

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB REPORT 2009

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Front Cover: Fieldfare *Terry Weston*

Inside Back Cover: Reed Bunting *Nigel Stewart*
Corn Bunting *Nigel Stewart*

Outside Back Cover: Whooper Swans *both Terry Weston*

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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 normally 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

As I predicted in my previous editorial this report has been produced largely based on a spreadsheet containing over 5,000 records of observations from many individuals including reports from BirdGuides and BirdTrack. For the first time we have, to a large extent, all the records for a single year contained within a computerised database. But this is a means to an end not an end in itself, and has made the task of our assistant recorders much easier than it has been in the past.

While the number of species seen in 2009 has been somewhat down on recent years I hope you will find this report of interest. As well as the usual systematic list covering all species we have an extended report on the rare breeding birds of the Lower Derwent Valley as 2009 was a significant year for Spotted Crake, Corncrake and Quail. There are accounts of two potential firsts for the York area, a Lesser Yellowlegs at Wheldrake in July and a Yellow-browed Warbler at Sand Hutton in November. Peter Reed has been managing annual surveys of Strensall Common in conjunction with the MOD and he describes the results of these surveys and the trends regarding the area's scarcer breeding birds. We also have shorter contributions on geese in central York, the birds of Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and the unfortunate fate of a Hobby in our area. I hope you will find much to enjoy.

Nothing really stays the same and this is certainly true in the birding world where ever more detailed knowledge of our birds has significantly affected avian taxonomy. Many species have been split and once again the order of species has been revised. The next YOC report for 2010 will adopt the new order (if you want to get a taste of what is to come visit www.bou.org.uk/thebritishlist/British-List-2010.pdf). In part the new order looks very strange but in time I am sure we will adapt as we have before. In turn we have had to revise the groups of species which our assistant recorders work with.

This editorial is being written in the autumn of 2011 so it seems appropriate to pay tribute to one of the club's long serving members, Ruth Traynor, who passed away in March of this year after a relatively short illness. Ruth was always a great supporter of the YOC; she was for many recent years the club's honorary treasurer and also a long-standing assistant recorder. We will all remember her strengths and fortitude in facing up to the challenges of life without complaint.

2011 was also the year in which the final year's work for the BTO Atlas was undertaken. It has been a mammoth effort and many members of the YOC have contributed in different ways. It has also resulted in many birders visiting areas which they had previously ignored yet many interesting and perhaps unexpected species have been recorded, as a result enhancing our appreciation of the bird life of the York area. Lastly, a major feature of 2011 has been the completion of phase I of the new Heslington East campus of York University. With its large lake and wetlands this has already become one of the foremost birdwatching sites of our area and with sympathetic management by the university will surely feature strongly in these pages in the future.

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. Thanks are also due to Jack Ashton-Booth, Andy Booth, Ian Brookes, Mark Coates, Bill Evers, Jonathan Pomroy, Nigel Stewart and Terry Weston for the drawings and photos which illustrate this report, and to Nigel once again for looking after production.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF 2009

January

Cold and icy weather from the end of 2008 continued well into January which produced a quiet start to the year, particularly in the Lower Derwent Valley. An adult **Bewick's Swan** accompanied just five **Whooper Swans** in the south of this area from the 4th while three of the former species were reported flying south over Wheldrake Ings on the 6th. Numbers of **Whooper Swans** then increased as the wintry conditions eased with 43 birds present in the North Duffield area by the end of the month while smaller numbers were also noted at Castle Howard Lake and in fields between Sutton-on-the-Forest and Strensall. A **Tundra Bean Goose** was reported to be with Greylags at Thorganby Ings on the 25th while skeins of **Pink-footed Geese** were noted passing over Millington Pasture and SHL during the first part of the month. Only single figures of **Pintail** were at North Duffield Carrs up to mid-month though a notable concentration of some 100 **Pochard** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th. Castle Howard Lake likewise held only single figures of both **Goldeneye** and **Goosander**.

There were some interesting raptor records, however, with up to two **Marsh Harriers** apparently wintering in the Lower Derwent Valley and at least one of the juvenile **Rough-legged Buzzards** at Millington Pasture being seen intermittently till the middle of the month.

Wader numbers were well down on what might be expected at this time of year with highlights being just three **Ruff** at Bubwith Ings on the 4th, **Jack Snipe** seen at two sites, several **Woodcock** reports from various locations, two **Black-tailed Godwits** at North Duffield Carrs on the 3rd and a **Green Sandpiper** in a flooded field at Upper Poppleton on the 27th and 28th. Notable gull records included a possible melanistic **Black-headed Gull** at York University and Clifton Ings, up to three **Iceland Gulls** and a single **Glaucous Gull**.

Meanwhile, **Barn Owls** were seen in several locations while up to three **Short-eared Owls** were noted at Millington Pasture and an injured **Long-eared Owl** was found on the roadside at Clifton Moor on the 25th but later died in care. A **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was seen along the Ebor Way on the 2nd with a male photographed when it visited a Huby garden on the 26th while the number of **Waxwing** reports increased as birds turned up in more urban areas. Pairs of **Stonechat** remained at traditional sites while good numbers of **Fieldfare** were

noted in a couple of spots. More unusually, a ringed **Cetti's Warbler** was seen behind the Tower Hide at Wheldrake on the 6th while a male **Blackcap** visited a garden in Copmanthorpe early in the month. The YOC recording area is still a stronghold for **Tree Sparrow** with some good counts being received although small birds in general were rather thin on the ground. Notable records, however, included ten **Brambling** at Stamford Bridge on the 20th with at least two more in a mixed finch flock at Millington Pasture which also included two **Twite** on the 18th. Two **Mealy Redpolls** were reported at Castle Howard on the 7th, with a sizeable flock of 16 **Bullfinches** in the Dunnington/Elvington area on the 30th, two **Hawfinches** seen at Millington Pasture throughout the month and up to 30 **Corn Buntings** coming in to roost at Melbourne early on.

February

Cold conditions lingered for the first half of the month with relatively few birds of note. There was a noticeable passage of **Pink-footed Geese** from mid-month, however, and 23 **Barnacle Geese** were caught up in this movement, passing over Wheldrake Ings on the 14th, but there were few reports of other wildfowl with a drake **Scaup** reported from Wheldrake Ings on the 15th and 16th being the most notable. Few raptor records were received apart from a female **Marsh Harrier** seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th and 15th. Waders, also, were poorly represented with highlights being 38 **Ruff** at Thorganby Ings on the 21st and a single **Green Sandpiper** at Harewood Whin on the 4th. The latter site also hosted an adult **Iceland Gull** on the 15th which was joined by a juvenile on the 24th while a juvenile **Glaucous Gull** was seen in the same area on four dates and at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th with a second-winter there on the 24th.

A **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was at Appleton Roebuck on the 17th and **Wood Larks** were in song at three sites from the 14th. Around 30 **Meadow Pipits** were noted on frozen floodwater at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th along with 15 **Pied Wagtails** while the **Waxwing** invasion continued with up to 40 birds roaming around the suburbs of York. **Stonechats** were still braving the wintry weather but there were few reports of **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** flocks. A male **Blackcap** was in a Haxby garden on the 1st with a single **Brambling** in York on the 2nd and three at Pocklington School on the 14th. Eight **Siskins** were at York University on the 26th and three **Lesser Redpolls** at Wheldrake Ings on the 16th with an impressive count of c.100 **Yellowhammers** at Copmanthorpe on the 3rd. Finally, up to 65 **Corn Buntings** roosted at

Clifton Ings while a very unusual record concerned one heard and seen briefly at York Science Park during the hard weather early in the month.

March

Milder weather this month resulted in more spring-like conditions with signs of breeding activity and some interchange between winter and summer visitors. **Whooper Swan** numbers began to decrease and **Pink-footed Geese** were also on the move although good numbers of **Wigeon** and **Teal** remained in the Lower Derwent Valley. In contrast, four **Garganey** were seen at North Duffield Carrs on the 18th with a pair at Wheldrake Ings from the 22nd–30th where a count of at least 250 **Tufted Ducks** on the 1st was notable. Also at this site, a drake **Scaup** was present from the 2nd, being accompanied by a female on the 19th and 20th. **Goldeneye** numbers at Castle Howard Lake started off at 25 on the 1st though only single figure numbers of **Goosander** were noted at this and other sites. A **Bittern** was reported flying over Skipwith Common on the 3rd while raptor records included two **Red Kites** at Millington Pasture on the 2nd with a single bird flying over the Rawcliffe area of York on the 30th, at least two different **Marsh Harriers** in the Lower Derwent Valley, single **Goshawks** reported from Upper Poppleton and Yearsley Moor and a few sightings of **Peregrine**.

A pair of **Avocets** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd and 23rd while six **Ringed Plovers** were at East Cottingwith on the 1st. Breeding **Lapwings** returned to Middlethorpe Ings with up to 25 birds present from mid-month and this species was reported as being more numerous in the Lower Derwent Valley. Around 20 **Dunlin** were at Wheldrake Ings from the 22nd while a maximum of 93 **Ruff** was at North Duffield Carrs on the 16th with up to 45 being noted at Wheldrake Ings. Two **Jack Snipe** were at Rawcliffe Meadows Flood Basin early in the month as well as 84 **Common Snipe** while single **Woodcocks** were noted at Skipwith Common and Upper Poppleton on the 22nd. Up to 20 **Black-tailed Godwits** were present at Wheldrake Ings with a single **Greenshank** there on the 25th while two **Green Sandpipers** were attracted to floods on Middlethorpe Ings. An adult **Yellow-legged Gull** was found in the roost at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th with single **Iceland** and **Glaucous Gulls** also noted.

Three **Short-eared Owls** were at Millington Pasture on the 15th while a **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was reported from Skipwith Common on the 22nd. Four **Wood Larks** were at Allerthorpe Common on the 13th with four pairs at Skipwith Common on the 20th and over 20 **Sky**

Larks counted on rough ground near Grimston on the 8th. The first **Sand Martin** records concerned 41 birds at Wheldrake Ings on the 16th as well as two birds at Naburn while the first **Swallow** of the year was seen at Strensall Common on the 29th with two **House Martins** at North Duffield Carrs on the 21st. A **White Wagtail** was reported from Black Dyke Ings near Barmby on the 17th while good numbers of **Waxwings** continued to be seen with a single **Wheatears** noted at North Duffield on the 22nd and Copmanthorpe on the 25th.

Counts of **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** were decreasing but a presumed wintering **Blackcap** continued to appear in a Heslington garden with possible newly arrived **Chiffchaffs** reported in song from the 25th. A recently discovered **Starling** roost in Heslington peaked at c.5,000 birds on the 9th and ten **Brambling** were still at Stamford Bridge on the 20th. Three **Mealy Redpolls** were reported from this area on the 1st with two in a garden in Copmanthorpe on the 18th while up to 18 **Crossbills** were noted at traditional sites. A single **Hawfinch** was at Millington Pasture on the 2nd while the **Corn Bunting** roost at Clifton Ings held a maximum of 60 birds on the 10th.

April

This was a predominantly dry, warm and sunny month which was very productive in terms of records. Lingering winter visitors included 13 **Whooper Swans** at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st but just one bird remaining from the 3rd–5th and up to four **Pink-footed Geese** present there until the 28th. Meanwhile, reports were received of 49 **Brent Geese** flying north over the reserve on the 22nd and a drake **Green-winged Teal** at the same site on the 6th and 7th. Most wintering ducks had moved on, however, while a pair of **Garganey** remained at Wheldrake Ings until the 17th with just the drake noted there on the 22nd and 25th.

Red Kites were seen at four sites within the recording area while single **Marsh Harriers** were noted at Wheldrake Ings on the 19th and moving north over Rufforth on the 24th. Four different northbound **Ospreys** were recorded in the Lower Derwent Valley from the 14th with a **Hobby** at Skipwith Common from the 22nd and two **Peregrines** also noted. Three **Common Cranes** flew north over Thorganby Ings on the 28th while wader sightings included an of **Avocet** at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th with two there on the 11th and 13th, a noticeable passage of **Little Ringed Plovers** throughout the month, up to 20 **Ruff** present in the Lower Derwent Valley, **Jack Snipe** at Rawcliffe Meadows Flood Basin on the 4th and Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd, up to 12 **Black-tailed Godwits**

at Wheldrake Ings with two **Bar-tailed Godwits** there on the 25th and one on the 28th when the **Whimbrel** roost peaked at 60 birds. A single **Greenshank** was also there on the 25th with a **Green Sandpiper** at Moor Monkton fishponds on the 20th and a **Common Sandpiper** at Fulford Ings on the 25th. An adult **Little Gull** was at North Duffield Carrs on the 13th while a juvenile **Iceland Gull** was seen on three dates with two terns, probably **Common Terns**, flying high over Long Marston on the 25th.

One to two **Cuckoos** were noted at just a few sites from the 10th with a single **Ring-necked Parakeet** reported flying over York railway station on the 11th. The first **Swift** of the year flew south near Naburn Bridge on the 24th with a male **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** reported from Allerthorpe Common on the 7th and one calling by Castle Howard Lake on the 11th. **Sand Martin** numbers continued to build this month but only single figures of both **Swallow** and **House Martin** were recorded. A **Tree Pipit** was back at Yearsley Moor by the 23rd with the first **Yellow Wagtail** at East Cottingwith on the 10th as seven appeared at North Duffield Carrs on the 11th increasing to 16 by the 14th while single **White Wagtails** were at this site on the 11th and at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th.

Good numbers of **Waxwings** were still being reported in flocks of up to 70 birds while a male **Redstart** was at Rawcliffe Ings on the 17th with a **Whinchat** at East Cottingwith on the 5th when up to four **Wheatears** were noted at different sites. The last **Fieldfares** and **Redwings** were recorded while a possible **Marsh Warbler** was seen and heard briefly at Hassacarr NR on the 12th and 13th while other incoming warblers included a **Grasshopper Warbler** at Thorganby Ings on the 6th, the first **Sedge Warbler** in the area noted on the 11th, **Reed Warbler** on the 28th, **Lesser Whitethroat** on the 19th, **Common Whitethroat** on the 24th and **Willow Warbler** on the 7th. Hundreds of **Chaffinches** were noted as part of a large and noisy mixed finch flock at Allerthorpe Common on the 7th which also included ten **Bramblings** and several **Lesser Redpolls** along with a possible **Mealy Redpoll** and a **Crossbill**.

May

As usual, this was also a busy month for records with a good variety of interesting species on offer. Most wintering wildfowl had already departed though 22 **Pink-footed Geese** were still at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th. Pairs of **Grey Partridge** were noted at four sites while a very early **Quail** was reported calling at North Duffield Carrs on the 28th. Up

to three **Little Egrets** were seen at Wheldrake Ings from at least the 7th and it was later reported that a pair had bred successfully at this site, fledging one youngster.

Raptor records included a **Honey Buzzard** moving north over Escrick on the 28th, a **Red Kite** flying low south over Fulford on the 1st, **Hobby** at four sites and a **Peregrine** at Wheldrake Ings on the 18th. Up to 13 **Spotted Crakes** were reported to be calling at the latter site early in the month while a single **Corncrake** was flushed on private land near Allerthorpe on the 6th with a **Common Crane** flying over Skipwith Common on the 29th. Other than the usual species of breeding waders, there were two records of **Little Ringed Plover** and good numbers of **Ringed Plovers** early in the month along with up to 20 **Dunlin** at Wheldrake Ings and a **Temminck's Stint** there on the 15th. A late **Jack Snipe** was reported from Clifton Ings on the 10th while ten **Whimbrel** were still at Wheldrake on the 7th with another three flying north over Cliffe on the 13th and four reports of **Common Sandpiper**. A single **Sandwich Tern** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 18th with four **Black Terns** gracing Castle Howard Lake on the 14th.

The first **Turtle Doves** of the year, a rapidly declining species in the YOC area, were seen at Yearsley Moor and Wheldrake on the 17th followed by four birds at Acaster Malbis on the 28th with further birds at four other sites. Meanwhile, single **Cuckoos**, another species suffering a downward trend, were noted at several sites. An unusual record involved an adult female **Long-eared Owl** which was rescued from the River Ouse at Clifton Ings and later released at the nearby Park&Ride site; the bird had an active brood pouch indicating it was nesting in the area.

Swifts became more numerous and widespread as the month progressed while a **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** visited a garden in Fulford from the 3rd–10th. Pairs of **Wood Lark** were on territory at traditional sites but **Tree Pipits** seemed unusually scarce.

Passage birds included at least four **Common Redstarts** from the 14th and two sightings of **Whinchat** with three 'Greenland' **Wheatears** at North Duffield Carrs from the 6th–9th and a male **Ring Ouzel** at Melbourne on the 5th. **Grasshopper Warblers** were reeling at three sites while both **Sedge** and **Reed Warblers** were well represented along with **Lesser** and **Common Whitethroats**, **Garden Warbler**, **Blackcap**, **Chiffchaff** and **Willow Warbler** while three **Wood Warblers** were in song at Yearsley Moor on the 23rd. The first **Spotted Flycatcher** was present at Welburn on the 10th while a probable **Pied Flycatcher**, a locally rare species nowadays, was seen briefly at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th with a **Nuthatch** also present there that day.

June

Things typically quieted down this month although there were good numbers of **Quail** about including at least 20 calling in the Lower Derwent Valley by the end of the month. A **Spoonbill** appeared briefly at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th before departing northwards while a **Red Kite** was seen at Clifton Ings on the 12th with at least three **Marsh Harriers** noted at North Duffield Carrs. A female **Goshawk** flew southeast over Heslington on the 23rd while there were several records of **Hobby**. A **Corncrake** was calling at Ellerton Ings on the 2nd while one present at North Duffield Carrs from this date proved very popular with two birds there from at least the 5th. There were two reports of **Common Crane** while wader interest was limited to the odd **Green** and **Wood Sandpiper**. A pair of **Common Terns** frequented York University Lake from mid-month and there was a welcome run of **Turtle Dove** records. Meanwhile, a **Long-eared Owl** roosted in full view of the Garganey Hide at North Duffield Carrs for much of the day on the 27th and was also reported in the general area on other dates. **Grasshopper Warblers** were reeling at Melbourne on the 9th and Thorganby Ings on the 30th while **Spotted Flycatchers** were seen at several sites.

July

This month is traditionally regarded as part of the 'midsummer lull' although there was enough to maintain some amount of interest! The series of **Quail** records continued while an adult **Little Egret** remained at Wheldrake Ings while three birds were present in the Clifton Ings area on the 14th. A single **Marsh Harrier** was seen at Thorganby Ings while a **Honey Buzzard** flew west over Rawcliffe Ings on the 15th and a male **Goshawk** was seen well at Coneysthorpe on the 4th with a juvenile passing through Walmgate Stray, York on the 28th. A **Corncrake** was seen at Allertorpe Gravel Pits on the 28th while **Little Ringed Plovers** were reported from two sites but the highlight of the month, if not the year, was undoubtedly an adult **Lesser Yellowlegs** discovered on the pool at Wheldrake Ings early on the 22nd. Other notable records concerned a single **Green Sandpiper** at Thorganby Ings while numbers at nearby Wheldrake Ings built up to ten birds by the 30th with a **Wood Sandpiper** also at the latter site on the 1st and a **Common Sandpiper** at Allertorpe Gravel Pits on the 25th. A pair of **Common Terns** continued to visit York University Lake from the 19th when four pairs were at Redhouse Reservoir.

A **Turtle Dove** was noted at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 5th and 16th while the **Long-eared Owl** seen at North Duffield Carrs last month put in another appearance on the 1st, a date when two young were heard calling at Strensall Common, while a **Cetti's Warbler** was reported to be singing at Storwood early in the month. A **Raven** moved north over Escrick on the 1st while a flock of 12 **Crossbills** was noted at Allerthorpe Common on the 17th.

August

Although birding interest was typically quiet at this time of year, York University's new development site, Heslington East, showed some promise and wet areas of a pig farm near North Duffield also attracted some interesting birds. Only two **Quail** were reported this month, however, while a dark morph juvenile **Honey Buzzard** seen at Askham Bog on the 18th was identified retrospectively from a photograph of the bird. Unfortunately, a badly injured **Hobby** which was found in a garden near Selby on the 4th had to be put down following examination by a vet.

Meanwhile, waders attracted to the pig farm near North Duffield on the 14th included 18 **Common Snipe**, nine **Greenshank** and up to five **Green Sandpipers** with two **Little Ringed Plovers** seen there on the 17th and 19th. Further **Greenshanks** were noted at three other sites while a **Common Sandpiper** was present at Heslington East on the 14th. Up to ten **Yellow-legged Gulls** visited Harewood Whin from mid-month while a pair of **Common Terns** was at Naburn Marina on the 8th with three flying south over Rawcliffe Country Park on the 28th.

A day-flying **Barn Owl** was hunting over Fulford Ings on the 8th and the **Long-eared Owl** at North Duffield Carrs was still being reported fairly regularly. Large gatherings of **Swifts** were noted before departing southwards while an immature male **Common Redstart** was a good find at Allerthorpe Common on the 3rd with **Wheatears** noted at SHL on the 6th and East Cottingwith on the 29th. A feeding flock of 20+ **Mistle Thrushes** was at Clifton Cricket Club grounds on the 25th while a **Grasshopper Warbler** was at Skipwith Common on the 13th and a pair of **Reed Warblers** fledged three young at Rawcliffe Country Park. Many juveniles of the commoner warbler species seemed to be on the move and **Spotted Flycatchers** were seen at Clifton Park from the 10th and at Hassacarr NR on the 19th with the flock of 12 **Crossbills** still at Allerthorpe Common on the 3rd.

September

The surge of records expected at this time of year did not materialise but some interesting species were seen nonetheless. A skein of 150+ **Pink-footed Geese** passed over York Science Park on the 23rd, part of what was to become a major regional movement but few other wildfowl of note were reported. There were a few interesting raptors seen, mainly involving dispersing juveniles, with two records of **Red Kite**, a **Marsh Harrier** roosting at Bank Island on the 19th/20th, three reports of **Goshawk**, an **Osprey** passing over Castle Howard Lake on the 9th and at least three sightings of **Hobby**.

A **Spotted Crake** was trapped and ringed at Bank Island on the 1st with two more caught the following day, all adult birds. Wader passage was poor but the usual build-up of **Golden Plover** and **Lapwing** flocks was apparent while up to four **Common Snipe** had returned to Clifton Ings and a **Greenshank** was at Skipwith Common from the 28th–30th while one to two **Green Sandpipers** were noted at four locations. Four **Yellow-legged Gulls** were found amongst a large flock of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** feeding in fields near Thorganby on the 5th with nine of the former there on the 8th; these presumably involved birds previously seen at Harewood Whin and they remained in the area for the rest of the month.

Late **Swift** sightings consisted of birds at three sites up to the 12th while the impressive spectacle of at least 2,000 **Swallows** roosting in a cornfield near East Cottingwith was witnessed by one observer. At least 12 **Yellow Wagtails** were at Thorganby on the 10th with the last of the year being one at Skipwith Common on the 12th while **Whinchats** were seen at Skipwith Common on the 9th and Wheldrake Ings on the 7th with a **Wheatear** at the latter site on the 2nd. Warblers were well reported and included a **Reed Warbler** at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 6th, a **Sedge Warbler** at Wheldrake on the 7th, a **Willow Warbler** present at the same site on the 20th and a **Garden Warbler** at East Cottingwith on the 10th. Three **Spotted Flycatchers** were in Clifton Park on the 1st with two remaining till the 3rd while another was at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th. Dispersing **Jays** were also noted in a few areas away from traditional breeding sites.

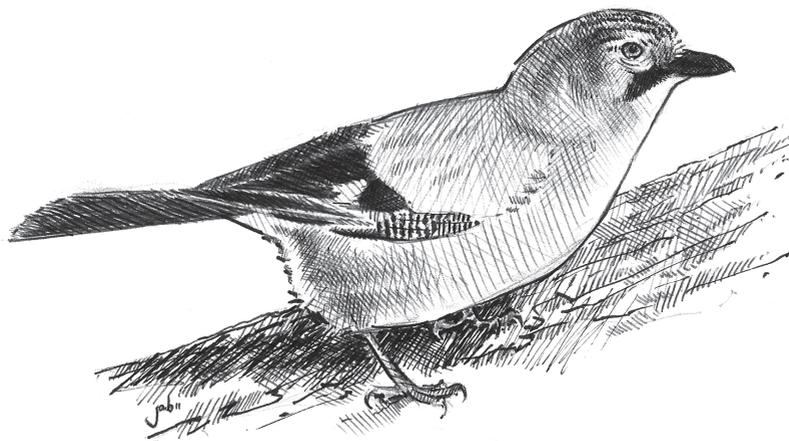
October

Arrivals and departures were the main feature of the month with the first **Whooper Swans** arriving from the 9th when a relatively small movement of **Pink-footed Geese** also took place. Numbers of wildfowl began to

increase generally while **Grey Partridges** were well reported with coveys of up to 15 noted at a couple of sites. A juvenile **Gannet** flew over the Pocklington Canal at East Cottingwith on the 11th while a run of raptor reports included **Marsh Harrier**, **Goshawk** and **Peregrine** with an **Osprey** passing west over Bank Island on the 5th and a late **Hobby** at Skipwith on the 28th.

The only notable waders reported were **Jack Snipe** at Clifton Ings, Dunnington Common and Skipwith Common with a **Green Sandpiper** at North Duffield Carrs on the 24th. A total of 21 **Yellow-legged Gulls** was counted in the Lower Derwent Valley on the 9th, including at least ten frequenting fields south of Thorganby during the first half of the month along with up to 300 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**.

A late **Turtle Dove**, a juvenile, was in a Bubwith village garden on the 4th while other lingering summer visitors included **House Martins** till the 27th and **Swallows** up till the 24th. **Grey Wagtails** were noticeable at a number of sites while c.50 **Pied Wagtails** moved west over Wilberfoss on the 28th. Pairs of **Stonechat** were reported from Heslington Tillmire on the 1st and North Duffield Carrs on the 9th with single **Wheatears** at Whitwell Grange on the 6th and East Cottingwith on the 7th as flocks of **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** built up. A **Chiffchaff** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th with an elusive male **Bearded Tit** in the reedbed there from the 8th–11th. Wandering **Jays** became more widespread as increasing numbers of finches and buntings included **Siskin** and **Crossbill** with three **Mealy Redpolls** reported from Stamford Bridge on the 7th.



November

Wet and windy weather persisted for most of the month and there was still some bird activity before things quietened down for the winter period. **Whooper Swan** numbers increased with 55 counted at North Duffield on the 14th while a single **Bewick's Swan** accompanied them from the 7th. Skeins of **Pink-footed Geese** were on the move with 200 present at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th as numbers of wildfowl in the Lower Derwent Valley increased dramatically while two **Ruddy Shelducks** at Wheldrake on the 19th were noteworthy as was a drake **Green-winged Teal** discovered at Bubwith Ings on the 30th. Other wildfowl of interest included **Pintail**, **Goldeneye** and **Goosander** while a **Little Egret** was at North Duffield on the 19th.

A female **Marsh Harrier** was seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st and Bank Island on the 19th and a **Rough-legged Buzzard** was reported flying west at Millington Pasture on the 11th with other raptors of note including **Merlin** and **Peregrine**. Some impressive wader numbers building up in the Lower Derwent Valley were reflected in a WeBS count on the 14th including more interesting species such as **Ruff** and **Green Sandpiper** while a **Lesser Yellowlegs** was reported on three dates. Gull counts also increased and included two **Yellow-legged Gulls** at Bank Island on the 17th.

A **Short-eared Owl** was reported at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th and 13th as numbers of winter thrushes diminished and a possible **Cetti's Warbler** was seen briefly at North Duffield Carrs on the 4th followed by a confirmed sighting in the reedbed at Wheldrake on the 13th. More unusual was a **Yellow-browed Warbler** watched for 15 minutes at SHL on the 4th while good numbers of finches included a single **Twite** flying around Wheldrake Ings on the 7th. Buntings were represented by up to 100 Reed Buntings at Rawcliffe Cornfield NR and c.30 **Corn Buntings** at Poppleton on the 11th.

December

Floods resulting from last month's ample rainfall initially attracted a good selection of waterbirds but froze over mid-month as one of the hardest winters for many years began to take hold. The herd of **Whooper Swans** in the North Duffield area peaked at 89 birds on the 2nd when the single accompanying **Bewick's Swan** was last reported. Two **Egyptian Geese** feeding on winter cornfields east of Ryther on the 13th were unusual while the drake **Green-winged Teal** was relocated at North Duffield Carrs

on the 2nd. Notable duck counts in the Lower Derwent Valley included 70+ **Pintail** and 40 **Shoveler** at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th when c.150 **Tufted Ducks** were at Bank Island. A female **Scaup** was found at Skip Bridge on the 8th and a **Red-breasted Merganser** was reported from North Duffield Carrs on the 4th while **Goosanders** were widespread with double-figure counts at three sites.

A **Red-necked Grebe** was observed drifting downstream on the River Derwent in the North Duffield/Bubwith area on the 1st – the first for a number of years – and raptor records included **Red Kite**, **Marsh Harrier**, **Merlin** and **Peregrine**. Wader numbers began to diminish with the onset of much colder weather though large flocks of **Golden Plover** and **Lapwing** were present in the Lower Derwent Valley early in the month with 50+ **Ruff** at North Duffield Carrs on the 2nd. One to two **Woodcocks** were noted in five locations while a **Black-tailed Godwit** was at Bubwith Bridge on the 20th with a **Spotted Redshank** at Bubwith Ings on the 5th and **Green Sandpipers** seen at two sites outside the Lower Derwent. Interesting gull reports concerned an adult **Mediterranean Gull** discovered in the roost at Castle Howard Lake on the 26th and an adult **Yellow-legged Gull** identified at Bank Island on the 22nd.

A **Short-eared Owl** was seen at North Duffield Carrs on the 4th while up to two **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** located in Stub Wood on the 10th was a notable record. Several **Stonechats** were at North Duffield Carrs on the 5th with a pair still present on the 19th and the **Cetti's Warbler** was reported again at North Duffield on the 4th and 11th with a **Blackcap** in Pocklington on the 22nd and a **Chiffchaff** at Wheldrake on the 25th. **Nuthatches** were noted at two sites as sizeable gatherings of **Tree Sparrows** were witnessed in a few areas while there were numerous reports of birds visiting urban gardens during the wintry weather. The only record of **Brambling** was of a single bird visiting a garden in Barton-le-Willows over Christmas but an impressive flock of over 120 **Linnets** frequented Rawcliffe Cornfield NR from mid-month and a **Lapland Bunting** was reported calling over Wheldrake on the 22nd.

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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 currently used in YOC reports.

Where appropriate the following abbreviations appear in the report:

BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)
SHL	Sand Hutton Laboratory, Sand Hutton (formerly known as the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) now part of fera (The Food and Environmental Research Agency)
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 SHL)
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

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.

In 2009 LDV WeBS counts took place only in January and November; those at Castle Howard Lake in January (18th), February (22nd), March (15th), April (26th), September (20th), October (11th), November (22nd) and December (27th). In these tables a short dash (-) indicates no birds were present; a blank entry indicates that no count was attempted.

Records submitted to 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.

This report is also based, for the first time, on records from within the YOC area submitted to BirdTrack. While we do have the names of observers records will, as necessary, be attributed to 'BirdTrack' rather than to the individual concerned. The very large majority of BirdTrack records relate to the commoner species and these normally just merit a summary anyway.

The systematic list also includes those species recorded in at least three of the previous ten years even if they were not recorded in 2009. The information given for these shows the year last recorded.

As in the previous report we have also included, for added interest, some records which occurred just outside the YOC recording area. These sightings 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 2009 include Twite and Hawfinch at Millington Pasture.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent Valley small numbers were noted at North Duffield Carrs in January with birds also feeding in fields by Derwent Cottage Farm, Bubwith peaking at 50 by mid-March. An impressive 60 birds were at North Duffield Carrs on the morning of 9th October but quickly dispersed with only single figure sightings there for the remainder of the year.

Good numbers were again at Castle Howard Lake throughout the year with at least 44 counted on 1st March, 60 during July including 14 juveniles while numbers peaked at 95 on 22nd November.

Bred again along the Pocklington Canal where 19 were noted by the end of August. Elsewhere two pairs were on York University Lake from late January through February while further sightings, mainly of one or two birds, were reported as follows:

February – from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and Hassacarr NR, Dunnington

March – on the ponds at Yearsley Moor and at Rawcliffe Lake

May – at Low Water, Terrington, with two pairs at Walbutts Sewage Works, Strensall Common (and two birds there again in November)

August – on the main York University Lake

October – one circled Wash Dike, Skipwith Common but did not land, plus two Immatures at Rawcliffe Lake.

Up to seven birds spent the year on the rivers in York ranging on the Ouse from Poppleton down to Naburn, where they probably bred, and with occasional sightings on the Foss and at Rowntree Park.

Monthly WeBS counts for Mute Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	31	41	26	32	59	68	95	85
LDV	89						106	

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Declining winter visitor and passage migrant

A single was with Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* at the southern end of the Lower Derwent Valley through January till 26th February (PR, AB, RS *et al.*) at least. In addition three were reported flying south at Wheldrake Ings on 6th January (BirdGuides).

Another single was found among the Whooper Swans at North Duffield Carrs on 7th November (RS, PR, AW *et al.*), remaining in the area until at least early December.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent Valley the main herd of up to 40 birds was again in the North Duffield Carrs/Bubwith Ings area early in the year with a peak of 65 on 15th March. In addition a flock of 60+ was at Wheldrake Ings during March including two birds that had been fitted with satellite tags at Welney. These two eventually departed at 19:00 on the 18th arriving in Iceland the following morning (per CR).

The first returning birds were seen on 9th October at North Duffield Carrs where numbers increased rapidly to 50–60 with 100 counted at nearby Ellerton Ings on 30th December.

Elsewhere up to four were at Castle Howard Lake from the start of January till mid-March with three in a ploughed field by Forest Hill Farm, along the Sutton-on-the-Forest to Strensall road, on the 3rd and 4th. Some northerly movement was noted in the second half of March with 35 over Osbaldwick on the 18th, followed by 120 over Selby and 32 over Huntington on the 20th.

In the autumn birds were noted moving back south with 28 over Heslington on 8th November, 16 over Huntington on 27th November and 23 over Askham Bog on 1st December. Additionally nine birds were on the River Ouse near Stillingfleet on 6th November with 30 at Overton Ings, Poppleton on the 27th. Birds were also seen near Beningborough on 5th December plus a single with Mute Swans *Cygnus olor* alongside the Pocklington Canal on 11th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Whooper Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-
LDV	59						55	

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Scarce winter visitor

The only record in 2009 was of a single bird of the Tundra race *rossicus* seen on 25th January with Greylag Geese *Anser anser* from the viewing platform at Thorganby Ings (CR per RS).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

A flock of 100 flew northwest over SHL on 14th January with further flocks of 40 and 30 on the following two days. More movements during February included 250 over Allerthorpe, 50 over Fulford, 65 over Osbaldwick and 300 over Wheldrake Ings on the 14th, 250 over Copmanthorpe on the 15th, 120+ over York University on the 19th, another 60 over Osbaldwick on the 21st and 75 over the Strensall to Sheriff Hutton road on the 28th .

Five were at Castle Howard Lake on 8th February, then three were at Acre Farm near Melbourne on 23rd March while a flock of 50–60 dropped in at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th. Four remained into early May but 22 were present there on the 10th.

First returning birds were 150 over York University on 23rd September with further flocks of 70 over Cliffe, 80 over York Racecourse and 42 over North Duffield Carrs on 5th October, 60 over SHL on the 9th, 96 over central York on the 29th, 100 over Askham Bog on 12th November and 80 south over Copmanthorpe on the 30th. A pair dropped onto the ponds by the viewing platform at Skipwith Common on 25th September and single birds were at Castle Howard Lake on 18th October and at Ellerton Ings during late November, with up to 40 present at the latter site by late December.



White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Scarce winter visitor

No records in 2009 after a run of eight consecutive years.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Common and widely reported throughout the recording area. In early January 260 were counted at North Duffield Carrs with as many as 200–300 around Castle Howard Lake all year. Late summer saw some large concentrations with several flocks totalling 400+ flying into fields near Ellerton on 8th August while a large flock roosting at Wash Dike, Skipwith Common during August peaked at 270 on 1st September. Another high count was 185 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 6th September while numbers at Castle Howard soared to a massive 668 on the 20th, while a further 114 settled on Rawcliffe Lake during late September and into early October. The largest flock away from the main areas during

the latter part of the year was of 100 seen feeding in a field near West Ness on 15th November while a flock of 200 flying over the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 13th December was thought to be of possibly wild origin.

Monthly WeBS counts for Greylag Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	60	17	261	43	668	270	12	-
LDV	1,393						2,468	

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Resident feral breeder and winter visitor

Another common goose that was recorded widely throughout the YOC area although in smaller numbers than the previous species. The highest count in the Lower Derwent Valley during the early part of the year was of 100 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st February, while the largest flock of the year was 274 at Castle Howard Lake on 9th July. Smaller flocks of 80+ were at Wash Dike, Skipwith Common and Allertorpe Gravel Pits during early September, and 100 were noted at Bubwith Ings on 19th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Canada Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	122	148	58	70	35	63	71	73
LDV	703						1,697	

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Occasional winter visitor and feral wanderer

A free-flying feral flock of up to 60 birds at York University probably accounted for most sightings in the area, including one of 23 over Wheldrake Ings on 14th February. A single bird commuted between North Duffield Carrs and Wheldrake Ings during March and April, also dropping in to Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on 16th March, the first record for this site. It may also have been the bird seen at Rawcliffe Lake on 5th May. Another single accompanied other geese at Castle Howard Lake from January through to April and again on 18th October and two were with Canada Geese *Branta canadensis* at Bank Island on 21st December.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

A flock of 49 was reported flying north at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April (BirdGuides)

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Rare visitor from feral population

Two were in a winter cornfield east of Ryther on 13th December. (BirdGuides)

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Winter visitor, migrant breeder and scarce autumn passage migrant

In the Lower Derwent Valley up to 20 frequented the North Duffield Carrs/Bubwith Ings area early in the year with peak counts of 50 at Thorganby Ings on 6th March and 30 at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd April. Seven were on floods at Clifton Ings on 12th February with pairs noted in roadside fields near Holtby on 8th March, on the River Ouse near Beningborough on the 20th, Scamland on the 23rd, at Low Carr near Sutton-on-the-Forest on 1st April and at Moor Monkton fish ponds on 4th May. Another pair was flushed from Wash Dike at Skipwith Common on 31st May but no evidence of breeding there was noted this year.

Small numbers were back in the Lower Derwent Valley from 13th August with eight at the pool, Wheldrake Ings on 23rd November and 26 counted at Ellerton Ings at the end of the year.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Shelduck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV		84					9	

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Scarce visitor mostly in the winter period

The only record this year involved a drake at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 26th and 27th September.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

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

Usual numbers were wintering throughout the Lower Derwent Valley with up to 2,000 at Wheldrake Ings and a similar number at North Duffield Carrs early in the year; again a few lingered through the summer. A peak count of 364 was made at Castle Howard Lake in January. Elsewhere two were at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 8th January with 12 on the River Rye at Swinton Ings on the 14th, eight remaining into early March. A further eight were on floods at Clifton Ings on 12th February.

Up to 100 birds made use of the ponds on Skipwith Common during September and October, presumably until conditions improved in the nearby Lower Derwent Valley. Here small numbers only were scattered

throughout the area until numbers built up to 1,000+ at Bubwith Ings in late November. A further 292 were at Castle Howard Lake this month with an immature on the River Ouse at Fulford on 25th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Eurasian Wigeon

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	364	284	52	3	19	69	292	121
LDV	9,614						10,605	

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

Vagrant

No records in 2009, the last being in 2007.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Winter visitor and migrant breeder

Wintered throughout the Lower Derwent Valley although the only counts received were from North Duffield Carrs with a maximum of 62 there on 22nd March. Early in the year three were also discovered on floods at Clifton Ings on 12th February.

Two pairs were on Wash Dike at Skipwith Common on 6th March with at least one pair breeding successfully, last seen on 7th August.

Birds were also seen throughout the year at Castle Howard Lake with a maximum of 21 in the first winter period and 55 in the second. A single bird graced the pond at SHL on 6th September while numbers had built up to 15 at Bubwith Ings by the end of December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Gadwall

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	21	11	2	3	7	41	52	46
LDV	95						44	

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

Winter visitor and resident breeder

Good numbers wintered in the Lower Derwent Valley with peak counts of 600 at North Duffield Carrs through January and February, up to 2,000 at Wheldrake Ings in March and 750 at Bubwith Ings in December. Good numbers also wintering at Castle Howard Lake with up to 257 in February and 315 during December. Around 70 also wintered at Skipwith Common with a peak of 100+ on 18th February and at least one pair bred there.

Elsewhere 26 were on the River Rye at Swinton on 4th January with five still there early March, 30 were on the River Derwent near Gunby on

4th February, 22 were on floods at Clifton Ings on the 12th, seven were seen near Frog Hall at Allerthorpe Common on 15th March, two were at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits during March and April and four were on the River Derwent near Stamford Bridge on 3rd April.

At the back end of the year 30 were at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 10th October, five were on floods at Bishopthorpe on 13th December, later seen near there on the River Ouse, two were on the River Ouse north of York at Poppleton on the 20th and three were seen dropping into a ditch at Clifton Ings on the 28th.

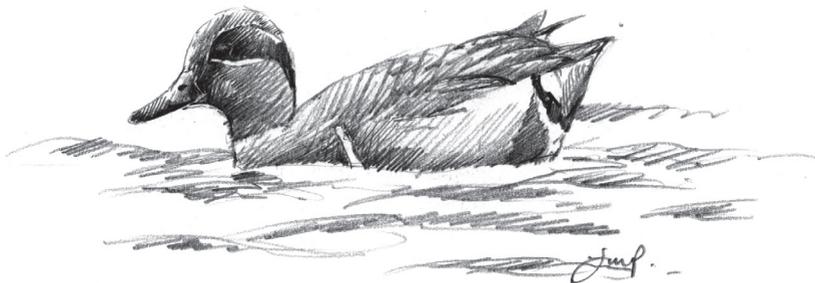
Monthly WeBS counts for Eurasian Teal

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	143	20	62	3	77	70	165	315
LDV	3,393						3,751	

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

Rare visitor

A drake was reported from North Duffield Carrs on 6th and 7th April (CR) and another drake first seen on Bubwith Ings on 30th November (TD, MiW) was then at the former site until at least 2nd December. This is the fourth year running that this species has been recorded in the YOC area.



Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Winter visitor and resident breeder

Common and widespread, recorded widely throughout the YOC area although again no large counts were received even from the Lower

Monthly WeBS counts for Mallard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	198	155	106	54	254	297	301	455
LDV	2,001						1,536	

Derwent Valley. Around 200–300 resided at Castle Howard Lake where winter numbers peaked at 455 in December while the only other counts of more than 100 were at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and the River Ouse between York and Naburn.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Winter visitor and scarce breeder

In the Lower Derwent Valley 48 were at North Duffield Carrs in early January peaking at 102 on 7th February with 94 remaining at Aughton Ings during early March.

Numbers of returning birds were slow to build but 70 were at Wheldrake Ings and 30 at North Duffield Carrs by the end of December. Elsewhere a pair was on Wash Dike at Skipwith Common with Wigeon *Anas penelope* from 5th–8th October and birds were also reported from Castle Howard Lake in February and October though no counts were available.

Monthly WeBS counts for Pintail

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LDV	298						30	

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Scarce migrant breeder

The first of the year were four at North Duffield Carrs on 18th March (BirdGuides) while a drake at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 22nd was the first for this site (P&SB). Also on that date two pairs were at Wheldrake Ings with one pair remaining there into early May (AB, MD). There were no further sightings of this species apart from a report of one at the unusual location of Allerthorpe Common on 30th May.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Scarce migrant breeder

Small numbers wintered in the Lower Derwent Valley with a peak of 100+ at both North Duffield Carrs and Wheldrake Ings on 20th March. Evidence of breeding came from a female with a brood of five ducklings seen at Wheldrake Ings during June. Returning birds numbered between 80 and 90 throughout the Valley by early December.

At nearby Skipwith Common eight were at Sheep Dike on 3rd February with a single male there on 4th March and 2nd June while a pair seen there on 28th July was thought to have bred as five birds were present on 11th September. A pair remained on 8th October and 11 were there on 17th November.

Elsewhere up to three were at Castle Howard Lake early in the year, a single was on the River Ouse by Rowntree Park on 20th March, a pair was back at Castle Howard Lake on 18th October and a single graced the JRTNR pond on 19th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Shoveler

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	-	1	4	-	-	5	-	-
LDV	142						55	

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers

Smaller numbers than usual were wintering at Castle Howard Lake this year with peak counts of just 46 during January and 22 in November although 100+ were counted at Wheldrake Ings in late January with smaller numbers noted throughout the rest of the Lower Derwent Valley.

Elsewhere singles were noted at Stockton-on-the-Forest on 3rd January and Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 11th with three on floods at Clifton Ings on 12th February, a drake on Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on the 20th, two pairs on the boating lake at Rowntree Park, York on 14th November and two on York University Lake on the 17th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Pochard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	46	27	12	-	-	-	22	5
LDV	122						6	

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Vagrant

There have been nine records of this species in the YOC area but none since 2006.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers

Castle Howard Lake is fast becoming the stronghold for this species in the YOC area with good numbers present in all months and with peak counts of 250 in early March and 105 during December; several pairs with young were noted during the summer. Not many records were forthcoming from the Lower Derwent Valley this year with the best counts being 30 at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd February and 42 at Bank Island on 7th November.

Small numbers were also noted at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits throughout the year with 20+ counted there during March and birds also commuting

to the nearby Lakeland Park pond and Frog Hall on the Common; a couple of pairs bred in the area.

At Skipwith Common up to five were present early in the year with three pairs present in May but there was no evidence of breeding this year, the last record being three on 26th August.

Other records included two at Moor Monkton fish ponds on 27th April, four at Gaterley on 12th May, two pairs around Strensall Common from 15th May into early June, two pairs at Naburn Marina on 8th June, three birds on the pond at SHL on 15th May with two there on 30th June and a drake on 29th July, three at Rawcliffe Lake on 26th September, a female at Rowntree Park pond on 14th November and six at Redhouse Reservoir on 29th December.

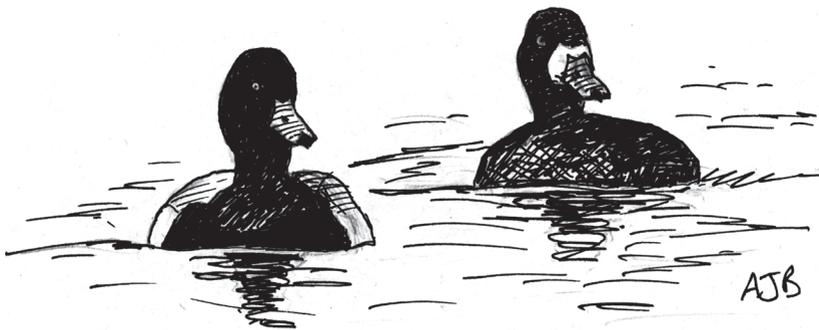
Monthly WeBS counts for Tufted Duck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	107	118	100	44	71	78	85	105
LDV	140						36	

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers

A drake present at Wheldrake Ings on 15th and 16th February (RS, TD) was seen again on 17th March and joined by a female on the 19th and 20th. This continues the annual run of records for this species starting in 1999. In addition to the Wheldrake Ings bird a female was seen on 8th December (DW) at Skip Bridge where the A59 crosses the River Nidd though this is about 1.5km west of the YOC recording area.



Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Very scarce winter visitor

After records for three years in a row there were none in 2009.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

Castle Howard Lake held 16 birds during January with numbers peaking at 25 in March; the first returning birds were a pair on 18th October with eight there in late December. Very scarce in the Lower Derwent Valley this year with a maximum of six at Wheldrake Ings through January but just four remaining on 20th March.

In the autumn a single female was reported from Wheldrake Ings on 23rd November with a male at Bank Island on 2nd December and one at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th. A single female with a flock of Eurasian Teal *Anus crecca* at Sheep Dike, Skipwith Common on 3rd December was the only other record.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Goldeneye

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	16	20	13	-	-	-	3	8
LDV	14						-	

Smew *Mergellus albellus*
Scarce winter visitor

No records in 2009 of this near annual species, with the last in 2008.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*
Very scarce winter visitor

No records this year after appearances in 2006 and 2008.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*
Regular winter visitor and passage migrant

Up to seven were wintering at Castle Howard Lake early in the year with 11 counted on 15th February while returning birds had built up to 12 by the end of the year. Eleven were on the River Derwent near Stamford Bridge on 13th February with at least two remaining to the end of March while five were at Wheldrake Ings on 15th February with a single there from 3rd–10th March and another four at North Duffield CARRS on 4th March. Two males were reported in central York on 20th March at the confluence of the rivers Ouse and Foss. Other, single figure, records during the winter periods came from Redhouse Reservoir, the River Rye at Swinton Ings, the River Ouse between Fulford and Naburn, the River Ouse between Clifton and Beningbrough and the bottom pond at Yearsley Moor.

Late in the year twelve were on the River Foss at Towthorpe Bridge on 28th December with another 12 at Redhouse Reservoir on the 29th.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*
Resident breeder in small numbers

The only records this year, all from Castle Howard Lake, were of a single on 22nd March, a pair on 18th April seen again in July, and another single on 9th September. It would seem the national cull has all but eradicated this species from the YOC area.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*
Resident breeder

Small numbers were again reported widely in farmland throughout the area but the only double-figure count was of 12 at Naburn Sewage Works on 13th December.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*
Resident breeder

Not as common as the previous species but many single-figure counts were reported throughout the area including Cheesecake Farm (Wheldrake), Dunnington Common, Ellerton, High Roans (Strensall), Long Marston, Seaton Ross, Strensall Common, Thornton Eilers, Thornton le Clay and West Lilling. The only double-figure counts were of 15 at Long Marston on 17th October and 12 at Earfit Lane, Copmanthorpe on 30th October. An interesting sighting on the outskirts of York involved two birds that were flushed from the top end of Rawcliffe Ings on the evenings of 24th and 27th May.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*
Summer visitor which breeds in good years

The first was heard calling at North Duffield Carrs on the evening of 28th May (PR) with several proclaiming themselves throughout the Lower Derwent Valley during June and July and into early August (see report on the rare and scarce breeding birds of the Lower Derwent Valley on page 94).

A single bird was heard calling at the Heslington Tillmire for four or five days from 12th June (MH) with one at Redhouse Reservoir and two at Long Marston on the 26th (PaR), the latter site playing host to three or four popular individuals a month later. Two birds were also at the traditional site at West Lilling in late July (PeR), with the last birds of the year there on 27th September, while singles were reported from Langton Road, Norton on 23rd August and Welburn on the 24th (both BirdGuides).

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*
Resident breeder

Common and regularly encountered in farmland throughout the recording area. Flocks of ten or more were regularly seen at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits throughout the year while birds were also present within the outer ring road with seven or eight in and around the Cornfield NR at Rawcliffe and up to six at Fulford.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Resident breeder, more widespread in winter

Singles were reported from North Duffield Carrs, Wheldrake Ings and the River Rye at Swinton Ings early in the year with another on Butt Pools at Strensall Common from 5th March to 15th May.

Pairs were at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on 17th May and High Roans, Strensall on 14th July while six pairs spent the summer on the pools at Skipwith Common and bred successfully. Elsewhere birds were present throughout the year with up to eight at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, up to four at Castle Howard Lake and several pairs along the Pocklington Canal.

In the second winter period one was on the pond at SHL on 6th November, four were at Walbutts Sewage Works, Strensall on the 18th, up to three were on the River Derwent in the Bubwith Ings/North Duffield Carrs area during December while a flock of ten was at the Pocklington Canal near Melbourne on the 23rd.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
Resident breeder and passage visitor

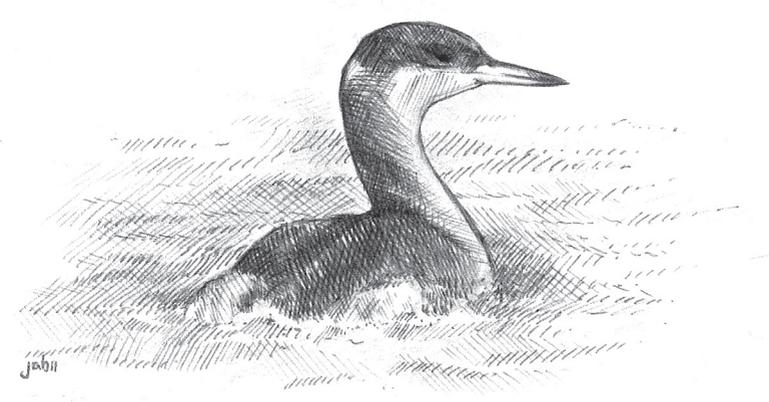
Up to eight wintered at Castle Howard Lake where at least two pairs were present through the summer. Another two pairs were on York University Lake with one pair raising two broods while a pair at Rawcliffe Lake again made three attempts to breed raising one chick the third time. Also seen throughout the year on the River Ouse between York and Naburn Marina where there were two pairs with two young in the summer.

Elsewhere one was on the River Derwent at Gunby on 4th February, two were at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 23rd May, a single was on the River Ouse at Clifton on 15th and 16th June, and three were on the River Derwent in the North Duffield Carrs/Bubwith Ings area on 19th December.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Very scarce winter visitor

A single drifting down the River Derwent by North Duffield Carrs on 1st December (PR) was seen later at Bubwith bridge (CR). Last recorded in 2004.



Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

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

No reports this year, the last being in 2008 though recently of near annual occurrence.

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Scarce autumn visitor on passage

An immature was reported flying over East Cottingwith Lock by Wheldrake Ings on 11th October (MaW), the 11th record for the area with the most recent previous records being in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Passage and winter visitor; recently established resident breeder

Present throughout the year at Castle Howard Lake with a maximum count of 55 in May. The breeding colony has relocated to the island and at least ten nests were counted this year. There is another breeding colony still at Wheldrake Ings but no detailed counts were received this year.

Elsewhere four were on the River Rye by Swinton Ings on 4th January and a single was at Rawcliffe Lake on the 25th, two were seen at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits in early February with one over Redhouse Wood, Moor Monkton on the 8th and three on the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on the 13th.

Singles were also noted at Redhouse Reservoir on 19th July, over Skipwith Common on 28th August and over the pond at SHL on 3rd November with two over Black Dike Plantation, SHL on 9th December. Birds were again seen flying up and down the River Ouse at Clifton throughout the year and three were regularly seen perched in riverside trees through December. Occasionally seen along the River Ouse between York and Naburn in all months.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Very scarce, mostly winter visitor

One was reported flying over Wash Dike at Skipwith Common on 3rd March (Stuart Ogilvie per DT). There have now been reports of this species in each of the last four years.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Very scarce, mostly winter visitor

Now of annual occurrence since 2003, one to three were regularly reported from the Lower Derwent Valley throughout the year with most sightings coming from Wheldrake Ings and North Duffield Carrs. Three at Clifton Ings on 14th July were not a totally unexpected surprise; they came up from some balancing tanks on the other side of the River Ouse and then flew off down-river.

Breeding was confirmed from a site near Wheldrake Ings with a pair fledging one young, a first breeding record for the Lower Derwent Valley for the county of Yorkshire as a whole.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Resident breeder

A small heronry was on the island in Castle Howard Lake with at least three active nests this year and up to ten birds during February and March. Elsewhere 30+ were counted in the Lower Derwent Valley in March while single birds were widely reported from many locations including Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and Lakeland Park, Buttercrambe Weir, Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings, Fulford Ings, High Roans (Strensall), Rawcliffe Lake, SHL and Skipwith Common.

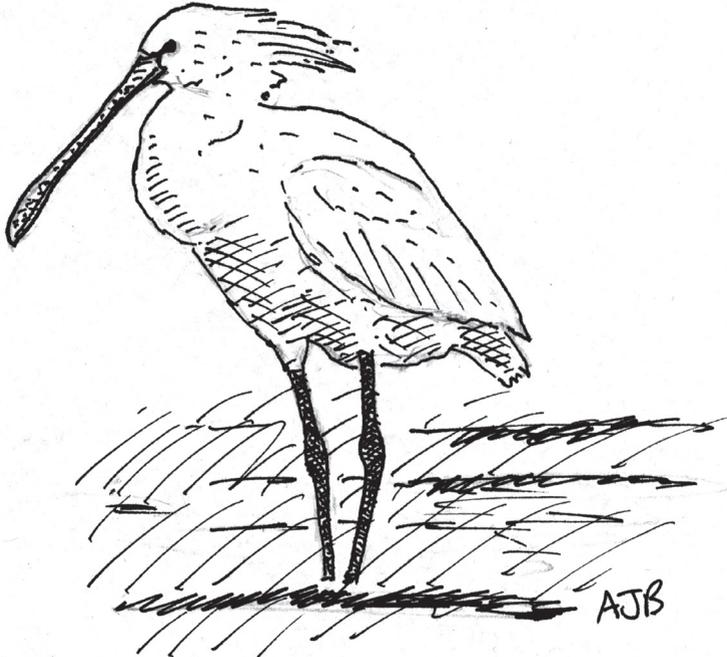
White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Scarce vagrant, but free-flying birds from the Harewood Estate near Leeds have been more likely in recent years

After annual appearances from 2005 to 2008 none was reported in 2009.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*
Rare vagrant

One on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the morning of 24th June flew off north (per RS). This is the 6th record for the York area following one in 2000.



Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*
Irregular passage migrant

Records of this species have been annual since 2005. One flew north over Escrick on 28th May (BirdGuides), a pale phase adult male drifted westwards over Rawcliffe Ings on 15th July (NS) and an immature south over Askham Bog on 28th August (MC) was identified from a photo (see colour pages).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*
Irregular but increasing visitor from reintroduction schemes

For some reason there were no sightings in the first part of the year until late March but the species was then regularly reported until the year's end. Single birds were seen over Newton-on-Ouse on 27th March,

in the Rawcliffe area on 30th March, Fulford on 13th April, Sherburn in Elmet on the 26th, SHL on the 27th and Riccall on the 30th. There was another over Fulford on 1st May with one over Brecks Lane, Strensall on the 18th and two over Tollerton on the 21st. On the 1st June one was seen again over Newton-on-Ouse while another drifted over Clifton Ings on the evening of the 12th. A further single was on the western edge of the area at Oxtun on 10th August followed by one at Skipwith Common on the 26th. In September a single flew over Black Dyke Lane, Upper Poppleton on the 19th with another east over Wheldrake Ings on the 21st. Two were seen at this location on 27th November, with lastly one flying over Fulford Golf Course on 17th December.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Passage migrant and rare breeder, now also scarce winter visitor

Present in the Lower Derwent Valley throughout the year with mainly ones and twos recorded although three were reported from North Duffield Carrs on 27th June. Birds were also noted visiting nearby Skipwith Common again with cream-crowns seen on 8th March, 8th August, 15th–21st September and 12th November, the latter being the first winter record for this site. Elsewhere singles were reported flying north over Rufforth on 24th April, over the River Rye at Swinton on 28th August and at Acaster Aerodrome on 12th December.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Mostly a very scarce winter visitor

Not recorded in 2009 but annual from 2003 to 2008.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Passage visitor and rare breeder

There were singles at Skipwith Common on 30th January and 4th March (DT, CR) with two over Gilling Park/Yearsley Moor on 17th March (BirdTrack) and a male seen circling over the area on the 21st (MD). Another was reported from Upper Poppleton on 23rd March (RD) heading distantly north before turning and heading south over the observer. A female flew over Heslington on 23rd June (JL), another was just south of Coneysthorpe on 4th July, a juvenile drifted westwards over Walmgate Stray on 28th July (AB) while other birds were seen at Yearsley Moor on 9th September (IB), Wheldrake Ings on 11th September (CG) and Skipwith Common on 12th October (DT). Single adults were seen over Fulford Ings on 27th September (AB), York Science Park on 2nd and 5th October (AB) and near Acaster Selby on 8th October (TD).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Resident breeder and passage migrant

A common raptor reported widely throughout the area and regularly encountered in gardens. Displaying birds were noted at several sites including three pairs at Fulford Ings on 13th April.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Passage migrant and scarce resident breeder

An incredible number of sightings this year with ones and twos reported from many sites throughout the area. Noteworthy counts included six at Terrington on 11th January, five over Howsham Wood, Howsham on 7th February, seven riding thermals over Selby on 11th March and ten at High Gaterley, Castle Howard on 24th May.

In the autumn ten were at Acklam on 13th September with six to eight birds seen at Wheldrake Ings on 5th October.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Regular passage migrant

Several single bird sightings in the Lower Derwent Valley during April included Wheldrake Ings on the 14th, North Duffield Carrs on the 17th and Thorganby on the 25th (all BirdGuides).

Return passage saw singles over Castle Howard Lake on 9th September (RCo) and Bank Island on 5th October (TD).

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident breeder

A very common raptor frequently encountered hunting roadside verges with singles and pairs recorded from many sites throughout the area although nothing of note to report this year.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

Early in the year one flew low across the A64 just north of Bishopthorpe on 16th January (JL) with another at North Duffield Carrs on 6th February (PR). In the autumn singles were seen at many sites throughout the Lower Derwent Valley from 24th September to the end of November (PR). Elsewhere, a female was chasing Skylarks *Alauda arvensis* at Naburn Sewage Works on 7th November (AB), one was seen following the River Derwent north towards Wressle on 25th November (MW) and another female was perched by the roadside close to Rufforth Tip on 24th December (PaR).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Passage and scarce summer visitor

Another good series of records this year started with one at Skipwith Common on 22nd April, with further singles seen at Turnham Lane, Cliffe on 13th May, Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 23rd, Rowland Hill Farm, Bolton on the 27th and Gilling East on the 31st. Another was seen at Bolton Percy on 10th June and one flew over the River Ouse near St Peters School, York on the 7th before heading off towards Clifton Ings where possibly the same bird was seen again on the 21st. Another was seen hunting Sand Martins *Riparia riparia* over Redhouse Reservoir the following day.

There were regular sightings of at least two birds on Skipwith Common from the end of May through to September indicating the possibility of breeding at this site. Other summer sightings included singles at East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest on 14th July, one seen to catch a House Martin *Delichon urbicum* over Storwood on 10th September with maybe the same bird hunting hirundines over East Cottingwith on the 12th and again on the 17th, and another at Acklam on the 13th while the last of the year was a bird over Skipwith on 28th October.

A badly injured bird, found in a Hemmingbrough garden on 4th August had to be put down (see note and photo on page 110).

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Winter and passage visitor

Up to two were wintering in the Lower Derwent Valley with the bulk of sightings coming from Wheldrake Ings and North Duffield Carrs. Elsewhere singles were seen at Sutton-on-the-Forest on 16th January, over Grimston Bar Park&Ride (York) on the 23rd, Hessay Ponds on 8th February and over Heslington on 12th April. There were no summer sightings this year but later on singles were at Acklam on 6th September, Cliffe on 5th October, over SHL on the 7th, Stamford Bridge on 9th November and Poppleton on 20th December. One was seen to strike prey by the River Ouse at Ouse Bridge, York before flying across the river with its catch which was still vocal!

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Resident breeder and winter/passage visitor

The secretive nature of this species probably accounts for the sparsity of records. A bird showed well at Castle Howard Lake on the 8th and 22nd February and two birds were calling on the 20th from Wash Dike at Skipwith Common where three pairs bred again this year. Also bred in the Lower Derwent Valley where an adult with two chicks was seen at Wheldrake Ings

on 5th July. One was in a small channel there on 23rd November with two seen in the car park during heavy flooding in early December. Singles were also seen at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 12th December and in front of the Geoff Smith Hide at North Duffield Carrs on the 19th while on Christmas Day two were heard and seen by Tower Hide at Wheldrake Ings.

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

Very scarce passage migrant and breeder

A bird was heard calling at Skipwith Common on the night of 19th May (CR per DT), a first record for this site. A good spring passage was noted in the nearby Lower Derwent Valley with up to 13 birds calling at Wheldrake Ings in early May and three birds calling between Bubwith bridge and North Duffield Carrs on 27th June. Three birds were also caught and ringed at Bank Island on 1st and 2nd September. See report on page 94 for full breeding details.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

Very scarce summer migrant and former breeder

An exceptional year for this species started with a bird calling from Ellerton Ings on 2nd June (PR) with at least two extremely popular individuals calling in front of the Garganey Hide at North Duffield Carrs from the 4th to the 6th (RS *et al.*). It is rumoured that up to ten pairs bred throughout the Lower Derwent Valley (see full details in report on page 94). Elsewhere one was flushed from the edge of woodland on private land near Allerthorpe on 6th May during a botanical survey (Pete Middleton per CT) and another was seen running across a path at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 28th July (P&SB).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Common resident and winter visitor

Common and widely reported from suitable habitat throughout the recording area with good numbers seen again at the more major sites. Most noteworthy counts received were of 25 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 1st February, 25 between York and Naburn on 9th October, 32 caught and ringed at Skipwith Common through the year and maximum WeBS counts at Castle Howard Lake of 43 in January and 69 in September.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Common resident and winter visitor

Common and reported from most areas of open water with high counts of 214 at North Duffield Carrs on 15th March and maximum WeBS counts at Castle Howard Lake of 222 in January and 430 in

September. Breeding was again reported from many locations although several sites recorded poor results this year.

Monthly WeBS counts for Coot

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	222	136	92	80	430	401	293	313
LDV	188						13	

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Scarce vagrant

Several sightings included three flying north over Thorganby on 28th April (BirdGuides) and a single over Skipwith Common on 29th May (BirdGuides). One was claimed to have been seen in the Refuge area of Wheldrake Ings on 2nd June (YWT per RS) but this report has been disputed by others present at that time. Two over the Millfield Lane Industrial site at Poppleton appeared to land in the vicinity of Clifton Ings on the 16th (BirdGuides).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Passage migrant and scarce breeder

The first to return were two at Castle Howard Lake on 22nd February. In March 20 were found at Thorganby Ings on the 6th, one at Heslington East, York University on the 8th, and a single by the River Derwent at Stamford Bridge on the 7th with four there on the 12th. Later in the month three were present at Castle Howard and a pair was at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd with two at Skipwith on the 26th. During April sightings were more widespread with singles or a pair at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Middlethorpe Ings, Naburn Sewage Works and Strensall Common.

In May birds were also recorded at Ellerton, Elvington Sewage Works, Gaterley, Melbourne, Pocklington Canal, on the Pocklington Industrial Estate where there was a nest with an egg, and at North Duffield village.

In June displaying birds were at Tang Hall Beck Fields, York and other pairs were noted at Allerthorpe, Bishopthorpe, by the River Derwent east of Stamford Bridge, Heslington East (York University), Middlethorpe Ings, Naburn Sewage Works and at Redhouse Reservoir.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rare visitor

Reported sightings were all at Wheldrake Ings with two present on 22nd and 23rd March, a single on 4th April and two again on 11th and 13th April.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*
Scarce summer breeder and passage migrant

First reports came from North Duffield Carrs in April with seven on the 11th as water levels dropped, eight on the 14th and nine on the 15th. Other spring records were three at Moor Monkton fish ponds on 20th April, a single at Naburn Sewage Works on the 24th and two at Moor Monkton again on 4th May. One calling as it flew over SHL on the 6th was a first for this site.

Breeding evidence came from a nest with three eggs found on 3rd May at Pocklington Industrial Estate with three young there on 17th May while two were seen with a downy chick at the York Railway Carriage Works on 6th June. An adult was located on a nest at Allerthorpe Lake Park on 20th June and an adult accompanied by a juvenile were sighted at Wheldrake Ings on 13th July.

Final records were of two at a partly flooded North Duffield pig farm on 17th and 19th August.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
Passage migrant

Six were on a muddy field at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 1st March. In May two were at North Duffield Carrs on the 6th followed by 11 at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th and 18 on the 10th.

Finally one was observed over Clifton Ings on 4th August.

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

Significant counts (100 or more) in the first winter period were as follows:

- 150 at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 18th January
- c.400 at Terrington on 24th January
- 300 near Elvington Sewage Works on 30th January
- 130 at North Duffield Carrs on 7th February
- 417 at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 3rd March
- 44 at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 22nd March
- 200 counted between Elvington and Wheldrake on 9th May.

Smaller numbers were recorded at other sites. There were then no more records until nine were noted with Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* at North Duffield Carrs on 6th July, and the next record was of 14 at Ellerton on 22nd August. Significant autumn records (100+) were then as follows:

- c.140 at Ellerton on 17th September with birds remaining at that location but reducing to 90 on 9th October

c.100 at Raker Lakes, Wheldrake on 21st September, building to 200 on 9th October and 250 by the 16th
 c.1,200 with Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* and Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* in a field between Cliffe and Newhay on 28th September, with good numbers remaining until at least 5th October
 c.320 counted at North Duffield Carrs on 24th October
 c.1,200 at Thorganby Ings/Ellerton Landing on 5th November
 c.200 at Angram on 11th November
 800 between Long Marston and Hessay on 11th November
 c.3,800 (the highest recorded count) at Bubwith Ings on 13th November
 c.800 at Thorganby Ings on 23rd November
 900 at North Duffield Carrs on 5th December falling to 60 by the 19th
 400 at Hagg Lane on 18th December but down to 141 by the 31st.

It appears from these records that larger flocks are more common and more widespread in the autumn with numbers diminishing through the winter but weather may also be a significant factor.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Not recorded in 2009 after records in 2006 and 2008.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Winter visitor, passage migrant and breeder

There were considerable numbers of reports of this species throughout the year and across the recording area. Records are listed of flocks of 100 or more plus details of any breeding evidence.

In the first winter period significant records were as follows:

273 at North Duffield Carrs on 8th January
 150 at Strensall Common on 11th January
 150 at Earswick Moor, Strensall on 13th January
 100 at Terrington on 24th January
 120 near Elvington Sewage Works on 30th January
 200 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st February
 150 at Bank House and a similar count at Ellers Farm, Buttercrambe on 2nd February.

From then on numbers fell but records in the tens continued through March. In late summer and autumn flocks started to build again and the more significant numbers are listed here:

120 at North Duffield Carrs on 6th July

230 at Thorganby on 27th July
110 at Ellerton on 14th September
300 at Cliffe on 8th October
100 between York and Naburn near the River Ouse on 9th October
900 at Thorganby Ings/Ellerton Landing on 5th November
110 at East Moor, Sutton on the Forest on 6th November
300 at Naburn Sewage Works on 7th November
110 near Sutton-on-the-Forest on 11th November
2,300 at Bubwith Ings on 13th November
c.100 at Eilers Farm, Buttercrambe from 24th to 27th November
1,200 at North Duffield Carrs on 5th December
500 at Skip Bridge by the A59, just outside the YOC area, on 5th
December
c.200 at North Duffield Carrs on 19th December
200+ flying southwest between York and Naburn on 20th December
110 by Bubwith bridge the same day.

Records of breeding evidence included an adult and chick near Stamford Bridge on 22nd April, eight adults and four small young at Pocklington Industrial Estate on 3rd May, and a single chick between Escrick and Naburn on 9th May.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

No reports in 2009 after records in each of the previous four years.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

No records of this species in 2009 with the last being in 2006.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Scarce passage migrant, mostly autumn

Not recorded in 2009, the most recent being in 2008.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Rare passage migrant

A bird was observed from Swantail Hide, Wheldrake Ings on 15th May (BirdGuides). This follows three sightings in 2008.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Rare vagrant but becoming more frequent

Not reported in 2009 after records in 2007 and 2008.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
Infrequent passage visitor, usually in the autumn

No reports in 2009 though recorded in seven of the last ten years.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*
Passage migrant and winter visitor

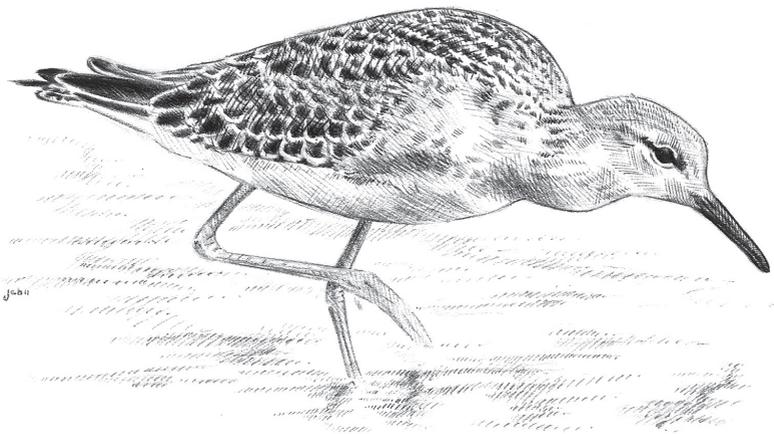
Five were present at North Duffield Carrs and one at Thorganby Ings on 11th January. There were then no further records until four were observed at Wheldrake Ings on 14th March, rising to 20 on the 22nd and with 20 still there on 9th May but numbers soon fell to just two by 10th May. One other spring record was of six at St Nicholas Fields, York on 8th April.

Autumn records commenced in September with singles at Heslington East, York University on the 13th and at Raker Lakes, near Wheldrake on the 21st. In December there were 38 at North Duffield Carrs on the 5th with 110 at Bubwith bridge on the 20th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
Rare breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Good numbers were counted in the first and second winter periods. During January three were at Bubwith Ings on the 4th, two at North Duffield Carrs on the 2nd, 41 at East Cottingwith on the 18th and then 38 noted at Thorganby Ings on 21st February.

During March the main counts were 93 at North Duffield Carrs on the 16th and 70 on the 20th. At Wheldrake Ings 20 were present on the 17th, with around 30 on the 20th, 40 on the 22nd and the 23rd, and 45 on the 24th.



Numbers fell in April but at Wheldrake Ings there were still 11 present on the 1st with 16 on the 8th and 11 again on the 17th. At North Duffield Carrs there were 27 on the 4th, 20 on the 11th and the 13th, and finally 15 on the 14th.

In the autumn numbers started to build from 5th November with two at North Duffield Carrs, followed by two at Thorganby Ings and six at Wheldrake Ings on the 7th, rising to 38 at Bubwith Ings on the 13th and 25 there on the 15th. Ellerton Ings had 21 the same day and 28 on the 27th.

Through December there were 51 at Bubwith bridge on the 5th, 18 at Ellerton on the 13th, but only 15 at Bubwith bridge on the 20th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

During January a single bird was present at Acaster Malbis on the 3rd (BirdGuides) while at Skipwith Common there were four on the north marsh on the 30th and one was flushed from the southeast of the site on the 31st (DT).

In the company of 30+ Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, two were flushed from Rawcliffe Meadows Flood Basin on 1st March (NS), and further singles were seen there on 4th April and 10th May, and at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April (BirdGuides).

The first birds of the autumn were seen on the north marsh at Skipwith Common with singles on 13th and 18th October and, in November, two flushed on the 1st with others being present on the 12th and the 25th (DT).

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*
Resident and migrant breeder, passage visitor

There were good numbers of records for nearly every month with peaks in the early and later parts of the year. Larger counts included c.50 at Fulford Ings on 1st January with ten there on 7th February and 20 present on 7th March. Fifty were counted at the Heslington Tillmire on 23rd February, the largest number recorded by the observer at this site, and 84 in early March at Clifton Ings. Other winter records included sightings at Allerthorpe Common, Castle Howard, Clifton Ings, Elvington Airfield, Gunby, by the River Rye and at Swinton Ings, as well as throughout the Lower Derwent Valley.

On Skipwith Common one was present at the northern marsh on 17th January with nine on the 30th and 12 on 20th February. Fifteen were flushed off the marsh near the Cropwise entrance on 31st January. During the breeding season a calling bird flew over the bomb bays on 11th April and a single drumming bird was heard on 29th April but it was not thought that breeding took place here in 2009.

Other displaying birds included a single by the Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on 5th May, four at the Heslington Tillmire on 22nd May and at White Carr, Flaxton on 29th May. Four were evident at North Duffield Carrs on 6th June.

There were estimated to be four territories at Strensall Common during the MOD survey on 15th May while another was located in the Church Bridge area of the Lower Derwent Valley.

In the autumn a tight flock of nine birds circled then landed on the marsh near the Cropwise entrance of Skipwith Common on 7th August. However, the overall autumn passage at Skipwith Common was poor, probably because the site became very dry. Four were flushed off the northern marsh on 25th September and there were ten there on 8th October. One was caught and killed by a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* after it had been flushed from the heath in the southeastern area on 16th October. Two juvenile migrant birds were caught on the northern marsh on 7th November and there were 21 in this area on 25th November. A single bird was flushed near Hollow Swang, Skipwith Common on 31st December during the long cold spell.

From 12th to 31st August birds frequented a flooded site at a pig farm near North Duffield where numbers fluctuated from three to a maximum of around 18 (on the 13th).

Other records came in October with singles at Acklam and Osbaldwick, and two at Castle Howard Lake. In November birds were present at Sutton-on-the-Forest and West Lilling, and in December at North Duffield Carrs, the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne and Rawcliffe Meadows Flood Basin with a notable 48 present at Bubwith bridge on the 20th.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*
Resident breeder and winter visitor

January records included birds seen or flushed at Askham Bog on the 1st, 3rd, 8th and 18th, Kexby on the 6th, Hessay fishing ponds on the 13th and Broomfield Farm and Rabbit Warren Wood, both northwest of Elvington, on the 17th. Also seen at Hassacarr Nature Reserve on the 14th and again on 3rd February.

A few roosted on Skipwith Common in winter and early spring with numbers rising when there was a shoot close to the Common. Two were flushed from the southeastern area on 2nd January, one at Gentian plot on the 19th, one off the heath south of the bomb bays on 18th February, and one in the southeast on 9th and 23rd March. Another was flushed from the end of Westfield Lane, Poppleton on 22nd March.

On 11th April a single was roding near Gilling Castle and again on 14th May. Other sightings included three at Allerthorpe Common on 10th May and again on the 30th, and at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on 11th June.

At Skipwith Common a single was observed on 24th April, with two displaying on 18th May, three on 3rd June and a single roding on the 14th. On 21st June an adult ran along a track and gave a distraction display indicating young in the area.

With the onset of hard weather in late autumn birds were widespread including two flushed on 18th November at Skipwith Common and again on 31st December. Other records comprised two at Redhouse Wood on 29th December and singles at Acaster, Buttercrambe Moor Wood, Copmanthorpe, Harlthorpe, JRTNR, Outgang (Heslington), Rawcliffe lngs and Whitwell Grange West (Castle Howard area), all in December.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Passage migrant and rare breeder, occasionally seen in winter

Most records were in March and April although two were observed at North Duffield Carrs on the early date of 3rd January.

At Wheldrake lngs during March there were three on the 2nd, ten on the 8th, 18 on the 14th, 12 on the 16th, 20 on the 21st, 11 on the 22nd and ten on the 23rd. During April numbers fluctuated between two and eight, but 12 were present on the 26th.

Other spring records concerned five at North Duffield Carrs on 17th March, eight at Bank Island on the 31st and two keeping company with Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* at Storwood on 25th April.

Late in the year one was present on the river bank by Bubwith bridge on 20th December in freezing conditions.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Scarce passage migrant

The only sightings were in April with two in summer plumage accompanying Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* at Wheldrake lngs on the 25th and one roosting there again with Whimbrel on the 28th.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage migrant

Most records were from Storwood before the birds left to roost at Wheldrake. The Storwood April records involved three on the 19th, 38 on the 22nd, 26 on the 23rd, around 30 on the 24th, 32 on the 25th, around 12 on the 26th and 37 on the 27th. Numbers soon fell to 13 by 29th April and just seven on 3rd May.

A similar pattern was revealed by the Wheldrake roost with April records being 11 on the 17th, 44 on the 22nd, 28 on the 25th and a minimum of 60 on the 28th but just ten by 7th May.

Three flew north over Turnham Lane, Cliffe on 13th May, maybe heading for the Lower Derwent.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Winter visitor, passage migrant and migrant breeder

In January two flew over North Duffield Carrs on the 3rd and 11 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 31st. Numbers increased in February with seven over North Duffield Carrs on the 21st and 20 at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd. There were further sightings in March with three at East Cottingwith on the 1st, two at Bog Hall, Castle Howard on the 2nd, Middlethorpe Ings on the 7th, Elvington Airfield on the 8th and Castle Howard Lake on the 22nd, with one displaying at Middlethorpe Ings on the 31st.

More birds were seen in April with nine at North Duffield Carrs on the 4th, up to six at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th and a flock of 30 by the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, with several birds displaying, on the same date. A pair was at Middlethorpe Ings on the 19th with other pairs at Bishopthorpe and North Duffield Carrs.

In May five territories were recorded at Strensall Common during the MOD survey on the 15th with other records from Fangfoss, Flaxton, Moreby, Rider Lane Farm (Barton-le-Willows), Terrington Bank, Heslington Tillmire and White Carr Farm (Dunnington). There was one June record with two territories reported from the Church Bridge area of the River Derwent on 9th June. No further records were received for the year.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Passage migrant and scarce migrant breeder

The first records came in April with a single by the River Ouse at Fulford Ings on the 25th and one over Strensall at night on the 27th.

May records were also of singles, at SHL on the 5th, Wheldrake Ings on the 9th, Gaterley on the 12th, Castle Howard Lake on the 14th and Fulford Ings on the 23rd.

In late summer singles were noted at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 25th July and at Heslington East, York University on 14th August.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

In the early months of the year birds were observed on a flooded field at Poppleton near the Wyvale Garden Centre from 26th to 28th January and at Harewood Whin on 4th February with two at Middlethorpe Ings on 7th and 18th March.

Return passage started with singles at SHL on 9th June, at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd June, Thorganby Ings on 1st July, Wheldrake Ings on 5th July, at Allerthorpe Common on 21st July with three at Wheldrake Ings the same day increasing to four by the 25th and building to ten on the 30th.

A single was noted at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 6th August while between three and five were present at a partially flooded area of a pig farm near North Duffield between 12th and 19th August. There were also three at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st of the month.

At Skipwith Common the first autumn passage bird was on 23rd July followed by two on 4th August and five there two days later. Three of these remained until the 11th with one staying until the 15th. A single bird was present on 29th August while a late bird was feeding on 4th October.

In September single birds were at Escrick on the 2nd and at Windmill Farm, Strensall on the 21st, with two at Melbourne and two at Wheldrake also on the 21st. Reports then dwindled with singles only at North Duffield Carrs on 24th October, Fulford Ings on 13th December, and over Rawcliffe Ings on 26th December.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

Just one was observed at Bubwith Ings on 5th December (RS).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

In the spring records of single birds came from Wheldrake Ings on 25th April and Stamford Bridge on 1st and 3rd May.

Late summer migration records included, in August, a single bird over Heslington on the 9th, about nine at a North Duffield pig farm on the 13th with one still there on the 29th as the site dried out, and one flying down-river at Bank Island on the 21st.

Two birds also visited Skipwith Common. The first was heard calling from Wash Dike on 27th August and remained until the 29th. The second bird was heard and seen in the same area on 28th September and remained until the 30th.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

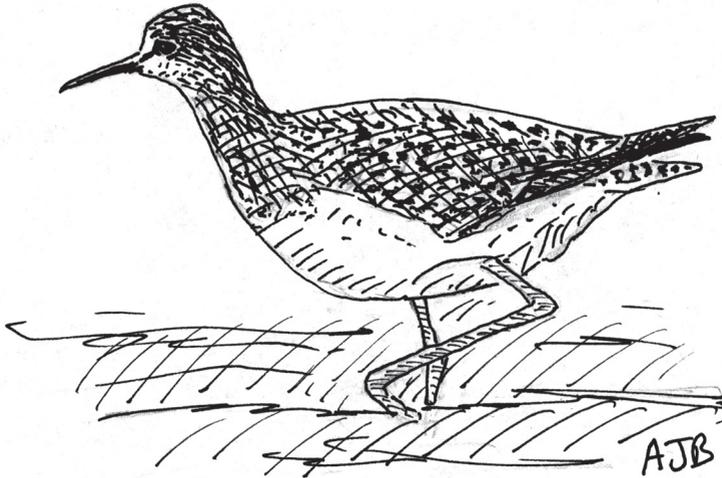
Rare vagrant

The last (and only) record of a Lesser Yellowlegs in the YOC recording area was in 1966. Remarkably, in 2009, there were three separate claimed sightings all which will need to be verified by BBRC. These were as follows:

A single bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd July (PP, RS *et al.*), seen from Pool Hide but departing same evening. See article about this find on page 103.

On 13th November a single at Bubwith Ings (PR) flew off with five Redshank *Tringa totanus* when disturbed by a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* and was relocated at Thorganby Ings (CR).

A single bird, maybe the one from Bubwith, was present at Aughton Ings on 23rd November (CR) and reported again at Ellerton Ings on 27th November (PR).



Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Passage migrant

A single bird was reported from Pool Hide at Wheldrake Ings on 28th June and 1st July.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor

The only reported sighting in January was of 73 at Bubwith bridge on the flooded edge of the river on the 26th.

In the spring two were at Clifton Ings on 4th March, five at Middlethorpe Ings on the 14th with two pairs there on the 18th, a single at Scamlands on the 23rd and two at Skipwith Common on the 26th. In the Lower Derwent Valley ten plus were present on 22nd March.

There were records of 16 and 30 at North Duffield Carrs on 9th and 14th April respectively, with eight at Thorganby Ings on the 10th, at least two pairs at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th and two pairs at Middlethorpe Ings on the 13th and 19th. Six were present at Wheldrake Ings on 10th May while three at the Heslington Tillmire on the 22nd included two showing alarm behaviour and one in song flight.

The first record for the second winter period was of five at Bubwith Ings on 5th November. Numbers then increased with 16 at Ellerton Ings on the 27th. Bubwith Ings had 45 and 16 on 5th and 10th December respectively while a further six were at Ellerton Ings on the 10th. In freezing weather late sightings came from the area of Bubwith bridge where water remained open with 24 on 19th December and a minimum of 100 on the 20th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Passage migrant, usually in spring

For many years of near annual occurrence but none was recorded in 2009 with the last in 2006.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

The only record of the year, a single adult bird, was at the Castle Howard roost on 26th December (BirdTrack).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Around 1,000 were observed at the Castle Howard roost from 1st January into March, and regular sightings were made in many areas as they made daily return flights between York landfill sites and roosting sites on the Humber or at Wheldrake Ings as well as to Castle Howard Lake.

Early winter records included twelve at Swinton Ings on 4th January and 26 at Stamford Bridge on 28th February.

In spring eight were sighted at Osbaldwick Sports Field on 3rd March, with 20 at Pasture House, Barton-le-Willows on the 5th, 25 at Whitwell Grange East on the 18th and two at the Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 15th. Three were over Allerthorpe Common on 26th April.

The first autumn records came from Osbaldwick Sports Field with a single on 15th July then no more until over 40 flew west over SHL on 5th October followed by ten at Stamford Bridge on the 9th and six at Osbaldwick Sports Field on the 21st. During November 20 were counted at St John's Well Plantation near Sutton-on-the-Forest on the 20th with 150 at Sutton-on-the-Forest on the 25th and ten at Osbaldwick Sports Field again also on the 25th.

Small numbers were also present at Rawcliffe Lake during the winter months and large numbers were attracted to Clifton Ings during flooding.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	-	-	5	-	-	4	-	26
LDV	1,850						380	

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor

One flying west at Fulford on 1st January was the only early winter record. Some, including an immature bird, were recorded over the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 13th April with two adults noted there on the 24th. Three were seen in the same area on 23rd May, with 15 on 8th June and around 20 on 25th July. In addition singles were seen on 9th October and 29th December.

Small numbers were regularly seen over Clifton Ings during the summer months. Other summer sightings came from SHL on 18th June, North Duffield on 15th August, and Harewood Whin on 1st September (showing characteristics of the race *L.f.intermedius*).

In the autumn a large flock was present in fields south of Thorganby for several weeks with up to 1,200 birds on 7th October decreasing to 100 by the 18th. Additionally ten were counted at Thornton Hill Farm on 11th October with three there on 20th October.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Scarce winter visitor

All records came from Wheldrake Ings or Harewood Whin in the first three months of the year. At Wheldrake Ings a juvenile was in the roost on 25th January (BirdGuides), a second-winter bird was seen on 28th February (PR) with a juvenile there on 15th March (BirdGuides).

At Harewood Whin in February juveniles were seen on the 3rd (RS, TD), 4th and 24th (BirdGuides), with a second-winter on the 24th (per RS) and a first-winter on the 28th (DR).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

Scarce winter visitor

All records were at either Wheldrake Ings or Harewood Whin (or between these two locations).

At Wheldrake Ings two were present on 6th January (BirdGuides), with a second-winter on 28th February (PR), a juvenile at the roost on 7th March (BirdGuides), a second-year bird on 10th April (DR) and a single bird on 17th April (BirdGuides).

At Harewood Whin an adult was present on 15th and 27th February (RS) and a juvenile and second-winter on 24th February (per RS).

On 5th January a second-winter was on a field between Knapton and the York ring road and a single was seen between the A64 and A1069 on 15th April (both BirdGuides).

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

A single roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 8th March (BirdGuides) was the only record in the first half of the year. In mid-August up to ten birds were seen regularly at Harewood Whin with just a single reported on 29th August and three on 1st September (both DR).

From 5th September to 18th October several were noted south of Thorganby (BirdGuides *et al.*) often associated with Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus* which numbered at times up to 1,200. The number of Yellow-legged Gulls varied ranging from two up to ten birds, maybe more overall. On 9th October 21 were counted in the Lower Derwent Valley as a whole (per RS) while a single adult was present at Bank Island on 22nd December (BirdGuides).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Records indicated good numbers in the early part of the year and during autumn but none during summer. During the winter months, this species was observed at the Castle Howard and Wheldrake roosts with regular sightings in many areas as they made daily return flights between York landfill sites and their roosts on the Humber or at Wheldrake.

In March ten were at Castle Howard Lake on the 1st with around 50 over the River Ouse between York and Naburn on the 7th. During April two were over the River Ouse on the 13th, with ten on the 19th and three on the 24th.

Elsewhere 15 were present at JRTNR on 2nd January, with 30 at Stockton on the Forest on the 3rd and 30+ over the River Ouse between York and Naburn the same day. Thirteen were at Swinton Ings on the 4th.

In the autumn between 30 and 50 birds were often seen over the River Ouse south of York between 9th October and 19th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Herring Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	1,050						350	

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Most records occur in the early and late parts of the year. During the winter a few were noted at the Castle Howard and Wheldrake roosts and there were regular sightings in many areas as they made daily return flights between York landfill sites and their roosting sites on the Humber and at Wheldrake.

In January two were seen at Stockton on the Forest on the 3rd, with 40+ over the River Ouse south of York on the same date and three at Castle Howard Lake on the 4th during the annual Bird Race. Two were at North Duffield Carrs on 1st February while two immature birds flew over Askham Bog on 28th April.

In the autumn up to 50 birds were seen over the River Ouse between York and Naburn between 9th October and 19th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Great Black-backed Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	1,000						280	

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor

A single adult was noted on the top pond at North Duffield Carrs on 13th April (DS).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

Regular sightings were made in most areas during winter as they made daily return flights between York landfill sites and roosting sites at Castle Howard, on the Humber and at Wheldrake.

The Castle Howard roost had around 2,000 individuals mostly with Common Gulls *Larus canus* on 1st January and again on 1st March.

Other notable counts (of 100 or more) were as follows:

c.500 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 3rd January

100 at Osbaldwick Sports Field on 20th January.

up to 300 seen from a garden in the Malton/Norton area from
January to March

300 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 7th March

500 at Strensall on 18th March

Other spring records came from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Pasture House (Barton-le-Willows) and Strensall Common).

There was a slow build up after the summer including c.50 on the River Ouse south of York on 25th July, ten at a North Duffield pig farm on 15th August and 50 by the River Derwent at Stamford Bridge on 22nd September.

Autumn flocks of 100 or more are listed below:

up to 100 with Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* and Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* on a field south of Cliffe/Newhay from 30th September to 4th October

c.300 by the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 7th October with 300+ there on 9th October and 13th December and 200 on 19th December

200 resting on ice at North Duffield Carrs on 29th December.

An apparently melanistic bird was on York University Lake on 15th and 16th January and gave the appearance of a raptor-like bird in flight, upsetting local feral pigeons.

To the north of York small numbers were seen regularly at Rawcliffe Lake during the winter months and large numbers were attracted to Clifton Ings during times of flooding.

Monthly WeBS counts for Black-headed Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	47	2	2	-	5	7	22	34
LDV	11,200						4,000	

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Scarce passage migrant

Not recorded in 2009 the last sighting being in 2007. This species seems to appear less often than previously.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Rare passage migrant

Four were observed over Castle Howard Lake on 14th May (DR), the only sighting in 2009 after a good year for this species in 2008.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*
Scarce passage migrant

A single was present at Wheldrake Ings on 18th May (BirdGuides), the first record in the YOC area since 1999.

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

At Castle Howard Lake four were present on 25th April with a single present on 14th May. Pairs were recorded at York University Lake on 20th June and on 19th, 23rd and 28th July.

Four were observed at Redhouse Reservoir on 19th July, a pair was seen at Naburn Marina on 8th August and three were watched at Clifton Ings on 28th August.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*
Resident breeder

Present in large numbers in urban areas and many farms. Has been present at SHL from 2008 with up to 20 seen. No notable counts reported.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*
Resident breeder

Birds were regularly seen along the River Ouse between York and Naburn with a maximum count of c.20 on 7th March. Seen regularly at The Retreat, York with seven there on 13th June. Twelve were counted on a BBS square at Moreby, near Naburn on 9th May, with six there on 14th June. Six to seven pairs were resident in the Clifton Ings area where they bred. Seen regularly in small numbers at Hassacarr Nature Reserve with a maximum of three at any one time.

At Skipwith Common an adult was sitting on two eggs on 26th March and birds continued to breed into September when six were ringed on the 29th. A total of 14 was ringed at this site giving productivity close to the five-year mean.

Twenty were at Acklam on 13th September while birds were also seen in ones, twos or threes at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits; Angram (East); Brecks Farm, Haxby; Castle Howard Lake; East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest; Forest Farm, Stockton on the Forest; North Duffield; Redhouse Wood, Moor Monkton; River Rye (by Swinton bridge); Strensall Common; Tang Hall Beck Fields, York and Thorganby. Occasionally seen at SHL.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Resident breeder

There were many reports in the first winter period with flocks over 100 listed below:

maximum of 129 at The Retreat, York on 17th January

400 at Tang Hall Beck Fields, York on 29th January

200 at Moor Monkton on 8th February

5000 coming in to roost at Selby on 24th January

2000 counted by the River Rye on 6th March, between Rye Bridge and Swinton Ings, including a flock of c.1750.

Several hundred were present near SHL in winter, favouring the Nursery Wood when not feeding. At Skipwith Common 300 roosted late in the first winter period within the large oaks in the southeastern area.

The WBBS count along the River Ouse from York to Naburn was 143 on 24th April with 86 on 28th June. A large count for the summer months was 106 feeding in a grass field along the Pocklington Canal near Melbourne on 7th May.

Breeding at Skipwith Common took place mostly in large hawthorn bushes; on 17th August three birds were sitting on eggs in the old orchard area, with two more active nests in the sheep pen near the car park at the Riccall end.

Over a thousand at Naburn on 7th November was the only notable count in the second winter period. Fairly large gatherings were also noted in the winter months at Clifton Ings where birds bred.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Resident breeder

This species was a regular visitor to many suburban gardens and regularly seen at Allertorpe Gravel Pits and Hassacarr Nature Reserve. Other records came from the River Ouse between York and Naburn throughout the year, at Claxton in February, and along the Pocklington Canal, in Pocklington and at North Duffield village in May.

At Skipwith Common an adult calling from the top of a dead pine at the western end of Sand Lane on 16th August was the first known sighting in the central part of the Common.

A pair was seen mating in a Wilberfoss garden in December, in the snow. Also reported from Brecks Farm, Haxby and at Seaton Common near Seaton Ross.

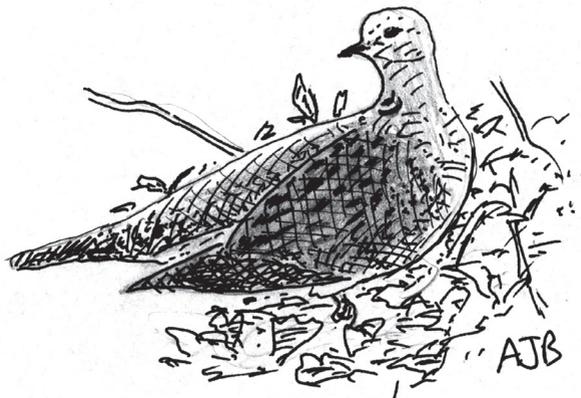
Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Passage migrant and increasingly scarce migrant breeder

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 17th May when a bird was heard calling from cover, and then seen flying past. One was reported from Yearsley Forest the same day. At Acaster Malbis four were reported on the 21st with two purring and a pair flying past while two were seen and heard there on the 28th. On the 25th one was in song between Pinewood Farm, Allerthorpe and the Pocklington Canal, while on the 28th at least two were singing near Appleton Roebuck in the afternoon.

At Skipwith Common, also on 28th May, a pair was seen feeding with Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* on waste ground immediately south of the new plantation. This was the only report from the area and it seems likely that no breeding took place for the first time in many decades. Birds were also absent from former breeding sites in Riccall. However, a pair was present at the old Whitemoor Mine site nearby.

In June one was along the Pocklington Canal on the 18th while another was purring behind houses in Brighton village on the 25th, heard again on the 28th. On the 27th one was calling in Gribthorpe, east of Willitof, with further birds purring from a small plantation south of Scackleton Low Moor Farm and near Dalby Bush Beck west of Terrington Bank. In July one was at Allerthorpe Gravels Pits on the 5th and again on the 16th, the last record of this species for the year.



Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Occasional but scarce visitor

The only potential record was a report on BirdGuides of a bird flying over the entrance to York railway station on 11th April.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
Migrant breeder

The first of the year was on 10th April at Skipwith Common, followed by others at Aughton and Wheldrake Ings on the 11th and one at The Brecks, Strensall on the 16th. Further records followed with birds at Calley Heath NR and North Duffield on the 18th, Strensall Common on the 22nd, one along the Pocklington Canal near Melbourne on the 25th with two there the next day and heard in various places along the canal later in the season. Further records followed with birds at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Askham Bryan, Haxby, Strensall golf course and the Heslington Tillmire in late April. Additional records in May came from Bielby on the Pocklington Canal, Bishopthorpe, Brighton, Bubwith Ings, Easingwold, Frog Hall (Allerthorpe Common), Moreby near Naburn, Newton-on-Ouse, Osbaldwick, SHL (the first at this site for three years) and White Carr (Flaxton).

It was estimated that there were at least two, probably three, territories at the Church Bridge area of the Lower Derwent. A juvenile was at Hassacarr NR on 13th July while the last sighting, of a recently fledged juvenile, was at Skipwith Common on 3rd August, on the heath south of the west end of Sand Lane.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*
Resident breeder

There were many records of this species throughout the year from the Lower Derwent Valley and the Pocklington Canal, including some hunting in daylight, even in bright sunlight. On 25th July one was seen at Wheldrake Ings carrying prey and young were heard calling in the background.

Three were seen around Castle Howard estate on 4th January, with birds seen there at other times during the year while others were seen at various locations along the River Rye through the year. One was seen at Tang Hall Beck Fields, York on 2nd February and again on various days in the spring until the field was mown on 21st June. A single bird was seen at Broad Oak, near Wigginton on various dates. At Heslington one occupied a nest box on the Tillmire and one was seen in a garden on 25th October.

Elsewhere sightings came from Fulford Ings; Grimston Bar; Haxby (where three young hatched from four eggs in a nest box); Kexby; Riccall; southern York ring road; Terrington; Towthorpe; Welburn; Wistow and Youlthorpe Pasture Hill, Full Sutton.

As usual birds did not breed on Skipwith Common but several pairs raised young within 1km of the site and various sightings in the early part of the year were considered to be of individuals from these pairs.

Also seen in the latter part of the year at Alberries (near Foggathorpe); Appleton Roebuck; Bank House, Buttercrambe; Brownmoor Farm, Sheriff Hutton; Cliffe (York Road); Easingwold; SHL; Forest Farm, Stockton-on-the-Forest; Kirby Misperton; Long Marston; Outgang, Heslington; Slingsby; and Yapham Grange near Pocklington.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Resident breeder but can be elusive

One was heard at Lodge Field near Gilling East on 28th January and again on the 7th and 15th of February, and on 29th March. One seen on Bubwith Ings on the 28th may have been in a nest hole. It was recorded on 14th May that it had been present at the same tree hole for over a month.

Other records came from Claxton and Copmanthorpe in March, The Retreat in York and at Castle Howard in April, a pair at Bielby by the Pocklington Canal in May, with one in an ash tree on Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith also in May and an adult and juvenile seen there in August. One was in Hodgson Wood, Meltonby on the 29th May, seen again on 20th September. Another was at Old Carlton Farm near Warthill on 30th May, flying from its usual oak tree across the corner of the field. Seen on 8th and 20th June at Allerthorpe Water Park hunting Sand Martins *Riparia riparia*, with further June records from Scamland, Melbourne and Thorganby Ings where one was also seen flying to the south of the village on 7th October; atlas records have established the probability of two separate breeding sites in the village.

Additional sightings were reported from East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest; over Towthorpe Road, Strensall; seen at SHL three times in the early part of the year and considered to be resident; one near the northwest boundary of Skipwith Common where breeding may have taken place; Dunnington Common and Brown Moor, Sheriff Hutton.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Resident breeder throughout the area

Resident in many locations in the recording area, including Beckwith Close, York; Clifton Ings, York (usually calling from Clifton Park); Easingwold; Gilling East; Osbaldwick; and The Retreat, York. Two separate birds were seen being mobbed by Blackbirds *Turdus merula* by the same observer on 9th January, one at Black Dyke, Yapham Common (near Pocklington), and the other in a yew tree in the churchyard at Foston.

A pair was heard calling from the old forester's hut on Yearsley Moor on the 21st, while three juveniles were seen at the bottom end of St Oswalds Road, Fulford on the same date.

On Skipwith Common six pairs had laid a total of 14 eggs by 26th March. However, it appears that food for the young was in short supply and eventually only seven chicks were ringed. No dead chicks were found so it is likely that the adults ate some of the eggs.

At SHL two pairs nested in owl-boxes, one in each wood. Two eggs were seen on 23rd April in the box in Nursery Wood and two large chicks in the one in High Plumps on 18th June. Birds were seen on the site later in the year. One was also heard at White Syke Plantation, Sand Hutton on 31st May.

Two young were ringed at Frog Hall, Allertorpe Common and two were seen there begging for food on 11th June when birds were also begging at Seaton Ross and at Low Farm, Allertorpe. One was with young at Easingwold on 1st May while another fluffy owlet was seen and at least one other heard in branches in Gilling Wood on 16th June.

At Skipwith Common on 29th September, one was disturbed while it was very close to a brood of two Stock Doves *Columba oenas* which it may have been trying to predate. At the brickworks south of Escrick birds were seen every evening from September to the end of the year. Also reported from Allertorpe Gravel Pits; Allertorpe Water Park; Buttercrambe Moor Wood; Hodgson Wood, Meltonby; North Duffield; Rowntree Park, York; Strensall; Sutton-on-the-Forest; Tang Hall Beck Fields, York; and Towthorpe Road, York.

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

One found by the roadside near Tesco at Clifton Moor, York on 25th January was taken into care but died three days later (Jean Thorpe per CR, RS). On 15th May one was seen to fall from the A1237 at Rawcliffe Ings into the river. It was rescued by some soldiers doing a river crossing exercise and taken to a wildlife sanctuary at Malton where it was found to be uninjured, presumably having just had a glancing blow from a passing car, and recovered well. Natural England were contacted and they determined it as a female with an active brood patch. It was released back onto Rawcliffe Ings and flew off towards the Country Park (per NS).

There were also several sightings from North Duffield Carrs, a first for the site, and may all have been of the same bird. It was initially seen on 27th June from the Garganey Hide (AW) and was then seen to fly past the Geoff Smith Hide late in the evening of 1st July. There were no more

reports until one was flushed from thorn bushes along the path between the hides on 6th August and good views were obtained of (presumably) the same bird on the 10th.

Two juveniles were heard calling at Strensall Common on 1st July (PeR). However, on Skipwith Common, where birds used to breed, none were seen, nor were young heard, during several night-time visits.



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

There were two reports of this species in the recording area this year; at Wheldrake Ings on 9th November by Swantail Hide and from there again on the 13th (both BirdGuides). However, there is no confirmation of either record. Just outside the YOC area three birds were reported from Millington Pasture on 29th January (BirdGuides).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*
Scarce migrant breeder

Despite several visits to Skipwith Common and two to World's End Plantation, Strensall no birds were located in the recording area this year after multiple sightings in 2008.

Common Swift *Apus apus*
Migrant breeder

The first record for the year was one flying south over Bishopthorpe on 24th April followed by two at Naburn on the 27th with one on the 28th, and then six over Sheriff Hutton on 4th May. The next day there were singles over the Pocklington Canal, at Whitwell Grange East and in central York, with two at SHL and three at Osbaldwick.

Numbers then increased rapidly and by 6th May there were c.160 at Wheldrake Ings with 50 there on the 7th, and 20 feeding over Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on the 8th. Ten were at North Duffield Carrs on the 14th with ten at Strensall Common the next day and 20 at Castle Howard Lake the day after.

Around 200 were feeding over Skipwith Common on 10th June but after this date numbers there declined. At SHL the highest count was c.20 on the 19th. Around 30 were counted circling over Cliffe village during an evening hirundine survey on the 29th while 70 were screeching over North Duffield village on 12th July. On the 14th 600 were at East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest feeding over oilseed rape, but with only 40 there the next day.

The last in Osbaldwick was on 6th August. Two were still in Strensall village on the 8th with the last over Wilberfoss on the 9th. Birds were present throughout the summer at Clifton Ings, with a large gathering noted just prior to a mass clear out in mid-August. Two remained there on the 13th and singles were noted over Ellerton and Skipwith Common on the 26th. One was over the Pocklington Canal on the 30th. Two were at the Millennium Bridge, York on 1st September, one was over Pocklington on the 7th while two over East Cottingwith on 12th September, in the company of other hirundines, were the last of the year.

Swift sp.

A white-rumped swift (thought by observers to be a possible Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus*) was present intermittently with several hundred Common Swifts *Apus apus* at Wheldrake Ings in the evening of 7th May (CR, PR), watched for over an hour, but then not seen again. This bird has not been positively identified. There is a history of occasional partial-albino Common Swifts passing through Wheldrake Ings at this time of spring in previous years, and this adds to the problems of identification.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Resident breeder

Birds were seen throughout the year along the River Ouse both to the north of York in the Clifton and Rawcliffe areas and to the south of the city

down to Naburn. Others were seen along the River Derwent at Old Malton and Stamford Bridge while two more were seen throughout the year at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits where a nesting site was found on 18th April.

Other sightings through the year came from the River Derwent at Buttercrambe Weir; Castle Howard Lake; Crambeck; East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest; The Grange, Pocklington Canal; near Huntington church; the River Foss at the JRTNR, New Earswick; Newhay; SHL; Skipwith Common; Walbutts Sewage Works, Strensall; a stream near the River Derwent north of Wressle and at York University Lake.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Scarce summer visitor

After sightings in 2002, 2003 and 2008 there were no records in 2009.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Resident breeder but not widespread

Most reports were from Strensall Common. Elsewhere birds were recorded from Bolton Percy; Castle Howard estate; Fulford Golf Course; Hagg Bridge, Pocklington Canal; Heslington Tillmire; Nunburnholme Wood; and the Outgang, Heslington. Heard at various times of the year at Allerthorpe Common with three there on 7th April and also at the nearby Lakeland Park. Birds were also heard yaffling at Gilling East and in Gilling Park in the spring. At SHL the resident pair was seen and heard frequently through the year until September. Birds were also seen throughout the year at Skipwith Common where a pair probably bred in the Danes Hill area while a nest site containing calling birds was discovered along the southern boundary in June. The entrance hole was 7m above ground level in a large silver birch.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Resident breeder throughout the recording area

Drumming was reported from 14th January to 20th April in various locations: Allerthorpe Gravel Pits; Frog Hall on Allerthorpe Common; near the Monument at Castle Howard; Gilling Castle and village; Strensall Common; Thorganby; and at Whitwell Grange West. Three separate birds were heard drumming on 7th February near Norton-on-Derwent. On 7th March five were along the River Ouse between York and Naburn, some drumming. Numerous birds were at Yearsley Moor on 21st March while at least 12 were at Allerthorpe Common on 7th April.

On 10th April one was seen flying into an artificial nest hole in a tree in Rowntree Park, York. One or two pairs were seen in Clifton, York

during the year, mainly around Clifton Park where they bred. At least four pairs bred on Skipwith Common with the total number of breeding pairs estimated at eight to ten.

Frequently seen at SHL visiting feeders and similarly sighted regularly in an Upper Poppleton garden, mainly between 1st June and 30th September, feeding on peanuts. Also reported from Askham Bog (maximum two, heard calling); Brecks Farm, Haxby (two birds); Hassacarr NR; Hodgson Wood, Meltonby; Moreby, near Naburn (two counted on a BBS square); Scamland, Melbourne; The Retreat, York (female seen twice); and at White Syke Plantation, Sand Hutton.

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

As usual there were few records of this elusive bird. One was seen by the Ebor Way (on the section between York and Tadcaster) on 2nd January. One was seen and photographed in a garden at Huby on the 26th with another at Appleton Roebuck on 17th February. A single bird was reported from Skipwith Common on 22nd March but no others were seen there during the normal nesting period. One at Allerthorpe Common on 7th April was a first for the observer in 13 years. One was calling by Castle Howard Lake on the 11th while another was reported from a garden in Heslington Road, York on 3rd and 5th May and regularly from then on.

In the autumn one, possibly two, at the west end of Stub Wood near Acaster Malbis were viewed for about 20 minutes and photographed on 10th December.

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*
Recent colonist in small numbers

The first record was of a bird in song at Skipwith Common on 14th February (DT) with one at SHL on the 20th (P&SB). There were perhaps two pairs in the area, but quite elusive, and the birds had gone by June. One was singing at World's End Plantation on 22nd February (PeR) while four were at Allerthorpe Common on 13th March (BirdTrack). Two were feeding/singing in a stubble field to the east of Skipwith village along the North Duffield road on the 21st (MH) while there were reports of at least four pairs displaying in the central area of Skipwith Common on the 22nd (DT). Seen on Strensall Common from 4th April with an estimated three territories (PeR); two were seen feeding on the ground there on 9th May before flying off (I&RT). Two were flushed at Skipwith Common on 9th September with three there on 4th October being the last of the year (DT).

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*

Resident breeder and winter visitor

The only large flocks reported in the early winter were 59 at Seaton Common on 8th February and 20+ near Grimston 8th March.

The first two recorded singing were near Terrington Bank on the 28th. Ten were counted on the River Rye between Rye Bridge and Swinton Ings on 6th March, including four in song. Single birds were noted singing near Bad Bargain Lane, Osbaldwick on the 17th; at Hassacarr NR on the 25th; and another near the Outgang, Heslington the next day. Several were singing at Wheldrake Ings on 5th April while up to six singing birds were counted between York and Naburn in the spring. Numbers counted on a BBS square near Riccall were definitely lower than previous years. Three were singing near Terrington Bank, and three near Terrington, during a BTO Atlas survey, on 4th May.

Twelve territories were estimated during the MOD survey of Strensall Common on 15th May. Ten were counted in a meadow near Farlington on the 20th. At Clifton Ings small numbers were recorded throughout the year and birds bred there, and on Rawcliffe Ings and at the Cornfield NR. At SHL there were probably several pairs in the south field but not often noticed.

On 10th November, near Sutton-on-the-Forest, 20 were reported at St John's Well Plantation with 25 at East Moor. At Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith c.200 were noted on 18th December, the only large flock recorded in the autumn.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first records of the year were on 16th March with 41 counted at Wheldrake Ings and two at Naburn. The first record from Clifton Ings was the next day, while the first for Fulford was the day after. On the 19th four were seen flying over York city centre while five were at North Duffield Carrs on the 22nd, one at SHL the next day, and another over Pocklington School on the 31st. Between York and Naburn, along the River Ouse, there were c.15 on 11th April, the highest count there this spring.

On 31st May a pair was seen nesting in a drainage pipe at the side of the River Foss at Layerthorpe, York but there was no sign of them in June. Around ten were in a colony by Fulford Hall on 25th May while nine were counted along the River Derwent between Brighton and Gunby in a one hour TTV count on the 28th and around 12 were seen to be nesting in the river bank there on 28th June. At Allerthorpe Lakeland

Park, 243+ nests were counted with 67 adults ringed on 20th June. Good numbers were again along the River Ouse at Clifton and Rawcliffe Ings but breeding was once more disrupted by summer flooding. At SHL 54 nest holes were recorded in the artificial bank with 30 birds there on 6th August.

The last of the year was a straggler at SHL on 1st September, with Swallows *Hirundo rustica*.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first of the year was one over Strensall Common on 29th March followed by one at Long Marston on 1st April, and two at Skipwith Common and 12 at Wheldrake Ings the next day. Three were reported at North Duffield Carrs on the 4th with three at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 5th. The same day saw the first birds over Strensall village with the first at Cliffe on the 7th. Reports were then widespread throughout the recording area.

Many young were seen feeding over a fishing lake on the Ebor Way north of Terrington on 28th June. A total of eight individuals was counted in an evening survey of Cliffe village the next day, with House Martins *Delichon urbicum* and Swifts *Apus apus*. Birds bred at Clifton Ings in good numbers, more than in recent years.

Through August flocks of 20 to 30 birds became noticeable at various locations in many parts of the YOC recording area but the species continued to be seen frequently in smaller numbers. Into September numbers appeared to increase with migrant birds maybe augmenting more local breeders as passage became more apparent.

Notable flocks included c.150 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 5th, in excess of 100 over Osbaldwick on the 8th, 24 flying along the River Ouse in York on the 18th, and 20 high over Gilling East on the 25th. The largest number seen together was a flock estimated at well in excess of 2,000 individuals which roosted one evening in a cornfield adjacent to East Cottingwith on 8th September.

Seven were at North Duffield Carrs on 1st October with five at Hassacarr NR and one over Wash Dike, Skipwith Common the same day. Four were at SHL on the 6th, with the last there on the 7th, while three were seen flying east at Ellerton on the 8th. The last reports included 30 passing through Wheldrake Ings on the 10th followed by three over a garden in Norton-on-Derwent on the 11th, two at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th and one at Bubwith on the 24th.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first were two at North Duffield Carrs on the early date of 21st March with three there the next day. Three were at Nunnington on 4th April with 20 at Naburn on the 7th, at least two at Wheldrake lngs on the 10th, four at Cliffe on the 13th and at many other locations from mid-April onwards.

Larger flocks at this time included 50 feeding south of Sands Lane, Skipwith Common in the rain on 27th April, and 65 on the Broad Manor Estate in Pocklington on 23rd May.

In Cliffe, five occupied nests were found on one house and around four birds were at another traditional site, but not visiting nests, during an evening survey on 29th June. The usual numbers bred around Clifton and Rawcliffe Lake but none appeared to have bred in Osbaldwick though some were feeding there on 23rd July and thereafter, last seen on 24th September. Many were seen nesting on the buildings at Castle Howard on 2nd August.

In late summer flock sizes began to increase with 40 seen at Sheriff Hutton on 3rd August, around 100 at SHL on the 13th, 20 in Gilling East on the 15th and 40 (with ten Swallows *Hirundo rustica*) feeding at Skipwith Common on the 29th. On 3rd September 70 were at Dorrington Close, Pocklington while two days later 50 were seen in passage over Allerthorpe Gravel Pits heading south. Eight were over Ellerton on the 14th and at least eight were still at Cliffe on the 28th.

On 1st October six were still at North Duffield Carrs with four at Hassacarr NR while a group of 20 appeared over Gilling East on the 3rd and stayed for 10 minutes or so hawking for insects before disappearing. Twenty were counted over Grange Farm, Haxby on the 5th while a pre-departure flock of 40+ over Rawcliffe lngs was present on the 6th. The last reported was a group of 11 at Greenshaw, Wigginton on the 27th.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Migrant breeder though numbers have recently declined

The first sighting of the year was at Yearsley on 23rd April followed by another near the old farm in Gilling Woods on the 26th and then one on 1st May in a recently felled area by the bottom lake in Gilling Park. One was on Allerthorpe Common on the 3rd and also reported from Strensall Common from that date, with five there on the 15th, and seven territories found in the MOD survey the same day. The first sighting at Skipwith Common was on 8th May, a late date for this site.

Reported again from Gilling Park House on the 21st and on 17th June when one was on its usual song post near the bottom lake. On 21st May one was in song at Skipwith Common where there appeared to be six territorial males by early June. Birds were seen or heard at three different locations on Yearsley Moor on 23rd May with two singing males there on the 31st. One was seen and another heard at Skipwith Common on 17th June, with two along the central nature trail on the 27th, but the number of territories on the Common is about half the total found in 2007. A pre-migratory flock of 12 birds at this site on 18th September was the last sighting for the recording area as a whole.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*
Resident and migrant breeder, and passage migrant

There was a winter roost early in the year at Skipwith Common, birds assembling on silver birches at the bomb bays and roosting in old heather. Numbers peaked at 32 on 16th February but then fell away with just ten by 17th March. There was a smaller roost on Sand Lane.

Elsewhere counts of more than one or two included eight at Scamland, Melbourne on 24th January; 30 at East Common Farm, Melbourne on 8th February; seven along the River Rye between Rye Bridge and Swinton Ings on 6th March and c.15 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on the 16th. Ten were flying northwest over York Science Park on the 18th.

Good numbers were present on Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings all year and birds bred there. One territory was found in the MOD survey of Strensall Common on 15th May. Four territories were located in the Church Bridge area of the Lower Derwent on 9th June.

On 19th September 15 passed Allerthorpe Gravel Pits while one was seen flying west over SHL on the 28th with two there on the 30th. At Skipwith Common four were seen on 10th September with 16 frequenting the heaths by the end of the month. However, birds appeared to leave this site in the cold weather of December. Five were on the frozen scrape in front of Geoff Smith Hide at North Duffield Carrs on 19th December. Birds were reported in smaller numbers during the year from East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest; Fulford Ings; Naburn Sewage Works; Redhouse Wood, Moor Monkton; Seaton Common, near Seaton Ross and from Whitwell Grange East.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*
Rare winter visitor and passage migrant

Not recorded in 2009 after annual sightings from 2005 to 2008.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*
Scarce, mainly winter visitor

Not recorded in 2009, the last sighting being in 2007.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first reported was a male at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 10th April followed by seven at North Duffield Carrs the next day and 16 there on the 14th. One was at White House Farm, Kexby on the 20th when a breeding pair was seen at Lilling Bottom. A bird calling at Naburn Sewage Works on the 24th was the first for that site. Another was at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 25th, and on other dates. Further records came from the Naburn-Deighton road on 25th April, at Keldspring Crossing, Pocklington on 3rd May, and Sheriff Hutton and Bank Island on the 4th.

Several remained at North Duffield Carrs with three at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 9th May and additional records from Allerton on the 16th, Broad Oak Farm, near Elvington on the 17th, by the Pocklington Canal (Walbut Bridge) on the 25th and at Skipwith Common on the 26th.

Evidence of breeding was found at Whitwell Grange East on 24th June and 8th July, near Brighton on 25th June, north of Terrington on the 28th, Escrick on 11th July and at Copmanthorpe on 21st July.

Up to ten were seen at a partially flooded area of a pig farm near Park Farm north of North Duffield on various dates in August with at least two remaining till the 30th when the site was drying out. A gathering of 12 birds including four males was found in a field behind Thorganby village hall on 10th September while one at Skipwith Common on the 12th was the last for the year.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
Resident breeder

Widely scattered reports throughout the recording area in all months of the year. In the first part of the year reports of one or two birds were as follows:

Gilling Park House (bottom pond on 18th April)

Nunnington Hall (14th June)

Pocklington Canal (various locations on 4th January, 22nd February, 25th May)

Redhouse Reservoir (21st June)

River Ouse (Clifton to Bishopthorpe, total of three on 25th May),

Wass (31st May)

Welburn Sewage Works (22nd February)

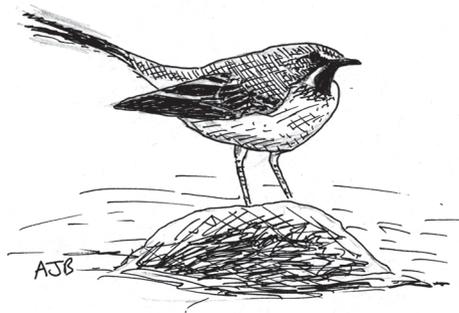
Wheldrake Ings (17th May)
Yearsley (two on 21st June)
York city centre (19th March, 5th May)
York University Lake (22nd May)

Reports of possible (or confirmed) breeding were received as follows: two seen on 5th April by Redcar House near Gilling East and a pair at Crambeck on the 11th; a pair breeding by the Water Works at Redhouse Reservoir on 5th May; and a pair by the Pocklington Canal just before Church Bridge east of Melbourne on 25th May.

From late summer onwards there were further reports of one or two birds as listed below:

Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common (21st November, 13th December)
Allerthorpe Gravel Pits (three heading west on 6th September,
one on 19th September)
Castle Howard (18th October)
Cliffe (juvenile in garden on 6th October),
Gilling Park House (10th October)
Heslington (14th August)
River Ouse (York to Naburn on 9th October and 7th November
and on other dates in winter)
SHL (13th August, 2nd November)
Skipwith Common (8th August, 1st September, 7th October)
Wheldrake Ings (27th September)
Wressle (25th October)
York city centre (8th December)
York University Lake (11th September and regularly from late
October until the end of the year)

Single birds were seen throughout the year on the River Ouse in York city centre while at Clifton Ings three to four were present all year, probably breeding at the sewage works. Sightings from Hassacarr NR were in March, April (two there on the 6th) and October.



Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Resident breeder

In the first half of the year notable counts included at least 50 on filter beds at Walbutts Sewage Works, Strensall on 3rd January when about ten were by the River Ouse between York and Naburn, seen there throughout the year, while 20 were by floods at Rye Bridge near Malton on 23rd February. Reports of birds in smaller numbers were received from throughout the recording area.

Few breeding records were submitted. A nest with five eggs was found in a wood pile at Allertorpe Gravel Pits on 23rd May. An adult was seen collecting food on the runway at Skipwith Common on 30th May while one was seen with three juveniles at SHL on 19th June. A family group was seen in Gilling East on 15th August with at least four youngsters.

In late summer, in August, up to c.40 were seen at a partially flooded area of a pig farm near Park Farm, north of North Duffield, numbers reducing as the site dried out. Six were at Heslington East, York University on 13th September. One was feeding on the margin of Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on 4th October, a rare sight for this location. A party of c.50 flew roughly west over Wilberfoss late afternoon on the 28th, presumably heading for a roost.

A flock of 23 was along the flood edge at Ellerton Ings on 13th December when c.35 were on floods at Middlethorpe Ings near York while three were feeding on the frozen scrape in front of the Geoff Smith Hide, North Duffield Carrs on the 19th. At least 200 were roosting in Parliament Street in the centre of York in December while the open-air market was on.

Present throughout the year at Clifton Ings, with 100+ feeding around the edge of receding flood waters early in the year. Seen in many other areas, including East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest; Tang Hall shops, York; and a garden in Upper Poppleton.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Continental race mainly as a passage migrant in spring

There were two reports this year. One was at Black Dyke Ings, Barmby Moor on 17th March while another was at North Duffield Carrs on 11th April, and again on the 13th.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Occasional winter visitor though more regular in recent years

Birds which had arrived earlier in the winter (*cf.* YOC Bird Report for 2008) continued to be seen frequently and widely, particularly in and

around York, from January until mid-April. In contrast none was reported in the autumn/winter period at the end of the year.

Ones and twos were reported in early January over Acomb (York) and in gardens at Haxby, Pocklington and Strensall. On the 5th seven were reported to have been seen in North Duffield while up to nine at Strensall were present until the last sighting there on the 22nd. On this date three were sighted at Askham Bog with seven there on the 25th and 27th.

There was a report of 15 at York University on the 23rd and on the same day 36 were reported at Monk Fryston. In Danesmead Close, Fulford, York 18 were seen on the 25th and this flock remained in the same general area until 2nd February, the maximum number being 28. At SHL a small number came to roost by the pond from January to March.

Into February three were seen in a small bush at the eastern end of Selby bypass on the 1st with two in a Haxby garden the same day. At least ten in Fulford Broadway were considered to be the same flock that had been previously in Danesmead Close. The flock moved on to Heslington Lane, and reached a maximum of 40 on the 11th, last seen there on the 25th. Around 50 were reported in trees by the railway line near Aldborough Way, York on the 5th and a flock of 16 birds was reported on the east side of Sherburn in Elmet the same day. One was in Pocklington on the 21st with eight at World's End Plantation near Strensall on the 22nd and c.35 flying south over the Flag and Whistle pub in Huntington, York on the 25th.

A minimum of 80 were in Haxby on 1st March, between Towthorpe Road and New Forge Court, with 15 on Fulford Road, York the same day while 20 were in the same locality at the bottom of St Oswalds Road on the 6th and 20 were in Green Lane, Rawcliffe on the 13th. A large number were in Eversley Park, Sherburn in Elmet (just outside the YOC recording area) on the 16th. On the 20th 52 were at the north end of Beckfield Lane, York, smaller groups being seen in the same area on the 24th and 30th. The same day at least 12 were seen in Grange Garth off Fishergate, York before they flew towards the Knavesmire.

Six were seen briefly in Acomb on 6th April with 11 in Copmanthorpe the next day. At least 25 were still in the centre of York, between the library and Museum Gardens, in the evening of the 8th and on the 9th at least 20 were in Nunnery Lane car park before flying off. Ten were seen over Acomb on the 13th, being chased by a female Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, while on the 15th 24 were in the grounds of Bootham Park Hospital, York. A flock, up to 68 this time, was again seen in the Nunnery Lane area from the 15th to the 18th. The last were a group of at least six at Selby Abbey on the 23rd.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident breeder throughout the area

Common throughout the recording area. The WBBS count along the River Ouse between York and Naburn, on 24th April, produced a total of 33 birds. At Allerthorpe Common 38 were ringed during the course of the summer. On Skipwith Common the number of breeding pairs appears to have declined in recent years due to the loss of suitable nesting habitat, but no survey was done this year. At Hassacarr NR none was recorded during a long cold spell in February and March but up to two were seen in later months.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Resident breeder throughout the area

Present throughout the recording area, particularly in gardens. First song noted was in Osbaldwick on 13th January. Eight were counted at The Retreat, York on 15th March. The highest number counted along the River Ouse between York and Naburn was 19 on 24th April.

At least two young birds were seen in Riccall on the 25th while in an Upper Poppleton garden the first fledglings were seen on 16th May. At Allerthorpe Common 14 were ringed during the summer. Birds were also seen throughout the year at Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Lake, breeding in both locations. A few pairs held territory on Skipwith Common where numbers have declined over recent years. Outside of the summer months two or more were regularly seen at Hassacarr NR with the maximum on this site being five on 15th April and 9th December.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Resident breeder throughout the area

Well distributed throughout the recording area. Higher counts included 13 between York and Naburn on 24th April and ten at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits the following day, with 16 again at the former site on 8th June. In total 28 birds were ringed at Allerthorpe Common up to 20th September.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Very rare visitor

No sightings in 2009 with the last record being in 2008.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Migrant breeder and passage visitor

A 'cracking male' was at Rawcliffe Ings on 17th April (NS) and another at Gilling Park on 14th May (BirdTrack). On 31st May two males were at

Yearsley (DR, BirdTrack) with another at Wass (DR). An immature male was observed at Allerthorpe Common on 3rd August (IA) and another male was found at Skipwith Common on 9th September (John Clark per DT).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Casual migrant breeder and passage migrant

A female was in bushes along Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 5th April (PR) and on 9th May single males were present at North Duffield Carrs (DS) and Wheldrake Ings (BirdGuides).

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Casual breeder and passage visitor; sometimes over-winters

During the first winter period a pair was present at North Duffield Carrs on 4th and 16th January and at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 7th February. Two were also seen near the Strensall to Flaxton road on 6th January.

On 29th April a pair was on the Heslington Tillmire, York and these birds were seen on many dates during the summer. Breeding was strongly suspected at this site with a possible juvenile seen on 22nd June. At the now traditional site of Strensall Common birds were seen most of the year and an estimated six pairs were counted during the annual MOD survey on 15th May.

In the autumn singles or pairs were present on various dates at Aughton, Bubwith bridge, Bubwith Ings, Ellerton, North Duffield Carrs and the Heslington Tillmire.



Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
Summer visitor and passage migrant

The first migrant was found at North Duffield Carrs on 22nd March followed by one at Copmanthorpe on the 25th, then three at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 5th April, a single at Copmanthorpe again on the 7th, two along the Naburn cycle track on the 13th and up to three at North Duffield Carrs again by the 15th. Thereafter up to four were seen at various sites including Strensall Common while birds of the Greenland race were identified at North Duffield Carrs and Wheldrake Ings between 6th and 9th May.

Autumn passage commenced with one at SHL on 6th August followed by singles at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on the 29th, Wheldrake Ings on 2nd September, Whitwell Grange on 6th October and Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith again the following day.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*
Very scarce passage migrant

Only one record this year: at the Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on 5th May (BirdTrack). This was the first record of this species since 2006.

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

Very common and frequent throughout the recording area, with high numbers recorded during BTO surveys, such as 28 at Gunby on 4th February and 52 including juveniles at The Retreat, York on 13th June. Additionally a noticeable influx occurred at Rawcliffe from mid-October.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*
Winter visitor

Widespread over the recording area in suitable habitats with larger flocks over 100 at Breck's Lane, Strensall on 3rd January; Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on the 18th; Stamford Bridge on the 20th; Scamland, Melbourne on the 24th; Frog Hall, Allertorpe on the 25th and 200 along the River Rye between Newsham Bridge and Swinton on 6th March. A few lingered into April with 40 at Stamford Bridge on the 18th and the last spring record was a flock of 40 at Moor Monkton on the 21st

The first autumn arrival consisted of four at Gilling East on 6th October followed by 15 at Strensall, 150 at Dunnington and 200 at Haxby, all on the 13th. Thereafter numbers built up to usual levels around mid-November with the largest flock of the autumn being 300 at East Cottingwith on 27th November.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Resident breeder but in decline in some areas

Fairly frequently recorded, although this species tends to be overlooked except in the breeding season. The first in song was recorded at SHL on 5th January and in Osbaldwick on 16th February while breeding was noted in the Clifton/Rawcliffe area, at Strensall and at Terrington. Eight were recorded between York and Naburn on 8th June and ten were there on 9th October.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Winter visitor

Well distributed over the YOC area with larger flocks of 150 at Walbutts Farm, Strensall on 3rd January, Redhouse Wood, Moor Monkton on the 11th and 100 at Scamland, Melbourne on the 24th. During February 120+ were at Clifton Park early in the month and flocks of 300 and 200 were at Skipwith Common and Cliffe Common respectively on the 5th with 200 at Calley Heath on the 13th. A few were still present in April at various sites until the last record on the 21st when 14 flew south at SHL.

Autumn arrivals were first seen on 6th October when one was at Fulford followed by eight at Stamford Bridge the following day and three along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on the 9th with others heard over Osbaldwick the same evening. Larger flocks of 150 on Wheldrake Ings and 60 at Ellerton occurred on 13th October and later in the year scattered flocks were found at a few sites in the south of the YOC area.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Resident breeder and winter visitor

Regular and frequent during the year throughout the YOC area with two or three noted at well-watched sites while singing was first heard on 21st January in Hull Road Park, York. Breeding was confirmed at Skipwith Common with ten there in early August. At North Duffield 12 were together to the west of the village on 16th August and at least 20 were around Clifton Ings on the 25th, including many juveniles.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Rare visitor

One ringed bird was present near Tower Hide, Wheldrake Ings on 6th January (BirdGuides) and at the end of the year another was in the reedbed at Swantail Hide, Wheldrake Ings on 13th November (BirdGuides).

In December one was present between the 4th and the 11th at North Duffield Carrs (BirdGuides, RS, PR).

These represent the first records in the recording area since 2006.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Scarce migrant breeder

One was reeling in vegetation at East Cottingwith Ings on 6th April (MaW) and other singles were at East Grange Farm, Thorganby on 2nd May (PR) and Wheldrake Ings on the 5th (CG, DR). In June one was in the Church Bridge area of Melbourne on 9th (AT) and another at Thorganby Ings on the 30th (BirdGuides). A brief burst of song from an autumn migrant skulking in scrub at Skipwith Common on 13th August was the first record of this species here for at least seven years.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

First recorded on 11th April when one was at Wheldrake Ings followed by one at The Grange, Pocklington Canal on the 12th and Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 18th. Regularly recorded at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, SHL and Fulford Ings during the summer and singles were also present at High Roans Cottages and Strensall Common. The last was recorded at Clifton Ings on 16th July.

[Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Very scarce summer migrant

One possible bird at Hassacarr NR on 12th and 13th April was only seen and heard briefly but coincided with a national influx of this species (T&VW).]

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first of the summer were found at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and Wheldrake Ings on 25th April with 11 at the Pocklington Canal by 3rd May. Other good counts were ten at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 25th May and 11 nests were found there on 7th June with one brood ringed. A bike ride along the Pocklington Canal between Canal Head and Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 25th May found 46 singing males. At Clifton Ings two broods were produced and three pairs were also recorded at Skipwith Common. The last bird of the year was seen at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 6th September.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Migrant breeder with some birds overwintering

One overwintered during January in a garden near Norton, feeding on peanuts, fat, sunflowers and rotten apples while another was reported briefly in a garden at Haxby on 1st February and another was at St Nicholas Fields, York on 25th February. One bird spent most of March at Heslington, York where it sang on occasions.

The first spring arrivals were on 5th April at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and Park Wood, Rossmoor followed by two at Walmgate Stray, York on the 8th and seven along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on the 11th. By late April birds were widespread throughout the recording area and 30 were ringed during July and early August at Allerthorpe Common where the last was seen on 20th September. A male and female were seen with many other common warblers along the Pocklington Canal near East Cottingwith on 10th September.

One overwintering adult male in a Pocklington garden was trapped and ringed on 22nd December.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Migrant breeder

Two were found at Allerthorpe Common on 3rd May with singles there on the 4th and at Gilling Park on the 8th. During the summer birds were widespread over the YOC area. A family party was seen at Low Water, Terrington on 28th June while at Allerthorpe Common 25 birds were ringed during July and early August. No specific date was provided by any observer for a 'last' record of the year.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Migrant breeder

Early migrants were singles at Fulford Ings on 17th April, near Bolton Percy and Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 19th, and at Holme Green near Appleton Roebuck and at Sheriff Hutton on the 22nd. Thereafter recorded quite frequently in the YOC area with breeding recorded or suspected at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and Sheriff Hutton. The last recorded was an immature at Allerthorpe Common on 3rd August.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Migrant breeder

The first of the summer was one at Riccall on 17th April with another at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on the 18th and in a garden at Norton on the 19th. Frequently noted throughout the YOC area with up to

18 recorded on 3rd May at Allerthorpe Common where ringing efforts caught 51 birds during July and early August. Breeding was confirmed or suspected at Allerthorpe Common, Clifton Ings, Fulford Ings, Skipwith Common and Terrington. The last of the year was at Allerthorpe Common on 20th September.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*
Vagrant

One was found in willows around the lake at SHL on 4th November (GW) but was only seen for 15 minutes by a few observers before disappearing. This is probably the 1st confirmed record for the YOC area though there appear to have been some unsubstantiated sightings in the past. See a brief account of this find on page 101.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
Scare breeder and passage migrant

Up to three were singing in the central valley at Yearsley Moor between 26th April and 17th June (BirdTrack, MD and DR).

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant with some birds overwintering

An overwintering bird was seen at SHL on 2nd February while the first presumed migrant was in York on 8th March, followed by singles at The Retreat, York and Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 15th and at Selby and Wheldrake Ings on the 16th.

Subsequently numbers of records increased rapidly as migrants arrived in the area with at least six at Yearsley Moor and seven at Park Wood, Rossmoor on 21st March and 20 at Allerthorpe Common by 7th April. Thereafter birds were found abundantly with breeding proved in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake. At Allerthorpe Common 78 birds were ringed between July and early August and seven were also ringed at Skipwith Common. Many lingered into September or later with some at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and Allerthorpe Common and at SHL on 7th October with one at Upper Poppleton on the 15th and at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th. A more obviously wintering bird was near Tower Hide, Wheldrake Ings on 25th December.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

Always later than its relative the Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*, the first arrivals were at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and Riccall on 5th April

followed by others at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th, at Allerthorpe Common on the 7th and at Naburn on the 9th. Numbers then increased quickly throughout the YOC area as further migrants arrived. The highest numbers of presumed breeding individuals were 17 at Heslington on 22nd May and 11 in the Church Bridge area of Melbourne on 9th June. Ringing activity at Allerthorpe Common resulted in 105 different birds being caught during July and early August. A late bird was by the River Derwent near Stamford Bridge on 14th September but the last of the year was at Hassacarr NR on the 23rd.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Resident breeder and winter visitor

Small numbers were present throughout the year at Allerthorpe Common, Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Clifton Ings, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common and along the River Ouse between York and Naburn, with occasional sightings elsewhere.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce passage migrant

No records in 2009 the last being in 2007.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Migrant breeder and passage visitor

A poor year with single birds at Monument Farm, Welburn on 10th May, at Kexby on the 22nd, at Gate Helmsley on 4th June, by the River Rye at Nunnington Hall on the 14th and at Upper Poppleton on 11th July. Two were at Askham Bog and at Whitwell Grange during June and July but the only breeding records were at Skipwith Common and at Terrington where birds feeding young was suspected in one area.

One was at Hassacarr NR on 19th August and another was in Clifton Park from 10th August with up to three there into early September. A family party of four was at Skipwith Common on 2nd September while a juvenile was watched in the car park at Wheldrake Ings on 9th September.

[Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Very scarce passage migrant

One seen at Wheldrake Ings on 9th May was described as 'probable' after only brief views (PaR).]

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Rare visitor

One at Wheldrake Ings from 8–11th October (RS) was the first in the YOC area for ten years.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Resident breeder

Significant numbers were reported as follows: up to 14 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, 20 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 3rd January with 25 there on 9th October, 13 at The Retreat, York on 17th January and at regular intervals through the year, 15 at Hodgson Wood, Meltonby on 20th September and 36 at Sutton-on-the-Forest on 28th November. Commonly seen throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake. Otherwise widely reported in single figures throughout the YOC recording area.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Resident breeder

Commonly seen throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake. Regular counts from The Retreat, York were 17 on 17th January, 14 on 15th February, 21 on 15th March, 22 on 18th April, four on 23rd May, eight on 13th June, ten on 23rd August and 14 on 20th September. Elsewhere widely recorded in single and low double figures.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Resident breeder

Commonly seen throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake. Regular counts from The Retreat, York were eight on 17th January, nine on 15th February, ten on 15th March, seven on 18th April, nine on 23rd May, three on 13th June and six on 23rd August. Elsewhere widely recorded in single and low double figures.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Resident breeder

Single birds were reported from Allerthorpe Common and Gravel Pits, along the River Ouse from York to Naburn, SHL, Strensall Common and Upper Poppleton but the species is probably much more widespread in the YOC area than the limited number of reports suggests.

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

Resident breeder

Six at Askham Bog on 1st January and five at St Nicholas Fields on 8th April were the highest counts while up to three were recorded at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits. Elsewhere one or two birds were found at Bielby, Castle Howard, Melbourne, Meltonby, Selby, Skipwith Common, Stonegrave, Terrington Woods, Wheldrake Ings and Yearsley.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Resident breeder

Up to three birds were reported from Allerthorpe Common and Gravel Pits, Askham Bog, Bielby, Castle Howard, Dodsworth Wood (Elvington), East Cottingwith, Elvington, Gilling Park, SHL, Kilnwick Percy Hall, Naburn, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common, Whitwell Grange East and Yearsley

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Resident breeder

Ones and twos were reported from Acaster Malbis, Bishopthorpe, Bolton Percy, Castle Howard, Gilling East, Strensall Common, Terrington Woods, The Retreat at York, Wheldrake, Upper Poppleton and Whitwell Grange East and West.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Resident breeder

Present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Skipwith Common.

Records of between one and three birds came from Allerthorpe Common, Askham Bog, Castle Howard, Easingwold, JRTNR, Moor Monkton, Skipwith Common, Stockton-on-the-Forest, Strensall Common, Terrington Woods, The Retreat (York) and York University. Five along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 7th March included two singing birds.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

One to three birds were seen at a variety of locations through the year but with as many as ten at Allerthorpe Common on 13th March.

In the autumn three were seen from Cliffe flying high to the south/southwest on 28th September, as many as ten were seen at Wheldrake Ings on 5th October, with four birds together at one point, while there was an influx of seven to eight birds at Clifton Ings with at least four still present at the year's end.

Magpie *Pica pica*
Resident breeder

Commonly seen throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area and at Rawcliffe Lake. Counts from The Retreat, York were nine on 17th January, four on 15th February, seven on 15th March, nine on 18th April, six on 13th June, six on 18th July and four on 23rd August. Elsewhere widely reported in single figures with 25 along the River Ouse from York to Naburn on 9th October.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*
Resident breeder

Good numbers present at Clifton Ings throughout the year with 200–300 heading noisily off to roost during afternoons in December. No other counts of over 100 except for 120 at Swinton Ings on 4th January.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*
Resident breeder

The highest counts were 100 at Scamland, Melbourne on 24th January, 150 at Allerthorpe Common on 25th January with 250 there on 21st November, 150 at Seaton Common on 8th February, 150 by Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on 13th February and 250 at Stockton-on-the-Forest late in the year on 1st December. At Castle Howard 28 nests were counted along the avenue on 26th June.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*
Resident breeder

Good numbers were present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area. The highest counts were 66 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 24th April (mostly on Middlethorpe Ings) and 36 at Walbutts Sewage Works, Strensall on 10th June. At Skipwith Common there was roost of about 200 in February and March while during the spring and summer about 50 non-breeding birds were present.

Raven *Corvus corax*
Rare visitor

One flying north between Escrick and Wheldrake on 1st July (BirdGuides) was the only record for the year. This is the 6th record for the YOC area.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
Resident breeder and winter visitor

Recorded in single or double figures at a variety of locations. A roost at Heslington peaked at 3,000 on 3rd March and one at Stockton-on-the-Forest peaked at 12,000 on 5th March. No significant counts in the second half of the year apart from c.500 at a pig farm near North Duffield on 13th August.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Resident breeder

Recorded in single or double figures at a variety of locations. Higher counts were 30 at Claxton on 16th February, 33 at Pocklington on 3rd May, 30 at North Duffield on 14th May, 45 at Elvington on 17th May, 35 at Haxby on 24th May, 40 at Thornton Hill on 26th September and 40 at Huntington on 11th December. At Rawcliffe Lake 30–40 were present throughout the year.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Resident breeder

Good numbers were present throughout the year in the Clifton/Rawcliffe Ings area where birds bred with many feeding in the Cornfield NR during the winter. Higher counts were up to 40 at Brecks Lane, Strensall on 3rd January, 60 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 11th January, 30 at Hassacarr NR on 28th January with 40 there on 1st December, 20+ regularly at a feeding station in Ellerton with 32 on 13th June, 30 at SHL on 11th September, 50 at Acklam on 13th September, 35 at East Moor, Stockton-on-the-Forest on 10th November, 40 at Bank Island on 5th December and 100 at Thornton on the same date.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*
Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Widely reported in single or low double figures. Higher counts were 200 at Elvington on 30th January, 'hundreds' at Allerthorpe Common on 7th April and 57 at the Ebor Way on 10th December. Over 20 singing males were counted around Huntington on 22nd May.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

Ten were reported near the River Derwent at Stamford Bridge on 20th January and again on 20th March with ten at Allerthorpe Common on

7th April. Elsewhere one or two birds were reported at Aughton, Barton-le-Willows, Pocklington School (three birds), Whitwell Grange East and Stockton on the Forest.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Widespread in single or low double figures. The highest count was 35 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 14th February.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Widespread in single or low double figures. The highest counts were 60 at Gypsy Corner on 6th January, 80 at East Moor, Stockton-on-the-Forest on 14th August, 50+ by the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 7th November and 50 at Hassacarr NR on 21st December.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Resident breeder in small numbers, passage and winter visitor

Widespread in single or low double figures. The highest counts were c.80 at Askham Bog on 25th August, 100+ at Allerthorpe Common on 7th April, 100+ at Bishop Wood, west of Selby on 17th March, 50 near the River Derwent at Stamford Bridge on 14th December and 20+ at Hassacarr NR on 29th December.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Widespread in single or low double figures. The highest count was 75 at Melbourne on 8th February. About 20 roosted at Skipwith Common on 30th January and numbers rose to 60 on 8th February and 70 on the 11th. Numbers then slowly declined though 38 were still present on 1st March. In the last five years the number of breeding pairs at Skipwith Common has increased substantially.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Very scarce winter visitor

Two were seen well on wires with other finches at Millington Pasture (just outside the YOC area) on 18th January (AB). In the autumn one flew around calling at Wheldrake Ings on 7th November (RS).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

In the first half of the year reported in single or low double figures from Allerthorpe, Askham Bog, Castle Howard, Heslington, SHL, Moor Monkton, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge, Strensall, Sutton-on-the-Forest and Yearsley Moor, with a maximum of about 38 at Bielby on 10th February. Fewer records in the second winter period but with c.120 at Redhouse Wood on 11th November and 25 at Rawcliffe Lake from 25th December to the year's end.

Mealy (Common) Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Scarce winter visitor

At least two were with Lesser Redpolls *Carduelis cabaret* at Castle Howard on 7th January (BirdGuides). Three were near the River Derwent at Stamford Bridge on 1st March (BirdTrack) with six there on 7th October (AS) while two were also reported from Copmanthorpe on 18th March (TD). At least one was located in a mixed finch flock at Allerthorpe Common on 7th April (IA).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Casual breeder and passage migrant

There were sightings at two locations in the first half of the year. The first came from Allerthorpe Common with a maximum of 18 on 13th March (and the last on 7th April) while 13 were seen at Bishop Wood west of Selby on the 17th.

In the autumn one was at York University on 14th September while another flew over Wheldrake Ings on 28th October.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Widespread, generally in single figures, but with up to 11 birds regularly at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, 16 near Elvington on 30th January and 12 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 19th December. Five large colourful birds feeding at Monks Cross Park&Ride (York) on 26th October were noted as possible continental immigrants *P.p.pyrrhula*.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare winter visitor

A male was located at Millington Pasture (just outside the YOC area) on 1st January with a female there on 18th January (AB). There were further reports from this area to the end of January.

[Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Very scarce winter visitor

One reportedly flew over Wheldrake Ings on 22nd December (BirdGuides). No further information received.]

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Up to a dozen birds were reported from Allerthorpe, Bishopthorpe, Hassacarr NR, Haxby, Melbourne, Meltonby, River Ouse between York and Naburn, Pocklington, Singleton Wood, South Duffield, Stockton-on-the-Forest, Strensall, Terrington and Whitwell Grange East. Higher counts were 40 at Newton-upon-Derwent on 26th January, 30 at Bielby on 8th February, 20 at Heslington East, York University on 8th March, 30 at Heslington Tillmire on 24th March, 20 at Thornton on 18th December and 60 at Wilberfoss on 24th 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 there again this year. Up to a ten birds were reported from Allerthorpe, Askham Bog, Bielby, Church Bridge (Pocklington Canal), Cliffe/Newhay, Fulford Ings, Hassacarr NR, JRTNR, Meltonby, River Ouse between York and Naburn, Thornton Lock (Pocklington Canal), Skipwith Common, Swinton Ings, Stockton-on-the-Forest and Heslington East, York University. Higher counts were 25 at Gunby on 4th February, 20 at Heslington Tillmire on 23rd February and 30+ at Wheldrake Ings on 13th October.

Seventeen territories were estimated during an MOD survey at Strensall Common on 15th May.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Resident breeder

At Clifton Ings a pre-roost assembly of 50–60 birds was seen in February and March with a maximum of 65 on 17th February; in the second half of the year there were 90+ during the hard weather towards the end of December. Elsewhere single figures were reported from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Barmby Moor, Copmanthorpe, Ellerton, Escrick, North and South Duffield, Pocklington, Riccall, Stockton-on-the-Forest, West Lilling, Wressle and Yapham. Higher counts were 65 at Wilberfoss on 26th January and 20 there on 24th December, 30 at Poppleton on 11th November, 14 at Strensall Common on 11th December and 15 at Melbourne on 23rd December.

Introductions/Escapes

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

A pair was present at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits throughout the year and seen on numerous visits from January to October. In March nest building was noted on two visits with two eggs present on 14th April. Birds were present at York University Lake where breeding also took place.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

One was seen at Wheldrake Ings on several dates from early March to mid-April while two were at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 21st April with one there on 25th April and again on 16th September which may have involved the bird seen earlier at Wheldrake Ings.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

One was present throughout the year at York University Lake. Two were also reported from Wheldrake Ings on 19th November but no further information was received which might help to determine their origin. It is assumed that these were escapes.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

Two apparently tame juveniles were on the ponds by the play area at the Castle Howard Estate on 23rd October (RCy). Last recorded in 2004.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

One was noted by Castle Howard Lake on 22nd March.

Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*

An escape was frequenting the Wetherby Road area of Acomb, York on 23rd April.

**Contributors to
the YOC Bird Report for 2009**
with apologies for any accidental omissions

Ian Andrews	Paul Reed (PaR)
John Bardet	Peter Reed (PeR)
Elaine Blake	Dave Richardson
Phil & Sarah Bone (P&SB)	Peter Roworth (PR)
Andy Booth	Helen & Ken Searstone (H&KS)
Terry Box	Sue Sessions
Ian Brookes	Dot Simpson
Fiona Butler	Russell Slack
Rob Chapman (RCn)	Darren Starkey
Mark Coates	Nigel Stewart
N Cooper (NC)	Alan Stow
Robert (Bob) Coursey (RCo)	David Tate
Roy Crossley (RCy)	Craig Thomas
Robert Dawson	Andy Tongue
Paul Doherty	Ian & Ruth Traynor (I&RT)
Malcolm Douglas	Jonathan Tyler
Trevor Douglas	Gareth Ventress
Paul (Paz) Fletcher	Mike Walton
Chris Gomersall	George Watola
Steve Griffiths	Mick Watson (MiW)
Mick Hayes (MH)	Peter Watson
Adam Hutt	Dave Waudby (DW)
Ben Kelly	Max Webber (MaW)
Mark Killeen	Terry & Val Weston (T&VW)
Anne Lawn	Mark Windmill
Tom & Julia Lawson	Alan Whitehead
John Lawton	Mike Williams (MW)
Jono Leadley (JLe)	BirdGuides
Anne & Chris Lloyd (A&CL)	Natural England (NE)
Peter McLennan	Ryedale Natural History Society Bird Report (RNHSBR)
John & Terry Millett (J&TM)	Sand Hutton Bird Report (SHBR)
Andrea Parker	YOC website reports
Pete Piringner	
Craig Ralston	

Earliest and latest dates for summer visitors/passage migrants

Species	Arrival date/ first reported	Last Reported
Garganey	18th March	30th May
Quail	28th May	27th September
Osprey	14th April	5th October
Hobby	13th April	28th October
Oystercatcher	22nd February	25th July
Little Ringed Plover	11th April	19th August
Whimbrel	17th April	13th May
Common Sandpiper	25th April	14th August
Wood Sandpiper	28th June	1st July
Common Tern	14th May	28th August
Turtle Dove	17th May	16th July
Cuckoo	10th April	1st July
Nightjar	-	-
Swift	24th April	7th September
Sand Martin	16th March	28th August
Barn Swallow	29th March	24th October
House Martin	21st March	27th October
Tree Pipit	23rd April	27th June
Yellow Wagtail	10th April	12th September
Redstart	17th April	3rd August
Whinchat	5th April	-
Wheatear	22nd April	17th October
Grasshopper Warbler	6th April	30th June
Sedge Warbler	11th April	16th July
Reed Warbler	25th April	6th September
Blackcap *	5th April	20th September
Garden Warbler	3rd May	17th June
Lesser Whitethroat	17th April	3rd August
Common Whitethroat	17th April	20th September
Chiffchaff †	15th March	15th October
Willow Warbler	5th April	14th September
Spotted Flycatcher	10th May	9th September

* Overwintering birds seen on 9th–26th January, 1st, 25th February, 8th, 9th, 15th March and 22nd December.

† Overwintering birds seen on 2nd February and 25th December.

Earliest and latest dates for winter visitors/passage migrants

Species	Last reported in Spring	First reported in Autumn
Whooper Swan	5th April	9th October
Pink-footed Goose	10th May	23rd September
Goosander	27th April	11th November
Golden Plover	22nd March*	6th July
Jack Snipe	10th May	-
Green Sandpiper	18th March	9th June
Fieldfare	21st April	6th October
Redwing	12th April	6th October
Brambling	16th April	11th October

*A flock of 200 seen between Wheldrake and Elvington on 9th May is difficult to place in this context.

Rare Breeding Birds of the Lower Derwent Valley 2009

Compiled by Craig Ralston

Cat A – Rare Species

Eurasian Wigeon

Max no. of adults: 16 No. of pairs: 7 No. of young: 0

No. of pairs

Poss: 4 Probable: 3 Confirmed: 0 Total: 0–7

Pintail: No evidence of breeding during the year. Two birds, one pair, remained into early May.

Garganey

Max no. of adults: 9 No. of pairs: 4 No. of young: 0

No. of pairs

Poss: 2 Probable: 2 Confirmed: 2 Total: 0–4

Northern Shoveler:

Max no. of adults: 159 No. of pairs: 71 No. of young: 54

No. of pairs

Poss: 11 Probable: 47 Confirmed: 13 Total pairs: 13–71

Black-necked Grebe: No records during the year

Little Egret

Max no. of adults: 3 No. of pairs: 1 No. of young: 2

No. of pairs

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

Marsh Harrier: The increase in birds throughout the year continues with 2009 being notable in the number of records of males (usually very scarce in the valley). However, despite up to two males and four cream crowns, no evidence of breeding was observed.

Water Rail:

Max no. of adults: 10* No. of pairs: 10? No. of young: 8
 (*calling males)

No. of pairs

Poss: 2 Probable: 6 Confirmed: 2 Total pairs: 2–10

Spotted Crake**Wheldrake Ings**

While catching and ringing Whimbrel in the refuge area at Wheldrake Ings on 29th April a single bird started calling at 21:15 with a total of eight calling birds in the refuge area. A further two were located in the pool hide/windpump areas giving a total of ten calling birds that night. The following evening a total of 11 birds was singing at this location but all singing stopped on the night of 1st May.

17th May A single flushed from the back of the pool
 31st May Another flushed from the back of the pool in the same
 area (c.50m)
 7th August A single, nearly fledged juvenile on the pool seen well

No. of pairs

Poss: 12 Probable: 0 Confirmed: 1 Total pairs: 1–12

North Duffield Carrs

3rd May A single singing male on the Geoff Smith scrape
 27th June A minimum of three calling males on the Geoff Smith
 scrape
 28th June Five singing males on the scrape
 20th July A single calling bird briefly at the same location

Possible: 4 Probable: 1 Confirmed: 0 Total: 0–5 singing males

Total for Lower Derwent Valley

Possible: 6 Probable: 1 Confirmed: 1 Total: 1–18 singing males

On 1st September, a single adult female was trapped and ringed in a walk-in trap at Bank Island. Another single was seen to run away from the area. The following morning a further two birds, an adult male and adult female, were caught and ringed in the same trap.

This represents an interesting record and is similar to a record of two birds present at the same site in September 2007. Although birds at this time could relate to passage birds, the site itself is not obviously a likely-looking one for autumn passage. Bank Island has represented a key breeding location in the valley over recent years and it is possible that birds had bred undetected here or relocated from nearby Wheldrake Ings. Birds showed a high amount of fat deposition (fat scores 3–4) and whilst two had completed moult and showed fresh plumage one, an adult female, showed signs of just finishing active wing moult. It is possible that these relate to local breeders rather than passage birds. Both adult females showed signs of a well developed but feathered-over brood patch.

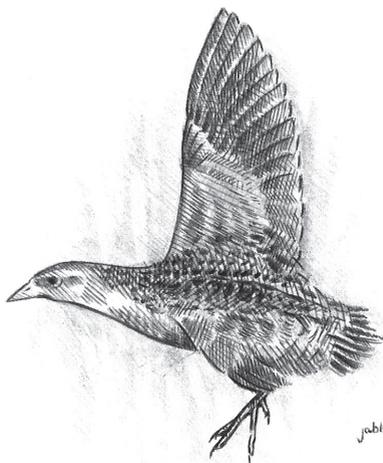
These birds have been excluded from the above totals as it is difficult to interpret their status.

Corncrake

An exceptional and well publicised year.

A single bird was reportedly flushed from a stewardship strip near Allerthorpe Common on 6th May. The record didn't come to light straight away but further investigation suggests this record to be reliable.

A single bird was seen well but briefly at Bank Island on 1st June at 17:00 as it appeared at one edge of the central ditches. On 2nd June, two birds were found singing well at Ellerton Ings from 15:00 with another reported at North Duffield Carrs at 18:00. The North Duffield Carrs bird was confirmed singing at 05:30 on the 3rd with three singing there from 10:00 until dusk, with another at the northern end of North Duffield Carrs at 18:00 and another at Wheldrake Ings at 20:00.



As the season progressed, all sang well (day and night and almost continuously) from 1st/2nd June until 10:00 on 6th June when birds became almost nocturnal in their calling activity, still regular until the 16th. However, birds then became very quiet with just occasional calling noted thereafter until the last calling was noted at both North Duffield Carrs and Wheldrake Ings on 23rd July.

Through the use of HLS (Higher Level Stewardship) special projects, the hay cutting was delayed over an area of 250m around all the main calling locations until at least 18th August and in some cases much later. Two broods were seen, one of four (minimum) very small young at North Duffield Carrs on 12th July and a single, recently fledged bird at Ellerton Ings on 18th August.

A radio-interview resulted in another landowner outside the Lower Derwent Valley NNR coming forward with an additional record. This concerned a bird which has heard calling at Towthorpe near Strensall from 2nd June but which was only confirmed by Natural England staff on 24th June. Another unconfirmed record has also come to light with another singing bird reported from Hagg Bridge in early June. These are not included in the totals.

A breakdown of individual birds and sites follows.

Bank Island

1st June Bird seen well
4th June Bird singing at 23:00 for 30 mins
5th June Bird singing at 05:30 for 20 mins
14th June Bird singing at 06:00 for 5 mins
18th June Site cut for hay but 250m radius around calling site left
18th August – site cut

Ellerton

2nd June Two singing birds from 15:00 to 05:30 on 3rd
6th June Singing continued almost continuously from 2nd June to 10:00 on 6th
9th June One bird singing briefly at 17:00
12th June One bird singing well at 21:30 and again at 23:15
19th June Two singing males at 23:30
18th August A single fledged juvenile flushed towards the end of hay cutting – flew to safety
Hay cut delayed until 18th August

North Duffield Carrs

- 2nd June Single singing bird reported at 16:00
3rd June Single singing bird from 0530 with three from 10:00 to dusk. An additional fourth bird located at the northern end.
4th June Single singing well at 05:30 to 09:00
5th June Two calling birds
6th June Three calling birds with two or three recorded daily thereafter until 16th June
21st June Single calling bird at 20:30
29th June Single singing bird at 22:45
7th July Single singing male
12th July Adult female with four or more young seen
16th July Adult pair seen well
19th July Singing male
23rd July Singing male
Hay cut delayed until 18th August

Wheldrake Ings (two sites – A & B)

- 3rd June Singing male (A)
7th June Singing male at 23:00–01:00 (A)
10th June Calling well (A)
13th June Singing male at Site A but also a second bird located (B)
23rd July Singing male reported at 15:00 for 10 minutes (A)
Hay cut delayed around both sites until 1st October

Allerthorpe area

- 6th May A single bird flushed from grassland margin near Allerthorpe Common by experienced birder
16th July A single bird (female) seen well by experienced birder and bird ringer at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits (this site is approximately 1–1.5km from the other site).

Summary of breeding (RBBP definitions)

Confirmed	2		(proof of breeding)
Probable	4 in LDV and 1 at Towthorpe	5	(present over 10 days)
Possible	4		(present in habitat)
Total	10 in LDV and 1 at Towthorpe	11	

No of young: 5+

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: No evidence of breeding during the year.

Cat B – Less Scarce Species

Gadwall

Poss: 18 Probable: 32 Proved: 22 Total: 18–72 pairs

Common Pochard: A single drake present throughout the year, apparently being incapable of flight.

Common Quail: Another good year in the Lower Derwent Valley with the first calling male at North Duffield Carrs on 11th May. Additional small numbers arrived during the month with a larger influx occurring from 2nd June and further influxes in late June/early July. Up to five singing males were recorded from North Duffield Carrs, four from Thornton Ellers, Thorganby Ings and Ellerton Ings with three singing males from East Cottingwith Ings and Wheldrake Ings and scattered birds throughout the area.

Land around Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith has traditionally represented a stronghold for this species in the Lower Derwent Valley area for at least 20 years. The first bird in this area in 2009 was a single on 3rd June.



Further birds arrived and with an influx towards late June there were two on the 24th, three on the 25th and six on the 27th. Up to five birds were reported singing regularly from the area during the remaining breeding season, with a peak count of eight (from a local farmer) in early July.

On 17th August, a conversation with a local farmer suggested 'several', maybe up to a 'dozen' birds had been seen during harvesting operations, which had been staggered to benefit the birds. On 18th August, when operations continued on the final strip, NE site staff attended and monitored the field. In total 21 Quail were counted flying from the field, usually short distances, with many attempting to hide. In less than an hour, a total of six birds (all juveniles) had been caught and ringed, representing approximately 10% of the all-time national ringing totals for the species. A remarkable series of events.

Breeding Definition	Singing males
Possible	32
Probable	21
Confirmed	5?
Young	6+
Total	5–58

Hobby

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

Wood Lark

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

Cetti's Warbler

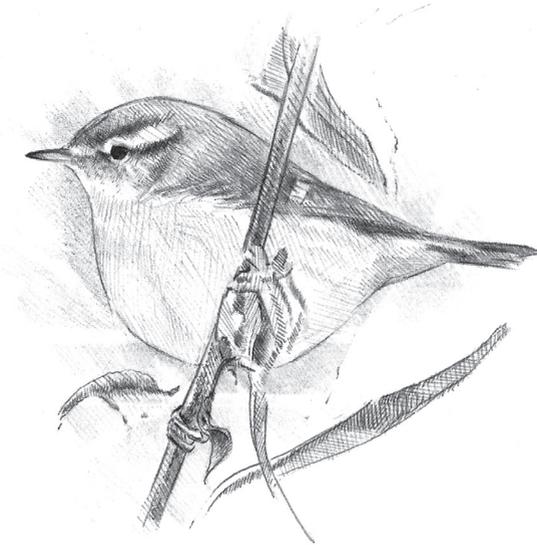
Poss: 1 Probable: 0 Confirmed: 0 Total: 0–1

Yellow-browed Warbler at Sand Hutton A 1st for the YOC area

by George Watola

On Wednesday 4th October I started on my usual lunchtime walk around the site (SHL, formerly the Central Science Laboratory) and was at the southeast corner of the pond at 12:15. It was a fine sunny day, quite warm for the time of year. I noticed a Phyllosc in a small sycamore about ten feet away and expecting a late Chiffchaff raised my bins to it. I could see the dull underparts as it faced me but was then rather surprised to see two distinct wing-bars and a prominent supercilium. The obviously green upperparts and yellow tinge to the super pointed out what it was – Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*! Recovering from the shock I looked at it intently for a minute or two, making sure I wasn't dreaming and getting the details, and then raced back to the offices 100 yards away to alert other birders. I quickly emailed a site-wide message, and then found Paul Cropper, an experienced birder recently returned from the Scillies, in his office.

We returned rapidly to the pond and I found the bird feeding on some short willows about 20 feet from the original sighting. It then flew across a corner of the pond back to the original area and fed in a small tree briefly before dropping down out of sight, unfortunately never to be seen again. Paul had a good look at it but four other birders didn't connect, though we spent some time looking.



Description

A small Chiffchaff-sized Phyllosc, green above, obviously so on the mantle; off-white below; supercilium striking, with an obvious yellow tinge; extending some distance behind the eye; two prominent white wingbars, both distinct; the shorter bar on the median coverts; the longer on the greater coverts; tertials edged yellowish; bill and legs appeared dark, but I can't say I particularly looked hard at the time, concentrating more on plumage details. I didn't hear it call. Paul thought he heard it calling, but wasn't sure with Tree Sparrows *Passer montanus* in the background. It was reasonably active and feeding, but not as zippy as some I've seen.

Not a Pallas's, Hume's, Greenish or Two-barred Greenish or even Eastern Crowned, all of which I've seen in England, based on plumage features. I've seen Yellow-browed quite often and even ringed one at Filey, so am 100% confident of the ID. It was also seen well by Paul, who was doubly pleased as he hadn't seen any on the Scillies!

Subsequently I was quite surprised to find there are quite a few inland Yorkshire records, according to Russell's book (*Rare and Scarce Birds in Yorkshire*), but this appears to be the first for the York area. I looked for it, as did others, the same afternoon, Thursday and Friday, but no sign. It may have just been moving through, rather than dropping into the pond area.

George Watola

References

Slack, R. & Wilson, A 1996 *Rare and Scarce Birds in Yorkshire*, Andrew Wilson and Russell Slack, pp.310–312

[There appear to have been three previous largely undocumented records of this species in the YOC area: one at Askham Bog on 1st November 1996 (JLe), one at Copmanthorpe, date unknown (TD) and one at Askham Richard 5th–9th October 2004 (AH). The latter site (HMP Askham Grange) was clearly too sensitive for news of the sighting to be released. As far as can be determined none of these records had descriptions submitted at the time and therefore remain unacceptable though both dated records were from experienced birders. The bird found by George Watola is therefore the first acceptable documented record for the area. Thanks to Russell Slack for his assistance in tracking down these references. – Ed]

Lesser Yellowlegs at Wheldrake Ings A 1st for the YOC area

by Russel Slack

At around 08:00 on 22nd July 2009 I received a call from local birder, Pete Piringer informing me that there was a Lesser Yellowlegs on the Pool at Wheldrake Ings. Naturally, for a local bird of such magnitude, I wasted no time in deciding that I would be late for work and headed straight down to the ings in record time – it wasn't that hard a decision to make!

Upon arrival Pete was still in the Pool Hide and, in the company of a few Redshanks *Tringa totanus*, there was a stunning adult Lesser Yellowlegs patrolling the margins of the pool at extremely close quarters. An exciting first for the York recording area, this was one of the few Nearctic waders that I had long considered likely to make an appearance on the ings at some point.

As a matter of routine I quickly double-checked the features to eliminate Greater Yellowlegs and then informed the news services of the bird's presence. During the day a procession of observers visited the site, many combining the visit with the Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* at Pulfin Bog near Beverley. Despite showing well throughout the day it was something of a surprise when the bird flew off southeast in the company of several Redshanks at around 18:20 and was not seen again in the Lower Derwent Valley.

What was presumably the same bird was then relocated at Paull Holme Strays on 24th July, where it remained until the 30th. The Wheldrake bird was the 12th for Yorkshire and the 1st for the YOC area. [See colour plates for digiscoped photos]

Russell Slack

[It is remarkable that two further records of this species were received during the year, with one reported at Bubwith Ings on 13th November, relocated later that day at Thorganby Ings, and a further report of maybe the same bird present at Aughton Ings on 23rd November and noted again at Ellerton Ings on 27th November. All three records are subject to acceptance by BBRC. – Ed]

Bird Surveys on Strensall Common

2003–2009

by Peter Reed

Strensall Common is an MOD army training area in the YOC recording area northeast of York. It covers 660ha and when not used for training purposes is a popular place for birdwatching and other recreational pursuits for the local population and visitors.

The habitat is primarily lowland wet and dry heath with scattered birch and scrub and occasional clumps of pine and shallow ponds. The southern part is mainly acid grassland with mown areas used for the firing ranges. The common is an internationally important lowland heath and is recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area for Conservation (SAC) because of its populations of nationally important insects and plants. The birdlife is also significant with a number of declining 'amber-listed' farmland birds and lowland breeding waders such as Curlew and Snipe.

For many years annual bird surveys using MOD staff and local volunteers from the YOC and RSPB have taken place and these have recorded the birds seen and made counts of the more important species. The early standard survey method was to walk a set route and mark sightings on a map, from which totals could be calculated and a yearly summary produced. In 2005 the introduction of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) BirdTrack computer system resulted in the requirement for a more formal recording method so that records could be compared more easily between MOD sites and also contribute to future national statistics on bird numbers and breeding trends. Counts were therefore changed to the recording of bird numbers and activity via the BirdTrack system using 1km x 1km grids and adding records of breeding evidence using a series of BTO codes. These were then allocated into 'possible' 'probable' or 'confirmed' breeding status categories for each species for each 1km square and then counted and added to the BirdTrack database. This system meant that, for the National Bird Atlas Survey which ran between 2007–2011, the records were directly incorporated into this national survey as well as being used for local and national MOD monitoring purposes.

These changes have meant that for comparability purposes over the years some adjustments have had to be made by going back to the original figures but there are now records of the number of territories on a consistent basis for the seven years 2003–2009, and these can

be plotted to show breeding trends on an annual basis. Figure 1 shows these changes for seven species which are of interest because they are either Schedule 1 protected species or 'Amber listed' Biodiversity Action Plan species. It can be seen from the graph that Yellowhammer, Linnets, Tree Pipit and Meadow Pipit have generally maintained territory numbers and Reed Bunting has increased from four to approximately 17 territories. Sky Lark, although having a steep rise in 2006 and 2007, also has similar numbers to 2003. Curlew and Common Snipe (not shown in the figure) which favour wetter areas have been stable at around three or four territories most years and Reed and Sedge Warblers have also remained constant at around two or three territories.

One of the major changes over the period has been the increase in Stonechats where, although occasionally recorded in the past, in 2003 two territories were found and breeding proven; by 2008 seven pairs were producing up to two broods each, with many fledged juveniles. This appears to be part of a general local and national trend of this species due to possible habitat and climate changes. Another species that has greatly increased is the Wood Lark which was first recorded breeding in 2005, increased to seven territories in 2006, and is now stable at around three territories. This species prefers very short grass or mossy or bare areas such those which had been cleared as part of the English Nature/Heritage Lottery Fund 'Restoring the Heaths of the Vale of York'



A habitat of scattered birch and pine trees with a groundcover of grass, moss and heather, is characteristic of Strensall Common (Photo: Peter Reed)

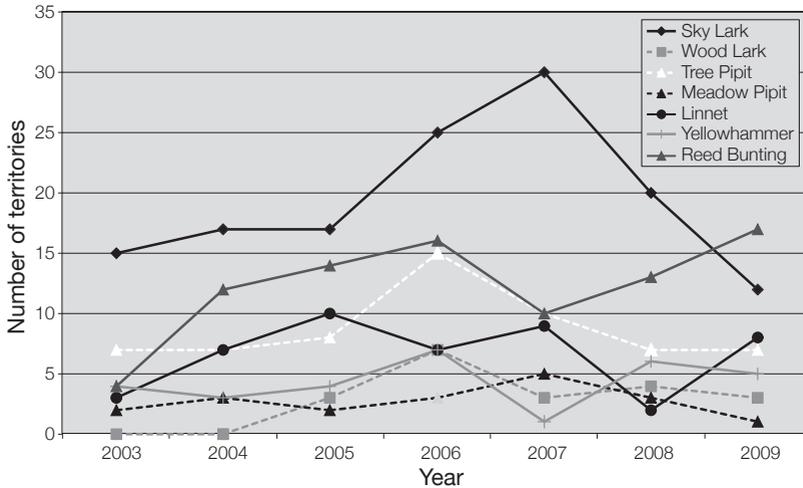


Fig. 1 Number of territories for seven bird species on Strensall Common 2003–2009

project, or areas deliberately burnt as part of grassland management. An area of conifers managed by the Forestry Commission adjacent to Strensall Common was also cleared as part of this project and this also had at least one pair of Wood Larks, plus Stonechat and Nightjar. The discovery of the Nightjar in 2004 was the first record since the early 1980s and occasional birds were seen on the common although none have been found since 2007, probably because of habitat changes. Another nocturnal species is Long-eared Owl which has been recorded every few years since 1985 and whose young are heard in the scattered pines but are rarely seen, although the hunting adults have been spotted at dusk on occasions.

Passing migrants also use Strensall Common and the grassy slopes of the ranges annually produce Wheatears during the spring, up to six on one occasion in 2004. Also Wood Warbler, Whinchat and Redstart have occasionally been recorded on passage. Another feature of Strensall Common is the interesting ‘butt-ponds’, produced when material was dug out to create the ranges’ protective rifle butts. These ponds have now grown up and have a flourishing colony of breeding Black-headed Gulls, plus Little Grebe, Greylag Geese, Sedge and Reed Warblers and Reed Buntings. Other species that are characteristic are Green Woodpeckers, often seen or heard in March or April, and warblers especially Chiffchaffs and Willow Warblers. Cuckoos are difficult to survey because they are so mobile but usually up to three singing males are estimated to be present

during April and May. As with other parts of the YOC recording area, increased sightings have been made recently of Red Kite, Common Buzzard and Hobby visiting or flying over the Common.

Overall Strensall Common has a flourishing and varied birdlife, especially in the spring and summer and monitoring these changing bird populations is an important part of the work of the local Strensall Common Conservation Group. This is comprised of MOD staff from various sections, the local tenant farmer, Natural England, the parish council and various natural history specialists. The management is determined by MOD needs with nature conservation and environmental enhancement of the heathland as an important component. The bird survey contributes to this and is an annual activity for which the author would like to thank all volunteers past and present.

Peter Reed

[A version of this article first appeared in 2010 in Sanctuary issue 39, a conservation magazine published by the Ministry of Defence – Ed]



*Kidney pond is named after its shape and holds many bird species
(Photo: Peter Reed)*

Notes

Geese In York

by Phil Bone

Since 2004 we have carried out a survey of the geese in York. All the city parks are surveyed, as well as York University, Rawcliffe Lake, the ponds at Wigginton and both sides of the River Ouse (from just south of the Millennium Bridge all the way upriver and past Clifton bridge) and the River Foss (from the north ring road to where it joins the Ouse). The count takes place on the last May bank holiday each year.

The table below is the count for 2009 with 2008 as a comparison. Canada Geese are subject to egg oiling, though this has not prevented an increase in the number of adults present. Greylags likewise are also on the increase. Ringing recoveries of Greylags ringed in York have shown that post-breeding birds have turned up in goose flocks in the Harrogate area, as well as some wintering in the Lower Derwent Valley and along the Humber, with birds even being seen at Teesside and Nottingham.

		2008	2009
Canada Goose	Full Grown	144	187
Canada Goose	Goslings	37	40
Canada Goose	Families	7	14

		2008	2009
Greylag Goose	Full Grown	245	290
Greylag Goose	Goslings	130	92
Greylag Goose	Families	31	31

Phil Bone

Allerthorpe Gravel Pits 2009

by Phil Bone

During both winter periods there were up to 35 Blue Tits and 60 Tree Sparrows regularly coming to bird feeders, as well as up to 30 Chaffinches and 20 Greenfinches. Unlike 2008 there were no large finch roosts (mainly Greenfinch and Chaffinch), or thrush roosts. However, there were two small roosts totalling about 40 birds present (which is traditional).

During the summer both Black Swan and Kingfisher were proved to be breeding on site for the first time. The Black Swans are not birds released by the site owners, one bird is pinioned and must have walked onto site from somewhere and the other is free-flying and turned up shortly after the pinioned bird arrived. While this pair built nests both in 2007 and 2008, 2009 was the first year that they laid eggs (2) but despite being brooded they failed to hatch.

There were four pairs of Little Grebe present on site and at least two pairs made two nest attempts though fledging survival was very low.

Reed Warbler

At least 16 singing males on site and 13 nests located and monitored. Several pairs were double-brooded. A better breeding season than 2008 when out of 14 nests, most were washed out and there was the depressing site of discovering large, wet and dead young. Birds did not bother to relay that year.

Turtle Dove

Not as common as in past years, when you could be almost guaranteed to at least hear if not see one! Birds were late back in 2009 and there were no sightings made until July and even then there was just the odd calling bird over the summer.

Wildfowl

The Garganey in March was a new species for the site.

Mandarin Duck in September was only the 2nd record for the site.

Wintering geese numbers (Greylag and Canada) were well down on previous years, as was Water Rail.

Elsewhere

Reed Bunting

There were up to 70 birds in the roost at Melbourne, with 36 caught here in November, when there was also a small roost of 45 Starlings.

Corn Bunting

During the spring birds were singing along the northern boundary of Pocklington airfield, with males singing most May mornings along the Pocklington – Fangfoss road, up to four males singing between Pocklington and Yapham (Sherbutt Fields Farm area) and other birds singing at Smylett Hall and in the Keldspring Crossing area. A bird was also singing in cereal fields along the A166 near Street Farm (Stamford Bridge).

Another population is between Strensall and Sutton-on-the-Forest area with up to eight singing at East Moor.

At the end of the year there were none in the Melbourne reedbed roost and it was not until 23rd December that we noticed any birds.

Phil Bone

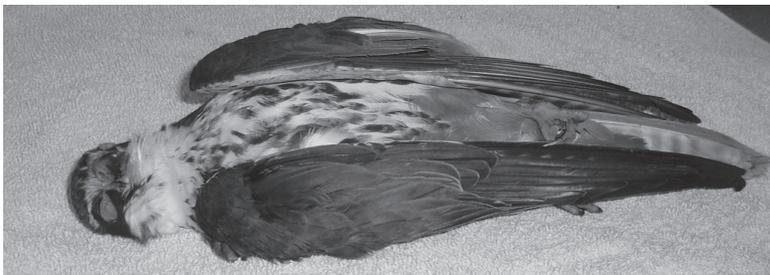
Hobby injured by power lines

by Jean Thorpe

A male Hobby was found on 4th August downed in a garden at Hemingbrough near Selby, East Yorkshire. After x-rays and examination by Andy Forsyth, vet at Battleflatts Vets at Strensall, York the bird was put to sleep. It had a fractured leg on the joint, a fractured radius on one wing and a fractured metacarpus on the other wing. The most obvious cause of the injuries looked to be overhead wire damage.

The bird weighed 164g and was examined by Craig Ralston the Head Warden of Lower Derwent Valley Nature Reserve who confirmed the bird as an adult male.

Jean Thorpe



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.

This report uses the revised version of the British List, revised and updated as a result of taxonomic changes, as at the end of 2007. 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 this order of species. Future reports will, however, adopt the new 2010 revised British List.

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

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	Cirl 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 for most sites but in many instances 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
Barton-le-Willows	715632
Beningbrough	529578
Beningbrough Hall	516586
Bielby	789437
Bilbrough	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
Canal Head, Pocklington	798474
Cape Farm, Sheriff Hutton	652683
Cass Wood, Huby	562669
Castle Howard Lake	714706
Caulkleys Bank, Nunnington	670782
Caulkleys Wood, Nunnington	665780
Cawood	573377
Cawton	643767
Chanting Hill, Welburn	724683
Church Fenton	515370
Church Bridge, Melbourne	759445

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
		Garganey Hide, North Duffield Carrs	698368
D		Garrowby Hill	798567
Danesmead Copse, York	607497	Gatehouse, Castle Howard	711695
Derwent Cottage Farm, North Duffield	700360	Gaterley	737696
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
Elvington	700476	Grimston Moor	613744
Elvington Airfield	670480		
Elvington Sewage Works	704485		

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
Healough 500477
Heslington East,
York University 6350-6450
Heslington Tillmire, York 638475
Heslington, York 627504
Hessay 524534
High Catton 718538
High Hutton 755685
High Lodge, SHL 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
Kirby Misperton 780794
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 Carr, Sutton-on-the-Forest
600623
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	Ryton Bridge	796754
Newton Carr	740494	S	
Newton upon Derwent	720495	Sand Hutton	695586
New Earswick	609555	Scackleton	650726
North Duffield Carrs	695375	Scamlands	766439
North Ings Farm, Terrington	652702	Scoreby Lodge	684513
Norton-on-Derwent	795710	Seaton Ross	780415
Nunnington (Hall)	667794	Seavy Carr, Thornton	753451
Nursery Wood, SHL	678585	Selby	615324
O		Sessions NR, New Earswick	610548
Osballdwick	633519	Settrington House	839702
Osgodby	641338	Shaw Wood, Castle Howard	700715
Oswaldkirk	625790	Sheriff Hutton	655664
Oulston Reservoir	570745	Silburn Lock,	
Ousethorpe Farm,		Pocklington Canal	797468
Pocklington	813516	Skewsby	625710
Oxton	505431	Skipwith	657385
P		Skipwith Common	653375
Petersfield Farm, Bielby	793422	Sleights, Amotherby	737758
Pocklington	802490	Slingsby	698750
Pocklington Airfield	793485	Slingsby Banks Wood	698733
Pocklington Canal	698426-800474	South Duffield	681335
Pond Head Farm, Oulston	566746	Stamford Bridge	715555
Pool Bridge Farm, Tillmire	642464	Steeton Whin	520435
Poppleton	560546	Stillingfleet	594410
Pretty Wood, Castle Howard	732690	Stillington	585678
Prospect House Farm,		Stittenham	679677
Terrington	661702	Stockton on the Forest	655561
R		Stonegrave	657777
Raker Lakes, Wheldrake	684463	Storwood	712442
Rawcliffe Bar Country Park	577547	Street Farm, Stamford Bridge	740565
Rawcliffe Ings	575544	Strensall	633608
Rawcliffe Lake	586546	Strensall Common	655600
Rawcliffe Meadows	577545	St Nicholas Fields, York	615517
Redhouse Reservoir	529575	Stubb Wood	585433
Redhouse Wood,		Sutton-on-the-Forest	584647
Moor Monkton	520573	Sutton upon Derwent	707468
Refuge, Wheldrake	708435	Swantail Hide,	
Riccall	620380	Wheldrake Ings	707438
Roscarrs	645316	Swinton	760731
Rose Cottage Farm,		Swinton Ings	772748
Terrington	669721	T	
Rossmoor Park	722436	Tang Hall Beck fields	6353
Rowntree Park, York	604508	Tang Hall, York	620520
Ryther	550392	Terrington	670707
Ryton	795757	Terrington Moor	685716
		The Retreat, York	617510

Thorganby	691420	Welburn	720680
Thorganby Ings	694416	Welburn Sewage Works	714685
Thormanby	495747	West Cottingwith Ings	695419
Thornton	760453	Westfield Farm,	
Thornton Ellers	730460	Allerthorpe Common	752482
Thurtle Wood, Terrington	692725	Westfield Farm, Thornton	743456
Tockwith	465525	West Lilling	648652
Tollerton	513643	West Ness	690790
Towthorpe	625586	Wheldrake	682450
Towthorpe Civic		Wheldrake Ings	705440
Amenity Site, York	648586	Wheldrake Wood	659466
Towthorpe Moor Lane,		White Carr Farm, Dunnington	680505
Strensall	625585-663579	Whitehill Mine	667359
Triangle Meadow, York	604547	White Carr, Flaxton	663603
		Whitwell Grange	715666
U		Wiganthorpe	662724
Ulleskelf	520400	Wigginton	595585
		Wilberfoss	734510
W		Wilks Plantation, Flaxton	662619
Waites Plantation, Heslington	630491	Winchmore, Stamford Bridge	727547
Walbut Lock		Wistow	594357
Walbutts Farm, Strensall	649620	Woodhouse Farm, Strensall	622614
Walbutts Sewage Works,		World's End Plantation	693594
Strensall	646618	Wressle	708313
Walmgate Stray, York	617505		
Waplinton Hall, Allerthorpe	776468	Y	
Warren Farm, Dunnington	674505	Yearsley	585744
Warren Wood, Dunnington	677503	Yearsley Moor/Woods	590755
Warthill	675555	York Minster	603523
Wash Dike, Skipwith Common	662372	York University campus	627506
Wass Woods	550796	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.