

# **YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB REPORT 2010**

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## **Compiled by**

P.A. Doherty, J.A. Lawson, P.J. Reed  
N.B. Stewart, P.E.W. Watson

## **Edited by M.C. Williams**

Assisted by A.J. Booth

Production by N.B. Stewart

**[www.yorkbirding.org.uk](http://www.yorkbirding.org.uk)**

## **Cover Illustrations**

- Front Cover: Little Owl *Terry Weston*
- Inside Back Cover: Osprey at Pool Bridge Farm  
*Nigel Stewart and Mike Williams*
- Outside Back Cover: Juvenile Redstart, Hassacarr NR  
Juvenile Grey Partridge, Dunnington Common  
*both Terry Weston*

# Contents

Committee	4
York Ornithological Club	5
Editorial	5
Highlights of 2010	7
Classified List	20
Contributors	81
Earliest and latest dates for migrants	82
Rare Breeding Birds in the Lower Derwent Valley	84
Red-rumped Swallow at Wheldrake Ings	87
Bird Atlas 2007–11 in the York region	88
Notes	
Allerthorpe Gravel Pits 2010	98
Species in the York recording area since 1966	100
Guidelines for the submission of records	104
The need for field descriptions	106
Gazetteer of sites in the York recording area	109

## Committee 2012

Chairman

I. Newton

Secretary

L. Newton

Treasurer

J. Dixon

Recorder

A. Booth

Email [recorder@yorkbirding.org.uk](mailto:recorder@yorkbirding.org.uk)

Assistant Recorders

P. Doherty  
J. Lawson  
P. Reed  
N. Stewart  
P. Watson

Committee members

R. Chapman  
T. Lawson  
M. Williams

## **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 Heslington East) 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) at St Olave's church hall, off Marygate, 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](http://www.yorkbirding.org.uk) for full details of club activities.

### **Editorial**

I am sure that many readers on browsing through this report for the first time will encounter a sense of confusion and bewilderment. The order of species in the systematic list, particularly from pigeons onwards, seems to be quite topsy turvy. This is a consequence of a decision made last year (highlighted in the 2009 report) that the YOC should adopt the latest taxonomic order published in December 2010. Many other local bird reports have already made this change and it is likely that other publications, including the new bird atlas due out in 2013, will adopt this reordering. Yes, it does seem strange at first, but I am sure we will grow accustomed to it as we have done with other revisions in the past.

This report has been produced from a database of just over 6,000 records including not only those from members but with input from BirdGuides and BirdTrack. The YOC website also provides a route through which non-members can submit casual records. However, an increasingly significant source of records is YorkBirding, the newsgroup organised and monitored on behalf of the YOC by Ian Traynor who also manages the YOC website. YorkBirding by its nature has a bias to the scarcer birds and the more interesting sites so it is important that observers continue to submit full records for all species across the YOC recording area.

One route that some serious birders are taking is to use BirdTrack as the home for all of their records. It ensures security and increasingly provides tools by which individuals can process and analyse their data. We are fortunate in being able to access BirdTrack records for the York area but the sheer number of such records, as many as 9,000 in one year, makes the task of extracting what is relevant quite challenging for us.

### **Bird Atlas 2007–2011**

While this report covers the birds which were recorded in 2010 it is now, at the time of writing, early autumn 2012. That means we are able, in this issue, to reflect on the BTO Atlas 2007–2011 project for which fieldwork was concluded at the end of the 2011 breeding season. To this end Rob Chapman, BTO Regional Representative for York (Yorkshire), has written an article which looks back at the atlas project with particular reference to the York area. Rob had the responsibility of organising atlas work in our area and many YOC members assisted with surveys and some with the subsequent validation of records.

Even at this stage Rob has been able to reveal some of the significant changes which have taken place in the distribution and populations of birds since the last atlas was published in 1993. The spread eastwards of Common Buzzard is well known while we are all aware of the increase in sightings and first breeding of Little Egret during the atlas period. But there have also been declines in species like Common Cuckoo and Turtle Dove. Provisional atlas results have allowed Rob to back up our subjective perceptions with hard data.

### **Acknowledgements**

As before the species accounts have been compiled by Nigel Stewart (Wildfowl to Shag), Peter Watson (Waders), Peter Reed (Bittern to Crane and Skuas to Puffin), Julia Lawson (Doves to Warblers), and Paul Doherty (Waxwing 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 and Jonathan Pomroy for the drawings, and to Ian Brookes, Mark Coates, Nigel Stewart, Ian Traynor, Terry Weston and Alan Whitehead for their photos which illustrate this report, and to Nigel once again for looking after production.

*Mike Williams*  
*editor@yorkbirding.org.uk*

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2010

## January

The year started as the last one ended – stuck in the depths of winter! Wildfowl continued to be seen in the Lower Derwent Valley but numbers were generally much reduced in the freezing conditions. The **Whooper Swan** herd in the North Duffield area peaked at 167 birds on the 13th with 130 still present on the 18th with perhaps the same **Bewick's Swan** from the previous year still tagging along. **Pink-footed Geese** were on the move in fine weather at the end of the month while three **White-fronted Geese** appeared at North Duffield Carrs on the 31st. Around 30 **Pintail** were at Bubwith Ings on the 14th with 46 drakes reported from Aughton Ings on the 23rd and a single Scaup was at Bolton Percy Ings on the 20th with a female seen at North Duffield Carrs on the 24th. Birds seeking refuge on the River Ouse included a drake **Goldeneye** at Clifton Ings on the 7th and Poppleton on the 9th with 14 **Goosanders** noted at Clifton Bridge on the 13th. Unidentified **Egret species** consisted of one flying south over Askham Richard on the 24th and another seen dropping into a field near Howden on the 25th.

Raptor reports were also scant with a male **Hen Harrier** noted flying over the A169 near Malton on the 17th and a male **Goshawk** displaying at a site near York on the 30th and 31st with **Peregrines** seen at three localities. The hard weather forced both **Common Snipe** and **Woodcock** to visit urban gardens while more unusual waders included a **Green Sandpiper** near Poppleton on the 1st. Owls were well reported with scarcer species represented by a **Long-eared Owl** near Foggathorpe on the 30th and a **Short-eared Owl** reported flying north over Huntington on the 6th. Single **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** were seen at Copmanthorpe on the 4th and Skipwith Common on the 25th while sizeable flocks of both **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** were noted. A report of a **Raven** flying over North Duffield Carrs on the 17th remained unconfirmed. A large mixed flock of finches and buntings at Long Marston on the 3rd included a **Brambling**, 60+ **Yellowhammers** and 60+ **Corn Buntings**. Two **Bramblings** were also seen at Fulford Golf Course and frequenting a garden in Copmanthorpe while the large **Linnet** flock at Rawcliffe Cornfield NR peaked at c.140 birds on the 11th with 100+ **Reed Buntings** and 90+ **Corn Buntings** also present by the 11th.

## February

Cold conditions continued with further spells of snow though temperatures did creep up at times, but never got into double figures. The **Whooper Swan** herd in the North Duffield area reached a maximum of 114 on the 14th and was accompanied by a single **Bewick's Swan** while more unusual species of geese started to appear although how much of what is hard to ascertain. A flock of 14 **Tundra Bean Geese** was reported to drop into North Duffield Carrs at dusk on the 8th as a popular group of 22 **Taiga Bean Geese** along with a single **Pink-footed Goose** were found grazing wet grassland between Byland and Coxwold on the 16th and remained until the 26th. **Pink-footed Geese** were generally on the move in good numbers and up to four **Greenland White-fronted Geese** were noted between Melbourne and Thornton on the 20th and 21st while other records probably related to **Eurasian White-fronted Geese** and totalled at least 70 birds in the Lower Derwent Valley. Numbers of duck also seemed to be on the increase with several hundred **Wigeon** and **Teal** scattered throughout the Lower Derwent and 278 **Pintail** recorded during a WeBS count on the 13th. Flooding from mid-month was more favourable for diving ducks than dabblers with good counts of **Pochard** and **Tufted Duck** while the female **Scaup** was seen at Ellerton Ings as well as North Duffield Carrs. A **Little Egret** was noted in a dyke near North Duffield village on the 14th while there was an unusual report of a **Bittern** standing at the roadside near Bilbrough on the 28th before flying



off. There were three sightings of **Marsh Harrier** with display noted by both **Goshawk** and **Sparrowhawk** but only single records of **Merlin** and **Peregrine** were received. Wader counts remained low with a **Jack Snipe** at Clifton Ings early in the month being the highlight. Immature **Iceland Gulls** were seen at Bank Island on the 21st and over Fulford Ings on the 27th. A flock of 25 **Stock Doves** at Middlethorpe Ings on the 13th was noteworthy as was a **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** reported near the Wheldrake Ings car park on the 11th. Passerines were still suffering with the harsh weather conditions though 50+ **Sky Larks** were at Thornton Ings on the 9th and flocks of **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** began to build up with a female **Blackcap** present in a garden at Cliffe from the 8th–10th. A single **Brambling** was again seen with other finches at Fulford Golf Course on the 9th while c.30 **Crossbills** were at Yearsley Moor on the 13th as the **Corn Bunting** roost at Clifton Ings peaked at 42 birds on the 19th.

## March

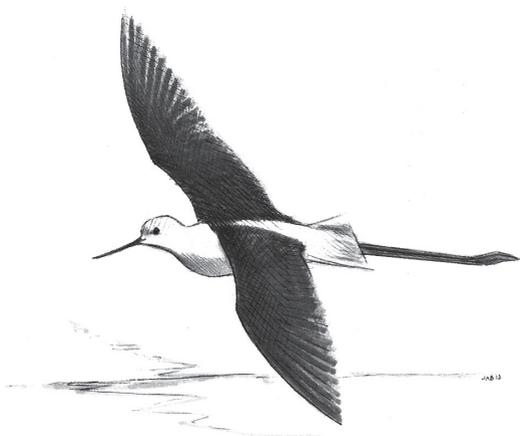
The weather was finally more spring-like by the middle of the month, allowing some of the expected summer visitors to arrive along with one or two surprises! Survey counts revealed good numbers of wildfowl in the Lower Derwent Valley as a single **Bewick's Swan** continued to be seen with the **Whooper Swan** herd (which peaked at 174 on the 16th) in the North Duffield area till at least the 17th. **Pink-footed Geese** were still passing through with a total of 1,800 birds over the Lower Derwent on the 3rd while at least three **Egyptian Geese** were reported. Records of scarcer ducks consisted of a drake **Garganey** at Seavy Carr on the 9th and the female **Scaup** still in the Ellerton area. A **Red-necked Grebe** was seen on the River Derwent at North Duffield Carrs on the 3rd and Ellerton Ings the following day while perhaps more unusual was a juvenile **Shag** recorded at Wheldrake Ings during a WeBS count on the 16th. Single **Little Egrets** were noted at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings with two **Red Kites** reported at Cawood on the 14th and another flying east over Acaster Malbis on the 21st while perhaps the same **Osprey** flew over York on the 27th and Ellerton Ings next day. An impressive total of 19 **Avocets** was at Aughton Ings on the 22nd with two **Little Ringed Plovers** at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th as well as four **Jack Snipe**. Numbers of **Black-tailed Godwit** at the latter site had increased to 25 by the 22nd while a **Green Sandpiper** was seen at the fish ponds near Hessay. More interesting gull records included a first-winter **Mediterranean Gull** and an adult **Little Gull** at Wheldrake on the

25th with a juvenile Iceland Gull seen at Harewood Whin and Wheldrake Ings. More surprising, however, was an adult **Kittiwake** noted at Clifton Ings on the 6th while a male **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was feeding on fat balls at Skipwith mid-month. The first **Sand Martin** of the spring was seen at North Duffield Carrs on the 12th while early **Barn Swallows** included singles at York Science Park on the 19th and Clifton Ings on the 27th with the first **House Martins** being two birds at Castle Howard on the 28th. In what was a poor winter for **Waxwings**, a single was at Selby on the 8th with four mobile birds present in the Fulford area of York on the 17th and 18th. A male **Wheatear** was at Bubwith Ings on the 21st while **Fieldfares** and **Redwings** were still very much in evidence. A male **Blackcap** at Askham Bog on the 30th was perhaps a new arrival as was a singing **Chiffchaff** at Wheldrake Ings on the 19th. A female **Brambling** was at Melbourne on the 24th with six at Wass Moor on the 28th along with 'many' **Crossbills**, while two **Mealy Redpolls** made a surprise visit to Clifton Park on the 10th.

## April

A dry month overall with high pressure predominating but it was generally rather cold with night frosts; however, it did warm up eventually. The remaining **Whooper Swans** were soon on the move with just a single juvenile left by mid-month. Three **Greenland White-fronted Geese** feeding in wet grassland at Strensall Common was a notable record while three **Egyptian Geese** lingered in the Lower Derwent Valley throughout the month. Two drake **Green-winged Teals** were reported from North Duffield Carrs on the 15th, presumably accounting for records of single drakes at Bubwith Ings the following day and Wheldrake Ings from the 20th–22nd at least. Eight **Pintail** remained in the Lower Derwent on the 8th with up to three **Garganey** reported at any time while a drake was at Newburgh Priory lake from the 2nd–5th. North Duffield Carrs held a fine total of 90 **Shoveler** on the 4th while a pair of **Goldeneye** was still at Wheldrake on the 7th. At least four **Black-necked Grebes** were at North Duffield Carrs on the 6th when three were seen at Wheldrake Ings. A 'large white heron with an orange-yellow bill' reported flying over Wheldrake on the 30th was most probably a **Great White Egret** while a **Little Egret** was seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 27th and three **White Storks** flew over York University towards Fulford on the 22nd. Meanwhile, an immature **White-tailed Eagle** was reported soaring over Stockton-on-the-Forest on the 9th – a known wandering individual from the Scottish east coast reintroduction scheme. Other raptors of

note included two **Red Kites** loitering over Pocklington on the morning of the 3rd, at least one **Marsh Harrier** in the Lower Derwent Valley, a female **Hen Harrier** over Strensall Common on the 8th, a notable passage of **Ospreys** and the first **Hobbies** of the year from the 20th. A **Spotted Crake** was calling at Wheldrake Ings during the month while there were a few sightings of **Common Crane**. Waders were well represented with the highlight being a **Black-winged Stilt** seen flying low west over Clifton Backies on the 26th. Otherwise, a pair of **Avocets** was discovered at North Duffield Carrs on the 15th and several **Little Ringed Plovers** were seen with a single **Grey Plover** at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th. Good numbers of **Black-tailed Godwits** remained in the Lower Derwent Valley throughout the month while the **Whimbrel** roost at Wheldrake Ings built up to a maximum of 101 birds on the 27th. Up to three **Spotted Redshanks** were seen in the Lower Derwent as well as up to four **Greenshanks** with several **Green Sandpipers** noted and a **Wood Sandpiper** present at both North Duffield and Wheldrake on the 29th and up to two **Common Sandpipers** reported from five sites from the 18th. An adult **Little Gull** was at Wheldrake on the 15th and adult **Kittiwakes** passed through North Duffield Carrs on the 12th and 13th though there were only two records of **Common Tern**.



A **Ring-necked Parakeet** was reported in Acomb, York on the 9th while the first **Cuckoo** was at Strensall on the 17th followed by several other birds in different locations although some were conspicuous by their absence at traditional sites. The first **Swift** of the year was seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th with a few others noted thereafter before a major influx took place. **Wood Larks** were now in full song at their

usual haunts with eight birds noted at one site while the first **House Martins** were three over Brandsby on the 12th. A **Tree Pipit** was singing at Strensall Common from the 9th with three there by the 18th and two at Yearsley Moor on the 29th but there appeared to be none at Skipwith Common again this year. Two **Water Pipits** were discovered at Heslington East on the 21st with this site also attracting up to three **Yellow Wagtails** from the 10th while eight birds were on the cricket pitch at Pocklington on the 24th along with a **White Wagtail**. Four **Waxwings** were seen again briefly in the Fulford area of York on the 17th, the last spring record. Single male **Common Redstarts** were noted at three sites though the only **Stonechats** that seem to have survived the hard winter was a pair at Heslington Tillmire. **Wheatears** were seen at a few sites including an impressive gathering of at least 14 birds in a ploughed field between East Cottingwith and Ellerton on the 30th. A small mixed flock of **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** was still at Clifton Ings on the 7th while the last sighting of the former species was 72 birds at Newton Mask on the 15th. Incoming summer migrants included **Grasshopper Warbler** at East Cottingwith and Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd, **Sedge Warbler** at the same site on the 12th, **Lesser Whitethroat** at Storwood on the 17th, **Common Whitethroat** and **Garden Warbler** at Allerthorpe Common on the 16th, **Wood Warbler** at Yearsley Moor on the 28th and **Willow Warbler** at Clifton Ings and Selby on the 5th. A **Brambling** was still at Wass Moor on the 2nd along with good numbers of **Siskin** and **Lesser Redpoll** while 'hundreds' of the latter were at Strensall Common on the 9th and up to 15 **Crossbills** noted at Wass Moor early in the month.

## May

Another dry month with disappointing temperatures at first before steadily warming up and then cooling off again. Two late **Whooper Swans** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th while a single **White-fronted Goose** was reported from Bank Island on the 3rd. Two **Egyptian Geese** remained in the Wheldrake area throughout the month and the only **Garganey** reported was a drake at Bank Island on the 4th. The first **Quail** of the year was calling at East Cottingwith on the 24th followed by two at Wheldrake Ings from the 26th while a **Little Egret** was seen at the same locality on the 21st. Interesting raptor records included a **Red Kite** over East Cottingwith on the 23rd, four sightings of single **Marsh Harriers** in the Wheldrake Ings area, and several **Hobbies** seen in the Lower Derwent Valley. Both **Little Ringed Plover** and **Common Ringed Plover** were noted at Wheldrake Ings late in the month but the

wader highlight was the discovery of two **Dotterels** in a recently tilled field between East Cottingwith and Ellerton on the 3rd. Apart from the usual breeding birds the only other wader record of note concerned three **Wood Sandpipers** seen briefly at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd while a **Little Gull** was reported from North Duffield Carrs on the 1st.

A **Red-rumped Swallow** was seen at Wheldrake on the 3rd and a belated record of a one-day **Nightingale** at the same location on the 29th was also received. Meanwhile, a male **Whinchat** was at Clifton Ings on the 14th with a male **Stonechat** at Heslington Tillmire on the 17th and three **Wheatears** were still at Heslington East on the 1st with birds of the Greenland race involving a single at Ellerton on the 3rd and two at East Cottingwith on the 15th. A good month for warblers was exemplified by one to two **Grasshopper Warblers** reported from five sites while single **Spotted Flycatchers** were seen at Nunnington Hall on the 8th, Skipwith Common on the 30th and Askham Bog on the 31st. The best bird of the month, however, was undoubtedly a female **Red-backed Shrike** present for only one day at North Duffield Carrs on the 24th.



## June

Mainly dry conditions persisted with light winds from a mostly northerly direction keeping things cool until the end of the month. There was a noticeable influx of **Quail** with up to 45 birds counted in the Lower Derwent Valley, several of which were trapped and ringed. A **Red Kite** was hunting over East Cottingwith on the 5th while a first-summer male **Red-footed Falcon** was reported over York the same day with

single **Hobbies** noted at three sites. Up to two **Spotted Crakes** and a **Corncrake** were calling in the Lower Derwent Valley early in the month while one to two **Green Sandpipers** were seen at three sites. A **Turtle Dove** was a surprise visitor to a garden in East Cottingwith on the 27th and a **Cuckoo** was still calling at Skipwith Common on the 11th where a **Nightjar** was heard on the 3rd with good numbers of juvenile hirundines indicating a successful start to the breeding season. Up to two **Sedge Warblers** were singing at Fulford Ings with this species and **Reed Warbler** both in residence on the small pool at Rawcliffe Country Park. The only report of **Spotted Flycatcher** concerned a single bird at East Cottingwith on the 25th while a **Raven** was observed soaring over Clifton Park on the 2nd before heading off northeast over Clifton Backies. One particular garden in East Cottingwith held impressive numbers of both **House Sparrow** and **Tree Sparrow** with respective counts of 60+ and 40+ recorded mid-month.



## July

A rather uneventful month weather-wise with temperatures about average and a mixture of sunny spells and bands of rain or showers, though amounts of precipitation were small. It was rather quiet on the birding front too as would be expected for the time of year. A **Mandarin Duck** was reported from Castle Howard Lake on the 11th while a **Quail** was calling near Tadcaster on the 7th with birds returning to the traditional site at West Lilling on the 28th when at least five birds were present with two there the following day. Single **Little Egrets** were noted at two sites within the recording area as were adult **Peregrines**. A **Common**

**Crane** was seen at both Wheldrake Ings and North Duffield Carrs on the 22nd with wader reports including a **Little Ringed Plover** flying over York University on the 1st with a pair of **Common Ringed Plovers** at Heslington East during the month. A **Greenshank** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd as up to four **Green Sandpipers** were noted at a couple of locations and a **Common Sandpiper** at Heslington East on the 20th. A first-summer **Kittiwake** flew northwest over East Cottingwith on the 11th and a pair of **Turtle Doves** was near Sheriff Hutton on the 9th with another pair between Acaster Selby and Appleton Roebuck from the 22nd. There were notable gatherings of **Swifts** and hirundines while a **Common Redstart** was observed carrying food at Yearsley Moor on the 10th with single **Whinchats** noted at one or two sites. A worn adult **Cetti's Warbler** was trapped and ringed in the car park at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st and heard singing briefly there next day while **Grasshopper Warblers** were reeling again at the latter locality as well as North Duffield Carrs. Commoner warblers were also very much in evidence and a **Spotted Flycatcher** was feeding a fledgling at Nunnington Hall on the 11th with a very vocal family party of **Jays** at Fulford Ings the day before. The West Lilling area held c.100 **Tree Sparrows** on the 29th while a single **Crossbill** was noted in Bishop Wood on the 3rd with six at Allerthorpe Common on the 18th.

## August

A relatively warm but unsettled month was fairly quiet for bird records though not bad for the time of year. Two juvenile **Grey Partridges** were a bit of a surprise at Naburn Sewage Works on the 14th and a single **Quail** was still calling at East Cottingwith the following day. A **Red Kite** was at Acaster Malbis on the 10th while a **Harrier species** seen briefly over Allerthorpe Common on the 26th may well have been something interesting with an **Osprey** at Skirpenbeck on the 21st. A probable **Merlin** dashed low north just east of Stamford Bridge on the 15th with an adult male photographed at Bolton Percy on the 17th while an adult **Hobby** flew southeast over Bubwith on the 18th. A sizeable post-breeding flock of 200 **Lapwings** was in the Strensall area on the 14th but a single **Green Sandpiper** at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th was the only indication of wader passage. Three **Yellow-legged Gulls** were at Harewood Whin on the 7th, possibly accounting for birds flying over Fulford Ings on the 21st and Elvington on the 31st; these birds were associated with a build-up of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** with 1,500+ birds at Elvington on the 31st. At least 30 **Swifts** were still flying around

Pocklington on the 13th with just single figures noted at several sites after that while **Barn Swallow** and **House Martin** flocks were building up prior to migration. More unusual was a report of nine **Tree Pipits** leaving a roost at Allerthorpe Common on the 27th before flying off high east while **Whinchat** and **Grasshopper Warbler** were still at North Duffield Carrs on the 2nd. Other species of warbler were on the move late in the month and single **Spotted Flycatchers** were seen at Clifton Ings on the 16th and 25th with two at Strensall Common on the 28th.

## September

This was a very unsettled month but the winds of change did little to liven up the birding scene, which was unusually quiet for the time of year. Over 100 **Pink-footed Geese** flew high over Rawcliffe on the 30th while the only other wildfowl records of note were 18 **Wigeon** flying south at Hagg Bridge on the 22nd and eight **Gadwall** present at Angram Ponds, Riccall on the 9th. A female **Grey Partridge** with 11 well-grown young at Sutton upon Derwent on the 3rd was a welcome sight though a late **Quail** at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th was more unexpected. A few raptors reported included a possible **Honey Buzzard** flying high southeast over Copmanthorpe on the 21st, single **Marsh Harriers** at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th and flying south over Bielby on the 26th, four **Common Buzzards** passing through Bank Island on the 4th and single **Hobbies** seen at five different sites up to the 23rd as well as four together at Castle Howard on the 12th.

A juvenile **Little Stint** at Skipwith Common on the 2nd and 3rd was a new species for that site, accompanied by two **Dunlins**, while two **Curlew Sandpipers** were reported from the bottom pond at Yearsley Moor on the 5th along with a single **Ruff**. A **Greenshank** was on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th when two **Green Sandpipers** and a **Common Sandpiper** were also present, while an impressive nine **Green Sandpipers** were along the River Ouse at Riccall on the 9th with two more at Fulford Ings on the 25th. An adult **Yellow-legged Gull** flew south with a passage of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th though more noteworthy was an adult **Caspian Gull** found and photographed at Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, just outside the recording area, on the 18th while two **Black Terns** were at Castle Howard Lake on the 7th.

Several **Swifts** were still attending nests at East Cottingwith until the 22nd and a **Nightjar** was reported from Skipwith Common on the 20th. The pre-migratory build-up of **Barn Swallow** included 400+ at

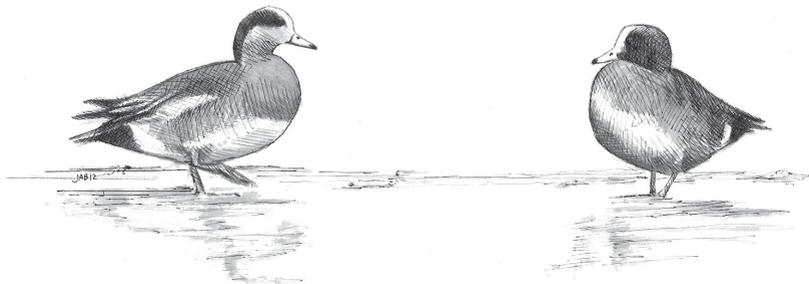
Dunnington Common on the 8th while late **Tree Pipits** were at Skipwith Common early in the month and flying over Clifton Backies on the 18th. A large gathering of some 120 **Yellow Wagtails** was at North Duffield Carrs on the 6th and 7th with a **Common Redstart** at Hassacarr NR on the 7th and 8th around which time up to seven **Whinchats** were at North Duffield Carrs as well as two **Wheatears**, with another by Wigginton Road allotments, York on the 22nd. The first **Fieldfare** of the autumn was seen at Osbaldwick on the 27th while the first **Redwings** were noted at both Osbaldwick and Sheriff Hutton on the 26th. A few different species of warbler were still around while the last **Spotted Flycatcher** was noted in Clifton Park on the 14th and a single **Brambling** graced a garden in Ampleforth on the 28th and 30th.

## October

This month's weather was mixed and rather uneventful though it was much better for birds overall. The first returning **Whooper Swans** were two at Castle Howard Lake from the 4th while a small passage of **Pink-footed Geese** was noted. The highlight of the month was a drake **American Wigeon** discovered at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th where it was seen on and off into early November. Good numbers of **Wigeon** and **Teal** were present throughout the Lower Derwent Valley though only seven **Pintail** were seen. There was an interesting run of raptors which included a juvenile **Hen Harrier** which lingered at Wheldrake Ings from the 24th–30th and up to two juvenile **Ospreys** which regularly visited fishing pools near Crockey Hill for most of the month, attracting a steady stream of admirers! A **Curlew Sandpiper** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th where up to 39 **Ruff** were seen while 14 **Jack Snipe** were trapped and ringed mid-month. Other interesting waders were up to two **Black-tailed Godwits** noted at Wheldrake on several dates and a single **Greenshank** at Bank Island on the 23rd. A **Kittiwake** was reported from Storwood on the 4th while a **Short-eared Owl** was present at North Duffield Carrs from the 8th–11th. Lingering summer visitors included **Barn Swallow** and **House Martin** though a **Rock Pipit** reported from Wheldrake Ings on two dates was more significant. The beginnings of a major **Waxwing** invasion started on the 24th while two **Stonechats** at Strensall Common on the 20th had managed to survive the previous harsh winter. Good numbers of **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** were reported while a few **Chiffchaffs** were seen along with a late **Willow Warbler** at Clifton Ings on the 11th. Two **Mealy Redpolls** were at Clifton Park on the 3rd and there was a good influx of **Brambling**.

## November

A generally mild month ended with heavy snowfall, forcing many birds to move out of the area. There were a few reports of **Whooper Swan** including up to 50 in the North Duffield Carrs area while a flock of 20 **Bewick's Swans** flew south over Howden on the 1st. Four **Bean Geese** were reported from Thorganby on the 27th, involved in a good passage of **Pink-footed Geese**, with two **White-fronted Geese** at Bank Island on the 21st and 22nd. The drake **American Wigeon** at Wheldrake Ings remained until the 7th while 19 **Goldeneye** were at Castle Howard Lake on the 12th though there were only three sightings of single **Goosanders**. At least two **Marsh Harriers** were reported from the Lower Derwent Valley while **Rough-legged Buzzards** were noted at two sites just outside the recording area with **Merlin** and **Peregrine** also seen. Wader-wise, a **Grey Plover** at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th and 10th was a good record with other interesting reports including 51 **Ruff** at the latter site on the 5th, single **Jack Snipe** at Clifton Ings on the 5th and Wheldrake on the 14th, five records of **Woodcock** including birds visiting urban gardens, and a **Green Sandpiper** frequenting Hassacarr NR. A second-winter **Caspian Gull** was reported from Bank Island on the 3rd while a juvenile **Iceland Gull** joined the roost at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd. **Sky Larks** became prominent towards the end of the month and the **Waxwing** invasion continued apace with flocks of up to 60 recorded. A probable **Black Redstart** was reported from a Bishophthorpe garden on the 18th while both **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** were present in good numbers. A **Blackcap** was in Clifton Park on the 20th when a **Firecrest** was trapped and ringed at Sutton-on-the-Forest. There were a few reports of **Brambling** with a single **Mealy Redpoll** at Castle Howard Arboretum on the 13th while the Clifton Ings area attracted good numbers of **Yellowhammer**, **Reed Bunting** and **Corn Bunting** during the month.



## December

The whole month was held in an icy grip and even the River Ouse froze over meaning there was little refuge for many birds. **Whooper Swans** in the Lower Derwent Valley increased to 92 by the 21st while a movement of **Pink-footed Geese** was again noted though reports of other wildfowl were few and far between apart from a number of **Goosanders** being forced onto still-unfrozen rivers. Up to three **Jack Snipe** were lingering at Heslington East while birds were also seen at two other sites and there were widespread reports of single **Woodcocks** with two **Black-tailed Godwits** at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st and a **Green Sandpiper** in a ditch at North Duffield on the 5th. **Barn Owls** were certainly suffering as **Waxwings** continued to prosper with **Fieldfares** and **Redwings** moving into urban gardens. A female **Blackcap** was in a Rawcliffe garden on the 30th with a **Chiffchaff** at Selby on the 10th while **Tree Sparrows** were well reported along with a few **Bramblings**. A large finch flock was feeding on birch trees at Redhouse Wood during the month including at least five **Mealy Redpolls** while Clifton Ings continued to attract good numbers of **Yellowhammer**, **Reed Bunting** and **Corn Bunting**.

*Andy Booth*  
*recorder@yorkbirding.org.uk*

## 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 last revised by BOU in 2010 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)
JRTNR	Joseph Rowntree Trust Nature Reserve, New Earswick
LDV	Lower Derwent Valley
NDC	North Duffield Carrs
NE	Natural England (formerly English Nature)
NR	Nature Reserve
RBBP	Rare Breeding Bird Panel
SHBR	Sand Hutton Bird Report (from SHL)
SHL	Sand Hutton Laboratory, Sand Hutton (formerly known as the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) now part of fera (The Food and Environmental Research Agency)
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)

The new Heslington East campus of York University is referred to simply as 'Heslington East' throughout this report, while the original campus site retains its previous reference as 'York University'.

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 most tables in this report. Any other noteworthy counts are referred to in the text.

In 2010 LDV WeBS counts took place on 13th February, 16th March, 14th April, 10th October and 21st December; those at Castle Howard Lake on 17th January, 20th February, 14th March, 25th April, 17th May, 20th June, 18th July, 14th August, 20th September, 17th October, 13th November and 17th December. In these tables a short dash (-) indicates no birds were present; a blank entry indicates that no count was made.

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 on records from within the YOC area submitted to BirdTrack and in this case we do know the observers' names. 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 2010. The information given for these shows the year last recorded.

As in previous reports 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.

### **Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*

#### ***Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor***

Once again the majority of records came from the Lower Derwent Valley and Castle Howard Lake; both sites have a healthy resident population with regular breeding taking place. Numbers increased

during the winter months with peak counts in the Lower Derwent Valley of 123 on 14th April and 113 on 21st December; at Castle Howard Lake there were peaks of 51 on 17th January and 81 on 13th November. Elsewhere two pairs were at York University Lake most of the year with one pair probably breeding plus at least two pairs on the River Ouse throughout the year south of York down to Naburn and occasional sightings to the north at Clifton Ings and at Poppleton. Other pairs were noted at Rawcliffe Lake on 13th March, at Loftsome Bridge over the River Derwent on 13th April and at Skipwith Common on the 24th. An interesting record of 26 at Coneysthorpe on 17th June probably involved the Castle Howard birds while other records were of two on the pool at SHL on 23rd June and a single at Heslington East on 21st November.

#### Monthly WeBS counts for Mute Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	51	41	25	20	49	61	81	63
LDV		98	114	123		74		113

#### **Bewick's Swan** *Cygnus columbianus*

##### *Declining winter visitor and passage migrant*

A single bird, probably the one from the previous year, was seen feeding with Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* at Derwent Cottage Farm near North Duffield Carrs early in the year and remained up to 17th March at least (PR). Towards the end of the year a flock of 20 was seen just outside the YOC recording area flying south over Howden on 1st November.

#### **Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

##### *Winter visitor*

Numbers in the Lower Derwent Valley in the first winter period peaked at 174 on 16th March with the main concentration at the southern end, feeding in fields by Derwent Cottage Farm near Bubwith during the day and roosting anywhere between North Duffield Carrs and Ellerton Ings. Birds on the move in this period included six over SHL on 8th February, eight over Coxwold on the 25th, 18 seen flying over the Museum Gardens, York on 3rd March and 50 over Terrington on the 7th. Interestingly, 31 heading over York University on 10th April had been seen departing from Wheldrake Ings some 30 minutes earlier.

One or two, probably injured birds, remained at North Duffield Carrs during the summer while the first returning bird was noted at Castle Howard Lake on 20th September with 11 counted there on 17th October. In the Lower Derwent Valley four were seen at Bank Island on

14th October with numbers increasing throughout the valley to 92 by 21st December. Additionally ten flew over Osbaldwick on 17th October and eight went over Clifton Backies on 21st November.

#### Monthly WeBS counts for Whooper Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	-	-	-	-	1	11	6	-
LDV		131	174	33		2		92

#### **Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*

##### *Scarce winter visitor*

A good series of records this year started with 14 birds of the Tundra race *rossicus* over North Duffield Carrs on 8th February with three found at Thornton Ellers the next day (both PR) and a further seven noted between Aughton and Bubwith on the 17th (JL). A remarkable 22 birds of the Taiga race *fabalis* were found in a field near Coxwold on 16th February (JP, AB, RS), subsequently confirmed as the same flock seen at Saltholme RSPB reserve on Teesside; they were accompanied by a single Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* and remained in the area until the 26th.

At the back end of the year four Tundra race birds were with Pinkfeet at Thorganby Ings on 27th November (CR per RS).

#### **Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

##### *Winter visitor and passage migrant*

There were many reports of skeins flying over the region this year with the more notable counts being 180 over Ellerton on 6th January, 180 over Melbourne on 3rd February, 100+ west over East Cottingwith on 2nd March and 1,800 over North Duffield Carrs the next day. Birds on the ground included a flock of 43 at the Water Treatment Works, Elvington on 3rd January that relocated to Thorganby Ings by the 31st, up to ten reported widely throughout the Lower Derwent Valley during the first winter period and a single bird that accompanied the Taiga Bean Geese *Anser fabalis fabalis* at Coxwold mid-February.

From early September there were further reports of birds flying over as they returned to their wintering grounds, most notably 250 over Clifton Ings on 30th September, 140 over Sherburn in Elmet on 7th November with 250 over Wheldrake Ings on the 14th. A large movement on 27th November involved 600+ over the Fulford Ings area with 1,200 through the Lower Derwent Valley. Later, 11 were on the new scrapes at Pool Bank Fisheries, Crockey Hill on 11th December with nine feeding in stubble near Wilberfoss from the 13th–14th. Small numbers were also reported throughout the Lower Derwent Valley.

**White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*

**Scarce winter visitor**

Three were present at North Duffield Carrs on 31st January while a flock of 31 flew over on 1st February with five returning later and remaining at this site until 7th February. Four birds were also at Wheldrake Ings on the 7th increasing to 12 by the 13th while an impressive 51 were at Thornton Ings on the 9th. Four birds of the Greenland race *flavirostris* were by the Pocklington Canal near Melbourne from 20th–21st February with three reported from a field on the Flaxton side of Strensall Common on 12th April. A bird of the nominate race was at Bank Island on 3rd May and later in the year two were present there on 22nd November.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

**Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor**

Common and widely reported throughout the recording area. Large numbers in the Lower Derwent Valley, as to be expected, were present early in the year with a WeBS count of 2,300 here on 13th February. Other notable counts were of 300 at the Water Treatment Works, Elvington on 3rd January, 762 at Castle Howard Lake on 20th June, 140 at Skipwith Common on 18th August, 218 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 18th September and 184 at Slingsby Carrs on 19th November. Up to 2,000 were again in the Lower Derwent Valley at the back end of the year.

**Monthly WeBS counts for Greylag Goose**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	72	62	68	15	169	-	21	10
LDV		2,300	433	540		1,897		1,980

**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

**Resident feral breeder and winter visitor**

As with the previous species, this is a common goose which was seen widely throughout the recording area. Good numbers were reported from the Lower Derwent Valley throughout the year with a maximum WeBS count of 1,005 on 10th October, while at Castle Howard Lake numbers peaked during the summer with 315 present on 20th June. The only other large flocks were 95 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 18th September and 108 on the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 30th October.

### Monthly WeBS counts for Canada Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	31	29	42	86	17	79	111	113
LDV		435	324	321		1,005		870

### **Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

#### *Occasional winter visitor and feral wanderer*

A flock of 19 was at Wheldrake Ings from 7th–13th February with 31 reported from Thornton Ings on 9th February; subsequently the Wheldrake birds relocated to North Duffield Carrs by 2nd March.

Later in the year a single was at Bank Island on 13th October and 30 dropped in at the new lake at Heslington East although they may have been the feral birds from the older York University Lake, while a single bird was reported from Slingsby Carr on 19th November.

### **Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla*

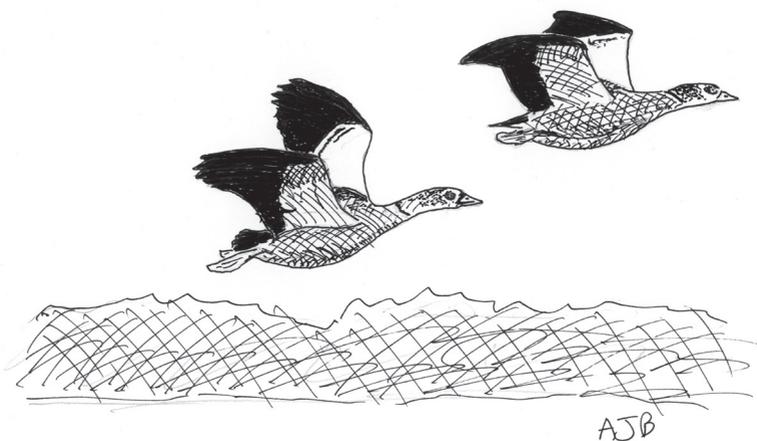
#### *Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant*

Not recorded in 2010 after appearances in 2007 and 2009.

### **(Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca*)

#### *Rare visitor from feral population*

Up to three were in the Lower Derwent Valley from 16th March to the end of May with one sporting a BTO ring. They were occasionally reported from North Duffield Carrs and Bank Island but mainly frequented Wheldrake Ings. These birds apparently visited the Calder Wetlands in West Yorkshire during this period but had returned to Bank Island by 26th May.



**(Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*)

*Vagrant, most records being of escaped birds*

There were no reports in 2010 after records in 2001, 2002 and 2009.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

*Winter visitor, migrant breeder and scarce autumn passage migrant*

Early in the year 50–60 were at Ellerton with a WeBS count of 159 throughout the Lower Derwent Valley on 16th March. Four were reported from Wistow Common on 7th February with at least ten at Newburgh Priory lake from 21st February to 19th March while a pair flew over Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on 4th April. In May two pairs were noted prospecting rabbit holes near Rabbit Warren Wood, Dunnington on the 5th and two were in a flooded meadow at Low Carr Farm, Haxby the same day.

Later in the year an immature flew upriver at Clifton Ings on 8th September plus five over Skipwith Common on the 29th. Four were noted at the Water Treatment Works, Elvington on 3rd November while at least 15 had returned to the Lower Derwent Valley by the year's end.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Shelduck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV		111	159	117		-		15

**(Mandarin Duck** *Aix galericulata*)

*Scarce visitor mostly in the winter period*

Just a single bird was reported at Castle Howard Lake on 11th July.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

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

Good numbers wintered in the Lower Derwent Valley as usual early in the year with a WeBS count of 14,803 on 16th March, but a maximum of just 147 was noted at Castle Howard Lake during the same period.

Returning birds again made use of the ponds at Skipwith Common with 130 seen there in late September while 10,200 were back in the Lower Derwent Valley by late December. Castle Howard Lake fared better during the second winter period with 279 counted there on 17th

Monthly WeBS counts for Eurasian Wigeon

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	54	147	41	-	28	279	266	52
LDV		13,689	14,803	1,780		2,210		10,200

October but the only reports away from these sites were of singles at Redhouse Reservoir on 2nd November and the Water Treatment Works, Elvington on 3rd November.

**American Wigeon** *Anas americana*

*Vagrant*

A drake was discovered on Swantail Ings at Wheldrake on 26th October (LJ per RS) and remained to 7th November. This is the 4th record for the YOC area following sightings in 2006 and 2007.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

*Winter visitor and migrant breeder*

Two pairs were on floods at Clifton Ings on 3rd January while early winter numbers peaked at 231 in the Lower Derwent Valley on 13th February with 187 remaining on 14th April.

A few pairs probably bred at Wheldrake Ings while a pair was also seen at Skipwith Common though breeding wasn't proved this year with just the drake remaining at the end of May.

Small numbers were also present throughout the year at Castle Howard Lake with a peak of 47 wintering there on 13th November. Eight birds were on the River Ouse near Riccall on 9th September and 43 were counted in the Lower Derwent Valley at the end of December.

**Monthly WeBS counts for Gadwall**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	14	19	15	6	11	35	47	42
LDV		231	158	187		21		43

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca*

*Winter visitor and resident breeder*

Up to 12 were on floods at Clifton Ings in early January with seven on the River Ouse at Fulford at the end of the month. Eleven were on the River Derwent near Stamford Bridge through February while 48 flew over Clifton Ings on the 23rd and there was a peak count of 150 at Skipwith Common on the 28th with up to 60 on Newburgh Priory lake in early March. At the two main sites wintering numbers peaked at 182 at Castle Howard Lake on 17th January and an impressive 6,411 were in the Lower Derwent Valley on 16th March.

Small numbers were noted at various sites through the summer while up to 17 were back on the River Derwent near Stamford Bridge from early October. A peak count of 180 was recorded again at Castle Howard

Lake on 13th November with 2,390 throughout the Lower Derwent Valley by the end of the year. Over 300 of these regularly commuted between here and Skipwith Common during this time while 30+ were on the River Ouse by Clifton Ings from 14th to 15th December.

#### Monthly WeBS counts for Eurasian Teal

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	182	84	15	4	5	16	180	12
LDV		4,111	6,411	2,100		1,880		2,390

#### **Green-winged Teal** *Anas carolinensis*

##### *Rare visitor*

Two drakes were at North Duffield Carrs on 15th April (CR per RS), one relocating to Wheldrake Ings on the 20th (DR) where it remained to the 22nd.

#### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

##### *Winter visitor and resident breeder*

A common and widespread duck recorded widely throughout the area. Surprisingly perhaps, in the Lower Derwent Valley, the peak count was of just 1,865 birds early in the year but a more respectable total of 4,350 was recorded towards the year end. Numbers at Castle Howard Lake were generally from 200–300 but with a peak count of 621 there on 18th July, probably including many young birds, while winter numbers peaked at 415 in December. The only other counts of note were 95+ at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, up to 130 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn and 320 at the Water Treatment Works, Elvington.

#### Monthly WeBS counts for Mallard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	222	145	97	72	287	159	226	415
LDV		1,865	425	1,800		3,120		4,350

#### **Pintail** *Anas acuta*

##### *Winter visitor and scarce breeder*

This species is normally present in the Lower Derwent Valley each winter period but numbers depend on the degree of flooding. Relatively few records were received this year. A single bird was on Bolton Percy Ings on 20th January with 46 drakes at Aughton Ings on the 23rd, while 278 were recorded in a WeBS count in the Lower Derwent Valley on 13th February with 64 similarly noted there at the end of December.

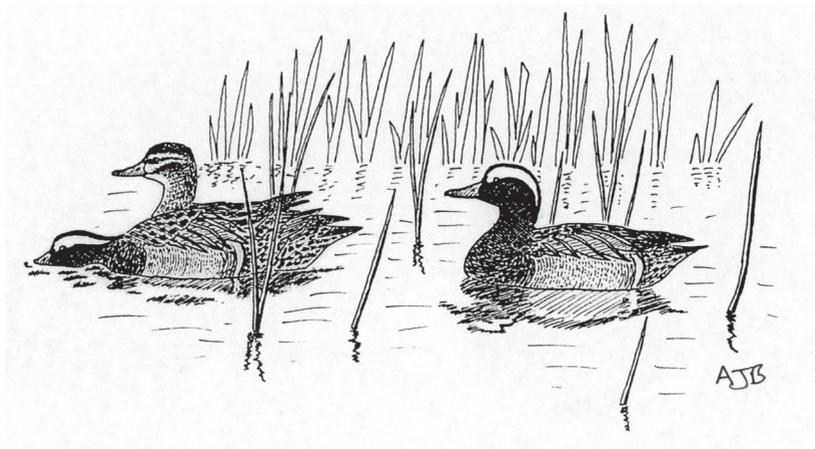
### Monthly WeBS counts for Pintail

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LDV		278	-	158		29		64

### **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

#### *Scarce migrant breeder*

The first of the year was at Seavy Carr on 9th March followed by four at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th. A drake graced Newburgh Priory lake for three days from 2nd April with another at North Duffield Carrs from the 16th to 27th and two drakes seen there on 8th May. Two pairs were also at Wheldrake Ings from 18th to 27th April with a drake remaining there until 17th May but again there were no sightings later in the year.



### **Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

#### *Winter visitor and resident breeder in small numbers*

This is another duck recorded in small numbers, mostly in the winter periods. Three were on floods at Clifton Ings on 3rd January with small numbers seen at Skipwith Common for much of the year. All other sightings came from the Lower Derwent Valley with a peak count of 612 on 14th April and 62 there at the year end.

### Monthly WeBS counts for Shoveler

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LDV		311	-	612		19		62

### **Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

#### *Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers*

Present throughout the year at Castle Howard Lake with a peak count of 36 on 20th February while in the Lower Derwent Valley numbers reached a maximum of 217 with most being seen around Aughton Ings. Elsewhere a couple was seen on the boating lake at Rowntree Park, York during March and a pair bred at York University Lake.

#### Monthly WeBS counts for Common Pochard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	20	36	8	-	-	11	-	10
LDV		211	170	8		5		11

### **Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

#### *Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers*

Good numbers were present throughout the year at Castle Howard Lake with a peak count of 148 on 20th February; the Lower Derwent Valley held a maximum of 322 birds also in February but counts there only reached 30 at the back end of the year. Small numbers were again noted at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits throughout the year with a maximum of 16 at any one time, with birds also commuting to the nearby Allerthorpe Water Park. Elsewhere double figures were noted at the Water Treatment Works, Elvington early and late in the year while small numbers were on the River Ouse south of York down to Naburn.

At Loftsome Bridge where the A63 crosses the River Derwent two pairs were seen on 13th April with a male and two females at the same location on 15th June but while suitable habitat is present no evidence of breeding was noted. At Skipwith Common up to 12 were present early in the year peaking at 15 in May but again there was no evidence of breeding. Birds were also noted at Newburgh Priory lake, SHL and Rawcliffe Lake.

#### Monthly WeBS counts for Tufted Duck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	82	148	110	34	26	33	65	58
LDV		322	227	177		34		32

### **Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila*

#### *Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers*

A single bird was at Bolton Percy Ings late afternoon on 20th January while a female at North Duffield Carrs on the 24th was then seen at Ellerton Ings up to 4th March.

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

*Very scarce winter visitor*

Not recorded in 2010 though seen each year from 2006 to 2008.

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant*

Up to 15 were present at Castle Howard Lake early in the year with at least 12 in the second winter period while numbers peaked at 14 in March at Wheldrake Ings. Single birds were sighted on the River Ouse at Clifton on 7th January and at Poppleton on the 9th, Newton on Ouse on 7th February and later in the year at SHL on 12th October with three at the Water Treatment Works, Elvington on 13th November.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Goldeneye

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	14	11	15	-	-	1	12	10
LDV		14	14	2		-		3

**Smew** *Mergellus albellus*

*Scarce winter visitor*

Not recorded in 2010, the last records being in 2007 and 2008.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

*Very scarce winter visitor*

Not recorded this year with the most recent sighting being in 2008.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

*Regular winter visitor and passage migrant*

Single figure counts were noted during the winter months at Castle Howard Lake with a maximum of seven on 17th January. The Lower Derwent Valley similarly held very few birds this year although good numbers were reported from nearby Raker Lakes, Wheldrake with 46 there on 12th February. Again noted regularly along the River Ouse during the winter periods both to the north and south of York with peak counts of 17 at Poppleton on 10th January and 16 by Bishopthorpe Bridge on 12th November. Ten were on the River Derwent at Buttercrambe Bridge on 3rd February. Other single-figure sightings came from the River Wharfe at Cawood, the Water Treatment Works at Elvington, on the new lake at Heslington East, Newburgh Priory lake, Redhouse Reservoir, SHL and the River Derwent near Stamford Bridge. Towards the year end 28 were located on open water by Linton Lock near Newton on Ouse on 21st December.

There was also a single summer sighting of four juvenile/female types on the River Rye near Nunnington on 29th July which may suggest breeding having taken place, but no evidence was found.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*  
*Formerly resident breeder in small numbers but now scarce visitor following national cull*

No records this year so it would seem that the national cull has eradicated this species from the YOC area. Interestingly the first record of Ruddy Duck in the area appears to have been in 1981 since when the species was recorded annually and bred most years from 1983 to 2003.

**Red-legged Partridge** *Alectoris rufa*  
*Resident breeder*

Single-figure counts were reported widely from suitable areas throughout the region while double-figure counts included 18 at East Cottingwith on 2nd January, 20 at Thorganby on the 31st, ten in a meadow by Low Carr Farm, Haxby on 3rd May, 25 at Kelfield Manor on 2nd September, 25 by Pocklington Sewage Works on 14th October and 24 at Thornton on the 24th, with ten seen regularly at Naburn Sewage Works during the latter part of the year.

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*  
*Resident breeder*

Not as common as the previous species with small numbers reported from Clifton Backies, Dunnington Common, East Cottingwith, Ellerton, Low Carr Farm (Haxby), Low Lane (Heslington), Naburn Sewage Works, Pocklington Industrial Estate, Thornton and Wilberfoss, while a female with 11 young was seen near Sutton upon Derwent on 3rd September.

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

The first of the year was one at East Cottingwith on 24th May and heard again from here at the end of May but the bulk of reports came as usual from the Lower Derwent Valley where up to 22 spent the summer with the last sighting coming from Wheldrake lngs on 8th September. Of interest, four birds caught here on 4th June included a bird ringed the previous year. Elsewhere at least two birds were again at a traditional site in West Lilling during July with a single bird singing from a wheat field at Skirpenbeck later that month.

**Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*  
*Resident breeder*

Common and regularly encountered in farmland throughout the recording area. The highest counts were 20 at Moreby near Naburn in May and 35 around Pocklington Sewage Works from late October into November.

**Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus*  
*Scarce autumn visitor on passage*

Not recorded in 2010 though seen the previous year.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
*Passage and winter visitor; recently established resident breeder*

Present throughout the year at Castle Howard Lake with a peak of 44 in May, possibly representing 20+ pairs breeding there, while six nests with eight fledged young were reported from the Wheldrake Ings colony. Elsewhere single-figure numbers were reported from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and Allerthorpe Water Park, Clifton Ings, Newhay, Poppleton, along the River Ouse between York and Naburn, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge and at York University Lake.

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*  
*Very scarce and irregular visitor*

An immature was reported from Wheldrake Ings on 16th March (WeBS), the first since 1996 and the 8th record for the area.

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*  
*Very scarce, mostly winter visitor*

Now nearly an annual visitor, one which was recorded on 28th February by the side of Field Lane, Bilbrough (near the junction with the A64) then took flight towards nearby farmland (RA).

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*  
*Very scarce, but becoming more frequent*

A species seen annually since 2003, one roamed the Lower Derwent Valley between 14th February and 21st May while another was sighted along the River Ouse between Linton Lock and Newton on Ouse on 14th July.

**Great White Egret** *Ardea alba*  
*Rare vagrant*

Not recorded in 2010 although seen in each of the previous two years.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

**Resident breeder**

Over the River Ouse, opposite Clifton Ings, a new heronry of at least four nests was set up but no other heronries were reported this year. Single birds were reported throughout the YOC area in suitable habitats with a maximum of 21 in the LDV on 14th April, six at Castle Howard Lake on 17th May and ten together at Wheldrake Ings on 16th June.

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

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

Three drifted slowly westwards over York University Lake on the afternoon of 22nd April (RS).

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

**Resident breeder, more widespread in winter**

Frequently recorded throughout the year at various sites in the Lower Derwent Valley, and at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits where three pairs and two nests were found. Breeding also occurred at Skipwith Common where two broods were reported, and breeding was suspected in the LDV and at Strensall Common. A few also wintered at Castle Howard Lake and on the River Ouse between York and Poppleton.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

**Resident breeder and passage visitor**

On York University Lake one pair was established by 28th January and two pairs had nests by the end of March. At one, two well grown young were present on 28th May and the pair bred again. The other pair eventually produced three chicks in early August but none were thought to have survived. Also bred at Castle Howard Lake where two young were reared, and at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits (two) and Naburn Marina (three). Breeding also occurred at Rawcliffe Lake although the two pairs there were unsuccessful.

Birds wintered at Elvington Sewage Works, Castle Howard Lake, Naburn Marina and on the River Ouse while birds were occasionally sighted within the Lower Derwent Valley.

**Monthly WeBS counts for Great Crested Grebe**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	-	3	6	8	6	5	7	4	6	8	10	1
LDV		-	4	-						-		-

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena*

*Very scarce winter visitor*

One was present between Ellerton and North Duffield Carrs on 3rd and 4th March (PR). This is the 4th record in the last ten years and follows one in 2009.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

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

With nearly annual sightings on passage, this year four birds were seen at North Duffield Carrs on 6th April (RS) while up to three were present at Wheldrake Ings between 6th and 13th April (RS *et al.*).

**Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*

*Irregular passage migrant*

An annual visitor since 2005, an autumn passage bird flying high to the southeast over Copmanthorpe on 21st September (TD) was the only record this year.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

*Irregular visitor in increasing numbers from reintroduction schemes*

Now an annual overflying visitor to the area, a pair circled over SHL on 11th February and singles were seen over Acaster Malbis, Cawood and Tollerton during March. Two lingered over Pocklington during the morning of 3rd April and another pair was over York on the 16th. Singles were also recorded during May and June at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits and East Cottingwith.

In the autumn singles were seen at Strensall Common on 20th October and Sherburn in Elmet on 18th November.

**White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla*

*Vagrant*

A raptor claimed to be this species was seen over Stockton-on-the-Forest on 9th April and was a potential first for the club recording area but the brief description received was deemed to be insufficient to establish its identity beyond reasonable doubt. The bird, according to the observer, was seen soaring at considerable height being mobbed by two Buzzards *Buteo buteo*. Nevertheless, a bird of this species which had been released as part of the Fife reintroduction programme nearly two years previously was sighted at a number of locations in Yorkshire at this time including the Humber area the day before the Stockton record

and at Barden Scale northeast of Skipton the day after. Previously it had toured the northeast being seen at Flamborough Head, on the Humber, in Northumberland and at Tophill Low.]

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

***Passage migrant and rare breeder, now also scarce winter visitor***

Singles were around North Duffield Carrs and Melbourne on 8th February and one flew over Clifton Backies, York on the 12th, with others at Skipwith Common on 1st March, 27th April and 6th May. During the summer a female was noted at many sites in the LDV but no breeding was confirmed. From September until December at least one male and one female were noted on 12 dates.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

***Mostly a very scarce winter visitor***

Recorded almost annually: a male flew over the A169 by the River Rye just north of Malton on 17th January (BirdGuides) and on 8th April a female flew over Strensall Common while being mobbed by a Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* and numerous Carrion Crows *Corvus corone* (BirdTrack). In the autumn a juvenile was present at Wheldrake Ings from 24th–30th October (JL per RS).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

***Passage visitor and rare breeder***

Continuing the recent increase in sightings, one was hunting at a Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus* roost at Selby on the morning of 16th January (PRd) while a male was seen displaying on five dates between 30th January and 21st March over Bishopthorpe Palace and Fulford Ings (AB). A female was also seen at Allerthorpe Common on 1st March (IA) and a male was displaying there on 16th April (IA). On 2nd March another was over the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne (BirdTrack) and on the 18th an immature female with tatty wings and four Common Buzzards *Buteo buteo* were seen drifting west over Ampleforth (JP).

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

***Resident breeder and passage migrant***

Commonly recorded throughout the area during the year, including gardens where sometimes seen catching prey. Pairs or displaying birds were noted at Fulford Ings, Lodgefield near Ampleforth and along the River Ouse between York and Naburn. At Selby three were seen hunting

at a Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) roost on 15th January and a male hunted through a flock of Siskins (*Carduelis spinus*) along the River Derwent at Stamford Bridge on 26th November. One was killed at SHL while hunting a pigeon, probably by flying into a window.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

*Passage migrant and scarce resident breeder*

Another impressive year, with ones and twos seen across the whole area and throughout the year. Higher numbers were five over Baffam Farm (Bugthorpe) on 27th January, five at SHL on 9th February, at least seven over Terrington on 7th March and eight over Welburn on 23rd May.

In the autumn, seven were over Dunnington Common on 7th October and eight near Ganthorpe on the 8th.

**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*

*Rare visitor mostly in winter*

Single birds were reported flying south over Copmanthorpe on 21st February (BirdGuides) and around Holtby and Stockton-on-the-Forest on 2nd October (JB) but neither of these records has been confirmed. Just out of the area, but of interest, was one between Warter and Millington in the Yorkshire Wolds on 18th November (CG) and another some 12km west of Easingwold on the 23rd (DD).

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

*Regular passage migrant*

A good year for this annual species. The first was one flying north over Hull Road, York on 27th March (CG) and another was at Ellerton Ings the following day (BirdGuides). During April, singles were seen at Askham Bog on the 1st (BirdGuides), Wheldrake on the 3rd (CR per RS), North Duffield Carrs on the 8th (BirdGuides), SHL on 13th (SHBR) and around Wheldrake Ings from the 21st–23rd (TD).

The autumn return passage produced one at Skirpenbeck on 21st August before a long staying immature bird was first seen on 4th October at York University Lake (JL) before flying off southeast and seen over Crockey Hill (per RS). It was then re-discovered the following day at Pool Bridge Farm Fishery, Crockey Hill where it stayed until 16th October giving good views for many observers. This bird, or another, was later seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th and again at the Crockey Hill fishery on 10th November. Another bird joined this long-stayer for the day on 8th October.

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*  
*Resident breeder*

Frequently seen across the region with more notable records of at least three displaying over Fulford Ings on 12th March and one pair with two juveniles were seen there later in July. Four were at Skipwith Common on 28th April with juveniles seen later in the summer and five were in a family party at the former North Selby Mine near Escrick on 14th September. An injured male bird at Naburn Sewage Works on 30th October was taken into care.

**[Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus*  
*Vagrant*

A first-summer male was reported circling over the junction of the A1237 and Moor Lane, Woodthorpe mid-morning on 6th June, before flying off towards York racecourse (BirdGuides). No description was received of what would otherwise have been the 8th sighting for the York area.]

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*  
*Passage migrant and winter visitor*

In the first part of the year singles were seen at Ellerton on 7th February (PR), East Cottingwith on the 10th (MaW) and North Duffield CARRS on 5th March (RD), while one sat outside the Geoff Smith hide for ten minutes giving good views (EB) at the same location on the 14th.

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*  
*Passage and scarce summer visitor*

With a good selection of records this year, the first was at Wheldrake Ings on 20th April followed by a pair displaying at Skipwith Common on the 21st. Thereafter, more notable records were a pair near Haxby apparently searching for a nest site on 3rd May, and singles hunting House Martins *Delichon urbicum* and Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* at East Cottingwith on 14th June, catching a House Martin at Ampleforth on the 25th, chasing Common Swifts *Apus apus* at Clifton Ings on the 29th and hunting Barn Swallows over the lake at SHL on 31st August.

A family party of two adults and two juveniles was at Castle Howard Lake on 12th September while the last of the year was near Naburn on 11th October.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

**Winter and passage visitor**

At the start of the year one was around Ruddins Ings northwest of Poppleton on 1st January with another at Clifton Backies on the 4th and York city centre on the 10th. Others were at Youlthorpe on 23rd January, Bishopthorpe on 13th February, Pocklington Church on 14th March and Wheldrake Ings on the 15th and 30th.

During the summer there were records of an immature flying out of Clifton Park on 23rd June and at Sherburn in Elmet on 19th July, both carrying prey.

During the autumn singles were seen at Selby, North Duffield Carrs and Wheldrake Ings on various dates.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

**Resident breeder and winter/passage visitor**

As usual there were not many records of this secretive bird with singles seen or heard at the Melbourne reedbed on 23rd January, Rawcliffe Ings on 3rd February, Skipwith Common from 17th April and at North Duffield Carrs on 5th May. At Skipwith Common it was thought four pairs bred with two juveniles seen on 4th August and an adult ringed on 22nd September. In the autumn 11 were counted during the WeBS count of the Lower Derwent Valley on 10th October and one was at Wheldrake Ings on 29th October and 5th November, with two calling at the Melbourne reedbed the following day.

**Spotted Crane** *Porzana porzana*

**Very scarce passage migrant and breeder**

As many as five calling males were recorded in the RBBP report for the LDV (see page 84) but no other records were received.

**Corncrake** *Crex crex*

**Very scarce summer migrant and irregular breeder**

After an exceptional year for this species in 2009 a possible three birds only were included in the RBBP report for the LDV (see page 84) while the only other record was of one calling intermittently for a short time at East Cottingwith Ings on 14th June (PR).

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

**Common resident and winter visitor**

Frequently seen throughout the year over the whole area, with higher counts (over 20) at York University Lake (22), Castle Howard

Lake (24) and Allerthorpe Gravel Pits (22). At Skipwith Common a few colour-ringed birds were found to have returned after the hard winter of 2009/10, and one controlled bird had been ringed at Wheldrake Ings three years before. One was taken by a cat at Heslington East on 9th December.

#### Monthly WeBS counts for Moorhen

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	19	46	22	10	15	11	20	27	27	32	42	15
LDV		189	220	212						189		78

#### **Coot** *Fulica atra*

##### *Common resident and winter visitor*

Commonly found on most areas of open water with high counts (100 or more) at North Duffield Carrs on 30th April (120) and at Castle Howard Lake on 19th December in two areas of unfrozen water (100). Breeding was recorded at many sites, even on small ponds in some cases.

#### Monthly WeBS counts for Coot

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	390	209	115	33	51	74	132	187	227	217	240	370
LDV		98	429	369						13		42

#### **Common Crane** *Grus grus*

##### *Scarce vagrant*

Now of nearly annual occurrence in the YOC area, two were displaying at Skipwith Common on 10th April (BirdGuides) and four were at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th (RS) with another at Thorganby Ings the following day (CR).

Overall at least two pairs were intermittently present at Skipwith Common and in the Lower Derwent Valley NNRs on a series of dates between 4th and 21st April, displaying and tentatively nest building but there was no real evidence of breeding.

#### **Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

##### *Passage migrant and scarce breeder*

Just two were in the Lower Derwent Valley on 13th February, followed by a peak of 32 on the 16th but decreasing to 14 on 14th April (WeBS).

Other records cover March to July and were mostly of ones or twos, of which most were from the Lower Derwent Valley but with 18 records from other locations including Heslington East.

Higher counts (four or more) were seven at Ellerton Ings on 7th March where young were seen on 18th May, six at North Duffield Carrs on 10th April, five at Castle Howard on 11th July and four at Allertorpe Lakeland Park on 26th July.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

*Vagrant*

One flew low and west early morning over Clifton Backies on 26th April (AW). This is only the 2nd record of this species in the YOC area with the 1st in 1993.

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

*Rare summer visitor*

A good year for records with nineteen at Aughton Ings on 22nd March "displaying like mad" (RS) and two at North Duffield Carrs on 15th April (AB, MW, NS).

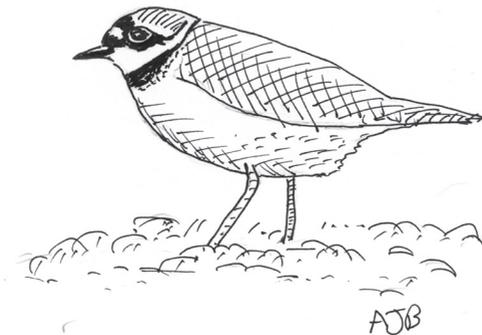
**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

*Scarce summer breeder and passage migrant*

First record was of two birds on 25th March at Wheldrake Ings where singles or a pair were seen up to seven times till 28th May.

Most records were from the new Heslington East site for the period between 10th April to 18th June where two or three were regularly seen but with occasions in late May and early June of up to eight birds. Birds were regularly seen displaying but breeding was not confirmed.

Other records came from Pocklington Industrial Estate with two birds on 2nd April. A single was at Allertorpe Lakeland Park on 4th June where two adults and a chick were seen on 26th July. One was at Bootham Stray on 17th April with three there on the 24th.



**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

*Passage migrant*

One was on a bare area of arable land near Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 17th April.

A pair was displaying and nest scraping as well as chasing away three Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* on 13th June at Heslington East with two there again on the 18th. On 6th July a female was incubating and a male standing guard but there was no sign of the birds on the 18th so the nest presumably failed.

**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

*Very scarce passage migrant*

On 3rd May a male and female were on a recently drilled field near Hagg Lane between East Cottingwith and Ellerton (PR). This is the first record for the YOC area since 2000.

**European Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

*Winter visitor and passage migrant*

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

120 over Selby on 9th January

1,890 in Lower Derwent Valley on 13th February and 145 on 14th April

300 approximately in near breeding plumage at Newhay in the late evening of 19th April.

Counts of over 20 were received from six other locations mainly in the Lower Derwent Valley with two of 80 and 87 birds and the last of 27 at Ellerton on 26th April.

First returning birds were 52 at Ellerton on 23rd July.

Other significant counts (100 or more) in the autumn and winter were:

116 at Ellerton on 9th September with 400 there on 10th October

976 in the Lower Derwent Valley also on 10th October

150 at Wheldrake Ings, 23rd October

420 at Ellerton, 2nd November

300 at Clifton Backies, 3rd November

250 at Yapham on 8th and 10th November

150 at Low Lane, Heslington on 21st November

200 at East Cottingwith on the same date

100 at Stamford Bridge, 26th November.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*  
*Winter visitor and passage migrant*

Single birds were noted at Wheldrake Ings on 11th April as well as 9th and 10th November.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*  
*Winter visitor, passage migrant and breeder*

Early in the year significant counts (100 or more) were:  
3,211 in the Lower Derwent Valley on 13th February with 3,062 there on 16th March. This decreased to 870 by 14th April.  
200 at Ellerton Ings, 3rd February  
110 at East Cottingwith, 6th February  
160 at Wistow Common, 7th February  
300 at North Duffield Carrs, 8th February  
300 at Bubwith Ings, 9th February.

Birds moved back to their breeding grounds in late March and through April and May. Evidence of breeding was reported at Heslington East, Haxby, in the Lower Derwent Valley, Middlethorpe Ings, Cornfield NR (Rawcliffe), Heslington Tillmire as well as by the River Ouse between York and Naburn.

First indication of flocking was observed in mid-June and in the second half of the year higher counts (100 or more) were:

150 at Castle Howard on 18th July with 260 there on 20th September  
160 at Ellerton, 18th September  
140 at Wheldrake Ings, 7th October  
230 at Stamford Bridge, 11th November  
1,000 at East Cottingwith, 21st November  
150 at Stamford Bridge, 26th November  
289 in the Lower Derwent valley on 21st December.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*  
*Winter visitor and passage migrant*

Not recorded in 2010 after sightings in 2005 and 2008.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*  
*Winter visitor and passage migrant*

Not recorded in 2010, the last sighting being in 2006.

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

A single juvenile on 2nd and 3rd September was on exposed mud

at the west side of Wash Dike, Skipwith Common (RS). This is the first record for this area.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

**Rare passage migrant**

Not recorded in 2010 after a sighting in 2009.

**Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

**Rare vagrant but becoming more frequent**

Not recorded in 2010 after sightings in 2007 and 2008.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

**Infrequent passage visitor, usually in the autumn**

Two reported on the bottom pond at Yearsley Moor on 4th and 5th September (BirdGuides) seems unlikely for this location and no further information was forthcoming. A single was at Wheldrake Ings on 24th October (JL per RS).

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

**Passage migrant and winter visitor**

There were reports of 46 at Bubwith bridge on 3rd January during a cold spell, 40 at East Cottingwith on 8th February, 88 at Bubwith Ings on 9th February and 60 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th March.

Significant counts for the first winter period in the whole of the Lower Derwent Valley were 210 on 13th February, 230 on 16th March and 217 on 14th April (WeBS).

In the autumn, on 2nd and 3rd September, two were with a Little Stint *Calidris minuta* at Skipwith Common on the west side of Wash Dike with singles at Ellerton on 22nd October and Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd. By the year end there were 20 at Bubwith bridge on 19th December.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

**Rare breeder, but common passage migrant and winter visitor**

Regular counts in the 30s and 40s came from Bubwith bridge, Bubwith Ings, North Duffield Carrs, Ellerton and Wheldrake Ings, in the first three months of the year with the highest counts being 90 at Ellerton Ings on 19th January and WeBS counts in the Lower Derwent Valley of 78 on 13th February and 56 on 14th April. A single bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 17th May.

Returning birds started with a single at Yearsley Moor on 4th and 5th September. There were then some 20 records through October,

November and December from sites around the Lower Derwent Valley with highest counts of 39 in October, 51 in November and 45 in December.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

**Winter visitor and passage migrant**

At Skipwith one was flushed off the northern marsh on 28th January while two were in the Lower Derwent Valley on 13th February and singles were seen again at Skipwith common on 16th and 20th March, when one flew off the southwest end of Wash Dike, and again on 6th April. Four were at Wheldrake Ings on 25th March with four overall in the Lower Derwent Valley on 14th April.

At Skipwith Common returning birds were first noted at the west end of Wash Dike and also on the northern marsh on 5th October. Singles were also present at the northern marsh on 20th and 25th October but left when cold weather began in late November.

Six were at Wheldrake Ings on 17th October with 14 ringed there on the 21st. Five were reported on 25th October with a single there on 14th November.

Elsewhere there was a single at Rawcliffe Meadows on 5th November and at Clifton Ings on 18th December. Three visited Heslington East on 7th December with a single there on the 9th and 19th as well as a single at Sutton upon Derwent on the 18th.

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

**Resident and migrant breeder; passage visitor**

In early January up to 40 were present at Bubwith bridge in cold weather reducing to 21 by the 9th while 25 were at Rawcliffe Meadows on the 31st. At Skipwith Common eight were recorded on 28th January with 13 there on 1st March while 15 were noted at Fulford Ings on 12th March. Peak WeBS counts in the Lower Derwent Valley were 765 on 13th February, 121 on 16th March and 250 there on 14th April.

Single records came from seven other sites in January, February and March including a displaying male at the Heslington Tillmire on 4th January.

In the breeding season 16 were at Fulford Ings on 5th April and ten at North Duffield Carrs on 6th May. Displaying birds were reported from Fulford Ings, North Duffield Carrs, Riders Lane Farm (Barton le Willows), Strensall Common and the Heslington Tillmire.

In late summer/autumn six were at Skipwith Common on 11th August, three at East Cottingwith on 5th September and ten at Skipwith Common on 10th October while on the same date 830 were counted in

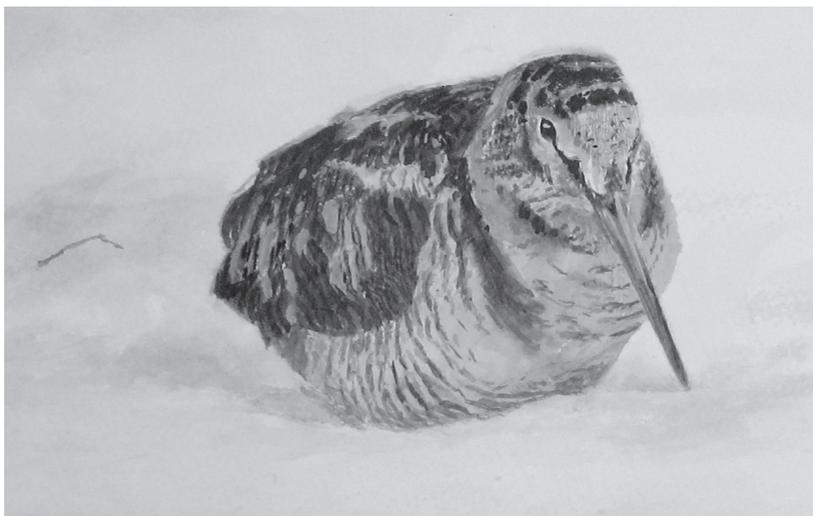
the Lower Derwent Valley as a whole. Two hundred were reported from Wheldrake Ings alone on 17th October. For the last three months of the year single-figure counts were reported from nine locations.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*  
*Resident breeder and winter visitor*

In the first three months of the year single birds were reported from 11 different sites including some gardens in January during cold weather. Two were seen at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 24th January and two at Skipwith Common on 14th February.

In the breeding season roding was reported from Bishop Wood near Selby and from Gilling with birds reported from five other sites. At Skipwith Common two were seen roding on 23rd May and two on 12th June but it appears that breeding has just about been abandoned, probably from grazing out of the understorey.

In the second winter period singles were reported from 13 different sites including one at York railway station seen flying low over platform 5!



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

While a single bird was around Bubwith bridge in cold weather during early January most records were in March and April from various locations in the Lower Derwent Valley. Initially most sightings came from Wheldrake Ings but by mid-April North Duffield Carrs was the most favoured site.

Four were at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd March building to 44 by 10th April with 46 on the 19th. At North Duffield Carrs ten were present on 17th April increasing to 70 by the 21st. Numbers there soon fell from 30 on 24th to four on the 28th with just a single bird at both locations in early May.

Finally, in autumn, two were at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd, 17th and 18th October with a single there on the 31st followed by two on 21st December.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*

**Scarce passage migrant**

Not recorded in 2010 after near annual sightings up to 2009.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

**Passage migrant**

Records for April and May were mostly from the Rossmoor Park area (near Melbourne) during the day and then roosting at Wheldrake Ings.

This site had eight on 17th April, up to 24 on the 18th, 25 on the 19th, 36 on the 21st, peaking at 101 on the 27th and then falling to 12 on 3rd May. At Rossmoor the first birds seen were 18 on 19th April increasing to 48 on the 22nd, 24 on the 25th, 35 on the 26th and 56 on the 27th. There were 32 birds on 5th May but none was seen on the 7th.

Single birds were also seen at Ellerton on 23rd April and 2nd May with a single over North Duffield Carrs on the 5th and two over Towthorpe on the 9th.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

**Winter visitor, passage migrant and migrant breeder**

There were 15 at Ellerton Ings on 1st January while WeBS counts showed 21 in the Lower Derwent Valley on 13th February increasing to 85 on 16th March and 89 on 14th April. From early March into April singles and displaying pairs were reported from 16 sites.

In May and June records came from eight locations including eight at Wheldrake Ings on 17th May and four territories on Strensall Common noted during the annual MOD Survey.

There were just six records, all in single figures, from July, August and September of which three were in Lower Derwent Valley, one at Castle Howard and two at Skipwith Common (on 9th and 15th August).

A single bird was in the Lower Derwent Valley on 10th October with three at Heslington East on 9th December, two at Rawcliffe Ings on the 14th and 26 in the Lower Derwent Valley on the 21st.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

*Passage migrant and scarce migrant breeder*

Single passage birds were recorded on several occasions between 18th April and 29th May from Bishopthorpe Ings, Clifton Ings, SHL and Wheldrake Ings while Heslington East had two present on 24th April.

Returning birds were at SHL on 8th July and 12th August, at Heslington East on 20th July and at Allerthorpe Lakeland Park on 23rd July.

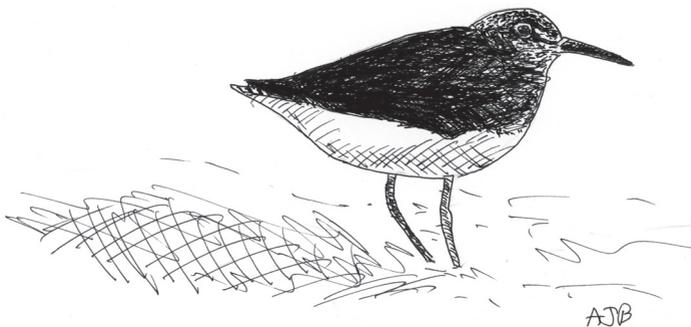
**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

*Passage migrant and winter visitor*

During the first winter period single birds were at Poppleton on 1st January and in the Lower Derwent Valley on 13th February. There was then a gap before two singles were found at or near Rabbit Warren Wood, Dunnington on 13th April with up to four at Wheldrake Ings between 12th and 19th April.

There were no further records until singles were seen at Cawood and Skipwith on 16th June followed by numerous sightings from five locations between 25th June and 24th October, mostly from Skipwith Common, the Lower Derwent Valley and Allerthorpe Gravel Pits. These were mostly of one or two birds but with peaks of four at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd July and at Skipwith Common between 24th and 31st July together with a peak there of five on 9th September.

Towards the end of the year there were single records at SHL on 26th November, North Duffield Carrs on 5th December and in the Lower Derwent Valley on 21st December.



**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

*Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor*

Records in April consisted of singles at North Duffield Carrs on the 17th and 18th, Wheldrake Ings from the 18th to the 21st and North Duffield Carrs again from the 25th to the 29th.

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

*Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor*

There were just three spring records. A pair was at East Cottingwith on 9th April with a single bird in the Lower Derwent Valley on the 14th and another at Bank Island on the 27th.

The first returning bird was one at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd July. At Skipwith Common four were at Wash Dike on 6th August with three there on the 7th and one on the 9th as well as one at Horseshoe Pond on the 8th with another at Boardwalk Pond on the 11th, 17th and 19th.

Other records were singles at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 9th August, SHL on 23rd August and Wheldrake Ings on 20th September. On 23rd October a single was present at Bank Island with another at Bubwith bridge on 18th December.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

*Passage migrant*

On 29th April a bird was briefly at North Duffield Carrs midday and presumably the same bird was at Wheldrake Ings that evening. Three were seen at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd May but didn't stay.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

*Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor*

Fifty were at Bubwith bridge in cold weather on 3rd January increasing to 120 by 7th February with 40 at Bubwith Ings on 9th February.

Following ten at Thorganby Ings on 2nd April just single birds were reported in April, May and June on several occasions at Middlethorpe Ings (including displaying birds), North Duffield Carrs, Heslington Tillmire and Wheldrake Ings. Later, two were at Skipwith Common on 22nd August.

Finally in December there were two at Heslington East on several dates between the 1st and the 9th and at Pocklington on the 1st, and a single at North Duffield Carrs on the 5th. Forty-eight were in the Lower Derwent Valley on 21st December (WeBS).

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

*Passage migrant, usually in spring*

Not recorded in 2010 after appearing almost annually till 2006.

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

*Scarce passage migrant*

This was a good year for records starting with one at Rawcliffe Lake on 6th March (NS) while another was at North Duffield Carrs on 12th

April (CR per RS) and again on the 13th (BirdGuides). Other sightings were: a first-winter at East Cottingwith on 11th July (MaW) and one at Storwood on 4th October (BirdGuides).

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*  
*Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant*

Regular in the YOC area throughout the year especially in the winter periods when frequent at landfill and roosting areas, for example 800 seen at Elvington Sewage Works on 3rd January. Other large numbers (100 or more) were 120 along the Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on both 26th and 29th January and up to 300 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on various dates from January through to April.

During the summer numbers declined with no reports of breeding but numbers then increased in the autumn with records (of 100 or more) as follows: up to 350 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, 220 at Bank Island, up to 250 at Castle Howard Lake, up to 200 along on the River Ouse between York and Naburn and up to 150 at Stamford Bridge (multiple counts at all sites).

Monthly WeBS counts for Black-headed Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	24	5	6	-	-	62	30	2
LDV		-	11,000	-		3,200		12,000

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*  
*Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor*

Annual since 1976, this species was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 25th March (RS) as well as 15th April (BirdGuides), and at North Duffield Carrs on 1st May where reported in the log at the Geoff Smith hide (*per* MW).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*  
*Passage migrant and winter visitor*

Although annual since 2004, the only record was a first-winter bird reported at Wheldrake Ings on 25th March (BirdGuides).

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*  
*Winter visitor and passage migrant*

Frequently recorded throughout the winter periods when higher counts of 100 or more were 180 at Youlthorpe on 23rd January and 400–500

at Newburgh Priory lake on 19th March. There were no sightings in May and June but then numbers increased during the autumn with higher counts of 250 at Pocklington Airfield on 6th October (150 on the 12th) and 100 near Stamford Bridge on 15th December.

#### Monthly WeBS counts for Common Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Castle Howard	21	12	1	2	-	4	-	17
LDV		-	3,200	-		36		5,700

#### **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*

##### *Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor*

A few were recorded through the year at some wetland sites such as Askham Bog, Castle Howard Lake, the Lower Derwent Valley and along the Derwent and Ouse. Larger numbers were noted in July and August with the highest counts being at least 30 flying over Fulford Ings on 10th July and 80 over the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 14th August.

#### **Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*

##### *Winter visitor and passage migrant*

Regular at landfill and roost sites during the year, with 450 counted at Elvington Sewage Works on 3rd January and 1,140 recorded in the LDV on 16th March (WeBS). Also seen regularly flying over the River Ouse between York and Naburn until 24th April, with a maximum of 150 on 31st January. Additionally seen at the Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), at Bank Island and in York city centre.

In mid-April a pair took up residence at York University Lake and on 30th April were seen on the Central Hall roof carrying nest material and chasing a passing Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*. However, later in the day, they had gone and were not seen again.

In the autumn birds were again seen regularly along the River Ouse between York and Naburn with a maximum 350 flying over on 27th November. Good numbers regularly used Clifton Ings for a pre-roost bathe when flooded and 1,098 were counted during the WeBS of the LDV on 21st December.

#### Monthly WeBS counts for Herring Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV		-	1,140	-		57		1,098

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*  
**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant**

Now a regular, mostly late summer, visitor to the YOC area, three were seen at Rufforth Tip on 7th August (RS) with two adults seen flying west at Fulford Ings on the 21st (AB) and a minimum of three feeding in fields north of Elvington on the 31st (RS). One was also seen flying south at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd September and nine were east of Naburn on the 9th (both RS). In most cases birds were seen associating with Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus*.

**[Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans*  
**Very scarce winter visitor**

One at Bank Island on 3rd November was tentatively identified by the observer as a second-winter bird (TD) but no further description was received.]

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides*  
**Scarce winter visitor**

An annual winter visitor since 2003, a second-winter bird was at Bank Island on 21st February (RS) while an immature flew over Fulford Ings on the 27th (AB). On 14th March a juvenile was found at the Harewood Whin tip (RS) and on the 16th another was located during the WeBS count of the Lower Derwent Valley.

In the autumn one roosted at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd November (TD, RS).

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*  
**Scarce winter visitor**

No records this year although seen most years, the last being 2009.

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*  
**Winter visitor and passage migrant**

Notable records were 250 roosting at Elvington Sewage Works on 3rd January with 50 flying west over the River Ouse between York and Naburn on the 30th. In the Lower Derwent Valley 1,740 were counted during the WeBS count on 16th March.

During the autumn/winter small parties of up to 70 were regularly seen flying west over the River Ouse between York and Naburn, with smaller numbers at Selby, and at Clifton Ings where they used the flooded ings for a pre-roost bathe. During the WeBS count of the LDV on 21st December 870 were recorded.

## Monthly WeBS counts for Great Black-backed Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV		-	1,740	-		32		870

### **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*

#### *Rare passage migrant*

Two at Castle Howard Lake on 7th September (DR) was the only record this year.

### **Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

#### *Passage migrant and rare migrant breeder*

One was at Naburn Marina on 23rd April with four at Castle Howard Lake two days later while a 'Commic' Tern flew over Ellerton on 17th May. At Allerthorpe Gravel Pits a pair was discovered displaying on 4th June and was later confirmed as nesting, producing one juvenile by 26th July.

### **Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

#### *Passage migrant*

There have now been no records for the last four years of this formerly near-annual spring visitor.

### **'Feral Pigeon'** *Columba livia*

#### *Resident breeder*

Almost certainly under-recorded given the very few reports received. Flocks of 20 or more were seen in urban and outlying areas, with a flock of 100 seen at SHL on 16th September being the largest recorded.

### **Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

#### *Resident breeder*

Regularly seen in small numbers throughout the recording area. Double-figure reports were 18 birds seen at the Outgang, Heslington on 29th January, regular reports along the River Ouse between York and Naburn with a maximum count of 19 on 23rd April, 25 seen at Middlethorpe lngs on 13th February and 16 at Moreby near Naburn on 2nd May (counted in a BBS square).

A pair bred by the River Ouse at Overton (Poppleton) and seven or eight pairs were resident in the Clifton lngs area. At Skipwith Common a late survey found five active nests during August and September with two eggs found on 2nd September. A total of seven was ringed at this site though adult sightings were infrequent with just three seen on 17th January and a pair flying over on 1st March.

Reports of small flocks (under ten) came from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Bootham Stray, Brandrith Farm (Bulmer), Brecks Farm (Haxby), Castle Howard Arboretum, Heslington East, Hovingham Carrs, Jeffry Bog, JRTNR, Kelfield Lodge, Redhouse, Thorganby, Wheldrake Ings and York University.

**Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus*

*Resident breeder*

There were many reports of very large numbers in the first winter period with 3,000 to 10,000 regularly seen roosting at Selby from 2nd January to 12th March and c.1,200 moving over Ellerton on 8th January. Flocks of several hundred were then reported throughout the YOC recording area during the year. In the second winter period 1,000 birds were seen regularly in early December at Selby peaking at 6,000 on the 21st.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

*Resident breeder*

This species was a regular visitor to many suburban gardens, parks and waterways. It was widely reported in single and low double figures.

**Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

*Passage migrant and increasingly scarce migrant breeder*

Very few records were received for this now scarce and elusive bird. The first record for the year was on 27th June when one was seen feeding in a garden at East Cottingwith while another was recorded at Skipwith Common the following day. Several birds were heard calling at Yearsley Moor on 3rd July and a pair was very active at the bottom of the hill leaving Sheriff Hutton for Bulmer on 9th July, heard again later in the churchyard. An adult and juvenile were seen between Appleton Roebuck and Acaster Selby on 22nd July followed by a sighting of two adults in the same area on 27th July.

**(Ring-necked Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*)

*Occasional but scarce visitor*

One was reported in York on 9th April (BirdGuides) near the BP garage on Boroughbridge Road while a possible escape (described as a 'yellow' bird) was seen at SHL on 1st September (SHBR). There appear to be increasing records in the York area of this species which is now well established in southeast England.

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*  
*Migrant breeder*

The first of the year was on 17th April at Strensall followed by others at Cawood on the 22nd, Towthorpe Road (Haxby) on the 24th, Church Bridge (Pocklington Canal) on the 25th, Swantail Hide (Wheldrake Ings) and East Carlton Farm (Warthill) on the 27th and Skipwith Common on the 28th. Further records followed with birds seen or heard at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Askham Bog, Beningbrough Hall, Bubwith, Elvington, Foggathorpe, along the River Foss between Haxby and Huntington, Gilling, Brecks Farm (Haxby), North Duffield Carrs, the Outgang (Heslington), Tang Hall Beck (York), Thorganby, Walmgate Stray (York), Wheldrake Ings, Whitwell Grange and Wigginton.

A record of a male and female seen at the Heslington Tillmire on 17th May might suggest breeding in that area. No juveniles were seen at Skipwith Common this year and it may be that breeding did not take place here in 2010.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*  
*Resident breeder*

The Lower Derwent Valley with the Pocklington Canal produced many records throughout the year, with some hunting in broad daylight, and three seen together in front of the Geoff Smith Hide at North Duffield Carrs on 16th August. Single birds were also seen at various sites along the River Rye throughout the year and at many other locations throughout the recording area including one bird seen on several days throughout July at Tang Hall Beck Fields in York.

On Skipwith Common sightings were less frequent than in the recent past. This may be because the resident pair nearest to the Common did not breed in 2010. One bird was seen hunting over Wash Dike on 16th February, on 2nd March and again on 29th October.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*  
*Resident breeder but can be elusive*

First reports, on 3rd January, were of single birds at East Cottingwith and by the Wetherby Road near Rufforth Tip. The same month two birds were reported at Poppleton on the 10th with one bird at the regular Thorganby site on the 17th and again on the 31st. One was reported calling in a field near Lodge Field House (Gilling) on 1st February, heard again in this area on 1st April. In Heslington, a single bird was found in Common Lane on 21st March followed by a pair in the same place on 9th April, along with one seen in Boss Lane the next day. At Skipwith

Common one bird was seen on both 2nd and 18th March despite birds not being reported from this area in recent years. One was seen at Ellerton on 30th March followed by April sightings at Barthorpe, at Thorganby again and at Old Carlton Farm (Warthill), while two birds were at Brecks Farm (Haxby) on 22nd May. In June single birds were seen at Bubwith and Youlthorpe, with a pair at a second site in Thorganby south of the village. At Ruddins Ings (northwest of Poppleton) three birds were seen on 24th July with one feeding young.

Additional sightings were reported from Brecks Farm (Haxby) on 12th October, Hovingham on 12th November, East Cottingwith (Hagg Lane), Fangfoss and Whitwell Grange on 6th December, Rawcliffe Ings on 8th December, Ellers Farm (Buttercrambe) on 9th December, Wilberfoss on the 10th and Dunnington on the 26th.

### **Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco*

#### ***Resident breeder throughout the area***

Birds were seen throughout the region in January and February including two at Scagglethorpe Moor (near Poppleton) on 31st January, one with colouring suggesting a continental origin.

On 18th April one bird was seen at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common with two young in the nest. At SHL two pairs again bred successfully in nest boxes in adjacent woodland. On 8th June an adult with three recently fledged young was seen in an oak tree at the southern end of East Cottingwith. In Clifton an adult with three well grown young roosted in trees near the allotments for a few days during late March while the usual pair was again present in Clifton Park. Only three pairs bred at Skipwith Common but with just one chick surviving suggesting that food supplies were again very restricted.

Additional reports were received of this species in the second winter period including one calling in Rowntree Park, York on 2nd December.

### **Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

#### ***Resident breeder and winter visitor***

Only one definite sighting was made, on 30th January (RCn), when a bird flew out of a hedge south of Foggathorpe during an atlas survey. Despite various visits during the year no birds were heard or seen at Strensall Common after two juveniles were heard calling in 2009 and there were similarly no reports from Strensall Common despite three visits to search for this species.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

*Casual breeder, passage and winter visitor*

On 6th January one was reported flying north over Huntington (BirdGuides). In the autumn one was found on 8th October at North Duffield Carrs (per RS) and seen there again from the 9th till the 11th (BirdGuides).

**Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

*Scarce migrant breeder*

Despite three evening visits to Strensall Common no birds were heard or seen this year. At Skipwith Common a bird was heard churring on 3rd June (DT) from 22:00 to 22:10 hours, and there were good views of a juvenile south of the bomb bays on 20th September (CR per DT). In late September several migrating juveniles, probably from the colony on the North York Moors, were reported across the region.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus*

*Migrant breeder*

The first of the year was one at Wheldrake Ings over Swantail Hide on 20th April (BirdGuides) with three there the following day. Further birds were seen at Naburn Sewage Works on the 23rd, Clifton Ings and East Cottingwith (two seen) on the 24th, as well as four birds at Clifton Backies and at Bootham Stray (York) on the 27th, 14 birds over Heslington East on the 30th with two at Ellerton the same day. Numbers then increased rapidly with 40 present on 1st May at Skipwith Common, peaking at 100 there on the 3rd. On 14th June c.60 were seen at Strensall Common and a minimum of 100 were at East Cottingwith on 4th July feeding over the Ings and adjacent arable land.

Late summer reports included parties of four birds seen at Acomb (York), Fulford Ings and Whitwell Grange on 20th, 21st and 23rd August respectively, with a juvenile at Fulford Ings on the 29th. Two pairs were seen at Ampleforth on 31st August still feeding young, while sightings at East Cottingwith on several days up to 22nd September were the last of the year.

**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 area and to the south down to Naburn, with a pair displaying at Fulford Ings. Others were seen along the Derwent Valley and Pocklington Canal, the River Rye and River Foss. At New Earswick on 29th April one was at a nest site on the River Foss.

Other sightings throughout the year were from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Castle Howard Lake, Cliffe, Hassacarr NR, Howsham, JRTNR, Millennium Bridge (York), SHL and York University Lake.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

**Scarce summer visitor**

After sightings in 2002, 2003 and 2008 there were none in 2010.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

**Resident breeder but not widespread**

On Skipwith Common birds were seen throughout the year and it is likely that two or three pairs bred but proof was restricted to the southeast quadrant where in June a family party of five newly fledged chicks were devoured by a small group of Carrion Crows *Corvus corone*. Most other reports were from Strensall Common while single birds were seen in other suitable habitat within the recording area.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

**Resident breeder throughout the recording area**

This species, which is almost certainly more widespread than the previous one, was regularly reported throughout the recording area, and was heard drumming in various locations from January until April. Three or four pairs were present throughout the year at Clifton Ings.

At Skipwith Common numbers appear to have risen in recent years with the first pairing seen at Danes Hills, away from the main common area, on 2nd March. It was thought that about ten pairs were present on the reserve, while adults were seen bringing food to calling young in a nest hole on 17th May.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos minor*

**Scarce resident breeder though localised and elusive**

The first of the few records of this elusive bird was at Copmanthorpe on 4th January (TD) followed by a sighting on 25th January near the northern boundary of Skipwith Common (per DT). On 11th February one was reported at Wheldrake Ings (per RS) in the wood next to the car park, but was not seen again. A male was feeding on fat balls at Skipwith on several occasions in mid-March (DC per DT) but despite these reports the distinctive drumming call was not heard on Skipwith Common in 2010 and there was no evidence of breeding (DT).

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*  
*Scarce passage migrant, mostly autumn*

On 24th May a female was seen from the Geoff Smith Hide at North Duffield Carrs (AW *et al.*), mostly perched on one of the fence posts below the flood bank. This was the first sighting in the YOC recording area since 1996 and only the 6th record in all.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*  
*Resident breeder*

Widely reported and commonly seen throughout the year. At York University, one was seen nest building on 1st February (not unusual according to Tim Birkhead's book (Birkhead 1991) in birds that stay on territory all winter) and there was a high count of 25 on 30th October along the River Ouse from York to Naburn.

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

Up to four birds were seen at various locations through the year, with Skipwith Common and Strensall Common being favoured sites. A pair with young was seen at Moreby, near Naburn on 19th June and a family party of five or more was at Fulford Ings in July.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*  
*Resident breeder*

The usual large noisy flocks were seen heading off to roost during the winter months at Clifton Ings, while the only count of over 100 was at Castle Howard Lake on 13th April. The species seems particularly common in the Thorganby and Wressle areas with birds frequenting the ruins of a 14th century castle at the latter location.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*  
*Resident breeder*

The highest counts (100 or more) were 130 at Leavening on 2nd January, 100 along the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 29th January and 467 at Bubwith on 13th February.

On 16th March at least six nests present in trees in the Micklegate churchyard in York city centre makes an interesting record.

At Buttercrambe Weir there were 600 on 27th October and 400 on 3rd November, while on 5th November 140 were seen at Castle Howard Arboretum with 500 at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on 5th December.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*  
*Resident breeder*

Good numbers were again present throughout the year on Clifton Ings and 50 were counted at Skipwith Common on 17th November where numbers rise when communal roosting takes place during the winter months. The other highest counts (50 or more) were 50 at Naburn Sewage Works on 5th April and 50 along the River Ouse from York to Naburn on 20th November.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*  
*Rare visitor*

There were two separate records this year with one flying over North Duffield Carrs on 17th January (BirdGuides) and a second bird performing aerobatics seen first over Clifton Park and shortly afterwards over Clifton Backies on 2nd June (NS, AW). These are the 7th and 8th records for the YOC recording area.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*  
*Resident breeder and winter visitor*

Small numbers were present throughout the year at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Castle Howard, Gilling Woods, River Ouse (York to Naburn), Strensall Common and Whitwell Grange with occasional sightings elsewhere.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapilla*  
*Scarce passage migrant*

A single bird was observed, ringed and photographed at Sutton-on-the-Forest on 20th November (BirdTrack). This was the first record since 2007 for the recording area.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*  
*Resident breeder*

Commonly seen throughout the year and widely reported in single and low double figures. Highest counts were 29 during an atlas TTV to the northeast of Bubwith on 13th February and 33 along the River Ouse from York to Naburn on 23rd April.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*  
*Resident breeder*

As with the previous species, commonly seen throughout the year and widely reported in single and low double figures. Highest counts were 24 along the River Ouse from York to Naburn on 23rd April and 30 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 24th October.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

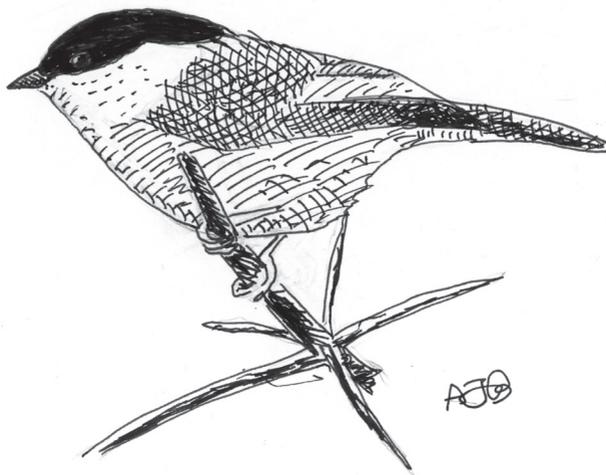
**Resident breeder**

Small numbers were reported throughout the year, although the species is probably much more widespread and numerous in the YOC recording area than the limited number of reports suggests. Mostly recorded in groups of three or fewer.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montana*

**Resident breeder**

The most favoured localities were Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Askham Bog, the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, Selby and Wheldrake Ings. Other reports came from the Bubwith area, Dunnington, Foggathorpe, Fulford Golf Course and Stamford Bridge, with a pair at Sheriff Hutton Park and SHL.



**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

**Resident breeder**

Five birds were reported from Welburn on 3rd January and five at Askham Bog on 23rd January but otherwise just one or two birds were recorded at Acaster Malbis, Allerthorpe Common, Beningbrough Hall, Brandrith Farm (Bulmer), Castle Howard, Gilling Woods, Castle Gardens (Malton), SHL, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge, Wheldrake Ings, Whitwell Grange and Yearsley Moor.

**Wood Lark** *Lullula arborea*

*Resident colonist in small numbers*

The first spring record at SHL was on 1st March (SHBR). Two birds which probably bred were seen there on 26th April. The first record at Skipwith Common was a singing bird on 14th February (DT) while up to eight birds were recorded from then until mid-September. Six breeding territories were recorded at this site. Just one pair was reported in April from Strensall Common.

**Sky Lark** *Alauda arvensis*

*Resident breeder and winter visitor*

Single-figure counts were recorded across the area in all months of the year. The only large flock (ten or more) of the early winter was 50+ at Thornton Ings on 9th February but larger numbers were noted in the second winter period with 17 high over Ellerton on 20th September, 19 over Hagg Lane (East Cottingwith) on the 25th, 75 going north over the Pocklington Canal at Bielby on the 29th, a minimum of 150 at East Cottingwith on 26th November and 50+ over Fulford Ings on the 27th.

The first bird noted in song was at Whitwell Grange on 25th February while eleven territories were estimated during the MOD survey of Strensall Common on 21st May. Other records of birds in song came from a variety of locations but with no other evidence of breeding.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

*Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

The first record of the year was a single bird at North Duffield Carrs on 12th March followed by sightings at Wheldrake Ings on the 18th and at Fulford Ings and by the Pocklington Canal at Bielby on the 21st. A colony by the River Ouse at Rawcliffe Ings continues to do well with 25+ pairs and with no summer floods at least two broods were raised.

Three birds were attending nests in the riverbank by Fulford Hall (Fulford Ings) on 12th April, while 60 birds were seen over Castle Howard Lake on 16th May. On 24th May at least 120 active nests were noted in the banks of the River Ouse between Newton and Linton north of York while at Allerthorpe Water Park 210 nests were counted with 116 adults ringed on 4th June. Thirty plus birds, including fledged juveniles, were seen on 26th June along the River Ouse (York to Naburn) and at SHL 25 birds were recorded on 3rd September.

The last birds of the year were 12 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 5th September and ten in a mixed flock of c.60 hirundines on 23rd September at Skipwith Common.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

*Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

The first of the year was on 19th March at York University followed by one at Rawcliffe Meadows on 27th March and then 30 birds feeding over Castle Howard Lake on 31st March. Reports were then widespread throughout the area.

Notable autumn flocks included 100 at SHL on 3rd September, 100+ at Ellerton on 8th September and 400 over Dunnington Common also on the 8th. October reports comprised 14 at Dunnington Common on the 7th and nine at Brecks Farm (Haxby) on the 8th followed, on the 9th, by 12 at Crockey Hill, four south over Poppleton and 20 migrating south over Sand Lane, Skipwith Common. The last record of the year was one at SHL on 19th October.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*

*Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

The first sighting of the year was of two birds at Castle Howard on 28th March. One was seen at Skipwith Common on 11th April and three were at Brawby on 12th April, with 50 at Castle Howard Lake the following day and then at many other locations from mid-April onwards.

At Heslington East six birds were seen collecting nesting material on 1st May and 28 birds were showing evidence of breeding at Foggathorpe on 23rd May. A minimum of 11 birds were seen going in and out of at least six nests at Thorganby on 20th June while 16 were on active nests at Bubwith the same day. Twenty or more, including fledged juveniles, were along the River Ouse (York to Naburn) on 26th June. A small colony was still present at Rawcliffe Lake but local residents discouraged them from nesting.

In late summer several flocks of up to 50 were seen around the area. The last reported sightings were five on 22nd September at Stamford Bridge, three at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 29th September and a few still at Clifton Ings in early October.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica*

*Rare passage migrant*

One bird was seen for just 25 minutes over the south end of the pool at Wheldrake Ings mid-morning on 3rd May (AM). A full description was submitted to YNU and accepted. See description of this find on page 87.

**Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*

*Rare visitor*

One (very scruffy) male was caught and ringed in the car park at Wheldrake Ings on the morning of 1st July (RS) and was still present at the same site the following day (BirdGuides). This is the 5th record in the YOC recording area following recent sightings in 2006 and 2009.

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

*Resident breeder*

Widely reported in the recording area, usually in flocks of up to 25, though c.50 seen along the River Ouse (York to Naburn) on 20th November was a notable count.

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

*Scare breeder and passage migrant*

One was singing at Yearsley Moor on 28th April (RCo), and on 5th and 15th May at least two birds were heard (RCo, DR). Nearby one was trilling in Gilling Woods on 30th April (BirdTrack) and at least one bird was in song at Gilling Park House on 1st, 14th and 21st May and 4th and 23rd June (BirdTrack).

**Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

*Migrant breeder and passage migrant with some birds overwintering*

The first migrant was recorded at Wheldrake Ings on 19th March followed by a singing bird at Rossmoor Park Wood and single birds at Bielby (Pocklington Canal) and Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 21st March. The number of records increased rapidly with ten singing along the River Ouse (York to Naburn) on 5th April and at least 15 at Allerthorpe Common on the 6th with a few pairs breeding at Clifton Park. Many stayed into September and October with one at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 4th October, two at Hassacarr NR on 6th October and one juvenile calling near Ganthorpe on 8th October. An overwintering bird was seen at Selby on 10th December.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

*Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

The first migrants were noted on 5th April at Clifton Ings and Selby followed by Allerthorpe Common on the 6th, Wheldrake Ings on the 7th, and SHL and Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on the 9th. Numbers quickly increased throughout the recording area with nine at Strensall Common (Butt Pools) on 21st May and 21 recorded during an atlas TTV survey at Foggathorpe on 23rd May.

The end of the season saw one bird at Fulford Ings on 29th August and the last bird at Stamford Bridge on 22nd September.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

*Migrant breeder with some birds overwintering*

An overwintering female was seen feeding on apples in a Cliffe garden on the 8th, 9th and 10th February. The first obvious spring arrival was a male on 30th March at Askham Bog while a single bird was seen at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 2nd April and a female at Heslington, York the same day was joined by a singing male on the 4th. Another pair was at Fulford Sewage Works on 5th April and by the end of the month birds were widespread throughout the recording area with 16 males singing along the River Ouse (York to Naburn) on 23rd April.

The last birds seen were at Clifton Backies on 30th September and a female feeding on elder berries at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 4th October. A wintering female was seen on several dates in the Clifton/Rawcliffe area during November and December.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

*Migrant breeder*

A single bird heard calling at Allerthorpe Common on 16th April was the first arrival while another was seen from the car park at Wheldrake Ings on 27th April. On 9th May a singing bird was at Danesmead Copse, Fulford and another by the River Ouse at Poppleton which was present until 5th June. Six birds were at Skipwith Common on 18th May followed by records of single birds across the area during the summer months. Three pairs held territory along the riverside at Clifton Ings while two birds were seen at Clifton Park on 23rd August with passage birds also present on the 25th. The last recorded sighting was on 9th September at Bootham Stray.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

*Migrant breeder*

Early migrants were singles at Storwood on 17th April, Clifton Backies on the 22nd and Bielby (Pocklington Canal) on the 23rd. Thereafter recorded frequently throughout the summer with the last birds seen on Bootham Stray on 8th and 9th September and at Clifton Backies on 16th and 18th September.

**Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

*Migrant breeder*

The first of the summer was at Allertorpe Common on 16th April and was a bird that was ringed as a juvenile in July 2009 in the same area. One was at Hemingbrough on 18th April with another calling from a hedge in Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on the 22nd and two males singing at Naburn Sewage Works on the 23rd. Frequent sightings continued along the River Ouse (York to Naburn) during the summer months with up to 12 birds singing and including fledged juveniles. A few pairs bred at Clifton Park, and a pair bred on Skipwith Common. The last birds seen were at Fulford Ings on 17th September and at Bootham Stray on the 23rd.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

*Scarce migrant breeder*

On 22nd April a bird was reeling in tall, rank vegetation near Hagg Lane at East Cottingwith (PR) and another was by the car park at Wheldrake Ings (CG). On 5th May one was heard near Monks Cross, York (AL) while another was at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th (BirdGuides). One was seen and heard at Beck Close (Elvington) on 19th May (AF) and two were heard along the riverbank at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th (AF). A second sighting at East Cottingwith on 24th June (PR) was followed by the last birds of the summer at Wheldrake Ings on 5th (DR) and 7th July (RS) and at North Duffield Carrs on 2nd August though present the previous week (RS).

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

*Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

The first records were at Wheldrake Ings near Swantail Hide on 12th April and at Heslington East, Skipwith Common and Thornton (Pocklington Canal) on the 24th. Regularly recorded during the summer at Fulford Ings and Allertorpe Gravel Pits with five pairs along the Pocklington Canal at Storwood on 2nd July. A pair at the little pond at Rawcliffe Country Park raised two broods and the last bird was seen at Askham Bog on 9th July.

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

*Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

The first bird of the summer was one singing at Clifton Ings on 5th May followed by eight on 9th May at Allertorpe Gravel Pits where three nests subsequently produced two broods. Three birds were also singing

at Castle Howard Lake on 16th May. One or two birds were heard on Strensall Common and at Foggathorpe with two pairs at Storwood by the Pocklington Canal. A first site record at SHL was sadly found dead on 7th June.

On Skipwith Common at least three singing males were present in Hollow Swang reedbed on 21st May and breeding took place. Five juveniles were caught and ringed in the autumn and the last bird was seen there on 15th September.

**Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*

*Occasional winter visitor though more regular in recent years*

In the first half of the year a few birds remained after the influx in the autumn of 2009: a single bird was in Selby on 8th March and up to four at Fulford, York on 17th and 18th March with a final sighting there on 17th April.



The first birds of a significant autumn arrival were 12 at Bank Island on 24th October. Records were then widespread across the whole of the region until the year end. Most counts were in single or low double figures, but groups of up to 30 were not unusual.

One favoured location was Fulford, York where four birds first appeared on 6th November with near daily sightings and numbers increasing to 25 on the 23rd but reducing to 22 on the 29th after which there was a gap in sightings until a few birds reappeared towards the end of December. Another prime site was in the centre of Malton, on the very edge of the YOC area, where 25 birds were noted on 12th November increasing to 60 by the 24th, then 100 on 4th December and 130 on the 5th but no more records thereafter. Other higher counts included 120 by the A170 at Sproxton (just outside the YOC area) near Helmsley on 28th November and 40 at Rawcliffe Meadows, York on the 29th.

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*  
*Local resident breeder*

The Castle Howard area remains a regular site for this species with a maximum of six recorded there on 13th April. Elsewhere records of up to three birds came from Acaster Malbis, Beningbrough Hall, Bishopthorpe, Fulford Ings, Gilling (Park, Woods and village), Heslington, Hovingham, Malton, Moorlands, Oak Cliff (Kirkham), Rowntree Park (York), Braygate Street (Swinton) and Yearsley Moor.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*  
*Resident breeder*

Resident at Skipwith Common and seen throughout the year at Clifton Ings. Up to six birds were noted at the following sites: Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Askham Bog, Lorrenger Lane (Askham Bryan), Beningbrough Hall, Bishopthorpe, Brandrith Farm (Bulmer), Braygate Street (Swinton), Castle Howard area, Clifton Backies, Flamingoland, Fulford Ings, Gilling (Park and village), Moorlands, Naburn, River Ouse (York to Naburn), Poppleton, Rossmoor Park, Rowntree Park (York), Sessions NR, SHL, Stamford Bridge, Whitwell Grange and Yearsley Moor. Confirmation of breeding came from Askham Bryan, Heslington East, SHL and Skipwith Common.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*  
*Resident breeder throughout the area*

Widespread and common across the region. Notable counts were 14 at Bubwith on 17th April, 34 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 23rd April and 45 there on 4th June.

**Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*  
*Resident breeder and winter visitor*

Recorded in single or double figures at a variety of locations. Higher counts (100 or more) were 100 at Haxby on 3rd January, 270 at Bubwith on 13th February, 150 at Copmanthorpe on 9th March, 200 at Kelfield Lodge on 22nd March and 145 there on 28th July, 111 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 4th June, 100 at North Duffield on 10th September, 100 at Pocklington Canal on 5th November and 100 at North Duffield Carrs on 12th December. A partially leucistic bird which resembled a Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus* was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 8th October (DR).

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*  
*Very scarce passage migrant*

Not recorded in 2010 after sightings in 2005, 2006 and 2009.

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

Common throughout the region with a significant increase during the winter months. The highest counts were 62 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 23rd April and 70 there on 4th June. Counts at Moreby, near Naburn were lower than in previous years.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*  
*Winter visitor*

Widespread throughout the region, though the only count over 100 during the first half of the year was 350 at Copmanthorpe on 9th March. Flocks numbering in the tens were reasonably widespread in the first three months with the last record being 72 at Newton Mask on 15th April.

The first of the autumn was one at Osbaldwick on the early date of 27th September but no more were sighted until mid-October after which sightings became frequent. Counts of 100 or more in the second half of the year were 850 at Clifton Backies on 20th October, c.150 at Osbaldwick on 24th October, 150 at the Melbourne reedbed by the Pocklington Canal on 6th November, 200 at North Duffield Carrs on 18th November, c.100 at Heslington East on 21st November, at least 150 at North Duffield Carrs on 12th December and 100 feeding on apples in a Dunnington garden on 26th December.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

*Resident breeder but in decline in some areas*

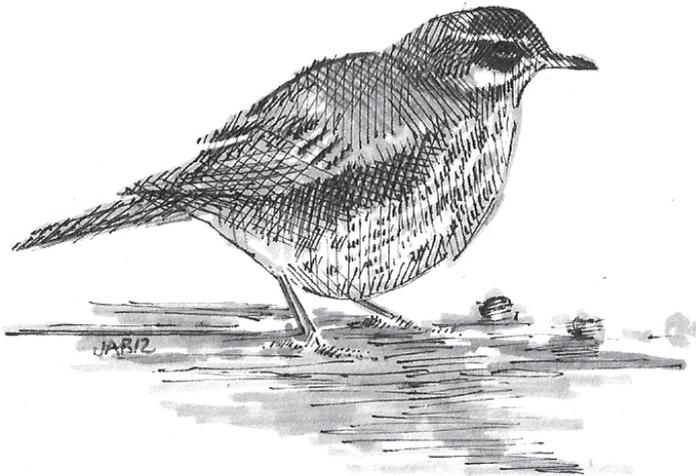
Seen regularly across most of the region with a notable increase at Clifton Ings during the winter months. The highest count was ten along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 5th April and the same number again on 4th June.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

*Winter visitor*

Widespread across the region in both winter periods. Small flocks, mostly of 30 or fewer birds, were widely reported, but with a flock of 95 on York University playing fields on 9th February and a flock of 60 at Pocklington School playing fields on 13th March. The last spring record was of a small flock with Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris* at Clifton Ings on 7th April.

The first autumn arrivals were seven at Osbaldwick and eight at Sheriff Hutton both on 26th September followed by regular reports from then on. There were signs of a notable influx on 9th October with c.120 at Crockey Hill, c.100 at Osbaldwick, a total of c.130 in several flocks flying south over Fulford Ings and 50 in two groups over Poppleton. After this date counts of 100 or more were as follows: 250 at Clifton Backies on 20th October, 240 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 24th October, with 250 there on 27th November, and a count of 100 along the River Ouse from York to Naburn on 20th November.



**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*  
*Resident breeder and winter visitor*

Recorded at a variety of locations throughout the region. The only counts in double figures were 20 at Skipwith Common on 23rd June and the same number roosting there on 18th August.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*  
*Declining migrant breeder and passage visitor*

The first record was one at Nunnington Hall on 8th May with further records from 18th May onwards. Breeding was confirmed at Nunnington and Skipwith Common, while one at Whitwell in July appeared to be collecting food for its young. Other records came from Baffam, Bootham Stray (York), Byland Abbey, Castle Howard, Clifton Backies, East Cottingwith, Gilling, Howsham, Malton, Strensall Common, Sutton Park and West Ness Hall. The last record was a single at Clifton Park on 14th September.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*  
*Resident breeder throughout the area*

Common and widespread, though at Skipwith Common it was commented that numbers were much lower than 20 years ago. The highest count was 12 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 23rd April.

**Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*  
*Scarce summer migrant and occasional breeder*

Snatches of song were heard from the path between Bank Island and the Wheldrake lngs car park on 29th May (PR). This is the first suggestion of this species in the YOC area since a pair bred at Bishop Wood in 2006.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*  
*Very rare visitor*

Not recorded in 2010, the last record being in 2008

**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*  
*Migrant breeder and passage visitor*

The first of the year was a male singing and investigating tree holes between Byland and Coxwold on 12th April (JP). The only other localities to record this species were Acklam, Gilling Park and Woods, Skipwith Common and Yearsley Moor. Breeding probably occurred at Yearsley

Moor as birds were seen carrying food on two dates in July (PW). The last report was a juvenile at Hassacarr NR on 7th and 8th September (TW).

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

*Casual migrant breeder and passage migrant*

The only spring record was a male at Clifton Ings on 14th May (NS). There were no summer records. In the autumn one was at Terrington on 5th September (DR) and seven were reported at North Duffield Carrs on 7th September (BirdGuides) with two still there on the 9th.

**Common Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus*

*Casual breeder and passage visitor; sometimes over-winters*

The year opened with one at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd January. There were then no more records until one was seen at the Heslington Tillmire in May, with two there on 15th June. In the autumn singles were at North Duffield Carrs on 2nd October, Crockey Hill on 9th October and East Cottingwith on 28th November. The species was notable by its absence from Strensall Common after the hard winter until two were seen there on 20th October.

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

*Passage migrant*

The first migrant was reported at Bubwith Ings on 21st March while a scattering of records during April and May included ten at East Cottingwith on 21st April with 14 there on the 30th. Birds of the Greenland race *leucorhoa* were noted at East Cottingwith and Ellerton. Autumn records all came during September and involved one or two birds at North Duffield Carrs and Wigginton Road allotments in York.



**Duncock** *Prunella modularis*  
*Resident breeder throughout the area*

Common and widespread throughout the recording area. The highest count was 12 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 23rd April and ten at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 23rd May.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*  
*Resident breeder*

Maximum counts (50 or more) were 50 at Selby on 3rd January, 60 at East Cottingwith on 16th June, 100+ at the west end of Low Lane, Heslington on 20th August (the highest count there in five years), 85 at Full Sutton on 20th August, 160 at Brecks Farm (Haxby) on 4th September and 150 at Bolton on 8th September. Reports of smaller numbers came from a variety of locations within the recording area.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*  
*Resident breeder*

Clifton Ings had good numbers throughout the year with a concentration of birds around the Cornfield NR during the winter. An average of 40 was recorded in an East Cottingwith garden during the winter months. Higher counts (50 or more) were 130 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 17th January (but with numbers decreasing through March and April), a minimum of 200 at Thornton on 28th September (with several hundred reported there on 24th October) and 150 at Wilberfoss on 2nd December.

Evidence of breeding was reported from East Cottingwith, Heslington, Nunnington, Sheriff Hutton, Whitwell Grange and Naburn Lane, York.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*  
*Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

The first was at East Cottingwith on 10th April but other reports soon followed. The only spring count of any consequence was 12 between East Cottingwith and Ellerton on 30th April, otherwise the maximum count was of eight birds. The only confirmed breeding reports were from Wressle and Gilling (Cawton Lane) but doubtless breeding did occur elsewhere as birds were seen at a variety of locations throughout the summer. There were few reports of autumn migrants, but these did include a noteworthy 120 at North Duffield Carrs on 6th and 7th September (BirdGuides) and a minimum of 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 8th September.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

*Resident breeder*

Up to four were seen regularly throughout the year at Clifton Ings and breeding was confirmed there and at Yearsley Moor. Elsewhere up to three birds were reported from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Fulford Ings, Gilling, Hemingbrough, Melbourne (reedbed by the Pocklington Canal), Newburgh Priory lake, Pocklington sewage works, Rowntree Park (York), Stamford Bridge, Welburn sewage works, Wheldrake Ings and the Foss, Millennium and Skeldergate bridges in York and at York University.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

*Resident breeder*

Reports came from Bubwith, Castle Howard, Clifton Ings, Fulford Ings, Osbaldwick, the River Ouse between York and Naburn, Skeldergate Bridge (York) and York University. The most notable counts were at least 200 in the Parliament Square roost in York on 13th March, 22 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 9th October and 110 at Pocklington Sewage Works on 14th October. All other counts were less than 15, with mostly single-figure records.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*

*Continental race mainly as a passage migrant in spring*

One was on the cricket pitch at Pocklington School on 24th April (IA).

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

*Migrant breeder though numbers have recently declined*

The first record was one at Strensall Common on 9th April followed by further records from here and Yearsley Moor. At Yearsley Moor three singing males, suggesting breeding, were recorded on 15th May while six territories were estimated at Strensall Common during the MOD survey on 21st May with signs of breeding also noted at Danes Hills (near Skipwith) and at Gilling Park. At Skipwith Common there was a worrying decline, with one pair at the most compared to the 11 holding territory in 2007, despite occasional singing birds earlier in the year. Nine at Allerthorpe Common on 27th August flew off to the east and the final record was one at Clifton Backies on 18th September.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

*Resident and migrant breeder, and passage migrant*

Small numbers were present throughout the year at Clifton Ings where there seem to be distinct summer and winter populations. Below

average numbers were noted at Skipwith Common with a maximum of 12 on 27th September. At Strensall Common just one territory was estimated during the MOD survey on 21st May.

Elsewhere birds were recorded in single figures from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Bolton, Brandrith Farm (Bulmer), Fulford Ings, Brecks Farm (Haxby), Heslington East, Middlethorpe Ings, Naburn Sewage Works and Pocklington Sewage Works. Higher counts (ten or more) were 30 at North Duffield Carrs on 11th September, 24 near Ganthorpe on 8th October and 11 at Elvington on 3rd November.

Unusual locations were Clifford's Tower, York during cold weather on 5th January and similarly one at York University on 30th November, with just one bird at each site.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

**Scarce, mainly winter visitor**

One was at Wheldrake Ings on 21st October (RS), the first record for the YOC area since 2007.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

**Rare winter visitor and passage migrant**

Two were by the new lake at Heslington East on 21st April (AB, RCn), the first record of this species since a well-watched bird at Catterton in 2007/08.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

**Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor**

A widespread and common species throughout the region but with most records in single or low double figures. Higher counts (25 or more) were 30–40 at Long Marston on 3rd January, at least 60 at Ellerton on 9th January, 25 on feeders at Hassacarr NR on 27th January, 30 at Copmanthorpe on 9th March, 30 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 4th June and 45 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 29th September.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

**Winter visitor and passage migrant**

There were just two reports of larger flocks: Wheldrake Ings had an impressive 35 on 24th October (JL) and ten were at Barmby Road, Pocklington on 28th December (IA). Elsewhere records in single figures in both winter periods came from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Ampleforth, Bank Island, Brandrith Farm (Bulmer), Castle Howard, Clifton Backies, Clifton Park, Copmanthorpe, Cornfield NR, Crockey Hill, East Cottingwith,

Fulford Golf Course, Gilling Woods, Hassacarr NR, Heslington, the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, SHL, Skipwith Common, Wheldrake Ings, Wilberfoss and York (Beckwith Close).

The latest spring sighting was of one at Wass Moor on 2nd April while the first autumn record was another single on feeders in an Ampleforth garden on 29th September.

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

*Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor*

Relatively few records were received this year. A roost of 350 at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on 17th January was by far the highest count of 2010 and 45 roosted there again at the end of the year on 12th December. Elsewhere there were 17 at Hassacarr NR on 27th January, 20 at Selby on 21st December and at least ten were regular visitors to an Askham Bryan garden. Other records in single figures came from Clifton Ings, Fulford Ings, Osbaldwick, the River Ouse between York and Naburn, and Skipwith Common.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

*Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor*

Largest counts (100 or more) were 100+ attracted to the feeders at Hassacarr NR on 27th January with 200 at Redhouse Wood on 14th December. Widely reported elsewhere in single and low double figures, but with higher counts (30 or more) of 42 at Welburn on 3rd January, 75 at North Duffield village on 20th February, 75 at Kelfield Lodge on 2nd September, 90 at Riccall on 9th September, 75 at East Cottingwith on 15th October, 80 along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 23rd October, 75 at the Cornfield NR, Rawcliffe on 5th November and a minimum of 60 at Redhouse Wood on 20th December.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

*Resident breeder in small numbers, passage and winter visitor*

In the first winter period highest counts (30 or more) were as follows: 80 at Strensall on 4th January, 40 at Gilling Woods on 17th January (with 100 there on 6th March), at least 30 at Hassacarr NR on 27th January and 70 at Rossmoor Park on 27th February. Additional records came from Askham Bog, Leavening, Poppleton, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge and Yearsley Moor. A male (with three other birds) singing on 9th April and a male at Yearsley Moor on 15th May might indicate possible breeding.

In the second winter period higher counts were 45 at Castle Howard on 5th November, 40 at East Cottingwith on 13th November, 30

at Stamford Bridge on 25th November and 300 at Redhouse Wood on 14th December. Single or low double figures were also recorded from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Askham Bog, Brandrith Farm (Bulmer), Cornfield NR (Rawcliffe), Crockey Hill, Fulford Golf Course, Hassacarr NR, Leavening, Selby, Skipwith Common, Strensall, Wheldrake Ings, Yearsley Moor and Walmgate Stray (York).

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

**Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor**

Reasonably widespread around the YOC area with, in the first winter period, counts of 30 or more as follows: 30 at Skipwith Common on 12th January, a minimum of 100 near Sands Lane, Wilberfoss on 28th January, 50 at Middlethorpe Ings on 31st January (and 30 there on 21st March), 300 roosting at Allerthorpe Common on 1st March, 30 at Whitwell Grange on 8th March and 40 at East Cottingwith on 19th March.

Five territories were noted at Strensall Common during the annual MOD survey and nine nests were found at Skipwith Common.

There were fewer reports in the second winter period with higher counts of 40 at Heslington East on 4th September, up to 30 at Gunby on 26th September, 55 at Smylett Hall, Yapham on 8th November, 70 at Heslington East on 27th November, around 100 at Wilberfoss on 2nd December and 130 near Cawood on 11th December.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

**Very scarce winter visitor**

Not seen in 2010 though recorded in both 2008 and 2009.

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cabaret*

**Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor**

Very small numbers were reported in the first winter period, most often from near Stamford Bridge but with additional records from Askham Bog, Castle Howard Lake, Danes Hills (northeast of Skipwith), Rawcliffe Lake and Skipwith Common.

In the second winter period there were more records with much larger numbers reported (30 or more): 50 at Skipwith Common on 23rd October, a flock of 60 at Redhouse Wood on 20th November (with 200 there on 14th December), 30 at Askham Bog also on 20th November and 30 at Selby on 21st December. Elsewhere single or low double figures were reported from Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Brandrith Farm (Bulmer), Castle Howard Arboretum and Lake, Heslington East, Outgang (Heslington), Pocklington, SHL and Skipwith Common.

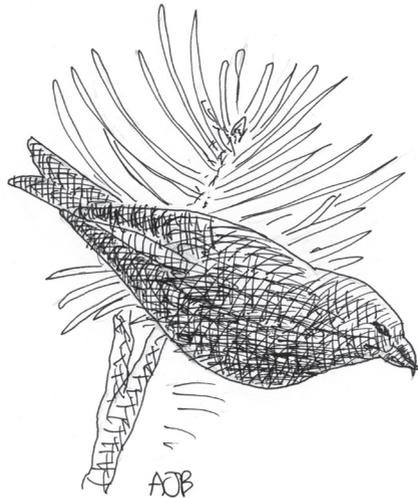
**Mealy (Common) Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea*  
*Scarce winter visitor*

Two were at Clifton Park on 3rd October (NS), one was at Castle Howard Arboretum on 13th November (BirdTrack) and five were with the Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret* flock at Redhouse Wood, Moor Monkton on 20th December (PaR).

**Common Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*  
*Casual breeder and passage migrant*

Thirty were at Yearsley Moor on 13th February (NS), 15 were at Wass Moor (just north of the recording area) on 2nd April and subsequent dates (JP *et al.*), one was at Yearsley Moor on 4th April (I&RT) with another single at Bishop Wood on 3rd July (PD), and six at Allerthorpe Common on 18th July (BirdGuides).

In the autumn a single bird was by Castle Howard Lake on 3rd November with one at the nearby Arboretum on the 5th (both P&SB).



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

Birds were noted in single figures at a variety of locations across the region. There were counts of ten or more as follows: ten at Leavening on 2nd January, 15 along the River Ouse from York to Naburn on the 30th (with slightly lower numbers in subsequent months), 20 noted in Selby on 7th December (with a count of 12 on the 21st) and about 15 seen at Fulford Ings on 25th December.

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*  
*Rare winter visitor*

Not recorded in 2010 after records in 2004, 2005 and 2008.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*  
*Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor*

This species is still widely reported within the YOC area in all months. In the first half of the year the largest flocks (20 or more) were 60–70 at Long Marston on 3rd January, at least 20 at Hassacarr NR on 27th January and 20 at East Cottingwith on 8th February.

Towards the end of the year sightings of 24 east of Stamford Bridge on 13th November, 40 at Wigginton on 10th December and 59 at Newton on Ouse on 21st December were the only counts of 20 or more.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*  
*Resident breeder and passage visitor*

Recorded in many locations throughout the year but with fewer reports during the summer months. A roost of 45 was counted at the Melbourne reedbed by Thornton Lock on 23rd January while 20 were at East Cottingwith on 8th February. Other records during the early part of the year were in single figures.

Eight singing males were seen along the River Ouse between York and Naburn on 23rd April and 13 territories were noted at Strensall Common on 21st May during the annual MOD survey.

An autumn roost of at least 32 at Skipwith Common dispersed after mid-October while the Melbourne roost peaked at 45 on 6th November. A minimum of 20 was recorded at East Cottingwith on 26th November and ten were noted in a Pocklington garden on 28th December. At Clifton Ings birds were seen throughout the year with a concentration around the Cornfield NR in winter.

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*  
*Resident breeder*

This species appears to be still widespread across the recording area. In the first winter period flocks of 20 or more were: about 60–70 with a mixed finch and bunting flock at Long Marston on 3rd January, 90 at Cornfield NR, Rawcliffe on 11th January, 145 roosting at the Melbourne roost by Thornton Lock on 23rd January, 75 at East Cottingwith on 8th February, 42 at Clifton Ings on 19th February, 30 at Bielby on 7th March and 25 at East Cottingwith on 25th March.

During the latter part of the year 50 were at Cornfield NR, Rawcliffe

on 1st July (but down to 20 on 2nd October), 25 at East Cottingwith on 31st October, 28 at Poppleton the same day, 55 roosting at the Melbourne reedbed on 6th November, at least 250 at East Cottingwith on 26th November, 118 at Cornfield NR, Rawcliffe on 29th November (but down to 50–60 in December), 24 at Ellerton on 19th December and 50 in a Dunnington garden on the 31st.

Other sites from which this species was reported were: Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, Bolton, Cawood/Thorpe Willoughby road, Fangfoss, Grimston Bar, Haxby, Kelfield Lodge, Langwith Stray (Heslington), Newhay, between North and South Duffield, Pocklington, Riccall, Sheriff Hutton, SHL, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge, Strensall and Wigginton.

## Introductions/Escapes

### **Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus*

The main sites for this introduced species are Allerthorpe Gravel Pits, North Duffield Carrs and York University Lake where breeding was confirmed with sightings of a pair with four juveniles in June and July. Sightings came in all months with an additional record of one bird at Wheldrake Ings on two dates in October .

### **Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

One was seen at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on four dates from May through to November. One was also seen at Buttercrambe on 13th December.

### **Swan Goose (Chinese Goose)** *Anser cygnoides*

One was seen at Allerthorpe Gravel Pits on three dates in May, July and August.

### **Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus*

Six were reported from the vicinity of Castle Howard Lake on 13th April.

## Hybrids

### **Carrion x Hooded Crow**

One was reported from Wheldrake Ings on 14th June.

### **Greylag x Canada Goose**

Three were recorded at York University Lake on 8th July during a campus survey.

## References

Birkhead, T.R. (1991) *The Magpies. The ecology and behaviour of Black-billed and Yellow-billed Magpies*. T. & A.D. Poyser, London.

## Contributors to the YOC Bird Report for 2010 with apologies for any accidental omissions

Andy D'Agorne	John & Terry Millett (J&TM)
Ian Andrews	Nick Moran
Richard Anstey	Jonathan Pomroy
John Bardet	Denise Raine
Elaine Blake	Craig Ralston
Phil & Sarah Bone (P&SB)	Paul Reed (PaR)
Andy Booth	Peter Reed (PeR)
Ian Brookes	Peter Reid (PRd)
Barry Byatt	Dave Richardson
Rob Chapman (RCn)	Peter Roworth (PR)
Mark Coates	Helen & Ken Searstone (H&KS)
Robert (Bob) Coursey (RCo)	Russell Slack
Roy Crossley (RCy)	Darren Starkey
Robert Dawson	Nigel Stewart
David Dickinson (DD)	Alan Stow
Jenny Dixon	Emily Strong
Paul Doherty	Simon Sweeney
David Dolman	David Tate
Trevor Douglas	Craig Thomas
Adam Firth	Ian & Ruth Traynor (I&RT)
Paul (Paz) Fletcher	Andy Walker
Elaine Gathercole	Mike Walton & Fiona Butler
Chris Gomersall	Trevor Walton
Steve Griffiths	George Watola
Martin Hammond	Peter Watson
Dave Harrison	Dave Waudby (DW)
Mick Hayes (MH)	Max Webber (MaW)
Lee Johnson	Mike Webster
Tim Jones	Terry Weston (TW)
Tim Key	Alexander Willis
Mark Killeen	Mark Windmill
Anne Lawn	Alan Whitehead
Tom & Julia Lawson	Mike Williams (MW)
John Lawton	Karen Woodall
Jono Leadley (JLe)	BirdGuides
Susan Leaper	Natural England (NE)
Peter Liddle	Sand Hutton Bird Report (SHBR)
Anne & Chris Lloyd (A&CL)	YOC website reports

## Earliest and latest dates for summer visitors/passage migrants

Species	Arrival date/ first reported	Last Reported
Garganey	19th March	17th May
Quail	23rd May	8th September
Osprey	27th March	24th October
Hobby	20th April	11th October
Oystercatcher	3rd March	26th July
Little Ringed Plover	25th March	26th July
Whimbrel	17th April	9th May
Common Sandpiper	18th April	12th August
Wood Sandpiper	29th April	3rd May
Common Tern	23rd April	26th July
Turtle Dove	27th June	27th July
Cuckoo	17th April	15th August
Nightjar	-	-
Swift	20th April	22nd September
Sand Martin	12th March	5th September
Barn Swallow	19th March	19th October
House Martin	28th March	early October
Chiffchaff †	19th March	8th October
Willow Warbler	5th April	22nd September
Blackcap *	30th March	4th October
Garden Warbler	16th April	9th September
Lesser Whitethroat	17th April	18th September
Common Whitethroat	16th April	23rd September
Grasshopper Warbler	22nd April	2nd August
Sedge Warbler	12th April	9th July
Reed Warbler	5th April	2nd September
Spotted Flycatcher	8th May	14th September
Redstart	12th April	7th September
Whinchat	14th April	9th September
Wheatear	21st March	23rd September
Yellow Wagtail	10th April	7th September
Tree Pipit	9th April	18th September

\* Overwintering birds seen on 8th February, 19th November, 13th and 30th December.

† Overwintering bird seen on 10th December.

## Earliest and latest dates for winter visitors/passage migrants

Species	Last reported in Spring	First reported in Autumn
Whooper Swan	24th April	15th September
Pink-footed Goose	10th May	23rd September
Goosander*	21st March	24th October
Golden Plover	26th April	23rd July
Jack Snipe	25th March	17th October
Green Sandpiper	19th April	16th June
Fieldfare	15th April	27th September
Redwing	7th April	26th September
Brambling	2nd April	28th September

\*Note that four females/juveniles seen on 29th July may be indicative of breeding.

## YOC Website

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

# Rare Breeding Birds of the Lower Derwent Valley 2010

Compiled by Craig Ralston

## Cat A – Rare Species

Species	Max no. adults	No. of young	No. of pairs			
			Poss	Prob	Proven	Total
Eurasian Wigeon	22	0	4	7	0	4–11
Pintail	2	7	0	0	1	1
Garganey	11	0	1	4	0	1–5
Shoveler*	268	25	50	33	11	11–94
Black-necked Grebe	4	1	1	0	1	1–2
Little Egret	2	0	1	0	0	0–1
Marsh Harrier†	2	0	1	0	0	0–1
Water Rail	8	5+	2	5	1	1–8
Spotted Crake	5	4?	3	2	0	0–5
Corncrake	3	0	2	1	0	0–3
Black-tailed Godwit‡	7	4	0	0	2	2



\* A record year with large numbers in late April and early May, falling as water levels receded.

† The increase in birds throughout the year continues with 2010 again being notable in a number of records of males (usually very scarce in the valley). One pair built a nest at North Duffield Carrs but abandoned it as water levels fell.

‡ A single pair (nominate race) displayed and bred at North Duffield Carrs, a nest with four eggs located on 19th April. They appeared to hatch but quickly lost chicks, presumably through corvid predation.

A single pair (*islandica*) displayed and bred at Wheldrake Ings – no nest was found but a female was seen with four newly hatched chicks on 21st May. The male was caught and ringed on 29th April (see photo below); the biometrics also supported the *islandica* race.



### **Ruff**

A total of 17 males and six females were present at leks in April and early May, with the last noted on 9th May. Two males summered. No evidence of local breeding.

## Cat B – Less Scarce species

### Gadwall

Poss: 20      Probable: 22      Proved: 32      Total: 20–72 pairs

### Common Pochard

Three drakes and a duck were present through April and the first half of May, with one pair remaining until 26th May. Display was noted but no further evidence of breeding was seen.

### Common Quail

Another good Quail year in the Lower Derwent valley area with birds present from the 17th April to 29th August. Seven males were caught and ringed, three showing extensive 'brood patches'. In addition, a single bird ringed as a chick in 2009 was caught back in its natal field in 2010.

A single male was also radio tracked – it had three regular calling spots and another location it kept returning to from which it didn't call – this may have been a nest site.

#### Breeding of Common Quail

Breeding Definition	Singing males
Possible	39
Probable	14
Confirmed	3?
Young	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3–56</b>

### Hobby

Poss: 3      Probable: 2      Proved: 0      Total: 2–5 pairs

### Woodlark

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

### Cetti's Warbler

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

## Red-rumped Swallow at Wheldrake Ings

Andy Malley

I normally try to visit the Derwent Ings at least a couple of times during the year. On this occasion the weather conditions did not seem favourable for coastal migrants and because there had been a number of records of Red-rumped Swallows *Cecropis daurica* in Yorkshire I decided that Wheldrake Ings and North Duffield followed by a trip to Nosterfield would put me in some pretty good areas. Being realistic I knew my chances were slim but it is the hope that motivates and on this occasion for once it paid off.

I left my car at about 08:30 near Bank Island and walked slowly down the reserve to the hides at the bottom. On the way I passed a birder coming from that direction and he had little to report, so my motivation took a knock but I continued to the first hide and on entering noticed a number of hirundines feeding at the back of the pool 50m–100m distant. There were approximately 20 Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica*, a few House Martins *Delichon urbicum* and the odd Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* and there flying in amongst them was a Red-rumped Swallow! I had to pinch myself, punched the air a couple of times and got my scope on to it. I did not have the Birdline numbers with me so contacted Brett Richards for the number and rung in the details. At times the bird came to within 25m of the hide but after 15 minutes a squall came through and all the birds lifted off. I thought it had gone but they reappeared after a couple of minutes. Another squall came through after 25 minutes and this time most birds failed to return. I tried the next hide but it was not there either.

Walking back to the car there were 100+ hirundines feeding and roosting on the grassland meadows but I failed to pick it up here.

The bird was picked out easily amongst the Swallows with which it had been loosely associating, a pale face and cheek giving an open-faced appearance. At certain angles a narrow collar was visible isolating the dark cap. The rump was coloured an apricot/rusty colour and was clearly visible, separating the dark tail/undertail coverts from the body feathering. The flight action was similar but different to Swallow, looking more streamlined and gliding more frequently.

*Andy Malley*

*[This is not the first record for the YOC area (records going back to 1966) but is the first since at least 1980. – Ed]*

# **Bird Atlas 2007–11 in the York region**

Rob Chapman

## **Introduction**

Over the last few years, thousands of birdwatchers across the whole of the British Isles have been contributing to the Bird Atlas 2007–11 project to produce an updated view of the distribution of birds in both the breeding and winter seasons. This article aims to give an overview of the atlas work undertaken, with a special emphasis on the Yorkshire (York) Region of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

The first comprehensive atlas of this type was produced in the mid 1970s (Sharrock 1976) to map birds across the British Isles in the breeding season; fieldwork for this was undertaken between 1968 and 1972. Twenty years on, between 1988 and 1991, fieldwork using similar methods was carried out for the ‘new breeding atlas’ (Gibbons *et al.* 1993). In addition to mapping distribution, this publication showed changes between the two atlases which highlighted areas of concern for the conservation of species; for example, the impacts of agricultural change. In between these atlases, Lack (1986) mapped the distribution of birds in winter; fieldwork for this was done in the three winters between 1981 and 1984.

Since then much has happened to Britain’s and Ireland’s habitats and climate so the BTO, partnered by BirdWatch Ireland and The Scottish Ornithologists’ Club, organised a combined breeding and wintering atlas to understand how Britain’s and Ireland’s birds have been affected.

## **Fieldwork methods and validation**

Atlas fieldwork started in the winter of 2007/08 and ended in the breeding season of 2011 with four winter and four breeding seasons covered. For the purposes of the work, the winter season extended from November to February and the breeding season from April to July. Records outside of these periods were also collected for evidence of breeding in such species as Crossbill and Grey Heron which breed earlier than April.

Two complementary methods were used for collecting data: Timed Tetrad Visits (TTVs) and Roving Records. TTVs were carried out based on tetrad mappings (a tetrad is a 2km x 2km square based on the standard Ordnance Survey grid). Two visits of one or, optionally, two

hours were made to assigned tetrads for each season: one in the first two months, the other in the second two. All birds seen or heard that were using the tetrad were counted and, for breeding season visits, an associated breeding code could be recorded. The aim of the TTV was to obtain data for abundance mapping as well as contributing to the distribution maps.

The Roving Record method's aim was to find further evidence of presence in winter and summer and of breeding in the breeding season for the distribution maps. These data have also been supplemented from other sources such as BirdTrack, the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP), BirdGuides records (where the location can be pinpointed to a grid reference), and other BTO surveys such as the Heronry Census and Breeding Birds Survey (BBS). The BTO has been working closely with the Rare Breeding Birds Panel to ensure that rare and sensitive species are represented yet are not compromised by the work.

The atlas project made full use of technology that was not available for the previous atlases with a comprehensive website for submission, editing and managing data. Records have been checked for quality to ensure that the final atlas will be based on a robust dataset. Grid references had to agree with the location name and counts not look excessive bearing in mind the species, location and time of year. Breeding codes had to seem sensible for each species and time of year; for instance, a code such as display for a winter visitor like Goldeneye would give a false suggestion of breeding.

Identification queries were made whenever the record was of a scarce or rare bird at the local, county or national level (the atlas has to be based on records that are acceptable to the YOC, YNU or BBRC as appropriate). This type of check was also used to detect incorrectly entered codes.

## **Size of the project**

The atlas sparked much enthusiasm in the birdwatching community as illustrated by the following figures nationally:

- 241.7 million birds counted
- 581 species (including escapees and races)
- 182,269 Timed Tetrad Visits
- 4,950,025 Roving Records
- 4,611,972 BirdTrack records
- 17,342 online users

This will have been helped by the increased use of electronic communication such as the internet, email and social media like Facebook. Furthermore, the BTO was very active in publicising the atlas through other media such as national newspapers and TV, through the BBC's AutumnWatch for instance.

## Coverage in the York region

Overall, out of the 375 tetrads in the York region, 251 were visited twice for the winter TTV with eight additional tetrads having had a single visit. In the breeding season, 232 tetrads were visited twice with 16 others having just one visit. Roving Records and BirdTrack records were generally distributed across the York region.

Table 1 shows tetrad coverage over the four years of the atlas by 10km square. There are 15 of these squares in the region (see map of the YOC recording area inside the front cover of this report), where SE53 is at the southwest corner and SE77 to the northeast.

Table 1: Atlas coverage in the York region

10km square (each has 25 tetrads)	Tetrads covered in winter	Tetrads covered in the breeding season	Tetrads with roving records
SE53	19 (3 single visit)	11	16
SE54	19	19 (2 single visit)	24
SE55	16	18 (1 single visit)	25
SE56	16	14 (1 single visit)	23
SE57	13 (1 single visit)	12 (1 single visit)	21
SE63	25 (1 single visit)	24 (3 single visit)	21
SE64	17	17 (3 single visit)	24
SE65	17	16 (1 single visit)	25
SE66	15	16	24
SE67	15	16 (1 single visit)	23
SE73	16 (2 single visit)	15 (1 single visit)	22
SE74	21	21	24
SE75	20 (1 single visit)	18	25
SE76	16	16	24
SE77	14	15 (2 single visit)	20

A total of 315 observers contributed records in the York region. This includes visitors to the area as well as many local people who had not previously been involved with BTO surveys. This level of interest within the region reflected the national picture. The average number of records submitted was 323 per person but this figure was heavily influenced by a small number of very active observers: 22 people each submitted more

than 1,000 records, four broke the 6,000 mark and one person input a massive 8,042!

Of the 79 people who took part in the TTV method most returned records from both visits in both seasons. Three people covered ten or more tetrads; one of these returned records for 20 tetrads.

In the third and fourth years, the local focus was on looking for gaps in the species lists for each of the 10km squares in the region and also on confirming breeding status. To help with this, two of the YOC trips in 2011 were arranged as 'hit squads' to SE73, SE76 and SE77.

## Numbers of records and species counts

Table 2 shows the number of records within the York region and the number of species in the winter and breeding seasons from 2007–11 by 10km square.

Table 2: Numbers of records and species

10km square	Winter Records	Species in winter	Breeding season records	Species in breeding season
SE53	1706	88	1503	87
SE54	3070	105	3794	104
SE55	2597	103	2686	109
SE56	1472	84	1221	82
SE57	1319	88	1777	99
SE63	4153	127	3388	146
SE64	2300	116	3284	137
SE65	6529	111	7079	142
SE66	1813	86	2649	94
SE67	1781	82	2115	98
SE73	1511	99	2081	99
SE74	4426	122	5544	139
SE75	2756	95	3283	94
SE76	3219	85	3861	103
SE77	4297	101	4332	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>42949</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>48597</b>	<b>197</b>

As can be seen, there is some variation in the numbers of records and species seen across the 10km squares in the region. This may be related to differences in search effort, observer experience and skill, as well as the fact that some areas simply hold more birds. More accessible and more populous areas have more records; this effect can be seen in

SE65, containing much of York, which has most records in winter and in the breeding season. This square also contains the University so this too may have had an effect, especially towards the end of the atlas with the emergence of Heslington East as a prime site for birds. The second and third ranked squares in both seasons are SE74 and SE77, probably due to their containing the key sites of Wheldrake Ings and Castle Howard respectively. In addition to having more birds anyway, people are more likely to visit and spend more time at these sites and so record more. Furthermore, SE74 was intensively covered by TTVs.

The reverse effects can be seen in SE53 and SE56, which do not appear to be so good for birds, and SE57 which is further from the main population centres. It could be the perception that these areas are less productive for birds thus influencing the choice of whether to visit or take on a TTV there. The 10km squares that had most winter records also appeared to have more in the breeding season (correlation coefficient 0.95, where 1 is a perfect match).

SE63 was also covered intensively and, although not having so many records, had the longest species list in both winter and in the breeding season. However, as a general rule, it seems that the more records there are in a square, the longer the species list. This is true in both winter (correlation coefficient 0.63) and the breeding season (correlation 0.74). Comparing the squares between the seasons shows that those with a longer species list in winter have a longer list in the breeding season too (correlation 0.90). This highlights the consistency of good birding areas throughout the year, although one cannot discount the influence of observer choice as noted above.

## **Regional highlights**

Blackbird was the most recorded species in both the breeding season and in the winter within the region. Table 3 shows the number of records for the top ten most recorded species in each season. Counts were recorded in TTV visits and were optional in Roving Records; however it was not possible to extract these for analysis.

It is interesting to note the similarity of the lists: eight species are in the top ten for both winter and breeding seasons. There is only one migrant species, Swallow, in the lists, although actual numbers of several on the winter list will have been augmented by continental birds. Possibly Starling was more recorded in that season as a result of this; it was 15th in the breeding season list.

**Table 3: Top ten in winter and breeding season**

Winter top 10	Records	Breeding season top 10	Records
Blackbird	2101	Blackbird	1958
Blue Tit	1887	Woodpigeon	1774
Woodpigeon	1769	Chaffinch	1641
Robin	1687	Blue Tit	1492
Carrion Crow	1526	Carrion Crow	1477
Dunnock	1511	Robin	1469
Great Tit	1481	Dunnock	1383
Chaffinch	1473	House Sparrow	1355
House Sparrow	1327	Wren	1354
Starling	1279	Swallow	1282

In the breeding season, 31 species had breeding confirmed in all 10km squares with a further nine species confirmed in 13 or 14 (more than 80%) of the squares (Tables 4 & 5).

**Table 4: Species confirmed breeding across the whole region (15 squares)**

Mallard	Dunnock	Carrion Crow
Moorhen	Robin	Starling
Lapwing	Blackbird	House Sparrow
Woodpigeon	Song Thrush	Tree Sparrow
Barn Owl	Chiffchaff	Chaffinch
Swift	Willow Warbler	Greenfinch
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Coal Tit	Goldfinch
Swallow	Blue Tit	Linnet
House Martin	Great Tit	Yellowhammer
Pied Wagtail	Jackdaw	
Wren	Rook	

**Table 5: Additional species confirmed breeding in 13 or 14 of the squares**

Mute Swan	Coot	Whitethroat
Greylag Goose	Mistle Thrush	Long-tailed Tit
Pheasant	Blackcap	Magpie

Fieldwork during the winters of the atlas resulted in 58 species being recorded in all of the 10km squares in the region, with a further 19 in 13 or 14 of the squares (Tables 6 & 7).

**Table 6: Species present across the whole region in winter**

Mute Swan	Stock Dove	Great Tit
Greylag Goose	Woodpigeon	Treecreeper
Canada Goose	Collared Dove	Jay
Teal	Barn Owl	Magpie
Mallard	Little Owl	Jackdaw
Red-legged Partridge	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Rook
Grey Partridge	Skylark	Carrion Crow
Pheasant	Pied Wagtail	Starling
Cormorant	Wren	House Sparrow
Grey Heron	Dunnock	Tree Sparrow
Sparrowhawk	Robin	Chaffinch
Common Buzzard	Blackbird	Greenfinch
Kestrel	Fieldfare	Goldfinch
Moorhen	Song Thrush	Linnet
Coot	Redwing	Lesser Redpoll
Golden Plover	Mistle Thrush	Bullfinch
Lapwing	Goldcrest	Yellowhammer
Black-headed Gull	Long-tailed Tit	Reed Bunting
Common Gull	Coal Tit	
Feral Pigeon	Blue Tit	

**Table 7: Additional species present in 13 or 14 of the 10km squares**

Pink-footed goose	Herring Gull	Marsh Tit
Wigeon	Tawny Owl	Willow Tit
Tufted Duck	Kingfisher	Nuthatch
Goosander	Green Woodpecker	Brambling
Peregrine	Meadow Pipit	Siskin
Snipe	Grey Wagtail	
Woodcock	Waxwing	

Common Buzzards were confirmed breeding in nine squares and there were over 250 records in the breeding season. Furthermore, this species was recorded in all of the 10km squares in the region during the winter. This reflects the significant eastward spread of this species since the previous atlases when Common Buzzard was a bird of the west and north of Britain. Only the second breeding atlas has a sight record in the region, neither have breeding records; the winter atlas had records from just four 10km squares.

Another species that has been doing well since the last breeding atlas is Little Egret. Although more common in the south, there were records from six 10km squares in the breeding season and two in winter within the York region. This included the first breeding record for Yorkshire, as documented in the 2009 YOC report. In the previous breeding atlas the species didn't even have a species account, being recorded in only three tetrads in the whole of the British Isles!

Cuckoo was also recorded over 250 times and these records were spread right across the region, yet evidence of confirmed breeding was recorded in only two squares compared to all 15 10km squares in both the previous breeding atlases illustrating the decline of the Cuckoo in England that has been noted in recent years.

The decline of the Turtle Dove over the last few decades has been well documented and the atlas results give further evidence of this. The species was present throughout the region in the first atlas and confirmed as a breeder in most of the 10km squares; it was missing from two of these squares in the second breeding atlas but still breeding in nine squares. The atlas records for 2007–11 show presence during the breeding season in only seven squares, none of which had any confirmed breeding records, with just three squares recording 'probable' breeding being the highest level of evidence.

Interestingly, the Barn Owl was recorded as confirmed breeding in all squares this time round. In the last breeding atlas it was only confirmed in seven, with another square containing a sight-only record; a thinning out and contraction of the range compared to the first atlas. Although population trends suggest a long-term decline in the UK, the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) index shows an increase in numbers. As the BBS started in 1994, perhaps this indicates that the species was at a low point around the time of the fieldwork period for the second atlas. In winter, Barn Owls were seen throughout the region while the previous winter atlas showed a similar pattern to the second breeding atlas, with presence in only seven squares.

The recent good run of Waxwing winters extended into the fieldwork period for the 2007–11 atlas. There were 92 records, although this figure includes some duplication, and the birds were logged in 14 of the 10km squares. There were even some records early in the breeding season period. In contrast, the species was thin on the ground across the country in the first winter atlas; the York region had records in just three 10km squares.

During breeding season fieldwork, some observers were lucky enough to come across some more unusual species; many of these

would have been birds on passage. Some of these came from sources such as BirdTrack or BirdGuides, for example Corncrake in the Lower Derwent Valley (LDV), the Red-backed Shrike at North Duffield Carrs and the Lesser Yellowlegs at Wheldrake Ings. Furthermore, Black Tern was seen at Castle Howard and the LDV, while the latter site also hosted Common Crane, Green-winged Teal, Spoonbill and Cetti's Warbler. Sightings of Dipper and Golden Oriole, the latter seen at Yearsley Moor, show that carrying out fieldwork can turn up unexpected gems.

Notable winter records included the Taiga Bean Geese at Coxwold, Eider, Smew and Red-throated Diver all at Castle Howard, the Water Pipit at Catterton, Great Grey Shrike at NDC and Skipwith Common, Cetti's Warbler at Wheldrake Ings, and the 2009 Sand Hutton Yellow-browed Warbler and Bearded Tit. There was also a scattering of Common (Mealy) Redpolls which were recorded in seven of the squares and several Yellow-legged, Glaucous and Iceland Gulls.

Please note that these comments are based only on the data available to the Regional Organiser and exclude those that have come from sources such as the RBBP.



Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*, one of the more unexpected species found during atlas work.

## Next steps

The Atlas 2007–11 is due to be published by the BTO in 2013, in time to promote it at the annual Birdfair at Rutland Water. It is expected that the book will be of a similar size to the last atlas (Gibbons *et al.* 1993) but will be supplemented by information on the BTO's website ([www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)).

At the time of writing, the presentation of maps is still being worked on. It is expected that there will be abundance 'heat maps' in a similar style to those of Gibbons *et al.* (1993) based on TTV data, with dot maps for presence in winter and breeding status. In addition there should be maps highlighting changes since the previous atlases.

Following publication, of course, the atlas should trigger further research into the distribution and abundance of our birds. This will be at the specific, habitat and ecosystem scales to address questions such as: What is the impact of climate change? Which species are doing well and which are not? And why?

## Acknowledgments

The atlas project would not have been possible without all the observers who contributed their records. I would like to highlight the contributions of Peter Watson, Dave Tate and Phil Bone for the large numbers of TTVs covered. Peter and Phil also helped me massively with the validation tasks and Andy Booth's input to this was also most valuable.

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*Rob Chapman*

*Rob Chapman is the BTO Regional Representative for Yorkshire (York)*

## Notes

### Allerthorpe Gravel Pits 2010

Phil Bone

Survey work over the spring and summer showed that despite the previous harsh winter many small resident birds had fared reasonably well with no declines noted for Wren, Robin, Long-tailed Tit, or for any of the titmice or finches. The only obvious decline was for Blackbird for whom the number of territories present had halved to just seven pairs (compared to 2009). Given the dry spring, breeding success for thrushes in general was low, with few pairs attempting second or third broods. It was mixed fortunes for summer migrants, while the number of Blackcap and Chiffchaff territories on site continues to increase, the number of Willow Warbler territories has continued its slow decline, the number having halved since 2006. The number of Reed Warblers territories present was also slightly down on 2009, though this is probably due to the state of the reed fringing the lakes, having been partly flattened due to the snow earlier in the year and partly due to increased damage by grazing geese. Disappointingly for the first time since 2000, there were no Turtle Doves present this year.

Over the year there was a noticeable increase in the number of Buzzard sightings, with records spread evenly throughout the year. Another noticeable increase was noted for Marsh Tit. With no modern records prior to 2005, late summer saw an increase in sightings, with one to two birds regularly recorded until the end of the year. In contrast Willow Tit has declined from a wintering population of around seven individuals to just two or three.

There were good numbers of Brambling around this autumn. While never a common winter visitor on site, the first birds appeared at the beginning of October and numbers quickly increased with up to nine birds present by the middle of the month. Thereafter three to four birds were regularly noted to the year end, when a very odd looking bird was also present. Originally reported as Snow Bunting, the bird proved to be a leucistic first-year male and it was seen on several dates in December.

The snowy conditions at the end of the year also saw an increase in activity around feeders with not only good numbers of finches and Tree Sparrows present, but also the usual Blue and Great Tits. More unusually there was also up to at least 12 Coal Tits present (a record count for the site). The snowy conditions also saw an increase in the

number of Greenfinches roosting on site, with of at least 500 birds noted using three laurel bushes in December; in contrast, with most of the lakes frozen over, there were no roosts of Reed Buntings. The year ended on a high, with small numbers present nearby, it was perhaps the best chance we have had for many winters to add Waxwing to the site list and we were not to be disappointed with a lone bird seen flying over the site on the 12th.

### **Allerthorpe Lakeland Park**

There was a slight decline in the number of nests present in the Sand Martin colony down from 243 active holes in 2009 to a maximum of 210 this year. As the summer moves on there is usually a small decline in the number of active holes present due to sand slides and this year the number of active nests declined to 130, though there was no noticeable effect on breeding productivity.

*Phil Bone*

*Note: Allerthorpe Gravel Pits is a site with no public access; please respect this. Allerthorpe Lakeland Park is open to the public and offers a range of watersports.*

## 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 2010. 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. 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>B</b>	American Wigeon *
<b>Bewick's Swan W</b>	Gadwall <b>B</b>
Whooper Swan <b>W</b>	Eurasian Teal <b>B</b>
<b>Bean Goose W</b> *	<b>Green-winged Teal</b>
Pink-footed Goose <b>P</b>	Mallard <b>B</b>
<b>White-fronted Goose</b>	Pintail ( <b>B</b> )?
( <b>Lesser White-fronted Goose</b> ) <b>R</b>	Garganey <b>B</b>
Greylag Goose <b>B</b>	<b>Blue-winged Teal R</b>
( <b>Snow Goose</b> )	Shoveler <b>B</b>
Canada Goose <b>B</b>	<b>Red-crested Pochard</b>
Barnacle Goose	Common Pochard ( <b>B</b> )
<b>Brent Goose</b>	<b>Ring-necked Duck</b>
( <b>Egyptian Goose</b> )	<b>Ferruginous Duck</b> *
( <b>Ruddy Shelduck</b> )	Tufted Duck <b>B</b>
Common Shelduck <b>B</b>	<b>Greater Scaup</b>
( <b>Mandarin Duck</b> )	Common Eider
( <b>Wood Duck</b> ) <b>R</b>	<b>Long-tailed Duck</b>
Eurasian Wigeon ( <b>B</b> )	<b>Common Scoter</b>

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  
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 \*  
Black Stork \*  
White Stork  
Spoonbill  
Little Grebe B  
Great Crested Grebe B  
Red-necked Grebe  
Slavonian Grebe  
Black-necked Grebe (B)  
Honey Buzzard \*  
Black Kite \*  
Red Kite  
Marsh Harrier

Hen Harrier  
Montagu's Harrier \*  
Goshawk B  
Sparrowhawk B  
Common Buzzard B  
Rough-legged Buzzard \*  
Osprey  
Kestrel B  
Red-footed Falcon \*  
Merlin  
Hobby (B)?  
Peregrine  
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 \*  
European 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  
Sabine's Gull  
Kittiwake  
Black-headed Gull B  
Little Gull  
Mediterranean Gull  
Common Gull W & P  
Ring-billed Gull? \*  
Lesser Black-backed Gull S & P  
Herring Gull W & P  
Yellow-legged Gull  
Iceland Gull  
(Kumlien's Gull)? R  
Glaucous Gull  
Great Black-backed Gull W  
Little Tern  
Caspian Tern R  
Whiskered Tern R  
Black Tern  
Sandwich Tern  
Common Tern (B)?  
Roseate Tern

Arctic Tern  
Common 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  
Common Swift B  
Alpine Swift \*  
Common Kingfisher B  
European Bee-eater  
Hoopoe  
Wryneck  
Green Woodpecker B  
Great Spotted Woodpecker B  
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker B  
Golden Oriole  
Red-backed Shrike  
Lesser Grey Shrike R  
Great Grey Shrike  
Magpie B  
Jay B  
Jackdaw B  
Rook B  
Carrion Crow B  
Hooded Crow  
Common Raven  
Goldcrest B  
Firecrest  
Blue Tit B  
Great Tit B

Coal Tit B  
Willow Tit B  
Marsh Tit B  
Bearded Tit  
Wood Lark B  
Sky Lark B  
Sand Martin B  
Barn Swallow B  
House Martin B  
Red-rumped Swallow \*  
Cetti's Warbler  
Long-tailed Tit B  
Yellow-browed Warbler  
Wood Warbler (B)?  
Common Chiffchaff B  
Siberian Chiffchaff  
Willow Warbler B  
Blackcap B  
Garden Warbler B  
Barred Warbler  
Lesser Whitethroat B  
Common Whitethroat B  
Grasshopper Warbler (B)?  
Sedge Warbler B  
Marsh Warbler \*  
Reed Warbler B  
Waxwing  
Nuthatch B  
Treetreeper B  
Wren B  
Common Starling B  
Rose-coloured Starling  
Dipper B?  
Ring Ouzel  
Blackbird B  
Fieldfare W  
Song Thrush B  
Redwing W  
Mistle Thrush B  
Spotted Flycatcher B  
Robin B

Common Nightingale  
Black Redstart (B)?  
Common Redstart (B)?  
Whinchat (B)?  
Stonechat  
Northern Wheatear  
Red-breasted Flycatcher  
Pied Flycatcher (B)?  
Dunnock B  
House Sparrow B  
Tree Sparrow B  
Yellow Wagtail B  
(Blue-headed Wagtail)  
Grey Wagtail B  
Pied Wagtail B  
(White Wagtail)  
Richard's Pipit  
Tree Pipit B  
Meadow Pipit B  
Rock Pipit  
Water Pipit  
Chaffinch B  
Brambling W  
Greenfinch B  
Goldfinch B  
Siskin B?  
Linnet B  
Twite  
Lesser Redpoll B  
Mealy Redpoll  
Arctic 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, Geese & Ducks to Shag  
Bittern to Common Crane & Skuas to Puffin  
Waders to Grey Phalarope  
Pigeons & Doves to Warblers  
Waxwing 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](mailto: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](http://www.yorkbirding.org.uk). Records for inclusion in the YOC Report should be submitted to the editor by email at [editor@yorkbirding.org.uk](mailto: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).

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 many 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	Caspian Gull
Black Brant	White-winged Black Tern
American Wigeon	Alpine Swift
Ferruginous Duck	Woodchat Shrike
Surf Scoter	Red-billed Chough
Wilson's Storm-petrel	(Greater) Short-toed Lark
Night Heron	Red-rumped Swallow
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	Tawny Pipit
Kentish Plover	Red-throated Pipit
American Golden Plover	Arctic Redpoll
White-rumped Sandpiper	Cirl Bunting
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Rustic Bunting
Red-necked Phalarope ( <i>in flight</i> )	Little Bunting
Ring-billed 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	<b>Red-necked Grebe</b>
Snow Goose	<b>Slavonian Grebe</b>
Brent Goose – all races	Black-necked Grebe
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
<b>(Common) Eider</b>	<b>Spotted Crake</b>
Long-tailed Duck	<b>Corncrake</b>
<b>Common Scoter</b>	<b>Common Crane</b>
<b>Velvet Scoter</b>	<b>Stone Curlew</b>
Red-breasted Merganser	Little Ringed Plover
<b>Black Grouse</b>	Dotterel
Common Quail	Knot
Golden Pheasant	Sanderling
<b>Red-throated Diver</b>	Little Stint
<b>Black-throated Diver</b>	<b>Temminck's Stint</b>
<b>Great Northern Diver</b>	<b>Pectoral Sandpiper</b>
Fulmar	Curlew Sandpiper
<b>Sooty Shearwater</b>	<b>Purple Sandpiper</b>
<b>Manx Shearwater</b>	<b>Buff-breasted Sandpiper</b>
<b>European Storm-petrel</b>	Jack Snipe
<b>Leach's Storm-petrel</b>	Black-tailed Godwit
Gannet	Bar-tailed Godwit
<b>Shag</b>	Whimbrel
(Great) Bittern	Spotted Redshank
White Stork	<b>Grey Phalarope</b>
Spoonbill	<b>Great Skua</b>

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  
Caspian 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  
European Bee-eater  
Hoopoe  
Wryneck  
Golden Oriole

Red-backed Shrike  
Great Grey Shrike  
Chough  
Common Raven  
Firecrest  
Crested Tit  
Bearded Tit  
Wood Lark  
Shore Lark  
Cetti's Warbler  
Yellow-browed Warbler  
Barred Warbler  
Rose-coloured Starling  
Ring Ouzel  
Nightingale  
Black Redstart  
Red-breasted Flycatcher  
Yellow Wagtail (scarce races)  
Richard's Pipit  
Rock Pipit  
Water Pipit  
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	5751
Allerthorpe Common	7547
Allerthorpe Gravel Pits (also known as the Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe)	7947
Allerthorpe Lakeland Park	780465
Ampleforth	583787
Appleton Roebuck	555423
Askham Bog	5748
Aughton	705385
Aughton Ings	698383

### 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
Bishopthorpe	594476
Bishopthorpe Palace	596480
Bishop Wilton	797553
Bishop Wood	5533
Black Dike, Barmby Moor	764502
Bolton Percy	532414
Bootham Stray, York	597548
Bossall	719607
Bowthorpe Hall	697331
Brandsby	589724
Brayton	601305

Brayton Barff	5830
Brawby	738781
Breck's Lane, Strensall	641612
Brecks (The), Strensall	648618
Breighton	709341
Breighton Airfield	720350
Brind	742310
Brindley's Plantation	742318
Broomhill Plantation	703449
Bubwith bridge	705364
Bubwith Ings	7037
Bugthorpe	773579
Buttercrambe	733582
Buttercrambe Weir	734585
Butterwick	732775
Byland Abbey	549790

### C

Calley Heath NR	753498
Canal Head, Pocklington	798474
Castle Howard Lake	7170
Cawood	573377
Cawton	643767
Church Fenton	515370
Church Bridge, Melbourne	759445
Claxton	694602
Cliffe	662320
Cliffe Common	666339
Clifton	593532
Clifton Backies NR, York	597544
Clifton Ings	583531
Clifton Park	584533
Coates Bridge, Pocklington Canal	785453
Coneysthorpe	713713
Coneysthorpe Banks Wood	720725
Copmanthorpe	565469
Cornborough Manor	630671
Cornfield NR, Rawcliffe	579542

Coulton	636742	North Duffield Carrs	698368
Coulton Moor Plantation	625748	Garrowby Hill	798567
Coxwold	536772	Gaterley	737696
Crambe	733649	Geoff Smith Hide,	
Crambeck	738674	North Duffield Carrs	696372
Crayke	562705	Giles Lock,	
Crockey Hill	625466	Pocklington Canal	795464

## D

Danesmead Copse, York	607497	Gilling (East)	614769
Derwent Cottage Farm,		Goosewood Caravan Park,	
North Duffield	700360	Sutton-on-the-Forest	591631
Designer Outlet, York	607477	Great Barugh	750790
Dringhouses, York	580495	Great Givendale	811539
Dunnington	671525	Great Wood,	
Dunnington Common	6750	Strensall Common	668627

## E

Easingwold	529698	Grimston	644514
East Cottingwith	703425	Grimston Bar roundabout	649516
East Moor,		Grimston Moor	613744
Sutton-on-the-Forest	600644	Gunby	710354
Ellerton (Ings)	700400		
Everingham (Park)	804426		
Elvington	700476		
Elvington Airfield	670480		
Elvington Sewage Works	7048		
Escrick	631427		
Escrick Park	635418		

## F

Fangfoss	765533	Hagg Bridge	717452
Fireman's Leap, New Earwick	609550	Harewood Whin	538518
Flamingoland	7780	Hartrigg Oaks, York	608559
Flaxton	680624	Hassacarr NR	673518
Foggathorpe	755377	Haxby	609582
Foss Island, York	609520	Healaugh	500477
Foston	698651	Heslington East,	
Frog Hall,		York University	6350-6450
Allerthorpe Common	7648	Heslington Tillmire, York	638475
Fulford, York	610496	Heslington, York	627504
Fulford Ings	608493	Hessay	524534
Fulford Golf Course	624494	High Catton	718538
Fulford Hall	606484	High Hutton	755685
Full Sutton	746555	High Lodge, SHL	675586

## G

Ganthorpe	689704	Hob Moor, York	585506
Garganey Hide,		Hogg's Pond, Dringhouses	581493

## J

Jeffry Bog, Low Hutton	759667	Holtby	675542
JRTNR, New Earswick	608548	Hopgrove (roundabout)	642553

**K**

Keldspring Crossing, Pocklington	786498
Kelfield	594384
Kexby	705511
Kilburn	504796
Kirby Misperton	780794
Kirkham Priory	736658
Knapton	562522
Knavesmire, York	594495

**L**

Langton	798671
Langwith Stray, Heslington	650480
Laytham	749395
Leppington	763613
Linton-on-Ouse	495607
Loftsome Bridge	705301
Long Marston	502512
Low Carr, Sutton-on-the-Forest	600623
Low Cattton	705538
Lower Derwent Valley	7036-7046

**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, York	630550
Moor Lane, Bishopthorpe	585470
Moor Monkton	506569
Moreby Wood	606428
Moorlands	577588
Mount Ferrant, Birdsall	796639
Murton	650527

**N**

Naburn	599455
Naburn Bridge	598467
Naburn Marina	599462
Naburn Sewage Works	601467
Naburn Wood	609438
Newburgh Priory (lake)	542767

Newhay	661307
Newton-on-Ouse	512599
Newton Carr	740494
Newton upon Derwent	720495
New Earswick	609555
North Duffield Carrs	695375
Norton-on-Derwent	795710
Nunnington (Hall)	667794
Nursery Wood, SHL	678585

**O**

Osballdwick	633519
Osgodby	641338
Oswaldkirk, York	625790
Oulston Reservoir	570745
Oxton	505431

**P**

Petersfield Farm, Bielby	793422
Pocklington	802490
Pocklington Airfield	793485
Pocklington Canal	698426-800474
Poppleton	560546
Pretty Wood, Castle Howard	732690

**R**

Raker Lakes, Wheldrake	684463
Rawcliffe Bar Country Park	577547
Rawcliffe Ings	575544
Rawcliffe Lake	586546
Rawcliffe Meadows	577545
Redhouse Reservoir	529575
Redhouse Wood, Moor Monkton	520570
Refuge, Wheldrake	708435
Riccall	620380
Roscarrs	645316
Rossmoor Park	722436
Rowntree Park, York	604508
Ruddins Ings	5456
Ryther	550392
Ryton	795757
Ryton Bridge	796754

**S**

Sand Hutton	695586
Scackleton	650726
Scagglethorpe Moor	5355

Scamlands	766439	Tollerton	513643
Scoreby Lodge	684513	Towthorpe	625586
Seaton Ross	780415	Towthorpe Civic	
Seavy Carr, Thornton	753451	Amenity Site, York	648586
Selby	615324	Towthorpe Moor Lane,	
Sessions NR, New Earswick	610548	Strensall	625585–663579
Settrington House	839702	Triangle Meadow, York	604547
Sheriff Hutton	655664		
Silburn Lock,		<b>U</b>	
Pocklington Canal	797468	Ulleskelf	520400
Skewsby	625710		
Skipwith	657385	<b>W</b>	
Skipwith Common	6537	Walbut Lock,	
Skirpenbeck	747570	Pocklington Canal	773442
Sleights, Amotherby	737758	Walbutts Sewage Works,	
Slingsby	698750	Strensall	646618
Slingsby Banks Wood	698733	Walmgate Stray, York	617505
South Duffield	681335	Waplington Hall, Allertorpe	776468
Stamford Bridge	715555	Warthill	675555
Steeton Whin	520435	Wash Dike, Skipwith Common	662372
Stillingfleet	594410	Wass Woods	550796
Stillington	585678	Welburn	720680
Stittenham	679677	Welburn Sewage Works	714685
Stockton on the Forest	655561	West Cottingwith Ings	695419
Stonegrave	657777	West Lilling	648652
Storwood	712442	West Ness	690790
Strensall	633608	Wheldrake	682450
Strensall Common	6460–6661	Wheldrake Ings	7043
St Nicholas Fields, York	615517	Wheldrake Wood	6546
Stubb Wood	585433	Whitehill Mine	667359
Sutton-on-the-Forest	584647	White Carr, Flaxton	663603
Sutton upon Derwent	707468	Whitwell Grange	715666
Swantail Hide,		Wiganthorpe	662724
Wheldrake Ings	707438	Wigginton	595585
Swinton	760731	Wilberfoss	734510
Swinton Ings	772748	Winchmore, Stamford Bridge	727547
		Wistow	594357
<b>T</b>		World's End Plantation	
Tang Hall Beck fields	6353	Strensall Common	6659
Tang Hall, York	620520	Wressle	708313
Terrington	670707		
Terrington Moor	685716	<b>Y</b>	
The Retreat, York	617510	Yearsley	585744
Thorganby	691420	Yearsley Moor/Woods	5875–6076
Thorganby Ings	6941	York Minster	603523
Thormanby	495747	York University campus	6250
Thornton	760453	York University Lake	620505
Thornton Ellers	730460		
Tockwith	465525		