

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB REPORT 2012

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Margaret Booth as a tribute to Andy Booth, former YOC Recorder.

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Cover Illustrations

Front Cover:	Short-eared Owl at Poppleton <i>Antony Ward</i>
Inside Back Cover:	Waxwing at Dunnington <i>Terry Weston</i> Temminck's Stint, Heslington East <i>Mark Coates</i>
Outside Back Cover:	Red-throated Diver, Dringhouses <i>Tom Lawson</i> Bittern at North Duffield Carrs <i>Mark Coates</i>

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If you are interestd in buying artwork from Jonathan Pomroy or Jan Wilczur they can be contacted at jonathan@pomroy.plus.com and Janwilczur@aol.com respectively.

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Committee 2013

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York Ornithological Club

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

Editorial

It is now some twelve months since we lost our former Recorder Andy Booth in tragic circumstances. Andy was a passionate supporter of the annual YOC report and we are very pleased, with the generous support of Andy's mother (Margaret Booth), to publish this enhanced issue of the report as a tribute to Andy and his birding exploits both in the York area and further afield.

We have been fortunate to have access to many of Andy's drawings and some of these illustrate this report (with drawings from other artists as usual) and the additional colour pages in this issue also allow us to include some of the exciting photos which Andy took while twitching the rarer birds he travelled far and wide to see.

Andy's artistic talents were perhaps less obvious in recent years but the opportunity to view his drawings from the past 25 years or more show just how good he was. Many of his earlier drawings reveal incredible detail.

I hope that all who read this report will take pleasure from the results of his talents and reflect on the substantial contribution which he made to birding in the York area and more widely in Yorkshire. It is also fitting to report that the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has renamed the Tower Hide at Wheldrake Ings in Andy's honour.

Another stalwart of the local birding scene, Russell Slack, provided a further shock, passing away suddenly in February after a short illness. Russ, as he was known to many, was less involved with the YOC, but was passionate about Wheldrake Ings, very much his local 'patch', and had a very extensive historical knowledge of the birds of the Lower Derwent Valley and beyond. A tribute to Russ, by long-time friend Craig Ralston, is published in this report.

As stated, we have been able to publish more material than ever before in this report. As well as the Classified List there is a major historical feature on the birds of Skipwith Common, short accounts of the first accepted records of Caspian Gull for the area and a fly-by Hooded Crow, the first for many years, an analysis of white-winged gull records in the first winter period and Tim Jones' account of how he set a new record year total for the York area in 2012.

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) to whom thanks are due. The report would also not be of the high standard I believe it to be if were not for the efforts of our new joint recorders, Nigel and Andy, who checked my editing and validated the records as necessary, and thanks to Rob Chapman for his help with proof reading. The Highlights for 2012 were edited by Andy Walker based on the monthly summaries prepared during 2012 for the YOC website by Andy Booth. Thanks are also due to Richard Hampshire, Jonathan Pomroy and Jan Wiczur for additional drawings, and to Mark Coates, Chris Gomersall, Tim Jones, Paul Reed, Antony Ward and Terry Weston for their photos which illustrate this report.

Mike Williams
editor@yorkbirding.org.uk

On the following two pages we reproduce, as a tribute to Andy Booth, some of the many photos taken by Andy on his frequent twitching excursions. All photos were digiscoped using a Fujii FinePix F10 camera.

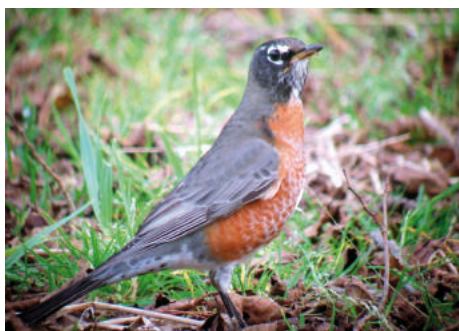


Andy Booth's Birds

Top to bottom, left to right:

Barrow's Goldeneye, Callander, 2007
 Laughing Gull, Countess Wear, 2007
 Audouin's Gull, Chapel St Leonard's, 2008
 American Black Tern, Covenham Res, 2011
 Wilson's Snipe, St Mary's, 2007
 Long-billed Dowitcher, Gibraltar Pt, 2006
 White-billed Diver, Hayle Estuary, 2007





Andy Booth's Birds

Top to bottom, left to right:

Common Yellowthroat, Rhiwderin, 2012
Siberian Stonechat, Teeside, 2011
Little Bunting, Spurn, 2007
Woodchat Shrike, Spurn, 2009
Pied Wheatear, Reighton Sands, 2008
Steppe Grey Shrike, Grainthorpe, 2008
American Robin, Tresco, 2006

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2012

Weather in 2012

The first three months of 2012 were very dry, continuing the trend of 2011. However, April was very likely the wettest April on record and caused extensive flooding in the LDV and elsewhere which lasted well into summer. Apart from May, all the remaining months brought well above average rainfall and more exceptional flooding from September through to December. The rain and flooding is likely to have had a major impact on the birds, particularly with regard to breeding, and to the distribution and numbers of birds in areas like the Lower Derwent Valley, and may also account for some of the less expected figures recorded in WeBS tables (see page 21).

January

The wintering flock of Whooper Swans was present in the Lower Derwent Valley (LDV) for the month, three **'Tundra' Bean Geese** were seen with c.40 **Pink-footed Geese** between Escrick and Wheldrake on the 8th while other counts of the latter included 450 north over East Cottingham and 400+ southwest over Bishopthorpe on the 14th as well as 150+ over Poppleton on the 11th. An adult **'Eurasian' White-fronted Goose** flew west over Rawcliffe Country Park on the 12th with up to 51 noted at Castle Howard and a couple at Wheldrake Ings from mid-month. **Red Kite** and **Merlin** at Heslington East on the 8th were good records. **Jack Snipe** was present throughout the month at Heslington East and a **Bar-tailed Godwit** was at Wheldrake on the 29th.

An adult **Mediterranean Gull** was seen at Heslington East on the 14th with an adult **Yellow-legged Gull** at Poppleton on the 20th and a first-winter there on the 27th. A first-winter **Caspian Gull** bearing a yellow Darvic ring (which unfortunately could not be read) was found at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th and continued to visit the reserve until the 16th. Meanwhile, an adult **Caspian Gull** was identified at Poppleton on the 20th and was seen again on the 27th at least. A second-winter **Iceland Gull** visited the roost at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th and 28th with an adult present at Poppleton on the 20th and 26th possibly accounting for birds seen flying west over Bishopthorpe on the 21st and northwest over East Cottingham on the 22nd. Three **Short-eared Owls** showed well in the Poppleton area through the month, while two also frequented Wheldrake Ings from the 8th.

Passerines of note were in low supply, the only **Waxwing** report this month concerning three birds seen in a roadside hedgerow near Bubwith Bridge on the 8th but these did not linger. A flock of 20+ **Lesser Redpolls** at Stockton on the Forest also included a single **Mealy Redpoll**. In what was a poor winter for **Brambling** a single female was in a garden just north of Strensall on the 29th and 31st. A **Twite** was at East Cottingham on the 1st and two **Crossbills** were at Fryston Moor on the 28th.

February

Whooper Swans were still showing well in the North Duffield area on the 18th. There was some movement of **Pink-footed Geese** from mid-month with counts of c.150 heading west over Bubwith Ings on the 16th, c.175 west over Ampleforth on the 21st and c.100 north over Askham Bog on the 26th while up to 40 '**Eurasian**' **White-fronted Geese** were noted at Castle Howard between the 19th and 21st with a single '**Dark-bellied**' **Brent Goose** trapped and ringed along the riverbank at North Duffield Carrs (NDC) on the 20th, a very nice surprise! Two **Egyptian Geese** flew south over Wheldrake Ings on the 12th. Three pairs of **Mandarin** were at Castle Howard Lake (CHL) on the 19th. A **Bittern** was seen out in the open on the frozen pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 7th but did not hang around, or at least did not show again. There were few raptor reports but these included a **Red Kite** at Poppleton on the 28th, single **Merlins** at Rawcliffe Cornfield NR on the 8th and York Science Park on the 22nd, and presumably the same **Peregrine Falcon** in the LDV between the 19th and 21st.

An interesting wader record was that of a first-winter **Knot** which frequented the pools at Heslington East from the 5th–18th. A **Jack Snipe** was at Redhouse on the 10th with birds at Heslington East throughout the month. A single **Black-tailed Godwit** was noted at Wheldrake Ings on the 19th with two there the following day. A single **Green Sandpiper** lingered at Heslington East from the 14th. Gulls continued to feature prominently this month, especially in the Poppleton area, with several interesting species seen: a first-winter **Yellow-legged Gull** was identified on the 13th with an adult there on the 26th while small numbers of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were also seen. There were regular reports of both **Iceland** and **Glaucous Gulls** with at least five and three of each respectively while an adult **Kumlien's Gull** was reported at the Wheldrake Ings roost on the 29th.

Short-eared Owls were still being reported in good numbers with at least nine birds in the Lower Derwent Valley mid-month. A **Great**

Grey Shrike present near Copmanthorpe on the 1st and 2nd was a good find and a **Raven** was observed calling from a pylon at Allerthorpe Common on the 14th. At least 300 **Tree Sparrows** were estimated to be at Cornfield NR, Rawcliffe on the 7th and a single **Brambling** flew over Castle Howard on the 20th with three present there on the 24th; 100+ **Crossbills** were at Allerthorpe Common on the 20th and 21st.

March

March was a busy month for birds with the gradual departure of some winter visitors and the appearance of the first summer migrants. At least 25 **Whooper Swans** were still at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th but birds were soon on the move with higher counts including 76 heading northwards from Wheldrake on the 16th when 50+ passed north over Ampleforth; smaller numbers were then recorded in the Lower Derwent Valley with a single noted at Heslington East on the 25th. One to two **Pink-footed Geese** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th and 25th. The first **Garganey** was a drake at Bank Island on the 18th followed by a (probable) pair at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th/25th and another drake at Newburgh Priory lake from the 30th. A female **Red-crested Pochard** discovered on the pool at Wheldrake on the 27th was a good record and was still present next day. A rehabilitated **Red Kite** was released at Wheldrake where it was seen on the 18th and could have accounted for sightings at NDC on the 27th and over Badger Hill, York on the 29th while single **Marsh Harriers** were reported in the Lower Derwent Valley on four dates. An early **Osprey** passed through Crockey Hill on the 10th and was followed by others moving north at North Duffield on the 19th, York city centre on the 23rd and Askham Bog on the 28th. A run of **Merlin** records this month probably involved birds passing through the area as it had been a poor winter locally for the species; most reports came from the LDV apart from one at Langwith Lane on the 17th and a female photographed flying over Askham Bog on the 20th.

An **Avocet** was recorded at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th, the first **Little Ringed Plover** was at Heslington East from the 10th with **Jack Snipe** again present at the site until at least mid-month. A maximum of 65 **Black-tailed Godwits** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th, a **Green Sandpiper** lingered at Heslington East through the month, with others at Strensall Common on the 23rd and over Wheldrake Ings on the 29th. A **Mediterranean Gull** was picked out from the masses of gulls flying over York city centre on the 7th while an adult **Yellow-legged Gull** was at Poppleton on the 5th with a third-summer at Heslington East on

the 29th. There were frequent reports of both **Iceland** and **Glaucous Gulls**, involving at least six of the former and two of the latter; most were seen at Poppleton but also at the Wheldrake Ings roost and a few birds were picked out as they passed over Heslington East. More unusual was an adult **Kittiwake** which visited CHL on the 3rd. The good run of **Short-eared Owl** records continued with most seen in the LDV including five at NDC on the 17th when there were also three at Wheldrake Ings; three birds also remained in the Poppleton area and two were down Langwith Lane, again on the 17th.

A male **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was seen by one lucky observer at Strensall Common on the 21st and **Woodlarks** were back on territory by the middle of the month. A **Wheatear** was at NDC on the 19th with two males at Heslington East on the 20th while **Fieldfares** were on the move as 1,500 passed through the LDV on the 16th. The only record of **Redwing**, however, concerned three birds at Fulford Ings on the 28th. Meanwhile, the first **Sedge Warbler** was at Wheldrake on the 30th and presumed newly arrived **Blackcaps** were evident from the 27th with the first singing **Chiffchaff** noted at the University of York on the 14th and an early **Willow Warbler** in a North Duffield garden on the 25th.

April

April was the wettest on record and resulted in the inevitable flooding of vulnerable areas. This was particularly the case in the LDV and a good variety of waterbirds were reported. Twenty **Whooper Swans** were still present at Aughton Ings on the 8th. A drake **Mandarin** was at Askham Bog on the 24th with two at CHL on the 28th. A drake **Garganey** graced Newburgh Priory lake from the 1st–3rd at least while ones and twos were noted at several sites within the LDV from the 22nd, with a pair of **Black-necked Grebes** at Wheldrake Ings the same date. A few reports of scarcer raptors were received including different **Red Kites** moving west at Heslington East and Wheldrake Ings on the 1st; single **Ospreys** west at the University of York on the 11th, lingering at NDC on the 14th and 15th before heading north, north over Strensall Common on the 16th and over Bank Island on the 27th; **Merlins** at Heslington East on the 3rd and East Cottingwith on the 10th; the first Hobby of the year at Skipwith on the 16th, and immature male **Peregrines** at Heslington East on the 1st and Wheldrake Ings on the 10th. **Black-tailed Godwits** were seen at various sites in the LDV throughout the month with a maximum of c.200 birds at Wheldrake Ings on the 18th. Seven **Whimbrel** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd and 23rd with 45+ at Thorganby Ings

on the 26th as flooding affected the birds' use of traditional sites. Up to three **Greenshanks** were noted at a few sites within the LDV from the 10th–28th. Two **Green Sandpipers** were at Heslington East early in the month and a single **Common Sandpiper** was at Bank Island on the 20th.

One fortunate observer picked up two **Arctic Skuas** passing high east over Sutton upon Derwent on the 30th with first-summer **Little Gulls** at Bubwith Ings on the 26th and NDC on the 30th. Late white-winged gulls provided first- and second-summer **Iceland Gulls** in a ploughed field near Knapton on the 15th and a juvenile **Glaucous Gull** flying west at Bank Island on the 13th. There was a reasonable tern passage, particularly towards the end of the month, heralded by 38 **Arctic Terns** moving through Bank Island on the 18th with three **Common Terns** at Redhouse Reservoir on the 23rd and a showy adult **Black Tern** lingering at Thorganby Ings on the 26th and 27th.

The first **Cuckoo** of spring was at Storwood on the 21st. More unusual was a roosting **Long-eared Owl** visible from the Pool Hide at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th and 9th, while one to two **Short-eared Owls** continued to be seen in the LDV. The first **Swift** of the season made a welcome appearance at Newburgh Priory Lake on the 20th. The first **Tree Pipit** of the year was noted at Strensall Common on the 13th with two **Scandinavian Rock Pipits** being found at Heslington East on the 2nd, one remaining in the area till the 8th. Also at Heslington East on the latter date, the first **Yellow Wagtail** of the year was seen. The last **Waxwings** of a poor winter for the species were seven birds seen briefly in Selby on the 3rd before flying off northwards. A **Wood Warbler** which burst into song in a Heslington garden on the 30th was a big surprise for the observer. A **Twite** was found at Heslington East on the 1st and remained till the 19th at least.

May

An **Egyptian Goose** was present at East Cottingwith on the 8th. Three **Mandarins** were at CHL on the 6th, with a drake near Hessay on the 17th. **Garganey** were regularly reported from the LDV with six birds noted at Wheldrake on the 28th. A singing **Quail** was heard near Heslington East on the 25th. Three **Black-necked Grebes** were at NDC on the 13th and 14th at least. One to two **Little Egrets** frequented the Wheldrake and North Duffield areas with a maximum of eight birds at Bank Island on the 30th where a **Spoonbill** was observed flying south on the 25th. Raptors were still on the move with a **Honey Buzzard** over Storwood on the 6th, four sightings of **Red Kite**, one to two **Marsh**

Harriers seen in the LDV, single **Ospreys** west at Thorganby on the 16th and northwest at Bank Island on the 21st, one to two **Hobbies** recorded in the LDV, and **Peregrines** noted at three sites.

Wader passage was again good with the floods in the LDV attracting most birds: two **Avocets** seen briefly at Wheldrake Ings on the 7th were then relocated to NDC the following day; a **Little Ringed Plover** was at Hagg Lane on the 10th; a summer-plumaged **Grey Plover** flew over Heslington East on the 26th and a **Sanderling** was at NDC on the 8th with two at Heslington East on the 27th; two **Temminck's Stints** were a good find at the latter site and stayed from the 20th to the 21st and another was reported at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd; three **Black-tailed Godwits** were present at Thorganby Ings on the 8th and on the 11th at Wheldrake Ings where 11 birds paused briefly on the 31st, and an adult **Bar-tailed Godwit** was found feeding with **Whimbrel** at NDC on the 1st, remaining until the 3rd; c.20 **Whimbrel** were present at this site before they moved on and one flew south over Heslington East on the 6th; up to five **Greenshanks** were noted at NDC early in the month with three birds at Heslington East towards the month end; a **Wood Sandpiper** was seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 27th while **Common Sandpipers** were reported from three sites and three **Turnstones** flew north at Bank Island on the 11th with two later returning south over NDC and another appearing at Heslington East from the 27th, remaining till the 29th. A first-summer **Mediterranean Gull** was seen at Thorganby Ings on the 8th, with two present at NDC the following day, while adult **Little Gulls** were noted at Wheldrake Ings on the 7th and 29th. Two **Arctic Terns** lingered at Raker Lakes on the 3rd but the next day saw at least 160 birds pass through the LDV – probably the highlight of the month for those lucky enough to witness this event. A single **Black Tern** flew south at Wheldrake Ings on the 19th.

The only record of **Turtle Dove** involved a brief appearance of one bird in a Sheriff Hutton garden on the 19th. A **Short-eared Owl** was still at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th. At Heslington East, a **Red-rumped Swallow** arrived with a passage of **Swallows** on the 6th but unfortunately did not linger. Two male **Common Redstarts** were singing at Castle Howard on the 20th with another male at Skipwith Common, and a male **Whinchat** was in a field near Ellerton on the 10th. It was another good month for **Wheatears** with up to at least 12 birds at Heslington East and others reported from Clifton Ings, East Cottingwith and Hagg Lane. **Spotted Flycatchers** were at Brayton Barff from the 15th with one at Poppleton on the 21st and another at Askham Bog on the 24th. Perhaps more exciting was a **Hooded Crow** seen flying west south of East Cottingwith on the 10th which unfortunately could not be relocated.

June

Up to seven **Garganey** were at Wheldrake Ings early in the month. A juvenile **Scaup** which turned up at Bank Island on the 24th proved to be a long-stayer and the forerunner of an impressive series of records in the LDV through to the year's end. The highlight of the month, for those who saw it at least, was an immature **Gannet** which was tracked by car and videoed flying west towards York on the 24th! Meanwhile, up to four **Little Egrets** were regularly reported from Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings throughout the month with singles seen at Heslington East on the 6th and 8th.

There were a few interesting raptor records this month including a **Honey Buzzard** reported flying low and west on the 24th over East Cottingwith where a **Red Kite** flew south on the 13th and **Marsh Harriers** sighted in the Wheldrake area on three dates. Single **Ospreys** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th, Castle Howard on the 10th and 15th and fishing in a lake near Pocklington on the 28th. There were reports of **Hobby** from the LDV and Castle Howard with one passing over York railway station on the 30th being more unusual. Three **Spotted Crakes** were calling at Bank Island on the 2nd with just one heard the following night before birds fell silent, though any breeding attempts probably failed due to subsequent flooding. A **Common Crane** flew high over Acomb, York on the 10th. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** was at NDC on the 1st and was a great find during a farmland survey. An adult and first-summer **Little Gull** were at Heslington East and a first-summer was also at Wheldrake Ings, both records on the 10th. There was an impressive count of 2,000+ **Swift** over Sherburn in Elmet on the 18th. A **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was heard calling in Askham Bog on the 15th but there were few reports of passerines of note during the month.

July

A juvenile **Mandarin** was reported from CHL on the 10th – indicative of breeding at the site – with it or another female-type bird seen on the 28th. Bank Island attracted two **Garganey** on the 28th while a drake was ringed at Wheldrake on the 30th with two juveniles present there the following day. The juvenile **Scaup** remained at Bank Island all month. Three **Quail** were back at the traditional site of West Lilling on the 9th. Bank Island held a **Black-necked Grebe** on the 13th while 45 **Grey Herons** at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th was an impressive and noteworthy

sight. The only raptor records, however, concerned a **Marsh Harrier** at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th and 30th as well as a single **Hobby** lingering in the Elvington area. Up to four **Ruff** were at Wheldrake Ings from the 28th when two **Black-tailed Godwits** were seen briefly at Heslington East before flying off south, probably accounting for two birds seen subsequently at Wheldrake. Two **Whimbrel** passed north over Heslington East on the 20th; a **Greenshank** was at Elvington WTW early in the month and up to two were at Wheldrake from the 30th. A **Green Sandpiper** was still at Heslington East on the 3rd with up to three birds noted at different sites within the LDV throughout while a **Wood Sandpiper** was at Wheldrake Ings from the 29th. A good 'flock' of at least seven **Common Sandpipers** was at Heslington East on the 1st with up to four at CHL and singles seen in the LDV. An adult summer **Mediterranean Gull** was in the Thorganby area on the 8th and a second-summer **Yellow-legged Gull** was also seen in the Thorganby area on the 8th and 15th.

An interesting record of **Turtle Dove** concerned one in a garden at Osbaldwick, York on the 20th and 21st. Single **Spotted Flycatchers** were at Askham Bog on the 8th and at Redhouse on the 24th.

August

Three female or juvenile **Mandarin** were on the New River Pond at Castle Howard on the 26th. Good numbers of **Garganey** were reported with a peak of at least 16 at Bank Island on the 15th and up to five at Wheldrake Ings while the **Scaup** continued to be reported from the LDV until at least the 14th. Up to seven **Little Egrets** frequented Wheldrake Ings with up to three birds visiting Bank Island where a maximum count of 46 **Grey Herons** was recorded on the 18th. At least four **Marsh Harriers** were noted in the Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings area throughout the month including at least two juveniles with another bird seen flying north over the A64 towards Heslington on the 17th. Belated news concerned a report of two **Ospreys** fishing in the grounds of Kilnwick Percy Hall late in the month. It was generally quiet for raptors, however, as the only other interesting records concerned an adult and juvenile **Hobby** high over Bubwith village on the 5th and an adult at Bank Island on the 26th as well as a large female **Peregrine Falcon** noted in the Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings area from the 23rd.

Waders were well represented, with Bank Island proving particularly attractive. Up to three **Little Ringed Plovers** were noted at Wheldrake Ings early in the month with up to two at Bank Island from the 14th. A total of 120 **Snipe** was at Bank Island on the 15th with 80 at Wheldrake Ings

on the 10th while six **Black-tailed Godwits** flew west at Heslington East on the 1st with up to five birds noted at both Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings. Meanwhile, two **Whimbrel** flew southwest over Heslington East on the 2nd and a single elusive **Spotted Redshank** was seen at Bank Island on the 17th and 18th. **Greenshank** were well reported throughout the month with up to at least ten at Bank Island, five at Wheldrake Ings and two at Heslington East. This was also the case for **Green Sandpiper** with up to at least ten birds recorded from both Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings while five birds flew over East Cottingham towards Wheldrake on the 20th and up to two birds frequented Heslington East. The only record of **Wood Sandpiper**, however, concerned a single bird at Bank Island on the 17th while five **Common Sandpipers** were at CHL on the 26th with up to three birds at Heslington East as well as ones and twos noted at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings. The rarest wader this month, though, was a juvenile **Red-necked Phalarope** reported from Bank Island on the 17th, but it did not perform for other than the initial observer. An immature **Yellow-legged Gull** was observed at close quarters at York University Lake on the 11th.

Two **Whinchats** at NDC did not hang around for long while three **Spotted Flycatchers** were at Nun Monkton on the 19th.

September

The first **Pink-footed Geese** of the autumn arrived when five birds paused briefly at Bank Island on the 8th. A notable movement was then apparent from the 13th with peak counts of 300 passing through the LDV and c.125 moving southeast over York on the 21st as well as 120 south over Elvington on the 27th. An eclipse drake **Garganey** remained at Bank Island from the 5th to 8th at least. A juvenile **Gannet** was reported flying south over Bank Island on the 17th. **Marsh Harriers** were prominent in the LDV this month, especially at NDC where a significant roost developed, with as many as 13 birds present mid-month; in addition, an immature flew west over Heslington East on the 8th. Single **Ospreys** were noted over the River Wharfe one mile east of Tadcaster on the 9th and fishing at pools near Newton upon Derwent on the 22nd with up to two **Merlins** seen at NDC. One to two **Hobbies** were observed at different sites within the LDV while three birds passed over Wilberfoss on the 28th and single **Peregrine Falcons** were noted in York city centre on the 5th and at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd.

A flock 200 **Golden Plover** at Elvington on the 27th and 28th was accompanied by two **Grey Plovers**, with another at Bank Island on

the 17th. A **Jack Snipe** was trapped and ringed at Bank Island on the 21st. Three **Black-tailed Godwits** flew over Bank Island on the 5th where they were seen again the following day with four birds there on the 7th while single **Greenshanks** were at the latter site on the 5th and at Wheldrake lngs on the 8th. Up to three **Green Sandpipers** were at Bank Island until the 16th while one lingered at Heslington East till the 10th in addition to three **Common Sandpipers**. A **Great Skua**, which flew east over the A19 north of Selby on the 29th, was a great record while notable gull reports included a first-winter **Mediterranean Gull** moving south over Naburn Marina on the 8th and two **Yellow-legged Gulls** seen in fields southwest of Thorganby on the 6th and 11th with a first-winter present at Elvington on the 26th.

Following on from the good numbers present in the recording area last winter, two **Short-eared Owls** were at NDC on the 16th with one still there on the 22nd. The last **Swifts** of the year were two birds at CHL on the 4th. A **Whinchat** was at Redhouse on the 9th and single **Wheatears** at both Heslington East and NDC on the 8th with two present at NDC on the 11th. Single **Spotted Flycatchers** were at Bank Island and Skipwith Common on the 8th with two at Skipwith on the 21st.

October

An impressive eight **Egyptian Geese** were at Thorganby on the 1st and 11 **Whooper Swan** were present at Bank Island on the 8th. On the 28th two juvenile **Scaup** were at Heslington East. **Marsh Harriers** (five on the 4th and three on the 15th) were regular at NDC throughout the month. A smart male **Hen Harrier** was observed hunting at Thornton, a forerunner of a good series of records for the species. A female/immature **Merlin** was observed near Brindley's Plantation on the 4th with **Peregrine Falcon** regularly seen at NDC during the month. A **Grey Plover** flew through NDC on the 11th, there was a juvenile **Knot** at Thorganby on the 17th and the 28th, and a **Jack Snipe** showed well at Hassacarr NR on the 13th, with another at Heslington East on the 28th. Up to two **Short-eared Owls** were still present at NDC during the month.

As would be expected/anticipated there were some interesting passerines during the month. Two very late **Tree Pipits** were recorded at Allerthorpe Common on the 28th with a **Rock Pipit** at Heslington East on this date. There was a welcome return as three **Stonechat** (male, female and juvenile) were found at Strensall Common on the 12th (increasing to five birds shortly after) and a large arrival of winter thrushes (**Fieldfare** and **Redwing**) was recorded during the latter part of the month. On the 23rd a **Bearded**

Tit was observed flying through Bank Island but as usual for this species in the area was not seen subsequently. After a poor 2011/2012 winter season for **Brambling** the 2012/2013 season was a different story and started on the 25th as four flew over Bishopthorpe and two flew over North Duffield; there was also one at Heslington East on the 29th.

November

One of the two **Scaup** from October was still present at Heslington East on the 3rd with a female/immature present at NDC on the 9th, a 1st-winter at Castle Howard on the 10th with a different 1st-winter there on the 21st. There was a showy **Bittern** at NDC between the 15th and 22nd which may have stayed longer if it wasn't for the River Derwent overflowing its banks, resulting in some of the highest flood waters for many a year in the LDV. A **Red Kite** was over the A19 at Escrick on the 25th and male **Hen Harriers** flying through NDC on the 8th and again on the 13th which were considered to be the same bird. Two **Jack Snipe** were present at Heslington East on the 7th and a **Green Sandpiper** was by the Pocklington Canal on the 11th. A **Short-eared Owl** graced NDC on the 10th but not afterwards, presumably due to its preferred foraging/roosting areas disappearing under water.

A late **Swallow** was at Skipwith Common on the 6th with a **Stonechat** there on the 10th. A wintering **Common Chiffchaff** was present in a Holgate (York) garden on the 30th. The first **Waxwing** of the winter was found just to the south of Bishopthorpe on the 3rd and signalled the start of an impressive passage of this species through the recording area. **Waxwing** numbers picked up in the second week of the month, with over 100 birds recorded in scattered flocks around York city centre on the 8th and a peak of 300 birds recorded in one flock at St. George's Field Car Park on the 13th. Numbers appeared to drop slightly by the end of the month, though records were spread more around the south of the recording area at this time. Two **Mealy Redpolls** were present at Langwith Lakes with 25 **Lesser Redpoll** on the 29th.

December

On the 13th three **Bewick's Swans** flew in to NDC with 82 **Whooper Swan**, and the **Bewick's Swans** were recorded intermittently during the remainder of the month at NDC, Aughton and Ellerton. One of the **Bewick's Swans** was fitted with a yellow Darvic ring which has shed some interesting

light on this particular bird's movements – the same bird was present briefly at North Duffield in 2009 and 2010. On the 16th, 154 **Whooper Swan** were reported from the LDV. Two **Scaup**, 1st winter male and female, were present at Castle Howard on the 28th. An excellent find on the 11th concerned a **Red-throated Diver** on Dringhouses Pond that showed very well at times and was present until the afternoon of the 12th, presumably displaced by the rapidly increasing ice on the pond. It was a quiet month for raptors with **Red Kite** seen over York city centre on the 7th and **Marsh Harrier** in the LDV on the 23rd the highlights. Due to very high water levels in the recording area waders were very thin on the ground; a **Grey Plover** at Thorganby on the 16th was the only record of note during the month though **Jack Snipe** were again present at Heslington East throughout.

It was fairly quiet for passerines; most interest concerned the large number of **Waxwing** that remained scattered around the recording area offering good photographic opportunities to many. Other interest concerned a flock of over 50+ **Brambling** present on the edge of North Duffield village throughout the month.

[Based on original monthly reports compiled by Andy Booth. Ed]

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Classified List

The sequence and scientific nomenclature follow that of the British List maintained by the British Ornithologists' Union. The British List was revised by the BOU in 2010 and it is this version, with some further revisions, which is currently used in YOC reports.

The following abbreviations are used throughout:

BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)
CHL	Castle Howard Lake
GP	Gravel Pit(s)
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 (national committee)
SHBR	Sand Hutton Bird Report (from SHL)
SHL	Sand Hutton Laboratory (formerly the Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton) now part of 'FERA', the Food and Environment Research Agency.
WBBS	Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)
WeBS	Wetlands Bird Survey (BTO)
WWT	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
WTW	Water Treatment Works
YNU	Yorkshire Naturalists' Union
YOC	York Ornithological Club
YWT	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

The following nature reserves appear as sites in the report (as well as 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.

WeBS counts at Castle Howard Lake are conducted every month 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 2012 Castle Howard Lake counts were made on 15th January, 12th February, 11th March, 8th April, 20th May, 17th June, 21st July, 19th August, 16th September, 14th October, 22nd November and 16th December. In the LDV counts were made on 15th January, 12th February, 13th March, 14th October, 18th November and 16th December. In these tables a short dash (-) indicates no birds were present; a blank entry indicates that no count was made. WeBS counts in the LDV did not include gull numbers in 2012.

The annual Michael Clegg Memorial Bird Race took place on 8th January with three teams from the YOC area. In the Classified List the event is referred to simply as the 'Bird Race'. Two teams in the York area each recorded 90 species on the day.

For detailed information on the breeding of scarce and rare birds in the LDV refer to the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) report on page 88.

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 also uses records from within the YOC area submitted to BirdTrack and in this case we do know the observers' names. However, 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 2012. The information given for these shows the year last recorded.

Records judged to be introductions/escapes are listed in Appendix A while hybrids are listed in Appendix B. Appendix C includes reports of scarce or rare species whose identity could not be confirmed (description not received or insufficient to confirm identity).

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Good numbers were again present at the major strongholds in the LDV and CHL, both sites retaining healthy resident populations of 30–40 individuals in the LDV and up to 20 at CHL, breeding taking place in both areas. Numbers increased during the first winter period with maximum counts, in February, of 149 in the LDV and 79 at CHL. Numbers post breeding increased again in the second winter period with a peak of 54 birds at CHL in November and 98 in the LDV in December.

There was again a regular exchange of birds throughout the year at Heslington East with maximum counts of 15 on 14th January and ten on 4th November, and there were also two birds on the main campus lake in early February.

A pair was noted nesting at Newburgh Priory Lake on 28th April and two immatures were on the large pond at Yearsley Moor early June. Also in June a pair with two juveniles were seen on the River Ouse at Bishopthorpe.

Later in the year approximately 20 were on floods near Cawood on 20th October.

Monthly WeBS counts for Mute Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	71	79	44	22	15	14	28	41	48	46	54	45
LDV	97	149	136							68	84	98

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Declining winter visitor and passage migrant

As last year there were no sightings during the first winter period, then three birds arrived with Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* at NDC on 13th December (AW *et al.*) with two remaining to the end of the year.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Up to 124 birds were noted during the first winter period at the southern end of the LDV, feeding in fields by Derwent Cottage Farm and in the NDC/Aughton/Ellerton area, with up to 45 birds seen regularly at Wheldrake Ings. By mid-March birds were on the move with many flocks noted flying over, most notably one of 76 seen leaving Bank Island on the 16th and reported flying over Dunnington Common a few minutes later; also that day 50 were noted heading northwest over Ampleforth.

Monthly WeBS counts for Whooper Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LDV	124	105	92			11	54	154

The first returning birds were 11 at Bank Island on 8th October and 14 on floods near Cawood on the 20th, with seven at CHL the next day and five still present there on 8th November. Fifteen were noted flying over Heslington East on 28th October with another seven flying over on 3rd November. Elsewhere four birds were seen flying over Strensall Common on 4th November with ten over Walmgate Stray on the 18th while numbers in the LDV had increased to the substantial total of 154 by the end of the year.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Scarce winter visitor

Just one record this year of a single bird of, presumably, the Tundra race *rossicus* seen at Bank Island during the Bird Race on 8th January (RS *et al.*).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Again there was an increase in reports of skeins flying over the region, though whether this relates to a definite increase in birds passing over or just better observer awareness is hard to say. The more notable counts (150 and over) were:

- 150 over Poppleton on 11th January
- 450 in four flocks over East Cottingwith on 14th January
- 150 over Bubwith on 15th February
- 150 over Beckwith Close, York on 17th February
- 175 over Ampleforth on 21st February
- 300 over Bank Island on 21st September
- 650 in three flocks over Kirkby Wharfe on 20th October.

Other sightings included one or two at Wheldrake Ings during late March, two on floods near Cawood on 20th October and two with 150 Greylag Geese *Anser anser* at Scagglethorpe on 21st December.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Scarce winter visitor

Two were seen with Pink Footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* over Poppleton on 11th January while one flew west with two Greylag Geese *Anser anser* over Rawcliffe Ings on the 12th. A further two were seen flying over Wheldrake Ings on the 15th with a single there on the 30th. A flock of between 35–50 was at CHL from 14th January to 21st February with a single bird of the Greenland race *flavirostris* accompanying them on 28th January (DR).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Resident feral breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Large numbers were recorded in the LDV in the first winter period but relatively few at CHL where peak counts were recorded post breeding.

Individual site counts of 200 or more were:

- 250 (maximum) at Heslington East from 10th–25th August and 300 there through September
- 250 at Bank Island on 16th August
- 250 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th September
- 350 at Scagglethorpe on 21st September
- 500 at NDC on 4th October
- 500 at CHL on 8th October
- 600 at Aughton on 14th October
- 1,600 at NDC on 14th October
- 240 at Allerthorpe GP on 24th November
- 361 at CHL on 16th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Greylag Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	12	-	52	8	289	42	100	361
LDV	1,235	1,543	546			909	1,165	1,149

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Resident feral breeder and winter visitor

As with the previous species a common goose which was recorded widely throughout the recording area. Peak counts in the LDV were in the first winter period but at CHL in the second. Individual site counts of 150 or more were:

- 175 at CHL on 9th July
- 150 at Heslington East on 1st August increasing to 300+ by end of September
- 250 at Scagglethorpe on 21st September
- 200 at NDC on 4th October
- 233 at CHL on 16th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Canada Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	49	2	63	63	32	109	125	233
LDV	643	589	203			402	315	350

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Occasional winter visitor and feral wanderer

Possible wild birds were reported from CHL with one on 21st January and four on 27th October, and at West Cottingwith Ings with one on 27th September. Three birds noted at Bubwith Ings on 16th December were also considered to be of wild origin but all other records were deemed to be from the feral York University flock or escapes and are covered in Appendix A.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant**

On 20th February a 'dark-bellied' bird *Branta bernicla bernicla* was on the river bank at NDC where it was trapped and ringed (CR).

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca***Feral breeder and occasional visitor**

Evidence suggests there is probably a small resident population in the LDV now although sightings remain sporadic. Two were reported from Wheldrake Ings on 12th February, one was at East Cottingwith on 8th May and eight were at Thorganby on 1st October.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna***Winter visitor, migrant breeder and scarce autumn passage migrant**

Small numbers were recorded at various sites throughout the LDV during the first winter period with individual high counts in spring of 79 at Thorganby Ings on 6th May and up to 50 at East Cottingwith Ings later that month. Just single-figure counts were reported thereafter and into the second winter period until an increase in the LDV in December.

Elsewhere two were at Oulston Reservoir on 7th January with up to ten at nearby Newburgh Priory Lake through March and April. A pair was on the River Ouse at Redhouse Reservoir on 22nd March, six were at Sheriff Hutton in late March, two were at High Moor, Hessay on 18th April and a pair was at Skipwith Common on the 24th.

Throughout May one or two birds were on the River Derwent at Stamford Bridge while one was at Holly House Farm, Hessay on the 17th, and another flew down-river at Clifton Ings on the 19th. Ten were reported at Holly House Farm (again) on 1st July while a juvenile at Heslington East on 14th August might indicate local breeding.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Shelduck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	103	119	107			-	3	41

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata***Scarce resident breeder**

A good series of records from CHL this year: three pairs were found there mid-February with two drakes still present on 28th April. A pair was seen again on 20th May and a juvenile was noted there in July indicative of breeding at the site; last sighting at CHL was of three female/immature types on 2nd August. In addition, two were seen at Beningbrough Hall on 19th March, a drake was on Holly House Farm pond, Hessay on 17th May and a female was at Wheldrake Ings on 16th June.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope***Regular winter visitor, spring passage migrant and resident breeder in small numbers**

Large numbers were present in the LDV in the first three months of the year with good numbers too at CHL in January and February. Elsewhere, during the first winter period, two drakes and a female were at Heslington East on 21st January with a single drake at Rawcliffe Lake on 3rd February, and another on floods at Bishopthorpe and on the River Rye by Ryton bridge on the 25th.

During the second winter period there was a steady increase in sightings in the LDV probably due to the area being significantly flooded with, for example, 300 seen at Thorganby Ings on 25th November and two flocks totalling around 1,100 at NDC and Bubwith Ings. Good numbers were again reported at CHL peaking at 573 in December when there were over 9,000 in the LDV as a whole, while 60 dropped in to Skipwith Common on 21st September and 164 were on the floods near Cawood on 20th October.

For information on possible breeding see RBBP report page 88.

Monthly WeBS counts for Eurasian Wigeon

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	489	543	43	2	40	344	437	573
LDV	11,688	10,146	11,313			593	1,020	9,148

American Wigeon *Anas americana***Vagrant**

No reports this year; last sighted in 2010.

Gadwall *Anas strepera***Winter visitor and migrant breeder**

At CHL wintering numbers peaked at 61 in February during the first winter period but in the LDV the highest count, of 374, was in March. Pairs were noted on the floods at Bishopthorpe on 25th February and at Redhouse Reservoir on the 28th, with a single at Allerthorpe GP on 2nd March followed by a pair at Heslington East on the 6th.

Good numbers were seen in the LDV through the summer with breeding pairs estimated to number between 66 and 105 (see RBBP report page 88).

In the second winter period highest counts were at CHL with very modest numbers in the LDV. Elsewhere a single drake was at Heslington East on 6th September and 34 were on floods near Cawood on 20th October.

Monthly WeBS counts for Gadwall

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	37	61	52	26	45	135	143	116
LDV	123	183	374			32	-	29

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

Large numbers (see WeBS counts) were recorded in the first winter period in the LDV but from a peak of 281 in January numbers at CHL diminished quickly as spring approached. Up to 18 were also seen early in the year on the River Derwent near Stamford Bridge with four at Allerthorpe GP on 19th February. Nine were on the floods at Bishopthorpe on the 25th with 62 on Newburgh Priory Lake on 6th March and 25 at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on the 10th. At Skipwith Common 50–100 birds were seen regularly late winter as birds began to pair up.

During the second winter period numbers peaked at 216 at CHL during November but increased to 6,246 in December in the LDV, perhaps due to the extensive flooding throughout the valley. Three were on floods near Cawood on 20th October and 85 were on Wash Dike at Skipwith Common on 30th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Eurasian Teal

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	281	66	12	7	6	6	216	135
LDV	7,226	6,435	3,015			835	1,304	6,246

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

No reports this year after annual occurrences from 2006 to 2011.

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

Common and widespread throughout the area. At CHL the highest WeBS counts were in January and February with fewer thereafter and into the second winter period. In the LDV substantial numbers were present in both winter periods with the peaks of 3,362 in February and 3,168 in December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Mallard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	419	459	118	64	219	150	175	191
LDV	2,556	3,352	2,089			1,302	2,772	3,168

Pintail *Anas acuta***Winter visitor and scarce breeder**

Good numbers were recorded in the LDV in the first winter period with a peak of 486 in February. Elsewhere a female was found in a ditch at Heslington East on 11th February, with another seen on floods at Bishopthorpe on the 25th, while a further female was at Newburgh Priory Lake on 20th March.

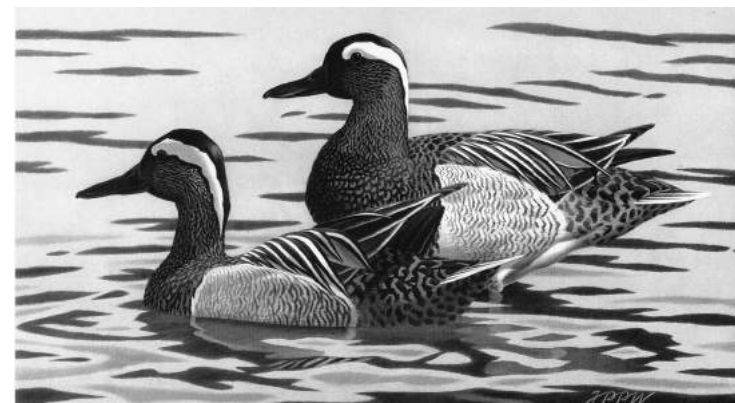
During the second winter period up to six were at CHL from late September into early October, a drake was on floods near Cawood on 20th October plus mainly single-figure reports from the LDV until numbers began to increase into December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Pintail

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LDV	375	486	364			5	16	82

Garganey *Anas querquedula***Scarce migrant breeder**

From one extreme to the other – after last year's poor showing it was a very productive year, the first being a drake at Bank Island on 18th March and then regular sightings of one to three birds throughout the LDV up to the end of May and a drake at Newburgh Priory Lake from 30th March to 3rd April. Early June saw a further influx into the LDV with at least five drakes at Wheldrake Ings; breeding was confirmed with two juveniles seen in July (see LDV RBBP report page 88). On 30th July a moulting adult male was trapped and ringed in the LDV. In mid-August an incredible gathering took place at Bank Island with at least 16 counted on the 15th and a last sighting there, of just one bird, on 8th September.

**Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors***Vagrant****2011**

The record of Blue-winged Teal seen at Wheldrake Ings on 18th March 2011 was “not accepted” by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

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

In the LDV, according to WeBS counts, numbers increased steadily in the first winter period peaking at 621 in March. Otherwise, just single-figure counts were received from this area, with small numbers reported from Skipwith Common between mid-February and the end of May including three pairs in April. Small numbers were also recorded at CHL in the first winter period.

At least one pair was thought to have bred at Skipwith Common but no young were seen, while between 31 and 110 pairs bred in the LDV (see RBBP report page 88) – during the late summer there were regular reports of around 20 birds in the Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings area.

In the second winter period just modest numbers were recorded at CHL (one or two) and in the LDV (see WeBS counts).

Monthly WeBS counts for Shoveler

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
LDV	266	409	621			53	34	32

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina***Vagrant although escapes from wildfowl collections are more likely**

A female located at Wheldrake Ings on 27th March, was considered a wild bird, and was still present on the 28th (TJ *et al.*).

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

Numbers at CHL peaked at 69 in January, during the first winter period, with a maximum of 86 in the LDV the same month. Elsewhere, up to three were at Allerthorpe GP during February and March, with a further three on floods at Bishopthorpe on 25th February and a single at Wash Dike, Skipwith Common on 6th April. Two to three were seen at Heslington East throughout the year with up to seven in March.

Breeding was confirmed in the LDV when a female was found on a nest containing seven eggs on 11th June (see RBBP report page 88).

Numbers were slow to build at CHL during the second winter period with just 12 there in December but flooding caused numbers in the LDV to increase substantially in December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Pochard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	69	38	2	-	-	-	2	12
LDV	86	26	21			-	5	62

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula***Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers**

There were good numbers again at the start of the year with peak counts of 256 at CHL and 200+ at major sites in the LDV. Up to 32 were at Allerthorpe GP during February and March and four were on floods at Clifton Ings on 30th April.

Fifteen had returned to Skipwith Common by 28th April and two or three pairs bred there. Breeding was also noted in the LDV and at CHL where good numbers remained through the summer. Summering pairs were also noted at SHL and at Goole Anglers' pond near Brighton.

Small numbers were again reported from Heslington East throughout the year with an impressive build-up in early autumn peaking at 83 on 14th September. There were also 44 on floods near Cawood on 20th October with second winter peak counts of 72 at Bank Island in the LDV on 10th November and of 134 at CHL on the 25th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Tufted Duck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	256	210	65	71	50	77	108	120
LDV	303	522	351			71	107	265

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila***Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers**

A good series of records started with a female at Bank Island on 27th May (JLe) followed by another female (or the same) at Wheldrake Ings from 24th June to 14th August (DB *et al.*).

A first-winter bird was found at CHL on 27th October (DR), reported again on 11th November with a drake present on 21st November (TJ), and both drake and female were present on 28th December (DB).

Another two first-winters were at Heslington East from 28th October to 3rd November (TJ *et al.*) and a single first-winter was at NDC from 9th November to 13th December (TJ *et al.*) with another at Wheldrake Ings on 14th November (JL).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra***Very scarce winter visitor**

No records this year; last seen 2008.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula***Winter visitor and passage migrant**

The first winter period saw up to 30 at CHL early in the year while several were in the Wheldrake Ings area (around 20 in the LDV as a whole) while a drake was at Heslington East on 14th January.

Birds were slow to return during the second winter period and it was late October before any were reported with a female at Heslington East on the 30th remaining there to 4th November. Subsequently up to seven were at a flooded NDC during November with single figures elsewhere in the LDV while numbers had reached 19 at CHL by late December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Goldeneye

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	26	23	8	-	-	3	15	9
LDV	21	17	11			-	3	11

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor

A red-head at NDC on 29th January (CR) was the only record this year.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Very scarce winter visitor

No records this year; last seen in 2011.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Regular winter visitor and passage migrant

Reported widely during the first winter period from the river systems and water bodies in the area with peak counts at Redhouse Reservoir and CHL of 53 and 40 respectively, both in February. Other double-figure counts included 12 over Bishopthorpe on 6th January and 20+ on the River Ouse at Fulford on 11th February with a flock, possibly the same, at Poppleton on the 14th.

Post breeding, eleven were at Redhouse Reservoir on 4th August with two redheads at Wheldrake Ings on the 16th followed by single-figure reports to the end of the year from CHL, a report of three flying south along the River Wharfe at Kirkby Wharfe on 18th November and seven at Bank Island on 16th December.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Formerly resident breeder in small numbers but now scarce visitor following national cull

No records again this year; not seen now since 2009.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Resident breeder and released to shoot

Single-figure numbers were again reported widely from many suitable areas throughout the region but the only double-figure counts were 25 at Bishopthorpe on 12th January, 11 at Bank Island on 18th February and 32 near Angram (to the west of York) on 17th October. Despite a paucity of records very high numbers were released for shooting.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Resident breeder

Although not encountered as frequently as the previous species, small numbers were reported from Cornfield NR, Dunnington Common, Haxby, Heslington East, the LDV, Naburn, Seaton Ross, Sheriff Hutton, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge, Strensall Common and Upper Poppleton. The only double-figure counts were 11 at Dunnington Common on 8th January and 15 at Storwood on 19th September.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Summer visitor which breeds in good years

The first was a single bird heard calling along Low Lane, Heslington East on 25th May (TJ *et al.*) followed by up to four at the West Lilling site through July into early August. Birds were recorded calling in the LDV but only for a short period and none appeared to have bred there this year (see RBBP report page 88).

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Resident breeder and released to shoot

Common and regularly encountered in suitable habitat throughout the recording area. Double-figure counts included 35 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th April and up to 18 at Allerthorpe GP from mid-October through to December.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Very scarce winter visitor

A juvenile was found on Dringhouses Pond, York late afternoon on 11th December (TJ, CG *et al.*) and was still present the next morning although it departed at midday, probably due the pond freezing over. Apart from a dead bird picked up at CHL in 2008 this constitutes the first record of this species in the YOC area since 1996 (see photo back cover).

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Scarce autumn visitor on passage

A sub-adult was seen flying low over the A64 not far from the Hopgrove roundabout on 24th June (JAB, TJ). It was tracked for five miles down the A64 and seen finally flying southwest over Heslington East. Another immature bird was reported flying over Bank Island on 17th September (CR & TD). These are the first records of this species in the area since 2009.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Passage and winter visitor; recently established resident breeder

CHL now appears to be the main site for this species and birds were again present throughout the year, numbers building through the first winter period and peaking between 50–60 birds in May with at least 15 nests

counted. Numbers fell post-breeding but increased again to 32 birds by the end of December.

Small numbers were reported from the LDV throughout the year but only one nest was noted at Wheldrake Ings where up to 11 birds were regularly reported. Elsewhere single-figure counts were reported from Allerthorpe GP (but 12 there on 24th November), Haxby, Hemingbrough, Heslington East, Howsham, Mowthorpe, Old Malton, Oulston Reservoir, Redhouse Reservoir, Stamford Bridge and York University.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Very scarce, mostly winter visitor

The first since 2010 was a single at Wheldrake Ings on 8th February, seen on the ice from Pool Hide (CR per RS). Later in the year one showed well from 15th to 22nd November (AC *et al.*) in front of the Geoff Smith hide at NDC. Though sometimes elusive during its stay, the bird was photographed by a lucky few (see photo back cover) but it eventually left the site, due to rising flood water.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce visitor, has bred

The frequency of sightings and numbers of this species continued to increase through the year.

At Wheldrake Ings there was a build up of numbers between 11th May and 24th June, with a maximum of four birds on 5th June. Birds were also seen at Bank Island in this period, mostly in late May/early June with a maximum of eight on 30th May. Other sightings in the LDV included two at NDC on 27th May. Later in the summer another influx between 4th and 20th August resulted in up to seven at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th.

Away from the LDV, one flew along the River Ouse at Newhay, near Selby on 7th July before heading north, and one in a tree at Heslington East on 8th August was mobbed by Carrion Crows *Corvus corone* with one also present on the 10th.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Resident breeder

Birds were recorded throughout the recording area in suitable habitats, with a maximum count of 48 at Wheldrake Ings on 28th July. Breeding was recorded at two sites, with three nests at CHL and at least four nests at the heronry established in 2010 at Acomb Ings, opposite Clifton Ings across the River Ouse. At least 17 chicks were colour-ringed in the heronry by Wheldrake Ings.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Resident breeder, more widespread in winter

There were many records of this species throughout the year, with breeding confirmed at Bank Island, Skipwith Common and Wheldrake

Ings, and strongly suspected at CHL and Strensall Common. A juvenile at Heslington East on 1st August might indicate breeding at or near this site. Maximum numbers at major sites were six at Allerthorpe GP, seven at Bank Island, five at CHL and Heslington East, and nine at Wheldrake Ings.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Resident breeder and passage visitor

Frequent at suitable lake and river sites throughout the year. Successful breeding was confirmed at Allerthorpe GP, where one pair produced one young; at Allerthorpe Lakeland Park, where one pair had a single chick; at CHL where a family party with two young was observed; and at Rawcliffe Lake where a pair produced two young. Nesting was also attempted at Bank Island, NDC (two pairs), Wheldrake Ings and York University Lake but these attempts were unsuccessful or the outcome is unknown. A pair displayed well on the new lake at Heslington East but lack of vegetation provided no suitable nesting sites.

Over-wintering was noted at Allerthorpe GP, CHL, Dringhouses Pond (York), Rawcliffe Lake and York University Lake with single sightings at Bishopthorpe and Clifton Ings during the first winter period.

Monthly WeBS counts for Great Crested Grebe

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	2	2	6	3	2	2	3	3	3	1	6	2
LDV	-	-	5							-	7	-

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Very scarce winter visitor

Not recorded in 2012 after records in 2009 and 2010.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

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

Following the pattern of nearly annual sightings on passage, a pair was at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April and three adults in breeding plumage were at NDC from 11–14th May. Later one was at Bank Island on 13th July. One to three pairs bred in the LDV (see RBBP report page 88).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Irregular but increasing visitor from reintroduction schemes

Another good year with an increased number of sightings of overflying birds compared to the previous year. One was seen at Heslington East on 8th January during the annual Bird Race, with another on 28th and 29th February at Poppleton where it was mobbed by a Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* and a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. One seen at Wheldrake Ings on

the morning of 18th March was probably the same bird released earlier that day at Thornton Ellers. This had been picked up poisoned a couple of weeks previously in the Pickering area and with only two-thirds of its expected body weight and taken into care (CR per RS).

Singles were also seen during the spring and summer on various dates at Flaxton, East Cottingwith, Heslington East, NDC, Thorganby and Wheldrake Ings. At the end of the year, one was at Escrick on 25th November and another was seen in the distance from York railway station on 7th December.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Passage migrant and rare breeder, now also scarce winter visitor

A female frequented Wheldrake Ings between 18th and 30th March and also during the summer at the same location. On 11th August a male was also seen at Wheldrake Ings with sightings of a single juvenile on the 14th, four birds on the 15th, two juveniles at Bank Island on the 29th and one at NDC on the 30th, strongly suggesting breeding may have taken place in the local area (see also RBBP report page 88).

Singles were also seen away from the LDV at Skipwith Common (on several dates from July to October), near the A64 at Heslington on 17th August and at Heslington East on 8th September.

During September a roost at NDC began to attract a significant number of birds, reaching a maximum of 13–16 on the 13th, later declining to a ten at the month's end and to seven by the 11th October, after which the roost appeared to disperse because of rising water levels covering their preferred roost location. During November and December up to three were still present in the LDV ranging widely and recorded at various sites and these stayed into the following year.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Mostly a very scarce winter visitor

Three records during the autumn: an adult male at Seavy Carr, Thornton on 15th October (RCy) was followed by another male at NDC on 8th November, which quartered for five minutes before flying south along the river, with another (or the same) there on 13th November (both AC).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Passage visitor and rare breeder

Two records only this year: one was reported at Skipwith Common on 13th February with another there on 26th May (both DC per DT).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Resident breeder and passage migrant

Commonly recorded and widespread throughout the recording area; often in gardens where frequently seen catching or chasing prey. Food items

included Blackbirds *Turdus merula*, pigeons *Columba* spp. and sparrows *Passer* spp. among others. Breeding was suspected or confirmed at Clifton Ings, Hassacarr NR, North Duffield, Skipwith Common and in central York, and display was also observed over York University.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Passage migrant and common resident breeder

Frequently seen during the year with increased sightings within the outskirts of York and in the south of the area. Counts of ten or more were recorded at Castle Howard in June, along the River Ouse between York and Naburn (including one group of six thermalling), and at Heslington East and Skipwith Common, all in September. In the Howardian Hills counts of over ten were recorded in January and September.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Regular passage migrant

A very good year for this species with many sightings of passage birds in the early part of the year. The first was at Crockey Hill on 10th March followed by one at NDC on the 19th, which was later seen near the Designer Outlet (York), and another at Askham Bog on the 28th.

During April singles were seen over York University on the 11th, NDC on the 14th and 15th, Strensall Common on the 16th, Allerthorpe GP on the 20th and Bank Island on the 27th. There were two records in May; at Thorganby Ings on the 16th and Bank Island on the 21st, while other singles were at Wheldrake Ings on 6th June and CHL on the 10th, the latter feeding for an hour and sitting in a tree. Interestingly, another also spent five days between 20th–24th June at Allerthorpe GP and this, or another, was fishing at a lake at nearby Pocklington on the 26th.

The autumn return passage provided sightings at Allerthorpe GP on 29th July, SHL on 11th August and one at a fishing lake at Newton upon Derwent on 22nd September.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident breeder

Widespread and frequently seen across the recording area, usually just ones or twos, but from Kimberlow Hill at Heslington East seven and ten were observed on 6th and 8th September respectively.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

A good scattering of records throughout the area, starting with one at Heslington East on 8th January during the annual Bird Race and another on the 25th near Stamford Bridge, followed by singles at Cornfield NR and at York University during February, and at the Heslington Tillmire, NDC

and Wheldrake Ings during March with two at NDC on the 18th. Sightings continued into April with singles at Bubwith, Heslington East and NDC with the last, of the first winter period, at NDC on the 27th.

Autumn observations commenced with two at NDC on 11th September and singles seen there on four occasions until the year's end while one was seen at Brinkley's Plantation south of Bubwith on 4th October.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Passage migrant; scarce and localised breeder

An annual visitor since 1998, the first of 2012 was on 16th April at Skipwith Common followed, on 4th May, by one between Wheldrake and York. On 16th May two were over Wheldrake Ings with singles at NDC and Thorganby Ings on the 27th. Thereafter singles were seen fairly frequently throughout the summer at the above sites and also at Askham Bog, Bank Island, Castle Howard, Dunnington Common, Elvington, Melbourne, Newton-on-Ouse, Wilberfoss and central York. The last of the year was at Askham Bog on 4th October.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Winter and passage visitor; scarce breeder

Records occurred in all months except July with the LDV being particularly favoured. Most records came from the area around Wheldrake Ings plus others at Bank Island and NDC, and three pairs are thought to have bred.

There were sightings in central York in January, May, June and September including one on York Minster preening for several minutes (11th May) while other singles were reported from Clifton Moor (August) and Heslington East (March and April).

Other records of singles came from SHL (January), Scagglethorpe (February), Sherburn in Elmet (June), Elvington (Oct), Selby (Oct), Kirkby Wharfe (November) and New Parks Wood east of Tollerton (December).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Resident breeder and winter/passage visitor

This bird is normally heard rather than seen and there were frequent records of up to three calling at Wheldrake Ings regularly from March to November. Also heard at Skipwith Common during the summer but it was thought only one pair was present. Others were seen or heard at Allerthorpe GP and the Pocklington Canal in January and March respectively and additional birds were heard at Bank Island and the Pocklington Canal from August to November with one seen at NDC in December.

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

Very scarce passage migrant and breeder

A good year with up to three audible from the viewing platform at Bank Island between 2nd to 4th June, usually after 22:00 hours (CR). A detailed

survey of Spotted Crakes was conducted nationally in 2012 and the results of this in the LDV suggested 0–8 breeding pairs. More details are in the RBBP report on page 88.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

Very scarce summer migrant and irregular breeder

Not recorded in 2012 after records in 2010 and 2011.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Common resident and winter visitor

Good numbers were recorded in the LDV (see table) with individual high counts of 31 at Thornton Ings in January, 32 at each of Wheldrake Ings and Thornton Ings in February, 21 at NDC and 117 at Thornton Ings both in March and 70 at Thornton Ings in December. Elsewhere there were records of 20 or above at Allerthorpe GP and CHL, the maximum being 48 at CHL on 16th September. Breeding was confirmed at Allerthorpe GP, CHL, Clifton Ings, Pocklington Canal at East Cottingwith and Melbourne, Rawcliffe Lake, SHL, Skipwith Common and at Wheldrake Ings.

Monthly WeBS counts for Moorhen

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	45	40	42	35	9	3	20	24	48	26	40	21
LDV	188	201	222							-	-	142

Coot *Fulica atra*

Common resident and winter visitor

Commonly encountered on suitable areas of open water. Breeding was confirmed at CHL where there were good numbers throughout the year, Pocklington Canal by East Cottingwith, Rawcliffe Lake and York University Lake. In the LDV only small numbers were recorded in the second winter period.

Monthly WeBS counts for Coot

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	325	448	96	46	29	51	108	146	107	160	209	212
LDV	122	911	122							8	3	-

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Scarce vagrant

At Skipwith Common up to four birds were seen on several occasions from 21st March to 28th April, but with no records thereafter.

Multiple sightings leading to birds displaying and copulating at various locations within the LDV are detailed in the RBBP report on page 88 and it may be that the birds seen earlier at Skipwith Common joined others already

in the LDV. Despite all the evidence breeding was not confirmed and it may be that high water levels acted as a deterrent. As many as 16 individuals could have been present overall. It is quite possible that some of these birds (at least) originated from the South Yorkshire population as four were seen flying north over the M62 at Howden just outside the YOC area on 25th April, suggesting movement from that area.

On 10th June one was seen flying very high over Acomb, York.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Passage migrant and scarce breeder

In total 127 records were received for some 18 locations in the January to August period, with most records in the LDV. However, of these sites 12 were away from the LDV. Most records were of one, two or three birds, including several pairs, until the last record on 2nd August.

The first was a single at Redhouse Reservoir on 8th January. Higher counts were nine at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th February and 3rd March, six at Thorganby Ings on 17th April, and at Wheldrake Ings on 30th June and Everingham on 3rd July.

In the breeding season examination of all records received suggests approximately 20 breeding pairs with the main sites being CHL, Heslington East and the LDV. The only site where breeding was confirmed was Heslington East where a pair were seen with three fledged young on 2nd July.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rare visitor

There were more sightings than usual this spring with one at Wheldrake Ings on 26th March, two on 1st April, then two again (at The Refuge) on the 18th, two at NDC on the 21st and four, which soon moved on, at Aughton Ings on the 27th. In May two were briefly at Wheldrake Ings on the 7th and two at NDC on the 8th (see also RBBP report page 88).



Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce summer breeder and passage migrant

The first was one at Heslington East on 10th March, reported four times up to the 17th, then three on the 27th, followed by two at Wheldrake Ings on the 31st. With regular sightings through April and May it is believed six pairs bred at Heslington East but only one juvenile was fledged compared with 12 here in 2011. Four seen on 19th June was the last sighting at Heslington East in 2012.

Elsewhere a single was at East Cottingwith on 10th May, with two seen between 27th May and 5th June on Bootham Stray, and a single at Cornfield NR on 4th May and 14th June.

In late summer, from 29th July to 20th August, birds were reported on eight occasions from Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island with a maximum of four on 4th August.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Passage migrant and occasional breeder

The majority of records were between May and September with Bank Island the most favoured site although birds were recorded earlier at Heslington East on 19th and 21st February and 20th March.

In May sightings came from Wheldrake Ings on the 7th, East Cottingwith on the 10th, NDC on the 10th (two) and 27th, and Heslington East on the 28th, all singles unless stated. Ultimately two pairs bred at Heslington East, both with double broods, and a total of nine young were fledged.

Most autumn passage birds were seen at Bank Island building from one on 11th August to 12 on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd, 15 on the 24th, 20 on the 25th and 26th, then ten on the 27th, 19 on the 28th and approximately 15 on the 29th with, finally, one on 6th September. One was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 8th September with four on the same date at Heslington East and three juveniles there on the 11th.

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

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

- 300 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th February
- 130 at Poppleton on 20th and 25th February
- 400 at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd March.

After 19th April (the last spring sighting) there were no further records until 28th July when 26 were at Bank Island (first of the autumn). Significant counts (100 or more) in the autumn and second winter period were:

- 225 at NDC on 16th September
- 200 in fields adjacent to Elvington STW on 27th September
- 1,000 at Newton upon Derwent on 19th October
- 150 at Cawood on floods on 20th October with 100 there on the 22nd
- 350 at North Duffield on 9th December.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant**

There were several records this year. On 26th and 27th May two summer plumaged birds flew over Heslington East calling and heading north (P&SB).

In the autumn a juvenile was present at Bank Island on 17th September (CR) with two adjacent to Elvington STW on the 27th (RS, AW). Singles were at NDC on 11th October and 16th November (AW, TJ) and at Thorganby Ings on 16th December (RS).

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

Early in the year significant counts (100 or more) were:

3,000 at Bubwith on 10th January

126 at Bank Island on 21st January

180 by A64 at Heslington on 24th February.

Numbers soon fell as birds dispersed to breeding grounds and from 29th March only single-figure counts were reported from numerous locations until 85 were back at Wheldrake Ings on 5th June.

Breeding was proved from a variety of locations including Heslington East, where there were four pairs and between three and four young were fledged, the Heslington Tillmire with a possible 26 pairs in late March, Scagglethorpe, Sheriff Hutton.

In the second half of the year 100 or more were reported in each month from some ten locations on 35 dates. Although there were seven reports of counts around 200 and six reports of 300+, only counts of 400 or more are listed below:

450 at Wheldrake Ings on 29th July

550 at Wheldrake Ings on 30th July

450 at Bank Island on 11th August

400 at Bank Island on 12th and 16th August

1,000 at Redhouse (Moor Monkton) on 11th September

500 at Redhouse on 18th September

560 at Elvington STW on 27th September

500 at NDC on 4th October

400 at NDC on 4th December

500 at Thorganby on 20th December

1,500 at NDC on 30th December

2,500 at NDC on 31st December.

Knot *Calidris canutus***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant**

Two records this year with a single at Heslington East on 5th March (RS) which remained until the 18th, and a juvenile at Thorganby Ings on 17th October (TJ).

Sanderling *Calidris alba***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant**

One was present at NDC on 8th May (CG) while two were at Heslington East on 27th May from 21:00 to dusk (TJ *et al.*).

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

Not recorded in 2012; last sightings in 2010 and 2011.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii***Rare passage migrant**

Two were present at various locations within this site on the 20th and 21st (TJ *et al.*).

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

One was at NDC on 1st June (DT *et al.*). This was the first record of this species since 2008.

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

Not recorded in 2012; last sightings in 2008 and 2010.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina***Passage migrant and winter visitor**

The first three months of the year saw good numbers in the LDV but decreasing quickly through April and into May. In January c.100 were at Bubwith Ings on the 10th with 40 at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th. A minimum of 100 was present at Wheldrake Ings on 18th February, down to 50 by 3rd March, 25 on the 25th and 15 on 1st April.

During April and May just single-figure numbers were reported at various sites including Heslington East, but with 15 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st April and 12 at World's End, Strensall Common on the 15th.

From end July onwards mostly single-figure counts were received, with maxima of six reported from Bank Island, Wheldrake Ings and Elvington STW, until numbers in the LDV increased substantially towards the end of the year.

Monthly WeBS counts for Dunlin

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	320	497	121							-	400	300

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***Mainly passage migrant and winter visitor; rare breeder**

In the first winter period counts in the LDV came mainly from Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island. Numbers here increased from single figures in January to ten on 19th February and 16 on 3rd March, but then falling away after 12 on 1st April to mostly ones or twos, though with four on the 27th. A single bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 4th May with a female there on 9th June.

According to this year's RBBP report (see page 88) up to 19 males and seven females were present at leks from late March to early May but there was no evidence of breeding.

From July onwards numbers slowly started to rise reaching a peak of 14 on 17th August after which numbers fell in September and October before building again in November to 20 at NDC on the 9th, 30 at Aughton Ings on the 19th and then 30 at NDC on 9th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for wintering Ruff

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	68	87	77			-	39	30

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtes minimus***Winter visitor and passage migrant**

All records relate to the two winter periods.

At Skipwith Common three were on the northern marsh on 9th January with two there on 26th February. The first autumn bird was on 28th September and from early October onwards a day roost developed on a small patch of the northern marsh measuring 70m x 5m. Three birds were caught on 5th October, two on the 15th, five on the 25th and five again on 8th November. None was retrapped. A maximum count of eight occurred here on the 27th when another bird was to the west of Wash Dike.

Elsewhere, Heslington East held up to six in January and four in February but with just a single reported on 10th March.

Singles were recorded at Bank Island on 21st September, Hassacarr NR on 13th October and Heslington East on the 28th, with two there on 7th November.

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

In the LDV as a whole numbers increase in the first three months to reach a peak of 661 in March. In the breeding season single figure records came from some ten locations after which good numbers were recorded until the end of the year. Good numbers were again present in the second winter period peaking at 474 in November.

Elsewhere 61 were at Skipwith Common on 9th January with 22 at Rawcliffe Meadows on the 16th but ten or fewer through February and March until 20 were counted at Wheldrake Ings on 19th April.

In the breeding season a displaying bird was at the Heslington Tillmire on 27th March after which drumming was recorded from four other locations (Bank Island, NDC, Thorganby and Wheldrake Ings) in the LDV up to the end of June.

From the end of July significant counts (30 or more) at individual sites were as follows:

40 At Wheldrake Ings on 29th July and 1st August
 30 at Wheldrake Ings on 5th August
 80 at Wheldrake Ings on 10th August
 30 at Bank Island on 12th August,
 40 at Bank Island on 14th and 16th August
 30 at Bank Island on 17th August
 120 at Bank Island on 18th August
 59 at Bank Island and 30 at Wheldrake Ings on 20th August
 150 at Bank Island on 21st August
 30 at Bank Island on 28th August
 30 at Bank Island on 6th September
 78 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th September
 30 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th September
 60 at Bank Island on 8th October
 44 at Wheldrake Ings on 10th November.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Snipe

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	162	233	661			353	474	235

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

In the first three months of the year reports came from ten locations, mostly of singles but three were at Wheldrake Ings, and two were at both Allerthorpe Common and Hassacarr NR.

At Skipwith Common numbers seen in the first winter period were lower than usual, probably due to dry conditions. Single birds were seen on 24th January and 23rd and 25th March. One pair was thought to have bred with three seen on 4th June and of these two were seen roding. No autumn sightings were reported here.

Elsewhere in the breeding season reports of single birds came from Frog Hall (Allerthorpe Common) and Yearsley Moor.

A single was at Wheldrake Ings on 5th August followed by records of single birds in November and December from five locations with two at Freer's Banks, Baxtonhowe on 12th December.

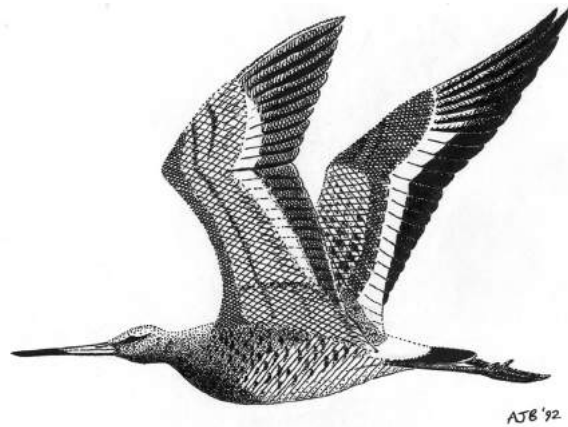
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Passage migrant and rare breeder, occasionally seen in winter

Most records were in March, April and early summer at Wheldrake Ings with returning birds from late July to early September.

A single at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd January was the only record until nine appeared there on 1st March after which numbers quickly increased with monthly peaks of 65 on 28th March and 200 on 18th April. At Thorganby Ings 90 were estimated on 27th April with a further 31 at NDC on the same date. Single birds continued to be recorded in May and June from Thorganby Ings and particularly from Wheldrake Ings.

Returning birds appeared from 28th July with peaks of six at Heslington East on 1st August, and five at Bank Island and at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th, maybe the same birds commuting between sites.



Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Scarce passage migrant

Singles were present at Wheldrake Ings on 29th January (AF) and at NDC on 1st, 2nd and 3rd May (TJ, OM *et al.*).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage migrant

As usual numbers built up through the LDV in April and May with peaks at the end of April and the start of May before birds moved on northwards. Extensive flooding forced birds to move from their more traditional roost sites (e.g. Storwood) to other un-flooded areas. The first were two at Ellerton Ings, three at Thorganby Ings and seven at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April. These were followed by at least ten at Thorganby Ings on 26th April building to 15 on the 27th and 35 on the 28th falling to eight on 15th May and just one on the 16th.

Another favoured site this year was NDC with five present on 27th April, nine on the 28th, 22 on the 30th, peaking at 26 on 1st May, then ten on the 2nd and two on the 13th. Elsewhere two were at Aughton Ings, nine at Wheldrake Ings and ten at Storwood on 27th April, with one at Heslington East on 6th June.

In late summer two birds were seen heading north over Heslington East on 20th July, and two there on 2nd August flew high to the southwest calling as they went.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Winter visitor, passage migrant and migrant breeder

Numbers increased in the LDV through the first three months of the year starting with 16 at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd January which rose to 29 on 19th February, 34 on the 20th and 37 on the 25th. In March there was a peak of 47 on the 25th. Numbers fell to 29 on 1st April, 25 by the 15th and 13 on the 19th. At NDC numbers rose from six on 18th February peaking at 24 on the 25th, then 22 on the 28th but fewer than ten thereafter. The only other double-figure count was 19 at Thorganby Ings on 27th April.

Smaller groups, all less than ten in number, were recorded in the same period from: Allerthorpe Common, Bank Island, Beningbrough Hall, Bubwith bridge, CHL, Heslington Tillmire, Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, Redhouse, Ryton bridge, Scagglethorpe, Sheriff Hutton, Stillingfleet, Strensall Common and Wass.

Only single figure numbers were reported in May and for the rest of the year except for 12 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st June and 38 at Hessay on the 29th. From July onwards only ones and twos were seen, all at sites within the LDV apart from one group of two adults with two juveniles at CHL on 28th July.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Passage migrant

The first spring passage bird was recorded on 20th April at Bank Island, followed by others at Heslington East, SHL and Thorganby in May.

Returning birds were recorded on 33 occasions from 1st July to 14th September mostly in ones or twos from Bank Island, Castle Howard, Heslington East, Ryton bridge and Wheldrake.

Higher counts were seven at Heslington East on 1st July and four on the same date at CHL with five there on 26th August.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Passage migrant and winter visitor

Records were mostly of one or two birds in most months except January and December and from nine locations but primarily at Bank Island, Heslington East and Wheldrake Ings.

Numbers increased slightly during late July and August with peaks of six at Skipwith Common on 29th July, six at Wheldrake Ings on 6th August, seven at Bank Island on the 16th and 30th, and five at East Cottingham on the 20th.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

A juvenile at Bank Island on 17th and 18th August (MaW) was the only record of the year.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

The first spring record was a single at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April. Further records, all in single figures, were received from four sites with peaks of two at Thorganby Ings on 27th April, five at NDC on 4th May and three at Heslington East on 27th May.

The first returning birds were two at Wheldrake Ings on 30th July. In August records were received for nearly every day of the month from three locations, many just single birds, but with peaks of ten at Bank Island on the 17th, five at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th and two at Heslington East on the 16th. The last record of the year was a single at Wheldrake Ings on 8th September.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Passage migrant

Singles were present at Wheldrake Ings on 27th May (JLe) and again from 29th July to 1st August (DB *et al.*) with another at Bank Island on 17th August (MaW).

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor

At the beginning of the year ten were at Bubwith Bridge on 5th January with 11 at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd. Other peaks were 15 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th February, ten on 25th March and six on 15th April. From mid-April numbers declined, with mostly just one to three birds, but four at Thorganby Ings on 27th April and five at Wheldrake Ings on 9th June.

Displaying birds attempted copulation at Heslington East on 27th March but with no further evidence of breeding at this site, while a pair with chicks was recorded at NDC on 6th June.

Only a few records were received for July and August with up to four at Wheldrake Ings on 7th August. After a gap, two were recorded at Cawood on 22nd October but there were then only four records in November and one in December, at Heslington East or in the LDV.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Passage migrant, usually in spring

Three records this year. On 11th May three flew north over Bank Island in the early evening (CR) and later two flew south through NDC (TJ, AW). Another was at Heslington East from 27th to 29th May (JLe).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

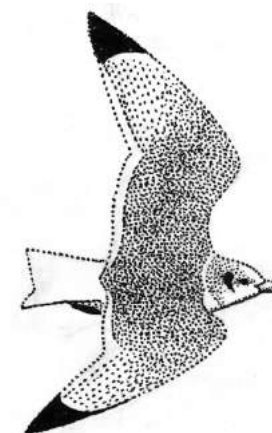
Very scarce passage migrant

Two at Sutton upon Derwent on 30th April (TJ) constituted the first record since 2007 and the 5th record for the recording area. One was a dark morph and the other pale; both were flying high up in an easterly direction during the afternoon (see also Tim Jones' article on page 111).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Scarce passage migrant

The first sighting since 2010 was of an adult at rest at CHL on 3rd March (DR).



Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

High numbers roosted at CHL in the early part of the year with c.500 there on 21st January and with Common Gull *Larus canus* in mixed flocks of 4,000+ on 12th February and 7,000+ on 6th March. Flocks of over 250 were also recorded at Rawcliffe Ings, Riccall Bridge Pump Station and near Stamford Bridge where 500 were noted in February and March.

For the first time in many years, no confirmed or suspected breeding records were submitted this year.

During the autumn, numbers again built up and flocks over 250 were 1,500 at Cliffe on 30th August, 2,000+ at Cawood on 20th October and 10,000 at CHL on 28th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Black-headed Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	220	100	8	-	-	-	-	400

Note: no gull counts in the LDV 2012

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

After an absence of records in 2011 there were records of a first-summer at Bubwith on 26th April (AW), one at NDC on 30th April (TJ), an adult at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May (OM), a good count of five at Allerthorpe GP on 18th May (P&SB) and one at Wheldrake Ings again on the 29th (RS). An adult and first summer were at Heslington East on 10th June (JL) and a first-summer bird was at Wheldrake Ings two days later (RS).

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

A good year starting with an adult on 14th January at Heslington East (TJ) followed by another in a large flock of Black-headed *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* and Common Gulls *Larus canus* over York on 7th March (AW). A first-summer was at Thorganby Ings on 8th May (AW) with two at NDC the following day (AW, PW, RS). An adult was at Wheldrake Ings on 6th June (CR) and at Thorganby Ings on 8th July (RS). The last for the year was a first-winter bird at Naburn Marina on 8th September (AB).

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

Flocks over 100 in the first winter period were 150 at Buttercrambe Moor on 10th January and in a mixed flock of 4,000+ with Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* roosting at CHL on 12th February. A flock of 500 was at Stamford Bridge the same day. Frequently seen elsewhere in lower numbers.

During the summer, small flocks of up to 50 occurred in the LDV and elsewhere, while numbers increased in the autumn to 120 at Pocklington Airfield on 26th October and 1,000 in a roost at CHL on 28th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Common Gull

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	26	34	2	-	-	-	-	200

Note: no gull counts in the LDV 2012

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

Seen throughout the year but in lower numbers in the first winter period, with records over ten of 15 at Riccall Bridge Pump Station on 27th January and of 12 at Upper Poppleton on 29th March. There was a high count of 100, presumably passage birds, in a ploughed field at Knapton on 24th April but thereafter small numbers only were seen in the summer, mostly in the LDV. During September and October small parties occurred at a number of sites but with 200 southwest of Thorganby on 6th September.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus***Winter visitor and passage migrant**

Frequently seen throughout the area during the year mostly in single or double figures, but 1,000s were often in fields near to Rufforth and the Harewood Whin landfill site. Reported large counts were 800 at Upper Poppleton on 29th March and c.1,800 in a ploughed field at Knapton on 24th April. A minimum of 180 were at West Farm, Kirby Misperton on 12th June and good numbers were noted using Rawcliffe Ings, when flooded, for a pre-roost bathe (note: no WeBS counts of this species were recorded at CHL and no gull counts were made in the LDV in 2012).

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

A good selection of sightings this year with an adult at Poppleton on 20th January and a first-winter there on the 27th, with presumably the same bird there again on 13th February and the adult on the 26th. Another adult was at Poppleton on 5th March and also at nearby Redhouse Reservoir on the 12th, while the last of the first winter period was a third-summer at Heslington East on the 30th.

During July a second-summer bird was at Thorganby on the 8th and 15th and an adult and sub-adult there on 6th and 11th September. A first-summer moulting into its second-winter plumage was at York University Lake on 11th August and a first-winter was in a field adjacent to Elvington STW on 26th September.

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

The first acceptable record for the YOC area was a first-winter bird bearing a lettered yellow ring (which unfortunately could not be read) at Wheldrake Ings on 14th January (TJ *et al.*), and this bird continued to visit the site until the 16th (TJ, RS, AW). Later, an adult was identified at Poppleton on the 20th (TJ & CG) and was seen again on various dates until 13th February. A description of the finding of these two birds is on page 92.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus***Scarce winter visitor**

A good year with a second-winter at the Wheldrake Ings roost on 14th and 28th January with an adult present at Poppleton on the 20th and 26th, possibly accounting for birds seen flying west over Bishopthorpe on the 21st and northwest over East Cottingham on the 22nd. During February there were regular reports of at least five visiting the regular sites of Poppleton, Redhouse Reservoir and Wheldrake Ings. These sightings, with additional ones at Heslington East and Foggathorpe, continued into March with six separate individuals identified near Poppleton on the 9th. The only April

sighting was on the 15th at Knapton where two were in a ploughed field. For further information see feature on white-winged gulls on page 97.

In August one was a Rufforth and at Redhouse Reservoir on the 4th.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Scarce winter visitor

An adult and juvenile were around the Poppleton and Wheldrake Ings areas from 24th February to around 5th March when only the juvenile appeared to remain, staying until 13th April and occasionally being seen flying over Heslington East. More details are in the white-winged gull feature on page 97.

On 4th August a first-winter was seen at Rufforth.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

During the first part of the winter birds were seen regularly at CHL, various sites in the LDV, Riccall Bridge Pump Station and at Knapton with the highest count being c. 100 at Knapton on 24th April.

From August sightings occurred again at the above sites, plus others, with the maximum of 100 at Cliffe on 30th August, in a field with Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* (note: no WeBS counts of this species were recorded at CHL and no gull counts were made in the LDV in 2012).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Rare passage migrant

Now recorded almost annually, one was at Thorganby Ings on 26th and 27th April (RS *et al.*) with another at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May (OM).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Passage migrant and rare migrant breeder

The first of the summer was a group of three at Redhouse Reservoir on 23rd April followed by various sightings in the LDV from 3rd May, mainly at Thorganby Ings and Wheldrake Ings with birds recorded nesting in June at the latter site. Other sightings came from Allerthorpe GP, Naburn Marina and Skipwith Common while the last of the year was one at Bank Island on 18th August.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Passage migrant

After just two birds in 2011, a major influx across England on 18th April saw 38 moving through Bank Island during the evening (CR), but no further records until the 25th when three flew south along the River Derwent at Bubwith bridge before heading east (AW). The following day (the 26th) two were at Wheldrake Ings (BirdGuides), with four there on the 27th (BirdGuides), while two were at Raker Lakes, Wheldrake the same day (CG).

Another even larger influx began on 3rd May with two at Raker Lakes, Wheldrake (CG). The next day (4th May) an estimated minimum of between 163 and 168 tracked north through the LDV from NDC via Aughton, Ellerton, Thorganby and East Cottingham (TJ, RS, AW) during the afternoon. At the end of the day, however, it was estimated that the record total of 227 through the York area on 2nd May 1983 had not been reached and therefore this record still stands!

'Feral Pigeon' *Columba livia*

Resident breeder

This species was again much under-recorded and is very common in urban and suburban areas. At least 300 on Dunnington Common on 8th January was the only large number reported.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Resident breeder

Regularly seen throughout the year in small numbers of ten or less but with one record of 20 birds at Sand Hutton on 27th May. On Clifton Ings seven or eight pairs were resident.

Singing birds were recorded holding territory at Newburgh Priory, Norton Oxbow (Norton), Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), River Derwent at Old Malton and Wheldrake Ings. At Skipwith Common, 2012 was the poorest breeding season since monitoring began in 2006. By mid-June Grey Squirrels had occupied most Tawny Owl boxes that were being used by Stock Doves.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Resident breeder

This is an abundant and widespread breeder but relatively few large flocks were reported in the first winter period..

Very large numbers were recorded in the second winter period as the population is boosted by the seasonal influx of continental birds. Flocks of over 500 were as follows: 1,000 at East Lilling on 12th November, 3,000 at Upper Helmsley on 28th November, 850 plus at Sherburn in Elmet on 30th November, 1,000 at Brecks Farm (Haxby) on 4th December and 1,000 at New Parks Wood, Melbourne on 5th December. Even these records probably represent a significant underestimate of the true numbers in the York area at this time.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Resident breeder

Regularly seen in small numbers close to human habitation, in parks and along waterways where a common breeder. A loose gathering of 116 birds was seen at Kirkby Wharfe on 20th October with 25 along the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 14th November.

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

There were only a few sightings of this now scarce and elusive bird within the recording area this year. One bird was seen and photographed in the observer's garden at Sheriff Hutton on 18th and 19th May (IB). A second was on the observer's bird table in Osbaldwick on 20th and 21st July (CRa).

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

No records in 2012; last recorded 2009.

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

The first of the year was one calling at Skipwith Common close to Wash Dike on 6th April followed by others heard and/or seen in the general area on the 23rd, 24th and 30th, but there was no evidence of successful breeding on the Common in 2012.

Elsewhere single birds were seen at NDC on 17th April and at Storwood on the 21st, with two by the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on the 27th. These were quickly followed by single birds at Jeffry Bog (Low Hutton), Helmsley Road Woods (Thornton) and York. At Strensall Common three were present on 4th May followed by one at Allerthorpe GP and two in Naburn Wood, both on 5th May. Further reports followed with birds seen or heard at Easingwold Golf Club, East Cottingwith, Hassacarr NR, Landing Lane (Haxby), Bank Island, Old Earswick, Poppleton, Rawcliffe Ings, Scagglethorpe, Selby, SHL, Stamford Bridge, Thorganby Ings, Towthorpe, Wheldrake Ings and Stockton Lane (York).

There was very little evidence of autumn passage probably due to the silent nature of birds at this time of year. Only two birds were reported in autumn, a juvenile at Rawcliffe Ings on 26th July and the last record of the year, a juvenile at Church Bridge (Melbourne), by the Pocklington Canal, on 21st August.

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

There were again many records throughout the year from the LDV and Pocklington Canal areas where birds breed in some numbers and a pair was seen regularly from the Geoff Smith Hide at NDC. On Dunnington Common up to four birds were seen and a pair raised two young in a box, both fledging successfully. At least three pairs bred within 1km of Skipwith Common and were regularly seen hunting over the reserve.

Other sightings came from Brighton, CHL, Easingwold, Gilling, Poppleton, Redhouse Wood (Moor Monkton), Ruddins Ings (Poppleton), Ryton bridge, Slingsby, Tang Hall Beck Fields (York), Terrington, Towthorpe and West Lilling.

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

The first of the year was seen at Heslington during the Bird Race on 8th January, followed by one at Bishopthorpe on 12th January, then two at Dunnington Common, and one bird (joined by a second on 29th March) along Bad Bargain Lane (Osballdwick) on 13th January. Sightings followed throughout the year at Barton-le-Street, Hagg Bridge (Pocklington Canal), Hessay, Heslington, Heslington East, LDV, Long Marston, Ryton bridge and West Lilling. At Foss Nabs and Ruddins Ings near Poppleton two birds were seen regularly during January, February and March.

In the breeding season two birds were seen at Thorganby Ings on 23rd April. A pair was present at the northern edge of Dane's Hills, Skipwith Common on 15th May but evidence of successful breeding was lacking. At Dunnington Common one adult and two young were sitting outside a nest box on 15th June.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco***Resident breeder throughout the area**

Records occurred all year throughout the recording area with many birds heard calling. At Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common two young were present in a nest box on 30th April and two juveniles were seen on the ground by a tree with a nest box at NDC on 1st May.

At Skipwith Common birds usually lay a month or so later than those in the surrounding areas but by 16th April four nest boxes contained eggs and another was occupied by the end of the month. The number of eggs noted was the highest since 2009. However, it seems that the birds found food scarce as three clutches were abandoned. One chick was ringed on 28th April and a further two young were ringed on 13th May. In the autumn two birds were caught close to the ground in mist nets which had been set for Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. It appears that the owls were lying in wait for the snipe coming in to roost from their feeding grounds.

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

The first record was on 9th April (TD) at Wheldrake Ings where it was seen from the Pool Hide and thought to have been noted the previous day by an unnamed observer. On Skipwith Common a couple of calls were heard during the evening of 22nd May from the view point at the end of the boardwalk (CR). Other observers had reported a brief glimpse and heard a call in this area two days previously. Hunger calls from young birds were not heard so it is very unlikely that any successful breeding took place here. Yet again no birds were heard or seen on Strensall Common during two evening visits. However, a single young bird was hunger-calling near East Cottingwith in June (CR) confirming breeding in this area (see also RBBP report page 88).

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

This year, in keeping with much of the country, started with significant numbers of birds present which had arrived as winter visitors the previous autumn. The first record of 2012 in the York area was of three birds showing well at Foss Nabs (Poppleton) on 1st January (PW). Up to four birds were present in rough fields in the same area on most days up to 1st April, on occasion giving superb views. A single bird, seen over Redhouse Wood on 21st March, was thought likely to be one of the Poppleton birds.

The second productive area was Wheldrake Ings where two birds were seen on 8th January during the Yorkshire Bird Race (AW *et al.*) with sightings here most numerous in March. At NDC/Bubwith records were also frequent from late February to end of April. In the LDV as a whole as many as nine separate individuals were recorded up to 4th May.

Away from the LDV two birds were seen in Langwith Lane, Heslington on 17th March, in the same field as Merlin *Falco columbarius*, Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* and Little Owl *Athene noctua* (OM). One was also at Heslington East on 30th April (CG).

In the summer two pairs in the LDV made unsuccessful attempts at breeding, with failure probably due to flooding (see RBBP report page 88).

During the second winter period two birds were seen at NDC on 15th September (AW) with one regularly present until 10th November. A single bird was seen, possibly one of the NDC birds, over Wheldrake Ings on 5th November (TD).

**Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus***Scarce passage migrant and breeder**

At Skipwith Common a female gave excellent views on 22nd May (CR). On 29th and 30th May a male churred and wing-clapped in the central area. A male was heard churring on 4th June (DB) and on 27th June a male was heard from Sands Lane. It was later seen clearly at the northern edge of Wash Dike, with another heard in the central area. The final sighting was on 14th July with a bird churring south of Sands Lane near Wash Dike, with another bird heard north of the five-way crossroads. A male and female were never seen together. Despite all this activity there was a lack of evidence that breeding had taken place, probably due to heavy rain in early summer. However, the number of sightings and calls reported from late May to mid-July was the highest since a pair last bred on the site in 2003.

At Strensall Common no birds were heard or seen during two visits (PeR).

Common Swift *Apus apus***Migrant breeder**

The first of the year was a single bird at Newburgh Priory Lake with Swallows *Hirundo rustica* and House Martins *Delichon urbicum* on 20th April. At least ten were seen at NDC on 27th April, with four at Skipwith Common the same day. Up to three birds were at CHL and a single bird at Tang Hall Beck Fields (York) on 28th April. At Wilberfoss a long established colony was reduced to two or three pairs (the first two birds arriving on 29th April and the last leaving in early August) despite artificial nest holes being incorporated into the alterations of an old building in the village. Numbers built up to a maximum of 1,500 at Wheldrake Ings on 31st May and to at least 2,000 at Sherburn in Elmet on 18th June.

On 11th May a partial albino returned to Ampleforth and bred for a second year, its mate arriving on the 12th. At Skipwith Common numbers hawking for insects were lower than usual and the birds had a poor breeding season in the surrounding areas.

The last sighting of the year was of two birds at CHL on 4th September.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***Resident breeder**

Birds were seen in ones and twos throughout the year along the River Ouse, both north and south of York. One or two pairs were present at Clifton Ings and a juvenile was begging for food by the River Ouse (between York and Naburn) on 8th September. Others were seen along the LDV and Pocklington Canal, River Rye and River Foss. At Allerthorpe GP two birds were regularly seen, with other sightings at CHL, Heslington East, Monk Fryston, near Redcar House (Yearsley Moor) and SHL.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*
Resident breeder but not widespread

Single birds were present in suitable habitat across the recording area with a pair regularly observed at SHL. Two birds were seen at Redhouse Wood on 18th April, three at Calley Heath NR on 7th July and two juveniles at Allerthorpe Common on 28th July.

Regular sightings at Strensall Common peaked at seven birds during the MOD survey on 18th May.

Birds showed well throughout the year at Skipwith Common, and probably two pairs bred though young were not reported. Excessively wet conditions in the breeding season resulted in reduced ant prey. Above average sightings were reported from the New Plantation area where the drier ground conditions seemed to be more suitable for the birds.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
Resident breeder

This widespread species was regularly reported throughout the year across the recording area, mainly in ones and twos. Drumming was heard in various locations from February to the end of April. A minimum of three was present at both Beningbrough Hall and CHL with four at Askham Bog and five at Brayton Barff. During the MOD survey on 18th May five birds were seen at Strensall Common while on 4th June four adults were recorded at Yearsley Moor, with juveniles calling from a nest hole.

At Skipwith Common five birds were recorded on 3rd March, two of them drumming, and on 16th April young were heard calling from a high nest hole in a Silver Birch. The Common was not surveyed for breeding pairs this year but it was thought that fewer than usual were present.

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

Three records of this scarce species were reported in 2012. The first was seen at Strensall Common on 21st March on a birch stump by the pond about 250 yards SSE of the car park nearest to the caravan park (MN). At CHL a bird was drumming and calling on 15th April (DR), and on 15th June one was calling in Near Wood at Askham Bog (JLe & CC).

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*
Rare summer migrant

None recorded in 2012 following sightings in 2006 and 2008.

Magpie *Pica pica*
Resident breeder

Commonly seen throughout the year in the recording area. On 18th December a notable 26 birds were present near the River Foss at Huntington.

Another interesting report was of one observed eating a large pheasant chick at Hassacarr NR on 20th June.

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

Birds were reported throughout the year from suitable habitats. The main sites were Skipwith Common (reported on six occasions, max. four), Yearsley Moor (five, five), Wheldrake Ings (seven, four), Castle Howard (twelve, two), Bank Island (nine, eight) with additional reports from a further 20 locations.

At Skipwith Common it is likely that five pairs attempted to breed, with three pairs present in the central area on 8th April. Much caching of acorns was seen in the autumn.

There was a general influx of birds from the continent in the second winter period. At Bank Island eight birds in total, including a flock of five, were seen on 8th October which could well be a record count for this area. Single birds, presumably different, were seen on 13th and 19th October over a garden in Heslington.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*
Resident breeder

A mixed pre-roost gathering of 8,000 Rooks *Corvus frugilegus* and Jackdaws was counted at Seaton Ross on 26th January. The only other sizeable flocks were 75 plus birds at Ryton near the River Rye on 25th March and 100 birds at CHL on 28th July. As in previous years large and noisy flocks headed off in the winter months to roost at Clifton Ings.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*
Resident breeder

There were counts in double figures throughout the year across the recording area. In the first winter period the only count of over 100 birds was the above report of 8,000 Rooks and Jackdaws *Corvus monedula* at Seaton Ross on 26th January. In the summer a flock of 150 was at CHL on 28th July while 210 were counted at East Lilling on 12th November in the second winter period.

A long established (at least 15 years) rookery of c.30 nests at Calley Heath NR near Barmby Moor was completely deserted in 2012. There was no evidence that the colony had moved to a new site in the vicinity, and no birds appeared at the colony in the pre-breeding season. At Ryton there were two or three rookeries with at least 75 individuals present. At CHL there were ten or more apparently occupied nests on 20th April and three nests were seen at Ulleskelf on 8th May. Numerous small rookeries in the recording area went unreported.

Carriion Crow *Corvus corone***Resident breeder**

Of the limited counts submitted most involved fewer than 20 birds, but with 27 reported from Brandrith Wood (Bulmer) on 20th March and 35 or more by the River Derwent at Old Malton on 23rd September.

At Skipwith Common 20–30 birds roamed the area throughout the year and at least two pairs bred here. On 16th May 102 were counted on adjacent fields.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix***Rare winter visitor**

A single bird was seen flying west over fields to the south of East Cottingwith on 10th May (CG). Despite searching in the following days there were no further sightings and the (remote) possibility of a hybrid cannot be ruled out. This is the first record for the YOC area since at least 1979 (dates of earlier records are unknown).

Raven *Corvus corax***Rare visitor**

The first sighting, of a single bird, was at Strensall Forest (north of Strensall) on 13th January (P&SB). A second individual at Allerthorpe Common on 15th February was reported “cronking” while perched on a pylon (RB).

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

This is a species which is surely much under-recorded. Throughout the year low numbers of up to four were present in various locations, with birds heard singing between March and August. Larger numbers were at Yearsley Moor where ten birds were singing on 28th April and 12th May. Numbers here peaked on 4th June when 25 birds were seen of which 17 were singing. Other good counts came from Allerthorpe GP with six on 14th October and Allerthorpe Common with 12 on 28th October.

At Strensall Common a maximum of five birds was seen on 4th November. At Skipwith Common at least two pairs were seen in the first winter period. In the autumn there appeared to have been an influx of migrants with seven caught and ringed at Hollow Swang and in the Bomb Bay area.

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

Not recorded in 2012 after sightings in 2010 and 2011 though a possible was at Brayton Barff in April (per AW).

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

Small numbers were seen throughout the recording area in a variety of locations. Counts of 15 or more were as follows: 15 at Dunnington Common on 13th January; a minimum of 17, of which nine were singing, at Old Malton on 15th February; 55 at Brayton Barff on 31st March; 15 at Brecks Farm (Haxby) on 13th October; 18 at Allerthorpe GP on 14th October; 26 by the River Foss at Huntington on 17th November and 31 at Londesborough Lodge (Dunnington) on 2nd December.

At Skipwith Common 52 birds were caught and ringed in 2012 including 34 which had hatched during the year.

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

A common species widely reported throughout the year. The highest counts, of 15 and over, were as follows: 15 at Allerthorpe GP on 4th February, 18 at Brecks Farm (Haxby) on 13th October, 18 at Allerthorpe GP on 14th October, 25 at Londesborough Lodge (Dunnington) on 2nd December and 19 by the River Foss at Huntington on 18th December.

At Skipwith Common no nestlings were ringed this year but 26 adults were ringed including eight which had fledged in 2012.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater***Resident breeder**

In 2012 this species was widely reported, mainly in single figures. However, there were high numbers of c.20 at Wheldrake Wood on 22nd January, a minimum of 75 at Yearsley Moor on 28th January, ten at Skipwith Common on 3rd March, 12 at Brayton Barff on 31st March and 11 at Londesborough Lodge (Dunnington) on 2nd December.

During the breeding season birds were heard singing at Allerthorpe Common, CHL, LDV, Skipwith Common and Yearsley Moor.

Willow Tit *Poecile montana***Resident breeder**

There were reports of ones and twos throughout the year mainly in the LDV and Pocklington Canal area. Other records came from Allerthorpe GP/Common, Askham Bog, Clifton Ings, Griffon Forest (Flaxton), Foggathorpe, Outgang (Heslington), Redhouse Reservoir, SHL (a pair on 27th January) and Strensall Common.

During the breeding season eight males were singing at Askham Bog on 22nd March with three at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd April. Additionally a bird was calling in an old hedge towards the south end of the Outgang (Heslington) on 20th April and a family party was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 24th June (between four and nine pairs bred in the LDV overall). Of interest

two juveniles were trapped together at New Earswick on 3rd July strongly suggesting breeding in that area.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Resident breeder

One or two were reported in the recording area throughout the year at the following locations: Bank Island, Brayton Barff, CHL, Coneysthorpe, Gaterley, Langwith Lane (Heslington), Heslington East, Hovingham, Old Malton, Rabbit Warren Wood (Dunnington), Seaton Ross, SHL, Moorlands Wood (Skelton), Strensall Common, Terrington Woods and Whitwell Grange. At Askham Bog five birds were seen on 5th February, with two singing males there on 22nd March.

At least four birds were seen at Skirpenbeck on 1st May having frequented a feeder there earlier in the year. On 15th May five birds were reported from Yearsley Moor. A pair successfully bred in a Rowan tree at Skipwith Common.

At Redhouse Wood nine birds were recorded on 4th September, with three seen at Allerthorpe Common on 28th October and three at Allerthorpe GP on 16th December.

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*

Recent re-colonist in small numbers

The two main areas, with several sightings at each, were Skipwith and Strensall Commons.

At Skipwith Common the first report was of four birds in early January (JC per DT) which moved off site when temperatures fell below freezing. The first singing birds were heard on 21st February and two more were seen on the same day (CR) and again on 23rd, 26th, 28th and 29th February (SH). Reports continued up to 31st May (MW). It appears that at least six pairs were present during the breeding season but the very wet conditions from late March to the end of June probably limited breeding success. Young birds were not reported and the adults had left the site by the end of July.

At Strensall Common three territories were estimated during the summer (PeR). The first sighting of a singing bird was on 23rd March (NS), followed by a pair on 12th May (NS) and a single bird on 18th May during the MOD survey (PeR *et al.*). At Fox Covert/White Carr five birds were reported (two pairs, one single) on 18th March (PeR) and a single bird at the same location on 5th April (PeR).

On 31st March a single bird was reported at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common (P&SB). A possible bird was reported at SHL in February and March (SHBR).

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*

Resident breeder and winter visitor

Birds were reported in single figures in suitable habitat throughout the year. The first to be heard were two at Wheldrake Ings on 18th February. Reported flocks (of ten or more) were c.20 along the Pocklington Canal (Canal Head to Coates Bridge) on 28th January, 75 in fields between Deighton and Naburn on 19th April, 12 in Naburn Wood on 5th May, ten (five pairs) at Scoreby Grange on 28th June, 20 (including juveniles) at Mowthorpe Hill (Terrington) on 14th July and a minimum of 40 at Thornton on 10th November.

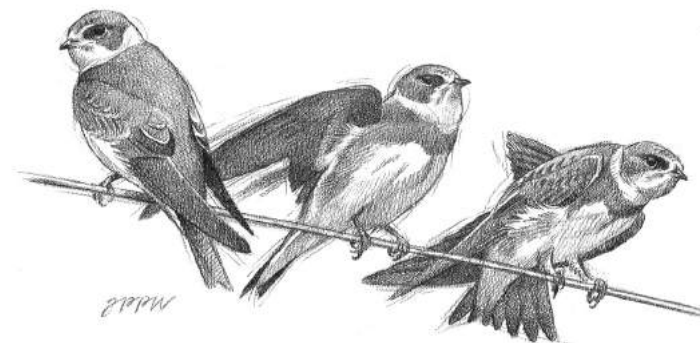
Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first bird recorded this year was at NDC on 11th March followed by four at Redhouse Reservoir on the 21st, at Overton (prospecting last year's nest holes) and Ruddins Ings (Poppleton) on the 27th, and three at Foggathorpe on the 28th.

At CHL 28 birds were seen on 15th April, with 25 exploring the banks of the River Ouse at Clifton Ings on 6th May and 40 at Wheldrake Ings on 19th May. On 12th June at Ryton bridge five birds were seen, one of which was in a nest hole in the river bank. A small breeding colony was also noted at the top of the exposed river bank of the River Ouse at Newhay on 7th July. At Clifton Ings it was not a good year as the birds arrived very late and breeding was thwarted by summer floods.

At Bank Island 30 were present on 13th September and the ten birds remaining on 16th September constituted the last record for the year.



Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first reported was on 28th March at Escrick, followed by two at Newburgh Priory Lake on the 30th and one at Heslington East on the 31st.

Numbers then built up throughout the area and counts of over 100 were as follows: at least 100 birds at CHL on 19th April mixed with House Martins *Delichon urbicum* and Sand Martins *Riparia riparia*, another mixed flock at Allerthorpe GP when 100 birds were seen moving north on 28th April, 100 hawking over a flooded field at Redhouse (Moor Monkton) on 29th April, 400 at Wheldrake Ings on 19th May, 100 at Heslington East on 1st August, 150 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th September, 100 at Bank Island on 13th and 16th September, and 150 at Scagglethorpe on 17th September. Good numbers were seen over Clifton Ings throughout the summer, but at Skipwith Common numbers were well below normal during the breeding season.

At NDC 100 birds were seen on 1st October which is where the last of the year were reported when c.12 birds were seen flying over on 11th October.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first reports, of single birds, were from Wheldrake Ings on 7th April and North Duffield on the 10th, followed by four at Newburgh Priory Lake mixed with 70 Swallows *Hirundo rustica* and a Swift *Apus apus* on the 20th, and two birds at CHL also on the 20th.

Breeding evidence came from CHL with at least five birds nesting in a cottage by the car park. Adults were feeding young in two/three nests in Whitwell village on 9th July with one nest still occupied there on 5th October. At SHL nine birds were seen intensively prospecting, with nests appearing in June, while a house in Cliffe still had at least two active nests on 21st August. These few records must significantly under-represent the true breeding status of this species.

Post-breeding flocks of over 50 birds were as follows: 50 minimum at Heslington on 16th August, 200 at Heslington East on 28th August, 50 at Bank Island on 13th September, 50 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th September, 150 at CHL on 16th September, 100 at Scagglethorpe on 17th September (with c.150 Swallows) and at least 50 at York University on 30th September. The last records were of c.50 in a mixed flock with Swallows at NDC on 4th October and three birds at Whitwell on 5th October.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*
Rare visitor

Not recorded in 2012 despite records in 2006, 2009 and 2010.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*
Resident breeder

Widely reported across the recording area in flocks of up to 20. On Strensall Common a flock of 26 was seen on 4th November.

At Skipwith Common 22 birds were ringed in 2012. With five of the 25 ringed in 2011 re-trapped this year in the same place it suggests that many birds are resident and also site faithful to a specific area.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
Scare breeder and passage migrant

Three records totalling four birds all recorded on passage. Two birds were seen at Brayton Barff (per AW) on 28th April. One was in an observer's garden at Heslington, York on 30th April (JL) when it was seen along with two Willow Warblers *Phylloscopus trochilus* following appalling weather of strong east winds and heavy rain. There are previous spring records in the same area, in 2006 and 2011. Lastly one was trapped and ringed at Bootham Stray on 30th July (IN).



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

The first probable migrant was on 10th March at Allerthorpe GP followed by a single bird at Heslington (York) on the 14th, 15th and 16th and a bird heard singing in Redhouse Wood on the 17th. Records then increased rapidly, mainly in single numbers and most of them singing. Significant numbers of ten or more birds were as follows: 11 singing males in a 4.5km stretch along the Pocklington Canal from Hagg Bridge to Overton on 25th March, ten at Strensall Common also on the 25th, 18 singing birds at the Outgang (Heslington) on 27th March, 14 at Allerthorpe Common on 7th April, 13 at Bishop Wood and eight at Wheldrake Ings on 14th April, 13 at Yearsley Moor on 28th April and 12th May, 23 at Yearsley Moor on 4th June and ten birds were seen along the River Ouse from York to Naburn on 8th September.

The last individual of the autumn was on 26th October at SHL. Birds at Holgate, York on 30th November and at Rawcliffe, York on 10th December were considered overwintering birds.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first migrant arrived on 25th March at North Duffield followed by single birds at Heslington East on 3rd April and at Monks Cross (Huntington) on the 6th. At Allerthorpe Common two birds were singing on the 7th, with up to three birds at Wheldrake lngs on the 7th, 8th and 9th. Numbers quickly increased throughout the recording area with 16 singing at Wheldrake lngs on 18th April and 12 at Skipwith Common on the 23rd. At Yearsley Moor 14 birds were reported on 12th May and 4th June, and 47 birds were caught and ringed at Skipwith Common from 16th April to 5th September.

At the end of the summer single birds were near Warthill on 9th September and Redhouse (Moor Monkton) on 18th September.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*
Migrant breeder with some birds overwintering

Overwintering birds were reported on 29th January at Fulford, York and on 6th February at Poppleton. The first probable migrants were reported on 25th March at Brecks Farm, Haxby and at Heslington, York followed by single birds at Redhouse (Moor Monkton) and Fulford lngs on the 27th, and at Norton Oxbow and Sheriff Hutton on the 29th. The species then became widespread across the recording area with the largest number reported at Yearsley Moor where 12 birds were seen on 4th June of which nine were singing. However, at Skipwith Common numbers were considered well below average.

The last summer visitors of the year were seen at Bank Island on 22nd and 23rd September and at Hassacarr NR, feeding on insects among ivy, on 13th October.

A single male seen in a Haxby garden on 5th December was presumably overwintering.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*
Migrant breeder

A single bird singing at Yearsley Moor on 28th April was the first reported arrival before three were seen at Stamford Bridge on the 30th. Single birds were reported from Wheldrake lngs on 4th May and at Brayton Barff, Redhouse Wood and The Arboretum (Castle Howard) on 5th May. Individuals were then recorded at these and ten other locations until the end of July with many of them in song. The last recorded sighting was at CHL on 2nd August.

Scarce & rare birds in 2012



Sacred Ibis, surprise visitors to the Hessay area near York in June. Photo: Mark Coates

One of several Short-eared Owls in the York area in the first winter period, this individual was photographed at Poppleton in February.

Photo: Antony Ward



Scarce and rare birds in 2012



White-fronted Goose (with Greylag) at Castle Howard in February. *Photo: Chris Gomersall*



Red-crested Pochard at Wheldrake Ings in March. *Photo: Chris Gomersall*



Egyptian Geese at East Cottingwith in May. *Photo: Chris Gomersall*



Two (of three) Black-necked Grebes at NDC in May. *Photo: Mike Williams*



Female Scaup at NDC in November. *Photo: Tim Jones*



Garganey Hide (roof just visible) at NDC in late November. *Photo: Mike Williams*

Scarce & rare birds in 2012



Jack Snipe in wintry weather at Heslington East in February. *Photo: Chris Gomersall*



Knot at Heslington East in February. *Photo: Chris Gomersall*



Turnstone at Heslington East in May. *Photo: Chris Gomersall*



Black Tern at Thorganby in April. *Photo: Mark Coates*



Twite at Heslington East in April. *Photo: Chris Gomersall*



Nightjar at Skipwith Common in early June. *Photo: Chris Gomersall*

Scarce & rare birds in 2012



Whinchat at Redhouse in September.

Photo: Paul Reed

Some of the flock of over 300 Waxwings in central York in November. Photo: Tim Jones



Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Migrant breeder

The first migrants were single birds at Clifton Backies NR on 26th April, Allerthorpe GP on the 28th and Wheldrake Ings by the Water Treatment Works on the 30th. Ones and twos were then seen during the breeding season but with six singing males along Hagg Lane and Green Lane at East Cottingwith on 10th June. The last birds recorded were two at Allerthorpe GP on 8th July and a single bird at SHL on 12th July.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Migrant breeder

The first records were of single birds at Heslington East on 19th, 20th and 27th April, and at Poppleton on the 26th. A few were seen at Thornton and Scagglethorpe on the 30th. Thereafter recorded across the YOC area where it is an abundant breeder. The last birds of the year were two at Wheldrake Ings on 6th September and a single by the River Ouse (York to Naburn) on 8th September.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Scarce migrant breeder

Separate sightings of five birds at four different locations in the LDV were reported in 2012 in what was a poor year for this species in the York area, possibly due to frequent flooding. The first was heard reeling at Wheldrake Ings on 18th April followed by a bird at Storwood on 3rd May. A third sighting came from North Duffield village where two were reeling all summer while a fifth bird was reported singing near Church Bridge (Melbourne) on 20th July.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first reports came from Wheldrake Ings on 30th March, and 18th and 19th April. On 23rd April a singing bird was heard at NDC with another at Bubwith on the 25th. Birds were then regularly reported throughout the summer in the LDV, at Allerthorpe GP and CHL. On 19th May ten birds were singing at Wheldrake Ings and on 8th July 12 birds were recorded along the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne with ten of them in song. However, no birds were seen or heard at Skipwith Common in 2012.

The last sighting was at Wheldrake Ings on 6th September.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first record was of at least five birds seen by the Pocklington Canal on 6th May. On 7th May single birds were present at East Cottingwith and Wheldrake Ings followed by three birds at Allerthorpe GP on the 8th and seven birds singing at CHL on 4th June. Good numbers of birds were seen

at Allerthorpe GP throughout the summer, the maximum being ten birds on 26th August; breeding was confirmed when five nests were located at this site. At Skipwith Common only six birds were caught and ringed at Hollow Swang in 2012 compared with 23 in 2011. As the trapping efforts were similar in both years this suggests that breeding in the reedbed was below average in 2012.

The last reports were of a single bird at CHL on 4th September, three at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th and another at Allerthorpe GP on the 8th.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Occasional winter visitor though more regular in recent years

In the first half of the year records were limited to three briefly at Bubwith bridge on 8th January (missed by all Bird Race teams) and seven at Selby on 3rd April.

However, in the autumn, a single at Bishopthorpe on 3rd November was the first of a sizeable influx particularly in the centre of York. Fourteen were reported at Heslington East on the 4th with ten at Ampleforth and five at York University on the 6th. By the 7th small flocks were being seen at locations outside York but with 25 along Beckwith Close in York.

From 8th November central York became the focus of reports particularly in the area from Nunnery Lane through St George's Field car park and across the river to Fishergate. On the 9th there were two reports of a flock of around 130 birds in this area, increasing to 185 on the 10th, 285 on the 11th, 300 on the 13th and the highest count of 310 on the 14th. A flock of 200 was also reported in the Woodthorpe area on the 10th. From the 15th numbers declined rapidly with, for a brief period, highest numbers coming from the Clifton Moor area with 100 there on the 17th.

Small flocks were then widespread in and around York through the rest of November and December with flocks of up to 50 birds in Acomb (York), Askham Bog, Askham Bryan, Bank Island, Beningbrough Hall, Bishopthorpe, Cliffe, East Cottingwith, Escrick, Gilling, Haxby, Heslington East, Linton-on-Ouse, Long Marston, Malton, North Duffield, Scagglethorpe, Sherburn In Elmet, Strensall, Wheldrake Wood and Wilberfoss.

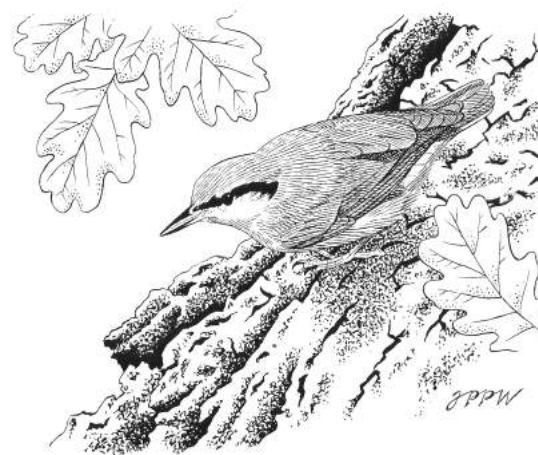
In modern times the highest count prior to 2012 appears to have been a flock of around 250 recorded at Copmanthorpe in 1991, so the 310 (minimum) reported above could be the highest count ever recorded in the York area.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Local resident breeder

Perhaps more widespread than thought and perhaps expanding its range in the area. For example, one was recorded at Bank Island on 30th March and a male was trapped and ringed in the New Earswick area on 30th November. Other reports in 2012, of up to six birds, came from Askham Bog, Askham Bryan, Brayton Barff, Buttercrambe Wood, Castle Howard, Fulford Ings,

Gaterley, Gilling (Park and village), Hovingham, Kirkby Wharfe, Londesborough Lodge (Dunnington), Moor Monkton, Old Malton Priory, Skipwith Common, Skirpenbeck, Thurtle Woods (Terrington), Wass Woods and Yearsley Moor.



Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Resident breeder

The only count in double figures was 12 at Brayton Barff on 31st March. Elsewhere, counts in single figures were noted at Allerthorpe Common, Allerthorpe GP, Askham Bog, Askham Bryan, Beningbrough Hall, Bishopthorpe, Buttercrambe Wood, Castle Howard, Gaterley, Hassacarr NR, Haxby, Hollicars, Howsham, Londesborough Lodge (Dunnington), Monk Fryston, Old Malton Priory, Osbaldwick, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), Poppleton, Rawcliffe Ings, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge, Strensall Common, Thurtle Woods (Terrington), Towthorpe, Wheldrake Wood and Whitwell Grange.

Breeding status is very under-reported, confirmed in 2012 only at SHL and Strensall Common.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident breeder

Widespread and common breeder across the region. No notable counts were reported this year.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Resident breeder and winter visitor

While flocks in the 100s were widely reported the only really notable flock, of approximately 2,000 birds, was of birds dropping into gardens in Heslington, to roost, on 20th February.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Very scarce passage migrant

Not recorded in 2012 after sightings in 2005, 2006 and 2009.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

Common throughout the region with a significant increase during the winter months. The only count over 50 was one of 81 by the River Foss at Huntington on 17th November.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Widespread throughout the region in both winter periods. In spring none was noted after 8th May and the first of the autumn were two at SHL on 9th October.

Counts of 100 or more were as follows:

300 at Riccall on 5th March

1,500 in the LDV on the 16th

100 at Allerthorpe Common on 7th April

130 at Scagglethorpe and 100 at Dunnington on the 19th

110 at Storwood on the 21st

1,000 west over Allerthorpe Common in four hours on 25th October

300 roosting at Allerthorpe GP on the 26th

325 north over Castle Howard and 162 west over Bank Island on 27th October

300 at Allerthorpe Common on the 28th, coming in to roost

200 in small flocks west over Heslington (York) on 7th November

150 at Allerthorpe GP on 24th November.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Resident breeder but declining in some areas; winter visitor and passage migrant

Seen regularly across most of the region. The highest counts were five at Brayton Barff on 31st March and five (four singing) at Yearsley Moor on 4th June. At Strensall village there was only one record all year and the usual one or two singing birds were absent.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Widespread across the region in both winter periods. The last in spring was at Wheldrake on 8th April and the first of autumn was one west over Castle Howard on 7th October.

Records of 100 birds or more were as follows:

200 flying southeast over Allerthorpe GP on 14th October

200 at Sheriff Hutton and "hundreds" southwest over Ampleforth on the 22nd

500 at Allerthorpe Common and "hundreds" at Redhouse Wood on the 23rd

192 west over Bank Island on 27th October and 130 there on 3rd November

250 at Allerthorpe GP on 4th November

3,000 with Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris* at Redhouse Wood on the 4th

250 at Storwood on the 14th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Resident breeder and winter visitor and passage migrant

Recorded at a variety of locations throughout the region. The only counts of more than five birds were seven at Old Malton on 15th February and ten at Melbourne on 18th August.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Migrant breeder and passage visitor

The first record was of three birds at Brayton Barff on 15th May followed by one at Scagglethorpe on 21st May; the only definite breeding records were at Crockey Hill (Pool Bridge Farm) and at Brayton Barff (up to four pairs); the final autumn birds were two at Skipwith Common on 21st September, with previously six there on 19th August. Also recorded at Askham Bog, Bank Island, CHL, Escrick, Flaxton, Nun Monkton, Redhouse (Moor Monkton), Silburn Lock (Pocklington Canal) and Strensall Common

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Resident breeder

Common and widespread throughout the recording area but probably under-recorded, particularly in the breeding season.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Very rare visitor

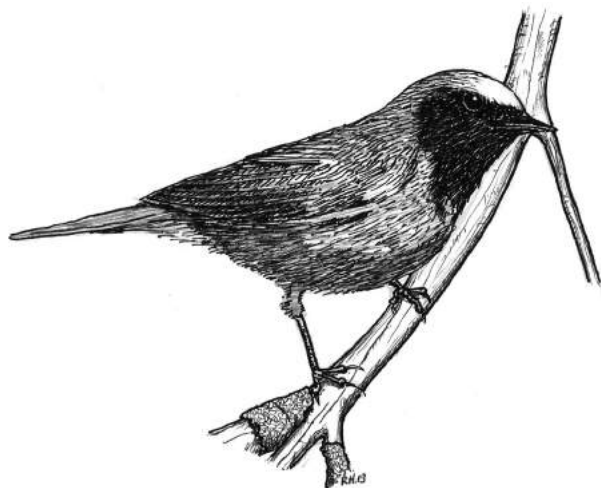
An adult male was at SHL on 28th March; this is the first record for the YOC recording area since 2008 (SHBR).

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first of the year was a singing male at Skipwith Common on 28th April and the presence of a freshly fledged female trapped on 12th July

suggests that breeding occurred here. One was singing at Brayton Barff on 5th and 6th May, a male was trapped and ringed at New Earswick on 9th May and two were singing at Castle Howard on 20th May with one there on 10th June. A male was singing at Wass Woods on 26th May and a male displayed to a female at Welburn Woods on 14th June. The only other records comprised an unexpected male on passage, near Hagg Bridge from 7–9th August, discovered during a YOC evening meeting, and another male trapped at New Earswick on 28th August.



Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Former migrant breeder and passage migrant

The only records involved passage migrants with a male at Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 10th May and, in the autumn, at least two at NDC on 30th August and one at Redhouse (Moor Monkton) on 9th September.

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Casual breeder and passage visitor; sometimes over-winters

After just a single record, at Heslington East, in 2011 the return of birds to Strensall and Skipwith Commons in 2012 was very welcome. A pair with a juvenile were present at Strensall Common on 12th October with five (three in one location, two in another) on the 20th and four reported on 17th November. At Skipwith Common a pair was present on 14th October with three there on the 31st and subsequently a first-winter male was caught and ringed on 2nd November.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor and passage migrant

The first of the year was at NDC on 19th March. A scattering of further records during April and May peaked with 12 at Heslington East on 6th May. Other records in this period came from Acklam, Cornfield NR, Deighton, East Cottingwith, Ellerton, Naburn and Naburn Wood, and Towthorpe.

Autumn records were limited to singles at Heslington East on 10th August and 8th September, and two at NDC on 11th September.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Resident breeder throughout the area

Common and widespread throughout the recording area but relatively few records were received.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Resident breeder

Continuing the pattern of reduced counts noted in 2011, this species occurred at a variety of locations but only two counts involved over 50 birds. There were about 60 at the Pocklington Canal (including Sandhill and Coates Locks) on 3rd September and 68 by the River Foss at Huntington on 17th November. Also recorded at Appleton Roebuck, Bishopthorpe, Foggathorpe, Gaterley, Haxby, Kexby, Melbourne (Pocklington Canal), Ryton bridge (over River Rye), Selby, Storwood, Upper Poppleton and Wheldrake but probably under-recorded.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Resident breeder

The only counts of 50 or more were 118 at Cornfield NR on 18th January with 130 there on 2nd February and 141 on the 7th (when the observer felt there could be as many as 300 in the general area) and 100 at Skipwith Common on 23rd April.

Only five pairs bred at Skipwith Common continuing the pattern of decline which is believed to be caused by a reduction in the area of gorse and the unsuitable nature of some of the remaining bushes. Eight pairs were noted breeding in and around a garden in East Cottingwith and one pair bred in a garden in Heslington.

Also recorded from Acklam, Allerthorpe Common, Allerthorpe GP, Bank Island, Benningbrough Hall, Bielby, Bishopthorpe, CHL, Clifton Ings, Copmanthorpe, Dunnington, Ellerton, Gaterley, Hagg Wood (Dunnington), Hassacarr NR, Haxby, Heslington, Kirby Misperton, Londesborough Lodge (Dunnington), Melbourne, Naburn, NDC, Rawcliffe Meadows (York), Redhouse (Moor Monkton), Seaton Ross, Sheriff Hutton, SHL, Stamford Bridge, Strensall, Upper Helmsley Common, Upper Poppleton, Westow and Wheldrake.

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

The first of spring was one at Heslington East on 8th April and spring counts in the recording area peaked at a modest seven, in fields between Deighton and Naburn on the 19th. Further April records came from Ellerton, NDC and Thornton before more widespread sightings in May and June.

A male 'Channel' Wagtail (*Motacilla flava flava* x *Motacilla flava flavissima*) was seen along Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 10th May (AW, RS).

Evidence suggestive of breeding was seen at Field House Farm (Pocklington Canal), Scoreby and West Lilling. The final sighting was of a few with Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis* at North Duffield on 16th September.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea***Resident breeder and winter visitor**

The only report of breeding came from Hassacarr NR. Elsewhere one or two birds were reported from Acaster Malbis, Allerthorpe GP, Bank Island, Beningbrough Hall, Buttercrambe, Heslington, Heslington East, Howsham, Millennium Bridge (York), Newburgh Priory, Pocklington Canal (at Melbourne and Silburn Lock), Redhouse Reservoir and Wood, SHL, St Nicholas Fields (York), Wass Woods, Welburn STW, Wheldrake Ings and central York (River Ouse).

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba***Resident breeder**

Records involving 20 or more birds were 32 at Wheldrake Ings on 10th January, 50 at Heslington East on the 15th, 50 at Riccall Bridge Pump Station on 29th February and 32 at Pocklington STW on 28th October.

The winter roost in the St Sampson's Square/Parliament Street area of central York involved about 350 birds by mid-January which had reduced to 120 by 23rd February. An estimated 100 were roosting there on 17th November. A similar roost of around 300 birds was also reported from York railway station.

There were four records this year of White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba* with a male at Redhouse (Moor Monkton) on 22nd March, five at Ellerton on the 19th, one at Naburn on 22nd April and one at Heslington East on 6th May.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis***Migrant breeder though numbers have recently declined**

The first of the year was one singing at Strensall Common on 13th April while the MOD survey there on 18th May gave an estimate of five territories. At Skipwith Common there were 4–5 pairs present on 28th April and there were also five singing males at Yearsley Moor on 26th May.

In the autumn one flew over NDC on 11th September, a single was at Walmgate Stray, York on 22nd September and two very late birds were reported from Allerthorpe Common on 28th October.

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

There were several counts of 20 birds or more at Heslington East with 40 on 21st January, 30 on 17th March and 3rd April, and 20+ on 8th September and 4th November. At Wheldrake Ings 20 were seen going to roost on 12th February.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus***Scarce, mainly winter visitor**

One at Heslington East on 2nd, 3rd and 8th April (JAB *et al.*) was considered to be of the Scandinavian race *littoralis*. In the autumn one flew southeast over Heslington East on 28th October (TJ).

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

One was trapped and ringed at Seavy Carr, Thornton on 5th March (CR) and a probable was seen briefly at Heslington East on 2nd April (JAB).

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 at Heslington East on 5th January, 60 at Skipwith Common on the 8th, 35 at Allerthorpe GP on 4th February, 26 at Naburn Wood on 5th May and 43 by the River Foss at Huntington on 17th November.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla***Winter visitor and passage migrant**

In the first winter period the last sighting was of three at Castle Howard on 20th March while the first of autumn was one at Allerthorpe GP on 14th October, the first of a good run of records in this period at this site. Other records, mostly of one or two birds, came from Bishopthorpe, Fulford Ings, Heslington East, Londesborough Lodge (Dunnington) and North Duffield where a large flock of up to 50 was present in December.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris***Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor**

The only records in double figures were 13 at Hagg Wood (Dunnington) on 13th January, 20 at Rawcliffe Meadows on the 29th, 12 at Brecks Farm (Haxby) on 25th March, 100 at Crockey Hill on 26th August, 20 at Hutton Grange (Angram) on 17th October, 100 at Seavy Carr (Thornton) on the 10th and 40 by the River Foss at Huntington on 17th November.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Higher counts (30 or more) were 60 at Cliffe on 20th January, 60 at Heslington East on 10th August, 30 at Thornton on the 25th, 40 at Heslington East on 21st September, 80 at NDC on 1st October and 34 by the River Foss at Huntington on 17th November.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Resident breeder in small numbers, passage and winter visitor

Records of more than 30 birds were 55 at Allerthorpe GP on 4th January, 60 at Askham Bog on the 25th, 100 at Stamford Bridge on the 26th, 90 at Yearsley Moor on the 28th and 100 at Bielby on the 30th.

In the autumn there were 50 at Stamford Bridge on 8th October and 45 at Allerthorpe GP on 24th November. Small numbers were recorded very widely across the recording area in suitable habitat.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Records of 30 or more birds were 40 at Heslington East on 5th January, 30 at Ellerton on the 8th, 70 at Hagg Wood (Dunnington) on the 13th, 41 at Dunnington Common on the 16th and 30 at Cornfield NR on the 18th. At Heslington East 30 were recorded on 15th February, with 70 there on 17th March, 200 (approximately) on 10th May and 30 on 28th May. No large flocks were reported in the second half of the year.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Very scarce winter visitor

There were more records than usual for this species. The year opened with one at East Cottingwith on 1st January (DR), followed by a calling bird north over Strensall Common on 23rd March (CG) and one at Heslington East from 1st to 19th April (TJ, JAB, CG *et al.*).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

The only records of more than 30 birds were 90 at Yearsley Moor on 28th January, 100 at Allerthorpe Common on 25th October and 40 by Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 14th November. Other records, in single or low double figures, also came from Allerthorpe GP, Askham Bog, Bank Island, CHL, Fulford Golf Course, Hassacarr NR, Haxby, Heslington (York), Holgate (York), NDC, Redhouse Wood, Seaton Ross, SHL, Skipwith Common, St Nicholas Fields (York), Strensall Common, Thorganby Ings and Wheldrake Ings.

Mealy (Common) Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Scarce winter visitor

In contrast to the large numbers in 2011, there was just a handful of records in 2012. Three gave prolonged views at a feeder in Heslington (York) on 1st January (JL) and one was at Warthill Common on 28th January (TJ). At least two were at Langwith Lakes, Heslington (York) on 29th November (CG).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Casual breeder and passage migrant

A good number of records in 2012 including ten at Yearsley Moor on 28th January, 20 at Wheldrake Wood on 11th April, 14 at Yearsley Moor on 26th May, 26 there on 4th June and 10 at East Cottingwith on 16th July. The highest counts came from Allerthorpe Common with at least 100 on 20th February, 40 on 5th April and 10 on 23rd and 25th October. Elsewhere single figures were reported from Allerthorpe GP, Askham Bog, Buttercrambe, Calley Heath NR, Castle Howard, Fryton Moor, Gilling Park, Heslington East, Mowthorpe Wood, Sherburn in Elmet, SHL, Skipwith Common, Stittenham Wood, Strensall Common and Wass.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Birds were noted in single figures at a variety of locations across the region. Counts of ten or more were 12 near Clifton Backies NR on 16th January, ten at St Nicholas Fields, York on 8th February, 12 at Clifton Backies NR again on the 15th and ten at Allerthorpe GP on 28th April.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare winter visitor

Not recorded 2012; last record 2008.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Very scarce winter visitor

Not recorded 2012; last record 2011.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

During the first half of the year records of 20 birds or more were 30 at Skipwith Common on 8th January, 70 at Thornton on the 13th, 30 at Hovingham on the 23rd, 26 at Dunnington on the 31st, 53 at Skipwith Common on 1st February, 50 at Copmanthorpe on the 3rd, 47 at Cornfield NR on the 7th, 21 by the River Derwent between Elvington and Kexby on the 23rd, 50 at Allerthorpe Common on the 28th and 50 at Acklam on 15th April.

On 18th May, during the annual MOD survey, two territories were estimated at Strensall Common, a further decrease in numbers at this site. Elsewhere there were numerous sightings of birds in song suggesting this species is still a reasonably common local breeder.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Resident breeder and passage visitor

The only records of 20 or more birds were 58 at Rawcliffe Meadows on 25th January and 60 roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 12th February. An estimated four breeding territories were noted during the MOD survey at Strensall Common on 18th May. As with the previous species there were numerous records of birds in song in the breeding season, the majority as expected from the LDV or adjacent to the River Ouse and also around CHL.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Resident breeder

Numbers at Dunnington Common peaked at an impressive 155 on 31st January. Elsewhere, records of 20 or more were 24 by the Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 26th January, 35 at Clifton Ings on 7th February and 30 at Seaton Ross on the 26th.

In the breeding season birds were recorded singing at Allerthorpe Common, East Cottingwith (nine singing males recorded along Hagg Lane on 10th June), Ellerton, Mowthorpe Hill, Naburn and the Pocklington Canal by Melbourne.

In the second winter period the only larger count was of 20 at Scagglethorpe on 10th December. Other winter records came from Cornfield NR, East Cottingwith, Ellerton Ings, Hassacarr NR, Huby, Menthorpe, Mowthorpe Hill, Naburn, Poppleton, Scagglethorpe, Seaton Ross, Sheriff Hutton, Stamford Bridge, Terrington and Upper Helmsley Common.

Appendix A: Introductions/Escapes

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Allerthorpe GP and the LDV (Wheldrake Ings and NDC in particular) were the sources of the large majority of reports. At Allerthorpe GP one bird was present from January to July, and again in November. Another was present at Wheldrake Ings in January, May, June, September and October.

Breeding or potential breeding was reported from two sites. One pair was seen at York University Lake on several dates and sightings of juveniles suggests two broods with two fledging from both the first and second broods though later sightings suggests not all of these ultimately survived. At NDC a pair with five cygnets was seen on 13th July but with no further records from this site.

Other records (single birds) came from East Cottingwith Ings, Everingham, Pocklington Canal (by Thornton) and West Cottingwith Ings.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Up to 70 feral birds were recorded intermittently from either Heslington East or York University Lake, but there were gaps at times of up to two months between reports. However, breeding was confirmed at Heslington East with two to three pairs and at York University with ten pairs.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

One was seen on four dates from late January to mid-March either at NDC or Wheldrake Ings.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Seven birds, presumably the regular feral birds, were reported at York University Lake in May while two birds were recorded on five dates in April and May at Wheldrake Ings. Eventually seven pairs fledged three young at the university while in August and September a flock of 20 or more individuals was reported at both Heslington East and the main university lake.

Swan Goose (Chinese Goose) *Anser cygnoides*

Two were recorded at Allerthorpe GP in February, March, April and November.

Black-bellied Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

A group of five was reported from Heslington East on 8th May.

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Two together were present at Holly House Farm ponds, Hessay on 20th and 21st June and these birds apparently remained in the area for around two weeks. One of the two had a ring on its left leg.

Prior to these sightings a single bird had been recorded at Orgreave Lagoons, Sheffield and at Blacktoft Sands in April. Subsequently two were seen in the Borders (Scotland) on 28th June, then in Northumberland on 1st and 2nd July (flying south) and in county Durham also on the 2nd which may have been the same birds. There were no further records of two together anywhere in the country.

Appendix B: Hybrids

Canada x Greylag Goose

One was reported from Allerthorpe GP on 19th and 25th February, 22nd April and 29th July with four together on 24th November. Several hybrid young were also present through the summer at Heslington East.

Barnacle x Snow Goose

One present throughout the year with Barnacle Geese *Branta leucopsis* at Heslington East.

Herring x Glaucous Gull (Viking Gull)

This presumed hybrid was present with other gulls at Poppleton on 20th January.

Appendix C: Unproven records

The following records, all of which require descriptions to be submitted for validation by the appropriate authority (YOC Recorders, YNU Rarities Committee, British Birds Rarities Committee), were received for the 2012 report. In each case either no description was forthcoming or the description was insufficiently detailed to confirm identification.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Bank Island 6th June

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Bank Island 25th May

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* Storwood 6th May, East Cottingwith 24th June

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd May

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* at Bank Island on 17th August

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua* north of Selby on 29th September

Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucooides kumlieni* at Wheldrake Ings roost on 29th February

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* southwest of Malton on 2nd June

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus* Bank Island on 23rd October

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* Heslington East on 6th May

Earliest and latest dates for summer visitors/passage migrants

Species	Arrival date/ first reported	Last Reported
Garganey	18th March	8th September
Quail	25th May	11th August
Osprey	10th March	22nd September
Hobby	16th April	4th October
Oystercatcher	8th January	2nd August
Little Ringed Plover	10th March	20th August
Ringed Plover	19th February	11th September
Whimbrel	22nd April	2nd August
Common Sandpiper	20th April	14th September
Greenshank	10th April	8th September
Wood Sandpiper	27th May	17th August
Common Tern	23rd April	18th August
Turtle Dove	18th May	21st July
Cuckoo	6th April	21st August
Nightjar	22nd May	14th July
Swift	20th April	4th September
Sand Martin	11th March	16th September
Barn Swallow	28th March	11th October
House Martin	7th April	5th October
Wood Warbler	28th April	30th July
Chiffchaff †	10th March	26th October
Willow Warbler	25th March	18th September
Blackcap *	25th March	13th October
Garden Warbler	28th April	2nd August
Lesser Whitethroat	26th April	12th July
Common Whitethroat	19th April	8th September
Grasshopper Warbler	18th April	20th July
Sedge Warbler	30th March	6th September
Reed Warbler	6th May	8th September
Spotted Flycatcher	15th May	21st September
Common Redstart	28th April	28th August
Whinchat	10th May	9th September
Wheatear	19th March	11th September
Yellow Wagtail	8th April	16th September
Tree Pipit	13th April	28th October

See overleaf for notes to both tables

Earliest and latest dates for winter visitors/passage migrants

Species	Last reported in Spring	First reported in Autumn
Bewick's Swan	not recorded	13th December
Whooper Swan	8th April	8th October
Pink-footed Goose	26th March	8th September
Eurasian Wigeon [†]	28th April	8th July
Eurasian Teal	28th April	24th June
Common Goldeneye	4th May	21st October
Goosander	5th May	4th August
Golden Plover	19th April	28th July
Dunlin	31st May	31st July
Ruff**	4th May	28th July
Jack Snipe	10th March	21st September
Green Sandpiper ^{††}	7th April	24th June
Fieldfare	8th May	9th October
Redwing	8th April	7th October
Brambling	20th March	14th October

Notes (to both tables)

[†] Overwintering birds seen on 30th November and 10th December.

^{*} Overwintering birds seen on 29th January and 6th February.

[‡] Excluding small number of potential breeders (see RBBP report).

^{**} A bird at Wheldrake Ings on 9th June is difficult to assess in this context.

^{††} A bird over Pocklington on 26th May is also difficult to assess.



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Rare Breeding Birds of the Lower Derwent Valley 2012

Compiled by Craig Ralston

Category A – Rare Species

Breeding data for each species (where available) is shown in the table opposite. Comments on some (mostly) other species are given below.

Little Egret

Up to three birds were present in the valley from late March and were present within both the heronry and cormorant colony. Two birds were seen displaying on several occasions and were seen flying into the heronry, but there was no other evidence of breeding. A species where numbers and length of stay during the year continue to increase.

Common Crane

There were more records than ever this year:

- 05/4 single bird arrived on site
- 14/4 pair arrived and joined single
- 16/4 a further eight birds arrived making 11 in total. Eight remained together with two pairs displaying well, and the group of three remained together with much display between them
- 22/4 twelve birds present with 2–3 pairs displaying and showing promising signs, including some attempts at nest and platform building
- 27/4 sixteen birds present when a further, more mobile group of four joined the flock for three days
- 29/4 two pairs displaying well and copulation by both pairs seen – 3rd pair in separate area – still eight birds present.

Other birds departed early in May and left just three pairs. Various flooding events kept moving them round the area and may have put them off. One pair that had been nest building at one site appeared to abandon it and move to nearby arable land where they remained until 27th June.

The other two pairs remained until 15th and 21st May respectively before moving off.

The UK crane working group and RBBP monitor this species and using definitions developed for Cranes, this would equate to three probable non-breeding pairs and up to ten other non-breeding birds present in the area.

Breeding success of Category A species in the LDV

Species	Max no. adults	No. of young	No. of pairs			
			Poss.	Prob.	Proven	Total
Eurasian Wigeon	20	0	6	0	0	0–6
Pintail	No evidence of breeding during the year					
Garganey	13	24	0	1	4	4–5
Shoveler*	242	170+	29	50	31	31–110
Black-necked Grebe	7	0	2	1	0	0–3
Little Egret	3	0	1	0	0	0–1
Marsh Harrier	2	0	1	0	0	0–1
Water Rail	7	0	0	7	0	0–7
Spotted Crane†	8	0	6	2	0	0–8
Black-tailed Godwit	?	0	0	1	0	0–1

* A much more productive year after a very poor 2011. A record number of 26 young were caught and ringed.

† Survey work undertaken as part of RSPB survey – submitted to RSPB with sound recordings taken. Maxima were three singing males at Bank Island, four at Wheldrake lngs and a single at North Duffield Carrs.

Marsh Harrier

Continues to increase in number and frequency year on year; 2012 was marked by the presence of several males during the early spring (always unusual here and possibly a factor in limiting breeding).

A single pair lingered at North Duffield Carrs in spring and was seen displaying and carrying nesting/platform material. However, flooding meant there were no further signs of breeding. Subsequently a pair, quite possibly the same, appeared in early July with three recently fledged juveniles at the same site, and it is possible they bred nearby on arable land or elsewhere.

The autumn was marked by above average numbers and the first communal roost ever seen in the valley with up to 15 birds (mainly juveniles) during September and early October (see classified list).

Once again the valley looks on the verge of being colonised.

Terminology (summary)

Possible – bird(s) present in breeding season in suitable habitat or singing male(s) present or heard in breeding season.

Probable – pair(s) in suitable habitat, birds holding territory, courtship display, nest building, agitated behaviour, visiting probable nest site.

Proven (confirmed) – nest with eggs, nest with young seen or heard, recently fledged young, recently used nest or eggshells, distraction display, adults carrying food or faecal sac.

For full details see: <http://www.rbbp.org.uk/downloads/rbbp-recording-standards.pdf>

Corncrake

There were no confirmed records this year and water levels were largely unsuitable.

Avocet

Continues to increase in the frequency of sightings and the length of time birds linger in the valley each year. Up to two pairs showed signs of display and holding territory but no further evidence of breeding emerged. It does appear likely that the valley will be colonised at some point.

Little Ringed Plover

A single pair attempted breeding at Wheldrake Ings during the first half of April but were subsequently flooded out. No further evidence of breeding.

Ruff

Up to 19 males and 7 females were present at leks during late March, April and into early May. Three or four males remained thereafter until early June, returning in early July briefly before moving off.

Black-tailed Godwit

A single pair was present through April at Wheldrake Ings and was thought to be incubating by mid-month but subsequent summer flooding late in the month is thought to have washed the nest out.

Following extensive flooding in mid-May, 14 nominate-looking birds arrived and remained for up to three weeks with as many as three pairs showing signs of display, but no further evidence of breeding.

Category B – Less Scarce Species

Gadwall

Excellent productivity later in the year with 200+ ducklings counted during late July/early August, with 26 ringed.

Possible: 11 Probable: 28 Proven: 66 Total: 66–105 pairs

Common Pochard

Eight drakes and five ducks remained into the breeding season after extensive flooding. A single female was found on a nest containing seven eggs on 11th June but this was subsequently predated.

Possible: 1 Probable: 3 Proven: 1 Total: 1–5 pairs

Common Quail

Breeding of Common Quail

Breeding Definition	Singing males in LDV	On adjacent arable
Possible	4	3
Probable	-	-
Proven	-	-
Total	0–4	0–3

Hobby

Possible: 4 Probable: 0 Proven: 1 Total: 1–5 pairs

Short-eared Owl

Two pairs (at Wheldrake Ings and North Duffield Carrs) remained after the extraordinary winter influx but both failed at the egg stage due to flooding.

Possible: 0 Probable: 0 Proven: 2 Total: 2 pairs

Long-eared Owl

Single birds were present during the breeding season near East Cottingwith with a single hunger-calling young heard in June.

Possible: 1 Probable: 0 Proven: 1 Total: 1–2 pairs

Woodlark

Possible: 4 Probable: 0 Proven: 3 Total: 3–7 pairs

Willow Tit

Possible: 5 Probable: 0 Proven: 4 Total: 4–9 pairs

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* **First records for the YOC area**

1st-winter at Wheldrake Ings 14th–16th January 2012

Tim Jones

The bird was initially picked out facing away from where I was viewing next to Tower Hide; I was first struck by how upright the posture seemed and how low the primary tips were to the ground. My mind instantly turned to Caspian Gull, but as it was almost the first large gull that I had seen in my scope I thought it best to pan around and see if I could compare it to a Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*. However, none had yet arrived in the roost. I then tried to focus on the detail of the bird, noticing that its mantle appeared plain grey with a neat mantle shawl contrasting against its white head. The tertials were also rather plain brown and finely fringed.

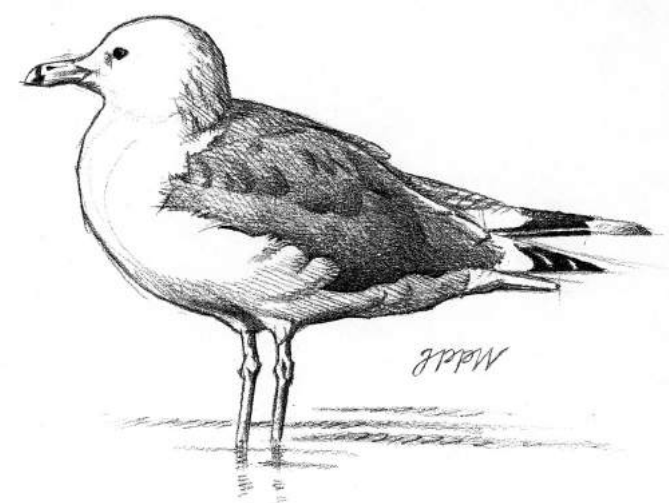
At this point it took off and flew a brief distance as some other large gulls came in to roost. When it flew it seemed to have a very pale underwing and distinctive clean tail pattern with a largely white base to the tail and upper tail coverts, and a dark sub-terminal band. I then couldn't pick it out again amongst the 20 or so large (Herring and Great Black-backed *Larus marinus*) gulls that had now landed nearby.

The gulls quickly shuffled around and I picked out the bird again facing away. Now, in direct comparison to the other surrounding gulls, it was clear that it was indeed a very good candidate for Caspian. I then watched the bird for a short while with a few glimpses of its bill which looked long and straight.

The impression was complete when the bird turned around to show a long shallow sloping forehead complete with a long straight and parallel-edged bill which was largely dark with just a small amount of pale on the base of the lower mandible. A clean white head with a small amount of dark marking around the eye made for a strikingly different look compared to the other gulls. From the side it was apparent how clear cut the neck shawl was. A mainly pale grey mantle with some dark shafts to the feathers, (hard to see detail at range) contrasted with the largely dark coverts with obvious white tips to the greater and several second-generation paler grey coverts. The tertials were almost solid brown with only a small even pale fringe. The long all-dark primaries nearly touched the ground due to the stance of the bird. The underparts were virtually clean white with a small amount of darker smudging around the sides of the breast and flanks.

After these features were all noted it then walked to the right and revealed that it had a yellow-ochre darvic ring on a long pale pink left leg. I instantly recalled a conversation that I'd had with JAB about the Spurn Caspian Gull the previous autumn that had a darvic like that on the bird I was watching. A few phone calls to other local birders and AW was on his way down. I then realized that I hadn't confirmed the wing pattern and tail pattern. Unfortunately the gull roost then started to build and the bird was lost for a long time until it reappeared at the front of the flock and was then seen by AW and AF. It then disappeared and was not relocated before dark.

I returned the following day and the bird was again present where along with CG, JAB and JLe we were able to confirm the pale underwing coverts and auxiliaries and the tail pattern of large dark tips to the tail feathers contrasting with white bases and largely white upper tail coverts. The bird took flight and disappeared south just before RS arrived on site but he and AW connected with the bird the next morning when the bird was last seen.



Adult at Upper Poppleton 20th, 27th January 2012

Tim Jones and Chris Gomersall

At around 14:30 CG asked me to have a look at a gull he had found. As soon as he said it I knew what gull he would put me on to as I had just been looking at it myself! The bird was clearly an adult with a

pale grey back a shade darker than the surrounding *Larus argentatus argenteus* Herring Gulls but not as dark as *L.a. argentatus*, and showed a small, unmarked white head, small dark eye, a straight yellow bill with a small dark mark near the small red gonydeal spot combined with a very shallow gonydeal angle. The bird was sitting on the deck with its head hunched over. The forehead slope was not as shallow as the 1st-winter at Wheldrake Ings the previous week but did not look as steep as the surrounding Herring Gulls. It showed a pronounced clean upper chest adding to an overall forward-leaning stance when it stood up. The body shape seemed slimmer than surrounding gulls with a narrow tertial step leading to long wings protruding beyond. The primary pattern that could be seen showed a large white mirror to p10 with a narrow black band just short of the tip and a pale tongue extending on the inner underside of p10. Due to the distance of viewing it was hard to see any further detail for p9–p6. Some dark markings could be seen on p5 when the bird dropped its wing slightly but not enough to see the extent of this. When the bird walked it was clear that it had a damaged/broken left leg. The leg length and colour could not be seen due to the field the bird was in, but it was apparent that it sat slightly higher than other Herring Gulls on a similar level presumably due to longer legs. The bird then flew off strongly south back towards the tip (Rufforth) at around 15:15 with around ten Herring Gulls. Although no precise detail could be seen in the wing it was clear that there was more white in the wing tip than in the Herring Gulls it was flying with.

The bird was seen subsequently on the 27th when the same features were noted but no more detail on the wing formula could be seen.

[Both records, the first by Tim Jones and the second by Tim Jones and Chris Gomersall, were submitted to YNU and accepted. So not before time, following previous but unaccepted claims of this species, these constitute the 1st and 2nd records of Caspian Gull for the YOC area. Ed]

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* East Cottingwith May 2012

Chris Gomersall

On the morning of 10th May 2012 I was conducting a BBS Farmland survey for Natural England in the East Cottingwith area. The weather was bright and sunny with a light southerly breeze. I had just started the second transect on my survey route when I notice a lone corvid flying towards me at a relatively low height. Solely for the purpose of the survey I lifted my binoculars to see whether it was going to be a Rook *Corvus frugilegus* or a Carrion crow *Corvus corone* (normally I would not bother to check each individual corvid in flight). I was astounded to see a pristine adult Hooded Crow about to fly over my head no more than 20ft away! I watched in awe as this beautiful bird flew over me and towards the direction of the Refuge at the back of Wheldrake Ings. Time to try get others onto it, so I sent out a few texts and emails to other local birders including Craig Ralston, Senior Warden at Wheldrake and Russell Slack, who lived in Wheldrake village. At the time I didn't even know the code for Hooded Crow to mark it down on my survey sheet; I certainly do now!

Obviously Hooded Crows are a pretty scarce bird around York and I would have hoped other birders could have got to see it, but unfortunately this wasn't to be. From the way the bird was flying and especially the height it was flying at, it looked like the bird may have taken off from the ground just prior to me seeing it, indeed it came from the direction of a rather large manure heap where it may have been feeding. As the bird passed overhead it was certainly gaining height, allowing me to see clearly the grey tone to the bird except for its jet black head and breast; the wings were all black as was the tail. All the margins between the two colours looked sharp and clean cut. As the bird flew away and became more distant I could also see the grey mantle. The total length of time I saw this bird was maybe 60 seconds and although brief and only in flight, I saw nothing on the bird to make me think it was a hybrid.

I have seen several Hooded Crows before both in the UK and around the eastern Mediterranean, including migrants along the Yorkshire coast.

Chris Gomersall

[The last confirmed record prior to 2012 was in 2002 when one was caught in a Larsen trap on the Escrick Estate (record not previously available). Up to 1980 Hooded Crow appears to have occurred annually (but was then reported as a race of Carrion Crow). Ed]

Allerthorpe Gravel Pits 2012

Phil Bone

Spring highlights provided higher than usual numbers of Siskin including 55 coming to bird feeders in January, with birds still present until April at least. In March a Water Rail was heard on the 3rd, once a regular winter visitor, now much less common these days and in April an Osprey paid a brief visit on the 20th. This year was a particularly good one for this species; occasional sightings occurred, over several weeks from mid-June into late July, of what may have been the same bird present until the 29th of that month.

Summer migrants were late returning and numbers were slow to build. The general impression was of a very quiet spring that seemed to be compounded by a lack of resident birds. This impression was confirmed at the end of the year by the results of the Common Bird Census (CBC) for this site, which showed that for many species the number of territories was down on previous years. The Willow Warbler decline continued, with the population now at its lowest since 2002 when the CBC started at this site. In contrast the trend for Chiffchaff is one of increase; however, the population this year was half that of 2011. Other notable declines among our resident birds included both Wren and Dunnock, with the number of territories present also being the lowest since 2002.

While early nesting species seemed to have fared all right (Tawny Owl, Blackbird etc.), the poor weather that arrived later had an impact on the breeding success of many species; some like Tree Sparrow seem to have taken the year off, while others like Reed Warbler, having lost their first broods, appeared to have given up and headed south earlier than normal. Nest box monitoring showed that while clutch sizes were normal for Blue Tits, both hatching and fledging success was low, while in comparison clutch sizes were down for Great Tit.

In the second half of the year there were good numbers of Siskin present, with smaller numbers of Lesser Redpoll. The first of the winter migrants appeared on 14th October with parties of Redwing passing overhead, the movement involving at least 200 birds, and a Brambling was also present. In November a Crossbill flew north on the 4th, while in the same month a Woodcock was flushed from the ground on the 24th and the year ended with two Crossbills flying south on 16th December.

[Note, Allerthorpe GP is a site with no public access; please respect this. Allerthorpe Lakeland Park is open to the public.]

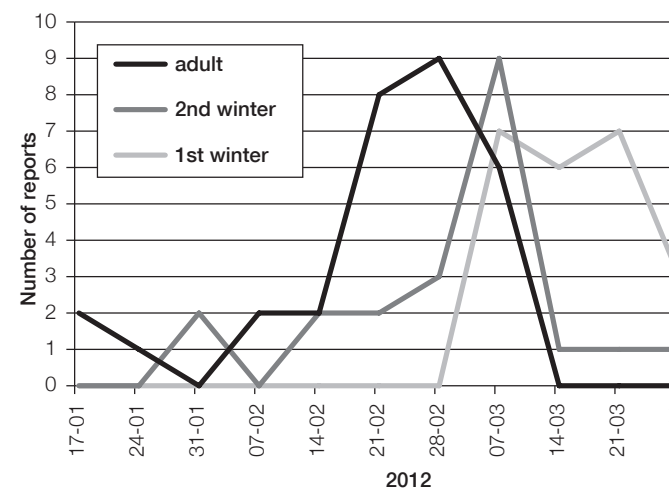
White-winged gulls in early 2012

Chris Gomersall

In early January 2012 there was an unprecedented influx of Iceland Gulls *Larus glaucoideus* into the UK, with the northern and western isles of Scotland and the west coast of Ireland experiencing much larger numbers than would normally be expected, most probably due to a lack of food in their normal wintering range exacerbated by severe north-westerly gales. In the second week of the month alone, there were some staggering counts of these enigmatic winter visitors from Greenland, with at least 162 in Shetland on 14th January, 34 in Stornoway harbour, Lewis (rising to 88 on 9th March – a new British site record!) and 45 from Killybegs, Ulster in late February (*Brit. Birds* **105**: 263–272).

As winter progressed some of these birds filtered further south, with many reports of Iceland Gulls coming from around the UK. With such large numbers in the country local gull enthusiasts were out in force, braving the elements and optimistically searching through any large flocks of gulls they could find! Sure enough, an adult Iceland Gull was duly found in fields at Poppleton on 20th January.

This bird was to be the harbinger, albeit on a slightly more modest scale, of York's very own mini-influx of 'white-wingers'. Birds were recorded on an almost daily basis until late March from several sites around the recording area. In line with the national trend, the first wave of 'white-wingers' consisted



Week by week analysis of the ages of Iceland Gulls reported in the York area in the first winter period (January to March) 2012.

entirely of Iceland Gulls. What was unusual was that predominantly adult birds were involved, although again this reflected the national trend. The first Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* was again an adult, found in fields near Poppleton, but not until 24th February. Peak daily totals were of four Iceland Gulls (three adults and a 2nd winter) and two Glaucous Gulls (both adults) at the Wheldrake Ings roost on 29th February and an impressive six Iceland gulls (two adults, two 2nd-winters and two 1st-winters) with another adult Glaucous Gull with them, all together in fields off the A59 near Upper Poppleton on 9th March. In total 73 reports were received of Iceland Gull, 15 of Glaucous Gull, and a single report of a possible Kumlien's Gull (see Appendix C of Classified List). Add to this two separate Caspian Gulls, four reports of Yellow-legged Gull, two of Mediterranean Gull and a long-staying 'Viking' gull (hybrid Glaucous x Herring Gull).

Although it's difficult to be exact about the number of individuals involved, the fact that so many birds of various ages were reported over a sustained period of time means it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the first birds seen in late January were not the same birds seen in late March. Furthermore, by comparing photographs of many of the birds, it would appear (conservatively) that there were 14 different Iceland Gulls (six adults, four 2nd-winters and four 1st-winters) and four Glaucous Gulls (two adults and two 1st-winters).

Regardless of the total numbers involved, it was certainly the best year in recent history for white-winged gulls around York, and there was certainly enough activity to keep avid gull watchers busy!

Gull watching can at times be a frustrating activity, especially when faced with several thousand birds all huddled together in a seemingly huge white mass. The best advice is to be patient, keep scouring the flock as the birds come and go, and of course hope for a bit of luck! It will probably be cold and possibly even snowy but the reward for finding your very own 'white-winger' is exhilarating.

York is actually a fantastic area in which to both attract and observe large numbers of gulls as the landfill site at Rufforth can attract upwards of 10,000 gulls on a cold winter's day! The very best areas for finding scarce gulls around York, especially during the daytime, are the fields around Poppleton, Knapton and the A59, where huge flocks can occur. The reservoir at Redhouse can also be productive as can the airfield at Rufforth (but please don't trespass). The birds head directly over the city each day, making for their spectacular roost at Wheldrake Ings. The gathering of so many large gulls in a single roost, is a truly fantastic sight and the envy of many other recording areas.

Chris Gomersall



Adult Iceland Gull



2nd-winter Iceland Gull



1st-winter Iceland Gull



1st-winter Iceland Gull



Juvenile Iceland Gulls (above & right)



Above: Juvenile Iceland Gull
Right: Adult Glaucous Gull



White-winged gulls all photographed in the Poppleton area by Chris Gomersall



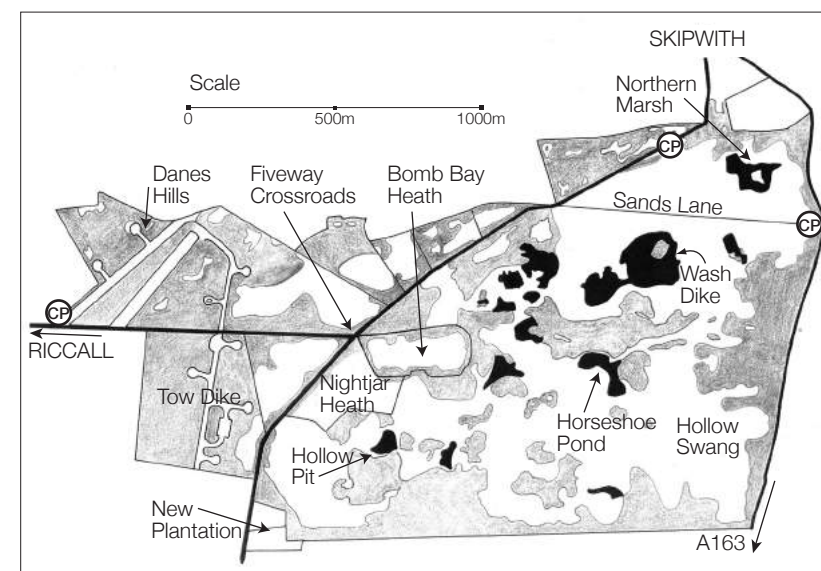
From top: Common Snipe, Jack Snipe (just after ringing), Whitethroats in nest, Black-headed Gull chick, juvenile Long-eared Owl.
Photos: David Tate

An ornithological history of Skipwith Common

David Tate

Introduction

Skipwith Common (the Common), previously known as the Front Common, lies 500m south of the village of Skipwith (SE660385) and covers 274ha. The Back Common, now usually called Crook Moor, is a wooded northwesterly extension of the Common and is not included in this essay.



Map of Skipwith Common (black = ponds, grey = woodland and scrub, white = heath, mire and reed). Note that Tow Dike and New Plantation are outside the boundaries of Skipwith Common NNR. (Original map: David Tate)

Originally, most of the surrounding parishes had their own commons which abutted onto the Common. However, these commons were drained and ploughed out when parliamentary enclosures took place in the nineteenth century. The final Enclosure Act for Skipwith took effect in 1904. This Act formalised the boundary of the Common, allowed for public access and created a group of conservators to protect the site. As a result the Common was not re-claimed for intensive farming.

“Silver Birches”
(1910)



“Where all nature
seems at rest”
(no year given)



“The darkness
deepens” (1909)

These photos were taken between 1909 and 1910 by B.Hanley (from a photo album devoted to Skipwith Common in the possession of David Tate). Top, showing the Common was partly wooded even then; centre, one of the lakes with Bog Bean growing; bottom, an evocative evening view.

From 1904 to 1939 the Common was primarily managed as a duck and snipe shoot. During the Second World War much of the western half was converted into an airfield and the remains of runways and other structures are still visible. The site received SSSI status in 1958 and was leased to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for 25 years in 1968. Subsequently 90% of the Common became a National Nature Reserve in 2009 and it is now jointly managed by Escrick Park Estate, the owners, and Natural England.

With a maximum height of 10.5m much of the Common rises slightly above the surrounding countryside and the watershed separating the Ouse and Derwent catchments bisects the site. The surface gently undulates over a range of 2.5m and is composed of fine-grained aeolian sand, which formed in early post glacial times, topped by a thin layer of peat. Originally, the deeper hollows contained usable peat and after removal they filled with ponds. The depth of the ponds varies from 0.2 to 1.5m and many dry out during hot summers. In 1891 there were 18 ponds covering 6ha though by 2000 half had disappeared because of encroaching vegetation. Subsidence, due to coal mining in the 1990s, led to an expansion of surface water in the northwest quadrant until it was recently removed by mitigation drainage. Currently, most of the pond water is very acidic (pH 4) and does not support fish or amphibians though dragonflies prosper.

The sandy soils are also acidic and contain few nutrients. An underlying layer of clay slows the rate of rainwater percolation and as a result shallow flooding is frequent.

The vegetation responds to variations in relief, soil moisture and management practices. Currently, the ponds are fringed with rush and small reed beds whilst mires of cotton grass and sphagnum moss occupy shallow, waterlogged hollows. On higher slopes the mires give way to wet heath and eventually dry heath. Purple moor grass occurs within the heaths and there are scattered areas of bracken and gorse. Silver birch, Scot's pine, oak and willow woodland, at various stages of development, cover the remaining half of the site. In all probability the ratio of woodland to heath would have varied over time according to economic factors. In times of high agricultural prices, such as the 1850s, the Commoners' grazing rights appear to have been fully utilised and woodland virtually disappeared. Later, during the agricultural depression of the 1930s, grazing and drainage maintenance ceased leading to an expansion of scrub and woodland on the drier parts and more mire elsewhere.



Young Turtle Doves in the nest at Skipwith Common



Three nests of Black-headed Gull at Skipwith Common

The bird life

Before 1880

The first known ornithological record for the Common dates from 1824 when two Avocets were shot and later displayed in the Yorkshire Museum. Shooting also accounted for several specimens of Montagu's Harrier (1846), three Bewick's Swans (1855) and two Little Gulls (1856). In 1858 a Pomarine Skua was picked up after a large inland 'wreck' had occurred. Records concerning live birds are rare. Thomas Allis (1844) noted that Ruff had bred and later evidence suggests that Twite probably did so.

1880–1918

Railway stations were opened at Riccall (1871) and Skipwith (1913) allowing increasing numbers of naturalists to access the Common. Members of the Yorkshire Naturalist's Union (YNU) visited in 1896 and 1912 and Bootham School in York regularly used the site for biology fieldwork. Sydney Smith began a long association with the Common. He collated the records of sightings and many were published in the YNU's bird reports with some finding a place in Nelson (1907).

Photographs taken by Hanley in 1910 show extensive areas of heath and mire, encroaching scrub and mature stands of woodland. Other images show the nests of Snipe, Teal, Coot, Water Rail and Willow Warbler. Written records of breeding birds include five to six pairs of Shoveler (1911); two pairs of Pochard (1916); two to three pairs of Redshank; Cuckoo; Grasshopper, Sedge and Reed Warblers and Reed Bunting. Whinchats bred on the encroaching scrub whilst Redstart, Green Woodpecker and Long-eared Owls held territories in the woodland. Other sightings of note were Red-backed Shrike, Black Tern (frequent in May), Jack Snipe and in 1914 one of the earliest inland Oystercatchers then seen in Yorkshire.

Four species from this period deserve special mention. For Curlew, Nelson noted that '*The only East Riding locality where its nest is reported from is Skipwith Common, where eggs were found on 8th May 1901...*' It is likely that birds from the Common later colonised the Lower Derwent Valley.

Turtle Doves began to colonise Yorkshire from the south in the late 1880s. When Smith wrote 'Turtle Dove in Yorkshire' for the YNU in 1922 he reported sightings on the Common in 1910 and breeding in 1914. The Rev. C.D. Ashe replied saying that '*I was living at Skipwith from 1893–1906 and I cannot remember a season in which there was none of these birds about, and every spring one or two pairs were nesting on the Common, particularly in some of the larger clumps of birches.*' This probably represents the first breeding record for the East Riding.

A Black-headed Gull colony existed on Riccall Common for many years but when the ponds were drained in the 1880s 50 pairs moved onto the Common. After 1910 the population estimates vary from 800 to 1,500 pairs and the gullery became one of the largest in Yorkshire and the only one in the East Riding. The owner, Lord Wenlock, had a passion for the gulls and his gamekeepers were instructed to protect them. However, large scale egg collecting did take place during the First World War when food became scarce. In 1917 900 eggs were harvested with 360 going by rail to Bradford.

The date when Nightjars first bred on the Common is unknown. Breeding was reported by the YNU in 1896 and boys from Bootham School found a nest on 7th July 1900.

During this period, Mr J. Morris, the Common gamekeeper, introduced Black and Red Grouse and four Red Grouse were shot in 1913 before the experiment was abandoned.

1919–1939

After 1918 the value of agricultural products declined. Grazing on the Common ceased and the site rapidly became wetter due to the lack of ditch maintenance. High water levels favoured wildfowl and the Common became known as one of the best duck shoots in the country. In 1920 a national record was set when 93 Wigeon were shot during a morning flight. Other shooting records include a pair of Garganey in 1930 whilst the maximum seasonal bag of 'Wild Duck' was 515 in the 1931/32 season.

Despite the shooting the number of pairs of breeding duck was exceptional. Morris reported 50 pairs of Teal, 20 pairs of Shoveler and 12 pairs of Pochard in 1933. The number of Pochard may well have accounted for 10% of the then national total. In 1932 Morris saw a pair of Pintail with seven young. When he reported another pair in 1938 H.F. Witherby asked Ralph Chislett to confirm the sighting. Chislett (1954) wrote that, '*... I visited Skipwith and questioned Morris closely; he was very definite in his statements and could not be shaken, the duck and brood kept among the growth on the far side of the water whilst I was there.*'

The wet conditions also attracted marshland birds. Ninety-one Snipe were shot in August 1919 and 213 during the 1923/24 season. Comments from the time indicate that 'many' Snipe nested. In the absence of grazing, large reed beds developed and these attracted wintering Bitterns. Unfortunately, one was killed by a dog in 1926 whilst another was shot during the late spring of 1933, and breeding was

never reported. Grey Herons were plentiful and Smith counted 21 on 1st August 1921 which he assumed were from the heronry at Stillingfleet.

In the drier areas three pairs of Curlew bred in 1936 when three Turtle Dove nests were also found. Twelve pairs of Nightjars were reported in 1926, though by 1939 the number had declined to two. The Black-headed Gull colony continued to form every year with numbers fluctuating from 'less' than 100 to about 1,000 pairs. There were complaints that the gulls were taking Lapwing eggs from nests on the surrounding farmland.

New breeding records for the period include Woodcock, Marsh Tit, Tree Pipit, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blackcap and Jay whilst in 1922 E.W. Wade reported that Short-eared Owls occasionally nested.

1940–1967

The eastern parts of the Common were left undisturbed during the Second World War and Nightjars and Black-headed Gulls continued to breed. Elsewhere, most of the vegetation was removed prior to the airfield construction and new ditches were created. After the war the abandoned RAF structures account for the breeding records of House Sparrow, Swallow, Sand Martin and Swift. Scrub rapidly invaded the disused airfield and the now drier central areas.

The Common continued to be managed as a duck shoot and grazing did not take place. In 1958 the site became a nature reserve when SSSI status was granted though it was agreed that the owner maintains the rights for 12 annual duck shoots. As many as 600–800 Wigeon continued to be present at the end of the winter period.

David Goode (1964) reported on the ecology of the Common. The section on breeding birds relies heavily on data collected in 1957 by Mr A. Deane, the gamekeeper, and includes the following species and numbers of pairs.

Black-headed Gull (40)	Green Woodpecker (4)
Teal (15)	Snipe (3)
Skylark (10+)	Whinchat (3)
Tree Pipit (10+)	Grasshopper Warbler (3)
Woodlark (1–10)	Long-eared Owl (2–3)
Turtle Dove (7)	Water Rail (2)
Shoveler (6)	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (2)
Woodcock (6)	Redshank (1)
Redstart (6)	Curlew (1)
Nightjar (5)	Barn Owl (1)

Deane also reported that Short-eared owls continue to breed occasionally but that Pochard, though sometimes present, no longer did so. Goode identified 23 pairs of Willow Tit in 1964 whilst his literature search revealed that a pair of Lesser Black-backed Gulls nested in 1954 and Nightingale bred in 1955.

Other records from the period include Great Grey Shrike (1940); Quail (1947); Corncrake (1953); Crossbill (1964); 20 Pintail (1966) and Hobby (1967). In 1951 a Marsh Harrier was shot and presented to the Yorkshire Museum. A winter Long-eared Owl roost developed in the late 1960s and numbers peaked at 16 during November 1967.

Towards the end of the period Peter Pearson established a 20 ha. Common Bird Census plot at the eastern end of Sands Lane and this was surveyed from 1964-68. During this time 51 species bred on the plot. The maximum number of pairs included: Nightjar (3); Marsh Tit (4); Tree Pipit (8); Turtle Dove (9); Yellowhammer (12); Robin (16); Tree Sparrow (18) and Willow Warbler (46).

1968–1993

The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) leased and managed the Common throughout this period. During 1968–72 the Common was surveyed for the first national breeding bird atlas. Breeding was proven for 43 species and a further 24 were recorded as probable breeders.

There was an increasing concern that invading Scot's pine and birch were damaging the biodiversity of the reserve and so a programme of manual scrub clearance began. The work did not keep up with the rate of re-generation and so in 1984 the Trust introduced 30 or so sheep into fenced plots where heath had previously dominated. Middleton (1995) describes the experiment, led by David Braithwaite, and claims that the grazing led to an increase in the number of pairs of breeding Nightjar from two in 1983 to 17 in 1990. However, he cautions that the higher figure may be due to inaccurate recording. Breeding Whinchat also re-appeared at this time.

A revision of the SSSI citation was produced in 1986 and the section on birds notes that, '*The number of breeding bird species is outstanding; approximately 76 species have been recorded, including nightjar, water rail, grasshopper warbler, reed warbler, sparrowhawk, willow tit and green, great spotted and lesser spotted woodpeckers*'.

The Common has never been a hot spot for nationally rare birds and only two records, both from this period, are reported in Wilson and Slack (1998). The first occurred on 27th May 1975 when Michael Clegg discovered a Red-breasted Flycatcher; the other relates to a pair

of 'Northern' Willow Tits identified by Tim Dixon on 24th December 1981. However, an interesting selection of locally uncommon birds were reported e.g. Wryneck (1968); Scaup (shot in 1968); Corncrake (1969); eight Bar-tailed Godwits (1969); Wood Sandpiper (1980); Great Grey Shrike (1985); Osprey (1989) and Peregrine (1990). Little Ringed Plover (1972), Wood Warbler (1980) and Crossbill (1993) bred successfully whilst a couple of Hen Harriers roosted during the winters of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

1994 – Present

The YWT's lease expired in 1994 and this was followed by several funded initiatives which allowed for large scale scrub clearance and the introduction of substantial numbers of livestock. By 2005 600 Hebridean ewes and their followers, 14 Exmoor ponies and 12 cattle grazed the Common without constraint. The grazing removed all but one of the reed beds, the woodland and scrub understorey, much of the cotton grass and a good deal of the birch which was invading the heaths. Recently the number of sheep has been reduced to 200-300 ewes and manual scrub clearance has re-started.

During 2007/08 the condition of the SSSI was professionally assessed. 20% of the site was reported to be favourable with the rest described as 'unfavourable improving'. However, many species of breeding birds have been lost since 1993. The list of species below includes the last known date when breeding took place.

Curlew	1994	Shoveler	2005
Whinchat	1994	Black-headed Gull	2005
Redstart	1996	Lesser S. Woodpecker	2005
Grasshopper Warbler	2002	Long-eared Owl	2007
Nightjar	2003	Snipe	2008
Willow Tit	2003	Turtle Dove	2009
Redpoll	2003		

In 2012 there was proof of breeding for 38 species and it is possible that a further five did so. The number of pairs of almost all of the more common species was at least 50% below that of the previous period. There are many possible reasons for the declines including loss of habitat, disturbance by livestock and dog walkers, increased predation, eutrophication and other external factors.

Although 300 Teal and occasional flocks of Wigeon are present in the autumn, morning flights from the Derwent Valley are now rare after mid-October. Supplementary feeding at the Thorganby shooting ponds may account for much of the decline.

However, not all is lost. Breeding Woodlark re-appeared in 1997 and there is now a small colony. A pair of Stonechat successfully bred for the first time in 2008, though not since. Hobby probably bred in 2009 and a winter Jack Snipe day roost has developed. There are usually six to seven pairs of Tree Pipit and Spotted Flycatchers appear with fledged young in the late summer. In dry autumns up to ten Green Sandpipers feed on exposed mud. A singing Redstart has been present for three summers and in 2012 at least one Nightjar was present for several weeks, though breeding did not take place. Finally, during the last decade there has been a noteworthy cast of passage birds or one-off sightings, including Black-necked Grebe, Little Egret, Bittern, Osprey, Goshawk, Spotted Crake, Common Crane, Ruff, Little Stint, Spotted Redshank and Ring Ouzel.

Conclusion

It appears that since the 1850s the number and diversity of birds on the Common peaked during the 1930s and again in the 1960s. Recent figures suggest the variety and number of birds is about half that of the peak periods. To reverse the losses local managers will require determination and a robust management plan.

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Other records have been taken from the annual reports of the YOC and YNU, and from the Escrick Park Game Book.

A record year in the York area

Tim Jones

I'm Tim Jones, from Birmingham but living in York where I studied Environmental Science at the University of York. From arrival in October 2010 I was quickly amazed at how different the birding was and soon adopted Heslington East as my local patch, convenient as I lived on site in my first year, allowing me to be out birding pretty much every day!

At the end of 2011 I decided that I wanted to do something different in 2012, something that would encourage me to get out in the field and add some extra excitement to my birding. Add a touch of competition and I'd found it, a York area Year List. I knew Russell Slack and Darren Starkey had both tried to record as many species as they could in 2006 and both ended on 170. A look at how many species I thought I could easily see in the York area in a year produced 130 species. Then add in another 20 species I would be pretty unlucky to miss and 150 would be 'do-able' but would 170 or more be achievable? With a lot of birding and with plenty of local twitching 160–165 should be achievable, so I decided to give it a go!

January

Arriving back in York on 7th January I quickly headed out to start off my year list, and also to prepare for the annual Michael Clegg memorial Bird Race on the 8th. A good day was spent around Hes East seeing a pair of Peregrine hunting Wood Pigeon. The next day we (me, Jack Ashton-Booth, Ollie Metcalf and Chris Gomersall) managed to beat the previous York area day record by four species, recording 90 on the day! Highlights for the year were Merlin, Red Kite, Crossbill and Woodcock but I would have to wait until the 14th for any more new birds.

That day brought an adult Med Gull at Hes East, then on to East Cottingwath to look for a reported Twite, which I dipped, but did see 450+ Pink-footed Geese heading north. On to Wheldrake lngs to look at the gull roost and almost the first gull turned out to be a 1w Caspian Gull, a first for the York area and my first accepted record for this area (see description page 92)! Also had a 2w Iceland Gull in the roost! The next day I followed up a report of 42 White-fronted Geese at Castle Howard but no joy apart from a few Goosander. Went back to Wheldrake and saw the Caspian Gull again and two White-fronts over! Another visit to Wheldrake on the 18th added Willow Tit and Upper Poppleton on the 20th produced another Caspian Gull (adult) and added Yellow-legged Gull to the list. In the next week I managed to get up to 101

species with the addition of Grey Wagtail, Jay, Little Grebe and Water Rail, the highlight in the last week being a Mealy Redpoll at Stockton on the Forest. Kingfisher and Oystercatcher were both added before the month's end to finish on 104.

February

A report of a Great Grey Shrike at Copmanthorpe on the 1st saw an early start to try get this 'bonus' bird. Arriving with Chris we eventually managed to pick it up distantly. Thanks to Alan Stow, who chatted to a local farmer who let us into one of his fields, we got some awesome views! While on a trip to Scarborough that weekend a phone call from Russ alerted us to a Knot at Hes East! After a rapid drive through some spectacular weather we sprinted to see the Knot feeding with four Dunlin on a small open patch in the ice (it then decided to stick around for the next two weeks!).



A Bittern at Wheldrake on the 7th was out of my reach and didn't stick around but an unseasonal Green Sandpiper joined the Knot on the 14th and a trip to Castle Howard on the 19th added Mandarin for the year. News of a Brent Goose at North Duffield emerged on the 20th but my car was in the garage! Early signs of spring saw a single Ringed Plover at Hes East on the 21st, followed by a more typical February day with several Brambling at Castle Howard, then round to Upper Poppleton to see a stonking huge adult Glaucous Gull. A cracking end to February leaving me on 111 so far.

March

First addition of the month was a Black-tailed Godwit at Wheldrake on the 2nd, then the spring-like theme continued with the first Little Ringed Plover returning to Hes East on the 15th. Several unsuccessful mornings

looking for Lesser Spotted Woodpecker became frustrating, but I did manage to add a few more spring migrants with Chiffchaff and Wheatear on the 20th, and a singing male Woodlark at Skipwith on the 22nd. The 27th saw another 'bonus' bird with a female Red-crested Pochard on the pool at Wheldrake, the first record for the York area since 2009. The last day of the month added a few more common migrants with Swallow and Blackcap, finishing on 125.

April

I started well by finding a Twite at Hes East, a nice grip back on fellow year-lister Chris after he had a bird flying over Strensall in March. Also added Sand Martin at last before heading to Wheldrake to see two Avocets in the afternoon. The month continued with two interesting looking pipits at Hes East on the 2nd found by Jack. We eventually decided that one was a *littoralis* Rock Pipit and the other probably a Water Pipit but we let that one go as just a probable, frustrating! While away on a Uni trip to Tenerife the major misses were a Long-eared Owl at Wheldrake, a Black Tern at Thorganby and some Cranes in the LDV. However, I managed to get the Cranes on my first day back in the area with four in a field near North Duffield along with my first Yellow Wagtails, House Martins, Whitethroats and Willow Warblers.

Highlight of the month, however, came on the 30th when I met up with Chris at Thorganby and we worked our way round the valley picking up a Little Gull at North Duffield, along with Marsh Harrier, Greenshank, Whimbrel, Swift, Sedge Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat before coming through Sutton-on-Derwent. I was following behind Chris's car in mine but as he turned down a small lane to try and get a view onto the flood, I got a brief glimpse of two 'interesting' birds fly over the road. Initial thoughts were Sandwich Terns, but they'd disappeared behind some houses so I hurriedly pulled forward and jumped out to get them in my bins. As I got onto them I quickly realised they weren't Sandwich Terns, but what were they? My brain soon kicked in and I realised I was watching two Arctic Skuas flying away from me! I rang Chris as quick as I could and he turned round, but not quick enough – a real heart racing moment. Top quality local birding left me on 137 by the end of the month, and good 'bonus' birds had been added, but I'd need to continue this good run through May as I knew that it would then become a lot harder to add new birds.

May

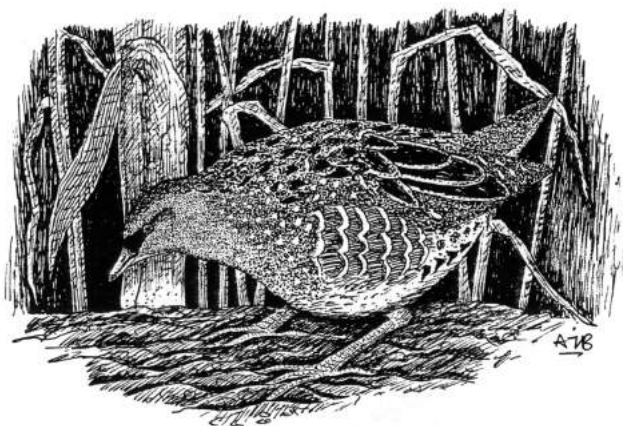
After my skua high, I went on to rack up another 18 year ticks in May which proved to be a very important month. First off was a Bar-tailed

Godwit at NDC after dipping one earlier in the year at Wheldrake, before a quick twitch to Raker Lakes on the 3rd saw Common and Arctic Terns added to the list (two days later I witnessed the second largest passage of Arctic Terns ever through the LDV with 161 birds racked up by myself on the 5th!). My first Hobby on the 4th was followed by a Cuckoo on the 6th. The 7th saw a twitch down to North Duffield after a reported Little Stint turned into a Sanderling. Got there just too late to see it but did add Garganey and later Egyptian Goose. After morning surveys on the 11th I called in at NDC again and added three stunning summer plumaged Black-necked Grebes to the list along with Common Sandpiper and two bonus fly-through Turnstones!

After a quiet interlude a pair of Temminck's Stints turned up on Hes East on the 20th, cracking birds to watch on my local patch and a real bonus! Added Tree Pipit, Reed Warbler and Garden Warbler in the next few days to reach 150 before hearing my only Quail of the year, at Hes East. Twitching a Turnstone at the same site proved successful when I went onto find a pair of Sanderling there on the 27th. The month ended well with Long-eared Owl and Nightjar at Skipwith Common. I was on 155 and surely another 15+ species should be easily achievable by the end of the year! And I still hadn't seen Osprey!

June

Started with singing Spotted Crakes! A truly memorable night at Bank Island where we managed to hear two different birds whipping away! A Little Egret at Hes East kept the year list going and I finally managed to see an Osprey, at Castle Howard on the 10th, coinciding nicely with a family trip there! Late spring migrants involved Spotted Flycatcher at Askham



Bog on the 17th and Turtle Dove on the 18th. Another highlight for the year came on the 24th when, driving back from Castle Howard, a Gannet flew over the car! I managed to pull over, digiscope some video footage, and get back in the car to track it five miles down the A64 to Hes East! An early Scaup on the 25th gave a feel of autumn but I still hadn't seen Grasshopper Warbler, Redstart or Wood Warbler! I finished the month on 164 though, a brilliant month, and the target was in my sights!

July

In a last ditch attempt at Grasshopper Warbler, after a tip-off, I finally managed to connect with a late reeling male! After a poor spring for the species with only one record in the area at Wheldrake I also connected with a Wood Sandpiper at the same site on the last day of the month to finish on 166. With five months of the year left and only five year ticks needed to break the record I was feeling confident!

August

In a very quiet month for me in the York area. I finally got Redstart on the 9th, along the Pocklington Canal, before I was on my way to Florida for two weeks! In that time I missed a Spotted Redshank which stuck around for everyone but me to see! Finished the month on 167. I'd need to do better than this for the rest of the year if I wanted to beat 170!

September

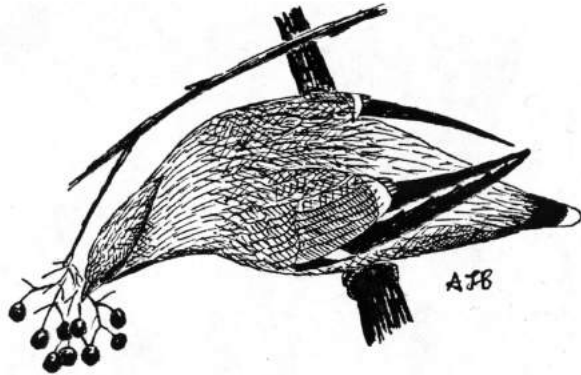
Failed to produce much with just the one year tick, a Grey Plover on the 18th added just before I headed off to North Ronaldsay for two weeks. Creeping ever so slowly towards 170 but finished on 168; could I equal the record by the end of October?

October

Apparently not! Third month on the trot with just one year tick and I was hoping that these autumn months would be awesome! A report of a Hen Harrier and a pair of Stonechats on the 15th had me wondering where to go! I went after the Hen Harrier and dipped but saw the Stonechats on the 16th as a consolation prize. Still creeping slowly along and onto 169; I can't get this close without getting 170 surely!

November

Waxwings started to be reported from Shetland and a few started to be recorded closer and closer to York. I eventually got a call on the 8th from Jack and Chris of a flock just up the road from my house. A quick drive



and I was soon looking at my 170th species in the area in a year. I was then thinking where my next tick could come.

A male Hen Harrier reported through North Duffield the same day saw me spend a few afternoons down there in the hope of connecting but no joy! It was reported again on the 13th but I decided against going down again on the 14th, due to one reason or another, only to find that a Bittern was then seen that evening! Do'h! So I got into the Geoff Smith hide before first light the next morning hoping it would appear in the small reedy/sedge area in front of the hide. There seemed to be little chance so I started scanning the wildfowl on the reserve, occasionally glancing down to the potential Bittern habitat in front of the hide, when all of a sudden I noticed a shape that wasn't there before. I raised my bins and was looking at the Bittern! I'd managed to get lucky and had just seen my 171st species in the area! Awesome! I quickly alerted the local birders and the hide soon filled up. November came to a close and predictably I didn't manage any more ticks. Nevertheless I was very happy with breaking the previous record of 170!

December

During December I was trying for another year tick to clear the previous record by a bit more, but more importantly to try to and keep ahead of Chris before I would leave for Birmingham over Christmas. Realising I would only have half a month of birding I hit it hard and amazingly managed to add three more species!

After yet another failed attempt at Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, me and Chris pulled in to Dringhouses pond for a quick check in case anything had come in with the cold weather. It soon played dividends with a slightly surreal moment as a juvenile Red-throated Diver swam around with Tufted Ducks! Mega!

I then made a list of potential target species to see before the year's end; most were going to take a lot of luck to see but one stood out, Bewick's Swan. But here I was with only three days of birding in the area left and still no Bewick's! This changed the day before I was to leave when three adults turned up at North Duffield on the 14th. I managed to see two of them from Aughton on the 15th! Big relief after Chris had seen them earlier in the morning which had placed him just one species behind me for a short while!

The 16th was to be my last day in the York area before Christmas, so the day was spent packing up confident that Chris would need three new species in the next 15 days to beat me. However, that confidence quickly took a blow as Andy Walker found three Barnacle Geese at North Duffield that Chris managed to connect with quickly as he was just around the corner at Aughton! Initially resisting the urge to go after birds of potentially dubious origin (but Russ had counted Barnacle in his total of 170) I made the decision with only around 40mins of daylight left! A little foolish but I raced down to Bubwith where they had last been seen and arrived to see a rather smug Chris announce that they had swum out of view!

Panic set in as I quickly grabbed my scope and started to scan the visible Greylags which the birds had been associating with. Before I could go through the whole flock they got up and flew, half going downriver and half upriver! Nightmare! I scanned desperately to try and pick them out in flight and couldn't! The flock that flew upriver settled back on the ings but were rather distant. The light was now going and out of pure desperation I scanned the flock one last time, to pick out three small pale-headed geese! I'd managed to see the three Barnacle Geese in the last five minutes of 'birdable' light! A crazy end to a crazy year but I headed off south for Christmas on a high.

Was that the end? Did Chris manage to see an extra three species in the last 15 days of 2012? Luckily for me 'no'; nothing new turned up between the 16th and the year's end. I finished the year on 174 and Chris on 172. A truly memorable year but one that I won't be attempting to better any time soon!

To summarise I'd seen 174 species out of a possible 192 species that had been reported in the area in 2012. Species I missed are as follows: Red-necked Phalarope, Red-rumped Swallow, Night Heron, Hooded Crow, Spoonbill, Brent Goose, Raven, Smew, Red-breasted Merganser, Hen Harrier, Bean Goose, Common Scoter, Black Tern, Spotted Red-shank, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Kittiwake, Whinchat, Wood Warbler.

[Not all of these records have been accepted – Ed].

Obituary Russell Slack 1967–2013

It was a shock to learn of the sudden passing of Russell Slack after a short illness on Tuesday 26th February 2013. Russ was a quiet and private man, keeping the devastating news of his illness to himself and only those closest to him. Since the end of 2012 Russ had been fighting a losing battle against cancer, and it was with great sadness and shock how quickly it all happened and how suddenly he was taken from his family, friends and the local birding community.

Despite being ill and suffering with treatment, Russ still tried to be part of the birding community in the Lower Derwent Valley, and asked to be kept up-to-date with bird news. One of the last birds he found on a visit to the valley was a single Waxwing in the Bank Island car park. Russ was a true 'local patch' birder, and most interested and happy when finding his own birds, especially in the LDV which was a special place for him, and a site to which he introduced many of his birding friends.

Over the years Russ amassed an impressive LDV list, but again it was discovering his own birds which gave him the most enjoyment, and finds such as Great White Egret, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Pectoral & Buff-breasted Sandpipers and Snow Bunting head a long list, whilst Gannet and Bearded Tit frustratingly and seemingly constantly eluded him, but which he took with his own great sense of humour. It was, however, not just rare and scarce birds which held Russ's attention, but also recording and counting commoner species, which Russ did avidly and for which we are so much better informed.

Well liked and highly respected, Russ became the official 'bird news hub' of the LDV and indeed much of the YOC recording area, getting along with everyone as he did so well, and passing on the many records that came his way. Living more locally in Wheldrake village in recent years gave Russ the opportunity to 'get on' to local birds more quickly and also to see the capture of birds during ringing. This gave him the opportunity, which not many have had, to see some of the Ings specialities in the hand, including Garganey, Spotted Crake and Quail to name a few.

An NNR volunteer in the Lower Derwent Valley for over 20 years, Russ was always keen to ensure the LDV and its records got the merit, justification and protection they deserved, and so he worked closely with the YOC, YNU and Natural England. He worked particularly hard with 'difficult to survey' species such as Black-necked Grebes and Spotted

Crakes which can appear in the valley in above-usual numbers. Russ was keen to help in any way he could and took part in BBS and farmland bird surveys, along with helping us with WeBS counts and ringing projects.

He was always keen to come out and help drag-net Jack Snipe or mist net Whimbrel, or merely spend hours trying to read off colour-rings.

Russ wasn't just simply into birds as a hobby from which he took enjoyment; he was passionate about birds and their conservation in the LDV and wider York area, which saw him roll up his sleeves and get stuck into practical habitat management, that in the long term would benefit sites, the birds and the enjoyment of others.

Russ also had a deep interest in analysing records, looking for trends and patterns, and predicting the occurrence of the less frequently encountered species in the area. Russ then took it one step further and went on to write about them and soon became the accomplished author of *Rare and Scarce Birds in Yorkshire* (with Andrew Wilson, 1996) and *Rare Birds Where and When: Vol. 1* (2009), and he also wrote various short papers on the status of seabirds in the York area for the local YOC reports.

The Lower Derwent Valley has sadly lost a true supporter and advocate, and birders, volunteers, all the LDV Natural England staff and friends have lost a true ornithological gentleman. Finding the next rare bird or local scarcity or catching the next unusual bird whilst ringing will now be tinged with sadness, but we shall go on and keep Russ's memory with us. It was a true pleasure to know Russ, and our thoughts are now with Linda, and his two young daughters.

Compiled by Craig Ralston and the LDV Team



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

Velvet Scoter	Hen Harrier
(Barrow's Goldeneye) †	Montagu's Harrier *
Goldeneye W	Goshawk B
Smew	Sparrowhawk B
Red-breasted Merganser	Common Buzzard B
Goosander (B)?	Rough-legged Buzzard *
Ruddy Duck B	Osprey P
Red-legged Partridge B	Kestrel B
Grey Partridge B	Red-footed Falcon *
Common Quail (B)	Merlin
Common Pheasant B	Hobby (B)
(Golden Pheasant)	Peregrine B
Red-throated Diver	Water Rail B
Black-throated Diver	Spotted Crake (B)
Great Northern Diver	Corncrake (B)
Fulmar	Moorhen B
Manx Shearwater	Coot B
European Storm-petrel	Common Crane (B)
Leach's Storm-petrel	Oystercatcher B
Northern Gannet	Black-winged Stilt †
Cormorant B	Avocet (B)
Shag	Stone Curlew
Bittern (B)?	Little Ringed Plover B
Night Heron *	Ringed Plover B
Cattle Egret †	Kentish Plover *
Little Egret (B)	Dotterel
Great White Egret *	American Golden Plover *
Grey Heron B	European Golden Plover W
Purple Heron *	Grey Plover
Black Stork *	Lapwing B
White Stork	Knot
Spoonbill	Sanderling
Little Grebe B	Little Stint P
Great Crested Grebe B	Temminck's Stint
Red-necked Grebe	White-rumped Sandpiper *
Slavonian Grebe	Baird's Sandpiper? †
Black-necked Grebe (B)	Pectoral Sandpiper
Honey Buzzard *	Curlew Sandpiper
Black Kite *	Dunlin W & P
Red Kite (B)	Buff-breasted Sandpiper *
Marsh Harrier (B)	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 †
 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 & B
 Yellow-legged Gull
 Caspian Gull *
 Iceland Gull (W)
 Glaucous Gull
 Great Black-backed Gull W
 Little Tern
 Caspian Tern †
 Whiskered Tern †
 Black Tern
 Sandwich Tern
 Common Tern B
 Roseate Tern

Arctic Tern P
 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 (B)
 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 †
 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
 Treecreeper B
 Wren B
 Common Starling B
 Rose-coloured Starling
 Dipper (B)
 Ring Ouzel
 Blackbird B
 Fieldfare W & P
 Song Thrush B, W & P
 Redwing W & P
 Mistle Thrush B
 Spotted Flycatcher B
 Robin B

Common Nightingale (B)
 Black Redstart (B)
 Common Redstart B
 Whinchat (B)?
 Stonechat B
 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 P
 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 Editors 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 to recorder@yorkbirding.org.uk. A list of species and subspecies needing written supporting evidence can be found elsewhere in this Report or contact the Recorder for guidelines or rarity forms. The importance of such descriptions for the validation of rare records cannot be overemphasized.

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

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 of 2013):

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

Additionally, contributors **are** asked to provide details for the following species/subspecies:

Bewick's Swan	Curlew Sandpiper
(Greenland) White-fronted Goose	Purple Sandpiper
Brent Goose – all races	Bar-tailed Godwit
Green-winged Teal	Spotted Redshank
Garganey	Grey Phalarope
Red-crested Pochard	Great Skua
Ring-necked Duck	Pomarine Skua
(Greater) Scaup	Arctic Skua
(Common) Eider	Long-tailed Skua
Long-tailed Duck	Sabine's Gull
Velvet Scoter	Kittiwake
Red-breasted Merganser	Little Gull
Red-throated Diver	Mediterranean Gull
Black-throated Diver	Yellow-legged Gull
Great Northern Diver	Little Tern
Fulmar	Black Tern
Manx Shearwater	Sandwich Tern
European Storm-petrel	Roseate Tern
Leach's Storm-petrel	Arctic Tern
Gannet	Razorbill
Shag	Little Auk
(Great) Bittern	Puffin
White Stork	Ring-necked Parakeet
Spoonbill	Long-eared Owl
Red-necked Grebe	Short-eared Owl
Slavonian Grebe	Nightjar
Black-necked Grebe	European Bee-eater
(<i>away from LDV</i>)	Hoopoe
Hen Harrier	Wryneck
Goshawk	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Osprey	Golden Oriole
Spotted Crake	Red-backed Shrike
Corncrake	Great Grey Shrike
Common Crane	Common Raven
Stone Curlew	Firecrest
Dotterel	Bearded Tit
Knot	Wood Lark
Sanderling	(<i>away from breeding areas</i>)
Little Stint	Shore Lark
Temminck's Stint	Cetti's Warbler
Pectoral Sandpiper	Yellow-browed Warbler

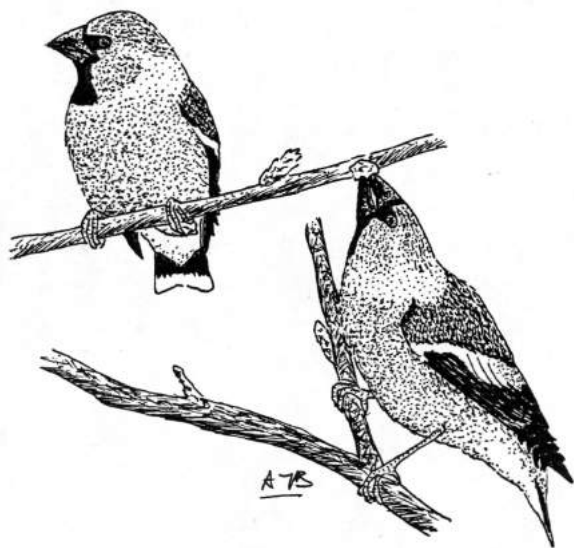
Wood Warbler
Barred Warbler
Rose-coloured Starling
Ring Ouzel
Nightingale
Black Redstart
Red-breasted Flycatcher
Pied Flycatcher
Yellow Wagtail

Richard's Pipit
Rock Pipit
Water Pipit
Twite
Mealy (Common) Redpoll
Hawfinch
Snow Bunting
Lapland Bunting

(*'Blue-headed' race and
'Channel' hybrid*)

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 Recorders' discretion and the list of species requiring descriptions is under constant review.

Note that if photographs showing key identification features are submitted of these species a field description may not be required (as long as details such as location, date, observer, etc. accompany the photographs).



Hawfinch, a species for which a description needs to be submitted to the YOC Recorders

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 given. Six figure grid references are provided for most sites but in many instances this simply identifies a larger area for which the grid reference is the approximate centre.

Most farms and woods are omitted (in the systematic list the nearest village is given for reference) unless particularly isolated, when they are included here, and street names are not listed except in rural areas where it might otherwise be difficult to locate the road referred to.

A		Brayton Barff	5830
Acaster Aerodrome	575428	Brawby	738781
Acaster Malbis	590455	Breck's Lane, Strensall	641612
Acaster Selby	574415	Brecks (The), Strensall	648618
Acklam	785618	Brighton	709341
Acomb, York	5751	Brind	742310
Allerthorpe Common	7547	Brindley's Plantation	742318
Allerthorpe Gravel Pits (also known as the Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe)	7947	Broomhill Plantation	703449
Allerthorpe Lakeland Park	780465	Bubwith bridge	705364
Ampleforth	583787	Bubwith Ings	7037
Anchor Plain, Strensall	6363	Bugthorpe	773579
Appleton Roebuck	555423	Buttercrambe	733582
Askham Bog	5748	Buttercrambe Weir	734585
Aughton (Ings)	7038	Butterwick	732775
		Byland Abbey	549790
B		C	
Baldwins Bridge, Pocklington Canal	740450	Calley Heath NR	753498
Bank Island	695452	Canal Head, Pocklington	798474
Barmby Moor	776490	Castle Howard Lake	7170
Barthorpe	774598	Cawood	573377
Barton-le-Willows	715632	Cawton	643767
Beningbrough	529578	Church Fenton	515370
Beningbrough Hall	516586	Church Bridge, Melbourne	759445
Bielby	789437	Claxton	694602
Billbrough	532468	Cliffe	662320
Bishopthorpe	5947	Cliffe Common	666339
Bishop Wilton	797553	Clifton	593532
Bishop Wood	5533	Clifton Backies NR, York	596540
Black Dike, Barmby Moor	764502	Clifton Ings	583531
Black Wood, Easingwold	5467	Clifton Park	584533
Bolton Percy	532414	Coates Bridge, Pocklington Canal	785453
Bootham Stray, York	597548	Coneysthorpe	713713
Bossall	719607	Coneysthorpe Banks Wood	720725
Bowthorpe Hall	697331	Copmanthorpe	565469
Brandsby	589724	Cornborough Manor	630671
Brayton	601305	Cornfield NR, Rawcliffe	579542

Coulton	636742	Garrowby Hill	798567
Coulton Moor Plantation	625748	Gaterley	737696
Coxwold	536772	Geoff Smith Hide,	
Crambe	733649	North Duffield Carrs	696372
Crambeck	738674	Giles Lock,	
Crayke	562705	Pocklington Canal	795464
Crockey Hill	625466	Gilling (East/Park)	614770

D		Goosewood Caravan Park,	
Danesmead Copse, York	607497	Sutton-on-the-Forest	591631
Derwent Cottage Farm,		Great Barugh	750790
North Duffield	700360	Great Wood,	
Designer Outlet, York	607477	Strensall Common	668627
Dringhouses, York	580495	Grimston	644514
Dunnington	671525	Grimston Bar (roundabout)	649516
Dunnington Common	6750	Grimston Moor	613744
		Gunby	710354

E		H	
Easingwold	529698	Hagg Bridge	717452
East Cottingwith	703425	Harewood Whin	538518
East Moor,		Hartrigg Oaks, York	608559
Sutton-on-the-Forest	600644	Hassacarr NR	673518
Ellerton (Ings)	700400	Haxby	609582
Everingham (Park)	804426	Healaugh	500477
Elvington	700476	Heslington East,	
Elvington Airfield	670480	York University	6350-6450
Elvington WTW	7048	Heslington Tillmire, York	638475
Escrick	631427	Heslington, York	627504
Escrick Park	635418	Hessay	524534
		High Catton	718538
		High Hutton	755685
		High Lodge, SHL	675586
		Hob Moor, York	585506
		Hogg's Pond, Dringhouses	581493
		Hollicarrs	626395
		Holtby	675542
		Hopgrove (roundabout)	642553
		Hovingham	667758
		Howardian Hills	5875-7568
		Howe Bridge	809761
		Howe Hill, Norton	803702
		Huby	566655
		Hull Road Park, York	620515
		Huntington, York	612550

F		J	
Fangfoss	765533	Jeffry Bog, Low Hutton	759667
Fireman's Leap, New Earswick		JRTNR, New Earswick	608548
	609550		
Flamingoland	7780		
Flaxton	680624		
Foggathorpe	755377		
Foss Island, York	609520		
Foston	698651		
Fulford, York	610496		
Fulford Ings	608493		
Fulford Golf Course	624494		
Fulford Hall	606484		
Full Sutton	746555		

G			
Ganthorpe	689704		
Garganey Hide,			
North Duffield Carrs	698368		

K		Newton-on-Ouse	512599
Keldspring Crossing,		Newton Carr	740494
Pocklington	786498	Newton upon Derwent	720495
Kelfield	594384	New Earswick	609555
Kexby	705511	North Duffield Carrs	695375
Kilburn	504796	North Howden	7530
Kirby Misperton	780794	Norton-on-Derwent	795710
Kirkham Priory	736658	Nunnington (Hall)	667794
Knapton	562522	Nursery Wood, SHL	678585
Knavesmire, York	594495		

L		O	
Langton	798671	Osbalwick	633519
Langwith Stray, Heslington	650480	Osgodby	641338
Laytham	749395	Oswaldkirk, York	625790
Leppington	763613	Oulston Reservoir	570745
Linton-on-Ouse	495607	Oxton	505431
Loftsome Bridge	705301		
Long Marston	502512	P	
Low Carr,		Petersfield Farm, Bielby	793422
Sutton-on-the-Forest	600623	Pocklington	802490
Low Cattton	705538	Pocklington Airfield	793485
Lower Derwent Valley	7036-7046	Pocklington Canal	698426-800474
		Poppleton	560546
		Pretty Wood, Castle Howard	732690

M		R	
Malton	785717	Raker Lakes, Wheldrake	684463
Mausoleum, Castle Howard	727696	Rawcliffe Bar Country Park	577547
Melbourne	753441	Rawcliffe Ings	575544
Middlethorpe Ings	603486	Rawcliffe Lake	586546
Melbourne Scamland	766437	Rawcliffe Meadows	577545
Meltonby	796525	Redhouse Reservoir	529575
Millennium Bridge, York	603497	Redhouse Wood,	
Monks Cross, York	630550	Moor Monkton	520570
Moor Lane, Bishopthorpe	585470	Refuge, Wheldrake	708435
Moor Monkton	506569	Riccall	620380
Moreby Wood	606428	Roscarrs	645316
Moorlands	577588	Rossmoor Park	722436
Mount Ferrant, Birdsall	796639	Rowntree Park, York	604508
Murton	650527	Ruddins Ings	5456
		Ryther	550392
		Ryton	795757
		Ryton bridge (Riggs Road Bridge)	796754

N		S	
Naburn	599455	Sand Hutton	695586
Naburn Bridge	598467	Scackleton	650726
Naburn Marina	599462	Scagglethorpe Moor	5355
Naburn Sewage Works	601467		
Naburn Wood	609438		
Newburgh Priory (lake)	542767		
Newhay	661307		

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,		U	
Pocklington Canal	797468	Ulleskelf	520400
Skewsby	625710		
Skipwith	657385	W	
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, Allerthorpe	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	Westow	7565
Strensall Common	6460–6661	Wheldrake	682450
St Nicholas Fields, York	615517	Wheldrake Ings	7043
Stubb Wood	585433	Wheldrake Wood	6546
Sutton-on-the-Forest	584647	Whitehill Mine	667359
Sutton upon Derwent	707468	White Carr, Flaxton	663603
Swantail Hide,		Whitwell Grange	715666
Wheldrake Ings	707438	Wiganthorpe	662724
Swinton	760731	Wigginton	595585
Swinton Ings	772748	Wilberfoss	734510
		Winchmore, Stamford Bridge	727547
T		Wistow	594357
Tang Hall Beck fields	6353	Woodhouse Grange	733470
Tang Hall, York	620520	World's End Plantation	
Terrington	670707	Strensall Common	6659
Terrington Moor	685716	Wressle	708313
The Retreat, York	617510		
Thorganby	691420	Y	
Thorganby Ings	6941	Yearsley	585744
Thormanby	495747	Yearsley Moor	5875–6076
Thornton	760453	York Minster	603523
Thornton Ellers	730460	York University campus	6250
Tockwith	465525	York University Lake	620505