

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB REPORT 2015

**Published by the York Ornithological Club
2016**



Compiled by

D. Bye, K. J. Chapman, R. E. Chapman,
P. A. Doherty, C. Gomersall, J. A. Lawson, J. Leadley,
O. Metcalf, P. J. Reed, N. B. Stewart & P. Watson

Edited by

K. J. Chapman, R. E. Chapman, P. A. Doherty, J. Leadley,
D. Tate, A. P. Walker & P. Watson

Printed and bound by
ColourOptions Ltd, York

Copyright © York Ornithological Club 2016

www.yorkbirding.org.uk

Cover Illustrations

Front Cover:	Kestrel © Terry Weston
Inside Back Cover:	Tree Sparrow © Terry Weston Great Grey Shrike © Nigel Stewart Spotted Flycatcher © Mark Coates Long-tailed Tit © Mark Coates Bullfinch © Antony Ward Redwing © Antony Ward
Outside Back Cover:	Barn Owl © Paul Greenwood Sparrowhawk © Paul Greenwood Little Owl © Nigel Stewart

Artwork

Pintail	© Jonathan Pomroy
Lapwing	© Jonathan Pomroy
Coal Tit	© Jonathan Pomroy

If you are interested in buying artwork from Jonathan, he can be contacted at jonathan@pomroy.plus.com.

All artwork and photographs in this report are published with the permission of the illustrator and photographers. Please respect their copyright.

Contents

Committee 2015	4
York Ornithological Club	5
Editorial	5
Highlights of 2015	8
Classified List	15
Earliest and latest dates for migrants	95
Rare Breeding Birds in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR	
<i>Compiled by Craig Ralston</i>	97
<i>Ringling Report 2015 Compiled by David Tate</i>	100
<i>York Cuckoos in 2015 Paul Doherty</i>	105
<i>Wheldrake Ings – Patchwork Challenge Duncan Bye</i>	108
<i>Peregrine vs Wigeon!</i>	113
<i>Redpoll in the York recording area David Tate</i>	114
<i>The Breeding Bird Survey in the Yorkshire (York)</i>	
<i>Region: 2015 update Rob Chapman</i>	125
<i>Species in the York recording area since 1966</i>	126
<i>Rarer species requiring descriptions</i>	130
<i>Guidelines for the submission of records</i>	132
<i>Contributors</i>	133
<i>Gazetteer of sites in the York recording area</i>	135

Committee 2015

President Professor Sir John Lawton

Chairman P. Watson

Email: chairman@yorkbirding.org.uk

Secretary J. Chapman

Email: secretary@yorkbirding.org.uk

Treasurer J. Dixon

Email: treasurer@yorkbirding.org.uk

Recorder A. Walker

Email: recorder@yorkbirding.org.uk

Committee Members

R. Chapman	T. Lawson
P. Doherty	J. Leadley
P. Fletcher	P. Reed
J. Lawson	N. Stewart

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 580 square miles around York. The area covers a range of habitats: wetlands (the Lower Derwent Valley), deciduous woodland (Hambleton and Howardian Hills), coniferous woodland (Yearsley and Ampleforth), lakes (Castle Howard and Heslington East), residual heathland (Allerthorpe, Skipwith and Strensall Commons), peat bog (Askham Bog) and the large agricultural areas of the vales of York and Pickering.

The Club has a membership of about 80 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, both within and outside the recording area and with more local visits on selected summer evenings. The annual Michael Clegg Memorial Bird Race takes place in January, when teams from across Yorkshire, including the YOC, focus on seeing as many species as possible in one day within their clubs' recording areas. Full details of the Club's activities can be found on the website – www.yorkbirding.org.uk. The Club unveiled its new website in October 2015; this also includes a Twitter feed (@yorkbirding) which is proving popular as a means of keeping up to date with the latest sightings in the area. In addition we have an active email group which shares information about local sightings.

Editorial

Welcome to York Ornithological Club's 2015 report, compiled and produced by the Editorial Committee. Following the successful publication of the 2014 report, it was decided that having an editorial committee responsible for compiling and publishing the annual report worked so well that the Club would continue to produce future reports in the same way.

How the report is produced

Records are received and collated, then split into sections which are distributed to the Assistant Editors who compile reports for their particular section. These are then returned to the Editorial Committee for checking of species report accuracy, editing, proofreading and the addition of articles, regular features and illustrations, before a final version of the report is produced.

New for this year, the section writers have used style sheets for each species, produced with the aim of ensuring that all species write ups follow a consistent pattern, enabling better year-on-year comparisons.

The list of birds seen in the York recording area since 1966 has also been reviewed and a number of species no longer appear on the list as we have been unable to verify the reports; for each of the species concerned we could find no

record of a description being submitted to the appropriate body (e.g. the YNU or BBRC) and subsequently accepted.

Despite receiving more records in 2015 than ever before, we are particularly interested in receiving more evidence of confirmed breeding of common resident breeding birds as these are often under reported. As with any breeding bird, please exercise discretion; sensitive records should be sent to the recorder.

Articles this year are by David Tate who has compiled the 2015 Ringing Report and a review of the status of Redpolls in the York recording area; Paul Doherty on The YOC Cuckoo Survey 2015; Duncan Bye who gives a very different perspective on local birding with his article about his year-long Patchwork Challenge at Wheldrake Ings; and Rob Chapman with an update on the BBS in the York region in 2015.

Acknowledgements

During 2015, Ian Traynor, who designed, built and hosted the club's first website, retired as webmaster after many years. The Committee would like to take the opportunity to thank him very much for the huge amount of time and effort he put in to the website, and for organising online sales of the Report. Thanks too to Rob Chapman who designed and built the new website, with input from Jono Leadley and Jane Chapman, and is now running it for the Club and to Jack Ashton-Booth and Tim Jones for running the Twitter feed.

Thank you to everyone who contributed records, without which the annual report would not be possible and YorkBirding email group through which local sightings are often publicised. Thank you to Derek Cooper for allowing us to use records from his online report 'Chasing the Sunrise' on a year's birding at Brayton Barff. Many thanks again to Elaine Gathercole who carries out the counts and provides WeBS data to the club for Castle Howard Lake and to Sean Garvey who provides the WeBS data for York University (Heslington East and West). This report benefits again from the ongoing efforts of Natural England staff in the Lower Derwent Valley, which is one of the most significant sites for birds in the York Area. We much appreciate their allowing us to use records posted on the LDV blog, for providing WeBS counts, and the annual Rare Breeding Bird Panel report for the Lower Derwent. Thanks to Nick Moran at the BTO for providing BirdTrack records. The Editorial Committee would also like to express its gratitude to Duncan Bye, Rob Chapman, Paul Doherty and David Tate for their articles.

Thank you to everyone who was involved with the preparation of the report for publication. Records from YorkBirding emails were collated by Paz Fletcher; Jono Leadley, Peter Watson, Jane Chapman and Paul Doherty extracted records from the LDV blog; and Rob Chapman formatted all records and collated them onto the master spreadsheet. Jono Leadley prepared and wrote the species write-up style sheets.

The species reports in the Classified List were written by the following individuals:

Jane Chapman	swans and geese
Ollie Metcalf	ducks
Peter Watson	game birds, divers, herons, egrets, storks and grebes
Ollie Metcalf	raptors (excluding owls)
Jane Chapman	crakes, rails, Moorhen, Coot and Crane
Jono Leadley	waders
Chris Gomersall	skuas, terns and gulls
Peter Reed	doves, pigeons, owls, woodpeckers and shrikes
Julia Lawson	crows, tits and larks
Paul Doherty	martins, swallows and warblers
Nigel Stewart	waxwings to thrushes, flycatchers, chats and wheatears
Duncan Bye	sparrows, wagtails, pipits, finches and buntings

Verification of records of scarcer species was undertaken by Andy Walker, Recorder and Jono Leadley, Assistant Recorder. Paul Doherty edited the Highlights of 2015. The weather report was prepared by David Tate using data from the electronics department at the University of York <http://weather.elec.york.ac.uk>.

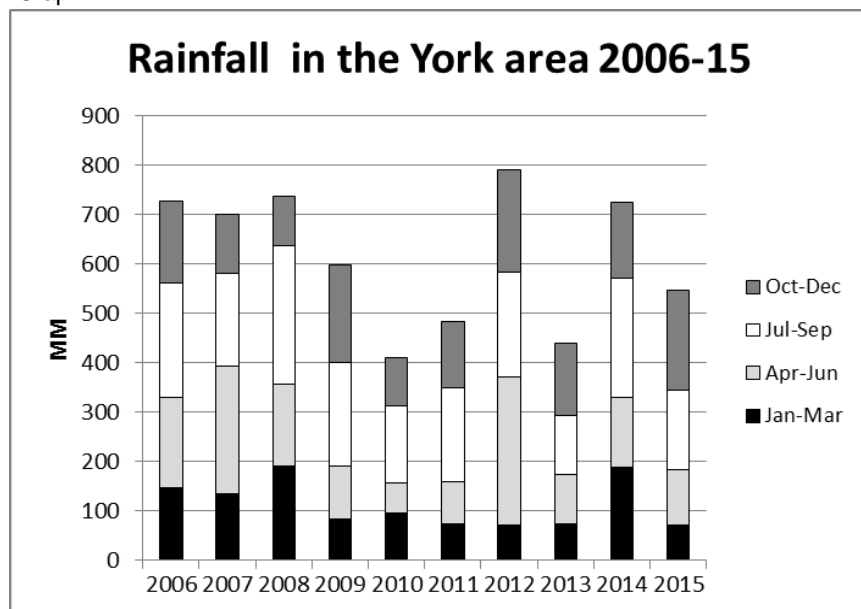
Many thanks to Jonathan Pomroy for his artwork, and to Duncan Bye, Monika Carrie, Jane Chapman, Mark Coates, Chris Gomersall, Paul Greenwood, John Heaton, Mark Hughes, Tim Jones, Tom Lowe, Jim Pewtress, Jonathan Pomroy, Craig Ralston, Nigel Stewart, David Tate, Paul Thorpe, Antony Ward, Tim Ward, and Terry Weston for their photos, which illustrate this report.

Highlights of 2015

Weather in 2015

The first three months of 2015 were much drier (see Graph 1) and slightly warmer than usual. Although the rainfall total for March was the highest since 2008 the amounts recorded in both January and February were more than 50% below the 2005-14 mean. January was mild (see Graph 2) with 15.5°C recorded on the 9th. Air frosts were limited to ten days during this late winter and early spring period. As a result there was an early start to the growing season; resident birds were not stressed by the weather and the lack of major floods in the LDV caused wintering wildfowl to focus on Bank Island, Wheldrake Ings and North Duffield Carrs where water can be retained.

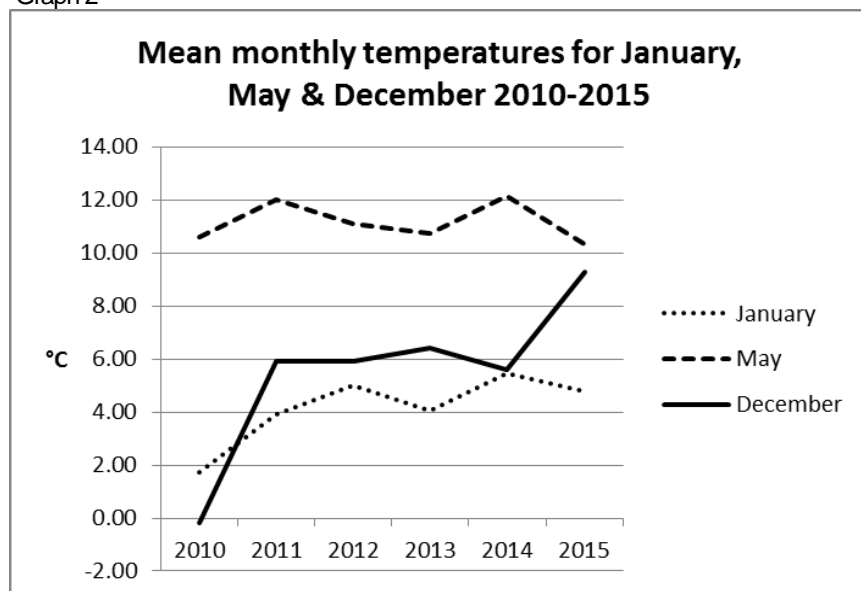
Graph 1



Dry conditions continued throughout April and rainfall was restricted to 9mm compared with the 2005-14 mean of 39mm. Temperatures for the month were average and the conditions favoured an early start for resident breeding birds. However, moderate conditions did not last and migrant breeders returned to a cool and unsettled May (see Graph 2). Although May had ten dry days the monthly rainfall total was double the ten-year mean due to heavy downpours on 10th/12th (33mm) and 22nd/24th (27mm). There was partial re-flooding of the river valley meadows resulting in a loss of some wader nests. Cool conditions continued

throughout June and July. The maximum temperature of the year was an unexceptional 28°C (1st July) and there were only four days above 25°C throughout the summer months. Most species of resident birds had a productive breeding season though Barn Owl and Kestrel struggled, however this was due to a shortage of voles rather than the weather. The conditions gave rise to an abundance of flying invertebrates which in turn resulted in a productive season for Swifts and hirundines. On the other hand those long distant migrants which nest in more exposed locations, such as Whitethroat and Willow Warbler, never fully recovered from the conditions in May and their breeding productivity was low.

Graph 2



The weather from early August to late October was generally quiet apart from 6th October which had 22mm of rain and proved to be the wettest day of the year. November was mild and wet with 78mm of rainfall compared with the 2005-14 mean of 52mm. December was even warmer (see Graph 2) with temperatures reaching 16°C on the 19th, a figure only bettered on nine days in May. Nationally, the year end was notable for the passage of three named Atlantic storms – Desmond (5th December), Eva (24-26th) and Frank (30th). Only Eva brought significant amounts (37mm) of rain to the York area and perhaps surprisingly the local rainfall total for December was less than that of 2011 and 2012. Unfortunately, rainfall totals on the Pennines and North Yorkshire Moors were much higher and as a result rivers passing through the York area burst their banks and flooding became extensive from 24th December and for several months afterwards.

January

The Michael Clegg Memorial Bird Race was held on 4th January and three teams in the Club area produced some good sightings, including **Long-eared Owls** at Strensall and Wheldrake, whilst a **Bewick's Swan** was seen at NDC (and again during the WeBS count on the 18th). Other quality birds seen during the Bird Race included **Pink-footed Goose**, **Jack Snipe**, **Short-eared Owl** and **Chiffchaff**. The **Whooper Swan** herd in the LDV reached 112 on the 6th and there were 9,000 **Wigeon** in the LDV early in the month. The peak for **Teal** came on the 24th when 8,500 were present at NDC. Careful checking revealed a **Green-winged Teal** amongst them; it was still present the next day (and reappeared on the 4th February). Four **Tundra Bean Geese** were at NDC on the 13th and NDC also hosted some quality birds of prey. A **Hen Harrier**, which had been present in December 2014, reappeared on the 8th, a **Rough-legged Buzzard** flew east on the 14th and there were three **Marsh Harriers** on the 25th. Gulls are always a feature of winter birdwatching and the Harewood Whin tip attracted large numbers to the Rufforth area. Its reputation as one of the best places in the country to view gulls continued with multiple sightings of ***Caspian**, **Iceland**, ***Kumlien's** and **Glaucous Gulls**. Several of them were also reported when they roosted at Wheldrake Ings. A **Kittiwake** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th and a **Mediterranean Gull** was near Rufforth Tip on the 22nd. The roost at CHL held 10,000 **Black-headed Gulls** on 4th January, with 4,000 **Common Gulls** there on the 17th. A **Waxwing** was at Cawood on the 16th and a **Raven** flew west over Skipwith Common the next day. The only **Bearded Tit** sighting of 2015 came on the 29th, when three birds were seen at Church Bridge, Melbourne. January also saw the biggest **Siskin** flocks of the year with 100 on the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on the 25th and at Stamford Bridge on the 27th. A flock of 200 **Yellowhammers** at Elvington on the 19th was easily the highest count of the year. Back at Church Bridge, the **Corn Bunting** roost peaked at 170 on the 29th.

February

There was another **Raven** sighting on the 6th, when two flew over Bolton Percy. A **Waxwing** was present briefly at Heslington East on the 8th, with another along Beckfield Lane, York on the 17th which remained to the month's end and then four birds were at Woodthorpe, York on the 25th. Several skeins of **Pink-footed Geese** totaling 1,640 birds moved through the LDV on the 9th, whilst four **Tundra Bean Geese** were at Bank Island on the 17th, then ten briefly on the 19th. Pride of place though went to a drake ***American Wigeon** seen briefly at NDC on the 14th. The same date produced the year's highest count of **Golden Plover** with 2,340 in the LDV and a flock in the Towton area peaked at 1,620 on the 22nd.

March

The gulls at Rufforth led the way in March. Following several **Iceland**, ***Kumlien's**, **Glaucous** and ***Caspian Gulls** in February, a first-winter ***Thayer's Gull** was picked out on the 2nd March and seen again the following day. Not surprisingly this is the first record for the club area. Not quite as notable, but still the first record

in our area since 2011, was a **Great Grey Shrike** at Heslington Tillmire on the 8th, which hunted the area until the 29th. An early **Wheatear** was seen at Bank Island on the 8th and the previous day saw two **Sand Martins** over Boroughbridge Road, York. The Beckfield Lane **Waxwing** remained throughout March, with up to four being seen between the 11th and the 22nd.

An impressive movement of **Whooper Swans** saw 761 pass through or over the LDV during the month. The highlight was on the 11th when 362 birds which had left the Ouse Washes earlier that day, arrived at Wheldrake Ings. They paused there until just before dusk, before continuing to the north. At the other end of the wildfowl spectrum the first record of **Garganey** for the year was a pair on Wheldrake Ings on the 20th. A **Kittiwake** was also at Wheldrake on the 20th and what may have been the same bird was seen flying west over Milford Common with a group of Black-headed Gulls. The next day, the 21st, saw two adult and a first-winter **Kittiwake** at Wheldrake. An early **Greenshank** flew over Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd and a **Rough-legged Buzzard** was at Thorpe Willoughby on the 23rd.

April

The **Waxwing** at Beckfield Lane was still present on 1st April, but then departed. An **Osprey** flew north over Wheldrake Ings on 4th April, with a second bird over Crockey Hill and the A64 on 13th April. The first **Swallows** to return were two at Newburgh Priory on the 4th and one at CHL the same day. An **Avocet** graced the lake at Heslington East on the 5th. **Meadow Pipits** were returning to their upland breeding grounds with 555 flying north past Whit Hill on the 6th and 1,109 the next day, when the first **House Martin** of the year joined them. The 8th and 9th saw a number of arrivals with the first records of **Blackcap**, **Willow Warbler**, **Cuckoo**, **Common Sandpiper** and **Little Ringed Plover**, and the first **Whitethroat** on the 10th. The spring "wanderings" of the Yorkshire **Cranes** resulted in three being seen over Strensall Common on the 10th. Five were at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th, a single there the next day and then five again in the LDV on the 22nd. A dark-bellied **Brent Goose** at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th and 13th, then moving to NDC on the 14th, was the first record for our area since 2012. The 12th provided the first **Yellow Wagtails** with birds at Bank Island and Whit Hill. There was also a **Ring Ouzel** flying northeast at Whit Hill on the 12th, a male on Clifton Rugby Club field on the 14th and another down Elvington Road in Wheldrake on the 22nd; these records reflecting an above average passage of Ring Ouzels nationally. The first **Swift** turned up at Ampleforth on the 17th, the earliest to the nest site there by five days. Gull numbers decreased markedly during the month and the last **Kittiwake** of the year flew over York on the 14th. The only **Bittern** this year came on the 22nd when a single flew north over Bank Island. In the LDV some 35 - 40 **Snipe** were drumming during the spring, a slightly higher number than last year. Another wader was added to the year list when a **Bar-tailed Godwit** joined the **Whimbrel** roosting at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th.

May

The five **Cranes** seen during April were at Ellerton on 1st May and then seen flying over NDC on the 2nd. A pair of **Avocets** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st then a single seen at Clifton Waterworks on the 8th. A **Spotted Redshank** called as it flew over Bank Island on the 8th and an adult **Mediterranean Gull** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th. The following day saw a ***Great White Egret** flying over Bank Island towards Wheldrake Ings. With the breeding season now in full swing a pair of **Stonechat** with two juveniles on Strensall Common during an MOD survey on 15th May was the only confirmed breeding record. A **Nightjar** at Brayton Barff was clearly a migrant. There was a welcome return for the **Pied Flycatcher** in 2015, after a blank year in 2014. Up to three males were singing and investigating nest holes around the lakes at Yearsley Moor from the 15th to the 27th. A **Mandarin** duck with four chicks was seen on the River Derwent at Crambeck on the 20th. The final **Osprey** of the spring flew over Melbourne on the 25th. **Quail** are often one of the last summer visitors to arrive and the first record of the year came on 26th May at Low Lilling Lane.

June

With most spring migration over attention turned to breeding birds. The **Quail** at Low Lilling Lane was heard again on the 7th and there were also singles in the LDV and at Milford Common. A **Nightjar** was at Allerthorpe Common on the 11th and up to three churring males were heard at Skipwith Common between 12th June and 20th July, though sadly there was no proof of breeding. At least three pairs of **Red Kites** showed signs of breeding, but without any evidence of success. Another recent arrival, the **Little Egret**, consolidated its presence, with three pairs in the LDV rearing a total of nine young. **Grasshopper Warblers** were later to arrive than usual, with one reeling at Ulleskelf Mires on the 10th and 17th and another at NDC on the 16th. On the 13th a ***Whiskered Tern** appeared briefly at Bank Island. From mid-June onwards the first returning waders began to be seen. It was a disappointing year for **Crossbills**, and a flock of 29 flying north at Towton on the 21st was the largest group reported. The month closed with a hint of autumn as hundreds of **Swifts** flew south at Whit Hill and Bank Island on the 28th and the 30th respectively. Three **Whimbrel** flying west over Whit Hill on the 28th were early autumn birds.

July

July can be one of the quieter months, but **Quail** were heard at Milford Common and at three places in the LDV. **Grasshopper Warblers** were reeling at Aughton Ings, Milford Common and Wharfe Ings, but the highlight was the **Corncrake** whose rasping calls were heard at Aughton Ings on 7-12th July. The first returning waders had been seen in June, but the pace picked up in July - five **Ruff** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd, with eight there the next day. Wheldrake also had seven **Black-tailed Godwits** on the 12th, the only other **Whimbrel** of the autumn on the 14th and a **Wood Sandpiper** on the 30th. **Herring Gulls** breeding in the

centre of York are a recent phenomenon and at the end of July the pair on Walmgate successfully fledged at least two young.

August

As usual, waders in the LDV were a focus in August. Wheldrake Ings had up to three **Greenshanks**, a **Wood Sandpiper** was seen on the 24th and seven **Black-tailed Godwits** were there at the month end. Wheldrake Ings had one or two **Garganey**, with three on the 23rd. An **Osprey** was at Clifton Ings on the 7th and passerine records in August included seven **Spotted Flycatchers** at Wheldrake on the 12th and five **Whinchats** on the 29th. The star bird of the month was an ***Aquatic Warbler** caught and ringed by the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th – a first for the recording area if accepted. That was followed by a **Wryneck** caught and ringed near New Earswick on the 24th; only the tenth record for the club area. Wheldrake scored again at the end of the month with up to three **Hobbies** seen there.

September

The month opened with **Mediterranean Gull** and **Pied Flycatcher** at North Duffield village on the 1st and a **Wood Warbler** singing at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd. The shivering song of the Wood Warbler is some contrast to the honking calls of a massed flock of **Greylag Geese**, but a huge flock of Greylags flew in to Heslington East on the 3rd, joining several hundred birds already present, bringing the total to 870, beating the previous peak count at the site by almost 400. An early **Short-eared Owl** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th and an **Osprey** flew over Elvington on the 16th. The first **Pink-footed Geese** of the autumn were 56 which flew southwest over Bank Island on the 20th. Waders continued to be seen with a single **Curlew Sandpiper** feeding around small pools by a muck heap near Thornton Ellers on the 24th and 25th.

October

Bank Island kicked the month off with a quality duo of **Osprey** and **Yellow-browed Warbler**. A large scale movement of **Lesser Redpolls** through the LDV started in mid-September; by the end of October, 800 had been ringed at Wheldrake Ings including 120 on 26th October. It's surely the case that the real numbers involved will have been into the thousands. On the 2nd they included a single **Common (Mealy) Redpoll**. A ***Great White Egret** flew over Milford Common on the 9th. Late records of **Hobbies** involved birds at Appleton Roebuck and Riccall on the 11th and the first **Whooper Swans** were seven at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th. The second half of the month saw the first real numbers of winter thrushes with 300 **Fieldfares** and 500 **Redwings** past Bank Island on the 29th. A ringtail **Hen Harrier** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th and then at Bank Island the next morning.

November

November saw the expected influx of wildfowl with 900 **Pink-footed Geese** at Bank Island from the 2nd to the 4th and by the end of the month the LDV had 6,500 **Wigeon** and 4,600 **Teal**. Quality birds included two **Tundra Bean Geese** at Bank Island on the 7th and two **White-fronted Geese** of the European race *albifrons* at Wheldrake Ings on 17th November and seen again at Bank Island on the 28th. The annual late autumn movement of **Woodpigeons** was particularly impressive with 154,705 counted flying southwest past Whit Hill, peaking at 30,640 on the 12th. The same date also saw a **Common (Mealy) Redpoll** at Melbourne. A **Cetti's Warbler** was calling at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st and two were present on the 24th. The third ***Great White Egret** of the year appeared at Gilling Lakes, Yearsley Moor and Gilling Beck on the 29th.

December

December opened with the **Great White Egret** remaining until the 11th and one, possibly two, **Cetti's Warblers** at Wheldrake Ings until at least the 20th. What were probably the same two **White-fronted Geese** recorded in November were seen again at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th. At the start of the month the six **Common Snipe** at Heslington East were outnumbered by seven **Jack Snipe**. The traditional **Pied Wagtail** roost on Parliament Street in the centre of York peaked at 700 mid-month. The only **Hawfinch** of the year was at Ampleforth churchyard from the 11th to the 20th. The end of the month was notable for extensive flooding, with record river levels recorded on the Foss and the Wharfe. One result was the extraordinary sight of a **Little Grebe** swimming over Hull Road Park on the 27th. A poor year for **Scaup** closed with only the second record - a female at NDC on the 31st.

Records awaiting confirmation by the BBRC or YNU are marked with an asterisk (*). These are detailed in the relevant species reports and updates on their acceptance will be given in future reports.

Please note: Records from previous years that have been accepted are detailed at the end of the classified list.

Classified List

The sequence and scientific nomenclature follow that of the British List maintained by the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU). This report uses the version of the British List, revised and updated as a result of taxonomic changes, as at May 2016. 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 classified list reflects this order of species. For example, falcons now follow woodpeckers. As in the 2014 report, the BOU's British (English) vernacular names are used throughout for consistency (with the exception of Greater Canada Goose, which will continue to be referred to as Canada Goose); this means that a number of species' names are no longer preceded by 'Common' or 'Eurasian', e.g. Common Eider is now referred to simply as Eider. The status of birds in the York recording area has also been reviewed and some revisions made to reflect changes in, for example breeding status or increasing/decreasing rarity.

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
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	Wetland Bird Survey (BTO)
WWT	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
WTW	Water Treatment Works
YNU	Yorkshire Naturalists' Union
YOC	York Ornithological Club
YWT	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

In addition, the following nature reserves appear as sites in the report:

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 Heslington East campus of York University is referred to simply as 'Heslington East' throughout this report, while the original campus site is now referred to as 'Heslington West'.

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 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 CHL are conducted every month but only data for January–April and September–December are normally included in the tables in this report unless the species is present throughout the year. WeBS counts for the University - comprising the combined totals for Heslington East and Heslington West (HES) – for several species are included again. In these tables a '-' indicates that no count was made; zero counts are shown as '0'. Any other noteworthy counts are referred to in the text. Dates for WeBS counts in 2015 are shown below

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	18th	8th	8th	19th	17th	15th	20th	16th	17th	18th	15th	13th
LDV	18th	8th	8th	-	-	-	-	-	-	18th	15th	17th
HES	18th	8th	8th	-	17th	14th	19th	16th	14th	18th	13th	15th

For more detailed information on the breeding of scarce and rare birds in the LDV refer to the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) Report on page 97.

The Red/Amber conservation status of birds has been updated as per BOCC – 4 [British Birds 108 • December 2015 • 708–746].

Records submitted to BirdGuides are 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. Observers' initials are included for less common species, however, the majority of BirdTrack records relate to commoner species which normally just merit a summary.

The systematic list also includes those species recorded in at least three of the previous ten years even if they were not recorded in 2015. The information given for these shows the year last recorded.

Category E records, including the University's free-flying geese and escapes are listed in Appendix A, while hybrids are listed in Appendix B. The birds listed in Appendix C are included for completeness, but a description has not been forthcoming. If a description is submitted, we will include any additional accepted records in a future report.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

As in previous years, the largest numbers of Mute Swans outside the breeding season occurred at CHL and in the LDV. Breeding records were received from a number of sites away from these strongholds.

In the first winter period, on 7th January 152 birds were present in the LDV, 56 of them at Wheldrake Ings. Ninety two birds remained into February, with resident pairs becoming more aggressive and driving off last year's broods. During March the first nest building was seen on the 4th at NDC. There were 79 present throughout the site on the 22nd, including a non-breeding herd of 32 at Wheldrake Ings. Similar numbers were recorded during April. The peak count for CHL in the first winter period was 65 during the WeBS count on 18th January. Excluding the WeBS counts the highest number recorded was 54 on 12th April. The only other site where more than ten were recorded was at Heslington East where numbers increased to a peak of 20 on 6th February declining to 11 on the 19th then to just the resident pair by the beginning of March.

Nesting was confirmed at Allerthorpe GP, Bishop Dyke, Bishopthorpe (River Ouse), Castle Howard Arboretum (on reservoir pond), CHL, Heslington East, Melbourne, Milford Common, NDC and Wheldrake Ings. The first cygnets seen were a brood of five at CHL on 16th May; while in the LDV the pair at Top Pond, NDC were the first to hatch with six cygnets on 20th May, with the two Wheldrake broods (of seven and five) hatching on the 21st and 27th respectively. A family party with five cygnets was at the north pond at Milford Common on the 26th. Two adults with six small young were at Castle Howard Arboretum Lake on 10th June and another pair with five young was on the River Foss, Huntington Road on 24th June. Five young were also reared at Bishop Dyke. Unfortunately the Heslington East pair failed this year. During June, five pairs with 27 cygnets were in the LDV, remaining in the valley during July and August. Six cygnets were colour ringed at Wheldrake Ings on 8th September.

Post breeding, at CHL, numbers built to 65 in July, remaining fairly constant until November when numbers increased to 83 on the 15th (the annual maximum) with a similar number again in December. In the LDV, returning birds increased numbers to 64 during October, with 41 at Thorganby on the 27th. Eighty four were present on 30th November. On 30th December there were 89, with a herd of 34 at Thorganby Ings on the last day of the year. Flooding along the River Wharfe between Cawood and Ulleskelf also attracted some birds, peaking at 13 on 23rd December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Mute Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	65	57	42	49	26	32	65	69	64	68	83	81
LDV	122	101	72	-	-	-	-	-	-	64	84	89
HES	3	12	3	2	-	2	3	2	2	2	2	2

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus**Amber listed**Declining winter visitor and passage migrant*

The only reports this year all relate to a single adult bird, first seen on the Bird Race on 4th January at NDC (RCn et al), and there again on the 5th and 6th with the Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* herd (AW) and again at NDC on 18th Jan during the WeBS count.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus**Amber listed**Winter visitor and passage migrant*

More than 90 of the herd present in December 2014 were at NDC on 4th January, with a maximum of 112 on the 6th and 101 present on the 24th. In February up to 80 were present all month, with 60 at NDC and 20 in the Refuge at Wheldrake Ings. Twenty one flew northeast over Bank Island on the 19th. The herd departed earlier than usual in March, decreasing to 20 by the 15th and just three on the 21st.

The spring passage saw an incredible 761 birds pass through or over the LDV during March (compared with 357 in 2014) starting with a herd of 62 passage birds pausing on the Refuge on the 1st. Twenty two flew north through the valley on the 6th, and 12 on the 8th. Coinciding with a big clear out of birds from the Ouse Washes on the 11th and 12th, 60+ flew north early over Askham Richard before 362 arrived at Wheldrake Ings late morning, moving on just before dusk on the 11th. On the 12th 200+ flew northwest over Elvington. Away from the LDV, on 11th March, 15 flew north over Milford Common and 34 flew north over Wharfe Ings. Further passage birds included eight at NDC, seven flying northwest over Brayton Barff and six over Allerthorpe Wood - all on the 14th, then 35 at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st. Fifteen were seen from Whit Hill flying north on 6th April, while 35 were seen flying over Ampleforth on the 7th.

During April a single immature lingered at Wheldrake Ings to the 26th, spending part of the month with Mute Swans *Cygnus olor* on the River Derwent at NDC.

The first seven of the autumn flew south at Wheldrake Ings on 17th October followed by five over Bank Island on the 19th. Fifteen flew south over East Cottingham on the 26th, then 41 south over Thorganby on the 27th and 32 over Bank Island on the 28th. The first twelve of the LDV's 'resident' herd were present at NDC on the 29th. During November the herd built up to 109 by the 24th. Elsewhere during November, 35 in three groups flew west over Flaxton on the 3rd, 15 were seen from Whit Hill on the 17th and six were at CHL on the 22nd. In December, 101 were present between NDC and Ellerton on the 20th. Seven were at Bolton Ings on 2nd December, and five there on the 3rd, then two at Wharfe Ings on the 23rd.

Monthly WeBS counts for Whooper Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	101	80	20	-	-	-	108	101

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis**Amber listed**Scarce winter visitor*

All records in 2015 were of the 'Tundra' race *Anser fabalis rossicus*. Four landed at NDC on 13th January (MFJ), and four were found at Bank Island on 17th February with two Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* (LM, CSR) which then flew towards Wheldrake Ings. Ten were present for a brief period at Bank Island on the 19th, along with the presumed same two Pink-footed Geese (LDV Blog).

The only sighting in the second winter period was of two *rossicus* at Bank Island on 7th November (CSR, FM).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus**Amber listed**Winter visitor and passage migrant*

In the first winter period, two birds were at CHL on 3rd January, and 27 at Bank Island on the 7th, then 60 flew in to Wheldrake Ings on the 8th. One was at Bank Island on 14th Feb, with three there on the 17th and four were at Rufforth Airfield on the 14th also.

As in previous years, spring passage birds were recorded primarily from late January to early March. A large north-westerly movement occurred on the afternoon of 9th February when 1,640 birds moved through the LDV, with 1,340 in several skeins seen at Grimston on the same day (possibly involving the same birds). Then on 5th March more than 2,000 Pink-footed Geese moved over NDC in the first two hours after dawn.

Few birds lingered on into April; two were present at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th, with three there from the 16th to the 18th and six from the 19th to the 28th. One was reported at Wheldrake Ings from the 6th to 12th May and a single bird at CHL on the 14th.

The first returning birds in the autumn were a skein of 56 that flew high southwest over Bank Island on 20th September, followed later in the day by 120 flying south over NDC.

During November, 900 birds were present at Bank Island from the 2nd to the 4th, roosting on the floods and feeding with the 'local' Greylag Geese *Anser anser* on nearby arable fields. Up to 80 birds remained in the Wheldrake Ings area from mid-November, increasing to 100+ by 13th December and 161 there from the 20th to the year's end.

Notable counts (150 and more) were:

6th January, NDC - 200 flying southwest

7th January, SHL - c.230 flying NNW

14th January, Bank Island - 120 flying north, then 300 north on the 17th

14th January, Forest of Galtres golf club – 200 over

6th February, Bank Island - 300 passing north

9th February, Bubwith Ings - 100 over, with a large movement of 1,640 moving north-westerly through the LDV in the afternoon. Several skeins totalling 1,340 (possibly the same birds) flew north/northwest over Grimston.

11th February, Bank Island - 180 flying north; Rufforth - 200 over in two skeins; Scarcroft Road, York - 178 flying NNW
 25th February - Skipwith Common – 200 flying west
 5th March, NDC - 2000+ moving over in the first two hours after dawn
 9th March, Melbourne - 350+, and 200+ over on the 10th
 26th September, LDV - 362 headed southeast in four separate skeins
 29th October, LDV - 300+ at dusk (south over Melbourne) and 200+ over Wheldrake Ings on the 31st
 25th October, Whit Hill - 254 flying north, and 330 flying southeast on the 31st
 2nd – 4th November, Bank Island - 900 present
 11th November, Wheldrake Ings - 300+; 85 were still present on the 22nd, then 79 to the month's end
 18th November, Whit Hill - 220 flying southeast
 20th November, Milford Common - 226 flying northwest
 20th December, Wheldrake Ings - 161 present

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*
Scarce winter visitor

Red listed (race)

The only records were from the second winter period. Two birds of the European race *albifrons* were at Wheldrake Ings on 17th November (LDV Blog), then seen at Bank Island on the 28th (DB). Two adults (presumed to be the same as those present in November) were seen at Wheldrake Ings on 20th December (JLe).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*
Resident feral breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Amber listed

In the early part of the year, more than 1,000 were present across the LDV throughout January and into February, decreasing to 500 by the middle of the month. Numbers fluctuated wildly at CHL during the year with 310 the maximum early in the year.

The first goslings reported were five on 16th April on the River Ouse in York followed by many other records of goslings at Heslington East, the LDV, Ozendyke Ings and SHL.

Post breeding, the June WeBS count at CHL of 579 was much higher than in 2014. However, the most astonishing record came on the Club's evening walk round Heslington East on 3rd September when a huge flock flew in to join several hundred birds already present bringing the total to 870, beating the previous peak count at the site by almost 400! On 17th September, 588 were at CHL (the peak count for the year), while 1,040 were in the LDV on 20th September. In early October 700 were present at Bank Island, with 1,020 throughout the LDV on the 15th. Twelve hundred were at Wheldrake Ings on 15th November with an estimated 1,700+ in the LDV on the 24th. The highest count was 2,150 at Wheldrake Ings on 12th December.

Individual site counts of 200 or more away from the LDV (and in addition to WeBS counts) were:

5th January, West Ings - 450

6th January, Elvington Sewage Works - 353

7th January, Wharfe Ings - 505; 270 on the floods on the 13th and 420 on the 18th

16th January, Heslington East - 200

30th January, CHL - c.300

13th March, Strensall - 300 flying low heading north

27th June, CHL - 384

2nd August, Skipwith Common - up to 400

3rd August, Heslington East - 207; with 260 on the 5th, 485 on the 13th, 300 min on the 15th and again on the 19th, then 415 on the 31st

3rd September, Heslington East - 870 (site record) and 570 on the 8th

17th September, Scagglethorpe - c. 500

6th December, Bolton Ings - 400+

20th December, Byland - 376

Monthly WeBS counts for Greylag Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	310	60	22	9	18	579	115	0	588	69	3	16
LDV	1057	1130	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	983	1200	2023
HES	171	129	65	-	49	100	221	320	443	239	26	16

(No WeBS data was received for this species in March from the LDV)

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Resident feral breeder and winter visitor

Canada Geese were seen at many bodies of water including ponds and gravel pits during the year, with CHL, Heslington East and the LDV again supporting the largest numbers. Between 450 and 500 were in the LDV throughout January, with most of these present at NDC in early February. At CHL the first winter period peak count was 350 during the WeBS count on 8th February.

Nesting birds were seen during March and successful breeding reported from a number of areas, with broods seen at Bishopthorpe, CHL, Clifford's Tower (York), East Cottingham, Heslington East, Milford Common, Ozendyke Ings and Wheldrake Ings from early May onwards.

Post breeding, as in 2014, numbers using Heslington East and West rose markedly in August and September (see WeBS table). The peak count for the year at CHL came in October when 386 were present on the 18th. In the LDV, numbers also built up during October with 350 through the site by the 31st. The peak count for the second winter period was 490 on 20th December, most birds being split between NDC and Wheldrake Ings. Much lower numbers were reported in December at CHL than in 2014.

Individual site counts of 150 or more (excluding WeBS counts) were:

25th January, CHL -180 and 300 on the 30th

1st February, NDC - 400 and again on the 7th

27th June, CHL- 196

31st August, Heslington East - 175

3rd September, Heslington East - 169

18th October, CHL - 386 and 203 on the 31st

5th November CHL - 200

16th November, Wheldrake Ings - 250 and 122 on the 22nd

Monthly WeBS counts for Canada Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	195	350	98	67	46	230	213	45	123	345	98	28
LDV	472	322	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	320	370	490
HES	37	38	36	-	43	73	40	120	140	35	27	0

(No WeBS data was received for this species in March from the LDV)

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Amber listed

Occasional winter visitor and feral wanderer

Away from York University where there is a free-flying flock, one was reported from CHL on 27th June and one was seen flying with flock of Greylag Geese *Anser anser* over Rufforth on 14th October, then one spent a month with the geese flocks at Wheldrake Ings from late November; all presumed to be feral birds. The 26 seen at NDC on 30th December were presumed to be the University flock.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

A 'dark-bellied' individual, seen on the 12th and 13th April at Wheldrake Ings (DB), then again on the 14th at NDC (AW) was the first sighting of this species in the area since 2012.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Feral breeder and occasional visitor

Two pairs with last year's offspring (ten from the two successful breeding attempts) were seen on 1st January and remained on the pond at East Cottingham all month. Seven were seen flying over nearby on the 11th. An immature bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 4th April, while a single was present on a pond at East Cottingham from mid-April through to the end of May. A single was at Wheldrake on 10th June and again on the 14th. One roosted there on 7th July and was also seen on the 24th and 26th, then one with a flock of Greylags *Anser anser* on 10th August. Away from the LDV the only records were of a single bird seen regularly with the mixed goose flock at Heslington East between 9th July and 8th October.

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

After a delayed passage in the first winter period of 2014, peak passage through the LDV was much earlier in 2015. Sixty six were already present at NDC on 3rd January, rising to 124 by the 11th. A further 115 were reported on the 11th from Ellerton, although, given the proximity of the two sites, a certain amount of overlap may have occurred between the counts. The peak count was 156 present throughout the LDV on 19th January, and 147 were still present on 17th February. By 1st April numbers had reduced to 100 birds throughout the LDV. Other records away from the LDV in the first winter period were one at Cawood Park seen on the 2nd and again on 7th January; five at Wharfe Ings on the 4th and one there on the 11th. In February two were at Newburgh Priory on the 8th and two long-staying birds at Heslington East first reported on the 25th that remained there until 22nd April, while in March one was at Wharfe Ings on the 11th.

Records from May onwards were patchy, and there were no reports of young birds or successful breeding, however five territorial males were in the areas surrounding Wheldrake Ings. Birds were present in the LDV throughout the breeding season up until July when there were no records. The maximum count in this period was on 12th May at Wheldrake Ings when 12 birds were present. Records away from the LDV were of two pairs on West Ings on 12th May and several records from Newburgh Priory, peaking with four on 15th May.

The first returning bird was an unseasonal single on Wheldrake Ings on 21st August. In November 15 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd building to 46 by the month's end, while the peak from the second winter period was 50 on 15th December throughout the LDV. Three were on Bolton Ings on 5th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Shelduck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	122	93	67	-	36	50

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata**Scarce resident breeder (Introduced/ Category C)*

Increasing in the area and reported from more sites, more regularly and in higher numbers than previous years. The first record of the year was a drake at Beningborough on 4th March, followed by four on 7th March at CHL and one from the 20th to the 22nd at Wharfe Ings. In April two were on the River Ouse near Beningborough/Redhouse from the 5th to the 8th and a pair was at CHL on the 30th, remaining until 16th May.

On 20th May, an adult with four chicks was seen on the River Derwent at Crambeck, and, for the third year in a row an eclipse drake moulted on Wheldrake Ings from 9th-30th June (presumed to be the same bird). The year's high count of 12 female/immatures occurred on New River Pond, CHL on 27th June. Mandarin continued to be reported from CHL until the last count of a single drake on 25th October. Nine were present at Beningborough also on 25th October.

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

A very common wintering species, with the LDV again holding nationally important numbers. The year got off to a good start with a count of 9,000 in the LDV in early January, whilst the highest January count from CHL was 593 during the WeBS count on the 18th. In February the peak count in the LDV was 8,100 on the 12th and at CHL 541 on the 8th. March saw a continued reduction of numbers, with a maximum count of 7,500 from the LDV in early March, decreasing to 1,700 by the 27th; 117 were present at CHL on the 8th.

Away from the LDV and CHL, counts over 50 during the first winter period were:

5th January, West Ings - 500

11th January, Ozendyke Ings - 220

13th January, Wharfe floods - 600 rising to 740 by the 18th

25th January, Church Ings, Acaster Malbis - 142

29th January, Wharfe Ings - 220

18th February Ozendyke Ings - 76

1st March, Bolton Ings - 53, with 70 on the 12th, rising to 96 by the 15th

8th March, Wharfe floods - 56

In the breeding season, eight pairs remained in the LDV during May, but only two pairs stayed on to June and July, with a lone female reported on Breighton Meadows on 12th July.

The first returning autumn birds were 22 at CHL on 9th September. By 27th September 65 were on Wheldrake Ings, with 43 present on CHL by the 17th. October peaks were 600 on the 31st in the LDV, and 372 at CHL on the 18th. 6,500 were in the LDV on 30th November and 501 at CHL on the 15th. Birds also started to arrive along the Wharfe with 91 at Bolton Ings on 16th November and 188 there on the 22nd, with 127 on Wharfe Ings on the 26th. Unusual records in November came from Wistow Clough with eight on 7th November and The Stank with two on 21st November. Numbers continued to rise in to December, with 644 on CHL on the 13th and a peak of 8,000 in the LDV on the last day of the year. Counts from the Wharfe peaked with 320 on Bolton Ings on the 23rd and 100 on West Ings on the 27th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Wigeon

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	593	541	117	2	43	372	501	644
LDV	6760	6344	6700	-	-	540	4500	8000

American Wigeon *Anas americana**Vagrant*

A drake was seen briefly at NDC on 14th February (LDV Blog), the first since 2010. If accepted by the YNU, this will be the fifth record for the area. An update will follow in future reports.

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

Common in the LDV, and at CHL, with some along the River Wharfe, but scarce elsewhere. January high counts were 177 on the 18th in the LDV and 156 at CHL on the 24th. Records from elsewhere included three at West Ings on 4th January, three at Ozendyke Ings on the 11th, seven on the 17th at Church Ings, Acaster Malbis, 16 on the Wharfe floods on the 18th and four at Heslington East on the 27th. February high counts were 173 on CHL on the 8th and 121 at Wheldrake Ings on the 27th. The only record elsewhere was of six at Heslington East on the 3rd. March saw a decline in numbers at CHL with a maximum of 63 on the 8th, but also an increase in the LDV to 231 on the 22nd. Other records included three at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 8th March, seven at Heslington East on the 20th and one at Newburgh Priory on the 29th. Numbers at CHL continued to decline in April to 26 on the 12th, but peaked in the LDV with 344 on the 4th. Other records comprised four at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on the 4th and five at Heslington East on the 22nd.

It was a successful breeding year for the species in the LDV with 92 pairs present and over 200 ducklings seen. It was also the first year in which the number of breeding pairs of Gadwall on Wheldrake Ings was greater than that of Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*. The only other location with confirmed breeding was CHL, where one pair was seen with ducklings.

Numbers began to increase again in October with 92 at CHL on the 31st, and 26 in the LDV on the same date. The only other record came from the Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe with three on 4th October. November saw further increases with 150 at CHL on the 5th and 29 at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th. Other records came from the Wharfe with 58 at Bolton Ings on the 18th, 11 at West Ings and four at Wharfe Ings both on the 26th. In December the peak count at CHL was 120 on the 13th, and 43 in the LDV on the 30th. There were four on West Ings on 7th December, 18 on Bolton Ings on the 17th and a single at Heslington East on the 19th. See also the RBBP report on page 97.

Monthly WeBS counts for Gadwall

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	130	173	63	10	33	66	112	120
LDV	177	99	231	-	-	26	29	43

Teal *Anas crecca**Amber listed**Winter visitor and resident breeder*

A common wintering visitor, with large numbers wintering in the LDV. The year started well with 8,500 in the LDV on 24th January, including an unusual bird with an all-white head. Further high counts were 350 at Elvington water treatment works on the 6th, 125 on Bolton Ings on the 11th, 350 on the Wharfe floods on the 13th, 420 at CHL on the 18th and 152 on Church Ings, Acaster Malbis on the 25th. Numbers declined quickly in February, with 5,100 in the LDV on 12th February the month's peak count, but elsewhere the only significant flocks were 70 on the

Wharfe floods on the 4th and 147 at Castle Howard on the 18th. March saw a continuing tailing off of numbers, and 5,000 in the LDV in early March had reduced to 3,000 by the 20th; it was noted that the departure of wintering birds was earlier than usual this year. The only other counts of note were 30 at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe on 7th March and 30 on the Tillmire on the 18th.

During the breeding season, in May a few pairs were scattered through the LDV, while four pairs were present at Wheldrake Ings on 1st June. There were no records received of confirmed breeding however.

The first returning birds began to appear in early August, with the highest count of the month being 180 on Wheldrake Ings on the 24th. Numbers continued to build into September, with 650 in the LDV on the 27th and a further 250 on Skipwith Common on the same date. On 17th September 31 were at CHL. Numbers stayed steady in October with 68 at CHL on the 18th, and 800 in the LDV on the 31st. Numbers increased dramatically throughout November, with the first four-figure count, 1,050, reached on the 11th in the LDV, quadrupling to 4,600 by the 24th. Elsewhere there were 200 on Bolton Ings on the 14th, 110 at CHL on the 15th and 120 on West Ings on the 26th. December counts peaked at 6,000 in the LDV on the 20th, with half of those on Wheldrake Ings. Forty eight were on Milford Common on 7th December, 250 at CHL on the 13th and 260 on Bolton Ings on the 27th with a further 80 on West Ings on the same date.

Monthly WeBS counts for Teal

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	420	147	2	0	31	68	110	250
LDV	6318	4756	5000	-	-	770	4150	6000

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

Rare visitor

A drake was present at NDC on 24th January (JLe) which stuck around until the 25th and then appeared on the river at NDC on 4th February; the first confirmed sighting in the area since 2011.

Another or the same returning bird was present on 20th December at Wheldrake Ings (JLe). Both of these records fit in with a pattern of a drake Green-winged Teal touring Yorkshire extensively, visiting sites with high numbers of wildfowl.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and resident breeder

The most widespread duck in the York area. The peak count was 2,220 in the LDV on 19th January, and other three-figure counts came from CHL with 325 on the 18th (peak count for the year) and 261 across Heslington East and West on the same date. There were 2,209 in the LDV on 8th February, 168 at CHL and 144 at Heslington East on the same date (WeBS). March saw over 1,000 still present in the LDV throughout the month, but only 78 remained at CHL by 8th March and 94 at Heslington (East and West) on the same date.

Breeding records came from Wheldrake Ings with an estimated 31 pairs and other breeding records came from Allerthorpe Water Park; Bank Island; Biggin, Bishopthorpe; CHL; Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe; Frog Hall (Allerthorpe); Hagg Wood; Heslington East; Hull Road Park, York; Melbourne Ings; Milford Common; NDC; Pocklington Canal, (Melbourne); SHL; Thornton Ings; Whitwell Grange and Willow Woods, Malton.

Post breeding, in July, August and September there was a build-up of moulting birds at CHL, Heslington (East and West) – annual peak count of 255 on 14th September – and Wheldrake Ings. October saw a marked decline in numbers with moulting and migrant birds moving on before wintering birds arrived. Numbers built up in the LDV during November so that by the 30th there were 1,800 throughout the site. Elsewhere, 165 were on the Wharfe floods on 26th November. December peaks were 1,400 at Wheldrake Ings on 20th December and 1,000 at NDC on the 23rd.

Monthly WeBS counts for Mallard

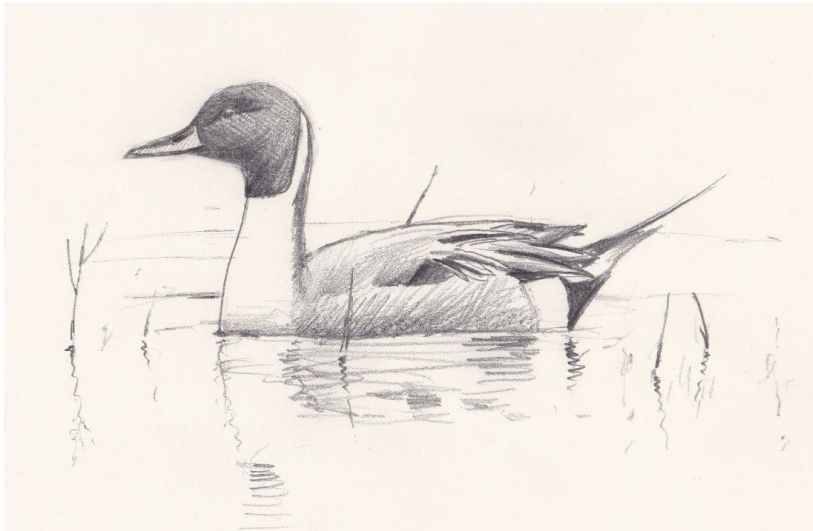
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	325	168	78	45	37	62	274	146	92	57	45	79
LDV	1605	2209	978	-	-	-	-	-	-	97	1160	2000
HES	261	144	94	-	74	130	218	276	255	182	181	127

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and scarce breeder

A common species in the LDV but irregular elsewhere. January's peak count in the LDV was 231 on the 18th. Other high counts were 60 on the Wharfe floods on the 13th and 35 at Church Ings, Acaster Malbis on the 25th. Counts in February were sparse, but 192 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd. An unusual record was



of two on Newburgh Priory Lake on 6th March, while the high count for the month was 242 on the 22nd at Wheldrake Ings. By 2nd April there were only 21 left on Wheldrake Ings and just a single pair remained by 15th May with no sign of breeding.

The first returning bird was a single on Wheldrake on 5th September. No further reports were received until October when singles were recorded at Bank Island, CHL, Wheldrake Ings and two present at Newburgh Priory Lake on the 18th. By 24th November numbers had built in the LDV to 77, and continued to increase into December peaking at 267 in the LDV on the 30th. Elsewhere there were 46 on Bolton Ings on the 23rd.

Monthly WeBS counts for Pintail

	Jan	Feb	Mar		Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	231	33	242		-	67	267

(No WeBS data was received for this species in October)

Garganey *Anas querquedula* *Scarce migrant breeder*

Amber listed

A poor year for the species. The first record was of a pair on Wheldrake Ings on 20th March, with a male calling there on 22nd. Two pairs were present at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April, while away from the LDV the only birds were a pair at CHL on 30th April, seen there again on 3rd May.

It was a disappointing breeding season with only one possible breeding pair present in the LDV; although a single juvenile was present in July and three in August it is possible these were bred elsewhere. The last record was early, with two at Wheldrake Ings on 24th August. See also the RBBP report on page 97.

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

Amber listed

Like most dabbling ducks, common in the LDV and scarce elsewhere. The highest count for January was 156 in the LDV on the 8th. Elsewhere there were three on Wharfe Ings on 3rd January, four on West Ings on the 4th and six on the Wharfe floods on the 13th. February's peak count was 152 on Wheldrake Ings on the 8th. On 22nd March there were 201 across the LDV and 147 were at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April.

There were five confirmed breeding pairs in the LDV with 12 young seen, and a further 39 probable and 23 possible pairs present.

Numbers in the second winter period didn't reach double figures until 4th October with 16 on Wheldrake Ings, followed by an October peak of 21 across the LDV on the 18th. The November peak count was 115 across the LDV on the 24th. Elsewhere, on 17th November there were 11 on West Ings and ten there on the 26th. Numbers increased in December away from the LDV with 49 on Bolton Ings on the 1st, an unusual record of a single at Flamingoland on the 12th, and a single at West Ings on the 27th. The monthly peak count from the LDV was 81 on 30th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Shoveler

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
LDV	104	152	201	-	-	21	95	81

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Red listed

Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers

An unusual year for the species, with low counts from the traditional strongholds of the LDV and CHL, but record counts from Heslington East. The January high counts of 30 on the 16th and 31 on the 27th at Heslington East far surpassed the nine at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th and four at CHL on the 30th (which remained until at least 8th February). With 33 in the LDV on 8th February, numbers continued to increase at Heslington East, peaking at 44 on the 14th with 42 still there on the 20th. March saw continued increases in the LDV with 30 on the 3rd, while there were 35 at Heslington East on the 7th. Four were on Heslington West from 15th March to the end of the month. By April numbers had declined to two pairs on Wheldrake Ings on the 9th, a pair at Heslington East on the 13th and a single female at Heslington West on the 24th.

The only breeding record came from Heslington West where a female with one chick was seen on 21st June.

The second winter period saw numbers start to build in November with a single on Milford Common on the 3rd, 12 at CHL on the 15th and seven at Heslington East on the 22nd. In December there were 16 at Heslington East on the 15th, 38 at Bank Island on the 20th, and lastly, 19 at NDC on the 31st.

Monthly WeBS counts for Pochard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	3	4	1	0	0	0	12	1
LDV	3	3	30	-	-	0	0	38
HES	26	14	35	-	0	0	8	16

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers

The first winter period saw fairly average numbers in the area, but again showed the increasing importance of Heslington East for diving ducks, especially in years where water levels are low in the LDV. January peaks were 155 at CHL on 18th January and 55 at Heslington East on the same date while elsewhere there were five on West Ings on the 4th, 33 at Elvington water treatment works on the 6th, three on Wharfe Floods on the 13th and 28 on Dringhouses Pond on the 17th. Numbers in the LDV didn't get above single figures in the month. In February there were the 156 on CHL on the 8th, with 92 at Heslington East on the same date. Again no sites in the LDV held above single figures. Numbers began to decline in March with peaks of just 61 at CHL and 67 at Heslington East on the 8th. However there were 65 in the LDV on 22nd March. Migrant birds were recorded at Milford Common with four on 8th March and 32 at Old Gravel Pits,

Allerthorpe also on the 8th, three at Acaster on the 25th and two on Skipwith Common on the 27th. Peaks in April were 40 at Heslington East on the 4th, 51 pairs across the LDV on the 28th and 85 on CHL on the 30th. Other records included six at Milford Common on 8th April, two at Castle Howard Arboretum on the 18th and 15 at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on the 19th.

Breeding records came from Wheldrake Ings with three successful pairs and additional single pairs at CHL and Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe. Birds were present at Heslington East throughout the breeding season but didn't breed, with numbers peaking at 42 on 31st July.

The second winter period saw increases at CHL throughout October with a high count of 86 on the 31st, whilst numbers on Heslington East declined to a low of 11 on 8th October. Numbers continued to increase in November with 103 at CHL on the 15th, 60 on Bubwith Ings on the 16th, and 46 at Heslington East on the 22nd. Records elsewhere included four at Wistow Clough on 4th November, five at Bolton Ings on the 23rd, two on West Ings on the 26th and 23 at Bank Island on the 28th. December peaks were 74 at CHL on the 13th, 58 at Heslington East on the 15th and 144 across the LDV on the 30th. All other records were from along the Wharfe with nine at Bolton Ings on 8th December, three at West Ings on the 10th and eight at Wharfe Ings on the 13th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Tufted Duck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	155	156	61	79	56	51	25	25	25	53	102	74
LDV	3	8	65	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	60	144
HES	55	92	67	-	8	7	32	31	31	24	23	58

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Red listed

Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers

An exceptionally poor year for the species given recent trends. There were just two records, the first, a drake, at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe from 14th March to 4th April (PB) and a female just scraped in to the report turning up on 31st December at NDC (DB).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce winter and passage visitor

Both records involved what were presumably spring passage birds taking an overland migration route. The first record of the year was a drake at Bank Island on 20th March, followed by two females on 12th April at CHL.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and passage migrant

A poor year for the species with no large gatherings but it did include a wider spread of records in the second winter period, including the first record at Newburgh Priory for seven years. High counts in January came from CHL on the

24th with 18 birds, six at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th and two (redheads) at NDC on the 13th. Numbers stayed low in February with 18 at CHL on the 8th, a drake at Heslington East on the same date that remained throughout the month, and a maximum of eight across the LDV on the 17th. March saw 19 at CHL on the 8th and a maximum of five at Wheldrake Ings on the 27th. April saw three at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th and four at CHL on the 12th, while the last record of spring was a female on Heslington East on the 13th and 14th.

The second winter period saw a continuation of the low numbers, with the first returning bird noted on 10th October at CHL, increasing to seven there by the 31st. The only other October record was a single at NDC on the 15th. In November there was a single at Newburgh Priory on the 17th, four at Clifton Ings on the 21st, and a small flurry of records on the 22nd with a single on Bolton Ings, ten at CHL, five at Heslington East and two at Wheldrake Ings. On 24th November, five were on Wharfe Ings. December saw a sharp increase in numbers with the highest counts from CHL and the LDV being 12 on the 13th (WeBS) and 21 on the 31st respectively. Elsewhere there was a single at Heslington East on the 4th, one at Bolton Ings on the 6th, 11 at West Ings on the 15th and a peak of 14 at Wharfe Ings on the 27th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Goldeneye

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	17	18	19	1	0	2	8	12
LDV	8	6	5	-	-	1	1	17

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor

Not recorded in 2015; though there have been records in four of the past ten years, most recently in 2014.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Very scarce winter visitor

Not recorded in 2015; though recorded in three of the past ten years, the most recent being 2011.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Regular winter visitor and passage migrant

A good spread of records in both the first and second winter periods, but with unusually low numbers at CHL, where there were no double figure counts during the year. Numbers were lower at Heslington West than in 2014, but markedly higher at Redhouse Reservoir.

The year started with nine at Church Ings, Acaster Malbis on 1st January. Double figure counts included 17 at West Ings and 13 at Wharfe Ings on the 4th, and 14 at Rawcliffe Lake on the 28th. At Heslington West the monthly maximum was eight birds on the 16th. In February there were 11 in York on the River Ouse opposite Rowntree's Park and 11 on Rawcliffe Lake on the 19th. Elsewhere there

were ten at Gilling Park but only single figures otherwise. Numbers increased during March with the peak count for the year occurring on the 28th, when 48 were on Redhouse Reservoir. Other significant counts included 19 at Heslington West on the 9th, 24 at Rawcliffe Lake on the 16th and 20 at Benningbrough on the 22nd. Numbers declined rapidly in April and the only records were of two on Rawcliffe Lake on the 1st, 18 at Redhouse Reservoir on the 5th, a single on Wharfe Ings on the 15th and two on West Ings on the 19th. Four birds were still present and displaying on Redhouse Reservoir by 2nd May, but had reduced to only a single by 17th May.

In the autumn the first returning birds were two at Bolton Ings on 9th October, followed by singles at CHL on the 10th and Wheldrake Ings on the 28th. There was a major arrival in November with birds returning to a number of different sites. Five were at both West Ings and Bolton Ings on the 5th; one in York City Centre on the 18th; then five at Bank Island, seven at CHL and two at Wheldrake Ings - all on the 22nd. On 23rd November, there were two on The Stank, followed by five at Wharfe Ings on the 26th, five at Acaster Airfield on the 27th and three at Yearsley Moor on the 30th. Numbers increased in December with significant counts of 20 at West Ings on the 8th, 24 at Wharfe Ings on the 10th and 23 there on the 17th and 12 at Heslington West on the 29th. There was an unusual record of a single on Hassacarr NR pond on 2nd December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Goosander

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	1	7	5	0	0	2	1	7
HES	0	0	10	-	0	0	0	5

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Former resident breeder in small numbers (Introduced/Category C)

Not recorded since 2013 as a result of a major national cull.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Amber listed

Scarce summer visitor which breeds in good years

The first was a calling bird on 26th May at Low Lilling Lane, then again on 7th June. On 30th June a single was singing (half-heartedly) at Milford Common and again on the 3rd and 4th July; two followed on the 11th with another singleton on the 20th. On 26th July and 3rd August three birds were calling and two on 5th August. There were probably four singing birds at Milford Common.

The LDV reported a poor year with birds late into the valley. In June there was a single bird and in July three singing males; specific birds reported were on 7th July at Aughton Ings, at Thornton Ellers on the 9th, at East Cottingwith on the 15th and briefly at NDC on the 24th. See also the RBBP Report on page 97.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Resident breeder and released to shoot

Widespread throughout the region, mostly in low single figures. In the first winter period counts of more than ten were 12 on 26th January at Milford Common, 12 on 8th February at Grimston near Tadcaster and 17 at Kirkby Wharfe the same day.

Breeding evidence came from Hagg Wood where 18 chicks were reported on 6th July and Ozendyke where there were 11 on the 20th.

In the second winter period 16 were in the Towton area on 4th November, 12 at Bank Island on the 22nd and 15 at Bolton Ings on 15th December. Many in SE53 are known to be ones released for shooting .

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Red listed

Resident breeder

Records were received from some 25 different locations, in addition to nine sites from around the LDV.

The only records of confirmed breeding were a family party seen at Naburn with four well grown young on 8th June and adults with eight chicks seen on 20th July at Milford Common.

Counts of six or more were:

1st January, Thorganby - 12 (two coveys)

3rd January, Church Bridge, Melbourne - six

4th January, Wharfe Ings - ten

15th January, Pocklington Canal - 12; Melbourne Ings - 12

29th January, Thornton Ings - nine

30th January, Seavy Carr - six; Westfield House - nine

3rd February, Milford Common - 18

7th February, Hagg Wood - 11

9th February, Forest of Galtres - ten

3rd August, Towton area - 12

30th November, Acaster Ings - 11

22nd September, Hagg Wood - 20

9th October, Milford Common - 40 (where it is understood that birds are released for shooting) and 20 there on the 19th

13th October, Hagg Wood - 20

30th November, Acaster Airfield - 11

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Resident breeder and released to shoot

Widespread throughout the region but many are released for shooting.

In the first winter period counts of over 20 were:

8th March, Wheldrake Ings - 25

9th March, Pocklington Canal, Melbourne - 50

The only breeding records were of a nest with eggs seen at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe in early April and a female and four young seen on 16th June at Ozendyke Ings.

In the second winter period counts over 20 were:

17th October, Bank Island - 21

18th October, Pocklington sewage works - 38; Wharfe Ings - 20

25th October, Bank Island - 26

31st October, Wheldrake Ings – 27

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Amber listed

Scarce autumn visitor on passage

Not recorded in 2015 after records in six of the past ten years; most recently in 2013.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Passage and winter visitor. Recently established resident breeder.

Highest numbers were reported from the strongholds of CHL and Wheldrake Ings, but between one and three birds were reported from several sites including Acaster, Heslington East, Milford Common and along the Pocklington Canal during the year.

Peak counts in the first winter period were 53 at CHL on 30th January and 39 in the LDV on 8th March, with 34 present on 1st April at Wheldrake Ings. Numbers decreased at Wheldrake Ings, as the water levels dropped, to 13 by 24th April.

At CHL, 22 apparently occupied nests were counted on 14th April, 14 nests on 16th May and 18 nests on 2nd June.

In the second half of the year notable counts were:

27th June, CHL - 22

29th September, Brayton Barff - 8

17th October at Naburn Ings - 7

23rd October, Wheldrake Ings - 27

31st October, CHL - 28

10th November, Wharfe Ings - 12

22nd November, CHL – 25

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Amber listed

Very scarce, mostly winter visitor

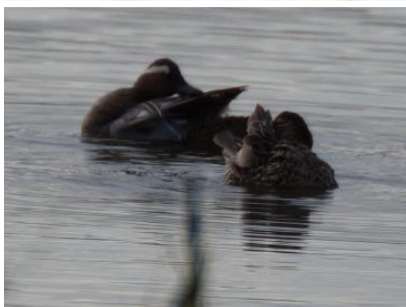
The only record of the year was a single bird seen flying over Bank Island heading north on 22nd April (FM, CSR).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce visitor, has bred

Numbers continue to increase year by year with birds now present most months, although there were no records for January or February. Most records were from the LDV, particularly Wheldrake Ings as well as Bank Island, the

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2015



Left to right and top to bottom :
Brent Goose ©Duncan Bye
Common Scoter ©Duncan Bye
Green-winged Teal ©Tim Jones
Garganey (pair at CHL) ©Jim Pewtress
Ruddy Shelduck ©Paul Doherty
Iceland Gull 'Kumlien's' race (at Knapton)
 ©Mark Coates
2nd-winter Caspian Gull ©Chris Gomersall

Refuge, NDC and Pocklington Canal. Up to three were recorded frequently, but maximum counts were nine on 1st July in the LDV and five at Wheldrake Ings on 1st August.

Away from the LDV, singles were seen at Dunnington, Redhouse Extraction Lagoon, Sherburn in Elmet and Wharfe Ings. On 13th May, four were at Ampleforth, three at Heslington East on 7th August and four at Milford Common on 20th October.

Successful breeding was again recorded in the area. In late May, a single pair was present in the heronry at Thorganby. The pair was joined by a second pair and this resulted in two broods of three and two. In addition, single pair bred in a heronry to the south of the valley raising four young.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Rare vagrant

On 15th May a single bird flew over Bank Island towards Wheldrake Ings (FM) and on 9th October a single flew over Milford Common (PD). From 29th November to 11th December a single was seen at Gilling Lakes, Yearsley Moor and Gilling Beck (RNHR, JP, KG, GS).

This is the third year in a row that this species has been recorded in the area and assuming these to be three different individuals, (if accepted by the YNU) they are the 6th, 7th and 8th records for the area. An update will follow in future reports.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Resident breeder

Peak count for the first winter period was 37 in the LDV on 22nd March, 31 of these at Wheldrake Ings.

On 30th March there were 25 active nests at the heronry adjacent to Wheldrake Ings. Up to 28 nests were present in the heronry during the breeding season. Having failed on the first clutches due to presumed Red Kite *Milvus milvus* predation second clutches fared better with an average brood size of two to three chicks for each successful pair. Twenty one chicks were colour-ringed on 27th May when a minimum of 46 chicks were present in inspected nests. Away from the LDV, on 13th March eight active nests were recorded at Acomb Ings and the same number at Bishop Wood on 28th April. At CHL two nests were recorded on 14th April and again on 2nd June, then a juvenile was in a nest there on the 27th when five other juveniles were also seen. Two juveniles were at Milford Common on 22nd June.

Notable post-breeding counts were ten birds at Milford Common on 5th August, 17 at Wheldrake Ings on 9th September and 19 in the LDV on 9th October.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

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

A bird of unknown origin took up residence at Flamingo Land, Kirby Misperton, from 7th May until it was found dead on 19th July in the lions' enclosure. The bird built a nest on the enclosure wall not far from the captive bird enclosure (RNHR).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Resident breeder, more widespread in winter

In January and February up to six were on the Pocklington Canal and up to eight are thought to have wintered there. Singles were seen at Ozendyke on 4th January, NDC on the 6th, Heslington East on the 16th (and several other dates), at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 18th January and again on 7th February, and at CHL on 24th January. Numbers increased thereafter with two at Milford Common on 2nd March, three on River Derwent at NDC on the 4th and six at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe by the 15th.

Records from the breeding period included a nest with eggs on 4th April at Frog Hall and young seen there on 2nd August. At Wash Dike, six were on territory on 26th April, with an adult seen feeding a chick on 3rd August. A pair was at Wheldrake Ings on 26th April. Two adults and four chicks were at East Cottingham on 19th May. At Heslington East birds were incubating on 21st June with two broods (one and two chicks) seen on 1st July and on 19th August two well-grown chicks and a younger one were seen there, so three pairs may have bred. Three pairs bred at Milford Common. On 9th September a juvenile was at Sand Hutton.

Eight, including one juvenile, were at Heslington East on 3rd September. In October up to ten were scattered throughout the LDV. On 18th October five were at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe and five on the same date at CHL. Through November and December singles were at Bolton Ings, CHL, Gilling Lake, Heslington East and West, The Stank, and, on 27th December, one swimming over Hull Road Park on the floods! Higher counts were three at Heslington East on 6th November, three at Melbourne on the 8th and three at NDC on 31st December.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Resident breeder and passage visitor

On 1st January a pair was at Dringhouses Pond and on the 8th at Acaster. Singles were at Heslington East and West through January and February and on 21st January the first pair was seen at Wheldrake Ings.

On 17th February a pair was at Heslington West, then seen nest building on the 24th and incubating on the 8th March. On 1st March a pair was at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe; by the 8th there were two pairs. Two were at Rawcliffe Lake on 17th March. On 28th March a new pair was at Heslington East and two pairs incubating at Heslington West. At the end of March gales swamped the Heslington East nest and one of the Heslington West nests was left and later taken over by a

Coot *Fulica atra*. On 22nd April three young were at Heslington West (and still there on 13th June). Four were at CHL on 16th May and again on 3rd July, with nine there on 7th August including two well-grown and three smaller juveniles. On 12th July a pair and a juvenile were on the River Ouse at Bishopthorpe. Through July and August between Scarborough Bridge, York and Naburn a pair with up to three young were seen regularly.

Two late broods were seen in September and October at Heslington West (adults still feeding three-quarter grown chicks). In the second winter period, reports from CHL, Gilling, Heslington East and West and the River Ouse in York were mainly of single birds.

Monthly WeBS counts for Great Crested Grebe

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
HES	1	1	6	-	7	4	2	4	6	3	3	1

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena* *Red listed*
Very scarce winter visitor

Not recorded in 2015 after records in 2004, 2009 and 2010.

Black-necked grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* *Amber listed*
Former summer visitor and scarce breeder now predominantly a passage visitor

Not recorded in 2015. Recorded in eight of the previous ten years; most recently in 2014.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* *Amber listed*
Irregular passage migrant

Like 2014, no records were received of this species in 2015; though recorded annually from 2005 to 2013.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Now regular visitor from nearby reintroduction schemes, passage migrant and breeder

Another year in which sightings of this species seem to be increasing exponentially, with 266 individual records in 2015. Red Kite was recorded in every month of the year, but was most frequently recorded from February to June, strongly suggesting that the majority of the birds seen in the York area are spring passage migrants. The best places to observe Red Kite in the York area were Bank Island, Wheldrake Ings and along the River Wharfe, although individual records came from across the area. The highest count of the year was of four birds at Wheldrake Ings that turned up on 16th March and remained until the end of the month.

Breeding behaviour was exhibited by at least three pairs in the York area, and in one case a nest was found to have been built and lined but breeding was not confirmed and the nest appeared to have been deserted.

There were fewer records in the second winter period, with far fewer records from the LDV, although the floodplains along the River Wharfe continued to be a good place to see Red Kites, and there was a spread of records from across the area.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and rare breeder, now also scarce winter visitor

Marsh Harriers were present in the LDV throughout the year, but were very scarce in the rest of the York area. Early winter records were confined to NDC, with a peak count of three there on 25th January. From February to March, there were records throughout the LDV, presumably referring to the same individuals touring the valley, with three cream-crowns still present in the LDV on 1st March. On 10th April two cream-crowns were still present at Wheldrake Ings, but it was noted how poor spring passage had been for this species. The only record of a migrating bird was of an immature female flying southwest over Towton on 14th May.

An adult pair was present throughout the breeding season in the LDV, but there was no sign of breeding.

The first autumn record away from the LDV was a male at Skipwith Common on 14th and 15th August, followed by a female in the Towton area on the 26th. A single was on Strensall Common on 20th September and a cream-crown was on Skipwith Common on 27th September. Numbers in the LDV peaked in September with four birds present during the month, but had reduced to two birds by November and December.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Red listed

Mostly a scarce winter visitor

A juvenile female overwintered in the LDV/Skipwith Common NNRs. After being seen in December 2014, the first sighting of 2015 was on 8th January (MF, CH et al) and it continued to be seen intermittently until 4th April (LDV blog). Two were seen interacting at dusk on 27th March at Skipwith Common (DT).

A ringtail was seen at Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island on 28th-29th October (LDV blog) and there was a further report of one at Bank Island on 13th November (TD).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Passage visitor and rare breeder

A pair was seen displaying in the LDV several times in February and March (LDV blog) but there was no evidence of breeding beyond that.

In the autumn an immature was seen at Skipwith Common on 14th September (LDV blog) and a juvenile male on 18th October at Bank Island was the last report of the year (LDV blog). No descriptions were received.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Resident breeder and passage migrant

Widespread and common throughout the York area (the commonest raptor in most areas), with most sightings being of one or two birds. There were 17 seen during the YOC trip on 8th February to SE53. Four were seen at Milford Common on 23rd March and five there on 16th April.

Breeding occurred or probably occurred at: Acaster, Bishopthorpe, Bolton Ings, Hassacarr NR, Milford Common, Old Gravel Pits, Allertorpe, Patefield Wood, Stillingfleet Hill, Wharfe Ings and several places in central York.

Passage through the York area was also noted in spring and autumn from Milford Common and Whit Hill, with nine flying north during spring, peaking with three on 12th April.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Passage migrant and common resident breeder

Another widespread and common raptor in the York area with many records of between one and four birds, however, despite their abundance, very little breeding information was received, with no confirmed records of breeding. Displaying birds were observed over Grimston, Patefield Wood and Rufforth; a territorial pair was observed at Moreby Grange Wood and a pair was possibly nesting in Bishop Wood. The scarcity of breeding records is likely reflective of poor reporting rates however as it was thought that SE53 alone held up to 20 probable breeding pairs.

Double figure counts were recorded on the following dates;

19th January, across the LDV - 12

8th February, across SE53 - 21, with 12 there on the 18th, 14 on the 23rd and 25 on the 27th

25th February, Rufforth - 15

26th February, Grimston - 11

14th May, Grimston - 10

8th June, Castle Howard - 10

3rd July, Stillingfleet Hill - 12

22nd September, Hassacarr NR - 11

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Rare passage migrant

A juvenile flew east over North Duffield village on 14th January (CSR, DK, AB) and another was reported at Thorpe Willoughby on 23rd March (JS).

Descriptions have been submitted to the YNU, acceptance will be updated in future reports.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Amber listed

Regular passage migrant

An even split of records with three each during spring and autumn passage. The first of the year flew north over Wheldrake Ings on 4th April (LDV Blog) and a

second bird flew over Crockey Hill and the A64 on 13th April (CG). The final bird of the spring flew over Melbourne on 25th May (CSR).

The first returning bird was over Clifton Ings on 7th August (Birdguides), another flew south over Elvington (LDV Blog) on 16th September and the final bird of the year flew through Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings on 1st October (CSR,MFJ).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Resident breeder and winter/passage visitor

As in previous years, Wheldrake Ings was one of the most reliable sites for seeing and hearing Water Rail. In the LDV, a minimum of 12 birds overwintered. The maximum counts in the early part of the year were three at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd January and three at Melbourne (near Church Bridge) on the 21st. Five were at the pool area at Wheldrake Ings during February and three seen or heard on several dates there in March as well as three at Melbourne and three at Thornton Ellers. Away from the LDV in the first three months of the year, reports (mostly of one or two birds) came from CHL, Flamingoland, Heslington East (maximum count of three on 8th February), Milford Common, Skipwith Common, and an unusual record of one at St. Nicholas Fields, York on 7th March.

During April, at Wheldrake Ings there were reports of up to four birds (three calling) and in May four calling birds were present all month. Breeding may have taken place at Church Bridge, Melbourne, following regular sightings in the winter and spring there. On 21st April, two birds were at Milford Common; the last record for this site coming on 3rd June.

A juvenile was seen at Skipwith Common on 12th August and a juvenile was present from 29th August at Wheldrake Ings along with two adults.

Post breeding, away from the LDV, singletons were at CHL on 31st October and Flamingoland, Kirby Misperton on 4th November. A maximum of three birds was reported from Wheldrake Ings in September, October and November. In December, four birds were seen there regularly, before being forced away by flooding on the 26th and up to three birds were at Church Bridge, Melbourne.

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

Amber listed

Very scarce passage migrant and breeder

For the second year in a row, there were no records of this species after annual records from 2005 to 2013.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

Red listed

Very scarce summer migrant and irregular breeder

Following a blank year in 2014, a single singing male was discovered at Aughton Ings on the morning of 7th July (MS), which continued to call throughout the day. On being caught and ringed that afternoon, it was found to be a first year male which showed signs of a brood patch. A second bird was also thought to have been present (CSR, AW, MFJ et al). The bird continued to sing over the coming days and was seen (although not singing) twice on the 12th (JL, RB). It

was then heard again on the 16th and 18th. In August a single bird was flushed by a tractor during hay cutting at Bank Island on the 24th (CSR). See also the RBBP report on page 97.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Common resident and winter visitor

Like last year, Moorhen was well recorded at suitable habitats throughout the year. On 18th January 110 birds were counted in the LDV, while numbers at CHL and Heslington (East and West) built up during the first winter period to peaks of 42 and 44 respectively on 8th March (WeBS). Away from these sites, in February and March, counts of between ten and 25 were recorded on several dates on the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne and Thornton Locks, with the maximum count there of 32 on 13th February and at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe, where the maximum count was 19 on 15th March.

The first chicks were reported from Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 12th April. Breeding was also confirmed at Bishopthorpe, Castle Howard Arboretum, CHL, Hagg Wood, Heslington East, the LDV (including Ellerton and Wheldrake Ings), Milford Common, Pocklington Canal (Church Bridge, Melbourne) and SHL.

Post breeding, the highest counts came from Heslington East and West, where numbers built up again during August and September, reaching 58 (WeBS count) on 14th September with similar numbers thereafter to the end of the year; the annual peak count being 59 on 13th December. At CHL, numbers fluctuated more than in 2014 peaking at 41 on 18th October before decreasing to low double figures in December. In the LDV the highest count received was 15 on 13th September.

Monthly WeBS counts for Moorhen

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	7	16	42	22	13	16	14	29	24	41	6	14
LDV	110	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HES	27	39	44	-	23	24	23	37	58	54	46	59

(No WeBS data received for this species in the latter part of the year)

Coot *Fulica atra*

Common resident and winter visitor

Though reported in low numbers from many areas with suitable habitat, the only significant counts all came from CHL, Heslington (East and West) and the LDV.

Monthly high counts during the first winter period in the LDV were 103 at Wheldrake Ings on 17th February rising to 198 on the 27th; 301 there on 22nd March (of 322 in the LDV at the time) and 208 there on 10th April. Numbers at CHL peaked at 126 during the WeBS count in February. At York University, numbers across the site peaked at 65 in March. Away from these three areas there were 16 at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 20th March and ten there on 19th April.

Breeding was confirmed at Allerthorpe Water Park, Castle Howard Arboretum pond, CHL, Heslington East, Milford Common, Old Gravel Pits Allerthorpe Whitwell Grange and Yearsley Moor, with the first chicks being reported from CHL on 30th April and Heslington East on 1st May.

Prior to post breeding dispersal, numbers rose to 153 at CHL in July (annual peak count), with the WeBS counts the highest monthly counts thereafter to the end of the year. The December count of 100 was much higher than in 2014. There were 81 at Heslington East and West on 16th August, the annual peak count, before numbers dropped back to monthly counts of around 60 for the remainder of the year.

In the LDV, no counts above ten were received in the latter part of the year, though it was noted that the first of the wintering birds returned to Bank Island on 3rd December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Coot

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	84	126	89	49	41	54	153	87	46	86	81	100
LDV	245	79	322	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	4
HES	54	48	65	-	58	61	69	81	63	59	56	61

Crane *Grus grus*

Amber listed

Scarce vagrant

Seen annually since 2007, the first report for the year was of a single bird at NDC on the 19th and 20th March (AW, CSR). Three were seen circling and slowly gaining height over Strensall Common on 10th April (NS). Also in April, five were at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th (TW per JLe) and a single there on the 21st. Five were seen again in the LDV on the 22nd (LDV blog). The same five birds were at Ellerton on 1st May and were then seen flying over NDC on the 2nd (LDV Blog). During June a single landed at Bank Island on the 12th and was also present early on the 13th (LDV blog). The last report was of one at Eastrington on 26th June (Birdguides). See also the RBBP report on page 97.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Amber listed

Scarce spring passage migrant

Following a blank year in 2014, there were three records this year of this scarce spring passage migrant. The first record involved a single bird at Heslington East on 5th April. In May, a pair was at Wheldrake Ings on 1st May followed by a single seen from a train at Clifton Waterworks on the 8th.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and scarce breeder

A single present at NDC on 15th January was an unusual mid-winter record. The first spring arrivals were a pair at Heslington East on the 13th February, the same day as in 2014, with three at Wheldrake Ings the next day, along with a

single at NDC. By the 25th, the count at Heslington East had increased to seven, with 13 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st March. Birds appeared at a further 16 sites during March and April, with most counts of one or two birds.

Pairs were confirmed to have bred at Dunnington Common, East Cottingham (where adults were noted feeding two chicks on 19th May), Heslington East, Stockton Common, Thornton Ellers and Warthill. Other birds present during the breeding season were noted from a further 17 sites.

Autumn passage began in July, with several family parties on the move through the LDV. Notable counts included nine present at Heslington East on 9th July, eight at Ampleforth College on the 13th and 11 at Heslington East on the 22nd. The last two of the year were single nocturnal migrants recorded passing over Fulford in the early hours of 18th September.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

During the first part of January, 1,870 were present in the LDV, with 1,100 present at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th. The freezing conditions mid-month caused a big departure, though many returned as the ground thawed later in the month. In February, 250 were present at Melbourne on the 11th, with 1,270 at Towton the next day. On 14th February 2,340 were counted in the LDV, 1,400 at Grimston on the 15th and the same number at Towton on the morning of the 18th (though only 100 there that afternoon) and 1,620 at Towton on the 22nd. In early March, 1,500 were still present in the LDV but birds began to disperse by mid-month. There were 147 present at Milford Common on 29th March, while ten at Towton on 17th April were the last of spring.

The first returning birds were four passing through the LDV on 25th July, followed by six at Milford Common the next day. The highest September count was 600 at Stillingfleet as birds began to appear widely in the area. Flocks gathered during October, with 1,000 at Kexby remaining into November at least, attracting the attentions of a Peregrine and a Buzzard. Notable counts were 425 at Raker Lakes near Wheldrake on the 10th and 370 at Milford Common on the 13th. In the second winter period, large numbers gathered at Wheldrake Ings, with 1,500 there on 3rd December, rising to 2,300 by the 11th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Not recorded in 2015, the first blank year since 2009.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Red listed

Winter visitor, passage migrant and breeder

Large numbers were present in the LDV during the first winter period, with 3,000 counted on 1st January, with the largest single flocks noted being 1,000 at North Duffield Carrs on the 7th and 500 at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th. In February, 3,400 were present in the LDV, falling to 1,800 by the 24th. Birds were

noticed back on territory throughout the area from mid-February onwards and numbers began to drop in March.

Birds were present in the breeding season at 33 sites, with three or more pairs present at Acaster Malbis (3), Heslington East (3), Stockton Common (5), Ozendyke Ings (6), Naburn area (6), Eastmoor (10), Heslington Tillmire area (13). In the LDV a brood of four newly hatched chicks was present at Bubwith on 4th May, along with three pairs with broods at Aughton Ings also on the 4th. Further broods appeared throughout the site thereafter.



The first post-breeding flocks started to be recorded in the second half of June, with 25 at Wharfe Ings on the 17th and 29 at Bank Island the same day, with 25 at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th and 34 at Milford Common on the 29th. In July, 200 were at Ellerton on the 2nd and 400 at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th. Similar numbers were recorded in August and September, with the highest count being 480 at NDC on 25th September.

Flocks became more widespread in October and November, with 260 at Rufforth on 6th October, 500 at Kexby on 29th October, 350 at Bank Island and 600 at Elvington on 8th November, 370 at North Milford on 11th November, 360 at Wharfe Ings on 26th November and 2,000 in the LDV by the end of the month. In December, counts in the LDV rose to 3,300 by the 3rd, with a colossal 5,000 at Wheldrake Ings on the 18th, dropping to 1,000 by the year-end due to high flood levels.

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

The first of the year was a single at Wheldrake Ings on 11th April, followed by a pair at Heslington East on the 13th. Another pair was seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd and 23rd and a single was heard calling as it flew over Askham Richard on the night of the 21st. The pair at Heslington East was seen displaying on 15th May, though was not seen subsequently and it seems this site is now becoming unsuitable for this species. Singles were seen in the east of the area on 28th May (location withheld) and at Wheldrake Ings on 30th June to 1st July. A single bird was present on a pool at Milford Common from 3rd June until the 24th, and an intriguing set of records of up to five birds were reported from Bootham Stray between the 24th and 30th June. A single at Wheldrake Ings on 12th July was the last of the year.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula**Red listed**Passage migrant and occasional breeder*

After the poor year in 2014, this year was even worse with no records at all from the spring period, and no breeding pairs.

The first record of the year was of a single flying south over Milford Common on 25th August. Two were present at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September, with three at Rufforth on 6th October and a single flying south over Milford Common on 19th October the last of the year.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus**Red listed**Passage migrant*

The first spring bird was on 16th April at Wheldrake Ings, three days earlier than in 2014. The passage flock grew during the month, reaching 76 by the 28th and a peak count of 123 on 1st May. The birds began to depart and had reduced to 31 by the 10th, with just two present on the 25th.

There was little evidence of autumn passage; three flew west over Whit Hill on the early date of 28th June, with a single at Wheldrake Ings on 14th July the last record.

Curlew *Numenius arquata**Red listed**Winter visitor, passage migrant and migrant breeder*

Good numbers were present in the area during the first winter period, with 25 in the LDV on 8th January, six on Bolton Ings on 21st February and 56 counted in the LDV the next day. Ninety two were present in the LDV on the 28th and 60 were counted roosting on the Refuge at Wheldrake Ings on 1st March. Passage birds continued to move through the LDV, although the picture was confused by the presence of territorial birds. On 22nd March 109 were counted at Wheldrake Ings, when at least 170 were present in the LDV as a whole. Thirty seven were present on the Refuge at Wheldrake Ings on 4th April.

Displaying birds were noted widely from the first week of March from 32 sites, almost double the number of 2014. Multiple displaying males were noted from Acaster (2), Ampleforth (3), Bolton Ings (4), Strensall Common (3) and Wheldrake Ings (3). Two chicks were on the Refuge on 10th June and four other pairs with young were also present on the same date in the Low Grounds and the main meadows at Wheldrake Ings.

Following breeding, birds began to move in late June, with 12 over Brayton Barff on the 20th, and 17 over Milford Common on the 22nd. On 7th July, 29 were at Wheldrake Ings with 24 still there on the 18th. Later in the year, 20 were present at Wheldrake Ings on 15th November with 30 there on 10th December.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Red listed

Passage migrant and rare breeder, occasionally seen in winter

Four were present at NDC between the 5th and 8th January, with another winter single at the same site on the 18th. Two arrived at Wheldrake Ings on 21st February, with seven present at East Cottingwith on the 22nd, and eight the next day, staying until 5th March at least. A flock of 24 was at Wheldrake Ings on 13th March, reducing to 13 by the 29th, with six on 4th April and 12 on the 27th, the last of the spring. The relatively low numbers were presumably due to the lack of water in the LDV at this time.

Seven birds were seen at Wheldrake Ings on 12th July, while four at Heslington East on the 31st was the only record away from the LDV this year. Seven at Wheldrake Ings on 31st August were the last of the year.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant

A single bird was roosting with Whimbrel at Wheldrake Ings on 28th April.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Amber listed

Passage migrant, usually in spring

Not recorded in 2015 after records in five of the last ten years, most recently 2014.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

A noteworthy flock of 11 was reported in the logbook from NDC on 2nd January, but no further details were received. The only other sighting was of a single there on the 13th.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Red listed

Mainly passage migrant and winter visitor; rare breeder

The year started with 60 at NDC on 1st January, with 30 seen at Aughton Ings on the 4th, presumably part of the same group. On the 6th 71 were counted at Wheldrake Ings, with 73 present at NDC the same day, indicating 144 present in the LDV as a whole. Numbers remained high in February, with 72 at NDC on the 22nd and 41 at Wheldrake Ings the same day. Forty eight were present at

Wheldrake Ings on 3rd March, and 35 were still present towards the month end, when many males were displaying. Hereafter numbers dropped rapidly, with a single at Wheldrake Ings on 5th April, followed by late migrants at Ozendyke Ings on 11th May, and an adult male at Bank Island on 12th June which was possibly an early returning bird.

In July, returning migrants were seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd when five were present, with eight there the next day. A single juvenile was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 17th August and 14 were present at Thorganby on 24th November.

Monthly WeBS counts for Ruff

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	122	126	48	0	14	-

(No WeBS count received for this species for December)

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Amber listed

Infrequent passage visitor, usually in the autumn

A single was present on the 24th and 25th September feeding around small pools by a muck heap near Thornton Ellers (LDV blog).

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Red listed

Rare passage migrant

Not recorded in 2015 though recorded in three of the last ten years, most recently in 2012.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Not recorded in 2015, though recorded in five of the last ten years, most recently in 2014.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and winter visitor

Early in the year 70 were at Aughton Ings on 4th January, with 180 at NDC on the 15th, rising to 225 by the 17th. Most departed in response to the freezing conditions the next day, with only three remaining there on the 19th. By 4th February 120 had returned to NDC, with 80 still present there on the 22nd, and 50 at Wheldrake Ings on 8th March. Eighty were present again at NDC on 20th March, but numbers fell sharply after this date.

It was a very poor spring for passage records, with singles at Wheldrake Ings on 15th April, three over there on 29th, seven there on 6th May and singles at Heslington East on the 14th and the last spring bird at Bank Island on 21st May.

The first returning bird appeared at Wheldrake Ings on 26th August and remained until 4th September, with another single on the 11th, and one at Bank Island on 7th October. Larger numbers began to return to the LDV in late

November, with 46 at Thorganby on the 24th, rising to 100 by the end of the month.

Monthly WeBS counts for wintering Dunlin in the LDV

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	202	35	80			0	100	-

(No WeBS count received for this species for December)

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Amber listed

Passage migrant

One on the river bank at Ellerton on 9th April was the first record for the year. Singles were at Acaster and NDC on 26th April and Wheldrake Ings on the 27th, with two at CHL on the 30th. Redhouse hosted a single on 2nd May, with other singles at Castle Howard on the 8th and 14th and at Wharfe Ings on the 11th.

The first returning bird was at Milford Common on 18th June, with another seen at Wheldrake Ings on 9th July, with a further single there from 24th August until 11th September and two there on 29th August. Other migrants were seen at Naburn Lock on 7th August, Towthorpe Road on the 23rd, Heslington East on the 25th and two at Redhouse Reservoir on the 27th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and winter visitor

One was present at Foggathorpe during February, with two near Colton Bridge, Appleton Roebuck on the 4th and two at Rufforth Airfield on the 14th. In March, singles were seen at Milford Common on the 5th and Heslington Tillmire on the 15th, with further birds at Naburn on 6th April, Milford Common on 13th April, two on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd and the last migrant at Askham Richard on the 23rd.

The first returning bird was at Bank Island on 13th June remaining until 16th, with singles at Milford Common on the 24th and at Wheldrake Ings from the 29th. Up to three were then present daily at Wheldrake Ings throughout July, with two at Skipwith Common on the 25th. In August, Wheldrake Ings held up to eight birds, with singles elsewhere at Bank Island, Melbourne and Thornton Eilers, and two at Skipwith Common on the 28th. In September, singles were reported from Milford Common on the 1st and 10th, Heslington East on the 3rd, two again at Skipwith Common on the 6th and two at Rufforth on the 14th. Small numbers lingered at Wheldrake Ings into October, with three there on the 1st and the last few singles on the 14th, 21st and 22nd. At the end of the year, one was at Bolton Ings on 18th December, with two at Rufforth on the 27th.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

One flew over Bank Island calling on 8th May (CSR, FM, JT).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia**Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor*

A single flew over Wheldrake Ings on the early date of 22nd March. The next record was almost a month later when two were at the same site on 20th April, remaining until the 22nd. A single was at Bank Island on 8th May, with two there on the 13th and another single there on the 20th. Next day, perhaps the same individual was at Wheldrake Ings, with another there on the 25th, the last of the spring.

The first of the autumn was one at Wheldrake Ings on 26th July, with other singles at Thornton Ellers on 10th August, Skipwith Common on the 11th, one over the car park at Brayton Barff on the 15th and at Wheldrake Ings from the 16th. Up to three birds were present at Wheldrake Ings in the second half of August with birds remaining until the end of month. During September one was reported from NDC on the 7th and one at Wheldrake Ings from the 10th to the 13th. The last sighting of the year was one at Wheldrake Ings on 4th October.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola**Amber listed**Passage migrant*

A poor year, with only two autumn records (both of single birds) at Wheldrake Ings, on 30th July and 24th August.

Redshank *Tringa totanus**Amber listed**Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor*

At NDC 28 were present on 4th January, with one at Heslington East on the 16th and two there on the 18th the only individuals recorded away from the LDV. Numbers remained modest during February and March. A bird caught at Aughton, NDC on 28th March had been originally ringed at Aughton Ings on 15th August 2004!

By the end of March, the wintering bird at Heslington East had been joined by three more birds, at least two of which appeared to be a pair and were seen displaying. Six pairs were thought to have bred at Wheldrake Ings. Elsewhere, birds were present in the breeding season at Heslington Tillmire, Milford Common and Skipwith Common, though were only thought to have bred at the Tillmire. Twenty five at Wheldrake Ings on 30th June included three unfledged broods. Small numbers were present at Wheldrake Ings throughout July and singles were seen on the 1st and 6th August.

A single was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September and another on 23rd October, with one or two around the LDV in November and December. One was at Bolton Ings on 10th November.

Monthly WeBS counts for wintering Redshank in the LDV

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	1	24	61	-	-	0	2	-

(No data received for December)

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

The year began with singles at Heslington East on 4th January - which remained until the 18th at least - and on Milford Common, also on the 4th. Three were recorded at NDC on 17th January, with singles at Bank Island on 8th February and Milford Common again the same day.

Evidence of some passage was noted in March, with singles at Melbourne, NDC and Skipwith Common and four at Milford Common on the 27th, two of which were still present on 16th April. The last of the spring were three at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April.

NDC yielded the first returning migrant on 27th September. Three were at Skipwith Common on 2nd November, with one back at Heslington East on the 6th, two there on the 22nd, and a remarkable seven on 4th December where they outnumbered the six Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* ! Four were still present at Heslington East on 19th December and one was on Milford Common on the 21st.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Red listed

Resident breeder and winter visitor

Singles were noted from 14 sites in the first three months of the year, with three at Milford Common on 19th March and two birds at Bielby on 18th January and at Aughton on 4th February.

The first roding bird was recorded at Wheldrake Ings on 9th April. Up to four birds roded at Skipwith Common throughout the spring, with other roding males noted at Bishop Wood where a 75 minute survey produced 14 sightings. Others were noted at Allerthorpe Common, Gilling Woods and Yearsley Moor (2). A dead bird was picked up by the A59 at Poppleton Lakes on 28th June, suggesting the presence of unrecorded birds in that area. One was seen in Haxby on 2nd August. In the autumn, single birds were recorded from several sites, indicating dispersal from breeding sites and the arrival of birds from Europe.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Amber listed

Resident and migrant breeder; passage visitor

Recorded from 24 sites in the first three months of the year. In the LDV the highest monthly counts were 69 on 8th February and 250 at NDC on 20th March. Away from the LDV, notable counts included 38 from Heslington Tillmire on 17th January, 100 flying over Rufforth Airfield on 14th February and 57 at Milford Common on 27th March.

Drumming birds were noted from Wheldrake Ings on 5th April, although birds continued to pass through with a high count of 79 on 27th April. In the LDV 35 - 40 birds were drumming during the spring which is a good count and slightly up on last year. A drumming bird was noted at Strensall Common in early June.

Breeding was confirmed at Ellerton Ings, Melbourne, NDC and Wheldrake Ings.

Thirty at Wheldrake Ings on 1st July was the first evidence noted of post-breeding dispersal. Heslington East (3) and Milford Common (2) were the only sites away from the LDV to record Common Snipe during the late summer-early autumn passage. In the LDV, the highest counts were 120 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th September and 22 at NDC on the 25th. Numbers increased during October, with 250 present in the LDV, though there were few high counts from single sites.

In the second winter period, good numbers were present with 50 at Skipwith Common on 1st November, 200 in the LDV on the 15th, 30 at Heslington East on the 22nd and 16 at Wharfe Ings on the 24th, with 39 at Bolton Ings on 1st December.

Monthly WeBS counts for wintering Snipe in the LDV

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	135	69	250		250	200	-

(No data received for December)

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Red listed

Very scarce passage migrant

Not seen in 2015, after records in the past three years.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

On 13th June a single flew round Bank Island for a couple of minutes before flying off north-east (LDV blog). If accepted by the BBRC, this would be the second record for the LDV, following a single at Wheldrake Ings in May 1995, and only the third for the recording area - the first being a 1st-summer at Castle Howard in 1983. An update will follow in future reports.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Amber listed

Rare passage migrant

Not recorded in 2015, the first blank year since 2007.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and rare migrant breeder

A single bird at Canal Head, Pocklington on 25th April was the first of the year followed by one at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th.

Two were at Bank Island on 7th May along with birds between there and Wheldrake Ings, and a pair near Melbourne thereafter until month end. The birds at Wheldrake Ings settled on the tern raft from mid-month and appeared to be going to nest having made a scrape by the 20th. They were sadly then evicted by a pair of Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* that went on to build a nest by the 24th. Other pairs were present during the breeding season at Bank Island and Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe. For the third consecutive year, a pair bred on the tern rafts at Heslington East, fledging two young; the family departing in early August. A non-breeding adult was also present there on several dates in July.

During August, four were seen flying south over Doe Park, Clifton Moor, one flew south in the Towton area on the 10th, two adults and a juvenile were seen at Melbourne on the 11th, an adult was at Heslington East on the 15th, and one was flying southeast over Naburn on the 21st. The last report of the year was of an adult seen flying over Wheldrake Ings on 9th September.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Amber listed

Passage migrant

A disappointingly quiet year for this enigmatic global migrant with very few records received. Six were at Allertorpe Lake Park on 4th May (TB) with five flying north at Canal Head, Pocklington the next day (LDV blog). The three birds which flew through Bank Island on the 8th were the last record of the year (LDV blog).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Red listed

Scarce passage migrant

A decent year for a species which is by no means an easy one to see in the YOC recording area. One was reported from Wheldrake Ings on the unseasonable date of 12th January (LDV blog). A bird was seen heading west over Milford Common with a small group of Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* on 20th March (PD), possibly accounting for the lone bird present at Wheldrake Ings earlier that day (CSR). Wheldrake Ings also hosted two adults and a 1st-winter bird on the 21st (LDV blog). Diligent sky-watching on 14th April provided the last record for the year as an adult drifted north over Bootham (Birdguides).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Amber listed

Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

Present all year round in the local area, with the winter months predictably registering the highest counts. The regular winter roost on CHL held about 10,000 birds on 4th January, with 5,500 there on the 17th and 5,000 on the 25th. Away from CHL, 500 were at Naburn Sewage Works on 3rd February, 650 on Rufforth Airfield on the 14th and 261 on Heslington East on 7th March.

This species is almost certainly under recorded during the spring and summer months, though the small nesting colony on Strensall Common appears to be increasing with about 20 pairs present.

In the latter part of the year 250 birds were seen hawking insects over Hagg Wood on 22nd September and 312 were feeding with a flock of Lapwing in fields near Riccall on 15th October. On 26th November a notable 1,650 were present on Wharfe Ings, while the Castle Howard roost had reached 6,000 birds by late November.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor

Not recorded in 2015. Only the second year to draw a blank since 1976!

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2015



Left to right and top to bottom
Corncrake – one of the star birds of the year ©Craig Ralston

Hobbies ©Mark Coates and

Cranes ©Tim Ward at Wheldrake Ings

Herring Gull & chicks in central York (a rare breeder in the area) ©Duncan Bye

Juvenile **Thayer's Gull** (the first for York if accepted by the BBRC!) ©Tom Lowe

Common Terns on the tern raft at Heslington East ©Jane Chapman

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus**Amber listed**Winter visitor and passage migrant*

A poor year for this species (in comparison with recent years) with only three records. Very unusually, one was near Rufforth Tip on January 22nd (TJ) and an adult was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 14th May (LDV blog). On 1st September one was feeding in a field at North Duffield (AW).

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

Another species which goes under-recorded in the area, 4th January saw 1,000 birds roosting on CHL, increasing to 4,000 on the 17th, but only 700 there on the 25th. Away from CHL there were 108 round Thornton Lock, Pocklington Canal on 23rd February. There were no reports between 26th April and 18th July and no other counts above 100 through the rest of the year until 22nd November when the roost had reached 1,000 birds on CHL.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus**Amber listed**Summer visitor and passage migrant, small numbers in winter*

Low single figure counts were seen during the winter months at sites in the LDV and at Rufforth although there were ten over Askham Bog on 4th January and 22 on the 8th at Westfield Farm, Thornton. Records continued in the same vein, mainly in York and to the south, through spring and into June, though there were 14 on 9th March at Melbourne and over 50 on 3rd May at Scagglethorpe Lane, Upper Poppleton.

Numbers increased from late June onwards with 32 on a visible migration watch from Whit Hill on the 28th and 41 on 17th July. The Towton area in the south west of the club area had 56 on 7th August, while there were counts in the LDV between 24 and 50 on five occasions later in the month.

A flock of 81 feeding at Milford Common on 10th September probably consisted of post-breeding birds on their return southerly migration. This was the last substantial count, though numbers reached double figures on a few occasions in late September at Bank Island and Hagg Wood. October's high count was 15 at Newburgh Priory.

In the second winter period the maximum seen was eight at CHL on 22nd November, with several records of five or fewer coming from Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings and finally one at The Stank, Sand Hutton on 16th December.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus**Red listed**Winter visitor, passage migrant and recent breeder in very small numbers*

Given this species' propensity for landfill sites, we are fortunate to have one of the largest remaining such locations left in the north of England (Rufforth Tip). During the winter months, the resident subspecies *argenteus* of the British Isles are vastly outnumbered by the annual influx of the larger, darker *argentatus* Herring Gulls, from Scandinavia. This contributes to many thousands of individuals

flying over the YOC area on a daily basis as birds move between feeding and roosting areas. Numbers fluctuate greatly and 13,500 dropping into roost at Wheldrake Ings on 12th February, increasing to 20,000 by the 25th, were quite typical. As spring commenced many birds started to return to breeding grounds and the large flocks disappeared. In April the highest count was 150 at Bank Island on the 4th, with no other counts in three figures.

Herring Gulls breeding in the city centre are a recent phenomenon, and again the rooftops of Walmgate were productive with at least two chicks successfully fledging there in late July. A pair also bred at Wheldrake Ings.

There were no counts over 100 received in the latter part of the year apart from 150 flying south seen from Whit Hill on 25th October.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

In 2015 there was a good series of records for a species which has now become an annual visitor to the local area. The only records in the first half of the year were of an adult seen around Rufforth tip on the 8th and 27th January (CG, TJ, TD).

There were no further records until the autumn passage commenced with a fresh juvenile on 22nd July on Rufforth airfield (OM). In August, the same location held two adults on the 5th (CG) and a peak count of three on the 21st (AH). Away from the main gull-watching haunts, two adults were seen on 4th October, feeding in stubble fields near North Duffield (AW), with an adult at Rufforth on the 6th (CG) and a 1st-winter bird there on the 14th (CG). The last record of the year saw an adult near Poppleton on 9th December.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor

Yet another record-breaking year for this species. A minimum of 19 individuals was observed throughout the year beginning with one at Rufforth on 2nd January and three at the same location on the 8th. During the month, 1st-winter birds were seen on the 14th near Poppleton (TJ), Rufforth airfield on the 16th (TL), on the 19th near Alne Tip, Easingwold (TL), with another the following day at Rufforth (CG). A 1st-winter and a ringed 4th-winter were seen together between Rufforth and Knapton on 12th February (AH). Having been ringed at Pitsea Landfill Site, Essex in 2011, this individual has been seen in Lincolnshire in 2012, Skegness (also in Lincolnshire) in 2013 and in Holland during 2014. A further two 1st-winters were seen at Rufforth on 18th February (TJ) with another there on the 26th (AH). The ringed 4th-winter and yet another 1st-winter were seen on Rufforth airfield on 11th March (CG).

A pair of keen eyes picked out the first juvenile to be recorded in the YOC area at Rufforth on 22nd July (OM) followed by another two there on 5th August (TL).

October saw a glut of records with 1st-winter birds present at Redhouse Reservoir on the 1st (CG), Rufforth on the 6th (CG), 7th (CG) and 13th present alongside a 2nd-winter (CG). An adult was photographed on Rufforth airfield on

the 14th (CG) and another different 1st-winter was there on the 16th (CG). A German ringed 1st-winter bird was present at Rufforth on the 24th (CG); this individual was also seen at Spurn Point during October. A new 1st-winter was near Rufforth on the 27th (CG). Another 1st-winter was seen near Rufforth on 11th November (CG), while an adult was photographed at Poppleton on the 13th (CG). On 8th December an adult was present at Rufforth (OM), while the two 2nd-winters there on the following day (CG) were the last of the year.

These records are currently being reviewed by the YNU; should any not be accepted, an update will follow in future reports.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*
Scarce winter visitor

Amber listed

Reported on an almost daily basis from 1st January until mid- March with most records coming from Rufforth (or fields nearby at Poppleton and Knapton) and the roost at Wheldrake Ings. The first of the year was a 1st-winter at the Wheldrake Ings on 1st January, also present there with an adult on the 4th. A 2nd-winter bird was at Rufforth and then seen at the roost on 14th January. Peak day counts of three birds occurred on 13th February and 5th March. The last record of the spring saw an adult fly through NDC on 12th March.

During the second winter period, one was reported from Rufforth Airfield on 30th November and a juvenile was seen at Rufforth on 27th December.

Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucooides kumlieni*

With only two (possibly three) previous records for the area, 2015 was easily the best year on record in our area for this subtle visitor from Canada. A 3rd - winter bird was observed at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd January (TJ, OM). In February, an adult was seen at Knapton on the 7th (JLe), whilst Rufforth held a juvenile on the 11th (TJ), and the adult was also seen here on the 12th (AH), 15th (OM) and 20th (MC). A first winter was seen at Rufforth on 3rd March (MS) with the same bird present here alongside the adult the next day (GD).

'Kumlien's' is an YNU description species so an update on acceptance of these records will follow in future reports.

Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*

A 1st-winter individual of this species, which breeds in the arctic region of Canada, was well seen and photographed on Rufforth airfield by one lucky observer on 2nd March (TL per TJ) and there was another report of it on the following day (MS per TJ). If accepted by the BBRC, this will be the first record for the recording area. An update will follow in future reports.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*
Scarce winter visitor

Amber listed

Only recorded in the first winter period, sightings involved individuals of various ages, including at least three adults. One or two birds were reported on most days from the Rufforth area between 2nd January (when an adult was seen at Askham

Richard flying towards the tip) and 5th March; the latter date providing the peak day count of three birds together on Rufforth airfield.

Away from Rufforth, one was seen at Melbourne on 6th January, two adults were at Wheldrake Ings on 13th February and a single there on the 15th. In March two 1st-winter birds were at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* *Amber listed*
Winter visitor and passage migrant with some summering individuals

Present in large numbers during the first winter period as birds commuted with other large gull species between Rufforth tip and the huge roosts in the LDV. The peak count for the year was 4,300 on 2nd February from Wheldrake Ings, with more than 4,000 present there throughout February.

During the summer months, ten were at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and 31st May with 30 there on the 21st, then 12 on 6th June. The distinctive leucistic bird from Norway returned to our area for the third year in succession and was seen at Bank Island, Heslington East and NDC on various dates during the spring and summer.

In the second winter period no counts were received from Harewood Whin Tip, Rufforth and the only counts above 50 were:

20th November, Wharfe Ings - 52, with 151 there on the 23rd (145 adults)

22nd November, Bank Island - 68

6th December, NDC - 54

13th December, Bolton Ings - 52, and at least 100 on the 19th

17th December, Wharfe Ings - 290

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*
Resident breeder

Recorded widely and frequently throughout the recording area. The largest number reported was a flock of 180 at Malton on 14th December.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas* *Amber listed*
Resident breeder

Frequently recorded throughout the year over the whole area with larger flocks noted during the winter periods.

Higher numbers were 49 at Skipwith Common on 3rd February, 66 at Bolton Ings on 1st March and 46 in the Towton area on 23rd December. Visible migration watches observed 52 flying west at Patefield Wood on 18th February and 24 flying south in three hours on 25th August at Milford Common.

During the breeding season singing was heard at Bank Island, Foggathorpe, Hovingham, Milford Common and several locations along the River Wharfe, Pretty Wood (Castle Howard), Wheldrake Ings and Yearsley Moor. At Melbourne one pair was investigating a nest box on 16th April and another pair was seen on 12th June plus a juvenile nearby. Nesting was also confirmed at Brecks Farm Haxby on 10th May; Knavesmire Road, York; and one was nest prospecting at SHL on 25th June.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Resident breeder

Widespread throughout the area with numbers increasing during the winter due to migrants.

Flocks over 500 during the first winter period were:

2nd January, Fulford Golf Course - 1,200

4th January, Sherburn in Elmet - 800

14th January, Milford Common - 800; with 600 there on the 26th

19th January, Upper Poppleton - 1,300

25th January, Skipwith Common - 1,000

2nd February, Milford Common - 1,000

3rd February, Pocklington Canal, Melbourne - 600

9th February, Grimston - 1400

20th February, Patefield Wood - 1,000

3rd March, Patefield Wood - 700

7th April, Towton - 1,800

Frequently recorded throughout the area during the breeding season, there was positive indication of nesting at Melbourne on 6th June with birds "breaking from stands of trees at the last minute", 85 were at Naburn Wood during a BBS on the 14th and an unsuccessful nesting pair in a Strensall garden.

High numbers were again observed during the autumn migration and wintering periods with records over 500 being:

9th November, Dunnington - 500

9th November, LDV - 7,000

21st November, Melbourne - 3,000

22nd November, Bank Island - 1,150

13th December, Bishop Wood - 970 leaving a roost

17th December, West Lilling - 1,000

Autumn visible migration watches at Whit Hill recorded a phenomenal total of 154,705 flying southwest between 25th October and 22nd November. Peak movements there were all in November, with 23,370 on the 6th, 27,340 on the 10th, 30,640 on the 12th and 29,820 on the 17th.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Resident breeder

Common and widespread throughout the area in suitable habitats where there is human habitation. Flocks of 20 or more were: 30 and 24 at Kirkby Wharfe on 8th February and 15th April respectively and 22 were at Old Malton on 10th December.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Red listed

Passage migrant and increasingly scarce migrant breeder

There were similar numbers to the previous year of this decreasing migrant breeder. The first returning birds were singles 'purring' at Foggathorpe and Skipwith Common on 1st May, with a pair at the former site on the 2nd. One was

present from the 25th to 31st May at Barmby Moor and one at Elvington on 12th June. Two pairs were found on nests in the Foggathorpe area during June – this area has been a traditional stronghold for the species and is now the last remaining area to hold birds in the LDV. Another was at Sutton upon Derwent on 25th August.

In the northern part of the area one was singing at Ampleforth on 7th June and two possible juveniles flew into trees near Scackleton Mill on 11th August, where previously an adult had been seen briefly on the Coulton side of the mill on 30th July.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Red listed

Migrant breeder

Although declining nationally there were still reasonable numbers in the area. The first was recorded on 9th April at Brayton Barff, followed by birds at Haxby on the 18th, Melbourne and Strensall on the 19th and two at Melbourne on the 20th. On the 21st one was at Skipwith Common, with three, possibly four, at Strensall Common and one at Wigginton.

After 22nd April calling birds became more widespread over the recording area with birds noted at the following additional locations: Allerthorpe area, Ampleforth, Bank Island, Bishop's Wood, Dunnington, Ellerton, Elvington, Easingwold, King's Moor, Stockton-on-the-Forest, Hemingbrough, Heslington Tillmire, Little Fenton, NDC, Ozendyke Ings, Poppleton, Sand Hutton, Sheriff Hutton, Stamford Bridge, Stillingfleet Hill, Stillington, Sutton-on-the-Forest, Thorganby, Thornton Ellers, Wheldrake Ings, Whenby and Tang Hall Beck Fields, York.

Three territories were estimated during the MOD survey of Strensall Common on 15th May – this is the usual number with no indication of a decline there. Three were also heard at Brayton Barff on 23rd May and up to three males and two females were at Melbourne during June, including a rufous phase bird. Juvenile birds were seen during the breeding season at Stamford Bridge on 11th June, in Ellerton Churchyard on 16th July and at Ozendyke Ings on 20th July.

The last recorded was one in York near Knavesmire Wood on 21st August.

See also Paul Doherty's article on page105 on the Club's survey during 2015.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Resident breeder

Another good year for sightings of this species, with records from many areas throughout the year, however breeding success was probably lower than in 2014. The LDV, Milford Common and the south-west part of the area (SE 53) provided most of the sightings – in the first winter period up to five birds were seen at NDC and in the Pocklington Canal area and on 19th February eight were seen between Wheldrake and North Duffield. Birds continued to show well during March and throughout the whole area with up to three at Bank Island and four at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd March. Thereafter numbers declined as birds returned to breeding sites.

In other areas, birds were also observed at Allerthorpe Common, Askham Bryan, Bielby, Bilbrough, CHL, Copmanthorpe, Dunnington Common, Elvington Airfield, Garrowby Hill, Gilling Woods, Grimston Bar, Hagg Wood area, Haxby, Heslington Tillmire, Kexby Bridge, Monks Cross (York), Moor Monkton, Naburn, Newburgh Priory, Nunnington, Redhouse Wood, Rufforth, Sand Hutton, Selby, Skipwith Common, Slingsby, Strensall Common, West Lilling, Whenby, Wigginton and Yearsley Moor. In York, at Tang Hall Beck Fields, a bird was present on 27th January and from 31st May to 14th July frequently hunting along the beck or in neighbouring fields.

Breeding did not appear to be as successful as 2014, with a pair at Deighton raising four young with the aid of supplementary feeding. Elsewhere in the Riccall/Kelfield/Escrick/Skipwith areas, although pairs were present at the usual nest sites, breeding did not take place. Breeding was noted at Strensall Common, but late, and three fully feathered young were found dead by the nest in mid-September, though the fourth chick may have fledged successfully. In SE53 two pairs were at Milford Common, two pairs at Ozendyke, one at Church Fenton and another near Ulleskelf.

Some interesting behaviour was noted at Skipwith Common where one roosted at a low height of 2m in a small pine during most of January and February. In April birds were also seen on two occasions to kill and eat a Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* at Wheldrake Ings.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Resident breeder but can be elusive

A good year for this species with records distributed over most of the recording area. Single birds were recorded outside of the breeding season at Acaster, Brayton Barff, Gate Helmsley, Gilling, Haxby, Heslington Tillmire, Kirkby Wharfe, Malton, Milford Common, Naburn, NDC, Poppleton, Sand Hutton, Scagglethorpe Lane, Thorganby and West Lilling.

During the breeding season (April-July) a pair was present at Thorganby on 9th April when the male was ringed, another was at Bank Island on the 14th and one at Ellerton Landing on the 20th. A pair bred in an old hedgerow willow at Riccall and at Naburn two were seen (as in previous years) on what seems to be a favourite oak, plus one was also seen going into farm buildings there. Nesting was also recorded at Craw Wood, Bossall, while singles were also seen during the breeding season at Acaster, Cliffe, Gate Helmsley, Kexby, Poppleton Scagglethorpe Lane, Storwood and Whenby.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Amber listed

Resident breeder throughout the area

Frequently heard at night during the beginning and end of the year and breeding was confirmed at a number of sites.

During the non-breeding period, at least three were heard calling – possibly up to six – at Allerthorpe Common and three at Milford Common on 4th January and two at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings.

In the autumn period two called at Wheldrake Ings on 20th August and up to four at Acaster Malbis on various dates in the autumn. Elsewhere, singles were also seen or heard at Brayton Barff, Bubwith, CHL, Clifton Moor and Clifton Backies (York), Easingwold, Gilling Woods, Hassacarr NR, Kirkby Wharfe, the LDV, Patefield Wood, Melbourne, Sand Hutton, Skipwith Common, Wheldrake Ings and York University.

During the breeding season (April – July) nesting was confirmed at Pocklington Canal, Melbourne, where a pair with two eggs was found, also a pair in Wheldrake Ings car park lane was incubating two eggs on 14th April and a bird was sitting in a nest box at Kirkby Wharfe on the 15th. However in the LDV breeding success appeared low following the low vole numbers present early in the year. Several pairs abandoned clutches or failed to rear broods – the boxes then being taken over by Stock Doves *Columba oenas* or Barn Owls *Tyto alba*. Elsewhere, breeding was confirmed at Haxby, Slingsby – where two newly fledged young were seen on 28th June – and at Scarthingwell where two newly fledged juveniles were found about 1km apart on the 30th. Single birds were also recorded during this period at: Ampleforth, Acaster Malbis, Allerthorpe, Bishopthorpe, Bishop Wood, Brayton Barff, Clifton Moor (York), Easingwold, Elvington, Gilling, Hagg Wood, Newburgh Priory, Nunnington, Redhouse Wood, Skipwith Common, Slingsby, Strensall and Strensall Common.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Resident breeder and winter visitor

Another good year for this species with breeding confirmed at one site. One was at Strensall Common on 4th January and on the same day another flew off the bridge at the car park at Wheldrake Ings, both during the Bird Race (TJ et al). The latter bird stayed on until at least 19th (LDV blog) while another was at Poppleton on the 22nd (CH).

There was one breeding record of begging calls from at least one chick heard at Yearsley Moor on 7th June (DR).

An adult was seen at Skipwith Common flying along the road at the west end on 5th July (JLe). At the end of the year one was at Rufforth on 10th December (Birdguides) and again on 27th, when it and Short-eared Owls *Asio flammeus* were disturbed by hunters with dogs (PW).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Amber listed

Winter and passage visitor; casual breeder

A very good year for this species after two quiet years since the big influx of 2012. Up to four frequented Milford Common from the start of the year until 8th February (PD) and singles were also seen at York on 8th January (Birdguides) and at NDC on the 17th and 24th (CSR).

A pair was present at Seavy Carrs throughout April and early May (NC, DB, LDV Blog) and were seen exhibiting behaviour suggesting that a breeding attempt may have been starting in late April/early May. However no further sightings were reported after 10th May suggesting the birds had moved on. Elsewhere in April,

singles were seen at NDC on the 9th (LDV Blog), Bank Island on the 10th (JB) and at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th (LDV Blog) and 23rd (DB).

During the autumn and winter period, singles were at Wheldrake Ings on 15th September (LDV blog) and there again on 30th and 31st October (CSR) and also at Selby and Milford Common both on the 20th (Birdguides, PD). In November singles were at Bank Island on the 3rd and 4th (JB) and at NDC on the 7th (LDV blog). Finally in December, up to three were at Rufforth most of the month staying into the new year (CG, HSi, OM, PW, RD, Birdguides), one at Wheldrake Ings on 13th (DB, JLe) and lastly one at Strensall Common on the 31st (HS).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant and breeder

One was flushed from an old pinewood clearing at Brayton Barff on 13th May (JF) and another was at Allerthorpe Common on the 11th June (SCE). At the traditional site of Skipwith Common up to three churring males were heard between 12th June and 20th July (DT, RCn, JCn, DB, JLe, LDV blog). However although a pair was present throughout most of the breeding season, no young birds were seen.

Swift *Apus apus*

Amber listed

Migrant breeder

The first of the summer was one at Ampleforth on 17th April and another on the 25th at Wheldrake Ings. The bird at Ampleforth was the earliest back at this nest site by five days. Singles were also seen in April flying north at Milford Common on the 26th and at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th. During May numbers in single figures were recorded frequently and widely but more than 100 were in the northern part of the LDV on the 6th, increasing to 400 by the 8th, and a mass arrival of screaming birds was noted in Riccall on the 9th.

Breeding was noted at Ampleforth, Francis Street (York), Heworth Village East (where there were fewer birds compared to previously), Westow, and suspected at Strensall, Sutton-on-the-Forest and Whitwell-on-the-Hill, plus other sites. At Ampleforth, only five pairs were back by 2nd June compared to ten in 2015, and on 8th August six pairs still had nestlings though 15+ were prospecting; it was concluded that fewer birds nested this year because of the cold May and June. However at Riccall there was a good breeding season at one of the small colonies, where seven pairs raised 17 young (av. 2.4).

At the end of June there were the first signs of late summer movement with 534 flying south in three hours at Whit Hill on the 28th and 300 at Bank Island on the 30th. A minimum of 723 flew south at Whit Hill on 4th July and 357 on the 17th and 300 flew west within two hours at Poppleton on the 20th. These observations mirror the substantial passage recorded at Spurn and indicate a significant passage across our region in late June and early to mid-July.

Numbers decreased throughout August, though 250 were at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on the 2nd and 50 still around Ampleforth on the 8th. The last were a

single at Wheldrake Ings on 10th September and two at Acaster Malbis on the 12th.

Swift fledglings

(nest cam)

© Jonathan Pomroy



Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Resident breeder

Amber listed

Frequently seen in ones or twos throughout the area in suitable wetland habitat. During the year birds were seen at the following sites: Allerthorpe GP, Aughton Ings, Bank Island, Bolton Ings, CHL, Crockey Hill, Foss Island York, Hassacarr NR, Heslington East and Heslington West, Germany Beck, Howsham, the LDV, Milford Common, Newburgh Priory, NDC, Ozendyke Ings, Pocklington Canal, Rawcliffe Lake, Redhouse Reservoir, Riccall, River Foss in York, along the River Ouse from Beningbrough to Acaster Malbis, Raker Lakes (Wheldrake), Sand Hutton, SHL, St Nicholas Fields (York), Stamford Bridge, Stillingfleet, Strensall Common, Thornton Ellers, Ulleskelf, West Ings, Wharfe Ings, Wheldrake Ings, Wistow Clough and Yearsley Moor.

Breeding was noted at Melbourne by the end of April; an adult was seen taking food to a nest at the base of a ditch-side oak at Wheldrake Ings on 13th May and a female flew up from a ditch with a faecal sack at Thornton Lock, Pocklington Canal on the 10th. They also bred at Elvington Weir during July, with another pair near Canal Head, Pocklington Canal whilst regular sightings came from Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island. A total of six or seven pairs are thought to have been present in the LDV area during the breeding season. There were no definite breeding reports outside of the LDV, but probably occurred at Wharfe Ings while two birds were present at Naburn Lock on 16th July and at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on the 25th.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Scarce visitor

The first in the area since 2013, one was caught and ringed on 24th August near New Earswick. This is the tenth record for the recording area and only the

second to be ringed. Interestingly, historical records show that Wryneck bred in the area up to 1946, so these sightings just refer to birds seen since 1966. More details are in the ringing report on page 100.

Correction: the Wryneck seen in 2013 was wrongly given as the 8th record for the area; it was actually the 9th.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Resident breeder but not widespread

Frequently seen and heard at suitable locations with a habitat of short grassland, with most reports being of one or two birds. During the year records were received from the following sites: Acaster Malbis, Allerthorpe (Common, Lake and GP), Ampleforth, Bank Island, Bishopthorpe, Black Wood (Easingwold), Bolton Ings, Bolton Percy, Brayton Barff, Calley Heath NR, Catterton Wood and Roling Bridge near Tadcaster, Crockey Hill, Easingwold, East Cottingwith, Elvington, Flaxton, Gilling, Heslington, Heslington Tillmire, Hob Moor and Knavesmire York, Kexby, Melbourne, Milford Common, Naburn, the River Ouse from Bishopthorpe to the Millennium Bridge, Ozendyke Ings, Pocklington Canal, Sand Hutton, SHL, Skelton, Skipwith, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge, Stockton-on-the-Forest, Strensall Common, Sutton Bridge, Thornton Ellers, Ulleskelf Mires, West Ings, Wharfe Ings, Wheldrake and York University (both sites).

Breeding was confirmed at a number of sites, with juveniles being seen at Milford Common, Ozendyke Ings and Skipwith Common (where probably two pairs bred). Pairs or suspected pairs were also present at Brayton Barff, Crockey Hill, Gilling, Kexby and Naburn during the breeding season.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Resident breeder

Widespread throughout the area, frequently coming to feeders or heard drumming during the spring.

Breeding nests with juveniles were recorded at Allerthorpe Common, Askham Bryan, Pocklington Canal Melbourne, Stockton Common, Yearsley Moor and a well-watched pair at Skipwith Common fledged young from the nest there on 9th June. A juvenile was a frequent visitor to a Strensall garden for peanuts between July and September.

At CHL on 14th May a leucistic individual with a lot of the black elements of the plumage replaced with pale brown/buff was present, and a juvenile female of the continental race was present at Wheldrake Ings during the year.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

Red listed

Scarce resident and localised breeder

Only two brief sightings were reported this year; one at Bank Island on 9th September which flew across and perched up briefly on a telegraph pole (CSR) and one at North Duffield on 18th December (TD). The latter bird flew across the

road in front of the driver and landed at the bottom of a roadside tree, unfortunately a car behind meant the observer was unable to stop!

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Amber listed

Resident breeder

A common raptor of farmland, widespread throughout the York area with many reports received. The first winter period saw good numbers in the LDV, with a maximum of seven birds between Bank Island and NDC on 21st January, with five birds being seen at NDC alone on 17th February.

The poor numbers of voles led to a below average breeding season however, with only three pairs confirmed breeding in the LDV, while other breeding records came from Colton, Hagg Wood, Heslington East, Londesborough Lodge Farm, Naburn, West Ings and several locations in SE53.

Numbers were lower but again widespread in the second winter period, and the only report of more than two birds was of three at Towton on 23rd December.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Red listed

Passage migrant and winter visitor

A very good year for this species in the York area. The majority of records came from the LDV. Wintering records, all of single birds, came from NDC on 1st January, Bank Island and Seavy Carr both on the 8th, Wheldrake Ings on the 13-14th, Bank Island on the 15th, Melbourne on the 29th, NDC on 12th February, Wheldrake on the 14th and Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd.

The busiest month was March, reflecting the passage of breeding birds heading back up to the moors alongside wintering birds. A female was at Milford Common on 7th March and still present on the 13th; on the 15th one was at Fulford Golf Course; one at NDC on the 16th and one there on the 18th; a male at Milford Common on the 17th; one at Heslington Tillmire on the 19th; one at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th and one on the 27th at Melbourne. April records came on the 9th, at Sutton, on the 19th at NDC, and on the 26th there were sightings at Melbourne and NDC.

The first returning bird was an unseasonable record on 21st July near Bishop's Wood; the next was one over Milford Common on 13th October. Further winter records were at NDC on 6th December, at Thorganby on the 13th and lastly at Bank Island on the 21st.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Passage migrant; scarce and localised breeder

The first record of the year was at Bank Island on 24th April, and there followed a good scattering of individual spring migrants across the area, although there were no counts above two in the spring period.

Breeding was confirmed in SE53 where a pair raised two young with a second probable pair also in that area. There were three probable breeding pairs in the LDV, and three further probable pairs in the wider York area.

Gatherings of Hobbies in the autumn period were four at Scarthingwell on 3rd August, three at Wheldrake Ings on 30th August until 1st September and four there on 10th September. There were two late records, both on 11th October, from Appleton Roebuck and Riccall.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Winter and passage visitor; local breeder

Another good year for Peregrines in the York area. In the first winter period the majority of sightings came from the LDV where the gatherings of winter wildfowl provide a ready source of prey, although the pair holding territory on York Minster seemed content to feed over the city centre and along the River Ouse.

There were three successful breeding pairs within the LDV, each raising two young. The pair on York Minster attempted to breed, but despite laying at least one egg they failed to rear any young, almost certainly because of the damp conditions on their chosen nesting ledge.

There were far fewer records of Peregrines in the second winter period, but they were more widespread, with records from farmland across the York area. There were no counts of above two birds, suggesting a lack of concentration of prey species forcing Peregrines to hunt over a wider area.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Occasional but scarce visitor

One was seen at Copmanthorpe on 22nd August (DH) and then from the 24th was seen and heard around Naburn on a number of occasions until the end of the year (JB).

Great Grey Shrike

Rare summer migrant

The first since 2011 was found at Heslington Tillmire on 8th March (MM) and relocated the following day when it chased and caught a male Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* in flight and then flew to a dense hawthorn with the bird in its bill and commenced plucking and devouring its prey (RD, CG). It showed well and remained remarkably unfazed by the attention it received from a stream of admiring birders over the next few weeks until the 29th, when it was last seen.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Resident breeder

This species was commonly seen in single numbers throughout the recording area with the exception in the first winter period of 13 birds on 20th February at Heslington East. Other notable numbers were seven in a bush together on 27th February at Nun Appleton and nine on 25th March and again on 16th April in the centre of York.

The only evidence of breeding was one juvenile seen with two adults on 28th June at SHL. In the second winter period eight birds were seen on 29th

December at Clifton Moor, York, while the largest flock of the year was 23 seen near Millennium Bridge in Fulford on 31st December.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Low numbers of up to five birds were regularly seen in suitable habitats throughout the year. Many records were from Acaster Malbis, Allertorpe Common, Brayton Barff, Hagg Wood, the LDV, Milford Common, Pocklington Canal, Scagglethorpe Lane, Strensall Common and Whit Hill. The highest count was of six birds seen on 4th April at Skipwith Common.

There was no submitted evidence of breeding or of an autumn influx this year.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Resident breeder

This species was widespread throughout the recording area with large numbers of roosting birds and flocks in the first and second winter periods.

In the first winter period significant numbers (of 50 or more) were:

5th January, Pocklington Canal - 50

18th January, Fulford - 50

25th January, Skipwith Common - 200

9th February, Patefield Wood - 2,580 roosting

1st March, Bolton Ings - 200

12th April, CHL - 60

There was no submitted evidence of breeding although many birds were seen in what appeared to be pairs.

In the second winter period significant numbers were:

31st October, CHL - 100

22nd November, Scarthingwell - 400 (leaving Patefield Wood roost)

25th November, Appleton Roebuck - 100 minimum

7th December, West Ings - 310

21st December, Patefield Wood - 800

31st December, Thorganby Ings - 50

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Resident breeder

Widely recorded, but few records of nesting though it is hoped that the rookery census undertaken by Phil Bone in 2014 (see 2014 report) will encourage more nesting counts.

Notable counts in excess of 100 in 2015 included:

11th January, Wheldrake - 100

12th January, SHL - 760 (mixed flock with a few Jackdaws)

14th January, Hagg Wood - 150

29th January, Pocklington Canal - 130

4th February, SHL - 200 (mixed flock with a few Jackdaws)

9th February, Patefield Wood - 470 (roost)

12th and 20th February, Pocklington Canal - 150
15th July, Milford Common - 144
18th July, Bank Island - 200
15th August, Refuge, Wheldrake - 250
27th August, Old Malton - 110
8th November, East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest - 300 (pre-roost gathering)
19th November, SHL - 180
21st December, Patefield Wood - 200

In April, a total of 12 nests, with birds using two pylons that created a bend and a “metal box” structure forming a steel rookery, was reported at Pocklington Canal. Nesting was also reported at Allerthorpe, in a small rookery at Bolton Percy and at Castle Howard.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*
Resident breeder

Even more counts were submitted in 2015 than in previous years, most of which were of fewer than 20 birds. Notable counts of 25 or more included: 59 at Wheldrake on 1st January, 36 at Acaster on 14th January, 29 at Milford Common on 1st May and 25 at Skipwith Common on 12th August.

Evidence of breeding was recorded at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton Lock) and SHL.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*
Rare winter visitor

One was picked up dead at Hessay on 3rd February. The only other record since 1989 was of one in 2012.

Raven *Corvus corax*
Rare visitor

This species has now been recorded in most years of the last decade. A single bird was seen on 17th January flying west over Skipwith Common (AW, MS). On 6th February two birds were recorded over Marsh Lane, Bolton Percy. One bird was pestering the lower of two circling buzzards and making a lot of grumbling vocals. The other was not as aggressive (MSK). A month later, on 5th March, a single bird was sighted at Hagg Bridge (CSR).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*
Resident breeder and winter visitor

Records of up to ten birds were submitted from many sites throughout the recording area. Birds were heard singing from late February to late May with 22 singing birds recorded at Bishop Wood between 28th April and 7th May. It was noted that breeding numbers at Brayton Barff are lower since the removal of the pine wood (as for Coal Tit) but one or two singing birds were reported there regularly up to early July.

Significant numbers of ten or more were as follows: 25 at Bishop Wood on 12th January and ten there on 8th February; 24 singing birds at Yearsley Moor on 16th May and ten on 7th June. At Milford Common 20 birds were recorded on 20th October. Numbers generally increased fractionally in the autumn.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant

No records in 2015 after sightings in 2007, 2010, 2011 and 2013.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Resident breeder

Many records were submitted from across the whole of the recording area and throughout the year. Sightings of over 15 were: 17 at Melbourne, Pocklington Canal on 23rd January; 20 at Moorlands on 27th January; 25 at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 7th February, with 21 there on 14th March and 24 on the 15th; 16 at Ebor Way on 24th March; 35 at Brayton Barff on 15th April.

It is presumed that the species bred widely throughout the area but evidence was only recorded at Brayton Barff, Naburn, Pocklington Canal, SHL, Skipwith Common, Strensall and Wheldrake Ings.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Resident breeder

This common species was widely reported across the area and throughout the year, mainly in single figures. Sightings of over 15 were: 29 at Acaster on 14th January; 20 at Moorlands on 27th January; 18 at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 7th February and the same number on the 14th and 15th March; 20 at Brayton Barff on 15th April.

Reports of breeding came from Acaster Malbis; Brayton Barff (eight nests with between four and seven eggs per nest); Breezy Knees, Warthill; Hemingbrough; Pocklington Canal; SHL (three broods in nest boxes, two with five chicks and one with four); and Wheldrake Ings.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Resident breeder

There were counts of mainly five birds or fewer for this widespread, common species. Higher counts were ten at Moorlands on 27th January and six at Acaster Malbis on 21st October.

Birds were singing from mid-January through to late June at Allerthorpe Common, Bank Island, Brayton Barff, Castle Howard, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common and Yearsley Moor.

Evidence of breeding was recorded at Brayton Barff (but with reduced numbers from previous years owing to the removal of the pine wood). At SHL six broods in nest boxes produced one of seven chicks, two of six chicks and three of five chicks.



Willow Tit *Poecile montana*
Resident breeder

Red listed

Singing birds were regularly heard at Coneysthorpe Bank Wood, in the LDV, at Milford Common and along Pocklington Canal, mainly in the Melbourne area.

Only two sites had confirmed breeding records: the LDV where a family party (three birds) was seen in the car park at Wheldrake Ings on 17th June, and Milford Common where a juvenile was recorded near Melton Leys on 11th July.

Sites and peak numbers per site were as follows: Acaster Airfield (1), Allerthorpe Common (1), Askham Bog (3), Bolton Ings (1), Coneysthorpe Bank Wood (1), Hagg Wood (1), the LDV (6 – all ringed in August), Milford Common (2), Pocklington Canal, Melbourne (5), SHL (2), Stamford Bridge (1), Strensall Common (3) and Yearsley Moor (3).

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*
Resident breeder

Red listed

Another declining species, there was no evidence received of birds breeding although a bird was heard calling at Wheldrake Ings on 16th April.

Sites and peak numbers per site were as follows: Allerthorpe Common (2), Allerthorpe GP (2), Ampleforth (1), Askham Bog (6), Callis Wood (2), CHL (2), Gilling Park (2), Hagg Wood (1), Howsham Mill (2), the LDV (2), Low Catton Road (1), River Rye, Nunnington (1), Pocklington Canal (1), Rabbit Warren Wood, Dunnington (1), SHL (2), the Ebor Way (2), The Stank (2), Sand Hutton (2), Whitwell Grange (2), Yearsley Moor (2), Calley Heath NR (1).

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*
Rare visitor

In 2015 only one sighting was reported, on 29th January, when three birds were seen at Church Bridge, Melbourne (LDV Blog). This was disappointing after

the “bumper year” of 2014 when relatively high numbers were observed in the autumn and second winter periods probably due to irrupting birds from a successful breeding season on the Humber Estuary.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Amber listed

Recent re-colonist in small numbers

As usual, Skipwith and Strensall Commons were the main locations, both providing multiple sightings. The first record of the year was at Skipwith Common when three singing birds were seen on 18th February (LDV Blog), followed by regular sightings of up to eight singing males from the beginning of March through to the end of July (LDV Blog). In May all eight singing males remained on Skipwith Common, showing well and being particularly vocal (LDV Blog). In June several pairs were sighted, some with three or four juveniles (LDV Blog). In July several broods were present and small post breeding flocks built up during the month (LDV Blog). A family party of four left the Common and flew to surrounding farmland (DT) on 1st September. A single juvenile was seen on 10th September and two juveniles on the 17th (LDV Blog).

At Strensall Common the first two birds were seen 9th April (PeR) followed by three (max) singing birds on the following few days (NL, GW, NS, DB, BB, PeR). In May up to five territories were estimated during a MOD survey and fledged young were seen later in the summer. On 15th May ten birds in total were seen at four different locations on the Common (PeR).

At Allerthorpe Common one singing bird was heard on 28th April (DB) and another single bird was recorded in song flight on 15th May (NS).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Red listed

Resident breeder and winter visitor

During the first winter period sudden snow cover on 19th January presumably accounted for a small movement and arrival at NDC during the day of a minimum of 25 birds which may have been forced from higher land outside of the valley. On the same day 51 birds were counted in two flocks at Melbourne. On 30th January the Melbourne flocks had increased to 70 birds and settled to 62 two weeks later. At NDC the flock had increased to 50 by 22nd February.

The first singing birds were three at Wheldrake Ings on 8th February and birds continued to be heard singing at Allerthorpe Common, Castle Howard, Foggathorpe, Heslington East, the LDV, Heslington Tillmire, Milford Common, Pocklington Canal, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common, West Lilling, Whitwell Grange West and Yearsley Moor. A bird was seen displaying at Askham Bryan on 28th March. Seven territories were estimated during an MOD survey at Strensall Common on 15th May. A recently fledged juvenile was amongst at least 12 birds at Milford Common on 3rd June and a nest with three eggs was found there on 18th June which had hatched four days later.

In the autumn at Wheldrake Ings 36 birds were seen at flying south on 17th September and 34 were seen on 10th October. At Acaster Airfield 33 birds were recorded on 19th October.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia**Amber listed**Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

Two flying west over Boroughbridge Road, York on 7th March were the first, closely followed by a single at Bank Island the next day. An obvious influx occurred on 12th April when there were 200 at CHL and 175 were counted heading north at the Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe.

Birds returned to the nest bank at SHL on 6th May and ten nests were noted on the River Rye between Nunnington and Plump Wood on 16th May. At least six holes in the artificial bank at Heslington East were occupied on 13th June and there were another six holes in nearby soil piles. A newly fledged juvenile near the artificial bank on 22nd July indicated successful breeding and four holes in the bank were being visited on 31st July. A supervised check of the artificial bank on 26th August showed that 17 of the 50 holes had been used and one nest still had four large young from a second (or even third) brood. Birds continued to visit the bank until 3rd September.

Fifty were at CHL on 9th September and visible migration watches at Milford Common and Whit Hill recorded 45 flying south between 30th June and 20th September. The final record was three at Wheldrake Ings on 9th October.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica**Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

The first were two at Newburgh Priory and one at CHL on 4th April. There were 20 at CHL on 12th April and 65 flew north at the Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on the same date. The only spring counts in triple figures were from Wheldrake Ings and involved 150 on 6th May and 250 on the 9th and 10th May.

Little information was received on breeding numbers or success and the only reports of breeding came from Sand Hutton, Stamford Bridge and Wheldrake Ings. At Sand Hutton two pairs had four young, another had three young and there were two more nests.

Notable autumn counts included 100 at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th and 18th July and 150 there on the 25th. The Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe had 100 on 2nd August. In September about 150 were at Sherburn WTW on the 3rd, there were 150 at CHL on the 9th, over 300 at Milford Common on the 10th, when there were 155 at Wheldrake Ings, with 200 there on the 13th and 500 on the 14th. Visible migration watches at Milford Common recorded 493 moving south and 81 north in 31 hours of observations between 5th August and 2nd October, including 211 flying south in three hours on 25th August. At Bolton Ings 226 flew south in two hours on 13th September. At Whit Hill 230 flew southwest in 51 hours of observations between 5th July and 23rd September. The last record was of 12 at Hassacarr NR on 23rd October.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum**Amber listed**Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

The first was a single flying north over Patefield Wood on 9th April. Single figures were then seen until 25th April when 50 were at Strensall Common.

Notable spring counts were 90 at Sherburn WTW on the 26th; 30 at Castle Howard on 30th April; 40 at Wheldrake Ings on 4th May (and the same number there on the 16th); 25 at Brecks Farm, Haxby on the 10th; 70 at Sherburn WTW on the 20th; and 50 at Wheldrake Ings on 31st May.

A BTO survey meant more breeding records were received this year. At least 40 nests (and 100 birds) were at Stockton Common on 22nd May, with other breeding records from Ampleforth; Keble Park in Bishopthorpe (six nests); Bolton Percy; CHL; Hemingbrough; Huby (nine nests); Huntingdon; Monks Cross, York (two nests at P&R building); Naburn Lock; Sand Hutton; Sutton-on-the-Forest; Ulleskelf (19 apparently occupied nests) and Whitwell Grange West.

In the autumn 200 were counted passing over the Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on the morning of 2nd August and other counts of 100 or more, were 620 at Sherburn WTW on the 3rd, 100 at CHL on the 9th, 100 at Milford Common on 10th September and 209 flew south in two hours at Bolton Ings on 13th September. The final record was seven at Hassacarr NR on 23rd October.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Rare visitor

A very good year for this species with at least two different individuals caught and ringed in the second winter period, representing the eighth and ninth records for the recording area, and birds also heard calling on several dates. One was caught in a mist net at Wheldrake Ings on 31st October (MFJ), the eighth record for the area, and one heard calling on 1st November (DB). Another was caught there on 3rd November (the ninth) (MFJ), with a single calling in the reed bed on the 21st and 22nd (JLe) and two on 24th November (CSR, LM, FM). One or, possibly, two birds were then present until 23rd December (JLe, LDV blog). With this species being recorded at Wheldrake Ings for each of the past three years, it will be interesting to see if this is a trend that continues.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Resident breeder

Widespread throughout the year in single or low double figures. Counts of over twenty birds were: 35 south of Riccall on 3rd February; 35 at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 12th July; 22 at Wheldrake Ings on 25th July; 25 at Bank Island on 9th August; 30 at Wheldrake Ings on 16th August; 24 at St Nicholas Fields on 26th August; 25 at Wheldrake Ings on 20th September with the same number there on 13th December and 25 near Cawood on 26th December. A Heslington garden reported their presence in 96% of weeks (93% in 2014), with a maximum of seven to twelve in November and December, otherwise typically one to four during the rest of the year.

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2015



Left to right and top to bottom
Two **Pied Flycatchers** at Yearsley, the one shown on the right was a much greyer bird
© Duncan Bye

Great Grey Shrike © Nigel Stewart

Hawfinch at Ampleforth © Jonathan Pomroy

Great Spotted Woodpecker (continental race – caught and ringed) © Mike Jackson

Turtle Dove (becoming a scarce sight in the recording area) © John Heaton

Waxwing © Paul Greenwood

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Vagrant

Following the fourth record for the area in 2014, another two birds turned up in 2015 (the fifth and sixth records). The first was at Askham Richard on 23rd September (AH) and one was calling at Bank Island on 1st October (CSR).

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Red listed

Passage migrant

After a blank year in 2014 (the first since 2003) there was one at Brayton Barff on 20th April (DC), and a single was seen and heard singing at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd September (CSR, MFJ, SJH).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant with some birds overwintering

The bird found at Heslington East on 31st December 2014 remained until 18th January. One was at Bank Island on 5th January and another at Osbaldwick on 15th February. A single at Bank Island on the 9th March could have been a wintering bird, but three were at Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on 13th March, after which single figures were seen on a daily basis. Birds were widespread in the LDV from 1st April, though with a noticeable arrival from the 4th to the 7th. Birds were widely reported in single figures and counts of ten or more were: 12 singing at Allerthorpe Common on 28th April, 14 along the River Ouse between Bishopthorpe and Millennium Bridge on 2nd May, and 17 singing at Yearsley Moor on 16th May. Twenty five singing birds were noted in Bishop Wood during late April and early May. Up to 14 pairs were present at Brayton Barff during the breeding season. Eighteen were counted at the Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 25th July.

Autumn records were mostly in single figures, apart from 12 at CHL on 9th September, ten at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th and 12 there on the 20th. Good numbers remained at Wheldrake Ings in early October with 37 trapped and ringed at Wheldrake Ings between the 1st and the 3rd giving an indication of the numbers involved. The final autumn record was a single at Wheldrake Ings on 1st November. The only record during the second winter period was of one at Wheldrake Ings seen on 20th December and again on the 30th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Amber listed

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first was singing at Wheldrake Ings on 9th April and 12 were singing there by midday on the 16th, increasing to 15 singing by the 27th. Brayton Barff had a maximum of six singing on 23rd April (in the 1980s it had as many as 47 breeding pairs; there were 43 singing males in 1990). Seventeen singing birds were noted in Bishop Wood during late April and early May. May records included 19 singing at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and records elsewhere in double figures were 21 at Skipwith Common on the 1st, 16 singing at Yearsley Moor on the 16th, and 12 singing at Milford Common on the 20th. The LDV had average numbers during

July with passage picking up during the last week and a noticeable influx seen on the 30th.

Evidence of successful breeding included four nests found at Skipwith Common and fledged young were seen at Brayton Barff on 12th August.

The last records were of one ringed at Skipwith Common on 15th September and one at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 17th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Migrant breeder with some birds overwintering

Overwintering birds were seen at Cawood on 9th January, Heslington on 5th February, Holly Terrace, York on 6th February, Grosvenor Terrace, York on 25th February and another at Heslington for a fortnight from late February, then another Heslington record on the 21st and 22nd March.

The first migrant was singing at Brayton Barff on 8th April, increasing to 19 singing there on 21st April, with 25 on 30th April and a record count of 26 on 6th May. Thirty singing birds were noted in Bishop Wood during late April and early May. The only other spring count in double figures was ten at Wheldrake Ings on 27th April.

Breeding was recorded at several sites and eight nests were found at Skipwith Common. A total of 80 ringed at Wheldrake Ings during July indicated a bumper breeding season.

Autumn records were all in single figures, except for 12 at Wheldrake Ings on 16th August. The final autumn migrant was at Heslington on 12th October. During the second winter period a male was in a Poppleton garden on 13th and 14th December, then a male and female on 25th December. Another male was seen in a Rawcliffe garden on 27th December.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Migrant breeder

The first was at Old Malton on 24th April. At Brayton Barff one was singing on 1st May, four were singing on the 2nd, increasing to five on the 14th and then up to six on the 24th. Elsewhere records were mainly of ones or twos, but with four singing at Wheldrake Ings on 27th May and three at Yearsley Moor on 7th June. They are rather scarce round Heslington (not recorded every year) and one singing at Fulford Golf Course on 4th May was in a new location. Similarly one seen during a BBS at Dunnington Common on 12th June was the first there for several years. Four singing males were noted at Milford Common and nine at Bishop Wood. Nine nests were found at Skipwith Common.

The final record was a juvenile seen at Brayton Barff on 16th September.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Migrant breeder

One was at NDC on 19th April, with two there the next day. Up to five pairs were present in the Melbourne area of the Pocklington Canal during July,

apparently breeding with good success and they also bred at Riccall Grange. Three passage birds were ringed at Wheldrake Ings in July.

Elsewhere records involved one or two birds at: Allerthorpe Common, Bank Island, Bolton Ings, Bolton Percy, Brayton Barff (the first since 2007), Clifton Ings, Foggathorpe, Haxby, Heslington Tillmire, Malton, Milford Common, Old Gravel Pits Allerthorpe, Redhouse, Riccall, SHL, Stillingfleet Hill, Thorganby, Thornton Ellers, Thornton Lock, Warthill, West Ings, Wheldrake Ings and Wistow.

The last record of the year was one at Thornton Ellers on 25th September.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Amber listed

Migrant breeder

The first was at Bank Island on the 10th April, with one singing at Wheldrake Ings on 16th April, several were at Pocklington Canal on the 22nd and there was a noticeable influx on 25th and 26th April. A BBS in the Naburn Wood square on 14th June recorded eight. Up to three pairs were present at Brayton Barff. It was a very poor breeding season at Riccall Grange; several males arrived, built nests, but then disappeared and only one pair bred successfully. Five singing males were noted at Milford Common and five at Ulleskelf Mires. A minimum of 15, including several juveniles, were at Milford Common on 26th July. Proof of breeding was also noted at Burtonfields, Melbourne and Wheldrake Ings.

The final record concerned a late brood of four juveniles seen at Church Bridge, Melbourne on 24th and 26th September.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Red listed

Scarce migrant breeder

The first records came much later than usual this year, with no reports during April or May. One was reeling at Ulleskelf Mires on the 10th and 17th June and one was at NDC on 16th June. One was reeling at Aughton Ings on 12th July and another at Ryther Ings on 20th July. At Milford Common at least three, and perhaps as many as five, were reeling between 18th June and 29th July. The last was one at Thornton Ellers on 10th August.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 15th April, with five there the following day and 12 on 20th April.

A breeding survey estimated that 21 pairs bred at Wheldrake Ings. During July 53 were caught and ringed at Wheldrake Ings, this included above average numbers of adults suggesting a less successful breeding season than in recent years.

Away from the LDV, between one and three birds were recorded at Allerthorpe Lake Park, Askham Bog, CHL, Heslington East, Middlethorpe, Milford Common, Old Malton, Ozendyke Ings (5), SHL, Skipwith Common, Ulleskelf Mires and Wharfe Ings. The final record was one at Wheldrake Ings on 1st October.

Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*

Red Listed

Very rare vagrant

A juvenile was caught and ringed by the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 12th August (MFJ, CSR) which if accepted would be the first record for the LDV, and follows two other birds caught and ringed in the country, in Suffolk and Guernsey on the 9th.

A description has been submitted to the BBRC via the BTO ringing office and we will give an update of the record's acceptance in future reports.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

One at Wheldrake Ings on 17th April was on the same date and the same location as the first record in 2014. Wheldrake Ings had four on the 21st and over ten on 29th April. A total of 13 singing birds were recorded at Milford Common (the last of which took up territory on 18th June). Forty five were caught and ringed at Wheldrake Ings during July. One was present at Heslington East from the 9th to 31st July.

In the autumn, ten were at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 2nd August. Away from the LDV and the locations mentioned above, birds were also noted at Askham Bog, CHL, SHL, Skipwith Common and Stamford Bridge. The final record was of two at Wheldrake Ings on 20th September.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Occasional winter visitor though more regular in recent years

A quiet year for this species with just a single record in January of a bird in Cawood on the 16th. In February, one was seen at Heslington East briefly on the 8th, with another discovered along Beckfield Lane, York on the 17th which remained to the month end and four birds were reported from Woodthorpe, York on the 25th. The Beckfield Lane bird remained in situ throughout March joined by possibly the Woodthorpe birds, up to four being seen between the 11th and the 22nd; it was last reported on 1st April.

No reports were received for the second winter period.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Local resident breeder

Widespread throughout the region, with counts of mostly one or two birds received from at least twenty five different locations, including two at Yorkshire Museum Gardens in the centre of York which turned up in September.

The only confirmed breeding was from Brayton Barff - where there were at least five pairs and three nest boxes had two broods of six and a clutch of six eggs respectively on 5th May - and Bishop Wood where an adult and two recently fledged juveniles were seen on 16th June.

Several birds were reported attending garden feeders during the latter part of the year.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Resident breeder

Common and widespread with single figure counts, mostly ones and twos, received from many sites throughout the region. Fourteen singing birds were noted in Bishop Wood during late April and early May.

Breeding was confirmed at Bishop Wood, Brayton Barff, Gilling Wood, Old Gravel Pits Allerthorpe, Rawcliffe Meadows and Yearsley Moor.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident breeder

Common and widespread, notable counts included ten down the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 20th March, 37 at Brayton Barff on 15th April, 69 singing in Bishop Wood during late April and early May and 12 in the Naburn Wood area on 2nd May.

No specific evidence was received of breeding.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Red listed

Resident breeder and winter visitor

Common and widespread, notable counts of 100 or more during the first winter period included 200 at Nunnington on 20th February with flocks of over 100 at Bolton Ings, Milford Common, Old Malton, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) and Thornton Ings during March, plus 120 on Heslington Tillmire and 150 at Wharfe Ings during the same period. In late summer a post breeding roost in excess of 100 was noted at Wheldrake Ings on 19th July and 210 were at Towton later in the month.

Some larger counts were received during the autumn and second winter period including 300 at Rufforth and 750 at Kexby in mid-October, while 368 were noted at Milford Common during a visible migration watch on the 20th. Visible migration watches at Whit Hill recorded 8,180 moving in a broadly westerly direction between 14th October and 20th November, including 2,000 on 29th October and 1,580 on 9th November, though it seems likely that some of these birds were moving to and from roosting sites. There were 1,800 at Towton on 31st October with 1,000 at Sutton upon Derwent on 3rd November, while around 3,000 birds were in the LDV during this period and 2,000 were at Wharfe Ings on 28th November.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Red listed

Very scarce passage migrant

A small passage during April included one reported in the logbook by visitors as sitting on Swantail Hide roof at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th; one flying northeast at Whit Hill on the 12th; a male on the Clifton Rugby Club field on the 14th and another along the Elvington to Wheldrake road on the 22nd.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Common and widespread although no large counts were received this year. Most notable double figure counts during the first winter period included:

2nd January, Fulford Golf Course - 30

16th January, Pocklington Canal at Melbourne - 21

7th February, Milford Common - 50

14th March, Pocklington Canal at Melbourne - 41

Breeding was reported widely with many fledglings seen. Ten singing males were noted in Bishop Wood during late April and early May.

Small numbers were noted during early autumn visible migration watches but no particular influx was noted with highest counts during the second winter period being:

21st October, Hassacarr NR - 17

31st October, Poppleton - 30

14th November, Bank Island - 15

12th December, Bank Island - 15

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Red listed

Winter visitor and passage migrant

A common winter visitor often encountered in large flocks, notable flocks of over 100 birds during the first winter period included:

1st January, Hagg Wood, Dunnington - 110, and again on the 14th

19th January, LDV - 1000+

22nd January, Poppleton - 230

30th January, Escrick - 254

1st February, Bishop Wood - 500

11th February, Allerthorpe Common - 150

14th March, LDV - 2,500

22nd March, Milford Common - 103

The last bird of spring was seen at NDC on 20th April.

The first returning bird was a single over Wheldrake Ings on 29th August, although it was mid-October before there were any further reports. Visible migration watches at Whit Hill in the autumn recorded 2,280 flying southwest in 51 hours between 16th October and 17th November, with an obvious peak of 1,329 on 31st October.

Other notable counts during the second winter period included:

20th October, Naburn - 110

29th October, Bank Island - 300

5th November, Bank Island - 2,000

7th November, Scagglethorpe Lane, Poppleton - 200

20th November, Bolton Ings - 160

19th December, Hovingham - 180

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Red listed

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Reported widely throughout the area all year although again only in small numbers, the only double figure counts this year were:

20th January, Heslington East - 12

Late April/early May, Bishop Wood - 11 singing males

16th May, Yearsley Moor - 17

8th October, Wheldrake Ings car park - 12

An adult bird was noted feeding a youngster in a garden in Westow on 9th May. Confirmation of breeding is under reported for this species.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Red listed

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Not many were around during the first winter period with the only flock of note being 110 at Milford Common on 11th February. The last bird of spring was seen at Bank Island on 17th April and the first returning bird was over Clifton Moor on 7th October.

Greater numbers were noted during the second winter period with visible migration watches accounting for some of the larger counts including:

13th October, Milford Common - 407

14th October, Whit Hill - 394; 133 on the 16th, 221 on the 18th and 288 on the 31st

15th October, Bank Island - 300; 103 on the 17th and 500 on the 28th and 29th

3rd November, Flaxton - 150

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Red listed

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Reported widely throughout the year in small numbers, breeding records were received from Barlby, Brayton Barff, Hagg Wood Escrick, Scagglethorpe, Skipwith Common and Wistow. Counts in Bishop Wood during late April and early May recorded three singing males.

Post breeding flocks were few but included:

16th August, Brecks Farm Haxby - 12

1st September, Brayton Barff - 13

31st October, Acaster Airfield - 45

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Red listed

Migrant breeder and passage visitor

The first birds of spring were at Brayton Barff on 1st May and Strensall Common on the 4th; thereafter being reported from a wide range of locations.

Breeding was confirmed at Brayton Barff, Crockey Hill, Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, Skipwith Common and Whitwell Grange. There were nine birds singing at Brayton Barff on 24th May and six pairs bred at Skipwith Common, with another two pairs in Skipwith village.

Autumn passage from mid-August was noted at Bolton Ings, Clifton Park, Hassacarr NR and Wheldrake Ings, with the last sighting of the year at Brayton Barff on 14th September.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Resident breeder

Common and widespread, 29 singing birds were recorded at Bishop's Wood during late April and early May and there was a maximum of 27 at Brayton Barff on 15th April.

Other double figure counts during the year were:

18th January, Askham Bogs - 10

17th February, Old Malton - 11

29th March, Askham Bogs - 10

18th September, Old Malton - 10

20th September, Askham Bogs - 10

14th October, Old Malton - 14

Two fledged birds seen at Melbourne on 18th May and single immature birds seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th and 17th July were the only confirmed breeding records received.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Red listed

Very scarce passage migrant

After a blank year in 2014, up to three males were singing and investigating nest holes around the lakes in Yearsley Moor from the 15th to 27th May (DB, JLe, JP, DR, GS). A female/1st-winter type was seen in North Duffield village on 1st September (AW).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Red listed

Very rare visitor

The first since 2013, a female type was reported from a garden in Clifton, York on 11th April (VG).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Amber listed

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first returning bird was a female at Riccall Grange on 15th April shortly followed by one or two birds in the Castle Howard area. Further reports of single males came from Hovingham, Skipwith Common, Wass Woods and Yearsley Moor from mid-May into early June.

The last bird of the year was one caught and ringed in the poolside Willows at Wheldrake Ings on 24th July.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra**Red listed**Former migrant breeder and passage migrant*

Spring passage included single males at Church Bridge, Melbourne on 25th April and at Cawood on 27th May. In late summer a pair was at Milford Common from 24th July to 3rd August, the female remaining until the 28th. Up to six frequented the LDV at NDC and Wheldrake Ings between 19th July and 13th September with the last bird at Bank Island on 15th September.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola**Casual breeder and passage visitor, sometimes over-winters*

This species is beginning to increase again following a run of harsh winters in the early 2010s that wiped out most of the Yorkshire breeding population.

During the first winter period up to four were reported regularly from NDC with birds also sighted at Bubwith, Hagg Bridge, Heslington Tillmire and Skipwith Common during this period.

A pair with two juveniles found on Strensall Common during a MOD survey on 15th May was the only confirmed breeding record.

In the autumn a bird was seen at Wheldrake Ings from 10th September until 4th October, three birds were at Milford Common on 18th October and a male near Towton on 4th November. Wintering birds were reported from NDC and Strensall Common.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe**Amber listed**Summer visitor and passage migrant*

An early bird at Bank Island on 6th March was followed by a bigger arrival of six there and three at North Duffield village on 14th April. Spring passage was also noted at Brecks Farm, Haxby (a bird of the Greenland race), Coney Hill (Yearsley), Eastmoor (3), East Cottingwith (three of the Greenland race), Heslington East, Heslington Tillmire (6), West Lilling and Whinney Hagg Lane.

During the summer a juvenile bird was seen at Acaster Airfield on 5th July.

Autumn passage involved three birds at Ellerton Ings on 9th August and two at NDC on the 13th, the last bird of the year being seen at Hagg Wood on 22nd September.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis**Amber listed**Resident breeder throughout the area*

This species continues to be common and widespread, if under-unrecorded in the YOC area. Nine at Brayton Barff on 15th April was the highest count of the year.

Breeding data was received from Skipwith Common where three pairs raised 11 young and a single pair bred at Riccall Grange. Confirmation of breeding was also received from the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, Monkton Road and Huntington where fledged young were noted.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Red listed

Resident breeder

Peak counts at the beginning of the year were similar to those seen during 2014 with 30 at Thornton on 3rd January, 40 at Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on the 6th and 45 at Brecks Farm, Haxby on 6th February.

Confirmation of breeding was again under-recorded with three nests in a Strensall garden and fledged young at Hemingbrough the only reports. At a garden on Heslington this species is less frequent and occurs in lower numbers on average than Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* and Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*.

Post breeding, reported flocks were significantly smaller than in 2014 with 55 at Brecks Farm, Haxby during August and September and 75 there on 22nd November.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Red listed

Resident breeder

Peak counts at the beginning of the year were lower than those seen in 2014. In January, 30 were present at Lock Lane on the 2nd, with 30 at Thornton on the 3rd and 43 at Elvington on the 19th. During February and March up to 30 were at Bank Island. Also in March, 30 were at Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on the 16th and 45 were at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 4th April.

Breeding activity was noted at Acaster Malbis and at Bank Island where several pairs bred in the nest boxes, with four fledged broods in May and four pairs raising a third brood in July. Breeding was also confirmed at SHL and Wheldrake Ings.

Post breeding, 50 were at Thornton on 21st June and 35 were at Milford Common on 30th July. Visible migration watches at Milford Common recorded three flying south, three flying east and 22 north between 27th July and 10th September, with a peak of 17 north and one east there on 29th July.

Flocks at the end of the year were down on the previous year but included, in November, 100 at Bank Island and 60 at Thornton Ellers.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Red listed

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

The first records of the year came on 12th April, a week later than in 2014, with a single at Bank Island and three northeast over Whit Hill. During the rest of April one to two were then reported from the 15th, with a peak of 12 roosting at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th. Single figures continued to be reported during May including five at Wistow on the 3rd, seven at Wharfe Ings on the 14th and six between Naburn and Deighton on the 15th.

During the summer birds were reported from suitable breeding habitat. Evidence of breeding was received from Heslington East where an adult was seen carrying food; and at Melbourne and Thornton Ings where 15 pairs bred; while at Wharfe Ings two juveniles were seen and a single pair bred on the Refuge at Wheldrake Ings.

Post breeding, eight were at Towton on 12th July and 30 at Ellerton Ings on the 28th.

Return passage was noted from the second half of August and included five at Bank Island on the 12th and six at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th. Visible migration counts at Milford Common recorded 12 flying south between 25th August and 22nd September with a peak of four on 28th August. Away from Milford Common, in September, the 7th saw 14 at NDC and five flying south over Wheldrake Ings. The final reports of the year were of singles at Sand Hutton on 17th September and south over Bolton Ings on the 20th, while the last of the year were three at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th.

Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava*

There was a report of a female showing characteristics of Blue-headed Wagtail on a ploughed arable field at East Cottingwith on 5th May (LDV Blog).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Amber listed

Resident breeder and winter visitor

At the beginning of the year ones and twos were reported from widespread locations, typically from water courses and sewage works, including birds in York city centre. In January, two roosted close to Church Bridge, Melbourne. On 6th April, three were at Redhouse.

Breeding was suspected at Bank Island, while two juveniles were at Selby Abbey on 17th July and a juvenile was caught and ringed at Wheldrake Ings after being caught in the duck pipe.

Visible migration watches at Milford Common recorded 15 flying south and two north between 25th August and 20th October, with a peak of seven on 19th September. Elsewhere in the area, mainly ones and twos were reported to the year-end, while three were at Bank Island during September and October and three roosted at Church Bridge, Melbourne during October.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Resident breeder

In January, the traditional roost on Parliament Street in York City Centre peaked at 600, with 300 still present there on 2nd March. Milford Common had large numbers in the first winter period with 170 on 11th February and 110 on 3rd March. Also in March, 21 were present on the Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on the 11th and 39 were at Whinney Hagg Lane on the 22nd.

Visible migration watches in the spring recorded 11 flying north at Whit Hill and ten north at Milford Common between 23rd March and 21st April.

No specific breeding confirmation was received but juveniles and food carrying were noted at Bank Island, Naburn, Sand Hutton, Scoreby Manor House, Whitwell Grange East and York University.

Post breeding, ten were at Heslington East on 31st August and 15 at Brecks Farm, Haxby on 13th September.

In the autumn 67 flew south at Milford Common between 25th August and 17th September with peaks of 29 on the 10th and 30 on 17th September. In October, 12 were at Riccall on the 15th with 15 at Pocklington Sewage Works on the 18th, while on the 29th the roost was back at Parliament Street. The roost there built up to 350 during November and peaked at an impressive 700 in mid-December. Also in November 20 were at Hagg Wood on the 17th, while in December, 18 were at Thorganby Ings on the 13th and 15 at Rufforth on the 20th.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Scarce spring passage migrant

The first record of the year was of a single at Welburn Sewage Works on 24th March (DR). In April singles were at Sand Hutton on the 2nd, Heslington East on the 13th (DB) and finally at Acaster on the 26th (CR).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Red listed

Migrant breeder though numbers have recently declined

The first reports of the year were of singles at Skipwith Common in April on the 13th, 25th and 30th.

During the spring and summer reports came from just three sites; 12 singing males were present on Skipwith Common, while at Strensall Common the MOD survey identified seven territories (an increase from four in 2014 and three in 2013) and on 7th June, three singing males were at Yearsley Moor.

Visible migration watches at Milford Common recorded singles heading south on 10th August, the 1st and 10th September and then two on 13th September, which was the final report of the year. On 10th September a single flew south over a North Duffield garden.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Amber listed

Resident and migrant breeder and passage migrant

At the beginning of the year peak counts included in January, 50 at Milford Common on the 4th, 15 at Riccall on the 5th and 30 at Heslington Tillmire on the 18th. In February, 36 roosted at Skipwith Common on the 3rd and 22 were at Heslington East on the 8th.

Evidence of passage birds returning to the area included 50 at Heslington East on 6th March, while the first singing bird was heard at Milford Common on the 17th. Spring migration included 196 flying north at Milford Common on 29th March, but this was eclipsed by 555 seen from Whit Hill going north on 6th April and 1,109 flying north there on the 7th.

Singing and displaying birds were present at Bolton Ings, Heslington Tillmire, Ozendyke Ings, Strensall Common, Wharfe Ings and Wheldrake Ings. The only confirmed breeding report was at Milford Common where a newly fledged juvenile was seen on 29th June.

Southbound passage in September included 240 south at Milford Common on the 13th, 124 at Whit Hill on the 19th and 146 on the 20th, 101 at Milford Common on the 22nd and 129 seen from Whit Hill on the 23rd. September also saw large

numbers pass through the LDV with 500 on the 13th and 300 at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and 19th. Smaller numbers were reported elsewhere with 15 at Heslington East on 15th October and 20 there on 6th November. On 22nd November, 15 were at Brecks Farm, Haxby.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Scarce, mainly winter visitor

The first record since 2012 was one seen during a visible migration watch at Milford Common on 20th March (PD).

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Amber listed

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant

Not recorded in 2015, having been recorded in eight of the past ten years, most recently 2013.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

The only record at the beginning of the year came on 4th April from Pocklington Canal at Bielby.

Visible migration watches at Milford Common and Whit Hill recorded nine flying south between 11th October and 20th November. During October, singles were seen at Whit Hill on the 11th (the first returning bird), the 16th and the 31st, while at Milford Common a single was recorded on the 13th, with two there on the 20th. Elsewhere in October, singles were at Elvington on the 18th, Bank Island on the 30th and 31st and at Skipwith Common on the 31st, with two at Ganthorpe on the 25th. In November, two were at Hassacarr NR on the 4th with a single over Whit Hill on the 10th, while a male in a Clifton garden on the 11th was a first for the site. At Milford Common, two flew south on the 20th while a single there on 23rd November was the last record of the year.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

At the beginning of the year the only count over 50 was 100 at Allerthorpe Common on 11th February.

Surveys during the breeding season produced 17 singing males at Bishop Wood and 31 singing males at Brayton Barff, while a BBS visit near Naburn Wood produced a count of 29 (an increase from 20 in 2014). At Skipwith Common nine nests were found, three of which were predated, with the remaining pairs producing 26 young. Breeding evidence was also received from Hagg Lane near Colton, Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, Westfield House and Wheldrake Ings.

Visible migration watches recorded 21 heading south at Milford Common on 20th October and 30 on the 23rd, while 25 flew south at Whit Hill on 31st October.

The peak count towards the end of the year was 120 at Sutton upon Derwent on 26th September. On 18th October, 45 were at Pocklington sewage works and 40 were at Wharfe Ings on 24th November.

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

At the beginning of the year the only notable counts were ten at Castle Howard on 5th January and 13 at Milford Common on 7th February.

During the breeding season an impressive ten pairs were found in Bishop Wood, with an estimated two to three pairs at Brayton Barff, while at Skipwith Common a pair raised four young at the second attempt. Other evidence of breeding was received from Milford Common, Sand Hutton and Wheldrake Ings.

Post-breeding counts included up to 13 at Wheldrake Ings during August, with 11 there on 4th October and ten on 22nd November. At Old Malton, 13 were present on 18th September, with ten there on 20th October.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes**Red listed**Rare winter visitor*

The only record of the year was of one which visited Ampleforth churchyard from the 11th to 20th December (JP, JR).

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

In stark contrast to 2014, there were no counts over ten received at the beginning of the year. Generally only one to two birds were reported for a species which has clearly been badly affected by *Trichomonosis* disease.

The only indication of breeding was of a male seen with two juveniles at Sand Hutton in June.

Post breeding, 40 at Field Lane, Thornton on 21st June was the highest count of the year. The only other reports of over ten were 16 at Old Malton on 19th August and 30 at Heslington East on 4th December.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina**Red listed**Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor*

At the beginning of the year a flock at Milford Common peaked at 83 on 3rd February. Also in February, 200 were at Allerthorpe Common on the 11th, while a flock of 90 at the Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on the 20th, peaked at 132 on 16th March. In April, 65 were at Pocklington Industrial Estate on the 12th and 35 were at Wistow on the 26th. Also of interest were visible migration watches at Milford Common and Whit Hill which recorded 52 flying north or northeast between 23rd March and 7th May.

Breeding data included a colony of an estimated ten pairs at Milford Common. Of the 11 pairs which bred at Riccall Grange, two nests were predated while the average brood size was 4.6. A pair at Skipwith Common produced two young. Breeding was also confirmed at Westfield House. The MOD survey of Strensall Common worryingly failed to find any territories compared with five there in 2014, four in 2013 and seven in 2012.

Visible migration watches at Milford Common and Whit Hill in the autumn recorded 239 flying south or southwest between 19th September and 18th

November, with a peak of 81 south at Whit Hill on 31st October. Elsewhere, 30 were at Bank Island during September and October. Also in October, 67 were at Riccall on the 13th, with 75 at Pocklington Sewage Works on the 18th, while a flock at Acaster airfield peaked at 160 on the 19th and 30 were at Nunnington on the 25th. In December, 30 were at Heslington East on the 4th, 63 at Sherburn in Elmet on the 6th and 160 at Towton on the 23rd.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*

Red listed

Very scarce winter visitor

Not recorded in 2015, after a single record in 2014.

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*

Red listed

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

In January, 35 were at Strensall Common on the 1st, with 60 at Allertorpe Common on the 4th. On 4th February, 40 were in Bishop Wood, the same day as 31 were reported from the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne. Numbers at Milford Common reached a peak of 55 on 21st March. After singles at Milford Common on 21st April and at Bishop Wood on 30th April there were no further reports until a single at Brayton Barff on 11th August.

Visible migration watches at Milford Common recorded 112 flying south between 3rd September and 23rd October which included 39 south on 13th September. A record breaking movement was reported from the LDV, starting in mid-September and continuing into October. At Wheldrake Ings a total of 560 birds were caught and ringed between 29th September and 3rd October. By the end of October, a final total of 800 had been ringed at Wheldrake Ings including 120 on 26th October. This figure perhaps indicates that the actual number of birds moving was into the thousands. Also in September, 50 were at Bolton Ings on the 20th, the same day as 30 were at Bank Island, with 60 at Melbourne on the 30th. In October, numbers at Melbourne had increased to 100 by the 9th, with 30 at Milford Common on the 13th and 40 at Wheldrake Ings on the 16th.

At Melbourne in November, 150 were trapped and ringed on the 12th with a further 40 ringed the next day. By the end of November, at this site, 500 had been trapped and ringed. Elsewhere in November, 50 were at Eastmoor on the 19th, while in December, 100 were at West Lilling on the 17th, with 60 still at Melbourne and 120 in Wheldrake Woods on the 29th. See also the article by David Tate on page 114

Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor

This species has now been recorded annually since 2008. The first record of the year was of a single at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd October (LDV Blog). In November a single was at Melbourne on the 12th (LDV Blog).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Casual breeder and passage migrant

In January, ten were at Allerthorpe Common on the 4th, with a report from Yearsley the next day and seven at Bishop Wood on the 12th. The next report was of a single at Strensall Common on 11th April.

June and July saw reports of birds passing through the area. On 21st June, 29 flew north at Towton with three west over Sherburn in Elmet on 30th June. July saw three fly east over Stillingfleet Hill on the 3rd, with three at Wheldrake Ings on the 18th and six flew west at Milford Common on the 20th.

On 5th August a single flew northwest over Milford Common, while several were at Askham Richard on the 13th.

At Sand Hutton, eight were present on 21st October, with a single there on 16th November. A single flying west over Milford Common on 20th November was the last of a disappointing year for this species.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

The highest count at the beginning of the year was 80 at Milford Common on 25th March. There were few breeding reports but three pairs successfully bred at Riccall Grange, each raising four young. In a garden at Heslington this species is now more common than House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*.

Post breeding, flock numbers were higher than in 2014 and included 170 at Heslington East on 31st August. In September an impressive 300 fed in game cover at Skipwith on the 3rd, with 50 at Calley Heath NR on the 5th, 120 at NDC on the 6th and 130 at Milford Common on the 10th. Visible migration watches at Milford Common recorded 48 flying south on 17th September and 24 on 23rd October. October saw the flock at NDC peak at 220, while 70 were still at Milford Common on the 13th and 75 were at Hassacarr NR on the 21st. At Heslington East, 70 were present on 6th November with 50 still there on 4th December. At Hagg Wood, 60 were present on 17th November.

Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Resident breeder in small numbers, passage and winter visitor

January saw the biggest flocks of the year with 100 on the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on the 25th and at Stamford Bridge on the 27th, with up to 50 at both these sites in February and 40 still at Stamford Bridge on 18th March.

The only summering birds reported in suitable breeding habitat were at Yearsley Moor and Gilling Woods with a maximum of eight there on 16th May.

There were then late summer reports of a national influx, which included 15 at Skipwith Common on 5th July, seven at Bank Island on the 7th, six at Wheldrake Ings the next day and 19 flying south at Whit Hill on the 15th. Also in July, two were at Brayton Barff on the 18th, the same day as eight (including six juveniles) were at the Pocklington Canal, Melbourne. On 4th August, 50 were at Brayton Barff.

Visible migration watches at Milford Common recorded 103 flying south between 9th September and 20th November with a peak of 52 on 13th September. On 22nd September, 50 were at Escrick Duck Decoy and 54 were at Milford Common on 13th December.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Red listed

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

In January a flock at Elvington peaked at 200 on the 19th. This was the only significant flock reported during the course of the year. A wintering flock at Milford Common peaked at 24 on 15th February and 30 were at Skipwith Common the next day, with only small numbers reported from other sites. A BBS around Naburn Wood produced a count of 27 on 2nd May.

The breeding season was generally under-recorded; seven birds were singing at Allerthorpe Common on 28th April, while the MOD survey on Strensall Common only identified a single territory compared to two in 2014 and five in 2013. At least nine pairs bred at Riccall Grange; of these, three were predated however the other six produced 16 young (with an average brood size of 2.6). Two of the predated nests were at a height of 3.5m in a hawthorn hedge, which the observer considered very unusual.

In a disappointing second half of the year, no post breeding flocks were reported; the highest count was 18 at Hagg Wood on 13th October.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Amber listed

Resident breeder and passage visitor

In January, an estimated wintering population of 500 was in the LDV, including, 150 roosting at Church Bridge, Melbourne with 150 at Elvington and 50 roosting at Wheldrake Ings. In February, 30 were at Milford Common on the 7th and 55 at Thornton Lock, Pocklington Canal on the 18th. On 9th March, 70 were at Thornton Ings.

Breeding data included four singing males at Heslington East, four at Ulleskelf Mires and 12 at Wharfe Ings. At Strensall Common only four territories found on the MOD survey was a further decrease on the seven found there in 2014 and 14 in 2013. There were an estimated 16 pairs at Wheldrake Ings, the same total as in 2014. Post breeding there were no significant flocks reported with the highest count being 28 coming in to roost at Church Bridge on 13th December.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Red listed

Resident breeder

With this species now scarce or absent from large parts of Yorkshire, numbers at the beginning of the year demonstrated how important the York population is.

In January, numbers at the traditional Church Bridge roost (Melbourne) built up slowly with 37 on the 4th increasing to 60 by the 6th. Numbers then increased quickly with freezing weather conditions and snow cover on the Wolds, with 150 on the 19th when 32 were caught and ringed. On the 20th 121 roosted, with 133 there on the 21st and an impressive peak of 170 there on the 29th. Also in

January, 30 were in fields close to Allerthorpe Common on the 4th, the same day as 61 were seen pre-roost at Riccall. A flock at Elvington increased from 40 on 1st January to 100 on 21st January. During February the Church Bridge roost had dropped to 82 by the 21st, with 45 still roosting there on 1st March and ten on 8th March.

No confirmation of breeding was received, although 15 singing males present on the Ings in the LDV was a higher count than normal. At West Lilling, five singing males were along Lilling Lane in May. A male singing at Heslington East on 2nd June was a first for the observer at this site. Other singing birds included a single at Cawood on 6th July and four singing and a single carrying food at Hagg Lane, East Cotingwith on 12th July.

There was only a handful of reports post breeding. Singles were at Milford Common on 25th August and Bolton Ings on 28th November. The Church Bridge roost held 15 on 25th November, while in December 23 were present on the 13th, increasing to 41 on the 29th.

Appendix A: Category E

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

One flew in to roost at NDC on 11th January and one was also seen there on the 18th and 20th February and on 6th March. All other reports were of the individual resident at Heslington East, which was recorded there in every month. As in 2014, it spent much of the year in close association with the resident pair of Mute Swans *Cygnus olor*, apart from when they were incubating from early April through to June.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Members of the flock at the University of York which now appears to be at a maximum of 26 birds – down from 30 last year – were recorded more often in the first half of the year. Part of the flock was at Heslington East in December. There is also a flock of 60 birds at Flamingo Land, Kirby Misperton which produced 12 goslings in 2015.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

There were a few reports of the free-lying flock resident at the University of York – all at Heslington West or flying towards the University playing fields where they often feed. Interestingly, some were also recorded on a microphone whilst flying over houses in Fulford on 18th September towards the University (presumed to be part of the flock).

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

One was at Bolton Ings on 16th November (PD) and was seen intermittently there until 19th December.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Two were at Nunington Hall on 19th February and three at Moxby on 6th June.

Guinea Fowl *Numida meleagris*

Four were at Castle Howard Arboretum on 18th April.

Appendix B: Hybrids

Greylag x Canada Goose

One was at CHL on 17th and 25th January, and one there on 31st October.

One was at Old Gravel Pits, Allerthorpe on 1st March and 12th April.

Greylag x domestic Goose

One was at Heslington East on 14th April.

Hybrid Tufted x Ring-necked Duck

One was at Milford Common on 6th March.

Appendix C: Insufficient evidence received

The following records are included for completeness, but a full description has not been forthcoming. If a description is submitted, we will include any additional accepted records in a future report.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* Adult male at NDC 13th June

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* Bank Island 1st October

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* Escrick 28th October

Update on records from previous years requiring a description by the BBRC or YNU

Great White Egret *Ardea alba* LDV: March 2014

Accepted by YNU

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* Rufforth: Jan – Feb 2014 and 30/12/14

Accepted by YNU

Earliest and latest dates for summer visitors/passage migrants 2015

Species	Arrival Date/First Reported	Last Reported
Garganey	20th March	24th August
Quail	26th May	5th August
Osprey	4th April	1st October
Hobby	24th April	11th October (very late)
Oystercatcher	15th January	18th Sept
Little Ringed Plover	11th April	12th July
Ringed Plover	25th August (VMW)	19th October (VMW)
Whimbrel	22nd April	14th July
Common Sandpiper	9th April	11th September
Greenshank	22nd March	4th October
Wood Sandpiper	30th July	24th August
Common Tern	25th April	8th September
Turtle Dove	1st May	25th August
Cuckoo	9th April	21st August
Nightjar	13th May	5th July
Swift	15th April	12th September
Sand Martin	7th March	9th October
Swallow	4th April	23rd October
House Martin	7th April	23rd October
Wood Warbler	20th April	3rd September
Chiffchaff †	13th March	1st November
Willow Warbler	9th April	17th September
Blackcap *	8th April	12th October
Garden Warbler	24th April	16th September
Lesser Whitethroat	19th April	25th September
Whitethroat	10th April	26th September
Grasshopper Warbler	10th June	10th August
Sedge Warbler	15th April	1st October
Reed Warbler	17th April	20th September
Spotted Flycatcher	1st May	14th September
Redstart	15th April	24th July
Whinchat	25th April	14th September
Wheatear	8th March (early bird)	22nd September
Yellow Wagtail	12th April	26th September
Tree Pipit	13th April	13th September

† Overwintering birds seen on 4th, 5th, 16th & 18th January, 15th February, 9th, 20th & 22nd March, 20th & 30th December,

* Overwintering birds seen on 9th January, 5th & 6th February, 25th February, 11th March, 13th, 25th & 27th December

VMW = visible migration watch

Earliest and latest dates for winter visitors/passage migrants

Species	Last reported in Spring	First reported in Autumn
Bewick's Swan	18th January	(none)
Whooper Swan	26th April	17th October
Pink-footed Goose	14th May (long staying individual)	20th September
Wigeon‡	28th April	9th September
Teal *	10th May	6th August
Pintail	19th May	5th September
Goldeneye	14th April	15th October
Goosander	17th May	9th October
Golden Plover	17 th April	25th July
Ruff	11th May	12th June
Dunlin	21st May	26th August
Green Sandpiper	23rd April	13th June
Jack Snipe	22nd April	27th September
Fieldfare	20th April	29th August (early bird)
Redwing	17th April	7th October
Brambling	4th April (only Spring record)	11th October

‡ Excluding small number of potential breeders (see RBBP Report on page 97)

* Small numbers (<25) remained in the LDV throughout the summer.



Blackcap – a very common migrant breeder

©Terry Weston

Rare Breeding Birds of the Lower Derwent Valley and Skipwith Common 2015

Compiled by Craig Ralston

Terminology (Summary)

Possible – birds (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.

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

Category A – Rare Species

Breeding data for each species (where available) is shown in the accompanying table. Comments on some species are also given.

Breeding success of Category A species in the LDV

Species	Max. no. adults	No. of young	No. of Pairs			
			Poss.	Prob.	Confirmed	Total
Wigeon	16		6	2	0	0 - 8
Garganey	2	?	0	1	0	0 - 1
Shoveler	137	12+	23	39	5	23 - 67
Pochard			1	0	0	0 - 1
Black-necked Grebe						
Little Egret	6	9	0	0	3	3
Marsh Harrier			1	0	0	0 - 1
Water Rail	11 (calling males)	3+	4	5	2	2 - 11
Corncrake			0	0	1	0 - 1
Short-eared Owl			1	0	0	0 - 1

Wigeon: The last of the wintering birds lingered to late April with 39 on the 30th. In May it became clear that eight pairs were still present and apparently holding territory/summering, although only two pairs remained during June and July. No nests or young seen.

Garganey: A rather poor year. The first returning birds were a pair at Wheldrake Ings on 20th March and a drake on the 22nd. Two pairs were at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April with a drake there again on the 16th. A single drake was holding territory throughout May between Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island, with a pair regularly thereafter during late May and June. A single juvenile was present on a

single date in July with up to three in August although these could well have been passage birds from other sites.

Shoveler: Although good numbers were present early in the season, many departed as water levels receded and subsequent breeding productivity was low. No young were caught and ringed for the first time in many years.

Pochard: Two pairs were present at Wheldrake Ings on 9th and 10th April with a single female there on the 23rd. A single drake was then present on 9th May.

Little Egret: Numbers continue to increase year by year and birds are now present throughout the year. A single pair were present in the heronry from late May with two pairs during June which resulted in two broods (of three and two) fledging during July (and accounting for a count of nine on the 24th of the month). A single pair also bred in a heronry to the southern end of the valley (as speculated last year) raising four young.

Common Crane: A pair was present at North Duffield Carrs on the 19th and 20th March, with some display noted. Five were then present at Wheldrake Ings on 20th April, with one remaining the following day and five again on the 22nd. There was much exciting calling and some display from two pairs but all apparently moved on. A single then re-appeared at Bank Island on 12th and 13th June. These do not fit into any of the specific breeding categories of possible, probable or confirmed but are reported here for completeness.

Peregrine: Three pairs were present in the wider LDV area and used the reserve and wider area for hunting – three broods of two fledged or reared close to fledging stage.

Marsh Harrier: Present throughout the year and now almost 'resident'. Several cream crowns lingered and several males were also present this year – mainly sub-adults, although an adult pair was present throughout – no signs of breeding.

Goshawk: A single male was seen displaying at one site on 17th March with a pair reported in the wider area over the next few weeks. A single juvenile was seen on several dates in early October suggesting local breeding may have occurred somewhere in the wider area.

Corncrake: A single singing male was present at Aughton Ings from 7th - 18th July with a second bird, a presumed female seen on the 7th and 8th. One was caught and ringed there on the 7th and found to have an extensive brood patch. The hay cut was subsequently delayed at this site until 30th August to allow for potential breeding success. A single was also flushed by tractor operations at Bank Island on 24th August.

Ruff: Up to 35 were present and lekking in the valley in late March. Twenty one were still present in two leks on 4th April, and 15 on the 12th with just five remaining (three males) on the 21st and no further records thereafter until a returning summer plumaged male appeared on 12th June.

Short-eared Owl: A single pair was present at Seavy Carrs throughout April and early May and, where seen, exhibiting behaviour suggesting that a breeding attempt may have been starting in late April/early May. However no further sightings came after 10th May suggesting the birds had moved on.

Category B – Less Scarce Species

(NB – some of these are now not considered by the RBBP but are included here for completeness and comparison with previous years' submissions)

Quail: A rather poor year (and quite a late one) in the valley with just a single singing male in June and three in July.

Breeding success of Category B species in the LDV

Species	Max. no. adults	No. of young	No. of Pairs			
			Poss.	Prob.	Confirmed	Total
Gadwall		200+ (with 40+ ringed)	31	25	36	92
Common Quail	2/3 singing males	-	2	1	0	0 - 3
Hobby		-	0	3	0	0 - 3
Woodlark		-	2	3	3	3 - 8
Willow Tit		-	7	3	7	7 - 17

Non-Native Species

(These are not now considered by RBBP but are included here for local interest to monitor the changing situation locally)

Egyptian Goose: Following a steady increase in recent records and breeding attempts by a single pair in 2012, two pairs bred in 2013 and produced two broods totalling four young. During 2014 two breeding attempts took place off site at East Cottingwith with two pairs both rearing broods to fledging – of seven and three. All 14 birds remained into 2015 although the single adult female remained during April – December.

Mandarin: Following a summering bird in 2013, a bird was present during June and July 2014 and the same individual returned again and was seen on several dates in June 2015.

Bird Ringing Report for 2015

Compiled by David Tate

Introduction

Almost all of the bird ringers known to operate in the York recording area responded to a request for data therefore, although this report does not offer a definitive account, it does provide a flavour of local ringing activities and results.

Bird ringing in 2015 – Numbers, species, locations and personnel

Details about the 8,996 birds reported to have been ringed in the York area during 2015 are shown in Figure 1. The total is slightly higher than last year though the number of species caught was two fewer. Corncrake and Lesser Black-backed Gull are new records whilst the Wryneck is the second to be ringed in area. About 12% of the birds were ringed before fledging (pulli).

Table 1.

	Adult	Pulli	Total		Adult	Pulli	Total
Mute Swan	19	24	43	Willow Tit	8		8
Whooper Swan	1		1	Marsh Tit	11		11
Greylag Goose	12	45	57	Woodlark	1		1
Canada Goose	12		12	Skylark	1		1
Shelduck	33		33	Swallow	37	96	133
Wigeon	89		89	Cetti's Warbler	2		2
Gadwall	1		1	Long Tailed Tit	196		196
Teal	447		447	Chiffchaff	459		459
Mallard	121	11	132	Willow Warbler	479		479
Pintail	1		1	Blackcap	369	21	390
Cormorant	1		1	Garden Warbler	60	29	89
Grey Heron	2	20	22	Lesser Whitethroat	53	5	58
Sparrowhawk	2		2	Whitethroat	92	2	94
Corncrake	1		1	Sedge Warbler	180		180
Moorhen	5		5	Reed Warbler	170		170
Oystercatcher		2	2	Nuthatch	5		5
Lapwing		6	6	Treecreeper	17		17
Ruff	8		8	Wren	117		117
Common Sandpiper	1		1	Starling	55		55
Redshank	3		3	Blackbird	103	26	129
Snipe	5		5	Fieldfare	1		1
Black-headed Gull	5		5	Song Thrush	11	8	19
Lesser Black-backed Gull	24		24	Redwing	59		59

	Adult	Pulli	Total		Adult	Pulli	Total
Herring Gull	530		530	Mistle Thrush		4	4
Great Black-backed Gull	10		10	Robin	135		135
Stock Dove		3	3	Redstart	4		4
Woodpigeon	8	2	10	Dunnock	111	14	125
Collared Dove	1		1	House Sparrow	116	4	120
Barn Owl	5	5	10	Tree Sparrow	137	51	188
Little Owl	1		1	Grey Wagtail	1		1
Tawny Owl	1	7	8	Pied Wagtail	1		1
Swift	4	19	23	Meadow Pipit	104		104
Kingfisher	6	6	12	Chaffinch	208	35	243
Wryneck	1		1	Bullfinch	109	4	113
Great Spotted Woodpecker	17		17	Greenfinch	97		97
Kestrel	5	17	22	Linnet	1	43	44
Jay	1		1	Lesser Redpoll	1,604		1,604
Jackdaw	1	5	6	Goldfinch	159	19	178
Rook	1		1	Siskin	5		5
Goldcrest	55		55	Yellowhammer	96	16	112
Blue Tit	541	129	670	Reed Bunting	228		228
Great Tit	317	314	631	Corn Bunting	31		31
Coal Tit	73		73	85 Species	8,004	992	8,996

Almost 80% of the ringing was carried out by members* of the Huddleston & Jackson partnership which receives financial support from Natural England.

* Robin Arundale, Steve Huddleston, Mike Jackson, Fallon Mahon, Lucy Murgatroyd, Ian Nicholson, Craig Ralston, David Tate, Jean Thorpe and Paul Thorpe.

The main ringing sites and focus of the group's activities include:

Lower Derwent Valley NNR

The most notable feature of 2015 was the ringing of 1,434 Lesser Redpolls at Wheldrake Ings and by the Pocklington canal at Melbourne. The exceptional number far exceeds the York area cumulative total for the period 1960-2014. For further details see the separate article about Redpoll on page 114

The number of adult ducks ringed was well above that of 2014 thanks in part to the effectiveness of the swan pipe on North Duffield Carrs, which accounted for most of the Teal and all of the Shelduck reported in Table 1. Due to unfavourable

conditions very few wildfowl pulli were caught with the exception of a few Mallard and 45 Greylags at Wheldrake Ings.

Totals of most post-breeding and autumn migratory warbler species caught at Wheldrake Ings were well above average and included 356 Willow Warblers; 332 Chiffchaffs; 263 Blackcaps and 161 Reed Warblers. However, the 180 Sedge Warblers ringed was 10% below the previous year. An Aquatic Warbler (subject to acceptance by the BBRC) was caught and two Cetti's Warblers, both hatched in 2015, were ringed towards the end of the year (31st October and 3rd November).

Mist netting at roost sites produced 189 Reed Buntings and 31 Corn Buntings. Other highlights were 100 Meadow Pipits, 55 Redwings, seven Willow Tits (half the 2014 total), two Kingfishers, two Redstarts and singles of Whooper Swan, Skylark and Grey Wagtail. Ringing of pulli included 20 Grey Herons (also colour ringed) at the Thicket Priory colony. Both Barn Owl and Kestrel had a very poor breeding season with none of the former and only five of the latter ringed before fledging.

Further details about ringing activities on the reserve can be accessed at <http://ldvnnr.blogspot.co.uk>.

Skipwith Common NNR

602 birds were ringed including 134 Redpolls, 88 Willow Warblers, 63 Long-tailed Tits, 21 Teal and 18 Goldcrests. Rarer birds for the site comprised singles of Lapwing (pulli), Kestrel and Woodlark. Other pulli ringing included 29 Garden Warblers, 21 Blackcaps and four Tawny Owls.

Rural areas south of York

As in the LDV, both Barn Owl and Kestrel had a very poor breeding season due to the cold spring and shortage of small mammal prey, and only five and 12 pulli respectively were ringed. The breeding productivity of the Swifts at the small monitored colony in Riccall was the same as in 2014, though the number of pairs was two fewer and only 17 pulli were ringed. Despite the cool spring, farmland birds had a good breeding season at the eight surveyed hedges east of Riccall. The 22 Linnet pulli ringed was double the 2014 total whilst Yellowhammer pulli numbers (16) were up by a third. In addition several pairs of Goldfinch colonised the site and 19 pulli were ringed. However, Whitethroat, which is the only common migrant found breeding in the hedgerows, had a very poor year and only two pulli were ringed compared with 17 in 2014. The decline in Whitethroat breeding productivity also took place at a national level and was probably caused by a shortage of invertebrate food when the birds arrived in the spring.

York suburbs and other sites

The Harewood Whin landfill site near Rufforth provides a significant food supply and attracts tens of thousands of gulls. In March a project began to determine where the large gull species arrive from, how long they stay in the area and where the mature birds go to breed. The birds are caught using a cannon net and are then colour ringed. Since the landfill operation is due to end in the near

future it will also be possible to discover how these long lived birds readjust to the closure. All of the gulls reported in Table 1 were ringed at this site and many colour ring re-sightings have been reported.



Wryneck ©Paul Thorpe

Ian Nicholson and Paul Thorpe trapped almost 800 birds at a variety of sites including New Earswick, Dunnington, Sand Hutton and Stillingfleet. The most notable event took place on 24th August when a Wryneck was caught near New Earswick (see photograph). This record is even more remarkable since it follows another caught at the same site on 26th August 2013.

Other significant records included 100 Blackcaps, 63 Chiffchaffs, 22 Bullfinch, two Marsh Tits and one Redstart.

Several long standing studies continued including the colour ringing of Starlings and Goldfinches at Clifton Moor and the monitoring of nest boxes at Stub Wood, Acaster Malbis where 192 Great Tit pulli were ringed.



Whimbrel ©Monika Carrie

Originally ringed at Wheldrake Ings in 2005, this bird was sighted in Ythan estuary, Scotland (12 miles north of Aberdeen) in August 2015.

Elsewhere, Phil and Sarah Bone, who operate in areas around Haxby, Pocklington and Allerthorpe, processed over 800 birds including many pulli, notably 96 Swallows; 66 Great Tits; 51 Tree Sparrows and six Kingfishers.

Chris Wright, who trains Leeds University MSc students and others at private sites near Thorganby, had time out for convalescence but still managed to supervise the ringing of 359 birds notably 52 Tree Sparrows; 34 Greenfinch; 25 Swallows; 23 Blackbirds and the only Fieldfare of 2015.

Smaller numbers (273) were ringed by Jim Pewtress's group including 254 at Flamingo Land, Kirby Misperton (89 Blue Tits, seven Marsh Tits, four Nuthatch and one Kestrel) and 19 at Nunnington (one Marsh Tit); David Turner and trainees (265) on farmland around Hovingham (78 Yellowhammers and 38 Chaffinch); Hugh Brazier (102) at Strensall including 26 Greenfinch and three Great Spotted Woodpeckers; Dan Sidley of Yorkshire Swan Rescue Hospital and Sorby Beck ringing group (40 Mute Swans - 18 adults and 22 pulli) and finally, Lucas Mander (32) at Fangfoss.

Recent ringing recoveries

Highlights of recent ringing recoveries for the York area are shown in Table 2 – see www.bto.org for further details (click 'ringing' then 'online ringing reports').

Table 2. Ringing recoveries in 2015

Species	Place ringed	Date	Recovered	Date	Dist./Age
Greylag Goose	Windermere	29.06.14	Bubwith Ings (s)	28.11.15	143 km
Shelduck	Martin Mere, Lanc	22.11.05	NDC	10.02.15	9yr 2m
Wigeon	Wheldrake Ings	03.12.13	Navy Port, Russia (s)	03.09.15	4,221 km
Gadwall (p)	Wheldrake Ings	01.07.14	Londonderry (s)	01.09.15	375 km
Teal	North Duffield Carrs	23.01.15	Arkhangel, Russ. (s)	10.05.15	2,672 km
Mallard	North Duffield Carrs	29.11.11	Esbjerg, Den. (s)	27.10.15	628 km
Whimbrel c	Wheldrake Ings	02.05.05	Ythan Estuary, Scot.	21.08.15	10yr 3m
B-headed Gull c	Oslo, Norway	08.09.14	York	31.01.15	975 km
LBB.Gull c	Rufforth	21.08.15	Portimao, Portugal	24.09.15	1954 km
Herring Gull* c	Farsund, Norway	26.06.11	Rufforth	21.08.15	667 km
Caspian Gull c	Brandenburg, Germany	09.06.15	Rufforth	13.10.15	1057 km
SE. Owl (p)	Forest of Bowland, Lanc	29.05.15	Holtby (road cas.)	30.07.15	107 km
Swift	Riccall (nest box)	19.06.09	Riccall (nest box)	16.07.15	6yr 0m
Chiffchaff	Allerthorpe Common	29.07.12	Portland Bill	29.10.15	393 km
Blackcap	Wheldrake Ings	02.09.15	Wiltshire	08.09.15	956 km
Sedge Warbler	Wheldrake Ings	22.08.13	Gironde, France	12.08.15	8yr 4m
Chaffinch	Sand Hutton	05.03.13	Legbourne, Lincs	20.04.15	100 km
Goldfinch	Dieppe, France	06.03.14	Allerthorpe	06.04.15	455 km

(p) = pulli; c = colour-ringed; (s) = shot

* This Herring Gull also seen at Throckmorton landfill site on 05.02.12

York Cuckoos in 2015

By Paul Doherty

Introduction

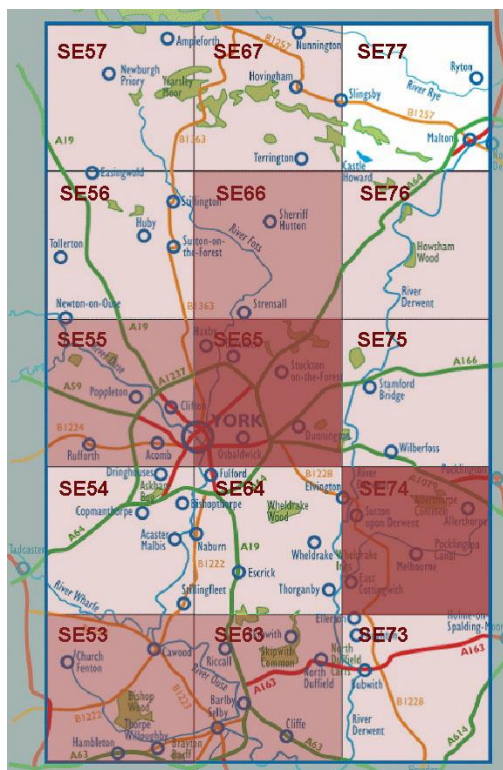
The Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* is one of our most distinctive summer visitors, but has suffered a serious national decline in the last 25 years. A Cuckoo survey was carried out in the Club area during 2015 to determine the local status. The results are compared with previous estimates.

Methods

The Cuckoo's main song period is from late April to late June and Club members were asked to report any singing Cuckoos during April, May and June. A request for records was made at Club meetings, on the YorkBirding email group and via the YorkBirding Twitter account.

Results

The map below shows the distribution of records across the club area



SE77, the 10 km square in the extreme NE of the club area was the only one with no records.

The other squares are marked with red:

Light red for 1 - 8 reports

Mid red for 9 -16 reports

Deep red for 17- 23 reports

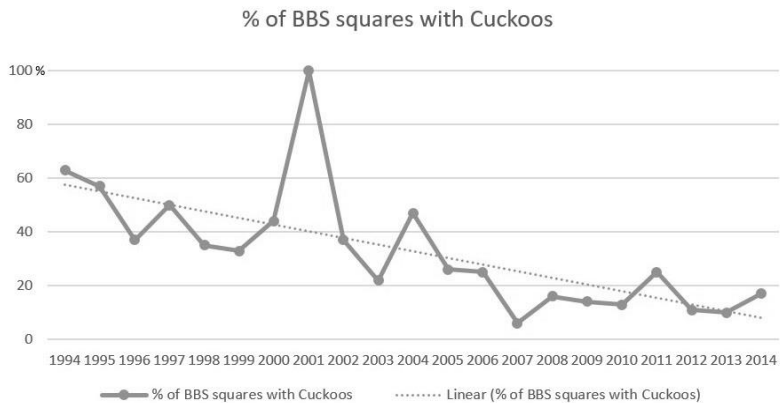
The absence of records from SE77 is unlikely to be explained by a lack of observers. An analysis of records submitted for all species in 2014 showed that SE77 had the seventh highest number of records out of the 15 tetrads which form the club area. The concentration of records in SE74 is because that area includes a large part of the LDV, which has been a stronghold for Cuckoos in the club area; SE65 had fewer records than SE74, but includes Dunnington, SHL and Strensall Common.

Previous Reports

The information contained in past YOC reports is mostly from casual observations rather than standardised surveys. The 1996 Report notes that for the LDV it was "An excellent year with over 100 on the site". In 1999 there were an estimated 85 singing males in the LDV and in 2015 LDV staff estimated 27 calling birds were present throughout the LDV. Away from the LDV observer coverage is less consistent, so comparison of results there is even more difficult.

Breeding Bird Survey

The British Trust for Ornithology has run the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) since 1994. It is the main scheme for monitoring population changes in our common breeding birds. The graph below shows the percentage of BBS squares in the York area which have reported Cuckoos.



The trend line follows a steady downward track and it is obvious that there has been a significant reduction in the number of Cuckoos in the York area.

Note that the figure of 100% of BBS squares reporting Cuckoos in 2001 is because an outbreak of foot and mouth meant that only one square could be surveyed and that had a Cuckoo.

A comparison of the percentage of BBS squares recording Cuckoos for 1994-1998 with 2010-2014 shows a 69% reduction (alternatively a comparison of 1994-1996 with 2012-2014 shows a 76% reduction). This is consistent with the Breeding Bird Survey Report 2014 which shows a 46% decline in the UK between 1995 and 2013, and includes a 68% decline in England (Breeding Bird Survey Report 2014).

Conclusion

Although Cuckoos are still reasonably widespread in the York area, the evidence clearly shows their numbers have declined significantly. This is consistent with the picture across the rest of Britain. This survey will give us a more information to judge how well (or how badly) Cuckoos are doing in our area in future years.

Thanks

Many thanks to all the people who have contributed to the Club's Cuckoo survey by sending in their sightings. As well as records from the LDV Team and BirdTrack it was pleasing to have so many individuals contributing. Records from the Breeding Bird Survey were invaluable in confirming the position in the club area and I am very grateful to Rob Chapman for his help with this. David Tate made several improvements.

References

Harris, S.J., Massimino, D., Newson, S.E., Eaton, M.A., Balmer, D.E., Noble, D.G., Musgrove, A.J., Gillings, S., Procter, D. & Pearce-Higgins, J.W. 2015. *The Breeding Bird Survey 2014*. BTO Research Report 673. British Trust for Ornithology, Thetford.



Cuckoo at Melbourne in May 2015

© Mark Hughes

Wheldrake Ings – Patchwork Challenge

By Duncan Bye

I moved to York at the beginning of 2012 and having had a patch back in Rotherham I was keen to find another patch. It soon became clear that Wheldrake Ings was one of the best local sites and I was surprised to find it relatively under watched.

Patchwork challenge had been running for a couple of years and I was interested to compare my own birding with patches in the north of England and beyond. Each bird earns points related to its rarity value (common, local, scarce, rare and mega). These categories are scored 1 – 5. For a species categorised as scarce or rarer, if self-found, the points are doubled. There is also a comparison league so you are also measured against your progress from the year before. The rules are simple; the patch must be a maximum of 3km² and can be any shape. For a species to count either you or the bird must be within the patch boundaries. My aim before starting the challenge was 130 species and 150 points.

The first day on patch was 3rd January which took in virtually the whole of the patch. I started at dawn, viewing the Refuge from East Cottingham where I scored my first 2-pointer of the year with a roosting Iceland Gull. Also present were a calling Water Rail, Shelduck, Golden Plover and Curlew. At Bank Island, Grey Wagtail was added and then the walk down to Wheldrake Ings added Dunlin, Pochard, Goldeneye and Redshank. Staying until dusk, Barn Owl, Tawny Owl and a Woodcock over the car park saw me finish with 60 species and 61 points. The next day, as part of the Michael Clegg Bird race, another visit to East Cottingham to view the Refuge saw Song and Mistle Thrush added along with another 2-pointer in the form of Whooper Swan. On the 5th, a Chiffchaff was a nice early surprise at Bank Island where Marsh Tit was also added. Wheldrake Ings also produced a surprise Nuthatch, while I also caught up with Ruff. A Red Kite was another 2-point addition on the 11th, and the final January tick was a Lesser Black-backed Gull in the roost on the 24th. During January I visited the patch seven times and ended with 78 species and 81 points which placed me in 11th in the Inland North league.

February started with three catch-up species on the 8th, with Skylark, Linnet and Red-legged Partridge added. The 14th saw more new birds, with Siskin, a returning Oystercatcher, Pink-footed Goose at Bank Island and an overdue Peregrine, another 2-pointer. More species were added on the 21st with a 2-point Marsh Harrier along with the first Black-tailed Godwit and two Great Crested Grebes at Wheldrake Ings. These turned out to be my only sighting on patch all year. The next day at East Cottingham I had the bonus of a calling Green Woodpecker and another 2-pointer, when a Merlin flashed through the Refuge. After just four visits during February I reached 90 species and 96 points which placed me in 6th in the Inland North league.

Due to couple of weeks in Morocco I only made it onto patch four times during March. On the 1st a long overdue Greenfinch was added at Bank Island, the same day as three Goosanders were added at Wheldrake Ings. Then on the 22nd, three more species were added with two Little Grebes on the canal at East Cottingwith; a pair of Grey Partridge at Bank Island, which are a tricky species to find on the Ings; while the first Little Egret of the year at Wheldrake Ings scored another 2 points. I finished March on 95 species and 102 points and 7th place in the Inland North league.

April tends to be the best month of the year for an inland patch and total of 14 visits were made. On the 6th the only Little Owl of the year was a good find. The 9th saw the first migrants as Willow Warbler and Sand Martin were added, while a Kingfisher was an overdue addition. A visit on the 12th finally added two Yellowhammers at Bank Island, where a Yellow Wagtail also put in an appearance. At Wheldrake Ings, 60 Swallows and three House Martins were welcome. However this day also produced the highlight of the year with the discovery of a dark-bellied Brent Goose in with the resident geese on the Refuge. As well as giving me another 2 points, this was a patch and York tick for me and a nice surprise. The 16th produced an overdue Blackcap and my first Sedge Warbler at Wheldrake Ings. An evening visit on the 23rd was productive with the first Cuckoo of the year, while I scored a bonus 2 points when a Short-eared Owl flew through and headed over the Refuge towards East Cottingwith. The main reason for the evening visit was to see roosting Whimbrel; one of the highlights of the birding year at Wheldrake Ings. So 29 flying into roost at dusk were another 2 points. More warblers on the 26th at Wheldrake Ings were Whitethroat and Reed Warbler. The next day, a Wheatear at a dry Bank Island was a welcome addition; never an easy bird to find. Garden Warbler was also new in at Wheldrake Ings the same day. A Common Tern was then added at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th. The final new birds of the month were added the next day with a single Swift and a Hobby. April saw me on 116 species and 126 points and 7th place in the Inland North league.

Despite another 15 visits during May, new species were hard to come by, with just four added. The 1st started well with Lesser Whitethroat along with another highlight of the year with a pair of Avocet present at Wheldrake Ings, another 2 point bird. The 4th saw another 2-point species added with a male Garganey which was helpfully flushed by a passing Red Kite. The final new species of the month was a Greenshank on the 21st. I finished what was a disappointing May with 120 species and 132 points and 9th place in the Inland North league.

June is normally a quiet month so I was pleased to add more species from my eight visits. The 10th was a plastic day, with an Egyptian Goose on the Refuge at Wheldrake, the same day as a 2-point moulting male Mandarin graced the Swantail Hide. Then a Green Sandpiper on the 14th at Bank Island was right on time. June saw me on 123 species and 136 points and 10th place in the Inland North league.

A selection of birds seen during the 2015 Patch Challenge



Goldeneye & Wigeon in January and **Black-tailed Godwit** in February



Shelduck (Feb), **Cormorant** (March) & **Brent Goose** (April)



Curlew & Marsh Harrier in April, **Avocet & Meadow Pipit** in May



Corn Bunting (July), **Little Egret & Common Sandpiper** (August) & **Greenshank** (Sept)

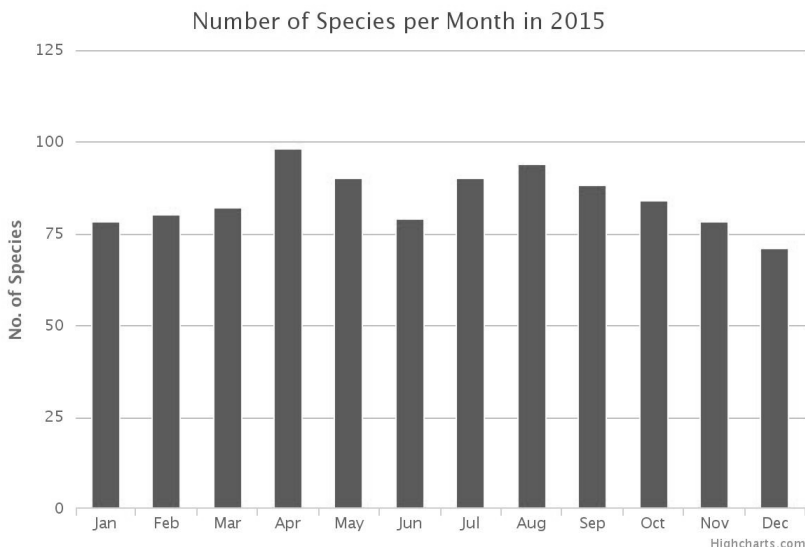


Fieldfare & Pink-footed Goose in November and finally **Short-eared Owl & Whooper Swan** in December

All photographs ©Duncan Bye

July was also a better than expected month with nine visits to the patch producing six new species. The 4th saw a singing Corn Bunting by the Pool at Wheldrake Ings. Then on the 9th I finally managed to add a Common Sandpiper and another overdue wader on the 12th, an immature Little Ringed Plover. The 18th saw the addition of a Spotted Flycatcher in the willows by the Riverside Hide at Wheldrake Ings and then the bonus of three Crossbills flying south. The final new species of the month was two Whinchats from the Swantail hide, which were a few weeks earlier than expected. July ended with me on 139 species and 142 points and 10th place in the Inland North league.

Graph showing monthly totals of species



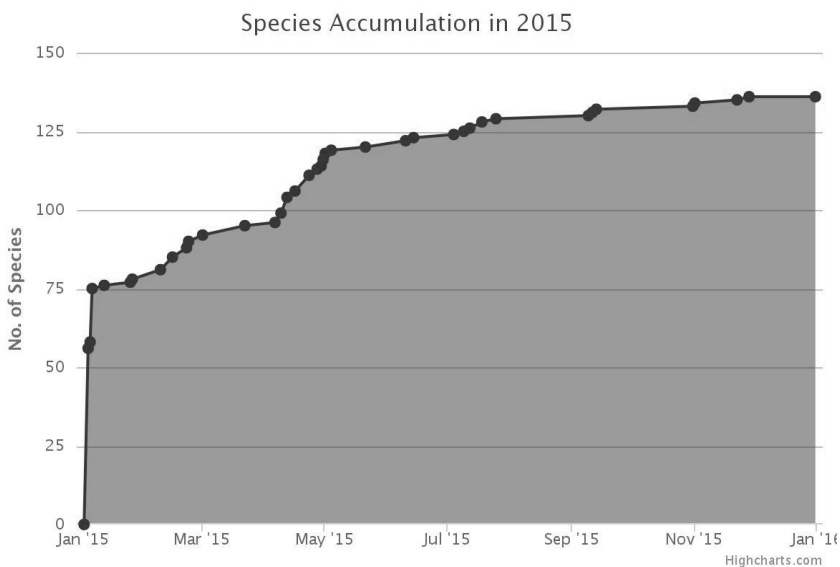
Rather surprisingly and despite 15 visits I failed to add any new species during August although it was still a good month in terms of species with up to seven Green Sandpipers, three Garganey, three Hobbies, seven Spotted Flycatchers and five Whinchats. I dropped to 11th place in the Inland North league at the end of August.

A further nine visits in September saw me add another three species. In what was a good autumn for this species I finally added Lesser Redpoll on the 9th with numbers building during the month. On the 11th I was pleased to get a couple of Ringed Plover, not a regular species on patch. Then on the 13th I was very happy to find a patch tick when a Stonechat was present with a couple of Whinchats. September saw me on 132 species and 145 points and still in 11th place in the Inland North league.

The only species added in October from the ten visits to the patch was a single Brambling which flew south west over Bank Island on the 31st. October took me to 133 species and 146 points and I dropped to 13th place in the Inland North league.

Into November and it was a good month with three new species, all of them patch ticks, from my six visits. The 1st saw me add 2 points with the discovery of a calling Cetti's Warbler in the reed bed close to the Swantail Hide. It remained elusive and I never did see it, despite it being present into December. Some flooding to the lngs brought in some geese at the end of the month with a Barnacle Goose joining a Pink-footed Goose flock on Wheldrake lngs on the 22nd. Then on the 28th I had my final new species of the year and 2 more points with two White-fronted Geese found in with the resident Greylag Geese at Bank Island.

Graph showing when the species were added during the year



With only four visits during December and no further species added, the year ended with final totals of 136 species and 151 points and in 11th place in the Inland North league. Having achieved my aim for the challenge in 2015, the bar has now been set for 2016.

Part of the patchwork challenge is to enter all records on the BTO Birdtrack. My final total on Birdtrack was 169 lists and 6708 individual records.

Peregrine vs Wigeon!

Possibly the strangest record received during the year was of a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, filmed by Jono Leadley and photographed by Duncan Bye, at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd March, persisting in its attempts to drown a drake Wigeon *Anas penelope* that it had caught. The incredible video footage can be accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJx_GO2HuD4



Photographs © Duncan Bye

As Jono recorded it on his blog “Amazing view of a Peregrine that has caught a drake Wigeon just outside Swantail Hide at Wheldrake Ings. The Wigeon valiantly tried to escape, being saved by the arrival of a local Buzzard *Buteo buteo* which seemed to really enrage the falcon, which left its half drowned meal and started mobbing the larger raptor”

Redpoll in the York recording area

By David Tate

Introduction

The Redpoll is one of the smallest finches likely to be found in the York recording area. At a distance, especially when seen in tree tops, it appears as a dark brown acrobatic bird with a forked tail. A closer view reveals much more colour – see photograph. Legs, chin and lores (between the eye and bill) are black; under parts white; the beak is yellow and of course the top of the head, which gives the bird its name, is red. Adult males have additional, though variable, amounts of red on the throat, breast and rump. The rest of the plumage is shades of brown or grey with darker streaks and includes a noticeably lighter wing bar.

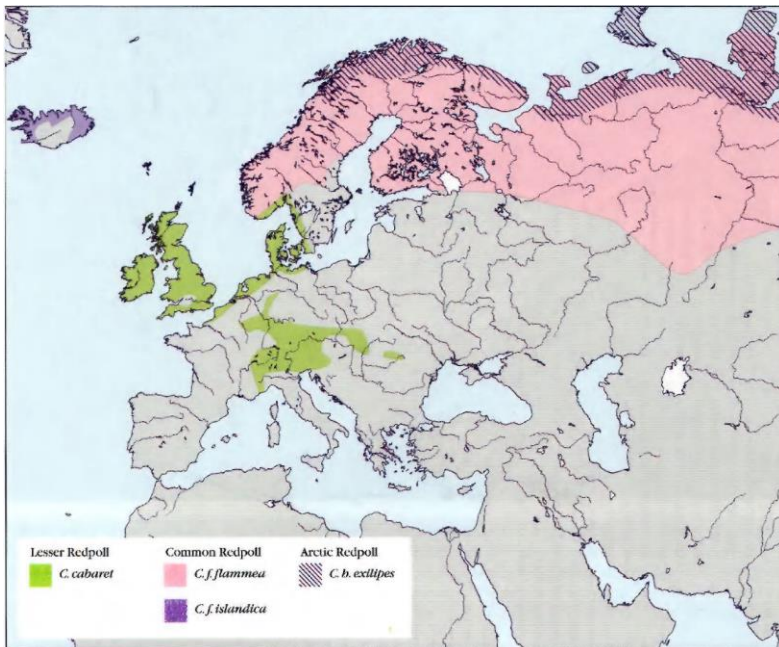
Redpolls differ in size and colouration across their European breeding range. Southern Redpolls are smaller and browner than their northern counterparts. This variation has led to a long standing debate about whether there is one species with distinct races or several species. By the 1980s authorities in the UK recognised two species – the Redpoll *Carduelis flammea* and the Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*. The Redpoll was said to have two races namely the Redpoll *Carduelis flammea cabaret*, which breeds in the UK and parts of western and central Europe, and the much more numerous Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea flammea* of Scandinavia and northern Russia. However, a revision took place in 2001 when the two races were given species status. The Redpoll was re-named Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret* and Mealy Redpoll became the Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea* with two races; *Carduelis flammea flammea* in Europe and *Carduelis flammea islandica* in Iceland. The Arctic Redpoll retained species status and the Scandinavian and Russian race is known as *Carduelis hornemanni exilipes*. The breeding ranges of the three species are shown in Map 1.

If that is not confusing enough, other authorities, including Bird Life International and the Irish Rare Birds Committee, disagree with the classification and recognise just one Redpoll species. The most recent analysis of Redpoll DNA carried out by Mason and Taylor (2015) supports the one species view. The size and distribution of the UK Lesser Redpoll breeding population has been subject to marked fluctuations. At the end of the 19th century breeding was widespread except for the Southwest and the Northern Isles. Numbers appear to have increased during the early twentieth century but this was followed by a long period of decline until the early 1950s. During the next 20 years newly planted coniferous forests and the prevalence of young birch scrub led to ideal nesting opportunities and as a result numbers rose dramatically to reach at least 300,000 pairs at the end of the 1960s. As woodlands matured and hedges were grubbed out the population went into another long term decline, especially in lowland England. Lesser Redpoll is now on the Red list of birds of conservation concern and the national breeding population is well below 200,000 pairs.

A male **Lesser Redpoll** (Skipwith Common 29.10.14). The wispy beige tips on the red feathers will wear away by the spring leaving a much brighter bird.



Map 1 Reproduced with permission of 'British Birds'
Breeding ranges in Europe of Lesser *Carduelis cabaret*, Common *C.flammea* and Arctic Redpolls *C. hornemanni*. Modified from Riddington *et al.* (2000).

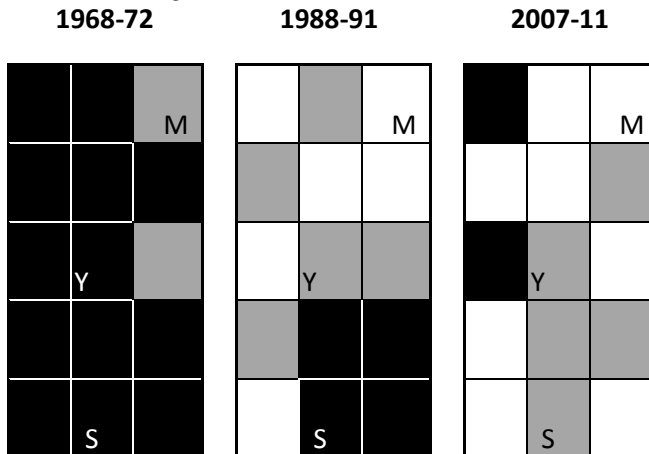


Breeding Lesser Redpoll in the York recording area since 1968

Local evidence concerning breeding Lesser Redpoll has been taken from YOC reports (1968-2014) and the three national breeding bird atlases. The YOC reports rarely provide proof of breeding therefore the following account assumes that unpublished detail existed at the time to support the claims of breeding.

The first YOC breeding record dates from 1968 when two pairs bred successfully at a Common Bird Census (CBC) plot on Skipwith Common. At this time many club members were involved with surveys for the first national breeding bird atlas (Sharrock, 1976) and the results from their fieldwork dominate the contemporary YOC reports. A total of 19 Lesser Redpoll breeding locations are listed in the 1971/72 editions. As would be expected the atlas map (see Map 2) closely reflects the YOC data.

Map 2 The distribution of Lesser Redpoll in the York recording area as shown in the three national breeding bird atlases



110km I M = Malton S = Selby Y = York

Black = Proven breeding; Grey = Probable/possible breeding; White = Absent

Later, several loose colonies were encountered. The 1978 CBC at Askham Bog found eight breeding territories and during the same year 15 pairs bred at Naburn sewage works, with 20 pairs reported there in 1980. For the rest of the 1980s details about breeding birds are limited to 1986 and 1989. It seems unlikely that Lesser Redpolls were absent during the intervening years; more likely that they went unreported.

Survey work for the second national atlas of breeding birds (Gibbons, 1993) also attracted YOC volunteers and again the annual reports for the period contain many of the results. There is a general agreement between the 1988-91 atlas map (see Map 2) and the annual reports, although the atlas record of proven breeding in SE73 (east of Selby) went unreported by the YOC. What is clear is that there

had been a considerable reduction in the breeding distribution since the 1968/72 surveys.

The decline in the number of pairs continued throughout the 1990s. Two or three pairs bred close to the Wheldrake Ings car park in 1993 whilst a survey of the LDV in 1995 discovered four pairs at Thornton Ellers; two at the Wheldrake Ings car park and two at Bank Island. The last 'proven' YOC breeding records relate to pairs at Strensall Common, Stearsby and Terrington in 1998. Since 1998 there have been records of singing males at Fulford Golf Course which suggest probable or possible breeding. In 2000 'several' males were present on 24th June; in 2007 seven males were displaying on 5th August with two present on the 29th, and in 2008 a solitary displaying male was seen on 10th June.

The third national breeding bird atlas (Balmer, 2013) shows that, although the breeding range in the York area was further reduced after 1988/91, Lesser Redpolls bred much more extensively than was reported by the YOC at the time (see Map 2). The proven breeding locations shown in the atlas were at Yearsley Moor (SE57 – top left corner) and Redhouse Wood (SE55) with both records dating from 2011.

So, as far as is known, Lesser Redpolls last bred in the recording area in 2011. However, despite the loss of habitat, breeding birds may still be present at infrequently visited places. It is also possible that a re-colonisation may take place if re-planting occurs when conifers are harvested at places such as Allertorpe Common and Wheldrake Woods.

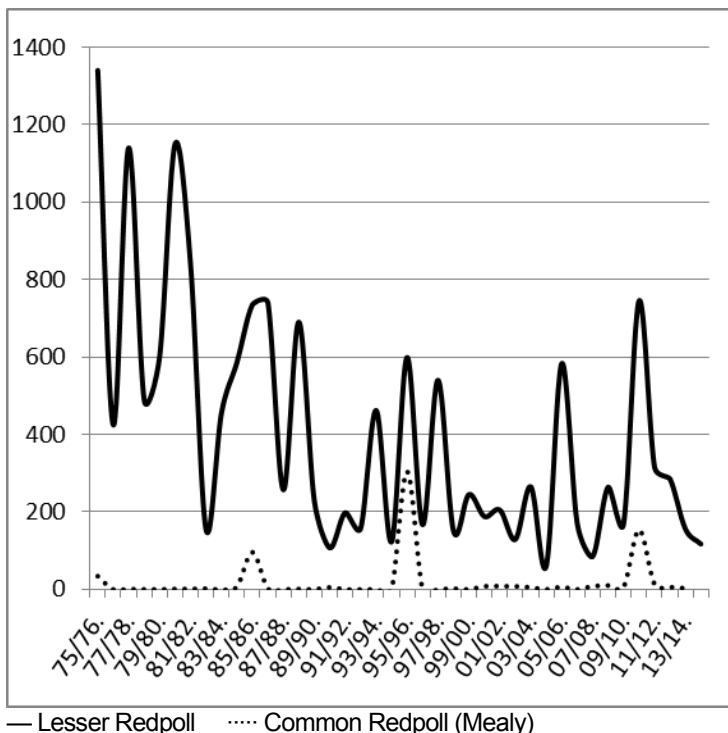
Non-breeding records of Lesser, Common and Arctic Redpoll in the York area

Graph 1 shows the number of Lesser and Common Redpolls reported in the York area during the non-breeding period (September-March inclusive) since detailed counts were first published by the YOC in 1975.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s the annual total of Lesser Redpolls exceeded 1000 on three occasions. Although there has been a general decline in numbers after 1980, possibly due to the loss of local and regional breeders, there are still winters such as 2010/11 when birds are abundant. Differences in observer coverage may partially account for the marked annual variations though the main cause is almost certainly due to the presence or absence of tree seeds which provide the principal winter food.

The maximum flock size occurred on 26th October 1975 when 1,000 birds were present at Selby Forest, now usually called Bishop Wood, though this record was not published by the YOC until 1980. According to Brown (2005) this count is a national record for England and occurred in a year when many birds arrived into the country from the continent. Map 3 shows the locations where flocks of 200 or more birds have been reported. These large flocks have declined in number during the review period, for example, seven were reported in the 1970s compared with three since 2000.

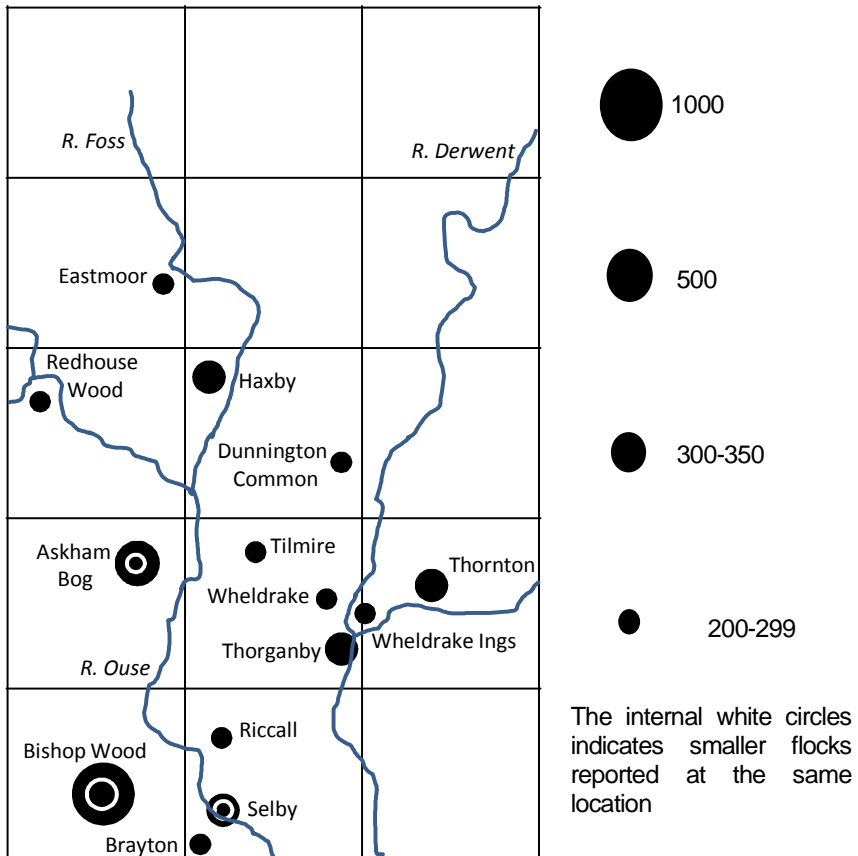
Graph 1 The number of Redpolls reported in the York recording area (September - March)



Common Redpolls (Mealy) were first reported by the YOC in 1975 and they have been annual visitors since 2008. The maximum winter total of just over 300 birds occurred during the winter of 1995/96. Most of these birds appeared in early 1996 and included 75 at Dunnington Common on 11th February and an estimated 135 at Yearsley Moor Wood on 1st March. These birds were part of a major influx into England which is described in detail by Riddington (2000).

A smaller Common Redpoll influx took place during the very cold winter of 1984/85. Four were present at Heslington throughout January, along with 30 Lesser Redpolls, and from the 28th to the 30th an Arctic Redpoll joined the flock. This much paler and larger Redpoll was probably driven further south than is usual due to extreme conditions in northern Scandinavian. It is the only accepted record for the York recording area.

Map 3 Lesser Redpoll flocks of 200 or more birds in the York area: 1975-2014



Results from ringing Lesser Redpoll in the York recording area

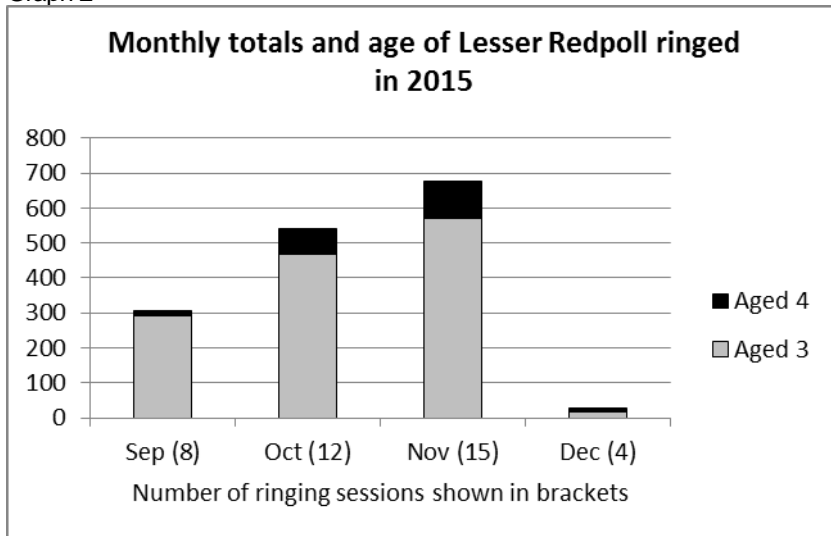
According to the 2000 YOC report, 644 Lesser Redpolls were caught and ringed in the York recording area during the period 1966-2000. Most of these birds were captured before 1990, for example 77 in 1982, at a time when widespread local breeding took place. Annual catches during the 1990s average 20 birds. Complete data for 2001-12 is not available though it appears that about 400 birds were ringed at various sites including the LDV, Sand Hutton, New Earswick and Allerthorpe. Twenty one birds were trapped in 2013 and 174 in 2014, when 148 were attracted to broadcasted calls on Skipwith Common.

Between 19th September and 13th December 2015 recorded calls were used during 40 ringing sessions resulting in the capture of 1,570 birds at Wheldrake Ings (836), Pocklington canal, Melbourne (603) and Skipwith Common (134). The

number ringed equalled 7% of the national total for the year and more than doubled the number of birds caught in the York area. The national 2015 total was close to the previous 5-year mean which suggests that the concerted effort and method used in the local area accounted for the large number caught rather than the presence of unusually high numbers of Lesser Redpolls.

Graph 2 shows that monthly ringing totals rose steadily from September to November and then declined abruptly in December when it appeared that most birds moved on. The mean catch size increased from 39 in September to 45 in both October and November which indicates that the number of birds present during the later months was similar.

Graph 2



In ringing terminology Aged 4 = hatched before 2015; Aged 3 = hatched during 2015

Once caught, birds are aged and sexed before release. In September 92% of the birds caught had hatched in 2015 – see Graph 3. The proportion of young birds fell to 86% in October and 84% in November. Perhaps the young birds were more prone to predation than the adults. However, it is more likely that the September birds consisted of young from early broods and failed breeders whilst later arrivals included the bulk of the breeding adults, along with their young. Very young birds are difficult to sex and the gender of only 4% of the September birds could be determined. In October, 78 (14%) of the birds were sexed with 21% of them proving to be female. The corresponding figures for November were 127 (19%) and 43%. The data suggests that in the autumn and early winter of 2015 females tended to arrive later into the York area than did the males.

Only 11 (0.7%) of the birds ringed at Wheldrake Ings were re-caught at the site. Re-capture did not take place at the other two sites and interchanges between the three sites were not reported. However, six of the birds caught in 2015 had been previously ringed at locations outside the York recording area – see Map 4 (filled squares)

Map 4 The origin of Lesser Redpolls migrating to the York area



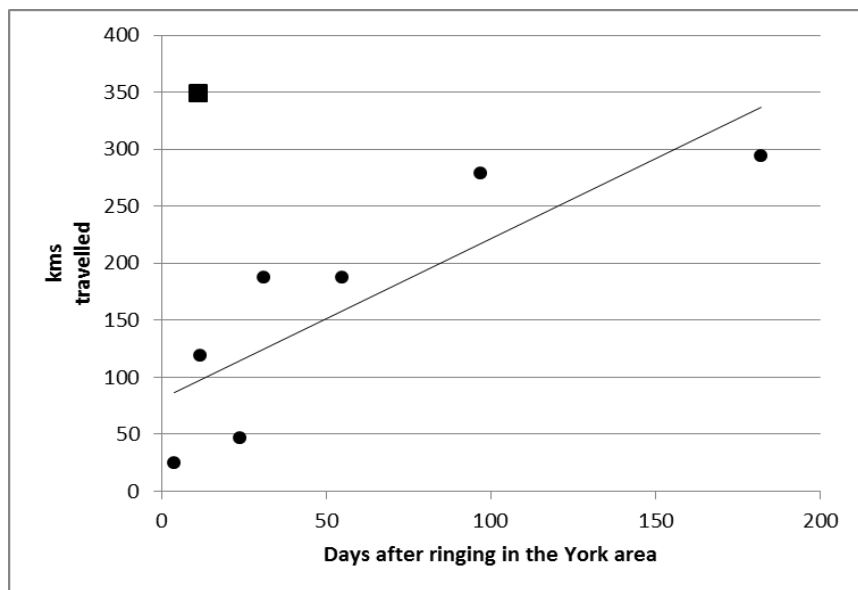
Three of these birds were re-caught within a month of their departure from Kilnsea; Spurn (2) and Ripon whilst the others had been ringed before the 2015 breeding season at Kilnsea, Sheringham in Norfolk and Capel, Surrey. Prior to 2015 a further nine immigrant birds have been caught in the York area and the origin of these individuals is shown on Map 4 (open square). It is noticeable that the origin of all the birds is restricted to the eastern half of England, south of the River Tees and east of longitude 2° west, and the Low Countries. The Dutch bird was ringed in March 2012 and caught at Skipwith Common during the following October. The farthest travelled immigrant was an adult male trapped on 5th April 2012 at Beaumont, Belgium and re-caught on Allerthorpe Common six months later after a journey of at least 533km.

To date, 12 of the birds ringed in the York area during 2015 have been re-captured elsewhere – see Map 5 (filled circle). All the birds recaptured before the end of the year had moved in a southerly direction and in general the distance covered increased with the passage of time – see Graph 3. The main exception was an individual, represented as the square on Graph 3, which was caught at Ickelsham on the south coast after a journey of 350km in 11 days. It is possible that this bird continued across the Channel to France or Belgium. The location of the birds re-captured in the spring of 2016 were all to the north of York including Catterick in North Yorkshire and Cumbria. It is likely that these birds had originally moved southwards before returning towards their breeding grounds. Historical records contain an additional nine records of birds which have emigrated from the York area – see Map 5 (open circle). Again, most of these individuals were re-trapped south of the York area whilst the two spring records (Lockerbie, Dumfries and Cumbria) are to the north.

Map 5 Re-capture locations of Lesser Redpolls emigrating from the York area



Graph 3 The distance and time between the ringing of Lesser Redpolls in the York area during 2015 and recapture elsewhere



Conclusion

It appears that family parties of Lesser Redpolls which breed north of York flock together in early autumn and feed primarily on the seeds of trees, especially silver birch and alder. The size of the seed crop varies both regionally and annually. When crops are poor or become exhausted the birds embark on a nomadic lifestyle. Many migrate south to the Vale of York and some overwinter if sufficient food is available. When the local crop is poor the birds soon consume the seeds and continue south to places where the supply is more plentiful. Birds ringed in the York area have reached the south coast and an analysis of national ringing data (Wernham, 2002) shows that in some years birds ringed in other parts of northern England have crossed the Channel into the Low Countries and northern France. During the late winter and early spring most Lesser Redpolls migrate from their wintering areas to breeding grounds in the north of England and Scotland, with some individuals passing through the York recording area.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the BTO for supplying the ringing data. The BTO Ringing Scheme is funded by a partnership of the British Trust for Ornithology, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (on behalf of: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage and the Department of the

Environment Northern Ireland), The National Parks and Wildlife Service (Ireland) and the ringers themselves. I would also like to thank Mr A J Tate for creating Maps 4 and 5 and British Birds for the permission to reproduce Map 1.

References

Balmer, D.E., Gillings, S., Caffrey, B.J., Swann, R.L., Downie, I.S. & Fuller, R.J. 2013. *Bird Atlas 2007-11: the breeding and wintering birds of Britain and Ireland*. BTO Books, Thetford.

Brown, A. & Grice, P. 2005. *Birds in England*. T. & A.D. Poyser, London

Gibbons D.W., Reid, B.R., Chapman, R.A. (1993) *The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991*. T. & A.D. Poyser.

Knox, A.G., Helbig, A.J., Parkin, D.T. & Sangter, G. (2001) The taxonomic status of Lesser Redpoll, *British Birds*, 94, 260-267.

Mason, N.A. & Taylor, S.A. (2015) Differentially expressed genes match bill morphology and plumage despite largely undifferentiated genomes in a Holarctic songbird, *Molecular Ecology*, 24 (12), 3009-3025.

Riddington, R., Votier, S.C. & Steele, J. (2000) The influx of redpolls into Western Europe, 1995-96, *British Birds*, 93, 59-67.

Sharrock, J.T.R., 1976. *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland*. T. & A.D. Poyser, London.

Wernham, C.V., Toms, M.P., Marchant, J.H., Clark, J.A., Siriwardena, G.M. & Baillie, S.R. (eds). 2002. *The Migration Atlas: movements of the birds of Britain and Ireland*. T. & A.D. Poyser, London.

The Breeding Bird Survey in the Yorkshire (York) Region: 2015 update

By Rob Chapman (BBS Regional Organiser)

Following last year's review of the BBS in the region, this short article summarises the 2015 season. Data were received from 40 squares: 37 BBS and 3 WBBS sites. This is one fewer than 2014's total. One hundred species of birds and ten species of mammals were recorded. There were 10,709 individual birds recorded, based on the highest counts in each square.

The ten most widespread species were:

Pos.	Species	Squares
1=	Blackbird	40
1=	Blue Tit	40
1=	Chaffinch	40
1=	Great Tit	40
1=	Swallow	40
1=	Woodpigeon	40
7=	Carrion Crow	38
7=	Robin	38
9	Wren	37
10	Pheasant	36

The ten most abundant species were:

Pos.	Species	Count
1	Woodpigeon	1852
2	Rook	746
3	Blackbird	614
4	Chaffinch	570
5	Carrion Crow	529
6	Starling	441
7	Wren	344
8	Blue Tit	323
9	Swallow	308
10	House Sparrow	302

The review last year focused on a selection of species' population trends. In 2015, the results for these species, in the order they were discussed, were:

- Mute Swan – 19 were recorded compared to 18 in 2014.
- Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Mallard – Fewer were counted in 2015 after recent increases.
- Sparrowhawk – The trends showed a recent decline though numbers (nine) were the highest in the last ten years.
- Buzzard and Kestrel – Similarly, these species were recorded in the highest numbers in the last ten years: 29 and 19, respectively.
- Feral Pigeon and Stock Dove – Both species were recorded more often this year than last though Collared Dove was recorded less often.
- Woodpigeon – Goes from strength to strength, unsurprisingly.
- Swallow and House Martin – Numbers picked up this year, it will be interesting to see if this is a reverse of the declines observed.
- Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Blackcap – All these warblers maintained their recent increase though there were fewer Whitethroats recorded than in 2014.
- Swift numbers sadly continued with their drastic decline though Starling numbers almost doubled from the previous year.
- House Sparrow and Tree Sparrow numbers were similar to last year.

House Martin was also the subject of a random tetrad survey in 2015, which was aimed at establishing a national population estimate. Forty four squares were searched, 16 squares contained colonies and there were 62 colonies found.

Species in the York recording area since 1966

This is a list of species recorded in the YOC area since 1966.

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.

Rarer species requiring descriptions

Rare and scarce species at national, county and local levels are marked in the list with three, two or one asterisks. Records of rarer birds require descriptions to be submitted for ratification as follows: *** British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC), ** Yorkshire Naturalists' Union Rarities Committee (YNURC), * YOC Recorder. Records for these species must be supported by descriptions taken in the field or as soon as possible after the sighting – preferably before reference to textbooks. Forms for species considered by the BBRC or the YNU can be obtained from any YNU vice-county recorder or the YNU website. Note: If photographs showing key identification features are submitted a field description may not be required (as long as details such as location, date, observer, etc. accompany the photographs). Full lists of YNU and YOC description species are on pages 130 and 131.

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

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

- Goldeneye W
- Smew
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Goosander (B)
- Ruddy Duck B
- Quail (B)
- Red-legged Partridge B
- Grey Partridge B
- Pheasant B
- (Golden Pheasant)
- * Red-throated Diver
- * Black-throated Diver
- * Great Northern Diver
- * Fulmar
- * Manx Shearwater
- * Storm-petrel
- * Leach's Petrel
- * Gannet
- Cormorant B
- * Shag
- * Bittern (B)?
- ** Cattle Egret
- Little Egret (B)
- ** Great White Egret
- Grey Heron B
- ** Purple Heron
- ** Black Stork
- * White Stork
- * Spoonbill
- Little Grebe B
- Great Crested Grebe B
- * Red-necked Grebe
- * Slavonian Grebe
- * Black-necked Grebe (B)
- ** Honey Buzzard
- ** Black Kite
- Red Kite (B)
- Marsh Harrier (B)
- * Hen Harrier
- ** Montagu's Harrier
- * Goshawk B
- Sparrowhawk B
- Buzzard B
- ** Rough-legged Buzzard
- * Osprey P
- Water Rail B
- * Spotted Crake (B)
- * Corncrake (B)
- Moorhen B
- Coot B
- * Crane (B)
- * Stone Curlew
- *** Black-winged Stilt
- Avocet (B)
- Oystercatcher B
- ** American Golden Plover
- Golden Plover W
- Grey Plover
- Lapwing B
- Little Ringed Plover B
- Ringed Plover B
- ** Kentish Plover
- * Dotterel
- Whimbrel P
- Curlew B
- Black-tailed Godwit (B)
- * Bar-tailed Godwit
- Turnstone
- * Knot
- Ruff (B)
- * Curlew Sandpiper
- * Temminck's Stint
- * Sanderling
- Dunlin W & P
- * Little Stint P
- ** White-rumped Sandpiper
- ** Buff-breasted Sandpiper
- * Pectoral Sandpiper
- ** Red-necked Phalarope
- * Grey Phalarope
- Common Sandpiper (B)
- Green Sandpiper P & W
- * Spotted Redshank P
- Greenshank P
- *** Lesser Yellowlegs
- Wood Sandpiper P

- Redshank B
- Jack Snipe W
- Woodcock B
- Snipe B
- * Pomarine Skua
- * Arctic Skua
- * Great Skua
- * Puffin
- * Little Auk
- * Guillemot
- * Little Tern
- *** Caspian Tern
- *** Whiskered Tern
- * Black Tern
- * Sandwich Tern
- Common Tern B
- * Roseate Tern
- * Arctic Tern P
- * 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
- 'Feral Pigeon' B
- Stock Dove B
- Woodpigeon B
- Collared Dove B
- * Turtle Dove B
- Cuckoo B
- Barn Owl B
- Little Owl B
- Tawny Owl B
- * Long-eared Owl B
- * Short-eared Owl (B)
- * Nightjar B
- Swift B
- ** Alpine Swift
- * Hoopoe
- * Bee-eater
- Kingfisher B
- * Wryneck
- Green Woodpecker B
- Great Spotted Woodpecker B
- * Lesser Spotted Woodpecker B
- Kestrel B
- ** Red-footed Falcon
- Merlin
- Hobby (B)
- Peregrine B
- * (Ring-necked Parakeet)
- * Golden Oriole
- * Red-backed Shrike
- *** Lesser Grey Shrike
- * Great Grey Shrike
- Magpie B
- Jay B
- Jackdaw B
- Rook B
- Carrion Crow B
- Hooded Crow
- * Raven
- Goldcrest B
- * Firecrest
- Blue Tit B
- Great Tit B
- Coal Tit B
- * Willow Tit B
- Marsh Tit B
- * Bearded Tit
- * Woodlark B
- Skylark B
- Sand Martin B
- Swallow B
- House Martin B
- ** Red-rumped Swallow
- * Cetti's Warbler
- Long-tailed Tit B
- * Yellow-browed Warbler
- * Wood Warbler

Chiffchaff B	Wheatear P
(<i>Siberian Chiffchaff</i>)	Dunnock B
Willow Warbler B	House Sparrow B
Blackcap B	Tree Sparrow B
Garden Warbler B	Yellow Wagtail B
* Barred Warbler	* (<i>Blue-headed Wagtail</i>)
Lesser Whitethroat B	Grey Wagtail B
Whitethroat B	Pied Wagtail B
Grasshopper Warbler B	(<i>White Wagtail</i>)
Sedge Warbler B	* Richard's Pipit
** Marsh Warbler	Tree Pipit B
Reed Warbler B	Meadow Pipit B
Waxwing W	* Rock Pipit P
Nuthatch B	* Water Pipit
Treecreeper B	Brambling W
Wren B	Chaffinch B
Starling B	* Hawfinch
* Rose-coloured Starling	Bullfinch B
Dipper (B)	Greenfinch B
* Ring Ouzel	Linnet B
Blackbird B	* Twite
Fieldfare W & P	Lesser Redpoll
Song Thrush B, W & P	* Common (Mealy) Redpoll
Redwing W & P	** Arctic Redpoll
Mistle Thrush B	Crossbill B
Spotted Flycatcher B	Goldfinch B
Robin B	Siskin B
* Nightingale (B)	* Snow Bunting
* Red-breasted Flycatcher	* Lapland Bunting
* Pied Flycatcher (B)?	Yellowhammer B
* Black Redstart (B)	** Cirl Bunting
Redstart B	Reed Bunting B
Whinchat	Corn Bunting B
Stonechat B	

Following a comprehensive review of previous reports, undertaken by Jono Leadley, some rarities that were included in the list have now been removed since no descriptions appear to have been sent to/or there is no record of acceptance by the BBRC or YNU and are therefore not proven (e.g. Baird's Sandpiper).

The YOC Recorder may ask contributors to provide extra supporting evidence for some species not on the description species lists taking into account factors such as observer experience, out-of-season occurrences and unusual or difficult plumages. This is at the recorder's discretion and the list of species requiring descriptions is reviewed regularly.

YNU Description Species for 2015

(Taiga) Bean Goose	White-winged Black Tern
(Tundra) Bean Goose (<i>in flight</i>)	Ring-billed Gull
Black Brant	Caspian Gull
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
Cattle Egret	Greenish Warbler
Great White Egret	Radde's Warbler
Purple Heron	Dusky Warbler
Night Heron	Dartford Warbler
Honey Buzzard	Subalpine Warbler
Black Kite	Melodious Warbler
White-tailed Eagle	Aquatic Warbler
Montagu's Harrier	Marsh Warbler
Rough-legged Buzzard	Tawny Pipit
Golden Eagle	Red-throated Pipit
Red-footed Falcon	Arctic Redpoll
American Golden Plover	Parrot Crossbill
Kentish Plover	Girl Bunting
White-rumped Sandpiper	Rustic Bunting
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Little Bunting
Red-necked Phalarope (<i>in flight</i>)	

YOC description species (additional to YNU)

Bewick's Swan	Fulmar
(Greenland) White-fronted Goose	Manx Shearwater
Brent Goose – all races	Storm-petrel
Green-winged Teal	Leach's Petrel
Garganey	Gannet
Red-crested Pochard	Shag
Ring-necked Duck	Bittern
Scaup	White Stork
Eider	Spoonbill
Long-tailed Duck	Red-necked Grebe
Velvet Scoter	Slavonian Grebe
Red-throated Diver	Black-necked Grebe
Red-breasted Merganser	(<i>away from the LDV</i>)
Black-throated Diver	Hen Harrier
Great Northern Diver	Goshawk

Osprey
 Spotted Crake
 Corncrake
 Common Crane
 Stone Curlew
 Dotterel
 Bar-tailed Godwit
 Knot
 Curlew Sandpiper
 Temminck's Stint
 Sanderling
 Purple Sandpiper
 Little Stint
 Pectoral Sandpiper
 Grey Phalarope
 Spotted Redshank
 Great Skua
 Pomarine Skua
 Arctic Skua
 Long-tailed Skua
 Puffin
 Razorbill
 Little Auk
 Little Tern
 Black Tern
 Sandwich Tern
 Roseate Tern
 Arctic Tern
 Sabine's Gull
 Kittiwake
 Little Gull
 Mediterranean Gull
 Yellow-legged Gull
 Turtle Dove
 Long-eared Owl
 Short-eared Owl
 Nightjar

Hoopoe
 Bee-eater
 Wryneck
 Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
 Ring-necked Parakeet
 Golden Oriole
 Red-backed Shrike
 Great Grey Shrike
 Raven
 Firecrest
 Willow Tit
 Bearded Tit
 Woodlark
(away from breeding areas)
 Shore Lark
 Cetti's Warbler
 Yellow-browed Warbler
 Wood Warbler
 Barred Warbler
 Rose-coloured Starling
 Ring Ouzel
 Nightingale
 Red-breasted Flycatcher
 Pied Flycatcher
 Black Redstart
 Yellow Wagtail
*('Blue-headed' race and
 'Channel' hybrid)*
 Richard's Pipit
 Rock Pipit
 Water Pipit
 Hawfinch
 Twite
 Common (Mealy) Redpoll
 Snow Bunting
 Lapland Bunting

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's recording area. All members are encouraged to submit records, whatever their level of knowledge.

1. Records must be submitted by the 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 noted where possible. Counts are preferable to terms such as 'few', 'several' or 'many' as these terms are very subjective and actual numbers enable the comparison of populations between years. For large flocks of birds, approximate numbers are acceptable.
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. These descriptions should be submitted to the Recorder as soon as possible after the sighting, preferably by email to recorder@yorkbirding.org.uk. The importance of such descriptions for the validation of rare records cannot be overemphasized.
4. Please remember to include your contact details, particularly name and telephone number and email address, with your records.
5. Records should, preferably, be submitted in electronic format as attachments to an email. Ideally records will be submitted on the club spreadsheet, which can be downloaded from the website www.yorkbirding.org.uk. Records for inclusion in the YOC Report should be submitted directly to the editorial committee by email to editor@yorkbirding.org.uk. Casual records can also be submitted via the casual records form on the website.

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. Sensitive records can be submitted confidentially to the Recorder.

Contributors to the YOC

Bird Report for 2015

(with apologies for any accidental omissions)

Chris Abbott	Robert (Bob) Coursey	N Heptinstall
S Aldous	(RCO)	J Higgins
P Allenby	Doug Crawford	J Hogg
L K Arkless	D Craven	Steve Huddleston
Jack Ashton-Booth	M Cunningham	A Humphreys-James
(JAB)	Andy D'Agome	D Humphries
I A Ashworth	J Dagley	Adam Hutt (AH)
T Baird	R R & N Darsley	P Izzard
Sue Ball	Robert Dawson (RD)	D Jackson
John Bardet	W Dewsnap	R E Jackson
R Barrett	Jenny Dixon	J Jarvis
Colin Beale (CB)	G Dobbs	L Johnson
J Beattie	I Dobson	Tim Jones (TJ)
Jonathan Begbie (JB)	M Dodds	D J Kelly
Neil Bielby	Paul Doherty (PD)	Mark Killeen
Tim Birkinshaw	Trevor Douglas (TD)	M S Kirby (MSK)
Barry Bishop (BB)	J M Dowson (JMD)	CP Kirk
K Blackmore	C Doyle	Andrew Kisby
Barbara Boize (BBo)	Richard Drew	A Lamb
Phil Bone (PB)	S Eaves	Anne Lawn
Hugh Brazier	S C Elliott (SCE)	John Lawton (JL)
Christine Brookes	J Ensor	Jono Leadley (JLe)
Ian Brookes (IB)	A Farrar	M Lee
Duncan Bye (DB)	Christine M Fearnley	Nicola Lefanu (NL)
Nicholas Carpenter	D Fennell	P & S A Leyland
(NC)	Adam Firth (AF)	Tom Lowe
A Carr	Joan Fines (JF)	David Lumsdaine (DL)
A C I Carter	Paul (Paz) Fletcher (PF)	P Lyons
N Carter	Michael Flowers (MF)	Fallon Mahon (FM)
C Cassells	Sean Garvey	D & M Mather
F B Caudwell	Elaine Gathercole	Naomi J Meredith
S Caudwell (SC)	Tim D Godson	Ollie Metcalf (OM)
Jane Chapman (JCn)	Chris Gomersall (GC)	Matthew Midgley
Rob Chapman (RCn)	A Gomez	D A Money
John Clarke (JC)	V Govind Kumar (VGK)	Nick Moran (NM)
Mark Coates (MC)	Steve Griffiths	Neil & Elizabeth N
S Collins	R Hammon	Moran
J Common	A Hanby (AH)	A Moreno
S P Coney	Christopher Harris	Lucy Murgatroyd (LM)
Derek Cooper	E J Hediger	D Neville
Neil Cooper	M Hemingway	P J Nicholson
R P Council	I Hendry	Jan Nobel

R T & G Osborne
 S Oxley
 R Packham
 S D Page
 Vincent Parslow (VP)
 G Paterson
 T J Phillips
 Jonathan Pomroy (JP)
 I Purslow
 D Raine
 Christy Ralph (CR)
 Craig Ralston (CSR)
 P Rawnsley
 A Reaney
 Paul Reed (PaR)
 Peter Reed (PeR)
 Penny Relf
 Keith Reynolds
 Dave Richardson (DR)
 M Rigby
 J Robson
 M Roberts
 S Robinson
 D W G Rothwell
 H Saxby
 A Scott
 Helen Searstone
 Alan Shadrack

C Sherwood
 G Sigsworth
 H Simons (HSi)
 J L & S Sims
 M Sitnikova
 M Slaymaker
 Gill Smith (GS)
 Jenny Smith (JS)
 L D Stead
 Nigel Stewart (NS)
 J Stopford
 Alan Stow
 A Swain
 H M Tanner
 P Tarling
 David Tate (DT)
 C B Thomas
 Paul Thorpe (PT)
 Ian Traynor (IT)
 Andy Walker (AW)
 C Walker
 Geoff Wallis
 R Walls
 Mike & Fiona Walton
 Tim Ward
 George Watola
 Peter Watson (PW)
 S A Watson

M Weir
 Terry Weston (TW)
 A Whitehead
 J Whitfield
 P Willey
 Mark Williams
 A D Winship
 D Wilson

 BirdGuides
 LDV Blog
 Natural England (NE)
 Ryedale Natural History
 Bird Report 2014
 (RNHR)
 Sand Hutton Bird
 Report (SHBR)
 YOC Website reports

The LDV team
comprises:
 Craig Ralston
 Mike Jackson (MFJ)
 Steve Huddleston
 Lucy Murgatroyd
 Fallon Mahon
 Jean Thorpe
 James Roberts

Gazetteer of sites in the York 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		Breck's Lane, Strensall	641612
Acaster Aerodrome	575428	Brecks (The), Strensall	648618
Acaster Malbis	590455	Brighton	709341
Acaster Selby	574415	Brind	742310
Acklam	785618	Brindley's Plantation	742318
Acomb, York	5751	Broomhill Plantation	703449
Allerthorpe Common	7547	Bubwith bridge	705364
Allerthorpe, Old Gravel Pits	7947	Bubwith Ings	7037
Allerthorpe Lakeland Park	780465	Bugthorpe	773579
Ampleforth	583787	Buttercrambe	733582
Anchor Plain, Strensall	6363	Buttercrambe Weir	734585
Appleton Roebuck	555423	Butterwick	732775
Askham Bog(s)	5748	Byland Abbey	549790
Aughton (Ings)	7038	C	
B		Calley Heath NR	753498
Baldwins Bridge, Pock.Canal	740450	Callis Wood	6971
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
Bilbrough	532468	Cliffe	662320
Bishopthorpe	5947	Cliffe Common	666339
Bishop Wilton	797553	Clifton	593532
Bishop Wood	5533	Clifton Backies NR, York	596540
Black Wood, Easingwold	5467	Clifton Ings	583531
Bolton Ings	537397	Clifton Park	584533
Bolton Percy	532414	Coates Bridge, Pock. 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
Brayton Barff	5830	Coxwold	536772

Crambe	733649	Grimston Moor	613744
Crambeck	738674	H	
Crayke	562705	Hagg Bridge	717452
Crockey Hill	625466	Harewood Whin (Rufforth Tip)	538518
D		Hartrigg Oaks, York	608559
Danesmead Copse, York	607497	Hassacarr NR	673518
Designer Outlet, York	607477	Haxby	609582
Dringhouses, York	580495	Healaugh	500477
Dunnington	671525	Hemingbrough	6730
Dunnington Common	6750	Heslington	627504
E		Heslington East, York Uni.	6350 –
Easingwold	529698		6450
East Cottingwith	703425	Heslington Tillmire	638475
East Moor, Sutton-on-Forest	600644	Heslington West, York Uni.	6250
Ellers Farm, Buttercrambe	7257	Hessay	524534
Ellerton (Ings)	700398	High Catton	718538
Elvington	700476	High Hutton	755685
Elvington Airfield	670480	High Lodge, SHL	675586
Elvington WTW	7048	Hob Moor, York	585506
Escrick	631427	Hogg's Pond, Dringhouses	581493
Escrick Park	635418	Hollicarrs	626395
F		Holtby	675542
Fangfoss	765533	Hopgrove (roundabout)	642553
Fireman's Leap, New Earswick	609550	Hovingham	667758
Flamingoland	7780	Howardian Hills	5875 –
Flaxton	680624		7568
Foggathorpe	755377	Huby	566655
Foss Island, York	609520	Hull Road Park, York	620515
Fulford, York	610496	Huntington, York	612550
Fulford Ings	608493	Huttons Ambo	763677
Fulford Golf Course	624494	J	
Fulford Hall	606484	Jeffry Bog, Low Hutton	759667
Full Sutton	746555	JRTNR, New Earswick	608548
G		K	
Ganthorpe	689704	Keldspring Crossing, Pock.	786498
Garganey Hide, NDC	698368	Kelfield	594384
Garrowby Hill	798567	Kennythorpe	790660
Gaterley	737696	Kexby	705514
Geoff Smith Hide, NDC	696372	Kilburn	504796
Giles Lock, Pocklington Canal	795464	Kirby Misperton	780794
Gilling (East/Park)	614770	Kirkham Priory	736658
Goosewood Caravan Park,		Knapton	562522
Sutton-on-the-Forest	591631	Knavesmire, York	594495
Great Barugh	750790	Knavesmire Wood, York	593488
Grimston	644514	L	
Grimston Bar (roundabout)	649516	Langton	798671

Langwith Stray, Heslington	650480
Laytham	749395
Leppington	763613
Linton-on-Ouse	495607
Loftsome Bridge	705301
Londesborough Lodge Farm, Dunnington	6952
Long Marston	502512
Low Carr, Sutton-on-the-Forest	600623
Low Catton	705538
Lower Derwent Valley	7036 – 7046

M

Malton	785717
Mausoleum, Castle Howard	727696
Melbourne	753441
Middlethorpe Ings	603486
Melbourne Scamland	766437
Meltonby	796525
Milford Common	5332
Millennium Bridge, York	603497
Monks Cross, York	630550
Moor Lane, Bishopthorpe	585470
Moor Monkton	506569
Moreby Wood	606428
Moorlands	577588
Mount Ferrant, Birdsall	796639
Murton	650527

N

Naburn	599455
Naburn Bridge	598467
Naburn Marina	599462
Naburn Sewage Works	601467
Naburn Wood	609438
Newburgh Priory (lake)	542767
Newhay	661307
Newton-on-Ouse	512599
Newton Carr	740494
Newton Mask SSSI	705501
Newton upon Derwent	720495
New Earswick	609555
North Duffield Carrs	695375
North Howden	7530
Norton-on-Derwent	795710
Nunnington (Hall)	667794
Nursery Wood, SHL	678585

O

Osballdwick	633519
Osgodby	641338
Oswaldkirk	625790
Oulston Reservoir	570745
Oxton	505431
Ozendyke Ings	539398

P

Parliament Street, York	603518
Patefield Wood	500381
Petersfield Farm, Bielby	793422
Pocklington	802490
Pocklington Airfield	793485
Pocklington Canal	698426
	-800474
Poppleton	560546
Pretty Wood, Castle Howard	732690

R

Raker Lakes, Wheldrake	684463
Rawcliffe Bar Country Park	577547
Rawcliffe Ings	575544
Rawcliffe Lake	586546
Rawcliffe Meadows	577545
Redhouse Reservoir	529575
Redhouse Wood, Moor Monkton	520570
Refuge, Wheldrake	708435
Riccall	620380
Rossmoor Park	722436
Rowntree Park, York	604508
Ruddins Ings	5456
Rufforth	5251
Ryther	550392
Ryton	795757
Ryton Bridge (Riggs Rd Bridge)	796754

S

Sand Hutton	695586
Scackleton	650726
Scagglethorpe Moor	5355
Scamlands	766439
Scoreby Lodge	684513
Seaton Ross	780415
Seavy Carr, Thornton	753451
Selby	615324
Sessions NR, New Earswick	610548
Sheriff Hutton	655664

Silburn Lock, Pock. Canal	797468	Triangle Meadow, York	604547
Skewsby	625710	U	
Skipwith	657385	Ulleskelf	520400
Skipwith Common	6537	W	
Skirpenbeck	747570	Walbut Lock, Pock. 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	Warren Wood, Dunnington	677503
Stearsby Hagg	620720	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 Bank Park, York	584512
Stonegrave	657777	West Cottingwith Ings	695419
Storwood	712442	West Ings	550394
Strensall	633608	West Lilling	648652
Strensall Common	6460 – 6661	West Ness	690790
St Nicholas Fields, York	615517	Westow	7565
Stubb Wood	585433	Wharfe Ings	568387
Sutton-on-the-Forest	584647	Wheldrake	682450
Sutton upon Derwent	707468	Wheldrake Ings	7043
Swantail Hide, Wheldrake Ings	707438	Wheldrake Wood	6546
Swinton	760731	Whitehill Mine	667359
Swinton Ings	772748	White Carr, Flaxton	663603
T		Whitwell Grange	715666
Tang Hall Beck fields	6353	Wiganthorpe	662724
Tang Hall, York	620520	Wigginton	595585
Terrington	670707	Wilberfoss	734510
Terrington Moor	685716	Winchmore, Stamford Bridge	727547
The Retreat, York	617510	Wistow	594357
Thorganby	691420	Woodhouse Grange	733470
Thorganby Ings	6941	World's End Plantation,	
Thormanby	495747	Strensall Common	6659
Thornton	760453	Wressle	708313
Thornton Ellers	730460	Y	
Tockwith	465525	Yearsley	585744
Tollerton	513643	Yearsley Moor	5875 – 6076
Towthorpe	625586	York (city centre)	599519
Towthorpe Civic Amenity Site	648586	York Minster	603523
Towthorpe Moor Lane, Strensall	625585 -663579		