

YOC REPORT 1983

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

This report has been compiled by members of York Ornithological Club and nearly all the records have been submitted by members who are active in watching an area of about 550 square miles around York which the Club is responsible for recording.

The Club has a membership of about 80 enthusiasts. It meets once a month in the Priory Street Sports and Community Centre, usually on the first Tuesday of the month, for a full programme of talks and discussions and for the informal exchange of information which bird-watchers find invaluable.

In addition, on the first Sunday of each month, there is a Club excursion to an area of ornithological interest, usually outside the recording area.

EDITORIAL

Once again it is my pleasure to acknowledge the debt of gratitude owed to the many observers who have submitted their records for inclusion in this report. Thanks are due to the artists whose work enlivens the following pages, and to the Y.W.T. and the R.S.P.B. Avocet Shop for providing outlets for this report.

Annual bird reports serve two main functions. Firstly, they are a reminder of a year gone by and the birds seen and, sadly for many of us, the birds missed. Secondly and more importantly they attempt to provide an objective assessment of the status of bird species in a particular area, at a particular point in time, thus enabling changes in status to be detected which may be pointers to environmental change. Fulfilling the first function depends in the main on recording the rare and unusual, a relatively easy task as most observers readily submit records of this kind. Fulfilling the second function requires a large number of records of commoner species to be submitted. In this respect observers could help by submitting more records. Whilst the arrival and departure dates of, for instance, Sand Martin are of interest and will always be published, of far more importance are the breeding sites and their size. Yet many observers are seemingly content to submit their first and last dates and little else. All records of all species are welcome, no matter how seemingly unimportant. They are retained on file even if they do not appear in the species accounts in the annual report.

The fortunes of our local birds continue to suffer with the seemingly never-ending loss of habitat. This was forcibly brought home when a small damp field with breeding Redshank and Snipe was discovered in Spaldington during Atlas field-work. Within a few weeks of the end of the breeding season it had been drained.

The same parish saw one of the worst cases of hedgerow vandalism when a half-mile hedge with many mature oaks was ripped out and burnt. Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland is a rare habitat in the Vale of York; it was therefore particularly unfortunate when a small oak wood was clear-felled at Elvington. The much vaunted Wildlife and Countryside Act does nothing to protect the wider countryside outside Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Even our SSSIs are seemingly not immune from the march of 'improvement'. During 1983 North Duffield Carrs, an integral part of the Derwent Ings SSSI, came under threat from a pumped drainage scheme. The scheme proposed by the Ouse and Derwent Internal Drainage Board will attract grant aid of 5096 from the Ministry of Agriculture and 2596 from the Yorkshire Water Authority. What sort of national strategy for wildlife conservation is it that can contemplate providing 7596 of the costs, from the public purse, of a scheme designed to destroy the wildlife significance of an integral part of a Grade 1 SSSI? The scheme appears even more outrageous given that the government has an international obligation to protect the Derwent Ings under the terms of the Ramsar Convention and that the I.D.B., M.A.F.F. and the Y.W.A. all have a legal responsibility to further nature conservation. The N.C.C., R.S.P.B., Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Wildfowl Trust and International Waterfowl Research Bureau have all objected to the scheme, as has the York Ornithological Club and many of its individual members. A considerable public outcry has resulted in generally favourable coverage on the television and radio, and in national newspapers. The scheme is now regarded as a watershed for nature conservation in Britain. We await the outcome with concern. For as Gwyn Williams, the RSPB's conservation officer said in the Sunday Times (22nd January 1984), "If we can't save a site as important as the Ings, we might as well all pack up and go home".

Tim Dixon

Stop Press

As this report is in press it has been announced that grant aid for the North Duffield Carrs pumped drainage scheme will not be forthcoming from M.A.F.F. The scheme, therefore, will not proceed.

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

The summer of 1983 saw completion of the second season of fieldwork for the tetrad atlas. A total of 118 tetrads have now been adequately surveyed with some breeding records from a further 80 tetrads. This is a slightly slower rate of progress than had been hoped for and may mean completion in summer 1987 rather than 1986 as originally envisaged. There are still major gaps in coverage in the north, particularly around Tollerton, Easingwold, Sheriff Hutton and Malton. Other gaps are in the south-west around Church Fenton and Colton, and in the mid-east around Barmby Moor and Full Sutton. Offers of help in these areas are

urgently needed. Fieldwork is easy and fun, and interesting birds can be found in what are seemingly very unpromising tetrads.

A total of 123 species has now been recorded in suitable breeding habitat of which 106 have been proved to breed and a further 11 have probably bred. The average number of species per tetrad remains at 52 and indicates that tetrads are still being well worked. Over 6,000 individual records have now been generated from the 118 tetrads covered and grateful thanks are due to Steve Channell for producing a very efficient set of data handling programs. Without this software, analysis of the data would have to be undertaken manually which would be extremely time consuming.

Much of the information so far gathered serves to confirm what was already evident. However, much that is new and unexpected also continues to emerge.

Predictably, perhaps, Blackbird is the most widespread species, being present in all tetrads surveyed. Who would have guessed, however, that House Sparrow would lie only 16th in the list of most widespread species, being absent from 10% of tetrads surveyed?

One interesting point to emerge from the project is the richness of the breeding bird community within the City of York. So far 74 species have been noted in possible breeding habitat within the city boundaries, 50 of which have been proved to breed with a further 18 probably breeding.

The less common species continue to throw up surprises. At the start of the Atlas no-one could have predicted that after two years Garganey would be recorded in more tetrads than Pochard or that Wood Warbler would prove to be more widespread than Grasshopper Warbler. Nuthatch and Hawfinch are seemingly more widespread than hitherto realised, probably reflecting a lack of fieldwork in woodland in recent years. Conversely Grasshopper Warbler and Whinchat are proving to be very scarce with breeding proved in only one tetrad for each species. Are we seeing the beginning of the demise of these species as breeding birds in the area or are they merely at a low point in their fortunes and destined to recover? The Atlas will provide an objective baseline from which to answer just such questions.

TIM DIXON

ORNITHOLOGICAL REVIEW OF 1983

1983 was surely the most spectacular year local ornithologists will ever see. Not only were more species recorded than ever before but there were also some spectacular breeding records. A total of 196 species and nine distinct sub-species were recorded during the year, once again a record number which seems unlikely ever to be exceeded. Six species were new to the area, these were a Whiskered Tern at Castle Howard, a Manx Shearwater at Stockton-on-the-Forest, a Barred Warbler at Anchor Plain, a Puffin at Fulford Ings, a White-rumped Sandpiper at Melbourne and an Arctic Skua at Wheldrake Ings. The number of species recorded in the area since 1966 now stands at 242.

The year opened with two female Long-tailed Ducks still gracing Stearsby Pond, they had arrived on 27th October 1982 and finally left on 4th May 1983. A Chiffchaff at Naburn and a Great Grey Shrike at Fulford heralded a quiet month which was further enlivened by a party of ten Whitefronts, two Red-breasted Mergansers, a Goshawk and a Merlin in the Derwent Ings. Gales in mid-month brought Buzzard, Kittiwake and Rock Pipit. It was the mildest January for over 60 years and Coot, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow and Mistle Thrush were all noted nest building. Among many singing birds reported was a Chiffchaff in the Derwent Ings.

February reminded us that winter still had a long way to run as gales and snow presaged a bitterly cold month. A Bittern and eleven Whitefronts arrived on the 2nd. Later a Black-throated Diver and three Little Auks were obviously storm-driven birds, as were a dead Kittiwake and an Iceland Gull. Further interest was provided by Goshawk and Merlin, and also by up to 25 Hawfinches at Scrayingham and over 3,000 Lapwings in the Derwent Ings.

Increasingly in recent years March has seen some interesting early passage waders in the Derwent Ings. 1983 produced Sanderling, K not, Grey Plover, Black and Bar-tailed Godwits, Ringed Plover, Whimbrel, Common Sandpiper and up to 17 Ruff, 3,550 Lapwing, 3,410 Golden Plover, 260 Snipe and 100 Redshank. Eight species of geese, including Bean and Brent, were present during the month with seven species together on the 5th. Other notable birds included two southern Cormorants, a Scandinavian Jackdaw, Bearded Tit, several Merlins, up to 46 Hawfinches and up to 20 Crossbills.

The wettest April for more than a century was also very cold, colder indeed than March. This contributed to a very late and protracted arrival of summer visitors with most species one or even two weeks later than normal. Interesting birds were seen, however, some of them attracted by flooding of the Derwent Ings in mid-month. They included Knot, Turnstone, Bar-tailed Godwit and a heavy Whimbrel passage. Raptors were represented by another Buzzard and several Marsh Harriers. Crane and Mediterranean Gull added quality. Passerines included Twite, Rock Pipit, Black Redstart, Ring Ouzel and large numbers of grounded Wheatears. Little Gull, Garganey and Ruddy Duck were not unexpected in late April and so gave little indication of the excitements soon to follow.

May continued cold and damp. A drake Mandarin got the month off to a good start with an unseasonally late Iceland Gull next day. The 2nd of May however was more notable for a record. passage of Arctic Terns through the Derwent Ings.

227 birds, displaced by the bad weather, were seen during the day. Buzzard and Twite soon followed. A fine collection of waders in a flooded arable field at Church Fenton awaited one fortunate observer on the 6th. They were a Dunlin, a Bar-tailed Godwit, three Grey Plovers and nine Dotterels. All in full summer plumage

and all in one binocular field of view! The next day brought Buzzard and Pied Flycatcher, but these were eclipsed by a drake Ring-necked Duck and a male Golden Oriole, both in the Lower Derwent. Interesting birds continued to arrive with Scaup, Honey Buzzard, Ospreys, Turnstone, Blue-headed Wagtail. By now, however, attention had turned to breeding birds which held promise of great excitement, sadly not all of it was fulfilled. A singing Corncrake rasped away for some time then left. A pair of Short-eared Owls attempted to breed but failed. A male Little Gull displayed and held territory in a Black-headed Gull colony; it paired with a first year female, but to no avail. If only an adult female had happened along. Pride of place however went to two delightful pairs of Black-necked Grebes. In view of their extreme secrecy and the rapidity with which they seemed to settle down to breed they may have been present for some time before they were discovered. Sadly they, too, apparently failed. Other species were destined to be more successful, although results in terms of young were not seen until later in the summer. During the month it became apparent that fourteen species of wildfowl were breeding in the Derwent Ings/Pocklington Canal. All of them were successful, including Ruddy Duck, Pintail, Garganey, Wigeon and Gadwall.

June was quiet but did produce a new bird for the area - a Whiskered Tern at Castle Howard. Two unusual records were a Fieldfare on the 28th and a male Long-tailed Duck feeding Teal-like in the mud around the Wheldrake pool. Common Terns made a half-hearted attempt to breed at the University and, as if to prove that the Lower Derwent holds no monopoly in breeding wildfowl, a female Red-crested Pochard with five ducklings was found near Malton. The drake was long gone but it may have been the bird found at Hornsea Mere around that time. The origins of the parents are inevitably clouded with uncertainty but there had been an influx of this species into northern England in November 1982, some of which are known to have stayed into spring 1983.

The hottest July for over forty years gave observers a chance to catch their breath before the anticipated autumn rarities. Interest was maintained by a Hobby and the start of the wader passage which included Grey Plover and up to 12 Green Sandpipers. Wader passage continued in August with several Wood Sandpipers and up to 17 Green Sandpipers. Raptors included Merlin, Goshawk and Buzzard. Late in the month two family parties of Quail were found. The first confirmed breeding in the area for over a decade.

September produced four new birds for the area. A Barred Warbler skulked in the depths of Anchor Plain only to betray its presence when it flew into a mist net. A Puffin must have been a remarkable sight as it whirred up the Ouse at Fulford Ings. A Manx Shearwater sitting by the side of the A64 at Stockton-on-the-Forest (hitch-hiking to Scarborough?) was even more surprising. A White-rumped Sandpiper at Melbourne brought the number of North American wader species recorded in the area to three. Raptors were represented by Osprey, Goshawk and Marsh and Hen Harriers. A Spotted Crake found Naburn Sewage Works to its liking and stayed for nine days. Other interesting birds included Scaup, Sandwich Tern and Bearded Tit. October opened with yet another Buzzard and a Sandwich Tern followed by a Peregrine and a party of Twite. Mid-month saw the last new bird for the area, an adult pale-phase Arctic Skua at Wheldrake Ings. An otherwise quiet month drew to a close with a Mandarin and another Little Auk.

A pleasantly warm and dry November opened with a Ring Ouzel in the Lower Derwent on the 2nd when two Bearded Tits and the last Swallows were also seen. The Ring Ouzel remained for several weeks. Other interesting birds followed - Bittern, Bonxie, Hooded Crow and a quite unexpected flock of 85 Common Scoters. On the 20th the Anchor Plain mist nets revealed another waif and stray; this time a splendid male Firecrest. How many vagrant passerines pass through the area undetected? Anchor Plain also produced the last interesting bird of the month in the form of a Great Grey Shrike.

Mist nets intercepted another unsuspected presence on the 3rd December when a Chiffchaff was caught in a Strensall garden. Interest then focused on the Derwent Ings with a Bittern seen on three occasions, a Little Gull and for the third consecutive year a Green-winged Teal. Wintering waders included Grey Plover, two Stints (probably Little) and a flock of 900 Dunlin. Boxing Day brought a memorable year to a close with 550 Pochard in the Lower Derwent and a Bittern on Strensall Common.

TIM DIXON

RINGING REPORT AND ANCHOR PLAIN REPORT

Ringing in the area has continued at a slightly reduced level compared with recent years. However, work at Anchor Plain, where over half the birds were ringed, continues to produce much of interest including this year two new ringed birds for the area - Barred Warbler and Firecrest. Interesting recoveries included relatively long movements for Blue Tit and Wren, a Linnet wintering in Spain. Movements linking Willow Warbler and Blackcap with France shed some light on the timing of spring migration. An Estonian-ringed Black-headed Gull trapped in a Selby garden reveals the origin of at least some of the many wintering Black-headed Gulls in the area. Long hours with telescope checking wing tags and colour rings on wintering gulls in the Derwent Ings has enabled T. Barker to produce much useful information on several species.

Anchor Plain Field Station and Nature Reserve Report

Although the position as far as acquiring the site has not changed, far more effort than ever before has been put into the scientific study of the reserve, covering many aspects of the natural history of Anchor Plain. Non-ornithological highlights have been first records of Purple Hairstreak and Clouded Yellow butterflies, several new species of uncommon moths and among several new dragonflies an extraordinary record of Britain's largest species, the Golden-ringed Dragonfly, 8.5cm long with a 10cm wing span.

Over the years much of the scrub area has developed into virtual jungle, becoming dense and impenetrable. This has adversely affected growth at ground level and rendered many of the ponds almost lifeless. This has resulted in reduced numbers of some breeding birds. Worst affected have been Reed Bunting, Sedge Warbler and Linnet and to a lesser extent Long-tailed Tit, Greenfinch and Bullfinch. A small area of Willow, Birch

and Hawthorn scrub has been coppiced in order to promote new growth. If this is successful additional areas will be similarly treated. Areas surrounding the ponds and willows within the ponds will also have to be dealt with if we are to retain the present aspects of the reserve.

Both the hide and the Heligoland trap proved to be of great value during the year, although the gales of December '83 and January '84 caused severe damage to both. The hide provided both height and cover in order to study the food preference of birds visiting a large rural bird table. Although the Heligoland trap proved disappointing as far as winter catches were concerned, it surpassed our expectations during the summer by catching eight Turtle Doves. This species is very difficult to catch using mist-nets and eight birds represents about 6% of the national annual catch of adult birds. The birds were all caught between 26th June and 17th July using racing pigeon food as bait. No more birds were caught after the 17th July, even though adults and young were present for several weeks afterwards. Mid-July is when most young hatch and it seems likely that at this time the adults switch from a diet of grain and weed seeds to one of the invertebrates, particularly caterpillars. (Pigeons and Doves of the World; Goodwin; 1980).

Warblers continue to form a high percentage of birds ringed (27.6%) at Anchor Plain. Willow Warbler accounted for 222 of the 397 warblers ringed in 1984. 570 Willow Warblers have now been ringed at Anchor Plain, more than any other species, Warbler or otherwise.

RINGED WARBLER/REGULUS TOTALS		
	1977-83	1983
Sedge Warbler	40	1
Reed Warbler	9	3
Barred Warbler	1	1
Lesser Whitethroat	67	27
Whitethroat	274	64
Garden Warbler	23	10
Blackcap	204	69
Chiffchaff	24	0
Willow Warbler	570	222
Goldcrest	86	34
Firecrest	1	1
TOTAL	1299	432

Two Jays showing characteristics of the grey backed continental race, *G.glandarius glandarius*, were ringed after the great October influx. The first on 30th October, the second on 27th December.

Four new species for Anchor Plain were ringed in 1983 - Lapwing, Whinchat, Barred Warbler and Firecrest. The Barred Warbler was the first for the area and only the fourth inland record for Yorkshire. The Firecrest was the second record for the area. The grand total of birds ringed is 5,026 of 60 species, the figures for 1983 being 1,435 of 51 species. Eight new species were seen - Great Crested Grebe, Pink-footed Goose, Goshawk, Hen Harrier, Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Tern and Twite. The total number of species recorded now stands at 134.

RURAL BIRD TABLE FEEDING SURVEY

During January through to the end of March a bird feeding survey was carried out using a large feeding table (an old door) sectioned off to enable different types of food to be offered in such a way as easily to determine the food preferences of any species feeding from or around (taking fallen food) the table.

The food supplied in continuous and abundant amounts were peanuts (PN) suspended in wire baskets above the table, wild bird seed (BS), apples (AP) and scraps (SC) containing bacon, fat, and bread all on the table, coconuts (CN) suspended beneath the table, bacon/fat (BP) secured to a post close to the table and grain/chaff (GG) on the ground away from the table but clearly visible from the hide. On nine occasions during the survey all visits to the feeding area during a half-hour period were recorded and food preferences noted. The total number of individual visits made to the feeding area during the 4.5 hours was a staggering 2,181 or one every 7.4 seconds. Extrapolating this rate produced a total of around 400,000 visits during the daylight hours of the three months when food was available and goes some way to explaining the three-quarters of a ton of food used to keep the bird table supplied.

The number of instances of birds taking particular foods was as follows:

	PN	BS	SC	AP	FF	CN	BP	GG	TOTALS
Blue Tit	437	129	49	8	3	31	30	3	698
Great Tit	418	122	77	2	0	54	8	3	684
Chaf finch		136	12	10	81			67	306
Blackbird		30	40	2	34			52	158
Robin		43	41	■	9			10	104
Dunnock		3	2		50			24	79
Willow Tit	38	4	11		4		7		64
Greenfinch	1	40	■					6	48
Coal Tit	20	■	6		4			2	34
Moorhen					■			7	8

Wren									2	■	3
Brambling										■	■
Linnet										■	■
Yellowham mer									1		1
TOTALS	314	508	243	23	187	85	46	177	2181		

Over one hundred visitors came to the reserve in 1983 including school children, evening class members, club members, field workers and visiting ringers. All contributed greatly to our 1983 results. Many thanks to all concerned.

Finally, special thanks are due to the owner of Anchor Plain, Mr. R. Piercy, for his continued permission for us to use the site.

RINGERS OPERATING IN THE Y.O.C. RECORDING AREA

Gordon Craine	A	St. Peters School
Roger Innes	A	Anchor Plain, Strensall Common
Pete Reid	A	Selby
Geoff Rogers	A	Stub Wood
Tim Dixon	C	Anchor Plain
Malcolm Paulson	C	Ryther
Richard Ward-Smith	C	Naburn, York University
Chris Wright	T	Training with Pete Reid
Jim Pewtress	H	Anchor Plain
James Pervis	H	Anchor Plain

Table of ringing recoveries omitted due to formatting issues

CLASSIFIED LIST

The sequence and scientific nomenclature used is that of Professor K.H.Voous, 1977, List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species. The three figures which follow the scientific name of many species indicate breeding status and refer to the number of tetrads in which breeding was considered possible, probable and confirmed respectively. The figures refer only to the 118 tetrads surveyed for the Atlas Project so far and not to all breeding records.

All records have been accepted by or submitted to the Y.N.U. or B.B.R.C. where applicable.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

One on a large goldfish pond at Bossall on 10th February remained to 14th when it was found dead. It now resides at the Yorkshire Museum. (TMC). Second record for the area.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 6, 4, 5

Bred at Pocklington Canal, Lower Derwent (six pairs), Riccall, Rosscarrs, Strensall Common (three pairs reared six young), Newburgh Priory, Castle Howard and Brandsby.

Outside the breeding season up to four regularly at Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and sporadically at Dringhouses Pond, Stearsby, Bishopthorpe, Acaster Malbis, Clifton Ings, Fulford Ings and Castle Howard. There was some evidence of passage through the Lower Derwent in late May and one at Anchor Plain on 22nd was presumably a migrant.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus* 1, 5, 7

More breeding records than ever before due to Atlas work and/or the large amount of spring flood water. Bred at Castle Howard (five pairs), Wiganthorpe Pond (two pairs), Pond Head (two pairs) and single pairs at Newburgh Priory, Welham Park, Sand Hutton, Dringhouses Pond, Heworth Pond, Selby, Church Fenton, North Howden and Foggathorpe. Flood water in Lower Derwent from mid-April attracted three pairs to one site, one pair of which laid eggs but failed, and seven birds to another site where a mating platform was built but birds left as water levels fell.

Outside the breeding season singles at Castle Howard and Dringhouses Pond in January and February with birds returning to breeding sites from early March. Ten at Castle Howard on 13th March increased to 29 on 26th with 19 on 2nd April indicating early spring passage. One at Fulford Ings on 16th April, three at Bolton Percy Ings on 2nd May. Two flew north at Anchor Plain on 24th July. The only post-breeding counts were two at Castle Howard on 17th September, five on 10th October and six on 16th, with two at Newburgh Priory on 30th November.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis* 0,0,1

Two pairs bred unsuccessfully in Lower Derwent. They were first seen displaying on 12th May. By 15th both pairs were holding territory with the males fighting fiercely. The females were sitting by the 16th. The birds then became extraordinarily elusive as emergent vegetation grew. They were last seen on the 21st. The cause of failure is not known (the nests were not approached) but was probably due to aggression by Coots. Several pairs

of Coots were nesting in close proximity and several fierce inter-specific aggressive encounters were noted.

Third record for the area and the first breeding record.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

An exhausted bird picked up at Stockton-on-the-Forest on 15th September, was later successfully released at the coast (per TED). First record for the area.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

An unusually large number of records. Singles in February circling over Selby on the 2nd and on Pocklington Canal on the 5th, after gales. Singles in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal on 6th March then almost daily from the 14th to 6th April with adults showing characteristics of the sub-species *P.c.sinensis* on 18th and 23rd March (TMC). Further singles there on 11th April when two were at Dringhouses Pond and on the 16th, 17th and 28th. In May one at Middlethorpe Ings on the 2nd and Naburn Sewage Works on the 4th. Two at Poppleton on the 5th, one in Lower Derwent next day with two on the 7th, five on the 17th and three on the 18th. One there on 18th June.

The only autumn record was of a second year bird at Castle Howard from 14th September to 15th October.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd February (TMC). Singles at Aughton on 4th November, Storwood on 11th December (GS) and Wheldrake Ings on 19th (per TED) and 22nd (DAR) probably refer to one individual. One at Strensall Common on 26th December (DW). A good showing. Seventh, eighth and ninth records for the area.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea* 34, 3, 1

The Lower Derwent heronry continues to increase slowly with 14 pairs this year. One pair bred at Yearsley - a new site. Mainly singles recorded in all months throughout the area, with the largest numbers coinciding with the emergence of juveniles from the heronries. Maxima were 23 at Wheldrake Ings on 25th June and 12 at Castle Howard on 5th August. Seven at Wharfe Ings on 11th December and ten there on 18th, when six were at Naburn, were unusually large winter concentrations.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor* 5, 6, 4

For breeding season records see page

Outside the breeding season very few records. In the first winter period up to six regularly in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and a pair intermittently at Dringhouses Pond. These latter birds may have been the same as two at Bishopthorpe on 5th March. At the year end regular in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with monthly maxima of two in August, one in September/October, five in November and 15 in December. One at Poppleton on 11th October was the only other record.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Number rather low in comparison with most recent years. Monthly maxima in Lower Derwent of 104 in January, 43 in February and 60 in March with 23 on 13th the last. First returning birds were 40 on 12th November (the maxima for that month) with 93 by year end.

Away from the Lower Derwent, six at Ryther on 2nd February and two at Naburn from 26th to 31st December.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

The injured bird which remained at Wheldrake Ings throughout 1981 and 1982 finally left in March 1983 having regained the power of flight in late 1982.

Monthly maxima in Lower Derwent were 41 in January, 19 in February and 31 in March. Nine on 3rd April and three on 6th were the last apart from an unusually short-necked adult with a rather pale bill which remained from 6th April to 19th May (TB, TED).

In autumn, three flew north at Elvington on 10th November, with three at Low Catton on 17th and seven at North Duffield Cams on 27th. Six at Castle Howard on 3rd December, four at Ryther on 10th, nine next day and 17 on 18th.

WHOOPEE/BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus cygnus/columbianus*

30 flew west over South Duffield on 12th February.

GREY GOOSE Sp *Anser Sp.*

100 west over Naburn on 20th January and 100 north-west at Poppleton on 8th March.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 5th March (TMC). Third record for the area.

PINK FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Up to eight regularly in Lower Derwent in January, up to three in February with two in March to 20th. 22 at Scrayingham for a week in early February were presumably from the Humber wintering flock. (per TED). One at Castle Howard on 12th February. One circling over Heworth on 1st August (SC) and seven north over Anchor Plain on 22nd October (RAJ).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

In Lower Derwent, one on 7th January, three first year birds from 29th January to 16th April with ten on 12th January, 11 on 2nd February, an adult on 5th March and four on 3rd April were probably all wild birds (TB, TED, TMC, DW et al).

Singles at University on 13th and 25th May (SC) and at Castle Howard on 12th June (TB) were presumably escapes.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

I, 12, 5

Bred at Castle Howard, North Howden Ponds and several sites in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. Probably bred at Bolton Percy.

Monthly maxima from the two main haunts at Castle Howard and Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal are shown below.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
C.H.	194	182	232	110	N/C	45	90	140	122	63	125	186
L.D./P.C.	180	193	130	40	18	22	37	111	95	63	180	173

The only other significant counts were 40 north-west over University on 25th January, 50 south over Hobmoor, York on 26th and 87 south-west over Scrayingham on 13th March (presumably heading for Lower Derwent).

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

O, 1, 0

The blue-phase bird which arrived in Lower Derwent on 1st December 1982 remained there until 6th March. It was at Castle Howard on 12th and 13th, back in the Lower Derwent from 18th to 20th, returning to Castle Howard from 26th to 30th April. It re-appeared at Castle Howard on 25th May paired with a Canada Goose and remained there to 10th September. (TW, DW).

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

6, 13, 12

Bred at Castle Howard, Stearsby, Wiganthorpe, Sand Hutton, Dringhouses, Heworth, York University and several sites in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. Probably bred at Bolton Percy.

Monthly maxima at Castle Howard and Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal are shown as follows.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
CHL	NC	68	71	30	NC	NC	62	76	230	141	127	47
LD/PC	250	230	120	62	30	NC	8	NC	65	NC	103	200

Significant counts elsewhere were 15 at Stearsby on 5th March, 85 at University on 23rd June, up to 60 regularly over Naburn Sewage Works in August (probably from University), 100 at University on 26th September, 22 north over Anchor Plain on 2nd October, 52 north-west over Appletree Village, York on 12th, 80 at Dringhouses Pond on 17th with 55 on 19th and 81 on 29th.

Two birds at Castle Howard from 13th November to year end were distinctly smaller than accompanying birds and may have been one of the several small migratory races. Nevertheless they were likely to have been escapes. (TB).

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

All records probably relate to escapes, see 1982 report.

Nine at Wheldrake Ings on 4th March. Next day one left Castle Howard southwards at 1300 hours, at 1327 hours one arrived at Wheldrake Ings from the north. It remained on the 6th but what was presumably the same bird was back at Castle Howard on 12th. Four at Wheldrake Ings from 5th to 15th June and at Castle Howard on 25th. One spent the evening of 29th August feeding with domestic geese in a Wheldrake farmyard and was very tame. Five at Wheldrake Ings on 13th, 15th and 17th November with four on 20th and 27th.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

An adult at Hagg Bridge on 15th March and at Wheldrake Ings on 18th and 19th (TB, TED, BGP, TMC et al) showed intermediate characters and could not be assigned to either of the palearctic sub-species.

Third record for the area.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

2, 19, 6

A good breeding season with one pair at York University and an estimated 32 pairs (possibly more) centered on the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. While most pairs were in the core of the area there were several peripheral pairs this year at Foggathorpe, Laytham, Brighton, North Howden, Ross Moor, Menthorpe and Crook Moor. Again the only nests found were in strawstacks and it seems likely that most pairs use such sites.

First returning birds were two in Lower Derwent on 4th January with monthly maxima of six on 29th January, 17 on 27th February and 49 on 13th March by which time most breeding birds had arrived. Some notable feeding concentrations were recorded in May when favourable conditions attracted a large proportion of the breeding birds - 18 at Bank Island and 22 at North Duffield Carrs on 14th, 46 at Ellerton on 21st and 64 at Aughton/Ellerton on 23rd. 18 were at Aughton on 15th June. By the end of June most adults had left and the young were creched. Most young had left by late July but one or two birds were seen to the year end. The first year that birds have been noted in every month.

Elsewhere birds were noted as follows: the University pair returned on 7th March, a pair at Kirkby Wharfe on 17th, four at Ryther on 25th April, 12 at Tollerton on 2nd May, one east near Fulford on 5th, three at Naburn on 12th. A pair at Newburgh on 13th November, one at Dringhouses Pond on 19th and five at Newburgh on 30th.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

0, 1, 1

Bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. At one site, one pair bred and three pairs probably bred. At another site one pair probably bred and another possibly did so.

Monthly maxima in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal of 3,500 on 23rd January, 4,500 on 27th February, 4,755 on 13th March, 1,200 on 14th April with 170 still present on 3rd May. After the breeding season birds arrived from late October with 350 on 30th, 3,600 on 17th November and 4,708 on 18th December.

Smaller numbers of ten or less in the autumn/winter at Castle Howard, Dringhouses Pond, Poppleton and Bishopthorpe.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

2, 2, 2

Bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. At one site two pairs bred and another probably bred. At a second site one pair bred. One pair probably bred at a third site. One or two outside the breeding season regularly in the early part of the year. Three on 25th September.

Elsewhere, three at Wharfe Ings on 5th February, one at Sand Hutton next day and two at Dringhouses Pond on 20th December.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

7, 10, 4

Appears to be declining as a breeding bird in the area. Observers are urged to submit all breeding season records. Bred as follows: 12 pairs in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, two pairs at Poppleton Ings and Bishopthorpe and one pair at Catterton. Monthly maxima in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal of 1,084 in January, 1,000 in February, 1,183 in March, 1,290 in April, 200 in September, 147 in October, 350 in November and 1,780 in December.

Elsewhere up to 250 in Wharfe Ings area in February and 209 at Wiganthorpe on 25th October. Up to 50 at Castle Howard, Stearsby, Newburgh and Fulford Ings.

A drake showing characteristics of the Nearctic sub-species, *A.c.carolinesis*, colloquially known as Green-winged Teal, at Wheldrake Ings on 17th December (TB).

Third record for the area.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

12,26,61

Winter numbers in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal were very low indeed with monthly maxima of 1,000 in January, 1,500 in February, 576 in March, 700 in September, 300 in October, 450 in November and 1,491 in December.

Other significant counts were 200 at Bishopthorpe on 8th January, 1,618 at Castle Howard on 16th, 200 at Wharfe Ings on 5th February with 68 at Castle Howard on 12th, 100+ at Newburgh in late July, 120 regularly at Dringhouses Pond from August to November, 585 at Castle Howard on 17th September, 120 at Newburgh on 27th, 959 at Castle Howard on 17th September, 110 at Acaster Malbis on 14th December and 132 (of which 128 were drakes) at Bishopthorpe on 23rd.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

1, 4, 1

An exceptional year for breeding records in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. At one site one pair bred (eight young) and two further pairs probably bred. One pair bred (three young) at a second site. One pair probably bred at a third site and single pairs possibly bred at two other sites, giving a total of two pairs proved, three pairs probably and two pairs possibly breeding.

Outside the breeding season monthly maxima in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal of 20 in January, 12 in February, 50 in March, singles in September and October, two in November and 40 in December.

The only other records came from Castle Howard in September with singles on 11th and 18th and two on 12th.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula* 1, 2, 2

An exceptional breeding season in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. At one site two pairs bred (rearing two and three young). One pair bred at a second site. Two pairs probably and one pair possibly bred at a third site. At two further sites single pairs probably and possibly bred. It is possible that one of the broods at the first site refers to the breeding pair at the second site where distraction display was regularly noted. The total of breeding pairs would then be two or three proved, three probably and two possibly breeding.

First record was a drake on 18th April and the last a female with three young on 26th July.

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*

A drake at Wheldrake Ings on 1st May (JB). In autumn drakes at Wheldrake Ings on 27th October and 12th November, at Castle Howard on 23rd November and shot (in error) at Haxby on 26th December. (DR, TB, DW per SC). Presumably the same bird involved in these autumn records. A female at Dringhouses Pond on 12th November and 7th, 10th, 23rd and 31st December. (DW). The pond was checked daily so the bird evidently spent most of its time elsewhere.

Published with the escape proviso. Fifth, sixth and seventh records for the area.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata* 2,11,4

A relatively good breeding year with perhaps 45 pairs in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. Probably bred near Skipwith Common. Winter counts in Lower Derwent were relatively low with 30 in January and February, 40 in March, 15 in September, 40 in October, 11 in November and nine in December. The only significant counts from elsewhere were 14 at Castle Howard on 10th September and 15 at Wigganhorpe Pond on 25th October.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina* 0,0,1

A female with five approximately ten day-old ducklings at Welham Pond on 12th June was totally unexpected (TB et al). The young were pure bred, four of the five fledged. The male parent was not seen, presumably having already left. It may have been the bird seen around the same time at Hornsea Mere, 29 miles E.S.E., and outside the recording area. While this record is published with the escape proviso it is significant that there had been an influx of this species into Yorkshire in the previous autumn.

Fourth record for the area and the first breeding record.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina* 1, 1, 2

One pair bred at Loftsom Bridge. Four pairs in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal throughout the breeding season but no young seen.

Winter numbers were low until year end. Larger counts were: 70 at Wheldrake, 27 at Dringhouses Pond and 73 at Castle Howard in January, 33 at Wharfe Ings and 30 at Wheldrake Ings in February. 50 at Wheldrake Ings and 20 at Castle Howard in March. 26 at Pond Head in November. 101 in Lower Derwent on 18th December increasing to 555 on 26th.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

A drake at Bank Island, Wheldrake on 7th May. (TB). Second record for the area.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula* 4, 15, 12

Bred at Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal (c. 10 pairs), Wiganthorpe (nine pairs), Strensall Common (two pairs), Pond Head (two pairs), Castle Howard, Newburgh, Brandsby, Stearsby, Welham and Kirkby Wharfe - a record year.

Monthly maxima in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal were 40 in January, 20 in February, 25 in March, 30 in April, 90 on 8th May; the only large year-end count was 120 on 26th December. 26 at Pond Head on 23rd January, 35 at Castle Howard on 5th March and 20 at Pond Head on 12th were the only other significant counts.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Two drakes at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd May (TB) and a duck at University from 26th to 29th September. (SC).

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

The two immature females at Stearsby which arrived in October 1982 remained to 4th May. A drake (first year or eclipse adult) at Wheldrake Ings on 10th and 13th June. (WH, TB). Third record for the area.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

One was brought exhausted to York University having been found at Holtby in early January. (per TED).

A remarkable party of 85 first winter birds arrived from the south-west at Castle Howard on 12th November, 74 of which left almost immediately. (DR).

Eighth and ninth records for the area.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Monthly maxima in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal were 20 in January, ten in February, 26 in March, 16 in April, two in May to 9th with one remaining until 14th, 11 in November and nine in December.

First autumn birds were two at Castle Howard on 29th October. Up to eight in both winter periods at Cawood, Bishopthorpe, Pond Head, Dringhouses Pond, Butterwick and Castle Howard.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

A pair at Wheldrake Ings on 19th January and a redhead at Castle Howard from 12th to 15th November. (TB, JP, DR).

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Up to five in Lower Derwent in January, four in February, seven in March, eight in April to 20th, with one on 18th May. Up to 20 at Castle Howard in January, 14 in February and 19 in March. First of the autumn was a redhead at Poppleton on 11th October, three in Lower Derwent on 16th, one there on 16th/17th November with up to seven in December. At Castle Howard up to eight in November and up to 15 in December.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis* O, O, 1

One pair reared one young in Lower Derwent. Two drakes and a duck arrived on 22nd April with a third drake next day. These birds remained to 23rd May when the unmated drakes left. A pair and one young were last seen on 10th June. One at Castle Howard on 18th September.

Fourth and fifth records for the area. First breeding record for the area and not entirely unexpected.

HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*

One at Bishop Wood on 9th May. (DW). Second record for the area.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Single females at Wheldrake Ings on 6th and 19th April. (DW, TB). A cream-crown flew south and a sub-adult male flew north there on 23rd (TB) with a cream-crown there next day. (per TED). A cream-crown at Crockey Hill on 7th September.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

A poor showing this year. Single ringtails south at Hemingbrough on 8th April (per TED), north at North Duffield on 16th and at Wheldrake Ings on 6th May. (per TED). A ringtail at Anchor Plain on 25th September (RAI) and a male near Huby on 13th November. (TB, DW).

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis* 2, 1, 0

Single immatures at Wheldrake Ings on 12th January (TMC) and Elvington on 14th February. (TB). A displaying male on 8th April, another male on 9th April (localities and observers withheld). One east over Anchor Plain on 7th August (EBB, TED, RAI) and an immature at Newburgh on 27th September. (JP).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus* 42, 15, 23

Surprisingly this species continues to increase with many records throughout the area. It has now been recorded in 68% of tetrads surveyed. The species is now well established as a breeding bird in York suburbs and may often be seen over the city. Birds bred very early this year, no doubt influenced by the mild winter; a pair was displaying at Askham Bog on 1st January. An interesting record of five flying together over fields at Storwood on 9th February.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

The best showing ever with singles at Stearsby Hagg on 18th January (PH, DW), Newburgh on 16th April (JP), north over York on 4th May (per TED), Brandsby Dale on 7th May (PH), at Butterwick on 19th June and 23rd July (IC, JK), Starwood on 13th August (TB), Dalby Carr on 1st October (PH), two south-east over Butterwick on 20th (IC, JK) and one at Fulford Golf Course on 6th December. (JHL).

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 18th and another on 24th, 25th and 27th May (HOB, CDRJ), one at Castle Howard on 22nd May. (per TED), One adult at Castle Howard on 3rd to 5th September. (PH).

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus* 57, 18, 21

Proved breeding records from Langwith, Storwood, Wheldrake, Bielby, North Duffield, Acaster Airfield, Acaster Wood, Naburn, Fulford, Acomb, Hobmoor (York), Millfield Lane (York), York Minster, Poppleton Ings, Kirkham Gorge, Coxwold, Newburgh and Oulston. These records are only a sample of the true population but indicate its continued health. Considered to be common throughout SE57 and SE67. (PH). However, records at Anchor Plain are decreasing. (RA).

Up to seven in Lower Derwent during winter months.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Singles at Brighton on 16th January, Acaster Malbis on 25th, Anchor Plain on 13th February. An obvious spring passage with further singles at Wheldrake Ings on 26th March, Stearsby on 27th, Snargate Beck on 29th and Bielby on 4th April.

A male and an immature at Slingsby on 5th August were very early. Further records of singles at Moreby Hall on 15th September, Naburn on 15th October, Slingsby on 30th November, Thorpe Willoughby on 4th December and Naburn Sewage Works on 27th.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

One flew east at North Duffield on 26th July. (TED).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

An adult male on 2nd and 9th June. (Locality and observers names withheld). One at North Duffield on 8th October made an unsuccessful stoop at a Wood Pigeon flock, then flew north. (TED).

Fourth and fifth record for the area.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa* 7, 44, 29

Common throughout the area. Largest coveys were 17 at Hagg Bridge on 18th January, 14 at Brandsby on 2nd October, 25 at Strensall Common on 13th November and 26 at Ellerton on 24th.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix* 13, 26, 30

Continues to decline. While it has been recorded from 5896 of tetrads its density is now very low in many parts of the area. The only coveys reported were ten at Poppleton on 3rd October, 18 there on 1st November, 16 at Dunnington Common on 14th and 16 near Strensall on 30th.

The "montana" morph recorded in 1982 was present at Hagg Bridge until 5th January. (TB).

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix* 9, 4, 1

The best year ever saw this species continuing its recent resurgence. A pair with four young at Holtby on 25th August (per DB). A pair with seven young near Wheldrake Ings on 21st August where one or two males were calling from 16th July (TB, DW). One calling near Brighton on 19th July (JB). Up to three at Hagg Bridge from 3rd June to 22nd September (TB et al). A singing male at Cawood on 24th July (DB) with further birds calling from the Lower Ouse area from 19th July to late August as follows: one near Turnham Hall (Selby), one at Selby Common and four at Barlow Grange (GDF). One at Bielby on 27th August (PD). An adult female shot at Storwood on 6th September (TB).

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus* 24, 35, 45

Common and widespread throughout the area. No significant counts this year. A totally melanistic male at Skipwith on 27th February.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus* 2, 4, 0

Bred on Pocklington Canal where an adult with five chicks was seen on 21st July (TB). Probably bred on Fulford Ings.

Present at Naburn Sewage Works and Fulford Ings regularly at both ends of the year. Elsewhere, singles at Bank Island on 20th February, Wheldrake Ings on 18th March, Strensall Common on 30th April, South Duffield Ings and Wheldrake Ings on 15th May, Wheldrake Ings on 23rd August and Bielby on 23rd October.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

An immature at Naburn Sewage Works from 12th to 20th September (JG et al). Second record for the area.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex* 1, 0, 0

One calling near Nunnington in mid-May (PH).

A widespread breeding species. Anchor Plain had its best year ever with 12 pairs.

Larger counts were 19 at Acaster Malbis on 30th January, 40 at Elvington on 28th February, 37 at Anchor Plain on 22nd May with 41 there on 5th June declining (presumably due to predation and dispersal) to 20 on 24th July. 30 at Sand Hutton on 25th November.

COOT *Fulica atra* 5,13,38

Bred at many places throughout the area. The mild weather encouraged a pair to display and build a nest at Cawood on 13th January. Late flooding in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal induced at least 80 pairs to breed, up to 350 were present in mid-May (passage birds?). The only other counts were six pairs at Dringhouses Pond and two pairs at Anchor Plain (the first ever).

The mild winter weather produced only small flock counts with 32 at Dringhouses Pond on 20th February, 170 at Wheldrake Ings on 26th March, 37 at Castle Howard on 9th October, 127 at Thicket Priory (Thorganby) on 27th December and 36 at Dringhouses Pond on 31st.

CRANE *Grus grus*

An immature flew north at Ellerton on 19th April (TB). Third record for the area.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus* 4, 17, 4

At least nine pairs bred in the Derwent Ings/Pocklington Canal area. Probably bred on the Wharfe at Wharfe Ings and Ryther. Present in the breeding season on the Rye at Butterwick.

Two at Spaldington Common on 23rd January were the earliest ever with one at Wheldrake next day and on 21st February. One over York in darkness on 1st March with three at Wheldrake Ings on 6th heralding the spring arrival. Birds present at breeding sites regularly thereafter until the departure in early July.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius* 1,4,2

Single pairs bred at Colton and Brighton Airfield.

First returning birds were a pair at Aughton on 4th April with five in Lower Derwent on 16th heralding a small spring passage there of 16 bird days in April and ten bird days in May to 25th. Elsewhere two at Church Fenton on 6th May and one at Naburn Sewage Works on 14th.

Autumn passage was confined to the Lower Derwent /Pocklington Canal and started early, presumably due to failed breeders. 24 bird days in June from 14th, 31 bird days in July (max. eight on 11th) and 53 bird days in August to 31st.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

All records from Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. Singles in March on 20th, 28th and 29th. 22 bird days in April, maximum nine on 17th. In May, four on 1st, two on 23rd and 25th and six on 28th. Singles on 1st, 24th and 29th July and on 27th and 24th August with two on 21st.

DOTTEREL *Charadrius marinellus*

Nine were in a flooded field at Church Fenton on 6th May in company with three Grey Plovers, a Bar-tailed Godwit and a Dunlin; all the waders were in full summer plumage (DW).

Fourth record for the area.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

The usual high numbers in the Lower Derwent with 2,200 on 3rd January, 1,500 on 16th declining to 500 by late February. A rapid increase in March from 900 on 4th to 2,060 on 12th, 2,984 on 13th and 3,800 on 20th (the highest number yet recorded) declining rapidly to 450 on 2nd April. Passage flocks comprising mainly the northern *P.a. altifrons*, then moved through with 875 on 11th, 600 on 14th and 16th and 1,500 on 17th declining to 70 on 26th with one on 19th May the last. Elsewhere, in the first winter period, flocks of 65 to 300 at Moor Monkton Moor, Wharfe Ings, High and Low Catton, Butterwick, Slingsby, Acaster Malbis and Wistow Lordship.

First returning birds were three in the Lower Derwent on 30th June with 85 on 14th July, then sporadic counts of up to 20 until 190 on 29th September, 200 on 21st October, 1,000 on 27th November and 18th December as monthly maxima. Away from Lower Derwent significant counts were 200 at Selby Common on 11th August, 350 at Brind on 9th September, 140 at High Catton on 15th October with 280 at Acaster Airfield on 16th. 1,000 at Acaster Malbis on 22nd December, 200 at Gate Helmsley on 30th and 2,000 at Acaster Malbis on 31st. 200 at Butterwick through December. D.W. considers that winter numbers are declining in the Lower Ouse valley, possibly due to changing farming practices. Certainly numbers were rather low this year.

A bird with white primaries and outer secondaries at Acaster Airfield on 16th October and Acaster Malbis on 31st December.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Two at Wheldrake Ings on 14th March, three at Church Fenton on 6th May and singles at Wheldrake Ings on 17th December and North Duffield Carrs and Wharfe Ings next day.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus* 16, 45, 41

The usual large numbers in the Lower Derwent with monthly maxima of 3,000 regularly in January, 3,000+ on 27th February, 2,550 on 13th March. Flocks dispersed rapidly in early April.

Post breeding flocks appeared from 6th June with 931 on 22nd June and 1,500 on 16th July with 2,500 at Melbourne on 21st. No significant counts in August or September but small parties flew south all day on 14th September. Maxima at year end were 500 on 21st October, 1,320 on 27th November and 2,927 on 18th December. The February, March and July counts are the largest yet recorded for these months (excluding the unprecedented fall in March 1980).

Significant counts elsewhere included 1,000 at Acaster Malbis on 2nd January, 600 at Moor Monkton Moor on 3rd, 500 at Spaldington on 22nd, 500 at Bishopthorpe on 5th November, 460 west at Anchor Plain on 13th, 465 west on 27th and 350 west on 11th December, 500 at Bishopthorpe on 28th.

Breeding counts were, c.190 pairs in Lower Derwent between Wressle and Elvington, at least 54 pairs on Pocklington Canal between Thornton Bridge and Hagg Bridge, 35 pairs between Newton Mask and Scoreby and 20 pairs along the Derwent at Scrayingham.

KNOT *Calidris canuta*

Three flew south at Aughton on 13th March. 15 paused briefly at Wheldrake Ings on 13th April and then departed north-west (DW).

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Singles at Bubwith on 4th March (TED) and Wheldrake Ings on 6th (TB) presumably refer to the same bird. On both occasions it was feeding with Snipe.

Fourth record for the area and the first in March.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

A good year for this species. Three at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September with one next day (per TED), one at Brighton Airfield on 17th (JB) and one south at Wheldrake Ings next day (TED, EBB). Additionally, two Stints at North Duffield Carrs on 18th December were probably this species (EBB).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis*

A juvenile at Melbourne on 26th September (TB, TED). First record for the area.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

All significant counts from Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with monthly maxima of 375 on 3rd January, 20 on 27th February, 200 on 19th and 25th March, 150 on 3rd April with 100 still present on 26th, 30 on 2nd May with two on 31st the last. Two of the birds on 2nd May were of the British breeding race *C.a.schinzii* (DB). First returning bird was a single on 24th June. One or two regularly in July (15 bird days), up to four in August (17 bird days), up to six in September (10 bird days), singles on 3rd and 25th October with six on 30th, three on 12th November with one on 17th. A sudden return on 11th December when 84 then 354 on 18th and an unprecedented 900 at North Duffield Ings on 26th (TED, EBB).

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax* 0, 4, 0

All records from Lower Derwent.

In January, singles on 3rd and 15th with four on 29th. Two on 20th February. An early return with 17 on 7th March with birds present regularly thereafter to end April. Probably around 40 birds present in mid/late April with lekking noted at two sites. Breeding is thought not to have occurred, probably due to the very wet spring. One or two present thereafter to early July. Autumn passage was light with 18 bird days between 25th July and 10th August, maximum three on 2nd August.

First returning wintering birds were four on 17th December with 13 next day, four on 21st and one on 27th.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 7th January and Naburn Marsh on 12th, two at Wheldrake Ings on 20th with four there on 23rd and singles on 8th and 12th February. Late April records are becoming regular in Lower Derwent, this year singles were at Aughton on 25th and Wheldrake Ings and North Duffield Carrs on 27th.

First returning birds were two at Ellerton on 29th September then singles at Hagg Bridge on 3rd and 10th November, Bielby on 20th and Bank Island on 27th. Up to three at Fulford Ings from 15th November to 18th December (12 bird days).

Winter numbers were generally unremarkable, spring passage was relatively heavy however.

20 at Wheldrake Ings on 30th January, 65 there on 9th February. 19 were on a small ornamental garden pond at Elvington on 19th February. 85 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th March, 123 in Lower Derwent on 13th, a total of 260 at three sites in Lower Derwent on 20th, 180 at Wheldrake Ings on 27th, 200 at Aughton on 6th April and 90 at Wheldrake Ings on 13th. These counts are obviously only small samples of the true numbers present. One can only speculate at the true numbers present that might be revealed by co-ordinated counts of the Lower Derwent in early spring, but several thousand birds are probably present.

A large number of drumming birds were reported this year: Lower Derwent (c. 100 drummers), Pocklington Canal 22, Newton Mask 5, Northland Ings 6, Kexby area 7, Buttercrambe 1, Scrayingham area 12, Brighton Airfield 5, Howden Ponds 8, Rossmoor 2, Laytham 2, Clifton Ings 1, Naburn Marsh 5, Middlethorpe Meadows 3, Bishopthorpe Ings 1, Bolton Percy Ings to Wharfe Ings 11, Kirkby Wharfe 1, Strensall Common 9 and Newburgh 1. Giving a total of 200 drumming birds. The wet spring leading to grasslands being much damper than usual may have induced more birds than normal to attempt breeding.

Post breeding counts were, 60 at Melbourne on 21st July, 35 at Wheldrake Ings on 30th August, 76 there on 3rd October and 55 at Hagg Bridge on 10th November. Up to 50 at Fulford Ings in November and up to 95 in December.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

4, 24, 6

Breeding proved at Bishop Wood, Maidensworth, Colton, Hovingham and Acaster Wood. Breeding season records, mainly of roding birds, from a further 15 sites.

Winter records away from breeding sites were rather few and mainly from Anchor Plain (eight bird days), also at University, Kexby Common, Wheldrake Ings, Hagg Bridge, Poppleton Ings and Poppleton Village where there were five on 26th December.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

All records from Lower Derwent. First birds were singles on 18th and 29th March. Present from 4th to 25th April (64 bird days), maximum 15 on 21st. Singles on 4th May, 3rd June and 18th to 21st June were all adults with an additional first summer bird on 19th June.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

The best showing ever. 25 flew north at Wheldrake Ings on 14th March (DW), singles at North Duffield Carrs on 29th April (TED), Anchor Plain on 1st May (north) (RAI), Church Fenton on 6th (DW), Ellerton on 18th June (GS) and Wheldrake Ings on 24th July (TB).

Tenth to fifteenth records for the area.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

One at Starwood on 26th March (GS) was the earliest ever and heralded the best spring passage on record. One north at Anchor Plain on 10th April, a concentrated passage in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal between 21st and 29th (60 bird days), maxima 15 on 24th and 22 on 28th. Singles in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal in May on 2nd, 4th and 11th with two on 14th. One north at Bishop Wood on 5th May.

One in Lower Derwent on 27th June, four on 10th July, one on 11th, four on 13th, singles on 14th, 24th and 31st. One west at Skipwith on 15th August, singles in Lower Derwent on 17th and 18th with two on 26th, one on 19th September was the last.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

16, 38, 23

First returning birds were singles at Wharfe Ings on 2nd February and Poppleton on 11th. Birds returned to Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and 26th and passage flocks were then noted until late April with eight on 4th March, 32 on 6th and 13th, 33 on 14th, 120 on 20th, 87 on 26th, 30 on 18th, 30 on 2nd April, 88 on 3rd, 22 on 8th, 49 on 9th, 19 on 11th, 22 on 17th and 14 on 28th the last. Spring passage flocks totaling 600 bird days in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. The first birds reached the north of the area at Butterwick on 14th March.

Bred at usual sites, see previous reports, with sample counts of 35 pairs in Lower Derwent, 21 pairs along Pocklington Canal and nine pairs between Newton and Scrayingham on the Derwent. New sites this year were Sutton-on-Forest and Ross Moor. Two pairs bred at Butterwick and have done so for several years.

First post breeding flocks were 50 in Lower Derwent on 27th June, 46 and 12 west on 28th, 36 on 29th and 28 on 30th. Thereafter autumn passage in Lower Derwent was very light, presumably reflecting a poor breeding

season. 48 bird days in July, maxima 18 on 4th and 21 on 10th. 56 bird days in August, maxima 11 on 3rd and 14 on 17th. Three on 4th September. Elsewhere small numbers flew south at Butterwick almost daily from 3rd to 17th July, three west at Anchor Plain on 20th July and one at Poppleton on 22nd September. One south at Cawood on 11th November and one in Lower Derwent next day and from 19th December to year end.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

A rather poor year. One at Elvington Airfield on 7th/8th April, three at Ryther on 24th were at Wharfe Ings next day. One at Wheldrake Ings on 20th May.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus* 7, 17, 12

First was at Acaster Malbis on 2nd January with 38 at Aughton next day, one at Naburn Marsh on 10th and in Lower Derwent on 22nd and 24th where there were three on 26th March and four on 29th. In February, one in Lower Derwent on 2nd, two on 15th, nine on 17th and 12 on 20th. Present regularly in Lower Derwent from 6th March with larger counts of 32 on 13th and 100 on 20th, 35 on 1st April, 40 on 6th, 50 on 9th with 25 on 30th the last flock noted.

Some breeding counts were, c.90 pairs in Lower Derwent, Pocklington Canal (ten pairs), Kexby to Scoreby (four), Northland Ings (four), Clifton Ings (one), Middlethorpe Meadows (two), Bishopthorpe (one), Naburn Marsh (four), Naburn Sewage Works (one), Bolton Percy Ings to Wharfe Ings (ten), Brighton Airfield (one) and Langwith/Elvington Airfield (five). New sites were North Ross (two pairs) and Spaldington (one). This latter site was subsequently underdrained and "improved" for agriculture. First post breeding flocks in Lower Derwent of 17 on 14th June was early and presumably was of local failed breeders, then 19 on 15th, seven on 18th, 24 on 23rd and 19 on 26th. In July larger flocks were 25 on 10th, 26 on 14th, 42 on 16th and 30 (Pocklington Canal) on 24th. A total of 163 bird days in July to 31st. The only other autumn bird was a single on 16th August.

First incoming wintering bird was at University on 25th November followed by one in Lower Derwent on 11th December with eight next day. One at Naburn Marsh on 21st, eight in Lower Derwent next day with five on 26th and one on 29th.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

An average year. In Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal singles on 15th, 22nd, 29th April. In May one on 2nd and 14th with two on 20th and singles on 20th, 21st, 23rd and 27th and 5th June.

In autumn, present daily from 22nd June to 12th July (31 bird days) maximum five on 6th July. Then singles on 24th, 4th August, 13th, two from 15th to 17th, six on 18th, one on 19th, two on 21st and one on 14th September.

Elsewhere singles at Wigganthorpe Pond on 2nd May, Cawood on 25th June, Strensall Common on 7th August and Elvington on 13th September.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

More than usual in first winter period with singles at Bielby, Butterwick, Clifton Ings, Melbourne and Stockton-on-Forest in January and at Acaster Malbis, Barmby Moor and Melbourne in February. No March or May records and only one in April at Poppleton on 30th. The worst spring passage ever. Autumn passage was conversely the heaviest on record mainly in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal where seen as follows: daily in June from 15th to 30th (22 bird days) maximum five at Wheldrake Ings on 24th. Almost daily in July (101 bird days) with maxima seven at Wheldrake Ings on 11th and 12 at Melbourne on 27th with 11 on 28th/29th. Almost daily in August (127 bird days) with maxima 15 at Melbourne on 1st and 15th, 17 on 16th, 15 on 17th and 11 on 18th. Present on eight days to 21st in September (19 bird days) with maximum eight on 9th. Two on 30th October, one on 8th November and two on 30th.

Elsewhere one or two in late July/August at Strensall Common, Castle Howard, Naburn Sewage Works, Wigganthorpe Pond, Poppleton and Elvington.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

One near Sherburn-in-Elmet on 13th April (DB). Two at Melbourne from 15th to 17th August with one from 18th to 20th (TB).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos* 3, 2, 0

First was one at Stearsby on 27th and 29th March (PH). Singles in Lower Derwent on seven days in April from 9th, one or two on seven days in May to 23rd (nine bird days). Elsewhere one or two at Poppleton, Middlethorpe, Red House Reservoir, Newburgh, Stamford Bridge, Cawood and Naburn Sewage Works in April and May. A pair at Hagg Bridge on 10th June was interesting, birds are suspected of having bred on the Pocklington Canal in several recent years.

In autumn birds were mainly confined to Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with singles from 24th to 30th June. One or two on five days in July (six bird days), singles on 18 days in August and one on seven days in September to 13th. Elsewhere two at Welham Park on 30th June, singles at Sand Hutton on 2nd July, Cawood on 17th, Red House Reservoir on 16th August, Cawood on 21st and a long staying individual at Naburn Sewage Works from 25th to 16th September.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd April (TB) and two at North Duffield Carrs on 14th May with a single there on 16th (TED, EBB).

Ninth to eleventh records for the area.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

A light phase adult flew south at Wheldrake Ings on 21st October (TB). First record for the area.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

One flew east over University on 14th November (JHL). Second record for the area.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

A first summer bird at Wheldrake Ings on 25th April (TB). Fifth record for the area.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

All records from Lower Derwent. An adult on 22nd April. An adult male arrived on 14th May, it was joined by a first summer female on 18th whereupon they both took up residence in a Black-headed Gull colony. The male displayed and held territory until 11th June. The female remained until 13th July. If only they had both been adults! A further first summer bird was present on 15th June. A first winter bird was at the Wheldrake Ings Gull roost on 24th December.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus* 16,0,5

Bred at Skipwith Common (400 pairs), Lower Derwent (250 pairs) and at Strensall Common where 48 pairs reared 87 young at one site and 18 young were reared at a second site.

1,200 at Acaster Malbis on 1st January, the same number at Ellerton Tip on 10th, 9,050 at the Wheldrake Ings roost on 23rd declined to 3,500 by month end. 600 at Ellerton Tip on 8th February declined to 300 by 17th. Roosting birds at Dringhouses Pond in the first three months peaked to 800 on 10th February. 27,000 at the Wheldrake roost on 13th March declined to 10,881 on 19th and 2,500 on 4th April. 1000 roosting birds at Ellerton on 29th April.

Up to 300 non-breeding birds at Naburn Sewage Works through summer months. 53 juveniles at Wheldrake logs on 24th July increased to 116 on 28th and 185 on 17th August. The only other significant count was 1,100 at Acaster Malbis on 18th December.

A leucistic adult with creamy white plumage, greyish ear coverts and normal bare parts was at the Wheldrake roost on five dates between 27th March and 14th April (DW, TED, EBB). What was thought to be the same bird was at Fulford Ings on 28th December (DW).

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

350 at Ellerton Tip on 15th January, 944 at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd with 800 on 30th. 2,000 at Ellerton on 17th February with up to 300 at Ellerton Tip throughout February. 500 at Spaldington on 7th March, 5,000+ at Wheldrake logs on 12th with 3,000 next day and 1,209 on 19th. A pair were displaying and copulating at Newburgh on 31st. 1,500 at Wheldrake Ings on 11th April, 344 at Castle Howard on 13th and 240 at Nunnington on 22nd the last spring flock.

As usual no significant records in May but single figure counts of first summer birds moving through in June to mid-July and second summer and adults in larger numbers in late July and August, maxima 200 east at Castle Howard on 5th August, 300 south-east over Strensall Common on 7th and 200 at Nunnington on 18th. Only low counts until year end with 100 at University on 29th and 30th December.

An adult at Ellerton Tip on 17th February had very dark mantle, unstreaked head and orange legs (TED, EBB).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Fourteen records of one to three birds, almost exclusively adults, throughout the area during January and February (16 bird days). More records all of adults in March (maximum seven on 27th, 30 bird days) and April (maximum 13 on 2nd and 3rd, 68 bird days) mainly in Lower Derwent. From May to July many records of first and second year birds (very few adults) mainly at Ellerton Tip with numbers increasing steadily from four on 2nd May, 20 on 22nd, 66 on 24th, 125 on 3rd June, 185 on 8th, 280 on 15th, 360 on 16th and a maximum of 470 on 17th. Numbers then declined steadily with 350 on 21st, 230 on 22nd, 160 on 23rd, 140 on 28th, 120 on 6th July, 70 on 14th with 30 on 24th the last. Adults returned in August with 22 at Anchor Plain on 10th, 70 at Ellerton Tip on 17th increased steadily to 180 by 31st, 195 on 21st September and 320 on 30th. Elsewhere in September, 70 at Brind on 9th, 150 at Spaldington on 11th and 120 at Brind on 23rd. In October 54 north over Anchor Plain on 2nd, 170 adults at Ellerton Tip on 4th and 12 at Askham Bog Tip on 17th. Thereafter a few records of one or two adults at various sites to year end.

An adult flying over Castle Howard lake on 12th September had the tail of a large fish protruding from its mouth.

More records of the northern sub-species, *L.f.intermedius*, this year. Three in the Lower Derwent on 19th March with singles on 27th, 28th, 29th, 1st April, 25th April and 17th June (TB, TED, DW) and one south at Naburn Sewage Works on 27th December (JG).

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Very few records received. Up to 55 at the Wheldrake Ings roosts and up to 51 at Ellerton Tip in January. Similarly up to 78 and 65 respectively in February. Thereafter only single figure counts until 15 at Strensall on 30th November and up to 80 at the Wheldrake roost in December. A pair were copulating at Wheldrake Ings on 28th April.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*

A first winter bird at Ellerton Tip on 24th February (TB). A first summer bird at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd May (JP) and at Ellerton Tip next day (TB) was very late.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Rather few records received. Up to 26 at the Wheldrake Ings roost and 90 at Ellerton Tip during January. Similarly up to 36 and 115 respectively in February. Thereafter apart from 20 immatures at Ellerton Tip on 23rd May only sporadic single figure counts until December when up to 230 at the Wheldrake roost.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

A second winter bird at Dringhouses Pond bathed for a few minutes then departed south-west on 18th January (DW). A first winter bird found dead at Bank Island, Wheldrake on 20th February (TB).

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Two adults at Castle Howard lake on 10th September (TB, DW) and one at Wheldrake Ings on 1st October (per TED).

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

A good year. In spring, nine at Wheldrake Ings on 27th April. 16 flew north at Anchor Plain on 1st May when one was at Wheldrake Ings. Thereafter in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal two on 3rd May and singles on 7th, 14th, 15th, 23rd, 24th, 4th and 6th June, three on 18th and one on 10th July. One flew north at Cawood on 27th June.

Four birds arrived at University lake on 2nd June and remained to 5th with three on 6th and one to 10th. During this time a pair was seen displaying and fish passing and were apparently holding territory on a flat, gravel covered roof.

In autumn an immature at Castle Howard on 10th September with two adults on 11th and one adult on 12th. An adult at Red House Reservoir on 11th and three immatures at Wheldrake Ings on 15th.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Singles at Wheldrake Ings and Wharfe Ings on 1st May gave no indication of what was to come. On 2nd May a massive displacement of Arctic Tern occurred through the Midlands and north of England, five were at Newburgh, 34 flew north at Wharfe Ings and 227 flew east at Wheldrake Ings, the highest daily total on record. Thereafter in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, seven on 3rd, ten on 7th, 11 on 8th, three on 9th (when one was at Castle Howard), one on 13th, five on 15th, singles on 17th, 19th and 22nd with two on 24th. Two north at Naburn Sewage Works on 4th June, one at Castle Howard on 7th, two south at Fulford Ings on 24th. One at Wheldrake Ings on 19th July, an immature at Dringhouses Pond on 9th August. An adult at Castle Howard on 11th/12th September with an immature also on 11th. One at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd October was the last.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

One at Wharfe Ings on 1st May with two south-east at Wheldrake Ings on 13th and four north there on 15th. Two north near Sherburn-in-Elmet on 14th June, four at Wheldrake Ings on 18th and three north-east there on 2nd July.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 26th April (TB, TED).

Fifth record for the area, all since 1979 and four of the five records at Wheldrake Ings in spring.

WHISKERED TERN *Chlidonias hybridus*

A first summer bird at Castle Howard on 4th June (DW). First record for the area.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

A good year. Five flew north at Aughton on 26th April to join another bird at Wheldrake Ings. One at Dringhouses Pond next day. In Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal two on 3rd May, at least 16 on 6th, one on 14th, at least five on 15th, three on 16th and one on 19th. Singles at Castle Howard on 21st and 23rd. Three at Starwood on 18th June were the last.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

20, 50, 27

Widely distributed as a breeding bird, particularly in the south of the area.

Double figure counts were 20 at Bubwith on 22nd January, 26 at Ryther on 24th, ten at Castle Howard on 31st, 16 at Church Fenton on 24th April, 24 at Ryther on 2nd May, 25 at Bubwith on 20th October, 22 near Aughton on 6th November, 22 at Poppleton on 21st, 35 at Lilling Green, Strensall on 30th and 24 at Acaster Airfield on 15th December.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

9,38,70

600 at Earswick and 500 at Elvington regularly in January/February. 900 flew south at North Duffield on 18th January with 2,052 at Bubwith on 22nd. 850 at Deighton on 12th February, 2,000 at Starwood on 13th, 350 at Ellerton on 17th, 300 at Bubwith on 20th and 1,000 at Hagg Bridge on 26th. 250 at Bubwith on 9th April.

480 at Stearsby on 27th November, 200 at Strensall on 30th. 700 at Brind on 7th December, 1,000 at Acaster Selby on 10th, 400 at Poppleton on 12th. A very large movement at Newburgh on 14th when 4,100+ flew west in a strong south-westerly in a 50 minute count. Many more were involved as the movement started well before counting started (JP). 520 flew south at Anchor Plain on 18th, 2,000 at Brind on 24th and 2,063 at Bubwith on 26th.

A bird at Church Fenton on 7th May had breast and tail slightly paler than normal, all other parts being white (DW). A bird at Hagg Bridge on 3rd June and 9th September had primaries and tail white (TB).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

17, 47, 26

Fewer roost counts received this year. 50 came in to feed at University every morning from 1st to 11th January. 50 at Selby on 10th, 29 at Poppleton on 20th. Up to 70 at North Duffield from January to mid-March. Up to 55 at Wheldrake during February/March. 30 at Windmill Lane, Heslington on 8th September. 503 at the Selby BOCM roost on 17th December was the largest count ever recorded in the area (per TED). 37 at Aughton on 27th.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

11, 53, 17

First was at Elvington Airfield on 22nd April (TB) with singles at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd and Brighton Airfield on 24th, three at Bubwith on 25th, one at Aughton on 26th with further birds at Storwood, Eastrington and Naburn Sewage Works

·before the major arrival on 8th May when at least 50 birds, mainly males, were in the Lower Derwent.

16 birds were at Anchor Plain on 7th August with nine on 6th September. Most birds had left by early September but more birds were present in late September than usual with one at North Duffield Carrs and two at Castle Howard on 18th and singles at Spaldington on 19th, Anchor Plain on 21st, Poppleton on 22nd and the last at Anchor Plain on 25th (RA).

An extraordinary record of a male displaying to and copulating with a Collared Dove at Storwood on 6th June (TB).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

28, 62, 15

First was at Anchor Plain on 20th April (RAJ) and at Wheldrake Ings next day with birds at Brighton, Aughton, North Duffield, Bishopthorpe, Copmanthorpe, Ryther, Askham Richard, Poppleton and Naburn Marsh before month end. The main arrival came from 1st May. Birds left very abruptly in late July with two at Anchor Plain on 24th July and singles at Strensall Common on 14th August, Brind on 31st and Wressle on 10th September (TED).

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

24, 1, 14

Bred at Wheldrake, Starwood (two pairs), South Duffield, Melbourne, Aughton, Ellerton, Newton-on-Derwent, Heslington (two pairs), Coulton and Dunnington. Possibly or probably bred at Bubwith (two pairs), Thorganby, Elvington, Sutton-on-Derwent, Brighton, Low Catton, Oswaldkirk, Stonegrave and Salton.

The species continues to give cause for concern, the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal is now the last major breeding stronghold with eight of the 12 proved pairs and seven of the ten possible/probable pairs here, reflecting its preference for permanent grassland.

Most of the records outside the breeding season came from the breeding areas. Birds were also seen at Poppleton, Cliffe Common, Hessay, Ampleforth, Moor Monkton, Nun Monkton, Crockey Hill and Escrick. Only one record of a

single at Anchor Plain which is considered very disturbing by RAJ in view of the amount of time spent there. Considered to be declining in Slingsby area. (IC, JK),

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua* 20, 8, 17

Bred at Laytham, Aughton, Starwood, Wheldrake, Dunnington Common, Butterwick, Marton and three sites near Brandsby. Possibly or probably bred at Bielby, South Duffield, Hagg Bridge, Sutton-on-Derwent, North Duffield, Bank Island, Anchor Plain, Salton, Hovingham, Coneysthorpe, Butterwick, Escrick, Naburn, Stillingfleet, Sheriff Hutton, New Earswick, Fulford, Gate Helmsley, Sand Hutton and Castle Howard. A slight decline in breeding season records compared with 1982 but the species is still obviously doing well. Recorded at a further seven sites outside the breeding season.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco* 24, 36, 16

A widespread and relatively common breeding bird recorded from 65% of tetrads surveyed during the Atlas Project so far. In 1983 breeding proved at 14 sites with hooting birds at a further 23 sites throughout the area.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus* 1, 1, 4

Continues to do well with breeding proved at Skipwith Common (two pairs) (TED, EBB), Strensall Common (BGP, DW), Allerthorpe Common (per TED) and near Brandsby (PH), a record year. Elsewhere singles at Hazelbush Plantation on 20th June (SC), University on 28th August (SC) and Anchor Plain on 13th September (RA).

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus* 0,2,1

Breeding attempted unsuccessfully in Lower Derwent at the 1982 site where the previous year's pair remained until end of May and were seen food passing in mid- May.

Elsewhere one at Wheldrake, two at Poppleton and two at Brighton Airfield from 1st January until 12th May, early April and 22nd March respectively. One or two at other Lower Derwent sites in first four months with singles at Escrick, Full Sutton, Elvington in February, and Bishop Wood, Elvington and Strensall Common in April. Four at the breeding site on 9th April. One at Millfield Lane, York from 7th to 13th May with one as Askham Bog Tip on 13th.

Rather few autumn records with two birds returning to Poppleton in early September and remaining to year end. Elsewhere one or two at Lower Derwent, Pocklington Canal and Elvington in October from 4th, at Pocklington Canal in November and Lower Derwent and Strensall Common in December.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus* 2, 2, 1

First returning bird was at Strensall Common on 17th May where three pairs bred. Also bred at Skipwith Common (two pairs) and Allerthorpe Common (one pair). An interesting record of a singing male at Nunnington on 19th June (per JP).

SWIFT *Apus apus* 42, 25, 32

First were singles at Clifton Airfield and Fulford Ings on 29th April (DW, TED). The first multiple arrival came on 2nd May with birds at four sites in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and at Kirkby Wharfe. The first major arrival was on 7th when 140 were at Naburn Sewage Works and 300 at Storwood. The only other large flock was of 300 at Millfield Lane, York on 2nd June.

Most birds left very early in August with 55 at North Duffield and 25 at Naburn Sewage Works on 6th. Seven west at Anchor Plain on 14th, one at North Duffield on 2nd September with two there on 4th. Singles at Elvington (TB) and Castle Howard (IC) on 20th the last.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis* 12, 8, 2

Bred at Fulford/Naburn (two pairs), Storwood and Melbourne. Probably bred at Wheldrake Ings and Poppleton and possibly at Bubwith. Noted elsewhere outside the breeding season at University, Dringhouses Pond, Kirkham, Kirkby Wharfe, York Foss, Malton, Howsham, Hobmoor (York), Askham Bog, Sand Hutton and at Anchor Plain where there has been a serious decline since 1981.

This species has yet to recover its pre-1978/79 winter population.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis* 17, 5, 10

Very few records received, not recorded at Skipwith Common for the first time for many years.

Bred at Strensall Common, Willitof, Hagg Bridge, Laytham, Crayke, Peel Park and Brandsby. Elsewhere noted only at Heslington, Tilmire, Fulford G.C., Stubb Wood and Crockey Hill.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major* 34,16,23

A common and widespread breeding species. Bred at 11 sites, probably bred at six sites and present in the breeding season at a further 22 throughout the area.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor* 8, 2, 0

Probably bred at Ampleforth and Newburgh. Reported elsewhere at Archbishops Palace on 12th and 16th January and 9th February, Heslington (Outgang) on 10th March, York (Rowntrees) on 14th, Poppleton Ings on 26th, Spellar Wood on 14th June and Anchor Plain on 10th July.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

15, 58, 35

Few large flocks reported this year probably due to the mild weather at both ends of the year, this being reflected by several singing birds in Lower Derwent on 16th January.

125 flew north at Wheldrake Ings on 30th January, 150 at Cawood on 8th February, 95 at Ellerton on 11th with 78 at Poppleton next day. Smaller flocks of 25 to 35 at Terrington, Wheldrake Ings, Naburn, Skipwith, Low Catton and Sand Hutton in first three months.

Evidence of movements from late September mainly at Anchor Plain with small numbers moving west on most weekends from 25th September to 13th November with maxima 41 west on 23rd October. 50 at Acaster Airfield on 16th October, 97 north-west over Osbaldwick on 22nd and 100 at Flaxton on 13th November.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

17, 5, 12

First birds were late, at Wheldrake Ings and Dringhouses Pond on 8th April with further birds at these two sites and at Naburn Sewage Works until the first major arrivals of 15 at Wheldrake Ings on 16th and 30 at Kirkby Wharfe next day. Maximum spring counts were of 50 at Naburn Sewage Works on 21st April and 14th May and at Wheldrake Ings on 16th May.

Bred at Poppleton, Fulford, Kirkby Wharfe, Melbourne, Thornton, Bubwith, York City Centre (the drainpipe site) and Burythorpe. Success was minimal and at Bielby, where breeding is regular, only a few non-breeders were seen.

Birds left abruptly in late August. Apart from one at Naburn Sewage Works on 12th September, Anchor Plain was the only site recording birds with up to five in September to 23rd with a late bird on 30th October, flying northwest!

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

15, 39, 61

A late and protracted arrival. The first at Fulford Ings on 11th April followed by birds at Butterwick on 13th and Newburgh, Poppleton and Naburn Sewage Works next day. The main arrival came on 18th/19th.

Largest spring flocks were 100 at Naburn Sewage Works on 27th April and 400 at Aughton on 2nd May.

Generally a very poor breeding year, this reflected in the very low autumn flock counts. 175 on wires at Poppleton on 23rd August, 200 at Bielby on 26th. Birds passed over Anchor Plain regularly in September, maximum 127 south on 13th. 200 at North Duffield on 24th. Most birds had left by early October but ones or twos seen at various places through the month with two at Pocklington Canal on 2nd November the last.

An aberrant "swallow" at Wheldrake Ings on 20th May was in company with other hirundines. The bird was too distant to note head and throat pattern. It showed normal black upper parts but with a white rump (c. 2/3 length of House Martin) which extended right round to white under-tail coverts. The tail lacked streamers but was markedly forked. It lacked tail spots. Underparts very white. Wings shorter than accompanying Swallows, giving a more fluttering "Martin"-like flight. It seems possible that the bird was a Swallow x House Martin hybrid (TB).

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

21, 14, 60

A late multiple arrival on 17th April with birds at Brighton, Bishopthorpe, Butterwick and Coxwold. Birds were not really widespread until late April/early May. Largest spring flock was 70 at Naburn Sewage Works on 27th April. As with other hirundines a very poor breeding season.

Autumn flocks included 100 at Bishopthorpe Ings on 5th and 10th July, 200 at Castle Howard lake on 10th August with 400 there on 11th September. 135 at Wheldrake Ings on 7th September, 140 at Windmill Lane, Heslington on 18th and 191 south at Anchor Plain on 21st. Most birds had gone by late September but a brood of two was being fed in the nest at Woodthorpe, York on 18th October; they flew next day. The last birds were all at Bubwith/North Duffield with four on 23rd, singles on 25th, 26th and the last on 5th November.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

1, 13, 12

First were two at University on 12th April with birds at three other sites until the major arrival in late April/early May when up to four at University and five at Anchor Plain. Bred at the usual sites with some counts being 15 pairs at Strensall Common, eight at Bishop Wood, three at Blackmoor Wood and three at Naburn/ Fulford Ings. Last birds were one south-west at Anchor Plain on 6th September and a single there on 13th.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

1B, 23, 15

Bred at all the usual sites.

Winter flocks were rather small with 79 at Naburn Sewage Works on 2nd January, 20 at Cawood on 13th and 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 30th. An obvious passage in March/April with 43 at Bubwith on 4th March, two at Anchor Plain on 13th (where the bird is strictly a spring/autumn migrant) were the first of the year there, 16 there on 20th, 30 at Bubwith on 30th. 20 at Redhouse Reservoir on 3rd April, 42 at Bishopthorpe on 10th and 20 at Stillingfleet on 21st.

An obvious autumn passage with 90 at Clifton Airfield on 16th September, 45 at Poppleton on 18th, 50 at Red House Reservoir on 21st when 21 at Anchor Plain, 35 at Wilberfoss on 22nd, 130 at Strensall Common on 9th October, 30 at Naburn Sewage Works on 16th. The only significant winter counts were 70 at a roost on Skipwith Common on 30th November and 26 at North Duffield Carrs on 26th December.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

One at Elvington on 18th January (TB) and two at Wheldrake Ings on 27th April (TB). Fourth and fifth records for the area.

This species has now occurred for three years running and seems likely to have been overlooked in the past.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava* 7, 9, 24

Five at Wheldrake Ings on 15th April were the first with one at Cawood next day. Ten at Naburn Sewage Works on 16th and at Wheldrake Ings on 19th were the largest flocks of a very poor spring passage. Birds were not widespread until early May. Very few breeding records received, present at the usual Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and Naburn/Fulford (16 pairs) sites, also at Clifton Ings and Spaldington.

The only significant autumn flocks were at Hobmoor, York and were comparatively large and late, 11 on 10th September, 18 on 11th, 60 on 14th, 35 on 18th, eight on 27th and ten on 10th December (IM). Single males showing characteristics of the Blue-headed race, *M.f.flava*, were at North Duffield Carrs on 12th May (TED) and Elvington Sewage Works on 19th (TB).

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

One pair bred at Crambeck.

Up to four this year at Naburn Sewage Works from 1st January to early April. One in the fountains in Exhibition Square, York, on 9th January with up to three at Elvington Sewage Works and one in York during the month. Singles in February at Elvington Sewage Works, Castle Howard Sewage Works, Askham Bog Tip and Wheldrake Ings. In March at University and Elvington Sewage Works, in April at Heworth (York), Millfield Lane (York) and two at Maldensworth. One at Newburgh on 14th was the last of the spring.

First autumn bird was an immature at Melbourne on 23rd July (birds have been suspected of breeding here in recent years). Birds returned to Naburn Sewage Works on 1st August and remained to year end with up to three in September and four in October. Singles in September at Anchor Plain, Newburgh, Hobmoor (York), Castle Howard and Cawood with three at Averhams Plantation on 18th. In October singles at University (five dates), Dringhouses Pond (two dates) and York Foss with three at Stockton Lane, York on 15th and three at Elvington Sewage Works from 24th to year end. One or two at a further nine sites in November and December.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba* 25, 20, 30

Very few roost counts received with, again, no counts from York Carriageworks. 46 at Naburn Sewage Works on 2nd January and 38 at Elvington Sewage Works on 11th.

At Anchor Plain, where the species is usually a spring/autumn passage migrant, three flew north on 10th April and four east on 17th. These fell in the main passage period for White Wagtail (*q.v.*) and may have been of this sub-species. Evidence of return passage in late September with 37 at Wheldrake on 21st, ten at Boroughbridge Road, York on 25th and 70 at Melbourne on 29th. Five south at Anchor Plain on 23rd October was the only autumn record there. 20 roosted on York District Hospital roof on 29th December.

Birds showing characteristics of White Wagtail, *M.a.alba*, were seen at Wass on 9th March (JP), Castle Howard on 6th April (DAR), Hagg Bridge on 21st (TB), Church Fenton on 24th (DW), Brayton Barff on 28th (TED) and Naburn Sewage

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus* 1,0,1

Recorded only from Crambeck where one pair bred successfully.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes* 21,48,47

Up to 41 roosting in House Martin nests at Butterwick in February. Otherwise the only significant counts came from Anchor Plain where seven pairs had a good breeding season. Generally ten to 20 there from mid-August to year end, but evidence of influxes on 2nd October and 6th November with c.35 on both dates.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

24, 43, 46

The only significant counts came from Anchor Plain with 12 from February to March, then evidence of a spring influx with five pairs on 10th April increasing to eight pairs on 24th and a record 11 pairs on 29th May. Possibly the wet spring caused an influx of failed breeders from elsewhere. Breeding success fairly poor with 20 to 25 from July to year end but an influx on 28th August when 45 were present.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

21, 34, 59

Seven pairs bred at Anchor Plain, otherwise no significant records received.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A female at Stamford Bridge on 8th April (RS et al). Fifth record for the area.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

6,2,5

Bred at Dale Wood, Brandsby and at Leavening (two pairs).

Singles at Kexby on 17th April, Bank Island (Wheldrake) on 23rd, Anchor Plain on 24th and Coneysthorpe on 21st May. Three juveniles at Hobmoor, York, on 23rd July was an intriguing record. In September a female at Anchor Plain on 4th, another at Butterwick around the same date, a male at Averhams Plantation on 14th and a juvenile there on 18th.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

5, 2, 1

One pair at Strensall Common was the only breeding record. The decline continues, in 1978 13 pairs were present. In spring, one at Clifton Airfield on 23rd April with two on 29th and two at Church Fenton next day. Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 8th May and singing at North Duffield Carrs from 12th to 14th.

First of the autumn was an immature female trapped at Anchor Plain on 14th August, one at Aughton on 23rd, two at Bielby on 26th, one at University on 6th September and three at Dunnington Common on 8th. A good series of counts from Clifton Airfield with 15 on 11th, seven on 15th and three on 16th (D\V) and from Hobmoor, York, with four on 11th, 13th and 15th and two on 18th, 21st, 27th and 3rd October (IM).

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The biggest spring passage ever recorded. 105 bird days in April. The first were two at South Duffield Ings and one at Rosscarrs on 8th with birds at 13 sites from 16th to month end, maxima were 37 at Clifton Airfield on 23rd, nine on 25th and 22 on 29th with eight at Strensall Common on 30th (DW). 76 bird days in May at 22 sites to 22nd. Birds were most widespread from 6th to 9th but maxima were 24 at Clifton Airfield on 1st and 12 there next day (DW). Most spring birds were seen immediately after heavy rain. A female at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd June.

First autumn bird was at Snargate on 11th August with up to three at Brighton Airfield, Storwood, Sutton-on-Derwent and Wilberfoss to 29th (ten bird days). In September up to four from 19th to 27th at Hobmoor, Clifton Airfield and Spaldington (16 bird days). Two females/immatures at Brighton Airfield on 20th/21st October are the latest on record (JB).

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

A female at Flaxton on 15th April (TB). A male at Aughton on 2nd November (TED) and presumably the same bird at Hagg Bridge on 23rd, 27th, 30th and 7th December (TB, TED). On all occasions the bird was feeding with mixed winter thrush flocks. Sixth and seventh records for the area.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

8, 23, 87

Winter flock counts were generally low. 40 at Anchor Plain on 23rd January, 57 at Fulford Ings on 9th February. The mild weather induced early breeding with a bird sitting at Heworth on 19th March and a pair with fledged young at Badger Hill, York, on 10th April.

The first autumn influx was of 102 at Hobmoor, York on 20th October, 50 at Anchor Plain on 23rd and 30th rising to 150 on 4th December. 100 at Aughton on 2nd November and 54 at Fulford Ings on 27th December.

The blue and yellow ringed male at University was seen on 19th and 26th January but sadly not after that date. It had reached the grand old age of at least 13.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Flocks were rather smaller than usual. Larger flocks were 200 at Sutton-on-Derwent on 17th and 20th January, 357 at Anchor Plain on 23rd, 250 at Wheldrake on 17th February, 200 at Stearsby on 20th, 280 at Elvington on 23rd. Slightly higher counts in March with 220 at Hagg Bridge on 10th, 300 at Appleton Roebuck on 16th, 406 (of which 340 flew east) at Anchor Plain on 20th and 350 at Hagg Bridge on 23rd. Birds flew north at Butterwick all day on 25th/26th. 200 at Elvington on 1st April, 250 at Moor Monkton on 4th when a pair were displaying in the Lower Derwent, 140 at Kexby Common on 13th, 230 at Askham Richard on 29th, 100 at Gunby on 1st May, 34 at Bubwith on 4th and one at Wheldrake Ings on 5th the last. One in a freshly cut hayfield with Song and Mistle Thrushes near Wheldrake on 28th June (TB). The first ever June record.

An unusual early autumn influx with 25 north-east over Bubwith on 7th September (JB), two west at Wheldrake Ings on 18th, 16 west at Anchor Plain on 21st, one at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd, 35 at Allertorpe on 29th and 57 west at Anchor Plain on 2nd October. Then surprisingly no more until 23rd when 100 at Anchor Plain. Passage was then light and protracted with 150 at Aughton on 2nd November, 120 at Anchor Plain on 6th, the first major influx coming on 11th when 220 at North Howden, the same number at Bank Island next day. 269 at Acaster Malbis on 12th December, 1,685 at Acklam on 22nd when 400 at North Duffield Carrs and 220 at Anchor Plain on 27th.

A completely white bird with 20 normal birds at Melbourne on 6th February (GS).

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos* 9, 28, 76

Very few significant records. Birds returned to Butterwick, where the species is always absent in winter, on 22nd February. 55 flew south at Anchor Plain on 23rd October.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

400 at Askham Bog on 1st and 3rd January, otherwise flocks small with 35 at Wheldrake on 4th, 36 at Clifton Ings on 23rd when 31 at Anchor Plain, 50 at Acaster Malbis on 29th. 94 at Elvington on 7th February with 72 there next day when 80 were at East Cottingwith with 80 at Thicket Priory on 13th and 155 at Elvington on 14th. Birds became scarce in March with 30 at Elvington on 24th, the only flock. In April two north at Anchor Plain on 10th and singles at Kexby Common on 13th and Fulford Ings on 23rd.

Autumn passage started early with 20 west at Anchor Plain on 25th September with single figures there and at a few other sites until the first major influx on 10th October when 80 flew south-west over Copmanthorpe. Passage was quite protracted as evidenced by nocturnal movements over the area on 10th, 22nd, 3rd November, 4th, 5th, 12th, 16th and 21st. 82 flew south over Anchor Plain on 23rd October, 70 there on 30th. 140 at Wheldrake Ings on 12th November with 350 nearby at Bank Island. 200 at Acaster Malbis on 12th December, 236 at Fulford Ings on 21st and 200 at North Duffield Carrs next day. 60 at Hobmoor, York on 24th was the first feeding flock of the year there, where birds are never seen feeding until late December/early January, presumably reflecting a shift from berry to pasture feeding.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus* 20,14,45

One was building at Dunnington on 20th January. The only double figure counts were 29 at Wheldrake Ings on 19th July and 24 at Castle Howard on 28th September. 26 flew south at Anchor Plain on 23rd October on which date there were influxes of Blackbirds and Fieldfares and southerly movements of Redwings and Song Thrushes.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia* 2, 3, 1

Singing males at Cawood on 3rd May (DB) and at Brighton Airfield from 7th May to 9th June (JB). This species has suffered a dramatic decline in recent years. Singing males in the breeding season for 1979 to 1983 have numbered 13, 16, eight, eight and now two.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* 9,24,20

First was at Wheldrake Ings on 17th April with up to three there until three at Nature Sewage Works on 7th May, with the main arrival next days when 20 were at Brighton Airfield. A generally small passage was reflected in a poor breeding season, with, for instance, none breeding at Anchor Plain. Only in major strongholds were numbers maintained with 20 pairs at Wheldrake Ings and 15 pairs at Fulford Ings/Naburn Sewage Works.

Three at Anchor Plain on 31st July were presumably failed breeders moving south. Last birds were singles at Anchor Plain and Hagg Bridge on 21st September and at Naburn Sewage Works next day.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* 2,14,15

Bred at Wheldrake Ings (ten pairs), Naburn Sewage Works/Fulford Ings (five pairs), Pocklington Canal, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common, Bubwith, Anchor Plain, Rosscarrs and Castle Howard.

First were at Strensall Common and Wheldrake Ings on 25th April with most birds arriving from mid-May. Last birds were one at Anchor Plain on 25th September and two at Naburn Sewage Works on 28th.

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*

A juvenile was caught and ringed at Anchor Plain on 4th September (RAI, AC, TED, EBB). First record for the area.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca* 11, 20, 8

Bred at the usual sites. Over the last few years it has become apparent that this rather secretive warbler is widely, if thinly, distributed in the south of the area but is almost absent north of York with Anchor Plain the northern-most regular breeding site.

First was at Elvington Airfield on 26th April with one at Heslington Outgang on 29th and two at Bubwith on 2nd May before a more general arrival on 7th/8th.

Anchor Plain had a particularly large autumn movement starting with 15 on 24th July with birds present almost daily until 21st September, maximum 39+ on 28th August. Last was one at Naburn Sewage Works on 26th September.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis* 16, 37, 42

The first was at Hagg Bridge on 21st April with one at Bishopthorpe next day and ten at Anchor Plain on 24th. Birds at six further sites before a major arrival on 8th May, when 23 at Anchor Plain and 20 at Brighton Airfield.

In contrast to other summer migrants this species apparently had a good breeding season with, for instance, 14 pairs at Anchor Plain with 50 there on 10th July and 60 on 25th declining steadily to the last on 25th September. Most had left the area by late August/early September with singles at Anchor Plain on 25th September and Hagg Bridge on 26th, the last.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin* 18, 27, 13

First was at Millfield Lane, York on 21st to 23rd April with two there on 24th when two were at Healaugh. Subsequent arrivals were very late with birds at only two further places to 11th May, birds did not arrive at Anchor Plain until 29th and the species was not really widespread until mid-June.

Not a particularly successful breeding season with evidence of return passage at Anchor Plain from late July peaking on 28th August with ten birds. The only September records were two at Anchor Plain on 11th and one at Melbourne on 26th.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla* 26, 47, 22

Wintering birds were at Cawood on 3rd January, Poppleton on 7th, Stamford Bridge on 12th, two at a Westow bird-table throughout February, singles at Hovingham on 1st March (a male), a female there on 4th, single males at Nunnington on 5th, Malton on 6th and Poppleton on 17th with a female at Tholthorpe on 27th. A singing male at Nun Monkton on 3rd April was probably a wintering bird rather than a spring migrant.

The first probable migrant was at Naburn Sewage Works on 15th April with a steady trickle of birds until a large fall on 8th May, when 60+ at Anchor Plain and 25 at Brighton Airfield. Breeding counts received included 18 pairs at Naburn Sewage Works/Fulford Ings, 12 pairs at Bishop Wood and ten pairs at Bielby and Anchor Plain.

Some large autumn counts at Anchor Plain with 40 on 10th July, 60 on 24th with 30 to 40 regularly until 62 on 28th August, 20 on 6th September with up to ten regularly until five on 25th. Last autumn birds were four at Naburn Sewage Works on 29th.

A female flew into a window at Appletree Village, York, on 3rd November and one at Bubwith on 8th.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* 3, 4, 1

Bred at Oliver Wood and Brandsby Dale (two pairs), a return to these sites after a ten year absence (PH).

Elsewhere, a singing male at Bishop Wood on 20th and 24th May (DW), another at Sutton Rush Wood, Hagg Bridge on 24th July (TB) and two birds in company of three Chiffchaffs and two Willow Warblers at Castle Howard on 19th September (JP).

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita* 19, 25, 9

One at Naburn Sewage Works on 1st/2nd January and one in full song at Bank Island, Wheldrake on 16th. First of spring was at Nun Monkton on 3rd April with one at Wass on 6th, with most birds arriving from 8th. A generally poor breeding season with, for instance, only two birds seen all year at Anchor Plain. Most birds had left by mid-September with the last, a singing male, at Castle Howard on 24th. One caught and ringed in a Strensall garden on 3rd December.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus* 20, 37, 57

In contrast to most summer migrants, a good breeding season for this species with 28 pairs at Fulford/Naburn Sewage Works and 22 pairs at Bishop Wood. Anchor Plain had its best ever year with 222 birds ringed. First were two at Stamford Bridge on 9th April with three at Anchor Plain next day, increasing to ten on 16th and 20 on 17th by which time birds were widespread. A major arrival on 24th when 50 at New Earswick and 90+ at Anchor Plain.

Anchor Plain had several high counts with 40 to 50 from late April to late July with a major arrival of 220+ on 31st July. 100+ there on 7th August, 25 on 10th, 60+ on 14th, 75 on 21st, then single figures until 40+ on 4th September and 20 on 21st the last.

Four at Castle Howard on 24th September, two at Naburn Sewage Works on 27th and one at Butterwick on 11th October, the last.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus* 23, 88, 9

Bred in suitable habitat throughout the area.

At Anchor Plain, in early months only three bird days until a spring influx of 15 on 20th March and 13 on 22nd. First autumn influx there was 20 on 11th September with 27 on 2nd October, then 15 regularly until 33 on 13th November, 30 on 20th, 35 on 27th and 30 to year end. The only other significant count was of 25 at Yearsley Moor on 30th November.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*

A first year male caught and ringed at Anchor Plain on 20th November (RAJ, TED, EBB, BGP). Second record for the area.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata* 23, 7, 32

Atlas records from 57% of tetrads surveyed.

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 8th May and the last at Fulford Ings on 29th September. An adult was still accompanied by dependent young at Acaster Malbis on 15th September.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

A female at Anchor Plain on 7th May (RAJ).

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus* 0, 1, 0

Two at Wheldrake Ings on 18th March (TMC), a female on 19th (TB), with two there on 29th (per TED). A pair in suitable breeding habitat at a site for the first week of April (observers name withheld).

Eight at Wheldrake Ings on 26th September (TB) and two flew north at Aughton on 2nd November (TED).

LONG TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus* 20, 17, 43

Autumn/winter parties of ten to 40 throughout the area. Largest counts were 65 at Anchor Plain on 30th October and 70 at Askham Bog on 4th December.

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris* 14, 9, 14

Recorded from 31% of tetrads surveyed compared with 50% for Willow Tit.

12 at Gill Wood on 9th January, ten at Anchor Plain on 28th August with six there on 25th September. Ten between Pond Head and Newburgh on 13th November.

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus* 17, 21, 21

14 at Anchor Plain on 3rd July, 12 on 24th, 12 on 14th August and 15 on 4th September were the only significant counts.

COAL TIT *Parus ater* 14, 22, 19

Recorded from 47% of tetrads so far surveyed. Maximum gatherings were 22 at Bishop Wood on 14th January, 40 at Averhams Plantation on 21st September and 20 at Bishopthorpe Palace on 29th December. All other records were of up to 12 birds scattered throughout the area in all months except July and August.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus* 12, 25, 80

Maximum counts were 42 at Fulford Ings on 19th February and 45 at Anchor Plain in January and February. 44 at Naburn Sewage Works on 19th June, 45 at Anchor Plain on 24th July, 65 there on 4th September and 80 on 25th with 40 to year end. 45 at Askham Bog on 4th December.

GREAT TIT *Parus major* 12, 29, 69

20 at Gill Wood on 9th January, 18 at Castle Howard on 6th March, 12 at Hob Moor on 4th December with up to 25 in January to March, 27 in June, 30 in August, 65 in September and 60 to year end at Anchor Plain.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea* 6, 4, 2

Atlas work is showing this species to be more widespread than hitherto realised with records from 10% of tetrads surveyed. Recorded in the breeding season at Castle Howard (three pairs), Wass, Hagg Wood, Kirkham and Archbishop's Palace.

Winter records from Castle Howard, York University, Archbishop's Palace and Leavening.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris* 26, 21, 19

Recorded from 66% of tetrads surveyed. Records from throughout the area with maximum counts of six at Anchor Plain in August and September.

GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*

A male at Brighton Airfield on 7th and 8th May (JB, TED, AF). Fourth record for the area.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Singles at Fulford Ings on 3rd January (SC) and Anchor Plain on 27th November (RAI).

JAY *Garrulus glandarius* 31, 16, 12

Recorded from 50% of tetrads surveyed. Eight at Elvington Industrial Estate on 6th April.

The massive autumn invasion of Britain was reflected in a smaller way in the York area with a three fold increase in October and November records at Wheldrake Ings compared with previous years. Up to seven at Anchor Plain from 2nd October to year end where previously the species was a scarce vagrant. Three of four birds ringed here showed characteristics of the eastern end of the species range with much of the pink plumage replaced by grey. One south-east over Butterwick on 20th October with five there from 22nd November to year end were the first ever seen there. One at York University on 13th December was the first recorded there.

MAGPIE *Pica pica* 28, 19, 55

26 at Dunnington on 9th February, 100 at a roost at Askham Bog on 29th and 30 at a roost at Kelfield on 9th March were maxima.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula* 18, 25, 41

Maxima were 300 at Acaster Malbis on 1st January, 650 with Rooks at Stearsby on 18th, 350 at Buttercrambe on 28th. 400 at Escrick on 3rd February and 300 at Sheriff Hutton on 6th.

A bird at Ellerton on 15th March showed characteristics of the Scandinavian sub-species, *C.m.monedula*. First record for the area.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus* 31, 14, 37

The largest gathering were 900 at Stearsby on 16th January, with 1,300 there on 18th and 700 at Buttercrambe on 28th. 1,000 at Starwood on 28th August and 1,200 at Bubwith on 25th October.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone* 26, 30, 56

Maxima were 200 at roost at Askham Bog on 1st January, 100 at Anchor Plain on 20th February. 113 at Anchor Plain on 14th August, 100 there on 23rd October and 137 on 13th November with 500 corvids. Mainly this species flew over daily, morning and evening, during autumn.

Birds showing characteristics of Hooded Crow, *C.c.cornix*, were at Ellerton from 15th November to year end (TB, TED et al) and possibly the same bird at Wheldrake Ings on 31st December (DW).

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris* 18, 18, 77

Maxima were 5,000 non-breeders roosting at Naburn Sewage Works during the summer, 1,000 at Bishopthorpe Ings on 10th July with 1,000 north-northwest there on 17th and 4,500 at roost at Strensall Common on 26th December.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus* 14, 30, 62

Apparently absent from 10% of tetrads surveyed. No significant flock counts received. The only significant record was of one eating a Poplar Hawk Moth at North Duffield on 25th July (EBB).

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus* 24, 23, 28

Maxima were 50 at Skipwith on 3rd January, 70 at Storwood on 11th. 80 at Anchor Plain on 6th February with 90 at Ellerton Tip on 8th. 115 at Anchor Plain on 4th March. 77 at Anchor Plain on 11th December when 130 at Holtby with 80 at Holtby on 30th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs* 15, 48, 52

Largest counts were 75 at Red House Reservoir on 3rd January, 55 at Stearsby on 16th, 96 at Dunnington Common on 20th, 52 at Anchor Plain on 23rd and 120 at Castle Howard on 31st. 103 at Anchor Plain on 6th February, 250 at North Duffield on 13th, 50 at Acomb on 20th with 50 there on 6th March. 60 at Barton-le-Willows on 1st

April.

40 near Oldstead on 9th September and 80 at Strensall Common on 27th December were the only significant autumn counts.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

71 at Anchor Plain on 6th February and 60 at Castle Howard on 9th March. A male at Pond Head on 2nd May was the last. First returning birds were two at York University on 21st October, 40 at East Cottingwith on 15th November with 35 at Aughton on 25th/26th December and 37 next day.

Other records of up to 20 birds at Acomb, Anchor Plain, Butterwick, Dunnington, Ellerton, Fangfoss, Holtby, Rossmoor, Stamford Bridge and Wheldrake Ings.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris* 30, 25, 43

Largest counts were 100 at Sheriff Hutton on 6th February when 65 were at Anchor Plain. 40 at Anchor Plain on 2nd October with 84 there on 23rd. 120 at East Cottingwith on 15th November and 40 at Thicket Priory (Thorganby) on 26th. 60 at Anchor Plain on 11th December and 60 at Gate Helmsley on 30th.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis* 17, 36, 34

42 at Wheldrake Ings on 30th January, 48 at Anchor Plain on 6th February, 35 at Wheldrake Ings on 16th March with 20 there on 21st. 30 at Cawood on 24th April. 28 at Poppleton on 3rd May. Post-breeding flocks were rather small with 20 at Anchor Plain on 6th September, 27 at Naburn Sewage Works on 8th, 80 at Clifton Airfield on 17th. 29 at Naburn Sewage Works on 16th October and 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 25th.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

20 at Black Dyke Plantation on 28th January, 41 at Scrayingham on 24th February, 55 at Pond Head on 12th March, 40 at Askham Bog on 18th. 60 at Bishop Wood on 27th April with 18 at Pond Head on 2nd May, the last.

First autumn birds were 15 at York University on 24th October, then 35 at Elvington Airfield on 23rd November and 70 at Melbourne on 7th December. Remaining records of up to 30 birds from 16 localities at both ends of the year.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina* 20, 36, 37

Few significant counts received. 65 at Elvington Sewage Works on 11th January, 60 at Anchor Plain on 6th February with 100 at Sheriff Hutton on the same date. 40 at Claxton on 26th March and a roost flight of 45 at Cawood throughout April. 53 at Wiggantherpe on 11th September and 68 at Hagg Bridge next day.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

20 at Askham Bryan on 20th April, one at Rosscarrs on 4th May (per TED) and seven west at Anchor Plain on 16th October (RAJ).

REDPOLL *Acanthis flammea* 24, 25, 10

Maxima were 120 at Anchor Plain on 23rd January, 300 at Bishop Wood on 8th April with 120 there on 30th and 100 on 5th May. 30 at Castle Howard on 9th October, 180 at Anchor Plain on 23rd November, 47 at Fulford Ings on 17th December with 41 there on 23rd, 35 at Skipwith on 18th and 30 at Averhams Plantation on 21st.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra* 2, 0, 0

One at Bishop Wood on 3rd February (DW), 20 at Ampleforth on 13th March (per TED), three at Sandburn Wood on 24th (DW) and one at Hazelbush Plantation on 15th April (DW).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* 17,36,19

Maximum counts of 12 to 15 regularly at Anchor Plain from May to year end (50 on 3rd July, and 21st and 25th September) and 11 at Fulford Ings on 23rd September.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* 6,7,1

A very good year. Breeding proved at Kirkby Wharfe (IM, BM) and Crambeck (TB). Other breeding season records from Stamford Bridge, Scrayingham, Walmgate Stray (York), Bishop Wood and Wass.

Outside the breeding season, one feeding in a Butterwick garden during January. One at Upper Helmsley on 15th February, up to 25 regularly at Scrayingham from 20th to 10th March (TW, V W) with 46 on 11th and 45 next day (BGP, TB) and four on 13th. One at Elvington on 4th March, four at Nun Monkton on 20th and one at Malton Golf Course on 26th.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella* 19,54,38

Maxima were 110 at Hagg Bridge on 6th January, 40 at Stearsby on 18th, 75 at Dunnington Common on 20th and 88 at Anchor Plain on 23rd. 35 at Gate Helmsley on 19th February. 53 at Anchor Plain on 4th March and 40 at Nun Monkton on 20th. 50 at roost at Anchor Plain on 3rd August with 70 there on 11th November.

CIRL BUNTING *Emberiza cirrus*

One at Seaton Ross on 4th April (DIM W). First record for the area.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus* 15, 30, 27

Very few records received. The only significant counts from Anchor Plain were 17 on 23rd January, 70 on 6th February, 36 on 4th March, 29 flew north on 17th April and 23 on 20th November.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

Maximum counts were 11 at North Duffield on 29th January with 20 there on 13th March and 30 on 20th. 19 at Acaster Malbis on 25th March. An extraordinary record of 160 at Storwood on 2nd May (TED). 39 at North Duffield on 26th November with 61 there on 17th December and 60 at East Cottingham on 26th.

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