

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB REPORT



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Edited by T. E. Dixon, J. Pewtress, M. Leahey and D. Anderson

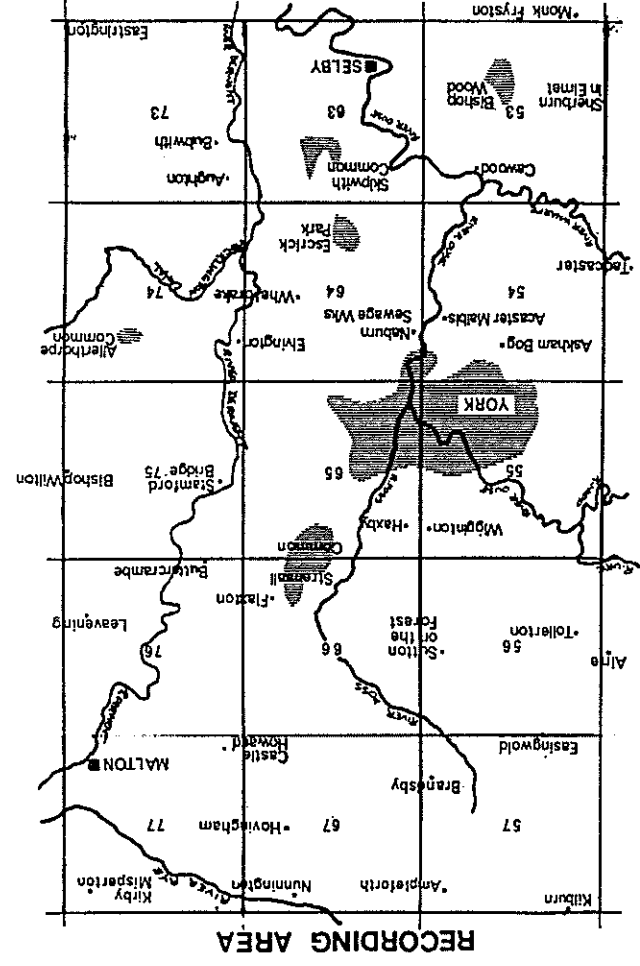
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YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB 1987

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YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

This Report has been compiled by members of the 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

Thanks are due, once more, to all those members and non-members who have submitted records for this Report. The production team remains as last year; Jim Pewtress (Divers to Coot), Mike Leakey (Waders to Woodpeckers) and Denise Anderson (Larks to Buntings) have compiled the species accounts. Muriel Pirozek has been responsible for much of the final production of this Report. Illustrations have been kindly provided by Mike Leakey and Simon Rickell. Producing a Report such as this entails an awful lot of sometimes boring and repetitive work. Grateful thanks are due to the above persons for the not inconsiderable amount of time and effort they have freely given.

On the conservation front the Nature Conservancy Council has continued to purchase land in the Lower Derwent Valley. Fund raising efforts by the Club bore fruit with the provision during the year of the Geoff Smith Memorial Hide overlooking North Duffield Carrs. The Nature Conservancy Council have provided a car park here and have constructed a scrape in front of the Hide. It was very pleasing to see the amount of use that the hide was put to during the year, thanks mainly to a very obliging Montagu's Harrier which arrived before construction was complete and gave pleasure to many people. The fund raising efforts for the River Derwent Appeal were successfully completed but at the time of writing the final outcome of this protracted legal battle is still not yet known.

T. Dixon

ORNITHOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS

During 1987 a total of 189 species and nine distinct subspecies was seen in the club recording area, a total only exceeded by the record year of 1982. Three new species were seen, firstly a Reeve's Pheasant at Scrayingham on 5th May presumably an escape. A juvenile Red-footed Falcon spent half a day at Roscarra on 16th September. A first year female Barrow's Goldeneye at Wheldrake Ings from 2nd to 14th November was quite unexpected and if accepted will be the second record for Britain.

January opened with a good count of 3200 Lapwings at Wistow Lordship on 2nd when there were also 1000 in the Lower Derwent accompanied by five Ruff and 55 Pinkfeet. A White-front was at Castle Howard on 5th with 67 Curlew in the Lower Derwent next day.

The Lower Derwent hosted some impressive waterfowl numbers during the month with up to 148 Bewick's, 55 Whoopers, 460 Greylags, 450 Canadas, 6300 Wigeon, 1300 Teal, 3000 Mallard, 28 Pintail, 200 Pochard and 210 Dunlin. Four Waxwings at Bishopthorpe on 14th were the first of several records in the early months. The 15th saw a drake Smew and 21 Goosander on the Ouse at Barlow, these were rather eclipsed however by an unprecedented nine Smew, including five magnificent drakes, in the Lower Derwent on 20th along with a party of eight Bearded Tits. A Scaup was on the Ouse at Poppleton on the 22nd. Two White-fronts arrived in the Lower Derwent on 24th when there were also 16 Goosander at Wharfe Ings and a Merlin at Barlow Grange. Two Waxwings were at Haxby and at Acomb on 26th. In the Lower Derwent there was an arrival of 40 Redshank on 28th when there was also a Great Grey Shrike.

A White-front was again at Castle Howard on 2nd February. Wildfowl numbers remained high in the Lower Derwent during the month with up to 136 Bewick's, 47 Whoopers, 300 Greylags, 662 Canadas, 6100 Wigeon, 3620 Teal, 2850 Mallard, 36 Pintail, 245 Pochard, 53 Goldeneye, 55 Goosander and four Smew. A Red-necked Grebe arrived there on the 5th with a female Ruddy Duck next day when a Waxwing was found at Selby. A Red-throated Diver flew south in the Lower Derwent on 12th. Another Waxwing was located on 13th, this time in York at Rowntrees. 3000 Lapwing and 340 Dunlin were in the Lower Derwent on 14th and a Kittiwake was there on 16th. A good count of 46 Goosander was made at Wharfe Ings on 21st. A Merlin was at Dringhouses Pond on 25th and in the Lower Derwent there was a Jack Snipe on 26th, Bean Goose and nine Ruff on 27th and 75 Curlew and a Kittiwake on 28th. This last date also saw a Kittiwake at Dringhouses Pond and an Oystercatcher at Osbaldwick.

March opened with a mammoth count of 36,000 Black-headed Gulls in the Lower Derwent where there was the first of a good series of Kittiwake records on 2nd and 90 Curlew on 3rd. Wildfowl numbers continued to be maintained with up to 106 Bewick's, 50 Whoopers, 5500 Wigeon, 3200 Teal, 2600 Mallard, 78 Pintail, 207 Pochard, 43 Goldeneye and 64 Goosander. The 6th saw two Kittiwakes at Selby. Another was at Roscarra on 8th when there were 78 Goosanders at Castle Howard and a Great Grey Shrike at

Yearsley. A major arrival of waders in the Lower Derwent on 10th brought 3300 Lapwing, 730 Dunlin, 106 Redshank and four Green Sandpipers along with another Kittiwake. The next day saw Smew at Roscarrrs, a Glaucous Gull at Dringhouses and nine Ruff in the Lower Derwent. A Red-breasted Merganser was in the Lower Derwent on 12th and a good count of 127 Snipe was made at Fulford Ings on 13th. Another Kittiwake was in the Lower Derwent on 15th along with a Merlin and the first spring migrant, a Garganey. Arrival dates of the more regular spring migrants and summer visitors are tabulated below.

March	15th	Garganey	Lower Derwent
	18th	Chiffchaff	Askham Bog
	19th	Willow Warbler	Buttercrambe Moor Wood
	28th	Black-tailed Godwit	Lower Derwent
	28th	Sand Martin	Castle Howard
	29th	Wheatear	Riccall, Clifton Airfield
April	3rd	White Wagtail	Lower Derwent
	6th	Whimbrel	Roscarrrs
	8th	Swallow	Kexby
	10th	Spotted Redshank	Lower Derwent
	12th	Yellow Wagtail	Brayton Barff
	13th	Pied Flycatcher	Moorlands
	17th	Greenshank	Lower Derwent
	17th	Black Tern	Lower Derwent
	17th	Tree Pipit	Lower Derwent
	17th	Ring Ouzel	Huntington
	17th	Blackcap	New Earswick
	18th	Cuckoo	Acaster Malbis
	18th	Sedge Warbler	Lower Derwent
	19th	Common Sandpiper	Poppleton
	20th	Marsh Harrier	Lower Derwent
	20th	Whitethroat	Heslington
	21st	Grasshopper Warbler	Bishop Wood
	21st	Reed Warbler	Roscarrrs
	21st	Wood Warbler	Wass
	22nd	Little Ringed Plover	Lower Derwent
	22nd	Lesser Whitethroat	Heslington
	25th	Garden Warbler	Lower Derwent
	26th	Whinchat	Sherburn in Elmet
	28th	Common Tern	Lower Derwent
	29th	Redstart	Strensall Common
	30th	Swift	Castle Howard
May	3rd	Spotted Flycatcher	Brayton Barff
	4th	Arctic Tern	Lower Derwent
	6th	Quail	Lower Derwent
	8th	Nightjar	Skipwith Common

The last Whooper Swans left the Lower Derwent on 17th March. A Merlin was at Brandsby on 21st when a Red-breasted Merganser, a Glaucous Gull and a Kittiwake were in the Lower Derwent. The 22nd saw the only Crossbills of the year at Yearsley where there was also a Great Grey Shrike. A Mediterranean Gull was in the Lower Derwent on 27th with a Glaucous Gull next day.

April opened with a drake Ruddy Duck in the Lower Derwent and, sadly, a dead Red Kite at Easingwold. A Goshawk was in the

Lower Derwent next day and on 3rd 550 Golden Plovers and a Grey Plover were at Riccall with a Green Sandpiper there on 5th. Two more Waxwings were found at Selby on 5th. An influx of waders in the Lower Derwent on 6th produced five Grey Plovers, 50 Dunlin, 25 Black-tailed Godwits and a Bar-tailed Godwit with yet another Kittiwake, a Knot and a Glaucous Gull were there on 8th along with a large migrant flock of 150 Meadow Pipits and one Water Pipit. A Jack Snipe was at Castle Howard on 9th. Migrant waders continued to appear in the Lower Derwent with a Knot from 10th to 12th and a series of Spotted Redshanks from 10th to 19th, a Bar-tailed Godwit was seen on 12th and the last Golden Plovers on 16th. Unprecedented Ruff numbers were present throughout the month peaking at 256 on 19th, another Knot was present on 24th and six Greenshanks and a Bar-tailed Godwit on 28th. One of the most exciting discoveries of the year was a roost of Whimbrel at Wheldrake Ings with birds present from mid-April through into early May, the roost numbered 68 birds by 29th. Other species of note in the Lower Derwent during the month were a pair of Garganey and two White Wagtails on 11th, Goshawk and Mediterranean Gull on 14th, a Black-necked Grebe on 16th which remained into May, three Black Terns and a Flamingo on 17th, Scaup, Marsh Harrier and Hottentot Teal on 20th, seven Cormorants on 23rd, Little Gull on 26th and 27th, Marsh Harrier, Ring Ouzel and six Black Terns on 28th and Marsh Harrier again the following day. Notable records from elsewhere during the month included a male Pied Flycatcher at Moorlands on 13th, 38 Goosander at Wharfe Ings on 15th, a Ring Ouzel at Huntington on 17th, a Common Scoter at Newton Mask on 21st, a Golden Pheasant at Bishopthorpe on 25th and two Willow Warblers of the Scandinavian subspecies *acredula* at Wass and another in the Lower Derwent on 26th.

May was generally a quiet month with most of the interest as usual centring on the Lower Derwent. The month opened with 12 Dunlin and 86 Whimbrel there, Whimbrel numbers peaked on 3rd with 88 birds. Two Arctic Terns were present next day. The 6th saw a continental Cormorant, a Spotted Redshank and the first of what proved to be a good series of Quail records. Three Greenshanks and a Marsh Harrier were present on 7th, a Spotted Redshank on 9th, six Black Terns and a Marsh Harrier on 11th, two Little Gulls, five Arctic Terns, 11 Black Terns and a Marsh Harrier on 12th, 18 Arctic Terns on 14th with a Black Tern next day and nine Common Terns on 26th. Elsewhere six Little Ringed Plovers were at Clifton Airfield on 2nd, a Reeve's Pheasant at Scrayingham on 5th, a Mandarin at Newbrugh, a Quail at Fangfoss and a Nightingale singing in York were all noted on 7th. A Little Tern was at Castle Howard on 16th and a Wood Sandpiper was in the unlikely setting of Byland Abbey on 23rd.

June was an exciting month in several respects, particularly in the Lower Derwent where the following breeding counts were made, 16 pairs of Herons, five pairs of Little and one pair of Great Crested Grebes, five pairs of Mute Swans, nine pairs of Wigeon and also of Gadwall, ten pairs of Teal, 60 pairs of Shoveller, eight pairs of Pochard, 45 pairs of Tufted Duck and an estimated 300 pairs of Mallard. A record 150 pairs of Coot bred and an excellent 150 pairs of Redshank. An Osprey was at Castle Howard on 2nd and 3rd. The 4th saw a Kentish Plover briefly at Riccall

where there was also a Quail on 7th. Another, or possibly the same Black-necked Grebe returned to the Lower Derwent on 14th, with the first returning Green Sandpiper the following day. The 16th saw possibly the bird of the year when a moulting female Montagu's Harrier arrived in the Lower Derwent. The bird soon took up residence on North Duffield Carrs in front of the newly erected Geoff Smith Memorial Hide and gave excellent views until mid-August to many thousands of visiting birdwatchers. Geoff would have been pleased. Three singing male Corncrakes were present in the Lower Derwent through most of June and into July, one of these birds was extremely obliging and was seen at exceedingly close quarters by many birdwatchers. Whilst no proof of breeding was forthcoming it remains a distinct possibility that breeding did in fact take place. The 18th brought a Hobby to Brandsby, an Osprey was at Castle Howard on 19th, a Pied Flycatcher and another Hobby were at Ampleforth on 20th. Quail were seen at Bielby on 23rd, North Duffield Carrs on 24th, Brighton on 29th and Newton Mask on 30th. A Hobby graced Askham Bog on these last two days.

July was generally a quiet month although the Montagu's Harrier was present throughout and Quails were noted at Riccall, Bishopthorpe, North Duffield Carrs, Wheldrake Ings, Nunnington and East Cottingham. In what turned out to be a good summer for Hobbys further birds were noted at Askham Bog, Huntington, Rowntrees, the Lower Derwent and scandalously one was picked up shot at Clifton Airfield. Other birds of note included a Fulmar at Brandsby on 3rd and a Mandarin in the Lower Derwent next day. The 5th saw a Short-eared Owl which remained to the month end in the Lower Derwent and a very fluffy Wheatear obviously very recently fledged, the origin of which is intriguing. A good count of 20 Little Ringed Plovers was made at Riccall on 10th. Thirteen Green Sandpipers were at Melbourne on 15th where there were two Wood Sandpipers on 18th and the only Curlew Sandpiper of the year on 21st. This last date also saw the first returning Goosander at Riccall, presumably a bird from the Dales' breeding population. Two Wood Sandpipers were at Holme on Spalding Moor on 23rd and the first Siskin of the autumn was at Stubb Wood on 28th.

August was remarkably uneventful. An Osprey was at Newbrugh throughout the month and the Montagu's Harrier remained in the Lower Derwent until the 20th. A Quail was in the Lower Derwent on the 1st, an early returning Scaup was on the Ouse at Riccall on 7th, and a Mandarin was at Newbrugh on the 9th. The 13th saw Goshawk and Merlin in the Lower Derwent with a good count of 13 Greenshanks at Riccall next day. The 15th saw the last Sedge Warbler of the year in the Lower Derwent, a very early departure. Twelve Green Sandpipers were at Melbourne and eight Common Sandpipers on Poppleton on 23rd, with 11 Common Sandpipers in the Lower Derwent on 25th. A White Wagtail was at Fulford on 26th with another at Naburn on 29th. Single Wood Sandpipers were at Melbourne on 29th and 30th.

The tempo increased slightly during September. The Newbrugh Osprey finally departed on 17th. The last Turtle Dove was at Barlow Grange on 2nd. The last Tree Pipit and a Quail were in the Lower Derwent on the 5th. Next day saw the last Little

Ringed Plover of the year at Riccall and three immature Black Terns at Castle Howard. Six Green Sandpipers were at Riccall and a similar number of Common Sandpipers at Roscarrs on 7th. 1250 Golden Plovers were at Pocklington Airfield on 10th, an early date for such a large flock. Castle Howard's first Goosanders of the year, a party of seven redheads, arrived on 12th. In what was a good year for raptors the York area's first Red-footed Falcon was seen at Roscarrs on 16th. A good September count of 75 Snipe was made in the Lower Derwent on 17th. A different Osprey arrived at Pond Head on 20th and was presumably the same bird as that seen at Newburgh from 22nd to 27th. The last Quail of the year was at Wilberfoss on 21st when the first Jack Snipe of the autumn was seen at Bielby. The 26th saw a White Wagtail at the university. The last Reed Warbler of the year was at Roscarrs on 28th and the last Willow Warbler was at Melbourne next day. The first pinkfooted geese of the autumn were seen on 30th when a flock of 30 flew west over Bishopthorpe.

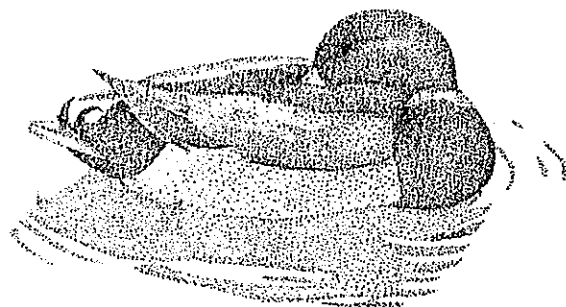
October was unusually quiet. The Lower Derwent held up to 1000 Wigeon, 730 Teal and 600 Mallard. The last Sand Martin of the year was at Riccall on the 1st when there was also a Rock Pipit there. The first of the autumn's Redwings was seen at Benningborough on 3rd. Six Green Sandpipers were still at Melbourne on 5th. The 7th saw the first Fieldfare and the last Redstart of the autumn in the Lower Derwent, followed next day by the last Turtle Dove. The 11th was a day of some movement with the first Whooper Swans and a Buzzard of indeterminate species in the Lower Derwent, Stonechats at Clifton Airfield and Naburn, the last Wheatear at Knapton and the last Whinchat at Clifton Airfield. A Grey Plover flew south over the Lower Derwent on 17th when the last Garden Warbler of the year was seen at Roscarrs. House Martins finally departed on the 20th with birds in the Lower Derwent and Hemingborough. Interest during the rest of the month centred mainly on the Lower Derwent where there were Scaup and Hen Harrier on 21st, Merlin on 22nd, a late Greenshank on 23rd, 35 Barnacle Geese on 24th, the first Bewick Swans on 25th, 18 Ruff on 28th, 1500 Golden Plovers, 3000 Lapwings, 2000 Fieldfares and a Rock/Water Pipit on 29th, another Greenshank and a good count of 2650 Fieldfares on 30th. Elsewhere a rather late Wood Sandpiper was at Ozendyke Ings on 23rd. The next day saw the last Swift at Dunnington Common and the last Swallow at Kexby. A Rock/Water Pipit was at Castle Howard and 70 Goldcrests were at Skipwith Common on 26th. A Black Redstart at Huntington on 30th finished the month in style.

Wildfowl numbers in the Lower Derwent picked up during November with 1800 Teal and 2200 Mallard. Again most of the interest was in the Lower Derwent with the first returning Shelducks on the 1st. The 2nd saw 16 Ruff, the first Goldeneyes of the year and most unexpectedly a first year female Barrow's Goldeneye, which if accepted will be the second record for Britain. The 4th saw a large movement of 3510 Fieldfares west in one hour along with a late Chiffchaff and a Twite. Next day saw 5880 Fieldfare moving between west and south-west during a three hour period, along with 1200 Golden Plovers and 3000 Lapwings. A tremendous count of 500 Snipe was made the following day along with 4900

roosting Fieldfares with another 900 moving south. A Stint of indeterminate species, probably Little, was seen on the 10th and 31 Curlew were present on 17th. The 22nd saw a rare record of three Snow Buntings flying west. Elsewhere during the month a staggering count was made of 4000 Redwings flying west over Sheriff Hutton on the 3rd, a diver of indeterminate species, probably Red-throated, flew over Anchor Plain on 5th when there was also a Merlin at Riccall. A well-watched Great Grey Shrike was present at Appleton Roebuck from 20th into December. The 23rd to 25th brought an unprecedented series of Little Auk records with birds picked up at Huby, Haxby, Clifton Airfield and the most unlikely surroundings of Coney Street in York city centre. The month ended with a Merlin at Haxby on the 28th.

Interest in December was almost exclusively in the Lower Derwent where there were up to 27 Bewick's, 41 Whoopers, 5000 Wigeon, 1500 Teal, 2800 Mallard and 20 Pintail. A Hen Harrier was seen on the 2nd with 25 Ruff the following day. Three White-fronts were present on the 5th with 4000 Lapwing on 7th and a Jack Snipe on 9th. The recent run of Bean Geese records was maintained with five birds arriving on 10th. Fortysix Curlew were seen on the 12th with a Grey Plover and a Jack Snipe next day and 90 Dunlin on 14th. A Merlin was seen on 20th, two Bean Geese on 22nd, 2000 Golden Plover on 23rd, three Bean Geese on 29th and the year closed with 44 Curlew and 24 Redshank on 31st. The only significant records from elsewhere were 33 Goosander at Castle Howard on 6th and a quite extraordinary record of a Swallow at Escrick on 8th.

T. Dixon



STATUS OF THE RARER WADERS OCCURRING IN THE
YORK AREA (1977-1987)

This paper summarises the change in status of the rarer waders occurring within the York Area between 1977 and 1987.

Wader observations during the period have been impressive, with four additions to the York Recording Area list, two of which were nearctic species. Additionally another nearctic species occurred for the second time (the first record of this species was before the study period).

During the period several species previously thought to be irregular visitors to the area such as Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) have been proved to be annual passage visitors, whilst other species such as Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temminckii*) have remained a greatly sought after rarity, despite the increased accessibility to some sites within the Lower Derwent and the discovery of hitherto unwatched locations for the observation of waders.

It is likely that three main factors have contributed directly to an increased awareness of wader species within the area:-

- (i) The increased number of observers, and stemming from this a handful of competent observers who have the motivation, knowledge and patience required to locate and identify the scarcer species that annually occur amongst the flocks of commoner species.
- (ii) An increased knowledge of the York Area geography, leading to the discovery of previously unknown sites and also a better understanding of established sites. For example, prior to 1983 Melbourne was a scarcely visited site. Since the discovery of high annual numbers of autumn Green Sandpipers (*Tringa ochropus*) there, it is now a rather well-watched site from July through to September and associated with this increased coverage have been the recording of several interesting scarce species such as the White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*) in September 1983.
- (iii) Spring passage has been particularly evident during the past five years due to the retention of the winter floods on the Lower Derwent well into the latter part of May providing suitable conditions as the floods recede to attract substantial numbers of the commoner species. Associated with these have been many sightings of scarcer species and also the "discovery" of a spring roost of Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) in the Lower Derwent.

What follows is a list of the scarcer waders which have occurred in the York Recording Area during the period 1977-1987. Should the reader be interested in the status of the commoner species then I refer them to the York Ornithological Club annual reports (1977-1987) and in particular to an article in the 1981 report "The Status of Waders in the York Area. Part 1": Oystercatcher to Dunlin" (Dixon, T.E.).

STONE CURLEW (*Burhinus oediconemus*)

One record, represented the first and only record for the area.

1982 - A single bird was seen in the meadow at Wheldrake Ings on the evening of 9th August. Amazingly it was relocated towards the northern end of Elvington Airfield the following morning, and was last seen flying low towards the southern end of the airfield.

An exceptional record of this rare wanderer to Yorkshire, and one that is unlikely to be repeated for quite some time as the species has only occurred in Yorkshire in 12 of the years between 1951-1983.

KENTISH PLOVER (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)

Three spring records during the period represent the first to third records for the area. As two of the records were of individuals associated with Ringed Plover (*C. hiaticula*) flocks, the careful checking of all 'charadius' plovers, especially in spring could yield ample reward for the meticulous observer.

1981 - A female with a flock of Ringed Plover (*C. hiaticula*) at North Duffield Carrs on 22nd May (first record).

1986 - A female, again associated with substantial Ringed Plover (*C. hiaticula*) concentration, was discovered at Aughton Ings on 6th May and was seen briefly on the 7th.

1987 - A female alighted briefly on small pools beside the River Ouse at Riccall on the 4th June, before continuing up-river.

That this rather rare charadrius should occur three times during the period is exceptional.

DOTTEREL (*Charadrius morinellus*)

Only two spring records during the period, representing the third and fourth records for the area. Out of interest, the first record was of three at Strensall Common on the 15th and 16th May 1970, and the second, a single, a year later on the 25th May at Cawood.

1982 - Eleven years elapsed before the third record of a single bird with 580 Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) at Escrick on the 20th April.

1983 - Following a night of torrential rain, nine birds were present with assorted other waders in a flooded arable field at Church Fenton on the 6th May. Sadly their stay was only brief.

Perhaps surprisingly scarce in the area, especially considering Golden Plover (*P. apricaria*) passage of the 'northern' birds

peaks in late April, declining to smaller numbers during the first week of May. Careful scrutiny of these flocks would doubtless reveal more *Charadrius morinellus*!

GREY PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

This species has firmly established itself as an annual visitor to the area during the period, especially in the vicinity of the Lower Derwent. Surprisingly, prior to 1976 there were only two published records, May 1966 and December 1970.

Looking at the monthly totals we can see a substantial spring passage between March and May, peaking in April. Also a strong winter presence between October and March of birds mostly recorded from the Lower Derwent and associated with Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) flocks on the 'ings' land. Surprisingly no records in either July or September.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Bird-days	28	5	9	30	14	7	0	3	0	7	8	14	125

Recorded from twelve locations within the recording area as follows (numbers of records in parentheses):-

Wheldrake Ings (22), North Duffield Carrs (11), Bubwith (4), Bank Island (2), Aughton Ings (2), other Lower Derwent sites (7), Anchor Plain (2), Wharfe Ings (2), Riccall (1), Church Fenton (1), Elvington Airfield (1), Bolton Percy Ings (1).

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*)

Seven records during the period, all in Lower Derwent and all in spring excepting one in September 1978. These constitute the first to seventh records for the area. A rather erratic visitor to the area with an exceptional six individuals recorded during Spring 1986, which provided the first multiple occurrence of the species within the area.

1977 - One feeding in a flooded meadow at North Duffield Carrs on the 24th April.

1978 - One on the 4th September at Wheldrake Ings represents the sole autumn record for the species.

1983 - Singles at Bubwith on 4th March and at Wheldrake Ings on 6th March were considered to be the same bird. On both occasions it was feeding with a flock of Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*).

1986 - An exceptional year with three records:

A summer-plumaged bird at Aughton Ings on both 11th and 12th May. On the 25th two winter-plumaged birds flew south over Wheldrake Ings, while three summer-plumaged birds were observed at Aughton, one of which was seen the following day.

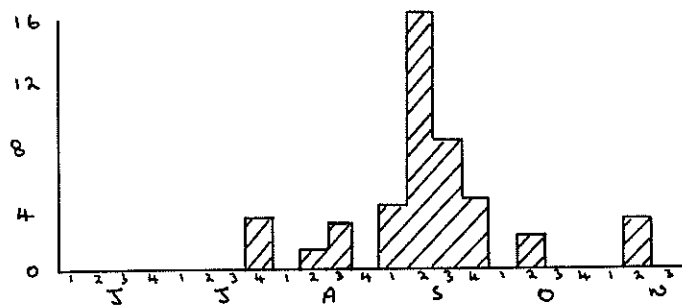
LITTLE STINT (*Calidris minuta*)

Recorded annually during 1978 to 1986 with all records in the autumn period between 26th July to 4th November and a sole spring record of an individual on 18th April 1979 at Bubwith.

Only three observations away from Wheldrake Ings, the spring bird at Bubwith in 1979, one at Brighton Airfield on 17th September 1983 and a confiding juvenile at Clifton Airfield on 22nd September 1985. Whilst at Wheldrake Ings, a total of 46 bird-days with earliest date recorded 26th July 1980 and the individual of 4th November 1979 the latest record. The vast majority of birds recorded have been juveniles and mainly 'short stay' birds. The exception being an individual at Wheldrake Ings between 18th-26th September 1984.

Exceptional numbers were recorded in 1978 at Wheldrake Ings with 17 bird-days on five dates in September with a maxima of six on the 11th.

Figure 1 Little Stint bird-days per seven day period, June to November (1977-87)



TEMMINCK'S STINT (*Calidris temminckii*)

Three definite records for the period of this much sought after stint. These records constitute the first to third records for the area, which curiously appeared in consecutive years.

1980 - One at Bank Island, Wheldrake on the 30th August (1st record).

1981 - On the 31st May an adult in summer plumage was seen at both Aughton Ings and North Duffield Carrs.

1982 - An adult in summer plumage was attracted to the low water levels at Castle Howard on the 30th May.

Favourable conditions in the Lower Derwent during the last few springs have surprisingly failed to produce subsequent definite records, but one at Wheldrake Ings on 31 May, 1985 was probably

a Temminck's. But when one considers the actual acreage of suitable habitat available for a passage Temminck's then this might not surprise the realists amongst us!

STINT sp (*Calidris* sp)

In addition to specifically identified birds there have been the following distant Stints which were probably Little Stints (*C. Minuta*):

1980 - One at Aughton on 12 February.

1983 - Two on 18th December at North Duffield Carrs.

1985 - A stint flew north between East Cottingham and Ellerton on the 28th December.

1987 - One at Wheldrake Ings on 10th November.

... and those that were probably Temminck's Stints (*C. temminckii*)

1981 - Two on 20th May at North Duffield Carrs and one at Aughton Ings on the 30th May (the following day an adult Temminck's was identified at the same site).

1985 - A Stint sp gave very brief views at Wheldrake Ings on the 31st May and was thought to be "almost certainly Temminck's".

In conclusion, a briefly seen Stint is most probably either of these two species, but could conceivably be something rather worth the wait!!

KNOT (*Calidris canutus*)

An annual visitor from 1982 onwards, with records for all years of the period except 1980. Prior to 1977 three records only, namely two at Elvington Airfield on 23rd January 1966, one at North Duffield Carrs on 25th April 1970 and in 1975 ten were at Wheldrake Ings on 7th March.

During the period this species has established itself as a predominantly late winter/spring passage bird between the months of February and May (with extremes 6th February - 7th May) and a smaller autumn passage noted in some years when conditions are favourable within the area (with extremes 14 July - 19 September). There have been no records in the period October to January nor have any birds occurred in June.

The only double figure count during the period was a flock of 15 that paused briefly at Wheldrake Ings on 13th April, 1983. The majority of observations comprise parties of three or less.

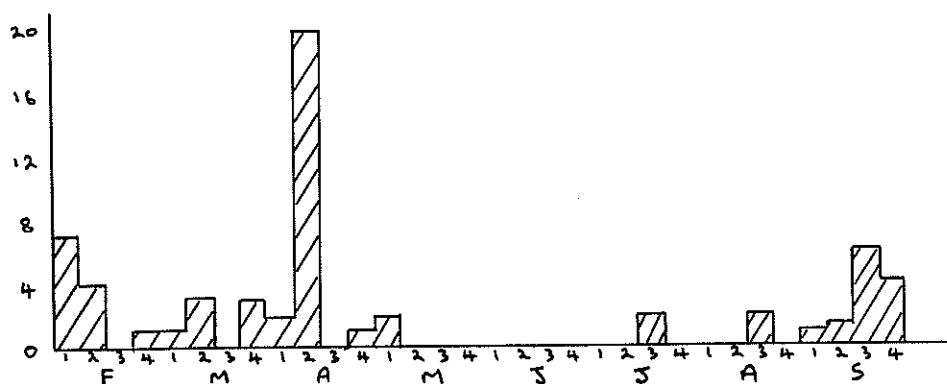
Not surprisingly perhaps, there have been only six records away from the Lower Derwent. In 1982 low water levels at Castle

Howard accommodated three different individuals, 8/9th August, 2nd and 8/9th September, one at Elvington Airfield on 28th February 1984. An interesting record concerned seven at Norton Grove on the 6th February 1985 and one was feeding along the banks of the River Ouse at Riccall on the 16th September 1985.

Birds are typically 'one day only'. Apart from those previously mentioned at Castle Howard up to two birds were present on five dates between 9th and 19th September 1979 at Wheldrake Ings.

The histogram below shows a seven day period breakdown for the aggregate number of Knot (*C. canutus*) bird days 1977-1987.

Figure 2 Knot-bird-days per seven day period February to September (1977-87)



WHITE RUMPED SANDPIPER (*Calidris fuscicollis*)

One record of this nearctic rarity which was the 7th record for Yorkshire.

1983 - A juvenile was present for several hours on the 26th September at Melbourne.

This was the last addition to the trio of nearctic waders recorded in the area - hopefully it will not be the last!

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (*Calidris bairdii*)

One record of this dainty species which was the 3rd record for Yorkshire.

1982 - The low water levels at Castle Howard attracted a summer plumaged individual for several hours on the unexpected date of 15th May. Sadly its performance was for its sole observer only.

A rather unexpected addition to the York Area list. The record was accepted by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union but was rejected by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Calidris melanotos*)

One record for the period represented the second area record. This is the commonest nearctic vagrant to reach our shores. The record prior to the period concerned was one at Roscarfs, Selby, on 6th August 1976.

1984 - A juvenile was located late on 3rd September feeding by the Pool at Wheldrake Ings. The following morning brighter weather caused the bird to be rather flighty and it was last seen around midday.

This individual appeared following classic conditions for nearctic vagrancy, in the shape of a series of rapidly moving depressions crossing the Atlantic. Given the exceptionally low water levels at Wheldrake Ings, Autumn 1984 provided some superb wader watching with the above bird being the icing on the cake! Interestingly Pectoral Sandpipers were also seen at Altofts Ings on the 1st September, Blacktoft Sands on the 2nd then Wheldrake and at Beacon Lane Ponds on the 8th, Spurn between the 9th and 13th and Tophill Low Reservoir from 14th to 26th September, suggesting that the same wandering individual was involved.

CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Eight records during the period, representing the second to ninth for the area. The first record occurred in 1967 with a single at Naburn Sewage Works between the 14th and 20th September.

Interestingly all but one records from the period were seen at Wheldrake Ings with the earliest record 21st July and latest 3rd November. Also one record at Melbourne.

1978 - One at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September.

1979 - At Wheldrake Ings a single bird on 27th and 28th October with two present on 29th October and between 1st and 3rd November.

1980 - Two on 14th August at Wheldrake Ings.

1984 A juvenile on 22nd September at Wheldrake Ings with a different juvenile between the 23rd and 28th September.

1985 - A juvenile at Wheldrake Ings between the 10th and 13th September.

1987 - An adult in full summer plumage at Melbourne on 21st July. This represented the only record away from Wheldrake during the period, and was also the earliest date on record.

Surprisingly this species remains an oddly erratic visitor to the York area. Most seem associated with exceptional influxes of the species to the east coast.

TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*)

Eighteen records during the period and recorded in all but two of the years. This hitherto rarity has been proved to be an almost annual spring passage wader with fourteen records in the period 23rd April to 26th May. There is one March record, two August, and one winter record in late November.

Away from the Lower Derwent other records have not surprisingly occurred from the River Ouse with birds recorded from Riccall, Red House Reservoir, Clifton and Middlethorpe Ings, with a single record on the River Wharfe at Ryther.

1977 - One in the Lower Derwent on 14th August.

1978 - One at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd May with two until the 7th. One south-south-west at Clifton on the 28th November.

1980 - Two at Wheldrake Ings on 6th May.

1981 - Again on 6th May two at Wheldrake Ings.

1982 - One at Red House Reservoir on 15th May.

1983 - Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd April at North Duffield Carrs on 16th May with two at the latter site on 14th May.

1984 - One at Aughton Ings on 6th March, Wheldrake Ings on 25th April and Middlethorpe Ings 3rd May.

1985 - Two at Aughton Ings on 26th May with a single at Riccall on 6th August.

1986 - Singles at Ryther on 24th April and Aughton Ings from 5th to 8th May, with two there on 7th.

May is the obvious month to search the 'ings' for this superb wader.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*)

Occurred in every year except 1977 and 1981. Predominantly a spring passage migrant with apparent peaks in early March and again in the latter part of April and early May.

Only three autumn records. Twelve at Riccall on 2nd September 1979, two at Bubwith on 12th July 1982 and a single the following year at Wheldrake Ings on 24th July. Interestingly there are two winter records. The first concerned two birds which flew into Wheldrake Ings during cold weather on the afternoon of January 6th, 1985 and fed with a Curlew (*Numenius*

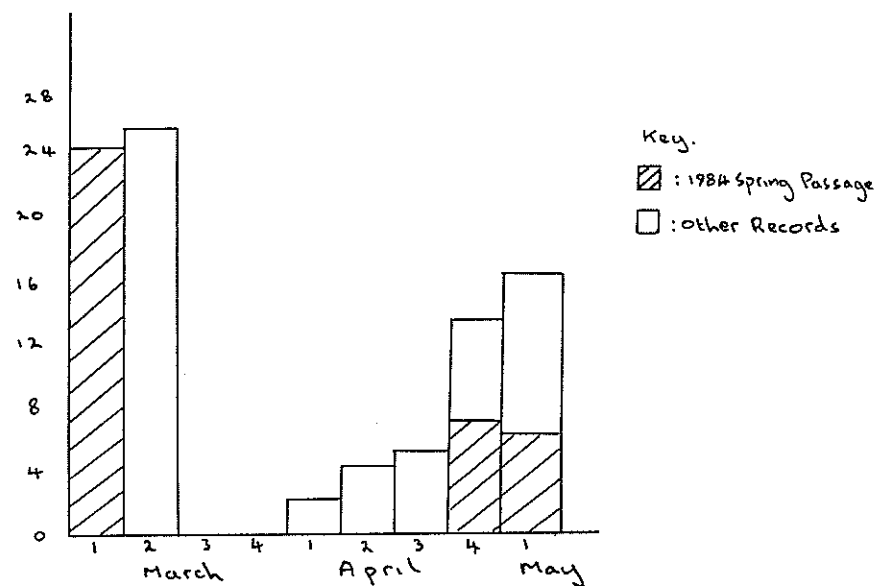
arquata) flock. A second a year later on 21st January when a single bird was seen, also at Wheldrake Ings.

All records bar four have been from the Lower Derwent vicinity, these being the 12 at Riccall in 1979, singles at Anchor Plain on 1st May and Church Fenton on 6th May in 1983 and one at Strensall Common on 28th April 1984.

The majority are single figure counts but 12 at Riccall in 1979, 25 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th March 1983 and 12 in the Lower Derwent on 1st Mrch 1984 were notable flocks.

The histogram below shows the spring passage (1977-1987) with the exceptional passage of 1984 highlighted.

Figure 3 Bar-tailed Godwit bird-days per seven day period March to May (1977-87)



WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*)

An annual passage migrant in varying numbers with total bird days for the period 116. In the Spring:Autumn ratio 1.27:1. The earliest record is one at Sherburn-in-Elmet on 13th April 1982 and by far the latest is one at Ozendyke Ings on 23rd October 1987.

The monthly breakdown for the period is shown below.

Month	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Bird days	6	56	3	20	28	2	1

From the above we see a peak of 56 bird-days in May. However, the exceptional spring passage in 1984 accounted for 37 of those in an eleven day period. July and August records quite often refer to long staying individuals, with the earliest returning bird recorded on 18th July in 1981 and 1987. Interestingly there are three June records all from the Lower Derwent: One at Wheldrake Ings on 4th June 1977, one at Sutton-on-Derwent on 16th June 1985 and one at North Duffield on 10th June 1986, and these probably relate to non-breeding birds heading north.

The overwhelming majority of records are from the Lower Derwent and Melbourne. There are however 12 records away from there: (2) Castle Howard, (1) Crockey Hill, (2) Naburn Sewage Works, (1) Skipwith Common, (2) Strensall Common, (1) Sherburn-in-Elmet, (1) River Foulness, Holme-on-Spalding Moor, (1) Ozendyke Ings and (1) Byland Abbey, Wass. The latter is the most northerly record for the area at a most unusual location.

SPOTTED REDSHANK (*Tringa erythropus*)

An annual passage migrant with total bird days for the period 128. In the spring:autumn ratio 1.91:1. The earliest record is a single at Storwood from 1st-4th March 1982 and the latest one at Wheldrake Ings on 5th September 1981.

Monthly breakdown for the period is shown below.

Month	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	TOTAL
Bird-days	12	37	28	7	4	34	6	128

From the above we see that passage starts in March with the earlier migrants building up to an April/May peak which accounts for 51% of total bird days. June birds probably represent late migrants, and return passage starts in July with the earliest returning bird on 10th July 1982. August sees the peak for autumn migration with 27% of total bird-days, and the few September records represent the last of the passage birds.

The vast majority of records are from the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal vicinity but there are eight records away from this area: one at Clifton Ings on 1st August 1978, one at Anchor Plain on 25th and 30th March 1981, one at Castle Howard on 10th July 1982, one at Elvington Airfield on both 7th and 8th April 1983 with three at Wharfe Ings area on 24th and 25th April of the same year. One at Ozendyke Ings on 24th April 1986. In 1987 singles at Castle Howard on 15th August and at Riccall on both 20th and 21st August.

RED NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*)

One record fell to a single observer and is the first record for the area.

1984 - One juvenile was attracted to the exceptionally low water levels on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th August, being present between 18.10 and 19.50 hrs.

GREY PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)

Two records during the period constituted the 2nd and 3rd records for the area. The first is a very poorly documented record in the 1974 Report which related to a bird seen at Dringhouses Pond for three days in August.

1978 - One at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th October.

1981 - One at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th March.

RUSSELL. S. SLACK
DECEMBER, 1988

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Y.O.C. Report 1981, pp.13-19.

CLASSIFIED LIST

The sequence and scientific nomenclature used is that of VOOS K.H.. List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species (1973 and 1977). B.O.U. 1977.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

One south in Lower Derwent at North Duffield Carrs on 12th February (TED).

Sixth record for the area.

A diver which flew east over Anchor Plain on 5th November was thought to be this species (JP).

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Bred at Brandsby (two pairs produced six young), Sand Hutton (one pair, two young), Roscarrs (one pair), Riccall (two pairs), Strensall Common (three pairs) and Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal (at least five pairs).

Relatively quiet in the first three months with five at Bolton Percy on 23rd January and up to three in Lower Derwent. The only other records during this period were one or two on Ouse above and below York and on the York Foss. Three at Wheldrake Ings on 4th April increased to six on 10th, nine on the 5th May with five pairs present on 20th.

Return passage in August with one at Wheldrake Ings on 6th, and two at Castle Howard from 27th August to month end. An adult and juvenile at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd September with one on 27th. Scarce in the last three months with one at Poppleton on 2nd October, two at Hagg Bridge on 17th, two at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd November with one at Poppleton on 13th. A bird at Wheldrake Ings from 10th November to 18th December when one on the River Ouse at Acaster Malbis.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Bred at Lower Derwent, North Howden Ponds, Foggathorpe Pond, Sturge's Ponds, Wiganthorpe Pond and Dringhouses Pond.

A bird along the river Ouse at Terry Avenue, Bishopthorpe, Fulford and Roscarrs, and singles at Barlow Grange and Dringhouses Pond were the only early records.

Birds began returning in early March with two at Wiganthorpe Pond and Castle Howard on 1st, six at Castle Howard on 8th increasing to nine by 19th. Five at Dringhouses Pond on 15th with singles at Poppleton, Wheldrake Ings, and Wharfe Ings during the month. Two at Wheldrake Ings on 31st were the first of a

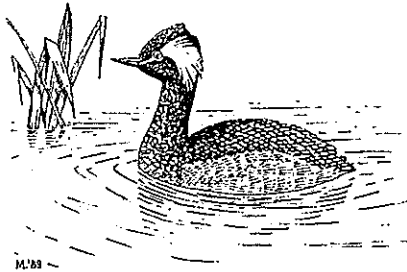
spring passage in the Lower Derwent with five on 4th April, six on 17th, twelve on 18th, nine on 4th May declining to two on 25th. During this period numbers continued to be low at Castle Howard where no breeding took place, with other records of singles at Poppleton and Sand Hutton. Four adults at Castle Howard on 16th July with three juveniles may have come from Wiganthorpe Pond. A juvenile at Clifton airfield from 27th July to 23rd August. An adult and immature at New Earswick on 7th September, an immature at Pond Head on 20th, two adults at Dringhouses Pond on 10th October and an adult at Castle Howard on 15th November were the only records in the last four months.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

One in Lower Derwent at Wheldrake Ings from 5th to 7th February (TED,SG,ML,DR,DW).

Eighth record for the area.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*



A well watched first summer bird at Wheldrake Ings from 16th April to 12th May (PP,TB,AB,RSS et al.) and again on 14th June (RSS,PP).

Fifth record for the area.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

An adult, dead for approximately one week, at Barlby on 14th February (TB). One over Brandsby on 3rd July (PH).

Fourth and fifth records for the area.

Addition to the 1985 Report: One flying up and down Kirkham Gorge in fog on 30th May (TED). Third record for the area.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The species was present in the Lower Derwent from the beginning of the year until the 25th May. January (25 bird days), February (27 bird days), March (26 bird days), April a remarkable (78 bird days) with a maximum of six on the 21st and seven on 23rd and 19 bird-days in May to 20th, with an adult showing characteristics of the sub-species *p.c.sinensis* on 6th. Third record for area of this sub-species. During this period singles also recorded at Dringhouses Pond, Castle Howard and River Ouse at Nunthorpe Ings.

In Lower Derwent, two at North Duffield Carrs and Bank Island on 21st October. One at Bank Island on 25th and at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th, with an immature in a garden in York from 21st to 28th (per York Evening Press).

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Sixteen pairs bred in Lower Derwent, a record year. Very scarce in the early months with records of single birds, from throughout the area, with two at Wheldrake Ings. A slight increase in April with two at Castle Howard and three at Wheldrake Ings. Numbers continued low until early post-breeding birds at Wheldrake Ings when ten on 26th May, 14 on 13th June with 23 thereon 18th, 21 on 9th July with 13 on 18th, comprising many juveniles.

Elsewhere, eight at Bielby on 23rd June and eight at Riccall on 3rd and 17th July. A concentration of records from the River Ouse at Roscarrs to Barlow with three on 17th August, five on 21st; eight on 4th September, nine on 17th with 15 on 24th. Numbers then declined with two remaining to year end.

An immature at Riccall on 17th July had all wing coverts strongly tinted rust-brown, but appeared normal in all other respects. It gave a superficial resemblance to Purple Heron.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

A record five pairs bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, three pairs were successful rearing six, five and three young. One pair bred at Roscarrs successfully. Single pairs were unsuccessful at Riccall and near Melbourne.

Records mainly in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area with maxima of 17 in January, six in February, seven in March, ten in April and 12 in May. Eight in October, and six in November and December.

Elsewhere, one or two at Roscarrs in the early part of the year, two at Melbourne on 22nd January, three at Barby on 8th February, one at Castle Howard 15th March, two over Bishopthorpe Ings on 27th August, one at Clifton Airfield from 24th October to 1st November and one at Poppleton on 15th December.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

All records from the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area, except for three at Kexby on 3rd January and 12 at Bolton Percy on 6th.

Monthly maxima were: 148 in January, 136 in February and 106 in March. Numbers declined to 46 on 21st March then no more until four on 17th April and one adult from 25th to 27th April the last.

The first returning birds were two adults at Bubwith on 25th October, increasing to 23 on 3rd November. 27 on 12th December declined to nine on 31st, resulting in a poor showing at the year end.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

A good showing with monthly maxima in Lower Derwent of: 55 in January, 47 in February and 50 in March, with 35 at Thorganby on 17th the last.

First returning birds were two adults and four immatures at North Duffield Carrs on 11th October with two adults and two immatures at Bank Island on 13th. Small parties of up to 16 birds and totalling 72 birds moved through the Lower Derwent valley until the 4th November, 20 at Bubwith on 25th and 26th indicated wintering birds returning, increasing steadily to 41 by 10th December which remained to year end.

The only record away from Lower Derwent was a party of five flying north at Selby on 27th January.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 27th February (GO). Two adults with three immatures of the race *A.f.rossicus* at Wheldrake Ings on 10th December (TED), two of the nominate race on 22nd (DR) with three, which behaved like new arrivals on 29th (RSS). This species must now be viewed as an annual winter visitor to the Lower Derwent.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchos*

In the Lower Derwent, 55 north west on 2nd January, then unusually, feeding parties of 21 on 3rd, 6th and 7th, 45 on 20th with 50 on 24th. Up to three in February, one in March, and ten in April with the last two on 25th May. The only late records were of one on 29th and two on 30th December.

Elsewhere: a single at Castle Howard on 2nd and 31st January to 2nd February, then 22nd March to 18th July. One overhead with Greylags at Newbrugh on 26th September. Early incoming migrants were 30 west over Bishopthorpe on 30th.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

One at Castle Howard on 5th January, two at Wheldrake Ings from 24th to 27th, and one at Castle Howard on 2nd February. Two adults and an immature at Wheldrake Ings on 5th December, with one adult remaining to 30th. All records refer to nominate race birds.

GOOSE sp *Anser* sp

40 south east over Hobmoor on 6th December.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Thirty pairs bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal but only seven broods totalling 40 young seen. Bred at Castle Howard where there were 30 adults and 11 young on 24th June.

Monthly maxima at the two main haunts were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lower Derwent/ Pock. Canal	460	300	275	40	30	78	148	210	240	220	389	210
Castle Howard	n/c	n/c	174	200	n/c	41	n/c	3	n/c	131	89	177

A steadying of numbers after the previous years' increases.

Elsewhere: reported in small numbers from Roscarrrs, Poppleton, Fulford, Skipwith Common and Newbrugh. 120 south at Thornton on 22nd November was the only count of flocks seen regularly flying off the Wolds at dusk during autumn, presumably birds returning to the Lower Derwent after feeding.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

The only report this year was of a bird showing characteristics of the race *A.c.atlanticus*, Greater Snow Goose, at Wheldrake Ings on 21st June (DW).

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and Brandsby.

Monthly maxima at the two main haunts were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lower Derwent/ Pock. Canal	450	662	350	26	10	35	52	130	129	229	315	280
Castle Howard	n/c	n/c	160	20	n/c	n/c	n/c	28	n/c	108	n/c	149

The count in February was caused by birds concentrating due to the icing up of the Ings and was a new record number.

Elsewhere reported in small numbers from twelve sites, with maxima of 54 at Sand Hutton on 30th August and 58 west over Brandsby on 25th September.

A bird on 3rd January at Wheldrake Ings showed characteristics of one of the smaller races, with shorter neck, smaller body, dark breast, reduced chinstrap, stubby bill and rounder head shape. The race was not discernible but thought not to be *minima*, perhaps a dark *hutchinsii* or *parvipes*. (RSS).

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

All records from Lower Derwent. A single bird present from 18th January to 3rd February, with two on 31st January. One on 20th April and two on 13th June. One on 5th December. All these probably escapes. However, a flock of 35 circling on 24th October may have been wild birds (AF).

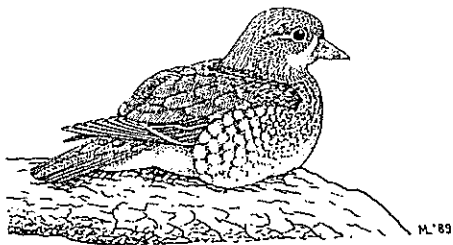
SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

A poor breeding season in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with only c.16 pairs. Three pairs bred at Riccall, one pair failed but the others raised five and nine young.

Two in the Lower Derwent on 10th January, increasing to ten on 25th and 16 on 29th. A poor spring passage with 35 in February and 32 in March. The first young seen on 24th May. Seventeen adults with five young on 18th June with a pair and thirteen ducklings on 21st and possibly the same pair with eight young on 5th to 10th July. Six immatures on 21st with the last on 24th. One in Lower Derwent on 1st November increasing to four next day which remained to 5th, one on the 28th and two from 8th to 22nd December, three on 28th increasing to 16 on 31st.

Elsewhere: Two at Riccall on 5th January, one at Roscarrrs on 28th, nine at Riccall on 10th March, two at Ryther on 3rd April and three at Wharfe Ings on 4th, with two at Poppleton on 12th and Spaldington on 25th. One in Skipwith Village on 8th June and two at Riccall on 26th August.

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*



A female at Newbrugh on 7th May (JP), Wheldrake Ings on 4th July (TED), and Newbrugh on 9th August (PWGC) was presumably the same wandering bird.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Nine pairs summered in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, no proof of breeding but most probably attempted to do so.

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area: 6300 in January, 6100 in February, 5500 in March, 1250 in April, 1000 in October, 5000 in November and 5000 in December. An excellent series of counts. Elsewhere small numbers from Wharfe Ings, Dringhouses Pond, Poppleton, Castle Howard, Bolton Percy and Kexby. A pair with flying young at Riccall on 2nd July were thought to have bred locally (TB) - possibly in Lower Derwent.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Recorded regularly in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area from 9th January to year-end, mainly in low single figures but eight at Wheldrake Ings on 14th February, ten on 27th and 28th, 11 on 2nd March and seven on 12th. At least nine pairs located during May and June, most if not all of which nested. A female with three ducklings on 20th June and thirteen adults with thirteen ducklings on 21st. Six on 19th October, four on 5th and 21st November and 13 on 5th and 19th December, with 16 on 20th and 28th and 19 on 31st as year end maxima.

Elsewhere: two males at Riccall on 25th October and one at Castle Howard on 29th December.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Ten pairs bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal and single pairs at Skipwith Common and Crook Moor, Skipwith.

The main concentration again came from the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal: 1300 in January, 3620 in February, 3200 in March, 1000 in April, 300 in September, 730 in October, 1800 in November and 1500 in December. A return to normal after last year's poor showing.

Small numbers also recorded from: Bolton Percy Ings, Wharfe Ings, Acaster Selby, Naburn Sewage Works, Fulford Ings, Castle Howard and Kexby.

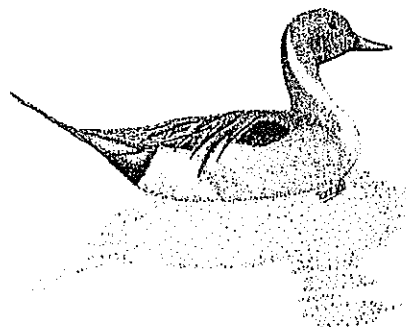
MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

At least 300 pairs bred in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal. In the Lower Derwent /Pocklington Canal area wintering numbers were slightly down with 3000 in January, 2850 in February, 2600 in March decreasing to 400 in April. Numbers began to increase by the end of July with 300 on 31st, 400 in August, 750 in

September, 600 in October, 2200 in November and 2800 in December.

Small numbers from elsewhere at Clifton Ings, Fulford, Dringhouses Pond, Foss Island, Bishopthorpe Ings, Low Moor, York University, Thornton, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge, Clifton Airfield, New Earswick, and Sturge's Pond. 400 at Skipwith Common on 18th October. No counts from Castle Howard. A male at Wheldrake Ings on 6th November had a completely bright orange bill (TED,EBB).

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*



Present in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area from early January, but again numbers were rather lower than usual with the exception of 78 on 15th March. Twenty eight in January, 36 in February, with pairs seen throughout the Ings in April and late May, the last being on 1st June. A male in eclipse plumage at Wheldrake Ings on 19th and 24th August. First returning bird was an immature male on 8th October, with five on 30th. Fifteen on 5th and 17th November and up to 20 during December.

A pair at Bolton Percy Ings on 23rd October.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

A very poor showing. All records from Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with a very early bird on 15th March (GO) and a pair from 11th to 17th April (FWO,TB,ML,TED et al.). A female on 28th June was a surprise find (TED) in view of the lack of spring records.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

A good breeding season in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with probably 60 pairs breeding. Many broods seen with the largest concentration being a party of 62 ducklings being shepherded by 11 females on 20th June. Outside the breeding season numbers in

the Lower Derwent were: up to six in January, 50 in February, 70 in March, 120 in April. Ten in October, 40 in November and 35 in December.

Few reports from elsewhere with three at Wharfe Ings on 4th April, three at Kexby on the 11th and a pair at Roscarrrs on 23rd, a single bird at Askham Bog on 24th July, seven at Castle Howard on 16th October and a male at Bolton Percy Ings on 23rd.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

A record year in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with eight pairs breeding at least four of which were successful. A pair bred successfully in North Duffield about 1Km from the Ings.

Larger counts in winter from Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings were: 162 on 7th January, with 200 on 28th, 245 on 14th February, 207 on 15th March reducing to 33 on 5th April. Smaller numbers at the year end with 48 on 25th October, 37 on 2nd November with 70 on 13th December.

Elsewhere: small single figures from the River Ouse at Fulford, York centre and Poppleton, Roscarrrs and Stearsby, with 15 at Dringhouses Pond on 20th February, 34 at Castle Howard from 1st to 9th March and 25 there on 31st December.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

An excellent breeding season in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with probably 45 pairs breeding, many of which were successful. Elsewhere four pairs bred at York University and single pairs on the Foss in York, at Heworth and Strensall Common. Probably bred at Skipwith Common.

Wintering numbers remained low with 55 in Lower Derwent on 5th January, parties of up to 41 were seen at six sites along the River Ouse from 12th to 25th. 110 in Lower Derwent on 14th February, 170 on 15th March and 120 on 2nd April. Numbers at the year end were 30 in Lower Derwent on 5th November and 80 there on 31st December.

Away from the River Ouse and Lower Derwent, 49 at York University on 7th February, 22 at Dringhouses Pond on 19th, and ten at Castle Howard on 31st December. Single figures from Brandsby, New Earswick, Clifton Airfield, Newbrugh and Sand Hutton.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

A female on the River Ouse at Poppleton on 22nd January (DA), one at Wheldrake Ings on 20th April (TB) and a female in the company of a Tufted Duck at Riccall on 7th August (TB). A well watched female at Bank Island from 21st to 29th October (DW, TED, DR, RSS).

Addition to 1985 report: a female at Wheldrake Ings on 6th April (DW).

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

A female at Newton Mask and Kexby on the morning of 8th April eventually flew west. The previous evening had seen torrential rain and easterly gales (RSS).

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

The largest counts were in Lower Derwent with 23 in January, 53 in February, 43 in March and 22 in April with the last being two immatures on 27th.

The first returning birds were three redheads on 2nd November, increasing to 16 on 6th, then single figures until 13 on 31st December. Elsewhere away from the Derwent Valley up to five birds at Dringhouses Pond, Fulford Ings, Middlethorpe Ings, Acaster Malbis, Clifton Ings, and Poppleton.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE *Bucephala islandica*

A female in Lower Derwent at Wheldrake Ings from 2nd to 14th November (TB, TED, RSS, DW et al.). First record for the area.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*

A male at Barlow Village on 15th January (DRC), and a female at Roscarrrs on 20th January and 11th March (TB). Nine (5m & 4rh) in Lower Derwent on 20th January started a series of records here. Mostly one or two redheads with the exceptions of two males and two redheads on 1st February, a male with two redheads on 3rd and 5th, with the last two redheads on 22nd March; a total of 55 bird days.

Addition to 1985 Report: a drake at Bolton Percy Ings on 3rd February (DW).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Single redheads in Lower Derwent at Wheldrake Ings on 12th March (TED), and on 21st and 22nd (PP, TB, TED).

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Largest counts were 21 at Barlow Village on 15th January, 28 at Roscarrrs on 16th, 16 at Wharfe Ings on 24th, 23 in Lower Derwent next day, 55 in Lower Derwent on 15th February, 16 at Barlow Village on 17th, 46 at Wharfe Ings on 21st, 78 at Castle Howard on 8th March when 64 in Lower Derwent and 38 at Wharfe Ings on 15th April. Last spring birds were two in Lower Derwent

on 26th April.

A very early returning female at Riccall from 21st July to 25th August. As several pairs now breed to the north of the area perhaps earlier birds may now turn up more often. Seven redheads at Castle Howard on 12th September, a male at Poppleton on 12th October and a redhead at Wheldrake Ings on 5th November were presumably passing through. The main arrival began late with six at Wheldrake Ings on 6th December when 33 at Castle Howard, with 16 in Lower Derwent on 9th. Few stayed with only four by year end at Wheldrake Ings.

Elsewhere up to six birds at York University, Cliffe Bend, Bolton Percy, Sturge's Pond and the River Ouse at Poppleton and New Walk, York.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

A very early female in Lower Derwent at Wheldrake Ings on 6th February (ML,JG). A male from 1st to 13th April with two males and a female next day (TED,DW,DR). A male on 16th and 17th was joined by another male on 17th and a female on 19th (TED,PP,CR). The last were a male and three females on 27th May (RSS). No sign of breeding but this species can be extremely secretive.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

A bird picked up freshly dead, having been hit by a car, at Easingwold on 1st April (per D. Astley).

Second record for area. The only other record was in winter 1973/4.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

All records of cream crowns in Lower Derwent on 20th April (TED,TB,SRR,NS), 28th and 29th (PP,TED), 7th May (TED) and 11th and 12th May (TED,PP).

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

A very poor year with no spring records. The only two were ringtails in Lower Derwent at Wheldrake Ings on 21st October and Ellerton on 2nd December (TED).

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

An immature female at Wheldrake Ings on 16th and 17th June (TED,DW,PP). The bird was later re-located at North Duffield Carrs on 22nd (EBB), and was watched by many visitors there, with sightings also at Ellerton, Aughton and Bubwith. The bird was finally seen flying south on 20th August (FWO). Third record for the area.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

One at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd April (PP) and 14th (TED/EBB). A pair displaying at a site on 21st and 22nd. Name of observer and site withheld. A male west at North Duffield Carrs on 13th August (TED,EBB).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Breeding confirmed at Lower Derwent, Bielby, Laytham, Naburn and Bishop Wood.

Mainly singles recorded at 46 sites, scattered throughout the area, in all months, although numbers were well down on the previous year. Interesting prey items this year included a Sand Martin at Castle Howard on 19th May (DR).

The Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal produced 60% of all records. Numbers were well down on 1986, perhaps due to the harsh early-year weather. The bird day figures perhaps indicate a flush of young birds in July and a suggestion of passage in September and October.

Monthly bird days in the area were as follows

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	5	11	4	5	6	13	6	11	21	5	5

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

One at Castle Howard on 2nd and 3rd June (per TB) and 19th (per TED). One at Newbrugh from August to 17th September (PH) was considered to be different from the bird at Pond Head on 20th September (RSS,TB,DR) and at Newbrugh from 22nd to 27th (ML,FWO).

A bird found in distress at Kirbymoorside in September was released at Bottom Lake, Ampleforth. The bird had a Swedish ring on, but the bird at Newbrugh on 22nd was not ringed (per JP).

BUZZARD sp *Buteo sp.*

One soaring over Lower Derwent on 11th October (NH).

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Despite the lack of records the bird is widespread and a common breeding bird.

A pair at YCL at Selby had six young on the 16th April which would give a laying date of approximately 19th March (TB).

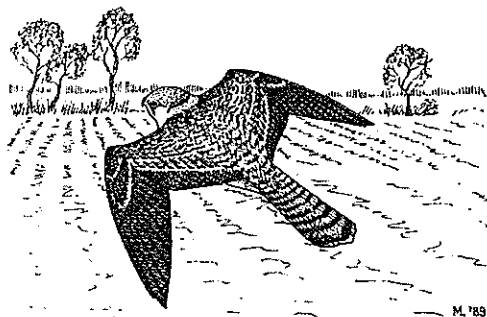
Four juveniles with two juvenile Sparrowhawks, were playing, chasing and talon grappling at North Duffield Carrs on 9th September. At one stage they ganged up on three Magpies and chased them around for a few minutes (TED).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

A female at Barlow Grange on 24th January. One at Dringhouses Pond on 25th February, Wheldrake Ings on 15th March and a female at Brandsby on 21st March. A poor spring.

The first returning bird at North Duffield Carrs on 13th August (scared off the moors after the 'glorious twelfth?'). One at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd October, Riccall on 5th November, Haxby on 28th, and at North Duffield Carrs on 20th December.

RED -FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*



A juvenile at Roscarrs/Barlow Grange on 16th September (TB).

First record for the area.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

One dead (hit window) at Brayton in early June (per TED), at High Farm, Brandsby on 18th June (per PH), Ampleforth on 20th (RSS,TB), Askham Bog on 29th (JHL et al.), and presumably the same west there on 30th with two south there on 2nd July (AHF). One at Huntington (AB) and Rowntrees on 13th (MR). One shot at Clifton Airfield on 19th July was taken into care (per TED). The last was at North Duffield Carrs on 29th (FWO). The best series of records ever for this species, involving at least six birds.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

A good year, with all records from Lower Derwent, with a bird north-east at Wheldrake Ings on 20th May (PP) the only spring record.

An immature female at Wheldrake Ings on 17th November (TED), 7th December (DW), and 10th (TED), with a male at Aughton on 26th (TED). Now seemingly a regular winter visitor to Lower Derwent. A very welcome situation.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

The bird is common in the Northern squares of 57, 67 and 77, but the status is becoming confused by the large number of hybrids that are being released for shooting (PH).

The largest covies were: 15 at Aughton on 15th January with 20 there on 25th, 26 at Riccall on 26th September, 14 at North Duffield Carrs on 29th October and nine at Scoreby on 20th November.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Although few records received there appears to be a slight increase in the Lower Derwent (TED), but it is not now common in the northern squares (PH). The only large covies were 14 at Poppleton on 2nd January, 24 at Wistow Lordship on 24th September and 33 at Crockey Hill on 1st November.

A bird showing characteristics of the extremely rare "montana" morph was seen at Fulford Golf Course on 30th June (JHL). There is one previous record of this morph, at Sutton Common in late 1982 and Hagg Bridge in early 1983.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

The best year since 1983, with singing males at Wheldrake Ings on 6th May (DW), Fangfoss on 7th (TW,VW), Riccall on 7th June, with two at Bielby on 23rd (PP). One at North Duffield Carrs on 24th, Bielby on 28th, Brighton on 29th and Newton Mask on 30th (TED). In July, at Riccall throughout the month, North Duffield Carrs on 2nd, 5th and 6th, Wheldrake Ings on 5th (TED,EBB), Bishopthorpe from 6th to 22nd (JG,DW,BGP), Nunnington on 7th (JP), Wheldrake Ings on 9th and 12th (TED/EBB), with two at East Cottingwith on 30th (per TED). One seen at North Duffield Carrs on 1st August (TED), Wheldrake Ings on 5th September, and the last near Wilberfoss on 21st (NS).

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

The four all-white birds at Castle Howard at the end of 1986

were again there on 4th March, with other singles at Wistow on 7th February, Thorganby on 30th September and 7th October, when one at Melbourne. A leucistic bird at Aughton on 1st October. The only melanistic records were of males at Sand Hutton on 8th April and at Skipwith on 17th November. No counts this year.

REEVE'S PHEASANT *Syrnaticus reevesi*

A male at Scrayingham on 5th May (JG). First record for the area.

GOLDEN PHEASANT *Chrysolophus pictus*

A male at Bishopthorpe Palace on 25th April and a female with seven chicks on 4th June (per Mrs.R.Habgood). First breeding record for the area.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Two pairs bred at Fulford Ings. In the early part of the year one regularly at Wheldrake Ings from 2nd January to 14th March with two on 21st January and one at Fulford Ings on 3rd February. One calling at Roscarrrs on 24th April.

One calling at Roscarrrs from October to year end. One at Wheldrake Ings on 25th October and 2nd November with three from 4th to 6th, two on 10th, one on 15th and 13th December.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

Three pairs probably bred in Lower Derwent. The best year ever with two singing males at Thorganby on 5th May, and one there throughout June and July (per TED). Singing males at Wheldrake Ings from 13th June until 15th July (DR,TB,TED,EBB et al.), with two on 13th, 14th, 20th, 23rd and 24th June and 2nd, 4th and 5th July (TED,EBB,DW).

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Largest counts were: 23 at Brayton Bridge on 29th January and at Bishopthorpe on 31st, with 17 at Barlby Tip on 11th March, 46 at Melbourne Carrot Wash on 25th September and 32 at Melbourne on 8th October.

A bird found dead at Naburn Sewage Works on 21st January, had been ringed at Peakirk, Cambridgeshire on 25th February 1986, 150km away.

Considered to have declined between Kexby and Stamford Bridge possibly due to predation by Mink. (RSS)

COOT *Fulica atra*

A good breeding season in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with c.150 pairs attempting breeding.

Winter numbers were rather low however in the Lower Derwent with 40 in January, 110 in February, 50 in November and 110 in December.

Elsewhere: 41 at Sand Hutton Pool on 2nd August and 40 at Pond Head on 20th September.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

An average breeding season, with eight pairs in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal district; along the Ouse below York single pairs bred at Naburn, Bishopthorpe and Barlby (at this last site eggs were destroyed by agricultural machinery). Additionally, an anxious pair at Riccall in June were probably breeding. Disappointingly, however, no confirmed breeding records came from the Lower Wharfe, despite the regular presence of up to two birds in late March and April. As regards the Ouse above York, a pair possibly bred at Poppleton. What were presumably wandering individuals were noted at Acaster Malbis, Hobmoor, Osbaldwick, Clifton Airfield and Selby in the period April to June.

Spring arrival was bang on time, with a single calling in darkness at Osbaldwick on 28th February (DR) preceding one at Wheldrake Ings on 1st March and two at North Duffield Carrs two days later; by 10th March seven were in the Lower Derwent.

By mid-July the vast majority of local breeding birds had departed. The latter half of that month saw a fair passage through the Lower Derwent, with 54 bird-days (maximum ten at North Duffield Carrs on 19th July). The last two birds of the year were at Aughton on 26th July - an early departure (TED).

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

With only three pairs nesting at two sites at Riccall it seems that the York area's breeding population has stabilized at a low level; contrast this with the situation in 1981 when there were eight pairs at seven sites. One displayed at Naburn in May and there was a trickle of birds through Clifton Airfield, but no indications of breeding here or elsewhere.

Of course the breeding population is very much dependent on spring passage, which was admittedly very poor in 1987. The first, flying south at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April (DW) constitutes the latest arrival of this species in the present decade; subsequently only 13 bird-days in the Lower Derwent to 27th May, with a maximum of three at Aughton on 25th April. A single was observed at the rather unexpected locality of York Station on 26th April, while the first bird arrived at Riccall the next day. Clifton Airfield produced 11 bird-days between

2nd May and 20th June, with a maximum of six on the first date.

Barring a single at Clifton Airfield on 12th July, all autumn records came from Melbourne and Riccall. Melbourne yielded 39 bird-days in July (max. six on 14th), one in August, and two in September, while Riccall produced 104 bird-days in July (max. 20 on 10th (TB), six in August and one in September. The last of the year was a juvenile at Riccall on 6th September (TB).

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

In comparison with the previous year an abysmal spring showing. A pair arrived at Riccall on 1st April (PP), but thereafter no more recorded until 26th April, when a single was noted at Aughton. Spring passage in the Derwent totalled only seven bird-days (all singles) up until 9th May.

A pair present at Riccall from April possibly bred, as indicated by their behaviour in June (PP). A single displayed over flooded arable north of Wheldrake Ings reserve on 28th April, but subsequently departed.

Only one autumn record, a single at North Duffield Carrs on 8th July (TED).

KENTISH PLOVER *Charadrius alexandrinus*

A female seen briefly but at close quarters on small pools by the Ouse at Riccall on 4th June constitutes the third record for the YOC area, and the second in successive springs (TB). All three records have referred to females.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Once again an unspectacular year; numbers never really recovered after January's cold snap and spring passage was unremarkable. Healthy autumn numbers were recorded, but early winter populations were generally disappointing. As usual, all significant counts came from the southern half of the recording area, with just a scattering of small flocks elsewhere (around Scampston, Alne and Strensall, for example). The year's records underline once more the importance of the Lower Derwent and the Wharfe/Ouse confluence for this species.

A flock of 3200 at Wistow Lordship on 2nd January proved to be the largest of the year in the York Area. During the next ten days flocks of 100-300 were noted at Wheldrake Ings, Ryther, Acaster Malbis and Bishopthorpe, but subsequent cold weather ensured the virtual desertion of the area for three weeks. A single at Wheldrake Ings on 24th was the only record for the remainder of January.

Reoccupation by wintering flocks was evident in February, though numbers were much smaller than normal, the only three figure counts coming from North Duffield Carrs, which held 600 on 14th

and 300 on 19th. The same site held 300 on 3rd March. Flocks of 150 were at Wheldrake Ings in mid-month and Wistow Lordship, with 300 at Wheldrake Ings on 30th.

April saw a poor spring passage, by far the largest flock being the 550 which spent four days at Riccall from 3rd. 350 at Scoreby on the 8th. Wheldrake Ings held 200+ on 10th and 150 on 14th, 120 flew east at Aughton on 18th while 200 of the northern race '*altifrons*' were at East Cottingwith on 19th. Early May produced five records of small parties (up to six birds) of '*altifrons*' in the Lower Derwent, the last being four at Aughton on 16th (TED).

On 30th June singles were noted in Lower Derwent at Wheldrake Ings (DW) and Thorganby (TED), heralding the return movement. There were numerous July records, most involving small parties; apart from 45 at Wistow Lordship on 10th all larger counts came from the Aughton/Bubwith/North Duffield Carrs district, which regularly held over 50 birds from 4th - maxima here were 103 on 8th, 155 on 15th and 100 on 17th and 18th. This area yielded the only significant August reports, with 148 on 1st and 260 on 3rd.

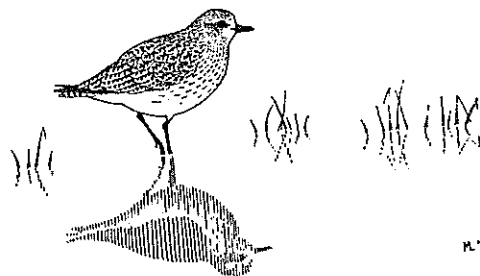
September saw a welcome increase in records from elsewhere, though the Lower Derwent was apparently virtually deserted, with 40 at Ellerton on 25th being the only record of note from the Valley. However, Roscarrrs held 64 on 2nd, 100 on 5th and 300 on 17th; Barlow Grange 400 on 9th, Pocklington Airfield 1250 on 10th, and Wistow 60 on 17th.

In October flocks of 30-50 were noted at Brighton, East Cottingwith, Butterwick, Naburn and Acomb, with 185 at Knapton on 11th. The last week of the month saw the arrival of a much larger aggregation at North Duffield Carrs, which held 500 on 24th, 1200 on 28th and 30th, and a peak of 1500 on 29th. This site seems to have been largely abandoned in November, with (correspondingly?) larger numbers further up the valley, 1200 at Wheldrake Ings on 5th, with 800 there on 11th and 400 on 20th, and 500 at Thorganby on 27th. Elsewhere, there were 226 at Roscarrrs on 4th, 130 at Poppleton on 12th and 600 at Copmanthorpe on 14th.

With the exception of 100 at Huntington on 23rd, and 182 at Roscarrrs on 30th, all notable December flocks were in the Lower Derwent. Following 800 at Bubwith on 3rd, up to 800 spent the second half of the month at Wheldrake Ings, while numbers at North Duffield Carrs peaked at 2000 on 23rd.

One observer commented on this species' total absence from a once-regular site near Bishopthorpe, the field having been 'improved' (PWC); an indication of the birds' dependence on traditional, permanent pastures in winter. Such fields support relatively high concentrations of soil invertebrates (Winter Atlas).

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*



M. 83

The year produced six records of this wader, which now appears annually. A concentrated batch of records came in early April, with one at Riccall on 3rd and 4th, a party of five at North Duffield on 6th, and a single there on 8th. At the other end of the year, a single flew south at Wheldrake Ings on 17th October, and one was present at the same site on 13th December. This year's records confirm the spring bias of this species' pattern of occurrence; April and May now account for 61% of records (43 out of 70 bird-days).

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

A good year, with wintering and post-breeding numbers apparently well up on those of 1986.

January began fairly quietly, with 1000 at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd, 600 at Bishopthorpe the same day, and 200 at Poppleton on 7th. The onset of severe weather resulted in the desertion of the York Area for a fortnight from 8th: four had returned to Wheldrake Ings by 22nd, increasing to 95 by 26th.

Milder weather in February prompted a large scale re-occupation of the Lower Derwent: contrast this with the scarcity of Golden Plover in the same period. Wheldrake Ings held 250 on 7th, 3000 on 14th and 2500 on 27th. There were 1500 at North Duffield Carrs on 14th and 1700 there on 27th. Good numbers remained through much of March, with North Duffield Carrs holding 1000 on 3rd, 1150 on 9th and 600 on 19th. 1500 were at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd, while a total of 3300 was present in the Lower Derwent on 10th. A flock of 500 flying north over Brayton on 26th was the last major count of the spring.

Territorial behaviour by breeding pairs was observed from 2nd March at Middlethorpe Ings, 11th at Poppleton and 21st at Stearsby. Bred in apparently normal numbers; for example 12 pairs on Tilmire. An adult was observed with chicks at Thornton on the extremely late dates of 23rd and 26th July.

The first post-breeding flock was noted at Wheldrake on 16th June, with 300 there on 18th and 250 on 28th; 80 were on Tilmire on 30th. These flocks peaked, as expected, in July, when some excellent counts were obtained, possibly indicating a good breeding season. Numbers involved in the Lower Derwent included 550 on 4th, 2000 on 8th, 1200 on 18th, 1370 at Acaster Malbis on 13th, and 50 at Poppleton on 26th.

In August flocks declined in size and frequency, though 1000 were at Acaster Malbis on 6th. Few were in the Derwent, but flocks of 200 were noted at Brighton, Marton, and Roscarrrs. The largest September gatherings were at Wheldrake Ings (200 on 5th and 29th), Roscarrrs (370 on 5th), Pocklington Airfield (450 on 12th), Clifton Ings (210 on 13th) and Ellerton (200 on 25th).

October saw a sizeable influx, with numbers at North Duffield Carrs increasing from 600 on 11th to 1000 by 21st and 2000 at the month-end. Wheldrake held 1000 on 17th and 19th and an excellent 3000 on 29th. Elsewhere, 330 were at Roscarrrs on 15th, 800 at Knaption on 22nd, 800+ at Newton-on-Derwent on 24th, and 500 at Wharfe Ings on 23rd.

Good numbers remained in early November, with 2980 at the southern end of the Lower Derwent on 1st, and 3000 at Wheldrake Ings on 5th. Other notable flocks included 470 at Flaxton on 3rd, 200 at Copmanthorpe on 14th, and 200 at Bishopthorpe on 20th. In December, 2000 were regular at Wheldrake Ings, with a peak of 4000 there on 7th. 1200 were at Bubwith on 3rd, and 2500 at North Duffield Carrs on 23rd. Elsewhere, 500 were counted at Bishopthorpe on 4th.

STINT sp

A stint seen in company with Dunlin at Wheldrake Ings on 10th November was thought to be Little, but definite identification was impossible (TED,DW).

KNOT *Calidris canuta*

Three April records in Lower Derwent, all of singles; one at North Duffield Carrs on 8th (TED) was followed by another at Aughton from 10th to 12th (TB,DR,RSS) and one at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings on 24th (DR). Spring appearances appear to be the norm in the York Area. The species has now occurred in all but one of the last ten years.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

An adult in full summer plumage at Melbourne on 21st July (TED,EBB) constitutes the ninth record for the York Recording Area, and the first for July.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

The species was present in fair numbers in the Lower Derwent during the first three months of the year, and spring passage was likewise reasonable.

Return movement was sparse, though marginally better than in the preceding two years. Numbers in the late autumn/early winter period were generally disappointing.

Aughton produced by far the largest January count, with 210 on 26th; 30 were at Wheldrake Ings on 7th and 60 at North Duffield Carrs on 28th. Elsewhere, two were at Ryther on 6th, and, during the hard weather, two at Roscarrs on 15th and one at Poppleton on 17th. In February, North Duffield Carrs held 340 on 14th and 65 on 19th, while 30 were at Wheldrake Ings on 7th. Early March yielded easily the largest counts of the year, with 500 at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd, 730 in the Lower Derwent on 10th, and 300+ on the Bubwith-Ellerton stretch on 11th. Thereafter numbers declined rapidly as the wintering population departed: at Wheldrake Ings, 90 on 12th had decreased to three on 15th and two on 18th.

Passage in April was confined to the Lower Derwent, and spanned the entire month. Maxima were 60 at Wheldrake Ings on 21st, 50 at North Duffield Carrs on 6th, and 30 at Aughton on 10th. In May a party of 12 at North Duffield Carrs on 1st was followed by four singles in the Lower Derwent, while at Riccall two were noted on 18th with one there the next day. Last of spring were five at Wheldrake Ings on 1st June (TED).

Apart from a single at Clifton Lake on 2nd August, autumn passage was noted at only two sites - Riccall and Melbourne. At the former there were 17 bird-days between 8th July and 3rd August, maximum being two on 17th July. At Melbourne there were 13 bird-days between 25th July and 13th August; maximum two on the latter date.

No records at all were submitted for the next eight weeks until a single was seen at North Duffield Carrs on 15th October, with six there on 30th. Almost as few present in November, maximum being 15 at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd. Numbers did increase somewhat in December, with maxima of 90 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th and 50 at North Duffield Carrs on 23rd, with 40 there on 25th, but were still extremely disappointing.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Once again probably bred in the Lower Derwent, this being the culmination of a truly exceptional spring passage, probably the best on record: over 100 were counted on several dates in April, with a maximum of 256 on 19th. At one site numbers increased from 27 on 15th to 123 on 17th, 141 on 19th and 173 on 21st and 22nd. Thereafter numbers declined abruptly, though at least one pair remained throughout May and a male into June. A second site held up to 100 in the last week of April; here ten remained to lek in mid-May. A third site held up to 100 in

mid-April, and a fourth a maximum of 22 on 18th April, though the possibility of some movement between these various sites must of course be remembered. Elsewhere in April, a reeve was at Ozendyke Ings on 11th and a single at Riccall on 27th. All in all an immensely encouraging spring and surely it is now only a matter of time before the species is proved to breed in the Lower Derwent.

During the first three months of the year all records came from the Lower Derwent, where numbers were generally slightly below average; no double figure counts were submitted. Maxima were five on 2nd January, nine on 27th February and nine on 11th March.

Typically, autumn passage was rather sparse: 11 July bird-days in the Lower Derwent and two at Riccall. The only August record involved a juvenile at Riccall between 3rd and 14th. In September, a single at Bank Island on 1st was followed by one to two at Melbourne on 3rd to 5th, two adult males at Riccall on 24th and 25th, and three adult males at Wistow Lordship from 29th (present to 16th October).

All subsequent reports for the last three months of the year came from the Lower Derwent, and the presence of a healthy wintering population is suggested by the following maxima: 18 at North Duffield Carrs on 28th October; 16 at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd November, and in December, 25 at Bubwith on 3rd, 20 at North Duffield Carrs on 25th with 20 at Wheldrake Ings the nextday and 23 there on 31st.

JACK SNIBE *Lymnocyptes minima*

Only five records were received, making 1987 the worst year of the present decade for this species; for example, no records at all from Fulford Ings, previously something of a stronghold for Jack Snipe in the York Area. All records involved singles: at Aughton on 26th February, Castle Howard on 9th April, Routh Lodge, Bielby on 21st September, and Wheldrake Ings on 9th and 13th December.

SNIBE *Gallinago gallinago*

Bred at apparently normal densities in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, sample counts revealing probably 50 pairs at Wheldrake Ings and around 25 at Aughton. Elsewhere the species bred at Fulford Ings (five pairs), Tilmire, Wharfe Ings and Kelfield Ings, and probably bred at Kexby and Laytham. Again a dearth of breeding-season records from the northern half of the recording area.

Generally scarce in the late winter period, January maxima including 15 at Clifton Ings on 10th, 12 at Hobmoor on 14th, and 30 at Fulford Ings on 30th. In February, 37 were counted at Fulford Ings on 6th and 23 at Bubwith on 19th. A count at a usually productive marsh on Strensall Common yielded only 12 birds on 1st March, while later in the month 127 were noted at

Fulford Ings on 13th and 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th.

No post-breeding flocks were reported, but in September numbers had begun to build up at Wheldrake Ings with 23 on 5th increasing to 75 on 17th. October gatherings included 57 at Wheldrake Ings on 19th and 43 at North Duffield Carrs on 22nd. All significant November counts came from Wheldrake Ings and were easily the largest of 1987; 150 on 3rd, 160 on 5th, a staggering 500+ on 6th (RS), 180 on 10th, 93 on 17th and 55 on 28th. The same site held 100 on 14th December, but only 19 had returned to Fulford Ings by 9th.

Small numbers were recorded outside the breeding season at Clifton Airfield, Poppleton, Bishopthorpe, Huntington and Yearsley Forest.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Breeding season records, mostly referring to roding birds, came from Skipwith Common; Black Plantation, Wheldrake; Kings Moor Plantation; Fulford Golf Course, Dunnington Common, Strensall Common; Acaster Wood; Askham Bog and Oliver Wood, Brandsby.

Severe weather in mid-January produced a number of records as birds left thick cover to forage in the open. Hence, singles were noted at New Barswick and Fulford on 11th, East Cotingwith and Wheldrake Ings on 16th, Naburn Sewage Works on 20th, and Wheldrake Ings on 21st. In February, a bird was at Yearsley Forest on 15th and one at Naburn on 20th. An unusual record came from Heworth on 2nd April when one was flushed from the lawn of a suburban garden in the early morning.

Later in the year, singles were observed at High Wood, Brandsby on 18th September, Hopgrove on 3rd November, and North Duffield on 15th November. Two were noted at Melbourne on 29th November while in December single birds were encountered at Wheldrake Ings on 6th and Sturge's Ponds, Selby on 21st.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

A very poor year, with a disappointing spring passage and no breeding attempted in the Lower Derwent (to which all records refer).

Following a single on 28th March, April yielded 35 bird-days, but a single flock of 25 on 6th was responsible for most of these. Single pairs displayed at two sites on 19th and 22nd.

All of May's records came from a single site, with singles on 10th, 12th, 19th and 23rd, with two on 15th and four on 16th (10 bird-days) (TED,TB,DR,PP).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

This species has appeared in every year of the present decade and this year's batch of records fit neatly into the

established pattern of spring occurrences; all were in April. Singles at North Duffield Carrs on 6th and Wheldrake Ings on 12th were followed by two at Aughton on 25th and one at Wheldrake Ings the same day; on 28th single individuals were noted at Aughton and Wheldrake Ings (total 7 bird-days) (TED,TB,DR,DW).

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

The spring showing can only be described as stupendous, while the autumn movement was generally above average.

Spring passage spanned seven weeks, the first being at Roscarrs on 6th April (TB) and the last at Riccall on 26th May. However, the bulk of records came in the last fortnight of April and the first fortnight of May, with by far the largest counts coming from a newly-discovered roost at Wheldrake Ings, which received almost nightly coverage from 17th April. Birds appeared very late in the evening here (no doubt the roost had been previously overlooked), typically from a northerly direction. April maxima included 35 on 24th, 66 on 27th and 68 on 29th; 396 April bird-days here, as compared with only 14 from elsewhere. May maxima at Wheldrake Ings were: 86 on 1st, 88 on 3rd, 44 on 5th and 24 on 6th, and a total of 442 bird-days was amassed here during the month, with another 12 bird-days coming from elsewhere.

During the period of peak numbers at the Wheldrake Ings roost very few Whimbrel were observed in the locality during the day, a fact which gives rise to speculation as to the whereabouts of the feeding areas of the birds involved. Perhaps a clue is provided by two reports of small parties flying north over Melbourne in late afternoon: five on 4th May and two on 9th.

The onset of autumn passage was presaged by a single at Riccall on 27th June. July provided a good scatter of records totalling 30 bird-days, most from the Lower Derwent, with a maximum of eight at Wheldrake Ings and three at North Duffield Carrs. Only four reports in August; one at Wheldrake Ings on 4th, a single at North Duffield Carrs on 13th, while on 23rd two flew east over Monk Stray, York (ML) and one+ called over Stamford Bridge (RS).

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

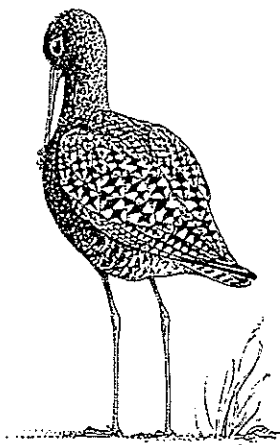
Generally another good year; a large number of breeding records were submitted and the Lower Derwent's wintering population continues to go from strength to strength. However, despite an interesting series of movements in late June post-breeding flocks were disappointing and autumn numbers rather low. Bred as usual in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, Skipwith Common, Bielby and Laytham districts, Moreby, Tilmire, Hopgrove, Stearsby, Skewsby, Stamford Bridge and two sites near Brandsby. Probably bred at Wharfe Ings, Kelfield Ings, Roscarrs, Poppleton and Strensall Common. An adult with chicks was noted at Thornton on the late date of 26th July.

Early January produced some excellent counts at Wheldrake Ings: 45 on 5th, 67 on 6th, 62 on 8th and 43 on 11th. The cold snap prompted an exodus so that by 18th only three could be found in the Lower Derwent. However, numbers had returned by the month-end, with Wheldrake Ings holding 26 on 23rd and 38 on 26th. About 30 were counted at this site on three February dates with 75 there on 28th. In March, flocks included 90 at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd, 50 there on 15th and 65 at North Duffield Carrs on 30th. Meanwhile, breeding individuals had returned to Poppleton by 13th and to Stearsby by 21st. A few notable passage flocks in April included 65-70 at North Duffield Carrs on 6th to 8th, 81 at Wheldrake Ings on 9th and 45 at North Duffield Carrs on 10th.

The second half of June yielded some interesting evidence of post-breeding movement, with several small parties and larger flocks observed flying in a direction between west and north-west. At North Duffield Carrs such records involved 28 on 22nd, 65 on 24th and 12 on 27th; at Wheldrake four on 21st, and at Bossall seven on 24th and two on 26th. Sporadic westerly movements continued into July involving, at North Duffield Carrs six on 2nd, seven on 5th and 11 on 11th; at Laytham three on 28th, and at Wheldrake Ings four on 29th. Small parties frequented the Lower Derwent throughout the month, all of single figures apart from ten at North Duffield Carrs on 11th. There were only two August records; four flying north-east over Stamford Bridge on 10th and eight at Bank Island on 30th. The sole September report involved a single at North Duffield Carrs on 5th.

October saw a welcome increase in numbers in the Lower Derwent, with maxima of 23 at Wheldrake Ings on 5th, 21 there on 25th and 15 at North Duffield Carrs on 30th. Twenty-one were counted at Aughton/Ellerton on 1st November, while Wheldrake Ings held 31 on the 17th of that month. All December records came from Wheldrake Ings and indicated a healthy wintering population: 46 on 12th and 13th, 40 on 22nd, 44 on 28th, and 41 on 31st.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*



A good spring passage, totalling 18 bird-days, with all records coming from the Lower Derwent. A single at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April was followed by one at Aughton from 11th to 16th and three different individuals at North Duffield Carrs on 11th to 13th. This last site held two on 16th. Two were at Wheldrake Ings on 17th, with another bird there and at Bank Island over the following two days. Singles were at Wheldrake Ings on 6th and 9th May.

Only three autumn records: singles at Castle Howard Lake on 15th August, and at Riccall on 20th and 21st, with two at East Cottingham on 29th.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

A good breeding season with perhaps 150 pairs in the Lower Derwent; sample counts included c30 displaying birds at Aughton in late April and 30 pairs in the northern half of Wheldrake Ings in early June. Elsewhere, the species bred at Fulford Ings (2 pairs), Middlethorpe Ings and Tilmire, with breeding probably taking place at Wharfe Ings and Kelfield Ings. The first flying young were observed on 18th June, at Wheldrake Ings.

Fair numbers were present in the Lower Derwent in the early months. In January 162 bird-days were recorded, maxima being 15 at North Duffield Carrs on 2nd, 20 at Wheldrake on 2nd and 20th, and 40 at Aughton on 28th. One to two were reported from Ryther, Wharfe Ings and Roscarrs. February saw 112 bird-days in the Lower Derwent, with maxima of 40 at Bubwith on 12th and 30 at North Duffield Carrs on 14th and 19th. A single visited Clifton Lake on 8th. A total of 106 was in the Lower Derwent on March 10th, but subsequently the only double-figure gatherings there were 25 at Bubwith/Ellerton on 11th, fourteen at Wheldrake Ings on 28th, and 10 at the same site on 31st. Dispersal to breeding territories is suggested by records of small numbers at Poppleton, Wharfe Ings, Riccall and Roscarrs late in the month.

Up to 25 birds were regularly present in the Lower Wharfe in the first half of April, while counts of between two and eleven were made at Acaster Malbis, Roscarrs and Fulford Ings during the same period. Up to six were present at Riccall in mid-May.

Many July records were received; some obviously referred to breeding birds, though most of these had dispersed by mid-month. The species was present at Riccall until 27th, with a maximum of eight on 13th and 14th. One to two were recorded in the Lower Derwent and Melbourne, with 14 at North Duffield Carrs and Aughton on 23rd. A single was at Clifton Lake on 10th. The only August record involved a single at Poppleton on 2nd to 11th, while in September two were noted at Wheldrake Ings on 17th. There were a mere four October bird-days, three of them in the Lower Derwent and the other at Ryther (on 23rd). Scarcely an improvement in November, with five bird-days in the Lower Derwent and a single individual at Clifton Lake on 8th. December saw a gradual re-occupation of the Lower Derwent by a reasonably-sized wintering population; at Wheldrake Ings five on 11th had increased to 13 on 19th, 17 on 28th and 24 on 31st, while North Duffield Carrs held 23 on 23rd and 15 on 25th.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Spring passage was about average, totalling 32 bird-days, all but one of them in the Lower Derwent. Following the first, a single at North Duffield Carrs on 17th (TED), April yielded 20 bird-days, maximum being six at Bank Island on 28th. There were 11 bird-days in the Lower Derwent in the first week of May, maximum three at Wheldrake Ings on 7th. The last of spring was at Riccall on 18th.

Return movement was first noted at Riccall on 4th July, and this

site subsequently played host to excellent numbers throughout the autumn. Elsewhere autumn passage was decidedly unspectacular.

In July there were 49 bird-days at Riccall, only five in the Lower Derwent and one at Melbourne. In August Riccall achieved a fine total of 154 bird-days (maximum 13 on 14th), the Lower Derwent 13 and Melbourne nine (maximum three on 13th). Other records involved singles at Strensall Common and Clifton Ings on 16th. Riccall produced 41 bird-days in September (with the last on the 30th), Melbourne 14 bird-days (up to 22nd) and the Lower Derwent, a mere two. Singles were noted at Wistow on 17th and Roscarrs the next day. A late individual was observed at North Duffield Carrs on 23rd and 30th October (TED).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Once again the species was scarce in both winter periods. Spring passage was better than in recent years, though still poor. Autumn numbers were perhaps slightly above average.

In January, two were at Bielby throughout and singles at Bubwith on 8th and Acaster Malbis on 17th. Four at North Duffield Carrs on 10th March were perhaps northbound birds rather than winterers. In April, singles at Riccall on 5th and 12th were followed by odd individuals at North Duffield Carrs on 16th, Wheldrake Ings on 24th and 25th, and Bank Island on 28th.

The first returning bird reached Wheldrake Ings on 15th June, with two at Riccall on 27th and three at Bielby the next day. During the following three months there were only five bird-days in the Lower Derwent, with most records coming, as usual, from Melbourne and Riccall. Melbourne yielded 132 bird-days in July, 76 in August and 31 in September; maxima were 13 on 15th July and 12 on 23rd August. Riccall was responsible for 42 bird-days in July, 79 in August and 53 in September; maximum here was six on 7th September.

Elsewhere, September singles were noted at Wistow on 17th, Walbut Bridge on the Pocklington Canal on 21st, Dale Pond on 22nd and Oulston Beck on 30th, these last two records comprising the year's only reports from the northern half of the recording area. Typically, numbers declined in October though six were at Melbourne on 5th and 23rd. Riccall recorded seven bird-days up until 5th. Singles were noted at Thornton on 2nd and Wheldrake Ings on 13th and 29th, while two were on the Pocklington Canal at Walbut Bridge on 30th. November's records involved a single at North Duffield Carrs on 18th and one to two at Thornton on three dates late in the month with two at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd. The only December report received referred to an individual at Bielby (no date given).

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Spring passage was very sparse, autumn rather better.

Single birds were seen at Aughton on 25th April and Byland Abbey on 23rd May. In July, Melbourne held two on 18th and one on 19th, 22nd and 23rd, while two were found on the River Foulness near Holme-on-Spalding Moor on the last-named date. A single was noted at Melbourne on 29th and 30th August.

A bird at Ozendyke Ings on the Lower Wharfe on the late date of 23rd October was feeding in flooded meadows in the company of Lapwings and Starlings (DW), and constitutes the first October record of the present decade.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

No breeding records; spring and autumn passages were of average proportions.

The first bird of spring was at Poppleton on 19th April (DA), with the next being two at Riccall and one at Wheldrake on 25th.

Three further singles at Clifton Airfield, Aughton and Riccall complete that month's records. May yielded a total of 19 bird-days, with one or two birds being reported from Wheldrake Ings, Aughton, Roscarrs, Riccall, Fulford Ings, Clifton, Poppleton, Stamford Bridge and Castle Howard. A single was observed at North Duffield Carrs on June 2nd.

In autumn, two at Newburgh Priory on 1st July were followed by one at Riccall the next day. Altogether there were 127 July bird-days, 97 of them from Riccall, and 20 from the Lower Derwent.

August yielded 192 bird-days, of which 141 came from Riccall and 25 from Melbourne. Maxima were 11 at Wheldrake Ings on 25th, eight at Poppleton on 23rd, seven at Riccall on 3rd and four at Melbourne on 1st. In September there was a total of 105 bird-days: 74 at Riccall, and 19 at Roscarrs, where there were six on 7th. Elsewhere, four were noted at Wistow on 17th. All October records came from Riccall; 16 bird-days, with the last on 13th (TB).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Two records this year: a summer-plumage adult at Wheldrake Ings on 27th and 28th March (TB, TED, DW, DR, PP), and a first-winter bird at the same site on 14th April (TED) constitute the fourteenth and fifteenth records for the York area.

Spring occurrences have become almost annual in recent years.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

A return to normal after the excellent spring of 1986. A first-summer at Aughton on 26th April was seen at Wheldrake Ings the next day (TED, DR), while on 12th May two adults graced Wheldrake Ings (TED).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Breeding numbers appeared healthy although no systematic counts from the Wheldrake Ings or Skipwtih Common gulleries were received. A count on 29th April indicated 50+ pairs at Strensall Common. In May, 130 pairs were on eggs at North Duffield Carrs on 6th, and 250 pairs were incubating at Aughton on 16th. The first flying juveniles were noted at Aughton on 23rd June, and at Wheldrake Ings five days later. Aughton held 500 juveniles on 6th July.

The early months of the year yielded few large counts, other than from the roost at Wheldrake Ings, where 10,000 on 3rd January, 36,000 on 1st March and 10,000 on 10th. c2000 foraging at Dringhouses' Tip the following day. Feeding flocks of 100-500 birds were reported from the Ouse in central York, Clifton Ings, Clifton Airfield and Bishopthorpe, while 600 were at Whenby on 22nd February.

As usual there were few significant counts in early autumn: 400+ at Bank Island on 13th August, and in September 300+ at Wheldrake Ings on 5th and 315 at Clifton Ings on 13th. Numbers began to build in October; following 500+ at Wheldrake Ings on 7th, the 24th saw 300 at Kexby, 300 at Elvington and 1500 at Newton-on-Derwent, while 6000 roosted at Wheldrake Ings the nextday. The roost at this last site regularly held four figures up to the year-end, with 5000 there on 9th December.

A first-winter bird with pure white primaries and wing-coverts was observed at Wheldrake Ings on 7th, 9th and 21st February, 1st March and 15th to 17th April. What was presumably the same bird (now in adult winter plumage) was back at Wheldrake Ings on 26th December (DR).

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Numbers were generally unremarkable throughout. During the first three months of the year maxima were 1500 at Wheldrake Ings on 10th March, with c1000 at Dringhouses' Tip the next day. Feeding flocks of between 50 and 500 birds were reported from Brayton, York Knavesmire, Clifton Ings, Clifton Airfield, Huntington, Strensall, Sheriff Hutton, Kexby and Stillington. Spring passage was almost indiscernible, with 300 on York Knavesmire on 10th April and 224 at Howsham on 12th being the only noteworthy aggregations. Wandering first- and second-summer birds were recorded at Roscarrs on 15th May, Wheldrake Ings on 17th June, and Dringhouses on 18th June, with a movement of 50 first-summer birds north over Wheldrake Ings on 4th May.

Return movement was evident during the last three weeks of July, but still amounted to only 28 bird-days (maximum 13 at Wheldrake Ings on 26th). Barring 200+ at Wheldrake Ings on 14th November, no significant records were submitted for the rest of the year: more counts please!

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Once again few wintering birds were reported but spring and autumn passages were above the average for recent years.

In January and February one or two roosted at Wheldrake Ings on several days, while at Roscarrrs a single was observed on 12th January.

Typically, the second half of March saw an increase in records, with Wheldrake Ings holding three on three dates and ten on 28th; one to two frequented Dringhouses' Tip in mid-month. This last site produced some good counts in early April; eight (including an adult of the race '*fuscus/intermedius*') on 1st, 22 on 9th and 13 on 10th. Maxima at Wheldrake Ings included 25 on 8th and 13 on 15th. Elsewhere, small parties of up to five birds were noted at Knavesmire, Brighton, North Duffield Carrs and Barlow/Grange.

There were 49 May bird-days at Wheldrake Ings, most, of course, involving sub-adult individuals: maximum was 12 on 16th. Two spent four days at Roscarrrs from 3rd and one flew south east at High Catton on 30th. June's records comprised five immatures at Wheldrake Ings on 13th, one or two daily at North Duffield Carrs from 14th to 26th, and 15+ at Brighton Tip on 27th. The only July reports referred to two adult '*intermedius*' types at North Duffield Carrs on 19th, and six birds (of which one was '*intermedius*') at Melbourne on 24th.

August saw the anticipated build-up of numbers at Brighton Tip, with 73 on 16th increasing to 125 on 23rd and 470 on 29th (one '*intermedius/fuscus*' type on this last date). Two were at Roscarrrs on 21st and two at Poppleton on 24th. In September numbers peaked at Brighton Tip, with a spectacular flock of 870 on 5th (RS); thereafter 78 here on 12th (including one '*intermedius*') and 450 on 19th. Barlow Grange had a single on 2nd, and Clifton Airfield two on 26th. An excellent flock of 98 was noted at Bubwith on 8th October, but apart from that numbers were low; one or two in the Lower Derwent on four dates, and four adults of one of the races '*intermedius/fuscus*' flew south over Wheldrake Ings on 8th. Only two November records, of two at Wheldrake Ings on 5th and one at Clifton Lake on 8th. An adult was noted at Wheldrake Ings on three December dates.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

A rather poor year; following encouraging numbers in early January no three-figure counts were received, and roost figures in the later months were disappointing.

In January, 30 flew south over Low Catton on 4th, 350 roosted at Wheldrake Ings on 7th, and 175 foraged at Brighton Tip on 10th. February maxima at Wheldrake Ings were 30 on 9th and 40 on 17th, while in March this site held 20 on 14th and Dringhouses' Tip 40+ on 11th. On 10th April three were at Wheldrake Ings and three at Dringhouses' Tip; the following day 20 were counted at Brighton Tip.

Ten, mainly immatures, at Wheldrake Ings on 24th May provided an unusual midsummer record (DW).

Post-breeding dispersal was suggested by records of one at Bootham Stray on 21st June, six at Poppleton on 19th July, two at Clifton Lake on 30th July and one at Brandsby on 26th August.

Thereafter no records until November, when five were at Wheldrake Ings on 14th, 25 at Brighton on 26th, and a single at Clifton Airfield on 28th. December counts at Wheldrake Ings included 40 on 6th, 26 on 22nd and a mere six on 31st, while one was at Poppleton on 25th.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Four records, all conceivably relating to the same first-winter individual, as follows: a single at Dringhouses' Tip on 11th March (ML) and one at Wheldrake Ings on 21st and 28th March and 8th April (TB,GO,PP,DR,DW).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Excellent numbers present in early January decreased markedly after the cold snap later in the month. Typically scarce in autumn, and roost-counts low at the year-end.

On 4th and 7th January Wheldrake Ings provided a fine roost of 450+ and 500+ birds respectively, while on 10th there were 220 at Brighton Tip. Thirty at Wheldrake Ings on 26th, with 20 there on 9th February and 15 on 17th, declining to 10 by 14th March. One to three recorded in the early months at Poppleton, Clifton Airfield and Dringhouses' Tip. April records were limited to eight at Brighton Tip on 8th and three at Wheldrake Ings on 25th. Two first years at Wheldrake Ings on 27th May and two were noted at North Duffield Carrs on the unexpected date of 24th June.

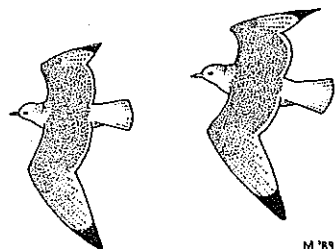
Autumn reports comprised seven at Brighton on 29th August, a single at Wheldrake Ings on 5th September, six at Roscarrs on 10th September and one at Wheldrake Ings on 7th October. Numbers increased in late November, with 36 at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd and 42 at Brighton on 26th. December maxima at the Wheldrake Ings roost were 59 on 5th, 60 on 6th, 35 on 22nd, 51 on 26th and 50 in 31st.

Elsewhere, one to four birds were observed in late November and December at Clifton, Acomb and Wiggington, while 20 were at Bubwith on 25th.

A flock at Brighton Tip on 10th January included an adult with a bright red bill and a first-winter with bright red legs (TED).

Graphic illustration of this species' voracious habits is provided by an observation from Wheldrake Ings on 29th December, when a first winter bird was seen to eat a freshly-dead female Teal (RS). Quite possibly the gull was the predator here.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*



M'83

A good year, with 11 records and 11 bird-days, all falling within the late winter/early spring period (see 1985 Report). All records were of adults, apart from one involving a long-dead second-winter individual at Castle Howard on 9th March (DW).

In February, one at Wheldrake Ings on 16th (PP) preceded singles at Dringhouses' Pond (DW) and Bank Island on 28th (DW,TB). March produced records of single birds at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd, 10th (oiled), 15th and 21st (TB,TED,PP,GO,DW), and at Roscarrrs on 8th (TB), while two were observed at Selby on 6th (TB). The sole April report referred to an individual at North Duffield Carrs on 6th (TED).

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

An average, if rather late and protracted, spring passage, the return movement being non-existent. Some interesting midsummer records, however.

The first was not until 28th April, when one was at Wheldrake Ings, two days later another was noted at Castle Howard. In May, three at York University Lake on 7th were followed by a displaying pair there on 13th, and a single at Castle Howard on 14th. Later in the month Wheldrake Ings held three on 25th, nine on 26th and two on 29th, while two were observed at Clifton Ings on 26th. More June records than usual, all referring to singles; at Dringhouses' Pond on 12th, Wheldrake Ings on 13th and 20th, and Sherburn-in-Elmet on 16th. There were two at Wheldrake Ings on 15th July.

An intriguing series of July records from Sherburn-in-Elmet raises the possibility of local breeding: an adult (or adults) seen on 11th, 12th and 17th flew off north on all three dates carrying fish (TB).

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Only five records were received, but due largely to one good count at Wheldrake Ings 27 bird-days were amassed.

The first of spring were two at Wheldrake Ings on 4th May (TED,PP,RSS), these being followed by five on 12th and 18 on 14th (PP), while at Thornton Ellers a single was noted on 16th. One other record: one at Fulford Ings on 30th June.

'COMMIC' TERN *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

All reports related to singles: at Wheldrake Ings on 14th May and 13th June, and at Poppleton on 26th May.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*

A bird feeding at Castle Howard Lake for an hour on 16th May (DR) constitutes the eighth record for the York Area, and on a typical date.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Another good spring showing in the Lower Derwent, the records falling in a month-long period from mid-April and totalling 43 bird-days.

First were three at Wheldrake Ings on 17th April (TED,RSS), subsequent maxima at this site comprised eight on 28th, six on 11th May and 11 the following day. At Aughton there were eight on 28th April. The last of spring was a single at Wheldrake Ings on 15th May. The only autumn record involved three immatures at Castle Howard Lake on 6th September (RS).

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

A three-day period in late November brought an amazing series of records involving five individuals, the first in the area since 1984. A large displacement of birds of this species took place in the southern North Sea at the time.

On 23rd November one was picked up at Huby but died later (per AH), and another was rescued from the unlikely surroundings of Coney Street in central York, only to suffer the same fate (per TED). The next day two were taken into care at Haxby, while on 25th one was picked up at Clifton Airfield: all three were later released at sea (per TED).

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Breeding records came from Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, Archbishop's Palace, Knavesmire Wood, Heslington, York Waterworks (where two pairs nested in boxes), Wiganthorpe, Mill

Hill, Oliver Wood, Snargate Wood and Maidensworth.

The species continues to be widespread, but outside the breeding season the only double-figure counts received involved 36 at Barlow Grange on 5th January, 14 at Roscarrs on 17th July and 12 at Aughton on 8th October.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

During the first three months of the year maxima were c1500 by the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 2nd January, 700 at Kexby on 4th, 2950 at Cliffe Bend on 16th January, 1500+ at Wheldrake Ings/Storwood on 21st January, and 2000 at North Duffield Carrs on 10th March. Smaller flocks of the order of 100-400 birds were observed at Brayton Barff, Wheldrake, Tilmire, Bishopthorpe and Sheriff Hutton.

Later in the year large aggregations were scarce, with 200+ at Roscarrs on 9th November and 470 at Snargate on 22nd November being the sole notable records.

A bird with completely white wings was seen at Aughton on 9th May (TED).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Few breeding records were submitted, the species now being a familiar part of most rural and suburban bird communities. Continuing expansion in urban areas is illustrated by a report of one nesting behind a drainpipe at the Borthwick Institute, York City Centre, on 18th March (PWC).

Many more flocks were reported this year, indicating a healthy population. January maxima included 45 at Storwood on 2nd, 31 in the Fulford roost on 11th increasing to 42 on 30th, and 45 at Whitwell grain-store on 18th. Later in the year numbers were even higher. In October, Newton-on-Derwent held 93 on 1st, Sturge's Pond 21 on 4th and Aughton 61 on 26th. November figures included 210 at Aughton on 17th with 90 there on 29th and 120 at Selby on 17th. Twenty were at Thornton on 1st December.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Slightly late in arriving, with two at Wheldrake Ings on 26th April (TED,PP) being followed by singles at Allerthorpe Common the next day and Brayton Barff on 30th.

Subsequently, breeding birds were thinly but widely distributed throughout the southernmost six 10km squares of the York Area, as far north as the southern fringes of York (two pairs bred at Naburn Sewage Works, for example). North of there the only records concerned a single at Bootham Stray on 15th June, and a cluster of eight breeding pairs around Brandsby: the species is possibly under-recorded elsewhere in these northern districts.

Two September singles, at North Duffield Carrs on 8th and Roscarrs on 22nd, preceded the last, which was at Wheldrake Ings on the rather late date of 8th October (TED).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Singles at Acaster Malbis on April 18th (TED) and at Aughton and Bishop Wood on 21st presaged a substantial influx during the last week of the month: from 24th, birds were reported from Melbourne, Laytham, Brayton Barff, Selby, Wheldrake Ings, Murton, Poppleton, Bishopthorpe and New Earswick. One at Gilling on 27th was the first in the north of the recording area.

A juvenile near Barlow Grange in late June had a pair of Yellowhammers as foster-parents; this is only an occasional host-species in Britain (TB).

The only July records involved a juvenile at Kexby on 19th and an individual at Poppleton on 28th. In August, an adult was noted at Riccall on 13th. The last of the year was a single at Barlow Grange on 2nd September (DRC).

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Pairs bred at Brighton, Melbourne, Aughton, Bubwith and Escrick. Present in the breeding season and probably or possibly bred at Dunnington Common, Wheldrake and Riccall. Outside the breeding season birds were noted at Thornton, Ellerton, North Duffield, Sherburn, Acaster Selby, Deighton, Naburn, Bishopthorpe, Heslington, Strensall, Sheriff Hutton, Stillington, Castle Howard, Gowthorpe Common and Rawcliffe Moor. The species continues to be scarce north of York.

Two road casualties were reported: on the A19 at Crockey Hillon 20th April and on the A64 at Fulford on 16th September.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Bred at Barlow Grange, Wistow Lordship, Aughton, Laytham, Thornton Ellers, Dunnington Common, Heslington (one young), Poppleton (successful), Brandsby, Farlington, Coneysthorpe, Marton and Oswaldkirk.

Present during the breeding season at North Duffield, Ellerton, Skipwith, Hagg Bridge, Wheldrake, Elvington, Murton, Low Catton and Fulford. During the remainder of the year reports came from Thorganby, Bank Island, Acaster Malbis, Appleton Roebuck and Acaster Selby.

Individuals were found dead on roads at Wheldrake in June and North Duffield in July.

The population appears to be stable.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Remains common and widely distributed with breeding reported from Aughton, Ellerton, North Duffield, Bishopthorpe, Heslington, Dunnington, Escrick, Hopgrove, Huntington, Old Earswick, Brandsby and Hovingham. Breeding season records came from Brayton Barff, Skipwith Common and Kirkham.

One was found dead on the A63 near Hemingbrough on 18th January, and another corpse was picked up at York Waterworks (no date).

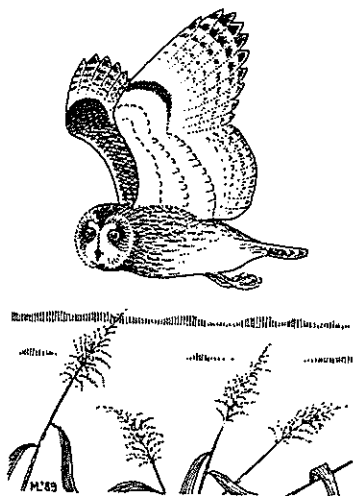
More records please!

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

A pair was present near Stearsby and probably bred. While no reports of breeding were submitted for either Skipwith or Strensall Commons, an adult was noted at the latter site on 21st June.

Records for the early months came from Clifton Airfield on 8th February, Huntington on 25th March, and Sturge's Pond during April; all referred to single birds. Later in the year the only report involved on at Seaton Ross on 28th December.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*



This species' scarcity in late 1986 was noted in the previous report, and the description held true for the early months of 1987. Indeed, the first six months of the year could only muster a single record of one at Clifton Airfield on 14th February. An atrocious showing.

A bird thought to be in post-juvenile plumage was observed at Wheldrake Ings on the decidedly strange date of 5th July, and what was presumably the same individual was noted there on four ensuing July days up until 26th, and by the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 28th.

Very few were in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal in autumn and early winter. Following one at Bielby on 15th November a single was seen at Wheldrake Ings on six December dates, and two were present at Aughton on 20th December.

The highlight of the later months was undoubtedly the discovery of a roost of this species at Clifton Airfield: following the first on 1st November, numbers there had increased to four by 28th. December maxima were seven on 5th, six on 20th and five on 28th. The roost was in an area of broken-up runway, rubble and wire 100m long by 15m wide, and individual birds apparently habitually used particular sites within it, from which pellets were collected (SRo).

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

At Skipwith Common the first churring male was heard on the early date of 8th May (TED), though it was not until the end of the month that other territories were occupied. Encouragingly, five pairs probably bred at this site.

Negative reports came from Allerthorpe Common; the species has apparently not bred there since 1983.

For the first time since 1978 no records were received from Strensall Common; a sad statistic.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Generally a rather late arrival, with barely a handful of birds present before the second week of May.

First of spring was one at Castle Howard on 30th April (DR), four were at Wheldrake Ings and a single at Clifton Green the next day.

Subsequently no records until 5th May, but thereafter single birds at five sites up until 9th May, when a respectable count of 44 was made at Wheldrake Ings. The first birds were noted at Brandsby on 10th.

Few large flocks were seen during the summer: maxima were 100 at Wass on 23rd May, 150 at Naburn Sewage Works on 4th June, 80 at Castle Howard on 18th July and 65 at Wheldrake Ings on 26th July. 100 at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd was the only sizeable August gathering.

As usual the vast majority of birds had departed by the end of August. Following two at Melbourne and one at Castle Howard on 6th, all September records featured singles; at Clifton on 7th, Brighton on 18th and Riccall on 23rd. The last, and very late, was one over Dunnington Common on 24th October (V&TW).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

There was no evidence of breeding in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal districts, though obviously birds were present (for example at Wheldrake Ings, Kexby and Bielby); low numbers were the legacy of two successive cold winters.

Elsewhere, two pairs bred on the Fulford/Naburn stretch of the

Ouse, while at Poppleton two juveniles were seen, despite the apparent abandonment of a traditional nest site. Two birds were present at Sturge's Pond during the breeding season.

The remainder of the year produced records from many of the above localities, and from Huntington, Aldby Park, Shipton, Newbrugh Priory, Bubwith, Roscarrs and Nun Appleton.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Single pairs bred at Wistow Lordship and Brayton Barff (where there were possibly two broods); birds, quite possibly from the latter site, were seen at Sturge's Pond and Roscarrs outside the breeding season.

May/June records from Brandsby Rectory, Blackmoor Wood and Oliver Wood undoubtedly refer to birds nesting locally; likewise individuals at Strensall Common in April and June.

The species was 'heard and seen' at Naburn Park, regrettably no dates were given. The only winter record received involved a single at Scaryingham on 15th February.

Apparently little change in status.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

Confirmed breeding took place at 11 sites: Wistow Lordship, Naburn Sewage Works, Archbishop's Palace, Melbourne, Heslington, Pool Bridge, Escrick, Stearsby Wood, Blackmoor Wood, Yearsley Forest and Oliver Wood. At least five pairs present in Askham Bog during the breeding season.

Probable/possible breeding occurred at a further 12 sites; most of these records relate to drumming birds in spring.

Even more widespread during the winter months and the species remains relatively abundant.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

'Several' pairs were reported as breeding on the Newbrugh Estate. Otherwise, singles were noted during the breeding season at Naburn Sewage Works (the year's only record from this previously productive district), Bishop Wood, Skipwith Common and Acaster Wood. In August a female was at Skipwith on 3rd and a bird at Thornton on 15th, while late in the year an individual was seen to fly towards a group of mature beeches near Front Street, Acomb on 5th December. Also recorded at New Parks, Huby (no date).

The geographical spread of this year's crop of records is satisfying, suggesting as it does a number of pockets of population.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Few reports of large flocks received this year. Twenty at Melbourne on 13th January, 50 at Poppleton on 18th, 24th and 25th with the largest flock of the year 126 at Brayton Barff on 20th. Thirty at Clifton Airfield on 8th February was the last flock as birds moved out during the hard weather.

The only breeding count was of 15 to 20 pairs at Clifton Airfield.

Some evidence of autumn movement with 43 at Clifton Airfield on 11th October, 36 south at North Duffield Carrs next day, 32 south-west there on 14th, 60 at Low Callon on 17th, 30 at Barlow on 23rd and 31 south-west at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd November.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Two early birds were at Castle Howard on the 28th March (GO), with the main influx starting on 3rd April building up throughout the area until 400 were feeding over Wheldrake Ings on 20th April (TB). 120 were at Castle Howard on 23rd May. Encouraging reports on breeding numbers came from Poppleton, Fulford (25 pairs), Naburn (five pairs), Wistow (one pair), East Ness and Middlethorpe (12 pairs). A few small September gatherings were recorded, 150 on the Lower Derwent on 17th being the largest, and the last bird was seen at Riccall on 1st October (TB).

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

The first birds to be seen in the area were at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April (PP,GO), thereafter arrived throughout the month to be seen in the usual feeding grounds but by the 30th April were investigating nest sites at Brandsby. On 9th May there were 500+ over Wheldrake Ings and by 27th May all 20 of the nests at Brandsby were occupied. A greater number than usual were at Naburn Sewage Works, with c200 on 4th June. Counts of 300+ at Castle Howard, c600 at Brandsby and 100+ at Bank Island were made and second broods at Brandsby recorded during August. 700 at Brandsby on 13th September with a peak of 2000 birds in the Lower Derwent Valley on 17th.

Southerly movements were seen on 7th October, when 700 flew over North Duffield Carrs in two hours and 67 on 8th October over Wheldrake Ings. There were still 100+ on Wheldrake Ings on 11th October but then numbers diminished and the last birds were seen on October 20th, with 20 at North Duffield (TED) and four at Hemingbrough (DC).

HOUSE MARTIN x SAND MARTIN hybrid.

A bird at Aughton Ings on 5th September had an apparent unjoined chest band, together with an extremely opaque rump. Otherwise upper parts dark. Structure as House Martin (RS).

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

On the 8th April the first was recorded at Kexby (RSS) closely followed on the 9th by birds at Castle Howard and Sturge's Pond. Small numbers continued to be noted until the 20th April when 50 were at Wheldrake Ings and on the 22nd April 'there was a continual passage of birds flying north through the University Campus from 2pm - 6pm' (JHL).

The main autumn counts were from the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal with 300 on 3rd August, 380 on 5th September, 300 on 12th and 5300 on 17th. On 7th October 300 flew south over North Duffield Carrs in two hours and small numbers continued throughout the month until the supposed last bird went south at Kexby on 24th October (RS). However, one at Escrick on 8th December was extraordinarily late and almost caused a road accident as it swooped across the road in front of the startled observer (TED).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

First arrivals were four at North Duffield Carrs on 17th April (TB) followed on 21st by two at Brayton Barff and a large count of 16 singing males in Bishop Wood (TB) and the first north of York at Brandsby the next day. Six were displaying on Strensall Common on 29th April and subsequently displaying birds seen at Buttercrambe Moor Woods, Castle Howard, Sand Hutton, Yearsley, Wheldrake Woods, Fulford Golf Course and Brayton Barff, breeding presumably taking place at all these sites.

The only autumn birds were seen in Lower Derwent on 28th August at Aughton Ings and the last flew north-west at Bank Island on 5th September (RS).

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

In January small flocks of 25 at Aughton, 30 at Naburn Sewage Works, one in a Bishopthorpe garden and 94 at Naburn Sewage Works were the only records received until April, birds presumably departing in the cold weather. Then, on 6th April there were c30 at Melbourne, on the 8th 150 on North Duffield Carrs and 70 at Kexby were presumably grounded by bad weather the previous night. On the 12th three displaying at Poppleton. During the breeding season they were present at Naburn, Poppleton (one pair), Clifton (12-15 pairs), Barlow (2-3 pairs) and Strensall Common. Confirmed breeding in the Lower Derwent Valley and Pocklington Canal.

Post-breeding flocks were 40 at Wheldrake Ings and 45 at Barlow on 17th September, 40 at Thornton on 25th September, 50 on North Duffield Carrs on 7th October, 40+ at Wheldrake on 11th October and lastly on 16th October there were 40 on Wheldrake Ings. The dates presumably indicative of migrant birds.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

One at Riccall on 1st October (TB).

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Singles at North Duffield Carrs on 8th April and at Aughton on 17th (TED).

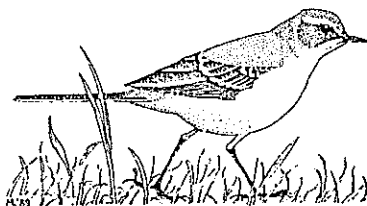
ROCK/WATER PIPIT *Anthus petrosus/spinoletta*

One south-east over Castle Howard on 26th October (DR) and one at North Duffield Carrs on 29th and 30th (TED).

Note These species have recently been 'split'.
York Area records, all since 1981, comprise four records of Rock Pipit totalling six birds, including one of the Scandinavian race *A.p. littoralis*; three Water Pipit and nine of indeterminate species.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

The first was at Brayton Barff on 12th April (DC) followed over the next week by singles at North Duffield Carrs, Wheldrake Ings and York Water Works. There were 35 at Sherburn-in-Elmet Sewage Works on 24th April and 40 there the next day.



Present throughout the breeding season on Clifton Ings (but possibly disturbed by early hay making), Naburn, Poppleton, New Earswick and Fulford. Bred at Bishopthorpe (feeding young on 29th July), Clifton, Lower Derwent, Pocklington Canal, Bielby, Latham, Sturge's Pond (three pairs) and Roscarrs (three pairs).

Small flocks of 23 and 21 were on North Duffield Carrs on the 8th and 11th July respectively, 17 between Roscarrs and Barlow Grange on 21st August, c25 at Loftsome Bridge on 24th/25th August. Fifteen remained on North Duffield Carrs until 12th September but the last birds seen in the area were two at the University on 30th September (JL) and one at Wheldrake Ings on 11th October (DR).

A male showing the characteristics of the Blue-headed race *M.f. flava* was at Barlow Grange on 10th June (TB). A female at Naburn Sewage Works seen four times between 8th May and 21st June was paired with a male *M.f. flavissima* (JG).

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

During the early months of the year one to six birds were recorded at Fulford, Parliament St., York, York Foss, Naburn Sewage Works (6), Hobmoor, Bishopthorpe, Wheldrake Ings, Castle Howard, Brandsby, Riccall, York Water Works and Stamford Bridge.

In the breeding season singles on single days were at Brandsby, Fulford, Dringhouses Pond, Aldby Park and Hobmoor. However, confirmation of breeding came from Bielby Beck and Canal Head, Pocklington.

From September one or two birds were at Clifton, Butterwick, York City centre, Brandsby, Wheldrake Ings, Thornton, Sherburn-in-Elmet, King's Manor, York, River Foss in York, the University and Acaster Malbis.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

During freezing weather on 7th and 8th January there were 58 and 60 respectively at Aughton and 81 on 8th January at Naburn Sewage Works. Later in the month, on the 20th and 24th the numbers were 76 and 71 at Naburn Sewage Works and on the 24th 26 on Strensall Common. Fortyfive at the Mount School, York on 12th February. On the 24th April 75 were at Sherburn-in-Elmet, presumably passage birds.

Post-breeding flock reports were from Melbourne where there were 25 on 18th July, 30 on 6th August and 31 on 23rd August, rising to 37 on 5th September. Eleven were at Brayton Barff on 6th September, 30 at the University on 25th September and 50 there on 26th, with 31 at Melbourne the next day. Eighteen in Knapton on 11th October and 39 on Strensall Common on 26th October.

Birds showing the characteristics of White Wagtail *M.a. alba* were seen at Bubwith on 3rd April, at Brighton Tip on 11th April and two at Aughton on the same day. One was still there on 15th April and on the same day one was at Strensall.

Returning birds were singles at Fulford on 26th August, at Naburn on 29th August and the University on 26th September.

A melanistic bird was present at Sherburn-in-Elmet from early April through the breeding season: the usual white was a dull grey (TB).

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Four at Bishopthorpe (per TED) on the 14th January was a good start, followed by two at Haxby from 26th to 31st (JG, YEP) and two at Acomb from 26th to 30th (HR). One was at Selby on 6th February (per TED) and one subsequently at Rowntrees, York from 13th to 21st February (AB,SR,ML) and finally two at Selby on 5th April (TB). Another good showing.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

A pair feeding young at Crambeck on 25th April (FO) was the only record. The species maintains its precarious foothold in the area.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

On the 19th January at Bishopthorpe during thick snow one was apparently living in a boat moored to the river bank. It was seen several times both morning and afternoon flying from a ventilator to forage under a nearby hedge (PC).

During the breeding season a pair nested immediately beneath a Sparrowhawk's nest at Brandsby. Otherwise no significant records.

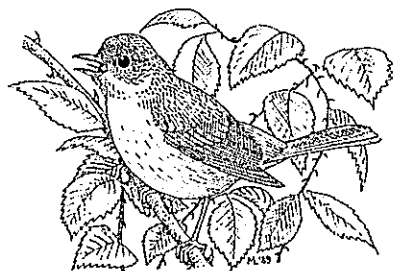
DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

A loose flock of eight at Aughton in very cold weather on 15th January was the only significant record received.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

On 4th January one was heard singing in the dark (7.00am) in Selby (DC). On 8th February 12 were on Clifton Airfield (NS). Otherwise no significant records.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*



On 7th May a singing male was at the Mount School, York (HR).

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A pair bred at Brandsby.

A single female was on Strensall Common on 29th April but no subsequent records were received from this site. Four males were at Acklam on 4th May, one male on 21st June on Bootham

Stray. A female was at Laytham on 9th August and another at Melbourne on 6th September, followed by an immature male at Clifton Ings on 13th September and a late bird was at Bank Island on 7th October.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A single male at Huntington on 30th October (AB). Eighth record for the area.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola torquata*

For the first time ever no confirmed breeding in the area.

The first in the area were three at Sherburn-in-Elmet on 26th April (TED,EBB) and then one on the 29th on Wheldrake Ings. A male was at Wistow on 19th May and a female at Roscarrs Pond on 20th.

Post breeding birds were a male at Wistow on 8th July, one at Thornton on 12th and an immature on North Duffield Carrs on 16th. On 11th August four were at Thornton and on 14th a similar number at Hagg Bridge. Two were at Acaster Malbis on 1st September and an immature on Bootham Stray on 2nd and 3rd. Three or four were on North Duffield Carrs from 3rd to 8th September. Finally a late bird, a female, was on Clifton Airfield on 11th October (S.Rt.).

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

On 11th October there was a male at Naburn (TC) and a female on Clifton Airfield (S.Rt.). A similar bird was again on Clifton Airfield on 24th (S.Rt.).

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The first arrivals came on the 29th March, two males at Riccall (PP) and one on Clifton Airfield (per TED). On passage during April birds were seen at Barlow, York Water Works (3), Escrick, Knavesmire(2), Crayke, Riccall (2), Clifton Airfield (6), Aughton, Wheldrake Ings (2), Bielby, Marton and Pigeon Cote Farm (25 bird-days in April). One May record, a single at Brayton on 12th.

On 5th July a fluffy juvenile which couldn't have flown far was seen on Wheldrake Ings (TED). A week later a bird was on Clifton Ings.

During autumn passage, August, birds were seen at Riccall (3), Shipton, Barlow, Clifton Airfield (2), Melbourne, and in September (to the 19th) at Wistow (3), Bootham Stray, Barlby, Breighton Tip, North Duffield Carrs, Barlow, Roscarrs (seven on 17th), East Cottingham and Clifton Airfield. The last, late bird was a female at Knapton on 11th October (SR). Another poor

year with 28 bird-days on spring passage and 28 bird days in autumn.

RING OUSEL *Turdus torquatus*

A male at Huntington on 17th April (SR) and another male on Wheldrake Ings on 28th April (PP). Ninth and tenth records for the area.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

The only early year flock recorded was a very small congregation of eight seen at Brayton on 14th January.

Nest building was seen in the last week of January at Cliffe and two eggs were laid on 8th February. It was later abandoned in severe weather.

The first autumn migrants were noted on 15th October when 35 on North Duffield Carrs. There were 40 at Aughton on 26th October, 90+ at Fulford on 17th November. Fortyone were at Aughton on 27th November and the largest flock of the year 150 on Acaster Airfield on 5th December. On 7th December there were 40 again at Thornton on 9th December, 60 on Fulford Ings and a final count of 60 on Clifton Airfield on 13th December.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Very few in the early months with flocks of 25 to 80 at seven sites in January and 15 to 50 at five sites in February, mainly along the Lower Ouse and Lower Derwent. Numbers picked up in March with 300 in Lower Derwent on 2nd, 196 on 13th, when 53 at Huntington, 200 in Lower Derwent on 21st, 117 at Dunnington Common on 6th April, 42 in Lower Derwent on 10th, 32 at Naburn Sewage Works on 12th, 107 at East Ness on 15th, 38 at Huntington on 17th, 25 at Thornton on 19th, six at Poppleton on 21st and the last a single east over University on 24th.

An excellent autumn showing. In Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, seven on 7th October, 47 west on 15th and 20 next day. Larger numbers from 24th when 350 at Poppleton, then in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal 260 on 26th, 470 on 27th, 240 on 28th, 2000 on 29th, 2650 on 30th, 960 on 1st November, 121 west on 2nd, 3510 flew west in the first hour after dawn over Bank Island on 4th, 5880 flew west and south-west in three hours over Wheldrake Ings on 5th, next day 900 flew south and at least 4900 roosted, 1200 on 7th, 2500 on 10th, 1000 on 15th and 350 on 16th.

Elsewhere, 250 at Holtby and 500 at Poppleton on 12th and 300 at Fulford Ings on 17th. There was a rapid dispersal of these huge numbers of birds from 17th with significant counts thereafter as follows: 60 in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal on 1st December, 110 there on 7th, 120 on 11th, 220 on 20th, 150 at Bishopthorpe on 21st, 40 at Acaster Selby on 26th, 60 at

Acaster Airfield on 27th and 40 east over Melbourne on 31st.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

With the exception of a flock of 12 at Bishopthorpe on 20th February no significant records were received.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Very few birds early in the year. Small flocks of over 20 in the early months of the year were at Fulford, Naburn, Wheldrake Ings and Dringhouses. The last of the passage birds was on Thornton Ings on 19th April.

The first returning bird was at Benningborough on 3rd October (SRT). Throughout the month small flocks were at Bank Island, North Duffield Carrs, Poppleton, Aughton and Hopgrove. Nocturnal passages were recorded on the 4th/5th, 13th, 20th, 21st and 30th. On 3rd November there were 45+ at Hopgrove, and an extraordinary 4000 flying west at Sherriff Hutton. On the 4th November, 30 were at Barlow Grange and on the 5th 475 flew south and south-west over Wheldrake Ings. On the 8th, 23 were at Clifton Airfield and c250 on 17th on Fulford Ings. Finally 10 at Bishopthorpe on the 28th. No records for December.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Singing birds were recorded during the winter months and on 28th April fully fledged young were being fed at Hovingham.

Autumn flocks in double figures were 16 on North Duffield Ings on 17th July, 23 at Brandsby on 16th August, 20 at Butterwick on 24th September, 14 at Newburgh Priory on 26th September; the largest flock of 36 at Huby on 28th September. 18 at Barlow Grange on 15th October and c15 at Brandsby on 13th. A maximum of 12 were on Hobmoor from 3rd to 20th September.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

The first returning birds were three singing in Bishop Wood on 21st April (TB). On 20th May one was at Strensall and singing males were at Thornton Ellers, Thornton Ings, Melbourne Ings and Pocklington Canal from 16th June to 17th July. Two pairs were at Brighton on 29th June. The last bird was heard singing on Fulford Ings on 15th August (TC). Numbers continue to be maintained.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

The first birds to arrive were singing on Wheldrake Ings on the 18th April (TED), two weeks earlier than last year and from then on spread rapidly throughout the area and were well established in suitable habitat by the 18th May which was when the major

arrival took place last year. A count of 13 singing males was made on the 27th April on Wheldrake Ings and 10 were at Roscarrrs on 30th April.

Breeding reports came from York Water Works, Naburn, Fulford, Lower Derwent and Pocklington Canal and probable breeding was reported from Clifton Ings, Roscarrrs, Sturge's Pond, Selby Canal, Brayton Barff, Bishopthorpe Crematorium, High Catton, Kelfield, Strensall Common and Castle Howard. There were no records received after the 24th June until the 2nd August when singles were on Roscarrrs and Barlow Common and on the 6th, 10th and 15th August on Wheldrake Ings (GO). A very early departure.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

The first arrivals were two at Roscarrrs on 21st April (DC). Later reports came from Wheldrake Ings, Sturge's Pond, Thornton Ellers, Askham Bog, Castle Howard, Strensall Common and Pocklington Canal.

Counts during May and June at Roscarrrs produced a maximum of 20 singing males and there were five singing on Wheldrake Ings on 8th July.

Birds bred in the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canbal (30 pairs), Sturge's Pond and possibly at Askham Bog, Selby Canal, Castle Howard, Strensall Common and Wheldrake Ings.

The final two were at Roscarrrs on 28th September (DC).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

The first arrival was on 22nd April (JL) at Heslington, where three males were singing by 4th May. Records came from 21 sites south of York but this year also from 4 sites in the Howardian Hills, including one breeding record from Brandsby and from Barthorpe and Stamford Bridge. They also bred at Laytham (6-8 pairs), Bielby, Lower Derwent and the Pocklington Canal and probably at Naburn and Selby where eight pairs were present in the breeding season. The last bird was at Roscarrrs on 17th September (TED).

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

An early returning migrant was seen on 20th April at Heslington (TC) the main body arriving from 23rd April to 9th May when 19 records came from 11 sites. On 17th June about six pairs were at Grimston and on 21st nine were on Bootham Stray. Breeding was noted on Clifton Airfield, York Water Works, Naburn, Poppleton, Bolton Percy, Foggathorpe, Bielby, Laytham, the Lower Derwent, Pocklington Canal and Askham Bog (12 singing males). Birds were present during the breeding season at Sturge's Pond, Brayton Barff, Roscarrrs, Barlow Grange and Selby Canal. The last bird was seen on 13th September at Melbourne (RS). No records from the northern half of the recording area.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

The first bird was on Wheldrake Ings on 25th April (PP) and thereafter at a further 15 sites throughout the area. They bred near Brandsby (three sites), the Lower Derwent, Pocklington Canal and on the 8th July a pair with a fledged brood and two others were seen on Strensall Common. They were present during the breeding season at Sturge's Pond, Brayton Barff and Askham Bog (three or four pairs). The last bird was at Roscarrrs Pond on 17th September (DC).

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

In the first three months of the year the only records received were of a male at Poppleton on 21st January and a male at Dunnington throughout January. The first migrant appeared at New Earswick on 17th April and two males were seen singing next day in Knavesmire Woods and similarly at the Archbishop's Palace. From then on they occurred at 19 sites throughout the area. A count of 12 was made at Brayton Barff on 6th June and 20 were singing in the YOC area south of Selby on 9th June. Reports of breeding came from the Lower Derwent, Pocklington Canal, four sites in the Howardian Hill, and there were 10+ pairs at Bielby. They probably bred at Naburn, Fulford, Escrick Woods, Brayton Barff, Sturge's Pond, Clifton, Stubb Wood and Askham Bog.

During November/December birds were seen in Selby, Butterwick, York City, Poppleton, Clifton and Dunnington.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

On the 21st April there were already four birds in Wass Wood and by the 26th four males were singing. On the 23rd May a count of eight singing males was made. Breeding was proved at this site. Five other sites around Brandsby held breeding birds, viz:- Brandsby, Oliver Wood, Dale Wood, Gilling Heights and Ampleforth. Two were singing at Brayton Barff on the 7th May but last years breeding success does not appear to have been repeated at this site.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

It is difficult to be certain which birds overwintered in this country but it seems that the one at Askham Bog on 18th March, and possibly the one at Roscarrrs on 6th April (TB) did so. Not until the 12th April did the main influx begin with records coming from eight sites to the end of the month. During May/June birds were singing at Askham Bog (three males), Sand Hutton Pond, Wass Bank, Coneysthorpe, Grimston, Wheldrake Woods, Terrington and Buttercrambe Moor Woods. Four birds were at Askham Bog on 4th July and two pairs possibly bred on Brayton Barff. Returning birds were at six sites during September, at Brandsby and Low Catton in October and late singles at Huntington on 1st November (AB) and Bank Island on 4th of that month (TED).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

On the 19th March a very early bird was in Buttercrambe Moor Wood (per TED). The majority began to arrive on 6th April at Sturge's Pond (DC) and Hobmoor (IM) and were well recorded and widespread by the end of the month.

On the 26th April birds of the East European race (*P.c. acredula*) were seen, a male at Aughton (TED) and two at Wass (TB).

A count of 74 singing was made on 9th June in that part of the YOC area south of Solby (DC). Up to 12 were present on Clifton Ings, 13 on Bootham Stray, 18 at Sturge's Pond, 20 pairs at Fulford, six pairs at Naburn and 16 singing males at Askham Bog. During the breeding season proven breeding came from Hobmoor, Poppleton, Bolton Percy and Bishopthorpe.

The last bird was at Melbourne on 29th September (ID).

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

At Castle Howard there was a small flock of 15 on the 2nd January, 11 on the 17th January (GO). A post-breeding group of eight were seen in Wheldrake Woods on 24th June.

Autumn records came from Clifton Ings, Brandsby (three sites), Pond Head, Yearsley (up to 20), Hopgrove, Lower Derwent and a good count of 70+ on Skipwith Common on 26th October (RS). One was on Wheldrake Ings on 27th December, 20 on University Campus/Fulford Golf Course on 30th. Thought to be 'plentiful' in Escrick Woods; 'seen all year' at Bielby. A better showing this year.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

The first bird was on Brayton Barff on 3rd May (DC) but the main arrival began on the 24th May when one was showing itself off in the Museum Gardens for the "Introducing the R.S.P.B." afternoon. On 26th May 13 on Brayton Barff was a very high count, by the 27th one had reached Brandsby although 'fewer breeding pairs this year' were reported from this area. Conversely birds were thought to be 'more abundant' at Stamford Bridge and Buttercrambe. Breeding reports were from Fulford Hall, Stillingfleet, Escrick Woods, the Lower Derwent, Pocklington Canal, Foggathorpe and Acomb. During the breeding season birds were also at Brayton Barff, Clifton Airfield, Wheldrake Woods Howsham and Melbourne. Autumn birds were mostly singles or small family parties, except for the 15 seen on Fulford Ings on 7th September (SR). The last one was seen on Roscarra on 22nd September (DC).

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Two sightings this year in the area, a male at Moorlands on 13th

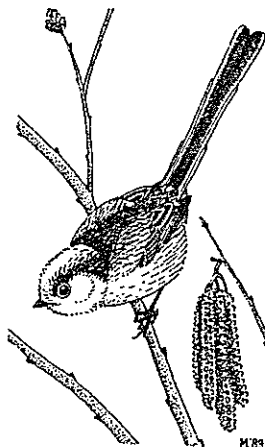
April (per TED) and a ringed female at Ampleforth on 20th June (TB,RS).

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Eight flew north over Aughton on 20th January (TED).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

A scattering of records throughout the area. A spring flock of ten on Dunnington Common on 6th April. Breeding was recorded in Poppleton and Bolton Percy. Post-breeding flocks were Melbourne (ten), Sturge's Pond (15), Thornton (19), Elvington Woods (35), Wheldrake (13), Acaster Airfield (ten), Fulford (21) and Poppleton (ten). Flocks also seen in Escrick Woods, on Fulford Golf Course, Tilmire and Acaster Wood, they were also seen regularly at Brayton Barff and Sturge's Pond.



MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

Scattered records throughout the year and present at 19 sites. One stayed through February in a Bishopthorpe garden. They bred in two sites at Brandsby and near Strensall Common two pairs were seen with broods. Three or four pairs bred at Askham Bog. A flock of 10 was at Yearsley on 11th October (NS).

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Bred in the Lower Derwent Valley, Pocklington Canal, Skipwith Common, Bielby, Laytham, Strensall, and Askham Bog, and possibly in Knavesmire Wood, Buttercrambe MoorWood and four sites near Brandsby. Also seen at North Duffield Carrs, Melbourne and four sites near Selby.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

Only one confirmed breeding record this year, at Askham Bog, but they were seen at 19 sites in the area. The larger flock counts in the year were seven at Castle Howard in January, seven at Brayton Barff in February and 16 on Dunnington Common on 6th April (T & VW).

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

The only significant count was of 47 at Dunnington Common on 6th April.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

No significant records received.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Well recorded in the Archbishop's Palace Woods from 23rd January where up to three were present and display was seen on 18th April and one heard calling on 4th June. No proven breeding however. Birds were in Wass Wood in the breeding season and one was at Ampleforth in early July. One atypical record at South Duffield on 27th July. Birds seen in October and November at Brandsby.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

A better showing this year. Records from twentytwo sites but only oneconfirmed breeding record - a pair feeding young at Fulford Golf Course.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

One at Bank Island on 28th January (TED). One on Yearsley Moor on 8th March (JC,PH) and again there on 22nd (TB). One seen regularly between 20th November and 8th December in the Acaster Selby/Appleton Roebuck area (FO,ML). Said by a local farmer to have been following the plough with gulls.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Remains a widespread though secretive breeding bird.

The only significant counts were of 15 at Crockey Hill in February and six at Brayton Barff on 12th April.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Twenty on Fulford Ings on 26th January rising to 23 by the 22nd February and 27 on Hobmoor in one tree were the largest counts received.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

On 9th June one was attacked by two male blackbirds (*Turdus merula*) at Newbrugh Priory and on 15th June two adults were feeding a juvenile on a bird table in Poppleton.

800 flying north at Low Catton on 4th January, 154 at Clifton Airfield on 3rd September and 100+ at Stamford Bridge on 24th November were the only counts made. Two small breeding colonies of 18 and 12 pairs near Brandsby.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Nest counts were 90 at East Ness, c38 at Skelton and five at a new rookery at Heworth but no young were seen (JC). Counts were made as follows: 130 at Fulford Ings on 3rd January, 600 north over Low Catton on 4th, 450 at Brighton on 16th, 100 at Poppleton on 24th, 800 at Marton on 8th February, 1000 at Brighton on 9th July, 300 at Roscarrys on 16th September, 200 at Woodhouse Grange on 2nd October and 2500 at Stamford Bridge on 20th November. A huge flock of corvids, mainly this species, numbering 10,000 flew over High Catton on 4th January to roost at Buttercrambe.

One with white wing bars at Barlow on 16th November (DC).

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

A flock of 21 on Clifton Ings on 25th January had increased to 30 by the 8th March and then 33 there on the 18th October. At least two pied birds were in the York Water Works area in January.

Birds showing the characteristics of Hooded Crow (*C.c.cornix*) were seen on 24th/25th January and 23rd November on Wheldrake Ings.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

The winter roost at Poppleton of c10,000 continued until 3rd April when it was disturbed, resulting in thousands of birds arriving in the village and having to find alternative shelter, dropping into any evergreen tree for several days, when numbers decreased rapidly.

A roost of 1000+ built up at Bishopthorpe during July as did one of 2000 on Clifton Airfield in August. At Barlow an autumn flock built up to 800+ on 21st October and on Wheldrake Ings there were c4000 coming to roost on 6th November.

On the 15th October 640 were flying west in small parties over North Duffield Carrs and were possibly migrants.

An aberrant bird at Fulford Ings on 13th March had a decurved bill tapering to about two and a half times its normal length on 13th March, and a leucistic bird at Wistow on 25th September was a uniform creamy brown colour.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Fifty at High Catton on 17th October and 52 at Dunnington on 2nd November were the only counts received.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

A maximum of 240 in Aughton during January, 200+ at Wheldrake on 7th January with smaller flocks at Ellerton (24), Barlow Grange (35), Fulford (50) and Heworth (20) from January - March.

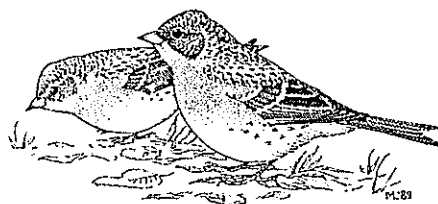
Wintering flocks at various sites in Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal of 60 on 18th October, 65 on 16th November, 120 on 27th and 29th, 110 on 30th, then 120 on 7th December. Seventy were at Poppleton on 21st December.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

The maximum count was of 270 at Aughton on 14th January, which included many obviously continental birds (TED). Other January/February flocks were 200 at Wheldrake Ings, c100 at Whitwell Grain Store, 80 at Poppleton, 30 at Skipwith, 40 at Crockey Hill and 25 at Copmanthorpe.

Wintering flocks appeared as early as 17th September with 70 at East Cottingham followed in that month by 40 at Brighton and 50 at Aughton. There were 40+ at Stamford Bridge in November and in December 90 at Thornton, c80 at Appleton Roebuck, 20 at Barlow, 80 at Crockey Hill, 30 at Acaster Selby and 150 at Acomb.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*



Maxima were 300 at Barton Hill on 31st January with numbers building to 250 on 18th January at Aughton. On 17th January 100+ were at Castle Howard and c75 at Whitwell Grain Store. Small flocks were seen on Skipwith Common and Stearsby during January/February. The last bird, a male, was at Roscarra on 16th April (TB).

The earliest returning birds were three flying west and calling over Wheldrake Ings on 30th September (DW) but they remained scarce except for a flock at Acomb which comprised 25 on 10th December and 50 by 30th December.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

The largest counts were c200 at the Whitwell Grain Store on 17th January and a flock at Aughton which built to 190 by 15th January. A flock of 70 was at Roscarrs on 14th March and there were still 85 at Aughton on 17th April.

Autumn flocks were 20 at Roscarrs on 20th September, 22 at Brayton Barff on 19th October and 130 at Thornton on 22nd November rose to 150 by the end of the month while the Roscarrs numbers grew to 37 by 8th December.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

In the early months of the year small charms only, 16 at Yearsley on 9th January, eight at Wheldrake Ings on 1st February, 41 at Yearsley on 11th February, 18 at Fulford on 26th March.

Post-breeding flocks at Clifton Airfield numbered 25 on 19th July rising to 137 on 23rd August falling to 70 on 5th September and on 11th October only 35 remained. Thirty on North Duffield Carrs on 3rd August rose to 75 by 11th and by 7th October had reached 110. Other flocks were of 30 at Melbourne on 6th August, 30+ on Hobmoor and 20 at Roscarrs on 28th September and 100 at Thornton on 2nd October.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

A very disappointing showing after the interesting proliferation last year.

Two at Aughton on 7th January, 25 at Askham Bog next day when there were ten at the University where 30 were noted on 13th, three at Acaster Malbis on 14th, two at Wheldrake Ings on 1st February, one at Bishopthorpe on 8th and again on 4th March; one on peanuts at Thorpe Willoughby on 13th March. Three in Stamford Bridge gardens from 1st to 6th April and singles at Upper Helmsley on 9th and Howsham on 12th.

One at Stubb Wood on 28th July, one at Wheldrake Ings on 28th October with two there on 17th November and four at Yearsley on 30th December.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Roscarrs held the largest flock, 140 on 7th March, but it had reduced to 62 by the 10th. Aughton held 50 on 10th January but only half that number five days later. On Brayton Barff there were 59 on 30th January, in Yearsley Forest 34 on 8th February, and at Spaldington ten on 25th April.

Post-breeding flocks built up on Clifton Airfield starting with 25 on 19th July, 98 in four flocks on 1st August, 55 in three flocks on 23rd August, 84 in three flocks on 26th September, 25 on 11th October and 72 in three flocks on 1st November. North

Duffield Carrs held 60 on 3rd August then 75 on the 11th. Other sites were Hagg Bridge with 60 on 8th October, Roscarrs 80 on 21st October, Aughton 90 on 6th November, Thornton 80 on 30th November, Acaster Selby 50 on 26th December. A decline was noted at Melbourne.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

One flew north calling at Bank Island at dawn on 4th November (TED,SR).

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Early winter flocks were 12 on Hobmoor on 7th January, 65 on Roscarrs on 15th January, 17 at Clementhorpe on 16th January, 16 at Heminbrough on 24th, 17 at Yearsley on 8th February and 20 on Brayton Barff on 2nd April.

Post-breeding flocks were 60 at Sturge's Pond on 29th September and 15 at Melbourne on the same day. On 2nd October, 10 at Melbourne and 12 at Thornton. On 15th October numbers rose at Melbourne to c20 and there were 10 on North Duffield Carrs. On 19th October 33 were on Brayton Barff, 29th October 45 at Sturge's Pond, 1st December 17 at Fulford, 28th December 30 at Pond Head and 30th December 12 at Yearsley.

A bird showing characteristics of Mealy Redpoll (*C.f. flammea*) at Brighton Tip on 11th April (TB).

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

A very disappointing dearth of records this year. Only seen on 22nd March, with groups of two and four at Yearsley (DR,PH).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Only one flock the whole year - ten at Sturge's Pond on 16th November.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

One at Bishopthorpe Crematorium on 3rd February, a female on Fulford Ings on 17th February and again on 9th September.

On 23rd May a pair were courting and nest building at Wass (TB). On 5th July a family party of five was in Wass Wood (DR). Also reported in the breeding season at Stearsby.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

The largest winter flock was of 80 at Aughton on 18th January. Smaller flocks were seen in the early months of the year at

Clifton Airfield, Fulford Ings, Clifton Ings, Poppleton, Brayton Barff, Copmanthorpe and Acaaster Airfield.

Post-breeding flocks were at Acaaster Airfield, Fulford Ings, Holtby, North Duffield Carrs, and the largest c100 at Melbourne on 30th October with 80 at Thornton on 1st December.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

During January there were 35 at Aughton on 10th, 12 at Roscarrs on 14th and 20 at Aughton on 18th.

Late winter flocks were 40 at Thornton on 21st November and 28 there on 7th December.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

Bred or probably bred at Lower Derwent, Pocklington Canal, Clifton Ings, Acaaster Malbis, Stubb Wood, Bishopthorpe, Naburn, Poppleton, Lilling, Strensall, Bielby, Brayton Barff and Sturge's Pond.

Largest flock of the year was of 65 at Wistow on 2nd April (TB). Smaller flocks were 15 at Fulford on 12th January, 40 at Aughton on 15th with 20 there on 18th, 35 at Roscarrs on 15th January and 47 there on 14th February. The only counts in the autumn were of 22 at Barlow on 23rd October and 15 there on 23rd November.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

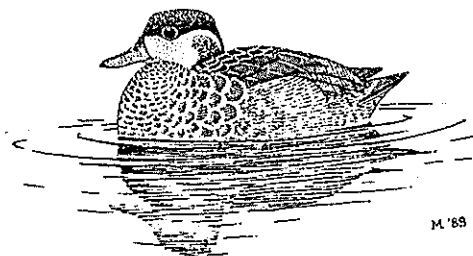
Three flying west over Wheldrake Ings on 22nd November (MLD,MH).

ESCAPED BIRDS

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

A single bird in the Lower Derwent on 2nd January and again from 18th to 1st February. Presumably the same individual at Castle Howard in March on 8th, 15th and 22nd. The bird reappeared in the Lower Derwent on 3rd May and was seen regularly until late July having apparently paired with a Greylag Goose. It was seen again on 24th August, 12th September and 22nd December.

HOTTENTOT TEAL *Anas hottentota*



A female at Wheldrake Ings on 20th April (TED).

GREATER FLAMINGO *Phoenicopterus ruber*

One at North Duffield Carrs on 17th April (TED).

PARAKEET sp. *Psittacula sp*

A green parakeet, ring-necked size, was at Skipwith on 19th August (JHL).

A bird seen around Bishopthorpe from 24th to 30th October was thought to be possibly Ring-necked Parakeet (PGWC).

ADDENDUM TO 1983 REPORT

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

One at Scrayingham for about four weeks during February and March (per TED).

The following species have also been recorded in the area since 1966 but did not appear in 1987.

Black-throated Diver	Sanderling
Great Northern Diver	White-rumped Sandpiper
Slavonian Grebe	Pectoral Sandpiper
Storm Petrel	Baird's Sandpiper
Manx Shearwater	Turnstone
Gannet	Stone Curlew
White Stork	Aotio Skua
Shag	Great Skua
Bittern	Iceland Gull
Night Heron	Sandwich Tern
Lesser White-fronted Goose	Roseate Tern
Brent Goose	Whiskered Tern
Egyptian Goose	Puffin
Ruddy Shelduck	Guillemot
American Wigeon	Ring-necked Parakeet
Blue-winged Teal	Alpine Swift
Red Crested Pochard	Bee Eater
Ferruginous Duck	Hoopoe
Ring-necked Duck	Wryneck
Velvet Scoter	Woodlark
Eider	Red-rumped Swallow
Long-tailed Duck	Marsh Warbler
Black Kite	Barred Warbler
Honey Buzzard	Firecrest
Rough-legged Buzzard	Red-backed Shrike
Crane	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Spotted Crane	Golden Oriole
Dotterel	Cirl Bunting
Temminck's Stint	Lapland Bunting

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