

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB - REPORT 1991

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

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

In addition, excursions are arranged to areas of ornithological interest, usually outside the recording area.

EDITORIAL

Thanks are due once again to all those members and non-members who have submitted records for this Report. The species accounts have been compiled by Tim Dixon (Divers to Ducks), Ian and Ruth Traynor (Raptors to Coot), Mike Leakey (Waders to Auks), Jim Pewtress (Doves to Warblers) and Denise Anderson (Flycatchers to Buntings). Muriel Pirozek has been responsible for the final production of the Report and illustrations have kindly been provided by Andy Booth, Mike Leakey and Nigel Stuart.

The processing of records places a time consuming and often repetitive workload on the above persons who have given their time freely to produce this Report and our grateful thanks are due to them.

Our thanks also go to the members of the committee for the work they have done throughout the year, our travelling members who kindly share with us their intrepid expeditions and those members who offer lifts to those without transport for club outings and other trips.

RECOVERIES, CONTROLS AND SIGHTINGS

There has not been a ringing report for the Y.O.C. since ringing stopped at Anchor Plain in 1983. However, ringing has continued on the periphery of the recording area and over the years an interesting series of recoveries and controls have taken place. At the same time an increasing number of colour ringed birds have appeared in the area especially in winter; e.g. Swans and Geese. In recent winters the influx of Waxwings has led to a ringing programme in Grampian, especially Aberdeen area, and it is interesting that the movements of this irruptive birds are slowly becoming clearer.

Below is a summary of information at hand to the end of 1991, and I hope that it will encourage observers to study more closely birds passing through our area so that we may be able to contribute to the complex movement and migration of our winter visitors and more common species.

MUTE SWAN

Z71084 Colour ring: 3P5 (blue)

Ringed as an adult male on 10th May 1990 at Ashington, Northumberland. It was sighted at Berwick—upon—Tweed on 14th June and 29th July; East Cottingwith on 26th January 1991; Wheldrake Ings on 28th May and Fairburn Ings on 10th September. Intensive ringing of the species is taking place in Northumberland and other movements have been noted in North Yorkshire.

"Interestingly the legs of this bird were strongly marked yellow [at Wheldrake Ings]. In September at Fairburn Ings the legs were less yellow but certainly very pale. I cannot find any reference to 'yellow legged' swans, only the 'pink legged' Polish morph. (T. E. Dixon, personal comment.)

Z68735 Colour ring: 3FJ (blue)

Ringed as a first year male at Killingworth, Tyne & Wear on 14 October 1909.

It was found freshly dead at River Kyle, Newton on Ouse on 1st February 1990.

BEWICK SWAN *Cygnus bewickii*

Colour ring: 169 (white)

Ringed at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire on 9th December 1969 and named 'Brown'.

The bird was in the Lower Derwent from 19th to 26th January 1991. The bird is now at least 25 years old and has a fascinating history of sightings.

Schlewig Holsten, Germany. 1974/75, 1977/78, 1980/81, 1983/84 and 1985.

Olund, Sweden. 1983.

Tewksbury. 1986.

Noordoostpolder, Netherlands. 1977 and 1987, this being the last sighting until 1991.

"It is interesting to note that amongst the few 20+ year old swans that we have on our sites most are females and that most of these have returned to the wintering grounds with remarkably few young during their long lives.

'Brown' to our knowledge has successfully reared just two cygnets. (W.W.T.)

A family party of two adults with their three cygnets was ringed at Slimbridge, Gloucs.

The male was ringed as a yearling in November 1975 and named 'Yarn'. His mate named 'Silk' and the three cygnets on 8th December 1989.

They were in the Lower Derwent 7th February 1990. This is 'Yarn's third mate and he has previously been identified at:

Tadhain Moor, Somerset — 10th December 1978.

Munnekezijl, Groningen, Netherlands — 12th November 1988.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Colour ring: PXP
Ringed as a cygnet at Grjotgardsuatn, Jokuldalur, East
Iceland on 19th August 1988.
Sighted in the Lower Derwent on 24th and 25th November 1989.
Colour ring: JEB
Colour ring: P75
Both these birds remained in the Lower Derwent until January
1992. Details of ringing were not available at the time of
publication.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*
5108241 Ringed as a nestling at University of York on 1st July
1981.
It has again been present at the University since March 1991 and
raised five young.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta bernicla*
CA25524 Colour ring: FE (green)
Ringed at Olenbukta, mohemanflya, Svalbard on 14th
August 1990
The bird was shot in the Lower Derwent on 5th January 1991.
CA27019 Colour ring: UUC (yellow)
Ringed at Olenbukta, Bohenanflya, Svalbard on 14th
August 1990
This bird was shot in the Lower Derwent on 5th January 1991.
UUC was the female parent of FH and was, together with the male,
UDA, and two other siblings, FD and UA, at Caerlaverock,
Dumfries, Galloway on 29th October and 4th December 1990 as a
family. The two adults and FM were last seen together in

Remainder of the ringing report not available due to formatting problems

STATUS OF THE RARER SEABIRDS IN THE YORK AREA

PART 1 - PRE-1966

RUSSELL SLACK, DECEMBER 1991

INTRODUCTION

This paper summarises the occurrences of the rarer seabirds within the York recording area prior to 1966 (Part I) and between 1966 and 1990 (Part II)

In considering species for inclusion records for families from Divers (Gaviidae) to Auks (Alcidae) are summarised. Seaducks are omitted from this list as they will be dealt with in a subsequent paper on Ducks.

Predictably the Lower Derwent (Wheldrake Ings in particular) has played host to the majority of our rarer seabirds. Castle Howard, with its year round standing water has also made quite a contribution in terms of the number of records included in this paper. Indeed it is surprising that many species remain so scarce given the amount of observer coverage these areas receive - especially so for Divers and Grebes.

Away from these areas where else might one look? The River Ouse, running into the Hunter is an obvious place. Anywhere along the length of the Ouse can (and does) produce interesting observations when given attention.

Recently interesting reports have come from Fulford and Poppleton and further downstream around Selby. Regular observation of Dringhouses Pond has produced several interesting species, most notably the Slavonian Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*) in February 1980 which attracted the attentions of the local press as well as that of local birders.

Also regular observations of landfill sites have provided many records of the large white-winged gulls. This goes to show that working your 'local patch' can be just as productive as the two major locations — even if your 'patch' is a rubbish tip! Predicting new species for the area is no easy task, given the erratic occurrence of inland seabirds. However, likely candidates are a spring white-winged black tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) in the Lower Derwent, Autumn Pomarine (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) or Long-tailed skuas (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) along with a storm blown Leach's Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) — Castle Howard perhaps? or possibly even a wandering Sabine's Gull (*Larus sabini*) — who knows? Checking the weather forecasts and good fortune shall no doubt determine which!

I have been unable to trace some of the early records referred to in the text for several species. Despite extensive searching of various literature I have been unable to find several records which (apparently) refer to first or second records for the area, which is particularly frustrating when trying to compile a comprehensive review of all the available data and literature.

What follows (Part I) is a short section on inland seabirds mentioned by both Nelson and Chislett in their books concerning Yorkshire Birds. Part II (1966 — 1990) will be published in the 1992 Report.

Should you be interested in the status of the commoner species then I refer you to the York Ornithological Club annual reports for the period in question.

SECTION 1: RARER SEABIRDS MENTIONED IN NELSON AND CHISLETT

Whilst compiling this paper I thought that it might be of interest to search out much earlier records. The two sources of reference for this are 'The Birds of Yorkshire Vol. II' by Thomas B. Nelson published in 1907 and 'Yorkshire Birds' by Ralph Chislett published in 1951. Of course many of the earlier records are vague but are a useful measure of the relevant species' status in those times. Many of the quotes in Nelson's book are from the 'Birds of Yorkshire' by Thomas Allis in 1844.

RED THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Thomas Allis in 1844 commented 'the immature bird is not infrequently obtained in winter near York; in full plumage it is very rare'. Nelson mentioned that it has been reported from the Derwent at East Cottingwith. Times have obviously changed as Chislett notes only two further records namely: one dead at Castle Howard on 22 January 1939 and an account of a bird caught uninjured in a ditch near Haxby on 22 February 1942. The latter bird was subsequently released on the River Foss.

BLACK THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Thomas Allis' report, written—in 1844: 'I have had two or three immature birds without the black throat, from the neighbourhood of Sutton—on—Derwent'. Nelson could add no further records. Additionally Chislett mentioned only an immature bird at Tollerton on 27 December 1927.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Thomas Allis in 1844 mentioned 'one bird, a young specimen from near Sutton—on—Derwent'. Nelson knew of no subsequent records. Chislett mentions one shot at East Cottingwith on 15 November 1912 and two very large divers on the River Ouse near Naburn in late April 1943 which were probably this species.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

Thomas Allis, 1844 commented: 'it is met with near - York occasionally, in immature and winter plumage; I once had a male nearly arrived at its full summer plumage; a specimen in full plumage was shot on the Ouse a few years ago, close to the City, and is in the Museum of York'. Nelson mentioned that the York Museum contains an immature bird picked up dead near the city. Chislett mentions four birds. One on the Ouse near Selby on 4 February 1892, one at Poppleton on 18 January 1923, one near York on 25 January 1942 and one at Castle Howard on 19 February 1950.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Nelson said that the 'Slavonian Grebe' had been recorded from Selby, Malton and the Derwent at East Cottingwith where 'in some seasons it is not uncommon'. Chislett was equally vague merely stating that the species occurred at Castle Howard, though with what frequency is impossible to ascertain.

BLACK NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Allis, 1844 stated that the 'Eared Grebe has been obtained near York in full plumage, but is very rare; it is occasionally met with in immature and winter dress'. Nelson lists four records: one near York 18 December 1849; an adult male in splendid plumage at Bubwith in the year 1854; one in the collection at Thicket Priory obtained nearby and near York on 23 October 1890. Chislett adds no further records.

LEACH'S PETREL

Chislett mentions a bird found by a cat at Clifton on 28 October 1917.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Chislett lists four records. One killed on the Ouse, York on 6 January 1922; a second adult female was obtained at York on 11 January 1922 and a third occurred at Pocklington about 6 January 1922 — it would appear that quite a 'wreck' of this species had occurred! Finally one was at Castle Howard on 12 February 1939.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Nelson mentions an adult male found dead at Skipwith Common in October 1858. After the great storm of October 1879 which caused massive numbers of skuas to be sighted off the north east coast one was seen at Pocklington. He also mentions the species being sighted at York but no date or site is given.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

Nelson notes a bird at Tollerton Ings, near York on 18 October 1879. No doubt another 'victim' from the storm of that year.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Nelson notes a specimen procured at York in October 1879.

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Nelson gives two records. One immature at Hopperton near York on 6 November 1859; a second on 18 October 1879 was found half starved and captured alive on Strensall Common.

The extent of the 'wreck' in 1879 appears to have been an amazing phenomenon — what numbers today's birders would have turned up one can only speculate!

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Chislett states that during the severe weather of early 1947 bird(s) were seen inland at York.

PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*

Nelson states that the species has been noted at Pocklington but gives no further details.

LITTLE AUK

Thomas Allis, in 1844, stated that 'some years ago I have known several killed in the water at Foss Island near York'.

Chislett mentions no additional records.

References

CHISLETT, R. Yorkshire Birds

NELSON, T.B. The Birds of Yorkshire — A Historical Account of the avifauna of the County — Vol. II

MUTE SWAN SURVEY

A study of Mute Swans has been undertaken in the York Area to monitor the population trends of the species locally and to complement a larger North—east survey. Several birds have been caught and ringed in the Lower Derwent valley, using blue colour rings. These rings have one digit and two figures engraved on them in white and can be read using telescopes at up to 200m. This allows the life histories and behaviour of known individuals to be followed without recapture. Sightings of such birds are therefore of great use; any sightings will be gratefully received and details of the bird's life history supplied.

A much more extensive ringing programme will begin in the latter half 1991 and any sightings can be sent to: C. Ralston, Wentworth College, University of York, Heslington, York, YO1 5DD.

CLASSIFIED LIST

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

An immature at Castle Howard from 6th to 16th November (RSS, Jr., DR et al.).

Second record for the area.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A relatively good breeding season with eight pairs in the Derwent Valley; two pairs at Sturge's Pond, pairs at Brandsby, Stearsby and Newburgh.

Outside the breeding season one to three birds recorded from the Lower Derwent Valley, Newburgh Priory, Clifton Lake, Pond Head, Castle Howard, the Ouse at York, Acaster, Riccall and Poppleton and the Nidd at Moor Monkton.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cr1* status

A good spread of breeding records as follows: at Castle Howard up to six pairs present but only two pairs bred, rearing two and one young; single pairs bred at North Howden (three yng); Sand Button (two yng); Foggathorpe Pond (one yng); Ampleforth Bottom Lake and Wigganthurpe Pond. Probably bred at Pond Head.

A scattering of spring passage birds with two in Lower Derwent Valley on 2nd March and five on 15th; one at Clifton Lake from 11th March to 7th May with two there on 24th March and 10th April; two in the Lower Derwent Valley on 13th April and three there on 15th; one at Newburgh next day; one at the University from 9th to 11th May. A single at Clifton Lake from 5th June to 9th July with two on 9th June; a single at Poppleton on 19th end 20th June; a juvenile in the Lower Derwent Valley on 5th July and two at Poppleton on 8th September.

At Castle Howard monthly maxima of seven in January; four in February; 12 in March; 15 in April; 10 in May; 12 in June; four in July; seven in August and nine in September to November.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

A winter plumaged bird in the Lower Derwent Valley on 3rd April (CR).

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

One in the Lower Derwent Valley on 6th October was eaten for breakfast by a Peregrine! (HP).

Fifth record for the area.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

A generally poor year. In January two at Poppleton on 4th; one at Cawood on 6th; one at Moor Monkton on 7th and 8th and two at Castle Howard on 6th and 12th.

February: One at Roscarrs and three at Popploton on 11th; one in Lower Derwent Valley on 15th; a splendid 12 at Poppleton on 17th and one at Bishopthorpe on 21st.

April: a bird showing characteristics of the continental sub-species *P.c. sinensis* in the Lower Derwent Valley from 1st to 7th; one at Poppleton on 2nd and two at Castle Howard on 13th, 24th and 27th.

Singles, at Castle Howard on 6th May, Riccall 11th June; Castle Howard 15th June and Lower Derwent Valley on 5th July.

Two at Foggathorpe Pond from 28th August to 1st September; a single in the Lower Derwent Valley on 1st, 3rd, 4th and 10th September; one at Poppleton on 10th October with five in the Lower Derwent Valley from 11th to 3rd November. Singles on the Ouse in York on 22nd October; Poppleton on 12th November and the Lower Derwent Valley on 15th December.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Bred in the Lower Derwent Valley but the heronry was not counted.

Monthly maxima there: 12 in May; nine in July; 13 in August; seven in September and eight in October. At Castle Howard up to four in August; five in September and seven in October.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Hot on the heels of last year's first for the second, an adult in the Lower Derwent Valley on March (KL, TED et al.).

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

A substantial increase in records. Seven pairs reared at least 31 young in the Lower Derwent Valley. A pair reared six young at Riccall and a pair failed at Newburgh.

Much increased numbers of wintering and non-breeding birds in the Lower Derwent Valley with month maxima of 30 in January; three in February; 36 in March; 35 in April; 39 in May; 16 in June; two in August and September; 13 in October; six in November and 11 in December.

Many more records from elsewhere also, with two at Castle Howard on 22nd January; one at Pond Head on 27th; two at Acaster South Ings from 11th to 13th February; two at Pond Head on 16th and three at Poppleton on 19th. Two at Cawood on 3rd March; eight at Clifton Lake on 17th; six there on 22nd and 24th and five from 25th March to end of April with three there on 29th March and 9th and 19th April. A single at Clifton Lake from 1st to 11th May with four there on 12th and 13th. One at Poppleton on 2nd and 20th June. Two at Clifton Lake from 30th September to year end. Four at Brandsby on 20th October; 12 at Newburgh on 6th November, nine at Pond Head on 16th; eight there on 14th December and singles at Bishopthorpe on 21st and Pond Head on 31st. Such numbers of Mute Swans are unprecedented and it is difficult not to link this with the phasing out of anglers' lead weights.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus bewickii*

Numbers again very low in the Lower Derwent Valley where up to 30 in January; 33 in February; 40 in March. First of the autumn was a single on 10th October with 25 by month end, up to six in November and eight in December.

Elsewhere: a single south over Escrick on 3rd January; three at Fulford Ings on 1st/2nd March; two south—east over Tilmire on 11th March; two south over University on 27th October and three at Overton on 12th November.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

In the Lower Derwent Valley: up to 48 in January; February; 70 in March; 16 in April with five on 25th the First of the autumn was a single on 20th October then up in November and 31 in December.

Elsewhere: Three south over Poppleton on New Year's Day. Eleven northwest over Heworth on 22nd October; three south over the University on 27th October; four at Castle Howard on 10th November and a juvenile with Mute Swans at Pond Head on 16th December and 14th December.

Addition to 1990 Report — One at Pond Head on 30th December.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

A single bird in the Lower Derwent Valley on 13th and 15th March and 4th April and two on 5th November.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

As usual the majority of records from the Lower Derwent Valley: up to 18 in January, February and March with 20 in April to 22nd. In addition, 70 flew south on 18th February. In November: 14 on 6th and 27 on 29th; two on 24th December.

Elsewhere: One at Castle Howard on 22nd January; 200 flew north over Riccall on 28th (FWO); four at the University on 4th; 300 flew west over Bishopthorpe on 3rd March (JAD); one at Castle Howard on 27th September with three there on 23rd December and one there regularly throughout December.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

An adult nominate race bird at Castle Howard on 16th March and 5th April (DAR).

LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser erythropus*

An immature bird at Wheldrake Ings on 19th December (TED, P.J.F).
Second record for the area.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Around 35 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley and four pairs at Skipwith Common.

Monthly maxima at Castle Howard were: 414 in January, 120 in February, 240 in April, 74 in July, 146 in August, 167 in September, 136 in October and 456 in November.

Numbers in the Lower Derwent Valley were lower than usual with monthly maxima of: 300 in January, 80 in February, 70 in March, 40 in April, 150 in July, 141 in August, 200 in September, 170 in October, 258 in November and 60 in December.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

One in the tower Derwent Valley on 18th and 20th October and 1st December.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

The only breeding records received were from the Lower Derwent valley where an estimated 25 pairs bred.

Monthly maxima there were 480 in January, 250 in February, 100 in March, 60 in April, 61 in July, 81 in August, none in September, 45 in October, 230 in November and 180 in December.

Monthly maxima at Castle Howard were: 50 in February, 51 July, 174 in August, 289 in September, 139 in October, 173 November and 218 in December.

Elsewhere: 30 at Poppleton on 5th January; 47 at Fulford Ings on 2nd March; 38 at Poppleton on 9th June; 30 at Bishopthorpe on 24th October; 112 at Sand Button on 20th November; 20 at Bishopthorpe on 23rd December and 33 at Fulford Ings on 25th.

Single birds showing characteristics of one of the smaller, migratory races (probably minima) were seen at Castle Howard on 1st, 8th and 12th January and in the Lower Derwent Valley on 16th January and 12th and 13th April.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

In the Lower Derwent Valley up to nine regularly in January and early February, two on 16th February; singles on 17th, 22nd and 30th March, 13th and 25th April and 1st and 3rd May with four on 4th and two on 9th and 13th.

At Castle Howard in May: two on 2nd and 6th; eight on 14th and four on 20th. In November a single on 13th, 16th and 23rd. One on the Ouse in York from 9th to 28th February.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

A single in the Lower Derwent valley on 25th and 26th March.

Eighth record for the area.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

A very poor breeding season where around 12 pairs produced only three broods. Two pairs present at Riccall during the breeding season.

In the Lower Derwent Valley up to 19 in January; 60 in February and 33 in March. Most breeding birds departed by early July but one juvenile remained to 2nd August.

One on 18th November and four from 20th December to year end.

Elsewhere: Three Acaster/Middlethorpe area on 26th January; two at Cawood on 3rd March; a female at Acaster/Middlethorpe on 16th; one at Newburgh Priory on 27th May and one at Castle Howard on 8th December.

MANDARIN Aix *galericulata*

A pair at Castle Howard from 20th October to year end were very confiding (DAR et al.).

WIGEON

Three pairs summered and probably bred in the Lower Derwent Valley. Monthly maxima there were 7000 in January, 5500 in February; a staggering 11,500 in March (a record), 1500 in April; 30 in September; 225 in October; 2000 in November and 3000 in December.

Elsewhere: 150 at Ozendyke Ings and 64 at Cawood on 3rd March; 11 at Newburgh Priory on 26th October; ten at Castle Howard on 6th November with 12 there on 23rd; ten at Newburgh throughout December and 14 at Pond Head on 14th.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

A very poor breeding season in the Lower Derwent Valley where only four pairs produced broods of nine and four, the first young appearing on 19th June.

Up to 12 present in January; seven on 11th February and one on 18th. Excellent numbers in March with four on 5th increasing to 21 on 16th and 53 on 26th. Up to 26 pairs in early to mid April declining to 10 pairs towards the month end. Numbers declined rapidly to the breeding population of four pairs by early May; most birds had left by late August. One or two regularly in September; one on 8th October and 9th November and a pair on 19th December.

Elsewhere a pair at Moor Monkton on 27th January; six at Cawood Marsh on 3rd March; pairs at Acaster Ings on 13th and the University on 19th; two at Pond Head on 23rd November.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

An excellent breeding season in the Lower Derwent Valley (in contrast to most other waterbirds) where around 19 pairs bred.

Monthly maxima there were: 4650 in January; 5300 in February; 5700 in March; 500 in April; 50 in May; 67 in August; 300 in September; 250 in October; 300 in November and 160 in December.
Elsewhere: 20 at Clifton Ings on 12th January; 40 at Acaster South Ings on 13th February; 16 at Wharfe Ings on 16th, 50 at Cawood on 3rd March and 40 at Castle Howard on 6th November.

MALLARD *Antis platyrhynchos*

Some breeding counts received this year were: 17 pairs produced 159 young at the university; six pairs produced 53 young at Escrick Park; six pairs bred at Clifton Lake and three pairs on the Foss in York City Centre produced 53 young.

A welcome return to form in the Lower Derwent Valley where monthly maxima were: 3000 in January; 3250 in February; 2950 in March; 150 in June; 200 in September; 100 in October; 60 in November and 450 in December. Elsewhere: up to 50 at Clifton Lake throughout the year; 267 on the Ouse in York on 9th February; 300 at Newburgh Priory on 18th August and 189 at the university on 27th November.

PINTAIL

In the Lower Derwent Valley up to 54 in January, 60 in February, 172 in March then a rapid decline to 11 in early April and three pairs by 23rd. An eclipse drake on 10th October, singles on 19th and 20th November with three on 30th and up to six during December.

Elsewhere: singles at Castle Howard on 8th and 22nd January with two at Moor Monkton on 25th. Singles at Acaster South Ings on 11th, 12th and 13th February and at Castle Howard on 16th. One at Cawood Marsh on 3rd March, two at Acaster Ings on 13th and at the University on 19th. Singles at Castle Howard on 27th September and 20th October and 35 southeast over Skipwith Common on 3rd November.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Three or four pairs probably bred in the Lower Derwent Valley where the first were a pair on 2nd April with birds present regularly thereafter to end of June. A single on 14th July and one or two regularly in August. Two on 2nd September and one on Elsewhere probably the same pair at Bishopthorpe Ings on 5th April, Fulford Ings/Middlethorpe Ings next day and Naburn Sewage Works on 12th.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

In the Lower Derwent Valley: up to 12 in January, 34 in February and 90 in March. Around 60 pairs in April attempted to breed but most departed early having failed or abandoned breeding; only five broods were seen, up to 14 in July had mostly departed by month end. One on 15th September, up to 36 in October, up to 14 in November and eight on 2nd December.

Elsewhere: five at Fulford Ings on 2nd March; three at Acaster Ings on 13th; a pair at the University on 2nd April; a female there on 15th; a pair again from 17th to 1st May with the female remaining to 7th.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

A pair at Bishopthorpe Ings on 25th February.
Tenth record for the area.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

A very poor breeding season in the Lower Derwent Valley where three or four pairs bred but produced no young. Monthly maxima there were: up to 600 in January, 890 in February and 1800 in March.

One or two from September to November with up to 21 in December.

Elsewhere: 202 at Cawood on 6th January; 33 at Castle Howard on 8th, 24 at Clifton Lake on 12th, 19 at Moor Monkton on 25th; 38 at Castle Howard on 2nd February; 286 at Cawood and 52 at Ozendyke on 3rd March; 136 at Acaster Ings on 13th. Thirteen at Clifton Lake on 1st December.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

An awful breeding season in the Lower Derwent Valley where only around six pairs produced just one brood.

Winter maxima there were: 90 in January, 130 in February, an excellent 350 in March and 80 in April.

A poor autumn showing with one on 18th September and four on 22nd December.

Elsewhere: four pairs bred at Newburgh and pairs probably bred on the Foss in York and at Pond Head.

Fifteen were at Cawood on 6th January; 13 at Poppleton on 12th February with 25 there on 19th when 31 were at the University; ten at Fulford Ings 2nd March with 37 at Cawood and nine at nearby Ozendyke the next day; 19 at Sturge's Pond on 16th April.

In autumn: 25 at Castle Howard on 6th November; 35 at Roscarrs on 9th and 40 at Castle Howard on 8th December.

SCAUP *Aythya mania*

Unprecedented numbers recorded. In the Lower Derwent Valley: one on 16th February and four on 26th; five on 1st March, nine on 2nd, three on 3rd, nine on 7th, three on 8th, one on ninth, five on 14th, 17 (the largest flock ever recorded) on 13th, five on 14th, 11 on 15th, one on 16th and five on 20th.

Elsewhere: One on the Ouse at Middlethorpe from 5th February to 7th then two there to 2nd March. Two at Poppleton from 8th to 13th February with one on 16th. Three at Red House on 12th March.

Two at Clifton Lake on 17th August with one remaining to 3rd September and one at Newburgh on 16th November.

LONG-TAILED DUCK

A first-winter bird at Newburgh on 20th and 26th October.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent valley were: 14 in January, five in February, 21 in March, six in April, two on 1st May with a drake until 30th.

In autumn singles on 20th November and 19th December.

Elsewhere more records than usual: in January singles at Moor Monkton, Fulford and Ryther. In February up to five at Acaster South Ings and singles at Kexby, the Ouse in York and Fulford. First of the autumn was at Clifton Lake on 19th October then 13 at Castle Howard on 20th, seven at Pond Head on 22nd, one at Clifton Lake on 23rd and two at Newburgh on 26th. In November singles at Sturge's Pond and Wigganorpe and two at Pond Head and Stearsby. In December up to 19 at Castle Howard; four at Pond Head and two at Bishopthorpe.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*

A red-head in the Lower Derwent Valley on 2nd and 7th March.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Bred at Butterwick and probably at Nunnington.

At Castle Howard up to 140 in January; 43 in February and 38 in March. Two there on 20th April. First of the autumn were two on 20th October then up to 37 in November and 111 in December.

In the Lower Derwent Valley, up to 17 in January; 73 in February, 10 in March and 17 in April with one on 6th May the last. Up to three in November and five in December.

Elsewhere, in February up to 18 at Acaster South Ings and Barlow Grange; up to 14 at Poppleton; two at Ryther on 16th and on the Ouse at Clifton on 23rd. Five at Cawood on 3rd March, four at Moor Monkton on 11th and a pair at Naburn on 31st with the female remaining to 10th June. A female at Acaster on 27th April. Seven at Poppleton on 25th October and three at Newburgh on 23rd November.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

A good year with a red-head at Acaster South Ings on 13th February; a pair at Newburgh on 19th April; a red-head at Castle Howard next day and a red-head at Clifton Lake on 7th October.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Two pairs probably bred in the Lower Derwent Valley where the first was a pair on 13th March.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

A cream-crown flew north at Wheldrake Ings on 13th May (ML, TED) and a female on 31st at Riccall Ings (CR). A single flying north east at North Duffield Carrs on 6th August (TED) and a male flying south at Allerton on 30th (AW). In September, all at Wheldrake Ings, a cream-crown on 4th (T&VW), TED) and a juvenile on 8th (DR).

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Sightings at Wheldrake Ings were a 'ringtail' on 1st (CR) and 2nd (TED), a pair on 2nd March (CR), a female September on 16th September mobbed by 200+ swallows (MP) and also a male on that date (TED).

Elsewhere: single females at Storwood on 22nd March, North Duffield Carrs on 11th October (TED).

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

In January, single females were at Escrick (CR) and Skipwith Common on 17th and Wheldrake Ings on 28th (TED). One was seen to take a pigeon at Fulford School on 11th March (CR) and a male was at Wheldrake Ings on 20th (TED). A male displayed at Escrick for an hour on 9th May (CR). A female was at the University on 5th November and a well-marked male took a fieldfare at Wheldrake on 20th (CR) and was still in the area up to the end of the month (TED). The same bird was seen at Storwood on 4th December, a male was at Wheldrake Ings on 24th.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

A widespread and common breeding bird throughout the area. Breeding reported at usual sites in 10km squares 5E57, 67, 77 (PB). Other breeding sites reported included Clifton, Skipwith Reported prey items (or intended prey) included Collared Dove at Acomb (BC); Fieldfare at Copmanthorpe (JAD); Snipe — caught and drowned at Wheldrake Ings — (MP); Red-legged Partridge at East Cottingham (TED) plus Robin, Song Thrush, Skylark and Starling. One chased a Goldfinch into a school classroom at Stockton—on—Forest; unfortunately both died (RD). Disputes with Kestrels were reported at Murton (RD) and Wheldrake Ings (TC).

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Singles at Brandsby Height on 27th March and at Brandsby High Farm on 12th and 28th April. The only other records were at Crocky Hill on 8th April (TC); Wheldrake Ings on 13th September (TED) and Heslington on 20th (TC).

Alteration to 1989 Report

After discussion with the Y.N.U.

Report Committee and the lack of substantive evidence, the record of this species breeding at Brandsby in 1989 has been withdrawn.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

A disappointing year, with only one brief sighting at Wheldrake Ings on 31st May (TED).

KESTREL

Widespread throughout the area. Only breeding reports were from Oulston Reservoir in the Howardian Hills, Rowntrees Factory and York Water Works although juveniles were reported from many sites.

RED-FOOTED FALCON

First-year female at North Duffield Carrs - the first record for the Reserve (TED) and fourth record for the area.

MERLIN

As in previous year most sightings were in the south of the area. Singles at Wressall Castle on 1st January, Naburn Lane on 13th, East Cottingwith on 16th; Riccall (by the A19) on 9th February and North Duffield Carrs on 1st and 15th March.

A late start for sightings of returning birds; the first report was on 10th October with a single chasing skylarks at Acaster Malbis Church; a male was at North Duffield Carrs on 23rd and a single at York Water Works on 29th. A male was at Wheldrake Ings on 6th November. December records were: a male over gardens at Clifton on 2nd; at Poppleton on 6th; Youton Parks and Killingbeck on 12th and High Catton on 21st.

Addition to 1989 Report: Single at Badger Bill on 16th March.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

A continuation in the decline of sightings in recent years with only four records received.

An adult was calling at Skipwith Common at dusk on 7th June (CR). A single over A64 at Grimston on 16th August. In September, a single was reported chasing House Martins at Poppleton on the 2nd (IW&CR) and one caught a Swallow on the 4th at Wheldrake Ings (T&VW).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

An excellent year which started with an adult male roosting at Escrick Mine on 16th and 17th January, feeding on the resident racing pigeons! (CR). A single was at Wheldrake Ings on 25th March (TED). Also at Wheldrake Ings, on 6th October, a male resisted mobbing by corvids to dine of the unusual prey of a Manx Shearwater, whose remains were later recovered and positively identified (MP, TED). A large immature female was at Beningborough on 14th November (CR) and a male seen hunting at Thornton Ellers on the following day (TED). A male was at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd December and possibly the same bird was seen at East Cottingwith on 31st (TED). The good fortune of this species has made it a frequent and welcome visitor. The first record for the area was only in 1980.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Records throughout the year, but sometimes difficult to quantify because of Chukar/Red—legged hybrids (PH). A pair was observed displaying and mating on the rooftops of a housing estate in Selby 17th March (RP). Two pairs were seen at Bossall on 31st March but not afterwards despite weekly visits (RD). Five pairs at Murton on 14th May and on later occasions (RD). Pairs also seen at High Stittenhain, North Duffield Carrs, Sand Hutton, Skipwith Common and Warthill. A pair with chicks was on Acaster Airfield 3rd August (FWO). Covies included 27 at Escrick on 2nd January and 20 at Storwood on 16th; 17 at Bossall on 19th February. Eleven were at Moor Lane, Bishopthorpe on 30th October; 14 at Elvington Lane on 12th December, 14 at Murton on 11th December and 19 there on 27th.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Seen throughout the year in many areas. Pairs seen in Bishopthorpe, East Cottingley, Escrick and North Duffield Carrs (two pairs) in June. Three pairs bred at Heslington, with a total of 21 young seen. A pair and eight young were seen at Newton Mask on 7th July and a pair with young near Escrick on 15th. A covey of 12 was seen east of Strensall Common on 26th August and a covey of 22, including young birds and adults, on 7th September. Birds were seen in Murton throughout the year with two large covies at the year end. There were also covies of 18 at Thornton Ellers on 5th January; 12 at Low Catton on 9th February, 11 at Wheldrake Ings on 11th and 15 at Thornton Ellers on 20th.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Seen regularly but with no significant sightings.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

At least one pair bred at Wheldrake Ings.

One was heard calling on Skipwith Common on 7th, 12th, 17th, 22nd and 30th January and also 2nd March and 17th May (FWO). Two heard calling on Fulford Ings on 18th January. One seen at Wheldrake Ings on 19th January, 6th and 11th February with singles on 30th May; 4th June; 8th and 20th November and 15th December.

MOORHEN *Gallinus chloropus*

Recorded in most known ponds and ditches throughout the area. Largest counts were: 38 at Stamford Bridge on 9th February; 16 at Sand Hutton on 13th and 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th. Thirty eight were at Melbourne carrot wash on 6th September and 11 by the River Foss near Fossway on 15th December. Bred at Escrick; Melbourne Ponds; Newborough Pond (JA); Pocklington Canal (clutch of 17 seen); River Foss; Wass (first chicks 5th May) and University. Three successive broods noted on Manor Farm Pond, Poppleton, with a total of 17 chicks.

COOT *Fulica atra*

A nest with a cold clutch of three eggs was seen at Melbourne on 2nd March. Pairs bred at Newburgh and Ampleforth in May and chicks seen 10th May at Wheldrake Ings. Several pairs nested on Oulston Reservoir, one using a nest originally built by a pair of grebes; nine young were seen in total, with juveniles still being fed on 21st July. Three pairs bred at Melbourne pools, with broods of six, five and two, and three bred at the University with seven young seen. Chicks were seen at North Duffield Carrs on 5th, 17th and 25th June and juveniles seen there on 24th July.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Only two reports: single seen on the Allerthorpe road on 2nd June, after heavy heard calling near Thornton Ellers on 14th Sutton-on-Derwent to rain (CR) and one July (TED).

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

No obvious trend in breeding numbers was discernible in the tower Derwent, while in the Pocklington Canal 'corridor' probable breeding occurred at Melbourne, Thornton and Seaton Ross. For the third successive year the species bred at Naburn, with incubation on such disparate dates as 21st April and 3rd June probably indicating a repeat clutch. Elsewhere, pairs were noted in the breeding season at Castle Howard, Cawood and Skipwith.

Spring arrival was early with singles at Wheldrake Ings on 10th and 25th February, six on 27th with pairs on 1st March at Acaster and North Duffield Carrs. Thereafter up to six were observed in the Lower Derwent on several March dates while on 3rd seven were logged in the Lower Ouse/Wharfe. A steady passage continued into April with the most surprising record being of a single flying north over Museum Gardens on 9th.

Post-breeding dispersal was concentrated into the first half of July; apart from two at Riccall on 9th and three near Moor Monkton on 15th—17th all records came from the Lower Derwent; no more than four were observed at any one time with the exception of a remarkable flock of 13 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th (TED).

Mid to late autumn records are unusual in the York area but 1991 yielded singles on 21st September at Wheldrake Ings (TED) and on 9th October at High Catton (RSS), the latter detected overhead late in the evening. Addition to 1989 Report One at Stamford Bridge on 12th July.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Breeding was attempted at York Waterworks while a juvenile at Riccall Pits early in July may have been of local origin (a pair was seen near Riccall Mine in late June). One displaying at Clifton Moor on 16th April was perhaps most likely to have been a passage bird.

First of a disappointing spring passage were singles on 6th April at Wheldrake Ings (ML) and Cawood (SB). A mere 17 bird—days throughout the York Area in April and May!

A single frequented Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island up to 12th July. Riccall produced 10 bird days that month. Two in the

Lower Derwent on 28th August were the last of the autumn (TED).

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

With the sole exception of a bird at Clifton Ings on 28th May (NS) all records came from the Lower Derwent. Following early individuals at North Duffield Carrs on 25th February (BC) and Wheldrake Ings on 27th (TED) March, April and May yielded only seven bird—days (of which three derived from 15th April). One midsummer single was noted on 14th June, while the only autumn record involved one at North Duffield Carrs on 24th July (AW). A very poor year.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

A disappointing year with only a handful of four-figure counts submitted; of these the 4580 in the Lower Derwent on 3rd January proved to be easily the largest. February's cold snap prompted the expected exodus. Following totals of 1200 at Wheldrake Ings, 120 at Stockton-on-Forest and 185 at Slingsby on 6th/7th no more than 25 were noted until a return of 5500 on 27th. In the Lower Derwent 3500 on 2nd March. Thereafter flocks dispersed and April's sole three—figure count was of 120 at Stillington on 2nd.

Territorial display was first noted at Stearsby on 8th March and Escrick on 10th. The first incubating bird reported was at Whitemoor Mine on 2nd April (FWO); the same site, date and observer as 19901 Sample counts included 12 pairs on Heslington Tilmire and eight pairs at Naburn, with the latter site producing the first chicks (on 21st April). A protracted breeding season is suggested by a record of birds still incubating at Poppleton on 27th May.

The first post—breeding flock concerned 50 at Wheldrake Ings on 17th June, increasing to 300 by the month end. The Lower Derwent provided the bulk of records over the next three months but no aggregations of more than 250 were reported. Birds were slightly more widespread in October, with flocks in the order of 50—25 noted at Acaster Airfield, Clifton take, Holtby and Shipton. November brought gatherings of 200—300 to Appletree Village, Castle Howard and Matton while back in the Lower Derwent 3000 were present by the month end. During December c300 were counted at Bishopthorpe and Pigeon Cote Industrial Estate and up to 1500 in the Lower Derwent.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

unusually low numbers wintered in the Lower Derwent at both ends of the year. There was, however, a good April passage.

January maxima included 800 in the Lower Derwent (3rd) and 40 at Stillington (12th). In February 50 were at Huntington on 1st; 120 at Slingsby on 6th and 200 at North Duffield Carrs on 25th when 4000 in the Lower Derwent Valley was the only number of note. North Duffield Carrs yielded the best March figures with a peak of 1600 on 2nd.

In April the Lower Derwent held 900+ on 5th; 1100 on 7th; 2500+ on 10th and 800 on 20th. Elsewhere, 55 were at Cawood on 9th and 190 at Nun Monkton on 14th. An interesting movement was noted over Naburn on three consecutive dates from 20th, comprising 135, 33 and 18 birds respectively; all were flying ENE (CR). May yielded a higher than average 78 bird—days, with the last being two at Acaster on 23rd (DP).

The first two returning birds were at Riccall on 4th July (SB) and were followed by 35 at North Duffield Carrs on 6th with smaller scattered parties more widespread thereafter. The Lower Derwent held a virtual monopoly on the species in August with a maximum of 550 on 20th; however, 350 were counted at Riccall on 28th. A mere two September bird—days were recorded while October brought 90 to Shipton (23rd) and 190 to Bishopthorpe (24th). Flocks of similar magnitude were observed at Acaster Airfield, Bishopthorpe, Clifton Gate, nigh Catton, North Duffield Carrs and Pigeon Cote Industrial Estate during the final two months of the year. The Lower Derwent held a disappointing 640 on 19th December.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Attempting to interpret the evolving pattern of this species occurrence in the York Area is a perennially intriguing task. This year's batch of records comprise two (with Golden Plovers) at North Duffield Carrs on 20th January (CR), a single at Wheldrake Ings on 11th April and one flying west over the University on 25th November (CR). A distinct double peak is now evident in the monthly bird—day totals since 1977: out of a total of 166 bird—days, 63 (38%) have been in the period November to January and 81 (49%) between March and May. January has now overtaken April as the second most likely month in which this wader may be encountered, but May remains the best bet (statistically at least!).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Three juveniles remained at Wheldrake Ings from 23rd to 27th August (DR), echoing last year's occurrence there. Long—staying small flocks of juveniles have been a feature of three out of four recent autumns, but this year's record constitutes only the thirteenth for the York Area.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

The year's records present somewhat of a mirror image of the 1990 pattern of occurrence: good numbers present in the early months, a fair spring passage and a dearth of records at the year—end. The sparse autumn passage was, however, comparable in size with that of the previous year.

Several three—figure counts came from the Lower Derwent in January, the maximum being 330 on 17th.

February's cold spell produced few records; on 10th a single was by the River Ouse at Clifton while five were at Acaster Selby the following day. Milder conditions attracted 250 to Wheldrake Ings on 25th February, increasing to 550 by 27th with 430 in the Lower Derwent on 1st March; 375 were still present there on 15th declining to 53 by the month end. Small numbers were also noted at Cawood and Escrick early in the month.

Passage birds were doubtless responsible for the notable spring count of 420+ in the Lower Derwent on 5th April; 155 were still present on 15th and 50—60 until 17th May. The last three birds finally departed Wheldrake Ings on 28th May. Elsewhere spring singles were logged at Clifton Lake (23rd April) and Cawood (28th May) (RD). A single was Wheldrake Ings on 8th June.

A poor autumn passage began on 13th July with two at Riccall (SB) and produced 30 bird—days in the Lower Derwent up until the end of September (maximum nine on 28th of that month). One or two were noted at Castle Howard and Clifton Lake.

The last three months of the year yielded only a handful of records, all from the Lower Derwent. Maxima were six on 7th October and again on 21st November and three on 22nd December.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

A rather disappointing year with numbers in the early months merely average, in spring slightly below average, in autumn decidedly poor and at the year end dismal.

Lower Derwent monthly maxima comprised 42 in January; 20 in February; 57 in March and 27 in April. Up to 15 were noted lekking in the first week of May but following the subsequent departure of the males the sole record was of a bird on 24th of that month, so breeding may not have taken place.

A single bird was responsible for 'autumn passage' in the Lower Derwent being present at Wheldrake Ings from 19th August to 10th September. Thereafter the Valley produced no more records until December when up to 12 frequented Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island.

The year's sole record elsewhere concerned two at Riccall on 28th August (SB).

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minima*

The year brought no discernible improvement in the fortunes of the species; only five records were received of which two seen likely to refer to the same individual.

One was at Red House on 24th January, while on 9th February another was sitting in deep snow in the incongruous surrounds of Main Street Dunnington. Two were noted at Wheldrake Ings on the late date of 30th April (TED) - the York Area's latest ever spring birds. Singles were noted at Fulford Ings on 20th November and 7th December.

SNIPE

Breeding numbers declined slightly in the Lower Derwent, no doubt as a result of low water tables. However, a record of an adult and two young chicks at North Duffield Carrs on the late date of 15th July shows high productivity in the form of multiple broods is quite possible given suitable conditions.

Elsewhere eight pairs bred at Tilmire, four at Bishopthorpe and singles at Fulford Ings, Naburn and Strensall Common.

The Lower Derwent hosted good numbers in January with 120 on 17th and 100+ on 23rd. Dispersal as a result of cold weather was evident in February the maximum being 35 at Clifton Ings on the 5th and small numbers subsequently turned up at such unexpected localities as York city-centre (three on 11th and two on 14th). March produced no significant records while in April up to 18 were observed at Fulford Ings.

Wheldrake Ings held a monopoly of double figure counts during the second half of the year, these included 23 on 10th and 40 on 23rd August with 17 on 29th September. Thereafter only single figures were reported.

WOODCOCK

Probable breeding took place at Askham Bog, Black Wood, Brandsby High Wood, Buttercrambe Woods, Dunnington, Maidensworth, Skipwith Common (at least eight roding) and Yearsley Moor.

Thirty two were present at Thornton Ellers on 29th January, while during February singles were seen in such unaccustomed sites as Murton and Sturge's Ponds (both on 13th) during the cold snap. March's sole notable record concerned a count of seven at Bollicarrs Wood on 26th.

November—December reports came from Fulford Golf Course, Park, Moresby, Skipwith Common and Wheldrake Ings while a minor influx was noted in the Brandsby district at the year-end.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

An early individual paused at Wheldrake Ings on 9th March; a six week gap then elapsed until a summer-plumaged bird arrived on 18th April. Thereafter the species was almost continuously present in the Lower Derwent until 24th May. Maximum counts during this period involved nine on 24th April and six on 21st May but there is no way of knowing how many different birds were involved. Display was observed on a number of occasions but pairs showed no inclination to settle onto territories. A single of the race 'islandica' was identified on 20th April (CR).

One was noted at Wheldrake Ings on 15th September.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Yet another narrow squeak for this 'annual' visitor! The sole record was of one at North Duffield Carrs on 13th January (TED), constituting the York Area's third winter record (all in January, the others coming in 1985 and 1986).

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

The first of spring was at Wheldrake Ings on 7th April (TED); later in the month roost counts there were very disappointing with only 10 on 25th and 20 on the 30th. However, 101 were present on 4th May and 73 the following evening. Poor observer coverage at the roost renders comparison of bird—day figures with previous years impossible but diurnal use of the site was noted on several May dates (maximum 32+ on 8th): the last of spring there was on 20th, though one was at Cawood on 30th (RD).

A very poor autumn passage began on 2nd July with a single south over North Duffield Carrs. On 2nd August nocturnal passage was detected over High Catton, while on the 16th of that month a single was over Brandsby. Last of the year were six flying east at Wheldrake Ings on 9th September.

Addition to 1989 Report: bird calling at Stamford Bridge in the night of 6th and 7th August.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

The species remains a widespread breeding bird in the York Area with confirmed records from Escrick (four pairs), the Lower Derwent, Moreby Park, Skipwith Common, Tilmire (two pairs) and in the northwest, 10km squares 56, 57, 66 and 67. Twelve breeding pairs at Strensall Common show the attraction of grazed lowland heaths. In addition, Curlews were present during the breeding season at Acaster, Brind, Cawood, North Howden, Poppleton and Spaldington, also at Wressle and Foggathorpe, the last two named sites being on 'set—aside' land.

Wintering numbers were slightly down on the previous year, especially at the year—end. Moreover, despite a fair spring passage in the Lower Derwent post—breeding numbers were barely average. Lower Derwent monthly maxima in the early months comprised 79 on 1st January, 85 on 25th February and 93 on 20th March.

One calling at Moor Monkton on 29th February may have been moving onto territory early, while seven at the Wharfe/Ouse confluence on 3rd March were perhaps more likely to have been winterers. Good numbers remained at Wheldrake Ings well into April, indeed, the site yielded the year's best count of 105 on the 15th.

The first post—breeding flock consisted of 12 birds at North Duffield Carrs on 27th June. Subsequent passage was confined to the Lower Derwent with the exception of three at Clifton Lake on 21st August. Monthly maxima there were 20 on 15th July, 34 on 26th August and 18 on 21st September. Corresponding figures for the final three months of the year were 22 on 22nd October, 48 on 27th November and 33 on 4th and 6th December.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

A blank spring for the first time in many years (spring records tend to predominate in the York Area). However, a series of August records at Wheldrake Ings involved three or four individuals; one on 9th (IMcD), a juvenile from 12th to 21st (Bc,la,DR) and two on 28th (TED).

REDSHANK

Perhaps a slight decline in the Lower Derwent's breeding population. Elsewhere three pairs held territory on Tilmire (one of which had chicks in late April) three pairs at Riccall in May and one or two pairs at Naburn. The Lower Derwent held good numbers in January (maximum 43 on 17th) but the species was virtually absent in February with the exception of 70 on Wheldrake Ings on 25th. March saw a gradual return so that by 20th 62 were present in the valley; a single at the University lake on 15th was unexpected. By April breeding pairs were of course back on territory, in the context of which eight at Ryther on 6th were intriguing. Post—breeding flocks noted at Wheldrake Ings of 60 on 8th June and 25 on 30th but numbers were lower during July. However, up to six were present at Riccall in the middle of that month. A single at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd August was the last of summer. Thereafter there were no records until one returned to Wheldrake on 26th October; up to three were noted in the Lower Derwent in November and 11 in December. The only other reported involved a single at Castle Howard on 16th November.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

A very poor year with both passages disappointing. Wheldrake Ings yielded singles on 11th and 25th April and 9th and 15th May. A late individual was at Riccall on 1st June. In autumn the Lower Derwent produced 17 bird—days between 3rd July and 27th September, with no more than two present at any one time. Elsewhere August singles were noted at Clifton Lake and Skipwith Common (both 13th) and Castle Howard (27th).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

In the early months two were at Melbourne from 1st to 15th January and one at Escrick from 1st January until 5th March. April birds were at Riccall (one on 6th) and Bank Island (two on 15th), while May singles paused at Skipwith Common on 21st and Poppleton on 23rd.

Returning birds in late June are regular, so two at Wheldrake Ings on 24th and one at Riccall on 29th came as no surprise. July produced 50 bird—days, 45 of which came from Riccall (maximum eight on 13th). August brought only 29 bird—days; 13 of these came from the Lower Derwent, seven from Riccall, three each from Melbourne and Castle Howard, two from Strensall Common and one from Naburn. The tower Derwent held a monopoly in September with 61 bird—days (maximum six on four dates); October singles were noted there on 1st and 25th, while November produced five bird—days between 13th and 30th. Elsewhere two were on a small pond between Haxby and Strensall on both 12th and 21st November. The sole December record concerned two on the Pocklington Canal on 1st.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

The poor showing of recent years continues; the only report received involved a single at Riccall on 28th April (CR)

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Apart from a bird holding territory at Riccall for five days from 28th April there was no indication of breeding. A sparse spring passage began on 9th April with one at Elvington (V&TW) and was followed by another on 20th at Sutton—on—Derwent. Apart from two at Clifton take on 13th all May records referred to singles: at Red House on 7th, Poppleton on 10th and 28th and Castle Howard on 14th, 20th and 26th.

Two at Red House on 29th June heralded an autumn passage which totalled 30 July bird—days; 29 in August and 18 in September. Most of July's records came from Riccall, which held four birds on several dates, although Newburgh yielded three on 10th. The species was more widespread in August with Castle Howard, Clifton Lake and Poppleton all claiming small numbers. The Lower Derwent was responsible for most of September's reports the last a single at Wheldrake Ings on 11th (OR).

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Two records were submitted, the first since 1988. At Wheldrake Ings three flew north on 28th May (ML) and a single fed by the Pool on 31st July (RC,IC). During the 1980s this species occurred in all but two Mays so the former record is typical. However, this year's July occurrence is the first ever for that month in the Area.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

The sole record referred to two (one of which was a first-year) at Wheldrake Ings on 24th April (RSS,TED).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Good numbers roosted at Wheldrake Ings in the early months with 8000 on 1st January, c4000 on 6th February and a staggering 30,000 on 3rd March declining to 5000 on 14th. The last significant gathering was of 400 at Stillington on 2nd April.

Bred as usual at Wheldrake Ings where flying juveniles were first noted on 1st July: eight days later the gullery was totally deserted. Two pairs attempted to breed at Skipwith Common but no counts came from Strensall. The species was scarce at the year end with the only large counts being of 2000 flying south—west at Wheldrake on 22nd December and 3000 roosting at Castle Howard (no date given).

A melanistic individual was observed at Wheldrake Ings on 1st January (CR). A bird picked up dead at York Waterworks in March bore a Danish ring (TC), unfortunately no further details were forthcoming.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Another disappointing year with 1000+ at Wheldrake Ings on 19th January being the only four figure count.

Clifton Lake achieved its annual maximum of 54 on 10th February while on 28th 108 were at Fulford Ings. March counts at Wheldrake Ings were 950 on 3rd and 800+ on 14th; elsewhere 300 were at Murton on 3rd and 250 on Bootham Stray on 9th.

Up to 30 were logged daily at Wheldrake Ings for much of April, declining to 18 by 5th May. May/June singles were noted at Melbourne and Naburn, while Healaugh Pond claimed the first returning adults - seven on 5th July. Thereafter only low double figures were reported during the autumn and winter, with the exception of 100 flying southwest at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd December.

Addition to 1989 Report: 44 first-summer birds at Acklam on 1st May.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

The early months brought singles to Wheldrake Ings (19th January) and Red House (1st February), while two at North Duffield Carrs on 2nd March were of the race 'fuscus'. Fourteen at this last site on 9th March heralded a light spring passage: 34 bird—days recorded at Wheldrake Ings up until 5th May (maximum 12 on 19th April). Return movement began on 30th June with three at Wheldrake Ings and three at Naburn the following day. A single was at North Duffield Carrs on 10th July and five at Castle Howard on 8th August. Single figures were in the tower Derwent from 12th August to the month end, while in September one was at Clifton Lake on 2nd and an impressive 42 at Brandsby on 14th (JP).

At the year—end the only records submitted concerned singles at Red House on 29th November and Harewood Whin Tip on 30th December with four over Brandsby Heights on 31st.

Addition to 1989 Report; 14 flew southeast at Wheldrake Ings on 30th April.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

The only record involved a first-winter (live) and an adult (dead) at Castle Howard on 16th January (DR).

Addition to 1983 Report: an adult on floodwater at Kexby on 17th December.

Addition to 1988 Report: an adult at Castle Howard on 13th March.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Another late and sparse spring passage culminated rather unexpectedly in the first confirmed breeding record at Wheldrake Ings.

Following a single at Clifton take on 30th April the University lake hosted one on 1st May, two on 4th and a pair between 8th and 14th (joined by a third individual on 10th); this pair was observed displaying, courtship—feeding and copulating. Elsewhere in May Wheldrake Ings held two on 8th and five on 25th and Naburn a single on 9th and two on 14th. June brought two to Poppleton on 9th and a pair to Wheldrake Ings from 18th; by 24th the latter were incubating a single egg (probably indicating a repeat clutch) but unfortunately the breeding attempt failed and the birds disappeared at the month-end.

Two adults remained at Naburn Marina throughout the first week of July, a period which also yielded five Lower Derwent bird days, two at Newton Mask and one at Red House. Remaining records comprised a single at North Duffield Carrs on 18th July, two at Red House the following day and two at Naburn Marina on 2nd August.

'COMMIC' TERN *Sterna paradisaea/hirundo*

Twenty three flying northeast at Wheldrake Digs on 30th April were probably Arctic; at the same site a single was noted on 3rd May. Single 'Commics' were also logged at Poppleton on 25th July and at Castle Howard on 8th August.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

A much improved spring passage began with a bang on 30th April with 29 flying northeast at Wheldrake Ings (this total excludes the 23 'Comemics' mentioned above). The same site attracted 19 on 2nd May; one on 3rd; three on 4th and one on 8th and 20th. The University lake had two on 6th and one on 10th; Naburn had four on 8th and Skipwith Common three probables on 18th. In June three were at Moor Monkton on 7th and a single at Poppleton on 9th while two singles moved south through the Lower Derwent on 15th and 18th. Addition to 1988 Report: Two north at Fulford Ings on 10th May and two at Castle Howard on 21st.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

One flew northeast at Wheldrake Ings in the evening of 30th April and was associated with a big movement of Arctic and 'Commic Terns (RSS). The York Area's fourteenth record.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

The species just makes it into the 1991 Report on the strength of a moulting adult hawking over Wheldrake Ings Pool on 1st August (Nt). The only recent blank year was 1989.

LITTLE AUK

A decapitated corpse (thought to have been dead two or three days) at Wheldrake Woods on 29th October ensured this species appearance in successive Reports.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Few records are received for this species and it may be that flocks are assumed to be feral pigeons. It would be prudent to examine all such flocks carefully.

Bred: Dunnington, Heslington, Tilmire, Strensall Common and York Water Works.

The only flock of note was of 53 at East Cottingwith on December. Small parties of up to 12 were recorded at Island, Bossall, Poppleton, Thornton, Sutton—on—Forest and the northern squares SE 57,67,77.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

In the early part of the year 200 were at Escrick Mine on 18th January, 200 at Murton on 24th, 200 there on 8th February with 1200 on 16th. One hundred at Skipwith on 17th February and Poppleton on 23rd, with 400 at Bossall on 24th. c200 at Warthill on 5th April when 300 at North Duffield Carrs.

Dead young in a nest in the Museum Gardens on 5th March indicate a laying date of 1st February.

One thousand at Wheldrake Ings on 6th October, 250 at Skipwith Common on 2nd November and 1700 at Castle Howard on 27th with 940 at Strensall on 5th December.

There was a very pale bird at Stockton-on-Forest 27th February.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Birds were singing and in full song at Skipwith village by 12th February. Three pairs were nesting at Murton on 24th April. Birds were present at most village outskirts in the six northern squares (PH).

The only counts were: 48 at Murton on 28th August; 43 at Thorganby on 2nd September and 33 at Moor Farm, Poppleton on 12th.

Addition to 1989 Report

120 at Murton on 14th October and 103 at High Catton on 21st.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

A poor year with the national trend of decline evident in the recording area. For the first time birds were not recorded at usual sites in squares 5E57,67,77 (PB) and although birds were present during the breeding season at several sites there was no evidence of breeding.

The first spring arrivals were at Seavy Carr on 8th May (MC) and Church Fenton on 9th. Six were along the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 12th and seven on 13th. A single at Holme—on—Spalding Moor on 12th.

Singles were recorded at: East Cottingwith, Escrick, Newton Marsh and Thornton during May, with two at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd and three on 30th; Poppleton on 9th and 10th June, Thornton Ellers on 18th, Wheldrake Ings on 20th and Skipwith Common on 23rd. Two were at Newton-on-Derwent on 23rd June and four at Sean Carr on 25th.

Recorded in July from Cawood, Poppleton and Melbourne Ings. The only records from the north of the area were two at Yearsley Wood on 8th August and a single at Dalby during that month. Up to eight were present at Riccall in late summer, two flew south at Poppleton on 8th September and the last were three at Riccall on 15th (SAn).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

The first was a calling bird at Skipwith Common on 12th April (FWO). Singles were recorded at: Poppleton on 14th; Moor Monkton on 20th; Wheldrake Ings 24th and 25th and also at Shipton and Pocklington Airfield. Birds reached the northern area by 27th when a single at Brandsby. Birds were widespread by mid—June, mostly singles with the exceptions of two at Bielby on 12th May; three at Wheldrake Ings on 24th; five along the Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on 1st June and two at Skipwith Common on 14th.

The only records for August were a juvenile at Wheldrake Ings on 5th and singles at Thorganby on 17th and Strensall Common on 24th. The last was a juvenile being fed by a Yellowhammer at Poppleton on 25th (IW&CR). The species seemed less common than usual at Bishopthorpe.

BARN OWL

Bred: Crockey Hill, Melbourne Common, Wheldrake Ings and five further sites.

Away from the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area singles were recorded from 14 sites with more from the north and east of York. Three at Wheldrake Ings on 4th April was the only multiple record.

During the breeding season birds were seen daily at Melbourne and North Duffield Carrs in July and occasionally at Foggathorpe and Denton Ings. However, the largest percentage of the records were from the first and last quarters of the year.

There were eight reported casualties with an interesting record from the Railway Yard at Leeman Road.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Having been thought to be in decline in recent years records from throughout the area give encouragement that the trend has been reversed.

Bred: Brandsby area (Pilfits, Skewsby and Snargate), Murton and Thorganby. Observed in the breeding season at: Acklam, Barmby Moor, Ellerton, Heslington Tilmire, Langwith, Naburn, Nunnington, Poppleton and Sand Hutton.

Most records were of singles apart from two at Poppleton on 7th April, Wheldrake village on 12th;

Stillingfleet/Naburn on 10th May and Bossall on 17th July.

A bird at Shipton on 3rd May was hovering above a ditch by the side of the A19 (JP).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Bred: Bielby (1pr. 1 yng.); Dunnington Common (2prs. 2yng.); Naburn (1pr. 2yng.) and Strensall Common (2prs. 4yng.).

Mainly singles reported from throughout the area during the year except for five calling at Strensall Common on 24th July; three at the University 16th October with up to six individuals in the Bishopthorpe area.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asia otus*

The only early records were of a single at Brind on 2nd January and three at roost on Skipwith Common on 14th and 26th.

A single at Wheldrake Wood on 25th May and an immature in a garden in Wheldrake village on 8th June.

Three young were calling at Skipwith Common on 19th June and 4th July. A single on Strensall Common on 24th June.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

In the Lower Derwent Valley seen in all months except June and August; however no proof of breeding. Most records referred to single birds but two were at Seavy Carr on 29th January and three at North Duffield Carrs on 8th December.

Addition to 1989 Report

Single at Thorpe Willoughby on 24th April

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Thirteen or fourteen pairs bred at Skipwith Common.

The first returning bird was at Skipwith Common on 18th May (CR) with eight by 8th June. Nine birds were churring on 19th with eleven on 24th. The last was a churring male on 25th August (FWO).

Elsewhere: Two at Hollicarrs Wood, Escrick on 10th June and at Yearsley Moor on 6th July.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

An early arrival was at Long Marston on 13th April (PW). The next was a single at Wheldrake Ings on 27th, two on 28th and one on 29th, singles at Clifton Lake on 4th May and Poppleton on 6th. A strong northerly passage occurred at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May with 15 there on 9th, 60 on 10th when three had arrived at Newburgh Priory. One hundred and twenty flew north at Bishop Wilton on 16th, with 50 at Wheldrake Ings on 24th and 70 at Riccall) on 31st. Two hundred were at Strensall Common on 14th June and 100 at Skipwith Common on 15th. Return movement began with 100 southeast at Brandsby on 22nd July but other than 60 at Clifton Lake on 3rd August no other significant numbers were seen.

In September singles were noted at Wilberfoss and Wheldrake Ings on 1st, Poppleton on 7th and the last at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd (TED).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Bred: Bishopthorpe, Lower Derwent Valley and Stamford Bridge. Seen in the breeding season at Clifton Ings, Escrick Beck, Fulford, Naburn Loch, Naburn and Poppleton.

The number of records received would indicate that breeding was more common than appeared.

Reported throughout the year but the only records from the northern area were from Newburgh Priory. Recorded from 21 sites with most concerning single birds. Exceptions were three displaying at Wheldrake Ings on 30th March; pairs at Gate Fulford Hill on 8th April, Clifton Ings on 9th, Wheldrake Ings on 12th and Poppleton on 30th May, with nine at Stamford Bridge on 11th June.

Two were on the River Ouse at Acaster on 6th December.

WRYNECK *Jynx • torquilla*

One in a garden at Sutton—on—Derwent on 30th April (TED).

Fourth record for the area and the first in spring.

Erratum - The bird at Copmanthorpe on 1st September 1981 was the third for the area and not the fourth as stated.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Bred: Escrick Mine, Fulford Golf Course, Strensall Common and Wass.

Probably bred: Escrick Wood, Moreby Park and Naburn Wood. In the first half of the year birds were heard frequently at Skipwith Common until 11th May with a pair present on 8th April.

The only other records were a single at Castle Howard on 10th April; Strensall Common on 5th May, Acaster Ings on 13th and Bishop Wilton on 14th. An adult was at Blackwood Plantation on 4th July.

Unfortunately a bird was found dead at Ampleforth Ponds on 15th June and two at Strensall Common on 26th August. In the latter part of the year singles were reported from Skipwith Common, Wheldrake Ings and Wheldrake Wood.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Bred: Clifton Hospital, Dunnington Common, Escrick, Palace Wood, Bishopthorpe, Skipwith Common and Strensall Common (4prs).

Recorded in the breeding season throughout the area; mainly single birds but two at Poppleton on 28th April.

A bird was drumming on a metal drain pipe at Escrick on 30th May. The only multiple numbers during the winter months were two males and one female on a bird feeder at Escrick on 17th February; two at Bank Island on 26th October and a pair at Skipwith Common on 6th December.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Bred: Escrick Wood (3yng.), Newburgh Priory (2yng.) and possibly Moor Monkton where a bird was seen carrying food on 7th June.

In the first half of the year singles were reported from Acaster South Ings, Askham Bog, Fulford Ings, North Duffield Carrs, Nun Monkton, Naburn, Poppleton, Skipwith Common, Stubb Wood and Wass. Two were at Skipwith Common on 19th January and a pair at the confluence of rivers Ouse and Nidd on 7th June.

The only records in the latter part of the year were singles from Askham Bog on 13th and 15th November and Murton on 25th December.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Bred: Elvington, Heslington Tilmire, Naburn and Poppleton.

The only early winter flocks were 52 south at Askham Bog on 7th February; 15 in the Murton area on 3rd March, 12 at Poppleton on 22nd and seven at Bossall on 31st. Twenty four were in the Murton area on 14th May and adults were feeding young at Poppleton on 27th.

Southerly passage was noted at Wheldrake Ings where 100 were present on 1st October with 70 there on 6th, 20 were at Holtby Lane on 12th and 35 at Acaster Airfield on 24th. The only flocks during the latter part of the year were 55 at Appletree Village on 11th November; 50 at Poppleton on 7th December and 19 at Murton on 27th.

Addition to 1990 Report

Fifty at Murton on 19th March and 40 at Bossall on 22nd December.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Bred: Middlethorpe Ings, Nunnington, Poppleton, Thornton Ellers and the confluence of rivers Ouse and Nidd.

Scarce during the early part of spring with the first at Poppleton on 15th March (PW) and again on 17th when two were at Wheldrake Ings. Only single figures were recorded from Cawood, Clifton Ings, Sturge's Pond and Wheldrake Ings in early April until 280 at Castle Howard on 16th and 15 at Cawood on 17th. 43 were at Riccall on 31st May.

Return passage was confined to Wheldrake Ings with 40 there on 13th August, 400 on 20th, 1000 on 22nd and 200 on 28th. Young were still being fed at Thornton fliers on 31st. Two at Clifton take (NS) and Wheldrake Ings (TED) on 2nd October were the last.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Birds were slow to spread throughout the area with no counts of any significance. The first spring arrivals were at Escrick (HG) and Fulford Ings (DB) on 11th April, North Duffield Carrs on 10th, three at Castle Howard on 13th, 10 at Newburgh Priory on 16th when 40 were at Wheldrake Ings, with 30 there on 18th. Thirty were at Naburn Sewage Works on 28th April and 25 at Pond Head Reservoir 4th May.

Return passage commenced with 70 at Wheldrake Ings on 13th August increasing to 5000 at roost on 27th; 3500 there on 28th and 5000 on 30th. The roost held 4000 on 2nd September; 6000 on 4th; 4000 on 14th and finally 2500 on 16th.

Elsewhere August parties of up to 50 were noted at Clifton Lake, Skipwith Village and Stockton—on—Forest.

Forty six were at Wheldrake Ings on 10th October; 10 at Kexby Bridge on 15th with singles at Appletton Roebuck on 18th, Fulford on 19th, Poppleton on 20th with six at Wheldrake on 29th the last (RC).

Addition to 1989 Report

Three at Stamford Bridge on 21st October.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

A poor breeding season with reports of "many sites unoccupied at Bishopthorpe" (PwGC), "only 20% of sites occupied at Escrick" (CR) and five pairs less at Sinbalk Lane, York where birds were still building on 10th June" (BR).

Nowhere were birds numerous during spring passage. The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 13th April (RSS), two there on 14th and at Sturge's Pond on 16th. No more than two were reported from Bishopthorpe, Castle Howard, Naburn, Poppleton and Skipwith Common to the end of the month, with the exception of twenty at Naburn Sewage Works on 28th.

Autumn passage was equally poor with 65 at Naburn on 29th August; 300 at Wheldrake Ings on 8th September and 38 at Clifton Lake on 9th. Ten at Scarcroft Hill on 2nd October, then single figures from mid-October at Acomb Green, Bishopthorpe, Heslington Tilmire, Poppleton and Wheldrake Ings. The last were two at Acomb on 29th October (SAB).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Two pairs were present in the breeding season at Fulford Golf Course and three pairs at Wheldrake Wood, with one at Ampleforth and Yearsley Common. Pairs were absent from two breeding sites in SE57 due to bad weather in May and June.

The first was at Yearsley Common on 21st April (RSS), with singles at Skipwith Common on 24th and 27th and Brayton Barff on 4th May. Six were at Yearsley Wood on 6th May, several at Skipwith Common on 18th and five at Allerthorpe Common on 20th.

Seven were at Strensall Common on 2nd June when an adult was feeding four young. Five remained on 14th, three on 20th and the last on 23rd (JSH).

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Bred: Clifton lags, Clifton take area, Elvington Airfield, Fulford Ings, Heslington Tilmire, Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal, Sheriff Hutton, Skewsby and Terrington.

Few records for the early part of the year with no passage of note. Thirty at East Cottingwith on 5th January, 17 at junction of York ring road with A64 on 28th and thirty at Clifton Ings on 9th April.

Post—breeding numbers were low with 10 at North Duffield Carrs on 27th June and 30 at Red House, Poppleton on 17th August. The only passage noted was 250 west at Wheldrake Ings on 28th October and 350 east on 29th. On 27th November 73 were at Melbourne Pool and 30 at Melbourne Scamland on 11th December.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Bred: tower Derwent Valley, Naburn, Poppleton and Shipton where a solitary pair nested by the main road — the male escorted a cyclist out of the territory (PH).

First arrival was a female at Naburn Sewage Works on 12th April (DP) followed by singles at Brayton Barff, Poppleton and Wheldrake lags on 15th, Naburn on 21st, two at Wheldrake Ings on 24th, 12 at Riccall on 28th and a pair at Poppleton on 30th. Up to five were seen in May and June at Acaster Airfield, Clifton Lake, Moor Monkton, Murton, confluence of rivers Ouse and Nidd, Poppleton, Riccall, Warthill and Wheldrake Ings. In July singles were reported from Holtby Lane and Skipwith. Two were at Strensall Common on 8th August and again on 12th, with a single on 24th and one or two at Wheldrake Ings until month end.

Four were in a garden at Moor Monkton on 1st September when two were at Wheldrake Ings. Six at Melbourne carrot—wash on 6th, three at the University 9th, a juvenile at Clifton Lake on 10th with three at Melbourne Pool and five at Kexby Bridge on 11th. Two were at Stockton-on-Forest on 19th, a family party of eight at Cliffe Common on 20th and three over Brayton on 23rd with the last being two at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd October (TED).

Bird showing characteristics of the race *M.f. flava*, Blue headed Wagtail, reported from North Duffield Carrs on 25th June and 6th and 10th July.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Bred: Escrick, Kirkham Priory, Naburn, Murton and probably bred in the Lower Derwent Valley. A pair noted during the breeding season at Billbeck, Brandsby with nine at canal head, Pocklington and singles at Newburgh and Naburn Sewage Works.

In the early part of the year up to two reported from Bank Island, Fossgate, Pike Hills Golf Club, Middlethorpe Ings and Wheldrake Ings, with a pair at Butterwick on 17th March.

In latter part of year four were at Dale Pond on 28th September, two at Stockton-on-Forest on 30th November and two at Bank Island during November and December. Singles were reported from Burnholme, Copmanthorpe, Naburn Sewage works, Melbourne Pools, Rawcliffe Ings, Rawcliffe Sewage Works and York Water Works.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Small winter parties in the early part of the year of 21 at Poppleton on 5th January and 10 at Allerthorpe on 3rd February. Spring passage was evident at Bank Island with 137 on 1st March 62 on 3rd, 32 on 16th, decreasing to 20 on 1st April and 12 on 24th.

Post—breeding flocks were 25 at Strensall Common on 8th August increasing to 35 on 12th and up to 24 were at Clifton Lake from 16th to 3rd September. Eighty five were at Melbourne slurry pit on 28th September, 140 at Melbourne Ponds on 27th November and 30 at Melbourne Scamland on 1st December.

Bird showing characteristics of race *M.a. alba*, White Wagtail were at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April and two at Naburn Sewage Works on 21st.

Addition to 1988 Report: A bird showing the characteristics of race *U.s. alba*, White Wagtail, was at Wheldrake Ings on 30th April.

WAXWING

Three at Copmanthorpe on 10th January increased daily to a peak of 250 on 18th. Thereafter numbers fluctuated on a day-to-day basis with maxima of 150 on 20th; 102 on 21st; 90 on 22nd, 110 on 26th, 23 on 27th with the last being three on 4th February. "At first it was thought that due to the appearance and disappearance of colour ringed birds there was a high turnover of birds at the site. However, it would appear that this was not the case and birds were simply ranging over a wide area in several large flocks.

At one point birds were present along the A64 between Copmanthorpe and Leeds and I would suggest interchange between the two sites" (C.S. Ralston). (See also 'Ringing, Recoveries and Controls'.)

Elsewhere: Five at Bishopthorpe on 13th January when eight at North Duffield Carrs. Forty at York Sixth Form College on 15th were undoubtedly part of the flock at Copmanthorpe. Two were at Fulford Golf Club on 18th, five at York Railway Station on 29th with two at Wildman Inn on A64 on 31st. Three at Acomb Green on 11th March increased to seven on 21st. The last were six at Dringhouses on 17th.

In the latter part of the year two were at Wheldrake Ings on 12th November and 23 at Hagg Wood, Skewsby on 24th. Three were at Church Bridge, Melbourne on 1st December and Poppleton on 3rd. Eight at York Railway station on 4th; three at York Cemetery on 5th with 17 at Heslington on 11th and 12th. The largest flock was of 40 at Brandsby Hall on 26th; 19 were at Yearsley Forest on 27th with two at Wilberfoss on 29th and 30th.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Two were present all year at Nunnington and a pair bred with three young at West Ness down river.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Widespread throughout the area. The only counts were three at Wheldrake Ings on 6th February; 18 at Brayton Barff on 18th April; four at Bottom Lake, Ampleforth on 7th June; four at the University 10th October and seven at Fulford Ings on 13th November.

Two in a garden at Murton on 14th February survived overnight temperatures of -14°C .

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Breeding reports from Dunnington and the northern squares 67, and 77 would indicate a good breeding season.

A nest with four eggs was at Stockton-on-Forest on 22nd April.

Sixteen were at Burton feeding on chaff on 13th February and nine were at Fulford Ings on 13th November.

A bird at Bishopthorpe had a conspicuous white forehead (PWGC). A domed nest was built at the University April and a brood of three reared. The structure was similar to that of the Wren but more untidy and loose (CR).

ROBIN

Nine pairs bred in the Ampleforth Ponds area.

As with several other species singing was noted early at Skipwith Common on 4th February. An early nester at Escrick had three eggs on 17th March.

Thirty six were at Brayton Barff on 18th April.

Birds were in winter territories in Brandsby by 7th August (PB), while the number of winter territories at Oulston Reservoir was considered down on previous years (I&RT). Thirteen were at Fulford Ings on 13th November and 21 at Heslington Allotments on 11th December.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Although not a commonly reported species in the area its absence from former breeding areas was noted in the northern part of the area (PH). The only records received were a singing male at Acklam on 6th May (T&VW) and Ampleforth on 26th.

A pair was displaying and prospecting at Skipwith Common on 2nd June, a male at Nunnington on 15th and a bird at Skipwith Common on 9th August (EWO).

Addition to 1988 Report

A female at Ampleforth on 22nd May.

WHINCHAT

Late arriving this year with the first a male at Bielby on 12th May (CR) and one at Wheldrake Ings on 13th, a female at Naburn on the railway walk on 23rd. Seven males and five females were at Strensall Common (a former stronghold of the species) on 24th; a pair on 14th and 16th June with three males and a female on 20th and a single on 23rd. No proof of breeding.

Three were at Wheldrake Ings on 26th August, four at Poppleton on 27th, a single there on 15th September with the last at Heslington Tilmire on 20th.

WHEATEAR

Once again a poor spring passage with singles recorded at Wheldrake Ings on 5th April (142); Poppleton on 30th and 7th May, Church Fenton on 15th May and North Duffield Cans on 21st when two males and

and a female were at Strensall Common with a single there on 22nd.

A pair with two young on the Naburn Railway Walk on 23rd May was a surprise considering the paucity of records this spring.

Return passage only produced four singles at Oswaldkirk on 13th August, Murton on 26th; Escrick cycle track on 11th September, with the last at Poppleton on 14th.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Maximum numbers in early part of the year were: 67 at Fulford Ings on 6th January; 20 at Skipwith on 25th with up to 40 at Oulston Reservoir to the month end. Thirty were at Fulford Ings on 8th February, 22 including one on a nut feeder, at Hutton on 10th and 23 at Brayton Barff on 23rd. A female was building a nest behind a drainpipe at Fulford on 27th February.

In the latter part of the year: 49 at Waingate Stray on 13th October, 23 at Appletree Village on 16th; 167 at Walmgate Stray on 16th November with 127 at Fulford Ings on 19th and 200 at Walmgate Stray on 21st. Smaller parties of 35 at Brandsby Lodge on 2nd December and 30 at Scrayingham on 30th.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Maximum counts in the early part of the year were: 350 at Storwood on 3rd January, 200 at Copmanthorpe on 16th and 19th when 200 were at Hutton, 200 at Bubwith on 23rd and York ringroad/A19 junction on 29th when 500 were at Shipton. Two hundred at Hopgrove on 4th February; 400 at Askham Bog on 7th and 300 flew north—east at Wheldrake Ings on 28th. Two hundred and fifty at Farlington on 9th March. 750 flew north—east at Wheldrake Ings on 21st, 285 at Dunnington on 25th with 1730 in the Wheldrake/Thorganby area on 26th. Three hundred at Brandsby on 1st April; 500 at Murton on 2nd with the last an exceptional flock of 55 at Seavy Carr on 8th May (TED/MI.).

The first returning bird was at Appletree Village on 16th October (BGP) with one at York Six Form College next day. Thereafter flocks began moving through the area with the maximum counts being: 300 over the University 19th; 300 at Castle Howard on 20th; 200 moved west at Bank Island and 250 west at North Duffield Carrs on 23rd; 250 flew south at Brandsby on 29th when 500 were at Wheldrake Ings. Three hundred and fifty flew over Skipwith Common on 2nd November, 700 at Heslington Tilmire on 12th, 250 at Acaster Church on 13th, 500 at Poppleton on 16th and 400 remained at Murton from 10th to year end. Seven hundred at Wheldrake Ings on 13th November increased to 2200 by 21st, 350 at Skipwith Common on 23rd and 450 at Poppleton on 28th, reducing to 300 by 4th December when 400 were at Rufforth. Three thousand were in the Lower Derwent Valley during December.

The best showing since 1987.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Few birds were recorded in the Brandsby area and elsewhere with the national trend of decline. More records of this species would enable us to estimate the Y.O.C. area.

A male in full song at New Walk, York on 26th January and Skipwith Common on 12th March (FWO). A nest with four eggs at Stockton-on-Forest on 8th April, four young on the 15th and fledged by 22nd (RD) and an adult with young at Poppleton on 28th.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Few records were received during the first half of the year with up to eight reported from Escrick, Murton, Scarcroft Stray, Stockton-on-Forest and the University where three young fledged on 14th April. Thirteen were at Red House School, Ampleforth on 19th July and 14 at Brandsby Church on 18th.

Small winter parties of up to ten birds were at Acaster Malbis, Dunnington, Fulford Ings, Pike Hills Golf Club, Poppleton, Sand Hutton and Stockton—on—Forest.

Fourteen were at Fulford Golf Course on 4th December.

Young were predated at Brandsby by a Sparrow Hawk (PH).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Birds were throughout the area in the early part of the year with maximum numbers being: 170 at Storwood on 3rd January, 60 at Copmanthorpe on 13th rising to 350 on 19th, 100 at Bubwith on 23rd and 150 at Tesco Store, Clifton on 29th. Southerly movement was observed on 7th February when birds were observed over York City centre and Askham Bog in heavy snow. Night passage was noted over York on 12th March and 1000 were at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd with 70 northeast on 5th April. Two at Bishopthorpe on 6th April and the last there on 17th (ML).

The first returning birds were four at Bishopthorpe on 25th September (PWGC) and two there on 29th. Forty were at Bank Island on 6th October, heavy passage was noted over the University from 12th to 14th with small groups observed moving south on 13th and over Appletree Village on 15th; 500 were at Wheldrake Ings on 29th and up to 1000 were present there throughout November. Forty five were at Acaster Airfield on 6th November, 120 at Fulford Ings on 13th when 70 at Heslington Tilmire, with 60 at Walmgate Stray on 29th.

Five hundred were present in the Lower Derwent Valley throughout December.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

At least six pairs bred at Wheldrake Ings.

The first bird was at Wheldrake Ings on (RSS/TED/CR/a) with two on 30th. A male at Seavy Carrs on 7th

May with up to three at Wheldrake Ings from 18th May to 12th July. Singles were also recorded at: Storwood on 17th May, East Cottingwith on 30th and also 28th July. Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 1st and 4th September were the last (TED)

Elsewhere: at least two at Cawood on 30th May and a single at Poppleton on 13th July.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Bred at Bishopthorpe and Wheldrake Ings and present in the breeding season at Allerthorpe Common, Castle Howard, Naburn, Poppleton, Riccall and Skipwith Common.

The first returning was at Wheldrake Ings on 24th April (TED), three on 28th when 12 were along the Pocklington Canal between Walnut Bridge and Melbourne. Eight males were along the Pocklington Canal between Hagg Bridge and East Cottingwith on 8th May with 20 there on 17th; 27 were at Wheldrake Ings on 20th and 60 on 24th.

Elsewhere: Singles at Poppleton on 10th May, Skipwith Common 18th, four at Allerthorpe Common on 20th, six at Poppleton on 24th and five pairs at Riccall on 31st. Two pairs were at Castle Howard on 15th June and three pairs at Skipwith Common on 20th. Two at Stillingfleet on 3rd July when two pairs at Clifton Ings. Fourteen were at Wheldrake Ings on 28th August with 12 there on 1st September and 14 on 4th; four remained on 8th and seven on 11th were the last (TED).

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Bred: Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area, Riccall, Common and possibly at Askham Bog and Castle Howard. Skipwith.

A single at Wheldrake Ings on 27th April was the first (TED) with the next not until 10th May with a single at Skipwith Common on 11th and 13th and Castle Howard on 20th.

Reported from the Lower Derwent/Pocklington Canal area throughout the summer with the maxima: being 12 on 24th May, 11 on 26th and 10 on 21st August.

Elsewhere: Two pairs bred at Riccall and birds were present at Askham Bog. Four young were at Skipwith Common on 26th July and a single on 8th September. Nine were at Wheldrake Ings on 8th September, two on 11th and the last an adult feeding two fledged juveniles at Walnut Bridge, Pocklington Canal on 15th (RC).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Bred: Flat Top, Terrington, Lower Derwent Valley and Yearsley Bank. Present in breeding season at Heslington, Naburn Railway track, Moreby Wood and Poppleton.

The species is under recorded in the northern area so breeding reports from the Brandsby area were most welcome.

The first spring arrivals were at Brayton Barff on 28th April (DC), Copmanthorpe on 8th May, Askham Bog on 9th when three at Wheldrake Ings. A single at Clifton lake on 12th May was the first record for this site.

By 24th May birds were widespread in the Lower Derwent Valley. Singles at Bielby on 28th, Holtby Lane, Warthill on 29th when one at Walmgate Stray. A single at Wigginton Pond on 1st June. The only record from Poppleton was a single on 3rd July with one at Foggathorpe on 13th.

The last were at Wheldrake Ings on 15th and 20th September.

WHITETHROAT

Bred: Brandsby area where pairs were at usual sites by late May, Moor Monkton where two pairs bred in Oil Seed Rape, Skipwith Common and Wheldrake Ings. Present in the breeding season at Ampleforth, Askham Bog, Bishopthorpe, Fulford, Poppleton, Naburn Railway Walk, Riccall and Strensall Common.

The species is no doubt under recorded with records coming from mainly well watched sites.

The first, a pair at Copmanthorpe on 28th April and Poppleton (IW&CR) Four at Wheldrake Ings on 14th May Pocklington Canal between Hagg Bridge and East Cottingwith on 17th with 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 24th.

Four at Wheldrake Ings on 27th August, three on 8th September with the last on 21st (TED).

Elsewhere: singles at Skipwith Common on 8th September and Poppleton on 18th.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Seven at Brayton Barff on 4th May were the first (DC), however arrival seems to have been late with the next a single at Stubb Wood on 15th, Brandsby on 17th, Skipwith Common on 18th and Copmanthorpe on 19th. Birds were widespread by the end of the month but scarce in June with singles at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd, Ampleforth on 7th and two at Thornton Ellers on 18th.

The only autumn record, and the last, was a single at New Earswick Nature Reserve on 12th August (NP).

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Although widespread throughout the area the only breeding records were from Brandsby, Fulford Golf Course and Wheldrake Ings.

Present in breeding season at Cawood, Heslington, Moreby Wood and Wheldrake Wood.

Spring arrival was very protracted with the first returning bird at Copmanthorpe on 23rd March (JAD). Thereafter singles at Cawood on 6th April; Archbishop's Palace on 11th; Thorganby and Struge's Pond on 12th. Became widespread throughout the area by the end of May, usually single birds but five at Knavesmire Wood on 23rd April; two at Askham Bog on 11th May and three at Poppleton on 24th when eight were at Wheldrake Ings. Two pairs were at the University on 26th and two at Oulston Reservoir on 27th.

Few reports during the latter part of the year with singles at Oulston Reservoir and Skipwith Common on 21st July. A male at Copmanthorpe on 5th November and a female at Fulford Golf Course on 13th may have been wintering birds as was the one at West Bank Park, Acomb to year end (FWO).

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Bred in Brandsby Dale.

An early bird unfortunately flew into a window and died at Heslington on 22nd April (CR).

Two singing males at Wass on 5th May; Knavesmire Wood on 12th when one at Brayton Barff; a single at Wass on 24th and three on 26th. Singles at Pond Head Wood on 27th May and on 15th June when two were at Brandsby.

The last was at Pond Head Wood on 27th July (I&RT)

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

At least one bird wintered at Bishopthorpe (DP).

The first birds were at Wheldrake Ings on 14th and 15th March (CR), Blackwood Plantation on 16th and Skipwith Common on 10th.

Birds were widespread by the end of the month with five at Blackwood Plantation on 23rd.

Singles were reported throughout the area during the breeding season, exceptions were 10 at Yearsley Wood on 6th May, three at Askham Bog on 11th and four at Brayton Barff on 18th.

The last was a single at Wheldrake on 30th September and 1st October and Ampleforth on 1st November (JP).

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

First arrivals were at Cawood (SAB) and Sturge's Pond (DC) on 6th April; Heslington Tilmire on 7th, Skipwith Common on 8th and Clifton Hospital on 10th. Six were at Skipwith Common on 12th and birds were throughout the area by 10th May. Maximum counts were: 12 at Pocklington Canal on 20th April when 10 at Wheldrake Ings. Eighteen between East Cottingwith and Hagg Bridge on 8th May, 25 at Wheldrake Ings on 9th, 12 at Yearsley on 10th; 40 at Skipwith Common on 15th and 25 at Wheldrake Ings on 24th. The only records thereafter were of eight at Ampleforth on 7th June; two at Stillingfleet 3rd July; three at Wheldrake Ings on 8th September and the last four at Wheldrake Ings on 6th October (TED,MP).

GOLDCREST

A much under-recorded species with very few records received.

Breeding reported from Blackmoor, Dale End in the Brandsby area and Oliver Wood.

A single was at Appletree Village on 17th January.

Considered to be scarce at Red House Wood, Poppleton on 29th November

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*

A female seen at Pocklington Canal on 14th May (TED).

Fifth record for the area.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

Very late arrivals this year with the first birds at Bootham Park on 25th May (FWO) and pairs at Bishopthorpe Crematorium and Escrick on 26th. They must have been present earlier, however, as two adults and four juveniles were recorded on 1st June in Escrick.

One or two were seen during the summer at Acomb, Newburgh, Strensall, University and Wheldrake Ings, with family parties at Brandsby, Nunnington, Pocklington Canal, Rawcliffe and Strensall Common.

The latest to be seen in the area was at Moor Monkton on 5th September (IM).

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Three records only — a male at Wass on 24th May (JSE); a male singing at Ampleforth on the 26th May (DR) and from the Plain of York on Strensall Common a pair prospecting nesting holes from 26th May until 2nd June (CR).

Addition to 1988 Report A male at Ampleforth on 22nd May.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula parva*

An adult female at Burnholme Wood, Heworth on 16th October (BGP).

This is the second record for the area, the first being a summer plumaged male at Skipwith Common on 27th and 28th May 1975.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Bred at Brandsby, Fulford Ings, Tilmire and University.

Rather sparse reports early in the year included 12 at Sturge's Pond; a maximum of 45 on Skipwith Common; 30 at the university and a pair on a bird table at Bishopthorpe. Seen at Askham Bog in May and at the end of the month on 23rd and 24th feeding young at Poppleton and Skipwith Common.

Family parties seen on 4th June at Fulford (33, 26 of them immature), on 13th at Skipwith Common (11), on 15th at Brandsby (two adults and 10 juveniles) and 12th July at Moor Monkton (20+).

In the latter part of the year the larger counts were of 24 at Brandsby, 35 at New Earswick; c55 on Skipwith Common 17 at Stubb Wood and 25 on Wheldrake Ings.

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

Confirmed breeding came only from Brandsby and Thornton Ellers.

Rather thinly spread throughout our recording area with reports in the early months of one or two from Hovingham, Oulston Reservoir and Skipwith Common. During the breeding season they were noted at Ampleforth (four), Askham Bog, Flaxton (two or three), Skipwith Common, Wass (three) and Wheldrake Ings. Later in the year singles were at Kilburn (two), Newburgh, Wheldrake Ings. Two eating burdock seed heads in Elvington three at Castle Howard.

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

As for the Marsh Tit thinly spread in our area through the year. Seen at Escrick, Skipwith Common and Wheldrake Ings January/February with a male singing at Skipwith on 4th February. A single at Oulston Reservoir on the 17th March. In the latter part of May males were singing on Allerthorpe Common and Skipwith Common and singles were at Askham Bog and Dunnington with a singing male at Thornton Ellers on 18th June. During July one was at Poppleton and four on Skipwith Common. Castle Howard had a family party of six on 22nd August. Two were at Bank Island on 21st November. Also seen at Brandsby and 'present in small numbers all year' at Brayton Barff and Sturge's Pond.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

The first report for the year was of one singing on Skipwith Common on 13th February and then a pair was seen there on 15th March. Nine were at Brayton Barff on 18th April and two at Newburgh on 28th. At Ampleforth, four pairs had broods of seven, six, five and five on 15th June and in Escrick a pair raised six young in a garage roof. Post—breeding birds were at Acomb Green, Brandsby, New Earswick, Skipwith Common and York and finally on 14th December a flock of 21 on Skipwith Common (FWO).

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

Thirty were at Stamford Bridge on 9th February and a further count of 51 was made at Brayton Barff on 18th April. There were several in full song on Skipwith Common on 24th May and 3rd June. Eight pairs nested on Strensall Common (three of them in boxes). Also bred at Clifton Lake and Moor Monkton but at Escrick all six young were lost at an early stage, possibly due to damp weather. Family parties were seen on 22nd and 23rd June at Poppleton and Skipwith Common.

Post—breeding flocks were 20+ at Poppleton on 12th Wheldrake Ings on 6th October with the only winter 20+ at Sand Button on 20th November.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Heard in full song in January at Bishopthorpe Palace and Skipwith Common.; on 18th April 23 were at Brayton Barff. Six pairs on Strensall Common on 2nd June (one in a box). At the end of that month a juvenile was at Wheldrake and a family party of nine on Skipwith Common. Also bred at Clifton Lake. Thought to have had "a poor breeding season, giving rise to few autumn counts" (JES).

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Seen regularly near Castle Howard January/March. Two were at Hovingham Park on 31st March and a pair at Archbishop's Palace on 5th April.

Present during the breeding season at Brandsby, Moreby Hall, Newburgh, Terrington, Wass, Museum Gardens, York and at a nest hole in Ampleforth. Possibly bred near York University where there were five on 12th November. A single at Oulston reservoir on 1st December.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

In January, two at Poppleton and Skipwith Common and in March singles at Hovingham and St. John's College, York. On 11th May two adults and two juveniles at Askham Bog; five at Brayton Barff and a single in Stubb Wood. In June a single at Moorlands and an adult feeding three young on Strensall Common on the 2nd. Bred at Hovingham Woods and Peel Park. In July a single was by Pocklington Canal and in August one at Skipwith Common.

During October, a single at the University and one in York and in November two at Fulford and Skipwith Common and one at Bank Island. At the end of December, singles on the Knavesmire and at York Water Works. They were also seen regularly throughout the year at Oulston Reservoir.

[GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*]

"A perfect description from a man and his wife (not bird people) at Brandsby Hall on 19th July. I was unable to confirm (PH).

This record is included in the Report because it has been rumoured for the past few years that this species has been seen in the recording area. Unfortunately field descriptions have not been forthcoming and so I would appeal to all observers to keep this species in mind during the summer months (JP).

GREAT GREY SHRIKE

Only one reported this year — a single at Castle Howard on 20th April.

JAY

Small numbers of one to four seen throughout the area: Allerthorpe Common, Askham Bog, Escrick, Holtby Oulston Reservoir, Poppleton, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge, Strensall Common, Wheldrake Ings and Yearsley Wood.

In January, there were five at Moorlands and six at Skipwith Common and again there in November gathering acorns, as were two at Stamford Bridge.

Thought to be 'a major predator of nestlings'.

MAGPIE

The larger flocks reported were 65+ at roost on Clifton Airfield on the 8th March and 40 at High Catton on 23rd February. Forty seven were at the University on 5th November.

A pair was nesting at Dunnington on 17th February. The only other breeding record was of two juveniles at Poppleton on 29th June.

Thought to be a highly predatory bird which operates in pairs around Brandsby (PB).

Addition to 1990 Report: 28 at Murton on 30th October.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

The larger flocks were 56 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th January, 17 at Sand Hutton on 7th December, 20 at Bossall on 20th and 40+ throughout the year at Moor Monkton.

As with other members of the corvid family very much under recorded; or is it? 'We should, I think, reflect as to whether the Jackdaw is really such a common species in our area as one might suppose' — J.F.Wilson, Chairman, 1976 Y.O.C. Report.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

The largest counts were of c1000 at Elvington Lane on 6th February and 1000+ at Holtby Lane on 22nd December.

Nest counts: nine occupied at Bootham School, York; 33 nests in three rookeries at Crockey Bill; 38 at Elvington; 13 at Escrick; 31 at Nunnington and 18 at Wheldrake. On 11th August one was seen to kill and eat a wasp in York.

Addition to 1990 Report: 5000+ at Bossall on 29th September.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

No counts or breeding records received. On 27th March one was carrying a dead mole.

A bird showing the characteristics of Hooded Crow *C.c. cornix* was at Wheldrake Ings on 7th December (TED).

Addition to 1990 Report: at Thorganby on 9th February one seen trying to eat a light bulb washed up by floods. Thought it was an egg?

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Larger counts (over 100) were: 3000 over Escrick on 6th March; 700 roosting at the University on 18th June; 4—5000 at Wheldrake on 6th October and 500 at Whitemoor Mine on 9th; 700 at Naburn Sewage Works on 26th November; 3000 roosting under Lendal Bridge, York in the winter months.

A leucistic bird at Dunnington, uniformly cream, was seen from 2nd January to 13th February and at Fulford one with a completely white tail on 15th March.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

No significant records received.

As with other farmland species the common House Sparrow is in decline. It would therefore be of interest if more observers could count all flocks, to give an indication as to the status of the species in the recording area.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

The larger early winter flocks were: 22 on a bird table at Escrick on 1st January, then 30 at Allerthorpe; 35 at Bank Island; 60+ at Bielby; 20 at Murton; 20 at Poppleton; 22 at Stockton—on—Forest; 45 at Storwood and 55 at Ulleskelf.

They probably bred at Fulford Ings, Murton, Naburn, North Duffield Carrs, Poppleton and Skipwith. Only confirmed at Escrick where two broods of five and three were raised and at Wheldrake Ings.

Larger post—breeding flocks at Acaster Airfield (65); Colton Bank (30); Forest Lane (50); Fulford Ings (27) and Heslington (27).

Addition to 1989 Report: 60+ at Aline on 14th March and 70 on Strensall Common on 19th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Twenty five were in Knavesmire Wood on 22nd January; 200 at Riccall on 1st February, 60+ at Stamford Bridge Sewage Works on 9th, 18 at Murton feeding on a 'chaff' heap on 13th. Singing males on 16th and 19th February

at Wheldrake and Skipwith respectively. On 26th March 117 were at Escrick and 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 9th May. The only breeding record was of three juveniles at Stockton-on-Forest on 17th July. The only winter flocks were: 50 at Acaster Airfield on 24th October, 50 at Wighill on 6th December and 100 at Skirpenbeck on 21st.

As with other finch species it has been several years since any large flocks of note have been reported.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

There were 11 at Brandsby on the 3rd January and a single at Murton on 22nd. Fifty at Castle Howard on 2nd February, 40 on Oliver Bank on 9th and recorded at Acomb Green between 13th February and 8th April. A male was at a bird table daily at Poppleton from 27th February to 3rd March. One at Yapham on 16th February and three at the University on 18th. Fifty on Garrowby Bill on 25th March and Strensall Common on 29th. Finally, up to 10 in Knavesmire Woods until mid-April (UP).

The first returning birds recorded were 20 at High Catton on 4th November, 24 at Ampleforth on 4th December, a single at Skipwith Common and two at Naburn at the end of the year.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Small numbers only seen early in the year except for a flock of 260 on Dunnington Common on 24th March and of 55 at Melbourne on 5th April. On 24th April two nests were found at Murton and on 24th May young were being fed at Poppleton. Recorded as a resident breeder at Clifton Lake and Brandsby. The only large flock later in the year was of 150 at Naburn on 1st December.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

The only flock noted early in the year was of 35 at Fulford on 18th January. One to three seen in the breeding season at Murton, Pocklington Canal, Rawcliffe, Skipwith Common, Stillingfleet and Stockton—on—Forest. Bred at Brandsby and Clifton Lake.

Post—breeding flocks were: 30 on Wheldrake Ings on 17th July; 65 at Poppleton on 15th September and 50+ at Murton drinking from a garden pond on 30th; 30 on Bank Island on 6th October and nine at Scrayingham feeding on burdock on 28th December.

Addition to Report: 100+ in Murton in September.

SISKIN

An encouraging number of records from throughout the area and for every month except June. In January present at Askham Bog (60), Castle Howard (15), Howsham (40), Skipwith Common (10), Thornton Ellers (65) and Wheldrake Ings (60). During February the numbers had risen to 200 at Askham Bog, 40 were at Fulford and Low Catton and up to 60 at Yearsley Moor. At the end of March five were on Strensall Common, rising to 40 in early April with 30 on Yearsley Common on 21st.

On 21st May seen on Strensall Common and possibly breeding. Nested in evergreens in a large garden in Fulford; three young were fledged (TC).

Post—breeding flocks of 70 were on Skipwith Common on 20th July and 50+ at the University. In August Yearsley Common held 30 and there were small numbers on Skipwith and Strensall Commons. They continued on Skipwith Common throughout September (max. 40), Wheldrake Ings (max. 30) and 80 were present at Newton-on-Derwent on 12th. During October still on Skipwith Common (max. 40), Wheldrake Ings (max. 40) and the University (max. 57). On 7th November 71 were at the University; Skipwith Common was down to 22 and 10 were at Sand Hutton in that month. In December there were 30 at Ampleforth, 20/30 at Askham Bog, 50 at Barton-le-Willows, 40 at Bielby, 60 at Melbourne, two at Naburn, 18 by the Pocklington Canal and two on Wheldrake Ings but only 11 at the University, a flock which declined dramatically after 27th December.

Addition to 1989 Report: In February/March at three sites at Brandsby.

Addition to 1990 Report: 50-60 at Sand Hutton in February and 40 in November.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

There were 50 at Skipwith Common on 9th January and in early February there were small numbers at Allerthorpe and Riccall. Eight were feeding on weed seeds at Stockton-on-Forest on 23rd March; 40 at Fulford Ings on 17th April and six pairs on Skipwith Common on 30th. A flock of 20 at Poppleton in May.

During the breeding season — and possibly bred — at Oulston Reservoir, Poppleton, Skipwith Common, Stillingfleet, Strensall Common, Whitemoor Mine and Osbaldwick where the pair mating were rather uncomfortably on top of razor fencing. Confirmed breeding at Skewsby Beck and Brandsby.

Post-breeding flocks were 11 at Stockton-on-Forest on 22nd August; 80 at Newton-on-Derwent on 12th September; 40 at Clifton Lake on 7th October, 30 on Wheldrake Ings on 9th and 38 at Acaster Airfield on 24th. Finally, 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd December.

Addition to 1990 Report: 30+ at Stockton-on-Forest on 3rd April.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

One record of a single singing on a tall weed on Skipwith Common on 9th October (FWO).

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

In the early months maximum numbers were: three at Allerthorpe Common; 12 at Askham Bog; 18 at Poppleton; 10 at Skipwith Common and 25 at the University.

During the breeding season: four on Tilmire and 15 on Yearsley Common. Five on Wheldrake Ings where bred as usual, with possible breeding at Strensall Common and Skipwith Common where 25 were present on 14th June. The only flock at the latter end of the year was 50 at Skipwith Common on 12th October. A bird showing the characteristics of a Mealy Redpoll (c.f. *flammea*) was at Escrick Mine feeding alone on 13th February (CR) and three or four were on Allerthorpe Common on 2nd March (AW).

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*.

An excellent year. Seventy eight were at Yearsley Moor on 1st January; 20 at Castle Howard on 12th and 16 at Wass on 3rd February; 30 at Terrington Wood in 15th February included a female at nest; a pair at Escrick on 16th, 60 at Castle Howard on 19th and 120 at Yearsley moor including two singing males on 25th. Eight flew west at Castle Howard on 21st April when 90 were at Yearsley Common, reducing to 28 on 6th May and 11 were at Allerthorpe Common on 31st. Twelve at Skipwith Common on 14th June; 13, including some juveniles, at Brandsby on 15th when 20 were at Ampleforth and six at Wass.

Forty four males were at Yearsley Forest on 1st August; six remained at Skipwith Common on 2nd when a single at Castle Howard where seven flew west on 24th. Twelve were still at Yearsley Common on 8th September and 12 were at Wheldrake Wood on 29th October.

The last record for the year was of three at Skipwith Common on 3rd November.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

On Skipwith Common one or two pairs resided nearly all the year but eight were present on 14th February and a juvenile just out of the nest was seen on 27th July (EWO). In the early months elsewhere at Clifton Ings (four); Escrick (six); Pike Hills Golf Course (13) and Poppleton (three).

During the breeding season present at Brandsby (three pairs); Elvington (three); Pocklington Canal (four); Snowball Plantation (two); Strensall (one pair) and singles at Oulston Reservoir and Stillingfleet. Bred at Wheldrake Ings.

Post—breeding: two at Wheldrake Ings end of August; six on Bank Island early September; eight in York Cemetery and 32 in three flocks on Fulford Ings (CR). In November singles at Holtby Lane, New Earswick, Thornton Ellers and a maximum of 13 on Fulford Ings on 13th. In December, five at Askham Bog; 13 at Heslington; six at Moor Monkton; three at Poppleton and two at Sand Hutton and Stockton-on-Forest.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A single at Oxton on 5th January and a female at Stamford Bridge on 9th February. Three were in Knavesmire Wood on 5th April with a pair displaying there the next day; on the 8th four were present with two on the 14th and a single on 17th May. Two at Middlethorpe Ball on 10th April completed the early months records. A single at Castle Howard on 8th December.

“No records from Escrick Park is very worrying as it was a breeding stronghold for the York area in recent years (CR).

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*

A single at Heslington on 11th December (CR).

The first since 1985.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A pair at Heslington on 11th December (CR).

YELLOWHAMMER

In the early months of the year: at Acaster Airfield (12); Bank Island (20); Clifton Lake; East Cottingwith (60); Murton (max. Clifton, 50); Riccall (10) and Sutton-on-Forest (30). On the 6th February, ‘as I arrived on Wheldrake Ings a heavy snow shower started — so too, it seemed, did the birds falling out of the sky into trees all around me’ (300) (RD).

Seen in the breeding season at Cliffe Common, Murton (28+), Haxby, Newburgh, Poppleton, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common and Stubb Wood. Four pairs bred on the Tilmire, 20+ pairs beside the cycle track between Escrick and Naburn and at Moor Monkton.

The only latter year flock was of 20 on the Tilmire on 7th December.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

In the early months: a female feeding in an Escrick garden during harsh weather; at Fulford Ings (three pairs), Murton (four), Poppleton (five), Skipwith Common (max. 10) and Stockton-on-Forest (two).

During the breeding season recorded at Cawood (two); Ings (three pairs); Fulford Ings (three pairs); Newburgh Priory (two singing males); Poppleton (six singing males); Riccall (three pairs); Tilmire (three pairs) with singles at Murton, Skipwith Common and Strensall Common.

Post—breeding flocks: 10 at Clifton Lake on 22nd September; in December three on Walmgate Stray and at Poppleton with a single, at Pocklington Canal.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

Singles at Clifton Lake and Sutton-on-Forest with five at Pocklington Airfield and three at Wilberfoss were reports in the early months. During April/May seven at Murton, singing males at Cawood, Deighton, Hagg Bridge, Seavy

Carr and Wilberfoss with a flock of 23 at Riccall on 31st May. In June there were three singing males at Acaster Airfield, two at Moorlands and one singing male at Skelton. They bred at Farlington, Stillington and Wheldrake Ings.

INTRODUCED

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus tratus*

A pair at Castle Howard until mid—January when the female was attacked by a dog and had to be destroyed. The male remained all year with a new female joining him on 27th August

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