

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

REPORT 1993

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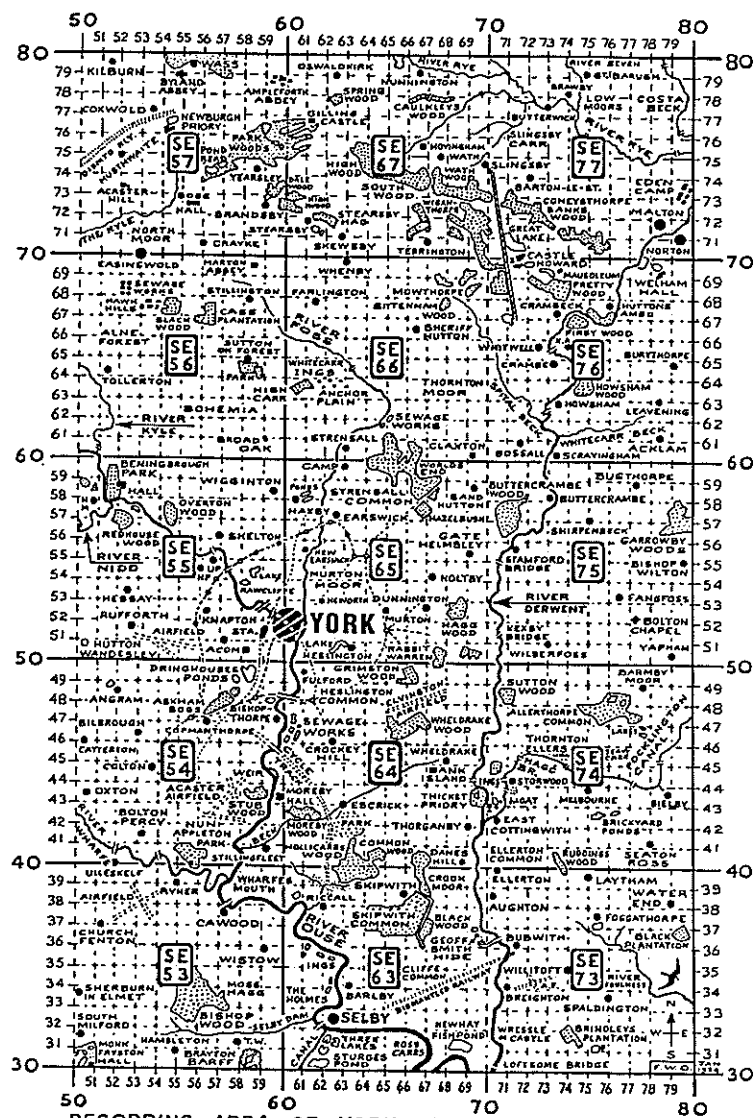
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RECORDING AREA



RECORDING AREA OF YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB.

IT IS 18½ MILES WIDE (EAST TO WEST) AND 31½ HIGH (NORTH TO SOUTH)
 THE FIFTEEN 10 KILOMETRE SQUARES MEASURE 6½ MILES BY 6½ MILES
 AND EACH SQUARE COVERS ABOUT 37 SQUARE MILES WITH THE WHOLE OF
 THE RECORDING AREA TOTALLING ABOUT 560 SQUARE MILES.

This Report has been compiled by members of York Ornithological Club with nearly all the records submitted by members who are active in watching an area of 550 square miles around York which the Club is responsible for recording. The area covers wetlands (Lower Derwent Valley), deciduous woodland (Hambleton Hills), coniferous woodland (Yearsley Forest), lakes (Castle Howard) and the large agricultural areas of the Vales of York and Pickering. The number of species recorded since 1966 is in excess of 260.

The Club has a membership of about 85 and meets once a month (except July and August) in The Friends' Meeting House, Castlegate, York on the first Tuesday of the month, for a full programme of talks and discussions, and for the informal exchange of information which bird watchers find invaluable. In addition, 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), Jim Pewtress (Raptors to Coot), Craig Ralston (Waders to Auks), Ian and Ruth Traynor (Doves to Warblers), Denise Anderson (Flycatchers to Buntings) and edited by Jim Pewtress. Muriel Pirozek has been responsible for the final production of the report. Thanks also to Frank Oates for producing a much needed new recording area map.

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. We welcome to the club new members who have joined this year. We have tried to produce a report of interest and our aim is to have complete and accurate coverage of our area. Perhaps new members live in areas that are not covered by other club members and we would be delighted to receive records from you. Guidelines for submitting records are available from the recorder.

It will be noticed in this report that several species that were reported are not in the Classified List. This is because no field descriptions were submitted to the recorder or intimated that they had been sent direct to the relevant records committees. If and when they are received they will be included in future reports.

Jim Pewtress

The following species have previously been recorded in the York Area but were not seen in 1994

Storm Petrel	Velvet Scoter
Honey Buzzard	Black Kite
Spotted Crake	Stone Curlew
Great Skua	Iceland Gull
Caspian Tern	Roseate Tern
Little Auk	Alpine Swift
Marsh Warbler	Cirl Bunting

REPORT ON RINGING IN THE YORK AREA DURING 1993

1993 saw a great increase in ringing activity in the York area. Several new sites were used for the first time for ringing studies as well as old sites being brought into action once again. The Lower Derwent Valley N.N.R. was particularly targeted in order to get some idea as to the relative abundance of species using the area as well as hopefully getting more long-term information in the form of recoveries of ringed birds and the retrap rates of returning birds.

Ringing in the reedbed at Wheldrake Ings provided us with the opportunity to monitor the roosting Reed Bunting population and to get some idea of the rate of turnover of roosting birds and site fidelity. The reedbed also proved very worthwhile later on in the season when we were able to study the breeding migrant warblers such as Reed and Sedge Warblers in greater numbers than had been possible than before.

A full programme of ringing was also carried out at Thornton Ellers following BTO 'Constant Effort Sites' rules and the results from this provided a valuable insight into the birds both breeding in the area and those using it primarily for feeding.

Pulli Black-headed Gulls were ringed during July and August at Wheldrake Ings which proved very exciting as it resulted in 2 fledged juvenile Black-necked Grebes being ringed - only the 5th and 6th ever ringed in Great Britain. The adults had left the site several weeks previously and were followed by the young birds about a week or so after ringing. A recovery of one of these ringed birds would provide extremely useful information to conservationists who need to know the exact areas where birds are stopping off on their migration so that these areas can be protected - as so few Black-necked Grebes have been ringed in Britain previously, the BTO have yet to register a recovery and so the exact destination of our local birds once they leave Wheldrake Ings is still a mystery.

Richard Ward-Smith continued with his CES site near Thorpe Arch and the information he gathered from what proved to be a successful year is once again included in our totals list.

Pete Reid also had a good year in the South of the area at Selby. He was lucky enough to ring a Wood Warbler - only the second ever ringed in the York area and a good record for the Selby area in particular.

Other rarer birds that were ringed during 1993 included a Lesser-spotted Woodpecker which was caught in a mixed Tit flock during the winter near Askham Bog. This site

is extremely useful in that it contains good numbers of both Marsh and Willow Tits and provides the opportunity to continue recent studies into the separation and sexing of these two species.

The nest box scheme I monitor near Askham Bog was once again well used - 50% of the boxes being occupied. Tree Sparrows however did not have as successful a year as 1992 - only 3 pairs used the boxes - and only one of those pairs went on to raise a second brood.

To summarise, a total of 5713 birds of 77 species were ringed in the York area during 1993 - an increase on 1992's totals of 120%.

May I take this opportunity on behalf of all the ringers working in the York area to thank all the landowners who have given us permission in one form or another and to all the observers who have given us details of sightings of ringed birds.

DANA MURFITT APRIL 1994

YORK AREA RINGING TOTALS

SPECIES	PRE-93	1993 Totals		TOTAL FOR 1993
		ADULTS	PULLI	
Black-necked Grebe	X	0	2	0
Mute Swan		69	0	0
Whooper Swan	X	0	1	0
Greylag Goose		10	2	0
Canada Goose		13	1	0
Shelduck		7	0	0
Wigeon	X	0	1	0
Teal		8	1	0
Mallard		21	44	6
Shoveller		4	0	0
Pochard		2	2	0
Sparrowhawk		63	2	0
Kestrel		45	2	5
Grey Partridge		2	1	0
Pheasant		3	0	0
Water Rail		1	1	0
Moorhen		39	40	0
Coot		8	9	3
Lapwing		30	0	65
Snipe		8	0	0
Woodcock		9	0	0
Curlew		3	0	5
Redshank		7	0	0
Green Sandpiper		3	0	0
Common Sandpiper		1	0	0
Blk. Headed Gull		265	1	223
Common Gull		4	0	0
Herring Gull		1	0	0
Stock Dove		2	1	3
Wood Pigeon		75	5	2
Collared Dove		83	4	0
Turtle Dove		15	0	0
Cuckoo		9	1	0
Barn Owl		2	0	0
Tawny Owl		20	1	1
Little Owl		6	4	8
Long Eared Owl		1	0	0
Short Eared Owl		1	0	0
Nightjar		2	0	0
Swift		787	0	0
Kingfisher		72	10	0
Green Woodpecker		2	0	0
Gt. Spotted Woodp.		36	9	9
Lesser "		1	1	1
Skylark		24	0	0
Sand Martin		1139	2	0
Swallow		4564	4	25
House Martin		3099	1	23
Tree Pipit		11	0	0
Meadow Pipit		92	0	0

SPECIES	Pre 1993	1993 totals ADULTS	PULLI	TOTAL FOR 1993
Yellow Wagtail	144	0	0	0
Grey Wagtail	74	8	0	8
Pied Wagtail	644	231	0	231
Wren	1782	129	0	129
Duncock	3059	244	9	253
Robin	2346	187	4	191
Redstart	52	2	0	2
Whinchat	6	0	0	0
Stonechat	1	0	0	0
Blackbird	8691	349	29	378
Fieldfare	254	1	0	1
Song Thrush	1665	55	1	56
Redwing	1758	8	0	8
Mistle Thrush	122	1	0	1
Grasshr. Warbler	1	1	0	1
Sedge Warbler	613	55	0	55
Reed Warbler	338	72	0	72
Barred Warbler	1	0	0	0
Lesser Whitethroat	239	34	0	34
Whitethroat	1026	110	0	110
Garden Warbler	152	28	0	28
Blackcap	1270	172	0	172
Wood Warbler	1	1	0	1
Chiffchaff	170	9	0	9
Willow Warbler	3290	331	7	338
Goldcrest	577	15	0	15
Firecrest	1	0	0	0
Spotted Flycatcher	259	22	8	30
Pied Flycatcher	12	0	0	0
Long Tailed Tit	1222	152	0	152
Marsh Tit	64	8	0	8
Willow Tit	381	27	0	27
Coal Tit	322	37	0	37
Blue Tit	7560	609	9	618
Great Tit	2798	351	14	365
Nuthatch	1	3	0	3
Tree Creeper	316	25	0	25
Jay	55	1	0	1
Magpie	45	3	1	4
Jackdaw	17	1	11	12
Rook	22	1	3	4
Carrion Crow	9	1	6	7
Starling	6201	297	19	316
House Sparrow	1627	13	0	13
Tree Sparrow	1046	170	7	177
Chaffinch	6140	235	3	238
Brambling	676	5	0	5
Greenfinch	11073	679	0	679
Goldfinch	908	199	0	199
Siskin	29	33	0	33
Linnet	732	6	20	26
Redpoll	600	6	0	6
Mealy Redpoll	8	0	0	0

SPECIES	Pre 1993	1993 totals		TOTAL FOR 1993
		ADULT	PULLI	
Bullfinch	1111	38	0	38
Yellowhammer	1005	27	0	27
Reed Bunting	844	53	0	53
Corn Bunting	27	0	0	0
106 species	84056	5196	520	5716

X denotes a new species for the area

List of Top 5 Species Ringed

Top 5 during 1993	Top 5 from Grand Totals
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GREENFINCH	GREENFINCH
BLUE TIT	BLACKBIRD
BLACKBIRD	BLUE TIT
GREAT TIT	STARLING
WILLOW WARBLER	CHAFFINCH

It is pleasing to see Willow Warbler making the top five for the first time - this partly reflects the relative abundance of these birds in our area during 1993

RINGING RECOVERIES AND CONTROLS 1993
(INCLUDING SOME PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED RECORDS FROM EARLIER YEARS)

SPECIES	PLACE RINGED	PLACE FOUND	DISTANCE	FINDING DETAILS
TUFTED DUCK FC32298 ADULT FEMALE	ABBERTON RES. ESSEX 03.07.1988	LONG MARSTON YORK 23.04.1993	275 K 1755 DAYS	DEAD - HIT WIRES
BLK.HEADED GULL EH60709	SELBY N.YORKSHIRE 14.02.1981	TOKOINRANTA HELSINKI FINLAND 27.03.1993	UNKNOWN	FIELD RECORD
BLK.HEADED GULL EJ39073 NESTLING	STRENSALL N.YORKSHIRE 04.06.1980	STRENSALL N.YORKSHIRE 30.04.1989	4KM 3252 DAYS	TAKEN BY FOX.DEAD BIRD FOUND
COMMON GULL C222734 PULLI	TEISKO HAMEEN LAANI FINLAND 03.07.1969	YORK N.YORKSHIRE 18.03.1980	1698KM 3908 DAYS	RING FOUND WITH METAL DETECTOR
SWALLOW H186078 1ST YEAR	YONDERTON STRATHCLYDE SCOTLAND 23.07.1991	WHELDRAKE INGS YORK 01.09.1991	316 KM 40 DAYS	CONTROLLED
SWALLOW H299730 1ST YEAR	WHELDRAKE INGS YORK 04.09.1991	ICKLESHAM SUSSEX 27.09.1991	348 KM 23 DAYS	CONTROLLED
BLACKBIRD XN95246 1ST YEAR FEMALE	BILTON-IN- AINSTY, WETHERBY 28.12.1983	REEPHAM NORFOLK 12.02.1993	204 KM 3334 DAYS	UNKNOWN
FIELDFARE RE84530 1ST YEAR MALE	THORGANBY YORK 18.11.1989	ROAILLAN GIRONDE FRANCE 07.12.1991	1040 KM 749 DAYS	SHOT
REDWING XK02482	ACASTER MALBIS YORK 27.12.1982	ALICANTE SPAIN 18.01.1985	UNKNOWN	SHOT
GARDEN WARBLER C242713	KNARESBORO R.S N.YORKSHIRE 14.07.1985	ACASTER MALBIS YORK 23.07.1987	UNKNOWN	CONTROLLED
BLACKCAP B439702	BILTON-IN- AINSTY, WETHERBY 24.04.1982	ACASTER MALBIS YORK 21.05.1983	UNKNOWN	CONTROLLED

SPECIES	PLACE RINGED	PLACE FOUND	DISTANCE	FINDING DETAILS
GOLDCREST 8C4579	CALF OF MAN ISLE OF MAN 29.03.1981	ACASTER MALBIS YORK 13.02.1982	UNKNOWN	CONTROLLED
GOLDCREST 9N1480	ABBOTTS BROMLEY, STAFFS 19.11.1989	ACASTER MALBIS YORK 25.01.1991	UNKNOWN	CONTROLLED
CHAFFINCH A665870	ACASTER MALBIS YORK 03.01.1981	RYTHER CAWOOD 07.06.1983	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN
CHAFFINCH B439147	RETFORD NOTTS 24.02.1982	ACASTER MALBIS YORK 12.11.1982	UNKNOWN	CONTROLLED
GREENFINCH VH85181	SWARLAND NORTHUMBERLAND 22.01.1991	DRINGHOUSES YORK 11.03.1991	161 KM 48 DAYS	CONTROLLED

RINGERS OPERATING IN THE YORK RECORDING
AREA DURING 1993.

NAME	PERMIT STATUS	AREA
RICHARD WARD-SMITH	A	THORPE-ARCH & BILTON IN AINSTY
PETE REID	A	SELBY
CHRIS WRIGHT	A	THORGANBY, WILBERFOSS & TADCASTER
DANAE MURFITT	C	LOWER DERWENT VALLEY & ASKHAM BOG
CILLA GRANT	C	THORPE ARCH
DAVE TURNER	C	NUNNINGTON
TIM DIXON	SC	WILDFOWL ONLY
BOB MORRIS	T	WITH CHRIS WRIGHT

CLASSIFIED LIST

The sequence and scientific nomenclature used is that of COOS, K.H., list of Recent Holarctic Bird Species (1972 and 1977) B.O.U. 1977.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

An extraordinary party of five flew low upstream in mist in the Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve on 26th November.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Bred at Lower Derwent Valley NNR (16 pairs) and Riccall (one pair).

Outside the breeding season one or two at Castle Howard, Pond Head, Poppleton and Newburgh Priory. Seen regularly at Riccall in autumn with maximum of eight on 30th August and in Lower Derwent Valley with maximum of 17 on 4th November.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

A single in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 30th November.

Ninth record for the area and the first since 1987.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

A single at York University Lake on 17th January (CS).
A single in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 30th November was in company with a Red-necked Grebe.

Seventh and eighth record for the area.

Submitted to YNU records committee

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR for the second successive year.

In March, six on 30th and one next day. During April, two pairs and a further two or three males were located. By early May it became clear that five pairs were breeding. The first newly hatched young were seen on 18th May. By late May, three pairs had hatched three, two and one young respectively. The other two pairs failed during incubation. All the young are thought to have fledged. The adults apparently left by mid-June with the last record of two fledged juveniles on 28th June.

There was one autumn record of a single from 17th to 19th November.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR, one flew north-east on 26th May (PP) and another flew south-west on 25th November (CR).
Eight and ninth records for the area.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

As usual the majority of records came from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with one bird-day in January, five in March, 30 in April, 16 in May, two in June, one in August, two in September, 19 in October, 60 in November and 29 in December.

Elsewhere, one to three birds noted, mainly in autumn, at Castle Howard, Claxton, Cliffe, East Ness, Kelfield, Monk Stray Lake (York), Poppleton, Riccall and Stillingfleet with four at Red House Reservoir and five at York Water Works in November.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR, singles from 13th to 19th January, 25th February, 7th March and 7th May. Conceivably only one bird involved in this good series of records.

NIGHT HERON *Nycticorax nycticorax*

An adult at Nunnington on 5th June (DT)

Submitted to YNU records committee.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Twenty pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley, equalling

the record count of 1992.

The only significant counts from elsewhere were seven at Riccall on 23rd June, nine at Castle Howard on 28th August and nine at Riccall next day.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

One in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 2nd May was the third record for the area.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

The population in the area continues to prosper fuelled by the extraordinary productivity of the Lower Derwent Valley breeding birds. Again record numbers in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with up to 35 in January, 32 in February and 43 in March.

During the breeding season 11 pairs held territory of which 10 pairs laid a total of 59 eggs, 50 young hatched of which a record 43 young fledged. The now regular non-breeding herd arrived on 20th April with 11 birds, increasing to 17 on 21st and 29 on 1st and 5th May with 24 throughout until 3rd June and then four remaining to 23rd.

The first bird arrived back from moult on 16th August, then up to eight in September (excluding the breeding birds). By late October 46 birds were present, declining to 11 by the end of November but increasing again in December to peak at 41.

Elsewhere, at Riccall two pairs bred but only fledged one young between them.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

All records were from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where up to 52 in January and 47 in February. In March, three on 6th, two on 9th and a single from 10th to 28th.

Eighteen flying south on 29th October were the first of the autumn. Fifteen, including a neck-collared bird, flew south on 6th November, eight flew south on 7th and ten flew south on 9th. Five on 18th November with three from 19th to month end. In December, one or two regularly, then six from 28th to 31st.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR, up to 61 in January, 60 in February and 45 in early March declining to two by 28th. Then, five on 3rd April and a late bird from 24th to 7th May.

The first birds of autumn were two on 12th October with six on 14th and up to three daily from then until 12 on 29th. In November, two from 1st to 9th, nine on 10th increased to 12 on 18th and 16 by the month end, which remained to 10th December, increasing after that to 22 by the end of the year.

An injured adult remained throughout the year.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

One in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 9th November with three next day.

Submitted to YNU records committee

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

The majority of records came from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where, seven on 24th January with two on 30th. In February, 60 on 5th and 6th, one on 18th and five on 25th. Seventeen on 1st March, seven on 7th and three on 12th and 17th. Up to five regularly through April with two on 30th the last.

The first of autumn were nine on 13th October which remained to month end. Nineteen from 1st to 4th November with a single from 5th to 8th, six on 9th, 21 on 10th, 140 on 13th, one on 14th and 36 on 17th. On 31st December.

Elsewhere, one at Castle Howard on 29th and 31st October, two on 10th and 19th December with one on 26th. A distinct November movement with 40 east over Fulford Golf Course on 3rd, 14 north-west over Hemingborough on 14th and 180 north-north-west over Skipwith Common on 17th.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

An unprecedented influx into Eastern England brought record numbers to the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. One on 37th and 29th January and 3rd February. Then on 16th February birds arrived steadily from the east to total 86 by dusk. Subsequently there were 81 on 17th, 76 on 18th, 92 on 20th, 72 on 21st, 80 on 22nd, 92 on 23rd, 79 on 25th and 80 on 27th. Numbers then increased rapidly as birds from elsewhere moved through on their way out of the

country. One hundred and thirteen on 1st March increased to 201 on 2nd and a staggering 347 on 5th (the largest flock ever seen in Yorkshire). There followed a rapid decline with 80 on 6th, 19 on 7th, 30 on 9th, 27 on 14th and 15th and then a single immature from 3rd to 5th April. (See Yorkshire Birding, vol. 2, no. 1.)

In the autumn, three on 22nd October, four adults and an immature on 9th November with another immature next day, three on 14th and four on 12th. Three adults from 25th to 29th, with 10 adults on 30th. In December, four adults and an immature throughout the month were joined by seven on 1st, two on 15th and 16th and nine on 28th.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

As usual most records came from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where the monthly maxima were as tabulated below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
210	350	450	NC	86	135	174	279	380	645	820	690

In addition to the non-breeding herd of 86 in May there were also 35 breeding pairs.

There was again evidence of movement of wild birds in November with up to 600 passing through daily from 9th to 11th. These birds arrived from the north-east and were associated with other grey geese species. The November count of 820 was the highest yet recorded in the area.

Elsewhere, five pairs at the University was the only breeding report received.

Significant other counts were 67 at Melbourne Scamland on 23rd January and at Castle Howard up to 443 in January, 399 in February, 374 in March, 358 in April and 416 in December.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

A blue morph bird in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 21st February was the only record.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR are tabulated below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	E
650	400	327	NC	27	60	98	154	240	570	780	600

In addition to the non-breeding herd of 27 in May an estimated 20 breeding pairs were present.

The only breeding records from elsewhere were two pairs at Crockey Hill and one pair at Wistow.

Significant counts from elsewhere included 150 at Castle Howard on 9th January, 45 at Red House Reservoir on 13th; 126 at Castle Howard on 30th March; 39 at Red House Reservoir on 27th October; 35 at Hemingborough on 6th November and 57 at Castle Howard on 29th December.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Three at Castle Howard on 3rd February with a single there on 6th and 13th, a single regularly in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR from 16th to 2nd March and a single again at Castle Howard on 7th and 8th.

A free-flying feral flock at the University numbered between 30 and 40 throughout the year and included at least three broods of young birds. This flock was presumably responsible for birds seen in York as follows:- singles on 1st April and 28th September and 30 flying north-west on 14th December.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

A dark-bellied adult in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 16th and 17th January

GREY GEESE HYBRIDS

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR a White-fronted x Greylag hybrid arrived on 27th January and stayed until the end of May. It paired with a Greylag and laid a clutch of eggs which failed to hatch. It reappeared from 23rd to 30th September. A single Greylag x Canada hybrid was present throughout December and a single Blue.Snow x Canada hybrid was present from 28th to 31st December.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Two at Castle Howard on 5th and 10th July.

Ninth record for the area.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR, up to 25 in January, 27 in February and 25 in March. Breeding birds were well distributed by mid-April with at least 45 pairs thought to have bred. As usual most breeding birds and their young left in June with the last, a female and five ducklings, on 19th July. A single immature arrived on 30th August and remained to 1st September.

The first adult returning from moult was seen on 28th October, with two the next day, then three throughout November with an additional five flying south on 24th. In December, three from 1st increasing to five on 24th and seven on 28th.

Elsewhere: one, possibly two pairs bred at Riccall. A pair at Roscarrrs on 16th February and 12th March, two at Castle Howard on 21st, a pair at Rufforth on 5th April, a female at Castle Howard on 2nd May and three at Naburn on 22nd.

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR, a drake on 18th April and two drakes on 12th September and 28th October.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR, six pairs summered and all probably bred but only one brood of young was seen. Monthly maxima were as shown in the table below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
6450	6500	7500	1000	NC	NC	NC	5	340	1200	6000	9000

No significant records from elsewhere other than 24 at Red House Reservoir on 13th January.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

At least fifteen pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where the monthly maxima were as shown below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
7	11	28	NC	NC	NC	NC	24	31	23	21	16

No significant records from elsewhere.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

A good breeding season in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with an estimated 30 pairs present. Monthly maxima here are tabulated below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
4132	3000	2000	711	NC	NC	27	93	230	950	2300	4350

Significant counts elsewhere included 19 at Riccall on 10th March with 15 there on 7th April; 21 at Castle Howard on 31st October; 250 at Skipwith Common on 17th November and 23 at Riccall on 18th December when 30 were at Wharfe Ings.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

An estimated 450 pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley where the monthly maxima were as shown below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
3100	2500	2500	NC	NC	NC	374	441	500	700	3100	4000

Significant counts from elsewhere included 206 at the University on 18th January, 450 at Castle Howard on 23rd with 103 there on 11th March and 312 on 25th August, 600 there on 29th December when 120 were at Newburgh Priory.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Virtually all records came from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where monthly maxima are shown below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
80	35	35	9	NC	NC	1	-	-	11	20	47

In April five pairs and a drake remained until 17th, declining to two pairs by the month end. One pair definitely bred - a brood of five ducklings two or three days old was seen on 23rd May. The second pair probably also bred. An isolated record of a single female on 27th July was unusual.

The only other record was of an eclipse drake at Castle Howard on 2nd September.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

A record year in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR from whence all records came. The first to arrive was a pair on 7th April. By the end of April four pairs were on territory. By mid-May an estimated ten pairs were breeding and at least four broods of young were seen subsequently. In July birds were still present continually with 13 different birds seen. In August, present throughout with the highest count of seven on 30th. No more records until a single on 6th and 13th October.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR are shown below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
50	70	77	NC	NC	NC	NC	43	55	64	251	115

The breeding population here was an astonishing 145 pairs - easily a new record.

The November count was the highest yet recorded in the winter.

Elsewhere: pairs at Acaster Malbis and Castle Howard on 3rd April and at Monk Stray Lake (York) next day with seven at Newburgh Priory on 12th May were the only records.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Winter counts in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR were low this year and are tabulated below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
254	275	220	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	74	31	71	150

In contrast, breeding numbers here reached a record 23 pairs in an extended season with broods still being located in early August.

Significant counts from elsewhere included 14 at Dringhouses Pond on 18th January and, at Castle Howard, 35 on 23rd January, 41 on 6th February, 12 on 11th March and 12 on 28th December.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR are shown

below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	B	D
32	78	200	NC	NC	NC	NC	14	89	35	51	89

A record 70 pairs bred here, with the first young (a huge brood of 16) seen on 18th June.

Significant counts from elsewhere included 27 at Dringhouses Pond on 22nd January, 33 there on 7th March and 11 on 30th. 14 at Hutton Wandesley on 5th April, 35 at Castle Howard on 16th July and 26 there on 11th December.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

All records came from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where there was a drake on 27th April and presumably the same bird on 1st and 2nd May.

In autumn, a drake from 26th September to 1st October. A first-year female on 21st November, an adult female on 22nd and a first-year drake on 28th. An adult female on 5th December.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

An influx into inland Yorkshire brought a first year drake to Castle Howard on 31st October and 1st November and two ducks in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR and a single duck at Poppleton on 4th November.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

A drake at Castle Howard on 8th May.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR are shown below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
15	13	15	5	-	-	-	-	-	12	16	21

The last of the spring here were two on 16th April and the first of autumn was a single on 12th October.

Elsewhere very scarce with up to six at Castle Howard from January to March with one on 24th April, then four on 15th October, two on 1st November and singles on 11th, 29th and 30th December. Singles at Pond Head on 23rd November and at Poppleton next day with four at Wharfe Ings on 18th December.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

In the Lower Derwent NNR a pair flew south on 7th May and a single red-head on 15th October.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Single pairs bred at Nunnington and Butterwick.

Numbers at the two main winter haunts, Castle Howard and the Lower Derwent Valley NNR are shown below:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
CH	106	13	81	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	24	82
LDV	40	84	64	35	1	-	-	-	-	6	46	87

Last of the spring was a single female in the Lower Derwent Valley on 15th, 19th and 20th May and first of the autumn were two at Castle Howard on 10th October.

A good scattering of records from elsewhere with two at Poppleton on 29th January, two at Cawood 20th February, "small numbers" regularly at Riccall in February and March with maximum 18 on 5th March, seven at Wistow on 17th March and four at Linton Locks on 10th April. A drake at Buttercrambe 7th July and a red-head at Riccall on 7th August were presumably local breeders.

In autumn, five at Poppleton on 30th September, one at Hemingborough and seven at Pond Head on 6th November. In December, two at the University on 14th, four at Wharfe Ings on 18th, six at Hemingborough on 25th, four at Poppleton on 26th, four at East Ness on 27th and one at Poppleton on 29th.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR, a drake on 5th February, another drake on 7th March and two drakes on 9th with two drakes and a duck on 26th. Numbers increased quickly in early April to reach a record population of 10 pairs. All birds had dispersed by late June.

In autumn, a drake on 9th and 19th October then up to six

birds regularly in November and two females during December.

Elsewhere, a pair at Castle Howard on 29th April and a single there on 19th September.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

The worst year since 1984, with only two records. An adult female at North Duffield Carrs on 13th April and a 'cream crown' at Wheldrake Ings on 6th May.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

An interesting record of one circling over Stockton Lane on 6th March (R&GP G). A female in the Lower Derwent Valley on 24th March and a 'ringtail' at Wheldrake Ings on 16th May.

'Ringtails' at Strensall Common on 23rd September, Lower Derwent Valley on 17th October, Wheldrake Ings on 21st, Lower Derwent Valley on 24th, and 13th and 14th November.

Addition to 1985 Report

'Ringtail' Skipwith Common on 1st April.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

A female at Dunnington Common on 24th January (TW) and a male at Wheldrake Ings on 28th October (BC).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Not as many reports this year as in the past. It is perhaps that as this species is now widespread throughout the area the number of records have diminished similar to that of other common species.

A female in Stubb Wood enjoyed a diet of Blue Tit and Great Tit throughout the year with a Chaffinch and Collard Dove to add a bit of variety.

Similarly Collard Doves appeared regularly on the menu of opportunist birds in a garden at Acomb Green.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

One pair attempted to breed. A pair in the Lower Derwent Valley on 27th May remained until 23rd June and were seen carrying nesting material.

Several autumn records on 10th, 12th and 20th August, 25th and 30th September and 17th October may refer to the same bird.

Elsewhere: Singles York Water Works on 1st July, Moreby Wood on 29th August and Askham Bog on 17th November.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

A quiet year with spring records from the Lower Derwent Valley on 26th April and 2nd May, Wheldrake Ings on 3rd with two in the Lower Derwent Valley on 23rd.

A single at Castle Howard on 18th July may have summered.

Autumn records of two south at Wheldrake Ings on August 30th and single south in the Lower Derwent Valley on 1st September.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

A good breeding season with reports of five young at York Water Works, four at Bishopthorpe Palace and three at Dunnington Common as well as Fulford Ings.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Only winter/spring records of a female at Dunnington Common on 21st January and in Lower Derwent Valley on 14th April.

Early returning males at Slingsby on 31st July and Riccall on 12th

August. Singles were in the Lower Derwent Valley on 18th August and 6th/7th September with two at West Ness on 12th and a male at Riccall on 19th. A female at Wheldrake Ings on 13th October, Hovingham on 20th and Lower Derwent Valley on 28th.

Single at Cliffe Bend on 6th November a male in Lower Derwent Valley on 8th and Stonegrave on 11th with a female in the Lower Derwent Valley on 17th and 20th with a single south at University on 27th. Males were in the Lower Derwent Valley on 20th December, Oulston on 21st and North Duffield Carrs on 26th.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

A single at Castle Howard on 1st July (MJD).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

A male and female at Wheldrake Ings on 17th January and an immature male on 14th March may be responsible for a series of sightings in the Lower Derwent Valley to 27th April (21 bird days).

Most sightings concerned single birds with the exception of a male and 1st Year female on 17th January, and an adult and immature male on 14th March.

A probable male at Fulford on 14th September, an immature at Wheldrake Ings on 12th October with an adult female at Ellerton on 29th November, Bank Island on 4th and 5th December with a male in the Lower Derwent Valley on 28th.

RED LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

One paired with a Chukar at Cawood, several pairs bred in the Lower Derwent Valley although no counts this year and four pairs were at Riccall during the breeding season.

The only coveys were 10 at Dunnington Common on 29th January and 18 at Claxton on 30th.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

No counts in the Lower Derwent Valley. Two pairs present in the summer at Riccall in almost 400 hectares of arable land, but no indication of breeding, would indicate the species vulnerable position.

Coveys noted were 10 at Slingsby on 27th January, 21 at Melbourne on 28th August, 30 in the Lower Derwent Valley on 2nd November with 27 at Fulford on 19th. Pairs seen at Malton Road and Warthill with three pairs at junction 4 of Pocklington Canal.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchis*

With large numbers released in some areas it is difficult to assess the true picture. The following counts were received:

25 at Moreby on 4th March, 22 Skipwith Common and 33 at Hollicarrs on 27th.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Five breeding pairs between the windpump and Swantail Hide at Wheldrake Ings were only a fraction of the total breeding population. Also bred at Skipwith Common with a

pair rearing two broods of six.

In the Lower Derwent Valley one on 27th January with upto four in February and large numbers in March with upto 20 at Wheldrake Ings.

Young birds were seen regularly throughout June and early July. Odd singles were heard in August, September and early October, then upto five in late October and upto six regularly in November and December.

Elsewhere: Calling birds at Skipwith Common on 13th March, Stubb Wood on 15th April and Sutton on the Forest on 28th September.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

Male calling in the Lower Derwent Valley from 12th to 15th June.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Bred in large numbers in the Lower Derwent Valley but no breeding counts were made. Also bred Dringhouses, at least nine pairs at Riccall, Thornton Ellers and the University, however this is a widespread breeding species throughout the area.

Eighty-three were at the University on 18th January, 96 in the Lower Derwent Valley on 30th August, 14 at Newburgh on 15th September and 27 at Castle Howard on 1st November.

Five pairs along a 1km stretch of river floodbank at Riccall indicates the importance of this type of habitat.

COOT *Fulica atra*

Breeding reported from Chapmans Pond, Dringhouses, Lower Derwent Valley (120 pairs), Newburgh (3 pairs), Riccall (5 pairs, no success), Sturges Pond (6 pairs) and University (5 pairs). Two pairs were present at Escrick Brick Works during breeding season.

The only numbers of note were from the Lower Derwent Valley.

70 on 19th January, 128 on 3rd February with 404 on 25th. 500 on 6th March with 600 on 16th. Very large numbers present in April with a maximum of 478 on 15th.

As usual very scarce in early autumn with monthly maxima of seven in August, 41 in September, 150 in October, 210 in November and 300 in December.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

A single bird at Wheldrake Ings on 9th January was discovered as a result of our first annual bird race (CSR,PF) and represents only the second record for that month in the area: the first was at Bubwith on 24th January 1971. First arrival dates have become increasingly earlier since the species established itself as a breeding bird in the area in 1976. Pre-1976, first arrivals were mid-April; 1976-81 (2nd March) while in 1989-93 (15th Feb.).

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR, two on 19th January, with a single on 23rd. Singles were noted on 3rd and 17th February, six on 20th and 11 on 21st and 27th (35 bird days). In similar style to last year March saw a small influx, peaking at 16.

Another increase in breeding numbers was observed at this site, with an estimated 12 pairs.

Elsewhere other sites noted an increase with pairs at Naburn (2), Warthill, Crockey Hill, Skipwith (2), Newburgh, Coxwold, Poppleton and Rufforth.

Most breeding birds had departed by late July at which time autumn passage was noted, somewhat later than usual, with a peak of nine birds at roost at Wheldrake on 27th with up to four regularly to 10th August.

Elsewhere passage birds were noted at Riccall and Moreby Wood, with the last on 11th September at Ampleforth (JP). A single at Wheldrake Ings on 24th December constitutes the area's second record for that month (AWn) and with the first only in 1990 may well reflect earlier comments (personal comment, CSR).

BLACK-WINGED STILT *Himantopus himantopus*

A pair and a first-year male spent the day at Wheldrake Ings on 6th May, flying off NNW shortly before dusk (PP,RSS,AWn). This represents the first record for the area.

Submitted to YNU records committee and BBRC.

This party was noted at several sites in the country around this time before settling down to breed (but unsuccessfully) in Cheshire.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

A single at Wheldrake Ings on 9th March arrived from the south east (PP et al.). First record for the area.

With birds now breeding adjacent to the Humber and increasingly common on the North-east coast how long will we have to wait for the next?

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR a single present from 16th May was joined by a second and display was noted (TED). They are thought to have attempted to breed but failed. On 8th June they moved to another site where it is likely they tried again but probably failed, although single juveniles, conceivably of this pair, were noted on 4th and 11th July.

Breeding was confirmed, at the British Sugar plant, with two pairs having young by late May (TDS). Two pairs also held territory at

Elvington Water Works and Escrick Brick Ponds but the outcome is unknown.

Passage very scarce this year, with the first noted at Wheldrake Ings on 8th April with singles on 2nd and 4th May and 20th June.

Only two autumn records with singles at Wheldrake Ings on 4th and 11th July.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

A relatively poor spring passage in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR, where the first three were noted on 9th March with four further records before the month end. A mere three bird-days were logged in April (singles on 3rd, 8th and 9th) while 18 bird-days in May comprised largely of a party of eight on 15th and 16th.

A protracted passage continued into June with singles on 21st and four on 28th. The last two were noted on 10th and 12th July until a very unseasonable bird noted during wader movements in November on 21st (RSS).

Elsewhere: One south at Riccall on 13th March and one calling in fog at Hemingborough on 9th October being the first for that area.

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

An early individual in winter dress was located at Wheldrake Ings on 8th March in the presence of 4200 Golden Plover (CSR). (Sixth record for the area). Large flocks of Golden Plover winter in the Spanish steppes and these flocks contain wintering Dotterel. Arriving with such an influx of Golden Plover on this earlier date may point to

this site as a wintering area for these birds.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

As usual, the largest concentrations were recorded in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR and peak monthly counts are tabulated below:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
3625	6000	6500	1500	-	-	19	24	600	500	640	4000

The last of spring were two on 28th April while the first returning bird was noted on 6th July.

The counts for the Lower Derwent Valley NNR are nationally significant, ie: >1% of the British wintering population.

A colour-ringed Golden Plover on 8th March has failed to be traced to any British ringing scheme so far.

Elsewhere: numbers seemed low with 300 at Woodthorpe on 2nd March with smaller flocks of up to 50 widespread throughout the area. Small numbers of presumably passage birds built up at Riccall during late March and during April, peaking at 700 on 19th.

The first returning birds were two at Hemingborough on 4th July increasing to 400 on 17th. 80 at Riccall on 5th September, 240 at Naburn on 24th, 300 at Hemingborough on 9th October and 450 at Riccall on 7th November.

Comments received suggested 'a poor year in the north of the area', with only a single at Castle Howard in September and two there on 13th November.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

An excellent showing of this fine wader, with records spread throughout the year, all coming from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR.

A single on 30th and 31st January was followed by singles on 3rd, 6th, 13th, 18th, 23rd and 25th February. Two on 6th March and singles on 8th and 9th. These birds associated with the large numbers of Golden Plover present.

Singles on 27th and 28th were more typical, but somewhat more unusual was a single on 9th August. Four on 18th September preceded singles on 19th and 29th. One on 9th October with three on 13th. Three in November and the last on 5th December completed a record-breaking run of records.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

In the Lower Derwent Valley, the end of the drought brought increased breeding compared with 1992 with an estimated 250 pairs breeding in a prolonged season, with last newly hatched young seen on 21st July. Counts for the first half of the year included 2050 in January, 6000 in February and 3500 in March.

The first post-breeding flocks built up to 150 during July, with 1050 recorded in September with early flooding, 1000 in October, 2500 in November and a fine 5200 in December rounded off the year.

Elsewhere, nine pairs bred on the Tilmire, five pairs at Escrick, six pairs at Naburn Sewage Works and four pairs at Newburgh and Riccall. The only parties of note in the early months were 300 at Pocklington Airfield throughout March and 400 at Escrick on 25th.

200 at Hemingborough on 4th July increased to 800 on 17th and 104 at Riccall on 7th increased to 800 on 8th August. 350 at Escrick on 9th, 1200 at Naburn on 24th September and 400 at Pocklington Airfield on 5th October; 750 at Roscarrs on 7th November.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Singles in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 5th, 7th and 17th February probably relate to a single bird but represent the first area record since 1989.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Two summer-plumage birds flew north up the Derwent at Aughton on the typical date of 7th May (CSR), representing the first record in the area since 1989.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Recorded annually during 1978-1986, this year saw a welcome return of this delightful little wader after an absence of four years. Two juveniles at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September preceded four next day with three on 13th and a single on 14th and 15th (CSR,PF,AW).

There was a large influx of Little Stint into the north-east at this time with over 50 at Blacktoft Sands alone!

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

A return to form after a poor year in 1992 with the Lower Derwent Valley NNR maxima for the first three months being 510 in January, 570 in February and 300 in March. In contrast, spring passage was relatively poor but somewhat extended with 25 in April, four in May and the last two on 10th and 11th June.

Barely a three week gap elapsed before the first returning bird on 4th July, followed by three on 5th. September logged ten bird-days (max. four on 17th) with the next on 14th October. Numbers throughout the later three months of the year were somewhat sporadic due to flooding, with 31 on 28th October until month end, 55 on 4th November, 51 on 27th and 47 on 5th December.

Once again very few records were received from elsewhere with a single at Castle Howard on 12th August and four at Slingsby Carr on 11th November with one on the river bank at Riccall on 17th.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Except for a male at Riccall Ings from 4th to 11th August all records came from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR.

Monthly maxima were 41 in January, 22 in February and an excellent 107 in March, 40 remaining throughout April. Up to seven birds remained throughout May, with five males and three females recorded in June. Following lekking in April breeding was proved when two fluffy juveniles appeared at two sites in early July (TED, CSR) and ten birds remained until the last on 21st.

Autumn passage commenced with a single on 29th August, remaining to 15th, with 46 bird-days following in September from 16th to 20th (max. of 24 on 17th). Numbers in the later three months reached maxima of 27 on 6th October, 24 on 4th November whilst numbers built up to a healthy, nationally significant wintering population in December with 75 arriving on 11th December building up to an excellent 86 by 30th (TED, RSS, CSR).

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocryptes minimus*

An improvement on recent years with a much better autumn showing. During the first half of the year, singles were noted on Heslington Tilmire on 2nd February up to four at Rawcliffe Meadows during the first week and a single at Riccall on 16th March with two on 30th.

A single returned to Coxwold on 29th September, a day earlier than last year, and what was possibly the same

individual was at Newburgh on 21st October (JP). Six at Riccall Ings on 7th November constitutes an excellent record (AWn) as does five on Clifton Ings on 20th.

A single at Wheldrake Ings on 12th November was the only record for the Lower Derwent Valley NNR.

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

An estimated 180 drumming in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR represents a healthy breeding population returning to the pre-drought levels of 1989, a pattern reflected in other breeding wader species. A protracted breeding season with good success, four nests still containing eggs on the late date of 15th July once again indicating multiple brooding.

Flocks of up to 30 were noted in January and February with 100+ in March (TED).

In Autumn, up to 24 in September with a respectable increase in October. Flocks of 30+ were noted regularly over the reserve with 70+ south on 16th and 170 on 29th. Numbers increased into November with 500+ at Wheldrake on 9th (RC) and 700+ on 11th. On this latter date a full valley count produced a massive 1030 (CSR). A mass exodus followed due to flooding, 120 returning on 27th. Deep floods prevented a further build-up in numbers but 300 in a ploughed arable field east of Wheldrake village had presumably been forced off the reserve (CSR,PF).

Elsewhere: six drummers were noted at Wharfe Ings, three on the Tilmire and two at Riccall Ings with a single at Cawood Ings. One or two regularly noted at Castle Howard with maximum seven on 13th March, 27 at Tilmire on 16th, 13 at Riccall on 30th August with 28 on 7th November. Seven at East Ness on 27th December the only northern record.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Fewer records received this year following last year's flush as a result of the Nightjar fieldwork coverage. No confirmed breeding but roding birds were noted at Skipwith (6), Bishops Wood (6), Buttercrambe, Askham Bog and the Fulford Golf Course/Tilmire area.

Apparently scarce at both ends of the year with 12 at Thornton Ellers on 26th January and seven at Fulford Golf Course on 30th the only records during the first quarter.

Returning birds taking up wintering sites were noticeable from mid-October with one at Ampleforth on 24th and two at Skipwith on 30th. Two at Thornton Ellers on 5th November, three on 29th, a single at Tilmire on 18th while Fulford

Golf Course held six at the year end.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

All records came from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where once again breeding was attempted but appeared to fail. An outstanding spring passage began with an early bird on 20th, 25th and 28th February. In addition to the breeding pair unprecedented numbers moved through the site, commencing with a single on 9th and 14th March, two on 17th and three on 30th. April amassed 320 bird-days (maximum 70 on 20th and a magnificent 104 on 22nd). These mainly involved birds showing the characteristics of the Islandic subspecies, *Limosa l. Islandica* and passed quickly through. Forty-five bird days were logged during May until the last three on 26th (max. seven on 9th and 10th). A single on three dates in early June was probably one of the breeding birds. In Autumn three on 5th August were joined by another four on 6th before six arrived on 17th September. A late bird paused on 20th November, a period of cold weather movements.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

By virtue of three records detailing nine birds 1992 must class as a Bar-Tailed Godwit year, with 26 bird-days amassed.

All records were received from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where seven paused on 24th January (TED), a single roosted daily from 22nd April to 8th May (RSS, CSR *et al.*) and the last, a late single on 27th November (TED) completed the showing.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

The first of the spring at the Lower Derwent Valley NNR roost was a single on 17th April with numbers building up steadily to a maximum of 77 on 29th. Numbers peaked on 2nd May at 86 then declined to two by the 18th. Whilst the peak was somewhat lower than normal a record 824 bird-days were recorded at this nationally important spring roost site - a Reserve record.

Autumn passage was slightly early with seven on 6th July, three on 18th, one on 19th and two on 27th with two from 1st to 6th August.

Elsewhere: three at Riccall on 9th May and two at Wharfe Ings on 18th. A single in flooded fields at Riccall on 21st August.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

In the Lower Derwent Valley NNR an estimated 60 pairs bred in a protracted breeding season.

Elsewhere: 'several' pairs on Elvington Airfield, four pairs with young on Strensall by 4th June and a single pair with chicks at Gate Helmsley on 9th. Pairs noted during the season at Heslington Tilmire (two) with singles at Slingsby, Old Byland, Kilburn, Elm Hagg, Poppleton, Stillingfleet, Rufforth and Moreby Wood - an increase in records.

Early year maxima from the Derwent were 43 in January, 180 in February building up similarly to last year to a splendid 271 in March. As usual, passage flocks were noted in April, the largest of which was 55 on 15th. Early post-breeding flocks moved through the site in June (up to 17) with 37 in July, 19 in August and 13 in September. Extensive flooding until the year end prevented the usual build up in numbers with a mere seven in October, 31 in November and 26 throughout December.

Up to eight at Castle Howard during July and August was the only other notable count.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

A good year for this superb little wader, passage falling typically into the pattern of the eighties, being late April and May.

All records were from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with the first a single which flew in from the south and left to the east on the evening of 30th April (RSS, TED, et al.). Further singles on 10th and 11th May and two on 12th. A single on 10th June was the first record in the area for that month and although April and May are still the best times to check the Ings for this species they have occurred during June, July and August during the present decade.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Hardly a return to form but still an improvement on recent years. All records were from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with a single on 4th March, four on 7th May and a single on 14th and 15th September.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Wetter conditions in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR proved

favourable for a welcome return to form with an estimated 120 breeding pairs. Early monthly maxima were healthy with 61 in January, 56 in February and a fine 124 in March. Up to 39 juveniles, presumably locally bred, frequented the pool at Wheldrake in July, departing as usual by the third week.

Birds were atypically still absent by the end of October, with the first rather late and isolated individual on 5th November. The next two arrived on 25th, increasing to 24 by 27th. Numbers fluctuated throughout December but stabilised at a peak of 58 at the month end and with 331 bird-days represents a much better winter showing at the year end than in recent years.

Elsewhere; breeding records were submitted from Wharfe Ings (four pairs), Tilmire (three pairs), Riccall (two pairs) and Naburn. Birds, presumably on passage, were noted at Escrick Brick Ponds on 10th May and Fulford Ings on 15th with birds returning to Castle Howard on 3rd and 10th July.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

This species still appears to be at a low ebb in the recording area with all records coming from three sites.

Birds were present in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with two on 23rd April and 24th, one on 25th, two on 27th and 28th and one on 29th and 30th. In May one on 1st, 5th, 12th, 13th, 15th and 26th with two on 3rd.

Return passage was slightly improved, commencing in the Lower Derwent with two on 1st August to 28th with three on 5th and 6th, seven on 8th, five on 11th and three on 25th. One from 1st to 5th September and 8th with two on 12th.

Elsewhere: one at Riccall on 29th April and 29th July and two frequently from 11th to 13th August (AW) with a single at Melbourne on 14th and 17th (DR).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Up to five wintering birds at both ends of the year were reported from the favoured Pocklington Canal/Melbourne Scamland/Bielby Beck area.

Spring passage as usual was slight, with the first at Castle Howard on 24th April (DR). One in the Lower Derwent Valley on 4th May, two on 21st June, one on 25th and two on 26th and 28th.

Autumn passage was more impressive with the first returning bird at Wheldrake Ings on 1st July, passage lasting until 11th September but with low numbers of

individuals involved. A single all month in July with five on 1st, two on 2nd three on 23rd and two on 30th. Two throughout August with three on 7th and 9th to 11th with eight on 8th September.

The favoured site at Melbourne produced its usual quota of records with 24 bird days (max. four on 5th May) until the last on 3rd June. 79 July bird-days (max. six on 27th) and 221 in August (max. 10 on 14th and 11 on 17th).

Riccall held birds regularly between 8th July and 23rd August with a peak of three on 16th July.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

A further improvement on recent years in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR. In April, one on 17th and 22nd was followed by three on 29th and a single next day (RSS, TED, CSR, DR). Two remained from 1st to 3rd May, one on 4th and two from 6th to 10th with a single on 23rd. As last year a late individual paused here on 8th June, while the next from 2nd to 12th September provided the only September and indeed Autumn record (AW, CSR, PF).

Away from the Lower Derwent a single on the banks of the River Ouse at Cawood on 8th May (DR).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

A slight improvement on recent years with a single at West Ness on the River Rye on 23rd March (JP) and Lower Derwent on 27th. Riccall held a single on five dates from 4th April to 9th May but birds were absent thereafter (AW). Singles in the Lower Derwent Valley on 2nd April and 24th when one at Castle Howard. Three at the former site on 3rd May with one on the 12th and 23rd while at the latter site one on 8th and two on 10th. Three at Melbourne on 12th.

First returning birds were two at Riccall on 23rd June and 'regular' there until the last on 17th August with three on 7th July and four on 8th. Five at Hemingborough/Cliffe Bend on 17th July with singles on 24th, 31st and 21st to 29th August. A single at Castle Howard on 14th September.

Autumn passage in the Lower Derwent was undistinguished with singles on 1st, 2nd, 9th, 21st and 23rd July, 12th, 16th and 20th September with the last on 12th October.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

A record year reported with a good spread of records throughout the year and a possible hybrid breeding

attempt.

The year started with an adult in summer plumage at Wheldrake Ings on 20th and 27th March (DR). A second summer bird was located in the Black-headed gullery on 21st June (RSS et al.) until at least 28th. It is quite likely to have been present but undetected before its discovery. It was strongly territorial, repeatedly landing in the same area of the colony where chick density was highest and seen on several occasions to attack and chase off a Black-headed Gull which approached it. Its behaviour suggested that it had a chick or chicks. A brief attempt was made to ascertain whether this was the case and despite agitation shown by the bird, all chicks appeared to be of Black-headed Gull. Whilst the evidence is largely circumstantial, it would appear that a hybrid pair of Mediterranean/Black Headed Gulls bred and hatched young (TED,EBB,CSR). What was almost certainly the same bird was located at Melbourne with feeding Black Headed Gulls in July (CSR).

Three records in the autumn/winter period from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR with a first-winter on 16th September (TED) (coinciding with other gull and tern species movements), while an adult roosted at Wheldrake on 4th and 5th December (DR,RSS,CSR) with a second-winter there on 11th completing the showing.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

A good year with the all records from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR.

A first winter on 15th April, an adult and two first-winters on 24th, an adult and first-winter on 25th, an adult on 26th, a second-summer on 28th, two adults, a first winter and second-summer on 29th and second-summer on 30th. Single second-summer birds on 2nd and 5th May, an adult on 13th, a first-summer on 17th to 19th and an adult on 23rd.

Flooding in September brought two first-winter birds into the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 16th (TED,CSR) when another was picked up moribund at York Water Works (TC). A first-winter at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and a second-winter on 18th (DR).

Prior to this year there had only been two September records, in 1981

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

The roost in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR held usual numbers in the first half of the year, the only count being 25,000 on 24th January. Castle Howard held 6000 on

23rd January with up to 5000 there throughout February and 1800 on 30th March.

A record 2000 pairs bred at Wheldrake Ings, with a further 50 at North Duffield Carrs (a new site) where success was judged to be high (TED).

Counts from Wheldrake Ings during the later months included maxima of 6500 on 17th September, 30,000 moving south off the Yorkshire wolds to the Humber on 20th, 7000 on 22nd and 37,000 on 28th. December counts included 7000 on 11th and 13,500 on 18th. Leucistic and aberrant birds were noted on 23rd January, 9th March, 10 on 19th May and 4th December.

The only other four figure counts from the area for the winter period concerned 4000+ at Castle Howard on 14th November. Numerous three figure counts were, however, recorded from widespread sites throughout the area.

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*

A first-winter bird at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May represents the first record of a transatlantic gull for the area (RSS, AW) and a long-awaited addition to the list.
Submitted to BBRC.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Four figure counts during the early part of the year were 2500 at Castle Howard on 23rd January and 2000 there on 26th February. Up to 600 were still roosting there by the end of March with 1350 in the Lower Derwent valley on 28th and 600 on 6th April. Up to 50 were reported from numerous strays and playing fields surrounding the city. Spring passage was noted from Wheldrake Ings with 600 on 6th April, 150 on 15th and 80+ present throughout May (max. 120 on 16th).

Returning birds first noted at Osbaldwick playing fields on 10th July absence until wintering birds returned in mid-October. Only a handful of records at the year end indicated a poor showing with 250 at Castle Howard in September, 600 there on 11th December and 460 at Terrington on 27th.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Single birds were noted in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 17th January and four dates in February. Spring passage was evident from March with four on 28th increasing to 16 on 30th. Monthly maxima for April and May were 31 and 84

respectively, being 74 and a fine 513 bird-days during these months, the latter comprising mainly immature birds. A steady but much reduced movement of sub-adults was observed during June and July, except for an isolated flock of 79 on July 29th. Birds were scarce at this site during the next two months but large numbers were noted moving in a southerly direction down the River Ouse at Riccall, peak daily counts being 369 in August and 98 in September (AW).

Very scarce at the year end with three on 6th October at Wheldrake Ings, one there on 12th and a final flock of five at North Duffield Carrs on 19th December the only records.

Birds showing the characteristics of the southern scandinavian race *L.f. intermedius* seen in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 6th, 27th and 30th March (AW, CSR, DR) and 5th May (PP).

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Once again the species appeared to be under recorded, or is this species really a scarce bird in the York area?

The Lower Derwent Valley NNR roost held very few with 18 on 7th January, 27 on 3rd February and 24 in March peak monthly maxima. Seventy-five were present at Harewood Whin Tip on 2nd March (AW).

At Wheldrake Ings on 31st March, an adult showing no black on the wings except for the extreme tips on the upper side superficially resembled a Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) (DR).

As usual very scarce during the summer months (max. five on 2nd May) at Wheldrake Ings with little improvement at year end. Up to 10 passed through daily from November with 35 on 28th and 17 on 29th signs of a slight passage.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

What may have been the same first-winter bird roosted at Wheldrake Ings on 8th January (TED) and 28th February (CSR).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Monthly maxima at Wheldrake Ings were 48 in January, 105 in February and 73 in March.

Elsewhere numbers were low with a 11 at Harewood Whin Tip on 2nd March, up to five recorded at Newburgh, Riccall and Clifton Lake in the first half of the year. No April records were received while the usual but diminished

passage of sub-adults was noted in May with a peak of 25 at Poppleton on 20th.

Up to five returned on a daily basis from early November increasing to 30 on 28th and 32 next day. 30 to 40 passed through the Lower Derwent Valley NNR, increasing rapidly at the end of December with 95 on 27th, 195 on 29th and 71 on 30th.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla* - passage/winter visitor

A single adult was in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 24th January and four adults next day at Clifton Lake. (another individual being picked up dead there) (CSR). An adult flew over Wheldrake on 25th February with an adult roosting amongst Black-Headed Gulls at Naburn Sewage Works on 16th and 17th March (RSS, Awn). Four adults were grounded in fog at Wheldrake Ings on 1st May, three remaining next day (PP, CSR).

In the later half of the year, a first-winter was at Wheldrake Ings on 16th September and two adults flew south there on 4th December completing an excellent year, returning to the former status witnessed in the mid-eighties.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

A poor showing with no evidence of breeding attempted apart from the now usual appearance of a pair at the University lake from 27th April to 14th May (RSS, AW, CSR). With the exception of a single over Monk Stray on 4th May the only other record consisted of a single flock of 13 at Wheldrake Ings on 17th (CSR). An isolated single was present on 21st June.

Autumn passage was equally small and consisted of a single at Castle Howard on 15th to 18th July and another at Poppleton on 20th being the last (IW&CR).

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

A better showing than in recent years commencing with a single at Wheldrake Ings on 29th April followed by two the next day. A total of 63 bird-days logged from this site during May (up to 28th) with a maximum of 43 flying north on 17th.

In autumn, a single on 14th September at Wheldrake Ings with four on 17th and a late juvenile on 13th October (PP).

No records received away from the Lower Derwent Valley NNR.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Following last year's exceptional series of records 1993 also proved to be a 'Sandwich Tern Year'. Singles flew north at Wheldrake Ings on 27th April and 7th May.

Returning birds involved two singles heading west over the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 16th September while another individual was present at Wheldrake Ings on 18th (DR, CSR).

With only six records in the eighties nine records have fallen in the present decade with a blank year in 1990.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Spring passage was restricted to the Lower Derwent Valley NNR where five on 11th May were the first with singles following on 12th, 14th 17th and 24th (TED et al.).

Rather exceptional was the usually minimal autumn passage, totalling a fine 22 bird-days (compared to 29 autumn bird-days 1972-1990). Four at Castle Howard on 14th September were the first (OR,MJD), a single remaining to 16th. Five were in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR on 15th with two or three daily until the last on 23rd (TED,CSR,RSS,DR)

WHITE WINGED BLACK TERN *Chlidonias leucopterus*

An adult in full summer plumage was located at Wheldrake Ings on the evening of 21st June (CSR). The bird spent approximately 40 minutes on the Reserve before leaving to the south.

First record for the area.
Submitted to BBRC.

What was presumably the same bird had been seen earlier in the day in Lincolnshire and was located over the following days frequenting the Wash.

STOCK DOVE *Columba Oenas*

Three pairs located in the breeding season in Riccall, at least two bred successfully (AW). A few pairs bred in the Lower Derwent valley (TED).

Largest counts came from later in the year, with 120 feeding in stubble adjacent to Melbourne Ings on 5th Nov (TED), 65 on Riccall Common on the 11th(AW), 18 at Stillingfleet on 9th Dec (AW), 20 at Cliffe Bend on the 25th (RSS) and 31 at East Cottingworth on 30th Dec.

Also reported from Dunnington, Castle Howard and Poppleton, where one fed regularly at the bird table until 1st April (DA).

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Large counts early in the year included over 300 on Askham Bog (DM), 300 at Castle Howard on Jan 23rd(JP), 250 at Hagg Wood on the 31st, and 220 at Ricall on Feb 17th (AW). Further large numbers were seen on 12th April, with 1400 at Coxwold and 600 at Coulton (JP). There were 92 at Riccall on 13th May(AW)..

The only large winter counts were 1500 at Castle Howard on 1st Nov(AW), and 1900 flying north-west over the lower Derwent on 29th Nov(TED).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Breeding reported from Dringhouses, Riccall (12 pairs), and Osbaldwick, where 1 pair was observed attempting to breed in September, until nest damaged in gale.(IF&RVT).

There were counts of 13 at Askham Bryan on 10th Jan, 42 at Hemingbrough on July 24th (RSS), 25 at Heslington at Aug 30th (IFT), 40 at Poppleton on Oct 8th (IW&CR), 21 at Crockey Hill on 21st Nov (AW), 63 at Poppleton on the 28th (DA), and 56 at Heslington Dec 15th (AW).

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

The first was in the lower Derwent valley on 23rd April. (DR) Heard singing at Ampleforth on 30th April, the first for 3 years (JP).

Six pairs bred in the lower Derwent(TED), and a pair at Escrick brick works (DC). There were pairs present in the breeding season at Brayton Barff and at Sturges Pond (DC).

Also seen or heard at Kilburn, Stubb Woods, Wheldrake Wood, river Ouse, Slingsby. There were still two in the lower Derwent on 21st Aug (TED), 1 on 18th Sept (DR) and the last was a very late bird on 2nd Oct (TED).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

The first record was at Poppleton on 16th April (PW), with the first in the north of the area heard calling at Ampleforth on 26th April (JP). First arrival in the lower Derwent valley was April 19th, and birds were present there from April 21st throughout the breeding season, though numbers were low. A rufous-phased bird was at

Wheldrake Ings from 9th May.

Also reported from Stubb Woods, Gate Helmsley, Osbaldwick, Layerthorpe, Thorganby Wood, Pocklington Canal, Skipwith Common, Heslington. At Riccall there were at least 5 males, but no juveniles recorded(AW). At Acaster Malbis a young bird just out of the nest was seen being fed by a pair of dunnocks(*prunella modularis*), calling for food, on 7th June, and another on 12th July(FWO).

Late birds seen were at Ampleforth on 29th August (JP), Wheldrake on 1st September, and a very late bird in Wheldrake village on 15th October (CR).

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Breeding records from Crockey Hill, where 2 young were fledged (TC); Escrick and Breighton (2 young each) (T&VW), and 7 pairs from the Lower Derwent valley (TED). Of these, one pair seen copulating at Wheldrake on 26th April (DM), and one seen carrying prey over East Cottingwith on 14th August (DR).

A single bird was seen hunting rough pasture by Oak Mere fishing lake, south of Skipwith village.(FWO) Single birds were also reported from Thornton, Escrick brick works, near Slingsby, Rufforth tip, and two birds were seen in the early hours of 10th October at the junction of the A19 and A64.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

One pair bred on the Wheldrake reserve, and several others in adjacent areas (TED). At Thornton Ellers a pair bred and raised 3 young; a pair at Hessay raised 2, and a pair at Tilmire raised 3(DM). Eggs were seen in a nest at Deighton, and young were raised at Crockey Hill(TC). Also breeding records from Gate Helmsley, Claxton, High Catton, Fulford, Moor Monkton, Newton Maske (2 young), Gilder Beck and Dunnington Common (T&VW), and also from Rufforth (3 young), Escrick, Hagg Bridge and Long Marston (3 young) (CR).

Single birds seen at Heslington, Naburn, Holtby, Warthill, Askham Richard, Escrick, Forest Farm, Stillingfleet, Wistow, Skipwith village, Stubb Woods and Stamford Bridge.

Road casualties were reported from Moor Monkton, Fulford, and Kelfield. A single bird at Appletree Farm was observed being mobbed by blackbirds(AH)

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Three pairs bred on Wheldrake Reserve, and many more in surrounding areas. Breeding records from Naburn (2 young reared in a box)(TC), Strensall Common where a pair was observed with young(BC), Riccall (1 pair bred, juvenile seen), Skipwith Common (3 pairs, AW), Welburn Woods (a nest seen with 2 juveniles), and Osbaldwick (IF&RVT).

A bird was heard hooting during the day at Swang Wood on 18th Jan and again on 8th October (FWO). Two were seen roosting side by side in a willow tree by Burnholme Beck(AH).

Eight were at Thornton Ellers on 23rd August.

LONG EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Several pairs bred in Wheldrake Wood (TC). A nest with at least 3 young was located in a conifer shelter belt on Peel Hall Farm on May 10th, and at least 3 juveniles were still there a week later(AW). An adult was seen over fields near Naburn Woods, with 2 young calling from the wood on July 5th (AW).

The only other breeding record was from Morby Wood (TC).

One bird was seen at Hollicarrs on 10th May (AW).

SHORT EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Becoming rather more scarce in the Lower Derwent. One was present on New Year's Day, one on 14th February, with 3 on the 17th, and singles on 6th and 20th March. An adult was seen in heavy wing moult on North Duffield Carrs on 9th July. One was seen on 21st October (TED).

Outside the Derwent Valley. the only other report was of one seen quartering the fields at Byland Abbey on 3rd December(JP).

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Up to six males were heard on Skipwith Common, the first reports being from 9th May.

Elsewhere: the only reports were from the north of the area, with two at Gilling, 1 at Ampleforth, and one in flight at Yearsley (JP).

SWIFT *Apus apus*

The first reports was of a single in the lower Dersent valley on 27th April. Numbers there built up with 100 on 9th May, 500 on 12th, 250 on 14th, 400 on 25th and 500 on 30th. In June, there were 200 on the 12th and 100 on the 17th, 120 on 7th July. (TED)

Elsewhere first reports were on May 10th. By 15th May, the normal numbers were in place at Osbaldwick, with 30 to 40 seen regularly by July 25th (IF&RVT).

50 pairs bred in Riccall village. There were 200 at Stillingfleet mine on July 1st (AW), with 150 plus at Riccall on the 7th (RSS), and 120 at Barlby on the 29th (AW).

On 7th August, most birds were still over their breeding sites in Poppleton, but by the 8th many were gone (DA). There were 200 plus above Acomb Green on 12th August (BC). The Osbaldwick birds were all gone by mid-August, but 3-4 were seen flying very high on the 28th.

On 1st September one was seen at Poppleton (PW) and 1 at Riccall (AW). The last in the Lower Derwent was on the 4th, and the final one in the recording area was seen at South Home on the 12th (MJD).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Seen regularly throughout the year in the Derwent Valley, with two pairs breeding at Wheldrake Ings, one pair at Bank Island, and one at Thornton Ellers, the last rearing seven young. (TED)

Breeding was also noted at Sturge's Pond (DCp), and on the river at Poppleton (IW&CR), where adults were seen feeding young. One bird was seen carrying food at Pocklington Canal (TC).

Two separate juveniles visited Moor Lane, Dringhouses on 10th and 22nd September (DM.)

There were also reports of single birds seen at York water works, Fulford Ings (TC), Cliffe Bend (RSS), Dringhouses Lake (JSH), Naburn Marina, Castle Howard (DR), Riccall (AW), Hassacarr Pond (T&VW), and Huntington (R&EPG)

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

One at Seavy Carr on 13th and 14th May was the only record, the first for many years in the recording area, and the first ever for Wheldrake reserve. Predictably it

totally eluded the Site Manager!

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

One was seen in a private garden in Escrick on 13th May, but couldn't be relocated the following day (CR), making the fifth record for the area.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

There were no definite reports of breeding in the area. However, in the lower Derwent valley singles were present on 2nd March and 7th, 16th and 23rd May, from 1st to 19th June, again on 4th and 7th August and 17th September, strongly suggesting that breeding was at least attempted (TED).

On Skipwith Common, 2 were flushed from the ground on Eric Heath on 9th Jan. 1 was calling in Swang Wood on 21st March, and a few minutes later calling in adjoining Blackwood; and heard calling in various locations at Skipwith throughout the year (FWO).

Also reported from Yearsley Moor (DR), Allerthorpe Common (MJD), and Redfern waste ground (DM)

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

Seen regularly throughout the year in the lower Derwent valley, where three pairs bred, with several more pairs breeding nearby. (TED).

Visited garden on Moor Lane Dringhouses daily, with 8 birds ringed during the year (DM).

Both male and female observed feeding on peanuts in Stubb Woods in the early part of the year. Drumming was heard on 16th March. On 4th April one was seen excavating a nesting hole in a dead stump, a task which took over 4 days. Seen on 15th May carrying food to the nesting hole, and female seen feeding a juvenile. Juvenile seen fledged and free flying on 6th June. (FWO).

Breeding also noted from Dunnington Common, where two pairs were seen (T&VW), and from Askham Bog (DM).

At Gilling Lake one adult was seen visiting a nest on 29th May (IF&RVT), and an adult was seen feeding a juvenile at Castle Howard on 24th June (MJD). A pair were seen with young near Poppleton on 6th June (IW&CR). A nest with young was located on Skipwith Common on 6th June (AW).

Juveniles were occasionally seen in Riccall during late summer (AW).

Other breeding reports were from Whin Covert, Heslington, and Fulford Ings(TC). Further records of sightings from another 10 locations.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Very few reports were submitted this year. Recorded in the first winter period and Stubbs Wood, and the second winter period at Skipwith Common (MJD).

One was caught and ringed in Dringhouses, presumably breeding at Askham Bog (DM).

The only other report was of a male heard drumming on the River Rye on March 21st (JP).

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Early winter flocks were of 35 at Ellerton on 10th January (BC), 20 at Welburn on the 23rd (JP), 200 at Moor Lane, Dringhouses, on 1st Feb (DM), 40 at Bielby on Feb 14th (TED), 17 at Tilmire on 17th Feb (AW), 20 at Stamford Bridge on 21st Feb (BC) and 30 at Wheldrake Ings on March 2nd (TED).

The first song was noted on 3rd March on Clifton Moor (BGP).

Large numbers bred as usual on Wheldrake reserve(TED), and 44 pairs in the Riccall area(AW). There were several pairs on Clifton Ings, and five eggs were found in a nest on Tilmire Common, Elvington airfield (TC).

In October, a small westerly movement was observed in the lower Derwent valley from 13th to 17th, with maximum of 300 on the 16th. There were further westerly movements in November, with 100 on 9th and up to 200 daily from 25th to 28th, and 60 on 26th December (TED). Elsewhere, 20 - 50 were seen over Askham Bog in passage on 6th November (DM), 80 on Riccall Common on Nov 17th (AW), and 81 plus at Poppleton on 21st Nov (DA).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Arrived early this year with 3 in the lower Derwent valley on the 13th March, followed by two on the 14th and 20th, three on the 21st and one on the 25th (TED). One was seen on the River Rye on the 21st. 15 were at York waterworks on April 5th, and two at Linton lock on the 10th. In the lower Derwent, birds were seen daily from 1st April, with numbers in passage building to 150 on the 19th and 200 on

the 20th.

Breeding records were from the Rye (55 nests with good breeding and some double broods - JP); Fox Hill (60 prs - T&VW), and North Duffield Ings (no count made - TED). No nest sites found in Poppleton this year (DA). Single birds also seen at Riccall and Linton lock.

In August, 10 plus were present at Castle Howard, mid-month, the last on the 28th. (MJD). 300 roosted in the reed-bed at Wheldrake Ings on 16th August. Last of the year were two at aWheldrake Ings on October 13th (CR).

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustics*

The first were six in the lower Derwent on 3rd April, present almost daily thereafter with maxima of 200 on 5th and 250 on 13th (TED). One was at Elvington Bridge on 4th April (TW), one at Poppleton on the 6th (PW), one at Melbourne on the 15th, two on the York ring road on the 16th, one at Terrington Woods on the 17th, and one at Osbaldwick on 24th.

Breeding records included a pair who reared four young in the Geoff Smith hide at North Duffield. At Riccall, breeding numbers were lower than normal, with only six pairs located (AW). Breeding numbers were also lower in the Hawnby area, where nesting was late (JP).

Passage noted at Riccall on 19th July (105 birds), then 600 at Wistow on 24th August, probably roosting on Wistow Pond en route for the coast (AW). At Osbaldwick there were larger numbers than usual on the 28th, then only odd ones except 50 on September 10th (IF&RVT). On 30th August 150 were at Naburn sewage farm (AW).

The onset of early flooding in the lower Derwent produced a huge count of 15,000 on the evening of 16th September (TED). 30 were in Appletree Village on September 24th, down to 2 on October 5th (BGP). The last at Poppleton was recorded on October 14th (PW), last at Castle Howard on the 15th (MJD), and the last at Osbaldwick on the 16th (IF&RVT). In the lower Derwent, up to 15 daily were counted to October 12th, 47 on the 13th, 15 on the 14th, 130 on the 15th, 40 on the 16th and two on the 22nd., when 7 were also recorded at Naburn (AW). The last was an immature bird which came into Wheldrake to roost with starlings on November 8th (CR).

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

The first were 15 in the lower Derwent valley on 11st April, with birds seen there almost daily from then on.

Peak counts were 250 on 16th May with 300 on 25th and 30th, and 250 on 14th June (TED).

Three pairs nested on one house in Woodthorpe (DM). In Claxton, a pair seen to successfully bred in June and again in August in the same nest (PA). Thirteen pairs were counted in Riccall village, where there were possibly many more, but only seven nests were noted on the NRA depot (AW). Breeding as usual in Tang Hall and Osbaldwick and seen in parties of four to six by the end of July, with larger numbers passing through by the end of August, then only small numbers in September. (IF&RVT).

At Acomb Green, three pairs nested on one house. On October 4th, nestlings there were still being fed by adults, with two young still being fed outside the nest on the 7th, but on the 8th there was no sign of any martins. (BC).

20 were on Clifton Ings on September 16th, with the last on the 29th, when 30 were also seen at Naburn, but young were still in nest on September 30th on Clifton Moor (BGP).

The last two at Castle Howard were on October 13th (MJF), with the last ones on Wheldrake Reserve a party of four on the 13th. In Osbaldwick 12 birds were still feeding above the garden on the 14th, with four on the 16th (IF&RVT), and the last on the 31st (DR).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

The only one at Wheldrake Ings was recorded on April 7th, the first of the year in the recording area. The first in the northern part was seen in Terrington Woods on April 17th.

One was heard in Bishops Wood on April 18th (AW), after which numbers increased until there were at least seven by the end of May (DR). Six were located near Ampleforth, and at least three pairs bred (JP). There were at least two on Skipwith Common (FWO). The only other report was of one in display flight on Strensall Common, 4th June (R&EPG), and one seen flying south-west by Castle Howard on August 25th (MJD).

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Early year counts included 64 at Tilmire on 17th Feb (AW), and 30 plus south west of Naburn on 20th March (RSS), but no significant counts from the Lower Derwent. 11 were seen near Riccall, moving north, on March 16th (AW).

Bred in large numbers at Wheldrake, also bred on Tilmire,

Elvington airfield, Clifton Ings, Ampleforth (8 pairs), and Ricall.

On 10th July, 34 were seen at Wass, and on 22nd September, 70 at Kilburn (JP). Autumn counts from the Lower Derwent were 150 on 2nd September, with 230 on 19th, 210 on 28th October, and 40 on 13th November (TED). There were 40 plus at Ellerton on November 13th (RSS).

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

The only reports were from Wheldrake Ings, with one seen on October 13th, 24th and 28th (TED), and on November 21st (RSS).

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Two in full summer plumage at Bank Island on 19th May (TED) were the only reports from the recording area..

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

First of the year was one at Wheldrake Ings on April 3rd, with two the next day, then daily from the 15th to a maximum of 60 on the 20th (TED). At Naburn sewage works the first two were on April 5th, then increasing to 12 by the 19th, with a peak of 24 on 5th May. Four were at Angram Ponds. on April 13th, numbers there rising to 39 (AW). Also seen at York waterworks on April 13th (TC).

A male blue-headed wagtail (*M.f. flava*) was at Wheldrake on 13th May, and one was at Cliffe Bend on July 4th (RSS).

Breeding was as usual in the lower Derwent valley, with no counts made. A pair were at Forest Farm on April 20th and other dates (JSH). At Angram Ponds there were at least 11 pairs in the breeding season, with many juveniles reared, including 23 seen feeding in stubble on 13th August (AW). A pair were seen at Naburn on June 3rd, with another pair at Heslington on the 6th, both pairs nesting in wheat fields (TC). Pairs also seen on Dunnington Common (TW), and two were at Cawood throughout May, presumably breeding (AW).

One or two were seen regularly in late July and early August at Castle Howard, the last on 24th August (MJD). There was one at Byland Abbey on September 2nd (JP). 150 flew south in three hours on 17th September, over Wheldrake reserve, with 40 birds grounded also. The last of the year were three on Sept 23rd, also at Wheldrake.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

The only breeding record was of two pairs on the Pocklington Canal (TED), but there was also a pair at Naburn sewage works throughout the year (DR). Single birds were seen in the winter at Melbourne sewage works, Tang Hall, the River Foss, Castle Howard Sewage works, Bank Island, and Wass, and in the summer at Castle Howard and Riccall, and throughout the year at York waterworks (TC).

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Winter counts were of 40 at West Ness and 30 at Thornton, both on January 10th, with 30 plus at Naburn on March 20th. 80 on 25th April on Wheldrake reserve were presumably northward bound passage birds. There were 52 at Naburn sewage works on December 13th

As usual, a few scattered pairs bred in the lower Derwent valley. Breeding at Riccall was poor, however, with only three pairs present, but all fledged young. An exceptionally early juvenile was fledged on April 22nd at York University (JSH). Three pairs nested at York waterworks (TC). A juvenile was seen feeding alone in Osbaldwick, Sept 23rd. There were 30 at Castle Howard on 1st August.

A white wagtail (*M.a. alba*) was at Angram Ponds on 8th May, flushed from oil-seed rape with a flock of yellow wagtails (*Motacilla flava*).

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Widespread in both urban and rural habitats. Numerous pairs bred in the Derwent Valley, and reported from Dringhouses. 17 pairs counted in Riccall village. 10 birds were counted at Ampleforth on 24th October

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Numerous pairs bred in Lower Derwent Valley, and 30 pairs bred in Riccall village (with another 21 pairs in the area). Three birds were singing at Castle Howard on 11th March and nine birds counted along Osbaldwick cycle track on the 15th.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Bred as usual in the Lower Derwent Valley, and 16 pairs were counted in Riccall. One male was setting up territory

in a garden in Osbaldwick on 22nd September

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

One female at Bank Island on 25th April was the 1st record for the Lower Derwent NNR. (IF & RVT)

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

First arrival was a pair at Wheldrake Ings on 27th April (CSR) with three at Ampleforth on 3rd May (JP). During June, birds were reported from Wass, Skipwith Common and Yearsley Common (2 males).

July saw the start of a relatively large autumn passage through the Lower Derwent Valley, where normally only one or two birds are seen annually. Five were seen on 28th July and two on 31st. One was present from 2nd to 7th August, three on 6th and singles on 10th, 11th and 30th. In September, there were two on 6th, 1 on 7th, five on 8th, one on 9th, with the last bird for the area being seen there on 17th.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

The first arrival was at Lower Derwent Valley on 26th April, the only spring record for the Reserve. A male was at Naburn Sewage Works on 17th May (DR) and one was seen on wires at Little Fenton on 28th (R & GPG). Two males were at Strensall Common on 22nd June (JSH) and a pair with young at the same location on the 29th (BC). Singles were in the Lower Derwent Valley in July on 6th, 9th, 10th and 15th and in August on 10th and 16th. Last bird seen in the area was a juvenile at Riccall on 17th August (AW).

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Single males at Wheldrake Ings on 4th and 5th January and 26th February were the only records of what is now a very rare winter visitor to the Reserve.

A pair which produced two broods (3 and 2 chicks) at Ampleforth provided the first breeding record in the area for at least ten years (JP).

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

First bird of the spring was at Malton Road, York on 21st March (JSH) and three were at Kilburn two days later (JP). By the end of March birds in one's and two's were reported from Brighton Meadows, Wheldrake and York Water Works.

April records came from Poppleton playing fields (2nd), North Duffield Carrs (two on 5th), Allerthorpe (17th), Warthill (20th), East Ness (two on 22nd) and Wilberfoss (25th). Lower Derwent Valley recorded 19 bird days during the month.

The return passage was good compared with recent years. Four birds passed through the Lower Derwent on 9th August, with a single there on 12th and a fluffy juvenile on 20th. A single bird was at Colton railway bridge on the 11th and a juvenile at Thornton on 20th. A juvenile was also at East Cottingwith on 12th September, and the last

bird recorded was in the Lower Derwent on 21st (TED), the latest record since 1989.

RING OUSEL *Turdus torquatus*

The only record for the area was a female at Bank Island, which arrived with a small influx of Blackbirds (*Turdus merula*) on 16th May (CSR)

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Winter flock counts were few. 10 were at Muncaster Gate on 29th January and 70 - 80 at Fulford Ings on 10th February (AW and RSS). 72 pairs were recorded in the Riccall area, including 52 pairs in the village. Notes on breeding came from Dringhouses (where 6 pairs bred in a garden), Poppleton and Osbaldwick (where a fledgling was unfortunately found dead in a garden pond). In the latter part of the year, flock counts included 60 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th October, 20 in a garden at Dringhouses on 30th, rising to 30+ on 4th November and 50+ on 24th November (feeding on apples in an orchard), 50 at Thornton Ellers on 4th November, 29 at Walmgate Stray on 16th, 20+ at Cliffe Bend on 25th December and 40 at East Ness on 27th.

An unusually marked bird - a white collar round the back of the neck - was at Crockey Hill on 29th March (DM)

FIELD FARE *Turdus pilaris*

Largest flock counts in the early part of the year were 200 at Poppleton on 27th January, 2,000 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st February, 300+ at Tillmire on 16th, 220 at Riccall on 16th. 100 on by the Malton Bypass were heading steadily east on 1st February. In March, numbers declined to 600 in the Lower Derwent on 17th. 50+ were at Poppleton on 30th. The last bird of the winter was in the Lower Derwent on 22nd April.

Returning birds in the Autumn arrived in September, with 12 in the Lower Derwent on 12th and 40 at Slingsby on 13th. October saw the start of a massive influx of birds which reached a peak of 15,000 in the Lower Derwent between 2nd and 6th November. The build-up started on 13th October, with 3,200 birds heading west over Wheldrake Ings, with 2,000 on 22nd, 4,500 on 28th and 1,500 on 29th. After the large passage on 2nd - 6th November, numbers declined to around 3,000 by the month end. Elsewhere, large flocks were counted at Oswaldkirk (750 on 25th October), Poppleton (500+ on 27th), Riccall (600 on 7th November), Hovingham Wood (1,500 on 12th), Scackleton (1,800 on 12th), Kilburn (1,200 on 23rd) and East Ness (1,000 on 27th December).

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomenus*

Unlike the past two years, no comments were received about the decline of this species, but only a dozen reports were received; more would help in monitoring the status in the recording area. 18 pairs were counted in Riccall (AW), and breeding was noted as usual in the Derwent Valley. Birds were singing in Osbaldwick on 31st January (I & RT) and 11 males were singing in adjoining gardens at Fulford Ings on 10th February (AW). At Ampleforth, 11 were counted on 10th April and 9 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th July. Young birds were in gardens at Poppleton on 1st August (IWR & CR).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

All the reports in the early part of the year came from the southern parts of the recording area. 20 were at Huntington on 2nd February, 40 - 45 at Fulford Ings on 10th and 300+ at Tillmire on 16th. 250 were in the Lower Derwent on 21st February, rising to 300 on 28th and declining to 60 on 21st March. The last bird of the winter was in the Lower Derwent on 20th April.

Unusually, a summering bird was found at Elm Hagg, near Byland Abbey on 1st June (JP). The bird was subsequently seen on three days each in July and August, with the last sighting being on 14th August.

The first winter arrivals were on 28th September, with two birds at Wheldrake Ings (RSS). There was an influx of 100 at Appletree Village on 8th October (BGP). The massive influx of Fieldfares (*turdus pilaris*) in mid-October was also mirrored by large numbers of Redwings. 2,000 were recorded in Lower Derwent on 13th October, 2,000 on 28th and 7,000 between 2nd and 6th November, declining to 1,000 by the month end. Other local counts were 50 in a garden at Dringhouses on 30th October and 4th November (DM), 25 at Muncaster Gate on 14th November and 60 - 70 at Stockton Lane, York on 21st December.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorous*

No breeding reports were received except from Lower Derwent, where a few scattered pairs bred. Birds were recorded in York city centre on 27th January and 15th March. Many small flocks were seen feeding on newly cut hay meadows in the Lower Derwent in July (TED). Double figure counts included 13 at Sorwood on 8th July, 12 in allotments at Heworth on 8th August and 10 at Poppleton on 7th October. Exceptionally large flocks were noted at Ellerton (58 on 17th July) and a massive 70 birds at Sutton Ings on 16th September.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Very scarce this year on the Lower Derwent, but probably bred at Bank Island. The first reeling males were heard at Bank Island on 25th April (DR, PP and I & RT). The following day, two were singing in Bishops Wood (DCp), where three birds were noted on 8th May (DR) and 16th June. One bird was at Thornton Ellers on 1st May.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Bred in large numbers as usual in the Derwent Valley, where up to 48 singing males were counted on 7th May between the car park and Swantail Hide (AW) and 71 on 9th (TED). The first arrival in the valley was on 16th April, and in Poppleton on 26th (IWR & CR). In May, singing males were noted at Cawood (11 on 18th around Wharfe Ings), Acaster Airfield (1 on 13th), Poppleton (5 by the R. Ouse on 20th, with eight on 6th June) and East Ness (1 on 27th June). Ten birds were still present at Wheldrake Ings on 1st September, where the last bird, a very late departure, was recorded on 21st October.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Breeding was reported from Lower Derwent (some 25 pairs, with the first bird arriving on 18th April - PP), Skipwith Common (FWO), Riccall (2 pairs at the NRA pool - AW), and Castle Howard (MJD). Breeding was also probable at Sturges Pond and Ross Carr Ponds, where numbers are seemingly on the decrease (DCp). Twenty were trapped and ringed at Wheldrake Ings. The birds left early this year, with the last being seen in the Lower Derwent on 2nd September.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Breeding reported only from Sturges Pond, Dringhouses and Lower Derwent (only one pair here this year), with birds

present in the breeding season in a number of locations in the southern part of the area and at Castle Howard (the only record from the northern area).

The first birds were two at Sturges Pond on 22nd April (D Cp) and one in Lower Derwent on 23rd. By mid May, there were records from Poppleton (one on 28th April), Langton (two on 3rd May), Tillmire (two males on 4th), Castle Howard (one on 8th) and Bishops Wood (one on 12th). The only other locations reported were Claxton (one on 30th May) and Burnholme Beck (one on 10th July). The last two were in Lower Derwent on 20th August (TED).

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Breeding confirmed in the Lower Derwent ("many pairs") and at Dringhouses and present in the breeding season at Riccall (12 pairs, with 7 juveniles in oilseed rape on 13th August), South Holme, Sturges Pond, Brayton Barff, Langton, Poppleton, Heslington, Acaster Airfield, Oswaldkirk-Nunnington area and Heworth.

The first was at Barlby on 19th April (DM) and two were singing at Sturges Pond on 22nd. One sang briefly from a TV aerial in Selby town centre on 7th May, 5 at Outgang Lane, Heslington on 13th, 7 singing males at Poppleton on 30th.

A small roadside survey carried out when cycling in June in the Oswaldkirk - Nunnington area suggested that birds preferred hedgerows with long grass near the base, and had a bias towards improved grassland rather than crops (JP). Three other records reported birds in oilseed rape.

The last was at Poppleton on 16th September (IWR & CR).

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

More reports than in some recent years. Bred at Thornton Ellers (5 pairs) with scattered pairs elsewhere in Lower Derwent.. The first record was, unusually, from the northern area at Wass on 21st April (JP) with three in Lower Derwent on 24th and one at Brayton Barff on 26th. Six singing males were in a small area of Bishop Wood on 23rd May - "excellent numbers" (AW) and five were singing at Brayton Barff on 16th June. Also recorded at Skipwith Common (4 in a small area), Kilburn, Gate Helmsley, Bad Bargain Lane (York), Elm Hagg, Coxwold, Dringhouses and Hovingham. At Thornton Ellers, 24 were trapped and ringed on passage on 31st August (CSR). The last bird was a late record on 4th September in Lower Derwent (TED).

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Birds presumably overwintering were at Heworth on 25th and 28th January, feeding on bread and seed and from a peanut feeder (AH), at Gilling on 2nd, 5th & 11th February (JP) and at Poppleton on 6th February, where a male visited a garden until 30th March (IWR & CR).

The first spring arrival was at Sturges Pond on 10th April (DCp), with birds arriving at Terrington on 15th and Thornton Ellers on 16th. Nine females were in Bishops Wood on 18th. Brayton Barff held 10 singing males on 10th May and 12 on 16th June (DCp). The only positive breeding reports were from Thornton Ellers (6 pairs) and the Lower Derwent (scattered pairs). Thirty birds were trapped and ringed at Thornton Ellers during August.

Late/overwintering birds were at Hemmingbrough on 9th October (RSS), Claxton (feeding on an apple tree) on 28th November (PA) and in two gardens in Poppleton on 5th December where one fed on nuts (IWR & CR) & 28th December (BC).

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

First reports, presumably of passage birds, came from the southern area, with the first singing at Poppleton on 16th April (IWR & CR), one at Brayton Barff on the same date, where it displayed until 29th (DCp) and a singing male at Thornton Ellers on 23rd May - the first record for the Lower Derwent NNR.

The first northern arrival was at Wass on 1st May (JP), where numbers increased to 4 - 5 birds on 1st July, with adults feeding 2 - 3 young. A singing bird was at Ampleforth on 6th June. No reports received after 1st July.

CHIFF CHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

This year no birds were reported over-wintering in 1992-93. However, in 1991-92 a bird at Bank Island in March was considered to have overwintered, and the first bird in 1993 was also reported at Bank Island on 12th March (TED), with a singing bird at South Holme on 22nd (MJD) and at Bishops Wood on 25th, where there were four by 7th April (DR) and twelve on 12th (DCp).

Birds were also present in April at Tilmire, Skipwith Common, Sturges Pond, Askham Bog, Moorlands, Terrington and Ampleforth. Two pairs were present on Dunnington Common throughout the summer, and were present in the breeding season at Brayton Barff and Sturges Pond. Recorded as a scarce breeder in Lower Derwent, with only

one pair located.

Last bird at Riccall was on 14th September and at Skipwith Common on 18th, where one bird was singing again. It seems likely that there may have been at least one over-wintering bird at Wheldrake Ings, where singles were reported up to 27th December.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The first bird, at Bielby on 3rd April, resembled a Willow Warbler, but the song, which started as a Willow Warbler turned into 3 - 4 calls resembling those on the Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) (RSS). This bird was heard again in the same location on 3rd May, and could be the supposed hybrid present at Thornton Ellers in 1991 and 1992.

Other early arrivals were in the Lower Derwent on 4th April, Sturges Pond on 6th and Dringhouses and Bishops Wood on 7th. Birds were widespread by the end of the month, with 35 at Ampleforth on 27th (JP). Fifteen at Brayton Barff on 1st May was "a disappointing number" (DCp), although breeding in the Lower Derwent was in larger numbers than usual. Other breeding was reported from Thornton Ellers, where one pair fledged seven young. Although undoubtedly a wide spread breeder, no other firm reports were received.

Last birds of the season were at Hagg Bridge (CSR) and Lower Derwent (TED) on 30th September.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

The larger flocks were 50 at Ampleforth in February, 70+ on Allerthorpe Common in May, 50 again at Ampleforth in October and 100+ in Askham Bog in November. Also seen at Wheldrake Ings (1-7), Thornton, Yearsley, Aughton, Slingsby Bank, Moorlands (10+), Stockton Lane, Bank Island (35), Appletree Village, Red House Wood and Riccall.

No breeding records received.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

The first returning bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 27th April (TED) followed by a single on 2nd May at West Ness. There were seven on Brayton Barff on 16th June and five at Thornton Ellers in August.

Breeding records came from West Ness, University, Thornton Ellers (four pairs), Wheldrake Ings and the Pocklington Canal near Melbourne (three pairs). Family parties were at Burnholme on 13th July and West Ness

(eight) on 1st September. Also present in Riccall (three pairs), Warthill, Poppleton, Stockton Lane and Castle Howard.

The last two were on Wheldrake Ings 10th September (AH).

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

The first was a male at Wass on 3rd May (JP) followed by a female at Ampleforth on 14th June.
Two males on Wheldrake Ings on 6th August were with a large flock of tits, warblers and redstarts.
These were the second and third records for the reserve (TED).

BEARDED REEDLING *Panurus biarmicus*

A single male at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May. A male and a female/immature at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd and 23rd October with the female/immature remaining until 28th. Both were unringed (TED, CR.).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

In the early months of the year there were 15 at Dunnington on 11th January with smaller parties of 7/9 at Dringhouses, Askham Bog, Huntington, Warthill, South Holme and Osbaldwick.

In mid-April a pair attempted to build a nest in golden leylandii in a Claxton garden but were disturbed before finishing and in June a fledgling was calling to be fed at Acomb Green.

Breeding records came from Riccall and Wheldrake Ings.

The earliest post-breeding flock seen was of 19 in Poppleton on 7th August, 12 were at Osbaldwick on 22nd September and 55 were at Wheldrake Ings on 18th October. 35 at Dringhouses on 4th November, 40 at Askham Bog on 6th with 35 at Skipwith on 17th. Sixty plus in four flocks in Bishop Wood on 18th December and 40 at Thornton Ellers on 30th.

Also recorded at Muncastergate and three or four were seen at both Heworth and Poppleton feeding on peanuts at the year end.

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

Seen during the 'Bird Race' on 10th January at four sites, Kirkham Priory, Knavesmire, Coneythorpe and Askham Bog. During the winter recorded at Skipwith, Stub Wood and Castle Howard.

There was a pair at Malton Road on 21st March, a pair at Moorlands and a pair with a nest in Red House Woods on 10th April; a single at Terrington on 15th April and four in Moreby Wood on 19th.

At least one pair bred at Thornton Ellers and were seen there regularly throughout the year. A family party with four juveniles at Skipwith Common on 20th July. A single at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th October was "an unusual record for this part of the reserve".

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Scattered records from our area came from Ampleforth on 10th January, four at Hagg Wood, Dunnington on 30th January and a single at Wheldrake Ings on 11th November. Four were seen regularly on Skipwith Common and birds were present in Askham Bog all year. They were "reasonably common in conifer plantations in the Castle Howard area".

Several pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings and seen occasionally in tit flocks outside the breeding season.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

A male in full song at Skipwith Common throughout January and a single at Askham Bog on 23rd. Reported from Askham Bog, Bishopthorpe, Coneysthorpe and Kirkham Priory on 10th.

Two at Wheldrake Ings on 4th April, eight at Ampleforth on 10th and two at Terrington on 15th with a single at Strensall Common on 17th May.

One at Wheldrake Ings on 15th October when 10 were at Castle Howard. Singles at Osbaldwick on 1st November and Wheldrake Ings on 11th with two there on 15th.

Comments received included "common in Red House Wood", "occasional records but no indication of breeding at Riccall", "three present at South Holme during the winter" and "present all the year in Askham Bog".

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

Still not many reports of any significance of this common species. There was a count of 10 pairs in Riccall. Four plus pairs bred at Dringhouses in nest boxes, a brood left a box in a garden in Poppleton on 9th June, young were being fed in Tang Hall, scattered pairs bred Wheldrake Ings.

25 at Castle Howard on 15th September was the only flock recorded.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

One or two in the early months at Burnholme, Terrington, Dringhouses, Askham Bog, Castle Howard, Elvington, Thornton Ellers, Heworth and Strensall Common. A count of nine pairs at Riccall.

Three pairs bred in garden nestboxes at Dringhouses and scattered pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Occasional sightings throughout the year from Castle Howard/Terrington with a maximum of six on 15th September. Breeding was confirmed at Hovingham Wood, Coxwold, Ampleforth and Gilling.

To the south of York, one at Thorganby in May. Two in tit flocks at Thornton Ellers on 18th September and a bird at Wheldrake Ings on 24th November were the 4th and 5th records for the Reserve (TED).

GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*

A single female at Storwood on the 29th August was the second record for the reserve (CR).

Submitted to the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

The only breeding record was of scattered pairs on Wheldrake Ings.

In the winter months, one to four seen at Thornton, Coneysthorpe, Ampleforth, Low Catton, Askham Bog, Hagg Wood, Terrington, Wheldrake Ings, South Holme and Castle Howard.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

In March a Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*) was flushed off the remains of a Great Grey Shrike on Heslington Tilmire. Identification was by the remains, especially the bill (TC).

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Birds in Stub Wood were watched regularly through the year and up to three were feeding on peanuts in the winter

months (FWO). A pair calling at Long Marston in April and another pair had a nest on Skipwith Common in May. Birds were also recorded at Ampleforth (nine in December), Askham Bog, Thornton Ellers, Terrington Woods, East Ness and two regularly visited a garden in Dringhouses in December.

Unprecedented numbers at Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island in the spring with singles on 15th and 31st March, three on 3rd April, one on 16th and a pair on 17th and 21st. One at Thornton Ellers on 1st May. Probably attempted to breed for the first time. Unprecedented numbers again in autumn with one on 10th September, two on 20th, and 21st with one on 24th. In October two on 7th, then nine on 11th and eleven on 12th. Upto 19 birds seen thereafter with maximum flocks of eight at Wheldrake, six at bank island and four at Thorganby.

A total of 123 bird days in October. In November, seven from 1st to 6th with up to five daily thereafter (94 bird days). One or two daily throughout December.

Individuals showing characteristics of the continental sub-species *Garrulus. g. glandarius* were seen on 12th and 20th October.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

In the early months of the year the only parties of note were: 17 at Roscarrs on 29th January, 9 at University on 30th and six at Stockton Lane on 15th February. At Riccall 19 fed regularly in fields, with a roost of 64 on the river bank, on 5th March.

The only party in the latter part of the year was nine at Askham Bog on 6th November.

Five pairs bred at Riccall, one or two pairs bred in boundary hedgerows on Wheldrake Ings and at Dringhouses where they had a single chick.

A comment that they are "still increasing at Osbaldwick. Nesting in large trees by accommodation fields and several times seen in dispute with crows over nests".

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

The larger counts were 120 at Moreby Hall on 4th March, 600 at Coxwold on 13th November, 500 at Kilburn on the same date, 1100 at Tollerton on 12th December, 180 at Ampleforth on the same day and 250+ on Tilmire on 18th.

Possible breeding at Riccall where they were present in single figures and five pairs bred on Thornton Ellers.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

The larger counts were: 3000 at Melbourne on 10th

January, 2000 at Escrick on 15th September, 2000 at Byland Abbey on 13th November and 1800 at Ampleforth on 12th December.

Included in a small flock of 120 at Coxwold on 23rd January was a bird with black face, brown head, neck, throat and mantle and underparts, sandy-brown scapulars, wings, rump and tail. Bill and legs normal. It was occasionally attacked by a near neighbour if it strayed too close but stayed within the flock if disturbed (JP).

Rookeries with breeding pairs were on the Knavesmire, at Crockey Hill, Osbaldwick and on Thornton Ellers where eight pairs bred, a new breeding species for the reserve.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Significant reports received were of 24 at Riccall on 10th September, 17 displaying on Wheldrake Ings on 10th October, 18 on Riccall Common on 17th November and 16 at North Duffield on 19th December.

Four pairs bred at Riccall, 44 pairs on Thornton Ellers and several other pairs bred in boundary hedges on Wheldrake Ings.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Breeding reports came from Dringhouses, the University and Wheldrake Ings where a few scattered pairs bred as usual. "Not a common breeding bird at Riccall with probably less than 20 pairs."

This species is most conspicuous for its post-breeding flocks and winter roosts. There were 4000 on the Minster on 26th August and 2000 under Lendal Bridge in York on 28th with in excess of 5000 in the early and latter parts of the year (AW). There were 4000 at Hemingborough on 6th November, 4000 flew over the city centre at 7.30am on 23rd presumably from roost. Ten thousand roosted at Wheldrake Ings on 7th November and 15,000 on the 8th, being the maximum, reduced to 2000 by 28th November (TED). Winter roosts in Askham Bog regularly contained in excess of 3000 birds.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Birds stripped a pampas grass plant for nesting material and were feeding young on 4th June at Osbaldwick. On 21st May the first juvenile appeared with one of the flocks of 15 that inhabit

Poppleton. On Wheldrake Ings birds were occasionally seen

flying over throughout the year.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

200+, at Poppleton on 7th January and 100+ still there on 1st April. Thornton Ellers held 20 on 10th January and 40 were at East Cottingham on 31st. Three were feeding in a garden in Osbaldwick during January and February. There were 30 east of Stamford Bridge on 21st February and 80 on arable land near Wheldrake Ings on 23rd with 60 on 2nd March. At the N.R.A. Depot at Riccall there were 18 in the spring and 15 pairs in the summer. Present in small numbers in the South Holme area.

Breeding reports came from Dunnington, Dringhouses and Wheldrake Ings where scattered pairs bred in the boundary hedges.

Winter flocks were: 53 at Riccall Common on 17th November, a splendid 450 at Thornton Ellers on 29th, 30 on arable near Wheldrake Ings on 7th December with 45 at North Riccall on 18th and 30+ at North Duffield on 26th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Only small parties in the early part of the year. 20 at Askham Bog and Elvington Lane on 20th January. 35 at Tilmire on 3rd February, 200 at Ampleforth on 21st with 70 at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd. Sixteen pairs bred in Riccall, on Thornton Ellers and as usual on Wheldrake Ings.

Post-breeding flocks were: 20+ at Askham Bog on November 6th, 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 7th December, 400 at Ampleforth and 400 at Tollerton on 12th, 40+ at North Duffield on 26th, 200 on Dunnington Common on 28th when 70+ at Poppleton.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Very scarce this year with the only double figure flocks at the end of the year.

During January there were five on Seavy Carr on 10th, a single feeding with a finch/bunting flock at Stearsby on 16th, two at Acaster Airfield on the same date, a male on Skipwith Common on the 29th and again on the 31st. No sightings in February but a male was in Stubb Wood on 1st March and another male on Skipwith Common on 21st. The last wintering bird was on Wheldrake Ings on 1st April (TED).

The first returning birds were two flying west over Wheldrake Ings on 13th October and another there on 24th. There was a single on Wheldrake Ings on 12th November and

a male at Skipwith Sewage Farm on 15th. A single on Wheldrake Ings and another feeding with finches and buntings at Thornton-le-Clay on 7th December. The only large flock of the year was 250 on Dunnington Common on 27th December. There were also 20 at North Duffield and 31 at East Cottingwith regularly at the year end.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Flocks of over 100 at the beginning of the year were: 100+ at Poppleton on 7th January, 200 in a linseed field at Sutton-on-Derwent on 9th, 300 at North Duffield and 200 at Bubwith Ings on 17th, 250 at Bubwith on 24th and 300 at North Duffield Carrs on 31st. 150 in fields near Wheldrake Ings on 23rd February.

Bred at Poppleton, Osbaldwick, Wass (six pairs), Riccall (11 pairs) and scattered pairs as usual on Wheldrake Ings.

Post-breeding flocks were: 50 in Appletree Village on 22nd November, 270 near Wheldrake Ings on 7th December, 300 at Dunnington and Poppleton on 27th with 180 at Welburn on 29th.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

A large charm of 200 feeding in a linseed field at Sutton-on-Derwent on 8th January (BC). Smaller flocks of eight to 15 were at Ampleforth, Welburn, the University and Rawcliffe in the early months of the year.

Bred at Poppleton, on Wheldrake Ings 'as usual' and there were three pairs in the summer at Riccall.

The first post-breeding flock was of 20/30 on telephone wires at Osbaldwick on 25th July, 160 were at Walmgate Stray on 27th August, 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 13th October, 17 at Skipwith Common on 17th November and 30 at the University on 13th December.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

100 at Kirkham Abbey on 10th January, 100 at Bishop Wood on 22nd, 300 at Welburn and 175 at Pond Head on 23rd. Smaller flocks (between 20 and 50) were at Elvington Lane, Ampleforth, Askham Bog, Castle Howard, Nunnington, Dringhouses, Yearsley Moor, Wheldrake Ings, Red House Wood, Moor Monkton, Riccall, Terrington with several singing in Naburn Wood and Moreby Wood.

In the breeding season one flying south-west at Riccall on the unusual date of 20th July (AWN).

Wintering flocks were first noted in October with 40 at Wheldrake Ings on 19th and 30 at Dunnington Common on 30th. 80 at Askham Bog on 6th November and Thornton Ellers on 29th with 30 at Naburn Marina on 31st. The Dunnington Common flock increased to 130 on 17th December, 100 at East Ness on 27th and 50 regularly at Thornton Ellers.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

In the early winter months 50 at East Cottingwith on 31st January, 400 at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd February, 50 at Riccall on 25th and 450 in fields near Wheldrake Ings on 2nd March.

During the breeding season there was a pair at Gate Helmsley, two pairs at Warthill, 10 pairs at Riccall, several at St. Nicholas Tip and a singing male at Muncastergate. Breeding was confirmed at Elvington Airfield (six pairs), Thornton Ellers (12 pairs) and scattered pairs at Wheldrake Ings.

Post-breeding flocks were of 250 at Riccall on 29th July and 100+ at Poppleton on 4th September. Wintering flocks were 300 at Riccall Common on 17th November, 100 in fields near Wheldrake Ings on 7th December, 50 at Poppleton on 9th, 80 at North Duffield on 11th and 85 there on 25th with 400 at Crockey Hill on 27th.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

A single in a mixed flock of finches at Ellerton on 8th November (CR), one with Linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*) on 13th (RSS) and two on 14th and 17th (TED).

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Very scarce this year with few flocks of note.

40 at Kirkham Priory on 10th January, 25 at Ampleforth on 20th February, 12 at Strensall on 24th and 18 at Bishop Wood on 18th April.

Two or three pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings.

37 at Wheldrake Ings on 13th October with 25 at Castle Howard during the month, 20 at Askham Bog on 6th November, 12 at Wheldrake Ings on 11th, 30 at Fulford Golf Course on 13th when 150 at Kilburn. 100 at Ampleforth on 12th December and 50 at Dunnington Common on 14th

"Very low numbers south of York this year" (AWn).

CROSSBILL, *Loxia curvirostra*

What appears to be a disastrous year with only records from Skipwith Common. Ten on 28th February, six on 23rd March, three on 25th and a female feeding a juvenile in Scots Pine on the 30th (FWO).

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A single at Wheldrake Ings on 21st May was the second record for the reserve (TED). One at Castle Howard on 26th June (TW) and four at Escrick on 23rd September were a welcome return to a former site (CR).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

A rather secretive bird but it must be under recorded in the area.

Three at Poppleton, singles at Thornton and Yearsley Forest in January, a male on Malton Road in March, two males and a female on Skipwith Common in April and a pair at Osbaldwick in May.

Confirmed breeding at York Water Works (three young reared), Wheldrake Ings (two or three pairs bred) and Thornton Ellers (four or five pairs bred).

A party was seen in Stub Wood on 22nd September. Eleven were on Skipwith Common on 17th November. One to six at Wheldrake Ings, Askham Bog, Poppleton, Heslington Tilmire, Dringhouses, Tang Hall Lane and Osbaldwick. 15 at Dunnington Common on 17th December.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Seen throughout the area in small numbers with the only parties of note in the early part of the year with no records received after June.

39 at Hagg Wood on 31st January, 64 at Heslington Tilmire on 3rd February, 150 at Bielby on 14th 20 at Stamford Bridge on 21st and 15 at Fangfoss on 30th June.

23 pairs at Riccall and a few pairs bred as usual on Wheldrake Ings.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A single female/immature with a flock of Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) at Cliffe Bend on 6th November (RSS) and a single female/immature at Riccall on 17th appeared to join a flock of Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*) (AWn).

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

In the early months seen at Seavy Carr, Wheldrake Ings and Yearsley Forest on 10th January, Poppleton (three females and one male) on 13th, Castle Howard on 11th March and 14 at Riccall on 14th.

During the breeding season there were five singing males at Poppleton and six singing males at Barlby in an 11 hectare field of oil seed rape indicating the potential importance of this crop (AWN), 10 pairs at Riccall 17 of them along the river (Ouse) bank and two pairs at Naburn Sewage Works.

Two pairs bred at York Water Works, many pairs bred (but not counted) on Wheldrake Ings and probably bred at Castle Howard.

Early winter flocks were 31 at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd October, then 15+ at Cliffe Bend on 13th November, 16 at Skipwith Common on 17th and 30 at Wheldrake Ings on 7th December.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

Flocks early in the year were six at East Cottingwith on 10th January, 100 near the by-pass at Dringhouses throughout the month, 100 at Bielby on 14th February and 10 at Roscarrrs on 16th.

During the breeding season singing males were at Askham Bryan, Acaster Airfield (four), Poppleton, North Duffield, Gate Helmsley (three), Cawood (five), Fangfoss (three) and Riccall (14).

Birds also at Warthill, Little Fenton, Thorganby Ings and Wheldrake Woods.

Confirmed breeding only at Wheldrake Ings (a few pairs) and Poppleton where one was seen carrying food on 31st September.

Later in the year two at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd November and nine at Cliffe Bend on 4th.

ESCAPES/INTRODUCED

Red Whiskered Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocusus*)

In a garden at Cliffe near Selby for a few days on 16th April (DM).

Budgerigar (*Melopsittacus undulatus*)

Seen going north along the A19 at Riccall on 19th April.

Chinese Goose (*Anser cynoides*)

Two at Stamford Bridge on 17th June (JSH).

Black Swan (*Cygnus tratus*)

Seen all the year at Castle Howard. Seen on Wheldrake Ings intermittently between 30th March and 15th May and on 5th May at North Duffield (DR).

Zebra Finch (*Taeniopygia guttata*)

At Landing Lane, York on 31st August. All cream with a bright red beak. Feeding under Elderberry bushes on railway embankment (AH).

Reports were received of the following species but were not substantiated with field descriptions as required by the YNU records committee.

Red-Crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

Raven *Corvus corax*

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