

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

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Compiled by

**A.Booth J. Pewtress, J. Robinson
I. Traynor, R. Traynor, P. Watson**

Edited by J. Pewtress

Produced by M. Pirozek

COMMITTEE

Chairman: I.R. Newton

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Treasurer: Mrs. R. Traynor

Recorder: J. Pewtress

Assistant Recorders:
A. Booth
J. Robinson
I. Traynor
R. Traynor
P. Watson

Committee member: Mrs M. Pirozek

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CLUB RECORDING AREA

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

This Report has been compiled by members of the York Ornithological Club with nearly all the records having been 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/Howardian Hills), coniferous woodland (Yearsley and Ampleforth Forest), lakes (Castle Howard) and large agricultural areas of the Vales of York and Pickering.

The Club has a membership of about 85 and meets on the first Tuesday of the month (except July and August) in The Friends' Meeting House, Castlegate, York, 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

This will be my last Editorial. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have served the club as Assistant Recorder and Recorder since 1984. However, I feel that it is time to take a back seat and allow a fresh input from the newer recorders. I would like to thank Ian and Ruth Traynor, Jackie Robinson, Peter Watson and Andy Booth and all the other past Recorders for the help they have given in the production of this report. They have had the unenviable task of sorting the records and writing the species accounts. I am sure that they will give their valuable assistance to Danae Sheehan the new recorder. It is encouraging that more members are now submitting records and I am glad to say that the newer members are recording in areas not often reported in our annual reports. Our thanks go to members of the Committee for the work they have done throughout the year, and our travelling members who kindly share with us their expeditions.

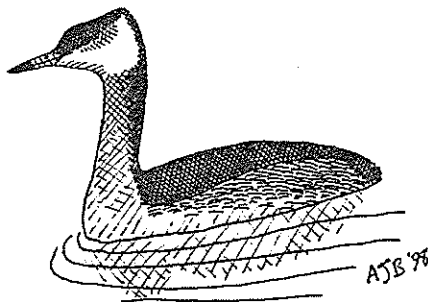
It is sad to report that once again some exciting species for the club area are omitted because there have been no written descriptions submitted to either the YNU or BBRC. It seems that we have to rely on observers from outside the area seeing these species and submitting the descriptions.

CLASSIFIED LIST

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

201 species were seen in the club recording area during 1996.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*
Status: Scarce visitor



One north on the River Ouse at Barmby Marsh on 10th February.
Singles south at Bubwith Ings on 24th, 26th and 31st December.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Status: Resident breeder

Lower Derwent NNR maxima early in the year were 49 on 6th January; 17 on 26th February and 21 on 9th March. High water levels in February forced birds from their usual river haunts into dykes and the Pocklington Canal.

In April, 17 on 1st increased to 21 on 6th and 11 arrived high from the south at Wheldrake on 23rd. A total of 22 pairs bred during the summer, producing at least ten broods totalling 23 young with first brood noted 27th May.

Most birds had left Wheldrake by the end of July although an adult and two young lingered. Small numbers at North Duffield were assumed to be failed or post-breeders from Wheldrake, three juveniles 24th August. Numbers increased from September to give monthly maxima of 24 on 3rd November and 37 on 14th December.

Elsewhere: one was at Rawcliffe Lake on 14th January and birds had returned to Brandsby Pond by 29th February, where three pairs double-brooded, all having left by 1st November. In spring, one - two were seen at Castle Howard, Ampleforth Fishpond, Welburn and Strensall

Common. One was at Castle Howard on 28th September and two were present there on 16th November. Finally, one on the River Ouse at Poppleton on 27th December.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Status: Migrant breeder and passage visitor

In the Lower Derwent NNR the first returning birds were singles at North Duffield on 25th February, Bank Island on 26th and Wheldrake on 29th. Numbers increased slowly to a record eight pairs at Wheldrake by the end of April. The first brood was noted on 22nd June and, in all, 20 young were hatched.

Most males had departed by the third week of July. Fledged young were seen in August but had left by the end of the month.

Elsewhere: up to eight birds were present at Castle Howard early in the year, where spring passage was described as being 'poor', with a maximum of 11 on 9th March. Two pairs were seen at Wiganthorpe on 15th March.

One present at Rawcliffe Lake in January and February was joined by a second in March with the pair breeding and fledging three young; all had left by 23rd July. Records were also received from Red House Reservoir, Forest Farm Reservoir, Warthill, Pondhead, and Bottom Lake, Yearsley where a nest was located on 7th June.

Later in the year a maximum of ten at Castle Howard on 5th October and one was present at Rawcliffe Lake from 29th October to 15th November.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

Status: Scarce winter visitor

One on the River Ouse at Poppleton on 1st February; singles were on the River Derwent at Bubwith on 25th and Thorganby on 29th. Both remained into March with the Bubwith bird moving on as flood levels receded.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Status: Scarce winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent NNR one on floods near Elvington on 14th February with another near Sutton-on-Derwent on 25th.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Status: Summer visitor

The first was at Castle Howard on 15th March.

The first returning birds in the Lower Derwent NNR were a pair at Wheldrake on 4th April. Numbers gradually increased to at least eight pairs by the end of the month. Two birds on 16th had BTO rings - presumably birds ringed at Wheldrake in 1993 or 1994.

A survey during the summer revealed that a record 15 pairs had produced 34 young, the first brood appearing on 14th May.

Birds began to depart in July, the last being two immatures on 24th.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

Status: Scarce visitor

Singles at Wheldrake on 11th and 28th April.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Status: Passage and winter visitor and recently established resident breeder

In the Lower Derwent NNR up to five birds were present early in the year with spring passage noted in March and April, including several records of the continental race *P.c. sinensis*. Up to five pairs were thought to have bred adjacent to the Reserve with birds regularly carrying food north from the Reserve during May and June. Immature birds were noted from July onwards as a high turnover of individuals was evident, with seven different colour-ringed birds seen on different dates. Up to ten birds were then present from September until the year end

Elsewhere one or two were seen at York Water Works and Stillingfleet throughout the year. Up to four were present at Castle Howard and good numbers were present at Red House Reservoir early in the year, peaking at 30 on 14th March, including one showing characteristics of the race *P. c. sinensis*. Singles were also recorded at Brandsby Pond and over Riccall.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

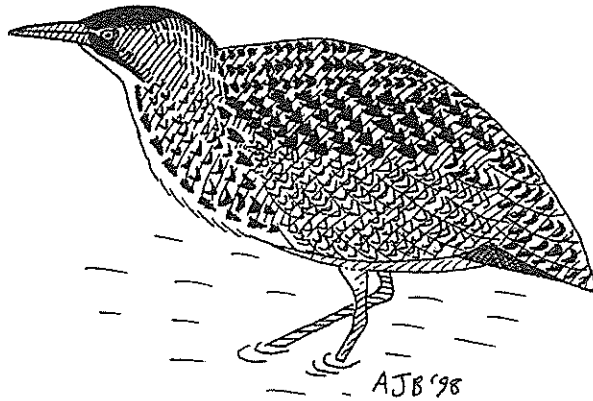
Status: Vagrant

Two adults at Wheldrake on 24th May and a single on 31st October constituted the third and fourth records for the Reserve.

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

Status: Scarce winter and spring resident

In the lower Derwent NNR one was seen clearly at Wheldrake on several dates in January with a second bird at Melbourne (by the canal) on 20th and 28th. During February five were seen during the first week, including a group of three by the Swantail Hide on 5th. Singles were



recorded thereafter until April with one bird 'booming' on 19th March for the fourth consecutive year.

After that none was seen until September when singles were in the reedbed by the Swantail Hide on 20th and 24th - prior to the start of phase 2 of the reedbed enlargement scheme. One to three during October and November.

Elsewhere: One was in a garden at Acaster Malbis at the end of the winter when snow was on the ground.

NIGHT HERON *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Status: Rare visitor

An adult briefly at Wheldrake on 9th September.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Status: Resident breeder

Lower Derwent NNR monthly maxima early in the year were 13 on 25th February and 20 on 10th March. From April, 22 pairs were present in a heronry near Wheldrake with good numbers feeding on the Reserve. Six pairs were also found along the Canal.

During June numbers of feeding birds increased with fledged young noted from 2nd. Thereafter, monthly maxima of 51 at Wheldrake on 15th July, 41 from the whole Reserve on 15th August, 31 on 15th September, 39 on 15th October and 17 on 1st December.

Elsewhere: a nest with large young was found in Bishop Wood on 2nd June. Two pairs attempted to breed at Castle Howard: one nest failed during incubation the other held chicks on 12th May but it is not known if any fledged. Birds were seen at Sheriff Hutton, Newburgh and Huby but no colonies located during the BTO Survey.

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

Status: Rare visitor

One took off from Melbourne Ings on 15th June, then circled over Hagg Bridge and drifted off high to the south.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Status: Rare visitor

A single flew south down the Derwent Valley on 25th June. Five were seen briefly at Wheldrake on 7th July and one on 3rd August.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Status: Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Lower Derwent NNR monthly maxima early in the year were 87 on 6th and 7th January and 61 on 18th February. Numbers increased with spring passage to 94 on 31st March. Up to 24 pairs held territory early in April with at least 13 pairs incubating by the end of the month and non-breeding flocks increased at Melbourne and Wheldrake but dispersed quickly during July.

The first broods of young were noted by 20th May and numerous broods were seen throughout the reserve in July. Many birds were colour-ringed during August and the first flying cygnets were seen on 1st October.

On 26th December 102 were present on the Reserve.

Elsewhere: four (three immatures) were on the River Ouse at Poppleton on 1st January, seven at Newburgh Priory on 14th and seven at Pond Head on 3rd February. A pair present at Rawcliffe Lake all year, being joined by a second male from 8th to 26th April and the six immatures from last year remained until 26th. Eight cygnets were seen on 5th June, of which seven survived to the year end.

Breeding was also confirmed at Cross Lanes near Easingwold and pairs were noted at Newburgh, Bottom Lake, Yearsley, Pond Head, Brandsby and Stearsby. Two at Castle Howard on 28th September.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Status: Winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent NNR, 30 by the end of January had increased to 61 (11 immatures) by 19th February. Dispersed groups were present throughout the Reserve and a colour-ringed bird was at East Cottingham on 8th February. Sixteen present in early March and 29 arrived on 20th. The last bird of spring was one at North Duffield from 1st to 7th April.

First returning birds were 16 south at Wheldrake on 31st October. Up to ten present during November. In December, 35 arrived on 24th (including a neck-collared bird) increasing to 118 on 27th when a second colour-ringed bird arrived and 70 remained to 31st.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Status: Winter visitor

Monthly maxima in the Lower Derwent NNR early in the year were 42 on 20th January and 27 on 25th February. There was a high turnover of birds during March when the maximum count was 75 on 28th.

Numbers declined in April, leaving an injured ringed bird (CAA) which remained throughout the summer and towards the year end. This bird was flying strongly by August and was joined by another in October.

The first returning birds of the winter were seven at Wheldrake on 3rd October. Up to 16 birds were seen during November, which included three colour-ringed individuals at North Duffield. Numbers increased to 96 on 26th December and another colour-ringed bird was present most of the month.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

Status: Winter visitor and late winter passage migrant.

Lower Derwent NNR records in January included an adult at Storwood on 6th and up to seven at Wheldrake. Numbers at the latter site increased during February to 36 on 12th and peaked in March with 65 on 4th, all of the tundra race *A.f. rossicus*, (a new Reserve and Yorkshire record) and 19 of the taiga race *A. f. fabalis*, on 24th declining to four on 26th.

Two on 15th November and 18 on 18th December.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant

Up to seven were present in the Lower Derwent NNR throughout January increasing to monthly maxima of 72 on 28th February and 590 on 27th March. Numbers declined quickly during April and May, leaving a single bird which summered.

The first returning birds were 38 south at Wheldrake on 24th September. Several skeins south throughout October while up to four birds remained on the Reserve. Fourteen were present during November with 91 south on 29th. Up to six were noted during December with 56 south on 5th including a Danish neck-collared bird.

Elsewhere, up to three at Castle Howard between February and May. One at Newburgh Priory on 30th March had an injured leg.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Status: Winter visitor

Lower Derwent NNR records early in the year included 21 at Wheldrake on 4th January with four at Storwood on 6th and 204 on 7th with numbers remaining high to the end of the month. Unlike the 1992 influx only 25-30 immatures were noted.

A single of the Greenland race (*A. a. flavirostris*) at Wheldrake on 29th January. Numbers increased during February to a maximum of 407 on 19th with 830 on 26th March (a new Reserve and Yorkshire record). Numbers then dropped dramatically leaving a single 'Greenland' race bird at North Duffield from 1st to 14th April.

The first returning birds were four adults on 15th November and up to 37 were present during December.

Elsewhere: 19 of the nominate race were at Castle Howard on 13th February, where a first-winter on three dates in March.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Status: Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Lower Derwent NNR counts in January increased from 564 on 6th to 1,304 on 20th - a new Reserve and Yorkshire record. This influx included a colour-ringed bird from Loch Eye, Inverness and the large movement noted at this time may well have involved 'wild' birds. Numbers then decreased with monthly maxima of 1,100 on 19th February and 511 on 9th March.

Up to 56 pairs were breeding with a good success rate noted. The first clutch on 25th March and the first brood on 20th April.

As usual, numbers increased from July onwards with 1,200 by November. A Greylag x White-fronted Goose hybrid returned in October, for its fourth winter, accompanied by three further hybrid offspring.

Elsewhere, twelve were seen on the River Foss in York on 19th January, where young were noted on 28th May. At Red House Reservoir 23 on 14th February and numbers in the Castle Howard area increased from 280 on 1st March to 305 on 9th. A pair was seen at Bridge End Farm near Buttercrambe on 19th April and one was at Pond Head on 8th May.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

Status: Winter visitor.

A blue-phase bird was present on the Lower Derwent NNR from 5th February to month end. Two blue-phase birds from 4th October to the end of the year.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor.

In the Lower Derwent NNR monthly maxima early in the year were 671 on 6th January, 970 on 19th February and 391 on 9th March. By the end of March 22 pairs had been located with the first completed clutch found on 24th. The first brood was noted on 18th April with a newly-hatched brood on 23rd June being the last of 46 breeding pairs.

Numbers built up in July to 380 on 28th and monthly maxima for the rest of the year were 317 on 3rd August, 113 on 15th September, 310 on 28th October, 721 on 15th November and 841 on 15th December.

Elsewhere: counts early in the year included 100+ at Red House Reservoir on 4th January; 40 in the Castle Howard area on 9th and 24 on the River Foss in York on 19th February.

A pair was noted on the nest at Sutton-on-Forest Common on 25th April where seven young were seen on 14th May and 2nd July. Breeding was also confirmed near Riccall. A pair with three young were at Castle Howard on 6th June where up to 45 remained into June with eight adults and five young on 2nd July. At Red House Reservoir 80+ were present in November and December.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Status: Winter visitor and feral wanderer.

In the Lower Derwent NNR, one throughout January. A single on 7th February and seven on 19th remained until month end. Two remained throughout March with ten north over Wheldrake on 25th.

A single on 21st October with two from 26th remaining into December with four present on 14th.

Records from elsewhere included four at Castle Howard on 9th January and one at Castle Mills Bridge, York. Singles at Castle Howard in May with 20 on 2nd July and a fresh corpse on 28th September.

On the River Ouse at Lendal Bridge, York one in June, an adult with young on the river near York on 7th and one on the 9th.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Status: Scarce winter visitor and spring passage migrant

Two of the dark-bellied race *B.b. bernicla* were at Bank Island from 5th to 10th March and one was at North Duffield on 9th April.

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

Status: Rare visitor

Three birds were present in the Lower Derwent NNR from 26th to 27th August with two remaining on 28th. Probably the same three were then seen briefly at Wheldrake on 11th September.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Status: Winter visitor, migrant breeder and scarce autumn passage migrant.

Lower Derwent NNR early monthly maxima were 47 on 21st January and 57 on 29th February with 62 by end of March. A total of 67 pairs were thought to have bred. A surprising sighting was of seven pairs with 41 young at Wheldrake in June - young are usually taken down the Derwent and creched in the Humber. A monthly maximum of 51 was recorded on 15th July with one to seven noted during the rest of the year.

Elsewhere: one was at York University on 7th January; two were at Newburgh Priory on 3rd February with four from 10th to 16th March, two remaining until 30th.

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

Status: Very rare migrant

One was at Wheldrake on 25th July.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Status: Winter Visitor, spring passage migrant and resident breeder.

Lower Derwent NNR monthly maxima early in the year were 12,000 on 21st January, 13,000 on 24th February and 13,060 on 9th March. Numbers decreased steadily with 2,700 on 20th April. In April 23 pairs were apparently present and possibly breeding. During May broods of five were at Bank Island, six at Wheldrake and four at North Duffield. Several further pairs were thought to be incubating. Several lone eclipse drakes were seen at Wheldrake during June but few females were seen so were presumably incubating or with small young nearby.

Small numbers were present throughout July and August, increasing in September to 350 by month end. Thereafter monthly maxima of 1,300 on 13th October, 3,500 by the end of November and 6,700 on 26th December.

At other sites, 16 at Red House Reservoir on 1st January increasing to 24 by 4th, decreasing to 16 on 22nd February. Three were at Brandsby Pond on 16th January. In February ten were at Castle Howard on 3rd, four at Rawcliffe Lake from 4th-9th with three at Newburgh Priory on 3rd and 10th.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Status: Winter visitor and migrant breeder.

The Lower Derwent NNR early monthly maxima were 77 on 6th January, 66 on 29th February, 167 on 30th March and 219 on 23rd April (a Reserve record). First broods appeared from 21st May and 91 pairs were located. Numbers remained high during June with a maximum of 97 on 21st and at least 20 broods were noted from mid-month.

Record July counts followed a successful breeding season, with a maximum of 147 on 15th; 27 broods were seen totalling 121 young. Numbers decreased during August and September, leaving 24 by the end of the month. A small passage was evident in October as numbers picked up slightly. A maximum of 39 on 21st November before birds became scarce, as usual, during December, with 19 on 1st being the only notable count.

Away from the Lower Derwent all records were from Castle Howard where a male was present on 4th March, a pair in April, May and September with three birds on 5th October.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Status: Winter Visitor and resident breeder.

Maximum monthly counts in the Lower Derwent NNR in January and February were 2,950 and 3,230 respectively, 5650 by the end of March declined during April to 300 month end.

This species is very difficult to survey during the breeding season but at least 50 pairs were thought to be present from early May. Birds remained secretive during early June but large numbers were noted from mid-month including 61 on the Pool at Wheldrake on 23rd - the first brood, of nine, was seen there on 14th. Birds became increasingly visible as July progressed with 89 on 19th. A monthly maximum of 179 on 3rd August increasing to 450+ by the end of September and 2,950 on 24th December.

Elsewhere: nine at Stearsby Pond on 22nd January, 16 at Castle Howard on 10th February with a single at Rawcliffe Lake on 24th. Two at Rawcliffe Lake on 4th September and 19 at Castle Howard on 21st with one at Rawcliffe Lake from 29th October to 15th November.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Status: Winter visitor and resident breeder.

In the Lower Derwent NNR 4,120 on 6th January declined to 2,150 by month end; 2,100 on 24th February, 1,977 on 9th March and 1,750 on 1st April.

The first completed clutch (of seven) was found on 19th March and during April an estimated 600 pairs were present on the Reserve. The first brood was found on 17th April with several more by the end of the month. Many broods failed in early May due to bad weather but numerous broods were noted by the end of the month and through June and July. Up to 1,000

were seen regularly at Wheldrake during August with a similar number feeding at Aughton in the evenings. 1,600 on 15th September, 2,100 on 3rd October, 2,900 on 23rd November and 3,200 on 26th December.

Away from the Derwent birds were present all year at Rawcliffe Lake with up to 40 recorded with breeding noted. About 20 were seen on a pond near Malton Road on 6th January, with 300 at Castle Howard on 9th. The first young at Castle Howard were seen on 13th April with 11 broods totalling 67 young. Breeding was noted at Osbaldwick, Stillington and Hessacre Pond. In July, 100 were at Castle Howard on 2nd with 20 at Woodland Grove, York on 6th August and about 40 on the River Foss, York on 6th October.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Status: Winter visitor and scarce migrant breeder.

All records came from the Lower Derwent NNR where there were monthly maxima of 104 on 21st January, 310 on 28th February, 361 on 30th March and 316 on 1st April declining to 91 on 21st. At the end of April 21 pairs were located and six females were thought to be incubating by 30th; a clutch of two was noted on 19th. At Bank Island a clutch of nine was found in early May, however a brood of five at Wheldrake on 18th were the only young seen. One or two eclipse adults at Wheldrake throughout June and a crèche of two females and 17 young on 23rd.

A female at Wheldrake on 28th September with small numbers during the rest of the year, culminating in 31 on 21st December.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Status: Migrant breeder

All records were from the Lower Derwent NNR.

The first returning birds, a pair at North Duffield on 11th March, were followed by further pairs and a female at Wheldrake and a pair at Barmby Marsh. By April birds became typically secretive, however at least nine pairs were thought to be on the Reserve during June and broods of nine were on Wheldrake pool on 18th and eight near Swantail Hide on 16th. At least four pairs raised young, with the last newly-hatched young seen on 17th July and at least seven fledged juveniles present during the last week of that month. Eleven birds were at North Duffield on 31st August, with single figures noted thereafter until the last two at Wheldrake on 1st-5th October.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

Early in the year Lower Derwent NNR monthly maxima were of 43 on 6th January, 104 on 28th February and a record 417 on 18th March with 238 still present on 6th April and an estimated 120 pairs found on the Reserve during that month. However, numbers declined during May,

possibly due to breeding failures. A maximum of 131 were present on 15th July with numerous broods noted until mid-month, including a crèche of 41 young on 17th. Monthly maxima for the rest of the year were 81 on 1st August, 27 on 2nd September, 32 on 17th October, 49 on 21st November and 52 on 24th December.

The only record away from the Derwent was of up to seven at Castle Howard throughout January and February.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Status: Rare visitor

A female in company with a pair of Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) took flight from Newton on 26th November and flew south down the Derwent.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Status: Winter visitor and migrant breeder.

A Lower Derwent NNR monthly maximum of 710 on 21st January increased to 2,712 by 29th February decreasing to 1,000+ on 1st March and 69 on 6th April. Up to 12 pairs were present throughout the summer with females apparently sitting on eggs by the end of May. Five broods totalling 33 young were at Wheldrake from 22nd June and a monthly maximum of 39 on 15th July included 27 fledged immatures.

Small numbers were then present during the rest of the year until 115 arrived on 23rd December, increasing to 750 on 26th but declining to 15 on 31st.

Elsewhere: most records received were from the first three months of the year with 25 at Brandsby Pond on 25th January, 82 at Castle Howard on 10th February, 30+ at Red House Reservoir on 14th, 22 at Rawcliffe Lake on 15th and nine at University on 21st.

Unprecedented numbers were reported from Newburgh Priory in March, peaking at 232 on 16th with nine at Wiganthorpe on 15th. Also recorded from Pocklington Canal, the River Ouse at Bishopthorpe and the River Foss at Monk Bridge. Eight at Rawcliffe Lake from 31st October to the year end.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Status: Winter visitor and migrant breeder.

Lower Derwent NNR monthly maxima early in the year were 142 on 6th January, 416 on 29th February, 281 on 9th March and 191 on 6th April. Up to 105 pairs were located during the summer with the first broods noted at Wheldrake on 23rd June and during July 29 broods were seen totalling 142 young.

A monthly maximum of 210 on 15th July was followed by 47 on 19th August, 27 on 15th September, 49 on 10th October and 21 on 2nd November. With flooding numbers then quickly increased to 105 on 24th December.

Elsewhere: six were on the River Foss at Monk Bridge through the winter. Fortytwo at University on 7th January, numbers peaked at Castle Howard with 47 on 3rd February, nine at Red House Reservoir on 7th, 28 at Rawcliffe Lake on 15th, 25 at Brandsby Pond on 28th and ten at Wiganthorpe on 15th March.

In Spring, eight at Brandsby Pond on 8th April, 13 at Pond Head on 9th and six at Bottom Lake, Yearsley on 25th. Six at Newburgh on 8th May when five at Pond Head with a pair at Forest Farm Reservoir on 3rd June. Late in the year, eight were at Rawcliffe Lake from 31st October to the year end and three at Red House Reservoir on 6th December.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers.

A female returned to winter in the Lower Derwent NNR on 20th January and a drake was at Wheldrake on 19th February with a pair being seen on 3rd March. A female at Wheldrake on 5th and 20th April.

Two drakes at North Duffield on 1st October, four females and a drake on 5th with a female until 10th. A female at North Duffield on 27th November.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

In the Lower Derwent NNR a monthly maximum of 29 on 6th January, 39 on 24th February included a drake in the unusual location of the Canal Head of Pocklington Canal. Numbers peaked in March with 53 on 18th the maximum and the last birds of spring three on 21st April. The first returning birds were two at Hagg Bridge on the Pocklington Canal on 10th November. A maximum of 39 was recorded on the Reserve on 26th December.

Away from the Derwent a female was on the River Ouse, York on 2nd and 4th January and one at Red House Reservoir on 4th with two on 17th. Nine at Castle Howard on 6th January increased to ten on 9th and this number remained through most of February, declining to seven by 1st March. Two females were at Rawcliffe Lake on 4th April and a male on the River Ouse at Poppleton on 7th and 12th May. Four at Castle Howard on 18th November and three at Wheldrake on 23rd.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*

Status: Almost annual winter visitor.

'Redheads' were at Thorganby in the Lower Derwent NNR on 6th January, Wheldrake on 18th

March and again on 23rd-24th December. One at Castle Howard on several dates between 3rd February and 16th March.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Status: Passage/winter visitor.

A drake and two 'redheads' at Wheldrake on 19th January, a pair on 23rd March with a drake at Bank Island on 24th March.

A female at Rawcliffe Lake between 24th - 27th January with the same or another on 1st March.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Lower Derwent NNR monthly maxima early in the year were 180+ on 25th and 28th January, a record 272 on 10th February and 213 on 20th March. During April numbers remained high at the roost and following record winter roost counts a pair was apparently breeding adjacent to the Reserve.

The first returning bird was a 'redhead' at Wheldrake on 31st August with another on 16th and 27th September. In November birds appeared quickly after flooding with a maximum of 39 on 30th increasing to 101 on 24th December.

Away from the Lower Derwent NNR the highest numbers were recorded early in the year, with maxima of 250 at Castle Howard on 9th January and 50+ at Red House Reservoir on 20th. The large numbers at Castle Howard occurred despite the use of thunder-flashes by the Bailiff to dissuade this species. Ten were at Brandsby Pond on 16th January and at Stearsby Pond on 28th. Up to 32 at Poppleton between 7th February and 7th March. A male at Forest Farm Reservoir on 22nd March and three at Naburn Marina on 24th. Nine along the River Ouse at Linton-on-Ouse on 25th May.

Late in the year, six were at Castle Howard on 17th November and Wheldrake on 23rd.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Status: Migrant breeder.

A pair in the Lower Derwent NNR on 8th April, increasing to five pairs and three drakes by the end of the month with nine pairs during May and eleven pairs in July but only one immature bird was seen, suggesting another breeding failure. Birds dispersed towards the end of July with the last being a drake on 5th September.

Elsewhere: a male at Rawcliffe Lake from 4th to 15th April, a male was at Castle Howard on 2nd May with two on 5th, a pair on 10th and a juvenile on 6th June. A male Rawcliffe Lake between 7th - 19th July and one at Castle Howard on 17th August. A female with two full

grown young at Castle Howard on 28th September suggested breeding and a female present on 5th October.

HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*

Status: Rare passage migrant.

A single north at Hagg Bridge on Pocklington Canal on 9th June and one south at North Duffield Carrs on 15th September.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Status: Vagrant.

One of the birds from 1995 in the Wheldrake-Esrick area on 7th January with both remaining until the month end. A single at Crook Moor, Thorganby on 19th September and nearby on 23rd - an unidentified large raptor at Skipwith Common on 18th may refer to this bird. A single at Thornton Ellers on 7th October.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Status: Passage migrant and rare breeder.

A single cream-crown at Wheldrake Ings on 4th January was the first winter record for the Lower Derwent Valley and probably relates to one of three birds wintering on the Humber.

The first of the spring was an adult male at Wheldrake on 3rd April joined by two females on 4th. All three frequented the site until 7th, with regular sightings thereafter until month end. Single females were present on 1st, 3rd, 5th, 8th, 21st and 27th May. Once again may be breeding adjacent to reserve. A single cream-crown at Wheldrake on 19th July and from 27th to month end. A female and juvenile were present daily from 1st to 9th August.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A single at Bank Island on 1st January, possibly the same on 7th and one at Wheldrake Ings on 20th. Males were present at Skipwith Common on 13th, North Duffield Carrs on 17th and Barmby Marsh on 21st. A ring-tail north at Wheldrake on 18th March. A ring-tail at Wheldrake on 5th October and another south on 30th.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

Status: Rare passage migrant.

A female south at Wheldrake on 6th July.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Status: Rare breeding resident.

A male at North Duffield on 7th January, a female at Wheldrake on 10th and 24th, with display noted at another site on 11th and 28th. Single at Wheldrake on 23rd February with a female on 24th. Singles at Wheldrake on 1st March, North Duffield on 2nd, Wheldrake on 14th and 18th, two at Bank Island on 13th and one at Melbourne on 21st. A pair at Wheldrake on 9th April with a male there on 21st. Birds were also seen at Aughton, East Cottingwith, Melbourne and North Duffield Carrs. In May recorded at Aughton (where prey included a Redshank), North Duffield and Wheldrake.

One at Seavy Carr on 27th August and two immatures at Thornton on 31st August and 1st September with singles at Wheldrake on 11th and 22nd and Melbourne on 23rd. An adult male at North Duffield Carrs on 12th October having killed a male Mallard, with an immature female at Wheldrake on 21st and male on 30th. A single immature over Wheldrake Woods on 16th. Adult male at Wheldrake on 12th November and a female at Thornton on 13th; two immatures at Wheldrake on 25th, a male on 28th and a single at Bank Island on 30th (at least four birds involved). An adult male and immature at Wheldrake on 2nd December, a male at North Duffield on 3rd, a female at Wheldrake on 4th and 7th, a male on 16th and another at Newton on 22nd (possibly five bird involved).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Status: Breeding resident and passage migrant.

Although there are no breeding records away from the Lower Derwent the number of sightings from throughout the area would indicate a good breeding population. Most reports were of single birds throughout the year, often in local gardens especially at Poppleton, and during the breeding season at Huby. Two were at Poppleton on 15th September.

In the Lower Derwent Valley: Regular throughout January from all sites, with display noted by month end from one site. This species appears to be more numerous than in previous years with 12 pairs located in April and by May many pairs were feeding young. Regular throughout September with nine on 28th, 21 there on 26th December and seven on 31st.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Status: Passage migrant and rare breeding resident.

Two near Bielby on 6th April. A single north at Wheldrake on 5th May and one at Storwood on 21st. A single west at Wheldrake on 5th June.

A single west at Wheldrake on 13th September, two there on 15th and one at Melbourne on 28th. A single east at Wheldrake on 10th October, two on 12th and singles south at Bubwith on 1st November and west at North Duffield Carrs on 19th December.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Status: Regular passage migrant.

A single flew north over Wheldrake on 24th March and two on 29th. An excellent spring passage with singles north at Wheldrake on 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 23rd April, and on 1st, 4th and 6th May but as usual none lingered. A total spring passage of 10 birds since March.

For the first time for many years no Autumn sightings.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Status: Resident breeder.

A pair raised four young at York Water Works and breeding was also recorded at Tilmire, Heslington and Fulford. Four seen above Low Petergate, York, on 27th June would indicate that the birds on York Minster were successful again. Frequent at Easingwold, Huby, Sutton-on-the-Forest, Stillington and Castle Howard. Singles at Rawcliffe Lake on 1st January, Stockton Lane on 16th April, Scrayingham on 17th June and Rawcliffe Lake on 14th November.

In the Lower Derwent Valley: 27 on 7th January with 21 on 20th. Nine on 17th February with 13 on 24th. Good numbers throughout March with 23 on 10th and three pairs at Wheldrake at month end. Twenty two pairs were located in April. The first brood (six) fledged at Thorganby on 30th June. Sixty one were on the reserve on 26th July.

Fifty seven were counted in the valley on 28th September and 41 on 19th November. A record count of 69 on 26th December, 21 on 30th and a few on 31st would suggest some passage birds were involved.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Only two records away from the Lower Derwent: Singles at Stamford Bridge on 6th March and Clifton Moor on 11th October.

In the Lower Derwent Valley: Seen regularly in January with up to eight birds including two at Wheldrake on 26th. A male at Wheldrake on 1st February, Thornton on 14th and a single at Newton Mask on 23rd. A female at Wheldrake on 2nd March and a male nearby on 4th. A male at East Cottingwith on 8th and Thornton on 10th. A single at Thorganby on 12th, a male at East Cottingwith on 13th with singles at North Duffield and Wheldrake on 22nd and 26th and one at North Duffield on 30th. (At least four birds involved, possibly five). Singles at North Duffield Carrs on 1st April, Wheldrake on 6th, 11th and 14th, East Cottingwith on 19th and Wheldrake on 23rd and 25th. At least two birds involved. A late passage female at North Duffield Carrs on 21st May.

An early returning bird at Wheldrake on 26th July. An immature at Wheldrake on 3rd and 6th

August with a male at North Duffield Carrs on 31st and 5th September. A male at Wheldrake on 10th September, a female and immature on 29th with another at East Cottingwith the same day. There were two at Wheldrake on 2nd October, a female on 13th, a male on 17th and 19th with an immature on 23rd and 30th. Males at Wheldrake on 1st and 5th November, a female on 9th an immature on 19th and a female on 26th and 29th with a single there on 7th December. A male at Wheldrake on 16th December, a single at Aughton on 26th and a female at Hagg Bridge on 30th rounded off a good year in the valley.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Status: Passage migrant.

An early individual south at Wheldrake on 21st April coincided with other arrivals in the north east. Two at Wheldrake on 5th May one on 9th and 24th. One at Wheldrake on 9th June, two at east Cottingwith on 22nd with another there on 26th.

A male was fighting a female Sparrowhawk at Hessacre Pond, Dunnington on 17th July (TW). A single at Wheldrake on 30th July was being chased by three immature Kestrels, another present there on 31st and also on 1st, 4th and 11th August with one at Thornton Ellers on 27th.

Birds were present early in September often hunting Sand Martins at the roost adjacent to Bank Island: two on 4th, singles 5th - 6th, four on 7th, two on 8th -11th with singles on 14th, 15th and 19th. At least two adults and three immatures involved.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Up to six birds in January in the Lower Derwent with males on 4th, 7th, 10th and 23rd and females on 9th, 11th and 15th. A single at Wheldrake lngs on 1st and 10th February, with three around the site on 24th. A probable immature male at North Duffield Carrs on 18th. Up to three birds remained at Wheldrake throughout March, with four birds present in the whole site on 18th. A single male frequented Wheldrake throughout April with a female on 5th and 11th. The regular small male was at Thorganby on 19th and present from 1st to 7th May.

The regular small male returned to Wheldrake on 1st August and again on 3rd. One at Wheldrake on 16th September. A single at North Duffield on 5th October with a female at Wheldrake on 12th and an immature on 16th. An adult male at Wheldrake on 9th and 13th November, an immature male on 16th, another male on 26th with two on 28th. An immature female at Wheldrake on 2nd and 14th December with an adult female on 21st, an immature male on 23rd and two females on 26th, and another near Wheldrake Woods (at least four birds). A female chasing a pigeon at Appletree village on 27th.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Status: Breeding resident.

The only covey reported was of 22 at Upper Poppleton on 15th February. Pairs were seen during the breeding season at Warthill, Cass Wood, Huby, Newton-on-Ouse, Castle Howard and Scrayingham, with three at Rufforth on 24th April.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Status: Breeding resident.

A pair bred at Heslington, outcome unknown. Other than coveys of ten at Cass Wood, Huby on 30th July and six at Towthorpe Common on 24th October reports were of pairs during the breeding season at North Duffield Carrs, Warthill, Dunnington Common, Poppleton, Whenby and Naburn with three at Poppleton on 27th December.

In the Lower Derwent 41 pairs were located in April. Two pairs at Thornton Ings and Melbourne had broods of five and nine on 20th August, whilst one at Thornton Ellers had paired with a Red-legged Partridge, raising 10 hybrid young.

Survey work in the Thornton area in September revealed 70 birds in several coveys. November proved an excellent month following a successful breeding season. Several large coveys were noted with 87 in the Thornton area, 57 at North Duffield Carrs and 34 at Melbourne Ings. A full count during the month of 352 was a welcome state of affairs, far out numbering Red-legged partridge.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Status: Migrant breeder and passage migrant.

The first of the year were two singing males at Wheldrake on 27th with another flushed at East Cottingwith Ings on 31st. Singles called briefly at Wheldrake on 4th, 5th and 8th June with one at Melbourne on 6th and 12th. Another at Thornton Ellers on 15th - probably nine birds involved since early May. A single at North Duffield Carrs from 17th July and two at Thornton from 22nd. A single singing at Melbourne Ings on 18th August with a brood of five seen at Thornton on 20th. A singing male at Brandsby Heights on several occasions in August. Immature flushed at Wheldrake on 5th and 14th October.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Status: Resident breeder.

No change in status. Widely released on the shooting estates. A chick was taken by a Carrion Crow at Huby on 15th June.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor.

A single at Castle Howard on 10th January and again on 16th and 18th November.

In the Lower Derwent Valley: eight at Wheldrake Ings on 1st January with nine along the Pocklington Canal on 6th - a total of 26 recorded during the month. Two were at the Swantail Hide on 10th February, one at Wheldrake Ings on 17th, three in the car park area and one at Melbourne on 12th. Twenty singing males located in March, 19 were at Wheldrake Ings. Twenty two singing males were located during April with 17 on Wheldrake Ings. A single calling behind the Tower Hide at this site had a call resembling Little Crake.

A female with five chicks on 18th July and another brood of seven on 28th with a further five individuals calling at Wheldrake during the month.

Large numbers of young recorded in August. At least 23 were located at Wheldrake Ings and a further 12 along the Pocklington Canal (at least 31 pairs with 11 broods). In September, up to 12 at Wheldrake Ings with a further two along the Pocklington Canal at Storwood. In October 18 at Wheldrake Ings, often giving excellent views from the Pool Hide, and four along the Pocklington Canal on 19th. 24 recorded in November and 21 in early December.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

Status: Rare passage migrant and rare migrant breeder.

The first returning bird called briefly in the reedbed by the Swantail Hide on 27th April. A single calling from the Swantail hide on 10th May and again on 31st and another individual took up territory in front of the Tower Hide from 27th. Singles singing at Wheldrake on 2nd and 8th June. An immature at Wheldrake on 6th August, with another nearby on 16th while adults were calling on 17th and 23rd. An excellent month confirming breeding for the second consecutive year.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

Status: Passage migrant and rare passage breeder.

A single male singing during the early hours of 21st May, but not thereafter - presumably a passage bird. At Wheldrake calling males on 5th June, with two on 7th and one on 8th & 9th. Unfortunately they all moved on.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Status: Resident breeder.

Only breeding reported from Rawcliffe Lake where two young were fledged and at Layerthorpe. Widespread throughout the area with the only counts of note being 29 at the University on 7th

January and 50 at Castle Howard on 9th.

Lower Derwent Valley: Maxima 317 on 21st January, 122 on 24th February, 516 on 31st March and 1st April, with 511 on 6th: c250 pairs throughout the reserve.

On 15th July there were 121 on the Reserve. A full count on 3rd August revealed 311. An excellent September with a record count of 816 on 15th, comprising mainly immature birds. Over 900 present on 21st and 802 on 15th November with 517 on 11th December.

COOT *Fulica atra*

Status: Migrant and resident breeder and winter visitor.

Reported from most suitable sites in the area. Twelve pairs at Rawcliffe Lake raised only 12 young, possibly due to the increased number of anglers. The only counts of note were: 40 at Rawcliffe Lake early in the year, 40 at Castle Howard on 9th January, 88 on 17th February and 40 on 1st March with 56 on 18th November and 55 on 27th December.

Lower Derwent Valley: 21 on 3rd January increased to 31 by 7th, 89 on 21st and 103 by the month end. On 18th February 115 were present and 116 on 24th, increasing to 289 on 26th and 407 on 29th. There were 719 by 10th March, 727 on 18th and a Reserve record of 1,227 on 30th and 1st April with 1087 on 6th. An estimated 500 pairs present with large numbers of broods appearing in early June.

A record July count of 670 on 15th following an excellent breeding season. A single pair was still incubating five eggs on 15th with numerous unfledged birds still present at month end.

Eighty one on 1st August declined to 59 by month end - well above average for August. In September 46 was the peak count with 21 by end November. Numbers increased in December with a maximum of 517 on 11th.

CRANE *Grus grus*

Status: Rare summer visitor.

A bird circled Wheldrake during the afternoon of 25th May. The first since 1993. A sub-adult located at Newton Mask/Kexby Bridge area from 21st June to month end. The bird had been in the area several days prior to its discovery and may have been the bird seen in late May circling Wheldrake.

A well overdue long staying rarity which was appreciated by numerous visiting birders. The bird remained until 4th July and what was presumably the same bird flew south at Wheldrake on 11th.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Status: Passage migrant and migrant breeder.

In the Lower Derwent NNR the first returning birds were three at Bank Island on 16th February and a single at Ellerton on 17th. Seven on 23rd increased to 21 on 29th.

During March numbers increased quickly to an impressive 37 on 12th April, dispersing onto adjacent breeding sites by month end, 17 pairs being located on 30th. In May there were still up to 17 pairs around the site, with the first young appearing at North Duffield Carrs by the month end. Birds present daily throughout July with a maximum of 39 on 15th and up to five remained to the month end. In August the only records were four on the 1st and three south on the 11th.

A single bird flew south over Wheldrake on 25th October.

Elsewhere: the first birds appeared on 25th February at Poppleton. Two near Moor Monkton on 11th March and two near River Ouse, Poppleton on 18th April. Two at Newburgh Priory on 9th and 24th March, four on 30th, two on 13th April with one at Welburn on 27th. A pair at Whenby on 4th June with two regularly at Castle Howard from 4th March to 29th May and on 2nd July.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Status: Passage migrant and migrant breeder.

Following two pairs on 5th April, seven on Bank Island on 13th, reducing to three by 20th, a total of eight pairs located around the site with four pairs thought to be incubating by the month end. Four pairs remained until mid-May but only two pairs were still incubating toward the month end, at Bank Island and Barmby Marsh.

By July pairs thought to have bred successfully at both Bank Island and North Duffield probably led to the good numbers logged during the month: four on 6th, three on 8th, six on 9-17th, with two from 18-23rd, three on 24th with one at month end. An immature at Wheldrake on 4th August with an adult next day, two until 10th and up to five present from 17-21st.

Elsewhere: several birds seen regularly during the summer at York Water Works. Two juveniles on 3rd and 10th August at Melbourne.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Status: Passage migrant

First returning to Derwent Valley were two on 2nd March, remaining until the month end, with eight on 30th and seven on 31st.

Two were present on 5th April and eight 6th-8th. Pairs were then present at North Duffield, Aughton and Bank Island from 10th-18th, the latter pair remaining to month end and thought to be incubating by 29th. A single bird frequented Bank Island throughout May and was

thought to have a mate on eggs nearby; another was at Ellerton on 21st. Two at Wheldrake on 6th July, four on 9th and singles on 12th, 13th and 17th. Five from 8th to 20th August with 6 on 21st. Two briefly at Wheldrake Ings on 21st September.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

In the Derwent Valley: maximum of 3,500 on 13th January, 2,900 on 25th February, 8,900 on 10th March, 3,900 on 1st April rapidly decreasing to 100 by month end. Up to 30 in the first week of May with singles on 23rd and 24th.

In July a steady trickle of birds passed through the site with nine from 8th-13th the maximum. Fifteen south over Thornton Ellers in ones and twos on 23rd August, with one next day and 250 south at Wheldrake from off the Wolds on 30th.

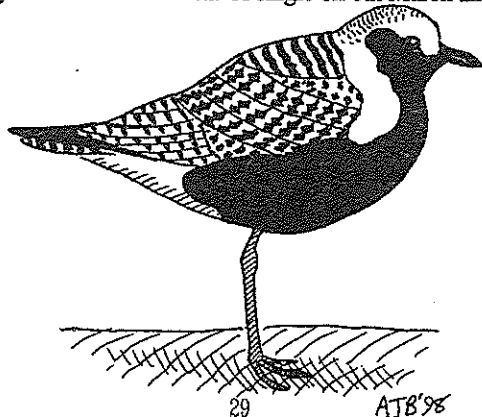
Rather scarce in September until 900 arrived on 14th with 1,100 next day. Three hundred moved south down the valley on 24th, 200 on 28th and 100 on 29th. In October only small numbers frequented the Ings but numbers on surrounding arable areas increased during the month with a maximum of 2,100 on 27th. There were 2,700 feeding on arable fields adjacent to the reserve in November, moving onto the Ings with rising flood levels at the month end. December saw a maximum of 3,000 on 20th.

Counts from elsewhere include ten birds near the river at Red House on 4th January. Fifty birds at Wigginton Road on 28th February and at least 20 near Riccall on 24th March in winter cereal, half in breeding plumage. One hundred birds in the Nunnington area on 23rd November. Some 600+ were going to roost near Poppleton on 12th December and Haxby Moor Road, Strensall held 410 birds on 14th with 40 on 22nd.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor.

A single south at Bank Island on 4th January, presumably the same bird at Wheldrake on 6th with three the next day and another on 20th. A single on 6th March and again on 25th-28th.



One on 14th July was a first record for that month. A single briefly on 2nd October.

A record flock of 16 at Bank Island on 1st December with three at Wheldrake on 2nd. Another at Bubwith on 24th with two from 26th to the year end.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Status: Migrant breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Derwent Valley NNR monthly maximum of 4,500 on 13th January, 7,300 on 24th February; three pairs were displaying on 24th and several more by the month end in fine weather. In March 14,543 on 9th & 10th declined to 2,300 on 30th and 2,350 on 1st April declined to 1,580 on 5th. First completed clutch was found, at Aughton, on 6th with newly hatched chicks (four) at North Duffield on 29th. An estimated 323 pairs were present in May, a new reserve record, with good breeding success. A small post-breeding flock of 19 was at North Duffield on 31st when at least two birds were still incubating clutches; three pairs at Wheldrake still had unfledged young on 9th July.

Wheldrake held 1,250 on 14th July, with several smaller flocks throughout the Valley; a full count of 2,050 on 15th with up to 1,000 frequenting Wheldrake until the month end. August produced a maximum of 2,400 on 1st. Thereafter birds were only recorded in very low numbers (up to 20) until 60 roosted at Wheldrake on 30th and 600 flew south there the same evening. During September small numbers moved south with 1,450 on 15th and 1,800 on 24th. A small movement on 9th October involved 1,000+ birds south in small parties during the day. Numbers on adjacent arable land increased to 3,200 on 27th. In November up to 3,850 were present around the site at the month end, The December monthly maximum was of around 4,100 on 20th but a mere 30 remained in the hard freeze at the month end.

Other counts of note were 100 at Wigginton Road on 27th February and 50+ at Poppleton on 7th March. Twelve pairs bred on Heslington Tilmire. A post-breeding flock of 2,000+ foraged near Tollerton on 28th August and a small flock made a brief visit to a frosty sports field at Osbaldwick on 20th November. There were 200 at Strensall on 14th December with 60 on 22nd.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A single at Wheldrake on 6th and 7th January with two on 20th to the month end. A single on 2nd-8th March, three on 9th-10th and one remaining until 16th. A single at Aughton on 2nd-5th April.

A summer-plumaged bird at Wheldrake on 20th and 27th July (the first July record), and a single from 26th-29th December.

Elsewhere: One at Sand Hutton on 18th November.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Two at Wheldrake Ings on 6th April and four on 22nd September.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Status: Autumn passage migrant and rare winter visitor.

An early immature at Wheldrake on 26th-27th July. An adult at Wheldrake on 4th August with an immature on 14th.

Nineteen arrived on 21st September at scattered sites with 11 at Melbourne the largest flock; there were 23 on 22nd and 13 remained at Melbourne on 23rd with seven on 27th and nine on 29th. There was, however, some turnover in these flocks, suggesting larger numbers moved through the site. A single at Wheldrake on 31st December.

Elsewhere: three at Castle Howard on 21st September with four juveniles on 28th.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris Temminckii*

Status: Rare spring passage migrant

A single at Bank Island on 7th May.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Status: Infrequent passage visitor.

A single immature at Wheldrake Ings on 9th August was the first for several years.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Ten on the Reserve on 3rd January, during the freeze, with 344 on 7th increasing to 882 by 20th and declining to 20 in the cold weather at the month end. In February, 550 on 17th and 1,000+ on 24th increased to 1970 on 23rd March.

Numbers declined to 570 on 30th, 521 on 5th April with 380+ on 18th and 100+ remaining until 26th with 30 at Wheldrake on 28th. Up to ten frequented Aughton during May until the last on 13th.

During July a much better showing than in recent years with the first two on the 11th, eight on 13th, ten from 14th-21st and 17 on 27th. Three on 1st-5th August, four on 6th-12th, five from 13th with a maximum of 12 on 17th-18th; ten on 19th, nine on 20th and single until 24th. Five south on 1st September, one on 3rd, four on 7th, singles on 8th-9th, two on 10th and seven on 19th, four arrived on 21st with four from 22nd-26th and two until month end. October proved a poor month with the only record a single at Wheldrake on 21st. A single on 9th and 13th

November with seven arriving with flooding on 23rd, 13 on 25th and 15 on 29th. Forty on 11th December, 100 on 21st, 140 on 22nd, 300 on 24th and 500 on 27th.

Elsewhere: single birds appeared at Rawcliffe Lake on 25th March and 15th November. Three birds at Melbourne on 7th September and two at Castle Howard on 21st.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Status: Rare breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor.

In the Lower Derwent NNR monthly maximum at 121 on 7th January, 41 on 24th February and 42 on 31st March. In April numbers were difficult to ascertain with at least 26 Reeves and 12 Ruffs present throughout the site. Lekking was noted towards the month end. One or two Reeves were present early in May but apparently absent thereafter, although breeding birds can be very elusive.

Autumn passage began with three on 18th July increasing to four on 22nd, six on 23rd and between five to seven to the month end.

Birds present throughout August with counts of seven on 1st, 17 on 2nd, 19 on 3rd, nine on 4th, six on 5th, 12 on 9th, seven on 10th, ten on 11th, three on 12th and singles thereafter with three on 19th, two from 20th-29th and four to month end. Four at Wheldrake on 1st September two on 3rd, a single on 5th with one at North Duffield Carrs on 24th, 20 south on 29th with two on 30th. October produced four at North Duffield Carrs on 1st, one at Wheldrake on 3rd and a single south on 12th. A single at Wheldrake on 11th November, 17 on 22nd with 24 on 25th and 29 on 28th.

In December 17 on 15th increased to 49 on 20th and 67 on 21st but few remained at the month end with freezing conditions.

Elsewhere: four at Melbourne on 31st August and then single birds on 7th and 14th September.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A single was flushed from a ditch on Seavy Carr on 1st January. Two were at North Duffield Carrs on 6th February. Three at Seavy Carr on 18th March, one at Wheldrake on 23rd and at Bank Island on 5th April.

The first returning bird was at Wheldrake on 17th September with another on 21st. Five on 14th October with four on 15th and at least three to month end. Four early in November at Wheldrake with a record 14 on 15th and a single at North Duffield Carrs on 26th. Singles at Aughton and North Duffield Carrs on 7th December, three at Wheldrake Ings on 17th and singles at Newton Mask on 22nd, East Cottingwith on 30th and North Duffield on 31st.

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Status: Resident/migrant breeder/passage visitor.

At Wheldrake, 123 on 7th January with 150 on 20th and 108 on 24th February, with 60 at Seavy Carr on 28th and 23 at North Duffield on 29th. On Bank Island, 472 on 9th March with 43 on 17th including four drumming males, with three drumming at Thornton on 21st. An astounding 1,531 on 30th/31st increased to 1,780 on 6th April - a new Reserve record. Good numbers then remained throughout the month with at least 380 drumming Snipe recorded on 21st. The first young were seen on 19th May, a brood of four.

At Wheldrake 300 were counted on 8th July whilst survey work there on 14th revealed a true population of 500 and a full valley count of 537. Birds showed well in front of Swantail Hide on newly exposed mud towards the month end with up to 40 on 27th.

Good numbers present throughout August with counts from Wheldrake of 120 on 2nd, 150 on 10th and 200 on 31st. Up to 15 were present at Melbourne and North Duffield on several dates, with scattered birds elsewhere. There were 300 at Wheldrake on 1st September with 100 regularly thereafter to the month end. An unusual movement at Wheldrake on 29th involved c400 birds south in small parties, 150 on 1st October with smaller numbers at scattered sites thereafter. In November numbers were generally low with an isolated influx of 200 at Wheldrake on 14th and 350 on 22nd.

Freezing conditions in December forced many birds off the site and into small ditches adjacent to the Reserve. A count of 110 along the river on 24th was the monthly maximum.

Elsewhere: one at Strensall on 1st January and Rawcliffe Lake on 31st. A pair was displaying at Newton-on-Derwent on 21st April and a drumming bird was at Strensall Common on 6th June. Three pairs bred at Heslington Tilmire. A single prospecting bird was seen at Spellor Farm, Stearsby on an area that had been drained and had previously held six pairs.

A single was at Rawcliffe Lake on 16th September, seven at Castle Howard on 28th with five on 5th October with one at Hessacre Pond, Dunnington on 21st and three at Castle Howard on 18th.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Status: Winter visitor and occasional rare breeding resident.

Thornton Ellers held nine on 6th January with four on 14th and five on 20th. A single at Wheldrake Ings on 7th. Five at Thornton Ellers on 1st February with a single roding on 23rd, five 1st-10th March with one at Wheldrake on 10th.

A pair on 1st and 20th April remaining until month end. Three at Wheldrake on 18th and three at East Cottingwith on 20th were presumably migrants.

Two at Thornton Ellers on 31st August, three on 13th October, two throughout November with two at Ellerton on 12th, one at East Cottingwith on 15th and two at Newton on 17th. Three at Thornton Ellers early in December with a single from 27th to month end and two in the car park at Wheldrake on 15th.

Elsewhere: birds were seen in the winter at Wheldrake Wood, Crockey Hill and Tilmire. Two were flushed at Pond Head on 3rd February, one was at Yearsley Moor Wood on 1st March with four roding on 7th June, three on 15th and four on 29th, a single over Linton in June and one at Fulford Golf Course on 28th. Again over Linton on 16th November and at Castle Howard on 27th December.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Status: Passage migrant and rare breeder.

Records from the Lower Derwent NNR included two at Wheldrake on 9th, 12th and 14th March and two at Aughton on 30th. A single pair in April and the female was thought to be incubating a clutch by 5th. A good spring passage with four on 14th and six on 15th. Nineteen were at North Duffield from 16th-18th, 22 on 19th, 59 on 20th, 23 on 21st, 15 on 22nd, eight on 23rd, 16 on 24th, 47 on 25th, six on 26th, 13 on 27th, two on 28th and five on 29th. All birds from 25th were of the Islandic breeding population (*L.l. islandica*). In May, 118 on 2nd, five on 3rd, 14 on 5th, two on 7th, three on 9th, 11 on 20th and the last, a single, on 21st.

Three at Wheldrake on 9th July, a single on 16th and five on 27th. This represented a record July showing for the site. Two on 3rd August, on 14th, 16th and 19th and a single on 27th.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor.

A single at Wheldrake on 20th January and a single in winter plumage 10th March. One on 5th April with seven on 20th and a single on 4th May. A single at North Duffield Carrs on 10th April. One over Wheldrake on 23rd August.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Status: Passage migrant.

In the Derwent Valley NNR the first north on 11th April with nine on 13th and a single on 15th. The Wheldrake roost built up from eight on 20th to 49 on 21st, 77 on 24th, 93 on 25th 107 on 29th and c130 on 30th.

In May numbers at the roost as usual peaked early with a new Reserve and Yorkshire record of 227 on 2nd. There were 167 on 3rd, 112 on 4th, decreasing to 23 on 9th, nine on 14th and one on 18th the last roosting bird. Three were then present on 24th with a single south on 31st.

Four south at Wheldrake on 17th July, five on 20th, one on 21st, two on 22nd, five on 23rd, three on 27th and three on 31st. On 23rd a flock of 141 was found at dawn at Thornton Ellers and had apparently roosted there. This, however, reflects records in recent years of nocturnal passage during this month - all moved on. Five on 1st and 3rd August, three on 4th, 14 on 5th, ten on 16th, with one on 20th and 26th.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Status: Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor.

In the Lower Derwent Valley 1 - 3 birds present in January with a peak of 12 on 11th. Passage flocks at Wheldrake of 48 on 27th February and 26 on 28th and 89 north there on 14th March.

Elsewhere on the Reserve, 121 north 4th March, then 52 on 9th, 310 on 13th, 317 on 26th, 270 on 28th and 245 on 30th. Forty seven pairs held territory on adjacent arable land by the month end. There were counts of 245 on 1st April and 267 on 6th and the first completed clutch (three) was found on 20th.

In May a total of 136 pairs located on or adjacent to the site with the first young seen on 16th, although many were still incubating clutches by the month end.

Good numbers were present throughout July with 97 on 14th the maximum. A single at Wheldrake on 30th behaved as if it had unfledged or newly-fledged young nearby - a very late date.

Birds roosted daily at Wheldrake in August with 39 on 1st, seven on 9th, 14 on 14th, 20 on 15th, 17th and 19th, 34 on 21st and up to 14 thereafter to month end.

On 2nd September 29 were at Wheldrake, 17 on 3rd and 11 on 7th with 21 at Bubwith on 14th increasing to 69 on 15th and 104 on 22nd. Sixty one flew south at dusk at Wheldrake on 22nd in addition to the above (giving a daily maximum of 165) whilst 109 flew south on 23rd, 73 on 24th, 62 on 25th, 91 on 26th, 61 on 27th, 43 on 28th, 54 on 29th and two on 30th. This southerly movement late in the month was thought to involve fresh birds daily, giving a total of 495 moving through the site.

Passage continued into October with two south on 1st, 11 on 2nd, eight on 7th and 9th, 26 on 12th, 14 on 13th, 16 on 17th and ones and twos thereafter,

One or two daily throughout November with ten on 23rd, 11 on 25th, 18 on 27th and 21 on 29th; 103 on 3rd December, 87 on 5th with 150 from 11th and an unprecedented influx on 16th brought 872 to Wheldrake, declining to 60 at the month end.

Elsewhere: two at Poppleton on 31st March, a single at Shargate on 3rd April and a pair at Newton-on-Derwent on 21st. Two birds were at Newton-on-Ouse on 4th May and Strensall records included two on 3rd June and calling birds on 6th with singles on 29th August and 5th October. A bird in a garden in Sherriff Hutton on 22nd June.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Status: Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor.

An immature at Wheldrake on 23rd April with the same or another on 26th & 27th.

Two at Wheldrake on 7th September with different singles on 13th and 14th and another at Melbourne from 4th-6th October.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Status: Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor.

In the Lower Derwent NNR, 172 on the 20th January, 63 on 25th February, 447 on 30th March, with 459 on 6th April a new reserve record.

A record 250 pairs present on or adjacent to the site with good breeding success recorded. Good numbers were present throughout July, with a maximum of 207 on 14th with over 120 immature. Two pairs at Wheldrake had newly fledged young on 9th.

First two returning birds were on 14th October. A steady return with one at North Duffield on 7th November, two at Wheldrake on 8th, four on 9th, seven on 25th and 32 on 28th. In December, 44 on 7th, 57 on 22nd, 122 on 26th, 149 on 27th with 80 to the month end.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Status: Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor.

For the third year a January appearance with two at Wheldrake on 13th. One at Storwood on 28th February and at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd March. A single at North Duffield on 17th April, one at Aughton on 18th, at Wheldrake on 19th-24th and another on 29th. Singles at Wheldrake on 3rd, 4th, 5th and 16th May, one at Bank Island on 7th and Thornton Ellers on 20th.

A record autumn passage with one on 6th July, nine on 9th, 11 on 10th-13th, seven on 14th then three on 18th and a single remaining until 22nd with three on 31st. There were 24 birds on 14th and 24th August, two on 5th September and singles on 7th and 9th.

Autumn singles at Castle Howard on 7th August.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Status: Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Up to four remained in the favoured wintering area of Melbourne/Bielby with a single at Bank Island on 7th January and at Ellerton on 29th February.

Passage birds at Thorganby on 1st March, two at North Duffield Carrs on 16th and a single at Barmby Marsh on 21st April. In May singles were present on 4th, 6th, 17th, 18th 21st and 25th, possible only two birds being involved.

July birds were surprisingly scarce given the number of other passage waders with just two at Wheldrake on 6th and 10th. In August as usual the Melbourne/Bielby/Pocklington Canal area held the largest numbers with 23 on 20th while the rest of the Reserve had five on several days. Singles were at Wheldrake on 2nd, 3rd and 12th September with three on 22nd-23rd and another at North Duffield Carrs on 24th. The Melbourne/Bielby/Pocklington Canal area held 10 on 1st October, nine on 2nd-9th, six on 10th-14th, three from 15th and two from 22nd to

month end. A single at Thornton Ellers on 17th. Up to four throughout November in the Melbourne Area with four still present up to 20th December and two on 26th.

Away from the Reserve, seen at Castle Howard on 28th September.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Status: Passage migrant.

A single at Barmby Marsh on 21st April with another at Aughton on 29th.

A single at Wheldrake on 7th May was followed by another at North Duffield on 18th and at Bank Island on 19th-21st.

A single at Wheldrake on 6th July and 19th-27th. August proved an exceptional month with two on 4th, four 5th-7th, five from 8th, seven from 9th, eight 11th-13th. Up to five remained until 20th with three on 21st the last.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Status: Passage migrant and rare breeder.

An early individual for the Lower Derwent NNR at Wheldrake on 3rd April with one at Thorganby on 17th and North Duffield from 19th-22nd.

In May birds frequented the Banks of the Derwent, with two on 4th-7th and singles on 10th, 16th-19th, 20th and 26th.

Two on 14th July with one at Wheldrake from 17th until the month end whilst another frequented the southern end of the Reserve, visiting Aughton and North Duffield during the same period. August proved an exceptional month with 12 on 26th the maximum and up to eight at Wheldrake the largest concentration on 24th. Three birds at Wheldrake from 1st-5th September with singles on 7th and 11th with one at Melbourne on 21st-23rd.

Elsewhere: A single at Melbourne on 14th April, Newburgh Priory on 27th and Castle Howard on 28th, 5th and 12th May with three on 7th August and two on 24th. Three at Melbourne on 31st August and two on 7th September.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Status: Rare winter visitor.

A single at Wheldrake on 24th March and one east on the evening of 18th December.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Status: Passage Migrant and winter visitor

An adult was present at the roost on 11th January with a second winter and a first winter bird

there on 20th.

An adult at Wheldrake on 11th February and the roost on 18th with a second winter at Bubwith pre-roost on 26th. An adult at Wheldrake on 4th March, a second winter bird on 5th, 13th, 14th and 17th, two adults on 18th and a second winter 1st May.

An adult at Wheldrake Ings on 25th November, a first winter on 22nd, 23rd and 26th December, with an adult on 23rd.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

Status: Passage migrant.

All records from Wheldrake. A winter plumaged adult on 25th January (the first January record), two adults on 1st February, a single adult 9th April with a second summer on 24th. Single second summer birds on 3rd, 4th, 5th and 9th May with an adult and first winter on 26th. An immature on 7th August.

SABINE'S GULL *Larus sabini*

Status: Rare winter visitor.

A single winter-plumaged adult flew east near Wheldrake Village early on 27th January but failed to re-appear at the Gull Roost.

First record for the Reserve.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Status: Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Wheldrake roost counts maxima :37,500 on 13th January, 29,500 on 10th February 32,500 on 9th March with 8,100 on 6th April. In May an estimated 2,000 pairs were at Wheldrake Ings with the first chicks (c20) hatching on 27th.

In July three pairs were still incubating clutches on 7th and two unfledged immatures still remained at the month end. Numbers decreased as the month progressed with 1,200 on 10th and 200 at the month end.

There were 700 present on 30th August and in September up to 1,000 passed south along the Reserve at dusk on a daily basis to roost on the Humber, with 300 at dusk on 23rd October.

Up to 3,000 moved south in November until flooding at the month end saw up to 5,000 roosting at Wheldrake by 30th. December had 5,000 on the 1st, 7,500 on 3rd with 13,000 on 21st being the maximum.

Elsewhere: at Castle Howard 300 on 9th January, 1,400 on 1st March and 700 on 27th December.

Peaks at Rawcliffe of 78 in January and December, 30 at Huby on 2nd and 27th February and

a flock at Osbaldwick had gone by the end of March and had reassembled in small numbers by 20th October.

COMMON GULL *Larus Canus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

On the Lower Derwent NNR counts included 11,300 by 20th January, 7,900 on 24th February, 30,000 on 24th-26th March and 3,950 on 6th April. Scarce thereafter with up to 20 regularly Wheldrake until month end and into May.

Until mid-month in July one or two sub-adults but absent thereafter until 40 on 31st. 1,150 roosted at Wheldrake on 30th November with 4,700 on 3rd December.

Elsewhere: Castle Howard again produced good numbers with 700 on 9th January, 600 on 1st March and 500 on 27th December.

Other records included 38 at Rawcliffe Lake in January and December, 50 at Huby on 27th February and 50 at Red House Reservoir on 29th. Two adults and a juvenile at Osbaldwick on 6th August.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Status: Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.

As usual relatively scarce during the early part of the year. seven on 20th January and 10th February but numbers increased with spring passage in March with 18 on 18th, 21 on 19th, 57 on 20th, 61 on 23rd, 79 on 28th, 89 on 31st and 97 on 8th April.

May produced a record month with 610 on 7th reducing to 160 by the month end - most sub-adults or immatures.

In July, 400 on 1st; nine on 4th August with 200+ on 12th and 270+ on 30th - presumably en route to roost on the Humber - and up to 50 recorded most evenings in September. Small numbers moved south at dusk on a daily basis in October whilst 137 were at Brighton Tip on 23rd. In December, one on 8th and 14th, with two on 15th and up to six daily thereafter.

Elsewhere: four at Red House Reservoir on 4th January, 11 at Huby on 18th May, two second summer on 29th June and one adult on 31st July.

Ten at Castle Howard on 28th September and two at Rawcliffe Lake on 3rd October.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Maximum counts for the Lower Derwent NNR were: 900 on 27th January with an individual on 7th showing extreme characteristics of the Northern Race; 1,070 on 10th February, 306 on 31st March with roost counts from Wheldrake in April of 271 on 1st, 239 on 8th, 61 on 12th,

41 on 20th, 57 on 26th and 98 on 29th, 105 on 3rd May declining to 33 on 30th.

From mid-August single figure counts most evenings with 11 south on 31st and up to 20 south daily over Wheldrake at dusk on their way to the Humber Roost. Fifty at Brighton Tip on 23rd October was the only notable count. Numbers increased during December with 31 on 3rd to 103 on 15th, 200+ on 21st and 1,900 on 31st.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*

Status: Winter visitor.

In the Lower Derwent NNR a 3rd winter bird on 6th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 14th and 20th January with an adult on 9th and 11th and a 1st winter bird 27th and 29th. February was another excellent month with a pale 2nd winter bird on 3rd, 17th, 19th and 16th with an adult on 5th, 16th and 19th and a 3rd winter on 18th. March had at least seven birds and in April a single 1st winter bird from 1st-13th, with two 2nd winter birds on 4th and singles on 5th, 6th and 9th and at North Duffield Carrs on 14th. Best showing for over a decade with at least 13 since early January.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Status: Winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent NNR, a 1st winter at Bank Island on 21st January, a rather dark 1st winter at Wheldrake Ings on 10th, 17th & 21st February and two Herring Gull/Glaucous Gull hybrids on 19th.

A record showing in March with at least eight birds involved during the month and a single 1st winter bird was recorded daily in April with a 3rd winter bird present on 4th, a 2nd winter on 5th and another 1st winter on 9th with an adult on 13th. In May, a late individual remained 1st-7th and re-appeared to roost on 18th - an end to an excellent winter showing involving at least 11 individuals.

A 1st winter bird at Wheldrake Roost on 31st December.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus cachinnans*

Status:

An adult roosting on Bubwith Ings on 2nd August.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

In the Lower Derwent NNR maximum counts included 1,050 on 7th January, 1,300 on 24th and 1,500 on 27th. Good numbers continued into February from the roost at Wheldrake, with 790

on 10th, 613 on 19th and 300+ on 26th. Bubwith Ings roost held 113 on 21st. Many immature birds in March with 112 on 10th, 121 on 18th (seven adults), 97 on 23rd and 107 on 31st. April peak roost counts included 93 on 6th, 47 on 13th and 51 on 21st with 70 on 5th May reducing to 30 by month end; Ten south at Wheldrake Ings on 4th with 21 on 31st.

The Wheldrake Roost held 37 on 30th November increasing during December to 1,750 on 31st when 550 fed at Brighton Tip during the day of 31st.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Status: Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A single at Wheldrake on 4th February and two south-east on 28th. Five on 17th March, one on 18th, seven on 19th, three on 20th and one on 22nd, a concentrated Spring passage reflecting a wider movement in North Yorkshire, all adults.

Three at the Wheldrake Ings roost on 20th December and earlier the same day 40 had been seen flying north from the Humber Bridge.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Status: Rare visitor.

A single north at North Duffield Carrs on 11th April.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Status: Passage migrant and rare migrant breeder.

Three at Wheldrake on 18th April with two at Barmby Marsh on 21st; seven north at Wheldrake on 26th with another on 28th. One at Rawcliffe Lake on 1st May and two at Castle Howard on 4th.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Status: Passage migrant.

Two north at Wheldrake on 13th April with a single north on 18th, 25 north in heavy rain on 25th with a single on 28th. An impressive 83 flew north during heavy rain on 1st May with 20 on 2nd, eight on 3rd, seven on 4th with one on 9th - a much better showing than in recent years with the concentrated period of passage reflected elsewhere in the region.

Four south, at Wheldrake on 11th July with a single south on 23rd August.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*

Status: Rare visitor

A single north at Wheldrake on 13th April and one south on 1st May was the first Reserve records since 1983.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Status: Passage migrant

Three at Wheldrake on 20th April with 13 on the Reserve next day with a single north on 29th. Five at Wheldrake on 1st May with one remaining until 3rd. Two on 11th July continued south.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Status: Resident breeder

In the Lower Derwent NNR regular throughout winter with 47 at Wheldrake on 3rd January, 27 at Wressle on 20th with 120 at Bielby and 40 at Melbourne on the same date and 100 at Thornton on 21st; an estimated 500 were present around the whole site on 20th/21st. Notable counts in February included 65 at Thorganby on the 6th, 20 at East Cottingham on the 10th with 41 there on 21st, and 27 at Ellerton on the 24th. In March, 31 at Thorganby on the 10th, then small flocks (up to 10) recorded from several sites during the month with 78 pairs counted on the 30th March.

Birds became increasingly obvious towards the end of July, with numerous small family parties scattered round the site. There were 31 at Thornton on August 17th. A small movement occurred early in October, with 91 west at Wheldrake on the 1st, 60 west there on 3rd and 32 on 4th, with good numbers present all month on the reserve.

Elsewhere: there were counts of 45 near Dunnington Common on 11th February and 15 in Poppleton on 1st March. Bred at York Water Works, and pairs seen at Marton-in-the-Forest and at York University. Four were near Newton on Ouse, 23rd June.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Status: Resident breeder

Very much under recorded. One hundred plus near the river at Poppleton on 14th February was the biggest count.

Twelve were on the ring road near Haxby on 10th March; 25 were at Castle Howard on 5th May, 50 on 10th and 12 were at Newton on Ouse on 23rd June. Twelve were at Monks Cross on 3rd October.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Status: Resident breeder

A road casualty near Skirpenbeck on 17th June with at least five on the riverside between Kexby and Elvington on 22nd. Singles seen in summer at Outgang Heslington, Tilmire and Morby Wood. A small roost at Bank Island built up to 59 by 21st October.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Status: Migrant breeders, passage visitor

In the Lower Derwent NNR the first record was of two purring birds on 8th May, increasing to 12 by the month end, and a record of 39 singing males/pairs located on or adjacent to the site in July. Present throughout August with one at Aughton on 24th, two at Hagg Bridge on 27th and a single at Elvington on 28th.

One at Wheldrake Ings 1st and 4th September, one near Sutton-on-Derwent on 14th with another at Barmby Marsh on 21st, the last.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Status: Migrant visitor

One at Seavy Carr on 9th October coincided with a large visible migration at this time.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Status: Migrant breeder

A single at North Duffield Carrs on 6th and 9th April and at Wheldrake on 14th. An excellent year with over 100 on the site. Two early newly-fledged juveniles at Wheldrake on 25th May.

Most birds had departed by mid-July, but two immatures were at Bank Island on 5th September, with a single at Wheldrake on the 7th the last.

Elsewhere: one on Dunnington Common, 18th April and recorded from Huby, Wigginton, Strensall Common, Crayke, Sheriff Hutton, Newton on Derwent, Scrayingham, Newton on Ouse (three recorded in the survey km square), Poppleton and Claxton.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Status: Resident breeder

Seen throughout the Lower Derwent NNR all year. Two birds were noted carrying food in daylight hours in March, one at Thornton on the 19th and one at Laytham on the 31st. At least one pair fledged four young before the end of July. Fifteen were along the Canal at Melbourne

to Hagg Bridge on 20th August and seven at Thornton Ellers throughout the month. There were numerous sightings from roads adjacent to the site later in the year, with at least 12 individuals involved. Harsh weather in the last week of November led to several day time sightings.

Elsewhere: bred on Skipwith Common, with two young fledged. Winter sightings at Scrayingham, Tesco (York) and two hunting near Pocklington Canal on 28th December. An injured bird at Langwith went to a sanctuary.

The BTO national survey is now in its third year. A definitive record will result. Meanwhile, records rare in the North of YOC area.(PH).

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Status: Resident breeder

Singles recorded from Wheldrake, Thornton and North Duffield during January. Thirtyone pairs were located in the Lower Derwent, with young from mid July.

Eleven were at Thornton Ellers on the 26th July, including one feeding on a dead rabbit on the road.

Bred at Fulford Golf Club, Escrick, Tilmire and Stearsby. Two adult birds and three juveniles on Dunnington Common on 6th July. A pair was seen in a hole in a tree at Barlow through June and July and also a pair at a probable tree-nesting site at Kexby on 29th June. Recorded also at Hessacarr nature reserve, Hagg Bridge, Cornborough, Sheriff Hutton, Strensall Common and Newburgh Priory, and Poppleton (all the year, in an ash tree).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Status: Resident breeder throughout the area

Two young were raised at Dunnington Common. There was a juvenile at Claxton on 3rd June with two adults and three juveniles at Yearsley Moor on 29th.

Also recorded at Cockey Hill, Morby Wood, Stillingfleet, Naburn, Hull Road Park, Monk Stray, Heslington, Osbaldwick, Bishopthorpe, Sheriff Hutton, Welburn, Wheldrake Wood, Huby, Easingwold

A bird observed prior to dusk at Wheldrake Ings on 20th April appeared to have a stoat or weasel as a prey item.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor

In the Derwent Valley up to four calling birds at Wheldrake in February, five at Thornton

Ellers, while 12 were counted along the Ings between Wheldrake and Sutton on the 28th.

Bred at Morby Wood, also present in breeding season at Crockey Hill, Naburn Wood and Wheldrake Wood.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Status: Casual breeder and passage/winter visitor

A single at Wheldrake on the 10th January.

In March, a single in the North Duffield/Bubwith area on the 20th, with two there on the 24th; a single at Wheldrake was watched coming in off the Wolds on the 27th, with another at Aughton on the 28th. A single on North Duffield Carrs on 6th April, with another on the 9th and at Wheldrake on the 14th. In May, one on the 16th and again the 17th was seen carrying food at dusk. A single was at North Duffield Carrs on July 23rd, with a newly fledged immature there on 29th - probably bred further up the reserve after several unsuccessful attempts in recent years.

Singles at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd and 8th December.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Status: Migrant breeder

The only reports were of a churring male on Skipwith Common on 14th June and one at Yearsley Moor Wood on the 15th.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Status: Migrant breeder throughout the area

The first recorded in the Lower Derwent NNR was a single at Elvington on 23rd April, another at Wheldrake the next day, with 27 there on the 27th, 30 on the 28th, and 100 on the 29th. On 1st May 150 were counted with 200 on the 5th, then 1000 on the 1st July and 1500 on the 7th. Present in small numbers until mid August with only singles thereafter - six on 13th September and the last two on the 23rd.

Outside the Derwent NNR, the first was at Coxwold on 20th April, at Crayke village from 29th with a maximum of 22 birds, and 50 on the A19/northern bypass on 12th May.

Report of 34 as the biggest group seen this year by a member who remembers recording thousands in the same location many years ago. Left Crayke by 5th August, maximum of 80 over breeding site in Poppleton, 6th August. Last seen at Sheriff Hutton by 13th August, Osbaldwick on 25th and in Poppleton, 15th September.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Status: Resident breeder

In the Lower Derwent NNR seen regularly at Wheldrake all January, with two displaying there on the 27th. Ten pairs located around the site, several pairs on the river between Bank Island and Wheldrake wind pump where young were successfully raised. Birds regularly seen by Wheldrake bridge and from Swantail hide.

Also seen at East Cottingwith, Hagg Bridge, Ellerton and Storwood. Sixteen were logged at the Wildfowl Count on September 15th. Four immatures were at North Duffield Ings on 12th October.

Other reports were from Hessacarr nature reserve, Castle Howard, Naburn marina, and central York (near Scarborough Bridge) and often seen at York Water Works.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Status: Resident breeder but not widespread

Records in the Lower Derwent NNR were of one was at Thornton Ellers on 20th April, with an immature there on 11th August and again on the 28th. A single at Wheldrake Ings on 16th and 29th October. One at Bank Island on the 5th December with a more typical record of one at Thornton Ellers on the 28th.

No confirmed breeding elsewhere but pairs were observed at Morby Park, Escrick and Allerthorpe Common. Singles were reported from at Yearsley Moor, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common, Brandsby Old Rectory, Wass and Dunnington Common.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Status: Resident breeder throughout the area

Up to two drumming birds at Wheldrake (Lower Derwent NNR) from 27th February in the car park/riverside oaks area. Birds continued to show well in March, with up to ten pairs around the site. Two pairs were feeding young in the car park area by 15th May. Later in the year four at Wheldrake on 1st December.

A pair on Dunnington Common raised only one young but fed in a garden all year. Also bred at Strensall Common. Birds were present in breeding season at Fulford Golf Course, Heslington, Morby Wood, Naburn Park, Castle Howard, Tollerton and York University. Two juveniles at Wass, 19th June.

In Poppleton, a juvenile fed on peanuts, often three or four times a day, from 21st July to 21st August. An adult seen in the same garden on 13th December could have been the same bird. Also at New Earswick Nature Reserve, Warthill, Huby, York Water Works, Yearsley Moor, Sheriff Hutton, Rowntree Park, Terrington and Welburn.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Status: Resident breeder

A single was drumming at Wheldrake in the riverside oaks from 27th February. From mid March, up to four pairs were present along the riverside path and car park area, but very elusive from mid April. A male was drumming at Thornton Ellers on 5th May. Birds were seen in the car park lane on 15th and 28th December.

The only reports from elsewhere were from York Water Works on 26th October and a flirting pair in Brandsby on 27th February.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor

In the Lower Derwent Valley movement noted in harsh weather in January, with flocks of 60 and 57 north at Wheldrake on 1st and 120 east in several flocks on 27th with 12 north over Thornton on 21st. Two hundred over Wheldrake on 11th February while 21 singing males were recorded in the valley from 11th onwards; 70 at Thornton on 24th with 30 at Ellerton on the same date.

The start of migration was heralded by 21 at North Duffield on 24th September with 200 west at Wheldrake on 28th, 400 on 29th and 73 on 30th. On 3rd October 300 flew south with 200 on 7th, 270 on 19th and 60 on 20th. Two hundred south-west at Wheldrake on 8th November and there was movement on most days with 90 on 26th and 80 at East Cottingwith on 29th-30th. The only notable flock in December was at East Cottingwith, building up to 192 by 22nd. A small movement was noted during harsh weather towards the year end with 40 at Menthorpe, 176 at Brighton and 295 near Newton on 31st.

Elsewhere: around 10 pairs bred at Heslington Tilmire and breeding was also reported on Elvington Airfield. Twelve at Forest Farm throughout breeding season and also at Huby, Castle Howard, Strensall and Yearsley Moor. Ten counted from survey square near Newton on Ouse in May and June, also numerous in Riccall breeding survey square.

Twenty at Morby Wood on 20th October 200 at Newton Mask on 29th November.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Status: Summer breeder and passage migrant

In the Derwent Valley NNR the first returning birds were three at Wheldrake on 27th March, with two next day. A single on 5th April, three on the 6th and 8th, 100 on the 10th, 600 on the 15th and 800 by 28th.

Migration began towards the end of August with 600 at Wheldrake on 23rd, 1000 at Wheldrake Ings on 30th and 3000 the next day. Birds roosted in a maize field adjacent to Bank Island, with 4100 on the 2nd September, 3000 on the 3rd and 5th, 4000 on 6th and 4500 on 7th, when numbers declined rapidly to 500 on 8th and 200 on 11th. Four on October 6th were the last.

Away from the Derwent, four were on the Ouse at Poppleton on 9th April whilst the first at Rawcliffe Lake were on 12th, with 20 there by the 16th. Numbers at Castle Howard rose from 100 on the 23rd April to 500 on 10th May. Frequent throughout summer over Ouse in York between Lendal and Ouse bridges, often seen entering drainage pipes by Moat House Hotel. Also seen in Rowntree Park, where the last was on 8th August.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Status: Summer breeder and passage migrant

In the Lower Derwent NNR, 20 at Wheldrake on 9th April were the first, with 50 present the next day and 600 on the 28th.

A single pair was incubating a full clutch in the hide at North Duffield by the end of May and by the end of August still had unfledged young there, the third brood.

There were 500 at Wheldrake on 31st August and birds were seen regularly throughout September, with 500 on the 23rd the only notable count. In October, 400 south on 6th with birds recorded daily until eight on the 11th, three on the 13th, six on the 16th, with the last two on the 20th.

Elsewhere: the first records were singles on 9th April at A64 near Askham Bar and in Selby, with 30 at Stillington by 19th and 500 at Castle Howard on 10th May. Twenty in York near Scarborough Bridge on 7th June and 25 at North Lane, near York, on 25th August. Gathering for departure from Osbaldwick on 7th September. Passing in parties along Osbaldwick cycle track on the 20th, more on the 28th, when birds were still in Sheriff Hutton. Last at Strensall on 13th October.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Status: Summer breeder and passage migrant

The first report in the Lower Derwent NNR was at Wheldrake on 8th May, with ten on 9th, 150 on 17th, 300 on 18th and 350 on 28th.

In August 270 were feeding in a concentrated flock over the new scrape at Wheldrake on 7th.

Birds left breeding sites adjacent to the Reserve suddenly early in September, with 300 at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th the only sign of passage although small numbers remained to the month end. Twenty were at Wheldrake on 6th October, two on the 11th, and a single on the 14th the last.

The first report outside the Derwent NNR was of two at Skelton on the 15th April. Eight were at Forest Farm on 5th May, with 14 by 10th June. In Osbaldwick, still checking out nest hole on 25th May, mud collecting on the Foss at Layerthorpe on the 27th and flying into nests on the Beeswing on Hull Road, 29th. Nine occupied nests in Sim Balk Lane, Bishopthorpe, by early June, certainly six feeding young. Three nests with young in mid September (third brood?). At Rawcliffe Lake, 10 breeding pairs in the area.

Three were in Strensall village on 3rd October, while two at Castle Howard on 17th October were the last.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Status: Summer breeder though numbers declined recently

Singles over Wheldrake on 4th and 16th April. Seen displaying on Fulford Golf Course but no evidence of breeding. One feeding a juvenile on Strensall Common on 5th June and at least five singing males on 12th June. Only other reports were from Skipwith Common and Yearsley Moor Wood.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Status: Resident & migrant breeder and passage migrant

Up to 60 at Wheldrake throughout January, with 300 on 27th. Good numbers moved back from 18th March, with birds displaying at Wheldrake on 25th and 80 at Melbourne on 31st were the peak counts. There were numerous breeding pairs, with the first fledged young at Aughton on 21st May.

Forty at Wheldrake on 10th September, with 89 at North Duffield on the 24th, 40 west at Thornton on the 27th, 1000 south west on 28th, with 2000 over Wheldrake in two hours on the 29th.

The visible movement continued into October with 1000 south on 3rd, 80 at Thorganby on 12th, 100 at Wheldrake on 14th, 300 on 19th and 80 the next day. One hundred on 7th November, 300 south on 8th; 100 at Wheldrake on 26th fed next to rising flood water. Small numbers elsewhere throughout the site.

Numbers increased with harsh weather late in December, with 120 at Thorganby, 100 plus at Bubwith and 60 at Wheldrake on 30th.

Elsewhere: around six pairs bred on Heslington Tilmire and they were frequently seen at York Water Works. One was at Monks Cross on 16th June.

Four at Strensall Common on 27th December.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Status: An irregular visitor to the area

One at Wheldrake on 11th October preceded three at Thorganby on 12th, four at Wheldrake on 14th, two on 15th and a late single on 26th. An excellent showing no doubt related to the large movement of Meadow Pipits at this time.

A single at Wheldrake on 9th November.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Status: An irregular spring visitor

A single at Wheldrake on 3rd - 5th April. Singles were at Wheldrake, Bank Island and Thornton on the 8th.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Status: Summer breeder and passage migrant

Two on 9th April were the first in the Lower Derwent NNR, with three on 14th, 13 on 16th and 51 on 18th, when a male showing characteristics of Blue-headed Wagtail (*M. f. flava*) was at Aughton; a fall on the 21st left 120 plus on the site while 63 newly arrived birds were at North Duffield on the 19th, 80 at North Duffield on 1st May, 30 on 7th and 135 on 8th - this latter flock containing four Blue-headed Wagtail. Breeding numbers were well up on last year with around 120 pairs.

By August generally scarce, with passage beginning on 17th with 30 on the 21st. Fifty south at Wheldrake on 5th September, with 11 on 7th, 21 on 14th, seven on 15th, singles on 16th-23rd with two on 26th the last: a single Blue-headed bird was at North Duffield Ings on the 14th.

Away from the Derwent NNR, one at Palace Ings, Fulford and Heslington on 17th April, one at Rawcliffe Lake on the 26th, one in Poppleton the same day with a pair there on the 28th, and a displaying male at Castle Howard on the 27th. Six at Forest Farm on the 25th, with four on 3rd June. A male at Claxton on 12th May with a pair on 16th. Five were on farmland near Riccall on 15th June, a male was at Scrayingham on 17th and two near Newton on Ouse on 23rd with another male at Kexby on the 29th. One at Huby on 9th July. Five birds at Melbourne on the 7th September and one on the 14th.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Status: Resident breeder

No spring records in the Lower Derwent NNR.

The first autumn bird was at Melbourne on 21st September, with singles at Wheldrake and Bubwith on 22nd and one at Bubwith on 29th when three were at Wheldrake. Numbers increased early in October, with nine present on 14th and up to ten in November.

Elsewhere: reported as a frequent visitor to York Water Works. Wintered January and February at Hessacarr Nature Reserve, Naburn sewage works, Castle Howard and Strensall.

Two at Naburn sewage works on 5th April, and a single at Crambe Beck on 15th May. One was at Rawcliffe Lake on 7th July, and three at the bottom lake at Yearsley on the 14th.

In September and October, singles were seen at Bubwith, Appletree Village, Melbourne, Osbaldwick and Rawcliffe Lake. One at Castle Howard 17th November.

PIED WAGTAIL · *Motacilla alba*

Status: Resident breeder

The Lower Derwent NNR held 100 at Wheldrake/Bank Island all January, with 60 roosting at Bank Island sewage works by the 21st and 400 at Wheldrake Ings in freezing weather on the 27th. Birds showing the characteristics of White Wagtail (*M. a. alba*) at Wheldrake on 29th March, 13th and 17th April, and Bank Island on 30th March and 6th April.

Good numbers once again bred round the site, with the first fledged brood (of five) at Bank Island on 11th May.

In September the largest concentrations were 140 plus at Melbourne on 10th and 147 on 21st with small numbers south west on 29th. Two hundred at Melbourne on 3rd October with 47 at Bank Island on the 19th the only other concentration. In November, numbers increased quickly with flooding, with 60 at Bank Island on 26th and 90 on 29th, 40 at Wheldrake on 26th increasing to 75 on 29th. Good numbers were present throughout December with a full valley count of 620 plus on the 22nd including 100 at Newton Mask and 80 at Bubwith Ings.

Elsewhere: there were winter counts of 15 in the District Hospital grounds on 11th January, 35 in Poppleton on 25th February and 25 near Wigginton Road on 10th March.

Three pairs bred at York Water Works, and good numbers appeared to be nesting at Castle Howard. Four at Pond Head in May. Frequent in Huby in June and December, and up to ten at Rawcliffe Lake throughout the year.

WAXWING · *Bombycilla garrulus*

Status: Occasional winter visitor

An excellent winter, sharing the region's influx.

In the Lower Derwent NNR fifteen were north of Wheldrake village on 14th January, two at Thorganby on 17th, four at Wheldrake on 18th, 25-30 at Bubwith on 20th and four by the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 28th. Five at Elvington and seven at Melbourne on the 7th February, 43 at Elvington on 10th, 14 at Wheldrake on 11th with 15 on 12th and 13th, six were at North Duffield on the 29th and 23 at Wheldrake on March 31st when 11 at Loftsome Bridge. Five lingered in Wheldrake village until 5th April, with a single there until the 7th. Four at Wheldrake village from 29th November were the first of a small influx. Eleven were at Sutton on 26th December with 25 at Thorganby on 30th.

Elsewhere there were many reports from this major irruption year!

Five in Nunnery Lane car park on 26th January, four at Barton Hill on the 28th. Six at Copmanthorpe on 4th February, two on East Common, Selby on 9th and 10th, two in Wheldrake Village on the 11th when seven in Easingwold, five in Elvington on the 12th, ten at Shipton-by-Beningbrough 12th to 18th, and seven in Dunnington on the 15th, also in Sheriff Hutton on the 14th and 15th, and Strensall on the 17th with 23 at Ampleforth on 23rd and 24th. One hundred on Clifton Moor between the 12th and 18th February, 60 at Green Lane, Rawcliffe

on the 17th and 18th, 30 at Rawcliffe Lake and surrounding estate on the 19th, with 120 in the area by the 21st, when 65 at Copmanthorpe. Twelve were at Yearsley Bridge, Huntington Road, on the 22nd, 16 near Stockton Lane on the 24th, one at Tang Hall on the 25th and two near Monk Stray on the 27th, when there were 20 at the City Hospital. Sixty on waste ground on Blossom Street (York) on the 28th and around 50 in Spen Lane, central York, on the 29th.

Forty at Clifton on 1st March and 15 on Lawrence Street with 100 in Manor Lane, Shipton Road, on 2nd; three flying over Osbaldwick on the 3rd, when around 60 feeding on berries by the ring road near Rawcliffe; 22 at Haxby on the 5th and 52 by Haxby level crossing on the 6th. Eight on Huntington Road cycle track on the 10th March, five in Strensall village on the 19th, five at Forest Farm on 21st, 15 in Badger Hill on 23rd when two arrived in an Osbaldwick garden, sampled rose hips but didn't stay! Eight at Strensall on 24th March when one at Terrington and 40 at Clifton Moor on 27th.

Twentytwo at Clifton Moor on 1st April when 12 at Yearsley Bridge. Sixty five in Rowntree's grounds on 4th April, 14 in Clifton on the 5th, a few still in central York on 7th, 14 in Beckfield Lane (Acomb) on the 9th with three on the 15th and 15 at Stockton Lane the last.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Status: Resident breeder throughout the area

Sixteen along the River Derwent path at Wheldrake Ings on 12th March. Noted in Huby to be nesting in an old swallow's nest, while in Poppleton four to six have been noted roosting in the winter in a House Martin nest, which they have occupied for the past two years. The only other reports were of six near Rufforth on 24th April, four near Newton-on Ouse 5th May, with three on 23rd June.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Status: Resident breeder throughout the area

Recorded from Huby, all year.

Counts were of eight males singing along Osbaldwick cycleway on 4th April, four at Scrayingham on 20th May, three near Newton on Ouse on 5th May, with two on 23rd June.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Status: Resident breeder throughout the area

Six were at Rufforth on 24th April. Counts from Newton on Ouse were three on 5th May, and two on 23rd June. Four were in a garden in Pocklington on 13th May, two of them being immature, while young were also seen in the garden centre on Harrogate Road on 18th May and a party of five juveniles was at Castle Howard on 6th June. Four by the River Foss in York on 6th October.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Status: Very rare visitor

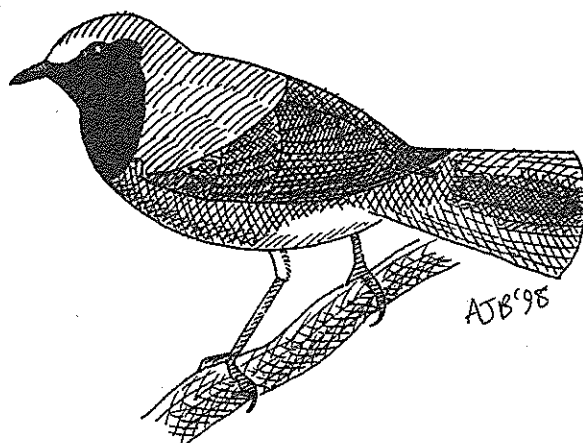
A single male at North Duffield Carrs on 26th May represents the second reserve record.

The only other report was from the Central Science Laboratory at Sand Hutton, where one female or immature bird was observed on 20th, 21st and 22nd November.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Status: Migrant breeder/passage visitor

A male at North Duffield Carrs on 24th April, and three at Wheldrake on 30th, a single on 1st May, with two on the 2nd.



One at Wheldrake Ings on 6th, 14th and 15th August, three on 20th and a female at Thornton Ellers on the 24th. One at Bank Island on 15th September, with a male in the car park area at Wheldrake Ings 16th-17th.

Reports away from the Derwent NNR were a male on Skipwith Common on 24th May, singing males at Wass on 25th and on Fulford golf course on 30th, but there was no evidence of breeding. Singing male at Strensall Common on 12th June and at Dalby on the 15th. One in a garden in Sheriff Hutton on 8th September and one at Rawcliffe Lake from 17th to 19th.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Status: Casual migrant breeder/passage visitor

A male at Thorganby on 24th April. Two pairs holding territory at Storwood on 20th May and remained to the month end. A male carrying food at Strensall Common on 12th June.

A male at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd July, another at East Cottingwith on the 31st with one at Wheldrake Ings on 15th September.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

The wintering male in the Lower Derwent Valley NNR remained at Wheldrake to 7th February. Two males were in front of Riverside Hide from 12th - 17th October. A male at Wheldrake on the 3rd November.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

In the Lower Derwent NNR, four near Wheldrake on 31st March when three at Breighton Meadows. Three on 12th April, a single on the 19th and 24 on the 21st with 17 on the 22nd and seven on the 24th. A male at Storwood on the 23rd ended an excellent spring passage.

A female at Wheldrake on 20th August, two nearby on the 25th and another at North Duffield Cams on 26th and 30th. Two late birds at Wheldrake Ings on 10th September with one on the 11th and two at Thorganby on the 12th.

Away from the Lower Derwent the first was by the River Ouse at Poppleton on 30th March with a male there on 31st. One on Clifton Moor on 8th April, Barlow Grange, Selby on the 13th, Forest Farm, Warthill on 16th and 25th, three at Skelton and a female at Smorgate on the 26th, three at Elvington Airfield on the 27th, with two females at Grimston on the 30th. Eight were on Strensall Common on 5th May.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Status: Rare visitor

A male at High Catton on 23rd February, may have wintered, and a male at Aughton on 10th March.

A male at Sutton on 14th November with two at Warthill on 29th.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Status: Resident breeder, winter visitor and migrant.

In the Lower Derwent NNR, 47 at Thornton Ellers on 21st January and 53 at Thorganby on 29th were notable.

Eleven at Thornton Ellers on the 5th November increased to 49 on 27th and Wheldrake car park area held 21 by the month end.

Elsewhere: large numbers in a Hawthorn hedge near Copmanthorpe on 28th January. Eight at Burnholme Beck on 25th February. Singing by late March in Osbaldwick, morning and evening, with four counted along the cycleway on 4th April and a female seen with food on the 17th; two juveniles were in a garden on the 24th, a different juvenile on the 26th and a female was seen carrying food in Sainsbury's car park (Layerthorpe) on the 30th. Thirteen near Newton on Ouse on 5th May.

A particularly aggressive male with a nest in the drive of a Poppleton garden was seen threatening passing humans and dogs, and chased a cat back and forth down the road three times.

Large winter feeding flocks noted feeding on apples in the north of the Recording Area.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Status: Winter visitor.

An influx from 5th January with 10,570 in the Derwent Valley on the 6th, 34,000 at Wheldrake on 27th and 7,000 the next day. The February maximum of 7100 on the 11th decreased to 230 by the month end. In March, 1300 on 1st, 2300 on 10th and 1,350 on the 18th, with 1,300 on 1st April decreasing to 50 on the 15th.

The first returning birds were west at Wheldrake on 19th October, with 800 the next day, six on the 21st and 400 on the 22nd; thereafter up to 150 daily. Two main influxes occurred during November with 3,500 on 6th - 8th and another 4000 on 17th - 21st, while around a thousand fed at Bank Island on the 26th and 3,100 were present on the 21st December.

Away from the Derwent: 1000 on Dunnington Common on 7th January, 250 at Poppleton on the 9th and 200 on Fulford Golf Course on 28th.

One with a complete clear-cut white head (forehead, crown, nape and sides of face) was observed in a flock of around 120 at Sutton on Derwent on 8th February (RC).

One hundred were at Huby on 27th February, 50 at Bulmer and 200 at Farlington on 1st March with 14 at Benningbrough Hall on 15th April. (Observed throughout the winter in Sheriff Hutton).

The first of winter was at Selby on 21st September. Daily records started on 18th October near Brandsby, birds mostly passing south-west. Towthorpe Common held 40 on 22nd October, flocks were in Sheriff Hutton from the 23rd and small parties passed through Osbaldwick on the 30th, with 60 nearby in Appletree Village on the 31st. Twenty at Sand Hutton laboratory on 1st November, and 50 near Coneysthorpe on the 3rd. Four hundred were on hawthorn at Barlow on 31st December.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Status: Resident breeder but in decline in some areas.

Nine singing males were recorded from around the Lower Derwent NNR on 11th February when three on Stockton Lane with two on the 24th. From 21st March to 10th May a male fed and sang in Poppleton garden, but no mate appeared. A pair at Naburn sewage works raised four young, while three fledged in a Hull Road garden. Common in Wass, and present in Huby throughout the year.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Status: Winter visitor.

In the Lower Derwent NNR, 7,300 on 6th January declining to 2500 by the month end. Thereafter 2900 on the 11th February, 500 on 10th March, 350 on the 18th and 70 on the 30th showed a steady departure. On 1st April 170 were at Wheldrake, with small numbers thereafter until the 10th: the last of the year were nocturnal passage birds over Bubwith on the night of the 15th.

The first returning bird was at Wheldrake on 23rd September, with two at Thornton Ellers on the 27th. Fourteen west at Newton Mask on the 8th October, 120 at Wheldrake on the 22nd, with heavy nocturnal passage and 400 on 23rd, with light passage noted to month end. In November, 1900 on the 6th and 2400 on 17th - 21st, with 1100 on the 20th December.

Elsewhere: birds were reported in Sheriff Hutton throughout winter, with 12 on Malton Road 10th February and 20th March. First of the autumn in a garden in Sheriff Hutton on 23rd October and ten at Brandsby on 28th. The usual large influx to the north of the area not noted this year. Nocturnal passage over York on 30th October and 40 at Strensall on 25th December.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor.

Under recorded this year.

Two near Sainsbury's, Foss Bank, 9th January, singing in Osbaldwick, 23rd March. One near Newton on Ouse 5th May and seen in Huby throughout the year. A large loose flock regularly move round Brandsby village environs eating all the holly berries.

A flock of 36 at North Duffield Ings on 14th September, 27 at Hagg Bridge on 22nd, with 13 at Melbourne on the 28th.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Status: Rare migrant breeder.

A male singing at Brighton Meadows on 21st April, with another at North Duffield Carrs on the 29th. One near River Ouse Poppleton on 12th and 17th May.

A single reeling male at Church Bridge Melbourne in August, was present until the 17th.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Status: Migrant breeder and passage migrant.

In the Lower Derwent NNR the first returning bird was at Wheldrake on 15th April, with four on the 17th, five on the 20th, 200+ on the 21st, and regular thereafter.

Small numbers present throughout September, with one at Wheldrake on 1st October the last.

Elsewhere: by the River Ouse at Poppleton on 21st April and Castle Howard on the 27th. Four males at Bridge End Farm, Scrayingham, on 20th May and two were in a Rape field at Kexby on 29th June.

Three pairs bred at York waterworks (TC).

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Status: Migrant breeder and passage migrant.

Two on 21st April were the first in the Lower Derwent NNR with six by the 29th.

Small numbers were still present at the end of August, with one bird feeding three newly-fledged young at Wheldrake on the 30th. Small numbers continued throughout September, with four at Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd, 14 on the 24th and eight on the 27th perhaps indicating a small return passage. Two were present in the reedbed at Wheldrake during the first week in October, with one on the 14th the last.

Elsewhere: one pair bred at York waterworks and the only other report was from Castle Howard.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Status: Migrant breeder.

The species had an exceptional year with good numbers throughout the Lower Derwent NNR. The first were two birds at Wheldrake on 27th April, with four the next day and a peak of 20 at Thornton Ellers on 8th May.

Present daily until 13th August, with one at Wheldrake on the 17th and 20th, three at Thornton on the 23rd and two at Bank Island on the 30th. Singles were at Wheldrake on 8th and 9th September, two on the 10th and one at Thornton on the 19th the last.

Elsewhere: one at Low Catton and Heslington on 6th May. Bred at Dunnington Common and seen feeding young in Morby Wood.

Two pairs at Forest Farm on 14th May, with a pair on 3rd June. Also reported from Huby, Ampleforth (two birds), Newton on Ouse, Sheriff Hutton (where breeding not confirmed this year). A displaying pair stopped for two days in August at Old Rectory, Brandsby and a single at Rawcliffe Lake on 5th September.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Status: Migrant breeder.

Arrived en masse at the Lower Derwent NNR with 20 in Wheldrake on 21st April and 31 by

the next day with the last recorded on 10th September.

Away from the Derwent, four pairs bred at York waterworks and two on Dunnington Common. Also seen at Castle Howard, Huby, Heslington, Osbaldwick cycletrack, Rawcliffe Lake, Appletree village, Scrayingham, Dalby, Sheriff Hutton, Nunnington, Welburn, Newton on Ouse and Poppleton.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Status: Migrant breeder.

A single at Poppleton on 21st April, at Wheldrake Ings on 28th with two the next day, and on Yearsley Moor on 8th May.

Pair feeding young in Morby Wood and in Huby on 25th July. Bred at Blackmoor, but less than hitherto noted in the north. Present during the breeding season at Bishops Wood and Dunnington Common and also seen at Forest Farm, St Nicholas Fields, Sheriff Hutton, and Welburn. Two at Wheldrake and on 9th and 10th September were the last.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Status: Migrant breeder and winter visitor.

A male at Thornton Ellers on 4th January and at Fulford from 23rd February to 17th March with a female on 24th and at Stillington on 1st and 5th March. In the spring they were, surprisingly, rather scarce, with the first at Wheldrake on 15th April but only a few thereafter.

Singing at Castle Howard on 20th April and at Yearsley Moor 8th May and 14th July. Also recorded in breeding season at Forest Farm, Huntington, Welburn, Sheriff Hutton, Terrington, Osbaldwick cycletrack and Poppleton. Nineteen were along the Canal from East Cotingwith to Wheldrake on 24th August, with 11 at Thornton Ellers on 30th. A pair was at Poppleton on 15th September and a family party at Osbaldwick on the 28th with a female at Strensall on 7th December the last. Commonly seen in the north of the area.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Status: Migrant. Seems lost as breeding species.

A singing male at Thornton Ellers on 8th May was presumably on passage, with two at Wass on 25th May and one on 19th June.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Status: Migrant breeder, passage migrant.

A single throughout January at Wheldrake Ings and a second from 18th - 21st showing

characteristics of the northern race, (*P. c. abietinus*).

A singing male in the car park area at Wheldrake on 23rd March. Present throughout April with one at Melbourne on the 1st and two at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd, 11 were singing on the 7th and 14 on the 21st.

Present in small numbers throughout August and September, with a concentrated passage towards mid September. Singing individuals at Wheldrake involved one on the 10th, 10 on the 11th, 13 on the 14th, three on 17th with up to three until 30th. Seven in song on 5th October, three on 7th, two on 14th, and singles on 18th and 28th.

Elsewhere: a single along the River Ouse at Poppleton on 30th March. Singles at Appletree Village and Askham Bog on 8th April, with a pair at Pond Head on the 9th, one at Claxton on the 14th, and three on Yearsley Moor Wood on the 20th. At Castle Howard, Fryton Wood, Huby and Strensall Common from late April to end July and at Rawcliffe Lake for the first time.

A single at Low Farm on 20th September.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Status: Migrant breeder and passage migrant.

First recorded in the Lower Derwent NNR on 10th April, with five on 15th, eight on 15th, 12 on 16th and 41 on 20th. Common thereafter.

Up to 40 were present on 3rd August at Wheldrake, with 60 at Thornton on the 23rd. Two still present with tits at Wheldrake on 10th September, with the last there on the 14th.

Outside the Derwent: a singing male at Castle Howard on the 13th April, with four at Sutton on Forest on 14th, at Sheriff Hutton and Claxton on the 17th, Overton and Poppleton on the 18th, Riccall and Osbaldwick on the 20th.

Frequent in Huby area, where they bred. Fewer apparently bred on St Nicholas fields, perhaps due to disturbance from road works. Three pairs present in spring at York Water Works. Also at Huntington, Forest Farm, Claxton, Newton on Ouse. Six at Rawcliffe Lake on 5th September.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Status: Winter visitor.

Recorded at Sheriff Hutton on 22nd February.

Two pairs at Pond Head on 8th May. Reported from Yearsley Moor, Forest Farm, Terrington and gardens on Hull Road. Two at Osbaldwick on 20th October - unusual for the area - and 30 at Morby Wood.

Ten at Wheldrake from 29th November.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Status: Migrant breeding/passage visitor.

The first records were of two at Coneysthorpe Bank Woods on 24th May and three at Wass on 25th. Seen on 11th July in a Sheriff Hutton garden where they have attempted to nest for the last two years. On both occasions the nest has been destroyed (cat or crow?).
Singles at Melbourne and Castle Howard on 10th August and Brandsby on 28th September.

In the Lower Derwent Valley, they were regular early in September and towards the month end singles were at Thornton Ellers on 24th and White Carr on 26th. Last sightings were at North Duffield Carrs on 30th September and 1st and 2nd October.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Status: Casual migrant breeder/passage visitor.

The only records were of single males at Huby on 1st May and Wheldrake Ings on 11th August.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Status: Winter visitor.

Three were at Wheldrake on 19th October with seven from 22nd including one colour ringed bird, at least three remained until 24th with one on 31st. A single female/immature at Wheldrake Ings on 7th November with three in the reedbed on 8th.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Status: Resident breeder.

Seen on 4th February in a garden at Osbaldwick, where they are usually scarce.

A family group at Claxton on 17th June, flocks of ten at New Earswick Nature Reserve on 4th July and at Huby on 31st December.

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*

Status: Resident breeder.

One at Strensall on 1st January, seven at Thornton Ellers on 1st February, at Terrington on 3rd March and in a garden at Sheriff Hutton on 21st April. Parties of between two and six at several locations at Yearsley Moor on 25th April.

Singles at Castle Howard on 10th May and Wass on 19th June. A pair at Huby on 27th June, where a single on 2nd July.

Singles at Terrington on 26th October, Nunnington on 23rd November, and Huby on 28th and 29th December.

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus*

Status: Resident breeder.

One at Terrington on 3rd February. Several breeding at sites near Peel Park with one at Yearsley on 30th November. At Dunnington Common this has now become a rare breeding bird.

In the Lower Derwent Valley, singing males were present at Thornton Ellers, Melbourne, Hagg Bridge, Sutton, Low Grounds, North Duffield Carrs and North Duffield during the last week of February and 11 were at Thornton on 24th.

Throughout August they were regular at Wheldrake and Thornton Ellers with the largest flock of 22 at Thornton on 28th.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

Status: Resident breeder.

Seen throughout the year at Huby, with a post-breeding flock of ten on 5th July. Breeding also took place at many sites by Brandsby. A group of five at Yearsley Moor on 14th July.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor

A breeding bird throughout the area but very much under-recorded. Fortyseven were at Thornton Ellers on 1st February, and 21 at Wheldrake on 7th. Common throughout the year at Huby. Seven at Newton-on-Ouse on 5th May and 23rd June.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Status: Resident breeder/winter visitor.

Another under-recorded species.

Common at Huby throughout the year. Three at Newton-on-Ouse on 5th May, with several parties of between two and six at Yearsley Moor on 14th July.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Status: Resident breeder.

Recorded in and around Brandsby village in all seasons with probably two pairs present.

Singles at Yearsley Moor Wood on 14th January, at Castle Howard on 3rd and 17th February and 17th March. At Yearsley Moor Wood throughout March. Two at Castle Howard on 20th April and a single at Wheldrake Ings on 25th. Further singles at Wass on 25th May, at Nunnington on 16th June and at Yearsley Moor on 14th July.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Status: Resident breeder.

One or two between January and August at Ampleforth, Castle Howard, Dalby, Dunnington Common, Huby, Naburn Sewage Works, Newburgh Priory, Nunnington, Pond Head, Poppleton, Rowntree Park (York), Strensall Common, Sutton-on-Forest, Wass, Welburn, Wheldrake Ings, and Yearsley Moor.

Bred at Cop Howe and Black Moor.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

Status: Extremely rare visitor.

An immature bird by the Pool Hide, Wheldrake on 8th September - a first for the Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve.

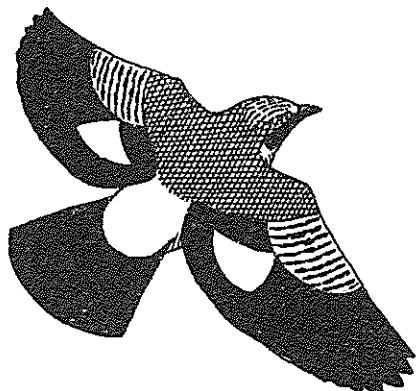
GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

A single bird showing well along the River Ouse at Fulford from mid-December to month end.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor.

In the Lower Derwent Valley two pairs were seen regularly around Wheldrake/Bank Island in March with another pair by Thicket Priory. Pairs at Thorganby, Wheldrake and Thornton in April. In August, four immatures were in the car park at Wheldrake Ings on 29th, presumably from the nearby Thicket Priory. Three at Wheldrake Ings on 1st September, with two immatures on 8th and another immature at North Duffield Carrs on 28th. October was an excellent month with birds seen almost daily from numerous sites around the Reserve - Ellerton, Aughton, North Duffield, Wheldrake (up to four birds), Newton (up to six) and Thornton (three). The peak count was of 14 on 11th, although probably many more were involved. In November they were seen regularly throughout the site with a maximum of seven recorded on 28th. In December again regular with one or two at Wheldrake and singles at Thorganby, Storwood and North Duffield.



AJB'98

Elsewhere: single birds seen at Strensall on 1st January and 3rd March. Then at Wass on 8th May and Huby on 3rd June when three birds at Strensall Common. Seen at Wass again on 19th June and Yearsley Moor on 14th July.

Breeding recorded at Cop Howe and Yearsley Forest.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Status: Resident breeder.

Regular at Huby throughout the year and a 'very noisy and populous predator' at Brandsby. Eight were at Newton-on-Ouse on 5th May and ten at New Earswick Nature Reserve on 29th December.

In the Lower Derwent Valley, 12 at Thorganby on 18th January was the most notable record.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Status: Resident breeder.

Common at Huby all year. A partially leucistic individual, which superficially resembled a Hooded Crow (*Corvus corone cornix*), at Flaxton on 30th March. Three at Newton-on-Ouse on 5th May and four on 23rd June.

The only large flock recorded was of 200 at Castle Howard on 10th May.

At Brandsby the village colony has dispersed as a result of the removal of a tree at Rectory Corner.

In the Lower Derwent Valley, numbers began to move eastward in August over Wheldrake to the Melbourne roost, with 150 on 30th.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Status: Resident breeder.

In the Lower Derwent Valley a large influx was notable towards the end of January, with 3000+ adjacent to the site on 20th and 7,300+ on 21st. The Melbourne area roost of corvids reached c.13,000 on 21st, mainly comprised of Rooks. In March, there were 52 nests at Elvington/Sutton and 22 between Wheldrake and Elvington. There were 61 occupied nests in the rookery adjacent to North Duffield Carrs in April, with 21 nests at Thornton Ellers. In August small numbers began to move eastward over Wheldrake to the Melbourne roost from mid-month, with 800+ on 30th, and 300+ roosted near North Duffield Carrs on 31st.

Elsewhere: 142 at Newton-on-Ouse on 5th May and 68 on 23rd June, where there were an estimated 101 active nests.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Status: Resident breeder.

Another under recorded species.

Common all year at Huby. Six at Newton-on-Ouse on 5th May and four on 23rd June.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Status: Resident breeder and winter visitor.

In January and February, and again from late November, several thousand roosted under Lendal Bridge, York. Birds were nesting in York from early April and young were seen on 25th April. Nesting material was observed being carried into Sainsbury's multi-storey car park on 28th May.

Common in Huby but generally under-recorded elsewhere. Twenty nine at Newton-on-Ouse on 5th May, eight on 23rd June with 200 at Castle Howard on 6th June.

In the Lower Derwent Valley 7000+ counted on 15th September, whereas in October there were only small numbers apart from an isolated peak of 750 on 23rd.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Status: Resident breeder though often difficult to find.

Eleven at Elm Park Estate on 1st January. Daily sightings in Huby throughout the year. Good numbers in Osbaldwick and in Riccall. The first young were recorded on 15th May. In Newton-on-Ouse 18 on 5th May and 30 on 23rd June. There were winter flocks of up to 40 on Dunnington Common.

Either under recorded or a dramatic decline. It would help if observers could estimate a total of flock size.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Status: Resident breeder/passage visitor. Rare in northern part of the area.

One or two birds almost daily in Huby. On 24th February singles at Howsham and Scrayingham, in a Sheriff Hutton garden on 27th and on 3rd March with a singing male near Naburn on 7th and four at Forest Farm, Warthill on 5th April and 14th May.

On 20th April, 11 near Riccall with six at Newton-on-Ouse on both 5th May and 23rd June. One at Hagg Bridge on 13th July, four at Spellar Farm on 28th August and nine at Gale Lane on 21st October. A single at Cornborough on 22nd December. Winter flocks of up to 50 on Dunnington Common and a flock of 60 at Claxton on 27th December.

Nesting took place in a garden nest-box in Sheriff Hutton but the four eggs were abandoned. There were further sightings in the garden on 21st April, 5th May and 15th December. The only other record of nesting was at Huby but this also failed.

One recorder commented that this has now become a rare species in the north YOC area. Another said there were no sightings in Wilberfoss and that it had apparently now disappeared.

In the Lower Derwent Valley, 60 were at Thorganby on 10th March, with 700 on 17th when 250 at Brighton and 75 at Bank Island on 18th, with an estimated 1,300 present around the site on 17th/18th. In August the only notable flock was of 65 at Thornton on 15th. On 4th September there were 110 at Thornton and 200 there on 22nd, with 230 at Thornton Ellers on 22nd December, 60 at Storwood on 27th and 300 at Brighton on 30th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor.

Seven at Forest Farm, Warthill on 29th March with eight males on 5th May. Twenty four at Newton-on-Ouse on 5th May where there were seven on 23rd June.

In Riccall there were fewer present than in during the 1995 BBS survey counts. Remarkable that no large flocks were sighted.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Status: Winter passage/visitor.

Single birds a bird table at Dunnington Common on 8th January, and at Yearsley Moor Wood on 1st March with two on 30th.

At the end of the year one over Dunnington Common on 16th November, with another in a Sheriff Hutton garden on 24th (the first seen there in 20 years), also in Selby on 31st December.

In the Lower Derwent Valley 'a very poor winter' was noted, with the first record that of a single at Seavy Carr on 22nd January and another at Thornton Ellers on 13th February. The

first autumn sightings were of three flying west at Wheldrake Ings on 6th October followed by 27 near Newton on Derwent on 19th November.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Status: Resident breeder, passage/winter visitor.

In January, 30 at Fulford Golf Course on 28th, two at Elm Park Estate on 30th and on 9th March. Forty were roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 11th February and 40 at Ellerton on 24th. Seven at Newton-on-Ouse on 5th May.

Autumn records included 400 at Hagg Bridge on 22nd September and 210 on the Low Grounds near Sutton on 22nd December.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor.

Seen frequently at Brandsby. Four were at Rufforth on 25th March and four pairs at Bridge End Farm, Scrayingham on 19th April. Six at Warthill on 23rd May. Parties of four to six were at Yearsley Moor on 25th April. Four were at Newton-on-Ouse on 23rd June and a flock of 20 at Strensall on 20th October.

In the Lower Derwent Valley there were up to 30 at Thornton Ellers throughout February with several smaller charms elsewhere and 40 at Thornton Ellers on 31st March.

Up to 25 were noted during August at North Duffield, Melbourne, Ellerton, and Bank Island, while good numbers were present throughout the site in September with 1000+ in all on 15th and a charm of 320 at Hagg Bridge on 22nd.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor.

In January flocks of 30 were at Dunnington Common on 1st and at Hessacarr Nature Reserve on 4th, 22 at Castle Howard on 13th, 65 at Yearsley Moor Wood on 14th, and a large flock of mixed Siskin and Redpoll at Strensall on 28th. In February, 100 were at Pond Head on 3rd with four at Castle Howard on 17th. Yearsley Moor Wood held 100 on 1st March with 75 on 30th. Fifteen were at Scrayingham on 4th April and one at Yearsley on 30th.

The first post-breeding flock of 25 was at Smargate Farm, Brandsby on 2nd October. Birds were seen at Nunnington on 23rd November, at Huby on 24th December, Yearsley Moor on 26th and at Castle Howard on 27th.

In the Lower Derwent Valley Siskin were very scarce early in the year but 35 were recorded at Melbourne on 7th February and 47 at Thornton Ellers on 24th with 20 seen on 31st March.

The first returning birds were six at Wheldrake on 29th September. This was followed by another poor month with six at Wheldrake on 11th October, ten on 12th and eight on 16th being the only records. November continued poor with 21 on 21st being the only record. In December there was some improvement with 80+ at Thornton Ellers on 8th, 60+ at Bank Island on 13th and 110 at Newton on 20th.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor.

Recorded almost daily in the village of Stearsby. One seen in a Sheriff Hutton garden on 3rd March and 45 at Rufforth on 25th. Sightings in April included a singing bird at Osbaldwick on 4th, when there were 17 at Claxton, followed by a larger flock of 50 on 17th with Seven at Forest Farm on 5th and 25th; seen at Sheriff Hutton on 21st and ten at Rufforth on 24th. Fifteen were at Newton-on-Ouse on 5th May, ten at Pond Head on 8th and seven at Forest Farm on 23rd.

A single at Newton-on-Ouse on 23rd June, at Sheriff Hutton on 16th August and a post-breeding flock of more than 70 at Poppleton on 27th.

In the Lower Derwent Valley they were scarce until an influx of 115 to Thorganby on 20th January and flocks of 60 at Melbourne and 90 at East Cottingwith on 21st. In February, 60 at East Cottingwith and 65 at Thorganby on 7th, 55 at Bank Island on 18th and 185 at Thornton on 24th. Sixty were at Thornton Ellers on 31st March.

There were good numbers of breeding birds throughout the site.

Small post-breeding flocks appeared at the end of May with 31 at Ellerton on 29th and 22 at North Duffield on 31st. In September, an impressive 350 at Thornton on 4th and 270 at Hagg Bridge on 22nd; small numbers moved south towards the end of the month, at around 15 per hour on 29th.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

Status: Scarce winter visitor.

At least three and possibly up to six with Linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*) at Thorganby on 20th January.

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Status: Breeder/passage, winter visitor.

Flocks of between ten and 44 birds were seen at Rawcliffe Lake between 11th and 24th January, including 20 showing characteristics of Mealy Redpoll (*Carduelis f. flammea*). A large flock of Redpoll mixed with Siskin at Strensall Common on 28th when 60 in woodland at Selby. Eighteen at Rawcliffe Lake on various dates in February. Also in February, 100, of which 75 were of the 'Mealy' type, at Dunnington Common on 11th and small numbers at Rawcliffe Lake

on 21st and 22nd.

The largest flock recorded was 150 birds, of which 90% appeared to be Mealy, at Yearsley Moor Wood on 1st March. Two females were at Huby on 26th April and a single in a Poppleton garden on 22nd May.

Twenty were at Kilburn on 28th September. There were no further sightings until December when eight were seen at Strensall on 7th and 20 at Selby.

In the Lower Derwent Valley, 19 were at Thornton Ellers on 1st February and following days with 21 at Melbourne on 21st and 62 birds with 'mealy' characteristics were at Thornton on 19th March. There were no further records until December when 60 were at Thornton Ellers on 4th with 40 at Newton from 19th to the month end.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Status: Resident breeder/passage, winter visitor.

Two males and one female were resident at Brandsby throughout the year. Sightings at Strensall on 1st January, two females by the river at Poppleton on 8th, and at least five at Fulford Golf Course on 28th. A pair at Rawcliffe Lane on 10th March and at Yearsley Moor on 29th June.

Single birds at Nunnington on 23rd November. A single at Rawcliffe Lake on 12th December (a first for this site), and a female at Huby on 26th, when two males were at Yearsley Moor.

In the Lower Derwent Valley, 17 were in the car park area at Wheldrake on 17th January. Twenty nine were counted on the reserve on 13th February in small parties. In August up to six were again in the car park area on 31st, with 11 at Thornton Ellers and three at Ellerton. There were up to 30 in several small family parties at Wheldrake in September and up to 10 frequented the car park area during October, with small parties elsewhere and 17 by the pool at Wheldrake on 13th.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Status: Rare visitor.

A single in the Wheldrake car park area on 1st and 23rd March - second and third records for the Reserve.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Status: Rare winter vagrant.

The only record was of a pair in front of Swantail Hide at Wheldrake Ings on 8th November.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Status Resident breeder/winter passage visitor.

Six were wintering at Rawcliffe Lake in the early part of the year. Larger numbers were at Forest Farm and Bridge End Farm, at Huby, Stillington, and Sutton-on-Forest between April and June. Seven on 5th May at Newton-on-Ouse where five were seen on 23rd June.

In the Lower Derwent Valley 12 singing males were at Melbourne and Thornton Ings on 24th February.

Flocks of 80 at Menthorpe and 30 at Storwood were recorded at the end of December.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Status: Resident breeder/passage visitor.

Six wintered at Rawcliffe Lake at both ends of the year. Single at Castle Howard on 17th March. A male there on 23rd April with one at Claxton on 14th and a pair at Bridge End Farm on 19th. Two males also at Bridge End Farm on 20th May and 17th June. A pair at Castle Howard on 10th May and 6th June. A male was at Newburgh on 25th May and at Lilling Bottom on 20th July.

One recorder commented "not now common even in suitable habitat in squares SE 57, 67 and 77" (the most northern 10 km. squares of the YOC recording area).

In the Lower Derwent Valley birds became more obvious during September: 36 came to roost by Swantail Hide in the reedbed on 29th - first autumn roost. Numbers increased in October with 61 on 3rd and 50+ regularly to the month end, increasing further up to 70 throughout November.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

Status: Resident breeder.

Fifteen at Bank Island in February with 25 at Whenby on 10th, 50 on 24th and single birds at Sheriff Hutton on 24th. Also recorded near Ellerton on 10th March, and at Forest Farm on 29th and throughout May and June. A singing male at Sheriff Hutton on 8th April, one at Poppleton on 14th with two on 21st and on 18th May. Two near Riccall on 20th April and Grimstone Bar, York on 28th. A single at Claxton on 3rd and 17th June. Singing males at Melbourne on 13th July, Naburn Moor on 21st and Melbourne again on 10th August.

Seen throughout the breeding season at Wilberfoss and "usually seen" at Lilling Bottom. A few breeding pairs at Strensall, Sheriff Hutton and Sutton in the Forest.

Twentyone were at Ellerton on 26th October. More than 60 were roosting near Church Lane Bridge, near the Pocklington Canal at Thornton on 28th December and three were at Sutton-on-Forest on 31st December.

ESCAPES / INTRODUCTIONS

BLACK SWAN

At Castle Howard all year.

FERAL DOMESTIC GOOSE

One at Castle Howard on 6th June with a party of Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*).

BAR-HEADED GOOSE

Single adult seen at Wheldrake Ings from 19th February to the month end, with Canada Geese. Also seen on 11th May, and from 7th to 15th September associated with large numbers of Greylag Geese (*Anser anser*).

NE NE GOOSE

A single present at Wheldrake from 7th to 15th September associated with Bar Headed Goose (*Anser indicus*) and Greylags.

SNOW GOOSE

A hybrid goose resembling a blue snow goose at Wheldrake Ings from 4th to 25th February. Two blue phase adult birds arrived on 24th October and frequented Wheldrake on and off to the end of November and throughout December.

MUSCOVY DUCK

One on River Foss on 10th January and 14th October.

COCKATIEL

A white bird with a yellow crest and orange ear coverts seen at Huby on 3rd August.

PEACOCK

One two miles west of Buttercrambe on 18th March and a male on 2nd April near The Friends Meeting House, York.

GUINEA FOWL

A deceased bird was found at Seavy Carr on 28th February.

The following species have been recorded in the York area since 1966 but were not seen in 1996:

Black-throated Diver	Black Kite
Great Northern Diver	Golden Pheasant
Red-footed Falcon	Black-winged Stilt
Ring-billed Gull	Stone Curlew
Roseate Tern	Kentish Plover
Caspian Tern	Dotterel
Whiskered Tern	White rumped Sandpiper
Guillemot	Pectoral Sandpiper
Little Auk	Red-necked Phalarope
Puffin	Grey Phalarope
Alpine Swift	Arctic Skua
Bee-eater	Great Skua
Hoopoe	Red-rumped Swallow
Wryneck	Richard's Pipit
Woodlark	Dipper
Manx Shearwater	Nightingale
Gannet	Cetti's Warbler
Cattle Egret	Marsh Warbler
White Stork	Barred Warbler
Egyptian Goose	Firecrest
Green-winged Teal	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Blue-winged Teal	Golden Oriole
Gannet	Raven
Cattle Egret	Rose-coloured Starling
White Stork	Arctic Redpoll
Egyptian Goose	Crossbill
(Green-winged Teal)	Lapland Bunting
Blue-winged Teal	Chil Bunting
Ring-necked Duck	
Eider	
Long-tailed Duck	
Common Scoter	
Velvet Scoter	

Contributors, with apologies for any who have been missed.

Andy Booth
Anne Lloyd
B. G. Pepper
Brian Coddington
Dave Richardson
Dr I. Barker
F. W. Oates
Ian Brooks
I.F. & R.V. Traynor
I.W. & C. Roberts
J. S. Henderson
M. J. Dixon
Malcolm Douglas
Mrs D. Anderson
Nigel Stewart
P. J. Reed
Peter Hutchinson.
Peter Reid
Peter Watson
R. E. Chapman
Richard Atterby
Roy Crossley
Simon Eves
T. & V. Weston
T. Chilton
J. Pewtress
English Nature (Lower Derwent Valley)