

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB REPORT 2018

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Compiled by

J. Begbie, D. M. Bye, K. J. Chapman, P. A. Doherty, S. Farley,
C. Gomersall, J. Leadley, D. Tate, D. Richardson,
C. B. Thomas & F. Walton

Edited by

K. J. Chapman, D. M. Bye, R. E. Chapman, P. A. Doherty,
J. Leadley & M. Sitnikova

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Committee 2018

President	Professor Sir John Lawton
Chairman	Peter Watson Email: chairman@yorkbirding.org.uk
Secretary	Jane Chapman Email: secretary@yorkbirding.org.uk
Treasurer	Jenny Dixon Email: treasurer@yorkbirding.org.uk
Recorder	Jono Leadley Email: recorder@yorkbirding.org.uk
Committee Members	J. Begbie R. Chapman E. Buizza P. Doherty D. M. Bye

York Ornithological Club

This report has been compiled by members of the York Ornithological Club (YOC), with records submitted by members and others who are active in watching an area of some 580 square miles around York. The YOC was formally established in 1965, though the founder members originally met at an evening class run by Michael Clegg in the late '50s, with the aim of observing and recording birds and other wildlife, and supporting their conservation, in the Club's recording area; this comprises 15 10-km squares around York. The area covers a range of habitats: wetlands (the Lower Derwent Valley), deciduous woodland (Hambleton and Howardian Hills), coniferous woodland (Yearsley and Ampleforth), lakes (Castle Howard and Heslington East), residual heathland (Allerthorpe, Skipwith and Strensall Commons), peat bog (Askham Bog) and the large agricultural areas of the Vales of York and Pickering.

The Club has a membership of about 90 and normally meets on the first Tuesday of the month (except June, July and August) at St Olave's Church Hall, off Marygate, York for a full programme of talks and discussions, and for the informal exchange of information. In addition, excursions are arranged to areas of ornithological interest, both within and outside the recording area, as well as local walks on selected summer evenings. The annual Michael Clegg Memorial Bird Race takes place in January, when teams from across Yorkshire, including the YOC, focus on seeing as many species as possible in one day within their clubs' recording areas. Full details of the Club's activities can be found on the website - www.yorkbirding.org.uk. This also includes a general Twitter feed (@yorkbirding) as well as one devoted to the York Minster Peregrines (@yorkperegrines). We also have an active email group where information about local sightings is shared.

Editorial

Welcome to York Ornithological Club's 2018 Report, compiled and produced by the Editorial Committee. The Club's annual survey looked at wintering Golden Plover this year; the findings along with historical occurrence of this species in Yorkshire and the area are revealed in an article by Paul Doherty and David Tate. Paul Doherty has also written an article on an unusual movement of Stock Doves in the autumn, while another dip into the archives by David Tate has thrown up more interesting changes in species' prevalence and distribution. There were three first records for the area in 2018. Duncan Bye's descriptions of his sightings at Wheldrake Ings of Pomarine Skua, following stormy weather on the east coast, and White-winged Black Tern are on pages 122 and 123. Disappointingly, an adult Black-crowned Night Heron* which turned up in two different non-birders' gardens and was photographed in each was not actually seen in the flesh by any member of the Club (*subject to acceptance by the YNU).

We received more records than ever before in 2018 - helped no doubt by the re-vamped (and easier to use) spreadsheet on which sightings can be submitted.

However, as with any publication that mainly relies on the submission of casual records, there are inevitably patches within the area that are covered more thoroughly and more regularly - again notably the Lower Derwent Valley NNR and SE53. There is therefore an inevitable bias towards coverage of these sites in the Report. It does not necessarily follow that some species are absent elsewhere; we may just not have anyone visiting that particular area often - the hectads (10 km x 10 km squares) SE73 and SE77 in the northeast and southeast of the recording area are generally under-recorded. Changes in habitat and land use can also affect sightings. With the end of Harewood Whin landfill site at Rufforth (commonly known as Rufforth Tip) as a working site, the anticipated marked decline in gull flocks and the scarcer species sometimes found within them has continued.

Breeding records also tend to be under-reported, so in an endeavour to gather more confirmation of breeding, particularly of common resident species, the Club successfully organised an informal weekend count at the end of May which many members took part in.

The list of birds seen in the York recording area since 1966 has been updated and some changes have been made to the species lists, for which we publish first and last dates, for both summer migrants and winter visitors. Where birds are known to overwinter occasionally, e.g. Blackcap and Chiffchaff, the first migrant date is taken as the date a singing individual is first heard.

How the report is produced

Records are received and collated, then split into sections which are distributed to the section writers who compile reports for their particular section. These are then returned to the Editorial Committee for checking of species report accuracy, editing, proofreading and the addition of articles, regular features and illustrations, before a final version of the report is produced.

Acknowledgements

As ever, thank you very much to everyone who contributed records, by whatever means, without which the annual report would not be possible. Thanks to Elaine Gathercole and Sean Garvey who carry out the counts and provide WeBS data to the Club from Castle Howard Lake and the University of York (Heslington East and West) respectively. One of the most significant sites for birds in the York area is the Lower Derwent Valley. Many thanks once again to the Natural England team for sharing records posted on the LDV Blog and for WeBS counts and to Craig Ralston for allowing us to reprint the annual Rare Breeding Bird Panel report for the Lower Derwent Valley NNR and Skipwith Common. Thank you to FERA (now National Agri-Food Innovation Campus, Sand Hutton - recorded as SHL in the main species accounts) and Friends of Rawcliffe Meadows for giving permission to extract records from their 2018 Reports, also to Richard Baines at the North Yorkshire Turtle Dove Project for records from the northern tetrads. Thanks to Neil Calbrade at the BTO for providing BirdTrack records and information about the presence of species in BBS squares in 2018.

The Editorial Committee would also like to express its gratitude to Paul Doherty and David Tate for their articles and to Duncan Bye for his descriptions of finding the White-winged Black Tern and Pomarine Skuas. Thank you to John Lawton for analysing wintering Goosander data. Many thanks to Sue Ball, Ian Brookes, Tom Broxup, Duncan Bye, Doug Crawford, David Craven, Jono Leadley, Chris Lloyd, Jan Nobel, Peter Richman, Trevor Walton, Antony Ward, Tim Ward and Terry Weston for their photos which illustrate this report. Thanks to Rob Chapman for running the website and keeping it updated, and to Duncan Bye and Jono Leadley for running the Twitter feed. Thank you to Doug Crawford for keeping everyone up to date about the Minster Peregrines via their dedicated Twitter feed.

Many thanks to everyone who was involved with the preparation of the report for publication. Records from YorkBirding emails were collated by Paz Fletcher; Fiona Walton extracted records from the LDV Blog; Rob Chapman formatted all records and collated them onto the master spreadsheet; Paul Doherty compiled the Highlights of 2018 and the weather report was prepared by David Tate. Thank you to all of the section writers for the time and effort taken to make sure that the species accounts give an accurate reflection of the status of each species during the year as it is not possible to include every record in each account. The species reports in the Classified List were written by the following individuals:

Jane Chapman	geese
Duncan Bye	swans and ducks
Fiona Walton	game birds, divers, herons, egrets, storks and grebes
David Tate	raptors (including owls)
Jane Chapman	crakes, rails, Moorhen, Coot and Crane
Jono Leadley	waders
Chris Gomersall	skuas, terns and gulls
Jane Chapman	doves, pigeons, Cuckoo to shrikes (excluding raptors)
Jonathan Begbie	crows, tits and larks
Paul Doherty	martins, swallows and warblers
Steve Farley	Firecrest to Starling
Barry Thomas	thrushes
Dave Richardson	flycatchers, chats, wheatears and Dipper
Jane Chapman	sparrows, wagtails, pipits, finches and buntings

Verification of records of rare and scarcer species was undertaken by Jono Leadley, York Area Recorder. Records still awaiting confirmation by the BBRC or YNU are marked with an asterisk (*) in the Highlights section. These are detailed in the relevant species reports and updates on their acceptance will be given in future reports. Records from previous years that have been accepted/rejected are included at the end of the classified list.

Jane Chapman - Editor 2019

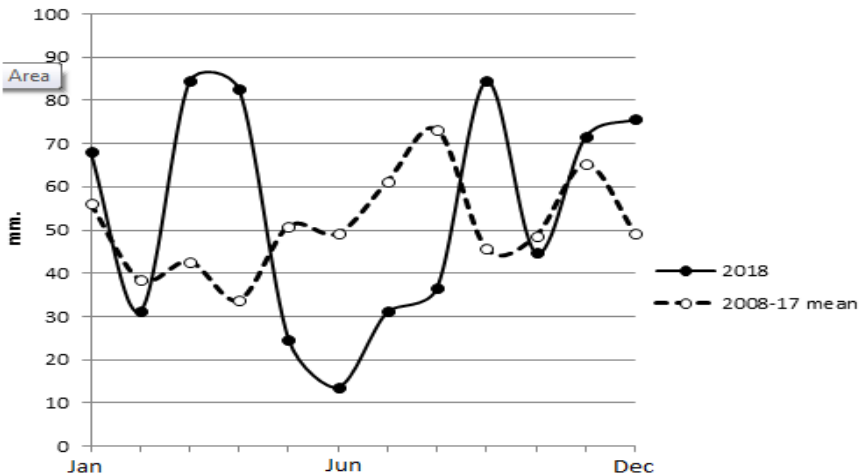
Highlights of 2018

Weather in 2018

Rainfall totals and temperatures in 2018 were similar to the previous 10 year means, however this masks the fact that the year had periods of extremes including a very cold February, a wet March and April and a glorious summer.

The named storms which passed over the UK in January had little impact on the York area and both rainfall and maximum temperatures were close to the previous 10 year mean (see Graphs 1 and 2). There were 18 ground frosts, though at times conditions were almost spring-like with 14°C occurring on the 24th. February was colder and drier with temperatures falling to -8°C on the 4th. The month will be best remembered for the anticyclonic storm, labelled by the media as the 'Beast from the East', which arrived on the 22nd. By the end of the month daytime temperatures had fallen to 2°C and a total of 3.5cm of snow was recorded on the 27th and 28th. The 'Beast' continued into early March and a further 4.5cm of snow fell on the 1st when the maximum temperature remained below freezing (-2°C). Temperatures steadily rose after the 5th until the arrival of a 'mini beast' on the 17th which led to 2cm of snow on the 18th and maximum temperature of 2°C. Between and after the 'beasts' there were periods of heavy rainfall and the monthly total of 84mm was double the previous 10 year mean (see Graph 1). The pumps which move water from Riccall Dam to the Ouse were overwhelmed on the 13th and flooding occurred in the area for the first time in many years.

Graph 1 Monthly rainfall totals for 2018 and the monthly means for 2008-17

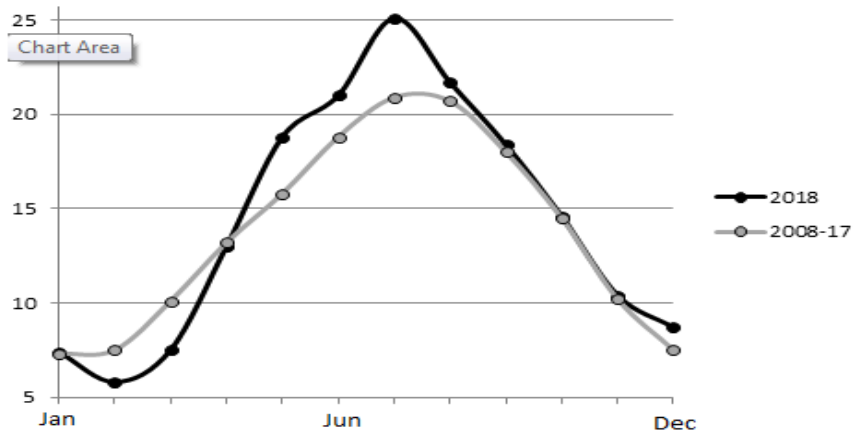


April was dominated by westerly airflows and average temperatures returned to normal. There were no air frosts, four days over 20°C and a maximum of 26°C on

the 20th. The westerlies also brought extended periods of rain and the monthly total of 82mm included 27mm on the 1st and 2nd which activated the Foss Barrier in York. The cold conditions and heavy rainfall during March and early April led to a late departure of ducks from the LDV, e.g. the number of Wigeon recorded during the April 2018 WeBS was eight times higher than the equivalent figure for 2017. The effect on summer migrants was mixed, some species e.g. Swift arriving up to a fortnight later than expected, but others arriving on similar dates to 2017.

There then followed a memorable four month period dominated by high pressure resulting in above average temperatures and below average rainfall - see Graphs 1 and 2. May had 13 days when temperatures exceeded 20°C and 25 dry days, whilst June had five days exceeding 25°C and 24 dry days. In addition June had only 14mm of rainfall and night-time temperatures averaged 10°C with a minimum of 16°C recorded on the 20th. Some birds bred later than usual e.g. Reed Warblers, with only adults ringed during June; however the conditions were considered excellent for prospecting Swifts. July was even hotter: 13 days exceeded 25°C; 31.3°C was achieved on the 27th, which proved to be the highest of the year, and the mean minimum temperature for the month was 4°C above the 10 year mean. The month had more than 20 dry days and although the rainfall total rose to 31mm most of this (19mm) occurred during a downpour on the 26th.

Graph 2 Mean monthly maximum temperatures 2018 and 2008-17



During early August temperatures rose to 27.9°C on the 3rd but afterwards there was a steady cooling and the mean for the month was only 1°C above average. However, 20 dry days resulted in a continuation of the drought. The conditions in 2018 led to a bumper crop of Silver Birch seeds that supported large numbers of Redpoll in the autumn.

Maximum temperatures over the next three months were very close to the 10 year mean (see Graph 2). Frosts were rare whilst the rainfall totals fluctuated

widely. September had 84mm of rain mostly resulting from Storm Bronagh which brought the year's highest daily total of 60.9mm on the 20th. As for the rest of the month there were 17 dry days. October had 19 days without rainfall and a below average 45mm of rain which was mostly due to the arrival of fronts from the Atlantic on the 5th and 14th. Similar westerlies brought heavy bouts of rain on three days in November resulting in an above average total of 71mm. However, soils remained dry and few Golden Plovers were encountered during the Club survey. The year ended with a wet and relatively warm December. Rain was recorded on 19 days and the monthly total of 76mm was more than double the 10 year mean. Five days exceeded 12°C though 7 air frosts occurred during periods dominated by high pressure.

January

Cetti's Warbler was an early addition to the 2018 list with one seen calling at CHL on the 7th. The only **Waxwings** in the first winter period were 24 at Haxby on the 4th, plus a report from Huntington on the 8th. An **American Wigeon*** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd and again on the 7th, whilst wildfowl in the LDV included 127 **Whooper Swans**, 337 **Pink-footed Geese**, 4 **Tundra Bean Geese**, 52 **White-fronted Geese**, 12,050 **Wigeon** and 11,220 **Teal**. Extensive flooding limited wader numbers in the LDV, but they included 3500 **Lapwing** and 71 **Ruff**. January gull sightings from the Wheldrake Ings roost included single **Mediterranean** and **Iceland Gulls**, each on four dates and **Glaucous Gulls** on five dates, while a **Kittiwake** was at NDC on the 19th. There was an **Iceland Gull** at Rufforth on the 5th and a **Yellow-legged Gull** at Rawcliffe Meadows on the 7th. **Hawfinches** were still present at the Yorkshire Arboretum following the invasion in 2017; a minimum of 100 and probably up to 110 were present on the 7th. CHL had an excellent count of 66 **Mandarin Ducks** on the 21st. York city centre hosted the traditional **Pied Wagtail** roost, with 700 counted at Parliament Street on the 23rd. Back at the LDV a **Great White Egret** at Bubwith Bridge on the 25th was less newsworthy than a few years ago, but the 30th saw a colourful end to the month with a **Firecrest** at Huntington.

February

Gulls opened the month with intermittent sightings of both **Mediterranean** and **Glaucous Gulls** at Wheldrake Ings, with a **Yellow-legged Gull** there on the 17th. The same date also produced the year's only **Caspian Gull** at Rufforth. The first **Raven** of the year flew calling over Skipwith Common on the 1st and another, a first for the site, over SHL on the 9th. The LDV was ever reliable for wildfowl with the **American Wigeon*** on three dates, plus a **Green-winged Teal** on the 18th (when a count showed 6580 **Teal** in the valley). **Whooper Swans** peaked at 141 on the 12th and two **Bewick's Swans** were present from the 12th to the 20th. There was a significant passage of **Pink-footed Geese** on the 17th when 1175 flew northwest, with another 320 on the next day. A **Great White Egret** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 7th and a **Bittern** there on the 14th. Passerine interest was represented by 32 **Hawfinches** at the Yorkshire Arboretum on the 18th and the

roost of **Corn Buntings** at Melbourne reached 97 on the 19th.

March

A **Grey Plover** flew west over NDC on the 1st when an **Iceland Gull** was also present and was seen again on the 2nd and the 11th. The 3rd produced a high count of 716 **Pintail** in the LDV and three **Scaup** at Heslington East on the 2nd had increased to five by the next day. The 3rd also saw the first spring migrant with ten **Sand Martins** at Riccall. Other migrants on the same day were a **Little Gull** at Bank Island and a '**Scandinavian**' **Rock Pipit** at NDC. A **Smew** was at CHL on the 4th and two **Scaup** at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th. A late winter roost of **Corn Buntings** near Riccall peaked at an impressive 117 on the 11th and the same area had 510 **Carrion Crows** attracted by abattoir slurry. The first singing **Chiffchaff** was at Haxby on the 12th. The 14th saw 261 **Whooper Swans** heading northeast over Bank Island and the following day a **Brent Goose** came in to roost at Bubwith Ings. An early **Spotted Redshank** was at NDC on the 19th and a **Common (Mealy) Redpoll** was with **Lesser Redpolls** at Thornton on the 21st and 23rd. The first **Swallow** was a welcome sight at Knavesmire on the 22nd, closely followed by a **Wheatear** at East Cottingwith the next day and a **Willow Warbler** at Skipwith Common on the 25th. Forty **Hawfinches** were still at Castle Howard on the 26th. Two red-head **Smew** flew over Bank Island on the 27th and the next day the first **Osprey** of the spring headed slowly north over the same site. The month closed with a colour ringed theme as 39 **Black-tailed Godwits** at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th included a colour ringed bird and the following day saw two **Black-necked Grebes** at NDC, one of which was colour ringed.

April

Evidence of **Hawfinches** away from Castle Howard came with a record of three at Gilling East on 1st April. The LDV had an impressive 6000 **Wigeon** at the start of the month, but by the 29th just 45 remained. Scarcer wildfowl were represented by a **Smew** at CHL on the 6th, a **Common Scoter** at Clifton Ings on the 8th and the first **Garganey** was at Bolton Percy Ings on the 11th. An **Osprey** flew north over Bank Island on the 3rd and a **Little Ringed Plover** appeared at Eden Camp. The first **House Martins** were at Ryther Ings on the 4th, **Blackcaps** were singing at two sites on the 6th and two **Yellow Wagtails** were at East Cottingwith on the 9th. The latter date also saw four **Cranes** circle Bank Island before heading north. A **Bittern** was heard booming at East Cottingwith from the 2nd to the 6th. A **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was a good sighting at Strensall Common on the 13th and the next few days saw first records of **Ring Ouzel**, **Whitethroat**, **Cuckoo**, **Swift**, **Sedge Warbler** and **Lesser Whitethroat**. Bank Island had two **Little Gulls** on the 17th, with a **Mediterranean Gull** at Wheldrake Ings on the same date, whilst earlier in the month there had been **Kittiwakes** at CHL and Bank Island. A **Black Redstart** was at Fangfoss on the 14th. Four **Whimbrel** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and 76 roosted there on the 26th. A spate of arrivals during the 21st-23rd included **Hobby**, **Garden Warbler**, **Whinchat**, **Wood Warbler**, **Reed**

Warbler and **Redstart**, while a singing **Wood Warbler** at Yearsley Moor was the first there for several years. Wader records during April included **Greenshank**, **Spotted Redshank** and up to 47 **Black-tailed Godwits** in the LDV. An **Osprey** flew over Wheldrake Ings on the 26th, there were two **Black-necked Grebes** at NDC the next day and a **Grasshopper Warbler** at Milford Common on the 27th was the first of the year. There was an excellent count of 37 **Little Egrets** on the 29th in the LDV and three records of **Great White Egret** during the month added to the southern feel.

May

Two **Great White Egrets** were at NDC on the 1st, with another at Sutton Ings in the evening. Wheldrake Ings had a **Spotted Crane** calling in the early hours of the 1st and **Garganey** were seen at several places in the LDV with 13 counted on the 7th. The first **Spotted Flycatcher** was at Brayton Barff on the 5th, but the LDV continued to dominate the start of the month with records of **Wood Sandpiper**, **Sandwich Tern**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Corncrake** and **Turtle Dove**. A singing **Wood Warbler** was an excellent record in a Heslington garden on the 12th, but attention switched back to the LDV. A **Little Gull** was present at NDC on the 20th, while a Yorkshire rarity, a **White-winged Black Tern** (the first for the York area) was present all too briefly at Bank Island on the same date and the 21st saw a **Wood Sandpiper** present at Low Grounds, with a **Turnstone** there on the 28th. The **Wood Warbler** at Yearsley stayed to at least mid-month. By the end of the month there was a total of eight **Corncrakes** in the LDV and the final note of the month involved the success of the Minster **Peregrines** whose four young were ringed on the 31st.

June

With spring migration largely over, the focus in June turns to breeding birds. Strensall Common had both **Long-eared Owl** and **Nightjar** early in the month, whilst two churring male **Nightjars** and a female were at Yearsley Moor on the 10th. Two **Spotted Crakes** were calling at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th and the first brood of **Garganey** ducklings was seen there on the 13th. A **Crane** was at Rufforth on the 16th and two **Spoonbills** circled over Skipwith Common on the 19th. A pair of **Black-necked Grebes** at NDC produced the first successful breeding record since 2004 and in contrast two **Whooper Swans** spent the month there. Up to 10 singing **Corncrakes** were present in the LDV, with at least one bird still calling at the end of the month.

July

Nightjar sightings at Strensall Common continued into July and the duo of **Whooper Swans** was still present at NDC at the start of the month, however one was found dead on the 12th. NDC had the first proof of breeding of **Cetti's Warbler** for our area when a newly fledged juvenile was seen on the 3rd. An **Osprey** circled the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th and a **Wood Sandpiper** was found there on the 8th. Wheldrake Ings had a pair of **Pintail** with five well

grown young on the 10th. The 28th saw a **Wood Sandpiper** at Wheldrake Ings.

August

Wader migration is often the highlight of August, and this year there were low numbers of **Dunlin**, **Redshank**, **Greenshank**, **Common Sandpipers**, six Whimbrel, 11 **Black-tailed Godwits**, up to 15 **Green Sandpipers** and a **Spotted Redshank**, though 3000 **Lapwing** were at NDC by the end of the month. The LDV was also the best place for birds of prey with the first returning **Merlin** on the 15th, up to five **Hobbies** and six **Marsh Harriers**. An **Osprey** was fishing over Wheldrake Ings on the 27th, **Red Kites** were recorded regularly and **Peregrine** sightings increased towards the month end. Two **Cranes** were reported over Hagg Bridge on the 25th, while two **Ravens** seen flying over Hildenley on the 26th were the first since February, and a **Great White Egret** was at Bank Island on the 31st.

September

Ospreys continued to be a feature with reports from six different locations on a total of seven dates. **Hobbies** were seen regularly in the LDV throughout the month and a **Long-eared Owl** was seen briefly at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th. Waders were unexceptional with the best being a **Wood Sandpiper** at Wheldrake Ings from the 1st-3rd. The first **Pink-footed Geese** of the autumn headed south over the LDV on the 14th with skeins of 130 and 22 and four **Whooper Swans** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd. A **Pied Flycatcher** was at Hob Moor on the 22nd and the first **Fieldfares** were a trio at Forest of Galtres Golf Club on the 24th. Two **Yellow-legged Gulls** were near Riccall on the 26th when the last **Swift** of the year flew over Bank Island. A **Raven** was calling over Skipwith Common on the 30th.

October

Raven sightings continued with two over Castle Howard on the 1st, then one flew north over Wheldrake Ings on the 8th. The first **Redwing** of the autumn was at Bank Island on the 3rd. **Ospreys** were seen at Strensall on the 4th and at Haxby on the 8th and 9th. A **Rock Pipit** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th and again on the 14th, with six **Bearded Tits** there on the 10th. The first **Jack Snipe** of the autumn was at Heslington East on the 15th. The last three **Swallows** and the first **Brambling** of the autumn passed over Kirkby Wharfe on the 16th, a **Twite** was at Wheldrake Ings on the same date and a **Common (Mealy) Redpoll** was ringed at Skipwith Common on the 19th. A **Ring Ouzel** was an unexpected visitor to a York garden on the 18th and a rarer autumn find was the only **Yellow-browed Warbler** of the year, seen in York on the 21st. Autumn gales pushed large numbers of **Pomarine Skuas** down the North Sea in late October, but this hardy seabird is seldom seen inland, so two pale morph adults flying west over Wheldrake Ings on the 27th were arguably birds of the year and a great addition to the York recording area list. A **Hooded Crow** was at Full Sutton on the 29th.

November

A **Little Auk** filmed on the River Derwent at Wheldrake on the 9th was a surprise. Three **Knot** flew south there on the 11th and a ringtail **Hen Harrier** flew over Bank Island on the 14th. **Hawfinches** were back at Castle Howard with 15 on the 15th. A **White-fronted Goose** appeared at Clifton Ings on the 24th and a **Crane** appeared at Thornton Ellers on the 25th. The LDV **Whooper Swan** herd built up to 81 and other maximum counts there included 1000 **Greylag Geese**, 4000+ **Wigeon**, 3000+ **Teal**, 1300 **Lapwing** and 1250 **Golden Plover**. A **Raven** was at Gilling Woods on the 25th and two more **Common (Mealy) Redpolls** were ringed at Skipwith Common on the 27th.

December

Dippers are now rare birds in our area so one at Newburgh Priory from the 2nd to the 29th was welcome. A **Common (Mealy) Redpoll** at Sand Hutton on the 3rd was the first for that site. The next day provided a surprise when a **Black-crowned Night Heron*** which would be another first for the area, was photographed in an Escrick garden and later in the month turned up at Hambleton, though sadly not seen by birders on either occasion. In the LDV three **Bearded Tits** flew over NDC on the 3rd and wildfowl numbers built up to some impressive levels. **Whooper Swans** increased to 97, there were 1140 **Greylag Geese**, 33 **White-fronted Geese** and several small groups of **Pink-footed Geese**. Ducks included 8800 **Wigeon**, 5200 **Teal** and there were 8000+ **Lapwing**, though only 980 **Golden Plover**. A **Raven** at Bubwith Bridge on the 13th was followed by two over Wheldrake Ings on the 14th. Christmas Eve saw three **Common (Mealy) Redpolls** at Griffon Forest and the Melbourne **Corn Bunting** roost reached 73 on the 27th. Two **Waxwings** in York on the 28th dwindled to one for the year-end; however 11 were at Melbourne on the 30th. Thorganby produced a red-head **Smew** and a **Slavonian Grebe** on the 28th. A **Mediterranean Gull** was in the Wheldrake roost on the 29th and the year's highest **Goosander** count came with 80 at Redhouse Reservoir on the 30th. The last day of the year produced a final highlight with a drake **American Wigeon*** at Bubwith.

YOC CLASSIFIED LIST

The sequence and scientific nomenclature follow that of the British List maintained by the British Ornithologists' Union. In 2017 the BOU published the 9th edition of its taxonomic list, for use in 2018 onwards, and the classified list order has been revised in light of these new changes e.g. geese now appear before swans; gulls, terns and grebes have moved en masse too. Several species have been renamed, most notably ducks, while Bean Goose has been split into two separate species - Taiga (*fabalis*) and Tundra (*serrirostris*). The Red/Amber status of birds is as per BOCC - 4 (*British Birds* 108 • December 2015 • 708 -746). National and local description species designations (BBRC/YNU/YOC) are included for easy reference - the YNU/YOC lists are on pages 138 and 139.

An indication of presence in Breeding Bird Survey squares during the 2018 season is shown in the classified list as BBS x/44 where x is the number of squares where the species was noted, while 44 is the total of BBS 1km squares/WBBS transects covered - there were 40 BBS and 4 WBBS. The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey is a partnership jointly funded by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), with fieldwork conducted by volunteers.

SE57 BBS 4	SE67 BBS 3	SE77 BBS 2
SE56 BBS 0	SE66 BBS 2	SE76 BBS 8 WBBS 1
SE55 BBS 2	SE65 BBS 4	SE75 BBS 2
SE54 BBS 3 WBBS 2	SE64 BBS 3	SE74 BBS 1 WBBS 1
SE53 BBS 0	SE63 BBS 2	SE73 BBS 4

Number of BBS 1 km squares/WBBS transects in each hectad (10 km x 10 km) - the distribution is randomised hence the uneven coverage in our region.

Where seasons are mentioned in species accounts the following applies: spring (March, April, May); summer (June, July, August); autumn (September, October, November) and winter (December, January, February).

The following abbreviations are used throughout:

BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
CHL	Castle Howard Lake
JRTNR	Joseph Rowntree Trust Nature Reserve, New Earswick
LDV	Lower Derwent Valley
NDC	North Duffield Carrs
NE	Natural England (formerly English Nature)
NR	Nature Reserve
OGP	Old Gravel Pits

SHL	National Agri-Food Innovation Campus (NAFIC), Sand Hutton, part of 'FERA', the Food and Environment Research Agency (formerly the Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton then Sand Hutton Laboratory - to avoid further confusion 'SHL' is still used to denote this site)
VMW	Visible migration watch
WBBS	Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (BTO)
WeBS	Wetlands Bird Survey (BTO)
WWT	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
WTW	Water Treatment Works
YNU	Yorkshire Naturalists' Union
YOC	York Ornithological Club
YWT	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

The following nature reserves also appear as sites in the report:

Cali Heath NR (Barmby Moor), Cornfield NR (Rawcliffe Ings), Fireman's Leap (part of the JRTNRs), Hassacarr NR (Dunnington), Huntington School NR (part of the JRTNRs), Sessions NR (part of the JRTNRs).

The Heslington East campus of York University is referred to as 'Heslington East' while the original campus site is referred to as 'Heslington West'. After many years' confusion over how they should be named, the Old Gravel Pits at Allerthorpe now appear throughout as Allerthorpe OGP.

Where appropriate, WeBS counts are included under individual species. WeBS counts in the Lower Derwent Valley are normally conducted in the winter months when seasonal flooding attracts wildfowl. Months when counts are made vary from year to year depending on conditions. Note that WeBS counts reflect numbers on a specific date and do not necessarily indicate maximum numbers at any location. WeBS counts at CHL are conducted every month but only data for January-April and October-December are normally included in the tables in this report unless the species is present throughout the year. WeBS counts for the University - comprising the combined totals for Heslington East and Heslington West (HES) - for several species are included again. In these tables '-' indicates that no count was made; zero counts are shown as '0'. Any other noteworthy counts are referred to in the text.

Dates for WeBS counts in 2018

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	21st	18th	19th	11th	20th	17th	15th	12th	6th	16th	9th	9th
LDV	22nd	18th	12th	13th						-	11th	9th
HES	21st	18th	19th	16th	22nd	17th	15th	12th	9th	15th	12th	9th

For more detailed information on the breeding of scarce and rare birds in the LDV refer to the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) Report on page 116.

Records submitted to BirdGuides are included in the report and marked as such where appropriate, but we do not have details of the individual observer(s) and these records remain unverified. They are included as it is clear that many birders (local or from further afield) visit the LDV in particular without otherwise submitting records. This report also uses records from within the YOC area submitted to BirdTrack. Observers' initials are however only included for less common species. The systematic list also includes those species recorded in at least three of the previous ten years even if they were not recorded in 2018. The information given for these shows the year last recorded.

Category E records, including the University's free-flying geese and escapes are listed in Appendix A, while hybrids are listed in Appendix B. The birds listed in Appendix C are included for completeness, but either a description has not been forthcoming or is insufficient to exclude possible confusion species. If a description is submitted, we will include any additional accepted records in a future report. Updates on records accepted/not proven by the BBRC or YNU rarities committee are at the end of the classified list.

Status Definitions	
Abundance	
Vagrant/Very rare	1-10 (records since 1966)
Rare	1-10 in the past ten years
Scarce	11-100 in the past ten years
Common	Widespread and frequently occurring species within the preferred habitat. E.g. Moorhen
Abundant	Large numbers of this species occur across the area. E.g. Woodpigeon or at certain times of year E.g. Wigeon
Breeding status	
Resident breeder	All or part of the local population is present throughout the year and breeds within the area. E.g. Blackbird
Migrant breeder	Breeds within the area but all or most of the breeding population departs in autumn and winter. E.g. Willow Warbler
Casual breeder	Has bred irregularly in the area since 1966 and may do so again. E.g. Pied Flycatcher
Winter visitor	All or part of the population breeds outside the area but either spends the winter here or has visited on at least 30 occasions in the winter months. E.g. Whooper Swan
Passage visitor	Occurs regularly in the spring and/or autumn. E.g. Black Tern

Please note: Abundance does not refer to the number of breeding birds; it is intended to give an idea of the prevalence of the species in the area.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

YOC Amber listed

One came in to roost at Bubwith Ings on 15th March (LDV Blog).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*
Naturalised breeder and winter visitor

BBS 8/44

Records were received throughout the year from suitable bodies of water, many in double figures, though there were fewer counts of 100 or more than 2017.

As expected, the LDV, CHL and Heslington East continued to hold the largest numbers, with most high counts being WeBS (see table). In the LDV monthly maxima were 467 on 16th January, with 100 at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd and 200 at Ellerton Ings on the 25th; 325 on 18th February, with 215 at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th; and 220 early in March. Numbers decreased thereafter to 40 by the end of the month as birds dispersed to breed. At CHL, the only three-figure counts up to the end of May were 120 on 2nd February, with 156 on 19th March (WeBS) the peak count.

During the breeding season, 13 pairs were in the LDV and 15 pairs on adjacent water bodies in the surrounding area. Breeding was confirmed at Bolton Percy Ings, Brumber Hill, East Cottingwith, Foggathorpe, Milford Common and Wheldrake Ings. The first goslings seen were a brood of six at Milford Common on 20th May.

Post breeding numbers increased markedly at CHL with three-digit counts in all months except October. Monthly maxima were WeBS counts, apart from August, when there were 113 on the 25th, and December, with 210 on the 29th. The annual peak count was 553 on 9th November. At Heslington East the annual build up post breeding saw 260 there on 16th August, but only double-digit counts thereafter. In the LDV a flock of 175 flew over Thorganby on 6th October. During the second winter period numbers increased to 213 by 25th November, with the year's peak count of 535 throughout on 9th December (WeBS). Elsewhere 130 were at Norton on 6th September and 340 at Redhouse Reservoir on 16th December with 150 on nearby fields on the 30th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Canada Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	35	30	156	83	56	154	259	16	230	41	553	127
LDV	467	325	200	65						-	138	535
HES	34	33	42	40	55	67	14	95	58	35	53	12

NB Only on Heslington East in Jan, Aug, Oct-Dec

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*
Scarce winter visitor with a small naturalised breeding population

Amber listed

Given that birds from the University's free-flying flock do sometimes turn up elsewhere in the area it can be difficult to confirm which birds are wild visitors.

Six flew in to roost at Wheldrake Ings on 13th January, with eight seen there on the 26th (origin unknown). These eight remained in the Bank Island/Wheldrake

Ings area throughout February (n.b. the whole university flock was seen at Heslington East during the month on two different dates, so presumably not part of this) and in March on adjacent fields until the 9th.

Later in the year, one flew north over Bolton Percy Ings on 23rd September. One was at Redhouse Reservoir on 23rd December, with two there on the 27th and on fields opposite on the 30th. A flock of ten was at Bubwith Ings on 23rd December.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Amber listed

Naturalised breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

BBS 16/44

Well reported throughout the year, with the LDV holding the largest numbers in autumn and winter. In the LDV, in January large flocks included 300 at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd, 300 at Westfield House Farm, Thornton on the 19th and 500 at Ellerton Ings on the 25th, with the monthly maximum 1089 throughout on the 22nd (WeBS). In February the monthly maximum was 833 on the 18th, with numbers dropping to 500 by early March and to around 100 by the month's end. At Bolton Percy Ings monthly maxima were 350 on 22nd January and 305 on 1st February.

Nesting was reported at several sites from March with the first goslings seen at Knavesmire and Ousebank on the 28th and at Tower Gardens, York on 2nd April (brood of three). A successful breeding season resulted in up to 100 goslings in the LDV during May. Breeding was also confirmed at Allerthorpe OGP, Bank Island, Bolton Percy Ings, East Cottingham, Frog Hall (Allerthorpe Common), Heslington East, Kirkby Wharfe, NDC, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), SHL (seven broods), Strensall Common and Wheldrake Ings.

Post breeding, numbers increased rapidly to 334 by 20th July at Heslington East, peaking at 450 on 12th August (WeBS). A flock of 350 was feeding on stubble between Elvington and Grimston Bar on 22nd August, with 600 there on the 29th. At CHL the annual peak count of 522 came on 17th June, with 445 on 6th September (both WeBS) and three-figure counts to the end of the year apart from August. In the LDV 400 were at Bank Island on 7th October, and 280 at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd. In November 450 came into roost at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th and 500+ were at Thornton Ellers on the 26th of 1000+ throughout the valley. In December 1000 roosted at Bank Island on the 5th, 637 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th and 423 at Ellerton on the 9th, with 700 there on the 22nd, while the peak annual count for the LDV was 1145 on the 20th. Counts over 200 elsewhere were: 340 at Foggathorpe on 26th October, 200 at Byland Abbey on 7th December, 350 on fields near Redhouse Lagoon on 30th December and 300 at Strensall on the 31st.

Monthly WeBS counts for Greylag Goose

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	1	8	7	10	38	522	253	0	445	256	340	143
LDV	1089	833	500	200						-	477	1002
HES	163	118	75	87	120	115	221	450	310	10	16	43

NB Only on Hes East in Jan and Aug

Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*
Scarce winter visitor

YNU Amber listed

This species has now been split off from Tundra (*Anser serrirostris*) and, as in 2017, there were no sightings in 2018.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*
Passage migrant and winter visitor

Amber listed

Movement was seen from the start of the year with flocks of 37 and 300 west over East Cottingwith on 2nd January, 30 west over Ellerton and skeins of 350, 35 and 30 northwest in the LDV. On the 6th 110 went southwest over Bolton Percy Ings. Smaller numbers continued to pass northwest through the LDV during the month and there were several hundred north over Heslington on the 31st. On the ground, one, surprisingly, was seen at Lendal Bridge in the centre of York with five Greylag Geese *Anser anser* on 6th January and one was in the Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island area from January to the end of March. In February 175 northwest over NDC on the morning of the 17th were followed by 1000 in the afternoon and 320 on the 18th. After that, 49 northwest over NDC on 25th March and 75 northwest over Allerthorpe OGP on 21st April were the only passage flocks reported. Ten lingered at Ellerton Ings with nine there on the 19th and the last were one on 4th May at SHL (with Greylags) and one suspiciously tame bird at Heslington East on the 18th.

The first returning birds were 130 south over Thorganby Ings and 22 over Wheldrake Ings on 14th September, then 120 southeast over on the 15th with 70 south over Rawcliffe Meadows the same day. Movement continued during the month including 200 southeast over Poppleton on the 27th and 347 east over Bolton Percy Ings on the 29th. October saw the greatest numbers moving over the area including 200+ south over NDC and 500 over Wheldrake Ings on the 5th followed by 400 north over Bank Island on the 7th and 500 on the 10th. Passage continued in smaller numbers during November and December with 160 southeast over Riccall on 24th November and 150+ over Bank Island on the 11th the only notable counts. There were no large flocks on the ground this year.

Other counts of 150 and more were:

23rd September, Skipwith Common - 169 over

30th September, Stamford Bridge - 197 over

1st October, Bank Island - 170 over

5th October, Melbourne - 200 southeast over

8th October, Bolton Percy Ings and Brumber Hill - 160 over

22nd October, Thorganby - 150 north over

26th October, Wheldrake Ings - 150 over

Tundra Bean Goose *Anser serrirostris*
Scarce winter visitor

YOC

A very poor year with only two records, both in January. Four flew over Bank Island on the 5th (LDV Blog), and a singleton was seen there on the 17th mixed in

with a flock of 200 Greylag Geese *Anser anser* and a single Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*
Scarce winter visitor

YOC *Red listed*

In contrast to 2017, most records came in the second winter period. A flock of 38 flew southeast over Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings at 08:35 on 14th January, 52 were at Bank Island at dawn on the 15th and seven at Ellerton on the 21st.

In November one was reported from Clifton Ings on the 24th. All other sightings came in December from the LDV. At least one was heard calling at Bank Island after dark on the 3rd, then there was an arrival of 28 at Thornton Ings on the 14th. Eight were at Bank Island on the 16th, remaining in the area to the end of the month, with 11 there on the 22nd. On the 17th 33 were at Wheldrake Ings at dusk, 13 at Ellerton on the 22nd, and 11 at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th and 26th. Of 23 in the valley on the 28th, 16 were in the Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings area.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*
Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

Amber listed
BBS 9/44

CHL and the LDV continue to hold the largest concentrations of this species which, while widespread in suitable habitat, is predominately found in the southern half of the recording area. In the first winter period counts at CHL (as well as WeBS) included 68 on 18th February and 47 on 11th March. In the LDV, 114 were present on 30th March including 59 in fields by Derwent Cottage Farm. Elsewhere, the peak in the Lower Wharfe was 14 at Bolton Percy Ings on 21st January. By 29th April, 124 were present throughout the LDV including 11 breeding pairs and 102 non-breeding birds, increasing to 144 non-breeding birds by 17th May with 86 at NDC and 41 at Wheldrake Ings.

The first young were a brood of nine on Pocklington Canal on 7th May. In the LDV, three nests were at Wheldrake Ings (all broods of three), with single nests at Bank Island, NDC, Thornton Lock (five young), Foggathorpe (eight young) and Coates Bridge (eight young). At CHL, four broods totalling 13 cygnets were present on 22nd July. Breeding pairs were also at Allerthorpe OGP (six young), Bolton Percy Ings, Derwenthorpe (two young), Heslington East (eight young), Newburgh Priory (five young) and Norton (three young). A pair at Angram, Riccall produced four young, although only a single fledged.

Post breeding WeBS counts at Castle Howard were significantly larger compared to 2017 (c.f. 98 max July count), although numbers towards the end of the year were lower (c.f. 119 max November count). In the LDV, September saw the resident breeding pairs, with broods, being joined by non-breeding birds from moulting sites elsewhere, with 25 non-breeding birds by the month end. In October, 13 were at Brumber Hill on the 3rd, with ten at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th and 21 on the river at Thorganby on the 23rd, while 11 flew over Bank Island on the 25th. The LDV flock had increased to 87 by 25th November, with 75 at CHL the same day, while 19 were at Heslington East on 30th November. In December, 11 were at Bolton Percy Ings on the 8th and 97 throughout the LDV on the 23rd.

Monthly WeBS counts for Mute Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	88	60	35	45	44	89	121	138	107	74	69	74
LDV	86	91	111	124						-	76	91
HES	5	2	2	2	2	3	2	10	12	10	11	9

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*
Scarce visitor and passage migrant

YOC Amber listed

A pair, including the returning colour-ringed bird "702", was present at NDC with the Whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus* herd from the 12th to 20th February (LDV Blog). These were presumably the same two which were at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd February (JMD, CD).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

Amber listed

The LDV is the most important wintering site in Yorkshire and it held nationally important numbers during the first winter period. During January, 127 were present in the LDV on the 2nd, increasing to 140 by the 28th, most at Ellerton Ings. Elsewhere three were at Bolton Percy from the 1st to the 7th, with a report from Easthorpe on the 20th. During February, in the LDV, 143 on the 20th included 138 at Derwent Cottage Farm, the herd often roosting at NDC. Spring passage began with six northwest over Wheldrake Ings on 17th February, followed by 33 on the 21st, while 25 heading north over Bank Island on the 28th, were forced to U-turn by a blizzard to land at Wheldrake Ings. The LDV is also an important staging and refuelling site for this species. During March an estimated total of 500 birds staged throughout the LDV, often favouring Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings. Satellite tagging has shown these birds leave the Ouse Washes in Cambridgeshire at dawn, arriving in the LDV at around 8 - 8.30am. These large herds often sleep and loaf for the rest of the day before departing prior to dusk. It's then a non-stop flight to Iceland, which, on favourable winds, can be made the following afternoon. Passage during March included 261 northeast over Bank Island on the 14th, with 63 northwest on the 25th and 43 at Bank Island the next day while 48 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th. The wintering herd, which included a couple of colour-ringed birds, remained in the south of the LDV, with 68 at Derwent Farm to the month end. Also in March, a family party of five was at a flooded Dam Dike at Riccall on the 15th, while on the 21st 38 flew northwest over Bolton Percy Ings. In April, 31 flew north over Bank Island and 35 over Thornton on the 3rd. At Bank Island, 17 flew north on the 5th, with 13 there on the 7th, while up to 12 remained at Derwent Cottage Farm to the 8th. On the 6th, 15 flew northwest over Bolton Percy Ings. Later in the month, two were at East Cottingwith Ings on the 21st, with six through Wheldrake Ings on the 26th, one flew over Rufforth Tip on the 28th and a single was at Aughton Ings from the 29th to 2nd May. In May, a single was at Low Grounds on the 18th, while at NDC three were present on the 13th, with two remaining throughout June and into July when one was sadly found dead on

the 12th. The remaining bird departed in late July.

The first returning birds were four at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd September and one at CHL the next day. In October four flew over Bank Island on the 4th, while nine at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th, included a female ringed at Svartarvatn, Bardardalur, Iceland on 6th August 2017. On the 18th, two were at Heslington East, while three were at Wheldrake Ings, with four remaining there to 20th. Six were at Plassmoor Ponds, Hemingbrough on the 22nd, 12 at NDC the next day and up to 27 at Thorganby by the 27th. At Bank Island on 28th, 33 flew south, while a single at CHL on the 27th was followed by six on the 29th. November saw the return of the wintering flock to the LDV with 68 at Ellerton on the 17th, and 81 throughout the valley on the 18th. Passage elsewhere during November, saw two east over Bolton Percy Ings on the 11th, 13 left east from Riccall Ings on the 13th, while on the 18th, eight were reported from Askham Bog and 13 flew southeast over Copmanthorpe. Six passed over central York on the 20th, with four at Bolton Percy Ings on the 24th, five over Hemingbrough and seven at Acaster on the 25th, and 14 at Acaster Malbis on the 26th. At Bolton Percy Ings four on 24th November increased to ten by 4th December, with 12 present from the 10th to the 14th. In the LDV during December, numbers had increased to 97 on the 7th and 8th, with 95 still present on the 20th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Whooper Swan

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	102	143	97	12						-	68	97

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Scarce visitor and naturalised breeder in small numbers

All records came from the LDV, where a small breeding population continues to be present in various ponds in the East Cottingwith/Storwood area. In January, a single was at Ellerton Ings on the 2nd, with ten at East Cottingwith and another at Melbourne. Seven were still at East Cottingwith on 10th February and a pair in the Melbourne area during the month. During early March, up to nine remained at East Cottingwith, with a pair present into April and a further two pairs in the wider area. Away from East Cottingwith singles were at Wheldrake Ings on 7th April, at Bank Island on the 8th and NDC on the 12th, with two at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th, two at Ellerton on the 18th and three at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st and again from the 26th to 29th, with three northwest over Bank Island on the latter date. During May, three to four were present at Wheldrake Ings all month, with two at Thorganby on the 28th, while the pair at East Cottingwith included a ringed bird. In June, three pairs remained in the East Cottingwith area, with six at Low Grounds on the 2nd, two at NDC on the 6th, and two at Foggathorpe on the 10th, while up to four frequented Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings during the month. During July and August, single pairs remained at East Cottingwith and Foggathorpe, with four non-breeding birds continuing to roam the LDV. There were no sightings reported during September and October. Two flew east over Wheldrake Ings on 25th November and finally six flew over Wheldrake Ings

towards East Cottingwith on 8th December.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Amber listed

Common winter visitor, migrant breeder and scarce autumn passage migrant

BBS 3/44

The first winter period saw an irregular presence along the Lower Wharfe with a peak of 13 at Ozendyke Ings on 30th January. Numbers in the LDV were higher than those in 2017 with up to 114 present during the WeBS counts. The main concentrations were again around Thorganby and Ellerton, with 69 at Ellerton Ings on 13th January. During March up to 40 were caught and colour-ringed. Elsewhere there were seven at Acaster Airfield on 27th January and reports of between one and five from Byland, Heslington East, Hessay Pond, Newburgh Priory, and Strensall (a pair at Carr Lane). A full count of the LDV on 29th April again produced 114, including 89 in the Thorganby area, many of which were territorial males. Away from the LDV, a pair was at Wharfe Ings on the 3rd, while up to five were at Kirkby Wharfe and three at Bolton Percy Ings during the month. Pairs were also present at Clifton Ings on the 8th, Ulleskelf Mires on the 17th, Newburgh Priory on the 25th and Carr Lane, Strensall the same day.

At the beginning of May, 110 were still present in the LDV before dispersing to breed. On the 3rd, 38 were at Ellerton and 33 at Aughton Ings on the 18th. The Strensall pair remained into May, two were at Bolton Percy Ings on the 5th, ten at Redhouse Lagoon on the 7th and two flew west over Riccall on the 17th. Flooded fields at Kirkby Wharfe held up to four pairs in May. At Elvington WTW a pair bred, producing eight young. In the LDV, the first brood of the year was at Thorganby on 14th May when nine young were on the river, while up to 60 territorial males were present throughout the month, around half of which were in the Thorganby area. A pair with six young was seen at Thornton Ellers on 6th June.

In the second half of the year, apart from sporadic records from Newburgh Priory, where the peak count was six immatures on 19th August, there were no reports from other sites until December when seven were at Bank Island on the 2nd, increasing to 26 the next day, with five at Aughton and 21 at Bank Island. Numbers peaked at 48 on the 16th with two at Bank Island and 46 at Wheldrake Ings. On 24th December, three were at Bolton Percy Ings.

Monthly WeBS counts for Shelduck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	114	114	100	114						-	0	21

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Scarce resident breeder (Introduced/Category C)

BBS 1/44

The stronghold for this species continues to be at Castle Howard, although it can also be encountered along the area's main river systems. During January record numbers were at CHL on the 21st with 31 still present on 18th February. Numbers decreased thereafter with three pairs present on 11th March and a pair on 6th April. Elsewhere during April a male was at Bolton Percy Ings on the 6th,

four at Beningbrough House on the 15th, and pairs at Norton on the 20th and Huttons Ambo on the 22nd. Also during April males were at Rawcliffe Meadows, at Jeffry Bog on the 22nd and at Kirkby Wharfe on the 28th.

There were no records during May and June although breeding is likely to have occurred at some sites. The next records came in July, when nine were at CHL on the 22nd and a female was seen briefly at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th. On 18th August, 26 at CHL included some immature birds. On 2nd September, three were at CHL, with a female at Bolton Percy Ings on the 23rd. During October, two were at Beningbrough Hall on the 7th, with 13 at CHL on the 17th and two at the Arboretum on the 29th. There were no reports during November, but December saw a male at Bolton Percy Ings on the 11th, two pairs on the River Ouse at Beningbrough Hall on the 26th, two at Redhouse Lagoon the next day and nine at CHL on the 29th.

Garganey *Spatula querquedula*
Scarce migrant breeder

YOC *Amber listed*
BBS 1/44

A bumper year, following a poor 2017. The first record of the year came from Bolton Percy Ings with a male present from the 11th to 13th April. This was the only report away from the LDV, where a male at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th was the first returning bird. During the rest of April, up to four including three males and a female were present at Wheldrake Ings, with a pair at Thornton Ellers on the 24th and a pair at NDC on the 28th and 29th.

Daily sightings continued during May with pairs remaining at Wheldrake Ings, NDC and Thornton Ings. On 5th May, four (three males) were at Wheldrake Ings. A full count of the LDV on 7th May produced four pairs, including five males, and it was thought two females were incubating. On Low Grounds on 9th May, four males and a female were present, while the next day a male was heard calling after dark at Aughton Ings and two males were at NDC. In the latter half of May the majority of records came from Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island. At Bank Island up to three (two males and a female) were present. There were fewer reports during June with continued sightings from Wheldrake Ings, Bank Island and NDC. Breeding was confirmed with a brood of seven at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th and a brood of ten at Bank Island on the 18th.

During July, a male was at Bank Island on the 3rd with a female present there on the 6th. At Wheldrake Ings a single was present from the 9th to the month end. This eclipse male remained on the pool at Wheldrake Ings into August, with three on the 11th - two remaining to the 17th and a single to the 27th. The final record came in September with one on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd and 23rd. See RBBP report on page 116.

Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*
Winter visitor and resident breeder in small numbers

Amber listed
BBS 1/44

The LDV held nationally important numbers during the first winter period. In January a full count in the LDV on the 15th produced 170, 61% of which were males, with 190 present in the valley on the 22nd. Numbers peaked in the LDV

during March with counts of 107 at Melbourne and Thornton Ings on the 23rd and 307 throughout the valley on the 30th. During April large numbers continued to be present in the LDV with an estimated 100 pairs, and 206 throughout on the 29th. The peak count along the Lower Wharfe was 112 at Bolton Percy Ings on 30th January, with 83 there on 13th March and 53 on 7th April. Elsewhere, sporadic counts of up to ten came from CHL, Claxton Grange, Kirkby Wharfe, Laybourne Lake, Naburn Ings, Ryther Ings and Wharfe Ings.

In May, an estimated 80 pairs were in the LDV, while a pair at Kirkby Wharfe on the 11th was the last record away from the LDV until August. During June, up to 30 ducklings were at Wheldrake Ings from the 12th, with more newly hatched broods appearing from the 15th, including 16 at Bank Island on the 18th and 34 at NDC on the 19th with a further 19 on the 22nd. Newly hatched ducklings continued to appear in early July with several unfledged broods remaining at the month's end. On 1st August a single unfledged brood on the pool at Wheldrake Ings was joined by 20 which flew into roost.

Intermittent records of between one and five birds came from CHL, Heslington East and Wharfe Ings from August to November. Late November saw birds returning to the LDV, with a single at Bank Island on the 23rd and seven on the 25th, while a single was at Angram ponds, Riccall on the 28th, 17 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 30th and a single at Heslington East on the 30th. December saw an influx of birds into the area as the floods returned. Along the River Wharfe, 80 were at Bolton Percy Ings on the 6th, 11 at Ozendyke Ings on the 14th and 15 at Ryther Ings on the 24th. At Heslington East, four were present on the 17th and one was at Redhouse Lagoon on the 27th. Numbers in the LDV increased from 31 at Bank Island on the 4th and 76 at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th, to 120 throughout the valley on the 20th, peaking at 192 on the 28th. See RBBP Report on page 116.

Monthly WeBS counts for Shoveler

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	190	152	298	201						-	4	87

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and migrant breeder

BBS 1/44

The LDV held nationally important numbers of this species during the first winter period. During January a full count of 143 on the 15th included 59% drakes, while in February the peak count of the year was 321 on the 17th, with slightly lower numbers during March of 245 on the 30th. At CHL, the peak count was 75 in January with smaller numbers thereafter. The peak count along the Lower Wharfe during the first winter period was 34 at Bolton Percy Ings on 30th January, with 30 there on 9th March. Away from the main sites, March saw eight at Angram ponds, Riccall on the 2nd, with two at Heslington East the next day and two at Ryther Ings on the 13th and 19th. A pair was at Milford Common during March. By April an estimated 90+ pairs were in the LDV with 181 throughout on the 29th.

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2018



Left to right and top to bottom

Barnacle Geese (likely wild birds at Bank Island) © Duncan Bye

Scaup © Duncan Bye

Smew © Duncan Bye

Garganey © Duncan Bye

Pochard and young © Jan Nobel

Black-necked Grebe © Duncan Bye

White Stork (Escape) © Duncan Bye

Also in April, a pair was at Allerthorpe OGP on the 7th and 21st, with another pair at Church Ings, Acaster on the 28th. In May, singles were at Newburgh Priory on the 14th and Ulleskelf Mires on the 16th and 18th. Two pairs were on flooded fields at Kirkby Wharfe during April and May, and a female with six small young was on the river there on 3rd June. In the LDV, sample counts during May included 15 pairs at NDC, 17 loafing drakes at Low Grounds on the 10th, 13 pairs at North Duffield and seven at Aughton Ings, while in June the first young started to be seen with five newly hatched broods totalling 31 at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th. An estimated 100+ young were seen by the month end. During July, young continued to be reported at Wheldrake Ings, and at CHL on the 22nd, six young were present.

Post breeding only small numbers were reported during August. Around forty were at CHL from September to the end of the year, peaking at 63 on 29th December. In October 14 were at Newburgh Priory on the 14th and ten at Wharfe Ings on the 16th, while in November 20 in the LDV on the 17th, and 20 at Bolton Percy Ings on 8th December were the highest other counts until the 28th when 103 were back in the LDV, with 43 at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th. Elsewhere a pair at SHL on 6th November was the first at the site for nine years. See RBBP Report on page 116.

Monthly WeBS counts for Gadwall

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	75	19	21	17	6	2	0	13	29	42	27	41
LDV	170	321	241	176						-	11	15

Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

Amber listed

Abundant winter visitor, spring passage migrant and rare breeder in small numbers

During the first winter period, the LDV held nationally important numbers of this species. The highest count of the year came in January with 12,750 on the 22nd, when 5000 were at Wheldrake Ings. January also saw the peak count at CHL with 344 present (WeBS). On 8th January, 120 were at Wharfe Ings with the peak count along the Lower Wharfe during the first winter period 380 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 30th. Early in March 11,000 were in the LDV reducing to 6000 by the month end, then 3500 on 13th April, 500 on the 21st and just 45 on the 29th. On 2nd March 51 were at Angram ponds, Riccall and 74 at Bolton Percy Ings on 6th April.

In May, 40 in the LDV on the 4th included 18 at Wheldrake Ings. A full survey of Wheldrake Ings on the 29th revealed eight males and three females (including a female distracting), with two males at NDC and a single at Aughton Ings. Small numbers continued to be reported from Wheldrake Ings during June, where a brood of six appeared on the 14th along with four males and a female, as well as three other males and two females in the rest of the LDV. During July up to five males and four females remained in the LDV, but no further young were seen.

In August, two were at CHL, while the 31st saw 200 at Bank Island and 220 at

NDC, although due to a lack of water in the LDV, these birds didn't remain into September, with just two at Wheldrake Ings and 24 at CHL on the 23rd. October saw an increase in numbers with 49 at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th, 50 at NDC on 12th, and 60 flew south over Bank Island on the 28th. During November, in the LDV 3000 were on the river between East Cottingwith and Ellerton on the 17th and 4000 throughout the site as flooding increased on the 25th. In December numbers rose again from 4500 on the 3rd to 8800 on the 28th. Monthly maxima at CHL were 129 on 16th October, 95 on 9th November (both WeBS) and 131 on 29th December. Elsewhere 130 were at Angram ponds, Riccall on 2nd November and 56 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 30th, with 220 there on 24th December. The annual peak count along the River Wharfe was 410 at Ozendyke Ings on 14th December. See RBBP Report on page 116.

Monthly WeBS counts for Wigeon

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	344	282	81	4						129	95	82
LDV	12750	9800	11000	3468						-	3000	5100

American Wigeon *Mareca americana*

YNU

Very rare winter visitor

The drake which was present in the LDV during December 2017 remained into the New Year. In January it was present at Wheldrake Ings from the 2nd to the 7th (JLe, DMB et al.), after which it went missing before being found back at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th and 10th February (PB). It was last seen at Bank Island on the 12th (CH).

In the second winter period a drake returned to the LDV, when one was found at Bubwith Ings on 31st December (JS et al.), again remaining into the New Year.

Records subject to acceptance by the YNU.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Amber listed

Common resident breeder and winter visitor

BBS 26/44

During the first winter period, peak counts from the main sites, were 170 at CHL and 236 at Heslington during January, with 1087 in February in the LDV. The only other notable count was of 103 at Newburgh Priory on 15th February.

Successful breeding was widely reported throughout the area, with the first predated egg found in the LDV on 23rd March, followed by the first brood at NDC on 2nd April. On 29th April, 14 broods (90+ young) and 150 pairs were located in the LDV. On 3rd June, 22 young were seen at Ulleskelf Mires. Many broods were also seen at: Acaster, Allerthorpe OGP, Bolton Percy Ings, CHL, Clifton Backies, Foss Islands (York), Heslington East and West, Hull Road Park, Kirkby Wharfe, Milford Common, Newburgh Priory, Norton, Pocklington Canal (The Grange and Thornton Lock), Rufforth tip and SHL.

Post breeding, 300 were at Wheldrake Ings on 14th August, with 75 at Hull Road Park on the 15th and 230 at Newburgh Priory on the 28th. At Milford

Common, unusually high numbers were present: 102 on 7th August, 200 on the 21st and 130 on 12th September. Also in September, 79 were at Ryther Ings on the 9th, with 63 at Hull Road Park on the 10th and up to 500 roosted at Wheldrake Ings early in the month. The dry autumn saw low numbers in the LDV during October when up to 300 were still present. On the 7th 75 were at Beningbrough Hall, 168 at Newburgh Priory on the 14th and 55 at SHL on the 29th. During November up to 700 were present in the LDV, increasing to 1000 in December. The highest count of the second winter period along the Lower Wharfe was 77 at Bolton Percy Ings on 6th December. Also in December, 259 were at Newburgh Priory on the 2nd and 105 at CHL on the 29th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Mallard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	170	59	47	17	23	95	235	167	96	69	24	83
LDV	737	1087	743	300						-	587	1000
HES	236	87	70	36	62	123	207	321	280	101	184	198

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and rare breeder

The LDV held internationally important numbers of this species during the first winter period - this is the most important site in Yorkshire. A full count of the LDV on 15th January produced 410, 370 of which were at Wheldrake Ings, consisting of 65% males. Along the Lower Wharfe in January, single-figure counts at the beginning of the month saw numbers increase at Bolton Percy Ings to 65 on the 30th. February saw a further increase in numbers in the LDV, with 609 present on the 25th - with 172 at Aughton Ings, 224 at NDC and 211 at Wheldrake Ings, while the only count away from there was of just four still present at Bolton Percy Ings on the 1st. At Bolton Percy Ings in March, two were present on the 7th and 9th with 22 there on the 11th, the same day as two were at CHL (the only record during the first winter period). March also saw numbers peak in the LDV as spring passage birds arrived, with 716 on the 3rd, 450 still present on the 23rd and 424 at the month end. Numbers then decreased from 300 early in April, with 200 at Melbourne and Thornton Ings and 150 at Thornton Ellers on the 13th, to 30 by the 19th with just six remaining at the month end. At Bolton Percy Ings 14 on the 3rd increased to 54 by the 8th: with just a single male remaining on the 11th and 12th.

During the breeding season, two pairs were present at Melbourne and Thornton Ings until 7th May, while a pair was present all month at Wheldrake Ings, with a female at NDC early in the month. At Wheldrake Ings, the female was thought to be incubating and breeding was confirmed on 10th July when five well grown ducklings appeared. The drake, which was also caught and ringed, was last seen on 9th August.

On 31st August, seven at NDC were the first passage birds, followed by a female at CHL on 23rd September. In October, a single was at Newburgh Priory on the 14th, while a female at SHL on the 23rd was a site first. It remained until the 30th, with two there on 9th November. November also saw birds return to the

LDV, with singles at NDC on the 20th and Bank Island on the 23rd. During December, there were 53 at Bank Island on the 2nd increasing to 121 by the 11th, with 182 throughout the LDV on the 20th, peaking at 212 on the 28th. At Bolton Percy Ings the peak was 64 on 24th December, while elsewhere along the Lower Wharfe 15 were at Ozendyke Ings on the 14th with six at Ulleskelf Mires on the 27th. A female was at Newburgh Priory on the 16th and 21st. See RBBP Report on page 116.

Monthly WeBS counts for Pintail

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	410	584	716	98						-	1	121

Teal *Anas crecca*

Amber listed

Abundant winter visitor and resident breeder in small numbers

BBS 1/44

The most important site in Yorkshire, the LDV held internationally important numbers during the first winter period. During January, both the LDV and CHL produced their peak counts for the year (both higher than in 2017), with 3770 at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd when the total count was 11,220 and 276 on the 21st (WeBS) at CHL. January also saw the peak count along the Lower Wharfe with 680 at Wharfe Ings on the 8th, the same day as 340 were at Bolton Percy Ings. On the 28th, 30 were at West Ings. Numbers halved at both CHL and in the LDV during February, with 6850 present at the latter on the 18th. Also in February, 43 were at Brumber Hill on the 6th, with 52 at Newburgh Priory on the 15th, while 56 at Heslington East on the 18th and 91 on 5th March were high counts for the site. In March, 74 were at Bolton Percy Ings on the 9th, while 5120 were still present in the LDV on the 30th. March also saw small numbers at several other sites including Allerthorpe Common and Strensall Common. In the LDV during April, 5000 early in the month fell quickly to 1100 on the 13th, 700+ on the 21st, and 271 on the 29th. On 7th April, 28 were at Bolton Percy Ings.

During May, reports were restricted to sites in the LDV, with 271 early in the month and 50 still present by the month end. During June, at least seven pairs were still present at Bank Island, Wheldrake Ings and NDC where a brood of seven was seen on 8th. The only reports during July came from Wheldrake Ings, where 20 were present on the 31st.

Returning birds in August saw 50 at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st and 200 at Bank Island on the 31st, the same day as 180 at NDC. On 22nd September 250 were at Wheldrake Ings and 600 there on 24th October, with 3000 throughout the LDV by the 25th. In late summer and autumn smaller numbers were also seen at Bolton Percy Ings, Brumber Hill, CHL (where 144 on 16th October was the highest count), Heslington East (maximum 65 on 19th October), Milford Common, Newburgh Priory and SHL. During the second winter period, in December 5200 were in the LDV on the 28th, and peak counts elsewhere included 500 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 4th, 80 at Ozendyke Ings on the 14th, and 202 at Newburgh Priory on the 29th. Also during December, 20 were at Riccall irrigation pond.

Monthly WeBS counts for Teal

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	276	110	3	4						129	4	23
LDV	11220	6580	5120	438						-	1988	3900

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

YOC

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant

For the fourth year running a drake was found in the area, although this could have been the bird present during December 2017. They can be easily overlooked amongst the thousands of Teal *Anas crecca* using the flooded Ings in the LDV. A drake was at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and 18th February (JLe).

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

YOC

Rare vagrant although escapes from wildfowl collections are more likely

An adult male was present on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 19th April (ET).

Pochard *Aythya farina*

Red listed

Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers

During both winter periods, Heslington East showed a significant increase in numbers compared to 2017, while counts were lower at both CHL and in the LDV. In January, the LDV held a peak of 91 on the 15th, while sample counts showed the population comprised 86% drakes. Away from the main sites, a singleton was at Rawcliffe Lake on the 9th and a pair at Heslington West on the 26th. During February, 180 in the LDV on the 15th was the peak count for the year, with the main flock present at Aughton Ings, while only small numbers were at Heslington and CHL. In early March the main LDV flock moved to NDC, with 176 there on the 1st and 67 still present on the 18th, after which numbers dropped with just 16 present in the LDV on the 31st. There was an increase in numbers at Heslington, with some remaining into April. Also during April, a single was on the flooded Clifton Ings on the 8th and two were at Rawcliffe Meadows. In the LDV during April, just 15 remained early in the month with the only reports after this coming from Wheldrake Ings, where just two drakes were present at the month end. A single drake remained at Wheldrake Ings until 8th May, where breeding was not suspected.

However breeding did occur again at both Heslington East and West, with single pairs at both sites, with a single fledging at Heslington East and three young were seen at Heslington West. On 26th June an eclipse male was at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th and 21st. There were no reports during July; however on 4th August a new brood of six young was seen at Heslington East.

Post breeding, small numbers remained at Heslington during September and October, while a male was at CHL on 27th October. Numbers increased at Heslington to a peak of 31 during November, while elsewhere in the area during the month, 12 were at Gilling on the 6th and one at CHL. During December, 31 were at Heslington East on the 14th and just a single male in the LDV on the 28th.

See RBBP Report on page 116.

Monthly WeBS counts for Pochard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	3	2	0	0						0	0	2
LDV	91	180	171	3						-	0	0
HES	38	9	30	6	5	5	5	9	3	8	31	21

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers

BBS 2/44

During the first winter period and early spring, peak monthly counts at CHL of 66 in January (WeBS) and 23 on 18th February were significantly lower than 2017. At Heslington East monthly maxima were 65 in January (WeBS), and 37 in both February and March. In the LDV during January, numbers increased from 35 on the 2nd to 136 on the 22nd, while sample counts on the 15th showed the population comprised 69% males. In February, numbers increased to 180 on the 2nd and 237 on the 8th. March saw numbers in the LDV peak at 364 on the 30th as passage birds joined the wintering birds. During April, a large number remained in the LDV with 232 present on the 20th, including 103 at NDC and 67 at Wheldrake Ings. Away from the main sites, single digit counts came from Allerthorpe OGP, Askham Bog (an unusual location), Bolton Percy Ings, Brumber Hill, Clifton Ings, Laybourne lakes, Rawcliffe Lake, Riccall (Angram ponds), SHL and Wharfe Ings. Ten were at Milford Common on 27th April.

During May, up to 50 pairs remained in the LDV, while a pair was at Ulleskeff Mires on the 1st, with 16 at Heslington East on the 4th, a pair at Heslington West on the 18th, seven still at Milford Common on the 20th and three at Plassmoor Ponds, Hemingbrough on the 27th. In June, in the LDV, pairs were reported from Bank Island, Wheldrake Ings, East Cottingwith and NDC where the first two broods of five and six were reported on the 23rd. A pair was still at Milford Common during June, where a juvenile was present on 19th July, confirming breeding there. July also saw breeding confirmed at Heslington East (two broods of three and seven), Skipwith Common (three young) and CHL (five broods totalling 17 young).

On 20th July, a post-breeding flock of 21 was present at Heslington East, with 59 there on 25th August. A pair remained at Milford Common during August with three there on 4th September. The flock at Heslington East increased to 66 on 22nd September, with 63 still there on 30th November, while at CHL 36 were present on 23rd September, 70 in October (WeBS) and 94 on 25th November. December saw the first returning birds to the LDV, with a female at Bank Island on the 2nd, with eight there on the 9th and 18 at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th and 25 back at Bank Island on the 28th. The peak annual counts for both CHL and Heslington East came on 9th December (WeBS) with 114 and 72 respectively, while 11 were at Riccall, Angram ponds on the 20th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Tufted Duck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	66	13	44	63	38	49	24	32	14	70	62	114
LDV	136	154	364	200						-	0	5
HES	65	37	32	6	9	13	18	37	44	41	30	72

Note: all HES were on Heslington East site apart from two in May and three in June

Scaup *Aythya marila*

YOC Red listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

All records came during March and probably involved the same small flock. On 2nd March, three females were found at Heslington East. The next day these birds had been joined by two 1st-winter females, all of which remained to 5th March. What were presumably the same birds then moved to the LDV on the 9th, with a single at Bank Island and two at Wheldrake Ings. All three were then present at Wheldrake Ings the next day, increasing to four on the 23rd, with three on the 25th the last reported.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Red listed

Scarce passage migrant

A poor year for the species with just a single record. A female was seen briefly on a flooded Clifton Ings on 8th April (FW). However this was an interesting record as it was away from the LDV and CHL.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and passage migrant

The peak count in the LDV at the beginning of the year was 24 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th January, which the LDV flock favoured during the month, while at CHL the monthly maximum was 22 on the 6th. Elsewhere, singles were at Cawood fishing pond on the 2nd, at Ryther Ings and Wharfe Ings on the 7th and Heslington East on the 25th. During February, birds in the LDV were largely confined to Wheldrake Ings, with displaying and copulation observed during the month, while three were at NDC on the 7th. At Heslington East a single was present on the 2nd, with two there on the 11th, while 43 on the 18th at CHL was the peak annual count. In March, two remained at Heslington East to the 4th, with a male the next day, while 32 were at CHL on the 11th and 15 at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th and 30th. In April, other than two at CHL on the 8th, all reports came from Wheldrake Ings with 14 on the 1st, 12 on the 15th, five staying to the 19th, followed by two on the 20th and the last a female on the 22nd.

The first returning birds were 12 at CHL on 27th October, with 21 there by 25th November. On 30th November, singles were at Heslington East and CHL. In December, a male returned to Wheldrake Ings on the 8th, with a pair there on the 10th and three present on the 26th, seven at Thorganby on the 17th and five at Ellerton Landing on the 30th. At CHL 39 on 9th December was the monthly maximum, with 31 there on the 29th. Three were at Heslington East on the 14th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Goldeneye

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	15	18	20	2						0	0	39
LDV	24	19	13	8						-	0	1

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor

A redhead was found at CHL on 4th February where it remained until 6th April (JLe, EB et al.). The only other record was of a redhead on the floods at Bubwith Ings from the 28th to 30th December (AF et al.).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Winter visitor, passage migrant and casual breeder

BBS 1/44

During January, monthly peak counts included eight at Acaster, seven at Heslington West and four at Naburn - all on the 1st, with 11 at Bolton Percy Ings and nine at CHL on the 6th, 15 at Cawood on the 7th, eight at Gilling Lakes on the 14th and seven at both Rawcliffe Lake on the 12th and at Redhouse Lagoon on the 20th. The peak count along the Lower Wharfe during the first winter period was 23 at Wharfe Ings on 28th January. One to three was recorded at other locations along the Rivers Ouse, Derwent and Wharfe, including five at Ozendyke Ings on the 27th and two at Askham Bog on the 28th. February saw a similar pattern, including 12 at CHL on the 19th, two at Acaster Airfield on the 4th, three at Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings on the 4th, five at Naburn on the 7th, three at Bolton Percy Ings on the 8th, five at Elvington on the 13th, three at Gilling Lakes on the 17th, five at Rawcliffe Lake on the 19th and four at Acaster on the 28th. Small numbers continued to be reported during March with three on the River Ouse at Scarborough Bridge on the 4th, five at Bank Island on the 10th, four at CHL on the 11th, six at Naburn on the 20th and four at Redhouse Lagoon on the 30th. There were fewer reports during April, but included two at Rawcliffe Lake on the 4th, four at Bolton Percy Ings on the 8th, a single at Ryther Ings on the 15th, seven at Redhouse Lagoon on the 19th, four at Kirkby Wharfe on the 22nd and a single on Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on the 25th.

During May, one to three was seen along the River Wharfe; the last spring record there coming on the 20th when a female was at Kirkby Wharfe. A female flying along the River Ouse at Rawcliffe Ings on the 22nd, was the last report until October. There was no repeat of last year's breeding.

The first returning birds in the second half of the year were singles at Redhouse Reservoir on 17th and Bolton Percy Ings on 26th October. Thereafter numbers increased steadily throughout November and December. Birds were recorded from 14 sites, 11 of them on, adjacent to, or less than a mile from the three major rivers (River Ouse - Acaster Malbis, Heslington West, Rawcliffe Lake, Redhouse Reservoir, Scagglethorpe, Naburn, and York; Rivers Ouse/Wharfe - Cawood; River Wharfe - Bolton Percy Ings, Wharfe Ings; River Derwent - LDV). The other three sites (CHL, Gilling Redcar and Heslington East), had records involving just one to three birds. In November Heslington West hosted most birds:

21 on the 11th, 28 on the 21st, c.50 on the 26th and 27th, and 36 on the 30th. Numbers remained high there throughout December ranging from 47 on the 9th to a peak of 61 on the 28th. However these numbers were dwarfed by two counts of at least 80 coming in to roost at Redhouse Reservoir on the 27th and 30th. 46 at Acaster Malbis on 29th December was another significant count.

Across nine weeks between 1st November and 31st December, the possible maximum numbers of birds across the recording area were:

1-7 Nov	8-14 Nov	15-21 Nov	22-28 Nov	29 Nov - 4 Dec	5-11 Dec	12-18 Dec	19-25 Dec	26-31 Dec
18	21	47	64	50	85	59	47	80+

However, with clear evidence of birds 'commuting' between sites, these must be (on occasion) over-estimates. The ratio of 'brown-heads' (females and immature males) to adult males was strongly biased to 'brown-heads'. In a sample of 585 birds 492 (84.1%) were 'brown-heads, and only 93 (15.9%) were adult males. The ratios were identical in both November and December.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Resident breeder and released to shoot

BBS 17/44

Widespread throughout the recording area, many are thought to be releases from captivity. Slightly more than half of all records received related to sightings of one or two birds. In the first part of the year the only counts of more than ten birds were 15 at Kirkby Wharfe on 1st January, 11 at Seaton Ross on 16th January, 16 at Riccall on 4th February and 12 at Kirkby Wharfe on 11th March. Confirmed breeding occurred at Bolton Percy where recently fledged young were seen and at Scagglethorpe, Poppleton where an adult with five chicks was seen on 4th August. From late August birds thought to be recent releases were noted at Milford Common with 12 there on the 30th, 70 on 4th September and 14 on 1st November. Other notable counts were 45 near Oulston on 16th October, 15 at Riccall on 21st November, 15 in a field at Ulleskelf Mires on the 30th and 30 at Byland on 21st December.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Resident breeder

Red listed

BBS 8/44

Records were received from nearly 50 different locations; most reports were of low single figures. Calling and/or displaying birds were recorded at Acaster Malbis, Bishophorpe and Milford Common. A pair possibly with young was at NDC in May. Recently fledged young were seen at Brumber Hill, Poppleton and, in August, at Scagglethorpe Lane and Strensall (pair with four young at Carr Lane).

During the year more than five birds were present at the following sites:

Acaster Malbis - ten on 27th January, six on 26th December

Bolton Percy Ings - 20 on 29th September

Brumber Hill - 17 on 10th September

Church Fenton - six on 10th November

Ellerton - eight on 5th January

Flaxton - 17 in fields west of the village on 12th November
Heslington East - seven on 7th January, six on 14th December
Huby - six on 1st October
Knavesmire and Ousebank - eight on 11th September, eight on 17th December
Milford Common - ten on 7th January, six on 4th September, 20 on 31st October
(probably all recent releases), 20 on 29th November
NDC - six on 10th December
Nunnington Lake - eight on 10th November
Pocklington Canal, Melbourne - 20 on 14th January, 16 on 5th November
Riccall Ings - 19 on 7th October (probably released birds), declining to 12 on 28th
November
Rufforth (Moor Lane) - seven on 3rd January, seven on 17th November
Scagglethorpe - seven on 21st January, six on 8th April, six on 24th October, ten
on 26th November
Stillingfleet - 18 on 18th November
Wistow - 13 on 18th October

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*
Scarce migrant breeder

Amber listed

A poor year with only three records from the LDV and few reports from elsewhere. In the LDV one was singing at NDC on 21st May. A month later, one was at Wheldrake Ings on the evening of 22nd June followed by one heard near Pocklington Canal on the 24th. The only other records were of one singing in a barley field off Carr Lane near Strensall at 03:30 on 2nd July and two at West Lilling on 4th July. See also RBBP Report on page 116.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Resident breeder and released to shoot

BBS 38/44

Widespread throughout the region with many released for shooting.

Up to five females regularly visited a garden feeder in Naburn for a six-week period from 19th February. Recently fledged juveniles were seen at Bank Island (three on 18th August), Bolton Percy Ings and Norton (one on 26th June).

Counts of more than 20 birds came from just two locations. At Milford Common there were 29 on 7th August, rising to 63 on 30th August (probably all recent releases) then 59 on 4th September, while 130 recently released birds were found wandering over a road near Oulston on 16th October.

A Freedom of Information request by Guy Shrubsole concerning the total number of pheasants reared in England in 2018 resulted in the issue of this information, broken down by postcode prefix. 1,045,300 Pheasants were registered in the YO61 postcode alone (over half of which is in the northeast corner of the Club area) – by far the highest number in England. Other significant releases in the Club area in 2018 included:

YO8 (Selby) - 82,550

YO17 (Malton - much of SE77, but also large parts outside Club area) - 171,450

YO23 (South Bank, Bishopthorpe, Copmanthorpe, Rufforth) - 74,100

YO42 (Pocklington, Barmby Moor, Melbourne, Seaton Ross) - 68,000
(<https://whoownsengland.org/2019/04/02/the-english-shooting-estates-that-rear-20-million-pheasants-a-year/>). Given these figures, submitted records do not remotely reflect the number of birds present in the recording area.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Resident breeder

In January, singles were present at Acaster, Allerthorpe OGP, CHL, Heslington East (remaining until March at least), Riccall and West Ings. Two were present at Stearsby Hagg on 1st January. One or two were seen regularly along the River Wharfe at Bolton Percy Ings from January to early April (a peak of five there on 28th January). In the LDV up to 17 were present during January with up to eight on the River Derwent, five on Pocklington Canal and two each at Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island. In February one was at Wheldrake Ings and two on Pocklington Canal at Melbourne. In March seven pairs were in the LDV with a pair nest building at NDC at the end of the month.

Up to eight pairs were throughout the LDV in May with several pairs noted in June. Elsewhere, confirmed breeding occurred at Allerthorpe OGP (recently fledged young present on 17th June), CHL (two adults with a juvenile on 25th August), Milford Common (two pairs bred successfully producing a total of eight young), Rufforth Tip (two pairs on pools there fledged nine young, with three of the pulli ringed on 12th August) and Skipwith Common (unfledged juvenile on Wash Dike). At Heslington East two adults, four juveniles and two larger immatures were present on 4th August.

Post breeding, a single was present on the lake at SHL from 17th August until 3rd December. Wintering birds saw three at Bolton Percy Ings on 11th November, three at Heslington East on the 12th (and one there on 14th December), one at Walbutts sewage pools, Strensall Common on the 13th and three at Gilling Redcar on the 23rd. In the LDV there were 18 along the River Derwent on 3rd December and four at Church Bridge, Pocklington Canal on the 12th.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
Resident breeder and passage visitor

BBS 1/44

In the early part of the year wintering birds were confined to Heslington East (a single on several dates in January), Bank Island (one on 16th February) and Wheldrake Ings (two on 6th January, a single on 28th January, two on the 4th to 10th February with a single to the month end).

Three pairs were at both Wheldrake Ings and NDC during April; single pairs remained to breed at each site with occupied nests and incubation observed during May. A pair was at Allerthorpe OGP during March and April, with three there on 14th March. A single pair bred on a lake near Melbourne Hall with two large juveniles there on 12th July. Further pairs were noted at Oaks Golf Course near Aughton and Pool Bridge Farm at Crockey Hill. Elsewhere two adults were at Heslington East on 3rd May and 22nd June but there was no sign of breeding.

Two adults were on Rawcliffe Lake during spring, with three there on 8th April, and during August an adult was there accompanied by two large and noisy juveniles. At CHL three adults and four juveniles from two broods (of three and one) were present during July and August. Two adults and two immatures were at CHL on 2nd September with just two birds there on 27th October. A single was at Heslington East on 28th October. Thereafter the only reports were of a single at CHL during November and one on Rawcliffe Lake during December.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus* YOC Red listed
Rare winter visitor

One on the River Derwent at Thorganby on 28th December (CSR) was an excellent find and a welcome follow-on to the two records in 2016 that ended a run of blank years from 2002-2015.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* YOC Amber listed
Scarce passage visitor; formerly rare breeder

Several birds arrived in spring attracted by the extensive flooding in the LDV, the first sightings since 2014; one pair stayed to breed. Initially two were found at NDC on 30th March (DMB, CSR); remarkably one of these had been ringed in the LDV as a chick in 2004 (a new European ringing longevity record for this species). A transitionally-plumaged bird was at Wheldrake Ings the same day (LDV Blog) and a winter-plumaged bird was at Bubwith Ings on the 31st (DMB, CSR et al.).

A pair of summer-plumaged birds found at NDC on 27th April (DMB, CSR et al.) was thought to be incubating eggs by 10th May (LDV Blog). By June the pair had three chicks - the first successful breeding since 2004 (LDV Blog). On 9th July a single fledged juvenile was still present at NDC (CSR, FM). See RBBP Report on page 116.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* YOC Amber listed
Very rare spring and summer migrant

The only record was of two that circled over Skipwith Common on 19th June then drifted off towards the River Derwent, arriving later at NDC (CSR et al.).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* YOC Amber listed
Scarce winter visitor

One was seen by the boardwalk near Swantail hide, Wheldrake Ings at dawn on 14th February (CSR). In April a male was heard booming from a reed-filled ditch at East Cottingwith Ings on the 2nd to the 6th (CSR). See RBBP Report on page 116.

Black-crowned Night heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* YNU
Very rare vagrant

An adult turned up by a garden pond at Escrick on 4th December and was only identified as such when a 'phone shot' was shown to a local birder. Sadly access was not possible and this rarity remained one that got away from the local

birding community. This was presumably the same adult that had been at Locke Park, Redcar in mid-November. On 12th December, what was presumed to be the same bird then turned up by a fish pond in another private garden in Hambleton, near Selby - a photograph of this was shown to a Club member who lives locally, but the bird was not actually seen by him. A photograph of the Hambleton bird appeared on page 12 of the summer 2019 edition of the RSPB magazine 'Nature's Home'. Whilst the identification is not in doubt, it still remains to be seen whether the bird is accepted as wild or an escape as the sightings took place late in the year. If accepted it will be the first confirmed record for the York area.

Record subject to acceptance by the YNU.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Resident breeder

BBS 8/44

Present in areas of suitable habitat throughout the region usually in low single figures. In the first winter period the only double-figure count came from Wheldrake Ings as birds moved back to the heronry there with 16 present on 21st February. Up to 19 nests were present by 17th April (with several holding small young), rising to an estimated 22 nests by 30th May (a decrease on recent years). The first fledged young appeared at Wheldrake Ings on 31st May. During June increasing numbers of juveniles were noted with 19 between Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings on the 24th. On 25th June a juvenile wearing a blue colour-ring was at Wheldrake Ings indicating that not all the juveniles in the valley during the summer are locally bred birds (LDV Blog).

Away from the LDV, breeding was attempted at four other sites. The heronry at Acomb Ings contained an estimated 18 nests on 17th April (the same figure as the previous year). Bishop Wood held eight (possibly 11) nests by 12th May with 12 birds present on that date. At CHL there were four active nests on 15th March and again on 25th April. Two nests present in a small farm wood near Yearsley on 22nd March were thought to have failed by 25th April.

Notable post-breeding counts of more than ten were confined to the LDV and included 31 at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd to 6th July when a further 13 were at Bank Island and up to 63 were throughout the LDV; 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th July were mainly juveniles. Other counts to the year-end included 18 at Wheldrake Ings on 30th August, then 17 there on 1st September and 14 throughout the LDV on 25th October, with the same number present on 25th November.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

YOC

Scarce visitor

Another strong showing with records in most months, the majority of sightings occurred in the LDV with up to three birds present in spring. The first was one that flew over Bubwith Bridge towards North Duffield on 25th January (CH) followed by one at Wheldrake Ings on 6th February (BirdGuides), with probably the same bird still there the next day (LDV Blog). There were no further sightings until April when one was present at Milford Common on the 7th (PD). A single was photographed

and reported by a walker at Sutton upon Derwent on 23rd April (LDV Blog). Another single, possibly the same bird, was seen flying over Swantail Ings at Wheldrake on the 25th (Twa). Two were at NDC on the afternoon of 1st May (CSR) with another reported at Sutton Ings in the evening (LDV Blog). A single was on the Low Grounds at Sutton on 2nd May (AF), with it or another on the main meadow at Wheldrake Ings the same day (JLe). Two birds showed well in the Low Grounds/Wheldrake Ings area until 8th May (one with some damage to its right wing) (LDV Blog). One bird remained and was seen regularly at Wheldrake Ings during May (DR, JLe, AF et al.) while a second individual was at Bank Island on 21st May (NC) remaining to month end (DMB). Another single was at Wheldrake Ings on 29th May (JB). At least one bird remained in the Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings area until 6th June (LDV Blog). Two birds were at NDC on 13th June (HT); one reappeared briefly at Bank Island on 22nd June (LDV Blog) followed by one at the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 14th July (DMB, SJH). A single flew into Bank Island early on 31st August before heading off east (CSR).

Individuals continued to visit the region during autumn and early winter with three at CHL on 20th October (BirdGuides), one circling over Wheldrake on 22nd October (LDV Blog) followed by a single heading over Bank Island towards Wheldrake on 9th November (CSR) with another single at CHL on the same day (BirdGuides). On 19th November one was on Pocklington Canal near Storwood (ASw). One individual frequented Newburgh Priory during December; it was first recorded there on 29th November (BirdGuides) and was still present on 29th December (JR, DMB). A single was at Byland on 21st December (JR). See RBBP Report on page 116.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Resident, with small numbers breeding in the LDV

BBS 2/44

Recorded from at least 30 sites with the majority of records from the LDV in spring and early summer. Peak counts at LDV sites included: 11 at Low Grounds and 17 at Sutton Ings on 28th April, 13 at Melbourne and Thornton Ings on 29th April, 11 at Ellerton Ings on 14th May, 13 at East Cottingham on 7th June and 14 at Thorganby Ings on 18th June. At least 13 pairs bred in the heronry at Wheldrake Ings and an estimated 35 young were reared. In July increasing numbers were seen in the Wheldrake area as local juveniles fledged, with 34 birds on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th and 50+ present throughout the LDV on the 5th.

A colour-ringed bird (H4) was seen at Bank Island on 8th May with another ringed bird (yellow T ring, red H) at Bank Island on 19th August (ringed by Mid-Lincolnshire ringing group as a nestling in May 2014).

Away from the LDV, there was a noticeable increase in records in SE53 where the majority of sightings were at Milford Common with a peak of three on 7th January and one or two birds present in all months except June and July. In addition a single was regular at Bolton Percy Ings during April, with one further upstream at Kirkby Wharfe on the 14th. A single was again at Bolton Percy Ings in September and October with four there on 3rd December and one on 14th December. The peak count at Heslington East was four on 20th July with three

there on 2nd September and singles to the year-end. Two flew south over Hull Road Park in York on 24th August. Other sites in the region attracting birds included Crockey Hill (four on arable fields on 7th November), Naburn (five in a field on 23rd October), Newburgh Priory (two during December), Riccall Ings (one wintered, last seen on 25th March) and Scagglethorpe (two by a beck on 16th November). Further singles were recorded during the year at Cliffe, Fangfoss, Haxby, Heslington Tillmire and Stamford Bridge. See RBBP Report on page 116.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*
Rare visitor

YOC *Amber listed*

Not recorded in 2018; there have been records in five of the last ten years, most recently in 2017.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Passage and winter visitor; localised resident breeder

BBS 3/44

CHL and Wheldrake Ings continued to hold the highest numbers. Numbers at CHL peaked at 39 on 18th February with ten there on 11th March. The roost at Wheldrake Ings held up to 18 during January increasing to 25 by 2nd February and remaining fairly stable through March and April with 27 there on 23rd March and 26 on 18th April. Flocks of up to ten birds were recorded flying over Bank Island in March and April. Away from the LDV and CHL the only sightings of more than five in the early months of the year were 11 at Bolton Percy Ings on 11th February and six at Ellerton Ings on 15th April.

Breeding took place at CHL with three nests there on 25th April. In the LDV a pair copulating was the first record of attempted breeding for several years.

Notable counts in the second half of the year included:

Acaster - eight on 30th December

Bank Island - 15 south on 22nd September, 12 north on 28th October, seven on 18th November

Bolton Percy Ings - eight on 9th October (six fishing in the river together), nine on 2nd November (six south, three in the area)

CHL - 18 on 23rd September, 11 on 16th October, 25 on 9th November, 33 on 29th December

Norton - seven east on 28th November

NDC - 15 north up the river at dawn on 1st December

Nun Appleton - nine flying around on 2nd November, possibly disturbed from their roost tree

Red House Lagoon - eight on 16th November

Ryther Ings - seven on 11th November

Wheldrake Ings - 21 on 2nd December

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
Scarce passage migrant

YOC Amber listed

Three passed through the York area on their way to northern breeding grounds during the spring. One was at Bank Island on 28th March (LDV Blog) whilst another flew over the same site and was later seen at Heslington East on the evening of 3rd April (LDV Blog, JN). The final bird was seen heading north over Wheldrake Ings at 17:00 on 26th April (LDV Blog).

The first returning bird circled the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 4th July (LDV Blog) and another was fishing near Tower Hide on 27th August (DB). A bird which frequented the Haxby area was first reported on 1st September (RB). What was presumed to be the same bird was present there on the 2nd, 28th and 30th and later on 8th and 9th October. In addition there were sightings at Sand Hutton on the 2nd, 10th and 28th September and 3rd October; Skipwith Common on 10th September; Strensall on the 13th and 18th September and 4th October; and Wheldrake Ings on 18th September. Sand Hutton and Strensall are less than 10 km from Haxby and therefore it is most likely that a single bird was visiting these three sites. Whether the individual ranged as far as Wheldrake Ings and Skipwith Common during its stay is open to question and it may be that these sightings represent one or two additional birds.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder and passage migrant

BBS 8/44

The number of reports received was similar to the 2017 total. Birds were reported throughout the year with the maxima of 34 records occurring in April and September and the minimum of eight in June. There were records from all hectads with the most from SE74 (62 from 9 sites), SE54 (54 from 11 sites) and SE53 (40 from 7 sites); whilst SE56, 67, 73 and 76 had three or fewer.

Prior to the nesting period there were widespread reports notably from the Lower Derwent and Lower Wharfe valleys, alongside well-watched sites at Acaster Malbis, Poppleton and Norton. Most records were of single birds, with two seen at Acaster Malbis on 6th January, Bank Island on 2nd February and Upper Poppleton during February, whilst three were at Norton on 22nd January and Wheldrake Ings on 2nd February. Other records came from Ampleforth, Barmby Moor, Bishop Wood, Byland, Colton, East Lilling, Kirkham Priory, Moorlands, Seaton Ross, Stamford Bridge and the Yorkshire Arboretum.

The first territorial display flight was noted at Norton on 22nd January followed by Wharfe Ings on 15th February, Foss Islands Road, York on 23rd March, SHL on 17th April and Brayton Barff on the 28th, while two females were chasing each other at Crockey Hill on 8th April. Proof of breeding was restricted to seven sites. Food carrying was reported from Melbourne on 29th May and Haxby on the 4th and 10th July. Two juveniles made an appearance at Hassacarr NR on 14th July followed by two at Heslington West on the 31st. In August one was at Thornton Wood near Pocklington Canal on the 5th, several at Upper Poppleton on the 12th and one at a bird bath in Naburn on the 17th. Birds possibly bred at Allerthorpe, Easthorpe and Strensall Common, where calls were heard on 18th August.

After the breeding season regular reports continued to be received from the Derwent, Ouse and Wharfe valleys. Fifteen southbound birds were recorded during VMW at Ozendyke between 9th September and 3rd November, compared with 21 in 2017. The species was also widely reported from the York area, including two displaying over Clifford's Tower on 29th December.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*, Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*, Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*, House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* and Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* were all reported as prey species.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

YOC

Rare passage visitor and very rare resident breeder

The number of sightings was slightly below that of 2017 and the only late winter record came from an area south of York on 6th February (DT).

The last known proven breeding in the YOC recording area took place in 1998, therefore the estimate of four and probably five breeding territories north of York, made by a group of dedicated observers (DMB, JAB, AH, JLe & JP), is exceptionally good news. Displaying birds were seen though nests were not searched for and none of the reports included proof of breeding evidence. However, at a site south of York calls from a young bird were heard on 4th September. During the next fortnight three observers (per DT) reported sightings of adult birds and at least two young. On 17th September one of the juveniles was seen and heard as it entered the site (DT). This proved to be the final sighting from the area. Breeding did not take place at this site but it is likely that the nest location was within the YOC recording area.

After the breeding season one flew over Aughton on 21st September and there was an adult male at Bank Island on the 26th (LDV Blog). Other sightings came from Castle Howard on 17th October (RCo); SHL, where two circled high over the lake on 24th October (GW) and a male was displaying over Nun Appleton on 2nd November (PD). An escaped bird with falconer's tethers appeared at SHL on 17th November.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Amber listed

Scarce visitor and passage migrant; now resident in the LDV in small numbers

The number of reports was similar to that of 2017 and again almost all of the records came from the LDV where birds were present throughout the year, though evidence of breeding was not detected.

During January three cream-crowns (adult females or immatures) were present in the LDV ranging widely between Bank Island and NDC. The number rose to four during February with three of them present at Wheldrake lngs on the 15th. Three were also at NDC on 18th March; one caught a Skylark *Alauda arvensis* there on the 30th. A first winter male appeared at Bubwith lngs on 5th

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2018



Left to right and top to bottom

Black-Crowned Night Heron (phone screen shot) per Jono Leadley

Great White Egret © Duncan Bye

Osprey © Duncan Bye

Corncrake © Jono Leadley

Crane © Duncan Bye

Whimbrel in the LDV © Jono Leadley

Wood Sandpiper © Duncan Bye

April and was regularly seen until the year-end. Most of the other April sightings came from Wheldrake Ings though one was seen attacking Coots *Fulica atra* at Thornton Ellers on the 5th and one was present at Melbourne on the 14th. The number of records increased in May; however, they mostly appeared to relate to the earlier birds. An exception was an immature with two green wing tags (X8) seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th. This bird was one of four chicks ringed in 2017 at a nest in Belgium. Three cream-crowns and the young male continued to be seen throughout June and July and later they were joined by a family party of two adults and three juveniles first reported on 31st August. It is not known how far away the nest site was, though there must be a chance that it was within the recording area. The family party and summering birds remained until at least the end of September. Afterwards, although the number of sightings slowly increased, the number of individual birds declined. On 12th October an adult male and female went to roost at Wheldrake Ings. A cream-crown and sub-adult male were harassing Teal *Anas crecca* on the River Derwent at Thorganby on 3rd December and a female caught a Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* on the River Derwent at NDC. NE estimated that 'up to three birds' were present at the end of the year.

Elsewhere, wandering birds, probably from the LDV, were seen at Skipwith Common on the 1st and 3rd May, Riccall on 11th May and Skipwith on 10th September, where a male was hunting over *Miscanthus* (silver grass). Separate records came from the Lower Wharfe Valley where a distinctive adult male was present at Bolton Percy Ings on 16th June and again at an undisclosed site in SE53 on 3rd July, where it was present with a 'very tatty' female. The cream-crown continued to show until 8th August. Finally, one at Bolton Percy Ings was chased northwards by Carrion Crows *Corvus corone* on 10th November.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*
Scarce winter visitor

YOC *Red listed*

The number of Hen Harrier records continues to decline and the only report was of an un-sexed bird flying over Bank Island towards Wheldrake Ings on 14th November (CSR).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Resident in the southern part of the recording area; scarce elsewhere BBS 6/44

Of the almost 400 records received most came from the Lower Wharfe Valley (40% from nine sites) and the LDV (24% from 13 sites). There was an increasing presence in SE53 where sightings on the east side of Sherburn in Elmet totalled 43 bird days (compared with 15 in 2017) whilst at Milford Common records increased from five in 2017 to nine in 2018 and sightings along the Lower Wharfe averaged 0.91 birds per visit, compared with 0.78 in 2017. Red Kites remain scarce in the six northern tetrads and none were reported from SE56, 57, 67 and 75, with four or fewer reports from SE65, 73 and 77. Red Kites are now present in the two river valleys throughout the year, though elsewhere very few were reported after June.

The number of sightings steadily increased during the first three months of the

year and included birds wandering beyond the main sites including Sand Hutton on 2nd January, Hessay on the 20th, Allerthorpe Common on the 22nd and Whitwell Grange on the 30th, Barmby Moor on 23rd February and Kirkham Priory on the 25th, Askham Bog on 5th March, CHL on the 11th, High Hutton on the 25th and Rawcliffe Lake on the 26th. The highest counts were three at Bolton Percy Ings on 25th January, four at Bank Island on 4th February and three at Brumber Hill on 19th March.

During the breeding season NE reported that four pairs were present in the LDV. At least one of these pairs bred successfully and a single fledged young was seen in July. Similarly, an adult and juvenile were present in the Lower Wharfe Valley at Bolton Percy Ings on 5th Aug and therefore breeding is likely to have taken place in this area, though the nest site could have been just beyond the recording area. There was also evidence to show that a pair was nesting at a site north-west of York, however the outcome was unknown. Widespread reports came from SE77 and SE76 including Appleton-le-Street, Barton-le-Willows, Castle Howard and Westow; breeding may have been attempted somewhere in this area. Wandering individuals, most probably non-breeders, continued to roam widely with some seen over York, including Badger Hill on 6th April and Fulford on 19th May.

Birds were regularly seen in the LDV during September but the number of sightings from this area declined thereafter and the records become dominated by reports from the Lower Wharfe Valley. Other post-breeding records came from Stillingfleet on 5th September, Acaster Airfield, with four records in October, and two were at Riccall on 2nd November.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Passage migrant and common resident breeder

BBS 20/44

There was a 16% decline in the number of records received compared with 2017, however the species remains the most commonly reported raptor in the recording area. In SE65 the number of reports halved whilst there were 35% fewer from SE54 and 55. It may well be that Buzzards are now so common in these areas that under-reporting is taking place. Birds were present throughout the year and TD's report of sightings during 41 out of 44 weeks at Acaster Airfield was typical. Most records dated from March and April with the fewest from November. A third of the 770 records came from the LDV, notably Bank Island, Wheldrake Ings and Pocklington Canal, whilst details from a further 110 sites were received. Birds were widely distributed - including populated areas - and very active prior to the main nesting period. Eleven were present in the Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings area on 2nd February and an amazing 25 reported from the Castle Howard area on 11th March. Records from infrequently reported sites included two seen harrying a Red Kite *Milvus milvus* at Whitwell on 30th January, five at Newburgh Priory on 15th February and three at Stamford Bridge on 26th March.

Courtship displays were reported from Allerthorpe on 13th March and Wheldrake Ings on the 29th, Haxby on 3rd April and Huby on 9th May. However, once egg-laying started the birds became very secretive resulting in a limited

number of breeding records compared with the overall number of sightings. An adult was seen taking food to a nest site in Riccall on 30th May. Two fledged young were at Melbourne on 3rd August, an adult and three fledged young were reported from Bolton Percy Ings on the 5th, an adult and two young at Milford Common on the 9th, an adult and two begging young at Strensall Common on the 10th, four young at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 13th, and three young at Thornton on the 18th. A kettle of nine, including two young, was over Heslington West on 3rd September. Pairs also bred at Bolton Percy and probably did so at Brayton Barff and elsewhere.

After the breeding season there was a slow decline in the number of reports until December when they increased. Birds were reported from all hectads but again the bulk came from SE 53, 54 and 74. The largest site count came from Bank Island where seven were reported on 23rd September and 7th October, whilst 12 were seen in SE55 on 18th November. One hit by a car at Cockey Hill was later released after being cared for; however, one shot at Riccall on 8th November had to be euthanised.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Winter and passage visitor; resident breeder

As in previous years, the majority of sightings came from the LDV, with at least 15 birds overwintering in the area. In January there were two near Melbourne, calling birds from three other sites along Pocklington Canal and one at Thornton Ellers. Numbers in February included up to six at Wheldrake Ings, three in the Melbourne area, three at Bank Island and two at Thornton Ellers. Elsewhere, sightings at Heslington East included two on 6th January and two again on 3rd February, while one on 11th March was being chased by a stoat. There were three at Milford Common on 7th January and one on 7th March. A singleton was on floodwater at Castle Howard on 15th March feeding and one at Rawcliffe Meadows on the 17th.

An 'exceptional' breeding season was noted in the LDV, but it was not possible to ascertain whether this was partly because very low water levels meant families ventured out further into the open than usual, so young were more obvious. The number of calling males was thought to be slightly above average with 18 calling, including five at Wheldrake Ings during May and two at Skipwith Common on the 20th. In the LDV eight pairs produced at least 16 young with the first brood (four young) seen on 12th June. During July young from at least four different broods were seen with adults on the pool at Wheldrake Ings and a pair with three newly hatched young (presumed second brood) was seen on the 22nd. Sightings of juveniles continued through August, including five at Swantail Ings on the 11th, and into early September.

Post breeding, in the LDV, most reports came from Pocklington Canal and Wheldrake Ings where birds were present to the end of the year, including five at the latter site on 28th December. There were two at Thornton Ellers on 25th November. Away from the LDV one was calling at Heslington East on 20th August, and one was present on 21st October; a singleton was at Milford

Common on 4th September and two at Newburgh Priory on 14th October. Winter birds included singletons at Milford Common on the 21st and 25th November, and 12th December. One was at Heslington East on 30th November, and two there on 14th December. See RBBP Report on page 116.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

YOC Red listed

Scarce summer migrant and casual breeder

Another good year for Corncrake in the LDV (from where all records came), with the first heard calling at NDC on 9th May, nearly a week earlier than in 2017 (DR, MC, CSR et al.). Several lucky observers saw this bird bathing and showing well on the 12th just in front of Geoff Smith hide. In addition to this very obvious bird several singing males arrived at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings during the month bringing the total to eight by the 31st. Numbers increased again in June to a total of ten, with five of these in the NDC/Bubwith area on the 15th and 16th. Two were seen at NDC on 19th June during the NE long term monitoring week and one bird continued to call through to the end of the month. During July one male continued to call at Bubwith to mid-month, with two present on the 12th. One was also calling at Bank Island on the 13th. The final report of a calling bird was of one at Bubwith Ings on the 21st. Confirmation of successful breeding came with the sighting of a juvenile at one of the key calling sites in August (LDV Blog). See RBBP Report on page 116.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

YOC Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant and casual breeder

Up to three males were calling in the LDV this year. One was heard at Wheldrake Ings in the early hours of 1st May and again on the 10th (CSR). This was followed on the 14th by one at NDC, which was also heard calling there after dark on the 21st (LDV Blog). The final record of the year came in June when two were calling against each other in a presumed territorial dispute (LDV Blog). See RBBP Report on page 116.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Common resident breeder and winter visitor

BBS 12/44

Widely reported in small numbers (mostly one to five), with CHL, Heslington (East and West) and the LDV again providing the highest counts. However, these higher counts were mostly from WeBS (see table). Numbers in the LDV remained high during the first winter period and into spring, with 231 in April the peak annual count, before birds dispersed to breed. Like last year, numbers at CHL were low, with 32 in both August and September the peak annual count. At Heslington (East and West) WeBS counts were broadly similar to 2017, apart from December when there were only 47 (87 in 2017). Away from these areas, 12 were at Allerthorpe OGP on 4th February and 10 there on 13th March.

Successful breeding was reported from many areas, including some very small ponds; the first brood was seen on 7th May along Pocklington Canal. Adults with

young were also seen at Bolton Percy Ings, CHL, Elvington WTW, Foggathorpe, Foss Island (York), Gilling, Hassacarr NR, Heslington (East and West), Hull Road Park, Monks Cross, Naburn, Norton, Poppleton, Riccall, SHL, Strensall (Potteries Lake), Ulleskelf Mires, Wheldrake Ings and Yearsley Moor.

Post breeding, up to 30 were on the pool at Wheldrake Ings during August, 39 adults and four juveniles were at East Cottingwith on 25th August and 18 at Milford Common on the 7th. As expected, numbers built up in the LDV during the second winter period, with 187 throughout the valley on 9th December. Away from the main sites, 21 at Newburgh Priory on 14th October was the only other double-figure count of the autumn and second winter period.

Monthly WeBS counts for Moorhen

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	0	8	5	11	2	2	15	32	32	16	4	4
LDV	115	98	187	231						-	88	187
HES	69	69	59	27	27	26	31	52	50	45	57	47

Coot *Fulica atra*

Common resident breeder and winter visitor

BBS 2/44

As in previous years, reported from sites with suitable habitat in low numbers (typically fewer than five). The only significant counts came from CHL, Heslington East and West and the LDV (with Wheldrake Ings and NDC the main sites within the valley). Counts from the University were somewhat down on last year, the peak count for the year being 59 in both January and September. However, counts at CHL were much higher than in 2017, with the annual peak count of 60 (in September) more than double that of the previous year. Numbers in the LDV could not be compared as there were no counts for January to April in 2017. However, numbers built significantly with flooding in the valley in February to 250, with 183 noted at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th, peaking on 30th/31st March at 287, by which time many were nest building. There were 204 on 29th April, including 38 nesting pairs. Some high-rise nests resulted from receding floodwater. On 10th May 102 were at NDC, with many remaining to breed there. Elsewhere 25 were at Plassmoor Ponds, Hemingbrough on 27th May.

During the breeding season nesting was noted at several sites. There were at least five occupied nests at Heslington East and three at Heslington West on 4th May and many broods seen there subsequently during the summer. Successful breeding was also confirmed at Brumber Hill, CHL, Hemingbrough, Knavesmire and Ousebank, Milford Common, NDC, Pocklington Canal (The Grange), Ulleskelf Mires and Wheldrake Ings.

Post breeding, very few counts were received apart from WeBS, with 26 at CHL on 29th December the only other double-figure count.

Monthly WeBS counts for Coot

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CHL	40	19	28	11	7	15	42	47	60	38	16	20
LDV	22	250	287	201						-	-	-
HES	59	47	36	16	18	18	26	41	59	40	38	40

Note: No LDV WeBS counts for Nov and Dec

Crane *Grus grus*

YOC Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant

The first of the year (and the highest count) were four on 9th April; they circled over Bank Island in misty conditions, calling, before heading north (CSR). One was at Skipwith Common on the 14th, a pair near Thornton on the 16th and two at Thorganby on the 17th (LDV Blog). In May, one flew into Wheldrake Ings on the 8th; a singleton was at Bubwith Ings on the 14th (LDV Blog) and one at Thorganby on the 16th (CSR, FM). One flew north over Wheldrake Ings on the morning of the 29th; it appeared to drop in at Bank Island, but was not relocated thereafter (DMB, JBe et al.). A singleton circled over High Petergate in the centre of York for several minutes before heading off north on 4th June (DWhi). On the 7th a sub-adult flew over Wheldrake Ings (LDV Blog). One was observed flying south over Wheldrake Ings and Low Grounds on the 16th (CSR) and one photographed flying over Askham Bog on the 17th (TB). An adult was on the scrape at Aughton on the 21st (FM) and 27th (NC). One was at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th (NC, DMB).

Sightings thereafter were more sporadic; one was on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 1st July, lingering there to the 2nd. Two were heading over Hagg Bridge on 26th August (BirdGuides), while the only September sighting was of one at Easthorpe on the 24th (HT). The final report of the year was of a singleton at Thornton Ellers on 25th November which flew off in the direction of Hagg Bridge (CSR, MSt). See RBBP Report on page 116.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Amber listed

Common passage migrant and scarce breeder

BBS 9/44

The first arrivals of the year, ten days later than in 2017, were on 27th January when there were single birds at Aughton Ings and East Cottingwith Farm Pond. A pair arrived at Heslington East on 2nd February and then numbers increased towards the end of the month, with one or two birds at several sites, plus a peak of seven at NDC on the 25th. Arrivals continued through March, with up to five seen at 20 sites, and higher counts being 19 in the LDV on the 30th, eclipsed by 23 the next day, and six at Heslington East in mid-March.

Birds were present at 26 sites during the breeding season (April to June), but breeding was only proven as follows: Heslington East (one pair), LDV (17 pairs), Milford Common (one pair) and Naburn (one pair). This species readily takes to any suitable breeding area which included the gravel-covered roof of an artificial Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* breeding bank at Heslington East and on the roof of an industrial unit at Pocklington Industrial Estate. At the latter site, a chick got stuck in a drainpipe and had to be rescued by the fire service!

From July, birds began to disperse and although seen regularly in the vicinity of breeding areas, the only sizeable group was 14 feeding on a golf course near Aughton on the 10th. Three at Wheldrake Ings on 28th July were seemingly the last records for the area as birds headed for the coast to winter, so one at Acaster Airfield on 3rd October was a late surprise.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*
Rare passage migrant

Amber listed

An early spring migrant was at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd February, followed by two further spring singles, at NDC on 23rd April and on the Low Grounds on 26th April. In the autumn, one was at private ponds adjacent to Thorganby Ings from 27th to 30th November.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
Winter visitor, passage migrant and resident breeder

Red Listed
BBS 17/44

Good numbers were present during the first winter period until hard weather arrived towards the end of February, causing a large southward movement. In early January over 1000 were present at Wheldrake Ings, 500 were at Bank Island on the 6th, 500 at Westfield House, Thornton on the 14th, 500 at Ellerton Ings on the 25th, 400 at Acaster Airfield on the 18th and 300 at Strensall on the 31st. During the WeBS count on the 22nd 3426 were present in the LDV. By early February, numbers in the LDV had risen to at least 5300 (much lower than the 9000 present in February 2017). Peak site counts included 1000 at Ellerton Ings on the 1st, 3500 at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd, 1000 on the Low Grounds on the 4th, and flocks of 500 at Thornton Ellers on the 5th and Thorganby Ings on the 10th and 11th. Elsewhere 400 were at Kirkby Wharfe on the 21st. Numbers crashed with the arrival of the 'Beast from the East' but as the thaw set in birds returned rapidly; by 10th March, at least 1000 were back in the LDV, and several pairs were displaying over breeding sites. Other flocks included 250 at Acaster Airfield on the 9th and 140 at Hessay on the 11th.

Hereafter, birds settled onto their breeding areas and the large flocks dispersed as birds moved off. Proof, or signs of breeding, came from Allerthorpe OGP, Brumber Hill, Church Fenton, East Moor, Foggathorpe Lakes, Germany Beck (Fulford), Heslington East (two chicks ringed), Kirkby Wharfe, the LDV (where 100+ pairs were present), Milford Common, Ozendyke Ings, Poppleton Common, Ryther Ings, Scagglethorpe Lane, Skipwith Common, Strensall, Towthorpe, Ulleskelf Mires and Wass, with young seen at at least half of these sites.

From mid-June, flocks began to develop as birds vacated their nearby breeding areas. 140 at Ozendyke Ings on the 16th was the first notable flock, with 130 at Wheldrake Ings on 5th July (rising to over 200 by the 18th), 110 at Foggathorpe on the 7th and 150 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 24th. In August there were 200 at Acaster Airfield on the 12th, 3000 at NDC on the 31st and 1000 at Bank Island the same day. Numbers decreased in September as birds departed, with 300 at Bank Island on the 29th and 250 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 25th the only notable counts. Numbers remained low through October and November,

apart from 400 at NDC on 9th November, before building up towards the end of the month, when 2300 were at Bank Island on the 30th. In December 2500 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th, rising to 3000 by the end of the month, when over 8000 were in the valley as a whole. Peak site counts during the month also included 2000 at Bubwith Ings on the 31st, 1500 at Bank Island on the 22nd, 1500 at Aughton Ings on the 30th, 1000 at the Low Grounds on the 16th, 754 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 6th and 500 at Newburgh Priory on the 21st.

Monthly WeBS counts for Lapwing

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	3426	3500	1000	564						-	1020	3000

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* *Winter visitor and passage migrant*

Numbers in January were down on 2017, with only 1230 in the LDV (c.f. 3850 in 2017). The count rose in February to a peak of 3770 on 22nd, 2000 of which were at Ellerton Ings and 800 at Bubwith. Early in February, notable counts were 400 at Thorganby Ings on the 10th and 400 at Ellerton Ings on the 11th. Numbers fell rapidly through March, with 95 at NDC on the 25th and 80 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 22nd being the peak counts. 30 at East Moor on 7th April and 18 at Sherburn in Elmet on the 14th were recorded, followed by the last spring birds, three at Scagglethorpe on the 25th.

The first returning bird was at NDC on 12th July, followed by 12 flying south over Bank Island on the 27th. Five were at Bolton Percy Ings on the 31st and two at Thorganby on 8th August. It was mid-September before numbers passing through the area increased. Three-figure counts during September and October were 180 at Ozendyke Ings on 19th September and 220 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 22nd, 350 at Low Catton on 7th October, 162 at Raker Lakes, Wheldrake on the 8th, 300 at Bank Island on the 13th, 179 at Scagglethorpe on the 14th and 180 at Ulleskelf on the 16th.

In the second winter period, numbers remained relatively modest, with the largest numbers being in the Wheldrake Ings area, with 980 on 9th December the peak, which was part of a LDV count of 1102. Other notable counts were 220 at Bolton Percy Ings on 4th November and 200 at Brandsby on 18th November. The Club's annual survey focused on wintering Golden Plover in 2018; see page 124 for Paul Doherty and David Tate's article.

Monthly WeBS counts for Golden Plover

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	1200	3770								-	1102	1000

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

One flying west over NDC calling on 1st March was the only record.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Red listed

Passage migrant and casual breeder

The first spring migrant was resting on a turf field near North Duffield on 29th April, followed by another single at Ellerton on 3rd May. Seven at Low Grounds on 13th May was a good count and the last of the spring.

In autumn, five flew southwest at Heslington East on 19th August during a period of strong winds, and two were briefly at Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd, with a single there on 10th September, the last of the year.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Passage migrant and scarce breeder

The first of the year was at Eden Camp near Malton on 3rd April followed by a single flying over Allerthorpe OGP on 21st April. In the breeding season pairs attempted to nest at Eden Camp, Elvington WTW and an industrial site near Milford Common. Other birds seen in the breeding season were one at Bank Island on 13th June, two at Bootham Stray on the 21st and two at Bank Island on the 23rd. It is likely that these birds represent failed breeders or non-breeding birds. A juvenile was seen at Heslington East, a former breeding site, on 6th July.

Single autumn passage birds were seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th, 15th (two), 17th, 28th and 29th July, a single at Carlton Husthwaite Flash on 19th August, and another single at Wheldrake Ings on 30th August which may be the same bird as the one recorded at Bank Island on 1st and 2nd September.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Red listed

Passage migrant

Four came into roost at Wheldrake Ings on the evening of 17th April, representing the first of the year. The roost count rose to 11 the next day and to 76 by the 26th, including a colour-ringed bird from 2007. Numbers diminished in May although the peak count was unknown as the roost moved. The maximum recorded in May was 39 on both the 2nd and 4th. Away from Wheldrake, singles were seen feeding at Ellerton Landing on 5th May and at NDC on the 8th with another at Wheldrake Ings the same day. The last of the spring was at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th.

In autumn, a single flew southwest calling at Milford Common on 8th August, the same day that two were on the pool at Wheldrake Ings at dawn. Later in August, single birds were heard migrating over Wheldrake and Ellerton on the night of 31st August -1st September, with another the following night over Ellerton and the last of the year flying south over Wheldrake at dusk on 2nd September.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Red listed

Winter visitor, passage migrant and migrant breeder

BBS 9/44

Fewer birds wintered in the LDV than in 2017, with a maximum count of 36 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th January, with small numbers seen elsewhere. The only other January record was a single at Bolton Percy Ings on the 21st. Numbers increased rapidly in February as birds returned to the area, with 29 at Thornton on

the 6th the first flock noted. 50 had arrived back in the LDV by mid-month, with 12 at Byland on the 25th and four at Kirkby Wharfe on the 21st. The first displaying birds were reported from the LDV on 25th February, becoming widespread during March. Further spring passage flocks were noted as follows: forty at Melbourne on 3rd March, 28 at Byland on the 10th and 100+ in the LDV on the 25th with individual flocks of 41 at Wheldrake Ings and 27 at Thornton Ings.

Birds were noted in the breeding season from at least 42 sites (including many in the LDV), though many of these may have not bred, or failed in their attempt. In the LDV, at least 60 pairs bred, with 17 young reared successfully. This is a major success when the numbers fledged in England as a whole, was incredibly small.

Following breeding, flocks of 21 on 2nd July and 17 on the 3rd were noted from Wheldrake Ings. Small numbers were then seen during the rest of July through to the year-end with Wheldrake Ings attracting the most, with a peak of 17 on 26th December. In addition, singles were noted at Newburgh Priory on 14th October and Brumber Hill on 6th November.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
Scarce passage migrant

YOC Amber listed

After a blank year in 2017, two came into roost with Whimbrels *Numerius phaeopus* during the evening of 8th May at Wheldrake Ings (CSR).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Red listed

Passage migrant also occasionally seen in winter and casual breeder

A single wintering bird remained in the LDV from 2017, being seen at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd January.

The first hint of a northward movement came on 24th February, when 15 were at NDC. This flock was seen at Wheldrake Ings the same day. Twelve were present at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd March, increasing to 21 by the 11th, with five at Ellerton Ings on the 17th. Towards the month end, 39 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th, surpassed the following month by a flock of 49 on 17th April. Further flocks of 23 were seen at Wheldrake Ings on 18th and 19th April, 47 on the 23rd, with 12 at NDC on the 27th and 19 at Ellerton on the 28th.

Most migrants had moved through by the beginning of May, although 12 were at NDC on the 10th, with seven lingering between the 11th and 13th and three on the 14th. Thirty-one flew north at Bank Island on 18th May, the last of the spring passage. Further to this, a pair of nominate race birds *L. limosa limosa* remained in the LDV and were observed mating though it is unclear whether they attempted to breed. A singleton at Bank Island on the unseasonal date of 18th June and at Wheldrake Ings on the 7th to 9th July, may relate to one of the pair.

The first return passage birds were seven at Wheldrake Ings on 12th July, with one there on the 13th and nine from the 17th to the 20th, with 25 briefly on the 26th. In August, most records came from Wheldrake Ings, with eight on the 3rd the peak count. A single juvenile graced the pool at Wheldrake Ings between the 14th and 21st. Elsewhere, three were at Heslington East on 5th August and two flew over Norton following the River Derwent on 14th September. There were no more

records until 9th December, when one was seen at Wheldrake Ings which remained there, being joined by two more birds at the month end.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Amber listed
Scarce passage migrant, usually in spring

The first since 2014, there were two spring records this year. One flew north at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May and another was seen at the Low Grounds on the 27th and 28th May (AF, CSR).

Knot *Calidris canutus* YOC Amber listed
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Three flew south at Wheldrake Ings on 11th November (DMB).

Ruff *Calidris pugnax* Red listed
Winter visitor and passage migrant

The wintering flock from December 2017 continued to reside in the LDV, with 77 counted on 22nd January. Peak individual site counts in January included 44 at Thorganby Ings on the 2nd, 62 at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th and 24 at Ellerton Ings on the 13th. Numbers fell slightly in February with 57 throughout on the 22nd, with 44 of these together at East Cottingwith Ings. Despite the harsh weather reasonable numbers still occurred in the LDV through March, with 32 at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th and 11th and 15 at Ellerton Ings on the last day of the month. Further cold weather caused the remaining birds to leave so that only three birds were recorded during April.

Five males and two females were lekking at two sites in the LDV in early May and although two males were present late in the month with a single female in early June, no evidence of breeding was noted. One of the males lingered in the valley into the summer and was joined by a second bird on 3rd July at Wheldrake Ings. Further singles were seen at Wheldrake Ings on 14th July and 4th August, with three present on the pool there between the 19th and 21st.

Following a lengthy gap, 18 arrived at Bank Island on 21st November, with 19 there the following day, the start of the wintering flock. Four at Thornton Lock were additional to this flock on 28th November. By mid-December, the flock had built to 23, with 45 in the LDV as a whole on 20th December, including 30 at Wheldrake Ings. Towards the end of the month, numbers had risen to 64.

Monthly WeBS counts for Ruff

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	71	57	31	1						-	0	23

Sanderling *Calidris alba* YOC Amber listed
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Not seen in 2018, but records in four of the past ten years, most recently 2017.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Unusually for the York area, recorded in every month of the year. Up to 200 wintered in the LDV, with many of these concentrated at Aughton Ings and on the riverbank at Thorganby. Numbers increased in February with 120 at the Low Grounds on the 10th and 300 in the LDV on the 18th, with 200 remaining until the 26th. Numbers dropped with the arrival of hard weather at the end of February to about 50 in the Wheldrake Ings area with smaller numbers elsewhere. During the snow, three birds were seen foraging on the grass next to Heslington East Lake accompanying Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris*! Following the thaw, extensive flooding meant there were no records in the LDV after 18th March, when 98 were recorded at Bubwith Ings.



Dunlin at Heslington East

©Duncan Bye

A small spring passage was noted, with one at Melbourne on 13th April, followed by two at Aughton Ings on 3rd May, one at Melbourne the same day and three at the Low Grounds on the 13th.

Unusually, four were at Bank Island on 13th June which flew off southeast, possibly non-breeding birds. The next returning migrant was a single at Heslington East on 12th July, with further singles at Wheldrake Ings on 9th to 11th August and one or two at Heslington East on a number of dates between the 16th and 25th August. The next couple of months were similarly quiet, with one at Melbourne on 26th September, one at Bank Island on 21st October and one at Wheldrake Ings on 18th November. The wintering flock began to assemble from early December with eight at Bank Island on the 1st, 11 at Wheldrake Ings a week later and 137

scattered around the site by the 28th.

Monthly WeBS counts for wintering Dunlin in the LDV

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	200	300	90	0						-	1	11

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Red listed

Winter visitor and resident breeder

Up to five were present at Allerthorpe Common on 7th January and at Wheldrake Ings on 20th February. Elsewhere, between January and March, one or two birds were reported from Bishop Wood, Broomhill Plantation, Heslington Tillmire, Melbourne, Milford Common, New Earswick, NDC, Riccall, Seavy Carr, Strensall Common, Thornton Ellers and Yearsley.

In spring and early summer, roding males were noted at several sites, indicative of possible breeding: Allerthorpe Common (four), Bishop Wood (two), Hagg Wood (three), Hovingham High Wood (one), Skipwith Common (five), Strensall Common (one) and Yearsley Moor (two).

There were no records from the end of June until 24th November when one was seen at Acomb Ings. One to two birds were seen from then through to the end of the year at Askham Bog, Bank Island, Brayton Barff, Church Bridge (Melbourne), Escrick, Patefield Wood and Skipwith Common, with counts of four at Wheldrake Ings on 17th December and Milford Common on the 29th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Another good year, although numbers were not as high as in 2017 and birds were not recorded at quite as many sites.

Up to four wintered at Milford Common, with four more at Riccall on 31st January. Two singles were recorded during January, at Bank Island on the 19th and Melbourne on the 26th. The following month one was at Heslington East from the 2nd, one was at Ryther Ings on the 18th and eight were part of a cold weather movement at Bank Island on the 28th. Further hard weather led to sightings of four at Dunnington, presumably frozen out of nearby ditches, with two seen at a roadside puddle! The individual at Heslington East was still present on 3rd March, with three at Bank Island, two at Wheldrake Ings and two at Rawcliffe Ings the same day. The count at Milford Common had increased to six by 13th March, with five at Ryther Ings on the 23rd. The last birds of the spring were three at Milford Common on 17th April.

One arrived back at Heslington East on 15th October followed by one at Wheldrake Ings on the 18th. November records involved singles at Skipwith Common on the 15th and Riccall on the 28th. On 11th December five were counted at Wheldrake Ings and one at Milford Common, with the last of the year a single flushed at Bishopthorpe Ings on 31st December.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago**Amber listed**Resident and migrant breeder and passage visitor**BBS 1/44*

Numbers in the first winter period were lower than in 2017, with a maximum of 350 in the LDV on 10th January the peak. Smaller numbers were also recorded from Hagg Wood (three), Heslington East (three), Milford Common (13), Rawcliffe Meadows (seven) and Wharfe Ings (one). Over 300 remained in the LDV during February, with up to 100 at Melbourne and Thornton Ings on the 6th and 73 at The Grange, Pocklington Canal the next day. Seventy at Ryther Ings on 18th February was a great count, with further birds recorded as follows: Bolton Percy Ings (ten), East Ings (13), Hagg Wood (one), Heslington East (two), Kirkby Wharfe (ten), Milford Common (11) and Wharfe Ings (two). Harsh weather at the end of February and the beginning of March caused dispersal as shallow water areas froze. One was seen in a garden in Copmanthorpe on 1st March, with small parties continually on the move through the LDV the same day, seeking foraging areas to the south and west and 300 were feeding along the unfrozen riverbank at NDC, part of an estimated 500 in the LDV. Birds were then flooded out by rapidly rising water levels following the thaw leading to appearances across the area: Bolton Percy Ings (four), Brumber Hill (three), Burtonfields (two), East Ings (eight), Elvington WTW (20), Heslington East (three), Kirkby Wharfe (31), Milford Common (31), Rawcliffe Meadows (16), Ryther Ings (45), Scagglethorpe Lane (one) and Wharfe Ings (one). Good numbers lingered into April but soon dispersed.

The first drumming birds were three over Thornton Ings on 4th April. A total of 67 drumming males was counted in the LDV on 10th May, only two fewer than in 2017, suggesting most birds had survived the cold weather earlier in the year. Away from the LDV, displaying or breeding birds were seen at Heslington Tillmire and Kirkby Wharfe (where a nest with four eggs was found); with birds also noted at Fangfoss, Milford Common, Ryther Ings and Wharfe Ings although some of these could have been late migrants.

The first post-breeding assemblage was 14 at Bank Island on 28th June. Subsequently, 11 were at Wheldrake Ings on 28th July and during August a maximum of 29 there on the 8th, with at least 30 in the Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island area through to the end of the month and small numbers elsewhere. Up to eight were present in September across several sites which is incredibly poor and again indicative of the very dry conditions in summer 2018. Numbers barely rose in the following months, with 20 at NDC on 23rd October, 15 at Melbourne on 5th November and 13 at Heslington East on 15th October the best counts. Things picked up considerably in December with 100 at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th and 100 at Melbourne on the 13th. By the 19th, 350 were in the LDV. Elsewhere, 31 were at Bolton Percy Ings on the 14th, with 21 at Ryther Ings the same day and 18 at Milford Common on the 24th.

Monthly WeBS counts for wintering Snipe in the LDV

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LDV	300	198	500	0						-	97	98

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Amber listed

Passage migrant

A good showing this year. One at Bolton Percy Ings on 21st April kicked off spring migration, followed by two at Heslington East the next day, with another pair there on the 28th. Also on the 28th, two were at Melbourne. One was seen at NDC on 29th April remaining until 7th May. One was at Kirkby Wharfe on 4th May, one heard calling after dark at Aughton Ings on the 10th, one at CHL on the 20th and the last of the spring one at the River Ouse, Bishopthorpe on the 23rd.

The first bird of the return passage was at Wheldrake Ings on 9th July, followed by one or two all month, with four there on the 28th and 30th and on 1st August. A single was at Bolton Percy Ings on 31st July. At Wheldrake Ings, three were present from the 2nd to 4th August, with one on the 5th and another single on the 29th. One or two birds were seen at Heslington East during August (with the duo last recorded on 2nd September), a single at SHL on the 28th and the last bird of the year was at NDC on 4th September.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS 1/44

In the first winter period, three were in the Riccall area; one was present at Dam Dike from 8th January until 19th March, with two at Riccall Ings from 14th January to 15th March. Singles wintered at Bolton Percy Ings from 18th January to 24th February, with another at Brumber Hill from 11th January to 15th February. Another single was by pools at Rufforth Tip on 7th January. Spring migrants were seen at Kirkby Wharfe on 22nd and 26th March (three, with two there on 19th April), Bolton Percy Ings on 25th March, Cawood on 22nd April and two at Bank Island on 8th May.

Return passage began on schedule on 28th June, when singles arrived at Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island, plus two at Skipwith Common. Two were at Wheldrake Ings on 1st July increasing to three on the 4th, four on the 9th, five on the 12th remaining until the 16th, eight at dawn on the 17th with the same number into the roost on the 25th, increasing to ten from the 28th to the month end. At Bank Island, two on the 14th was the highest count there in July. Singles at Acaster Airfield and Castle Howard on 1st August were notable. At Wheldrake Ings there were 12 on the 2nd, falling to nine regularly during the month with peaks of 12 on the 14th, 15 on the 15th and 13 on the 17th. Peak counts during August from other sites included two at Melbourne on the 3rd, one at Carlton Husthwaite Flash on the 19th, two at Heslington East on the 20th, five at Bank Island on the 26th, and one each at Bolton Percy Ings and SHL on the 28th. As normal, numbers dropped in September, with peak counts at Wheldrake Ings eight at the beginning of the month, dropping to five by the 6th (and again on the 22nd), with up to two to the month end. Four were at Bank Island on the 1st, four at Heslington Tillmire and one at Bolton Percy Ings on the 9th and two at Wistow on the 21st.

In October four at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th was the highest count. Up to three were present until the 14th, with one on the 27th. Elsewhere, singles were at Bank Island towards the end of the month, and one at Bolton Percy Ings on the 25th and

26th. During November, singles were reported from Bank Island, Brumber Hill, Heslington East and Scagglethorpe, with one to four at Wheldrake Ings until the 25th, by which time birds were taking up their winter residences. In December, three resided on Bolton Percy Ings and one flew over Melbourne on the 27th.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Amber listed

Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor

BBS 1/44

In January, only recorded from the LDV where the peak count was 51 on the 22nd, most of which were feeding along the riverbank in the Thorganby - Ellerton area. Eighteen were at Aughton Ings on 10th February, by which time the LDV count had risen slightly to 56, with the first birds back on their breeding territories at Bank Island by the month end. A full site count of the LDV of 51 on 31st March included 40 still at Ellerton. Away from the LDV, birds were seen at Bolton Percy Ings and Heslington East, with display noted at the former site.

Redshank is declining rapidly as a breeding species in the area reflecting its poor fortunes elsewhere. In 2018, breeding pairs in the LDV were down from 28 in 2017 to 15, with displaying birds at only two other sites, Bolton Percy Ings and Kirkby Wharfe. Birds with young were still present in the LDV well into July, possibly after a late start to nesting caused by the extensive flooding in March. Very few were seen after mid-July, with single juveniles on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 6th August and 12th September.

No more were recorded until three at Wheldrake Ings on 30th October, which remained through November, increasing to six by the 25th. Twenty-one were counted in the LDV on 25th November, in response to rising river levels and some shallow flooding, this number remaining through to the year-end.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant

One at Aughton Ings on 3rd May was the first record in a reasonable year for the species. This, or another single, was at Low Grounds on 5th May and was present the next day. Another single was seen at the same site on 21st May.

The first returning bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 28th July which remained until the month end, when a second was present nearby at Bank Island. These were followed by another on 1st August and then one on 1st September, which was trapped and ringed on the night of the 2nd, only the second to be ringed in the York area.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

YOC Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant

There were three records of this elegant wader this year. The first was on 19th March at NDC (CG), with another over a month later, flying over Thornton Ellers on 29th April (CSR). In autumn, one flew into Bank Island calling on 23rd August (LDV Blog).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and rare winter visitor

A poor spring showing made up for by a reasonable autumn passage. The first of the spring was at Wheldrake Ings on 20th April, with the same or another there on the 26th and 28th. A bird at NDC, also on 28th April, may have been the same bird as seen at Wheldrake. The last of the spring was a late bird that flew north, calling, at Bank Island on 30th May.

The first returning bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 25th July, which remained until the 29th. One flew southwest at Milford Common on 7th August, with two southwest over SHL on the 13th. A single was on the pool at Wheldrake Ings the following day, with another on the bank of the River Derwent at Ellerton on the 16th, one at Bank Island on the 21st and one at Wheldrake Ings from the 19th to the 29th and presumably the same bird at Bank Island on the 30th. One was at Heslington East on 31st August, with another over Wheldrake Ings on 4th September while the last of the year was one over Copmanthorpe on 3rd October.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

YOC Red listed

Scarce passage migrant

There were three reports of this usually pelagic species in the recording area this year, all adults. One was present briefly at NDC on 19th January (TD), more typically, during April singles were seen on the 8th at CHL (DMB) with another over Bank Island the following day (CSR).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Amber listed

Resident breeder, abundant winter visitor and passage migrant

BBS 11/44

As with the other commoner gull species, continues to be under-recorded in the YOC area; however there were a few reasonable counts. On 9th January 1000 were seen at East Cottingham, with 500 at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th, 280 on the 18th at Acaster Airfield and over 300 present at NDC on the 27th. The only other notable spring record was on 3rd March when 300 were seen feeding on a slurry pit near Riccall.

The traditional nesting colony on Strensall Common seems to have disappeared, five pairs were seen displaying over Butt Pools during April, but the site appeared abandoned by 28th May. Several breeding pairs were seen in the LDV; the first two fledged juveniles were seen on 26th June at Bank Island. In July, 43 juveniles were seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th, with other successful breeding noted at Melbourne and juveniles also seen at Heslington East.

Widespread reports of autumn passage included 250 feeding on the Knavesmire on 16th July, 200 at Rufforth Tip on the 19th, 480 at Riccall on 27th August and 300 seen flying south over Wheldrake Ings on 30th September. As expected, numbers built up towards the year-end. In October, 420 were present on Wharfe Ings on the 15th, increasing to 800 the following day, while the popular slurry pit at Riccall held 1600 on the 24th, increasing to 2000 by 24th November. On 8th December 4450 were seen at the regular winter roost on Wheldrake Ings, with 700 on Wharfe Ings on the 9th. An impressive count of 2000 was present on

Heslington East on 14th December with the roost at Wheldrake Ings peaking at 5000 on the 26th.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus* YOC

Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor

Spring passage offers the best chance of seeing this species in our area, and the four records received this year perfectly exemplify this: one was present on 3rd March at Bank Island (LDV Blog), the same site also holding an adult and 2nd-calendar-year bird on 17th April (LDV Blog), whilst in May one 1st-summer bird was seen at NDC (JLe) and two at Wheldrake Ings (DMB) on the 20th.

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* YOC *Amber listed*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant BBS 1/44

A very good year for this species with all except two records coming in the first winter period. An adult roosted at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd January (JLe, DMB) with a 2nd-winter bird present on the 6th at CHL (JLe), whilst two were seen on Rawcliffe Meadows the following day (CT). On the 20th, a 1st-winter was at Wheldrake Ings, with an adult there on the 27th (DMB, AF). During February, diligent watching of the regular gull roost on Wheldrake Ings produced several records; on the 2nd two 1st-winters were seen (DR, DMB), with an adult there on the 4th and three adults seen on the 10th (CG). A 1st-winter was present at Bank Island on the 14th, with another adult and 1st-winter on the 17th at Wheldrake Ings. One was rather surprisingly seen during a BBS count on 2nd June near Seaton Ross – possibly wandering from North Cave (GR). At the end of the year, an adult in winter plumage was at Wheldrake Ings on 29th December (DMB).

Common Gull *Larus canus* *Amber listed*

Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant

A dramatic decline for this species with numbers much reduced from previous years. The only significant count during the first half of the year was on 15th January when 500 were seen at Wheldrake Ings, with another 130 on Pocklington Canal at Thornton. This species' nearest breeding grounds are in Scotland and Northern Ireland and the first returning birds were two juveniles seen at Bank Island on 24th June. No other autumn passage was noted but numbers throughout December quickly built up at Wheldrake Ings, when 800 were present on the 8th, with 1000 there by the 16th and culminating on the 26th when 1500 represented the largest count of the year.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* *Amber listed*

Winter visitor and passage migrant BBS 2/44

Though recorded every month (only one record each in June and July) with mostly single digit counts, as is the case with other large gull species, the closure of Rufforth tip has had a significant effect on numbers present in the recording area. With the absence of the large gull roosts formerly at Wheldrake Ings, the only counts of significance came from the surrounding countryside. The 40 seen

on Bolton Percy Ings on 21st January was the largest gathering noted during the first winter period. A very modest flock of 17 adults seen at Ellerton on 29th March were most likely breeding birds on spring passage headed to northerly breeding grounds. A few lingering non-breeders and 2nd-calendar-year birds were seen in the LDV over the summer months but it wasn't until the second winter period that numbers began to increase with 103 at Riccall on 24th November, thereafter the only notable records came from Wheldrake Ings - indeed the roost of 288 individuals on 8th December was the peak count of the year.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*
Scarce winter visitor

Amber listed

Another species which will be affected by the closure of Rufforth tip, and as a result will become much rarer in the recording area. A first-winter bird found near Rufforth on 2nd January, and seen there again on the 21st, was subsequently seen on several dates throughout the month at both Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island and was in fact joined by a similarly aged, albeit much darker, individual and both were seen together at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd and 8th February.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*
Scarce winter visitor

Amber listed

A relatively decent year, especially in comparison to other large migratory gulls, with all records coming in the first half of the year. The first report was of one at Rufforth on the 5th and 6th January, with an adult seen on the 12th at Wheldrake Ings and a 1st-winter bird also there the following day. In February a 1st-winter bird was seen on several days between NDC and Wheldrake Ings and was joined by another 1st-winter at NDC on the 15th, with a single bird reported from there on 11th March. A 2nd-calendar-year bird seen flying north over Wheldrake Ings on 15th April was the last record of the year.

Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucoides kumlieni*

YNU

No records in 2018 after records in each of the past four years.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Red listed

Winter visitor, passage migrant and recently colonised breeder in small numbers

BBS 21/44

As feared, due to the closure of the landfill site at Rufforth, this species has suffered a significant reduction in numbers in a local context. The thousands of gulls present formerly at both the tip itself and the regular winter roost at Wheldrake Ings, have now vanished. The only significant counts during the first winter period were 360 bathing in pools near Rufforth Tip on 3rd January and a flock of 200 on Wharfe Ings on the 8th.

Herring Gulls started to colonise and nest in York city centre only very recently, and the first pair to nest back in 2014 is still doing so, this year returning to their Foss Islands Road rooftop nest on 7th March. Other territorial birds were noted

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2018



Left to right and top to bottom

Caspian Gull © Jono Leadley

Kittiwake © Duncan Bye

Sandwich Tern © Jono Leadley

Long-eared Owl © Jono Leadley

Nightjar © David Craven

Hobby © Duncan Bye

Three of the 'Minster' Peregrine chicks

© Doug Crawford

during the breeding season with pairs seen on Blossom Street, Holgate, Acomb, Fishergate and Hull Road. During July, two fledged juveniles were seen on Foss Islands Road and three were seen on rooftops near Blossom Street. The city centre breeding population looks set to continue to rise.

Very few records were received for the remainder of the year; the largest count of the year was of 440 bathing in pools at Rufforth Tip on 19th July, while 245 at Wheldrake Ings on 8th December was the peak count from there.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* YOC Amber listed
Scarce winter visitor

The absence of large, loafing gull flocks in the area, which previously offered the best chance of sightings, will now make the finding of this species very unlikely. The only record was of an adult winter bird found near Rufforth on 17th February (JLe).

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* YOC Amber listed
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

A quiet year for this more southerly species with five records received, all of adults. One was present on 7th January at Rawcliffe Meadows (CT), then singles at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th (JLe) and 18th February (DMB). One was photographed on a pool behind the landfill at Rufforth Tip on 26th May (ML). More seasonably in a local context were the two seen on 26th September near a slurry pit at Riccall (DT), with one lingering there until 8th October.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* Amber listed
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant BBS 3/44

As is normal with this species, there were a few lone individuals seen during the early part of the year but it wasn't until March when numbers began to slowly increase as spring migrants passed through; 15 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st, with 56 birds present there on 12th April. They were only reported in single figures over the summer months, with the exception of a large flock of 100 presumably non-breeders at Foggathorpe on 10th June. Autumn is usually the peak time for this species as birds head to wintering areas further south and flocks can usually be found in the fields to the south and east of York. These gatherings which hold both the UK subspecies '*graellsii*' and the more northerly '*intermedius*' were scarcer this year, however the 110 seen on Bolton Percy Ings on 9th August, and 400 present near Riccall on 25th September were fairly typical. Numbers fell away sharply towards the year-end, with 21 roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd December and only single birds seen thereafter.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* YOC Amber listed
Scarce passage migrant

A lean year for this species with just one record. An adult was present for a few hours at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May (ET, AF, JLe), staying long enough to be seen by a number of local birders.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and rare migrant breeder

BBS 1/44

The first returning bird was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 15th April with another singleton at Redhouse reservoir on the 19th. The provision of several nesting Tern rafts in the YOC area is having a positive effect on the breeding population, with pairs seen at several sites particularly in the LDV. At Wheldrake Ings five were seen regularly during May, often on the raft. Three pairs were seen on the raft at NDC on the 7th, with one pair subsequently nesting and hatching three young on 22nd June. One pair also nested at Wheldrake Ings. During July three chicks fledged successfully at both NDC and Wheldrake Ings. At Heslington East, a pair nested on top of the Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* 'Hotel', also fledging three young, two of which were ringed by the University of York ringing group. In August, eight birds were seen together at Wheldrake Ings on the 7th, departing the following day, with the last record of the year coming from Naburn where a single flew south on the 21st.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

YOC Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant

Another poor year for this global wanderer with only two records. Typical of birds migrating through our area to breeding grounds further north, on 29th April a group of five flew north past the Tower Hide at Wheldrake Ings (AF), with a singleton over Bank Island on 8th May (LDV Blog).

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* YNU*Very rare vagrant*

An adult in full breeding plumage was seen for just 15 minutes on 20th May at Wheldrake Ings (DMB). Arguably long overdue, this constitutes the first record for the YOC recording area. A full description of the finding is on page 122.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger**Scarce passage migrant*

Not recorded during 2018, only the second blank in the last 10 years.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

YOC Red listed

Scarce passage migrant

Not recorded in 2018, though recorded in three of the past ten years, most recently in 2014.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

YOC

Very rare passage migrant

Two pale phase adults which flew west over Wheldrake Ings on 9th November (DMB), constituted another great first for the recording area since the Club's formation. Duncan Bye's full description of the sighting is on page 123.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

YOC

Very rare passage migrant and storm-blown vagrant

A rather strange record was of one filmed on the River Derwent at Wheldrake Ings by a passing dog walker on 9th November (LDV Blog). Though a classic date for a storm-driven oceanic species to find itself inland this represented the first live bird in the recording area for 24 years!

'Feral Pigeon' *Columba livia**Common resident breeder*

BBS 13/44

Reported throughout the year, including a number of flocks of between 30 and 50 birds; the only count above 50 was 75 at Malton on 3rd October.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas**Resident breeder*

Amber listed

BBS 23/44

Reported throughout the year from areas of suitable habitat. As in previous years, most counts were typically of one to five birds. Flocks of 20 or more were 43 at Cornfield NR on 22nd January, and again on 22nd February with 51 there on 16th March, 20 at Milford Common on 27th March, 52 on the stack at Milford Common on 22nd July, 48 on the 24th, 59 on 8th August, 38 on the 21st and 26 on 4th September, and 50 at Church Fenton on 11th October.

During the breeding season, reports of pairs, singing birds or courtship display seen came from Acaster Malbis, Acomb Wood, Bank Island, Bolton Percy Ings, Brayton Barff (three pairs), Clifton Park, East Cottingwith, Naburn, Rawcliffe Meadows, Scagglethorpe Lane, Seaton Ross, Thorganby Ings, Upper Poppleton, Wass, Wheldrake Ings and Yearsley Moor. Breeding was confirmed at Fulford, Kirkby Wharfe, Pocklington Canal (where one recently fledged bird was seen on 13th July at Melbourne), Riccall (where at least six pairs bred) and Thornton.

VMW at Ozendyke saw 2176 fly south and 79 north between 4th August and 30th November, with peaks of 179 south and 34 north on the 9th and 145 south on 11th October. These unusually large movements for the area are the subject of an article by Paul Doherty on page 127.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus**Abundant resident breeder*

BBS 44/44

Again, probably the most widespread and visible bird across the recording area with numerous reports received throughout the year, many of flocks of over 100 birds, and migration also evident in the autumn.

Flocks of 500 or more in the first winter period were 1000 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st January, 850 feeding on oilseed rape at Hepton Mill, Malton and 600 at Low Roans Farm, Strensall both on the 27th, with 700 at Copmanthorpe on the 29th. In February there were 750 at Acaster Airfield on the 9th, 500 at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 22nd, 2000 at Brumber Hill and 600 at Riccall both on the 27th.

Pairs showing courtship behaviour were noted in several places and 161 were seen near Naburn Wood during a BBS on 5th May but breeding confirmation was under reported again and only came from Bolton Percy, Church Fenton (where

eight pairs fledged 20 young), Haxby, Norton and Poppleton.

VMW at Ozendyke recorded 10,685 flying south and 1581 flying north between 10th September and 30th November, with a peak of 1735 on 27th October. The peak migration count for the LDV was 481 south over Bank Island on 18th November. Apart from migrants, in the autumn and second winter period flocks over 500 were: 510 at Bolton Percy Ings on 30th November, 500 there on 14th December and 1000 on the 24th, 2000 at Bank Island on the 16th and 600 at Poppleton the same day.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

YOC Red listed

Passage migrant and declining scarce migrant breeder

Another year with few records. The first were two in Coulton on 1st May; then on the 7th one flew over Bank Island. In June one was near the hides at NDC on the 7th and one turned up at Cawton on the 17th. Two were reported near Coulton on 2nd July. In August one flew over the NE reserve base at Bank Island. Sadly there were no sightings reported from Ampleforth or Gilling where they have been regular in recent years.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common resident breeder

BBS 18/44

Widespread in areas of human habitation, most counts were of up to five birds, but generally one or two. The highest count in the first half of the year was 16 at Bolton Percy on 19th May.

Whilst many pairs were evident, particularly around gardens, confirmation of breeding was more limited only coming from Bolton Percy, Heslington, Poppleton, Stamford Bridge and York (Railway Station).

Counts over 20 in the second half of the year were 28 at Kirkby Wharfe on 24th July, then in October 38 at Sherburn in Elmet on the 1st and 36 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 16th. In December 22 were at Yearsley on the 2nd and 30 at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on the 7th. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 62 south and 6 north between 10th September and 18th November with a peak of 14 south on 25th September.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Red listed

Migrant breeder

BBS 6/44

The first of the year was heard in Haxby on 15th April, two days earlier than 2017, followed on the 18th by singles at Skipwith Common, Strensall Common and Wheldrake Ings. The 21st and 22nd saw arrivals at Allerthorpe, Bank Island, East Cottingwith, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), Rawcliffe Meadows and Stamford Bridge. Arrivals continued into May - mainly calling males noted - with reports ultimately coming from around 40 sites during the season. During May there were up to three males and two females at Skipwith Common, while four calling males counted during the MOD survey at Strensall Common was consistent with the number of territories recorded the previous year. On 13th May, at Pocklington Canal, Melbourne, a male was calling while a female dropped into

vegetation and put up a Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* which seemed agitated. Most reports in June came from sites in the LDV with up to five males and three females along Pocklington Canal at Melbourne and two singing males at each of NDC, Skipwith Common and Storwood. Elsewhere, one was at Bolton Percy on the 1st, two calling at Allerthorpe Common on the 4th (and one on the 26th) and three calling at Strensall on the 17th. In July two males were at Melbourne until at least the 6th, a silent adult was at Milford Common on the 3rd, a fledged immature was at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th (and 15th), and two males there on the 9th. The last of the year, over a month later, was a juvenile at NDC on 16th August.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Resident breeder

BBS 8/44

The 300 records received were a 12% increase on 2017. Birds were reported in every month with a January minimum and April maximum. The Lower Wharfe Valley (16 sites) and the LDV (14 sites) each provided a third of the records. There were only 15 reports from the six northern tetrads, with none from SE77 whilst the Foulness Valley, a former stronghold, now appears to be under-reported.

During the first three months most sightings occurred within 3 km of the Rivers Derwent, Ouse and Wharfe. Exceptions included Askham College, Bilbrough, Bishop Wilton, Gilling East, Meltonby, Newburgh Priory, Oulston, Sherburn in Elmet and Strensall. The frequent cold and wet conditions led to many day time sightings including by Aughton Church at 12:20 on 20th January and at Bank Island (2), Thorganby (2) and NDC (3) during March.



Barn Owl at Wheldrake Ings

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Colin Shawyer, a national Barn Owl authority, noted that the 2018 breeding season was poor throughout much of the UK and this proved to be the case in the YOY area. The first suggestion of breeding came from Brumber Hill where an adult was seen carrying prey, probably for a sitting female, on 24th April. During May birds were reported hunting at Wass on the 14th and Stearsby on the 24th. The first proof of breeding came from Church Fenton where two fledged young were seen on the 27th. In June food carrying was reported from Elvington on the 7th and near Tang Hall Beck on the 29th; hunting was noted at Brumber Hill, Bolton Percy, Low Catton and Naburn, whilst a box near Melbourne was occupied. The known ringing of owlets during July was restricted to four sites. At Escrick one chick survived from a clutch of four whilst comparable figures from Riccall were three from four and three from five, and at South Milford two from four. An adult was still carrying food at Lilling on 14th July, whilst two young fledged from the Melbourne box in August. On 17th September two young were ringed from a clutch of six eggs at Deighton where supplementary feeding takes place.

After the breeding season the frequency of sightings declined and was mainly from the major river valleys with the Lower Wharfe Valley providing all but one of the November records. Elsewhere three were at Scrayingham on 4th October (the only SE76 record), two were at Redhouse Lagoon on the 17th, one was hunting off Moor Lane, Rufforth on 1st November, two were seen near Huby on the 23rd and one was at Towthorpe on 21st December, which appeared to catch a mole.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*
Resident breeder

Amber listed
BBS 2/44

There was a 34% increase in the number of records compared with 2017 primarily due to data received from the national BTO Tawny Owl survey which began in the autumn. Birds were noted throughout the year with most records dating from May and the fewest from February and March. Almost half of the 188 records came from SE54 (ten sites) and SE74 (seven sites) whilst there were three or fewer reports from SE57, 67, 75 and 76.

The majority of the pre-breeding records came from the Wharfe and Derwent valleys. Elsewhere, birds were present at Stamford Bridge on 22nd January - the only SE75 record, Barmby Moor on 4th February and the Yorkshire Arboretum on 7th March. Notable counts of calling birds included four at Allerthorpe Common on 7th January and Gilling East on 17th February, whilst five, including three males, were at Bishop Wood on 7th January.

The number of proven breeding records equalled the record breaking total of 12 set in 2017. The first occupied nest was reported from Scagglethorpe Lane, Moor Monkton on 18th February. At Skipwith Common three pairs raised seven young from 11 eggs and a fourth pair abandoned a clutch. The young were ringed on 3rd May when they were about a week old. Two pairs at Brayton Barff raised five young in nest boxes. Elsewhere, recently fledged young appeared at Acaster Malbis (3) and Church Fenton (2) on 18th May; Bank Island (1) on 5th June; Stockton-on-Forest (2) on 12th June and Naburn (1) on 1st July. In addition birds were present throughout the year and probably bred at Allerthorpe Common,

Bolton Percy, Gilling East, Kirkby Wharfe, Norton, Wheldrake Ings, and York, including Clifton Park, Fulford, Museum Gardens and Rowntree Park.

The BTO selected tetrads in SE53 and SE56 for post-breeding point surveys and 22 surveyors, including some Club members, covered 64% of the former and 80% of the latter. Ten territories were detected in SE53 and 19 in SE56. The SE56 results are especially noteworthy since there was only one YOC record from this hectad in 2017 which suggests that the area is under-reported. The highest estimate of three pairs was found on the tetrad which includes Easingwold Golf Course. Most of the other autumn and early winter reports came from the Wharfe and Derwent valleys, Strensall and Malton plus a few sites not already mentioned including Hagg Wood, Kexby on 2nd October, Huby on 24th November, Milford Common and Flaxton on 24th December and two at Whitwell on the 26th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Resident breeder

BBS 2/44

The number of records was similar to that of 2017 though the number of reported sites declined from 33 to 25. Reports came from every month with a maximum of ten in December and a minimum of two in April and November. It appears that birds continue to be scarce north and east of York with SE56 and 67 lacking reports and only single records were received from SE57,66,74,75 and 76.

During the first three months birds were reported from Acaster Malbis, Bank Island, Bolton Percy Ings, Brumber Hill, Hagg Bridge, Moor Monkton (Scagglethorpe Lane), Poppleton, Seaton Ross and Thorganby. Two were calling and displaying at a site near Rufforth on 15th April, however the only proof of breeding came from Riccall where an ash tree cavity nest containing five eggs was found on 16th May. A further inspection on 26th May showed that the nest had been predated with two dead mutilated chicks remaining. The only other evidence of breeding came from Clifton Park on 24th May when a bird was seen carrying food in an area where previous sightings had been frequent. Breeding may have taken place at other previously mentioned sites as well as Dunnington, Ellerton, Naburn, Strensall, Whitwell, Wistow and Yapham since all these locations had breeding season records and are likely to have supported permanent territories.

After the breeding season birds were reported from most of the above sites as well as Langwith Stray on 1st September, Skipwith on the 10th, Oxton on the 22nd, Heslington East on 15th October and SHL on 6th December. Some of these records may have resulted from the dispersal of young birds. Jean Thorpe successfully rehabilitated a Little Owl picked up in Norton during July.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

YOC

Scarce localised breeder and occasional winter visitor

The nine reports occurred between mid-May and early September and were restricted to three sites. At Skipwith Common a calling adult was reported on 11th and 21st May and again on 4th June (LDV Blog) though breeding was not proven. However, a pair was successful at Strensall Common where a hunger calling owl was heard on 23rd May with two calling a week later (PR). On 7th June (DR

et al.) reported at least one adult with the two recently fledged young. The adult brought a large rodent, probably a Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*, to one of the young. A similar trio was present on June 11th (JLe) and 12th (PR). The final sighting of the year occurred on 4th September when one flew between the reed bed willows at Wheldrake Ings (LDV Blog).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

YOC Amber listed

Winter and passage visitor; casual breeder

The species has become scarcer since the 2015 influx. In 2018 eight reports came from six sites. During the early part of the year singletons were seen in the Melbourne/Thornton area on the 13th and 14th January (LDV Blog), near Dunnington on 5th April (LDV Blog) and at Clifton Park on 8th May (CT). Evidence of breeding, which last took place in 2012, was not reported. After the breeding season reports came from Milford Common on 29th September, 21st October and 1st November (PD) all of which may relate to the same bird. Other wintering birds were at Rufforth on 17th November, when one was seen being chased by Crows *Corvus corone* (ML), and Wheldrake Ings on 11th December (FM).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

YOC Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant and scarce migrant breeder

The first of the year was one at Grimston Moor on 24th May (PW). Two 'churring' males were at Strensall Common on the evening of the 30th in a similar area to the previous year, with three there on 7th June (DMB, EB, DR, JLe), one heard on the 12th (PeR) and up to five on the 19th (FW). Two were churring again on 3rd July with wing clapping display and halting rattle heard (PeR). At Skipwith Common one was heard calling on 5th June, a welcome return after a blank year there in 2018. Also in June, a male was churring and later two males and a female chasing each other in flight were seen at Yearsley Common on the 10th (DR). During August, in the LDV, a juvenile was seen well a couple of times near 'Nightjar' heath at Skipwith Common (FM, JC), while one which turned up in a Dunnington garden in August stayed around long enough to be photographed (DC per TW) - an amazing garden tick!

Swift *Apus apus*

Amber listed

Migrant breeder

BBS 22/44

The first returning birds were three high over Wheldrake Ings on 15th April, then singletons at Ampleforth, Bank Island and East Gilling on the 20th and Heslington Tillmire on the 23rd. Twelve were at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th, with one or two also reported from CHL, NDC and York by the end of the month. A trickle of birds in the first week was followed by a flurry of arrivals in the second week of May at many more sites, though several observers noted that they were very late back compared with previous years - in some cases by as much as two weeks. This was thought to be due to the exceptionally cold spring with a similar pattern of late arrival to that in 2013 when this last occurred. On 16th May a large arrival saw 200+ at Wheldrake Ings, the only three-digit count of the month, while

50 were at Brayton Barff on the 30th. In June 60 were over Thornton on the 6th, 50 over Wharfe Ings on the 16th and 40 at Strensall Common on the 17th.

Nesting birds were seen at Dringhouses and Francis Street in York, Gilling, Naburn and Osbaldwick (where a Magpie *Pica pica* was seen trying to predate an adult from its nest - unsuccessfully) and Upper Poppleton. At Riccall nine pairs bred at a house colony, producing 18 young. One adult ringed there in 2011 was re-trapped, though not at the same nest site. At Ampleforth, breeding was widespread, with up to 50 pairs about. At Gilling up to ten birds were prospecting nest boxes erected in 2017, up from three the previous year. Counts in the area were double those of 2017 with at least 30 present and the number of non-breeding prospecting birds had also doubled. It is perhaps significant that Spurn saw relatively little passage during the summer, suggesting that younger non-breeding birds did not have to vacate due to cooler weather. Other areas where breeding probably took place included Naburn and Strensall.

Fewer reports of return movement south were received this year. Larger counts included 135 at Bubwith Ings on 11th July, hundreds over Gilling on the lead edge of a thunderstorm on the 16th and 154 slowly moving south over Norton in a thunderstorm on the 26th. At least 1000 were circling about in two huge flocks there on the 27th prior to another storm, which was preceded by lots of flying insects - the observer noting that it was an 'amazing sight'. On the 30th 1000+ headed south very high over Gilling at 16:00. In August 60 moved over Brayton Barff on the 5th. After that reports were all of one or two birds, with a singleton flying south over Bank Island on 16th September the last of the year.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Resident breeder

Amber listed
BBS 3/44

Reported throughout the year, generally in ones or twos, with most sightings coming from areas where birds were present all year - Bank Island, Bolton Percy Ings, Pocklington Canal, sites along the River Ouse, and Wheldrake Ings. Three were at Naburn lock on 23rd March, three at Bolton Percy Ings on 14th May, six along the River Ouse between Millennium Bridge and Naburn Lock on 4th August, seven at Wheldrake Ings on 9th August and three along Pocklington Canal near Melbourne during December. Records also came from Acaster, Allerthorpe OGP, Clifton, Clifton Backies, East Cottingwith, Fangfoss, Foss Island, Fulford Ings, Gilling Park, Hassacarr NR, Heslington East, Heslington Tillmire, Hovingham (Wath Beck), Hull Road Park, Huttons Ambo, Kirkby Wharfe, Laybourne Lakes, Milford Common, NDC, Rawcliffe (lake and meadows), Redhouse Reservoir, Riccall, Rufforth Tip, Ryther Ings, SHL, Wharfe Ings and Wistow.

During the breeding season pairs were seen regularly at Bolton Percy Ings, Kirkby Wharfe and Milford Common, indicating probable breeding. In the LDV, two pairs bred along the River Derwent at Wheldrake and several fledged young were caught and ringed there on 25th June, while four birds were seen on the pool on 12th July. One of a pair seen at Wheldrake Ings on 12th August was food carrying and a pair was at Elvington Lock throughout the month. At least one pair bred along the Melbourne arm of Pocklington Canal, fledging three young.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor*

YOC Red listed

Rare resident breeder

Like last year, there were just a handful of records. This year, all came from Strensall Common. A male was heard drumming on 14th April (MF), and one drumming again in trees near the train line on 6th May (NCa). During the MOD survey on 18th May one showed well, landing on and flying between silver birches before being spooked by a Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* and disappearing into a thicker stand of trees (JBe).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Resident breeder

BBS 21/44

Widespread and well reported throughout the year, mostly in ones and twos, records came from 75 different locations. Three were at the Yorkshire Arboretum on 1st February, four were drumming at Brayton Barff on the 24th and three were at Hagg Wood on the 27th. In March, there were six at Bolton Percy lngs on the 25th, the same day as three at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe, and three were by Cross Paths at Strensall Common on the 29th. Six were at Yearsley Moor on 28th April and three at Kirkby Wharfe on 11th May. Later in the year, three were at Bolton Percy lngs on 20th September and again on the 22nd.

During the breeding season there were many reports of drumming males and confirmation of breeding came from several sites. Six pairs were present at Brayton Barff with fledged young seen there. Pairs bred in woods by Acaster Airfield, and at Angram Ponds, Riccall - although the outcome at the latter was not known - and at Bolton Percy, where fledged young were also seen. Food carrying was noted at SHL on 18th May. In June, a pair was feeding young at Skipwith Common on the 7th, with fledged young seen at the nest site on the 11th. A juvenile was on garden feeders in Naburn on the 9th, three (including a juvenile) were at Kirkby Wharfe on the 10th and two recently fledged young were seen at Huby on the 22nd. A juvenile was seen on feeders alongside a female in Upper Poppleton during June. Four were at Yearsley Moor on 1st July. A juvenile was on a garden feeder in Strensall on 30th August.

During VMW at Ozendyke, eight were seen flying south and one north between 4th September and 9th October.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Resident breeder

BBS 4/44

Though records came from over 30 locations with suitable habitat, as in previous years, the area's large commons (Allerthorpe, Milford, Skipwith and Strensall) accounted for most records - all where this species is present year round. Reports were sparse in late autumn and winter with only five records received from October to December.

Sightings were predominantly of single birds, though the spread of sightings and reports of calling birds indicated that there were several present on both Skipwith and Strensall Commons. Three were noted at Skipwith on 21st April and one observer noted "several calling birds spread across the northern nature

reserve, including the woods near sewage works, which is an unusual location for this species" at Strensall Common on 6th May. Elsewhere, a pair was seen at Scagglethorpe Lane on 18th February and two were at Ampleforth on 18th July.

There was little breeding evidence received. At SHL, where there were regular sightings during the year apart from February and March, one pair bred and a recently fledged juvenile was seen on 16th July, while two pairs were present at Brayton Barff during the breeding season. A pair was visiting a nest site near Rufforth on 8th April and a juvenile was seen in the area later in the year.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
Resident breeder

Amber listed
BBS 18/44

There was an 80% increase in the number of records since last year. However, most of this was due to multiple sightings of one or two birds made by patch recorders at Bank Island (63 records); Wheldrake Ings (58 records), Milford Common (45) and Pocklington Canal (41). Birds were reported from a further 88 sites that were concentrated in SE65 (13 sites), SE64 (12) and SE74 (11). Most of the sightings occurred in January (71), when wintering birds from elsewhere may have been present. August had the minimum of 19 sightings.

During the late winter and early spring there was a widespread distribution of birds including three at Brumber Hill on 13th January, six at NDC on the 17th, three at Bubwith Bridge on 28th, four at Scagglethorpe Lane on 23rd February and three at Bolton Percy Ings on 25th March.

Despite the large number of reports only eight provided proof of breeding. Two broods were ringed at Riccall (four chicks on 16th June and two on 6th July), one at Escrick (three on 13th July) and one at Hemingbrough (three on 21st June). Although this is a small sample the mean brood size of 3.0 is below the local 2013-17 mean of 3.8. Other evidence of breeding came from Bank Island (an occupied nest on 4th May), Bolton Percy (bred successfully), Sheriff Hutton (one possibly two juveniles on 12th July) and Thornton (recently fledged young on 6th August). Breeding may also have taken place in territories at Kirkby Wharfe, Milford Common, Strensall Common, Scagglethorpe Lane and Ulleskelf Mires.

After the breeding season records from the Derwent and Wharfe valleys dominated. In addition there was a run of September records from the York area including Heslington East on the 22nd, Clifton Backies on the 26th, Danesmead Wood on the 29th, and Monks Cross (regular), whilst one was at Haxby Landing on 10th October. Birds were also reported from some of the northern hectads, from where there have been few recent records, including Norton on 1st October, Gilling East on the 9th, Full Sutton on the 16th, Tollerton on 17th November, Newburgh Priory on 7th December and CHL on the 29th. The maximum autumn and early winter count of three was reported from Milford Common on 4th September, Bolton Percy Ings on the 22nd, Wheldrake Ings on 7th October and Brumber Hill on 4th November.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Red listed

Passage migrant and winter visitor

After the record breaking number of sightings in 2017 the 2018 total of 16 is below the 2013 -17 mean of 18. There were ten sightings in the first three months. Again, most of the records came from the well watched areas close to the River Derwent: Sutton upon Derwent on 9th January, East Cottingwith on the 13th, Bank Island on the 15th, NDC on the 18th (and 23rd March) and South Ross on 1st February. It is possible that some of these records relate to the same individual. Elsewhere birds were present at West Lilling on 1st January, Rufforth Airfield on the 24th, Acaster Airfield on 16th February and Riccall on 18th March.

The first returning bird was a male seen at Wheldrake Ings on 15th August. After a gap of 12 weeks early winter birds appeared at Riccall, where a bird unsuccessfully struck at a flying Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* on 7th November, at Brumber Hill on the 9th, Wistow on the 15th and Bolton Percy Ings on the 21st. The final bird of the year was an immature sighted at Ellerton on 22nd December. A third of the records reported the gender of the bird and, as in 2017, most were female. It would be useful to have more gender details to determine if females are actually more common than males.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Passage migrant; scarce and localised breeder

BBS 1/44

The number of records was slightly down compared with 2017 due to fewer reports from the Lower Wharfe Valley. As usual, most (64%) of the records came from the LDV. The first returning bird was seen on 21st April at Wheldrake Ings, where three were present by the end of the month. Wheldrake Ings continued to be the favoured site throughout May. A pair was food passing on the 15th and the number of individuals rose from six on the 8th to an impressive eight on the 18th. Elsewhere in the valley two were present at Brighton on the 3rd, Bank Island on the 9th, NDC on the 10th and Bubwith also on the 10th.

When breeding started in June the birds became more secretive leading to fewer reports. However, a pair was seen at East Cottingwith on the 19th and one chased Swifts *Apus apus* over Elvington village on the 22nd. July and early August were also relatively quiet though a bird was seen catching and eating a House Martin *Delichon urbicum* at the pool on Wheldrake Ings on 7th August. This was followed by the appearance of family parties of five at Bank Island on the 14th and four at Thorganby on the 23rd. In addition to these proven breeding records NE estimated that another four pairs possibly or probably bred in the LDV. After the young fledged there were regular sightings of one or two birds until the last was reported at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th September.

Although one was present at Bolton Percy Ings on 12th July the other six records from the Lower Wharfe Valley date from September and therefore it seems less likely that breeding took place there. Other areas with more than one record, though no proof of breeding, were Acaster, Brayton, Dunnington Common, Malton, Skipwith Common and Strensall, whilst single sightings came from Copmanthorpe, Heslington East, Holtby (a juvenile on 12th September),

Hovingham, Knavesmire (York), Naburn, Riccall and Towthorpe. The last sighting of the year was at Escrick on 5th October. See RBBP Report on page 116.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Winter and passage visitor; scarce breeder

The number of records continues to increase though they are dominated by reports from SE74 (39 sightings, mostly from Wheldrake Ings) and SE65 (29 sightings, almost all from York). They were in all the other hectads except for SE 56, 67 and 75. Birds were present throughout the year with a maximum of 20 reports occurring in March and April and the minimum of seven in September.

Most reports from the first three months of the year came from the LDV (13) and the Lower Wharfe Valley (9). NE staff estimated that three wintering birds were present in the LDV during January rising to at least five in February. The records indicate that adults of both sexes and immatures were present. On 16th January an adult female showing characteristics of the northern race "*calidus*" was present at NDC. In the Lower Wharfe Valley two were present at Bolton Percy Ings on 21st February with one mobbing another which was eating a kill on the ground. Elsewhere, one was at Acaster Malbis on 17th January, two at Heslington East on 2nd February, and two in York on 23rd February. In March one was at Norton on the 10th, two at CHL on the 11th, one at West Lilling on the 25th, one at Haxby on the 25th and two juveniles at SHL on the 31st.

Four chicks were reared at York Minster for the second successive year. They hatched in early May; were colour-ringed (orange with a number) on the 30th and flew for the first time on 11th June. At least six other pairs bred on pylons in the recording area. Three of the nest sites were north of York where a minimum of three chicks was raised, while NE reported another three sites in the LDV area. One of these nests was monitored and a minimum of two young was seen. An adult flying eastward over the Sherburn in Elmet area on 5th July may have been from a nest site beyond the YOC area.

Post breeding records included many sightings of the York Minster pair and their young. Further afield, two were at Norton on 26th July, while an immature female became a road casualty at Seaton Ross on 22nd September and later died in care. At Riccall a juvenile male unsuccessfully stooped at a Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* on 29th September and 24th October, whilst an adult female was successful on 11th November. Singles were at Bilbrough on 7th October and Acaster Airfield on the 26th. At the end of the year NE reported four wintering birds in the LDV including an immature female at NDC with an orange ring which was likely to be one of the Minster young. Other December records came from Bolton Percy Ings on the 3rd, 4th and 7th and Milford Common on the 9th, whilst a bird roosted on Selby Abbey on the 21st.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

YOC

Scarce visitor but escapes cannot be ruled out

As last year, one pair bred in the Clifton/Rawcliffe area, raising three young, which visited the same garden on a regular basis throughout the year, apart from

when the female disappeared whilst on eggs as she reappeared with fledglings subsequently. In March, during the cold snap, three, (the pair and one of the young from the previous year) were photographed in the garden chasing Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris* off apples put out for the thrushes!

Other sightings mostly occurred in the Clifton Park area (presumably relating to these birds) with two seen there on 6th January, three on the 7th, one on 9th February and three on the 17th. One was seen on 8th April, and five together on 9th June at Clifton Cricket Ground, while two flew over on 6th July, with the last report for that area being a singleton on 26th November. Away from Clifton there were just two records: a singleton at Sherburn in Elmet on 27th August and one at Bank Island on 22nd December at dusk.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* YOC
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Not recorded in 2018, after records in four of the past ten years, most recently 2017.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius* BBS 8/44
Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

There were regular sightings of this species all year throughout the recording area, mostly of one to three birds. Larger gatherings were unusual but six were counted, with courtship behaviour observed, at Cross Paths, Strensall Common on 26th March, with the same number at Milford Common on 19th July.

Like 2017, there were no records of confirmed breeding but up to three pairs were reported from Skipwith Common in June. On 4th June one was seen to take a Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* chick there. A pair was seen regularly during July in poolside scrub at Wheldrake lngs and birds were seen all year in suitable breeding habitat at Bolton Percy lngs.

The only other large numbers were seen almost exclusively during VMW, with the onset of autumn: 9 north and 1 south over Bolton Percy lngs on 19th September and a peak count of 11 south there on the 25th. These were part of a total movement of 45 (38 flying south and seven north) over Ozendyke during the period 10th September - 3rd October.

Magpie *Pica pica* BBS 32/44
Common resident breeder

Observed mainly in low single figures throughout the year and across the recording area.

Larger counts included 20 at Clifton Backies on 13th February and 14 in the Danesmead Wood/ River Ouse area on the 22nd, where there were 13 on 21st March and 12 on the 30th. On 20th May 17 round Fulford included some recently fledged birds and there were 16 at Clifton Backies on 21st June. The only count above ten in the second half of the year was 18 at Haxby Landing on 10th October.

During the breeding season a pair was nest building at Heslington on 25th

February and feeding young in early May; on 21st April a bird was seen in a nest at Allerthorpe OGP and there were two pairs with seven recently fledged young at Church Fenton in late May. A family party of three was at SHL on 17th July. A pair breeding in an Upper Poppleton garden was seen to predate Tree Sparrows *Passer montanus*.

Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

Common resident breeder

BBS 30/44

Though widespread and well reported across the recording area throughout the year, many records did not include counts. Of those that did, most were below 50. At the start of the year 400 were in a mixed flock with Rooks *Corvus frugilegus* on fields by SHL on 3rd January while the largest flock of the year by far was 1140 near Thornton Lock, Pocklington Canal on the 15th, with 700 there on the 22nd. All other flocks over 100 came in the autumn and second winter period as follows:

16th September, Kirkby Wharfe - 250

16th November, SHL - 120 (heading north to roost)

3rd December, Bolton Percy Ings - 200

28th December, Patefield Wood - minimum of 440

29th December, Newburgh Priory - 300

There was almost no evidence of breeding received; at least one pair bred at Acaster Malbis (food carrying seen on 20th May), recently fledged young were seen at Bolton Percy Ings and breeding was noted in the Poppleton area.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Common resident breeder

BBS 32/44

Once again this corvid species was in ample evidence in the recording area with significant counts of 100 or more as follows:

3rd January, Westfield House Farm, Thornton - 250

14th January, Bank Island - 200

15th January, Thornton Lock, Pocklington Canal - 300

16th January, Seaton Ross - 700

22nd January, Allerthorpe Common - 100 plus

22nd January, Thornton Lock, Pocklington Canal - 300

20th May, Bank Island - 300

1st July, Yearsley Moor - 100

13th July, Milford Common - 100

19th July, Wheldrake Ings - 200, and again on the 21st

1st August, Wheldrake Ings - 100

16th September, Kirkby Wharfe - 100

2nd October, SHL - 100 heading north at dusk

24th October, Thornton Lock, Pocklington Canal - 150

27th October, Bank Island - 100

10th December, Pocklington Canal, Melbourne - 100

28th December, Patefield Wood - 560

In terms of breeding evidence, it was reported that 24 birds were present at Riccall on 10th January, but all of the previous year's nests had been blown away. By 3rd February there were 88 birds back there. In March 21 nests were counted at Kirkby Wharfe on the 9th, 14 occupied at Strensall opposite the entrance to the Barracks on the 20th, approximately 100 at Lilling Wood on the 21st, 16 at Riccall on the 22nd, 21 occupied at Barmby Moor on the 24th and 40 occupied at North Duffield on the 25th. On 3rd April there were at least 20 nests with a minimum of five occupied near B & Q (Hull Road). On the 5th the Riccall rookery held 29 nests with at least four more at a nearby overflow site and three out of four nests at Allerthorpe OGP contained eggs. Breeding also took place at Bolton Percy Ings, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton Lock), Poppleton and Stamford Bridge. Good numbers were seen throughout the year at the Naburn rookery.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Common resident breeder

BBS 42/44

As in previous years, there was no shortage of sightings reported but although the species appears to be prospering the only records received of breeding or of newly fledged/juvenile birds were of an occupied nest at Brumber Hill, nesting at Poppleton and three pairs which bred at SHL, where three juveniles were seen with an adult on 19th June.

Largest counts were as follows:

17th January, Riccall - 68 (feeding on abattoir slurry near the old mine)

7th February, Riccall - 93 (same place and behaviour as January sighting)

19th March, Riccall - 510 (as per January/February sightings). Apparently 100+ birds were caught in a gamekeeper's Larsen trap nearby in February and March.

12th April, Wharfe Ings - 65

4th November, Wharfe Ings - 73

4th December, Riccall Ings - 88

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Rare winter visitor

The first record since 2015, and the first of a live bird since 2012, was one photographed in a pig field at Full Sutton on 29th October (IA).

Raven *Corvus corax*

YOC

Scarce visitor

Although the recorded sightings of this charismatic corvid were not quite as numerous as in 2017 there were still sufficient sightings to support the fact that this is now an increasingly familiar bird in our area.

One flew over Skipwith Common, calling, on 1st February (SC) and on the 9th one flew over West Car Park at SHL pursued by a Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*, a first for the site (ET). There were no further records until 26th August when two were seen at Hildenley (RCo). In September there was another calling over Skipwith Common on the 30th (LDV Blog). In October, two were at Castle Howard on the 1st (CR) and a single flew north over Tower Hide, Wheldrake Ings on the

8th, calling, before heading towards Thorganby (CSR). In November one, or possibly two birds were heard in Gilling Woods on the 25th (GS) and the year ended with sightings in the LDV at Bubwith Bridge at dusk on 13th December (AS) and two over Wheldrake Ings, flying towards the village, on the 14th (AF).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Scarce winter visitor

In contrast to 2017's impressive influx, a lean year for this irruptive species. The year started promisingly with a flock of 24 at Haxby, feeding on berries in a private garden on 4th January but this proved to be the species' high water mark for the year as there was then only one further report during the first winter period - a single at Huntington on the 8th. At the end of the year the first returning birds noted were two in York on 28th December at Castle Mills, 11 in Melbourne on the 30th and singles in York on 30th and 31st at St George's Field Car Park.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Common resident breeder

BBS 16/44

Common and widespread with most records in low single digits. Larger counts included 23 at Yearsley Moor (21 singing) on 28th April, increasing to an impressive total of 35, of which 25 were singing, on 1st July. Twenty were at Allerthorpe Common on 5th August and ten at Acaster Malbis on 13th October.

In the breeding season, in addition to those mentioned above, five were singing at Brayton Barff, a pair was at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common, courtship display was recorded at Easthorpe and Strensall Common (Cross Paths), and birds were holding territory at CHL, Ellerton Ings, Skipwith Common. Confirmed breeding was evidenced by a nest with young at Acaster Malbis and recently fledged young at Acomb Wood, Fulford, Milford Common, Skipwith, Skipwith Common and Strensall Common (Butt Pools).

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Resident breeder

Red listed

BBS 5/44

As has been the case in previous years birds were usually observed in ones and twos with larger counts being four at CHL on 6th January, four at Allerthorpe Common on both the 22nd and the 25th, and four in Hagg Wood on the 23rd. In March there were four at Frog Hall, Allerthorpe Common on the 25th.

During the breeding season reports were disappointingly few; there was a minimum of five birds holding territory on Yearsley Moor on 23rd April. A pair was reported from Firby on the 22nd and thereafter two probable juveniles, reported to be in fresh plumage, were seen scrapping over cherries at Sand Hutton on 29th June. Possible breeding was reported from Acaster Airfield and Stub Wood.

Other sites and peak numbers were: Allerthorpe Common (1), Allerthorpe OGP (2), Askham Bog (1), Castle Howard (Centenary Way) (1), Gilling Park (minimum 2), Gilling Woods (Piper Hill) (1), Griffon Forest (3), Hagg Wood (1), Hall Moor, Terrington (1), High Hutton (1), Hovingham (2), Howsham (2), Kirkham Priory (1), Melbourne (1), Newburgh Priory (1), Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) (1),

Redhouse Lagoon (2), SHL (2), Skipwith Common (1), Strensall Common (2), The Stank (2), Westow (1), Wheldrake Ings (1), Whitwell Grange (1) and the Yorkshire Arboretum (1)

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

YOC Red listed

Scarce resident breeder

BBS 1/44

Records again came principally from the LDV though there was plenty of evidence of a significant presence in the Lower Wharfe Valley too.

During the breeding season in the LDV after a bird had been observed holding territory there on 5th May the first juvenile of the summer was ringed in the willows around the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd July with two more there on the 5th, and one on the 16th. A recent fledgling was seen along Pocklington Canal on the 2nd, with two at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th. Elsewhere, recently fledged birds were seen at Bolton Percy Ings and birds were considered to have probably bred at Kirkby Wharfe, Milford Common and Ulleskelf Mires.

Records also came from: Acaster Airfield (1), Allerthorpe Common (1), Allerthorpe OGP (3), Askham Bog (1), Canal Head, Pocklington (1), Castle Howard (1), Church Bridge (Pocklington Canal) (1), East Cottingwith (2), Elvington Airfield (4), Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) (4), Naburn (1), NDC (1), Riccall, Angram Ponds (1 - the only Riccall Parish record), Ryther Ings (1), Skipwith Common (1), Terrington Bank (1), Thornton Lock (Pocklington Canal) (1), Wheldrake Wood (1), Yearsley Moor (1), Yorkshire Arboretum (1). See RBBP report on page 116.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Common resident breeder

BBS 42/44

Well reported, mostly in single-figure counts, with larger totals as follows: 11 around Rufforth Tip on 11th January, 12 at Seaton Ross on the 16th, 20 at Acaster on the 17th, 16 at the Yorkshire Arboretum on the same day, 15 at Howsham Mill on the 28th and 30 at Riccall on the 30th. Into February there were 45 in Hagg Wood on the 12th, then 12 at Danesmead Wood on 9th March and 16 in a garden in Dunnington on the 17th. Later in the year there were 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st August, 14 at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on the 3rd, 11 at Acaster Malbis on the 12th and 45 at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th, with 11 there on 30th September. Thirteen were at Acaster Malbis on 27th October with 11 there on 30th November. In December 12 were at Danesmead Wood on the 2nd and 13 at Acaster Malbis on the 25th.

As usual there were large numbers of records during the breeding season with breeding confirmed at Acomb Wood, Askham Bryan, Brayton Barff (with 32 singing there on 23rd April and 13 occupied nest boxes in May), Church Fenton, Clifton Backies, Easthorpe, Eastrington Ponds, Fulford, Naburn, Poppleton, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton Lock), SHL (four broods), Seaton Ross, Strensall Common and Wheldrake Ings. A family party of 14 at Pocklington Canal (West Melbourne) on 3rd August included at least 6 juveniles and many young birds were present in three family parties at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th.

Great Tit *Parus major*
Common resident breeder

BBS 40/44

Widespread and well reported throughout the year, though mostly in single digit figures. Ten were at the Yorkshire Arboretum on 17th January while 30 at Riccall on the 30th were part of a large passerine flock. Later in the year 16 were at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 17th August and 20 at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th.

During the breeding season, singing birds were widespread; 27 were counted holding territories at Rawcliffe Meadows during a BBS. Ten males were singing at Brayton Barff on 23rd April, though this was noted as being fewer than in 2017, and ten round Fulford on 20th May. Breeding was confirmed with fledglings seen at Acomb, Acomb Wood, Askham Bryan (nest with six hatched eggs), Brayton Barff (nine occupied nest boxes in May), Bolton Percy, Church Fenton (eight fledglings), Easthorpe, Haxby (seven eggs in a bird box), Heslington, Naburn, Poppleton, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), SHL, Seaton Ross, Skipwith Common (where a brood of five was ringed) and Wheldrake Ings.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

YOC

Scarce visitor usually in autumn and winter

This species graced the York area with its presence for the fifth consecutive year with six birds seen at dusk at Wheldrake Ings on 10th October (LDV Blog) and a further three which flew from Aughton Ings towards NDC at dawn on 3rd December (CSR, MFJ, GD). With new reed beds being planted this year it is to be hoped that this species will find the LDV even more alluring in the future.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

YOC

Localised migrant breeder

Records came almost exclusively from the heathland redoubts of Skipwith, Strensall and Allerthorpe Commons, with the first records of the year for each location being 18th February (a bird singing at Skipwith), 13th March (two singing at Strensall) and 9th March (two at Allerthorpe - one in stubble just to the south and another in song and in display flight)

At Skipwith Common, there were single singing birds on 9th March and 4th April and a bird holding territory on the 9th. Numbers increased thereafter with four singing on 15th April, increasing to five by the 19th. Two were seen on the 21st and three heard (one of which was seen) on the 22nd. Six were thought to be present throughout May (RBBP Report) including one singing on the 3rd, two on the 5th, one singing on the 9th and three (one displaying with a further two on the ground) on the 13th. In June, two were recorded on the 10th and one on the 23rd.

At Strensall Common two were singing on 25th March, with pairs at two locations on the 26th. Regular reports came during April, with a maximum count of six birds on the 6th; while the annual MOD survey on the 18th indicated that five males were holding territory throughout the Common. Into June a single bird was observed on the 9th, two in flight on the 14th and a single in song on the 19th.

At SHL, near White Syke Farm (a former breeding site), one was seen and/or

heard singing on five dates from 4th to 13th April. It was conjectured that severe weather in March may have driven it there from Strensall Common. At Allerthorpe Common, one was at Frog Hall on 24th March, two on 9th April and a single at Frog Hall on the 18th. After June the only record for the area in 2018 was of a brood seen at Skipwith Common in the autumn. See RBBP Report on page 116.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Red listed

Resident breeder and winter visitor

BBS 39/44

This species, although increasingly scarce elsewhere, continues to be recorded in good numbers throughout the year though, as in 2017, sightings dipped, this time to two birds, in August. In the first winter period the only notable gathering was on 1st January when approximately 150 were at West Lilling. On 11th March 22 were at Brumber Hill.

The first singing male was at Heslington East on 25th January, with three at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th, followed by two there and four at NDC on 1st February and the next day there were birds singing at Acaster Airfield. Riccall's first in song was heard on 8th February. By the 11th three birds were holding territory at Wheldrake Ings, two of which were singing. Six were in song at Milford Common on the 16th, one at SHL on the 19th and one along Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on the 21st. Other locations with singing birds included fields near Acomb Wood, Allerthorpe OGP, Aughton Ings, Bank Island, Brumber Hill, Bubwith Ings, CHL, East Cottingwith, Ellerton, Flaxton, Foggathorpe, Howden, fields near Naburn, Pocklington Canal (The Grange - courtship display), Thorganby Ings, Thornton (courtship display), Wass, Wheldrake Ings and Yearsley Moor. Twenty were at Milford Common on 5th June. Confirmation of breeding came from Riccall where a brood of four was ringed from a nest in a field of barley; food carrying was seen at Strensall Common, though only four territories were found during the MOD survey (down from eight in 2017) and young successfully fledged at Acaster Airfield and Brumber Hill.

Autumn passage over the LDV saw a peak of 237 birds flying south on 15th September. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 437 flying south and 50 north between 16th September and 18th November with a peak of 111 on 7th October.

Autumn and winter flocks included 33 at Fangfoss on 1st October, 30 at Acaster Airfield on the 7th (with at least 20 to the end of the year), 28 at Brumber Hill on the 10th and 56 there on the 15th. On 18th November 34 were seen near the Red Lion Pub in Poppleton.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

BBS 5/44

The first returning birds were ten at Riccall on 3rd March, with the next at Castle Howard on the 11th, then six at Bank Island on the 29th.

Three-figure counts were 100+ at Bank Island on 13th April while Wheldrake Ings had 113 on the 22nd, 100 on the 25th and 150 on the 27th.

An end of season check at Heslington East showed 48 occupied burrows (from a possible total of 98): 22 in the older bank and 26 in the newer one. This is

significantly below the total of 77 in both 2016 and 2017. At SHL 33 nest holes were counted, but it is not known how many were used for breeding. Elsewhere nesting behaviour was reported from Heworth, Kirkby Wharfe and Rawcliffe Ings.

The largest post-breeding gathering was a modest 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 11th August and the final records were two there on 23rd September, with two at CHL on the same date.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

BBS 37/44

Two at Knavesmire on 22nd March were the first, followed by a single at Rawcliffe Ings on 1st April. Spring counts of 100 or more birds were 100+ at Bank Island on 13th April and 100 at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th, whilst a large arrival on 1st May saw 500+ at Low Grounds and a similar number at Bank Island.

Breeding was noted at Ampleforth, Elvington WTW, Melbourne, Naburn Grange, Naburn Marina, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), SHL, Strensall and Upper Poppleton.

In the LDV post-breeding counts of 100 or more were recorded on seven dates with 250 at Wheldrake Ings on 16th July and 1000+ there on 15th August. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 1466 flying south and 37 north between 4th August and 9th October with a peak of 281 south on 9th September. Elsewhere, there were 100 at Bolton Percy on the 3rd and 137 at CHL on 23rd September. The final record involved three at Kirkby Wharfe on 16th October.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Amber listed

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

BBS 18/44

Nine at Ryther Ings on 4th April were the first, followed by a single at CHL on the 6th. The largest spring count was a modest 30 at Bank Island on 28th April. Breeding was noted at Acaster Airfield, Bishopthorpe, Bolton Percy, Church Fenton, Coxwold, Heslington, Monks Cross, SHL, Skipwith, Strensall, Thorganby and Upper Poppleton.

VMW at Ozendyke recorded 785 flying south between 9th and 23rd September with a peak of 343 south on 10th September. Autumn records of 100 or more birds were 100 at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th and 27th August, 100 at Bolton Percy on 3rd September and 110 there on the 16th, 100 at Sand Hutton on the 6th, 350 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 16th, 200+ at Heworth on the 19th, 700+ at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st and 300 at Low Grounds on 22nd September. The final record involved several at Rawcliffe Meadows on 7th October.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

YOC

Rare visitor

The year began with one calling at CHL on 7th January (JLe). Singles were then reported at NDC on 2nd May (LDV blog), Thornton on 15th June (LDV blog), and finally at NDC on 3rd July (LDV blog). The trend of increasing records continues and the July record involved a recently fledged juvenile which is the first evidence of breeding in the Club area.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident breeder

BBS 20/44

Widespread throughout the year in single and low-double figures. The highest counts were at Wheldrake Ings where there were 35 on 22nd July and 25 recorded on 14th January, 19th August and 22nd September. Away from the LDV the highest count involved 20 at Bolton Percy Ings on 7th July.

Probable or confirmed breeding was recorded at Acomb Wood, Bolton Percy Ings, Castle Howard, Clifton Backies, Fulford, Riccall Common, Scagglethorpe Lane, Seaton Ross and Wheldrake Ings. A Heslington garden reported their presence in 72% of weeks (down from 88% in 2017), with a maximum of 20 in November.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

Amber listed

BBS 20/44

The first was at Skipwith Common on 25th March, followed by one at Bank Island on 4th April. The first double-figure count involved ten at Wheldrake Ings on 15th April and by the 20th 24 were present. Wheldrake Ings provided several counts of up to 20 birds, but away from the LDV, 18 were on territory at Yearsley Moor on 19th May and there were ten at Skipwith Common on 5th May and 12 at Strensall Common on 14th June.

Singing birds were widespread during the breeding season and confirmed breeding records came from Bank Island, Brayton Barff, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), Skipwith Common and Strensall Common.

Autumn passage through the LDV was described as well below par with just a trickle of birds moving through the site and ringing totals well down on previous years. The final record was of one in shrubs near Rufforth Tip on 20th October.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant; some birds overwinter

BBS 36/44

Wintering birds were at Cawood Ings on 1st January and Riccall Ings on 6th February. The first migrant was at Haxby on 12th March, with another at Rawcliffe Ings the next day and birds at five sites by 25th March. Birds were widely recorded in single figures and counts of ten or more were made on ten dates, the highest counts being 24 (23 singing) at Yearsley Moor on 19th May and 26 there on 1st July. Breeding was confirmed at Brayton Barff and Skipwith Common (two nests with broods of two and five). At Heslington they were recorded on seven of 43 weeks (16%), a marked decline on previous years.

The last autumn migrant was at Fulford Ings on 17th November, as a single at Heslington East on 30th December was probably wintering.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Rare passage migrant

YOC Red listed

The first since 2015, a male was singing in woodland at Yearsley from 22nd April to 13th June, often showing well too (JP, JLe et al.).

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* YOC

Very rare vagrant

After an amazing six records in 2017, the only report this year was a single in York on 21st October (PM).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

BBS 6/44

Wheldrake Ings had the first bird on 15th April, with eight there by the 22nd. There was a large arrival overnight on the 1st/2nd May in the LDV with calling birds widespread. On the 5th May 23 singing birds were counted at Wheldrake Ings. Away from the LDV, single-figure counts were made at Askham Bog, the Lower Wharfe, Milford Common, Rawcliffe Meadows, Riccall and SHL. The first juvenile was caught at Wheldrake Ings on 22nd June and recently fledged birds were seen at Pocklington Canal (Thornton) on 20th July. A French ringed bird was caught at Wheldrake Ings on 25th July, where there was also the final record on 22nd September.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

BBS 1/44

The first were singletons at Cawood and Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April with 15 birds singing at the latter site by 5th May. Eight were at Thornton Lock along Pocklington Canal in early June. Away from the LDV counts of between five and ten were made at Allerthorpe OGP, Askham Bog, Cawood Ings, Heslington East, (where the number of territories in the small reed beds there continues to increase), Milford Common, Rawcliffe Meadows and Riccall. Over 50 were ringed at Wheldrake Ings during July, a brood of four was ringed at Heslington East and juveniles were also seen at both Melbourne and Thornton Lock along Pocklington Canal on 6th August and again at the latter on the 10th and 14th September. The last of the year was one at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd September.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Red listed

Scarce migrant breeder

One was reeling at Milford Common on 27th April, with another at Kirkby Wharfe the next day. Singles were heard at Hagg Bridge on the 5th and East Cottingham on 10th May, and one was heard at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May and again on the 12th and 14th July.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Migrant breeder with some birds overwintering

BBS 34/44

A wintering bird was in a Heslington garden from January to March, with another on Holgate Road, York on 10th February. Two in an Elvington garden on 30th March were probably wintering birds. The first migrants were singing at Bolton Percy Ings and Fulford on 6th April. Single-figure counts were widespread

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2018



Left to right and top to bottom

Ring-necked Parakeet © Sue Ball

Hooded Crow © Ian Brookes

Wood Warbler © Jono Leadley

Black Redstart © Tim Ward

Whinchat © Duncan Bye

Rock Pipit © Duncan Bye

and 17 singing birds at Brayton Barff on 23rd April had increased to 20 by 14th May. There were 14 (eight singing) at Yearsley Moor on 19th May. Proof of breeding came from Acaster Airfield, Church Fenton, Heslington, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), Riccall Grange (two nests and broods of four young ringed), Rufforth, Sand Hutton and Skipwith Common (11 nests found: two predated, eight broods ringed with a mean brood size of 4.2).

Twelve birds at Wheldrake Ings on 25th August were probably migrants. Singles at Dunnington, Hassacarr NR and York during November were also likely to be migrants, but singles at Poppleton on the 10th and 11th and at Easthorpe on 21st December were probably wintering.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Migrant breeder

BBS 8/44

The first was singing at Skipwith Common on 21st April with three there by 5th May, while three at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th had increased to six by 7th May. Away from the LDV records in single figures came from Allertorpe Common, Allertorpe OGP, Brayton Barff, Breezy Knees, Derwent West, Fox Covert, Milford Common, Redhouse Lagoon, Redhouse Wood, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common and Yearsley Moor. Breeding was confirmed at Brayton Barff and Skipwith Common. It was a poor breeding season at Skipwith Common, which is almost certainly due to a loss of habitat, with a decline from nine pairs in 2015 to four in 2018. Of the four pairs, one nest was predated and the average of the other three broods was 2.0 which is well below the norm. The final record was at Bank Island on 1st September.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Migrant breeder

BBS 6/44

The first were at Bolton Percy Ings and Thorganby on 15th April, with an arrival on the 18th when birds were at Bank Island, Fangfoss, North Duffield and Thornton, with three at Clifton Backies the next day. Away from the LDV reports of one or two birds (mostly singing males) came from: Acaster South Ings, Baxton Howe, Bolton Percy Ings, Brumber Hill, Bustardthorpe Allotments, Clifton Backies, Deighton, Hassacarr NR, Kirkby Wharfe, Milford Common, Naburn, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton), Riccall, Scagglethorpe Lane, Ulleskelf Mires, Wass and Yearsley. Two pairs which bred at Riccall with three young ringed at each nest was the only proof of breeding. The last record was a single at Hassacarr NR on 19th September.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Migrant breeder

Amber listed

BBS 33/44

The first were two singing at Brayton Barff on 14th April with a more general arrival on the 22nd and eight at Brumber Hill on 23rd April. Counts of ten or more were 12 at Brumber Hill on 5th May, ten at Bolton Percy Ings on 14th May and 11 at Brumber Hill on 19th May and 12th June.

Breeding was confirmed at Acaster Airfield, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne),

Sand Hutton, Skipwith Common and at St Nicholas Fields, where one carrying nesting material on 23rd May was the first breeding attempt for several years. Nest building was also noted at Rufforth Tip. At Skipwith Common it was an excellent and prolonged breeding season. Thirteen nests were found - two were predated, the average brood size was 4.2 at ringing. Ringing took place from 28th May to 23rd July so second broods were almost certain. Later nests were unlined which is unusual and was probably due to the very warm conditions. The final record was one at Clifton Backies on 17th September.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* YOC
Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

The first since 2016 was one seen on the morning of 30th January in a garden bordering the River Foss in Huntington. It was seen, often from less than a metre away, fighting with two Goldcrests *Regulus regulus* before disappearing (AFi).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* BBS 7/44
Resident breeder and winter visitor

Low single digit records were prevalent throughout the year with notable counts of ten or more being ten at Allerthorpe Common on 7th January, 16 at Yearsley Moor on 28th April, 18 there on 19th May and 24 on 1st July, of which 19 were singing.

Throughout the breeding season birds were observed territory holding and singing at Allerthorpe (OGP and Woods), Ellerton, Foggathorpe, Frog Hall (Allerthorpe Common), Fulford, Gilling Woods, Heworth, Huby, Monks Cross, Stockton Parish (Fox Covert/Kings Moor/White Carr/World's End), Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), Skipwith Common, Strensall Common and Yearsley Moor. Recently fledged young were seen at Acaster Malbis on 10th June.

There were no significant counts in the second half of the year, the highest count being five at Bolton Percy Ings on 8th October.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* BBS 40/44
Common resident breeder

Very common and widespread throughout the reporting area, usually observed in low single digit numbers, though many records received did not include counts, just noting presence. During January up to 39 roosted in boxes at Bank Island. There were ten at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 28th March, 12 at The Stank on 9th April, 24 at Brayton Barff on 23rd April, ten at Danesmead Wood and River Ouse on the 6th and 11th May, with 12 there on 1st June, and 14 round at Fulford on 20th May. The highest count later in the year was eight at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 12th November.

Singing males were heard from late February to September, including 15 holding territory at Rawcliffe Meadows and six singing at SHL. However, confirmed evidence of breeding was limited again. Two broods were seen in a garden at Seaton Ross on 7th June. Recently fledged young were also seen at Skipwith on 10th June, while two broods of six and three ringed there on 23rd June and 8th

July respectively, were noted as being just a small sample of those present.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Resident breeder

BBS 6/44

Widespread in areas with suitable habitat. Most reports were of one or two birds, as in previous years, from around 45 sites (37 in 2017). Five at the Yorkshire Arboretum on 6th January was the maximum count for the site. Three were at Kirkby Wharfe on 7th January and four singing at Brayton Barff on 7th April. Six were at Yearsley Moor on 28th April, of which three were singing, three at Wheldrake Ings on 25th August and three at Thorganby on 22nd September.

Evidence of breeding was received from several sites throughout the breeding season with singing males and territorial pairs observed. A newly fledged juvenile was caught and ringed in poolside willows at Wheldrake Ings on 25th June and recently fledged young were also seen at Acaster Malbis on the 27th. Up to six pairs were present at Brayton Barff, three of which bred in Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* boxes; this was a lower number than in 2017. One thought to be a dispersing juvenile was noted at Heslington on 3rd September.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Common resident breeder

BBS 7/44

Common and widespread throughout the recording area, with reports, mostly of one or two birds, coming from 47 sites. Three were at Allerthorpe Common on 27th January and 24th March, Wheldrake Ings on 17th February, Yearsley Moor on 28th April, Skipwith Common on 26th May and Bolton Percy Ings on 1st September. Four were at Skipwith Common on 31st March, five at Brayton Barff on 23rd April and six at Yearsley Moor on 19th May and again on 1st July.

Little evidence of confirmed breeding was submitted; with an occupied nest at Dingle Dell, Bubwith on 10th June and recently fledged young seen along Scagglethorpe Lane on 30th July the only records. However singing males and territory holding was more widespread, with pairs noted at many sites.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Red listed

Common resident breeder and winter visitor

BBS 23/44

Common and widespread across the recording area. There were many more flocks of over 100 in the first three months than in 2017. Strensall saw the most impressive numbers with a murmuration there that built up from an estimated 30,000 on 4th February to 40,000 on the 25th, with a similar number on 7th March and 10,000 on the 9th, with the birds roosting northeast of the village. Smaller murmurations of 600+ at Aughton on 20th January and 3000 over fields by SHL on 16th March were also noteworthy.

Other flocks of 200 or more in the first three months were:

1st January, Bank Island - 230

1st January, Kirkby Wharfe - 200

2nd January, Wheldrake Ings - 350, 200 on the 6th and 300 on the 13th

6th January, Allerthorpe OGP - 280

18th January, Acaster Airfield - 250
 29th January, Brumber Hill - 300
 31st January, SHL - 200 and the same number on 28th February
 5th February, Scagglethorpe Lane - 400
 27th February, Brumber Hill - c250
 3rd March, Riccall - 200 feeding with gulls and corvids near the old mine and 300 roosting in evergreen trees in the village on the 11th
 18th March, Pocklington Canal, Melbourne - 300
 21st March, Westfield House Farm, Thornton - 200
 22nd March, Kirkby Wharfe - 400 in a single flock
 27th March, Scagglethorpe Lane - 200

During the breeding season, an occupied nest was observed at Aughton Ings on 8th April, with birds seen entering a hole in the tree. A nest with young was observed at St Mary's, York on 5th March and recently fledged young in a garden in Broadway, York on 12th May. As many as 25 recently fledged young were present at Church Fenton on the same day. Fledged young were also seen at Acomb, Bolton Percy Ings, Easthorpe, Fulford, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), Poppleton and York (Cromer Street and Butcher Terrace - where a pair fledged two broods). Many of these were visiting garden feeders.

Post breeding, flocks built up again with larger flocks including c300 at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd August, 120 at Norton on the 3rd, 140 at Ozendyke Ings on 9th September and 300 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 17th. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 3464 flying south and 165 north between 16th September and 18th November with a peak of 1347 south on 28th October. 331 flew northwest over Bank Island on 21st October with a large movement of 2180 northeast over on the 28th; while Monks Cross hosted a murmuration of 600 on the 29th. In December, in the LDV 500 were on Low Grounds on the 2nd, and the 8th/9th saw c1000 birds moving south towards dusk and back into the valley at dawn, possibly from the 5000+ North Cave roost. On the 10th 300 were at Bolton Percy Ings and there was a murmuration of c250 - 300 at Heslington East on the 17th.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*
Scarce passage migrant

YOC *Red listed*

On the northwards migration in spring three records of single birds were received. The first was of a first-year male at Fangfoss on 13th April (TWA) followed by one at Skipwith Common on the 19th (LDV Blog) and a male on Acaster Airfield on the 26th (AS, JLe), seen again on the 29th (MM).

In autumn the only record was of one photographed in a garden on The Mount in York on 18th October (NM).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Common resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant *BBS 44/44*

Common and widespread throughout the area. In the first winter period counts of 20 or more were 20 at Hagg Wood on 23rd January, 20 along Scagglethorpe

Lane on the 24th, 21 along Mill Lane and the River Foss on the 26th, 22 at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 2nd February, the same number at Heslington East on the 3rd and 20 at Acaster Airfield on the 4th. In addition counts of 15 - 20 came from Bolton Percy, Danesmead Wood and Easthorpe.

Singing birds were widely reported during the breeding season, with 20 noted at Brayton Barff on 23rd April. The first fledglings were seen on 19th April at Cromer Street, York. Confirmed breeding was also reported from Acaster Malbis, Allertorpe OGP, Church Fenton, Clifton, Easthorpe, Fulford, Hemingbrough, Heslington, Huttons Ambo, Naburn, NDC, Norton, Poppleton, SHL, Skipwith Common, Wheldrake Ings and York city centre. On Skipwith Common young from 18 nests were ringed, with an average brood size of 3.9. In May, 38 were counted round Fulford on the 20th and there were consistently more than 20 in Danesmead Wood during the breeding season.

Post breeding, until November, apart from at Danesmead Wood, the only count above ten was 17 at Hassacarr NR on 16th October. In November an influx was noted at Acaster Airfield early in the month; 28 were seen along Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on the 5th with 20 there on the 9th and 21 on the 12th; while 20 were at CHL on the 25th. In December 20 were at Danesmead Wood on the 2nd, but numbers were noticeably lower than in 2017.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Red listed

Winter visitor and passage migrant

BBS 1/44

During the first three months, significantly more counts were submitted and many flocks were considerably larger than in 2017 (in 2018 31 flocks of 150 or more compared with only seven in 2017 and a peak count of 400). The harsh weather and snow in early March temporarily dispersed the large flocks; small groups of birds then descended on gardens in and around York in search of food, stripping berries and guarding apples put out to tempt them in. Peak site counts were 750 at Acaster Airfield on 29th January, 800 at Bolton Percy Ings on 25th March, 1000 at Brumber Hill on 19th March, 400 at Eastmoor on 27th January, 300 at Riccall Ings on 14th January and the same number at Riccall Dam Dyke on the 24th, 800 by Scagglethorpe Lane, Poppleton on 2nd March (where over 500 were also seen in January and February) and 700 at Wharfe Ings on 29th January. Flocks of 150 or more were also noted at Cawood Ings, Flaxton, Hagg Wood, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) and Skipwith Common, while 600 were in the southern part of the LDV in mid-March. In April 200 at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st and 100 at Thorganby on the 3rd were the last substantial flocks. The last was one at Appleton Roebuck on the 19th.

The first returning birds of autumn were three at Forest of Galtres Golf Club on 24th September followed by five at Naburn on 2nd October. On 7th October larger flocks (though still fewer than 100 birds) were widely reported, with the first significant passage flocks being 402 over Bank Island on the 24th, followed there by 800 over on the 27th and 950 on the 28th. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 5223 flying south and 336 north between 7th October and 30th November with a peak of 1513 south and 110 north on 28th October. A big arrival in the last week of

November saw 500 present at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd along with 300 at NDC, 200 at Thornton Ellers and 150 at Hagg Bridge on the 25th. In December 300 at Bank Island on the 6th was peak count for the month.

Other flocks of 150 or more to the end of the year were:

28th October, near Rufforth Tip - 210

5th November, Pocklington Canal at Bielby - 220

11th November, Wheldrake Ings - 150

28th December, Kelsit Grange, Tollerton - 200

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Red listed

Winter visitor and passage migrant

The highest count in the first part of the year was 350 at Brumber Hill on 27th February. Other counts of 100 or more, from that period, were 100 at Bolton Percy on 10th January, 200 at Hagg Wood on 27th February and 150 at Riccall on 3rd March. A flock of 21 was seen at Rawcliffe Ings on 11th April, with singles at Wheldrake Ings, Scagglethorpe Lane and Bank Island the following day the last of the season.

The first of the returning migrants was one over Bank Island on 3rd October. The following day produced small parties at Wheldrake, about 50 in total, followed by three each at Clifton Backies, Naburn and Poppleton. Numbers built up rapidly after that with 116 arriving at Bank Island, and 100 over Haxby on the 7th. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 1735 flying south and 146 north between 5th October and 18th November, with a peak of 367 south on 28th October. Many smaller flocks were recorded during the autumn and second winter period.

Other counts over 100 were:

11th October, Wheldrake Ings - 227

16th October, Clifton Backies - 110+ flying west

27th October, Bank Island - 571 flying northwest and 1005 northwest on the 28th

27th October, CHL - 150

29th October, Naburn - 100 northwest over in smaller groups

11th November, Bank Island - 108

30th November, Brumber Hill - 100

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Red listed

Resident breeder but declining in some areas; winter visitor and passage migrant

BBS 34/44

Widespread and seen in small numbers (typically one to four) throughout the year, notably in the Vale of York. The peak count was 24 which came in to roost along Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 22nd February.

The first singing bird of the year was heard at Norton on 6th January. Eight were singing at Brayton Barff on 21st February, increasing to nine there on 30th April and 12 by 14th May. At Yearsley Moor 12 were present on 19th May (seven singing) and 15 there on 1st July (12 singing). There were numerous other reports of singing males and of 'territory holding' with the first definitive report of breeding

coming on 1st May at Stamford Bridge when food carrying was seen. Further confirmed breeding was reported from Brumber Hill, Naburn, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), Poppleton, Riccall, Rufforth, Seaton Ross and Skipwith Common. At the last site 11 nests were found with an average brood size of 3.4 when the young were ringed - more than double the number of nests found in 2017. The Riccall site yielded seven nests in hedgerows, though predation rates were high with only two broods (of four and one) ringed.

Ten seen at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 19th October was the only double-digit count after July.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Red listed

Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

BBS 8/44

Widely distributed across the recording area though usually seen as singing males or a pair. In the early part of the year a notable count was of 19 at Riccall on 17th January, which were feeding on an area of lawn turf. Five were at Brayton Barff on 21st February, where three pairs were present during the breeding season. Sites with proven breeding were Naburn, Skipwith Common (where one chick was seen to be taken by a Jay *Garrulus glandarius* on 4th June), Strensall Common, Thornton Lock (Pocklington Canal) and Wass.

Small groups were seen during the summer and autumn. On 16th June seven were at Bolton Percy Ings and seven at Grimston Moor on the 25th. In July 12 at Milford Common on the 1st increased to 15 on the 3rd, while there were 19 along Centenary Way at Castle Howard on 18th August and nine on Walmgate Stray the following day. In September 21 were at Westow on the 7th, with 16 at Bolton Percy on the 9th and 38 there, the peak count for the year, on the 17th. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 21 flying south and ten north between 9th September and 2nd November with a peak of nine south and two north on 14th September. Fifteen were noted at Brumber Hill on 12th November. Singing males were heard in November at Naburn on the 5th and at Heslington on the 18th.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Red listed

Migrant breeder and passage visitor

BBS 2/44

As usual the first returning birds appeared in May, though two days later than in 2017, with one at Brayton Barff on the 5th followed by two pairs in Skipwith from the 17th, at least one at Strensall Common on the 18th and two at Melbourne on the 30th. New arrivals continued to be seen in early June with singles at Appleton Roebuck and Norton both on the 6th, then two at Acaster Airfield on the 8th and 9th; with between one and three birds at a further eight sites by the month end.

Evidence of breeding came from several locations with three families at Brayton Barff, an excellent six pairs around Gilling (including one pair nest building on the corner of a house in a pyracantha bush), a pair nesting in a garden in Osbaldwick, another pair along Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, two pairs near Skipwith Common, and a pair along the riverside track at Wheldrake Ings. Two adults were feeding a juvenile at Bank Island on the 2nd and 3rd September.

In August post-breeding records included singles at Brayton Barff, Clifton Park

and Strensall Common with two at Bolton Percy and juveniles at both Rawcliffe Meadows and Wheldrake Ings. In September there were up to three early in the month at Skipwith Common, singles at Brayton Barff, Dam Dike in Riccall and Scagglethorpe, and one or two along Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on several dates. The final records came at the end of the month with one at Hassacarr NR on the 17th and the last on the 24th at Wheldrake Ings.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*
Common resident breeder

BBS 41/44

Remains common and widespread throughout the area with most counts in low single figures. Double-figure counts were fewer than in recent years. In the first half of the year these included ten at The Stank on 9th April, 14 singing at Brayton Barff on 23rd April and 15 in Fulford on 20th May. Greatest numbers occurred at the year-end presumably due to winter immigrants bolstering the number of resident birds with 23 at Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on 5th November, 12 in Danesmead Wood and along the River Ouse on 2nd December and 40, the yearly maximum, at Easthorpe on the 26th.

Definite breeding records of adults carrying food or recently fledged young came from Acaster Airfield, Acaster Malbis, Acomb, Bolton Percy, Bubwith, Easthorpe, Heslington, Huttons Ambo, Naburn, Norton, several sites along Pocklington Canal, SHL, Seaton Ross, Skipwith, Strensall Common, Upper Poppleton, Wheldrake Ings and York city centre. Of particular note were 18 territories at Rawcliffe Meadows counted during a BBS.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*
Scarce passage migrant and casual breeder

YOC Red listed

A poor year, with just one passage migrant seen at Hob Moor, York on 22nd September (BB).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Rare visitor

YOC Red listed

A great record of a female seen and photographed near Fangfoss on 14th April (TWA), coincidentally on the same date as for the only record of 2017!

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

Amber listed

The Howardian Hills continue to be a stronghold of this species in the area, particularly the northwestern end of the range.

The first of the year were two singing males near the bottom lake at Yearsley Moor on 23rd April. This site accounted for the majority of the records with these two males continuing to be encountered for the rest of April and throughout May. There was no confirmation of breeding however. Additionally, there were two singing males at Byland Abbey on 14th May, when there was also one at Wass Woods, and one at Grimston Moor on the 24th.

There were no further records until autumn migrants started to pass through

the area later in the year. In August there were singles at Barkston Moor on the 25th, at Hildenley on the 26th and around the bomb bays at Skipwith Common on the 29th. In September there was one at Scagglethorpe on the 1st and the last of the year was one on Bootham Stray, York on the 21st.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Red listed

Passage migrant and casual breeder

The only spring record was a male at the former breeding site of Strensall Common on 21st April.

Most records came from the meadow between the Tower and Swantail hides at Wheldrake Ings where in recent years a small group of birds have started to gather in late summer. This year the first appeared on 11th August with one or two continuing to be seen for the rest of the month, with a peak count of three on the 27th. One or two continued to be seen in September to the 23rd; the last of the year. Elsewhere returning migrants were seen as follows: two were at NDC on 28th August, whilst in September three were seen working their way along a hedge top and feeding on the ground below at Riccall Ings on the 4th, followed by singles on Strensall Common on the 5th and 15th.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Casual breeder and passage visitor; sometimes over-winters

At the beginning of the year most over wintering records came from the LDV. In January one to two birds were at both Aughton Ings and NDC for most of the month, a pair on the Refuge at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th and up to two at Thorganby between the 20th and 26th. In February one was at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd and 4th, with three at NDC also on the 4th, reducing to one on the 9th, then two on the 17th. Singles were at Aughton on the 11th and Wheldrake Ings again on the 25th and 26th. Away from the LDV singles were at Heslington East on the 2nd and 3rd February, with one at Acaster Airfield on the 4th. Presumed passage birds were encountered in April with a pair at Thornton on the 15th and 17th and a single at Skipwith Common on the 21st.

The small breeding population at Strensall Common continued to flourish with the first two birds back at this site on 7th March and a pair plus another male on the 25th, when the male of the pair was singing. The first recently fledged young were seen on 18th May. In the MOD bird survey on 19th May a total of five pairs holding territory was counted, including three pairs having at least three young visible. This represents a continued increase from one pair located in the 2016 survey and three in 2017. Second and even third brooding may have occurred as recently fledged young continued to be seen right up until 8th August. After August only two records were received from this site as the breeding birds dispersed; at least eight including juveniles on 5th September and a pair on 12th November.

Passage records in autumn included one at Acaster Airfield on 22nd September, a pair at Brumber Hill on the 8th, 10th and 13th October with one there again on 2nd November and two at Riccall Ings on the 5th. At Wheldrake Ings two arrived on 4th October, with four on the 20th and then two or three were

present daily to the end of the year. A pair was seen feeding near Rufforth Tip on 14th October, with a male in the same area on 26th December. The only other wintering bird noted was one at NDC on the 20th and 23rd December.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
Summer visitor and passage migrant

Amber listed
BBS 1/44

The first, although later than last year, but still relatively early for the area, was a female in fields off Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on 23rd March. Spring passage began in earnest nearly a month later at the end of April with singles near Broomhill Plantation on the 21st and Riccall the next day. There were five south of Bubwith on the 24th and eight at Acaster Airfield on the 26th, reducing to two on the 27th when there were also three at Copmanthorpe, eight at East Cottingwith and one at Wheldrake Ings. On the 29th numbers had increased back up to seven at Acaster Airfield, with three at Ellerton and one again at Wheldrake Ings. Passage continued in May with one at Brumber Hill on the 1st and three at Ellerton on the 2nd increasing to nine, the year's peak count, the following day. On the 4th one was at Heslington East and three at Riccall, then singles at Dunnington Common on the 5th, NDC on the 7th and 13th and East Cottingwith on the 28th. The last was a female at Dunnington on 5th June.

Return passage was much lighter with all records involving single birds. In August records came from Scagglethorpe on the 4th, the Knavesmire, York on the 24th and Bolton Percy Ings on the 25th. In September there was one at Strensall Common on the 15th, at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd and 23rd and the last for the year was one on the 26th which was unfortunately found dead below a window in Fulford.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*
Rare visitor, formerly a breeding resident in small numbers

Since its demise as a breeding bird in the early 1990's this is a very difficult species to catch up with in the recording area, there having been just one record in the last ten years. As such, one inhabiting a small brook which feeds into Newburgh Priory was a great find. Present for almost a month, it was first located on 2nd December and then seen on at least four further occasions until the last observation on the 29th (JR).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Common resident breeder

Red listed
BBS 33/44

Sadly the decline in numbers of this species seems to be continuing; the largest count of the year being 58 in a BBS square on the edge of Riccall at the second survey on 10th June.

At the start of the year 30 were at Ellerton on 2nd January, 20 at Stamford Bridge on the 11th and 20 at East Cottingwith the same day. In February numbers at East Cottingwith increased to 30 on the 10th and 24th, with 20 at Aughton on the 11th. During March and April counts of 20 came from Stamford Bridge, East Cottingwith and Ellerton. On 7th April 25 were in Fulford, with 20 there on 20th

May and 22 at Danesmead Wood on 6th May.

Confirmation of breeding was limited, though there was good news from Sand Wath Farm at Church Fenton where 15 pairs fledged 55 young. In Fulford a family of five juveniles were on feeders on 26th August. Three broods were raised in each of two nest boxes in Strensall, and juveniles were with adults on feeders in Acomb and Upper Poppleton.

Post breeding the highest count was just 34 at Acaster on 18th November. Flocks of 20 were at Norton on 12th September, Acaster Airfield on 7th October, Pocklington Canal on 27th October and Danesmead Wood on 2nd December.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Red listed

Resident breeder

BBS 28/44

Widespread in the area, with records coming from over 70 locations and many double-figure counts.

The peak count for the year came on 1st January when 100 were at East Lilling, while 80 were at Thornton on the 7th, 45 at Cawood Ings on the 15th and 40 at Aughton Ings on the 27th. In February and March the highest counts were 40 at Scrayingham on 15th March and up to 30 at Bank Island, the Yorkshire Arboretum and Hassacarr NR. In April 50 were at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on the 13th and 30 each at Westfield Farm on the 18th and Fangfoss on the 19th.

Confirmation of breeding came from Acaster Malbis, Bank Island, Easthorpe, Pocklington Canal (Coates Bridge) and Seaton Ross. Five pairs bred at SHL, including one pair with a second brood seen on 30th July. Pairs also bred at Poppleton though one nest was predated by a Magpie *Pica pica*.

There were no large post-breeding flocks this year. In July 30 were at Milford Common and the same at Brumber Hill at the beginning of September. In October 30 were at Castle Howard on the 1st, while numbers increased at Brumber Hill to 50 by the 13th and at least 50 roosted in hawthorns near Rufforth Village on the 20th. During November and December 50+ were at Bank Island, while 42 on 12th December was the highest count at Hassacarr NR.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Amber listed

Common resident breeder

BBS 39/44

Common and widespread, most counts received were of one to three birds. The highest counts were eight at Hagg Wood on 12th February, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 28th March, Wheldrake Ings on 29th March and Brayton Barff on 23rd April.

Singing birds were noted at various locations from mid-February, including three at Bank Island on the 25th and four at Wheldrake Ings on 29th March. Confirmation of breeding came from Acaster Malbis, Acomb, Bank Island, Bolton Percy, Church Fenton (three pairs raised eight young), Fulford, Heslington, Poppleton, University of York (brood of five ringed) and Riccall (three nests - one predated, broods of two and four from the others). At Skipwith Common 11 nests were found of which four were predated; the mean brood size at ringing was 3.0.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

Red listed
BBS 7/44

Widely reported, the first of the year were two at East Cottingwith on 9th April, with further singletons there and at Ellerton and Melbourne on the 15th. Following a notable arrival into the area during the following week - with records of one or two from many sites - four were present at Naburn on the 23rd and four at Acaster Airfield on the 26th. Nine were on farmland near Naburn on 7th May, with five calling there on the 21st.

Several pairs bred in the area. In June an adult was seen carrying food to a nest site north of King Rudding Lane at Riccall on the 4th; a juvenile was seen at Thornton on the 6th; and a pair with two young was at Low Grounds on the 22nd. A family of five was at Heslington East on 7th July and five juveniles were seen there on the 20th. Recently fledged young were also seen at West Melbourne on Pocklington Canal on 3rd August and at Bolton Percy.

Return passage south was noted from early August, with two over Bolton Percy Ings on the 4th. Five flew south over Milford Common on the 21st. A large movement at the end of August included eight southwest over Clifton Backies on the 28th, with 20+ south over NDC the same day and 30+ south during the morning of the 29th at Wheldrake Ings, while a further 20 were present there at dusk. Other gatherings included 12 at Brumber Hill on 21st August and 15 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 25th. In September there were 22 at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd and 19 there on the 10th, 12 at Bubwith on the 6th and 17 at NDC on the 8th. Four heading south over the LDV on 28th September, then a singleton over Bank Island on 2nd October were the last of the year.

Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava*

YOC

None in 2018, after records in four of the past ten years, most recently 2017.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
Resident breeder and winter visitor

Red listed
BBS 1/44

Widely reported in ones and twos from areas of suitable habitat during the year. Five in turned fields off Moor Lane, Rufforth on 21st January was the largest count.

Breeding evidence was limited; a singing male was at Sherburn in Elmet on 30th March and a pair was seen on a pond at Yearsley Moor on 28th April, but the only evidence of confirmed breeding came from Naburn where an adult and two juveniles were seen at the lock on 2nd August.

VMW at Ozendyke recorded seven flying south between 9th September and 11th November. Three were at Wheldrake Ings on 4th September and again on the 7th, with singles over on the 17th and 21st. Four were seen at Norton level crossing on the 28th. Four returned to the WTW at Bank Island during September, where they remained, with three staying on through October and November. Three were at Monks Cross on 5th October, three on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th and three at Thornton Lock on Pocklington Canal on the 16th and 26th, while two flew west over Bank Island on the 27th. There were several

sightings at SHL during October, with three there on the 19th.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Common resident breeder

BBS 21/44

Few large gatherings were recorded in 2018. In January the Parliament Street roost in the centre of York held 700 on 21st January (the highest count of the year) and 200 were present on 6th April. Elsewhere 30 were at Thornton on 7th January, 20 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th January and 32 at Riccall on 15th February. Ten were at East Cottingwith on 9th April.

Small numbers were widespread during the breeding season with breeding confirmed from a number of sites; young were seen at Bank Island, Brumber Hill, Heslington East, Naburn, Norton, Riccall (a brood of five was ringed, but sadly fell prey to a cat), SHL (several pairs bred), Strensall Common and Wheldrake Ings.

Post breeding flocks included 25 at Acaster Malbis on 5th August, 20 at SHL on 20th September and ten at Bank Island on the 22nd, of which nine flew south. In October 22 were at Fangfoss on the 1st, 21 at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th and 17th, and 14 at Heslington East on the 28th. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 109 flying south and 26 north between 9th September and 24th November with a peak of 24 south on 25th September.

Sadly there was no roost in the centre of York in the latter part of the year, possibly because of the 'continuous dripping rain' type of lighting put up in the trees for the Christmas fairs, followed by the trees in Parliament Street being pollarded later in December (apparently this is done on a four-year cycle) leaving nowhere to roost. The only three-figure counts were of 200 in trees by the River Foss next to Castlegate car park on 4th November which flew off north, and 100 in trees by Merchant Adventurers' Hall on 12th December. Elsewhere, 40 roosted at Wheldrake Ings on 15th November.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Scarce spring passage migrant

Two were present on arable fields between Storwood and East Cottingwith on 9th April (DMB).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Resident and migrant breeder and passage migrant

Amber listed

BBS 3/44

In January flocks included 11 at NDC on the 2nd, 17 at Bolton Percy Ings, 30 at Heslington East on rough grassland and 20 at Thornton on the 7th, a wintering flock of 24 at Riccall on the 10th and 19 at Cawood Ings on the 19th. During February 20 were at Heslington East on the 2nd and up to 30 there on the 18th. In March, 65 were across Bubwith Ings and NDC on the 18th, 50 at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) on the 19th and 12 on Naburn Ings the same day. There were also 12 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 25th.

Birds in song flight were noted from late March, including five singing over Bolton Percy Ings on the 29th. Many reports of birds holding territory, singing and displaying were received during April, including nine at Melbourne by Pocklington

Canal on the 16th. Ten were on Milford Common on the 27th. Six were in song flight at Ryther Ings on 1st May. Confirmation of breeding came from Bolton Percy Ings (where recently fledged juveniles were seen on 3rd June), Heslington Tillmire (where food carrying was seen on 6th June) and Ryther Ings.

Post breeding, build-up of numbers began in late August with 30 at Brumber Hill on the 20th and 32 at Bolton Percy Ings on 1st September. In the LDV 200+ were present on the 4th, 560 on the 15th and more than 400 on the 21st. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 4451 flying south between 28th August and 17th November, including 1213 on 20th September, with a peak of 1625 south on 22nd September. On the 22nd 207 flew south over Bank Island and 47 over Wheldrake Ings.

Late autumn and winter gatherings included 30 flushed by a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* at Milford Common on 30th October. During November 40 were at Brumber Hill on the 12th and 50 roosted at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th. Thirty were on Bolton Percy Ings on 9th December and a wintering flock of 24 was on the meadow at Three Haggas Wood, Escrick on the 19th.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Red listed

Migrant breeder though numbers have recently declined

BBS 2/44

The first of the year was a singing male at Skipwith Common on 18th April, with two there on the 19th, then one at Strensall Common on the 22nd. Two were singing at Yearsley Moor on the 25th, where numbers increased to seven by the 28th - of which six were singing. At Strensall Common, the MOD survey on 18th May found seven territories being held by singing/displaying males: an increase of two on 2017. During the month, at least five were holding territory at Yearsley Common; however the maximum count received from Skipwith Common was only six, of which five were singing males, well down on the eleven of the previous year. Away from these three areas, one was at Grimston Moor on the 25th. There were no reports from Allerthorpe Common this year. On 10th June at Yearsley Common, a pair was feeding at least one fledgling and there were two separate singing males; three males were still singing there on 1st July.

In August, a singleton was at Sherburn in Elmet on the 5th, one flew southwest over Milford Common on the 7th, and two flew south there on the 21st. There were still seven present on Strensall Common on the evening of the 14th. One flew west at Castle Howard on the 18th and one south over NDC on the 28th. The last of the year were one flying south over Bank Island on 15th September and one south over Bolton Percy Ings the same day.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

YOC Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

No confirmed sightings in 2018, after records in five of the past ten years, most recently 2017.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*
Scarce, mainly winter, visitor

YOC

A good year with four records, after two blank years. One was at Wheldrake Ings on 6th January (LDV Blog). A bird of the *littoralis* (Scandinavian race) turned up on the frozen floods at NDC on 3rd March (AW et al.). In April a more distant bird was seen on the 7th from Ellerton Church (JLe). In the autumn, one was at the pool at Wheldrake Ings on mud in front of the hide on 6th October and presumably the same bird was present again on the 14th (DMB et al).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

BBS 44/44

Widespread and well reported during the year, mostly in small numbers, with some larger gatherings in the winter months. Peak monthly counts in the early part of the year were: 51 at Melbourne, Pocklington Canal on 31st January, 50 at Acaster Airfield on 4th February and 50 at Hagg Wood on the 27th, and 20 at the latter on 13th March.

There were many reports of singing males; 12 were singing at Brayton Barff by 24th February. A BBS near Naburn recorded 18 singing on 5th May, and 15 were singing at Skipwith Common the same day. Several birds held territory at Strensall. Confirmation of breeding was under-recorded for such a common species. Three pairs bred at Church Fenton fledging ten young and fledglings were also seen at Acaster Airfield, Bolton Percy and Poppleton. At Riccall Grange five nests were found on a farmland plot; the mean brood size at ringing was 2.8 and all fledglings survived. Of twelve nests found at Skipwith Common, three were predated, and the mean brood size at ringing of the rest was 4.1. A juvenile dashing itself against a window repeatedly on 7th July was the only sign of breeding at SHL, though seven singing males were present in mid-May.

Post breeding a flock of 120 was near Sutton upon Derwent on 26th September; while 144 in a mixed flock with Linnets *Linaria cannabina* by Moor Lane, Rufforth was the peak count for the year. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 317 flying south and 13 north between 9th September and 18th November, with a peak of 38 south on 15th September. At Bank Island 11 flew southeast on 11th November. In late autumn and winter the only flock of note was 50 which stayed around cow sheds near Acaster Airfield.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

A quieter start to the year than in 2017 with singletons at Kirkby Wharfe on 2nd January and Allertorpe OGP on the 6th and three at Elvington early in the month. 'Several' stayed in a Thorganby garden during the month; two were in Elvington on the 27th and five at Strensall on the 31st. During February, one or two were reported from the Yorkshire Arboretum on several dates. One was at Allertorpe OGP on the 4th, and later in the month nine turned up at Hagg Wood on the 27th, the same day as 18 at Kexby. Early in March 15 were at Elvington on the 4th and ten at the Yorkshire Arboretum on the 7th. Five were at Allertorpe OGP on the

13th, with two there on both the 14th and the 25th. Elsewhere one was at Dunnington on the 23rd and two at Milford Common the same day.

A few birds remained into April including singletons at Rawcliffe, Clifton Backies and Melbourne early in the month, six at Allerthorpe OGP on the 7th and nine on feeders at nearby Allerthorpe on the 8th. Four lingered at Elvington to the 10th, with five there on the 14th. On the 21st three females and a male were present; the last one departed on the 22nd.

The first returning bird was at Kirkby Wharfe on 16th October, then one at Norton on the 24th and further singletons at Bank Island and Milford Common on the 27th. Three were at Bank Island on the 28th and one at Wheldrake Ings on the 31st. Three at Milford Common on 1st November and one at Norton on the 14th were the only records for the month. In December singletons were seen at Bolton Percy Ings on the 4th, Milford Common on the 11th, Wheldrake Ings on the 16th and Fulford Ings on the 19th. However these were eclipsed by 50 in a mixed finch flock in trees at Gilrudding Grange near Naburn, 30 of which remained to the 24th: easily the highest counts of the year.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

YOY Red listed

Rare winter visitor

Though the majority of sightings and reports were of the overwintering birds at the Yorkshire Arboretum, there were records from a number of other sites too. Members of the very well-watched long-staying influx at the Arboretum were mobile and often quite difficult to pick up so counts on any given day could vary wildly, with most counts between 15 and 50. Maximum monthly counts were 100 on 7th January, 32 on 18th February, and 40 on 24th March (and on the 26th). The last seen at the Arboretum were three on 30th March. Elsewhere, on 1st January there was one at Acaster Malbis, one at East Gilling and three at Kirkby Wharfe. Singletons were also recorded at East Gilling and Kirkby Wharfe on several other dates during the month. One was at Thornton on the 7th, one at Selby on the 9th, one at Elvington on the 20th and two at Redhouse Reservoir the same day. A flock of 29 at East Gilling on the 21st was the largest count away from the Arboretum. There was also one at Ellerton on the 26th. During February, the only records away from the Arboretum were at Selby on the 1st and Gilling on the 5th and 8th. In March one was at Ampleforth on the 3rd, one at Elvington on the 4th, two at Bolton Percy on the 6th and two each at Byland and Coxwold on the 10th. A small flock of eight was at East Gilling on the 12th, three at Yearsley on the 13th, a singleton at Thorganby on the 17th and two at Bank Island on the 18th. The last of the spring were three at East Gilling on 1st April.

Later in the year the only sightings came from Castle Howard with two there on 10th November, 15 on the 15th and the last report of any on the 18th.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Amber listed

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

BBS 19/44

Reported from over 50 sites during the year, with most counts of one to five birds. Several reports related to birds regularly visiting feeders, including at Acomb

and Bishopthorpe. Eleven were at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) on 3rd January (and eight there on the 14th), a flock of eight at Brayton Barff on the 13th and nine on Allerthorpe Common on the 22nd - with 20 there on the 25th and ten on the 27th. Higher counts in February were eight at Angram ponds, Riccall on the 7th, and 34 between Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings on the 10th (peak count). Eight were at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 23rd, with eight also the monthly maximum at SHL. There were nine at Wheldrake Ings on 4th March.

During the breeding season, pairs were present at many sites and confirmation of breeding - with juveniles seen - came from Acaster Airfield, Acomb (a pair with two juveniles visited garden feeders), Clifton Park, Heslington East, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), Poppleton and Wheldrake Ings (where at least two pairs bred).

Post breeding there were ten at Wheldrake Ings on 21st July, 12 on 4th August and 11 on 22nd September, with nine at Bank Island early in October. In late autumn the only counts above six were ten, including four males, at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 28th November and 12 at Patefield Wood, which included a party of ten, on 28th December.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

BBS 22/44

Though numbers were somewhat higher than 2017 at the start of the year, with several flocks of ten or more reported, records later in the year were discouraging with no large flocks at all. Most records were of one or two birds.

At the start of the year, 30 were on Cornfield NR on 13th January and 20+ there on the 24th; ten were at Elvington on the 27th, and 20 at Strensall on the 31st. In February ten were at the Yorkshire Arboretum, increasing to 20 on the 18th, and 11 at Heslington. The peak count for the year was 40 at Ampleforth on 3rd March.

During the breeding season males singing and holding territory were noted at a number of sites. Confirmed breeding success was very limited however. Adults and juveniles were observed visiting feeders in Acomb and fledglings were seen in Upper Poppleton. Two or three pairs bred in Riccall Parish and a juvenile was in a Naburn garden on 24th June. At SHL one pair attempted to breed, but there was no confirmation of the outcome.

Post breeding, the only double-figure count was ten at Riccall on 11th December.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*

YOC Red listed

Rare winter visitor

There was a report of one feeding on seed heads at Wheldrake Ings on 16th October (CSR): the first sighting since 2014.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Red listed

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

BBS 33/44

In January, flocks of 50 or more were 50 at Seaton Ross on the 2nd, 75 at Milford Common on the 7th, 112 at Cornfield NR on the 13th, 50 at Riccall on the

24th and 200 at Strensall on the 31st. A flock at Heslington East built up to 40 by 18th February, the same day as 60 were feeding in a mixed finch flock at Brayton Barff - the largest flocks reported during the month. Numbers at Cornfield NR decreased to between 20 and 30 during February, with similar numbers remaining there through March. On 19th March a flock of 120 was in fields near Brayton Barff, and 200 were at Seavy Carr and Thornton on the 23rd. Smaller flocks included 30 at Stamford Bridge on the 26th and 30+ at Wistow on the 29th. Some flocks were still around in April including 50 at Skipwith Common on the 14th, 47 at Westfield Farm, Thornton on the 18th and 80+ at NDC on the 27th.

During the breeding season, there were reports of singing males and pairs seen at Allerthorpe OGP, Bank Island, Bubwith Bridge (five pairs), Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and The Grange), Poppleton, Wass, Westfield Farm (Thornton) and White Carr (Stockton Parish). Six territories were found at Strensall Common during the MOD survey on 18th May (down from nine in 2017). Of five at Bank Island on 17th June, two were singing and one food carrying. On farmland near Riccall Grange 21 nests were found in hedgerows; though six were predated, the mean of the other broods was high at 4.4, probably due to the warm, dry summer. At Skipwith Common four pairs bred, of which broods of three and four survived to ringing. Pairs also bred at Brayton Barff and Brumber Hill.

Post breeding VMW at Ozendyke recorded 1711 flying south and 16 north between 28th August and 30th November, with a peak of 208 south on 10th September. A flock of 150 was on Acaster Airfield on 10th September, and 80 on 7th October, while 89 were in a mixed flock with Chaffinches *Fringilla coelebs* near Moor Lane, Rufforth on the 20th, and 50 at Acaster Malbis on the 29th with 60 there on 16th November (and 40 still there on 30th December). Also in November a flock of 92 was feeding on weed seeds in a sugar beet field by Riccall on the 11th, 40 were at SHL on the 29th and 90 at Cornfield NR on the 30th: 80 of the latter flock staying on through December. On 14th December 65 were at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne).

Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Acanthis flammea* YOC Amber listed
Scarce winter visitor

Six were at Allerthorpe Common on 22nd January (FW, MW). On 21st March one was in with a flock of 15 Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret* at Thornton, which remained to the 23rd (NC). One in with a flock of 70 Lesser Redpoll at Melbourne on 7th April was still there on the 11th (NC).

The only other records came in December when one was at SHL, also with a flock of Lesser Redpoll, the first confirmed record for the site (GW) and finally three were at Griffon Forest on the 24th (AL).

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret* Red listed
Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

A flock of 80 was at Hagg Wood on 2nd January, 30 at Thornton on the 7th and 22 along Pocklington Canal, Melbourne on the 11th which increased to 36 by the 31st, while the largest flock of the year was 120 at Allerthorpe Common on the

22nd. In February there were 26 at Riccall on the 5th, while along Pocklington Canal at Melbourne and Thornton up to 30 were about. This flock increased during March to 40 on the 26th and to a maximum of 80 on the 28th before reducing to 70 on 6th April through to the 11th. Most then departed, leaving only nine there on the 12th and one on the 16th. The last of spring were two flying over Bolton Percy Ings on the 22nd.

Like 2017, there were no sightings in late spring or the summer months, indicating that this species appears to have stopped breeding in the area.

In September the first was one at Bolton Percy Ings on the 22nd, and one at Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd. Small numbers arrived during October including ten at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) and at SHL. A welcome influx saw 231 ringed at Skipwith Common between 10th October and 21st December (compared with 98 over the same period in 2017). Numbers increased at Melbourne to 42 in early November, with 40 still there at the end of the month. Ten were at Gilling Woods on the 23rd, and 80 at Bolton Percy on the 27th. In December the Melbourne flock remained around 40 but the highest count came from Brayton Barff where 60 were present on the 22nd. Fifteen were also at Strensall the following day.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Casual breeder and passage migrant

BBS 1/44

A small increase in records, up from only five in 2017. In the first half of the year all but one record came from Yearsley Moor. Two were present there on 1st January, six on the 26th and a male and two females on the 27th. There were no more reports until late April with 12 on the 28th followed by eight on the 19th. On 29th June a singleton was at Castle Howard. The highest count of the year was 23 at Yearsley Moor on 1st July. Three flew over Norton on 11th July, and three were calling over Canal Head, Pocklington on 5th August. On 29th September four flew over Bank Island and three were seen flying northeast during a VMW at Milford Common on 31st October. The final sighting was of four at Allerthorpe Common on 30th December.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

BBS 39/44

Widespread with both flocks and smaller numbers well reported throughout the year. An increase in numbers regularly visiting garden feeders was noted.

Flocks in the first part of the year included 50 at Askham Bog on 20th January, a pre-roost flock of about 50 at Heslington at dusk on 10th February and 60 at Riccall on the 12th. On 1st March a flock of 50 was swirling about in strong winds in Fulford and 50 were at Seavy Carr and Thornton on the 23rd. The largest flock in April was 30 at Wheldrake Ings on the 7th.

Singing males and pairs were evident at many sites from late March, with breeding confirmed at Acaster Airfield, Acomb, Bank Island, Brumber Hill, Fulford (two broods), Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton Lock), Poppleton and SHL. At Riccall, five nests were found in hedgerows on farmland of which one was predated and the mean of other broods at Gilling was 3.0.

Post breeding flocks started to form during August, including 53 at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) on the 17th, 30 at Brumber Hill on the 20th and 40 at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th. Numbers continued to rise at Wheldrake Ings with 100 there on 15th September, 130 on the 22nd and about 300 on the 29th. During October the largest flocks were 200 at Thorganby and 250+ at Wheldrake Ings. A flock of 62 was near Rufforth Tip on the 20th, with flocks of 40-50 also seen at Acaster Malbis, Bank Island and Naburn during the month. Sixty were at Brayton Barff on 18th November and 50 at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 23rd. In December, while 60 were still at Wheldrake Ings early in the month, numbers increased at SHL to 50 by the 20th. Late in December, 50 were at Heslington on the 25th and 60 there on the 31st, while 50 were at Milford Common on the 28th.

Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Resident breeder in small numbers, passage and winter visitor *BBS 2/44*

In January, flocks of between 20 and 50 were reported from Allerthorpe Common, Askham Bog, Hovingham, Howsham Mill, Milford Common, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), SHL and Stamford Bridge, as well as small numbers from several other sites. The Pocklington Canal flock increased to 102 on 5th February (dropping back to 60 on the 9th), 120 were at Askham Bog on the 9th and 50 flew over SHL on the 21st; a few birds also turned up on garden feeders in Strensall and Heslington. In March a flock of 60 was at Askham Bog on the 5th, along with flocks of 20 at both Nunnington Lake and Pocklington Canal. During April one or two visited garden feeders at several sites, including a pair in Fulford on the 11th.

Most reports during the breeding season came from Yearsley Moor; on 19th May, 13 were present including one singing male. A male was in display flight there on 10th June. Elsewhere in June, singletons were seen on the 6th and 9th at Easthorpe and a male on feeders in Fulford on the 21st. Eighteen on 1st July at Yearsley Moor was the last record until 15th September.

During the autumn, VMW at Ozendyke recorded 71 flying south between 15th September and 24th November with a peak of 19 south on 20th September. A flock began to build up in October at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), with 56 on the 15th the highest count. The flock remained in this area, feeding on canal side alders during November, with a maximum of 140 on the 16th, the same day as 80 were at Thornton Lock. A smaller flock of up to 25 was at SHL during the month. During December, flocks of 20 were reported from SHL and Milford Common, while the Melbourne flock remained throughout the month.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Red listed

Resident breeder

BBS 6/44

At the beginning of the year, monthly maxima at the traditional reedbed roost at Thornton Lock on Pocklington Canal were 51 on 23rd January and 97 on 19th February, but dropping to 20 on 21st March. A flock of 37 at Brayton Barff on 14th February increased to 96 on the 24th, but then decreased to 50 by 14th March. On 7th February 73 roosted at Angram Ponds, Riccall, while 117 there on the 11th

was the peak count for the year.

Singing males were evident from the end of March at several locations including Acaster Airfield, Kirkby Wharfe, Naburn and Yapham, with 17 at East Cottingwith on 28th April. At Church Fenton six fledglings were seen on 25th May. In the LDV during June there were up to 100 singing males in the wider area, with several still singing through July. North of Strensall nine territories were counted in mid-July. Up to four pairs bred in Riccall Parish.

During the autumn and winter months a flock built up at Towthorpe to a maximum of 100 on 20th December. The reedbed roost at Melbourne held 73 on 21st December.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Red listed

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

BBS 32/44

There were no really large flocks in contrast to 2017. In January 25+ were at Cawood on the 11th. On 8th February 20 were at Acaster Airfield while 55 were at Hagg Wood, Dunnington on the 12th, dropping to 30 by the end of the month and 25 in early March. Also in March 37 were at Brumber Hill on the 11th (and 34 on the 19th), and 20 at Bubwith on the 18th.

At Brumber Hill 14 were present on 5th May and 22 on 12th June. Birds were reported from around 60 sites during the breeding season, with many singing males evident from late March onwards including ten near Naburn Wood (BBS count), six at Scagglethorpe Lane, three at Wass and five at Yearsley Moor. Breeding confirmation came from three sites including Brumber Hill and Church Fenton, where two pairs fledged nine young. Of 19 nests found in hedgerows on farmland near Riccall Grange eight were predated and two destroyed by farming activities; the mean of the other broods at ringing was 3.0 (above average).

In October the highest count at Brumber Hill was 32 on the 15th with smaller numbers there to the end of the year. In November 20 were at Towthorpe on the 13th, then in December about 50 were at Acaster Airfield on the 10th (and 30 on the 31st), while the largest flock of the year was 59 at CHL on the 29th.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Amber listed

Resident breeder and passage visitor

BBS 19/44

In the first part of the year, up to 46 were at Thornton Lock (Pocklington Canal) in January and February, while 50+ were at Cawood lngs on 25th January, 25 at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) on 2nd February, 20 at Strensall Common on 5th March and 20 at Milford Common on 7th March. On the 31st 20 were along the river bank between East Cottingwith and Bubwith.

During the breeding season, singing and displaying birds were reported from over 30 sites with suitable habitat from early March, especially sites in the LDV; eight singing males (out of 19 birds) were at Wheldrake lngs by the 30th, increasing to 13 in mid-June. Other sites included Bank Island (four singing), East Cottingwith (four singing) and Heslington East (five singing). However, only five territories were found during the MOD survey at Strensall Common (down from 17 in 2017). Breeding was confirmed at Brumber Hill, Escrick, Kirkby Wharfe, Riccall

(five nests - two broods of four survived to ringing), Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton Lock) and Wheldrake Ings.

Post breeding, 29 were at Thornton Lock (Pocklington Canal) on 5th October. During monthly counts - on 17th October, 15th November and 15th December - 100+ were roosting in the reedbeds at Wheldrake Ings.

Appendix A: Category E

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

The resident bird remained at Heslington East all year in close association with the breeding pair of Mute Swans *Cygnus Olor* (as it has done over several years), apart from the period when they were incubating eggs.

There were also reports of single birds in the LDV during the year. One was present at Derwent Cottage Farm, North Duffield on 17th February and at Bubwith Bridge on 8th April. During May one was present at Wheldrake Ings from the 3rd to the 19th. This was the last report until August when one was present at NDC on the 31st. The last was one reported at NDC on the 19th and 23rd December. It is possible that all these sightings in the LDV related to the same bird.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Monthly sightings of the whole of the University of York's free-flying flock were made at either Heslington East or Heslington West. Counts in the first part of the year were between 25 and 30. Numbers increased to 42 in August post breeding with flock counts of between 38 and 41 to the end of the year. Four pairs with young goslings (broods of one, two, two and four) were seen in June.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

The University of York's free-flying flock spent most of their time at Heslington West, being reported there in every month except October. The flock was occasionally seen on the playing fields by Heslington and at Heslington East. Only one pair bred.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

The now-annual female was back at Ellerton/Thorganby from the 2nd to 10th January. A pair was then reported from private shooting ponds at Thorganby from the 14th to 18th February. Presumably the same single bird was reported from Aughton Ings and NDC on 26th February, moving back to Thorganby until 8th March. The next day it had moved to Bolton Percy Ings. During April it was back in the LDV, at Bubwith Ings on the 2nd, before returning to the River Wharfe, at Ulleskelf Mires on the 17th and at Kirkby Wharfe on the 19th. These were the last records until it was seen flying southeast over Bolton Percy Ings on 17th November.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* YOC

A single leucistic female was found at NDC on 24th February (JLe) and was still present the next day. It was considered by observers to be a likely escape.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* YOC

An individual found at NDC on 2nd May (MC, DMB, JLe) was wearing a red ring and was thought to have escaped from captivity; it was present the following morning at Bubwith Ings (LDV Blog). It was first seen in Cambridgeshire in April and also visited Staffordshire.

Appendix B: Hybrids

Australian x Common Shelduck

The Australian x Common Shelduck hybrid, first seen in 2016, returned to the LDV and was present during both winter periods with the Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* flock. The only record at the beginning of the year came on 21st January when it was present on the Refuge at Wheldrake Ings. Then in December it was seen at Bank Island on the 2nd and at Wheldrake Ings on the 16th.

Teal x Green-winged Teal

A possible hybrid was reported from the Low Grounds on 2nd December (AF).

Appendix C: Unproven records

Tundra Bean Goose *Anser serrirostris* YOC

One was reported at Heslington East on 27th January. No description received.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* YOC

One was reported at CHL on 8th January. No description received.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* YNU

One was reported near Malton on 30th January. No description received.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* YNU Amber listed

Singletons were reported at Murton on 27th July and Beningborough on 3rd September. No description received by the YNU.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* YOC

Three were reported at Wheldrake Ings on 28th July. No description received.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* YOC

Singletons were reported at Laybourne Lakes (Rufforth) on 1st January and

30th June but no description was received.

Update on records submitted to the BBRC/YNU

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

YNU

The individual found by Duncan Bye, Adam Firth and Jono Leadley at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd December 2017 and relocated at Bank Island on the 6th has been accepted by the YNU and is confirmed as the first record for the York area (as detailed in the 2017 Report).

Kumlien's (Iceland) Gull *Larus glaucooides kumlieni*

YNU

The records of singletons seen on the 4th and 16th March 2016 (as detailed in the 2016 Report) have both been accepted by the YNU.

Coues's Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni exilipes*

BBRC

The individual seen at Hagg Wood, Dunnington in February 2017 has been accepted by the BBRC and is confirmed as the second record for the York area (as detailed in the 2017 Report).

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

BBRC

The record from 2015 was not submitted to the BBRC so is not accepted.

Earliest and latest dates for summer visitors/passage migrants 2018

Species	Arrival Date/First Reported	Last Reported
Garganey	11th April	23rd September
Quail	21st May	4th July
Osprey	28th March	9th October
Hobby	21st April	5th October
Oystercatcher	27th January	3rd October
Little Ringed Plover	3rd April	2nd September
Ringed Plover	29th April	10th September
Whimbrel ^	17th April	13th May (8th August)
Common Sandpiper	21st April	4th September
Wood Sandpiper	3rd May	2nd September
Greenshank	20th April	3rd October
Common Tern	15th April	21st August
Turtle Dove	7th May	29th August
Cuckoo	15th April	16th August
Nightjar	24th May	End August
Swift	15th April	26th September
Sand Martin	3rd March	23rd September
Swallow	22nd March	22nd October
House Martin	4th April	7th October
Wood Warbler	22nd April	13th June
Willow Warbler	25th March	20th October
Chiffchaff †	12th March	1st November
Blackcap *	6th April	20th October
Garden Warbler	21st April	1st September
Lesser Whitethroat	15th April	17th September
Whitethroat	14th April	17th September
Grasshopper Warbler	27th April	14th July
Sedge Warbler	15th April	22nd September
Reed Warbler	22nd April	23rd September
Spotted Flycatcher	5th May	24th September
Redstart	23rd April	21st September
Whinchat	21st April (1)/11th August	16th September
Wheatear	23rd March	26th September
Yellow Wagtail	9th April	2nd October
Tree Pipit	18th April	15th September

† Overwintering birds on 1st January, 6th February, 15th and 17th November and 30th December

* Some birds overwintered

^ Two records of return passage on 8th August - at Milford Common (1) and Wheldrake Ings (2)

Earliest and latest dates for winter visitors/passage migrants

Species	Last reported in Spring	First reported in Autumn
Bewick's Swan	16th January	8th December
Whooper Swan ^	28th April (late July)	5th October
Pink-footed Goose	10th May	12th September
Pintail	7th May	17th September
Goldeneye	11th April	22nd October
Goosander	23rd July	13th October
Golden Plover	4th April	18th July
Ruff	25th May	15th July
Dunlin	14th May	17th July
Green Sandpiper*	7th May (2nd June)	24th June
Jack Snipe	15th April	13th October
Fieldfare	7th May (late bird)	8th October
Redwing	5th April	6th October
Brambling	17th April	27th September

^ Two birds lingered to July; one was picked up dead on the 12th, the other departing late in the month

* 2nd June bird could have been one returning early



Redwing - a winter visitor

© Terry Weston

Rare Breeding Birds of the Lower Derwent Valley and Skipwith Common 2018

Compiled by Craig Ralston

Terminology (Summary)

Possible - birds (present) in breeding season in suitable habitat or singing male(s) present or heard in breeding season.

Probable - pair(s) in suitable habitat, birds holding territory, courtship display, nest building, agitated behaviour, visiting probable nest site.

Proven (confirmed) - nest with eggs, nest with young seen or heard, recently fledged young, recently used nest or eggshells, distraction display, adults carrying food or faecal sac.

See: <http://www.rbbp.org.uk/downloads/rbbp-recording-standards.pdf> for full details

Category A - Rare Species

Breeding data for each species (where available) is shown in the accompanying table. Comments on some species are also given.

Breeding success of Category A species in the LDV

Species	Max. no. adults	No. of young	No. of Pairs			
			Poss.	Prob.	Confirmed	Total
Wigeon	15 (4 f 11 m)	6	-	3	3	1 - 3 (plus ad. drakes)
Garganey	6+	17	-	1	2	1 - 3
Shoveler	206 (100 prs)	120 (five caught and ringed)	63	16	21	21 - 100
Pintail	2	5	-	-	1	1
Pochard			1	-	-	0 - 1
Little Egret	42 - 50	35	-	-	13	13
Great White Egret	3		0	0	0	0
Black-necked Grebe	2	3	-	-	1	1
Peregrine	10	4+	3	0	2	2 - 5
Goshawk	2		1	0	0	0 - 1
Red Kite		1	3	0	1	1 - 3
Water Rail	18 calling males	16+ (min)	1	10	7	7 - 18
Spotted Crake	3 calling males (max)		1	2	0	0 - 3
Corncrake	10 calling males	1+	5	5	1	1 - 11

Whooper Swan: Two birds, both capable of flight, lingered throughout May, June and into July when one was picked up dead. The other departed late in the month.

Eurasian Wigeon: Four pairs were present on 7th May with eight pairs located during the month. A full survey of Wheldrake on the 29th revealed eight drakes and three females (including a female distracting) on that date, with two additional drakes at NDC and a single at Aughton Ings on the same date. A brood of six was present on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 14th June, with four drakes and a female there throughout.

Garganey: The first returning drake was at Wheldrake Ings on 17th April followed by two there on the 20th. Two drakes and a female were present there on the 21st with three drakes and a female on the 22nd and an additional pair at Thornton Ellers on the 24th (total of six birds present in the valley). In May pairs remained at Wheldrake Ings, NDC (where they were copulating on the 1st) and Thornton Ings early in the month. A full count on 7th May produced a total of 13 birds (four pairs and five drakes), by which time two ducks were thought to be incubating. A minimum of five pairs was present to the month end. A single drake remained at Bank Island in early June, and was joined most dawn and evenings by a female, thought to be incubating nearby. The first brood (seven ducklings) was present on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th, shortly followed by a brood of ten at Bank Island on the 18th. The last seen was an eclipse drake present on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 16th which remained to the month end.

Northern Shoveler: An estimated 100 pairs were present during April with 206 counted on the 29th. Up to 80 pairs were present throughout the site in May. Up to 30 ducklings were present at Wheldrake Ings from 12th June, with increasing numbers of newly hatched broods appearing from the 15th. 16 were recorded at Bank Island on the 18th with a crèche of 34 at NDC on the 19th, and two further newly hatched broods (19 ducklings) on the 22nd. Several newly hatched ducklings continued to appear early in July with several unfledged broods remaining at the month's end.

Pintail: Two pairs were present in early May with one pair remaining throughout, and thought to be incubating by the 10th. Birds were difficult to locate but the drake, and to a lesser extent the duck, continued to be seen throughout June until the pair, with five large ducklings, were located on 10th July.

Pochard: 12 were recorded on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 17th April (10 drakes) with five there on the 18th. Seven were reported on the 20th with two drakes remaining on the 28th to month end. One drake lingered into May, but there were no other signs of breeding.

Little Egret: Five pairs were present in the heronry on 17th April with five birds also seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 18th. 19 were present over the heronry on the

20th with a full count of 27 present throughout the valley on that date - a noticeable arrival into the area. Numbers continued to increase thereafter with 17 on Sutton Ings and 11 on the Low Grounds on the 28th. A full valley count (excluding the heronry) of 37 birds was had on the 29th. A full count on 7th May produced a minimum of 42 birds (excluding the heronry). A check of the heronry on the 10th revealed a total of 12 occupied nests. Other more notable counts included 11 at Ellerton Ings on the 14th, with eight at East Cottingwith Ings and 13 at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th (with an estimated 50+ throughout the whole site). At least 13 pairs are known to have bred in the heronry with an estimated 35 young reared there, with birds starting to fledge at the end of June. Up to 20 built up on the pool at Wheldrake Ings at the month end. In July large and increasing numbers were present early in the month as further local juveniles fledged from the heronry. 34 were present on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th with 50+ present throughout the whole site on the 5th. 20 were still present on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th when six were at NDC and five at Aughton Ings.

Great White Egret: Continues to increase in frequency and number during the year - records included here for completeness and to monitor further increases. A single was at Sutton upon Derwent on 23rd April, with presumably the same bird at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th. Two were present at NDC on the afternoon of 1st May with another reported at Sutton Ings in the evening. A single was then found on the Low Grounds at Sutton on the 2nd. Two remained and showed well in the Low Grounds/Wheldrake area until the 8th, when one was seen heading off to roost in the heronry at 2140hrs. At least one remained at Wheldrake Ings daily to the 25th with a second bird at Bank Island on the 21st and one remaining there to month end (note - one bird is showing some damage to its right wing). In June at least one bird remained early in the month in the Bank Island/Wheldrake area until the 6th, reappearing there again briefly on the 22nd. A single reappeared at the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 14th July.

Bittern: A single was present and booming at East Cottingwith Ings on 2nd - 6th April from a reed filled ditch and adjacent Fen/reed habitat. Given the habitat, possibly a wintering bird about to depart.

Common Crane: Despite more encouraging attempts to colonise and attempted breeding in the valley in previous years continues to be a regular breeding season visitor - and another to watch in coming years: included here for completeness. Four flew north after circling over Bank Island, calling in the mist on 9th April. A single was present at Skipwith Common on the 14th with a pair near Thornton on the 15th and two in Thorganby on the 17th. A single flew into Wheldrake Ings, calling after dark on 8th May with presumably the same at Bubwith Ings on the 14th and Thorganby Ings on the 16th. A single flew north over Wheldrake on the 29th before losing height and appearing to drop in at Bank Island - however it couldn't be relocated. A single sub adult was present over Wheldrake on 7th June, whilst a single flew south over Bank Island and the Low Grounds on the 16th.

What was considered to be a full adult was present on the scrape at Aughton on the 21st with another there on the 27th and at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th. A single lingered on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st and 2nd July.

Black-necked Grebe: Extensive flooding in the valley attracted birds in late March and a pair to NDC on 27th April. This pair, in full summer plumage, remained and was thought to be incubating by 10th May, appearing with three near-fledged young nearby on 19th June.

Peregrine: Continues to be increasingly encountered in the valley during the breeding season. The regular three pairs nesting on pylons around the valley were all present during the breeding season, but time restraints prevented monitoring. One pair is however known to have produced at least two young. Another pair was found during the year (but outcome not known).

Marsh Harrier: Frequent throughout the breeding season as usual but no evidence of breeding on the reserve this year and no evidence of breeding in the wider area (although effort wasn't targeted off the reserve).

Goshawk: A single pair remained in the area throughout the year - but not monitored enough to allow details of activity or outcome to be known.

Red Kite: Continues to increase throughout the year including the breeding season. Up to four pairs were present throughout the area with an increasing number of sightings during July, including the first fledged young (a single) appearing on the Ings.

Water Rail: A good year for the species. Numbers of calling males were average or slightly above average but recorded breeding success was exceptional. Whether this is the reflection of a truly exceptional breeding season or merely the result of extremely low water levels bringing birds/broods into view is difficult to ascertain. Two calling birds had returned to the reedbed at Wheldrake Ings with falling water levels there by 30th March and two were calling at Bubwith Ings on the 31st. By the end of May at least 18 calling birds were recorded from: Skipwith Common, Wheldrake, Pocklington Canal, Aughton Ings and NDC. During June up to eight pairs remained throughout. A single pair was seen with four young at Wheldrake on the 12th. A fledged juvenile was present at Wheldrake Ings on 4th July with two there with two adults on the 7th and 8th. Two juveniles (different broods) were present on the pool on the 12th with two adults seen and heard calling. Three juveniles (from probably three separate broods) and two adults were present on the 16th with six juveniles (four broods) on the 17th. From the 22nd onwards, a pair was also seen with three newly hatched young, presumably a second brood. Five were seen on the 25th (including two fledged immatures and a single juvenile). A further juvenile, from a different brood was seen on the 30th. In total at least six broods were recorded on Wheldrake Ings, with a minimum of 11

young present, and although only three or four individual adults could be accounted for, presumably others were present in the area.

Spotted Crane: A single was calling in the early hours of 1st May at Wheldrake Ings, with the same individual calling again on the 10th and a single at NDC on the 14th. A single was calling after dark on North Duffield Ings on the 21st. Two were present at Swantail, Wheldrake on 8th June - calling against each other in a presumed territorial dispute.

Corncrake: The first calling male of the year was singing in front of the Geoff Smith hide at NDC on the evening of 9th May and again on the 10th, remaining to the month end. By the end of May there were eight singing males at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings. Up to ten singing birds were present in total in June incl. five singing males located during survey work in the NDC/Bubwith area on the 15th/16th. During the NE long term monitoring network week, two were seen at NDC on the 19th. Late hay cuts and friendly mowing practices were put in place at the month end to protect these birds, with at least one bird at Bubwith calling to the month end. A single calling male was still present and vocal at Bubwith Ings until 15th July, with two there on the 12th and a single again on the 21st. A single was calling at Bank Island on the 13th. A single juvenile was reported at one of the key calling sites in August proving successful breeding yet again.

Ruff: A poor year, continuing the general trend of decreasing numbers. A mere three birds were logged during April (after a large move out following freezing weather in March). Five males and two females were lekking at two sites early in May. Two males were still present late in the month with a single female on 1st-3rd June, a male on the 11th and the last on the 30th. No evidence of any breeding attempts.

Black-tailed Godwit: Lingering individuals and pairs continue as a feature of the site, with breeding attempts in some years - often short lived. Two pairs were present in the valley from 20th April to the month end, while 12 were present at North Duffield on the 27th with 19 at Ellerton on the 28th and a pair on the 29th. During May a single pair lingered in the valley from the 1st with a lone bird, possibly an off-duty male, seen on the 6th before a pair were located again, copulating, on the 7th. Three were present at NDC on the 8th with twelve there on the 10th, seven on the 11th - 13th and three on the 14th. A pair lingered at this site thereafter.

Category B - Less Scarce Species

Breeding success of Category B species in the LDV

Species	Max. no. adults	No. of young	No. of Pairs			
			Poss.	Prob.	Confirmed	Total
Gadwall		105+ (15 caught and ringed)	36	30	24	24 - 90

Quail			3	-	-	0 - 3
Hobby		4+	3	1	2	2 - 6
Woodlark			2	3	1	1 - 6
Willow Tit		4 juv caught and ringed	3	6	2	2 - 11

(NB - some of these are now not considered by the RBBP but are included here for completeness and comparison with previous years' submissions)

Gadwall: In April numbers remained scattered throughout the site with an estimated 90+ pairs present into May. Five newly hatched broods totalling 31 ducklings were present at Wheldrake on 12th June. 14 were present at Bank Island on the 18th whilst 23 were at NDC on the 19th. Further broods continued to appear with 100+ ducklings counted throughout the reserve on the 22nd, including several newly hatched broods. A brood of five recently hatched ducklings appeared at Wheldrake Ings on 12th July with several unfledged broods still present at the month end.

Common Quail: Another poor year - a few recorded in the county. The first singing male was present at NDC on 21st May. A single at Wheldrake Ings on the evening of 22nd June was only the second record of the year, shortly followed by another individual heard on the 24th near Pocklington Canal.

Hobby: During May up to three birds showed well at Wheldrake Ings early in the month, including a pair food passing on the 5th. Six were present over Wheldrake Ings on the 9th when two were also over Bank Island. Two were at NDC along with two at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th, with six daily thereafter at Wheldrake Ings until the 14th. Good numbers remained throughout the site with up to eight daily thereafter. In June they were still present throughout the site in good numbers although increasingly secretive with the onset of nesting. Sightings continued during July. A family party of five were present at Bank Island on 14th August with one at Elvington on the 17th, Dunnington on the 19th, two over North Duffield village on the 21st and a family party of four at Thorganby on the 23rd. Sightings continued into September.

Woodlark: The first singing bird was present at Skipwith Common NNR on 4th April followed by another on the 9th. Four singing birds were present by the 15th with five recorded on the 19th. Six were present throughout May. Limited survey work followed but one brood was seen during management work in the autumn.

Willow Tit: The first juvenile of the summer was caught and ringed in the willows around the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd with two more there on the 5th. The fourth juvenile of the month was caught and ringed there on the 16th, whilst an unringed adult was seen in the reserve base garden on the 31st.

White-winged Black Tern - a Yorkshire rarity and first for the York area

By Duncan Bye

I started the day at around 7am on 20th May at East Cottingwith where a Great White Egret *Ardea alba* was still present on the Refuge area of Wheldrake Ings. I then drove to Bank Island, where three Garganey *Spatula querquedula* were present, before walking the track down to Wheldrake Ings where I found two first-summer Little Gulls *Hydrocoloeus minutus* feeding over the Ings at 11:00. They left south with several Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* at 11.45. I spent several hours at Wheldrake Ings before returning to the lookout tower at Bank Island at around 15:30 where I intended to sky watch until around 17:00.

With the sun behind me, the light conditions were excellent although there was some heat haze. I continued to scan from the Bank Island area from the lookout tower, constantly checking the flooded ings and the surrounding area/sky. Then at around 16:10 while scanning with my binoculars I picked up a 'Black' Tern hawking over the flooding ings and was immediately struck by the pale wings and black body. A few seconds of panic followed as I tried to get a view in my 'scope. I got the bird with 'scope views and the white wings, black body/head and white tail confirmed to me that I was watching a White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*, a species I had been watching a few days earlier in Romania where they had been in the company of Black *Chlidonias niger* and Whiskered *Chlidonias hybrida* Terns. The contrast between the black body and pale/white wings was striking; the black on the underwing was also obvious as it fed over the flooded Ings. Having discounted these other two species and knowing this is a rare bird in Yorkshire and York, I phoned York Recorder Jono Leadley, who wasn't too far away in his car close to Crockey Hill. I continued to watch the bird while on the phone. However while I tried to contact other local birders I took my eye off the bird and unfortunately it did a disappearing act about 16:15 and I missed what direction it headed off in. Unfortunately it was not seen by anyone else during its short stay in the Lower Derwent Valley.

This record has been accepted by the YNU.

Pomarine Skua - a first for the York area

By Duncan Bye

I spent the morning of 27th October at Bank Island, sheltering from the wind, rain and snow, where there was a notable passage of Redwings *Turdus iliacus* and Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris*. After a trip to Castle Howard to check the lake for any wind-blown migrants or seabirds, I then returned to Bank Island early in the afternoon and headed down to Wheldrake Ings. Wheldrake Ings was quiet with very little activity on the pool or from the Swantail hide, with a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* being the best bird. With the wind still strong, I decided to head back up the path to the Tower Hide to see if it was more sheltered and to watch for any passing birds. I was aware of a large movement of seabirds along the Yorkshire coast and there had also been a report of an Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* over Harrogate.

Scanning from the Tower Hide, there were numerous Gulls passing over the area: mainly Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* with smaller numbers of Herring *Larus argentatus* and Great Black-backed *Larus marinus* Gulls. At around 16:05, I picked up three large birds in my telescope over towards East Cottingwith and not much above the height of the willows of the pool. As they flew head on, one was a Herring Gull, while the other two had white faces with a dark cap and collar and looked bulky with a white barrel chest/breast. They looked bulkier than the Herring Gull but with a similar wing span. The wings were dark and pointed with an obvious bend at the elbow, giving them more of a falcon-like appearance than the Herring Gull. By this point I was concentrating on only one of the birds, which then briefly circled round showing a dark tail with an extra thinner extension to the tail. By this time I knew I was looking at Pomarine Skuas *Stercorarius pomarinus*; although they were lacking the full spoons, the clean white belly and head and full collar pointed to pale phase adult birds.

During this time I was also trying to phone the news out to local birders but was unable to reach anyone else. I then decided I needed to get some photos as the birds were passing west over the pool, unfortunately while trying to switch to my bridge camera, I was unable to relocate the birds with my bins or 'scope. Having lost them I got the news out, via Twitter and WhatsApp in the hope they might be picked up elsewhere. Unfortunately they were not seen by anyone else in the Lower Derwent Valley or in the York area.

I never thought I would be lucky enough to find a skua species inland, let alone two Pomarine Skuas and the first confirmed sighting for the York recording area since the inception of the Club.

Note: Nelson (Birds of Yorkshire, 1907) mentions Pomarine Skua sightings at Skipwith Common in 1853 and Pocklington in 1879, the latter coinciding with a large passage along the coast in 1879.

Club Wintering Golden Plover Survey 2018

By Paul Doherty and David Tate

Golden Plover breed on upland areas in Britain, across much of Northern Europe and in Iceland. They are only winter visitors to the York area, with the first autumn birds typically seen in July and the last spring ones in April.

National winter distribution and numbers

The winter distribution of Golden Plover has shifted to the east since the mid-1980s (perhaps in response to climate change), resulting in large numbers on the east coast and on the arable farmland in Eastern Britain (Gillings *et al.* 2006). Winter numbers counted by WeBS increased strongly in Britain between the mid-1980s and 2006, then declined sharply until around 2011, followed by a partial recovery (Frost *et al.* 2018).

York area winter distribution and numbers

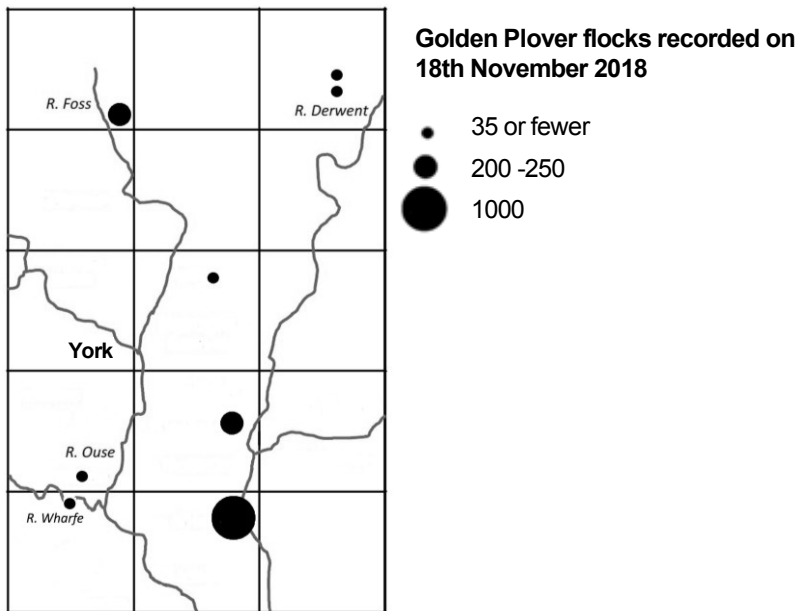
The status of wintering Golden Plover in the Vale of York during 1966-81 was summarised by Tim Dixon in the 1981 Club Report:

"Winters in large numbers in the southern part of the area, no significant counts have been noted from the northern six 10 km squares of the area. The major wintering areas are the Ouse below York/Wharfe-Ouse confluence, and the Lower Derwent between Wheldrake and Brighton. Other important areas the Upper Ouse/Nidd-Ure confluence and two newly discovered sites: the foot of the Wolds north of Pocklington and the ancient carr lands north of Howden. The three latter areas may be more important than at present realised as they are seldom visited. Conservative estimates of mid-winter numbers are 2,500 at the two major sites and 1,000 at the remaining three, giving c.8,000 birds in total."

WeBS counts for the LDV commenced in 1992/93 and show a similar pattern to the national picture, with a high point of 10,250 in the winter of 2000/01, then a decline, but with an increase in the winters of 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The 2018 YOC winter Golden Plover survey

The chosen date was 18th November 2018 and a total of 23 observers covered all fifteen 10 km squares in the Club area, though coverage varied between squares and it was never possible to cover all parts of a square. In particular there was no coverage of the carr lands north of Howden, which Dixon noted as an important area. A total of 1552 Golden Plovers was reported with the only flocks over 35 being 250 near Brandsby (SE57), 1000 at NDC (SE63) and 200 at Raker Lakes (SE64).



Discussion

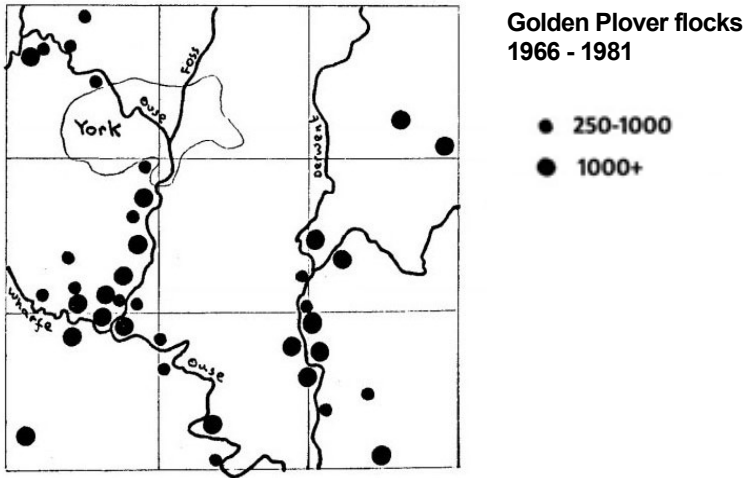
The November 2018 counts were lower than might have been expected. In the past the dominant feeding areas were old permanent pastures. As these have been ploughed out some of the birds have adapted to feed on waste after sugar beet harvesting and winter cereals. The autumn of 2018 was especially dry and observers commented on the unusually dry conditions for November which may have made feeding difficult and depressed numbers. In the Riccall area Golden Plovers were not present after November and had not returned by the end of the winter, which is most unusual. These conditions mean that the 2018 survey may have underestimated the number of Golden Plovers wintering in the Club area.

A review of Club Reports from 2013 to 2017 shows the following maxima:

LDV	Ouse below York/Wharfe - Ouse confluence	Upper Ouse/Nidd-Ure confluence	Foot of the Wolds north of Pocklington	Carr lands north of Howden
4150	1620	1200	2300	0

The total of the maximum counts in the table is 9270 and it should be noted that the lack of records around Howden may simply be due to a lack of observer coverage. A total of 9270 is higher than the figure of 8000 put forward by Dixon, but Dixon's figure is an estimate of the wintering population whereas the figure of 9270 is simply an aggregate of maximum counts.

The map which Dixon compiled for the 1981 Report is reproduced here (note that he did not include the northern six 10 km squares).



It is unwise to draw too many conclusions by comparing this with the map from the 2018 survey - Dixon's map covers a fifteen year period, whilst the other is a snapshot of the situation on a single day. Dixon gave a conservative estimate of about 8000 Golden Plover in the Club area. Clearly this is much higher than the total of 1552 recorded during the Club survey.

The existing data does not make it possible to draw any firm conclusions. Dixon stated that: "The southern Vale of York is probably the most important inland wintering area for Golden Plovers in Britain." and it is clear that further coordinated counts would help provide a better picture. In the meantime it is worth highlighting the need for more counts of (a) the Upper Ouse/Nidd-Ure confluence (b) the foot of the Wolds north of Pocklington and (c) the ancient carr lands north of Howden, and Club members are urged to help improve coverage of these three under- recorded areas.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks are due to the Club members who carried out the counts on which this article is based.

References

- Dixon, T. *York Ornithological Club 1981 Report*
Frost *et al.* 2018. *Waterbirds in the UK 2016/17*
Gillings *et al.* 2006. Distribution shifts in wintering Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* and Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* in Britain. *Bird Study*, 53:3, 274-284

Unusual movement of Stock Doves in the Vale of York, autumn 2018

By Paul Doherty

In the autumn of 2013 I began to take an interest in visible migration across the Vale of York. Initial observations were from Milford Common, but I added further sites at Whit Hill from 2015 and Ozendyke (adjacent to Bolton Percy Ings) from 2016. The latter has been my favoured site with over 70 hours of observations made in each autumn during 2016-18. In 2018 I carried out 73.05 hours of observations there on 39 dates between 4th August and 30th November.

A typical watch involves two hours of observations beginning at sunrise with a record kept of all migrants and their direction of flight. The counts are entered on the Trektellen migration website/database (www.trektellen.org) which shares migration counts across the UK and Europe. The autumn of 2018 at Ozendyke was largely uneventful with little in the way of surprise species or unusual movements, with one clear exception - the unusually large numbers of Stock Doves *Columba oenas* on the move.

Autumn counts

Prior to 2018 my highest count of passage Stock Doves at Ozendyke was 47 flying south on 23rd September 2017. The first indication of unusual numbers in 2018 came on the 10th September when 42 flew southeast. On 20th September the 2017 record was equalled and was then almost doubled on the 25th when 86 flew southeast. Clearly something different was happening.

That new record count was exceeded again on 5th October when 138 flew southeast, most of them in a straggling flock of 83. I carried out observations on twelve dates in October and recorded over 100 birds on seven dates. The peak count was on the 9th when 179 flew southeast and 34 flew north. That was one of five days when a northward movement was also recorded (with a total of 61 birds). The high numbers continued in November with counts of 129, 124 and 109 on the 4th, 10th and 11th. By the end of the season the autumn total was roughly ten times higher than in the previous two years, despite a similar number of observation hours in each year (Table 1).

Table 1.
Autumn totals of Stock Doves recorded on passage at Ozendyke 2016-18.

Year	Totals	Observation hours
2016	185	77:35
2017	260	78:10
2018	2255	73:05

Counts at other UK sites in autumn 2018

Total counts for UK Trektellen sites are shown in Figure 1.

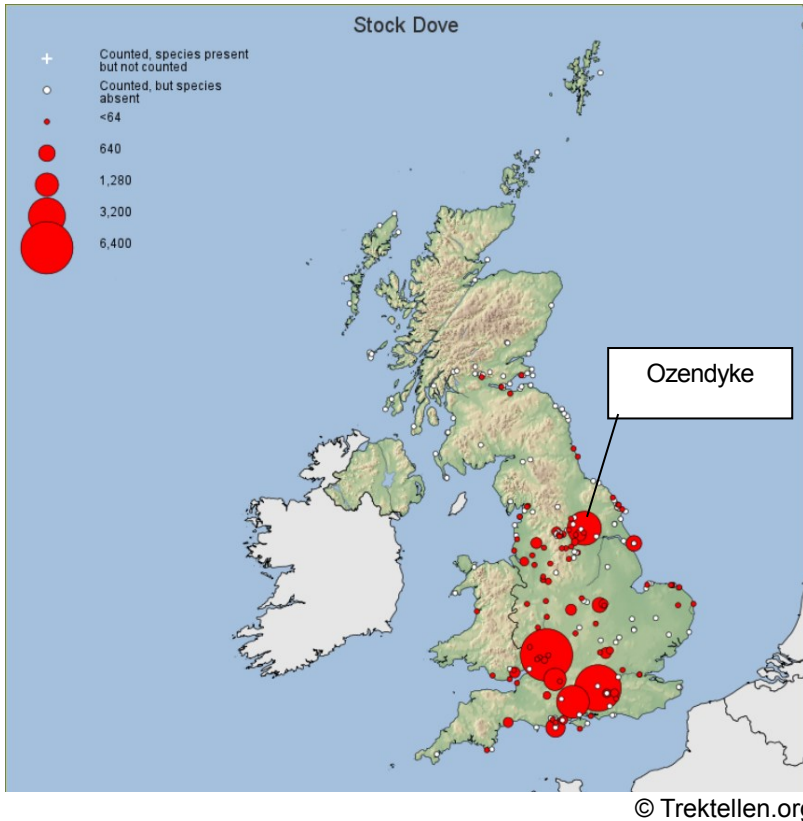


Figure 1. Total number of passage Stock Doves at UK Trektellen sites autumn 2016-18 (n= 24,683 birds).

Selecting the UK sites where Stock Doves are most numerous on migration for comparison with Ozendyke shows a contrasting pattern with Ozendyke (Table 2.). Numbers at most of these sites were no higher in 2018 than in the previous two years, with the exception of Spurn Point, which showed a 20-fold increase in 2018. Counts in autumn 2018 elsewhere in Yorkshire showed some similarities with Ozendyke. Anglers Country Park near Wakefield recorded its highest autumn total of 114 birds, including a new peak day count of 58 on 7th October. Spurn Point Bird Observatory recorded its third highest autumn total on record (c.f. 746 in 2009, 555 in 2005) and its highest ever autumn day count with 242 on 13th

November (previous highest was 211 on 17th November 2009).

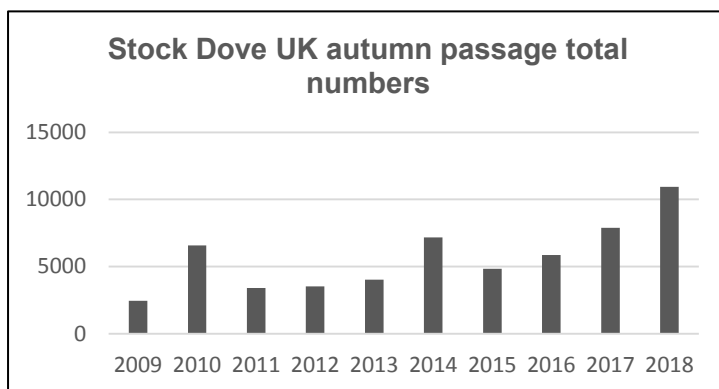
Table 2. Autumn totals of Stock Doves recorded on passage at other UK sites recording high numbers 2016-18.

	2016	2017	2018	Total
Durlston, Dorset	101	302	449	852
Morgan's Hill, Wilts	439	381	360	1180
Ozendyke, N Yorks	185	260	2,255	2700
Painswick Beacon, Gloucs	2,335	2,045	2,035	6415
Spurn, E Yorks	29	17	533	579
Trigpoint Hill, Hants	478	1,406	645	2529
Tweseldown, Hants	968	2,146	1,950	5064
	4535	6557	8227	19319

UK annual totals

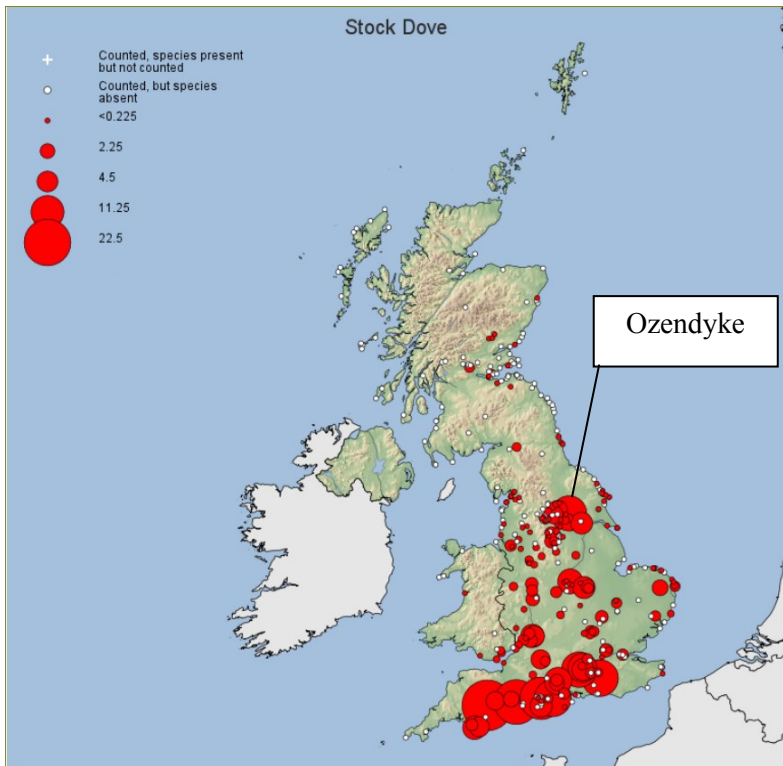
Looking at the annual totals summed across all UK Trektellen sites over the last ten years (2009-2018) shows that 2018 was the best autumn on record for Stock Dove passage with 10,936 birds recorded. By the end of the autumn I had logged a total of 2,255 Stock Doves (2,194 in a southerly direction and 61 heading north) at Ozendyke - this represented 20.6% of the UK autumn total and was the highest autumn total for any individual site.

Table 1. Autumn totals of Stock Doves recorded on passage in the UK 2009-18.



Discussion

The 2018 Ozendyke counts represented no less than ten of the “top 100” all time highest counts of moving Stock Doves in the UK on Trektellen, and 27 of the top 100 highest UK counts in autumn 2018. They also comprised a high proportion of the UK 2018 autumn total which is all the more significant coming from an inland and relatively northerly site. Most other sites with high Stock Dove counts come from coastal sites in southern counties of England such as Suffolk, Kent, Hampshire, Dorset and Gloucestershire, where the Stock Dove is presumably more abundant and where the coast acts as a strong concentrating factor for passage birds (Figure 2).



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Figure 2. Autumn passage of Stock Doves at all UK Trektellen visible migration sites over the ten year period 2009-2018 shown as hourly averages ($n=56,525$ birds, $t=108,002$ hours)

British Stock Doves are thought to be largely sedentary (Migration Atlas) and

the summer and winter distributions are similar (Bird Atlas 2007-11), so the nature of these autumn movements is not clear. Data on Trektellen show that British autumn counts are usually highest in southern and southwestern England (Figure 2), suggesting a south-westerly movement through lowland UK. The scale of passage at Ozendyke is the greatest of any visible migration site north of Painswick Beacon in Gloucestershire.

I did wonder whether the large numbers at Ozendyke were simply leaving a nearby roost and heading for a favoured feeding site. The fact that they invariably flew over at a significant height (normally judged to be above 300 metres) suggested that they were moving some distance. On 11th October I changed position by 500 metres to obtain a more prolonged view of where the Stock Doves were heading. I saw one group of four birds which doubled back and came down in a field just to the south. Other groups continued south until out of sight, although some of these did lose height before disappearing. On three occasions after finishing the watch I searched fields some 3 to 4 kms to the south to see if I could locate any Stock Doves. On October I found 50 feeding just east of Church Fenton, but on the other two occasions I didn't locate any.

None of the above proves that the Stock Doves weren't simply undertaking local feeding trips, but it does seem more likely that a genuine movement was involved. The Migration Atlas noted that "In the past, large flights of Stock Doves have been reported through England in the autumn, probably as drift migrants from the normal migratory routes from Fennoscandia and other countries east of Britain". However the lack of unusually high numbers away from Yorkshire suggests that the movement seen at Ozendyke was not widespread and was therefore unlikely to involve continental immigrants.

The fact that the movement was most marked at sites in Yorkshire, may point to a very good breeding season in this area compared to other years. The summer of 2018 was notable for being warm and dry. The exact nature of the movement described here is not known and further counts would help to clarify the nature of this under-recorded species.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Clive McKay and David Tate for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

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Records from the archives

Compiled by David Tate

The following selections have been taken from previous YOC and YNU reports. The records of rare birds were accepted by the appropriate authorities.

25 years ago - The 1993 YOC Report contains a detailed account of bird ringing in the York area by Danae Murfitt. Almost 6000 birds were ringed during the year, of which Greenfinch was the commonest species. 231 Black-headed Gull pulli were caught at Wheldrake Ings along with two juvenile Black-necked Grebes - the 5th and 6th to be ringed in the UK. A Black-headed Gull ringed at Selby in 1981 was reported from Helsinki, Finland during March 1993. Andrew Wilson, who was sharing a house in Riccall with Russell Slack, carried out a detailed bird survey of the parish and the report contains many of his results, including the breeding data for 34 species. The two birders went on to produce the 'Rare and Scarce Birds in Yorkshire'. Andrew is now an Associate Professor of Environmental Studies in Pennsylvania. The 1993 tally of rare birds was exceptional and in addition to the list below there were reports of Red-necked and Slavonian Grebe, Fulmar, Red-breasted Merganser, Wryneck, Black Redstart, Great Grey Shrike (eaten by a Sparrowhawk) and Snow Bunting.

Rare Birds:

Red-throated Diver - five flew north along the Derwent on 26th November

Eider - a small influx into inland Yorkshire in late autumn included a male at CHL on 31st October and two females at Bubwith Bridge and another female at Poppleton on 4th November

Black-winged Stilt - a pair with a first year male was at Wheldrake Ings on 6th May

Ring-billed Gull - a first year bird seen at Wheldrake Ings on 7th May! The only YOC record.

Golden Oriole - a female was present at Storwood on 29th August

Breeding:

Garganey - an estimated ten pairs on the LDV NNR (four broods seen)

Shoveler - an estimated 145 pairs bred along the LDV

Black-headed Gull - 2000 pairs bred on Wheldrake Ings including a hybrid pair of Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls

Skylark - 44 breeding pairs at Riccall

Sedge Warbler - 71 singing males between the car park and Swantail hide, Wheldrake Ings on 9th May

Yellowhammer - 23 breeding pairs at Riccall

High counts:

White-fronted Goose - an unprecedented influx into Eastern England brought record numbers to the LDV which led to a maximum of 347 on 5th March, which at the time was the largest flock ever seen in Yorkshire.

Jackdaw - 1100 at Tollerton on 12th December
Swallow - 15,000 in the LDV on the evening of 16th September
Goldcrest - 100+ at Askham Bog during November
Starling - 5000+ roosted under Lendal Bridge, York during the winter
Greenfinch - 300 at Dunnington and Poppleton on 27th November

50 years ago - The records are taken from the 1968 YOC and YNU (shown in italics) reports. The YOC Report describes the survey work carried out for the first national breeding bird atlas. Good progress had been made in SE64 and SE63 though coverage elsewhere was more limited. It seems that then, as now, most reporting came from a small number of key sites and the local patches of active members. The report also contains a note about ringing at Naburn sewage works and Moorlands. Greenfinch dominated the totals and there is a note about one caught in 1967 at Moorlands, which was re-trapped in Belgium during January 1968. Most of the records at this time were from Naburn and Skipwith Common.

Rare Birds:

Scaup - one shot at Skipwith Common
Little Gull - six summer records from Naburn sewage works
Wryneck - Skipwith Common, 14th September - the 1st YOC record
Woodlark - one singing on Skipwith Common [not reported again by the YOC until 2000]
Twite - two on Skipwith Common, 7th January
Unfortunately, although published, the sightings of Red-footed Falcon (SE66); Golden Oriole (Skipwith, 25th April) and Cirl Bunting (Skipwith Common, August) lack the detail required for acceptance. It would be interesting to know the precise location of the Woodchat Shrike, reported by the YNU, at Kirby Underdale on 27th May since the village site is only 600m east of the YOC recording area.

Breeding:

Pintail - two ducklings were introduced onto the University of York ponds on 18th May - they were not seen again
Woodcock - a nest with four eggs was found at Crockey Hill
Whinchat - present in the breeding season at Skipwith Common, Overton and Strensall
Redstart - 'nesting' at Heslington
Redpoll - two pairs bred successfully on the CBC plot at Skipwith Common

High counts:

Garganey - *seven at Bolton Percy Ings on 21st July*
Long-eared Owl - *16 at the Skipwith Common roost on 11th November*
Brambling - *600 at Melbourne on 27th March*

100 years ago - The information has been taken from the 1918 and 1919 editions of the YNU's 'The Naturalist'. During 1918 Sydney Smith, the York area bird

recorder, remained at his West Africa military posting and William Hewitt continued to stand in for him. Hewitt's report for the year includes:

- A late record from 1917 concerned a Fork-tailed Petrel (Leach's) picked up by a cat at Clifton, York on 28th October.
 - On June 30th a Cuckoo egg, of the '*Skylark type*', was seen in a Dunnock's nest at Kelfield.
 - Land Rails (Corncrake) were first heard near York on 7th May and at Elvington the next day. Hewitt noted that, '*I have found this species in many localities near York during this summer, and believe it to have been of more frequent occurrence than usual*'.
 - A pair of Curlews was present on Skipwith Common throughout May though nesting was not proven.
 - Two Redshank clutches of five eggs were reported on 6th May. [In recent years only 1% of Redshank nests have been found to hold five eggs.]
 - Dr Lowther of Elvington reported that ducks had been very scarce in the LDV during the early part of the year and no rare species had been seen. However, Hooded Crows came in '*very small numbers*' but they did not stay for long.
 - Turtle Doves were noted from many localities and the birds are reported to be '*gradually extending their range*'.
 - At 1 a.m., on the 17th March, '*Great numbers of birds were calling from the sky, evidently a phase of spring migration*'. The species appeared to consist of Redwing, Fieldfare, Starling and Skylark.
 - Spring arrivals - Swallow 24th April (Kexby); House and Sand Martin 28th April (Stamford Bridge); Swift 5th May (Gate Helmsley) and Willow Warbler 23 April (Elvington). [These dates are 2 - 4 weeks later than contemporary records.]
- This was the last year that eggs from the Black-headed Gull colony on Skipwith Common were harvested as part of an effort to lessen the impact of war-time food rationing. However, after the loss of 900 eggs the previous year many of the gulls appear to have abandoned the gullery and only 471 were taken in 1918. These were sold locally at 1d. each, at a time when they were priced at 7d. in Leadenhall Market, London.



© Duncan Bye

Black-headed Gull - A common breeding bird on Wheldrake Ings 25 years ago

Species in the York recording area since 1966

This is a list of species recorded in the YOC area since 1966. Regular breeding birds are marked B and occasional/former breeders (B). Regular winter visitors are marked W and regular passage migrants P; while regular non-breeding summer visitors are marked S. Brackets indicate species of dubious origin or subspecies.

Rarer species requiring descriptions

Rare and scarce species at national, county and local levels are marked in the list with three, two or one asterisks. Records of rarer birds require descriptions to be submitted for ratification as follows: *** British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC), ** Yorkshire Naturalists' Union Rarities Committee (YNURC), * YOC Recorder. Records for these species must be supported by descriptions taken in the field or as soon as possible after the sighting - preferably before reference to textbooks. Forms for species considered by the BBRC or the YNU can be obtained from any YNU vice-county recorder or the YNU website. If photographs showing key identification features are submitted, a field description may not be required (as long as details such as location, date, observer, etc. accompany the photographs). Full lists of YNU and YOC description species are on pages 138 and 139.

- * Brent Goose
- Canada Goose B
- Barnacle Goose
- Greylag Goose B
- ** Taiga Bean Goose W
- Pink-footed Goose P
- * Tundra Bean Goose W
- * White-fronted Goose
- Mute Swan B
- * Bewick's Swan W
- Whooper Swan W
- Egyptian Goose B
- (Ruddy Shelduck)
- Shelduck B
- Mandarin Duck B
- * Garganey B
- *** Blue-winged Teal
- Shoveler B
- Gadwall B
- Wigeon (B)
- ** American Wigeon
- Mallard B
- Pintail (B)
- Teal B
- * Green-winged Teal
- * Red-crested Pochard
- Pochard (B)
- ** Ring-necked Duck
- *** Ferruginous Duck
- Tufted Duck B
- * Scaup
- * Eider
- * Long-tailed Duck
- Common Scoter
- * Velvet Scoter
- Goldeneye W
- Smew
- Goosander (B)
- * Red-breasted Merganser
- Ruddy Duck (now absent from area following national cull)
- Red-legged Partridge B
- Grey Partridge B
- Quail (B)
- Pheasant B
- (Golden Pheasant)
- * Red-throated Diver
- * Black-throated Diver

- * Great Northern Diver
- * Storm-petrel
- * Leach's Petrel
- * Fulmar
- * Manx Shearwater
- Little Grebe B
- * Red-necked Grebe
- Great Crested Grebe B
- * Slavonian Grebe
- * Black-necked Grebe (B)
- *** Black Stork
- * White Stork
- ** Glossy Ibis
- * Spoonbill
- * Bittern
- ** Cattle Egret
- Grey Heron B
- ** Purple Heron
- * Great White Egret
- Little Egret B
- * Gannet
- * Shag
- Cormorant B
- * Osprey P
- ** Honey Buzzard
- Sparrowhawk B
- * Goshawk B
- Marsh Harrier (B)
- * Hen Harrier
- ** Montagu's Harrier
- Red Kite (B)
- ** Black Kite
- ** Rough-legged Buzzard
- Buzzard B
- Water Rail B
- * Spotted Crake (B)
- * Corncrake (B)
- Moorhen B
- Coot B
- * Crane
- * Stone Curlew
- Oystercatcher B
- *** Black-winged Stilt
- Avocet
- Lapwing B
- Golden Plover W
- ** American Golden Plover
- Grey Plover
- Ringed Plover B
- Little Ringed Plover B
- ** Kentish Plover
- * Dotterel
- Whimbrel P
- Curlew B
- * Bar-tailed Godwit
- Black-tailed Godwit (B)
- Turnstone
- * Knot
- Ruff (B)
- * Curlew Sandpiper
- * Temminck's Stint
- * Sanderling
- Dunlin W & P
- * Little Stint P
- ** White-rumped Sandpiper
- ** Buff-breasted Sandpiper
- * Pectoral Sandpiper
- Woodcock B
- Jack Snipe W
- Snipe B
- * Red-necked Phalarope
- * Grey Phalarope
- Common Sandpiper
- Green Sandpiper P & W
- *** Lesser Yellowlegs
- Redshank B
- Wood Sandpiper P
- * Spotted Redshank P
- Greenshank P
- * Kittiwake
- * Sabine's Gull
- Black-headed Gull B
- * Little Gull
- * Mediterranean Gull
- Common Gull W & P
- ** Ring-billed Gull
- Great Black-backed Gull W
- Glaucous Gull
- Iceland Gull W
- ** (Kumlien's Gull)
- Herring Gull W, P & B
- * Caspian Gull
- * Yellow-legged Gull

- Lesser Black-backed Gull S & P
- ** Caspian Tern
- * Sandwich Tern
- * Little Tern
- * Roseate Tern
- Common Tern B
- * Arctic Tern P
- *** Whiskered Tern
- ** White-winged Black Tern
- * Black Tern
- * Great Skua
- * Arctic Skua
- * Pomarine Skua
- * Little Auk
- * Guillemot
- * Puffin
- 'Feral Pigeon' B
- Stock Dove B
- Woodpigeon B
- * Turtle Dove B
- Collared Dove B
- Cuckoo B
- Barn Owl B
- Tawny Owl B
- Little Owl B
- * Long-eared Owl B
- * Short-eared Owl (B)
- * Nightjar B
- Swift B
- ** Alpine Swift
- Kingfisher B
- * Bee-eater
- * Hoopoe
- * Wryneck
- * Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (B)
- Great Spotted Woodpecker B
- Green Woodpecker B
- Kestrel B
- ** Red-footed Falcon
- Merlin
- Hobby (B)
- Peregrine B
- * (Ring-necked Parakeet)(B)
- * Red-backed Shrike
- *** Lesser Grey Shrike
- * Great Grey Shrike
- * Golden Oriole
- Jay B
- Maggie B
- Jackdaw B
- Rook B
- Carrion Crow B
- * Hooded Crow
- * Raven
- Waxwing W
- Coal Tit B
- Marsh Tit B
- * Willow Tit B
- Blue Tit B
- Great Tit B
- * Bearded Tit
- * Woodlark B
- Skylark B
- Sand Martin B
- Swallow B
- House Martin B
- ** Red-rumped Swallow
- * Cetti's Warbler
- Long-tailed Tit B
- Willow Warbler B
- Chiffchaff B
- ** (Siberian Chiffchaff)
- * Wood Warbler
- * Yellow-browed Warbler
- Sedge Warbler B
- Reed Warbler B
- ** Marsh Warbler
- Grasshopper Warbler B
- Blackcap B
- Garden Warbler B
- * Barred Warbler
- Lesser Whitethroat B
- Whitethroat B
- * Firecrest
- Goldcrest B
- Wren B
- Nuthatch B
- Treecreeper B
- ** Rose-coloured Starling
- Starling B
- * Ring Ouzel
- Blackbird B
- Fieldfare W & P

Redwing W & P	Tree Pipit B
Song Thrush B, W & P	* Water Pipit
Mistle Thrush B	* Rock Pipit P
Spotted Flycatcher B	Chaffinch B
Robin B	Brambling W
* Nightingale (B)	* Hawfinch
* Pied Flycatcher (B)	Bullfinch B
* Red-breasted Flycatcher	Greenfinch B
* Black Redstart (B)	* Twite
Redstart B	Linnet B
Whinchat P	* Common (Mealy) Redpoll
Stonechat B	Lesser Redpoll
Wheatear P	** Arctic Redpoll
Dipper (B)	*** 'Coues's' Arctic Redpoll
House Sparrow B	Crossbill B
Tree Sparrow B	Goldfinch B
Duncock B	Siskin (B)
Yellow Wagtail B	Corn Bunting B
* (Blue-headed Wagtail)	Yellowhammer B
Grey Wagtail B	*** Pine Bunting
Pied Wagtail B	** Cirl Bunting
(White Wagtail)	Reed Bunting B
* Richard's Pipit	* Lapland Bunting
Meadow Pipit B	* Snow Bunting

YNU Description Species for 2018

Taiga Bean Goose	Golden Eagle	Radde's Warbler
Black Brant	Red-footed Falcon	Dusky Warbler
American Wigeon	Black-winged Stilt	Siberian Chiffchaff (inland only)
Ring-necked Duck	American Golden Plover	Dartford Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Kentish Plover	Subalpine Warbler
Surf Scoter	White-rumped Sandpiper	Melodious Warbler
White-billed Diver	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Blyth's Reed Warbler
Wilson's Storm-petrel	White-winged Black Tern	Marsh Warbler
Cattle Egret	Ring-billed Gull	Rose-coloured Starling
Purple Heron	Kumlien's Gull	Red-flanked Bluetail
Glossy Ibis	Alpine Swift	Citrine Wagtail
Black-crowned Night Heron	Woodchat Shrike	Olive-backed Pipit
Honey Buzzard	Penduline Tit	Arctic Redpoll
Black Kite	Red-billed Chough	Parrot Crossbill
White-tailed Eagle	Short-toed Lark	Cirl Bunting
Montagu's Harrier	Red-rumped Swallow	Little Bunting (inland only)
Rough-legged Buzzard	Greenish Warbler	

YOC description species (additional to YNU)

Brent Goose - all races	Bar-tailed Godwit	Wryneck
Tundra Bean Goose	Knot	Lesser Spotted
(Greenland) White-fronted Goose	Curlew Sandpiper	Woodpecker
Bewick's Swan	Temminck's Stint	Ring-necked Parakeet
Garganey	Sanderling	Great Grey Shrike
Green-winged Teal	Purple Sandpiper	Red-backed Shrike
Red-crested Pochard	Little Stint	Golden Oriole
Scaup	Pectoral Sandpiper	Hooded Crow
Eider	Red-necked Phalarope	Raven
Long-tailed Duck	(ex YNU)	Willow Tit
Velvet Scoter	Grey Phalarope	Bearded Tit
Red-breasted Merganser	Spotted Redshank	Woodlark (<i>away from</i>
Red-throated Diver	Kittiwake	<i>breeding areas</i>)
Black-throated Diver	Sabine's Gull	Shore Lark
Great Northern Diver	Little Gull	Cetti's Warbler
Storm-petrel	Mediterranean Gull	Wood Warbler
Leach's Petrel	Caspian Gull	Yellow-browed Warbler
Fulmar	Yellow-legged Gull	Barred Warbler
Manx Shearwater	Little Tern	Firecrest
Red-necked Grebe	Black Tern	Ring Ouzel
Slavonian Grebe	Sandwich Tern	Nightingale
Black-necked Grebe	Roseate Tern	Pied Flycatcher
White Stork	Arctic Tern	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Spoonbill	Pomarine Skua	Black Redstart
Bittern	Arctic Skua	Yellow Wagtail
Great White Egret	Great Skua	(<i>'Blue-headed' race and</i>
Gannet	Long-tailed Skua	<i>'Channel' hybrid</i>)
Shag	Little Auk	Richard's Pipit
Osprey	Razorbill	Water Pipit
Goshawk	Guillemot	Rock Pipit
Hen Harrier	Puffin	Hawfinch
Spotted Crake	Turtle Dove	Twite
Corncrake	Long-eared Owl	Common (Mealy) Redpoll
Crane	Short-eared Owl	Lapland Bunting
Stone Curlew	Nightjar	Snow Bunting
Dotterel	Bee-eater	
	Hoopoe	

The YOC Recorder may ask contributors to provide extra supporting evidence for some species not on the description species lists, taking into account factors such as observer experience, out-of-season occurrences and unusual or difficult plumages; this is at the Recorder's discretion. The list of species requiring descriptions is reviewed regularly.

Guidelines for the submission of records

One of the most important functions of the York Ornithological Club is the publication of the Annual Report. The value of this publication depends on members submitting records of their sightings within the Club's recording area. All members are encouraged to submit records, whatever their level of knowledge.

1. Records must be submitted by the end of March following the relevant year to be considered for appearance in the Annual Report.

2. For each species, records should give the site and date with numbers of birds noted where possible. Counts are preferable to terms such as 'few', 'several' or 'many' as these terms are very subjective and actual numbers enable the comparison of populations between years. For large flocks of birds, approximate numbers are acceptable.

3. Records of scarce or rare birds will need a description for consideration by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union Rarities Committee and, if necessary, the British Birds Rarities Committee. These descriptions should be submitted to the Recorder as soon as possible after the sighting, preferably by email to recorder@yorkbirding.org.uk. The importance of such descriptions for the validation of rare records cannot be overemphasised.

4. Please remember to include your contact details, particularly name and telephone number and email address, with your records.

5. Records should, preferably, be submitted in electronic format as attachments to an email. Ideally records will be submitted on the Club spreadsheet, which can be downloaded from the website www.yorkbirding.org.uk. Records/photographs for inclusion in the YOC Report should be submitted directly to the editorial committee by email to editor@yorkbirding.org.uk. Casual records can also be submitted via the casual records form on the website.

News of recent sightings, descriptions of rarities etc. should continue to be submitted to the Recorder and/or circulated on the YOC newsgroup (see the YOC Website) as previously, though caution should always be exercised over publicising records of rare breeding birds in the breeding season. Sensitive records should be submitted confidentially to the Recorder.

In line with the YNU, the YOC reserves the right not to publish records of scarce birds which cannot be attributed to a named observer and are unsupported by photographic evidence.

Contributors to the 2018 Report

(with apologies for any accidental omissions)

P Abbott	J Cox (JC)	M Holling
L W Arkless	David Craven (DC)	Steve Huddleston (SH)
I A Ashworth	Doug Crawford	S Hunter
D Austin	Pat Crofton (PC)	Adam Hutt (AH)
R Baker	Paul Cropper(PCr)	P Izzard
Richard Baines (RB)	Michael & Muriel Cruchley	Mike Jackson (MFJ)
Sue Ball	R R & N Darsley	R E Jackson
C Barker-Wyatt	J G Davies (JD)	B Jones
Colin Beale (CB)	J Day	G Jones
Jonathan Begbie (JB)	W Dewsnap	A Jowett
Neil Bielby	Jenny Dixon	K & H Kirk
Tim Birkinshaw (TB)	Paul Doherty (PD)	A Kisby
Barry Bishop (BB)	Trevor Douglas (TD)	John Lawton (JL)
G M Blackman	J Dove	Jono Leadley (JLe)
C Blakey	J M Dowson (JMD)	Nicola Lefanu (NL)
Nigel Boatman	C Dowson (CD)	A Leggett (AL)
Barbara Boize (BBo)	C Doyle	P & S A Leyland
Phil Bone (PB)	S C Elliott	K Limb
D Brand	Anneliese Emmans Dean	Anne & Chris Lloyd
H Brazier	J Ensor	Mark Lucas
M T Breaks	P M J Espin	Peter Lyons (PL)
Ian Brookes	Steve Farley	A Mackowski
M Brown	E Fell	Fallon Mahon (FM)
Tom Broxup (TB)	D Fenton-Scott	G Manners
Emanuela Buizza	M Fewster (MF)	D & M Mather
P Butson	Adam Firth (AF)	P Maugham (PM)
B Byatt	Alastair Fitter (AFi)	A McDonald
Duncan Bye (DMB)	Paul (Paz) Fletcher (PF)	R Mcghie
N A Calbrade	Sean Garvey	N McKenna
A Cameron	Elaine Gathercole	Naomi J Meredith (NM)
Nicholas Carpenter	Tim D Godson	M Midgley
M Carr	Chris Gomersall (CG)	John Millett
S Caudwell (SC)	A Gomez	D A Money
E G Chapman	S Gregory	Neil & Elizabeth N Moran
Jane Chapman (JCn)	S Griffiths	I Morris
Rob Chapman (RCn)	Christopher Harris (CH)	P Mountain
K Claiden-Yardley	A Hartman	Michael Naylor
F C Clark	A Hashmi	Steve Newby
B Clyne	N Heptinstall (NH)	J P Nicholson (JN)
Mark Coates (MC)	S Heywood	P J Nicholson
Derek Cooper	R D Hind	Jan Nobel
Neil Cooper (NC)	R Hoare	D Owen
Robert (Bob) Coursey (RCo)	S Hodgson	R North

N Parkin
Z Pavlitska
Jonathan Pomroy (JP)
S Pont
A Porter
M Price
I Rae
Christy Ralph (CR)
A Reaney
Peter Reed (PR)
G S Reid
Jim Reid (JRe)
Penny Relf (PRf)
Liz & Keith Reynolds
Dave Richardson (DR)
Peter Richman
T Riley
J Robson (JR)
B N Rossiter
H Saxby
Andrew Schofield (ASc)
P Scholes
A Scarborough
M Scarborough
Helen Searstone
Alan Shadrack (AS)
E Shilland
H Simons (HSi)
R D H Simpson
T J Simms
Masha Sitnikova
Gill Smith (GS)
M S Smith

James Spencer (JS)
L D Stead (LS)
M Stenton (MSt)
Alan Stow
D Strath
Alan Swain (ASw)
P J Swinhoe
H M Tanner (HT)
David Tate (DT)
S Taylor
Barry Thomas
D H Thomas
Ian Traynor (IT)
C Toop (CT)
E Tooth (ET)
P Townsend
JJ Tucker
G Voakes
C Walker
Brian Wallace
Geoff Wallis
J Walsh (JW)
Fiona Walton (FW)
Mike Walton
Trevor Walton (TWn)
Antony Ward
S Ward
Tim Ward (TWa)
J C Warwick
George Watola (GW)
A Watson
Peter Watson (PW)

M Weir
Terry Weston (TW)
M J Wheeler
J White
D Whittington
J Wild
P Willey
Mark Williams
D Wilson
M Windmill
D H Woodmansey
A Wootton

BirdGuides
University of York Ringing
Group Report
Friends of Rawcliffe
Meadows 2018 Report
LDV Blog
Natural England (NE)
NAFIC (Sand Hutton) Bird
Report
YOC Website reports

The LDV team comprises:

Craig Ralston (CSR)
Mike Jackson (MFJ)
Steve Huddleston
David Tate
Lucy Murgatroyd
Fallon Mahon
Jean Thorpe

Gazetteer of sites in the York recording area

All grid references within the YOC recording area refer to the 100km OS square SE so this is not included in the grid references given. Six figure grid references are provided for most sites but in many instances this simply identifies a larger area for which the grid reference is the approximate centre. Most farms and woods are omitted (in the systematic list the nearest village is given for reference) unless particularly isolated, when they are included here, and street names are not listed except in rural areas where it might otherwise be difficult to locate the road referred to.

A		Brind	742310
Acaster Airfield	575428	Brindley's Plantation	742318
Acaster Malbis	590455	Broomhill Plantation	703449
Acaster Selby	574415	Brumber Hill	535430
Acomb, York	5751	Bubwith Bridge	705364
Allerthorpe Common	7547	Bubwith Ings	7037
Allerthorpe OGP	7947	Bugthorpe	773579
Allerthorpe Lakeland Park	780465	Buttercrambe	733582
Ampleforth	583787	Buttercrambe Weir	734585
Anchor Plain, Strensall	6363	Butterwick	732775
Appleton Roebuck	555423	Byland Abbey	549790
Askham Bog(s)	5748	C	
Aughton (Ings)	7038	Cali Heath NR	753498
B		Callis Wood	6971
Baldwins Bridge, Pock.Canal	740450	Canal Head, Pocklington	798474
Bank Island	695452	Castle Howard Lake	7170
Barmby Moor	776490	Cawood	573377
Barthorpe	774598	Cawton	643767
Barton-le-Willows	715632	Church Fenton	515370
Beningbrough	529578	Church Bridge, Melbourne	759445
Beningbrough Hall	516586	Claxton	694602
Bielby	789437	Cliffe	662320
Bilbrough	532468	Cliffe Common	666339
Bishopthorpe	5947	Clifton	593532
Bishop Wilton	797553	Clifton Backies NR, York	596540
Bishop Wood	5533	Clifton Ings	583531
Black Wood, Easingwold	5467	Clifton Park	584533
Bolton Percy Ings	537397	Coates Bridge, Pock. Canal	785453
Bolton Percy	532414	Coneysthorpe	713713
Bootham Stray, York	597548	Coneysthorpe Banks Wood	720725
Bossall	719607	Copmanthorpe	565469
Brandsby	589724	Cornfield NR, Rawcliffe	579542
Brayton	601305	Coxwold	536772
Brayton Barff	5830	Crambe	733649
Breck's Lane, Strensall	641612	Crambeck	738674
Brecks (The), Strensall	648618	Crayke	562705
Brighton	709341		

D		Healaugh	500477
Designer Outlet, York	607477	Hemingbrough	6730
Dringhouses, York	580495	Heslington	627504
Dunnington	671525	Heslington East, York Uni.	6350 -
Dunnington Common	6750		6450
E		Heslington Tillmire	638475
Easingwold	529698	Heslington West, York Uni.	6250
East Cottingwith	703425	Hessay	524534
Easthorpe, (Upper Poppleton)	5355	Heworth	618529
East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest	600644	High Catton	718538
Ellers Farm, Buttercrambe	7257	High Hutton	755685
Ellerton (Ings)	700398	High Lodge, SHL	675586
Elvington	700476	High Plumps Wood, SHL	671584
Elvington Airfield	670480	Hob Moor, York	585506
Elvington WTW	7048	Hogg's Pond, Dringhouses	581493
Escrick	631427	Hollicars	626395
Escrick Park	635418	Holtby	675542
F		Hopgrove (roundabout)	642553
Fangfoss	765533	Hovingham	667758
Fireman's Leap, New Earswick	609550	Howardian Hills	5875 -
Flamingoland	7780		7568
Flaxton	680624	Huby	566655
Foggathorpe	755377	Hull Road Park, York	620515
Foss Island, York	609520	Huntington, York	612550
Fulford, York	610496	Huttons Ambo	763677
Fulford Ings	608493	J	
Fulford Golf Course	624494	Jeffry Bog, Low Hutton	759667
Fulford Hall	606484	JRTNR, New Earswick	608548
Full Sutton	746555	K	
G		Keldspring Crossing, Pock.	786498
Ganthorpe	689704	Kelfield	594384
Garrowby Hill	798567	Kexby	705514
Gaterley	737696	Kilburn	504796
Giles Lock, Pocklington Canal	795464	Kirby Misperton	780794
Gilling (East/Park)	614770	Kirkby Wharfe	506409
Goosewood Caravan Park,		Kirkham Priory	736658
Sutton-on-the-Forest	591631	Knapton	562522
Great Barugh	750790	Knavesmire, York	594495
Grimston	644514	Knavesmire Wood, York	593488
Grimston Bar (roundabout)	649516	L	
Grimston Moor	613744	Langwith Stray, Heslington	650480
H		Laytham	749395
Hagg Bridge	717452	Linton-on-Ouse	495607
Harewood Whin (Rufforth Tip)	538518	Londesborough Lodge Farm	
Hassacarr NR	673518		Dunnington 6952
Haxby	609582	Long Marston	502512

Low Carr, Sutton-on-the-Forest	600623
Low Catton	705538
Lower Derwent Valley	7036 -
	7046
Low Grounds, by Wheldrake Ings	703444
M	
Malton	785717
Mausoleum, Castle Howard	727696
Melbourne	753441
Melbourne Scamland	766437
Meltonby	796525
Middlethorpe Ings	603486
Milford Common	5332
Millennium Bridge, York	603497
Monks Cross, York	630550
Moor Lane, Bishopthorpe	585470
Moor Monkton	506569
Moreby Wood	606428
Moorlands	577588
Mount Ferrant, Birdsall	796639
Murton	650527
N	
Naburn	599455
Naburn Bridge	598467
Naburn Marina	599462
Naburn Sewage Works	601467
Naburn Wood	609438
Newburgh Priory (lake)	542767
Newhay	661307
Newton-on-Ouse	512599
Newton Carr	740494
Newton Mask SSSI	705501
Newton upon Derwent	720495
New Earswick	609555
North Duffield Carrs (NDC)	695375
North Howden	7530
Norton-on-Derwent	795710
Nunnington (Hall)	667794
Nursery Wood, SHL	678585
O	
Osbalwick	633519
Osgodby	641338
Oswaldkirk	625790
Oulston Reservoir	570745
Oxton	505431
Ozendyke Ings	539398

P	
Parliament Street, York	603518
Patefield Wood	500381
Petersfield Farm, Bielby	793422
Pocklington	802490
Pocklington Airfield	793485
Pocklington Canal	698426
	-800474
Poppleton	560546
Pretty Wood, Castle Howard	732690
R	
Raker Lakes, Wheldrake	684463
Rawcliffe Bar Country Park	577547
Rawcliffe Ings	575544
Rawcliffe Lake	586546
Rawcliffe Meadows	577545
Redhouse Reservoir	529575
Redhouse Wood, Moor	
Monkton	520570
Refuge, Wheldrake	708435
Riccall	620380
Rossmoor Park	722436
Rowntree Park, York	604508
Ruddins Ings	5456
Rufforth	5251
Ryther	550392
Ryther Ings	551389
Ryton	795757
Ryton Bridge (Riggs Rd Bridge)	796754
S	
Sand Hutton	695586
Scackleton	650726
Scagglethorpe Moor /Lane	5355
Scamlands	766439
Scoreby Lodge	684513
Seaton Ross	780415
Seavy Carr, Thomton	753451
Selby	615324
Sessions NR, New Earswick	610548
Sheriff Hutton	655664
Sherburn in Elmet	500330
Silbum Lock, Pock. Canal	797468
Skewsby	625710
Skipwith	657385
Skipwith Common	6537
Skirpenbeck	747570

Slingsby	698750	Walbutts Sewage Works,	
Slingsby Banks Wood	698733	Strensall	646618
South Duffield	681335	Walmgate Stray, York	617505
Stamford Bridge	715555	Waplinton Hall, Allerthorpe	776468
Stearsby Hagg	620720	Warren Wood, Dunnington	677503
Steeton Whin	520435	Warthill	675555
Stillingfleet	594410	Wash Dike, Skipwith Common	662372
Stillington	585678	Wass Woods	550796
Stittenham	679677	Welburn	720680
Stockton on the Forest	655561	Welburn Sewage Works	714685
Stonegrave	657777	West Bank Park, York	584512
Storwood	712442	West Cottingwith Ings	695419
Strensall	633608	West Ings	550394
Strensall Common	6460 -	West Lilling	648652
	6661	West Ness	690790
St Nicholas Fields, York	615517	Westow	7565
Stubb Wood	585433	Wharfe Ings	568387
Sutton-on-the-Forest	584647	Wheldrake	682450
Sutton upon Derwent	707468	Wheldrake Ings	7043
Swinton	760731	Wheldrake Wood	6546
Swinton Ings	772748	Whitehill Mine	667359
T		White Carr, Flaxton	663603
Tang Hall Beck fields	6353	Whitwell Grange	715666
Tang Hall, York	620520	Wiganthorpe	662724
Terrington	670707	Wigginton	595585
Terrington Moor	685716	Wilberfoss	734510
The Retreat, York	617510	Winchmore, Stamford Bridge	727547
The Stank, near Sand Hutton		Wistow	594357
Thorganby	691420	Woodhouse Grange	733470
Thorganby Ings	6941	World's End Plantation,	
Thormanby	495747	Strensall Common	6659
Thornton	760453	Wressle	708313
Thornton Ellers	730460	Y	
Tockwith	465525	Yearsley	585744
Tollerton	513643	Yearsley Moor	5875 -
Towthorpe	625586		6076
Towthorpe Civic Amenity Site	648586	York (city centre)	599519
Towthorpe Moor Lane, Strensall	625585	York Minster	603523
	-663579	Yorkshire Arboretum	
Triangle Meadow, York	604547	(by Castle Howard)	705697
U			
Ulleskelf	520400		
W			
Walbut Lock, Pock. Canal	773442		