

YORK ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB REPORT 2019

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Moorhen with chicks © Terry Weston

Errata: The photograph of a Hobby on page 65 of the 2018 YOC Report should have been credited to Dave Gilfillan, not Duncan Bye. In the Classified List, the sighting of the White-winged Black Tern was given as Wheldrake Ings; it should have been Bank Island.

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Committee 2019

| | |
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York Ornithological Club

As in previous years, the annual 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 120 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 2019 Report, compiled and produced by the Editorial Committee. We hope you will find it interesting and informative. Whilst there were no 'firsts' for the recording area in 2019, there was still plenty to enjoy, as evidenced by the number of records received. We extracted sightings submitted via Twitter for the first time, as it is apparent that many younger birders in particular prefer to share their sightings this way. With more people submitting sightings via BirdTrack too and an increased willingness by members to use the club's spreadsheet, the total number of records received was the highest ever. As noted in previous years, 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 (10km x 10km 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. There was reduced access to CHL for part of the year, so fewer counts were received from there. We have been working hard to encourage more submission of breeding records of commoner species as these tend to be under-reported, so the May weekend count the club successfully organised in 2018 was repeated in 2019, again yielding much useful data. The club's annual survey was a repeat of the Golden Plover survey undertaken in 2018, as that was affected by abnormally dry conditions. It was stymied again by unusually wet conditions in 2019 and the intention is to repeat this again in 2020.

The list of birds seen in the York recording area since 1966 has been updated. Blackcap and Chiffchaff have been removed from the species lists of summer migrants for which we publish first and last dates as some birds are known to overwinter so it is no longer possible to be totally confident whether birds encountered in March or November are migrant or overwintering.

How the report is produced

Records are received and collated, and once sightings of description species are verified, these are 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. One of the most significant sites for birds in the York area is the Lower Derwent Valley. Huge 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 include the annual Rare Breeding Bird Panel report for the Lower Derwent Valley NNR and Skipwith Common. 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. Thank you to FERA (now National Agri-Food Innovation Campus, Sand Hutton - recorded as SHL in the main species accounts) for giving permission to extract records from their 2019 Report, 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 2019 and to Amanda Hewick at Stockbridge Technology Centre, Cawood, who supplied the weather data. Thank you to John Lawton, David Tate, Richard Baines and Jacob Davies for their articles. We are very grateful to Richard Baines, Richard Bennett, Tom Broxup, Duncan Bye, Gerry Capelin, Hugo Charlton-Jones, Mark Coates, Doug Crawford, Pat Crofton, Paul Doherty, Adam Firth, Adrian Hotson, Tim Jones, Jono Leadley, Caroline Lewis, Jan Nobel, Craig

Ralston, Mike Walton 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 once again to Doug Crawford for keeping everyone up to date about the Minster Peregrines via their dedicated Twitter feed.

Many thanks to everyone involved with the preparation of the report for publication. Records from YorkBirding emails and the LDV Blog were collated by Jane Chapman and from the Twitter feed by Duncan Bye; Rob and Jane Chapman formatted all records and collated them onto the master spreadsheet; Paul Doherty compiled the Highlights of 2019 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:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Duncan Bye | geese, 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 |
| Dave Richardson | doves, pigeons and Cuckoo |
| Jane Chapman | Nightjar to shrikes |
| 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. Any records from previous years that have been accepted/rejected are included at the end of the classified list.

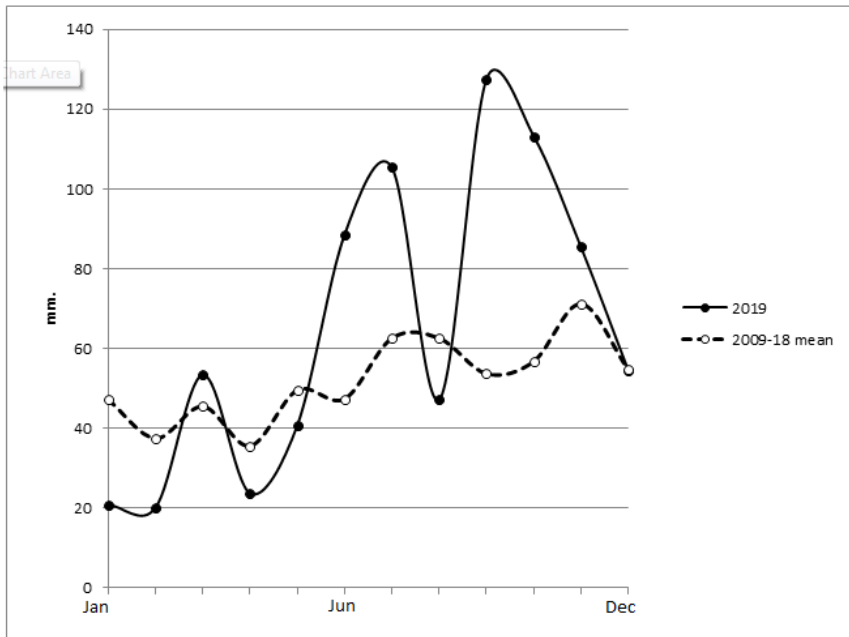
Jane Chapman - Editor

Highlights of 2019

Weather in 2019

2019 had the highest rainfall total since 2012 despite the fact that the period from January to the end of May was one of the driest on record (see graph). These five months were generally mild though night time air frosts continued well into April. Heavy rainfall occurred at times throughout the summer and although average temperatures were above the norm it often felt cool, though 33.6°C on 25th July was an exceptionally hot day. The most notable feature of the year was the prolonged period of cool and wet weather which lasted from mid-September to late November. The 326mm of rain which fell during this time was exceptional and left the ground saturated until the year-end.

Monthly rainfall totals for 2019 and the monthly means for 2009-18



High pressure was dominant throughout January and this led to dry air, light winds and cold nights. Rain did not occur until the 15th and the monthly total was 66% below the 2009-18 mean. Maximum daytime temperatures were below 12°C and 11 night air frosts occurred, including -5.7°C on the 31st, which was the coldest night of the year. Similar conditions continued into February which had 18 rain free days. An exception to the generally cool conditions occurred from the 21st to the 27th when airflow from North Africa brought unusually warm days, peaking at 17°C on the 27th. Despite this the nights were still cold and there were

ten air frosts. The only snow of the year occurred on the 2nd but this was little more than a sprinkling which soon disappeared. Despite the dry January and February the WeBS counts in the LDV were not reduced because plenty of open water remained from the above average rainfall which occurred in late 2018.

Air pressure dropped during the first half of March and westerly winds brought milder but more unsettled weather. The first heavy rainfall of the year occurred on the 5th which had a total of 10.7mm. High pressure was re-established during the second half of the month resulting in dry sunny conditions. Overall the monthly rainfall and maximum temperatures were above the 2009-18 mean and there were only two air frosts. Dry conditions continued into April which had 22 rain free days. It was cool until the 17th with maximum temperatures rarely rising above 12°C and there were eight night-time frosts. A warmer period followed with the maximum of 22.5°C occurring on Easter Monday (the 22nd). May was generally cool with occasional showers. The mean maximum temperature was 15.5°C with only one day exceeding 20°C. Rainfall was below the 2009-18 mean and there were 18 dry days.

The five month spell of dry weather was broken in June. The monthly rainfall total of 89mm was double the combined figure for January and February and almost 90% above the long-term mean. Downpours occurred on the 4th (11.5mm); 11th (10.6mm) and 25th (16.0mm). Temperatures were mostly cool. The mean maximum was 1°C below average and there were unseasonably cold days such as the 12th which remained below 12°C. However, conditions improved towards the end of the month and 25°C was recorded on the 30th. Much of July was mild and cloudy though there was a hot spell from the 23rd to 26th including 33.6°C on the 25th which proved to be the hottest day of the year. Temperatures fell by 10°C during the remaining 5 days of the month which also had 45mm of rain. The monthly rainfall total was 68% above the 10-year mean whilst the combined total for June and July was the highest since 2007. The summer conditions favoured the scrub and hedgerow invertebrate populations, and those bird species which prey on them for their young, such as Blackcap, Whitethroat, Linnet and Yellowhammer, had an excellent breeding season. The only downside occurred when naked young failed to survive the days of heavy rainfall. For example, on Skipwith Common some broods of Blackcap and Linnet succumbed to hypothermia during the downpour on 11th June. At soil level the wet conditions reduced the availability of invertebrate food and as a result ground feeding birds such as Blackbird, Robin and Dunnock did not do so well. The first three weeks of August were generally bright and sunny. Rainfall was well below average though light westerly airflows helped to keep temperatures to near the norm. The last hot spell of the year occurred on the 26th and 27th when 30°C was exceeded.

There then followed an extended period dominated by a westerly jet stream which brought wet, cloudy and cool weather. Although September had a settled week (13th - 20th) the monthly rainfall total amounted to 127mm which made it the wettest month of the year (see graph) and the wettest month since July 2009. Also, the wettest day of 2019 occurred on the 24th which had a total of 36.6mm. The conditions prevailed for much of October and November with both months

having above average rainfall totals (see graph) and only 14 rain-free days between them. By the end of this period the total rainfall amounted to 326mm which makes it the wettest three months since May-June 2007. The cloudy conditions led to below average temperatures though air frosts were not recorded. November was especially cold and cloudy with only six days over 10°C and sunshine limited to 45 hours. The reason for the low number of returning Golden Plovers in the autumn may well have been due to the lack of feeding opportunities on the saturated soils. Less surprising was that Teal numbers were above average in the LDV during October. Milder and drier conditions developed in December and both rainfall and temperatures returned to the previous 10-year mean. There were 12 dry days with clearer skies resulting in five nights with air frosts.

January

2018 closed with a drake **American Wigeon** at Bubwith Ings; happily it was still there on 1st January remaining until the 13th and was even joined by a female* on the 10th. There was more transatlantic interest as a drake **Green-winged Teal** at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st was seen intermittently until the 26th. Finding them was never easy as **Wigeon** peaked at 9827 on the 16th, and the same date saw 6154 **Teal**. Other wildfowl in the LDV included male and female **Smew**, **Barnacle Goose**, **Tundra Bean Goose** and up to 23 **White-fronted Geese**. Numbers of large gulls have been reduced by the closure of the Rufforth landfill, but the LDV still had records of single **Yellow-legged**, **Caspian** and **Iceland Gulls** during the month. A **Great White Egret** was at Bank Island on the 19th and one was at Newburgh Priory all month, whilst a **Red-necked Grebe** was at CHL from the 5th to the 21st. Small birds weren't ignored with wintering **Chiffchaffs** at six locations and more unusually a **Siberian Chiffchaff*** was at Heslington East on 6th January. Good numbers of **Lesser Redpolls** were at Allerthorpe, Skipwith and Strensall Commons. The Allerthorpe flock included 20 **Mealy (Common) Redpolls** and a single **Coues's Arctic Redpoll*** was present from the 3rd to the 9th. There were five **Waxwings** at Strensall on the 9th and Strensall Common hosted a **Firecrest** on the 11th. A handful of **Waxwings** were seen elsewhere and there were two **Hawfinches** at Castle Howard on the 23rd. The Melbourne **Corn Bunting** roost had an impressive 170 birds on the 29th.

February

An adult **Kumlien's Gull** was in the gull roost at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th. A hint of spring came with a **Woodlark** back on territory at Strensall Common on the 11th. February had started with about 100 **Whooper Swans** in the LDV, but the mild weather encouraged some to leave early. Four **Bewick's Swans** passed through on the 25th, resting briefly at Bank Island before continuing on their way. The same spell of mild weather resulted in several sightings of **Chiffchaffs** from the 23rd. In contrast with the early **Chiffchaffs**, a drake **Scaup** was at CHL on the 23rd (through to 9th March) and the peak count for **Goosander** was 100 at Redhouse Lagoon on the 28th. **Ravens** appeared at Castle Howard on the 13th, Allerthorpe Common on the 25th and Spaldington on the 27th. Allerthorpe

Common also had the year's only sighting of **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** with a single on the 25th.

March

March started with the highest **Crossbill** counts of a distinctly average year for this species - there were 24 at Wheldrake Woods on the 1st and 25 at Allertorpe Common on the 4th. Spring passage of **Pintail** resulted in a peak of 365 in the LDV on the 3rd and the same date saw a new record for the Lower Derwent NNR of 602 **Gadwall**. A male **Common Scoter** was at Bank Island on the 5th, with a female there on the 18th and then another male on the 22nd. The latter date also saw a **Red-necked Grebe** at Wheldrake Ings. The LDV produced a **Great White Egret** at Hagg Bridge on the 5th, a **Hooded Crow** at Melbourne and Thornton Ings on the 8th and a **Crane** at East Cottingwith on the 10th. The first **Sand Martins** were four at CHL on the 15th, while the first **Wheatear** was at Heslington Tillmire on the 23rd. The same date saw a **Raven** over Acaster Airfield and a **Sanderling** at NDC stayed until the 28th, but a **Grey Plover** at Ellerton Ings on the 24th didn't linger. Ellerton hosted the first **Garganey** (a pair) on the 24th, there was a **Little Ringed Plover** at Kirkby Wharfe on the 26th, plus **Swallows** at Acaster Malbis and Wheldrake Ings on the 31st. March also saw an impressive passage of **Whooper Swans** through the LDV, with over 800 during the second half of the month.

April

The month opened with the expected arrival of several summer visitors - **House Martin** and **Whitethroat** on the 3rd, **Yellow Wagtail** on the 5th and the first **Cuckoo** was singing at Melbourne on the 10th. **Black-tailed Godwits** in the LDV peaked at 114 on the 6th and Wheldrake Ings had a **Knot** on the 7th and a **Spotted Redshank** the next day. An **Avocet** was at Bank Island on the 5th, but one flying along the River Ouse near Poppleton on the 15th was more unexpected. The first **Redstart** and **Sedge Warbler** were on the 12th and were followed by **Garden Warbler** on the 16th, **Lesser Whitethroat** and **Tree Pipit** on the 18th, and **Reed** and **Grasshopper Warblers** on the 20th. The only **Osprey** of the spring flew over Storwood on the 17th. A **Swift** was over Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd, the same date and site as the first **Common Tern**. The next day produced a **Sandwich Tern** at Sutton upon Derwent and a **Corncrake** was at NDC on the 24th. Bank Island had a **Kittiwake** on the 25th and an **Arctic Tern** on the 27th. The 30th saw a **Raven** flying high to the east over Riccall.

May

The traditional **Whimbrel** roost at Wheldrake Ings peaked at 66 on the 1st, with a **Spotted Crake** there the same day. Fields near Riccall had a **Yellow-legged Gull** also on the 1st. The highlight of the month however clearly came on the 8th when a combination of easterly winds and rain produced a total of 43 **Black Terns**, six **Arctic Terns** and three **Grey Plovers** at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings. On the same day Heslington East had a **Black Tern** and four

Arctic Terns. A handful of other **Black Terns** subsequently passed through the LDV. The variety of waders in the LDV picked up, with three **Turnstones** on the 10th, **Spotted Redshank** (on four days), five **Greenshanks** and a **Wood Sandpiper**. A **Great White Egret** appeared on the 10th and a **Crane** on the 15th. Meanwhile the first **Turtle Dove** of the year was one singing at Gilling East on the 12th, with singing birds at three other locations before the end of the month. **Little Egrets** continued to increase with a count of 69 (excluding breeding birds at their nests - which took the total to around 85) in the LDV on the 17th. Another **Spotted Crake** was at Bank Island on the 23rd, with a 1st-summer **Little Gull** at NDC on the 27th, a **Cetti's Warbler** at East Cottingwith on the 28th and then a **Great White Egret** at NDC on the 31st.

June

As usual, June was a quieter month than May. A **Corncrake** was calling at East Cottingwith on the 2nd and a **Spotted Crake** was at Bank Island on the 10th. Away from the LDV it was good to have **Long-eared Owls** breeding successfully at two sites. Another **Turtle Dove** was heard singing on the 7th, while one also turned up in SE53 on the 26th (seen again on 4th July). A **Great White Egret** at SHL on the 9th was the first record for that site, and then one was at Bank Island on the 21st and Wheldrake Ings on the 28th. Arguably the best record of the month was a female **Montagu's Harrier*** which flew south at Wheldrake Ings on the 18th. It did however have to compete with a **Cattle Egret*** which made a brief appearance on the scrape at Bank Island on the 28th. Two **Wood Sandpipers** were at Bank Island from the 26th to the month-end and a good year for **Garganey** continued when a female was seen with a brood of six ducklings at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th. The same date also saw an **Osprey** at SHL which lingered until 1st July.

July

July got off to a good start with a **Temminck's Stint** at Bank Island on the 2nd and a **Wood Sandpiper** present at the same time. A **Yellow-legged Gull** was at Riccall on the 20th. The last reported **Turtle Dove** was one singing at Gilling on the 21st. There was a minimum of five **Nightjars** at Strensall Common on the 22nd. Waders took over again with two **Avocets** at Bank Island on the 21st and then the LDV enjoyed its share of a national influx of **Wood Sandpipers** with a record flock of nine at Bank Island on the 29th.

August

August is often a good month for waders and three **Avocets** at Wheldrake Ings on the 4th were a good start. A **Turnstone** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th and the same site had **Greenshank** on several dates, building up to three by the end of the month. As usual few notable waders were seen away from the LDV, but a single **Greenshank** was at Acaster Airfield on the 28th. An **Osprey** at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th was the first of four there and sightings of **Marsh Harriers**, **Red Kites** and **Hobbies** remained at a healthy level in the LDV. Two

Whinchats at NDC on the 10th were the first of the year and on the same date as one at Wheldrake Ings. A **Great White Egret** was at Heslington East on the 12th and a **Raven** at Gilling East the next day. Warblers and other passerines were starting to move through the area and included a **Pied Flycatcher** at Storwood on the 26th. The following day produced a **Nightjar** sitting on a garden fence post at Clifton and another was at Elvington on the 29th and the 30th.

September

Three **Greenshanks** were still at Wheldrake Ings until the 9th and 20 **Green Sandpipers** were counted there on the 2nd. A **Crane** was at Wheldrake Ings on the morning of the 8th and a **Great White Egret** was at SHL on the 9th. A **Nightjar** was seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th and 11th, and a rehabilitated juvenile from North Yorkshire was released at Skipwith Common on the 20th. Another quality raptor was reported on the 13th when a **Honey Buzzard*** flew over Wheldrake Ings, with another reported from Bubwith on the 24th. The 13th saw the first **Pink-footed Geese** of the autumn when 70 flew over Kirkby Wharfe, while a lone **Bearded Tit** was at Wheldrake Ings the next day. A **Cetti's Warbler** was at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and there were then occasional LDV records until the end of the year. Two **Spotted Crakes** showed well in front of Swantail Hide at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and 18th, with one still there on the 19th. A **Jack Snipe** was flushed from stubble at Riccall Ings on the 19th; nine **Fieldfares** were at Rawcliffe on the 20th and 12 **Whooper Swans** over NDC on the 21st. A **Raven** at Brayton Barff on the 21st was a first for that site. **Great White Egrets** were at Milford Common on the 25th and Wheldrake Ings on the 27th and a **Crane** flew over Bank Island on the 29th. A **Raven** was seen at Bolton Percy Ings on the 29th and 30th.

October

The first two **Redwings** of the autumn were at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd and they soon became more widespread, including a high count of 1700 **Redwings** and 2000 **Fieldfares** over Wheldrake Ings on the 20th. Early flooding in the LDV encouraged some good numbers of wildfowl and a drake **Ring-necked Duck*** made a brief appearance amongst the **Pochard** on the 10th. **Scaup** were present on the 13th to the 15th with another on the 23rd, and our earliest ever **Smew** was a redhead at Bank Island from the 16th to the 27th. A **Hen Harrier** roamed the LDV from 10th to the 19th and other raptors were well represented there. Up to eight **Marsh Harriers** were present; the last two **Hobbies** were seen on the 11th, a **Merlin** on the 9th, multiple **Peregrines** and **Red Kites**, whilst 16 **Kestrels** and 34+ **Buzzards** were recorded during the WeBS count on the 12th. Away from the LDV a male **Hen Harrier** was seen at Stamford Bridge on the 23rd and then a ringtail was at Elvington and Heslington Tillmire on the 28th. A minimum of seven **Bearded Tits** were at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th, with two there on the 16th and one on the 18th. The first two **Brambling** of the autumn flew over Bank Island on the 15th. A **Raven** was at Skipwith Common on the 18th and the 22nd, with two there on the 25th. Perhaps the most surprising record of the month was the fact

that **Great White Egrets** out-numbered **Little Egrets**, with up to five of the former and two of the latter recorded.

November

The month was dominated by rainfall, which resulted in extensive flooding; not surprisingly there were some interesting wildfowl counts in the LDV. Up to 170 **Whooper Swans** was a good count, but the humble **Greylag Goose** stole the show with a new reserve and club area record of 3400. Other geese recorded in the LDV included over 800 **Pink-footed Geese**, plus 33 **European** and two **Greenland White-fronted Geese**. Six **Ruddy Shelduck** appeared at Aughton on the 9th and stayed in the area until the end of the month. The flooding attracted good numbers of diving duck with 171 **Pochard**, 258 **Tufted Duck**, nine **Scaup** and four **Red-crested Pochard**. A **Slavonian Grebe** was seen at NDC on the 18th. The last **Swallows** were two at Bank Island on the 4th, followed by the final **House Martin** at Elvington on the 5th. A **Bittern** flew from South Milford towards Milford Common on the 6th, on which date a single **Hawfinch** was seen at Castle Howard. A **Raven** was at Bolton Percy on the 14th and a lone **Waxwing** was at the Jewbury stretch of York city walls on the 16th. The 16th also saw a count of 4150 **Redwings** and 2200 **Fieldfares** in the LDV, with a roost of 10,000+ **Starlings** forming at Aughton on the 18th. The LDV also produced a record count of 23 wintering **Stonechats**. There were just two records of **Great White Egret** in the LDV, however one was seen at Heslington East on the 21st and 22nd.

December

The month opened with a **Scaup** at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st, with four present on the 7th and up to three were seen during the rest of the month. A **Raven** was at NDC on the 5th and a **Brent Goose** seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 19th. A lone **Waxwing** was at Askham Bar on the 11th, one was at Woodthorpe from the 17th to the 21st and one back at Askham Bar from 19th to the 21st. A **Shag** picked up in a Sutton upon Derwent garden on the 17th was taken into care and released at the coast the next day. A **Great White Egret** was at Bank Island on the 19th and four **Cranes** were calling over Church Bridge, Melbourn on the 21st. The **Starling** roost at Aughton increased to 50,000+ and provided an impressive spectacle. A **Knot** was at NDC on the 24th and a **Great White Egret** was at Newburgh Priory from the 24th to the 26th. There were three wintering **Cetti's Warblers** in the LDV, but one at CHL on the 28th was more unusual. The same date saw two **Bewick's Swans** in the Bubwith-Aughton area and up to 188 **Whooper Swans** were present in December. The numbers of large gulls at the Wheldrake Ings gull roost have declined with the closure of the landfill site at Rufforth, but there are still large numbers of the smaller gulls and the roost had a **Mediterranean Gull** on the 19th, two on the 29th and one the next day. The year closed with up to three **Chiffchaffs** at Bank Island from the 29th to the 31st.

YOC CLASSIFIED LIST

The sequence and scientific nomenclature follow that of the British List maintained by the British Ornithologists' Union, currently the 9th edition published in 2017. 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 142 and 143.

An indication of presence in Breeding Bird Survey squares during the 2018 season is shown in the classified list as BBS x/43 where x is the number of squares where the species was noted, while 43 is the total of BBS 1km squares/WBBS transects covered - there were 39 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. Though two squares were not covered in 2019, one not surveyed in 2018 was, resulting in a net loss of coverage of one. The changes within hectads are shown as (+/-1)

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| SE57 BBS 3 (-1) | SE67 BBS 3 | SE77 BBS 2 |
| SE56 BBS 0 | SE66 BBS 3 (+1) | 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 3 (-1) |

Number of BBS 1km squares/WBBS transects in each hectad (10km x 10km) - 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 the University of York is referred to as 'Heslington East' while the original campus site is referred to as 'Heslington West'.

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 2019

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-------------|------|-------------|-------------|------|------|-----|------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| CHL | 20th | 17th | 17th | 21st | 17th | 16th | 7th | 4th | 8th | 14th | 17th | 15th |
| LDV | 16th | - | 24th | 21st | - | - | - | - | - | 12th | 16th | 14th |
| HES | 20th | 16th | 24th | 22nd | 19th | 15th | 7th | 14th | 16th | 12th | 17th | 16th |

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 119.

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 2019. 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*

YOC Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

A single dark-bellied bird was present on Low Grounds, Wheldrake Ings on 10th December (LDV Blog).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

BBS 2/43

Naturalised breeder and winter visitor

Records were received throughout the year from suitable water bodies and

rivers, with lower numbers at CHL compared to 2018. At the beginning of the year the largest flocks were at the sites covered as part of the WeBS counts. Monthly maxima in January were 370 in the LDV on the 5th and 200 at CHL on the 27th. In February, 102 were at Heslington East on the 2nd, 220 at East Cottingwith on the 3rd and 172 at CHL on the 13th.

By the end of March only 40 local breeders were left in the LDV where 15 to 20 pairs were present during the breeding season. The first young were seen at the Knavesmire on 14th May, while breeding was confirmed at Bank Island, Bolton Percy Ings, CHL, Naburn (two pairs), Milford Common and Wheldrake Ings. This is undoubtedly an under-reporting of the true picture.

Post breeding numbers increased at CHL during June and July, while 40 were at Rowntree Park, York on 25th July and 250 at Heslington East on 5th August. In the LDV counts included 130 at Wheldrake Ings on 30th September and 243 throughout the site on 23rd October, with numbers further increasing there and at CHL towards the end of the year, where 288 at the September WeBS was the annual maximum. Elsewhere 151 were at Rawcliffe Ings on 13th October.

Monthly WeBS counts for Canada Goose

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| CHL | 168 | 60 | 92 | 37 | 31 | 182 | 222 | 85 | 288 | 23 | 93 | 272 |
| LDV | 249 | - | 41 | 41 | | | | | | 183 | 321 | 377 |
| HES | 11 | 32 | 34 | 37 | 28 | 57 | 59 | 177 | 32 | 20 | 49 | 0 |

Note: All except two on Hes East in Aug, only on Hes West in Sep and Oct

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor with a small naturalised breeding population

Due to the presence of the free-flying flock at the University of York, it can be difficult to confirm the status of birds occurring away from this site. In January a single was present at Wheldrake Ings with the large goose flock on the 18th before moving to Bank Island on the 19th and 20th and re-appearing at Elvington on the 29th. At CHL, two were present from 27th January to 8th March, while a single at Poppleton on 24th February may have been the LDV bird.

The next records came in October, with 12 present with a large Greylag Goose *Anser anser* flock on the 12th, with 13 then being reported (presumably the same birds) from Ellerton Ings on the 14th and 20th. The final record was of two at Thorganby on 21st October.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Amber listed

Naturalised breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

BBS 17/43

Well reported throughout the year from the area's water bodies and river systems. The LDV once again held the largest numbers, with record-breaking numbers present during November, while counts were significantly lower at CHL at the end of the year compared to 2018.

In the LDV during January, the peak count came on the 14th, when 1867 were

present, including 625 at NDC. Also in January, 300 were at Carr Lane, Strensall on the 8th and 270 at Nunnington Lake on the 26th, with 260 still present there on 8th February. Numbers in the LDV decreased to 500 by mid-February and unseasonably warm weather saw birds paired up by the 22nd.

The first three goslings were seen at St George's Field Car Park, York on 20th March, followed in April by young seen at Ouse Bank on the 5th and a pair with five young at Tower Gardens the next day. In April a full count in the LDV produced 128 adults and 34 goslings on the 22nd, with 41+ goslings at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th. In May in the LDV, 203 adults and 83 goslings were present, with 11 further pairs raising 34 goslings on ponds adjacent to the LDV. Breeding was also confirmed at Allerthorpe OGP (37 goslings), Bolton Percy Ings, CHL, Foggathorpe, Heslington East, Naburn (three pairs), NDC, SHL (three pairs), Strensall, Stamford Bridge and Wigginton.

Post breeding, 380 adults and 100 fledged young were in the LDV by the end of June. 170 were present at Strensall on 16th July, while in August numbers at Heslington East peaked at 520 on the 5th. Also in August, counts included 200 at Easthorpe on the 26th and 300 at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 27th. In the LDV counts increased during September with 175 over Elvington on the 18th, 306 over northwest at Bank Island on the 27th and 400 at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th. Numbers continued to increase in the LDV during October, while 3400 on 11th November represented a new reserve record, with 2470 still present in early December. Elsewhere in the area, significant counts included 200 at SHL on 31st October, while in November 500 were at Ozendyke Ings on the 19th, with 760 there on 1st December. 270 were at Kirkby Wharfe on 28th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Greylag Goose

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| CHL | 5 | 9 | 13 | 5 | 11 | 202 | 114 | 0 | 674 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| LDV | 1811 | - | 226 | 128 | | | | | | 1417 | 2851 | 1780 |
| HES | 76 | 83 | 101 | 80 | 83 | 113 | 95 | 415 | 71 | 159 | 51 | 78 |

Note: All except two on Hes East in Aug and all except one on Hes West in Dec

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and winter visitor

The York area continues to host a small wintering population as well as seeing regular flocks passing over as birds move between wintering areas in Norfolk and Lancashire. There is also an increasing wintering flock on the Humber which regularly feeds on the Wolds. In January, six were at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st, remaining to the 8th, with 16 present on the 20th, while 54 were at Brumber Hill and a single at Newburgh Priory on the 1st and one at Nunnington Lake on the 26th. During January around 1500 passed north/northwest through the LDV, including 240 on the 18th and 270 on the 20th, with 250 over Bank Island the next day, and 300 on the 26th. Elsewhere in January, heading north west were 160 at Brumber Hill on the 7th, 110 at Riccall and 200 at Heslington East on the 18th, with 262 at Clifton Moor on the 19th, and 274 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 20th.

Flocks during February included 202 northwest over Bank Island on the 3rd, 200 north at Poppleton on the 5th and 109 flew north at Bolton Percy on the 12th, with 450 northwest over Thornton and 100 over NDC the same day. Sustained passage from the 21st to the 23rd included a total of 1174 through the LDV, 150 northwest at Easthorpe and 100 northwest at Heworth - all on the 21st. On the 22nd, 210 flew west in two skeins over Milford Common. In March a flock of 26 appeared at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st, with 22 still present in the area on the 28th but just five on the 31st. 34 were in fields at Poppleton on the 2nd. The only migrating flocks were 'sizeable flocks' calling after dark at NDC on the 4th and 6th and 40 northwest over Bank Island on the 23rd. Lingering birds in April and May included up to 12 still at Wheldrake Ings to the 12th, some moving between there and NDC, with five at the latter site from the 17th to 20th May. The last were one at Bolton Percy Ings on 29th May and one at Wheldrake Ings on 16th June.

The first returning birds were 70 which flew north over Kirkby Wharfe on 13th September, with 57 west over Bolton Percy Ings the next day, then 70 over Acomb and 51 over Wheldrake Ings heading south on the 15th. On the 16th, 63 flew over Elvington. On 23rd September 120 flew southeast over Poppleton and 100 north over Hagg Bridge on the 24th, while on the 30th, 213 flew south over Bank Island and 300 east over Sherburn in Elmet. During October, 6000+ were recorded in the LDV, with one or two lingering during the month with the Greylag Goose *Anser anser* flocks. Larger flocks included 476 on the 3rd, 423 south on the 12th with 300 over Skipwith and 470 over the valley on the 14th. 840 in or over the valley on the 15th included 550 feeding on stubble near North Duffield. 200 passed south over Thorganby Ings on the 16th, with 320 over Thorganby on the 19th, 419 over Melbourne on the 23rd, followed by 200+ over Wheldrake on the 24th, 300 at Melbourne on the 25th and 350 over Bank Island on the 27th. On the 28th 220 flew southeast over Thorganby and 600+ flew west over Melbourne towards dusk on the 29th, with 200 east the following morning and 230 over Thorganby daily to the month-end. Elsewhere 300 flew south over Bolton Percy on 30th October. Passage decreased during November, although 200 were present in the Thorganby area on the 2nd, while 95 flew in to roost at Thornton Ings at dusk on the 15th with 115 seen flying out at dawn on the 16th - presumably commuting between fields on the Wolds and this roost site. Up to five lingered at Bank Island, with seven over Melbourne on the 29th. At Ozendyke Ings 16 on 19th November reduced to 12 by 1st December. During December 200 flew over Bolton Percy on the 4th and 98 on the 31st. In the LDV, 45 were in the Melbourne area on the 1st, with 117 there on the 16th, and 98 throughout on the 28th. Flocks of 90 at Thornton, 32 at Hagg Bridge and 42 at East Cottingham were observed feeding in fields on the 29th, with 26 remaining at Hagg Bridge on the 31st.

Tundra Bean Goose *Anser serrirostris*
Scarce winter visitor

YOC

Another poor year. In January one was at Bank Island on the 4th (CSR, AF) and presumably the same bird was at Aughton on the 15th (CSR, MFJ). Later in the year one flew calling over Bank Island on 31st October (CSR).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

YOC Red listed

Scarce winter visitor

On 1st January a singleton was at Newburgh Priory, with eight at Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings from the 1st to the 15th, and five at NDC on the 11th. On 19th January, 11 were at NDC, with 12 at Bank Island, the last records until March. On 14th March a single was at Wistow Clough, one at Kirkby Wharfe on the 26th and 27th and four at Wheldrake Ings on the 31st. Finally one was present at Wheldrake Ings from the 22nd to 28th April.

The first returning birds appeared in November with two immatures at Ellerton on the 16th, followed by 33 south over Bank Island on the 22nd, with a single there on the 29th, the same day as seven adults were at Melbourne which stayed to 1st December. Also on 1st December, a family party of seven took up residence at Thorganby Ings. They were joined by another bird from the 7th, before moving to Bank Island on the 9th and remaining to the month-end.

Two Greenland White-fronted Geese *A. a. flavirostris* were at Bank Island on the 24th and 25th November (DW).

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Amber listed

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

BBS 3/43

Widespread in suitable habitat, though predominantly found in the southern half of the recording area. CHL and the LDV continue to hold the largest numbers, but there was a 45% decrease in numbers evident from WeBS counts at CHL (cf. max of 138 in August 2018). Monthly maxima at CHL were all WeBS counts (see table below). At the beginning of the year peak counts included 21 at Kirkby Wharfe on 6th January, while in February up to 90 were present in the LDV, with 12 at Heslington East on the 1st, and 14 still at Kirkby Wharfe on 17th March. In March 89 were present in the LDV on the 24th, with at least half of the birds at NDC, as well as some birds incubating clutches in the valley. At Newburgh Priory 11 were present during March increasing to 25 during May. In the LDV during May numbers peaked at 144 before dropping to 52 by the month-end, while 22 were at Heslington East on the 20th.

In the LDV during the breeding season, 13 pairs were present including single pairs at Bank Island (three young), Pocklington Canal at Melbourne (seven young), Pocklington Canal at Storwood (four young) and Sutton upon Derwent (five young) with two pairs at Wheldrake Ings (three young) and NDC (four young). Breeding pairs were also present at Allerthorpe OGP (five young), CHL (three pairs and nine young), Heslington East (two young), Lakeside Way at Malton, Milford Common (two pairs and 11 young) and Yorkshire Arboretum (nine young).

Post breeding, 13 were at Newburgh Priory during June, while in September 15 were at Milford Common on the 3rd and 22 non-breeders were in the LDV in addition to the family parties. In October, up to 15 were at Newburgh Priory, while peak monthly counts in the LDV were 79 on 20th October, 82 on 16th November (WeBS) and 92 on 1st December. During November 14 were at Ryther Ings, with 12 at Bolton Percy Ings and 13 at Kirkby Wharfe, where numbers increased to 20 on 28th December. On 31st December 14 were at Heslington East.

Monthly WeBS counts for Mute Swan

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| CHL | 64 | 44 | 38 | 42 | 39 | 60 | 45 | 49 | 43 | 48 | 26 | 25 |
| LDV | 81 | - | 89 | 128 | | | | | | 61 | 82 | 88 |
| HES | 8 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 11 | 12 |

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

YOC Amber listed

The only record at the beginning of the year was of four which spent 30 minutes at Bank Island on 25th January, before continuing northeast up the River Derwent (CSR). At the end of the year, a pair, including the returning colour-ringed bird "702" was found at Ellerton on 28th December, moving to Bubwith Ings the same day (JLe et al.), and were again present at Aughton Ings on 31st December (CSR, DMB).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

Amber listed

The LDV continues to be the most important wintering site in Yorkshire. In the first winter period peak counts in the LDV included up to 97 during January and 82 during February, with the wintering flock in the southern half of the valley. Also in January, three flew west over Milford Common on the 3rd and 33 flew northwest over Wheldrake Ings on the 20th. During February, the first northerly passage birds were 23 northwest on the 18th and five the next day. Following nocturnal passage overnight through the LDV on the 22nd/23rd, 70 flew over Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd, with 32 over Fangfoss the next day, when birds were also heard over York at midnight. On the 25th, 72 passed through Wheldrake Ings and 12 flew over York. A further 50 passed through the LDV during the rest of February. During March, up to 71 continued to be present in the LDV. Passage during March included at least 848 which moved through the LDV, with an estimate of over 1000 being involved if uncounted nocturnal herds were included. The biggest passage days in the LDV were 223 on the 19th and 129 on the 25th. Elsewhere during March, northward moving birds included 13 over Copmanthorpe on the 13th and 138 over Bolton Percy Ings on the 19th. The 20th saw flocks of 42 at Ampleforth, 19 at Bolton Percy Ings, 40 at Church Fenton, 35 at Milford Common and 70 over New Earswick. On the 22nd 13 flew over Rufforth Tip, with 50 over Monks Cross the next day. On 24th, 60 passed over Huntington and Osbaldwick, with 24 settling on Wharfe Ings to the 25th. At Church Ings, Acaster, 18 were present on the 26th with 49 the next day, when four were at Kirkby Wharfe. On the 27th, 11 flew over Brayton Barff and Bolton Percy, while on the 29th, 17 briefly stopped at Red House and two flew over Rufforth Tip. The final spring records came during April with three at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th, 30 at NDC on the 10th and 30 at Easthorpe on the 12th. A single was still at NDC on the 14th, but was picked up and taken into care on the 18th and later died weighing just 4kg.

The first returning birds were 12 which flew south over NDC on 21st

September, and a single there on the 28th. Early October saw four at Clifton Ings on the 4th with 15 at Heslington East the next day, increasing to 19 there on the 8th, with eight still present on the 28th. In the LDV, numbers built up to 71 by the 26th while a total of 181 went through the valley on passage during the month. On the 21st 41 were at NDC. Elsewhere, nine were at Bolton Percy Ings and 19 flew southeast over Clifton Ings on the 21st, with a single over Church Fenton the next day and 16 southeast over Gilling East on the 25th. On 28th October seven flew south over Poppleton and two flew southeast over Easthorpe on the 30th. The wintering flock in the LDV continued to build during November with peak count of 170 on the 10th and 140 at the end of the month. On 3rd November 40 passed over York, with 32 at Nether Poppleton on the 9th, eight flew south over Acomb on the 13th and ten flew south over Clifton Ings on the 17th. Also in November, 13 were present at Kirkby Wharfe from the 19th, reducing to four by 29th December. In December, seven were at CHL on the 17th, while 188 were present in the LDV on the 18th when 154 roosted at Thorganby with another 34 roosting at Thornton.

Monthly WeBS counts for Whooper Swan

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| LDV | 90 | - | 19 | 0 | | | | | | 2 | 129 | 149 |

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Scarce visitor and naturalised breeder in small numbers

A small breeding population continues to be present in the LDV, where they are resident around various ponds in the East Cottingwith, Storwood and Melbourne areas. Early in the year, up to four could be found around East Cottingwith. The first young appeared during April; a pair with four goslings was at Seaton Ross on the 15th and another pair with two goslings was at East Cottingwith on the 19th. In May a pair was at Wheldrake Ings on the 6th and 14th, while four pairs along with three goslings were located in the East Cottingwith area. Three adults were at Wheldrake Ings on 1st June with two there on the 18th.

A successful breeding season saw a count of 12 in the East Cottingwith area on 25th August, while record numbers were present in the LDV during October. In October, seven flew west at Bank Island on the 5th with four at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th and 12th. A record count of 17 on the 12th included 12 on Low Grounds and a pair with three half-grown young at East Cottingwith, which were also caught and ringed. Also in October, nine flew over Bank Island on the 19th and ten were at Thornton on the 25th. An adult with three young remained at East Cottingwith during November and December. The only record away from the LDV was of a single at Kirkby Wharfe on 28th December.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Amber listed

Common winter visitor, migrant breeder and scarce autumn passage migrant

BBS 3/43

Numbers in the LDV were lower than in 2018, with peaks of 74 on 29th January, 60 during February and up to 80 during March. Along the River Wharfe a

maximum of seven was at both Bolton Percy Ings on 17th March and at Kirkby Wharfe on 26th March. Elsewhere, counts at Newburgh Priory increased from five on 5th January to a peak of 14 on 16th February, dropping to eight on 14th April. One or two were also reported from the Acaster area, Brumber Hill, CHL and Eden Camp. In April, four were at Hessay Pond, while one was paired with the Common Shelduck/Australian Shelduck hybrid at Eden Camp on the 24th.

By April 60 pairs were estimated throughout the LDV. In the LDV during May, 62 off-duty males were counted on the 18th and 72 on the 24th. Also in May, two were still at Hessay Pond on the 4th, with pairs at Naburn on the 21st and High Moor on the 28th while five were at Newburgh Priory on the 3rd with a pair remaining there from the 28th to 17th June. There was no confirmation of breeding outside of the LDV, although, during June a pair was at Huby on the 3rd and one at Skipwith Common on the 6th, when a pair was at Stamford Bridge Flash and a pair was at Bolton Percy Ings the next day. Numbers in the LDV quickly decreased during June as birds departed for the upper Humber from 70 on the 1st to just three on the 29th and no records during July.

The only records in August were of single immature birds at Heslington East on the 14th, having been present for a week and at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th. With no reports in September, October saw singles at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd and at Bolton Percy Ings on the 12th. Wintering birds started to return to the LDV during November with 13 at Ellerton Ings on the 3rd, increasing to 36 on the 10th and peaking at 52 on the 16th. Two were at Kirkby Wharfe on 24th November. All records came from the LDV during December, with an impressive count of 131 on the 14th, of which 74 were in the traditional Thorganby/Ellerton area.

Monthly WeBS counts for Shelduck

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| LDV | 63 | - | 57 | 61 | | | | | | - | 52 | 131 |

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Scarce resident breeder (Introduced/Category C)

BBS 1/43

CHL continues to be the stronghold for this species in the York area, although increasing numbers are being encountered on the area's main river systems. At CHL, peak counts at the beginning of the year included 32 on 20th January, nine on 17th February (both WeBS) and ten on 28th April, when pairs were seen flying into a couple of woods around the estate. Proof of breeding came on 25th May when two young were seen on the Great Lake, while counts of 26 on 23rd June, 41 on 30th June and 36 on 7th July suggested a good breeding season. It is likely numbers are under-reported as they can disperse to the numerous ponds and streams around the estate. 21 were still present in August, then numbers dropped to nine in September, with between one and five seen monthly thereafter (WeBS).

There were also regular reports from the River Ouse at Red House and Beningbrough. A pair was seen flying into Redhouse Wood during March and April, while five males were on the River Ouse at Beningbrough on 5th May. In June, four were at Redhouse Lagoon on the 13th. Breeding was proven at

Beningbrough on 5th August, when a juvenile was seen with four females. On 25th August 40 were seen flying along the River Ouse at Beningbrough at dusk indicating the population there is under estimated.

A noticeable increase in sightings was reported along the Lower Wharfe, with 17 bird days in 2019 (cf. four in 2018). The five seen on 8th September at Bolton Percy Ings were presumably the same as the five flying east there on the 17th. Away from these main sites, a pair was at Stearsby Hagg on 1st January, while a pair at Huttons Ambo on 16th March, followed by nine at Kirkham Priory at 13th April may indicate another significant population in this area. A male was on a farm pond at Kexby on 24th May, while a female was at Wheldrake Ings on 7th September and a drake at Bank Island on 1st October.

Garganey *Spatula querquedula*
Scarce migrant breeder

YOC Amber listed

Another excellent year following a good showing in 2018, although all but two records came from the LDV. The first records came in March with pairs at Ellerton Ings on the 24th and on the Refuge at Wheldrake Ings on the 31st. The main arrival into the LDV came from 6th April when pairs were present at Wheldrake Ings and Aughton Ings. For the rest of April there were regular sightings of pairs at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings. By the 22nd three pairs and a drake were present in the LDV, with birds also at NDC and two were seen at CHL during the WeBS count on 21st April. Numbers continued to increase during May with further reports from Bank Island, Wheldrake Ings and NDC with birds often showing well. Full surveys in the valley included seven drakes and three females on the 6th and four pairs and three drakes on the 13th. The first young were two seen at Bank Island on the 18th, followed by another female with a brood of eight there on the 30th. In June daily sightings continued from Bank Island, Wheldrake Ings and NDC, while another family party was at Wheldrake Ings when a female with six young was present from the 29th. July saw further broods with five at NDC from the 8th to the 14th and a third brood of two was at Bank Island on the 23rd. A single at Heslington East on 22nd August was the only other report away from the LDV. Also in August, the only reports in the LDV were received from Wheldrake Ings, where the five fledged juveniles and one or two adult females remained early in the month with four still present to the 28th. During September birds at Wheldrake Ings included eight on the 3rd with a single female remaining there on the 18th and 24th, the last record of the year. See RBBP report on page 119.

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

Amber listed

The LDV held national important numbers during the first winter period, where counts included 198 on 23rd February, with numbers peaking during March when 283 were present on the 3rd, with 314 on the 30th. In April, 274 were still present on the 3rd before dropping to 210 by the 20th. The peak count along the Lower Wharfe during the first winter period was 19 at Bolton Percy Ings on 17th March. Elsewhere in the area, one or two were reported from Byland, Castle Howard,

Heslington East, Mill Beck, Newburgh Priory, Rawcliffe Lake, Riccall and SHL up to early April.

During the breeding season, up to 70 pairs were present in the LDV during May with broods seen from 8th June, and breeding confirmed at Wheldrake Ings and NDC. See RBBP report on page 119. Elsewhere, the only report was of a pair at CHL on 23rd June although there was no evidence of breeding.

During August up to ten were still present in the LDV, while two 'female types' were at Heslington West on the 21st. In September, 24 were at Bolton Percy Ings on the 30th, when 11 were at Wheldrake Ings. Records increased during October with the peak count along the Lower Wharfe 61 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 12th, where 56 were present on 9th November, the same day as 15 were at Kirkby Wharfe and 51 were present at Bolton Percy Ings on 21st December. Numbers in the LDV increased during October, with 12 at Bank Island on the 4th, 54 throughout the LDV on the 11th and 130 by the 20th. Peak counts in the LDV included 156 on 9th November and 186 on 29th December. Elsewhere there were only a handful of reports during this period with CHL producing four on 11th October and five on 29th December. A single was at Rawcliffe Ings on 13th October and three reported from Askham Bar on 21st December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Shoveler

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| LDV | 221 | - | 247 | 210 | | | | | | 41 | 127 | 147 |

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and migrant breeder

BBS 1/43

During the first winter period the LDV held nationally important numbers including 239 on 7th February and 283 at Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd. On 3rd March there was a record count of 602, including 341 at Wheldrake Ings, taking numbers above the internationally important levels, although numbers dropped to 210 by the 24th. Counts at CHL were similar to those seen during 2018 (see WeBS). The peak count along the Lower Wharfe during the first winter period was 35 at Wharfe Ings on 25th March. Smaller numbers were recorded elsewhere with peak site counts of 12 at Heslington East, 13 at Newburgh Priory, a pair at Angram ponds, Riccall, two at Allerthorpe OGP, seven at Wistow Clough, three at Foggathorpe and eight at Acaster Church Ings.

Up to 107 pairs were located in the LDV during May with the first broods appearing from 7th May. See RBBP report on page 119. A pair was at Milford Common in April and May, but there was no evidence of breeding. A pair was at Ulleskelf Mires during April and May, and a female with three small young was there on 20th June. Breeding was also confirmed at CHL where a brood of eight was present on 30th June.

Post breeding, 18 were at Wheldrake Ings on 11th August, while in September, 33 were at Newburgh Priory on the 6th, with 32 at NDC on the 21st. In late autumn and the second winter period the peak count at Bolton Percy Ings was 18 on 12th October. Counts at CHL were significantly down on 2018 levels during

this period (cf. 42), with a maximum of four on 19th November. The LDV saw numbers increase during October from 64 on the 11th to 154 by the 20th, while in November 161 were present on the 16th, with 204 on 29th December. Elsewhere, 29 were at Newburgh Priory on 4th October with two there on 3rd November. Two were at Rawcliffe Ings on 13th October. At Heslington East, five were present during October and November, with ten on 6th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Gadwall

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| CHL | 64 | 37 | 11 | 13 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| LDV | 198 | - | 211 | 217 | | | | | | 44 | 161 | 165 |

Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

Amber listed

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

In the LDV, numbers reduced due to freezing conditions after a count of 9827 on 16th January, although 9200 were present on 17th February. During March in the LDV, 8820 were present on the 3rd; decreasing to 5170 by the 24th, while a large departure on the night of the 30th saw just 1027 remaining on the 31st. The peak counts at CHL (see WeBS table) were significantly lower than those seen in 2018 (cf. 344 in January 2018). The peak counts along the Lower Wharfe during the first winter period came from Bolton Percy Ings, with 120 on 12th February and 150 on 16th March. Just ten remained there on 22nd March, with 30 at Wharfe Ings on the 25th. On 18th January 53 were at Angram ponds, Riccall, while a single was at Newburgh Priory on 5th April. During April the majority of reports came from the LDV where 970 were still present on the 12th, before reducing to 150 by the 23rd and 33 pairs present on the 30th.

During May, up to seven pairs and three additional drakes remained, mainly at Wheldrake Ings, where birds continued to be reported to 21st July when a single male was present. Breeding was confirmed at Wheldrake Ings on 11th June when a brood of four was found. See RBBP report on page 119.

The first returning birds were 60 at Thorganby on 2nd September, two at Milford Common the next day, four at Newburgh Priory on the 21st, when 35 were present at NDC, four at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th and six at Newburgh Priory on the 28th. On the 30th 200 were back at Wheldrake Ings, the same day as three at Bolton Percy Ings. Numbers in the LDV quickly increased during October with 1868 on the 12th rising to 3200 by the 21st. Numbers continued to increase during November and December, with a peak count of 11,300 on 31st December. Counts along the River Wharfe included 50 at Bolton Percy Ings on 22nd October, with 180 there on 22nd November and 280 on 19th December, while the peak count was 410 at Ozendyke Ings on 23rd December. Elsewhere, on 30th October eight were at Heslington East and 112 at CHL on 29th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Wigeon

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| CHL | 112 | 181 | 18 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 25 | 55 |
| LDV | 9827 | - | 5173 | 490 | | | | | | 1868 | 7300 | 8713 |

American Wigeon *Mareca americana*

YNU

Very rare winter visitor

All records came in January. The drake present at Bubwith Ings at the end of 2018 was present there again on 1st January (JS). It then relocated to Low Grounds and Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd (AF, DMB) and was back at NDC on the 5th (CSR). An adult female was then found at NDC on the 10th (CSR, DW) with the drake re-appearing at Wheldrake again on the 13th (GF et al.).

The records pertaining to the drake have been accepted by the YNU, the record concerning the female is still subject to acceptance.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Amber listed

Common resident breeder and winter visitor

BBS 19/43

At the beginning of the year the peak count from the LDV was 1400 on 2nd February. Away from the core sites (see WeBS below), counts at Newburgh Priory included 66 on 13th January, increasing to 117 on 16th February. On 23rd January, 53 were in Hull Road Park, with 46 there on 1st February.

The first young were at Heslington Tillmire on 4th April where a brood of six was present, increasing to a crèche of 15 on the 9th. Successful breeding was widely reported including broods at Bank Island, where three broods totalling 27 young were present on 27th April. Breeding was also confirmed at Bolton Percy Ings, CHL, Escrick, Gilling, Heslington East and West, Malton, Melbourne, Milford Common, Norton, Rawcliffe Lake, SHL, Skipwith Common, Stamford Bridge, Warhill and Wheldrake Ings.

Post breeding, numbers started to increase in June with 54 at Hessay Pond on the 2nd, 40 at Hull Road Park on the 14th and 74 at Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd. There were 96 at Milford Common on 5th July, with 85 there on 6th August and 78 on 3rd September. Also in July, 50 were at Rowntree Park on the 25th. Numbers during August included 107 at Wheldrake Ings at dusk on the 7th, while 125 were at Newburgh Priory and 50 at Skipwith Common on the 12th. In September, 206 were at Newburgh Priory on the 6th, 150 at NDC on the 21st and 50 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 30th. In the LDV, up to 1000 were present by the end of October, 1437 in November (WeBS), with 1200 present during December. At Heslington West, numbers peaked at 264 (WeBS) in August with between 110 and 140 present to the end of the year. On 30th October, 84 were present at Newburgh Priory.

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2019



Left to right and top to bottom

White-fronted Goose © Adam Firth

Bewick's Swan © Jono Leadley

Ruddy Shelduck © Paul Doherty

American Wigeon © Duncan Bye

Green-winged Teal © Adam Firth

Scaup © Jono Leadley

Common Scoter © Jan Nobel

Monthly WeBS counts for Mallard

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| CHL | 115 | 66 | 20 | 41 | 30 | 87 | 105 | 194 | 161 | 72 | 47 | 83 |
| LDV | 988 | - | 1023 | 455 | | | | | | 280 | 1437 | 983 |
| HES | 176 | 55 | 51 | 61 | 80 | 109 | 181 | 264 | 133 | 136 | 131 | 115 |

Note: More on Hes West in Jan and last three months

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and rare breeder

Nationally important numbers were present in the LDV during both winter periods. Peak counts in the LDV were 307 on 26th January, 200 at Wheldrake Ings on 17th February and 365 on 3rd March. Numbers dropped to 136 by 31st March. Along the Lower Wharfe during the first winter period, birds were present from 10th February, when 25 were at Bolton Percy Ings, with four at Wharfe Ings. The peak count at Bolton Percy Ings was 79 on 17th March, with two at Kirkby Wharfe on the 26th the last from this area. Also in March a single was at CHL on the 8th and two at Church Ings, Acaster on the 27th. During April, numbers in the LDV continued to decrease from 100 on the 3rd to 78 on the 13th and just four pairs present at the month-end. A single pair remained at Wheldrake Ings in early May, although there was no repeat of last year's breeding success and the pair was last seen at Bank Island on the 12th.

The first returning bird was at the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th and 26th September, and one was at Heslington West the next day. Numbers quickly increased during October, starting with two at Bolton Percy Ings on the 2nd and 3rd, with four at Bank Island on the 5th, and 32 at Aughton Ings on the 12th. By the 21st 111 were back in the LDV, while in November, 321 were present on the 16th when 215 were at Wheldrake Ings. Numbers continued to increase during December with 503 throughout on the 29th and 352 at Wheldrake Ings on the 31st. Along the River Wharfe small numbers were present during November; peaking with 36 at Bolton Percy Ings on 23rd December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Pintail

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| LDV | 307 | - | 137 | 27 | | | | | | 34 | 321 | 417 |

Teal *Anas crecca*

Amber listed

Abundant winter visitor and resident breeder in small numbers

During the first winter period, internationally important numbers were present in the LDV, including up to 6154 during January and 5000 in February. Numbers started to reduce during March from 3330 to 2130 by the 24th and 980 on the 31st. During April, 780 were still present on the 12th, with 423 on the 22nd. The peak count along the Lower Wharfe during the first winter period was 280 at Bolton Percy Ings on 11th February, with 90 still there on 17th March and 120 at Kirkby Wharfe on 26th March. Birds also wintered in low double-figures at Milford Common, with a peak of 33 on 15th January. At Heslington East, peak counts

included 97 on 25th January, 94 on 18th February and 54 on 20th March. At Newburgh Priory the maximum was 91 on 16th February. Elsewhere in January 70 were at Brumber Hill, while counts along the River Derwent saw 160 at Hemingbrough and 150 at Wressle on the 30th. In February, 109 were at Brighton on the 15th, with 50 at Angram ponds, Riccall on the 21st. During this period smaller numbers were also present at Acaster Airfield, Allertorpe Common, Heslington Tillmire, Hessay Pond, Kelsit Grange, Kirkham, Rawcliffe Lake, Strensall Common, Wass, Wheldrake Wood and Wistow.

During May all records came from the LDV where an estimated 55 pairs were present early in the month, with reports mainly from Wheldrake Ings, Bank Island and NDC. Small numbers continued to be reported during June and July from these sites, with the only evidence of successful breeding coming from Bank Island when a brood of seven was seen on 23rd July. Away from the LDV, nine were at Newburgh Priory on 17th June and four at CHL on the 23rd.

Post breeding, numbers increased during August at Wheldrake Ings with 54 on the 31st. Also during August a single was at Ulleskelf Mires on the 8th and nine at Newburgh Priory on the 12th, where 55 were present on 6th September, with 131 there on 30th October. Also during September, 11 were at Milford Common on the 18th, while numbers built up to 700 at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th. By 21st October 3200 had returned to the LDV, with 5000 present on 31st December. In the second winter period the peak count along the River Wharfe was 550 at Bolton Percy Ings on 17th November, with 210 present on 21st December. At CHL the peak annual count of 196 came on 15th December (WeBS). At Heslington East, 32 on 4th November increased to a peak of 100 on 28th December.

Monthly WeBS counts for Teal

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| CHL | 133 | 24 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 24 | 90 | 28 | 196 |
| LDV | 6154 | - | 2130 | 631 | | | | | | 2478 | 3274 | 4438 |

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis* YOC

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant

This species has now been recorded annually in the area since 2015. All records came from Wheldrake Ings during January. A drake was present on the 1st (SF), 10th, 11th, and 13th (JLe) and was re-found on the 25th and 26th (AF).

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* YOC

Vagrant, though escapes from wildfowl collections are more likely

There were two records, both in November. Four drakes found at Aughton Ings on the 3rd (DMB, JLe et al.) were followed by a single drake at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th (LDV Blog).

Pochard *Aythya ferina* Red listed

Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers

A seemingly poor first winter period in the LDV, with the only flock of

significance being at Heslington East, while the continued lack of birds at CHL remains a concern, with a single present in January and four on 17th February (WeBS) then three on the 23rd. At Heslington East the flock peaked at 82 on 10th January, with 81 (61 males) still present on 1st February, decreasing to ten by 27th March. Virtually absent from the LDV during January other than singles at Wheldrake Ings, in February there was an influx with 19 at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th increasing to 63 (42 males) by the 17th when a total of 81 were in the valley, before quickly dropping to just one or two by the end of March. There may have been some movement of birds between the LDV and Heslington East during this period. At Bolton Percy Ings, two were present on 10th February with a single the next day and a single there on 17th March. Also on 17th March a pair was at Derwenthorpe pond, Osbaldwick. During April, two were at Norton on the 7th and two at Hessay Pond on the 20th.

At Wheldrake Ings there was no evidence of breeding although one to four were occasionally recorded to 15th July. Breeding was confirmed at Heslington West where broods of two and three were present on 12th June and the brood of three were well-enough grown to be included in WeBS counts later in the year. Breeding was also suspected at Heslington East.

The only records during August and September came from WeBS counts at Heslington East and West. Numbers there started to build during October, with 40 present on 4th November, though the maximum in December was just 11 on the 6th. Extensive flooding in the LDV from October saw good numbers present, with 11 at Bubwith Ings increasing to 43 by the 10th, while in November 67 included 58 at Aughton Ings, with 159 in the whole LDV by the 16th. Birds seemed to move to Wheldrake Ings during November, where 128 were present on the 24th when 171 were in the LDV as a whole. Numbers remained high in December when the flock started to move back to the south of the LDV with 187 on the 11th including 41 at Ellerton Ings and 83 at Wheldrake Ings. By 30th December, 193 were present, when 165 were at Bubwith Ings.

Monthly WeBS counts for Pochard

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| CHL | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| LDV | 0 | - | 2 | 0 | | | | | | 22 | 159 | 75 |
| HES | 53 | 13 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 21 | 1 | 10 |

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

YNU

Very rare vagrant

A drake was found with the Pochard *Aythya ferina* flock at Bubwith Ings on the afternoon of 10th October (CSR). This is the first record since 2006 and if confirmed will be the eighth record for the area.

Record subject to acceptance by the YNU

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Winter visitor and breeder in small numbers

At the beginning of the year, monthly maxima at CHL were 48 on 20th January, 52 on 23rd February, 56 on 17th March and 78 on 13th April. Numbers at Heslington East peaked at 87 in January, while 50 were present on 1st February, with 28 on 27th March and 27 on 18th February. In the LDV only low numbers were present during January, with an influx occurring during February, with 59 at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th, increasing to 240 there and at Bank Island on the 17th. Numbers peaked at 342 during March, with 200 still present at both sites on 10th April and then up to 50 pairs remained in the LDV to the month-end. Flooding along the Lower Wharfe attracted occasional birds in single figures, although 28 were at Wharfe Ings on 24th March. In March, 12 were at Rufforth Tip on the 8th and 14 were at Plassmoor Ponds, Hemingbrough on the 23rd. During the period, single figure counts were also reported from Allerthorpe Common, Hessay Pond, Newburgh Priory, Rawcliffe Lake, Riccall, Skipwith Common and Wistow Clough.

During June 31 pairs were present in the LDV, with the first broods (of five and six) reported from Wheldrake Ings on the 28th; with five pairs and 21 young present in the LDV during July. The only other confirmed breeding came from Newburgh Priory where six young were present on 4th August.

Post breeding only small numbers were reported. During October, 17 at Bubwith Ings on the 5th was the start of an influx into the LDV, increasing to 51 on the 11th while 173 were in the whole of the LDV on the 27th including 90 at Bank Island. November saw numbers peak at 264 on the 30th, with 235 still present on 15th December. Counts at Heslington East included 54 on 4th November and 57 on 31st December. At CHL monthly maxima were 85 on 14th October and 60 on 19th November before peaking at 103 on 15th December (WeBS). Elsewhere, one was at Newburgh Priory on 4th October and 15 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 10th (with one there on 8th December), and one at Gilling on 20th November.

Monthly WeBS counts for Tufted Duck

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| CHL | 48 | 42 | 56 | 73 | 32 | 25 | 7 | 20 | 17 | 85 | 36 | 103 |
| LDV | 11 | - | 342 | 91 | | | | | | 40 | 258 | 167 |
| HES | 87 | 20 | 22 | 12 | 9 | 10 | 16 | 19 | 47 | 47 | 3 | 49 |

Note: all HES were on Heslington East site apart from two on 19th May

Scaup *Aythya marila*

YOC Red listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

A better year, with several long-stayers and a flock of nine, after a relatively poor year in 2018. The only record at the beginning of the year was of a male at CHL which stayed from 23rd February to 9th March.

The first returning bird came on 13th October when a male was found at Bank Island remaining to the 15th, with an immature there on 23rd October. The next records came in November with a female at Bank Island on the 21st followed by an impressive flock of nine (including one male) at Bubwith Ings on the 24th, while

a 1st-winter drake was at Ellerton Ings on the 29th, moving to Wheldrake Ings the next day. The 1st-winter drake remained at Wheldrake Ings into December and was still present there, with two females, on the 7th when a second 1st-winter drake was at Aughton Ings. A 1st-winter drake was still present at Bubwith Ings on the 14th and again on the 21st and 22nd. Three drakes were recorded at NDC on the 27th followed by two at Aughton Ings from the 28th to the 31st. An estimated seven individuals were present in the LDV during the month.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*
Scarce passage migrant

Red listed

After a single record during 2018, a better year with four records. During March three singles were present at Bank Island - a drake on the 5th, followed by a female in the afternoon of the 18th and then another drake there on the 22nd. The only other record was of an adult female at Heslington East on 29th July.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

Amber listed

As expected, most records came from the LDV and CHL. Peak counts from CHL at the beginning of the year included 23 on 20th January (WeBS) and 30 on 23rd February. At Heslington East, four were present on 3rd January, with one or two to 2nd February. In the LDV birds were mainly present at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings, with few records from the south of the valley. Seven were at Thorganby on 2nd, while the peak count was 14 at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th. On 17th February, 15 were at Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island, with 11 at Wheldrake Ings on the 23rd. Birds remained into March, including 15 at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd, with eight there on the 10th, and 17 throughout the LDV on the 24th. Wheldrake Ings continued to hold birds during April, with eight on the 6th, while ten there and one at Bank Island on the 10th, possibly involved some spring passage. One or two were then present until the last at Wheldrake Ings on 17th April.

The first returning birds came in October with two females at Bank Island on the 27th, followed by seven at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd November. At CHL numbers increased from ten on 10th November to 20 on 9th December and again to 32 on the 29th. Numbers in the LDV continued to increase during November, with 25 at East Cottingwith Ings on the 23rd and 14 in the whole valley on the 24th. On 1st December 17 in the LDV included 14 at Ellerton Ings, while a count of 23 on the 8th saw birds split between Ellerton and Aughton. On 29th December 33 were in the LDV, while 21 were present at Aughton Ings on the 31st. The only other records came from Heslington East with two there on 6th December, then four on the 16th and one on the 23rd.

Monthly WeBS counts for Goldeneye

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| CHL | 23 | 28 | 13 | 0 | | | | | | 0 | 9 | 15 |
| LDV | 11 | - | 17 | 0 | | | | | | - | 11 | 12 |

Smew *Mergellus albellus*
Scarce winter visitor

Amber listed

The only records at the beginning of the year came in January. A redhead flew over Bank Island on the 2nd, a drake was at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th and a drake flew south down the River Derwent at North Duffield with two Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* on the 31st.

A redhead which appeared at Bank Island on 16th October was the earliest ever in the area; it remained there to 27th October. The previous earliest was a female at CHL on 25th November 1973.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Winter visitor, passage migrant and casual breeder

BBS 2/43

At the beginning of the year the largest counts were of roosting birds at Redhouse Lagoon including 94 on 9th February and 100 on the 28th. Numbers remained high during March with 59 on the 23rd, while in April 40 were still present on the 1st, with two there on 4th May the last of the spring. At Naburn Lock, peak counts included 41 on 25th January, 52 on 1st February and 22 on 7th March. Counts at CHL included 40 on 21st January, 14 on 13th February and seven on 7th March. The peak count along the Lower Wharfe during the first winter period involved 38 at Wharfe Ings on 24th March, having increased from 19 on 12th February. Elsewhere in the area, in January, 20 were at Gilling on the 8th, the same day that ten were on Rawcliffe Lake (with 11 there on 12th February). Also in January, 17 were on the River Ouse at Overton on the 16th, with 37 at Acaster the next day and eight at Nunnington Lake on the 26th. In February, ten were at Oulston Reservoir on the 21st and 36 at Moor Lane Pond on the 28th. Numbers decreased during April, but included six at Rawcliffe Ings on the 4th, three at Kirkham Priory on the 13th and six flew south at Wheldrake Ings on the 19th. Into May one or two lingered at Redhouse Lagoon and Bank Island, with the last at Kirkby Wharfe and Scoreby on the 29th.

These were the last records until three at Scagglethorpe Lane on 24th August, followed by singles at Newburgh Priory on 6th September and Redhouse Lagoon on the 21st, with four at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th. Records along the Lower Wharfe peaked at just four on 10th October at Bolton Percy Ings - with a similar number at Ryther Ings on 12th December. Also in October, four were at Gilling on the 15th and five at Bank Island on the 17th. Birds returned to Heslington West from 26th October where peak counts included 30 on the 30th, 45 on 9th November and 68 on 16th December. On 27th November 16 were at Naburn, where up to 50 were present during December. During December, 30 were at Acaster Malbis on the 8th, with 11 on the brickyard pond at Elmfield Terrace, York on the 20th and 16 at CHL on the 29th.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Resident breeder and released to shoot

BBS 23/43

Reported widely from suitable habitat, slightly over half the sightings received

occurred in spring when most counts were of low single figures. Notable coveys of more than ten were present in SE53 early in the year with 25 at Milford Common on 3rd January, 13 at Kirkby Wharfe on 4th January followed by 43 there on 12th February and 11 at Bolton Percy Ings on 17th February. Elsewhere there were 15 at Wheldrake Wood on 7th January and 12 near Gilling East on 14th February. In the autumn increased numbers were observed in the north of the region as well as in SE53. At Newburgh Priory there were 23 on 28th September, 11 on 30th October and 21 on 3rd November, while nearby Byland held 30 on 18th October. The year's highest count by far was 200 at Kirkby Wharfe on 3rd October, presumably recently released birds.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Red listed

Resident breeder and released to shoot

BBS 9/43

Widespread in the region with records received from 70 different locations, mostly of between one and six birds. Calling birds were reported at Acaster Airfield, Bank Island, Bishopthorpe, Coneysthorpe Banks Wood, Knavesmire, West Lilling, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common, Scagglethorpe Lane, Thornton, Towthorpe and Wheldrake Ings. Records of confirmed breeding were a pair with nine young at Acaster Malbis, a pair with 12 young at Arglam on 26th August and six recently fledged young at Scagglethorpe Lane on 5th September.

Larger coveys of more than six birds occurred at the following sites:

Acaster Airfield - eight on 24th November

Acaster Malbis - 15 on 2nd January

Brayton Barff - a covey of 21 in nearby fields on 2nd January

Brumber Hill - eight on 23rd December

Heslington East - seven on 3rd November

Menthorpe - up to 50 in the Menthorpe and North Duffield area on 1st December in large coveys and at least 30 on 22nd and 23rd December

Milford Common - 16 on 6th January, 41 obvious releases on 18th September, 16 on 20th November, ten on 3rd December

Pocklington Canal, Melbourne - ten on 18th October

Poppleton - ten on 1st September, 11 on 10th November

Ryther Ings - 13 on 30th August and again on 1st September, thought to be releases

SHL - 16 in the allotments briefly on 11th November

Scagglethorpe Lane - 12 on 14th February, 18 on 10th November and 2nd December

Skipwith Common - 31 between there and South Duffield on 31st December

South Duffield - ten on 31st December

Strensall - seven on 8th January

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Amber listed

Scarce migrant breeder

Another poor year with a maximum of four singing males reported in the LDV. The first was one at Wheldrake Ings on 19th May and again the next day when

another (a different bird) was singing on the Ings at Storwood. June records consisted of one singing at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st, two at East Cottingwith on the 13th and one in meadows near Brighton on the 19th. The only other report was of one calling at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th and 11th August. See RBBP report on page 119.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Resident breeder and released to shoot

BBS 38/43

Common and widespread throughout the region, counts of over 20 occurred in the autumn when many birds are released for shooting. The highest numbers were reported from SE53 with 103 at Milford Common on 18th September and 150 at Kirkby Wharfe on 3rd October. Further high counts from Milford Common included 60 on 3rd September, 38 on 20th November and 49 on 3rd December. Elsewhere there were 50 at Acaster Airfield on 3rd October, while Bank Island held 35 on 27th September and 36 on 5th October. More than 20 were also present during the autumn at Scagglethorpe Lane with 30 there on 19th September, 22 on 12th October and 24 on 29th November.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Resident breeder

BBS 1/43

Present at a minimum of 13 sites during the first winter period. Peak counts included three on the River Wharfe at Bolton Percy Ings, three at CHL, six at Gilling Redcar, six on the River Derwent at Hemingbrough, three at Stearsby Hagg, four at Wheldrake Ings and six on the River Derwent at Wressle. Two were at Heslington East and Milford Common and singles were at Bank Island, Ellerton Landing, Moor Lane Pond near Newton-on-Ouse and Riccall. Freezing conditions in late January attracted up to 28 birds to the open water of the lower River Derwent (south of Kexby) and the Pocklington Canal.

In spring territorial pairs were observed at Strensall Common and Allerthorpe OGP. Wheldrake Ings saw a peak count of 13 on 10th April following extensive flooding; numbers reduced as floodwater receded but there were still several pairs present late in the month. A pair and two fledged chicks were on the pool at Wheldrake Ings from 16th June. Two adults and a juvenile were on CHL and another adult with a juvenile were on adjacent New River Pond on 23rd June. Adults with an almost full-size chick were seen at Skipwith Common on 14th July. Two pairs bred successfully at Milford Common with a minimum of two juveniles present there on 6th August and 3rd September. Two adults and two juveniles were at Heslington East on 12th September and one unfledged juvenile there on 16th September.

Seven birds plus a very small chick were on the lagoons east of Rufforth Tip on 22nd September. Three immatures lingered at Wheldrake Ings during the first two weeks of October and, possibly the same three immatures were on the farm pond at East Cottingwith on 18th October. Other autumn sightings included a minimum of four at Bank Island, two at Newburgh Priory and eight along the Pocklington Canal. A single was regular at SHL from June until November.

During the second winter period the highest counts were six at Gilling Redcar, five at Kirkby Wharfe and three at NDC. At other sites, Bolton Percy Ings, Heslington East, the River Foss at Huntington, the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne and Wheldrake Ings each held two birds and Bank Island, CHL, Hull Road Park (York) and Sandburn Golf Club hosted singles.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Resident breeder and passage visitor

A record from Wheldrake Ings on 1st January was the only report until an influx from mid-February brought single birds to CHL, Heslington West, Rawcliffe Lake and Wheldrake Ings, increasing to four at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd February and three at CHL the following day. By March singles were also at Bank Island, Allerthorpe OGP and Melbourne Park Farm, two were on Bubwith Ings and two were on ponds near Hemingbrough (with a single at the latter site in July). A pair at Wheldrake Ings on 14th March remained to the month-end. A pair was at Pool Bridge Farm near Crockey Hill on 4th April, while at Heslington West a pair that was displaying on 11th April was still present in June but there were no signs of breeding. Five were at CHL in early March with two pairs there on 21st March and a single occupied nest on 23rd June. One pair nested at Rawcliffe Lake with two adults and two juveniles present there throughout June and a single adult and juvenile remaining on 27th July. A juvenile present briefly at Wheldrake Ings after heavy rain on 10th September was a presumed passage bird. A single at Bolton Percy on 13th October was the only record from this location. At Heslington East two birds were present from June until November with a single remaining to the year-end. Four were on extensive flooding at Wheldrake Ings on 10th November with a single there on the 16th when one was also at NDC. An immature was on floodwater at Bubwith Ings on 22nd December.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

YOC *Red listed*

Rare winter visitor

A 1st-winter bird was found at CHL on 5th January (TJ, JA-B); it remained there for over two weeks to the delight of local birders and was last reported on 21st January. This was followed in March by an adult bird in summer plumage at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd (DMB) that was present for one day only. These were the first records for the recording area since 2010.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

YOC *Red listed*

Rare winter visitor

One was found on the River Derwent at North Duffield on 18th November and was still present the following day (CSR, FM et al.): the third record since 2016.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

YOC *Amber listed*

Scarce passage visitor; formerly rare breeder

None in 2019, after records in six of the past ten years, most recently 2018.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* YOC
Scarce vagrant, but escapes are more likely
None in 2019, after records in three of the past ten years, most recently 2017.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* YOC *Amber listed*
Very rare spring and summer migrant
None in 2019, after records in three of the past ten years, most recently 2018.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* YOC *Amber listed*
Scarce winter visitor
One was seen at South Milford on 6th November, flying from a westerly direction over South Milford station before descending into the Milford Common area, much to the surprise of the two observers (MCa, PCa).

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* YNU
Very rare vagrant
A summer-plumaged adult bird flew into Bank Island from the east on 28th June. It paused briefly on the scrape there before moving off towards Wheldrake Ings (FM, CSR). This constitutes the third record for the YOC recording area.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
Resident breeder BBS 8/43
Widely distributed throughout the region, the majority of reports were of ones or twos. The only double-figure counts in the early part of the year occurred at Wheldrake Ings where there were 11 on both the 17th and 23rd February. The highest counts away from the LDV were eight together at Naburn on 25th January and nine at CHL on 17th February.

Numbers in the LDV rose in spring as birds returned to the heronry at Thicket Priory adjacent to Wheldrake Ings. The heronry had 25-27 occupied nests on 19th April with fledged young first noted at Wheldrake Ings on 17th May and at NDC on 21st May. Breeding was also attempted at three other sites. At CHL four nests were in use on 28th April, and three recently fledged young were present there on 1st May. Ten adult birds were present at the Bishop Wood colony on 27th March and an estimated ten nests were occupied on 16th April. The heronry at Acomb Ings held nesting birds on 23rd February and again on 6th April but no numbers were given.

Post-breeding counts of more than ten were confined to the LDV with 31 throughout the LDV on 16th June, up to 15 there throughout August, 15 at Wheldrake Ings on 7th September, 31 throughout the LDV on 25th October (with 17 at Thornton Ellers on that date) and 17 throughout the LDV on 16th November.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba* YOC
Scarce visitor

One or two birds were present in every month except July and a record-breaking five different individuals visited the LDV during the autumn. During

January a wintering single frequented Newburgh Priory Lake (TJ, PB et al.) in the north of the region. On 19th January it was present at nearby Ampleforth (BirdGuides) and Byland (JR) (one also seen on 9th February there) and one flew over Bank Island towards Wheldrake (CSR) the same day. One at Hagg Bridge on 5th March was followed by a single at Bank Island on 10th April (LDV Blog), then one flying over Bank Island on 10th May (FM, CSR, JT) was also seen there on the 11th and 14th. Another was present at NDC on 31st May (CSR). In June one flew east over Bank Island on the 21st (JT, FM) with another at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th (MFJ). Birds were also found at sites away from the LDV during the summer and early autumn. At SHL one was fishing around the lake on 9th June: the first record for the site (PCr et al.). One was seen at Heslington East on 12th August (BirdGuides). SHL had its second record when one appeared there on 9th September (PM). An individual was on a waterlogged field near Milford Common on 25th September (PD) with it or another at Bolton Percy Ings on 3rd October (PD). One was reported from Tollerton on 26th October (BirdGuides).

The first autumn record for the LDV was one at Wheldrake Ings on 27th September (DMB, CSR, MFJ) and again on 2nd October (GC). A single was on the riverbank at North Duffield and subsequently at NDC on 4th October whilst another two were present at Bubwith Ings on the same date (LDV Blog). One remained at NDC on the 5th (DMB), with one at Ellerton Landing on the 8th, East Cottingwith Ings on the 10th and four on the 12th with two at Thornton Ellers and singles at Aughton and Thorganby (DMB, CSR). On the 14th one was at Ellerton Ings (NC), two were viewed from the platform at Thorganby Ings on the 15th (AF) when two were still present in the Melbourne area (GJ), with singles at Thorganby and NDC on the 16th and 17th. On the 18th, five were present at Bank Island (BirdGuides) and five were at Ellerton Landing in a presumed roost on the same date (LDV Blog). Singles were at Melbourne and Aughton on the 20th (DMB, GWa) with one or two reported regularly in the NDC, Ellerton and Thorganby areas until month-end (JLe, RCn, JCN et al.). November was considerably quieter with one remaining at Thorganby Ings on the 1st (LDV Blog), one at Church Bridge, Melbourne on the 15th and 16th (LDV Blog) and a single at Heslington East on the 21st and 22nd (MW). In December one briefly appeared at Bank Island on the 19th (LDV Blog) while a single at Newburgh Priory Lake on the 24th (JP) was still present there on the 26th (NB). See RBBP report on page 119.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Resident, with small numbers breeding in the LDV

BBS 2/43

A marked increase in the number of individual birds present and in the number of sites returning records with reports coming from at least 40 locations. Record numbers occurred in the LDV with peak counts of 21 in the valley on 6th April, 17 at Wheldrake Ings on 15th April and 27 in the LDV on 2nd May including ten each at Bank Island and NDC. This was followed by an astonishing count of 52 in the roost at NDC on 15th May with 69 present throughout the whole site the following morning (excluding breeding birds in the heronry). There were still 31 at NDC on 17th May and up to 20 daily until the end of the month. Peak counts at other LDV

sites included five at Thorganby on 31st March and six along the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 3rd April (and again on 8th November).

Breeding again took place at the heronry near Wheldrake Ings with 16 occupied nests on 17th May producing an estimated 40 young. The first fledged birds were seen on 23rd June at Wheldrake Ings and NDC. Numbers at Wheldrake Ings peaked in late June and early July with 19 there on 30th June (when 11 were at Bank Island) and 23 on 5th July.

Away from the main LDV sites, locations that attracted several birds included (maximum numbers in brackets): Crockey Hill (four on 10th October), Heslington East (four on 14th August), Milford Common (four in late September), Riccall (three on 18th January), Sherburn in Elmet (three in Bishop Dike on 23rd August), Stamford Bridge (four on 4th May) and Stillingfleet (three on 16th April). Two birds (including birds flying over) were seen at Acomb, Brayton Barff, Bolton Percy Ings, Hassacarr NR, Heslington, Heslington West, Naburn, Newburgh Priory and Skipwith Common. Elsewhere, singles were noted at Acaster Selby, Bootham Stray, Brighton Meadows, Byland Abbey, Copmanthorpe, Dunnington, Germany Beck, Haxby, Kirkby Wharfe, Poppleton, SHL, Strensall, Towthorpe, Ulleskelf Mires, Walmgate Stray and Wistow Clough. See RBBP report on page 119.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

YOC Amber listed

Rare visitor

None in 2019, after records in four of the last ten years, most recently 2017.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

YOC Red listed

Very rare visitor

A 1st-winter bird was picked up in a garden at Sutton upon Derwent on 17th December; it was ringed and released at the coast the following morning after a night in care (LDV Blog). Only the tenth record for the recording area, this was the first since 2010.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Passage and winter visitor; localised resident breeder

BBS 3/43

CHL and Wheldrake Ings remain the favoured sites in the region. At the start of the year the largest numbers at CHL were 28 on 10th January and 15 on 17th February while Wheldrake Ings held 19 on 12th January, up to 30 at the roost during February then 27 on 10th March. Elsewhere counts of more than five birds were ten at Stearsby Hagg on 1st January, 26 at Hessay Pond on 12th January, eight at Rawcliffe Ings on 23rd February, six by the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 8th March and 17 at Wharfe Ings on 26th March.

The only breeding reports were of a single occupied nest at CHL on 25th May, followed by an adult and a recently fledged juvenile present there on 23rd June. At Wheldrake Ings one pair built a nest but then abandoned it.

Notable counts in the second half of the year included seven at Brumber Hill on 9th September and again on 2nd October, 13 at CHL on 14th October with 30 there on 10th November, eight at Melbourne on 14th October, seven at NDC on

28th December and 17 roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 20th October, with 26 there on 3rd November then 11 on 1st December.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
Scarce passage migrant

YOC Amber listed

The number of individuals reported was similar to recent years. One flying north-east over Storwood on 17th April (LDV Blog) was the only north-bound sighting. The next bird, possibly a returning failed or non-breeder, was present at SHL fishing lake from 29th June to 1st July (PMo). During August south-bound singletons passed over Wheldrake Ings on the 10th (CSR), 17th (DMB), 20th (CSR, LM, MFJ) and the 27th (CSR), which was the last sighting of the year.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*
Scarce passage migrant

YNU Amber listed

Apart from the exceptional passage in 2008, when 11 autumn migrants moved through the LDV, this continues to be a rarely-sighted bird in the recording area. The last accepted record was in 2010 and so the two reports for 2019, subject to accreditation by the YNU, are noteworthy. The first sighting occurred on 13th September when a dark-phase bird circled over the pool at Wheldrake Ings before gaining height and drifting off to the south (CSR, LM, JT). Later, a juvenile was reported flying southwards over Bubwith on 24th September (BirdGuides).

Records subject to acceptance by the YNU

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident breeder and passage migrant

BBS 7/43

The number of reports (324) was similar to the 2018 and 2017 totals. Birds were sighted throughout the year with the maxima of 37 occurring during April and November and the minimum of 12 in June. Almost 45% of the records came from Bolton Percy and Ings, Melbourne, Naburn and the Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island area, whilst there were three or fewer reports from SE57, 66, 67, 75 and 76 and none from SE56. There has been a 28% decline in the number of Sparrowhawks in England during the period 2008-18 but it is not possible to determine any change of status in the York recording area from the available data.

Most of the reports for the first three months of the year came from the previously listed sites. In addition garden bird feeders in York may well have drawn birds to Danesmead Wood, Heslington, Hull Road, Knavesmire, Poppleton, and Wigginton Road. Other records came from Carlton Husthwaite flash, Foggathorpe, Norton and Strensall Common. The first reports of pre-nesting interactions came from Nun Appleton on 17th March where four birds were present, including two sparring females, and on the 19th display flights were seen over Bolton Percy Ings. Display activity continued into April and was reported from Norton on the 8th and Acomb on the 17th.

Proof of breeding evidence was limited to six sites: Brayton Barff (fledged young), Naburn (adult carrying food), Nun Appleton (female with food), Skipwith

Common (calling young), Stamford Bridge (fledged young) and York (Homestead Park - calling young). Comments from contributors and an analysis of the data suggests that breeding probably took place at Acaster Malbis, Bank Island, Bolton Percy Ings, Castle Howard, Easthorpe, Fulford, Haxby, Malton, Milford Common, Newton-on-Derwent, Welburn and Wheldrake Ings. Breeding did not take place at SHL where it appears that the female of the regular pair was lost and as a result Feral Pigeons *Columba livia*, which had been her favourite prey, thrived again. After the breeding season regular reports continued to be received from the Derwent, Ouse and Wharfe valleys. The species was also widely reported from the York area: Askham Bog, Bishopthorpe, Copmanthorpe, Fulford, Haxby, Heslington East and Rawcliffe Meadows. Four were seen from Church Bridge, Melbourne on 29th November, whilst two were at CHL on 9th December.

Blackbird *Turdus merula* (2), Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, Magpie *Pica pica*, Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* and Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* were all reported as prey species. The Magpie was caught by a male at Heslington on 19th March and after a 20 minute struggle the predator was driven off by a passer-by leaving behind the live semi-plucked victim (see John Lawton's eye-witness account on page 123). There were reports of three birds stunned after colliding with windows, one of which survived, and two deaths caused by traffic.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

YOC

Rare passage visitor and very rare resident breeder

Twelve reports of this secretive bird were received which is below the recent average. Most sightings came from a site in SE63 where a female was occasionally seen during February and March (DT, DC). Then on 14th July a male was seen carrying food to distant woodland and presumably the same bird was precariously balanced on an overhead wire close to the main site on 2nd August. On 13th August two, possibly three, young called loudly from near the top of a large Scots pine and were present again there on the 15th when they moved off to the northwest at 14:00 (HP). During their stay the birds remained in dense cover and could not be successfully photographed. A female was seen again on 18th September and on 15th December. Clearly a pair bred in the area but they did not nest at the site where the observations were made.

Although there are fewer details from the Howardian Hills compared with 2018, evidence continues to show that birds are maintaining territories and breeding in the area. Displaying pairs were present in SE57 on 23rd March (BirdTrack) and during the spring in SE77 (JA-B). An active nest was discovered in SE67 (JA-B) though the outcome was unknown. Finally, one was circling high over SHL on 20th September (GW).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Amber listed

Scarce visitor and passage migrant; now present in the LDV throughout the year

There has been a small but steady rise in the number of records during the past three years. In 2019 134 sightings were reported from 12 sites, mostly in the LDV, though again there was a lack of breeding evidence.

In the LDV an adult female and three immatures were present throughout January and February with most reports coming from Wheldrake Ings and NDC as well as Aughton, Bubwith and Ellerton Ings. An adult male joined the wintering birds on 2nd March and by the 13th it was thought that two pairs were present (LDV Blog). A male was still present on 15th May, however, during the second half of the month sightings became scarce and it appears that the adult birds left the area leaving behind two immature cream-crowns. Occasionally reported in May and more frequently throughout June, one was mobbed by a Hobby *Falco subbuteo* at NDC on the 5th. An immature male was present with at least one cream-crown at NDC on 4th July. A returning adult pair appeared at Wheldrake Ings on 20th August and the male, or another, roosted at the site on the 28th. The male continued to come to roost during September, joined by two cream-crowns on the 16th and a third at the end of the month. The male was not recorded at the roost site after early October. However, the number of roosting cream-crowns increased to five on the 18th and an impressive seven on the 23rd. One of the cream-crowns was a juvenile female which had been shot near Scarborough. After a period of care by Jean Thorpe, during which a fractured wing had healed, the bird was released in the safer environment at Wheldrake on 13th October. The bird's distinctive plumage allowed it to be identified at the roost site until at least the 27th. Six cream-crowns were present in the LDV during early November declining to three by early December. A male which had been wing-tagged near Burnham Market, Norfolk on 12th August 2018 was at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd September. It was not seen again in the York area which further suggests that there may be a steady turnover of birds in the LDV.

Elsewhere at least three different birds, almost certainly from the nearby LDV, were seen hunting over Skipwith Common on separate occasions during the first three months of the year and on 14th November a cream-crown attempted to take a Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* there. The Lower Wharfe Valley provided an unusual winter sighting of a female at Milford Common on 19th February. In September there were two there on the 10th followed by singles on the 17th and 18th. One was also reported from Bolton Percy Ings on the 14th and 19th. Sightings beyond the two Valleys are rare and this year included one at Brown Moor, Sheriff Hutton on 28th April and a cream-crown over farmland at Riccall on 10th July.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*
Scarce autumn and winter visitor

YOC *Red listed*

There was a better showing than in 2018 with three individuals seen as they migrated through the recording area during autumn. A 1st-winter ringtail male was present at Wheldrake Ings on 10th October before it flew across to Bank Island (TJ). It roosted at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th and was then seen there daily until the 19th (ASw, GC, TJ et al.). A male was also seen flying south over the A166 west of Stamford Bridge on the afternoon of the 23rd (RBa). The final sighting of the year was of a female present in the Heslington Tillmire and Elvington Airfield area on the 28th (LDV Blog).

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2019



Left to right and top to bottom

Red-crested Pochard © Jono Leadley

Red-necked Grebe © Tom Broxup

Great White Egret © Duncan Bye

Hen Harrier © Gerry Capelin

Crane © Jono Leadley

Crane © Duncan Bye

Avocet © Duncan Bye

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

YNU

Amber listed

Very rare summer migrant

The first record since 2015, if accepted, was of a female seen on 18th June at Bank Island (FM) and later over Wheldrake Ings (CSR) before it slowly drifted southwards.

Record subject to acceptance by the YNU

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Resident in the southern part of the recording area; scarce elsewhere BBS 3/43

The number of records received topped 400 for the first time; prior to 1999 there were only seven sightings in the recording area. Most reports came from the well-watched Lower Wharfe Valley and LDV where birds are present throughout the year. The number of records peaked at 58 in May and the joint minimum of 20 occurred in August and December. Sightings of wandering birds, especially in the first half of the year, were more widespread and only SE56 and 67 lacked records.

During the first four months of the year multiple sightings from the Lower Wharfe Valley included four at Kirkby Wharfe on 6th January and five at Bolton Percy on 20th March whilst in the LDV three favoured the Melbourne area throughout March and three pairs were present on the reserve by the end of April. Reports from elsewhere included Acaster Malbis, Askham Bryan, Allerthorpe Common, Beningbrough, Bilbrough, Bishop Wilton, Brandsby, Castle Howard, Copmanthorpe, Dunnington (2), Heslington Tillmire, High Hutton, Kelfield, Kirkham (2), Newburgh Priory, Naburn (3), Poppleton, Redhouse Lagoon, Sherburn in Elmet, Skipwith Common, Strensall (village and Common), Warthill and York.

In the LDV four pairs were regularly seen throughout May and June. Two pairs bred, producing five young between them. The other two pairs possibly bred (RBBP). High counts, once the young had fledged, were 11 in the Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island area on 15th July and 12, including five young, on the 17th. In the Lower Wharfe Valley ten were present in the Bolton Percy area on 18th July and five, including three juveniles, were seen over the nearby Ings on the 23rd. The young birds probably originated from a nest site within the recording area or just beyond. There were also claims, not directly reported to the YOC, that two pairs bred in the Howardian Hills. YOC data does show that a pair was present in SE76 during April. After July there were between 20 and 30 records per month mostly from previously listed locations, especially those in the Lower Wharfe and Derwent Valleys. Other sightings occurred at Church Fenton, Hemingbrough, Stillingfleet, Towton and York (Askham Bog, Clifton Park, and Foxwood Lane). The last high count of the year was five at Kirkby Wharfe on 22nd November.

Five records specifically related to hunting locations. On 1st May one attempting to take abattoir waste spread on a field in Riccall was driven off by Carrion Crows *Corvus corone*. Three birds followed silage cutting operations at Hessay on 15th June; four hunted over the mown hay at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd July; one was at a recently cut field of oilseed rape in Riccall on 2nd August and four followed the second hay cut at the Low Grounds on 19th September. One

being mobbed by both a Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* and an Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* at Naburn on 19th June was noteworthy.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Passage migrant and common resident breeder

BBS 29/43

There was a record-breaking total of 1081 records from 151 different sites making this species, which first bred in the area during 1995, by far the commonest raptor reported in the recording area today. It appears that pairs now hold territories in all 15 hectads. March had most records (139) whilst July had the minimum (64). Birds were reported during every three month period of the year at Acaster Airfield and village, Bank Island, Bolton Percy and Ings, Brayton Barff, Brumber Hill, Castle Howard, Kirkby Wharfe, Melbourne, Milford Common, Newburgh Priory, Naburn, NDC, Poppleton, Wheldrake Ings and York.

During March, multiple sightings, when pairs were reinforcing their territorial claims, included six at Pocklington Canal on the 8th and Milford Common on the 17th; seven at Escrick on the 5th and Riccall on the 24th; eight at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th and Scagglethorpe Lane on the 23rd, and nine at Skipwith Common on the 23rd. On the 20th a 360° scan survey from Bolton Percy Ings resulted in a total of 14 birds. During the breeding season there were reports specifying pairs either holding a territory or displaying at Acaster Malbis (Stubb Wood), Ampleforth, Earswick, Heslington Tillmire, Howsham Wood, Huby, Kirkham, Melbourne, Milford Common, Sand Hutton, Seaton Ross, Stillingfleet, Stockton on the Forest (2) and Thornton. Direct evidence of breeding was limited. A bird was seen carrying nest material towards Naburn Wood on 16th February and a pair mated at NDC on 20th March. Proof of successful breeding only came from Naburn, Milford Common, Melbourne, Stamford Bridge, and Ulleskelf Mires where recently fledged young were recorded during August. Indirect evidence of breeding success came from some large counts, which no doubt included some young birds, from June onwards. Eight were at Allerthorpe on 9th June; nine at Acaster Airfield on 13th September; ten at Scrayingham on 8th September and 12 at Stockton on the Forest on 23rd August whilst a substantial total of 34 was achieved when the LDV WeBS survey took place on 12th October.

Birds have been increasingly sighted within the York City ring road and in 2019 reports came from Acomb (four on 17th April), Askham Bog, Clifton Park (four on 3rd April), Dringhouses, Fulford, New Earswick, Heslington, Heworth, Monks Cross, Rawcliffe, The Retreat and Walmgate Stray. A late unsubstantiated report suggested that a pair may have bred at The Retreat in 2018. The number of reported sites in SE56, 57 and 67 increased from ten in 2018 to 16 though this may just have been due to increased observer coverage.

A pair skirmished with a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* over SHL on 6th August and one took a Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* at Kirkby Wharfe on 12th July. Jean Thorpe dealt with six Buzzards from the recording area. One of them died from rat poisoning whilst others were lost due to shotgun wounds, a collision with power lines and old age. A bird released from a trap recovered and was later released as did a stunned individual from Scrayingham.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus**Winter and passage visitor; resident breeder*

As usual, wintering birds were mostly found in the LDV. In January, four were at Wheldrake Ings with others along the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne and East Cottingwith. Four remained at Wheldrake Ings during February and three in the Church Bridge area, with other scattered individuals in the valley. By the end of March up to five males were singing at Wheldrake Ings and three at Melbourne. Elsewhere singletons were at Milford Common on 6th January and 22nd February, and at Heslington East on 18th January and the 9th and 16th February, while one was flushed from rushes by the River Ouse at Riccall on 10th January.

During April two were at Skipwith Common, five males were singing at Wheldrake Ings and five other singing birds were scattered across the LDV. The number of singing males at Wheldrake Ings increased to six during May and up to seven by mid-June. There were few reports thereafter until the first fledged young, a brood of two, were seen with an adult at Wheldrake Ings on 1st September on the scrape by Swantail Hide. Four adults and two juveniles (presumed to be two broods) were seen on the 8th, and on the 15th up to six were calling around this area. At the end of the month there were four on the pool at Wheldrake Ings. The only reports away from there were of one at Melbourne on the 20th and several records of one or two at Milford Common.

Post breeding most reports came from Wheldrake Ings. Six were in the reedbed by Swantail Hide on 23rd October, and wintering birds also returned to sites along Pocklington Canal, including East Cottingwith and Melbourne. Two were calling at NDC on 24th November. By the end of the year up to four were calling at Wheldrake Ings from a total of 14 wintering in the valley. Away from the LDV the only reports came from Milford Common with three on 3rd December and Bolton Percy Ings with two on the 8th. See RBBP report on page 119.

Corncrake *Crex crex*YOC *Red listed**Scarce summer migrant and casual breeder*

A very poor year compared with 2018, with no confirmation of breeding having taken place. The first singing male was heard at NDC on 24th April (AS), one was flushed from the side of the path by the hides at Bank Island on 13th May (LDV Blog) and a male was singing at dawn on the Ings at East Cottingwith on 2nd June (JB). See also RBBP report on page 119.

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*YOC *Amber listed**Scarce passage migrant and casual breeder*

On 1st May two calling males (and possibly a third) were heard calling at dusk in the Refuge at Wheldrake Ings (CSR). Later in the month, one was heard at 23:30 on the 22nd and at dawn on the 23rd at Bank Island (DMB, CSR). One was heard there again on 10th June after dusk (LDV Blog). On 17th June two (possibly passage birds), including a juvenile, showed well on the scrape in front of Swantail Hide, Wheldrake Ings (CSR, JLe). They remained there with one, sometimes both, continuing to show well for local birders to enjoy until the 19th. They were seen

taking short flights too and were even photographed whilst in flight. See also RBBP report on page 119.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Common resident breeder and winter visitor

BBS 10/43

Widely reported from areas of suitable habitat throughout the year, mostly in small numbers (one to six) with, as expected, higher counts coming from the LDV and Heslington East and West, mostly during WeBS (see table). However, there were only very small numbers reported from CHL all year, with ten in September the peak count. During the first winter period and into spring in the LDV there were over 100 wintering birds, however the WeBS count of 121 in April was well below the 231 of 2018. Numbers at Heslington East and West were very similar to 2018, the peak annual count of 71 coming in January. Elsewhere the only double-digit count was 11 at Allerthorpe OGP on 11th January.

Occupied nests were noted from March and successful breeding was reported from many areas; the first brood being seen at Norton as early as 21st April. Adults with young were also seen at Allerthorpe OGP, Bolton Percy Ings, CHL, Gilling, Hassacarr NR (where a pair raised three broods: of seven, six and five), Heslington East and West, Hull Road Park (York), Milford Common, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton - several broods), Scagglethorpe Lane, Stamford Bridge, Stockton on the Forest, Warthill, and Wheldrake Ings (several broods).

Post breeding, in addition to the birds at Heslington East and West (see WeBS), the only count over 20 at Wheldrake Ings was 23 on 11th September and 17 were at Newburgh Priory on 18th October. In the second winter period, numbers built up as usual in the LDV with 122 there by mid-November, increasing to the year's peak count of 143 in December (WeBS).

Monthly WeBS counts for Moorhen

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| CHL | 7 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| LDV | 123 | - | 102 | 121 | | | | | | 20 | 122 | 143 |
| HES | 71 | 54 | 37 | 27 | 28 | 26 | 58 | 38 | 55 | 38 | 52 | 50 |

Coot *Fulica atra*

Common resident breeder and winter visitor

BBS 1/43

As in previous years, reported mainly in low single-digit numbers from sites with suitable habitat, with the only significant counts coming from the LDV (notably Wheldrake Ings in the first winter and spring period) and Heslington East and West. Numbers at CHL were lower than last year, the peak count there being 36 in March. In February the highest count at Wheldrake Ings was 99 on the 23rd, building rapidly to 291 by 3rd March and then to 330 in the Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island area by the 10th with 276 still present on the 31st. Numbers decreased during April as birds dispersed to nest, but there were still 151 at the WeBS count on the 21st. WeBS counts were the monthly maxima at both CHL and Heslington East and West during the first winter period and into spring, with the January count

at the latter also the peak count there for the year.

During April up to 50 nesting pairs were counted in the LDV and the first brood (of two) was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 8th May. Successful breeding was also confirmed at several other sites: Bank Island, CHL, Hemingbrough - where eight adults and 13 young were seen at Plassmoor Ponds on 18th May with 30 birds there on 7th July -, Heslington East, Knavesmire and Ousebank, Milford Common, NDC and Wistow.

Post breeding, apart from WeBS counts, 12 on 29th November and 27 on 26th December at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) and 27 at Thornton Ings on the 30th were the only double-figure counts.

Monthly WeBS counts for Coot

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| CHL | 23 | 29 | 36 | 22 | 7 | 14 | 16 | 20 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| LDV | 1 | - | 272 | 151 | | | | | | - | 11 | 4 |
| HES | 55 | 43 | 22 | 24 | 30 | 22 | 30 | 25 | 24 | 27 | 27 | 28 |

Crane *Grus grus*

YOC Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant

There were fewer records than in 2018, and no more than two birds seen together except in December. The first of the year was one heard calling at East Cottingwith and Storwood on 10th March (DMB et al.), with a pair at East Cottingwith on the 11th; two seen later that day heading over Fulford Golf Course were presumed to be these birds. Also in March a singleton was at Wheldrake Ings and the Low Grounds on the 24th (CSR). In April two flew over Bank Island, heading towards Hagg Bridge on the 10th (CSR), with two also reported over Skipwith Common two days later (LDV Blog). On the 23rd two were seen flying over Clifton Ings towards Shipton (CH). One sub-adult turned up at NDC on 15th May (CSR), which was seen on the 16th at Aughton Ings (FM).

There were no more sightings until the autumn when one was on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the morning of 8th September, which flew off heading north just before midday (DMB), and one flew over Bank Island on the 23rd (CSR, FM). The only October sighting was one seen at Thorganby Ings on the 31st (SW, TH). The final report of the year, also the highest count, was of four at Melbourne that flew over Church Bridge calling at dusk (LDV Blog). See RBBP report on page 119.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Amber listed

Common passage migrant and scarce breeder

BBS 8/43

An early returning bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 27th January, the same date as in 2018. The next was seen at Newburgh on 9th February, followed by three in the LDV the following day. From mid-February, spring migrants were seen at several sites, with up to five at Bolton Percy, CHL, Heslington East, Hessay Pond, Kirkby Wharfe, Naburn and SHL, besides birds at sites in the LDV. Passage continued during March, with birds recorded from at least 17 sites in addition to the

LDV. The highest counts received were ten at Wharfe Ings on the 25th and 18 in the LDV on the 3rd, with 17 there to the end of the month.

Birds began to settle on territory in April, with breeding pairs noted at CHL, Heslington East (one pair nested on top of an artificial Sand Martin bank!), Riccall and SHL. In the LDV, around fifteen pairs were present; two pairs definitely bred, accounting for family parties with fledged young seen in late June. Birds were present during the breeding season at 20 other sites across the area.

Autumn passage began in late June with singles and small groups noted moving through the LDV, mainly heading south and west. Up to five birds were seen at several sites, often made up of family parties, with fledged young. Birds were seen regularly during July until all had departed by month-end. Thereafter, only one record was received - of four flying over a Fulford garden on 24th August.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*
Rare passage migrant

Amber listed

A reasonable year with a small number of migrants. A single was seen on 5th April at Bank Island, followed by an excellent record of one flying east along the River Ouse between Poppleton and Overton on the 15th. On the return passage, a party of three was on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 21st July followed by another party of three there, noted as an adult and two juveniles, on 4th August.

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

Red Listed
BBS 17/43

The LDV maintains its status both as the main wintering area and as a hotspot for breeding pairs. Due to sympathetic management it is likely that more pairs are successful in the LDV as opposed to those breeding in intensively farmed areas.

Large numbers were present in the LDV early in the year, before freezing conditions caused a mass departure at the end of January. An impressive 8800 on 2nd January included counts of 3500 at Wheldrake Ings, 2500 at Thorganby and flocks of 1000 at Bubwith and Ellerton. 4000 was the highest single-site count during the month, at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th. Away from the LDV, the only notable count was of 400 at Hessay on the 27th. Numbers remained low in the first part of February, before a thaw set in and birds began to return to the area. By the 18th the LDV held 4200, with flocks of 2000 at Wheldrake Ings and 1000 at Bank Island. 500 at Byland Abbey on the 22nd was a good count, with 310 at Kirkby Wharfe also notable. With milder weather, pairs were seen prospecting suitable breeding areas in the second half of February. Numbers remained high in the LDV in March, with 2590 across the site on the 3rd, with 1000 at NDC on the 6th. No other notable flocks were reported and birds had largely dispersed to breeding areas by the month-end.

During the breeding season the LDV remained a stronghold with over 60 pairs recorded. Aside from the LDV, birds bred with varying degrees of success across the area, with pairs reported at: Acaster Malbis, Allerthorpe, Bolton Percy Ings, Brighton (three pairs), Brumber Hill, Burtonfields, Dunnington, Eden Camp, Foggathorpe, Haxby, Heslington East (three pairs), Heslington Tillmire and

adjacent fields (four pairs), Hessay, Kirkby Wharfe, Milford Common, Moorlands, Ozendyke Ings, Seaton Ross, Skipwith Common (adjacent fields), Slingsby, Strensall, Towthorpe and Ulleskelf Mires. It is likely that there are many individual pairs not reported, especially from areas infrequently visited by birders.

The first post-breeding flocks were reported from the beginning of June, with over 80 at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st. Numbers gradually increased during June and July, with larger numbers between August and September. The largest flocks noted were: 180 at Bolton Percy Ings on 14th July, 234 at Wheldrake Ings on 27th July, 250 at Ozendyke Ings on 18th August, 250 at Bank Island on 22nd August, and 120 at Elvington on 27th September. Numbers increased rapidly during mid-October with 2100 at NDC on the 15th, a large part of the 2450 throughout the LDV on the 21st. Elsewhere 110 were at CHL on the 14th (WeBS). In November numbers remained relatively static, with 2140 on the 16th. Just outside the LDV, 250 were at Stockton on the Forest on the 26th. Larger numbers arrived in early December, with the LDV count increasing to 4760 on the 8th, including 2000 at Aughton, 1200 at Ellerton and 1000 at Thornton Ings. Numbers seemed low elsewhere across the area during this time, with the only notable count coming from Buttercrambe, where there were 400 on the 19th.

Monthly WeBS counts for Lapwing

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| LDV | 8127 | - | 317 | 121 | | | | | | 1221 | 2140 | 3730 |

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

A poor start to the year with lower numbers than usual in the LDV. 1000 were present between the 4th and 7th, with 500 recorded at Wheldrake Ings during the first week of January. The picture was largely the same in February, with 800 at East Cottingwith on the 11th and 500 at Wheldrake Ings the previous day the highest counts. Similar numbers were present in the LDV in early March but fell away rapidly as birds headed for their breeding grounds. 200 at Beningbrough on 1st April and 120 at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th were the last three-figure counts of the spring. Mid-month, on the 14th, there were still 41 at Wheldrake Ings and 31 at Skipwith Common. Two at Bank Island on 30th April were the last of spring.

The first returning bird was seen at Wheldrake Ings after heavy rain on 19th July, with two seen flying south the next day and three at Bank Island on the 29th. A scatter of singles was seen throughout the area during August before a good count of 180 was made at Bolton Percy Ings on the 30th. During September, more flocks began to arrive. The regular flock at Raker Lakes near Wheldrake peaked at a modest 100 on the 30th. Elsewhere 120 were at Bolton Percy Ings on the 1st. 233 at Bank Island on the 18th and 140 at Bubwith on the 21st. Numbers continued to increase gradually in October, with 2100 in the LDV by the 27th, including flocks of 700 at NDC and 323 at Wheldrake Ings, with little change in November, although NDC had attracted 2000 birds by the end of the month. Numbers remained static in the LDV until the year-end. There were very few birds

elsewhere with 250 at CHL on 14th October (WeBS), the only three figure count.

Monthly WeBS counts for Golden Plover

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| LDV | 998 | - | 29 | 0 | | | | | | 201 | 1870 | 834 |

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Two records this year: One was at Ellerton Ings on 24th March and three flew north over Wheldrake Ings on 8th May.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Red listed

Passage migrant and casual breeder

A decent showing this year. The first migrant passed through Wheldrake Ings on 30th March, followed by another at NDC from the 11th to 13th April. Further singles were seen at Wheldrake Ings on 29th April; with perhaps the same bird there on 1st May, at NDC and Wheldrake Ings on the 6th, at NDC on the 9th and again on the 15th. Eight at Bank Island on 16th May indicated a small movement through the area, followed by 11 at NDC from the 16th to the 22nd, with five there from the 24th to the 27th, all of which were thought to be subspecies *tundrae*. Singles at Bank Island on 31st May and Wheldrake Ings on 1st June were the last of the spring. Just over a month later, two were seen at Bank Island on 3rd July. Singles were at Wheldrake Ings on the 16th and 20th July and a late bird was at CHL on 10th November.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Passage migrant and scarce breeder

The first of the year was at North Ings, Kirkby Wharfe on 26th March a week earlier than the first of 2018. A single arrived on the scrape at Bank Island on 1st April and stayed until the 6th, with a single the next day at North Ings, Kirkby Wharfe. Two at Wheldrake Ings on the 5th were followed by one on the 6th at Eden Camp, Malton, with the first recorded from Heslington East on the 12th. Singles were seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 16th, Bootham Stray on the 21st (with two on the 23rd) and two at Bank Island on the 19th. During May, one or two were at Bank Island early in the month with up to four at NDC mid-month, one of which associated with the Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* flock. One remained at this site from the 18th to the 22nd. At Bank Island one was seen intermittently through June. Two pairs bred this year: a pair nested at Heslington East but failed to raise any young, possibly due to bad weather, and a pair successfully raised two young at SHL. A third pair was present at the old Escrick Mine site but no further details were received.

In July, birds began to pass through the area. Up to five were at Bank Island early in the month, with singles seen on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on several dates until the last of the year on 11th August.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus**Red listed**Passage migrant*

Two were seen at Wheldrake Ings on 10th April, a week earlier than in 2018. These two may have accounted for the next record from Wheldrake on the 16th. Six arrived at Wheldrake Ings on the morning of the 19th, with 12 between Wheldrake and Bank Island on the 20th, with the roost rising to 17 on the 22nd and 25 on the 24th. 26 roosted at Wheldrake on the 26th, with 44 there the next day. With dry conditions, the roost seemed to split with some on the main meadow at Wheldrake and some on the refuge, making counts difficult. This also led to birds feeding in the damp grasslands at Wheldrake during the day rather than in the preferred fields in the valley. 66 roosted at Wheldrake Ings on 1st May and ten were seen at Bank Island on the 3rd. The Wheldrake roost had dwindled to 30 by the 5th, although 25 were feeding in the main meadow there on the 10th. The next day, the last of the spring was seen at Wheldrake Ings.

An unusual passage record was of ten that flew south over Bank Island just after dawn on 18th July.

Curlew *Numenius arquata**Red listed**Winter visitor, passage migrant and migrant breeder**BBS 11/43*

January numbers in the LDV were slightly up on 2018, with a maximum of 41 on the 5th, climbing to 88 on the 29th when a marked arrival happened. There were no records from elsewhere in the area until 10th February, when a bird was seen at Bolton Percy Ings, followed by a pair displaying there the next day. The first singing bird was on the early date of 11th January, at Bank Island, although it was another month before territorial behaviour became widespread, with local sites being reoccupied by breeding pairs. During February, flocks were seen across the LDV, with 60 at Wheldrake Ings on the 19th, 62 there on the 23rd and over 90 in the LDV by the end of the month. Elsewhere, passage flocks included 24 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 23rd, 16 at Hessay Pond on the 24th and 21 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 26th, with 27 there on the 28th. Passage continued through March, with 84 in the LDV early in the month, 21 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 2nd and 12 at Wharfe Ings on the 24th. On 19th April 23 at Wheldrake Ings presumably included local breeders as well as birds destined for other places.

In the breeding season, birds were widespread across the area. In the LDV, around 70 pairs were present; at least 35 young fledged from about 30 pairs, with ten chicks ringed. Pairs noted elsewhere were as follows (all reports refer to single pairs unless otherwise stated): Acaster Malbis (three pairs), Bilbrough, Bolton Percy Ings (two pairs, one of which fledged two young), Brumber Hill, Castle Howard (pair fledged young), Church Ings (Acaster), Hessay Pond, Huby, Kirkby Wharfe, Milford Common, Moor Monkton, Naburn Ings, Newburgh Priory, Ozendyke Ings, Ryther Ings, Scagglethorpe Lane, Strensall Common (eight pairs), Sheriff Hutton and Wharfe Ings.

By July, birds were finishing their breeding attempts, with failed or completed breeders already flocking together. Eighteen were at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st, with 13 nearby at East Cottingwith Ings; 24 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th and

the 11th. Smaller numbers were present in the LDV through August and into September, before 28 briefly circled Wheldrake Ings on 10th September, with seven at Bank Island on the 17th. Small numbers were seen throughout the LDV and at some of the breeding sites into the autumn, with the only notable counts being 28 at Wheldrake Ings on 28th November and 11 at NDC on 5th December.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* YOC Amber listed
Scarce passage migrant

None in 2019, after records in seven of the past ten years, most recently 2018.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Red listed
Passage migrant also occasionally seen in winter and casual breeder

All records were from the LDV this year. The three birds that arrived at Wheldrake Ings at the end of December 2018 were still present early in January, being joined by a fourth on the 5th. These birds remained through January, with another three arriving at NDC from the 10th. Fifteen were counted in the LDV on 23rd February. Passage increased during March, with 22 at Wheldrake Ings on the 2nd, 24 the next day and 63 on the 22nd. Sixteen were recorded at Melbourne on the 20th, which may have been a different flock to the Wheldrake birds, which peaked at 75 on the 24th. In early April, passage flocks moved through, with some lingering, the peak count being 114 throughout the LDV on the 6th. Thereafter passage diminished, with few records received in May: the highest count being three at Bank Island on the 3rd.

The first returning bird was at Bank Island on the early date of the 26th June, a fortnight earlier than in 2018. Five were at Bank Island on the 30th, with ten there on 2nd July. One arrived at Bank Island on 23rd July and associated itself with a Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* flock. Further singles were seen at Wheldrake Ings on 12th September, 20th October, 15th and 16th November (Ellerton).

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

Three circled Bank Island on 10th May before heading off high northeast. One reported from the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 15th August was an unusual record.

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

Two singles were recorded this year. One was on the refuge at Wheldrake Ings on 7th April and one was at North Duffield Ings on 24th November.

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

Slightly higher numbers were present in the LDV in January than in 2018, with a maximum count of 91 on the 13th, comprising 57 at Wheldrake Ings and 34 at NDC. The year started with 20 at Bubwith Ings and 24 at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd. Lower numbers were observed in February, with up to 50 throughout the

month across the LDV, including 42 at Bank Island on the 27th, before counts increased again in early March, to 61 in the LDV on the 3rd, 39 of which remained until the end of the month. Most of these birds were still present in the first half of April, with a lek of 11 males and three females seen late in the month. Up to 11 were at a lek site on 4th May but declined thereafter to one on the 18th and 22nd.

The first returning bird was at Bolton Percy Ings on 18th August, which circled and then flew southeast. Another single was on the pool at Wheldrake Ings on the 26th, with two there on the 5th September, one from the 10th to the 13th, followed by two at Bolton Percy Ings on the 30th. Numbers began to build gradually in the LDV from mid-October, starting with seven at Aughton Ings on the 12th, part of 13 across the LDV on that date. On 20th October 33 were at Ellerton and 18 at Wheldrake Ings, with 52 throughout the LDV on the 27th. Numbers increased a little in November, when 61 were counted in the LDV on the 16th, with 33 at NDC on 1st December being the last notable count of the year.

Monthly WeBS counts for Ruff

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| LDV | 91 | - | 39 | 31 | | | | | | 13 | 61 | 31 |

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

YOC *Red listed*

Rare passage migrant

An adult was an excellent find at Bank Island on the late date of the 2nd July (DW). What was presumably the same individual was found the next day at Scaling Dam. This is the first record since two at Heslington East on the 20th and 21st May 2012, and the tenth for the York area.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

YOC *Amber listed*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

An individual made a protracted stay at NDC from the 23rd to 28th March, often in the company of a couple of Dunlins *C. alpina* (SW et al.).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Amber listed

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Unlike 2018 recorded in only ten months of the year, with no records from July and August. Similar numbers wintered in the LDV, with 200 present in January, including flocks of 50 at Bubwith Ings on the 3rd and 100 at NDC on the 15th. Smaller numbers were present in February, with cold weather prompting half of the flock to depart. The largest count was of 90 at Ellerton on the 18th. 200 were back at NDC on 6th March, falling to 30 by the 10th, with 47 across the LDV on the 24th. Singles were at Bank Island on the 5th, 22nd and 29th April, followed by one at NDC on the 6th and 9th May and two at Melbourne on the 10th, when eleven were scattered between Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island. One was at Bank Island on the 15th, with two there the next day, one at NDC on the 23rd, one at Wheldrake Ings on the 27th, two at Bank Island on the 31st and the last of the spring at NDC on 3rd June.

The first autumn bird resided at Wheldrake Ings from the 8th to 12th September, before a long gap until another single was present at Ellerton Landing on 20th October, then ten at NDC on the 29th. Numbers remained modest through November; with 18 at NDC on the 24th the highest count in the LDV. In December, 32 at Aughton Ings on the 10th was the highest count for the month.

Monthly WeBS counts for wintering Dunlin in the LDV

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| LDV | 200 | - | 47 | 1 | | | | | | - | 14 | 33 |

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Red listed

Winter visitor and resident breeder

Good numbers were present in January, with nocturnal surveys revealing nine feeding in the LDV between Wheldrake Ings and Bubwith Ings on the 8th, with eight at NDC on the 6th. Elsewhere, singles were reported from Bishop Wood, Church Fenton, Milford Common, Strensall Common and Warren Wood (Dunnington). During February, four were at Skipwith Common on the 22nd and 23rd, with one or two at Heslington Tillmire, Howsham, Langwith Stray, Rabbit Warren Wood and SHL. Further survey work in the LDV found that most birds had departed by early March, although birds were still reported outside of breeding areas, suggesting some spring passage.

In the breeding season, birds were present or seen roding at the following sites: Allerthorpe Common, Bishop Wood (plus Moss Hagg Wood and West Hagg Plain - several roding birds in total), SHL (two roding birds), Skipwith Common (one pair), Strensall Common and Yearsley Moor (at least two males). A bird by the riverside at Wheldrake Ings on 25th July was unusual.

In autumn birds arrived from the continent and singles were seen at scattered locations including at Brayton Barff, Melbourne, Rufforth Tip, SHL and Skipwith Common during November and East Cottingwith, Heslington Tillmire, Milford Common and SHL the following month. One was found with a broken wing in a pond in Marygate, York on 23rd December but sadly had to be put down.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Up to five were present in the first winter period at Milford Common, increasing to eight by 27th March. Two were at Heslington East on 25th January, following a single present there on the 10th. A single was at Rawcliffe Meadows on 5th January. Besides the four at Milford Common during February, singles were at Hassacarr NR on the 5th, on the Low Grounds at Wheldrake Ings on the 10th and at Riccall on the 17th. Further singles appeared in March at Bolton Percy Ings, Kirkby Wharfe, Riccall, Ryther Ings and Wheldrake Ings. Up to six were present at Wheldrake Ings on 15th April, with two at Milford Common on the 5th and 16th.

An early returning bird was flushed at Riccall on 19th September, followed by seven at NDC on 7th October. Monitoring at the latter site revealed a good passage of birds through the area, with five still there on the 9th and 11th, with the

last single on the 24th, before the site flooded and became unsuitable. During October, six were at Skipwith Common on 11th October, four at Seavy Carr the next day, three at Riccall on the 22nd and singles at Ellerton Ings, Hagg Bridge, NDC and SHL. Birds began to reappear at wintering sites by November: at Riccall on the 1st, Heslington East on the 8th (two on the 11th), Milford Common on the 8th, Bishopthorpe Ings on the 16th, Thornton Ellers on the 16th and up to seven at Skipwith Common on the 27th. Three were at Heslington East on 6th December with four at Skipwith Common the same day. One was at Wharfe Ings on the 15th and one was at Riccall still on the 29th.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Amber listed

Resident and migrant breeder and passage visitor

Good numbers were present in the area in the first winter period. During January, 150 were counted after dark at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd, increasing to 180 by the 21st. Peak counts for other sites during the month were 36 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 4th, 16 at Milford Common on the 29th, 14 at Heslington East on the 25th and 12 at Ryther Ings on the 20th. The following month, over 500 were in the LDV on several dates suggesting an influx from further north following a cold snap. Twenty six at Heslington East on the 6th was a good count, with 32 at Milford Common on the 27th and 15 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 26th. Good numbers remained into March, with 150 at Wheldrake Ings and 100 at NDC on the 4th, 44 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 26th, up to 33 at Melbourne on the 8th, 23 at Ryther Ings on the 24th and 23 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 31st.

The first displaying birds were noted at NDC on 4th March, with three drumming birds at Wheldrake Ings on the 18th. Good numbers were still moving through the area during April, with a remarkable count of 56 at Heslington East on the 5th and up to 100 at Wheldrake Ings the next day and over 50 still on the 19th, despite many being back on territory. Up to 15 were drumming at NDC by mid-month and eight drumming birds were noted at Wheldrake Ings by the month-end.

Seven at Bank Island on 2nd July were presumably local breeders as the first post-breeding flocks didn't build up until towards the end of the month, with a peak of 30 at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th. Numbers remained steady at Wheldrake Ings during August, with at least 24 present by the month-end and into September, with small numbers reported elsewhere. More birds arrived in October and consequently, numbers increased. The highest count of the month was at Skipwith Common, which hosted 184 on the 11th, with 24 at Wheldrake Ings the same day. The following day 315 were counted in the LDV, including 50 at NDC and 31 at Seavy Carr. Away from the LDV, 15 were at Heslington East on the 11th and 18 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 12th. Good numbers persisted through November, with 12 at Riccall on the 1st, 75 at Skipwith Common on the 5th, and 25 at Bishopthorpe Ings on the 16th. By December, flooding had reduced counts, but 150 were still at Melbourne during the month, with 37 at Heslington East on the 6th and 26 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 8th.

Monthly WeBS counts for wintering Snipe in the LDV

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| LDV | 200 | - | 128 | 130 | | | | | | 315 | 211 | 218 |

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Amber listed

Passage migrant

A relatively poor spring passage was eclipsed by a good autumn. The first confirmed sightings of the year were at SHL and Wheldrake Ings, on the late date of 30th April, nine days after the first in 2018. In May, singles were at Bolton Percy Ings on the 9th, Bank Island on the 10th, Heslington East on the 12th (two), Naburn on the 18th and Elvington on the 20th (two).

The first returning bird was at Bank Island on 2nd July, followed by another single at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th. Four were present at Wheldrake Ings on 27th July, with three remaining to the end of the month. Elsewhere, one was at SHL on the 29th and one at Bolton Percy Ings on the 31st. The following month, single migrants were recorded from Acaster Airfield, Bolton Percy Ings, Clifton, Heslington East, Skipwith Common and Wheldrake Ings, with the last bird of the year at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd September.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and winter visitor

Three singles were reported in January, at NDC on the 10th, Riccall on the 11th and Hassacarr NR on the 23rd, suggesting small numbers were wintering in the York area. The theme continued in February, with singles at Towthorpe on the 4th and Kirkby Wharfe on the 12th, with possibly the same bird at Ulleskelf Mires the next day. Two at Rufforth Tip on 8th March could have been wintering birds, as could have been the single at Church Fenton on the 13th. One appeared at Bank Island on the 30th March and remained until 6th April. Bolton Percy Ings, SHL and Wheldrake Ings all held birds during April and two were at Heslington Tillmire on the 3rd. The last of the spring was at SHL on the 29th.

A month and a half later, the first returning bird arrived at Wheldrake Ings on 16th June, which remained for the month, being joined by a second on the 21st. Four were at Bank Island on 28th June and two at Acaster Airfield the next day. Passage increased during July with the bulk of the records from the LDV. Eight were at Bank Island on the 3rd, followed by up to six between Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island, with eight there between the 8th and 10th. Between five and eight were then present through to the end of the month. A single was at Skipwith Common on the 30th. Numbers increased further in August, with a peak count of 17 at Wheldrake Ings on the 31st. Two were at Rufforth Tip on the 27th and one at Milford Common on 3rd September. Eight at Wheldrake Ings on the 11th was the peak September count, with three at Acaster Airfield on the 30th. Six were along the river at NDC on the 2nd October with two at Bank Island the same day. One or two were reported from Acaster Airfield, Clifton Moor, Thorganby Ings and Thornton Ellers, with four at Bank Island on the 18th. Thereafter, only solitary birds

were recorded, from Bolton Percy Ings, Brumber Hill, Kirkby Wharfe, NDC and North Milford, some of which may have referred to the same individuals.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Amber listed

Passage migrant, migrant breeder and winter visitor

BBS 1/43

In the first winter period, numbers remained static in the LDV at 30 in January and February, increasing to 34 in March. Elsewhere in the period, a single was seen on several days at Heslington East in January, with two there on 2nd February, and two at Ryther Ings on 24th March with presumably the same pair at Kirkby Wharfe two days later. By April, birds were back on territory in the LDV, with up to 20 pairs, a welcome increase from 15 pairs in 2018. This included six pairs at Wheldrake Ings, five at NDC and two at Bank Island. Records of one or two birds came from Bolton Percy Ings, Heslington East, Heslington Tillmire and Kirkby Wharfe during April, but there were no signs of breeding. Small numbers were seen through the LDV in July, including some family parties, indicating that some of the pairs at least had been successful. The only August record was of a single at Ozendyke Ings on 18th August, as most birds had rapidly departed their breeding grounds once the young had fledged.

Wintering birds began to return to the LDV from 20th October, building to 17 at Ellerton Ings in mid-November and 20 by December, through to the year-end.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant

Another good year for this species. The first of the spring was seen at Bank Island on 14th May, followed by another single at NDC on the 17th. Two at Bank Island from 26th June were presumably failed breeders. One or two were seen at Bank Island and at Wheldrake Ings until 2nd July. Further singles were seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th and 16th July, before an incredible flock of nine was seen at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th, a record flock for the York area and part of a large national movement.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

YOC Amber listed

Scarce passage migrant

Another reasonable year for this attractive wader, with three records, equalling 2018. An early bird was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 8th April (CSR), followed by a stunning breeding-plumaged adult at the same site from the 10th to 17th May (JLe). An autumn bird was present at NDC on 27th October (JcN & RCn).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Amber listed

Passage migrant and rare winter visitor

Good spring and autumn passages were noted. The first spring migrant was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 19th April, with further singles on the 22nd, 25th, 29th and 1st May. Another single was at Wheldrake on 8th May and one, perhaps the same bird, was seen the next day at Bank Island. One at NDC on 15th May was eclipsed by five there on the 17th, with four the next day and a single on the 19th.

A late bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 8th June.

Less than a month later, two were at Wheldrake Ings and one at Bank Island on 3rd July, with four across the site the next day, two remaining until the 11th, with one the next day. It is difficult to know if these July birds were late spring migrants, non-breeding birds or early-returning failed breeders. There was then a blank period until 3rd August, when one appeared at Wheldrake Ings, then a gap until the 20th, when another single appeared, residing there until the 25th, with two on the 26th and three on the 27th until the month-end. One at Acaster Airfield on 28th August was a good record. Up to three were present between Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings throughout September, with a single seen at Heslington East on the 20th. One remained at Wheldrake Ings until 2nd September, with another at Bank Island and Thorganby Ings on the 17th, followed by another sighting from there on the 21st which may have been the same late individual.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*
Scarce passage migrant

YOC *Red listed*

Perhaps not surprisingly, this pelagic wanderer is quite scarce in the recording area and the almost annual status is due to one or two records each year, usually occurring briefly after spring storms. As such, typically, adult birds were seen passing through Bank Island on 25th April (CSR) with another photographed there on 23rd May (AF).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
Resident breeder, abundant winter visitor and passage migrant

Amber listed
BBS 3/43

As expected the highest counts came from the roost at Wheldrake Ings in both winter periods and autumn and there were many significantly higher counts than in 2018. The roost held c.8000 on 3rd January, with 10,000 present on the 20th and 13,000 (peak count) on the 21st and 10,000 again on 17th February, but only 800 on 17th March. Elsewhere 450 were at CHL on 10th January, the same day that 3000 came into roost on the Top Lagoon at Heslington East; many of these observed coming in high from the north and northwest. 1000 were at NDC on 10th February and in March 900 were at Wharfe Ings on the 24th, with 300 there on the 25th and 200 at Kirkby Wharfe on both the 17th and 26th, while 180 there on 7th April was the only three-digit count for the month.

Counts of up to 30 came from various sites during May and June. The first juvenile was noted at Bank Island on 23rd June and 32 including two immatures were there on the 29th. Four juveniles were at Wheldrake Ings on 1st July and 100 at NDC on the 4th included eight juveniles. 100+ juveniles were present in a count of 430 at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th. Loafing flocks included 220 (ten juveniles) at Riccall on the 20th, and 212 on the sports fields at Heslington West on the 28th, seen earlier that day in a feeding 'swarm' over Fulford. 220 were on a flooded field at Milford Common on 1st August, 250 on the Knavesmire on the 15th, and 300 at Skelton on the 31st.

During the autumn there were feeding flocks in the hundreds at Riccall and Milford Common. Passage birds included 449 northwest over Bank Island on 27th

September. There were 500 at Bolton Percy Ings on 30th September and 850 there on 12th October. 350 were at Acaster Airfield and 1100 at Kirkby Wharfe on 3rd October, 400 at Rawcliffe Ings on the 13th, and 570 northwest over Bank Island on the 19th, with 300 at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th and c.300 at Melbourne on the 27th and 28th. At the end of the month 7500 roosted at Wheldrake Ings on the 30th and 7000 were in the roost on 3rd November, building to 33,400 on 14th December (WeBS) increasing further to up to 35,000 by the end of the year. The highest counts elsewhere were several hundred feeding/loafing in a mixed gull flock in fields near Spaldington Common on 24th November, 400 at Kirkby Wharfe on 21st December and 500 at Hessay Pond on the 22nd.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus* YOC
Passage migrant and scarce winter visitor

The sole record of the year was of a 2nd-calendar-year bird observed on 27th May at NDC (CSR, MFJ).

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* YOC *Amber listed*
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

Large winter gull roosts can offer some of the best chances of finding this species in the YOC area; all records this year came from the LDV. On 17th February a winter-plumage adult was found at Wheldrake Ings (DMB, JLe), whilst a summer-plumage bird was seen at NDC on 3rd March (LDV Blog). Unusually this year, there were no summer records and it wasn't until December when once again adult winter birds were seen, with one at NDC on the 19th (AW) and two in the roost at Wheldrake Ings on the 29th (CG, JLe), with a single also seen there on the 30th (DMB).

Common Gull *Larus canus* *Amber listed*
Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant BBS 2/43

Few counts over 20 were received away from the LDV; however numbers roosting there were far higher than in 2018. The roost at Wheldrake Ings held 2000 in early January, building to 4500+ on the 21st, with 3000 the monthly maximum for February and 300 on 17th March. There was some evidence of spring passage with a flock of 30 west over SHL on 2nd April, while 100 were seen following a tractor near there on the 4th, 175 at Heslington East on 9th April and 40 south over Wheldrake Ings on the 29th. 19 sub-adults and immatures paused at Bank Island on 1st May before flying south and there were 50 in the LDV on the 18th with small numbers noted as having passed through during the month. There were only single-digit counts during June and July, mainly from the LDV, apart from 76 adults and sub-adults on newly-cut hay meadows at Wheldrake Ings on 18th July and 42 on the 28th. In August 30 were at West Melbourne on the 26th. The winter roost at Wheldrake Ings held 4000+ on 30th October. In November 1000 roosted on the 3rd, increasing to 8000+ by the 28th and up to 10,000 during December, with 8300 at the WeBS count on the 14th.

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2019



Left to right and top to bottom

Ringed Plover © Duncan Bye
Wood Sandpiper © Craig Ralston
Spotted Redshank © Duncan Bye
Kittiwake © Adam Firth
Caspian Gull © Duncan Bye
Black Tern © Adam Firth
Turtle Dove © per Peter Lyons

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus**Amber listed**Winter visitor and passage migrant**BBS 1/43*

A somewhat better year than 2018, with three-figure counts coming from two sites - Wheldrake Ings and NDC. Other records were mainly single-digit counts where counts were given. Numbers at the roost built up during early January to a peak count of 980 on the 16th (WeBS). On the 10th, 188 were loafing at NDC during the day. Up to 400 roosted in the LDV during February. In March, up to 350 roosted at NDC feeding in nearby fields during the day; up to 200 remained in that area during April and 100 during May. In June 20 sub-adults and immatures were at NDC on the 3rd. After that, 15 day-roosting at Riccall on 20th July was the only count of note until 19th October when ten were at Brumber Hill. In early November 31 were at NDC, increasing to 40 on the 24th, the same day as 21 at Wheldrake Ings. In December 140+ were in the Wheldrake Ings roost on the 8th and 341 present during the WeBS count on the 14th. 311 roosted at NDC on the 11th.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus**Amber listed**Scarce winter visitor*

Not recorded in 2019, the first blank year since 2010.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides**Amber listed**Scarce winter visitor*

Only just avoiding the same blank fate as its larger cousin, a 1st-winter bird seen at NDC on 6th January (JS) was the only report of the year.

Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucooides kumlieni**YNU**Very rare winter visitor*

An adult was seen at the gull roost at Wheldrake Ings on 9th February before being flushed by a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* and flying south (JLe).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus**Red listed**Winter visitor, passage migrant and recently colonised breeder in small numbers**BBS 13/43*

Though recorded throughout the year few counts were above 20 with most in single-digits. During January higher counts were 310 at NDC on the 18th when 400 roosted at Wheldrake Ings; numbers building to 1000+ in the roost by the end of the month, with a similar number in early February. In March 250 were following a plough in fields near Malton and 129 flew north during a 90 minute VMW at Bolton Percy Ings on 14th April. There was no evidence received of pairs successfully breeding in York city centre in 2019 as they have done the past few years. In September 50 were in the Scagglethorpe Lane area on the 7th and 37 on wet fields there after heavy rain on 29th October. On 12th November 70 were at Brumber Hill and 80 there on the 24th, the same day several hundred were present in a mixed gull flock at Spaldington Common. In December, 100 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 15th and 627 feeding on fields by Derwent Cottage Farm near NDC on the 23rd. 300 roosted at NDC on several dates during the month but

only 150 were in the Wheldrake Ings roost at the end of the year. At Riccall 300 were feeding on abattoir waste on 30th December.

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

A few sightings, well down on the heady days when Rufforth Tip was still open. A 1st-winter bearing a yellow colour-ring was at Thorganby on 5th January (CSR) then another, or perhaps the same one, seen at the gull roost at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th (DMB, JLe).

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

An adult was at Bubwith on 1st January (DW). Then in May an adult was seen in a shallow pool on a lawn-turf field at Riccall on the 1st (DT) with an adult also seen day-roosting there on 20th July, three amongst 40 other large gulls on the same turf field on 8th August and four on the 10th. The only other sighting came from Bank Island on 24th August when one was in fields opposite the car park with the Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* flock (CSR).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* Amber listed
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant BBS 3/43

Though reported every month, apart from passage flocks in the autumn and several large flocks at Riccall, most counts were in low single-digits. In the first half of the year, the only notable counts were 26 feeding on recently cultivated cover crop at Riccall on 13th March and 23 at Bank Island on 24th April, with some single-figure flocks also seen moving through there during the month. On 1st May six adults and four young were in a shallow pool on lawn-turf field at Riccall, where 176 were day-roosting on the 7th (and 210 there on 20th July). In June 321 were at NDC. In August up to 60 were on fields opposite Bank Island car park on the 24th and 40 at Skelton on the 31st. Two individuals of the '*intermedius*' race were in a small flock of eight birds at Milford Common on 3rd September. During September 29 at Brumber Hill on the 9th, and 28 at Church Fenton on the 12th (and 39 on the 21st) were eclipsed by 150 feeding in a cultivated field by Riccall on the 20th. There were 40 in fields by Acaster Airfield on 5th October, while 18 at Brumber Hill on the 19th was the last count above two to the end of the year.

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

The only report of the year was of one seen flying towards Hagg bridge near Sutton upon Derwent on 23rd April (CSR).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Amber listed
Passage migrant and rare migrant breeder BBS 1/43

Local breeding success continued, with pairs successfully fledging young from three sites in the LDV and a pair at Heslington bred again. The first arrived back at

Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April, a pair on the 27th, four on the 28th and six on the 29th. Four were seen at Bank Island on the 30th with five at Wheldrake Ings the same day. Two were at Redhouse Lagoon on the 27th. In May the first at Heslington East arrived on the 8th, with two present on the 17th. By the 12th two pairs were on the tern raft at Wheldrake Ings, with five birds there on the 15th; one was on a nest on the 17th. A pair was present at NDC from the 11th. At Heslington East a pair was clearly incubating - on top of one of the artificial Sand Martin banks - on the 29th, with a pair also observed nesting at NDC the same day. On 19th June the pair at Heslington East had two half-grown chicks, while on the 21st two chicks were seen on the raft at NDC (which fledged in July), another pair was present in the Elvington area, and three chicks hatched at Wheldrake Ings, with the adults seen feeding them. Two further adults as well as the family were seen there on the 26th. The young were ringed and fledged from the raft on 6th July. Six were present on the 14th with the family departing soon after, reappearing on the 28th and the juveniles again on the 30th. On the 23rd two adults and two newly-fledged young turned up at Wheldrake Ings, thought to be the Elvington pair.

Elsewhere one flew over Naburn on 9th June, one was mobbing a Red Kite *Milvus milvus* there on the 19th and one was perched on a boat in the marina on 1st August. Two were at Redhouse Lagoon on the 4th and 6th July and one at Acaster on the 14th. Five (three adults and two juveniles) were seen at Wharfe Ings on the 4th, with four of these seen at Bolton Percy Ings the same day and one at Ulleskelf on the 11th. The final sightings were two over Naburn on 13th August apart from a dead adult found at Skipwith Common on the 25th.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*
Scarce passage migrant

YOC Amber listed

A lean year for a species which can occur in good numbers in some years. The first was seen flying northeast during a thunderstorm over Bank Island on 27th April (CSR), with three north over Wheldrake Ings on 4th May. Spring passage peaked on the 8th with six seen over Bank Island in heavy rain and strong easterly winds (CSR, CG), with four seen together later in the morning flying over the main lake at Heslington East (JCn) and one there later in the day (CB) presumably involving the same birds.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*
Scarce passage migrant

YOC

Early morning heavy rain showers and driving easterlies on 8th May resulted in a count of 43 passing through between Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island in just two hours (CG, CSR): the second largest day total on record for the LDV. Though these birds did not linger, one was seen later in the morning fishing at Heslington East, remaining there for the day (JCn, CB, GW et al.). The only other records were of single birds seen at Bank Island and at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th (AF, DMB); then Wheldrake Ings hosted two on the 11th (LDV Blog), with one there on the 16th (ASw, JR) and again on the 20th (LDV Blog).

'Feral Pigeon' *Columba livia*

Common resident breeder

BBS 21/43

Widespread reports throughout the year included numerous flocks of between 20 and 60 birds, the exceptions to this being 68 around York Minster on 23rd April, whilst Acaster Airfield held 120 on 18th November increasing to 160 by the 29th.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Resident breeder

Amber listed

BBS 24/43

Recorded throughout the year from suitable areas, the prime habitat appearing to be less intensively managed farmland with some reports also from gardens. The majority of sightings involved between one and six birds. Flocks exceeding 20 included 22 at Milford Common on 6th January, 46 at Kirkby Wharfe on 2nd February and 26 at Wharfe Ings on 9th March and up to 83 at Milford Common during September. In December 42 were at Milford Common on the 3rd, with 234 (the year's maximum count) feeding on stubble at Derwent Farm, North Duffield on the 23rd, 50 at Milford Common on the 28th, 200 at Brumber Hill on the 30th and 50 at Menthorpe Lane, North Duffield on the 31st.

During the breeding season records of pairs present, singing birds or courtship display came from Acaster, Acomb Wood, Allerthorpe Woods, Aughton Ings, Bank Island, Bishop Wood, Bolton Percy Ings, Bubwith, three sites around Castle Howard, Clifton Park, East Cottingwith, Frog Hall (Allerthorpe), Haxby, Heslington, Kelsit Grange, Kirkby Wharfe, Kirkham, Melbourne, Milford Common, Norton, Ryther Ings, Scarthingwell, Seaton Ross, Slingsby Bank Woods, Strensall Common, Thornton, Welburn and Wheldrake Ings. The only confirmed breeding in the form of occupied nests came from Rawcliffe Ings on 23rd February and Thornton on 12th May although breeding was also considered highly likely in Heslington where a pair were regular in a Horse Chestnut tree during June and July, with the male often singing.

VMW at Bolton Percy Ings, mainly during September, recorded 91 flying south and 19 north, including 31 flying south during a two hour period on the 8th.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident breeder

BBS 43/43

Remains the most widespread and regularly encountered species in the area, with migrants augmenting numbers during autumn and winter.

In the first winter period flocks of 500 or more included 700 at Bolton Percy Ings on 4th January, increasing to 1700 by the 20th, then down to 600 on the 27th. On the 19th c.500 were at Naburn with 600 at High Roans, Strensall on the 27th. In February 600 were feeding on oilseed rape at Riccall on the 4th, with the same number at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 11th, 800 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 13th and 500 at Bank Island on the 16th. 550 still remained at Bolton Percy Ings on 19th March.

Breeding evidence was limited and clearly under-recorded for such an abundant species with courtship behaviour or territory holding details received from only around 30 sites and actual breeding confirmed from just Malton

(Lakeside Way), SHL, Stamford Bridge and Welburn.

There was just one VMW count received of 760 flying south at Bolton Percy Ings in one hour on 9th November. Compared to last year, numbers during autumn and winter remained comparatively low with few flocks exceeding 200; those that did were solely encountered in December and included 400 at Ellerton Ings on the 15th, 345 along the Pocklington Canal at Thornton on the 23rd, 800 at Brumber Hill on the 30th and 230 at Strensall Common the following day.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

YOC Red listed

Passage migrant and declining scarce migrant breeder

The BTO Breeding Bird Survey showed a 3% decline for this species in England during 2019 and a shocking 95% decline in the last 23 years.

As has been the case in recent years, most reports came from the north of the recording area in SE67, the majority of records being reported to the North Yorkshire Turtle Dove Project (NYTDP) as part of their efforts to survey and map Turtle Dove numbers and territories with the aim of conserving and improving habitat for this iconic species. See also Richard Baines' article on page 128. The first of the year was one singing in Gilling on 12th May (JP). Elsewhere in SE67, one was in a garden on 15th May (LB) and one singing in the same area on 28th May (SN), with a further report on 1st July that two birds had been present in a garden during the summer, which included a singing male (however these two may be the same as the birds reported on the 15th and 28th May). Also in May, one was heard in Ampleforth Village on 24th May (after a blank year in 2018), and one was singing in a wood on the Hovingham Estate on 31st May (LB). One was heard during a Turtle Dove survey visit on 7th June - in the adjoining 1km square to that being surveyed (EB). In SE53, one was seen and photographed on 26th June and 4th July. The last report was of one singing in Gilling on 21st July (GS). There was however no confirmation of breeding.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common resident breeder

BBS 17/43

Remains widespread in the area, usually in association with human habitation, the majority of records received involving groups of ten or fewer with ones or twos being most frequent. The largest count in the first half of the year was of 22 at Kirkby Wharfe on 6th January.

Evidence of breeding was rather limited coming from only 15 sites; the majority of these records related to singing males or birds apparently holding territory. The exception to this was recently fledged young seen during the year in a garden in Stamford Bridge and a nest with young found at Rufforth Tip on 16th July.

Post breeding there were few large gatherings and all under 20 birds until the last two months of the year when in November the year's maxima occurred on the 19th with 70 at Kirkby Wharfe, reducing to 60 by the 24th, on which date there were also 23 at Ivy House, Welham Bridge. In December 24 remained at Kirkby Wharfe on the 5th.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
Migrant breeder

Red listed
BBS 9/43

The year's first record came on 10th April, a calling bird along the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, five days earlier than in 2018. The next birds arrived on the 19th when there were two at Elvington, and singles at Redhouse Lagoon, Skipwith Common and Wheldrake Ings, then SHL and Strensall Common on the 20th. By the end of April the species had been recorded additionally from Allerthorpe Common, Bank Island, Castle Howard, East Cottingwith, Haxby, Stillingfleet, Storwood, Thorganby and Towthorpe, the majority of records being of single birds except for four at Strensall Common on the 23rd and two calling males with a female in flight at Allerthorpe Common on the 28th. The spread of sightings, again mostly of single birds, continued in May culminating in records received from around 35 sites although as usual very few were received from the three northern tetrads, fewer than ten reports in total.

During the annual MOD survey of Strensall Common in May there were an estimated three birds, which is consistent with the usual number for this site, whilst a sample count from the LDV produced 39 singing males, maximum counts coming from along the Pocklington Canal of ten between Canal Head and Church Bridge and seven between Melbourne and East Cottingwith, with four in the vicinity of Wheldrake and three in both the Thorganby Parish and Skipwith Common. Sightings from Brayton Barff were said to be well down this year. Records reduced in June, the majority centred around the LDV including Pocklington Canal and the three large commons at Allerthorpe, Skipwith and Strensall. The majority were of ones and twos except for two males and a female at Strensall Common on the 1st and up to four males and two females visiting the reedbed at Church Bridge, Pocklington Canal during the month. In July there were single adults at both Thornton Lock and Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd and Melbourne on the 7th. Thereafter only reports of immatures were received, one being fed by a Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* at Wheldrake Ings on the 8th (seen again on the 10th, 12th, 13th and 19th) and one which fledged from a Wren's *Troglodytes troglodytes* nest at Skipwith Common on the 28th and 29th. In August there were single immatures at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd and 11th and the last two records of the year both occurred on the 15th, a day earlier than in 2018, when one remained at Wheldrake Ings with another at Strensall Common.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*
Resident breeder

BBS 4/43

The number of records received was similar to 2017 though 20% below the 2018 total. Birds were reported from every month with a maximum of 49 sightings in February and a September minimum of three. 70% of the reports and 46% of the reported sites came from SE53, 54, 64 and 74. There were no records from SE56 and 67, just three from SE77 (one site) and four from SE73 (four sites).

During the first three months most sightings came from well watched places such as Bank Island, Bolton Percy Ings, Milford Common, Naburn and Wheldrake Ings. In addition there were reports from 19 other sites from where there were no

subsequent records namely Aughton, Appleton Roebuck, Askham Bog, Bilbrough, Bubwith, Bishop Wilton, Byland, Cawood, Copmanthorpe, Elvington, Low Grounds, Monks Cross, Raker Lakes, Redhouse Lagoon, Rufforth Tip, Seaton Ross, Selby, Sutton upon Derwent and Wistow. The number of reports from January and February was double the total for the same period in 2018 and was mainly due to the freezing conditions which forced birds to hunt during daylight hours. Cold weather continued into February and 12 birds were present in the LDV during daylight hours on the 1st.

Although pairs were present at many known territories, proof of breeding was restricted to eight sites: Bolton Percy Ings (food carried to two different nest sites from late April to early July), Kelfield (food to a nest site on 13th June), Melbourne (one owlet by box on 24th July), Milford Common (farmer reported breeding), NDC (food to a nest on 15th May), Riccall (broods of two and four), Terrington (food to a nest on 5th May) and Wheldrake Ings (food to a nest on 12th April and 8th June). Four regularly used nest sites in the Riccall/Kelfield/Esrick area remained unoccupied. Breeding probably took place elsewhere but it does appear that 2019 was a poor breeding season for this species. Jean Thorpe reported an unusual event from Flaxton where a farmer discovered five owlets in a corn dryer that he had bought from elsewhere. The young were taken into care and three survived.

After the breeding season the frequency of sightings was well below the norm. The ten records for November was the maximum monthly total from August to December and there were only three September reports compared with 21 in 2018. In the Lower Wharfe Valley the number of sightings was 75% below the 2018 total. All of this suggests that few young birds joined the adult population. Reports during this period from sites not previously mentioned came from Church Fenton, Hessay, Holtby, Oxtou, Scrayingham (six reports from 3rd October to 28th December) and Wigginton Road, York.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*
Resident breeder

Amber listed
BBS 4/43

The number of records received has almost doubled since 2017 mostly due to findings from the national survey and an increasing total from a few well monitored sites such as Allerthorpe, Bank Island, Bolton Percy, Naburn and Wheldrake Ings. Birds were reported in every month with a May maximum of 35 and a July minimum of 13. The number of occupied sites rose to 71 and the 16 proof-of-breeding reports is a YOC record. However, there were no reports from SE56 and 73 and only one from SE67. The lack of reports from SE56 is surprising because 19 post-breeding territories were recorded during the national survey in 2018 suggesting that the apparent absence of birds in 2019 was due to under-reporting.

The majority of the late winter records came from the previously listed well monitored sites. Elsewhere, birds were present at Bishop Wood, Heslington West Kexby, Newburgh Priory, Pocklington, Poppleton, SHL, Strensall, York (Danesmead Wood, Fulford and Rowntree Park) and Yorkshire Arboretum. Notable counts of calling birds included five at Acaster Malbis on 5th January and Seaton Ross on the 28th and seven at Allerthorpe Common on the 6th.

The record number of proven breeding records came from Allerthorpe Common (young), Bishop Wood (two young), Bolton Percy (two young), Brayton Barff (two pairs with young), Dunnington (two young), Haxby (young), Kelfield (one young), Scagglethorpe Lane (two pairs with young), Sand Hutton (one young), Stockton on the Forest (two young), Skipwith Common (three young), Strensall Common (two young), Thornton (a brood) and Wheldrake (one young). In addition, breeding probably took place at several sites where birds were present throughout the year, for example Acaster Malbis, Bank Island, Pocklington (Yapham road) and SHL. Although there were reports from 12 sites within the York ring road, proof of breeding evidence was not forthcoming. It would be interesting to know if breeding does occur within the City. It was the poorest breeding season at Skipwith Common since 2013 with five nest boxes remaining unoccupied. From July onwards most of the reports came from the listed places with the addition of Ampleforth Abbey, Colton, Easthorpe, Newton-on-Derwent and Nunnington Hall. The largest counts of calling birds during this period were five at Nether Poppleton on 11th September, eight at Bank Island on 15th September and five at Stamford Bridge on 17th December.

Jean Thorpe dealt with seven Tawny Owls from the recording area. Birds from Pocklington and Castle Howard had Frounce (trichomoniasis) and had to be euthanised. Three were from traffic accidents at Claxton, York and Malton; two survived and were later released. Finally, a bizarre event was reported from Dunnington during November when the pair from Hassacarr NR became stuck in a nearby industrial boiler flue. After rescue and a clean-up the birds were released back at the NR the next day.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Resident breeder

BBS 2/43

The number of records (131) has doubled since the poor showing in 2018 whilst the number of reported sites (33) and proof of breeding has risen back to the levels of 2017. Reports came from every month with a maximum of 19 in June and a minimum of three in November. Again there were very few records from the northern hectads with none from SE56, 67 and 76 and single sites only in SE57, 66 and 77. It is not known if this is due to an absence of birds or under-reporting. During the first three months of the year there were records from Acaster Malbis (two birds), Askham Bog, Biggin, Bolton Percy, Bolton Percy Ings, Brayton Barff, Byland (2), Haxby, Heslington, Moor Monkton, Naburn, Norton, Poppleton, Seaton Ross (3), Strensall, Thorganby, Thornton, Wheldrake Ings and Wressle.

Proof of breeding came from five places: Acaster Malbis (four young raised), Clifton Park (two recently fledged young seen on 28th June), Dunnington (three young raised in an artificial box), Malton (an owlet was picked up in Malton on 14th July and successfully cared for by Jean Thorpe) and Riccall (one owlet ringed at an ash tree site on 17th June). Breeding may well have taken place at other sites where birds were present throughout the year. In addition there were breeding season sightings from Biggin, Gowthorpe, Kexby, Murton, Naburn, Poppleton, Riccall (second site), South Milford and Yapham. Good numbers of reports, some

of which may have been of dispersing young, continued into July and August from many of the noted sites as well as Kirkby Wharfe, Newton-on-Derwent, Ryther and Wistow. After this time the number of sightings declined and the only new site was Knapton on 12th September. A dead bird with lacerations to the neck was reported from Acaster Malbis on 10th April.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* YOC
Scarce localised breeder and occasional winter visitor

The 15 early-January to late-July reports from six sites and the two breeding records are similar to those of recent years.

A calling bird was heard at Allerthorpe Common on 6th January (PB) and one was sighted at Rufforth Tip on 24th February (ML) and the 26th (AHO). There was then a gap of three months until another was seen whilst being mobbed by Blackbirds *Turdus merula* at NDC on May 15th (LDV Blog), though there was no subsequent evidence of breeding there. However, successful breeding did take place at Strensall Common and Bishop Wood. June records from the former site included a hunting adult on the 9th (ASw et al.), an adult on the 19th (GWA) and two, possibly three, hunger-calling owlets from a nest site in the same area as last year on the 22nd (DR). The young were calling more powerfully on the 29th (DR) and by 16th July two young had fledged (PR), with the final sighting there of a young bird flying low and hunger-calling on the 22nd (PR). At Bishop Wood two hunger calling owlets were heard on the 19th June (PD) and four on the 22nd (ASw). This is the largest brood size reported by the YOC since the one at Skipwith Common in 1968. Calling young were not heard at Skipwith Common during four evening surveys. An adult with a dislocated shoulder found at Appleton Roebuck on 18th March could not be saved and had to be euthanised.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* YOC Amber listed
Winter and passage visitor; casual breeder

The species continues to be scarce since the 2015 influx though the number of records (11) and reported sites (nine) is almost double the recent average. During the early part of the year one hunted over Rufforth Tip on 10th February (ML) and the 24th (BirdGuides). Likely spring passage birds appeared at Skipwith Common on 14th April and two were near Aughton on the 23rd (both LDV Blog). There was no evidence of breeding and the next sightings were not reported until November when one flew south over Bank Island on the 2nd (CSR) and singles were present at Brumber Hill on the 9th and 12th (ASw), Wheldrake Ings on the 9th (DMB), Coulton on the 12th (ASw) and Hessay on the 25th where one perched on a straw bale in the pouring rain (BT). The last sighting of the year was of two hunting between Menthorpe and North Duffield on 31st December (LDV Blog).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* YOC Amber listed
Scarce passage migrant and scarce migrant breeder

As in the past couple of years, the majority of records came from Strensall Common; however none were recorded at Skipwith Common (from five survey

visits) - a previous stronghold. The first of the year were two males heard 'churring' between 22:00 and 23:00 at Strensall Common on 31st May - in the same areas (and only one day later) as two in 2018 (PR). Two, possibly three, were present on 1st June (DR, JLe) and one of the two 31st May arrivals was heard again on the 3rd (PR, JB). Four were heard on the 9th (DMB, AS, AF). Later in the month, three were 'churring', with wing-clapping and halting rattle also heard, on the 19th and 20th (PR, GW), then two were 'churring' on the 27th (FW) and 29th, when one was also seen briefly (DR). In June, the only sighting away from Strensall Common was one that showed well, 'churring' and displaying, at Yearsley Moor on the 5th; potentially a second male was also heard 'churring' briefly in the distance (DR). One was heard at Strensall Common again on 4th July (JW), while a different male was 'churring' in White Carr, Stockton Parish on the 9th (PR). Three were 'churring' again on Strensall Common on 22nd July (at the same sites as 20th June) (PR, AS). In August the last record from Strensall Common was of one giving flight calls on the 8th. Perhaps the year's most surprising record was of one photographed perched on a fence post in a garden in Clifton early on the morning of the 27th (FW, MW). A passage bird was seen on Dauby Lane, Elvington on the 29th and 30th (AF), with another at Wheldrake Ings at dawn on 10th September (CSR). The last of the year was a single rehabilitated juvenile released on 20th September following a few days in care (JT, CSR).

Swift *Apus apus*
Migrant breeder

Amber listed
BBS 15/43

The first of the year was one over Wheldrake Ings on 22nd April, followed by singletons at Norton on the 24th, Bank Island on the 26th, Acomb on the 27th and Haxby on the 30th, the same day as two at Riccall (with two back at the breeding colony there on 1st May) and six at Wheldrake Ings. By 3rd May 40 were in the Bank Island/Wheldrake Ings area, increasing to 60 there and 40 at NDC on the 6th, increasing again to 300+ on the 9th and 500+ on the 10th, with smaller numbers thereafter. Away from the LDV birds continued to arrive in small numbers to many other sites. However, apart from the LDV where counts of 40 to 50 came from Bank Island, 100 at Wheldrake Ings on the 27th and 50+ at NDC on the 31st, there were few counts over ten and some observers noted that, similar to 2018, birds seemed to be late arriving in their area. In early June 36 were at Bolton Percy Ings on the 2nd, and 100 at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th, 12th and 14th, while up to 60 were over Brayton Barff on the 15th. Passage birds saw 300 move over Wheldrake Ings on the 14th and 1000+ on the 24th. Higher counts during July included 50 over Ampleforth Abbey and 40+ over Stamford Bridge (both sites where they bred), 60 over Brayton Barff and 60 over Bolton Percy Ings.

Birds were seen exploring and subsequently visiting occupied nests in several areas. Confirmation of breeding came from Acomb, Ampleforth Abbey, Easingwold, Easthorpe (where the first fledged young were seen on 8th July), Gilling, Naburn, Nether Poppleton, Stamford Bridge and York (Terry Street). At the Riccall colony it was an average year: eight pairs bred and 14 pulli were ringed (mean brood size = 1.8), while two adults from 2011 were re-trapped, one of which

had been caught at the same nest in 2016 and 2018. It was noted that it was an exceptional year for late breeding probably owing to the spell of colder weather in June, some birds abandoning nests and re-laying after the 20th - one swiftlet at Gilling fledged in the first week of September.

Reports of return passage included a movement west during the evening of 29th July with 80 over Poppleton, then 80 over Naburn on 3rd August and 45 over Bolton Percy Ings on the 4th, 100 south over Fangfoss on the 16th, the same day as 30 south over Bank Island, 35 over the river valley at Bolton Percy Ings on the 18th and 20 over Naburn on the 24th. Low single-digit counts were reported thereafter with the last of the year being four over Wheldrake on 18th September.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Resident breeder

Amber listed
BBS 2/43

Reported throughout the year in ones or twos, with the majority of records again coming from areas where they are present all year: Bank Island, Bolton Percy Ings, Pocklington Canal, sites along the River Ouse (including Naburn) and Wheldrake Ings. Records also came from Acaster, Allerthorpe OGP, Askham Bog, Barton-le-Willows, Bielby, Bishopthorpe Ings, Castle Howard, East Cottingham, Fulford Ings, Gilling, Hagg Bridge, Hassacarr NR, Heslington East and West, Heslington Tillmire, Howsham Bridge, Kirkby Wharfe, Laybourne Lakes, Malton, Milford Common, Nether Poppleton, Newburgh Priory, Newton upon Derwent, NDC, Osbaldwick, Rawcliffe Lake, Redhouse Lagoon, Riccall, Rufforth Tip (lagoons), Ryther Ings, SHL, Stamford Bridge, Stearsby Hagg, Towthorpe, Wharfe Ings, Wistow Clough and York.

During the breeding season courtship feeding was noted between a pair along the River Derwent on 31st March, and pairs were also seen at Naburn, where food-carrying was seen in May. In early June adults were seen feeding young at Melbourne along the Pocklington Canal and a pair raised a brood of four young at Bielby. Pairs at Wheldrake Ings bred and birds were seen daily from June onwards at Pool Hide, with four present on 8th July. Several juveniles were caught and ringed in the LDV in late July and early August. A juvenile was also caught and ringed at Heslington East in mid-July. Regular sightings at Milford Common and along the River Wharfe at Kirkby Wharfe and Bolton Percy Ings indicated probable breeding. A juvenile seen with an adult at Wharfe Ings on 4th August was probably raised nearby.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor*
Rare resident breeder

YOC Red listed

The only record came from Allerthorpe Common where one was heard calling on 25th February (BT).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
Resident breeder

BBS 19/43

Widespread across the area and again well reported throughout the year, mostly in ones and twos, from around 75 locations (similar to 2018). Some were

reported regularly visiting garden feeders. Five were at Strensall Common on 11th February, three at Tank Plantation, Allerthorpe on 2nd March, three at Strensall Common on the 23rd, and three along Knavesmire and Ousebank on 5th April. Of five at Yearsley Moor on 2nd May, two were drumming. There were four at Butt Pools, Strensall Common on the 15th and three in Slingsby Bank Woods on the 20th. In June there were three at Soulby Wood (Coulton) on the 4th, Bolton Percy on the 8th and West Ings on the 16th. Later in the year there were three at Bolton Percy Ings on 20th August and again on September 13th, then four there on the 14th, three at Castle Howard on the 16th and four at Milford Common on the 18th. In December three were at Milford Common again on the 3rd and seven around Wheldrake Ings on the 13th.

Drumming males were reported from mid-February and breeding confirmation came from several locations. A fresh juvenile was at Milford Common on 23rd May, a nest held young at Strensall Common on 1st June and young were seen at Acomb Wood on the 16th, the same day as an adult and two young were at West Ings. A juvenile was seen at Kirkby Wharfe on 20th June, one on feeders in Bolton Percy on the 30th and one at Nether Poppleton also on the 30th. The first to fledge at Wheldrake Ings was seen on 2nd July and three were caught and ringed there during the month. A nest site was being visited on Scagglethorpe Lane on 8th July. Pairs also bred at Brayton Barff, Skipwith Common (Dane's Hill), Stamford Bridge and Upper Poppleton, with fledged young seen at each of these sites.

During VMW at Ozendyke five flew south between 30th August and 27th September.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Resident breeder

BBS 3/43

Records, generally of single birds, came from around 35 locations with suitable habitat - with the largest number of sightings coming from Milford and Strensall Commons where birds are present throughout the year. Three were seen at Milford Common on 3rd December, while reports of two (or pairs) came from Acaster Malbis, Ampleforth, Heslington Tillmire, Naburn, Pocklington Canal, SHL, Strensall Common and Terrington. Like 2018, sightings were sparse again from October to December, with only eight reports received.

'Yaffling' birds were heard at several sites during the breeding season and there was more evidence of confirmed breeding than in 2018. Fledged young were seen at Melbourne, Pocklington Canal on 21st June and one juvenile again on the 24th near the Melbourne Arm. On 4th July an adult and two juveniles were seen in an orchard in Naburn, with the juveniles seen there again on the 14th. A family party of three was also seen by Redhouse Lagoon on the 4th and a recently fledged juvenile was at Bolton Percy on the 30th. A juvenile was feeding under oaks at Skipwith Common on 10th August. Of two birds seen at Milford Common on 3rd September, one (and possibly both) was a juvenile and one of the Naburn juveniles was drinking from a birdbath on the 19th. A pair present all year at SHL bred, fledging one young - seen feeding there on 5th August.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
Resident breeder

Amber listed
BBS 16/43

The annual number of reported sightings has doubled since 2017. This has taken place at a time when, according to the BTO, there has been a national decline in the population of 19% during the period 2008-18. However, it seems likely that the apparent local population increase is caused by more records from a limited number of sites rather than an increase in the number of birds. Half of the 632 sightings came from six well-watched sites namely: Bank Island, Bolton Percy Ings, Brumber Hill, Milford Common, Scagglethorpe Lane and Wheldrake Ings. Birds were reported from a further 94 sites concentrated mainly in the nine southern hectads. Although the number of reports from the six northern hectads remained the same as in 2018 the number of reported sites fell by a quarter. Records from SE56 and 67 were limited to single sightings at two locations. The monthly report totals ranged from 44 in August to 61 in October.

During the early months of the year there was a widespread distribution of single birds and a few reports of two. A survey of the LDV on 3rd February produced a total of 21 birds. There were 19 proven breeding records compared with eight in 2017. The rise may have been due to an increase in observer coverage or a more productive breeding season or some of both. The reported breeding sites were Allerthorpe, Bolton Percy Ings, Cawood, Elvington, Escrick, Hassacarr NR, Hemingbrough, Heslington Tillmire, Kexby, Kirkby Wharfe, Naburn, Melbourne, Milford Common, Moor Monkton (Scagglethorpe Lane), Riccall (two pairs), Seaton Ross, Terrington and Towthorpe. Most of the records involve adults carrying food to nest sites or recently fledged young, though brood sizes were known from Elvington and Escrick (five at each), Riccall (four at one site) and Towthorpe (four). The one eyed male at Kexby, now present for his seventh year, helped to raise four young giving a cumulative total of at least 19. The pair at Hassacarr NR produced a clutch and although the pair was present for five weeks the eggs failed to hatch. After the breeding season sightings dominated from the Derwent and Wharfe valleys. Counts of four, which were probably family parties, were reported from Milford Common on 1st September, Stillingfleet on the 17th and Bubwith on 27th October, whilst six were at Wheldrake Ings on 19th October and 16 throughout the LDV on 12th October.

Birds were occasionally seen within the York ring road at Askham Bog, Heslington East, Danesmead Wood, Fulford (Germany Beck and Ings), the Knavesmire, Monks Cross and Rawcliffe though there was no evidence of breeding. Elsewhere, a dead bird seen at SHL on 13th March appeared to have been predated, whilst one caught a Blackbird *Turdus merula* at Brumber Hill on 13th April.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*
Passage migrant and winter visitor

Red listed

The number of reports (17) was very close to the 2011-18 mean of 16. During January singles were at Heslington Tillmire on the 6th, NDC on the 11th, 18th and 23rd, Wheldrake on the 13th (where a male hunted thrushes at Raker Lakes), and

Acaster Malbis on the 16th. The only February record was from Newsham Bridge (SE77) on the 8th. There was then a gap of almost two months before the next sighting, on 5th April at NDC, followed by one at Copmanthorpe on the 12th and 13th and a female over Wheldrake Ings on the 16th. The final spring report was of a male at NDC on the unusually late date of 22nd May.

The first returning bird was a female seen on Riccall Ings on 19th September. The bird made a concerted but failed effort to catch a flying Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*. The remaining four reports all came from the LDV where October sightings included singles at NDC on the 9th and 16th and Bank Island on the 10th, with the last of the year at Thorganby on 3rd November.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Passage migrant; scarce and localised breeder

BBS 4/43

Although the number of records (88) was almost identical to 2018 both totals are 12% below the 2017 figure. As usual, most records (66%) came from the LDV.

The first arrived at Wheldrake Ings on 19th April and numbers in the Valley steadily rose to six by the 24th. On the 28th a pair was seen catching dragonflies at Bank Island before they perched on a conifer and carried out a courtship display. Two or three were regular at both Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island from 1st May though sightings became scarcer as cooler weather set in. When warmer temperatures were re-established on the 11th the birds returned and were then reported throughout the reserve until the end of the month. During the nesting period the number of sightings declined as the birds became more secretive. NE reported one brood of at least two young whilst two pairs probably bred and three others possibly did so. By August birds were seen daily at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings, where one was seen to catch a Swallow *Hirundo rustica* in front of Tower Hide on the 14th. Sightings continued into September when singles were present at Melbourne on the 19th and 20th and at Bank Island from the 26th to the 29th. Three were present at dusk over Wheldrake Ings on the 24th and the last bird of the year was seen there at dusk on 11th October.

In the Lower Wharfe Valley birds were present at Bolton Percy Ings on 7th May, 16th June, 21st August and 5th September, Brumber Hill on 19th July and Milford Common on 5th July and 21st September. However there was no evidence to suggest that breeding took place. Other sites which had multiple records were Naburn, Poppleton, Skipwith Common and Strensall Common (two males from 13th-15th May). Elsewhere single records came from Copmanthorpe, Gilling (a probable juvenile on 15th August), Hambleton, Hassacarr NR, Heslington, Little Fenton, Norton, Riccall, Selby and SHL.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

BBS 2/43

Winter and passage visitor; scarce breeder plus a breeding pair at York Minster

The number of reports has risen by almost 20% since 2017. Most of the 153 records came from the four well-watched sites at Wheldrake Ings (37 records), NDC (29), York Minster (13) and Bolton Percy Ings (10). However, there was only one report from the six northern hectads compared with eight from five sites in

2018. Birds were present throughout the year with a maximum of 22 reports in January and the minimum of four in August.

Most of the sightings reported during the first three months of the year were of wintering birds in the LDV, the resident pair on York Minster, the Lower Wharfe Valley and a roosting pair in Selby. Five hunted over the LDV during January, including a pair which displayed on the 31st. One of these birds was seen to catch a flying Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* on the 6th. Four were present during February when one struggling to fly with a large prey item was seen at Melbourne on the 23rd. Three remained during March, including an immature bird. The pair at York Minster was present throughout this period and one of them, or individuals from other local pairs, probably accounted for the sightings at Copmanthorpe on 14th February, Heslington East on the 16th, SHL on the 19th and Acaster Malbis on 17th March. The first report from the Lower Wharfe Valley came from Ozendyke Ings on 23rd February followed by one at Nun Appleton on 4th March, with two there on the 11th, and one at Bolton Percy Ings on the 31st. A roosting pair was present at Selby throughout January and February with the male using a sheltered ledge on West Mill whilst the female kept out of the wind on various parts of the Abbey. Elsewhere one was at Huby on 17th February and one at a known breeding site in SE73.

During the breeding season four chicks were reared at York Minster for the third successive year. They hatched in early May and were colour-ringed (orange with a number) on the 22nd. When the young fledged there was a flurry of reports from the surrounding area including Clifton, Heworth (where one of the adults teased three young with food on 18th June), Rawcliffe and SHL. The RBBP report for the LDV indicates that three pairs were present at pylon nest sites around the Valley and that at least one pair bred producing a minimum of two young. There were no reports from other previously used nest sites. A juvenile seen at Milford Common on 30th July almost certainly came from a nest site beyond the recording area. Other reports from this period included the filming of an immature bird catching a Teal *Anas crecca* at NDC on 5th April, a two bird chase at Stamford Bridge on 15th July and a bird attempting to predate a Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* over SHL on 6th August.

The number of reports increased from four in August to 11 in September and this higher level continued to the year-end. Many of these were from the LDV where three wintering birds were present by late December. Reports from the Lower Wharfe Valley included three birds at Bolton Percy Ings on 5th October. Other sightings came from places close to the York Minster nest site, whilst one flew over Skipwith Common on 7th November.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

YOC

Scarce visitor but escapes cannot be ruled out

Sightings were sparse in the first half of the year - with only five reports received; four from the Clifton/Rawcliffe area (where a pair has bred in recent years). In the second half of the year sightings increased. While records of one or two from the Clifton/Rawcliffe area continued to dominate, with three seen together

on several occasions (in June, September, October and November - mostly at the usual Rawcliffe garden, though none of the birds seen there had ring-necks indicating that they were male), there were reports of singletons from several other sites within York. In addition there were a few records away from the city - one flying south at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd January, and singletons over Dunnington Common on 11th August and Naburn on 10th October, while a surprising flock of 16 was in trees and bushes by the cycle path along the A19 at Riccall on 13th December. There was no evidence of breeding taking place this year.

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

None in 2019, after records in four of the last ten years, most recently 2017.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius* BBS 12/43
Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

As in previous years this species was encountered regularly and widely throughout the recording area, although mostly as single birds or up to a maximum of five, and no larger groups were detected in the first half of the year.

Evidence of breeding was again scarce. Two pairs were seen at Allertorpe Common on 2nd March, while on Skipwith Common a nest with eggs was predated on 11th May although a nearby nest met with more success and there were young ready to fledge on 2nd June, the inference being that there were probably two separate pairs. Elsewhere the agitated behaviour of a pair said to be nesting was reported from Scagglethorpe Lane on 20th May. A juvenile was caught and ringed at Wheldrake Ings on 7th September.

Some slightly larger groups were observed in the autumn and second winter period, possibly indicative of post-breeding birds on the move. There were six together at Milford Common on 3rd September, seven on the 25th at Wheldrake Ings, and, the largest single count of the year, 12 on Skipwith Common on 11th October, when six were also seen to fly in to roost in poolside willows at Wheldrake Ings. Six were noted on Skipwith Common on the 14th and 11 again at Milford Common on 3rd December.

Magpie *Pica pica* BBS 24/43
Common resident breeder

There were frequent sightings of single birds and groups of ten or fewer across the recording area all year but a few larger gatherings were also noted.

Clifton Backies hosted 20+ on 18th March, there were 14 at West Field Beck/Wood (Haxby) on 27th June and 20 at Nether Poppleton on 14th July. Later in the year, on 12th September West Field Beck/Wood hosted 18 birds, with 13 there on the 27th, 12 on 1st October and 14 on the 30th, then 19 on 15th November. On 3rd November 12 flew over Bank Island in a loose flock, 12 were in Scagglethorpe Lane on 17th December, with 15 there on the 27th, and a party of 17 was feeding on stubble at Barlby on the 29th.

Breeding evidence was limited. A pair started to repair a nest from the previous

year in mild weather in a Heslington garden on 14th January, halting when the temperature dropped on the 17th. Re-commencing in mid-March, the nest was occupied throughout April with young fledged towards the end of May. This pair was observed nest building again from 29th November to the year-end whenever the weather was conducive! Two were seen holding territory at Easthorpe on 10th April and in Danesmead Wood on 25th July. Recently fledged young were present at Ampleforth Abbey on the 15th and 18th July, two juveniles were in a Naburn garden on the 15th and juveniles were reported from a garden in Stamford Bridge.

Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

Common resident breeder

BBS 35/43

There were plentiful sightings throughout the year but more notable were the larger gatherings in excess of 50 birds.

Early in the year 200 were at Heslington West on 2nd January, 120 at Yapham Road on the 5th and 250 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 27th. Into February Pocklington Canal held 76 at Melbourne and 268 at Thornton Lock on the 4th (with 280 there on the 14th), and there were 120 at Appleton-le-Street on the 8th. In the autumn there were 150 at Bolton Percy Ings on 12th September, 160 at Kirkby Wharfe on 3rd October, 63 at Thornton Lock, Pocklington Canal on 19th November and a breath-taking 850 (minimum number) roosting birds in Patefield Wood on the 30th. Thereafter there was a roost of approximately 400 at Heslington West on 2nd December and 60 at Melbourne on the 16th.

Although large numbers of records were once again submitted for this species there were, as in previous years, few that evidenced successful breeding. Nest building was observed at Castle Howard on 17th April and one seen visiting a nest site at Melbourne the same day. On 9th April, and again on 15th May, birds were seen visiting nest sites at Kirkham and Crambe. There was nest building at Knavesmire and Ouse Bank on 11th April, birds were said to be holding territory in the Melbourne/Thornton area on 20th May and six were doing the same at Ampleforth Abbey on 17th July. There were three reports of recently fledged young: in a party of six at Norton on 7th April, in a group of 20 at Kirkby Wharfe on 12th July and in a Stamford Bridge garden.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Common resident breeder

BBS 28/43

A commonly encountered corvid within the recording area, the communal nature of which species often produces large gatherings, notably:

4th January, Bank Island - 200

12th January, Winchmore, Stamford Bridge - 1000

26th January, East Ness - 150

27th January, Kirkby Wharfe - 150

27th January, Wheldrake Ings - 300

8th February, Appleton-le-Street - 250

5th July, Milford Common - 540; 200 on the 14th and 160 on the 21st

6th July, Wheldrake Ings - 300 and 200 on the 7th and 28th

17th July, Ampleforth Abbey - 132 and 166 on the 18th
2nd August, The Grange, Pocklington Canal - 120
26th August, Bank Island - 200
29th October, Scagglethorpe Lane - 200
30th November, Patefield Wood - 650
28th December, Deighton - 150

Nest building was noted at Acaster, Newburgh Priory and South Melbourne (30 birds nest building), while nest counts were received for a number of rookeries: The Mount, York (a new rookery with eight nests), by B&Q on Hull Road (79 nests), Kirkham and Crambe (11 nests), Naburn (minimum 30 nests opposite the church and 60 airborne birds there on 9th June, plus six nests opposite Bell Hall), Strensall (seven nests) and Riccall (24 active nests). Evidence of successful breeding was limited. On 16th June and 7th July respectively, recently fledged young, and then juveniles, were seen in parties of three and four birds at Norton, Malton. Two juveniles were seen with their parents at Thornton Lock, Pocklington Canal on 24th June, while the large counts at Ampleforth Abbey in July included fledged young.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Common resident breeder

BBS 42/43

Despite the huge number of records submitted for this ubiquitous corvid, once again, breeding evidence was thin on the ground. An interesting record was of a bird with white wings seen along the River Derwent on 6th March. The majority of larger counts came from the southwest of the area, with notable gatherings greater than 50 as follows: 55 at Milford Common on 22nd April, with 72 there on 4th May, 66 on the 10th, 70 on the 12th and 60 on the 14th. There were 100 at Poppleton riverside on 30th May, 100 at Wheldrake Ings on 6th July, 89 at Milford Common on 6th August, 65 at Scagglethorpe Lane on 29th October and 90 at Patefield Wood on 30th November.

One was seen gathering nesting material in a Naburn garden on 26th March; a pair was nest building in Heslington on 8th April, and on 12th May at Thornton. There was an occupied nest at Seaton Ross on 29th April and birds visiting a nest site on Milford Common on 14th May. The first report of fledged young came from Melbourne on 15th May and in the Naburn garden where nest building was noted in March an adult was seen feeding two begging juveniles on 3rd June. Recently fledged young were on Milford Common on 18th June and 5th July, at Ampleforth Abbey on the 15th, 16th and 18th July, at Nether Poppleton on the 22nd, at Melbourne on the 28th and 31st (two juveniles), and at Norton, Malton on 4th August. At SHL a pair raised two broods totalling six young.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Rare winter visitor

One was seen on 8th March between Melbourne and Thornton Ings loosely associating with eight Carrion Crows *C. corone* (NC).

Raven *Corvus corax*
Scarce visitor

YOC

After a slight dip in the number of sightings in 2018, the number of records submitted rose again and included, for the first time, what appears to be evidence of successful breeding in the recording area. On 31st January two were noted at Newburgh Priory (NC) and, into February, singletons were observed at Castle Howard on the 13th (CR), at Allertorpe Common on the 25th (IA) and Spaldington, flying towards Brighton, on the 27th (CG). Further singles were noted on 6th March near Canal Head along the Pocklington Canal (LDV Blog), with another “thermalling” over Acaster Airfield on the 23rd (ASc).

Excitingly, there were then a handful of sightings at Castle Howard, with a single bird reported as holding territory there on 17th April (CR), a pair on the 28th at a probable occupied nest site (DMB), and a bird heard nearby, and subsequently seen briefly, on 31st May during a Turtle Dove survey visit (JB). Interestingly, John Mather’s “The Birds of Yorkshire” (1986) reports the species as having actually nested on the Mausoleum up to 1856, after which it has been absent as a breeding bird from the club’s area. There was also a report of one flying over Riccall in the direction of Skipwith Common on 30th April (DT).

In August one was at Gilling East on the 13th (JP) while in September a calling bird flew southeast over Brayton Barff on the 21st (DCo) with another at Bolton Percy lngs on the 29th and 30th (JRe). In October Skipwith Common hosted a single bird (possibly two) on the 18th (DT, HP) with a pair also there from the 22nd until the 25th (AWH). There was another sighting at Bolton Percy on 14th November (JR) with the final of the year being one seen between NDC and Skipwith Common on 5th December (LDV Blog).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*
Scarce winter visitor

There were very few records of this irregularly irruptive winter visitor, the first being of three seen in Thorganby village on 2nd January. Later that month five were seen perching in a small tree at Strensall Common on the afternoon of the 9th and there was another at Sutton upon Derwent on the 29th. In the second winter period, one was seen on a rowan tree at Jewbury in central York on 16th November. However, most records were from December; one turned up at the Tesco car park at Askham Bar on the 11th, with one seen there again on the 19th to the 21st. The same bird may have accounted for records of one seen around nearby Woodthorpe from the 17th to the 21st.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*
Common resident breeder

BBS 14/43

A familiar species encountered widely throughout the club area, usually in small numbers. Notable counts were of a minimum of 12 in a mixed tit flock at High Plumps Wood, SHL on 31st January, when there were also 17 noted on the west side of Allertorpe Common, with 12 on the Common’s east side on 2nd March and 15 on the west side on 10th April. On 2nd May 21 were at Yearsley

Moor, of which 18 were singing and one carrying food.

Singing males and territory holding were noted at many sites, but evidence of successful breeding was limited. Two young were noted in Upper Poppleton on the 8th and 12th June and adults were feeding young in a garden near Rawcliffe Meadows also on the 12th. There were newly-fledged birds in a party of nine individuals at Milford Common on the 18th and two adults were seen visiting a nesting site at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 21st. There was a family party moving through waterside willows on 23rd June at Gilling Redcar, young birds reported in conifers nearby at Gilling Castle/village on 1st July, a juvenile at SHL on the 8th and two there on the 9th. In addition birds successfully bred at Brayton Barff, at Poppleton (young seen), in a copse in Skirpenbeck and fledglings/juveniles were seen at Stamford Bridge.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Red listed

Resident breeder

BBS 5/43

Once again this species was observed mainly in ones, twos and threes, with reports coming from around 36 sites with suitable habitat. There were some larger counts: up to six at Askham Bog on 17th February, four at Allerthorpe Common on 8th March and eight at Yearsley Moor on 2nd May.

Breeding records were again few and far between. Pairs were reported from Allerthorpe Common, Crambe, Skipwith Common (two pairs), Heslington Tillmire and Lodge Field near Gilling East. Singing males were heard at Allerthorpe Common, Kirkham and Crambe and Strensall village, while one was holding territory at King's Moor, Stockton Parish. However the only compelling evidence for attempted or successful breeding was of one (from three seen) carrying food or a faecal sac in Allerthorpe Woods on 11th May, an adult carrying food at Skipwith Common on the 19th and a family party of five seen at Gilling on 1st July. Breeding was also suspected in a copse at Skirpenbeck.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

YOC Red listed

Scarce resident breeder

BBS 2/43

Once again many of the sightings came from the LDV but, as in 2018, reports from the Lower Wharfe Valley were indicative of an established presence there too.

In the LDV the strongholds were Wheldrake Ings and Bank Island where there were eight pairs, with nine pairs at Melbourne and Thornton Ings, at least four pairs along the Pocklington Canal and scattered pairs elsewhere. Confirmation of breeding came from Wheldrake Ings (at least three broods, from which eight juveniles were ringed), Bank Island (one juvenile ringed), the Melbourne area (two pairs with at least two young) and Thornton Ellers (three young). On 14th August 14 birds were noted at Wheldrake Ings and there was thought to be a minimum of 17 in the area during the month (LDV Blog). Elsewhere a bird hatched earlier in the year was caught and ringed in Riccall on 26th August at least 2km from suitable breeding habitat, and a second bird ringed there two days later.

Other sites where birds were noted, with peak numbers per site, were as

follows: Allerthorpe Common (2), Allerthorpe OGP (1), Askham Bog (5), Bolton Percy (2), Coneysthorpe (1), Foggathorpe Lakes (1), Howsham (1), Kirkby Wharfe (1), Milford Common (2), Mires Lane, Ulleskelf (3), Naburn (1), Selby (1), Skipwith Common (3), Wharfe Ings (1) and Wistow (1).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Common resident breeder

BBS 41/43

Widespread and well reported throughout the area during the year, mostly in small numbers. Larger counts were 16 at Seaton Ross on 2nd January, with the same number in Naburn Wood on the 19th and 13 there on 16th February. Danesmead Wood/River Ouse hosted 14 birds on the 20th January, with 17 there the next day and on 15th February, 12 on the 22nd and again on the 28th, and 14 on 8th April. In fields at Brecks Farm, Haxby there were 31 on 28th January, with a further 29 there on 10th February, 12 on the 16th and again on the 24th, with 12 on 1st June. There were 19 on Milford Common on 18th June, and 12 at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 19th. Post breeding, numbers were swelled by young birds, as was the case of a group of 12 in Fulford in June, which included ten fledglings, and in a count of 13 at Milford Common on 5th July, another of 11 at Ulleskelf Mires on the 8th, and a group of 12 birds on the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on 28th August. Towards the end of the year there were 16 at Milford Common on 20th November and 19 there on 3rd December. On 1st December 15 were at Bank Island, 13 at Askham Bog on the 19th, 17 there on 29th, and 16 at Acaster Malbis on the 26th.

Records of confirmed breeding came from Acaster Malbis, Acomb Wood, Allerthorpe OGP, Ampleforth Abbey, Bishop Wood, Biggin, Brayton Barff, Breezy Knees (Warthill), Easthorpe, Flawith Beck, Fulford, Heslington, Haxby, Malton, Milford Common, Naburn, Nether Poppleton, Norton, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton Lock), Rawcliffe, Scagglethorpe Lane, SHL, Skipwith, Slingsby Bank Woods, Stamford Bridge, Ulleskelf Mires, Wheldrake Ings, Yapham Road and York (St Mary's).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common resident breeder

BBS 39/43

Well reported from across the recording area throughout the year, mostly in low single-digit numbers. Higher counts (above ten) were: 12 at Brecks Farm, Haxby on 10th February and the same number at Danesmead Wood/River Ouse on 8th April. At the end of the year there were 19 at Milford Common on 3rd December and 20 at Askham Bog on the 29th.

Breeding records came from the following locations: Allerthorpe OGP, Brayton Barff, Clifton, Easthorpe, Heslington, Milford Common, Naburn, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton Lock), Poppleton, Rawcliffe, Scagglethorpe Lane, Skipwith, Slingsby Bank Woods, Stamford Bridge, Ulleskelf Mires, Upper Poppleton, Wheldrake Ings and York.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

YOC

Scarce visitor usually in autumn and winter

Although there were sightings of this sought-after species for the sixth successive year, there was little sign of the hoped-for increase in the number of local records. Planting of reed beds in the LDV continued apace last year so we must continue to be patiently optimistic about the future for this handsome bird locally. Not unexpectedly, all records came from Wheldrake Ings, and occurred in early autumn with one on 14th September (AF, CSR), a minimum of seven there on 5th October (LDV Blog), two on the 16th (TB) and the last on the 18th (IM).

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

YOC

Localised migrant breeder

As usual, this species' sightings were restricted principally to areas of lowland heath. At Skipwith Common, the first returning bird of the year was noted on 12th February, and there were two there on the 22nd. By 8th March one was holding territory and during the month up to three singing males were reported. On 5th April four birds were seen and there were up to six singing males during the month, with five said to be holding territory by 1st May. Signs of successful breeding were of a pair carrying food on the 18th and a presumed family party of seven on 31st July which included at least one juvenile. It was estimated that there were at least four pairs on the Common.

Strensall Common's first record of the year was on 11th February when, from a total of four seen, two were in song flight. One was then seen holding territory on 22nd April and three were reported to be doing so on 13th May, with a total of four by the 17th, though unfortunately there were no records of successful breeding. Nearby there was a pair at Fox Covert/White Carr, Stockton Parish on 11th February, again on the 23rd and three were holding territory there on 15th June.

At Allerthorpe Common, one was at Frog Hall on 23rd February, and a singing male on 2nd March, with another on 16th April, but that was the last record of the year there.

Away from these three hotspots, one flew over Melbourne village on 2nd March and, as in 2018, there was one not far from a former breeding site near SHL, on 29th March.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Red listed

Resident breeder and winter visitor

BBS 38/43

We are fortunate to be able to continue to enjoy a healthy population in the club area and this was reflected in the number of records submitted although, uncharacteristically, there were no large flocks noted during the first winter period.

The first singing birds were in the LDV at Aughton and NDC on 17th January. On 4th February there were two in song flight and a courtship display at Acaster Airfield, 11 at Heslington East on the 9th included a singing male and, by the 10th, there were two holding territory at Ellerton Landing. There was a singing male at SHL on the 12th, another in a group of four in Scagglethorpe Lane on the 16th and one holding territory at Bank Island on the same day. There was courtship

behaviour by four at Germany Beck, Fulford on the 17th and plenty of song reported from four at Milford Common the same day. Reports of birds singing or holding territory also came from at least 45 other locations with suitable habitat. At Strensall Common the annual MOD survey recorded 13 territories, up from just four in 2018. Evidence of successful breeding included a juvenile on Ryther Ings on 16th June and five recently fledged young in a field margin at Flawith Beck. In July there were several family parties reported from Wheldrake Ings following the hay cut. Possibly indicative of a decline in some areas was a report from a farm at Acaster Malbis of four pairs, where in previous years there have been as many as ten.

Autumn passage began with 11 southwest over Wheldrake Ings as early as 19th July and five over on the 24th. As passage got into its stride there were counts of 27 at Acaster Airfield on 25th September, 46 south over Wheldrake Ings on the 26th, 64 south over Bank Island on the 27th and another 80+ south over Wheldrake Ings the same day, 41 the following day and 35 on the 29th. Into October Acaster Airfield held 50 on the 5th and 40 on the 6th while 32 flew south over Ozendyke on the 13th and a group of 47 west over Wheldrake Ings on the 20th. Larger flocks encountered in winter included 35 at Acaster Airfield on 29th November, an impressive 200+ in fields south of Dunnington on 28th December and 90 along Hagg Lane at East Cottingwith on the 30th.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

BBS 4/43

The first returning birds were four at CHL on 15th March, followed by three at Bank Island on the 18th and nine at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th. Three-figure counts were 100 at CHL on 28th April, 100+ at Bank Island on the 28th and 29th April, 150 there on 3rd May and 100 the following day.

An end of season check at Heslington East showed 63 occupied burrows (from a possible total of 98): 30 in the older bank and 33 in the newer one. This is above the total of 48 in 2018, but below the total of 77 in both 2016 and 2017. It was a poor breeding season, with unprecedented numbers of abandoned full clutches (at least ten nests), dead adults (16) and at least 14 dead nestlings in six broods. The very wet summer is likely to have been the cause. Elsewhere nesting behaviour was seen at Allerthorpe, Bank Island (16 nest holes occupied by late May), Bubwith Bridge, Kirkham Priory, Naburn, Poppleton and Rawcliffe Ings (59 nest holes on 10th May). At Bank Island 21 chicks were ringed at the nesting bank on 18th June and a further 25 on the 27th, with the last brood of two ringed there on 28th August.

The largest post-breeding gathering was 60 at Wheldrake Ings on 17th August with 55 seen flying south there on the 30th, and the only record after early September was a late single at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd October.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica**Migrant breeder and passage migrant*

BBS 36/43

A single at Acaster Malbis and two at Wheldrake Ings on 31st March were the first, with small numbers seen at many sites by mid-April. Spring counts of 100 or more birds were 100 at Bank Island on the 28th and 29th April, 200 at Bank Island on 3rd May, 100 there on the 9th and 400 the next day, 100 at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd and 4th May, 150 there on the 9th and 200 on the 11th.

Breeding was noted at Acaster Malbis, Ampleforth Abbey, Coneysthorpe, Milford Common, Nether Poppleton, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton), SHL, Stamford Bridge, Strensall Common, Towthorpe, University of York, Yapham and Wheldrake Ings.

Post breeding, a pre-roost gathering of 100 was at Newton-on-Derwent on 24th August. In the LDV counts of 100 or more were recorded on twelve dates, with 500 roosting at Wheldrake Ings on 8th September and 1000 on the 13th. VMW at Ozendyke recorded 601 flying south between 25th July and 27th September with a peak of 163 on 1st September. Two at Bank Island on 4th November were the final sighting.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Amber listed

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

BBS 13/43

The first were two over Clifton Park on 3rd April, followed by birds at Newburgh Priory and Wheldrake Ings on the next day. The largest spring counts were 100 at Bank Island on the 3rd and 9th May, with 200 there on the 10th, 100 at Wheldrake Ings on the 9th and 360 at Milford Common on the 10th.

Breeding was noted at Ampleforth Abbey, Barmby Moor, Bolton Percy, Bootham Stray, Castle Howard, Coneysthorpe, Dunnington, Easthorpe, Heslington East, Huby, Monks Cross, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), Rawcliffe, SHL (at least 12 occupied nests), Stamford Bridge, Stockton on the Forest (at least two different colonies) and York (Butcher Terrace - three nests).

A flock of 100+ fed over the lake at SHL in rain on 9th July and 100 were also present on the 30th. Autumn passage was poor with no records of 100 or more birds, and a peak of 80 at Wheldrake Ings on 18th August and again on 8th September. The final record was of one at Elvington on 5th November.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

YOC

Rare visitor

The first of the year was singing at East Cottingwith on 28th May (JB, JC), then one was heard at Bubwith on 5th June (LDV Blog). A 1st-year female was caught and ringed at Wheldrake Ings on 17th September (LM, CSR) and one heard there the following day (JM). One was singing in the reedbed by Thornton Lock (Pocklington Canal) on 14th October (NC), a 1st-winter bird was caught and ringed at Bank Island on the 15th (CSR), and one was calling at Wheldrake Ings at dusk on the 23rd (CSR). Intermittent sightings and reports of birds heard calling during November and December involved one and then two wintering birds at East Cottingwith and Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) (DMB, NC, AF, CSR). A

third wintering bird was then found on 28th December at Coates Lock, near Bielby (LDV Blog). A welcome sighting away from the LDV was one in a reedbed at CHL on 28th December (JLe) – the second record for that site.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common resident breeder

BBS 20/43

Widespread throughout the year in single and low-double figures. The highest count was 50 at Allertorpe Common on 9th January, while 20 were at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd January and 20 at Escrick on the 4th. In the autumn numbers peaked at 40 at Wheldrake Ings on 1st September and again on the 8th while there were 23 at Milford Common on the 10th and 20 at Bank Island on the 28th.

Probable or confirmed breeding was recorded at Acaster Malbis, Allertorpe OGP, Bank Island, Brayton Barff, Ellerton, Heslington, Milford Common, Moor Monkton, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne), Poppleton, Scagglethorpe Lane, Seaton Ross, SHL, Skipwith Common, Strensall Common, Ulleskelf Mires, Wheldrake Ings and Wistow Clough.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Amber listed

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

BBS 19/43

The first was at Norton on 22nd March, with the next at Bank Island and Brayton Barff on 1st April, and by 6th April 11 were in the Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings area. Wheldrake Ings had several counts of about 20 birds, with the highest being 28 on 20th April. There was a minimum of 30 at Allertorpe Common on 28th April, 27 (26 singing) at Skipwith Common on 1st May and 32 singing at Milford Common on 18th June.

Singing birds were widespread during the breeding season and confirmed breeding records came from Brayton Barff (five pairs bred), East Cottingwith, Heslington East (where five chicks and nine juveniles were ringed), Pocklington Canal (The Grange), Skipwith Common and Wheldrake Ings. At Skipwith Common three broods were ringed in June (broods of six, six and two). At the nest with two chicks at the time of ringing a small grass snake left the nest and it had clearly consumed some of the young - subsequent visits showed that the two ringed had survived to fledging.

Nearly all the autumn records involving double figures came from Wheldrake Ings with a peak of 21 on 3rd August, but there were 22 at Milford Common on 6th August. The final record was a single at Moor Monkton on 14th October.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant; some birds overwinter

BBS 35/43

January saw wintering birds recorded at Askham Bog, Escrick, Heslington East, Monks Cross, Strensall Common and Wheldrake Ings (the latter on several dates). A spell of unseasonably mild weather meant that one at Heslington Tillmire on 23rd February could have been a migrant, as several singing birds were located in late February and early March.

Widely recorded in single figures, counts of ten or more were made on over 30

dates, the highest being 28 at Allerthorpe Common on 10th April, 37 at Yearsley Moor on 2nd May and 20 at Slingsby Bank Woods on the 20th. Breeding was confirmed at Brayton Barff (15 singing males represented the second most common breeding warbler at the site and fledglings were seen), Naburn, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) and Skipwith Common (six nests - two predated - broods of six and four were ringed in May and a brood of four ringed in July).

Most migrants departed by late October. During November reports of singles came from Aughton Ings on the 3rd, Heslington East on the 18th, North Duffield Ings on the 29th and Hull Park Road (York) on the 30th. One was ringed at Bank Island on the 21st, where up to three overwintering birds were present on the 29th to 31st December

Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* YOC (ex YNU 2019)
Very rare vagrant

One was at Heslington East on 6th January (TJ). The only previous record for the YOC recording area was of one at Fulford Ings from 24th December 2007 until 14th January 2008.

Record subject to acceptance by the YNU

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* YOC Red listed
Rare passage migrant

Accidental omission from the 2018 Report: On 12th May 2018, a singing male was observed in a garden in Heslington; first identified by song it was then watched as it moved through and disappeared a few minutes later (JL).

Sadly there were no sightings in 2019, after records in six of the last ten years.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* YOC
Very rare vagrant

None in 2019, after records in five of the past ten years, most recently 2018.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant BBS 7/43

The first was at Wheldrake Ings on 12th April and by the 19th there were 15 in the LDV as a whole and then 21 at Wheldrake Ings on the 25th. Interestingly a French-ringed bird was caught there on the 29th. Away from the LDV, single-figure counts were made at Bolton Percy Ings, CHL, Heslington East, Kirkby Wharfe, Milford Common, Monks Cross, Nether Poppleton, Poppleton, Rawcliffe, Rufforth Tip, Ryther Ings (11), Stamford Bridge, Ulleskelf Mires and Wistow. In addition to Wheldrake Ings, breeding was confirmed at Bank Island, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton) and Ryther Ings.

Ringing at Wheldrake Ings in August produced 41 on the 21st, 30 on the 26th and 21 on the 27th. Seventeen were caught and ringed there on 2nd September. Wheldrake Ings then had one or two birds during September, except for a small influx of seven on the 16th, and the final birds were two there on the 19th.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Migrant breeder and passage migrant

BBS 1/43

The first was singing at Wheldrake Ings on 20th April, there were two at East Cottingwith on the 21st and three at Milford Common on the 22nd. The first double-figure count was 11 at Cawood on 6th May. Away from the LDV, birds were seen at the following sites, with any double-figure counts shown in brackets: Allerthorpe OGP (14), Cawood (11), CHL, Heslington East (14), Heslington West, Milford Common (16), Ozendyke Ings, Riccall, Wharfe Ings and Wistow Clough.

Breeding was confirmed at Heslington East, Milford Common, Pocklington Canal (Thornton Lock), Rawcliffe Meadows (with juveniles seen there in July), Riccall and Wheldrake Ings. They did not breed on Skipwith Common where the main reed bed has been grazed out. Four were caught on Riccall Ings in hawthorn scrub well away from reeds in August; all were young hatched in 2019 and on passage. Twenty passage birds were also caught and ringed at Wheldrake Ings on 20th August. At Heslington East 73 were ringed including 32 juveniles - a locally significant figure given that only 99 Reed Warblers were ringed in North Yorkshire during 2018. See also the UoYRG Report for 2019 on page 136.

There were eight at Wheldrake Ings on 13th September, with singles towards the end of the month and the last one on 2nd October.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Red listed

Scarce migrant breeder

The first was reeling at Low Grounds on 20th April, followed by one at Wheldrake Ings on the 27th (then present until 13th July) and one at NDC on the 28th (present until 27th May). One was reeling at Wharfe Ings on 16th June and another at Clifton Park on 24th June was present until 8th July. One was at Strensall Common on 6th July, another at Rufforth Tip on the 7th and the last was at White Carr, Stockton from the 14th to 16th July.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Migrant breeder with some birds overwintering

BBS 36/43

Wintering birds in January were singles at Askham Bog, Copmanthorpe, Easthorpe, Rawcliffe, Sheriff Hutton and York (a garden near Rowntree Park and Wilton Rise). A female at St Nicholas Fields on 18th March was probably also a wintering bird.

The first migrants were singing at Brayton Barff and Skipwith Common on 25th March. The Brayton Barff bird was 13 days earlier than one singing in the very same location in 2018. One was at Bank Island on 26th March, with three there on the 27th. Six were at Wheldrake Ings on 12th April and another arrival on the 19th and 20th produced 11 at Wheldrake Ings and ten at Bank Island. There were 15 at Allerthorpe Common on 28th April. A record count of 31 singing males came from Brayton Barff on 1st May (the commonest breeding warbler there). There were 13 at Yearsley Moor on the 2nd, 12 at Slingsby Bank Woods on the 20th, 14 at Bishopthorpe on the 25th and 13 at Milford Common on 5th July. Elsewhere birds

Rare and Scarcer Birds recorded during 2019



Left to right and top to bottom

- Long-eared Owl** © Adrian Hotson
- One of the juvenile **'Minster' Peregrines**
© Doug Crawford
- Waxwing** © Mark Coates
- Coues's Arctic Redpoll*** © Tim Jones
(two photos)
- Juvenile **Siskin** © Pat Crofton

were widespread in single figures with proof of breeding coming from Brayton Barff, Bolton Percy Ings, Clifton Backies, Hassacarr NR, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and Thornton Lock), Riccall Grange (four successful nests, mean brood size at ringing 4.0), SHL and Skipwith Common (an excellent breeding season - 21 nests found of which four were predated. Mean brood size at ringing was 4.0 and four pairs raised five young. One pair used the same nest twice - the first encountered in six years of surveying).

Large numbers moved though Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings in late August and September, with many caught and ringed. Higher counts included 22 on 25th August, 21 on the 27th and 20 on the 28th, 31 on 2nd September, 20 on the 9th and 31 on the 18th. The highest October count was three at Bank Island on the 3rd. November saw singles recorded at five sites and in December one was at Easthorpe on the 5th, one at York (Elmfield Terrace) on the 14th was joined by another on the 15th, then one again on the 20th, and a single in a Heslington garden on the 16th reappeared on the 24th.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Migrant breeder

BBS 7/43

The first was at Moor Marston on 16th April with four at Allerthorpe Common by the 30th. The highest counts came in early May when six were recorded at both Skipwith Common and Wheldrake Ings, and there were eight at Brayton Barff on the 6th and six at Slingsby Bank Woods on the 11th. Away from the LDV reports of up to five (mostly singing males) came from Acaster Airfield, Allerthorpe Common, Askham Bog, Barmby Moor, Bishop Wood, Bolton Percy Ings, Bootham Stray, Brayton Barff, Breezy Knees, Castle Howard, Coulton, Haxby, Knapton, Milford Common, Moor Monkton, Newton upon Derwent, Rabbit Warren Wood, Redhouse Wood, Ryther Ings, SHL, Skipwith Common, Slingsby Bank Woods, Strensall Common and Ulleskelf Mires. Breeding was confirmed at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) and Wheldrake Ings. At Skipwith Common eight nests were found, one was predated and the mean brood size at ringing was 4.2; one brood of six was an unusually high number. After 21st July there were no more reports until two were caught and ringed at Wheldrake Ings on 27th August with the final record one at Bootham Stray the following day.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Migrant breeder

BBS 9/43

The first was singing at Bolton Percy Ings on 18th April with singles at Bank Island, Brumber Hill and Clifton Backies the following day. The highest counts of the year were four at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 29th and 30th April while five were at Brumber Hill on 30th April (and the 11th and 17th May) same day as four along Scagglethorpe Lane. Away from the LDV reports of one or two birds (mostly singing males) came from Acaster Airfield, Bolton Percy Ings, Bootham Stray, Brumber Hill, Church Fenton, Clifton Backies, Foggathorpe, Haxby, Heworth, Kirkham, Lilling (Low Lane), Milford Common, Monks Cross, Moor Monkton, Murton, Naburn, NDC, Nun Appleton, Ozendyke Ings, Poppleton, Redhouse

Lagoon, Riccall, Ryther Ings and Ulleskelf Mires.

Proof of breeding only came from Redhouse Lagoon where one was feeding young on 18th June, and Riccall where a nest was found, but was predated at the egg stage. The last record was one at Bank Island on 19th September.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*
Migrant breeder

Amber listed
BBS 33/43

The first was at Spaldington on 3rd April, with the next one at Kirkham Priory on the 13th and one at Bank Island on the 15th. There were five in the Wheldrake Ings/Bank Island area on the 20th with a further arrival noted on the 24th. Counts of ten or more were 12 at Brumber Hill on 27th April (14 there on the 1st and 14th May and 13th June), 12 at Scagglethorpe Moor/Lane on 30th April, ten at Milford Common on 14th May (and on 5th July), 11 at Ulleskelf Mires on 15th May (and 18 there on 20th June and 28 on 8th July), ten at Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 15th June and 16th August, ten at Ryther Ings on 19th May, 11 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th June and 15 there on the 26th and ten at Hemingbrough on 7th July.

Breeding was confirmed at Allerthorpe Common, Bank Island, Clifton Park, Escrick, Pocklington Canal (The Grange and Melbourne), Rufforth Tip, Wheldrake Ings and Ulleskelf Mires. Nineteen nests were found on farmland at Riccall and west of Skipwith; three were predated and the mean brood size at ringing was 4.2. There were six broods of five. The last of the year was one at Bank Island on 6th October.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*
Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

YOC

The only confirmed report of the year was one seen on 11th January at Strensall pumping station showing well with Goldcrests *Regulus regulus* and a mixed tit flock (CH).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*
Resident breeder and winter visitor

BBS 9/43

Single-digit records were prevalent throughout the year (mostly ones and twos) with notable counts of ten or more in the first half of the year being 12 at Milford Common on 6th January, ten at Allerthorpe Common on the 31st, ten at Yorkshire Arboretum on 23rd February and 31 (27 singing) at Yearsley Moor on 2nd May.

Throughout the breeding season birds were observed territory holding and singing at Allerthorpe (Common and Woods), Castle Howard, Coneysthorpe Banks Wood, Danesmead Wood, Hagg Wood (Dunnington), Easthorpe, Gilling Park, Haxby, Heslington, Heworth, Kings Moor, Melbourne South, Milford Common, Murton, Nether Poppleton, Osbaldwick, Pocklington Canal, SHL, Skipwith Common, Slingsby Bank Wood, Stockton on the Forest, Strensall Common YWT, Strensall Common, Warthill, Wheldrake Ings, Yapham Road and Yearsley Moor. Fledged young were seen at Yapham on 18th May and food-carrying at both Riccall and Skipwith Common on the 19th, with breeding also confirmed at Brayton Barff.

The only significant counts in the second half of the year were ten around the pool area at Wheldrake Ings on 5th September (with two or three birds ringed most days around this time) and eight at Bolton Percy Ings on 29th September.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Common resident breeder

BBS 39/43

Very common and widespread throughout the recording area, usually reported in low single-digit numbers. Many records received did not include counts, just noting presence. Counts of ten or more were: ten at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd March, 11 at Allerthorpe Woods on the 29th and 20 at Allerthorpe Common (west side) on 10th April. In May there were ten near Nabum Wood on the 4th (BBS count), 13 at Slingsby Bank Woods on the 11th (and 26 there on the 20th), 16 at Milford Common on the 14th (and 12 on the 23rd), 11 at Strensall Common on the 17th, and 16 round Bishopthorpe on the 25th. In July 15 were at Milford Common on the 5th, 28 at Slingsby Banks Wood the same day, 12 at Ulleskelf Mires on the 8th, 11 at Danesmead Wood on the 25th and 16 at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) on the 31st. From August to December monthly maxima of between 15 and 26 came from Milford Common, while 16 at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) on 11th December and 20 there on the 29th were the only other double-figure counts later in the year.

Singing males were heard from mid-February to December and holding territory from April to November. Confirmation of breeding came from Acaster Malbis, Brayton Barff, Milford Common, Upper Poppleton, SHL, Stamford Bridge, Wheldrake Ings, with fledged young seen at all of these sites.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Resident breeder

BBS 7/43

Widespread in areas with suitable habitat with birds also noted coming to garden feeders. Most reports were of one or two birds as in previous years. Records came from around 48 sites (45 in 2018). Four were at Kirkby Wharfe on 2nd February, five at Yorkshire Arboretum on 23rd February, five (singing) at Brayton Barff on 2nd March, four at Bishop Wood on 22nd March, four at Yearsley Moor on 2nd May, four at Coneysthorpe Banks Wood on 30th June, five at Castle Howard on 2nd September, four at Rawcliffe Ings on 10th November, and four at Yorkshire Arboretum on 25th November.

During the breeding season singing males were heard and confirmed evidence of breeding was received from a few sites. Two adults with three newly-fledged juveniles seen following and copying the adult birds were at Heslington in the vicarage garden on 10th June. Three nest boxes were used at Brayton Barff (down on the 2018 breeding season) and two immature birds were seen at Dringhouses on 12th July.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris**Common resident breeder**BBS 8/43*

Common and widespread throughout the recording area, with reports mostly of one or two birds coming from more than 75 sites. Counts of three came from Strensall Common on 11th February, Frog Hall (Allerthorpe) on 23rd February, Waplinton Hall (Allerthorpe) on 2nd March, Kirkby Wharfe and Skipwith Common on 17th March, Bishop Wood on 27th March, Allerthorpe Common (west side) on 10th April, Danesmead Wood (including a pair feeding) on 15th April, Strensall Common on 13th May, Yearsley Moor on 28th May and Skipwith Common on 6th July. At Wheldrake Ings there were four on 3rd August, with three there on the 11th and again on the 26th, also on the 6th and 12th October.

Singing males and territory holding were noted throughout the breeding season. Food-carrying to a nest site was seen at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) in May. Recently fledged young were seen at Strensall Common in May and SHL in July. Five juveniles were ringed at Wheldrake Ings in June. An adult was seen feeding two recently fledged young at Gilling Redcar on 23rd June. Pairs also bred at Brayton Barff and in a copse near Skirpenbeck.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris**Red listed**Common resident breeder and winter visitor**BBS 26/43*

Common and widespread across the recording area. The largest flocks in the first quarter were 500 which roosted in Melbourne on 5th February and 800 on the 27th at White Carr Farm, Sutton-on-the-Forest. Other flocks of 200 or more in the first three months were: 200 at Wheldrake on 3rd January, 500 at Melbourne on the 4th, a murmuration of 200 at Easthorpe on the 17th, 300 at Riccall on the 26th, 250 at Hessay on the 27th and 200 at Brumber Hill on 5th March.

During the breeding season nest building was observed on 7th April in Acaster Malbis. Birds were observed territory holding at Easthorpe on 19th April and visiting a nest on the 29th at St Mary's, York. A nest with young was seen 12th May at Brecks Farm, Haxby. Fledged young were seen at Ampleforth Abbey, Easthorpe, Fulford, Malton, Nether Poppleton, Norton, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne, Thornton Lock and West Melbourne), Stamford Bridge, Strensall, Yapham Road and 40 in a garden near Rowntree Park on 14th May.

Post breeding flocks started with 100 roosting most evenings throughout July at Wheldrake Ings increasing to 300 by the end of the month. Larger flocks included 500 at Millfield Lane on 22nd August and c.500 at Brumber Hill on 13th September. In October 200 were at Ellerton Ings on the 20th, 500 near the bypass at Haxby on the 25th, with 215 at Bank Island, 700 at NDC, c.300 at Thorganby and 400 at Thorganby Ings on the 27th, and 500 at Scagglethorpe on the 30th. In November 500 were at NDC and 250 at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd. A roost at Aughton had built up to 2000 by the 4th and 3000+ by the 9th, performing murmurations. 10,000+ were present there on the 18th with 7000+ on the 22nd and 10,000+ again on the 28th when 1500 also roosted near Wheldrake. 1100 were present at NDC at dawn on the 29th - presumably birds coming from the Aughton roost. 1460 were observed during a VMW at Bolton Percy Ings on the

9th. In December 1000 were roosting in conifers at Thorganby early in the month with 500 in the Melbourne/Thornton area on several dates, while 300 were at Monks Cross on the 13th. High numbers were observed at the Aughton roost early in the month, with between 5-10,000 present each evening, increasing to an impressive 30,000+ on the 17th, increasing further to 40,000 on the 22nd reaching 50,000+ on the 31st. The spectacular murmurations were much enjoyed by the birding community and locals alike.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*
Scarce passage migrant

YOC *Red listed*

The only record was of one at Kirkby Wharfe on 24th March (DR).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Common resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant *BBS 43/43*

Well reported, common and widespread throughout the area but seldom congregates in significant flocks. Sites with counts of 20 or more in the first part of the year were: 20 at Allerthorpe OGP on 11th January, 24 at Danesmead Wood/River Ouse on the 20th (with regular counts of between 14 and 25 coming from there during the year), 34 at Bank Island on the 23rd (after an influx on the 18th with freezing conditions), 24 at Acaster Airfield on the 29th, 20 at Milford Common on 1st February, 20 at Easthorpe on the 20th, 25 at West Field Beck/Wood (Haxby) on 1st April and 21 there on the 15th (seven singing).

During the breeding season singing males were mostly noted from March. High counts included 42 between Bishopthorpe Bridge and Riccall on 25th May, 30 at Riccall on 13th June, 44 at Milford Common on the 18th (with 33 there on 7th July) and 32 at West Field Beck/Wood on the 27th. The first evidence of breeding was food-carrying observed on 10th April in York and a juvenile which had fallen out of the nest on the 11th in Haxby. Fledged young were being fed in a Heslington garden on the 21st. Breeding confirmation also came from Acaster Malbis, Ampleforth Abbey, Biggin, Brayton Barff, Clifton, Easthorpe, Heslington East, Milford Common, Norton, Pocklington Canal (The Grange), Rufforth Tip, SHL (ten pairs), Skipwith (12 nests - two predated, mean brood size of 3.4 at ringing), Stamford Bridge, Terrington, Ulleskelf Mires, Upper Poppleton, Yapham and York (Hull Road, Fulford, Rawcliffe and St Mary's).

Comments from the autumn period suggest that there may have been an influx of migrants in early October: a 'notable increase in numbers' saw 26 at Melbourne on the 4th, a flock of 20 'dropped into bushes' at CHL on the 5th and there were 20 at Bank Island the same day. On the 8th 20 were at Meltonby, 20 at West Field Wood/Beck on the 17th (with 36 there on 15th November) and 'arrivals' at Bank Island on the 19th. In November there were 20 at Bank Island on the 11th while a full count at Milford Common of 55 on the 20th was only bettered by 61 there on 3rd December.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

Red listed
BBS 2/43

The first few weeks of January yielded widespread reports of flocks but none of more than 90. From 26th January onwards, following a cold spell, much larger flocks were observed with 400 at Riccall on the 26th, 300 at Brumber Hill on the 27th and 300 at Hessay on the same date. In February a flock at Acaster Malbis numbered 140 on the 1st, 244 on the 2nd and 185 on the 3rd. Brumber Hill yielded 300 on both the 4th and 5th February. Other three-figure counts that month were of 150 at Nunnington Hall on the 8th, 200 at Naburn on the 13th (and 100+ on the 21st), 200 at Bolton Percy on the 17th and 100 in the Kirkham/Crambe area on the 26th. March sightings included 300 at Brumber Hill on the 5th, 100 at Strensall Common on the 17th, 120 at Bolton Percy on the 20th, 500 at Hessay on the 24th and 200 on Scagglethorpe Lane on the 28th and again on 4th April. Further April counts over 100 were of 230 at Elvington on the 1st, 120 at Bolton Percy on the 14th and 18th, 300 at Deighton on the 15th, 400 at Scagglethorpe Lane on the same date and 100 at Bank Island on the 16th. The last of spring were nine at Acaster Airfield on 29th April.

The first returning migrants were nine seen at Rawcliffe on 20th September followed by similar small groups until mid-October when 40+ birds were seen at Thorganby on the 15th and 50 there on the 16th. A major influx then followed with 1280 heading west over Wheldrake Ings on the 20th, part of the 2900 recorded in the LDV that day. On the 29th 100 were present at Brumber Hill and c.60 at SHL. Flocks greater than 100 were widely reported through November and December with site maxima as follows: 500 at Aughton on 11th November, 600 at Bank Island on 3rd December, 200 each at Bolton Percy Ings and Brumber Hill on 3rd December, 200 at Bubwith Ings on 28th December, 150 at CHL on 19th November, 175 at Dunnington on 8th November, 200 at East Cottingwith on 10th November, 1000+ at Church Bridge, Melbourne on 13th November, 900 at NDC on 3rd December and 130 at Scagglethorpe Lane on 4th November.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

Red listed
BBS 2/43

This migrant is much more widely dispersed, and in smaller flocks (between one and 20 birds), than its larger migrant cousin the Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, venturing even into the centre of York. Early in the year 20 were at St George's Field on 2nd January, 52 in the Museum Gardens on the 5th and 30 on Poppleton Ousebank School playing fields on the 4th and 5th, with bigger flocks including 250 at Brumber Hill on 4th February (and 100 on 5th March), 80 at Allerthorpe Wood on the 5th, 81 at Thornton Lock on the 14th and 300 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 17th. A flock of 50+ was on fields near Fulford Golf Club on 3rd March, with 100 present at Brumber Hill on the 5th. The final significant flocks were of 40 at Kirkham and Crambe on 27th March, 38 heading northeast over Heslington Tillmire on 2nd April and 50 at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 15th, while the last of spring was one over Walmgate Stray on 1st May.

The first returnees were 'several' seen at Walmgate Stray on 3rd September,

but the bulk of arrivals was in early October with 290 WSW over Bolton Percy Ings, 20+ over Dunnington, 27 at Hessay, 20 west over Naburn, 60 south over Thorganby and 35 south over Wheldrake Ings, all on the 3rd. The 4th saw 50+ landing or over-flying SHL and 155 passed west over Bolton Percy Ings on the 5th. Another 92 flew west over Poppleton on the 7th with a further 100 over there on the 9th. The influx continued on 15th October with 320 at Bank Island, 200+ there on the 20th and 1600 over Wheldrake Ings whilst a total of 2200 were reported throughout the LDV. Brayton Barff saw 200 pass over on the 21st and 84 were at Melbourne on the 25th, with a further 80 passing northwest over Bank Island the following day. Subsequent counts in triple figures were 800+ on 6th November at Bank Island, c.1000 which arrived there on 11th November (with 900 there the following day), and 4150 throughout the LDV on the 16th. 100 were at Bolton Percy on the 17th, 1500 at Bubwith Ings on the 18th, c.150 at CHL on the 19th, 100 at Brumber Hill on the 24th, 231 at Melbourne on the 25th and 145 at Church Bridge the following day. On 3rd December 100 were at Brumber Hill and 118 at Milford Common. There were 3200 throughout the LDV on the 7th, when 101 were caught and ringed. Finally, 100 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 14th, 200 at Bank Island the following day and 100 at Bubwith on the 28th. Smaller numbers were recorded widely and frequently elsewhere during this last quarter, the general impression being that numbers were significantly greater than 2018 but not out of line with those from 2017.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Red listed

Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

BBS 32/43

Common and widespread throughout the area but generally seen in small numbers (one to four). Larger counts (particularly during the breeding season) are likely to reflect numbers of territory holders rather than any flocking behaviour given the distinctive and far carrying song of this familiar vocalist. Indeed, there were no reports of significant feeding groups during the year. A small influx was noted at Wheldrake Ings on 29th September after an influx on easterlies at the East Coast. The highest counts were 15 at Milford Common on 18th June and 14 at Bank Island on 5th October. High single-figure counts came from Allerthorpe Common, Bishopthorpe, Bishop Wood, Brayton Barff, Coneysthorpe, East Cottingham, Easthorpe, Melbourne, Naburn, Nether Poppleton, Scagglethorpe Lane, Skipwith Common, Yearsley Moor and Wheldrake Ings.

The first evidence of territory holding was at Haxby on 26th January and then at Rawcliffe on 6th February. Reports of singing birds were widespread from February, including eight at Brayton Barff on the 16th. Confirmation of breeding came from Bank Island (first fledged brood seen on 31st May), Brayton Barff (ten singing males and fledglings seen), Dunnington (Hagg Wood), Haxby (Brecks Farm - where an adult was carrying food/faecal sac on 24th February), Melbourne (Pocklington Canal - including one juvenile being fed by an adult on 10th May, and two being fed on the 15th), Milford Common (fledged young), Naburn, SHL (young being fed on 13th July), Stamford Bridge (fledged young), Ulleskelf Mires and Wheldrake Ings (fledged broods). At Skipwith Common of three nests found, one

was predated and broods of four and five were ringed at the others.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Red listed

Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

BBS 10/43

Widely distributed across the club's area but generally seen singly or as a pair. Some singing males were reported during January and February at Haxby, Kirkby Wharfe, Melbourne, Naburn, Seaton Ross, Stockton on the Forest and Wharfe Ings. On 29th January four were present at Acaster Airfield and four at Yorkshire Arboretum on 23rd February. Three at Naburn on 15th May were observed seeing off a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. In spring and early summer four were singing at Brayton Barff on 18th May, with juveniles seen there during the summer. Eight, including juveniles, were at Bolton Percy Ings on 16th June and 11 at Brumber Hill (also including juveniles) on the 26th.

Higher counts mostly came from SE53 later in the year. Notably 17 were at Brumber Hill on 17th August, 31 in a single flock at Kirkby Wharfe on the 20th, eight at Ozendyke Ings on 17th September and eight at Nunnington on the 22nd. On 2nd October seven flew over Thorganby and seven were present at Thornton Lock (Pocklington Canal) on the 18th. In November, four were at Dunnington on the 8th and 13 at Brumber Hill on the 9th with 12 there on the 12th, whereas five on 3rd December was the only count above two for the month. A few reports of singing birds during November and December came from Bank Island, Bolton Percy, Brayton Barff, Heslington West, Nether Poppleton and Riccall.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Red listed

Migrant breeder and passage visitor

BBS 3/43

The first of the year, eight days later than 2018, concerned three birds at Strensall Common on 13th May. Further reports from additional sites quickly followed with three at both Bolton Percy on the 14th and Brayton Barff on the 15th, then singles at Norton on the 16th, along the Pocklington Canal at Melbourne on the 17th and 18th and Frog Hall (Allerthorpe) on the 21st. Two remained at Bolton Percy on the 22nd, one at Castle Howard on the 24th and numbers had increased at Brayton Barff to four by the 27th, when there was also one at NDC. In late May at least five territories were located around Gilling, two pairs in the village and three singing males in nearby Gilling Woods, similar numbers to last year. In early June one was still present at NDC on the 5th with singles from two further new sites, Appleton Roebuck on the 6th and Elvington on the 8th and 9th.

There was a welcome increase in the number of sites which provided definite evidence of breeding: Bolton Percy (two displaying agitated behaviour then recently fledged young observed later in the season), Brayton Barff (records of family parties of six, five and four received, although numbers were said to be lower than in 2018), Gilling (at least two successful nests with several fully grown juveniles accompanying an adult in Pottergate and a nest opposite the Fairfax Arms which fledged three young), Healaugh (nest with eggs), Howsham (young being fed), Kirkby Wharfe (adults with fledged young), Pocklington Canal at Melbourne (a nest with three young that were ringed), Skipwith Common (a nest

with two young seven metres up in a Scots Pine tree - the first young fledged on the 16th July and the second two days later). A family party was seen at Allerthorpe on 11th July, with youngsters being fed, during a club evening walk.

Post-breeding records occurred from the second half of August and comprised a party of three (including two juveniles) at Thornton on the 21st and 22nd, one on the 21st at Wheldrake Ings (with three there on the 22nd and two on the 25th), singles at Hassacarr NR on the 24th and Bootham Stray, York on the 28th, then four at Warren Wood, Dunnington on the 31st. In September, apart from singles at Brayton Barff on the 2nd and Hassacarr NR on the 4th, all records came from Bolton Percy with four on the 1st, two on the 5th and then the last of the year, two at Bolton Percy Ings on the 13th.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Common resident breeder

BBS 37/43

Continues to be widespread in the area, generally encountered in low single-figure numbers, usually ones and twos. Regular double-figure counts of between ten and 15 occurred in the Danesmead Wood and River Ouse area. Elsewhere counts of ten or more included 22 at Easthorpe on 20th February, a minimum of 15 at Heslington on 3rd March, 19 at Allerthorpe Common on 10th April and ten singing males at SHL on the 12th, while the CBC suggested 21 to 23 holding territory there. Thirteen were at Milford Common on 14th May, 18th June and 5th July increasing to 22 by 10th September. In October there were 15 at Nether Poppleton on the 7th and 12th, increasing to 22 by the 13th, with ten at both SHL and West Field Beck on the 15th and 17th respectively. In November counts of 12 occurred at Nether Poppleton on four dates with 21 on the 27th, then in December there were 14 at Milford Common on the 3rd, ten at Askham Bog on the 19th, 22 at Nether Poppleton on the 26th (20 on the 28th), 12 at Easthorpe on the 27th and 17 at Askham Bog on the 29th.

Numerous reports were received during the breeding season of singing males and birds holding territory, however observations of either active nests or recently fledged young were only received from Ampleforth Abbey, Bank Island (where they bred in good numbers with 15 newly-fledged juveniles located in June), Brayton Barff, Clifton including Clifton Backies, Danesmead Wood, Easthorpe, Heslington, Heslington East, Milford Common, Norton, Pocklington Canal at Melbourne, Poppleton, near Rawcliffe Meadows, Rufforth Tip, SHL, Scagglethorpe Lane, Seaton Ross, Skipwith Common (two nests located, both containing broods of five which were ringed), Stamford Bridge, Strensall, Strensall Common, Ulleskelf Mires, Upper Poppleton, Westow and York Minster.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

YOC Red listed

Scarce passage migrant and casual breeder

Mirroring last year, there was just one record of a single passage migrant, a female at Storwood on 26th August (CSR).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Rare visitor

YOC *Red listed*

None in 2019, after records in five of the last ten years, most recently 2018.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

Amber listed

The first spring migrants were observed in April with one at Wass Moor on the 12th, eleven days earlier than in 2018, followed by single males at both Bolton Percy lngs and NDC on the 18th. Sightings in May presumably related to birds taking up territories although any definite proof of breeding was lacking. The regular site of Yearsley Moor held just one singing male on the 2nd and 28th; elsewhere there was a singing male at Strensall Common on the 17th and a pair inspecting a potential nest site in the trunk of an oak tree at Castle Howard on the 24th. In June the singing male at Strensall Common was again present on the 1st and 5th whilst a further singing male was located at Brandsby on the 10th. A recently fledged juvenile at SHL on 9th July may have been indicative of breeding in the local area rather than an early passage migrant.

Post breeding, birds started to pass through the area in August with a 1st-year caught at Skipwith Common on the 12th. At Bolton Percy lngs there was a male on the 13th, 14th and 17th increasing to three, a male and two females, on the 18th. A female at Wheldrake lngs on the 25th was followed by a juvenile male which was caught and ringed on the 27th and one was at Bootham Stray on the 28th and 29th. The Bootham Stray bird was still present on 4th September with the last records of the year received on the 5th - one at Wheldrake lngs and a juvenile female at Bank Island, which was caught and ringed.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*
Passage migrant and casual breeder

Red listed

Fewer records were received than in recent years with no sightings during the spring passage period.

Post breeding, the first birds were observed in August with two at NDC on the 10th, when there was also one at Wheldrake lngs. At this latter site the regular late summer gathering occurred with a further two on the 17th, one on the 26th, two again on the 27th, increasing to three on the 28th (when one was caught and ringed), four on the 29th then one on the 30th. Elsewhere in August two were at Thornton Ellers on the 25th and a single at Storwood on the 26th. In September a single remained at Wheldrake lngs on the 2nd and 13th, with the last of the year being two hawking from a hedge top at Riccall lngs on the 19th.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*
Casual breeder and passage visitor; sometimes over-winters

At the start of the year most records came from either the LDV or Strensall Common, although numbers seemed to be lower compared to recent years.

Wintering pairs were present at both NDC and Wheldrake lngs in January and February, with singles at Allerthorpe Common on 8th January and Strensall

Common on the 12th and 26th and a male was at Heslington Tillmire on 4th February. In March, away from the breeding site at Strensall Common, a female was at NDC on the 30th. Further passage birds were seen there on the 15th and 18th May, and a pair was at Low Moor allotments in York on 16th May.

The breeding population at Strensall Common continues to maintain a foothold in the area no doubt helped by the recent run of relatively mild winters. Birds seemed to re-establish territories from March onwards with a singing male on the 8th increasing to three, including a pair, by the end of the month. In April up to six were present, whilst the MOD survey on 17th May concluded that four pairs were present, slightly down from the five pairs in 2018. On 22nd April an adult carrying food was observed, with the first fledgling recorded a week later on the 29th. Up to four fledglings were encountered during May and in June further young birds or adults carrying food were recorded up to the 14th. Following the breeding season birds very quickly vacated the site with the last individual seen on 16th July. This early departure perhaps suggests a less successful breeding season than in 2018 when recently fledged young were still being seen up to the beginning of August. Away from Strensall Common there was one early-summer record of a bird at Germany Beck on 15th June, perhaps a dispersing failed breeder.

Further post-breeding sightings did not occur until August when there was one at Brumber Hill on the 28th, then in September two at Bolton Percy Ings on the 8th, a single at Wheldrake Ings from the 18th to the 27th and five at Bank Island on the 25th, with four there on the 27th. Greater numbers occurred during October with up to 16 present (12 sites) in the LDV. Away from the LDV two were at Brumber Hill on the 9th, one at Castle Howard on the 16th, two at Riccall on the 21st (and one on the 22nd) and three at Strensall Common on the 23rd. The LDV continued to hold good numbers in the last two months of the year. During November one or two were at Bank Island, East Cottingwith, Ellerton, Melbourne and Storwood. The highest counts came from NDC peaking at nine on the 11th, when there were an estimated 23 in the whole valley. Elsewhere two were at Heslington Tillmire on the 6th and a male at Skipwith Common on the 20th. In December up to nine were still at NDC early in the month with ones and twos at Bank Island, Bubwith, Heslington Tillmire, Melbourne, Riccall and Wheldrake Ings.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Amber listed

Summer visitor and passage migrant

A relatively poor spring passage through the area compared to recent years with no larger groups encountered. The first bird appeared on the same date as in 2018, a female at Heslington Tillmire on 23rd March, with the next, a male, at NDC on the 30th. After these early migrants the next occurred at Aughton on 8th April with further singletons at East Cottingwith on the 13th, Wheldrake Ings on the 16th, Heslington East on the 17th and 18th, East Cottingwith again on the 19th when there were also three at Brumber Hill, singles at Bank Island and Wheldrake Ings on the 20th then two at both Bilbrough on the 21st and Acaster Airfield on the 22nd. Numbers in May were very disappointing with singles only at Poppleton on the 4th, NDC on the 6th, Heslington East on the 8th and Bank Island on the 26th.

There were no further records until return passage commenced in August with singles at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st and 20th, Bolton Percy Ings on the 21st, three at Thornton Ellers on the 25th, then one at Poppleton on the 28th which remained until 1st September. Additional September sightings, all of single birds, came from Naburn on the 3rd, Heslington East on the 5th, Scagglethorpe Lane on the 7th, Bolton Percy on the 13th, a juvenile at Fangfoss on the 17th and the last bird of the year, one at Rawcliffe Ings on the 28th, two days later than 2018.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Common resident breeder

Red listed
BBS 29/43

Counts came from over 80 sites, with a few sites (such as Easthorpe) very well monitored during the year, with multiple counts received from those. There were many records of up to five but, encouragingly, also many of between ten and 20. There were many more counts of 30 or more received than in 2018, especially in the second half of the year.

In January, 30 were at Thornton on the 6th, 26 at Foggathorpe on the 9th and 35 at Brecks Farm, Haxby on the 28th, with 31 there in mid-February. Thirty were at Acaster on 10th February, and 40 counted during a BTO winter survey visit at Riccall on the 14th, with 32 there at the second survey visit on 14th March.

Nest building was seen in April and breeding was confirmed at Easthorpe, Fulford, Melbourne (Pocklington Canal), Norton, Poppleton, Rawcliffe Meadows (two or three broods), Stamford Bridge, Strensall, Welburn and Yapham. On 2nd August a flock of 25 at Melbourne included at least ten juveniles.

Post breeding, alongside many counts of up to 20, larger gatherings included 100 along Millfield Lane, Easthorpe on 22nd August - by far the highest count of the year, 60 in Wheldrake (village) on the 25th and 30 at Newton upon Derwent on the 29th. There were 53 round West Field Beck and Wood in Haxby on 1st October and 34 in the Danesmead Wood area on the 12th, 30 at East Cottingwith on the 20th and 50 at Murton on the 28th. In November 30 were at Aughton Ings on the 3rd and 30 still at East Cottingwith on the 9th and 24th. On the latter date there were also 65+ at Ivy House, Welham Bridge. During December the East Cottingwith flock increased to 40 on the 15th and 50 on the 27th.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Resident breeder

Red listed
BBS 28/43

Remains widespread in the area, with records again received from around 70 locations, with many counts in double figures. At Bank Island NNR Base up to 60 were present during January then 40 to 50 during February and March, with 20 the highest count there in April and around 20 every month during the summer. Forty were at Brayton Barff on 16th January, the same day as 60 at Hassacarr NR. In February 60 at Barton-le-Willows on the 19th was the peak count for the month. During March 35 were at Seavy Carr on the 22nd, with 25 at Brecks Farm, Haxby on 12th May.

Confirmation of breeding came from Acaster Malbis, Allerthorpe OGP, Ampleforth Abbey, Bank Island, Dunnington, Pocklington Canal (Melbourne and

Thornton), Poppleton, Scagglethorpe Lane, SHL (five occupied nests), Skirpenbeck (ten broods) and Stamford Bridge.

Post-breeding flocks were somewhat smaller than in 2018. In addition to 20 at Bank Island during September and October, 20 were at Lodgefield on 30th September, 50 were at Brumber Hill on 9th October and a flock of 18 was seen flying south over Bolton Percy Ings on the 12th. During November 30 were at Bank Island on the 16th and 23rd, and 35 at Hassaccarr NR on the 20th, while 67 there on 14th December was the peak count for the year.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*
Common resident breeder

Amber listed
BBS 38/43

Well reported throughout the year, counts of this common and widespread species were mostly of one to four birds. Double-figure counts were 12 at Milford Common on 6th January, ten at Brecks Farm, Haxby on 24th February, 25 at Easthorpe on 21st March (the highest count of the year), 20 at Thorganby on 23rd October and ten at Milford Common on both 20th November and 3rd December.

Singing birds were heard from mid-February and widely from March, notably 20 of the 25 at Easthorpe, also five at Bank Island on 20th April and four at SHL during April. Breeding was confirmed at Bank Island, Brayton Barff, Fulford, Heslington, Heslington East (where eight juveniles were ringed by the UoYRG), Melbourne (Pocklington Canal), Nether Poppleton, Upper Poppleton, SHL, Stamford Bridge, Strensall, Thornton and Wheldrake Ings. At Riccall five nests were found (one predated) but the mean brood size of 2.5 at ringing was considered rather low. Of four nests found in hedges at Skipwith Common, one was predated, but the mean brood size at ringing was somewhat higher at 3.3.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Migrant breeder and passage migrant

Red listed
BBS 9/43

The first of the year were singletons at Bank Island and at Wheldrake Ings, both on 5th April, followed by three at the latter on the 10th, and one at East Cottingwith on the 13th, with up to seven in the LDV by the 19th (and ten daily by the end of the month). Thirty were at Bilbrough on the 21st, with 17 there on the 23rd, and ten at Riccall on the 22nd. Reports of mostly one or two were then reported from many other sites and five on farmland east of Naburn. During May up to 20 roosted at Wheldrake Ings and it was noted that there were above average numbers about on the Ings and surrounding farmland thereafter.

The first singing male was heard on 11th May, while food-carrying was first seen on 15th June, at Bolton Percy. Breeding was also confirmed at Acaster Malbis (three pairs bred), West Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) and Scagglethorpe Lane - with young seen at all three sites - and near Stamford Bridge (one possibly two pairs seen food-carrying).

VMW at Ozendyke recorded 30 flying south between 25th July and 14th September with a peak of 19 on 18th August. In the LDV four flew south over Wheldrake Ings on 18th August, followed by three south on the 20th, 11 south on the 25th and seven south on the 26th, with smaller numbers also heard moving

over on other days. In September 19 flew south over Wheldrake Ings on the 15th and three on the 16th. The last of the year were three at NDC on the 28th.

Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava* YOC
Very rare vagrant

None in 2019 after records in four of the past ten years, most recently 2017.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* *Red listed*
Resident breeder and winter visitor *BBS 3/43*

Reported throughout the year, mostly singletons or pairs, from over 40 sites in areas of suitable habitat, with some, such as the pair at the WTW adjacent to Bank Island, present all year. Four (two pairs) were at Naburn Lock on 6th April.

Breeding was confirmed at several sites: food-carrying was seen at Acaster on 19th April, while young were seen at Norton on 15th May and a family party of five was at Howsham Bridge on 24th May. In June a juvenile from the adjacent WTW was at Bank Island on the 27th. Young were seen at Newburgh Priory on 6th July and food-carrying was also seen at Rawcliffe Ings on the 25th. Adults were seen feeding young at Stamford Bridge, while at the end of the year a young bird was seen at Welburn on 21st December.

Four at Brumber Hill on 9th July and seven there on 30th September (the highest count of the year) were the only counts above two of the autumn and second winter periods. During VMW at Bolton Percy one flew north and three flew south between the 1st and 17th September.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba* *BBS 28/43*
Common resident breeder

Like 2018 there were few reports of large gatherings and the roost at Parliament Street in the centre of York was almost non-existent again; after 50 on 25th January, 100 there on 2nd February was the only three-digit count of the year. Elsewhere up to 20 were at NDC on 11th January, 44 at Riccall on the 26th, 20 at Bank Island on 2nd February, 28 at Riccall on 1st March, a pre-roost of c.60 at SHL on 3rd April and 20+ on a newly-ploughed field at Bilbrough on the 21st.

Small numbers were seen at many sites during the breeding season and confirmation of breeding came from a few. Food-carrying was seen at Naburn on 17th May, and an adult was feeding two young at Heslington East on the 29th. A juvenile was with four adults at Wheldrake Ings on 9th June, an adult and two juveniles at SHL on the 14th (where several broods fledged during the summer) and two adults and four young at Gilling village on 1st July. Reports of fledged young also came from Ampleforth Abbey, Deighton, Heslington East (at least three families present on 28th July) and Milford Common.

Post breeding, flocks began to form with 13 at Wheldrake Ings on 14th September the first of these and a few birds were noted flying south. At the end of the month 60 were at Brumber Hill on the 30th. On 2nd October 37 were feeding in a waterlogged field at Milford Common, while 18 were at Bolton Percy Ings and 20 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 3rd. Also in October, 30 were at Brumber Hill on the

7th and 40 there two days later. At Bolton Percy Ings 14 flew south on the 12th and six southwest over Bank Island on the 13th. The monthly maximum for November was a meagre 18 at Riccall on 19th November. In December 50 braved the noise and lights of the Christmas Fair to roost in Parliament Street, while 60 roosted at SHL on the 19th and 38 at Milford Common on the 30th.

White Wagtail Motacilla alba alba
Scarce spring passage migrant

There were several records in April, all from the LDV, so some sightings may relate to the same bird. One was on the new scrape at Bank Island on 1st April then one (possibly the same) there from the 4th to the 6th and again on the 9th (DW, CSR, AF). One was at NDC on the 5th (JLe), then a singleton at Wheldrake Ings on the 12th and again on the 14th (DMB). One was at Bank Island on the 19th, with three there together on the 24th (DMB).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*
Resident and migrant breeder and passage migrant

Amber listed
BBS 2/43

Well reported throughout the year from areas of suitable habitat with a pronounced autumn passage.

A flock of 40 on the 4th at Dunnington Common was the largest of January with 12 at Milford Common on the 6th, 16 at Bishop Wilton on the 19th, 22 at Strensall Common on the 23rd, and 37 at Clifton Ings on the 30th. In February, 40 were at Bolton Percy on the 5th, 20 at Heslington East on the 16th (and up to 30 there on the 18th) and flocks of 30 at Milford Common and 28 at Bolton Percy Ings on the 17th. At the latter, during a VMW, 61 flew northwest on 20th March, the same day as a flock of 25 at Heslington East - which were also presumed to be passage birds - as were 15 there on the 27th. A flock of 20 flying low southwest over Heslington Tillmire on 2nd April was the last flock of spring.

Displaying and singing birds were seen at many sites from mid-March onwards and food-carrying was first seen on 15th May, at Bolton Percy Ings. Breeding was also confirmed at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal), Ryther Ings and Redhouse Lagoon, where a pair with a juvenile was seen on 2nd June.

The first migrants were two south over Wheldrake Ings on 24th July. Thirty grounded birds were at Bolton Percy Ings on 18th August and 17 on the 20th, with 15 on the ground at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st and 28 on the 28th. The first large movement took place on 30th August when 139 were seen flying south at Bolton Percy Ings during a two hour VMW. Further VMW there recorded 574 flying south during September. On 5th September a flock of 60 was flushed from a field at Ozendyke Ings by a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. In the LDV the first notable flock was of 150+ over on 12th September, then 200+ on the 13th. On the 27th 220 flew south over Bank Island and 238 flew south over Wheldrake Ings on the 28th. Smaller flocks of up to 20 birds also moved through during the month.

In late autumn and the second winter period there were a few flocks: 30 at Brumber Hill on 7th October and 40 there on the 9th were the highest counts, with 24 at Wheldrake Ings on the 13th, 26 at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) on the

27th and 30 at Riccall on the 30th. In November 25 were at NDC on the 9th and 20 at Langrickgate Field, East Cottingwith on 15th December.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Red listed

Migrant breeder though numbers have recently declined

BBS 1/43

As ever, most reports came from the large commons of Allerthorpe, Skipwith and Strensall. However the first of the year were two that turned up unexpectedly at Heslington East briefly, foraging along the eastern shoreline on 18th April. At Skipwith Common the first returning birds were two on the 19th, increasing to three by the 24th, with three singing males present early in May. At Strensall Common the first returned on 20th April, while four were at Yearsley Moor on the 21st. At Skipwith Common it was estimated that there were four to five pairs present during the season and confirmation of breeding came with a family of five seen in a birch tree on 12th June. Numbers increased to six at Yearsley Moor by 2nd May, of which four were singing, but after that the only reports from there were of two on the 28th and one on 5th June. On Strensall Common the MOD survey on 17th May found 11 territories, an increase of four from the seven found in 2018. Elsewhere, one was at North Duffield on 18th May, one at Coneysthorpe Banks Wood on 25th May and one at Soulby Wood, Coulton on 16th June.

Post breeding one flew south over the pool at Wheldrake Ings on 19th August, one was by Tower Hide on the 25th (and again on the 27th) and one also flew south there on the 25th. The final sighting of the year was of one flying south over Bolton Percy Ings on 5th September.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

YOC Amber listed

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

None in 2019 after sightings in five of the past ten years, most recently 2017.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

YOC

Scarce, mainly winter, visitor

None in 2019 after sightings in five of the past ten years, most recently 2018.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

BBS 43/43

Widespread and well reported throughout the year (though many observers did not submit counts), mostly in small numbers, with some flocks in winter.

Peak monthly counts in the early part of the year were: 60 at Castle Howard on 27th January, with other high counts including 36 at Acaster Airfield and 30 at both East Moor and Milford Common; 40 at Milford Common on 1st February, with 30 also recorded at Heslington Tillmire and Naburn during the month, but only 15 in March, at Black Plantation, Gilling East on the 14th.

Males were singing from mid-February and the first nest building was seen in March, at Acaster Malbis. During a BBS visit near Naburn 17 males were singing on 4th May, similar to 2018, with 11 singing at Milford Common the same day and 13 at Slingsby Bank Woods on the 11th. Food-carrying was seen at Bishop Wood

on the 5th and the first fledged young were two broods (of two and four) at Melbourne, Pocklington Canal on the 20th, where young were also being fed in early July. Fledged young were also seen at Acaster Malbis (in early June), Brayton Barff and Stamford Bridge. Sixteen males were singing at Milford Common on 18th June. In July 15 were feeding on oilseed rape at SHL on the 9th, and 20 at Bank Island on 17th August increased to 25 the following day. Of nine at Melbourne on the 30th, four were juveniles. At Riccall, of four nests found in hedges one was predated, while the mean brood size of ringing of the others was 5.0. At Skipwith Common from 16 nests (three predated, one washed away) the mean brood size at ringing was 2.9.

Post breeding 30 were at Milford Common on 18th September and 14 flew southwest over Bank Island on the 25th. In October, 20 at Acaster Airfield on the 6th and 50 at Brumber Hill on the 9th were the highest counts. A flock of 60 was at CHL on 19th November and 41 at Milford Common the following day, while 50 along Menthorpe Lane, North Duffield was the only significant count in December.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*
Winter visitor and passage migrant

During January, singletons were at Stearsby Hagg on the 1st, Bank Island on the 3rd (and 13th) and Allerthorpe on the 6th, the same day that two were at CHL and 12 spread around Milford Common (with three there on the 15th and six on the 29th). Two males were at Bank Island on the 21st, while six were in a mixed finch flock (mostly Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*) at Naburn on the 25th and 26th. Singletons were also seen at Allerthorpe OGP, Bolton Percy, Brandsby, Seaton Ross and York (near Rawcliffe Meadows). During February 20 were in a flock with Chaffinches south of Stillington on the 9th, and 20 at Sandhole Plantation, Naburn on the 13th. Other reports (mostly of one or two) came from Acaster Airfield (four on the 4th), Bishopthorpe, Elvington, Heslington, Riccall, SHL, Skipwith Common, Thornton Ellers (four on the 4th) and sites already mentioned. Early in March four were at Bolton Percy on the 1st, one at Allerthorpe woods on the 2nd (and 29th), and two at Bank Island on the 3rd. Three (two males) were at Riccall on the 17th feeding on a game strip in a mixed finch flock, and two at Skipwith Common. Three were at West Melbourne on the 22nd and at Walbutts Farm, Strensall on the 29th. A male was singing at Bolton Percy Ings on the 31st, the same day as one was at Nun Monkton. In April one was seen around feeders at SHL, one was at Naburn on the 2nd, two at Bank Island on the 3rd, two at Acaster Malbis on the 7th, a male and female in a Heslington garden on the 8th, and one at Allerthorpe Common on the 10th. A singleton at CHL and a small party at Howsham Woods (including a male in breeding plumage) on the 13th were the last of spring.

There were very few reports in the autumn. Two flew over Bank Island on 15th October and one over Rawcliffe Meadows on the 22nd, while three were at Bank Island on the 23rd. During November singles were seen at Poppleton on the 3rd, Melbourne on the 8th, CHL on the 19th and Church Bridge (Pocklington Canal) on the 29th. The only December record was one at NDC on the 29th.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

YOC Red listed

Rare winter visitor

A quiet year with just a handful of records, all from the Castle Howard area. Two were seen over Ray's Wood on 23rd January (TW). In the second winter period, one was at Yorkshire Arboretum on 6th November (JP), and again on the 16th, with one over Ray's Wood on the 19th. One was at the Arboretum again on the 28th and 29th (AS, JR), with the final sighting of the year one there on 3rd December.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Amber listed

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

BBS 17/43

Well reported throughout the year, from around 70 sites (a large increase on 2018 when records came from 50 sites), with most counts of one to five birds.

In January eight were at Bank Island on the 4th and 13th, eight at Milford Common on the 6th, 12 at Allerthorpe Common on the 9th (and ten along the west side on the 31st), eight at Allerthorpe OGP on the 11th, and ten at Wheldrake Ings on the 20th. In February nine were at Bank Island on several dates and 20 in a mixed flock of passerines at Acaster Airfield on the 4th.

Pairs were evident during the breeding season, including three pairs along Pocklington Canal (Melbourne) on 1st April, where the first juveniles were calling from alder bushes on 5th June and recently fledged young were also seen on the 28th and 30th August. Successful breeding was also confirmed at Brayton Barff (three pairs bred), Rawcliffe Meadows (juveniles seen in a nearby garden on 1st September), Stillington (family party of six seen on 19th June), Ulleskelf Mires and Wheldrake Ings. At Skipwith Common three chicks were ringed at the only nest (of three) to survive predation.

Post breeding numbers at Wheldrake Ings built up from eight on 4th August to 19 on the 26th (peak count for the year). Ten were still there in early September with 16 on the 14th and 11 on the 25th. In October nine there on the 11th and eight on the 13th were the highest counts. On 19th November 17 were around CHL and ten at Milford Common on the 20th, with 11 there on 3rd December. There were also 11 at Acaster Malbis on 14th December.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris**Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor*

BBS 19/43

Widely reported in small numbers (up to five, though mostly ones and twos) from around 70 sites, however the decline in flocks has continued, with only two flocks above ten seen. Six were at Seaton Ross on 5th January, a flock of eight at Riccall on the 24th, a flock of 23 in the top branches of a copper beech tree in Copmanthorpe on 2nd February and six along West Field Beck on 22nd March. Of eight at Foggathorpe on 19th May, one was singing.

During the breeding season, reports of pairs and singing males were fairly widespread. However reports of confirmed breeding only came from a few sites. A family of five was seen at Bank Island on 18th May (and the first ringed there on 31st May), with fledglings also seen at Ampleforth Abbey, Rawcliffe Meadows,

Riccall and Stamford Bridge. It was noted that for the first time there was no evidence of breeding at SHL and none at Brayton Barff either.

Post breeding, the only other significant flock of the year was one of 25 on the edge of a field east of Ryther on 28th July. Eleven were at Wheldrake Ings on 17th November and seven at East Cottingwith on 27th December.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*
Rare winter visitor

YOC *Red listed*

None in 2019, after records in four of the past ten years, most recently 2018.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*
Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

Red listed
BBS 28/43

Well reported from areas of suitable habitat, flocks of 50 or more in the first winter period included 50 at Clifton Moor on 1st January, the same day as 100 at Yearsley Moor, 60 at Kirkby Wharfe on the 6th and 87 at Cornfield NR on the 8th (increasing to 100 there on the 13th, but only 65 on the 19th). There were also 60 at Riccall on the 19th (and 70 on the 31st), 80 at Strensall Common on the 20th, 50 at SHL on the 21st and 60 at Milford Common on the 29th to 1st February. The flock at Kirkby Wharfe had increased to 110 on 12th February, reducing to 70 by the end of the month and into March. On 26th February a flock of 77 was at Tank Plantation, Allerthorpe. In March there were flocks of 100 at Seaton Ross and c.120 at Thornton on the 8th. By 18th March the Cornfield NR flock had decreased to 30, with the same there in mid-April, while there were 40 at Kirkby Wharfe on 7th April and small flocks of up to 20 reported from several sites around this time.

Pairs and singing males were seen and heard from late March and food-carrying seen at Acaster Airfield on 22nd April. A flock of 30 was seen on stubble there on 9th May. Breeding confirmation also came from Bank Island, Melbourne (Pocklington Canal), Milford Common, Riccall (nine nests, mean brood size at ringing 3.4), SHL, Skipwith (five nests - one predated, one washed out - mean brood size at ringing of the surviving nests was 2.6) and West Field Farm, Thornton.

Post breeding, up to 40 were at Wheldrake Ings on the 22nd and 24th July, with three caught and ringed there, and about 50 roosting in the reedbed during August. The first large flock was 110 feeding on stubble at Riccall on 13th August. VMW at Bolton Percy Ings recorded 65 flying south on 30th August, 215 south on 1st September and 65 south on the 27th. On 8th September 75 were at Bank Island, with 110 on nearby arable fields on the 16th, the same day as 80 at Wheldrake Ings. At the end of the month 52 were at Acaster Airfield and 60 still at Wheldrake Ings. On 6th October 200 were along Wheldrake Lane, 54 at Melbourne on the 11th and 100 at Scagglethorpe Lane on the 29th, with 50 at Acaster Airfield on the 30th. A flock of 40 at SHL was the largest in November, but all these counts were eclipsed by up to 400 feeding on stubble at Menthorpe on 27th December when 100 were also at NDC, the latter flock still there on the 31st.

Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*
Scarce winter visitor

YOC Amber listed

Twenty were amongst a large flock of Lesser Redpoll *A. cabaret* at Allerthorpe Common on 3rd January (TJ) and again on the 4th (JS). On the 6th ten were still present, feeding on an adjacent field (JLe), five on the 10th (BirdGuides) and four on the 11th (HT). Three were ringed at Skipwith Common: on the 17th, the 25th (when two turned up there) and the 28th (DT). There were also two at Strensall Common on the 25th and 26th (MS). In February two were seen again at Skipwith Common on the 9th (MF), two more were ringed on the 14th and 23rd respectively (DT) and one was in with the Lesser Redpoll flock there on the 26th, as well as eight on 8th March (LDV Blog). On 31st March 30 were at Allerthorpe Woods (PA) and seen again on 14th April - the last of spring.

The only record later in the year was of one at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) seen feeding with Siskins *Spinus spinus* on 26th December (NC).

Amazingly, one ringed on Skipwith Common in January was 'taken by a cat' 2283kms away at Mames, Porsanger, Finnmark, Norway in July. This place is 450kms north of the Arctic Circle and in an area where both Common and Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni* breed (DT).

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*
Passage and winter visitor; occasional breeder

Red listed

The first winter period was notable for some very large flocks. The largest flock of January was one of 250-300 seen at Skipwith Common on the 15th, with 150 there on the 26th. A flock of 200 was at Allerthorpe Common early in the month, though halving by the 13th. Flocks of 100 were at Escrick on the 6th, Redhouse Wood on the 12th and Brayton Barff on the 28th. Up to 400 were feeding in canal-side alders at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) during the month - the peak count for the year. Flocks were generally smaller in February, with 120 at Skipwith Common on the 23rd the only count above 60. Forty were at Wheldrake Wood on the 7th and 60 at Bishop Wood on the 22nd. In March the Skipwith Common flock numbered 120 on the 8th, reducing to 80 by the 13th; numbers dwindled thereafter. The final flocks of spring were 40 at Redhouse Wood on 13th May and 20 at Allerthorpe Woods on the 16th, with the last of the spring sightings at Hagg Wood on the 20th.

Appearing to confirm its loss as a resident breeding species in the area (third consecutive year with no summer/early autumn records) there were no further reports until late October. In contrast to 2018 there were very few seen in this period and only four were ringed at Skipwith Common (compared with 231 ringed during the 2018 influx). One flew over Bolton Percy Ings on 21st October, the same day as one over SHL; while a mere three at Wheldrake Ings was the highest count in November. During December, nine at Melbourne on the 13th and 22 at Brayton Barff on the 16th were the only flocks seen.

Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni*

BBRC (ex YNU 2019)

Very rare vagrant

After the excitement of a Coues's Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni exilipes* turning up in the York area early in 2017, one turned up at Allerthorpe Common on 3rd January with 20+ Common Redpoll *A. flammea* and c.200 Lesser Redpoll *A. cabaret* on the southern edge of the reserve (TJ). It was seen again briefly on the 4th (EL, JS) and on the 5th (BirdGuides). On the 6th it was feeding with the Common and Lesser Redpoll flock in a field adjacent to the YWT Reserve (JLe). The last report came on the 9th (BirdGuides). Whilst thought to be a 'Coues's' (*exilipes*), which would be adjudicated by the BBRC anyway, it should be noted that all occurrences of Arctic Redpoll are now being considered by the BBRC. If accepted it will be the second record of *exilipes*, with the only other record of Arctic Redpoll in the York recording area being one in 1985.

Record subject to acceptance by the BBRC

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Casual breeder and passage migrant

Another disappointing year with very few sightings (mostly from Allerthorpe Common) and only two records after March. In January six were seen at Allerthorpe Common on the 11th, then three at nearby Frog Hall on 23rd February. In March a flock of 24 turned up at Wheldrake Wood on the 1st, followed by six at Allerthorpe Common on the 2nd, with a flock of 25 (peak count for the year) there on the 4th, but only five remained on the 8th. A singleton was at Skipwith Common on 1st May and the only autumn record was of one that flew southwest, calling, over Wheldrake Ings on 3rd September.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

BBS 37/43

Widespread and well-reported throughout the year, both in small numbers and flocks. Larger flocks in the first part of the year included a pre-roost gathering of 60 at Heslington on 3rd January (increasing to 66 on the 6th), 45 at Bank Island on the 5th, 50 at Milford Common on the 6th and 50 at Brumber Hill on the 21st. In February a flock of 50 was roosting in a tree at Monks Cross and 55 at Wheldrake Ings on the 24th. In March 41 were at Riccall on the 1st, with 60 at Wheldrake Ings on the 3rd, 50 there on the 10th and 30 at the end of the month.

Singing males were heard from March, with breeding confirmed at Ampleforth Abbey, Bank Island, Bolton Percy Ings, Brayton Barff, Deighton, Dringhouses, Ellerton Landing, Melbourne (Pocklington Canal), Milford Common, Nether Poppleton, Riccall (two broods - one brood of five ringed), SHL, Stamford Bridge, Ulleskelf Mires, Upper Poppleton, Welburn, Wheldrake Ings, Yapham and York (fledglings seen in various gardens around the city).

Post breeding flocks built up from late July including 80 at Milford Common on the 23rd, 55 at Escrick on the 26th and c.50 at Walmgate Stray on the 28th. A flock of 60 at Melbourne on 2nd August included juveniles, while 50 were at

Brumber Hill on the 9th and 11th. A charm of 60 at Wheldrake Ings on the 31st increased to 90 there on 1st September, peaking at 200 on the 4th, with 150 still there on the 14th and 110 on the 22nd. On 26th September a flock of 100 was at Naburn. In October the largest flocks were 100+ at Brayton Barff on the 16th and 80 at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal) on the 18th - the latter flock remained during November, with 84 there on the 22nd, and then reduced during December. Also in November 59 were at Milford Common on the 20th, while 157 there on 3rd December was the only flock above 50 during the month.

Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Resident breeder in small numbers, passage and winter visitor *BBS 2/43*

In January the largest flocks were 30 at Stearsby Hagg on the 1st, 60 at Melbourne on the 2nd and 60 at Milford Common on the 15th, with the same number there on 1st February. The Melbourne flock peaked at 70 on 13th February reducing to 30 on the 20th and 25 on the 22nd. A flock of 80+ was at Heslington on the 14th. In March, a flock of 50 was at Skipwith Common on the 5th, with 100 there on the 12th, the peak count for the first half of the year. Smaller flocks and individuals were also reported from around 30 other sites, including birds visiting garden feeders.

Whilst there were a handful of records of singing males heard in March and April at Bishop Wood, Heslington and Welburn, and eight birds were at Yearsley Moor on 2nd May, the only evidence of breeding came from Stamford Bridge where a juvenile and two adults visited garden feeders on 9th June - possibly the pair that were regular visitors to the same garden until late May.

Apart from one seen at Easthorpe on 26th August, there were no more records until 4th October when one was at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal), with a flock of 15 there on the 23rd, while a flock of 12 was at Thornton Ellers on the 29th. A flock of 20 headed south over SHL on 4th November, while a flock of 20 was there on the 20th and 35 on the 21st, peaking at 40 on the 29th, but reducing to 15 on 4th December. The Melbourne flock built up during November and early December to around 70, feeding on canal-side alders, with up to 130 in the Melbourne/Thornton Ellers area through to the end of the month.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Red listed

Resident breeder

BBS 4/43

During January 70 were in the traditional roost at Melbourne (Pocklington Canal), with 170 there on the 29th, the peak count for the first winter period. In early February, 40 were at Thornton Ellers on the 4th, but though 44 gathered at the Melbourne roost site that evening most flew off with only ten going to roost. In February 45 were at Mires Lane, Ulleskelf on the 6th, the same day as 63 roosted in *Miscanthus* on Hining Marsh at Riccall (and again on the 21st). On the 12th c.40 were on wires at Towthorpe, with 60 at Thornton Ellers and 60 at Melbourne on the 14th. In March 20+ were on wires at Towthorpe and 16 on 25th April.

The first singing males were heard in early March from several sites, with many singing during the summer months from sites with suitable breeding habitat,

including a minimum of ten around Stamford Bridge in July. Despite this, there were no reports received of confirmed breeding.

After 1st August there were no records received until 3rd November when one was at Aughton Ings. However by 19th November 15 were at Melbourne in the Church Bridge roost. The roost increased thereafter to 32 on 1st December and 80 on the 21st, with 68 there on the 31st. Elsewhere 50+ were at Oak Butts Farm, Towthorpe on 16th December, with 80 on wires there on the 22nd, while 50+ were in fields near Dunnington on the 28th and 50 along Hagg Lane, East Cottingwith on the 30th, the same day as 26 at South Duffield.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Red listed

Resident breeder, passage and winter visitor

BBS 37/43

In the first winter period and early spring, there were very few flocks over 20: 24 were at Acaster Airfield on 1st January, 42 at Stamford Bridge on the 12th, 21 at Brumber Hill on the 15th and the same at Hassacarr NR on the 16th. In February, 33 were at Milford Common on the 1st, 24 at Deighton on the 3rd, 21 at Riccall on the 4th, the same day as 35 at Thornton Ellers, and a flock of 23 at Naburn on the 21st. There were 30 at Wheldrake on 3rd March. During April 20 were at Brumber Hill (with 17 there on 6th May and 18 on the 14th) and 20 along Snake Lane in SE75 on the 18th. In early May there were 17 at Brumber Hill on the 6th and 18 there on the 14th.

Singing males were reported widely from mid-March from areas of suitable habitat, higher counts including 11 near Naburn Wood (BBS count), nine at Welburn, six at both Huby and Terrington, five on Langwith Stray, Heslington and four at Thornton. On 20th May 22 were at Sheriff Hutton. There was limited confirmation of breeding however; food-carrying was seen near Stamford Bridge and fledged young were seen at Ulleskelf Mires. At Riccall 20 nests were found on farmland - though four were predated, at the remainder the productivity was high with six broods of four and mean brood size at ringing 3.1.

Post breeding there were few flocks reported. The highest count at Brumber Hill was 20 on 9th October. At Acaster Airfield numbers built up from ten in early October to 30 by 29th November, with 20 still there in mid-December. Elsewhere the only other count above ten was 15 at Ulleskelf Mires on 31st December.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Amber listed

Resident breeder and passage visitor

BBS 13/43

In the first winter period and early spring, 100+ were in the Melbourne roost in early January, increasing to 130 by the end of the month, but decreasing to around 40 by the end of February. A pre-roost flock of 40 was at Strensall Common on 23rd January. On 8th March 34 were in a flock with Yellowhammers *Emberiza citrinella* at West Field Farm, Thornton and a flock of 30 was at Melbourne.

During the breeding season singing males were reported from over 30 sites with suitable habitat, notably in the LDV, including eight singing at Wheldrake Ings on 19th May increasing to 13 singing (of 21 counted) on 22nd June. On 24th March six (of ten counted) were singing at Ryther Ings. Eleven territories were

found during the MOD survey at Strensall Common, up from five in 2018, but still well below the 17 of 2017. At Heslington East 13 males were singing on 29th May (compared with five in 2018). Breeding was confirmed at Ampleforth Abbey, Heslington East (where ten juveniles were ringed), Melbourne (Pocklington Canal), Riccall (four nests - one predated - broods of four, four and three ringed) and Wheldrake Ings (where many juveniles were caught and ringed during July).

Post breeding, 20 roosted at Bank Island on 24th July. A flock of 20, comprising adults and juveniles, was at Riccall on 2nd August and up to 150 were in the reedbeds at Wheldrake Ings toward the end of August. In September 100+ were roosting there on the 13th and 200+ on the 16th; most then departed leaving only 20 on the 19th. A large number of juveniles were also noted passing through during the month and at Riccall 59 were trapped and ringed during the autumn. The roost at Swantail reedbed at Wheldrake Ings held 112 on 23rd October.

Appendix A: Category E

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

The resident bird remained at Heslington East all year, while a single was present in the LDV from 2nd January to 3rd February and then again from 27th October to the year-end; it favoured NDC, but was also seen at Wheldrake Ings on 8th January.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

The University of York's free-flying flock was seen during WeBS counts in all months - 39 at Heslington East in Jan, otherwise at Heslington West - where there were 38 in Feb and Mar, with between 28 and 32 seen there in all other months, although no young were reported.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Sightings of the University of York's free-flying flock came mainly from Heslington West where up to 24 were seen every month, and were presumably the same 23 birds which were present at Poppleton on 8th September (N.B. one has a damaged wing and cannot fly so never leaves the area by Derwent College at Heslington West, hence why the flock tends to total 23 when seen elsewhere).

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

The escaped female made intermittent appearances at Bolton Percy Ings and Kirkby Wharfe during February, March and May, and then reappeared in December. A single was also at Nunnington Lake on 26th January. On 9th November a family party of six was found at NDC staying to the 11th after which they relocated to Ellerton Ings until the 16th, returning to NDC from the 18th to the 24th and then moving to North Duffield Ings on 29th November. There were no further records until 31st December when what were presumably the same birds were seen at Thorganby Ings.

Wood Duck One presumed escape was on floods by Acaster Church Ings on 27th March.

Eagle Owl An escaped bird was seen at Huby on 19th October and at NDC on the 23rd and 24th.

Green Rosella An escaped bird frequented Strensall Village between January and March.

Appendix B: Hybrids

Canada x Greylag Goose Three at CHL on 13th February.

Appendix C: Unproven records (insufficient details received for confirmation)

Crane Two over Sutton upon Derwent on 9th April; one calling at NDC on 2nd November.

Osprey One reported over Pocklington on 17th April.

Turtle Dove Two reported in the vicinity of the University of York on 3rd May.

Short-eared Owl Two reported at Wressle on 2nd January.

Raven Two reported over Newburgh Priory on 31st January.

Yellow-browed Warbler One reported at Easthorpe on 5th October.

Firecrest One reported at Heslington West on 6th March.

Update on records submitted to the BBRC/YNU

American Wigeon *Mareca americana* YNU

The records of one present at Wheldrake Ings from the 2nd to 7th January 2018 (JLe, DMB et al.) then seen again in February, and the drake at Bubwith Ings on 31st December (JS et al.), as detailed in the 2018 Report, have been accepted by the YNU.

Earliest and latest dates for summer visitors/passage migrants in 2019

| Species | Arrival Date/First Reported | Last Reported |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Garganey | 24th March | 24th September |
| Quail | 19th May | 11th August |
| Osprey | 17th April | 27th August |
| Hobby | 19th April | 11th October |
| Oystercatcher | 27th January | 24th August |
| Little Ringed Plover | 26th March | 11th August |
| Ringed Plover | 30th March | 10th November |
| Whimbrel | 10th April | 11th May (18th July) |
| Common Sandpiper | 30th April | 3rd September |
| Wood Sandpiper | 14th May | 29th July |
| Greenshank | 19th April | 21st September |
| Common Tern | 22nd April | 13th August |
| Turtle Dove | 12th May | 21st July |
| Cuckoo | 10th April | 15th August |
| Nightjar | 31st May | 20th September (juv) |
| Swift | 22nd April | 18th September |
| Sand Martin | 15th March | 23rd October (late bird) |
| Swallow | 31st March | 4th November |
| House Martin | 3rd April | 5th November |
| Willow Warbler | 22nd March | 14th October |
| Sedge Warbler | 12th April | 19th September |
| Reed Warbler | 20th April | 2nd October |
| Grasshopper Warbler | 20th April | 16th July |
| Garden Warbler | 16th April | 28th August |
| Lesser Whitethroat | 18th April | 19th September |
| Whitethroat | 3rd April | 6th October |
| Spotted Flycatcher | 13th May | 13th September |
| Redstart | 12th April | 5th September |
| Whinchat | 10th August | 19th September |
| Wheatear | 23rd March | 28th September |
| Yellow Wagtail | 5th April | 28th September |
| Tree Pipit | 18th April | 5th September |

Note: Chiffchaff and Blackcap have been removed from this list as some birds overwinter making it impossible to tell which birds are definitely migrants.

Earliest and latest dates for winter visitors/passage migrants 2019

| Species | Last reported in Spring | First reported in Autumn |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pink-footed Goose | 16th June | 13th September |
| Bewick's Swan | 25th January | 28th December |
| Whooper Swan ^ | 14th April | 21st September |
| Pintail | 12th May | 25th September |
| Goldeneye | 17th April | 27th October |
| Goosander | 29th May | 24th August |
| Golden Plover | 30th April | 19th July |
| Ruff | 22nd May | 18th August |
| Dunlin | 3rd June | 8th September |
| Jack Snipe | 16th April | 19th September |
| Green Sandpiper | 29th April | 16th June |
| Fieldfare | 29th April | 20th September |
| Redwing | 1st May | 3rd September |
| Brambling | 13th April | 15th October |

^ The lingering 14th April bird was picked up on the 18th, but subsequently died weighing just 4kg.



Yellow Wagtail – a migrant breeder

© Craig Ralston

Rare Breeding Birds of the Lower Derwent Valley and Skipwith Common 2019

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. of adults | No. of young | No. of Pairs | | | |
|---------------|--|---------------------------|--------------|-------|-----------|------------------------|
| | | | Poss. | Prob. | Confirmed | Total |
| Wigeon | 17 (10d 7f) | | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 - 4 and extra drakes |
| Garganey | 10+ (5d, 5f) overall (7d, 5f) | 22 (8 caught & ringed) | 2 | 0 | 5 | 5 - 7 |
| Shoveler | 156 | 63 (2 caught & ringed) | 45 | 14 | 11 | 11 - 70 |
| Pochard | | | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 - 2 |
| Little Egret | 69 - 85 | c.40 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 16 |
| Peregrine | 8 | 3+ | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 - 4 |
| Red Kite | | | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 - 4 |
| Water Rail | 14 calling males | 3 (prob two broods) | 3 | 9 | 2 | 2 - 14 |
| Spotted Crake | 3 calling males | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 - 1 |
| Corncrake | 3 calling males | | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 - 4 |

Eurasian Wigeon: Up to seven pairs and three additional drakes remained throughout May. A single brood of four was found with the female at Wheldrake on 11th June with five additional adults still present.

Garganey: Great year for the species. A survey on the 13th May produced a full count of four pairs and three drakes. A drake was displaying to two females at Bank Island on the 17th, when pairs were also present at Wheldrake and NDC. A single female was reported at Bank Island with two young on the 18th followed by another female appearing with a brood of eight there on the 30th. A female with a brood of six ducklings were on the pool at Wheldrake on 29th/30th May. A brood of six remained at Wheldrake on the 1st - 5th July with another female at Bank Island on the 7th and Wheldrake on the 10th. A brood of five was seen at North Duffield Carrs on the 8th - 14th. One or two females continued to be seen daily on the pool at Wheldrake and were joined by the brood of five there at dusk on the 15th - at least 12 were present in the valley around this time. Two females and five juveniles remained at Wheldrake thereafter until month-end, with one caught and ringed on the 20th. A brood of two, near-fledged ducklings was caught and ringed at Bank Island on the 23rd - possibly a third brood of the season here.

Northern Shoveler: Up to 70 pairs remained throughout the site during May. A single brood of two at Wheldrake on 8th June was the first of the year. 48 ducklings were present in several broods at North Duffield Carrs with ten ducklings at Wheldrake on 4th July.

Pintail: Pairs at both Bank Island and Wheldrake lingered into mid-May but departed thereafter - no evidence of any breeding attempts.

Pochard: Following a lone drake in mid-May, up to two drakes and two ducks were recorded during June, with a single lingering, followed by two then lingering on and off into July. No evidence of any breeding attempts.

Little Egret: Continues to increase. At least 11 individuals were counted in the heronry on 19th May when 7 - 8 nests were occupied. 16 nests were counted in the heronry on 17th May. The first fledged young were singles at Wheldrake and North Duffield Carrs on 23rd June, with up to 11 present on Wheldrake on the 29th and 19 there (including a family party of five) on the 30th.

Great White Egret: Continues to increase in frequency and number during the year - records included here for completeness and to monitor further increases. Although fewer birds were present during the breeding season record numbers were present in late August with up to five birds present during October.

Common Crane: Despite more encouraging attempts to colonise and attempt breeding in the valley in previous years, and another decline in records this year, the species continues to be a regular breeding season visitor. Included here for completeness. A single was heard calling several times from the Storwood and East Cottingwith area on 10th March, followed by a pair at East Cottingwith on the 11th before, presumably the same birds, were seen heading over Fulford Golf Course later in the day. A single was then present at Wheldrake lngs and the Low

Grounds on the 24th. In April two flew over Bank Island on the 10th before flying towards the canal at Hagg Bridge, with two also reported over Skipwith Common on the 12th. A single sub-adult was present at North Duffield Carrs on 15th May and again the following day at Aughton Ings.

Peregrine: Continues to be encountered in the valley throughout the breeding season. The regular three pairs nesting on pylons around the valley were all present during the breeding season with another pair located - time restraints once again prevented full monitoring. One pair is however known to have produced at least two young. Another pair was found during the year (but outcome not known) whilst a further pair (within the southern Lower Derwent Valley, but outside the YOC area) bred and raised at least one young.

Marsh Harrier: Once again frequent throughout the breeding season but no evidence of breeding on the reserve this year, and no direct evidence of breeding in the wider area. Adults with accompanying broods continued to turn up in late summer, but whether these have bred off-site or originate from the Humber (or both) is unclear.

Red Kite: Continues to increase throughout the year including the breeding season. At least two broods (five young) fledged in the area. There were regular sightings during May and June of up to 3-4 pairs in the area. In July, up to seven adults and four juveniles were present in the Wheldrake/Bank Island area from the 10th until the 15th, with seven adults and five young there on the 17th. Seven were present throughout the western side of the valley on the 22nd.

Water Rail: Back to a more normal year following last year's bumper season. Calling birds were concentrated as usual at Wheldrake Ings, with up to seven calling males at this site and scattered birds elsewhere. Proof of breeding came quite late with three on the scrape by Swantail Hide, Wheldrake, on the 1st (one adult and two juveniles) followed by a single at Pool Hide on the 3rd. Four adults and two juveniles (presumed different broods) were present at Wheldrake on the 8th.

Spotted Crane: Two calling males, with possibly a third, were present in the refuge at Wheldrake at dusk on 1st May. A single was then located at Bank Island after dark (23:20hrs) on the 22nd and again at dawn the next day. A single male was singing at Bank Island after dusk on 10th June. In September, two were found and showed well in the scrape in front of Swantail Hide at Wheldrake Ings on the 17th, with one the following morning still showing well (and another briefly seen). At least one was present until dusk and again on the 19th. Not included in breeding figures as could well be passage birds, but included here for completeness.

Corncrake: A much quieter year of late, reflecting wider reports nationally and also the vulnerable nature of this small population - however it continues to maintain a toehold in the area.

Ruff: A single lek resulted in up to eleven males and three females recorded in late April and early May, followed by just singles during the second half of the month. No evidence of summering or breeding.

Black-tailed Godwit: No evidence of any breeding attempts.

Category B - Less Scarce Species

Breeding success of Category B species in the LDV

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

| Species | Max. no. of adults | No. of young | No. of Pairs | | | |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|-------|-----------|----------|
| | | | Poss. | Prob. | Confirmed | Total |
| Gadwall | | Min. 73 (5 caught and ringed) | 54 | 33 | 20 | 54 - 107 |
| Quail | 5 singing males | | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 - 5 |
| Hobby | | 2 + | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 - 6 |
| Woodlark | | | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 - 6 |
| Willow Tit | | Min. 13 (9 caught and ringed) | 10 | 16 | 7 | 7 - 33 |

Gadwall: An average year following a new record LDV count of over 600 in early March.

Common Quail: Another poor year.

Willow Tit: A full survey was carried out this year in addition to the ongoing monitoring work, with individuals/pairs picked up by BBS, in conjunction with national survey effort. Wheldrake Ings and the Bank Island area remained a stronghold (8 pairs), along with Melbourne and Thornton Ings (9 pairs) and Pocklington Canal (4+ pairs). Scattered pairs elsewhere. Confirmed breeding at Wheldrake (at least 3 broods - 8 juveniles ringed), Bank Island (1 juvenile ringed) and the Melbourne area (2 pairs with 2+ young) and Thornton Eilers (3 young).

A Battle Royal

By John Lawton

About ten minutes before nine o'clock on 19th March 2019 all Hell broke loose in front of my house in Heslington. I could vaguely hear it from the kitchen at the back and, with a remake of Hitchcock's 'The Birds' on my mind, I peered out of the front door, where I was greeted by the sight of about twelve Jackdaws, six Magpies and two Carrion Crows all screaming blue murder, with an accompanying orchestra of 'pinking' Blackbirds, flying backwards and forwards over the road about fifty yards away. I had no idea what was going on, except that I had never seen anything quite like it in nearly seventy years of birding.

Below the melee, on the road, I could make out what I initially thought was a bag of litter dropped by passing students. Except it moved, quite a lot! Not litter, but two birds, a Magpie and a female Sparrowhawk locked together in mortal combat. A female Sparrowhawk is roughly twice as heavy as a Magpie, so a kill was definitely on the cards, but this Magpie was not giving up without a fight.

The two birds lay side-by-side on the road, with the hawk's claws firmly embedded towards the top and bottom of the Magpie's breast and belly. The problem (for the would-be killer) was that every time it attempted to get on top of its prey to finish it off the Magpie lunged at it with its beak, threatening serious injury. The result - stalemate. There was no way the Sparrowhawk could dispatch the Magpie, but there was no way it was going to give up its breakfast, and there was no way the Magpie was going to let the hawk finish it off.



Magpie and Sparrowhawk grappling on the road

© John Lawton

I dashed back into the house, grabbed my camera, and gingerly returned, snapping as I approached. In my excitement I'd forgotten to change the lens to a telephoto, but the Sparrowhawk seemed oblivious, and the Magpie couldn't leave even if it wanted to (which it undoubtedly did), because by now it was losing feathers from part of its breast and bleeding quite badly where the hawk occasionally managed to get up close and personal.

For the next 15 or 20 minutes several people passed on their way to work, often within a few yards of the birds. Bizarrely two passers-by just ignored (or didn't even see) the drama in front of them, but others did and paused to ask me what was happening, expressing amazement at the battle royal. Then a gentleman (we will refer to him as a gentleman, but he wasn't) saw the fight, shouted at me that "this is cruel", and despite my protestations kicked the hawk off the Magpie, which fled. The Sparrowhawk paused for a moment, apparently confused (or exhausted), before it too shot off.

I was furious. "That's what Sparrowhawks do," I explained to the gentleman as calmly as I could. "They don't eat carrots. All that will happen now is that the injured Magpie will probably die, and the hawk will go and kill something else for breakfast. So two birds die instead of one."

His reply: "Oh you're a clever b***** aren't you", as he stalked off.

I wonder whether he thought Blackbirds pulling worms out of his lawn was cruel, or whether he watched predators and prey in a David Attenborough programme? Perhaps the real thing was all too much for him. Whatever, it's not often you get to watch nature red in beak and claw for real, just in front of your own house.

Records from the archives

Compiled by David Tate

The following selections have been taken from previous YOC and YNU reports. Unless stated otherwise the rare bird records were accepted by the appropriate authorities.

25 years ago

The introduction to the 1994 YOC Report contains two items that still resonate today. Jim Pewtress, the recorder, noted that:

'It is with regret that once again it has been necessary to add a list of unconfirmed reports at the end of the species accounts. This is due to the lack of field descriptions as required by the YNU and BBRC.'

The list contains 18 species including Ferruginous Duck, Bee-eater, Red-breasted Flycatcher, White-tailed Eagle and Chough. Secondly, Frank Oates described his analysis of the sighting locations published in the 1992 Report. Most (55%) of the records came from SE63, 64 and 74 which contain the LDV and Skipwith Common whereas only 2% came from SE56, 66 and 76. The conclusion includes the comment that:

'The idea of this short report is to make members aware of the disproportionate coverage of our area and hope that they may find time ... to visit one of the under recorded areas once or twice a year...'

The account for Bittern notes that the LDV was chosen as a national 'Project Bittern' site and that £20,000 was spent in late 1993 on a scheme to prevent the reedbed at Wheldrake Ings from drying out. Highlights, mostly from the LDV include:

Rare Birds:

Ring-necked Duck - A drake at Wharfe Ings, Cawood on 7th March

Velvet Scoter - A drake at Wheldrake Ings on 15th March

Manx Shearwater - One picked up in a York garden then taken to the coast

Nightingale - One singing at Brayton Barff from 30th April to 9th May

Lapland Bunting - One calling in dense fog over Wheldrake Ings on 14th October

The Black Kite record from Brayton Barff was not accepted by the YNU.

Breeding:

Mute Swan - 14 pairs laid 90 eggs and 69 cygnets fledged in the LDV

Little Grebe - 13 pairs bred at Wheldrake Ings producing 18 young

Cormorant - Two pairs bred at Wheldrake Ings: first inland county record

Bittern - A booming male was heard at Wheldrake Ings from the 7th to 12th May

Ruff - Three newly-fledged juveniles were seen in the LDV on 2nd July

High counts:

Pochard - 2785 in the LDV on 15th January

Curlew Sandpiper - Six by the River Ouse at Poppleton on 14th August

Common Gull - 15,000 roosted in the LDV on 20th January

Kittiwake - 31 at Wheldrake Ings on 25th January after a gale

Swift - 3000 at Dunnington during August

50 years ago

1970 was a 'European Conservation Year' and in advance of this the YOC chairman (Peter Pearson), recorder (Peter Hutchinson) and assistant recorder (Terry Chilton) expressed their views about regional and local concerns in the introduction to the 1969 Report. Specific concerns included the continuing use of DDT; the '*galloping stupidity of modern trends in both agriculture and industry*', as well as the proposals to dump fly ash on Thorne Moors, flood Farndale and build a barrage at the mouth of the River Derwent. There is also mention of the '*little practical value*' of SSSI status and the successful motion at the AGM that the Forestry Commission should '*take themselves out of business*'.

In the event Thorne Moors and Farndale were not inundated; DDT was banned in 1984; the Forestry Commission eventually morphed into the mellower Forestry England and although the Derwent barrage was built in 1975 it did not lead to the reclamation of the LDV for arable farming as was feared at the time. However, Defra have estimated that 56% of farmland birds were lost between 1970 and 2017 and the status of SSSIs is still a matter of concern with the number in favourable condition falling from 44% in 2003 to 39% in 2019.

Nineteen YOC members contributed to the 1969 Report. Notable records were:

Rare Birds:

Glaucous Gull - A 2nd-year bird at CHL on 8th December

Great Grey Shrike - One present in both SE67 and SE64 on 26th October

Breeding:

Corncrake - Young seen during June in SE63

Quail - A nest with seven eggs in SE63 produced at least two young.

Nightjar - Probably eight pairs in SE63 and two pairs in SE64

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker - Report of breeding near North Duffield

Grasshopper Warbler - Probably 15 pairs on Skipwith Common

High counts:

Bewick's Swan - At least 235 in the LDV on 26th December

Wigeon - 3000 on River Derwent floods on 16th March

Bar-tailed Godwit - Eight at Skipwith Common on 17th September

The Bewick's Swan count was published by the YNU and is much higher than the YOC figure. None of the YOC records, apart from the Wigeon count, appear in the YNU Report.

100 years ago

William Hewitt, the acting York district bird recorder, died suddenly in late October and as a result his report for 1919 was not completed. However, some of the pre-October records were published by the YNU:

A calling **Corncrake** was present at Stamford Bridge in May. The number of pairs of **Black-headed Gulls** at the Skipwith Common gullery had increased after the war time egg harvesting ceased. Several pairs of **Shoveler** and three pairs of **Pochard** also bred on the Common, though the number of **Redshank** had declined to three or four pairs. The first **Swift** of the year was seen at York on 7th May with the last at Bishop Wilton on 21st September. A young **Cuckoo**, between 14 and 21 days old, had been brought to Hewitt. He successfully hand-reared the bird and released it back into the wild on 4th August.

Members of the YNU visited Coxwold during the Easter weekend (April 21st-23rd). Most of the field work took place north of the village much of which lies just beyond the YOC boundary. The bird report contains a few records for the YOC area including **Willow Warbler**, **Yellow** and **Grey Wagtail**. The **Cuckoo** had been heard on 18th April and there was a drumming **Snipe** on the 19th. A **Ring Ouzel** was seen on Byland Moor and a **Grouse** nest with eggs was discovered, both of which were within 3km of the YOC area. Although **Red Grouse** have not been reported by the YOC since it formed in 1966 a few previous records have been published. For example, during the severe winter of 1879/80 Grouse appeared at Oswaldkirk. In addition, a unique event took place on August 31st 1940 when German bombs set fire to Helmsley Moor which led to a report of small coverts flying around the Hermitage, Stockton on the Forest during the night.



Nightjar – a scarce breeder in the YOC recording area

© Mike Walton

This bird turned up unexpectedly in a garden in Clifton in August 2019.

North Yorkshire Turtle Dove Project

By Richard Baines

Introduction

In the autumn of 2015, I had the bright idea to set up a volunteer project focused on surveying and helping Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* in North Yorkshire. Little did I know four years later we would win the UK National Parks award for best conservation project!

In 2016 our first meeting attracted over 20 volunteers, at that time we were greatly assisted with resources provided at no cost by Forestry England (FE) and the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC). Our project was inspired by surveys conducted by volunteers from the North Yorkshire Forest Bird Study Group (NYFBSG).

In December 2016 with help from a range of partner organisations, the North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPA) applied for a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) grant in order to create a resourced project focused on Turtle Doves.

The NLHF Turtle Dove Project aims are:

- Provide advice, training, support and small-scale capital work.
- Train farmers about Turtle Dove conservation so that they can spread the word amongst the farming community.
- Recruit volunteers to conduct surveys.
- Deliver talks and guided walks for local residents, schools and community groups.
- Create publicity and display material at key locations such as the Sutton Bank National Park Centre and the Dalby Forest Visitor Centre.

Ecology and Conservation Status

The Turtle Dove is a member of the Columbidae family which includes European doves and pigeons. A spring migrant, they arrive on their breeding grounds from April. Their range extends across much of Europe and the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa. From September the majority of the population leaves Europe to winter mainly south of the Sahara Desert in the Sahel zone of Africa (BirdLife International 2019).

European populations of Turtle Doves have been in decline since the 1970s. They were included on the register of Unfavourable Conservation Status in the European Union (EU) and in Europe in 2007 (Lutz, 2006). The current global population (2019) is quoted as 12,800,000-47,600,000 mature individuals and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) status is listed as vulnerable and decreasing (BirdLife International 2019). In the UK Turtle Doves are Red Listed (high conservation concern) as described in The Population Status of Birds in the UK (Eaton et al. 2015). The continuing decline has led to the species being formally added to the UK Rare Breeding Birds Panel list in 2019 as a 'regular

breeding bird'. This criterion includes species with over 1000 breeding pairs (RBBP, 2020). The UK RBBP collates data in partnership with county recorders on rare species of birds breeding in the UK.

Breeding habitat traditionally includes farmland, scrub and woodland. Nest sites often favour hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and are usually located between one and three metres above the ground (Browne, 2004). In the North Yorkshire forests Turtle Doves have been noted singing within commercial forestry plantations for many years where they have also been found to be nesting.

Historical Status of Turtle Doves in Yorkshire

One of the first formal natural history accounts of Turtle Doves in the UK was written by Thomas Bewick in 1826 in his iconic book 'A History of British Birds'. The only record he references was of a bird shot out of a flock in Northumberland in 1794 (Bewick, 1826). Bewick goes on to describe a Turtle Dove song as:

'Singularly tender and plaintive: in addressing his mate, the male makes use of a variety of winning attitudes, cooing at the same time in the most gentle and soothing accents; on which account this bird has been represented in all ages, as the most perfect emblem of connubial attachment and constancy.'

In 1882 William Yarrell in his book 'A History of British Birds Volume III' refers to their status and breeding habitat as:

'Owing to the great increase of conditions suitable to their habits, these birds are both more numerous and far more widely distributed than in former years. They frequent woods, fir plantations, and high thick hedges dividing arable land.'

Following on from William Yarrell, Thomas H. Nelson in his book 'The Birds of Yorkshire A Historical Account of the Avifauna of the County', references the first "notice" of Turtle Doves as a Yorkshire bird by Thomas Allis written in 1844 (Nelson, 1907). These sightings are interesting as they refer to only four records, the earliest of which is dated as 1824; "Dr. Farrar has seen but one specimen which was shot near Rotherham about 1824". Nelson goes on to describe the bird as:

'Popularly supposed to be a south-country bird, the Turtle Dove has of late years, like some other species, been extending its range northward'.

Several references are later described which confirm the status as scarce-rare in the county in the early-mid 19th Century:

'A straggler on migration north of Sheffield'.

By the time Nelson wrote his book, the Turtle Dove population was increasing significantly in the eastern part of Yorkshire:

'Mr. W.H. St. Quintin, writing in 1902, says the Turtle Dove was unknown to him in his nesting days, being first heard at Scampston about 1885, later still at Lowthorpe, and now each year it is found at both places. At the end of May 1900, he saw five together in a field at Scampston and in 1897 knew of six pairs in the plantations there'.

Nelson continues to describe in detail the breeding status, referencing the limit of the breeding range as:

'At Scarborough it reaches the most northerly point at which the nest has been known with absolute certainty'.

Eggs found in 1900 and a nest at Wykeham in 1905 is noted. However, he then describes two birds in a plantation near Marton in Cleveland in June 1902 which may have been breeding. The next formal natural history book to be written on the birds of Yorkshire was published in 1952. Ralph Chislett described the increase in Turtle Doves as continuing into the early-mid 20th Century to the point where:

'Nowhere in the county where suitable cover exists can the species be accounted uncommon'.

He then makes a useful habitat reference by the naturalist W.S. Medicott in 1945:

'W.S.M. mentioned afforestation as a possible cause of increase. Certainly, Turtle Doves now breed in most of the plantations of the Forestry Commission'.

A good example of the favored habitat at that time is then described as:

'In the spruces about Strines, on high ground to the west of Sheffield, K. Wheater estimated that thirty pairs bred in 1948'.

Thirty-four years later in 1986 John R. Mather published his book 'The Birds of Yorkshire'. The majority of the section on Turtle Doves is devoted to migration counts in the eastern part of the county and on the coast. It appears this was due to the lack of migration records noted by Chislett (1952). Flocks numbering up to 193 are described at Spurn in 1979. The largest numbers were noted as being recorded in the eastern part of the county; in the spring of 1981, 543 birds were logged between 8th May and 23rd June at Blacktoft Sands. He describes the status as being virtually the same as in Nelson's day apart from it increasing in the lower dales and in the north. He also describes the larger numbers in the eastern Pennines and North York Moors as due to the increase in forestry plantations (Mather, 1987).

Arrival dates throughout these references give a consistent pattern of first sightings in the third or fourth week of April. Increasing numbers then arrive at breeding localities from May into early June. Strongest passage at coastal stations is often recorded as late May into early June, a good example of this being the 68 recorded at Spurn over two days; 4th and 5th June 1966 (YNU 1965-66). Earlier arrival dates though exceptional are occasionally noted such as a bird at Wilton near Middlesbrough on 24th March 1972 (YNU 1972).

During the 1990s, YNU annual county bird reports began to record the status of Turtle Doves as decreasing markedly in recent years. The 1997 report cites the best area in that year as the Lower Derwent National Nature Reserve (LDNNR) with 29 singing males. In the same report, the few VC62 (Vice County) records include sightings from several sites in Wykeham/Dalby Forests although breeding was noted as not proven. Bearing in mind the lack of VC62 records from that year and the large number from VC61 it is a distinct possibility that Turtle Doves were under-recorded or few records submitted giving a false picture of the status in VC62.

Ten years later in 2007 the recorded status in Yorkshire had not improved and fewer records meant the status was amended to 'very scarce' (YNU 2007). In the

NYMNP 14 pairs were found within the forest area, this was noted as similar to recent years.

Since 2007 the most consistent records of breeding Turtle Doves in our project area have come from two sources; the NYFBSG and York Ornithological Club (YOC). The NYTDP area encompasses two bird clubs; Scarborough Birders Club (SBC) and YOC along with two natural history groups: Ryedale Naturalists (RN) and Scarborough Naturalists (SN). The support and co-operation of all these groups have greatly helped the Turtle Dove project since its inception in 2016.

SBC collates all bird records within their recording area. SBC have shared all of their records of Turtle Doves annually with NYTDP for the three years 2017-2019. These records appear in the database as 'casual records'.

The YOC has collated records of all bird species submitted to the club within its recording area since its inception in the mid-1960s. The YOC has recently shared all of their current and historical records of Turtle Doves from between 2003 and 2019 with NYTDP. Their records appear in the database as 'casual records'. Historical records from within both the YOC recording area and the TD Project area consistently show several villages in the Howardian Hills AONB (HH AONB) as key sites. The following were mentioned regularly in reports from 2003-05; 'Yearsley Moor', 'Towthorpe Farm, Terrington' and 'Gilling'. Two of these village areas, Gilling and Yearsley Moor, were still producing records in 2019 illustrating the high degree of site fidelity exhibited by Turtle Doves. Records from this period are scarce and only describe small numbers i.e. <12 sightings in 2003 from the whole of the YOC recording area. However, these records may not illustrate the true picture at that time due to the variable number of observers submitting records and/or bias of observer coverage. In 2006 the status of Turtle Doves within the YOC Report was described as an 'increasingly scarce migrant breeder'.

Historical Status and Habitat Summary

Turtle Doves have been recorded as a breeding bird within Yorkshire for almost 200 years. Within that time, they have undergone significant changes in range and associated breeding numbers. A scarce-rare straggler in the early part of the 19th Century they were then considered as common throughout Yorkshire in the mid-20th Century, followed by a significant range contraction noted from the latter part of the century.

Reliable references to habitat choice throughout the literature reveal Turtle Doves have often favored woodland and forest habitats throughout this period. One revealing reference in Yarell (1882) locates their habitat as "*woods, fir plantations, and high thick hedges dividing arable land*". This edge or 'ecotone' between two habitats, forest and farmland, is still very evident to this day in their current choice of landscape within the NYTDP area.

Project Surveys and Monitoring Methods

The NYTDP population survey and monitoring method involves:

- Two visits undertaken within key seasonal dates for Turtle Dove.
Visit one 11th May - 19th June, visit two 21st June - 24th July

- Two transects walked within a 1km² monad
- Both visits conducted within the first two hours after dawn



Turtle Dove

© Richard Bennett

Formal Survey Results

2016 - Our first year of the project was carried out as a volunteer group with resources provided at no cost by FE and NEYEDC. This got us off to a great start with 20 volunteers surveying 29 squares in and around Cropton Forest. A total of 26 singing males was recorded in Cropton Forest on these population surveys.

2017 - The NLHF project started in May 2017. Surveys were carried out in Dalby Forest and five monitoring squares in Cropton chosen from squares surveyed in 2016 which had positive results. In 2017 a total of 18 singing males was recorded; 11 in Dalby Forest in the new population survey area and seven in Cropton from the five monitoring squares first surveyed in 2016.

2018 - The 2018 surveys were the first to include the HH AONB area. Surveys were carried out in the northern part of the AONB and a new NYMNP area referred to as the Eastern Area which focused on three forests; Langdale, Wykeham and Broxa plus ten monitoring squares; five in Dalby and five in Cropton. In 2018 a total of 24 singing males was recorded; 18 from the new Eastern Area, two from the Cropton monitoring squares, three from the Dalby monitoring squares and one from the HH AONB northern population survey.

2019 - In 2019, population surveys were carried out in a new central area of the HH AONB and an additional 19 monitoring squares; 15 covering the three forest areas in the NYMNP area already covered in population surveys and four within the HH AONB area surveyed for the first time in 2018. A total of 38 singing males was found in 2019: one from the new HH AONB central area population survey, 19 from the Cropton monitoring squares, five from the eastern monitoring squares and 11 from conservation monitoring squares.

Casual Records

At the start of the funded project we realised the importance of giving casual records equal weight alongside population surveys when planning sites for conservation intervention. The combination of historical data and new casual records confirmed the importance of sites outside of our formal survey areas. Close liaison with local bird clubs and naturalist societies has facilitated collection of data and allowed us to recruit more volunteers for our formal surveys. This important relationship between professional conservation organisations and amateur naturalists has allowed new survey skills to be learnt and data exchanged to the benefit of both communities.

The increased awareness developed through the outreach activities during the funded project led to a large increase in bird records in 2017. All records were listed and treated as separate birds without any filter. This way we were able to track repeat records from sites and map likely breeding areas. 2017 was the best year for casual records with 289 birds reported. There was a fall in 2018 to 231 and another decrease in 2019 to 210. The largest flock recorded during these three years was 13 at a farm south of Dalby Forest on 25th July 2017. This post-breeding flock contained several juveniles and occurred within a landscape which has been a traditional area for post-breeding birds for a long time. This is also an area with stony limestone rich soils suitable for fumitory to grow in profusion.

The large majority of casual records originated from the east of the project area within and on the border of the forest areas of Cropton, Dalby, Wykeham, Langdale and Broxa. These villages in close proximity to the forests have consistently produced records throughout the project. The most northerly birds recorded by the project (casual observations) which exhibited behaviour consistent with breeding occurred in Silton Forest near Osmotherley in 2019. Bearing in mind the rarity of Turtle Doves north of this site, this may be the furthest north extant Turtle Dove breeding site in the UK. The forest area between and including Boltby Forest, Sutton Bank and Scawton has been another productive area for casual records in every year of the project. During this time, Turtle Doves have remained a popular feature for visitors at Sutton Bank National Park Centre and were still present in 2019. The Howardian Hills area produced the fewest records but despite the low numbers, the same villages and adjacent forest areas consistently produced birds every year of the project; Gilling, Yearsley and Cawton. Ampleforth held a small number of birds in 2017 with a gap in 2018 then again in 2019.

Results Summary

Over the course of the four survey years a total of 106 singing males was found on all surveys and monitoring visits. This total includes the new conservation monitoring squares which did not cover areas already covered by the population surveys. A total of 57 singing males were discovered on the population surveys alone which covered new areas each year. Bearing in mind the strong site fidelity of Turtle Doves it is therefore likely that the 57 males were different despite being recorded in different years. A total population therefore of between 57 and 106 potentially breeding males has been recorded over the first four years of the project.

Conservation Resource Targeting

At the start of the volunteer project it was our intention to move as quickly as possible from surveys to conservation intervention. In 2018 we set up the North Yorkshire Turtle Dove Grant designed specifically for landowners and farmers. The work involved sowing and managing a wild flower plot which would provide seed for Turtle Doves. Within two years of starting the volunteer surveys in 2016 we were able to fund our first Turtle Dove wild flower plot on the Dawnay Estate near Wykeham. This was an important milestone for the project and hugely satisfying to see habitat benefits so soon after the volunteer project started.

To ensure best use of this new grant we needed to target resources on the most important sites to achieve both maximum gains for Turtle Doves and best use of our limited funds. To facilitate this targeting, NEYEDC were commissioned to create, using GIS, a list of key 1km squares for conservation intervention within the project area. The analysis was based on the following feature layers; water, forestry and/or woodland, environmental stewardship schemes and Turtle Dove records covering the period 2016-18. The case for targeting interventions at key sites is strengthened by the strong site fidelity nature of Turtle Doves, often over more than one generation.

Project Achievements and Discussion

The surveys, started in 2016 by a small group of volunteers, have been very popular over the course of the following three years. A total of 81 volunteers have taken part in the surveys.

Formal and casual records of Turtle Doves collated by the project have been extremely valuable in targeting conservation work. A farmer who owns a small land holding between Helmsley and Sutton Bank made contact with the project in 2019 to tell us of two Turtle Doves that were present on his farm throughout the summer in 2018 and in 2019. After a visit by the project officer the farm now has a six-year Turtle Dove grant for two wild flower seed plots. In February 2020 we funded the restoration of a dew pond on the same farm within 200m of where the Turtle Doves were seen in 2019.



Dew pond restoration

© Richard Baines

Prior to 2016 there was limited awareness nationally about the significant population of Turtle Doves in the north-eastern part of North Yorkshire. The work of the NLHF project and associated volunteer surveys has directly led to our area now being recognised as one of the nationally important Turtle Dove Friendly Zones (TDFZ) by Operation Turtle Dove. The North Yorkshire Turtle Dove Project is now represented at the annual OTD technical meetings held in Cambridge. These meetings focus on knowledge exchange between national and international conservation teams and decision making on Turtle Dove conservation priorities.

Over the course of the three funded years of the project, many of our aims have been met and surpassed. In September 2019 we were proud to receive national recognition winning the best conservation project award at the UK National Parks conference. However, with limited funds available for conservation work we have yet to deliver the scale of habitat change needed to improve the Turtle Dove population across the whole of our project area. With many of the strategies now in place to positively affect this population change, large scale delivery is now the biggest challenge facing our project.

Acknowledgements

The success of the NYTDP is directly due to the many people who have worked hard on surveys, donated photographs, art work, raised awareness in communities and/or created new habitat on farms or community owned land. We have been overwhelmed by the support the project has received. We therefore wish to send our huge thanks and a Turtle Dove purr to everyone who has donated their time. But don't think we are finished; this is a never-ending story!

This article is an abridged version of the full report.

The full report (including references) is available from Richard Baines:
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Bird ringing on University of York campus - 2019 report

By Jacob Davies

Bird ringing was carried out on the University of York campus in 2019 by UoY graduate students, post-docs and staff, and an undergraduate student from the University of Oxford. Ringing took place almost entirely on Heslington East campus, with all mist-netting taking place in an area around the west end of the main lake. Birds were mist-netted (over 18 sessions) or ringed as chicks in the nest. Ringing data contribute to the British Trust for Ornithology's national ringing scheme, but also served to assist the UoY Estates Operations Team with their conservation work, and to demonstrate bird ringing for undergraduate biology students. It was an enjoyable experience for all, providing convenient practice and training for 11 ringers throughout the year.

429 birds of 27 species were ringed during campus mist-netting and chick-ringing sessions in 2019 (Table 1). Blue Tit, Reed Warbler, Great Tit, Robin and Blackbird were the most frequently ringed species. The number of Reed Warblers ringed on campus in 2019 (73) is locally significant; only 99 Reed Warblers were ringed in North Yorkshire as a whole in the previous year. The most exciting bird was a young kingfisher caught in mid-July.



Birds ringed on University of York campus 2019
Clockwise from upper left: Redwing, Kingfisher, Reed Warbler and Coal Tit

Mist-nets were set up in three patches of young woodland and reedbed just west of the main lake on Heslington East. A high proportion of individuals (particularly non-breeders) were caught only once, suggesting that birds use these habitat patches for relatively short periods while moving around the wider landscape. A relatively high proportion of the captures of Robin and Dunnock were recaptures, suggesting that these species may be more resident locally within Heslington East. The most frequently caught individual was a female Blue Tit (S146951), caught five times from January to November, including once in May with a brood patch showing that she was breeding close by.

Table1. Ringing records on University of York campus, 2019

| Species | New | | | | | Retraps | | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Adult | Juv | Unkn. age | Chick | Total | Adult | Juv | Unkn. age |
| Blue Tit | 17 | 26 | 1 | 36 | 80 | 10 | 6 | |
| Reed Warbler | 30 | 32 | 1 | 10 | 73 | 14 | 7 | |
| Great Tit | 14 | 16 | | 16 | 46 | 3 | 2 | |
| Robin | 11 | 17 | | 5 | 33 | 5 | 1 | |
| Blackbird | 18 | 10 | | 4 | 32 | 3 | | |
| Blackcap | 9 | 11 | | 4 | 24 | 1 | | |
| Redwing | 7 | 17 | | | 24 | | | |
| Willow Warbler | 6 | 9 | | 5 | 20 | | | |
| Reed Bunting | 7 | 10 | | | 17 | 1 | | |
| Dunnock | 6 | 8 | | 2 | 16 | 5 | | 1 |
| Bullfinch | 6 | 8 | | | 14 | | | |
| Long-tailed Tit | 5 | 1 | 6 | | 12 | | | 2 |
| Chiffchaff | 1 | 5 | | | 6 | | | |
| Goldfinch | 1 | 5 | | | 6 | | | |
| Goldcrest | | 2 | 3 | | 5 | | | 1 |
| Wren | 3 | 2 | | | 5 | | | |
| Whitethroat | 2 | 2 | | | 4 | | | |
| Greenfinch | 2 | | | | 2 | | | |
| Woodpigeon | | | | 2 | 2 | | | |
| Coal Tit | | 1 | | | 1 | | | |
| House Sparrow | 1 | | | | 1 | | | |
| Kingfisher | | 1 | | | 1 | | | |
| Lapwing | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Lesser Redpoll | | 1 | | | 1 | | | |
| Linnet | | 1 | | | 1 | | | |
| Oystercatcher | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Song Thrush | | 1 | | | 1 | | | |
| Total | 146 | 186 | 11 | 86 | 429 | 42 | 16 | 4 |

Two birds were caught which had been ringed outside the campus. An adult female Reed Warbler was captured on her way south in mid-July, having been ringed in breeding condition near Gateshead in mid-June. This demonstrates that Heslington East not only provides habitat for passerines breeding locally, but also for passerines on migration. Another Reed Warbler was captured having been ringed as a juvenile at nearby Wheldrake Ings, in autumn two years before. Although the initial capture for this individual may have been of a Heslington-bred bird on migration, this capture may alternatively suggest that, for this species, there is permanent interchange between the University of York and more distant sites. Apart from these two adult Reed Warblers, 30 other adults of this species were ringed during the breeding season; a surprisingly high frequency in such a small area of reedbed.

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 142 and 143.

- * 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 (B) |
| Wheatear P | *** Arctic Redpoll |
| Dipper (B) | *** 'Coues's' Arctic Redpoll |
| House Sparrow B | Crossbill B |
| Tree Sparrow B | Goldfinch B |
| Dunnock 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 2019

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Taiga Bean Goose | Black-winged Stilt | Radde's Warbler |
| Black Brant | American Golden Plover | Dusky Warbler |
| American Wigeon | Kentish Plover | Arctic Warbler (ex <i>BBRC</i> |
| Ring-necked Duck | White-rumped Sandpiper | <i>Jan 2019</i>) |
| Lesser Scaup | Buff-breasted Sandpiper | Dartford Warbler |
| Surf Scoter | Lesser Yellowlegs (ex | Melodious Warbler |
| White-billed Diver | <i>BBRC Jan 2019</i>) | Blyth's Reed Warbler |
| Wilson's Storm-petrel | Ring-billed Gull | Marsh Warbler |
| Glossy Ibis | Kumlien's Gull | Rose-coloured Starling |
| Cattle Egret | White-winged Black Tern | Red-flanked Bluetail |
| Purple Heron | Alpine Swift | Citrine Wagtail |
| Black-crowned Night Heron | Red-footed Falcon | Olive-backed Pipit |
| Honey Buzzard | Woodchat Shrike | Parrot Crossbill |
| Montagu's Harrier | Penduline Tit | Cirl Bunting |
| Black Kite | Red-billed Chough | Little Bunting (inland only) |
| Rough-legged Buzzard | Short-toed Lark | |
| White-tailed Eagle | Red-rumped Swallow | |
| Golden Eagle | 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 | Grey Phalarope | Willow Tit |
| Velvet Scoter | Spotted Redshank | Bearded Tit |
| Red-breasted Merganser | Kittiwake | Woodlark (<i>away from</i> |
| Red-throated Diver | Sabine's Gull | <i>breeding areas</i>) |
| Black-throated Diver | Little Gull | Shore Lark |
| Great Northern Diver | Mediterranean Gull | Cetti's Warbler |
| Storm-petrel | Caspian Gull | Siberian Chiffchaff (<i>ex</i> |
| Leach's Petrel | Yellow-legged Gull | <i>YNU Jan 2019</i>) |
| Fulmar | Little Tern | Wood Warbler |
| Manx Shearwater | Black Tern | Yellow-browed Warbler |
| Red-necked Grebe | Sandwich Tern | Barred Warbler |
| Slavonian Grebe | Roseate Tern | Firecrest |
| Black-necked Grebe | Arctic Tern | Ring Ouzel |
| White Stork | Pomarine Skua | Nightingale |
| Spoonbill | Arctic Skua | Pied Flycatcher |
| Bittern | Great Skua | Red-breasted Flycatcher |
| Great White Egret | Long-tailed Skua | Black Redstart |
| Gannet | Little Auk | Yellow Wagtail |
| Shag | Razorbill | <i>(Blue-headed' race and</i> |
| Osprey | Guillemot | <i>'Channel' hybrid)</i> |
| Goshawk | Puffin | Richard's Pipit |
| Hen Harrier | Turtle Dove | Water Pipit |
| Spotted Crake | Long-eared Owl | Rock Pipit |
| Corncrake | Short-eared Owl | Hawfinch |
| Crane | Nightjar | Twite |
| Stone Curlew | Bee-eater | Common (Mealy) Redpoll |
| Dotterel | Hoopoe | Lapland Bunting |
| | | Snow Bunting |

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 2019 Report

(With apologies for any accidental omissions)

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| T G Payne | Alan Stow | University of York Ringing |
| Brian Pepper | Jen Stopford | Group Report (UoYRG) |
| Robin Perutz | R Strong | YOC Website reports |
| Claire Pinches | Alan Swain (ASw) | @Yorkbirding |
| Michael Plevin | P J Swinhoe | @York Peregrines |
| Jonathan Pomroy (JP) | H M Tanner (HT) | |
| A Porter | David Tate (DT) | The LDV team comprises: |
| Roger Raimes | Barry Thomas | Craig Ralston (CSR) |
| Christy Ralph (CR) | Richard Thomlinson | Mike Jackson (MFJ) |
| A Reaney | M Timmons | Steve Huddleston (SH) |
| Peter Reed (PR) | M P Toms | Lucy Murgatroyd (LM) |
| C Regan | C Toop (CT) | Fallon Mahon (FM) |
| G S Reid | Ian Traynor (IT) | Jean Thorpe (JT) |
| Jim Reid (JRe) | Andy Walker (AW) | George Day |

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 | | Brindley's Plantation | 742318 |
| Acaster Airfield | 575428 | Brockfield | 664553 |
| 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 |
| Ampleforth | 583787 | Buttercrambe | 733582 |
| Anchor Plain, Strensall | 6363 | Buttercrambe Weir | 734585 |
| Appleton Roebuck | 555423 | Butterwick | 732775 |
| Arglam | 783359 | Byland Abbey | 549790 |
| Askham Bog(s) | 5748 | C | |
| Aughton (Ings) | 7038 | Cali Heath NR | 753498 |
| B | | Callis Wood | 6971 |
| Bank Island | 695452 | Canal Head, Pocklington | 798474 |
| Barmby Moor | 776490 | Carlton Husthwaite Flash | 5176 |
| Barthorpe | 774598 | Castle Howard Lake (CHL) | 7170 |
| Barton-le-Willows | 715632 | Cawood | 573377 |
| Beningbrough | 529578 | Cawton | 643767 |
| Beningbrough Hall | 516586 | Church Fenton | 515370 |
| Bielby | 789437 | Church Bridge, Melbourne | 759445 |
| Biggin | 544349 | Claxton | 694602 |
| Bilbrough | 532468 | Cliffe | 662320 |
| Bishopthorpe | 5947 | Cliffe Common | 666339 |
| Bishop Wilton | 797553 | Clifton | 593532 |
| Bishop Wood | 5533 | Clifton Backies NR, York | 596540 |
| Black Wood, Easingwold | 5467 | Clifton Ings | 583531 |
| Bolton Percy Ings | 537397 | Clifton Park | 584533 |
| Bolton Percy | 532414 | Coates Bridge, Pock. Canal | 785453 |
| Bootham Stray, York | 597548 | Coneysthorpe | 713713 |
| Bossall | 719607 | Coneysthorpe Banks Wood | 720725 |
| Brandsby | 589724 | Copmanthorpe | 565469 |
| Brayton | 601305 | Cornfield NR, Rawcliffe | 579542 |
| Brayton Barff | 5830 | Coxwold | 536772 |
| Brecks (The), Strensall | 648618 | Crambe | 733649 |
| Breighton | 709341 | Crambeck | 738674 |
| Brind | 742310 | Crayke | 562705 |

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|---|--------|
| D | |
| Derwenthorpe, York | 630519 |
| Designer Outlet, York | 607477 |
| Dringhouses, York | 580495 |
| Dunnington | 671525 |
| Dunnington Common | 6750 |
| E | |
| Easingwold | 529698 |
| East Cottingwith | 703425 |
| East Cottingwith Ings | 697415 |
| Easthorpe, (Upper Poppleton) | 5355 |
| East Moor, Sutton-on-the-Forest | 600644 |
| Eastrington Ponds LNR | 785300 |
| Ellers Farm, Buttercrambe | 7257 |
| Ellerton (Ings) | 700398 |
| Ellerton Landing | 679403 |
| Elvington | 700476 |
| Elvington Airfield | 670480 |
| Elvington WTW | 7048 |
| Escrick | 631427 |
| Escrick Park | 635418 |
| F | |
| Fangfoss | 765533 |
| Fireman's Leap, New Earswick | 609550 |
| Flamingoland | 7780 |
| Flaxton | 680624 |
| Foggathorpe | 755377 |
| Foss Island, York | 609520 |
| Fulford, York | 610496 |
| Fulford Ings | 608493 |
| Fulford Golf Course | 624494 |
| Fulford Hall | 606484 |
| Full Sutton | 746555 |
| G | |
| Ganthorpe | 689704 |
| Garrowby Hill | 798567 |
| Gaterley | 737696 |
| Giles Lock, Pocklington Canal | 795464 |
| Gilling (East/Park) | 614770 |
| Goosewood Caravan Park, Sutton-on-the-Forest | 591631 |
| Great Barugh | 750790 |
| Grimston | 644514 |
| Grimston Bar (roundabout) | 649516 |
| Grimston Moor | 613744 |
| H | |

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Hagg Bridge | 717452 |
| Harewood Whin (Rufforth Tip) | 538518 |
| Hassacarr NR | 673518 |
| Haxby | 609582 |
| Healough | 500477 |
| Hemingbrough | 6730 |
| Heslington | 627504 |
| Heslington East, York Uni. | 6350 - 6450 |
| Heslington Tillmire | 638475 |
| Heslington West, York Uni. | 6250 |
| Hessay | 524534 |
| Heworth | 618529 |
| High Catton | 718538 |
| High Hutton | 755685 |
| High Lodge, SHL | 675586 |
| High Plumps Wood, SHL | 671584 |
| Hob Moor, York | 585506 |
| Hogg's Pond, Dringhouses | 581493 |
| Hollicarrs | 626395 |
| Holtby | 675542 |
| Hopgrove (roundabout) | 642553 |
| Hovingham | 667758 |
| Howardian Hills | 5875 - 7568 |
| Huby | 566655 |
| Hull Road Park, York | 620515 |
| Huntington, York | 612550 |
| Huttons Ambo | 763677 |
| J | |
| Jeffry Bog, Low Hutton | 759667 |
| JRTNR, New Earswick | 608548 |
| K | |
| Keldspring Crossing, Pock. | 786498 |
| Kelfield | 594384 |
| Kexby | 705514 |
| Kilbum | 504796 |
| Kirby Misperton | 780794 |
| Kirkby Wharfe | 506409 |
| Kirkham Priory | 736658 |
| Knapton | 562522 |
| Knavesmire, York | 594495 |
| Knavesmire Wood, York | 593488 |
| L | |
| Langwith Stray, Heslington | 650480 |
| Laytham | 749395 |

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|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|
| Linton-on-Ouse | 495607 | Osgodby | 641338 |
| Londesborough Lodge Farm | | Oswaldkirk | 625790 |
| Dunnington | 6952 | Oulston Reservoir | 570745 |
| Long Marston | 502512 | Overton | 554557 |
| Low Carr, Sutton-on-the-Forest | 600623 | Oxton | 505431 |
| Low Catton | 705538 | Ozendyke Ings | 539398 |
| Lower Derwent Valley | 7036 - | P | |
| | 7046 | Parliament Street, York | 603518 |
| Low Grounds, by Wheldrake Ings | 703444 | Patefield Wood | 500381 |
| M | | Petersfield Farm, Bielby | 793422 |
| Malton | 785717 | Pocklington | 802490 |
| Mausoleum, Castle Howard | 727696 | Pocklington Airfield | 793485 |
| Melbourne | 753441 | Pocklington Canal | 698426 |
| Meltonby | 796525 | | -800474 |
| Menthorpe | 700346 | Poppleton | 560546 |
| Middlethorpe Ings | 603486 | Pretty Wood, Castle Howard | 732690 |
| Milford Common | 5332 | R | |
| Millennium Bridge, York | 603497 | Raker Lakes, Wheldrake | 684463 |
| Monks Cross, York | 630550 | Rawcliffe Bar Country Park | 577547 |
| Moor Lane, Bishopthorpe | 585470 | Rawcliffe Ings | 575544 |
| Moor Monkton | 506569 | Rawcliffe Lake | 586546 |
| Moreby Wood | 606428 | Rawcliffe Meadows | 577545 |
| Moorlands NR | 577588 | Redhouse Lagoon | 529575 |
| Mount Ferrant, Birdsall | 796639 | Redhouse Wood, Moor Monkton | 520570 |
| Murton | 650527 | Refuge, Wheldrake | 708435 |
| N | | Riccall | 620380 |
| Naburn | 599455 | Rossmoor Park | 722436 |
| Naburn Bridge | 598467 | Rowntree Park, York | 604508 |
| Naburn Marina | 599462 | Ruddins Ings | 5456 |
| Naburn Sewage Works | 601467 | Rufforth | 5251 |
| Naburn Wood | 609438 | Ryther | 550392 |
| Newburgh Priory (lake) | 542767 | Ryther Ings | 551389 |
| Newhay | 661307 | Ryton | 795757 |
| Newton-on-Ouse | 512599 | Ryton Bridge (Riggs Rd Bridge) | 796754 |
| Newton Carr | 740494 | S | |
| Newton Mask SSSI | 705501 | Sand Hutton | 695586 |
| Newton upon Derwent | 720495 | Scackleton | 650726 |
| New Earswick | 609555 | Scagglethorpe Moor/Lane | 5355 |
| North Duffield Carrs (NDC) | 695375 | Scamlands (Melbourne) | 766439 |
| North Duffield Ings | 707359 | Scoreby Lodge | 684513 |
| North Howden | 7530 | Seaton Ross | 780415 |
| Norton | 795710 | Seavy Carr, Thornton | 753451 |
| Nunnington (Hall) | 667794 | Selby | 615324 |
| Nursery Wood, SHL | 678585 | Sessions NR, New Earswick | 610548 |
| O | | Sheriff Hutton | 655664 |
| Osbalwick | 633519 | Sherburn in Elmet | 500330 |

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Silburn Lock, Pock. Canal | 797468 |
| Skewsby | 625710 |
| Skipwith | 657385 |
| Skipwith Common | 6537 |
| Skirpenbeck | 747570 |
| Slingsby | 698750 |
| Slingsby Banks Wood | 698733 |
| South Duffield | 681335 |
| Spaldington | 759335 |
| Stamford Bridge | 715555 |
| Stearsby Hagg | 620720 |
| Stillingfleet | 594410 |
| Stillington | 585678 |
| Stittenham | 679677 |
| Stockton on the Forest | 655561 |
| Stonegrave | 657777 |
| Storwood | 712442 |
| Strensall | 633608 |
| Strensall Common | 6460 - 6661 |
| St Nicholas Fields, York | 615517 |
| Stubb Wood | 585433 |
| Sutton-on-the-Forest | 584647 |
| Sutton upon Derwent | 707468 |
| Swinton | 760731 |
| Swinton Ings | 772748 |
| T | |
| Tang Hall Beck fields | 6353 |
| Tang Hall, York | 620520 |
| Terrington | 670707 |
| Terrington Moor | 685716 |
| The Retreat, York | 617510 |
| The Stank, near Sand Hutton | 687577 |
| Thorganby | 691420 |
| Thorganby Ings | 6941 |
| Thormanby | 495747 |
| Thornton | 760453 |
| Thornton Ellers | 730460 |
| Tockwith | 465525 |
| Tollerton | 513643 |
| Towthorpe | 625586 |
| Towthorpe Civic Amenity Site | 648586 |
| Towthorpe Moor Lane, Strensall | 625585 |
| | -663579 |
| Triangle Meadow, York | 604547 |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| U | |
| Ulleskelf | 520400 |
| W | |
| Walbut Lock, Pock. Canal | 773442 |
| Walbutts WTW, Strensall | 646618 |
| Walmgate Stray, York | 617505 |
| Waplinton Hall, Allerthorpe | 776468 |
| Warren Wood, Dunnington | 677503 |
| Warhill | 675555 |
| Wash Dike, Skipwith Common | 662372 |
| Wass Woods | 550796 |
| Welburn | 720680 |
| Welburn Sewage Works | 714685 |
| West Bank Park, York | 584512 |
| West Cottingwith Ings | 695419 |
| West Ings | 550394 |
| West Lilling | 648652 |
| West Ness | 690790 |
| Westow | 7565 |
| Wharfe Ings | 568387 |
| Wheldrake | 682450 |
| Wheldrake Ings | 7043 |
| Wheldrake Wood | 6546 |
| Whitehill Mine | 667359 |
| White Carr, Flaxton | 663603 |
| Whitwell Grange | 715666 |
| Wiganthorpe | 662724 |
| Wigginton | 595585 |
| Wilberfoss | 734510 |
| Winchmore, Stamford Bridge | 727547 |
| Wistow | 594357 |
| Woodhouse Grange | 733470 |
| World's End Plantation, Strensall Common | 6659 |
| Wressle | 708313 |
| Y | |
| Yearsley | 585744 |
| Yearsley Moor | 5875 - 6076 |
| York (city centre) | 599519 |
| York Minster | 603523 |
| Yorkshire Arboretum | 705697 |