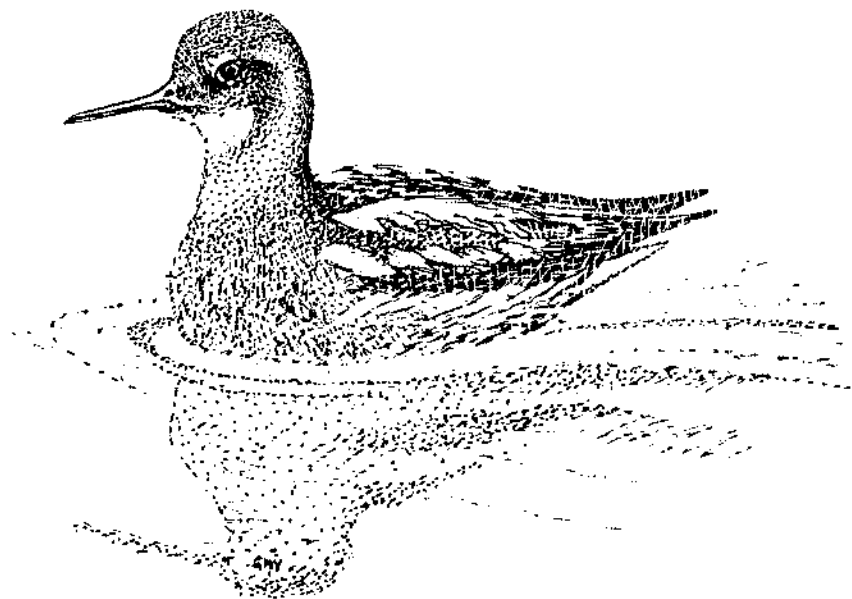
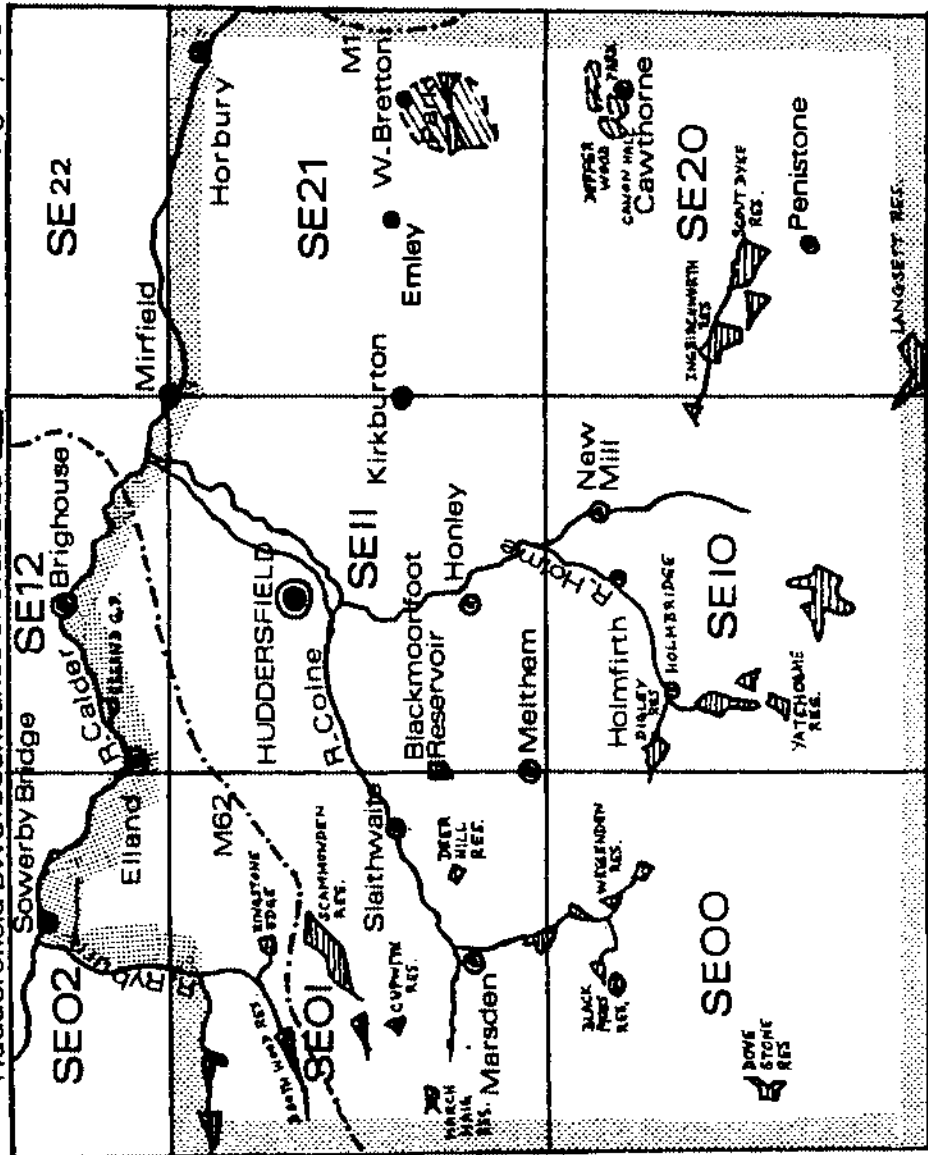


**Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club**

# **Birds in Huddersfield 1985**



**ANNUAL REPORT**



## BIRDS IN HUDDERSFIELD 1985

### Report of Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Thanks to the sterling work of the Committee, Club members, in 1985, once more enjoyed a varied and interesting programme of indoor lectures and field outings. Seven of the latter were to such ever popular venues as Southport and Martin Mere to the west and Filey and Spurn on the east. Apart from informal club evenings there were ten programmed lectures plus an unscheduled one mainly about otters which stimulated more questions and comments than all the others!

The 1985 indoor programme was started on 8th January by Trevor Sutton with 'Breeding Birds of Greater Manchester', in which he described how members of the Manchester Ornithological Society used 2km x 2km tetrads for mapping breeding distribution. He was followed on 22nd January by John Reynolds recalling some more of his 'East African Days'. Jon Hornbuckle told of his travels in 'Search for Eagles' on 19th February. On 5th March members were fascinated by James Alder's witty, detailed and informative account of 'The Dipper' based on many years of observation. Denis Summers-Smith who published a New Naturalist monograph on the House Sparrow in 1963 came to us on 2nd April and 'In Search of Sparrows' put our most familiar bird into a worldwide taxonomic and ecological context. On 24th September Gwyn Williams, of the RSPB Conservation Planning Department, contrasted the effects of sympathetic and unsympathetic policies on wetland habitats in 'Birds, Wetlands and Man'. Some members of the Club remember how sought-after a lecturer George Yeates was thirty years ago; as George stopped lecturing some twenty or more years ago it was a rare privilege to hear of his experiences in photographing Pink-footed Geese and Great Northern Divers in 'Iceland, Land of the Loon' on 8th October. Many topics of local relevance were discussed by Roy Crossley, President of the Y.N.U., in his wide-ranging talk 'The Naturalist in Yorkshire' on 22nd October. Clive Johnson, on 19th November, gave us a good idea of the stark beauty of the Antarctic in 'Icebergs and Huskies'. In marked contrast to Antarctica were the sun-drenched habitats in Spain and Portugal described and shown in magnificent slides by Kevin Carlson in 'Photographing Birds in Iberia' on 2nd December.

The RSPB organised a Huddersfield Conservation Day on 16th November. Along with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and various other groups we were invited to participate in the exhibitions that were to be set up in the King Street Mission. Our display stand generated considerable interest among the general public and also resulted in useful sales of past Reports and of Mike Denton's updated Blackmoorfoot Reservoir Report. The day ended with a showing of the RSPB film on Golden Eagles at the Venn Street Arts Centre.

I cannot end this report without paying tribute to all the work done by members of the Committee in furthering the interests of members on whose behalf I should like to thank them all most sincerely.

John Reynolds, July 1986.

## The Weather in 1985

In general, January was frosty, with snow causing problems on a few occasions and temperatures almost 5F below normal. Freezing easterly winds and snow on the 12th produced below zero temperatures for the next week and caused most waters to be frozen over. Blizzards occurred on 24th and 27th, but on the latter date heralded the start of milder, but windier weather from the west which continued into February. An anticyclone to the north-east of Britain brought freezing weather again on 7th and this persisted to 14th. Fog on 21st and 22nd preceded mild south-westerly winds at the month end. Spring-like conditions in the early part of March gave way to much colder weather from 13th, when an anticyclone which developed to the west moved eastwards into Europe, producing easterly, and later south-easterly, winds from the continent. Milder westerlies returned on 22nd and persisted to the month-end.

Unsettled, mainly south-westerly weather dominated in early April, but a colder north-westerly airstream developed on 9th. A high pressure system then developed and moved south over England bringing warm sunny weather from 16th to 18th, but this was short-lived as another anticyclone brought more cold northerly winds until 28th, when the wind turned south-westerly. Westerly winds in early May were replaced from the 8th by easterlies which persisted for about ten days. Clear skies and sunshine were frequent in mid-month. Torrential rain and north-easterly winds on 21st gave way to unsettled cyclonic westerly weather on 22nd, with warm southerly air arriving on 27th giving hot, settled weather.

June opened warm and sunny, but this was followed from 6th by unsettled cold and wet westerly weather. Later cool northerly winds followed on 16th by cool westerlies resulted in this being the second coldest June of the century. The consequent reduction in insect activity inevitably meant that food for nestlings was very scarce.

Hot continental weather with air from the south-east brought a welcome, but brief interlude to early July, but it did not last. Cooler, unsettled westerly weather returned after 5th. Temperatures were well below normal for most of the month and rainfall in the second half of the month was also above average, after a relatively dry first half. August was cool and unsettled, with a series of depressions tracking eastwards, bringing in mainly cool air from the North Atlantic. Only on 13th, 29th and 30th did warmer air get in from the south-east. Overall, there were few dry days, and the month was dull, with little sun.

West to north-west winds, sometimes strong, in the first week of September created cool, unsettled conditions. From 7th, an increase in air pressure to the south diverted the Atlantic depressions to a more northerly track north of the British Isles, allowing warm air to be brought in from the south and leading to higher temperatures. After 18th, south to south-east winds became more frequent and the last weekend of September was the hottest of the year. The month was generally dry, with above average sunshine.

October opened with unsettled westerly weather as a series of depressions crossed the Atlantic. After 12th, a developing anticyclone meant fine, settled weather, but from 21st this high pressure system moved northwards, giving for a few days strong easterly winds, followed by cold northerlies which persisted into early November. Cyclonic westerly weather predominated from 3rd, with cold northerlies from 10th. The winds gradually veered to the east, backing to north from 24th, only becoming warmer on 30th. Northerly or easterly winds occurred on twenty days, bringing dry conditions, but making this November the coldest since 1925.

December was mainly wet and cloudy with above average temperatures. From 26th a cold anticyclone over Greenland extended southwards and very cold air arrived on the resulting northerly winds. Snow fell only on 30th. The last day of the year saw the ending of the cold spell with a return to milder westerlies.

## Introduction to the Classified List

The area covered by the Club comprises Ordnance Survey ten-kilometre squares SE00, 01, 10, 11, 20 and 21 along with those parts of SE02 and SE12 south of the Rivers Ryburn and Calder.

As in our last eight annual reports, the status of each species occurring within the area has been indicated by one or more of the following classifications:-

Resident Breeder  
Partial Migrant  
Passage Visitor

Migrant Breeder  
Winter Visitor

For the breeding species, the number appearing in brackets following the statement of breeding status is an estimated level of breeding abundance, based on the table below:-

1. 1-20 pairs per year
2. 21-100 pairs per year
3. 101-500 pairs per year
4. 501-2500 pairs per year
5. 2501 or more pairs per year

The passage and winter visitors have each been allocated a category stating their degree of frequency and occurrence. For passage visitors, the category indicates the number seen during the year, while for winter visitors, an estimate has been made of the number present in the area on one day during the year as follows:-

Rare 1 or fewer birds  
Scarce 2-10 birds  
Uncommon 11-100 birds  
Common 101-1000 birds  
Numerous 1001 or more birds

In attempting to establish breeding numbers and the number of passage and winter visitors, particularly in the case of the more common species, it must be realised that the figures essentially are estimates.

Precise localities for records of Schedule 1 species (Protection of Birds Act 1954-67) have been kept confidential where it is felt that publication might lead to harmful disturbance.

Many of the more common breeding species have been listed without further comment than an indication of their status. For further details of these and their habitat preferences, readers are referred to the 1980 Report, in which appeared a complete list of all species recorded in the area up to the end of 1980 together with notes on their status.

## Notes on the Classified List

During 1985, 173 species were recorded in the Club area. All the records listed of rare or unusual species have been accepted by the appropriate authorities.

Unusual species which occurred during the year included Red-throated and Great Northern Divers, Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes, Leach's Petrel, Brent Goose, Ruddy Duck, Arctic Skua, Sandwich Tern and Nightjar, with Eider, Yellow-browed Warbler and Raven each being identified for only the second time in the area, the last following hot on the heels of the first acceptable sighting in 1984.

Undoubtedly though the highlights of the year were the Red-necked Phalarope which delighted a few fortunate observers at Horbury Wyke during the afternoon and evening of 2nd June and the Pomarine Skuas which occurred on 11th November at Midhope and Scout Dike Reservoir. Both were additions to the area's avifauna.

Fewer Dotterel appeared at the traditional site in spring, but one occurred nearby in autumn. The number of Kittiwakes observed at Blackmoorfoot in 1984 was considered exceptional, but was totally eclipsed by the events of 14th March 1985, when no less than 226 birds passed through. Mediterranean Gulls appeared on two dates, but on the debit side there was not a single sighting of either Glaucous or Iceland Gull, the first year since 1969 that neither species has been recorded there.

An excellent variety of raptors included Red Kite, Marsh Harrier, two Rough-legged Buzzards, Osprey and Hobby as well as Goshawk and Peregrine, with a Golden Eagle to the south-west only just failing to make it into the Club area. The Osprey flew west of Crowden on 5th April, on which date Bretton Park produced a remarkable array of summer migrants, including earliest-ever records of Tree Pipit, Redstart and Garden Warbler, but apart from Willow Warblers, summer visitors generally were late and in some cases in reduced numbers. Pied Flycatchers arrived only to disappointment, none of the three males seen in spring apparently succeeding in attracting a female. The cold, wet spring and early summer must have had a very serious effect on breeding success and it appears that many moorland breeders, especially the waders, left the moors early, being unable to cope with the severely adverse conditions.

In stark contrast to 1984, water levels at the local reservoirs were exceptionally high, creating none of the conditions necessary to attract migrant waders in autumn. Consequently there were few records and most of those that did occur were seen only briefly as they passed rapidly through the area, frequently calling, mainly to the west.

The days between 5th and 13th October saw interesting movements of several passerine species, notably Meadow Pipits and various finches, at Blackmoorfoot and Wholestone Moor and to a lesser extent elsewhere, whilst the weekend of 16th/17th November proved an exciting one at local waters with Red-throated Diver, Bewick's Swan, 22 Common Scoter and all three species of sawbill, including for the sixth consecutive winter the wintering drake Smew at Ingbirchworth, as well as Water Rail being recorded.

I should like to express my sincere thanks to Mike Denton for once again condensing the information on the Blackmoorfoot logsheets into a form which facilitates greatly the work of the Recorder, for compiling the Ringing Report and for the short paper on the *Aythya* hybrid at Blackmoorfoot; to Mike Pinder and to Martin Yates for providing the illustrations which increase enormously the attractiveness of this report and to all those members and other observers who have contributed records, without whom this report could not have been prepared.

Brian Armitage - Recorder

## CLASSIFIED LIST

This list follows the sequence and scientific nomenclature of Professor Dr. K.H. Voous (1977) List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species.

### **Red-throated Diver Gavia stellata**

Rare visitor

Singles occurred at Blackmoorfoot Reservoir on 6th January (PNB, MLD, JMP, JP) and on 36th November (CCT), the latter arriving at 1055 hours from the north-east and departing to the west at 1115 hours.

Except for 1963, this is the only year in which more than one bird has occurred.

Ninth and tenth records.

### **Great Northern Diver Gavia immer**

Rare visitor

One was watched at Blackmoorfoot Reservoir for thirteen minutes on 14th February before it flew off to the west (CH). Eleventh record.

This species has now appeared in four of the last five years.

### **Little Grebe Tachybaptus ruficollis**

Resident breeder (1). Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

At least eight pairs bred in the area, raising 19 young, as follows: R.Calder, Horbury 1 pair - 4 young, Scout Dike Reservoir at least one pair - 3 young, Ingbirchworth Reservoir two pairs - 4 young, Bretton Park 2 pairs - 2 young, Square Wood Reservoir, Denby Dale one pair - 4 young, Beshaw Whams one pair - 2 young and Castle Dam, Penistone. Additional pairs in the breeding season were noted at Royd Moor Reservoir on 16th May and Coxley Dam, where nest building was taking place on 17th April, with a single bird at Langsett Reservoir on 1st June.

Birds were present in the area in all months although numbers were low prior to the breeding season, maximum being six at Elland Gravel Pit/R.Calder on 26th January.

Numbers after the breeding season were very high at the Ingbirchworth/Scout Dike group of reservoirs. The actual numbers involved are difficult to assess owing to the interchange of birds between the different waters in the area. Scout Dike had a max. of 26 on 7th September, when nine were also present at Ingbirchworth, with 19 on 20th September (nine were at Ingbirchworth), whilst the peak at Ingbirchworth was 21 on 12th and 24th October. Ingbirchworth had at least six other dates in October when numbers reached double figures.

Other waters where birds occurred were Cannon Hall (max.3 in February), Gunthwaite Dam (one to three on 35 dates, mainly August to October) and Blackmoorfoot Reservoir, with records on 38 dates, mainly October and November, with four on 14th November as maximum.

### **Great Crested Grebe Podiceps cristatus**

Resident breeder (1). Uncommon passage visitor

At least twelve pairs attempted to breed at six waters, successfully rearing approx. 22 young.

At Bretton Park, where birds were present in all months, six pairs attempted to breed and four were successful, producing eleven young, but not all survived. The spring maximum was 18 on 6th April and on 14th and included four sitting birds; in autumn 13 on 8th September. One pair bred at Ingbirchworth, rearing two young. Birds were present from 29th January to 21st November, with a maximum of six on 13th October.



Birds were first noted at Scout Dike Reservoir on 10th March (four); three pairs were present during the breeding season and eight young were seen on 2nd August, but these had been reduced to four by 15th September. Maximum was 12 on 2nd August.

A single pair at Elland G.P. raised four young.

In 1984 Blackmoorfoot Reservoir was noted as having an unprecedented series of records, but 1985 saw these records increase even further. Birds occurred in all months (one date in January, one in February, five dates in March) and from 6th April almost continuously to the year end, with an unbroken run from 24th May to 29th December. Monthly maxima were; January - one, February - one, March - three, April - three, May - two, June - eight, July - fourteen, August - twenty one, September - twenty two, October - twenty, November - thirteen, December - seven. In addition a pair bred for the first time ever, successfully rearing a single chick. The nest was completed by 10th June, four eggs had been laid by 20th and the first egg hatched on 14th July, when the nest with its three remaining eggs was deserted.

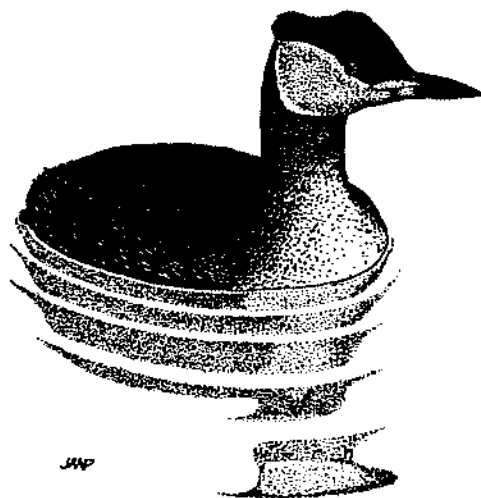
There were no records from non-breeding waters.

### **Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena***

Rare visitor

An adult in partial breeding plumage occurred at Blackmoorfoot Reservoir on 14th and 15th September (BA, MLD).

The seventh record for the area and first at Blackmoorfoot since 1959.



### **Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus***

Rare visitor

An adult in summer plumage at Blackmoorfoot Reservoir on 25th April (MLD).

Seventh record for the area.

**Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa***

Rare visitor

One at Elland G.P. on 18th September (SC).

Seventh record for the area.

**Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

Scarce passage and winter visitor.

Fewer records than in some recent years.

One present at Bretton Park on five dates from 7th March to 14th April and one in autumn on 8th September; one at Langsett Reservoir on 2nd April. Blackmoorfoot Reservoir had only two records of single birds on 15th April and 10th July. One at Royd Moor Reservoir on 15th September and an immature in early November at Scammonden Dam.

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

Resident breeder (1).

There was no increase in the size of the heronry on the lower lake at Bretton Park. Of ten nests built, six were again occupied and five pairs succeeded in raising ten young, a smaller number than in 1984. An interesting development was the presence of eight birds on the island on the upper lake in July, perhaps a forerunner to further expansion.

Recorded at upwards of thirty localities in the area, covering all habitats except the high moorlands and including one flying over Huddersfield town centre on 7th January, but most frequently from Gunthwaite Dam (82 dates - max. two birds), Ingbirchworth Reservoir (about 30 dates - max. two birds) and Blackmoorfoot Reservoir (85 dates, mainly in autumn and winter - max. three birds). Five were near Broadstones on 13th October.

At Almondbury a juvenile sent several weeks from 17th September feeding on trout from a garden pond (DS & VAI).

**Mute Swan *Cygnus olor***

Resident breeder (1).

After a blank year in 1984, a pair bred successfully in 1985 at Horbury Wyke, raising four young, all six remaining on the adjacent R. Calder to the year end. (A second pair raised five young at Millfield Flash, less than a kilometre beyond the club boundary). Perhaps the high success rate will lead to the species being able to re-establish itself in other suitable habitats in the area in the near future.

Elsewhere birds occurred at Ingbirchworth Reservoir, in Jan/Feb (one), on 12th/13th August (one), 14th August (two) and from 19th October to the year end (up to three), Thongsbridge and Cannon Hall in Jan/Feb, Boshaw Whams until 19th April (two) with one in Aug/Sept, Longley (Holmfirth), two until 23rd March, thereafter one to 7th June, Elland - two adults on R. Calder, Scout Dike Res. (two from June to August) and Square Wood Res., Denby Dale which had an adult and three immatures from August to 28th October. The adult died during cold weather in December, when the three immatures left to take up residence at Ingbirchworth.

Blackmoorfoot Res. had its first record since 1970, four sub-adults on 15th June, which appeared at Deer Hill Res. later the same day.

**Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus***

Uncommon winter visitor.

One record only. Six were at Langsett Res. on 16th November (DJS).

### **Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus***

Uncommon winter visitor.

Five records received may refer only to one group of birds and one individual.

In the early part of the year, three adults at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 3rd Jan were seen to depart south-west (JMP), after which three birds were at Boshaw Whams on 11th and 13th Jan (JMP) and at Langsett Res. from 18th January to 2nd February (NWA, FJW).

An adult was at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 3rd November (HQ, GMY) and at Ingbirchworth Res. from 13th to 16th Nov. (CB, DJS et al).

### **Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus***

Uncommon to common passage visitor.

Most of those observed were identified only as 'grey' geese but probably refer to this species.

Records in the early part of the year were few with one west at Blackmoorfoot on 1st January, 80 north over the Longwood Valley on 14th January, a small skein over Skelmanthorpe ('grey' geese) on 11th February and three over Langsett on 3rd April (MW).

With the exception of a single 'grey' goose west at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 12th October, all the remaining records were in December as follows: - 25 ('grey') west over town centre on 4th, 120 east over Little Don Valley on 7th, 250 ('grey') east at Bretton Park on 8th, small skein west over Longwood Valley on 12th, and on 14th 43 west over Marsden and 250 ('grey') east over Langsett Res.

### **Greylag Goose *Anser anser***

Uncommon passage visitor.

23 flew east over Brownhill Res. on 9th Jan (WDH) and on 17th Feb 180 flew high to the west at Blackmoorfoot Res. (BA, MLD, JP), easily the highest number ever recorded there.

The orange bill of a very wary adult at Ingbirchworth Res. on 2nd December identified it as belonging to the Western race, A.a. anser (RD & SEH).

### **Canada Goose *Branta canadensis***

Resident breeder (1).

Bretton Park. Numbers were much reduced this year compared to 1984. 110 in January increased to 200 in mid-March, but there were only 130 in September, 150 in October and 240 in November. Continuing population control resulted in only eleven goslings being reared. One Canada/Chinese Goose hybrid from 1980 was still present on 15th September (DP).

For the second year running a pair bred successfully at Winscar Res. where six adults were present on 20th April.

Birds were recorded from a further twelve waters, including pairs in the breeding season at Deanhead Res., Wessenden Head Res., Scammonden Dam and March Haigh Res.

Blackmoorfoot Res. had birds on 21 dates with maxima of 16 on 2nd Jan and 13 on 23/24th August. Other maxima were 15 at Digley on 19th February, 7 at Boshaw Whams on 23rd and 29th March and 13 at Ingbirchworth Res. on 23rd/24th December.

Few were noted flying over the area; two west at Whitley Common on 24th March, two south at Yateholme on 18th May, 15 west at Gunthwaite on 9th June and one north at Blackmoorfoot on 12th October.

The population at Cannon Hall numbered c.60 on 24th November.

### **Barnacle Goose Branta leucopsis**

Rare visitor.

The two birds at Bretton Park in late 1984 described as being of uncertain origin stayed in 1985 and laid six eggs, none of which hatched. One of the pair remained until late in the year (DP).

21 flew south-west over Shepley on 3rd January (FJW).

The origin of a single bird at Wessenden on 16th June (POB) must be regarded as suspect.

### **Brent Goose Branta bernicla**

Rare visitor

An adult of the nominate dark-bellied race, B.b. bernicla, occurred at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 2nd January (JMP, HQ, DWS).

Third record for the area.

### **Shelduck Tadorna tadorna**

Uncommon passage visitor.

A further decrease in the number of records of this species.

Blackmoorfoot Res. Recorded on only eight dates, compared with fourteen the previous year. Twelve on 2nd with nine on 3rd Feb, one on 3rd and three on 29th March, one on 26th April, one on 2nd and 6th May and seven on 26th August.

Other records came from Langsett Res., ten on 2nd February and two on 21st October, with four at Scout Dike Res. on the former date, Digley, one on 5th March, Ingbirchworth, one on 10th March and seven on 25th September, an immature at Royd Moor Res. on 10th August, at Horbury Wyke, a juvenile on 18th August and 13th September and two adults on 20th September, one north-east over Ossett Spa S.F. on 11th November and 43 north-east over Crosland Moor at 2050 hours on 19th July.

### **Wigeon Anas penelope**

Common passage and winter visitor.

A very poor year. Birds were recorded from only six waters as follows:

Blackmoorfoot Res. In the early months recorded on only seven dates, with a maximum of ten on 27th February. Occurrences were more frequent from September onwards, with records on 19 days, but double figures were reached only on 13th September (ten) and 1st December (12).

Elland G.P. Two on 22nd and one on 26th February.

Ingbirchworth Res. One record only in the early part of the year, a single bird on 17th March. More frequent in the autumn, with birds present intermittently from 11th September to 29th December, peaking at 18 on 21st October.

Royd Moor Res. Three on 17th March.

Scout Dike Res. Four on 10th March and twelve on 13th October.

Horbury Wike Two males from 2nd to 15th October, with a female also present on 7th.

### **Gadwall Anas strepera**

Scarce passage and winter visitor.

Records of two at Scammondeo Dam on 15th (CCT) and at Ingbirchworth Res. on

28th Sept (CB) could refer to the same individuals. A male at Holme Styes Res. on 5th October (WSMcC).

#### **Teal Anas crecca**

Resident breeder (1). Common passage and winter visitor.

Breeding evidence was very scanty this year and comprised only a female with four young at Winscar Res. on 24th July and two females performing distraction display on 25th June at Black Moss where three pairs were considered to be present. Apart from these two localities there were no records of the species in the area between late April and August, except for a male at Cupwith Res. on 22nd June.

Numbers in the early part of the year were low, with Blackmoorfoot having birds on only six dates in February (max. five on 4th). Ingbirchworth had nine on 3rd March, Horbury Wyke 117 on 17th January and 68 on 10th March, Dewsbury S.F. 56 on 16th February, Royd Moor Res. 16 on 18th January and ten on 17th February, Scout Dike Res. 11 on 17th March and Bretton Park six on 16th March and seven on 25th April. Elsewhere, six other waters held up to six birds.

The second half of the year produced more records but, with two exceptions, the numbers were very low. Blackmoorfoot Res. had birds on 31 dates, with double figures being reached only on 30th August (22 birds) and 27th November (27 birds). Numbers peaked at Ingbirchworth Res. on 22nd December with 32, at Gunthwaite Dam on 14th November with 12, at Dewsbury S.F. on 15th December with 23; birds occurred at five other waters, all in low single figures. The two exceptions in these low counts were Horbury Wyke, where peak monthly counts were 84 on 13th September, 60 on 7th October, 100 on 28th November and 100 on 1st December, and the Royd Moor/Scout Dike area when on 29th December 52 were counted at Royd Moor and 50 at Scout Dike, although many of the birds from the latter site were seen to move to Royd Moor, so the actual total can only be surmised.

#### **Mallard Anas platyrhynchos**

Resident breeder (2-3). Common winter visitor.

Breeding was proved at Blackmoorfoot Res. (two pairs), Bretton Park (at least six pairs), Cannon Hall, Ingbirchworth Res., Black Moss, Bilberry Res. (three pairs), Scout Dike Res., Golcar Canal, Longwood Res., Scammonden Dam, Elland G.P., Ryburn Res., Boshaw Whams, Dewsbury S.F. (two pairs, ten young), Horbury Wyke (three pairs, 21 young), and on the R.Calder between Horbury Wyke and Dewsbury S.F. (six pairs), which is a very considerable increase on 1984. Pairs probably bred in many other areas.

Maximum counts in the early part of the year were 83+ at Elland G.P. on 2nd Jan, 83 at Blackmoorfoot on 12th Jan, 430 at Bretton Park on 10th Jan with up to 350 in February, 40 at Cannon Hall on 10th Feb, 53 at Ingbirchworth Res. in February, 57 at Brownhill Res. and 38 at Digley on 17th Feb and 47 at Rnyd Moor Res. on 15th Feb, with smaller numbers at many other waters.

Numbers in the second half of the year were generally lower, the corresponding maxima being at Blackmoorfoot, 29 on 24th December, Bretton Park 97 in December, Ingbirchworth 89 on 5th October, Scout Dike Res. 31 on 29th December, Ringstone Edge Res. 28 on 28th December, Coxley Valley Dam 120 on 29th December, 95 at Rnyd Moor Res. on 24th September and 50 at Horbury Wyke from 5th to 13th September.

#### **Pintail Anas acuta**

Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

Apart from a male at Langsett Res. on 19th January and a single bird at Elland G.P. on 15th February, all records were in the second part of the year.

With the exception of five on 14th September and a male on 1st December at Ingbirchworth Res. and two at Horbury Wyke on 3rd December, all the remaining records were from Blackmoorfoot Res. as follows:- two on 30th August, in September five on 11th, two on 12th, seven on 14th, one on 19th, three on 25th, four on 26th, one on 29th, four on 2nd Oct with two on 6th and finally three on 1st December.

### Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

Rather fewer records than usual, with only three occurrences in spring - a male at Bretton Park on 7th April, two males at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 22nd April and two males at Horbury Wyke on 28th April.

Blackmoorfoot Res. then had birds on 3rd July (seven), 14th July (two), 18th August, two on 4th and 13th September with one on 6th, seven on 24th, five on 25th and four on 26th Sept., three on 18th October and three on 26th November.

Ingbirchworth Res. had a single bird on six dates in September, with two on 21st, three on 19th October, while two females were at Bretton Lakes on 15th September. There were three males and a female at Horbury Wyke on 5th September and a single male on 15th October. Two males at Dewsbury S.F. on 15th December.

### Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Common passage and winter visitor.

Blackmoorfoot Res. Regular up to 24th March, with maxima of 13 in January, 23 on 9th February and 20 on 8th March. A few records in August, then more regular from mid-September with 14 on 27th September, 11 on 19th October, seven on 6th November and 18 on 14th/15th December as maxima, otherwise five or less.

Bretton Park Fairly regular in the early months to late March, and from 8th September to the year-end, with maxima of 24 on 17th February and 29 on 15th December.

Elland G.P. Higher than average numbers at both ends of the year, with 16 on 26th January and 28 on 28th December the highest counts.

Ingbirchworth Res. Recorded on about twenty dates up to 21st March with a maximum of 15 on 5th January, and on a dozen dates from 12th October to the year-end, with max. of 11 on 30th October and 30th December.

Other waters where the species occurred less frequently and usually in smaller numbers were Cannon Hall (three on several dates), Gunthwaite Dam (16 dates, mostly Nov/Dec, max. six on 7th March), Horbury Wyke, Royd Moor Res., Scout Dike Res. (eight dates, max 20 on 27th October) and Scammonden.

A hybrid male showing characteristics of the type known as Paget's Pochard was at Blackmoorfoot Res. from 5th to 7th March (MLD, JMP). See separate note.

### Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Resident breeder (1). Common passage and winter visitor.

Early maxima were 21 at Ingbirchworth Res. on 10th February, 17 at Scout Dike Res. on 10th March and 21st April, 18 at Digley/Bilberry on 27th May, 25 at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 19th/20th January, 32 at Bretton on 24th April and 12 each at Boshaw Whams on 15th March, Gunthwaite Dam on 6th February and Cannon Hall on 9th April.

Breeding was proved at Bretton Lakes, four pairs and about 24 young, but not all survived, Bilberry Res. one pair, 3 young, and on the R.Calder at Horbury one pair, four young, but several other apparent pairs present in the breeding season at

Cannon Hall), Langsett Res., Scout Dike Res., March Haigh Res., Denby Dale and Horbury Wyke. None were at Black Moss during June.

Late maxima were; Ingbirchworth Res. 33 on 30th Sept. Scout Dike Res. 29 on 26th August, Blackmoorfoot Res. (where almost daily from June to the year-end) 22 on 3rd July, Bretton Lakes 24 in September, Cannon Hall 19 on 24th September, Royd Moor Res. 44 on 1st September, 17 at Horbury Wyke on 20th September, Ringstone Edge Res. 16 on 23rd September and Boshaw Whams eight on 25th October.

Smaller numbers, all single figures, occurred at five other waters.

#### Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce passage and winter visitor.

Blackmoorfoot Res. had a female type on 1st to 3rd February, a different bird on 10th February, two females on 31st July and another immature female on 19th/20th August (MLD, JMP, et al).

A female was at Elland G.P. from 12th to 25th January (JDW) and an immature male at Scout Dike Res. on 23rd November (JH, DJS).

#### Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Rare visitor.

An eclipse/immature male at Langsett Res. on 19th January (JH).  
Second record for the area.

#### Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce to uncommon passage visitor.

After this species' very poor showing in 1984, this year was a marked improvement.

A male was at Elland G.P. from 8th to at least 17th April (JDW, CCT). Five were on the R. Calder near Horbury Wyke on 2nd December (JRS).

All other records came from Blackmoorfoot Res. as follows:- one male and one female on 23rd June (MLD, JP), six (five males) on 14th July, a male on 26th July (MLD), a male and a female on 18th August (MLD, JMP), a female on nine dates in October from 18th (many observers) and 22 females on 16th November (MLD, CCT et al).

#### Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Regular, but uncommon, passage and winter visitor.

The last was a female at Ingbirchworth Res. on 6th May and the first returning birds were three at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 16th October. Numbers in the area were generally low at both ends of the year.

Blackmoorfoot Res. Regular up to 1st April, with eight on 17th March as maximum and from 16th October with 11 on 15th November, otherwise never more than six.

Ingbirchworth Res. One to four regularly to 6th May, with maximum of seven on 13th January and 5th April, and from 19th October to year-end, max. seven brownheads on 30th October.

Scout Dike Res. had seven on 10th March and nine on 15th December as respective early and late maxima. Birds were regular at Elland G.P. in the early part of the year, with a peak of 15 on 16th February.

Small numbers, up to three, occurred at either end of the year at Winscar Res., Horbury Wyke, Cannon Hall, Bretton Lakes, Bilberry/Digley Res., Gunthwaite Dam, Royd Moor Res, Ringstone Edge Res., Broadstones Res., Holme Styes Res., Marsden and Cupwith Res.

### **Smew Mergus albellus**

Rare visitor.

The now regular adult male was last seen at Ingbirchworth Res. on 12th April returning to Scout Dike Res. for a sixth winter in eclipse plumage on 3rd November, the earliest date on which it has ever appeared in the area and remained to the year-end (many observers), commuting regularly between Scout Dike Res. and Ingbirchworth Res.

### **Red-breasted Merganser Mergus serrator**

Scarce visitor.

Rather more frequent than usual with six records during the year.

A male on the R. Calder, near Brighouse, from 25th to 28th February (KF).

The remainder were all in the second half of the year as follows; Blackmoorfoot Res. one on 24th September (MLD), three on 13th October (GMY) and one on 8th November (MLD), all of which were redheads.

Single males at Ingbirchworth Res. on 16th November (CB) and at Langsett Res. on 15th December (BA, GBS).

### **Goosander Mergus merganser**

Scarce passage and winter visitor.

Rather a poor year for the species.

Redheads appeared at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 23rd and 28th January and at Elland G.P. on 9th Feb. (CCT). Four at Langsett Res. on 19th January (GJS).

Later in the year two redheads at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 26th October (JMP), on which date two were also present at Ingbirchworth Res. (RD & SEH); four at Blackmoorfoot on 16th November (CCT) and four (two males) at Sparth Res. on 17th (MS), followed by a single redhead on the upper lake at Bretton from 6th to 8th December (JMD, NL, DJS) and a further male at Ingbirchworth on 21st December.

### **Ruddy Duck Oxyura jamaicensis**

Scarce visitor.

A female/immature at Scout Dike Res. on 20th September (CB).

Eleventh record for the area.

### **Red Kite Milvus milvus**

Rare visitor

One flew south-west over Heyden Moor on 8th June (per W.U.) towards the Langsett area, where a bird (presumably the same individual) was seen in the Little Don Valley on various dates from 2nd to 23rd June (JH, MW).

Only the second record since the 1850's (last in 1981).

### **Marsh Harrier Circus aeruginosus**

Rare visitor.

A second year male flew east between Penistone Viaduct and Hoylandswaine on 24th May (RS).



### **Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus***

Scarce visitor

A male at Deer Hill on 16th April (DP) must have been a fine sight as it perched and flew against a background of scorched and blackened grassland. It was seen to capture a Meadow Pipit which managed to escape.

A male was seen displaying over one of the high moorlands on 9th March and 2nd May.

Single ring-tails were at Denby Dale on 1st October (DB) and at Winscar on 29th December (JED).

### **Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis***

Scarce visitor

A male flying south at Whitley Common on 31st March (JED) and a female in the same area on 24th August (FJW).

One was seen flying to the south-east over Oakes on 25th August (JMD), a male was near West Bretton on 11th September (JRS) and one at Langsett on 22nd December (WDH).

Recorded from two other localities on various dates in the early months.

This species is increasing and spreading in the North of England and it would be unwise to publish any details which might jeopardise the future chances of this bird becoming an established breeder in the area.

### **Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus***

Resident breeder (1-2).

Sightings of this species continue to show a marked increase. In 1985, birds were seen in sixty localities (at more than forty of these during the breeding season), a fifty percent increase on the previous year. In fact more records have been received of this species than of Kestrel. I feel sure that observers are reporting every Sparrowhawk sighting, but neglecting to do the same with Kestrel - a good example of observer bias!

Despite the large number of observations, however, proof of breeding was obtained for only two pairs, which reared respectively two and three young. Otherwise all sightings were of singles, or occasionally of two birds.

Sparrowhawks at Dalton seem to be accident prone! On 23rd March a female flew into the recorder's garden fence whilst taking a Collared Dove temporarily stunning itself, whilst on 29th August another (or perhaps the same) female crashed against a bedroom window, tumbling down the roof to fall onto the patio. It revived and flew off strongly after about fifteen minutes.

### **Buzzard *Buteo buteo***

Rare visitor

One soaring in the Digley area on 12th April (HQ). With the exception of 1981, this species has occurred annually in six of the last seven years.

### **Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus***

Rare visitor

One in the Shepley area on 30th and 31st October (FJW) and one in the Little Don Valley on 23rd November (BBSG).

Fifth and sixth records for the area.

**Osprey Pandion haliaetus**

Rare visitor

One flew up the valley at Crowden Great Brook on 5th April (WU).

Eleventh record since 1952.

**Kestrel Falco tinnunculus**

Resident breeder (2)

Recorded from some fifty localities. Breeding evidence for eight pairs, but pairs present at many other sites. The situation would appear to remain healthy.

Few observers submit records of this species. Over half the records were submitted by one member. (See comments under Sparrowhawk).

**Martin Falco columbarius**

Former breeder, now scarce to uncommon passage/winter visitor.

All records are listed and all were of single birds.

In the Ingbirchworth/Whitley Common/Broadstones area birds were seen on 4th January, 8th and 30th April (male), 15th September (female), 2nd and 9th November and 27th December (female), one near the Flouch Inn on 24th February, a female at Royd Moor on 8th March, one at Winscar on 16th March, a male at Digley on 23rd March, a male in the Little Don Valley on 28th April and near Langsett on 16th June, a female at Millhouse Green on 21st September, at Blackmoorfoot on 6th October and 27th November, in the Coxley Valley a female on 16th and 19th October, and a male hawking for Meadow Pipits around the sprinklers at Ossett Spa S.F. on 15th December.

In addition, a male was observed in a suitable breeding area on 5th May, 30th June and 25th August, but no further indication of breeding was obtained.

**Hobby Falco subbuteo**

Rare visitor

One in the south of the area on 20th July (JH, DJS).

Ninth record for the area.

A further submission in the Armitage Bridge area is under consideration by the Y.N.U. Rarities Committee.

**Peregrine Falco peregrinus**

Scarce visitor

A female at Winscar Res. on 12th January (DJS), an immature flying north-east over Bilberry Res. on 18th May (BA, MLD) and an immature wearing jesses at Blackmoorfoot on 31st August (MLD, JMP).

**Red Grouse Lagopus lagopus**

Resident breeder (2-3)

Few reported and the records which were received tend to confirm the continuing decline of the species in the area.

Records in the early part of the year only from the Langsett and Holme Moss areas where respectively over 200 on 19th January and only about six birds on 17th February. Late in the year only two could be found on Slaithwaite Moor on 16th November, with none on 27th December, four at Snailsden on 28th and 16 to the west of Winscar Res. on 29th December.

Low numbers also reported from the Langsett area.

### **Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa***

Resident breeder (1).

Although there were no confirmed records of breeding this year, birds were seen in the breeding season in more localities than in any previous year, which would appear to indicate that the species is increasing its range.

Seven were at Midgley on 13th January, eight at Barnby Hall, Cawthorne on 17th February, one at Silkstone on 24th March, a pair at Norcroft, near Cawthorne on 6th and 13th April and a pair near Wessenden Head on 15th April.

In the Ingbirchworth area birds were noted at Broadstones on 31st March, 26th May and on three dates in July, a pair near Ingbirchworth Res. on 5th March and 6th April and a singleton at Whitley Common on 26th May.

Up to five were in the Digley/Bilberry area between 24th March and the end of July, with eight present on 18th December (NL).

New areas where birds were seen were Little Don Valley (two dates in April), Bullcliffe Wood, a pair on 18th May (CB), Shepley, Jenkyn Lane, a pair on 20th June (FJW) and Harden Res. with two throughout April (DJS) and one on 1st June (CB).

### **Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix***

Resident breeder (2).

Many more records were received this year, enabling a truer picture of the species' status in the area to be determined.

Breeding was proved at Lindley Moor (at least one, probably two pairs), near Scout Dike Res. (c. ten young), Hoylandswaine and Gunthwaite Mill. Other breeding season pairs were noted as follows: near Blackmoorfoot, Outlane, Elland G.P., Royd Moor Res, Cannon Hall, Bretton Park, Kexborough (four pairs), Norcroft (three pairs), Stainborough (three pairs), Silkstone, Gunthwaite (five pairs), Whitley Common and Ingbirchworth (two pairs), giving a total of at least 29 pairs.

Reported coveys still were of relatively small numbers, with 17 at Elland G.P. on 17th August, 12 at Cannon Hall on 10th August, but 27 there on 26th October, 12 at Cawthorne on 27th December and 12 at Norcroft on 29th December, with one of 16 at Carr Lane, Ingbirchworth on 24th January being the only one reported in the early months.

### **Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus***

Resident breeder (2-3).

As usual, very few records received, from only eleven localities and mainly of single birds.

Present throughout the year at Bretton Park and a pair bred in the Hall Dike Valley for the first time in four years. Two pairs at Horbury S.F. throughout the year.

A male flying along the main road at Mount, Outlane on 18th May (CCT) at a height of about six feet may have been the victim of too many Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*) cartoon films!

### **Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus***

Scarce winter visitor.

At Gunthwaite Dam, singles on seven dates between 14th January and 7th February and on 26 dates between 7th October and 23rd December, with two present on 6th November (CB).

One at Bretton Lakes on 17th November (DPr) and perhaps the same individual on 22nd and 24th December (C Br), and one was beside the canal at Lintwaite on 16th December (WS McC).

### Moorhen Gallinula chloropus

Resident breeder (3).

This remains a very much underrecorded and unreported species, making it very difficult to assess its comparative breeding status.

At least four pairs bred at Bretton, where on 8th September juveniles were seen in six different locations, two pairs at Gunthwaite Dam and was present in the breeding season at Broadstones Res. and Meltham Mills.

Blackmoorfoot Res. had records on 57 dates, mainly in April and August to October, never more than two birds.

Gatherings of 17 at Gunthwaite Dam in October/November and 21 at Horbury Wyke on 13th April were the largest reported.

### Coot Fulica atra

Resident breeder (2).

Another good year for this species, with breeding reported at Ingbirchworth Res. (seven pairs), Bretton Park (c. 10 pairs rearing c. 25 young), Horbury Flash (17 young on 7th July), Cannon Hall (five pairs with broods on 7th July), Gunthwaite Dam (one pair), Gunthwaite Hall (one pair), Royd Moor Res. (one pair, two young), Boshaw Whams (one pair, four young) and Scout Dike Res. Additional pairs present in the breeding season at Horbury Wyke, R.Calder near Horbury, Dewsbury S.F. (three), Meltham Mills and Elland G.P.

Blackmoorfoot Res. had birds daily from September to the year-end with a maximum of eight on 28th December.

Maxima at other localities included 129 on 13th January, 85 on 10th March and 72 on 8th September at Bretton Park, but numbers in the last three months of the year did not exceed 40 there, 34 at Ingbirchworth Res. on 19th October, 40 at Elland G.P. on 16th February and 29 on 28th December and 23 at Scout Dike Res. on 17th March, otherwise less than twenty at other waters.

### Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus

Uncommon passage visitor

Few records this year.

One at Winscar Res. on 3rd February (NWA). After one feeding in a meadow at Spicer House Lane on 9th May, birds occurred at Blackmoorfoot Res. singly on 10th, 28th and 29th May.

Return passage began with one at Blackmoorfoot on 17th July, followed by singles on 21st July, 5th, 6th, 11th, 25th and 29th August, with two passing west on 14th.

The only other records were of five at Ingbirchworth Res. on 28th July and two at Scout Dike Res. on 4th August.

### Littled Ringed Plover Charadrius dubius

Occasional breeder and scarce summer visitor.

After last year's exceptional occurrences, 1985 has proved to be the worst year since 1981 with birds on only six dates.

On 27th April one circled Blackmoorfoot Res., where three passed over to the west on 24th July (MLD). One at Broadstones Res. on 10th May (JMP). At Dewsbury S.F. one on 4th June and two on 3rd July, with two adults and a juvenile at Horbury Wyke on 17th July (JRS).

### **Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula***

Uncommon passage visitor.

Exceptionally high water levels at local reservoirs meant no exposed shoreline and in common with most other waders, records of this species were very sparse.

One flew calling over Ingbirchworth Res. to the north-west on the very unusual date of 22nd February (JMP), one at Winscar Res. on 27th May (WS McC), one west over Blackmoorfoot Res. on 14th September, where on 16th ten flew south-east (JMP).

### **Dotterel *Charadrius marcellus***

Rare passage visitor, now regular.

Five in the traditional Spicer House Lane area from 9th to 11th May, increasing to six on 12th, were last seen on 14th May (CB, JMD, DJS et al.)

In autumn, one at Broadstones on 23rd September (NP).

### **Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria***

Migrant breeder (2). Common passage and winter visitor.

Numbers in the early months were low with maximum counts in January of 30 at Crosland Hill on 2nd, 150 at Brown's Edge on 4th, 12 north-west at Honley on 9th and at Blackmoorfoot Res. 33 on 26th, where birds were recorded on only two other January dates. In February, birds could be found in only one locality and on one date only, at Whitley Common where 33 were counted on 24th, with a single additional bird with Lapwings at Ingbirchworth.

Generally, numbers in the area increase throughout March and April and although 1985 numbers followed the trend, it was much less pronounced than in most previous years. Blackmoorfoot's March maximum was 80 moving west on 15th, with up to 32 present on three dates later in the month, but one on 27th was the sole April record. At Whitley Common, where traditionally flocks of several hundreds appear, the highest March counts were 195 on 24th, 150 on 26th, 201 on 29th (including 54 'Northern' birds) and 174 on 31st, whilst April produced only two flocks into three figures, 250 on 18th and 180 on 25th. Nearby at Broadstones were 115 on 23rd March and 250 on 14th April. Ringstone Edge was the only other locality with any significant numbers - 127 on 5th and 250 on 6th April, with a high proportion, perhaps 80% of 'Northern' birds on each date. Numbers declined through May apart from 350 in fields near the Flouch Inn early in the month, with maxima of 226 at Whitley Common on 2nd, 42 there on 6th and 53 on 12th and above Holme about 20 on the last date. 22 'Southern' birds were in the Spicer House Lane area on 1st June.

In the breeding season numbers appeared to be very low (in fact the HBWC team failed to record this species in the 24 hour county bird-watch on 11th May), with presumed breeding pairs located at Board Hill (three), where a broken egg was found on 25th April, Crowden Great Brook (one), March Haigh (one), Snailsden (two), Upper Windleden Res. (one) and West End Moss (two). At one traditional breeding area, Black Moss, birds were present in mid-May, but none could be found on 25th June. Birds were calling near Winscar Res. on 30th June.

Post-breeding season numbers were also very low. Blackmoorfoot Res. had birds on most days in July, with only three counts of over a hundred, peaking at 220 on 30th, but on only twelve days in August and only 180 on 28/29th surpassing the hundred mark. Broadstones had 59 on 17th July and 180 on 13th August.

From September onwards, numbers decreased even further, the Blackmoorfoot maxima being 74 on 8th September, 160 on 7th October, 150 on 16th November and only one bird in December, on 11th.

Elsewhere, Broadstones had 40 on 14th September, 260 on 9th and 176 on 16th November, with 110/120 at Crosland Hill on 22nd November and 50 there on 20th December as the only flocks reported apart from 18 on Meltham Moor on 28th December.

#### **Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

Rare/scarcely passage visitor.

One record only. A bird flew south over Blackmoorfoot Res. at 0845 hours on 1st December (MLD, JMP), only the second record ever in that month.

#### **Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus***

Resident breeder (3-4). Numerous passage and winter visitor.

Very small numbers encountered in the early months. In January 120 at Cawthorne on 1st, 50 at Brown's Edge on 4th and 37 at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 26th being the largest and almost the only parties. February produced even smaller numbers, maxima being 30 at Boshaw Whams on 1st, 55 near Bretton and 37 at Ingbirchworth on 24th and 52 at Blackmoorfoot on 27th. No other flock of more than 50 reported prior to the breeding season, the largest being 49 at Boshaw Whams on 3rd March.

By 22nd June, 320 were at Whitley Common and at the end of July numbers at Blackmoorfoot had reached 800, with 350 at Ringstone Edge also on 30th. Elsewhere 70 at Skelmanthorpe and 60 at Horbury Wyke in mid-month and 100 at Dewsbury S.F. on 31st were the highest counts received. No high counts anywhere in the area apart from Blackmoorfoot Res. where numbers increased throughout August to 500 by 31st (only half the 1984 maximum); thereafter this locality had very low numbers with monthly maxima of 380 on 4th September, 132 on 3rd October, 165 on 25th November and 122 on 7th December.

Broadstones had 120 on 19th October and 620 on 9th November, otherwise the only flocks over a hundred were at Crosland Hill on 8th (100+) and 22nd November (200). Very few were present in the club area in December apart from 70 at Dewsbury S.F. on 15th.

Little movement was witnessed at either end of the year with birds noted moving west on 4th February (16) at Ingbirchworth and at Denby Dale on 29th (100) and 30th October (20), 67 north at Ossett Spa S.F. on 11th November, with southerly movement on 24th February at Tinker Hill (4) and 16th November (16) at Scammonden.

Scarcely any information received for the breeding season, except for birds noted as being in territory at Whitley Common on 24th February (where two pairs with young on 3rd May) and at Lindley Moor on 2nd March, and a pair which reared three young at Horbury Wyke. To what extent the low autumn numbers at Blackmoorfoot (and elsewhere) reflect a poor breeding season or high water levels and lack of shoreline, or both, remains unknown.

#### **Dunlin *Calidris alpina***

Migrant breeder (1-2). Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

Very few records received. It seems probable that as well as reducing numbers of moorland breeders, the appalling spring and summer weather deterred observers from visiting the high moorlands, with a consequent reduction in the number of records for such typical species as the Dunlin.

One to the north-east at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 8th February, two there on 3rd March and two to the south on 8th March preceded the spring influx, which became apparent with birds at Winscar on 6th April, followed by two on 9th and three on 20th, and two at Slaithwaite Moor on 17th April. Two were in fields near the Flouch Inn on 2nd May.

Breeding season records were received only from Board Hill, where three were displaying on 25th April, Cupwith Hill in May (a nest with eggs), Upper Windleden Res. (one pair bred), Black Moss, where although birds were present in mid-May a visit on 25th June failed to find any, and Blackstone Edge Res. where there were five birds on 16th June.

All other records were of passage birds: at Blackmoorfoot two west on 9th and one on 31st May, one west on 7th and one south on 23rd July, two north-west on 5th and one on 31st August, one on 10th October, while in December four moved west on 1st, two south on 2nd and one west on 12th.

The only other birds were singles at Dewsbury S.F. on 15th October and Ingbirchworth on 15th November.

#### **Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***

Scarce passage visitor.

A male in partial breeding plumage was in Spicer House Lane in May (CB) and at Blackmoorfoot Res. two flew west on 7th September (PDB, MLD). A very poor showing.

#### **Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus***

Scarce passage and winter visitor.

In the Hall Dike Valley one or two present January to March and from late October to the end of the year (D. Maude).

One at Elland G.P. on 26th January (CCT), one undated record from Ringstone Edge (JB) and one at Ossett Spa S.F. on 29th November (JRS).

#### **Snipe *Gallinago gallinago***

Resident breeder (2). Common passage and winter visitor.

Reported from nineteen localities, of which thirteen were probable breeding areas.

Breeding pairs at Blackmoorfoot, Hall Dike Valley (three), South Crosland and Board Hill (two), birds displaying at Scammonden, Harbury, Flight Hill, Digley, Whitley Common, Broadstones, Boshaw Whams and Snittlegate.

Highest counts were 50 at Dewsbury S.F. on 16th February, 15 at Harbury Wyke on 26th February, 18 at Scout Dike Res. and 19 at Ingbirchworth Res. both in December.

One very experienced observer asked "Where are they this year?"

#### **Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola***

Resident breeder (2). Uncommon winter visitor.

Roding birds were noted at Mag Wood, Hall Dike, Dean Wood, Storches Hall Woods, Hades, Crowden Great Brink and in the Swinden Plantation/Flouch area (two birds). Other localities where birds were present in the breeding season were Stocks Moor on 21st May, Hey Wood on 9th May and Hoyland Bank Wood on 17th May.

Outside the breeding season, single birds were reported from Ingbirchworth, Cowcliffe, Dobb Dike, woodland below Digley Res., Longwood Valley, Little Don Valley, Mount (Outlane), Hades, Hoyland Bank Wood and Bretton Park, with three on the canal at Linthwaite on 9th December.

Probably remains a much underrecorded species.

### **Bar-tailed Godwit Limosa lapponica**

Scarce passage visitor.

All records were of birds flying west. At Blackmoorfoot Res. one on 5th July (MLD, JP), two on 14th August (MLD, JMP) and one on 6th September (MLD, JP, JMP), plus two up the Calder Valley at Horbury on 18th August (JRS).

### **Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus**

Scarce to uncommon passage visitor.

One spring record of a bird flying west up the Calder Valley at Horbury on 4th May (JRS).

Occurred in autumn at Blackmoorfoot Res. with singles west on 7th and 8th July (MLD) and one at Ingbirchworth Res. on 19th August (CB).

### **Curlew Numenius arquata**

Migrant breeder (2). Common passage visitor.

There were no records in the first two months, spring arrival commencing with birds flying west at Blackmoorfoot on 5th and 8th March, with records on two other dates later in the month. Only four other localities had recorded birds by the end of March, Whitley Common on 10th, Ingbirchworth on 11th, Digley on 20th and Bretton, with widespread arrivals not occurring until early April. However, several small flocks were noted at the March arrival points with at Whitley Common 13 on 10th, 27 on 12th and 20 on 31st, ten at Ingbirchworth on 11th and 20 near Digley on 20th March.

Birds were noted at five lowland localities in the breeding season, whilst on the uplands pairs were present and bubbling heard at Whitley Common, Ingbirchworth, Scout Dike, Digley, Rishworth Moor, Scammonden, Yateholme, Crowden, Slaithwaite Moor, Flight Hill, Ramsden Clough, near Holme, Broadstones, Royd Moor, Snailsden, Snittlegate, and Winscar. Young were seen at Ingbirchworth, Scout Dike, Meltham Cop and Emley Moor. The only post-breeding flock was of 20 at Scammonden on 25th June.

Almost all post-breeding season sightings at Blackmoorfoot Res. were of birds flying west with seven on 24th July and nine on 5th September. The last were a single bird at Ingbirchworth Res. on 22nd November and one calling over Blackmoorfoot Res. on 31st December.

### **Spotted Redshank Tringa erythropus**

Scarce passage visitor.

One flew west at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 4th September (MLD).

### **Redshank Tringa totanus**

Migrant breeder (1-2). Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

An extremely poor year.

Breeding was not proved anywhere in the club area; at Black Moss where eight pairs were in territory in 1984, only two birds could be found on 25th June.

Returning birds appeared at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 9th March, at Whitley Common on 10th, where there were three on 31st, but only a single bird in April and no records thereafter.

Three were on Slaithwaite Moor on 17th April and in the Winscar Res. area six on 9th and seven on 20th April. Two at Crowden Great Brook from 24th May to 2nd June. Single pairs throughout the year at both Dewsbury S.F. and Horbury Wyke, without proof of breeding.



Blackmoorfoot had records of birds on only six dates between 2nd June and 5th August, compared with over seventy days in 1984.

#### **Greenshank Tringa nebularia**

Uncommon passage visitor.

Blackmoorfoot Res. had most records, all of birds flying west, with singles on 24th July, 19th and 24th August and 4th September, with three on 25th August.

Elsewhere birds were noted: one at Whitley Res. on 14th July and two overflying Lower Hopton on 31st August, when two were also seen at Horbury Wyke.

#### **Green Sandpiper Tringa ochropus**

Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

Generally a poor year, but more mid-winter records than in any previous year.

One at Elland G.P. on 25th January (JDW), one at Dewsbury S.F. on 16th February, 12th March and 15th April (JRS), two at Horbury Wyke from 3rd August to 13th September, with one on 7th October (JG, JRS, PS), one at Dewsbury S.F. on 28th August (JRS), one west at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 2nd September (JMP), one at Ingbirchworth Res. on 21st September (SMD) and one on the canal near Sparth Res. on 17th November (MS).

In addition two were at the newly created Lower Spen Nature Reserve on 10th March (JRS) with one there on 8th December (C. Br). This site is just to the north of the club's recording area.

#### **Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos**

Migrant breeder (2).

The first returning bird was noted at Dewsbury S.F. on 13th April, followed by one at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 17th and three at Winscar Res. on 20th April; by the end of the month, birds had appeared at three other localities with a high total of seven at Ingbirchworth Res. on 30th.

Breeding was proved at Little Don Valley, Winscar Res. and in the Yateholme area. Pairs were also located and probably breeding as follows: March Haigh Res. (two), Hey Green Marsden, Tunnel End Res., Wessenden Valley (two), Snailsden, Holme Styes Res., Yateholme (a second pair), Boshaw Whams, Crowden Great Brook (two), Bilberry Res., Upper and Lower Windleden Reservoirs (one each) and Deer Hill.

Birds also occurred during the breeding season at Ringstone Edge Res., Denby Dale, Bretton Park and Red Brook Res. with no indication of breeding.

Six at Bilberry Res. on 30th June, and on 14th July at Blackmoorfoot Res., where birds were reentered on 63 dates, but none in June.

In autumn occurred on three dates each at Horbury Wyke and Dewsbury S.F. (max. five on 31st July). The last was one at Ingbirchworth Res. on 30th September.

#### **Red-necked Phalarope Phalaropus lobatus**

Rare visitor.

An adult male found at Horbury Wyke by J.R. Smithson at 1440 hours on 2nd June remained until dusk, but had gone by 0430 hours the following day.

First record for the area.

**Pomarine Skua** Stercorarius pomarinus

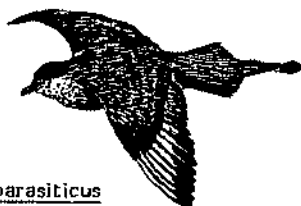
Rare visitor.

An immature bird watched for about three minutes at 1100 hours on 11th November near Midhope Res. was mobbed by a Goshawk and was seen to fly north into the club area (JED). What was presumably the same bird was seen shortly afterwards in the Little Don Valley (K. Fellowes per DJS).

On the same date a party of four birds, comprising a light-phase adult with full, twisted tail, a second light-phase bird and two dark-phase individuals flew over Scout Oike Res. (HP, per DJS). Four identically plumaged birds had flown west over Pugneys, Wakefield some thirty minutes earlier.

First and second records for the area.

Unprecedented numbers of birds of this species occurred on the Yorkshire coast at this time and sightings were made at several inland localities in the county.



**Arctic Skua** Stercorarius parasiticus

Rare visitor.

A dark-phase adult which flew south-west over Swinden pines towards the Flouch Inn on 22nd June showed four-inch long extensions to the central tail feathers (DJS).

A dark-phase adult appeared at Blackmoorfoot Res. for five minutes on 4th September before flying west (MLD).

Fifth and sixth records for the area.

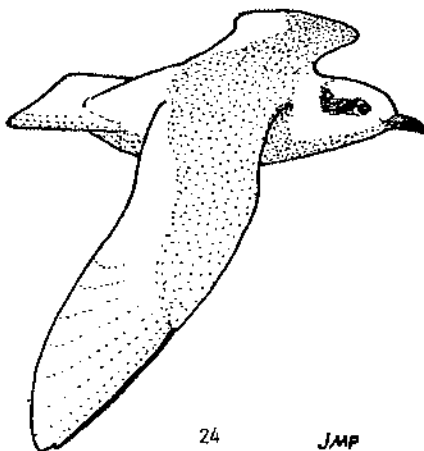
**Mediterranean Gull** Larus melanocephalus

Rare visitor.

Two records from Blackmoorfoot Res. An adult on 23rd and 26th January (JMP) and a juvenile on 3rd August (MLD, JMP).

A more normal pattern after last year's exceptional occurrences.

Fourteenth and fifteenth records for the area.



### **Little Gull *Larus minutus***

Scarce passage visitor.

All records are from Blackmoorfoot Res. as follows: a first-summer bird 16th May (JMP), two adults and two immatures passing south on 18th August (MLD, M5) and a further immature on 23rd September (MLD).

### **Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus***

Resident breeder (1-2). Numerous passage and winter visitor.

The only real roost count at Blackmoorfoot Res. gave a total of 7800 on 3rd February, but only 334 by 15th and 141 by 29th April. 13 on 24th May was the only double-figure count in that month, with June also having a maximum of only 13. Numbers normally rise significantly towards or into four figures by the end of July, but this year the month's maximum was a mere 280 on 27th. By 30th August, numbers had reached 2600, but no counts were made thereafter.

The only records received of flocks involving more than 100 birds were 150 flying south-west at Lepton on 6th March, up to 175 in January/February at Elland C.P. and 293 there on 28th December which left to the south-west in late afternoon, and about 200 in March and 150 in December at Ingbirchworth Res. Over a hundred roosted at Dewsbury S.F. during the winter months.

For the second successive year, the breeding colony at Black Moss had a disastrous year, worse even than in 1984. In mid-May, only 80 adults were present and by 25th June only 31 adults and six young were visible, with no eggs in the very few nests which had been built (MLD). Once again the reason remains obscure.

One pair reared three young at Dewsbury S.F. (JRS).

### **Common Gull *Larus canus***

Numerous winter and passage visitor.

The single count at the Blackmoorfoot roost in the early months produced a total of 1480 birds on 3rd February, a very much higher figure than any in the preceding year. Numbers had declined to single figures by the end of April, where they remained until 6th August, except for eleven on 30th July. There was a slow but gradual increase to 62 on 20th September, but after this date no further counts were made. A bird present on 9th December was still in juvenile plumage, showing no sign of moult to first-winter (MLD, JMP).

Highest counts received from other localities were 150 at Ringstone Edge Res. on and 27 there on 14th December, and six in February at Ingbirchworth Res.

### **Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus***

Common passage and winter visitor.

After single figures in December 1984, numbers at the Blackmoorfoot Res. roost did not reach double figures until 3rd March (24) with a maximum of 43 on 25th. Mainly single figures throughout April, May and June rising to 20 by 30th July. Numbers rose steadily in August, peaking at 49 on 29th, thereafter building up through September (max. 126 on 26th) to the annual peak of 181 on 10th October. From mid-November, the numbers of birds were reduced significantly with never more than twelve in the second half of the month and double-figure counts on only two dates in December.

In the Broadstones area, 35 were present on 14th September, rising gradually to a peak of 135 (almost all adults) on 19th October, then falling to two on 2nd December (JMP). Fifteen were at Ingbirchworth Res. in December.

Birds of the race *L. f. intermedius* (all singles) were at Blackmoorfoot on 23rd, 25th

and 29th March, 21st April, 28th and 29th July, 13th August, 8th, 10th and 26th October (MLD, JMP).

A bird showing characteristics of the race *L.F. fuscus* was observed at Broadstones on 21st September (JMP).

#### **Herring Gull Larus argentatus**

Common passage and winter visitor.

This species was described in the 1984 Annual Report as being the only one of the common gulls to show an increase on the 1983 figures. This trend towards increased numbers has continued into 1985. In the Blackmoorfoot roost after 334 on 1st, January figures peaked at 609 on 4th, falling to 122 on 26th; the February peak of 156 occurred on 3rd with a fall to 13 by the month-end. Single figures on all but seven dates in March, with a maximum on 3rd of 31, then occurrences on only a single date in each of April, May and August. The first double-figure count in autumn was 12 on 26th October, followed by a November maximum of 212 on 23rd, and in December 213 on 11th with 196 at the year-end.

Counts at other localities gave maxima of 26 at Broadstones on 7th December, and near Whitley Common 80 on 17th November and 45 on 5th December. Twelve adults flew west at Denby Dale on 5th August.

Individuals showing characteristics of the race *L.a. michahellis* were at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 9th, 10th and 19th October and at Broadstones on 10th, 19th (two) and 25th October (two) and 16th November.

#### **Great Black-backed Gull Larus marinus**

Common winter visitor.

Maxima at the Blackmoorfoot Res. roost were 143 on 2nd, 202 on 4th and 169 on 6th January, 41 on 1st February, with nil from 17th, one only on a few dates in March, two on 9th April, then none until the first of autumn on 13th September. Numbers did not reach double figures again until 9th November, reaching 104 by 23rd. Numbers in December fluctuated from 26 to the peak on 31st of 101.

Ingbirchworth Res. had a January maximum of 57, with 25 in November and December.

First recorded in the autumn at Broadstones on 10th October, building up to 54 on 26th December.

80 were at Langsett Res., also on 26th December.

#### **Kittiwake Rissa tridactyla**

Scarce passage visitor.

Blackmoorfoot Res., where sightings have increased dramatically in recent years, had its best ever series of records. An adult on 1st January, then no more until 14th March. On that date 82 (72 adults, 10 immatures) flew west between 1650 and 1705 hours, four adults arrived from the east at 1740 hours, then at 1750 hours a flock of 101 (84 adults, 17 immatures) came from the east and passed through to the west; ten minutes later at 1800 hours, a flock of 39 birds (32 adults, 7 immatures) arrived from the east and settled to roost. The day's total of birds was an unprecedented 226. Further records of one on 19th March, an adult on 2nd May, an adult and an immature on 8th November and two adults on 10th November.

Additional birds were an adult at Boshaw Whams on 25th January and a first-summer bird flying west at Low Common, Ingbirchworth on 8th April.

A bird found long dead near Brighthouse on 10th March, 1984 had been ringed on 21st June, 1983 at Goulien, Finistere, France.

### **Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis***

Rare passage visitor.

One flew south at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 23rd September (BA).

Eighth record for the area.

### **Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

Uncommon passage visitor.

Recorded from Blackmoorfoot Res., singles unless otherwise stated, on 19th May, 5th June, 13th July (two), 25th August, 18th September, 30th September (at least four, probably nine), 1st and 4th October.

Elsewhere one was at Horbury Wyke from 17th July to 5th August, an immature at Ringstone Edge Res. on 20th August and a juvenile at Horbury Flash on 26th August.

Birds not specifically identified, which could have been either this or the following species, occurred as follows: at Blackmoorfoot Res. 17 on 29th April, one west on 1st May, one east on 2nd May, one south-west on 25th August and two on 29th September, with six at Ingbirchworth Res. on 23rd May.

### **Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea***

Uncommon passage visitor.

One at Elland G.P. on the very early date of 12th April, followed by a second at Ingbirchworth Res. on 30th April, with another bird there on 6th May.

With the exception of seven at Bretton Park on 5th May and one flying west up the Calder Valley at Horbury on 18th August, all records were from Blackmoorfoot Res. as follows: in May, one west on 1st, two on 5th, five on 22nd, two on 23rd, one on 5th June, three on 17th and one on 27th July, three on 5th and one on 18th August, one west on 27th September and in October singles on 1st, 2nd and 7th with two on 13th.

### **Black Tern *Chlidonias niger***

Scarce passage visitor.

There was one spring record of an adult in full summer plumage at Ingbirchworth Res. on 15th May (KH).

In autumn, two on 19th September at Blackmoorfoot Res. (BA), where on 30th September a party of eleven was present at mid-day. These disappeared and soon afterwards four apparently different birds appeared. Two birds were still present at 16.30 hours, giving a probable total of 15, or possibly 17 individuals (BA, JED, MLD).

### **Stock Dove *Columba oenas***

Resident breeder (2-3). Common winter visitor.

An exceptional movement was noted in the Denby Dale area on 4th February, when flocks of 350 and 100 were observed moving east in the early morning (DB). Otherwise, the largest parties reported were seven at Winscar Res. on 24th February and twelve at Silkstone S.F. on 2nd March.

Widely distributed in the breeding season, with reports from about twenty localities. Movement was noted at Blackmoorfoot Res. mainly August to October, of small numbers, usually one or two only, predominantly to the west.

After the breeding season, the only parties reported were 14 in Spicer House Lane on 2nd August, about 30 moving north-east at Denby Dale on 28th October and eight flying west over Hepworth Iron Works on 28th December.

### Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Resident breeder (4). Numerous winter visitor.

The significant movements of late 1984 continued into the early part of 1985. At Blackmoorfoot in January 1210 west on 1st, 400 east on 2nd, 900 south-west on 7th, 1922 north-west on 12th, 598 north on 19th and 230 north-west on 26th; these continued into February with 170 east on 8th, 1070 south-east on 10th, 23 south-east on 12th and 100 south on 3rd March. Other movements in January were recorded in the Longwood Valley, with 1100 north-west on 7th and 800 north-west on 9th, each in a 25 minute period in very cold weather. 200 moved west in the Ingbirchworth area on 1st January and 51 north-east on 10th February, on which date 27 moved east at Lindley Moor and c.1500 east at Netherton. Later movements of 250 north on 10th March at Harden Clough and 80 west over Deffer Wood on 31st March.

At the same time as these movements were occurring, grounded flocks of 1200 at Farnley Tyas on 11th January, 700 at Gunthwaite on 1st and 500 on 9th January, 300 at Bretton Park on 27th January were noted, with many counts of between 50 and 225 birds in the Denby Dale area in January/February with parties of up to 30 birds still present there in mid-April.

The only record for the breeding season described the species as 'widespread and plentiful' in the Yateholme area.

Only one post-breeding season record received, of 100 moving west at Ingbirchworth Res. on 3rd November.

### Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Resident breeder (3).

The species may still be spreading in the area; two in a garden at Hinchliffe Mill were the first recorded in that locality by the observer(HG).

Bred at Blackmoorfoot Res. (MLD). No flocks reported this year. One killed by a Sparrowhawk at Dalton on 23rd March (BA).

A much under-reported species.

### Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Migrant breeder (1-2). Decreasing?

The first were three in the Langsett area and one at Dewsbury S.F. on 6th May, with the latter locality having two on 4th June.

One sang in Deffer Wood on 31st May, 9th and 20th July and two were seen together there on 1st June.

The only other records were of one at Stockmoor Common on 22nd June, one flying west at Cowcliffe on 20th July and one at Dewsbury S.F. on 15th August.

The status of this species locally appears to be decidedly unhealthy.

### Ring-necked Pheasant *Psittacula krameri*

One first seen in the Almondbury area on 20th January associating with Starlings was observed at regular intervals throughout the year and learned to feed at peanut feeders on bird tables (SMC). Its origin is uncertain.

### Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Migrant breeder (2).

None reported in April except from the Digley area, where the first was noted on 22nd April, with a second by 27th. General arrival from about 6th May and not widely distributed until the month-end.

As in the last two years, reported from nearly thirty localities, some of which held two or more males, with up to ten calling at Crowden Great Brook in late May/early June.

A juvenile was found dead in an Almondbury garden on 1st August (DS & VAI).

The last reported was a juvenile on 1st August in the Lower Wessenden Valley, otherwise 19th June at Cawthorne!

### **Barn Owl Tyto alba**

Resident breeder (1).

Rather more records this year, presenting a rather less discouraging picture.

One at Shepley on 11th February (FJW) and one seen at dusk at Houses Hill on 17th February (OK, per D Man). Reported as being seen regularly by residents in the Whitley Willows/Houses Hill area (MM).

One seen at Dalton on 18th April and alarming on 27th in an area where successful breeding (three young fledged) is reported as having taken place in either 1982 or 1983 (BA).

A single juvenile seen in a locality in the south of the area on 11th June (per DJS).

Singles at Lepton Edge on 4th September (GBS) and near Golcar on 15th December (DWB), both former breeding areas.

### **Little Owl Asio otus**

Resident breeder (2).

Single birds or pairs located in nine areas prior to the breeding season. Successful breeding confirmed for twelve pairs, and probably attempted to breed at at least eighteen other sites where pairs were observed.

A bird found at the roadside at Shepley on 18th April was taken to Mrs.B.Watson and later to M.L.Denton. Although apparently uninjured, it was very emaciated, refused to take food and died a few days later.

### **Tawny Owl Strix aluco**

Resident breeder (2).

Perhaps as a result of the comment under this species in the 1984 report, more records were received of this species. Although confirmation of breeding was not obtained in the majority of cases, many more pairs have been located.

Breeding was proved at Hoyland Bank, Bretton Park (two pairs), Hinchliffe Mill, Gunthwaite (two pairs) and Almondbury. A further 47 pairs and/or calling birds at twenty sites were reported by one observer (D.Maude) and other birds were heard calling or seen during the breeding season in twelve additional areas.

This must represent a much more realistic picture of the bird's status than has been possible previously.

### **Long-eared Owl Asio otus**

Resident breeder (1).

In one breeding area an adult was seen on 19th February and a single young bird was heard calling on 18th May; a second pair is believed to have failed (BA, JED).

No information was received from a second traditional breeding area.

### **Short-eared Owl Asio flammeus**

Resident/migrant breeder (1). Scarce winter visitor.

The only records in the earlier winter period were of single birds near Upper Windleden Res. on 30th January and 11th March.

One hunting over a possible breeding area on one date in late May and two dates in June, when two birds were present.

One came in to Blackmoorfoot from the north-east at 2105 hours on 28th May. One near Deer Hill Res. on 31st July, one near Horbury Wyke on 28th October and up to three in the Snailsden/Holme Styes area in December.

#### **Nightjar Caprimulgus europaeus**

Rare visitor.

A female in Bretton Park on 31st May (D Pr).

#### **Swift Apus apus**

Migrant breeder (2).

The first was a single bird at Iogbirchworth Res. on 30th April, where there were ten on 2nd May and 100 by 9th. Singles at Almondbury on 1st and at Waterloo on 2nd May were followed by birds at Denby Dale on 3rd and Cooper Bridge and Blackmoorfoot Res. on 5th May. More widespread from mid-month, with parties of 20 at Slaithwaite on 16th and 60 at Blackmoorfoot on 22nd. Blackmoorfoot Res. regularly had over 20 per day in June, with 63 on 13th as maximum.

Several observers reported the species as scarcer than in previous years in some areas, e.g. in the Longwood Valley, Milnsbridge (25 on 17th July), Lockwood and Aspley, where 50 on 25th July was only a moderate number.

On 2nd August at Horbury Wyke 800 moved south between 1030 and 1130 hours and a further 500 between 1330 and 1500 hours. 150 were in the same area on 5th August (JRS). Still widely distributed over the area in mid-August, with 36 moving south at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 31st August, the last for that locality.

Birds were noted in September at Horbury on 4th, Almondbury and Brockholes (two) on 5th with the last at Denby Dale (five) and Skelmanthorpe (12) on 9th.

#### **Kingfisher Alcedo atthis**

Resident breeder (1).

No proof of breeding was obtained this year, although recorded regularly on the River Don at Penistone and at Bretton. Recorded in the breeding season from only six localities, a considerable decrease on 1984.

Outside the breeding season, recorded from several localities in the Colne Valley, the Holme Valley and Elland Gravel Pit, where up to three were seen in the early months.

#### **Green Woodpecker Picus viridis**

Resident breeder (1-2).

Although birds were recorded in about fifteen localities in the breeding season, confirmation of breeding was obtained at only four of these and involved six pairs.

Regular sightings outside the breeding season from about a dozen other woodlands.

#### **Great Spotted Woodpecker Dendrocopos major**

Resident breeder (2).

Widely distributed throughout the area. Pairs bred at Bretton Park (at least one, possibly three), Digley, Turner Wood, Hagg Wood, Gunthwaite, Yateholme, Harden



Clough, Haigh Spring Wood, Hall Dike Valley (three), Dean Wood, Spring Wood, Morton Wood, Langsett, Butternab Wood, Beaumont Park, Lepton Great Wood and Almondbury and probably at many more localities where pairs were seen or birds heard drumming.

Seven were seen in Bretton Park on 10th March, including four birds in the same tree.

Continued to be seen regularly at garden bird tables in Edgerton and Almondbury, although one in a garden at Ossett on 4th January was described by the observer as a very unusual occurrence. One in a garden at Salendine Nook on 14th November was oblivious to traffic and people passing very close by.

Recorded outside the breeding season from many localities.

#### **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Dendrocopos minor**

Resident breeder (1).

Recorded on many more dates than in 1984 at Bretton Park, with singles on eleven dates, two drumming on 16th February, three on 24th February (DJS) and two pairs in widely separated areas on 17th March, when one of the pairs was indulging in courtship display (CH, DMP). After 22nd April, however, there were no further records until 19th October.

A pair bred at Gunthwaite, where young were being fed in the nest-hole on 1st June (CB, DMan) and breeding was also suspected at Hagg Wood, Thongsbridge (PDB). A male was seen and heard in Stonycliffe Wood on 22nd June (DB). Recorded regularly from Grimsar Wood, but no proof of breeding (WSMcC).

Outside the breeding season, one was at Banks Hall, near Cawthorne on 3rd February (SMD) and one at Cannon Hall on 3rd March (BA, GBS).

#### **Skylark Alauda arvensis**

Resident breeder (3-4).

Seven birds in fields to the east of the reservoir on 3rd March were the first of the year at Blackmoorfoot, with three at Outlane by 24th March. Three west at Blackmoorfoot on 1st April and 13 south there on 5th October were the only records received.

The species did not seem as numerous during the breeding season as in previous years.

#### **Sand Martin Riparia riparia**

Migrant, former breeder.

Once again the species was extremely scarce, with no indication of breeding in the area. All records are listed below.

In spring, one at Bretton on 9th April, one at Elford G.P. on 20th, one at Ingbirchworth Res. on 18th April with three there on 24th, at Blackmoorfoot Res. two on 6th and 18th May, one at Longwood Res. on 16th May and two at Ingbirchworth Res. on 12th May.

In autumn in July at Blackmoorfoot Res., one on 10th, four south on 18th and one south on 21st, two at Horbury S.F. on 5th and three at Oigley on 14th, followed by two at Ingbirchworth Res. on 15th September and one/two at Square Wood Res. Denby Dale on 17th September.

### Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Migrant breeder (4). Numerous passage visitor.

Three flying west at Flockton Moor on 21st March (GBS) were exceptionally early, preceding the next sighting at Bretton Park on 5th April by more than two weeks. After further birds at Bretton on 6th and 7th, one appeared at Horbury on 8th April, one at Silkstone S.F. and two at Ingbirchworth Res. on 9th, two at Elland G.P. on 12th, then at Skelmanthorpe on 15th, Blackmoorfoot Res. and Leeds Road Pleying Fields on 16th, over Slaithwaite Moor on 17th, Meltham on 18th and Marsden on 19th with reports from many additional localities from 20th April onwards. Included amongst these were gatherings of 120 at Scout Dike Res. on 21st, 93 at Ingbirchworth Res. on 26th and at least 100 at Clayton West S.F. on 28th April.

In May, 50 were at Bretton on 1st, 120 on 6th and 300 on 12th at Ingbirchworth Res. but these numbers were overshadowed by a total of about 2000 there on 14th in dull, overcast conditions (JH); 400 were still present on 21st May.

Few breeding season records received, but only three pairs were at Springwood Colliery, Emley, where five or six pairs has been a more normal figure (GBS).

Autumn movements involved 300 birds south on 5th September and 150 south on 13th September at Horbury S.F. and 37 west at Lindley Moor at dusk on 9th September.

General departure took place in September, but there were October records from nine localities, with the last at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 17th and four west at Langsett Res. on 19th.

### House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Migrant breeder (3).

The first were one at Golcar and two at Bretton Park on 14th April, followed by birds at Linthwaite on 17th, Meltham on 18th and Blackmoorfoot Res. on 19th April. Five other localities had received birds by the end of the month, with gatherings of 100 at Ingbirchworth Res. on 25th, 25 at Bretton and 30 at Elland on 28th. Good numbers persisted at Ingbirchworth into May with 160 on 10th and 250 on 12th with 100 at Bretton Lakes on 1st. Arrivals may have continued into June; with 57 at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 7th and 80 at Ingbirchworth Res. on the same date. Ingbirchworth had a breeding colony of twelve pairs.

Few comments were received about the breeding situation, but absent from some areas where the species is normally seen in summer and numbers were reduced in at least one other. A second brood at Lockwood left the nest on 24th September, remaining in the area to the month-end.

Post-breeding season gatherings numbered 175 at Horbury S.F. on 6th August, 200 at Ingbirchworth Res. on 10th August, at least 200 over the lower lake at Bretton Park on 8th September, 'many' at Holmbridge on 21st September, 120 at Cannon Hall on 15th September, when there were also good numbers at Ingbirchworth again and 70+ over the canal at Golcar on 7th and 14th September.

In contrast to 1984, October records were numerous and involved Ingbirchworth Res. (4th), Bretton Park (5th), Blackmoorfoot (until 10th), Almondbury (11th), Honley (14th), Meltham (20th), Penistone (22nd) and Outlane (25th), but the last was one seen several times in the Coxley Valley on 3rd November (JG).

### **Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis***

Migrant breeder (3).

One at Bretton Park on 5th April (JG, PS), was the earliest by three days ever recorded in the area. No others were recorded until 13th when two were at Deffer Wood, followed on 17th by birds in the Coxley Valley (two), Gunthwaite, Lepton and Bank Wood, Emley (five), by which time the number of singing males at Deffer Wood had also increased to five. The only other April bird was on 23rd at Hey Wood.

Over a hundred singing males were located in May, including a remarkable 23 in the Langsett and Little Don Valley area on 28th, plus a further ten at six other sites in June, which would appear to present a healthy situation in the breeding season.

Blackmoorfoot's only record was the last of the year on 26th August.

### **Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis***

Resident breeder (4-5). Partial migrant.

Wintering birds were noted at Silkstone S.F. and Lower Cumberworth (15 in snow on 17th) in January and February and at Horbury S.F., where there were 50 on 28th February, but there was little evidence of a return to moorland breeding areas this year apart from 16 at Digley on 6th April and a flock of between 200 and 300 on 28th (when also 40 in the Little Don Valley), and 20 near Ingbirchworth on 8th April. No large numbers were reported from any of the other traditional gathering areas.

A widespread movement was noted at various localities in early to mid-October of birds moving mainly to the south-west; 2nd Oct, 16th south at Blackmoorfoot; on 5th, 62 south at Netherton, 57 south-east at Oakes and 203 south at Blackmoorfoot; on 6th, 104 south-west at Wholestone Moor; on 7th, 84 south at Almondbury, 64 south at Blackmoorfoot, 85 west-south-west (in ten minutes) at Lindley Moor and 450 per hour south-west at Wholestone Moor; on 8th, 71 south at Almondbury, 350 south-west at Wholestone Moor; on 12th, 25 south at Blackmoorfoot and 150 south-west at Wholestone Moor, where an additional 100 flew south on 13th. Assuming all of these to have been different birds, this gives a minimum total of 1821 moving. Grounded birds in the Horbury area totalled 140 on 7th October, with 21 at Ossett Spa, S.F. on 9th October.

A few birds were still in the area late in the year, at Silkstone S.F., Yateholme and Booth Dam in November and one flying west at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 28th December.

### **Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava***

Migrant breeder (1).

Most of the records were of spring birds which passed through the area. Singles at Horbury Wyke on 15th, Ingbirchworth Res. on 24th and Silkstone S.F. on 27th April, where a male was also seen on 6th May and 1st June. Two were at Ossett Spa S.F. on 30th April and two males and a female at Denby Dale on 16th May.

A pair were with four young at Dewsbury S.F. on 23rd July (JRS) and other pairs reported as having bred at Armitage Bridge and in the Hall Dike Valley (DM), with further sightings in the breeding season from Hepworth and Crowden Great Brook.

Blackmoorfoot Res. had records on two autumn dates only (17 in 1984), with one south on 25th August and four south on 29th September, whilst one was at Bretton Park on 11th September.

These were the only records.

### **Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea***

Resident breeder (2).

Once again records were received from an increased number of sites. Sightings were reported from almost forty localities, including one in the town centre in December.

Evidence of breeding was obtained at Armitage Bridge, Meltham Mills, Thunderbridge, Ossett Spa S.F. (three young in July), Hall Dike Valley, Magdale, Yateholme and the canal at Milnsbridge, with other pairs during the breeding season at Silkstone, Morton Wood, Denby Dale, Wessenden Head, Booth Wood, Riding Wood, Little Don Valley and Ramsden Clough.

On the debit side, the only records from Bretton Park were singles on 25th April, 23rd June and 15th December and one observer reported the species as being less frequent than in 1984 along the canal at Golcar, where the only records were in winter.

Regular at Elland G.P. and Longwood Brook outside the breeding season, with up to four at the second locality, as well as at Horbury S.F. (four), Ossett Spa S.F. (three) and West Bretton S.F. (five on 4th September).

Four flew west at Shaw Wood, Outlane on 28th September. Two were present in an Edgerton garden on 13th October, one remaining to the year-end, despite the attentions of a female Sparrowhawk.

### **Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba***

Resident breeder (3).

The roost at the Civic Centre held 107 birds on 12th January and at least a hundred on 1st February. Smaller numbers in the early months included 40 on 26th and 50 on 28th February at Horbury S.F., 12 at Brockholes S.F. on 12th February and 30 at Silkstone S.F. on 17th March, whilst at Ossett Spa and Dewsbury Sewage Farm respectively, 20 and 30 birds were present throughout the year.

Pairs were reported in the breeding season only from Ossett Spa S.F. (three pairs bred), March Haigh, Milnsbridge, Riding Wood Res. and Bretton Park, with three juveniles beside the Fenay Beck on 20th June.

After the breeding season, gatherings in September at Cannon Hall of 38 on 7th, 76 on 15th and 55 on 19th and at Huddersfield New College playing fields of 18 also on 19th were noteworthy, as were 27 at Silkstone S.F. on 2nd November.

Movement was noted in October at Blackmoorfoot Res. with 22 south on 5th, and at Wholstone Moor of 12 on 7th, 10 on 8th, 23 on 12th and 11 on 13th, all to the south-west.

At the end of the year at the Civic Centre roost, 80 had gathered by 1650 hours on 7th November and 181 were counted on 7th December. A winter roost in the Yateholme area held a maximum of 75-80 birds on 25th November.

### **Dipper *Cinclus cinclus***

Resident breeder (2).

A slight increase in the number of records, including breeding. Bred successfully at Bilberry Res., Crowden Great Brink, Fenay Beck (Woodsome), Thunderbridge, Morton Wood, West Vale (two broods of five each), Denby Dale, Marsden Clough, Little Don Valley, March Haigh, Merrydale Clough, beneath Manchester Road at Slaithwaite and in the Hall Dike Valley. Additional localities in the breeding season at which pairs occurred and breeding likely to have taken place were Black

Brook, Fenay Beck (Kirkburton), Turner Wood, Fenay Bridge, Skelmanthorpe, Denby Dale, Meltham Bar, Boshaw Whams, Royd Edge and Hey Green Marsden. Reports were not received from several localities where breeding has taken place in recent years.

Further records, mainly outside the breeding season and of single birds, from a further twelve localities.

#### Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident breeder (3).

Well distributed in the Silkstone, Deffer Wood and Bretton Park areas in April and described as more frequent along the canal at Golcar than in 1984.

Otherwise no records received which give any indication of the species' status.

#### Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Resident breeder (3).

No reports received, but noticeably less frequent in recorder's garden than in former years.

#### Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Resident breeder (4-5).

One at Ingbirchworth Res. on 26th December was considered unusual, but no other records received, making its relative status impossible to assess.

#### Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Migrant breeder (2).

A male at Bretton Park on 5th April (JG, PS), equalled the earliest ever recorded in the area, but birds were seen in only five other localities before the month-end, at Yateholme and in the Coxley Valley on 21st, Digley on 22nd, Little Don Valley on 27th and at Honley on 29th, the last a female which did not stay in the area.

In May and June, the species was found in a further ten localities, a slight increase on 1984, although there were again very few records from the eastern parts of the club area.

Singing males were located at Bretton Park, near the canal at Golcar (a first record for that site), Windybank Wood, Marton Wood, Digley/Bilberry (at least three, with two pairs proved breeding), Stortbes Hall Woods (on 8th May only), Turner Wood (two), Yateholme area (at least two pairs bred), Langsett area (at least three pairs), Hall Dike Valley (two pairs bred), Butternab Wood and Hinchliffe Mill.

The last records were of a family party at Digley on 18th July, followed by a female/juvenile in the Grimescar Valley on 19th September.

#### Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Migrant breeder (2).

A singing male and a female on Meltham Moor on 16th April (DMP) was the only record for that month, the next being males at Honley and Skelmanthorpe on 1st May, although neither remained to breed.

Birds were more widespread than in 1984, but numbers in some of the localities where birds were found were much reduced. Scammonden had only two pairs, compared with nine singing males the previous year, while in the Langsett area eight singing males were located on 24th June compared with eleven in 1984.

Breeding was proved at Deer Hill Moss (four pairs), Scammonden, Meltham Moor (two pairs), Winscar, Cartworth Moor, Harden Res. (two pairs), Crowden and Upper Windleden Res. (two pairs). Other pairs or singing males present at Snailsden (two), Wessenden (three), Ramsden Clough, Arrunden, Broadstones and March Haigh (up to four birds, but no proof of breeding). On 4th June a male was seen perched high on the Holme Moss TV transmitter.

After the breeding season birds were seen at Dewsbury S.F. on 23rd July and 25th August (two), Horbury Wyke on 26th and 27th August (two each), Brown's Edge and Scout Dike on 26th August, two on Lindley Moor on 8th and four on 9th September, with the last four at Scammonden on 11th September.

#### **Stonechat Saxicola torquata**

Scarce passage visitor. Occasional breeder (1).

In the early part of the year, birds were located near Winscar Res., a male on 12th January (DJS), at Tunnel End Marsden, a male on 16th March (DWB) and near Whitley Common, a female on 23rd March (JED).

On 17th July at Snailsden, a male was watched accompanied by two recently fledged juveniles (JMP), indicating breeding in the immediate vicinity, the first breeding record since 1977.



#### **Wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe**

Migrant breeder (2).

There was just one March record, of a male at Ingbirchworth on 31st, the next being a male and a female near Blackmoorfoot Res. on 1st April, followed on 3rd by one at Whitley Common and on 5th by a female near Linthwaite, a male at Oxgrain's Beck, one male and three females at Ringstone Edge, six at Brown's Edge and 28 males (with no females) at Broadstones, with 16 birds there on 6th April, when there were also 12 in the Digley area.

Breeding season reports were few, with pairs reported from Holme Moss (one), several near March Haigh and common in the valley of Crowden Great Brook, Marsden Golf Course (a pair with a juvenile on 1st August) and a juvenile near the Flouch Inn on 20th July. Birds were also noted during the breeding season at Snailsden, West End Moss, Langsett, Board Hill, Harden Clough, Royd Edge Clough, Deer Hill, Upper Windleden Res., Wessenden, South Crosland, Cottonstones and Beddington, in many of which breeding probably occurred.

No post-breeding concentrations greater than six birds (at Broadstones on 25th August) were reported. The last were a male at Ingbirchworth on 13th October and eight on Emley Moor on 15th October.

#### **Ring Ousel Turdus torquatus**

Migrant breeder (2).

The first was a female on 23rd March at Digley, where numbers peaked at nine on

the late date of 28th April. At least two pairs attempted to breed in the area, one of them successfully. A second pair had four eggs on 18th May, which were found broken on 27th May.

Elsewhere breeding occurred at Wessenden, March Haigh, Hades, Upper Windleden Res., Ramsden Clough (one pair each) and Crowden Great Brook (four pairs), with additional birds seen in suitable habitat at West End Moss, Snailsden, Chew Valley, Rishworth Moor and in the Little Don Valley.

None were reported after 4th June.

#### **Blackbird *Turdus merula***

Resident breeder (5). Numerous winter visitor.

Very few records received.

A pair was in bracken at Buckstones on 10th April.

Evidence of an autumnal influx at Oakes, where 15+ were found in an area in which normally only four to six are present. 42 fed on hawthorns in Dick Clough on 3rd November and 16 at Silkstone S.F. on 29th December. At Horbury Wyke 16 were counted on 27th October and 40 on 1st December.

In the Longwood Valley, two partial albinos were noted, one of which, on 18th March, had white markings around the face and a wheater-white rump.

#### **Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris***

Numerous passage and winter visitor. Has bred.

In early January up to 1000 birds remained in the Gunthwaite area from December 1984, with 400 at Clayton West and over 200 at Cawthorne on 1st, 300 at Bretton on 3rd, 100 at Elland on 5th and 700 at Silkstone on 6th as other three-figure totals in the first week. With severe cold weather persisting for the rest of the month however, birds began to move out of the area and numbers were much reduced. The only flocks exceeding a hundred birds were 150 moving west over Salendine Nook on 18th and 150 grounded birds at Kirkheaton on 27th January, when 50 were also in the Cawthorne area. Otherwise, 45 moving south at Blackmoorfoot on 19th and 36 at Horbury Wyke on 13th were the highest January totals reported. Birds were noted during the month in gardens at Lindley Moor, Dalton and Almondbury. Numbers remained low throughout February, with 80 at Cawthorne on 3rd, 400 at Cat Hill on 5th and 200 in the Whitley Common/Broadstones area on 22nd the highest totals in a month when birds were recorded on only ten dates.

In the first ten days of March, birds were reported from only Ingbirchworth (46 on 2nd), Whitley Common (100+ on 3rd and 150 on 10th), Cawthorne (30 on 2nd), Denby Dale (five on 8th), Bretton Park (140 on 10th) and Blackmoorfoot Res. (28 north-west on 10th). Thereafter numbers began to increase with 560 reported from Spicer House Lane on 11th, 60 at Cannon Hall and 50 at Almondbury on 16th, 90 at Denby Dale on 18th and up to 1200 in the Ingbirchworth area on 23rd and small flocks at several localities on 24th. Only birds remained in the Ingbirchworth area on 31st March, whilst the only significant numbers reported in April were 200 at Carr Lane, Ingbirchworth on 3rd and 5th, 100 flying west at Outlane on 4th and 50 at Bretton on 6th. No birds were reported in April after two on 16th at Digley, but at one locality on 1st May, a pair were behaving territorially and 16 were at Oxspring on 16th May.

Twelve birds were reported moving south at Almondbury on 30th August, an extremely early date, and other birds were noted on 10th September (parties of four and six) in the same area with three at Castle Hill on 17th and four or five on pasture at Cinderhills, Holmfirth on 18th September. It would be interesting to know the origins of some of these birds.

Although two birds were observed moving west, again at Almondbury on 7th October, further arrivals were not noted until 19th, when there were at least 30 at Bretton and a few passing over Oakes and Crosland Hill. Birds were then reported from 23rd onwards, with Gadding Moor, Skelmanthorpe, Denby Dale, Horbury Wyke, Blackmoorfoot, Ingbirchworth and Honley all producing records before the month-end, but the only large number reported was 500 at Denby Dale on 29th.

There was a large arrival at the beginning of November, with up to 1000 moving west over Hazlehead on 2nd, 400 west over Langsett and 500 west at Ingbirchworth with 400 grounded at Gunthwaite on 3rd and smaller numbers elsewhere on both dates, but no other significant numbers during the month except for 142 west at Almondbury on 13th.

In December, north-westerly movement was recorded at Blackmoorfoot on 8th (343) and 12th (seven), at Lindley Moor on 14th (11 west) and at Skelmanthorpe on 16th (50), 18th, 19th and 28th, but grounded birds were very scarce especially in the second half of the month, when the weather became much colder, with 150 at Horbury Wyke on 1st, 120 at Blackmoorfoot from 7th to 12th and 40 at Royd Moor on 15th as the largest numbers reported.

### **Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos***

Resident breeder (4).

On 3rd January, parties of 30 and 15 were observed moving north-west at Almondbury.

Birds were scarce in the first winter period of the year, doubtless as a result of the hard weather. Only three could be found in Bretton Park on 27th January. Three were in song at Cannon Hall and one at Silkstone S.F. on 3rd February, whilst on 24th March birds were in song at lower altitudes when those at Digley and Winscar were still silent.

### **Redwing *Turdus iliacus***

Numerous passage and winter visitor.

The year began with over 200 in the Gunthwaite area, 30 at Shepley, 20 at Almondbury and 26 moving west at Blackmoorfoot on 1st January. On 5th, 100 were at Eland G.P. and 150 at Gunthwaite Dam, with 82 at Cawthorne on 6th, but the only other flocks approaching a hundred during the month were at Selendine Nook on 17th and at Kirkheaton on 27th. Birds frequented the town centre and suburban gardens during the cold spell from mid-month onwards. None were reported in the first half of February and there were records from only seven localities in the second half with very low maxima of only 47 at Cannon Hall on 13th and 50 in the Longwood Valley on 22nd.

Birds remained scarce throughout March with birds reported on only six dates, including 80 at Banks Hall on 2nd, 40 at Cannon Hall on 3rd, 30 at Tunnel End, Marsden on 17th and 65 at Silkstone on 24th, when a bird was singing at Gunthwaite. A few were reported from Bretton on 6th April and the last was a single bird at Digley on 22nd April.

The first returning birds were three moving south-west at Blackmoorfoot on 7th October, followed by one at Thongsbridge on 9th, one at Outlane and five at Ingbirchworth on 10th, 20 beside the canal at Golcar and 60 passing west at Outlane on 13th, with 90 moving west at the last site on 14th. Although arrivals of birds continued to be noted throughout October, no large numbers were involved, maximum being 90 at Horbury Wyke on 27th.

Numbers in November remained low, the only three figure counts being 100 in the Longwood Valley on 24th and 170 at Ossett Spa S.F. on 27th, otherwise a maximum of thirty reported from only six other localities and 46 moving west at Almondbury on 13th.



The largest flock reported in December was of 70 at Horbury Wyke on 1st, followed by 42 at Blackmoorfoot on 12th and 30 at Dewsbury S.F. and Gunthwaite respectively on 15th and 27th, otherwise only seven other records of mainly single figures and very scarce as the year came to a close.

**Mistle Thrush Turdus viscivorus**

Resident breeder (3).

Few reports received before the breeding season, when there seem to have been good numbers.

Several sizeable parties noted in the post-breeding season: 60+ in the Little Don Valley on 6th July, 15 at Digley on 14th July, with 28 feeding there on Rowan berries on 27th September, 64 feeding on freshly ploughed land at Whitley House on 3rd August, 16 at Cannon Hall on 19th September, 14 at Yateholme on 22nd September, 42 on Rowans at Royd Edge Clough on 29th September, 20 near Slaithwaite on 2nd October and 38 in Holme Styes Wood on 7th October.

Movement was noted on 18th September over Newsome, with 23 to the south-west and at Crosland Hill where about 30 moved west.

**Grasshopper Warbler Locustella naevia**

Migrant breeder (1).

The only record was of one reeling at Bank Wood, Emley on 7th July (DB).

**Sedge Warbler Acrocephalus schoenobaenus**

Migrant breeder (1).

A singing male was seen at Ingbirchworth Res. on 6th May (JMP) and during May, one sang at Horbury Wyke while three others were singing nearby alongside the R. Calder at Horbury (DP), with one still performing on 2nd June (CCT).

Blackmoorfoot Res. had single birds on 6th May and 11th August and Scout Dike Res. had records on three dates in August (MW).

**Reed Warbler Acrocephalus scirpaceus**

Rare passage visitor.

A male sang and was well seen at Ingbirchworth Res. on 6th May (JMP), on which date a singing male Sedge Warbler was also present.

**Lesser Whitethroat Sylvia curruca**

Migrant breeder (1).

Singing males were heard and seen in seven localities, mainly in the east of the area as follows: at Skelmanthorpe on 1st May, Gunthwaite Dam (18th and 25th May), Coxley Valley (2nd June), Horbury Wyke (3rd June), near Oeffer Wood (10th and 16th June) and Stockmoor Common (22nd June, when a second bird was also present).

The remaining singing male was beside the canal near Leeds Road Playing Fields. First heard on 7th May, it remained in the area, being heard and seen regularly to the end of July, but no female appeared (DWB). This site was frequented by a singing male every year from 1973 to 1979, with no evidence to suggest that a female was present.

One was at Scout Dike Res. on 26th August.

### **Whitethroat** Sylvia communis

Migrant breeder (2).

The species was very late in arriving, with the first bird not located until 12th May at Stocksmoor, followed on 16th May by a singing male at Elland G.P. and three at Ossett Spa S.F.. Breeding was confirmed only at the last locality, where a pair and four young were present on 7th July, near Netherton (Wakefield) with a pair feeding young on 24th June and in the Coxley Valley, where young were being fed on 2nd and 6th July.

Elsewhere, singing males in May/June were heard at Bretton Park, Bretton Cross-roads, Deffer Wood, Longwood Valley, Horbury, Hayland Bank, Oxspring (one each), Elland G.P. and Horbury Wyke (two each) and the Coxley Valley (five) with other reports from the Hall Dike Valley, the Storthes Hall area, Morton Wood and the Holme Valley.

The last was one in the Coxley Valley on 29th August.

### **Garden Warbler** Sylvia borin

Migrant breeder (2).

One at Bretton Park on 5th April (JMD, DS) was the earliest ever recorded in the club area by almost three weeks. The next was not recorded until 6th May at Deffer Wood, followed on 12th by birds at Stoneycliffe Wood, Gunthwaite Clough Wood (two) and Golcar, but general arrival was even later, continuing into June.

Singing males in the area totalled forty, including five each at Bretton, Deffer and in the Holme Valley, an increase on 1984, but breeding was proved at only one locality.

Three were caught and ringed at Blackmoorfoot in August, with all three birds being present on 10th, the latest date.

### **Blackcap** Sylvia atricapilla

Migrant breeder (2/3). Scarce winter visitor.

Although the first bird was noted at Bretton Park on the early date of 5th April, few other localities received birds before May. Indeed, birds continued to arrive into June, with the first of three singing males in the Longwood Valley not being recorded until 14th June.

The species is much more widespread and occurs in a greater variety of habitats than the previous species and over 100 singing males were reported from all parts of the club area, although not all of these would breed successfully. Included were at least nine at Bretton Park, six in Deffer Wood, 15 in the Holme Valley and five in the Coxley Valley.

Blackmoorfoot had birds on four autumn dates, the last on 14th October. Other October records came from the canal near Golcar (a male and a female on 13th) and the Longwood Valley (a male on 5th, a female on 18th).

A male visited a bird bath in a Rastrick garden on 16th December (JFR).

### **Yellow-browed Warbler** Phylloscopus inornatus

Rare visitor.

One discovered in Shaw Wood, Outlane at 1400 hours on 27th September (CCT) gave only brief, but satisfactory, views to its finder and to one other observer (JB) on two or three occasions up to 1820 hours.

The second record for the area, the first having been at Bretton Park on 2nd November 1980.

### **Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix***

Migrant breeder (1).

The first to arrive was one at Bretton Park on 5th May, followed by two at Meltham Mills on 8th May. The first did not remain and breeding was not proved at the second locality.

Twelve singing males were located as follows: Rake's Dyke (two in June), Digley Bottom (one in May and June), Turner Wood (two), Longwood Valley (two - one pair bred successfully), Beaumont Park (two - one pair definitely bred, a second pair almost certainly), Holmbridge (one), near Holmfirth (one), and near the Flouch Inn (one on 14th May).

At Drop Clough, where birds were present in 1984, none could be found, but some of the areas where birds had occurred last year appear not to have been checked.

Away from the breeding areas, a bird was at Horbury Wyke on 3rd July.

### **Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita***

Migrant breeder (2).

Apart from a probable at Denby Dale on 6th March, none were noted until 3rd April at Slaithwaite, followed by at least three on 5th April at Bretton Park and one at Deffer Wood on 6th.

Thereafter both Bretton Park and Deffer Wood held five singing males in early May, with four at Bank Wood, Emley, an increase on the previous year. Up to 24 singing males were located in some fifteen areas, most of them to the south and south-east of Huddersfield.

Blackmoorfoot had just one record, which was also the last for the area, on 28th October. Other records during that month were at Oskes on 4th and 5th, when a bird was also noted at Horbury Wyke.

### **Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus***

Migrant breeder (4).

In contrast to most of the other summer visitors, Willow Warblers turned up earlier than usual and, in many areas, in very good numbers. The first arrivals were noted on 5th April, with at least five singing males at Bretton Park, three at Elland G.P. and one at Digley. There were 23 singing males in the Hall Dyke Valley by 12th April, at least ten at Bretton and twelve at Deffer Wood on 17th, six at Brockholes on 18th, 15 at Scout Dyke Res., ten at Royd Moor Res. and five at Rowley Wood, Lepton all on 21st, with high counts at other woodlands before the month-end.

Blackmoorfoot had birds present from 18th April, with maxima caught and ringed of 23 on 17th July, 13 on 10th August and five on 13th September. Bad weather severely curtailed ringing activities from mid-August onwards. One present on 1st October was the first for the locality in that month.

The last was one at Horbury Wyke on 7th October.

Several observers commented on the lack of birds in gardens in the late summer, probably indicating low success in a very cold and wet breeding season.

### **Goldcrest *Regulus regulus***

Resident breeder (3). Common passage visitor.

Birds were present in several woodlands in the first winter period, but only small numbers were involved.

In the breeding season, singing males were noted at Bretton Park (three), Deffer Wood (more than ten, with juveniles seen on 19th June), at Cannon Hall, Langsett, Yateholme and even in a garden at Dalton on 8th March. Bred in Storther's Hall Woods.

Many areas had small numbers in the autumn/second winter period, with a maximum of ten at Yateholme on 2nd November feeding with a mixed tit flock.

Evidence of an influx in the Langwood Valley on 13th and in the Oakes/Salendine Nook/Lindley Moor area on 22nd/23rd September, which was also reflected at Blackmoorfoot, where there were at least five individuals on 12th October. Reported as being more frequent than in 1984 along the canal at Golcar.

#### **Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata**

Migrant breeder (3).

Two in the Langsett area on 5th May were the first arrivals reported, but it was not until near the end of the month and even into June that birds were well distributed.

About 40 pairs were located in about 25 areas, but breeding evidence was received for only 10 pairs.

The last were two in the Coxley Valley on 16th October (JG), the latest ever recorded in the area.

#### **Pied Flycatcher Ficedula hypoleuca**

Rare passage visitor, usually in spring and occasional breeder.

After the exceptional occurrences of 1984, the situation in 1985 was disappointing, but still encouraging when compared with previous years.

A male near Deanhead Church on 18th April (Mr. Piggott) was the earliest date for the area, and was followed by a second male at Bretton Park, on 21st (DP) and 23rd April (DJS). A male in the same locality on 1st May (DP) may have been a different individual. Another male occurred on 8th May at Smith Wood, near Storther's Hall (DS & VAI), but could not be found on subsequent visits.

At Blackmoorfoot Res. a juvenile was caught and ringed on 31st July (MLD).

#### **Long-tailed Tit Aegithalos caudatus**

Resident breeder (2).

Following the low numbers at the end of 1984, the highest numbers were eleven at Bretton Park on 3rd January, six at Brockholes on 6th January and seven at Silkstone on 3rd February, otherwise only very small numbers were reported.

Pairs bred at Bretton Park (three), Coxley Valley, Woodsome, Hall Dike (two), Dean Wood, Sinking Wood, Morton Wood, Lepton Great Wood and Silkstone, with single birds or pairs also noted in the breeding season at Blacker Wood, Stockmoor Common, Bank Wood and Stonycliffe Wood, representing a slight increase on the previous year.

Post-breeding parties were still relatively small, the largest being 23 at Lepton Great Wood and 16 at Silkstone both on 8th September, 16 at Magdale on 31st August and 12 at Bretton on 30th December. No other double figure counts were received, but six visited an Edgerton garden on 18th November with five there on 14th December.

### Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

Resident breeder (2).

After its poor showing last year, there was a considerable increase in records of this species. In the early months, birds visited gardens at Almondbury and Golcar (two birds), and were also located at Silkstone, Cawthorne, Bretton Park, Molly Carr Wood, Magdale, Blacker Wood, Langsett and Elland Gravel Pits.

In the breeding season, pairs bred in the Hall Dike Valley (three), Dean Wood and Morton Wood, a pair was courtship feeding at North Dean on 11th May, adults with fledged young were seen at Scout Dike Res. on 14th and at Silkstone on 26th August; additional single birds or pairs were seen at Scissett, Bank Wood, Bretton Park, Horbury, Deffer Wood, Skelmanthorpe, Langsett (two areas), Stocksmoor Common, Stonycliffe Wood and Yateholme and it is likely that breeding occurred in at least some of these localities.

There were five records at the end of the year, but perhaps indicative of a revival was one on a garden feeder at Hinchliffe Mill on 15th December, the first to be recorded there since 1982.

### Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Resident breeder (3).

This is a much under-reported species and confirmed breeding was reported only from Bretton Park (two pairs), Storther's Hall Wood, Scout Dike Res., Yateholme (where good numbers were noted both in the early part of the year and during the breeding season) and in deciduous woodland in the Longwood Valley. High numbers were also present in Deffer Wood, without any evidence of breeding being obtained.

At Dakes, two flew south on 5th and one on 12th October and two birds were present at Blackmoorfoot on five dates in December.

### Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Resident breeder (5).

Flocks of 20 at Ingbirchworth and Bretton Park in January and at Silkstone in February. Maximum reported were 40+ in Bretton Park on 24th February.

On 13th October 17 flew west over the moor at Deer Hill.

No reports were received which throw any light on breeding season performance, nor were any flocks reported in the latter part of the year.

### Great Tit *Parus major*

Resident breeder (4).

A flock of more than 20 in Bretton Park on 24th February was the largest reported in the early part of the year.

No evidence was submitted to indicate the species' breeding status.

Woodland at Wholstone Moor held a flock of 25 on 12th October, of which twelve moved off westwards over the moor.

### Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Resident breeder (1).

After a disappointing demise in 1984, this species was proved to breed again this year. D. Manchester discovered breeding pairs in Beaumont Park and at Big Valley, Netherton, whilst birds were heard calling in Bretton Park in May (JL) and at Hagg Wood in June (D.Man), and one was seen in the Coxley Valley on 29th June and 11th August (JG).

A Netherton bird table was visited by a single bird on 1st and 28th September, on the latter date on 24 occasions in an hour, taking bread, peanuts and cake mix; at the same locality two birds were present on 3rd October and were observed to hide peanuts in holes in a wall and cover them (AD).

### Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Resident breeder (2-3).

Birds were reported from some 25 localities, with pairs recorded in the breeding season at Bretton Park (probably at least three), Gunthwaite Dam, Deffer Wood, Derby Dale, Morton Wood, Thunderbridge, Hall Dike Valley (three), Dean Wood, Sinking Wood and Storthes Hall Wood.

This is a considerable advance on the previous year but many birds/pairs must still be going unreported and unrecorded.

One was caught and ringed at Blackmoorfoot on 25th July.

### Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Resident breeder (2).

Reported in the early part of the year from only eight localities, in each case one or two birds being involved, apart from six at Gunthwaite Hall on 22nd January.

During the breeding season, however, when the species can be extremely secretive and inconspicuous, records were received from many woodlands, including pairs in as many as 18 locations in the Hall Dike/Netherton/Honley Wood area, three pairs in the Holme Styes area, three pairs at Yateholme, at least four pairs in Storthes Hall Woods and a pair nesting in a garden at Hinchliffe Mill.

Records became much more frequent from October onwards, with evidence of an influx on 12th when four were present at Blackmoorfoot and seven flying southwest at Wholestone Moor, with two also southwest at Ingbirchworth on 19th October. Two flew high to the north-east at Yateholme on 2nd November.

One visited an oak tree in an Almondbury garden regularly throughout October and November and two were very active in the grounds of Greenhead College on 14th November, with two in Greenhead Park on 23rd December.

### Magpie *Pica pica*

Resident breeder (4).

Numbers roosting at Blackmoorfoot were very low in the early part of the year, with 36 on 5th February and 53 on 29th March as maxima. Higher numbers were present at the year end with a maximum count of 86 on 2nd December. At a former large roost at Holywell Green, only 29 were present on 23rd March. Other roosts at Linthwaite and in the Longwood Valley held respectively 70 to 80 and a maximum of 60 birds during both winter periods. A flock of about 50 birds was observed going to roost at Thornhill on 14th October and 48 were at Cawthorne on 2nd November, on which date a flock of 30+ was seen in the Yateholme area.

No breeding season records were received, but personal observations would seem to indicate a considerable increase in numbers in suburban area and a continuing extension towards the town centre.

### Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Resident breeder (4).

Only two reports relating to this species were received. The Blackmoorfoot maximum of 22 on 23rd September was rather lower than usual.

120 flew northwest at Outlane on 1st October.

### Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Resident breeder (5).

Few records received and none relating to breeding.

Flocks of 500 at Springwood, near Bretton on 2nd October and 1500 on 5th December at Emley Moor.

### Corrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Resident breeder (2-3).

Continues to increase and is met with in practically all habitats, including built-up areas, where breeding is taking place. Flocks of up to 20 were reported quite frequently, with 68 at Whitley Common on 10th March, 43 on 10th and 110 on 23rd November on Lindley Moor.

The roost which was discovered in the Longwood Valley near Outlane last year held 160 birds on 9th February, 70 on 15th April and in November 110 (including a white-winged individual) on 1st, 120 on 2nd, 140 on 15th and 180 on 24th (CCT).

An individual showing characteristics of *C.c.corone*, referred to as Hooded Crow, was recorded at Ossett Spa S.F. on 16th November in the company of three Carrion Crows (JRS).

### Raven *Corvus corax*

Rare visitor.

One was at Swinden Plantation, near Langsett, on 24th February (JL, JJS). The second fully authenticated record for the area, following immediately on the first in May 1984.

### Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Resident breeder (5).

Once again, no counts were made of birds roosting in Huddersfield Town Centre.

In March, over 200 were at Ingbirchworth on 23rd and 130 at Ringstone Edge on 27th.

On 4th June, many hundreds were roosting in bushes at Scout Dike Reservoir and about 500 were observed apparently going to roost in trees at the western end of Ingbirchworth Res., where about 3000 were present on 14th August (BA).

About 350 juveniles at Blackmoorfoot Res. on 13th June continued the pattern of occurrence in that month established in 1979. The autumn maximum there was 310 on 12th September.

### House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Resident breeder (5).

No records received, but no change in status apparent.

### Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Resident breeder (2-3).

Records were received from only a dozen localities, at half of which birds were seen on only a single date.

Breeding season records came from Blackmoorfoot, Bretton Park, Denby Dale, Skelmanthorpe, Ingbirchworth, Elland and Almondbury.

No large flocks were reported, maxima being ten near Whitley Common in January and February and 20 near Midhope on 17th November.

All records of this species would be welcomed in future years.

### Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Resident breeder (4). Numerous winter visitor.

Few noteworthy flocks were reported in the early months. Bretton Park held about 100 on 3rd January, including one party of 60, but only 30 were present on 27th, when 125 were counted at Cannon Hall feeding mainly on beech mast. Also in January, 65 were at Harden Clough. The maximum count was 277 at Bretton Park on 9th March. Thirty flew east, at Elland G.P. on 10th February.

The only report relating to the breeding season was of eight nests found at Blackmoorfoot in May and June.

Autumnal movements were noted at Wholestone Moor on 12th and 13th October, with respectively 148 and 45 all moving in a south-westerly direction and at Blackmoorfoot on 20th October, when 23 flew south and on 3rd November with 23 flying west.

Flocks in the second winter period were larger than in the early months, with over 300 near Midhope on 17th November and 100 there on 18th December, and 80 at West Bretton S.F. on 28th November.

#### **Brambling Fringilla montifringilla**

Uncommon to common winter visitor.

This species continued to be scarce in the early months of the year, no more than two being reported from only four localities in January. About 30 were in the Yateholme area on 19th February, but it was not until late March at Digley that any large numbers were found. Counts there included 38 on 23rd, peaked at 100 on 25th March, then declined to 42 on 6th April, 15 on 10th, a single female on 23rd and one male on 26th April (the last of the spring). Other late birds were a female near the Floueh Inn on 20th April, ten at Yateholme on 21st and 'several' at Meltham Mills on 22nd.

The first returning bird of the autumn was one at Meltham on 2nd October, followed by two near Broadstones on 10th, at Blackmoorfoot on 14th and at Bretton Park on 19th October. 19 flew west at Blackmoorfoot on 20th October, after which one or two were present there on only six dates to the year end. Two flew west at Wholestone Moor on 22nd October.

At the year end, birds occurred more frequently and in greater numbers than in 1984, with single figures at Ingbirchworth, Hayland Bank Wood and West Bretton S.F. in November. Larger parties and flocks were 30 at Bretton Park on 3rd November, near Midhope 20 on 17th November and 100 on 18th December and 50 at Ingbirchworth on 29th December, with single figures also in December at Silkstone S.F., Almondbury, Royd Moor and in the Holme Valley.

None were reported from gardens in the area during the year.

#### **Greenfinch Carduelis chloris**

Resident breeder (4).

Few observers bother to report occurrences of this species!

In the early months no large flocks were reported, the largest parties being 15 at Cannon Hall and Blackmoorfoot on 19th February; at the latter locality 39 were caught and ringed on 10th March and at least one pair attempted to breed.

The only flocks at the year end were 80 near Broadstones on 19th October and 200 in the same locality on 16th November.

No movements were reported.

#### **Goldfinch Carduelis carduelis**

Resident breeder (2-3).

There were few reports in the early months, maxima being eight at Ingbirchworth on 8th and ten at Yateholme on 19th February.

Breeding occurred at Yateholme, in the Longwood Valley (at least two pairs), Prospect Mills (Longwood), Hall Dike, Meltham Mills, Marsden, Hade Edge and Hades, with singing males in May/June in gardens at Dalton, Lindley Moor and



Birchcliffe and also at Silkstone S.F. (two), Deffer Wood, Meltham Bar (two), Cannon Hall (two) and Bretton Park; birds were also present during the breeding season at Digley, Blackmoorfoot, Denby Dale, Bretton crossroads, Skelmanthorpe, Clayton West, Lower Cumberworth and Slaithwaite, at some of which breeding probably took place.

Post-breeding season gatherings included 30+ at Magdale on 31st August and 22 at Black Brook on 15th September.

Autumn movement was noted at Wholestone Moor on 12th and 13th October, when respectively 34 passed southwest and 18 west, but no corresponding movements occurred at Blackmoorfoot, where birds did occur on many dates from 14th April (five west), with the only double figure counts on 25th July (18) and 28th August (11).

Very scarce in the area from mid-October onwards, the only reports being seven at Crosland Moor and two at Royd Moor Res. on 18th and 19th October respectively, with singles at Blackmoorfoot on one date in November and two dates in December.

### Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Resident breeder (1). Uncommon winter visitor.

In the early months recorded in much better numbers than in 1984. Deffer Wood had about 50 on 12th January, with smaller numbers to 22nd February, about a dozen at Cawthorne Park Wood on 1st January, when 30 were near Langsett which also had 100 on 10th February, 60 in larches at Bretton Park on 19th January, 18 at Silkstone S.F. and six at Cannon Hall on 3rd February and 160 (with Redpolls) at Yateholme on 17th February, with 80 there on 24th and eight still present on 10th March. Regular at Elland G.P. until 15th February, with a maximum of 40 on 5th January.

Several pairs were reported as breeding in the Langsett area (BBSG) and adults and juveniles were seen at Yateholme and Deffer Wood in July.

In the latter half of the year, small numbers (less than ten) were encountered at Meltham on 6th September, at Blackmoorfoot on 7th October and 3rd November, Bretton Park on 19th October, Langsett and Marsden on 20th October, near High Hoyland on 25th October, at Silkstone S.F. and Hoyland Bank Wood on 2nd November, Ossett Spa S.F. on 5th and 28th November, Elland on 20th November, the canal at Golcar on 3rd November and 27th December and at Slaithwaite on 26th November. Larger numbers occurred as follows: at Bretton Park 12 on 3rd November, 150 on 6th, 70 on 27th and 100 on 30th December, and c.40 at Gunthwaite Dam on 3rd November.

Obvious movements took place, mainly in October, and were recorded at Lindley Moor with five south on 29th September, Oakes one south-east on 14th July and two north on 19th October, Blackmoorfoot one south on 31st August and 21 also south on 5th October, in the Longwood Valley in October one west on 5th, one west on 12th, two north-west on 19th, one west on 22nd and in November six west on 1st, at Wholestone Moor also in October one west on 6th, nine west on 12th, nine west on 13th and two west on 22nd, at Almondbury 13 south on 7th October and at Ingbirchworth one south-east on 19th October.

### Linnet *Carduelis cannablis*

Resident breeder (4). Partial migrant.

The first birds were recorded at Cannon Hall on 4th March when 40 were present, followed by one at Blackmoorfoot on 9th March. Returned in April to regular breeding sites at Dalton on 16th and Marsden on 18th, whilst in the same month flocks were present of 30 at Horbury S.F. on 15th and over 100 at Huddingley on 24th. Over 40 were beside the canal at Golcar on 5th May.

The largest autumn gatherings were 180 at Broadstones on 2nd September, 40 at Ingbirchworth on 15th September, and in October 30 at Ossett Spa S.F. on 9th, 90 at Grime Lane (Broadstones) on 10th and 50 at Horbury S.F. on 23rd.

There were no November or December records.

### **Twite *Carduelis flavirostris***

Resident and partial migrant breeder (3).

The first returning bird was at Blackmoorfoot on 9th March, but there were no further records until 5th April at Oxgrains Beck and Broadstones and 6th April at Rishworth Moor, Winscar and Booth Dam Quarry, followed by birds at Issues Road on 9th, Buckstones on 10th and Whitley Common on 21st April. In each case only low single figure were involved. The only localities to have flocks into double figures in spring were March Haigh, with 34 on 18th April and 23 on 6th May and Digley, where 14 were counted on 3rd May.

Bred at Deer Hill (at least four pairs), Bord Hill, Upper Windjeden Res., Harden Res., Crowden Great Brook and in the Upper Little Don Valley and most probably at several other traditional sites which appear not to have been checked.

Post-breeding season flocks were difficult to come by, with only 19 at Deer Hill on 26th July, 40 in Spicer House Lane on 5th August, 70 at Digley on 27th September and 108 in Grime Lane (Broadstones) on 10th October being reported, probably indicative of a below average breeding season.

### **Redpoll *Carduelis flammea***

Resident breeder (2-3). Uncommon winter visitor.

The largest numbers reported in the early months were 40 at Cannon Hall on 5th January, 100 at Honley on 24th January, 220 at Langsett on 13th February and about 200 in the Yateholme area from 19th February to 10th March, reducing to 120 on 21st April. About 120 of those at Langsett (DP) and many of those at Yateholme (BA,JB,CCT,GMV) showed characteristics of the Northern race of C.f. flammea, colloquially known as Mealy Redpoll. Smaller numbers occurred in many localities.

Bred at Yateholme, Blackmoorfoot, Digley and Swinden Plantation and also present in small numbers in the breeding season at Deffer Wood, Bank Wood (Emley), Scammonden, Marsden, Winscar and Meltham Mills.

Towards the year end the species was much scarcer, the only parties of note being 20 at Horbury on 13th October, 27 on 27th and 22 on 29th November at Ossett Spa S.F., with only very small numbers elsewhere.

Movement was recorded at Blackmoorfoot on two dates in September (maximum 16 south on 20th) and two dates in October (maximum 20 south on 5th) and at Wholestone Moor, where south-westerly passage occurred in October on 12th (29) and 13th (18).

### **Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra***

Resident breeder (1). Uncommon passage visitor.

A better year for the species. What was probably a family party, comprising six birds, was seen at Deffer Wood on 1st June, with further sightings of a similar number on 9th and 27th July (DB,JE & SMD,DJS). A single bird had been seen in the same locality on 6th April (JMD). Three immatures were feeding on pine cones on 16th June at Swinden Plantation (JED), where there were 18 on 30th June (JL), at least 35 on 13th July (DJS), with 22 remaining in the area on 27th October (DJS).

A flock of about 80, consisting mainly of immature birds but with some adults of both sexes, fed on larch cones in the Yateholme area on 30th June, with 20 in the same area on 9th July and one still present on 22nd September (JED).

South-easterly passage was observed at Oakes on 14th July (four) and on 5th October (one bird), whilst another singleton passed to the west at Wholestone Moor on 6th October (CCT).



**Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula***

Resident breeder (2-3).

Reported from 28 localities, of which 21 were in the breeding season. Breeding probably took place at many of these, but young were seen only at Silkstone S.F. An attempt was made again at Blackmoorfoot, but sadly the nest was plundered.

At least three pairs were in the north-eastern part of Deffer Wood and at least two pairs each at Bretton Park, in the Longwood Valley and in the Derby Dale, Skelmanthorpe and Cumberworth areas.

The largest parties reported were seven at Honley in January and at Horbury Wyke on 17th February, and eight in Blacker Wood on 8th December and in the Longwood Valley on several dates.

**Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes***

Rare visitor.

This species continues to tantalise a few fortunate observers and to frustrate the rest.

One by the lower lake at Bretton on 19th April (DPH), one drinking from a pool in Stony Cliffe Wood on 22nd June (DB) and two, on 24th November, again in a sweet chestnut tree at Cannon Hall (NL), where a probable was heard on 2nd March (BA, GBS).

This secretive species must be a strong candidate for probable breeding in the future, if it is not already doing so!

**Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis***

Rare winter visitor.

One flew from the side of Ingbirchworth Res. on 1st January (DP), on which date five were discovered at the roadside about two kilometres to the west-south-west near Whitley Common (JC). After further sightings of these five birds on 11th (JMP) and 23rd January (FJW), eight were located there on 3rd February (JED).

One flew over Langsett Res. on 10th November (JH).

### **Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella***

Resident breeder (3).

The highest numbers in the early months were recorded at Silkstone S.F., where there were over 20 on 1st January and a flock of 45 on 2nd March, when four males were also in song there. About 15 were still present on 24th March. The only other double figure counts were 16 at Horbury Wyke on 7th March, 25 at Lepton on 10th March and 18 at Ravensthorpe Tip on 2nd April.

The only breeding season reports indicated good numbers well distributed around Deffer Wood and presence at Honley, Stocks Moor Common and Ingbirchworth.

17 at Silkstone S.F. on 29th December was the only flock reported in the later months.

### **Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus***

Resident breeder (2).

Recorded very infrequently in the early months, the only reports being of 13 at Broadstones on 11th January and one at Cowcliffe on 16th February, the latter a most unusual locality. The next was one on 17th March at Blackmoorfoot, where a pair was present in June, and one or two on many dates from July to September.

Singing males and/or pairs were located at Elland G.P. (three), Bretton Park, Scammonden (two), Deer Hill, Broadstones, Ingbirchworth (two), Scout Dike (four), Royd Moor (three), Gunthwaite Dam, Oxspring, Boshaw Whams, Ringstone Edge, Hall Dike Valley (three), March Haigh, Tunnel End Res., Redbrook Res., Crowden Great Brook and New Mill, which represent a slight increase on 1984.

The only birds reported after the breeding season were at Blackmoorfoot, which had singles on eight dates in October, plus three flying south on 5th, on five dates in November and on seven dates in December, with two on 28th and three on 8th.

### **Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra***

Resident breeder (1).

There were rather more records than in 1984, but no proof of breeding.

One was on Flockton Moor on 25th February (GBS) and one at Lepton on 6th March (DCT). One flew west on 29th April at Ponker Farm, Skelmanthorpe, where birds have occurred spasmodically in previous years (DB).

Two seen on 10th May near Emley in what has been a traditional breeding area (GBS). In June singing males were present at Hall Dike, Greaves Head and near South Crosland, the last a former breeding area (DM). Three, one of which was a singing male, were near Ingbirchworth on 28th July (JMD).

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B. Armitage

## PAGET'S POCHARD - AN AYTHYA HYBRID AT BLACKMOORFOOT

At 1630 hours on 5th March 1985 as I arrived at the hide at Blackmoorfoot Reservoir, I was confronted with an Aythya duck which was sitting on the water at ca. 30 yds range. The bird was facing in the direction of the hide and through binoculars the whole of the head and breast were seen to be a rich chestnut colour. Obviously the first thought was towards male Ferruginous Duck Aythya nyroca but when it turned the bird revealed a brown-grey mantle with paler flanks and greyish undertail coverts, and the eye was seen to be golden-yellow, thereby ruling out the possibility of that species. The only reasonable thought left open to me was a hybrid, but since I was not conversant with Aythya hybrids the following description was taken.

### Description

The whole of the head and neck was a rich chestnut colour, the breast being a darker chestnut than the head. Mantle dark brown-grey, much darker than male Pochard, A. ferina and contrasting markedly with the paler grey flanks. Undertail coverts greyish but rest of ventral region black. In flight displayed a prominent white wing bar - much as Tufted Duck, A. fuligula.

### Soft Parts

Eye, bright golden-yellow. The bill shape was identical to Pochard but showed the following characters; tip black succeeded by a thin white band which turned pale blue-grey and became progressively darker towards the base. A typical male Pochard differs by having the base of the bill black, contrasting sharply with the pale-blue grey.

### General appearance and size

Although the head was more peaked than a male Pochard the rest of the bird's outline was very similar to that species. In size the bird varied little from a normal Pochard. An illustration to show the head shape and bill patterning has been supplied by Mike Pinder.



### Discussion

♂ POCHARD

♂ PAGET'S POCHARD

When dealing with a single duck of this nature the governing factor behind its ultimate identification is the colour of the bill and eye (Gillham et. al. 1966).

One of the bird's parents was without doubt a Pochard; investigations showed the other half of this odd couple to be a Ferruginous Duck. This hybrid was formerly known as Paget's Pochard, when it was considered to be a distinct species.

The breeding ranges of Pochard and Ferruginous Duck overlap considerably (Cramp & Simmons 1977, Harrison 1982) but, although there is a possibility that this individual had been born to wild parents, this is thought unlikely. It is more probable that the bird originated from a wildfowl collection, despite its apparent wariness.

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M.L. Denton

# EARLY AND LATE DATES OF SUMMER MIGRANTS

SPECIES	First 1985	Earliest ever	Locality	Last 1985	Latest ever	Locality
Little Ringed Plover	27th April	29th March 83	Dewsbury S.F.	17th July	14th Sept. 83	Blackmoorfoot
Common Sandpiper	13th April	7th March 64	Horbury Bridge	30th Sept	31st Dec. 75	Elland G.P.
Turtle Dove	6th May	27th April 80	Bretton Park	15th Aug.	12th Oct. 71	Ossett S.F.
Cuckoo	22nd April	8th April 76	Denby Dale	1st Aug.	27th Oct. 77	Royd Moor
Swift	30th April	22nd April 62	Thunderbridge	9th Sept.	28th Oct. 61	Brockholes
Sand Martin	9th April	22nd March 83	Bretton Park	17th Sept.	23rd Oct. 71	Blackmoorfoot
Swallow	21st March	10th March 59	Elland	19th Oct.	13th Nov. 77	Hall Dike
House Martin	14th April	8th April 82	Kirkburton	3rd Nov.	27th Nov. 59	Gawthorpe
Tree Piptit	5th April	5th April 85	Bretton Park	26th Aug.	17th Sept. 78	Blackmoorfoot
Yellow Wagtail	15th April	7th April 80	Bretton Park	29th Sept.	6th Oct. 80	Ossett Spa S.F.
Black Redstart	-	14th April 76	Elland G.P.	-	20th Nov. 78	Ossett
Redstart	5th April	5th April 65 & 85	Bretton Park	19th Sept.	24th Oct. 76	Deer Hill
Whinchat	16th April	15th April 72	Wessenden Head	11th Sept.	26th Oct. 68	Lindley Moor
Wheatear	31st March	11th March 78	Digley	15th Oct.	10th Nov. 79	Royd Moor
Ring Quail	23rd March	16th March 77 & 78	Digley	4th June!	15th Nov. 65	Ossett
Grasshopper Warbler	7th July	22nd Apr. 67 & 81	Bretton/Horbury	7th July	14th Aug. 70	Gawthorpe
Sedge Warbler	6th May	13th April 81	Healey S.F.	11th Aug.	13 Sept. 72/83	Lees Mill/Elland G.P.
Lesser Whitethroat	1st May	22nd April 84	Horbury	26th Aug.	27th Sept. 73	Deighton
Whitethroat	12th May	19th April 68	Gmacc/Ldly Mr.	29th Aug.	26th Sept. 84	Horbury Wyke
Garden Warbler	5th April	5th April 85	Bretton Park	10th Aug.	24th Nov. 84	Silkstone S.F.
Blackcap	5th April	16th March 77	Denby Dale	16th Dec.	31st Dec. 82	Blackmoorfoot
Wood Warbler	5th May	22nd April 81	Coxley Wood	3rd July	27th Aug. 65	Fixby
Chiffchaff	3rd April	12th March 77	Bretton Park	28th Oct.	31st Dec. 82	Blackmoorfoot
Willow Warbler	5th April	29th March 81	Brockholes	7th Oct.	13th Oct. 82	Almondbury
Spotted Flycatcher	5th May	29th April 73	Bretton Park	16th Oct.	16th Oct. 85	Coxley Valley
Pied Flycatcher	18th April	18th April 85	Deanhead	31st July	12th Sept. 76	Bretton Park

## RINGING REPORT

The first winter period of the year was dominated by easterly winds and consequently the ringing effort was much reduced. This was also the case during the second winter period when unsettled weather conditions affected the ringing activity. A large drop in ringing totals was therefore inevitable, the main species affected was Greenfinch and a reduction of some 50% was evident over an average year's catch.

Although the spring and early summer periods were excellent for the ringing of passerine pulli the overall total suffered because of a disastrous season experienced by the Black-headed Gulls at Black Moss. However, a total of 135 pulli was ringed, this figure consisting of; Kestrel (5 Wessenden), Black-headed Gull (4 Black Moss), Woodpigeon (2 Blackmoorfoot), Swallow (5 Deer Hill, 19 Crosland Moor), Meadow Pipit (4 Blackmoorfoot), Dipper (5 Digley, 4 Deer Hill Moss, 10 West Vale), Dunnock (13 Blackmoorfoot, 5 Crosland Moor), Robin (6 Blackmoorfoot), Whinchat (8 Deer Hill Moss), Ring Ouzel (4 Digley, 4 Wessenden), Blackbird (21 Blackmoorfoot, 9 Crosland Moor), Song Thrush (8 Blackmoorfoot), Mistle Thrush (8 Blackmoorfoot), Blue Tit (8 Blackmoorfoot, 14 Crosland Moor), Magpie (5 Blackmoorfoot), Chaffinch (23 Blackmoorfoot) and Redpoll (4 Blackmoorfoot).

Very unsettled weather dominated the late summer and autumn. High water levels at Blackmoorfoot coupled with long rainy periods resulted in the main net site being under water and totally useless by the third week of August. Consequently the handling of migrants returning in their winter quarters was greatly affected, ie. only 188 Willow Warblers ringed compared with 333 in 1984.

For the seventh consecutive year no new ringing species were handled, although the Pied Flycatcher caught at Blackmoorfoot constituted only the third ringing record for that species.

All in all the year was dominated by gloom and despondency with only 960 birds being ringed and only 5 publishable recoveries coming to light (excluding the belated recoveries from 1984).

A further 212 birds were ringed in a garden at Almondbury by Dave Hodson and he is to be thanked for his efforts. These additions have been placed in brackets in the Ring Totals List. The grand total of birds ringed by Club members during 1985 has therefore risen to 1172.

The ringing scheme is greatly dependent on the public for a large proportion of its recoveries. By inspecting dead birds you could be adding to our knowledge of bird movements.

CHECK THAT ROAD CASUALTY - it may be a Scandinavian Blackbird.

### RINGING RECOVERIES

#### Key to symbols and terms used

- Age: 1. Pullus (nestling or chick)  
2. Full grown, year of hatching quite unknown.  
3. Hatched during calendar year of ringing.  
3J. As 3, but still in juvenile plumage.  
4. Hatched before calendar year of ringing, exact year unknown.  
5. Hatched during previous calendar year.  
6. Hatched before previous calendar year.



Sex: M = Male  
F = Female

**Manner of recovery:**

- V Caught or trapped and released with ring.
- VV Ring number read in field or sight record of identifiable colour marks.
- X Found dead or dying.
- XL Found dead (not recent).
- + Shot or killed by man.

**Date of recovery:**

Where this is unknown the date of the reporting letter is given in brackets.  
All recoveries of five kilometres or more are published. The recoveries of Kittiwake (FT85816) and Greenfinch (NN65037) were received too late for inclusion in earlier reports.

**Recoveries of Huddersfield Ringed Birds**

BLACK-HEADED GULL

EH49331	I	21.06.83	Black Moss, near Marsden. 53 34'N I 55'W
	VV	26.02.85	Southport, Merseyside. 53 39'N 3 I'W 73Km W.
	VV	28.10.85	Southport. 73Km W.
EH49383	I	22.06.83	Black Moss.
	X	16.03.85	Gaulby, Billesden, Leicestershire. 52 36'N O 58'W 125Km. SSE.

SPARROWHAWK

EH69241	5F	13.02.81	Edgerton, Huddersfield. 53 40'N I 48'W
	V	14.02.81	Edgerton
	X	10.10.85	Driffield, Humberside. 54 I'N O 26'W 98Km. ENE.

GREENFINCH

NN65037	3F	11.12.83	Blackmoorfoot, near Huddersfield. 53 37'N I 52'W
	X	06.03.84	Fixby, Huddersfield. 53 41'N I 47'W 9Km. NE.

**Birds recovered in Huddersfield**

KITTIWAKE

Paris	I	21.06.83	Goulien, Finistere, France. 48 03'N 4 36'W
FT85816	XL	10.03.84	near Brighouse. 53 42'N I 48'W 660Km. NNE.

GREENFINCH

8H44500	5F	12.02.83	Barrow Hill, Staveley, Derbyshire. 53 17'N I 22'W
	V	12.01.85	Blackmoorfoot. 50Km. NW.

M.L. Denton

# **RINGING TOTALS LIST - 1985**

The figures in brackets indicate the number of birds ringed by Dave Hodson in Almondbury.

Kestrel	6	Blackcap	3
Black-headed Gull	4	Willow Warbler	188 (1)
Woodpigeon	2	Goldcrest	7
Collared Dove	-(1)	Spotted Flycatcher	-(1)
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	Pied Flycatcher	1
Swallow	29	Coal Tit	2 (1)
House Martin	11	Blue Tit	118 (137)
Meadow Pipit	4	Great Tit	30 (32)
Pied Wagtail	2	Treecreeper	1
Dipper	19	Magpie	6
Wren	26	Starling	- (10)
Dunnock	47 (4)	Tree Sparrow	12
Robin	68 (3)	Chaffinch	33
Whinchat	8	Greenfinch	241 (15)
Ring Ouzel	8	Goldfinch	1
Blackbird	33 (4)	Linnet	2
Song Thrush	9 (2)	Redpoll	7
Mistle Thrush	8 (1)	Dullfinch	4
Sedge Warbler	1	Reed Bunting	15
Garden Warbler	3	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>960 (212)</b>
		<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1172</b>

M.L. Denton

## LOCAL RETRAPS AND RECOVERIES

In Huddersfield the majority of birds are ringed in places that are accessible to the public, so it is not surprising that a number of 'local' birds are found: eg. dead on road, killed by cat etc.

Large numbers of retraps are also handled, some, many years after ringing; these are tabulated below. The top lines show the approximate period between ringing and either retrap (table 1) or death (table 2). The figures show the number of individuals retrapped or found dead near their place of ringing.

**Table 1 - Retraps**

	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	Total
DUNNOCK	1	2			3
ROBIN	2	1			3
BLACKBIRD			1	1	2
WILLOW WARBLER	1	1			2
BLUE TIT	5	1			6
GREAT TIT	1			1	2
CHAFFINCH		2			2
GREENFINCH	1				1
					21

**Table 2 - Recoveries**

	1 yr	2yrs	Total
BLACKBIRD		1	1
WILLOW WARBLER	1		1
			2

M.L. Denton.

## CLUB OFFICIALS FOR 1986

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## NOTES

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