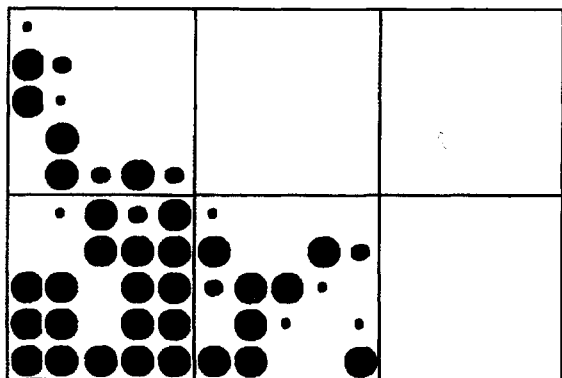


AN ATLAS OF THE BREEDING BIRDS OF THE HUDDERSFIELD AREA



HUDDERSFIELD BIRDWATCHERS' CLUB

AN ATLAS

OF THE

BREEDING BIRDS

OF THE

HUDDERSFIELD AREA

1987 - 1992

Editorial committee:

Brian Armitage
John E.Dale
Stephen Hey

Cover illustration by Stuart Brocklehurst

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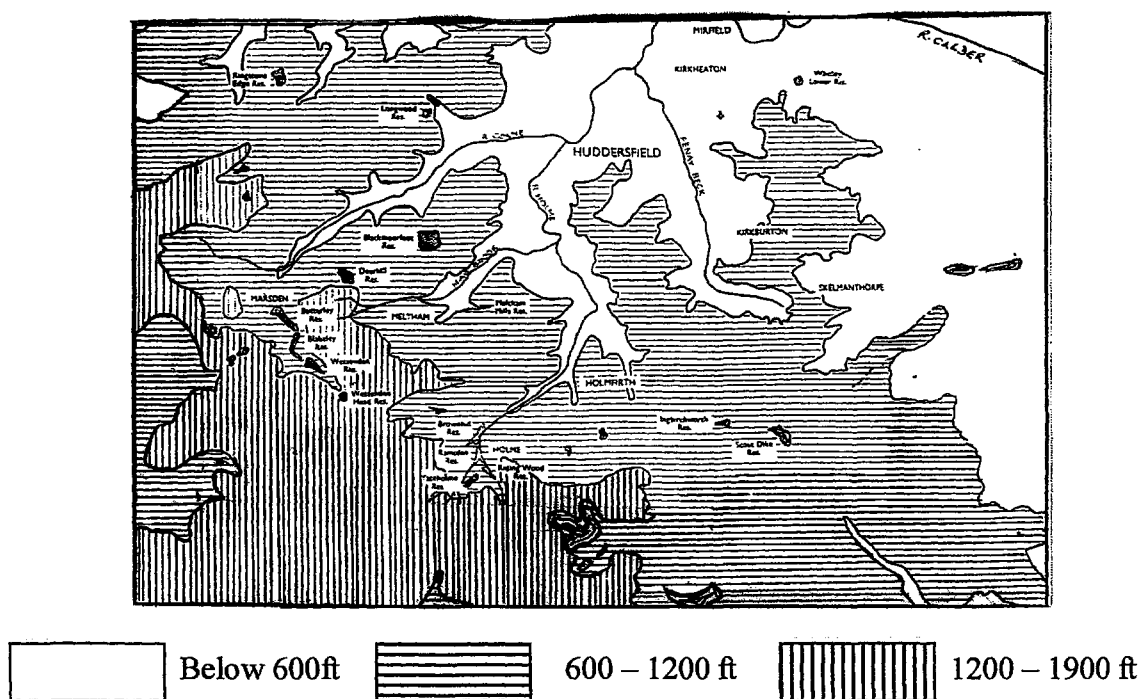
INTRODUCTION

The idea of producing an atlas of the breeding birds of the Huddersfield area had been mooted in the early to mid 1980s, so when the BTO announced its intention to organize a second national survey of breeding birds in the UK in the years 1988-1991, it provided an opportunity not only to collaborate at a national level, but also to conduct a survey of the local area. A pilot survey was undertaken in 1986 and a full survey was carried out in the years 1987 to 1991.

The Sheffield Bird Study Group to the south had already carried out a survey of the breeding birds of its area in 1975-80 and the Manchester Ornithological Group to the west a similar project in 1979-83. Our area forms a link between the two and would therefore help in providing a fuller picture of the situation in the area of the Southern Pennines.

THE AREA

Situated on the eastern fringes of the Pennines, the area shows a gradual downward slope from the southwest, with a highest point of 582m. above sea-level at Black Hill, to the north and east, decreasing to only 30m. above sea-level in the extreme northeast in the valley of the R. Calder. The millstone grit uplands are dominated by heather moorland with peat and cotton grass, which gives way to rough pasture, much of it drained and improved in recent years, on the moorland fringes. Many small streams form the headwaters of the Rivers Colne, Calder, Holme and Little Don and have gouged out steeply-sided valleys, clothed with woodland in which oak predominates.



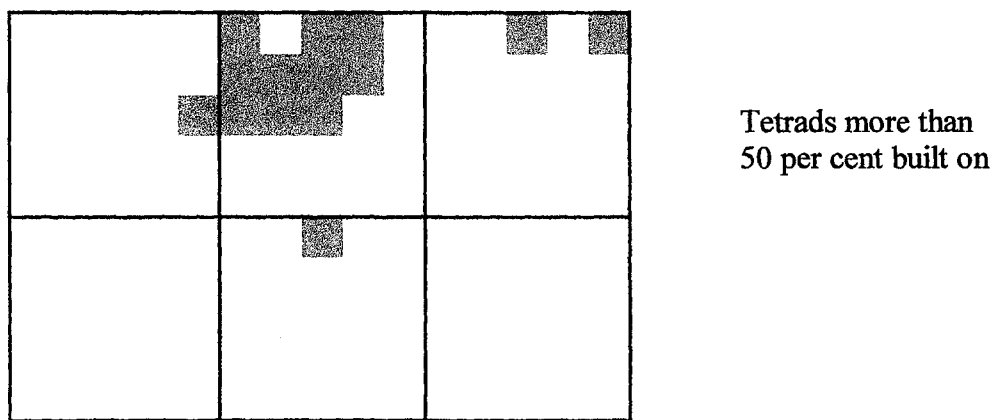
Altitude and river systems

The major rivers have eroded their way through the millstone grit, exposing rocks of the Lower Coal Measures in the central valleys, while to the east lie the Middle Coal Measures. At lower altitudes there are some fairly extensive deciduous woodlands and there are large stands of coniferous plantations on the moorland edges.

The deep, narrow valleys have proved ideal for the construction of reservoirs to supply the needs of the towns and industry of West Yorkshire; with the exception of a very small area of subsidence, created by the coal-mining industry, in the Calder Valley and the ornamental lakes at Bretton Park,

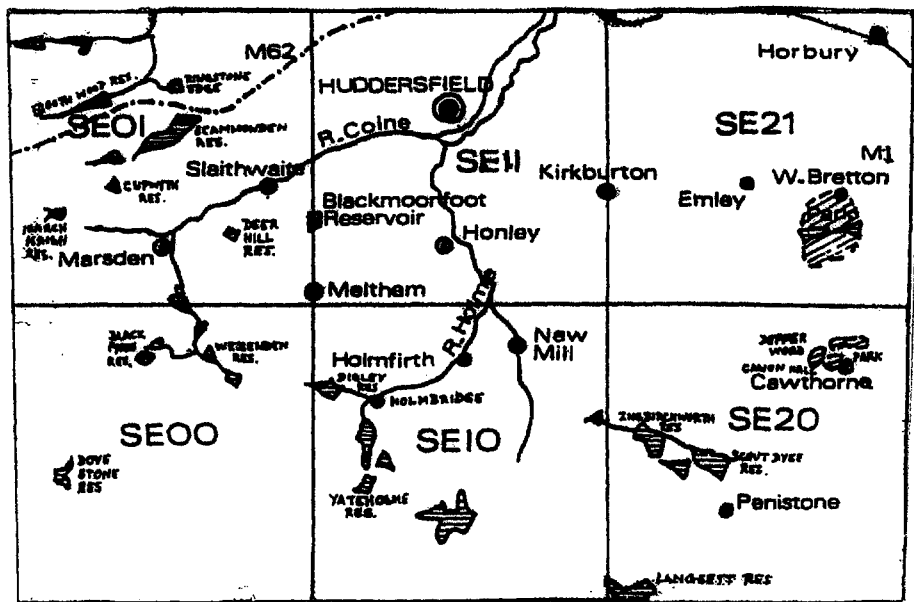
these reservoirs provide the only wetland habitats in the area. This lack of wetlands, allied to the altitude, means that the area is peripheral for several species of birds which breed fairly commonly nearby to the east.

Much of the area is given over to pasture for sheep and cattle, with a greater percentage of arable farming in the east and north. With the exception of the highest ground in the southwest, all the habitats within the area have been modified by man. Surprisingly, only 14 tetrads, representing nine per cent of the total surveyed, are built up by more than 50%.



THE SURVEY

The area covered by the survey comprises the six 10km. Squares SE 00, SE 01, SE 10, SE 11, SE 20 and SE 21.



Map of the area surveyed

Each 10km. square was subdivided into 25 two-by-two km. squares (tetrads) and observers were asked to record all breeding activity in each tetrad. Volunteers were sought to be responsible for covering thoroughly individual tetrads as well as recording information from any casual visits to other tetrads. The records were returned on prepared sheets which listed all the breeding species likely to occur in the area. The following codes were used, based on those devised by Sharrock (1976).

O Species observed in breeding season.

POSSIBLE BREEDING (small dot)

H Species observed in breeding season in possible nesting **habitat**.

S **Singing** male(s) present (or breeding calls heard) in the breeding season.

PROBABLE BREEDING (medium-sized dot)

P **Pair** observed in suitable nesting habitat in breeding season.

T Permanent **territory** established through registration of territorial behaviour on at least two different dates a week or more apart in the same locality.

D **Display** and courtship observed.

A **Agitated** behaviour or **anxiety** calls from adults.

I **Incubation** patch present on adult bird examined in the hand.

N Visiting probable **nest-site**.

B **Building** nest or excavating nest-hole.

CONFIRMED BREEDING (large dot)

DD **Distraction display** or injury feigning.

UN **Used nest** or egg-shells found.

FL Recently **fledged** or downy young found.

ON Adults entering or leaving nest-site in circumstances indicating **occupied nest** or adults seen sitting on the nest.

FY Adults carrying **food for young** or **faecal sac (FS)**.

NE **Nest with eggs**

NY **Nest with young** seen or heard.

For ease of identification each tetrad in any given 10km. square was also allocated a designated letter, as shown.

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| E | J | P | U | Z |
| D | I | N | T | Y |
| C | H | M | S | X |
| B | G | L | R | W |
| A | F | K | Q | V |

Each 10km. square had an appointed organiser who was responsible for collecting and collating information from the observers' field work and for compiling the dot maps for his particular square.

These organisers were:-

SE 00 Mike Pinder

SE 01 Mike Denton

SE 10 John Dale (1987) and Mike Pinder (1988 – 91)

SE 11 Brian Armitage

SE 20 Mike Dale (1987) and John Dale (1988 – 91)

SE 21 David Proctor

These maps were then all passed to Brian Armitage, who had the task of checking the data and producing the finished map for each species for the whole area. When all the data had been received it was discovered that some tetrads had been inadequately covered during the survey and it was necessary to extend field work into the 1992 breeding season to fill in the gaps.

THE SPECIES' ACCOUNTS

On the species maps a small dot represents possible breeding, a medium-sized dot probable breeding and a large dot confirmed breeding. The highest category of breeding evidence obtained within the survey period is the one used in each tetrad and this evidence may have been obtained in only one of the survey years. It is highly likely that many of the probable breeding registrations could be upgraded, but the necessary evidence was not obtained. Conversely it is likely that in many of the tetrads showing possible breeding no breeding actually took place.

The figures opposite the species' names represent, in order, the total number of tetrads in which the species was present, percentage of tetrads occupied, and the number of tetrads with confirmed, probable and possible breeding. It was thought to be unwise, particularly in an attempt to prevent disturbance at nest-sites, to publish maps for certain raptor species (Goshawk, Merlin and Peregrine) and for some other sensitive species such as Long-eared Owl, Fieldfare and Raven.

The writing of the species' accounts was divided between the three authors, John Dale being responsible for raptors, waders, Black-headed Gull, owls, Skylark and Dipper to Wheatear (31 species), Stephen Hey for gamebirds, crakes and rails, pigeons and doves, Cuckoo, sparrows, finches and buntings (28 species) and Brian Armitage for the rest (54 species). Stephen Hey also took on the huge and unenviable task of putting the data, including the dot maps, onto computer disk. Final proof-reading, which included rechecking the accuracy of the species' maps, was done by Brian Armitage and John Dale.

Determining the actual numbers of each breeding species was not one of our objectives. However, an attempt has been made to estimate breeding populations of some species, based on average population densities in typical habitats quoted in the two national atlases of breeding birds published in 1976 and 1993.

The authors would like to apologise for the very late publication of this work. Many circumstances have contributed to the delay. Despite its lateness, however, we consider it still to be a valuable document, showing as it does, a picture of the area's breeding birds at a definite point in time and thereby providing a baseline for future workers. In the intervening period, significant changes have taken place in the status locally and nationally of some of the species occurring; the more important of these are mentioned in the text.

Thanks are due to Stuart Brocklehurst for his very evocative cover illustration of a Ring Ouzel in typical habitat.

REFERENCES

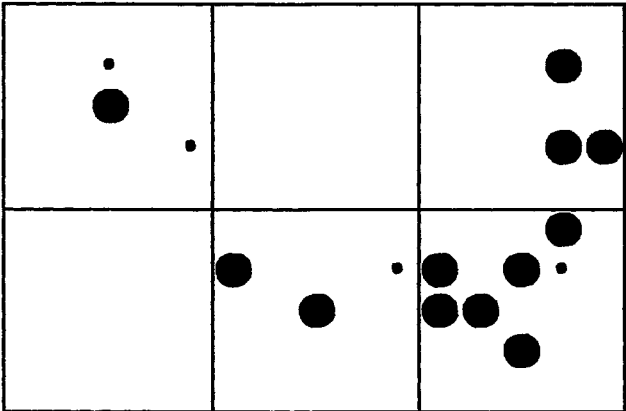
A complete list of references is given in the Bibliography which follows the species' accounts. Of the local references, Mosley (1915) is the most frequently quoted. It should be remembered that the area to which he refers, mainly to the south and west of Huddersfield, forms only part of the area covered by the present survey (160 sq.km. compared with 600 sq.km.) and excludes many of the most interesting and productive habitats we surveyed.

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

16;11% (12;0;4)

Resident breeder (1)



The essential requirement for the successful breeding of the species is the presence of luxuriant vegetation on the lake bottom together with a dense growth of emergent vegetation. As well as occurring on large waters, it is found on much smaller waters than the next species, catching as it does smaller fish than the Great Crested Grebe. Except for the loud whinnying trills which reveal its presence, it can be an elusive species and breeding proof can be difficult to obtain if young are not seen. Most waters

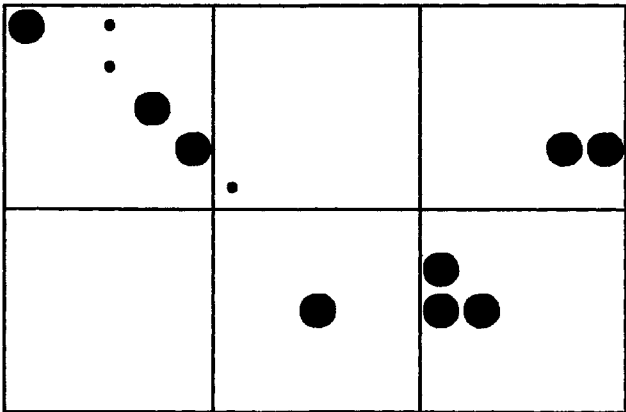
support one pair only but as many as four pairs have bred in any one season at Scout Dike Reservoir. Breeding success is often low, failures being caused by low water levels leaving nest sites high and dry and thus open to predation, and conversely by high water levels leading to nests being flooded out at the incubation stage, although successful pairs may raise two broods in a year. The total number of pairs is unlikely to exceed fifteen in any one year, with the stronghold of the species being the Ingbirchworth group of waters which may hold up to nine pairs in a good year. Post breeding concentrations in this area have reached 27 birds at Ingbirchworth (Aug. 1989) and Scout Dike (Sept. 1992).

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

12;8% (9;0;3)

Resident breeder (1)

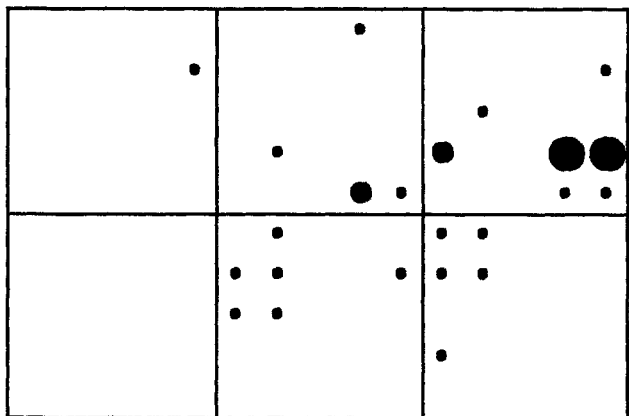


This grebe is found at fewer sites than the previous species owing to its preference for larger waters. It generally occurs on shallow lakes or lakes with extensive shallow margins, with some fringing vegetation for nest sites. Although occurring on fewer waters than Little Grebe, its breeding population is often greater due to higher densities at favoured sites. For example both Bretton Park and Scout Dike Reservoir have supported up to seven pairs, out of a maximum total of twenty pairs, in any one year.

Breeding success is often exceedingly low, owing to fluctuations in water levels and young birds tending to have a low survival rate. An illustration of this occurred at Blackmoorfoot Reservoir in 1996, when from a total of 13 nests (with at least 54 eggs), only three young were reared. Strong winds, heavy rain and predation by corvids, fox and grey squirrel were some of the causes. Some large waters remain unoccupied due to the lack of vegetated margins required for nest sites, but are potential future breeding sites if this requirement were to be met.

Grey Heron
Ardea cinerea

23;15% (2;2;19)
Resident breeder (2)



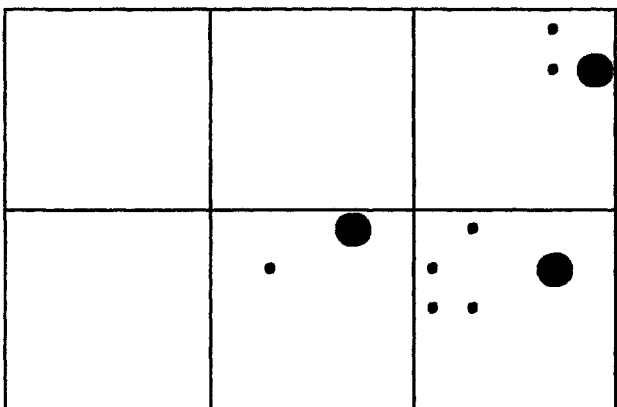
The only confirmed breeding was in Bretton Park, where nesting began on an island in the lower lake in 1975. It was not until 1981, however, that successful breeding occurred, with two pairs rearing young. The number of breeding pairs remained in single figures until 1989, when a new site on an island in the upper lake was colonised. In that year, 22 pairs raised 50 young.

Breeding success is very high; for example in 1991, 48 young fledged (from 24 clutches containing 68 eggs) and in 1992, 55 young fledged (from 21 clutches containing 58 eggs). By 1992, a total of 315 young had flown from this colony. Nests of single pairs or even small colonies, especially in coniferous habitats, could easily have been overlooked during the atlas years.

It is clear this species is increasing and must be a potential coloniser of new sites, especially if all available nest sites at the Bretton Park heronry are fully utilised. Since 1995, breeding has occurred at a further three widely scattered locations.

Mute Swan
Cygnus olor

10;7% (3;0;7)
Resident breeder (1)



The Mute Swan has never been other than an uncommon breeding bird in the area. Mosley referred to it as "domesticated; occurring on mill dams and in public parks". Regular breeding occurred at Bretton Park up to 1958 with two or three pairs in most years, again in 1960 to 1965, but then not until 1973 after which a single pair bred in most years to 1980. They have not bred here since.

Just three sites are shown on the map where breeding is known to have been attempted during the atlas years. At two of these, the only attempts were in 1986, with one pair being successful at Cawthorne Park and the other pair failing at Horbury Wyke. Successful breeding occurred in 1987 at Wild Spur Mill, Hepworth. The outcome of another attempt the following year here is unknown.

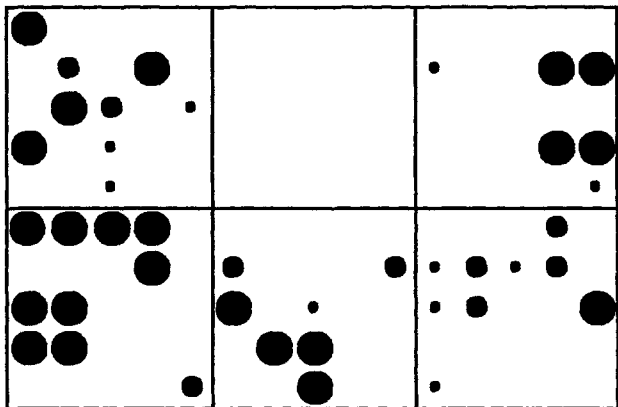
There has been no increase in records of the species in recent years despite the presence of large numbers at locations just outside our recording area (e.g. Pugney's CP, Wakefield). There seems little likelihood of an increase in breeding pairs.

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

41;27% (22;9;10)

Resident breeder (2)



Canada Geese were breeding at Bretton Park as long ago as the second half of the nineteenth century (Lister, 1883), with breeding next recorded at Cannon Hall in 1938. Bretton Park has remained the species' breeding stronghold with about 70 pairs nesting in 1982. However, some form of population control has been practised there since 1980 due to damage caused to agricultural interests.

From the mid-1970's pairs began nesting at other lowland localities and by the early 1980's had begun to spread to upland waters. During the Atlas years breeding was proved in an additional twenty tetrads outside Bretton Park as well as being probable at another nine. By 1991, ten pairs were breeding at Winscar Reservoir and its environs and some other waters supported several pairs.

Since the Atlas years a further considerable spread has taken place and there are few waters in the area which do not now support this species, whose presence can be detrimental to other potential breeding waterfowl species.

Barnacle Goose

Branta leucopsis

1;1% (1;0;0)

Resident feral breeder (1)

No map is included for this species, but it is included as a breeding bird on the strength of a feral pair which have nested at Bretton Park since 1985. Up to 1992 this pair has bred each year raising a total of 14 young during the Atlas years. During 1991 a third adult paired with a Canada Goose and reared one hybrid young.

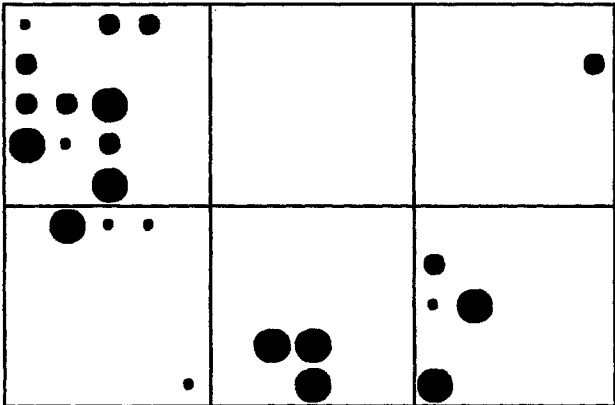
The Barnacle Goose is not recognised in "The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland 1988-1991" as a truly wild breeder, all records being considered to involve escapes or deliberate releases from captivity.

Teal

Anas crecca

23;15% (9;8;6)

Resident breeder (1)



The favoured habitat of moorland pools, bogs and peat mosses is reflected in the breeding distribution of this species within our area, whilst the absence of records from the south-west where these habitats also occur in abundance is probably indicative of the problems surveying such a difficult area for a species which can be very secretive and elusive in the breeding season.

Breeding at many sites apparently is sporadic with nesting occurring maybe only during one or two years in a decade. Unlike the next species, breeding is made more difficult to prove owing to the fact that broods of young rarely swim in open water. Teal which breed at lowland sites choose waters with plenty of cover provided by emergent or other peripheral vegetation, a habitat which is largely lacking in our area and is amply illustrated by the lack of breeding records from lowland sites.

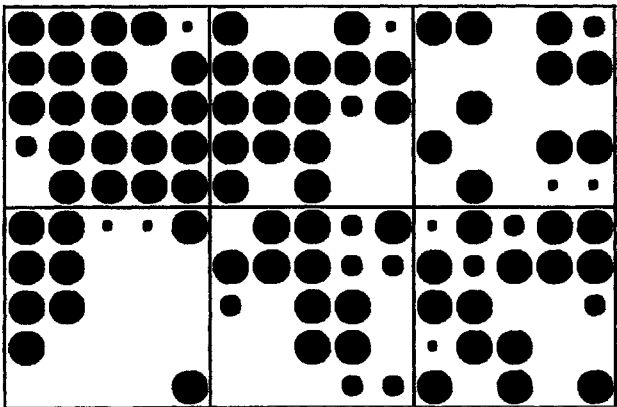
During the Atlas years, breeding was proved at 13 waters and probably took place at eight others, giving a population in the order of 20-25 breeding pairs. Mosley referred to this species as a straggler, which probably once bred.

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

100;67% (80;12;8)

Resident breeder (3)



In contrast to the last species, the Mallard demonstrates a very catholic taste in its breeding habitats. It occurs in a great variety of habitats and its numbers include semi-tame birds which demonstrate the species' ability to live alongside man. It will take advantage of newly created habitats and will readily lay replacement clutches if the first ones are lost; it is therefore not surprising that the Mallard has been so successful.

The species was found breeding along small streams, rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, dams, woodlands and even in gardens with ponds or near to a water course of some description. Many waters support several pairs. Of the 123 species encountered during the breeding survey, Mallard was the 27th most widely distributed.

Amazingly, Mosley was able to describe the species only as a straggler to the area, which probably once bred!

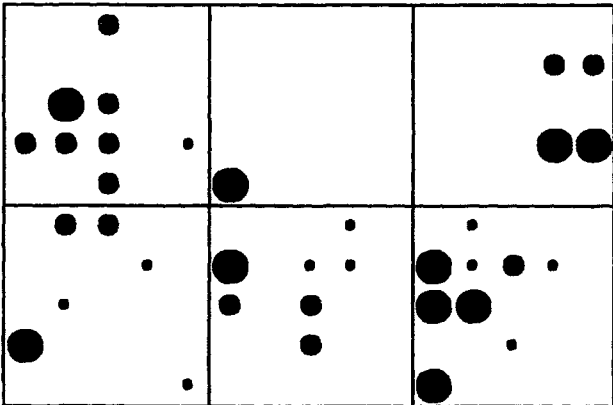
Shoveler
Anas clypeata

2;1% (0;1;1)
Resident breeder (1)

A pair was present during the period under consideration in one year, throughout the breeding season. No proof of breeding was obtained, although the habitat is capable of supporting a breeding pair. The Shoveler's absence from our area is unsurprising due to the lack of sites with shallow, muddy waters with adjacent rough pasture for nesting. In fact we only have one such small locality in our recording area.

Tufted Duck
Aythya fuligula

35;23% (10;14;11)
Resident breeder (1)



The majority of sites supported only a single pair, but at favoured localities such as Bretton Park and Scout Dike Reservoir as many as five and six pairs respectively have been seen in any one year.

Until the early 1970's, breeding seems to have been restricted to Bretton Park, so the species has increased dramatically over the intervening 20 years.

The species frequents both large and small waters, in moorland as well as lowland localities and has also bred along the Rivers Colne and Calder, its nest usually being built on dry ground within ten metres of the water's edge, well-concealed in rank herbage. It is a late breeder, laying in mid-May and broods of young are seldom seen before July. In some years pairs have occurred at many sites during the breeding season, but without any breeding evidence being obtained. Of the 14 probable breeding sites, breeding is known to have occurred in some years prior to the Atlas fieldwork.

Ruddy Duck
Oxyura jamaicensis

1;1% (0;1;0)
Resident breeder (1)

This "alien" species, which first escaped from the Wildfowl Trust collection at Slimbridge in 1952, has spread throughout the country in dramatic fashion since the 1960's, during the course of which it has achieved a considerable degree of notoriety.

Its first appearance in the Huddersfield area was in May 1977 at Blackmoorfoot Reservoir. During the Atlas years displaying pairs were observed at two sites, but no other breeding evidence was obtained. However, proof of breeding is not easy to obtain, as the species breeds late in the season, broods often stay in dense cover and ducklings are not usually in evidence before August or even September.

Not until 1996 was breeding confirmed in the area, at a site which was not occupied during the years of the Atlas fieldwork.

Goshawk

Accipiter gentilis

7;5% (1;1;5)

Resident breeder (1)

Single sightings of this rare and impressive raptor were noted on three occasions in 1966 and 1967, and at the time it was assumed that these records were of falconers' escapes. The next sighting was in 1974 by which time it was known that the species had been breeding with some success just south of our area for about five years. Therefore the occurrence of birds in four localities in 1976 aroused considerable interest, although the information was initially restricted to a few committed individuals.

For the following two years a pair bred in an extensive mixed woodland, rearing two young in 1977, and at least one in 1978. Birds were present at this site for the next four years, but there was no further proof of successful breeding.

A second site was occupied in 1979, since when birds have bred there regularly including at least two of the Atlas survey years. However breeding has not always had a successful outcome due to the activities of 'collectors', and there are reports of birds having been shot.

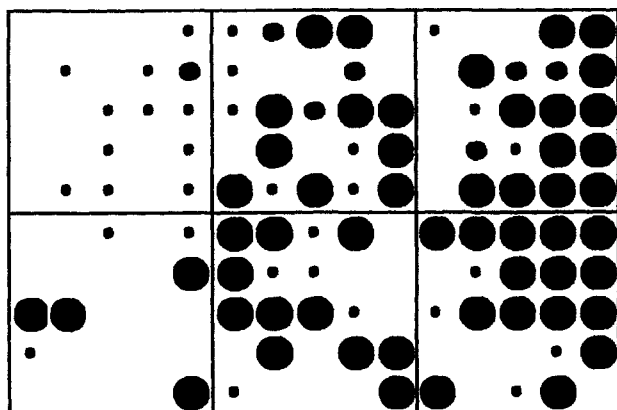
The origin of the current population of Britain's Goshawks is largely derived from foreign birds usually imported for use by falconers from which they have escaped, or on occasions been deliberately released.

Sparrowhawk

Accipiter nisus

92;61% (54;7;31)

Resident breeder (2)

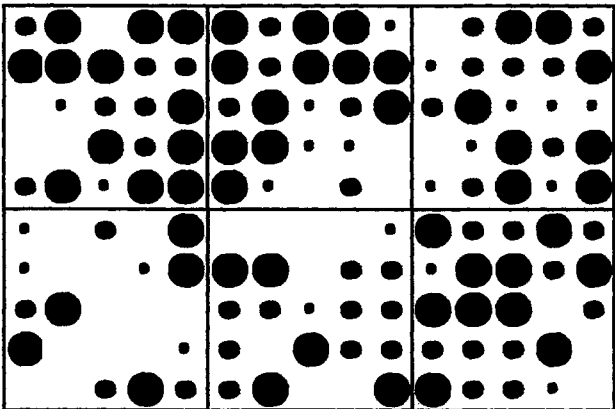


In the early 1970's the species was known to be breeding at only three or four locations in the area, and could certainly be described as rare. This was typical of the situation nationally where populations had been in decline for more than 20 years, mainly due to the use of organochloride pesticides in agriculture from about 1947 resulting in shell thinning and reduced breeding success. More toxic compounds in use from 1956 poisoned many adult Sparrowhawks. With the gradual reduction in the use of these chemicals the

species recovered slowly in the 1970's then rapidly during the 1980's. The recovery was reflected locally, and by the late 1980's they had become well distributed, and once again had become a relatively common raptor in keeping with its status according to Mosley.

Nesting in conifers for preference, but frequently in broad-leaved woodlands, it can now be noted visiting gardens in many areas, particularly those where bird-feeders are in regular use, in search of bird prey species.

Sparrowhawks have been intensively monitored by a small group of ringers based in the Barnsley area to whom we are indebted for much of the information on the distribution map.



For many years this was the only raptor that could be located regularly within the area. Familiar to most people because its hovering technique when hunting for favourite prey of voles and other rodents make it both unique and conspicuous.

Kestrels do not build nests but eggs can be laid on rock ledges, in tree holes, in holes or ledges in buildings, or occasionally in substantial disused nests of other species. Areas of farmland and moorland, upland

valleys, motorway verges and even open land within the conurbation are all habitats where it can hunt for food.

With birds breeding in over 50 tetrads, a likely annual total of breeding pairs will be in excess of 70. Strangely Mosley described the species as a "former resident, now a rare visitor. A victim of keepers and general shooting".

The species has had a somewhat tenuous hold on the area during the club's history, with a maximum of three known pairs during the early 1970's which declined to nil by 1980 following the theft of young from one site in 1979. However during the Atlas years pairs were present at four locations almost annually, although one site in the vicinity of a Peregrine eyrie was eventually abandoned.

Unlike other raptor species affected by contamination due to the use of pesticides, the Merlin has recovered relatively slowly. Habitat changes, particularly loss of heather moorland, have been identified as a cause for decline.

A study of a moorland area and adjacent farmland in the South Pennines near Rochdale, has been carried out recently and proposals for the management of that area have been put forward that should be beneficial to breeding birds and in particular to Merlin.

The main prey species is Meadow Pipit which is still abundant on our moors. The Merlin is normally a ground nester, occasionally a tree nester, and it is to be hoped that the status of this delightful little falcon will improve locally presuming disturbance is kept to a minimum.

Peregrine
Falco peregrinus

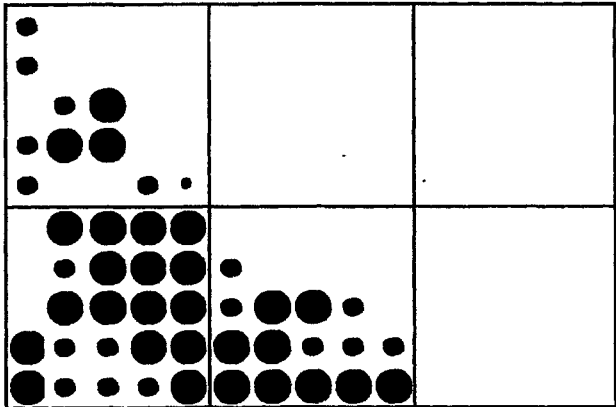
7;5% (6;0;1)
Resident breeder (1)

Following a massive collapse in its population in many parts of the world through the effects of organochloride insecticides, the British population was probably at an all time low in 1964. A slow recovery took place and by the late 1970's the species began to return to parts of Yorkshire.

With less than ten sightings locally in 25 years prior to 1981, amazingly pairs appeared at three sites in that year, successfully breeding at one. The success at that site was largely thanks to a small group of dedicated individuals carrying out regular surveillance. Subsequently pairs have held territory at six sites including Derbyshire Delph near Rishworth, where following successful breeding in 1986, the R.S.P.B. wardened the site continuously during the breeding seasons from 1987 to 1993. The site was open to the public each season following hatching and entertained thousands of visitors during those years. Favourite nest sites are substantial ledges on cliffs, crags and quarries whilst buildings have been used in some towns. They hunt for prey over a wide area preferring pigeons, waders and similar sized species. That it will continue to breed in the area seems certain, but success has been restricted due to collecting and persecution.

Red Grouse
Lagopus lagopus

47;31% (28;18;1)
Resident breeder (3)



Resident and sedentary in open moorland areas, usually between 350m. and 450m. above sea level, where ample heather and berry-bearing food plants exist. Normally above or well clear of the tree line. A hard species to accurately judge numbers present with inaccessible and often private breeding grounds. The population of this species has also been shown to exhibit cyclic fluctuation in numbers with peaks approximately every six years, though it seems small isolated populations, on moors with low rainfall, tend not to show such

marked changes in numbers.

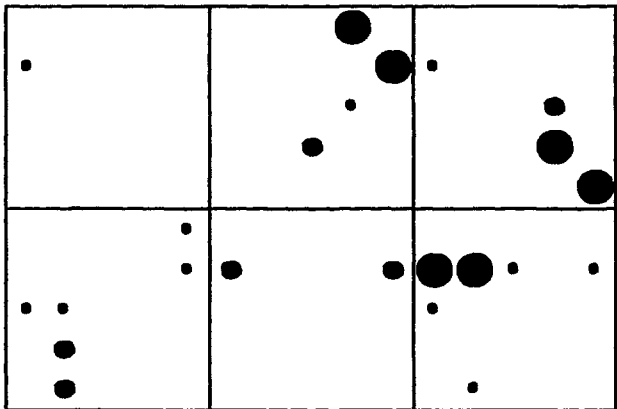
There are still many organised shoots on 'Grouse managed' moorlands around Huddersfield. In 1988, 180 brace were shot on 12th August on moors to the west of Dunford Bridge - the highest first day total for 50 years according to the gamekeeper. In contrast low numbers in 1991, following a population crash in 1989, led to just two days shooting in the Little Don Valley. While still present in good numbers to the west of Dunford Bridge, there seems to have been a genuine decline in numbers on Slaithwaite Moor. The population is estimated to fluctuate between 100 and 500 pairs.

Red-Legged Partridge

Alectoris rufa

23;15% (6;6;11)

Resident breeder (1)



A rather scarce and elusive bird within the club area, ranging in a variety of habitats from low-lying farmland up to moorland fringes. Possibly underrecorded, especially in farmland areas, and fluctuations from year to year may in part be due to coverage (or lack of coverage) from observers. There seems no reason why all the areas shown on the distribution map could not be breeding sites for this species.

The status regarding birds released for shooting is unclear, though records relating to Chukar *Alectoris chukar* and Chukar x Red-legged Partridge hybrids show that a certain number are released locally. Some care should be taken in identifying this species because of these hybrids, the best feature to look for in Red-legged Partridge is the white throat bordered by a black necklace which fades into black streaking on the upper-breast. The Chukar shows a more extensive creamy coloured throat which is bordered by a solid black necklace. The black and white flank markings are also more prominent in Chukar.

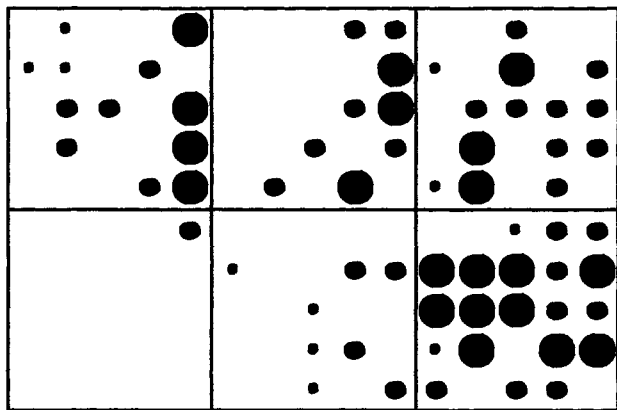
There were no records of this species in Mosley's time, in fact the Red-legged Partridge did not expand its range northwards into Yorkshire till after the 1930's. It has probably bred in small numbers in our area since the 1950's.

Grey Partridge

Perdix perdix

64;43% (20;33;11)

Resident breeder (2)



A farmland bird of open country. It prefers continuous grass or herbage, not higher than its head, usually interspersed with some taller and denser cover such as hedgerows, woodland verges or rough overgrown areas for concealment and nesting sites. As with the previous species, it will nest at all altitudes up to moorland fringes.

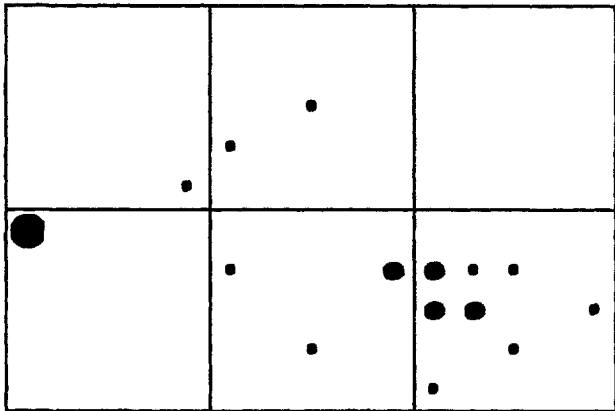
Being crepuscular it is often not an easy species to detect and is best located when calling at dusk. Historically the species was always resident "where preserved", being described as abundant in all cultivated parts in the 19th Century. While the Grey Partridge has never been common since the formation of the bird club, there are many traditional locations where it can still be found, showing it to be mainly sedentary. Though this species is undoubtedly declining nationally, it would seem from records received that the local population is stable at around 50-100 pairs. This would fit in with the comment in The New Atlas of Breeding Birds that Northern Pennine grouse moors have shown no decline.

Quail

Coturnix coturnix

15;10% (1;4;10)

Rare/Casual Migrant breeder (1)



This summer migrant varies greatly in numbers from year to year. In our area it usually arrives from mid-May and has still been heard calling up to mid-August.

The Quail is the most secretive of gamebirds, seldom leaving the cover of the cereal crops it chooses to nest in. They prefer level or slightly undulating land, clear of trees and bushes, up to around 300m. in the club area (though they have been noted much higher elsewhere). A hard bird to

census as calling largely ceases when breeding and calling birds themselves are difficult to locate because of their ventriloquial qualities.

In the study period, the following totals were recorded (the first figure is number of locations, the second is the number of calling males): 1987 - 0,0; 1988 - 0,0; 1989 - 11,15; 1990 - 3,3 and 1991 - 1,1.

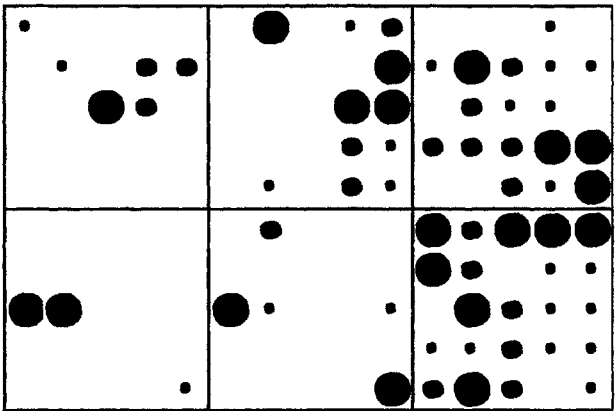
1989 proved to be the largest invasion in Britain since 1970 and records for the Huddersfield area were the highest ever and included confirmed breeding at Castle Shaw, near Standedge. The best location for this species in Huddersfield is undoubtedly the Broadstones and Ingbirchworth area where they often occur even in relatively scarce years.

Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

64;43% (20;19;25)

Resident breeder (3)



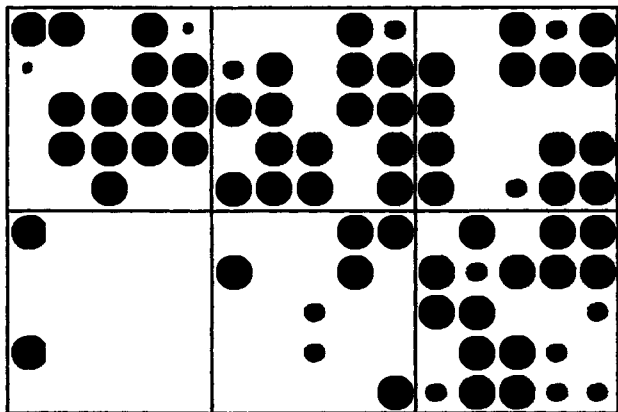
The population of this gamebird is extensively managed for the purpose of shooting, some main centres for rearing birds being Yateholme, Deffer Wood and Coxley Wood. The bird does however live undisturbed in many areas at all altitudes up to moorland fringes, but usually in sheltered woodlands. They feed readily in open grassland and cultivated fields around these woodlands. In summer they can live and breed away from woodland (examples being records from high moorland at Holme and

Winscar) but are susceptible to wet and windy weather.

They are commoner, with higher densities, in the eastern half of the area and as long as it is offered some sort of protection it is likely to live unaided and in relatively good numbers throughout the club area in all areas but high moorland. An estimate of our population must be in the order of 500 pairs.

Moorhen
Gallinula chloropus

76;51% (62;12;2)
Resident breeder (3)



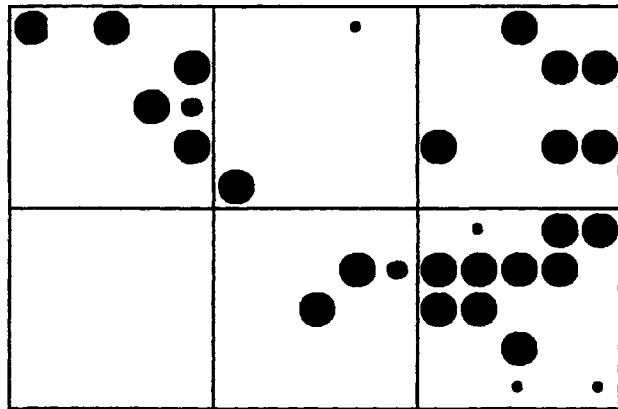
The Moorhen is a common wetland bird in both natural and man-made habitats and it is at home in both still and moving water. The species requires ready access to open fresh water that provides shelter around its margins, in the form of woodland or tall plants, and they usually feed in dense cover but are equally fond of grazing on nearby grassy areas. They avoid any sites exposed to wind and wave action.

Tolerance is shown to human disturbance, for example at Cawthorne Park where the species is successful around the ornamental waters and lawns.

It is more often associated with the lowland sites to the east of the study area where the breeding densities are highest, though they have been noted on moorland reservoirs such as Black Moss and March Haigh. The population in our area would appear to be stable.

Coot
Fulica atra

29;19% (23;2;4)
Resident breeder (2)



In our area, the Coot is a bird characteristic of reservoirs, slow moving rivers and the park lakes of Bretton and Cawthorne. It is absent as a breeding bird from the high moorland areas to the south and west. Unlike the Moorhen, this species does not use small ponds and streams. Examples of the smaller areas of water used for breeding by the Coot would be Gunthwaite Dam and Castle Dam (near Penistone).

Historically, early writers noted the bird as "nearly extinct around Huddersfield" (Eddison), "formerly resident, now rarely seen" (Mosley) and "rare visitor with only a handful of records" (Swabey and Aubrook). Bretton Park held sporadic breeders from as far back as 1931 but the population was subject to egg-taking and gaps of several years between successes. Ironically 1958 (the year the last quote was published) was an excellent year for the species after which numbers started to increase and birds spread from this base to other waters, particularly in the Ingbirchworth area.

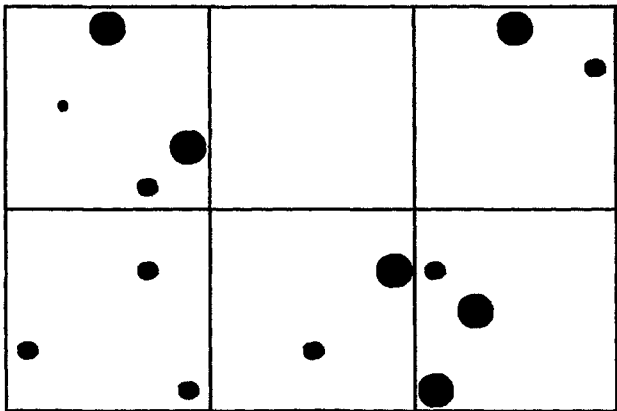
This steady increase in breeding birds has continued to its current status, being well established at the present time. Whilst breeding numbers seem stable, the large numbers that used to winter at Bretton park in the 1970's (e.g. c350 on 24/11/73 and c330 on 8/1/75) have reduced to less than 100 during the atlas years.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

14;9% (6;7;1)

Migrant breeder (1)



Having first bred in Britain in 1938 it was 1968 and 1969 when the species first bred near Huddersfield at a gravel pit immediately north of the Atlas survey area. In 1971 a pair bred successfully on an exposed reservoir shore to the south-west of Huddersfield.

During the Atlas survey years breeding took place at six sites, and birds held territory at seven more. 1991 proved to be the most productive season with breeding pairs at

three sites. The presence of this species is dependant on availability of suitable sites, which are generally man-made or controlled and can therefore change their nature from year to year. Gravel pits, sewage farms, waste dumps, quarries and other mining complexes all may be used, but exposed reservoir shores in drier years are most frequently exploited in our area.

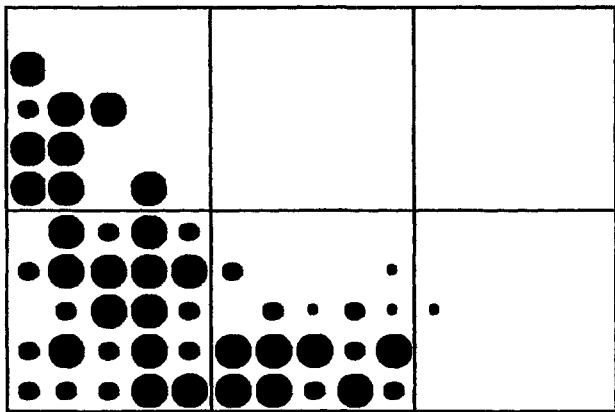
A schedule one species which is very sensitive to disturbance, this summer visitor should always be treated with respect, and given plenty of time and space to get on with its breeding activities.

Golden Plover

Pluvialis apricaria

49;33% (27;18;4)

Resident breeder (2)



Undoubtedly the most numerous of the breeding waders that are largely confined to the higher moors. By combining our own survey records with those of the Upland Breeding Survey (1990) it seems likely that about 220 pairs bred in the area. Earlier authorities had described the species as an uncommon but regular breeder.

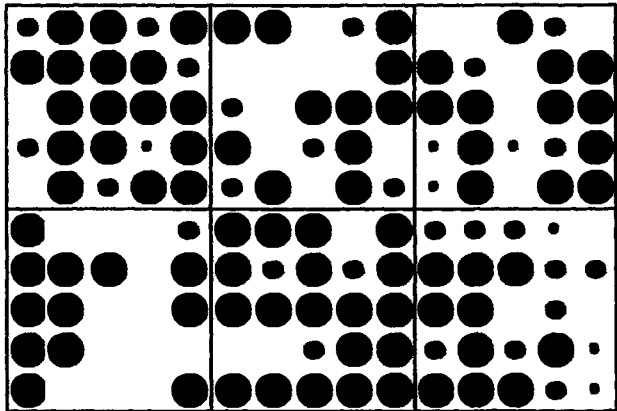
The nest sites are usually in short vegetation such as heather and cotton grass on open treeless moorland with good all-round

visibility. Wet pastures and arable land adjacent to the moors are important feeding areas.

The song of the cock bird delivered from some 100m. above its breeding ground on deliberate slow wing beats, with a plaintive "terr - pee - oo" is an unforgettable experience on a clear spring morning.

Lapwing
Vanellus vanellus

115;77% (82;26;7)
Resident breeder (3-4)



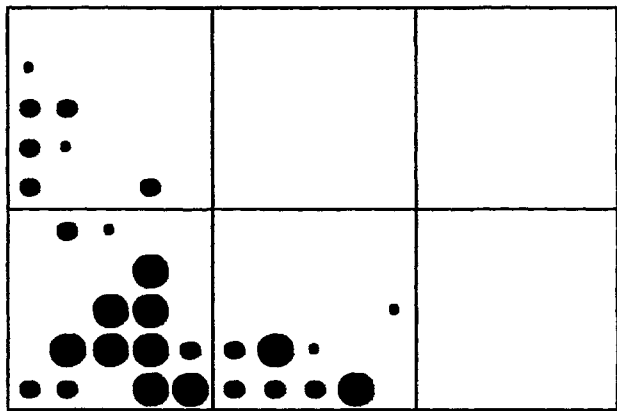
Although still apparently having an adequate presence within the area the distribution maps do not give the full picture of a changing situation. Population density has declined in many of the lowland meadows, and in upland marginal land. Drainage and changing farming regimes including carrying out mechanical work in the breeding season influence breeding success.

The higher moorlands do not hold many pairs although the species can breed at up to 500m. above sea level (e.g. Wessenden Head Moor). Preferred nest sites are open fields with short vegetation, or ploughed land giving the sitting bird a reasonable viewing range. Moorland sites are only suitable if vegetation is sparse and away from deep heather.

It is not easy to give an estimate of population. The high moorlands may only hold about 30 pairs, but in some areas of upland grasses (e.g. near Ingbirchworth) as many as 20 pairs may be in one tetrad. More detailed work is needed to produce a realistic estimate, but a total of 800 pairs is possible.

Dunlin
Calidris alpina

28;19% (10;13;5)
Migrant breeder (1)



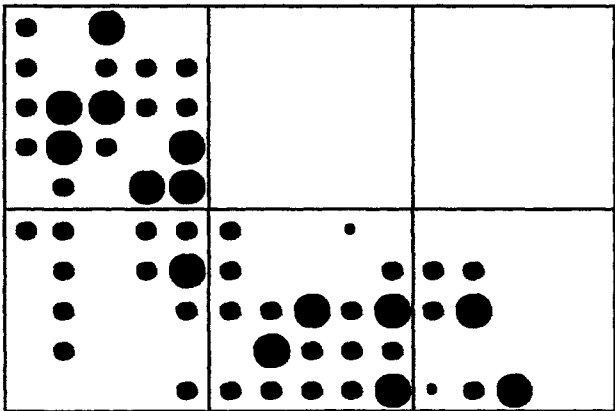
As with other wader species that breed on the South Pennine moors the Dunlin population has not been fully surveyed by our members, but the Upland Bird Survey (1990) located 40 pairs within our area, not dissimilar to the estimate of about 30 pairs made in 1975. Mosley considered it to be an occasional breeder, whilst Swabey and Aubrook classed it as a summer resident of our moorlands.

Favoured habitats are areas of peaty pools often amongst cotton grass, and in poorly drained bogs. The watching non-sitting bird often makes use of neighbouring Golden Plovers in what is known as the "plover's - page syndrome". The Dunlin uses the wariness and extra height of its larger relative to enable it to feed without interruption, while the Golden Plover gives timely warning of the approach of predators. (D&M Nethersole-Thompson. 1986)

This delightful little wader is one of the gems of our moors where it is close to the southern limit of its range in England.

Snipe
Gallinago gallinago

54;36% (14;38;2)
Resident breeder (1-2)



Difficulty in proving breeding may mean that Snipe was underrecorded during our Atlas survey. It was probably not appreciated that the presence of a displaying (drumming) bird is considered adequate indication that breeding activity is taking place.

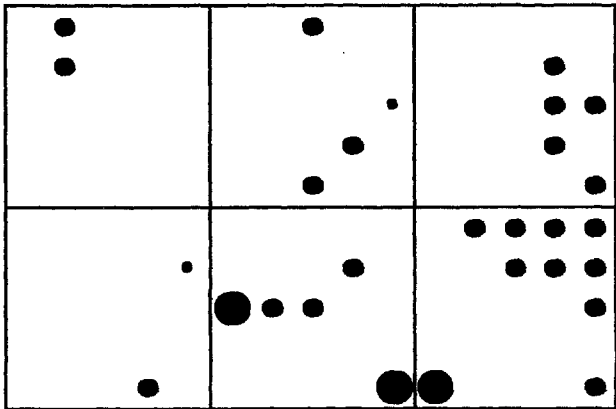
Relatively scarce on the high moorlands, it is amongst wet in-bye pastures (which are ideal for feeding), with ground cover such as tussocks of molini or cotton grass, that

most of the population occurs.

Drainage of lowland meadows means that it has apparently been eliminated from such habitat, although it does occur in remnant damp pastures during the winter months. With birds present in just over 50 tetrads a conservative estimate of breeding numbers would be 100 to 120 pairs.

Woodcock
Scolopax rusticola

28;19% (3;23;2)
Resident breeder (2)



The most difficult of the waders to monitor. Usually only located at dusk, or just before dawn, when the male undertakes roding flights which cover irregular circuits over woodland (usually flying only a few metres above the tree tops) in its home range.

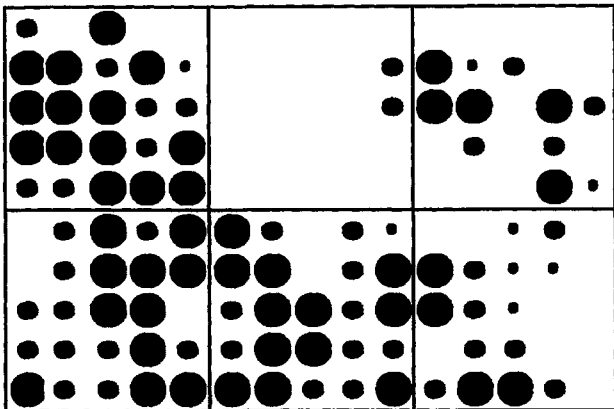
The registrations on the distribution map in the probable breeding category are the outcome of observations of roding birds. The actual proof of breeding in the three tetrads indicated the location of a nest, or an

adult with recently fledged young. It is perhaps no surprise that some of the highest densities of this species in our area occur in the tetrads where breeding was proved with the Yateholme, Langsett and Upper Little Don Valley areas being favoured over many years.

The total number of registrations indicate a minimum of 25 pairs, and a maximum certainly in excess of 50 pairs.

Curlew
Numenius arquata

95;63% (46;41;8)
Migrant breeder (2)



The bubbling song and undulating display flight are well known to those who visit the high moors for recreation, bird-watching or just enjoying the view. This is the favourite breeding habitat for the Curlew, but damp pastures with rushes are frequently used, and lowland hay meadows have been used occasionally since the mid-1970's.

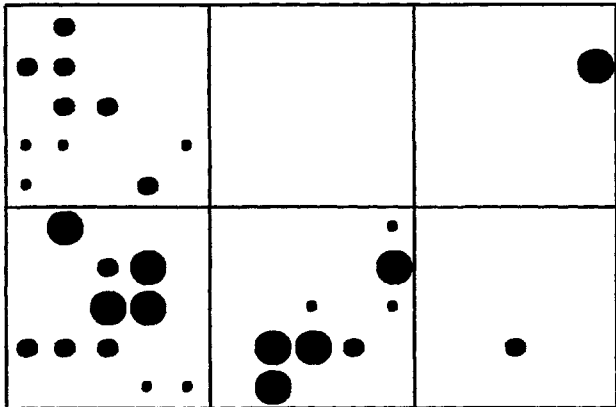
Mosley said "a few may breed", and indicated Netherton Moor and Lindley Moor amongst a short list of sites. Swabey and Aubrook

classified the bird as a thinly distributed summer resident.

The Upland Bird Survey (1990) located 91 pairs, but during our Atlas survey breeding birds were present in 18 tetrads outside the U.B.S area, and probable breeders occurred in over 20 more tetrads. A total breeding population may be in excess of 150 pairs. However the population density is declining in parts of the area particularly near Ingbirchworth where improved drainage is rendering the habitat less suitable.

Redshank
Tringa totanus

30;20% (9;12;9)
Migrant breeder (1)



From historical records in the Huddersfield area it appears that Redshank populations have either fluctuated considerably, or been inadequately studied. Neither Mosley, "rare straggler", nor Swabey and Aubrook, "passage migrant, fairly numerous", made any reference to breeding. The present writer believes breeding to have taken place on Slaithwaite Moor in 1948, and the Halifax Scientific Society (1965) listed Ringstone Edge as a breeding site. The club records for 1973-75 noted a total of 25

breeding pairs, which roughly occurred in only nine tetrads, and an estimate of fifty breeding pairs was made in 1975.

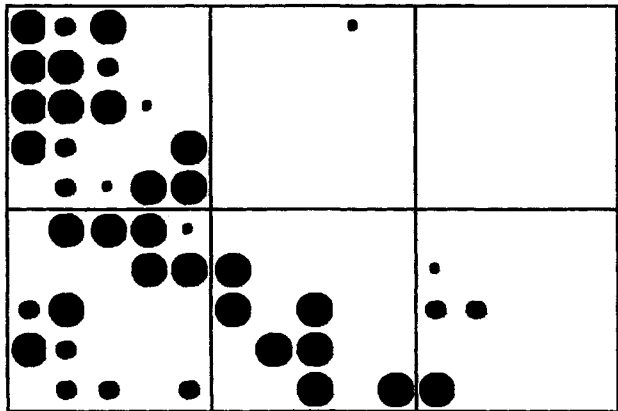
The species could now be described as scarce and declining, with our Atlas survey, and the Upland Birds Survey giving a combined total of at most 13 pairs breeding, and about ten more probably breeding, largely in boggy areas of the moorlands. Wet meadows containing sedges and rushes along moorland margins and in the lowlands are rapidly disappearing and the loss of such habitats has been more detrimental to Redshank than to Snipe or Curlew.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

42;28% (26;11;5)

Migrant breeder (2)



This attractive little summer visitor is largely confined to breeding sites along our upland streams and reservoir margins. Streamside breeders suffer disturbance from people making increasing use of the uplands for recreation (Yalden 1986). Whilst this is inevitable it is to be hoped that regular visitors will learn to appreciate the reasons for a bird's agitated behaviour.

With significant registrations in 37 tetrads it is likely that the total population is in the

region of 50 pairs.

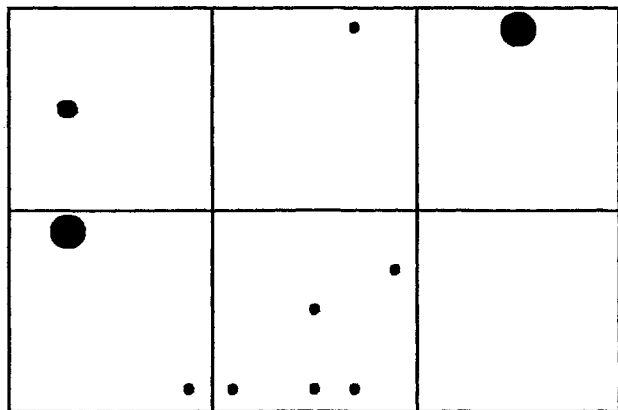
According to Mosley, Common Sandpipers bred along the River Colne, but were declining as human population increased.

Black-headed Gull

Larus ridibundus

10;7% (2;1;7)

Resident breeder (1)



A colony adjacent to Black Moss Reservoir (Little Black Moss) is known to have been occupied around 1896, and numbered about 150 pairs from 1913-1919, but was then apparently deserted sometime prior to 1938. It was re-occupied in the 1950's and 1960's with "many" pairs in some years. From 1974-1994 it was closely monitored with nestling ringing carried out in most years.

A peak of breeding activity occurred in 1977 with 212 birds sitting. However after 1983 (113 young counted) the colony

declined rapidly for reasons unknown. During the Atlas survey years numbers were low, and subsequently the last breeding attempt was in 1994.

Other sites have been occupied spasmodically in the area including Dewsbury S.F. (1986), Cupwith Reservoir (1987), Horbury Wyke (1991) and Ringstone Edge Reservoir, none of which held more than three pairs. It is noteworthy that in the first half of this century other colonies were occupied in the South Pennine moorlands, all of which have since been abandoned.

Feral Pigeon

Columba livia

Resident breeder (3)

Little census information available for this species has led to no map being produced. This is a species often ignored by birdwatchers, but it undoubtedly has a "niche" living alongside man. It is common in built-up areas, especially the large towns. Most nest sites are fairly high above ground and under cover, making factories, railway stations and large public buildings popular choices.

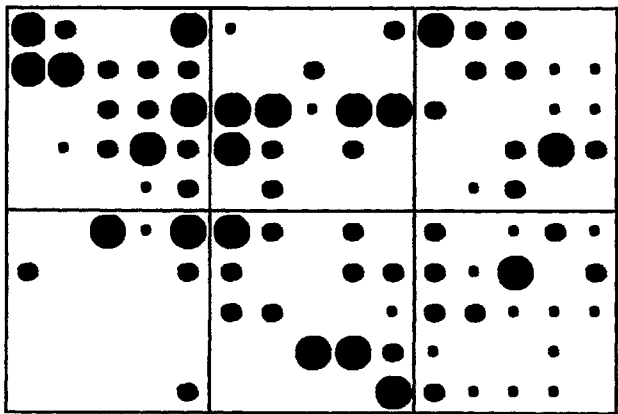
It is commonest in Huddersfield town centre with up to 400 regularly present and some control of numbers is undertaken by the Council.

Stock Dove

Columba oenas

82;55% (20;40;22)

Resident breeder (3)



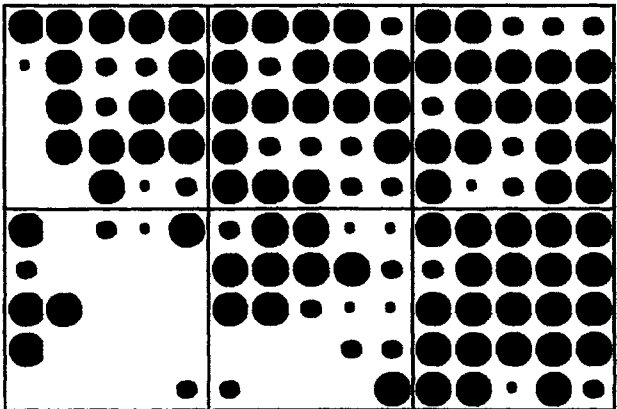
This bird is very much more widespread today than it was in the last Century. It was unrecorded by Mosley and by the time of Swabey and Aubrook it was noted as uncommon. Some declines in populations took place in Britain in the 1950's and 1960's due to organochloride seed dressings, but these were reversed when their use was halted.

It is a bird of forest edges, open farmland and moorland fringes and is present in most areas apart from the high moorland. Wary of man, it is characteristically seen flying away from you after being disturbed. They need easy access to fields rich in weed species or crop seeds and to nearby drinking water. The Stock Dove uses quarries, old buildings, holes in mature trees and will also use nestboxes as breeding sites. A pair attempting to breed in a nestbox at Gunthwaite in 1989 failed when Grey Squirrels built a drey on top of the eggs.

While the species is not common, it is thinly spread over much of the study area and would appear to be stable or slightly increasing in numbers. Winter numbers have been showing some increase and since the Atlas work finished, flocks of over 100 have been seen. An estimate of the population would be 200-300 pairs.

Woodpigeon
Columba palumbus

124;83% (87;28;9)
Resident breeder (4)



The Woodpigeon is an adaptable species whose core habitat is woodland fringed by open spaces. Where agricultural advancement has broken up forest, they readily take to copses, roadside trees and hedgerows, typically nesting three to five metres above the ground.

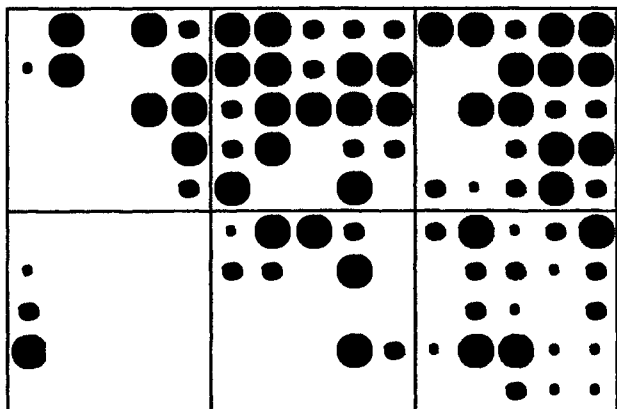
It is common in all but featureless moorland which lacks nest sites. The status of this bird would appear to have been stable for many years, though breeding details are

seldom reported due to it being a common species.

Any persecution it suffers today through shooting would appear to have little impact on the population, which is likely to be between 2,000 and 2,500 pairs. Historically this species suffered more through shooting, with Mosley attributing decreases in his day to woodlands ceasing to be preserved and listed the species as relatively rare.

Collared Dove
Streptopelia decaocto

83;55% (41;30;12)
Resident breeder (3)



This species began a marked range expansion in Europe from around 1930, when it was mainly confined to the Balkans. By 1955 the first breeding record for Britain was confirmed. In Huddersfield the first sight record was in 1963 at Bretton Park with the first confirmed breeding record six years later at Edgerton. Since then it has continued to spread and consolidate its position in the club area to its present total which is probably in the region of 300 to 400 pairs.

Closely associated with human activities, usually in suburban areas, this species normally avoids open countryside and city centres. It depends largely on food provided indirectly by man and often selects sites where grain is readily available such as flour mills, farms, gardens and hen-runs. Overhead wires nearby to these sites are preferred for perching.

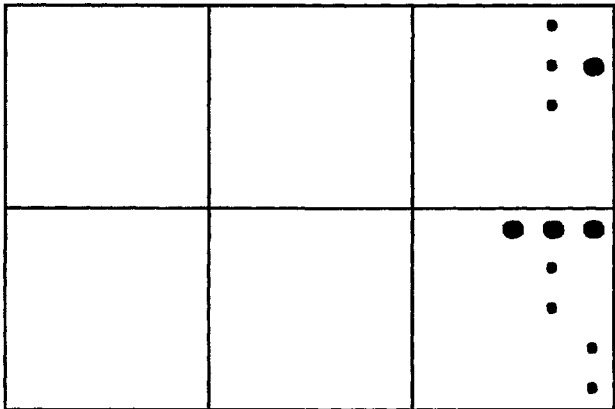
The species is fairly common in the lower areas in the centre and east of the study area, with Booth Dam Quarry being the highest site in the west at an altitude of 290m. above sea level. According to The Birds of the Western Palearctic, few Collared Doves in Britain breed above 300m.. The population in our area would appear to be stable, though many suburban breeding areas are seldom, if ever, visited on a regular basis.

Turtle Dove

Streptopelia turtur

11;7% (0;4;7)

Migrant breeder (1)



This species normally occurs annually in woodlands to the east of our area, but in small numbers only. This has not always been the case with the Turtle Dove described as "plentiful" in 1944 and "breeding in the district each year" in 1958. Some population fluctuations may be due to being near the westerly edge of its range, or perhaps to heavy losses through shooting on migration in certain European countries.

In Britain the species is declining and would appear to be showing most declines in breeding numbers on the fringes of its range. Our breeding population is unlikely to exceed 20 pairs and judging by the solitary record of Turtle Dove in 1991, at the traditional site of Silkstone Common, this may be an over estimate.

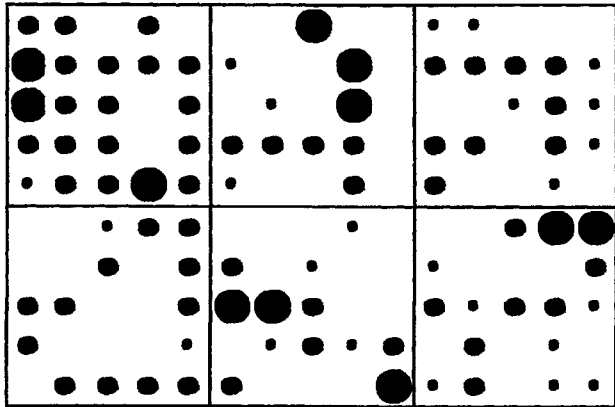
The preferred habitat of the Turtle Dove is fairly dry, sunny, sheltered lowlands with accessible water and a variety of cover, as well as open ground. Woodland edges and old hedgerows are the places to look for them in Huddersfield.

Cuckoo

Cuculus canorus

90;60% (11;55;24)

Migrant breeder (2)



This wide ranging, thinly spread, species is recorded from most habitats with the exception of built-up areas and exposed moorland, being most frequent in valleys adjacent to moorlands and in wooded areas to the east.

In the Annual Report of the Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club 1975, John Dale noted a general impression of a decrease in numbers from the 1950's continuing to the mid-1960's. He considered this to be

particularly so in built-up and low-lying areas, but hard evidence of such a decline was not available. It would seem that the population is stable at present, having been that way since the mid-1960's, with a total number breeding in the region of 50-75 pairs.

This bird's secretive breeding habits, restless mobility and far carrying voice make accurate censusing hard though there are many traditional sites where this bird returns each spring. There is an annual Cuckoo Festival at Marsden on the last weekend in April, and participants are usually rewarded with its song. The Dunnock and Meadow Pipit are the only host species definitely seen feeding young Cuckoos in our area over the years.

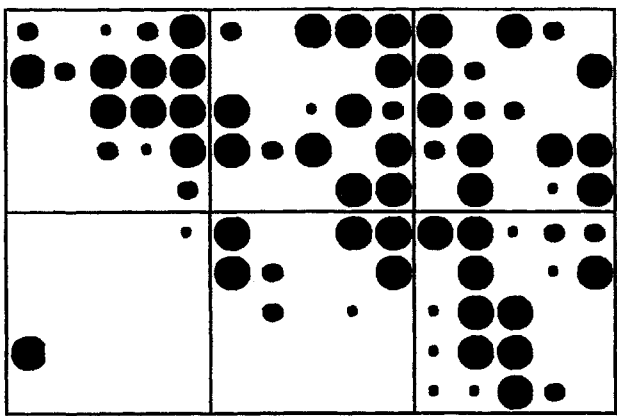
| | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Barn Owl | 5;3% (0;1;4) |
| <i>Tyto alba</i> | Former resident breeder |

With no confirmed breeding records during the survey period (apart from a "released" pair, see below), and none subsequently, it seems likely that the species has not bred within the area since the years 1983-1986. Mosley classed the Barn Owl as a "former resident, now a rare visitor". The situation was certainly healthier in the 1970's, when at least four sites had pairs breeding for anything from three to eight seasons.

In 1990 a pair of free flying, but injured, birds were released in the north-west of the area and successfully reared three young, one of which was found dead in Tadcaster on 31st October that year. From 1986-1990, 40 hand reared birds were released in the Barnsley area, including the south-east of our area, but full details of the outcome of the scheme are not known.

There have been many false rumours about occurrences of Barn Owl, but however unlikely, they should all be checked.

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Little Owl | 75;50% (45;18;12) |
| <i>Athene noctua</i> | Resident breeder (2) |



The Little Owl is not a native to Britain. During the 19th century a number of attempts to introduce birds were made, ultimately succeeding in Southern England in the 1890's, after which a relatively rapid spread west and north brought them to West Yorkshire in the 1920's.

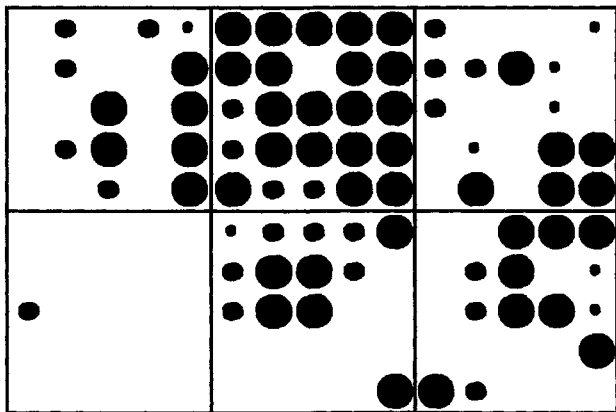
Disused farm buildings, substantial dry stone walls and tree trunks with natural cavities are the principal nest sites. The conversion of barns into residential

properties in recent years has removed a number of useful sites. Despite this the species is present in over 70 tetrads, some of which hold more than one pair. They have been known to breed up to 350m. above sea level, but lowland sites where there are better winter survival rates are preferred.

It seems likely that numbers remain fairly stable, and an estimate of 40 pairs in 1975 may have been on the low side.

Tawny Owl
Strix aluco

77;51% (46;23;8)
Resident breeder (2)



The distribution map forms an interesting picture with the greatest concentration of proved breeding records occurring in heavily populated urban areas, from where additional information was supplied by members of the public following an appeal in the Huddersfield Examiner.

Although primarily a woodland dweller, gardens with mature trees can provide secure nest and roost sites. In more rural areas detection of this very nocturnal species

proved less easy and it is likely that some pairs were overlooked.

With breeding proved or probable in nearly 70 tetrads the total population will be close to 100 pairs. Mosley described it as a former resident and Morley indicated a similar status in the Halifax area in the early part of the century. Both authors conclude that heavy persecution was responsible for its absence.

Long-eared Owl
Asio otus

6;4% (4;0;2)
Resident breeder (1)

The long term history of this the most elusive of our owls is not adequately recorded. It appears to have bred in our area in the early part of Mosley's life (about 1865), but the next record was not until 1925. For the next twenty years or so most records were of dead birds on keepers' gibbets, presumably having bred locally.

However since the early 1970's pairs have bred regularly in four distinct areas of coniferous woodlands, and occasionally in four other sites, including in 1989 a pair ground nesting on moorland. During the Atlas survey years no fewer than seven sites had successful pairs, but three of these were each only occupied in one season.

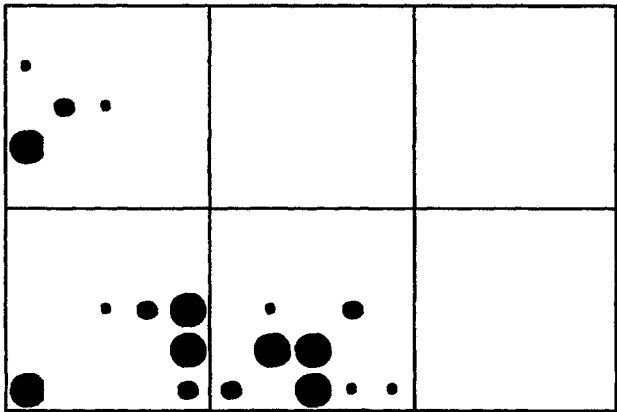
The local population may fluctuate and appears to be in the range of five to ten pairs annually.

Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

18;12% (7;5;6)

Resident/migrant breeder (1)



Although this species does not breed annually in the area it can be classed as a regular breeder. Populations in our area, and on the Pennines generally, are known to fluctuate quite widely over relatively short periods with an important factor being cyclical populations of the Field Vole *Microtus agrestis* a favourite prey species.

During the five years of the Atlas survey pairs occurred at twelve different sites all in the high moorland and usually amongst

heather, though one nest was in bracken. 1989 was the year of greatest breeding success, with four pairs rearing young.

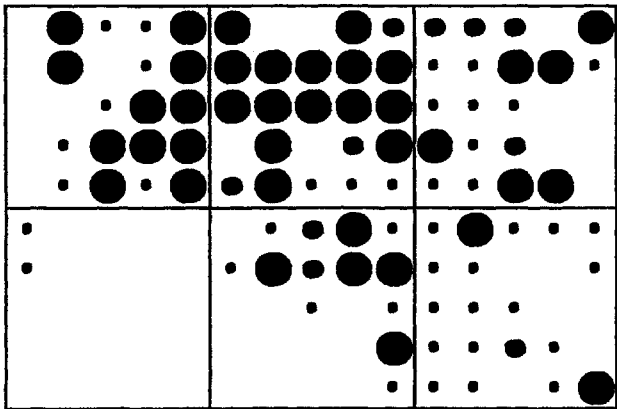
Most earlier authors considered Short-eared Owl to be a rare breeder in Yorkshire (Nelson, Chislett) and Mosley did not refer to breeding locally. The first published record in the area was of a nest found on Rishworth Moor in 1932 (Mosley). The species has become a more frequent breeder in the county and locally in the last 50 years.

Swift

Apus apus

92;61% (39;10;43)

Migrant breeder (3)



This late arriving migrant nests entirely in man-made structures, under eaves, beneath roof tiles and in small cracks in old buildings. Areas of long-established human occupation are therefore more suitable for breeding than new housing or industrial developments from which the species is normally lacking.

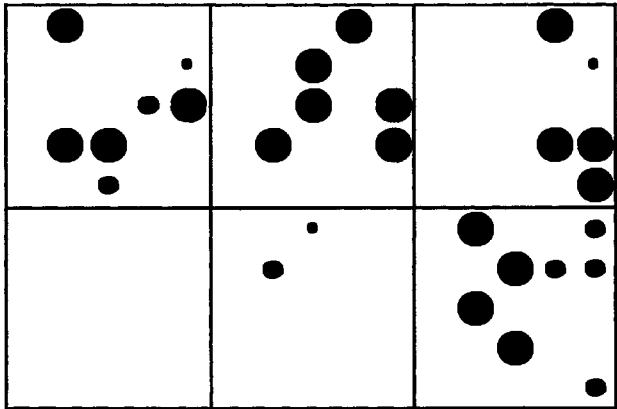
There has been a general decline in numbers since the mid-1970's and this has been reflected in our area, particularly following

the demolition of old mills and other buildings which provided ideal nest sites. Screaming parties of birds can no longer be taken for granted. Nevertheless, the species was found in well over half the tetrads surveyed, being commonest in the most built-up areas. The high percentage of possible breeding records indicates the difficulty of proving breeding for this most aerial of species and many in this category could probably be upgraded.

It is equally difficult to give an estimate of population as this species is a colonial breeder and multiple nests may be reached via a single entrance hole.

Kingfisher
Alcedo atthis

28;19% (18;7;3)
Resident breeder (2)



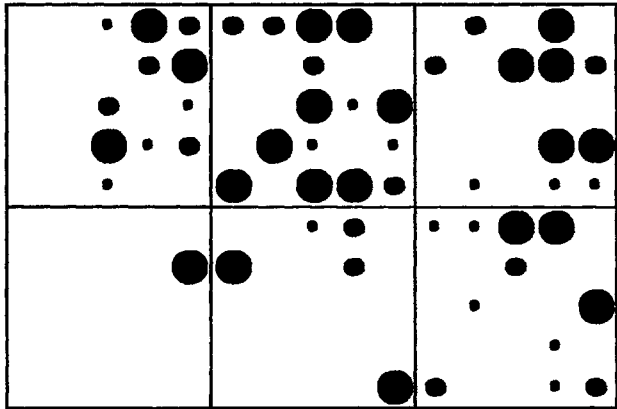
Described by Mosley in 1915 as a "former resident ... now a persecuted visitor ... still visits the district every year", its demise being caused by a combination of persecution, pollution and destruction of fish - the Kingfisher has obviously made a remarkable recovery in our area. For such a colourful bird though, it is surprisingly easy to overlook. In some of the tetrads, more than one pair was found giving a population estimate approaching 30 pairs.

The evidence would appear to indicate that our local rivers and streams are benefiting from efforts to control the discharge of harmful effluents in a bid to improve water quality. Pairs were found on the Rivers Colne, Calder, Holme, Don and Dearne and the Fenay Beck as well as some smaller streams, but breeding was not confirmed on the River Holme above Honley - possibly due to lack of nest sites.

The species is severely affected by hard winters, but has proved in the past quick to recover, being capable of rearing three or even four broods in a season with up to six young per brood.

Green Woodpecker
Picus viridis

54;36% (22;16;16)
Resident breeder (1-2)



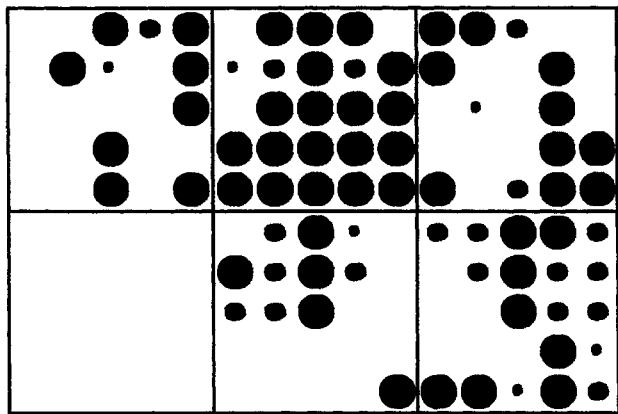
Proof of breeding can be difficult to obtain as this species' characteristic calls only indicate its presence in an area and its nest hole is often very high up in a tree, making observation difficult.

Its typical habitat is not one of continuous woodland, but rather of wooded areas with open spaces such as parkland or farmland with plenty of mature trees in well-established hedgerows. The map shows it to be well distributed, particularly in the northern and eastern parts, with an absence from the high moorlands of the west and south-west and coniferous plantations. It can be found close to well built-up areas if the necessary habitat is present.

Mosley described the species as a rare visitor, giving only one recent record of a bird killed in Whitley Woods and he attributed its disappearance from the area to the cutting down of old timber trees.

Great Spotted Woodpecker
Dendrocopos major

75;50% (50;19;6)
Resident breeder (2)



This is a familiar woodpecker of gardens, regularly visiting nutfeeders and bird-tables. Its distinctive calls, loud drumming and noisy young make it an easy species to locate compared to the other woodpeckers, confirmed by the fact that over 90% of the registrations indicated probable or proved breeding.

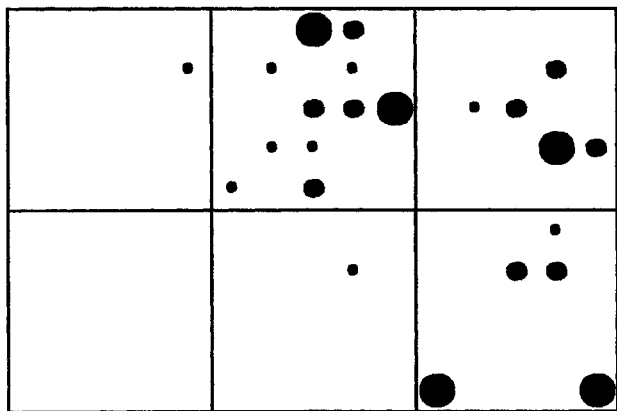
It is easily the commonest and most widespread of our three resident woodpeckers. It occurs in most woodlands

in the area, although the minimum area required for breeding is two to three hectares and isolated small woods are less likely to be occupied.

Some woodlands, including those near Huddersfield town centre, hold several pairs of birds, so the breeding population is likely to be in the region of 70-80 pairs, with the highest densities in mature, broad-leaved woodlands, although it does occur in coniferous plantations too. It was absent from the whole of the south-western moorland areas as one would have expected. Mosley described the species as probably resident, so the species has undergone a remarkable increase since the early part of the century.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Dendrocopos minor

23;15% (5;9;9)
Resident breeder (1)



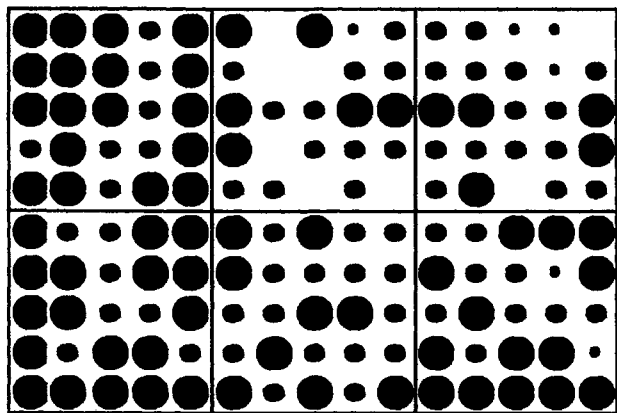
Not only is this species difficult to prove breeding, it is also difficult to find. Its vocalisations and drumming are not so loud as the previous species and it spends much of its time in treetops on small twigs and branches and is extremely difficult to observe in the breeding season when trees are in leaf.

It is a bird of broad-leaved woodlands and also favours mature alders along water courses. Up to the mid-1970's Bretton Park

was the only site where breeding is known to have occurred on anything approaching a regular basis and this remains the most reliable locality for the species, but even here sitings are much more frequent outside the breeding season. All 18 probable or possible tetrads contain suitable breeding habitats and considering the general sedentary nature of the species, it is highly likely that breeding did occur in several of these. (Prior to the Atlas years, breeding was in fact noted in eight of these locations). Apart from Bretton Park, breeding was confirmed in only four other sites and only sporadically at these.

Skylark
Alauda arvensis

142;95% (70;66;6)
Resident breeder (4-5)



The song of the Skylark can be heard in springtime over open land throughout the area. Its apparent absence from a few tetrads that are not totally built-up may be due to lack of observer coverage.

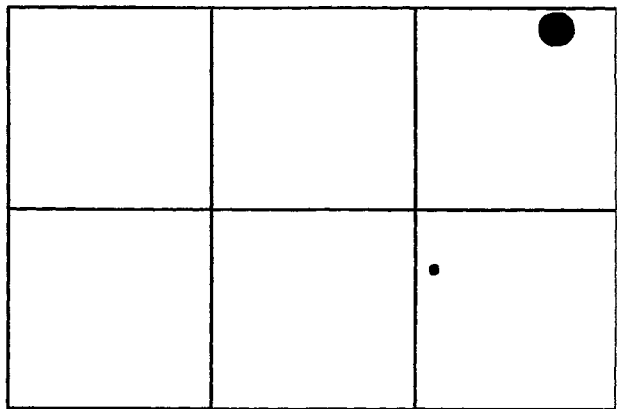
In Britain generally lowland populations have been declining since about 1980 mainly due to changes in farming methods (Population Trends in British Breeding Birds 1990). It is probable that numbers are declining on land in the east of our area.

The verification of that probability would require an in-depth study of a small number of selected sites.

The moorlands and upland pastures hold large numbers, and many tetrads in these areas hold in excess of 30 pairs, and it is estimated that the total population is at least 2,500 pairs.

Sand Martin
Riparia riparia

2;1% (1;0;1)
Migrant breeder (1)



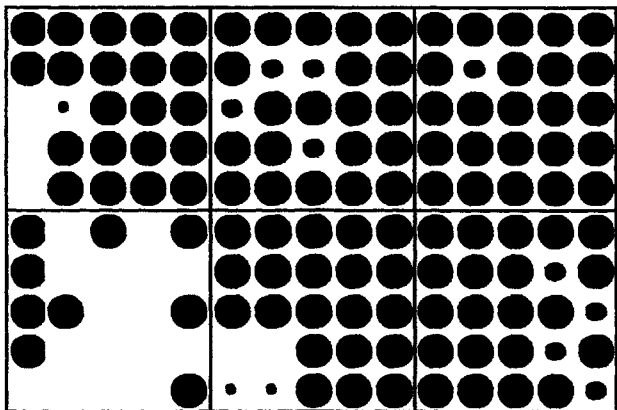
During the Atlas years, the only recorded breeding occurred in 1988 when four nests were discovered at Healey Mills on the River Calder. This was the first proved breeding for five years. Prior to this, small colonies had existed in the 1960's and 1970's at Elland Gravel Pits, in the Hall Dike Valley, on the River Colne below Linthwaite, on the River Calder at Mirfield and on the River Dearne downstream from Bretton Park.

This species, one of the earliest to arrive of our summer visitors, suffered population crashes in 1968-69 and 1983-4 as a result of drought conditions in its winter quarters.

Owing to the surface geology which prevails, the nesting requirements of the Sand Martin are rarely met in our area. The species requires a sandy stratum in a vertical cliff or bank in which to excavate its nest tunnels, so there is little chance of it extending its breeding range beyond the few sites where it has bred in the past. Mosley, as a boy, noted a "great" colony at the bend of the River Colne at the bottom of Dalton but the species was persecuted by nesters and driven away during construction of the sewage works.

Swallow
Hirundo rustica

129;86% (117;9;3)
Migrant breeder (4)



This well known summer visitor was the fourth most widespread of the species encountered in our area, as well as being the most ubiquitous of our summer migrants.

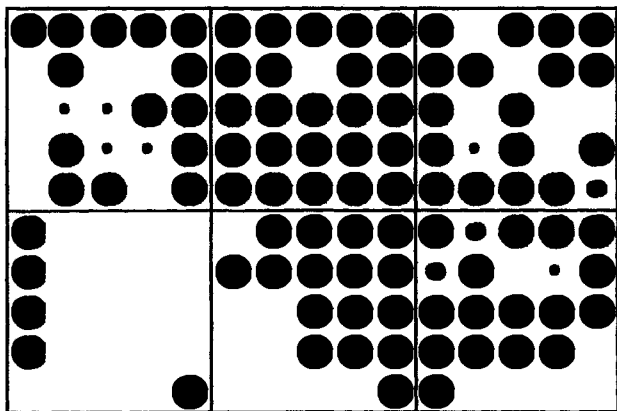
It occurred in all habitats from heavily built up areas to the moorland fringes, absent only from high moorland areas of the south-west where there were no buildings for nest sites. The preferred habitat of the species is farmland with outbuildings and barns etc. with livestock. The species can

have a very long breeding season and birds were feeding young in the nest as late as 15th September 1987 at Fenay Bridge and 4th October 1992 at Ingbirchworth.

Local declines and increases are regarded as not unusual, but since about 1984 there has been a more widespread decline on a national level. Numbers are affected by drought in the wintering quarters and also by bad weather in the breeding season leading to delayed nesting with fewer second and third broods than usual. A conservative estimate of the breeding population would be around 600 pairs.

House Martin
Delichon urbica

101;67% (92;3;6)
Migrant breeder (3)



This species is less widespread than the Swallow, but more numerous in many of those tetrads which are composed mainly of built up areas. The species has benefitted from the Clean Air Act of 1956, which has led to an increase in aerial plankton and nationally its distribution is inversely correlated with atmospheric pollution. It has the ability to take advantage of new buildings, especially in housing estates where there are abundant nest sites.

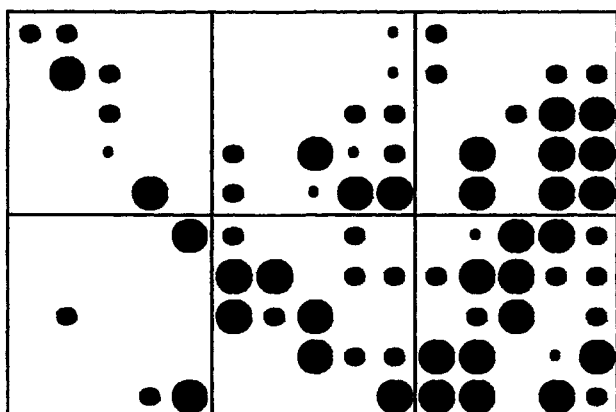
Arriving in mid-April to mid-May, the House Martin has a protracted breeding season with young regularly observed being fed in the nest in late September or even early October and almost 90% of pairs raise two broods. It has been suggested that the House Martin is in slow long-term decline but there is no firm evidence for this. However, nesting has become more dispersed with the species tending to breed in smaller colonies with few now having more than low double figures of pairs and most in single figures. The total population is probably in the order of 400-500 pairs. This contrasts with Mosley's statement in 1915 that he had seen no nests recently except at Gawthorpe Mill.

Tree Pipit

Anthus trivialis

69;46% (32;30;7)

Migrant breeder (2-3)



As its name implies, the species requires tall trees for song posts and is found in woodland with open areas of ground, lacking dense shrubs and undergrowth, for feeding. Newly felled woodland is ideal as long as some trees are left to provide song posts. Another favoured habitat is young conifer plantations, of which there was an abundance on the moorland fringes in particular during the Atlas years. In new upland afforested areas, colonisation may occur for up to nine years when the trees

become too tall for the species' requirements. At lower levels, on better quality land, they may remain suitable for only four years.

The Tree Pipit arrives in its territory from mid-April onwards and is easily located by its conspicuous song flight though, as the map shows, breeding is much harder to prove.

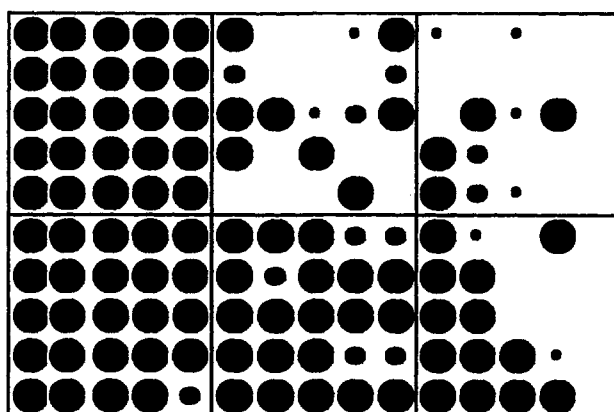
In favoured areas, occupancy rates can be very high; for example in 1986 twelve males were located in Deffer Wood and ten in the Hall Dike Valley and in 1988 as many as 22 males were singing in Deffer Wood. This would imply a healthy population of up to 100 pairs in the area during the survey. However the situation has changed drastically in recent times and in the late 1990's the species has become much scarcer with numbers reduced by 75% or more. Some of this can be attributed to plantations becoming unsuitable due to state of growth, but other factors must be involved due to traditional woodland sites being deserted.

Meadow Pipit

Anthus pratensis

113;75% (94;11;8)

Resident / migrant breeder (4-5)



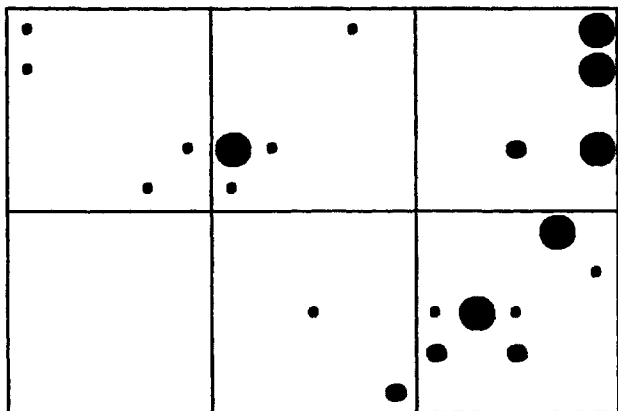
The Meadow Pipit was found in three-quarters of the tetrads surveyed and proved breeding, which is made comparatively easy by locating adult birds carrying food for their young, was established in 83% of those occupied.

The distribution map shows the species to be almost ubiquitous in the western and southern portions of our area; indeed it is the commonest breeding passerine on the moorlands and on the hill farms of the

moorland fringes. In the early years of young coniferous plantations the species can be exceedingly common. The species also occurs on farmland habitat in lowland areas, particularly on low quality soils and rough grassy areas.

Yellow Wagtail
Motacilla flava

21;14% (6;4;11)
Migrant breeder (1)



Hobkirk reported the Yellow Wagtail as being common, while Mosley stated it was still a regular summer visitor though less common than when he was a boy. The species has undergone a severe decline since the 1950's and by the time of the Atlas fieldwork had become decidedly uncommon in our area.

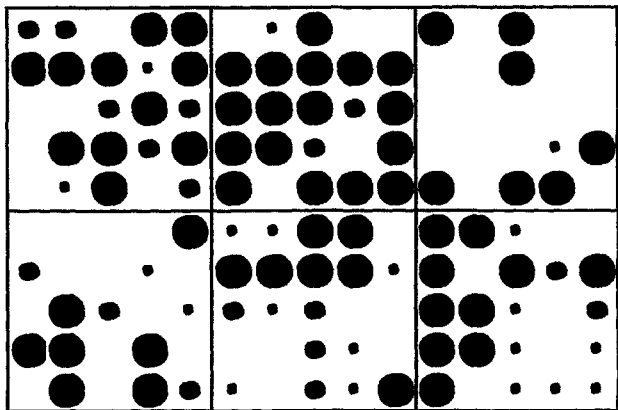
The distribution could easily create a misleading impression of the species' status. In none of the confirmed or probable tetrads

did breeding occur in more than one year and, with the exception of Horbury SF where two pairs raised seven young in 1986, no site held more than one pair. It is highly likely that the vast majority of possible registrations referred to birds passing through on spring migration.

Nationally, the species' range has contracted throughout the 1970's and 1980's and this decline has continued in more recent years. Formerly a bird of wetlands, the species has more recently begun to nest in arable farmland, a habitat which was utilised in 1989 just outside Bretton Park.

Grey Wagtail
Motacilla cinerea

96;64% (59;17;20)
Resident breeder (2)



Atlas fieldwork showed the Grey Wagtail to be commoner and more widespread than previously had been suspected.

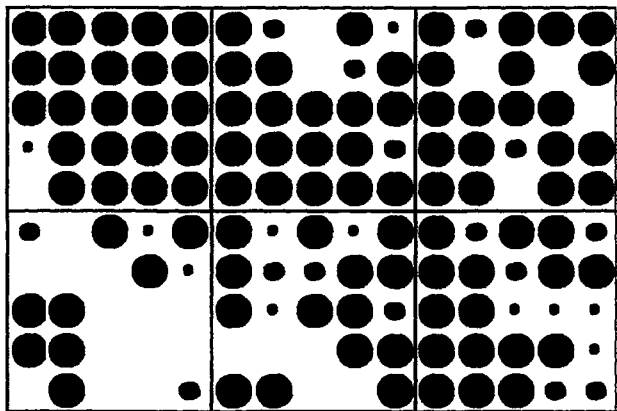
The species traditionally has a preference for fast-flowing streams, bordered by broad-leaved trees, and with rocky or shingle banks or small islands and therefore is typically considered a bird of mainly upland areas. However, as the map shows, it is also widely distributed in lowland areas when it is usually found near man-made

structures such as bridges, weirs, reservoir outflows, canal locks and millstreams etc. Indeed it is found breeding very close to the town centre at Aspley and Lockwood. Pollution seems to have little effect on this species due to its having a great range of insect prey, much of which, unlike for example the Dipper, is of non-aquatic origin.

The species has benefitted from a series of mild winters and the total breeding population could well exceed 100 pairs. This is a far cry from Mosley's time at the turn of the century, when it was described as an occasional winter visitor. Mosley states that he often looked for it, but never found it, "where the Dipper breeds".

Pied Wagtail
Motacilla alba

125;83% (99;15;11)
Resident breeder (3)



The Pied Wagtail was the eleventh most widespread species in the survey. It was found breeding everywhere apart from in woodlands and bare moorland areas; it is common in urban areas, often close to man as well as in very open treeless habitats, provided suitable nest sites are available, such as dry-stone walls.

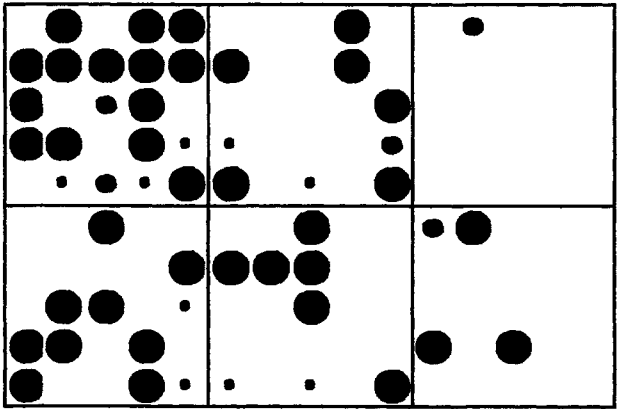
It is a conspicuous bird, often seen perched on walls, which are ideal sites for spotting insect prey on adjacent roads and tracks.

Although it was a common breeder in Mosley's time, its status has changed during the intervening period. Mosley described the Pied Wagtail as a summer visitor, wintering on the east coast, with an earliest arrival date of 14th February 1902 at Kirkheaton. Nowadays it is with us all year round and birds can be seen in town centre streets and car parks prior to roosting at the Civic Centre, where up to 320 birds have been counted.

Nationally, a figure of 150 breeding pairs per 10 km² has been estimated, which would indicate a total breeding population of well in excess of 500 pairs.

Dipper
Cinclus cinclus

52;35% (38;5;9)
Resident breeder (2)



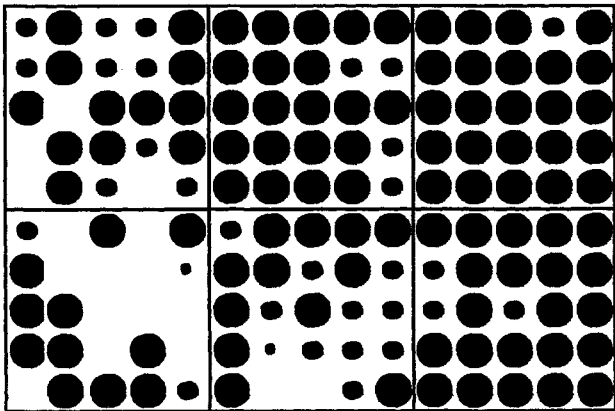
Earlier writers considered the Dipper to be an uncommon breeder. However given its strict habitat requirements the Atlas survey proved it to be well distributed.

Breeding pairs were located in 38 tetrads indicating a population in excess of 40 pairs. Most suitable river tributaries descending from the moorlands held pairs and a good proportion were in lowland sites such as the River Holme and Fenay Beck. Less anticipated were two sites near the River

Colne north of the town.

The sight of this bird perched on a stone in mid-stream, bobbing as if hinged on its legs and slipping underwater to walk along the bottom seeking food, is most delightful and unique.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Wren | 133;89% (102;29;2) |
| <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> | Resident breeder (5) |

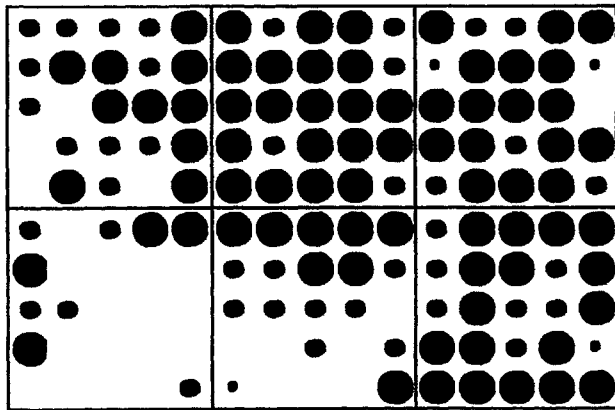


Extremely widespread and very common occurring throughout the area except for the high moorland plateaus, which lack suitable cover. Wren population levels can fall significantly in severe winters such as early 1963, but not since the early 1980's have conditions been harsh enough to affect their numbers. During the B.T.O. Atlas survey 1988-91 it was considered to be one of the most numerous species in Britain.

A wide variety of nest sites can be used including crevices in buildings, walls, rocks or trees, old nests of other birds, hedges, brambles, Ivy etc. With such a range of possibilities it is commonly found breeding in gardens in all parts of the area.

The population was estimated at about 4,000 pairs in 1975, but a calculation based on the estimate given in the New Atlas of Breeding Birds for Britain would put our population in excess of 10,000 pairs.

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dunnock | 122;81% (76;42;4) |
| <i>Prunella modularis</i> | Resident breeder (4) |



Almost as widespread as the previous species, it is also absent from the high moorlands, but can breed on hill slopes with bracken or bush cover up to about 350m. above sea level. Nest sites are largely in vegetation such as hedgerows, shrubberies, brambles and almost any low, thick growth, and gardens are widely used. Even the smallest areas of thick cover in the heart of the town centre itself are utilised by this species.

The national population trends were showing a slow decrease from the mid-1970's to the early 1990's, which may be reflected in our area, but without detailed monitoring this would be impossible to detect for such a common bird.

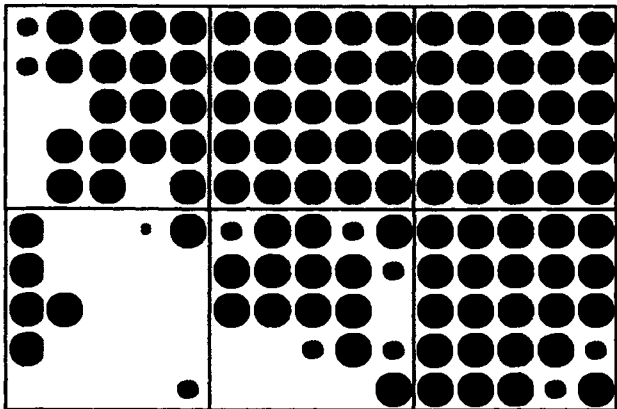
Using the estimates given in the New Atlas of Breeding Birds for Britain, our population could be as high as 4,000 pairs.

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

121;81% (110;10;1)

Resident breeder (4-5)



Although naturally a bird of woodlands, copses and hedgerows, the Robin adapts wonderfully to gardens and shrubberies and is one of the most generally well known of our birds.

Whilst it may not breed up to the same altitude as Wren and Dunnock it is extremely widespread, with breeding proved or probable in 120 tetrads.

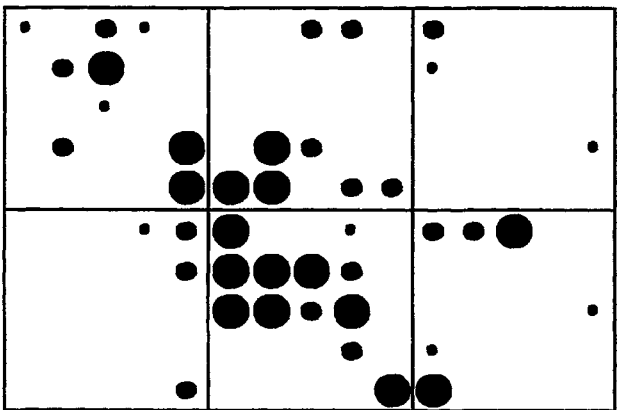
Again following the New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain, a population of about 8,000 pairs may be in the area though our estimate would be a more conservative 5,000 - 6,000 pairs.

Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

42;28% (16;17;9)

Migrant breeder (2)

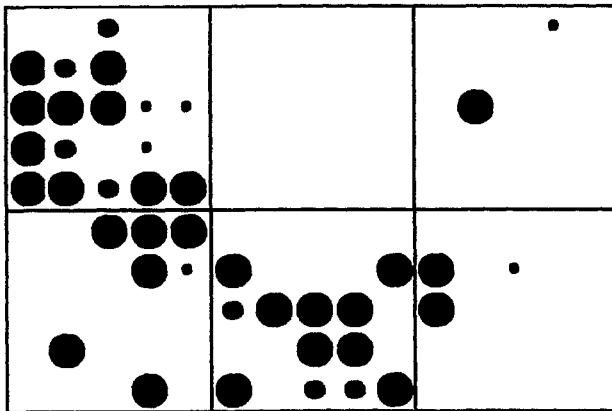


The Redstart can be found in a variety of habitats including wooded moorland cloughs, deciduous (especially oak) and mixed woodlands, and occasionally nests in walls or disused buildings adjacent to scattered trees. Mosley indicated numerous localities within SE11 which must have held some 20 pairs, whereas during our survey probable breeding was recorded in only five tetrads within the same area.

In more recent years (i.e. since about 1985) there has been an inexplicable decline in the east of our area, particularly around Bretton and Cawthorne. With breeding proved in only 16 tetrads the population appears to be in the range of 30-50 pairs.

Whinchat
Saxicola rubetra

41;27% (28;7;6)
Migrant breeder (2)



Whinchats were formerly widely distributed in open country wherever bushes and tall vegetation occurred from lowlands to hill slopes, and less exposed moors to at least 300m. However declines in available breeding sites from at least 1950 onwards have grown apace in our area, and in those of neighbouring societies, all of whom comment on "tidying up" and "improvements" of the landscape being detrimental to this species.

Conifer plantations in the early stages of growth (2-5 years) are a favoured site, but these are only temporary havens and with reduced planting will rarely be available in future. Loss of heather and gorse in the Ingbirchworth area in particular (but also in pockets elsewhere) has removed 15-20 breeding sites in the past 20 years.

The Atlas survey with proven breeding in 28 tetrads gives a maximum population of about 60 pairs against an estimate of 100 in 1975. Habitat loss has continued since 1991.

Stonechat
Saxicola torquata

2;1% (2;0;0)
Occasional breeder (1)

In researching the history of Stonechat the only clear picture that emerges is of a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. This still applies today.

During the 1970's the species went through an exceptional "purple patch" which was reflected in the neighbouring society areas of Manchester, Sheffield and Barnsley. A pair bred at Yateholme in 1972, and in the years 1974 to 1977 five sites held one to two pairs; three of these being occupied in 1977 (four pairs). During these years the numbers of passage and wintering birds also increased.

The severe winter of 1978-79 must have affected populations generally for records from 1980 to 1988 were very limited, although single pairs were found feeding young during July in both 1985 (Linshaw) and 1986 (Ramsden Clough). A pair bred in the south-west of the area during the Atlas survey period.

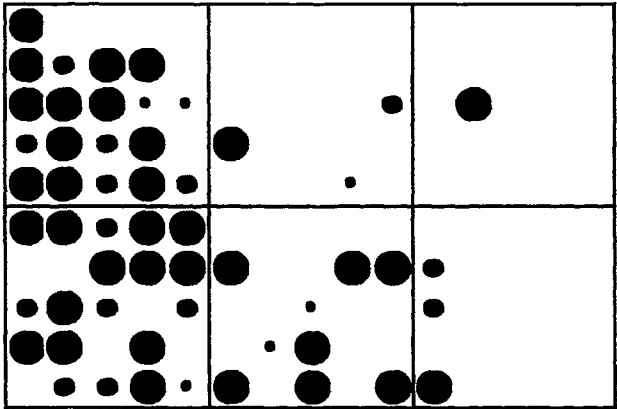
It breeds most frequently in areas of heather and gorse thus overlapping with Whinchat, and has proved to dominate that species where both are present. (Phillips J. S. 1970)

Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe

54;36% (34;14;6)

Migrant breeder (2)



The favoured habitats of the Wheatear, the high moorlands particularly in rocky areas and upland pastures with dry stone walls have changed little in recent years, and it remains as described by Mosley and others as a widely distributed, and relatively common species in appropriate habitat.

Breeding was proved in 34 tetrads, one of which according to the Breeding Birds of the South Pennines held ten pairs, and a population estimate has to be at least 100

pairs, about 20 pairs less than the 1975 estimate.

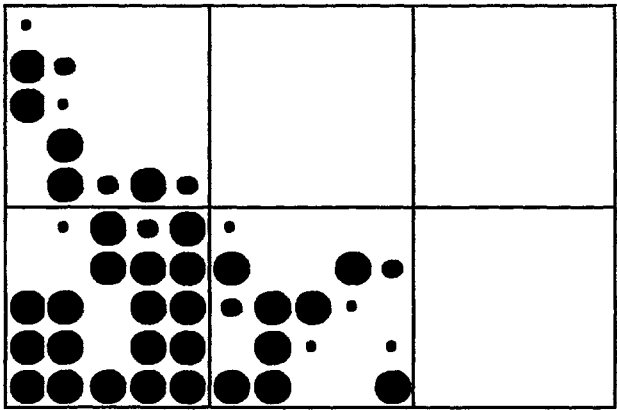
Of all our summer visitors, the Wheatear is often the first to be reported, the striking grey, black and white plumage of the male standing out prominently in sparse grassland or on top of dry stone walls.

Ring Ouzel

Turdus torquatus

44;29% (31;6;7)

Migrant breeder (2)



Mosley described this species as "more restricted than formerly, but still very numerous on Slaithwaite Moor". Since that time there has been a further decline, which was quite advanced by the time of the Atlas survey, Slaithwaite Moor having been deserted except on its south-western fringes. The Ring Ouzel, one of the earliest to arrive of our summer visitors, is a bird of high ground with broken terrain, rarely being encountered on uniform moorland.

The territory normally includes a crag, gully, gill, or clough; heather and bracken for nesting cover and nearby pasture for feeding are of overriding importance. The map clearly shows those localities south-west of a line running from the extreme north-west corner of our area to the vicinity of Langsett.

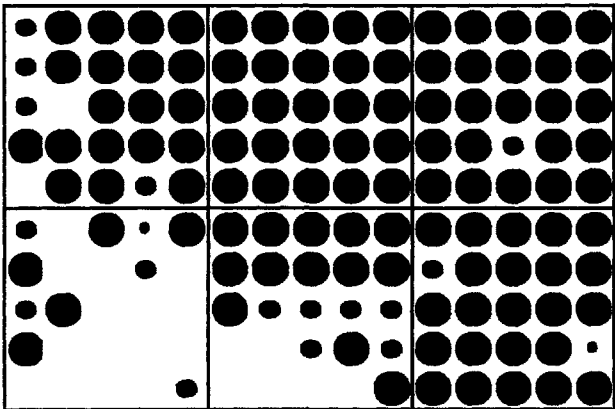
Despite the gradual nation-wide decline of this species, some tetrads with an abundance of the optimum habitat still support up to three or four pairs, giving a breeding population during the Atlas years in the region of 40 pairs. However, this decline has accelerated in the ensuing years and the current population may not exceed half this number.

Blackbird

Turdus merula

127;85% (109;16;2)

Resident breeder (5)



Described by Mosley as being abundant, the Blackbird still retained this status during the years of the breeding survey. The species occurs in every habitat except the highest uniform moorlands, presumably a result of a lack of suitable nest sites and an adequate food supply.

It has been found nesting in bracken at a height of 1,200 feet as well as in a pub yard in the middle of Huddersfield town centre, with young being fed there on the early date

of 18th March. Unfortunately, because of its habit of nesting in close proximity to man, it suffers serious casualties at the hands of traffic and domestic pets, especially cats. To balance this however, research has shown that it achieves notably higher breeding success in suburban environments than in woodland and other natural habitats.

Nationally, population densities have been calculated at as much as 250 pairs per km² in suburbia, 26 pairs per km² in farmland, with only single figures in upland areas. If one allows a conservative figure of 20 pairs per tetrad where breeding was confirmed, this gives a population figure of well over 2,000 pairs in the area surveyed and probably considerably more.

Fieldfare

Turdus pilaris

2;1% (1;1;0)

Occasional breeder (1)

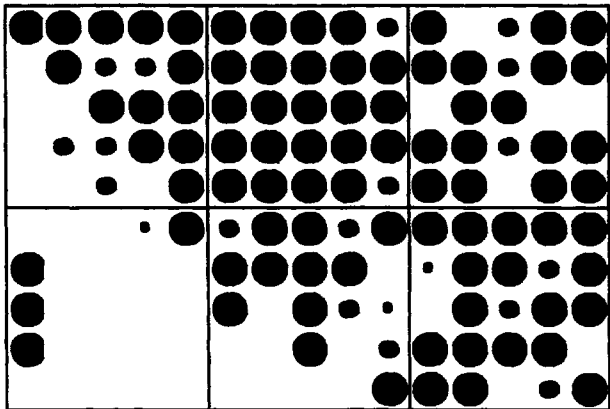
For over 100 years the Fieldfare has been increasing its breeding range westwards in Europe south of the Baltic. The first breeding took place in Britain in 1967, when a pair nested in the Orkney Islands with a second pair probably breeding in County Durham. During the years 1968-72 there were 15 records of confirmed breeding in Britain, two of these just to the south of our area in Derbyshire in 1969 and 1970.

With a total British breeding population of probably less than 25 pairs, it is highly encouraging to report that successful breeding occurred in the west of our area in 1989, when a pair were seen carrying food to young birds in the nest. Prior to that, however, breeding had been strongly suspected in a different locality in 1982 when an adult and five flying young were seen on 16th July, in 1983 (an adult and two or three young on 14th August), in 1984 (a juvenile seen on 14th July) and in 1985 when on 1st May a pair were behaving as though holding territory. At a third locality a bird became very agitated at the presence of magpies on 13th May 1992.

Unfortunately, there have been no further breeding records of the species since the Atlas years.

Song Thrush
Turdus philomelos

106;71% (86;17;3)
Resident breeder (4)

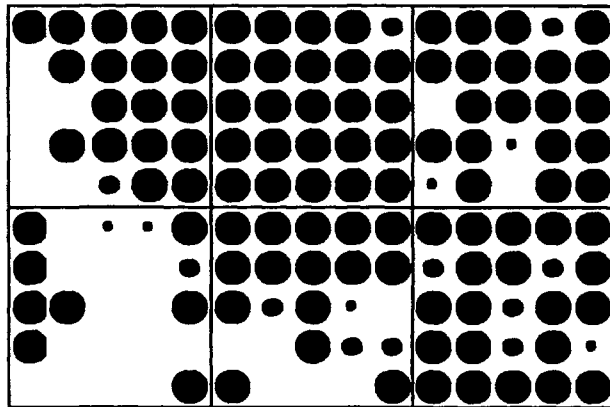


During the years of the Atlas project, the Song Thrush was found to be less widespread and breeding was proven in considerably fewer tetrads than the Blackbird . It was missing entirely from over one quarter of the tetrads surveyed, mainly moorland to the south west of the area, but also from several tetrads in the eastern, lower part of our area where one might have expected the species to occur.

For reasons which are not yet clear, but might include weather conditions, a reduction in the amount of suitable feeding areas due to changes in farming practice, loss of hedgerows and permanent pasture, the effect of pesticides either directly by poisoning or indirectly by reducing food supplies, the Song Thrush has been in decline as a breeding species since the mid-1970's. Sadly, since the breeding survey was undertaken, the decline in Song Thrush numbers has accelerated at an alarming rate and still continues. Mosley described the species as an abundant resident.

Mistle Thrush
Turdus viscivorus

122;81% (105;11;6)
Resident breeder (3)



Surprisingly, this species was found in only five fewer tetrads than the Blackbird and is very widely distributed except on the highest tracts of uniform moorland.

Its favoured habitat is woodland edge or open country with scattered trees and bushes making typical farmland with its fields and hedges ideal. It is also found widely in parks, gardens and playing fields, as well as on the moorland fringes. Where trees are absent or lacking it will nest on

walls, rocks or even on the ground. It is a very early breeder, commencing in March or even February and may raise two or three broods in a season.

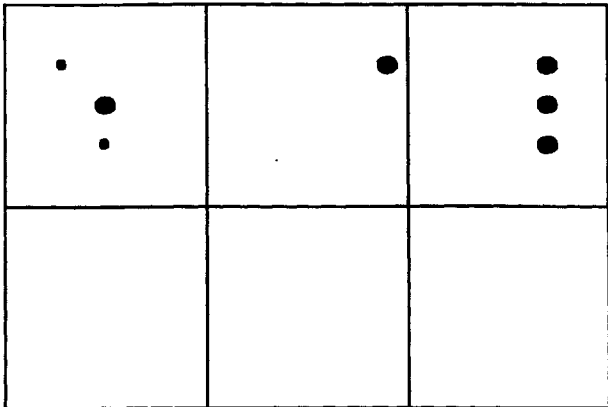
The Mistle Thrush requires much larger territories than the other common thrush species, of up to ten hectares and is therefore more sparsely distributed than its cousins, but a conservative estimate of three to four pairs per occupied tetrad would give a total breeding population in the survey area of 300 to 400 pairs. In some areas of the country there may be as many as ten pairs per km², with a farmland average of 1.9 and a woodland average of 4.9, so the above estimate may well be on the low side. Mosley stated it to be abundant in wooded parts.

Grasshopper Warbler

Locustella naevia

7;5% (0;5;2)

Migrant breeder (1)



Describing the Grasshopper Warbler as the rarest of our regular summer visitors, Mosley could remember when it bred in most of our large coal measure woods. Hobkirk reported that it arrived in the third week of April, inhabiting thickets, mainly in damp situations. If these two authorities are correct, and considering the bird's distinctive song, there is no reason to believe otherwise, then the Grasshopper Warbler has undergone a marked decline in our area

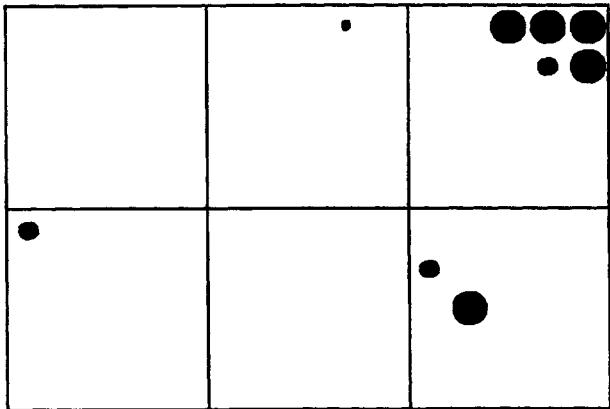
It is a species which is notoriously difficult to prove breeding, with the best indication being of birds seen carrying food. None of the sites mapped was occupied in more than two years, illustrating the erratic nature of the species' appearance at some sites. Although the species is usually associated with damp situations, it has also made itself at home in young conifer plantations. There is an abundance of this habitat in our area which does not appear to have been used, presumably because it is at too high an altitude for what is essentially a lowland species. On a more optimistic note, breeding has been proved in the area since the years of the survey in 1996, though it sadly failed at the young stage.

Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

9;6% (5;3;1)

Migrant breeder (1)



In describing this species as not so common as formerly, Mosley was nevertheless able to define its status as still fairly common in suitable places, and went on to list various mill dams at which the species still bred. Most of these have now been drained or have otherwise disappeared, reducing the area of suitable habitat for the species.

Most areas where the Sedge Warbler breeds are close to water, but in recent times it has spread to other habitats such as young

forestry plantations and crops, particularly cereals and oil-seed rape. It is generally absent from high ground. The distribution map shows it to be mainly confined to the lower Calder Valley in the Dewsbury/Horbury area, with up to ten singing males in some years, with breeding also proved and probable at the Ingbirchworth group of reservoirs in two of the survey years.

The species suffered a devastating population crash in 1993 when fewer than 5% of adults were estimated to return to breed from their wintering quarters south of the Sahara in Africa.

Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

1;1% (0;1;0)

Occasional migrant breeder (1)

Mosley described the Reed Warbler as a former summer migrant, but long extinct locally. During the Atlas years, up to two singing males were recorded along the River Calder in the Horbury area, but breeding was not proved although likely in some of the years. This is one of the few areas where there is suitable reedbed habitat.

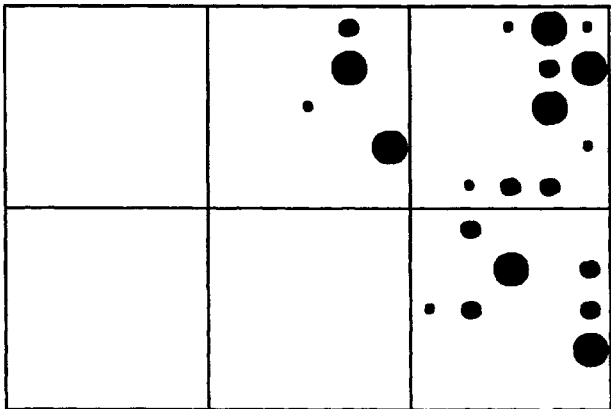
At a site further up the Calder Valley, the former Elland Gravel Pits, there is more extensive suitable habitat in the form of phragmites beds, and up to two pairs of Reed Warbler have bred there in more recent years. Although this locality is in the club's recording area, it was not included in the areas surveyed for the Atlas of Breeding Birds. However, during the survey years, the only record from this locality was of a bird singing on one date in 1991.

Lesser Whitethroat

Sylvia curruca

21;14% (7;8;6)

Migrant breeder (1)



In Mosley's day, this summer visitor was described as being less common than the Whitethroat, but was then reported to be breeding in at last eight sites within three miles of Huddersfield town centre. The first modern record was not until 1964, when four birds were seen at Bretton Park, since when the species has been recorded on a much more regular basis. Since about 1970 the Lesser Whitethroat has been increasing its range in Britain and our area has benefited from this.

The distribution map clearly shows that it is a bird of lowland habitats, not occurring above the 200m contour, with all records coming from north-east of a line drawn from Huddersfield town centre to Thurgoland in the extreme south-east corner. Some tetrads held more than one pair, so the total population is perhaps somewhere in the region of 20 pairs. Only one-third of the registrations were of confirmed breeding, which is not altogether surprising as the species is very secretive, with the male often ceasing to sing soon after the pair bond has been established. The easiest way to confirm breeding is when the birds have young and the adults become very agitated and readily give their characteristic alarm calls.

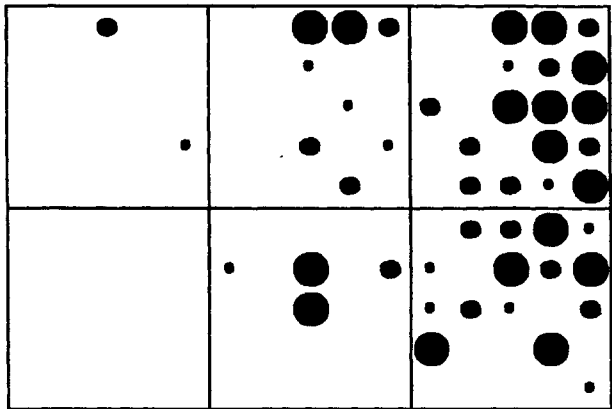
The species can easily be overlooked altogether and there is much suitable habitat in the area which could hold birds but which is probably not much visited by birdwatchers. Tall, dense hedgerows and relatively small areas of scrub and bushes, even close to built-up areas, could easily hold a pair.

Whitethroat

Sylvia communis

46;31% (17;17;12)

Migrant breeder (2)



The Whitethroat was a common breeding bird in the area up to 1968. However, as a result of severe drought conditions in the species' wintering quarters on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert, the population collapsed by 77% in 1969, with the number of breeding pairs in Britain down from an estimated 5 million to 1 million. In our area, Bretton Park, which had up to then supported about ten pairs, held only two and in some other areas where there had been six pairs, none returned.

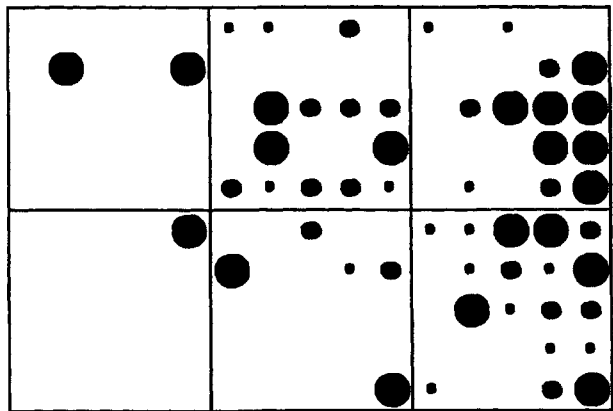
Fortunately the species began to recover by the mid-1970's. By the time of the Atlas survey, recovery was well underway but the species was largely confined to the eastern half of the area. The Whitethroat is found in all kinds of scrub habitat, on waste ground with hawthorn thickets, well-vegetated areas around lakes and marshy areas, in woodland rides and clearings and in hedgerows bordering fields. Although less than one-third of the tetrads surveyed held birds, some of those contained several pairs, for example in the Calder Valley/Thornhill district 23 singing males were located in 1987, with double figure counts in all the other Atlas years. The total population is probably 75 pairs.

Garden Warbler

Sylvia borin

53;35% (20;17;16)

Migrant breeder (2)



The Garden Warbler has shown a definite increase since the 1970's, both in the number of birds and the number of localities in which it has occurred. During the Atlas years it was found in slightly more than one-third of the tetrads surveyed.

The song of the Garden Warbler, which is what usually indicates the presence of the bird, is very similar to that of the Blackcap, but the Garden Warbler is more often found away from mature trees, in scrub and young

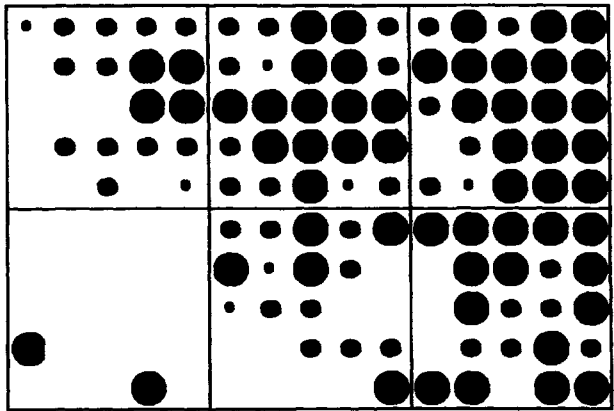
plantations, than its congener. Its most favoured habitat is fairly open deciduous woodland with a dense shrub layer, preferably with tangled brambles. It breeds later than most of the Sylvia Warblers, but seems even so to manage to produce two broods in a season. The map shows it to be well distributed in the north, central and eastern parts of our area, with a few isolated instances of breeding in the north-west and the south if suitable habitat is available. Within the bird's range it was present in most woodlands, with several birds in some and as many as seven males at Bretton Park in 1988, so that the population could well be up to 100 pairs.

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

105;70% (58;40;7)

Migrant breeder (2-3)



Mosley states the Blackcap to be less common than formerly. His statement that it is "very shy...easily overlooked" is difficult to reconcile today. It is an exuberant songster and much more readily seen for example than the previous species. The species occurs in mature deciduous or mixed woodlands with a good shrub layer, tall hedges, forestry plantations and garden shrubberies if taller trees are available for song posts.

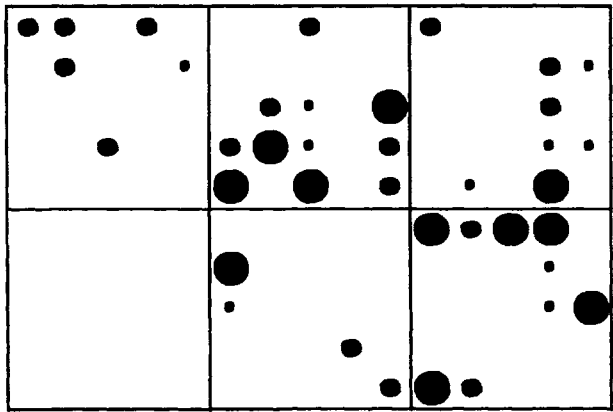
In recent years the Blackcap has probably been the most successful warbler in Britain, increasing continually since the 1950's. The increase has been particularly noticeable relative to the Garden Warbler, which was the commoner species in the first half of the twentieth century, but now the reverse is true. This has been attributed to its more northerly wintering grounds being more favourable than the Garden Warbler's, south of the Sahara. In favoured localities such as Bretton Park and Deffer Wood up to a dozen singing males have been found in a season, so a total population of 400 pairs may not be too high an estimate.

Wood Warbler

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

38;25% (11;17;10)

Migrant breeder (1-2)



The Wood Warbler's favoured habitat is woodland with a good canopy, little secondary growth and sparse ground cover, conditions which exist in beech and oak woodlands. The species has more exacting habitat requirements than the Chiffchaff or Willow Warbler.

The distribution map is somewhat misleading. Several tetrads held the species in only one or two years of the survey; most of the registrations were in the early years of

the survey and only three sites held birds in all the years in which fieldwork took place. The total breeding population in any one year is probably not greater than ten or a dozen pairs, with some sites having up to four singing males.

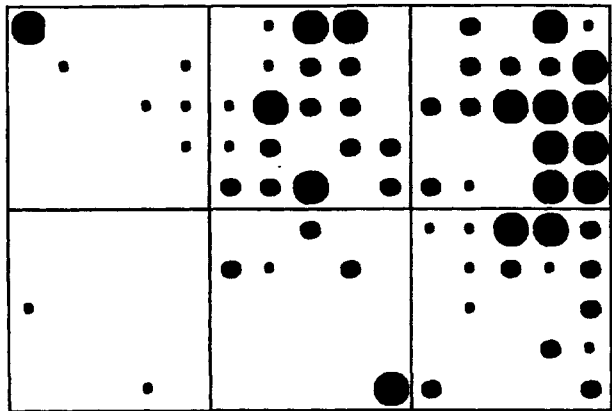
In the years since the fieldwork for the Atlas was undertaken, there has been a considerable decline in numbers of birds and number of sites occupied, with no proof of breeding anywhere in the area and some formerly regular sites totally abandoned. Mosley described Wood Warbler as much rarer than formerly when most of the large woods had held a pair for the previous 40 or 50 years.

Chiffchaff

Phylloscopus collybita

64;43% (17;27;20)

Migrant breeder (2)



The Chiffchaff is widespread except in the two westernmost 10km squares and the southern half of SE10, a distribution that reflects the availability of the species' preferred habitat. It is found mainly in old deciduous or mixed woodland with tall trees necessary for song posts and rough undergrowth for nesting.

On account of its very distinctive song, it is a species which is not likely to have been overlooked. Confirmed breeding records

however are not easy to obtain, due to its habitat making watching birds back to the nest very difficult. It is also relatively scarce compared to the Willow Warbler.

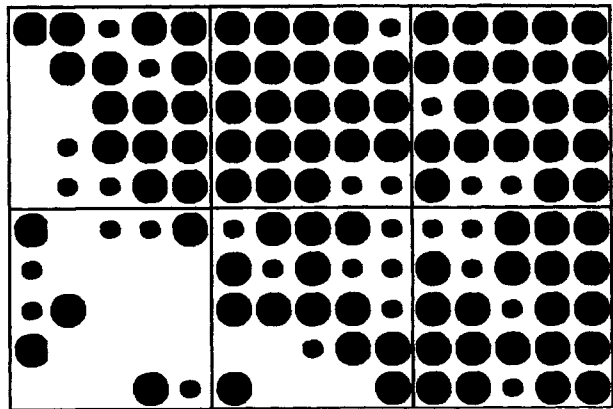
Mosley states that he had never heard the species in the Colne Valley and the distribution map shows that the Chiffchaff is still a very scarce bird in that locality. Particularly in the east of our area, several pairs breed in some of the woodlands, so the population is much greater than the number of proven cases and is probably at least in the range of fifty to one hundred pairs.

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

125;83% (97;28;0)

Migrant breeder (3-4)



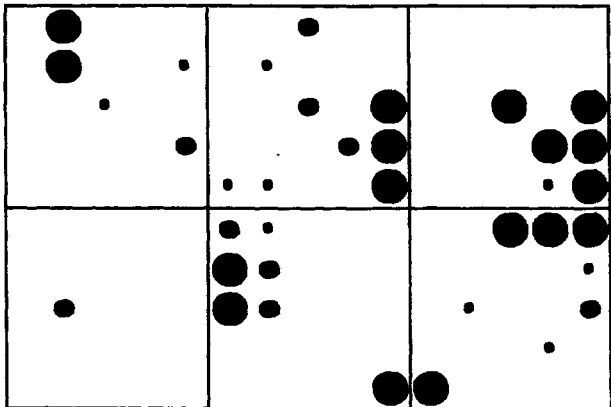
The Willow Warbler is without doubt the most abundant and widespread of our warbler species as was the case in the time of Mosley. It was eighth in rank order of tetrads occupied, equal with the Starling, and was recorded during the Atlas survey in practically every habitat containing trees or bushes of some description, being absent only from the high uniform moorland areas.

Many woodlands hold more than ten pairs of birds and the total breeding population is

probably in excess of one thousand pairs. In the tetrads where the species occurred, all registrations were either probable or confirmed, with almost 80% in the highest category. Presumably this is because the species is so common and birds are relatively easy to watch back to nest sites.

Goldcrest
Regulus regulus

36;24% (17;9;10)
Resident breeder (3)



Mosley described the Goldcrest as being rare, formerly resident, with recent sightings in Storthes Hall Woods, which are still one of the strongholds of the species.

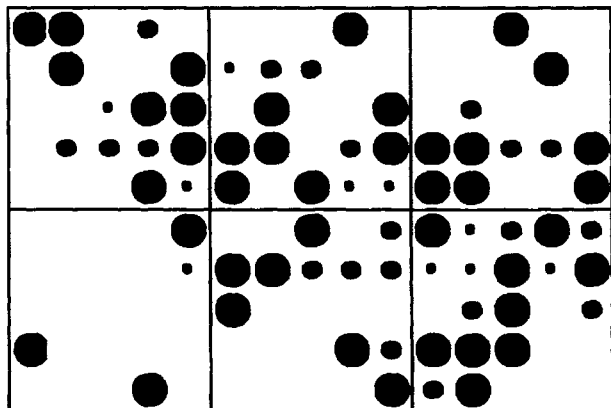
It is mainly, but not entirely, a bird of coniferous woodlands, and is one of the few species to have benefited from the afforestation policy of the Forestry Commission. It is the eleventh most abundant breeding passerine in British woodlands. The species also occurs in

deciduous woods and large gardens, especially if a few conifers are available for nest sites. Populations are affected by severe winters, but compensated by a prodigious breeding capacity with the female laying a second clutch whilst its first brood is only half grown.

After a series of mild winters, breeding densities can reach a high 320 pairs per km² in optimum coniferous habitat and up to 25 pairs per km² in deciduous woodland, increasing if a few coniferous trees are present. So, despite presence being recorded in only 36 tetrads, our breeding population is well over 100 pairs.

Spotted Flycatcher
Muscicapa striata

72;48% (42;20;10)
Migrant breeder (2)



This species, one of the last summer migrants to arrive, was found perhaps to be surprisingly well distributed throughout the area in a variety of habitats, absent completely only from the high moorlands of the west and south-west. The total breeding population is probably in the region of 70 pairs.

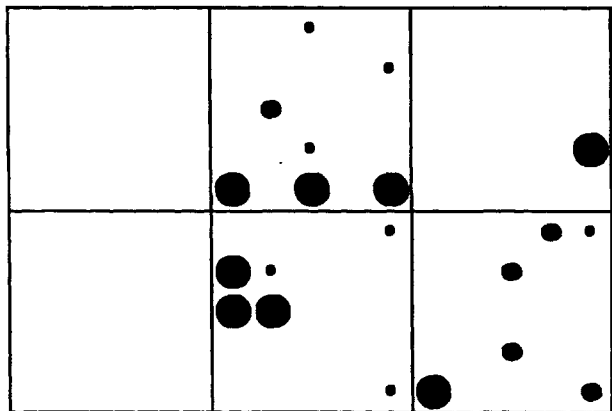
It was found in both deciduous and coniferous woodlands, in parklands, gardens and churchyards and the presence of man

seemed to be no deterrent in its choice of breeding site.

Mosley described the species as being less common than formerly and adds "I have not seen a pair for some years". Obviously therefore the species has shown an increase since the early 1900's, but there has been a long term decline nationally since the early 1960's, which has continued since the years of the Atlas survey and the species is now less widespread than the map shows.

Pied Flycatcher
Ficedula hypoleuca

20;13% (8;5;7)
Migrant breeder (1)



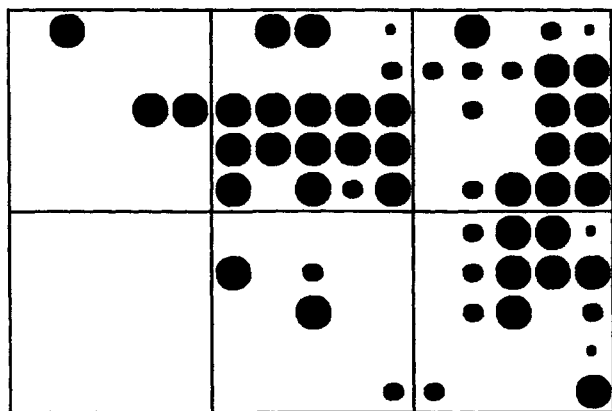
The distribution map for this species may be misleading in that only three of the sites held regular breeding pairs and six further sites showing breeding or probable breeding held birds in only one of the years in which fieldwork was undertaken. Encouragingly though, the numbers of breeding pairs showed a gradual, but steady, increase from one pair in 1986 to three pairs in each of the following three years to seven pairs in 1990 and finally to ten pairs in 1991. Unfortunately this increase has not

continued in the ensuing years.

Just two regular sites held more than one breeding pair. Several spring records related to males or occasional pairs at various locations where birds failed to remain. Studies have shown population densities can be significantly increased with the provision of nest boxes. Even in their preferred oakwood habitat, nest boxes are used readily. In our survey, nest boxes were occupied at five sites, three of these being in woodland and two in the Holme Valley in garden habitats. It would appear that further nest box schemes might encourage the spread in our area of this attractive summer visitor, as we have many oak woodlands which appear to be suitable habitat for the species.

Long-Tailed Tit
Aegithalos caudatus

56;37% (37;15;4)
Resident breeder (2-3)



This species occurs in woodland, farmland, parkland, scrubby areas, hedgerows (particularly of hawthorn with brambles), gardens and low shrubbery with the nest usually being placed in thorny bushes or shrubs, but sometimes in trees up to twenty metres from the ground. Lack of suitable habitat meant that the species was almost totally absent from the western third and much of the central southern districts of our area. It can demonstrate remarkable nest site fidelity, for example a pair nested in the same

bush for three consecutive years in the Hall Dike Valley. Unfortunately, its conspicuous nest, particularly early in the season, makes it an easy target for predators and many eggs and young are lost in this way. Many pairs do not lay replacement clutches.

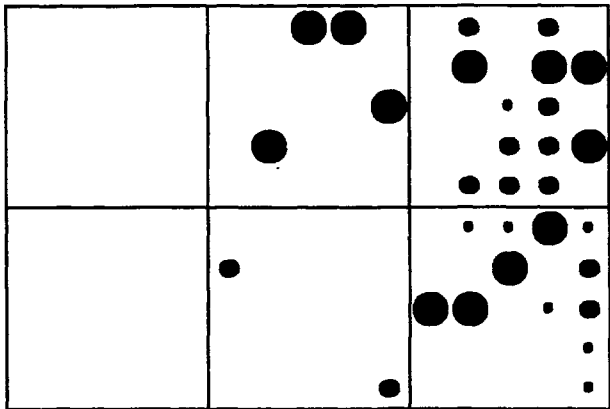
The Long-tailed Tit is vulnerable to severe winters, when up to 80% of the population may be lost, but this has not occurred in recent years, enabling a healthy and increasing population to exist. The population may well be over 100 pairs which is a far cry from Mosley's statement that it is "formerly resident, perhaps so still, but rare".

Willow Tit

Parus montanus

31;21% (12;12;7)

Resident breeder (2)



The Willow Tit is found in only one fifth of the area's tetrads with breeding proved in only twelve of these, whereas as recently as 1972 a survey by R. L. Brook of Wakefield revealed a minimum of 17 pairs in nine woodlands in SE21 and the northern part of SE20. In fact since the early 1970's there has been a steady national decline in the numbers of this species which has continued since the years of the Atlas fieldwork.

The species is restricted mainly to lower altitudes in the east of the area with a handful of records from the north central part within about three miles radius of the Huddersfield town centre. The Willow Tit excavates its own nest hole and on account of its relatively weak bill requires soft, rotten stumps which are normally only found in the eastern part of the area. Few localities hold more than a single pair, so the total population during the Atlas years was unlikely to be more than 30 pairs.

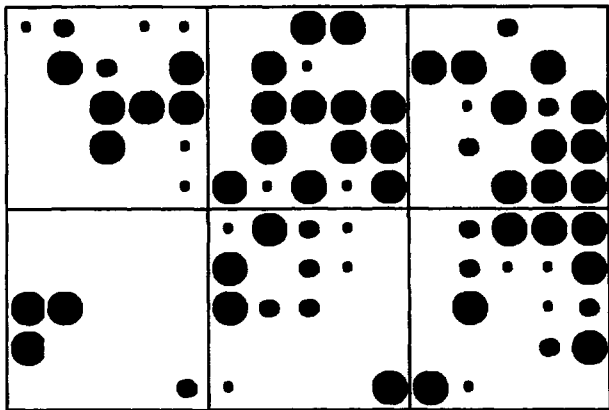
The species was only separated from Marsh Tit in Britain in 1900 and confusion reigned for some time thereafter. Indeed Mosley only refers to the Marsh Tit ("resident, but rare") which is an extremely rare visitor to our area and his and earlier references are highly likely to refer to Willow Tit.

Coal Tit

Parus ater

74;49% (43;14;17)

Resident breeder (3)



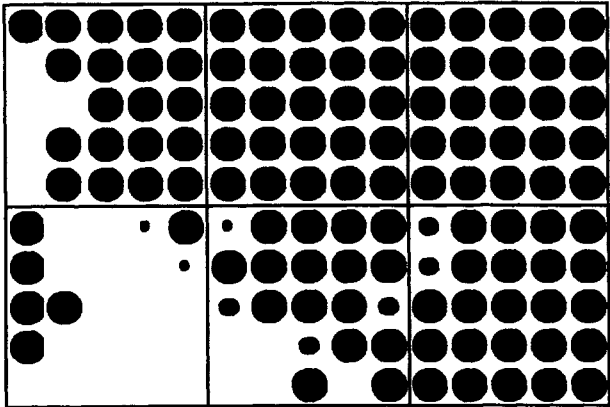
The Coal Tit is principally a bird of coniferous woodland and plantations, but also occurs in gardens which contain a few conifers, including exotic species, as well as in exclusively deciduous woodland. The map shows the species to be well but patchily distributed throughout the area with the exception of the western and southern moorland areas.

It nests in holes in trees or, if natural sites are not available, in man-made structures such as dry stone walls. The nest site is often at a lower level than those of other tit family members. In some of our woodlands such as Deffer Wood, Storthes Hall Woods and the Digley and Yateholme areas it is very common and one of the predominant passerine species.

Nationally, breeding densities are considered to average twelve and a half pairs per km² in woodlands in general, with concentrations of up to 100 pairs per km² in favoured habitats. There could be as many as 400-500 pairs in the survey area.

Blue Tit
Parus caeruleus

123;82% (115;5;3)
Resident breeder (5)



This very familiar species was the most widespread and numerous member of the tit family in our area. It was the eleventh most widespread species encountered in the survey.

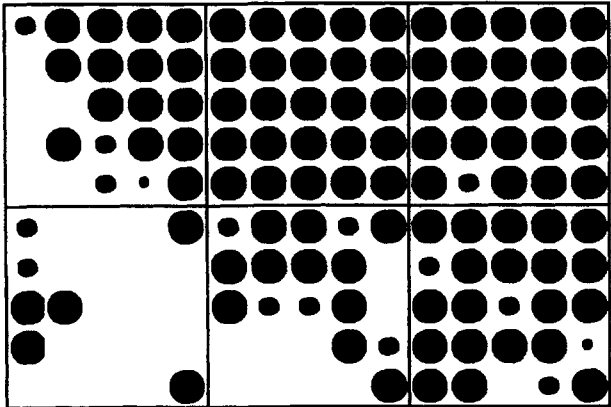
It occurs in all habitats with the exception of the high moorlands of the west and south-west, with highest densities in deciduous (especially oak) woodland, where nationally the average is 42.7 pairs per km². Even on farmland the breeding density is

almost 15 pairs per km². Breeding numbers seem to be limited only by the availability of suitable nestholes. Where there is adequate food supply the species readily takes to nest boxes, which enables it to penetrate into heavily urbanised areas. Indeed, the provision of food has led to considerable numbers breeding in urban environments.

In 1983 (before the survey) 34 pairs bred in nest boxes in Bretton Park giving some idea of the densities which can be achieved, although the Great Tit will exclude Blue Tits from tree holes and nest boxes where there is competition between the species for nest sites and food. The total breeding population for the whole area is probably not less than 2500 pairs.

Great Tit
Parus major

116;77% (100;14;2)
Resident breeder (4)



The Great Tit was found in only seven fewer tetrads than the Blue Tit and its breeding range within the survey area is almost identical to that of the former species.

The species' habit of taking food readily from the ground makes it better able to adapt to habitats outside woodland than the Blue Tit, but average densities for the species compare unfavourably with that species, at 8.5 pairs per km² for farmland and 28 pairs per km² for woodlands. Like

the Blue Tit it will nest readily in nest boxes, walls, drainpipes, etc. but requiring a slightly larger entrance hole, there are fewer sites available to the Great Tit and it is therefore considerably less numerous.

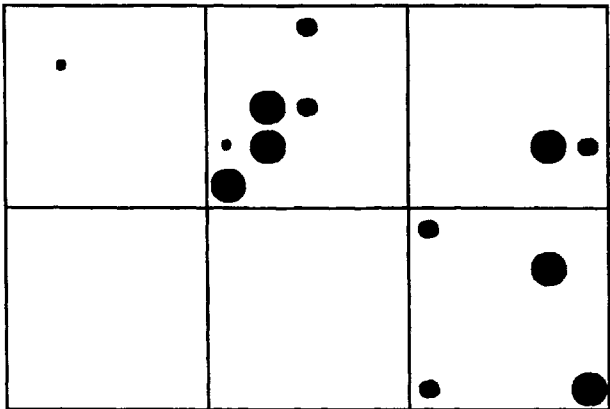
The total breeding population is probably in the region of 1000 to 1500 pairs.

Nuthatch

Sitta europaea

13;9% (6;5;2)

Resident breeder (1)



Until recently the Nuthatch has been a rare bird in our area. Breeding was first proved in modern times at Denby Dale in 1968, Thongsbridge in 1974 and 1975 and also Bretton Park in 1975.

Since the mid-1980's however there has been an upsurge of records, including confirmed breeding, especially in the latter years of the survey, in seven sites mainly to the south-west of Huddersfield town centre and in the east of the area. The species

favoured habitat is mature deciduous woodland, especially of beech and oak, which occurs widely in our area. A factor which influences the success of otherwise of the species is that it will only lay one clutch in a season and if this fails no replacement is made.

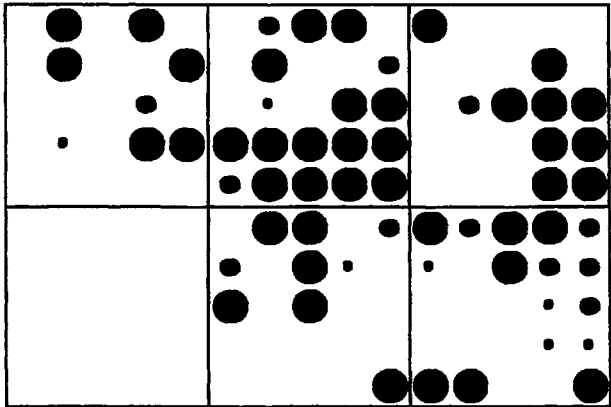
Recently there has been a northward expansion in the species' range in Britain. Indeed, since the Atlas fieldwork was concluded there has been a spectacular increase in the number of woodlands in which the Nuthatch can be found, especially to the immediate south and south-east of Huddersfield. Mosley was able to give only one record of the species, a bird shot in Storthes Hall Woods in the autumn of 1847, but he also says that it may have been a resident at some time.

Treecreeper

Certhia familiaris

61;41% (42;12;7)

Resident breeder (2-3)



Mosley, in 1915, described the status of the Treecreeper as being formerly resident and fairly common, but was last seen in 1899 in Storthes Hall Lane. He concluded that if still resident, it is in very reduced numbers.

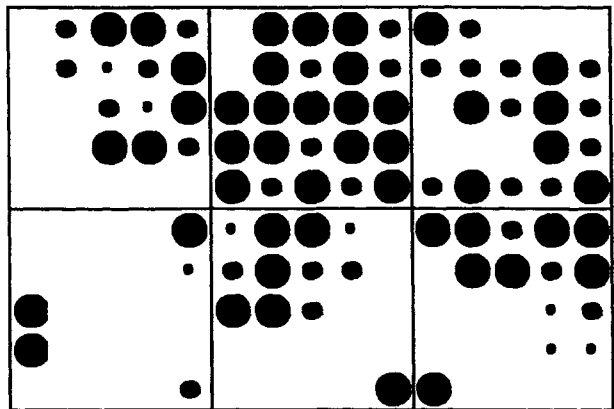
Happily the situation is now much different, with the species well distributed in most woodlands throughout the area. Being a very sedentary species, areas of probable and possible breeding might well be upgraded. Its preferred habitat is deciduous or mixed

woodland, but it also occurs in coniferous woodlands at much lower densities owing to the lack of suitable nest sites.

Although the Treecreeper usually nests in a split in a tree or behind a flap of bark or Ivy, in 1986 a pair nested in the crack of the wall of the now defunct Fenay Mills DIY store. Bretton Park has held up to eight pairs in a season, so the total population may well be over 100 pairs.

Jay
Garrulus glandarius

86;57% (47;31;8)
Resident breeder (3)



Mosley described this species as formerly resident, when it used to be not uncommon, but now extinct locally, probably largely due to persecution by gamekeepers. He gives a list of woodlands where the species bred in the past; all these sites are now occupied once again.

The Jay is well distributed throughout the area, with the exception of the high treeless moorlands, being particularly widespread in the northern and eastern parts of the area.

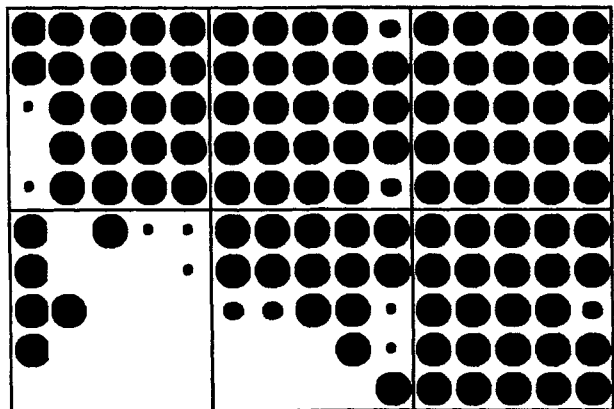
Confirmed or probable breeding was recorded in just over half of the tetrads, with many woodlands holding several pairs, for example up to six pairs were found in the narrow strip of woodland bordering a two kilometre stretch of canal between Golcar and Linthwaite. Although mainly a woodland species, it has adapted to parks and gardens, even in largely urban areas.

Surprisingly for such a large colourful bird, the Jay can be very elusive during the breeding season, its presence often being advertised by its loud, raucous calls, although in autumn it becomes very conspicuous as a result of its habit of collecting and storing acorns to supplement winter food supplies.

It occurs in both broad-leaved and coniferous woodlands that provide adequate cover for nesting. The total population of the area is likely to be between 200 and 300 pairs.

Magpie
Pica pica

126;84% (114;5;7)
Resident breeder (4)



Historically Magpie corpses could always be found on keepers gibbets, and although Mosley noted a reduction in numbers during his lifetime he located over 50 nests in SE10 and SE11 about 1915.

Very obvious population increases took place from about 1950, and an estimate was made in 1975 of at least 1,000 pairs in the area. This was based on nest counts done within tetrads of quite diverse breeding habitats.

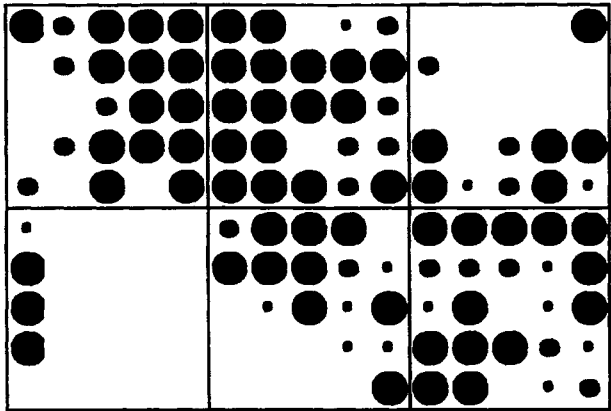
The Magpie is now a common garden bird as well as breeding in hedgerows, isolated mature trees and all varieties of woodland and appears to have occupied every suitable niche. A population estimate is not easy but must be of at least 1,500 pairs.

Jackdaw

Corvus monedula

96;64% (62;20;14)

Resident breeder (4)



The Jackdaw occurs in a wide variety of habitats, including woodlands, parkland, hedgerows with mature trees, crags, quarries and buildings even in the town centre, in fact everywhere there are suitable nestholes.

The distribution map shows it to be absent from the high featureless moorland areas of the south-west due to lack of suitable nesting sites. The species was surprisingly not recorded in many tetrads in the

north-east of the area, probably due to insufficient coverage rather than to the species' absence.

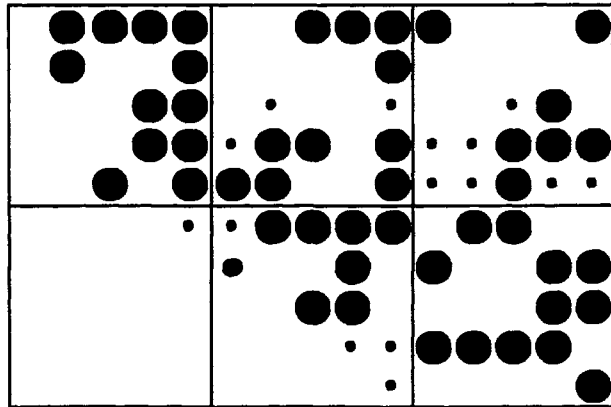
If sufficient nest-sites are available, the Jackdaw is a colonial breeder, a fact borne out by the nesting of 16 pairs in Langsett village in the extreme south of the area in 1990. The 1968 - 1972 Atlas quotes an average figure for farmland of 160 pairs per occupied 10 km₂, so the probable breeding population of our area is well in excess of 500 pairs. Mosley described the species as a not uncommon resident.

Rook

Corvus frugilegus

64;43% (48;1;15)

Resident breeder (5)



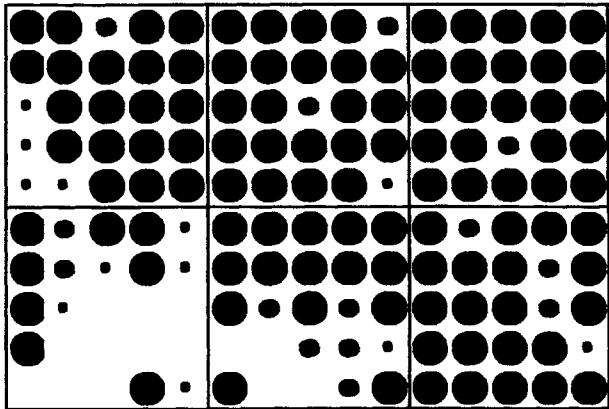
The Rook is well distributed in the north and east of the area. Although generally avoiding heavily wooded countryside, it needs stands of tall trees, which sometimes may be quite isolated, for its nesting colonies. Its favourite nest tree has traditionally been the elm, but with the spread of Dutch Elm Disease, it has readily taken to other species such as sycamore and beech; in our area the majority are in sycamores.

No attempt was made during the Atlas survey to census numbers of breeding Rooks, but censuses were carried out in 1945, 1964 (partial coverage only), 1973, 1975 and 1983. In the last of these a total of 90 Rookeries was located, with a combined total of 4119 nests. For full details see the Annual Club Report of 1983. Between the 1945 and 1973 surveys an increase in the number of nests in the order of 30% was noted. The trend over the years has been for small rookeries (20 nests or fewer) to appear and disappear, while the larger ones continue for decades.

The species was also noted as abundant in Mosley's time with the largest colony in Huddersfield Road, Holmfirth, which contained 208 nests in 1909.

Carrion Crow
Corvus corone

136;91% (110;14;12)
Resident breeder (3)



The species had been heavily persecuted by keepers from some time after 1860, so that by 1915 the only remnant populations were in the Bretton and Cannon Hall areas (Mosley). Keeping activities ceased during the two world wars, and by 1960 a significant recovery was evident with birds breeding in many of the mature woodlands.

By 1980 Carrion Crows had spread to more isolated groups of trees including those of the moorland cloughs, and were beginning

to occupy sites in suburban gardens and public parks. During the Atlas survey it proved to be the second most widely distributed species, and appeared to have occupied all suitable habitats. The total population is considered to be near 1,000 pairs.

With numbers still increasing it threatens to become a serious predator even in areas some distance from nest sites as foraging birds regularly visit the moorlands in search of nesting waders and grouse.

Raven
Corvus corax

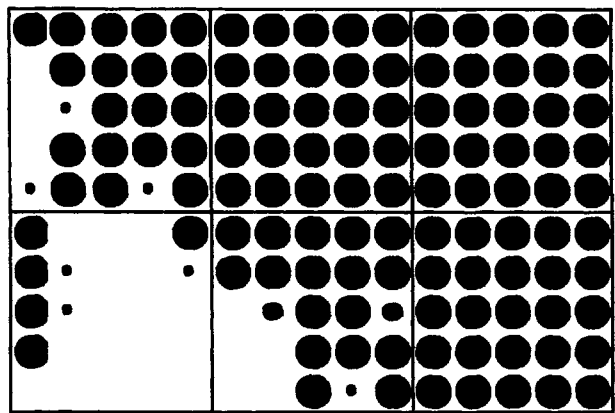
1;1% (0;1;0)
Possible breeder (1)

The Raven is associated with wild upland territory, generally requiring a cliff, crag, quarry face or less frequently a tree, as a nest site. In modern times there have been only seven records of the species in the Club area up to 1989.

However in 1992 a pair almost certainly bred on a crag in the west of the area, but it was not until 1996 that a pair was proved to breed at a different site. Following this there was an upsurge of records in 1997 and 1998, with breeding proved at an additional site as well as the 1996 site still being occupied. The species, which receives no mention in Mosley, is a most welcome addition to the list of those breeding in the area.

Starling
Sturnus vulgaris

125;83% (116;2;7)
Resident breeder (5)

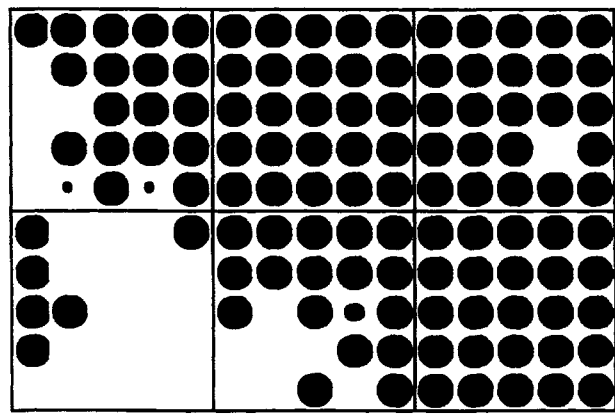


This species was the eighth most widespread in the survey. It is absent only from the remote moorlands, mainly in the south-west of the area, where its requirements for breeding, namely the availability of a suitable nest site together with nearby grassland for foraging, are not met. The Starling's preferred foraging habitat is grazed permanent pasture, where it consumes huge numbers of leatherjackets (crane-fly larvae).

As a breeding species, it is equally at home in woodlands, where it uses natural holes as well as usurping those excavated by woodpeckers, farmland and heavily urbanised areas and is one of our most familiar and abundant breeding birds, with a population well in excess of 8000 breeding pairs.

House Sparrow
Passer domesticus

118;79% (115;1;2)
Resident breeder (5)



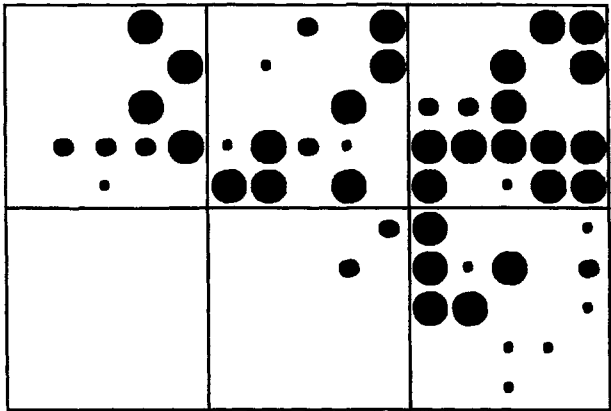
The House Sparrow is a very common bird that has a close association with man. It is very adaptable with most areas being suitable for it, providing they attract continuous human settlement or activity, particularly when accompanied by livestock. Lack of suitable nest sites leaves many moorland tetrads unoccupied. It is most common in densely populated areas, but also widely spread in suburban and rural locations.

Mosley stated it to be "abundant and showing an enormous increase in the last 20 years", attributing the destruction of the Sparrowhawk as a reason. Today there is a general feeling that the species is declining, though it is still fairly common. Perhaps one reason could be the increase in Sparrowhawk numbers in the area.

With a lack of any detailed census work in the area, one can only hazard a guess and put a figure on the population of around 3,500 breeding pairs.

Tree Sparrow
Passer montanus

50;33% (29;10;11)
Resident breeder (2)



This is a strange species in that there have been major recent fluctuations in its numbers. In Britain there was a noticeable expansion from the late 1950's, followed by declines and range contraction since 1976-1977. This has been mirrored in published records from our area. Up to the 1950's the bird was probably a resident species abundance two (using the one to five scale outlined in the introduction). Numbers increased throughout the 1960's and early 1970's with the 1975 report showing

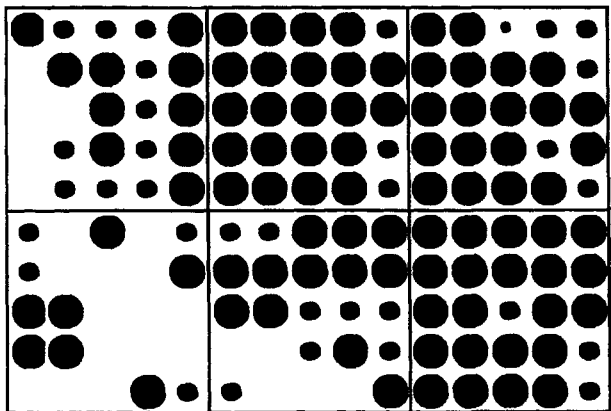
abundance four. The 1981 report contracted to abundance three to four, the 1985 report to abundance two to three and back to abundance two for the study period.

There are still a few traditional sites where this bird can be located in the area, mainly with an easterly bias. It breeds in woodlands, copses, hedgerows with mature deciduous trees and occasionally buildings. The very first list of birds in Huddersfield, by Hobkirk in 1859, lists Storthes Hall Wood as a site for this bird and this still holds true today. Emley, Bretton, High Hoyland, Almondbury and the Ingbirchworth area have also proved reliable over the years.

This is a hard species to census and can easily be overlooked. It can colonise areas one year and be absent the next for no apparent reason. There may be in the region of 100 pairs breeding.

Chaffinch
Fringilla coelebs

126;84% (92;33;1)
Resident breeder (5)



The Chaffinch is a very common resident, inhabiting woodlands of all varieties in the breeding season. Other equally suitable habitats are parklands, gardens and farm hedgerows. The numerous conifer plantations in the area hold large numbers of this species, and are colonised when the plantations reach seven to ten years old.

The status of this species, reviewed in the 1975 report, suggests possible decreases in numbers away from coniferous woodlands.

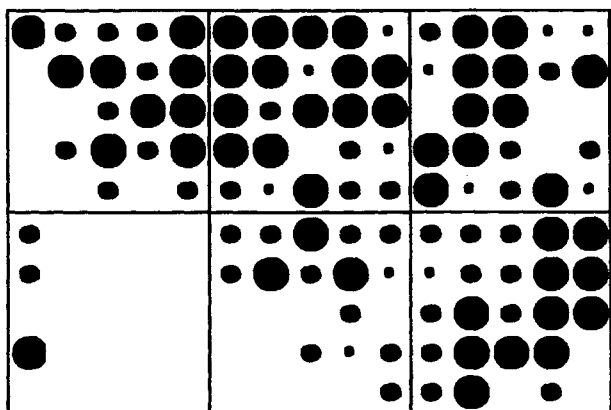
If that were the case, then any losses would appear to have been gained back to the healthy numbers recorded in the study period. The Chaffinch is quite possibly the commonest breeding bird in the area with a breeding population in the region of 10,000 to 12,000 pairs.

Greenfinch

Carduelis chloris

103;69% (50;41;12)

Resident breeder (4)



This common species is widely distributed, often in small colonies, and uses a variety of habitats with a definite preference for tall trees with a sunny aspect. It is well suited to lightly populated suburban areas and often thrives around mature gardens and churchyards for example. The ornamental parkland of Bretton and, in particular, Cawthorne, is well favoured with the many large trees to its liking.

While the current impression is of a stable breeding population, the same cannot be said for winter flocks and communal roosts which have declined greatly since the 1960's. This decline has been attributed to the changes in farming practices, though on the plus side, the Greenfinch is undoubtedly a beneficiary of winter feeding stations. This species is a partial migrant so winter flock numbers may not necessarily be an indication of local breeding populations.

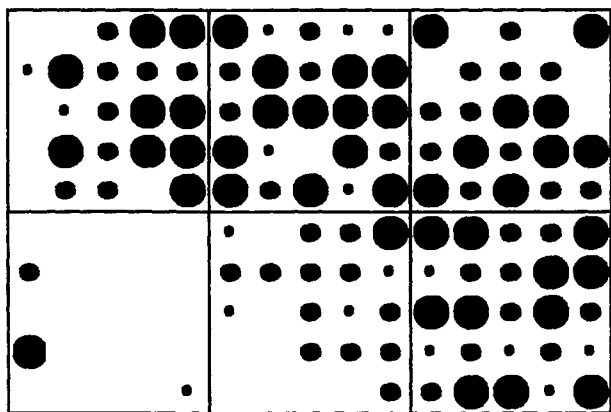
The population estimate for the area is 1,500 to 1,800 pairs, perhaps similar to Mosley's time when he too noted the species as common.

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

108;72% (44;47;17)

Resident/Migrant breeder (3-4)



Prior to 1960 it would seem that the Goldfinch was a genuinely scarce bird in our area, listed as "a rare visitor, but has bred" by Mosley and only listed as "an uncommon winter visitor" by Swabey and Aubrook. Large scale commercial catching of this mainly migratory species (80% of the population moves south to winter in Belgium, France and Spain) took place in Britain prior to the 1930's. An increase in population was noted from the mid-1960's throughout the area, from low-lying areas

up to moorland fringes, and this steady increase has continued into the 1980's.

This increase in sites was reflected by increasing numbers in post-breeding flocks from below ten in the early 1960's to 80-90 in the early 1970's. Its breeding position for the Atlas years would seem stable at around 500 - 750 pairs with birds spread thinly throughout suitable habitat, backed up by healthy autumn flocks.

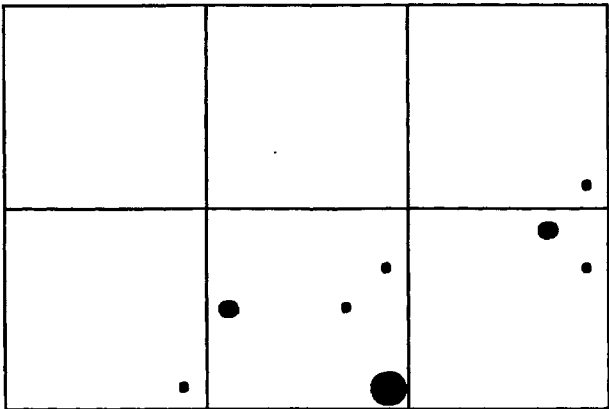
It overlaps to some extent with Greenfinch, but without that species' preference for tall trees. The Goldfinch breeds in parks, gardens, fringe woodlands, well grown hawthorn and gorse.

Siskin

Carduelis spinus

8;5% (1;2;5)

Resident breeder (1)



This species has benefited from the spread of conifer plantations in Britain, generally increasing in numbers from the 1950's. In our area this increase was not noted till the 1970's with the first confirmed breeding in 1978 near Langsett. They mainly prefer spruce for nesting but will also use fir and pine, especially where they are well grown and well spaced.

A gradual, slow, colonisation of suitable conifer woodlands in our area has continued

though breeding numbers are still fairly low with probably no more than 20 pairs during the survey period. The low numbers involved may be due to our birds being in one of a number of isolated pockets scattered throughout Britain, well south of the main breeding population in Scotland.

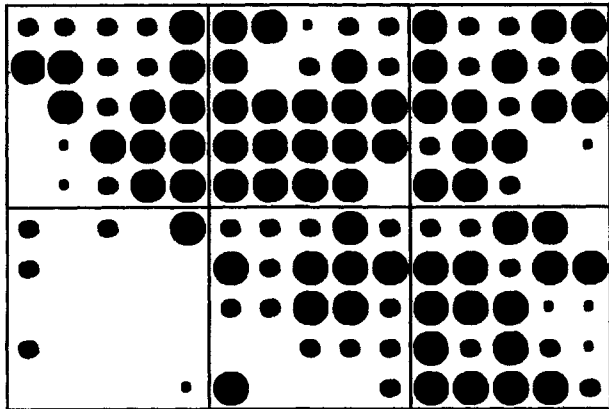
The best locations include the Langsett / Little Don Valley area, Yateholme, Holme Styres, Bretton, Deffer Wood, Digley and Heyden Bridge.

Linnet

Carduelis cannabina

117;78% (68;41;8)

Resident / migrant breeder (3-4)



While still a common bird in the area, a decline in the number of Linnets is apparent. Numbers in autumn post-breeding flocks are well down from the high points in the 1960's and 1970's and the perceived breeding abundance has dropped from four in the 1975 club report to three-four for the Atlas period. This would give us an estimated population of between 500 and 750 pairs.

The Linnet chooses low nest sites in dense cover such as thorny trees, bushes, hedges

and is particularly fond of gorse, heather and bracken areas affording a sunny outlook. Some good areas where the species is still common are Castle Hill, Ingbirchworth/Broadstones and Quarmby Clough. It is a very typical bird of farmland where hedges are used as field boundaries. They normally avoid towns, suburbs and gardens. They are quite widespread even up to moorland fringes where they have been found nesting near Twite in bracken.

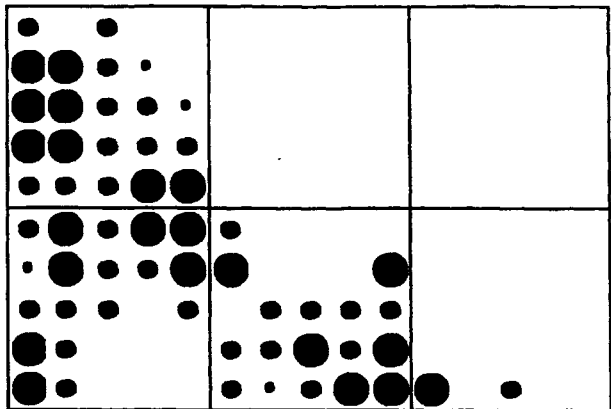
Mosley said the bird was "fairly common in places with bushes, but such places are disappearing". Numbers were also thinned by bird-catchers in his day. Habitat loss still continues today to a lesser degree and changes in farming practices may also be affecting populations.

Twite

Carduelis flavirostris

58;39% (22;32;4)

Resident / migrant breeder (2-3)



This bird is closely associated with moorland fringes where they are found in small breeding colonies and ground nest in heather, bilberry, bracken or grass tussocks, often under a rock or in a crevice.

The BWP quotes considerable range contraction for this species, documented in 1986 and 1989 and locally numbers reported (both on the breeding grounds and of autumn flocks) would suggest a decrease in the breeding population. The presumed

breeding density was abundance three in 1975 and this had slipped to two to three for the study period. The core sites, such as Rishworth Moor, Slaithwaite Moor, Wessenden, Digley, Royd Edge and Holme, are returned to faithfully and we can only hope this continues to be the case.

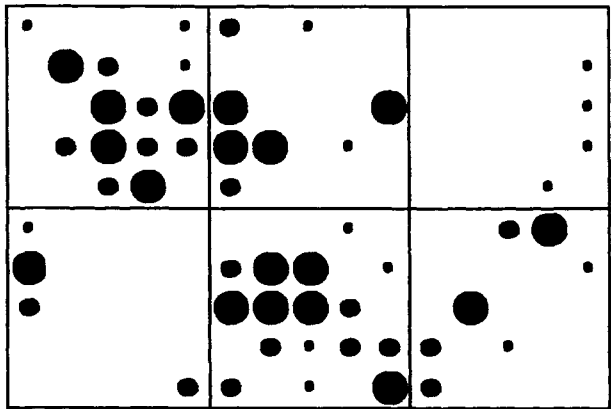
Mosley knew the bird as common on all heather moors, even Crosland Moor, where he had often found the nest. He also recorded it wintering on stubble and in farmyards at lower levels e.g. Hepworth, though today winter records are hard to come by and the species is generally absent.

Redpoll

Carduelis flammea

53;35% (18;19;16)

Resident breeder (2)



Formerly a scarce resident, this species has expanded its range with notable increases in the 1950's and 1970's. The main cause of this expansion was almost certainly due to the planting of conifers, with the Redpoll particularly liking young plantations, especially when birch was present. Other preferred habitats are mixed scrub woodland, field hedgerows and alders along streams.

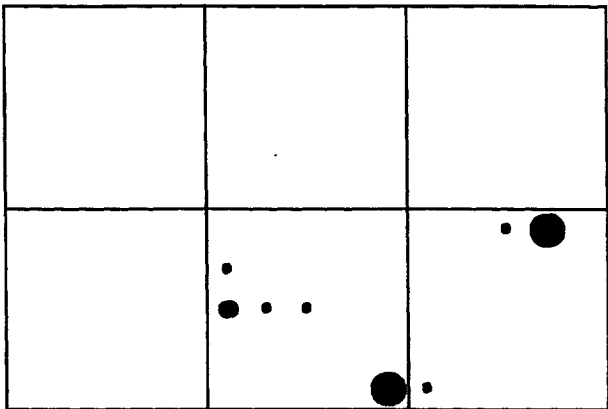
A peak in population occurred in the mid-1970's when locally the bird was breeding at abundance three but, in line with the rest of Britain, this has dropped (possibly by as much as 50%) to the levels of the study period. It is hard to judge if this will continue as this species is subject to obvious fluctuations in its population. Perhaps these fluctuations have been occurring over a long period of time with Mosley stating that the Redpoll was a "not uncommon resident but less common than in Hobkirk's time".

Crossbill

Loxia curvirostra

8;5% (2;1;5)

Irregular breeder (1)



The Crossbill is generally a scarce bird in the club area, subject to occasional invasions when they may stay to breed. The best locations when the birds are present are the Langsett and Upper Little Don Valley areas, Deffer Wood and Yateholme.

1990/1991 was a good example of such an invasion with birds breeding at Swinden Plantation and probably in the Yateholme area. The main arrival took place in the autumn of 1990, with the breeding

confirmed in 1991. Breeding was suspected or confirmed in all of the Atlas years except 1989, with fairly small numbers involved. Notable historical British invasions, mirrored in Huddersfield, occurred in 1909/10, 1962/63 and 1971/73.

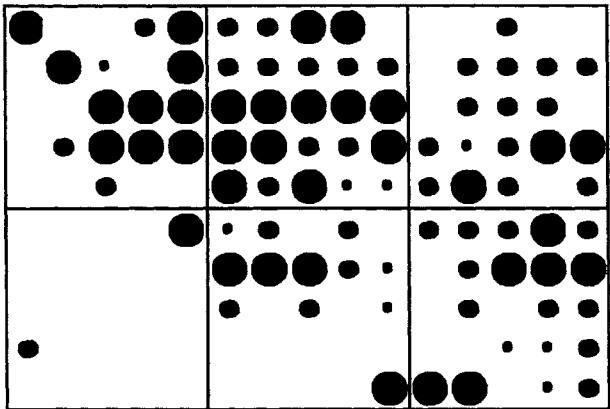
Habitat choice is invariably mature spruce, pine or larch with access to water nearby. Breeding can occur as early as January but more normally eggs are laid from February to April.

Bullfinch

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

88;59% (36;42;10)

Resident breeder (2)



This shy finch occupies habitats offering plenty of cover such as mature mixed broad leaved woodland, thickets, detached groups of trees and dense hedgerows. It is chiefly sedentary in our area with small flocks occurring at or near favoured areas outside the breeding season.

With a breeding abundance of three the Bullfinch was noted in the 1975 club report as having "increased steadily, particularly during the early and mid-1960's, and at the

same time widened its distribution". A reversal of this trend has occurred in Huddersfield, and Britain as a whole, from the mid-1970's with a reduction in numbers of up to 40% to its current breeding abundance of two. Numbers appear to be stable at present and probably in the region of 100 pairs.

Mosley stated that the Bullfinch was "resident, now rare but formerly common" with the decrease attributed to birdcatchers.

Hawfinch
Coccothraustes coccothraustes

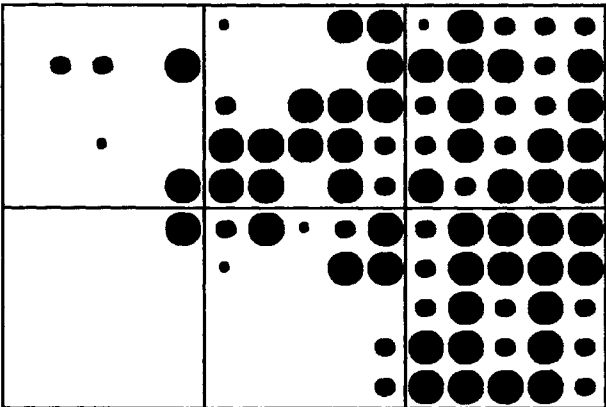
3;2% (0;1;2)
 Possible breeder (1)

This enigmatic bird is highly elusive most of the time but especially so during the breeding season when feeding and nesting quite high in the canopy. It would be an excellent breeding season find for any local birdwatcher. Apart from a very old suspected breeding record (a young bird shot in Dalton in 1902), firm breeding evidence is hard to come by, though it has been strongly suspected at Bretton Park in recent years, with a juvenile seen on 11th September 1989. This site, together with Cannon Hall and Deffer Wood, accounts for the lion's share of records for this species with Bretton Park providing your best chance for seeing them in the winter months.

We suspect it will be in these areas where the Hawfinch is eventually tracked down and proved to be a resident breeder, albeit in low numbers. Their main preferred habitat is mixed broad-leaved woodland and also more ornamental parkland. A knowledge of the easily missed explosive 'ticking' call would almost certainly aid discovery. Mosley also suspected probable breeding but stated that the most likely places were strictly private and observers few.

Yellowhammer
Emberiza citrinella

83;55% (51;27;5)
 Resident breeder (3)



This species is well distributed, predominantly in the eastern half of the club area, breeding in open country at the edge of woodlands, in bushes and in hedgerows. It is said to be declining in some areas due to agricultural practices and loss of habitat, but our situation seems to be one of little change in that it remains a fairly common bird in the more low-lying farmland areas in the east of the region. It is possible that there has been some decline in the more woodland fringe populations, for example it is less common

today in the Woodsome Valley than it was in the 1960's.

The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland states the species to be more numerous on highly productive farmland, though some declines in Britain have occurred since 1980 in woodlands.

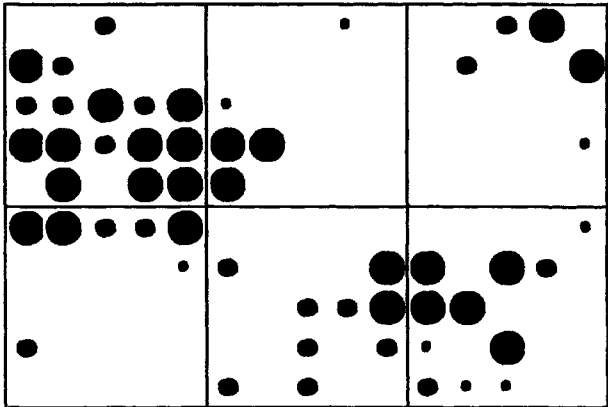
Densities are highest in the east , with the Emley/Flockton/Clayton West area a particular stronghold with around 30 pairs, which ties in with Mosley who described the bird as common, mainly on coal measures. An estimate of the population would be in the order of 400-500 pairs, appearing similar or slightly down on that of Mosley's day.

Reed Bunting

Emberiza schoeniclus

53;35% (25;20;8)

Resident breeder (2-3)



This species is a widespread, if thinly distributed breeder, almost exclusively linked to wetland habitats. The usual areas in which it is encountered are around reservoirs, streams, canals, rivers and marshy areas. Historical records suggest some fluctuation in numbers, perhaps at a peak around the time of the 1975 club report when it was described as breeding abundance three.

Various works describe a steep national decline from around 1975-1983 which ties in with a reduction to breeding abundance two for the study period. The reductions in numbers may be linked to severe winters, or more likely to food shortages caused by the introduction of efficient herbicides to control weeds in the 1970's. It is interesting that results from the BTO's Garden Bird Feeding Survey revealed a major and continuing increase in the winter use of gardens by Reed Buntings during the 1980's.

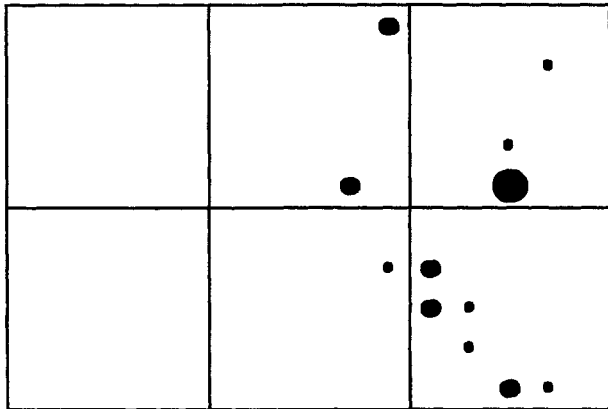
The total population in our area will be at least 100 pairs. The best area is undoubtedly the Ingbirchworth group of reservoirs, with around 14 singing males in 1991.

Corn Bunting

Miliaria calandra

12;8% (1;5;6)

Resident breeder (1)



This species has sadly declined significantly in our area after being apparently fairly common around the turn of the century. From 1964-67 the species was recorded from up to 30 localities with from one to nine singing males at each. It was still present in breeding abundance two in 1975 but was barely hanging on by a thread in the study period. In fact during 1990, no records were received for the club area.

Many reasons have been put forward for this range contraction, from changes in farming practices to climate change, but whatever the reasons it is clear that it is happening nationally at the northern and western fringes of its range.

1991 produced records of birds near Kirkheaton and in the Ingbirchworth area, the latter always having been a stronghold in the past. Its favoured breeding sites are usually arable farmland with hedges or drystone walls to use as singing perches. Limited records since the Atlas field work can only mean that the Corn Bunting is on the verge of disappearing as a breeding bird in the club area.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| B. Addy | Mr Crabtree | P. Hill |
| A. M. Ainley | Miss M. Craig | L. T Hirst |
| D. Ainley | J. Cullen | R. Holland |
| A. Allison | J. E. & Mrs S. M. Dale | R. D. & Mrs S. E. Holloway |
| R. B. Angus | J. M. Dale | F. D. Hopkin |
| B. Armitage | S. Davies | A. Horne |
| J. S. Armitage | N. C. Dawtrey | C. Horne |
| A. Auckland | A. & Mrs J. D. M. Densley | K. Horne |
| C. Auld | G. & Mrs K. Denton | A. Hoyle |
| Mr & Mrs D. M. Ayrton | M. L. Denton | H. Hoyle |
| M. Bacon | B. Dickinson | C. N. Ibbotson |
| R. Bamforth | P. Disken | P E Ingham |
| D. Barrans | T. Duckworth | D. S. & Mrs V. A. Ives |
| J. B. Baxter | Mr & Mrs Dyson | B. Jackson |
| J. Beaumont | M. R. Eastburn | J. Jemmison |
| J. R. Beaumont | R. Elliott | R. Jenkins |
| R. R. Beaumont | Dr A Farrar | G. Kaye |
| J. Billington | Ms H Faulkner | M. A Kaye |
| C. Biltcliffe | K. Fawcett | R. Kersey |
| I. Blackburn | Dr J Findlay | G. Kitchen |
| G. Blunt | D. Finnes | S. Knell |
| B. Boothroyd | A. Fisher | B. Lambourne |
| J. J. Bowley | J. Fisher | M. R. Langston |
| A. Boyson | D. M. Fligg | N. Leece |
| P. N. Bradbury | Miss I Fox | P. G Lindley |
| D. W. Brierley | G. France | J. Littlewood |
| D. Broom | Mrs P. M. Frost | Dr and Mrs L. Lloyd-Evans |
| G. Brook | J. Garbutt | J. B. Lockwood |
| D. Bullett | J. Gardner | Mrs N. Longley |
| F. Burhouse | S. R. Graham | P. L. R. Longley |
| F. Burley | P. Grba | B. & Mrs J. M. Lucas |
| N. Butcher | D. Green | D. Manchester |
| D. Butterfield | J. Green | J. Mark |
| P. A. Cadogan | P. Guest | G. Marston |
| T. Cantwell | D. Haigh | D. Maude |
| G. Carr | G. Haigh | J. P. McKinnell |
| G. M. Carr | A. Haine | Mrs M McNeill |
| N. Carter | D. J Hall | Dr T. Melling |
| Miss A M Cawthra | M. Hallas | D. Meredith |
| M. Charnock | W. D. Harris | Mrs P Merlin |
| S. Chippendale | P. Harrison | J. M. Morton |
| B. Cocking | P. G. E. Hardwick | D. J. Moss |
| D. Cockman | D. Hawkes | G. Moss |
| Ms S. Coghlan | H. Heeley | G. Mullins |
| D. R. Collins | T. & Mrs M Hetherington | Mrs M Murphy |
| S. R. Cooke | S. Hey | K. Negus |
| B. J. Cooper | R. Higginbottom | K. Neve |
| J. D. Copp | M. Hill | Mrs J. M. Newman |

D. Nixon
 L. Nixon
 Mrs M. Norcliffe
 D. M. Owen
 J. K. Palliser
 N. E. Parker
 B. Penistone
 K. Pickard
 Mrs M. Pidgeon
 T. Piggott
 I. Pilkington
 J. M. Pinder
 D. M. Pogson
 S. Pogson
 D. Proctor
 H. Quarterman
 S. Reed
 J. F. Reynolds
 J. E. Rogan
 Miss R. Rothery
 J. Rutherford
 M. Saxelby
 J. W. Scholes
 P. Shelton
 D. Shore
 G. B. Silver
 R. H. Sims
 D. Small
 E. J. Smith
 H. Smith
 P. Smith
 Dr P. J. W. Smith
 S. & Mrs B. Smith
 J. R. Smithson
 P. Spring
 D. J. Standring
 W. A. & Mrs L. Stanley
 Dr. J. Stevens
 J. T. Sutton
 D. Sykes
 F. Sykes
 Miss M Sykes
 T. Sykes
 F. Taylor
 J. Taylor
 L. Taylor
 M. Taylor
 R. Taylor
 C. C. Thomas
 B. Thornton

R. E Thornton
 J. Thurman
 C. E. Todd
 R. Tolson
 M. Tunmore
 N. W. Turner
 R. Turner
 W. Underwood
 J. G. Vaughan
 R. Vaughan
 B. G. Waight
 A. J. Wainscoat
 J. Wainwright
 J. M. Walker
 M. J. Watson
 R. Welburn
 W. Whittaker
 G. Whittles
 R. D. Wild
 J. Wilkinson
 D. J. Williamson
 T. Wimpenny
 D. Womack
 S. Wood
 B. W. Woodcock
 S. Wooler
 R. H. & M. A. Wright
 Dr D. W. Yalden
 G. M. Yates

Barnsley Bird Study Group
 Halifax Bird Club
 Halifax Scientific Society
 Huddersfield RSPB Group
 Keighley Data Bank
 Wakefield Naturalists' Society

(apologies for any omissions)

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**CO-ORDINATES OF LOCALITIES NAMED IN SPECIES ACCOUNTS
(O.S. Landranger Series 110)**

| | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Almondbury | SE1615 |
| Aspley | SE1516 |
| Black Moss | SE0308 |
| Blackmoorfoot Reservoir | SE0912 |
| Booth Dam Quarry | SE0116 |
| Bretton Park | SE2812 |
| Broadstones | SE1906 |
| Cannon Hall | SE2708 |
| Castle Dam, Penistone | SE2502 |
| Castle Hill | SE1514 |
| Castle Shaw | SE0009 |
| Cawthorne | SE2808 |
| Cawthorne Park | SE2709 |
| Clayton West | SE2510 |
| Colne Valley | SE0914 |
| Coxley Wood | SE2717 |
| Crosland Moor | SE1215 |
| Cupwith Reservoir | SE0314 |
| Dalton | SE1616 |
| Deffer Wood | SE2608 |
| Denby Dale | SE2208 |
| Derbyshire Delf Quarry | SE0116 |
| Dewsbury Sewage Farm | SE2519 |
| Digley | SE1007 |
| Dunford Bridge | SE1502 |
| Edgerton | SE1217 |
| Emley | SE2413 |
| Fenay Bridge | SE1815 |
| Flockton | SE2415 |
| Gawthorpe (Mill) | SE1916 |
| Golcar | SE0916 |
| Gunthwaite Dam | SE2406 |
| Hall Dike Valley | SE1111 |
| Healy Mills | SE2719 |
| Hepworth | SE1606 |
| Heyden Bridge | SE0900 |
| High Hoyland | SE2710 |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Holme | SE1005 |
| Holme Styes | SE1305 |
| Holme Valley | SE1409 |
| Holmfirth | SE1408 |
| Horbury Wyke | SE2917 |
| Ingbirchworth Reservoir | SE2106 |
| Kirkheaton | SE1818 |
| Langsett | SE2100 |
| Lindley Moor | SE1018 |
| Linshaw | SE1304 |
| Linthwaite | SE1014 |
| Little Black Moss | SE0308 |
| Little Don Valley | SE2200 |
| Lockwood | SE1315 |
| March Haigh Reservoir | SE0112 |
| Mirfield | SE2019 |
| Netherton Moor | SE1113 |
| Quarmby Clough | SE1117 |
| Ramsden Clough | SE1203 |
| Ringstone Edge Reservoir | SE0518 |
| Rishworth Moor | SE0017 |
| Royd Edge Clough | SE0909 |
| Scout Dike Reservoir | SE2305 |
| Silkstone Common | SE2904 |
| Slaithwaite Moor | SE0414 |
| Storches Hall Woods | SE1812 |
| Swinden Plantation | SE1800 |
| Thongsbridge | SE1510 |
| Thornhill | SE2518 |
| Thurgoland | SE2901 |
| Upper Little Don Valley | SE1900 |
| Wessenden Valley | SE0509 |
| Wessenden Head Reservoir | SE0707 |
| Whitley Willows | SE1916 |
| Winscar Reservoir | SE1502 |
| Woodsome Valley | SE1714 |
| Yateholme | SE1104 |

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