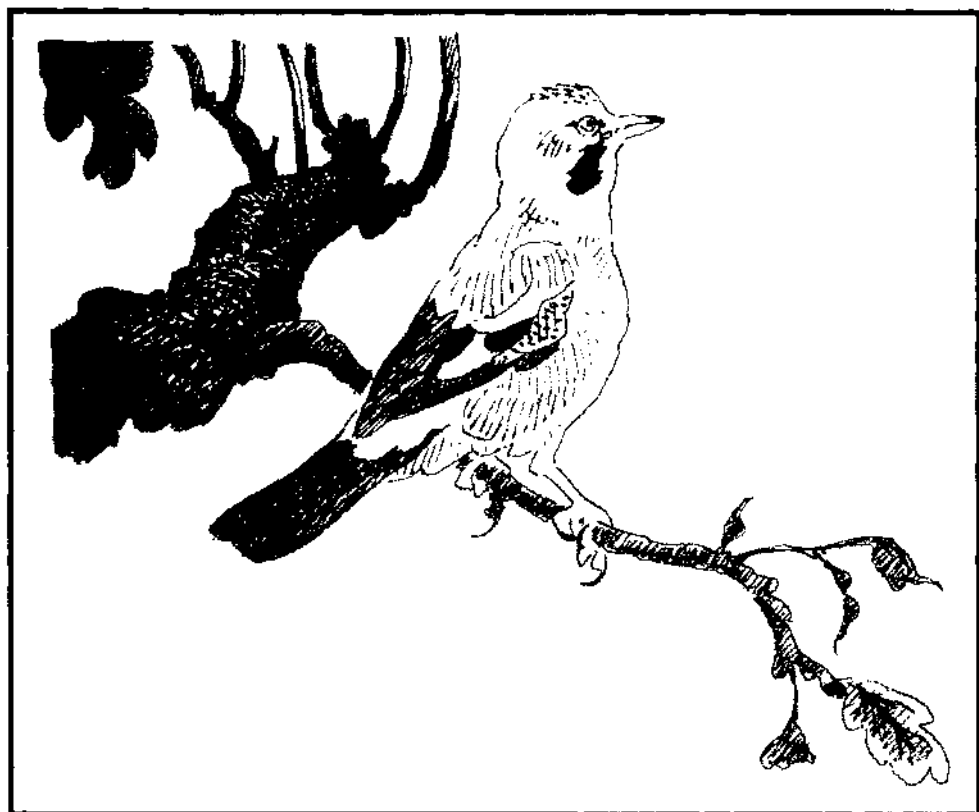
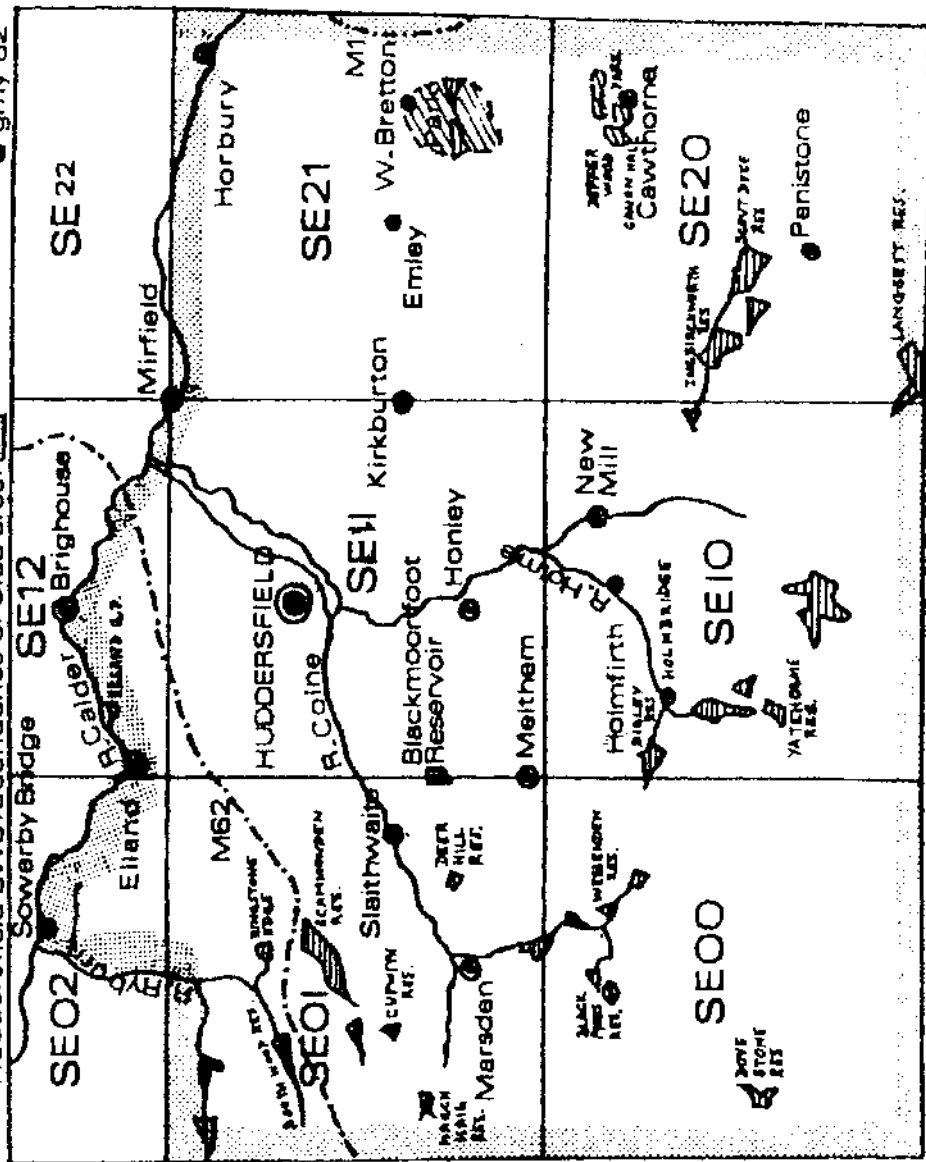


Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club

Birds in Huddersfield 1998



ANNUAL REPORT



BIRDS IN HUDDERSFIELD 1998

Report of the Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club

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by Stuart Brocklehurst

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1998

I must start my first report with thanks to a number of people: to Malcolm Charnock who guided the club wisely and firmly during his Presidency; to David Barrans whose efficiency and good humour as Recorder were much appreciated; and to the remaining officers, committee members and members whose sustained efforts keep the club moving forward. David is replaced by Brian Armitage whose long experience will be a great asset.

Of concern, however, there is still no President-Elect nor an organiser for indoor meetings. This matter is now urgent. If you do not feel able to volunteer for one of these positions do you know anyone who might? Vacancies apart, if the good health of our club can be partly judged by the quality of its visiting speakers then we are in first class condition. Twelve lectures were given of high quality on such topics as "The Gambia" (Mike Denton and Dave Barrans), "Denso Marstor" (Steve Warrilow), Greek Islands, Owls, Scotland, Costa Rica, Bolivia and Derbyshire. Attendance at these meetings was good with a fair sprinkling of visitors who must have been impressed by some stunning photography, erudition worn lightly and enthusiastic delivery.

Field meetings continue but with varying response from members. Thanks go to David Woodhouse for what can be a difficult and frustrating task of organising these trips.

At the beginning of the year it was agreed that the club should realise some assets by selling off its library. Disappointingly, the idea of an auction for members fell on stony ground so we await a response from possible buyers.

On a positive note the tetrad breeding survey has taken flight and the results should land in the form of a booklet by the time the 1999-2000 programme has begun. Many, many hours of observation and recording were put into this project and it will be a valuable club record and essential reading for members.

Mention of the breeding survey leads me to an idea mentioned by John Dale of targeting particular species in 1999-2000. This would serve two functions: it would provide important information on named species and help all members feel that they are part of the same useful project on biodiversity.

So, all records of the following birds should be passed on to Brian Armitage: Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Skylark, Song Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher, Tree Sparrow, Linnet, Twite, Bullfinch and Reed Bunting.

As we move into the next millennium it might be an appropriate time to consider in what direction the club should evolve. Have you any bright ideas? A newsletter has been tried before but it is not an easy thing to sustain. At one time there was a group of members who shared information on local sightings but that seems to have faded away.

If you have any positive suggestions please let the committee know. In the meantime, thank you again for helping to make this a friendly and enthusiastic club.

David Holloway May, 1999

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASSIFIED LIST

In terms of the total of species recorded, the year was a good one. 178 species, just one fewer than the record 179 in 1993, were reliably reported and one new species, subject to acceptance by the relevant county and national rarities' committees, was added to the area list. This was a White-winged Black Tern which flew through Dewsbury Sewage Farm on 11th October. Other uncommon species included Red-throated Diver (the first since 1985), Slavonian Grebe (first for ten years), Gannet, White Stork (probably a wanderer from Harewood Bird Garden), nine Brent Geese at Blackmoorfoot Res. which was a record count for an inland site in the county, Red Kite, two Rough-legged Buzzards, four Ospreys, Pomarine and Arctic Skuas, Little Tern, two Firecrests, both Great Grey and Red-backed Shrikes and Lapland (first since 1988) and Snow Buntings. Unfortunately all of these birds were seen only briefly, most for only a few minutes and were unavailable to most people.

The decline of several formerly common species continued :- Grey Partridge, Skylark, Song Thrush, Willow Tit, Linnet, Twite, Redpoll and Bullfinch all were in reduced numbers and Tree Sparrow was not proved to breed at all in the area; I would urge members to report all sightings of these species in 1999, as well as those of Lapwing and Reed Bunting. Several summer visitors were also down in numbers, breeding waders in general, as well as Swift, Tree Pipit, Ring Ousel, Wood Warbler, of which there were more records than in 1997, but still no breeding evidence was obtained, and Spotted Flycatcher.

It was a poor season for passage waders. High water levels at the local reservoirs left little or no shorelines and the only records of Little Stint, Ruff, Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Wood and Green Sandpipers came from Dewsbury S.F. and Horbury Wyke.

However, there were some breeding successes, notably Long-eared Owl (two sites) and Short-eared Owl (four pairs at least), a colony of 18 pairs of Sand Martins on the R. Calder, Stonechat (successful breeding at two sites), Raven, Crossbill (at least three pairs reared young) and the amazing spread and increase of the Nuthatch continued - we must have somewhere in the region of fifty pairs now!

My thanks to David Barrans for having maintained the Club's records so efficiently over the past four years, to Stuart Brocklehurst for providing the illustrations which enhance this report, to David Woodhead for his report summarising the year's field trips, to Martin Wells for providing records from Barnsley Bird Study Group and to Mike Denton for his Ringing Report and monthly summaries of sightings at Blackmoorfoot. Congratulations too to the Blackmoorfoot regulars, whose dedication has led to the site recording its 200th species, in addition to winning the 1998 BTO/ British Sugar Bird Challenge Award for Small Wetlands with a total of 122 species during the year.

Finally, thank you to all those observers who have submitted records for the year. I hope that those who did not do so will be encouraged to do so in 1999, even though it will make the recorder's job that bit harder!

NOTES ON THE CLASSIFIED LIST

The area covered by the Club comprises Ordnance Survey ten-kilometre squares SE 00, 01, 10, 11, 20 and 21, along with those parts of SE 02 and SE 12 south of the Rivers Ryburn and Calder. The status of each species occurring within the area has been indicated by one of the following classifications :-

Resident breeder	Migrant breeder
Partial migrant	Winter visitor
Passage visitor	Rare visitor

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

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

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

Precise locations for records of Schedule 1 species (Protection of Birds Act 1981) and for some other sensitive species have been kept confidential where it is felt that publication might lead to harmful disturbance.

A complete list of all species recorded in the area up to the end of 1993 appeared in the report for that year, compiled by the then Recorder, Stephen Hey.

CLASSIFIED LIST

This list mostly follows the sequence and scientific nomenclature of Prof. Dr. H.K. Voous (1977, List of Holarctic Bird Species), although in the light of recent findings some previously considered races have been given specific status.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Rare visitor

One was at Blackmoorfoot Res on 19th December (MLD). The eleventh record for the area and the first since 1985.

Diver *sp.*

An unidentified diver flew north at Blackmoorfoot at 1130 hrs. on 22nd November (DMP).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Resident breeder (1)

In the early months birds were recorded at Gunthwaite Dam, Bilberry Res, Bretton Lakes, Ingbirchworth Res and Winscar Res mainly singly, but as many as seven were on the R. Calder at Elland on 28th January.

Breeding occurred at Ingbirchworth Res, with two or three pairs, one of which was double-brooded, rearing a minimum of 11 young, at Scout Dike Res, where three pairs reared at least nine young and for the first time since 1976 at Langseti Res, where a pair fledged a single chick from the three which were hatched. A pair also nested successfully on the R. Calder near Dewsbury town centre. Other pairs may have bred at Gunthwaite Dam, Broadstones Res, Bretton Lakes and Elland GP but confirmatory details were not forthcoming.

In the later months, as birds dispersed, birds were seen additionally at Digley Res, Boshaw Whams, Scammonden, Ringstone Edge Res and Denby Dale. The maximum site count was 11 birds at Ingbirchworth on 18th and 29th September, these being the only double-figure counts received.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Resident breeder (1)

With the exception of 12 at Bretton Lakes on 7th and 25th January all pre-breeding season counts were in single figures, with up to six in February and nine in March at Blackmoorfoot. Elsewhere numbers did not exceed two birds. A single at Winscar on 3rd February was unusual.

By the end of March birds were present on all breeding waters. Breeding occurred at Blackmoorfoot, where two pairs reared a total of three young to the flying stage (two young from one of the pairs

did not fly until mid-October), with a third pair failing, at Scout Dike Res – four pairs present from 21st March, with two pairs rearing five young, Boshaw Whams – one pair, two young, Cromwell Lake – two pairs, one of which had three young on 11th August and Ingbirchworth, where two pairs reared four young. In addition, four pairs were present at Bretton Lakes on 26th April, but no further breeding evidence was received.

The only large post-breeding season numbers recorded were at Blackmoorfoot, where numbers peaked at 26 from 30th July to 3rd August, with a September maximum of 22 from 2nd to 8th, decreasing thereafter to seven at the month's end, with up to ten in October, four in November and eight in December. The only other count in double figures was 20 at Bretton on 14th November. One at Digley on 17th August was the first the observer had seen there in many years watching.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Rare visitor

An immature at Blackmoorfoot on 6th August (M.I.D, DMO) was the first for ten years and the tenth for the Club area.

Gannet *Sula bassana*

Rare visitor

An adult flew over the Huddersfield Crematorium at Fixby towards Ainley Top at 1530 hrs. on 30th December (J.Scannell). 12th record for the area.

(In addition, a bird picked up on 14th August at Hood Green, between Penistone and Barnsley, was released at Ingbirchworth Res, where it roosted on the waterworks tower).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Uncommon passage and winter visitor, becoming more frequent

Birds were recorded in every month except March, with the first a single at Bretton on 11th January, followed by February sightings at Blackmoorfoot on 15th, Bretton – two on 22nd and Scammonden on 28th. In April singles were at Blackmoorfoot on 6th and Brownhill Res on 16th, with a flyover to the southeast at Scout Dike on 19th.

Blackmoorfoot Res had the majority of the remaining records, with one west on 8th June and in July an adult on 15th, three adults and three immatures which stayed for 20 minutes on 25th, a juvenile on 26th and an adult and an immature on 28th. In August singles on 6th to 8th, followed by two on 19th, an adult on 13th September, an adult and five immatures east on 19th September and finally three immatures south on 1st December.

Horbury Wyke had a good series of records with singles on two July dates, one on 4th and two on 10th/11th August and in September singles on two dates, two on three dates and three on 15th, with one on 3rd October – it is probably likely that these are birds wandering from nearby Pugney's.

Other sites where birds were seen were Riding Wood Res one on 2nd May, Golcar Flats one preening on a small reservoir on 11th August, a juvenile at Brookfoot Lake, Elland on 24th September, Digley Res one on 15th October and two flying over Shepley on 19th October.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Resident breeder (2)

As in previous years, birds were recorded in small numbers either feeding, resting or flying over from more than 30 localities, rural, suburban and urban in all months. Generally sightings were of only one or two birds, but there were nine at Scammonden on 14th February, 21 at Bretton on 15th February, four at Ravensthorpe G.P. on 19th June, a maximum of eight at Blackmoorfoot on three August dates and at Horbury Wyke up to ten birds in August, reducing to one or two to the year end.

At Bretton Lakes, 48 nests were occupied, 25 on the Upper Lake and 23 on the Lower Lake (BBSG), but no details of breeding success were received. At Scammonden, there were four occupied nests, with a minimum of four nestlings seen on 19th May (JB, JED). An adult was sitting on a nest at a new site at Marsden on 4th April and 7th and 20th May, but the outcome remains unknown (MLD).

Breeding probably also occurred on private land near Lepton Great Wood, but confirmation could not be obtained. No reports were received from Storthes Hall Woods, where a pair bred in 1996.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Rare visitor

A bird present in the Bretton area from 25th to 27th April (PMcG, BLNE) was only the third to be recorded this century and the first since 1978, but was presumably one of the free-flying individuals from Harewood Bird Garden.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Resident, occasional breeder (1)

A pair which bred at Horbury Wyke had eight cygnets throughout June to August, reducing to seven on 12th October, which was the last recorded sighting (J.Hnd, DHP). The first successful breeding in the area since 1995.

Elsewhere, birds were seen on the R. Calder at Cooper Bridge/Colnebridge on 28th January (2), 1st March (1), 18th April (2) and 8th May (1), with perhaps the same two birds on the river at Dewsbury S.F. on 17th May. One was present on several dates at Denby Dale, a single adult at Blackmoorfoot on 12th September (only the eighth site record), with two at Inghirchworth on 25th February, 21st and 23rd November and 27th December.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Scarce winter visitor

A poor year for the species, the only records being of five adults at Inghirchworth on 9th March (GC.Snr) with six present on 22nd March (PBW).

In autumn two adults at Digley Res on 12th October (MC) appeared later the same day at Blackmoorfoot Res (MLD).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Uncommon to common passage visitor

The year began well, with several skeins being sighted on 1st January :- 72 west over Shepley, c.120 northeast over Ingbirchworth, 65 east at Ringstone Edge, with 52 landing in a field to the north and c.150 northwest at Wooldale. Later in the month a flock was heard going west over Linthwaite at 1830 hrs. on 7th. Passage continued in February with, on 7th, 55 west at Dewsbury S.F., c.200 northwest over Penistone on 10th, three skeins totalling 530 all northwest over Dewsbury on 11th, 74 northwest over Crosland Moor at 1100 hrs. on 14th, 152 west over Dewsbury S.F. on 15th and c.140 east at Scammonden on 17th.

The only grounded birds (and probably feral) were a singleton at Castle Dam, Penistone on 24th January and one at Meltham Mills Res on 13th March.

In the second half of the year there were fewer reports, the first being 34 flying east at Dewsbury S.F. on 4th October. Further October records were a flock east at Linthwaite in darkness on 11th, 73 east at 0915 hrs. at Blackmoorfoot on 23rd, 37 northwest at Dewsbury S.F. on 25th, c.100 southeast over Shelley at 0920 hrs. on 29th and 30 over Spicer House Lane which landed in nearby fields at Whitley Common on 30th.

Passage became lighter in November, with 186 west at Dewsbury S.F. on 15th, 19 at Ingbirchworth on 29th and a small flock over Dalton at 2030 hrs. on 30th. One flew west at Blackmoorfoot on 11th December, a flock west over Linthwaite at 2300 hrs. on 10th, c.200 northwest over Bradley Park Golf Course on 22nd and finally 250/300 over Golcar and Blackmoorfoot on 29th.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Uncommon passage and feral visitor

All sightings were in the first four months of the year as follows :-

Bretton Park :- 1 on 7th January and 1st March, two on 12th March, three on 12th April and two on 16th April. Blackmoorfoot Res :- one on 23rd March. Gunthwaite Dam :- two on 29th March. Scout Dike Res :- two on 31st January, one on 19th March, six on 14th April and one on 12th May. Langsett Res :- seven on 17th April.

It is likely that most of these birds were of feral origin.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Resident breeder (2)

This species continues to proliferate and to procreate extremely well!

Sites where breeding is known to have occurred with numbers of pairs and/or young present, were :- Winscar Res (ten young), Wessenden Head Res (11 young), Butterley Res (two pairs, six young), Deer Hill (one pair), Black Moss (one pair at least), Swellands Res (one pair), March Haigh Res (four young), Dovestones Res (46 young), Harden Res (one pair), Lower Windleden Res (three+ pairs) and Scout Dike Res (four pairs, two young) Birds were also present during the breeding season at at least a further six sites, at some of which breeding may have occurred. No details were received from Bretton Lakes.

Outside the breeding season the highest numbers were reported from the Ingbyworth complex of waters, with several counts at Scout Dike of over 200 in the early months and a maximum of over 300 on 20th January; Royd Moor held a maximum of 133 on 7th March, Ingbyworth 87 in December.

Elsewhere maxima were as follows :- Winscar Res 120 adults on 1st July, Boshaw Wharves 60 in mid-February, Scammonden 49 on 7th August, Butterley Res 49 adults on 6th July, Bretton Lakes 164 on 22nd February and 133 on 25th October, Digley Res 31 adults on 7th June, Castle Dam, Penistone 68 on 24th January, Dovestones Res 109 adults and 46 young on 6th June, Broadstones Res 42 on 23rd January and Langsett Res 54 on 30th August. Clearly, numbers in the area were much lower at the end of the year than in the early months.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Rare visitor and occasional feral breeder (1)

Bretton Lakes accounted for the great majority of the records, numbers varying from eight on 7th January to one on 15th February, with up to six birds also reported in April, October and November. A Canada x Barnacle Goose hybrid was present on 22nd Jan (BBSG).

Single birds reported from Scout Dike and Broadstones on 20th and 23rd January respectively presumably refer to the same individual.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Rare visitor

A party of nine birds which graced Blackmoorfoot Res on 29th September (MLD,JJ,DMP,SP) represents the highest number recorded at an inland site in Yorkshire.

Two flew west up the R.Calder at Dewsbury S.F. on 6th December (JH).

These are only the sixth and seventh records for the area, the last being in 1993.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Uncommon passage visitor

Blackmoorfoot Res recorded birds in every month with the exception of December, but none stayed for more than a day apart from two on 12th/13th January. In February, two were present on 12th, with one on 17th, in March five on 7th, two on 10th and 18th, two on 27th April, one on 23rd May, four on 29th June, three on 19th July, five on 22nd August, in September two on 6th, six on 17th and 18th, but not all the same birds, two on 3rd October and in November singles on 22nd and 25th.

Elsewhere, Ringstone Edge held 11 birds on 4th January, with two on 31st October, 11 were at Broadstones on 23rd January and two on 23rd April, three at Scammonden on 19th February, two flew west at Elland G.Ps. on 9th May, two at Dewsbury S.F. on 17th May and at Horbury Wyke four on 1st September and one on 3rd October.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Rare feral visitor

The male which frequented the Elland/Brighouse area in 1997 was again present this year, being seen at Elland G.P.s. on 4th January and 12th December (JB), on the canal near Brighouse on 25th February (DM) and on the R.Calder in the centre of Brighouse on 30th December (GBS).

A female present at Scammonden on 17th/18th February (JB) was either of this species or Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Common passage and winter visitor

Birds were scarce in the first part of the year and only single figures were reported. In the autumn/late winter period, following the established pattern, birds occurred with greater frequency and in larger numbers.

Blackmoorfoot Res :- present daily in the first two months, but with max. in January of only five on 14th, and in February of three on 1st. One was present on three March dates. None were seen then until five on 28th August, followed by a high count of 43 on 20th September, 31 remaining the next day. From then until the end of October birds occurred on 20 dates, max. nine on 1st October; in November on 14 days with nine on 2nd, 47 on 3rd and 27 on 23rd, otherwise no more than five; one or two present on 23 days in December. Ingbirchworth Res :- apart from three birds on 31st January, there were no records until 19th September, with four present, followed by 17 on 20th. From 2nd October to 5th November between four and 13 birds were reported, with four remaining on 23rd and 29th November. Scout Dike Res had eight birds on 11th January and seven on 31st January, with October, November and December maxima respectively of 13, seven and 12. Nearby Royd Moor Res held eight birds on February 13th and 24 on 20th and numbers fluctuated between four and 14 individuals from 16th October to the year end. It is highly likely that there is a regular interchange of birds between these last three sites.

The only other sites from which birds were reported in the early months were Ringstone Edge with 11 and Denby Dale with four on 23rd January, Horbury Wyke six on 1st March and Langsett Res four on 14th April.

In the autumn period, Deer Hill Res had an exceptional 40 birds on 20th September, when two also appeared at Digley Res, Scammonden 11 on 21st September, Ringstone Edge nine on 2nd November, Broadstones 31 on 21st November and Castle Dam, Penistone seven on 7th and eight on 8th December. The significance of the date 20th September should be noted, when a total of 102 birds appeared at four sites in the area, with a further 11 birds at an additional site the next day.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Scarce passage and winter visitor

A better year for this species, with at Blackmoorfoot six (3 males, 3 females) on 18th February (MLD,JKP) and a female on 1st May (MLD), a male at Ingbirchworth on 21st September (DHIP) and two at Langsett on 3rd October (BBSG).

In addition a female at Horbury Wyke on 28th June was "acting suspiciously" (JHod).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Resident breeder (1). Common passage and winter visitor

There was a poor showing in the first winter period, the only double figure counts coming from Royd Moor Res, with ten on 6th January and 15 on 13th February and Horbury Wyke, which held 20 on 23rd February reducing to 12 on 1st March. Birds were present in single figures at five other waters including Bretton Lakes, where nine were on the Upper Lake on 7th January.

The breeding season produced only one positive record, a pair rearing two young at Lower Windleden Res (BBSG), although two pairs were at Scout Dike on 12th April.

In the second winter period, numbers were rather higher, with an obvious influx to the Deer Hill/Blackmoorfoot area on 20th September (see Wigeon), with respective counts of 24 and 36 birds. Ingbirchworth Res recorded its only double figure peak in September, with 29 on 1st, increasing to 32 later in the month, when 30+ were also at Horbury Wyke. Apart from 14 on 20th November at Blackmoorfoot, just four other waters had single figure counts.

Exceptional numbers were present from October onwards at Dewsbury S.F.; from 65 on 4th October numbers gradually increased to 120 on 8th November and peaked at 220 on 6th December, reducing thereafter to 162 on 13th.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Resident breeder (3). Common winter visitor

Pre-breeding season peaks at favoured waters were :- Blackmoorfoot 27 on 1st January, 32 on 19th February and 28 on 4th March, Royd Moor 58 on 6th January, Bretton Lakes c.80 on 25th January and Horbury Wyke 45 on 23rd February.

Breeding was reported from about 20 localities and a wide variety of habitats, but evidence from Blackmoorfoot Res indicates that breeding success may be extremely low; at that site from 52 ducklings observed, only four reached the flying stage.

As is to be expected, numbers were higher in the latter part of the year, but lower in the Ingbirchworth area than in the late 80s and early 90s, peaks in that area being only 20 at Scout Dike on 19th August, 69 at Royd Moor on 25th August and 95+ at Ingbirchworth on 19th September, with up to 58 at the last site to the year end. Horbury Wyke had c.100 on 18th August, Lower Windleden Res 53 on 4th September, Boshaw Whams 38 on 6th September, a small pond at Lindley 23 on 3rd October, Langsett Res 87 on 10th October and Dewsbury S.F. 38 on 11th October. Monthly maxima at Blackmoorfoot were 51 on 19th September, 33 on 11th October, 54 on 25th November and 46 on 10th December.

No counts were received from Bretton Lakes or Elland G.Ps. for the second half of the year.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Uncommon passage and winter visitor

The only record in the early months was of two birds at Blackmoorfoot on 10th January and in autumn one on 18th September, six on 7th and three females on 23rd November (PDB,MLD).

A single male in eclipse plumage was at Ingbirchworth on 19th September and 11th October (BA), with a male also at Scout Dike on 30th October (BBSG).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare summer migrant

There were two records of the species this year :- a male and a female at Dewsbury S.F. on 12th to 15th April (JH) and a female-type at Blackmoorfoot on 1st October (MLD,DHP).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Uncommon passage and winter visitor

A very poor year for this species with only four records. A male and a female at Elland G.Ps. on 2nd May (JB), with all the rest in autumn – two birds at Horbury Wyke on 10th August and 1st September (DHP) and two at Blackmoorfoot on 6th September.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Common passage and winter visitor

There were fewer records with lower numbers of birds than in most recent years.

Blackmoorfoot Res - one on 8th January was the only record in the first half of the year, one on 26th July, then no more until one on 1st October ; maximum for October was 12 on 3rd, present on only five days in November, max. ten on 3rd, then on just two dates in December, max. two birds on 19th.

Ingbirchworth Res - January maximum ten, increasing to 14 on 3rd February, with four on 15th March. After one on 23rd July no records until three on 1st November, with maxima of 12 on 22nd November and up to 24 in December.

Scammonden - maxima were 17 on 17th January and 14th February, six on 25th November and four on 5th December.

Birds were reported, usually in low single figures, from eight other sites – Bretton Lakes (up to nine birds), Elland G.Ps. (six on 7th February), Boshaw Whams (two in Feb/March), Meltham Mills Res (one on 28th January), Ringstone Edge Res (max. seven on 22nd November), Scout Dike Res, Langsett Res and Denby Dale.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Resident breeder (1). Common passage and winter visitor

Pairs bred at Langsett Res and Horbury Wyke (five small young present in August), with further pairs present in the breeding season at Bilberry Res and in the Wessenden Valley.

Blackmoorfoot Res - birds were present daily throughout January, but with a low maximum of only seven on 4th. From February to the end of May, birds were recorded on only 29 dates, with six on 14th March the highest count. Thereafter birds were recorded daily, with monthly maxima of 13 in June, 18 in July, 13 in August, eight in September, 12 in October, ten in November and seven in December.

In previous years there has been a build-up of considerable numbers at Ingbirchworth and Scout Dike Res's, but numbers are much reduced recently.

Scout Dike Res - present throughout the year and at least one pair bred. The maximum count in the early part of the year was 12 on 26th April, with later peaks of 37 on 29th July, 14 on 2nd August, 26 on 19th September down to eight on 18th October.

Ingbirchworth Res - Maximum monthly counts were nine on 1st January, 12 in February, 18 in March and 11 in April. The summer build-up of moulting birds reached a peak of 38 on 21st July, reducing to 16 in August, with up to seven to the year end.

Scammonden - monthly maxima 33 on 17th January, 32 on 14th February, 19 on 3rd March and in the latter half of the year, 16 on 8th October and 14 on 5th December.

Other double figure counts were 15 at Gunthwaite Dam on 11th January, 16 at Bretton Lakes on 15th February and 18 on 5th April, 13 at Deanhead Res on 3rd October and 16 at Elland G.P.s. on 19th December. Single figures were noted at nine other waters.

Scarp *Aythya marila*

Scarce passage and winter visitor

Two first-year males were at Blackmoorfoot Res on 18th October (MLD,DMO).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce to uncommon passage visitor

All the records came from Blackmoorfoot, with six males on 18th July, an excellent flock of c.75, all but one of which were males, on 12th August (PB,DMO) and a single male on 12th September.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Regular, but uncommon, winter visitor

The great majority of records came from Blackmoorfoot as follows :- a single bird on ten dates in January, present almost daily through February, March and April, but a maximum of only three birds and the last spring record on 28th April. Single females on 6th June and 8/9th July were unseasonal before the first autumn arrival of a first-year female on 15th September. One or two on three dates in October, nine on 2nd November, followed by a tremendous influx of 44 birds, including 18 males, on 3rd November, but only one remained the next day. Birds were recorded on only ten further dates to the year end, with a peak of eight on 7th December.

At Ingbirchworth Res no more than two birds were reported in the early months, the latest being on 21st March, while in the second winter period there was a record of a single bird on one date only, 29th November.

Ringstone Edge Res provided the only other record in the first period, with a pair displaying on 18th March.

In the second winter period, there were records from a further ten waters, mainly in November, with maxima of six at Ringstone Edge on 1st November, ten at Winscar Res on 6th November, seven at Langsett Res on 22nd December and four at Scout Dike from 29th to 31st December.

Smew *Mergus albellus*

Rare visitor

The only records were of one male and two redheads at Bretton Lakes on 24th January (DMP,SP,KW) and three redheads at Blackmoorfoot Res on 24th November (PDB).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce to uncommon passage and winter visitor

A redhead was present at Brookfoot Lake, Elland on 24th to 31st January and from 12th to 29th December (JB,JED) – possibly the same individual was involved?

A redhead flew west at Blackmoorfoot on 1st November (MLD).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Regular passage and winter visitor

There was an encouraging increase in the number of sites from which this species was reported.

Blackmoorfoot Res - birds were recorded daily from 1st January to 23rd March, but with low peaks of eight in January, six in February and seven in March. After three on April 9th there were no further records until November, when up to four birds were present on six dates, with up to six in December also on six dates.

Bretton Lakes - regular in the early months with peaks of 50 on 7th and 25th January and 30 on 10th February, the last spring report being 16 on 1st March. The first wintering birds were noted on 11th November, with maxima of 15 on 17/18th November and 14 on 27th December.

Elland G.P.s. - regularly reported in the early months with a peak of 26 on 28th January, a pair on 26th April and six still present on the late date of 1st May. At the end of the year 35 were counted on 12th December.

Birds were also reported in the early months from Inghirchworth Res – one on 1st January, Folly Hall a pair flying towards Lockwood Bar on 5th January, Lockwood a male flying downstream on 11th January, Ringstone Edge four on 24th January, Langsett Res four on 15th February and Castle Dam, Penistone, where up to 11 (a record count for the site) were recorded on 13 dates between 11th January and 8th February.

At the end of the year, Ringstone Edge had four on 18th October, three on 25th November, a male on 2nd December and four on 15th December; a male was at Scammonden on 6th November, a male and a female on the R.Colne at Cooper Bridge on 24th and a single male at Scout Dike Res on 26th December.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Infrequent visitor. Has bred (1)

During the summer months up to four males and four females were present at Horbury Wyke, but there was no further evidence of breeding at the site, where breeding has been proved in two recent years.

At Scout Dike Res a male and a female were seen on 5th April and a juvenile female on 19th September. Inghirchworth Res supported up to three birds (two males) during May and June, whilst birds were noted at Bretton Lakes on several dates through the year, but breeding evidence was lacking.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Rare visitor

One in the Wessenden area on 31st March was watched for almost an hour in flight and at rest on the ground before drifting away west into mist at 0945 hrs. It did not appear to be wing-tagged (DHP).

Addition to 1995 Report - one at Winscar Res on 24th April (NWA in "Birds of Barnsley").

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Rare visitor

Single ringtails were seen at Ramsden Clough on 21st March (JB,BWW) and at Scammonden on 11th October (JB), with further records from the Langsett area on 19th March, 17th October and 1st November, the last being mobbed by Ravens (BBSG).

A ringtail harrier flying over Bradley Wood on 18th August was too distant for specific identification (GBS), but the date suggests it could have been Montagu's Harrier (*C. pygargus*).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*
Sporadic breeder and rare visitor

On 20th March, in a garden at Lindley Moor, a bird of this species, probably a male, killed a feral pigeon, which it plucked and fed on for over an hour before being flushed; it returned later, eventually removing the prey item. Presumably the same bird was also seen to attack unsuccessfully another feral pigeon in a neighbouring garden twice on 24th March and was probably sighted briefly also on 18th and 28th March (JED,SMD).

Displaying birds were noted at three sites in March and April, but the outcome of any breeding attempts remains unknown. (For comparison, in the Barnsley area six pairs were present, with five failing to breed (BBSG)).

Elsewhere, one was near Castle Hill on 16th May (BA), one flew south at Dewsbury S.F. on 27th July (JH), and two circling over Thornhill on 13th September were mobbed continuously by 18 Magpies for c.20 minutes (JH).

A juvenile/female in the Cartworth Moor/Snailsden area on 6th September had unusual plumage, being generally brownish and ginger in colour, with blotchy breast markings and pale fringes to the upperwing coverts (MC).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*
Resident breeder (2)

As in 1997, records were received from about 50 localities, of which about 20 had breeding season sightings. Proof of breeding was very scanty however, with confirmation only from Denby Dale (two pairs), Shepley, Meltham Mills and Langsett Banks. Garden sightings were received from Almondbury, Lockwood, Cowcliffe, Lindley Moor, Dalton, New Mill and Shelley.

Autumn movement was noted at Dewsbury S.F., with a maximum of five individuals, all flying east, on 26th September.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*
Rare visitor

In the early months singles were in the Little Don Valley on 2nd January and at Hingcliff Common on 18th April (BBSG). A dark bird at Digley on 17th August scattered gulls and was mobbed by corvids (HQ).

One in the Grimescar Valley on 18th October was mobbed by corvids before gaining height over Fixby Ridge and flying north (BC), whilst one soared over the valley below Scammonden Dam: then drifted off to the south on 6th November (JB).

There were two sightings in the Dogley/Lepton area of what was presumably the same individual, on single dates in October and November (JMD).

In addition a buzzard sp. flew over Meltham Mills on 28th March (TD).

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Rare visitor

There were two records of this species which could refer to the same individual - one was at Hingcliff Common on 29th March (BBSG) and one flew north over Crowden at 0930 hrs. on 18th April (WL).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Rare visitor

After a blank year in 1997, it was very pleasing to receive records of four individuals. The first flew over West Bretton towards Dewsbury on 20th April (BLNE), one flew west over Dewsbury S.F. on 28th April (JH) and one flew north over Winscar Res on 9th May (JIM).

The single autumn sighting of a probable juvenile being mobbed by a Hobby at Winscar Res on 19th September, before leaving to the southwest, must have been spectacular (MC,PC).

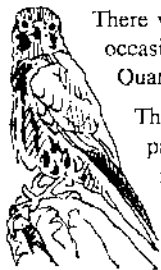
Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident breeder (2)

Reports were received from almost exactly the same number of localities as Sparrowhawk, with breeding proved at Blackmoorfoot Res (two young fledged), Bretton Park, Scammonden (three young), Lockwood (four young reared on a mill chimney), Denby Dale (three young) and Holmfirth. The majority of sightings were in the winter months and it would appear that the species' numbers may be declining in the area. In future, all records would be appreciated.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Resident breeder and scarce visitor



There were few records in the early months, the earliest being one at Inghirchworth occasionally from early January to 7th April, followed by single males at Derby Delf Quarry and Blackmoorfoot Res respectively on 19th and 21st March.

Three pairs bred in suitable moorland areas, one pair rearing four young, a second pair three young, but the third pair, which had one downy chick on 5th July, was robbed (RSPB).

In the second half of the year, sightings were more frequent and widespread, with a female at Snailsden on 25th July, one at Townhead on 23rd August, a male at Bilberry Res on 5th September, one at Langsett on 6th September, one over Lindley Moor on 13th September; in October a female/immature at Ringstone Edge on 5th and a male at Deanhead Res on 23rd. The last for the year was one in the Little Don Valley on 7th November.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Rare visitor

All sightings were in autumn; in August one was at Ingbirchworth Res on 12th (VA) and two flew over Penistone on an unspecified date (NEP), with one at Winscar Res mobbing an Osprey on 19th September (MC,PC)

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Resident breeder (1)

The upturn in the fortunes of this species continues. Records were received from upwards of 20 localities and for all months of the year. Very few reports related to breeding, which therefore remains something of an unknown quantity this year, although a pair is known to have bred successfully at a new locality, with a second pair apparently taking up territory in a second new area. Pairs were also present at two other established sites.

Away from these areas, birds were present as follows (all singles unless otherwise stated) – Ingbirchworth on 10th January, Digley on 17th January, Booth Wood Dam on 22nd January, Little Don Valley on 31st January (2), 16th July and 12th December, Blackmoorfoot on 2nd February, 18th March (2 north) and 20th July, Wessenden Head on several dates January to March, Holmfirth (Burnlee) on 22nd March, Scammonden on 30th March, near Langsett on 18th April, Snaildsen/Winscar area on 19th and 29th April, 15th August (2), 5th October, 1st November and 21st December, Dunford Bridge on 1st July, Upper Cumberworth on 24th July, Dewsbury S.F. on 25th July and flying east on 13th November, Denby Dale on 19th August, Ringstone Edge Res, a juvenile attacking gulls on the water on 31st August, Carlcotes on 4th September, near Meltham on 3rd October, Cartworth Moor on 17/18th October and a female flushed from its roost on the railway viaduct at Penistone on 27th December.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Resident breeder (3)

The only count in double figures was of 12 at Black Moss on 27th April, otherwise in the breeding season no more than six were reported from any single locality. Breeding season reports came from Holmfirth (off Greenfield Road), Digley area, Harden Res, Wessenden, Holme Styes, Snaildsen, Buckstones, Cupwith, Dovestones and the Upper Little Don Valley.

In the winter months, these same areas produced the majority of the records, with maxima of six on the Dunford Bridge Cycle Track on 22nd November and about eight in the Snaildsen area on 29th November.

Obviously lack of coverage is responsible to a great extent for producing an incomplete picture of the species' numbers in the area; it is interesting to compare these records with the 300 brace which were shot in five days shooting from 13th August to early September just to the south of our area on Midhope Moor (BBSG).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Resident breeder (1)

There were very few reports this year.

A pair bred at Millhouse Green near Fenistone (BBSG) and a pair was seen at Digley on 30th May, with a further sighting there of a single individual on 20th December.

A sighting of two adults with two young in a ploughed field off Dearne Dike Lane near Ingbirchworth on the extremely early and unlikely date of 27th April baffled the observer (JED).

A hundred birds were released in January at Upper Midhope, just outside our area, by the local keeper, leading to numerous sightings and probably accounted for one seen near Langsett Res on 12th May.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Resident breeder (2)

There was a welcome increase in the number of locations, mainly in the breeding season, from which the species was reported, although breeding was confirmed only at Royd Moor (BBSG). Other pairs were present at Meltham Cop, Whitley Common, Broadstones Lodge, Scammonden, Blacker Wood, Digley, Shepley, Honley Moor/Wood Nook, Coxley Valley, Almondbury, Haddingley Lane near Shepley, Bullcliff Wood and Emley Moor, where there were up to six pairs. Singles were seen or birds heard calling at Cheese Gate Nab, Winscar Res and Denby Dale.

The largest numbers reported were nine in the Royd Moor area on 31st January and seven in the Fenay Bridge/Dogley area on 18th November. Other winter sightings came from near Wilshaw on 18th February, five birds near Ingbirchworth on 2nd October and Ossett, where five birds present on 10th November were the first seen in the area for a few years.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce summer visitor, occasional breeder

A relatively poor year with only two records of calling birds, both in May, the first at Windmill Lane, Broadstones on 9th (TM), the second on 18th at Scammonden (JB).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Resident breeder (2 – 3)

Breeding was reported only from Bretton Park, Farnley Tyas and Woodsome, with further sightings from an additional 17 localities. The species was reported as a frequent visitor to a garden feeding station in Holmbridge (MC) and one visited a Meltham garden on 13th October (JT).

The species is probably much under-reported.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Scarce winter visitor

In the early months, singles were at Elland G.P.s. on 1st January, 7th February, 7th March and 28th April, when one was calling from tall reeds (JB) and at Bretton Lakes on 7th February (BBSG) and 8th April (BC); at this latter site on 15th February, one was seen and two others were calling at the head of the Upper Lake (JED).

The only record in the second half of the year was of one at Horbury Wyke on 3rd October (DHIP).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Resident breeder (2)

Breeding was confirmed at Blackmoorfoot Res (two pairs attempted, two young reared), Lumb Lane (three juvs. on the early date of 7th April and a pair with five juvs. on 24th April), Elland G.P.s., Dewsbury S.F. (where a pair had four newly hatched chicks on the late date of 26th September), Bretton Lakes, Scout Dike Res (at least four pairs), Inghirchworth Res (at least four pairs reared a minimum of three young), Lepton Great Wood, Horbury Wyke, Stockmoor Common, Blacker Beck, Winscar Res, Lower Windliden Res, Broadstones Res, Langsett Res (at least two pairs) and Denby Dale, where one pair reared three chicks.

The only significant counts were of 22 at Bretton Lakes on 22nd February and a maximum of 48 at Dewsbury S.F. on 26th November. High numbers also occur in the Horbury area, but unfortunately no counts were received.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Resident breeder (2)

In the early part of the year the highest counts were eight at Gunthwaite Dam on 11th January, nine at Elland G.P.s. on 15th January and c.12 at Scout Dike Res on 31st January.

Breeding was reported from Blackmoorfoot Res, where there were two pairs, but apparently no young survived to fledging, Scout Dike Res with four breeding pairs rearing at least eight young, Bretton Lakes, Inghirchworth Res, where six pairs reared a minimum of 13 young, and Horbury Wyke.

Birds were also present during the breeding season in small numbers at Gunthwaite Dam, Dewsbury S.F., Denby Dale and Boshaw Whams.

There were no counts of any significant size in the second winter period.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostragalus*

Uncommon passage visitor

Most records were in the spring. At Ringstone Edge one was present on 22nd March, with two on 3rd April, one flew west at Royd Moor on 7th April and one was at Broadstones on 4th May. At Blackmoorfoot one on 18th March, three flew west on 22nd April, two were present from 5th to 7th May, with singles on 10th May, 29th July, two on 30th July and a further single on 8th August. Dewsbury S.F. had three birds on both 20th June and 18th August.

At Winscar Res, four birds were present on 19th and 29th May, with two remaining throughout June and July and until 18th August, but failed to breed.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rare visitor

Addition to 1984 Report - one at Ingbirchworth Res on 24th March is mentioned in "Birds of the Sheffield Area", J.Hornbuckle & D.Herringshaw, 1985 but no further details have come to light. The first record for the Club area if confirmation can be obtained.

Addition to 1997 Report - during the afternoon of 4th August at Blackmoorfoot Res, a flock of approximately 20 birds was reported on the west bank between the hide and the southwest corner. Telescope views were obtained of the birds feeding and resting. The long upturned bills and plumage details were described by the observer (H.Park). Although the observer does not claim to be a birdwatcher, she knows the species well and it is difficult to imagine what other species might have been involved (Recorder).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce summer visitor and occasional breeder

The first arrival was a single bird on 28th March at Dewsbury S.F., which had additional records of five on 12th April and four on 7th August (JH). Low Fields, Elland had three on 29th and five on 30th March (JB). At Scout Dike one arrived on 12th April in advance of heavy rain and Castle Dam, Penistone had singles on 25th April and 10th May (BBSG). At Blackmoorfoot one flew west on 16th June (MLD).

Sadly, there was no evidence of breeding at any site.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Uncommon passage visitor

There were just two records, both in autumn. Four flew west in the company of five Dunlins at Blackmoorfoot on 16th August (MLD) and one was at Winscar Res on 8th September (BBSG).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Migrant breeder. Common passage and winter visitor

With the exception of a single individual at Blackmoorfoot on 27th, the only site where birds were recorded in January was Dewsbury S.F., which had very large numbers roosting on 25th (2000) and 31st (1100); the same site had 800 on 1st and 7th February, while Blackmoorfoot had birds on just two February dates - 37 on 24th and 18 on 28th.

There were few reports in March and numbers were relatively low, Blackmoorfoot having 130 on 1st, down to four on 6th, with just one on 22nd, Ringstone Edge 110 on 4th and 210 on 8th and Whitley Common seven on 11th and 92 on 22nd. In April, birds were noted at just five sites - Ringstone Edge 250+ on 3rd, Whitley Lane 30 on 11th, near the Flouch Inn 19 on 11th and 41 on 17th. Blackmoorfoot numbers peaked at 83 on 15th and eight were present at Black Moss, a breeding area, on 27th.

Birds were reported from only three sites in May - Blackmoorfoot, where birds were present daily to 28th, with a maximum of 43 on 10th, Cupwith one on 3rd and Broadstones, which had seven on 24th.

Apart from Black Moss and Cupwith, breeding season records came from the Isle of Skye (one on 6th June), Holme Styes (one on 10th June), Winscar (four breeding territories, with a further seven to the west) and the Snailsden/Harden area (11 territories). One observer reported birds at their usual sites, but in very small numbers.

This last observation was reflected in post-breeding numbers. Blackmoorfoot had only a single individual in July (on 6th), none at all in August, in September just one on 17th, none in October (in fact there were no records in that month in the whole of the Club area) and 21 on 29th November.

The only other autumn/winter records were 18 near the Flouch on 16th July, three on 4th and five on 11th August, one flying over Brownhill Res in fog on 27th September; in November, 750 on 15th and 45 on 29th at Dewsbury S.F., which also had 60 birds on 6th December, with further December records from Ringstone Edge of 62 on 5th, 34 on 6th and 48 on 20th and 210 at Broadstones on 22nd, a very untypical date.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Rare passage visitor

One flew east at Winscar Res on 4th June (JIM) and two juveniles gave excellent views for an hour at Boshaw Whams on 1st October (DHP).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Resident breeder (3). Numerous passage and winter visitor

Most reports in the first two months of the year came from Blackmoorfoot, where in January the maximum counts were 115 on 2nd and 250+ on 12th, 17th and 30th, and in February 160 on 10th and 180 on 11th. Elsewhere, two were at Boshaw Whams on 31st January with up to 60 there in February; also in February, 25 at Castle Dam, Penistone on 13th, 16 over Castle Hill on 18th, 18 at Elland G.P.s. on 25th and up to 13 at Ingbirchworth.

Birds had returned to breeding areas above Holmfirth on 1st March, the only flocks in that month being 21 at Denby Dale on 11th and 50+ over Ingbirchworth on 15th.

During the breeding season birds were reported from Lumb Lane, Almondbury (one pair), Lower Castle Hill (up to six pairs in a traditional field), near Lepton Great Wood (one pair), Scout Dike (one pair bred), Ingbirchworth area (bred), Winscar (bred), New Mill, Dovestones (bred), Snailsden (at least five pairs bred), Hartcliffe Hill (one pair bred), Denby Dale (two pairs attempted) and Shepley, where two pairs attempted, one pair failing due to farming activities. Breeding numbers in the Holme Valley were described as similar to those in 1997.

Post-breeding maxima were generally low; at Blackmoorfoot 83 on 30th June, 110 on 22nd July, up to 170 in August and September, 140 in October, 210 in November and 170 in December. Maxima at other sites were as follows :- Broadstones c.300 on 21st July and up to 1000 on 23rd November, Royd Moor c.600 on 27th July, Dewsbury S.F. 170 on 19th and 195 on 28th July, with 470 west on 8th November, Ingbirchworth c.200 on 19th August, Scout Dike c.150 on 15th November and c.200 at Bretton Lakes on 27th December.

Little Stint *Calidris minutus*

Rare passage visitor

The only record was a single bird at Dewsbury S.F. on 17th September (J11).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Migrant breeder (1 – 2). Uncommon passage visitor

Two at Black Moss on 27th April and one occupied territory at Round Hill, southwest of Winscar Res in June were the only reports from breeding areas.

Blackmoorfoot Res produced the great majority of the remaining records with one west on 25th February, two west on 7th May, two on 9th July, singles on 23rd and 27th July, five west on 5th August, five west on 16th August in the company of four Ringed Plovers, two on 12th and one on 13th September, one on 12th October and singles on 1st and 7th November.

The only other records were one at Broadstones Res on 13th February, at Ingbirchworth singles on 8th May, 22nd September and 3rd October, while Dewsbury S.F. had singles on 27th July and on four September dates. One was also at Boshaw Whams on 1st October.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Scarce passage visitor

Dewsbury S.F. played host to a single bird on 28th August (JH).

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Scarce passage and winter visitor

Ellaud G.P.s. had most of the records, with one on 31st January, three on 9th March and three on 12th December (JB). The only other report came from Ringstone Edge, where one was present on 15th November (JB).

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Resident breeder (1 – 2). Common passage and winter visitor

Numbers in the early months were higher than in several recent years, with 24 at Royd Moor and 17 at Elland G.P.s, both on 31st January, 20 at Ringstone Edge on 21st February and 12 on 23rd April and 27 at Horbury Wyke on 1st March. By contrast, Blackmoorfoot Res had only one bird on two dates in February and four on 1st March.

Pairs bred at Fox House Moss, Deer Hill and in the Little Don Valley and displaying birds were noted in addition at Digley, Buckstones, Winscar, Broadstones and in the Cupwith/Nont Sarah's area, with three males at the last location.

After the breeding season, there were few records until late in the year. Blackmoorfoot Res had singles on 6th September and three dates in October and one flew over Holmbridge on 5th September. Ringstone Edge held 16 birds on 23rd October and 25 on 15th November, seven were at Inghirchworth on 30th October, two at Cupwith on 6th December and 12 at Elland G.P.s. on 12th December, but Dewsbury S.F. had easily the highest concentrations, with a roost on one of the beds holding 52 on 29th November, 51 on 12th December and 53 the following day.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Resident breeder (2). Uncommon winter visitor

The only record in the early months was of one flushed at Broad Carr Wood on 10th January.

Roding birds were observed between April and July in the Upper Little Don Valley (several), Stockmoor Common, Shepley, Storthes Hall Woods, Royd House Wood (on 25th May only) and in the Holme Styes/Crossley's Plantation/Yateholme area (several).

Later in the year singles were at Shepley on 6th November, near Castle Hill on 11th November (brought in by a cat unharmed and released (Mr. & Mrs. M. Rayner via MLD)), Deer Hill Moss on 22nd November and 29th December and Scammonden on 23rd November.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Rare passage visitor

Sightings of a single bird at Blackmoorfoot Res (MLD) and an adult in a field at Ringstone Edge with Lapwings (JB) both on 5th August could conceivably relate to the same individual.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Rare passage visitor

At Blackmoorfoot one flew west on 14th April (MLD); in autumn a juvenile was in fields at Ringstone Edge from 24th to 28th August (JB).

On 5th September, eight fast-flying large waders in a tight flock flew northwest at 1650 hrs. at Blackmoorfoot. They were flying low and not seen through binoculars. The observer, who was driving past at the time, is fairly sure that they were this species, but cannot be certain (SH).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce to uncommon passage visitor

The only record was of two birds in fields near Ingbirchworth Res on the typical date of 4th May (BBSG).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Migrant breeder (2). Common passage visitor

The earliest arrivals were on 1st March, when three pairs were back on territory at Stocksmoor Common, with an additional bird at Ingbirchworth. The next were at Hade Edge and Broadstones, where 24 were counted on 7th; the latter site also held 21 on 11th and 16 on 13th March. Other sites which had birds in March were Blackmoorfoot, Deer Hill Moss, Digley/Bilberry, Scammonden/Deanhead, Royd Moor, Hinchliffe Mill and near the Flouch Inn, where a high count of 55 on 14th reduced gradually to 17 on 27th (BBSG).

Evidence of breeding was obtained from the usual moorlands and upland meadows at Black Moss, Dovestones, Broadstones Res, Winscar (at least five pairs), Digley, Scammonden, Scout Dike, Royd Moor, Ingbirchworth, Cupwith (three pairs), Dunford Bridge/Thurstone Moor (at least six pairs), Snailsden, Ramsden Clough, Harden Clough, Hade Edge and near the Flouch Inn and at a lower altitude at Stocksmoor Common.

Few post-breeding gatherings were noted and there was little evidence of passage through or out of the area, apart from 14 flying west over Flockton on 22nd June, nine west at Blackmoorfoot on 2nd July, 27 in the Dunford Bridge/Thurstone area on 4th July, seven, including at least three juveniles at Snailsden on 27th June and 12 near the Flouch on 11th July.

The only records after the first week in August were singles at Blackmoorfoot on 10th and 31st August and two west on 19th September, four at Greenley Carr on 12th September, with the last one at Scammonden on 31st October

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Scarce passage migrant

One occurred at Dewsbury S.F. on 27th September.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Migrant breeder (1)

There was a slight increase over the previous year in the number of records of this species. On the down side, no confirmed evidence of breeding was obtained, although a pair was displaying near Winscar Res in March, April and May and probably bred.

Passage was apparent from late March, with singles at Ringstone Edge on 21st and 23rd and at Ingbirchworth and Blackmoorfoot on 28th. The last locality also had singles on 7th April and 2nd May and one was at Flight Hill on 13th June.

There was little evidence of autumn passage, the only records being three at Horbury Wyke on 15th July and one at Blackmoorfoot on 6th August.

Numbers at Dewsbury S.F. peaked at nine on 15th November.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage visitor

Another very poor year :- in August three at Dewsbury S.F. on 9th (JH), one at Horbury Wyke on four dates from 10th to 26th (DHP) and two at Ingbirchworth on 19th (BBSG).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Uncommon passage and winter visitor

One was at Dewsbury S.F. on 7th February (JH).

Apart from a bird at Lower Windleden Res on 4th September, all the records were from Horbury Wyke and Dewsbury S.F. The former site had birds on 20 dates between 23rd July and 23rd September, usually one or two, with a maximum of four on 10th and 17/18th August. Dewsbury S.F. had records on several dates from 1st August to 8th September, three on 5th September being the highest count, with a late individual on 8th November.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Rare passage visitor

One at Horbury Wyke on 11th August gave prolonged views (DHP).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Migrant breeder (2)

The earliest arrivals were at Blackmoorfoot Res (two) and Elland G.P.s. (one) on 20th and at Bretton Lakes (two) on 21st April. By the end of the month birds had also occurred at Langsett Res, Brownhill Res, Digley, Redbrook and Winscar Res's, with records from a further nine sites in May and June.

Breeding took place at Winscar Res, two pairs successful, a further three pairs washed out by high water levels and at least seven birds including juveniles present on 1st July. Langsett Res (two pairs), Lower Windleden Res (one pair), with additional pairs at Scammonden, Wessenden, March Haigh Res, Dovestones Res, Deanhead Res and Digley Res.

In autumn, birds were at Blackmoorfoot on 20 dates in July, seven dates in August, with two on 12th September the last. Horbury Wyke had one or two on several dates from 23rd July to 13th September, Ingbirchworth up to three between 6th July and 15th September, with a peak of at least seven on 13th September. The last of the year were singles at Langsett Res on 19th September and in flight over Lindley Moor on 27th September.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Rare visitor

A dark-phase immature which chased Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Blackmoorfoot Res on 21st October was the 200th species recorded at the site (MLD) and the fourth record for the Club area, all the previous ones being in 1985.

Addition to 1995 Report - a skua over Ingbirchworth Res on 22nd October was probably this species (NWA in "Birds of Barnsley").

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Rare visitor

Three dark-phase adults flew east at Blackmoorfoot Res at 1030 hrs. on 4th August (DMP). The ninth record for the Club area.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Rare visitor

With the exception of an adult at Dewsbury S.F. on 26th July (JH), all records were from Blackmoorfoot Res – an adult on 14/15th February (MLD,PB,JKP), a different adult on 26th February (PB), an adult on 15th March (DHP) and an adult in full summer plumage on 5th and 19th August (MLD, DMP).

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Scarce passage visitor

At Dewsbury S.F. birds were recorded on 6th (two) and 9th August (one) and 25th September (JH).

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Resident breeder (1). Numerous passage and winter visitor



The former breeding colony at Black Moss was deserted on 27th April; a pair was present at March Haigh Res on 19th April, but no further visits were made.

No specific counts were made at Blackmoorfoot Res, but in combination with Common Gull (*Larus canus*), early monthly maxima were January 6750, February 4800 and March 5050. Elsewhere, monthly maxima were :- at Ingbirchworth January c.500, February c.900, March c.300. Dewsbury S.F. 500 on 9th March and c.100 at Shepley on 25th January.

Larger numbers occurred in the latter half of the year, with maxima at Blackmoorfoot in July of 137, August 168, September 950, with c.5350, again in combination with Common Gull, in November.

In November up to 600 were at Ingbirchworth, 500 at Broadstones, c.1100 in fields at Spicer House Lane, 200+ at Denby Dale and 1100 at Dewsbury S.F. increasing to 1300 at the last site in December. 350 were at Royd Moor on 13th December, when there were also c.500 at Scout Dike Res. Smaller numbers were also reported from Woodsome Hall Golf Course, Lindley Rec. (Jan-March and July-Dec) and Digley Res.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Common passage and winter visitor

See under Black-headed Gull for winter counts at Blackmoorfoot Res, which had small numbers during May to September, with a gradual increase to a maximum of 46 on 6th Sept.

In the early months, 105 were at Ringstone Edge on 4th January, c.30 near Boshaw Whams on 17th January to mid-February only, 14 at Shepley on 25th January, up to six at Ingbirchworth between January and March and 49 at Scammonden on 3rd March.

120 at Langsett Res on 21st July was a very unusual record so far as the date is concerned. In the latter part of the year, singles were seen at Lindley Rec. between 30th August and 28th November, up to 3 at Scout Dike Res between September and December, "several" at Woodsome G.C. in October/November, six at Ingbirchworth on 1st November, at Ringstone Edge 100+ on 6th November and 180 on 13th December and 15 at Broadstones on 17th November.

This species is obviously being under-recorded/overlooked/not counted at many sites.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Common passage and winter visitor

Birds were present at Blackmoorfoot Res in all months of the year peaking in February at 237 and in September at 1137, with a steep decline in numbers thereafter. With the exception of one at New Mill on 1st January, a single in January and seven in March and in May at Ingbirchworth Res, 114 at Hartcliffe on 11th April and three at Broadstones on 19th April, all other records were in the second half of the year.

In July 50+ were at Broadstones on 23rd, small numbers were noted passing over Shelley, up to three were at Blackley, small numbers in the Denby Dale/Shepley area, c.250 at Langsett Res on 26th and 90 at Ringstone Edge on 31st. In August up to 200 at Royd Moor Res, up to 700 at Millhouse Green, 700 at Langsett Res, with smaller numbers at Hade Edge, Ingbirchworth and Denby Dale. At Digley, six on 9th September were the first of the autumn and there were still 400 at Millhouse Green on 1st September, 850 at Royd Moor on 19th and c.1200 there on 29th, with many moving towards Langsett Res.

At the year's end 250 at Royd Moor and 110 on Dearne Dike Lane on 11th October, 25 at Ingbirchworth Res (including two of the race *fuscus/intermedius*) on 18th October, when 300 were also at Fullshaw, 26+ at Broadstones on 25th, 191 on Brooksbank School Playing Fields on 31st, followed in November by 85 there on 14th and 60 at Royd Moor on 7th. 350 at Royd Moor on 13th was a very high count for December.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Common passage and winter visitor

Maxima at Blackmoorfoot were :- January 387, February 47, March 56, April and May one, June nil, July and August one, September two, October six, November 98, December 207.

The only other records received were from Ingbirchworth – one in January and seven on 16th December, Royd Moor an adult on 13th April, Shelley, where small numbers passed over in September, Broadstones Res two on 25th October, Ringstone Edge one on 26th May, Blackley Tip one on 7th and three on 16th July, Denby Dale, where the species is seen only occasionally since the tip was capped and from the Langsett Res roost which had 63 on 12th February, six on 28th November and 349 on 28th December.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus cachinnans*

Scarce visitor

Blackmoorfoot Res has had a monopoly on this species since its split from Herring Gull and birds were identified here on 12th August (three adults and juv/1stW) (PB), 14th, 15th and 31st August (adult – PB,MLD,DMO), 5th September (two adults), 7th September (adult), 12th September (adult) and 17th September (PB,MLD), 11th October (adult or 3rd/4thW – MC) and 7/8th November (adult – MC,MLD).

However, as familiarity with the species increases and observers have got to grips with the identification features, records have been forthcoming from several other sites as follows :- at Blackley Tip an adult on 11th July and an adult and a 3rd summer on 16th July and 7th August (JB), an adult at Broadstones Res on 21st July (MCW), a 3rd summer at Ringstone Edge on 4th, 5th and 11th August (JB), at Millhouse Green two adults on 11th August and an adult on 16th August assigned to the race/species *L.c.michahellis* (MC,BBSG), a 3rd summer at Royd Moor Res on 29th and 31st August (GJ,MCW), three at Ingbirchworth Res on 1st September (BBSG) and in winter an adult on Brooksbank School Playing Fields on 5th December (JB).

The preponderance of records in late summer is noteworthy.

Iceiland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

Scarce winter visitor

Two sites recorded birds. Blackmoorfoot had a 1stW on 23rd – 28th January (PB,DHP,JKP), an adult on 30th January (PB,JKP), a 1stW on 4th, 5th and 8th February (DHP) and a 2ndW on 22nd February (PB) – a minimum of four birds. At Blackley Tip a 1stW was present on 27th, 28th and 31st January at least, with an adult also present on 28th and 31st January and 1st February (JB,JD).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Scarce winter visitor

Blackmoorfoot Res had 1stW birds on 17th January (JKP), two on 24th January which were different from that on 17th (PB,JKP,DHP) and on 3rd February (DMO) – at least three individuals. A 1stW was in fields at Broadstones Lodge on 24th January (GM,DMS) and an adult at Broadstones Res on 13th February (MCW).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Common winter visitor

Monthly maxima at Blackmoorfoot Res were :- January 124, February 18, March 2, April – August nil, September two, October nil, November 29, December 63.

The only other records received were of a 1st summer at Ringstone Edge on 28th April, a subadult flying over Shelley on 2nd May, an adult at Digley on 27th September, an adult at Blackley Tip on 15th November, several on Woodsome G.C. in November/December, one at Ingbirchworth in December and ten at Langsett Res on 25th December.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Scarce passage visitor

Adults occurred at Blackmoorfoot Res on 15th March (MLD) and 19th December (PB,MI.D) and a juvenile was at Ingbirchworth Res on 31st October (BBSG).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Uncommon passage visitor

The first of the year were at Elland G.Ps. on 2nd (two) and 3rd May (five), followed by one which flew west at Blackmoorfoot on 9th. One flew southeast at Ringstone Edge on 21st May and two were present at Ingbirchworth Res on 29th and 30th May. At Blackmoorfoot in June, one stayed from 4th to 16th, three were present on 29th, with single adults on 3rd, 18th and 25th July and two adults on 16th August. One was at Ingbirchworth on 15th June and one at Ravensthorpe G.P. on 25th June. Horbury Wyke had a single on 28th May, two on 19th June and then regularly up to four to 18th August.

Apparently birds from the breeding colony at Pugney's C.P. regularly fly up the R.Calder beyond Dewsbury S.F. to feed (JH), which could account for the three adults and two juveniles present at Elland G.P.s. on 26th July. An adult at Ringstone Edge Res on 31st August was probably unrelated to this behaviour however.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon passage visitor

Singles were at Elland G.P.s. on 16th (DSI) and 21st July (MLD).

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Rare passage visitor

Two flew west at Blackmoorfoot on 8th May (MLD).

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Rare passage visitor

At Dewsbury S.F. on 11th October, a juvenile flew west at 1040 hrs. Excellent views were obtained and the bird was photographed. It came in from the east with Black-headed Gulls and continued flying towards Dewsbury town centre (JH).

This will be a new species for the Club area if the identification is accepted by YNU Rarities Committee and BBRC.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Resident breeder (3)

Only two records were received, 350+ in the town centre and 160+ at Thornton Lodge, both on 9th December.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Resident breeder (2)

Reports were received from 26 localities, although few counts at either end of the year reached double figures. In the early months maxima were c.20 at Hade Edge on 4th January, 49 at Royd Moor on 31st January, 18 at Denby Dale (where there were up to 100 in 1996) on 24th February and 40+ at Whitley Common on 15th April, otherwise numbers were generally in low single figures.

Positive evidence of breeding came from Blackmoorfoot, Scout Dike, the Lumb Lane/Castle Hill area (up to ten pairs), Penny Spring Wood (probably three pairs), Emley Moor, Denby Dale (three pairs) and Shepley (two pairs), with birds present in the breeding season also at Lower Stones Wood, Lepton Great Wood, Ilorbury Wyke, Dewsbury S.F., Bretton Park and Shelley.

Flocks of 25 or more were present regularly during the summer months, numbers dwindling towards the year end, at Horbury Wyke. Late season high counts were c.50 in Dearne Dike Lane on 11th October, 14 at Royd Moor Res on 7th November and up to 38 in fields to the west of Blackmoorfoot Res in December.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Resident breeder (4). Numerous winter visitor

There were few reports of this species and none in large numbers, other than "many" roosting at Carr Wood, Woodsome on 11th January, but no count was made, otherwise 50+ were at Horbury Wyke and near Golcar Station on 23rd February and 1st March respectively. Numbers at the year end were higher, but unexceptional, with c.350 at Bretton Lakes on 17th November, 160 over Thornhill on 29th November, up to 100 regularly in the Penny Spring area and winter flocks of over 200 in the Denby Dale and Shepley areas the highest counts received.

Breeding was much under-reported.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Resident breeder (3)

Few observers reported this species. Breeding was reported from only six areas and included a pair nesting at Huddersfield Fire Station on 4th June. The only counts in double figures were of up to 14 birds in a Shepley garden and a high total of 56 at Dewsbury S.F. on 6th August, but only 17 were present the following day.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Migrant breeder (2)

Single males at Dovestones Res on 23rd, Bow Grains (Deer Hill Moss) on 24th, Little Don Valley on 25th and above Marsden on 29th were the first April records for two years. One was at another locality near Marsden on 2nd May ("Cuckoo Day!"), with additional sightings from Digley, Scammonden, Tunnel End, Wessenden and Crossley's Plantation by 9th May. Later in the month birds were seen or heard at a further 14 localities. Generally only single birds were involved, but three were in the Upper Little Don Valley on 19th May.

For the second successive year none was heard in the South Ossett area.

The last report for the year was as early as 7th June at Scammonden.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Formerly resident, now a rare visitor

One was hunting over fields in the northeast of the area on 12th December (JH), the first record since 1993.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Resident breeder (2)

A very widely reported species. Records were received from about 40 localities, with breeding confirmed at Shepley (two pairs), Denby Dale (three pairs), Tinker Hill, Cubley/Roughbitchworth area (at least four pairs), Broadstones Res, Lower Stones Wood, South Ossett, Blackmoorfoot, Lumb Lane, Castle Hill and Royd Moor Res and pairs at several other sites in the breeding season.

An interesting observation at Whitegate Lane, above Holmbridge, was of a bird flying above the road calling continuously, prompting the observer to wonder if such behaviour is a usual occurrence (MC).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Resident breeder (2)

Bred at Langsett Res (three pairs), Shepley (two pairs), Denby Dale, Yatcholme, Bretton Park and Ingbirchworth, with other birds noted in the breeding season at a further 15 sites, mainly woodlands.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Resident breeder (1)

Bred in coniferous woodland at two sites, rearing a single young at one (SK); at the second site two or three fledged young were seen to fly short distances on 3rd July (SH).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Resident/migrant breeder. Scarce passage/winter visitor

A welcome return to form for this moorland species. At one site three pairs bred, with one juvenile remaining to 7th November (BBSG). At a second moorland site two birds were seen on 5th June, whilst one on 8th June caught a vole and carried it off presumably to a nest site; further sightings were made of two on 18th June and one on 24th July.

At the beginning of the year one was hunting at Horbury Marshalling Yards on 25th January (JH).

All other records were in the latter part of the year, notably in the Deanhead/Scammonden area, where almost daily sightings were made between 8th October and 11th November, with at least nine individual birds involved, the highest daily total being seven on 8th and 12th October. Elsewhere singles were at Holme Moss on 15th October (MC), Blackmoorfoot on 29th October (TD) and 10th December (MJD), Dewsbury S.F. on 30th November (JH) and Deer Hill on 22nd December (TD).

Swift *Apus apus*
Migrant breeder (2 – 3)

The earliest birds to arrive were over a week later than usual, the first being one at Hinchliffe Mill on 7th May, followed on 8th by one over the town centre, two at Crosland Moor and several at Ingbirchworth. Birds were seen at a further eight localities on 9th and 10th May and at least 50 were over Cooper Bridge S.F. on 12th. Generally numbers were very low compared with the situation ten years ago.

Birds were present at Blackmoorfoot during May, June and July, with up to 24 daily and peaks of 37 and 80 on 4th and 25th June respectively. Passage was noted at Buckstones, where 70+ flew west on 7th June, but more spectacularly at Dewsbury S.F. on 14th June, when 500 flew west in 2.5 hrs. in the morning and 1326 in the evening (JH).

There were few records after mid-August, the last being a single at Horbury Wyke on 18th, 20 at Scout Dike on 20th, one at Crosland Moor on 22nd and 24th and three at Blackmoorfoot on 27th, with none recorded in September.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Resident breeder (1)

Breeding took place at Scout Dike, on the R.Calder near Horbury Bridge and Dewsbury S.F., on the R.Dearne below Bretton Lakes and on the R.Don, where between Bullhouse Bridge (Millhouse Green) and Deepcar, all but about three kilometres of which is in the Club area, there was a minimum of six pairs (BBSG). There were additional sightings of birds in the breeding season from Elland G.Ps. (up to four birds), the R.Colne (behind the Zeneca Works and the Mc.Alpine Stadium), Barkisland (pair), Bretton Park/R.Dearne, Fenay Beck and Lockwood Brewery.

Outside the breeding season, additional localities from which birds were reported were Blackmoorfoot Res, regularly from September to the year end, Rashcliffe, Lockwood, Marsden, Scammonden, Horbury Wyke, Armitage Bridge, Shelley, Hinchliffe Mill, Primrose Hill, Brownhill Res and Langsett Res.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*
Resident breeder (1 – 2)

The species was reported from approximately 45 localities with breeding being confirmed at Thornhill, Horbury Wyke, New Mill, Denby Dale (two pairs) and Scammonden, pairs present at Royd Moor, Shepley, Scout Dike, Grimescar Valley, Woodsome, Bretton Park, Elland and Langsett, with calling birds or sightings of single individuals in suitable breeding habitat at Lumb Lane, Almondbury, Golcar, Thunderbridge, Digley, Lower Stones Wood and Netherton.

In the post-breeding/winter months, birds were reported from a further 18 localities.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Resident breeder (2)

This is a very widespread and common species, as evidenced by the reports from 60 localities, although records of confirmed breeding were comparatively few. Sites where nesting occurred were Deffer Wood, Lepton Great Wood, New Mill, Bretton Park (where a pair was at a nesthole used the previous year by a pair of Nuthatches), Beaumont Park, Denby Dale, Shepley, Storthes Hall Woods, Royd House Wood, Mollicar Wood, Penny Spring Wood, Carr Wood, Armitage Bridge and Digley Bottom, with a further 20 woodlands where breeding probably took place.

Both in and outside the breeding season, the species visited gardens in Almondbury, Somerset Road, Lockwood, Dalton, New Mill, Meltham and Hinchliffe and doubtless in other areas.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

Resident breeder (1)

There was an increase in the number of reports of this elusive species, which is possibly expanding its range or simply being detected more frequently.

At Bretton Park, a female was excavating a nesthole on 31st March and single males were seen on 31st March and 20th April, a pair on 12th April and singles on four dates in the winter months. A pair bred in Mollicar Wood, where young were being fed in the nest on 5th June. Probable breeding occurred at Cliff Wood, Langsett, where drumming was heard on 26th April, a male was searching for food in Spring Wood, Netherton on 22nd May and between March and May birds were also observed at Woodsome, Lumb Lane, Blacker Wood, Healey House, Armitage Bridge and Elland Park Wood, all in possible breeding habitat.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Resident breeder (3)

In February, a minimum of five singing males were back on breeding territories at Broadstones on 12th and movement was taking place at Blackmoorfoot, with birds flying west on 13th (12) and 14th (nine).

The next dated report was of three-plus at Digley on 22nd March. Few observers sent in records of this species, but breeding territories were located at Wessenden Head (two), Ashes Lane, Almondbury, Hade Edge, Stockmoor Common, Emley Moor, Lepton, near Penny Spring Wood, New Mill (where the species was absent in 1997), Shepley, Crosland Hill, Deer Hill, Elland G.P.s., Millhouse Green (at least two), Royd Moor (15 – 20), Scout Dike (two) and Denby Dale (five).

The only autumn reports were of small numbers of migrants calling overhead at Broadstones on 12th September, three moving south over the Duuford Bridge Cycle Track on 20th September and three at Greenley Carr on 4th October.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Migrant breeder (1)

The first reports were of three at Ingbirchworth and Scout Dike on 11th April, with two at the latter site on 19th April, followed later in the month by singles at Blackmoorfoot on 22nd and 24th, one at Wessenden Head Res on 23rd, five at Elland G.P.s. on 24th, and on 26th two at Ingbirchworth, three at Broadstones and at least ten at Bretton Lakes. Single figures were then noted at Blackmoorfoot on four dates in May, max. three on 30th, at Dewsbury S.F. on 17th May and at Scout Dike on 2nd (c.8) and 3rd May.

A breeding colony on the R.Calder at Healey held 18 pairs (JH), but no records were received from the breeding site at Ravensthorpe.

A large passage took place at Dewsbury S.F. on 13th June, when 350 flew west, but no other movements were notified.

In autumn, few were noted, maximum at Blackmoorfoot being six on 19th August, with the last on 13th September, whilst up to 20 were seen regularly at Horbury Wyke during July and August.

Addition to 1995 Report :- a pair bred at Cawthorne Park (NWA in "Birds of Barnsley").

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Migrant breeder (4)

Birds were very late in arriving, the first not being until 20th April, when singles were at Flockton and New Mill, with the next at Flush House and Crosland Hill on 21st, at Hade Edge,

Blackmoorfoot, Shepley and Denby Dale on 22nd and Lindley Moor and Wessenden Head on 23rd. By the end of April further reports had come from Elland G.P.s. (30 on 24th), Broadstones, Scout Dike, Ingbirchworth, Upper Denby, Shelley, Snailsden and Scammonden. No gatherings of any significance were reported during the spring, with only up to a maximum of 14 at Blackmoorfoot in May, 12 at Scout Dike on 2nd May and "good numbers" at Ingbirchworth on 12th.

Few reports of breeding were received.

Autumn counts similarly were low, Blackmoorfoot's maxima being 35+ on 27th August and 67 on 17th September. Elsewhere, c.20 at Bretton Park on 16th August, c.100 at Ingbirchworth on 20th August, 20 in the Grimescar Valley on 27th August, c.200 at Carlcotes and c.500 at Cubley on 4th September and "large flocks" in the Denby Dale area were the only counts to reach double figures.

October birds were noted at Bradley Park G.C. on 1st (one), Jackson Bridge on 4th (two), New Mill on 6th (one), Cinderhills on 7th (seven), Shelley on 8th (two), Flush House on 9th (one), Skelmanthorpe on 10th (three) and the last was at Hinchliffe Mill on 18th.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Migrant breeder (3)

The first arrival, at Bretton Park on 12th April, untypically was eight days earlier than the first Swallow and ten days earlier than the next of its species at Denby Dale and Elland (three) on 22nd. The next were at Lindley on 25th, Ingbirchworth (three) and Scout Dike on 26th and Blackmoorfoot on 28th (four) and 29th April (two). Few spring flocks of any size occurred, apart from 120 on 10th May and 180 on 18th June at Dewsbury S.F. and 100+ at Clayton West S.F. on 26th May. During this period the maxima at Blackmoorfoot were just five in May and four in June.

Breeding was reported from Lumb Lane, Almondbury (four nests), Holly Bank Road, Lindley (three nests), Shepley (three nests), Hade Edge (four nests on school and others on houses), Outlane (six nests) and Newsome (one nest). There are surely other sites to be reported.

In autumn, Blackmoorfoot had maxima in July of 33 on 26th, in August 55+ on 27th and in September 103 on 6th. Other high counts were c.75 at Penistone on 9th August, c.50 at Ingbirchworth on 12th and 16th August, with c.60 at Bretton Lakes on the latter date, 100 at New Mill on 29th August, good numbers at Shelley with over 100 per day regularly in late August, c.40 moving south over Lockwood on 15th September, with good numbers at Hinchliffe Mill on 19th September. The largest numbers however were recorded at Dewsbury S.F., which had 113 on 23rd August, 989 passing west on 13th September and 1403 also west on 27th September.

There were no late records, but in October c.50 were still at Hinchliffe Mill on 3rd, one at Shelley on 8th, three at Skelmanthorpe and four over Dewsbury on 10th and the last on 12th at Lindley.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Migrant breeder (2)

The only April records came from Langsett Res, where one was in song on 25th, and Blackmoorfoot on 26th. Elsewhere in the breeding season, birds were noted at Scammonden (but did not breed), Royd Edge, Upper Little Don Valley, where at least four pairs bred, Cliff Wood (probably two pairs), New House Wood, Woodsome Lees, Denby Dale, where one pair bred and three young fledged on 17th June, and Winscar Res (two singing males present). No reports were received from previous strongholds such as Deffer Wood and the Bretton area. The species is very obviously in decline locally.

There were autumn records from Scammonden – one on 8th August, Ingbirchworth – one on 10th August, one at Blackmoorfoot on 16th August, at Denby Dale on 24th August and over Digley Res on 6th (two) and 7th September, the latter date one of obvious visible migration.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Resident breeder (4 – 5). Partial migrant

Singles at Dovestones Res and Meltham on 10th January were rather unusual. Five at Broadstones on 13th February were also early. More characteristically, birds were reported from regular sites from mid-March onwards, with 50+ at Denby Dale on 1st April and similar numbers passing over Shelley daily from the beginning of April, with a heavy passage of hundreds of birds in the Ingbirchworth area on 5th April. On this same date, Dewsbury S.F. reported a spring maximum of 60 birds, a total much reduced from previous years. Ten were still on passage at Scout Dike on 10th April and 85 counted at Elland G.P.s. on 15th April.

Reported as abundant in the breeding season at Hade Edge, Harden Clough and Winscar and probably breeding at Farnley Tyas and near Penny Spring Wood.

Many flocks were noted in the autumn period, mainly in September, with much evidence of movement, generally to the south or southwest, as follows :- at Digley in September c.100 on 5th, 100 – 200 on 7th, c.10 on 9th, up to 50 on 17th, c.20 on 24th and hundreds in fields on 26th, at Brownhill Res c.200 passing on 6th, at Cartworth Moor 80 – 100 moving in short hops across fields on 9th, at Greenley Carr c.100 moving southwest on 12th, with similar numbers at Broadstones and westerly movement at Ingbirchworth on the same date, c.70 at Castle Hill on 15th, c.200 in set-aside at Emley on 16th, c.20 at Castle Dam, Penistone on 27th, 53 southwest at Scammonden on 3rd October and a general southerly movement at Flight Hill on 4th October.

Late birds were recorded at Scammonden, with 10+ on 1st November, one on 2nd December, Deanhead four on 4th November, Digley one on 15th November, Quarmby one on 10th December, Emley Moor one on 26th December and from Blackmoorfoot, which most unusually had two or three daily throughout December.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Rare passage visitor

Singles occurred at Dewsbury S.F. on 25th October and 29th November (JH) and at Royd Moor Res on 7th November (MCW).

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Migrant breeder (1)

There were only species – a male

and a male of the nominate race *M.f.flava* (Blue-headed Wagtail) at Upper Denby on 27th April (TM)

There was a better series of records in autumn, with singles at Scout Dike Res on 27th July and a juvenile on 29th August (BBSG), single juveniles at Ingbirchworth Res on 5th, 9th and 15th August, four juveniles on 16th and one on 19th, which possibly indicates breeding nearby (TM, BBSG). Three were at Horbury Wyke on 23rd August and passage was noted at Digley Res on 5th September, when two passed over with numbers of Meadow Pipits and 7th September, when one occurred in a fall of Meadow Pipits and Pied Wagtails (MC). One was near Lower Stones Wood on 18th September, five flew over Shelley on 23rd September (SG).



Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Resident breeder (2)

Bred at Bretton Lakes, Thunderbridge, Denby Dale, Dewsbury S.F., Wessenden Res, Scout Dike Res, Castle Dam, Penistone, Dunford Bridge, Little Don Valley above Millhouse Green (five pairs) and between Hazelhead and Deepcar at least 25 pairs were present on the R.Don. Probable breeding was also reported from near Almondbury, Dogley, Waterloo and Tunnel End, with other breeding season sightings from Colnebridge, Hey Green, Deer Hill, Stephen Wood (Denby Dale), Meltham Mills, Milnsbridge, Ingbirchworth, Holmfirth, Digley, Gunthwaite, Langsett and near Penny Spring. The species is widely distributed and maintains a healthy breeding population.

Birds occurred outside the breeding season at a further 20 sites, including gardens at Shepley, Lockwood and Meltham and in the town centre.

Most sightings were of one or two individuals, but there were seven together at Ingbirchworth on 25th August (DHP).

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Resident breeder (3)

A pre-roost gathering of at least 150 birds was at the Springwood Car Park on 8th March, with 40+ there on 5th July. The only other early season count was of eight birds at Silkstone S.F. on 11th January.

Breeding was reported only from Ingbirchworth (at least two pairs), Emley TV mast, Emley Moor, Emley village/Skelmanthorpe (c.6 pairs) and Denby Dale.

There were more post-breeding season counts, the maxima being at Dewsbury S.F. 60 on 30th July, 63 on 23rd August, 68 on 13th and 75 on 15th September and 46 on 25th October, at Ingbirchworth 20 on 14th August, at Scout Dike 35+ on 29th August, at Digley c.20 on 5th September, at Dunford Bridge 15 at one puddle on the Cycle Track on 24th September and 14 on the dam wall at Langsett Res on 28th September.

A bird at Dewsbury S.F. on 21st November was in an unusual plumage – all white with a yellow head, black wingtips and pink legs and bill (JH).

Two birds attributed to the nominate race *M.a.alba* (White Wagtail) were at Dewsbury S.F. on 2nd May (JH).

Additions to the 1994 Report – nominate race birds *M.a.alba* occurred at Royd Moor on 29th May and at Langsett on 26th September (NWA in "Birds of Barnsley").

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Eruptive winter visitor, rare to uncommon

Seven were reported at High Hoyland on 16th January (BJLNF), but no further details are available.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Resident breeder (2)

One was at Liphill Brook, Burnlee on 17th January and one at Thunderbridge on 23rd February, where at nearby Dogley N.R. one was carrying food on 2nd May. Breeding was confirmed only at Hill Top, Slaithwaite, where a pair reared two broods of five and six young, Wessenden, Oxygrains Beck, on the R.Little Don above Millhouse Green (two pairs reared a minimum of five young and at least nine pairs between Hazelhead and Deepcar (BBSG)). Other records from known breeding sites included birds at Hey Green, Marsden, Beestones Wood, Dovestones and Langsett.

There were several sightings from the Holme Valley, including one in the centre of Holmfirth on 2nd October.

Several observers consider the species to be in decline in the area; all records should be submitted in future years.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident breeder (4)

A common and widespread bird throughout the area with, for example, 17 at Bretton Lakes on 22nd February, 14 singing males in the Little Don Valley above Millhouse Green, six males holding territory at Cliff Wood, Langsett, up to 12 singing males at both Lepton Great Wood and Penny Spring Wood, 13 at New House Wood, Denby Dale and abundant at Gunthwaite in April.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Resident breeder (3)

Widespread and common throughout the area, but reported to be declining in the Denby Dale and Shepley areas (TM).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Resident breeder (4 – 5)

All reports received refer to the species as a common breeder, numerous or abundant. At least six territories were occupied in a CBC plot at Shepley, six males held breeding territories at Cliff Wood, Langsett and there were ten singing males at New House Wood, Denby Dale.

On 6th October, when hundreds occurred on the east coast, at least seven were in the car park at Digley Res in a fall of thrushes.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Migrant breeder (2)

The first was a male in a New Mill garden on the rather early date of 16th April, followed by males at Upper Little Don Valley on 25th, Ingbirchworth on 26th, near Blackmoor-foot on 29th and Helme on 30th April.

Further singing males and/or females appeared in May at Scammonden, New House Wood, Hey Green, Riding Wood Res, North America Wood (two males), Cliff Wood, Digley and Langsett, but the only proofs of breeding were obtained at Holme Styes, where a male was carrying food on 27th June and in the Upper Little Don Valley, where at least six pairs bred above Brookhouse Bridge.

The only autumn reports came from Dunford Bridge Cycle Track and a Cowcliffe garden on 8th August, between Upper Denby and Upper Cumberworth on 30th August and Scammonden, where a juvenile was present on 31st August.

Addition to 1997 Report :- bred at Denby Dale (TM).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Migrant breeder (2)

The first were two at Broadstones Farm on 24th April, followed by two nearby at Windmill Lane on 26th, a male at Meltham Moor on 27th and a female at Denby Dale on 29th April. In early May, birds appeared at Scammonden on 2nd and 4th (two), with additional sites occupied from mid-month.

Bred at Scammonden (at least one pair out of two present), Winscar (two pairs), Barmings, Lower Windleden Res and the Upper Little Don Valley (three pairs), with further pairs or singing males at Buckstones, Deer Hill, Royd Edge, Harden Clough and Hingcliff Common.

Passage birds were noted in autumn at Dewsbury S.F., where the first juvenile appeared on 27th July increasing to five on 4th August, with four on 28th August, 8th September and 10th October, Scout Dike which had six on 2nd August, when there were also seven at Ingbirchworth, Spicer House Lane one on 28th August, Deanhead six on 31st August, Ingbirchworth village one on 8th September, Ringstone Edge one on 19th September and finally three on the cycle track at Dunford Bridge on 20th September.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Occasional breeder (1). Scarce passage and winter visitor.

In the early months, a female was at Deer Hill on 8th February, with what was possibly the same bird at West Nab on 22nd (DMPJJ). At Black Moor a male and a female were seen on 21st February, with the male remaining to 24th (MLD).

A pair bred at Winscar rearing four young, with three birds including an adult male still in the area on 8th November at least and a pair probably bred at Hingcliff Common (BBSG). In addition a pair with a very recently fledged juvenile were at Bow Grains on 6th September (TD).

There was an excellent series of autumn/winter records as follows :- two on the cycle track at Dunford Bridge on 20th September (MC), a male at Ramsden Clough on 7th October (DMP), at Scammonden four, including adult male and female on 18th October, with two on 25th and one on 30th October, a female on 4th November and an adult male and a female on 2nd December, at Deanhead male and female on 23rd October and one on 30th October (JB,JED), two near Meltham(DMP) and two at Hingcliff Common (BBSG) on 1st November, and in December a female between West Nab and Deer Hill on 19th (TD) and an immature at Broadstones Lodge on 22nd (BBSG).

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
Migrant breeder (2)

A male near Deer Hill on 11th March (DMP) and still present on 13th was more than two weeks earlier than the next arrivals on 27th, when four birds were at both Winscar and Broadstones, followed by four at Spicer House Lane and Whitley Common and one in the Little Don Valley on 28th, with a male and a female at Scammonden on 29th and a female at Oldfield on 2nd April. A further arrival took place on 5th April, with one at Dewsbury S.F., seven at Dearne Dike Lane and nine at Brown's Edge "airfield".

After small numbers at a further four sites in the next two weeks, there was a significant influx from 25th, when 11 were at Blackmoorfoot; on 26th there were at least 30 in the Broadstones Lodge area, ten at Broadstones Res, seven at Scammonden, with ten at Upper Denby and five at Denby Dale on 27th, increasing to nine on 29th

Lindley Moor held two of the Greenland race (*O.o.leucorrhoa*) on 4th May (JED).

Breeding occurred at Dovestones, Upper Windleden Res, Winscar (one pair – two young) and Wessenden, where a recently fledged juvenile was seen on 6th July, and doubtless went unrecorded at many other sites.

Records were received from five sites in August, while in September a male was at Cartworth Edge on 6th, Blackmoorfoot had birds on four dates, the last being three on 17th, Dewsbury S.F. had singles on 25th and 27th and one was at Digley on 26th. There were two October records, one at Winscar on 11th and two birds at Scammonden on 18th.

Ring Ousel *Turdus torquatus*
Migrant breeder (1 – 2)

The first was a male in the Little Don Valley from 27th, joined by a female from 30th March and one pair bred. At least one male, possibly two, was near Bilberry Res on 30th March and the same site held three birds on 12th April and six males feeding together on pasture on 18th April, but no breeding evidence was reported from this traditional site.

A male was present at Buckstones from 26th April, whilst this locality held a pair and an additional male on 3rd May. In the Wessenden Valley four singing males were present throughout May and a nest with eggs was located on 27th. At Dovestones a pair probably bred and a calling male was heard at Ramsden Clough on 19th May.

There were two records of probable immigrants in autumn, two feeding on Rowan berries at Dovestones on 19th September and a male at the unusual site of Royd Moor on 6th October (JLM).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Resident breeder (5)

A very common species throughout the area.

20+, mainly first-year males, were in the upper valley at Scammonden on 31st October, one was on the moor top at Blackstone Edge on 14th November and 45 were counted at Thornhill Mill Bank on 13th December.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Numerous passage and winter visitor

January numbers were relatively low, with reported maxima of 100 at Spicer House Lane on 6th, c.50 at Bretton Park on 15th, 100 at Shepley on 25th and 100 at Scout Dike, c.100 at Broadstones and 30 at Ingbirchworth all on 31st. Numbers increased slightly in February with c.50 at Lumb Lane on 3rd, c.30 at Royd Moor on 10th, 300 at Ingbirchworth and 100+ at Broadstones on 13th and smaller numbers at Blackmoorfoot and Scammonden. No large build-up of birds returning to breeding grounds occurred in the spring months, the only significant numbers being 80+ at Royd Moor on 15th March, c.400 at Spicer House Lane on 31st March, 200 at Denby Dale on 1st April and 70 at Dewsbury S.F. on 4th April. Thereafter records were few, with two at Scout Dike and c.10 at Castle Hill on 19th April the last.

Returning birds in the autumn were very late, the earliest being in a mixed flock with Redwings passing southwest over Lindley on 15th October. The next were 42 moving southwest at Ringstone Edge on 23rd October, with eight at Dobb Dyke, Holmbridge on 24th, singles at Scout Dike on 28th and at Scammonden on 30th and over Lindley Moor and Hinchliffe Mill on 31st, when c.30 at Royd Moor was the first flock of any size in that area. Numbers increased from November onwards, with on 1st, c.300 at Ingbirchworth, 306 at Dewsbury S.F. and 40 northwest over Lindley Moor, and on 2nd 560 moved southwest at Scammonden, with 350 northwest there and 230 west at Blackmoorfoot on 7th, 236 west at Skelmanthorpe, 946 south at Dewsbury S.F. and c. 240 at Scammonden on 8th.

Thereafter numbers were generally fewer, although grounded birds were recorded at many locations, but with a good flock of c.400 birds at Spicer House Lane on 29th, when 262 were also at Dewsbury S.F.

Maxima at the year end in December were 84 at Dewsbury S.F. on 6th, 76 at Scammonden on 15th, c.350 near Ingbirchworth on 16th, 40 at Blackmoorfoot on 26th, 250+ at Bretton Park on 29th and up to 200 in the Shepley/Denby Dale areas.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Resident breeder (3)

Probably as a result of the widely publicised decline of this species at a national level, more records were received than usual for this species, generally relating to the breeding season. In spite of the increase in records, however, there were few relating to actual breeding, which was reported only from Denby Dale (three pairs), Shepley (two pairs), Shelley (two pairs) and Dewsbury S.F. (one pair). Most reports were of singing males or of individuals seen in the breeding season at the following locations :- Milnsbridge, Elland G.P.s., Beestones Wood, Holme Styes (two males), Winscar Res (two males), New House Wood (three males), Hade Edge, Golcar, Bretton Park (four males), Carr Wood, Digley Bottom, Mollicar Wood, Ossett, New Mill, Hinchliffe Mill, Meltham and Cliff Wood.

A bird of the continental race was present on 3rd October at Scammonden, where at least three grey continental birds were also present later in the month. Seven birds were at Elland G.P.s. on 29th December.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Numerous passage and winter visitor

There were few reports in the early months and only of relatively small numbers. Up to 100 were at Bretton Park on 15th January, 50+ at Fixby on 21st February and 70+ at Royd Moor on 15th March, otherwise no more than 30 were noted anywhere. The last and only record for April was one at Blackmoorfoot on 6th.

Birds were late returning in autumn, the first being one at Scammonden on 3rd October, followed there by 65 flying west, calling over Holmbridge and c.40 over Shelley all on 5th, two at Blackmoorfoot on 8th and one at Dunford Bridge on 10th. Thereafter birds were seen at ten sites during the month, with maxima of 45 at Blackmoorfoot, "a large flock" mixed with Fieldfares over Lindley, c.350/450 west in 1.5hrs. at Holmbridge all on 15th and a sizeable westerly passage over Hinchliffe Mill on 31st with up to 20 elsewhere.

November numbers were low, with a southerly movement of 65 at Dewsbury S.F. on 8th and a maximum of 50 at Bretton Park on 17th. At the end of the year, up to 100 were in Bretton Park and 100+ in Litherop Lane on 30th December, otherwise no site recorded more than 30 birds.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Resident breeder (3)

Up to 18 were seen in a Lockwood garden on various dates between 30th January and 22nd October, but no other gatherings in double figures were noted in the first winter period, the largest being eight at Royd Moor on 15th March.

More were reported in the post-breeding season, with in August, a maximum of 27 at Dewsbury S.F. on 26th and 41 in the upper Grimescar Valley on 27th. A flock of 17 was near Holme on 12th September and c.30 were at Dovestones on 19th September.

One was in full song at Bretton Park by 13th November.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Occasional migrant breeder (1)

There was no evidence of breeding, but singing birds were heard in the Grimescar Valley (JMN) and at Horbury Bridge (JH) on 2nd May, near Healey Marshalling Yards from 3rd to 6th May (JH) and at Denby Dale from 14th to 16th July (TM).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Migrant breeder (1)

One had arrived at Elland G.P.s. on 2nd May and was followed by five singing males, which probably included some passage birds, at the same site on 10th (JB), when one was also at Blackmoorfoot Res (MLD). During May and June one sang at Dewsbury S.F. and three singing males were just outside the works perimeter fence throughout, although no definite proof of breeding could be obtained; a maximum of five was seen on 2nd August (JH). The only other record was of a bird presumably on passage at Scout Dike on 27th July (BBSG).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Rare breeder and passage migrant

A singing bird was present from 1st May at Elland G.P.s., with two males from 15th and breeding took place, two adults and two juveniles being seen on 25th July (JB, JED, SH et al).

The only other record was of a male in song at Horbury Wyke on 28th June (JH).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Migrant breeder (1)

After a poor year in 1997 there was a welcome increase in the number of records of this species.

The first was a male in song on 18th April at Dewsbury S.F., where a further sighting was made on 4th July (JH). The next singing males were at Dalton on 27th April, but not subsequently (BA) and on 28th at Shelley, where an adult was feeding two young on 15th August and last seen on 17th September (SG). Two singing males at Scout Dike were probably on passage (BBSG). Two pairs bred at Thornhill Mill Bank, an adult feeding chicks on 24th May (JH). The most surprising record was of a male heard to sing three times in bushes near the Pine Street Car Park in Huddersfield town centre on 7th May only (SH). Other males were at Denby Dale on 22nd and at Shepley on 27th and 31st May (JED, TM).

In August single birds were at Cowcliffe on 8th (GBS), at New Mill killed flying into a window on 10th and at Denby Dale on 24th (TM).

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Migrant breeder (2)

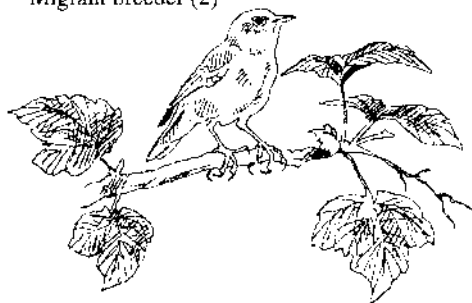
The earliest returning birds were two on 26th April at Bretton Lakes, where subsequently up to ten males were in song and up to six pairs probably breeding. These were followed in May by one at Elland G.P.s. on 1st, a pair at Royd Moor and a male at Dogley N.R. on 2nd and a male in song at Scout Dike, where later two pairs probably bred.

Breeding occurred at Elland G.P.s. with up to six males in song, Cowcliffe, Dewsbury S.F. where five pairs reared young, Shelley and Colne Road, with additional singing males present in another eight localities.

In autumn a remarkable count of 41 was made at Dewsbury S.F. on a single settling bed on 2nd August (JH). Migrants were at Ingbirchworth on 15th August (two), New Mill on 18th August and Broadstones on 12th September.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Migrant breeder (2)



One was reported from Bretton Park on the very early date of 8th April, but there were no more records from that site until 27th. By mid-May, up to 15 singing birds were present there. Singles occurred at Shelley and Elland G.P.s. on 1st May, numbers increasing to seven at the latter site by 10th, when three were singing in the Woodsome area, otherwise it was from mid-May onwards that the general arrival took place.

Breeding occurred at Stockmoor Common, Denby Dale, Dogley N.R. (two pairs), Scout Dike Res, Royd Moor Res (at least two pairs), Carr Wood and Cliff Wood (five breeding territories) and singing birds were reported from a further 12 localities, in many of which breeding probably took place.

Blackmoorfoot had only one record of a bird on 28th July, on 2nd August one was at Royd Moor and three at Scout Dike; no other post-breeding season reports were received.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Migrant breeder (2 - 3). Scarce winter visitor

In the early months birds were reported from gardens in Meltham on 14th (male) and Lockwood from 17th to 24th January (female).

The first singing bird was reported from Bretton Park on 31st March, followed by birds at Lockwood on 3rd April, at New Mill and Dalton on 8th and Horbury Wyke on 10th. The main arrival took place from about the last two weeks of April, reports being received from over 60 localities, mainly of singing males, but with breeding confirmed at only 13 sites.

At Blackmoorfoot, where a pair bred, a total of only a dozen birds was noted between July and the last on 19th September, and elsewhere there was little evidence of passage apart from singles at Ringstone Edge on 31st August, Dovestones on 19th and Dunford Bridge Cycle Track on 20th September.

At the end of the year singles were in Bretton Park on 14th November, a male at Skelmanthorpe on 21st November, a male at Lindley Moor on 22nd November and finally a female at New Mill on 23rd December.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Migrant breeder (1)

A slight increase in sightings compared with recent years, but still decidedly scarce and not proved to have bred.

A male singing in a Skelmanthorpe garden on 22nd April was not in suitable breeding habitat (JMD) and one sang at Blackmoorfoot only on 28th April (MLD). A singing male was seen and heard in a new location with suitable breeding habitat near Holme Styes on 4th May (SH), a male was in song at Cliff Wood, Langsett on 19th May (JED,SH) and one sang near Deanhead Church on 1st June (JB).

At Langsett Banks a pair were giving alarm calls on 10th August, which is an exceptionally late date if breeding (BBSG).

BBSG reports numbers of the species down 90% on 1997.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Migrant breeder (2 – 3)

The earliest arrivals, in March, were at Bretton Park on 19th, when there were as many as eight singing males, Gunthwaite on 20th and Blackmoorfoot on 21st, followed by one at Ingbirchworth and at least eight at Deffer Wood on 23rd. By the end of the month, mainly from 28th, birds had been recorded at a further eight sites.

Breeding season reports were received from many localities, mainly woodlands, throughout the area, but breeding proof was only obtained at Langsett Res, Denby Dale and Shepley.

There was considerable evidence of autumn passage, although Blackmoorfoot had no birds in July or August and a single male on only eight September dates. Two were at Ingbirchworth on 19th August, singles at Digley on 10th September and 6th October, Hinchliffe Mill on 16th September, Holmbridge on 18th September, at Winscar and Dunford Bridge Cycle Track (at least three) on 20th September, with one at the latter site also on 24th September, two at Elland G.P.s. on 23rd September and one in song at Hade Edge on 28th September. In October singles were at Scammonden on 3rd and 10th, at Shelley on 5th and at Royd Moor on 10th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Migrant breeder (3 – 4)

A very early bird was at Gunthwaite Dam on 29th March, with early April reports from Bretton Park on 3rd, Quarmby Clough on 4th, Scout Dike on 5th, Meltham on 6th, Blackmoorfoot and Elland on 7th and Dalton on 8th. Many more arrived from 12th onwards and the species was widely distributed in good numbers by the month end.

This is our commonest breeding warbler and was reported as abundant by several observers. BBSG has supplied the following information regarding males holding breeding territories :- Ingbirchworth 14, Scout Dike minimum 14, Little Don Valley 18, Cliff Wood seven; in addition Stocksnoor Common, Elland G.P.s., Scammonden and Lepton Great Wood all held in excess of 15 singing males.

There was little evidence of movement in autumn; Blackmoorfoot had only 3-4 daily in July and August, one on ten dates in September, with two on 4th, Dunford Bridge Cycle Track ten on 8th August, Bretton Wilderness Plantation c.10 on 16th August, Digley one on 9th September, Ingbirchworth a juvenile in song on 12th September and the last was delivering sub-song at Dovestones on 19th September.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Resident breeder (2 – 3). Common passage visitor

Birds were widespread, but in only very small numbers, in the early months, no count exceeding six until 12 were located in a loose flock at Scammonden on 28th March.

Probable breeding was reported from all the usual coniferous plantations as well as from mixed and deciduous woodlands at Lepton, Deffer, Shepley, Cliff Wood, Langsett, Denby Dale, New House Wood, Scout Dike, Winscar Res, Holme Styes, Crosland Heath and the Yateholme area. A pair bred in a garden at Kirkheaton (Mrs.Crowther).

More frequent in the later months, with 40+ in the Little Don Valley on 15th August and c.30 there on 13th November. An obvious influx to the Scammonden area from mid-October when 15 were present, with 45 on 31st. About 60 were counted on a circular walk around Langsett Res on 10th October, but no other counts reached double figures at any site.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

Rare visitor

One was reported at the eastern edge of Stony Cliffe Wood, Netherton on 15th April (BLNE), but no further details are available.

A female was at Langsett Banks on 15th November (MCW).

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Migrant breeder (1 – 2)

One was reported from Hey Green, Marsden on the remarkably early date of 25th April (GBS), with more normal arrivals noted in mid-May on 16th at Digley Bottom, on 17th at Langsett, in the Upper Little Don Valley two on 20th, followed by two at Shepley on 30th.

At least three pairs bred in the Little Don Valley, with single pairs at Helme, Langsett village, North America Wood and at Shepley, where four young were reared from a nest against the wall of a house (J.Cookson), and there were three pairs at Denby Dale. At Hinchliffe Mill on 8th July an adult was carrying food; on 16th August an adult and a juvenile were together in Bretton Park and an adult and two juveniles in Wilderness Plantation. A singing bird was at Kirkburton from 1st June onwards.

Evidence of dispersal in autumn came with records of singles at Deer Hill on 19th August, Royd Moor from 22nd to 25th August and near Horbury Wyke on 31st August. In September, singles were in Bretton Park on 3rd and 17th, three (two adults and a juvenile) at Scammonden on 3rd, with the last one each at Shelley and Dovestones on 19th.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Migrant breeder (1)

A male in Cliff Wood, Langsett on 12th April (MCW) equalled the earliest date recorded for the species in the Club area. By 25th April two males were in song and these had increased to six males by 2nd May. Four pairs bred, of which three fledged a total of 19 young, with one pair's brood of six dying during heavy rain on 1st/2nd June (BBSG).

A male was in Bretton Park on 27th April (BA) and one was in song at Magdale on 5th May (DM), but neither of these birds was seen or heard subsequently. Two males were singing in suitable habitat near Holme Styes, a new site, on 4th May (SH). A pair was at Denby Dale on 16th May and possibly two pairs bred in the area (TM), while two singing males were located in New House Wood (JMD).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Resident breeder (2)

Although widely reported in the early months, the largest party was of just ten birds at Woodsome Lees on 16th January, otherwise only single figures recorded.

Breeding was reported from 16 localities, mainly in the east of the area, with at least three pairs each at Scout Dike, Stockmoor YWT Reserve and Bretton Park and as many as eight nests were found in the area of Horbury Wyke. A common breeder in the Shepley and Denby Dale areas, Cliff Wood, Langsett and in the Storthes Hall woodlands, which both held a minimum of two breeding pairs.

The adverse weather in mid-April certainly affected the species and perhaps as a result few large flocks were seen in the post-breeding season. One observer, who participates in the BTO Nest Record Scheme and located 16 occupied nests, writes :- "The April snowfall in the afternoon of 14th April caught out three of the above nests. At the nests, all in brambles, the parents were found dead in the nests. I think they had gone to the nests to roost and had then become trapped by the heavy snow" (J.Hodson).

Only eight autumnal/winter flocks reached double figures, maxima being 21+ at Elland G.P.s. on 11th August and 20+ at Bretton Park on 11th November, otherwise no more than 12 reported. The species is becoming a frequent garden visitor in several areas.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

Resident breeder (1)

This species, which is in quite serious decline on a national level, was reported from 13 localities and breeding confirmed at two of these, Scout Dike, with at least two pairs and Royd Moor (at least one pair). Present in the breeding season and probably bred also at Bretton Park (two pairs at least), Horbury Wyke, where five birds were seen on 18th August, Lepton Great Wood, Deffer Wood, Wilderness Plantation, Bullcliffe Wood and Denby Dale.

Elsewhere birds were at Dogley N.R. on 23rd March, Blackmoorfoot on 10th July, Ing-birchworth on three dates in August/September and Shelley on 17th September.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Resident breeder (3)

A common and widespread species with breeding occurring in most woodlands, especially in conifers.

It is probably the most common species in the Storthes Hall woodlands, where at least 40, including a flock of 15+, were seen on 17th February. The only other count of any substance was 20 in Bretton Park on 22nd February.

A regular garden visitor in many areas, particularly during the winter months; at Hinch-liffe Mill birds of this species emptied a whole feeder of sunflower seeds in a single day.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Resident breeder (5)

A very common and widespread breeding species in suitable habitat throughout the area. 67 were counted at Bretton Park on 22nd February and a flock of at least 23 was at Dobb Dyke on 24th October.

A pair was feeding young in a bat-box at Fixby on 18th May (DS).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Resident breeder (4)

Like the last species, common and widespread throughout. At Bretton Park 29 were counted on 22nd February.

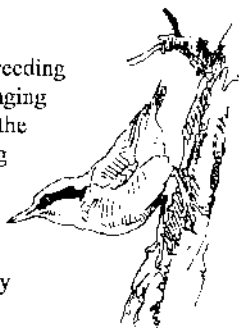
Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Resident breeder (2)

The extraordinary increase and expansion of this species continues. Breeding was attempted in at least 14 woodlands, in several of which up to four singing males were located. Apart from Bretton Park the strongholds are in the Woodsome/Almondbury, Holme Valley and Hall Dike Valley. Breeding was confirmed or highly probable for about 30 pairs.

In addition, birds were present in a further 14 sites in March, April and May, including some areas where breeding had taken place in previous years, so a total breeding population of the order of 50 pairs may not be too high an estimate.

Birds were reported as visiting gardens in Wooldale, Almondbury (two sites), Meltham and Farnley Tyas.



Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Resident breeder (2 – 3)

This species was reported considerably less frequently than Nuthatch, but I am sure that this is not a true reflection of the two species' comparative status in the area. The majority of records were also in the winter months and included birds in gardens at Lockwood, New Mill, Hinchliffe Mill, Meltham and Shelley. Eight were seen in Bretton Park on 22nd February.

Breeding was reported from Elland G.P.s., Lepton Great Wood, Penny Spring Wood, Cliff Wood (two pairs), Little Don Valley (at least three pairs), Denby Dale (about five pairs), Shepley (about five pairs) and Bretton Park, where a nest was located in a crack in the bare rock of a quarry face and from which young were reared successfully.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Rare visitor

One on wires opposite Lane End Farm, Flockton on 18th April (NWA) could not be found subsequently and was the first since 1990.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Rare visitor

An adult male was in an area of gorse and hawthorn scrub at Gilbert Hill, Langsett on 29th May (BBSG,BA,JMD et al).

This is only the third record this century, previous ones being in June 1954 and June 1983.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Resident breeder (2)

More records of this species were received than in some recent years; it is common and widespread throughout the woodlands, but most conspicuous in autumn when it is collecting acorns for winter storage. Maximum numbers reported were 12 at Dewsbury S.F. on 4th April, up to nine at Holmbridge in September/October and six in a single tree in a Hinchliffe Mill garden on 3rd October.

Pairs, probably or confirmed breeding, were reported from Deffer Wood, Carr Wood, Penny Spring Wood (up to four), Storches Hall Woods, Lepton Great Wood (up to four), Mollicar Wood, Lower Stones Wood (up to four), Digley, Dalton, Horbury Wyke, Blackmoorfoot, Bretton Park, Holme Styes, Denby Dale (about five), Shepley (about five) and New House Wood (two).

Magpie *Pica pica*

Resident breeder (4)

Widespread and abundant throughout, although BBSG reports a decline of perhaps 30% on 1997 numbers in the Little Don Valley.

55 were observed going to roost at Big Valley on 21st January and 70 roosted at Dewsbury S.F. on 18th February.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Resident breeder (4)

Few reports received, but a common breeder in much of the area.

Flight lines of birds going to roost reported from Shelley (c.500) and Dalton (hundreds) with other corvids and returning from roosting sites over Shepley (regularly up to 300).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Resident breeder (5)

No counts of significantly large flocks were received.

Nest counts were made at Crosland Moor – 13, New Mill – four, down from nine in 1997 and Lower Stones Wood c.50.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Resident breeder (3 – 4)

Scavenging parties of 23 at Nont Sarah's and c.20 at Scammonden on 5th May were quite unusual as to date.

Birds with much white in the wings were again present in the Penny Spring area.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Resident breeder (1)

Recorded much more frequently than in previous years in the west and south of the area, with sightings in all months except July and August. Breeding occurred at at least one site, where a pair was observed in tumbling display flight on 7th March and small young were being fed in the nest on 8th April (TD,DMP,SP,KW).

Birds were seen regularly in the Winscar/Snailsden/Harden area and Little Don Valley, in the West Nab/Deer Hill area on several dates in January and February and once in October and December, in the Yatcholme area in February, March and May, on one occasion being mobbed by a Peregrine.

Three together were at Digley on 4th March, with one or two on several other dates (TM,DHP,HQ), two flew over Greenfield Road, Holmfirth on 9th March and at the same site engaged in an aerial battle with Carrion Crows on 1st September (DHP), three were watched for half-an-hour at Wessenden Head Res on 5th February and were seen again on 13th April (DMP). Two were at Dovestones on 6th June (SH) and in Longdendale on 19th June (HQ) and one was with Rooks at Gilbert Hill, Langsett on 7th November (BBSG).

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Resident breeder (5). Numerous winter visitor

Very few records received of this common breeder and winter visitor, the only flocks reported being c.150 at Broadstones and c.300 at Ingbirchworth both associating with Fieldfares on 13th February, with at Dewsbury S.F. 350 on 27th September, 508 on 1st and 209 on 8th November.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Resident breeder (5)

Several observers report the species as declining; still common, but in smaller numbers at Denby Dale and Shepley; in the Holme Valley yet again none breeding above Holmfirth and at Hade Edge none seen in the first half of the year.

The largest concentrations reported were 30 in a Lockwood garden on 4th January, with 12 there on 2nd December, up to 20 in the Penny Spring Wood and 20-30 in the Lumb Lane areas of Almondbury.

At least four pairs bred in Langsett village.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Resident breeder (1)

Once again there was a disturbing lack of breeding evidence for this once common, but now apparently threatened, species. In the Denby Dale area up to 30 were present from 30th January to 24th February and a pair was nest-building on 27th April, but the outcome was unknown (FM).

The other "stronghold" of the species appears to be in the Lumb Lane district of Almondbury, where up to 25 birds were reported as being present in early spring (SG). In late November/December up to 15 birds were in the Penny Spring area – could these be the same as the Lumb Lane birds, or indicate successful breeding nearby? At a former breeding site, Royd House Farm, a single bird was seen on 3rd April (DSI).

A pair was displaying near Ingbirchworth Res on 27th April, but not seen thereafter (JMD,SH) and pairs were also present but without positive breeding evidence at Farnley Tyas, Emley, Shepley (DBar,SG), with a singing male at Scout Dike Res on 3rd and 14th May (BBSG). At Dewsbury S.F. very few were recorded, possibly owing to the construction works being carried out on site, but eight were present on 12th April, with five on 19th April and 17th May (JH).

Outside the breeding season, two were in a New Mill garden on 10th January (CDA).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Resident breeder (4 – 5)

The largest flock in the early months was c.150 feeding with Bramblings at Digley on 5th February, with smaller numbers elsewhere – 50 at Bretton on 7th January and c.40 in a mixed flock with Yellowhammers at Broadstones on 7th March.

Breeding season reports confirm it as very common throughout the area with, for example 13 territories on a Shepley CBC plot.

In autumn, movement was noted at Scammonden, where 60+ flew southwest on 31st October, on which date a flock of 50 was present at Royd Moor. The only other reports of winter flocks came from Denby Dale and Shepley, with 50+ birds occurring at both sites, and Shelley, where there was a garden flock of 30+ at the year end.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Uncommon to common winter visitor

Many were in the area following the 1997 autumnal influx. The largest flock was at Digley, where c.150 on 5th February increased to c.200 on 14th March, with 20+ still remaining on 18th April. About 100 were in Bretton Park on 15th January, reducing to 70+ on 12th February, 38 on 1st March and 11 on 5th April and up to 100 were at Camborne Drive, Fixby on 7th February. Other sites where double figures were counted were Denby Dale with 20 on 31st January to 3rd February and 20th March, with five still present on 20th April, Ingbirchworth with a January maximum of 22, c.10 on 3rd February and a singing male remaining on 19th April, Blackmoorfoot Res which had 15-20 on 8th February and single figures (max. seven) on a further 13 dates from 1st January to 20th April, Salt

Pie Farm, Birdsedge which had birds regularly in February and March and then 22 on 17th and 21st April, with 17 on 22nd and two on 24th April, Meltham up to 23 birds feeding in a garden in early March, Golcar with ten on 5th April and Elland G.Ps. where there was a flock of 37 on 20th April.

Single figures were reported from a further 14 sites, mainly in late March and April and included birds in gardens at Lockwood, Shelley, Lindley Moor, New Mill, Wooldale and Meltham. The last records of the spring came on 26th April from Hinchliffe Mill, where four birds were feeding on treetop buds, and on 27th April from New House Wood.

In contrast, birds were very scarce in the autumn and late winter period. The first were two flying southwest over Scammonden on 11th October, with a further small number on 2nd November, followed by one west over Digley on 15th and at Blackmoorfoot two on 18th and one on 20th October. In November up to seven were at Fixby early to mid-month, on 7th calling birds flew over Gunthwaite Dam (one) and Digley (about three), two were at Dewsbury S.F. on 8th, a male was in a Lindley Moor garden on 11th and about ten in Bretton Park on 13th. About 20 at Cubley on 25th was the only December record.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Resident breeder (4)

Few reports of winter flocks were received, particularly for the early months, maxima being 95 at Dewsbury S.F. on 26th September, c.30 in Spicer House Lane on 26th October, c.100 in setaside at Broadstones on 31st October, up to 30 birds in a Shelley garden to the year end and at least 110 going to roost in the late afternoon at Cannon Hall on 30th December.

At Shelley, several pairs reared two or three broods each and at Denby Dale young were still being fed by adults on 8th September.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Resident breeder (2 – 3)

Flock sizes were considerably reduced in comparison with those for most recent years, maxima being 18 in a Lockwood garden on various dates from 3rd January to 18th April, 12 briefly in a Lindley Moor garden on 23rd January, 32 on 27th July, 13 on 15th and 14 on 20th August at Blackmoorfoot, c.15 at Birds Edge Lane on 30th August, c.50 at Lindley Moor on 16th September, 30+ at Crosland Road, Oakes on 2nd October, c.40 at Langsett Res on 12th October, ten south of Pule Hill, Marsden on 15th October and 12 at Bretton Park on 16th December, a very low count for the last site. Smaller numbers were recorded at many sites.

Surprisingly no evidence of breeding beyond possible was received, apart from in the Shepley and Denby Dale areas.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Resident breeder (1). Uncommon winter visitor

Numbers in the early months were quite low, although birds were seen in about 20 localities. January records included at Elland G.P.s. 25 on 1st and 14 on 15th, 50+ at Broad Carr Wood on 10th, when c.30 were also at Dovestones and 20 at Storther Hall Woods, c.25 at Bretton Park on 11th and 35+ at Royd House Farm on 24th. Elsewhere, mainly singles were reported, quite frequently at garden feeders, with six at Blackmoorfoot on 21st February. Song was noted at Storther Hall Woods on 23rd February, at Denby Dale on 25th February and in a Shelley garden on 10th April. An adult male was found dead under a roost tree in a Dalton garden after a night of severe frost on 25th January.

Breeding occurred in the Upper Little Don Valley (at least three pairs) and at Langsett Banks (minimum two pairs) and probably in the Storther Hall and Yateholme areas at least.

There were fewer reports in autumn. In September five were at Blackmoorfoot on 13th, birds were heard at Dunford Bridge on 20th and about five at Brownhill Res on 29th. October records came from Dewsbury S.F. with eight on 4th, Dunford Bridge flyovers on 10th, Blackmoorfoot one on 20th and Scammonden, where 26 flew southwest on 31st. Sites reporting birds in November were Langsett Res c.20 on 1st, Scammonden c.15 on 4th, Gunthwaite Dam one on 7th and Bretton Park 27 on 17th. The only December record was of six birds at Dewsbury S.F. on 6th.

Interestingly, there were no reports from gardens in the autumn/winter period.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Resident breeder (3). Partial migrant

This species does not normally arrive in the area until March, so any earlier records are therefore distinctly unusual. This year there were several such records, namely three at Bunny Wood, Golcar on 11th and c.50 feeding on stubble at Royd Moor Hill on 31st January, when five were also at Elland G.P.s., with seven at Black Moor on 25th February.

More normal returning birds were at Shelley on 26th March, building up to 20 by mid-April, with about six pairs remaining to breed, and four at Holme Chapel on 30th March.

In the breeding season reports were received from Broadstones, Hade Edge, Castle Hill, where there were at least three pairs and about 40 birds counted on 31st August, Thurstonland, Langsett, Woodsome Lees, Lepton Great Wood, Dogley N.R., New Mill, Digley, Denby Dale (20+ on 30th April), Lower Stones Wood and New House Wood.

In the latter half of the year a flock of 140 arrived at Dewsbury S.F. in the first week of September and increased to a maximum of 210 on 27th September, at least ten at Dunford Bridge on 24th October, c.30 were in setaside near Broadstones on 31st October, one at Ringstone Edge on 15th November and about ten at Cubley on 25th December.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Resident and partial migrant breeder (2 – 3)

The earliest returning birds were in March at Deer Hill on 13th, when there was a flock of 15, and at Blackmoorfoot, which had one on 19th, seven on 20th, three on 21st, one on 22nd, nine on 24th and 11 on 30th, followed by two on two dates in April and May.

Elsewhere in May, birds were reported from Digley about ten on 2nd, Buckstones three on 3rd, Nont Sarah's a pair on 5th, Tunnel End Res two on 7th, Wessenden at least four on 8th. Deer Hill four and Deer Hill Moss two both on 15th.

In June two were near Winscar on 4th and 20th and two pairs at Buckstones on 6th, but no positive breeding evidence was reported from any locality.

There were few autumn records – 15 at Scammonden on 18th August (JB), a flock of 32 near Boshaw Whams on 2nd October (DHP), one flying west over the Little Don Valley on 27th November (BBSG), c.20 at Blackmoorfoot on 29th November (MLD) and c.40 at Cubley from 12th December to the year end (BP,BBSG).

Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Resident breeder (2). Uncommon winter visitor

During the early part of the year one was over Dovestones on 10th January, nine at Longwood Edge on 18th January, c.25 near Digley on 9th February, about ten in the Little Don Valley on 10th February and at Storthes Hall Woods one on 17th and at least three on 20th February.

There were few breeding season records, but two pairs bred in the Little Don Valley and breeding probably took place at Bretton, otherwise only low single figures were reported on one or two dates, apart from a high count of 40 at Stockmoor Common on 18th April.

Only low numbers were reported in the autumn/late winter period from a dozen sites, with maxima of seven southwest at Scammonden on 31st October, ten in the Little Don Valley on 7th November, seven at Bradley Park G.C. on 19th November, 16 at Dewsbury S.F. on 22nd and 29th November and in December 17 on 12th and nine on 20th at Elland G.P.s., otherwise only single figures from six sites.

Birds of the nominate race *C.f.flammea* ("Mealy" Redpoll) were reported at Gunthwaite Dam on 7th November (four) and Elland G.P.s. on 20th December (two).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Irregular breeder (1). Uncommon passage visitor

A very good year for the species, with breeding proved in two localities.

At Scammonden the first reported were 10+ on 27th January, with maxima in February of 46 on 19th, 11 on 30th March and six on 20th April including singing birds, although no breeding evidence was obtained (JB,JED).

In the Yatcholme area a total of c.50 birds was present in three separate flocks on 3rd February (BA) and on subsequent dates up to 30 birds were seen, culminating in the breeding by at least one pair which raised two young (SK,DMP,SP,KW).

Birds also occurred in the Little Don Valley, where three males held territories, two pairs probably bred and on 30th May c.25 birds, including juveniles, were feeding in addition to c.30 flying high over the valley (BBSG).

Elsewhere, about five birds were present in Storthes Hall Woods on 17th February (BA), a singing male was at Winscar Res on 18th April (BBSG) and up to 27 in the woodlands around Langsett Res in mid-May (BBSG,BA,JED,SH).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Resident breeder (2)

The only flocks reported were seven at Bretton Park on 25th January, c.10 at the Dunford Bridge Cycle Track on 10th October, with six there on 22nd November, ten at Scammonden on 14th November and a maximum of eight at Denby Dale during the late winter period. Outside the breeding season up to four birds, but normally pairs or singles, were reported from a further 12 sites.

Breeding occurred at Denby Dale (at least two pairs), Wilderness Plantation and near Digley, with probable breeding reported from Bretton Park, Lepton Great Wood, Dogley N.R. (two pairs), Penny Spring Wood, Shelley and Golcar and birds present in 19 other locations.

A partially leucistic bird which was present on the Dunford Bridge Cycle Track on 22nd November exhibited some very unusual plumage features. It had a black mask extending behind the eye, a white crown, nape and tertials, pale grey wing coverts and mantle, with some feathers showing white fringes and two greyish/white wingbars. The underparts were pale but not as white as the crown, with a distinct fawn wash to the breast sides. It was presumed to be a male (JMD,SH). The same bird was also seen on 22nd December (GCSnr).

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Scarce to uncommon visitor.

One lucky observer had the good fortune to find one at Bretton Park on 1st January (HQ), the only record for the year!

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Rare visitor

One was seen briefly at Ringstone Edge on 20th November (AC). The eighth record for the area and the first since 1988.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare winter visitor

A female or immature was feeding on roadside grit near Cook's Study on 16th November (MC) and a female was at Bow Grains, Deer Hill Moss on 29th December (TD).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Resident breeder (3)

In the early part of the year 22 were at Shepley on 1st January, a flock of 31 at Royd Moor on 13th February and a flock near Broadstones Res reached a maximum of c.60 on 7th March.

A minimum of 12 pairs bred in the Scout Dike/Royd Moor area and nine territories were located on a Shepley CBC plot, a big reduction on the previous year's total of 14. Other sites from which breeding was reported as probably occurring were Carr Wood, Mollicar Wood/Lumb Lane/Royd House Wood (up to five males), Lepton Great Wood, Bimley Moor, Penny Spring area and Farnley Tyas, with additional breeding season reports from Castle Hill, Bretton, New House Wood, New Mill, Denby Delf and Whitley Common.

In the latter part of the year 50+ were at Shepley on 13th September, c.25 at a roost in Lower Stones Wood in November/December, 60+ at Denby Dale on 9th and ten at Elland G.P.s. on 12th December.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Resident breeder (2)

The stronghold of this species in our area seems to be the Ingbirchworth group of reservoirs, where a minimum of 12 pairs bred, eight at Scout Dike, two each at Ingbirchworth and Royd Moor and one pair probably at Broadstones, where up to three males were present in June and five birds in August.

Elsewhere, singing males were located in the Scammonden area (four), Wessenden Res (one), Deer Hill Moss, Buckstones (up to three males and two females) and Horbury Wyke, with further sightings at Gunthwaite Dam, near Bilberry Res, Blackmoorfoot, Elland G.P.s. and Upper Windleden Res.

Outside the breeding season singles were at Denby Dale on 13th and 24th January, 19 roosted at Elland G.P.s. on both 28th February and 12th December, one at Brownhill Res on 6th September and 31st October, a male at Digley Res on 18th September, about five on the Dunford Bridge Cycle Track on 20th September, two at Greenley Carr on 4th October and at Blackmoorfoot singles on 20th September, three dates in October and finally on 29th November.

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Barnsley Bird Study Group
In Focus at Denby Dale
RSPB Office, Denby Dale
Shepley Bird and Wildlife Group

RINGING REPORT

As with last year, the weather conditions coupled with a month long ringing expedition to The Gambia, made any ringing attempts during the first winter period impracticable.

The water level at Blackmoorfoot was falling at a steady rate during May, raising hopes of a prolonged mist-netting period. June however, was one of the wettest on record and for

most of the month the reservoir was full. Hopes of any mist-netting during the main autumn passagewere dashed as the netting area was under three feet of water for most of the period and therefore out of commission. On the two occasions when it was possible to mist-net, only 13 new birds were handled.

The atrocious weather conditions during the breeding season, especially in early June, caused the demise of a number of nestlings which were being monitored, not only for ringing purposes, but also for the BTO's Nest Record Scheme. 43 nestlings/chicks were ringed, however, consisting of the following:- Merlin (7 at two different moorland localities), Stock Dove (2 Blackmoorfoot), Dipper (9 Hill Top), Blackbird (7 Blackmoorfoot), Song Thrush (4 Blackmoorfoot), Jay (4 Blackmoorfoot), Chaffinch (4 Blackmoorfoot) and Reed Bunting (4 Deer Hill Moss).

The generally inclement weather conditions during the second winter period were not conducive to the catching of birds and consequently no birds were handled at this time.

During the course of the year only 58 birds were ringed. No recoveries were received from the British Trust for Ornithology, nor were any controls handled.

Owing to the limited ringing, very few retraps were handled and the only bird which exceeded a 12-month period between ringing and retrap was a two-year-old Blue Tit.

No recoveries of more than twelve months duration were notified during the year.

RING TOTALS LIST – 1998

Merlin	7
Stock Dove	2
Collared Dove	2
Dipper	9
Robin	4
Blackbird	7
Song Thrush	4
Blackcap	2
Willow Warbler	3
Blue Tit	4
Great Tit	2
Jay	4
Chaffinch	4
Reed Bunting	4
GRAND TOTAL	58

FIELD TRIPS REPORT 1998

Grantley Hall and Gouthwaite Reservoir 25th January

At Grantley Hall the woods gave us species including Great Spotted Woodpecker, Long-tailed, Marsh, Blue and Great Tit, Nuthatch and Treecreeper.

Species seen at Gouthwaite included Little Grebe, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Pink-footed Goose, Canada Goose, Goldeneye, Sparrowhawk, Common Buzzard (but no sign of the Rough-legged Buzzard which had been present the previous day), Grey Partridge, Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker and Dipper, as well as two Little Owls, one of which was in the same tree as one seen two years ago.

Tregaron 15th February

Today we took on the long trip to Mid-Wales; as usual it was worth it on a warm, clear, sunny day with superb scenery and 50 species recorded.

As we neared Tregaron Bog, a number of Red Kites were seen in a roadside field; the coach stopped and we enjoyed close-up views of this elegant raptor. Common Buzzards were also seen en route and we saw many more during the day. As we walked along the old railway track, more Red Kites were present as well as a ringtail Hen Harrier and Kestrel.

Other species seen were Grey Heron, Mute Swan, Goosander, Grey Partridge, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Stonechat, Fieldfare, various titmice, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Bullfinch and Reed Bunting whilst Ravens flew overhead. In mid-afternoon we set off for a new Red Kite feeding station, the one we visited a couple of years ago no longer being operative. On arrival at the tip, at which carcasses had been placed, we saw up to 15 Red Kites in close proximity, providing a great ending to a superb day.

Flamborough Head and Filey Brigg 22nd March

A mild and calm day on the east coast produced 49 species.

At Flamborough we saw plenty of Gannets, Kittiwakes and Puffins as well as Cormorant, Shag, Kestrel, Oystercatcher, Black-headed, Lesser Black-backed, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls and Razorbill. Sightings at Filey included Red-throated Diver, Great Crested Grebe, Wigeon, Gadwall, Teal, Common Eider, Sparrowhawk, Ringed Plover, Purple Sandpiper, Long-tailed and Marsh Tits, Bullfinch and Yellowhammer. The only early migrant was a Wheatear.

Woodwell and Leighton Moss RSPB 19th April

As usual this very popular reserve did not disappoint with a group total of 86 species. Most of the party left the coach before the main reserve was reached for a look at the sea-hides, where Grey Heron, Greylag and Canada Geese, Shelduck and various duck species including Red-breasted Merganser were seen, whilst waders included Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Curlew and Redshank. Some of the group then walked up to Woodwell, where a soaring Common Buzzard and Green Woodpecker were seen, but only those members who stayed a little longer saw the single Hawfinch high atop a tree.

The main reserve was excellent even though we had some light rain in the afternoon. Species recorded were Marsh Harrier, Sparrowhawk, Mediterranean Gull, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Goldcrest, Bearded Tit, various titmice, Treecreeper, Jay, Linnet and Bullfinch; the elusive Bittern was heard many times booming, but not seen.

Molly Carr Woods, Digley and Fairburn Ings RSPB 24th May

A largely local day as only four participants were present. Our first venue, Molly Carr Woods near Castle Hill, enabled us to watch the nest of a pair of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers discovered here previously; we had excellent views of both parents as they went about bringing food to the nest. A short walk into the next patch of woodland saw us repeating the exercise at the nest of a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers; Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Nuthatch and Treecreeper were also present here.

At Digley, above Holmfirth, we walked a circular route from the car park, past the dam and on to the tops, an enjoyable two-and-a-half hour trip as the weather was kind to us and we saw some noteworthy birds including several Red Grouse, Curlew, Wheatear, a flyover Ring Ousel and had distant views of a Peregrine. We also heard both Cuckoo and Raven.

The expected species were recorded at Fairburn, the highlight being a pair of Garganey.

Wharfedale Crags 2nd July

A small group of us attended the annual Nightjar trip to this site north of Sheffield. A very blustery wind meant that we only had very brief views of one bird. In addition we saw Woodcock and spoke to the warden who told us the Nightjar last chanced about 28th June, the best time being mid to late June. Sightings should be reported to the warden Dave Buttle, 3 Brook Lane, Oughtibridge, Sheffield S35 0FQ.

Flamborough Head, Filey Brigg, Bempton Cliffs and Fairburn Ings 6th September

A party of six members in two cars set off for the east coast following reports of migrants and rarities. We first walked along the Old Fall Hedge at Flamborough looking for a Bluethroat which had been seen the day before, but we found only a few Redstarts. At Bempton another Bluethroat was reported, but again we saw only Pied Flycatcher. It seemed strange to see no Guillemots or Razorbills on the cliffs, which held only Gannets.

At Filey Country Park we did manage to see a couple of rarer birds – a Wryneck on the cliff as we looked down into the wind, with near the church an immature Red-backed Shrike which gave excellent views.

We finished off the day at Fairburn, where we saw 2 Garganey and a good selection of duck species from the Lin Dyke Hide; a good day with 59 species seen.

Spurn Peninsula 11th October

A few days of westerly winds meant that most of the rarities which had been here last week had departed, however the group total of 79 species was excellent and included several interesting birds. We first called in at Easington Cemetery to look for reported Red-backed and Great Grey Shrikes; whilst we saw neither it was worthwhile as a hedgerow was alive with Redwing, Brambling, Linnet and Yellowhammers. The walk down Beacon Lane produced a group of Shorelarks, which were in the furrows of a stubble field and rather difficult as we were looking into a strong wind.

Later near the churchyard we located a Great Grey Shrike on telegraph wires and enjoyed excellent views of it. As we walked down the Canal we were able to appreciate the beautifully marked Jack Snipe which was found skulking in the ditch.

Right at the end of the day a stunning Firecrest was seen in the churchyard and we enjoyed this rather mobile individual to round off the trip on a high note.

Filey Brigg and Flamborough Head 8th November

A cold but calm day on the east coast produced 66 species.

We first called at the Church Ravine in Filey to look for Firecrest and soon located it and enjoyed good, if brief, views. The beach and brigg held Common Eider, Red-breasted Merganser, Knot, Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Redshank and Turnstone and a late Common Tern was resting on the tip of the brigg.

The next call was at Primrose Valley Holiday Park, where we 'scoped four Great Northern Divers, one of which was in summer plumage, quite close inshore.

Lastly, at Flamborough, we visited both North and South Landings and saw a raft of over 100 Common Scoter with a few Velvet Scoter mixed in with them, Sparrowhawk, a covey of Grey Partridge, Blackcap and Yellowhammer.

Woodwell and Leighton Moss RSPB 13th December

As this reserve can be good for birds all year round, we decided on a winter visit. A group total of 63 species was rewarding and included some interesting species and one real rarity. At the sea hides were male and female Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit and a hunting Sparrowhawk which scattered the various ducks as it chased a passerine. Shortly the Long-billed Dowitcher was located and enjoyed by the members of our group.

Those who went to Woodwell were rewarded with Hawfinch and the main reserve was productive with Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, Water Rail, Kingfisher, Bearded Tit, Marsh Tit, Coal Tit, Redpoll and Bullfinch as well as plenty of Bittern sightings.

This was a great trip to round off the year.

Many thanks to all participants during this time.

David Woodhouse, May 1999.

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