
**BLACKMOORFOOT
RESERVOIR
1959-1973**

Compiled by P. Bray

**HUDDERSFIELD
BIRDPWATCHERS'
CLUB**

PRICE 25p

BLACKMOORFOOT RESERVOIR

1959 - 1973

The purpose of this account is to give a brief summary of the occurrence of all species of birds at Blackmoorfoot Reservoir during the fifteen years from 1959 to 1973. It is based primarily on the information contained in the log-books from the reservoir which were kept firstly by the Huddersfield Naturalists' Photographic and Antiquarian Society and secondly by the Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club. The surviving copies of these log-books cover the years from 1959 to mid 1966 and from 1971 onwards. This information has been supplemented by reports extracted from the record cards of the Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club and in a few cases from the Ornithological Reports of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union.

Being situated only four miles from the centre of Huddersfield, the reservoir must have attracted its share of attention from local birdwatchers ever since its construction which took place between 1871 and 1876. There were no doubt several interesting species observed in the early years of the reservoir's existence but few records have survived to the present day. Only three species which are missing from the following list are known to have occurred before 1959 and these are from relatively recent times, namely Grey Lag Goose in 1951 and 1958, Long-tailed Duck in 1956 and Slavonian Grebe in 1958. The number of species observed between 1959 and 1973 was 154.

The original intention in writing this report was to determine how many species had undergone changes in status during the fifteen year period. It soon became evident that a high proportion of the birds showed such changes, nearly all of them consisting of increases, either in numbers or in frequency of occurrence. However, the coverage of the reservoir by birdwatchers was far from consistent over the fifteen years, as can be seen from the fact that visits by observers were recorded on about 110 days in 1959 and on 325 days in 1973. It was difficult to estimate the degree to which this growth in coverage might have been responsible for the apparent changes amongst the various species.

A few of the increases were possibly caused by real changes which took place in the numbers of birds occurring in the area, corresponding to expansions in the populations over the country as a whole. Several species are known to have undergone such expansions, one of the many causative factors being the succession of mild winters from 1969-70 onwards. On the other hand, some of the increases were probably caused by more localised influences, for example the variation of water level in the reservoir which has obvious consequences on the numbers of waders and other shore birds to be seen. Whether it be due to fluctuations in rainfall or to changes in demands on the water resources, there was a tendency for the autumn level to be lower in the last few years of the period than at other times, although it was exceptionally low in 1959.

Because it was impossible to separate the various factors affecting the birds' apparent status, the original objective of the survey could not be fulfilled. Instead, the report was written with the restricted aim of summarising the available information and few attempts were made to interpret the results.

Within the report the use of observers' initials has been confined mostly to those species which were recorded six times or less during the period under review. For reference, the observers' names are as follows:

S. N. Anscombe	T. Duckworth	N. Leece
P. G. R. Barbier	A. S. Gunby	K. A. Norcliffe
T. D. Bisiker	D. Hall	M. J. Palmer
P. Bray	W. R. Hirst	D. M. Pogson
D. Butterfield	V. D. Hollis (Mrs.)	S. Pogson
T. Cantwell	J. G. Ireland	D. W. Sill III
R. Crossley	D. Mallinson (D Mal)	E. C. J. Swabey
J. E. Dale	D. Manchester (D Man)	D. Sykes
J. M. Dale	D. Maude (D Mau)	L. Taylor
M. L. Denton	J. Murphy	O. S. White
C. Disbrey	J. M. Leece	

DIVER sp.

1 on 22nd November, 1959 was watched on the water by three observers but it left after a short time.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER

1 in full summer plumage on 2nd July, 1962 (CD, D Mal)

RED THROATED DIVER

1 on 12th February, 1961 (OSW). First record for the reservoir.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE

Annual visitor, principally in spring between mid March and early May and in autumn between July and November, also seen at other times between mid February and mid December, only rarely in mid winter. Usually seen in ones or twos with a maximum of 6 on 27th November, 1972. The number of bird-days per annum averaged 11 in the years from 1959 to 1966 and 17 in the years from 1967 to 1973.

RED-NECKED GREBE

1 in winter plumage stayed from 21st to 29th November, 1959 (OSW et al). First record for Blackmoorfoot.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE

2 were present on 10th and 11th September, 1959, one of which stayed until 22nd September (ECJS et al). 1 in full breeding plumage was seen on 26th April, 1967 (MLD et al).

LITTLE GREBE

Mainly an autumn visitor in October and early November, recorded less frequently at other times of the year excluding January. Appearances were sporadic and the species was absent in some years. Usually seen in ones or twos but the maximum was 11 on 9th November, 1967. The number of bird-days averaged 6 per annum.

CORMORANT

Up to 4 birds were seen on a total of ten dates in spring and autumn during the months March to May and September/October. The only winter record was of 1 on 27th December, 1960.

GREY HERON

Apart from 1 on 24th November, 1962 and 1 on 15th March, 1971, all sightings were in autumn between 8th July and 17th October, often involving birds flying overhead. The increase in the number of bird-days per year from 5 or less between 1959 and 1970 to 12 or more between 1971 and 1973 corresponded with the increase in the Huddersfield area as a whole.

MALLARD

Present throughout the year with one or two pairs breeding in most years. Excluding juveniles, numbers seldom exceeded 10 between mid April and August and were highest between October and March, the average winter maximum being 46. These winter numbers showed a progressive increase from 22 in 1960-61 to 100 or more in 1969-70, decreasing again to 30 in 1972-73. The overall maximum was 146 on 19th September, 1966, an exceptional number for autumn.

TEAL

Annual visitor in variable numbers occurring mainly between mid August and November, less frequently between December and April with occasional records in other months. Birds were seen with unusual regularity through the winter of 1971-72, continuing after the autumn peak from December to April in numbers up to 19. The maxima were 27 on 18th August, 1959, 30 on 9th November, 1967 and 29 on 19th August, 1973.

GARGANEY

1 on 22nd and 23rd September, 1966 (MLD). First record for the reservoir.

GADWALL

1 on 31st October, 1964 (PGRB); 6 on 19th, 4 on 20th and 4 on 25th September, 1966 (ECJS, MJP, SNA); 3 on 30th September, 1967 (NL); 1 on 10th April, 1968 (MLD) and 2 on 23rd April, 1970 (NL, JML). None had been seen before 1964.

WIGEON

Very variable in numbers and scarce in some years. Occurred mainly between late August and November less frequently between December and early May, once in early June and once in mid August. There was an exceptional flock of 60 on 8th October, 1963, the highest figures otherwise being 36 on 10th September, 1969 and 26 on 4th December, 1973.

PINTAIL

A scarce visitor from 1959 to 1968, recorded on one or two dates in only five of the ten years during the months October to December, February and April with a maximum of 6 on 9th November, 1967. There was a marked increase during the last five years with a tendency towards earlier arrival, ten of the twenty-three dates in these years being in August and September, the remainder between October and March. 3 on 18th August, 1971 were the earliest and 17 on 27th August, 1973 represented the largest flock.

SHOVELER

Annual visitor in small numbers averaging 9 bird-days per year. Most records were in August and early September, others between mid September and December, also between February and mid April, while there was an unexpected number of appearances in June. The maxima were 9 on 13th November, 1960, 12 on 11th December, 1960 and 9 on 6th June, 1966.

SCAUP

Appearances in the early years were few, consisting of single birds in 1959, 1961 and 1966. Recorded in each year from 1968 to 1973 when birds occasionally stayed for several days giving an average of 11 bird-days per annum over these six years. Except for 1 from 26th June to 3rd July, 1968, all appearances were between August and early March, mostly between late September and early November. The maximum was 11 on 20th October, 1972.

TUFTED DUCK

Regular visitor in autumn from late June or July to November, less frequent thereafter until April sometimes May. Numbers were highest in 1969 and 1970, reaching 53 on 15th November, 1969 and 38 on 20th September, 1970. The maxima had averaged only 8 in the preceding years from 1959 to 1968 and were between 14 and 17 in the succeeding years from 1971 to 1973.

POCHARD

Variable in numbers. Occurred sporadically in July and August, most frequently between September and November, irregularly again between December and early April, with one record in May. The maxima were 22 on 21st November, 1959, 30 on 2nd November, 1969 and 20 in late January/early February, 1973.

GOLDENEYE

Regular winter visitor, usually from October to April, the earliest being on 11th September, 1960 and the latest on 12th May, 1970, while single birds were seen in July in each of the years from 1968 to 1970 and one summered from late June to late August in 1973. Numbers were generally highest in November/December and March/early April, particularly the latter period with a maximum of 22 on 26th March, 1972.

VELVET SCOTER

Singles were present on 14th March, 1960 (CD), 24th November, 1962 (VDH) and 29th October, 1969 (NL, KAN). These were the first records for the reservoir.

COMMON SCOTER

Appeared in every year except 1968 and 1969. The majority of records were between July and mid August when most of the birds were drakes. Recorded less frequently between mid August and mid December, once in February, occasionally in April and May and once in late June. Usually seen in small numbers with maxima of 11 on 18th August, 1961 and 19 on 28th July, 1966 but there was an exceptional flock of 90 on 11th August, 1965. Excluding this flock, the average number of bird-days was 9 per annum.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

1 on 23rd December, 1960 (D Mal), 1 on 13th November, 1965 (PGRB), 2 on 25th October, 1969 (DWS) and 1 on 30th July, 1972 (DH, SP).

GOOSANDER

Scarce winter visitor, recorded on thirteen dates between 8th November and 9th February with a maximum of 10 on 2nd January, 1969. Also seen once in late March. One record was in 1963 and one in 1965, the remainder between 1969 and 1973.

SMEW

Single females were seen in 1970 on 29th March (MJP) and 16th April (KAN). Single males were seen in 1971 on 1st January (JED et al) and 21st December (PB). These were the first records for Blackmoorfoot.

SHELDUCK

Seen in every year except 1963. The number of bird-days per annum averaged 6, 13 and 31 in the three consecutive five-year periods 1959 to 1963, 1964 to 1968 and 1969 to 1973. Except for 1 on 16th July, 1965, all records were outside the summer, between mid August and mid May, and were slightly more frequent in spring between late February and April and in autumn between mid August and early September than at other times, although the largest parties often appeared in winter. The maxima were 11 on 29th December, 1966 and 11 on 26th January, 1972.

GREY GEESE

Skins which were not specifically identified were seen flying over as follows: 44 on 9th November, 1963, 9 on 6th December, 1964, 22 on 23rd January, 1965, 100 on 24th September, 1967, 15 and 26 on 21st October, 1973.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

60 flew southwards over the reservoir on an unrecorded date in December, 1966 (SNA). 2 came down on to the banks on 14th November, 1971 (MLD et al), 1 or 2 flew over on four dates between 14th January and 10th February, 1973 (DWS et al) and 85 flew south-west on 28th November, 1973 (DS).

BARNACLE GOOSE

1 on 7th May, 1966 (TDB et al).

CANADA GOOSE

Up to 9 birds were seen on eight dates, mainly in the second half of the year between July and December, also in May.

MUTE SWAN

Singles were present on 5th February, 1961 (CD) 17th November, 1963 (D Mal) and 10th to 12th April, 1964 (WRH et al). In addition there was an adult with 4 immatures on 12th December, 1970 (D Man, PB).

WHOOOPER SWAN

4 on 16th December, 1968 (DS), 1 on 29th October (DWS) and 5 on 31st December, 1973 (D Man).

1971

BEWICK'S SWAN

Recorded in the years 1962 to 1967 and 1970 to 1973 on a total of 34 dates between 24th October and 3rd March. Unusual numbers were seen between 5th and 11th January, 1971, building up to 49 on the 9th. The previous maximum had been 27 on 8th January, 1967. There were a number of other reports involving 10 or more birds.

SPARROWHAWK

1 on 21st July, 1964 (JGI) and 1 on 11th July, 1971 (TD et al).

OSPREY

1 which flew over on 9th May, 1971 paused to hover only briefly (PB). First record for Blackmoorfoot.

MERLIN

1 was seen on 5th March, 1960 then singles appeared in each of the months August and October, 1971, February, September and December, 1973.

KESTREL

Seen regularly in the area with records covering every month of the year. Probably bred in most years. Usually seen singly, sometimes two or three in spring and autumn, with a maximum of 4 on 10th August, 1972.

PARTRIDGE

There were isolated reports in 1962, 1966 and 1973 but birds were seen on several occasions in fields to the east of the reservoir in 1967, namely singles in April and May, 6 in October and November.

PHEASANT

Casual visitor. Singles were in the reservoir grounds on 18th September, 1971, 25th November, 1972 and between 7th and 22nd November, 1973.

MOORHEN

One or two pairs bred in the years 1959 to 1963 and again in 1966. There were no reports from 1968 to 1970. In subsequent years, one or two birds appeared occasionally between February and April, also in September.

COOT

Small numbers were seen almost annually with an irregular pattern of appearances in the months July to March, while individuals occasionally stayed for extended periods, as from 9th January to 28th February, 1960 and from 17th November, 1962 to 1st January, 1973. The maximum was 7 on 26th December, 1963.

OYSTERCATCHER

Passage migrant, seen in every year except 1960 and 1964 on a total of twenty-four dates in autumn between late July and the end of August, also seen on six dates in spring between late February and mid May. There was one winter record on 7th January 1962. Usually occurred in small numbers, not exceeding 3, but there were 11 on 17th August, 1970.

LAPWING

The numbers present in the first two months of the year were variable, depending upon weather conditions, since the birds moved out in severe winters. Flocks, if present, dispersed during March and April when the local breeding territories were occupied. Good numbers nested in the fields around the reservoir. The build-up of autumn flocks occurred from June onwards and usually reached a peak in August or September, although this did not apply in 1971 when the numbers doubled to 1,000 in the second half of December. The size of flocks was apparently affected by the hard winter of 1962-63, there being up to 500 in preceding years and only 200 during autumn in 1963 and 1964, after which recovery was slow. In 1970 numbers were in excess of 1,000 in August and early September, reaching the exceptional figure of 5,000 or more on 19th August.

RINGED PLOVER

Autumn passage migrant in very variable numbers. Birds were seen frequently in the four years 1959, 1969, 1970 and 1971, a few appeared in 1961, 1962, 1967 and 1972 but the species was absent in the remaining seven years. Except for 2 on 21st November, 1959 and 1 on 27th June, 1971, all appearances were between 24th July and 27th September. The maxima were 12 on 7th August, 1959, 19 on 18th August, 1969 and 17 on 10th August, 1971.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER

The first record for the reservoir consisted of 1 on 29th September, 1969 (DWS). Singles were seen on 10th, 12th and 15th August, 1971 (DWS, MLD, PB), followed by 2 on 27th May, 1972 (DWS) and 1 on 11th June, 1973 (MLD).

GREY PLOVER

1 on 21st December, 1969 (ASG, D Man) was the first to be seen at the reservoir. Subsequent sightings involved 1 from 10th to 13th September, 1971 (MLD et al), 1 on 3rd February, 1972 (DWS), 3 on 20th September, 1972 (MLD) and 1 in breeding plumage on 31st August, 1973 (JED et al).

GOLDEN PLOVER

Spring flocks of varying size were present from early February to late April, the maxima being 500 in March, 1960 and 300 in March, 1973. Autumn flocks were present from mid July to October, sometimes staying until December, the maxima being 300 in September, 1962 and 400 in October, 1972. Rarely seen in winter and absent in May/June, despite the proximity of breeding areas to the west of the reservoir. Small numbers of the northern race were reported in spring in some years.

TURNSTONE

One or two birds were seen in autumn on six dates between 25th July and 21st August in the years 1961, 1966 and 1970 to 1972. There was a spring record of 3 on 6th May, 1967.

SNIPE

Numbers were controlled mainly by the water level. The build-up started in July or August and reached the highest figures between October and December, after which numbers usually declined but they were maintained at a moderately high level until March or April in the few years when there was sufficient shore available through the winter. Birds were seen occasionally at the reservoir during the summer and small numbers nested in the surrounding fields. The maxima in the early years were 42 on 11th October, 1959 and 30 on 12th September, 1964. Autumn figures exceeded 50 in each year from 1969 to 1973, reaching 80 in the last three years with a maximum of 85 on 4th November, 1972. 21 were ringed in 1973.

JACK SNIPE

Seen on one date in 1959, one date in 1964, seven dates in 1971 and four dates in 1972, all between 8th October and 20th March. Most were singles but there were 3 on 19th March, 1971.

WOODCOCK

There were records on eight dates during the months October to December and March in the years 1959, 1960, 1969, 1971 and 1972. All concerned single birds except for 2 on 27th December, 1960.

CURLEW

Regular in spring during March and April and in autumn between July and September, occasionally up to November, also seen at times in May and June. Breed nearby, on the west side of the reservoir. The earliest was on 26th February, 1972 and the latest was on 1st December, 1962 with an isolated winter record of 1 on 24th January, 1965. Numbers were mainly small, especially between 1963 and 1965, possibly showing the effects of the severe winter in 1962-63. The maxima were 25 on 15th August, 1961, 40 on 15th August, 1962 and 22 on 19th September, 1970.

WHIMBREL

Ones and twos were seen on twelve dates in autumn between 20th July and 10th September in the years 1964, 1966, 1967 and 1970 to 1973. In addition, 5 flew westwards with 2 curlews on 11th August, 1973. Spring records consisted of singles on 1st May, 1966 and 2nd May, 1971 with a further 2 on 14th June, 1973.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

A flock of 23 flew westwards on 11th November, 1967: the first record for Blackmoorfoot. One or two were seen on six dates between 22nd July and 1st October in the years 1969 to 1971 and one appeared in spring on 7th April, 1972.

GREEN SANDPIPER

Singles were recorded on one date in June, one date in August, four dates in September and one date in October. The first was in 1962 and the remainder were between 1969 and 1972.

WOOD SANDPIPER

1 on 13th August, 1961 (D Mal et al) and 1 on 6th August, 1965 (WRH, JGI). First records for Blackmoorfoot.

COMMON SANDPIPER

Regular in autumn between late June and September with maxima of 6 on 22nd July, 1959 and 6 on 13th July, 1969. Only occasional in spring between mid April and early June. The earliest was on 18th April, 1964 and the latest was on 1st October, 1966 with the exception of 1 on 21st November, 1959 and 2 on 8th November, 1970.

REDSHANK

Annual visitor in small numbers from mid March to April and from July to mid September, also seen occasionally in May and June. The earliest was on 5th March 1961 and the latest was on 12th September, 1971 except for 3 on 20th October, 1966 and 1 on 25th November, 1973. The maximum was 6 on 12th July, 1960. A decrease took place after the 1962-63 winter and only a few records of single birds occurred in the years 1963 to 1965 with an apparent return to former frequency by about 1969. The subsequent maximum was 5 on 17th April, 1971.

SPOTTED REDSHANK

Singles were recorded on 17th August, 1962 (D Mal), 27th August, 1969 (NL, JML), 6th October, 1971 (MLD, DWS), 26th and 30th August, 1972 (MLD) and 8th September, 1973 (TC). In addition, there were 2 on 24th June, 1973 (D Man et al). None had been recorded before 1962.

GREENSHANK

Autumn passage migrant. Occurred almost annually with an average of 5 bird-days per year. All appearances were between 5th July and 4th September except for 1 on 1st October, 1961 and 1 on 27th September, 1969. The highest number was 7 on 15th August, 1962.

KNOT

The first record for the reservoir concerned 1 on 27th August, 1969 (NL, JML). In 1972 4 flew westwards separately on 17th August, 2 flew northwards on 16th September, 1 was ringed on 21st September and another appeared on 22nd September (MLD et al). In 1973 10 flew westwards on 2nd September (MLD) and 1 was present on 5th November (MLD, PB).

LITTLE STINT

2 on 16th August, 1959 were the first to be seen at the reservoir. No further records occurred until 1970 when singles appeared on 25th July, 8th and 12th September and 3 were present on 12th October. Subsequent sightings involved 1 on 4th, 2 on 5th and 3 on 11th September, 1971, 1 on 30th September, 1973 and 1 on 4th October, 1973.

DUNLIN

Regular visitor, mainly in autumn between July and October or November, less frequent in spring between mid March and May with occasional birds in winter. Usually seen in small numbers with spring and autumn maxima of 6 on 12th April, 1963 and 19 on 6th September, 1973.

CURLEW SANDPIPER

2 on 4th September, 1969 (DS). First record for Blackmoorfoot.

SANDERLING

Singles appeared on 21st August, 1959, 20th August, 1961, 8th August, 1967, 4th and 23rd August, 1971 and 26th September, 1973. There were also 4 on 10th August, 1970. Spring records referred to 1 on 24th May, 1970 and 2 on 28th May, 1972. There had been no records before 1959.

RUFF

After 1 on 17th August, 1962, birds were seen on ten dates between 3rd August and 16th September in the three years 1970 to 1973. The maximum was 4 on 16th September, 1971.

GREY PHALAROPE

1 was observed at distances down to 10 feet on 28th and 29th November, 1969 (DWS). First record for Blackmoorfoot.

ARCTIC SKUA

1 light and 2 dark phase birds were seen for a few minutes on 13th September, 1969 during which time they pursued gulls before leaving northwards (JGI). First record for Blackmoorfoot.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Winter visitor from October to March or April. Small numbers were seen at times in autumn during August and September but appearances were rare in summer between May and July. The consistency of reporting may not have been uniform but the available figures showed a large scale increase with maxima of 14 in the winter of 1960-61, 40 in 1964-65, 50 in 1967-68, 150 in 1970-71 and upwards of 400 in the last three winters. The overall maximum was 520 on 15th December, 1973.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Mainly a passage migrant occurring from March to May and from July to November or December, also seen in moderate numbers through the summer (mostly immatures) and through to the winter (mostly adults). In contrast to the other four common gull species, there was little evidence of any marked increase in numbers. Autumn numbers varied from year to year the highest figure being 1,000 on 7th September, 1972. Spring numbers were generally lower, the maximum being 700 on 12th April, 1973. Wintering birds were slightly more numerous in the last few years than previously, usually not exceeding 60, but there were 200 on 6th January, 1971.

HERRING GULL

Present throughout the year but mainly a winter visitor from October to March or April. Up to 60 were seen in early summer during May and June and up to 100 were present in autumn between July and September, occasionally reaching 200. The available winter figures showed a progressive increase as follows: 250 on 7th January, 1961, 350 on 30th January, 1965, 500 on 22nd February, 1970, 1,500 on 14th January, 1972 and 2,000 on 1st January, 1973.

COMMON GULL

Winter visitor. The first few birds of autumn were usually seen in July and arrivals continued from August onwards. The highest numbers were between October and mid April after which a few stayed into May and there were occasional birds in June. The winter maxima were only poorly documented but the available figures showed a significant increase from 200 on 17th March, 1963 to 900 on 15th February, 1973.

GLAUCOUS GULL

There had been one record prior to 1959, on 30th January, 1950. The second record for the reservoir concerned an immature on 23rd January, 1965. In 1970 single birds in first- and second-winter plumages were seen on nine dates between 6th and 24th March involving probably 3 different individuals. The species was observed in each of the succeeding years as follows: In 1971 a second-winter bird on a total of eighteen dates between 11th January and 22nd March, an adult on 22nd and 26th March and a third-winter bird on 24th October; in 1972, first-winter birds on 22nd January and 28th-29th March; in 1973, a second-winter bird on 18th and 21st February and a third-winter bird on 15th and 19th March.

ICELAND GULL

The first record consisted on an immature on 7th February, 1960. An adult was seen on 11th December, 1965 and a first-winter bird was seen on 28th March, 1968. In 1970 immatures in plumages from first- to fourth-winters appeared on a total of 18 dates between 22nd February and 25th March, including 2 birds on 10th-11th March and 3 birds on 18th-19th March. These 1970 records involved probably 7 or more individuals. Birds were observed in each of the succeeding years as follows: in 1971, a second-winter bird with a sub-adult on 10th March, the latter reappearing on 11th, 19th and 22nd March, in 1972; a first-winter bird on 20th February, a second-winter bird from 19th to 22nd April and a third-winter bird on 16th November; in 1973, a first-winter bird on 5th and 7th March and another on 29th December.

LITTLE GULL

2 were present on 26th September, 1964 and 1 was seen daily from 27th August to 2nd September, 1971. Singles were recorded on a further six dates in autumn between 2nd August and 1st October, added to which there was a spring record of 1 on 29th April, 1961 and a winter record of 1 on 20th December, 1969.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

Mainly a winter visitor. Numbers were seen to build from July onwards, sometimes reaching 1,000 by August as in 1965 and 1973. The highest figures were between October and mid March, then a rapid decrease occurred between mid March and April and only small numbers were present in May and June. The winter numbers showed a general increase over the fifteen year period from 2,500 on 29th December, 1963 to 6,000 on 1st January, 1973 while there was an isolated peak of 7,000 on 6th January, 1971.

KITTIWAKE

After 1 on 3rd February, 1962 and 2 on 6th February, 1966, 1 to 4 birds were seen on five dates in the years 1971 to 1973 during the months February, March, May, August and November.

BLACK TERN

Autumn passage migrant, recorded in variable numbers in the years 1960 to 1964 and 1970 to 1973 on a total of twenty-two dates between 31st July and 27th September. Numbers were mainly small, not exceeding 5, the maxima being 18 on 15th August, 1962, 16 on 20th August, 1962 and 10 on 27th September, 1970.

COMMON TERN/ARCTIC TERN

These two species were seen collectively as passage migrants in variable numbers, occurring mostly in autumn between 25th July and 23rd September, less frequently in spring between 23rd April and 3rd June with additional late spring or early autumn records of 4 on 25th June, 1961 and 1 on 8th July, 1972. Birds were seen almost annually with an average of 6 bird-days per year but this does not include the exceptional passage in 1970 when birds appeared at intervals from late July to early September, the maximum number present at any one time being 15 on 17th August.

Relatively few birds were identified specifically as Common Tern: 1 on 5th August, 1966, 1 on 27th May, 1972 and 1 on 3rd June, 1973. Some of the birds in 1970 were identified as Arctic Tern including the peak number of 15. Others were: 2 on 3rd August, 1965, singles on 22nd August, 1969, 8th July, 8th August and 9th September, 1972 and lastly 2 on 12th September, 1972.

STOCK DOVE

Early records appeared to fit the downward trend in England which took place from 1957 to 1964. Up to 3 birds were seen in autumn in 1959 but there were only single records in 1960 and 1962, none in 1961, 1963 and 1964. Up to 5 birds appeared again in July and August, 1965 and the frequency of sightings increased thereafter, in spring as well as autumn, until birds appeared throughout the year by the end of the fifteen year period. Breeding was confirmed in 1969 and 1971 and probably occurred in other years. The maximum was 10 on 14th January, 1973.

WOODPIGEON

Present throughout the year and breeding, but not particularly numerous. The largest flock consisted of 130 on 11th November, 1973.

COLLARED DOVE

2 at farmstead on 21st May, 1969 were the first to be seen in the area. Recorded in ones and twos on a few dates in each of the subsequent years between March and May and between August and November, also once in June.

CUCKOO

Infrequent visitor. Singles were recorded on sixteen dates, seven of which were in 1972, including a female ringed on 2nd June. The earliest was on 30th April, 1961 and the latest was on 24th August, 1970.

BARN OWL

1 on 11th and 24th January, 1959 (RC, OSW).

LITTLE OWL

There were scattered reports of single birds at various times of the year in 1962 and from 1965 to 1971 while breeding was confirmed some distance to the north-east of the reservoir in 1968 and 1969.

One or two frequented a barn near the reservoir from February to April in 1972 and throughout the year in 1973 when successful breeding occurred.

TAWNY OWL

Single birds were seen or heard on a few dates in each year from 1971 to 1973 during the months January and May to November. One was ringed on 21st August, 1971 and another on 10th November, 1973.

LONG-EARED OWL

1 was discovered perched in trees close to a mist-net on 22nd September, 1972 and was later ringed (MLD et al). First record for Blackmoorfoot.

SHORT-EARED OWL

1 on 17th April, 1969 (DWS), 1 on 18th November, 1970 (CD), 1 on 18th October, 1971 (DB) and 1 ringed on 11th November, 1973 (MLD).

SWIFT

The earliest was on 2nd May, 1962 and the latest was on 8th September, 1971. Present through the summer although not breeding in the immediate vicinity of the reservoir. Numbers were very variable from day to day, the largest passage or weather movement involving 379 which flew westwards in three hours on 28th May, 1972.

KINGFISHER

1 on 22nd August, 1972 (MLD). First record for Blackmoorfoot.

GREEN WOODPECKER

1 on 29th October, 1960 (LT). First record for Blackmoorfoot.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Singles were recorded on eight dates during the months February to April and October, all in the years 1970 to 1973.

SKYLARK

A common breeding species in the fields around the reservoir. Present throughout the year but not numerous in winter, the majority leaving in autumn and returning mainly in March and April. Winter flocks of any size were infrequent, the largest being 54 on 7th January, 1968. Notable movements over the reservoir were observed in October, 1971, including 445 and 384 which flew west on the 23rd and 24th respectively.

SWALLOW

The earliest was on 14th April, 1972. A spring build-up was not often evident so that 60 on 15th May, 1972 was unusual. Present through the summer nesting in small numbers on buildings around the reservoir. Maximum numbers occurred between mid July and September, typically reaching 50, the highest figure being 200 on 10th August, 1973. See in October in most years, the latest being on the 24th, 1971.

HOUSE MARTIN

There was only one record in April: 2 on the 24th, 1966. Passage migrant in variable numbers in May/June and August/September, the picture being confused in the last three years by visitors through the summer, presumably from local breeding colonies. 11 on 15th May, 1960 was the highest number between 1959 and 1968, the subsequent maximum being 30 on 7th July, 1973. There were a few records in October, the latest of which was on the 6th, 1966 and there was a straggler on 14th November, 1971.

SAND MARTIN

Passage migrant in small numbers between mid July and mid September, less frequent between early April and May, occasional in summer. The earliest was on 5th April, 1959 and the latest was on 17th September, 1970 with the exception of 1 on 23rd October, 1971. Up to 3 were seen in spring and up to 9 in autumn but the unusual number of 30 flew south on 6th August, 1972.

CARRION CROW

Seen in small numbers throughout the year, least frequently between April and June. Birds appeared in ones or twos during the first half of the fifteen year period and in slightly higher numbers in the last few years with a maximum of 21 on 5th November, 1972.

ROOK

Birds from rookeries situated some distance to the east and south-east of the reservoir were seen throughout the year, regularly flying over to feed in fields in the area. Most numerous outside the breeding season, when hundreds were present, but no large concentrations were reported.

JACKDAW

Similar to Rook but present in smaller numbers. 150 on 6th January, 1972.

MAGPIE

Present throughout the year and breeding in the area. A flock of 31 on 1st December, 1962 was the maximum during the first half of the fifteen year period. The roost in trees beside the reservoir was first reported in February, 1970 when it contained 80. Similar numbers were seen in subsequent winters between October and April with a maximum of 120 on 2nd March, 1973.

JAY

Inrequent visitor. Singles were seen in March, 1967 and in March and April, 1972, added to which there were up to 5 on five dates in October, 1971.

GREAT TIT

Present throughout the year and breeding but not numerous. Most conspicuous outside the breeding season with parties of Blue Tit. 16 were ringed in 1973.

BLUE TIT

Easily the commonest Parus species, present throughout the year and nesting within the reservoir grounds. 15 on 14th September, 1971 is probably under-representative of maximum numbers. 40 were ringed in 1972.

COAL TIT

1 in September, 1965 and a few reports in each year from 1970 to 1973 during the months February to April and August to November.

WILLOW TIT

3 on 24th October, 1971 (DWS), 1 ringed on 25th August, 1972 and another on 2nd August, 1973 (MLD).

LONG-TAILED TIT

8 on 22nd October, 1973 (JED) and 5 ringed on 10th November, 1973 (MLD).

TREECREEPER

1 was ringed on 21st October, 1971 then singles were seen on 21st January, 1972 and 21st September, 1972 (MLD, DWS).

WREN

Resident and breeding within the reservoir grounds. Evidence of the effect of the hard winter of 1962-1963 was lacking and it is not known if the species disappeared for a time before 1 was ringed on 7th September, 1963. 13 were ringed in 1971.

DIPPER

1 was seen flying down the catchwater on the south side of the reservoir on 14th June, 1972 (DWS). First record for Backmoorfoot.

MISTLE THRUSH

Present throughout the year in small numbers and nesting within the grounds. Small flocks were sometimes seen in autumn with a maximum of 26 on 4th September, 1969. 18 were ringed in 1972.

FIELDFARE

Passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers occurring most frequently between mid October and December. The earliest were 6 which flew west on 20th September, 1972 and these preceded the largest influx, including a south and westerly movement of over 1,200 on 22nd October, 1972. Appearances were irregular in winter during January and February with a maximum of 100 in fields to the east of the reservoir on 22nd January, 1967. Birds were more frequent again from March to mid April with a maximum of 300 on 24th March, 1972. The latest were 30 on 20th April, 1972.

SONG THRUSH

Several pairs nested within the grounds. The winter status was uncertain since the birds are easily overlooked but the species was probably absent from January to mid February in some years at least. There was a flock of 11 on 10th September, 1962 and 25 flew over on 24th October, 1971. No more than 9 were ringed in any one year.

REDWING

Numbers were appreciably lower than those of Fieldfare. As with that species, the earliest arrival and largest influx occurred in 1972, the first being 7 on 5th October while the maxima were 112 on 8th October, 227 on 22nd October and 120 on 10th December flying south and west.

From January to April numbers were mainly small, the highest figure being 40 on 19th April, 1973 and this was also the latest date.

RING OUZEL

Single males were present on 29th March, 1969 (JGI) and 8th May, 1972 (DWS).

BLACKBIRD

Present throughout the year, several pairs nesting inside the grounds. Numbers were slightly higher in winter between October and March due to the presence of roosting birds of which there were about 40 on 10th March, 1972. 106 were ringed in 1973.

WHEATEAR

Regular visitor in small numbers in spring between late March and early May and in autumn between mid July and late September. The earliest was on 24th March, 1973 and the latest was on 28th September, 1971. The spring and autumn maxima were 7 and 6 respectively although there were 22 on 19th April, 1971. The species bred in nearby areas.

STONECHAT

Recorded on seven dates in the months November, December and March. All were single birds except for 2 to the south-west of the reservoir on 21st December, 1968. One record was in 1962 and the remainder were between 1968 and 1973.

WHINCHAT

Surprisingly few sightings. Singles were seen on eight dates in autumn between 11th August and 26th September in addition to which there was an adult with two juveniles to the east of the reservoir on 22nd August, 1967. The only spring record concerned 1 on 8th May, 1969.

REDSTART

Scarce passage migrant. Singles were recorded on eleven dates between 15th July and 30th September in the years 1961, 1963, 1964 and 1971 to 1973.

ROBIN

Resident and breeding within the reservoir grounds. 8 which were ringed and 2 which were retrapped on 30th September, 1973 represented an unusual number to be handled in one day. 45 were ringed in 1972.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER

Song was heard briefly from 1 on 21st June, 1971 (MLD, DMP). First record for Blackmoorfoot.

SEDGE WARBLER

1 on 16th August, 1966 (JGI et al), 1 in song on 29th May, 1972 (DWS), 1 ringed on 20th August, 1972 (MLD) and 1 seen on 4th September, 1973 (D Mau).

BLACKCAP

All records concerned birds which were ringed, singles having been caught on the following dates: 16th July, 1963, (retrapped on 27th July, 1963), 25th July, 1964, 21st Oct. 1965, 14th Sept. 1972 and 27th Sept. 1973 (TDB, MLD).

GARDEN WARBLER

Singles were ringed on 1st August, 1963 (TDB) and 18th August, 1972 (MLD).

WHITETHROAT

1 was seen on 16th August, 1966 (WRH) and 1 was ringed on 30th May, 1972 (MLD).

LESSER WHITETHROAT

1 ringed on 3rd August, 1972 (MLD). First record for Backmoorfoot.

WILLOW WARBLER

The earliest was on 7th April, 1972 and the latest was on 22nd September in the same year. Movement through the area in spring and autumn was noted in some years, as witnessed by the increased numbers, with maxima of 25 on 10th May, 1972 and 20 on 16th August, 1966. Several pairs nested within the grounds. 30 were ringed in each of the years 1963 and 1973 and 55 were ringed in 1972.

CHIFFCHAFF

Scarce passage migrant. Ones or twos were seen on only five dates in spring between 27th March and 25th April and on only five dates in autumn between 16th August and 23rd September, with the addition of 1 ringed on 5th November, 1972.

WOOD WARBLER

1 seen on 16th August, 1959 (CD, ECJS) and 1 ringed on 14th August, 1972. (MLD).

GOLDCREST

A scarce visitor from 1959 to 1970, reported on one or two dates in eight of the twelve years with no more than two together. Frequent in the last three years in autumn between late August and early November, less regular in spring between mid February and early May with single records in July and December. The maximum was 15 on 6th October, 1971.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

One or two birds were seen on 15 dates between 14th August and 21st September, nine of which were in 1972. Those outside autumn were 1 on 24th May, 1970 and 1 on 15th June, 1972.

DUNNOCK

Resident, several pairs nesting within the grounds. 44 were ringed in 1963 and 52 were ringed in 1972.

MEADOW PIPIT

Present throughout the year but not numerous in winter after the majority had left in autumn. The return of birds in loose flocks, up to 50 in number, was observed between mid March and late April, at which times a movement northwards and westwards was also noted, the highest figure being 113 which flew north on 31st March, 1972. Common as a breeding species around the reservoir.

Numbers were generally highest in autumn between August and mid November with 100 in the fields to the east of the reservoir on 29th October, 1971 and 75 on the reservoir banks on 23rd September, 1972. Birds flying south and west on 21st and 24th October, 1971 totalled 146 and 141 respectively.

TREE PIPIT

Three records, all in 1972 : 1 on 3rd June (DWS), 1 on 2nd August and 1 ringed on 22nd August (MLD).

ROCK PIPIT

Singles were seen in 1972 on 2nd October (MLD, DWS) and 21st October (JED, JMD). First records for Backmoorfoot.

PIED WAGTAIL/WHITE WAGTAIL

Present throughout the year and probably bred near the reservoir in all years. Numbers were highest in autumn between July and October and were small at other times. The maxima were 31 on 29th September, 1966 and 60 on 22nd September, 1972. Birds of the Continental subspecies were seen on one date in each of the years 1969, 1972 and 1973 and on five dates in 1971. All records were of single birds and were between 31st March, and 19th May.

GREY WAGTAIL

Reported only once between 1959 and 1968, in April, 1965, and then annually from 1969 to 1973 with an average of 10 bird-days per annum over these five years. Most records were between mid July and the end of October, the remainder between late January and early April. Usually appeared singly, often flying over, but 10 were seen on 24th October, 1971.

YELLOW WAGTAIL

Mainly a passage migrant which occurred in small numbers and with varying frequency between mid July and September, sometimes in May. Nesting of one pair near the reservoir was confirmed in 1969 and probably occurred from 1970 to 1972. The earliest was on 14th May, 1971 and the latest was on 23rd September, 1969 with a maximum of 7 on 22nd August, 1967.

STARLING

A common breeding species in and around the reservoir grounds. The largest winter flock consisted of between 1,500 and 2,000 in fields to the east of the reservoir on 22nd January, 1967. There was a pre-roost gathering in woodland on the south side of the reservoir of up to 1,000 in October, 1973.

GREENFINCH

Present throughout the year with a few pairs nesting inside the grounds. The roost in bankside bushes was used throughout the fifteen year period, mainly from August to April with the highest numbers between December and March. The maxima were 300 in February, 1970 and 300 in January, 1971. A similar number was seen feeding in fields to the east of the reservoir in February, 1967. 439 were ringed in 1973.

GOLDFINCH

Recorded on one or two dates in only five of the ten years from 1959 to 1968 during the months July and October to December with a maximum of 6 on 2nd December, 1962. Annual from 1969 to 1973 when singles and small parties were seen most frequently between October and December, less frequently in March and April, sometimes in other months excluding January and June. A total of 18 flew south and east on 8th October, 1972.

SISKIN

Birds were seen flying south on six dates in 1971 between 21st October and 27th November, including 12 on 29th October (DWS). Otherwise there were 8 on 2nd November, 1970 (JM), 1 on 22nd October, 1972 and 2 ringed on 25th March, 1973 (MLD).

LINNET

Scarce in winter with one with one record in December, none in January and small numbers occasionally in February. Arrival occurred mainly between mid March and early April when small flocks were seen, up to 40 in number. Present throughout the summer and breeding on rough ground in the area. Large concentrations were noted at times in autumn, mainly in August and September, the maximum being 200 on 11th September, 1959. Southerly movement was observed in October, 1971, including 111 on 21st and 137 on 23rd.

TWITE

Regular in spring between March and May when birds were returning to the moorland breeding areas. 45 on 3rd March, 1963 were the earliest and 75 on 25th March, 1973 was the largest flock. Less regular in autumn between August and mid October with a maximum of 50 to the south-west of the reservoir on 8th August, 1971. The only record outside these spring and autumn periods was 1 on 29th December, 1966.

REDPOLL

There were several reports in some years and none in others during the first half of the period covering the months June to December with a maximum of 5 on 16th October, 1966. Occurred annually but in variable numbers in the last few years, mainly between late July and early December, also between late February and May, sometimes June. Breeding in the latter years was possible but not confirmed. A southerly movement in October, 1971 included 50 on 21st, 89 on 23rd, 73 on 24th and 43 on 29th. The maximum otherwise was 25 on 27th August, 1972.

BULLFINCH

There were only a few reports in the first half of the period between August and December and in March while only one bird was ringed in these years, in 1965. A pair with juveniles was seen in August, 1966. Later reports showed presence throughout the year and breeding by two or more pairs. Small parties up to 7 were seen outside the breeding season with a total of 13 on 21st October, 1971. 24 were ringed in 1972.

CROSSBILL

2 flew northwards on 1st August, 1972 and 4 were ringed on 8th October, 1972 (MLD). First records for Blackmoorfoot.

CHAFFINCH

The breeding status was largely overlooked. Birds were noted most frequently in small numbers in spring between mid March and May and in autumn between mid September and November, also at other times of the year. There was only one record of a sizeable winter flock: up to 60 in fields to the east of the reservoir in January, 1967. Exceptional numbers were seen flying south and west in October, 1971: 401 on 21st, 412 on 23rd and 397 on 24th. No more than 2 were ringed in any one year.

BRAMELING

A few were involved in the finch movements in October, 1971, notably 67 which flew north-west on the 24th. Up to 30 or 40 were present in October, 1966. Otherwise up to 8 were seen on eight dates in January, March, April, and December, between 1965 and 1972.

YELLOWHAMMER

Occasional visitor. Up to 3 were recorded on nine dates between October and March with the addition of one in May.

CORN BUNTING

Birds were reported consistently from the small breeding colony on the east side of the reservoir (although not before 1963). The maximum number was 9 on 4th March, 1967. Apart from 1 which flew over the reservoir on 27th November, 1971, all reports were between March and August.

REED BUNTING

Breeding was confirmed in some years and probably occurred in all others. Small numbers were seen most frequently between mid February and May and between mid July and November, at which times an increase on a small scale was discernible. Formerly absent in winter and latterly present all year. 17 flew over on 23rd October, 1971 when 6 others were present and there was a party of 9 on 31st December, 1972.

SNOW BUNTING

1 female was seen feeding on the shore on 26th November, 1971 (JED). First record for Blackmoorfoot.

HOUSE SPARROW

Common resident. A partial albino was at Lake House from October, 1971 to March, 1973. Ringing of this species was intermittent, the maximum number being 73 in 1964.

TREE SPARROW

Breeding was confirmed in 1960 and in subsequent years. Winter flocks were seen feeding and roosting with Greenfinches in the first few years of the period with a maximum of 50 on 25th December, 1960. 300 were in fields to the east of the reservoir on 22nd January, 1967. No large winter flocks appeared in later years but instead gatherings were sometimes seen in late summer and autumn with a maximum of 200 on 19th August, 1971. Due to the presence of such a gathering 178 were ringed in 1973.
