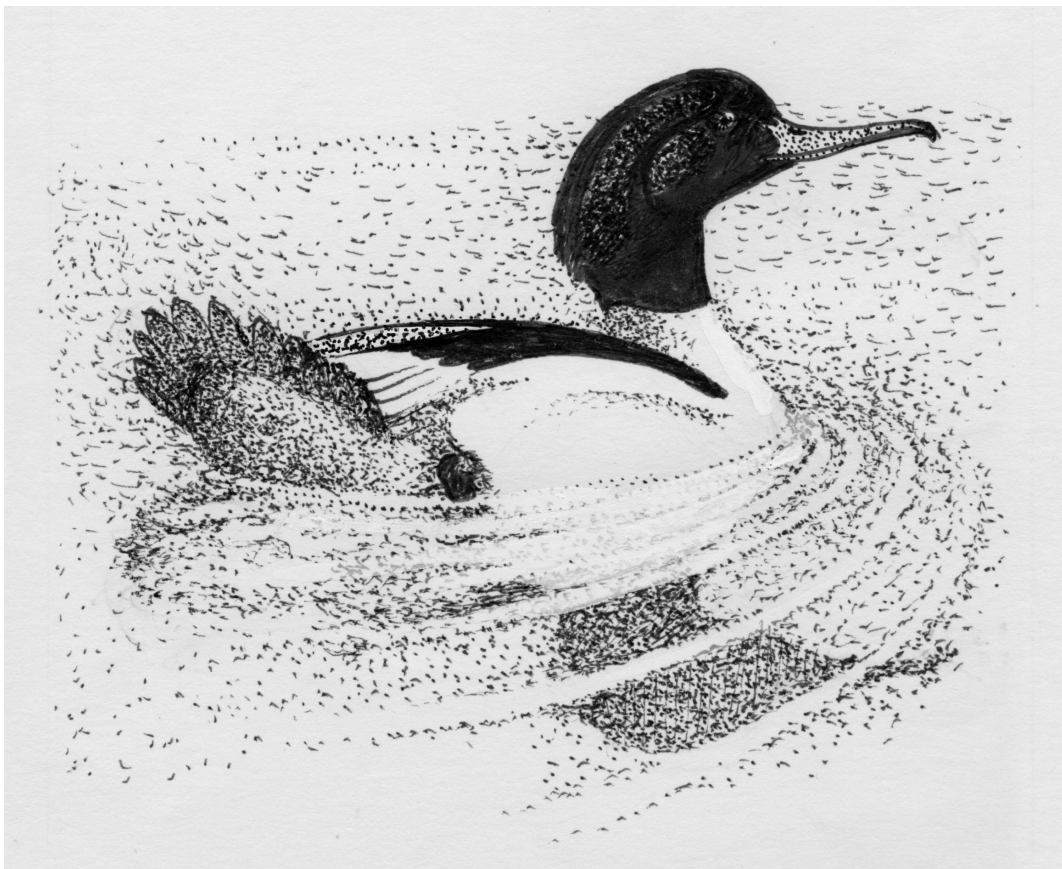




**Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club**

# **Birds of Blackmoorfoot Reservoir 1985 - 2003**



**Compiled by Mike Denton**

Registered charity no 1098296

**‘Birds of Blackmoorfoot Reservoir 1985-2003’** is a publication of Huddersfield Birdwatchers’ Club and the third such review produced by the Club, the previous reports covering the years 1959-1973 and 1974-1984. It is based upon bird sightings submitted by Club members and other volunteer birdwatchers.

**Blackmoorfoot Reservoir** lies in the shadow of the Pennines, some 5.6 km to the south-west of Huddersfield in West Yorkshire. It is important in ornithological terms both for the number and variety of birds it attracts and because it is one of the most regularly watched and systematically recorded sites in the Huddersfield area. It therefore provides a valuable insight into the birdlife of Huddersfield and how this has changed over the years.

**Mike Denton** has been Conservation Officer of Huddersfield Birdwatchers’ Club since 1990. He is a consultant entomologist as well as an experienced birdwatcher and licensed bird ringer, with ringing experience in both the UK and Africa. He is Regional Representative and Regional Development Officer for the British Trust for Ornithology. Previous bird publications include *‘Birds in the Yorkshire Museum’* and *‘Blackmoorfoot Reservoir 1974-1984’*. Mike has been studying the birdlife of Blackmoorfoot Reservoir since 1965.

Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club is a registered charity (no 1098296).

**Front cover: Goosander by Mike Pinder**

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# Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club

## Birds of Blackmoorfoot Reservoir 1985-2003

### CONTENTS

compiled by Mike Denton

Page	2	About Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club
	3	Preface by the Club President
	4	Introduction
	8	Acknowledgements
	9	The Classified List
Inside rear	cover	Club Officials for 2003-4
Rear	cover	Map of Blackmoorfoot Reservoir and its environs

### ILLUSTRATIONS

by Mike Pinder

Front	Cover	Goosander	Page	40	Mediterranean Gull
Page	12	Bittern		68	Sedge Warbler
	19	Scaup		73	Long-tailed Tits
	40	Long-tailed Skua		79	Brambling

## **ABOUT HUDDERSFIELD BIRDWATCHERS' CLUB**

Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club was formed in 1966 and registered as a charity in July of 2003, with the aims of:

### **Studying and recording the wild birds of the area and publishing an annual report:**

Members and other bird watching supporters are out and about throughout the year observing birds across the area and submitting records for analysis by our Club Recorder. We now have a wealth of data covering some 36 years, an invaluable source for showing the trends in local bird populations. The Club is the only organization in the area undertaking this kind of ornithological research. Our *Birds in Huddersfield* report has been published annually since the Club was formed and the latest issue is available to buy through local bookshops and information centres or directly from the Club Recorder (see inside rear cover).

From time to time we also publish more specific, one-off work, including an Atlas of the Breeding Birds of the Huddersfield Area (2001) and this review of Blackmoorfoot Reservoir.

Our publications are also to be found in the Huddersfield Public Library and go to many regional and national ornithological and wildlife conservation bodies.

### **Promoting education of the public about wild birds and their habitats:**

We run a lecture and meeting programme between September and May each year, at which visiting experts present on a wide range of birding topics, from local to overseas, with some stunning still and video footage.

### **Supporting research into conservation of wild birds and their habitats:**

Most readers will be only too well aware of the threat to many of our wild birds, but if conservation is to be effective, it needs to be based upon hard evidence and research. This is where the Club comes in. We have members with substantial experience in bird observation and surveying and there is also a role for the less experienced volunteer.

The Club has played a major role in many bird life surveys of local, regional and national importance, including over 50 for the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), RSPB, National Trust, English Nature, Peak District National Park and Kirklees Metropolitan Council. We also advise Kirklees Council on bird life issues through our representation on two of its conservation committees.

Our research is undertaken entirely by volunteers and the Club is wholly reliant upon the generosity of its members and upon voluntary donations to fund its work.

Members of the public are welcome to all of our meetings, free of charge (voluntary donation), and we try to provide something for birdwatchers of all tastes and experience. It is a great way to learn about birds and to meet fellow birders.

So, whether old hand or beginner, why not come along and join us ?

Simply contact any member of the Committee (see inside rear cover) for more information.

## **PREFACE BY THE CLUB PRESIDENT**

Mention Blackmoorfoot Reservoir to members of The Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club and they will immediately think of Mike Denton. He has made this site his local patch and surveyed the bird-life there with enormous devotion for nearly 40 years. As a consequence, there is little, if anything, that anyone else would be able to tell him about the habitat and its species. We can envisage him sitting in the cosy hide scanning the waters, or cautiously treading his way through the bushes and undergrowth at the reservoir edge, or standing in the teeth of a cold and powerful wind undertaking a gull watch in the declining light of a winter afternoon. All the activity that he has seen there on his very frequent visits has been painstakingly recorded in the interests of research. Who better than Mike, then, to produce a report of sightings at Blackmoorfoot for the Birdwatchers?

He has not, he would want me to stress, gathered the data completely unaided but has been able to rely on that collected by other members, who are listed in the acknowledgements. Their work over the years is much appreciated by the Club for, without such painstaking recording, there would be no extensive report. He has, too, been ably supported by Mike Pinder's wonderful illustrations, which add to its attractiveness.

It is, like all of our surveys of this sort, a considerable undertaking, because there is a great difference between having the records and turning them into a report. It is obvious from even the merest glance just how much time and effort have gone into the collation of information and the commentary. This report covers a period of some 19 years and, as such, is able to give us a picture of trends. It was preceded by two earlier reports (both regrettably out of print) covering the periods from 1959 to 1973 (by Paul Bray) and 1974 to 1984 (also by Mike), so that it is now possible for us to study about 45 years of bird life at the site.

I know that all of the members of the Birdwatchers' Club (and others who take an interest in our research) will endorse my view that we should be most grateful to Mike for the industry and enthusiasm that he has invested in this enterprise. We can be assured that he and others are gathering the data for the next one.

Michael Rayner

## INTRODUCTION

Blackmoorfoot Reservoir is situated at the base of the Pennines some 5.6 km to the south-west of Huddersfield in West Yorkshire (Grid reference: SE098127) at an elevation of 256 metres above sea level. Work on its construction began on 1st May 1871 and the reservoir was filled to overflowing on 20th December 1876. As with most Victorian reservoirs, Blackmoorfoot was formed by the damming of a valley, but, due to the topography, it was necessary to build two dam walls. The northern embankment is the larger, being 713 m long, 122 m wide at the base, and 21 m high. The southern embankment is 456 m long, 73 m wide at the base and 12 m high. The total cost of the reservoir was £260,549. A curious optical illusion can be seen from the Wessenden Head Road (3 km to the S.S.W.) when viewing the inflow conduit as it passes from Brow Grains at 267 m to Blackmoorfoot, as the water appears to be flowing uphill.

The surface area of the reservoir is relatively large (approximately 41 hectares) but, being situated at the base of the Pennines, with a maximum depth of 12 m and no submerged or marginal plant communities, it offers little attraction to wintering surface feeding wildfowl (although Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* are constantly present and other *Anas* species are recorded on passage). In the past, small numbers of diving duck (Tufted *Aythya fuligula*, Pochard *A. ferina* and Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*) wintered, but these have decreased to the point of becoming virtually nonexistent. A large gull roost is a major winter attraction and, in times of water shortage, the gently shelving western bank can provide a good feeding habitat for passage waders etc. Plantations of deciduous woodland (in which Rhododendron is dominant) fringe the west and east banks and a more extensive wooded area is situated in the western half of the south bank. A small oak woodland (Orange Wood) lies immediately to the south of the reservoir and is included in the recording area.

Being situated between the Colne Valley (to the north) and the Holme Valley (to the south), the reservoir not only attracts birds flying along the river systems, but is also ideally placed for visible migration observations. Spring migration is generally rather weak, but autumn migration tends to be more obvious. The governing factor regarding the impetus for bird migration is the weather: light S.W. winds with little cloud cover producing the optimum conditions. Autumn migration, which can be observed anytime between mid-August and late October, is generally more productive during the first couple of hours of daylight when birds can be observed flying in a southerly or westerly direction. The birds which fly in a westerly direction tend to do so on a broad front, but those flying south appear to follow the lines of trees along the west and east banks. Species involved include wintering thrushes, Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*, Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, House Martin *Delichon urbicum*, finches and, occasionally, buntings.

Since 1961 the winter gull roost has attracted considerable attention and observations have resulted in the identification of 12 species. Although Yellow-legged Gull has occurred, it is not included in the total, because its taxonomic position is still in contention. The roost regularly holds in the order of 7,000 individuals that, nowadays, mainly consists of Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* and Common Gull *L. canus*. Large numbers of both Herring Gull *L. argentatus* (up to 2,000) and Great Black-backed Gull *L. marinus* (up to 600) utilized the roost until 1976. The closing of a number of local refuse tips at this time, however, denied these species a food source and numbers plummeted: Herring Gull have only occasionally reached 600 and Great Black-backed Gull usually remain at less than 250.

The species total for the reservoir (excluding escapes) now stands at an impressive 203, but the highest annual total never exceeded 129 (both 1989 and 1990) while in 1999 it was as low as 105.

My own involvement with natural history at Blackmoorfoot began in 1965, nearly forty years ago. Bird records, however, date back to the 1950s and observations began to proliferate after the Huddersfield Naturalists', Photographic and Antiquarian Society were given permission by the land owners (the then Yorkshire Water Authority) to erect a hide along the west bank in 1959. This hide was replaced by Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club in 1970 and observations continue to this day. This regular coverage of the reservoir by birdwatchers enabled the Club to publish two reviews which embraced the periods 1959-73 (Paul Bray) and 1974-84 (Mike Denton). This report, which covers the years 1985 – 2003, continues the documentation of birds at Blackmoorfoot Reservoir.

During the last decade a number of Club members had suggested that observations from the reservoir should be brought up to date, but this had always been declined as it was felt that the status of very few species had changed sufficiently to warrant this. A quick scan of the record cards, however, revealed this not to be the case. There were a good number of species which had undergone marked changes, some in line with the local population trend and others in accordance with the national long-term trends published by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

In the period under review, visits were made on an average of 338 days per annum, the lowest number of visits being in 1992 (304 days) with the highest number of visits being recorded in 2003 (363 days). Even though the number of man-days has remained more or less constant over the period, the number of Club members frequenting the hide has declined dramatically, thereby resulting in a corresponding drop in man-hours. Although this will have had some effect on the frequency of which certain species are observed, e.g. fly through waders, it has had no effect on the recording of breeding numbers. Any fluctuations in breeding numbers are therefore real.

Bird ringing at Blackmoorfoot has added considerably to our knowledge and understanding of movements (see *Results from Bird-ringing in Huddersfield* published by the Club in 1998). The ringing carried out between the early 1960s and 1998 has indicated the origin and destination of many bird species, the following being some of the more interesting: a pullus Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* shot in Spain the following January (1255 km S.S.W.); winter ringed Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* recovered during the winter at Selby, North Yorkshire (55 km E.N.E.), in Denmark (845 km E.N.E.) and Spain (1955 km S.S.W.); a number of Black-headed Gulls from Scandinavia, the most interesting involving a colour-ringed adult from Denmark which commuted between Denmark and Blackmoorfoot for at least 11 years, being in Denmark from March to June and Blackmoorfoot from July until February; a juvenile Swallow netted in Spain (2050 km S.S.W.) a month after ringing; an adult House Martin found dead in France (1200 km S.S.E.); a juvenile Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba* shot in Portugal (945 km S.S.W.); a first-year Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* killed by a car in Dyfed (230 km S.W.); a number of Blackbirds *Turdus merula* recovered in Scandinavia; a first-year male Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* shot in France (845 km S.S.E.); a first-year Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus* netted in Nottinghamshire (68 km S.E.) and a winter ringed adult male Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* found dead in Norway (978 km N.E.).

The foreign recoveries outlined above are typical for the species and parallel the national findings of the BTO ringing scheme. The most significant recoveries to stem from ringing at Blackmoorfoot originate from the 328 Twite *Carduelis flavirostris* handled in late July 1976; five being recovered abroad and one in Britain. Three were in Belgium during November (two in 1976, one in 1977) and two in the Netherlands (October 1976 and February 1977). The British recovery, a first-year bird, had shown interesting fidelity to its wintering grounds, being netted at Hythe, Colchester (Essex) (265 km S.E.) in both February 1979 and January 1980. In addition, an adult which had been colour-ringed in Lincolnshire during the winter of 1986/87 was seen at Blackmoorfoot on 31st March 1990 (157 km N.W.). The ringing of Twite in the Pennines has shown that they migrate south-east to winter on the coast between the Wash and the Thames but, with the exception of individuals in north-eastern France and northern Italy, these remain the only foreign recoveries for Twite reported to the British ringing scheme and therefore add considerably to our knowledge of the species.

The easiest means of gauging the magnitude of birds passing through an area is to compare the annual ringing totals for that species: for Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*, although numbers at the reservoir fluctuated annually, in most years up to 200 were handled, with 374 in 1986, 427 in 1987, 403 in 1989 and 414 in 1990 being the maxima. Without ringing the impression of the number of birds present is generally far lower than the daily ringing total. On a number of occasions species were caught which had not been located in the field e.g. Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*, all Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* and a Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*.

The cessation of ringing in 1998 has deprived the Club of records such as these, and this must be borne in mind when reading the species accounts; the lack of records after 1998 does not mean that the birds no longer occur (they may or may not), it simply means that they have not been caught and ringed.

Personally my main interest in birds at Blackmoorfoot has not been with rarities, although they do add sparkle, it is the fluctuation in numbers of the commoner species which has attracted my attention. By keeping records on a near daily basis, patterns of occupancy emerge and, over time, allow for a better understanding of bird populations and movements. It has long been appreciated, thanks to work by organisations such as the BTO, that bird populations tend to fluctuate annually. Some of these fluctuations are triggered by natural occurrences e.g. the catastrophic drop in the Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* population after the severe winter conditions of 1962/63. Some, however, are man related and most seed-eating farmland birds have decreased alarmingly over the last 25 years due to man's activities. Populations of birds at Blackmoorfoot have tended to parallel the national trend.

The casual visitor to Blackmoorfoot may consider it to be ornithologically uninteresting. Many days can be rather quiet and, unless the observer is prepared to work the area on a regular basis and in all weather conditions, they may come away feeling unrewarded. The following report is based on the numerous hours which Club members have spent observing and documenting their observations. The commitment of observers who are prepared to count the commoner species not only contribute to the continuity of records but, when amassed, these records allow for a better understanding of bird populations and movements. Without the enthusiasm of these people this report, as with the two previous reports, would not have been possible.



Due to the excellent relationship that the Club has built up over the years with Yorkshire Water, members of the Club continue to be privileged in being allowed access to the west bank of the reservoir. So as to maintain this excellent relationship, it is suggested that if informing non-members about birds at the reservoir it should be pointed out that observations can be made from the east and south banks or, should they be persuaded to join the Club, they too can have a key and facilities for using the hide.

As both earlier reports are long out of print, a summary of each species' status prior to 1985 is included in the text. The year, followed by the number of records in parenthesis, is shown for species with a limited number of occurrences.

It is hoped that this publication will not only become an archival document, but will also encourage people to continue to enjoy the birdlife of Blackmoorfoot Reservoir and contribute to the observations and records which will enable future reports of this nature to be possible.

Mike Denton

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks must be extended to the landowners, Yorkshire Water, for without their continued support observations from the hide would not be possible. Mike Wainman is to be thanked for producing the map that appears on the rear cover and for also taking on the task of collating the report and turning it into this finished published document. Special thanks are expressed to Mike Pinder whose excellent illustrations enhance the front cover and the text by so admirably depicting the species concerned. Tim Duckworth, whose nest finding abilities are legendary, is to be thanked for his enlightened discussion regarding the number of nesting pairs of certain species. As mentioned in the Introduction, it is the continued observations of Club members that have made possible this review, a great debt of gratitude is therefore extended to all members who have contributed records.

As in many such studies, one stands upon the shoulders of those who have gone before, particularly Paul Bray, who was not only responsible for the first Blackmoorfoot review (1959-73), but who also initiated the recording system upon which all the Club's reports have since been based.

Within the report, the use of observers' initials has been confined mostly to those species that were recorded six times or less during the period under review. Where more than one observer is involved, they are given in alphabetical order.

For reference the observers' names are as follows:

B. Armitage	S. Hey	S. Pogson
W. Baggeley	C. Horne	H. Quarterman
D. Barrans	K. Horne	S. Reed
P.D. Bell	J. Jemmison	C. & D. Shields
P.N. Bradbury	J. Laycock	D.W. Sill
P. Bray	D. Manchester	S. Stott
P.A. Cadogan	M. Murphy	C.C. Thomas
T. Cantwell	K.A. Norcliffe	G. Trowman
J.E. & S.M. Dale	D.M. Owen	M. Tunmore
J.M. Dale	J. K. Palliser	A.J. Wainscoat
A. Dean	D.H. Pennington	J.M. Walker
M.L. Denton	T. Piggott	B.W. Woodcock
T. Duckworth	J.M. Pinder	K. Wright
T. Guillosson	D.M. Pogson	

## CLASSIFIED LIST

Where necessary, all birds have been accepted by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union Reports Committee and, if applicable, by the *British Birds* Rarities Committee. The systematic list follows the sequence and scientific nomenclature of Prof. Dr. K.H. Voous (1977) *List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species*, or more recent updates.

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

Previous records: 1961 (1) and 1978 (1).

A single was present on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1985 (PNB, MLD, JKP, JMP) and on 16<sup>th</sup> November of the same year an individual arrived from the north-east at 1055 hrs., departing westerly some 20 minutes later (CCT). A single was present on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1998 (MLD). These were the ninth, tenth and eleventh records for the Club area.

### **Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

Previous records: 1977 (1) and 1983 (1). There are no recent records.

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

Previous records: 1900 or 1901 (1), 1962 (1), 1981 (1) and 1983/84 (1). The 1983/84 record concerned a long staying individual.

A single departed in a westerly direction on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1985 (CH); an immature was present on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990 (MLD) and a bird in full summer plumage was present on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2002 (MLD *et al.*). These were the eleventh, twelfth and fifteenth records for the Club area.

### **Diver sp.** *Gavia* sp.

Previous record: 1959 (1).

A diver which flew north at 1130 hrs. on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1998 could not be identified to species (DMP).

### **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

During the 1959-1973 period the species was mainly an autumn visitor (October and early November) with less frequent visits at other times of the year. There was then a gradual increase in records and from 1980 the species was recorded far more frequently with a marked increase in spring occurrences.

The last 19 years have seen a tremendous upsurge in sightings and, although the majority of records were from the spring and autumn periods, the species was also recorded at other times of the year. Winter records depend upon the severity of the weather, but in the winters of 1986/87, 1987/88, 1989/90 and 2001/02 one or two individuals were present throughout the December to February period.

Usually present in very small numbers, but up to six have occasionally been recorded, and seven were seen on 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> October 1986. Although there has been a tendency for birds to remain at the reservoir for longer periods than formerly, the number of bird-days per annum has fluctuated markedly – in 1988 it was at the all time high of 401, but in 1996 it was only two. Despite these fluctuations, there has still been a marked overall increase in the average bird-days per annum: in the years 1959-1973 it was six, between 1974-1979 it was nine, between 1980-1984 it was 29 and during the period under review it had increased to 154.

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

Formerly recorded during the spring (March-May) and autumn (July-November) periods in small numbers (maximum of 13 on any one day).

The status of this species has totally changed, birds now being present in larger numbers and from March through to November, with more likelihood of winter (December-February) occupancy. A build-up in numbers commencing in July or August (occasionally in June) occurred annually and between ten and 25 were then present until late September. Larger numbers have occasionally been recorded: in 1986 the 30 which were present between 17<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> July had increased to 34 the following day, these birds remaining until 1<sup>st</sup> September, and in 1994 between 30 and 43 were present from mid-July until mid-August. This increase in numbers can best be gauged by comparing the average bird-days per annum: in the years 1976-1979 it was 29, from 1980-1984 it had increased to 126 and during the period under review it increased to an amazing 2404. Winter records generally involved one or two birds, but up to seven were present in early December 1985, eight on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1998 and nine on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2003.

The first breeding attempt occurred in 1985. With the exceptions of 1993 and 1996, when low water levels precluded any attempts, breeding has taken place annually since this time. Most attempts concerned nests anchored to willows along the west bank, but later in the year they were occasionally built floating on Amphibious Bistort in the north-west corner. Results have been very variable, with no more than three young reared to maturity in any season (a maximum of two broods in 1998) and only 18 have fledged successfully. The reasons for nest failure included predators (Corvids, Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* and Fox *Vulpes vulpes*), wave action and, the major problem, fluctuating water levels which have flooded or left nests high and dry. A remarkable sequence of events occurred in 1986; five pairs built a total of 13 nests into which 54 eggs were laid but only three young hatched, all of which eventually fledged (see The Great Crested Grebe Saga. *Birds in Huddersfield* 1986).

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

Previous records: 1959 (1).

An adult in near full summer plumage was seen on 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> September 1985 (BA, MLD *et al.*) and a similar plumaged bird was present on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1989 (PAC, MLD, DMO, MT). In 1990 a single was seen on 6<sup>th</sup> January (JED, JMD, MT); an immature was present on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1993 (JED, DMO, SS) and in 1995 one remained from 14<sup>th</sup> January until the 24<sup>th</sup> (MLD, JKP *et al.*). These were the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth and fifteenth records for the Club area.

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

Previous records: 1982 (2).

A bird in full summer plumage was present on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1985 (MLD, JMP, C & DS); in 1988 a winter plumaged bird remained from 2<sup>nd</sup> March until the 17<sup>th</sup> (MLD, JMP *et al.*); an immature was seen on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1998 (MLD, DMO) and a single which arrived on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2000 remained until 10<sup>th</sup> January 2001 (MLD, TD, DHP *et al.*). These were the seventh, ninth, tenth and eleventh records for the Club area.

### **Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

Previous records: 1949 (2), 1956 (1), 1959 (1), 1967 (1), 1978 (1), 1982 (3) and 1983 (2).

In 1989 a single in full summer plumage was present from 7<sup>th</sup> May until the 11<sup>th</sup> (MLD *et al.*) and one was seen on 25<sup>th</sup> September (MLD, TD, MT, JKP). An immature was present on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1993 (MLD, DMO *et al.*) and a bird in full summer plumage was seen on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1996 (MLD). There was a remarkable run of records in 1999: a single was present between 16<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August and four were seen on 26<sup>th</sup>, two then remained from 27<sup>th</sup> until 9<sup>th</sup> September with a single from 10<sup>th</sup> until 17<sup>th</sup> (PDB, MLD, DHP *et al.*). Two summer plumaged birds were seen on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2002 (DMO *et al.*) and what may have been the same individuals were present on 23<sup>rd</sup> June (PB, MLD). During the same year, a bird in full summer plumage was seen on 20<sup>th</sup> July (MLD) and an immature was present on 15<sup>th</sup> August (PDB). In 2003 a single in full summer plumage remained from 27<sup>th</sup> May to 27<sup>th</sup> July (MLD *et al.*).

### **Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

Previous records: 1977 (1) and 1982 (1).

A single on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1989, first seen at 1840 hrs., departed in an easterly direction three minutes later (DMO) and one flew west at 1300 hrs. on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1996 (TD). These were the tenth and thirteenth records for the Club area.

### **Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

A single that was present for nearly an hour on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1988 (KAN, GT) was the first record for the reservoir and the sixth for the Club area.

### **Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

In line with the national increase, there was a marked upsurge in the number of sightings, especially from 1996 onwards. The average of three bird-days per annum recorded between 1959 and 1984 increased to ten between 1985 and 1995 and 14 between 1996 and 2003. Formerly recorded in all months of the year save for February and August, the species has now been encountered in every month although the highest percentage of records were between April and October. Most records were of singles, occasionally up to five, with records in excess of this involving eight (a party of seven which flew south-west and a single which flew north-east) on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1993, a party of six departed to the north-east on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1996, a party of six (three adults and three immatures) departed in a westerly direction on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1998 and a party of six (one adult and five immatures) flew east on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1998.

There have been two records of birds showing characteristics of the Continental race *P. c. sinensis*: on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1987 a single flew west (MLD) and one was present on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1988 (BWW).

### **Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Three immatures which arrived at 1040 hrs. on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1991 departed west five minutes later (MLD) and a single, probably first-summer, departed west at 1855 hrs. on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1996 (PB, MLD). These were the first records for the reservoir and the seventh and fourteenth for the Club area.

### **Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

A single in the plantation near the hide on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1988 (MLD, JMP) was the first record for the reservoir and the third for the Club area. The two previous records had been as long ago as 1891 and 1922.



### **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

A single on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2002, first seen at 0740 hrs., departed north-easterly at 1225 hrs. (MLD *et al.*). This was the first record for the Club area.

### **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

From being an uncommon, predominantly autumn visitor (1959-1973), the picture changed markedly with records spanning all months, although most were still between July and October (1974-1984). The pattern of occurrence during the period under review changed little from the previous decade, although one or two were more frequently seen during the winter months. Previous records had referred to singles, occasionally two and a maximum of four (one day only). Although one or two were the norm during the present period, up to six or seven were frequently encountered (especially since 1990) with eight or nine occasionally. There were unprecedented numbers in 1993 when between nine and 14 were present daily from 16<sup>th</sup> July until 4<sup>th</sup> August. This increase in numbers can best be gauged by comparing the average bird-days per annum: in the years 1959-1973 it was six, between 1974-1984 it had risen to 27 and during the period under review it had increased to an amazing 266.

### **Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*

Previous records: 1953 (1), 1961 (1), 1963 (1), 1964 (1) and 1970 (1).

Four sub-adults were present on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1985 (MLD) and single adults were seen on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1997 (MLD) and 12<sup>th</sup> September 1998 (PB, MLD). On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2001 an adult arrived from the north, circled the reservoir, and returned north at 0910 hrs. (TG) and four adults flew south-south-west over Meltham Cop on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2003 (CH).

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

Continued to be recorded as formerly, there being sporadic records during the winter months. Over the years however, there has been a marked decline in the number of records: in the 15 years 1959-1973 the species was present on 34 days (average of 2.3 days per annum), in the 11 years 1974-1984 this had fallen to 21 days (average of 1.9 per annum) and during the last 19 years it had fallen to 15 days (average of .8 days per annum).

During the period under review, the species was recorded in the years 1986, 1987, 1990, 1991, 1993 to 1996 and 2001, with records falling between 17<sup>th</sup> October and 12<sup>th</sup> January (62% being in November). All records were of single figures (1-6) with the exception of a herd of 20 (16 adults and 4 juveniles) on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1986 and 14 adults which arrived from the north-east at 1510 hrs. on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1994. Most sightings involved birds that were present only for the day, although from the herd of 20 on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1986 two of the adults remained until 12<sup>th</sup> (the other 18 having departed westerly at 1520 hrs.).

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

Previous records: 1950 (1), 1955 (1), 1956 (3), 1957 (1), 1968 (1), 1971 (1), 1973 (1), 1974 (1), 1975 (1), 1976 (1), 1982 (1) and 1984 (1).

There has been a marked increase in records since this time and the species was recorded in all the years under review save for 1988, 1989, 2000 and 2001. The 24 records were all between 7<sup>th</sup> October and 27<sup>th</sup> March (72% being in October/November) and all involved

single figures (1-7), with the exception of 18 adults which flew west on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1986. All records were of a single days duration, apart from the juvenile which remained between 8<sup>th</sup> November and 21<sup>st</sup> December 1996, the bird being present in the south-west corner overflow field from 26<sup>th</sup> November.

*Birds in Huddersfield 1994* makes reference to 14 adults on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1994; this record should, in fact, be attributed to Bewick's Swan *C. columbianus*.

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

Continued to be recorded as a sporadic visitor with records in all the years under review. Extreme dates were 19<sup>th</sup> September (1991) and 15<sup>th</sup> March (2001 and 2002), although most records (81%) fell between November and February. Although normally seen flying in a westerly direction, there was a growing tendency for skeins to fly in an easterly direction. Skeins of anything up to 150 were the norm but records in excess of this were as follows: *ca.* 511 (skeins of 111 and *ca.* 400) south-east (not south-west as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1987*) on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1987 (the skein of *ca.* 400 were at a long range, probably over Bretton, and were recorded as probably of this species), 220 flew east on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1987, 201 flew west on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1991, 283 (skeins of 156 and 127) flew east on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1994, 160 flew north-west on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1995, *ca.* 180 flew north-west on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1997, 160 flew east on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1999 and *ca.* 200 flew north-west and 200 east on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2001. The occasional records of birds on the reservoir (1-6 individuals), although falling during the same period, probably related to feral or unhealthy individuals.

Skeins of unidentified 'grey' geese were occasionally recorded. All sightings fell into the same pattern as mentioned above and probably refer to this species. The 12 records involved skeins of double figures with the exception of the following: 650 (skeins of 250, 200 and 200) flew west on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1994, 100+ flew west on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1997 (these were incorrectly documented as Pink-footed in *Birds in Huddersfield 1997*) and 250+ flew west on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1998 (these were incorrectly documented as Pink-footed in *Birds in Huddersfield 1998*).

### **White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*

Two adults flew west at 1510 hrs. on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1989 (TC, MLD); an adult flew west at 1525 hrs. on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1992 (MLD, MT) and three adults of the nominate race *A. a. albifrons* were present on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1993 (SH). These were the first records for the reservoir and the third, fourth and eighth for the Club area.

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

Previous records: 1951 (1), 1958 (1), 1974 (1) and 1976 (3).

The national increase in the feral population has resulted in a marked upsurge in records. There were between one and three records in each of the years under review save for 1987, 1988, 1990, 1992-95 and 1997. Records now span all months of the year except July. With the exception of *ca.* 180 which flew west at 1620 hrs. on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1985 (BA, MLD, JKP) and 12 on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1996 (AJW) all other records involved between one and seven



individuals. Apart from the skein of *ca.* 180, which is the highest number ever recorded in the Club area, it is more than likely that all other records refer to feral individuals.

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

The national increase in this introduced species has been reflected in a tremendous upsurge in records. Originally the species was a sporadic visitor with most records in the months of May and June, occasionally in all other months save for July and December. This frequency of occupancy continued until 1990, although small numbers (usually in single figures and never more than 27) were recorded in all other months. Between 1991 and 1995, although not present on a daily basis, records were more frequent (especially in autumn) and involved larger flocks: 39 on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1991, 33 on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1991 and 48 on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1995. In most years since 1996, and especially since 2001, there was a marked increase in records between late July and early October. So much so that in some years flocks were present, in high double figures and occasionally in excess of 100, on a daily basis during this period. The largest flocks recorded were during the second half of 2003 when the species was seen almost daily between mid-June and the year end: numbers tended to fluctuate daily, but in excess of 110 were regularly present, the maxima being up to 151 between late October and mid-November and up to 168 in December. In the years 2002 and 2003 the autumn flocks fed in the fields to the west and used the reservoir for loafing and roosting. A single on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1993 was a hybrid with a Barnacle Goose *B. leucopsis*.

### **Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

Previous records: 1966 (1), 1975 (1), 1977 (1) and 1980 (1).

In 1990 what was undoubtedly the same individual was present from 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October, 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> November and 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> December. Four were present on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1991, two of which had colour rings (investigations at the time revealed that they were not BTO or WWT combinations, and were therefore more than likely escapes). A party of three on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1993 contained one that was a hybrid with a Canada Goose *B. canadensis*. A single was present on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1994 and four were seen on 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> November 1996. Considering that feral populations are now widespread in Yorkshire (including a breeding pair at Bretton Park for some of the period under review), it is perhaps unlikely that any of the above refer to birds with a wild origin.

### **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

An adult was present on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1985 (JMP, HQ, DWS) and a party of nine were seen on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1998 (MLD, JJ, DMP, SP). These were the first records for the reservoir and the third and sixth for the Club area. *Birds in Huddersfield 1998* incorrectly states that the nine were in September and that they represented the highest number recorded at an inland site in Yorkshire.

### **Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

A single with a damaged left foot was present on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1990 and one was seen on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1991. These birds had presumably originated from captivity and not the British feral population (mainly in Norfolk).

### **Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

Continued to be recorded annually. Although recorded in every month of the year (as previously), the species was mainly recorded between mid-August and late May, occasionally in June (four of the 19 years under review) and July (seven years). Records generally involved single figure flocks, although up to 19 were occasionally present, but larger flocks were recorded as follows: 23 were present on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1986, 90 (nine departed west at 1940 hrs., 39 flew east at 2040 hrs. and 42 arrived from the west at 2055 hrs.) on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1987, 28 departed west on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1991, 25 arrived from the east at 1825 hrs. on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1994 and 28 were present on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1996. There were no long-staying individuals, all records being of a single days duration except, very occasionally, up to three birds which remained for up to three days. Despite these large flocks, the average number of bird-days per annum deceased: from 1974-1984 it was 60 but during the period under review it was 46.

### **Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa*

A male on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1987 remained until 17<sup>th</sup> June of that year. In 1988, what may have been the same individual was present from 17<sup>th</sup> until 19<sup>th</sup> April and 5<sup>th</sup> May. This species is not admitted to the British List by the British Ornithologists' Union as the breeding population is thought not to be self sustaining. Records are worthy of publishing, however, as the species may eventually become established.

### **Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

A male on 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> April 1987 and two males on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1997 were presumably escapes.

### **Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

No real change in status, occurring in very variable numbers mainly between September and March, but with a small number of records in all other months. Between September and March flocks of anything up to 22 (occasionally up to 50) were recorded, the following being the exceptions: 77 on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1986, 64 on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1996 (see also Teal *A. crecca* below) and 81 on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1997. Although these flocks generally consist of both sexes, a flock of 46 on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1990 were all males. Usually only recorded for a days duration, but, as in the past, when the water level was sufficiently low, thereby uncovering feeding areas, the species has been known to stay for long periods: up to 19 were present daily between 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1989 and 7<sup>th</sup> February 1990 and in 1991 up to 43 were present on most days between 10<sup>th</sup> September and 22<sup>nd</sup> December. The occasional records between

April and August usually involved less than five birds, but nine were present on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1990, 12 on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1994 and 11 on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2001.

### **Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Continued to be recorded as a sporadic visitor. There were records in all the years under review save for 1985, 1987, 1993 and 1997. Although occurrences now span all months of the year, most sightings (81%) fell between July and January. Up to 1989 the species was recorded on a maximum of three days per annum, but since 1990 this has increased to a maximum of six days. All records involved singles or pairs, with the exception of three on both 30<sup>th</sup> September 1994 and 7<sup>th</sup> November 1994, six on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1998 and three on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2002. Apart from two males which were present from 20<sup>th</sup> until 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1992 and a female-type from 14<sup>th</sup> until 16<sup>th</sup> October 1999, all other records were of a single days duration.

### **Teal** *Anas crecca*

Formerly recorded annually with most records occurring between August and November, occasionally in all other months.

There has been a marked shift in occurrences during the period under review: a high proportion of records spanned the period August to January, but there was a marked upsurge in spring (March and April) records. Occurrences in other months (February and May to July) continued to be sporadic. Between August and January flocks were generally present for short periods and usually consisted of single figures (occasionally up to 38), but 63 were present on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1996 (see also Wigeon *A. penelope* above). In years when the water level receded, thereby uncovering feeding areas, the species has been known to increase in numbers and stay for long periods: in 1989 up to 48 were present daily between 24<sup>th</sup> August and 28<sup>th</sup> October and up to 66 were present on most days between 10<sup>th</sup> August 1991 and 6<sup>th</sup> January 1992. In spring, and also February and between May and July, all records involved flocks of ten or less with the exception of 15 on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1986.

### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

No real change in status, although there has been a recent decline in wintering numbers but more pairs than formerly bred (up to 11 pairs per annum since 1995). No more than 20 were present between April and August. During September or October a marked increase normally took place, after which numbers fluctuated until all but the breeding birds had dispersed by the end of March. Although numbers normally fluctuated between 30 and 50, occasionally up to 70 were present, but there were exceptions: up to 88 were present in January 1985, up to 111 in October 1990 and up to 102 in November 1996.

In some years, however, quite the opposite occurred: between September 1988 and March 1989 usually less than 17 were present, between mid-September 1989 and March 1990 usually less than 22 occurred, between December 1990 and March 1991 numbers never rose above 20, between December 1994 and March 1995 never more than 17 occurred and

between November 2002 and March 2003 the maximum number recorded was 18. These figures were not influenced by severe weather conditions.

On 4<sup>th</sup> May 1997 a female was accompanied by 18 ducklings, but they were not seen thereafter. *Birds of the Western Palearctic* vol. I states that this is the maximum for a single female. In 2002 some of the broods were very late e.g. ten newly hatched ducklings on 21<sup>st</sup> July. *BWP* indicates that replacement clutches (which is what these presumably were) can be laid after egg loss, or even after the early loss of ducklings.

### **Pintail** *Anas acuta*

Continued to be recorded as previously, although the average of 35 bird-days per annum recorded during the 1974-1984 period was not maintained. Although recorded annually, there were years (1986, 1993, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002 and 2003) when the species was present on five or less days. As a consequence, the average bird-days per annum during the period under review was only 22. Most occurrences spanned the September/October period (62%) and, although there were records from all other months, these were less frequent than formerly. During the peak period most records were of single figures, the following being the exceptions: 34 on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1989 (this record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1989*), 20 on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1990, 42 flew west at 0925 hrs. on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1991 (with 17 present the following day) and 13 departed in a westerly direction at 1635 hrs. on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1997. Outside the peak period all records were of single figures with a maximum of eight on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1990.

### **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

Previous records: 1966 (1), 1975 (1), 1976 (1) and 1977 (1).

The species has been recorded on a further four occasions: two males and two females on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1986 (MLD, JMP); a male and female on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1990 (MLD *et al.*) and female-types on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1998 (MLD, DHP) and 12<sup>th</sup> September 2000 (DHP).

### **Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Continued to be recorded as an annual visitor in small numbers, but the average bird-days per annum decreased: from 1974-1984 it was 24, but during the period under review it was 16. The majority of records (68%) spanned the period late July to October with a peak in August/September, but there was also a noticeable peak in spring (mid-March to April). Although there were records in all other months (only one in February and May) these were infrequent. All records concerned birds which were present for no more than two days duration (generally only a single day) the maximum involving eight on both 16<sup>th</sup> August 1992 and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1994.

### **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*

Previous record: 1982 (1). This bird was very confiding and therefore considered an escape. There are no recent records.

### **Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Formerly recorded as a winter visitor between September and March (usually less than 12 representing the winter flock), with occasional records between April and August.

The status of this species has changed markedly, and the decrease in wintering birds apparent after the early winter period of 1982 continued to the present day. Although flocks were regularly encountered during the winter period, with some staying for several weeks, the only hint of former times concerned a flock of up to 41 (generally less than 20) which were present daily between 9<sup>th</sup> October 1990 and 13<sup>th</sup> January 1991. Since 1998 winter records became sporadic and in the first winter period of 2003 the species was not recorded (the first record of the year concerned a single on 7<sup>th</sup> September). Flocks during this period were generally of less than 20, very occasionally up to 42, the following being the exceptions: 89 (of which 60 were males: not females as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1986*) on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1986, 73 on 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> November 1996 and 68 on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1999. Records between April and August always involved flocks of less than eight (usually 1-4) and, although fairly frequent, became less so after 1997.

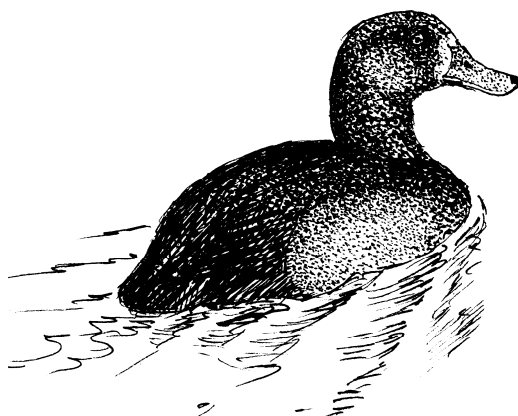
### **Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Up until the first winter period of 1981 the species formed winter flocks with Pochard *A. ferina* (when it was always present in larger numbers) and occurred sporadically at other times of the year. Thereafter the winter flocks ceased and the species became a regular (almost daily) visitor.

This frequency of occurrences continued throughout the period under review and birds were present on most days unless the reservoir became frozen over. Numbers fluctuated markedly with anything between a single and 38 being present, although generally there were less than ten (especially after 1997). The largest flocks always began to assemble in late July or early August. These moult gatherings mainly consisted of males which always dispersed after completing their moult.

### **Scaup** *Aythya marila*

The records of this species continued to show no real pattern to the sporadic appearances, although there were two peaks: July/August (similar to that observed in the 1974-1984 period) and, more noticeably, October/early November (similar to that noted in the 1959-1973 period). With the exception of May, there



were records during all months of the year (only one in January, March, April, June and December).

The species was recorded annually save for 1990, 1993, 1994 and 1997. The majority of records involved singles, occasionally two, the following being the exceptions: 13 (five males: not five females as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1988*) on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1988 (MLD, MT), four (two males) on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1999 (MLD) and six female-types which arrived at 1525 hrs. on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2003 (PB, MLD). Most birds were present for no more than two days duration (generally only a single day), but in 1986 an adult female remained from 25<sup>th</sup> September until 3<sup>rd</sup> October and in 1989 a male was present between 4<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June. The flock of 13 noted above is the largest ever recorded in the Club area.

### **Aythya hybrids**

The following *Aythya* hybrids have been recorded at the reservoir: a male which was present between 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> March 1985 showed characteristics of Paget's Pochard, a hybrid between Pochard *A. ferina* and Ferruginous Duck *A. nyroca* (MLD, JMP) (see Paget's Pochard - an *Aythya* hybrid at Blackmoorfoot. *Birds in Huddersfield 1985*); a female on 31<sup>st</sup> October and 1<sup>st</sup> November 1988 which had a superficial resemblance to a small Scaup *A. marila* was considered to be a Scaup X Tufted Duck *A. fuligula* hybrid (MLD, JMP) and a male on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1996, although showing some characteristics of Lesser Scaup *A. affinis*, proved to be a hybrid between a male Tufted Duck and a female Pochard (MLD).

### **Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

Previous records: 1950 (1), 1956 (1) and 1982 (1). There are no recent records.

### **Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

No real change in status. Continued to be recorded annually, the majority of records (63%) falling between June and August, when most of the birds were drakes. The species was recorded less frequently between September and mid-November and there were occasional records between mid-March and mid-May. Usually seen in single figures (mainly one or two), but occasionally larger flocks were present: 22 (all females) on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1985, 38 (all males) on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1993, 32 (17 males) on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1997, *ca.* 75 (all males bar one) on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1998 and 13 (12 males) on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2002. The majority of birds were only present for one days duration, but singles occasionally stayed for up to five days, the only exception being a female which was present between 14<sup>th</sup> July and 5<sup>th</sup> August 1995.

### **Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

Previous records: 1950 (1), 1960 (1), 1962 (1), 1969 (1) and 1975 (1). There are no recent records.

### **Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

There has been a marked change in the status of this diving duck. Formerly recorded annually, with flocks up to eight being a regular (almost daily) feature between October and April, and occasional singles occurring during the summer months. This pattern of winter occupancy continued, but birds became less frequent after the first winter period of 1987. Since that time, the number of birds present has decreased (generally to less than six) and the species is now best classed as a frequent winter visitor. With the exception of singles on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1990 and 15<sup>th</sup> September 1998, all other first arrivals were during the first half of October. In spring birds had generally departed by late April, but occasionally between one and three remained as late as 24<sup>th</sup> May. The highest counts (there were only 12 double-figure counts during the period under review compared with innumerable double-figure counts for the previous 20 years) included 15 on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1988, 17 on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1997, 44 (of which 18 were adult males) on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1998 and 26 on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1999.

Singles were recorded during the summer months as follows: in 1986 a first-summer male remained from 26<sup>th</sup> May to at least 8<sup>th</sup> November (thereafter the position became obscure due to similar plumaged immigrants), a first-summer male on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1996, in 1998 a female on 6<sup>th</sup> June and 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> July and in 2001 a first-summer male between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June with a different first-summer male from 10<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

### **Smew** *Mergellus albellus*

Previous records: 1970 (2), 1971 (2), 1974 (1), 1976 (1) and 1984 (1).

Although males have been recorded in the past, all present records referred to 'red-heads': a single on 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> November 1994 (JED, SH, DMO, AJW); in November 1995 a single on 4<sup>th</sup> (PB) with two the following day (PB, MLD, JKP) and a single on 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> (JMW); three on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1998 (PDB); in 1999 singles remained from 2<sup>nd</sup> until 9<sup>th</sup> January (MLD *et al.*) and from 20<sup>th</sup> until 28<sup>th</sup> February (MLD *et al.*) and a single was present on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2003 (CH, KH *et al.*).

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

From being a very occasional visitor (eight records of one or two between 1952 and 1972), the species became almost annual between 1976 and 1984 with an average of six bird-days per annum.

During the period under review, birds were recorded annually save for 1987 and 2002, but, although the average bird-days per annum increased to nine, this was inflated by the unprecedented number of occurrences between 1993 and 1995 (48 bird-days in 1993, 24 in 1994 and 45 in 1995). Records spanned all months of the year with the exception of February and August, there being a peak in April/May (especially since 1992) and a very noticeable peak between October and mid-November (48% of records falling into this period). Occurrences of anything up to four (usually singles or two) were the norm, the only exception being eight males on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1993 (AJW).

Most records involved birds which were present for no more than two days duration (generally only one), but in 1993 a pair were present between 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June (with probably the same pair between 21<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>), in 1994 a male remained from 14<sup>th</sup> until 19<sup>th</sup> May (with probably the same male between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>) and in 1995 a male was present between 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> June and a 'red-head' remained from 5<sup>th</sup> until 16<sup>th</sup> November.

### **Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

The increase in records apparent during the 1974-1984 period continued, with the species becoming increasingly frequent since December 1996. Previously the species had mainly been recorded between October and December and again in March. Up to 1996, however, there was a marked upsurge in January/February records, with the majority (97%) falling between mid-September and March. Number involved at this time were always small, generally singles, but occasionally flocks of up to eight were present. The only records outside this period were of a male and female on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1986, a flock of 21 which arrived at 1745 hrs. and departed south-west after a five minute stay on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1989 and nine which flew west at 0925 hrs. on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1994.

After 1996, this pattern of occurrence continued, but the frequency of observations increased markedly. Whereas in the past birds had generally only been present for a days duration (occasionally up to two or three and once a pair remained for ten), observations became almost daily between October and March. Up to December 2001 the number of individuals involved was always in single figures, but since that time flocks of anything up to 25 became the norm and up to 31 were present in February 2001. Towards the latter end of the period under review, up to six were occasionally present in April, but the only May record involved a female on 18<sup>th</sup> 1997. This increase can best be gauged by comparing the number of bird-days per annum: in the years 1974-1984 it was ten, between 1985 and 1996 it had doubled to 20, but during the last seven years it increased to an amazing 327.

Interestingly, most of the records since 1996 have tended to involve birds that were not present during the course of the day, but were observed to fly in during the evening, either to feed or roost. By first light the following morning they had usually departed.

### **Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Previous records: 1977 (1) and 1978 (1).

This introduced species was recorded in 11 of the 19 years under review. There being single records in 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1997, 2000 and 2002 and two or three records in 1995, 1996 and 1999. With the exception of a first-year male on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1987 (MLD, DMO, JMP), four males and three females on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1990 (MLD), a female on 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> March 1991 (MLD, JMP) and a male on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2000 (MLD) all other records fell between 11<sup>th</sup> July and 11<sup>th</sup> November. These records involved between one and three individuals (generally only one) which were present for no more than two days duration except for a female-type which remained between 30<sup>th</sup> August and 6<sup>th</sup> September 1996 (MLD, JKP *et al.*). This last mentioned bird was incorrectly stated to have been present until 27<sup>th</sup> September in *Birds in Huddersfield 1996*.



### **Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

A 'cream-crown' on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1999 gained height on the thermals over Meltham Cop before drifting off in a north-easterly direction (TD, JJ, DMP); a 'cream-crown' flew west-south-west at 1350 hrs. on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2002 (CH) and during the same year one drifted west at 1440 hrs. on 1<sup>st</sup> September (TD, CH). In 2003 a 'cream-crown' hunted along the west bank for ten minutes before drifting off westwards at 1050 hrs. on 9<sup>th</sup> August (MLD, DHP). These were the first records for the reservoir. Excluding all escapes, and allowing for recent taxonomic changes, this was the 200<sup>th</sup> species to be recorded at the reservoir.

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

Previous record: 1981 (1). There are no recent records.

### **Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

A 'ring-tail' drifted west at 0650 hrs. on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1997 (MLD). This was the first record for the reservoir and the seventh for the Club area.

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

Previous records: 1976 (3), 1977 (6), 1978 (1) and 1979 (1).

The only record since this time concerns an adult on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2003 which was being mobbed by Carrion Crows *Corvus corone* over the south bank, the bird eventually departed over Meltham Cop (TD).

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

The national decrease in this species, caused by the use of chlorinated hydrocarbons during the 1950s and 1960s, resulted in only two records during the 1959-1973 period. The banning of these chemicals, however, resulted in a phenomenal increase in the national population. This increase being reflected in the Club area and also at Blackmoorfoot, so much so that between 1980 and 1984 the species averaged 36 bird-days per annum.

During the period under review, this upsurge in records continued and resulted in an increase to an average of 45 bird-days per annum. As in the past, birds were recorded throughout the year, although they were less apparent between April and June and there was generally a sharp increase in records during the autumn. Most records were of singles, very occasionally two.

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

Previous record: between 1958 and 1962 (1).

There were two records during 2001: one drifted to the north-west at 1245 hrs. on 28<sup>th</sup> March (TG) and a single circling Meltham Cop on 7<sup>th</sup> April drifted off in an easterly direction (TD). In 2002 one drifted east at 1620 hrs. on 23<sup>rd</sup> April (TG).

### **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

Previous record: 1971 (1).

There were a further five records in the period under review: one flew west on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1991 (TD, CH); one flew north-west at 1825 hrs. on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1996 (PB); one circled several times before flying off westwards on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2000 (KW); one flew south-east at 1145 hrs. on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2002 (MLD, DHP) and one flew east at 1615 hrs. on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2003 (SP). The 30<sup>th</sup> March record was the earliest for the Club area.

### **Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

No real change in status, one or two birds generally being present throughout the year. In years of unsettled winter weather, however, birds were totally absent (i.e. no records in November/December 1986) or very scarce. In 1989 a pair nested in an old Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* nest in Orange Wood and since 1991 a pair nested annually in the Yorkshire Water tower along the north embankment (additionally, in 1992 a pair attempted to breed in a hole in a wall in the south-west corner overflow field and in 1993 a pair probably bred in Orange Wood).

### **Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

The marked decrease in records continued. During the years 1974-1979 the species averaged 17 bird-days per annum but only 9 in the years 1980-1984. Since this time there has been another fall in records (only 28 during the period under review), giving an average number of bird-days per annum of less than two. The species was recorded annually save for 1993, 1996 and 1997. All records involved singles, with 64% occurring between mid-July and October and 25% in mid-March/April. The others were in January (1), May (1) and November (1).

The omission of the words “within the Club area” at the end of the first sentence in the 1974-1984 review gives the impression that the species bred at Blackmoorfoot. This has never been the case, the end of the sentence should read “.... suffered a decline, this paralleling the decrease in the species’ breeding status within the Club area.”.

### **Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

An immature landed briefly on the north bank wall on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1990 (JE & SMD), a single was present on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2003 (MLD) and one was chasing Swallows *Hirundo rustica* on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2003 (PB). These were the first records for the reservoir.

### **Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

Previous records: 1977 (1), 1978 (1), 1981 (1), 1982 (1), 1983 (1) and 1984 (2).

There were no further records, with the exception of an immature which was wearing jesses on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1985, until a single was seen on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1989 (TD). Since 1991, in line with the national (and local) increase in the breeding population, there was an upsurge in records and the species was then recorded annually. There were never more than five records per annum (1995 and 1996), but two distinct peaks were apparent: between February and early April (26% of records) and from August to mid-November (55%). Other records involved singles in June (1), July (2) and December (1). All records involved singles with the exception of a male and female which flew north together on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1998.

On 5<sup>th</sup> October 1991 a female stooped, and hit, a Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, which fell into the reservoir. Thereafter it flew over the corpse and picked it from the waters surface with one foot (MLD).

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

Two on Meltham Cop on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1997 (AJW) and a single along the west bank on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2000 (KW) remain the only records of this introduced species.

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

Continued to be recorded as a sporadic visitor, but pairs bred in four of the years under review. In 1989, 1991, 1992 and 1997 single pairs bred on Meltham Cop (the first breeding evidence from the reservoir). During the years when the species was recorded but did not breed (1990, 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2003) there were never more than two records per annum. Although Meltham Cop produced the majority of records, the species was occasionally seen in the fields to the east and west of the reservoir. There was no set pattern to these occurrences, birds being recorded in March (once), April (twice), July (once), October (twice) and December (twice). Numbers involved were always small, coveys of five on Meltham Cop on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1996 and six in the fields to the east on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1999 being the maxima.

### **Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

Previous record: 1977 (1).

A male was singing in the north-east corner on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1990 (TD) and a male was singing to the west of the reservoir (Black Moor) from 18<sup>th</sup> until 21<sup>st</sup> June 2003 (CH, DHP *et al.*).

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

Up until 1991, the species remained a casual visitor, with singles in 1985 (17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> May), 1989 (13<sup>th</sup> April) and 1991 (19<sup>th</sup> October) but, after a single (all white bird) on 11<sup>th</sup>

September 1995 (not 9<sup>th</sup> November as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1995*) the species was recorded annually and, as in the past, occasionally bred. Since 1996 singles were present for extended periods (mainly between April and July) and pairs bred in 1996 (south-west corner overflow field) and 1997 (Orange Wood). The majority of records concerned individuals which had taken up residence in Orange Wood.

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

A single seen briefly in flight along the west bank on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1988 (MLD) was the first record for the reservoir.

### **Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Records during the 1974-1984 period were almost annual (with one or two pairs breeding in three of these years), but the species was nowhere near as common as formerly.

Between 1985 and 1996 (save for 1989, in which year a pair bred) the species continued to be recorded infrequently. The species was usually recorded singly (occasionally two were present), but records spanned all months and there was no set pattern to the occurrences. Between 1997 and 2003 the species bred annually (no more than two pairs per year) and, unless the winter weather turned inclement, birds were present throughout the year. After the failed breeding of 2003, when the pair was last seen on 5<sup>th</sup> June, no more occurred during the year. Excluding any young of the season, the highest counts were of five or six in late September/early October 1997 and September/October 1999.

### **Coot** *Fulica atra*

The marked increase in records since 1977 stabilized and the occasional breeding attempts continued. In ten of the years under review (1986-89, 1992, 1994, 1998-2000 and 2002), up to two pairs attempted to breed. As previously, records spanned all months of the year with no real pattern to the occurrences emerging. Between late July 1985 and early March 1990, and again from mid-August 1993 until early June 1994, with the exception of short interludes caused by inclement winter weather, the species was a permanent resident. Most records involved single figure (usually 1-6) with a maxima of 16 on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1986 and 13 on both 11<sup>th</sup> January 1987 and 18<sup>th</sup> August 1997.

### **Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Continued to be recorded as a passage migrant with occasional records outside the two main passage periods. The maximum bird-days during the period under review was 29 (1996) with an average of 14 per annum.

Recorded annually, with 50% of records falling between mid-July and the end of August. The increase in spring records (April to mid-June) noted between 1974 and 1984 continued, and 37% of records occurred during this period. Numbers during these two peaks were always in low single figures (usually one or two) with the exception of nine on 5<sup>th</sup> August

1988 and flocks of 13 which were present on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1991, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1995 (all adults) and 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1996 (all adults). The small number of records at other times of year (January to March, September and November) involved between one and three birds (usually only one), but five were present on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1992.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Bird-days
1985					3		2	6					12
1986					2		2	2					12
1987					2	1	1	4					15
1988	1		1				2	3					16
1989					3	2	1						13
1990					1	1	3	4	2		1		20
1991			1	1		1	2	1					18
1992							2	1	2				13
1993					1		3	1					12
1994									1				1
1995					1		2	1					16
1996		1	1		3	2	2	4					29
1997				3	3	1							7
1998			1	1	4		2	1					15
1999			1		2	2	2	1					12
2000				3			1		1				6
2001		1		1		1	5	4					18
2002				1	2		2	1	1				14
2003		1	1	1	1	1							8

**Table 1:** Oystercatcher - the distribution of records as shown by days present per month and the total bird-days per annum.

### **Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Previous record: 1978 (1).

A single in a field to the west of the reservoir (Black Moor) for a few hours on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1989 (TD, DHP, SP) was the fifth record for the Club area.

### **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

No real change in status, birds occurring sporadically and occasionally breeding. Recorded annually save for 1987, 1988, 1999, 2000 and 2001. In 1990 two pairs each raised three young to the flying stage and the following year, although a pair were displaying, scrape building and copulating, no eggs were laid. In the years when no breeding attempts occurred, there was a maximum of 34 bird-days (1993), but the average for the period under review was only seven. All records were in the period 3<sup>rd</sup> April (a single in 1996) to 7<sup>th</sup> September (a single in 2003), with most falling between May and July. Excluding 1990, when two pairs bred, the species was usually recorded singly, but occasionally two were present, the only exceptions being three which flew west on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1985, three adults on both 7<sup>th</sup> July 1993 and 13<sup>th</sup> July 1995 and three on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1996.

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

Continued to be recorded as previously, being predominantly an autumn passage migrant in very variable numbers with occasional records in spring. The species was recorded annually, with 84% of records falling between July and September. There were occasional records in October/November, all of which involved singles, the latest being on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2002. The other records all fell between mid-April and late May. In the 1974-1984 period there had been occasional records in June but, interestingly, none occurred during this month in the period under review. Records in spring were always of one or two, but numbers in autumn, although generally in single figures (usually one or two, occasionally up to seven) there were exceptions: ten flew south-west (not south-east as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1985*) on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1985 and 11 were present on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1989.

The maximum bird-days during the period under review was 105 (1989) with an average of 13 per annum.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Bird-days
1985									2				11
1986					1		1	2					4
1987					1			3	1				5
1988							1	1					2
1989					1		1	9	17	4			105
1990				3	2		1	14	17				61
1991					1			3	1				12
1992									2				2
1993					1			1					2
1994								1	1				6
1995					1		1	4	3				12
1996				2	1			3	2	1			11
1997									1	1			6
1998								1					4
1999								1					1
2000								2					3
2001							2	1	1				5
2002								1			1		2
2003									1				1

**Table 2:** Ringed Plover - the distribution of records as shown by days present per month and the total bird-days per annum.

## **Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

There are three records, all from the large field to the west of the reservoir: two were present on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1995 with three being in residence from 14<sup>th</sup> until 16<sup>th</sup> (MLD); three on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2002 departed to the north-west at 1915 hrs. (DHP *et al.*) and a single was present on 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> May 2003 (PDB, CH *et al.*). These were the first records for the reservoir.

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

Mainly recorded as a spring and autumn visitor (1959-1974), but between 1975 and 1984, although there were still spring and autumn peaks, the species also became a winter visitor.

This pattern of occurrences continued during the period under review, but, from being a rare visitor in May and June, the species became more frequent and flocks in the large field to the west of the reservoir became a regular feature from 1989 onwards. Numbers at this time of year fluctuated, with generally less than 30 being present, but there were occasional flocks in excess of this, the maximum being 53 on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1999 and up to 58 in May 2002.

The build-up of autumn flocks commenced from July onwards and normally reached a peak in September (although in some years i.e. 1988, 1992, 1998, 1999, 2001 and 2003 birds were very scarce). Generally less than 80 were present at this time, the maxima being up to 220 in late July 1985, up to 170 in late August 1986 and up to 196 in September 1991. Between October and February flock sizes fluctuated widely (unless the area was vacated due to severe winter weather), the maxima being 180 on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1986, up to 216 in late October/early November 1991, 165 on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1995 and up to 420 in late October 2003. These winter flocks, if not overflying the reservoir, were present in the large field to the west or fields to the east.

In March and April flocks were usually smaller (and more predictable), but numbers occasionally built up to 190, and in April 1990 up to 353 were present. These spring assemblages usually included a proportion of birds with blacker 'faces' than the British breeding population (formerly regarded as the 'Northern' race '*altifrons*', but now known to be a clinal difference) and were presumably on passage to breeding grounds much further north.

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

Previous records: 1969 (1), 1971 (1), 1972 (2), 1973 (1), 1974 (3), 1976 (4), 1978 (6), 1979 (2), 1980 (1), 1981 (1), 1982 (2) and 1983 (3).

Continued to be recorded as a sporadic visitor until 1994, after which there were no occurrences. Records during the period under review were as follows: a single flew south at 0845 hrs. on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1985 (MLD, JMP); singles were heard calling on 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> August 1986 (JMP); a single flew west on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1987 (MLD); two flew north-east on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1988 (MLD, JMP); a single was present on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1989 (JMP); one flew south on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1990 (MT); in 1991 a single was present on 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> September with three between 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> (MLD, TP *et al.*) and a single was present on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1994 (MLD).

Analysis of all records from the reservoir shows that they fell between 14<sup>th</sup> July (1979) and 31<sup>st</sup> December (1976) with 31% in August, 26% in September and 28% in October.

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

The pattern to the occurrences of this species continued as previously, but number involved were reduced (especially after 1992) and the number of breeding pairs, in line with the

national long-term population trend, decreased. The build-up of autumn flocks occurred from June onwards and normally reached a peak in August/September. Between 1985 and 1992 these assemblages consisted of anything up to 950 strong and in July 1990 peaked at 1100. Numbers of this magnitude have not been recorded since, flocks of 300 or less being the norm, the only exceptions being up to 417 in mid-July 1995, up to 444 in late September 1996 and up to 468 between July and September 2001.

Winter flocks fluctuated in response to weather conditions and birds tended to vacate the area during the severest weather. Generally less than 200, very occasionally up to 550, were present at this time, but in 2001 flocks of up to 590 occurred in mid-October with up to 600 in mid-December (there had been a maximum of only 340 between these dates) and up to 820 were present between October 1989 and mid-February 1990.

As with Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, these flocks were generally present in the large field to the west or fields to the east of the reservoir. Flocks (if present) began to disperse during March/April, but pairs remained to breed in most years, either on Meltham Cop or in fields to the west and east of the reservoir. Between 1985 and 1995 up to a dozen pairs held territories in these areas, but since this time the maximum number of pairs has never exceeded two, and in some years no breeding attempts were undertaken. The only cold weather movement noted during the period under review concerned a flock of 105 which flew west on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1987.

### **Knot** *Calidris canutus*

Continued to be recorded as an occasional visitor with records in 1989 (1), 1990 (1), 1991 (1), 1995 (3), 1996 (1), 1997 (1), 1999 (1) and 2003 (1). All occurrences fell between 19<sup>th</sup> July (1990) and 1<sup>st</sup> November (1997) and involved singles except in 1995 when two juveniles were present on 29<sup>th</sup> August (MLD), three were present on 5<sup>th</sup> September (DM, KW) and a party of five departed in a westerly direction at 1650 hrs. on 7<sup>th</sup> October (PB). With the exception of an adult in 50% summer plumage which stayed from 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> August 1999 (MLD, JKP, DHP) all other records were of a single days duration.

Analysis of all records from the reservoir shows that they fell between 19<sup>th</sup> July (1990) and 5<sup>th</sup> November (1973) with 84% falling between mid-July and late September.

### **Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

Continued to be recorded as an autumn passage migrant with occasional occurrences in spring; the frequency paralleling that observed between 1979 and 1984, being less regular than the previous five years. There were records in 1986 (1), 1989 (4), 1990 (3), 1993 (2), 1995 (2), 1996 (1) and 2001 (2). The spring records fell between 13<sup>th</sup> May (1996) and 7<sup>th</sup> June (2001), with those in autumn falling between 18<sup>th</sup> July (1995) and 26<sup>th</sup> August (1989). All occurrences involved one or two individuals with the exceptions of three which were moulting into summer plumage on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1989 (MLD, DMP) and three summer plumaged birds which flew west at 1230 hrs. on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1995 (MLD). Except for a summer plumaged bird which stayed from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> June 2001 (MLD, TG, CH), all other records were of a single days duration.



Analysis of all records from the reservoir shows that 19% fell between mid-May and early June, the remaining 81% falling between mid-July and late September.

### **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

Previous records: 1959 (1), 1970 (4), 1971 (3), 1973 (2), 1975 (2), 1976 (6), 1978 (5) and 1983 (1).

The only records during the period under review concern a juvenile on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1994 (MLD), two juveniles on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1995 (PB, KW) and in September 1996 a party of eight juveniles on 20<sup>th</sup> with ten juveniles the following day and a single juvenile on 23<sup>rd</sup> (PB, MLD *et al.*). The records for 18<sup>th</sup> September 1996 (juvenile) and 19<sup>th</sup> September 1996 (two juveniles) published in *Birds in Huddersfield 1996* were given in error.

### **White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*

A single on 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> July 1990 (MLD *et al.*) was the first record for the reservoir and the Club area.

### **Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

Previous records: 1969 (1), 1975 (2), 1978 (2) and 1980 (1).

In September 1990 an adult was present on 22<sup>nd</sup> (MT) and an immature on 24<sup>th</sup> (MLD) and a single was seen on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1991 (MLD *et al.*).

### **Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

Previous record: 1976 (1).

Singles were present on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1987 (MLD, TD) and 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> October 1989 (MLD, JKP, JMP, MT). These were the fourth and fifth records for the Club area.

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

Continued to be recorded as a regular visitor, mainly in autumn (July to October), less frequently in spring (March to May) with occasional records between November and February. Numbers were very variable, generally less than ten (normally only one or two), but 18 were present on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1991 and 14 on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1995. Small parties (usually less than eight) were regularly recorded overflying the reservoir (normally in a westerly direction) the maxima being 18 west on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1991, 13 west on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1994 (this record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1994*) and 12 (10 + 1 + 1) west on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2001.

1990 was exceptional in that up to four (generally one or two) were present almost daily between 7<sup>th</sup> May and 5<sup>th</sup> August. The only periods when birds can utilize the reservoir for feeding in this manner is when the water level is low. However, even in years when the water level was low, with the exception of 1984 when up to 12 birds were recorded daily between 30<sup>th</sup> April and 18<sup>th</sup> July, this phenomenon was not repeated.

### **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Tryngites subruficollis*

Previous records: 1975 (2). There are no recent records.

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

Formerly recorded as an autumn passage migrant with a small number of records in all years between 1970 and 1984 with the exception of 1982.

Since this time, the species has become a sporadic visitor and was only recorded in nine of the 19 years under review (see Table 3). All records spanned the period 20<sup>th</sup> July to 1<sup>st</sup> October (both 1990), the largest proportion (93%) being in August/September. Most records involved between one and three individuals, but four were present on five dates in August 1991 (see below), four were present on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1994 (not September as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1994*) and five flew west at 0855 hrs. on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2002.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Bird-days
1985									1				2
1986								3					4
1987													0
1988													0
1989								2	1				3
1990							1		3	1			5
1991								12	17				64
1992													0
1993								2					4
1994								1	7				14
1995													0
1996													0
1997													0
1998													0
1999													0
2000								1	4				5
2001													0
2002								1					5
2003													0

**Table 3:** Ruff - the distribution of records as shown by days present per month and the total bird-days per annum.

Birds were generally present for a days duration, but 1991 was exceptional: in August, after a single on 7<sup>th</sup>, four on 18<sup>th</sup> and one on 22<sup>nd</sup>, between two and four were recorded daily until 15<sup>th</sup> September and a single was present for the following two days. Although this was the highest annual number of bird-days (64) ever recorded at the reservoir, the average over the period under review was only 6 (14 between 1974-1984).

### **Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Previous records: 1959 (1), 1964 (1), 1971 (5), 1972 (3), 1975 (4), 1976 (2), 1978 (2), 1979 (5), 1980 (1), 1982 (3), 1983 (7) and 1984 (2).

The presence of this species is totally dependant upon the water level during the winter months, high water levels covering the feeding area, although it is possible that birds go unrecorded in the south-west corner overflow field. The only records during the period under review are as follows: in 1986 a single was present on 6<sup>th</sup> October (MLD) and two were seen on 10<sup>th</sup> (MLD, JMP); two were present on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1994 (MLD) and a single was seen on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1997 (MLD).

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

Formerly recorded throughout the year in variable numbers (totals in winter being governed by the water level and the severity of the weather). A build-up in numbers was apparent in July/August with a peak in October/November (exceeding 50 in most years, with a maximum of 92). After 1978, however, the numbers present decreased by about 50%. Small numbers probably bred in the fields to the west in most years, and there were occasional records of pairs nesting within the confines of the reservoir.

The level of occurrences apparent since 1978 persisted until the end of 1991, but the numbers present were much reduced (usually less than ten), with the only return to former times occurring during the winter of 1989/90 (almost daily with a maximum of 26 on 4<sup>th</sup> November) and between September and November 1991 (daily, with up to 47 in October/November).

Since this time, the status of the species has changed yet again and it can now best be classed as a sporadic visitor in very small numbers. Although there was a tendency for there to be more records in autumn, there was no peak and this pattern became even less apparent after 1997. Records normally involved less than ten individuals (only occasionally higher) the maxima being up to 19 in October/November 1996 and up to 23 in November 1997. Birds were occasionally recorded overflying the reservoir, usually in a westerly direction, the only records of significance being a flock of nine which flew south-west on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1995 and a flock of 11 which flew west on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2001.

The only breeding attempts during the period under review involved single pairs in the south-west corner overflow field in 1985, 1987, 1989 and 1990.

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

Previous records: 1959 (1), 1960 (3), 1969 (1), 1971 (1), 1972 (1), 1975 (4), 1976 (1), 1977 (1), 1978 (2), 1979 (2), 1981 (2) and 1983 (2).

There are only five dated records of this crepuscular species during the period under review, all concerning singles: 4<sup>th</sup> September 1990 (TD); 10<sup>th</sup> November 1990 (TD); 27<sup>th</sup> October 1993 (MLD); 15<sup>th</sup> December 1995 (TD) and 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1996 (TD). Over the years, singles, which have not been reported, have occasionally been seen in Orange Wood during the winter months (mainly October/November) (TD).

### **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*

Previous records: 1974 (1), 1975 (1), 1976 (2), 1978 (2), 1981 (1), 1983 (1) and 1984 (2).

There were a further eight records during the period under review, all concerning birds in full (or near full) breeding plumage with the exception of the individual in 1998. A single departed south on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1986 (MLD, DMP); one was present on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1990 (AD); two arrived from the west at 1945 hrs. on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1994 (MLD, DMO, JKP); two were present on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1995 (not 4<sup>th</sup> as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1995*) (DMO, JKP); singles were present on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1996 (MLD, DMO) and 5<sup>th</sup> August 1998 (MLD); one flew west at 1550 hrs. on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2000 (MLD) and a single flew west at 0945 hrs. on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2003 (MLD).

Analysis of all records from the reservoir shows that 78% fell between July and mid-August with 11% in both April and June.

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

Formerly recorded as an almost annual visitor, with a small number of records in all years between 1967 and 1984, with the exceptions of 1968 and 1973.

During the period under review, the number of records decreased, although the pattern of occurrences remained similar. There were records in 1985 (3), 1987 (4), 1988 (2) and a single in 1990, 1991, 1996, 1997 and 1998. The majority of records (71%) fell between 5<sup>th</sup> July (1985) and 21<sup>st</sup> November (1987). Most records were of one or two individuals which usually flew west or departed in a westerly direction, the only flocks in excess being six west on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1987 (MLD, DMO); four west on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1988 (MLD, JMP); five west on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1991 (MLD) and four departed in a westerly direction at 1725 hrs. (after a 20 minute stay) on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1996 (JKP).

There were three spring records: a single flew west on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1987 (MLD); one was present on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1988 (MLD, JMP) and a single flew west on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1998 (MLD). The only record outside these periods concerned a single which flew south on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1987 (MLD).

Analysis of all records from the reservoir shows that 74% fell between July and September, 15% in October/November and 9% between mid-March and early May.

## **Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

Continued to be recorded as formerly, although there was a noticeable decrease in the average number of bird-days per annum: from 18 during 1974-1984 to five during the period under review.

The species was recorded almost annually (see Table 4) and, as in the past, was predominantly an autumn visitor with occasional records in spring. Records in autumn were all between 27<sup>th</sup> June (1993) and 5<sup>th</sup> September (2002) with 76% falling between mid-July and late August.

Numbers involved were always low, generally one to three individuals (usually one or two), the only exceptions being four west on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1990, nine west on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1990 and nine west at 1930 hrs. on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1995. Spring records, which occurred annually between 1993 and 1997 and again in 1999, 2000 and 2003, fell between 16<sup>th</sup> April (1996) and 31<sup>st</sup> May (1999) and involved singles with the exception of two which departed north-west (not flying west as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1994*) on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1994, six which flew south-east at 1859 hrs. on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1995 and four which departed in a westerly direction at 0935 hrs. on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2000. The majority of records (73%) concerned birds overflying the reservoir or departing in a westerly direction.

	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Bird-days</b>
<b>1985</b>							2						2
<b>1986</b>							3	5					13
<b>1987</b>							1	1					2
<b>1988</b>							1	1					2
<b>1989</b>							3						4
<b>1990</b>							5	2					19
<b>1991</b>													0
<b>1992</b>							3	2					8
<b>1993</b>					1	1							2
<b>1994</b>					1								2
<b>1995</b>				2				1					16
<b>1996</b>				1				1					2
<b>1997</b>					1								1
<b>1998</b>													0
<b>1999</b>					1								1
<b>2000</b>				1				1					6
<b>2001</b>							1	1					3
<b>2002</b>									1				1
<b>2003</b>					1		4	1					6

**Table 4:** Whimbrel - the distribution of records as shown by days present per month and the total bird-days per annum.

### **Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

Continued to be recorded as a regular spring and autumn migrant with records in summer and occasionally during the winter months. Although this pattern of occurrences continued during the period under review, there were fewer records, especially after 1994. Spring passage occurred in March and April (occasionally from mid-February) and autumn passage between July and September (occasionally up to mid-October). The number of records during May and June remained stable until 1994, after which the species became a sporadic visitor. These summer occurrences, usually of one or two birds, probably involved breeding individuals from Black Moor (to the west of the reservoir), but single pairs bred on Meltham Cop in 1985 and 1986 and in the fields to the west in 1988.

Passage records (during both periods) mainly concerned birds which were overflying the reservoir in a westerly direction. Those in spring usually involved one or two individuals, occasionally up to five, the only exceptions being six south on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1986, in 1988 nine west on 2<sup>nd</sup> April and nine (one west and eight east) on 4<sup>th</sup> April (this record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1988*), 14 west on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1999 and 20 south at 1440 hrs. on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2002. Numbers in autumn were more variable (usually one or two, not infrequently up to six, occasionally up to 11) the exceptions being 20 (15 + 5) west on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1986 (not 20<sup>th</sup> as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1986*), 36 (7 + 6 + 18 + 5) west on the rather early date of 27<sup>th</sup> June 1993 and 19 (17 + 1 + 1) west on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2002.

The only winter (November to January) records involved singles (for one day only) in December 1985, January 1986, November 1987, November 1988, November and December 1989, January and November 1993, November 1994, January and November 1995 and November 2002.

### **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

Previous records: 1962 (1), 1969 (1), 1971 (1), 1972 (2), 1973 (2), 1974 (4), 1976 (3), 1977 (1), 1978 (4), 1979 (1), 1981 (2) and 1983 (1).

The only records during the period under review are as follows: in 1985 a single flew west on 4<sup>th</sup> September (MLD); a single was present on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1991 (MLD, AJW) and in September 1995 a single on 2<sup>nd</sup> departed in a southerly direction (JKP), a juvenile on 3<sup>rd</sup> departed in a westerly direction (PB), two juveniles were present on 10<sup>th</sup> (MLD) and a single juvenile was present on 18<sup>th</sup> (KW).

Analysis of all records from the reservoir shows that 86% fell between mid-July and mid-September, 7% (two records) in June and 3.5% (single records) in both October and December.

### **Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

Formerly recorded as an annual visitor in small numbers during spring and autumn, with occasional summer records (1959-1973). Thereafter (up to 1984), although following a similar pattern, the species was recorded with increased frequency, there was a marked tendency for birds to linger during autumn and there were occasional winter records.

Since this time, although the species was recorded annually, there was a marked decrease in records, especially after 1996 (only three in 1999 and one in 2002 and 2003). Spring records (March/April) occurred annually with the exception of 1999 and 2003, and never exceeded three birds (one or two being the norm). Records in autumn (July to mid-October) were annual, with the exception of 2002, and normally involved between one and three individuals (usually one), the only numbers in excess being four on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1990 and nine on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1996 (this record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1996*).

Summer records (May/June) were infrequent, but one or two were present on a number of days in 1989, 1990 and 1993, although, unlike 1984, they were not suspected of breeding nearby. The only winter records involved singles in November 1986, January 1987, November 1988, November 1989, January 1995, November 1999 (two dates) and November 2001.

### **Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

Continued to be recorded as formerly, being predominantly an autumn visitor with occasional records in spring. Although the species was recorded almost annually (see Table 5), there was a noticeable decrease in the average bird-days per annum: from 24 during 1974-1984 to eight during the period under review.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Bird-days
1985							1	3	1				7
1986							1	2					4
1987								1	1				2
1988							2	1					5
1989								2	1				5
1990					1			15	7	1			49
1991							1	7	4				15
1992							1		1				3
1993					2			2					7
1994								2	2				4
1995								4	6				17
1996								2	2				5
1997								4					4
1998													0
1999								3	1				4
2000													0
2001					1		1	2	1				5
2002					1			1	1				3
2003								1					5

**Table 5:** Greenshank - the distribution of records as shown by days present per month and the total bird-days per annum.

Extreme dates for autumn records were 5<sup>th</sup> July (2001) and 3<sup>rd</sup> October (1990), with 82% falling between August and mid-September. Numbers involved were always low, generally between one and three individuals (usually one or two), the only exceptions being nine on

19<sup>th</sup> August 1990, with four the following day and five which departed west at 1930 hrs. (after a five minute stay) on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2003.

Most birds were present for no more than two days duration (usually only one), but two remained from 21<sup>st</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> August 1990 and a single from 30<sup>th</sup> August until 4<sup>th</sup> September 1991. The only spring records involved singles on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1990, 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> May 1993, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2001 and one which flew west at 0710 hrs. on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2002.

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

Formerly recorded as an autumn passage migrant on a near annual basis (especially between 1969 and 1983) with records involving one or two birds, very occasionally three, and a maximum of 13 bird-days in 1978.

The number of records has since declined and the species was only recorded in nine of the 19 years under review: 1985 (one record), 1986 (1), 1987 (6), 1988 (1), 1989 (3), 1994 (1), 1995 (1), 1996 (2) and 2001 (1). As in the past, all records were during the autumn period, the extremes of dates being 24<sup>th</sup> July (1989) and 10<sup>th</sup> September (1994) (not October as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1994*). All records involved singles with the exception of two on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1996.

Analysis of all records from the reservoir shows that 94% fell between mid-July and late September with 62% in August.

### **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

Previous records: 1961 (1), 1965 (1), 1975 (1), 1980 (3) and 1984 (1). There are no recent records.

### **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*

An adult in full summer plumage was present for about five hours on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1989 (MLD, MT *et al.*). This was the first record for the Club area and the second for Yorkshire.

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

Formerly recorded as a regular autumn visitor with occasional records in spring (1959-1973). Thereafter (up to 1984), although following a similar pattern, the species was recorded more frequently in spring and in 1984 a pair remained to breed.

Since this time, the species continued to be recorded annually, but from 1985 until 1995 the demarcation between the two migration periods became clouded, with one or two individuals (very occasionally three or four) being noted regularly throughout the summer months, and pairs bred in 1990 and 1991 (the 1990 breeding attempt was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1990*). Following this period, the species reverted to being mainly a spring



(April/May) and autumn (July to September) visitor, but there was a marked decrease in records after 1997.

Spring birds had usually arrived by the second half of April, the earliest being singles on 11<sup>th</sup> (1999) and 12<sup>th</sup> (1988). In autumn the latest concerned two on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1986 and a single on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1996. Although there were spring and autumn records during each of the years under review, the species vacated the area very early in some of these, there being no birds after August in 1986, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2001 and 2003, and there were no records in 2002 following a single on 8<sup>th</sup> July. Numbers involved were never very high (usually less than four, one or two being the norm, but very occasionally five or six) the only numbers in excess being eight on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1987 and seven on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1990.

### **Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Previously recorded on a near annual basis, especially between 1970 and 1984, with a small number of records (1-7) each year which mainly spanned the autumn period.

There has been a marked decline in records since this time and the species was only recorded in five of the 19 years under review. In 1986 an adult departed in a westerly direction on 29<sup>th</sup> July (MLD, TD), an adult flew west on 1<sup>st</sup> August (MLD) and two immatures were present on 2<sup>nd</sup> September (MLD); in 1987 two flew west on 1<sup>st</sup> August (MLD) and three flew west on 16<sup>th</sup> September (MLD); a single was present on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1989 (only the third ever spring occurrence) (MLD, DMO); in 1990 a single flew west on 30<sup>th</sup> July (MLD) and two flew west (with a Sanderling *Calidris alba*) on 8<sup>th</sup> August (MLD) and in 1991 a single departed in a northerly direction on 25<sup>th</sup> August (PB, TC).

Analysis of all records from the reservoir shows that 92% fell between mid-July and early October with 46% in August and 8% in May/early June.

### **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Previous record: 1969 (1). There are no recent records.

### **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A dark-phase immature seen chasing a Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1998 (MLD) was the first record for the reservoir and the fourth for the Club area.

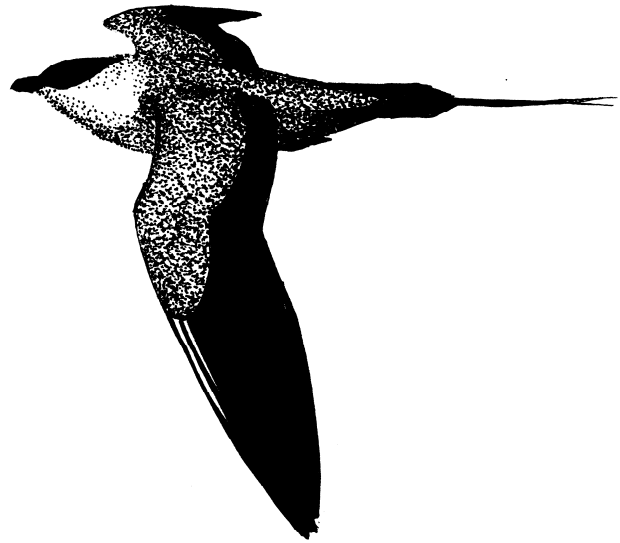
### **Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Previous records: 1969 (1), 1976 (1) and 1978 (1).

On 4<sup>th</sup> September 1985 a dark-phase adult arrived at 1810 hrs. and departed in a westerly direction five minutes later (MLD) and on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1998 three dark-phase adults flew east at 1030 hrs. (DMP). These were the sixth and ninth records for the Club area.

### **Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

On 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1988 a party of nine (eight adults and an immature) arrived at 1850 hrs. After causing total pandemonium amongst the roosting gulls, they departed to the south-west at 1905 hrs. (MLD, JMP). This is an incredible record for an inland locality and the highest number recorded inland in Yorkshire. The record coincided with an exceptional movement along the east coast (particularly Yorkshire), where several localities had numbers far in excess of previous records. This is the only record for the Club area.



### **Skua sp.** *Stercorarius sp.*

Previous records: 1982 (1) and 1984 (1). There are no recent records of birds which could not be identified to species.

### **Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*



A first-summer on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1975 was not only the first for the Club area, but also the first inland record for Yorkshire. Thereafter (up to 1984), there were records as follows: 1976 (1), 1977 (1), 1981 (one bird for three days), 1982 (1), 1983 (1) and 1984 (nine bird-days involving at least five birds). With the exception of a juvenile on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1976, the others fell between 9<sup>th</sup> November and 14<sup>th</sup> April.

Since this time, the species has been recorded annually save for 1992 and 1999 and, as can be seen from Table 6, most records fell between October and March, a high proportion being from January onwards. All records between October and December involved short stay individuals, with no birds frequenting the roost for more than four days duration.

Roosting birds between January and March occasionally stayed for extended periods: a first-winter on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1989 was seen frequently until 16<sup>th</sup> March 1990, an adult on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1993 was last seen on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1994, in 1995 a first-winter on 4<sup>th</sup> February remained until 19<sup>th</sup> March, in 2000 an adult on 7<sup>th</sup> January was last seen on 28<sup>th</sup> February and in 2003 an adult on 12<sup>th</sup> January remained until 4<sup>th</sup> February. The only records outside the winter period involved a juvenile on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1985 and a summer plumaged adult on 5<sup>th</sup>

and 19<sup>th</sup> July 1998 (the July records were incorrectly stated to have been in August in *Birds in Huddersfield 1998*).

	J	F	M	A - J	J	A	S	O	N	D	b-d	juv	1 <sup>st</sup> -w	2 <sup>nd</sup> -w	adult
1985	2					1					3	1			1
1986			2					5			7	2	2		
1987		1	4							5	10				6
1988	3		1					1	1		6		3		2
1989	2									4	6		1	1	1
1990	13	7	10							3	33		2		1
1991	1		3								4		1		1
1992											0				
1993										3	3		1		1
1994	9	2						1	1		13		2		1
1995	1	9	8								18		2		
1996			3					1	2		6		3		
1997		5	5							1	11		2		2
1998		3	1		2						6				4
1999											0				
2000	6	11									18		1	1	3
2001								2			2		1		1
2002	3	7	3						1	4	18			1	5
2003	8	2	4						3		17			1	2

**Table 6:** Mediterranean Gull - the distribution of records as shown by days present per month, the total bird-days (b-d) per annum and the minimum number of individuals within each age group.

It will be noted from Table 6 that the age structure is biased towards first-winters and adults, there being only four records of birds in second-winter plumage. The reasons for this anomaly, although interesting, are unknown. Despite the high number of bird-days during some years (maximum of 33 in 1990), the number of birds per annum (mainly identifiable by head markings) remains low and, even though these figures are a minimum, the highest is six in both 1987 and 2002.

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

Continued to be recorded as a sporadic visitor, with records in all the years under review with the exceptions of 1988, 1998, 1999 and 2000. There were up to four records per annum, most of which (77%) fell between mid-July and mid-November. The only spring records (singles in 1985, 1989, 1996 and 2002) fell between 5<sup>th</sup> March (2002) and 6<sup>th</sup> May (1989). Two records which fell outside these periods concerned a first-winter on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1994 and three adults on 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> January 1995 (*Birds in Huddersfield 1994* makes reference to an adult on 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> February 1994: this record was given in error and should be attributed to Mediterranean Gull *L. melanocephalus*). Most occurrences involved one or two individuals, the only records in excess being of four (two adults and two immatures) which departed south on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1985 (not 18<sup>th</sup> as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1985*), four (an adult

and three first-summers) which departed north-east on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1989 and three adults which were present on 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> January 1995 (this was the only record of birds frequenting the reservoir for more than one days duration).

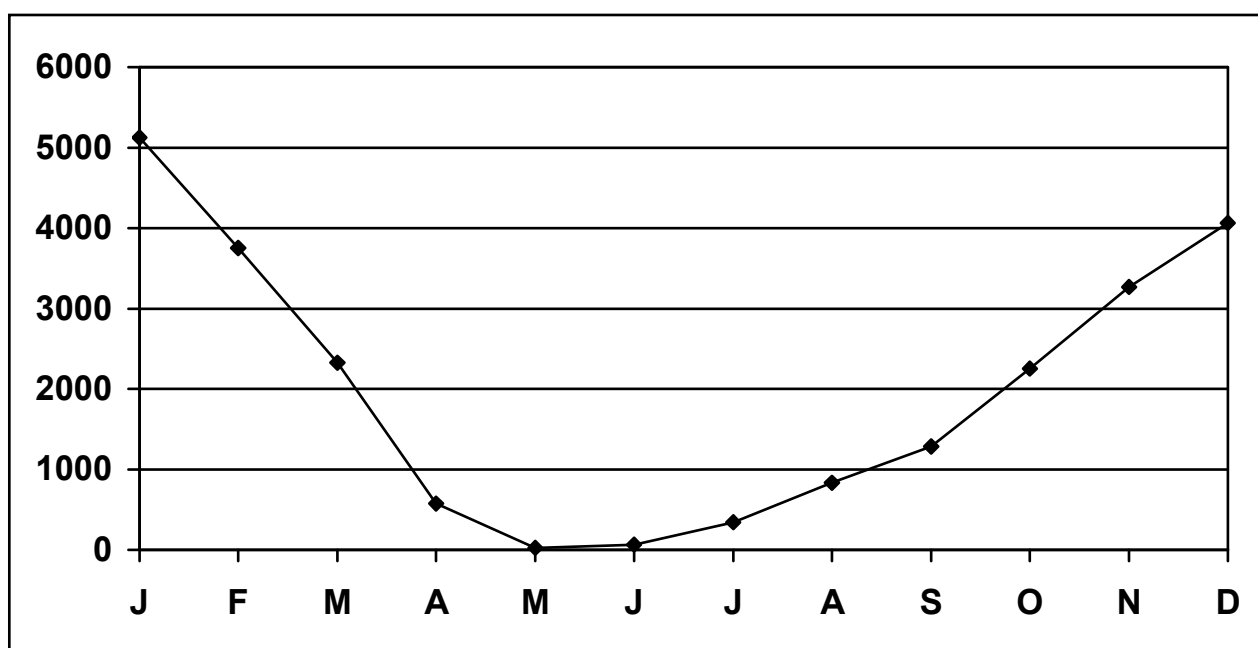
### **Sabine's Gull** *Larus sabini*

Previous records: 1980(1) and 1982 (1).

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1987 an adult (perhaps a second-winter as it was never seen to fly) was located in the gull roost (MLD); in 1989 an adult in full summer plumage was present on 23<sup>rd</sup> August (DMO) and a juvenile was seen in the gull roost on 31<sup>st</sup> October (MLD, MT). The 1987 individual appeared after very severe south-westerly gales had swept the southern half of Britain bringing unprecedented numbers into the country, probably from the Bay of Biscay. These and the previous records are the only ones for the Club area.

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

Continued to be recorded as formerly and in similar numbers. A build-up in numbers was apparent from July onwards and between 1985 and 1989 had reached four figures by August, 2600 being present by late August 1985 and 2250 by late August 1989. In the following years (1990-2003) this build-up, although still apparent, never exceeded the 770 which were present in mid-August 1990. The highest figures were always present between October and mid-March, with the species reaching its peak in January or February. Roosting flocks of up to 4000 were frequently recorded, but up to 5200 were occasionally present, with 7800 on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1985 and 5963 on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1993 being the maxima. The number of birds decreased rapidly after mid-March (occasionally earlier) and by May/June less than 40 were usually present, 116 in late June 1986 and 227 in late June 1989 being the exceptions.



**Figure 1:** Black-headed Gull - average monthly maxima for the years 1985-2003.

## **Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis***

Previous records: 1979 (1) and 1982 (1). There are no recent records.

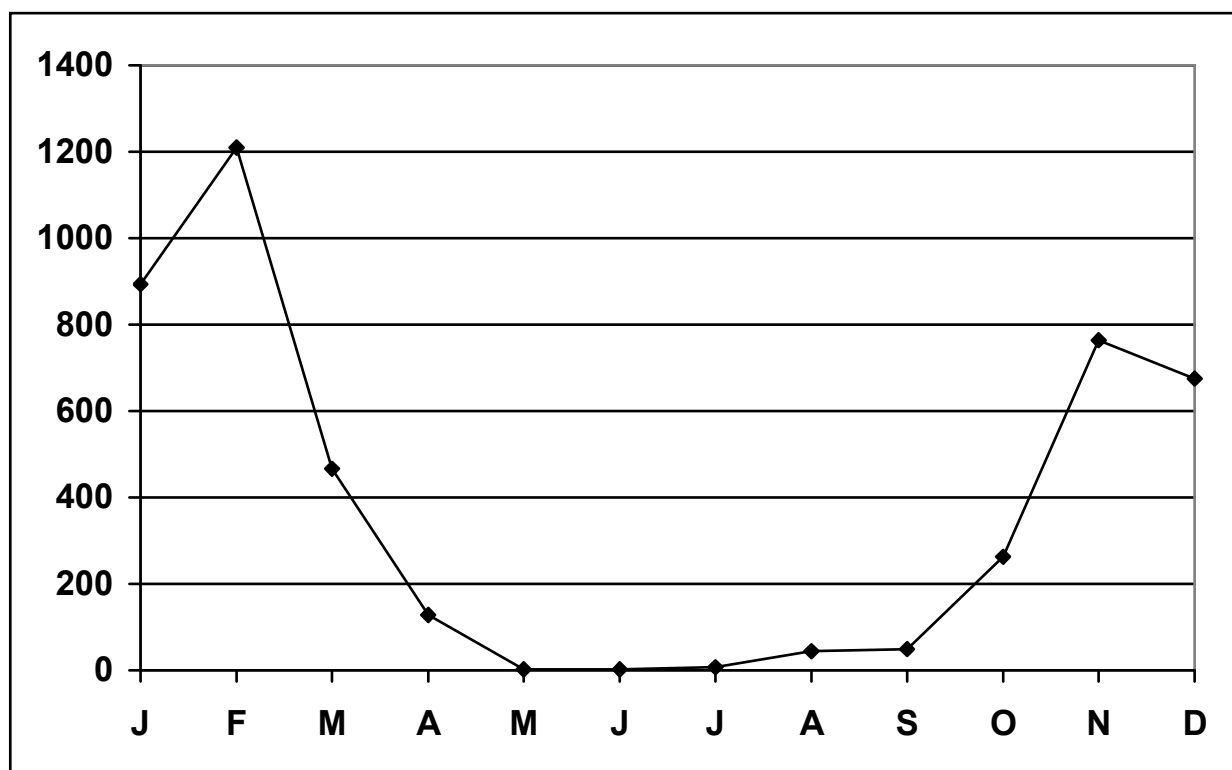
## **Common Gull *Larus canus***

No real change in status, being recorded as formerly and in similar numbers. A build-up in numbers commenced from late July onwards, but until October usually less than 80 were present, the exceptions being 106 on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1994, 113 on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1995 and 120 on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

The highest figures were always present between October and March, with the species peaking in the February of each year.

Roosting flocks of up to 1100 were regularly recorded, but 1480 were present on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1985, 1360 on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2002 and 2100 on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2003.

Records between April and July were frequent (especially in July), but, with the exception of 860 on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1996, numbers at that time of year never exceeded 17 and were always in low single figures during May and June.



**Figure 2:** Common Gull - average monthly maxima for the years 1985-2003.

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

Continued to be recorded as formerly, being mainly a passage migrant between March and early May and from July to November, although birds were also present in summer (mainly immatures) and throughout the winter (mainly adults).

Unlike the two other large gull species, Great Black-backed Gull *L. marinus* and Herring Gull *L. argentatus*, there was little evidence of a marked increase in numbers during the 1960s and early 1970s. Numbers present in spring never exceeded 700 (generally less than 400), but those in autumn, although varying annually, were higher, with a maximum of 1000. Wintering birds during this period usually numbered less than 60, but 200 were present in early January 1971 and summering birds usually remained below 40, although 175 were present in mid-June 1974. Following the second winter period of 1976, the number of birds decreased markedly and, up to 1984, the spring peak never rose above the 200 recorded in April 1977 (only 23 in 1982) and the autumn peak never exceeded the 550 during October of the same year (only 105 in 1983). The number of both wintering and summering birds also declined and rarely exceeded 30 during either period. This reduction coincided with the closure of a number of local refuse tips and this was considered to be the main causal factor behind the decrease (these closures also affected the numbers of Herring Gull and Great Black-backed Gull, but not Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus* or Common Gull *L. canus*).

During the period under review, the number of wintering and summering birds, along with those on spring passage remained at this lower level, but the autumn passage, although remaining at the lower level during most years, reached all time highs in others. In spring, passage birds rarely increased to more than high double figures, but up to 144 were present in late March 1993 and in 2001 there were 359 on 17<sup>th</sup> March and 536 on 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

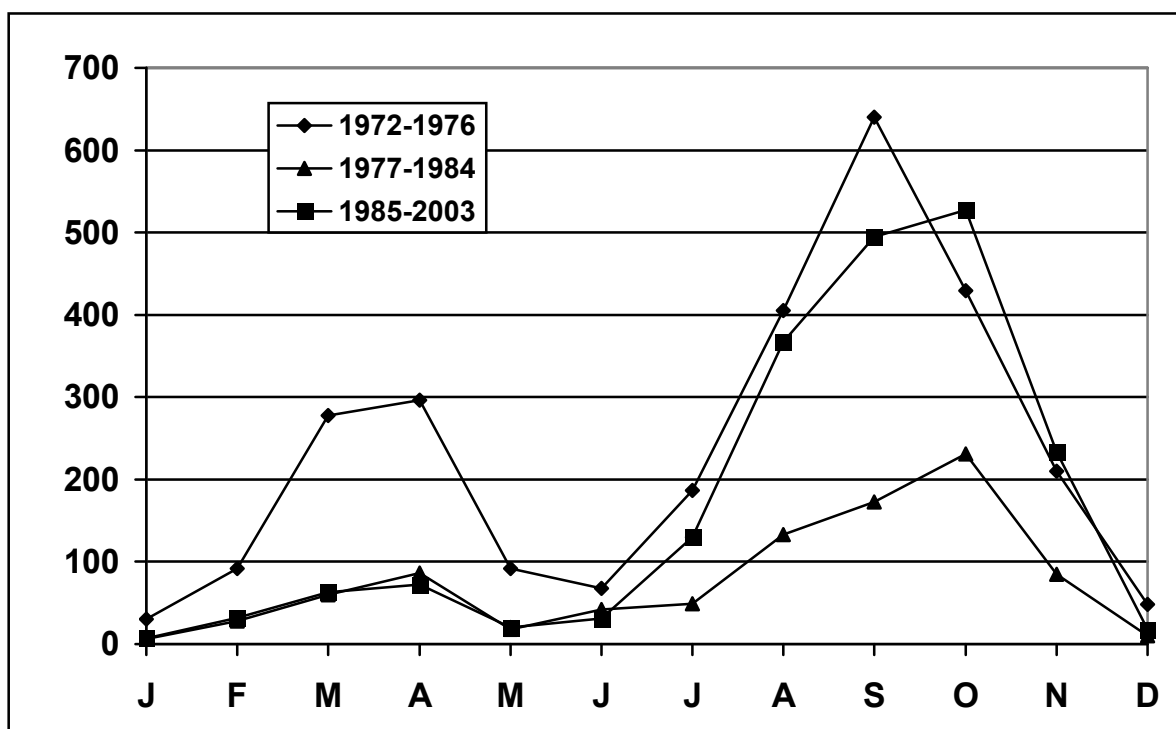
The number of birds in summer was usually less than 40, but treble figures were present throughout June 2001 and reached a maximum of 193 on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The autumn build-up usually commenced in July and generally peaked at no more than 800 (usually less than 500), but 930+ were present on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1991 and unprecedented assemblages occurred in late September/early October 1993, early October 1994, late September 1996, late August to mid-October 1997 and September 1998. During these periods, the number of birds remained above 1000, the maxima being 1317 on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1993 and 1656 on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1994. By November numbers began to decrease rapidly, but low double figures usually remained until at least mid-month and occasionally, as in the years 1995 through to 1998, about 500 were present (maximum of 518 on 5<sup>th</sup> 1995).

Numbers in winter (December to February) rarely exceeded 30 and were generally in single figures (especially in January) but 237 were present in mid-February 1998.

In the past there were occasional records of birds showing characteristics of the nominate race *L. f. fuscus*, but during the period under review there were only three further sightings: singles on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1986 and 27<sup>th</sup> November 1996 with two on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1994. Birds showing characteristics of the race *L. f. intermedius* continued to be recorded sporadically. Singles on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> March and 21<sup>st</sup> April 1985, 28<sup>th</sup> March 1986, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1988 and 14<sup>th</sup> March 1997 were the only spring occurrences. In autumn, sightings were almost annual and far more frequent, spanning the period 13<sup>th</sup> June (2001) to 23<sup>rd</sup> December (1994). Most records were of singles, only occasionally two, but three were present on 1<sup>st</sup> November

1991 and in September 1996 between one and six were seen almost daily from 17<sup>th</sup> (these records were omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1996*). As in the past, birds of these two races were considered to have been present on other occasions, but light conditions at the time did not always allow sub-specific identification to be determined.



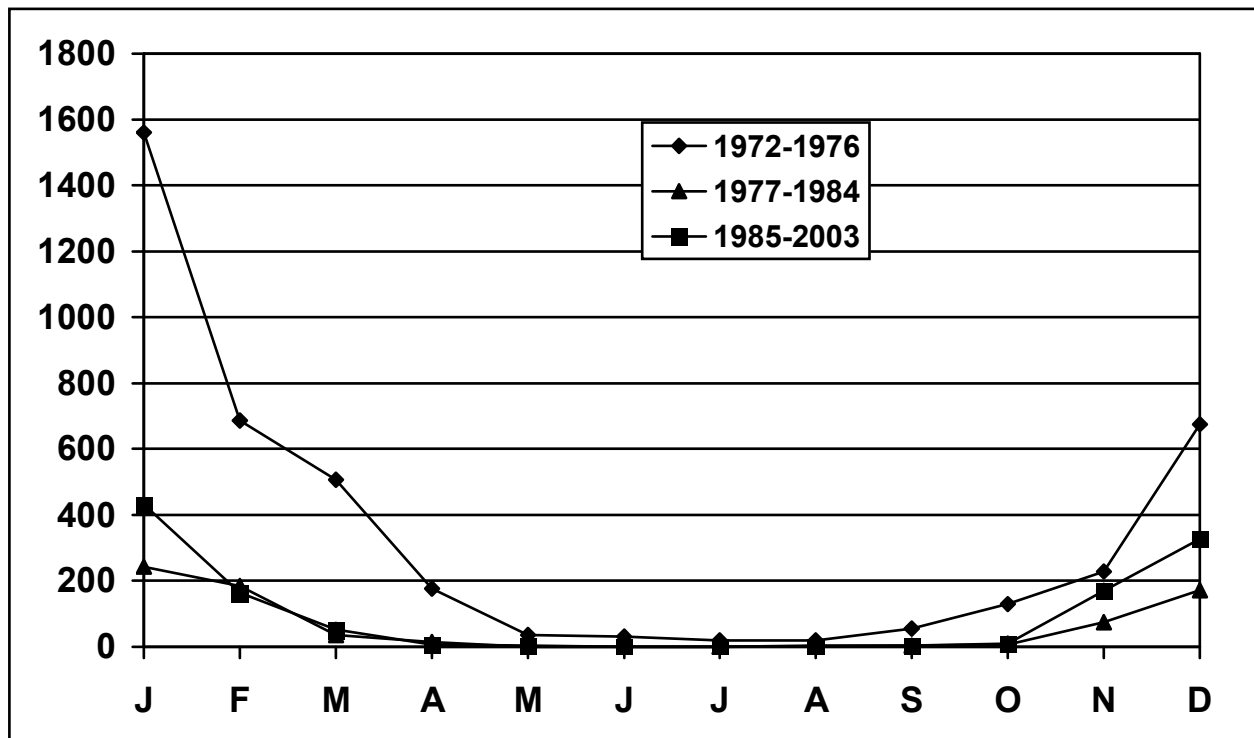
**Figure 3:** Lesser Black-backed Gull - average monthly maxima for selected periods.

### Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Prior to the first winter period of 1976, the species was present throughout the year and, although 50 to 100 (occasionally up to 200) were present between May and September, larger numbers frequented the roost from October through to March or early April. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the roost (which peaked in January) showed a progressive increase in numbers: 250 in January 1961, 350 in January 1965, 500 in February 1970, 1500 in January 1972 and 2000 in January 1973 and 1974. This pattern of occurrence changed after the first winter period of 1976 and, up to 1984, there was a marked decline in the number of roosting birds (maximum of 400) and in summer the species became an infrequent visitor (maximum of six) and was generally completely absent. This reduction coincided with the closure of a number of local refuse tips and this was considered to be the major contributory factor behind the decrease (these closures also affected the numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus* and Great Black-backed Gull *L. marinus*, but not Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus* or Common Gull *L. canus*).

During the period under review the number of birds, both roosting and visiting in summer, remained at this lower level (Figure 4). The winter build-up usually commenced in October, but numbers during this month were generally in single or very low double figures and never exceeded 23. Larger numbers began to assemble from the first half of November and, as previously, reached a peak in January. Numbers present in December/January were variable, usually remaining below 450, only occasionally reaching 600, the exceptions being 766 on

1<sup>st</sup> January 1994 and 657 on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2001. By March, occasionally as early as February, numbers began to decrease rapidly; February totals normally remained in treble figures (usually less than 200, occasionally up to 400, with 488 on 3<sup>rd</sup> 2000 being the maximum) and March totals, which were generally in double figures, never exceeded the 187 on 17<sup>th</sup> 1996. Records between April and September were unusual (usually less than a handful per annum) and generally involved low single figures for no more than a few days duration, but in 2001 there were 42 on 21<sup>st</sup> April and 23 on 13<sup>th</sup> May.



**Figure 4:** Herring Gull - average monthly maxima for selected periods.

### Yellow-legged Gull *Larus argentatus michahellis*

The taxonomic position of this gull is still in contention, and the Taxonomic Sub-Committee of the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee have not felt fit to elevate it to species level (although investigations into the taxonomy of the 'larger white-headed gull' complex are currently under way). From a recording point of view it is perhaps of little consequence where its taxonomic position lies: whether it be classed as a full species or a sub-species it is still identifiable (but see Gulls with yellow legs, not Yellow-legged Gulls! in *Birds in Huddersfield 1995*).

Following the first records in 1980 (five bird-days in July and two in September), there were other records in 1982 (one in April), 1983 (five bird-days in September and nine in October) and 1984 (13 bird-days in August, eight in September, 27 in October and one in November).

During the period under review, although recorded annually save for 1987, 1993 and 2002, the number of bird-days per annum fluctuated markedly (from three in 1985 and 1991 to 51 in 1997). The majority of records fell between July and November, only occasionally between mid-December and mid-April (Table 7). The records between July and November generally involved singles but, especially since 1994, two or three have occasionally been



present and on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1998 there were four (three adults and a first-winter). The few records between mid-December and mid-April, with the exception of two adults on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1995, concerned single adults which stayed from no more than four days duration. The number of birds involved in any one year is always open to conjecture because, unlike Mediterranean Gull *L. melanocephalus* which can have distinct markings, it is not always possible to be certain with individual Yellow-legged Gulls. In 1994, however, there was a minimum of ten birds, with 11 in 1996 and 20 in 1997.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	A	S	O	N	D	b-d	1 <sup>st</sup> -w	2 <sup>nd</sup> -w	3 <sup>rd</sup> -w	adult
1985									3			3				1
1986				1					5			6				3
1987												0				
1988									3			4				2
1989						3	2		7			12				3
1990									3	1		4				1
1991							3					3				2
1992		1				1	2					4				3
1993												0				
1994	4					5		7	12	2		34				10
1995		2						1	1	2		7				4
1996			3			6	4	18	1	3		43		1	3	7
1997	1						2	23	12	1		51		2	8	10
1998							4	4	1	2		16	1	1		4
1999							1			4	2	8				4
2000						2	2	7	3	2		19	1			6
2001						1	4	1	3	1		12				5
2002												0				
2003							1	10	2			15	1		1	5

**Table 7:** Yellow-legged Gull - the distribution of records as shown by days present per month, the total bird-days (b-d) per annum and the minimum number of individuals within each age group. On occasions ageing can be problematic, consequently some of the ages are only probable (adult includes all records of individuals recorded as sub-adult).

As can be seen from Table 7, all records prior to 1996 had involved adult/sub-adults. This was simply due to the fact that until this time the identification features necessary for separating younger birds were not fully appreciated.

### **Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides*

There were single records of single birds for one days duration in 1960, 1965 and 1968. Between 1970 and 1984 the species was recorded annually save for 1980 and 1982; all records (which were usually of singles, rarely of two) fell between 7<sup>th</sup> December and 9<sup>th</sup> April and involved up to six different birds per annum (but usually only one or two) with a maximum of 24 bird-days, although the average was only six.

During the period under review, the species was recorded annually save for 1985, 1995 and 1999 and, with the exceptions of an isolated second-winter on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1993 and a third-winter on 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> April 2001, spanned the period 1<sup>st</sup> December (1993) and 31<sup>st</sup> March (1996 and 1997).

	J	F	M	A	M - S	O	N	D	b-d	1 <sup>st</sup> -w	2 <sup>nd</sup> -w	3 <sup>rd</sup> -w	adult
1985									0				
1986	1								1				1
1987								2	2	2			
1988	1								1	1			
1989	1							1	2		1	1	
1990	4								4	1			
1991	1								1			1	
1992		1							1	1			
1993						1		14	15	2	1		
1994	9	1							12	1	1		
1995									0				
1996		6	4					2	13	3	2		1
1997		2	1						4		3		
1998	7	4							11	1	1		1
1999									0				
2000	2								2	1			
2001		1	1	2					4			2	1
2002	8	1							9		2	1	
2003								4	4	1	2		1

**Table 8:** Iceland Gull - the distribution of records as shown by days present per month, the total bird-days (b-d) per annum and the minimum number of individuals within each age group. On occasions ageing can be problematic, consequently some of the ages are only probable.

Records in December were unusual (Table 8), the majority of birds occurring in January or February (the 14 bird-days in December 1993 relate to two first-winters: one present for 12 days, the other for two). The majority of birds only frequented the roost for short periods (usually less than four days, only occasionally up to six), but a first-winter was present daily between 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> December 1993 and in 1994 a first-winter (not the 1993 individual) was seen on ten dates between 2<sup>nd</sup> January and 5<sup>th</sup> February. Most records involved singles, but two were present on 7<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January 1994 (first-winter and second-winter on both occasions), 9<sup>th</sup> March 1996 (second-winter and adult) and 9<sup>th</sup> February 1997 (two second-winters). As can be seen from Table 8, the minimum number of individuals per annum was usually less than four, but at least six different birds occurred in 1996.

### **Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus***

There were single records of single birds for one days duration in 1954 (not 1950 as stated in the 1959-1973 review) and 1965. Between 1970 and 1984 the species was recorded annually; all records (save for one of two birds) being of singles and, with the exception of isolated individuals on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1971 and 17<sup>th</sup> October 1979, fell between 11<sup>th</sup> December and 20<sup>th</sup>

April. Up to six different birds per annum (but usually only one or two) were involved in these sightings with a maximum of 21 bird-days, although the average during the period was only five.

Since this time, the species has been recorded annually, save for 1985, 1987, 1991, 1992, 1999 and 2003, and, with the exception of an isolated second-winter on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1996, spanned the period 26<sup>th</sup> November (1993) and 3<sup>rd</sup> April (1996). As with Iceland Gull *L. glaucoides*, records before the New Year were unusual (Table 9), the majority of birds occurring between January and early March (the ten bird-days in December 1993 relate to two birds: a second-winter for nine days and a third-winter for a single day).

	J	F	M	A	M - S	O	N	D	b-d	1 <sup>st</sup> -w	2 <sup>nd</sup> -w	3 <sup>rd</sup> -w	adult
<b>1985</b>									<b>0</b>				
<b>1986</b>								1	<b>1</b>			1	
<b>1987</b>									<b>0</b>				
<b>1988</b>	1		1						<b>2</b>	1			1
<b>1989</b>								1	<b>1</b>	1			
<b>1990</b>			1						<b>1</b>				1
<b>1991</b>									<b>0</b>				
<b>1992</b>									<b>0</b>				
<b>1993</b>	4						1	10	<b>15</b>	2	1	1	
<b>1994</b>	10	4	1						<b>17</b>	2	1	1	
<b>1995</b>	1								<b>1</b>	1			
<b>1996</b>			2	2		1		2	<b>7</b>	2	1		
<b>1997</b>	5	1							<b>7</b>	2	1		
<b>1998</b>	2	1							<b>4</b>	3			
<b>1999</b>									<b>0</b>				
<b>2000</b>		11							<b>11</b>	1			
<b>2001</b>		3						1	<b>4</b>	2			
<b>2002</b>	24	28						2	<b>56</b>	2			1
<b>2003</b>									<b>0</b>				

**Table 9:** Glaucous Gull - the distribution of records as shown by days present per month, the total bird-days (b-d) per annum and the minimum number of individuals within each age group. On occasions ageing can be problematic, consequently some of the ages are only probable.

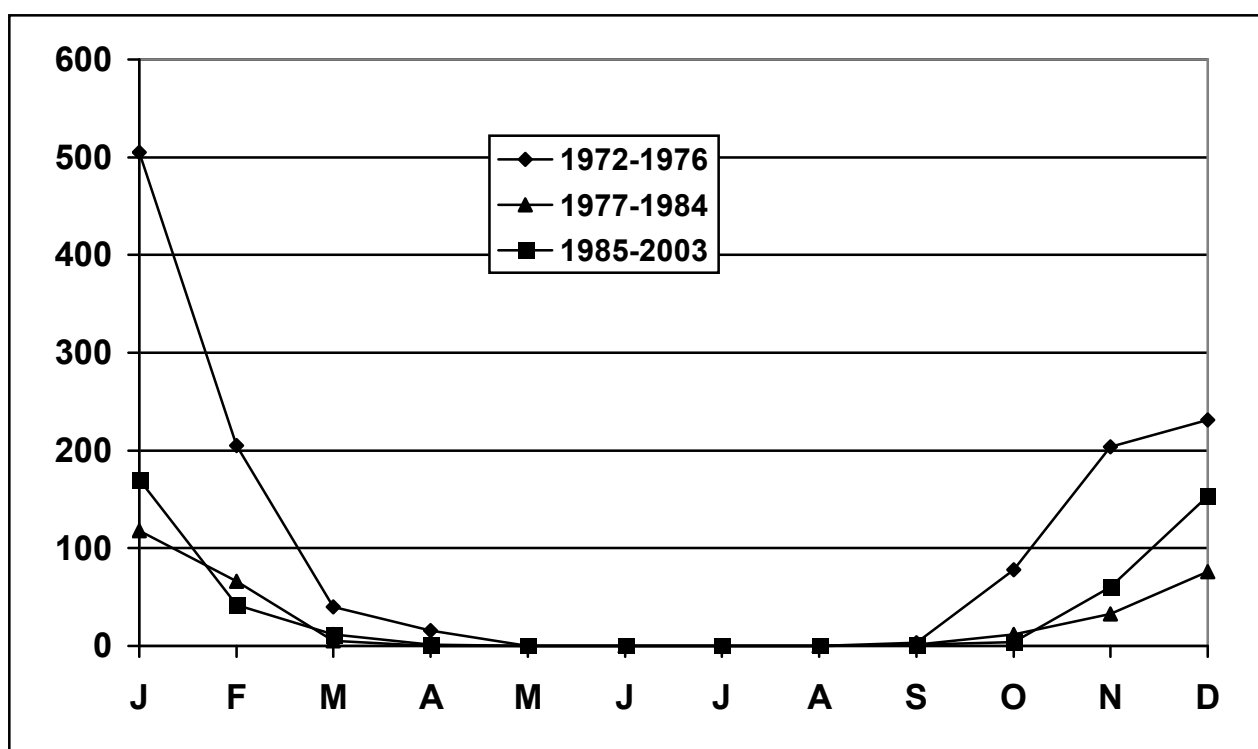
The majority of birds were present for one or two days duration, only occasionally for up to six days (normally in the roost, but see below) although a second-winter remained from 10<sup>th</sup> until 18<sup>th</sup> December 1993, a first-winter was present between 9<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> February 2000 and in 2002 a first-winter was recorded daily between 13<sup>th</sup> January and 28<sup>th</sup> February. Most records involved singles but two were present on 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> January 1994 (first-winter and second-winter), 17<sup>th</sup> January 1997 (first-winter and first/second-winter), 24<sup>th</sup> January 1998 (first-winters) and in 2002 the long-stay first-winter was joined by another first-winter on 26<sup>th</sup> January and 24<sup>th</sup> February.

In 2002 the long-stay first-winter (13<sup>th</sup> January to 28<sup>th</sup> February) fed at a refuse tip in Honley (now no longer extant) and used the reservoir, not only for roosting, but also for loafing and bathing during the day: daytime sightings of this species, along with those of Iceland Gull, are extremely unusual.

## Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Continued to be recorded as formerly, being predominantly a winter visitor from October to March with rare occurrences between April and September.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, roosting birds (which peaked in December or January) showed a large scale increase, with a maxima of 14 in the winter of 1960/61, 50 in 1967/68, 150 in 1970/71, 400+ in 1972/73 and 600 in both 1973/74 and 1974/75. Following the second winter period of 1976, the number of birds decreased markedly and, up to the end of 1984, never rose above the 200 recorded in January 1979. This reduction coincided with the closure of a number of local refuse tips and this was considered to be the governing factor behind the decrease (these closures also affected the numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus* and Herring Gull *L. argentatus*, but not Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus* or Common Gull *L. canus*).



**Figure 5:** Great Black-backed Gull - average monthly maxima for selected periods.

During the period under review, the number of roosting birds remained at this lower level (Figure 5). The winter build-up usually commenced in October, but numbers during this month never exceeded 14 and were generally in low single figures. Larger numbers were normally present from early November and, as previously, reached a peak in December or January. Numbers present in December/January were usually less than 250, the exceptions being 272 on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1987, 278 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1994, 266 on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1994 and 277 on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1996. By March, occasionally as early as February, numbers began to decrease rapidly; February totals were normally in double figures, only once reaching treble figures (116 on 1<sup>st</sup> 2000) and March totals, which were generally in single figures, never exceeded the 67 which were present on 2<sup>nd</sup> 1988. Records between April and September were very unusual (less than a handful in most years, with none in 1994 and 1999) and involved one or two birds for no more than a couple of days duration, the only exceptions being four on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1996 and three or four in late April/mid-May 2001.

### **Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Between 1957 (the first recorded occurrence) and 1973 the species was a sporadic visitor with records in January (1), February (3), March (1), May (1), August (1) and November (1). Thereafter (1974-1984), records were more frequent and the species became a near annual visitor with up to nine records per annum which spanned all months of the year, with the exceptions of May, June and July.

This frequency and pattern of occurrences continued, with up to nine records per annum in all the years under review save for 2000 and 2003 when the species was not recorded. A high proportion of records (76%) fell between January and April, with 70% of these occurring in March. A smaller peak occurred between mid-August and mid-December, with 79% of these records falling in late October/mid-November. There were four records outside these periods, three in May and a single in July: single adults on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1985 and 30<sup>th</sup> July 1989, four adults on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1990 and an adult on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2001. Numbers involved were very variable, usually one or two, occasionally up to six, but there were 226 on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1985 (see below), 19 adults and two first-winters on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1988, 32 adults arrived from the north at 1725 hrs. and departed westerly ten minutes later on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1994 and 26 adults and two first-winters departed north-west at 1730 hrs. on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

The unprecedented total of 226 on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1985 commenced with 82 (72 adults and ten first-winters) departing the gull roost in a westerly direction between 1650 and 1705 hrs., a further four adults arrived from the east at 1740 hrs., ten minutes later a flock of 101 (84 adults and 17 first-winters) arrived from the east and continued their journey in a westerly direction and at 1800 hrs. a flock of 39 (32 adults and seven first-winters) arrived and roosted on the reservoir. Interestingly, at about the same time (1710-1830 hrs.), 165 were recorded at Pugney's near Wakefield.

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

Previous records: 1977 (1) and 1983 (1).

There were a further five records during the period under review: a single flew south on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1985 (BA); in 1990 three adults departed in a westerly direction on 13<sup>th</sup> July (MLD) and an adult departed west at 0635 hrs. on 13<sup>th</sup> August (MLD); in 1997 two adults flew west at 0715 hrs. on 18<sup>th</sup> June in company with two Common Terns *S. hirundo* (MLD) and two adults were present on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2002 (MLD). These were the eighth, tenth, eleventh, fourteenth and seventeenth records for the Club area.

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

In both previous reviews, records of this species, along with those of Arctic Tern *S. paradisaea*, were so fragmented that they were treated together under the heading of Common/Arctic Tern. In recent years, however, a better understanding of the field characters necessary for the identification of these two species has meant that a good proportion of birds are specifically identified. The number of records of birds identified to species during the period under review now allows individual appraisals to be carried out.

Common Tern was recorded annually as a passage migrant in very variable numbers. Although autumn records tended to outnumber those in spring, the occurrences of birds during the summer months made the distinction between the passage periods less obvious. Extreme dates were 26<sup>th</sup> April (1987) and 16<sup>th</sup> October (2001), with most falling between mid-May and mid-September. The only April records involved a single which departed west on 26<sup>th</sup> 1987 and one which departed south on 28<sup>th</sup> 1994; October records involved singles on 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 1985, a juvenile on 4<sup>th</sup> 1997 and an adult on 16<sup>th</sup> 2001.

The highest number of bird-days occurred in 1989 (19), 1990 (44) and 1998 (23). The number of records decreased markedly after 1998 and in 2000 and 2003 there were single records of single birds for one days duration (no Arctic or 'Commic' Terns were recorded during these years). Most records involved between one and three individuals, occasionally up to six, the only exceptions being on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1985 when up to nine were probably involved, nine on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1987, a party of 19 (14 adults and five first-summers) on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1990 and nine on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1992. Interestingly, since a party of six on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1995 no more than three have been present on any one day. All occurrences were of a single days duration except for singles which remained from 14<sup>th</sup> until 17<sup>th</sup> May 1993 and between 4<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June 1998.

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

Between 1985 and 1998, with the exception of 1992, the species was recorded annually in variable numbers (the single 1998 record was incorrectly documented as being from Elland gravel pit in *Birds in Huddersfield* 1998). Since this time there have been no records, nor have there been records of 'Commic' Tern (which may have included this species). Unlike Common Tern *S. hirundo* (see above), the records fell into two distinct passage periods, with the number in spring (May to mid-June) being about equal to those in autumn (July to mid-October). The earliest record concerned a single which flew west on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1985 and the latest involved two which were present on 13<sup>th</sup> October of the same year. The number of bird-days per annum was generally low: 25 in 1985 and 12 in 1993 being the maxima. Most records involved between one and three individuals, the only exceptions being parties of five on both 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1985 and 20<sup>th</sup> May 1991 and 11 adults on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1993. All records were of a single days duration except for a single which was present on 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> May 1996.

### **Common/Arctic Tern**

That observers are becoming more competent at identifying these two species can be gauged from the fact that 'Commic' Terns were only recorded in nine of the 12 years between 1985 and 1996 (the single 1996 record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield* 1996), all records since this time have been species specific. The records spanned the period 29<sup>th</sup> April (1985) to 20<sup>th</sup> October (1988) with most falling between May and September. The only April record involved a flock of 17 which flew west on 29<sup>th</sup> 1985 and the only October record concerned an immature on 20<sup>th</sup> 1988. The other records (23) involved between one and three individuals with the exception of seven on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1987, in 1989 a flock of 14 on 18<sup>th</sup> July and seven flew west on 24<sup>th</sup> August and eight on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1991. All records were of a single days duration.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Bird-days
1985				1	7	1	3	4	4	5			59
1986					2		1	2					10
1987				1	1	3	1	3	2				34
1988					1				1	1			5
1989					4	1	3	6	1				49
1990					4	1	4	5	1				51
1991					3	6		2	2				27
1992							4	2	1				17
1993					7	1	4	3	1				29
1994						3	1	1	2	1			12
1995				1	1	2	4		1				16
1996					2	2	2	1					10
1997						2	1	1	2	1			11
1998					1	15	4	1					24
1999							2						3
2000								1					1
2001					2	3	1	1		1			11
2002						1		1					3
2003						1							1

**Table 10:** Common, Arctic and ‘Commic’ Tern - the distribution of records as shown by days present per month and the total bird-days per annum.

### **Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*

Previous records: 1976 (3), 1977 (1), 1979 (3) and 1983 (3).

There were a further three records during the period under review: a single on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1986 arrived at 0720 hrs., departing in a westerly direction ten minutes later (MLD); an adult on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1995 was not seen after 0625 hrs. (MLD) and two flew west at 0635 hrs. on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1998 (MLD). These were the twelfth, fourteenth and fifteenth records for the Club area.

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

Formerly recorded as an autumn passage migrant in variable numbers (1959-1973). Thereafter (up to 1984), although the autumnal pattern continued, there were occasional spring records.

Since this time, although the species continued to be recorded as an autumn passage migrant, there was an upsurge in spring records (35% now falling into this period). These spring records (1988, 1989, 1990, 1992 and 2000) were very concentrated, with all records falling between 24<sup>th</sup> April (1992) and 23<sup>rd</sup> May (1989). Passage in autumn (1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997, 1999 and 2001) was more extended and spanned the period 10<sup>th</sup> July (1989) and 30<sup>th</sup> September (1985) with 73% falling between mid-August and late September. During both passage periods, numbers were mainly small, generally not exceeding seven, but at least 11 (possibly as many as 17) were encountered on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1985 and 12 were

present on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1990 (these birds coincided with an exceptionally heavy passage through Yorkshire and other eastern counties: see *Birds in Huddersfield 1990*). All records were of a single days duration.

### **Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

It may appear strange but the presence of this species has never been proved. Flocks of pigeons which overfly the reservoir were obviously fanciers' birds. It is unknown, however, whether the odd one or two which were occasionally seen drinking along the reservoir edge or near the buildings along the north bank are simply taking a break before continuing their flight or are 'genuine' feral birds. Without breeding evidence the status of this species will continue to be open to conjecture.

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

Between 1959 and 1964, the species was only an occasional visitor in small numbers (1-3) and in some years was totally absent. Thereafter the frequency of sightings increased and by 1973 birds (up to a maximum of ten) were present throughout the year with occasional breeding taking place. This upward trend continued between 1974 and 1984 and birds were generally present throughout the year, with a predominance of records during July and August; there was no evidence of breeding (although it was possible that attempts went undetected in Jubilee Quarries in at least some of the years) and, although numbers were generally small (1-4), the maximum recorded rose to 15.

During the period under review, the species was generally present throughout the year, with breeding occasionally taking place. Although records spanned the whole year, there were occasions when the species was absent for several months during winter and there were no records during the following winter periods (not all of which were associated with inclement weather): 1989/90, late 1990, 1991/92, 1992/93, 1993/94 and 1996/97. Numbers involved were usually small, between one and six being the norm, but occasionally up to eight and very occasionally up to 11 were present, the only exception being 15 which flew west on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1989. Larger concentrations, however, were noted in the fields to the west of the reservoir since 1998: up to 38 were recorded daily in December 1998, a flock of 26 on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1999, a flock of 21 on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2001 and up to 32 were present between 10<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> June 2003.

A proportion of records (as in the past) related to birds flying in a westerly direction, but it is now known that most of these concern local feeding movements and not true passage. Single pairs bred in six of the years under review: 1986 (Jubilee Quarry), 1997 (Orange Wood), 1998 (small barn to the west) and 2001, 2002 and 2003 (Orange Wood).

### **Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

No real change in status, being present throughout the year (up to eight pairs breeding) and with occasional large roosting flocks and cold weather movements being noted. The species continued to roost in Orange Wood during the winter months of most years. Normally less than 100 constituted the roost, but 220 were present on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1985 and 450 on 13<sup>th</sup>



January 1991. Cold weather movements were occasionally recorded, the most spectacular being in 1985: in January 1210 flew west on 1<sup>st</sup>, 400 east on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 900 south-west on 7<sup>th</sup>, 1922 north-west on 12<sup>th</sup>, 598 north on 19<sup>th</sup>, 230 north-west on 26<sup>th</sup> and in February 170 east on 8<sup>th</sup> and 1070 south-east on 10<sup>th</sup>. Other movements, not related to cold weather, concerned 480 north on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1991, up to 470 south on a number of days in November 1992 and between 12<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> December of that year up to 770 per day flew north.

Early morning and late evening movements were a regular feature of most winters and involved birds overflying the reservoir which were leaving or entering roosts (recent observations by PB have shown that evening birds were flying no further than Honley Wood). Flocks of anything up to 400 were the norm, early morning exceptions being 600 (one flock) east on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1997 and 1670 (flocks up to 300) north six days later, the only late evening exception concerned 1500 south-east on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2002.

### **Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Following the first record in May 1969, the species was recorded sporadically (never more than two birds) until 1973. Thereafter (1974-1984), records increased markedly (although there was no corresponding increase in numbers) and the species became a spring and autumn visitor with occasional records during the winter months; a single pair occasionally bred. This pattern of occurrences has changed, and during the period under review birds were present throughout the year (except for short interludes during inclement weather) with breeding taking place annually. The species continued to be recorded in small numbers (usually only one or two), but larger congregations have occasionally been seen in the vicinity of the Bull's Head public house: up to 27 in January 1992 and up to 21 in late August 1997. The annual breeding attempts have generally been in the grounds of Lake House (where artificial food was provided) and usually involved a single pair, but in 1986 two pairs raised young.

### **Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

Previous records: 1976 (1), 1979 (1), 1981 (1), 1982 (1) and 1984 (1).

The only record since this time concerns a single on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1986 (MLD).

### **Ring-necked Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

Singles that flew north on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1997 and south on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2001 were presumably escapes.

### **Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

Continued to be recorded as a rare visitor, with records in all the years under review save for 1991, 1999 and 2001. Most records involved singles, only occasionally two, all being in May or June with the exception of isolated singles on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1987 and 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1990. The maximum bird-days was eight in 1989, but in most years it was usually only one or two.

Nearly all the May records were of singing males, the earliest being a single on 6<sup>th</sup> 1995. An hepatic female was present on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1987 (MLD).

### **Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

Previous records: 1959 (2) and 1976 (1). There are no recent records.

### **Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Continued to be recorded annually with occasional breeding records. As in the past, however, the species was rarely recorded from within the confines of the reservoir, most records being from the walls to the west. There was a gradual decline in the number of records between 1974 and 1979, with a marked reduction thereafter. This decline was attributed to the renovation of the large barn near the Will's O' Nat's public house and the small barn immediately to the west, both areas previously favoured by the species. This low level of occurrence continued until 1996, with one or two being occasionally recorded. There was no set pattern to these occurrences, with records spanning all months of the year.

Since this time, the species has been recorded with increased frequency, one or two (four during the summer of 1997) generally been present throughout the year. In 1997 two pairs bred (one in a wall to the west, the other in a wall to the north-west) and in 1998 a pair bred in a wall to the west. It is possible that pairs bred in other years since this time but proof of breeding has not been forthcoming.

### **Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco*

Formerly recorded as an almost annual but sporadic visitor, although a pair bred in 1974 and in the mid-winter of 1983/84 up to three roosted under the eaves of Lake House.

The status of this species has changed since this time and, although a single roosted under the eaves of Lake House between January and April 1985, there were records in only eight of the other years under review. With the exception of singles on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1994 and 20<sup>th</sup> May 1998 and a pair which bred in Orange Wood in 1999, the other records (ten) fell between late August and mid-March. Interestingly, three of the records involved birds calling during the hours of daylight: a single near the hide at 0815 hrs. on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1996, two in the south bank plantation at 0845 hrs. on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1998 and a single in the south bank plantation at 1000 hrs. on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2002.

As with other nocturnal creatures, it is possible that this species goes unrecorded. It is quite conceivable, however, that the species has become genuinely rare at Blackmoorfoot. Observers who regularly used the hide for gull watching tended to remain until dark but rarely recorded the species and PB, who lives near the Bull's Head public house, has only heard the species in the vicinity of his garden on two occasions (28<sup>th</sup> January 1994 and 8<sup>th</sup> May of the same year).

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

Previous records: 1972 (1) and 1977 (1).

On 12<sup>th</sup> March 1997 an emaciated bird was found dead in Orange Wood (DMP, SP, DWS) and on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1999 one was found with a wing so badly damaged that it had to be destroyed (via WB, MM).

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

Continued to be recorded as a casual visitor. There were records of singles (for a days duration) in the following months: May (1985), August (1991), October (1989, 1995 and 1998) and November (1996 and 1998). (The November 1998 record was incorrectly documented as being in December in *Birds in Huddersfield 1998*). A single was present on 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> October 1988 and on 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> November 1989 two were recorded. In 1992 there was a prolonged period of residency in the Meltham Cop area: a single was present from 10<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January, thereafter it was joined by a second individual, both of which remained throughout February and March, a single then remained until 24<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Swift** *Apus apus*

No real change in status, birds being present throughout the summer months with occasional passage or weather related movements. In the past the earliest arrivals tended to be in the first half of May (the only April records involved singles on 23<sup>rd</sup> 1968 and 30<sup>th</sup> 1984), but the species was recorded in April during six of the years under review (1988, 1989, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2003), the earliest being a single on 24<sup>th</sup> 1989. During the summer months the species was recorded almost daily, even though birds do not breed in the immediate vicinity. Numbers were very variable, usually up to 30, but flocks of anything up to 95 were not infrequent and occasionally up to 200 were present, numbers in excess being 380+ on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1987, 250 on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1987, 310 on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1988 and 250+ on both 8<sup>th</sup> June 1989 and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001.

Most birds had departed by the end of August, but occasionally one or two lingered into the first week of September, the only records thereafter involved singles on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1988, 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September 1997 and 21<sup>st</sup> September 2003.

### **Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Previous records: 1972 (1), 1975 (1), 1977 (1) and 1981 (1).

During the period under review, the species was recorded annually save for 1991 and 1992. There were single records of individual birds in each of the years 1985 (September), 1986 (October) and 1987 (August). Thereafter the species was recorded with increasing frequency, although there were only two occurrences in 1996 and three in 2001. With the exception of a single on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1989, all other records fell between July and early April, a high proportion being during the winter months (November to February). Most records were of singles, very occasionally two, that were present for no more than a few days duration.

Since late 1993, however, birds have remained for extended periods: a single was present between 24<sup>th</sup> December 1993 and 10<sup>th</sup> February 1994 (with two on six dates), one remained from 18<sup>th</sup> October until 20<sup>th</sup> December 1998 and what may have been the same individual was present from 1<sup>st</sup> January until 1<sup>st</sup> March 1999, a single remained from 4<sup>th</sup> October 1999 until 17<sup>th</sup> February 2000 (with two on 24 dates, including daily between 9<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January) and one was present between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 1<sup>st</sup> December 2002. Excluding these long stay individuals the maximum bird-days was 32 in 1993 and 1997.

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

Previous records: 1949 (1), 1960 (1), 1970 (1), 1976 (1), 1977 (5), 1978 (1) and 1980 (1).

There were no further records until 1986 when a single was present on 12<sup>th</sup> April and 20<sup>th</sup> July. Since this time, the species has been recorded as a near annual visitor, there being records in all years save for 1988, 1990-1992, 1994, 1995 and 1999. The records (30) involved singles, with the exception of two on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1998, and were of one days duration, except for singles from 18<sup>th</sup> until 21<sup>st</sup> April 1987, 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> August 1997 and 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> May 1998. The maximum number of bird-days was seven in both 1987 and 1998.

Analysis of all records from the reservoir shows two distinct peaks: 45% falling between mid-February and late May, the other 55% between mid-July and early November.

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

There were eight records of singles between 1970 and 1973 (rather surprisingly these were the first for the reservoir) and, although there was an increase in records between 1974 and 1984, the maximum number of bird-days per annum was only seven.

During the period under review, the species was recorded annually with the exception of 1989, but the number of bird-days per annum remained low until 1992 (maximum of 12 in both 1987 and 1991). Thereafter the species became increasingly frequent with one or two being recorded, sometimes for prolonged periods, during most months of the year (*Birds in Huddersfield 1995* makes reference to only two records during 1995: the statement being incorrect). In 1997 the first breeding attempt occurred (a single pair in Orange Wood) and pairs also bred, again in Orange Wood, in 2002 and 2003.

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

A male which flew north from the grounds of Lake House on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1992 (SR) was the first record for the reservoir.

### **Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

Continued to be recorded as formerly, birds breeding in the fields around the reservoir, with the vast majority moving out in winter and with occasional movements being noted. In both previous reviews (1959-1973 and 1974-1984), the species was described as a 'common'

breeder (at the time it was not felt necessary to quantify this statement), but, in line with the national long-term population trend, there has been a marked decrease during this period of review and no more than five pairs per annum bred.

Birds were noted returning to the breeding areas in February or March and most had vacated by mid-October. Between November and January birds were scarce, only being recorded in seven of the winters under review. Numbers at this time of year were always fewer than three, with the exception of a flock of 17 which flew west on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1999 and up to 20+ which fed in a kale field to the north-east of the reservoir between 16<sup>th</sup> December 2002 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2003.

Although movements were noted annually, the low numbers recorded during the 1974-1984 period persisted, there being no return to the large movements of the early 1970s (maximum of 445 west on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1971). These movements usually occurred during the month of October and were normally in a westerly direction, numbers involved were small (less than 35) but a flock of 54 flew south on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1991 and 42 (in small groups) flew south on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

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

No real change in status, being recorded annually as a passage migrant in small numbers between mid-July and mid-September, less frequently between early April and May, occasionally in summer.

Although spring migrants usually arrived in early April there were records during March in four of the 19 years under review, the earliest being a single on 12<sup>th</sup> 1989. With the exception of an unprecedented total of 36 which flew south on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1988 (this record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1988*), all records involved less than eight individuals (generally between one and four). Birds had usually departed by mid-September, the only record thereafter concerned a single on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2001. The number of bird-days per annum fluctuated markedly, being as high as 126 in 2001 but as low as four in 1993; the average being 28.

### **Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Continued to be recorded as formerly, birds being present throughout the summer months with small numbers breeding and with occasional passage movements.

Spring arrivals were normally recorded in the first half of April, but singles were present on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1993 and 29<sup>th</sup> March 2001 (with five on 31<sup>st</sup>). Generally fewer than 20, very occasionally up to 60, were then present throughout the summer, but unprecedented assemblages occurred in late April/early May 1991: 73 on 29<sup>th</sup> April with 100+ the following day and 130+ on 4<sup>th</sup> May. Small numbers (up to seven pairs) bred in buildings around the reservoir and not infrequently within the grounds (the renovation of the stable block at Lake House in 2001, however, has denied access for breeding). A build-up in autumn commenced in July and numbers fluctuated daily, generally fewer than 60 but occasionally up to 85 were present, the exceptions being 100 on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1995, 110 on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1997, 100+ on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2002 and in August 2003 there were 120+ on 26<sup>th</sup> and 140 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

Birds were recorded migrating in a southerly direction in the late autumn of all years and, although numbers were usually small (less than 50), they outnumbered feeding concentrations on a few occasions, the maxima being 250+ south on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1987, 177 south on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1992 and 222 south-south-west between 0900 and 1000 hrs. on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2003. Birds lingered into October in most years, but had usually vacated the area by mid-month, records after this time involved three on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1987, a single south on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1991 and four on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1994.

### **House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*

Between 1959 and 1970 the species was recorded as a passage migrant in variable numbers in May/June (one record in April) and August/September. Thereafter (up to 1984), records became far more frequent during the summer months (due to a small breeding colony in the village to the north of the reservoir), but there were April records in only a further three of these years.

This pattern of occurrence continued during the period under review but, with the exception of 1987, there were arrivals during April of each year (*Birds in Huddersfield 2001* incorrectly states that there were no records until 1<sup>st</sup> May in 2001). These April arrivals usually occurred in the second half of the month, the earliest being on 12<sup>th</sup> in 1988 (a single), 1993 (two) and 1999 (three). Generally fewer than 20, very occasionally up to 70, were then present throughout the summer, the only record in excess being of 86 on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1987 (the record of 120 on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1996 quoted in *Birds in Huddersfield 1996* is erroneous).

Birds continued to breed in the village to the north of the reservoir and in 1989 there were 13 nests on a Yorkshire Water building along the north embankment with 14 nests the following year (since renovation in 1991 there have been no further nesting attempts on the building, but eight pairs bred on nearby houses during that year).

A build-up in autumn normally commenced in August and numbers fluctuated daily, generally fewer than 40 but occasionally up to 86 were present, the exceptions being 140+ on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1989 (not 14<sup>th</sup> as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1989*), 180+ on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1991, 120+ on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1994 and 103 on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1998. There were southerly movements in the late autumn of most years but these were usually very small (less than 20), the exceptions being 88 (one flock) south on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1996, 66 south on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2001 and 53 south on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2003. Birds were present up to late September, but only lingered into October in 11 of the 19 years under review, the latest record being of two which flew south on 15<sup>th</sup> 2001.

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

Three singles in 1972 were the first records for the reservoir. Thereafter (up to 1984), there was a marked upsurge in sightings and the species was recorded in small numbers on an almost annual basis; in 1974 a pair bred and a pair were suspected of doing so in 1975.

During the period under review, the status of this species changed markedly, there being no more than four records per annum during the following years: 1985-1987, 1989, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1998 and 2002. All records (which involved singles except for two on 30<sup>th</sup>

August 1987) fell between 28<sup>th</sup> July (1989) and 14<sup>th</sup> September (2002), with the exception of singles on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1995 and 26<sup>th</sup> April 1998.

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

No real change in status, pairs breeding in the surrounding fields with the vast majority moving out in winter and with occasional movements being noted. The return of birds in spring apparent between 1959 and 1973, although not as obvious between 1974 and 1984, again became a regular feature.

Birds were noted returning to the breeding areas between mid-March and late April, numbers involved generally being less than 30, the exceptions being up to 83 on Meltham Cop in mid-March 1989 (not eight as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1989*), ca. 40 along the south bank on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1997 and 80+ along the south bank on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2001. Movements at this time of year were scarce, usually involving fewer than 25 birds flying in a westerly direction, the only movement in excess concerned 229 which flew north on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2002. At least 15 pairs remained to breed. Numbers were generally higher between August and late October, up to 60 being the norm, but 200 were present along the south bank on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1988, 85+ on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1994 and 70+ on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1999.

Autumn movements were recorded between mid-September and late October (once on 1<sup>st</sup> November) and normally involved less than 100 birds flying in a southerly or westerly direction, the exceptions being 203 south on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1985, 197 south on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1988, 157 south on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2001, 139 south on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2001 and 522 south between 0845 and 1015 hrs. on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

Between November and February birds were scarce, only being recorded in eight of the winters under review. Numbers at this time of year were always fewer than seven, with the exception of up to 11 which were present between 17<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November 1996 (these birds were recorded during a period of severe weather conditions and were observed feeding on seeds along the waters edge), 11 on both 12<sup>th</sup> December 2001 and 25<sup>th</sup> December 2002 and 25 on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2003.

### **Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

Previous record: 1978 (1). There are no recent records.

### **Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

Previous records: 1972 (2), 1976 (1), 1978 (1) and 1983 (1).

A single was present along the west bank shore on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1989 (MLD).

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

From 1957 (the first recorded occurrence) until 1973, the species was mainly a passage migrant in small numbers between mid-July and September, sometimes in May, with nesting (a single pair) being suspected or proven in each of the years between 1969 and 1972. Thereafter (1974-1984), although there was no evidence of breeding, the species was recorded annually with a slight increase in records and an upsurge in spring occurrences; the maximum bird-days was 42 (1976) with an average of 21 for the period.

The status of the species has changed markedly since this time and, in line with the local and national long-term population trend, has shown a corresponding decline. Although recorded annually during the period under review (save for 1997, 1998 and 2000), the maximum bird-days was only 19 (in both 1989 and 1990) with an average of just over five for the whole period. Spring records occurred in 11 years and fell between 21<sup>st</sup> April (2001) and 12<sup>th</sup> June (1987) with autumn records occurring in 12 years and spanning the period 16<sup>th</sup> July (1989) to 2<sup>nd</sup> October (2003), a large proportion of these being between mid-July and late August. The majority of records involved singles, only occasionally two, but four flew south on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1985, three were present on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1986, three (one south and two grounded) on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1986 and four (one flock) flew south on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003.

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

The first records for the reservoir concerned singles in 1948 and 1965. There were no further records until 1969, after which (up to 1984) the species became an annual visitor, mainly between mid-July and late October although there were occasional records in all other months (the maximum bird-days was 23 (1984), with an average of 12 for the period).

The status of the species has changed markedly since this time and, although a good proportion of records continued to fall between mid-July and late October, there was an increase in records at other times of the year with birds being present for extended periods; occasionally up to two pairs bred. On occasions, however, birds were absent for long periods, in some years the first record not being until March, and there were no records between late October 1985 and early July 1986, early December 1993 and early May 1994 or late October 1995 and mid-July 1996. Numbers were always small, usually one or two, only occasionally up to four.

Pairs bred (along the catchwater drain or near the Yorkshire Water buildings along the north embankment) in 1990 (one pair), 1992 (one), 1995 (one), 2000 (one), 2001 (two) and 2002 (one) and were suspected of doing so in other years (in 1999, although a pair collected food along the reservoir edge, they nested along the catchwater drain near the Will's O' Nat's public house).

Autumn movements (September/October) were occasionally recorded, but never involved more than four birds flying in a southerly or westerly direction.



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

No real change in status, birds generally being present throughout the year with occasional movements in autumn and breeding occurring in most years.

Numbers in winter (November to mid-February) were always in single figures, with birds usually vacating the area during the severest winter weather. A small influx normally occurred in late February/March, but numbers never exceed the 17 which roosted in the willows to the north of the hide on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1989. The breeding population normally consisted of less than six pairs, but in 1988 eight pairs bred with 11 in 1991. Numbers were always highest in autumn (late June to October), when up to 30 were regularly recorded, larger congregations being of 50+ which roosted in the willows to the north of the hide on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1989 and up to 55 in late September 1991.

Small numbers were recorded migrating during most years, always between September and mid-October and usually in a southerly, occasionally westerly, direction; 22 south on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1985, 25 south and four west on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1988 and 17 south on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2001 being the largest totals involved.

Birds showing characteristics of White Wagtail *M. a. alba* were recorded on two occasions: a single on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2001 (PDB) and one which remained between 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2003 (MLD). Previous records of this race were in 1969 (1), 1971 (4), 1972 (1) and 1973 (1), all records spanning the period 31<sup>st</sup> March (1972) and 19<sup>th</sup> May (1971).

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

Previous records: 1972 (1), 1979 (1) and 1981 (1).

There have been a further 15 records since this time: 1986 (2), 1987 (4), 1988 (3), 1989 (1), 1995 (1), 2001 (1), 2002 (2) and 2003 (1), all involving singles with the exception of two on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2002. Most records (87%) fell between early November and early May, the exceptions being singles on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1988 and 29<sup>th</sup> May 1989. A good proportion of records were from the catchwater inlet along the south bank, but an unusual record concerned a single which circled the reservoir before departing in a northerly direction on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1995. Occasionally birds winter along the catchwater drain near the Will's O' Nat's public house and some of these records, which were all for a days duration, presumably relate to these wondering individuals.

### **Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Continued to be recorded as formerly, birds being present throughout the year but with reductions in numbers after periods of severe winter weather (these reductions were not as devastating as those experienced after the severe winters of 1962/63 and 1978/79, however). The species bred during most of the years between 1959 and 1984; one or two, sometimes three or four pairs being involved.

The number of breeding pairs, in line with the national long-term population trend, increased during the period under review and more than a dozen pairs now breed annually. When

ringing was undertaken (up to 1998), a small influx was normally apparent in July/August when a predominance of juveniles were ringed as they passed through the area, the largest numbers involved were 24 in 1985 (from a total of 26 ringed during the year), 27 in 1987 (from a total of 30) and 30 in 1989 (from a total of 40).

### **Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

No real change in status, birds being present throughout the year with up to a dozen pairs breeding. There were no large assemblages (very occasionally up to 30 were recorded in the past) but an unusual record involved a party of three which flew high to the west on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1988.

### **Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

Continued to be recorded as formerly, birds being present throughout the year and breeding. Between 1974 and 1984, up to eight pairs nested around the reservoir, but, in line with the national long-term population trend, this has now increased and about a dozen pairs breed annually. The occurrence of xanthocroic juveniles (see “Yellow Robin” in *Birds in Huddersfield* 1978) has not been repeated.

### **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A single in female-type plumage in the north-east corner on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2003 was the first record for the reservoir (JL).

### **Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

There were 12 records of singles (all during the autumn period) between 1949 and 1973. Thereafter (1974-1984), the species became an annual visitor and there was a marked increase in records (up to ten bird-days per annum), most of which involved singles during the autumn period, but singles were seen in spring during five of these years.

During the period under review, the species reverted to being a sporadic visitor, there being records in 1986 (3), 1988 (1), 1989 (4), 1990 (3), 1995 (1), 1996 (2), 1999 (1), 2001 (1) and 2003 (1). The autumn records (14) fell between 11<sup>th</sup> July (1990) and 15<sup>th</sup> September (1996) and were for a single days duration, but a juvenile ringed on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1990, although not recorded in the interim, was retrapped on 2<sup>nd</sup> August of that year. Thirteen of the autumn records concerned birds caught for ringing and involved singles with the exception of two on both 14<sup>th</sup> July 1989 and 27<sup>th</sup> August 1989. The only spring records involved singles on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1989, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1999 and 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2001.

### **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

Continued to be recorded as a rare visitor, mainly in autumn, but with occasional spring occurrences.

There were records in each of the following years: 1987 (1), 1988 (1), 1990 (1), 1995 (2), 1997 (4), 2002 (4) and 2003 (1). All records involved one or two individuals (usually only one) which were present in the south-west corner overflow field or the fields to the west and, with the exception of a male which sang in the south-west corner overflow field between 16<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> June 1995, were for a single days duration. Most records (11) were in autumn and fell between 4<sup>th</sup> July (1997) and 21<sup>st</sup> September (also 1997) but nine of these were after 22<sup>nd</sup> August. The spring records (two) concerned singles on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1988 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 1997.

### **Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus***

Previous records: 1962 (1), 1969 (2), 1971 (1), 1972 (1), 1973 (1), 1975 (1) and 1977 (1). The 1968 record quoted in the 1959-1973 Blackmoorfoot review was from near the Will's O' Nat's public house and not the reservoir.

There were a further eight records during the period under review: single males were seen on Meltham Cop on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1990 and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1992 (both TD); on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1994 a male and two females were near the inlet (PB); a male was in the south-west corner overflow field on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2000 (DHP); a female was near the inlet on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2002 (DMO); a female was in the north-east corner on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2003 (MLD); a male was on Meltham Cop on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2003 (CH) and a male was in the fields to the west of the reservoir on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2003 (CH). From the above, it is obvious that the increase in records of this species in the Club area has not been reflected at Blackmoorfoot.

### **Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe***

There were three records prior to 1960, all concerning singles: 26<sup>th</sup> March 1948, 15<sup>th</sup> May 1949 and 29<sup>th</sup> August 1957. From 1960 until 1981 the species was recorded almost annually in small numbers, being seen during the spring, but particularly the autumn, migration period.

A single on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1985, however, was the first since that time and the species was absent in 1986. Between 1987 and 1995 the species was recorded annually and, although there was an upsurge in spring records, the number of autumn records waned (the only autumn occurrences being in 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1992). With the exception of an isolated single on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1992, the spring records fell between 20<sup>th</sup> March (1990) and 14<sup>th</sup> May (1989). Up to five individuals were present at this time (usually one to three), but seven were recorded on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1988 and six on both 12<sup>th</sup> April 1991 and 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1995. Autumn records during this period, with the exception of an isolated single on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1992, fell between 11<sup>th</sup> August (1989) and 28<sup>th</sup> September (1990) and always involved singles.

Thereafter (1996-2003), the annual occurrences continued, but there was a marked increase, not only in spring records, but also in the number of birds involved. In most years, although there were spring records in all and autumn records in all save 2000, spring records were more numerous. The records followed a similar pattern to those noted above; in spring falling between 27<sup>th</sup> March (1999) and 30<sup>th</sup> May (2003) and in autumn, with the exception of an isolated record on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1997, between 16<sup>th</sup> August (both 1998 and 1999) and 16<sup>th</sup> October (2002). Most birds had departed by the end of September, however, and the only October records involved a single on 7<sup>th</sup> 2001, two from 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> 2002 and a single on 1<sup>st</sup> 2003. As

noted above, the numbers involved in spring increased markedly and, although a good proportion of records were still in low single figures, they not infrequently reached high single figures, the exceptions being 13 on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1996, 11 on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1998 and 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> April 1999 and 28 on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2002 (with 13 the following day). By sharp contrast numbers in autumn were always low, the maxima being five in late August/early September 2002 and ten on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

As in the past, most records were from the fields to the west of Meltham Cop, only occasionally from within the confines of the reservoir.

### **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

Previous records: 1969 (1) and 1972 (1).

There were a further three records during the period under review: a male was on Meltham Cop on 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> April 1989 (MLD, TD); a female was in the south-west corner overflow field on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1999 (MLD) and two flew south on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2001 (TG).

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

Continued to be recorded as formerly, birds being present throughout the year with immigrants swelling the numbers during the winter months. The number of breeding pairs remained the same as previously, up to ten pairs per annum being involved. The small winter roost (up to 20) noted along the west bank and in the grounds of Lake House between 1974 and 1984 persisted, but became less apparent after 1990.

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

Between 1959 and 1973, the species was recorded as a passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers, occurring most frequently between mid-October and December and again from March to mid-April. Thereafter (1974-1984), although still recorded as a passage migrant and winter visitor, the species was present throughout the winter months, whereas previously appearances in January/February had been irregular.

This pattern of occurrence continued during the period under review, but reverted to the former winter status during bouts of inclement weather, the species being absent from mid-January to early March 1986, mid-January to mid-March 1992, early January to mid-March 1999 and early January to mid-March 2002.

Most arrivals occurred during the second week of October (although birds were not recorded until 5<sup>th</sup> November in 1995, 4<sup>th</sup> November in 1998 and 10<sup>th</sup> November in 2000), but there were occasional records in the first half of October, the earliest being two on 6<sup>th</sup> 1987, two on 2<sup>nd</sup> 1988 (with 27 on 11<sup>th</sup> and 57 on 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>), nine on 8<sup>th</sup> 1990 (with 200+ on 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>) and 23 on 7<sup>th</sup> 1999. Flocks thereafter were very variable in number, generally fewer than 100, but occasionally up to 200 were present, the exceptions being 325 (plus a further 129 which flew south) on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1994, 300+ on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1999, 320 on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2001, 410 on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2002, 500 on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2002 and 400 on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2003 (the record of *ca.* 350

on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1996 quoted in *Birds in Huddersfield 1996* actually relates to birds at Ingbirchworth).

Not infrequently movements were recorded, not all of which were associated with cold weather, most being in a westerly or southerly direction. These movements, although usually less than 100 strong, outnumbered the wintering flocks on several occasions and up to 250 were not infrequent, numbers in excess involved 343 north-west on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1985, 454 south-west on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1987, 881 south and four west on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1988, 392 west on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1991, 567 south on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1994 with 621 west the following day and 378 south on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

Most birds had departed the area by late March and only lingered into April during 11 of the years under review, the latest being on 17<sup>th</sup> 1993 (40+), 17<sup>th</sup> 1996 (two), 17<sup>th</sup> 2002 (74) and 21<sup>st</sup> 2003 (54). Unusual records outside this period were of two which flew south on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1987 and a single on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1995 (the 4<sup>th</sup> May record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1987*).

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

Continued to be recorded as formerly, being predominantly a summer visitor (February to October) with breeding occurring annually. In line with the national long-term trend, however, there has been a decrease in the number of breeding pairs; between 1974 and 1984 up to six pairs per annum bred but this has now dropped to two or three, four pairs at most. During the months November to January the species normally deserted the area, but two were present on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1986, singles on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1994, 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January 1995, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2001 and up to two were occasionally seen during the winter of 2002/03.

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

No real change in status, being recorded annually as a passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers. The earliest arrivals were normally evident in the first week of October, the only record prior to this involved a single which flew south on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2001. Generally fewer than 40, occasionally up to 80, constituted the winter assemblages, the only larger flocks being of 400 on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1989, 102 on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1992 and in January 2003 there were 155 on 17<sup>th</sup> and 114 on 21<sup>st</sup>.

Not infrequently movements were noted, most of which were in a westerly direction and usually involved passage birds moving into the country in October (occasionally there were small movements during the winter months that were not always associated with cold weather). Usually less than 40 were involved in these movements, only occasionally up to 160, the maxima being 363 west on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1986, 608 north on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1992, 293 north on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1994 (with 126 south the following day) and 224 west seven days later, 244 south on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2001 and 656 south-east between 0900 and 1030 hrs. on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003.

As in the past, records after December became irregular in most winters, although they usually increased in March as returning birds again passed through the area. Numbers at this

time of year were never large (generally less than 30, occasionally up to 60) but 100+ were present on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1993. April records only occurred in 1989, 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2002 and were always in low single figures, except for a flock of 12 on 17<sup>th</sup> 2002 which was also the latest.

### **Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

No real change in status, birds being present throughout the year in small numbers with up to seven pairs (generally less) breeding around the reservoir. Small flocks (as in the past) were occasionally present between mid-August and mid-October, the maxima being 28 on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1989, 25 on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1990, 40+ on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1991 and 26 on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2003. The infrequent northerly movements recorded between 1975 and 1982 totally ceased.

### **Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

Previous records: 1971 (1) and 1976 (1).

A single was ringed on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1989 (MLD).

### **Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

There were five records prior to 1974: 1966 (1), 1971 (1), 1972 (2) and 1973 (1). Thereafter (up to 1984), a large increase in records occurred and the species was recorded annually as an autumn passage migrant (save for 1982), with a small number of spring records which gave an average of six bird-days per annum.



Since this time the species continued to be recorded almost annually (all years save for 1992, 1994 and 2001), but, even though there was an increase in spring records, there was a marked downturn in autumn occurrences and the average bird-days per annum decreased to only two. Although there were spring and autumn records during ten years, in only four of these (1985, 1988, 1989 and 1990) did they coincide. The spring records (11) spanned the period 29<sup>th</sup> April (1990) to 8<sup>th</sup> June (1997) and involved single individuals (usually a singing male) for a days duration. Records in autumn (20) fell between 20<sup>th</sup> July (1989) and 13<sup>th</sup> September (1988), 70% of which were in August. These records again involved singles, the only exceptions concerned two on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> August 1987 and 20<sup>th</sup> July 1989 (caught for ringing on each occasion) and, like those in spring, were all for a days duration.

### **Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Previous records: 1974 (1), 1975 (1), 1976 (1) and 1977 (1). Although included as a previous record, the individual from 1977 showed mixed characters of Reed and Marsh Warbler *A. palustris* and could not be assigned to either species.

As with the above records, the three during the period under review concerned birds that were caught for ringing: in 1987 singles on 29<sup>th</sup> August and 9<sup>th</sup> September and a single on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1990 (all MLD).

### **Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

Previous records: 1972 (1), 1976 (2), 1977 (1), 1982 (3), 1983 (1) and 1984 (2).

A single was present on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1986 (JMP), singles were ringed on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1992 and 7<sup>th</sup> August 1993 (both MLD) and a male was singing on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2001 (MLD).

### **Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

There were three records prior to 1974: 1949 (1), 1966 (1) and 1972 (1). Thereafter (up to 1984), there were between one and three records (all of singles) on a near annual basis, mainly in autumn (12), but occasionally in spring (3).

The number of records decreased during the period under review and the species became a rare visitor, although in recent years up to two pairs have bred. Excluding the years in which the species bred, spring records (all of singles) were on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1987, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1992 and 28<sup>th</sup> May 1996 (the 1992 record was incorrectly stated to have been on the 3<sup>rd</sup> in *Birds in Huddersfield 1992*). The autumn records, again all singles, were on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1989, 10<sup>th</sup> August 1990, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1995, 16<sup>th</sup> August 1996, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2000 and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2003 (the 1990 record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1990*). In both 1999 and 2001 a pair bred at the top of the lane at Edge End, in 2002 a pair bred in the same locality with an additional pair in Orange Wood and in 2003 a pair bred in Orange Wood (the 2001 record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 2001*).

### **Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

There were three records prior to 1974: 1961 (1), 1963 (1) and 1972 (1). Thereafter (up to 1984), there were between one and five records (all of singles) on a near annual basis, mainly in autumn (22), but occasionally in spring (3).

Since this time the species continued to be recorded almost annually (all years save for 1991, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2002 and 2003) and a pair bred in 2000. The spring records concerned a male which sang between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> June 1997, a pair which bred in Orange Wood in 2000 and a pair that took up residence in Orange Wood in 2001, but, despite the male constructing several cocks' nests, no breeding attempt occurred. In autumn, with the exceptions of 1986 and 1988 which were unusual (see below), there were between one and four records per annum, all of which spanned the period 17<sup>th</sup> July (1989) and 13<sup>th</sup> September (1987). Most

records involved singles which had been caught for ringing, but two were occasionally caught and three were caught on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1985. The majority of these birds were present for a days duration, only occasionally were birds retrapped a couple of days later.

As already stated, the autumn periods of 1986 and 1988 were unusual, for although the records fell between the dates outlined above, more birds than usual were involved and, more interestingly, some remained for extended periods. In 1986 a total of five birds were ringed, four of which were retrapped up to ten days later and in 1988 a total of nine were ringed, with four being retrapped up to 11 days later.

### **Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

There were six autumn records of singles prior to 1974. Thereafter (up to 1984), the species was recorded almost annually, mainly as an autumn passage migrant, but occasionally in spring and there were three December records; the number of bird-days per annum averaged four.

Since this time, the species has been recorded annually. The sporadic appearances continued in 1985 and 1986, there being four records during each year (all singles except for two on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1986) which spanned the period 15<sup>th</sup> July to 14<sup>th</sup> October. Records then became more frequent, and up to 1995 the species was recorded as both a spring and autumn visitor, with males occasionally taking up territories for extended periods during the summer months (in 1987 a pair were present in Orange Wood throughout May but did not breed). Spring arrivals normally occurred in the first half of May, occasionally in April, the earliest being a male on 11<sup>th</sup> 1993. Autumn migrants (which mainly involved singles caught for ringing, only occasionally two) were most evident between late July and late August, only occasionally did birds linger into September; the latest being a single on 19<sup>th</sup> 1987.

Since 1996 there was a marked upsurge in records, with birds being present throughout the summer months and up to at least two pairs breeding (three singing males have occasionally taken up residence but breeding has not always been proven). In 1996 a pair were strongly suspected of breeding along the west bank, but single pairs bred in Orange Wood in 1998, 1999 and 2002 while in 2003 pairs bred in Orange Wood and along the west bank (the breeding record for 2001 quoted in *Birds in Huddersfield 2001* was given in error). During this period, spring arrivals continued as outlined above, the earliest being a male on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001. Autumn migrants again followed a similar pattern, most birds having vacated the area by late August, the only September record involved two females on 19<sup>th</sup> 1998. An unusual winter occurrence concerned a female in the south bank plantation on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1997.

### **Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Previous record: 1977 (1). There are no recent records.

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

Previous records: 1959 (1), 1972 (1), 1975 (1), 1976 (2) and 1980 (1).



There were a further seven records during the period under review: in 1988 a single ringed on 1<sup>st</sup> August was seen the following day (MLD); a singing male was in Orange Wood on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1989 (DMP); in 1990 a singing male was in Orange Wood on 8<sup>th</sup> May (TD) and one was ringed on 29<sup>th</sup> July (MLD); a singing male was in the south bank plantation on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1992 (MLD); a singing male was along the west bank on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1998 (MLD) and a single was in the south bank plantation on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2001 (TG).

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

Continued to be recorded as a scarce passage migrant in both spring and autumn. The average number of bird-days per annum increased, however, from five between 1974 and 1984 to nine and there was a noticeable increase in spring records from 2001 onwards. Between 1985 and 2000 there were no more than three spring records in nine of the years, all involving singles which were present for no more than three days duration and all falling between 21<sup>st</sup> March (1998) and 27<sup>th</sup> June (1987). In the three following years (2001-2003), there were up to six spring records per annum and, with the exception of a singing male on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2002, they fell within the dates outline above. Most of these records involved single males but two males were present in late March/early April 2002 and 14<sup>th</sup> June 2003 (*Birds in Huddersfield 2001* makes reference to three on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2001 but this is incorrect as only a single was involved). As with the previous spring records, birds were normally present for no more than three days, but a male remained in the south bank plantation between 8<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> May 2003.

Autumn records occurred annually and fell between 16<sup>th</sup> July (1989) and 28<sup>th</sup> October (1985), a good proportion being in September. Most records involved singles, only occasionally two, but three were ringed on both 9<sup>th</sup> September 1990 and 10<sup>th</sup> September 1995 (not 20<sup>th</sup> as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1995*). Birds were normally present for a days duration, only occasionally for up to seven days, the exceptions being singles which were present between 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September 1990 and 11<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September 2000.

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

No real change in status, being recorded annually as a passage migrant in both spring and autumn with several pairs remaining to breed.

Spring arrivals usually occurred during the second week of April, only occasionally during the first week, the earliest being a single on 2<sup>nd</sup> 2001. Thereafter numbers increased and at least ten pairs remained to breed. Although this is an increase in the number of pairs recorded between 1974 and 1984 (up to seven pairs), numbers decreased to their former level during the last five years (in 2003 no breeding attempts occurred along the west bank, this being the first time that two or three pairs had not bred since systematic recording began in 1959).

In the years when ringing was undertaken (up to 1998) a trickle of migrants was normally evident in early July, but peak passage generally occurred between mid-July and late August. Up to 20 birds per day were regularly ringed at this time, with occasional catches as high as 33, the maxima being 41 on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1986, 42 on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1986 and 40 on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1987. The easiest means of gauging the magnitude of this passage is to compare the annual ringing totals: although figures fluctuated annually, in most years up to 200 were handled with 374 in

1986, 427 in 1987, 403 in 1989 and 414 in 1990 being the maxima. By September numbers had dwindled to low single figures, the only exceptions being in 1987 when ten were present on 1<sup>st</sup> and eight on 3<sup>rd</sup>, but the majority of birds had vacated the area by the third week, singles on 1<sup>st</sup> October in both 1985 and 1986 being the latest.

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

Between 1956 (the first recorded occurrence) and 1970, the species was a scarce visitor, being recorded on a maximum of three days per annum in 11 of the 15 years. Thereafter (up to 1984), the species was recorded annually as an autumn passage migrant with spring migrants being noted in most years and occasional winter records.

This pattern of occurrence continued during the period under review, but, although there were no records in 1986 and only one in 1991 (a single on 26<sup>th</sup> October), the number of winter records increased, especially since 1997. Spring records (March/April) occurred in 12 years but, with the exception of at least five on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2001, never involved more than three individuals (usually only one or two) that were present for no more than six days duration. The only summer records concerned a singing male in the south bank plantation on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1998, up to two in PB's garden (near the Bull's Head public house) throughout the summer of 2000, which were suspected of breeding nearby, and a pair which bred in Orange Wood in 2002. As in the past there were occasional records between mid-July and late August, but these never involved more than three individuals and were for no more than a days duration.

Autumn passage occurred between September and November, and in some years, especially between mid-September and late October, small numbers were present almost daily. Numbers present at this time of year were usually less than five, only very occasionally up to high single figures, but 30 were present on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1987 and 18 on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1989 (with 12 the following day). As noted above, winter records (December to February) increased, especially since 1997, and although only one or two individuals were involved, they sometimes remained for several weeks.

### **Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapilla*

Previous records: 1975 (1) and 1977 (2).

A single was seen briefly near the hide on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1996 (DB, MLD).

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

Between 1948 (the first recorded occurrence) and 1973, the species was recorded during ten of the 26 years: on 19 occasions as an autumn passage migrant and two as a spring migrant (never more than two birds were involved). Thereafter (up to 1984), the species was recorded annually, mainly as an autumn passage migrant, but also in spring, with single pairs occasionally breeding (records never involved more than three individuals).

Since this time, although recorded almost annually (all years save for 1998 and 2000), the number of bird-days per annum never rose above the 16 recorded in 1987 unless the species was breeding. Spring records were infrequent and, excluding the years in which the species bred (see below), only occurred in 1985 (three records), 1986 (two) and 1993 (two), singles were involved on each occasion, the extreme dates being 18<sup>th</sup> May and 16<sup>th</sup> June. In years when the species bred (1988-1992 and 2001-2003) breeding pairs were generally absent until June and vacated the area shortly after breeding. Up to two pairs bred in each of these years (always in Orange Wood or the south bank plantation) but had mixed fortunes: in 2001 a pair raised two broods but in 2002 a pair made three nesting attempts, all of which failed.

Most records were during the autumn period and, excluding the breeding birds, fell between 7<sup>th</sup> July (1986) and 17<sup>th</sup> September (1997) with the exception of an isolated single on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1999. Number involved were always small (one or two) but four were present on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1987 and four remained between 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

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

Previous records: 1976 (1) and 1980 (1).

During the period under review there were a further five records: one was ringed on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1985; a single caught on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1988 had been ringed as a pulli in Cumbria on 3<sup>rd</sup> June of that year; a single was ringed on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1989; one was along the west bank on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1990 and a single was ringed on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1993 (all MLD).

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

There were three records prior to 1974: a single on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1954, eight on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1973 and five on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1973.



Between 1974 and

1984 the species became an infrequent visitor with no more than four records per annum between October and January, but the species was completely absent during four of these years.

This low level of occurrences continued and, in the following five years, there were only two records: at least one on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1985 and four on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1989. During the following seven years (1990-1996), the species was recorded annually and more frequently, but, although a pair bred in Orange Wood in 1991, most records continued to fall between October and January, only occasionally during other months: February (1), March (2), May (1), June (2) and September (3). Numbers were very variable, usually less than nine, but in 1990 there were 11 on 26<sup>th</sup> October and 1<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November with 12 on 19<sup>th</sup> December.

There has been a tremendous upsurge in records since this time, with small parties being recorded throughout the year, although there were more records between September and

April when roving parties could be present for several weeks. As previously, flock sizes fluctuated widely, up to 11 being regularly recorded, only occasionally up to 14, with 16 on both 30<sup>th</sup> October 1997 and 12<sup>th</sup> October 2000, 15 on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2002 and 22 on 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> December 2003 being the exceptions. This increase in status has led to more nesting attempts: single pairs bred in Orange Wood during 1997, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003.

### **Willow Tit** *Parus montanus*

Previous records: 1971 (1), 1972 (1), 1973 (1), 1974 (2), 1975 (7), 1976 (3), 1977 (3), 1978 (3) and 1983 (1).

The species continued to be recorded sporadically, with seven further records during the period under review, all involving singles: 29<sup>th</sup> August 1985, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1986 (caught and ringed), 20<sup>th</sup> June 1989, 24<sup>th</sup> June 1990, 26<sup>th</sup> August 1990 (caught and ringed), 11<sup>th</sup> October 1995 and 10<sup>th</sup> July 1998.

### **Coal Tit** *Parus ater*

Between 1965 (the first recorded occurrence) and 1973, there were occasional records of never more than two birds during five of the years. From 1974 until 1977, records became more frequent with up to 25 bird-days per annum, but a steady decline was apparent thereafter (up to 1984) and the species was completely absent in 1979 (never more than four birds were present).

During the period under review, although the species was recorded annually, the number of bird-days fluctuated markedly; from a maximum of about 85 in 2002 to one in both 1995 and 2000. The records now spanned all months (previously there were none in May), but, as is to be expected with such a species, no set pattern emerged. Only rarely did numbers exceed two, but six juveniles were ringed on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1992 and seven were present on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1996. In 2002 and 2003 a pair bred along the east bank. Despite this infrequency of records from the reservoir, the species was a regular visitor (since 1991 and mainly between autumn and spring) to PB's garden (near the Bull's Head public house).

### **Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus*

Continued to be recorded as formerly, being present throughout the year and breeding. Between 1974 and 1984, up to eight pairs per annum bred, but this increased during the period under review and upwards of 15 pairs bred annually. As in the past, flocks which mainly consisted of immatures were usually apparent in July and August, the maxima included 63 (46 ringed and 17 retraps) on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1986 and 32 ringed on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1995 (this last mentioned record was incorrectly stated to have been 29 in *Birds in Huddersfield 1995*). No more than 20 were then present throughout the winter months. A flock of 27 on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1998 was unusual for the time of year.

### **Great Tit** *Parus major*

Continued to be recorded as formerly, being present throughout the year and breeding. Between 1974 and 1984, the breeding population consisted of one or two pairs, but this increased during the period under review and upwards of eight pairs per annum bred. During autumn and winter the species formed flocks with Blue Tits *P. caeruleus*, but numbers were always much lower than that species; the autumn maximum being 13 (caught and ringed) on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1996, whereas the winter population was always less than ten.

### **Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

In July 1987 what was presumably the same individual was seen in Orange Wood on 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> (MLD, TD) and the south bank plantation on 7<sup>th</sup> (JMP); in July 2001 a single was seen in Orange Wood on 5<sup>th</sup> (CH) and one was in the south bank plantation ten days later (DHP); in March 2002 a single was seen in Orange Wood on 28<sup>th</sup> (TD) and in 2003 a single was present in Orange Wood on 11<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February (PB, MLD) and 5<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April (MLD, DMO), one remained in the south bank plantation between 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May (MLD, DMO) and a single was seen in Orange Wood on 17<sup>th</sup> December (CH). These were the first records for the reservoir of a species which continues to spread in the Club area.

### **Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Not recorded from the reservoir until 1971, there were then 16 further occurrences in seven of the years up to 1984, all concerning singles except for two on a single date, with most occurring during the second half of the year.

Since this time, although the species has remained a sporadic visitor, records became almost annual (all years save for 1993, 1994 and 1998) and single pairs bred in Orange Wood in 1992, 1999, 2001 and 2002. Excluding these breeding birds, the other occurrences followed a similar pattern to formerly, with most occurring after July and, with the exception of two which were present in Orange Wood throughout May and June 1987, the others were for a single days duration. The majority of records were of one or two individuals, but three were present on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2000.

### **Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*

Previous record: 1976 (1). There are no recent records.

### **Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

The species was an infrequent visitor prior to 1973, there being no more than five records in each of the years 1967, 1971 and 1972. Between 1974 and 1984 there was an increase in records but, although recorded annually save for 1982, there were never more than 14 occurrences per annum, generally involving only one or two individuals.

Thereafter, records became annual, but the low frequency of occurrences continued until 1992, although in 1987 a pair built a nest in Orange Wood, but did not lay eggs and single pairs bred in Orange wood in 1990 and 1992. Records during this period all fell between mid-April and mid-December and, with the exception of four on both 12<sup>th</sup> October 1985 and 1<sup>st</sup> October 1988, never involved more than two birds.

Since this time the species has been recorded with increasing frequency, but records during the first winter period of the year were very scarce until 1999, thereafter the species was present throughout the year. Single pairs bred along the west bank in 1998 and in Orange Wood in 2003 (being a secretive and inconspicuous breeder, however, it is possible that pairs bred undetected in other years). Despite this increase in records, there has been no corresponding increase in bird numbers, the majority of records involved one or two individuals, only rarely up to seven, the only exception being a flock of 11 on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1999 (this record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1999*). An unusual record concerned a flock of six which flew high to the south-east on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

### **Magpie** *Pica pica*

No real change in status, being present throughout the year and breeding. The national (and local) increase in the breeding population has not been reflected at the reservoir, as the number of breeding pairs between 1974 and 1984 has remained unchanged at about eight. A winter roost in the south bank plantation (first noted in February 1970) continued, but did not materialize after February 1997. As in the past, variable numbers were present in the roost between October and March, the maxima being 86 on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1985, 83 on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1989, 88 on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1989 and 86 on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1990. The largest concentrations outside this period involved 26 on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2001.

### **Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

Prior to 1984, small numbers were present throughout the year with flocks (maximum of 100+) overflying the reservoir in the evening (generally with Rooks *C. frugilegus*) to roost at rookeries to the east and south-east.

This status remained unchanged during the first decade under review, but, since that time, the number of overflying birds has increased markedly. So much so, that although there has been no appreciable decrease in Rook numbers, the species has become more abundant and now outnumbered that species on most evenings. Up to 200 now regularly overfly the reservoir to roost (mainly during the winter months), with numbers in excess occurring during 2003: 270 on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 352 on 21<sup>st</sup> October and 340 on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. It is now known, due to observations by PB, that some of these birds (along with Rook) overfly the rookery at Berry Brow and travel as far as Farnley Tyas to roost. During the last five years, up to four pairs bred in the Yorkshire Water buildings adjacent to Orange Wood. Renovation work in 2003, however, may have caused the demise of this small colony.

### **Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

No real change in status, being present throughout the year with birds feeding in nearby fields and flocks overflying the reservoir at dusk (generally with Jackdaws *C. monedula*) to roost at rookeries to the east and south-east. Small numbers regularly feed in the local fields, but congregations rarely exceed 100, the 475 in the fields to the north-east on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1987 being exceptional. As in the past, roosting flights were more apparent during the winter months, but never involved more than 150 birds. It is now known, due to observations by PB, that some of these birds (along with Jackdaw) overfly the rookery at Berry Brow and travel as far as Farnley Tyas to roost.

### **Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

Between 1959 and 1973, the species was present throughout the year in small numbers, but birds were less frequent during the summer months and there were no breeding attempts. Thereafter (up to 1984), this pattern of occurrence continued, but single pairs occasionally bred within the reservoir grounds or nearby.

Since this time, the status of the species has changed markedly and, in line with the national long-term trend, the number of breeding pairs has increased: about eight pairs now breed annually around the reservoir and in Orange Wood. As in the past, birds were more noticeable when a shoreline was available for feeding, but also on the ice if the reservoir was frozen over. The number of birds present has increased over time; in the first decade never more than 11 were seen, but in 2001 there were 32 on 20<sup>th</sup> January and 23 on 6<sup>th</sup> March. Interestingly, with the exception of 21 on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1972 all previous assemblages had been of less than six.

### **Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix*

Previously regarded as a sub-species of Carrion Crow *C. corone*, but recently elevated to species level by the British Ornithologists' Union. Previous records: 1975 (2). There are no recent records.

### **Raven** *Corvus corax*

A single flew north over Jubilee Quarries on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2003 (PB) and one circled low over the north-east corner at 1230 hrs. on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2003 before drifting off in a westerly direction (MLD). In recent years this species has become increasingly regular in the Club area and has occasionally bred. These were the first records for the reservoir, however.

### **Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

No real change in status, being present throughout the year with a small number of pairs (no more than seven) breeding in both man-made and natural sites. The roost of mainly juveniles in the west bank willows during June, which had been a feature between 1979 and 1984, only materialised in 1986: up to 800 were present by mid-month with 2000 on 21<sup>st</sup> (the only roost

during 1985 concerned *ca.* 350 juveniles in Orange Wood on 13<sup>th</sup> June). As in the past, a flight line of several hundreds and, not infrequently, thousands of birds was noted at dusk as they flew to roost in Huddersfield. A return flight was usually apparent at first light the following day when birds were then flying in a westerly direction. Since the mid-1990s, however, the number of birds in these flights has decreased, obviously as a result of the decline in roosting birds in the town centre.

Winter concentrations normally involved anything up to 100 birds (in the past 600 were the norm), but 900 were present in the fields to the west on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1988 (these birds were incorrectly stated to have flown west in *Birds in Huddersfield 1988*). A flock of 900 which flew west on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1991 was unusual and unprecedented numbers occurred in October/November 1995: 600+ on 17<sup>th</sup> October built up to 4300 by 30<sup>th</sup> and 5500 by 5<sup>th</sup> November. During the first three weeks of November these birds roosted near the Bull's Head public house (this was not a pre-roost gathering as stated in *Birds in Huddersfield 1995*).

### **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Formerly recorded throughout the year in small numbers with breeding in both reservoir houses and in the village; occasionally birds roosted along the west bank (maximum of 100) and up to 350 were present with Tree Sparrows *P. montanus* in early August 1976.

During the period under review, although birds were present throughout the year, numbers rarely exceeded double figures and, in line with the national long-term trend, the breeding population decreased to no more than four pairs per annum. Recent renovation work at both of the reservoir houses will probably have a further detrimental effect on the breeding population, especially at the house in the south-east corner. There were no roosting congregations or autumn flocks.

### **Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

Between 1959 and 1984, a few pairs bred on an almost annual basis and autumn flocks were evident in most years (up to 200 strong in the mid-1970s), winter flocks of generally less than 50 were present during the first few years of this period (rarely recorded thereafter) and 300 were in the fields to the east in January 1967.

The status of the species has changed markedly since this time and, although single pairs bred in 1985 and 1986, the autumn assemblages never increased to more than six but, rather unusually, two were present for extended periods during the winter months of both years. In 1987 there was a single record of two on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, this being the last recorded instance of the species at Blackmoorfoot.

### **Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

From 1959 until 1975, small numbers were present throughout the year, being most noticeable between mid-March and May and mid-September and November; single pairs probably bred in most years. Thereafter (up to 1984), the species was recorded with

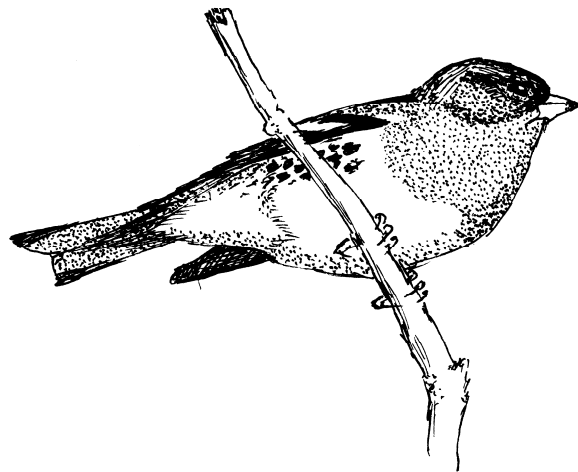


increasing frequency and in larger numbers, birds being present throughout the summer months (never more than six) and with up to a dozen during the winter months (a flock of 50+ on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1976 was exceptional). Although pairs probably bred in most years, the only confirmation came in 1977 (one pair) and 1983 and 1984 (three pairs in each). Early morning movements over the area in October/November were noted in most years.

During the period under review, this pattern of occurrence continued, but the number of breeding pairs increased over time and at least ten pairs now breed annually. There was a slight shift in the timing of autumn movements, passage birds now being recorded almost annually between mid-September and mid-November. These movements were usually in a southerly or westerly direction and normally involved less than 20 birds, only occasionally up to 75, the exceptions being 407 west on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1986, 202 south with 26 west on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1988 and 66 south with 57 west on 22<sup>nd</sup> October of the same year. Winter numbers, as in the past, rarely rose above a dozen, but in years of good Beech mast birds formed feeding flocks with Brambling *F. montifringilla* in the south bank plantation, 45+ on 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> October 1997 and 65+ on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2002 being the largest flocks recorded.

### **Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Between 1965 (the first recorded occurrence) and 1974, the species was a sporadic winter visitor in variable numbers and a few were involved in movements during October 1971. Thereafter (up to 1984), records showed a marked increase with birds being recorded annually and with far greater frequency; autumn movements were occasionally recorded.



Since this time, the pattern of occurrence has continued and the species was recorded annually. The first arrivals normally occurred in mid-October, only occasionally during early October, a single on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1986 being the earliest. Autumn movements were only noted in four years (1985, 1986, 2001 and 2003) and numbers were always in low single figures with the exception of 19 west on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1985, 22 west on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1986, 24 south on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1986 and seven south-east on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003.

The number of winter occurrences varied markedly and in some winters there were fewer than five records of no more than nine birds for a single days duration. In most of the other winters, records were more frequent, but never involved more than eight birds, usually less than four, which only remained for a few days duration. The late winter of 1997 and the winter of 2002/03 were good Beech mast years and larger flocks, along with Chaffinch *F. coelebs*, frequented the south bank plantation for extended periods. In 1997, birds were present daily between 21<sup>st</sup> October and 19<sup>th</sup> December and, although numbers were generally in single figures, 13 were present on 23<sup>rd</sup> October and 40+ on 1<sup>st</sup> November. Larger number were recorded on a daily basis between 30<sup>th</sup> October 2002 and 16<sup>th</sup> April 2003: flock

numbers fluctuated daily but double figures were regularly recorded, the maxima being 60+ on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 65+ on 12<sup>th</sup> December and 50+ on 11<sup>th</sup> February. Most birds had departed by early April (usually earlier) but two were present on 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April 1989, up to seven remained until 12<sup>th</sup> April 1993, three were present on 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> April 1998, a single was seen on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2001 and up to four (but 17 on one date) remained until 16<sup>th</sup> April 2003.

### **Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

Continued to be recorded as formerly, being present throughout the year and breeding. A winter roost along the west bank between 1959 and 1979 occasionally held up to 300 birds, otherwise no more than 50 were present.

Between 1985 and early 1999 this lower level of occupancy continued, up to 40 (occasionally as many 65) being present during the winter months (October to March). A flock of 120 along the east bank on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1997 was unusual (this record was omitted from *Birds in Huddersfield 1997*). During the second winter period of 1999, birds started to roost again in the west bank bushes, the activity being recorded annually since this time. As in the past, birds were usually present between late August and April, with the highest numbers occurring between January and March. Numbers never reached the magnitude of earlier years, high double figures being the norm with a maxima of 100+ on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000 and 110 on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2003. The breeding population, in line with the national long-term trend, has remained more or less constant since 1984 at half a dozen pairs.

### **Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

Between 1959 and 1970, there were records on one or two dates in seven of the 12 years; most in the second half of the year with never more than six birds being involved. In the following three years (1971-1973) the species was recorded annually, singles or small parties (usually less than five) being seen most frequently between October and December, less frequently in March/April and sometimes in other months excluding January and June. Thereafter (up to 1984), the species continued to be recorded annually, but with far greater frequency and with a changed pattern of occurrence; records spanned all months, with the largest proportion being between July and October, a slight influx was noticeable in April or, more usually, May. Numbers during this period rarely rose above ten.

This pattern of occurrence continued until 1990, numbers remained similarly low, but in the first half of November 1989 up to 25 were recorded almost daily. In 1989 and 1990, single pairs bred along the west bank. Since this time, the species has continued to be recorded annually, but birds remained throughout the year (with the exception of interludes caused by inclement winter weather) and up to four pairs per annum bred. The number present has also increased and parties of low double figures were not infrequent, but 53 were feeding on thistles on 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October 1991 and in October/November 1995 between 30 and 140+ were seen on a daily basis.

As in the past, birds were not infrequently noted on passage between mid-September and mid-November, usually in single figures (only occasionally in small double figures) and generally in a southerly direction, the exceptions being 107 south on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1995 and 50 south on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

### **Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

Between 1970 (the first recorded occurrence) and 1984, the species was a sporadic visitor with a small number of records in 11 of the 15 years, the majority in October/November, but there were also single records in February, August and December; numbers involved were variable but never exceeded 12.

Since this time, the status of the species, in line with the national long-term trend, has changed markedly. Not only has the frequency of records increased (although there were six or less in 1989, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1999 and 2000), but the pattern of occurrence has also changed. A high percentage of records now fell between September and November, but, since 1989, records between December and March were not infrequent and there were occasional records between June and August. Numbers involved were variable, but rarely reached double figures, the exceptions being 19 on both 9<sup>th</sup> October 1995 and 14<sup>th</sup> September 1997. Most birds were present for no more than a few days duration, but in March 1998 up to five fed daily in PB's garden (near the Bull's Head public house).

Movements, normally in a southerly direction, were a regular feature during September and October. Usually less than ten, but occasionally up to 25 were involved, the exception being 33 south and 28 west on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1988. Passage in 1991 was unusual, in that southerly movements were noted almost daily between 6<sup>th</sup> September and 8<sup>th</sup> October and involved double figures on a number of occasions, the largest numbers being in September: 19 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 33 on 8<sup>th</sup> and 22 on 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

No real change in status, being present between spring and autumn (occasionally in winter) and breeding. Birds normally returned to the area during the second half of March (slightly earlier than formerly) but, even though the largest number present at this time consisted of only 18 on 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> April 2002, up to ten pairs bred (mainly along the catchwater drain and Meltham Cop). Unfortunately, there is no quantitative data regarding the number of breeding pairs in previous years: the 1959-1973 review states 'breeding on rough ground in the area.' and that of 1974-1984 'several pairs breeding on rough ground...'.

As in the past, large concentrations were regularly present in autumn, mainly between mid-August and mid-October, but exceptionally until mid-November. Flocks of anything up to 86 were not infrequent (slightly larger than formerly), the maxima involved up to 180 in October 1987, 120+ on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1995 and up to 150+ in mid-September 2001. These flocks generally frequented the fields to the west, but the 1987 assemblage was in a kale field to the east.

Occasionally southerly or westerly movements were recorded, always in September/October and usually involving less than 15 birds, the only exceptions concerned 30 south on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1988, 31 south on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2001 and 21 south on 23<sup>rd</sup> October of the same year. The only winter record involved a single on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1986.

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

Up until 1984, the species was a regular spring (March to early June) and autumn (mid-July to early November) visitor that was recorded annually between 1970 and 1984.

During the period under review the species was recorded annually save for 1993, 1995 and 1996, but the number of sightings decreased, there being four or less in nine of the remaining 16 years. Although most records followed a similar pattern to that outlined above, there were occasional winter records. Returning birds (March to early June) appeared in 14 years and were generally in single figures, only occasionally up to 16, but 40+ were present on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1988, 22 on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1999, 27 on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2000 and up to 36 were seen on most dates between 7<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> April 2002. Autumn flocks (mid-July to early November) only materialised in nine years, but, whereas in the past they had tended to be larger than those in spring, this was no longer the case, all records being in single figures with the exceptions of 57 which flew south on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1986, 23 west on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1986, 18 south on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1987, 27 west on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1991, 23 on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1992, 26 between 29<sup>th</sup> August and 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2002, 26 on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2002 and 20 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2003.

Records outside these passage periods involved 18 south on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1988, 22 west on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1989, 36 west on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1990 and *ca.* 20 on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1998, but the winters of 1987/88 and 2002/03 were unusual. In 1987/88 a kale field to the east held 25+ on 28<sup>th</sup> November, *ca.* 40 between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> December, 137 on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 56 on 24<sup>th</sup> January and 104 on 31<sup>st</sup> January while in 2002/03 a kale field to the north-east had up to seven daily between 30<sup>th</sup> December and 18<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cabaret*

Between 1954 (the first recorded occurrence) and 1970, there were sporadic records of up to five birds in six of the 17 years, all in the second half of the year. In the following four years (1971-1974), there was an increase in records and the species was recorded annually in variable numbers, again mainly in the second half of the year but also between late February and May, sometimes June (even though breeding was suspected no proof was forthcoming). The number of birds also increased during this period, reaching double figures on occasions, but a heavy passage between mid-October and November 1971 produced high double figures on several dates with 113 (89 south, 14 north and 10 west) on one of these. In 1975 and subsequent years through to 1980, birds were more numerous (although numbers never exceeded 16) and up to two pairs bred annually. Thereafter (up to 1984), a noticeable decline took place, records becoming infrequent and no breeding attempts occurred; most records fell between April and October, only very occasionally in February/March and the number of birds present rarely reached double figures.

During the period under review, the species was recorded annually, but this roller coaster status continued. Between 1985 and 1991, the number of records increased, the majority spanning the period mid-April to early November and single pairs bred in 1985 and 1990. The number of birds rarely reached double figures, but autumn movements, generally in a southerly direction between mid-August and October, were noted in most years and produced a maximum of 16 south on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1985, 20 south on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1985 and 47 (one flock) south on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1988.

Since this time, the species has reverted to being a sporadic visitor with a maximum of 19 records per annum (1997), but usually less than eight. Most records fell between April and November, only occasionally in January, March and December, but no breeding attempts occurred, birds remaining for no more than a few days duration. Numbers involved were usually in low single figures and never exceeded the nine recorded on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1994 (this record was incorrectly stated to have been in October in *Birds in Huddersfield 1994*) and autumn movements became virtually non-existent.

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

Previous records: 1972 (2).

There were a further 14 records during the period under review: 1986 (1), 1988 (1), 1990 (2), 1991 (4), 1993 (1), 1997 (3) and 2001 (2). All occurrences fell between 1<sup>st</sup> July (2001) and 15<sup>th</sup> November (1997). With the exception of at least two calling birds on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2001 (MLD, TG), the other records involved birds overflying the area: seven in a southerly direction, four northerly with singles to the west and north-west. Numbers involved were very variable, usually less than three, but occasionally up to eight, those in excess concerned flocks of 26 south on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1990 (MLD), *ca.* 60 north on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1991 (MLD, SH), 28 north on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1993 (MLD), 18 south on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1997 (MLD) and 12 south on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1997 (PB).

### **Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Prior to 1971, there had been one or two records in 1960 and each of the years between 1963 and 1966, all in the second half of the year, save for one in March and never involving more than four birds. Between 1971 and 1978 there was a marked upsurge in records, birds being present throughout the year in very small numbers (maximum of seven, but usually one or two), with at least two pairs breeding in 1971 and 1972 and single pairs in 1974 and 1977. There then followed a total crash in the population, there being no records after November 1978 until a pair bred in 1984, after which records of up to four were sporadic until mid-November.

During the period under review, the species was recorded annually as a regular visitor (in 1993, 1994, 2000 and 2002, however, records were very sporadic) and during the first decade up to two pairs per annum bred. In some years, birds were present throughout, but in 1986, 1989, 1990, 1992-1999 and 2002 there were no records until April, May, June or even July. As in the past, numbers present were usually small, generally one or two, but occasionally up to six, the maxima being seven on both 1<sup>st</sup> November 1987 and 7<sup>th</sup> August 1988. Breeding occurred as follows: 1985 (one pair), 1986 (two), 1987 (two), 1988 (one), 1989 (two), 1990 (one) and 1995 (one).

### **Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A single which flew south into Orange Wood on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1987 (MLD) was the first record for the reservoir. In the Club area this species is generally recorded from localities in the east (e.g. Bretton Park), records from the west and such a high elevation being most unusual.

### **Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Previous record: 1971 (1).

In 1996 a male and female flew west along the south bank on 1<sup>st</sup> November (MLD).

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

Continued to be recorded as an occasional visitor, although single pairs bred at the top of the lane at Edge End in 1987 and 2001. There were records in eight of the years under review (1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1994, 2001, 2002 and 2003), but, excluding the years in which the species bred, there were never more than seven records per annum. With the exception of an isolated single on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1990, all other records fell between late January and mid-October. Numbers involved were usually small (less than three), but 13 were present on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1987 and between late January and mid-February 1990 a maximum of 16 flew south on a number of occasions. As these movements were in the evening, it was presumed that they involved roosting birds.

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

From 1958 (the first recorded occurrence) until 1970, small numbers (one or two) were recorded almost annually between February and October with single pairs breeding, or suspected of doing so, in most years. Between 1971 and 1978 small numbers, usually one or two, but occasionally up to nine, were present throughout the year, but passage on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1971 produced a total of 23 (14 south, three west and six present) and a single pair bred annually. In the following six years (1979-1984), the species became exceedingly rare with very few sightings of only one or two birds, most of which were during the winter months, but in 1984 a pair bred.

During the period under review, the fortunes of the species rallied until 1991, after which records again became infrequent. Records between 1985 and 1991, which never involved more than four individuals, fell between March and December, with breeding occurring annually: single pairs in 1985-1988 and 1991 with two pairs in 1989 and 1990. Since this time, the species has reverted to being a sporadic visitor (only six records in 1992 and four in 2000) and, although there were records in all months, those between December and March were very infrequent. The majority of records involved one or two individuals, the only exceptions being four on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1995 and six on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2000. Even though single males took up territories in 1997, 1998, 2001 and 2002 they failed to attract a female.

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

Formerly recorded to the east of the reservoir, where a small breeding colony was present between 1963 and 1971. There have been no records since three singing males were present near Jubilee Quarries in 1974. The national demise of this species has been reflected in the Club area; in some years there being no records of what was formerly a widespread breeder.

## NOTES

## NOTES



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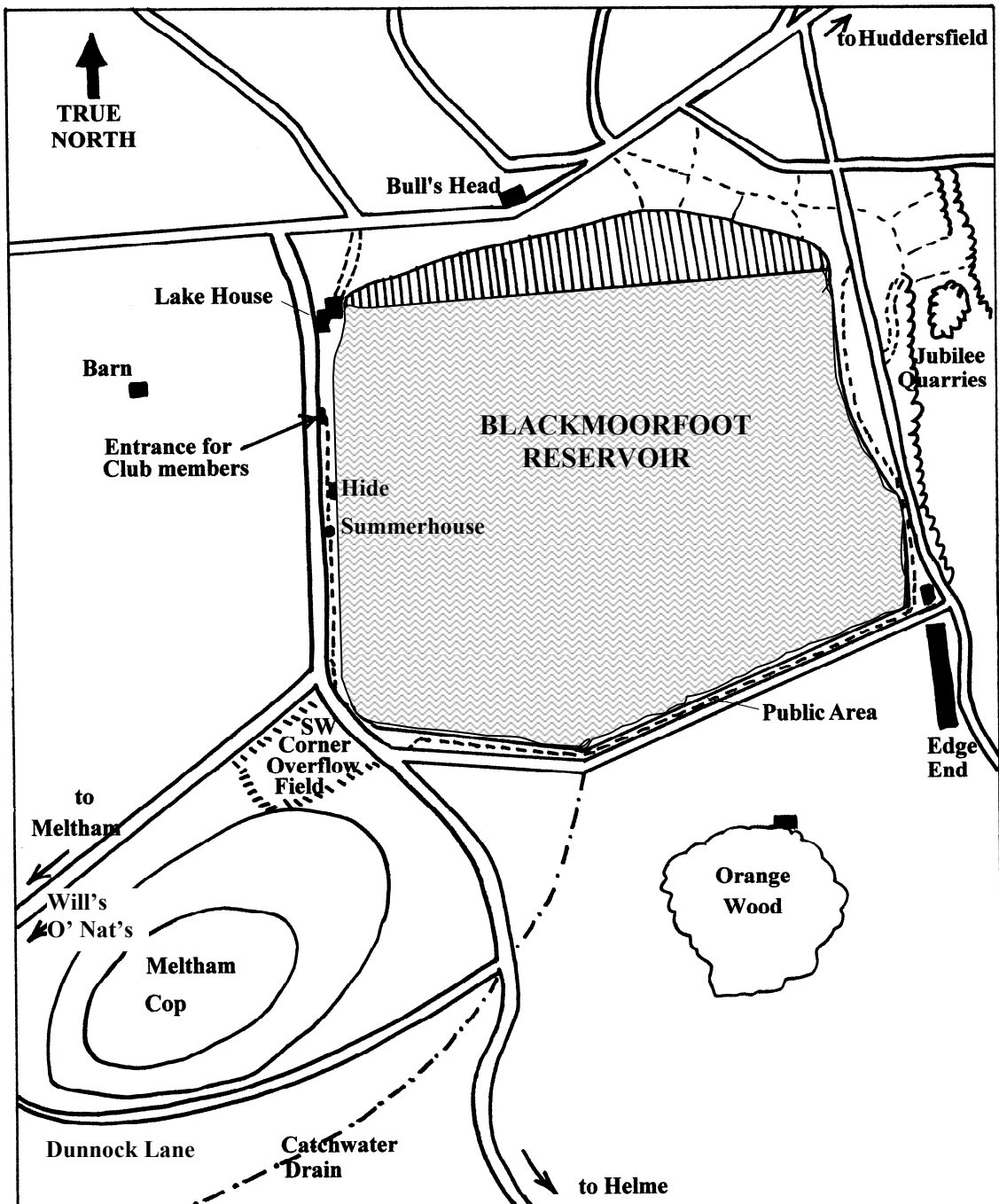
Mavis Murphy

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Chris Abell                      David Holloway                      Sandra Holloway                      Terry Piggott

Public information website: [www.icbirdwatchers.co.uk](http://www.icbirdwatchers.co.uk)

# Blackmoorfoot Reservoir and Environs



SCALE |----- 1 Kilometre -----|  
1/2 Mile