
ANNUAL REPORT
1974

HUDDERSFIELD
BIRDWATCHERS'
CLUB

PRICE 25p

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 1974

The very excellent annual report which follows is largely the work of two members, P. Bray and M. Denton and I thank them on your behalf for their considerable efforts and the fine results.

I know, however, that they will agree when I say that such a report could not have been produced without the support and enthusiasm of many other members, not forgetting our juniors, who may not be individually named, but who form an increasing and active section of the club.

The feeling of friendly co-operation runs through the club and one believes that members are enjoying its activities and are prepared to help others to do so. Our membership continues to increase noticeably and our meetings and club trips have again been very well attended.

Our Secretary, Mr. W. Slater, has again done a remarkable job in finding new and interesting speakers and in spite of a period of ill health has continued to keep routine matters well under control. I hope and believe that he is now fully recovered and will be able to enjoy more active bird watching again.

In spite of increasing costs all round our finances are in a healthy state and our treasurer, Miss J. Senior, is to be congratulated on the very pleasant and efficient way she carries out her onerous task.

We have again had an enjoyable and varied selection of club outings and have generally been favoured by the weather. We are indebted to Mr. T. Cantwell for the efficient and economical arrangements.

Two new members are welcomed to the committee, namely Messrs. D. Sykes and D. Manchester, both have done much good work for us over past years and their election is very well merited.

Messrs. C. Disbrey and P. Bray leave the committee and will be greatly missed. I must pay a very special tribute to Mr. C. Disbrey. He has been an officer of the club since its foundation and has been a tower of strength as recorder, president and committee member over the years. He will be missed in an official capacity but I know that he will always be available for help or advice if required.

We are fortunate in having such good facilities for our meetings and are grateful to Mr. Aubrook and his staff at Ravensknowle for their help and co-operation. Our hide at Blackmoorfoot is in constant use and our appreciation for the freedom granted there goes particularly to Mr. and Mrs. Jollans and the Yorkshire Water Authority. I hope that all members will continue to treat these club facilities with the care and respect appropriate.

May I conclude by saying that any suggestions to improve the club and its activities will always be welcomed. I hope that you all enjoyed your membership over the year and that 1975 will prove ever more interesting and beneficial.

BRIAN W. WOODCOCK, Club President.

RECORDER'S REPORT

The Huddersfield area possesses few features which could be regarded as ornithologically outstanding, nevertheless the diversity of habitats enclosed within its boundaries, associated with the range in altitude from 100 ft. at Horbury Bridge in the north-east to 1900 ft. at Black Hill in the south-west, provides a satisfactory variety of breeding and visiting birds. A total of 152 species was recorded in 1974.

It was pleasing to note the successful breeding of Merlin and Barn Owl for the third consecutive year, while the nesting of a pair of Nuthatches represented the first breeding record since 1968. One species which nested after a much longer period of absence was the Long-Eared Owl. Two pairs bred successfully, the first for about forty years, although the species is one which is easily overlooked and it is probable that breeding occurred in 1973.

Marsh Tit and Reed Warbler are two common British species which are locally scarce or rare and these provided two records each during the year. The Rough-legged Buzzard is a rare visitor indeed so that it was an exceptional occurrence to have sightings at both ends of the year. A Black Redstart had appeared for the first time ever in 1973 and another stayed for a period during autumn 1974. Waxwings arrived in appreciable numbers during November at the start of an invasion of similar magnitude to that in 1970. Most winters see isolated reports of small numbers of this species but irruptions into the area are infrequent, previous ones having been in 1959 and 1965.

A few birds were seen which were obviously escapes, such as Parakeet, Bar-headed Goose and Barnacle Goose. It is debatable whether the Mandarin Duck which was at Bretton in November and December belonged to the same category but although the doubt about its origin is recognised this bird has been included in the systematic list. A Grey Lag Goose which was present in the area in April/May was similarly of doubtful origin but this too has been included in the systematic list.

Several observers sent in reports which they had accumulated from particular localities as a result of watching at frequent intervals throughout the year. Such activities are welcomed and are to be encouraged, especially if they are carried out from year to year. For the commoner species, regular observations at a selection of places provide one of the most direct means of discovering how the numbers and habits of the birds change with the seasons and also help to show if any long-term changes are taking place which they frequently are, albeit very gradually. The changes are seldom as dramatic as the population crash of the Whitethroat in 1969 and are usually much more difficult to detect. Besides being useful in any attempts to monitor bird populations, watching regularly at one particular place has the added advantage that it usually leads eventually to the sighting of the unusual, even in the most unpromising areas.

The question of what types of information are required by the Recorder was raised on a number of occasions. The simplest answer which can be given is to suggest a look at any recent club report since this will give an indication of the sort of information relevant to each species.

Many species are clearly sufficiently scarce to justify sending all individual sightings, while others are sufficiently common to make the listing of all encounters impractical, in which case maximum numbers, birds in unusual places, etc. deserve mention. Perhaps the main group of birds which members have in mind when asking the question consists of those species in the medium category which are neither scarce nor abundant. There are many such species, among which one might name as an arbitrary selection Great Crested Grebe, Teal, Kestrel, Stock Dove, Tawny Owl, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Long-tailed Tit, Treecreeper, Chiffchaff, Tree Pipit and Goldfinch. If the observer has met these on a few occasions, they are all worth reporting individually. If a species has been seen frequently at one place or another, the information can probably be presented in its most convenient form as a short summary. Breeding evidence is always welcome for this type of species. At all events, if anyone has any records and he is not sure if they are wanted, by all means forward them to the Recorder who can then judge for himself.

Thanks go to all club members who sent in reports during 1974 and who helped in this way to provide a worthwhile picture of the bird life occurring in our area. I can only hope that this my first, and last, attempt at compiling a report has done justice to the endeavours of club members. My special thanks go to John Dale for his help and support throughout the year and for his sustained efforts in gathering records which did more than make up for any shortcomings on my part. The club is fortunate to see his return to the recordership and we can all join in wishing him success in his combined offices for the club and for the Y.N.U.

P. BRAY

RINGING REPORT

2,438 birds of 46 species were ringed in the first nine months of 1974, but due to illness no ringing was carried out in the last quarter of the year, and this fact alone accounts for the large drop in totals for both Blackbird and Pied Wagtail.

The Swallow roost at Lees Mill never built up to more than 500 birds and subsequently only 102 were ringed, on the other hand three were caught that had been ringed in 1973, and one retrapped from 1972. The number of Greenfinches ringed at Blackmoorfoot was down by 300 on last year, but this was mainly due to the best net sites being under water during February and March, and not to a lack of birds.

Of all the birds ringed 1,017 were "Sparrows", 512 of the 616 House Sparrows ringed at Crosland Moor were ringed in the four weeks commencing mid June, only 27 have subsequently been retrapped and 4 found dead locally, showing an incredible turnover of this mainly sedentary species.

The totals of Wren, Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff at Blackmoorfoot are all up on last year, but this is probably due to a superfine net being used as opposed to a standard mesh net which tends to let certain individuals of these species pass through without being caught.

As more and more birds are ringed in the Huddersfield area it is obvious that new ringing species are going to be increasingly difficult to come by, and the only new ringing species during 1974 included the two Marsh Tits at Edgerton and the Reed Warbler at Blackmoorfoot.

During the year 103 pulli were ringed, this included; 1 Mallard (Blackmoorfoot), 2 Kestrel (Wessenden), 11 Lapwing (Blackmoorfoot), 19 Black Headed Gull (Black Moss), 2 Tawny Owl (Blackmoorfoot), 11 Magpie (Blackmoorfoot), 14 Blue Tit (6 Blackmoorfoot, 8 Waterloo), 4 Mistle Thrush (Blackmoorfoot), 8 Song Thrush (Blackmoorfoot), 23 Blackbird (19 Blackmoorfoot, 4 Lindley), 5 Robin (Blackmoorfoot) and 3 Dunnock (Fartown).

RINGING RECOVERIES

Key to symbols and terms used:

<u>Age:</u>	Full	-	nestling or chick not yet able to fly.
	Juv.	-	young able to fly freely.
	I. Y.	-	bird in its first year of life.
	F. G.	-	Full grown, age uncertain.
	Ad.	-	Adult, at least one year old.

<u>Sex:</u>	M.	-	Male
	F.	-	Female

Manner of recovery:

V	-	Caught or trapped, and released with ring.
X	-	Found dead or dying.
+	-	Shot or killed by man.

Date of recovery: Where this is unknown the date of the reporting letter is given in brackets. All recoveries of 5 km. or over are published.

The Wren recovery was received too late for inclusion in the 1973 report.

HUDDERSFIELD BIRDS RECOVERED ELSEWHERE

SWIFT

SA11563	Ad.	11. 7. 72	Deer Hill, Nr. Huddersfield. 53° 36' N 1° 54' W
	V	1. 8. 74	Wintersett Res. Nr. Wakefield (Yorks) 53° 38' N 1° 26' W 28 Kms. E

HOUSEMARTIN

JN73997	Ad.	11. 7. 73	Blackmoorfoot, Nr. Huddersfield. 53° 37' N 1° 52' W
	X	(24. 10. 74)	Mine de Salau, Nr. Seix (Ariege) FRANCE 42° 44' N 1° 08' E

HUDDERSFIELD BIRDS RECOVERED ELSEWHERE (Continued)BLACKBIRD

CH39437	Ad. F	3. 11. 73	Edgerton, Huddersfield. 53° 40'N 1° 48'W
	X	19. 7. 74	Egton, Whitby (Yorks) 54° 26'N 0° 45'W 110 Kms. NE
CH39482	I. Y. M.	5. 11. 73	Blackmoorfoot
	V	Autumn 1974	Eina (Opland) NORWAY 60° 34'N 10° 41'E
CH39841	Ad. M	1. 1. 74	Edgerton
	V	11. 74	Lissewege (West Flanders) BELGIUM 51° 18'N 3° 12'E

GREENFINCH

BR07769	Ad. F	26. 2. 73	Blackmoorfoot
	X	30. 5. 74	Stocksbridge, Sheffield, (Yorks) 53° 29'N 1° 34'W 23 Kms. SE
BR07794	I. Y. M.	5. 3. 73	Blackmoorfoot
	X	(13. 8. 74)	Holymoorside, Chesterfield (Derby). 53° 13'N 1° 29'W 50 Kms. SSE

MOVEMENT WITHIN THE HUDDERSFIELD AREAMAGPIE

EF52369	Pull	6. 6. 72	Lindley, Huddersfield 53° 40'N 1° 50'W
	+	24. 3. 74	Slaithwaite, Huddersfield. 53° 37'N 1° 53'W 5 Kms. SW

BLACKBIRD

CH39229	Ad. M	19. 10. 73	Edgerton
	V	2. 5. 74	Blackmoorfoot 6 Kms. SSW
CH94252	Ad. F	25. 4. 74	Blackmoorfoot

MOVEMENT WITHIN THE HUDDERSFIELD AREA (Continued)

<u>BLACKBIRD</u>	X	2.7.74	Rishworth, Nr. Halifax. 53° 40'N 1° 57'W 8 Kms. NW
<u>GREENFINCH</u> BR19715	Ad. M	7.2.72	Blackmoorfoot
	V	20.1.74	Bretton Park, Nr. Wakefield. 53° 37'N 1° 34'W 18 Kms. E
	V	20.3.74	Blackmoorfoot 18 Kms. W

BIRDS RECOVERED IN HUDDERSFIELD

BLACK-HEADED GULL

Kal 606779	Pull	25.6.70	Troldholmene (Jutland) DENMARK 57° 02'N 9° 30'E
	X	14.1.74	Blackmoorfoot

WREN

?	Ad.	31.7.73	Hauxley (Northumberland) 55° 19'N 1° 33'W
	X	17.11.73	Nr. Huddersfield 190 Kms. S

M. L. DENTON

LOCAL RETRAPS AND RECOVERIES

In Huddersfield the majority of birds are ringed in areas that are accessible to the public, so it is not surprising that a large number of "local" birds are found by such people e.g. dead on road, killed by cat, etc.

Large number of retraps are also handled many years after ringing, these being tabulated below.

The top lines show the approximate period which had elapsed between ringing and either retrap (Table 1) or death (Table 2). The figures show the number of individuals either retrapped or found dead at their place of ringing.

TABLE 1 - RETRAPS

	<u>1 yr.</u>	<u>2 yrs.</u>	<u>3 yrs.</u>	<u>4 yrs.</u>	<u>5 yrs.</u>	<u>6 yrs.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Swallow	3	1					4
Jay		1					1
Great Tit	1						1
Blue Tit	3	1					4
Blackbird	28	33			1	1	63
Robin	4	1	2			1	8
Willow Warbler	1						1
Duncock	3	5					8
Meadow Pipit	1						1
Pied Wagtail	1						1
Greenfinch	4	6					10
Linnet		1					1
Brillfinch	1	3					4
Chaffinch		1					1
Reed Bunting	1						1
House Sparrow			2				2
Tree Sparrow	3						3
							<u>114</u>

TABLE 2 - RECOVERIES

	<u>1 yr.</u>	<u>2 yrs.</u>	<u>3 yrs.</u>	<u>4 yrs.</u>	<u>5 yrs.</u>	<u>6 yrs.</u>	<u>7 yrs.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Black-Headed Gull			1					1
Blue Tit		1						1
Song Thrush		1						1
Blackbird	5	5			1		1	12
Robin	1							1
Duncock	1							1
Greenfinch		2						2
Brillfinch	1							1
								<u>20</u>

The absence of four year old birds is due to a lack of ringing during that period.

M. L. DENTON

BIRDS RINGED IN HUDDERSFIELD 1974

SPECIES	BLACKMOOR FOOT	CROSLAND MOOR	EDGERTON	BLACK MOSS	DEER HILL	WATERLOO	LINDLEY	FARTOWN	WESSENDEN	
MALLARD	1									1
KESTREL									2	2
MOORHEN	2									2
LAPWING	11									11
BLACK-HEADED GULL				19						19
TAWNY OWL	4		2							6
SWIFT					12					12
KINGFISHER	1									1
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER	1									1
SWALLOW	102									102
HOUSE MARTIN	4	2								6
ROOK		6								6
MAGPIE	13	2								15
GREAT TIT	10	5	1							16
BLUE TIT	58	23	7			9				97
WILLOW TIT	1									1
MARSH TIT			2							2
WREN	39	2								41
MISTLE THRUSH	12	4								16
SONG THRUSH	12	3	11							26
REDWING	5		20							25
BLACKBIRD	130	21	244				4			399
WHEATEAR	2									2
RESTART	1									1
ROBN	55	5	6							66
SEDGE WARBLER	1									1
REED WARBLER	1									1
BLACKCAP	3									3
WILLOW WARBLER	76									76
GARDEN WARBLER	2									2
CHIFFCHAFF	10	2								12
GOLDCREST	4									4
DUNNOCK	33	17	2					3		55
MEADOW PIPIT	9	3								12
PIED WAGTAIL	41									41
STARLING	2	119								121
GREENFINCH	139	2	5							146
TOTAL C/Fwd.	785	216	300	19	12	9	4	3	2	1350

SPECIES	BLACKMOORFOOT	CROSLAND MOOR	EDGERTON	BLACK MOSS	DEER HILL	WATERLOO	LINDLEY	FARTOWN	WESSENDEN	
GOLDFINCH		1								1
LINNET	9									9
TWITE	2									2
REDPOLL	2									2
BULLFINCH	10	2	5							17
CHAFFINCH			6							6
REED BUNTING	34									34
HOUSE SPARROW	49	616								665
TREE SPARROW	352									352
TOTAL	458	619	11							1088
TOTAL B/F	785	216	300	19	12	9	4	3	2	1350
FULL TOTAL	1243	835	311	19	12	9	4	3	2	2438

ECTOPARASITES

Birds are host to a variety of parasites, among these are the Hippoboscidae ("flat flies"). Six species of "flat fly" breed in Britain of which five have been found on certain species in the Huddersfield area. Since 1971 specimens have been collected and sent to Mr. H. Beaumont of Rotherham for identification. This report is therefore based on his findings.
For terms used see RINGING REPORT.

ORNITHOMYA AVICULARIA

1F	Blackmoorfoot	18. 8. 71	ex	Hackbird	Ad M	(CK66778)
1F	"	18. 8. 71	ex	"	Ad F	(CJ21017)
1F	"	12. 8. 72	ex	"	Ad F	(CJ59750)
1M, 1F	"	14. 8. 72	ex	"	Ad M	(CJ59797)
1F	"	22. 8. 72	ex	"	I. Y. M.	(CJ49087)
1M	"	28. 8. 72	ex	"	Ad F	(CJ59800)
1F	Edgerton	21. 10. 72	ex	"	I. Y. M.	(CJ82573)
1F	"	25. 11. 72	ex	"	Ad M	(CJ21114)
1F	"	22. 10. 73	ex	"	I. Y. M.	(CH39290)
1M	Blackmoorfoot	5. 8. 72	ex	Robin	Juv.	(SA11576)
1F	"	23. 8. 72	ex	Pied Wagtail	Juv.	(JN31151)
1M	"	21. 9. 72	ex	"	Ad	(JN73559)
1M	Crosland Moor	28. 6. 74	ex	Starling	Ad F	(XV67313)
1F	"	27. 7. 74	ex	House Sparrow	Ad F	(BS33181)
1F	Blackmoorfoot	8. 8. 73	ex	Tree Sparrow	Juv.	(JP79108)

ORNITHOMYA FRINGILLINA

1F	Kirkburton	10. 10. 71	ex	Tree Creeper	F. G.	(S21427)
1F	"	2. 10. 71	ex	Wren	F. G.	(S21416)
1F	Blackmoorfoot	12. 8. 71	ex	Robin	I. Y.	(JE98542)
1M	"	9. 8. 72	ex	"	Ad	(JJ45392)
1F	"	14. 8. 72	ex	"	Ad	(JJ37905)
1F	"	30. 8. 72	ex	"	Ad	(JE98542)
1F	"	30. 8. 72	ex	"	Juv.	(SA11587)
1F	"	8. 9. 72	ex	"	Juv.	(")
1F	"	12. 9. 72	ex	"	Ad	(JJ09118)
1M	"	25. 7. 73)	ex	"	Juv.	(JP79082)
1M	"	10. 9. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80787)
1F	"	24. 8. 72	ex	Willow Warbler	F. G.	(S49472)
1F	"	22. 8. 71	ex	Dunnoek	F. G.	(JE98541)
1F	"	29. 7. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80613)
1F	"	14. 9. 74	ex	Tree Sparrow	I. Y.	(JP80902)
1M	"	27. 8. 74	ex	Tree Sparrow	Juv.	(JP80865)

ORNITHOMYA CHLOROPUS

1F	Blackmoorfoot	13. 8. 73	ex	Swallow	Juv.	(JN31261)
1F	"	16. 7. 73	ex	Great Tit	Juv.	(BR07840)
1M	"	4. 8. 72	ex	Robin	Juv.	(JJ45496)
1M	"	4. 8. 72	ex	"	Juv.	(JJ45500)
1F	"	9. 8. 72	ex	"	Juv.	(SA11599)
1F	"	16. 7. 73	ex	"	Juv.	(JP79023)
1F	"	12. 7. 74	ex	Willow Warbler	Ad	(595295)
1M	"	12. 8. 71	ex	Dunnock	F. G.	(JE98541)
1F	"	22. 8. 71	ex	"	Juv.	(JE98539)
1M	"	24. 7. 73	ex	"	Juv.	(JP79057)
1M	"	9. 8. 73	ex	"	Juv.	(JP79123)
1M	"	9. 8. 73	ex	"	Juv.	(BP19882)
1F	"	17. 7. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80134)
2F	"	25. 8. 72	ex	Meadow Pipit	F. G.	(JN31215)
1M	"	3. 8. 72	ex	Pied Wagtail	Juv.	(JJ45487)
1F	"	5. 8. 72	ex	"	Juv.	(SA11595)
1M	"	18. 8. 72	ex	"	Juv.	(JN31022)
1F	"	19. 8. 72	ex	"	Juv.	(JN31029)
1M	"	16. 7. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80110)
1F	"	9. 8. 72	ex	Linnet	I. Y. M.	(JJ45390)
1F	"	2. 8. 72	ex	Billfinch	Juv. F	(JJ45479)
1F	"	27. 8. 74	ex	Reed Bunting	I. Y. F.	(JP80859)
1F	"	7. 8. 72	ex	House Sparrow	F. G. M.	(not ringed)
1F	Crosland Moor	27. 7. 74	ex	"	Juv. M	(BS33166)
1M	"	28. 7. 74	ex	"	Juv. M	(BS33185)
1F	"	10. 8. 74	ex	"	Juv. M	(BS33228)
1M	"	19. 8. 74	ex	"	Juv. M	(BS33233)
1F	Blackmoorfoot	16. 7. 74	ex	Tree Sparrow	Juv.	(JP80131)
1F	"	17. 7. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80132)
1M, 1F	"	25. 7. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80615)
1F	"	25. 7. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80620)
1F	"	26. 7. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80646)
1M, 1F	"	29. 7. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80699)
1F	"	1. 8. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80712)
1F	"	1. 8. 74	ex	"	Ad	(JP80744)
1F	"	1. 8. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80745)

ORNITHOMYA FRINGILLINA AND ORNITHOMYA CHLOROPUS

2M	O. Fringillina,	2F	O. Chloropus,	Blackmoorfoot	24. 7. 73	ex	Robin	Juv.	(JN73988)
1F	"	1F	"	"	24. 7. 73	ex	"	Juv.	(JP79070)
1M	"	1F	"	"	24. 8. 74	ex	"	Juv.	(JP80852)

ORNITHOMYA CHLOROPUS AND ORNITHOMYA AVICULARIA

1M	O. Chloropus,	1F	O. Avicularia,	Blackmoorfoot	3. 8. 74	ex	Tree Sparrow	Juv.	(JP80767)
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STENEPTERYX HIRUNDINIS

1F	Blackmoorfoot	4. 9. 72	ex	Swallow	Juv.	(JN52201)
1F	"	7. 9. 72	ex	"	Juv.	(JN68066)
1M	"	27. 8. 73	ex	"	Juv.	(JP79460)
1F	"	11. 7. 73	ex	House Martin	Ad	(JN73996)
1F	"	12. 7. 73	ex	"	Ad	(JP79019)
1F	Crosland Moor	16. 6. 74	ex	"	Ad	(JP80012)

CRATAERINA PALLIDA

2F	Deer Hill	11. 7. 72	ex	Swift	Ad	(SA11556)
1F	"	18. 6. 74	ex	"	Ad	(SA21507)
1F	"	18. 6. 74	ex	"	Ad	(SA21516)

Of particular interest is the fact that Dunnock JE98541 was carrying *O. Chloropus* on 12. 8. 71 and *O. Fringillina* on 22. 8. 71. The three Robins (JN73988, JP79070, and JP80852) are of interest as they were carrying *O. Fringillina* and *O. Chloropus* at the same time, this is probably not an uncommon occurrence in areas where both flies are present and both are fairly common, but as these two species have a very narrow distributional overlap records are few. Three records of considerable importance concern Swallows (JN52201, JN68066 and JP79460) all three were carrying *Sterepteryx Hirundinis* a species generally confined to House Martins, and has only recently been found on Swallows.

M. L. DENTON

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AT BLACKMOORFOOT RESERVOIR DURING 1974

Although the year was punctuated with the usual periods of relative inactivity, the results of the twelve months' birdwatching proved to be very rewarding. The spring and autumn passage seasons were particularly fruitful while the summer and winter periods were by no means without interest.

The weather during spring was mainly anticyclonic with cloudy skies and cool, north-easterly winds, especially in April. As a result of these winds the immigration of birds into the country was generally retarded and although these effects were noticeable to some extent in the area around the reservoir, the dates of first arrivals were mostly about average. Four species of migrants produced their first ever spring records for the reservoir, namely Greenshank, Ringed Plover, Redstart and Garden Warbler. A Reed Warbler which was ringed on 13th May was a new species for the locality.

In contrast to the weather in spring, that in autumn was very unsettled and there were continually changing winds and periods of rain. This unsettled weather, coupled with low water level, brought waders in larger numbers and in greater variety than ever before, including a Black-tailed Godwit on 14th August which was another new addition to the species list. Terns also appeared much more frequently than usual.

Visits to the reservoir by club members were spread throughout the year, the hide having been occupied on 312 days during which some 50 observers logged a total of 1050 hours. The number of species observed was 117. Besides the migrant birds, most of the regular species were recorded with a measure of consistency and the results of the observations on some of these commoner species can be summarised as follows.

Efforts to count the numbers of roosting ulls were made on no less than 140 dates, the highest figure being about 7,800 on 24th December. Lesser Black-backs, Herring Gulls and Black-headed Gulls were present in numbers similar to those of recent years while Great Black-backs and Common Gulls reached the record figures of 600 and 1,200 in January and March respectively.

Although the numbers of birds in the gull roost have always been variable, sometimes undergoing large fluctuations from week to week or from day to day, the reasons for these fluctuations have never been clear. However, the sudden decrease which took place on 28th December was obviously caused by strong winds since the number of birds fell to about 900 after severe gales on this date, compared with over 5,000 before and after. All five species were affected to a similar degree.

Because gulls of one species or another are seen daily at Blackmoorfoot, it had been assumed previously that birds used the reservoir as an overnight roost at all times of the year. This was disproved on a number of occasions between late April and mid June when there were found to be none present at nightfall, or only very few, even though there had been one or two hundred during the daytime.

The numbers of ducks at the reservoir were about average for most of the year but there was an exceptional flock of 107 Tufted Ducks on 2nd October. One female Mallard nested at the waterside and hatched 10 young, only one of which survived. There was a summer record of an immature drake Goldeneye on 19th June. This species is usually one of the most dependable winter visitors but the birds were rather late in taking up residence in the autumn. The first to arrive were 3 on 10th October, then the birds continued to arrive and depart for several weeks and none stayed for any length of time until the end of November.

Lapwings, Golden Plovers and Snipe followed their usual seasonal variations except that the second species appeared in moderate sized flocks at an early date, in late January, and there were also a few records of small numbers in mid winter and in mid summer when this species is normally absent. The nest of a Snipe was discovered on the shore of the reservoir in June when it contained four eggs. Sadly, the nest was deserted and the eggs were cold later in the month.

The Twite as a rule is seen more frequently in spring than in autumn. This year, the spring records were few in number and were generally late, mostly between mid April and late May. On the other hand, autumn numbers were unusually high due to the presence of flocks which gathered to feed on the western shore. These flocks were present from late July to the beginning of October and reached a maximum of 85 on 14th September on which date a further 26 were seen to fly over.

The formation of Tree Sparrow flocks at the reservoir has occurred a few times in recent years but not annually. In 1974 numbers started to increase in early July and rose to a maximum of about 200 on 11th August. The birds remained in declining numbers until about mid October but there were the usual reports of small numbers practically throughout the year.

JANUARY

The year got off to a good start when two Pintails, a Glaucous Gull and an Iceland Gull were seen on the 1st. The Glaucous Gull was present again on the 2nd.

During the first three days the wind was from a south-easterly direction but thereafter it varied between south and west for the remainder of the month except for another day of south-easterlies on the 8th. There was a considerable amount of rainfall so that the reservoir became completely filled by the 18th. The month was generally mild with no lying snow.

A flock of 14 Wigeon which had arrived in December stayed until the 6th, when most of them left, but three remained until the 14th. Two more were seen later, on the 20th. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was unexpectedly ringed on the 8th and a single Whooper Swan visited the reservoir on the following day. Fieldfares were noted in the area on a few occasions, including 60 on the 14th. The only Redwings of the month were seen on the same date, five in number. A Shelduck was on the water on the 27th and two or three Coal Tits were in the plantations on the 31st.

FEBRUARY

The second month was equally as mild as the first. The wind was mostly in the southern quarter for the first two weeks, accompanied by further periods of rain.

A Moorhen was seen on the 5th and 6th and then two or more were present from the 13th onwards, remaining until April. A Merlin appeared near the reservoir on the 10th and 21st.

There had been light north-easterly winds from the 17th to the 20th and then there was a change to a south-westerly breeze on the 21st when a flock of 10 Pintails was seen to arrive at midday and an immature Iceland Guil was found in the roost in the evening. Two days later, on the 23rd, the light wind veered to north-westerly and another Iceland Gull appeared in the roost, a bird in practically adult plumage. Also on the 23rd, the first two Dunlins were seen at the water's edge and the first Curlew was heard.

Fieldfares were seen with some regularity throughout February coming in to roost in the trees near the north-east corner of the reservoir. In contrast, Redwings were seldom seen, although a flock of 60 passed over on the 24th. A Grey Wagtail flew over in calm misty weather on the 25th and a Tawny Owl was heard at dusk on the same day. A single Coot was present on the 26th. Three Curlews arrived on light easterlies on the 27th and a Shelduck came in on moderate south-easterlies on the 28th.

MARCH

There were cold north-westerlies for the first three days of March and then a change to light easterlies on the 4th saw the return of an Iceland Gull, the same bird as on 23rd February. This individual appeared again on the 6th when it was joined by a first-winter Glaucous Gull.

The first Shovelers of the year, three drakes, arrived with six Wigeon in calm, mild weather on the 7th and the first Great Crested Grebe was seen on the same day. The Great Crested Grebe stayed overnight until the 8th when there was another Curlew. Little happened while the wind freshened and backed from south-easterly to north-easterly over the next few days but a return to westerlies on the 13th brought a Dunlin and two Coot.

The weather became calm and mild again on the 14th when two Curlews were seen. Moderate southerlies on the 15th saw the arrival of an adult Kittiwake and an adult Iceland Gull, the latter continuing to visit the reservoir until the 19th.

On the 16th the wind became westerly and increased almost to gale force, whereupon two Wigeons, a Curlew, a Dunlin and the first Redshank were seen. The wind settled in the south-west over the next five days and decreased in strength. There was a Dunlin on the 18th, a Curlew on the 19th and a Merlin on the 21st. When a strong north-easterly arose on the 24th a Short-eared Owl was seen circling over the reservoir, mobbed by gulls. The wind was north-easterly again on the 27th when two Redshanks passed through and a first-winter Little Gull joined the other gulls at roost. During the last three days of the month the weather was calm and sunny with misty mornings. The first Little Grebe was present on the 30th and 31st and this proved to be the only bird of the year.

Spring passerine movement was less in evidence during March than usual. The first Twites did not appear until the 28th, when four were seen, and no more were noted until after mid April. The only spring Goldcrests were two on the 30th. Fieldfares continued to roost in the plantations throughout the month, the maximum number being 130 on the 30th. Redwings were seen at the beginning of the month only, in ones and twos.

APRIL

The weather in April was remarkable for the fact that the wind stayed between north and east from beginning to end. There was a good deal of cloud, some fog and mist, but not much rain.

Little of note occurred during the first few days until a Merlin was seen on the 6th. The first of the summer species to appear at the reservoir were two Willow Warblers which were heard singing on the 10th. No more appeared during the following days until a Willow Warbler and a Chiffchaff were ringed on the 17th. The first two Swallows arrived on the 19th and on the same date another Chiffchaff was ringed. A male Restart and the third Chiffchaff were caught on the 21st. Subsequent arrivals were two Wheatears which were ringed on the 22nd, a Yellow Wagtail which flew over on the 26th and a Garden Warbler which was ringed on the 29th.

Waders continued to appear in their usual small numbers during the month, there being Dunlins on five dates, Curlews and Redshanks on four dates each. A flock of seven Bar-tailed Godwits, including three in summer plumage, flew over on the 20th, heading west. The first Common Sandpiper arrived on the 21st, followed by singles on the 22nd and 23rd with a further two on the 29th.

During the period from the 18th to the 27th the weather was not noticeably different from the remainder of the month but there was a sequence of noteworthy visitors, starting with a Glaucous Gull on the 18th which stayed until the 20th. On the 19th two 'Comic' Terns passed through and a Grey Lag Goose arrived to stay for four days. A drake Shoveler was present on the 20th, followed by two Common Scoters and a Great Crested Grebe on the 21st. A Heron flew over on the 22nd and another 'Comic' Tern passed through on the 23rd. Two Coots stayed from the 23rd to the 24th and an adult Kittiwake was present from midday on the 24th to early afternoon on the 25th. On the latter date a party of four 'Comic' Terns flew over, heading north-east. There were two Shelducks on the 26th and two Wigeons on the 27th.

Moorhens had been resident on the water since mid February, increasing to four during the second week in April when some nesting activities were evident. However, the water level began a long, slow descent during the month and the birds were put off, none being seen after the 29th.

Fieldfares stayed in the area in moderate numbers until late in the month, the last being a flock of 100 in fields to the north-east of the reservoir on the 29th.

MAY

The persistent north-easterly weather of April continued for several days at the beginning of May. There was a light northerly wind with occasional hail showers on the 1st, when a Great Crested Grebe was seen, and then the wind veered to the east on the 2nd when there was a drake Common Scoter and an immature Cormorant. Things became quieter as the wind backed to north-easterly from the 3rd to the 7th and there was still nothing of note when a change to southerlies occurred, at last, on the 8th.

Strong south-easterlies blew during the next two days, bringing the first three Swifts and a 'Comic' Tern on the 9th, followed by the first House Martin and a Little Gull on the 10th. There were southerly winds with occasional showers over the following days and the first Sand Martin was seen on the 11th, after which a Reed Warbler was ringed on the 13th. This bird was netted amongst the willows on the west bank of the reservoir and after release it was heard to sing briefly.

Thanks to a steadily increasing amount of exposed shore at the water's edge, a few waders continued to appear during May. There was a Redshank on the 2nd, single Dunlins on the 3rd, 20th and 26th and Common Sandpipers on six dates up to the 28th. To these were added a Greenshank on the 13th and a Ringed Plover on the 28th.

A pair of Little Owls had been seen at the barn on the west side of the reservoir since the beginning of the year and nesting seemed likely but the site was apparently deserted by the end of the month, the last bird having been seen on the 19th. A pair of Tawny Owls was apparently set for greater breeding success when they were found to have three young in a Magpie's old nest on the 6th. Unfortunately the nest was seen to have been plundered later in the month.

The weather became variable during the second half of May. It was fine and sunny with a westerly breeze on the 20th when a Yellow Wagtail flew over northwards and a Sparrowhawk was seen circling over the wood on the wouth side of the reservoir. There were fresh south-westerlies and cloudy skies on the 26th when two Shelducks were seen on the water.

JUNE

There were several quiet days during this month which often represents a summer hiatus, nevertheless a degree of interest was maintained by a few visits from waders. The only passerine migrant worthy of mention was a Sand Martin on the 2nd.

Single Ringed Plovers were present on each day from the 2nd to the 4th and there were two on the 5th. Curlews, Redshanks, Common Sandpipers and Dunlins were seen on a few days each, mostly in the second half of the month. In addition, there was a Sanderling in partial summer plumage on the 3rd and a Little Ringed Plover on the 19th.

Besides the ever-present Mallard a few other ducks put in occasional appearances, including three drake Common Scoters on the 16th and an immature drake Goldeneye on the 19th. A flock of 22 Canada Geese visited the water on the evening of the 13th, a single Great Crested Grebe was present on the 18th and there were two on the 27th. A Heron made an early appearance on the 20th.

Three new breeding species for Blackmoorfoot were found in June. A pair of Spotted Flycatchers was seen on the 16th and the nest was observed to contain two fledglings by early July. There was at least one pair of Coal Tits in Orange Wood although no nest site was located. A male Tree Pipit was holding territory at the edge of Orange Wood on the 20th and the pair was seen to be food-carrying three weeks later.

JULY

The first two weeks of July saw a continuation of the pattern set in June with Curlews, Redshanks, Common Sandpipers and Dunlins still appearing in small numbers, but with an increasing frequency.

Single drake Common Scoters were present on the 6th and the 8th and on the latter date the first of the autumn 'Comic' Terns flew over into strong south-westerlies, followed later in the day by a Turnstone. There was a Wheatear and a Sand Martin on the 9th.

The weather throughout July was dominated by westerlies.

The sky was overcast on most days but there was no more than an average amount of rainfall. As a result of the lowering of the water level which had continued since April, large areas of mud and gravel were uncovered on the west and south shores and these began to attract more birds in the second half of the month. Indeed, this period saw the beginning of what was to prove to be the best ever wader passage season.

After a break in the westerly weather on the 13th, when there were light north-easterly winds, a return to light south-westerlies on the following day brought the first Oystercatcher. The wind remained light and drifted from south-west to north-west on the 16th, when there were eight Dunlins, then it backed to south-westerly again on the 17th, when two more Oystercatchers appeared. An increase in wind strength over the next few days brought Herons on the 18th and 19th, a Ringed Plover and a Sanderling on the 20th and two more Sanderlings on the 21st, these staying until the 22nd.

The winds decreased and moved to between north and west until the 26th. There were varying numbers of Dunlins on the 23rd, reaching an all-time maximum of 23 in the afternoon. A Heron arrived on the 24th and singles were also seen on each of the following three days. Two Oystercatchers, a Turnstone, a Great Crested Grebe and a Sand Martin appeared during sunny weather on the 25th, followed by two little Ringed Plovers, two Sanderlings, two Greenshanks and another Oystercatcher during cloudy weather on the 26th.

When the wind strengthened again during the next two days a Sanderling passed through on the 27th and a Knot was seen on the 28th in addition to a flock of 11 'Comic' Terns and two Great Crested Grebes.

Rain on the 29th and 30th saw an increase in the pace of arrivals. Single Knots were seen on both these days and there were two Oystercatchers on the 29th, increasing to 11 on the 30th. The other visitors on the 29th were two Sanderlings, two Whimbrels, five Ringed Plovers and two 'Comic' Terns; those on the 30th were two Turnstones and a Shelduck.

As the rain turned to showers on the last day of the month, three more Ringed Plovers were seen.

AUGUST

Although the winds were light for much of August, occasionally reaching force 5 or 6, they were very variable in direction while the weather went through a succession of changes. This varying weather was typified by that occurring on the 1st which started with a sunny morning and a north-westerly breeze, then the sky became overcast in the afternoon as the breeze drifted to the south-west. A Garden Warbler and a Green Sandpiper were present in the early hours and a Spotted Redshank was seen in the evening. A total of 18 Dunlins flew over during the course of the day.

The light wind swung through one-hundred-and-eighty degrees from south-west to north-east on the 3rd, when two immature 'Comic' Terns and a Sand Martin passed through, also a Garden Warbler was ringed.

Little happened with a continuation of the north-easterlies on the 4th but a change to a southerly breeze and sunny weather on the 5th saw the arrival of a Greenshank and three Shelducks.

Conditions were calm and sunny on the 6th, when two Common Terns appeared, but easterlies on the 7th brought nothing new. A Common Tern, an Arctic Tern and a Black Tern arrived in showery weather with light westerlies on the 8th. After two more days of showers on the 9th and 10th there was a brightening of the sky and a change to moderate north-westerlies on the 11th when several new birds were seen. A total of eight Common and Arctic Terns passed through during the morning, at which time there was also a Sanderling and a Bar-tailed Godwit. A Whimbrel flew westwards with six Curlews in the afternoon and a Grey Plover appeared in the evening. On the same day a Wheatear was seen to fly over and a juvenile Shelduck arrived to stay for several days.

Fine weather on the 12th and 13th, first with westerlies and then with south-easterlies, produced a relatively quiet period. The 14th opened with calm, misty weather and seven 'Comic' Terns flew over in the morning followed by a flock of 17 in the early afternoon. As the day progressed the winds strengthened from the south and these were accompanied initially by drizzle, later by periods of rain. Six more 'Comic' Terns were seen and a variety of waders came to join the 14 Ringed Plovers already present, namely two Spotted Redshanks, a Ruff, a Greenshank, a Grey Plover and a Black-tailed Godwit. The winds remained strong and southerly on the following day and more birds came and went, including three 'Comic' Terns, a Sanderling, two Spotted Redshanks, a Ruff and a Greenshank.

The winds decreased and became south-westerly over the next two days. A Turnstone, a Ruff and three 'Comic' Terns appeared on the 16th, then a Blackcap and a Sedge Warbler were ringed on the 17th. Also on the 17th, two Yellow Wagtails passed through and the number of Ringed Plovers reached a maximum of 25.

The light winds became variable again from the 18th to the 22nd, during which time the sky was alternatively clear and cloudy. On the 18th a Heron and two Yellow Wagtails were seen and a Greenshank passed through from east to west. No less than eight Greenshanks were present on the shore in misty weather on the following morning and there were also 10 Shovelers on the reservoir. On the 20th a flock of six Whimbrels was seen to arrive from the east at midday and a Spotted Redshank came in during the evening to stay until the following day. A number of ducks appeared on the 21st, including two Pintails and three Wigeon, while on the same day two Yellow Wagtails flew over and two Willow Tits frequented the bushes on the west bank, one of which was ringed on the 22nd.

A showery, south-westerly air-stream took over on the 23rd and with it came two Grey Plovers and two Sanderlings. Similar weather on the following day brought three more Sanderlings, a Whimbrel and three Yellow Wagtails.

There was calm, dull weather at first on the 26th when a Heron, a Yellow Wagtail and a Goldcrest were present in the early part of the day, then the onset of rain towards evening saw the arrival of two separate Greenshanks and an unprecedented flock of 33 'Comic' Terns which was followed quickly by another individual.

There was surprisingly little activity on the 27th, when there were showers and moderate westerly winds, but a flock of 10 Redshanks did arrive late in the day.

The wind became light and backed slowly from south to north-east during the three days from the 28th to the 30th while there was an increasing amount of cloud. A Willow Tit appeared on the 29th. The increasing cloud resulted in fog and drizzle by the 30th when two Whimbrels, four Turnstones, four Ruffs and a Green Sandpiper were brought down to the reservoir. There was more rain on the 31st, when the wind veered towards the south, and this brought two Ruffs and a Heron.

SEPTEMBER

Conditions were in keeping with those of August on the first day of the month when there was cloudy weather with light winds and another Ruff was seen on the shore. After this placid start, the weather became decidedly unpleasant over the following week, beginning with moderate easterlies and heavy rain on the 2nd. The number of Dunlins reached a maximum of 24 on this day. As the heavy rain continued on the 3rd, the wind became westerly and increased to force 7. Four Whimbrels stayed for a short time at midday and several small parties of 'Comic' Terns were seen to arrive and depart, totalling 17. Another two 'Comic' Terns passed through on the 4th when there was a slight improvement to showery weather with fresh south-westerlies. The wind remained between south and west over the following days, steadily increasing in strength until it reached gale force on the 7th, the gales being accompanied by torrential rain storms. The only new arrivals during this period were two Great Crested Grebes, however a female or immature Merlin which had been seen for the first time on 30th August put in several appearances on consecutive days.

The winds decreased somewhat on the 8th but the south-westerlies still brought heavy showers and four Turnstones passed through, followed by three 'Comic' Terns. Six Ruffs appeared in fine weather on the 9th and then things became quieter in sunny weather with light southerlies on the 10th. Rain returned on the 11th bringing a Spotted Redshank, then more showers came on the 12th resulting in a number of new birds, including three Black Terns, three 'Comic' Terns, four Pintails, a Great Crested Grebe and a Heron. The Merlin made a reappearance on the 13th and this bird continued to visit the area on occasions until the 22nd.

From the 14th to the 16th the weather was clear and sunny with a light southerly wind. Three Greenshanks were seen on the 14th, a 'Comic' Tern flew over on the 15th and four Black Terns appeared on the 16th. There were also eight Wigeon and three Shelducks on the latter day. The wind moved to the western quarter on the 17th and thereafter it slowly increased in strength. Apart from a Greenshank on the 18th, little was recorded during the succeeding days until the wind reached gale force on the 22nd when there was more rain, bringing another Turnstone.

By this time it was evident that the passage of waders was coming to a close. Although Dunlins and Curlews continued to pass through at intervals, the other common waders disappeared, the last dates for Redshanks, Ringed Plovers and Common Sandpipers being respectively the 18th, 20th and 22nd.

Several passerines had been seen during the stormy weather in the early part of the month including an unusual number of Chiffchaffs, the first of which appeared on the 4th. Siskins of this species were ringed on the 6th and the 8th. On the latter date a Wheatear was seen on the west bank of the reservoir. A Blackcap was caught on the 9th, followed by another on the 10th. Also on the 10th, three more Chiffchaffs were ringed and a Coal Tit was seen in the plantations. Two new Chiffchaffs were in the bankside willows on the 13th and a Grey Wagtail flew over on the same day. An early Fieldfare arrived on the 14th and on the same day there were also two Yellow Wagtails, two Grey Wagtails, a Wheatear and a Goldcrest. Two Grey Wagtails were seen again on the 15th and there was yet another Chiffchaff on the 22nd.

The weather was changeable with rain at times on the 23rd when three Great Crested Grebes were on the water and the last of the 'Comic' Terns passed through. As a consequence of the large amount of rain which had fallen during the month, the water level had risen several feet above its lowest point since August but there was still a moderate amount of shore remaining, sufficient to attract a Ruff during calm dull weather on the 25th.

There was a mixture of weather during the last few days of September from clear sunny weather on the 26th to calm overcast weather on the 30th. Two or three Curlews were seen on each day and there was a Shelduck on the 26th, also two Dunlins on the 27th. Some of the summer species put in the last of their regular appearances during this period, namely Willow Warbler on the 26th, Chiffchaff on the 27th, Wheatear on the 28th, Swallow and House Martin on the 29th. On the other hand, Goldcrests started to appear more frequently, including three which were ringed on the 29th.

OCTOBER

October was marked by northerly winds, particularly at the beginning and end of the month, but the winds were mostly light and were accompanied by damp rather than cold weather. Rain fell on several days and the water level continued to rise.

The first Redwings were seen in the trees on the south side of the reservoir on the 5th and small parties were seen on a few dates over the rest of the month. Fieldfares began to appear in small flocks from the 11th onwards and there was some indication of a south-westerly movement on the 26th. Goldcrests were seen or heard almost daily but numbers remained small, not exceeding four. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen on the 17th and again on the 18th, while a Jay was present from the 17th to the 22nd. The last two Swallows of the year flew over on the 18th, heading westwards.

Dunlins were still fairly regular, appearing on ten dates through the month, including 7 on the 4th and 9 on the 6th. Curlews were seen on six dates, the last of which was on the 27th. The only other wader was a single Common Sandpiper which appeared on the 2nd, a rather late date for this species.

After three Wigeon had arrived on the 3rd, numbers varied from 10 to 17 between the 4th and the 10th and thereafter up to 6 were seen until the end of the month. There was an eclipse drake Pintail on the 4th and a female or immature Scaup on the 29th.

Among the other visitors to the area were single Herons on the 6th, 25th and 31st, also three Great Crested Grebes on the 15th. A Little Owl returned to the barn near the reservoir on the 14th, for the first time since May, but it disappeared again after the 17th.

A Kittiwake flew over into moderate north-easterly winds on the 22nd, followed a few hours later by a first-winter Little Gull. A skein of about 200 Grey Geese flew directly over the reservoir on the 26th, most if not all of them being Pink-footed Geese. Two Bewick's Swans were seen on the reservoir on the same day.

NOVEMBER

The winds were light and variable for the first eight days of November, during which time there were varying amounts of cloud and occasional light showers. The reservoir was hidden under thick fog on the 1st but observers were able to see a Dunlin and a Heron on the bank, also 12 Shelducks near the water's edge. There was a single Shelduck on the 2nd and another on the 7th then there came a welcome visit from 5 Smew which were seen to arrive at dusk on the 8th. The birds were all 'redheads'.

Strong south-westerlies brought rain on the 9th when a Bewick's Swan appeared on the water, then heavy showers followed over the next few days as the wind gradually moderated. Cold weather with frosty mornings prevailed over the middle of the month and a Phylloscopus Warbler was seen in the bankside willows, on the 16th. Strong south-westerlies and heavy showers returned on the 24th when three more Bewick's Swans appeared on the water and a flock of 14 Pintails flew over southwards. A Grey Wagtail was seen on the same day. Westerly weather with showers continued for the remainder of the month and the wind was strong again on the 30th when 6 Shelducks appeared.

One or two Wigeons had been regular at the reservoir for most of the month and the number rose to 15 on the last day. Fieldfares were seen on occasions until the 9th while Goldcrests were present in small numbers from beginning to end.

DECEMBER

Strong winds were the main feature of the weather in December. The reservoir had already become filled to capacity by the end of November so that the continuation of cloudy conditions with periods of rain could produce no further effect on the water level.

A single Snow Bunting was seen on rough grassland to the east of the reservoir on the 4th and the first Iceland Gull of the winter arrived on the 7th. There was little of note during the succeeding days until a Cormorant was seen on the reservoir and another Iceland Gull appeared in the roost on the 14th.

Six Bewick's Swans payed a visit on the morning of the 15th, then things became routine again until a Cormorant reappeared on the 21st at the same time as two Shelducks. After a Great Spotted Woodpecker had been seen on the 22nd two more Shelducks arrived on the 24th, then the third Iceland Gull was found on the reservoir on the 27th. The wind reached unusual strength on the 28th when visibility was restricted by the clouds of spray being blown across the surface of the water. A female Scaup was present through these stormy conditions and a Merlin was seen briefly flying along the east bank.

Duck numbers were generally low during the month and Wigeons appeared on three occasions, consisting of singles on the 1st and 15th and 2 on the 24th. Golden Crests, contrary to previous habits, stayed in the area throughout the month but Fieldfares largely disappeared, the only record consisting of a flock of 80 on the 29th.

In contrast to the windy weather of December, bird activity became rather quiet on the 30th and 31st, thereby bringing an undistinguished end to what had been an interesting and varied year.

P. BRAY

SYSTEMATIC LIST

RED-THROATED DIVER

Elland G. P. 1 from 23rd December to the end of the year (per Halifax Scientific Society). The last record was of 2 at Yateholme in January, 1963.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE

Bretton present all year : 1-2 in January/February and November/December : the spring maximum was rather low at 8 on 17th March after which up to 5 adults were seen through the summer until October : bred successfully and 3 young were reared by 2 pairs.

Ingbirchworth 1-2 from 7th April to 14th September : 2 adults and 1 juvenile on 30th July.

Blackmoorfoot 1-3 on twelve dates between 7th March and 15th October.

Scout Dyke 1 on 17th March.

LITTLE GREBE

Bretton 2-7 in the first half of the year : bred for the second successive year and 2 or more young were reared : 6+ present after the breeding season with a maximum of 13 on 6th December.

Royd Moor 1 pair hatched 2 broods and raised 4 young : present from 6th April to 13th October.

Other records outside the breeding season came from Cannon Hall, Gunthwaite, Scout Dyke (including 7 on 15th September), Roadstones, Ellberry, Blackmoorfoot and Fartown (canal).

CORMORANT

Blackmoorfoot singles on 2nd May, 14th December and 21st December.

Digley 1 flew over on 28th September.

Bretton 1 on 5th, 6th and 13th October.

Scammonden 1 on 15th December.

Booth Wood Res. 1 on 15th December.

HERON

The increase over recent years was maintained. Bretton held small numbers throughout the year with a maximum of 8 on 25th August. Elsewhere there were sightings on ten dates between January and May and then there were frequent reports of numbers from 1 to 3 between early June and mid November, decreasing again towards the end of the year. Most of these were seen in the neighbourhood of reservoirs.

MALLARD

Breeds in small numbers by a variety of waters throughout the area. Winter flocks on the larger sheets of water are present in January-March and October-December. Maximum numbers were :

Bretton 178 on 13th January and 271 on 15th December.

Scammonden 85 on 20th January and 45 on 8th December.

Dcan Head 68 on 2nd November.

Royd Moor 76 on 26th January and 56 on 30th November.

Blackmoorfoot 46 on 2nd January and 23 on 9th November.

TEAL

Up to 12 were observed irregularly at six waters in the first part of the year until 25th May. Small numbers (mostly drakes) were seen at three moorland localities in June and breeding evidence came from two of these. After the breeding season, birds were seen from 3rd August at seven waters, the maximum numbers being at Blackmoorfoot where there were 25 on 21st August and 27 on 31st August.

WIGEON

January numbers included a maximum of 20 at Blackmoorfoot on the 5th, 16 at Royd Moor on the 13th and 15 at Ingbirchworth on the 13th. There were scattered records of smaller numbers until April, the last being 2 at Blackmoorfoot on the 27th. The first of the returning birds were 5 at Ingbirchworth on 8th July, an unusually early date, and the next were 3 at Blackmoorfoot on 21st August. Small numbers occurred irregularly at a few waters for the remainder of the year with maxima of 17 at Blackmoorfoot on 4th October and 18 at Yateholme on 30th November.

PINTAIL

Blackmoorfoot 2 on 1st January, 10 on 21st February, 2 on 21st August, 4 on 12th September, 1 on 4th October and 14 on 24th November.

Bretton 1 from 24th November to the year end with a second bird on 15th December.

Horbury 2 on 6th and 14th March.

SHOVELER

Blackmoorfoot 3 on 7th March, 1 on 20th April, 10 on 19th August and 1 on 2nd October.

Bretton 2 on 6th January, 1 on 16th June and 4 on 12th October.
Royd Moor 2 on 13th April.

MANDARIN DUCK

Bretton 1 drake from 16th November to the end of the year.

SCAUP

Black Moss 1 on 4th and 19th June (JED)

Ringstone Edge 1 on 16th and 23rd June (JED)

Blackmoorfoot 1 on 29th October and 1 on 28th December (PB, JED, JMD)

TUFTED DUCK

By far the largest numbers were at Bretton where birds were present all year although no information was received regarding breeding. The highest figures were 130 on 20th January and 327 on 23rd November. Reported from eleven reservoirs, all but a few outside the breeding season, with maxima of 29 at Ingbiethworth on 13th July, 22 at Royd Moor on 15th September and 107 at Blackmoorfoot on 2nd October.

POCHARD

Moderate numbers occurred at eight waters up to 5th May and after 8th July, with the addition of 2 drakes at Blackmoorfoot on 16th June. Appearances were irregular at most places. The maxima were 24 at Bretton on 13th January and 39 there on 15th December, 41 at Royd Moor on 20th February and 16 at Blackmoorfoot on 8th October.

GOLDENEYE

Most regular at Blackmoorfoot where the last of spring was 1 on 9th May and the first of autumn were 3 on 10th October. The maximum was 19 on 4th April. Up to 8 were seen at ten other waters in the winter months and there were additionally singles in June at Black Moss on the 4th and 19th, also at Blackmoorfoot on the 19th.

COMMON SCOTER

Blackmoorfoot 2 on 21st April, 1 on 2nd May, 3 on 16th June, 1 on 6th July and 1 on 10th July.

Deerhill 7 on 29th June.

Digley 4 on 22nd July.

Ingbirchworth 4 on 10th August.

GOOSANDER

Bretton 1 'redhead' on 1st December (JED).

SMEW

Blackmoorfoot 5 'redheads' on 8th November (JED). Sixth record for the Huddersfield area.

SHELDUCK

Blackmoorfoot 1-2 appeared on four dates up to 26th May and 1-3 on fourteen dates after 30th July, added to which there were 12 on 1st November and 6 on 30th November.

Deanhead 2 on 2nd November.

Digley 1 on 23rd December.

GREY LAG GOOSE

What appeared to be a semi-tame bird was at Hackmoorfoot from 19th to 22nd April and at Broadstones on 4th May.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

A skein of c200, apparently all this species, passed through westwards on 26th October and was reported from Emley, Netherton, Hackmoorfoot and Marsden. A large skein of grey geese over Oakes on the same day may have been different birds. 2 flew over Bretton on 7th December.

CANADA GOOSE

The highest numbers at Bretton were 137 on 13th January, 162 on 8th July and up to 130 in November-December. Several pairs bred as usual and 44 juveniles were counted on 28th May. Elsewhere there were 22 at Hackmoorfoot on 13th June also singles at Royd Moor on 6th April and Scout Dyke on 15th September.

MUTE SWAN

A pair reared 4 young at Bretton and a second pair nested at King's Bridge but the eggs were taken. 1-2 were seen at five other waters and some of these were non-breeding residents.

WHOOPEE SWAN

Hackmoorfoot 1 on 9th January (AR).

Ringstone Edge 4 on 8th December (JED).

BEWICK'S SWAN

Hackmoorfoot 2 on 26th October, 1 on 9th November, 3 on 24th November and 6 on 15th December.

Bretton 1 flew over on 16th November and 1 was in a field near the park on 15th December.

Royd Moor 1 on 17th November.

Scout Dyke 3 from 24th December to the year end.

ROUGH LEGGED BUZZARD

1-2 wintered on moors to the south of our area after the irruption of autumn 1973 and singles which had wandered into the area were seen on two occasions in the early months of the year, namely at Fulshaw on 15th February (JED) and at Swinden Plantation on 20th March (BA). These were the first records for the Huddersfield area for at least sixty years. One returned in the autumn and was seen over Langsett Reservoir on 16th November (RW).

SPARROWHAWK

Records from eight localities constituted a noticeable increase in sightings compared with recent years, however at four of the localities birds were seen on single occasions only and many of the other sightings were outside the breeding season so that evidence of any recovery in breeding status is uncertain.

MERLIN

In May one bird frequented the site where successful breeding had occurred in 1973 but no nesting activities were evident. A pair reared 2 young at a second location. Outside the breeding season singles were seen on three dates at Scammonden and on fifteen dates at Blackmoorfoot.

KESTREL

Scattered widely as a breeding species from moorland and farmland areas to residential and industrial districts. Birds were observed most frequently in about twenty-two localities and breeding probably took place in most of these, although proof came from two only. Reports were received from several other places and some of these may also have held breeding pairs.

RED GROUSE

Resident on most of the moors in various densities depending upon the vegetation. Occurs in some areas down to about 1000 ft. No large coveys were reported beyond 25 on Withens Moor on 3rd November and 50 on Slaithwaite Moor on 14th December.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE

Ingbirchworth/Royd Moor 1 on 7th May, 2 on 4th August and 1 on 6th August (JED).
Midgley 1-2 in May and June (DB).

PARTRIDGE

Breeds widely but somewhat thinly on farmland, extending to upland pastures near moorland. Reported from Bretton, Ingbirchworth/Whitley Common/Broadstones, Cartworth Moor, Bunn Moor and Bradley in numbers from 1 to 8. Also seen near Billcliff Wood where there were 12 on 7th July and 28 on 11th August.

PHEASANT

Distributed thinly and patchily over the north-eastern half of the area. Reported from Bretton, Deffer Wood, Thunder Bridge, Lumb, Hey Wood, Cooper Bridge and Grimescar.

WATER RAIL

Bretton singles on 13th January (JED), 31st March (DM) and 1st December (TWF).
Lees Mill Dam, Linthwaite 1 on 20th January and 18th February (MLD).

MOORHEN

Breeds throughout the area by waters of all types although it is absent from most of the upland reservoirs which suffer from lack of cover and variation in water level.

COOT

Bred as usual at Bretton where the maxima were 249 on 5th January and 199 on 22nd September. Much less regular at other waters and the only further breeding record came from Royd Moor where 1 pair raised 2 young. 1-7 were seen at Ingbirchworth Gunthwaite, Gawthorpe, Blackmoorfoot, Longwood and Scammonden.

OYSTERCATCHER

Digley 2 on 25th April.

Ingbirchworth 1 on 7th July.

Blackmoorfoot Seen on six dates in July as follows:- 1 on 14th, 2 on 17th, 2 on 25th, 1 on 26th, 2 on 29th and 11 on 30th.

Elland G. P. 5 on 24th July.

LAPWING

Widespread as a breeding species, most common on upland pastures and moorland edges between about 700 ft and 1300 ft, less frequent in intensively cultivated areas and on high moorland. No flocks above 50 were reported in the early months. Birds were in occupation of territories near Snape Res. by 26th February. Post-breeding flocks started to form at the beginning of June and reached maxima of 500 at Ingbirchworth on 4th August and 900 at Blackmoorfoot on 26th August. Towards the end of the year there were 300 near Lepton on 15th December and 180 near Ingbirchworth on 27th December.

RINGED PLOVER

In spring there were singles at Blackmoorfoot on 28th May and from 2nd to 4th June, also 2 on 5th June, followed by 1 at Deerhill on 12th June. Autumn passage at Blackmoorfoot lasted from 20th July to 20th September, including almost daily appearances from 29th July to 14th September, with maxima of 14 on 14th August, 25 on 17th August and 14 on 8th September. Elsewhere in autumn there were singles at Ingbirchworth from 21st to 23rd July and 2 at Deerhill on 24th August.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER

Elland G. P. 2 during May (per Halifax S. S.)

Blackmoorfoot 1 on 19th June (MLD, PB) and 2 on 26th July (MLD, DWI).

GREY PLOVER

Blackmoorfoot 1 on 11th August (JED, JCG), 1 on 14th August (PB, JMD et al) and 2 on 23rd August (JED, PB).

GOLDEN PLOVER

Flocks were seen at Whitley Common, Ringstone Edge, Blackmoorfoot and Flockton between late January and the end of May with respective maxima of 500, 400, 250 and 100. Many of the birds in these flocks in April and May were distinguishable as belonging to the northern race, as were lesser numbers at other localities. The species breeds on a number of the high cotton-grass moors and 26 or more pairs were found from Wessenden Head Moor to Hack Moss in mid June. The highest post-breeding numbers were 250 at Blackmoorfoot on 26th August and 200 at Whitley Common on 28th August. Birds remained in moderate numbers at these two places until November but records were few by December.

TURNSTONE

There had been records on only eleven dates during the last fifteen years so that the following sightings constituted an exceptional year.

Blackmoorfoot in July, 1 on 10th, 1 on 25th and 2 on 30th; in August, 1 on 16th and 4 on 30th; in September, 4 on 8th and 1 on 22nd.

Ingbirchworth 1 on 11th August.

SNIFE

Display flights of breeding birds were observed at several places during March-May, principally in the moist upland areas favoured by Lapwings. Maximum numbers outside the breeding season were 27 at Horbury on 6th March and 87 at Blackmoorfoot on 3rd November.

JACK SNIFE

Colnebridge S. F. 1 on 26th April (DS).

WOOD COCK

Roding was seen near Langsett and Bretton in March and May respectively. A few records of singles in the winter months came from Deighton, Grimscar, Emroyd Common and Bretton.

CURLEW

Well distributed over the high moorland as a breeding species and also on upland pastures, nesting in some areas down to about 900 ft. The earliest was 1 at Blackmoorfoot on 23rd February. Most breeding areas were deserted by August but passage continued through September the birds appearing mainly by upland reservoirs and the latest was 1 at Blackmoorfoot on 27th October. The largest party reported was only 12 at Deerhill on 27th June.

WHIMBREL

More records than usual, all at Blackmoorfoot : 2 on 29th July; 1 on 11th, 6 on 20th, 1 on 24th and 2 on 30th August; 4 on 3rd September.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

Blackmoorfoot 1 on 14th August (PB, JMD et al). This was the second record for the Huddersfield area, the first having been at Elland S. F. in 1940.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

Blackmoorfoot 7 on 20th April (MLD, PB) and 1 on 11th August (JED).
Deerhill 1 on 13th June (MLD, PB).

GREEN SANDPIPER

Blackmoorfoot 1 on 1st August (MLD) and 1 on 30th August (JMD, DS et al).
Ingbirchworth 1 on 15th August (CD).
Royd Moor 1 on 15th September (PB).

COMMON SANDPIPER

The earliest was at Deerhill on 20th April and the latest was at Blackmoorfoot on 2nd October. Birds were seen through the breeding season at most of the high moorland reservoirs. Passage birds appeared in small numbers mainly at reservoirs but also occasionally by other waters, e. g. Colnebridge S. F. and Bretton in spring, R. Colne at Lintwaite in autumn. The maximum was 6 at Blackmoorfoot on 1st August.

REDSHANK

The first arrival was 1 at Blackmoorfoot on 16th March and the last was 1 at the same reservoir on 18th September. Records during the breeding season indicated that there were 2 pairs at Whitley Common, 1 pair at Hepshaw, 7 pairs at Wessenden Head and at least 3 pairs at Black Moss. 1-2 were also seen during May or June at Ringstone Edge, Rishworth Moor, Deanhead, March Haigh, Cupwith and Deerhill. Small numbers were seen in spring and autumn at a few lowland waters as well as at reservoirs. The maximum was 10 at Blackmoorfoot on 27th August.

SPOTTED REDSHANK

More frequent than usual.

Blackmoorfoot 1 on 1st August, 2 on 14th August, 2 on 15th August, 1 on 20th-21st August and 1 on 11th September.

Royd Moor 3 on 14th September.

GREENSHANK

Singles were seen in spring at Ingbirchworth on 20th April, at Blackmoorfoot on 13th May and at Deerhill on 12th June. A good passage occurred in autumn as shown by the following:-

Ingbirchworth 1-2 on fourteen dates between 4th August and 14th September.

Blackmoorfoot 1-3 on seven dates between 26th July and 18th September with the addition of 8 on 19th August.

Ringstone Edge 4 on 5th August.

Deerhill 1 on 6th, 1 on 11th and 1 on 15th August.

Royd Moor 2 on 17th and 2 on 31st August.

Digley 1 on 14th September.

KNOT

Blackmoorfoot Singles were seen to arrive and depart on the three consecutive days 28th, 29th and 30th July (JED, DM).

DUNLIN

The earliest were 2 at Blackmoorfoot on 23rd February. Small numbers were seen during March-May at Blackmoorfoot, Ringstone Edge and Horbury. By far the highest spring numbers were at Deerhill, reaching 27 on 4th May, and birds were present here through the summer. 7 pairs were located on the moors from Wessenden Head to Black Moss during June. Autumn passage was recorded at Blackmoorfoot and Ingbirchworth with respective maxima of 24 on 2nd September and 12 on 23rd July. The latest was 1 at Blackmoorfoot on 1st November.

SANDERLING

The number of records equalled the previous total for the Huddersfield area.

Birds were seen at Blackmoorfoot on the following dates: in June, 1 on 3rd; in July, 1 on 20th, 2 on 21st-22nd, 2 on 26th, 1 on 27th and 2 on 29th; in August, 1 on 11th, 1 on 15th, 2 on 23rd and 3 on 24th.

RUFF

More reports than in any previous year.

Blackmoorfoot 1 on 14th, 1 on 15th, 1 on 16th, 4 on 30th and 2 on 31st August; 1 on 1st, 6 on 9th and 1 on 25th September.

Ringstone Edge 4 on 6th August.

Ingbirchworth 2 on 31st August, 1 on 12th September and 5 on 14th September.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

600 were present in the Blackmoorfoot roost on 1st January and there were still 200 up to 16th February then a sudden decrease took place in the second half of the month and small numbers, not exceeding 11, were present in March up to the 19th. Singles appeared only rarely thereafter until twos and threes began to arrive in September. Numbers increased through October and there were 400 on 22nd December.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Numbers were highest at Blackmoorfoot from late February to mid April and from July to mid November with maxima of about 400 on 21st March and 900 on 12th September. Birds were seen through May and June in numbers up to 175 but roosting was apparently an irregular occurrence at this time of the year. No more than 20 were seen before 7th February or after 8th December.

HERRING GULL

By far the highest number at Blackmoorfoot was 2,000 on 1st January. There were usually between 500 and 800 during the early months until the beginning of March and numbers declined from then until the end of April. Few were seen in May and up to 50 were present between June and mid October, rising to 500 by 21st December.

COMMON GULL

There were up to 800 at Blackmoorfoot until late February when a noticeable increase occurred, reaching 1,200 on 2nd and 28th March. A rapid decline followed and all had left by the end of April. 1-3 were present on a few occasions through the summer and 70 had returned by the end of July. The subsequent build-up reached over 1,000 on 24th December.

GLAUCOUS GULL

Blackmoorfoot First-winter birds on 1st-2nd January (PB, JCG), 6th March (MLD, PB) and 18th-20th April (JED et al).

ICELAND GULL

Blackmoorfoot First-winter birds on 1st January and 21st February; what was probably a fourth-winter bird on 23rd February, 4th and 6th March; an adult on 15th, 17th 18th and 19th March; a fourth-winter bird on 7th December; an adult on 14th December and another on 27th December (PB, JED, MLD, JCG, DS et al).

LITTLE GULL

Blackmoorfoot First-year birds on 27th March (JED), 10th May (MLD) and 22nd October (PB).

BLACK-HEADED GULL

The breeding colony at Black Moss held higher numbers than in recent years. About 200 adults were present on 19th June and there were about 70 juveniles on 14th July; most of them at the flying stage. Numbers were in excess of 3,000 at Blackmoorfoot up to mid March and after the beginning of October with maxima of 6,000 on 20th January and 6,000 on 24th December.

KITTIWAKE

Blackmoorfoot . Single adults on 15th March (PB), 24th-25th April (MLD, PB) and 22nd October (PB).

BLACK TERN

Elland G.P. 6 on 16th May (per Halifax S.S.).

Blackmoorfoot 1 on 8th August (TC), 3 on 12th September (MLD, JCG, PB) and 4 on 16th September (MLD).

Bretton 1 on 14th and 15th September (JED, JMD, PS).

COMMON TERN

Blackmoorfoot 1 on 29th July, 2 on 6th August, 1 on 11th August, 1 on 16th August, 1 + 3 + 6 on 3rd September and 1 on 8th September.

ARCTIC TERN

Blackmoorfoot 1 on 29th July, 1 on 8th August, 3 + 1 on 11th August, 1 on 16th August, 1 on 3rd September and 1 on 8th September.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN

Birds additional to those identified above were seen on several days, in spring as well as autumn, making this an exceptional year.

Blackmoorfoot in April, 2 on 19th, 1 on 23rd and 4 on 25th; in May, 1 on 9th; in July, 1 on 10th and 11 on 28th; in August, 2 on 3rd, 1 on 8th, 3 on 11th, 1 + 6 + 17 + 1 + 1 + 3 on 14th, 3 on 15th, 1 on 16th and 33 + 1 on 26th; in September, 3 + 2 + 1 on 3rd, 2 on 4th, 1 on 8th, 3 on 12th, 1 on 15th and 3 on 23rd.

Ingbirchworth 3 on 15th August.

STOCK DOVE

Breeds widely in small numbers in a variety of habitats. 1-6 were reported at eleven localities from Scammonden in the west to Bretton in the east. The largest flock consisted of 25 at Whitley Common on 27th December.

WOODPIGEON

Common and widespread, breeding in all areas with sufficient trees, from suburban districts to moorland valleys. The highest number reported was 800 to 1000 roosting at Bank Wood on 15th December.

TURTLE DOVE

A scarce summer visitor to the north-eastern part of the area. Records of singles only at Horbury and Bullecliff Wood in July.

COLLARED DOVE

Observed in twelve localities, mostly in the vicinity of human habitations. The strongholds of the species are in the north-east and 86 were seen at Horbury on 23rd January. Further west numbers were mainly small with maxima of 12 at Edgerton in January/February and 12 at Gawthorpe in April.

CUCKOO

The earliest were singles at Digley and Scammonden on 22nd April.

Up to 4 were seen or heard at Digley and Yateholme between late April and the end of June and the remaining scattered records came from Scammonden, Buckstones, Deerhill, Cartworth Moor, Bretton and near Rastrick. The latest was 1 near Meltham Cop on 2nd August.

BARN OWL

1 pair successfully reared 2 young. Birds were seen at two other localities.

LITTLE OWL

Breeding birds are scattered widely over the area in open country excluding high moorland. 1-2 were seen at eighteen localities, many of them known breeding sites, but little in the way of breeding proof was obtained.

TAWNY OWL

Occurs in more enclosed habitats than Little Owl, mainly in wooded areas but also frequently in places with scattered trees on the outskirts of towns and villages, e.g. at Almondbury Common where up to 5 were heard in April. Breeding proof came from Blackmoorfoot, Bretton and Lockwood.

LONG-EARED OWL

After indications of possible breeding at one locality in 1973, 2 pairs were found at the same site in April. By July one pair had reared at least 3 flying young and the second pair was feeding 3 fledglings.

SHORT-EARED OWL

The number of sightings fell to a more normal level following a good year in 1972 and an exceptional year in 1973.

Scammonden Singles on 12th February, 16th February and 29th March (JED, JMD).
Blackmoorfoot 1 on 24th March (MLD).

SWIFT

The earliest were 3 at Blackmoorfoot and 1 at Fenay Bridge on 9th May. An influx occurred in the next few days and there were 15 at Scammonden and 30 at Ingbirchworth by 12th May. The maximum was 150 at Deerhill on 18th June, while a total of 200 flew south and east over Lindley Moor on 3rd August. Birds were still fairly widespread for two weeks into August but the majority had left by the 18th. The latest was 1 at Almondbury on 12th September.

KINGFISHER

As usual the majority of sightings were outside the breeding season. Proof of nesting within the area seems to be hard to come by. 1-2 were seen at Bretton between January and April and between July and December. Elsewhere 1-2 were seen infrequently at Coxley, Longwood and Linthwaite.

GREEN WOODPECKER

Numbers had been low following the severe winter of 1962-63 but the recovery which became most noticeable in 1972 was continued into 1974. Breeding was attempted at Beaumont Park and probably also at some of the following localities where birds were seen with varying frequency: Bretton, Digley/Hilberry, Hagg Wood, Dean Wood, Lockwood, Booth Wood, Edgerton and Grimescar.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

A pair rested at Beaumont Park and 1-3 were seen with regularity at Bretton. Elsewhere 1-2 were reported from Hoyland Bank, Deffer Wood, Highburton, Royd House Wood, Almondbury, Longley Wood, Blackmoorfoot, Edgerton and Deighton.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Bretton 1 or 2 on 20th January (DP), 31st March, 7th April and 14th April (JED).

SKYLARK

Common breeding species throughout the area on open grassland and moorland. Many areas on high ground are deserted in winter. Birds were present near Ingbirchworth through the early months but were noticeably more numerous by 16th March, indicating a return movement. The largest winter flock consisted of 50 near Storthes Hall on 2nd November.

SWALLOW

The earliest were 2 at Outlane on 7th April and the next were 6 at Bretton on 12th April. Birds appeared at several places during the remainder of April but the main arrival was not until May. 100 were at Ingbirchworth by 12th May. The autumn roost at Lees Mill Dam, Linthwaite, held smaller numbers than in the previous two years and was short-lived, the maximum being 500 on 18th August. Most birds had left the area by the end of September but small numbers appeared fairly frequently through October. The latest were 6 at Bretton on 5th November and 1 at Holmbridge on 9th November. The fate of young being fed by 2 pairs at Cannon Hall into the first week of November was not determined.

HOUSE MARTIN

The first arrivals were 7 at Bretton and 1 at Ingbirchworth on 20th April. This species has increased in numbers during recent years but the evidence was insufficient to determine whether this trend was maintained. The maximum number was 100 at Ingbirchworth on 10th August. 40 were at Bradley as late as 4th October and smaller numbers continued to appear through the month, the last being 1 at Bretton on 2nd November.

SAND MARTIN

Few records were received, the earliest being 3 at Bretton on 12th April and the latest 1 at Ingbirchworth on 4th August. Singles were also seen at Blackmoorfoot and Bilberry Reservoir.

CARRION CROW

Widespread, commonest in open wooded country and parkland in the east, more thinly distributed in moorland areas in the west.

ROOK

Nests in large numbers in suitably timbered areas in the north and east, also in the larger valleys penetrating into the hill country, although few rookeries are as high as 800 ft. The birds habitually resort to upland pastures for feeding.

A flock of corvids at Royd Moor on 27th January contained over 2,000 birds and one at High Flatts on 26th December contained about 5,000. Rooks in both cases making up 75 to 80 per cent of the total while the remainder were Jackdaws. One of the birds at High Flatts had pure white secondaries.

JACKDAW

A common resident with a similar distribution to Rook, although it nests in some areas at higher altitudes. The largest numbers reported were those with Rook : see above.

MAGPIE

Common and widespread, found in all areas where there are areas of grass interspersed with trees, from suburbs to moorland edges. Occasionally visits open moorland, e.g. Back Moss and Tinker Hill at 1,300 ft. Moderate sized parties were seen outside the breeding season, such as 50 near Boothroyd Wood on 21st March and 40 at Emroyd Common on 3rd November. The Blackmoorfoot roost held 101 on 10th February and 80 on 8th December.

JAY

Occurs in all the woods of sufficient size and also visits some of the smaller ones outside the breeding season. The largest gathering was of 13 at Smith Wood on 9th April.

GREAT TIT

Common in all well-timbered areas, less frequent in pure conifer woods.

BLUE TIT

As Great Tit : additionally inhabits the smaller copses and areas with more scattered trees : an abundant species.

COAL TIT

Mainly but not entirely seen among conifers, e.g. Yateholme, Boothroyd Wood, Deffer Wood. Fairly numerous in mature mixed woodland such as at Bretton.

MARSH TIT

A scarce species which has never been proved to breed in the area. Last recorded in 1970. 3 were at Bretton on 27th January (JED). 2 were ringed at Edgerton on 1st February and 1 was retrapped there on 7th February (MLD).

WILLOW TIT

Inhabits a variety of areas with woods and thickets, often near water. 1-4 were seen at Bretton, Hoyland Bank, Deffer Wood, Royd Moor, Thunder Bridge, Highburton, Lockwood, Blackmoorfoot and Deighton.

LONG-TAILED TIT

One of the species which has benefitted from recent mild winters. Breeding evidence came from Bretton (4 pairs) and Woodsome. The largest numbers were 17 at Thunder Bridge on 26th January, 16 at Bretton on 16th February and 20 at Beaumont Park on 30th October. Smaller numbers were seen at Deffer Wood, Highburton, Smith Wood, Lumb, Hey Wood, Upper Park Wood, Blackmoorfoot, Yateholme, Longwood, Grimescar, Deighton and Gawthorpe.

NUTHATCH

Hagg Wood A pair was seen feeding young in May (DM).

Bretton 1-2 at intervals from 15th September to the end of the year (JED, DP et al).

Denby Dale 1 on 27th August (DB).

TREECREEPER

Breeds fairly widely but thinly in suitable areas offering tall mature woodland. 4 pairs were located around the lakes at Bretton. Few other records received.

WREN

Widespread and common in a variety of habitats with low cover, from woods and thickets to bracken-covered moorland slopes.

DIPPER

Bed near Meltham and Denby Dale. 1-3 were reported from Rishworth Moor, Booth Wood, Longwood, Dean Wood, Digley and Thunder Bridge.

MISTLE THRUSH

Widespread and common. Sometimes seen in small flocks after the breeding season: 20 at Deighton on 21st August, 20 at Storthes Hall on 2nd November and 35-40 at Digley in late August and early October.

FIELDFARE

Flocks of up to 100 were seen at several widely scattered places at the beginning of the year until late March when there was a noticeable increase in numbers lasting through much of April. About 1,000 roosted at Royd Moor on 23rd March and 7-800 were at Ingbirchworth on 6th April. There were 500 at Emley Moor on 27th April and 200 remained there on 29th April. The latest were 50 at Digley on 30th April except for 1 at Gawthorpe on 5th May, 6 at Grimescar on 7th May and 1 at Digley on 16th May. An early autumn bird appeared at Blackmoorfoot on 14th September, followed by another at Digley on the 15th and 20 at the latter place on the 20th. The main arrival started with 40 over Lindley Moor on 3rd October. Later maxima were 400 at Coxley and 400 at Horbury, both on 30th October, also 600 roosting at Emroyd Common in early November.

SONG THRUSH

Well distributed and common as a breeding species. Neighbouring ornithological societies to the east describe this bird as more common in autumn or winter but locally it appears to be less common in the winter months, particularly in upland areas.

REDWING

Up to 200 roosted at Edgerton during January and February. Numbers reported elsewhere in the first few months were small, the maximum being 60 over Blackmoorfoot on 24th February. The latest were 2 at Grimescar on 29th April. The first to return were 2 at Digley on 1st October and there were 82 at this locality on the following day. 300 roosted at Emroyd Common in early November and 200 were at Grimescar on 15th December.

RING OUZEL

Reported most frequently from Digley where the earliest were 2 on 22nd March and the latest were 2 on 1st October. The spring and autumn maxima were 15 on 18th April and 12 on 14th September. Elsewhere 1-3 were seen in spring and summer at Rishworth Moor, Scammonden, Deerhill, Wessenden, Wessenden Head, Yateholme and Snailsden.

BLACKBIRD

Widespread and common in a multitude of habitats with trees and bushes, including scrub-covered hillsides in moorland areas where the breeding range sometimes overlaps that of Ring Ouzel, e.g. at Wessenden. The roost at Edgerton held 200 to 250 during January and February, decreasing to 50 by early March.

WHEATEAR

The first to arrive were 2 at Digley on 21st March and birds appeared at a number of other breeding localities on the moorland fringes in early April. Small numbers were seen occasionally away from the high ground in spring and autumn, including 1 at Horbury on 14th April and 1 in the Leeds Road/Deighton area on 10th September. Up to 9 were at Whitley Common in May and August. October records consisted of 1 at Emley Moor on the 5th and 1 at Oakes on the 10th.

STONECHAT

The number of sightings was maintained at a high level for the third successive year. These included a summer record of 1 at Bentley Springs on 20th June. Scammonden 2 on 17th, 2 on 23rd and 1 on 24th February; 1 on 2nd March and 2 on 2nd November.

Ringstone Edge 1 on 10th March.

Lindley Moor 1-2 juveniles on 3rd, 5th and 6th August, 28th and 29th September, with the addition of an adult on the last date.

Castle Hill 1 male on 13th October.

Victoria/Carlecoates 1 on 31st October.

Scout Dyke 1 on 17th November and 24th December.

WHINCHAT

The earliest were singles at Digley and Longwood on 8th May. Breeding evidence came from Deanhead/Scammonden, Deerhill, Wessenden, Digley and Ingbirchworth/Royd Moor. Autumn records came from Lindley Moor, Linthwaite, Bradley and Horbury in addition to the above. The latest was 1 at Lindley Moor on 29th September.

REDSTART

Singles at Bretton and Deerhill on 20th April were the first. Isolated records of males in April and May came from Blackmoorfoot, Grimescar and Booth Wood. Breeding evidently occurred at Bretton, Digley, Brownhill and Dobb Dike while additional summer birds were seen at Bentley Springs, Emley Moor and Hall Dike. Singles in autumn appeared at Longwood, Lindley Moor, Deighton and Jackson Bridge with the latest at Digley on 16th September except for 1 at Oakes on 7th October.

BLACK RESTART

Digley 1 female/immature on 11th August (EWS) and 10th to 29th September (NL, EP, PB, JED, JMD, DM). Second record for the Huddersfield area.

ROBIN

A common resident in gardens, woods, copses etc.

REED WARBLER

1 was ringed at Blackmoorfoot on 13th May (MLD) and 2 were seen at Coxley Wood on 15th May (DP). Although it is reported that birds have occasionally appeared in the past in the extreme north-east of the area, these are the first to find their way into the club's records.

SEDGE WARBLER

Grimescar 1 in song on 30th June (NL).

Blackmoorfoot 1 ringed on 17th August (MLD).

Lees Mill Dam 1 on 19th and 28th August (MLD).

BLACKCAP

The earliest were 2 on 20th April at Bretton where up to 8 males were heard singing in summer. Commonest in the east of the area but rather scarce to the south and west of Huddersfield. Records in these areas in spring and summer came from Grimescar, Edgerton, Longwood, Beaumont Park, Hagg Wood and Holmbridge. A number of birds were seen into late autumn and winter: single males at Coxley Wood on 30th October, Bretton on 10th November, Longwood on 15th November and Beaumont Park from 17th to 24th November; single females or immatures at Deighton on 21st October and Beaumont Park on 3rd December.

GARDEN WARBLER

Scarcer than Blackcap. The first to arrive in the breeding areas was 1 at Bretton on 5th May and last was at Denby Dale on 20th August. The only records away from the eastern woodlands were single passage birds at Blackmoorfoot on 29th April, 1st and 3rd August.

WHITETHROAT

The earliest was at Bretton on 5th May and the latest at Linthwaite on 20th August. Breeding season reports were from Bretton, Deffer, Hillcliff, Almondbury, Deighton and Longwood. Others in spring and autumn came from Horbury, High Hoyland and Emley Moor.

LESSER WHITETHROAT

Bretton 1 male on 28th April (JED, JMD).

Deighton Singles on 12 dates between 30th April and 27th August (DR, TC).

Coxley Wood 1 male on 8th May (DP).

WILLOW WARBLER

The most abundant summer visitor. In addition to woods and bushy places it is found in more open habitats with a few trees, including moorland valleys. After 1-2 had arrived at Blackmoorfoot, Deighton and Coxley on 10th April, birds appeared at several places over the following days and the species was fairly widespread by 20th April. The latest was 1 at Blackmoorfoot on 26th September.

CHIFFCHAFF

A single bird, probably this species, was seen at Bretton on 30th March, 2 were singing there on the following day and up to 6 were heard through the spring into June. Elsewhere, 1-3 were seen or heard in spring at Deffer, Bulcliff, Denby Dale, Thunder Bridge, Dungeon Wood, Beaumont Park, Crosland Moor and Backmoorfoot but some of these, particularly those in the west, were passage birds. At Backmoorfoot an autumn passage was more marked than usual, consisting of up to 3 on nine dates in September. The latest definite Chiffchaff was 1 singing at Backmoorfoot on 27th September. Single Phylloscopus warblers were at Bretton on 5th October, Backmoorfoot on 16th November and Dalton on 14th December.

WOOD WARBLER

Coxley 1 male on 2nd May (DP).
Farmley Bank Wood 1 male on 3rd June (DS).

GOLDCREST

Birds were present during the breeding season at Bretton, Yateholme and Longwood. Fairly common and widespread in spring during March and April, more so in autumn between September and November.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

The earliest was 1 at Beaumont Park on 19th May and the latest were 2 at Digley on 28th September. Seen also at Bretton, Denby Dale, Hagg Wood, Hilberry, Backmoorfoot, Longwood, Hollywell Brook, Deighton and Kirkheaton. Breeding was proved in four of these localities.

DUNNOCK

Common and widespread in all areas with trees and bushes, also occurring to a lesser extent amongst low scrub and bracken on moorland slopes.

MEADOW PIPIT

The most abundant breeding species on the moors, common also on grasslands at medium altitudes, less so in the more highly cultivated lowland areas in the east. High ground is largely deserted in winter and numbers at this time of year in the area as a whole form only a small fraction of the summer population. Birds had returned to Deerhill Moss and were fairly common by 20th March. 25 were at Colnebridge S.F. on 20th April, 100 were at Digley on 21st September and over 50 roosted at Lindley Moor on 28th September.

TREE PIPIT

The first were 2 singing males at Bretton on 28th April. 1-4 were heard between May and July at Backmoorfoot, Yateholme, Hagg Wood, Grimescar, Gawthorpe, Whitley Beaumont, Stockmoor, Bretton and Deffer. The latest was 1 at Deffer on 24th August.

PIED WAGTAIL

Breeds widely in small numbers throughout the area. The maxima at reservoirs were 28 on 29th June at Backmoorfoot and 18 on 7th August at Ingbirchworth. The roost at Lees Mill Dam contained 60 on 20th January and 80 on 28th July.

GREY WAGTAIL

Breeding season records came from Both Wood, Digley, Yateholme and Bretton. Seen more frequently at other times of the year at Holmbridge, Royd Moor, Blackmoorfoot, Linthwaite, Crosland Moor, Beaumont Park, Longwood, Longroyd Bridge, Edgerton, Longwood, Fartown/Deighton and Bretton.

YELLOW WAGTAIL

The earliest was 1 at Bretton on 13th April and this was followed by only a few reports of singles at Bretton and Blackmoorfoot in April and May. 1-3 were seen in autumn at Blackmoorfoot, Digley, Ingbirchworth and Almondbury between 4th August and 18th September.

WAXWING

2 at Scapegoat Hill on 1st March were the only ones of the 1973-74 winter.

Recorded later in the year as follows:

Thornhill 1 on 31st October and 1st November.

Fartown 2 on 18th November and up to 42 to the end of the year.

Beaumont Park/Crosland Moor 32 on 27th November, up to 40 until early December and up to 15 for the remainder of the year.

Aspley 3 on 29th November.

Salendine Nook 3 on 1st December.

Almondbury 1 on 4th December.

Birkby early-mid December with a maximum of 61 on the 9th.

Bretton 15 on 14th December.

Lindley 3 on 25th December.

STARLING

Abundant resident and winter visitor. Absent from high moorland although the moorland edges are visited frequently in autumn. Four flocks between Royd Moor and Hade Edge on 26th January totalled 9,000 also 7,000 were at Ingbirchworth on 16th February. The roost in Huddersfield town centre has not been counted since the 1950's when the maximum was 10,000.

GREENFINCH

Common in most areas except moorland. The Blackmoorfoot roost had maxima of 180 on 14th January and 100 on 30th November. 150 were with Tree Sparrows near Denby Dale on 26th October.

GOLDFINCH

Breeds widely but thinly over much of the area. Reported most frequently in autumn. There were 50 at Bretton on 22nd September and 50 at Kirkburton on 12th October. Breeding evidence came from Outlane, Longwood, Lockwood, Holmbridge, Woodsome, Kirkheaton, Royd Moor and Bretton.

SISKIN

Numbers were small at both ends of the year.

Bretton up to 6 on a few dates until 17th March and up to 16 on occasions after 16th November.

Grimescar 1 on 10th March.

Longwood 2 on 15th November.

LINNET

Many birds leave in winter but some flocks remain. 50 roosted at Bretton in late February and up to 150 frequented the Leeds Road playing fields during February and March. Flocks of up to 60 were seen at several places in April and early May with a maximum of 100 near Lepton on 3rd May. Breeds widely on rough ground up to moorland edges. 100 were at Kirkburton on 12th October.

TWITE

There has been a noticeable increase in the last few years evidenced by the size of spring and autumn flocks. Birds sometimes stay in the area through the winter but this year none was reported before 24th February or after 22nd October. Of the spring flocks, the largest was 180 at Scammonden on 28th March. In autumn 80 were near Digley on 29th August, 100 at Ringstone Edge on 12th September and 110 at Blackmoorfoot on 14th September.

REDPOLI

Up to 50 were in the Leeds Road/Deighton area in the winter months. Breeds widely in small numbers, particularly in conifer plantations such as Yateholme, Boothroyd Wood, Deffer, Cawthorne and Billcliff. 50 were at Coxley on 30th October.

BULLFINCH

Fairly common throughout the area in places with suitable cover, also occurring in some of the more open habitats which are visited most frequently outside the breeding season, even occasionally treeless areas at the edge of moorland up to 1,400 ft.

CHAFFINCH

Widespread and common as a breeding species in most areas with trees or bushes but nowhere over-abundant. The roost at Edgerton held up to 55 in January and February. There were 200 at Upper Midhope on 21st March but no other large winter flocks were reported. An albinistic bird at Royd House Wood on 17th March had buff plumage throughout.

BRAMELING

Scattered records in the early months were from Bretton, Deffer, Penistone, Victoria, Royd House Wood and Edgerton. The maximum was 65 at Victoria on 16th February and the latest was 1 at Bretton on 28th April. The first to return was 1 at Bretton on 13th October and up to 40 were seen here in the following weeks, increasing to 300 in December. Elsewhere 1-6 were reported from Grimescar, Digley, Holmbridge and Royd Moor in October and November.

YELLOWHAMMER

Breeds widely over the area up to moorland edges although numbers are distributed thinly through much of its range. No winter flocks were noted other than 40 at Longwood in January and February.

CORN BUNTING

1-4 singing males were heard in spring and summer at Royd Moor, Ingbirchworth, Whitley Common, Coxley Valley, Upper Hopton, Lascelles Hall, Dalton Bank, Crosland Moor, South Crosland/Blackmoorfoot and Outlane Moor. Autumn records additionally came from Whitley Beaumont and Bradley. All reports were between April and September.

REED BUNTING

Breeds in small numbers in suitable places by rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, etc., also in moist upland areas such as rushy pastures and cotton-grass moors, e. g. Wessenden Head and Snailsden at 1,300-1,400 ft. High ground is mostly deserted in winter.

SNOW BUNTING

This species has declined markedly since the mid 1960's with only two records of single birds since 1968, both in 1971. A male was seen near Blackmoorfoot on 4th December (DS).

HOUSE SPARROW

An abundant resident, breeding wherever there are occupied human habitations with consequent highest densities in suburban areas.

TREE SPARROW

Breeds throughout the area in places offering old deciduous trees. Flocks outside the breeding season included 150 at Colnbridge S.F. on 20th April, 200 at Blackmoorfoot on 11th August and 200 near Denby Dale on 26th October.

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