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BIRD REPORT

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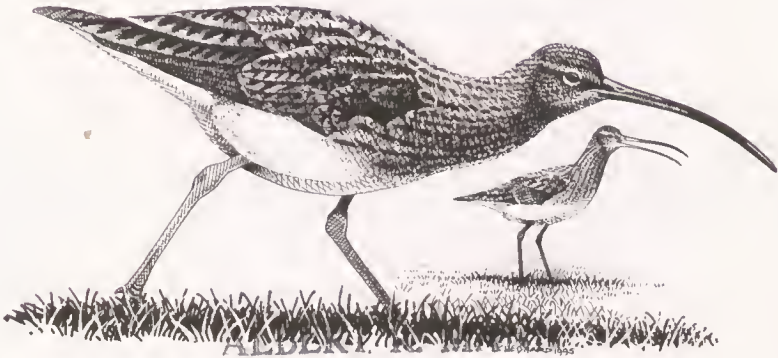
YORKSHIRE NATURALISTS' UNION

BIRD REPORT

1997

DATA COMPILED BY G. E. DOBBS

WRITTEN AND EDITED BY L. J. DEGNAN AND G. E. DOBBS



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YORKSHIRE NATURALISTS' UNION ORNITHOLOGICAL SECTION

Reports Committee:

Chairman: By rotation

Vice-County Recorders:

VC 61: **G. E. Dobbs**, 12 Park Avenue, Princes Avenue, Hull. HU5 3ER
Tel: 01482 341524 E-mail geoffdobbs@aol.com

VC 62: Records until 31st December 2000
D. Bywater, 2 High Moor Way, Eastfield, Scarborough. YO11 3LP
Tel: 01723 582619 E-mail dave@dbywater.freemove.co.uk

Records from 1st January 2001

R. S. Slack 64 Sundew Gardens, High Green, Sheffield. S35 4DU
Tel: 0114 2845300 E-mail russells_-sovereign@yahoo.co.uk

VC 63: **M. Barnett**, 12 Woodlands Close, Denby Dale, Huddersfield. HD8 7RH
Tel: 01484 865961

L. J. Degnan, 14 Fiddlers Drive, Armthorpe, Doncaster, DN3 3TT
Tel: 01302 835094 E-mail pat.degnan@lineone.net

VC 64: **J. Pewtress**, 31 Percy End, Kirby Moorside, York. YO62 6DQ
Tel: 01751 431001 E-mail Jim.Pewtress@btinternet.com

VC 65: **N. J. Morgan**, "Linden", Church View, Ainderby Steeple, Northallerton.
DL7 9PU Tel: 01609 770168 E-mail nick.morgan1@virgin.net

Division of VC 63/64

Lance Degnan: Barnsley Bird Study Group, Blacktoft Sands RSPB, Doncaster & District O.S., Rotherham & District O.S., Sheffield Bird Study Group, SK 58

Mike Barnett: Fairburn Ings, Halifax Birdwatchers' Club, Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club, Castleford Nats. and Ardsley Res, Leeds Birdwatchers' Club, Sorby NHS, Wakefield NHIS, Five Towns Bird Group

Jim Pewtress: all other VC 64 areas

EDITORS' FOREWORD

This report contains a summary of the reported sightings for all the species in the county for the year 1997. As such, it is the last in a long series of reports, as the Reports Committee has decided to report annually from 1998 on only a selected range of rare and scarce species, and to treat the commoner species in 5-yearly summaries. The first summary of the commoner species in the new format will therefore cover the years 1998-2002, and is hoped that greater use will be made of national data sets in order to identify short-term population trends.

In the catching-up process of trying to produce reports within twelve calendar months of the year being reported, the Committee has already produced the *1998-1999 Rare and Scarce Bird Report*, and the 1997 Report follows out of sequence.

This report started out as a "catching-up" exercise, and the Vice-County Recorders were asked to write summaries for their areas in order to reduce the amount of editing and synthesis. They approached the task with tremendous enthusiasm to produce very comprehensive summaries for their recording areas, and even after editing, this report is still very detailed. Hopefully it contains some useful data that can be used for conservation purposes and as a baseline for comparison in future reports.

We would particularly like to thank John Dale for his meticulous work in summarising VC 63 and the Bradford region of VC 64. In his final YNU Report as a VC Recorder John has provided us with his personal knowledge of the status of the birds of these areas. Dave Bywater (VC 62), Jim Pewtress (VC 64) and Nick Morgan (VC 65) are also to be thanked for their detailed summaries. Special thanks to Pete Drury for his assistance with word-processing and to Pete Greaves for comments in general on the manuscript.

Special thanks also to the artists Carl Corbridge, Yuri Gabrilovich, John Grist, Alan Marshall and particularly to Paul Leonard for his continued support in this way. The *Doncaster and District Ornithological Society* generously made available their collection of black and white illustrations, some of which complement this report. John Harriman and Iain Leach readily provided the cover photographs.

Geoff Dobbs and Lance Degan

A SUMMARY OF 1997

During 1997 a total of 284 species was identified with certainty in the county of which 157 bred or at least attempted to do so.

Breeding birds

For the most part, the pattern of breeding success or otherwise of birds in Yorkshire in 1997 reflected national trends, although there were certain areas of divergence. Some farmland species such as Tree Sparrow, Reed Bunting and Yellowhammer continued to become increasingly scarce in the western parts of the county, though the upland and heavily urbanised environments of West and South Yorkshire have always been a limiting factor, so that decreases there have been more noticeable. Other species have also been in decline across the county. These include Mallard, Spotted Flycatcher and Lesser Redpoll. The situation with Yellow Wagtail, White-throated Dipper, Common Redstart, and Song Thrush is less clear, though a decrease is suspected. Numbers of Common Whitethroat remained depressed.

Some species continued to thrive however. The number of pairs of nesting Northern Gannets at Bempton further increased, whilst good numbers of European Nightjar were reported and both European Goldfinch and Eurasian Siskin seemed to be faring well. A small colony of Black-necked Grebes remained in the Derwent Valley, where record numbers of Garganey were observed, some breeding successfully. A total of 16 pairs of Pied Avocets bred at Blacktoft Sands RSPB Reserve and Bearded Tit numbers were high after another fairly mild winter. Raptor populations were more variable. Eurasian Sparrowhawk increased throughout whilst Common Buzzards continued their spread eastwards, with summering individuals noted in VC 61. Both Eurasian Marsh Harrier and Eurasian Hobby made advances, although proof of breeding for the latter was difficult to establish. Unfortunately both Peregrine Falcon and Northern Goshawk suffered from human disturbance and nest predation. Hen Harrier maintained a tenuous hold, while Merlin numbers remain stable.

Storms and heavy rain at the end of June caused problems for some species. Many Black-legged Kittiwake nests at Bempton, Flamborough and Filey were washed away. Only two Little Tern chicks survived from 42 pairs at Easington and many Little Grebe nests were washed out in the Derwent Valley.

Rarities and Visitors

Despite no new species for the county being recorded in 1997, it was a good year for rare migrants and also good for the numbers of some less rare ones. Yorkshire's second Lesser Scaup was discovered at Tophill Low in January and no less exciting was the third county record of Pied-billed Grebe with one residing at Skelton Lake and then Mickletown Ings between 14th June and 19th July.

The year began with a spell of cold northerlies early in January that brought a record influx of Slavonian Grebe to VC 62. The Bufflehead of doubtful origin remained in East Yorkshire from 1996, staying until May. Two immature Golden Eagles wandered the moors and dales of north-west Yorkshire in January and February whilst Red Kites were encountered throughout the year, following release schemes elsewhere in the country.

A rare spring find was a Little Bunting at Spurn on the 30th April. Two Alpine Swifts were recorded, one from Bretton Park on 28th April and another from Hornsea Mere on 4th May. The first of two Tawny Pipits, formerly a very rare bird in the county, was seen at Hunt Cliff VC 62 in May, with another later in the year in August at Flamborough. Visitors from the Mediterranean again occurred in May; a single Hoopoe at Sammy's Point, a Subalpine Warbler in Kilnsea and two Woodchat Shrikes, one each at Filey and Easington. In June, a Savi's Warbler sang at Staveley NR from 6th to 9th and two Red-footed Falcons were seen at Spurn. During the summer, good numbers of European Storm-petrel were tape-lured and trapped. An irruption of Common Crossbill occurred in late June and July. Sea-watching in late summer and autumn was profitable, especially at Flamborough, with reasonable numbers of Sooty Shearwater, 15 Cory's and 11 Great Shearwater, and good numbers of both Leach's

Storm-petrel and Sabine's Gull. A juvenile White-winged Tern was seen at Hornsea Mere in late August. Rare waders in September included 2 Baird's Sandpiper, 3 Pectoral Sandpiper and 2 Wilson's Phalarope. It was also an excellent year for counts of Little Gull, while the numbers of reported Yellow-legged Gulls and Roseate Terns continued to increase.

Rare autumn passerines included the first Aquatic Warbler since 1981 found at Spurn on 8th August, a Rosy Starling nearby in Kilnsea on 27th and 28th September, an Isabelline Shrike at Spurn on 23rd September, an early Dusky Warbler at Spurn on 28th September, and a Radde's Warbler there on 19th October. A Pied Wheatear was then found in Kilnsea on 21st October, remaining until 28th. Not all rarities were in the Spurn area, however, as an Arctic Warbler was seen at Sandsend on 19th and 20th October and later that month, a Blyth's Reed Warbler was trapped and ringed at Flamborough on 21st, remaining until 24th. Good numbers of Barred, Icterine and Pallas's Warblers were noted on the coast in autumn, but by the end of the year only 2 coastal Bluethroats had been recorded, although 2 males of the White-spotted form summered on Thorne Moors.

In late autumn there were above average numbers of Red-necked Grebes in coastal areas. There were few reports of sizeable flocks of Brambling in either winter period and numbers of Purple Sandpipers were also down.



CLASSIFIED LIST

All rare and unusual species in this Report have been considered by the Reports Committee of the YNU and found to be acceptable on the evidence supplied by the observers. Records that require national verification have been submitted and accepted by the *British Birds Rarities Committee* (BBRC). The sequence and nomenclature used is that of the BOU *Checklist of Birds of Britain and Ireland* (6th edition, 1992), updated BOU 1999 and 2000. Changes that will take effect from January 2001 have been implemented retrospectively (e.g. Green-winged Teal).

The following abbreviations are used in the text:

BPNR	Beacon Ponds Nature Reserve
CP	Country Park
GC	Golf Course
GP	Gravel Pit
LDNNR	Lower Derwent National Nature Reserve
NR	Nature Reserve
PHENR	Puffin and High Eske Nature Reserve
Res	Reservoir
RVCP	Rother Valley Country Park
SF	Sewage Farm
TLNR	Tophill Low Nature Reserve
VC	Vice-County

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Common coastal passage migrant and winter visitor; uncommon in summer; scarce inland

VC 61 Large numbers were offshore at the beginning of the year particularly in mid-January, when on the 12th, 680 were at Flamborough and 460 flew north at Barmston. More abundant next month when an impressive 1257 were counted between Rolston and Aldbrough and 1270 were off Grimston on 22nd. Regular counts at Spurn produced 145 on 15th and 138 on 18th February, 186 on 29th March and 145 on 6th April. Small numbers were recorded throughout the summer. Autumn movements began with 24 at Flamborough on 9th September, followed by 63 south at Filey on 18th and a further 57 on 20th, before 174 were noted at Flamborough on 21st. Severe weather in late November resulted in 74 south at Filey and 121 at Spurn on 29th, with 120 at Filey and 268 at Flamborough on 30th. Small numbers thereafter to the year-end. Inland records from TLNR included singles on 24th January, 14th and 15th March, 12th and 13th April, with one at Wheldrake Ings on 24th December.

VC 62 Recorded in almost every month of the year along the coast, mainly in small numbers, except for 107 flying north at Whitestone Point, Whitby on 14th October. Inland, one was on Sealing Dam Res on 8th April.

VC 64 An adult was at Farnham GP from 14th to 21st February.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Uncommon coastal passage migrant and winter visitor; rare inland

VC 61 A creditable total of 81 was recorded at Flamborough during the year, with small numbers from other coastal sites. In January, Flamborough reported a total of 10, including 2 on each of the 1st, 17th and 20th. Singles were at Grimston on 1st January and at Spurn on 18th. In February, Flamborough held 3 on 5th, 2 on 7th and one on 10th, with one at Spurn on 18th February. Up to 2 were regularly seen at both Aldbrough and Barmston throughout late January and February. Further singles were at Flamborough on 3rd, 4th and 29th March, with one at Spurn on 30th March. Two unseasonal birds were on the sea at Barmston for much of July and one was there on 27th August. September saw the first returning passage birds with singles at Flamborough from 6th and one at Spurn on 19th. There were just 2 seen at Flamborough in October, with singles at Spurn on 8th, 14th, 22nd and 26th. Noted more

frequently in November with one at Spurn on 8th, 19 at Flamborough (including 6 on 22nd) and including Filey's only record of the year, which flew into the bay on the 29th. There were a further 37 records from Flamborough in December peaking at 4 on each of the 1st, 6th and 7th. Inland, one was at Watton NR on 6th February.

VC 62 Singles were recorded on 5 dates at Scarborough and on 2 at South Gare during the first 2 months, with 2 together off Redcar on 25th January. Lingering birds remained at Sealing Dam from 15th January to 14th February, at Sandsend Bay from 3rd January to 9th February and off Saltburn from the 4th to 22nd February. Subsequent singles were at Ness Point on 5th April and at Sandsend Bay on 20th May. In the autumn, 4 flew north at Scarborough on 25th October and 2 did likewise at Long Nab next day. Thereafter, scattered singles to the year-end at Scarborough (4 dates), at Whitby (4 dates) and at Saltburn.

VC 63 One was present at Southfield Res from 31st December 1996 until 3rd January, before appearing once more from 6th to 12th January. One appeared at Leeshaw Res on the morning of 3rd March, being seen later at Leeming Res, at Thornton Moor Res and at Stubden Res, where it remained until first light on 4th March. What was presumed to be this same highly mobile individual was at Ogden Res from 22nd March until 1st May, visiting Thornton Moor Res on the 27th April. No doubt the same bird was responsible for sightings at several east Lancashire reservoirs during March.



GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Uncommon coastal passage migrant and winter visitor; rare inland

VC 61 Relatively scarce this year with the largest total by far, 16, being reported from Flamborough, these including singles on 5th January; 15th February; 12th March; 24th May; 11th September; 5th, 13th and 26th October; 22nd November; 6th, 13th and 14th December whilst 2 were noted there on both the 2nd and 21st November. Three birds were found in the Filey recording area, these being on the 13th April, 2nd October and on the 15th November. There was quite a good showing at Barmston, where singles were logged on the 19th September, 12th October, 10th December, and 2 on both the 16th and 21st October, all of these flying north. At Spurn, a disappointing 2 reports, one on 24th May and the other on 11th October.

VC 62 Quite scarce this year with singles at Whitby on the 10th January and 5th February, Cayton Bay on 12th January and Redcar on both the 2nd and 9th February. In the latter part of the year, 2 flew past Whitestone Point on 10th September with a single there on 20th, then further singles in Jackson's Bay, Scarborough on 5th October, at South Gare on 14th October and back at Scarborough on 4th November.

PIED-BILLED GREBE *Podilymbus podiceps*

Rare vagrant, 2 previous records

VC 63 A summer-plumaged adult found at Skelton Lake on 14th June remained until 17th July (PRM *et al*), before being relocated at Mickletown Ings on 18th and 19th July (per WJH).

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Cold and wet conditions in the breeding season, coupled with summer flooding, adversely affected breeding. Successful breeding was noted at LDNNR (where only 11 pairs out of 22 were successful, these producing 32 young, not all of which fledged), at Filey Dams (a minimum of 2 pairs bred), North Cave GP, North Ferriby, Brigham Quarry and Danes Dyke, with additional breeding pairs noted at Bransholme SW, Kelk Beck and the Wansford Canal, but the outcome at these last locations was unknown. Numbers in general were down at both TLNR and PHENR, where peak non-breeding counts were 12 and 8 respectively.

VC 62 Breeding birds were only reported from Wykeham Lakes (3 pairs). Good numbers at Sealing Dam during the autumn with a maximum of 18 in October and throughout the year at Coatham Marsh, with a high of 11 in August.

VC 63 At least 120 breeding pairs were located at about 50 sites. Outside the breeding season, the highest counts reported were 22 in the Lowther Lake/Skelton Lake area on the 1st November and at least 46 in the Manvers/Smithies area of the River Dearne, (including Broomhill Ings), in both January and February.

VC 64 12 breeding pairs were reported from the Harrogate area and 6 at Fairburn Ings. Maximum counts included 14 at Farnham GP on 9th March, 12 at Staveley NR in May and 12 at Gouthwaite Res in October. Reported in all months from Fairburn Ings with up to 13 in June and 20 in August.

VC 65 Breeding reported from Kirby Fleetham, Seorton, Catterick and Bolton-on-Swale GP. Maximum counts included 15 at Nosterfield NR in August.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Resident breeder, passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Breeding was reported at the LDNNR where 6 pairs raised 11 young, Newton Mask where one pair raised 3 young, Westfield Pond near Brandesburton (2 young) and East Park, Hull where 4 pairs produced 19 young. Small numbers of non-breeding birds are seen offshore in both summer and winter with 63 at Barnimston on 7th January and 25 in Filey Bay on 15th February. On inland waters, 40 were counted at Hornsea Mere on 12th November and 26 at TLNR on 15th October.

VC 62 Breeding was reported from Wykeham Lakes (2 pairs), Seamer Road Mere (one pair) and Burton Riggs GP Gravel Pits (one pair). The best freshwater count was of 17 at Sealing Dam in May, whilst at the coast, 16 were off South Gare during January and 12 off Scarborough during March.

VC 63 During the breeding season, around 50 sites held a total of about 80 pairs. The maxima outside the breeding season were 71 at Winterset on 1st November, 39 at Pugney's CP on 11th January and 38 at Worsbrough Res on 15th August.

VC 64 Bred at 8 locations in the Harrogate area, where the species was seen in every month at Farnham GP though the maximum counts involved 12 at Hay-a-Park GP in both October and December and up to 15 there in November. Larger numbers occurred at Fairburn Ings during the spring, reaching 45 in April, these reducing to 28 in May when 16 breeding pairs were located. Post-breeding parties produced a maximum count of 50 in August.

VC 65 Single pairs at Nosterfield NR, Brompton-on-Swale, Catterick, and Bolton-on-Swale GP and 5 pairs at Seorton Quarry. The largest count forthcoming was of 14 at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 27th December.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 An excellent year, with most records in the latter half, although birds were present in all months except May and June. At Filey, one or two at the beginning of the year with 3 on 9th February; a summer-plumaged adult in the bay for a week from 20th July; a juvenile on 25th August; 2 in September and 3 from 11th October through to late December, when a 4th was found. At Flamborough, small numbers were reported in January and February including 3 on 5th January. The majority of the 96 sightings at this location came from September to the year-end, peaking at 5 on both the 2nd and 3rd November, and a noteworthy 7 on 4th. Two were at nearby Sewerby on 3rd November. At Barmston there were 2 in early January, 2 in April, one in August, between 1 and 3 in September, before a remarkable count of 10 on 7th October, this being a Yorkshire record. These birds remained for a few days, with 7 logged there two days later on the 9th. A single flew north at Grimston on 19th September when 2 flew north at Hornsea, and one was on Hornsea Mere on 7th December. A juvenile was at BPNR from 13th to 17th September. At Spurn, a summer-plumaged bird was offshore on 17th and 19th July and single birds were noted there on 7th, 17th and 21st September, on 2nd October whilst 3 flew north on 3rd of that month. Inland records included one at PHENR on 23rd August, one at Watton NR on 20th and 21st December and singles at Low Catton Ings and on the River Derwent at Bubwith on 22nd and 23rd December respectively.

VC 62 Early in the year, 1 to 2 frequented Redcar, Whitby, Scarborough and Cayton Bay whilst 4 were at Saltburn on 8th March. Two flew past both Staithes on 20th July, and Whitestone Point on 10th September. A summer-plumaged bird was off Cromer Point, Scarborough on 6th September. In the latter months, 1 or 2 were seen fairly regularly off South Gare between 26th September and 12th October, then again in December between the 6th and 14th. Singles frequented Sealing Dam from the 20th to 21st November, Redcar between the 7th and 14th December and Coatham Marsh from 20th to 31st December. Two were off Scarborough Harbour 27th to 28th December one of which remained until 31st. Finally, one was inland at Wykeham Lakes from 8th to 14th December.

VC 63 The bird at Steeley Quarry from 1996 remained until 5th March. Compared with the large influx to the coast in the latter half of the year, inland waters fared rather poorly. New arrivals included single birds at Skelton Lake on 4th and at Southfield Res on 7th January. Pugney's CP attracted a juvenile on 2nd September and an adult from 15th to 27th October. RVCP was host to one bird from 29th November, joined by a second on 20th December, both staying until the year-end. One was at Stanley Ferry Flash on 3rd December.

VC 64 Singles were at Chelker Res on 23rd April and at Otley GP on 21st December.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor, more frequent in autumn

VC 61 There were relatively few records in comparison with the January influx in the north of the county. Singles in January remained on Hornsea Mere from 1st to 5th, were at Filey on 11th and 12th and on Hornsea Mere again from 13th to 31st. Two together were at Filey from 17th January to 28th February and one at Flamborough on 29th. In February, 3 flew south at Spurn on 1st, one was at Hornsea Mere on 7th and one at Filey between 13th February and 23rd March. An adult at Filey on 1st July was an unexpected mid-summer bonus for some observers. Two were at Barmston on 28th August with singles there on 14th and 21st October. An immature was at Filey from 23rd to 27th October and one was at Flamborough on 22nd November. One remained at BPNR from 22nd November to the year-end and one was at Filey Brigg from 20th to 27th December. Inland singles in January were at Wbelldrake Ings on the 23rd, at Welton Water between 12th and 19th, at TLNR on 13th, with 2 at North Duffield CARRS on 26th October.

VC 62 An unprecedented influx during January produced the highest numbers ever seen in Yorkshire. Up to 5 were on the sea between South Gare and Saltburn from 11th January to 19th March. One was at Whitby on 17th January and up to 2 in Sandsend Bay between 21st and 25th January. Scarborough became the hub of the influx, where the first was noted at Cornclian Bay on 8th January, numbers subsequently rising through January to 7 on 19th, 15 on 25th and 19 on 26th (5 North Bay, 2 South Bay, 12 Cayton Bay). Thereafter the birds dispersed with high counts of 5 on 28th January and 7 on 2nd

March, the last being a single in the North Bay on 9th March. These figures easily eclipse the previous Yorkshire record count of 5 birds together at Swillington Ings on 24th December 1945! A summer-plumaged bird was on Lockwood Beck Res on 18th and 19th April. None were noted in the latter part of the year.

VC 63 The first was seen at Ogden Res on 10th January followed by one at Pugney's CP on 13th January, where it stayed until 6th February. On the 28th September there was one at Methley GP and then one at Skelton Lake from 28th October to 15th November, one at Anglers CP from 31st October to 30th November and one at Morehall Res from 6th to 11th November.

VC 64 Just one record, at Gouthwaite Res between 18th and 30th October.

VC 65 A single at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 26th December.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Rare recent breeding species, scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 Present at LDNNR from 31st March, where 4 pairs raised 11 young. (46 pairs nationally - Ogilvie *et al* *British Birds* 1999). These birds departed in early July, but there were 2 August records. A pair spent most of May at Hornsea Mere. Elsewhere the first of the year was atypically on the coast at Flamborough on 10th January. Singles were reported from TLNR on 28th January, on 7th June, between the 7th July and 26th August, another remaining from 17th to 29th August, with 2 on 13th October. One flew south at Flamborough on 21st September and one was at North Cave GP from 15th October to 14th November.

VC 62 Two summer-plumaged birds frequented Sealing Dam on 6th May.

VC 63 A pair bred at Mickletown Ings hatching 3 young, all unfortunately lost at about 3 days old. Other sightings included summer-plumaged birds at Southfield Res on 18th April, Potterie Carr on 22nd April and Pugney's CP on 29th and 30th April. A pair, possibly those from Mickletown Ings, appeared on Skelton Lake on 27th June remaining until 29th June and a single was there on 7th August. Anglers CP hosted a single on 17th August, then a first-winter on 14th September and an adult on 27th December. Astley Lake recorded a first-winter on 13th September and Treeton Dyke an adult from 28th to 30th September.

VC 64 A spring pair at Farnham GP on 4th and 5th May. In September, a pair at Hay-a-Park GP on 6th and 7th, one of which remained to the 17th, and later one was at Farnham GP from 3rd to 13th October. Singles were reported from Fairburn Ings in April and May and singles were sighted at Lindley Wood Res on 14th and 15th August.

VC 65 One at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 9th February. A pair, once again, perhaps the above-mentioned Mickletown Ings birds, were at Nosterfield NR on 24th and 25th June.

NORTHERN FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

Common breeder; abundant offshore being less frequent in winter; occasional inland

VC 61 As usual, largest numbers were reported from Flamborough, including in January, 3960 on 21st, 5880 on 27th and 3660 on 29th. Northerly winds in September produced 6540 on 9th and 9300 on 10th, the latter date also hosting Spurn's peak of 3790. Late counts from Flamborough included 6300 on 30th November and 7520 on 12th December. Away from the coast, 2 flew over Sigglesthorne on 24th June and one was found dead in Hull in February. Dark phased "blue" Fulmars were recorded in every month, with a regular wintering bird on the cliffs at Filey until 20th April. Seawatch dark-phased birds were reported mostly from Flamborough, where 142 records included peaks of 6 on 4th January and 10 on 29th June. Singles were also observed at Filey on 19th July, 14th August and 18th November, though none this year at Spurn.

VC 62 Around 310 pairs was counted on the cliffs between Saltburn and Cowbar. Inland sightings comprised up to 8 between March and August at Roseberry Topping (an inland breeding location in previous years) and a single over Wykeham Lakes on 9th April.

VC 63 Singles were seen at Shaftholme, near Thorpe Marsh, on 10th and east over Southfield Res on 14th September.

VC 64 One was picked up in early January near Fairburn and released at the reserve and another was there in December.

CORY'S SHEARWATER *Calonectris diomedea*

Scarce late summer/autumn coastal vagrant from Mediterranean/North Atlantic

VC 61 A good year with 15 reports. The first one flew north at Barmston on 23rd June, before 2 further sightings there, one on 11th August and one that lingered offshore to be seen daily between 22nd and 25th September (PP). Once again, persistent effort at Flamborough reaped rewards with one on 28th June, then 2 on 29th, singles on 23rd July, 11th and 31st August, and 10th, 11th, 20th, 21st and 24th September. At Spurn, one flew north, with presumably the same bird later returning south, on 20th September (AR: JL: KF: KR *et al*), and one flew south on 4th October (IG).

VC 62 One flew north past Marine Drive, Scarborough on 18th July (RIIA) and another past Staithes on 20th July (MRKA: WIB).

GREAT SHEARWATER *Puffinus gravis*

Very scarce coastal vagrant, mainly in late summer/autumn, from South Atlantic

VC 61 A notable 11 were reported from Flamborough, the highest annual total since 1978. Singles on 19th and 20th July, 30th August, and 9th September, but 5 flew north in a 45-minute spell on 10th September (PAL). The last birds were singles on 2nd and 3rd October.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus*

Quite common summer/autumn coastal passage migrant; rare in spring/winter

VC 61 A poor August, but numbers picked up in September and October. The first of a total of 1989 recorded at Flamborough was an early bird on 28th June, followed by 3 on 18th July, on which date one was at Filey, and one at Spurn on 19th. Just 57 were seen at Flamborough in August, and only 6 at Spurn. Subsequently recorded regularly from coastal watchpoints between 9th September and 24th October. Peak northerly movements in September involved 194 at Flamborough and 101 at Spurn on the 9th, 331 at Flamborough and 138 at Spurn on the 10th, and 17 at Filey on 13th. In October, north-westerly gales produced 22 on 2nd at Filey, 335 on 2nd and 293 on 3rd at Flamborough, when 243 and 79 respectively at Spurn, with 7 also noted at Grimston on 2nd. A further movement in October produced peaks of 55 at Filey on 12th and of 269 at Flamborough plus 83 at Spurn on 13th. Finally, single late birds on 20th November at Spurn and on both the 26th November and 14th December at Flamborough.

VC 62 Birds began to appear regularly from the end of August but numbers were generally low through August and September, the highest count being 30 north at Whitestone Point on 10th September. October was a better month, particularly on the 12th, when north-westerly gales produced counts of 86 passing Long Nab, and 81 north off Marine Drive, Scarborough in only 75 minutes.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

Common coastal passage migrant mainly in summer/autumn, scarcer in spring

VC 61 A relatively good year, with the first at Flamborough being 4 on 29th March. Peak counts there were 214 north on 15th June, 423 on 19th July, 1076 on 10th September, and then 515 on 2nd October with numbers tailing off after the 12th. The 10th September was a good day to be sea watching anywhere along the coast, bringing maximum counts of 229 to Spurn and of 55 to Grimston, but Hornsea's peak count was 140 on 19th September. At Filey, peak numbers coincided with the gales on 2nd October, when 104 flew north and 20 south. One at Brough Haven on 31st August landed on the river. The last of the year were at Flamborough on 13th and 14th December.

VC 62 Small numbers noted through April and May, then more regularly from June to mid-October. The largest counts came on the big sea watch days; 531 flying north past Whitestone Point on the 10th September and 63 north past Long Nab on the 13th October.

BALEARIC SHEARWATER *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Scarce coastal migrant, mainly in late summer/autumn

VC 61 Generally recorded during the passage of Manx Shearwater in late summer and autumn. Four were reported from Filey, with singles on 24th July (and presumed same on 27th), 7th August, 13th September and 2nd October. A total of 42 were reported from Flamborough, with the first on 26th July,

4 on 22nd August, and the peak count being 7 on 2nd October. Seven were also at Barmston and one at Aldbrough on 11th August, with 3 off Hornsea on 19th September and 2 at Barmston on 25th September. The yearly total of 8 at Spurn comprised 2 south on 16th August, one south on 31st August, 2 north on 9th September, one north on 10th and 2 south on 2nd October. A single seen off Sunk Island on 14th September was perhaps the most interesting one of the year.

VC 62 Five records this year, all singles as follows: off Staithes on 7th September, passed Whitestone Point on 10th September, passed both Marine Drive, Scarborough and Long Nab on 13th October with another off the Marine Drive on 20th October.

EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Scarce coastal migrant and non-breeding visitor to the coast; rare inland

VC 61 One flying north at Spurn on 11th April was only the second spring record at the Observatory. Other sea watch records involved one flying south at Hornsea on 6th July and another 3 there on 13th October, on which date one was seen at Flamborough. 43 were were tape-lured and trapped at Filey Brigg in July, including 5 British controls, and 9 birds were trapped at Flamborough between 5th and 26th July.

VC 62 Trapping was attempted for the first time at Whitby GC on the night of 14th July; 2 were caught, one of which had been ringed at Filey the previous evening. The only other record was of a bird brought into Scarborough Harbour on a fishing boat on 8th October. It recovered and was released the same day.



LEACH'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Very scarce coastal migrant, usually during late autumn; rare inland

VC 61 An exceptional run of records involving some high daily counts, particularly from Spurn where 3 flew north on 9th September, followed by 2 north on 10th, then 18 north on 19th, (when one off Flamborough, 4 off Barmston and 10 seen off Hornsea), 3 north in the morning of the 20th and 2 south in the afternoon. In October, 3 flew north off Hornsea on 2nd, when 2 north at Grimston and 6 north at Spurn, 2 north at Flamborough on 12th, singles north at Flamborough and Filey on 13th, with 2 more north at Spurn on both 20th and 21st. A total of 62 bird-days, of which 38 came from Spurn.

NORTHERN GANNET *Morus bassamus***Increasing breeder at one location; abundant offshore during spring, summer and autumn**

VC 61 The numbers breeding at Bampton cliffs continues to increase, with 2500 nests counted. Despite the June storms, breeding success was thought not to have been badly affected.

Highest daily counts at Flamborough were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
440	3800	1630	700	1500	2992	4774	3200	5000	2450	150	112

At Spurn, peak counts involved 414 on 19th August, a record 1230 on 10th September and 419 on 13th October. Westward passage up the Humber was specifically noted on 19th September when 94 were counted at Hull and 2 near the Humber Bridge, with 9 just east of the bridge on the 10th. One was at TLNR on 25th September.

VC 62 Whitestone Point provided the best counts of 653 on 19th July and 617 on 20th September.

VC 63 Singles over Blacktoft Sands on 28th August, 19th October and 23rd November. One near-adult was on the main lake at Pugney's CP from 30th October to 6th November. The bird took short flights and appeared to be well.

VC 64 Singles at Fairburn Ings in April and May. A juvenile was on the roadway at Kex Gill Quarry (Washburn Valley) on 18th September; there is no information as to whether it was alive or dead!

GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo***Coastal breeder in small numbers; recently bred inland; common winter visitor and migrant**

VC 61 The only indications of breeding came from LDNNR, where nest building by 2 pairs of sub-adults was noted, and later, a pair with 4 recently fledged young at nearby Wheldrake Ings on 26th July. There is also a colony on the North Cliff at Filey. The highest counts at the coast were between August and October, with peak numbers at Flamborough of 110 on 27th September, and at Spurn of 19 on 6th September. About 20 wintered at Flamborough, with similar numbers at LDNNR, PHENR and TLNR and 13 were reported at Stamps Pond. Unfortunately, no counts received from Hornsea Mere. At TLNR, a record 222 were counted on 15th October. Individuals showing characteristics of the Continental race *P. c. sinensis* were reported from Wheldrake Ings and Flamborough in February, March and early April, and from Filey on 21st March.

VC 62 Breeding took place at Boulby Cliff (25 pairs) and Hunt Cliff near Saltburn (30 pairs). Inland, up to 9 were at Lockwood Beck Res and Sealing Dam occasionally through the year. Also 10 were in Locke Park, Redear in January, and 1 to 4 at several other locations.

VC 63 Roosts early in the year included 60 at St Aidan's Lake in the first week of January and up to 39 regularly at Southfield Res throughout January and February. Larger counts from Pugney's CP where 47 collected in both February and October, 78 in November and a whopping 93 on the 12th December. Elsewhere, counts of between 20 and 30 were made on the River Aire near Knottingley on 3rd January, at both Potterie Carr and Broomhill Ings in September, and at Winterset Res in December. Examples of the "*sinensis*" race, usually one or 2, were recorded at several sites in the early months.

VC 64 Reported in all months from the Harrogate area with 13 at Farnham GP in January. At Fairburn Ings monthly totals remained above 50 increasing to 70 and 76 in the months of October and November.

VC 65 Seen at Bolton-on-Swale GP in every month, maximum counts being 49 on 4th January, 71 on 8th February (highest ever count at this site) and 37 on 11th October. Five other sites had between one and 5 birds. In March up to 5 white-headed birds at Bolton-on-Swale GP.

EUROPEAN SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis***Coastal breeder in small numbers, passage migrant and winter visitor**

VC 61 Low numbers at Filey, where it breeds on the cliffs, included 16 north on 9th September.

Highest daily counts from Flamborough, reflecting the local breeding and wintering populations, were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
222	175	111	94	46	43	N/C	250	148	194	290	351

Much more scarce at Spurn, where singles reported on 21st March, 22nd and 29th May, 5 on 15th June, then peaks of 28 on 11th and 9 on 18th September, and 7 on 22nd November. Inland, one was at Barmby Marsh on 4th January with 3 Great Cormorants.

VC 63 The long-staying bird was again recorded on the River Don at Meadowhall from 1st January to the 16th March (present since 1994). Singles were at Thornton Moor Res on 10th August and at Elland GP from 31st August to 2nd September.

GREAT BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 At LDNNR at least 3 over-wintered, with one at Wheldrake Ings on 9th February and 2 on the Pocklington Canal on 10th, and further sightings at Wheldrake Ings on 17th and 21st March. Booming was heard from a single, unaccompanied male in April. Singles were at Barmston on 6th and at Hornsea Mere on 10th January, while one in a ditch at Grimston on 26th March flew south at dusk. One returned to Wheldrake Ings on 14th October and was reported twice in November.

VC 62 An unusually early bird at Wykeham Lakes on 1st August was likely to be a wandering individual from the endangered British breeding population. One remained at Coatham Marsh from 13th December to the year-end.

VC 63 Singles were noted at Blacktoft Sands on 1st to 16th January, 9th February, 2nd to 23rd April, 12th May, 1st June and 31st December. Other singletons were noted at Tyrham Hall on 1st January and Thorpe Marsh on 10th March, though one found at the latter location on 13th January had sadly been dead for some days. The 2 birds from 1996 at Potteric Carr, both remained to the end of February, though just one to 24th March. One returned to this traditional site on 21st October and was frequently seen until the 18th November, with 2 noted from 9th to 31st December. Winterset Res attracted a single on 6th March and one on 30th November was subsequently seen regularly to the year-end.

VC 64 One flew north over Staveley NR on 12th April.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce vagrant in slowly increasing numbers

VC 62 A single at Coatham Marsh for thirty minutes on 5th May (NAP: JBD) and a bird travelled along the Vale of Pickering on 14th May, being seen at Burton Riggs GP, Wykeham Lakes and then Scampston Park Lake.

VC 63 One at Thorpe Marsh on 24th and 25th June (AO: JDW).

VC 64 One at Lindley Wood Res on 1st May (PC).

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 Bred near Driffild (25 pairs), near Wheldrake (26 pairs) and at Thornton Wood (6 pairs) and success appeared to be high. Highest counts came from the Derwent Valley where 70 on 1st August and also from the Hull Valley where 61 were noted at Brigham Quarry on the 20th July. A little passage was noted at Flamborough involving 7 on 6th July and a total of 19 birds on 6 dates in the peak month of September, when 5 were noted over Filey Dams on 20th.

VC 62 Heronries at Scampston Pond and Spikers Hill held 12 and 13 nests respectively. Young were present at both sites but no further information provided. The largest gatherings away from the heronries came from George Hurd's Marsh, Scarborough with up to 16 throughout the year.

VC 63 In all, 85 pairs were reported from 10 heronries but little information on success rate was forthcoming. Counts of nests included 24 at Bretton Park, 6 at Wentworth, 3 at Scammonden, 3 at Denaby Ings and 2 each at Agden and Damflask. The highest count away from a heronry was of 23 at Broomhill Ings on 14th September.

VC 64 Three sites in the Bradford area hosted a total of 61 nests which produced 146 young, the principal one being at Dob Park where 103 young were reared from 42 nests. Widespread reports of small numbers were received from throughout the Harrogate area, peaking at 17 at Gouthwaite Res on 18th January. Seven occupied nests were reported from Bishop Monkton and 10 from Five-ponds Wood. Maximum numbers at Fairburn Ings were 16 in July and in September.

VC 65 The heronry at Kirby Fleetham contained an estimated 20 occupied nests.

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

Rare vagrant, almost annual in recent years

VC 61 A sub-adult frequented Wheldrake Ings on 24th June from 10.00 until 13.20 hours, before flying off to the south-east (GAD *et al*).

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

Scarce vagrant, escapes from Harewood confuse status

All records are thought to refer to Harewood birds.

VC 61 One at Wheldrake Ings at midday on 2nd May drifted off east.

VC 64 There were singles over Chelker Res on 23rd April, at Clifton near Otley on 27th April (KM), at Knaresborough GC on 3rd May (LSK *et al*) and at Fairburn Ings in July.

VC 65 An un-ringed adult bird was seen on Romanby GC on the evening of the 10th July and was present briefly the following morning, having roosted on a pylon (IT: NJM).

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus*

Rare vagrant

VC 64 Four birds were seen flying low over Kex Gill Quarry, Blubberhouses Moor on 10th April (F & JLT); a quite extraordinary record.

EURASIAN SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Scarce migrant and summer visitor

VC 61 One "in-off" the sea at Flamborough on 7th April (JWS), one flew south-east over both BPNR and Spurn on 11th May, one south at BPNR on 4th July, and one at Wheldrake Ings on 4th August.

VC 62 A single remained in the South Gare to Coatham Marsh area from the 7th to 13th June (MAB) and later in the year, 3 young birds remained at Coatham Marsh on the 18th and 19th November (GI).

VC 63 In common with recent years, Blacktoft Sands regularly hosted one, sometimes two birds, during the spring and summer months. The first single arrived on 12th April staying until 20th, and it may have been this individual which flew north-east over Southfield Res on 19th. Perhaps the same bird re-appeared at Blacktoft on 3rd May, staying until the 5th. Two birds arrived on the 4th June taking up residence until 24th, only one of which remained until 3rd July. After a single day's absence (when one seen at BPNR, presumably the same individual), two birds appeared on 5th July remaining until 13th. A single was seen on all days between 15th July and 12th August.

VC 65 Three birds flew in to the fishing lake at Kiplin Hall on 30th November and were still present the following morning (BM), presumably the group seen previously on Coatham Marsh.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Increasing breeding resident and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 2,400, GB threshold 260

VC 61 At LDNNR, 10 pairs laid 62 eggs, hatching 53 young, 37 of which survived. Three pairs bred at TLNR raising 10 young, one pair at PHENR, and one pair at East Park, Hull. Cold weather in January induced a movement of over 200 birds through the LDNNR, peaking at 104 on the 4th. Some were colour-ringed, revealing they had originated from Harrogate, Knaresborough, Thirsk, Northumberland with 2 birds from the Midlands. Elsewhere notable flocks included 49 on Leven Carrs and 36 at PHENR during February, 75 at TLNR in March and 34 at Bransholme SW in October. 11 flew south at Spurn on 3rd September. Unfortunately no counts were received from Hornsea Mere, where large numbers no doubt gathered to moult as they have done for many years.

VC 62 Only 6 pairs were reported breeding in the south of the VC (excluding Teesside), hatching a total of 25 young, though many of these were known not to have survived. The largest gathering was at Seamer Road Mere Scarborough, where up to 10 were present during January.

VC 63 Remains fairly common as the following site maxima show; 68 at Pugney's CP on 3rd February, 47 at Methley GP in March rising to 98 on 28th September and 38 at Thrybergh CP in early June. Larger groups in December included 46 at RVCP, 59 at Skelton Lake/Lowther Lake (River Aire) and 28 at Allerton Bywater. There were more breeding records than in recent years, an excellent sign, though this may be partly due to more careful reporting. A total of 30 pairs raised 73 young at 22 sites.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, at least 10 pairs raised 39 young at 8 sites. Also bred at Farnham GP, Hay-a-Park GP and Staveley NR with 20 pairs at Fairburn Ings. The largest numbers in the Harrogate area came from Hay-a-Park GP, where 44 were counted in January, 39 in September and 38 in August. As usual numbers remained high at Fairburn Ings, increasing from 126 in April to 240 in July then decreasing to 114 by the year-end.

VC 65 Bred successfully at Scorton, Bolton-on-Swale GP and Masham. The maximum count was of 21 at Scorton Quarry on 21st June.

TUNDRA SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

Passage migrant and winter visitor: numbers have decreased in recent years

WeBS: International threshold 170, GB threshold 70

VC 61 On the 4th January, 58 congregated in the LDNNR, the foremost wintering site in Yorkshire. These increased to 139 by the 1st February, though regular passage flocks were noted there in March, such as 33 on 1st increasing to 60 by the 15th, with the last 37 leaving on 17th, although a single appeared on 22nd and 2 were at North Duffield Carrs on 2nd April. The first to return to this established site comprised 19 on the 19th October. Remains much scarcer than Whooper Swan on the coast. Three were at Hornsea Mere on 8th January, 21 flew north-east over Paull on 13th March and 15 proceeded north-east over Dane's Dyke, Flamborough on 31st March. In the autumn, the first flew south at Flamborough on 4th October, followed by 3 south at Filey on 23rd and one on 28th. Next was a singleton at TLNR between 30th October and 2nd November, then 4 flew south at Filey on 27th November and 2 flew south at Spurn on 4th December.

VC 62 One at Burniston on 5th March was found dead the following day.

VC 63 Small numbers were present at lowland sites up to 9th March and from 22nd October. Larger parties remained at the regular wintering sites around Blaxton and Wroot where 23 were counted on 27th January and a peak of 49 during February. At Byram Park there were 8 from 13th January to 5th February rising to 11 on 9th February then down to 2 on the 3rd March. One of these birds had been ringed at a site on the Pechora River delta on 13th June 1996. Sightings on the return journey were reported from Norfolk, Scotland, the Netherlands, Germany and Estonia before arriving back on the Pechora delta.

VC 64 The only reports were of 6 at Fairburn Ings in November and December.

VC 65 There were no records received this year (formerly regular wintering species in small numbers).

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Passage migrant and winter visitor in increasing numbers

WeBS: International threshold 160, GB threshold 55

VC 61 Wintering counts in the LDNNR peaked at 61 on 1st January with 51 still present into mid-February. The last 27 left on 17th March, but subsequent passage groups of 6 arrived on 22nd March (staying until 24th), with 13 more on 2nd April and 31 on 7th. The first 12 returned on 24th October with numbers increasing to 31 by the year-end. Few reports elsewhere inland, and only of single figures for short periods of time. Passing birds along the coast were reported more frequently than in other years. These began on 1st January when 5 flew north at Filey where 3 more flocks totalling 18 birds flew south over the Dams during the month. Also in January 8 were at Danes Dyke from 2nd to 10th, 3 were at Hornsea Mere on the 25th, 2 were at Stamps Pond on 10th February, 5 at Spurn on 30th March and 13 there on 1st April. A late bird was seen at Barmston on the 29th April. In the second winter period, peak counts of passage birds included 3 at Flamborough on 3rd October, 14 at Spurn on 4th

(earliest autumn record) and a further 8 there on the 24th. Next month, 15 were at Flamborough on 28th November and 2 were at Filey on 29th, with a flock of 14 in cliff top fields near Ulrome at the end of the year.

VC 62 Small numbers of less than 7 birds were noted at 6 locations during each winter period. Double figure counts were as follows: 13 at Wykeham Lakes on 3rd March, 27 at the North Bay, Scarborough on 10th March and then 13 flying south at South Gare on 4th October. Two at Seamer Road Mere from 29th May to 17th June were undoubtedly from feral stock.

VC 63 Records from over 20 localities, in the early months to late March and in autumn from 13th October. Parties were generally small, only occasionally gathering into double figures. Byram Park, for example, attracted 32 on 13th January, 34 on 5th February, 33 on 2nd and 30 on the 9th March, grazing, rather unexpectedly, on oilseed rape. At the opposite end of the year, Broomhill Ings held up to 7 in December, Great Preston (near Swillington), 21 on the 3rd December and the Misson/Newington area of the Idle Valley (on the Nottinghamshire boundary), 33 on 18th December.

VC 64 Some records from the Harrogate area may well be from the feral population at Studley Lake, though no doubt some genuine wintering birds do occur. Passage birds included 9 flying north over Pannal and two at Gouthwaite Res on 6th April, 2 over Staveley NR on both 17th and 18th and 3 there from 19th to 24th. Birds returned in October beginning with 2 at Staveley NR on 9th, 2 at Farnham GP on 12th, then 10 which flew south-east at High Batts NR on 23rd, and 7 at Bellflask next day. Interestingly, only 4 were reported from Fairburn Ings during this period, though numbers soon increased to 28 in November with 26 in December.

VC 65 The year began well with a herd of 32 at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 24th January. Kirby Fleetham regularly held an attractive flock; 27 were present throughout January and February with a group of 9 returning here in November, subsequently increasing to 17 from the 7th December then to 23 by the year-end. Other noteworthy counts included 8 near Morton-on-Swale on the 15th October and 16 at Nosterfield NR on the 1st November.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*

Scarce and irregular winter visitor and passage migrant

WeBS: International threshold 800, GB threshold 4

VC 61 Taiga Bean Geese *A. f. fabalis* included 3 at Filey Dams until 15th January, with a 4th bird irregularly present between the 3rd and 11th. Four were at Barmston on 17th January (same birds?) and 2 at Grimston on 2nd February. Up to 5 were regularly reported in winter at the LDNNR, where peak counts included 47 on 24th January and 19 on 17th February. Later sightings at Wheldrake Ings of 5 on the 9th March, 11 on 11th, 17 on 12th and 4 on 18th were thought to involve Norfolk birds returning north. In autumn, 19 returned to Wheldrake Ings on 19th November with small parties occasionally to the year-end.

Seven Tundra Bean Geese *A. f. rossicus* were at Stamps Pond on 12th January though just one remained on the 19th. Three of this race flew south at Flamborough on 9th November, a further 3 on 30th, whilst 2 appeared at BPNR on 22nd staying to the 23rd. Next month, 6 appeared at PHENR on 28th December with presumably the same flock observed heading south two days later.

In November, 2 were present around TLNR from the 23rd to 30th; one showing characteristics of *A. f. fabalis* whilst the other displayed those of *A. f. rossicus*! At Spurn on the 30th November, 2 birds of an unspecified race, flew "in" from the east with a party of White-fronted Geese.

VC 62 Nine Bean Geese *sp.* were reported from Castle Howard between the 13th and 24th January. A single was over the South Gare, Redcar on the 1st March with another single over Jackson's Bay on 8th November, neither of which could be attributed to race.

VC 63 Four were at Thrybergh CP on 8th and 9th January (WD; PB *et al*) and one at Thorpe Marsh from 13th January to 13th April (MJP *et al*); all were of the "Tundra" race *A. f. rossicus*.

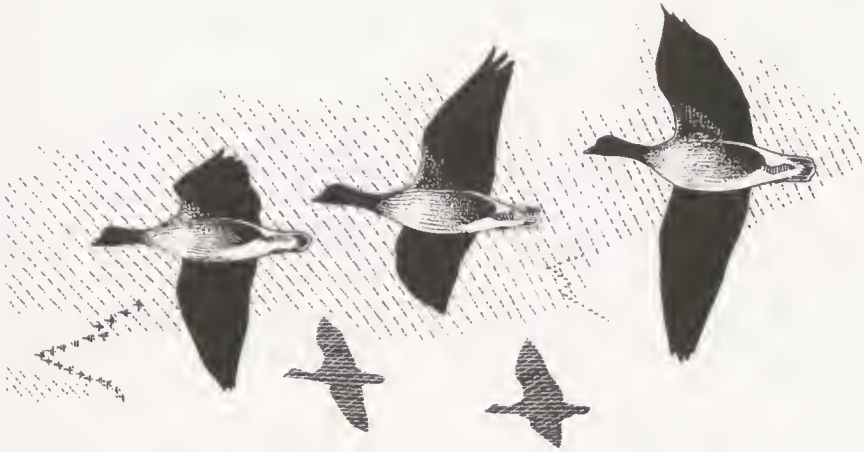
VC 65 A single was found at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 26th February. The next single (though probably the same bird) remained at Scorton Quarry from 13th March, being joined by a second individual on the 14th April. Eight were reported at Nosterfield NR on 11th March and an additional 9 were watched circling over Marfield NR on 16th March. None of these reports could be attributed to race with any certainty.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Winter visitor, formerly abundant; passage migrant, common at times

WeBS: International threshold 2,250, GB threshold 2,250

VC 61 Quite widespread in small groups, though most frequent as a passage migrant in early spring and late autumn. Up to 6 were present during January at LDNNR, when 24 were at Grimston on the 25th. In February, 400 flew north-west at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st and a further 780 on 16th, 41 were at Flamborough on 23rd, whilst 130 flying north-east at Barmston on 26th February were also seen from Hornsea. In March, 110 flew north at Spurn on 1st, 77 at Flamborough on 3rd, 70 arrived high from the south at Wheldrake Ings on the 21st and finally 59 flew west at PHENR on 22nd. The LDNNR subsequently attracted several small parties towards the end of March, such as 35 on 31st, these staying into April with 3 still present in May. In autumn, 8 moving south at Wheldrake Ings on 10th September were the first, with 53 south at Filey and 42 likewise at Spurn on 13th, all unusually early. In October, noteworthy southerly counts included: 73 at Spurn and 245 at Flamborough on the 11th, a further 277 on 12th and 180 on 13th at Flamborough, 250 at Wheldrake Ings on 19th, 290 at North Duffield Carr on 22nd and finally 120 south at Filey on 29th. The latter was the start of an exceptional passage at Filey where 5 skeins totalling 600 flew south on the 11th, and a further 205 on 12th and 172 on 13th. In December 55 flew south at Barmston on 13th, 65 flew east at TLNR on 15th and finally 90 flew south over Hull on 25th.



VC 62 Only small numbers were present during the first two months, the largest flocks occurring at Wykeham Lakes where 27 on 1st February increased to 47 by the 19th. On 1st March, a north-westerly movement occurred through the area with around 1000 birds over Scarborough (the largest skein of 400 over Langdale End) and 700 noted going north in 5 skeins over Cleveland. Autumn movements were

noted between 9th September and 22nd December. The highest numbers involved were; 150 south at Cromer Point on 29th September, 130 south over Sandsend on 29th October, 250 south at Cromer Point on 11th November and 41 south over Scalby on 22nd December.

VC 63 Typical westerly and north-westerly movements were widely reported from mid-January to early March, most notably between the 14th January and 1st February when totals of 636, 770 and 310 were counted over Southfield Res, Wilsie and Broomhill Ings respectively and 390 over Carlton Marsh on 24th. Five skeins totalling 600 flew over Blackburn Meadows on 16th February. After a rather early flock of 550 on the River Humber at Blacktoft Sands on 17th September, much higher numbers in the autumn, mostly moving east or south-east, included 1550 (in less than 1 hour) at RVCP on October 14th and c.2100 (in less than 2 hours) on 9th November. Regular observations at Rod Moor, west of Sheffield, during October and November totalled 8300 birds flying south-east, including 760 on 25th October and 1330 on 7th November. Many other sites had day totals of between 150 and 300 during the period mid-October to November, this reflecting the increasing numbers wintering in Norfolk.

VC 64 The largest skeins were flyovers comprising counts of 100 at Farnham GP on 12th February, 150 over Ripon on 24th February and 240 flying south over High Batts on 22nd October.

VC 65 In January, 300 flew over Colsterdale on 14th, 35 over Roundhill on 20th and 23 over Nosterfield NR on 28th. A flock of 29 at Bolton-on-Swale GP remained throughout February, with 30 near Kiplin Hall on 16th.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Uncommon winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 6,000, GB threshold 60

VC 61 Several parties were in the LDNNR at the beginning of the year, this being the most regular site in the county. These included counts of 162 on 27th January, 150+ on 8th February and 41 on 23rd March. Elsewhere, 6 were at Hornsea Mere from 7th January to late February, one was at Filey Dams from 14th to 17th January, 14 were at Flamborough on 26th January, followed by a further 2 on 30th, 3 on 15th February and 135 south there on 11th March. One frequented East Park, Hull on 11th April, and 2 were at Barmston on 26th. Spurn hosted its earliest-ever autumn record of 4 on 4th September, followed by 2 on 13th October, 5 on 20th November and 9 on 30th. 17 were at Flamborough on 22nd October and 3 on 29th November. Three remained at TLNR from the 23rd to 30th November, with one lingering to the 29th December. The first to return to the LDNNR were a flock of 33 at Wheldrake Ings on 28th November, with 101 present in the valley by the 29th and 90 still on the 27th December. Hornsea Mere attracted up to 4 in December. A single adult of the Greenland race *A. a. flavirostris* was at LDNNR on 20th April.

VC 62 A poor year with just small numbers at 6 locations during both winter periods, including 4 at Castle Howard on the 24th January, 5 north off Scarborough on 4th November and 7 at Scalby Mills from 19th to 23rd November.

VC 63 Typically scarce this year, though Blacktoft Sands produced a good run of reports in the early months. These began with 12 down between 12th and 18th January, (though 13 on 13th) then in February, flying birds included 40 to the east on the 7th, 8 west on the 8th and 34 west on the 9th. January sightings involved 2 birds at Edderthorpe Flash on 1st January, 2 at Idle Stop between the 21st and 23rd, 4 at Ulley Res on 26th and one flying east over Southfield Res on 27th. In the late winter period, just one report, a single flying north over Broomhill Ings on 16th October. A bird of the Greenland race *A. a. flavirostris* was at both Scammonden Dam and Ringbone Res on 27th December.

VC 64 Two adults and a juvenile flew over Farnham GP on 1st January. Ripon Racecourse Pond attracted one from the 4th to 12th January, and then 2 were at Hay-a-Park GP on 18th and 5 at Ripon on 2nd March.

VC 65 Two were at Thornton Steward on 15th February, and a skein of 39 flew over Bellflask Quarry on 30th November. Greenland race birds *A. a. flavirostris* were at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 26th February, with 3 there on 29th November.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Common feral breeder and winter visitor; breeding range still extending

VC 61 A common resident of the ponds and lakes in the VC. Breeding was confirmed at 14 sites including 61 pairs at LDNNR. Peak counts included 340 on 2nd June at East Park Hull, 750 on 6th September at TLNR, 1150 at LDNNR on 4th January and 2000 there on 18th November. A small passage was noted at Spurn in late May/June and small numbers at Flamborough in November, while 39 came "in-off" the sea at Filey on 21st December.

VC 62 Breeding was reported from Wykcham Lakes and Seamer Rd Mere with 8 and 35 young respectively. The largest gatherings were 227 at Wykeham Lakes in June and 168 at Scaling Dam in September.

VC 63 Increasing numbers of "feral" birds bred, including 3 pairs at Blacktoft Sands, 10 at Thorpe Marsh, 5 at Potterie Carr and 2 at Wentworth Park, from which a combined total of 53 young survived. Maximum counts came notably from Blacktoft Sands where 980 collected on 25th September, then three-figure totals daily to the 29th when 450 were present and over 100 regularly during December.

VC 64 Birds bred at Ben Rhydding GP, Fewston Res and Denton Hall Lake (probably 8 pairs). Recorded in all months from Farnham GP, Hay-a-Park GP, Staveley NR and Fairburn Ings with peak counts of 600 at Farnham GP in September and of 1000 in October.

VC 65 Continues to expand rapidly both as a wintering and breeding species. Maximum counts included 1000 at Nosterfield NR on 1st August, 510 at Marfield on 1st December whilst in the Bolton-on-Swale GP area, 1760 were counted on 26th February and up to 2000 in late July (probably including birds from Nosterfield NR).

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Common and widespread introduced feral breeder; breeding range still extending

VC 61 Breeding counts came from TLNR with 3 pairs and the LDNNR where 51 pairs raised 75 young. The largest flocks included 800+ at LDNNR in January and 1300 in late November, 160 at TLNR in September and 117 at East Park, Hull in February. Coastal passage was very slight this year, only indicated by 3 flying south at Spurn on 9th April (the only report of the year) and a few reported on scattered dates at Flamborough. One recorded in winter 1996/1997 at Filey had been neck-ringed at Trondheim, Norway.

VC 62 Reported breeding from several locations. There were many large gatherings involving three figures, the highest being of 408 at Wykeham Lakes in March.

VC 63 At least 75 pairs bred at 45 sites, with some success at most. Autumn peaks were 1056 at Winterset Res on 12th October, 600 at Pugncy's CP in September, 382 at Broomhill Ings in December and flocks of 200 at a further 6 localities.

VC 64 Bred at 7 sites in the Bradford area and at 3 in the Swillington area. The largest counts in the Harrogate area concerned 375 at Farnham GP and 450 at Staveley NR in August. Fairburn Ings maintained large numbers all year, culminating in 1340 in June, the largest count of the year, these gradually reducing to 1000 in July, to 936 in August and to 620 in October.

VC 65 There was some evidence of a decline in numbers, possibly due to competition from Greylag Geese for breeding sites. Maximum counts were of 266 at Thornton Steward Res in January and 153 at Nosterfield NR in October.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Feral population occasionally breeding; scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 320, GB threshold 270

VC 61 With small groups of "feral" birds present in the county it is difficult to establish the true status. Bred at Primrose Valley and in the Hull Valley and small parties were seen at East Park, Hull and Hornsea Mere. 17 were at Wheldrake Ings on 1st January, while several small parties there in March, including 17 on 23rd, coincided with movements of other geese and were probably of wild origin. 16 apparently wild birds joined 7 feral ones at Filey Dams from 13th to 20th March. 18 at Filey on 10th and 8 on 12th October, plus 2 on 28th December may also have been "genuine". At Flamborough, 2 occurred on 23rd January, together with one on 11th October, 8 on 12th October and 5 on 29th November. Six flew in from the east at Spurn on 27th September with one on 10th and 5 on 22nd October, while a flock of 24 at Cherry Cobb Sands on 14th October also arrived from the east.

VC 62 A feral flock now numbering 9 was seen throughout the year in the Filey/Burton Riggs GP/Wykeham Lakes area. There was a movement through the area in October, with 64 north past Whitestone Point and 5 north at Long Nab both on the 11th, 8 north past Long Nab on the 12th, 45 north past Whitestone Point on 13th and 48 north there the next day.

VC 63 Small numbers of birds, many of feral origin, were present at lowland sites throughout the VC and occasional hybridisation with Canada Goose was noted. Such a hybrid was at Broomhill Ings on the 25th April and again throughout May, with 5 at the same locality on the 2nd and 4th September. The largest flock recorded was 14 flying south at Southfield Res on 29th October though 7 frequented both Bretton Park and Pugney's CP throughout the early months.

VC 64 Five frequented Fairburn Ings in April and 3 in May, one of which remained until September.

VC 65 Bred at Seorton Quarry (3 young). Six were at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 20th December.

DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicula bernicula*

Passage migrant and regular winter visitor to the Humber

WeBS: International threshold 3,000, GB threshold 1,000

VC 61 Small numbers of Dark-bellied Brent *B. b. bernicula* were noted on passage at Filey and Flamborough in January and again from September to December, with peaks of 15 at Filey on 28th November and 28 at Flamborough on 4th November. Filey also had singles on 2nd May and 8th June. Monthly maxima on the Humber at Spurn, the only regular wintering site, were of 280 in January, 185 in February, 200 in March, 83 in April and 73 in May but only one from 25th. In June, 11 flew south on 12th and one was on the Humber on 13th. The first bird returned on 11th September followed by 20 on 14th and 30 on 27th. Numbers built up quickly to peak at 154 in October, 107 in November and 175 in December. Further up the Humber, 164 were at Cherry Cobb Sands on 25th January and 123 on 22nd February, with one at Wheldrake Ings on 28th to 29th January.

VC 62 Small numbers of passage birds were regularly noted with the highest numbers all coming from Long Nab. These comprised 87 flying north on 10th October, 20 north on 20th October, 28 south on 4th November and 19 south the following day.

VC 63 Singles occurred at Thrybergh CP on 18th February, Blaektoft Sands on 17th and 21st November and RVCP from 1st to 31st December.

VC 64 Three were at Lower Laithe Res from 2nd to 12th February. One was at Gouthwaite Res on 1st February and one at Fairburn Ings in November.

VC 65 One, of an unspecified race, was at Nosterfield NR on 29th December.

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicula hrota*

Scarce passage migrant and occasional winter visitor

VC 61 This form breeds primarily in the Canadian Arctic, Greenland and Svalbad, with England's only regular wintering flock, at Lindisfarne, coming from the latter. All Yorkshire records were coastal, usually in small parties and some duplication is thought to have occurred. The only noteworthy reports in January came from Filey when 16 were present on the 3rd, 11 flew north on 9th and 7 south on 23rd. Most autumn passage occurred between 15th September and the end of October. A flock of 14 flew south at Spurn on 15th September. A good series of reports from Filey began when 17 flew north on 16th September, followed by 6 on 19th, then 61 on 12th October, 11 in total between the 13th and 14th and a further 12 on 20th. Flamborough recorded a total of 112 bird-days between 7th September and 16th December, the highest ever annual total there. September and October were also the peak months at Flamborough, peaking at 22 on 15th September and 18 on 12th October. Elsewhere, 15 were off Hornsea on 19th and 2 flew north at Barnston on 20th October. Two lingered on the Humber at Spurn from 9th to 12th October and 2 more on 22nd November.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Rare visitor from feral populations elsewhere in country/local escape; has very occasionally bred

VC 63 Singles were observed at Lingodell (SK58) on 21st January and nearby Penny Hill on 22nd, at Newington on 23rd March, at RVCP on 8th June and at Broomhill Ings on 26th and 27th June.

VC 64 Two at Fairburn Ings in August with one in September and November.

COMMON SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna**Scarce breeder; common passage migrant and widespread winter visitor to the Humber**WeBS: International threshold 3,000, GB threshold 750*

VC 61 Breeding was noted at several sites along the Humber, whilst the LDNNR held a record 63 pairs, 17 of which raised 80 young at the Wheldrake Ings section of that area. Two pairs bred at North Cave GP and 2 pairs at TLNR. Large numbers occupy the upper Humber, with a peak post-breeding count at Brough Haven of 1850 on 12th July. At Spurn the monthly maxima were 1100 in both January and February, falling to 32 in May, then building to peak again at 800 in September. At TLNR the highest count was of 24 on 31st March; that at Flamborough, 20 in November and December.

VC 62 Recorded regularly throughout the year but generally small numbers. At Scarborough there were 8 on the sea at Croiter Point on 4th November and 6 at Scalby Lodge between 19th and 21st December. Inland, between 2 and 4 frequented Wykeham Lakes between 3rd April and 25th May.

VC 63 Blacktoft Sands had maxima of 127 on 17th and 30th March, 161 on 16th April and peaks of 50 to 100 in all other months. 10 pairs bred. Westerly passage there totalled 468 between 1st and 19th September. Elsewhere in VC63, 16 pairs bred at 12 sites with c.40 young reared. A maximum of 27 birds was recorded from Southfield Res in December.

VC 64 Successful breeding came from Otley GP where a single pair raised 6 young and from Swillington Ings, where 3 broods of 1 or 2 young were noted. Five pairs also bred at Fairburn Ings. Maximum numbers at Fairburn Ings involved 40 in April, 36 in May, 31 in June and 26 in August with 20 at Farnham GP in September.

VC 65 Breeding was noted at Nosterfield NR, Marfield and Bolton-on-Swale GP. The highest count was of 18 at Nosterfield NR in October.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata**Rare visitor from feral populations elsewhere/local escape*

VC 61 One at Filey Dams from 23rd to 27th April. Feral birds possibly bred at Cruckley Farm in the Hull Valley.

VC 62 A drake at Harome on 3rd February and a drake on Staithes Beck from 21st October to mid-December.

VC 63 One male at Elland GP on 11th January to 1st May, again between 12th September and 18th October whilst a female visited here three times between these dates. A female remained at Thrybergh CP from the 10th to 13th March; 2 males and one female were at Bingham Park, Sheffield on 8th April; a male was found at the Slaithwaite Canal on 22nd September; one was at Forge Dam, Sheffield on 17th October and 2 birds frequented Blackmoorfoot Res on 6th November.

VC 64 One was at Fairburn Ings in April.

EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope**Scarce resident, common passage migrant and abundant winter visitor**WeBS: International threshold 12,500 GB threshold 2,800*

VC 61 The only report of breeding came from LDNNR where 15 pairs were still present in late May, these producing about 20 young. This area also produced the highest counts for the year, monthly maxima involving 10300 on both 26th and 30th January, with 10600 there on 1st February and 2300 still present on 15th April, after which date numbers fell sharply. 9100 were again present by 21st December. The upper Humber basin also remains a winter stronghold, with 3700 recorded in the Broomfleet Island/Whitton Sands area on 11th October. Elsewhere, 3600 were at TLNR on 28th January and 2900 later in the year, on the 28th December. Stamps Pond attracted 900 and PHENR 342 in February. Coastal passage included 156 north at Filey on 26th September, 399 at Flamborough on 27th September and 268 at Spurn on 7th October, with further high counts at Spurn of 286 on 17th and 280 on 5th November.

VC 62 In the first winter period, the Sealby Mills/Jackson's Bay wintering flock peaked at 195 on 24th January, whilst Sealing Dam held 82 during January and Wykeham Lakes 36 on 3rd January. Autumn passage was light, beginning in early September with the largest movements being 111 north at Cromer Point on 25th September and 90 north at Long Nab on 12th October and 101 north at Whitestone Point

on 14th. In the later months, numbers at Scaling Dam were slightly down on last year with peaks of 89 in October, 93 in November and 58 in December. The wintering flock at Scalby Mills had built up to 60 by 26th December.

VC 63 Much larger wintering counts in this VC. Site maxima were: Blacktoft Sands, 809 on 17th February and 803 on 19th December; Broomhill Ings, 710 on 4th January and 525 on 21st December; Idle Valley, 600 in January and 400 in December; Winterscft Res, 420 on 15th February and 382 on 24th December; Edderthorpe Flash, 400 on 17th January and 354 on 26th December; Skelton Lake, 350 during early January.

VC 64 Numbers at Fairburn Ings increased from 80 in September to 190 by the year-end, with a maximum of 203 in November. Peak counts in the Harrogate area were of 310 at Hay-a-Park GP in January, 215 there in February and 160 in March. Gouthwaite Res held 160 in October and 140 in November. A sudden influx to Pennine/Dales reservoirs occurred on the 16th October, during easterly wind and rain. On this day, Swinsty Res attracted 151, Fewston Res 69, Otley CP 120, Broadstones Res 120, Blackmoorfoot Res 81, Ringstone Edge Res 55 and a total of 104 were noted at other reservoirs.

VC 65 Peak counts included an impressive 1410 at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 12th January and 496 at Nosterfield NR in October.

AMERICAN WIGEON *Anas americana*

Rare vagrant

VC 64 A drake graced Hay-a-Park GP, Knaresborough from 16th to 22nd March (RE: GTF: SMR: IW *et al.*).

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Resident, breeding in increasing numbers; fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 300 GB threshold 80

VC 61 This species continues to increase. Record breeding counts came from LDNNR where an estimated 146 pairs included 120 from Wheldrake Ings alone. TLNR reported between 7 and 9 broods and 2 pairs bred in Hotham Hall. Breeding success was high, with post-breeding counts of 416 at LDNNR on 16th June and of 117 at TLNR in July. The importance of LDNNR for this species is further emphasised by large winter counts such as 315 on 23rd March. Most waters recorded their highest numbers in autumn, such as 124 on 5th October at Hornsca Mere and 190 at TLNR on 11th September.

VC 62 An excellent count of 75 at Scampston Park Lake on 11th November. Otherwise, just single figure counts noted occasionally from six locations during the year.

VC 63 Bred at 7 localities where 19 pairs reared about 108 young. Widespread during the winter months, maxima including: Potteric Carr, 60 in January and 76 in October; Langold Lake, 76 in November/December; Rother Valley, 50 in February and 49 in December; Nostell Park, 49 in November and Broomhill Ings, 44, again in November.

VC 64 Bred in the Swillington Ings area, where 24 young were located from approximately 6 pairs, and at Fairburn Ings where 16 pairs bred. The largest gatherings in this VC came from Fairburn Ings where 127 in July increased to 286 in September before reducing to 132 in December. The Swillington area attracted 159 in August and 61 were at Farnham GP in December.

VC 65 No more than five birds recorded at any site.

EURASIAN TEAL *Anas crecca*

Resident breeding in small numbers, common passage migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 4,000 GB threshold 1,400

VC 61 As many as 100+ pairs were thought to be present at LDNNR, although only 13 broods totalling 93 ducklings was specifically noted. The peak post-breeding count there was of 300+ in early August. No breeding reports were received from the Hull Valley. Peak winter counts of 4850 at LDNNR on 1st March and 6300 on 21st December maintained the Derwent Valley's position as UK's 4th most important wintering site. Elsewhere, 942 at TLNR on 16th November, 240 at PHENR in November, 300 at Hornsca Mere in December and 202 on the Humber at Saltend in January. Coastal passage was most noticeable in late August and September, and included 114 at Filby on 27th August, 392 at Spurn

on 28th August and 454 there on 12th September, and 182 at Flamborough on 27th September. There were no significant counts in November, normally a peak month, apart from 483 flying south at Spurn on 5th.

VC 62 Maximum counts were of 258 at Sealing Dam in November and 77 in the Jackson's Bay area during January. Regular along the coast in autumn but only small numbers, with 63 flying north at Long Nab on 7th September and 96 north at Whitestone Point on 14th October the best counts.

VC 63 12 pairs bred at lowland sites, raising c.44 young. Site maxima included 972 at Broomhill Ings, 447 at Potterie Carr, 431 at Thrybergh CP, 416 at Pugney's CP, 300 at both Edderthorpe Flash and Thorpe Marsh, all in January. Blacktoft Sands held good numbers all year including 640 on 20th August, 925 on 27th September and 388 on 25th October. Other sites with maxima of 150 to 250 at the year-end included Old Denaby, RVCP, Blackburn Meadows, Aldwark SF, Denaby Ings, Ingbirethworth Res and Thorne Moors.

VC 64 Bred at or near Gouthwaite Res where a female and four small young were seen on 29th April and one pair bred at Fairburn Ings. Numbers at Gouthwaite Res peaked in the later months with 690 in September, 730 in October and 740 in November. Fairburn Ings held a creditable 332 in September and 314 in December.

VC 65 225 at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 30th November was the only count of note.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis*

Rare vagrant

VC 61 Drakes of this North American duck, (from 2001 treated as a full species) were reported from Wheldrake Ings on 3rd April, staying until 10th (seen by many observers) and then again between 8th and 13th May with a final sighting on 31st.

VC 62 One was at Coatham Marsh on 26th December (PAAB).

VC 63 Possibly the same drake was involved at RVCP from 18th to 22nd January (RG), at Broomhill Ings on 29th January and 1st February (CN) and at Potterie Carr from 20th to 23rd February (MI: SB: DC).

VC 64 One stayed at Gouthwaite Res from 28th October to 16th November.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common breeding resident and winter visitor, numbers supplemented by feral releases

WeBS: International threshold 20,000 GB threshold 5,000

VC 61 A widespread breeding species, as indicated by an estimated 600 pairs at LDNNR. The national decline was, however, reflected in lower winter numbers, particularly from the Humber. Peak counts included in January, 4400 at LDNNR, 1200 at TLNR, 160 at Spurn on the Humber and 159 at East Park, Hull. Coastal passage was slight, with Flamborough recording the peak day count of 110 in January.

VC 62 Wykcham Lakes attracted 280 in January, Sealing Dam 250 in November, Seamer Rd Mere 200 in January, Brompton Pond 172 also in January and Lockwood Beck 114 in November.

VC 63 Breeding was widespread; for example, 172 pairs bred at 22 sites in the Barnsley area. The highest count however came from Blacktoft Sands where there were 620 on 20th August, with 582 at Potterie Carr in January, 463 at Pugney's CP also in January and 449 at Winterset Res on 25th August. RVCP, Thorpe Marsh, Broomhill Ings and Edderthorpe Flash also recorded counts of over 300.

VC 64 24 pairs bred at Fairburn Ings with post breeding totals of 637 in July, 427 in August and 420 in September. Gouthwaite Res regularly held 275 between August and the year-end.

VC 65 Wintering numbers at the main waters generally continue to fall with a peak count of 850 birds at Bolton-on-Swale GP but only 24 at Nosterfield NR.

NORTHERN PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Very scarce breeding resident, fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 600, GB threshold 280

VC 61 Record winter numbers congregated at LDNNR, where a modest 39 in early January built to 160 by the 15th February and again to 178 on 15th March. Up to 30 pairs were still present in April, these

decreasing to 11 pairs in May, though only 4 pairs are thought to possibly have bred, and 2 pairs definitely so, since broods of 7 and 5 were noted. The most notable count elsewhere was of 85 at Broomfleet Ponds on 11th October. Coastal passage occurred mostly between August and late November, with the highest figures involving 32 at Spurn on 12th September, 11 north at Filey on 24th September, 19 at Barmston on 7th October and 22 at Spurn on 16th.

VC 62 Recorded from only 4 freshwater localities, but only the single present from 1996 until 25th January at Peasholm Park, Scarborough, remained for more than one day. The others were; 2 at Coatham Marsh on 18th September and singles at Scaling Dam on 30th September and Scampston Park Lake on 16th November. Coastal passage was typically light, 20 past Scarborough during the autumn with 8 on 12th November being the best.

VC 63 Small numbers, up to 7, were present at many waters from January to early April and from September onwards. Passage birds were most conspicuous in September, as the following totals show; 36 flew west at Southfield Res and 12 appeared at Dear Hill Res on the 12th, 26 flew north-west at Broomhill lngs on 25th, 13 were at Blackmoorfoot Res on the 28th, 26 at Thorne Moors on the 31st and at Blacktoft Sands, there were 21 on the 2nd, 12 on the 7th, 10 on the 8th and 24 flew east on the 18th.

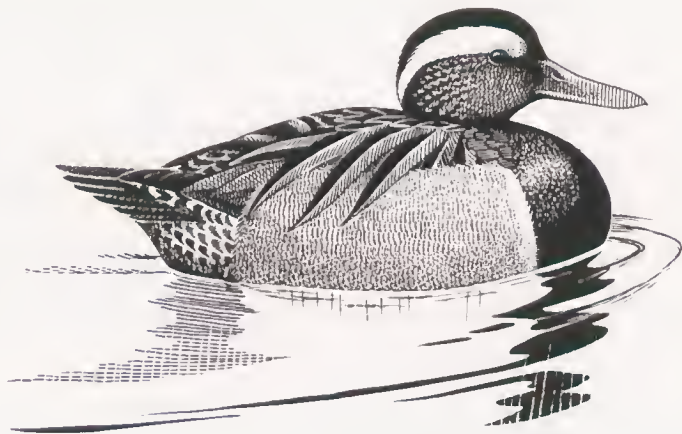
VC 64 Sightings were restricted to scattered singles with maximum counts of 3 at both Staveley NR and Fairburn lngs.

VC 65 One to five birds recorded at three waters.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Rare breeding summer visitor, scarce passage migrant

VC 61 Although regarded as a rare breeding bird, an estimated 20 pairs were reported at LDNNR raising 48 young (of which 4 were ringed), probably the most at any British site since the 1960's. The first of the year, not surprisingly, was a pair at LDNNR on 11th, with another at Watton NR on 31st March, with other passage pairs in spring, mostly in May, noted at Barmston, East Park Hull, Filey Dams, Hornsea Mere, TLNR and on the "canal scrape" at Spurn. All birds had left LDNNR by September, and autumn passage was generally light, with most records from TLNR, concerning one to 3 birds in September and the last there on 1st October.



VC 62 In spring, pairs at Coatham Marsh on 7th April and at South Gare on 17th May. A female or immature flew north past Whitestone Point on 19th July. Autumn produced a single at Coatham Marsh from 6th to 30th August (joined by a second on the last date), with another single there from 26th September to 9th October.

VC 63 The first to appear were 2 females at Old Denaby on 29th March. RVCP hosted a pair on 13th April, a female on 30th July, then a long-staying immature male seen on 26th, 29th and 30th September, and on 1st and 11th October. Blacktoft Sands had spring males on 30th April and 1st and 17th May. Broomhill Ings hosted a male on 23rd June, then an immature from 8th to 28th September and again on 1st October. A male was present at Pugney's CP on 6th and 7th June, an immature male at Redmires Res on 19th September and a late female/immature at Old Denaby on both the 15th and 16th November.

VC 64 Two pairs bred at Fairburn Ings with 2 fully-fledged young noted during the summer. A pair was at Staveley NR on 30th March and 1st April with a male at Farnham GP on 27th May. At Allerton Bywater, a pair on 11th May; at Astley Lake, a male on 10th and 11th May; at Skelton Lake, a female on 20th June; at Leventhorpe a pair from 21st May to 1st June, a male on 8th June and a female on 16th and 24th June.

VC 65 A drake was at Marfield on 22nd April.

NORTHERN SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Scarce breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 400, GB threshold 100

VC 61 The only documented breeding came from LDNRR where numerous broods were noted in May and June and where wintering numbers built up to 310 by 23rd March. A count of 385 at Hornsea Mere on 5th October was the highest ever for this well-watched location. Other notable counts included 92 at TLNR in November and 23 at PIIENR in September. Coastal passage was light, with totals of about 60 birds seen at both Flamborough and Spurn, and a peak of 16 at Spurn on 16th October.

VC 62 Small numbers only, including a handful of coastal records of 1 to 5 birds.

VC 63 Breeding counts included 10 pairs in Donecaster area (about 50 young), 2 pairs in Barnsley area (11 young) and 4 pairs at Blacktoft Sands. Peak counts were rather typical both in number and date; Potterie Carr, 50 in January, 63 in August and 70 in December; Broomhill Ings, 61 in September and 55 in October; Pugney's CP, 61 in November. Blacktoft Sands however hosted the largest gatherings of 104 on 30th September and 130 on 12th October.

VC 64 At Fairburn Ings, an estimated 7 pairs bred, and peak counts there occurred during the months August to October with 230, 250 and 270 respectively. In the Swillington area, 191 were at St. Aidan's on 5th January and 120 on nearby Astley Lake on 2nd February and later in the year, 163 on Astley Lake on 21st September.

VC 65 Between 1 and 7 birds were recorded at 4 waters.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

Scarce migrant; escapes from captivity and feral birds confuse status

VC 61 Presumed escapes were reported as follows; 3 females at Wheldrake Ings on 6th July with just one remaining next day, 3 drakes at TLNR on 29th July, a female at Wheldrake Ings on 15th September and a drake at Watton NR on 9th October.

VC 63 At RVCP, one of the previous year's males was present from 1st January to 22nd April and single females were at Broomhill Ings on the 12th and Pugney's CP on the 13th August.

VC 64 Singles were reported from Fairburn Ings in May and September. Marten's NR in the Aire Valley, attracted a female on 20th May. A bird in "female-type plumage" was present at Lowther Lake on 21st July and then Mickleton Ings on 22nd. Eclipse drakes were at Skelton Lake on the 4th and 6th September, at Lowther Lake on the 1st and at Astley Lake on the 5th October.

COMMON POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Scarce breeding resident, common to abundant migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 3,500, GB threshold 440

VC 61 An estimated 26 pairs bred at LDNNR (a record number) rearing 30 young, and one pair at TLNR raised 3 young. The highest count was of 700 at LDNNR on 21st February, rather lower than normal. Hornsea Mere attracted 102 in January, 135 in November and 315 in December. Elsewhere, peak counts were disappointing; 99 at TLNR in January, 78 at PHENR in February and 47 at East Park, Hull. On the coast, the maximum count at Spurn was of 14 flying south on 5th November.

VC 62 Small numbers were the norm, maxima being 45 at Hackness Lake and 40 at Seamer Road Mere in January, 37 at both Burton Riggs GP and Wykeham Lakes in March and 64 at Scaling Dam in December. Seawatching numbers were poor, with 5 flying north off Marine Drive, Scarborough on 20th October being the best.

VC 63 Breeding occurred at Denaby Ings where one pair reared 5 young. The highest counts were unexceptional and involved 247 in October at Southfield Res, 243 in January at Thrybergh CP, 143 in October at Pugney's CP, and 113 in November at Winterset Res.

VC 64 10 pairs bred at Fairburn Ings with monthly maxima of 206 in August, 209 in September and 167 in December. Large counts elsewhere included 410 at St. Aidan's Lake on 5th January (water level was reduced shortly after this date), 160 at Astley Lake in late January and 85 at Hay-a-Park GP in December.

VC 65 A pair summered at Bolton-on-Swale GP but there was no sign of breeding. This same site hosted the best counts of 191 on the 8th February and 225 on 30th November.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

Scarce vagrant

At least 3 birds were present in the county, 2 drakes and a duck.

VC 61 A drake at TLNR between 11th and 19th April, was seen again on 21st (RL: FXM: KR *et al*). Presumably the same bird re-appeared on 1st May (TR).

VC 63 A female was at Pugney's CP up to the 4th February and from 15th November onwards. A female was also at Winterset Res on 27th April (PS) and males at Stanley Ferry Flash on 22nd June and Broomhill Ings from 3rd to 18th September.

VC 64 In the Swillington area, a drake was at Skelton Lake from 19th to 24th March and a second drake at Astley Lake from 23rd to 26th. One, or other, of these birds no doubt accounted for subsequent sightings in May (on 1st and 16th), in August (18th), and again in September (on 6th and between 11th and 16th) (MPL: PRM *et al*). Presumably one of these same birds put in appearances at Fairburn Ings in April, May and August with possibly the same at Thorpe Underwood fishponds between 1st and 5th April.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Quite widespread breeder, common to abundant migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 10,000, GB threshold 600

VC 61 A record 131 pairs was estimated to be present, not all breeding, at LDNNR. Two pairs bred at TLNR and 2 pairs at PHENR. Counts included 800 at TLNR in August, 345 at LDNNR in February and 226 there in July, 200 at Brandeshurton Ponds in August and 85 at PHENR in February. No counts were received from Hornsea Mere and no significant ones from the coast.

VC 62 Reported hreeding at 5 sites in the south of the VC with at least 6 pairs. Highest counts on fresh waters were of 79 at Scaling Dam in August, 75 at Seamer Road Mere in February and 61 on Brompton Pond, also in February. Again only small numbers along the coast with 25 north at Long Nab on September 11th easily the highest.

VC 63 Breeds widely throughout the VC, for example 30 pairs in the Doncaster area raised at least 126 young. Thrybergh CP attracted 245 in January, Allerton Bywater 109 in February and Mickletown Ings 86 in October.

VC 64 35 breeding pairs were known at Fairburn Ings, where the maximum count was 915 in August, 185 were at Farnham GP in both February and March.

VC 65 Breeding was noted at Nosterfield NR, Marfield, Bolton-on-Swale GP, Scorton and Pallet Hill. The maximum counts of 116 at Bolton-on-Swale GP in August and of 84 at Nosterfield NR in September were considered low.

GREATER SCAUP *Aythya marila**Winter visitor in small numbers to the coast; scarce inland***WeBS: International threshold 3,100, GB threshold 110**

VC 61 The coastal movements from December 1996 continued in January, with 15 north at Filey and 77 north at Flamborough on 1st, when 21 passed Hull west up the Humber. One was at Filey Dams until 14th, when 3 were in the bay and one at Primrose Valley. Hornsea Mere held up to 5 until the 9th January, and 11 were at Barmston on the 11th. A flock of up to 550 was present on the Humber at Spurn from January to the middle of February. This had dwindled to 90 by the middle of March and 1 to 4 lingered to mid-April. An unseasonal male appeared sporadically there from mid-July to early August. Inland in this VC, there were scattered reports from both LDNNR and the Hull Valley of up to 3 birds until 4th March and then singles from 19th September. Much less common during the mild weather of autumn and late winter, with coastal maxima of just 8 off Hornsea on 19th and 6 off Barmston on 29th September. 17 were on the Humber at Hull on 19th November.

VC 62 Between 1 and 6 lingered in the Whitby area until late January and in the Scarborough area until mid-February. A summer record concerned a female at South Gare from 13th May to 13th October, being joined by a male for 10 days in early August. Very few in the latter part of the year, involving just 10 birds in total from four sites.

VC 64 In the Harrogate area, a drake was at Staveley NR on 25th January and at Farnham GP next day. Three were at Farnham GP on 13th August with one present on 9th and 10th September. A first-winter male was at Bar Lane Quarry on 26th December. Records from Fairburn Ings involved singles in April and August and 2 in May.

VC 65 A female was at Bellflask on 16th October and a pair at Bolton-on-Swale GP in late March.

LESSER SCAUP *Aythya affinis**Rare vagrant*

VC 61 A female found on the "D" reservoir at Tophill Low on the 9th January stayed until 20th April (EJH: RL: FXM *et al.*). The second county record, following last year's male at Angler's CP.

COMMON EIDER *Somateria mollissima**Passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce inland*

VC 61 Regularly reported throughout the year at Flamborough, with counts of up to 100, (although only 12 in August), and peak passage there of 190 on 19th November. Flocks totalling 210 flew north at Filey between 18th and 21st November and an additional 89 north there on 16th December. Much lower numbers on the Humber than reported in the previous year. Birds were present in single figures each month and the two highest counts at Spurn were of 45 on 15th January and of 200 on 20th November. The latter figure no doubt included the flocks totalling 150 which flew past Sunk Island on the 19th November. Inland, an immature male on 20th May was TLNR's 4th ever record.

VC 62 Recorded in every month with the south Tees producing the higher counts of 50+ at South Gare during June and August then up to 45 to the year-end. Other coastal maxima included 33 at Whitby in December and 30 flying north at Scarborough on 5th November.

VC 63 A female was at Potteric Carr on 26th April (BGB).

VC 64 A drake and 3 ducks frequented Gouthwaite Res on 8th November.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis**Uncommon coastal migrant and winter visitor, rare inland*

VC 61 Very few records, with Flamborough providing the majority. However, the year began with the long-staying female at Filey Brigg which remained until 20th April. Only 3 were recorded at Flamborough between January and March, then more regularly, 20 in all, between 11th October and 1st December, peaking at 8 on 12th December. Two flew south offshore at both Hornsea and Spurn on 13th October, 2 were on the Humber at Spurn on 4th November, and finally singles flew south at Filey on 29th November and 31st December.

VC 62 All records were singles as follows: Cayton Bay/South Bay Scarborough between 19th January and 12th February; north off Marine Drive Scarborough on 12th October and south off Cromer Point

Scarborough on 4th November. Sea passage off the Tees was recorded on 16th February, 12th September and 5th and 18th October, no more than 3 birds on any day and all flying north.

BLACK SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, infrequent in summer; uncommon inland

WeBS: International threshold 16,000, GB threshold 350

VC 61 Present all year though larger numbers occur in winter. Occasional offshore movements from January up until June generally involved singles or low double figures, but also 95 at Spurn on 10th June. The usual late summer passage included daily maxima of 434 flying north at Barmston on 10th July, 330 at Spurn and 354 at Flamborough hoth on 20th and 90 north at Filey on 3rd August. In autumn: 225 at Filey and 200 at Spurn on 18th September; 374 at Barmston, 483 north at Hornsea, 219 at Filey and 200 at Spurn on 19th; 284 at Flamborough on 27th; 146 at Filey on 12th October; 229 at Barmston on 15th, and a last movement of 405 at Flamborough on 2nd November. Inland, a female was at LDNNR on 28th January, a drake at Wheldrake Ings on 4th April, whilst 9 circled Barnby Marsh on 29th December.

VC 62 Seen all year, but no large counts for the early months. The most notable flock of the year was 310 in the Redcar/Saltburn area through November. Sea passage highs were:

Whitestone Point	159 north	19th July
Long Nab	87	19th August
Whitestone Point	134 north	20th September
Cromer Point	122 north	25th September
Long Nab	148 north	12th October
Long Nab	87	13th October
Whitestone Point	259 north	14th October
Cromer Point	54	24th October

VC 63 A total of 51 hird-days reported between 7th April and 5th November from 10 locations. All were of low single figures and for one day only, except for a group of 12 males and 13 females at Pugney's CP on 15th October, which reduced to just one male the next day. The locations involved were: Howden Res, 2 birds on 7th April; Thrybergh CP, 2 birds on 17th April; Blackmoorfoot Res, 3 birds on 7th July and 4 on 28th September; Worsbrough Res, 2 birds on 11th July; Fly Flatts Res, a single on 26th July; RVCP, a single on 24th August, Winterscett Res, 2 birds on 24th August and 5 on 3rd November; Southfield Res, a single on 29th September and finally Redmires Res, 2 hirds on 5th November.

VC 64 All records were as follows; Swinsty Res held one male on 13th January, Otley GP one male and 2 females from 21st to 24th May, Skelton Lake one female from 25th to 27th June and 2 females on 16th October, Fairburn Ings one male in August, Gouthwaite 6 males on 5th November and Lowther Lake one male on 9th December.

VC 65 Two drakes were at Nosterfield NR on 25th July.

SURF SCOTER *Melanitta perspicillata*

Rare vagrant

VC 62 A stunning male found in Burniston Bay on 26th September (AF) gradually drifted south, and to many birdwatchers' delight, remained in the South Bay at Scarborough until 1st October.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

Uncommon coastal migrant and winter visitor, rare inland

WeBS: International threshold 10,000, GB threshold 30

VC 61 As expected, seen only infrequently and in small numbers along the coast. At Filey, 2 flew north on 3rd January, though both Spurn and Flamborough reported between one and 3 occasionally

during January and February. Barnston attracted similar low numbers during the early months, with 4 there on 13th February and, more unusually, 6 on 12th May. After a few scattered July and September records, relatively good numbers in October and November. A total of 78 were recorded at Flamborough in October, peaking at 17 on 14th, and a total of 57 in November, including 8 on 2nd. Recorded on 13 dates at Filey from 25th September to 20th December and similarly at Spurn where high counts included 9 on 15th and 7 on 18th October. Five were off Hornsea on 13th October and 6 on 4th November.

VC 62 Scarce in the first winter period with one north at Scarborough on 2nd February and singles in the Redcar, Saltburn and Whitby areas during January and February. Peak counts in the autumn were 14 on the sea at Cromer Point on 17th October and 7 at Whitby on both 6th and 7th December.

VC 63 One bird was at Winterset Res on 29th November, a rare visitor inland.

COMMON GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Common and widespread passage migrant and winter visitor, occasionally over-summering

WeBS: International threshold 3,000, GB threshold 170

VC 61 The largest counts came, not unexpectedly, from Hornsea Mere; a creditable 523 during March dropping to 350 in April. Nearby, TLNR reported a site record 202 on 22nd February and 72 were at LDNNR in January. Unseasonal singles appeared during the summer months at TLNR, on 24th July and 2nd August. On the coast, autumn passage was light, peaking on 5th November when 45 flew south at Spurn and 37 at Flamborough.

VC 62 Typically small numbers noted on freshwaters in the area, with a high of only 17 at Scaling Dam in March. A reasonable passage along the coast through October and November, the highest counts being as follows: 48 north past Whitestone Point on 14th October, 38 past Long Nab on 25th October and 23 south at Cromer Point on 5th November. Flocks on the sea included 36 in Cornelian Bay on 4th November.

VC 63 Eight waters had maximum counts of up to 22 during the early and late winters. Higher counts came from Pugney's CP with 81 on 8th January and subsequent monthly maxima of 58 for February, 54 for March, 42 for April and 54 on 6th December. Winterset Res was the only other place to regularly hold good numbers; 41 in January, 45 in February and up to 59 in March, then up to 49 in November and 46 in December. An out of season bird was at Catcliffe Flash on 17th and 18th June.

VC 64 Counts over 40 came from Hay-a-Park GP in January (53), Fairburn Ings in April (45), and Gouthwaite Res in December (50).

VC 65 No more than 25 birds seen at any one water.

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*

Scarce winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 250, GB threshold 2

VC 61 Cold weather in January led to a welcome influx of this attractive duck, lasting until March. Maximum individual counts were of 12 at TLNR on 26th January and 17 at Bethel's Pond, Brandesburton on 15th February, though up to 32 birds in total were in the broad TLNR, Brandesburton and Hornsea Mere area. At LDNNR, up to 4 "redheads" and 6 drakes were present in January, and a record 13 including 6 drakes on 4th February, with 7 on 21st and a "redhead" remaining until 23rd March. Three birds were seen on the Humber in January and a "redhead" at Welton Water on 6th February. Passing birds were noted on the coast with a "redhead" north past Filey on 3rd January, a male past Flamborough on 25th of that month and 3 birds there on 29th. In the second winter period, good numbers once again, beginning at North Cave GP where a single remained from 14th October until the year-end. Up to 8 birds were present up and down the Hull Valley in December, producing high counts of 5 at Watton NR on the 18th and 7 at Bethel's Pond on 28th, and one at Tunstall from 23rd to 27th December. At LDNNR there was a "redhead" on 6th December, then 3 more on 21st with a peak of 8 on 27th.

VC 62 A "redhead" frequented Scarborough Harbour between 3rd and 7th February, before moving to Scamer Road Mere on 8th and staying until 8th March. Coatham Marsh regularly hosted 1 or 2 from 5th January to 21st February and later in the year, 2 again on 20th and 21st December.

VC 63 One or two birds recorded at many sites, particularly in January and February, the majority of which were "redheads". It is likely that birds wandered between sites, including to some in adjacent VC 64. At Southfield Res, 1 to 2 birds were present from 9th to 18th January but 3 males were there on 12th and at Denaby Ings, 4 birds on 19th included two males. Pugney's CP hosted birds throughout the period 5th January to 15th March, with a maximum of 4 including 3 drakes on 13th and 14th February. Singles in February and March, in some instances on only one or two dates, were at Thorpe Marsh, Denaby Ings, Broomhill Ings, Thrybergh CP, Blacktoft Sands, Bretton Park, Winterset Res, RVCP, Harthill Res, The Fleets (Barnsley), Blackburn Meadows, Catcliffe Flash, Ringstone Edge Res, Elland GP and Thorne Moors. Single "redheads" were at Winterset Res, Southfield Res and RVCP during late December.

VC 64 Single birds in January were reported from Otley GP and Yeadley Tam. Knotford Nook played host to up to 4 "redheads", though usually less, between 1st January and 3rd March. Between 1 and 3 "redheads" were at Hay-a-Park GP between 19th January and 1st February and 1 to 2 were at Farnham GP from 21st January through February. The Swillington Ings area attracted up to 4, including one male, up until mid-February. In the late winter period, the first returned to Fairburn Ings in November building to 6 in December. Before the end of the year, 2 had returned to Knotford Nook, a single "redhead" to Ripon Racecourse Pond on 13th December and four to Swillington Ings on 30th and 31st.

VC 65 A drake at Masham on 18th February; all the others were "redheads". Three at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 1st January increased to 7 on 2nd February, with birds remaining through to March. Singles at Cleasby and Stapleton in January and at Seorton in March. In the second winter period, 4 "redheads" were seen at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 30th November.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*
Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor; has bred
WeBS: International threshold 1,250, GB threshold 100

VC 61 Small numbers present along the coast during most months of the year, though very scarce June to August. Flamborough recorded an early return passage count of 6 on 19th July. Most common from September to November with peak counts mid-October; 18 north at Filey and 13 off Hornsea on 12th and 18 north at Filey, 25 at Flamborough and 7 at Spurn all on 14th. Inland, a drake was at TLNR from 8th to 11th January, a drake at Wheldrake Ings on 6th December and a female at PHENR also in December.

VC 62 The largest counts came from South Gare and Redear with monthly maxima including:

	January	February	July	October	November	December
South Gare	47		14	27	7	21
Redear/Saltburn	7	10			21	23

Smaller numbers from other coastal localities during both winter periods. October produced the best passage counts of 19 north at Long Nab on 12th and 19 north at Whitestone Point on 14th.

VC 63 Bred in the Sheffield Area, though unfortunately just across the border in Derbyshire. One pair however, was present at Redmires Res during the spring. Records came from 16 sites in total, the most notable counts coming from Underbank Res, where 4 males were present on 25th January, Howden Res where 7 on 22nd March, Blacktoft Sands, 5 on 16th and 7 on 21st October and at Southfield Res, 3 from 21st to 28th October. The remaining sites attracted only 1 or 2 birds, usually for one day only, though occasionally for up to a week, mostly between January and March or October to December.

VC 64 Typically scarce, beginning with one at Gouthwaite Res on 5th January and a male at Hay-a-Park GP on 12th, 19th and 23rd. Reported from Fairburn Ings, 2 in May and June with one in September.

VC 65 Singles on the Swale at Great Langton on 14th April and at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 8th October.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Uncommon breeding resident; widespread and quite common winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 2,000, GB threshold 90

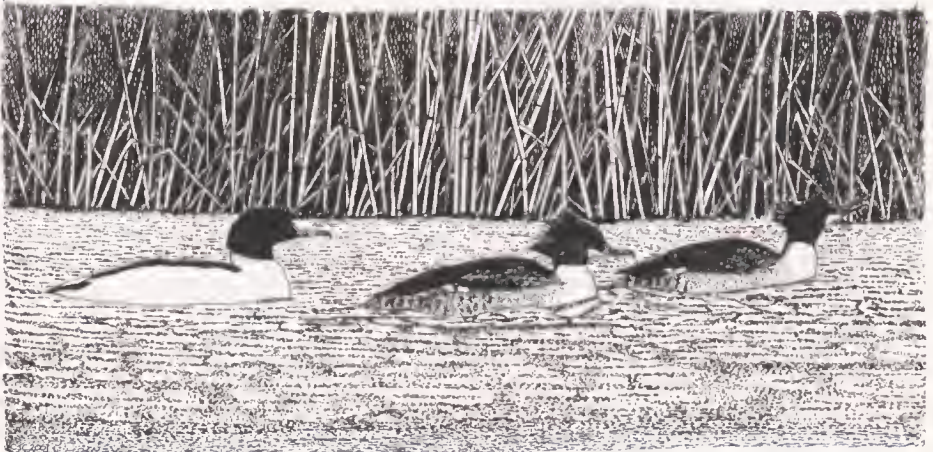
VC 61 No proof of breeding, but a pair prospected the River Derwent near Sutton in May. Winter counts included a Yorkshire record 354 at LDNNR on 13th January, dropping slightly to 289 on 18th and to 217 by 9th February. Elsewhere, strangely scarce in this VC, the only double-figure counts being of 14 at TLNR on 3rd January, 12 in East Park, Hull on 4th February and a flock of 14 flying north at Spurn on 23rd October.

VC 62 The Scarborough area held more than usual during January with up to 15 at Seamer Road Mere and 8 at Wykeham Lakes. Nearby Sealing Dam also held up to 15 in both January and December and 13 were at Lakeside Lodge, Rillington also in January. Only small numbers elsewhere.

VC 63 Of widespread occurrence in winter and in ever increasing numbers. One pair bred successfully at Morley SW on the River Aire. The following site maxima were noted in the relevant months; Bretton CP 55 for December; Broomhill Ings, 122 for January and 77 for February; Catcliffe Flash, 56 for February and 61 for March; Elland GP 79 for January; Thornton Moor Res 97 for December; Thrybergh CP 61 for January, 107 for February and 55 for March; RVCP 50 for January, 61 for February, 87 for March and 71 for December; Southfield Res 198 for January, 81 for February, 56 for March and 60 for December; Winterset Res, 60 for January.

VC 64 Breeding was reported at many sites along the length of the Rivers Nidd and Ure and at Gouthwaite Res. Also bred on the River Wharfe at Bolton Abbey and at Appletreewick. The largest groups were all reported in January, namely 210 at Hay-a-Park GP, 180 at Otley GP, 90 in the Swillington area and 60 at Ripon Racecourse Pond. Again, only single figure counts from Fairburn Ings and a maximum of just 8 in both September and November. Numbers built again in the late winter period, peaking at 80 in the Swillington area.

VC 65 Widespread reports of breeding in the VC, although no evidence of any further range expansion. The dramatic reduction in wintering numbers at Leighton Res continued with maximum counts of only 22 birds in January and 32 in February (238 here in January 1994).



RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Introduced feral breeder in increasing numbers; first reported in 1968 and first breeding 1980

VC 61 A pair spent the early winter at LDNNR, the first time this has happened, and 20 birds were present in the breeding season, but only 2 broods seen. No breeding was reported from the Hull Valley, where peak counts at TLNR were of 58 in February and 63 in December. The only other count of more than single figures was of 13 at Hornsca Mere on 5th October. Disappointing news from Filey Dams after last year's successful breeding, only one record, a male on 29th June.

VC 62 At least three broods at Wykham Lakes with up to 6 adults present from 13th March until 21st September. Coatham Marsh field birds from April to the year-end with highs of 12 in August and 18 in September. Birds passing along the coast are rare, so not surprisingly, the 4 female/immatures flying north at Whitby on 25th October was the first record for the area.

VC 63 A total of 27 pairs bred at 11 waters. Potteric Carr had the highest breeding numbers with 7 pairs hatching 26 young. Maxima reported include 113 at Pugney's CP on 21st November, 87 at Worsbrough Res on 28th January and 61 at Winterset Res on 9th December.

VC 64 Breeding data was received from Fairburn Ings (15 pairs), Skelton Lake (7 broods hatched but few survived) and from Staveley NR. St Aidan's Lake (Swillington area) has previously been a winter stronghold for this species, but complete drainage took place in January/February after a maximum of 95 birds on 5th January. Some of the displaced stock no doubt moved to Fairburn Ings where post-breeding numbers were much higher than usual: 243 in August, 220 in September and 216 in October decreasing to 151 at year-end. It seems likely that Hay-a-Park GP will become a regular wintering area with up to 24 young from October to year-end.

VC 65 Breeding was confirmed at Marfield. At Bolton-on-Swale GP monthly maxima included 24 in January, 29 in October and 41 through December.

EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*

Rare breeding species and scarce migrant

VC 61 One flew north over Thornton Ellers on 24th May, and was later seen at Strensall Common (CSR).

VC 62 A pair summered once again, but no breeding took place. The first observations came on 24th May, with two passage birds moving through during the last week of that month.

VC 63 One flew west over Little Don Valley on 14th June (GMC).

VC 64 One over New Swillington Ings on 31st August (PRM).

BLACK KITE *Milvus migrans*

Rare migrant

VC 62 One flew east along the Leven Valley (Teesside) on 28th April (GI).

VC 63 One flying north near Maltby on 27th April (R & Mrs JH : AH). Perhaps the same bird involved in both these sightings.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Scarce but increasing wanderer from British re-introduction schemes

VC 61 One at Flamborough Head on 7th April (RWP: HEP), with perhaps the same flying south at Grimston on 8th April (TI). A single untagged adult was near LDNNR on 6th December.

VC 62 One at Levisham on 14th September (JR) and one near Sleddale 11th to 22nd November (JMY).

VC 63 One flew over Crimsworth Dean on 22nd March (AH).

VC 64 A series of records came from the west of the VC at the beginning of the year. At Gouthwaite Res, untagged birds were noted on 8th, 12th, 14th, 15th, 22nd and 25th February, a yellow-tagged bird on 24th August, and a red-tagged bird (from the East Midlands re-introduction) on 1st and 30th November and 8th December. A few records from the Bradford area, included one over Askwith Moor (SNH) and later over Bolton, Bradford (DM) on 12th July; one north over Timble Ings on 9th September (AJ) and one north over Barden Moor on 26th October.

VC 65 An excellent year. A yellow wing-tagged bird, known to be from Central Scotland, frequented the Leighton and Roundhill areas between 1st and 13th January. Untagged birds were noted on Feldon

Ranges on 13th April and throughout August; on Kirby Hill, north of Richmond, on 28th July with probably the same bird at Little Langton next day, and on Masham Moor on 7th December. An orange-tagged bird above Leyburn on 2nd September and 2 or 3 tagged birds wintering in the Leighton Res to Nidderdale area in the second winter period.

EURASIAN MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Rare breeder, uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor in slowly increasing numbers

VC 61 Two pairs successfully raised 5 or 6 young on the north bank of the Humber, and breeding may have occurred in the Derwent Valley, where 2 newly fledged juveniles were reported on 31st July. These may have been local birds or more likely, could have been wanderers from the Humber or elsewhere. A considerable increase in southerly passage along the coast, particularly in April/May was noted at several sites, and listing all the records is not practical. At Spurn, a "cream-crowned" bird on 12th March was the earliest-ever record there, although the chronological first was at Wheldrake Ings on 7th. The next was at Bewholme on 25th March. There were no more records until April when singles were noted at BPNR on 19th, Spurn on 22nd, 23rd, and 29th, and BPNR again on 30th. One at Hornsea Mere on 24th April and up to 3 in early May, with 4 at Barmston from 28th April to 27th May. In May, 5 passed through Filey, 3 through Flamborough and 19 through Spurn, with 4 at the latter location on 5th and 3 on 31st. Inland there were 14 records from LDNR, 7 from TLNR, one at PHENR, a male at North Cave on 21st June, a male near Hotham on 14th and 15th July, with one at Aldbrough also on 14th. Autumn passage began with singles at both Filey and Spurn on 30th July, then subsequently on 3 dates in August at Filey, on 4 dates at Flamborough, 2 dates at Barmston and one at Grimston (the 31st). Spurn reported the most, 12 bird-days in August including 4 on 21st and 3 on 22nd, then 3 in September and finally 1 on 17th October. In addition there were half a dozen autumn records from the Hull Valley.

VC 62 One pair was present between 16th June and 19th August, with a second female on 8th July, but no evidence of breeding was forthcoming. In spring, passage birds were reported from late April and through May, though numbers were down on last year with birds on only 8 dates and all singles except for 2 flying south at Scalby on 30th May. In autumn there were 5 records, all of singles, with one lingering at Scaling Dam 30th August to 4th September.

VC 63 The species is becoming more frequent in the VC. Present at Blacktoft Sands from 19th March to 13th November where 5 "pairs" reared 10 young, whilst nearby, up to 2 birds were regularly seen on Thorne Moors from 25th May to 12th October. An immature male at Higham, Barnsley on 14th March was particularly early. Records of singles then came from 14 other sites, with a full half of these being in the peak month of May, and all on one date only except for a female which lingered at Broomhill Ings between 20th and 22nd May.

VC 64 Eleven records through the year, the most notable being of 3 different birds at Gouthwaite Res between 11th August and 13th September and a female in the High Batts area on 2nd October.

VC 65 A female was at Nosterfield NR on 18th May.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Uncommon passage migrant and decreasing winter visitor; occasionally breeds

VC 61 Birds of both sexes were seen intermittently on 11 winter dates in the Easington and Sammy's Point area, making this the most regular site in the VC. Elsewhere a male was sighted at Wheldrake Ings on 7th January and a "ring-tail" frequented the Hull Valley throughout that month. In February, a "ring-tail" was near the Humber Bridge on 9th and another near TLNR on 10th, whilst an adult male flew south at Spurn on 18th. Wheldrake Ings attracted a "ring-tail" on 12th March and another was at Watton NR on 6th April. Passing "ring-tails" flew south at Spurn on 7 dates and a single male did likewise on 17th October. At Flamborough there were only 2 records, both of "ring-tails" from 28th to 30th September and 1st to 9th November. Returning birds included at least one bird in the Hull Valley from September to December, with 2 at Wheldrake Ings in September and a male at North Duffield on 17th October.

VC 62 A pair reared 3 young at a site in the north. At least 5 "ring-tails" wintered in the Scaling Dam/Lockwood Beek areas from January to March and up to 4 from September to December. Single males were noted at Danby on 28th March and at Eston Moor on 29th December, and records of passing

females from the Scarborough area included individuals at Scalby on 28th April, at Wykeham Moor on both 12th and 13th May and at Jackson's Bay on 26th May.

VC 63 Birds were recorded throughout the year at Blacktoft Sands with wintering maxima of 4 on 12th January and 6 on 28th December. Long-staying individuals included a female from March to May and a male May to July. A number of records on widespread dates from Thorne Moor, Hatfield Moor and the Idle Valley will doubtless include wanderers from Blacktoft. Up to 3 on the south-western moors in both winters was a slight improvement on some recent years. Against that however, there were no regular winter records from the Halifax Moors (6 records only).



VC 64 Recorded regularly in the upper Dales between 14th January and early March with a maximum of 5 at Gouthwaite Res on 8th February. One of these on 8th February had a wing-tag originating from Langholm (Scottish borders) in 1996. A female was at Staveley NR on 22nd February and 31st December. The only record from Fairburn Ings was of one in April. The first returning bird to the Gouthwaite area was on 2nd October with up to 2 intermittently to the year-end. Up to 3 were in Airedale in October and up to 3 on several dates in Wharfedale from late October to the year-end.

VC 65 No confirmed records of breeding.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

Very scarce migrant; has bred

VC 61 A "ring-tail" flew south at Filey Dams during the evening of 4th May, presumably the one seen previously at Cloughton in VC 62. Next day it continued south, to be logged at both Hornsea Mere and Spurn. Another flew south at Spurn on 12th and one flew north there on 13th. One passed north at Barmston on 10th May with one over crops there on 14th, whilst one flew south near Easington on 9th June.

VC 62 Four records: an immature male at South Gare on 10th May (NAP); single "ring-tails" south at Cloughton Wyke (also seen at Filey) on 4th May (NCD et al); at Aislaby on 29th May (GI) and Easington High Moor 4th June (WN).

VC 63 One "ring-tail" at Blackmoorfoot Res on 14th May (MLD), a second-summer male in the Hallam Moors to Redmires Res area on the 11th to 13th July (DW & many observers), a male at the Sandbeck Estate on 10th July (SMB: DC) and a female in the Idle Valley from 30th July to 4th August (TR).

NORTHERN GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Scarce but slowly increasing breeder and rare passage migrant

VC 61 A number of sightings from the vicinity of LDNNR, with perhaps 4 birds present in winter and young birds present on the reserve in late summer/autumn. A juvenile caught and ate a Lapwing in front of the Swantail hide on 6th August. At Spurn, an immature male flew north on 16th September and an adult male was in the Point dunes on 21st.

VC 62 A pair reared 2 young in the area. Regularly reported from forest areas.

VC 63 At least 4 pairs bred in the south-west, 3 of which reared a total of 4 young. Displaying birds were seen at two other sites.

VC 64 Status little changed. Reported irregularly from several areas and throughout the year, but no reports of breeding forthcoming except for displaying birds at two locations.

VC 65 Breeding season records from 3 sites but probably under-recorded.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Common resident, winter visitor and passage migrant

The increase in records seems to be continuing, but there is no census information to substantiate this.

VC 61 Reported from widespread locations including urban and industrial areas. On the coast, small numbers all year at Filey, Flamborough and Spurn with spring and autumn passage noted; 6 at Flamborough on 30th March, 8 at Spurn on 28th April, and 10 at Flamborough on 22nd October.

VC 62 Widely reported but very little evidence of proven breeding and no significant coastal movements noted.

VC 63 Widespread with daily reports, though the recent population increases have now stabilised. Many breeding pairs throughout, although details in some literature was sparse or vague. At least 40 pairs were present in the Barnsley area (suggested in their report to be a considerable underestimate) and smaller numbers in all other areas.

VC 64 Recorded in every month at Fairburn Ings with a daily maximum of 8 in April and 6 in September. Widely reported from 28 sites in the Harrogate area.

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Uncommon but increasing breeding resident; scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 A noteworthy group of 3 was near Thorganby on 16th February and later singles at North Duffield Carrs on the 6th and at Brind on 21st May. Two summered in the Hotham/North Cliffe area remaining until last seen on 14th September. A good spring passage at Spurn began with a record daily count for spring of 4 flying south on 13th March. There were a further 6 sightings at Spurn in March and 3 at Flamborough, with 2 near Barmston on 17th, then singles at Filey on 1st April, at Spurn on 10th April and at Flamborough on 3rd May. The only autumn records on the coast were an early bird at Spurn on 9th August and a rather late one at Flamborough on 22nd November. Inland, a single was at Wheldrake Ings on 1st September.

VC 62 Scarce in VC 62 this year with the only regular observations being of up to 2 in the Uplcatham and Guisborough areas in January to April and singles again on 16th August and 11th November.

VC 63 The incredible rate of increase continues and sightings are not unusual in the Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield areas. Less obvious around Barnsley, where 14 sightings from 10 localities was more modest, but nevertheless, unprecedented. Similarly the 6 records each for the Halifax and Huddersfield areas were an "increase". Two pairs were in residence at Sandbeck Park, south of Doncaster, where 5 birds were noted in the air together on 2nd February and again on 6th March, with talon-grappling observed on 31st.

VC 64 Between 7 and 9 pairs bred in the upper Dales, of which at least three were successful. 12 were in the air together at Gouthwaite Res on 9th October. The Bradford area reported an increase in the

number of records, particularly in Wharfedale, where 2 pairs were probably breeding and 12 birds were noted on 7th September. Sightings in lowland areas are becoming more frequent; singles for instance were recorded in 5 different months of the year at Fairburn Ings.

VC 65 A minimum of 15 pairs attempted to nest on the eastern fringes of the high ground, but due to lack of observer coverage in the Dales, this figure is almost certainly too low. Impressive counts included 15 at Leighton Res on 12th October though higher totals of 23 on 15th February and 28 on 28th October were estimated to be in the Nidderdale/Colsterdale area. On the lower ground of the VC there have been more sightings of single birds but no confirmed proof of breeding to date.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 One flew south at Spurn on 12th January (BRS) and one flew north-west over the "triangle" on 2nd May (LJD: PKG).

VC 62 What was no doubt the same wintering bird was seen in Sleddale on 29th October, 23rd November and 6th December (JMY: AEH: JVF).

VC 64 Singles at Gouthwaite Res on 28th October (AO'N) and 7th November (MGM).

VC 65 One near Bellerby Ranges on 4th October was quite early (DO), followed by a single at Leighton Res on 2nd December (DS).

GOLDEN EAGLE *Aquila chrysaetos*

Very rare winter visitor

VC 64 An immature was seen and well described at Gouthwaite Res on 9th, 14th, 15th and 23rd February (PRI *et al.*). It was considered to be a second-winter bird and different from that of November 1996.

VC 65 A different immature bird was seen intermittently in Colsterdale through January, no doubt the above-mentioned bird from late 1996.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Regular passage migrant in increasing numbers

VC 61 A mediocre showing commenced when one flew north at Wheldrake Ings on 30th March, followed by further singles there on 6th, 12th, 14th, 26th and 28th April. In the Hull Valley just 2 reported, these being one at PIENR on 5th April and one north along the River Hull at Emmotland on 2nd May. In May, single birds flew north at Spurn on 3rd and 31st, north over nearby BPNR on 4th, and north at Filey on 24th whilst one flew south at Spurn on 26th. Probably the same individual flew south over both Filey and Flamborough on 8th June. In autumn, all records were in September and comprised singles at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd, 7th and 9th, while 2 flew south at Spurn on 6th, with one east over BPNR on 20th.

VC 62 Seven during the spring from 6 localities, the first being at Guisborough on 8th March whilst Wykeham Lakes was hailed as the top site claiming 3 of the records. In the autumn, one lingered at Sealing Dam from 12th to 26th August and a single was over Guisborough and later south over Romanby on 13th September.

VC 63 Not an exceptional year, with only 30 bird-days reported between the first on the 29th March at Thrybergh CP and the last on the 18th October near Dunford Bridge. There was a peak of 9 sightings during May.

VC 64 The first was at Gouthwaite Res on 29th March followed shortly by 2 on the 31st. Passage in early April produced sightings at High Batts NR on 4th, Farnham GP on 6th, Staveley NR on 7th, Sharow on 10th and Staveley NR on 12th. In the Bradford area a total of 10 records, involving about 6 birds from 30th March to 10th September, mostly in either Airedale or Wharfedale. Birds late in spring, presumably non-breeding birds, were at Farnham GP on 31st May and at Studley on 5th June. The only record from Fairburn Ings was of a single in April. Returning birds appeared at Gouthwaite Res on 11th September, Farnham GP on 12th and Staveley NR on 21st.

VC 65 Only 6 singles were noted on passage and all for one day only. The first was at Thornborough on 30th March, with one at Bellflask on 31st March. Others were recorded from Bellflask on 12th April,

at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 13th May, near Aysgarth Falls on 1st June and an unseasonal bird at Bellflask on 6th July.

COMMON KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Common resident and passage migrant

VC 61 No change in status reported. 27 pairs were reported at LDNNR, where it seems to have a stable population. No significant passage was noted along the coast, peaking at only 9 on 31st March at Flamborough and 12 at Spurn on 10th October.

VC 63 Good numbers breeding in all areas with no hint of a decline. The Barnsley area may have held up to 100 pairs (26 actually located). The total number of pairs proved to be breeding in the Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield, Huddersfield and Halifax areas was just under 40, but it was thought likely that up to 5 times that number were actually present. Maximum day counts were 13 birds at Ewden on 3rd August and 18 at Broomhill lngs on 9th July.

VC 64 Three pairs bred in the Swillington area and 13 in the Bradford area, where more were suspected. Counts of up to 7 or more came from Sear House Res, Lofthouse and Gouthwaite Res during August and September.

RED-FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*

Rare vagrant

VC 61 Two different first-summer males were present at Spurn in early June. One flew south past the "narrow neck" at 05.15 on 4th (JC) and another was found north of the Warren on 7th, venturing down to the Point on the 8th (AA: DJS).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Rare resident breeder; uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Regular at LDNNR until 25th April and from 27th August, with possibly 8 different individuals involved. TLNR reported only 5 sightings between January and March whilst there were just 3 autumn records from the whole of the Hull Valley. Along the coast quite frequent occurrences of singles, but only 5 records from Filey. Flamborough reported 4 on 28th September, and 1 to 2 were at Spurn in every month except June.

VC 62 Regularly reported along the coast in winter periods, mainly singles and no more than 2 together.

VC 63 About 10 pairs reported as breeding in the South Pennines but there could have been more since the whole of the uplands were not surveyed systematically. Fairly common in the lowlands around Blacktoft Sands and Doncaster during both winter periods.

VC 64 Eight breeding pairs were in the Harrogate recording area, at least 3 of these known to be successful. In the Bradford area, 5 pairs reared 20 young, one pair failed and 2 other sites were occupied. There were several other pairs present on moorland not easily accessed. Widespread reports of single birds during January to April and again during August to December.

VC 65 No indications of any change in status.

EURASIAN HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant in increasing numbers; rare breeder

VC 61 Circumstantial evidence pointed to a pair possibly breeding adjacent to the LDNNR. The first spring sighting there was at Wheldrake lngs on 28th April, followed by singles on 3rd and 5th May, with 2 at both Thorganby on 8th and at Wheldrake lngs on 12th. There followed a number of July to September records from LDNNR, including 3 adults and 2 juveniles at Wheldrake lngs in late August, suggesting local breeding. At TLNR, Hobbies were regularly noted from June through to September, with juveniles seen on 3 dates in late August/early September. Similarly at Hornsea Mere, regular sightings from June until August. On the coast singles were at Filey on 29th May and 7th June, whilst coincidentally, 17 were reported from both Spurn and Flamborough, including 4 at the former on 8th June, a daily record for spring. The latest bird was at Spurn on 4th October.

VC 62 Recorded on 12 dates, all singles. The earliest was at Burniston on 26th May and a late bird was at Scarborough on 15th October.

VC 63 Another species showing a tremendous increase. Two pairs reared one and 3 young respectively in the Doncaster area, the latter being at a newly discovered site. Birds were present on Thorne Moors from 3rd May to 21st September but no other details known. Blacktoft Sands reported 37 bird-days though more than half of these records were due to a pair seen on most days between 10th and 22nd May. There were more than 30 other miscellaneous records in the VC until the last on 6th October.

VC 64. An increase was noted in the Harrogate area, beginning with one at High Batts NR on 12th May, followed next day by birds at both Ripon Golf Course and Hay-a-Park GP. Subsequent sightings from the Harrogate area involved 4 records in June, 3 in both July and August and 2 in September. Fairburn lngs hosted singles during the months May to August. Remains scarce however in some parts of West Yorkshire, birds being recorded on only 4 dates in the Swillington area and on 5 in the Bradford area. However the latter did include a pair displaying on 15th May, hopefully a sign of things to come.

VC 65 Birds were seen at Ainderhy Steeple on 28th July and 8th September.

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce, but slowly increasing, breeding resident and winter visitor

VC 61 Regularly reported from Filey, where up to 3 birds were present, and from Flamborough, where several different individuals were noted from January to May and August to December, although no more than 2 were ever seen on the same day. Despite the apparently suitable habitat and the presence of pairs into May, breeding was not noted at either site. Occasionally seen in the Spurn/Easington area in the early months and again from 21st August when the first of good series of more than 15 sightings was noted. Further inland, one in Hull on 5th January, and 9 winter records from the Hull Valley. Additionally 2 were displaying near TLNR on 13th April and juveniles were logged there on 6 dates between 25th August and 25th September. The LDNNR was again favoured by the species; 3 different individuals were present in January, with perhaps 5 birds there in March, a late individual appeared on 19th May, and the first returning bird on 4th September with 3 birds present again by December.

VC 62 Pairs were present at two locations through the summer months but no positive evidence that breeding took place is available. Regularly recorded along the coast in both winter periods.

VC 63 Breeding pairs were present at a minimum of 12 sites in the South Pennines, from the Halifax moors south to the Yorkshire/Derbyshire boundary. Of these, at least 3 pairs were robbed and one failed through natural causes. At 5 other sites, birds were either not breeding or were inadequately monitored. The only positive comment came from Sheffield, "several pairs raised young", though some would no doubt be in Derbyshire. Good numbers of winter records, especially in lowland areas.

VC 64 100 records from the Bradford area where 2 pairs bred but both nests were robbed. Four pairs held territory in the Harrogate recording area of which only one was successful. Widespread sightings from lower ground during the latter part of the year.

VC 65 In common with the rest of the county, the only reports received pointed to a poor breeding season.

RED GROUSE *Lagopus lagopus*

Common resident of the upland moors

VC 63 High counts included 200 on Barnside Moor and adjacent Ewden Height on 3rd January, 120 on Thurlstone Moor also on 3rd January, 100 at Upper Commons on 26th October and 80 on Foulstone Moor on 21st October.

VC 64 No apparent change in status. 60 were at Burley Moor on 27th August and 80 in the Leighton cattlegrid area on 12th October.

BLACK GROUSE *Tetrao tetrix*

Scarce resident

VC 65 A count of 11 females and 5 males on MOD land near Catterick was the highest count in this area for a number of years. The only other information received was from Arkengarthdale, where up to four males were reported.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa***Common resident; introduced**

VC 61 Little evidence of any change in status, although more frequently reported in the east of the county as evidenced by coveys of 22 at TLNR in January and 21 at Flamborough in October.

VC 62 Continues to be of widespread occurrence.

VC 63 Widespread in small numbers in the VC and in the south of VC 64. Releases continue in some areas and are probably responsible for some of the highest counts, which all incidentally, came from the Doncaster area. These comprised coveys of 45 at Thryhergh CP in October, of 43 at Hooton Roberts in November, 42 at Southfield Res in September, 40 at Wilsic in February (18 pairs bred), 32 at Blaxton GP in November, 30 on Hatfield Moor in November, 25 at Firsby Res in January and regular counts of up to 24 at Broomhill Ings.

VC 64 Widely reported with the largest coveys of 17 at High Batts NR on 5th January and 20 on Dallowgill Moor on 10th December. Reported in all months from Fairburn Ings peaking at 20 in both October and November.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix***Common resident but has decreased in recent years**

VC 61 Little evidence of a change in status, despite the national decline. 80 pairs were recorded at LDNNR, where a covey of 59 was noted at North Duffield Carrs on 3rd January. Coveys of up to 25 birds were also noted at Sunk Island.

VC 62 Breeding was confirmed at Wykeham (15 young). Continues to be regularly seen throughout the Scarborough district, though fewer reported from the north of the county. Larger coveys of 12 were seen at Great Ayton on 6th January and at Cloughton on 20th September.

VC 63 Bred in modest numbers in all society areas with no evidence of any further declines. The largest counts, as usual, came in the winter months and included coveys of 50 at Wilsic and 46 at Broomhill Ings in January, 40 at Southfield Res in late October and of 38 at Darrington in November.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, the species was described as "well distributed in small numbers". Several reports of declining numbers came from the Harrogate area, and the only large covey noted was of 24 at Newhouses on 4th November. Four pairs bred at Fairburn Ings, where maximum counts included 12 in July, September and November with 14 in December and 15 in October.

VC 65 Most comments pointed to a continued decline in the numbers of this species, though no specific data was forthcoming.

COMMON QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix***Summer visitor in varying numbers; occasionally breeds**

VC 61 An exceptional 91 singing males were reported in the Lower Derwent Valley, this being by far the largest number ever claimed in Yorkshire. Even though the species is known to exhibit large and erratic variations in numbers, the above counts are extraordinary. The first 2 were heard at Aughton on 2nd May, then subsequent intensive surveys lead to a further 63 being located on the reserve and 28 on adjacent arable land. Three counts of proven breeding, hroods of 3, 4 and 10, was testimony to the large numbers involved. Migrants were noted at Filey, 2 each in May and June, whilst birds were noted at Spurn on 4 dates in May. A more exceptional 8 arrived at Flamborough on 23rd with up to 6 recorded thereafter to 5th June. Birds were also heard calling in May near Barmston, Brandeshurton, Leconfield, Siggleshornc, TLNR and Wilholme. Three were calling near North Cave GP on 29th June with a further single there on 6th July. Late calling birds were at Grimston between 4th and 8th August and near Easington on 9th August, with the last report on 17th August near TLNR.

VC 62 Nine records, all for a single day only, except for one singing at Nunthorpe between the 18th and 23rd May.

VC 63 An excellent year culminating in the first confirmed breeding in the Barnsley area, when a female with 4 young was flushed at Edderthorpe Flash in early August. A particularly early bird called from a wheat field between Tickhill and Stainton from 28th April to 4th May, then many records until the last, a single flushed at Pot Hills Marsh on 4th October. Birds were located at a total of 32 mainly lowland sites, though usually just one or two calling birds. Larger counts, no doubt loose colonies,

included up to 5 in the Idle Valley continuously May through to August and 8 calling in the Blaxton/Wroot area, including 5 at Wroot on 29th July. One was present at Laughten-en-le-Morthen on 26th May increasing to 4 through June and July.

VC 64 A meagre 3 calling birds; one each at Staveley NR on 9th June, at Bishop Monkton Ings on 13th and at South Stainley on 24th.

VC 65 Calling birds were heard at West Tanfield and Nosterfield NR in June, Kirby Fleetham on 8th July, East Tanfield between 9th and 13th July, Snape on 8th August and at least 2 at Ainderby Steeple in mid-August.

COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

Common resident; introduced

VC 61 Common resident, with large numbers released.

VC 63 Widely distributed, being reared for shooting in many woods. There were few records of any significance. 70 were counted at Wentworth Park in September, 35 at Sprotbrough in both January and October, 42 at Rockley on 14th October and 34 at Grimthorpe on 24th October.

VC 64 The largest count involved 300 at Fountains Ahbey in November.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Scarce breeding resident and uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 The breeding stronghold of LDNNR held an estimated 24 pairs, much in line with recent years. Birds called from 3 separate locations at TLNR in May (where up to 6 wintered), and 2 or 3 were present at PHENR during the summer. Elsewhere, a few scattered wintering birds were noted at Brandesburton, Flamborough, Grimston and Spurn. Only 4 migrants were noted on the coast and all at Spurn, one in March and 3 during the autumn.

VC 62 Singles at several sites through both winter periods with 2 at Scamer Road Mere on 4th and 12th January.

VC 63 An estimated 20 pairs were considered to be breeding at Blacktoft Sands where the maximum daily count reached 15 on 1st January. Spring and summer records included one at Bretton Park on 14th May and one heard regularly at Carlton Marsh from 30th June through July and August. A road casualty at Denaby Ings on 7th July indicated local breeding, whilst one was at Winterset Res on 30th April and 2 there on 8th June. The only site in the Doncaster area to offer any real evidence of breeding was Potteric Carr, where the rarely heard hut strident "pupp pupp pu-eerrrrr" song, performed by the female in courtship, was heard on 26th March. Wintering birds were reported in both winter periods from at least 35 sites. Larger gatherings included 4 on 14th October at Winterset Res, whilst in December, 4 on 15th at High Royd SF, 5 on 31st at Worsbrough Res and 7 on 7th at Pugney's CP.

VC 64 Recorded at Staveley NR in every month with a maximum of 6 on 1st April. A maximum of 4 was at Fairburn Ings in April with 3 to July and 2 to the year-end. Elsewhere, just scattered singles at 11 sites including Swillington Ings.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

Rare breeding summer visitor and scarce migrant

VC 61 At Wheldrake Ings singing males were reported during nocturnal surveys, with the first on 6th May, but no evidence was forthcoming to verify the numbers involved.

VC 64 An adult at Staveley NR on 24th August (PTT).

COMMON MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Abundant breeding resident; some immigration in autumn/winter

VC 61 Seems to be continuing to increase, with an estimated 400 pairs breeding in the LDNNR being a site record, and 40 young being ringed at Wheldrake Ings alone. A late brood of 2 was at North Duffield on 5th October. Only at PHENR was a local decrease noted.

VC 63 The species bred in good numbers in all society areas though no really large gatherings were noted. Maxima of between 50 and 70 occurred mainly during the autumn to late winter period, with the following locations involved: Denaby Ings, Potteric Carr, Thorpe Marsh, Sprotbrough Flash,

Wentworth Park and Wintersett Res. The largest count submitted of this uninspiring species was of 80 in the Idle Valley on 25th November.

VC 64 16 pairs bred at Fairburn Ings with numbers increasing from 43 early in the year to 112 in August then declining to 59 by the year-end. Breeding confirmed from a number of sites in the Harrogate area with a highest count of 30 at Staveley NR in October.

COMMON COOT *Fulica atra*

Very common breeding resident; some immigration in winter

WeBS: International threshold 15,000, GB threshold 1,100

VC 61 Numbers continue to increase at LDNNR where there were record counts of 1353 on 23rd and 1371 on 29th March, leading to an estimated 550 pairs breeding, with increases noted at peripheral sites away from the Wheldrake Ings nucleus. Numbers in the early winter were down at TLNR, but 1230 on 4th December was exceptional. Winter maxima elsewhere peaked at 250 at Stamps/Leven Ponds.

VC 62 Highest counts were 154 at Sealing Dam in September, 105 at Seamer Road Mere in December, 71 at Burton Riggs GP in January and 70 at Wykeham Lakes in October.

VC 63 Breeds commonly throughout the area. Site maxima included 644 in January and 508 in August at Wintersett Res, 633 in January at RVCP, 508 in August at Worsbrough Res and 430 in January at Pugney's CP. Further high counts of between 140 and 220 came from Thrybergh CP, the Nostell Estate, Broomhill Ings and Methley CP.

VC 64 45 pairs bred at Fairburn Ings with peak day counts of 961 in July and 640 in September. In the Harrogate area, 550 were at Hay-a-Park GP in January and 300 at Farnham GP in December.

VC 65 Maximum counts came from Bellflask Quarry where 250 throughout January and from Bolton-on-Swale GP where 262 on 8th February rose to 362 on 20th July.

COMMON CRANE *Grus grus*

Scarce migrant

VC 61 One was present at Sunk Island on 4th August (JW).

VC 62 One came "in-off" the sea at Whitby on 9th May (TJB), and was most likely the bird seen over Middlesbrough later the same day (RCT).

EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Breeds in small numbers: common winter visitor and passage migrant

WeBS: International threshold 9,000, GB threshold 3,600

VC 61 17 pairs bred at LDNNR with a high success rate, one pair at PHENR and an unsuccessful pair at Spurn. Present all year at Filey Brigg where up to 70, though the largest numbers were, as usual, on the Humber at Spurn (see below). Notable passage at Spurn included 600 flying NE on 9th March and 795 south on 28th August. Southerly coastal passage elsewhere involved 353 at Filey on 5th and 384 at Flamborough on 11th August.

VC 62 Bred again at Wykeham Lakes with 3 pairs present during the summer and 3 young seen on 14th May. Large counts involved 480 at Saltwick Nab on the 7th September and 740 roosting at South Gare on the 6th September. Counts in the Coatham Sands/Redear area during the autumn/winter WeBS counts were as follows, including comparisons with Spurn:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Coatham	75	650	204	105	169	75	46	330	116	438	243	466
Spurn	1400	2500	2000	800	600	500	540	1150	1200	3000	2000	1000

VC 63 Numbers were generally low and unremarkable, except for the Doncaster area where breeding pairs were located at Blaxton Common 2 pairs, Dale Pit Quarry one pair, 3 young, Ellerhome GP one pair, Misson Springs one pair, Pickle Wood GP one pair and Southfield Res, one pair unsuccessful.

VC 64 Bred at 7 sites in the Harrogate area and breeding was attempted in the Swillington Ings area but with no success. Better luck in the Bradford area where, apparently, 4 pairs were successful. The most impressive count submitted was of 35 at Kex Gill Quarry on 25th July.

VC 65 The recent trend towards earlier spring arrivals and larger movements, particularly along the Ure Valley, continues. The first birds to return were at Nosterfield NR on 7th February, with birds at Seorton and Bolton-on-Swale GP the following day. The maximum one-day count was on 1st March with 482 birds present at 4 sites including 238 at Thornton Steward Res, 154 at Nosterfield NR and 44 at Bolton-on-Swale GP.

PIED AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Breeds at one location, but scarce elsewhere

WeBS: International threshold 700, GB threshold 10

VC 61 An increase in the breeding population at Blacktoft Sands has resulted in an increase in records along the north bank of the Humber, notably at Brough Haven. Here singles appeared in January and February increasing to 3 in March and to 9 in April. A notable 32, including 4 juveniles, showed up on the 12th July, decreasing to 6 by 31st August and to 4 in September, with the last 2 reported on 2nd November. Surprisingly scarce elsewhere; one at Barmston on 17th April was a first for the site, whilst 2 flew south offshore at Spurn on 4th May.

VC 63 At Blacktoft Sands, 16 pairs reared only 16 young. Birds were present from 28th February to 23rd December, with peak numbers in mid-summer.

STONE-CURLEW *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Rare vagrant, in recent years, most often in spring/summer; formerly bred

VC 61 One at Flamborough in thick fog on 17th May (the late DB) was first record since 1987 for the location.

LITTLE (RINGED) PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 Scattered records between 23rd March and 23rd August. A pair raised 3 young at North Cave GP, 4 young were raised at Watton NR, but a pair at PHENR failed, and birds were present at Brigham Quarry. A poor year at LDNNR, though one juvenile was observed with 2 adults at Wheldrake Ings on 29th June.

VC 62 The first arrived at Wykeham Lakes on the 12th March, where 5 pairs hatched at least 3 broods though none was thought to have survived the heavy rain during June. Up to 5 passage birds were seen at Coatham Marsh during April/May.

VC 63 Reported between the 12th March at Wombwell Ings and the 19th September at Blacktoft Sands. Interpreting the total number of pairs located in the VC is difficult, due partly to the overlap of society areas and partly, to details from some sites being withheld. Probably 52 pairs bred, or attempted to breed (half being in the Doncaster area). Details on 25 of these pairs indicated 37 young were raised.

VC 64 In the Bradford area 3 pairs bred, of which 2 reared 5 young in all. At Skelton Lake one pair reared 4 young. A respectable total of 5 pairs bred at Fairburn Ings and at least one pair at Farnham GP.

VC 65 The first arrival was noted at Pallet Hill on 21st March. Survey work found eight pairs along the Ure Valley (but unfortunately only one pair fledged 3 young) and 12 pairs along the Swale, between Morton Bridge and Catterick (including gravel pit sites). Poor weather and predation led to very low fledging rates here also.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Breeding resident; quite common passage migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 500, GB threshold 290

VC 61 11 pairs attempted to breed at Spurn where at least 8 young probably fledged, 2 pairs succeeded at Barmston where 2 rather late downy young were watched on the 4th August, whilst at LDNNR 3 pairs held territory but no proof of breeding was obtained. Peak counts during the year included 184 at Brough Haven on 23rd May and 190 on 13th August. For the second year in succession, Spurn hosted

record numbers in August; 500 on 16th rose to a new record of 826 on 20th, then again to 955 on 24th. 70 of the Arctic race *C. h. tundrae* were recorded at Spurn on 1st June.

VC 62 Two pairs bred at South Gare rearing 2 young. WeBS counts for the Coatham Marsh/Redcar area, with Spurn data for comparison, were:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Coatham	0	7	4	4	99	23	46	201	15	0	0	28
Spurn	6	43	12	13	40	80	40	955	400	100	57	36

Elsewhere larger counts came from Jackson's Bay with 65 on 14th January and 52 on 5th November.

VC 63 Six pairs bred at 3 sites in the Barnsley area and all produced young. Larger numbers in the Doncaster area, where between 13 and 15 pairs were located at 9 sites, the most productive of which was Carr Hill, where 6 pairs fledged 22 young. Passage numbers were modest at most locations. Thorne Moors attracted 47 on 1st June and 70 on 12th September and Wombwell Ings, 41 on 24th August. Individuals of the "*tundrae*" race were noted at Broomhill Ings; 7 on 18th May, 8 on 21st May and one on 23rd August.

VC 64 Little information forthcoming, other than 3 pairs present at Fairburn Ings, one pair reared one young at Kex Gill and one pair "possibly" bred at Knostrop. The only count of note was 49 at Fairburn Ings in August.

VC 65 Confirmed breeding at Scorton, Pallet Hill and Bellflask Quarry.

EURASIAN DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce passage migrant, more frequent in spring; has very occasionally bred

VC 61 Three flew south at Spurn on 23rd April (MJP; DRM; MGS; KG) and 2 flew south at Barmston on 25th August (PP). Two at Filey on 1st September and 5 there on 2nd (SC *et al*) were thought to involve birds seen previously at Jackson's Bay (see VC 62 below). Two further juveniles at Filey on 21st September (LG; DM; CCT).

VC 62 Spring sightings began with 3 at Ness Point, Whitby on 29th April (PN), then 20 at Grosmont on 10th May before a long staying single (for the time of year), at South Gare from 17th to 26th May (SF). In autumn, a nice find was a flock of 7 in cliff top fields at Jackson's Bay, Scarborough on 1st September (MF) and one later at Carlton Bank, Great Ayton on 2nd (PW).

VC 63 Three, remarkably early, birds on Burbage Moor on 3rd March, then 4 on 29th, before 6 on 10th May dropping to 5 on 11th (JA; EAF; JSH; RT). Rudd Hill, just north of Burbage Moor, had 10 on 1st May (BWM) and 4 on 9th May (AHVS). At Rawcliffe Moor there were 7 on 3rd May in fields adjacent to Thorne Moors, huddling to 10 by 11th May (PB; RJS; WHF). Two females were at Axel Lane, SK58, on 7th May.

VC 64 A remarkable spring passage was reported from high ground in the Harrogate area when nine parties joined together in heavy snow, producing a total of at least 121 birds present. On Ilkley Moor, near the Twelve Apostle Stones, there was one bird on 2nd May, 6 on 3rd, 10 on 4th, 12 on 6th, 24 on 7th, 9 on 9th, 19 on 10th and 4 on 12th (RS; PC). Nearby at Round Hill, on the north side of Wharfedale, there was one on 2nd (CM).

EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Scarce moorland breeder; common passage migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 18,000, GB threshold 2,500

VC 61 The Humber Estuary (including the south bank) is of international importance for wintering European Golden Plover, as illustrated by the December WeBS count of 34,444. The largest gathering was an estimated 20000 at Saltend, Hull on 18th October, on which date 17000 were also at Cherry Cobb Sands, this month giving the highest combined total for the year. Elsewhere 1650 were at

LDNNR on 30th January and 4910 on 1st February, 2500 at Beswick on 14th October and 1500 at Howdendyke Lee on 24th August.

VC 62 Once again no significant records from moorland breeding sites. Poor counts everywhere at the beginning of the year, with 90 in the Whitby area on both 9th January and 15th February being the best. Better numbers during the autumn, especially so in November, when 300 were at Whitby on 2nd, 400 were near Stokesley on 4th and c.1300 were in coastal fields at Redcar on 23rd.

VC 63 Few breeding records were received: 7 pairs at Black Moss, Huddersfield, 12 pairs on Ovenden Moor, 7 pairs on Wadsworth Moor (Halifax area), whilst 18 pairs were located in the Barnsley area. Early year maxima included 1200 in the Idle Valley on 25th February and 1500 at Thurcroft on 29th March. As usual, the earliest returning large flocks used the Humber, with 2000 noted at Blacktoft Sands on 20th July, building to 3650 by November. Several large counts in the late winter period; 3500 at Cridling Stubbs on 15th November, rose to 6000 in early December and at Axle Lane, South Anston, December flocks rose from 3750 on the 5th to 4700 on the 16th. Good numbers of northern race birds *P. a. apricaria* were noted at several sites during April, such as 380 at Stanley Ferry Flash from 14th to 16th April.

VC 64 Known to have bred on the high ground in the Harrogate area, and between 6 to 10 pairs were located in the Bradford area. There was an early return in autumn with 1000 at Fairburn Ings by August, subsequently building to 3700 in November then again to 7000 in December. A large flock of 3200 was at Cawood on 19th November. Northern race birds *P. a. apricaria* were recorded between 19th April and 1st May peaking at 300 on Kirkby Hill and 1500 at Norwood Lane.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor, uncommon inland

WeBS: International threshold 1,500, GB threshold 430

VC 61 Present throughout the year on the Humber with peak numbers on the outer estuary in August. Monthly maxima at Spurn included 306 in August and 226 in September. Much smaller numbers elsewhere, with for example, 11 being the most seen at Filey Brigg. Inland, just 7 well scattered singles including 3 from PHENR.

VC 62 The south Tees estuary held up to 48 birds during the winter periods, otherwise only small numbers along the coast.

VC 63 There were few records of note, most were of 1 or 2 birds for single days, at about 10 locations. More regular at Blacktoft Sands where 3 on 15th and 16th May, 5 on the 6th and 3 on the 10th August, 4 on 3rd October and 3 on the 10th.

VC 64 Only 9 individuals reported, nearly all from Fairburn Ings, including 3 during August.

VC 65 One at Nosterfield NR on 12th January.

NORTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Declining breeding population; common passage migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 20,000, GB threshold 20,000

VC 61 Breeds in small numbers in suitable habitat including on the Wolds. A record 440 pairs were in the LDNNR during the breeding season. The Humber Estuary (including the south bank) is of international importance for wintering birds, with 21,884 counted in December. Smaller, but still significant, wintering flocks also noted at LDNNR including 8100 on 30th January, 9200 on 2nd February and 4730 there in March. Notable flocks of 1000 occurred at Barnston on 23rd October and north of Hornsea on 31st December.

VC 62 More modest counts were as follows: 320 on the south Tees in January, 750 at Whitestone Point on 2nd November and 600 at Wykeham Lakes on 16th November. A leucistic bird was reported from Whitby on 20th September and from Sealby on 27th December.

VC 63 Most society reports gave some counts of approximate breeding pairs, these being as follows: Barnsley area, 90 pairs, Doncaster, 70 pairs, Rotherham, 30 pairs, Sheffield, 20 pairs, Halifax, 15 pairs and Blacktoft Sands, 7 pairs, but it is doubtful if these figures indicate the true status. Regular large counts from Blacktoft Sands involved 1100 on 9th February, 1000 birds from late August increasing to 2100 in September and to 4000 by December. Cridling Stubbs attracted 2000 on 15th November and

2500 on 19th December and 5 other lowland sites peaked at between 1000 and 1300 on dates between September and December.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, widespread breeding but no indication of numbers was suggested. A total of 50 pairs bred in the Harrogate area, but many broods were lost due to bad weather in May and June, and 25 pairs bred at Fairburn Ings. The only large counts involved 2720 in August at Fairburn Ings and up to 1000 birds in the Swillington area in mid-November.

VC 65 A poor breeding season was noted due largely to unfavourable spring weather. Nevertheless, several post-breeding flocks built to 500 birds with the largest being of 700 at Nosterfield NR on 27th December.

RED KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Passage migrant and common winter visitor; uncommon inland

WeBS: International threshold 3,500, GB threshold 2,900

VC 61 The small wintering flock at Filey Brigg peaked at 450 in February. A grand total of 30,283 was counted on the Humber Estuary (including the south bank) WeBS count on the 14th December. Recorded at Spurn in every month (see table below) with the 10000 in March being a spring record and the 20000 in December a new winter record. Also of note is the August count, a particularly low one for the time of year. Coastal passage included 173 flying south at Filey on 9th August. Occasional birds, totaling 11 bird-days, were noted at LDNNR.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	- Apr	May	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
south Tees	2200	170	0	4	4	1	2	1	5	295
Spurn	5200	6000	10000	1150	250	670	8000	6000	10000	20000

VC 62 Maximum count away from the south Tees (see above) was 500 at Scarborough in January. The figures for the south Tees show a continued decline, perhaps due to birds relocating to the Humber.

VC 63 The most important counts included, 3 on 3rd January and 3 flying east on 21st November both at Southfield Res, 8 on 14th January and 3 on 28th August at Blacktoft Sands, 14 landing briefly on 28th August at Wombwell Ings and 18 flying south on 17th November at Winterset Res.

VC 64 Reported only from Fairburn Ings in August and Gouthwaite Res in September and October.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Passage migrant and winter visitor; uncommon inland

WeBS: International threshold 1,000, GB threshold 230

VC 61 Present on the coast throughout the year in small numbers, with peaks of 78 at Filey Brigg on 12th January, 170 at Barmston on both 6th January and 24th February, and 115 there on 4th May. Southerly coastal movements peaked in late July and early August, with 106 at Spurn on 28th July and 25 at Filey on 3rd August.

VC 62 The Coatham Sands/Redcar area was by far the most productive, the table below showing the WeBS counts, with Spurn monthly maxima for comparison:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Coatham	36	224	162	333	587	2	134	188	88	0	404	375
Spurn	29	21	34	64	413	58	196	620	355	65	34	47

Note that the first area claims the higher counts during the spring months, but that larger figures occur at the latter in autumn. Elsewhere, 200 at Whitby on 21st January and 92 at Scarborough on 8th February, further substantiate the importance of these northern heaches during winter.

VC 63 The first January record of Sanderling for the Sheffield area occurred at the RVCP between the 4th and 11th. During May, the peak month for passage Sanderling in this VC, Broomhill Ings reported 12 bird-days and Southfield Res 6, and hirds were fairly regularly at Blacktoft Sands. There were other scattered records of single birds during the July to October period.

VC 64 In the Swillington Ings area, 2 birds arrived on the 4th January, then 3 from the 5th to the 8th. In addition, 2 flew east on 2nd March and in May, 2 on the 1st then singles on the 5th, 17th and 26th. Fairburn Ings hosted only 5 bird-days through the year, including 2 in February, the same month an unseasonal single visited Farnham GP on 23rd.

VC 65 Singles delighted their observers at Nosterfield NR on 16th April and 18th May, and at Scorton on 10th May.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Passage migrant, scarce in spring and varying numbers in autumn

Recorded in low numbers throughout the county.

VC 61 One at Saltend on 1st June was the first of a poor showing. On the coast, singles in July were reported from Barmston on 10th and 24th, at BPNR on 20th and at Spurn on 23rd and 28th. Not much improvement in August; one at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd, singles at Spurn on 17th and 28th, and at Filey Dams on 21st. In September, singles were at Barmston on 1st, Saltend on 2nd, East Newton on 4th, Spurn on 6th and Saltend once more on 12th. Brough Haven hosted the largest group of 7 on 21st September, with 3 there on 4th October. Spurn recorded another single on 1st October and Barmston, a late bird on 24th.

VC 62 A very poor year with all records as follows; Wykeham Lakes, 3 on 15th, one on 27th, 4 on 29th May, and Coatham Marsh 1 on 28th to 31st August.

VC 63 In contrast to the rest of the county, Blacktoft Sands produced a good run in the late spring, with birds present daily from 5th to 22nd May, when a maximum of 6 on the 16th, then again, on the 3rd and 4th June when up to 3 birds were present. Autumn passage began on 29th July, though only singles and a maximum of 3 until October. A late flurry brought birds from 1st to 28th October peaking at 6 on the 3rd. Extensive areas of shallow water on Thorne Moors tempted 8 birds to land on 1st June, a notable count for the time of year. Singles elsewhere were recorded from Broomhill Ings on 8 dates between 4th June and 21st October and at Shaftholme pools on 3 dates between 21st September and 5th October.

VC 64 Only reported in October; 2 at Fairburn Ings and one at Skelton Lake (on 10th).

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

Scarce passage migrant, more common in spring

VC 61 One was found at Filey Dams on 30th May (EM: KS: HJW). A juvenile was at Beacon Ponds, Kilnsea on 29th August (KG).

VC 62 One at Burton Riggs GP on the morning of 30th May (J11e) stayed only a short while and was undoubtedly the bird found at Filey Dams later the same morning.

VC 63 A reasonably good showing and remarkably all 4 reports were in autumn. One at Thorpe Marsh on 20th July (DJW) was the first returning migrant, before juveniles were identified at Broomhill Ings on 26th August (DMW: NWA: J11 *et al*), Thorne Moors on 29th and 30th August (WHP: BWP) and at Shaftholme pools on 2nd and 3rd September (TR: JW).

VC 64 One at Skelton Lake from 14th to 17th May (GT) with possibly a second at Astley Lake on 17th (MB: DHH: PRM) and 2 there from 21st to 25th May (DAH: *et al*).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER *Calidris bairdii*

Rare vagrant from North America; 5 previous records

Remains a great rarity in the county, these being the sixth and seventh records.

VC 61 A moulting adult was at TLNR on 16th August (TD: PW1 *et al*).

VC 62 An adult was at Coatham Marsh, Redcar on 10th August (MAB: MCo).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

Rare vagrant in spring, very scarce in summer/autumn, though annual in recent years

VC 61 A juvenile was at TLNR between 17th and 27th September (IF *et al*).

VC 62 A juvenile at Coatham Marsh on 7th September only (JBH: AEH).

VC 64 One at Astley Lake on 10th May, a typical spring date (PRM *et al*).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Passage migrant; scarce in spring but commoner in varying numbers in autumn

A poor year for this migrant species.

VC 61 Two at Spurn on 7th June were late spring migrants, though an individual lingering at BPNR between the 20th and 26th June is unlikely to have made the long trip north. Returnees were regularly seen at Spurn in July, but no more than 3, with 2 at nearby BPNR on 20th. Singles were reported upriver at Brough Haven on 7th July and 30th August with occasional singles at Saltend from 29th July. Numbers built up slightly in August when Cherry Cobb Sands attracted up to 3 birds and up to 4 were seen virtually daily at Spurn. Saltend hosted the largest counts of up to 7 during September, thereafter numbers diminishing until 2 late birds were at Spurn on 20th October. Inland during the autumn, just singles on 3 dates at TLNR and on one at PHENR.

VC 62 Only four records: one at Scalby on 19th August, 2 at Coatham Marsh on 27th August, one passing Whitestone Point on 7th September and a late bird at South Gare on 14th October.

VC 63 Blacktoft Sands was again the principal site for this species. Singles on only 5 dates between 2nd July and 29th August but then recorded continuously from 1st September to 28th October. During this period there were double figure counts on 13 September days and on one, (the 7th), in October. Peak numbers involved 18 on both the 7th and 10th, and 19 on 8th September. Few reports elsewhere; singles at Blackburn Meadows on 22nd July, at Broomhill Ings on 28th August, 4th September and 2 on 26th September, at Thorne Moors on 4th, 5th and 12th September and at Shaftholme pools on 21st September and on 1st October.

VC 64 Just one report, from Fairburn Ings in September.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Passage migrant and winter visitor to rocky coasts, rare in summer

WeBS: International threshold 500, GB threshold 210

VC 61 Often seen around Filey Brigg in all months except June, with a maximum count of 48 in April, but this total is much reduced in comparison with the three-figure numbers recorded there in the late 1980's. One was at the Victoria Dock, Hull, on 25th April. Singles were at Spurn on 3 days in May, and one to 3 occasionally from 1st October to 18th November.

VC 62 Significant high counts included; 112 at Scarborough on 19th January, though this figure is much reduced compared with the previous year, 82 at Whitby on 8th March and 16 at South Gare on 9th November.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Breeds in small numbers on the moors; common passage migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 14,000, GB winter threshold 5,300

VC 61 20,695 were counted on Humber Estuary (including the south bank) during the WeBS count on the 14th December. At Spurn, 2850 in January, a new spring record of 7900 on 11th May and 10000 on 24th July. Numbers then fell to 5000 in October and to only 700 in December. Winter gatherings in the CP at Filey regularly attracted 200 birds. Inland, large numbers again at LDNNR; 1000 were there in late January, with 1125 on 1st February, falling to 200 by late March and then 300 on 1st April. Disappointing numbers were reported from TLNR (maximum count 46 on 24th August) and PHENR (maximum 8 on 1st January).

VC 62 The largest count received was of 350 on the South Beach at Scarborough on 8th January.

VC 63 There appears to have been few attempts to check breeding habitat, though 6 pairs were located near Huddersfield at Black Moss. 6 pairs were near Halifax on Ovenden and Wadsworth Moors, and 4 pairs were on the moorlands near Barnsley. Monthly maxima at Blacktoft Sands included 530 on 15th

February, 250 on 15th March, 383 on 9th April, 180 on 31st July, 262 on 2nd August, 240 on 19th September, 640 on 1st October, 300 on 8th November and 350 on 17th December. Passage numbers elsewhere were quite low, highest counts all being in October; Broomhill Ings, 22 on 14th, Southfield Res, 40 on 15th, and Thornton Moor Res, 24 on 16th.

VC 64 Recorded in small numbers in every month. Swillington Ings attracted a maximum of 28 on 6th May, whilst early returning birds included 35 in July at Fairburn Ings.

VC 65 12 at Bellflask Quarry and 30 at Nosterfield NR on 16th October were the largest flocks noted.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Passage migrant and winter visitor, largest numbers in autumn; has occasionally bred

WeBS: International threshold ? GB threshold 7

VC 61 Bred successfully at LDNNR, with 2 females rearing 7 young, though 16 lekking males and 7 females were present during the breeding season. Wintering counts here peaked at 103 on 30th January, with 81 in February and up to 102 during April. One was at TLNR on 28th March and 2 singles there in April, before a light passage both here and along the coast during May. Autumn passage at TLNR reached 27 on 29th August, with subsequent maxima of 22 in October, 10 in November and 8 in December. Wintering birds returned to Wheldrake Ings, including 31 on 30th November and 52 on 30th December.

VC 62 Occasionally reported through the winter months with 3 at the British Steel Ore Terminal, South Tees on 7th February being the most. Small numbers only through the spring, maximum of 6 at Coatham Marsh on 4th May, and through the autumn, though up to 13 were at Coatham Marsh and in the coastal fields at Marske during October and November.

VC 63 Up to 3 frequented the regular wintering site of Misson Springs, near Bawtry at both ends of the year. Blacktoft Sands attracted a single on the 18th January and 2 on 23rd December, otherwise all reports there were between 12th March and 19th October with peaks of 57 on 28th August and 120 on 27th September. Singles were reported at many localities in the spring and early autumn, larger numbers including 4 flying west at Southfield Res on 21st April, 8 at Broomhill Ings on 7th April and 8 there on 30th August, 9 over Anglers' CP on 25th August and 7 there on 30th August. Finally, RVCP hosted a winter bird between 21st and 31st December.

VC 64 11 birds were at Leventhorpe, near Swillington, on 2nd May and 4 on 7th September. The largest count from Fairburn Ings was of 8 returning birds in August.

VC 65 Eight were at Nosterfield NR on 3rd January with a late bird there on 28th December.

JACK SNIFE *Lynnocryptes minimus*

Passage migrant and winter visitor; has declined in recent years

VC 61 Early year sightings on the coast comprised one at Filey Brigg CP on 12th January, one at Barmston from early January remaining until the 24th April and 1 to 2 at Spurn throughout January. Birds were present throughout at LDNNR, where peak counts included 4 at Aughton on 2nd January, and 5 at Wheldrake Ings on both 30th March and 7th April, gradually reducing until the last on 23rd. Eight were counted at Seavy Carr on 30th March with singles at TLNR on 31st March and 1st April. No more records until September when the first of the autumn was at Wheldrake Ings on 14th, and others at TLNR on 20th and 24th, Spurn on 25th and Filey on 25th and 26th. Inland, numbers picked up in October at LDNNR with 7 on 10th, rising to 17 on 9th November. Coastal reports included 2 "in-off" the sea at Filey on 16th October and 1 to 3 regularly at Spurn from 11th October to 6th November. Occasional singles then to the year-end at TLNR, Kilnsca and Filey Dams and 2 at both Spurn and Seavy Carr.

VC 62 Singles at Scarborough on 12th January and at Wykeham Lakes on 27th February and 15th April were the only records in the first half of the year. During the autumn, up to 2 at Long Nab occasionally between 5th October and 7th December. The largest count came from inland with 4 at Lockton on 4th November.

VC 63 A total of 26 sites reported one or 2 wintering birds either early or late in the year. Hatfield Moors and Pot Hills Marsh recorded up to 3 in March, and Carlton Marsh 5 on both the 18th and 25th of that month. The first returnee was located at Thorpe Marsh on 28th September with numbers building

thereafter up to the year-end. By December, Wilthorpe held 4 on 6th, Barrow (Barnsley) 3 on the 3rd and 2 were at Denaby Ings from the 14th.
 VC 64 Four near Skelton Lake on 4th February. Five locations in the Bradford area and 4 in the Harrogate area attracted singles during the winter months.

COMMON SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Passage migrant and winter visitor; has declined as a breeding bird in recent years

VC 61 English Nature at LDNNR reported an estimated 360 drumming males, slightly down on 1996, but the success rate appeared to be high resulting in a record count for autumn of 870 in August. Large numbers were in the valley throughout the year as witnessed by counts of 1030 on 30th March, 1200 on 7th April and 600+ on 15th November. There were no breeding records from the Hull Valley, despite birds being present at Watton Carrs up until the 2nd May. TLNR attracted 22 in March and 58 in September, whilst a total of 54 flying south at Filby on 27th August was unprecedented. A leucistic bird was present at LDNNR on 20th October.

VC 63 Detailed information on the breeding status of this species, particularly from the western moorlands, is scant, so it is difficult to draw accurate conclusions. Comments received indicated little change in status, but it is thought the ongoing, long term decline has continued. In the Halifax area, 15 displaying birds were noted, with 12 territories identified in the Barnsley area, 8 upland and one lowland site occupied in the Sheffield area and 2 displaying birds located in the Rotherham area. Around Doncaster, once a breeding stronghold for this species, records have further declined and "drumming" birds are now an unfamiliar sound, with only 10 found this year. Counts of wintering birds have also declined, peaking at Blacktoft Sands where 53 on 17th August, 113 on 28th September and 83 on 1st October. Nearby Thorne Moors attracted 62 on 9th August. Top locations in the Barnsley area were Broomhill Ings with 60 on 1st October and Worsbrough Res with 53 birds on both the 15th February and again on 31st December.

VC 64 Despite a lack of census work, it is known that 10 breeding sites were occupied in the Bradford area. The largest counts came during the autumn, particularly from Fairburn Ings where 43 in September and 62 in October, reducing to 16 by year-end. Notable numbers in the Harrogate area included 42 at John o' Gaunt's Res on 6th December and 71 at Bishop Monkton Ings.

VC 65 23 at Solberge was (depressingly) the highest count in the VC.

EURASIAN WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Passage migrant and winter visitor; breeds in small numbers

VC 61 Roding birds were reported from Houghton Moors, Burton Constable, TLNR and Wheldrake Ings. Eight were at Grimston on 1st January and up to 3 occasionally at Spurn from January to March. Autumn passage on the coast was noted from 12th October at Spurn, though the main arrivals were typically later and included 14 on 27th October and 24 on 5th November.

VC 62 As usual, roding was known from various forest sites but no estimates of numbers received.

VC 63 Good numbers of roding birds were reported from most areas, but with no specific census work undertaken, some counts will be rather meaningless. The following are likely to be under-estimates; noted at 7 sites in the Doncaster area, though there could have been 20+ pairs; an estimated 25 pairs found in the Barnsley area, the majority in the Ewden Valley and in 24 locations in the Sheffield area, though up to half of these were in Derbyshire.

VC 64 Roding was reported from 6 sites in the Bradford area and from 12 in the Harrogate area.

VC 65 Hard weather in the early part of the year generated 5 sightings in suburban gardens and led also to birds feeding on roadside verges (e.g. 4 seen during a 5 mile journey between Bolton-on-Swale GP and Great Langton in January).

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers; very occasionally breeds

WeBS: International threshold 700, GB threshold 7

VC 61 At LDNNR breeding did not take place, although a displaying pair was present from 8th to 10th March, and then sporadically in April and May. Few records at this location until April, when a passage

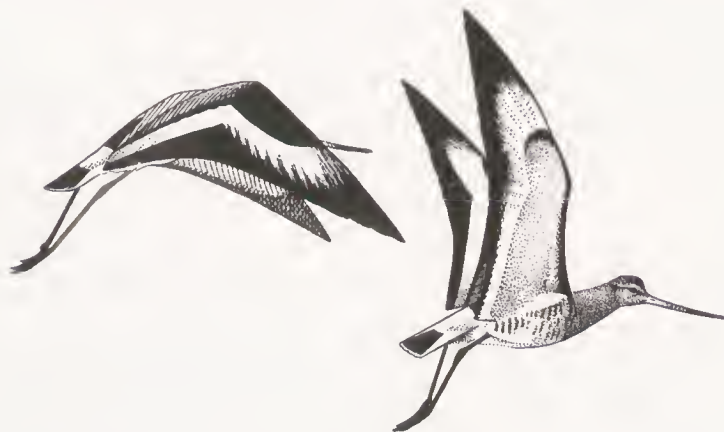
of Icelandic race birds *L. l. islandica* was noted through the valley, comprising 35 north on 16th, 107 on 18th, 31 on 19th and 10 on 28th. This continued into May with 13 on 2nd, 60 on 5th, 5 on 6th, 4 on 7th, 7 on 8th, 17 on 12th, 8 on 14th, 5 on 15th and 11 on 18th. Three sub-adults, of the nominate race, were present from 24th May to 9th June. Elsewhere the numbers recorded continues to increase. Spurn's first ever January records included 12 on 19th, and single figure numbers were subsequently noted in April and May through to December. TLNR also recorded its first winter record of one on 19th January. Birds passed along the coast quite frequently, with for example, 80 recorded from Filey, 78 of which occurred during the late summer and autumn. The main concentration of records came from Saltend, where peak counts included 155 on 29th July, 274 on 15th August and a remarkable 427 on 5th September, reducing to 39 on 18th October. This flock is usually to be found on the south bank of the Humber.

VC 62 A single was at Scaling Dam on 13th April, thereafter more frequent at Coatham Marsh with one on 2nd May, 7 on 21st August, 14 on 31st August and 5 on 8th September. Two at Saltwick Nab on 3rd May were the only birds to be seen in the Whitby area whilst just to the south, a single frequented Wykeham Lakes on 19th to 20th May and 6 south past Cromer Point on 27th August.

VC 63 Most often seen at Blacktoft Sands, though rather unusually, the maximum count of 42 occurred on 11th December. Otherwise, 1 or 2 birds were reported from many sites, with double figure counts of 16 on the 28th July and 11 on 22nd August at Southfield Res, 10 south on 14th July at Winterset Res and 28 south-east on the 20th August at RVCP.

VC 64 April passage birds involved 13 at Gouthwaite Res on 23rd April and 44 feeding at Astley Lake during the early morning of 26th, which flew off after one hour. Returning birds at Fairburn Ings peaked at 8 in July and 6 in August.

VC 65 Just singles from 4 sites except for 3 at Nosterfield NR on 12th June.



BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Passage migrant and winter visitor, occasionally in summer

WeBS: International threshold 1,000, GB threshold 530

VC 61 Wintering numbers continued to increase at Spurn, with monthly maxima of 201 in January, 269 in February and 104 in March, but 807 in September was the highest count for the whole year. Three were inland at Bank Island (LDNNR) on 13th January.

VC 62 The south Tees area had the highest count of 230 in February.

VC 63 This bird remains a scarce passage migrant in both VC63 and 64. 10 flying west at Blacktoft Sands on 6th July was the only notable record.

VC 64 One at Kex Gill Quarry on 9th April and 3 at Astley Lake on 1st May. A total of 6 bird-days from Fairburn Ings, before the last sighting of the year, a single at Gouthwaite Res on 5th December.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus***Passage migrant in spring and autumn**

VC 61 A notable movement of birds through the Derwent Valley was recorded in spring, beginning with 2 on the exceptionally early date of 20th March. Passage increased in April when 789 bird-days were recorded, with high counts of 39 on 23rd, 67 on 24th, 103 on 29th and 133 on 30th. In May, peak counts, mostly of roosting birds, were 171 on 1st, 183 on 6th and 145 on 7th, with numbers falling thereafter. The final total was an impressive 2153 bird-days. Much smaller numbers elsewhere. Spring passage commenced on the 12th April at Spurn, with a maximum count of 23 on 6th and 9th May. Birds were then present through late spring and summer, with 30 on 15th July, 70 on 31st and 65 on 1st August. 413 were logged passing Filey between July and September, and much smaller counts further down the coast at Hornsea and Grimston. In the upper Humber, 21 were at Saltend on 1st August. Spurn then had single figure counts through September, apart from 24 on 10th, and although one was at PHENR on 18th October, Spurn claimed the last sighting on the 23rd of that month.

VC 62 A light spring passage with no more than 6 at any site. Autumn passage started in mid-July and ended mid-September. Numbers were generally small with the better counts at South Gare comprising 31 on 6th, 37 on 7th and 20 on 20th August.

VC 63 An unexceptional year, as indicated by just 5 records in total for the combined Halifax and Huddersfield areas. Elsewhere, well over 50 records between late March and early October, including 7 flying west at Southfield Res on 2nd May, 6 north-west at Winterset Res on 2nd August and 7 at Thornton Moor Res on 24th August. Blacktoft Sands, of course, attracted some birds including 8 on 27th April and 11 on 22 September.

VC 64 Spring birds recorded from 26th April until 14th May at 6 sites in the Harrogate area, with returning birds from 9th July including singles at Farnham GP on 19th August and Staveley NR on 24th. Considered to be scarce at Fairburn Ings where only 8 bird-days were logged through the year.

VC 65 Just 1 to 5 birds were reported from 5 sites.

EURASIAN CURLEW *Numenius arquata***Common passage migrant and winter visitor; breeds on moors****WeBS: International threshold 3,500, GB threshold 1,200**

VC 61 An estimated 180 pairs were present on, or adjacent to, the LDNNR, which was also the location of the highest counts, notably 360 on 25th January and 415 on 21st February. Additional large gatherings were found on the Humber as well, including 300 at Brough Haven on 31st August and 285 at Spurn in November. Flocks totalling 30 to 40 were in the TLNR and PHENR areas of the Hull Valley in January and some remained throughout the year.

VC 62 Several pairs were observed displaying in the Vale of Pickering during the spring. Higher counts from the regular sites were of 30 in the Coatham Sands/ Redcar area in December and up to 28 resident in the Scarborough area throughout both winter periods.

VC 63 Good breeding numbers were recorded at all moorland sites and about 8 pairs were located in the lowlands around Doncaster. Spring gatherings peaked in March, some on lowlands, such as 84 at Blaxton GP on the 5th, and some on higher ground, such as 58 on Barnside Moor on the 8th and 53 at Thornton Moor Res on 20th. Westward passage was noted at Blacktoft Sands in July; 70 on the 5th and 115 on 6th.

VC 64 Two pairs bred at Fairburn Ings raising 2 fledglings, though breeding success on the moors was adversely affected by poor spring weather. Otley GP boasted 2 large flocks of 150 on 15th February and 220 on 8th March. Also in March, 125 were noted flying upstream past Burley-in-Wharfedale on the 3rd and 80 were at nearby Knotford Nook on 22nd. Post-breeding flocks peaked at 100 at both Denton on 4th July and at Chelker Res on 15th August. There were three figure counts from several areas throughout the last quarter of the year including 200 on 26th October and 250 on 26th December at Denton and 300 on 23rd November plus 280 on 25th December at Otley.

VC 65 Little breeding success in the upland areas due to poor spring weather. Large groups of 250 were near Middleham on 2nd January, and of 150 at Nosterfield NR on 26th February. Bolton-on-Swale GP reported substantial counts of 316 on 8th February rising to 488 by 1st March, with 207 again present on 14th December.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Passage migrant, much commoner in autumn, occasionally over-winters

VC 61 Singles were reported from Cherry Cobb Sands on 12th and Wheldrake Ings on 30th April. May records were virtually confined to the LDNNR area, beginning with 4 at Wheldrake Ings on the 1st and 2nd, then a single at North Duffield on 3rd, one at Barmby Marsh on 4th and another at Wheldrake Ings on 18th. The first at Spurn was not until the 8th June, but several followed on the 18th and 22nd, and from 2nd to 10th July. Other black ones in stunning summer plumage were at Filey Dams on 14th and 29th June, and at Cherry Cobb on 21st. The first birds definitely on return passage were at Wheldrake Ings on 24th July and 3rd August. More common thereafter, 5 singles were at TLNR in August to September and up to 3 at Spurn in August though peaking at 4 on 29th. Occasional singles or 2 during September, with a late bird at Spurn on 20th November.

VC 62 Only 4 records, all of singles, beginning at Wykeham Lakes on 11th May, then Bran Sands on 13th July, South Gare on 28th August and Jackson's Bay on 6th September.

VC 63 Away from Blacktoft Sands this is a scarce passage migrant in the VC, with only 10 records of 1 to 2 birds from 5 localities. More frequent at Blacktoft, where birds were present on the 17th February, between the 4th March and 30th April, on the 4th June and then continuously 4th July to 30th December. There were usually only 1 or 2 birds up to mid-August and in December, but double figures on 17 dates between 2nd September and 23rd October, with a peak of 17 on 17th September.

VC 64 In spring one was at Fairburn Ings in April, 2 in May and one in June. Singles at Fairburn Ings in both August and September with 3 at Leventhorpe on 18th September being the only other record of note.

VC 65 A single at Nosterfield NR on 27th July.

COMMON REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Passage migrant and winter visitor; breeds in steadily declining numbers

WeBS: International threshold 1,500, GB winter threshold 1,100

VC 61 An estimated 235 pairs were present at LDNNR. Maximum counts at Spurn included 1400 in July and a record 5500 on 24th August, with 3300 in September. Wintering birds reached 100 at Filey Brigg and passage there peaked in July when 153 flew south on 15th.

VC 62 Few counts of any significance, as the following January maxima show; 200 on the south Tees, 200 in South Bay Scarborough and 80 at Whitby.

VC 63 Breeding numbers in the VC were rather low but definitely under-recorded. Seven pairs bred at Blacktoft Sands, where 54 were counted on 6th April though the yearly high was of 125 on 25th September. In the Doncaster area there were 15 + pairs, including one pair on Thorne Moors, (first breeding record), and in the Barnsley area, at least 12 pairs. Other societies totalled about 14 pairs, giving a tally of at least 48 pairs for the VC.

VC 64 Bred at 7 sites in the Bradford area and at 3 sites in the Swillington area, including at Astley Lake, where a flock of 33 migrants joined the residents on 18th April. Seven pairs bred at Fairburn Ings with a maximum spring count of 55 in April and winter counts of 17 in November and 21 in December. Eight sites had breeding pairs in the Harrogate area.

VC 65 Reported breeding from Nosterfield NR, Roundhill Res where 4 pairs, Pallet Hill and Scorton Quarry.

COMMON GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Passage migrant, more numerous in autumn; has over-wintered

VC 61 One at Filey Brigg on 7th April was the first, followed by singles at Spurn from 16th, and then a light spring passage of 1 to 2 birds at LDNNR, PHENR, Spurn and TLNR through to early June. The larger passage, as expected, was between mid-August and mid-September, with peak counts in August of 27 at Wheldrake Ings on 5th, 41 at TLNR on 25th and 23 at Spurn on 28th. The last was at Spurn on 19th October.

VC 62 The first was recorded at Wykeham Lakes on 17th April with the last at South Gare in October. Only small numbers during both passage periods, more frequent in autumn when a maximum of 6 at South Gare in August.

VC 63 Scarce in spring at Blacktoft Sands where only 1 to 2 seen occasionally between 28th April and 20th May. Much more regularly from 4th July to 4th November, with maxima of 18 on 7th August, 22 on 22nd August and 20 on 2nd September, then a final late bird on the 12th December. Otherwise Common Greenshank were noted at about 40 localities between 30th March and 7th November. Broomhill Ings attracted 19 on 25th August, Thorpe Marsh a maximum of 16 on the same date and Thorne Moors, up to 10 also in August.

VC 64 Spring records were scarce with singles at Fairburn Ings and Gouthwaite Res in April. Two returning birds were at Fairburn Ings in June, and then recorded there through to November with a maximum of 19 in August. There were small numbers in the Swillington area, peaking at 7 on 4th September.

VC 65 Small counts of 1 to 2 came from 5 sites with a small influx noted on 25th August when 8 were at Bolton-on-Swale GP, 5 at Nosterfield NR and a single at Masham.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Passage migrant, more numerous in autumn; small numbers over-winter

VC 61 Scattered birds were noted in the winter months, when 2 remained along the Pocklington Canal in January and 4 birds in the LDNNR in February. Light passage in spring, when up to 3 were at TLNR in April and 2 at Wheldrake Ings in May. Maximum counts came during return passage, including 17 on a tiny farm pond at Etherdwick near Aldbrough on 4th July, 32 at TLNR on 18th August and a record 43 at LDNNR on 25th August. In October, 5 remained in the Melbourne/Bielby area of the LDNNR, 6 were at Brigham Quarry on 18th and 5 at PHENR on 26th. A very high count for November was of 21 on 9th in LDNNR including 14 along the Pocklington Canal. A December bird was at Swinemoor, Beverley on 11th.

VC 62 A poor year, the first was a single at Wykham Lakes on 8th April, followed by just 3 other spring records. During autumn Coatham Marsh (up to 3) was the only regular site.

VC 63 Recorded in every month of the year. January records included 3 at Blackburn Meadows, whilst during December there were 2 at Grimethorpe. Blacktoft Sands held maxima of 10 on 29th June, 16 on 27th July, 20 on 30th August and 29 on 2nd September. Elsewhere one or 2 were reported from at least 25 sites.

VC 64 Small numbers seen regularly in the Bradford area and at Fairburn Ings. Swillington Ings hosted up to 7 between 23rd July and 5th September and up to 6 were at Gouthwaite Res between 12th August and 5th September. The latest record came from Lowther Lake on 21st December.

VC 65 An increase in wintering records but autumn passage was very light.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Passage migrant in spring and autumn

VC 61 A fairly typical scatter of records, with all the major wetlands hosting at least a single bird. Passage began with one at both TLNR and Filey Dams on 2nd May and a further 4 at the latter by the 1st June. Single birds were at Spurn on 4th and 20th May, at nearby BPNR on 11th, with 2 at Wheldrake Ings on 12th, one of which remained until the 20th. Subsequent sightings at Wheldrake included 2 on 21st, a single on 22nd and a late bird on 1st June. Two appeared at North Cave GP on 19th, then one at PHENR on 22nd, before another at North Cave GP on the 30th. Most of these same locations also held birds on the return passage including 4 individuals noted at Wheldrake Ings during July/August and at least 7 at TLNR between 25th July and 10th October. In addition, singles were recorded at Filey Dams from 20th to 27th July, at BPNR on 20th July, at Spurn on 22nd and 24th August, at both BPNR and PHENR on 25th August and finally at Spurn on 14th September.

VC 62 Reported "occasionally" during May at Coatham Marsh. Autumn passage started early when a single was at South Gare on 2nd July and then more frequent sightings at nearby Coatham Marsh, where up to 6 were noted during August. Elsewhere, singles were present at Sealing Dam between the 30th September and 4th October and at Coatham Marsh again from 5th to 7th October.

VC 63 Blacktoft Sands was once again the prime site, with singles noted occasionally between the 2nd May and 13th September. Peak counts involved 2 birds from 28th to 30th August, 5 birds on 31st August and 3 birds between the 1st and 8th September. Broomhill Ings attracted singles on the 14th,

24th and 25th May, then 2 on 28th August before an excellent total of 9 next day, (including a flock of 8 that eventually departed south). There were singles on Thorne Moors on 8th June, at RVCP on 6th and 23rd August, at Winterset Res on 25th August and at Thrybergh CP on 15th September, a new species for the latter site.

VC 64 Singles on passage at Fairburn Ings in May, June and August with one at Skelton Lake from 16th to 18th May.

VC 65 One flew over Bellflask Quarry on 22nd August.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Widespread summer visitor, breeding in the north and west; passage migrant elsewhere

VC 61 Low spring counts between the 5th April (North Duffield Carrs) and 14th June, and all of single figures except for 13 at Spurn on 3rd May, a record spring count for the Observatory. August produced an interesting series of reports including some exceptionally high numbers at sites both inland and on the coast (see table below). There appeared to be 2 peaks, one around the 11th and a second around the 25th. The last was at Spurn on 27th September.

VC 62 The first were singles at Lockwood Beck Res and Scaling Dam on 20th April and the last was one at Jackson's Bay on 3rd September.

VC 64 Breeding was attempted at 4 gravel pits in the Harrogate area. Recorded at Fairburn Ings between April and October with a maximum of 20 in August.

VC 65 Widespread reports of breeding came from both watercourses and the main gravel pit sites, including 4 pairs at Bellflask and 5 at Scorton Quarry.

Autumn passage

Date	Site	Number of birds
7th August	Hornsea Mere	22
11th August	Hornsea Mere	28
11th August	Tophill Low NR	35
11th August	South Gare	21
11th August	Scaling Dam	38
12th August	Scaling Dam	48
12th August	Lockwood Beck Res	17
15th August	Saltend, Hull	17
18th August	PHENR	11
19th August	Tophill Low NR	25
25th August	Filey Brigg	18
25th August	Barmston	23
25th August	South Gare	14
25th August	Scaling Dam	30
25th August	Spurn	58 including 49 south

RUDDY TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Passage migrant and winter visitor, small numbers occasionally in summer

WeBS: International threshold 700, GB threshold 640

VC 61 Recorded in every month along the coast, with the highest counts at Spurn, including 242 in August and 125 in September. Inland records comprised singles at both North Duffield Carrs and PHENR on 18th to 19th May, at Wheldrake Ings on 21st May and a noteworthy 4 at TLNR on 11th September.

VC 62 Counts from favoured areas peaked at 177 on 31st December at Redcar, 162 on 22nd March at Whitby and 100 on 30th August at Jackson's Bay. Three ventured to Wykeham Lakes on 11th May with 2 remaining until 16th.

VC 63 Up to 2 birds recorded from 6 localities between mid-April and mid-November, though most of these were in August.

VC 64 A flock of 9 flew south over Whetstone Gate, Ikley Moor, on 29th March. Up to 4 regularly at Skelton Lake, from the 1st to 10th May. Additionally, singles were at Farnham GP on 4th May and 3 at Fairburn Ings during August.

VC 65 Three at Bellflask Quarry on 23rd August.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE *Phalaropus tricolor*

Rare vagrant, nine previous records

VC 61 One of uncertain age at BPNR on the evening of 2nd September (KG *et al*) was the first in Yorkshire since a breeding-plumaged female at Blacktoft Sands in June 1983.

VC 63 A first-winter graced RVCP on 15th September (RG: PG).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *Phalaropus lobatus*

Very scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn

VC 61 A male at BPNR on 11th July, one on the River Humber at Sunk Island on 19th September, and singles on the sea off Flamborough on 7th and off Hornsea on 13th October.

VC 64 One at Staveley NR on 4th July (RE).

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Scarce coastal passage migrant and winter visitor; rare inland

VC 61 The only early year record was of one at Barmston on 2nd January, but then no more until gales during the autumn. Two were seen from the RSPB cruise out of Bridlington on 20th September, then singles off Flamborough on 2nd, 4th and 7th October, Barmston and Hornsea on 13th, and Flamborough again on 21st and 24th. One stayed on Head Farm Pond, Flamborough from 15th to 18th October and it or another, roosted at nearby South Landing on 21st. On 22nd December, one was located on Brig.

VC 62 One at South Gare on 13th October (JBD).

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Passage migrant in autumn, scarce in spring and occasional in summer

VC 61 Spring birds were reported from Flamborough on 9th May and flying north passed Barmston on 27th May. Next appeared at Spurn on 19th July, on which date there were also 2 at Flamborough. August totals were quite low, just 7 passing Filey, 17 passing Flamborough, 5 at Spurn and a single at Aldbrough. September was even poorer; 4 were at Spurn on 10th, 6 at Spurn and 6 at Barmston on 19th, and 9 at Flamborough on 20th, with single figures on a few other days. Passage finally improved a little in October. Six flew south at Filey on 2nd, 25 at Flamborough on 2nd and a further 65 there on 24th, 26 at Spurn on 2nd and 8 on 11th. November birds were seen at Spurn on 8th and 4 on 18th, at Filey on 20th, 3 at Flamborough on 29th, before one there on 12th and 2 on 16th December.

VC 62 Another poor year with only South Gare producing any respectable counts; 26 south on 11th October and 24 north on 13th. Other sites recorded few birds, with annual totals of only 5 birds at Whitby and 2 birds at Scarborough.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Passage migrant, common in autumn, scarce in spring and occasional in summer

VC 61 A relatively poor year for coastal passage, particularly in late August and early September. The first was one at Flamborough on 4th January. A total of 4 bird-days were at Flamborough in April and 12 in May, during which month 2 bird-days at Filey and 7 at Spurn. Fewer in June, when only 7 birds were recorded along the entire coastline. Seen virtually daily on the coast from early July to early November, but mainly in single or low double figures with a quiet August. Peak counts were generally associated with northerly winds; 66 at Flamborough on the 11th August; 67 at Spurn on 27th August; 201 at Flamborough and 93 at Filey on 9th September; 71 at Spurn on 10th September; 94 at Hornsea, 80 at Spurn and 70 at Barmston all on the 19th September and finally 60 at Spurn and 51 at Flamborough both on 2nd October. Smaller numbers later in October and through November until the last records from Flamborough on 13th and 16th December. Inland sightings included one at Wheldrake

Ings on 22nd July, an adult at Cherry Cobb Sands on 17th August, a juvenile flying west up the Humber at Victoria Docks, Hull on 19th September with 2 dark phase birds nearby at Sammy's Point, Hull on the 20th.

VC 62 A spring bird flew north at Staithes on 27th April. Autumn was very poor with only small numbers present late June through to October. Despite a reasonable effort being expended, a total of only 85 birds was counted at Whitby through the autumn. The highest single day count of 23 however, came from South Gare on 2nd August.

VC 63 Typically scarce this year, reports being confined to two at Anglers CP on 23rd August and one at Southfield Res on the 25th.

VC 64 Four bird-days at Fairburn Ings in May and a pale morph at Gouthwaite Res on 13th September were the only records.

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Uncommon coastal migrant mainly in autumn; rare inland

VC 61 All in all, a fairly mediocre year with passage perhaps a little later than usual. In August, adults were seen at Spurn on 8th, 2 were at Flamborough on 14th, one at Filey on 16th (this bird was seen later that day during the "Yorkshire Belle" cruise out of Bridlington) and single juveniles at Spurn on both the 26th and 27th. In September, 2 adults at Filey on 20th, 11 records from Flamborough, 5 from Barmston and 4 from Spurn, with passage peaking on the 19th when 8 birds in total were reported from the coast including 2 north at Barmston and 2 at Hornsea. Met with more frequently in October; singles at both Barmston and Filey, 2 at Spurn and 14, mostly juveniles, reported from Flamborough until the last bird on 29th. On the Humber, a juvenile flew east at Cherry Cobb Sands on 29th Aug (JMT) and another juvenile flew up-river past Hull, towards the mouth of the River Hull, on 19th Sept (PLM).

VC 62 A poor showing. The first flew south at Long Nab on 25th August. There was then a gap until October when an adult was at South Gare on 2nd, a juvenile there on 13th and singles south at Long Nab on 25th and South Gare on 27th.

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*

Passage migrant, mainly in autumn with small numbers at other periods

VC 61 Seen in every month at Flamborough with a few more winter records than normal. These comprised 2 on 1st January, singles on 8th and 20th January, 8th and 16th February, 3 on 8th March and 4 on 6th April. Small numbers continued to be seen throughout the spring until 3 on 28th and 11 on 29th June. Noted at Filey on 2 dates in April and on 3 in June, though none were seen at Spurn until singles on 28th and 29th June. More frequent thereafter all along the coast, particularly at Flamborough where monthly bird-day totals were 120 in July, 279 in August and 385 in September. Peak day counts occasionally coincided between the various coastal watch points; 45 at Filey and 70 at Flamborough on 9th September, 27 at Barmston and 30 at Hornsea on 19th September, and 38 at Spurn on the 2nd October. Numbers decreased after 30 at Spurn on 20th October, with 10 at Filey on 29th November being the only notable figure though 4 were off Flamborough in December between 12th and 26th.

VC 62 A poor year. A single at Whitby on 2nd January, then small numbers along the coast from late June through to November. Highest counts were 12 past Whitestone Point, Whitby on 13th September, 20 north at South Gare on 13th October and 13 north at Scarborough on 20th October.

VC 63 A noteworthy find inland; one at Blacktoft Sands on 7th September and one at Wombwell Ings on 2nd November.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Increasing visitor in all seasons

VC 61 Now reported very widely, with most between August and October. On the coast, 7 reports from Filey, 40 from Flamborough (with a peak of 10 juvenile/first winter birds in September), 13 from Barmston, 3 from Grimston, 7 from the Easington and Kilnsea area and 9 from Spurn. Once again, the Hornsea seafront attracted one throughout January and again July to November. Inland, one was at TLNR on 18th February and an adult at PHENR on 28th March was a new species for the reserve. Birds were present at LDNNR in January (3 dates), February (4), March (4) and December (4), and in

addition, an adult resided in the Black-headed Gull colony at Wheldrake Ings from April to June. An adult flew west past Hull docks on 9th September and nearby an adult was seen at East Park, Hull on 7th and 17th November and again on 17th December.

VC 62 Birds remaining from the previous year included 2 adults at Whitby until the 9th March and an adult and a 1st-year at Scarborough until the 30th March. Elsewhere 1 or 2 birds were noted at South Gare, Dunsdale Tip (Guisborough), Scaling Dam, Sandsend and Filey during both winter periods, with an adult at South Gare, and an adult and one second-winter (same birds as earlier in the winter?) at Scarborough, settling down at the end of the year. Sadly, after returning for 17 consecutive winters, the Saltwick bird was not seen after 19th August.

VC 63 Further increases noted, so much so, that it is unrealistic to list all the reports individually. Most were seen at reservoir gull roosts, but birds also joined the feeding throngs on town refuse tips. A respectable 7 records came from the Bradford area and 3 from the Halifax area. At Blackmoorfoot Res, first-winter birds were seen on the 10th, 21st and 28th February, on the 2nd, 14th, 20th, 21st and 22nd March, and adults on the 15 and 16th February, and also on 14th December. At Pugnycy's CP, an adult was noticed on 4 dates between 17th and 31st January, a second-summer on 29th March and an adult on 30th December. Nearby Wintersett Res attracted first-winters on 2nd, 9th and 15th February, and 29th November, with adults on 8th, 9th, 16th and 20th February. The most interesting observation in the Barnsley area was of a second-summer bird at Broomhill Ings on 19th July. A total of 18 records in the Doncaster area of which 6 came from Southfield Res, including 2 adults flying north on 15th April, a first-summer between the 10th and 18th April and again on 10th May and a second-year on 9th August. At Potteric Carr, a potential breeding site, a second-summer arrived on 6th April remaining until 4th May, with an adult also there on 11th April and a first-summer present on 23rd, 29th and 30th. Fewer noted in the Sheffield and Rotherham areas, though RVCP held first-winter birds on the 12th and 25th January and South Anston a first-winter on 26th September.

VC 64 Recorded in most months at Fairburn Ings with 3 in April. Adults were at Skelton Lake on 5th January, at Swinsty Res on 19th January and at Otley GP on 18th March.

VC 65 An adult was at Bolton-on-Swale GP intermittently from 9th February to 1st March and again on 29th November.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

Passage migrant, occasionally in large numbers in autumn

VC 61 A record year at Hornsea Mere. The earliest large count was of 293 on 17th July, increasing to 440 by the end of the month, then to 1140 on 4th August and to over 3000 between 31st August and 17th September. There were still 220 present on 2nd October and during these observations, it was estimated that between 8% and 13% were juveniles. Nearby on the coast, 220 flew north at Grimston on 14th August, perhaps birds heading towards the Mere. At Flamborough, a total of 19204 bird-days was counted during the year, this being the second-best year ever, after 1995. These included early singles on 12th January and 1st February, then peak counts of 39 on 20th July, 1532 on 26th August, 1022 on 5th September, 767 on 23rd September, 2770 on 22nd October, 3619 on 25th October and 513 on 21st November. Only small numbers were noted at Filey, with 3 singles in the first two months, up to 8 in July and a peak of 29 on 22nd September and 16 on 19th November. Singletons were at Spurn on 1st and 5th January and 6 on 29th April, then regularly until November with a peak count of 103 on 17th July and 170 on 20th. A late bird was at Spurn on 18th December.

Inland, Wheldrake Ings hosted one on 3rd April, with 6 on 27th and 3 on 29th, then 9 on 2nd May, 2 of which, both adults, remained for a further 2 days displaying in the Black-headed Gull colony. Recorded almost daily at TLNR between the 5th July and 21st September but in lower numbers than 1996. Highest counts came in July when 16 flew south on 5th, 14 were on the "D" reservoir on the 6th and 17 were present on 11th. An adult on 10th December was unusual.

VC 62 Strangely scarce this year given the large numbers further down the coast. Singles were off Scarborough on 5th January and South Gare on 16th March. Autumn passage was light with intermittent counts up to 20 made in July through to September and fewer thereafter until November.

VC 63 Thrybergh CP noted a first-winter bird on 4th January with adults on 9th February, on 14th to 15th April, then immature birds on 10th June and 8th to 9th August. The bird on the last date was joined

by a juvenile, with 2 next day, one of which stayed through to 16th. Eight juveniles flew west there on 2nd September and 9 adults were present on 4th November, to complete a good year for this location. Potteric Carr attracted a first-year from 26th to 29th April, a typical date for the Doncaster area. Other April records came from Treeton Dyke (no age given) on 3rd April, from Broomhill Ings where 2 adults were present on 10th, and from Worsbrough Res which hosted an adult and a first-summer on both 25th and 27th. Subsequent sightings involved an adult at Worsbrough Res on 4th May, 4 adults at Broomhill Ings on 17th July, a first-summer at RVCP on 23rd July (and further birds on 19th September and on 29th November), a first-summer at Blackburn Meadows on 24th July and a juvenile at Wintersett Res on 17th August. Pugney's CP fared slightly better; after 2 first-summer birds on 1st June, a run in September produced singles on 13th and 14th and 2 on 17th. Finally, Blackmoorfoot Res had 2 adults on 16th November.

VC 64 Four were at Fairburn Ings in April, with 2 in May and singles in August and September. Elsewhere in April, an adult and an immature were at Skelton Lake on 27th, a first-winter there on 30th and 2 adults graced Astley Lake on 27th.

SABINE'S GULL *Larus sabini*

Scarce autumn coastal migrant, very rare in winter

VC 61 A good year for this species including 20 reported from Flamborough, 10 from Spurn, 6 from Barmston and 5 from Filey. An adult south at Filey on 11th August was the first, with 2 juveniles at Flamborough on 6th November the last. Between these extremes, 10 bird-days logged in August, all adults except for 2 juveniles at Flamborough on 20th and another on 22nd. A total of 34 bird-days in September, clearly the peak month, with daily maxima comprising 5, (an adult and 4 juveniles) passing Hornsea on 19th, 3 (2 adults) at Spurn on 10th, and 3 at Flamborough on both 15th and 21st. Unusually there was just one October record involving 2 north off Barmston on the 20th. The only freshwater report was of an adult briefly at BPNR on the 8th September.

VC 62 Two records for the year, an adult passed Whitestone Point on 10th September (TJB: AWI), whilst more exceptionally, a winter plumaged adult graced Heslington Playing Fields, York on 24th November (MP).

VC 63 One flew into Angler's CP on 14th September, stayed 35 minutes, and departed south (GJS: PS: MAT *et al*), a rare treat indeed.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Common breeder in colonies; abundant in winter through immigration from Europe

WeBS: International threshold 20,000, GB threshold 19,000

VC 61 An estimated 2300 breeding pairs were at Wheldrake Ings, numbers which are much in line with recent years. After the first fledged juvenile seen on 2nd June, success was known to be high with many young seen. As usual, large winter gatherings of several thousands were widespread; at LDNNR (including Wheldrake), 26500 on 26th January and 27800 on 9th February, at Barmston 25000 on 30th September, whilst higher counts came from TLNR involving 32000 on 28th October and 43800 on 25th November. Coastal passage at Flamborough was generally light with maximum day counts of only a few hundreds, except for a more intensive period in late September (daily maximum of 4695) and early October (2200). An apparent albino was seen at TLNR on 24th August and a leucistic bird at Filey from 23rd to 26th September.

VC 63 Breeding successes included 33 pairs at Pugney's CP which raised 23 young and 150 pairs at Dale Pit Quarry (Doncaster) which raised at least 216 young, all of which were ringed. Major counts, coming mainly from roosts, were: Thrybergh CP, 8000 on 4th January; Pugney's CP, 6000 in February; Thornton Moor Res, 6400 on 18th January; Wintersett Res, 5000 in January and Edderthorpe Flash, 4000 on 28th January. The largest totals of the year, however, involved 10000 moving west at dawn over Southfield Res on the 9th February and 10200 counted at Blacktoft Sands on the 18th September.

VC 64 The major breeding sites were Barden Moor, where 2751 nests were counted on 24th May and Gill Beck Head with 960 nests on 21st May, but no indication of success was forthcoming. Breeding also occurred at Farnham GP (50 pairs), Fairburn Ings (550). An impressive 12000 birds roosted at Fairburn Ings in December and 5000 likewise at St Aidan's Lake in the first week of January.

VC 65 250 pairs were reported breeding at Marfield Quarry NR but no reports of numbers were received from the upland tarn breeding sites in the Yorkshire Dales. Maximum counts included 21000 at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 5th January and 19500 there on 7th December. An all-white bird was at Nosterfield NR in March and a melanistic bird was seen at Bolton-on-Swale GP in March. The latter bird was unable to roost with the main flock at this site as it was constantly attacked on landing.

MEW (COMMON) GULL *Larus canus*

Very scarce breeder; common passage migrant and winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 16,000, GB threshold 9,000

VC 61 Exceptional counts came from TLNR, particularly in late autumn when 31000 on 28th October rose to 55000 by 9th November. Conversely, a maximum count of 8500 at LDNNR in January, though large, was fewer than in the previous year and between them, these two sites made counts elsewhere inland rather meaningless. On the coast, 19000 at Barmston on 19th September was by far the largest number reported whilst specific passage birds included 1500 north at Filey on 3rd April and 2300 at Flamborough on 2nd October. Birds showing characteristics that can be associated with the larger and darker race "*heinei*" were recorded at Flamborough; a total of 30 bird-days in January including 6 on the 4th, 4 in February, 9 in November and 11 in December. Similar birds were at Saltend on 1st January, 2 on Hesselc foreshore on 5th and 3 on 11th January, one in East Park Hull on 10th February, (all BR) and one at TLNR on 18th and 19th November (RL).

VC 63 The roost at Thornton Moor Res produced 1400 on 18th January and 750 on 29th December, whilst that at Wintersett Res held c. 800 on 2nd November. Watchers at Southfield Res logged 1500 flying west on 9th February, the largest number noted in the VC. Of more regular occurrence were counts of between 250 and 300 made at Pugney's CP early and late in the year, at Thrybergh CP in January, at Elland GP in December and Sprotbrough Flash in December.

VC 64 St Aidan's Lake attracted 2000 the first week in January, by far the most notable gathering reported. Otherwise, 370 were at Fairburn Ings in December and 300 at Gouthwaite Res on 24th March.

VC 65 The only location to notify four figure counts was Bolton-on-Swale GP where 2000 on 5th January, an estimated 3000 on 9th February and 2100 on 7th December. A noticeably larger, dark-backed bird, perhaps "*heinei*" was at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 28th February.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Very scarce breeder; common passage migrant and increasing winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 4,500, GB threshold 500

VC 61 A pair attempted to breed at Wheldrake Ings and a pair collected nest material at Filey. There were a handful of winter records from a number of sites, although the monthly total of 18 in January at Flamborough was unusual. Passage was noted from early April, with up to 25 at Spurn from May through to July and up to 30 at TLNR on 6th July. From mid-August post-breeding groups of adults and juveniles were noted widely, with peaks of 60 at TLNR and 63 at Spurn. Adults showing characteristics of *L. f. intermedius* were more frequent in winter and early spring at most sites except PHENR where there were 7 records between April and August.

VC 62 Very small numbers were present in the winter months increasing through March, then quite widespread, though again in small numbers, in summer and autumn. Intermittent summer sightings from the Scarborough area suggested that breeding may have been overlooked.

VC 63 The first breeding record for the Doncaster area was of 2 pairs at Dale Pit Quarry: one pair failed and one pair hatched 2 young. High counts included 1000 at Pugney's CP on 1st September, 700 at Southfield Res on 4th August and 700 in the Sprotbrough Flash area in late September. The roost at Blackmoorfoot Res peaked at 1034 in August and 1047 in October. One ringed as a nestling in southern Norway in 1991, was found dead at Southfield Res on 10th September, and was presumably an example of *L. f. intermedius*. Darker backed birds were also noted at Broomhill Ings and Sprotbrough Flash.

VC 64 The only significant counts were of 505 at Fairburn Ings in July increasing to 2755 in August then declining to 320 in September.

VC 65 Nosterfield NR hosted the largest count of 2095 on 7th October and Bolton-on-Swale GP the next highest of 650 on 15th August.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Increasing breeder, migrant and common winter visitor

WeBS: International threshold 13,000, GB threshold 4,500

VC 61 Breeds on the sea cliffs north of Bridlington, and less frequently, on rooftops in some seaside towns. The only breeding count received this year was of 35 nests in Filey town. Large gatherings along the coast included 2688 *L. a. argentatus* at Flamborough on 18th January, 2197 on 2nd February and 1897 on 21st March, and later in the year, 1020 at Filey on 23rd November. Quite large numbers of the northern race *L. a. argentatus* were at Flamborough in both winter periods, including 687 on 1st February, though numbers fell rapidly to 21 by the 1st March, with 572 reported there on 23rd December.

VC 63 Roost counts were much lower than in the early "nineties". Winterset Res reported 1950 on 14th January, Southfield Res 900 on 3rd December, Sprotbrough Flash and nearby Levitt Hagg tip area 900 on 17th December, Thornton Moor Res 394 on 2nd February, Pugney's CP 500 in November and Blackmoorfoot Res 322 in December. Birds considered to be of the northern race *L. a. argentatus* were reported from Broomhill Ings on 5 dates between July and December and more regularly from Levitt Hagg tip in November and December.

VC 64 The roost at Fairburn Ings held 250 in October increasing rapidly to 1700 by the year-end. Otherwise, up to 300 were at Bar Lane Quarry and Farnham GP during January and December.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus argentatus michahellis*

Scarce summer visitor and migrant

VC 61 Birds identified as *michahellis* are now too numerous to record in detail, with 85 bird-days logged at BPNR alone. At Spurn at least 10 individuals may have been recorded, with 14 at Flamborough, most of which were on typical dates in August (5) and September (4). Inland, 4 were noted at TLNR including 2, more unusually, on 19th January, and an adult roosted at West Wharf, Victoria Dock Hull on 5th November.

VC 63 It seems that careful checking of any large gull flocks will reveal this species from time to time, particularly so from July to October. A reasonably full account of sightings, including ages, is given below, hopefully illustrating the pattern of occurrences. It is likely to be the last time that this will be possible. In the Bradford section of this VC, birds were noted at Thornton Moor Res from 27th July to 5th September; first-year birds from 27th July to end of August, a third-year on 2nd August and up to 3 adults from 3rd August to 5th September. At Ringstone Edge Res single adults were reported on 21st, 27th and 30th July and on 1st, 3rd, 12th, 18th and 22nd August; 2 adults on 5th and 14th August; an adult and third-summer on 4th August; single adults again on 3rd and 9th September and 2 on 16th. Blackley Tip held one adult on 4th August; Blackmoorfoot Res an adult on 25th January, a sub-adult on 27th and 30th August, 3 of mixed ages on 1st September, mixed patterns of adults, second-winter, third-winter and sub-adults on 29 dates from early September to 1st November. The Sheffield report cites monthly maxima of 7 at Redmires Res in September, 2 at RVCP in November and one at Tinsley Park in July. In the Barnsley area, one at Broadstones Res on 27th June and a third-winter at Winterset Res on 19th September. Broomhill Ings was once more a local hotspot for this species, with 19 individuals between the 15th June and 7th August, and a maximum of 4 on 12th July. In the Doncaster area, Levitt Hagg/Sprotbrough Flash recorded birds on 67 dates between 20th May and 25th December with a maxima of 3 on 12th July, 11th August, 13th August and 14th September. Southfield Res recorded birds from 6th June to 31st December making a total of 19 bird-days. Similarly, Shafholme pools attracted up to 3 birds regularly between 25th August and 21st October.

VC 64 In the Bradford area there were 36 records including an adult at Sugden End Tip on 26th February and a second-summer at Timble Ings on 14th June. Astley Lake held a fourth-year bird on 20th March, an adult on the 6th and 18th April and a second-year on 22nd April. A single was at Fairburn Ings in July. Records from Gouthwaite Res included a third-summer and 3 adults on several dates between 2nd and 30th August and then 3 adults and a second-winter bird present between 4th and 30th October.

VC 65 Adults were at Bolton-on-Swale GP on both 16th February and 29th November and at Seorton Quarry on 12th August and 2nd September.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 As usual, more frequent during the first winter period. In January, one was at Hornsea on 2nd; third-winter birds were at Dacre Lake, Brandeshurton on the 4th, and BPNR on 6th and 26th. A first or second-winter bird was on the Hessle foreshore on 5th, whilst birds of unrecorded age were at Spurn on both 6th and 19th, and at Hornsea Mere on 7th and 23rd. First-winters were logged at LDNNR on 9th, 18th and 28th with a second-winter on 25th. A first-winter was in Filey Bay on 13th, and on 25th a first-winter preened and bathed on the "D" reservoir at TLNR. In February, 7 were recorded at Flamborough beginning with an adult on 3rd, then an adult and a second-winter on 8th, a first-winter, a fourth-winter and an adult on 9th, and a second-winter on 12th. The LDNNR continued to attract visitors, a first-winter on 2nd and 4th and an adult on 27th. Single un-aged birds were reported from Hornsea Mere on 2nd, Spurn on 3rd and Barmston on 9th. An adult was at Filey's Coble Landing on 8th and second-winter birds flew south offshore at Spurn on both the 8th and 22nd February. In March, a third-winter was at Grimston on 1st, with 6 different birds noted at LDNNR during the month (3 first-summer, one second-summer, one third-summer and an adult) and an un-aged bird was present at Spurn on 31st March. A second-winter was present at Filey from 5th to 19th April with a third-summer at Wheldrake Ings on 15th.

In the second winter period, a first-winter was at Flamborough on 8th November, and later that month an adult flew south at Spurn on 8th, 22nd and 25th with probably the same individual noted in the Spurn/Easington area on 6 dates in December. Also in December, a second-winter was at the Wheldrake Ings in the LDNNR on 14th with a third-winter on 17th and an adult on 28th, whilst a third-winter was present on Filey Brigg on 27th.

VC 62 Three different birds were identified at Dunsdale Tip during January: an adult 5th to 14th, a first-winter 11th to 19th and a second-winter 16th to 20th. At Scarborough an adult was present on 18th January, at Burton Riggs GP a third-winter on 23rd January and a first-winter there on 31st January, and at Whitby, a second-winter on 6th February. The most unseasonal bird of the year was a first-summer at South Gare on the 22nd June. In the second winter period, just one report, an adult at Scarborough on 8th December.

VC 63 Southfield Res hosted adults, probably the same, on 4th and 10th January, Denhy Dale a second-winter on 4th January, Winterset Res a first-winter on 4th January (the third in the VC on this date) and a second-winter on 3rd February. Also in January, first-winters at RVCP on two dates, the 7th and 19th, and at Royd Moor Res on one, the 18th. February brought a second-winter to Blackburn Meadows on 2nd February and first-winters to Cridling Stubbs on 20th, 24th and 26th and again on 4th March. Blackmoorfoot Res recorded a second-winter on 1st January, then 2 second-winter birds flying west on 9th February and one on 31st March. Levitt Hagg tip/Sprotbrough Flash held third-winter birds in February on the 8th, 11th and 12th, and first-summer on 4th, 6th, 8th and 9th May. Other scattered records involved adults at Thorpe Marsh on 9th February and at Thorne Moors on 12th March, a second-winter at Broomhill Ings on 11th December and a first-winter at Woodthorpe, Sheffield, on 30th December.

VC 64 At Astley Lake, a series of records that could relate to the same individual; second-winter birds noted on 22nd and 27th February, a second or third-winter on 20th March and a second-summer on 17th April. Single un-aged birds were at Fairburn Ings in April and December. A second-winter bird was at Farnham GP on 1st and 15th March whilst both a first-winter and a second-winter were there on 11th April. The first-winter was present again on 12th, with 2 second-summer birds on 14th and one of that age on 19th.

VC 65 A second-winter at Nosterfield NR on 7th, 20th and 27th February and an adult there between 22nd and 26th February. A first-winter bird was noted over Bellflask on 9th April and a first-winter at Nosterfield NR on 16th April.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*
Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 Two first-winters flew north at Grimston on 1st January and singles were regularly reported from the coast between Hornsea and Barmston in January/February. A grand total of 21 bird-days were

reported from Flamborough from January until the last on 7th March, with a peak day count of 2 first-winters and one third-winter on the 9th February. A first-winter was present at Filey until 5th January, and different first-winters were noted on 15th and 17th and possibly a fourth on 29th. A first-winter was present on the Hessle foreshore on 5th, 11th and 12th January whilst a first-winter in the LDNNR at Wheldrake Ings from 18th, was the forerunner of several sightings including an adult on 21st and a second first-winter bird on 29th. In February, a first-winter remained at Wheldrake Ings throughout, (joined by a second on 23rd), and a second-winter was present on 12th. Nearer the coast, an adult was at Fosse Hill, Brandesburton on 2nd February, a first-winter at Saltmarshe on the Ouse on 17th and 2 first-winters were at Barmston on 9th. In March, a first-winter was at Filey on 6th, whilst a second-winter showed at Wheldrake Ings on both the 13th and 16th and a third-summer there on 28th, perhaps one of these birds remaining thereabouts to be seen on 5th April. On the coast in April, a first-year bird flew south at Spurn on 26th and a first-summer (the same?) was on BPNR on 30th. In May, a late first-summer was at Filey from 25th to 30th.

In autumn an adult flew south at Spurn on the early date of the 29th August, and a first-winter was at Filey on 11th October. In November there were 3 reports from Flamborough and 4 in December. Also in December, a second-winter flew south at Bubwith Ings on 23rd, 3 roosted at Hornsea Mere on 28th, on which date a first-winter was at Filey, with a second-winter at the latter site on 31st when both first- and second-winter birds were seen at Spurn.

VC 62 In the first 3 months Dunsdale Tip, Middlesbrough was easily the most productive area with 8 different birds being seen including 5 first-winters on 7th January. Elsewhere, 4 different individuals were seen at Whitby and 1 to 2 in the Scarborough area. Singles also at Sealing Dam, Marske and Bran Sands. Fewer reported during the latter part of the year, just singles from Sealing Dam and Scarborough and 2 from Whitby.

VC 63 A good year with many records in the VC. Winterset Res attracted first-winter birds from 2nd to 7th January, on 21st January and 8th February, a second-winter on 12th January and immatures on 16th and 26th February. Similarly, Thryhergh CP held a first-winter from 1st to 5th January and again on 12th February and nearby Broomhill Ings, a first-winter and a second-winter bird on 17th January. Cridding Stubbs proved rather more inviting, with birds seen on 13 dates between 20th January and 6th March, virtually all first-winters, including 2 on 20th January, 3 on both 27th and 29th January and 3 once more on 4th February. During the same spell, first-winter birds were at both RVCP and Treton Dyke on 24th January, at Langsett Res on 12th January and 22nd February and at Blackmoorfoot Res on the 11th January, with 2 there on the 17th, and subsequent singles on the 18th, 21st and 23rd January and 9th February. Thorne Moors hosted adults on 9th February and 27th December and Blacktoft Sands an unaged bird on 17th May. Daytime tipping activities at Levitt Hagg near Sprothorough Flash produced regular sightings of first-winter birds between 18th January and 9th March, peaking in February, when 2 were seen on 6th and 3 on 8th, with 3 again on 4th March. Second-winter birds there on 27th January, 2nd and 10th February and 29th December. Southfield Res as always, recorded some roosting birds, this year first-winters on 13th January, 26th January and 12th February and an immature on 17th March. Immature birds flew south-west over Thorpe Marsh on 16th and 23rd February and an adult was there on 22nd February. Immatures also flew over Potteric Carr on the 9th and 23rd February.

VC 64 A first-winter was at Farnham GP between 6th and 19th January and again on 31st. Another, or the same, first-winter bird was seen at both Farnham GP and Bar Lane Quarry between 11th and 18th March and a second-winter bird was at the latter site on 16th March. At Astley Lake, a first-winter was noted on 15th February, and second-winters on 20th, 21st, 26th, 28th and 30th March and on 1st, 3rd and 5th April.

VC 65 A second-winter was at Nosterfield NR intermittently between 20th February and 19th April, a second-winter at Bolton-on-Swale GP 26th February and a second-summer at Scorton on 13th July.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*
Passage migrant, winter visitor and non-breeding resident
WeBS: International threshold 4,800, GB threshold 400

VC 61 A large number of wintering birds were noted, and smaller numbers of non-breeding birds during the summer. On the coast, counts of note from Flamborough included 620 on 11th and 695 on

18th January and up to 476 on several dates in April and May. 400 returning adults were at Filey in September, whilst 700 flew south at Spurn on 8th November and 960 were at Flamborough on 24th. Despite a peak inland count of 1900 at TLNR on 31st December, numbers were generally well down on the previous year at this location. Other notable counts included 49 in January and 50 in December at PHENR. 300 were counted on sandbanks off Hessele on 16th October.

VC 62 Higher counts were as follows: 1000 south at Scalby Mills on 11th September, 531 on the south Tees in November, and 342 at in the Coatham Sands/Redcar area in December.

VC 63 Numbers were unexceptional, with 850 at Winterset Res on 4th January easily the highest number reported. Thornton Moor Res held 187 on 1st January and 139 on 29th December and Thybergh CP 90 on 5th January, though 130 flew south-west over there on 12th January. Birds were often logged flying over Wilsic, including 180 on 24th September. Further three figure counts came from Southfield Res with 148 on 18th December, Broomhill Ings with 120 on 26th December, Thorpe Marsh with 160 on 28th December and Sprotbrough Flash where 200 on 30th December.

VC 64 The winter maximum in Harrogate area was of 50 at the Bar Lane Quarry gull roost on 14th January. St Aidan's Lake held 800 in January and 400 in December and roosting birds at Fairburn Ings roost totalled 420 in October increasing to 1300 in December.

VC 65 75 were at Nosterfield NR on 13th December.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Abundant coastal breeder and passage migrant, scarcer in winter, occasional inland

VC 61 A common breeder on the coast from Flamborough northwards, but this year, badly affected by northerly gales and torrential rain at the end of June, which led to many nests being washed away. The estimated loss of chicks was 80% at Filey, and likely to be similar at Bempton. Coastal passage peaked at 15550 through Flamborough on 8th March and 20000 on 21st; birds returning to breeding cliffs to the north. Similarly, 2360 flew north at Filey in 1.5 hours on 27th April and 874 at Spurn on 22nd May. Few inland reports, including 3 at Wheldrake Ings on 5th March with singles there on 14th and 19th and 3 again on 18th, with one at TLNR on 20th April. Surprisingly, no records were received for the River Humber though they undoubtedly occurred.

VC 62 Breeding counts were as follows: Hunt Cliff near Saltburn - 4150 to 4400 pairs; Boulby Cliffs - 2850 to 3100 pairs; Scarborough Castle Headland - 1826 pairs.

VC 63 A moderate to poor year with 30 records in total, from 14 sites, 9 of these being in March. Peak counts were 4 west at Blacktoft Sands on 14th May and 4 on 4th June and 5 on 15th October at Thybergh CP.

VC 64 A total of 7 bird-days at Fairburn Ings during the year. An adult at Farnham GP on 18th February and another on 5th May with one at Gouthwaite Res on 10th. Autumn records are less usual, and involved singles at Farnham GP on 15th October and 23rd November and an immature at Staveley NR on 24th October.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Common passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor

VC 61 The first birds arrived at both Flamborough and Filey on 21st March, with maximum spring counts of 64 at Flamborough in May and 50 at Spurn in June. Numbers increased in July when 430 were at Flamborough on 27th, but the largest counts came in August when feeding birds tend to linger before autumn migration; 701 were at Flamborough on 5th, 300 roosted on Filey Brigg on 11th and 357 flew south there on 12th, up to 500 were seen regularly at Spurn with 1000 on 23rd, while 1384 flew north at Barmston on that date and 705 were at Flamborough. A colour-ringed first-winter picked up dead at Filey on 26th August, bore a Dutch ring. Late records included one at Bridlington on 17th November and December individuals on the beach at Filey on 7th and first-winters at Flamborough on 7th and 10th. Inland, one flew north at Wheldrake Ings on 25th April and 2 flew south over the "O" reservoir at TLNR on 25th August.

VC 62 Started to appear in late March continuing as a light spring passage through to June. Higher numbers from late July with 800 at Bran Sands on 30th the highest count. A late bird was at Scarborough on 2nd December.

VC 63 RVCP was the local "hot-spot", beginning with 2 on 25th April, then singles on 16th, 17th and 18th May, and 4th August. April records from Pugney's CP included 2 flying north-east on 17th and one on 24th. At Winterset Res one flew west on 13th May, at Broomhill Ings, one flew east on 18th May, whilst Blackmoorfoot Res reported 2 west on 18th June. The remaining records were; one at Broadstones Res on 6th July, 2 at Blacktoft Sands on 11th August and 2 flying east at Southfield Res on 19th September.

VC 64 One was at Astley Lake on 14th April. 2 at Farnham GP and one at Fairburn Ings on 22nd April with 3 on unspecified dates at Fairburn Ings during September.

ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii*

Scarce coastal migrant, most frequent in early autumn

VC 61 An exceptional year for this species, with virtually all records referring to adults. The season began with a single at BPNR on 17th June. Most records came in July and August. July birds were seen at Barmston on 3rd, singles flew north at Flamborough on 11th and 21st (and a rather early juvenile reported there on 28th), 2 flew north at Hornsea on 17th, singles were at BPNR on 19th, 20th and 29th, a colour-ringed adult roosted on Filey Brigg on 22nd and 2 adults flew south at Spurn on 26th. In August 3 adults were at Filey Brigg on 3rd, with one on 10th, 22nd and 24th, though 2 were present on 25th, both of which were colour-ringed, and one seen subsequently on 28th. An adult flew south at Spurn on 23rd and a juvenile likewise on 25th, and an adult flew south at Grimston on 31st. In September adults flew south at Spurn on 10th and 13th September.

VC 62 A pair laid 2 eggs at a site in Cleveland hut unfortunately the birds were flooded out. These birds were probably responsible for occasional sightings of singles from the south Tees shore during June. Elsewhere, singles at Scarborough on 27th July and 3rd August.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Common passage migrant and summer visitor; breeds in small numbers

VC 61 The first was one at Thornton Ellers on 8th April, then recorded regularly until the last at Spurn on 25th October. Spring counts peaked on 3rd May when 93 flew east out of the Humber estuary at Spurn and 50 passed north at Flamborough. Present at Filey from July to late September, with juveniles from 11th July. Numbers built throughout August; 367 north at Barmston on 12th, 628 at Flamborough on 25th, 204 south at Filey on 28th with a further 200 loafing around the Brigg. At Spurn, 200 regularly gathered on the Humber in August with a peak of 830 on 29th. The main southerly passage occurred between 3rd and 8th September, involving 548 south at Barmston and 1840 south at Spurn on 4th and 339 at Flamborough on 5th. Inland, there were no breeding records, and little notable passage, except for 26 on the "D" reservoir at TLNR on the 26th April, and 5 adults and an immature flying north at PHENR on 29th August.

VC 62 First of the spring was a single at Wykeham Lakes on 17th April. The colony at the BSC Ore Terminal, Redcar held 227 pairs. Highest numbers away from here were 100 at Scarborough on 16th August.

VC 63 The first arrivals were 2 quite early birds at Pugney's CP on 10th April, followed by one at RVCP on 15th April and 7 at Southfield Res on 17th April. Birds were recorded at just over 40 waters in the April to September period including breeding birds at Pugney's CP, where 4 pairs reared 7 young, Worsbrough Res, 3 pairs and 7 young, Broomhill Ings, one pair and 3 young and at Catcliffe Flash, where one pair hatched 3 young but all died although one was reared from a replacement hood. Site maxima were as follows: Pontefraet Park 10 on 11th May, Broomhill Ings 20 on 18th May, Potteric Carr 15 on 18th May and Blacktoft Sands 10 on 3rd August. Southfield Res attracted birds virtually daily May through to September, peaking at 7 on the 19th May, 14 on 8th July, 12 on 3rd August and 12 again on the 1st September. Late singles were recorded at RVCP on 25th September, at Blackmoorfoot Res on 4th October and at Thrybergh CP, where one flew west on 9th October.

VC 64 Six pairs bred at Fairburn Ings raising 8 young. One pair bred at Farnham GP but unfortunately all 3 young were found dead in July. At Astley Lake, breeding by one pair was attempted, then abandoned when the islet became flooded in July, whilst at Skelton Lake, there were 7 or 8 successful broods mostly of 3 young.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea***Common passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor**

VC 61 On the coast, one at Spurn on 10th April was the earliest ever for the Observatory. The largest counts in April came on 26th when 11 flew north at Filey and 60 were reported flying out of the Humber estuary at Spurn. The first to be seen at Flamborough was not until the 3rd May, with small numbers thereafter in May and June, and peak counts of 113 on 19th and 110 on 27th July. Numbers in July at Filey were larger than normal, notably the 45 seen flying north there on 27th. In September 40 adults were at Kilnsea on 2nd, whilst in October, 34 were at Flamborough following strong northerlies on 2nd October. For the third year in succession inland spring passage was poor, with 10 at LDNNR on 25th April and 11 on 4th May, one at TLNR on 27th April and 4 there on 16th May. The last was at Spurn on 12th October.

VC 62 The first was at South Gare on 26th April and the last, also there, on 11th November.

VC 63 The species was noted at 13 waters. The first arrivals were 2 at Pugney's CP and one at Denaby Ings on 15th April, followed by 9 at RVCP on 25th, and an impressive 36 at Southfield Res on 26th April (same day that large numbers were counted flying out of the Humber estuary at Spurn). Nine flew north at Edderthorpe Flash on 18th May. Late birds were at Blackmoorfoot Res on 21st September and at Broomhill Ings on 29th September.

VC 64 Spring passage at Fairburn Ings peaked at 26 in April and 4 in May. Autumn records comprised singles at Farnham GP on 1st August and Gouthwaite Res on 9th October.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons***Passage migrant and localised summer breeder**

VC 61 Although 42 pairs nested at BPNR, atrocious weather between 25th and 27th June accounted for the loss of 10 clutches and 30 chicks, which together with predation by Kestrel and Merlin, resulted in only 2 chicks eventually fledging. This was the worst result since 1991, (see *Spurn Wildlife no. 7* for fuller details). Remains scarce elsewhere on the coast, with 2 at Filey on 18th May, 2 south at Filey on 13th July and 2 at Flamborough on 15th, and one at Flamborough on 4th August. Inland, an adult flew quickly south at PHENR on 8th June, a new reserve record.

VC 62 At Coatham Sands, 16 birds displayed but unfortunately then moved to a site on the north of the river leaving only 2 pairs, both of which failed. Away from Teesside only 3 records, all singles; at Sealby Mills on 27th April, Sealing Dam on 3rd May and Staithes Nab on 13th July.

VC 63 One bird was at Winterset Res on 25th April then singles at Potterie Carr on both 27th April and 18th May. Blacktoft Sands recorded 2 on 3rd May, one on 4th May and 2 on 7th July. Further singles were noted at Southfield Res from 19th to 22nd May, RVCP on 23rd May, Broomhill Ings on 21st June and Elland GP on 18th July.

VC 64 Two at Fairburn Ings on unspecified dates in May and 2 birds at Skelton Lake on 17th May.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger***Passage migrant in varying numbers**

VC 61 Four at Wheldrake Ings on 25th April were the first. Another party of 4 at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd May became the forerunner of a notable passage through the south of the county, mostly confined to the Humber "corridor". At Spurn, groups totalling 222 birds flew east out of the Humber estuary during the morning of 3rd May, establishing a new day record for the Observatory. More were seen elsewhere that day; 22 at Hornsea Mere, 16 at Wheldrake Ings, 9 at both TLNR and Filey, 7 at PHENR and 6 at Flamborough, with one at BPNR. A further 6 were at TLNR on 18th and 4 were present at PHENR on 1st June. Numbers in autumn were also higher than in recent years, starting with single birds at Spurn on both 15th and 30th July. Between 1 and 6 were then seen regularly along the coast, particularly so in August, when peak counts were made on the 27th, these including 18 at Spurn and 11 at BPNR and during this same period, up to 9 lingered around Filey Brigg between 14th August and 9th September. September got off to a good start with 30 at Barmston on 1st, and peaks at Spurn of 21 on 3rd, 17 on 4th and then between 9 and 14 daily from the 5th to the 8th. TLNR logged 3 juveniles on 2nd September and subsequent singles on 4th, 12th and 22nd, with 2 at Hornsea Mere on 19th and the last at Barmston on 29th.

VC 62 In the spring just 2 recorded, one at Sealing Dam on 28th April and the other at Wykeham Lakes on 12th June. In autumn, one at Sealing Dam 19th August, 6 flew north past Whitestone Point on the 10th September and finally a single flying south at Long Nab on 20th September.

VC 63 An early bird was at RVCP on 15th April prior to the influx in early May which began on the 2nd when 9 appeared at both Wintersett Res and Potterie Carr. Next day, the 3rd, more were reported from 10 localities including 12 at Elsecar Res, 11 at Southfield Res and 9 at Potterie Carr. Presumably many of these birds moved along the Humber and out to sea at Spurn (see above). On the 4th May, there were 3 at Thrybergh CP and just singles at 4 other waters. Further passage later in the month was confined to 1 or 2 at 9 waters. In June, Southfield Res recorded 5 and Pugney's CP 3 on the 1st and Blacktoft Sands 4 on the 11th, the last of an eventful spring. In August there were 7 at Blaekmoorfoot Res on the 7th, before larger counts on the 22nd brought 20 juveniles to Southfield Res and one adult and 18 juveniles to Broomhill Ings. Even larger counts were made a few days later on 27th, when there were 30 at Wintersett Res and 20 adults at Southfield Res. Blaektoft Sands noted 15 flying west on 1st September, then 7 other waters had occurrences of between 1 to 3 birds during the month, until the last at Methley GP on the 28th.

VC 64 One in April at Fairburn Ings heralded a good spring passage in May, with 39 at this site, 11 at Bar Lane Quarry, 5 at Studley Lake and one to 2 at a further 3 sites on the 3rd and 4th May. At Skelton Lake there were 5 in the morning of 3rd, that increased to 23 by mid-afternoon and there was also one at Yeadon Tarn. One was at Farnham GP on 17th May. Return passage involved 9 at Fairburn Ings in August, one in September, and singles at Hay-a-Park GP on 5th October and Bar Lane Quarry on 8th.

VC 65 Two were at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 26th April and 2 at Nosterfield NR on 18th May.

WHITE-WINGED (BLACK) TERN *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Rare vagrant

VC 61 A juvenile lingered at Hornsea Merc from 18th to 27th August (TEG *et al*).

COMMON GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Abundant breeder and passage migrant, less common in winter

VC 61 Bred from Flamborough northwards. No counts received from Bempton this year. An almost "albino" bird that landed on Filey Brigg on 19th June was a great surprise to those who witnessed it. A most unusual find was a winter-plumaged bird on the River Derwent between Bank Island and Wheldrake on 23rd October, a rare bird inland. Highest day counts at Flamborough were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1930	15500	21775	20300	nc	18600	30675	50	148	4500	7100	nc

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*

Common breeder and passage migrant, less common in winter

VC 61 Bred from Flamborough northwards. No breeding counts received from Bempton. Returned much earlier than usual, with 18925 at Flamborough on 21st March. Highest day counts at Flamborough were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
111	4800	18925	15400	nc	1900	6675	25	36	645	11	4

VC 62 Breeding activity noted from Boulby Cliffs, Hunt Cliff and possibly Ness Point, Whitby.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Passage migrant and winter visitor, in greatly varying numbers

VC 61 An early bird passed Spurn on 9th September, but the main movement was in October when, after the 12th, 305 were recorded at Flamborough and 84 at Spurn. The only significant day was the 24th, when 182 passed Flamborough and 25 passed Spurn. In November, small numbers only, peaking

at 21 at Barmston on 4th and 13 at Spurn on 30th. Similarly in December; one at Flamborough on 4th, 3 on 13th and 5 on 18th, on which date a surprising 134 flew south at Filey into strong south-easterly winds.

VC 62 One found dead at Rcdcar on 8th February was the sole record from the first 4 months. Two unusual summer records this year. The first flew overland and alighted on a slag heap at South Gare on 17th May, but was unfortunately found dead three days later. The second flew south at Scarborough on 18th July with Guillemot. Single figure counts only in October/November from the coastal watchpoints.

VC 65 One seen on Bellflask Quarry lake for 45 minutes on 30th October (BM).

ATLANTIC PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*

Common breeder and passage migrant, uncommon in winter

VC 61 Bred from Flamborough northwards, with an early arrival of 1550 at Flamborough on 27th February. Ledges were occupied from early March, and breeding thought not to have been affected by the June storms. No reports received from Bempton. Often the commonest auk at Filey in summer with three figure counts not unusual, but further south at Spurn much less common with a peak count of only 34 on 18th July. Up to 3000 were recorded daily during the summer at Flamborough, with numbers building in late July to maxima of 15710 on 18th and 12720 on 21st. Impressive though these figures are, numbers were still about 50% down on normal. Only single birds in January and February and scattered records of up to 3 in November/December.

ROCK PIGEON (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia/feral*

Common resident

VC 61 Present throughout the year on the cliffs from Flamborough north, often in large flocks in adjacent cliff-top fields. Inland, regularly encountered in the Hull Valley, particularly so at TLNR where a peak count of 200 was made on 19th January and also around Hull itself, where up to 700 were at Saltend on 3rd December.

VC 63 There was little interest in recording this species, although 330 were noted in Huddersfield town centre in January and 200 at Thrybergh CP on 24th February.

STOCK PIGEON *Columba oenas*

Fairly common resident; some passage and immigration

VC 61 Appears to be increasing as evidenced by the 80+ pairs estimated to be present at LDNNR. A flock of 52 was present at PHENR on 1st January and one, also of 52, was at Grimston on 1st March.

Recorded in all months at TLNR except December, peaking at 40 in February but by early April most sightings were of pairs, with 2 nest boxes occupied by 18th. Pairs were noted from many sites in the county including the suburbs of Hull, and owl boxes seem to be offering an alternative breeding site in the absence of old trees. Light southerly passage was noted at Spurn in March, with a peak of 12 on 2nd, and the largest reported autumn flock was 80 at Cranswick in November.

VC 63 Bred throughout the area, including in farm buildings on the moorland fringes at up to 1200 feet above sea level. Flocks of 50+ were reported from Birley Edge (Sheffield), Norland (Halifax), Hatfield Moor, Southfield Res and Treeton in the first three months of the year. Larger flocks included 150 at Shortwood, Barnsley, 100 at Edderthorpe Flash and 100 at Broomhill Ings all these on 1st February and 180 at Treeton Dyke on 25th February. Later in the year, 160 were at Broomhill Ings on 7th December and lesser flocks of 50+ were noted at Malpass Hill, Old Denaby and Thrybergh CP. A count of 400 flying south at Queensbury on 28th October was most unusual.

VC 64 No large counts, though 80 were in the Gouthwaite Res area in January, October and November. 50 were logged at High Batts NR in February and at Staveley NR in August. Recorded in all months at Fairburn Ings with a maximum of 60 in May.

COMMON WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Abundant resident and passage migrant/winter visitor

VC 61 Winter counts at TLNR included 1200 on 10th January, 2300 on 3rd and 3000 on 22nd February, with 400+ at Filey Dams on 9th February and 850 at Danes Dyke on 4th March. Numbers

then fell, although coastal passage was noted in March through to early June. A minimum of 62 pairs was recorded in the TLNR breeding survey of 8th June. 152 flew south at Spurn on 22nd November and in the second winter period, 1265 congregated at PHENR on 7th December and 450 at Driffild Riverhead on 12th.

VC 63 In the early months there were flocks of 2000 to 3000 at Barnsdale Bar, Bretton Park, Brierley Common, Cridling Stubbs, Edderthorpe Flash, Ewden Valley, Firsby Res, Howell Wood, and Netherwood. Larger counts of 5000 were made at Wilsic throughout January, at Thrybergh CP from 6th to 9th January and at Thorpe Marsh on 21st January. Sustained effort during the autumn migration over Rod Moor produced a total of 72700 birds moving south, with peaks of 16800 on 7th November and 10000 on 30th October (KC). Smaller passage numbers included 2600 south over Redmires on 24th October. Seven localities had counts of between 1000 and 1700 in November and December. Roosting numbers included 2500 at Cowick on 21st November, 3000 at Woodsome, Huddersfield, in December and 4000 at Cridling Stubbs on 2nd December.

VC 64 1800 gathered at Staveley NR on 12th January and 2000 at Bishop Monkton Ings on 2nd February. Up to 2000 roosted at Swillington Park during February.

EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*
Common resident, still extending range slowly in north-west

VC 61 Not an uncommon bird in urban areas but also around farms and docks where grain is spilled. Winter flocking often noted with c.100 near Watton on 13th November, 96 at High Eske Farm on 19th and c.45 regularly around Stamps Ponds in December.

VC 63 Breeding was widespread but, as with other pigeons, there is little precise information. Flocks/roosts of 50 to 60 were reported from both Broomhill Ings and Edderthorpe Flash in January and September; Lockwood, Huddersfield in January, Mexborough SW in October, Tyrham Hall in November and at Dinnington in December. Pugney's CP held 93 on 28th September, Swaith, Barnsley, 91 on 1st September, Handsworth, Sheffield 76 on 3rd October, Sunnyside Fields, Sheffield, 74 on 1st October though the Idle Valley with 130 on 14th December reported the most.

VC 64 The second winter period produced most; 60 at Markington in October, 100 at Cropper Farm, Spofforth in November and 50 at Quarry Moor, Ripon in December.

EUROPEAN TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*
Summer breeding visitor; numbers have decreased markedly in recent years

VC 61 The first was one in the Derwent valley at Thorganby on 20th April, though most arrivals came nearer the month end. Once again the LDNNR appears to be a stronghold for this declining species; a total of 29 "purring" males were recorded there, though still down from the 39 singing birds of last year. Additional breeding records include possibly 4 pairs at TLNR, 2 pairs at Stamps and one at Watton NR and perhaps 2 pairs near PHENR. Potential breeding records are indicated by a bird at Bransholme SF on 2nd June and a group of 5 on 24th August near Catfoss. Passage along the coast was light, with the first bird at Filey on 4th May and the first at Spurn on 9th May, then 1 to 8 daily from 11th May to 9th June with maxima of 3 at Filey and 10 at Spurn on 26th May. Flamborough reported the worst year on record, with just 13 birds, all in spring (compared to 203 in 1987). Particularly scarce in autumn, just 1 or 2 birds at Spurn on 2 days in July, one on 29th August and the last bird on 7th September. The last was one at Grimston on 22nd September.

VC 62 First of the spring at South Gare on 14th May and last at Burniston on 5th September. Recorded from several sites within Wykeham /Dalby Forests with calling heard but breeding not proved.

VC 63 Early arrivals, all in April, were at Thorpe Marsh on the 22nd and Thorpe Salvin on 25th, Poteric Carr, Edderthorpe Flash and Broomhill Ings, all on 27th. Breeding estimates as follows; Blacktoft Sands, 4 pairs, Doncaster area, 36 pairs (8 birds on Thorne Moors 18th May), Barnsley area, 8 pairs. In the Rotherham and Sheffield area, a few birds were present but breeding was not proved. The species was virtually absent from the west of the VC; there was just one record from the Halifax area and none from the Huddersfield area, this confirming the recent worrying trend. In the Pontefract area, 2 birds were present at Womersley on 14th May and 3rd September. The last record was one at Broomhill Ings on 20th September.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, one near Bingley on 5th August was the first area record since 1994. Breeding was considered likely, but not confirmed, in the Swillington area as 3 males were noted on territory between 11th May and 17th September in the Woodlesford/Fishpond Lock area. Passage birds at Fairburn Ings comprised 2 in May and 4 in June. Recorded at 7 sites in the Harrogate area with 4 at Staveley NR in late May.

VC 65 Present at Nosterfield NR, East Tanfield and the military areas near Catterick but absent from a number of other traditional sites.

COMMON CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 A good year in inland areas, but declines noted at the coast. The first was reported from Thorganby on 19th April, then from Spurn on 23rd and 24th. Seemingly bred with good success at LDNNR where 45 young were counted in early June and 30+ in July. Further juveniles were seen at Burshill Ponds, at Filey, at TLNR and at Billabong in August. A single at PHENR on 10th September was both the latest ever for that location and the latest of the year in the VC. A "hepatic" phase female was at Filey from 12th to 30th June.

VC 62 The first was at Scaling Dam on 20th April and the last a juvenile at South Gare on 29th August.

VC 63 Early singles, all in April, were recorded at Carlton Marsh and Cudworth, (probably the same bird) on the 11th, at Hardwick on the 13th and at Winterset Res on the 15th, with widespread reports by the month end. High counts included up to 8 on Thorne Moors throughout May, 7 each at Little Don Valley in May and Thorpe Marsh in June and 5 at Carlton Marsh on 17th June. Sightings of juveniles were recorded in most society areas. Late records came from Southfield Res on 17th September and from Pugney's CP on 27th September.

VC 64 Four host nests were noted at Fairburn Ings and 3 pairs bred at Rombald's Moor. After the first at Hay-a-Park GP on 14th April, noted as widespread in small numbers in the Harrogate area, with a maximum of 5 at Staveley NR. In the Bradford area birds were logged at 40 localities, with the last juvenile seen on 26th August.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Resident, more widespread in the south-east; very rare in north-west

VC 61 Intensive fieldwork on the LDNNR revealed 46 pairs on or adjacent to the site, surely making this area a stronghold for the species in the whole country, let alone the county. However, breeding success may have been limited, since the expected number of sightings of juveniles failed to materialise. Breeding records elsewhere, (mostly from owl boxes erected in the area) included: 2 pairs near Filey, 3 pairs at Foston, one pair just north of Pulfin (raised two broods) and one pair at Watton NR. Hunting birds were recorded at Beeford, Brandesburton, Filey, Flamborough, Gristhorpe, Hedon bypass, Hutton Cranswick, Leonfield, PHENR, Stamps Pond and TLNR.

VC 62 Breeding reported at 3 localities, with further birds recorded in summer from several other sites.

VC 63 None were reported from the Huddersfield and Halifax areas. In the Doncaster area, noted from 11 localities, from 7 in the Rotherham area, and from just one in the Sheffield area. In the Barnsley area 2 pairs bred with 3 young fledged, though birds were seen at an additional 9 sites. Up to 3 were frequently seen at Blacktoft Sands but no reference to any breeding was forthcoming.

VC 64 A welcome increase was reported in the Harrogate area, but on the downside, unfortunately 7 in total were found dead along the A1 and A1 (M) during the months of May and from September to the year-end. Reported from six sites with breeding confirmed at Great Ouseburn (two fledged) and Staveley NR where 2 pairs each fledged two young from nest boxes.

VC 65 Only two reports received, at Skeaby on 7th September and at Little Langton on 24th September.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Introduced resident, scarce in the east but fairly common in parts of south and west

VC 61 Widely distributed in the VC as the following records show. 21 pairs were estimated in the vicinity of the LDNNR, two pairs were around Lockington in March and single pairs present between Cherry Burton and Eton, at Watton NR, and around Meaux Abbey. A successful pair was seen feeding

young near Airmyn in June, and one was seen with a juvenile near Aldbrough in July. In addition, regular sightings came from near Filey, the Cowlam Valley, Kilnwick, Hutton Cranswick, Bracken and Kelk Beck.

VC 62 Birds were recorded during the summer season at 13 sites with several proven or presumed breeding pairs.

VC 63 Thought to be under-recorded, with the following estimates of breeding pairs (after taking into account any overlapping boundaries): Barnsley area 25 pairs; Huddersfield 8 pairs; Halifax 10 pairs; Doncaster 20 pairs; Rotherham 5 pairs; Sheffield 5 pairs.

VC 64 Common and widespread in the Harrogate area being recorded from 32 sites. In the Bradford area, there were probably at least 15 pairs. Recorded in all months at Fairburn Ings but most records concerned the same bird, although 2 were present from May to July.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Widespread resident

VC 61 There were no significant records from the VC where it remains a common bird in suitable urban and rural habitat. At least 29 pairs located at LDNNR and 2 pairs bred at TLNR.

VC 63 This is another species that is under recorded with regard to actual proof of breeding. The various societies notified the following number of pairs or potential pairs: in the Barnsley area, at least 47 pairs were present, 40 of which were in woodlands to the west of the A629, whilst only 9 were found in the Sheffield area. The Rotherham area fared rather better, birds were noted from at least 18 sites and similarly in the Doncaster area with 15+ sites including 6 pairs breeding at Wilsic. The species appears to be slightly less common towards the western fringes of the VC, birds being located at just 6 sites in the Halifax area and at 5 in the Huddersfield area.

VC 64 Very common in the Harrogate region where recorded from over 30 sites. Bred at 2 locations in the Swillington area and in the Bradford area, proof of breeding came from at least 10 sites.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Scarce resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Little evidence of breeding. Calling birds near Wheldrake Ings were heard on several dates in May and June. At Spurn, a recently fledged bird was trapped at the Warren on 16th July. Locations reporting sightings of singles in the early months were Thornton Ellers, Danes Dyke, Wheldrake Ings, TLNR, Newton Mask and Seavy Carr. Coastal migrants in spring were seen at Filey on 7th and 18th May and at Flamborough on 26th. A very poor autumn, with singles in October at Filey on 21st and 24th; at Flamborough on 27th, 29th and 31st; at Spurn on 15th, 23rd, 24th and 30th, and 4th November; at Sammy's Point, Easington on 2nd November, and finally one at TLNR on 11th. Only two birds were recorded from the Cowlam roost in November.

VC 62 A poor year with no evidence of breeding being received. Only 2 singles reported from Scarborough.

VC 63 Probably more common than the records suggest. Successful pairs bred in the Huddersfield area (2 young); in the Halifax area (one young and hunger calls heard at a second site); in the Sheffield area, (2 pairs bred, one of which successfully reared 2 young with young heard calling at a third site); in the Barnsley area, (7 pairs bred at 5 sites rearing 8 young); in the Doncaster area, (at least 4 pairs bred at 3 sites). Additionally, one pair bred in SK 58 area and one pair bred in the Rotherham/Sheffield overlap zone, but the outcome of these is unknown. A good number of birds were noted outside the breeding season and several roosts were located. The highest count reported was of 9 at Thorpe Marsh early in the year.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, 3 pairs reared 5 young but there was only one record outside the breeding season. A roost of approximately 20 was found at an undisclosed site in the Harrogate area during the 1996/1997 winter.

VC 65 Breeding reported at one site but undoubtedly under-recorded.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce resident in moorland areas; passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 No confirmed breeding, although one was inland at North Duffield Carr on 16th May. Just one sighting in January, at Seavy Carr on 4th, though this bird was seen again there on 18th March and one was at Wheldrake Ings on 25th March. Fairly regular at Spurn, though only one or 2 from 29th March to 6th April and one on 4th May. Flamborough reported singles on 5th April, 22nd May and 18th June whilst one was at Filey on 1st May. Marginally more frequent during the autumn, beginning in August, when Flamborough had 2 on 22nd, one on 23rd, 2 on 25th and one on 30th, with singles on 20th and 29th October. At Spurn, a single bird was present from 25th to 30th August and one to 2 almost daily from 14th September to 29th October with a maximum of 3 on 22nd September. Additional single birds were also at Spurn on 18th November and 14th December. In the Derwent Valley, one was at East Cottingwith on 14th September and 2 at North Duffield Carrs on 14th November. Along the Humber, the only sighting was of one at Cherry Cobb on 14th October, but there were 15 sightings in the Easington area between 27th April and 31st December. At TLNR there was one on the 25th February and another reported on 30th November. All in all, a fairly poor year for this species.

VC 62 Birds were present on the moors during the summer but no evidence of breeding. Singles were seen along the coast during spring and autumn but only occasionally.

VC 63 Birds were present at 6 sites in Upper Derwentdale along the Derbyshire and Yorkshire border, but they were not fully monitored and breeding was proved at only one of these. In the Halifax area pairs occupied 9 moorland sites and breeding was proved at 3 of these, including a pair with 4 young at Leeshaw Res. Records outside the breeding season and in the lowlands were relatively few.

VC 64 Swillington Ings attracted between 2 and 3 birds up until 14th January. In the Bradford area, there was some evidence of breeding at 2 moorland sites, with six birds reported from high ground near Harrogate, one of which near Great Ouseburn stayed in possible breeding habitat from May until July. Autumn and winter records came from 4 sites with 3 at Marton-le-Moor being the maximum.

EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 Scarce coastal sightings included one found sheltering amongst rocks at the end of Filey Brigg on 21st May, and another was at Filey Dams on 28th. Inland, one was at Brandsby Heights near York on 24th and one was at Wheldrake Ings on 31st May. Once again "churring" birds were noted on Skipwith Common but no more details received.

VC 62 Present in good numbers in the forests of the North Yorkshire Moors.

VC 63 The peat moors to the east of Doncaster remain the county stronghold for this species. Casual surveys on Hatfield Moor revealed between 32 and 41 "churring" males and the annual count on Thorne Moors suggested 32 males holding territory. Three pairs were again in Bawtry Forest. Birds were present at these Doncaster sites between 15th May and 14th September. In the Barnsley and Sheffield areas, 4 sites covered by these societies are in their overlap zones and because full details are withheld from their reports, it can only be concluded that at least 8 "churring" males were located between 20th May and 28th July.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, one bird was heard on 29th May and again on 1st June.

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

Comments suggest a decrease in numbers of breeding pairs perhaps associated with reduced availability of nest sites. Nevertheless, there were some high counts over inland waters and reservoirs.

VC 61 One at TLNR on 27th April was the first with a small influx of 22 at TLNR and 30 at PHENR on 3rd May associated with south-easterly winds. Peak spring counts at TLNR were 3800 on 19th May, 4000 on 1st June and 5000 low over the site in cold, showery conditions on 20th June. Spring passage at Spurn included 850 on 13th and 850 on 19th June, in which month 2550 were at Flamborough on 12th. The main movement at Spurn occurred in July with counts of 1900 on 3rd, 2000 on 13th, 6400 on 16th and 4500 on 31st. In August, 3200 were at Flamborough on 16th, 1500 at Spurn on both 21st and 23rd. Passage in September included 50 south at Thornwick Bay on 3rd, 700 at Flamborough on 5th and 500 south at Filey on 16th. October birds were typically scarce until the last one at Flamborough on 11th.

VC 62 The first and the last for the year were both at Scarborough, on 1st May and 1st October.

VC 63 Early arrivals were singles at Potteric Carr on 20th April, Edderthorpe Flash on 22nd and Denaby Ings on 24th. Highest counts came late in May including 1000 at Winterset Res on the 12th, 500 at Thorne Moor on the 17th and 1000 at Thorpe Marsh on the 22nd. Broomhill Ings reported similar high counts of 1000 on 31st July and again on the 9th September. The last records, all in September, were at Woodthorpe on the 25th, Broomhill Ings on 26th and at Lundwood on the 27th.

VC 64 The Bradford area hosted the first bird, at Dowley Gap on 26th April, and the last, at Hewenden on 22nd September. After the first, numbers soon improved during May when 1000 were at Astley Lake on 23rd, and up to 2000 were regularly at Fairburn Ings. Feeding flocks of several hundreds were commonplace in June, peaking at 1000 over Marley SF on 29th. Fewer large flocks noted thereafter, though 400 were feeding at Skelton-on-Ure on 7th July. Aberrant birds were seen at Astley Lake; one on the 15th May, showed a white belly patch and one on the 16th May, a white tail.

VC 65 First recorded at Stapleton on 22nd April.

ALPINE SWIFT *Apus melba*
Rare vagrant, usually in spring

VC 61 One over Hornsea Mere on the evening of 4th May (NC: PJP: DP *et al*).

VC 63 One feeding over the western end of Bretton Park between 0820 and 0910 hours on 28th April (NWA: GT).

COMMON KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*
Resident; numbers vary with severity of winters

VC 61 Another good year at the LDNNR for this declining British species. A record total of 17 pairs were located, the majority along the watercourses of the River Derwent, the Beck and the Pocklington Canal, and success was reasonably high producing a peak count of 30 at Wheldrake Ings on the 28th June. In addition, 2 pairs bred at TLNR, with reports from half a dozen other sites in the Hull Valley including ponds at Foston Mill, where up to 14 were recorded in August including several juveniles. The recent mild winters seem to be favouring this gem.

VC 62 Widely reported, mostly singly and not more than 2 at any one site.

VC 63 In the Huddersfield area, 2 pairs were at Bretton Park and birds were present at a further 5 potential breeding sites. In the Halifax area, 2 birds bred along the River Calder and breeding was suspected near Ryburn Res. The Barnsley area reported at least 11 pairs and at least 8 in the Doncaster area. Despite being widely reported in the Rotherham and Sheffield areas, there was rather surprisingly, no proof of breeding.

VC 64 Up to 4 were recorded in every month at Fairburn Ings except for 5 in July. One pair frequented the Swillington area and at least 4 pairs were located in the Bradford area. No apparent change of status in the Harrogate area.

EUROPEAN BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster*
Scarce vagrant from southern Europe, annual in recent years

An exceptional year for this species, with what appears to have been 2 large flocks present in the county in late August.

VC 61 One flew south over Beacon Hill, Flamborough on 26th May (the late DB) with no doubt the same bird doing likewise at Spurn the next day (SR: PJA: DRM *et al*). On the 29th, one discovered over Kilnsea subsequently flew south at Spurn (BRS: DRM: MJP: MFS), with further singles at Hornsea Mere on 14th June and south at Spurn on both 5th July (BRS: MJP: AAH) and 20th July (BRS: AG). A record breaking run in August began with singles at Thornton Ellers in the LDNNR (CSR) and at Flamborough (PAL), both on 8th August. These preceded a flock of 9 at TLNR on 16th (FXM *et al*), which was re-found at Grimston on the 17th, when amazingly, they had been joined by a 10th bird (AL: TI). Four flew south over Beacon Lane, Kilnsea on 18th but "U-turned" over the Warren at Spurn and were no doubt the 4 back near Watton NR on the 20th (RC *et al*), which left to the east after just 15 minutes.

VC 62 One at South Gare on 7th August (PAAB), was followed by a flock of 12 which spent an hour on overhead wires at Settrington, Malton on 20th August (GA: CA: JHa).

VC 63 One on 12th June at Crane Moor east of Penistone (per JHe).

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Rare vagrant from the Continent, annual in recent years

VC 61 A bird was flushed at Sammy's Point, Easington on 1st May, a typical date for Yorkshire.

EURASIAN WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Scarce coastal passage migrant; rare inland

VC 61 A poor year with all records during the autumn. The first appeared at Spurn on 22nd August, remaining until the 25th, both date and location being no great surprise. The next frequented Flamborough North Landing from 23rd to 25th, then others along Beacon Lane Kilnsea on 29th and 30th, at Bcmpton from 30th August to 2nd September, at Flamborough on 6th September, at Spurn near the lighthouse on 20th, at Bampton again on 29th to 30th, and finally at Flamborough on 15th October.

VC 62 Just 2 this year, one at South Gare on 27th August (EGC) and a late bird at Sandsend on 23rd October (MRKA: TJB: WIB).

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Resident; slight range extension eastwards in recent years

VC 61 Rarely wanders east of the Wolds, but one was at Flamborough on 5th May and a juvenile was found on the cliffs at Filey on 5th September. TLNR attracted one in June and nearby one remained on or near PHENR from March to September. Regularly seen at Wheldrake Ings and Thornton Ellers in the LDNNR, whilst more unusually, was one reported from the Hessle foreshore on 5th January.

VC 63 Society totals for the number of breeding pairs or regularly occupied sites were as follows: Barnsley, 21; Doncaster, 20; Rotherham, 10; Huddersfield, 8; Halifax, 3. No specific numbers came from the Sheffield area, but breeding was noted at 3 "new sites".

VC 64 Present at 10 sites in the Bradford area and at 21 in the Harrogate area. Recorded in all months at Fairburn Ings peaking at 8 in July and 2 pairs probably bred at Swillington Ings.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Resident; small numbers of migrants from the Continent in most years

VC 61 Under-recorded. At least 7 pairs bred in the LDNNR, single pairs at PHENR and TLNR and a pair was presumed to have bred in Primrose Valley. Sightings were made throughout the year in the Hull Valley. Migrants, not necessarily *D. m. major*, were noted at Spurn on 15th August and 24th October, whilst 2 showing characters of the Continental race *D. m. major* were noted at Flamborough, on 1st February and again between the 25th and 27th October.

VC 62 Migrants came "in-off" the sea at Whitby on 16th October and at Hawsker on 2nd November.

VC 63 Present in most major areas of woodland, though the number of records submitted does not often indicate this. Estimates from the society reports suggest that birds bred or were present at about 20 locations in the Huddersfield area, at 29 in the Barnsley area and at 20 places in the Doncaster area.

VC 64 Good numbers in all suitable woodlands in the Bradford and Harrogate areas. At Swillington Ings at least 3 pairs bred. One was feeding on a Red Hot Poker (*Kniphofia sp.*) plant at Darley on 8th June. (See *British Birds* vol. 85 p.41 for similar behaviour).

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Scarce resident, absent from the east

VC 61 Birds were present in the LDNNR from mid-March, but the total number of pairs is not known with certainty. Most sightings of this inconspicuous species were made from the car park lane and riverside willows at Wheldrake Ings. Further east, one at Hornsea Mere on 6th April and a female was reported from Hotham on 2nd August.

VC 62 The only record was of one along Rievaulx Terrace, Helmsley on 15th August.

VC 63 Remains an elusive quarry, particularly in the western reaches of the VC. Halifax reported 7 individual records, all in the Elland/Brighouse area. Birds were recorded from only 4 localities in the Huddersfield area, though two of these are known breeding haunts. Noted more frequently in the

southern and eastern parts, particularly around Sheffield, where birds were seen at 20 localities (some in Derbyshire), around Rotherham where 20 sightings and around Doncaster where seen at 11 localities. A pair held territory at Hawks Wood near Rotherham, whilst breeding was considered "probable" at Worsbrough and "possible" at Nostell, both these latter sites being in the Barnsley area.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, one pair was proved to breed in Doh Park and records were received from 7 other locations. Swillington Ings produced 2 records but only one from Fairburn Ings, this being in May. Reported from 17 sites in the Harrogate area (some of these may intrude into VC 65).

VC 65 Reported from Whitcliffe Woods, Bellflask, Bolton-on-Swale GP and Hackfall Woods where 3 different birds were drumming in early spring.

GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Very scarce coastal passage migrant; occasional winter record

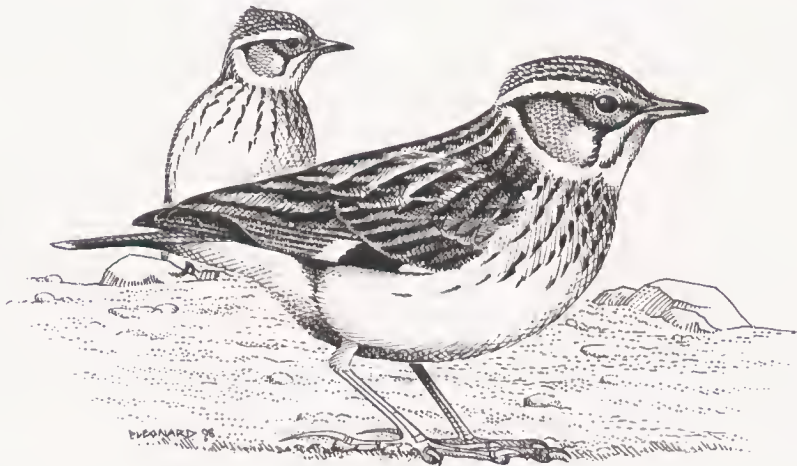
VC 61 One at Spurn on the Point beach on 22nd May (MJP). A second bird was seen on the "parade ground" on 2nd June before flying up to Chalk Bank. It re-appeared on 4th, when it flew off high to the south (MJP: KG).

WOOD LARK *Lullula arborea*

Rare breeding visitor and passage migrant, increasing in recent years

VC 61 Singles at Barmston on 2nd and 4th January and at Flamborough Head on 2nd June were particularly noteworthy as winter and summer sightings on the coast are rare. More typical are individuals on passage in early spring and late autumn, such as birds at Spurn on 20th April (and presumably the same bird on 21st), with a further single at Hornsea Mere on 5th May. In October, one flew south at Spurn on 11th, one was in the "triangle" on 19th, 2 were present from 20th to 21st and one flew south on 22nd. One was reported from Flamborough on 21st October and one was in "set-aside" near Kilnsea on 2nd November.

VC 63 One was at Thorpe Marsh on 23rd February. At a location in the Doncaster area, 2 pairs bred and reared young successfully, with one of the pairs hatching a second brood.



SKY LARK *Alauda arvensis**Common, though decreasing, resident; passage migrant and winter visitor*

VC 61 Wintering flocks were generally small in the early winter, largest counts all referring to January: 300 at TLNR on 1st and 58 at PHENR on the same date, 72 on Watton Carrs on 9th whilst further inland, a total of 1820 was counted in the LDNNR on 5th. Small flocks also along the coast in January, generally in stubble, and 250 could be found at Filey, 50 at Flamborough and 30 at Spurn. No breeding surveys this year, but the 300 singing males at LDNNR and the 38 singing males at TLNR both suggested the population at these sites remained stable. In October and November, southerly passages of between 50 and 200 birds were regularly counted at Spurn, with 365 on 18th and 240 on 29th October being the most, and 220 were also noted at Flamborough on the latter date. During the late winter period, there appears to have been few suitable areas of stubble to collect birds, although 120 were noted in this habitat at Owssthorpe on 30th October.

VC 62 Higher counts submitted were 326 south on 17th October at Long Nab and 150+ at Whitestone Point on 22nd November.

VC 63 Although still considered to be a widespread and common breeder, flock sizes and movements are noticeably smaller than 20 years ago. The largest flocks early in the year were relatively small, such as 40 at Thrybergh CP in January and 80 at Wilsic in mid-February. Cold weather movements in January involved 54 over Thorne Moors and 117 over Southfield Res all moving south on the 1st and 80 moving north-west over Broomhill Ings on the 12th. Breeding was widely reported though some counts are largely academic, but they could provide a baseline for future estimates. Blackburn Meadows reported between 20 and 30 pairs; Denaby Ings, 20 singing birds; Thorpe Marsh, 25 pairs and Wilsic, 65 pairs. Southerly passage in late autumn was fairly light: 140 flew south-west over Rod Moor on 18th October; 110 flew south over Thrybergh CP on 17th October; 100 flew south over Pot Hills Marsh on 28th September and 100 flew south over Broomhill Ings on 26th October.

VC 64 Seven pairs bred at Fairburn Ings and 4 at Killinghall Moor, but habitat destruction at these localities is now almost complete so few can be expected in the future. Concern was also expressed that numbers on the higher ground were also down, but no quantitative information to substantiate this. Small numbers were recorded at Fairburn Ings throughout the year with maximum counts of 116 in September, 75 in October and 64 in November. Elsewhere, little information other than 35 at Farnham GP in November, 30 at Marton-le-Moor in December and 40 at Staveley NR also in December.

HORNED (SHORE) LARK *Eremophila alpestris**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant*

VC 61 The year began with the significant sighting of a single on wasteland at Victoria Dock, Hull on 5th January. Coastal records are the norm and included 5 regularly at Tunstall between 5th January and 1st February and occasional records emerging from the Spurn area, beginning when 5 flew south on 12th January, and including 3 which came in from the east on 16th March. Then began a series of late spring occurrences including further birds at Spurn on 23rd April, on which date 2 were noted at nearby BPNR. One was at Filey from 8th to 13th April, 3 were there from 2nd to 4th May, one of which had been colour-ringed at Titchwell earlier in the winter. Two more were at BPNR on 10th to 11th May with one at Sammy's Point on 11th to 13th and back at BPNR on 14th to 17th. The first autumn record was on 12th October at Barmston, followed by one at Spurn on 23rd, 2 there on 26th and one on 29th, when one was also at Flamborough. More arrived at Spurn with 7 on 30th, increasing to 9 on 31st and to 10 by 3rd November, these still present on 30th. Meanwhile 9 were at South Landing, Flamborough from 1st to 9th November and one at Filey from 25th to 29th. Parties of up to 7 birds remained in the Easington and BPNR area in November and December and up to 6 were reported Barmston at the end of the year.

VC 62 Up to 11 were at Port Mulgrave from 22nd March to 6th April, 3 were at Scarborough on 29th March, one at Saltwick Nab on 14th April and 4 later birds at South Gars between 9th and 10th May. In the autumn, 2 at Kettleless on 6th October, 3 at Cromer Point, Scarborough on 26th October, while at Port Mulgrave returning birds numbered 6 on 8th and 9th November and 7 on 16th.

VC 63 A single bird at Rails Head, Halifax, in misty conditions on 17th November, remained only a few hours. (NCD *et al*)

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 The first appeared at TLNR on 13th March. A larger influx occurred on 11th April when more than 100 were feeding at both TLNR and at PHENR, numbers huddling further to 150 at PHENR on 19th and to 223 at Spurn on 28th. The largest spring count came from TLNR; a whopping 3400 on 5th May. The most important breeding colony was at North Cave GP where an estimated 150 to 200 pairs bred. Additionally, 16 pairs were counted at North Duffield, 23 pairs at Sutton Ings, 30+ pairs between Elvington and Kexby, 18 pairs at Watton NR, and somewhere between 18 and 27 pairs at Brigham Quarry. Small and uncounted colonies are known to have been present on the sea cliffs at Filey and Dimlington. Peak autumn counts over inland waters included 900 at TLNR on 27th August and 1400 on 6th September. Southerly passage on the coast was frequently noted at Spurn, peaking at 700 on 26th, 420 on 31st August and 335 on 8th September. The last 2 of the year similarly drifted south at Spurn on 10th October.

VC 62 Not noted until 2 were at Scaling Dam on 27th March. Two large colonies in the Scarborough area were apparently very much affected by heavy rain during June; at Wykeham Lakes, 126 holes were occupied by 2nd June hut unfortunately only 3 birds remained after the rain. Likewise at Jackson's Bay, numbers were reduced from 106 occupied holes to just 12 during the same period. A colony of 10 pairs was also reported from Whitby.

VC 63 Early arrivals were 2 at Blacktoft Sands and 3 at RVCP on 10th March, though only small numbers to the month end except for 60 birds at Pugney's CP on 31st. Larger counts through April included 160 at Pugney's CP on 2nd, 100 at RVCP on 12th, 350 flying north at Broomhill Ings on 13th, and particularly so on the 25th, when 130 were at Blacktoft Sands and 250 at each of Thrybergh CP and Southfield Res. A census was undertaken in the Doncaster area to establish a benchmark population level; this indicated 930 "apparently occupied holes" at 16 colonies. The largest was of 290 holes at Blaxton GP, others of 100 holes or more being found at Lakeside, Styrrup Quarry, Austerfield Quarry and at Birds Wood near Wroot. The breeding success was affected by the prolonged wet weather in June, and information provided by the Doncaster Ringing Group suggested that only a small proportion of pairs actually reared young. In visits to the Hatfield Woodhouse colony, the proportion of young was about 7% of the total catch, at a time when it would normally be expected that juveniles formed the bulk of the birds caught around the colony (for more information see *Doncaster Bird Report 1997*). The only other large colony reported was of 285 pairs at Pugney's CP. From late summer large numbers gathered at Blacktoft Sands, where roosting birds totalled 10500 on 1st September, down to 1500 by 10th September. Few birds were noted after mid-September but 30 were at Pugney's CP on 19th, 36 over Hatfield Moor on 27th and 8 at Thorpe Marsh on 8th October.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, Otley GP was a favoured site with 12 on 26th March, 300 there on 19th April and 1000 on 5th May. Counts at breeding sites included 80 "pairs" at Denton Hall, 50 to 75 at Marley SF and 30 at Burley Weir. A new artificial nesting wall at Staveley NR was colonised with 10 first broods and 21 second broods reared. A single pair nested at Fairburn Ings. The largest counts in this VC were made at Fairburn Ings; 500 in August rising to 3000 during September.

VC 65 First arrival was on 14th March at Pallet Hill. An unusual breeding record concerned a small colony that took up residence at Nosterfield NR. An excavator took a sample scoop from the ground to ascertain the depth of sand. Almost immediately, the excavated trough was occupied by Sand Martins that were in effect nesting below ground level. The colony was left undisturbed to the end of the breeding season.

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 The first was at TLNR on 3rd April, but daily totals there remained low until 26th when 100 were reported with 100 at PHENR and 310 at Spurn on 28th. Not surprisingly, the largest counts came from the coast in May, including 1450 flying south at Spurn on 4th, 260 at Flamborough on 10th and 1100 back at Spurn on 14th. Few breeding records were received but these did include 21 to 24 pairs at TLNR. In autumn, southerly coastal passage peaked in September; 400 at Flamborough and 1400 at Spurn on 5th, 1900 at Spurn on 6th, 3000 there on 8th, 1200 at Flamborough on 9th, 350 at Filey and

1600 at Spurn, both on the 19th. The last inland birds appeared to be 2 at Hotham on 29th October, with 2 at Spurn on 7th November, so it was therefore a big surprise when one was seen at TLNR on 23rd November.

VC 62 An early record involved one at Scarborough on 13th March (MF) then no more until a scattering of birds from 6th April. The last was a single at Sandsend on 10th November.

VC 63 First arrivals were singles at Blackburn Meadows on 30th March followed next day by birds at Aghen Res and Redmires Res. Frequently seen throughout April and May, the maximum being 750 on 7th May at Winterset Res, and subsequently good breeding numbers in all areas. Several autumn roosts developed; 2000 at High Royd SF on 18th August, building to 6000 on 10th September, 3000 at Edderthorpe Flash on 1st September and 1000 at Broomhill Ings on 5th and 16th September. South-westerly movements were counted at Rod Moor, Sheffield, peaking at 2170 on 21st September, a day of considerable passage since 1000 also flew south at Broomhill Ings, and 100 per hour were noted moving south through Potteric Carr. The latest sightings all came in November, usually singles, but 18 flying south at Broomhill Ings on the 18th and a very late 4 south at the same locality on 29th.

VC 64 The first singles were reported at both Knotford Nook and Otley GP on 4th April. Autumn roosts at Staveley NR and Skelton-on-Ure each held 3000 birds on 9th and 22nd September respectively. The last single was at Skelton Lake on 27th October.

VC 65 The first was at Great Langton on 29th March.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 An early migrant was reported from Barmston on 20th March, with the next at Filey on 6th April after which numbers remained low until late in the month when 320 appeared at TLNR on 26th. Poor numbers reported at PHENR, including a peak spring count of only 40 in May. At Spurn, passage occurred between 20th May and 12th June, with 100+ on 10 days and a peak of 922 on 26th May. Bred widely throughout the region, but no information of any value other than 8 pairs in Foston village, down from 13 the year before. Inland passage in September was slight, but on the coast 200 flew south at Flamborough on 6th, 700 at Spurn on 12th, a further 893 there on 13th, 600 south at Filey on 14th and 176 at Spurn on 19th. 57 passed through Spurn on 10th October where the last was seen on 7th November.

VC 62 The first was at Eberston on 13th April and last at Jackson's Bay on 4th November. The largest count was of 200 at Cloughton on 31st August.

VC 63 Hartill Res hosted one on 30th March, a full week before the next at Blackburn Meadows on 6th April. Feeding flocks gathered over many of the region's water bodies in April and May; Pugney's CP attracted 150 on 26th April and 200 on 8th May; Thrybergh CP 300, 450 and 350 on the 6th, 7th and 8th May respectively; Sprotbrough Flash 200 on 5th May and Broomhill Ings 150 on 6th May. Post-breeding groups regularly reached several hundreds in August, the larger counts however came in September; 800 at Winterset Res on 13th; 700 at Underbank Res on 15th; 550 at Thrybergh CP on 17th and 3125 flying south or south-west at Rod Moor on the 21st. Broomhill Ings held 60 birds on 1st October and 51 flew south at Wilsic on the 5th. There were October records from only 10 localities with the latest at Haworth Moor and Potteric Carr, both on the 29th.

VC 64 There were singles at Astley Lake and Knotford Nook, and 2 at Dowley Gap SF on 11th April. Spring passage peaked in mid-May when 420 were at Fairburn Ings and 300 were at Astley Lake.

VC 65 Artificial nest boxes were readily occupied at Sharow (17), at Ripon (9) and at Copt Hewick (8). In autumn 400 were at Druids Altar in the Bradford area on 29th August, whilst up to 250 frequented Fairburn Ings in September. The last 2 were at Lemonroyd SF on 16th October.

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Scarce coastal passage migrant in autumn; rare inland

VC 61 Typically, all records were in late autumn. At Spurn, the first was found in Clubley's field on 16th October and what may have been this bird was in Kilnsea on 17th (PRM). Two new birds arrived on 22nd, one remaining until the 25th on which date a second bird appeared at Chalk Bank, this being last seen the following day. One was at Flamborough on 18th October (MN: PAL: DJB) and another

near the north end of Dane's Dyke, Flamborough on 27th (DBy). Subsequent singles were at Spurn from 4th to 5th November with another from 20th to 21st.

VC 62 One at Boulby Cliffs on 18th October (MAB: SF) was the only record.

VC 65 A bird at Bolton-on-Swale GP on the evening of 10th May was still present the following morning (NJM: RSt). The first record for VC65.

TAWNY PIPIT *Anthus campestris*

Rare coastal passage migrant

VC 61 A juvenile/first winter was at Head Farm, Flamborough on 18th August (PAL), the fourth record for Flamborough.

VC 62 A short-staying individual was at Hunt Cliff on 30th May (PAAB).

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 An increasingly scarce migrant in the VC, with Flamborough reporting "the worst year on record" with just 14 recorded. More frequent at Spurn; one on 16th April was followed by singles on 20th and 23rd, then 1 to 3 regularly until 7th June and a maximum of 4 on 3rd May. Only 5 spring birds reported at Filey, all between 28th April and 25th May and a few more at Flamborough, 12 in total between 30th April and end of May. The first bird of the autumn returned to Spurn on 14th August and then between 3 and 9 were recorded daily from 23rd to 31st. In September, 2 at Filey on 28th and up to 3 regularly at Spurn, where single birds were present on 3 days in October up to the last on 23rd. Flamborough's remaining singles were on 18th August and 27th September.

VC 62 Present in forest clearings but no estimates of breeding numbers. Spring passage was light with coastal sites producing only a handful of reports except for an excellent count of 12 at Boulby Cliffs on 1st May. Very few in autumn, just one at Boulby Cliffs and 2 at Scarborough.

VC 63 Early arrivals, both singles, were seen on 12th April at Treton Dyke and the Little Don Valley. There was a general impression of modest breeding numbers throughout, and happily, no indication of any further decline. The majority of breeding records came from open woodlands, particularly conifers on the Pennine slopes, and from forest edges, especially conifers, in other locations such as Hatfield Moor, where 9 pairs held territory, Bawtry Forest (10 pairs), and both Wharnciffe Heath and Sector Wood in the Barnsley area. Only a few were located on return passage, mostly in September, when one was at Southfield Res on the 5th, one at Seammonden on 6th and 6 flew south-west over Rod Moor on the 6th. The only October bird was at Tyrham Hall on 6th October.

VC 64 Reported in "moderate numbers" in the Bradford area and from 13 sites in the Harrogate area. The first was seen on 24th April; up to 4 were at Fairburn lngs in May and the last, a late bird, was at Gouthwaite Res on 23rd October.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Abundant resident; passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61. After being absent from much of the VC during the winter, migrants returned in March producing high counts of 60 at Filey on 16th and of 70 at Watton Carr on 27th. A widespread and abundant breeder, notable figures including an estimated 300 pairs at LDNNR and 25 pairs at TLNR. In autumn southerly passage was noted from 6th September to 18th October at all coastal watchpoints. Filey recorded 50+ on several dates whilst the high at PHENR was 94 flying south on the 14th September. The best days at Flamborough were in late September; 300 on 26th and 270 on 27th, and similarly at Spurn where 2200 were counted on 14th and 1200 on 18th of that month. These movements had dwindled to virtually nothing by the beginning of November.

VC 62 A noteworthy spring movement of 500 per hour at Boulby Cliffs on 31st March was the only significant count.

VC 63 Returning birds included 150 at Walshaw on 28th March, 255 at Agden Res on 30th and 500 flying north-west there on the 31st. Passage continued through April, particularly at Luddenden Dean where 1000 were counted on 6th April and a further 600 on the 20th. This bird remains a very numerous breeding species in all society areas. Autumn counts of passage birds peaked in September, most

heading in a south or south-westerly direction: 135 at Firsby Res on the 7th; 173 at Thorne Moors also on the 7th, with 200 feeding there on the 12th and 533 passing over on the 14th; 165 at Southfield Res on the 17th and 300+ at Barnside Moor on the 23rd.

VC 64 The largest winter counts of 70 in January and 50 in December came from Lemonroyd SF. In October, a nice flock of 90 was at Farnham GP on 1st April. Recorded at Fairburn Ings in all months with peaks of 60 in April, 165 in September and 73 in October. At Whetstone Gate, Ilkley Moor, 500 were logged on the 13th September and at Qucensbury, 150 flew south on the 28th September.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Fairly common resident and winter visitor from Scandinavia

VC 61 Breeds along the rocky coasts from Flamborough northwards. A flock of 20 was noted at Newbiggin, Filey in February and 15 per day were regularly recorded at Flamborough, with 25 in October. Up to 6 were regularly noted at Spurn in January and February, then up to 10 daily from October to the middle of November peaking at 16 flying south on 18th October and 13 likewise on 1st November. Inland, an *alba* wagtail was harassing one which called on the "D" reservoir wall at TLNR on 22nd October. This is a regular wintering species along the Humber, recorded from Cherry Cobb Sands where singles on 8th and 11th January, 2 on 21st and one on 23rd February, one on 1st October and 3 on 18th. In December, up to 4 birds were frequently seen along the riverfront at Victoria Dock, Hull. One Scandinavian Rock Pipit *A. p. littoralis* was seen at Flamborough on 25th February and either 4 or 5 birds were noted at Filey between 4th March and 7th April.

VC 62 Birds showing characteristics of the Scandinavian race *A. p. littoralis* were reported from Whitby (3 birds) and Scarborough (2 birds).

VC 63 Singles were found at Thorne Moors on 1st and 2nd March and at Winterset Res on 4th and 6th April. Much more frequent in the autumn when there were singles at 2 locations in September and at 5 locations in October. Highest daily counts concerned 3 at RVCP on 17th October and 3 also at Winterset Res on the 18th. Unidentified Rock/Water pipits were reported at a total of 13 mostly lowland sites, but including 2 upland reservoirs. A bird showing characteristics of *A. p. littoralis* was present at RVCP on 22nd March with another, or the same, on the 6th April.

VC 64 Lemonroyd SF held 3 on 26th October, the only definite sightings, though the Swillington area documented Rock/Water pipit flyovers on 4 dates in January, October and November.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant from Europe

VC 61 This species is very scarce in this VC, so it was a bit of a surprise that two decided to spend the winter at Barmston, being reported there between 2nd January and 7th April.

VC 63 Seven records beginning with one in the Holdworth/Damflask area on the 2nd and 3rd January (KC). Thornton Moor Res attracted a wintering bird on 20th January, which remained until 2nd February, and later, another passage bird which stayed from 31st March to 3rd April. Blackburn Meadows, produced singles on 11th February, 21st November and 7th December (RAH), and RVCP one on 13th April (EAF).

VC 64 Two birds over-wintered in the Astley Lake and Lemonroyd SF area, these individuals being joined by others in spring when 2 appeared at Skelton Lake on 20th March and at least 5 at Astley Lake on 21st March, one remaining through to 11th April. One bird returned to Lemonroyd SF on 1st November, then up to 3 from the 9th (also visiting Astley Lake), and one was at Skelton Lake on 16th. In the Bradford area, Marley SF noted one bird through January and also on 15th February, Dowley Gap SF held one on 3rd January and Lindley Wood Res one on 14th April. Singles were at Fairburn Ings in October and December.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, possibly declining

VC 61 The first was recorded at Sammy's Point, Easington on 8th April, with 2 at Spurn and one at TLNR on 9th. Passage numbers then steadily increased with maxima of 89 at Spurn on 28th, of which 77 flew south, and 16 at TLNR on 29th April (considerably down on last year's peak of 40 to 60).

Numbers were similarly down at PHENR where the peak spring count was only of 6 on 21st April. Counts consolidated during early May, Flamborough held 19 on 1st and Spurn 87 on 2nd, but an unusual fall of 250 occurred in the Derwent Valley on 5th, with 300 present on 6th. Probably 130 pairs bred in the LDNNR area, 9 pairs in the TLNR area and Filey reported breeding for only the second time. The autumn peaks involved 60 at North Duffield Ings on 15th, 27 at TLNR on both 9th and 30th August and 40 at Spurn on 6th September. The last sightings were of late migrants near Paull on 12th October and at Spurn on 15th.

Blue-headed Wagtails *M. f. flava* from the near Continent, were noted in May at Flamborough on 1st (3), 2nd (4), and 5th; at Spurn on 12th, 15th, 21st, 22nd, 25th and 26th; near Paull lighthouse on 16th, and at TLNR on 17th (female), 19th and 22nd. More intrepid singles pushed even farther inland to LDNNR on 9th, 13th and 25th May. As expected, less frequent or even decidedly rare, in autumn, just 2 were seen, at Flamborough on 18th August. A male Grey-headed Wagtail *M. f. thunbergi* was reported from Flamborough on 3rd June.

VC 62 A poor spring with just a trickle noted along the coast where 12 at Scarborough on 24th April and 10 at Whitby 1st May were the only double figure counts. One bird showing characteristics of Blue-headed Wagtail *M. f. flava* was at Whitby on 1st May, whilst of more intrinsic interest was a bird showing characteristics of the "type" *cinereocapilla* (Ashy-headed) at Coalhiam Marsh on 26th April.

VC 63 Early records in April were 2 at Winterset Res on the 6th, 2 at Blacktoft Sands and one at RVCP, both on the 7th. A much larger influx took place on the 26th when 32 appeared at Thrybergh CP and on the 27th, when 33 were at Southfield Res. Breeding data submitted was thought to be very incomplete and not worthy of further mention. In July there were 30 birds at Broomhill Ings on the 25th, after which a gradual growth in numbers peaking at 70 on Thorne Moors on the 12th August with the same number later at Broomhill Ings on 24th. A decline in September, though 60 were at Broomhill Ings on the 3rd and 30 at Blacktoft Sands on the 17th until late records of 2 at Thorpe Marsh on 12th October, and a particularly late juvenile at Broomhill Ings on 21st November. Birds showing the characteristics of the Blue-headed race *M. f. flava* were reported at Thorpe Marsh on 30th April and 27th May; at Broomhill Ings on 1st May; in the Worsbrough Valley on 8th May; at Southfield Res on 3rd May, 4th May and 16th June and finally at RVCP on the 9th May. At Lemonroyd SF between 29th June and 19th July, a female *flavissima* paired with a male *flava* and 2 juveniles were fledged.

VC 64 There were four reports of birds showing characteristics of various Continental races during late April and early-May in the Harrogate area although no descriptions were received. Spring passage at Fairburn Ings was undistinguished with maxima of 12 in April and 10 in May. Return passage was also rather mundane, peaking in August when groups sometimes totalled about 20 birds, these declining to groups of around four in September and to just a single in October.

VC 65 Breeding was confirmed at Bellflask Quarry. The first sighting came from Bolton-on-Swale GP on 12th April, birds remaining here to peak at 15 on 1st May. An individual showing plumage characteristics that can be associated with Syke's Wagtail *M. f. beema* was at Morton-on-Swale bridge on 27th May. Such birds are widely recognized to be the hybrid offspring of *flavissima/flava* pairings, rather than vagrants from southern Russia.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Fairly common resident except in south-east; scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Two pairs bred along the Pocklington Canal in addition to the pair at the traditional Bell Mills site near Cranswick. In winter, singles were widely reported from more than 20 sites. Most frequently seen during autumn passage however, beginning in August and ending in early November and 6 at TLNR on 26th August was a notably high count. At Spurn, one to 3 recorded regularly from 17th August to 31st October plus 5 on 31st August and 6 on 22nd October.

VC 63 Cautious breeding estimates revealed 3 pairs in the Rotherham area, 20 pairs in the Sheffield area (though at least half are likely to be in Derbyshire), 26 pairs in Barnsley area and 15 pairs in the combined Huddersfield and Halifax areas.

VC 64 No discernible change in status in the Harrogate area, being reported from 20 widespread sites. In the Bradford area there were 9 pairs and Swillington Ings held 2 pairs. Occasionally reported at Fairburn Ings with a spring single in May and up to 2 from September to the year-end.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba***Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor**

Widespread throughout the county, occurring in urban, farmland and upland environments.

VC 61 467 in bare fields near Ellerker on 11th October was easily the largest congregation found. Coastal watchpoints noted regular passage, initially in mid-March to mid-April, again for a short period in early July and then again in late September to October, the last being the largest and most sustained period of movement. The largest counts came from Flamborough, 25 on 31st March and 55 on 27th September.

Nominate race birds *M. a. alba* were seen between 15th March and 23rd May, with 9 individuals logged at Filey, about 20 at Flamborough and somewhere between 35 and 40 at Spurn. An interesting dichotomous situation was noted in the pattern of occurrences between 2 of our most keenly watched sites. The majority of *alba* seen at Flamborough were noted in late March, including 6 on the 31st, with none seen after 4th May. However, down the coast at Spurn, none were seen before 9th April and the majority were in May, when 5 were seen on 22nd and 6 on the 23rd. Inland *alba* were recorded at East Park, Hull on 10th and 14th March; at PIENR on 13th, 21st, 26th and 27th April; at TLNR on 27th and 30th March, and 20th, 29th and 30th April, and at Bank Island in the LDNNR on 9th April. In autumn, 10 were reported from Flamborough between 29th August and 23rd October.

VC 62 Well-watched sites reported small numbers of White Wagtails *M. a. alba* moving through in March and April, the highest count being of 12 at South Gare on 20th April.

VC 63 The largest counts came from winter roosts in town centre locations; Wakefield city centre hosted 200 to 300 on the 20th January; Sheffield city centre, 155 on 31st January; Monk Bretton glassworks, 200 at the end of January; St. James' Bridge, Doncaster, 150 in November and 400 during frosty weather in December. There were also high counts of 101 at Dinnington SF on 4th February and 200 at Low Barugh SF, Barnsley on 30th November.

White Wagtails *M. a. alba* were noted at about 20 sites between 13th March and 27th May, the daily maximum being 6 at Winterset Res on the 26th April, and 9 at Southfield Res and 8 at Broomhill Ings, both on the 27th April.

VC 64 Roosts of 100 were found in the "Food Giant" car park, Boroughbridge during January and also in Keighley town centre on 1st December. High numbers of feeding birds were consistently found at Lemonroyd SF; 120 on 25th January and again on 6th December; at Dowley Gap SW where 200 to 300 were logged on 2nd February and at Skelton Lake where 120 scavenged ploughed land in early October. Reported from Fairburn Ings in all months with 57 in August and 93 in September reducing to 40 in November but back up to 90 in December. 100 were at Knaresborough SF on 14th January, with 70 at Spofforth SF in early April.

Birds of the nominate race *M. a. alba* were at Knaresborough SF on 15th April, with 2 at Fairburn Ings on unspecified dates in April and May.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus***Irruptive visitor in late autumn and winter, occasionally in large numbers**

VC 61 A scattering in the early part of the year involved 5 between Thorganby and Skipwith on 3rd January, one in East Park, Hull and 3 along Holderness Road, Hull on 5th and 6th, and 4 at Flamborough on 14th. Slightly higher counts of 10 came from the car park at Wheldrake Ings on 19th and 7 there on 27th. A flock of 9 were reported at Filey Dams in late January. Many must have moved on since few were seen in February, just 3 at Bricknell Avenue, Hull on 8th and 9th February and 3 on an unspecified date in Wheldrake village. Only a little improvement in March, when a small influx to the area produced 10 on a lamppost in Beverley on 9th, 20 on Holderness Road, Hull on 14th and 4 at Sutton Fields, Hull on 25th. A quite exceptional record was one by the fog station at Flamborough on 13th June (PAL).

VC 62 Good numbers remained from the record breaking 1996 influx in the Hcmlington area (Middlesbrough) with 138 on 3rd January, 114 on 1st February and 47 on 19th March. It is not known whether counts of 90 birds in Middlesbrough in January and 40 there in February involved the same individuals. Guisborough attracted up to 35 during January, Scarborough up to 16 and Whitby up to 23. A late spring bird was at Coulby Newham near Guisborough on 19th May. In December singles in

Scarborough on two dates with 2 on 22nd to 26th, one at Skelton Castle on 15th and 3 back in Middlesbrough 21st to 23rd.

VC 63 Once again, good numbers were reported in the Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield and Sheffield areas. The list has, by necessity of space, been confined to flocks of 10 or more birds. In the Sheffield area, 65 were at Nether Edge on 7th March, Broomhill attracted 88 on 16th March and Darnall, 60 on 26th March. Rotherham town centre hosted 64 on 9th April then back in Sheffield, the city centre hosted 18 in mid-April and 12 flew west to roost at Redmires Res on 20th April. In the Huddersfield area, Birkby held 17 on 1st January; Springwood 26 on 3rd January; Aspley 75 on the 29th January; Lockwood 82 on 3rd and 56 on 4th February; Crossland Moor 14 on 14th February; Greenhead 50 on 1st March and Longwood 35 on 17th March. In the Halifax area, up to 12 were at Hanson Lane 1st to the 5th January; 20 at Ogden Water on 18th January and 27 at Todmorden on the 8th and 9th April. In the Bradford area, 21 at Timble Ings on 5th January; up to 67 in the city centre from the 11th January to the month's end; Canal Road held 45 on the 25th February; Bingley Arts Centre, 21 from 1st to 6th March, building to a maximum of 82 on the 4th. Elsewhere in March, Guiseley attracted 35 on the 17th; Riddlesden 30 on 23rd; Marley roundabout 53 on 28th and Beeches Hotel, Keighley, 50 on the 30th. In April, 38 at Longwood Ave, Bingley on the 3rd, and 15 at Marley on the 26th down to 10 on the 30th. Only one sighting during the second winter period, this being at the Midland Station, Sheffield, on the 6th December. After record numbers the previous year, none at all were seen around the Doncaster area in 1997.

VC 64 Birds from the influx in 1996 accounted for the early records in January. One at Studley Royal on 2nd January, 8 in Knaresborough on 3rd and 4th, one at Hutton Conyers on 23rd and 25th and 9 at Pateley Bridge on 26th. One frequented Harlow Carr Gardens on 6th April. At the other end of the year, a single was at Fountains Abbey on 20th December.

VC 65 Three at Richmond and 2 at Kirby Fleetham on 4th January.

WHITE-THROATED DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Widespread resident on higher ground in north and west; Continental race a rare winter visitor

VC 62 Breeding reported from 4 sites with birds seen at several other suitable areas. One of the Continental race *C. c. cinclus* (Black-bellied Dipper) was at Sealby Beck, Scarborough from 17th November to the year-end (MF: KC).

VC 63 In the Halifax area at least 4 pairs bred and 2 others possibly did so, whilst in the Huddersfield area 6 pairs bred with additional birds noted at 5 other sites. In the Barnsley area approximately 15 pairs were present, all probably breeding and in the Sheffield area, pairs were present all year but no clear indication of numbers was available this year.

VC 64 Widely but thinly spread in the riverine systems of the Harrogate area with records from the rivers Nidd, Crimple, Skell, Ure and Laver. In the Bradford area, present along the Wharfe and Aire valleys where at least 10 pairs were known, plus one pair at Oxenhope, in the Bradford part of VC 63.

VC 65 A pair feeding young at Haekfall Woods on 21st May was the only record.

WINTER WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Abundant resident; passage migrant in small numbers

VC 61 Ubiquitous following another mild winter. Coastal passage birds were noted in September and October at Filey, Flamborough and Spurn, but no more than 50 were seen, this count coming from Spurn on 15th October.

VC 63 Estimates and counts of pairs and/or singing males were made by some societies, but none involved complete surveys so some data was rather meaningless. Blacktoft Sands held 8 pairs; Marley SW, Bradford, 15 singing males and the Blackburn Meadows and Listerdale Wood area of Sheffield, 65 singing males.

VC 64 Recorded monthly at Fairburn Ings with maximum counts of 25 in August and 26 in November.

HEDGE ACCENTOR *Prunella modularis*

Abundant resident and autumn passage migrant

A widespread breeding bird.

VC 61 Known to be an inconspicuous passage migrant along the coast, but few counts owing to its drab nature and skulking behaviour. Autumn passage was considered to have been unusually light at Filey.

VC 63 The information provided was much less significant than that supplied for the preceding species. 46 singing males were at Broomhill Ings, 6 pairs were at Blacktoft Sands, and 36 birds were counted at Blackburn Meadows on 26th October.

VC 64 Common at Fairburn Ings with up to 25 in most months and 35 in June and 36 in November.

EUROPEAN ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Widespread breeding bird. The breeding bird survey at TLNR indicated 12 to 13 pairs, only half the previous year's total, whilst the 30 individuals counted there on 8th July included quite a number of young birds. Virtually no spring passage was noted on the coast and only poor numbers during the autumn. The main passage of Continental birds, presumably *E. r. rubecula*, took place in the second half of October; 25 on 22nd and 20 on 27th at Flamborough and 37 on 21st and 42 on 23rd October at Spurn.

VC 62 The highest autumn count was of 73 along the Scarborough coastline on 19th October.

VC 63 Again, little significant or detailed information was supplied. In the Barnsley area, 98 singing males reported at 7 main localities, in the Doncaster area, 186 pairs at 5 localities and in the Sheffield area, 66 singing males in 3 localities.

VC 64 Many counts of over 35 at Fairburn Ings with excellent winter counts of 95 in October, 94 in November and 55 at year-end.



COMMON NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Rare breeding summer visitor in the south and increasingly rare passage migrant

VC 61 One was singing at the Warren, Spurn on 26th April with presumably the same bird in "big hedge" on 27th.

VC 63 On Thorne Moors, 12 males held territory, a good total, the first and last dates being 22nd April and 1st June. One male was in song for a week at the old site of Barnburgh colliery, though no dates were given to DDOS, but recordings were apparently made of its song.

BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica*

Scarce coastal passage migrant; occasional very rare breeding species

VC 61 A very poor year. The only record was a female at Spurn on 24th May (LJD: PKG).

VC 62 One at South Gare on 17th to 18th May (MCo) was the only record.

VC 63 Following last year's successful breeding on Thorne Moors, two males of the White-spurred race *L. s. cyanecula* returned, the first singing regularly from 6th April to 29th May and the second likewise from 6th April to 20th June (ML: PCR *et al*). Sadly no females were known to be within earshot, so hopes of a sustainable breeding outpost may have been dashed.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare resident breeder and uncommon passage migrant

VC 61 Small numbers irregularly at the well-watched coastal promontories. The first of 17 spring records from Flamborough came on the 12th March, with up to 4 on 31st March and the last 3 being on the 19th April. One was at Spurn from 17th to 19th March, then 1 to 2 regularly from 30th March to 4th June with a maximum of 3 on 4th April. Two appeared on cue at Filey on 23rd March, one remaining until the 28th, then further singles in April and 2 in May. Grimston hosted individuals on 25th March, 3rd and 7th April and East Newton one on 18th May. A juvenile was a surprise find at Spurn on 31st July staying until next day, then, north-easterly winds brought another from 30th to 31st August. Thereafter 1 to 2 birds occasionally at Spurn during September, singles on 11th and 17th October then daily from 20th to 29th with the main arrivals being 6 on 21st and 8 on 27th. Filey also attracted birds in October; 2 on 16th and one on 27th and also at Grimston where one on 21st and 2 on 27th. Up to 3 stragglers remained at Spurn into November with the last bird on 9th. Surprisingly scarce all autumn at Flamborough, where totals of only 5 bird-days in October and 3 in November until the last on 23rd.

VC 62 Positive evidence of breeding came when a female was watched feeding 2 young at Saltburn on 15th June with one to 2 present in the area through to the 29th. In addition, an adult with a juvenile appeared at Whitestone Point on 26th July, promptly disappearing from whence they came. Birds presumably wintering, appeared at Scarborough on 1st January, at Malton Railway Station on 2nd January and at Whitby from 16th January to 14th February. In spring, a scattering of birds along the coast from late March. The south side of the Tees produced 8 sightings during the spring including a singing male at South Gare 17th to 18th May, whilst Whitby had 3 birds during the same period. In the autumn singles were at Whitestone Point on 29th September, Saltwick Nab on 30th September with one at Scarborough from 17th to 18th October.

VC 63 Another poor year in Sheffield city centre; the only sighting concerned a singing male on 30th April, though this was at a traditional breeding site. An unseasonal bird was at Plains Lane, Elland on 25th January whilst an intriguing individual showed at Dinnington on 13th July. More expected were "female types" at Axle Lane, South Anston on 22nd March and on 15th November, one at Harden Moor on 12th April and one at South Kirby on 29th November.

VC 64 Swillington Ings reported a first-year male on 26th April and, more noteworthy, both a female and a juvenile were at Kex Gill Quarry on 26th July.

COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Breeding summer visitor to north and west; passage migrant more common in autumn

VC 61 No breeding records were received. As is often the case, merely a light coastal passage noted in spring, with the first at Flamborough on 19th April, followed by 3 further singles there that month and up to 3 birds daily in May between 16th and 27th. Fewer at Filey, 6 bird-days between 25th April and 23rd May, including 4 on 2nd and one at Barmston on 4th May. At Spurn one to 2 in April from the 23rd and recorded on six days in May with a maximum of 3 on 5th. There were no more records until one at Spurn on 29th July. In autumn, a trickle in August and disappointing single figures until the end of September, when falls of 40 at Spurn on 25th, of 10 at Filey and of 40 at Flamborough on 26th and of 30 at Flamborough, 11 at Grimston and 37 at Spurn on 27th. Back to single figures in October until the last birds at Filey, Flamborough and Spurn on 21st. Inland there were only six records beginning with a female or juvenile on 14th August near Easingwold Farm and 2 at Wheldrake Ings on the same day. Further singles appeared at Wheldrake Ings on both the 10th and 17th September, then one was watched

at Victoria Doek, Hull on 26th September before a final bird, once again at Wheldrake Ings, on 6th October.

VC 62 The first of the year occurred at Scarborough on 13th April and the last at Long Nab on 18th October. A very poor year for passage birds with all sites recording only very small numbers.

VC 63 Inland arrivals in April involved singles at Thorpe Marsh on 9th, Dunford Bridge on 10th, Axle Lane on 11th and Thrybergh CP on the 13th. Breeding was reported in the Halifax area where 9 pairs were located, but judging by the 10 singing males counted at Hardecastle Crag, there would appear to be at least twice the figure quoted. In the Huddersfield area, there was some evidence that 6 territories were occupied, but again likely to be under-recorded. More precise figures indicated that 27 pairs bred in the Barnsley area and 15 in the Sheffield area. There were late records of singles from Withens Clough on the 21st and Broomhill Ings on the 22nd September.

VC 64 The Bradford area had a very early record of a singing male at Lindley Wood in the Washburn Valley on the 30th March increasing to 4 birds there by the 12th April, when singles were at Haverah Park and White Crag Plantation. It was subsequently considered to have been a good breeding season. Migrant singles at Fairburn Ings in April, May, July and September with 2 in August. The last one was reported at Paul Clough on 22nd September

VC 65 First bird was seen on 10th April in Haekfall Woods with 8 there on 11th May.



WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Breeding summer visitor to north and west; coastal passage migrant more common in autumn

VC 61 A pair at Thorganby Ings on 13th June and a single juvenile there on 4th July suggested breeding in the LDNNR for the second year running. Birds on passage included 2 at Wheldrake Ings on 11th September and 4 birds at Ellerton Ings on 14th. The only other inland records were of one at Cherry Cobb on 10th May, either 4 or 5 near Seaton on 22nd August, and singles at PHENR on 6th, 7th and 13th September. The first spring migrant along the coast was at Flamborough on 11th April and the last

at Spurn on the 4th June. Peak day counts came in early May; of 8 at Spurn on 4th, 7 at Filey on 2nd and 6 at Flamborough on 3rd, followed by unseasonal singles at Filey on 3rd July and at Flamborough on 8th. A more protracted autumn passage from 7th August to 15th October, with peaks in August of 3 at Barmston on 22nd, 6 at Filey and 10 at Flamborough on 25th, 3 at East Newton on 27th and 29 at Spurn on 28th. In September, peaks were 21 at Spurn on 20th, 20 at Flamborough on 26th, and 7 at Spurn on 28th. Fewer in October up to the 15th; only one to 2 were occasionally seen at both Filey and Spurn.

VC 62 First was at South Gare on 26th April, with a light passage in both spring and autumn, and the last bird at Scalby Mills on 18th October.

VC 63 The first arrivals were recorded at Thorpe Marsh on the 2nd and 12th April. Breeding was almost entirely confined to the moorland fringes and cloughs. The Barnsley area reported 9 pairs, the Sheffield area 6+ pairs (declining), the Huddersfield area, 3 pairs, (though no observations from some known sites), and the Halifax area, at least 12 pairs. Late records, all singles in October, were from Pontefract Park on the 2nd, Treeton Dyke on 3rd and Thornton Moor Res on 5th.

VC 64 A negligible spring passage at Fairhum Ings, just 2 in April and one in May. In the Bradford area, the first appeared at Wilsden on 19th April and at least 10 pairs are thought to have bred. Return passage began at Fairhum Ings with 2 in July, then one in August and 5 in September.

VC 65 A survey of Colsterdale found an encouraging total of 17 singing males in May.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Rare breeding resident confined to the west; uncommon autumn and winter visitor elsewhere

VC 61 Spring migrants were very scarce; the first was one at Flamborough between 8th and 23rd February, followed by singles on 4th and 8th March and one at Filey on 19th March. Spurn hosted just one on 28th April and another on 17th and 18th May. In the autumn, between one and 3 infrequently at Flamborough from 17th September to 22nd October and similarly one to 3 at Spurn from 17th September to 12th October with later singles at Spurn on 1st November and again from 30th November to 1st December. There were 3 at Barmston on 17th October, one at Filey on 19th October (the only one of the autumn), 2 at Cowden on 16th November and one near Fraisthorpe on 13th December. Inland, a single was at Thorganby on 26th April, then in October, one at North Duffield Carrs on 17th, near Paull lighthouse on 18th and at Wheldrake Ings on 23rd.

VC 62 A pair bred near Fylingdales where food carrying was seen on 18th June and birds still present on 16th July. Singles at Saltwick Nab on 23rd February, a juvenile at Whitestone Point on 7th August and another bird there on 20th August.

VC 63 In the first winter period, singles were observed at only 3 lowland sites, for one or 2 days only in February to April, and at one upland site in March. During the breeding season, there was one at Langfield Common from April to June and a singing male in the Upper Little Don from 3rd May to 14th June. The majority of the records occurred from late September to the year-end, mainly at upland sites. There were singles at 5 sites west of Huddersfield between 22nd September and 1st December, each for one day only, and singles at 4 sites west of Halifax between 11th and 26th October. In the Bradford area, singles were at Thornton Moor Res on 21st and 26th September and 2 were on Harden Moor on 27th with further sightings there until 7th December. Birds were found at 3 upland sites around Ingbirchworth in December. The highest count was of 3 birds on Dukes' Road near Agden on 11th October and of 2 birds on Barnside Moor from 15th November to 31st December. Further east, lowland sites were not without birds; a pair at Thorpe Marsh from the 31st October to 31st December; a female at Broomhill Ings from 2nd November to 31st December; one at Edderthorpe Flash on 26th October and 2 immatures there from 24th November to 31st December whilst Blacktoft Sands reported one on both the 11th October and 1st November.

VC 64 Singles on 4 dates between 28th September and 11th November made Swillington Ings the most frequent haunt of this species in the VC. Elsewhere, birds were at Bradup on 3rd and 5th October, at Longside Moor on 9th October, at Norwood Lane on 10th and 13th November, near Baildon on 11th November with a pair at Little Almscliffe on 19th December. The only report from Fairburn Ings was of one in October.

VC 65 A male at Bellflask Quarry on 24th February.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe**Widespread breeding summer visitor to the west and north, and common passage migrant*

VC 61 The first was at Filey on 10th March, the highest count that month being of 18 at Spurn on the 31st. There then followed a good spring passage right through until early June. Decent numbers appeared in early April: on the 7th, 36 were at Grimston and 30 at Spurn, whilst next day, 30 were at Flamborough. Passage peaked later this month when consistent counts of between 34 and 49 were made at Spurn from 24th to 28th. Less conspicuous in May; 20 at Filey and 27 at Flamborough on 2nd, and 24 at Spurn on 24th being the maxima. Mid-summer records this year involved one at Flamborough on 6th July, one at Filey on 14th, and 2 at Spurn on two days during that month. Autumn movements were noted daily on the coast from 1st August to 21st October, mostly in single figures. Maxima from the "hot-spots" involved 16 at Filey on 24th August, 30 at Flamborough on 6th September and 19 at Spurn on 7th. Inland, scattered sightings of single birds, mostly during the spring, were the norm, though including 6 at Watts Quarry on 27th April and 6 at Watton Beck on 30th.

Birds of the Greenland race *O. o. leucorroha* were specifically noted at Flamborough with 10 in May and 3 in September, though it is likely that many of those counted in spring are of this race.

VC 62 Early birds were at Whitby and South Gare on 18th March. Stalwart observers at Whitby and Scarborough produced admirable counts of 83 on 7th April and 130 on the 27th respectively.

VC 63 An early arrival with birds reported from over 25 sites during March after the first at Whitley Common on the 1st. Parties of 10 or more were reported from 9 locations during April peaking at 30 near Blackmoorfoot Res on the 6th. Birds considered to be of the Greenland race *O. o. leucorroha* were caught and ringed at Thorpe Marsh on 27th April (a male and a female), and again on the 29th (a male), though a further 17 birds present that day were considered to be Greenland migrants. Few breeding records were reported and all from Pennine localities. A very late bird was at Deer Hill on 2nd and 4th December.

VC 64 An "unprecedented" passage at Farnham GP between 18th March and 6th May peaked at 10 on 7th April. Late records included one at Whetstone Gate and 2 Skelton Lake, both on the 11th October.

PIED WHEATEAR *Oenanthe pleschanka**Rare vagrant*

VC 61 A first-year female was found in Kilnsea on 21st October and remained in the Spurn/Kilnsea area until the 28th (MA: KG: LS *et al*). The second record for the Observatory.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus**Breeding summer visitor to higher ground in north and west; passage migrant elsewhere*

VC 61 Coastal passage was very slight beginning with one at Flamborough on 12th April, then 5 more there that month and one on May 1st. Single birds were at Easington and Spurn on the 13th April, with 4 at Filey between 22nd April and 4th May and another at Spurn on 2nd May. Much more evident during the autumn, particularly at Spurn in mid-October. Most large counts were associated with influxes of thrushes, such as the day total of 19 on 15th October, which included a flock of 11 seen to fly in from the east. Inland one was at PHENR on 18th October. Finally in November, there was one on 2nd at Spurn and a rather late bird on the 29th at Flamborough.

VC 62 An indifferent performance, just one to 2 individuals noted occasionally along the coast in both spring and in autumn.

VC 63 Singles were reported at Wessenden, Tickhill and near Hackenthorpe on 21st March and then up to 5 in the Halifax area from the 23rd March. Breeding was probably not fully recorded, but undoubtedly remains scarce: indications pointed to 4 pairs each in both the Barnsley and Sheffield areas, 5 pairs in the Huddersfield area and 7 pairs in the Halifax area. Noteworthy records included 11 that flew south at Strines on 27th September and a late record of one at Blake Dean (Halifax area) on 4th November.

VC 64 The first occurred on Burley Moor on 10th March and 3 males were located on territory in the Scar Valley by 16th April. Only 2 breeding pairs were located in the Bradford area though more must surely be present. Four were together at Angram Res on 11th August whilst 2 late birds were present at Paul Clough on the 17th October and one was on Ilkley Moor on the 18th.

COMMON BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Abundant resident; passage migrant and common winter visitor

VC 61 Immigration particularly noted from mid-October to early November when the largest counts were as follows: 900 arriving at Filey between 14th and 16th; 550 at Flamborough on 16th and 3550 on 27th; 1600 at Spurn on 14th and 800 on 27th. The arrivals in November were especially disappointing, numbers quickly falling away after the 4th when 650 were at Flamborough and 350 at Spurn.

VC 62 The usual late autumn arrival was small with counts of 30 to 40 widespread along the coast, but only one of 100+ birds, at Scarborough Castle on 2nd November.

VC 63 During a severe spell of weather in the first week of January, there were high counts at many locations: Broomhill Ings 90; Denaby Ings 80; Thryhergh CP 59; Wilthorpe 52 and Thorne Moors 41. Although common and widespread as a breeding bird, some locations hold particularly good numbers such as Listerdale Wood where there were 56 singing males on 14th June.

VC 64 Common at Fairburn Ings during the year peaking at 140 in November.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor; occasionally breeds

VC 61 The largest winter estimates were all inland at LDNNR, where 5400 gathered on 5th January, 8000 on 2nd November building to 12000 on 4th, at which time, 600 were present at TLNR. No significant counts from the coast until migrants began to return in October. Observers at Filey logged up to 300 from 14th to 19th, at Flamborough, 650 were present on the 16th, 1705 on 26th and 3220 on 27th, whilst at Spurn, 800 on 14th, 1500 on 16th and 1500 on 17th were the maxima. In November, Flamborough recorded 500 and Spurn 600, both on the 2nd.

VC 62 Larger flocks during the first half of the year included 160 at Eston Nab in March, 200 at Wykeham in February and 300+ near Piekering in April. Late birds were at South Gare on 4th May and at Boulby Cliffs and Brotton on 6th May. First of the autumn were 10 early birds at Wykeham Carrs on 7th August, then small numbers became widespread during October but no really large flocks were noted, 120 at Sealing Dam on 9th November being a rather paltry maximum.

VC 63 January flocks of 1000 graced Womersley on the 1st, the RVCP and Bradley (Huddersfield) on the 2nd, whilst 2000 were at Denaby Ings from the 5th to 7th and a further 2000 flew west there on 22nd. The largest flock however, was of 2500 at Broadstones on the 14th. High counts were maintained through February; 750 at Oxenhope on the 7th and 1500 at Ingbirchworth on the 28th, this flock dropping to 500 by the 23rd April. Slightly fewer during March, but still 1000 at Went Ings on the 5th and 600 at each of Royd Moor on the 9th and Lodge Moor on the 15th. Groups totalling 530 flew west at Redmires Res on the 24th and 500 were at Bawtry on the 31st. The last large flocks, recorded on 27th April, were of 600 at Royd Moor and of 320 at Gunthwaite. There was a singing male at Fox Clough on the 11th May and one adjacent to Bilberry Reservoir, near Holmbridge, on 5th July.

First autumn arrivals were 3 at Broadhead Clough on the 21st September, followed by one at Caldene Fields on 22nd and 6 at Blackburn Meadows on the 25th. Numbers built gradually through October, but no large gatherings until late in the month. 816 were counted at Langsett on the 18th, 620 at Thorpe Marsh on the 23rd and 1000 at Sandbeck on the 30th. Birds on the move included 800 flying to the west at Worsbrough Res on the 24th and 823 south at Queensbury on the 17th. A total of 9000 birds flew over Rod Moor in the October to November period, including 1010 on the 28th October and 1045 on the 7th November. Site maxima for November revealed 1500 at Upton on 5th, 1000 at Toll Bar, Doneaster on the 3rd, 1000 on Thorne Moors on the 8th, 700 at Southfield Res on the 1st and 700 at Austerfield on the 14th. Womersley attracted a large feeding flock of 2000 birds on the 9th November, these remaining until at least the 2nd December.

VC 64 Counts early in the year were disappointing, 415 at Ellacarr Pike on 23rd February and 500 at Bradup on 15th March being the most. Late showings during the spring involved 30 birds at Dob Park on 1st May, one at Denton Moor on the 14th May and one at the Yorkshire Showground in Harrogate on the 23rd May. Immigration produced counts of 3200 flying west at Hay-a-Park GP and 1000 at Pannal, both on 25th October, these figures being strangely high compared with the more modest arrivals noted along the coast at that time. This influx was also noted at Fairburn Ings where daily counts reached 2700 in October and 5000 in December.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos**Common but decreasing resident; passage migrant and winter visitor*

VC 61 The breeding population at TLNR was thought to be stable at 10 pairs. Relatively few migrants were recorded in October; up to 270 between the 15th and 18th at Filcey, 120 at Spurn on the 15th and 40 at Flamborough on the 22nd.

VC 62 Under-recorded throughout the year and the only autumn counts came from the Castle Hill, Scarborough where 17 on 19th October and 10 on 2nd November.

VC 63 Most societies made general statements about the decline in recent years, though two, Doncaster and Huddersfield, suggested that numbers may have remained stable, though at their recent, lower levels. Some counts were made of breeding pairs and/or singing males: Broomhill Ings, Netherwood, Winterset Res, all reporting 4 each; Bretton Park 5; Hatfield Moors and Potteric Carr, 7 each; Stocksbridge 8; Wilsie 9 and Nostell 10.

VC 64 There was an increase in the number of records received in the Bradford area, with 21 pairs confirmed breeding. A small winter influx noted at Fairburn Ings with 20 in October, 16 in November with 10 remaining to year-end.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus**Very common passage migrant and winter visitor; very occasionally recorded in summer*

VC 61 Only small winter flocks were noted in the east, including 40 at Spurn in January and 60 at Muston in February with larger numbers inland, peaking at 3700 at LDNNR on 5th January. Only light passage was noted in spring, mostly single figures on the coast in March, and singles up to 18th May at Flamborough. Immigration in autumn included an early bird at Spurn on 4th August, then, in September, 24 at Wheldrake Ings on 11th, 14 at Spurn on 24th and 100 at Flamborough plus 90 at Spurn both on the 27th. Larger counts came in October: 3100 at Flamborough on 11th, 5000 at Spurn on 14th, 400 at Filcey on 15th and 1200 at Flamborough on 16th. Movements were also noticed inland, including 800 passing through TLNR on 12th October and 2500 counted at LDNNR on 4th November.

VC 62 80 at Skelton Castle on 20th January and 126 at Wykcham Lakes on 19th February were noteworthy counts in a rather quiet first few months. An equally lean autumn began on 24th September when 5 were at Ness Point, Whitby and numbers remained at a low level thereafter. The highest count was of 100 at Skelton Castle on 24th October.

VC 63 In January flocks of up to 200 were not difficult to find, but few were larger than this; Denaby Ings held 700 on the 5th, Huddersfield town centre 350 on the 9th, Lightcliff 300 on 1st and Bramall Lane 270 on the 6th. Generally lower numbers in February and March before the last departing singles in April. There were however, 90 birds in the Limb Valley, Sheffield, on 26th April. In the later months, a few singles appeared in late September and early October, but the main arrival did not begin until the 12th October when 6775 flew west at Rod Moor, 3200 moved south-west at Redmires, 1400 west at RVCP, 500 were grounded at Sprotbrough Flash and 450 flew north-west at Withens Clough. Broomhill Ings recorded 1000 on 16th October, including 700 which flew west in one hour. This large passage continued with 2290 counted moving west at Rod Moor on the 21st. Later in the year most flocks were small except for 150 at Blackburn Meadows on the 19th December and 200 at Pot Hills Marsh throughout that month.

VC 64 The only significant groups were all noted in October; a total of 1000 flew south-west at Rivock Edge Plantation on the 12th and 1200 which flew south at Astley Lake on the 16th. Also on the 16th, 300 were counted in Lindley Wood.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus**Common resident increasing in south-east; very scarce on passage*

VC 61 Casual observations indicate this species is increasing as a breeding bird. A few migrants were noted on the coast especially in March and again in late September/October.

VC 62 Noteworthy flocks were 43 at Sealing Dam on 11th August and 28 at Wilton on 6th September.

VC 63 Remained moderately common and well distributed throughout the VC and large post-breeding flocks of 30 or more were not exceptional. Barrow Tip held 38 on the 19th September, Barnside Moor 37 on 15th September and Thorpe Marsh 35 on 17th August.

VC 64 A loose flock of 47 birds was at Ilkley Tennis Club on the 17th August and 30 were at Plompton on 31st July.

COMMON GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*
Uncommon breeding summer visitor and scarce passage migrant

VC 61 The first reeled at TLNR on 11th April where 6 males were holding territory in early May. The next appeared at Cowden on 15th April, with the first reeling males reported from LDNNR the following day. 24 were present at the latter site in May and several juveniles were seen at Wheldrake Ings during August. At Spurn one was singing on 22nd April, later paired, and the 2 birds remained until mid-July rearing 2 broods (the first successful breeding here since 1981). Two were singing at Hornsea Mere on 2nd May and 2 pairs were confirmed at Filey. At Flamborough, 4 singing birds were reported but only 2 for sufficient time to suspect breeding. Autumn migrants showed at Filey on 10th August and later that month at Spurn on 12th, 17th and 27th. September birds occurred at North Duffield Carrs on 12th, at Flamborough on 20th and 26th, at Spurn on 25th, at both Filey and PHENR on 27th and finally at Sammy's Point, Easington on 28th.

VC 62 Considered to be a poor year despite reeling birds at Coatham Marsh, Margrove Ponds (3 birds) and at 4 locations around Scarborough.

VC 63 The first singles were reported at Pugney's CP, RVCP and Thorne Moors on 12th April. Although evidence for breeding at some sites was rather sketchy, at others it was quite adequate and in general, numbers were normal or slightly higher than normal. Totals of "probable" breeding pairs include: 9 on Thorne Moors; 8 at Blacktoft Sands; up to 29 in the Barnsley area; 5 in the Rotherham area and 4 in the Sheffield area. Singing males were recorded at some 20 other sites, though without sufficient evidence for further comment. The only late record was one at Pot Hills Marsh on 6th September.

VC 64 The Swillington area held about 6 singing birds at various sites between 28th April and 13th July. At least one pair, probably 2, was at Marley SF with evidence of successful breeding and 6 pairs were at Fairburn Ings. Birds remained at Staveley NR until 2nd August with a maximum of 3 on 29th April.

VC 65 Only reports were from Catterick and Colsterdale.

SAVI'S WARBLER *Locustella luscinioides*
Rare migrant

VC 64 One singing and tape-recorded at Staveley NR from 6th to 9th June (RE: PTT et al).

AQUATIC WARBLER *Acrocephalus paludicola*
Rare coastal passage migrant, 8 previous records

VC 61 One found and later trapped along the "canal zone" at Spurn on 8th August (MJP). This was the first at the Observatory since 1981, the joint earliest ever and the eighth for the Spurn area.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*
Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant

The breeding population was for the most part, considered to be stable.

VC 61 Numbers reported to be a little lower at LDNNR than in recent years, but 1000 pairs were nonetheless estimated to be present. At TLNR, the 60 pairs estimated to be present showed no change in status. Numbers of breeding pairs were well down at Flamborough however, and fewer were noted at Spurn where no pairs summered (5 in 1996). The latest record was one at North Ferriby on 29th September.

VC 62 The first appeared at Coatham Marsh on 26th April. Present in good numbers during the breeding season around Scarborough, where birds were singing from Oil-seed Rape at Scalby and along the adjacent Vale of Pickering.

VC 63 The first arrived at Blacktoft Sands on the 11th April, with 2 at Winterset Res on 12th and one at Denaby Ings on 15th, but there was no general influx until the last week in April. Impressive counts of singing males occurred at Blacktoft Sands where there were 90; at Broomhill Ings, 52; at Winterset

Res, 42; at Pugney's CP, 39; at Thorpe Marsh, 25 and at Potterie Carr where there were at least 20. There were late records at Thrybergh CP on 23rd September, at Scammonden Res on 27th September and at Southfield Res on the 6th October.

VC 64 47 pairs nested at Fairburn Ings, 22 singing males were located at Marley SF with additional confirmed breeding from Staveley NR and Hay-a-Park GP.

BLYTH'S REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Rare vagrant, 5 previous records

VC 61 A first-winter bird appeared in a mist net during routine ringing at Flamborough on 21st October. It was released at South Landing where it showed well to a large number of visiting birdwatchers, until last seen on the 24th (PAL: JMP: NAP: DAR *et al*).

MARSH WARBLER *Acrocephalus palustris*

Scarce passage migrant; occasional rare breeding species

VC 61 At Spurn, one singing at the Point on 31st May (LJD: DRM: PJA *et al*).

VC 63 One bird at Potterie Carr on the 8th June, sang in territory from the 10th to 14th June, adding a new species to the Doncaster list (JH; DC *et al*).

EURASIAN REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Widespread breeding summer visitor to south and east; uncommon passage migrant

VC 61 The first was singing at Wheldrake Ings on 18th April. Increased numbers were reported from the LDNNR, where a broad estimate of 130 singing males reflects the larger area of reeds now present around the valley. A successful season involving about 40 pairs at TLNR, further strengthened the species presence in the VC. Scarce however on the coast with only 2 spring records from Filey and 2 in the autumn; one spring record from Flamborough and 4 in autumn, and small numbers of between one and 3 at Spurn from 13th May to 2nd July and from 7th August to 28th September. The last was at TLNR on 14th October.

VC 62 An excellent year in the Scarborough district with at least 40 singing males. Habitat creation at Wykeham Lakes has no doubt helped to swell the local population, though birds are being discovered in other areas along the coasts. In contrast, and for no apparent reason, just one single migrant recorded at Whitby, this being on 28th to 29th September.

VC 63 The first arrivals were in April at Potterie Carr on the 20th, at Pugney's CP on 24th and at Blacktoft Sands, Bolehill Flash and Denaby Ings on the 26th. There were high numbers of singing males at Blacktoft Sands (250), and lesser counts of 31 singing males from Wintersett Res, 30 singing males at Pugney's CP, and at least 25 pairs at each of Thorpe Marsh and Potterie Carr. Lingering birds provided late records from Pugney's CP on the 24th September, from Old Denaby on 28th September and at Tyrham Hall on the 14th October.

VC 64 An estimated 40 pairs nested at Fairburn Ings with probable breeding at Staveley NR where there were 18 on 14th June. Somewhere between 10 and 15 pairs were in the Swillington area, this thought to be down on 1996 levels.

VC 65 The only one was at Kirby Wiske in May, but no evidence of breeding.

ICTERINE WARBLER *Hippolais icterina*

Scarce coastal passage migrant, more common in autumn

VC 61 Spring records came from Flamborough on 21st May with a later bird on the 15th June and from Filey, where a single remained between 22nd and 24th May. It was a bumper autumn for this species, particularly in the Spurn area, where about 15 individuals were thought to be involved. The series began with a bird trapped at the Warren on the 8th August, then a second near Rose Cottage on the 11th and 12th, before 5 arrived on 17th, with an additional bird in Kilnsea. One was at Flamborough on 18th, before the next arrived at the Point at Spurn on 27th, and one next day around the Blue Bell, staying until the 29th. Meanwhile singles appeared at Filey from 28th to 31st and at Flamborough from the 29th to 30th. A bird was present at Spurn in "canal hedge" from 1st to 2nd September when 2 additional birds were on Beacon Lane, Kilnsea. Subsequent singles were at Sammy's Point, Easington on 19th to

20th, Spurn "narrow neck" on 20th and 21st, at Filey on 27th and finally at Flamborough from the 27th to 28th.

VC 62 Three records during the autumn involved 2 at South Gare on 27th August (MCo: AJW) and singles at Hawsker on 18th August (TJB) and Ness Point, Whitby on 28th August (JAB).

SUBALPINE WARBLER *Sylvia cantillans*

Rare migrant; annual in recent years and more frequent in spring

VC 61 A female was found at Beacon Ponds, Kilnsea on 19th May (KG).

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*

Scarce coastal passage migrant, very rare in spring

VC 61 Most were found in the south of the county, beginning in Kilnsea on 10th, 15th and 17th August with one nearby at Spurn also on 17th August. Next were in September; one opposite the Blue Bell at Spurn on the 10th, singles at the Warren, Spurn on 19th, at Sammy's Point 19th to 20th, in Easington on 20th, in "canal hedge" at Spurn on 20th, and finally one at the Point, Spurn on the 28th. In contrast, Flamborough recorded only one during the year, a bird near South Landing on the 26th September. In October one was near Rose Cottage at Spurn from 14th to 15th, with another at the Blue Bell from 18th to 19th, one at Sammy's Point, Easington on 19th and one at "black hut" Spurn on 22nd. Further singles in October were reported from Filey on 11th, with a long staying individual along Beacon Lane, Kilnsea daily from 12th to 20th. In total about 17 individuals involved of which 14 were in the Spurn area.

VC 62 Singles at South Gare from 21st to 25th August and 13th to 15th October. Whitestone Point near Whitby scored with one on 21st to 23rd September and nearby Whitby Golf Course attracted one on 18th to 19th October.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Rather uncommon breeding summer visitor, scarcer in north and west; passage migrant

VC 61 Breeding populations variously reported as stable or low. Spring passage was almost entirely restricted to May, the largest site counts being mid-month and including 17 at Spurn on 14th, 7 at Filey on 16th and 6 at Flamborough on 17th. Rather a quiet autumn migration between 12th August and 30th September, involving just one to 3 birds infrequently at both Filey and Flamborough, though more numerous at Spurn where the highest day tally was of 17 on 26th August. Three individuals at Flamborough in late October, on the 17th to 18th, on the 22nd and on the 27th, showed characters which were considered to be incompatible with the nominate race; however the exact origin of these (hence (sub) species involved) is impossible to ascertain on current knowledge.

VC 62 A very small number of migrants during both passage periods, the extreme dates being 7th April at Scalby and 18th October at Burniston.

VC 63 There was a decidedly early bird at Potteric Carr on 6th April, followed by singles at Hail Mary Woods, Sheffield and Broomhill Ings on 20th April. Most sites however, recorded their first arrivals in the first week of May. Society reports list numbers of breeding pairs where that information is available. These approximate figures are known to be very incomplete, but nonetheless revealed at least 8 pairs around Doncaster, 26 around Barnsley, 6 around Rotherham, and 2 around Sheffield. Otherwise there was only one site each in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas where birds were present for more than one date, and in addition, 3 singing males remained throughout at Pugney's CP. Most had departed for warmer climes by the middle of September, the last notified sightings being from Wilthorpe on the 21st September and from Thrybergh CP on the 25th.

VC 64 Eight pairs bred at Fairburn Ings whilst breeding was proven at Lindley Wood and Ben Rhydding in the Bradford area. Singing birds were noted at about 5 sites in the Swillington area during May and at 2 sites in July. There was a late bird in a Low Moor (Bradford) garden on the 11th October.

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 Breeding populations reported as stable at LDNNR but well down at Filey and also well down at TLNR, where the annual breeding birds survey revealed only 12 pairs, a marked reduction from the

previous year's record 36 pairs, and in fact, returning to more normal levels, 54 males held territory at Spurn, a slight increase on the previous year's 46. Spring migration peaks included 20 reported from Filey on 2nd and 25 from Flamborough on 23rd May. Autumn migration slipped quietly by with little notice, one at Spurn from 15th to 21st October being the last.

VC 62 Present in good numbers through the breeding season. The first appeared at Whitby on 15th April and the last at Scarborough Castle on 28th September.

VC 63 The first arrivals, all in April, showed up at South Anston on the 10th, at both Thrybergh CP and Edderthorpe Flash (2) on the 11th and at both Potteric Carr and Denaby Ings on the 12th. The highest breeding estimates came from; Broomhill Ings, where there were 60 males on territory; Blackburn Meadows, 52 singing males on 3rd May; Denaby Ings, 25 pairs; Worsbrough Valley, 24 pairs; Thorne Ashfields, 19 pairs and Pugney's CP, 17 singing males. There were late records at Edderthorpe Flash on the 23rd September, at Wroot on the 25th and at Thrybergh CP on the 28th.

VC 64 Breeding took place at Hay-a-Park GP where 6 pairs and at Staveley NR where 4 pairs, whilst 17 pairs bred at Fairburn Ings, with maximum counts of 40 in May, 50 in June and 65 in July. It was considered to have been a good year in the Bradford area with at least 25 pairs located, these present between 26th April and 21st September, and also in the Swillington area where 15 to 20 pairs were present during the period 20th April to 21st September.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Well distributed breeding summer visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 Little comment on status available, although 12 singing birds in the TLNR area was about par for recent years. Few spring migrants on the coast; surprisingly so at Filey where only 2 records, but also at Flamborough where between one and 3 noted on only 8 dates in May. Spurn did marginally better with one to 2 recorded regularly from 1st May until 14th June and 5 on 20th May. Autumn migration peaked in the latter part of August with a smaller peak towards the end of September, however with the exception of 10 at Spurn on 28th August, only single figures were noted. The last were at both Filey and Flamborough on 18th October.

VC 62 First of the year was at Aislaby on 22nd April whilst the last was a rather late bird on 6th November at Locke Park, Redcar.

VC 63 The first arrivals were at Potteric Carr on the 13th April and at Blackburn Meadows on the 20th. Breeding estimates from the Barnsley area revealed c.90 pairs (including 30 males at Winterset Res); Doncaster area, c.25 pairs; Rotherham area, c.10 singing males; Halifax and Huddersfield areas, at least 20 pairs. Late birds were at Worsbrough Res on 21st September and Thrybergh CP on 15th October.

VC 64 The Bradford area held up to 20 pairs, Fairburn Ings 5 pairs and Temple Newsam, in the Swillington area, reported 5 males in early May. Only 7 spring records from the Harrogate area.

VC 65 The first was watched near Croft-on-Tees on 19th April. A total of 18 singing birds were counted along the River Swale between Langton Bridge and Catterick on 12th May, these increasing to a noteworthy 26 on 25th May.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Widespread breeding summer visitor and passage migrant; winters in south and west

VC 61 Wintering birds included 2 at the Point at Spurn on 15th January. Spring passage began at the start of April with one at Flamborough on 1st and 4 at Filey on the 8th. Daily maxima in spring involved 7 at Flamborough on the 30th April and 9 at Spurn on several dates in late April and early May. A more pronounced passage in autumn, particularly in late September and throughout October, but again counts were rather low, including 10 at Filey and 14 at Flamborough on 26th September, and 12 at Spurn on 27th. Further light passage continued through to 6th November at Flamborough and to the 30th November at Spurn.

VC 62 This year wintering birds were reported from Pickering on 3rd February, Heslington (York) on 22nd November and 2 were at Great Ayton throughout November and December. One in song at Wykeham Lakes on 4th April was the earliest migrant, though like many of the commoner drift migrants, there was only a small coastal movement this year, the maximum from any one site being only 6 at Cornelian Bay on 25th August.

VC 63 Wintering birds, presumably from Continental stock, were noted in all areas. Over 40 were recorded in the January to March period and about 25 in November and December. The main influx in spring was between 30th March and 10th April. High breeding numbers were mentioned in the local reports, for example, up to 100 pairs in the Doncaster area and 220 in the Barnsley area, (quoted as the best year since 1970), which included record counts at several sites, such as 42 pairs at Winterset Res and 40 pairs in the Worshrough Valley.

VC 64 Winter records from the Harrogate area involved a male at Knaresborough during January and 2 females on 5th at Sharow. In February, a female was at Plompton on 17th February and a male plus a female back at Sharow on 19th. It was considered to have been a good breeding season in the Bradford area, where 15 pairs reported with a similar number also at Fairburn Ings. Late singles appeared at Hay-a-Park GP on 22nd November and at Sharow on 30th, before wintering males were located in Knaresborough, Ripon and Harrogate in December.

ARCTIC WARBLER *Phylloscopus borealis*
Rare coastal migrant in autumn

VC 62 A somewhat late bird was at Sandsend Quarry, Whitby on 19th and 20th October (TJB: RSS: AWh), just reward for observers persevering on their local patch.

PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER *Phylloscopus proregulus*
Rare autumn migrant; very rare inland

VC 61 An exceptional year for this rare but increasingly regular Siberian visitor, Flamborough reporting 9 individuals and the Spurn/Easington area 15 individuals. The forerunner of this large influx was at Flamborough on 17th October. The first at Spurn was at the Point from 20th to 23rd October with a second near the Crown and Anchor from 21st to 24th, but these were overshadowed when 5 were found around Easington on 21st and a further 2 at Flamborough, giving a grand total of 9 for the day. One of the Flamborough birds stayed until the 23rd, being joined mid-stay by another, whilst in the Spurn area, a new bird appeared at the Warren on 22nd, (when 2 remained by Easington cemetery, one of these to the 23rd). One was at Filey on 26th staying until the 27th, when more arrived: 4 at Flamborough, one at Spurn "black hut" and one in Kilnsea. On the 28th, one was seen along "canal hedge" Spurn with a second near the Spurn lighthouse, while another was found at Flamborough in South Landing, joining 2 which remained from the previous day. A new bird was found in Easington cemetery on 28th which lingered until 2nd November, with one at Spurn near the churchyard from 4th to 8th and a second bird at "wire dump" on 5th.

VC 62 One was trapped and ringed at Whitestone Point, Whitby on 27th October also being present the following morning.

YELLOW-BROWED LEAF WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*
Scarce autumn passage migrant; rare inland

VC 61 A good year with at least 36 birds, and possibly 44, recorded along the coast. The first to grace the coastline appeared on the 25th September concerning 2 at Filey, 2 at East Newton and singles at both Sammy's Point and Kilnsea. Next day 2 more appeared at Filey and 2 were found at Flamborough, with 4 there on 27th, when one was at Grimston, a fifth at Filey and 5 at Spurn. Numbers increased to 7 at Flamborough on 28th when 7 were also in the Spurn area, these involving one at Sammy's Point, 4 along the peninsula and a further 2 in Kilnsea. One was still at Kilnsea on 29th with another at Spurn, 2 at Flamborough 29th to 30th, and 2 birds remaining at Filey until 30th. In October, singles were at Spurn on 2nd, 7th, 8th, 12th, 13th, 20th and 25th; at Flamborough on 6th, 18th and 20th with 2 on 17th and 21st; at Kilnsea on 12th October, and further singles in Easington on 15th and 25th, at East Newton on 16th and finally at Filey from 22nd to 25th.

VC 62 One in Redcar on 27th September was followed by another nearby in Locke Park the following day. Two birds were in the Whitby area; one at Whitestone Point on 18th September and the other at Hawsker on 18th October. Two were present together at Jackson's Bay, Scarborough from 28th to 30th September.



RADDE'S WARBLER *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

Rare coastal migrant in autumn

VC 61 One was found at the "narrow neck" at Spurn on 19th October (KG *et al*).

DUSKY WARBLER *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Rare coastal migrant in autumn

VC 61 A bird trapped at Spurn on the 28th September, was not seen again until the 5th October, when it made a surprise re-appearance close to where it had been caught (LJD: GF: MJP *et al*).

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Local breeding summer visitor to north and west; scarce passage migrant

VC 61 Single birds were at Barmston on 28th April, at Filey on 2nd, 4th and 8th May, at Flamborough on 3rd, 10th (2) and 11th May and at Spurn on 26th and 28th June. Typically early to return in autumn, beginning with one at the Point, Spurn from 27th to 28th July. In August, further singles at Spurn on 10th, 14th, 30th with 2 there on 13th, one was at Flamborough on 25th, one in Kilnsca on 28th, one at Filey on 29th, with the last at Flamborough on 18th September.

VC 62 No coastal records. Singing birds were noted from several sites including Guisborough Priory and Saltburn Woods in the north of the VC and also around Scarborough at Forge Valley, Silpho, Raincliffe Woods, May Beck and Harwood Dale.

VC 63 The first singles were noted at the Sandbeck Estate on the 27th and Howell Wood on 28th April with a general arrival in the first week of May. The Barnsley area held at least 20 pairs, considered to be about normal; the Halifax area, up to 7 pairs and there were additional birds at single sites in the Huddersfield and Doncaster areas. The last record was of one at Scout Dyke on the 14th September.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, the first 3 were at Strid Woods on the 20th April. The highest breeding numbers were also there, involving 22 males counted on the 14th May. Reported from 8 sites in the Harrogate area. The last record was of 2 at St Ives, Bingley on 2nd August.

COMMON CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant; scarce in winter

VC 61 An over-wintering bird was at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd January and another was at Spurn on the 13th December. The first migrant was at Filey Dams on 5th March. Both migration periods were quiet, with maximum spring counts at the well-watched sites producing 8 at Spurn on 27th April and 10 at

Flamborough on 30th. Comments about breeding status were few, but it was suggested that greater numbers had been present at LDNNR. Autumn migration was noted from mid-September to early November, peaking at up to 6 at Flamborough at the end of October and 9 at Filey on 11th. Occasional individuals showing characteristics of the northern race *P. c. abietinus* were noted from Flamborough. During the spring migration, these included early singles on the 6th and 13th April, followed by others on the 11th May and 2 on the 17th. In autumn, birds considered to have been this race were present on 15 dates, peaking at 5 on 22nd October and 4 on 4th November, whilst one was at Filey from 5th to 13th December. Birds of the race "*tristis*" are much more rare and must be adequately documented.

VC 62 No wintering records. First was one at Sealby on 5th March and the last 2 were at Scarborough Castle on 2nd November. A bird showing characteristics of the race *P. c. abietinus* was at Whitby on 1st October.

VC 63 Only about 5 wintering birds were recorded in January and February, with more, about 16 in fact, in the November to December period. Spring arrivals were noted from 1st March, with many located by mid-month and birds then present through the summer until November, though the latest stragglers may have involved wintering birds. There were good breeding counts in all areas, including 122 singing males in the Barnsley area and at least 80 in the Doncaster area. Birds were noted showing characteristics of the race *P. c. abietinus* at Within Clough on 20th September and at Thorpe Marsh on 2nd October.

VC 64 Present in the Bradford area from 9th March until 22nd October, where good numbers bred, and also considered to be widespread throughout the Harrogate area. Passage birds numbered up to 20 at Temple Newsam throughout April. Reported in all months from Fairburn Ings with a maximum of 8 in both May and June and 2 pairs were breeding. Wintering birds were noted at Dowley Gap in the Bradford area in the early months and 3 singles were at Swillington Ings in the later months.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Abundant summer visitor and passage migrant

VC 61 No apparent change in breeding status, although 90 pairs at TLNR was a better than average total. Early birds inland were at Thornton Ellers on 30th and in Hull on 31st March, these beating the first on the coast, at Spurn and Filey on 1st April. Filey went on to record 20 on the 28th April, which included some with characteristics of the northern race *P. t. acredula*. At Flamborough 21 were recorded on 30th April, but the main arrival involved 66 on 1st May, the latter also including 6 *acredula* and similarly at Spurn where the largest influx brought 72 on 27th April and 60 on 1st May. The main month for autumn passage was August, when birds were logged daily along the coast. Peak counts at Spurn were 80 on the 15th, 100 on the 22nd and 120 on the 28th, whilst those for Flamborough were 52 on the 15th and 60 on the 23rd and at Filey, 44 on the 24th. Seven birds attributable to *acredula* were reported from Flamborough between 18th and 25th August. September was much quieter for passage, with mostly single figure counts until the last at Spurn on 29th October.

VC 62 The first was early on 24th March at Brompton near Scarborough, then a more general arrival from April 8th. The largest site count during autumn was 20+ at Hawsker on 30th August, including one showing characteristics of the race *P. t. acredula*.

VC 63 There were early arrivals at Thybergh CP on 23rd March and at Potteric Carr on the 25th. Subsequent high counts of breeding birds throughout the VC included 120 in the Worsbrough Valley and 131 at Wintersett Res. Late records came from Firsby Res on the 6th October and at Listerdale Wood on the 11th.

VC 64 In April, there were 35 males at Marley SF on 26th and up to 60 at Temple Newsam, with good breeding numbers reported from both these areas. A total of 33 pairs were logged at Fairburn Ings producing post-breeding counts of 70 in July and 93 in August.

VC 65 Two at Great Langton on 6th April were the first.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Well distributed resident and passage migrant, occasionally in large numbers

VC 61 Breeds in suitable habitat. Insignificant counts during a disappointing spring migration, peaking at just 8 at Filey on 23rd March. More noticeable in autumn, migrants arriving in numbers on several

dates: on the 30th August when 50 were at Spurn; on 5th and 6th September when 55 were at Filey; on 30th September when 125 were at Flamborough and 75 were at Spurn; on 21st October when 220 were at Flamborough and on 22nd October when 95 were at Spurn. This influx was also noted inland, with 80 at TLNR on 22nd October.

VC 63 All societies described the status as "normal" and breeding numbers in areas of suitable conifer plantations as "high" or "common". 54 were caught and ringed at Melton Wood near Doncaster on 15th November out of at least 200 present

VC 64 No apparent status change in the Harrogate area with widespread records in the winter months and early spring and many breeding pairs. 16 were at Fairburn Ings in October and 25 in November.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant; bred in 1995

A generally mediocre year.

VC 61 As always, the first migrants appeared in March, beginning with one at Burton Buses, Beverley Westwood on 12th, followed by singles at Spurn on 15th, at Sammy's Point, Easington on 21st and at Flamborough on 30th. The rest of the spring migrants were all at Spurn; on 8th and 27th April and another on 1st May. The next was one at Spurn on 28th September, then up to 3 regularly there from 21st to 31st October, 2 being present to 2nd November and a single from the 5th to the 8th. Only 3 sightings emanated from Flamborough, all in Old Fall, on 17th to 18th, 27th to 29th October and on the 1st November, whilst Filey attracted 2 from 28th October to 1st November. One occasionally appeared in a Hornsea garden from 29th October to 6th November.

VC 62 Singles occurred at Ness Point, Whitby on 17th March, with a tit flock at Sinnington on 24th September and at Scarborough Castle on 6th October.

VC 63 One was at Blacktoft Sands on the 31st March. A male at Broomhead Wood on 30th May, may possibly be the same individual which was present "in the north-west area of Sheffield" from 1st June to 5th July (AD). A male at Midhope Res on 16th and 23rd June (MCW) and one at Blackburn Meadows from the 5th to 12th December (RH).

VC 65 A bird was trapped and ringed in Foxglove Covert, Catterick Garrison on 16th March (AC).

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Widespread breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, decreasing in recent years

VC 61 A scarce, but probably under-recorded breeding bird in the VC. The first was one at Wheldrake Ings on 30th April, but generally scarce at LDNNR, with the largest count being 11 at Wheldrake Ings on 3rd September. Near Beverley, 10 were noted at Burton Buses during August. Insignificant coastal passage was noted, with 7 at Flamborough on 17th May and 9 on 6th September. Late birds were at Filey, Flamborough and Spurn all on the 28th September though the latest of all was inland at TLNR on the 29th.

VC 62 Coastal passage was very light with a maximum of 7 at Sandsend Quarries on 7th August.

VC 63 The first singles were all in May, at Wymingbrook on the 2nd, at Axle Lane, South Anston on the 6th and at Hardcastle Crags on the 9th. In the Doncaster area there were at least 23 breeding pairs, 17 of these at Wilsic, and in the Barnsley area at least 20 breeding pairs scattered amongst 9 sites. There were probably less than 10 pairs located in the each of the Rotherham and Sheffield areas and even fewer in the Huddersfield and Halifax areas. The species apparently continues to decline but could be under-recorded.

VC 64 At least 10 pairs in the Bradford area and 5 in the Harrogate area, where a high rate of failure was noted. The only records from Fairburn Ings were of 3 in August and 4 in September.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula parva*

Scarce coastal passage migrant, rare in spring

VC 61 One was at Sammy's Point, Easington on 21st September and one at "black hut" Spurn from late evening on 27th to early morning on 28th. Two were at Flamborough on 27th, with singles there on 29th, when a first-winter was at Grimston. Flamborough attracted another on 15th October and the final bird appeared at the Warren, Spurn in the late afternoon of 21st October.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Breeding summer visitor to moorland fringes; passage migrant more common in autumn

VC 61 A male was at TLNR from 17th to 23rd April and a female there on 1st May. On the coast, the first of a poor showing arrived at Spurn on 27th April, then 3 singles there in May and 4 at Filey. Flamborough fared a little better, with 11 bird-days in May, including 3 on both the 22nd and 24th. In autumn, present almost daily on the coast from 6th August (Spurn) to the 19th October (Flamborough). Peak arrivals were mostly in August, such as 14 at Filey on 17th and 27 at Spurn on 28th. Associated with these were 5 in the East Newton/Aldbrough area on the 28th August, with singles on 5 dates at Barmston between the 8th and 28th. In September, 18 were at Flamborough on 26th, increasing next day when 9 were at Filey, 35 at Flamborough and 11 at Spurn.

VC 62 No reports of breeding birds. Only 3 spring passage birds were noted, one in Scarborough and 2 on the south Tees. A total of 37 birds passed through the Whitby area with a maximum of 11 there on 27th September. In comparison only 3 birds were seen around Scarborough all autumn!

VC 63 The first 2 males were reported at Cliffe Wood, Langsett on 22nd April. There was little definite evidence of breeding status, the probable total number of pairs being as follows: Barnsley 4, Huddersfield 2 and Halifax 3. The last records of the year came from Blackburn Meadows on 17th September and near Knottingley on 23rd September.

VC 64 The first record came from Bolton Abbey Woods on 15th April. Nesting was confirmed at Scar House and Harlow Carr, 4 pairs bred at Newhouses and up to 15 nest boxes were known to be occupied in Wharfedale and the Washburn Valley. The last sighting was at Marley SF on 25th August.

VC 65 The only reports on breeding status came from Haekfall Wood and West Tanfield, where in nest boxes, only 3 pairs bred successfully compared with 6 in 1996.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Breeding resident along upper Humber/Ouse; occasional irruptive immigrant from the Continent

VC 61 Two were discovered in reedbeds at Saltend, Hull on 29th April, staying through the summer to breed, with a juvenile noted on 12th August and 2 birds still present on 24th September. This habitat has now been lost to industry. A pair was at Wheldrake Ings on 14th October, a single there on 21st and 4 birds from 29th to 31st.

VC 63 70 pairs bred at Blacktoft Sands. The highest counts made, presumably showing when birds were irrupting, were of 250 on 10th October and of 150 on 6th November.



LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus**Common resident except on high ground to west*

VC 61 Reports suggested an increase in numbers, with several flocks noted at Filey, Flamborough and in Hull and good breeding success confirmed at TLNR. Coastal passage was noted at Flamborough between 28th September and 23rd November, where up to 20 birds were recorded on the 3rd November and at Spurn where 3 flocks totalled 19 birds on 30th October.

VC 62 The larger gatherings were of 34 birds at Wykeham Lakes on 19th February, of 50 at Lovell Hill, Great Ayton on 26th May and of between 30 and 40 at Skelton Castle on 10th June.

VC 63 Thought to be maintaining or increasing its numbers in suitable habitats throughout the VC. In the Doncaster area the highest counts of breeding pairs were 28 at Melton Wood, 17 at Wilsic and 15 at Potteric Carr, and 6 sites hosted feeding flocks of between 30 and 50 birds. In the Rotherham area 25 pairs were located and in the Barnsley area numbers were reportedly very high. The Sheffield area boasts a widespread population and there were at least 8 sites with autumn flocks of between 35 and 50 birds, though the largest gathering by far was a pre-roost flock of about 120 birds at Walkley on each day between the 24th and 26th September. Other large flocks included 60 at Storrs Mill Wood on 27th October and 69 at Nostell Park on 7th December.

VC 64 The highest count was of 100 in the High Batts NR recording area on 5th January with 40 at both Stavley NR in July and Farnham GP in November. Reported in all months from Fairburn Ings where 12 pairs bred and the maximum count was of 69 in June. At Temple Newsam, aggregate flock totals revealed up to 80 in both winter periods.

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris**Thinly distributed resident, scarce in south-east and south-west*

VC 61 Scattered pairs were reported in the Derwent Valley with breeding proven at Thornton Ellers, and birds also noted at Houghton Woods and along the western edge of the Wolds, including South Dalton. Two records from west Hull were the most easterly reports.

VC 62 Widely reported from woods around Scarborough with breeding proved at one site and possibly at another.

VC 63 Present in the Doncaster and Rotherham areas only. The main stronghold is the parkland to the south-west of Maltby including Roche Abbey, where there were at least 10 birds on 10th February, and the Sandbeck and Firbeck Estates, where positive information exists for only 4 pairs. Wilsic reported one to 2 on various dates between February and October.

VC 64 Reported from 15 sites between Hell Wath and Wetherby with breeding confirmed at 4 of these. Six birds were counted at Fountains Abbey and at High Batts NR in January. The Bradford area could muster only 5 records, none in former breeding areas and most coming from Marstons NR.

WILLOW TIT *Parus montanus**Thinly distributed resident, scarcest in the east and declining in most areas*

VC 61 The majority of records were from the west of the VC. Coastal reports typically scarce, just one in Primrose Valley in June, one at Filey CP in July and one at South Landing, Flamborough from 18th August to 9th November. East of the Wolds the only evidence of breeding was a party of 4, including 2 juveniles, seen at TLNR on 29th August, although a single bird was seen at PHENR on 29th June. Elsewhere one was at Armyn on 5th March with an adult and 2 fledged young there on 11th July, one excavated a decaying stump at Saltmarsh Delph on 5th May and pairs reported at both Thornton Ellers and Wheldrake Ings. One was at Heslington, York on 22nd November.

VC 62 Reported from 16 sites through the year but mostly of irregular sightings with no proven breeding.

VC 63 In the Doncaster area at least 25 pairs were located, plus a good number on Thorne Moors, where 15 birds were logged on 31st October. Much smaller numbers bred around Rotherham, though the species was described as "fairly common" in the Sheffield area, particularly in the eastern parts of that area. A grand total of at least 37 pairs were found in the Barnsley area at 10, mostly lowland, sites. Further to the west little information, though considered to be under-recorded in the Huddersfield area where only 3 to 6 pairs were located with apparently no records at all from the Halifax area.

VC 64 Up to 6 birds frequented Fairburn Ings throughout the year, but noted only occasionally in the Bradford area with no proof of breeding. Bred however at Staveley NR and High Batts NR. Singles observed at Fellbeck and Dallowgill were the first records for Upper Nidderdale since 1987.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

Common resident and passage migrant in small numbers

VC 61 No change in status reported. One was at Spurn on 20th November.

VC 63 Very numerous in conifer woodlands in the VC and obviously flourishing, but few records of any significance. The highest counts came from Howell Wood where there were up to 30 during the winter months.

VC 64 A maximum of 4 at Fairburn Ings throughout the year. Widespread in the Harrogate area with breeding recorded at 7 sites.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

Abundant resident and passage migrant in small numbers

VC 61 No change in status. Coastal migration was noted in September when the highest count of 60 was made at Flamborough on 26th.

VC 63 Very common throughout the VC. Large counts of breeding pairs came from the Doncaster area such as 40 pairs at Wilsic, 29 at Potteric Carr and 22 at Denaby Ings. The largest flocks were generally attracted to feeding stations such as Denaby Ings, where up to 80 gathered in the winter months. Elsewhere, 100 were at Cragg Vale (off Calder Valley) on 6th September and 97 were counted in Lister Woods on 22nd February. Indicative of the high numbers in the VC were the 60 caught and ringed at Finningly Park on the 24th June.

VC 64 Between 34 and 53 were recorded from Fairburn Ings during the year, with 23 breeding pairs. Three nest box schemes in the Harrogate area produced a whacking 210 young.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Abundant resident and passage migrant in small numbers

VC 63 There were few comments in the reports apart from "very common". Potteric Carr held 27 pairs and Wilsic 31, where flocks often peaked at 60 between March and October.

VC 64 Occurred in similar numbers to the previous species at Fairburn Ings where 19 breeding pairs were located. The thriving population in the Harrogate and Ripon areas was further augmented by the provision of nest boxes; 20 pairs taking advantage of such homes raised 141 young.

WOOD NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Well distributed resident in the north, west and south, but absent from the south-east

VC 61 The only report was of a male at Thicket Priory, Wheldrake Ings on 11th April, though birds are apparently resident around Strensall village.

VC 63 The species has been increasing and spreading in the VC for up to 30 years, with more obvious progress in the last 10 years. Doncaster, Rotherham, Barnsley and Huddersfield Reports all pass comments to this effect and quote examples of new breeding colonies. The Doncaster area hosted 23 pairs, with at least 2 new sites visited. Around Rotherham, birds bred at 10 localities, whilst 12 pairs were in the Barnsley area and 5 additional males singing at other sites. Perhaps less frequent further west, though 6 pairs were around Huddersfield, one being at a new site, and one pair was at a new site near Halifax. The highest count for the year was of 12 seen at Nostell on 17th August.

VC 64 Little change in status overall. Fountains Abbey remains the best site in the Harrogate area, but birds are being increasingly recorded in mature trees and at garden feeders in Harrogate town itself. In the Bradford area, breeding was reported from 5 sites with birds known to be present at several others.

EURASIAN TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Well distributed resident, absent from higher ground

VC 61 Scattered pairs reported from suitable woodland. A bird trapped at Filey on 3rd October showed characteristics of the northern nominate race *C. f. familiaris*.

VC 63 Like a number of sensitive species, it seems to be benefiting from the run of relatively mild, frost-free winters. There were good numbers in all areas but few counts reported. 29 pairs located at 10 sites in the Barnsley area and 15 pairs at 4 sites in the Doncaster area.

VC 64 Recorded throughout the year in small numbers, with up to 6 in May at Fairburn Ings where 2 pairs bred and 7 were at High Batts NR on 5th January.

EURASIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*
Scarce passage migrant mainly in spring; bred in 1992

VC 61 A typical showing. In May, a male was at Spurn on 10th, a male at Filey on 18th, a "green" bird at Spurn "wire dump" on 20th with possibly the same bird at the Point on 22nd, and a male singing at South Landing, Flamborough on 23rd. Records in June featured a female at Flamborough on 7th and a male at PHENR on 15th (DGH).

VC 62 At a location near Scarborough, a male was heard in song on two dates in June.

VC 65 A female was seen by the River Swale near Catterick, during waterways bird census work on 12th May (JRE).

ISABELLINE SHRIKE *Lanius isabellinus*
Rare vagrant in autumn, 4 previous records

VC 61 At Spurn, a first-winter bird was found at the "narrow neck" on 23rd September (RB: MJP *et al*).

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*
Scarce passage migrant; formerly bred

VC 61 A good spring showing. The first was a female present at Spurn from 16th to 17th May, with a male at the Point on 24th, a male in the "triangle" on 25th, 2 females in "canal hedge" on 30th and a male, once again at the Point on 31st. Filey hosted a male from 22nd to 24th and Flamborough singles on 24th and 26th May and 6th June. Also in June, a male at Spurn on 1st, another at Welwick on 4th, further males at Spurn on 6th and 9th, and a female there from 10th to 12th. Less conspicuous in autumn, when August sightings involved 2 at Flamborough on 18th, another 2 there on 24th to 25th and a single on 27th. A juvenile remained in Kilnsea from 24th to 27th September.

VC 62 Adult males graced South Gare on 19th to 20th May with one slightly inland at Howden Hill near Scarborough on 25th May. Two juveniles were found in the autumn, again one inland, this time at Harland Moor (Hutton-le-Hole) on 28th August and also one, more expectedly, at Whitestone Point on 30th September.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*
Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 A poor year for this species. One was seen at Wheldrake Ings on 2nd February and a second bird was present at nearby Fulford Ings from at least 5th to 27th February (REC), although it may have been there since 1996. Typical of recent years, few coastal reports; one seen at Spurn "wire dump" on 16th October was presumably the same bird that was at the Point on 17th and later flew off to the south-west, whilst one was seen briefly at Danes Dyke, Flamborough on 9th November.

VC 63 One at Treeton Dyke on 1st March (EAF) and one at Greave Clough, Widdop on 4th and 5th April (PG *et al*).

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator*
Rare migrant, mainly in spring; 4 autumn records

VC 61 A female was found at Filey on the early date of 1st May (NPS *et al*) and a tail-less adult was between Kilnsea and Easington on 30th May (NPW: photo IGI).

EURASIAN JAY *Garrulus glandarius*
Well distributed resident but absent from most of the high ground and the south-east

VC 61 East of the Wolds, the only places where this species was regularly noted were Hornsea Mere, Rise Hall and Burton Constable Hall, with additional singles at PHENR in May and in Hull during

September. On the coast at Spurn, there was a sizeable influx in spring. The first was on 30th April, then singles on 4 early dates in May until 3 on 14th, 9 on 15th, with one to 2 then daily to 22nd and 5 on 23rd. Most birds were U-turning or passing south, though one or 2 remained continuously at the Point 15th to 22nd. Obviously associated with this movement were 2 at Sammy's Point, Easington on 22nd May and one there on 27th May. Flamborough recorded singles on 2 dates during this period and on 3 dates in September.

VC 62 Relatively common in mixed woodlands, but no evidence of passage this year.

VC 63 There were 15 birds in Listerdale Wood on 11th October. Comments were made in both the Sheffield and Rotherham reports of an increase in the frequency of visits to gardens.

VC 64. Overall numbers and breeding success was apparently maintained. Thinly but widely distributed in the Harrogate area with a maximum of 7 at Farnham GP on 30th September and a total of 11 at Fairburn Ings in October.

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common resident, increasing in urban areas; forms large winter roosts

VC 61 No change in status reported.

VC 63 A roost at Firshy Res lchd 116 on 31st January, 115 on 6th March and 40 on 6th April. Blackburn Meadows similarly held 50 roosting on 3rd May, this large count on such a late date suggests that local breeding populations are at their limits and these represent non-breeders (*c.f.* Carrion Crow). There were 60 at Broomhill Ings on 2nd March and 100 at Carlton Marsh on the 17th August.

VC 64 Common at Fairburn Ings with a maximum of 40 in May and 35 in both April and July.

EURASIAN JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Resident on the cliffs from Flamborough northwards and in suitable habitat elsewhere, with no change in status reported. High counts included 4800 at TLNR in November. Some movement was noted at Spurn from mid-October to mid-November, with a peak of 55 on 28th November. Birds showing characteristics suggesting the nominate race *C. m. monedula*, with its slightly paler nape, marginally paler underparts and slight neck collar, were seen at Hornsea Mere in January, at the Leven by-pass in February, at Watton NR in September and at Brigham Quarry in October. However, the status of these eastern forms in the County is not yet clear, as not all birds are identifiable. Some *monedula* exhibit little in the way of neck collars and paler napes, whilst the better-marked examples approach the distinctiveness of the more eastern race *soemmeringii*. Counts along the coast at migration times in March, October and November do however indicate that some Continental birds are involved.

VC 63 Roosting birds were noted at Cragg Vale (Halifax) where 607 birds flew south-east to roost on 5th October and 770 on the 17th. Similarly at Carlton Marsh, where 247 were logged flying north to roost on 2nd January, whilst in December, up to 300 gathered at dusk at each of Potteric Carr, Levitt Hagg and Denaby Ings. The largest feeding flocks were 700 at Brierley on 4th February and 1000 at nearby Winterset Res on 16th February. Up to 300 were at Grimethorpe and Darrington in January, at Potteric Carr in March and at both Broadstones and Thorpe Marsh in August. Unfortunately like most corvids, very much under-recorded, as these counts are not exceptional, but are the highest submitted.

VC 64 The largest flocks were of 1213 flying south-east at Barden on 13th January, 1000 at High Batts NR in September and 1000 flying over Rossett Green en route to the Beckwithshaw roost in October.

VC 65 1000 birds were at Scorton 12th January.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Overall the population was thought to be stable, although roost flocks at TLNR may have been down. The rookery at Flamborough remained fairly constant at 78 occupied nests. Passage was regularly noted at Spurn from 13th March to 28th May, and again in October, though involving no more than 60 birds on any one day.

VC 63 Remains common throughout the VC. There were 2200 at Carlton Marsh on 2nd February and a regular pre-roost gathering of 1500 congregated at Wroot in November and December, whilst the

Ecclesall Woods roost held 4500 corvids, mostly this species, on 13th December. Four pairs nested on electricity pylons at Bolehill Flash near Sheffield.

VC 64 The maximum counts were 400 at South Stainley in September and 1000 flying over Rossett Green in October, presumably on their way to the Beckwithshaw roost.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Increasing resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Coastal passage was noted from mid-March to mid-May, and again in late September to October. Largest counts were in the latter month involving 68 on 11th at Spurn and 130 on 27th at Flamborough.

Singles of the distinctively plumaged Hooded Crow *C. c. cornix* were at Catfoss Lane on 2nd February, Bethel's Bridge on 9th February, North Duffield on 7th March, Spurn on 8th and 13th March, and at Filey on 23rd March and 29th October. One was also at Decoy Farm near TLNR on 25th November.

VC 62 Single *C. c. cornix* were at Dunsdale Tip from 1st January to 9th February, at Hawsker on 5th March, at Cromer Point Scarborough on 2nd April and in Sleddale on 15th November.

VC 63 The growing number of reports of roosts and large flocks during the breeding season, suggests that many locations may be exceeding the carrying capacity of local breeding sites (see comment in *Sheffield B.S.G.* report). Several flocks of non-breeding birds were noted on upland farmland and moorland fringes in the Huddersfield area, particularly in April and May and especially around Scammonden. Elsewhere, the high counts were all made at roosts; 150 gathered to roost at Thorne Moors on 9th and 23rd February, rising to 180 on the 2nd November. At Potteric Carr, 126 gathered on an ice covered Low Ellers on 4th January. At High Royd SF, near Myrtholmroyd, a year round roost, held 90 on 14th March, 120 on 4th May, 50 on 14th June and 66 on 29th July. Other large counts were made at Broomhill Ings, 67 on 20th September; at Carlton Marsh, 160 on 2nd September; at Listerdale Woods, 70 on 11th October and at Went Ings, 70 on 27th October.

Sightings of wintering *C. c. cornix* have declined in recent years, so it was no surprise that just one individual was reported, at Darrington GC on the 4th, 6th, 13th and 20th February.

VC 64 Four pairs bred at Fairhum Ings where birds were recorded every month with a maximum of 50 in September. Astley Lake hosted 80 in November and December.

COMMON RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Scarce resident, breeding in north-west where increasing slowly; rare in the east

VC 61 One being pursued by 4 Carrion Crows at TLNR on 26th August (TR *et al*) was the first record for the site.

VC 63 A total of 32 records covering all months were received from the Huddersfield, Barnsley and Sheffield societies, nearly all relating to the Peak District moors along the south-west Yorkshire boundary. Most concerned only one or 2 birds, with higher numbers as follows: Ewden, 3 on 6th January; Howden Moor, 4 on 12th February; Pike Low, 3 on 12th February; Redmires, 4 west on 9th April; Holme Moss, 4 on 2nd May; Rod Moor, 4 on 12th October; Little Don Valley, 4 on 27th October. In the Halifax area, there were 37 records (up from 25 in 1996) in all months except November, usually of one to 2 birds, but 4 were in one area on the 29th and 30th March. Records away from the immediate moorland fringe were few, one flew over Savile Park on 1st February and 2 flew over Pontefract on 15th May.

VC 64 The Bradford area had well over 30 records covering all months except May to August. Although the bulk of these were in Wharfedale, they did include sightings at Timble Ings on 24th October, Addingham on 30th November and 4 near Barden Res on 29th October. In the early part of the year a single bird was at Gouthwaite Res on 13th March, being seen again in September, then 3 in October, one of which remained to the year-end. Further singles were nearby at Scar House Quarry in September and again in November.

VC 65 One in Colsterdale on 21st January. A bird carrying yellow wing-tags was seen being mobbed by a Peregrine Falcon in Arkengarthdale on 3rd February.

COMMON STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor, but not in former numbers

VC 61 The largest counts by far were inland, particularly at TLNR where 7000 gathered in fields adjacent to the reserve on 26th and 30th October and also at nearby PHENR where a roost regularly held 2000 birds in autumn and winter. The first large counts from the coast were of 1000+ daily at Spurn from 9th March until the 23rd peaking at 1600 on 9th, after which numbers dropped to double figures until June. A mid-summer build-up at Flamborough comprised 460 mostly juvenile birds on 15th June and likewise 500 were at Spurn from June to mid-October. Peak months of passage were October and November. Migrants included 500 "in-off" the sea at Filey on 25th September, 1000 to 3000 daily at Spurn between the 15th and 30th October, these including 3000 on 22nd and 2000 to 3000 daily from 27th to 30th. Meanwhile the largest counts at Flamborough were of 600 on 26th and 1000 on 27th October. In November, between 1000 and 1500 were at Spurn on 4th and 5th.

VC 63 Considered to be declining as a winter visitor in the Barnsley and Sheffield areas. The highest early year count was of 2500 at Darrington on 2nd March. Post-breeding flocks were widespread in mid-summer when 5000, mostly juveniles, were feeding at Broadstones on 3rd July. At Rod Moor, westerly movements were 50% down on 1996, though these nevertheless totalled 8250 during the October to November period, including 2340 on 17th October. These movements were also witnessed at Wilsic, where 4150 flew west on 17th October. Large feeding flocks were also found at Hazelhead, Penistone, totalling 6000 on 11th October and at Martin Common, Bawtry, where 2500 throughout December. A roost in Sheffield city centre totalled 800 on the 18th June, though much larger numbers gathered to roost in the reedbeds at Blacktoft Sands, involving up to 15000 on 17th October.

VC 64 2500 flew over Caldene Fields going to roost on the 18th August. Post-breeding flocks held 2000 at Fairburn Ings in June and July and a summer roost at Staveley NR also held 2000 birds.

ROSY STARLING *Sturnus roseus*

Rare vagrant

VC 61 A juvenile first found in the caravan site at Kilnsea on 27th September, roamed with the local Common Starlings and later moved to the "triangle" at Spurn where it remained until 28th (WHP: AS: BPW *et al.*).

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Common resident, decreasing in recent years

VC 61 A decline was noted at Filey where the species was described as "still abundant" in 1996. It is still a common bird at Flamborough, but the late summer flocking of previous years no longer seems to be a feature. A flock of 200 was just north of TLNR on 16th January and 320 were at Haversham Farm in the Hull Valley on 26th October. The undoubted decline in the numbers of this species, is demonstrated by counts at Spurn not exceeding 50. Up until the mid-1970's, regular southerly movements in autumn were noted here, peaking at 2100 flying south on 13th October 1976.

VC 63 The Sheffield group reported "no indication of any halt in the decline", whilst the Halifax and Huddersfield areas, hinted at a decline in some urban districts, but not necessarily throughout. The only positive statement came from the Barnsley area, where the decline in the south was thought to have been "redressed a little". The numbers visiting gardens around Doncaster continued to be relatively low, though 100 gathered in a garden at Wath (Rotherham) in January. Large feeding flocks were almost non-existent but did include 200 at Broomhill Ings on 23rd February, 150 at Thrybergh CP in early August and 300 in the Idle Valley in December.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, coverage was considered to be poor and consequently the species is likely to have been under-recorded. Two pairs bred at Fairburn Ings with peak numbers of 120 in May and 88 in June. 100 frequented a Ripon farm in September and October.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Resident, decreased markedly in recent years

VC 61 A scarce resident, but one whose fortunes can be helped by the concerned birdwatcher – note the thriving population based on nest boxes erected in the vicinity of Filey Dams. Three pairs also used nest

boxes at Wansford, and such a venture could be used to consolidate existing populations at North Bransholme, PHENR, Stamps Pond and Watton Carrs. There were 37 occupied nest sites at Spurn, where spring flocks comprised 60 in March, 80 in April and 100 on 8th May. In addition 70 flew south at Spurn on 10th October. In the LDNNR 300 were noted at Thornton on 4th January and 250 at Wressle on 5th. At Flamborough, the winter flocks contained fewer birds than previous years with maxima of 25 in January and 85 on 17th October.

VC 62 A good year in the south Tees area where at least 17 pairs were proved breeding and several other locations were known to hold birds. The larger flocks in this area were of 40 to 55 in both Aislaby and in Hart village during January and December. Birds were reported throughout the year from the Whitby and Scarborough areas, where at Burniston 100 were counted on 20th March.

VC 63 As the species declines it appears to be decreasing most rapidly from the upland areas in the west. Considered to be very scarce in the following regions: the Halifax area; the higher ground (above 200 metres) in the Huddersfield area; the western side of the M1 in the Barnsley area and the west side of the Sheffield area. Elsewhere, over 20 pairs were located in each of the Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster areas, mainly in agricultural environments. The highest individual counts included 47 at Southfield Res on the 4th and 5th February, 53 at Thrybergh CP on 16th September, 80 at Shaftholme all through September and 60 at Broomhill Ings on 28th and 29th September.

VC 64 Small numbers bred in the Swillington Ings area and 4 pairs bred at Fairburn Ings but no more than 12 birds recorded there in any one month. The largest flocks were of 70 at Marton-le-Moor in December and 30 birds near Silsden on 17th September.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Abundant resident; passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Resident, with increased numbers in winter. Passage on the coast was very light during the spring rarely exceeding double figures, though 100 birds did fly south at Spurn on 16th March. Arrivals on the coast in October included 80 at Flamborough on 4th, 100 at Filey between 15th and 21st, 200 at Spurn on 16th increasing to 280 on 17th, and 200 at Flamborough on 18th.

VC 62 Largest flock reported was of 200 at Wykeham Lakes on 25th March.

VC 63 There were flocks of over 100 birds at several places in the early months peaking at 150 near Wilsie on 8th February. Even higher counts came later in the year involving 255 at Broomhill Ings on 1st September and 300 at Bretton Park on 22nd November. Counts at roost sites revealed 300 at Castle Carr (Luddenden Dean) on 21st March, 252 at Thorpe Marsh on 23rd February and 276 at Redmires on 17th January. The latter roost built to 326 by the 24th March with 245 also there on 29th December. Visible migration detected over Rod Moor peaked at 600 birds moving south-west on 8th October, 430 doing likewise on 17th October and 900 on 11th November.

VC 64 Monthly totals of between 40 and 65 were reported at Fairburn Ings where strangely, considering the above counts, 48 pairs are thought to have bred. A flock of 100 was at High Batts NR in January, with 80 at Leighton Res and 50 at both Gouthwaite Res and Staveley NR that month.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Passage migrant and winter visitor in varying numbers

VC 61 Decidedly scarce in the early part of the year when just a handful of singletons were discovered, though these did include a late bird at Flamborough on the 19th May. More plentiful in autumn when the first migrants arrived on 19th September, then 25 at Sammy's Point, Easington on 26th, 45 at Spurn and 25 at Flamborough on 27th. Numbers were undistinguished in October with 81 at Flamborough on 11th, 80 at Spurn on both the 14th and 16th, 45 at Flamborough on 27th and 56 there on 4th November.

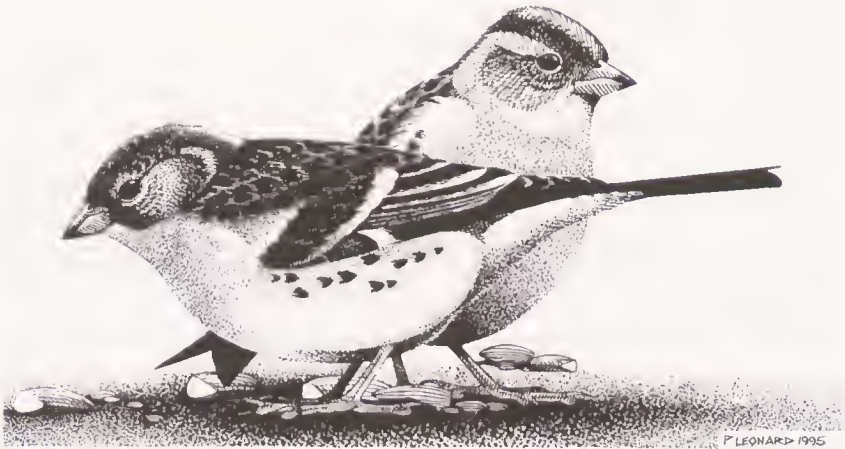
VC 62 A poor year with the largest flocks in the north. A flock of 45 fed near Upleatham during January and February whilst a nice spring group of 23 was in Guisborough on 12th April. Only small numbers were recorded during the autumn, the first being at South Gare on 18th September, a typical date for a first arrival. Subsequently recorded to the year-end with the largest count, a gathering of 52, at Loekwood Beck Res on 23rd November.

VC 63 Small numbers of up to 10 were widely scattered in the early months. Wilsie attracted a feeding flock of 60 amongst other finches on 3rd January, with a similar number at Finningley on the 21st

March. The latest spring emigrants were at Fixby, Huddersfield on 26th April and at Ecclesall (3) on 28th April. Occurred in reasonably good numbers in the latter half of the year, beginning with one at Nostell on 4th October. Then followed a few single figure groups until an obvious influx in mid- to late October, which was most obvious to the west of Sheffield where 126 flew south-west at Rod Moor on 17th October and 114 likewise at Redmires next day. November hosted the largest counts; 1100 at Strines on 6th, 100 at Gorpel Clough on the 9th; 500 at Hollingdale Plantation on the 15th and 300 at Ringinglow on the 24th. During December with flocks settling down for the winter, 300 were at Broomhead all month, 100 nearby at Midhope on the 12th, 100 at Norland on the 5th and 100 were at Bretton on the 13th. Roosts were noted in December at Redmires Res where there were 204 on 29th and also at Langsett Res where 105 on the 30th.

VC 64 Only small numbers in the Bradford area, except up to 50 near Barden on 2nd April. In the late months, 100 were at Swinsty Res on 25th October building to 120 there in December, whilst 200 at Norwood on 1st December could have been the same flock. Other reasonable counts were of 60 at Otley GP on 27th December and 100 at High Batts NR on 16th October.

VC 65 200 were near Brompton-on-Swale on 5th January.



EUROPEAN SERIN *Serinus serinus*

Scarce passage migrant in spring and autumn, with 2 winter records

VC 61 One flew south at Spurn on 26th May.

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Common resident and passage migrant

VC 61 No change in status noted, with a good autumn passage. Up to 200 at Grimston in September, 200 at Easingwold Farm in early October, 250 at Spurn on 18th and 185 at Flamborough on 29th

October. Birds bearing Norwegian rings were controlled at both Filey and Flamborough in October, indicating the origin of at least some of the autumn migrants.

VC 63 Breeding status was considered to be unchanged, though winter flocks were definitely smaller than those of 10 to 20 years ago. A flock of around 200 remained at Wilsic throughout January and February, 120 were at Bingham Park, Sheffield on 2nd January, 104 were at Carr Hill, Sheffield on the 6th September and 100 at Denahy Ings on the 2nd October. Slightly higher counts in November; 170 in the Idle Valley on the 3rd, 150 near Redmires Res on the 12th and 150 at Brampton Common at the end of the month. South-westerly movements were noted at Rod Moor involving 150 on 11th October and 160 on 17th October and also at Redmires Res where 100 on 18th October (213 roosted here on the 29th December).

VC 64 Common in all months at Fairburn Ings with a maximum of 65 in August, though interestingly, only one single seen in October. At Swillington, there were 80 at Newsam Green Farm on 4th January and in the Bradford area, 70 roosted at Esholt on 4th January and 75 flew south-west at Paul Clough on 11th October. The largest flock was of 150 at Staveley NR in November.

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common resident; passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 No change in breeding status reported. Spring passage at Spurn was rather a short-lived affair, from 27th April to 5th May, during which time 100 to 165 flew south almost daily and 675 on 28th April. Autumn movements were concentrated in the last week of September and first 2 weeks of October. Flamborough reported 250 on 26th September and 150 on 27th, whilst the largest counts at Spurn were in October, with southerly counts of 314 on 5th, 415 on 8th, 425 on 10th and 445 on 11th. Inland, 140+ were at Wheldrake Ings on 30th September.

VC 62 No large counts, 48 at Upleatham on 23rd January and 45 at Wykeham Lakes on 12th January were the most reported.

VC 63 An increase in breeding stock was apparent in the Halifax, Huddersfield and Barnsley areas. Few large gatherings were notified during the early months, excepting 100 birds which visited a Brinsworth garden on one January day to feed on linseed. There were only 2 flocks of 50 or more reported during March and in August, 5 flocks of 50 to 75, plus 110 at Broomhill Ings on the 26th. Slightly larger groups noted in September, such as 80 at Scammonden on the 2nd, 90 at Heights Wood, Halifax on the 27th, 100 at Carlton Marsh on the 27th, 175 at Carr Hill, Doncaster on the 15th and 255 at Broomhill Ings on the 15th. In October, similar if not even higher counts; 100 at Thorne Moors on the 4th, 110 at Lindholme on the 6th and 250 at Broomhill Ings on the 16th. A slight decline in visible migration was noted at Rod Moor where the autumn total fell from 1250 in 1996 to 870, with a peak day count of 180 to the south-west on 28th September.

VC 64 In the Bradford area up to 120 were at Glovershaw on 27th August and 100 on Popley Fields on the 30th, and 150 were between Skelton Lake and Astley Lake in the Swillington area on 6th September. 12 pairs bred at Fairburn Ings where monthly totals varied between 12 and 38, but like the last species, almost absent in October when only 2 were reported.

EURASIAN SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Scarce breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Although scarce in the early months, when 30 at TLNR on 21st January and 70 at Thornton on 12th February were the highest counts, it was regularly noted from August. Many were reported from the coast, the first big push being of 83 at Spurn on 31st August. Seen daily thereafter until early November, monthly maxima being 580 on 18th September at Spurn and 71 at Flamborough on 27th, 110 at Spurn on 2th October with 68 at Flamborough and 35 at Filey both on the 25th. Flamborough hosted the best November count of 95 on the 1st. Some of these birds presumably moved inland, resulting in estimates of 400 flying west at Wheldrake Ings on 10th September and a further 300+ on 11th, though 100 did remain and were seen regularly up until the end of the year. 100 resided at TLNR throughout December and 39 at P11ENR on 1st November was a record count for the location.

VC 62 Flocks of 100+ were seen in several forested areas of the North York Moors during the winter months with a much slighter presence during the summer indicating a small breeding population.

Coastal arrivals were noted from mid-September and 55 at Boulby Cliffs on 18th October was the highest number reported.

VC 63 A reasonably good year. Flocks of 50 to 100 were reported from 10 localities during the first 3 months when larger gatherings included 135 at Firsby Res and 400 at Hollingdale Plantation both in February. In March, 400 flew west at Howden Res on the 22nd and large numbers continued to be seen in the forests of the Peak District in April when 375 were still at Hollingdale Plantation on the 2nd. Considered to have bred in good numbers near the following locations; Holmbridge, Langset Res, Little Don Valley, Ewden, Broomhead Res, Agden, Hollingdale Plantation, Wyming Brook and Redmires Res. Passage to the south-west over Rod Moor totalled 2500 during the August to October period with a maximum of 490 on 5th September. Movement was also counted at Broomhill Ings where 413 passed south between 2nd and 8th September and at Strines where 230 flew west on 6th September. Autumn flocks of 50 to 100 were reported from 6 sites in September and October, from 8 sites in November and from 4 in December. Higher numbers included 120 at Newsholme Dean on 24th August, 120 at Withens Clough on 10th September, 160 at Roche Abbey on 19th November and 130 at Dodworth on the 25th December.

VC 64 In the Swillington area, a flock of 40 spent the winter between Fleet Lane and Lemonroyd. The Washburn Valley attracted 100 during January, Barden 150 on the 8th February, Beckwithshaw 150 on 15th February and Laund Pasture 100 on 7th March. Possibly bred at Scar House Res and Birk Crag. Autumn and winter flocks included 220 at Lumb Clough Beck on 24th August, 100 at both Fewston Res and Staveley NR in September with 180 at Gouthwaite Res on 11th of that month. The largest numbers involved 200 at Woodbridge, Ripon and 300 at Bridge Hewick both in November.

VC 65 60 in Colsterdale on 27th December was the largest flock recorded.

COMMON LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Common resident and passage migrant

General opinion on breeding numbers has pointed to a decline in all areas over the last few years but with no noticeable further reduction apparent in 1997.

VC 61 A scattered breeder, with 40 to 50 pairs at Spurn and 20 pairs at TLNR. Flocks included 200 at Filey in February, 185 at TLNR on 6th April, 160 at PHENR on 23rd August and in September, 200+ at Menthorpe on 11th, 250+ at Thornton Ellers on 15th, 230 at TLNR on 21st and 140+ at Wheldrake Ings on 30th. Spring passage was noted on the coast from March to mid-May, with 50 to 400 daily at Spurn and 690 on 28th April. In autumn, good numbers were recorded in late August, September and early October. 250 were at Flamborough on 23rd August and 400 present 27th to 30th September, with the highest counts at Spurn comprising 530 on the 5th and 400 on 8th October.

VC 62 The largest flock noted contained 200 to 250 birds at Burniston during June and July.

VC 63 Pre-breeding season flocks peaked at 210 in fields near Potteric Carr in March and 400 at Winterset Res on 13th and 14th April. Subsequently there were 21 flocks of between 100 to 250 birds in various areas in the post-breeding period, mostly in September and October. Higher numbers included 300 at Edderthorpe Flash on the 6th August, 350 at Southfield Res on the 23rd and 550 at Firsby Res on the 25th. September flocks included 275 at Wilsie between the 4th and 10th and 350 at Broomhill Ings on the 16th. In October, 556 were at Netherwood on the 12th and in November, 500 at Doncaster Carr on 1st. The year finished with counts of 350 at Thrybergh CP on the 15th December and 300 at Netherwood on the 4th.

VC 64 In the first half of the year, the largest flock was of 70 at Ripon SF on 20th April. In the Bradford area breeding was reported as widespread but no actual numbers were quoted. At Swillington Ings, described as "quite scarce" this year with flocks of up to 50 in the early spring and again from October onwards. August flocks included 200 at Quarry Moor, Ripon and 100 at Bishop's Palace.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

Resident, breeding on the Pennines; passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 Remains an occasional visitor, except during the late autumn when variable numbers pass through coastal watchpoints. The only flock noticed in January was of 35 at Barmston, staying most of the month, then no more until March when 2 at Filey, 3 at Cherry Cobb Sands and 24 back at Barmston.

A few birds lingered at Barnston into April, perhaps joined by some new ones, but only small numbers of up to 8 were involved, with the last on the 26th. More frequent in the autumn beginning when 13 flew south at Spurn on 13th September and 30 next day. Small numbers, up to 12, were then recorded with some regularity until early November, mostly flying south, with 54 on 1st November the highest count. Elsewhere, day maxima peaked in October, including 71 at Flamborough on the 23rd and 25 at Sammy's Point, Easington on the 26th. Smaller numbers and less frequent records in November and December, though 26 were at Flamborough on the 23rd December and 12 fed on weed seeds on scrubland in west Hull on the 28th.

VC 62 Up to 24 were regular at South Gare throughout January and February. Excepting these, very scarce, in fact just one bird, this being recorded at Long Nab on 12th January. Autumn passage birds were noted at Whitby, just 2 birds, and Scarborough, 5 birds. As autumn passed to winter, flocks materialized at Saltwick Nab, Whitby where up to 50 in November and 24 during December and at South Gare where 18 had returned by December.

VC 63 The Halifax area is very much a stronghold for this species, but the *Halifax Birdwatchers' Club Report* unfortunately made no estimate of breeding numbers, though flock sizes would suggest in excess of 100 pairs but probably less than 200 pairs. The Huddersfield moorlands perhaps held up to 50 pairs, one pair was found in the Barnsley area (in an overlap site with Huddersfield), but sadly there were no breeding pairs located in either the Bradford area or in the Sheffield area, in fact hardly any birds at all were found in the latter; the annual total being just 10 sightings and all of single birds! Some small flocks were discovered, mostly on moorlands outside the main breeding season; 30 frequented Withens Clough for much of the year, building to 60 during the post-breeding period in July. Another regular locality was Whiteholme Res where birds were attracted to seed in the late winter producing counts of 46 on the 9th November and 52 on the 13th December. Besides these, the other largest flocks notified were 42 at Cragg Vale on the 23rd January, 48 at Broadstones on 1st April, 30 at Leeshaw Res all through July, 36 at Thornton Moor Res on 11th August, 40 at Wainstalls on the 14th September and finally 60 at Lumbutts Res on 29th of that month.

VC 64 13 were at Summerstones Moor on 25th September.

VC 65 All notified sightings were as follows: 7 at Nosterfield NR on 5th January, 40 near Agill Beck in early March, a single in Colsterdale on 3rd May and 20 on Leighton Moor on 16th November.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Declining breeder; passage migrant and winter visitor

VC 61 One or two pairs were in the car park area at Wheldrake Ings during the breeding season and an additional one at Thornton Ellers in May. Some birds may have bred on an area of scrubland in west Hull, since birds were present on 11th March, and by mid-summer, family parties were noted here. TLNR had a poor year with none until 14th September, but PHENR had a record autumn passage with a peak of 25 flying south on 14th September. Larger flocks occurred inland at LDNNR; 20 were at Wheldrake Ings on 30th September rising to 230 on 8th October, with 130 still present in December when a further 100+ were at Newton Mask/Low Catton Ings. It was a rare bird on the coast in spring, with 5 birds at Flamborough from 18th April to 26th May and one at Filey also on 26th May and one to 2 birds occasionally at Spurn from 10th April. Small numbers were observed at these same locations in autumn with movements noted from late July, peaking in September and October. 100 passed through Spurn on 18th September and 60 later that month on the 29th. Three were at East Newton on 26th and 8 at Filey Dams on 28th September.

VC 62 Very few records from the forests during the summer months, the only evidence of breeding being of 2 family parties at Wykeham Lakes in July. A small passage was noted along the coast during autumn but no more than 10 from any location. The largest flock was of 50 at Heslington, York on 22nd November.

VC 63 Believed to be declining as a breeding species, but few serious counts or estimates were made, so the extent of the decline is not known for certain. There were however a few pairs for certain in the Halifax, Huddersfield, Barnsley and Sheffield areas. Typically, the largest counts were made in the wintertime, especially in January when there were 150 at Farningley Park on the 24th (87 caught and ringed), 75 at Elsecar Res on 15th, 60 at Thrybergh CP on the 8th and 60 at Edderthorpe Flash on 20th.

The same flock remained at Edderthorpe Flash all February, when a further 80 were found at Lundwood SF on 16th, 60 at Ulley on 9th and 50 at Howell Wood on 7th. In March, 80 were at Winterset Res on the 21st and 50 on Thorne Moors on the 23rd whilst the last big group of spring was of 70 to the south of Bradfield on the 11th April. After a quiet mid-summer period, the next notable gatherings came in October, particularly 70 at Broomhill Ings on 18th and also 70 at Withens Clough on the 19th. Good feeding must have been available on Hatfield Moors, where at Lindholme, 90 on the 9th November increased to 140 on 12th December.

VC 64 In the Swillington area a flock of up to 60 frequented the Fleet Plantation from late February to early April. Breeding reports came from 2 or 3 sites near Bradford and one pair at Fairburn Ings. Counts of note were 30 at Farnham GP on 11th March, 45 in April at Fairburn Ings and 20 at Kirkby Hill in September.

VC 65 No breeding season reports received and wintering numbers were low.

MEALY REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*
Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

This form has been given full species status by the **BOURC** from January 2001. Overflying redpoll cannot always be assigned to species, but the following were definitely identified by observers.

VC 61 Nine were at Flamborough on 21st September, followed by one on 26th. October produced more; 3 on 4th, 8 on 5th, 12 on 18th and 3 on 22nd, and the last were singles on 1st and 2nd November. At Spurn, noted occasionally from late October onwards, with 2 on 25th, 4 on 29th and 2 on 31st and up to 2 on four November days. Elsewhere, one was at Paull on 29th September, at least 9 were at PHENR on 18th October and 15 were at Kingswood, Hull on 26th December.

VC 62 Birds showing the characteristics of this species were noted at Whitby, where 2 on 22nd September and one on 18th October and at Scarborough, where 2 on 28th September and a single on 4th November.

VC 63 25 were reported at Willow Wood, Winterset Res on 1st January, otherwise very small numbers (up to 6) from 10 scattered sites, mostly in January and February.

VC 64 Up to 4 were noted in the redpoll flock at Fleet Plantation from late February to early April.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*
Scarce breeding resident, occasionally in larger numbers following irruption years

VC 61 A mid-summer irruption generated a lively period for the coastal bird watcher, particularly at Spurn where the movement was unparalleled in the 50 years of the Observatory's history. The first 5 at Spurn flew south on the 8th June, followed by small counts of 3 on 11th, one on 14th, one on 23rd, and 4 on 24th, before an unprecedented 210 flew south on 26th. Most of these birds were recorded in just a couple of hours observation at the Point, where flocks dropped in briefly before heading out across the Humber towards Lincolnshire; it was thought likely that many more birds could have been involved if observers had been there to witness them. Only 2 were seen on the 27th, but another 190 on the 28th, and 32 on 29th. The influx began to peter out in July with 5 on the 1st, 10 on the 2nd then one to 4 on 8 further days to the month end. Elsewhere, "good years" were reported from Flamborough and Filey, even if the totals were slightly disappointing compared with those at Spurn. The first at Flamborough were 2 on the 10th June, then 15 on 28th and 3 on 29th. Meanwhile, 40 were at Grimston on 26th June, with one at Filey Dams on 27th and 15 at Filey on 28th, when 8 were at TLNR. There were further records on several dates in July through to September from; Barmston (max. 14 on 2nd July), Easington (max. 20 on 2nd July), Filey (max. 2), Hornsea (one), Hotham (2), PHENR (max. 7 on 13th July), TLNR (max. 19 on 29th September) and Wheldrake Ings (max. 7). A later influx occurred in October, though this time Flamborough enjoyed the "lion's share", with a total of 227 recorded including a peak day count of 69 on 22nd. Elsewhere in October, small numbers were reported from Filey, Grimston, PHENR, Spurn (including 9 on the 25th) and TLNR (including 21 on 24th). Most of these immigrants moved through very quickly, with the last coastal sightings being of 4 at both Flamborough and Grimston on the 5th November, though 6 flew over East Park, Hull on 6th November.

VC 62 In the first 5 months of the year, 2 in Langdale Forest on the 23rd February and up to 10 near Guisborough throughout March and April were the only records. During June birds began to appear

along the coast as well as inland and it was evident that a substantial influx was taking place. The first to appear were 17 at Nunthorpe on 17th June, followed by 30 at Burniston on 28th. From July birds became widespread, aggregate flocks peaking at 200 to 300 in the Wykeham Forest on 31st. Birds remained plentiful throughout the VC to the year-end with small flocks regularly to be found, and ones of 80+ birds from several widely spread locations.

VC 63 As normal a few records in January, mostly small numbers but double figure counts of 25 at Midhope Res on 24th January and of 15 at Hollingdale Plantation on 1st February. Birds lingered long enough at the latter site for a few pairs to breed successfully. Small numbers in early June were followed mid-month by a notable influx, this being followed by a lull until a further influx in October that evolved into a more significant invasion. Most of the coniferous woodlands around the Peak District reservoirs hosted birds and also several lowlands sites, the most important counts being: 50 at Swinden Plantation on 14th June; 26 at Haw Park on 22nd which built up to 70 by the 29th; 40 at Howden Res on the 28th and 30 at Broomhead Res on the 29th. In July, 60 were found at Redmires Res on the 5th and 30 at Barrow Hills, near Bawtry on the 14th. Some birds dispersed during August when peak counts revealed only 15 at Upper Midhope on the 3rd and 21 at Swinden Plantation on the 10th and similarly in September when 12 at Tyrham Hall on the 12th was the most noted. Birds were more obvious again in October, when 75 were at Hollingdale Plantation on the 3rd and 30 at Swinden Plantation on the 4th, 43 at Upper Midhope also on the 4th, 18 at Blackmoorfoot Res on 17th and 20 at Roche Abbey on 19th. At Redmires Res, counts of visible passage to the south-west, revealed a total of 650 for the June to November period, including 136 on the 11th October, whilst at Rod Moor, totals for the same period were 400 flying south-west with a high count of 65 on both the 8th and 11th October. Good numbers were maintained until the end of the year. In November up to 19 were at West End GC, Halifax between the 5th and 16th, 78 were at Langsett Res on the 7th, 40 at Morehall on the 8th and 16 at Dodworth on the 16th. In December, 20 were found at Cantley (Doncaster) on the 4th, 60 were at Lindholme Prison on the 11th, 30 nearby at Great Gate Wood on the 12th, 30 at Upper Midhope on the 20th and 30 at Tyrham Hall on 27th, though these were no doubt the same birds seen previously at both Lindholme Prison and at Great Gate Wood. The year ended with 39 back at Haw Park (Winterset Res). In addition there were about 60 other records of between one and 10 birds.

VC 64 In the Bradford area, the first 4 were at Barden on 8th March with 18 there by the 29th June. Timble Ings regularly hosted birds, 3 on 3rd May, 25 on 29th June and 32 on the 30th June. Probably the most frequented location was the Washburn Valley where up to 20 were recorded throughout July to December whilst the undoubted topmost count was of 200 at Beechcroft Moor Pits on the 25th September. After an absence of records in the Harrogate area in 1996, a notable irruption started in April when 50 were at High Batts NR on 14th. Subsequent high counts involved 50 at Harlow Carr Gardens on 30th June; 10 at Skelton-on-Ure on 2nd July, 9 at Gouthwaite Res on 5th and 18 over Lumley Moor on 15th; 17 at Low Laithe on 23rd August, 21 at Gouthwaite Res on 5th October increasing to 56 by 11th, with 40 nearby at Scar House Dam on 8th. Numbers fell in November and the last was at Staveley NR on 12th November.

VC 65 Early sightings came from Bellflask where 30 on 10th May, 60 flew over this same location on the 14th September and later, 30 were in Colsterdale and up to 20 in a Richmond garden in October. Up to 29 remained in the Richmond area through November with a final sighting of 16 at Leighton Res on Christmas Day.

COMMON ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Scarce passage migrant; occasional very rare breeding species (first in 1992)

VC 61 At Flamborough, a male graced South Landing on 25th and 26th May (PAL, the late DB) but was in poor condition and is thought to have died. The next was a female or immature on 28th May at Spurn (GED), followed by a first-year male at Filey on 30th May (PLM *et al*). A similarly aged bird appeared at Flamborough on 9th June (PAL) and a female there on the 15th (AMA). Spurn hosted an unseasonal adult male on 6th July (AAH), whilst a first-year male was at Flamborough two days later on the 8th. Autumn birds were trapped at Spurn on 18th September (DJB), with another nearby in Kilnsea on 27th and one at Filey on 28th (DJS *et al*).

COMMON BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Thinly but widely distributed; winter visitor in small numbers

VC 61 Scattered breeding records included 10 to 15 pairs in the LDNNR area, 2 pairs at TLNR and a pair at Primrose Valley. The highest counts came from the former location, 37 around the car park at Wheldrake Ings on the 27th February and again on 8th September. An arrival on the coast in October included 6 at Filey on 18th and 8 at Flamborough on 20th and 22nd.

Single northern race birds *P. p. pyrrhula* were specifically noted at Flamborough on the 18th October and 3rd November, in Kilnsea on the 20th October and at Spurn on both 20th October and on the 3rd November.

VC 62 A flock of 10+ at Sandsend Quarries on 22nd November was the largest flock noted.

VC 63 Populations were reported to be stable in all parts of VC 63. Flocks of between 10 and 19 were noted at more than 12 locations, with higher counts occasionally such as 25 on Thorne Moors on 1st January, 23 at Potteric Carr "in January", 22 at Wintersett Res on 22nd September, whilst on the Chesterfield Canal, Rotherham, 50 were discovered on the 13th December of which 20 were caught and ringed.

VC 64 Four breeding sites were confirmed in the Harrogate area with a maximum count of 9 at Staveley NR on 21st September. Three pairs bred at Fairburn Ings where 6 to 9 birds were recorded throughout the year with the exception of 20 in November.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Scarce breeding resident, absent from high ground and the south-east

VC 61 One was at the Humber Bridge CP on 26th April, a site where a pair successfully bred in 1992, 1993 and 1994. Four were at Spurn on the unusual date of 11th June. Single autumn migrants appeared at Flamborough on 21st September and also at North Ferry by the Old Brick Pond on 30th September.

VC 62 Up to 3 regularly in the Guisborough/Hutton areas during January to March, then again from November to the year-end, with a maximum of 7 on 9th December. May well be nesting near Skelton Castle, where up to 2 were seen on many dates March to June, whilst 8 were at Helmsley on 25th January.

VC 63 Stainborough held up to 11 birds in the January to May period and 3 pairs were present there on the 13th April. One pair probably bred in Howell Wood, where irregular observations showed a male on 10th April, 2 birds on 1st May and 3 on 7th June. Rockley was a frequent winter haunt with a maximum of 5 recorded on the 28th December. Reasonably widespread around Doncaster, where 6 were singing in Kings Wood, Bawtry on the 15th March. Gelster Wood held 4 on 31st March, Rossington Hall one on 8th April, one on 26th June and 5 from 15th to 17th April. Firbeck Hall 7 in February, 5 on the 1st and 3 on 16th March, one on 4th October and 13th December.

VC 64 20 were present in the Fountains Abbey/Studley Royal area on 25th January but then only singles intermittently to 19th April with one to 3 seen very occasionally to the year-end. Singles were at High Batts NR on 4th May, Staveley NR on 13th September, 15 at Skelton-on-Ure on 11th December with 2 at Newby Hall on 16th.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR *Calcarius lapponicus*

Regular passage migrant and winter visitor in varying numbers; rare inland

VC 61 The only decent flock was of 24 at the traditional wintering site at Barmston on 2nd January with 10 there on the 14th. At Newbiggin, 4 remained from 1996 until February, 3 were at Aldbrough on 31st January and 2 on 1st February and 4 were at Grimston on 11th January, 2 remaining until 22nd February. No more than 3 were noted intermittently at Flamborough in January, with 2 on 24th February and singles on 5 dates in March plus 3 on 31st. One was at Filey in March and single birds noted on 5 March days at Spurn, indicated some through passage, as did one at Flamborough on 26th April and a late bird at Sammy's Point, Easington on 9th May. In autumn, 4 were at Filey, 3 at Flamborough and one at Grimston in September. Birds returning for the winter were more obvious from October, when up to 3 were seen on 9 dates at Flamborough and up to 2 on 9 dates at Spurn. A similar situation in November, though up to 5 on 12th at Flamborough, with additional singles at Barmston and Grimston. In December, 2 were at Barmston on 10th and 9 at Flamborough on 20th.

VC 62 A poor year. Scarborough held birds through the first 3 months with a maximum of 14 in fields at Jackson's Bay on 26th February. The only sighting away from Scarborough was of one at Port Mulgrave on 22nd March. In the autumn, 2 records from Whitby totalled just 4 birds whilst a flock of 5 was at Scarborough.

VC 63 One was located at Upper Midhope on the 6th October (MCW) and one flew south-east at Rod Moor on 22nd October (KC).

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Winter visitor, though in smaller numbers in recent years, rare inland

VC 61 All but 3 records came from the coast. January is often the optimum month of the year, and large flocks of 80 were at Grimston on 2nd, up to 46 at BPNR from 6th (staying until 20th February), up to 23 at Barnston, whilst 50 flew south at Spurn on 19th. In February, up to 34 were on Carr Naze, Filey, with 8 again at Filey on 1st April, though the last of the emigrants were singles at Flamborough on 19th and 20th April. In autumn, an early bird was at East Newton on 16th and 18th September, with singles at Spurn on 22nd and 26th. In October one to 2 at Flamborough from 4th, 2 at Barnston on 17th and 3 in Hornsea on 31st. In November, up to 20 were regularly present at Spurn, with higher counts of 104 on Clubley's Field, Spurn on 15th, 80 south on 16th, 106 south on 21st and 41 present on 23rd. Elsewhere in November, up to 71 frequented Flamborough, 65 were at Newbiggin and 12 on Carr Naze, Filey. In December, the largest gatherings included 55 north of Hornsea, up to 43 at Barnston and 40 at both Tunstall and Spurn. The inland records mentioned previously involved 2 at Mickley Dike on 25th February, one at TLNR on 18th March and one at PHENR on 1st November.

VC 62 South Gare held the highest numbers with 43 in January and 52 in December. Elsewhere a noticeably poor year. Whitby noted just 6 singles during the autumn, whilst at Scarborough there were no significant numbers until November when up to 30 were seen on several dates. Inland, 14 were at Baysdale on 30th November and 12 on Blakely Ridge on 27th December.

VC 63 There were singles at, or flew over, a number of sites: Gorphey Res on 2nd January; Burbage Moor on 2nd February and 27th December; Blackburn Meadows on 9th March; Blacktoft Sands on 10th March; Deer Hill on 11th March; Edderthorpe Flash on 3rd November; Winterset Res on 8th and 9th November; Southfield Res on 12th November; Barkisland on 24th to 27th November and both Redmires Res and Pugney's CP on 30th November.

VC 64 At Menston, 3 were found on the 16th November. Whetstone Gate held one from the 25th to 29th November and more unusually, 5 on the 26th. Kex Gill Quarry attracted 3 on both the 13th and 14th December. At the Whiteholme Res complex (Halifax), seed put down enticed this species to join the feeding throng. In February, 11 were present on the 8th, one on the 10th and 4 on the 22nd; in March, 4 on the 2nd and 3rd, 2 on the 7th and one on the 14th, then, one (a leucistic bird) on 8th and 9th November and one on the 7th December. A freshly dead bird was at Duck Street Quarry, Greenhow on 19th December.

VC 65 A male was at Bolton-on-Swale GP on 26th March.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Resident; numbers have decreased considerably in recent years

VC 61 Described as "in decline" as a breeding and wintering species in the LDNNR and on the coast at Filey, where a maximum of only 10 were discovered in January and February. At TLNR, only 4 pairs were located compared with 16 in 1996, although pre-breeding flocks of 33 in March and 27 in April were comparable with the previous year. 30 were at Flamborough in February and 40 in March and 30 again in November. At Spurn only occasional birds were noted, the highest count of 7 being on 27th September. By far the largest gathering noted was of 200+ at Brighton Meadows in the LDNNR on 24th December.

VC 62 100 at Burniston on 7th January and 60+ at Hayburn Wyke near Scarborough on 1st March were the most impressive flocks reported.

VC 63 Becoming quite scarce in the Halifax area and declining around Huddersfield where the largest flocks contained only about 30 birds. Flocks in general were thought to be smaller than in 1996 but the species remains well distributed at lower altitudes east of the Pennines and away from urban areas. 10

flocks of between 50 and 70 birds were located in the first 3 months of the year, and 5 flocks of the same size in November and December. Larger counts came from Wilsic where 175 congregated on 3rd January, from Grimthorpe where 100 were found on 6th January, in the Worsbrough Valley where 80 were present on 8th January and in the Upper Moss Valley where a feeding group of 82 was found on the 19th December. Little information was forthcoming concerning breeding success or otherwise. The highest breeding estimates concerned 40 pairs at Wilsic, 10 pairs at Sprotbrough Flash with 16 singing males at Thorpe Marsh and 23 singing males at Broomhill Ings.

VC 64 In the Bradford area great concern was expressed, since breeding numbers were considered to be low and the largest flock recorded was of only 17 (at Harden). Swillington Ings attracted two separate flocks of 100 in early January whilst West Haddlesey, near Selby, attracted a flock of over 200 on 23rd December (JPM). Flocks of 100 frequented the Bishop's Palace area in February and on "set-aside" and stubble at Marton-le-Moor in December. Four pairs bred at Fairburn Ings although numbers remained low there throughout the year with a maximum of 7 in May.

ORTOLAN BUNTING *Emberiza hortulana*
Very scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn

VC 61 First-winter birds were found at Filby (PLM: FXM: CCT: HJW *et al*) and at Flamborough on 25th August (DIMW), with one remaining at East Newton from the 28th to 30th August (AJ: PG) and a first-winter bird at Spurn on 11th September (SE), later re-located in Kilnsca.

VC 62 A first-winter frequented Whitby Golf Course on the 24th to 25th September (TJB: RSS).

LITTLE BUNTING *Emberiza pusilla*
Rare passage migrant, mainly in autumn

VC 61 The first spring record for Spurn called and was seen briefly at the Warren heligoland trap on 30th April (IDW).

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniulus*
Resident and passage migrant; slight recent decline

VC 61 No evidence of any change of status. A total of 600 to 700 pairs were estimated to be in the broad LDNNR area, 25 pairs at TLNR and 23 pairs at Spurn. A roost that developed at Wheldrake Ings held 140 birds on 30th September and 330 on 9th October, whilst nearby a flock of 340 was reported from Brighton Meadows on 24th December. Small-scale movements were noted on eight days in October at Spurn, peaking at 26 flying south on the 11th.

VC 62 At least 10 breeding territories were located at Wykham Lakes. A small autumn passage was noted in late September and October along the coast, with a total of 21 passing through Whitby and smaller numbers at other localities.

VC 63 With the exception of the Doncaster report, all societies gave indications of declining populations. The Sheffield area report, for example states, "breeding counts suggest a further alarming decline", whilst a "drop in records ... and evidence of decline in recent years" came from the Rotherham report. There were few flocks of 30 or above, but that is not unusual in the VC. Highest counts involved 35 in "set-aside" fields at Winterset Res on 1st January, 30 at Denaby Ings on 5th January, 30 at Pugney's CP on 30th January (12 pairs bred), 30 roosting at Finningley Park on 7th March and up to 30 at Bullcarr Mires (Upton) in "winter". The following breeding totals were suggested by the relevant society reports: Doncaster, c. 80 pairs (of which 34 were singing males at Thorpe Marsh) and Barnsley, 97 pairs (of which 20 were singing males at Broomhill Ings). Blacktoft Sands maintained an estimated 55 breeding pairs.

VC 64 Remains reasonably common in the Swillington Ings area, where 50 were present on 4th January and good numbers were thought to have bred. In the Bradford area, Reed Buntings were widely distributed in moderate numbers. A decline was noted at Stockbridge NR near Keighley, though West Haddlesey held over 50 on 23rd December and there were about 15 pairs at both Mickletown Ings and Allerton Bywater. 39 pairs bred at Fairburn Ings where birds were recorded in all months with a maximum of 80 in May and 16 remaining at the year-end.

CORN BUNTING *Milaria calandra*

Resident, absent from higher ground; considerable decrease in recent years

VC 61 It is difficult to be dogmatic about the status of this species without quantitative information. A continued decline was noted along the coastal fringes with low numbers again at Filey, Flamborough (5 pairs) and Spurn. Some areas inland however maintained a reasonable presence, with for example, 60 to 70 pairs estimated on the farmland adjacent to the LDNNR, including notable concentrations in the East Cottingwith/ Hagg Lane area and in the Newton/Sutton/Thornton vicinity. Fewer found this year at TLNR where 6 or 7 pairs compared unfavourably with 15 pairs in 1996. The only exceptional winter flock was of 400 on "set-aside" fields at Long Riston on 17th January. More moderate counts included 110 at Newton in the LDNNR on 12th February, 75 at Flamborough on 25th August, 22 at Barmston on 25th April and 10 at BPNR on 25th January.

VC 62 Singing males were heard in the Boulby to Hummersca neighbourhood (2 birds), near Marske and the Scarborough area. Largest flocks outside the breeding season were 10 at New Marske in January and 5 at Boulby throughout August to October.

VC 63 In January 20 were at Brampton Common on the 16th January and 16 at Southfield Res on the 18th, then up to 50 at Harthill Res late in the month. In March 20 were at Sprotbrough Flash on the 3rd, 15 at Broomhill Ings on 4th, 31 at Edderthorpe Flash on 24th, 22 at Pontefract Park on 25th and 12 at Darrington on the 14th. Information on breeding birds in the VC was inconsistent; the Barnsley area claimed 14 pairs at 4 sites and the Doncaster area, 30 pairs at 3 sites. In the lowlands south of Doncaster and Rotherham (including the SK58 area), there were about 20 singing males located at 9 sites and an additional 7 singing males at Darrington on the 8th April. The largest flock notified was of 93 at Loscar Common (Grange Farm) on 27th November and in addition, 25 flew west over Lindholme on 4th December and 17 were at Notton on the 13th.

VC 64 Three to 4 pairs were on territory at Copt Hewick in June. Few large gatherings; 60 at Marton-lc-Moor and 25 at Marton-cum-Grafton both in December, whilst at Swillington Ings, small numbers of up to 30 until the 16th March and up to 20 from 1st November. Singles were at Fairburn Ings from April to July with 5 in November.

VC 65 70 were in "set-aside" fields near Thornborough in March and 29 were at Leeming Bar on 8th February.



CATEGORY D

Species whose status is being monitored the **BOURC** (see *Ibis* 136: 253)

RUDDY SHELDUCK *Tadorna ferruginea*

Rare vagrant; feral/escapes confuse status

VC 61 A bird of unknown origin was present on the Humber at Spurn on 28th October.

CATEGORY E

Species that have been recorded as introductions, transportees or escapees from captivity, and whose breeding populations, if any, are thought not to be self-sustaining.

CHILEAN FLAMINGO *Phoenicopterus chilensis*

One was at the British Steel ore terminal on Teesside on 14th September, 12th October and 9th November.

FLAMINGO sp. *Phoenicopterus* sp.

One reported from Thornton Ings on 31st January.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

A single regularly reported at Wheldrake Ings.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

Two flew south at Filey on 26th May and two at Wheldrake Ings with Canada Geese in late May. One was at Scaling Dam from 16th September and a single at Wheldrake Ings from 3rd November to the year-end.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*

One was at Stamps Pond on 17th February and one flew east at Blacktoft Sands on 18th. Two were at Fairburn Ings in April, May, September, November and December. A white-phase bird was at Farnham GP on 19th April and one at Marfield NR on 29th August. One blue-phase bird was at Gouthwaite Res on 10th April with 2 at Wheldrake Ings from 28th May and 2 (probably the same?) at Nosterfield NR on 1st August.

ROSS'S GOOSE *Anser rossi*

An adult was in East Park, Hull on 29th May. One with a red plastic leg ring frequented Studley Lake, Farnham GP, Hay-a-Park GP and Staveley NR in late September and October and one was at Bolton-on-Swale GP from 20th December to year-end.

CAPE SHELDUCK *Tadorna cana*

Two at Wheldrake Ings on 4th September.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Up to 5 free-flying in the Brandesburton area.

CHILOE WIGEON *Anas sibilatrix*

A drake was at Wheldrake Ings in April and May.

BUFFLEHEAD *Bucephala albeola*

VC 61 The female of doubtful origin was re-found at Hornsea Mere on 6th January (TC *et al*) remaining for three weeks, before being re-located at East Park, Hull on 27th and later at Bransholme

SW from 10th February to 18th April, East Park again from 22nd April to 1st May and finally at Bransholme SW from 2nd to 27th May. This bird was first seen at Hornsea Mere on 8th December 1996 (KAB: BKS *et al*). It carried a black ring on its right leg. BBRC considered this bird to be an escapee and as such is not counted on the official list.

LANNER FALCON *Falco biarmicus*

One wearing jesses at Spurn on 8th, 9th and 13th September was also seen in the Easington area.

GREY-HEADED GULL *Larus cirrocephalus*

A colour-ringed, first-summer bird was reported at Wheldrake lngs on 25th May and an adult was reported there on 24th June.

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus*

One at Haverfield Quarries on 23rd February and three sightings of a single in SK 58 area, these being at Axel Lane on 20th August, South Anston on 26th September and Axel Lane again on 3rd October.

BUDGERIGAR *Melopsittacus undulatus*

One at Spurn on 1st October.

AFRICAN GREY PARROT *Psittacus erithacus*

One flew south at Spurn on 31st October.

PATAGONIAN CONURE *Cyanoliseus patagonus*

A female frequented Thornaby near Middlesbrough on 7th November and 22nd to 23rd December.

EAGLE OWL *Bubo bubo*

A pair of unknown origin bred at one site producing three young. The landowner reported them present in the same area in 1996.

WHITE-THROATED LAUGHING-TITRUSH *Garrulax albogularis*

One at Filey on 23rd May with presumably the same at Flamborough on the Outer Head on 15th June.

PALLAS'S ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus roseus*

One was well watched at East Newton on 4th May (AJ: T1).

BLACK-HEADED MUNIA *Lochura atricapilla*

One with a flock of House Sparrows at Filey CP in early September.

ZEBRA FINCH *Poephila guttata*

One at Skelton Castle on 7th August and one at Filey from 11th to 18th October.

ADDITIONS TO THE 1996 REPORT

COLLARED PRATINCOLE *Glareola pratincola*

VC 61 The bird mentioned in the *YNU Bird Report for 1996*, seen flying south at Muston on 3rd June (GMB) and present next day at Honsea Mere (EJH: RL) has now been accepted by **BBRC**. This individual had tail feathers missing on the right hand side and is generally believed to be the same wandering individual that has returned to Norfolk amongst other places, each year since 1994.

SPOTTED CRAKE

VC 62 One at Margrove Ponds 25th September (JR).

LITTLE AUK

VC 63 One picked up on 12th November at Southowram near Halifax died in care a week later.

WOODLARK

VC 63 The bird at Midhope Res on 14th April was also heard on the 15th.

ADDITION TO THE 1994 REPORT

CATEGORY D

Species whose status is being monitored the **BOURC** (see *Ibis* 136: 253)

FALCATED DUCK *Anas falcata*

Rare visitor/escaped species

VC 63 A male at Blacktoft Sands on 22nd May.

EARLY AND LATE DATES OF SOME MIGRANTS IN 1997

Species	Earliest arrival date	Latest date
Spotted Crake	6th May	24th August
Little Ringed Plover	12th March	23rd August
Whimbrel	20th March	23rd October
Wood Sandpiper	2nd May	7th October
Common Sandpiper	5th April	27th September
Sandwich Tern	21st March	10th December
Roseate Tern	17th June	13th September
Common Tern	8th April	25th October
Arctic Tern	10th April	12th October
Little Tern	21st April	22nd August
Black Tern	15th April	29th September
Turtle Dove	20th April	22nd September
Cuckoo	11th April	27th September
Common Swift	20th April	11th October
Sand Martin	10th March	10th October
Barn Swallow	13th March	29th November
House Martin	20th March	7th November
Tree Pipit	12th April	23rd October
Yellow Wagtail	6th April	21st November
Common Redstart	30th March	21st October
Whinchat	2nd April	18th October
Northern Wheatear	1st March	4th December
Ring Ouzel	10th March	29th November
Grasshopper Warbler	11th April	28th September
Sedge Warbler	11th April	6th October
Eurasian Reed Warbler	18th April	14th October
Lesser Whitthroat	6th April	11th October
Common Whitthroat	10th April	21st October
Garden Warbler	13th April	18th October
Wood Warbler	20th April	18th September
Willow Warbler	23rd March	29th October
Spotted Flycatcher	30th April	29th September
Pied Flycatcher	15th April	19th October
Brambling	18th September	28th April
Lapland Bunting	20th September	9th May
Snow Bunting	16th September	20th April

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

The following observers have contributed records to this report, with apologies for any omissions. They have either submitted records directly, or their initials appear in a local report for the species included in the systematic list. The Editors thanks all who have submitted records.

J J Ackroyd	B Beilby	G M Carr	L J Degnan	T Francis
R Adams [RAd]	C Bell	L Carr {LCa}	G Denison	A M Frith
N W Addey	J Bell	D Carroll	K Denny	G A Frith
P J Alker	N A Bell	M J Carroll	S Denny	R A Frost
J R Allen	B Bentley	N Carter	M L Denton	Y Gabrilovich
K J Allison	A Bevan	M Chadwick	A B Devitt	G H Garrett
S Allison	C Bielby [CBi]	T Chantry	T E Dixon	A M Gibson
A M Allport	D P Binns	C Chapman	G E Dobbs	T E Giles
K Anderson	S M Bird	R E Chapman	A Dodds [ADo]	L Gillard
C E Andrassy	P Bishop	E Charlton	C Dodsworth	K Gillon
R H Appleby	R P Blagden	L Charlton	L Doughty	N D Gilson
E Appleton	P Bland	T D Charlton	P Dove	I Glaves [IGI]
C Appleyard	M A Blick	M Chase	P Drury	J Glendinning
G Appleyard	P Bolton	E G Clark	P J Dunn	J H Goddard
A Archer	R Bolton [RBo]	J C Clarkson	J B Dunnett	C Gorman
S Armitage	A J Booth	K Clarkson	K A Dutton	A G Gough
M R K Askew	L Boswell	E Clubleby	R Dyson	K R Gould
A Atkinson [AAI]	P Boswell	S Cochrane	R Eades	P Graham
J E Atkinson	W I Boustead	A Cockcroft	J R Edwards	G Grainger
R Attenby	D J Bowes	I Colley	S C Elliott	F A Graves
I Austin	P K Bowman	K Colwood	C Essery	R Greasley
D J Bacon [DJBa]	K Boyd	D Constantine [DCo]	R Evison	P K Greaves
R Baines	S Boyd	J W Cooper	S Exley	S Green
D J Bamforth	D P Boyle	M Corner {MCo}	H Failey	S H Greenacre
S Banks	S Brebner	J Costello	J V Fairbrother	M Greenland
L & M Bardwell	D J Britton	D W Cottee	C P Falshaw	P Grice
D C Barker	S Brocklehurst	M Coverdale	S Farish	A Grieve
J Barker	P L Brown	A Crcase	C Featherstone	J Grist [JGr]
T J Barker	H O Bunce	R Crosby	G Featherstone	A E Hague
M Barnett	R Burgin	J E Crowther	A P Feenly	H A Hague
D Barrans	A Burnham	P A Crowther	M G Fenner	J S Hague
K Barrow	J T Burnham	R J Croxton	J D Fletcher	G L Haigh
S Barrow	D Butterfield	M & P Cunningham	E A Fisher	J I Hamilton
S Barwick	P Butterworth	P Cunningham	G T Foggitt	J I Hancock [JHx]
Y Barwick	D Buxton [DBx]	W F Curtis	G Follows. [GFo]	R & Mrs J Hardcastle
G M Batten	D Bye [DBe]	J E Dale	A Ford	R A Harper
A A A Baxter	D Bywater [DBy]	N Dales	A Forsyth	J Harriman [JHr]
P A A Baxter	N Calbrade	R A Davies	I Forsyth	R Harris
B Beaumont	P Caley	A Dawson	K Foundation	J Harrison [JHa]
The late D Beaumont	P J Carlton	N C Dawtrey	M Francis	P Harrison
J A Beaumont	G Carr	G Dayes	P Francis	P Hart

D Hartley	R Kenyon	J R Mather	D Page	N Robinson
J Harwood	S M Keywood	R Mawby [RMA]	E C Parker	A Robson [ARo]
K J Hayhow	A King	P Medforth [PMc]	N Parker	P J Rogan
D Hazard	L S King	T Melling	H Parkin	S M Root
E J Hediger	H R Kirk	P Meredith	D Parkin	K Rotherham
W J Hesketh	W E Kitching	M G Metcalfe	V Parslow	P C Rowarth
J Hewitt [JHe]	S Knell	DR Middleton	S Pashby	D Rushforth
S Hey	K L Knight	P Middleton	D M Pearce	D A Rushforth
J Higgins [JHi]	D Lakin	A Miller [AMi]	J M Pearson	S W Sanderson
M Higgs	J C Lamplough	B Miller [BMi]	N A Pearson	C Sawyer [CSa]
R D Hill	T Lane	F X Moffatt	J Pewtress	DJ Scanlon
S Hill	P A Lassey	K Moir	J & V Phillips	PM Scanlon
C Hind	J Law	L Mole	D Pickering	P Scott
A Hirst	M P Lawlor	R Mole [RMo]	M J Pilsworth	R E Scott
D G Hobson	M Leakey	D A Money	P Piringier	R Scullion
S T Holliday	J B Leason	C Moore	M Pocock	A Scutt [ASc]
M Holling	G Lee	N J Morgan	R Pomcroy	N P Senior
R D Holloway	P Leonard	S Morgan	R Pope [RPo]	P Senior
A Holmes	M Lambert	B Morland	R Poyner [RPy]	S Seymour
P I Holt	G Lindley	E Morley	J R Prentice	G Shentall
R N Hopper	G M Linley	J & M Morley	D J Prest	A Simpson
T Hopper	S Lister	A J Morris	B&D Preston	D Simpson
D A Hunter	V Lister	P R Morris	N A Preston	A Sinnott
D Hursthouse	I Lonsdale	R Morris	W H Priestley	R S Slack
A D Hull	M Lonsdale [MLo]	P L Mountain	H E Prior	C Slater
G Hurd	P Lonsdale	M G Neal	R W Prior	C Slator [CSI]
A A Hutt	J Lunn	M Nethercoat	D Proctor	M Slingsby
G Icton	R Lyon	M Newsome	R H Proctor	K Slingsby
M Ingham	J McLoughlin [JMc]	P Newton	S Radcliffe	A H V Smith
P V Irving	T Malkin	J Nichols	C S Ralston	D M Smith
A Isherwood	D Mansell	G G Nicholson	J & M Rawcliffe	J N Smith
T Isherwood	P March [PMA]	W Norman	M Rebbbeck	M Smith
P W Izzard	A Marshall	A Oates	A Redman	P Smith [PSm]
H T James	D C Marshall	F Oates	R A Rccse	P J W Smith
A F Johnson	I Marshall	R O'Brien	J Regan	B K Smithson
C G Johnson	R A Marshall	A O'Neill	S C Renouf	R Smithson
I A Jordan	J Martin	T O'Neill	B Richards	I C Spalding
G Joynt	J I Martin	D Oldham	M C Richardson	G A Speck
D Kelsall	S Martin	P Ottaway	T Richardson	G J Speight
T Kendall	P Maske	T Overment	A Roadhouse	G T Speight
F Kenington	A Mason [AMa]	A Page	S Robins	B R Spence

J Spottiswood	C Teal	H Vilkaitis	T Watson	S Willoughby
P M Spradbury	C C Thomas	D M Waddington	J R Weatherill	A Wilson [AWi]
D J Standing	J M Thomas [JMTh]	S Wadsworth	I Webster	B E Wilson
S D Stansfield	E Thompson	P Wainwright	M C Wells	C Winn
L D Stead	I Thompson	D I M Wallace	A J Wheeldon	S Witty [SWi]
R Stephenson [RSt]	M Thompson [MTh]	A Walker	R Wheway	E Wolff
W Stephenson	C Timms	I D Walker	A White [AWh]	D Wood [DWo]
J Storry	J Timms	N Walker	H J Whitehead	D Woodmansey
M G Stoyle	P Tomlinson	R V Walker	N P Whitehouse	P Wordsworth
C C Straw	F Topham	D J Ward	E Wignill	S Worwood
P Sutcliffe [PSu]	J L Topham	J Ward	S Wignill	[SWo]
R Swales	M Townsend	R Ward	J Wilcox	J Wozencroft
J W Sykes	P T Trcloar	F A Wardman	J Wilkinson [JWi]	[JWo]
G Taylor	J M Turton	S Warrilow	M D Williams	D Wright
M Taylor	M Underwood	J Warwick [JWa]	P D R Williams	J M Youngs
R Taylor	G Vause	S Warwick [SWi]	T J Williams	A Zabukas
R C Taylor	D Venus	P Waterton	A Williamson	
S A Taylor	B Vickers	N Watson	P J Willoughby	



LOCAL REPORTS

The following local society and club reports have been received and readers requiring more information on those areas are advised to consult the relevant report.

Barnsley Area Bird Report (Barnsley & District Bird Study Group)
Birds In Huddersfield (Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club)
Birds in the Sheffield Area (Sheffield Bird Study Group)
Bradford Ornithological Group 1997
Cleveland Bird Report 1997 (Teesmouth Bird Club)
Doncaster Bird Report 1997 (Doncaster & District Ornithological Society)
Filey Brigg Bird Report 1997 (Filey Brigg Ornithological Group)
Five Towns Report 1997 (Five Towns Bird Group)
Flamborough Bird Report 1997 (Flamborough Ornithological Group)
Halifax Bird Watchers' Club Report 1997
Harrogate and District Bird Report (Harrogate and District Naturalists' Society)
Hull Valley Report 1997 (Hull Valley Wildlife Group)
Lower Derwent Valley Ramsar/SPA Breeding Bird Report 1997
New Swillington Ings Bird Group (Annual Report)
Scarborough District Bird Report 1997 (Scalby Nabs Ornithological Group)
Sorby Natural History Society (Newsletters)
The Birds of SK 58
South Holderness Countryside Society (Newsletters)
Spurn Wildlife No.7 (Spurn Bird Observatory)
Whitby Bird Report 1997
York Ornithological Club Report 1997

Reports and lists were also received from:

Beacon Ponds Nature Reserve and Holderness Log; Birds of Denaby Ings; Blacktoft Sands RSPB Reserve; Castleford Naturalists' Bird Report; Fairburn Ings RSPB Reserve; Hatfield Moors Bird Report; Lower Derwent Valley monthly sheets; Thorne Moors (Bird Report & Systematic List);

DESCRIPTION REQUIREMENTS

It is our aim to continue to present these reports with complete accuracy so that those who use them in the future may accept the records of all species without doubt or query.

British Birds Rarities

All national rarities must be described and accepted by **BBRC** to be included in the **YNU Report**. We would prefer to receive the description first and will forward it immediately to **BBRC**. **BBRC** do request that all records be submitted through the County Recorder system. Failing this, we would at least expect to receive a copy. A list of species for which descriptions are required by **BBRC** for publication in their Annual Report on Rare Birds in Great Britain is available from *British Birds*.

County Rarities

Descriptions are required for the species listed below.

Cory's Shearwater	Pomarine Skua [inland records only]
Great Shearwater	Long-tailed Skua [inland records only]
Balearic Shearwater	Ring-billed Gull
British Storm-petrel (sight records)	Sabine's Gull
Leach's Storm-petrel	Roseate Tern
Little Egret	Black Guillemot
Purple Heron	European Bee-eater
Bean Goose (to race/species)	Greater Short-toed Lark
Ruddy Shelduck	Richard's Pipit
Green-winged Teal	Tawny Pipit
Ring-necked Duck	Cetti's Warbler
Surf Scoter	Aquatic Warbler
European Honey Buzzard	Marsh Warbler
White-tailed Eagle	Icterine Warbler
Montagu's Harrier	Melodious Warbler
Rough-legged Buzzard	Dartford Warbler
Golden Eagle	Pallas's Warbler
Spotted Crake	Yellow-browed Warbler [inland records only]
Corn Crake	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Common Crane	Eurasian Golden Oriole
Stone-curlew	Woodchat Shrike
Kentish Plover	Red-billed Chough
Temminck's Stint	European Scrin
Pectoral Sandpiper	Common Rosefinch
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Girl Bunting
Red-necked Phalarope	Ortolan Bunting
Grey Phalarope	Little Bunting

White Stork (increasing escapee), Red Kite (introduction programme) and Wood Lark (breeding species) have been removed from the description list, and White-tailed Eagle has been added, as it is no longer considered by **BBRC**.

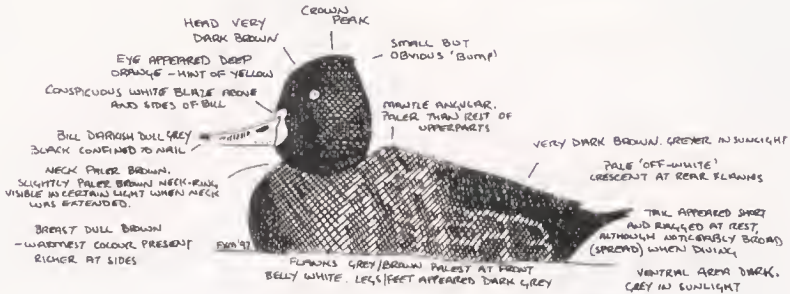
The work of the Reports Committee can be aided considerably if observers will submit descriptions as soon as possible after the bird has been seen. Details should include the description taken in the field

before reference to any text books; the locality including 4-figure grid reference; date and time; habitat; weather conditions; optical aids used; distance from the bird; period of observation; species present for comparison, if any, and previous experience of the species. Forms for submitting details based upon those by the BBRC can be obtained from any Vice-County Recorder or by e-mail from the editors.

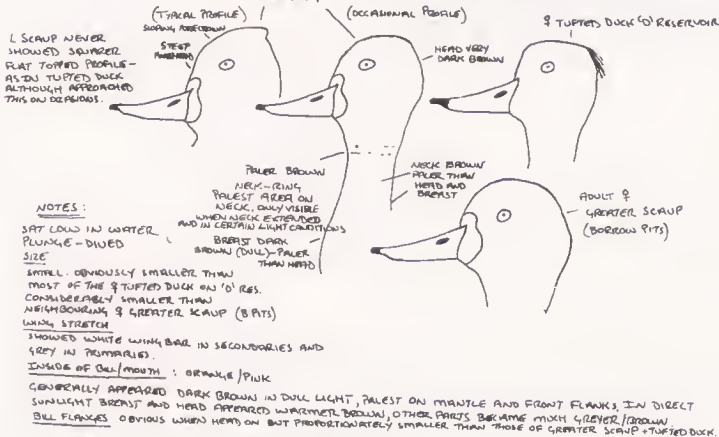
Races and other unusual occurrences

The Reports Committee may request descriptions to support records of well-defined races of commoner species, (e.g. Grey-headed Wagtail) or to support records of migrant birds out of season and commoner birds seen in unusual circumstances. The Committee will require descriptions to support records of difficult to determine races, particularly those whose taxonomic status is under review (e.g. Siberian Chiffchaff, Caspian Gull).

♀ LESSER SCAUP - TOPHILL LOW
(Possibly 1st winter) 11th - 12th Jan '97



♀ LESSER SCAUP COMPARISON OF HEAD PROFILES 18/01/97



NB: SKETCHES BASED ON ORIGINAL, NOTEBOOK, SKETCHES.

RARE BREEDING BIRDS IN YORKSHIRE

Observers who have first-hand knowledge of rare breeding birds within the county are requested to submit their evidence to the appropriate Vice-County Recorder, Report Editor or direct to the Rare Breeding Birds Panel, if the observer so wishes. The system used by the Panel for indicating geographical locations is done on a regional basis with Yorkshire being part of "England North". In some instances the county will be named but should the observer request the omission of "Yorkshire" the Panel will respect this with only the region being named. A full list of the species considered by the Panel appeared in *British Birds* 81: 102 - 103. Species that are known to have bred, or attempted to have done so in recent years, in Yorkshire, are listed below:

Black-necked Grebe
Little Bittern
Northern Pintail
Garganey
Common Pochard
European Honey Buzzard
Eurasian Marsh Harrier
Montagu's Harrier
Northern Goshawk
Eurasian Hobby
Common Quail

Spotted Crake
Corn Crake
Black-tailed Godwit
Little Gull
Eurasian Golden Oriole
Bluthroat
Black Redstart
Fieldfare
Parrot Crossbill
Common Rosefinch

In addition, brief outline details of numbers of Schedule 1 species are requested [area, numbers and success].

Panel report forms are available from the Report Editor, Vice-County recorders or direct from the RBBP by post or from the RBBP's website.

Dr. M. A. Ogilvie, Secretary RBBP, Glencairn, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay, PA49 7UN. E-mail RBBP@indaal.demon.co.uk

Website: <http://www.indaal.demon.co.uk/rbbp.htmls>

