

Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club

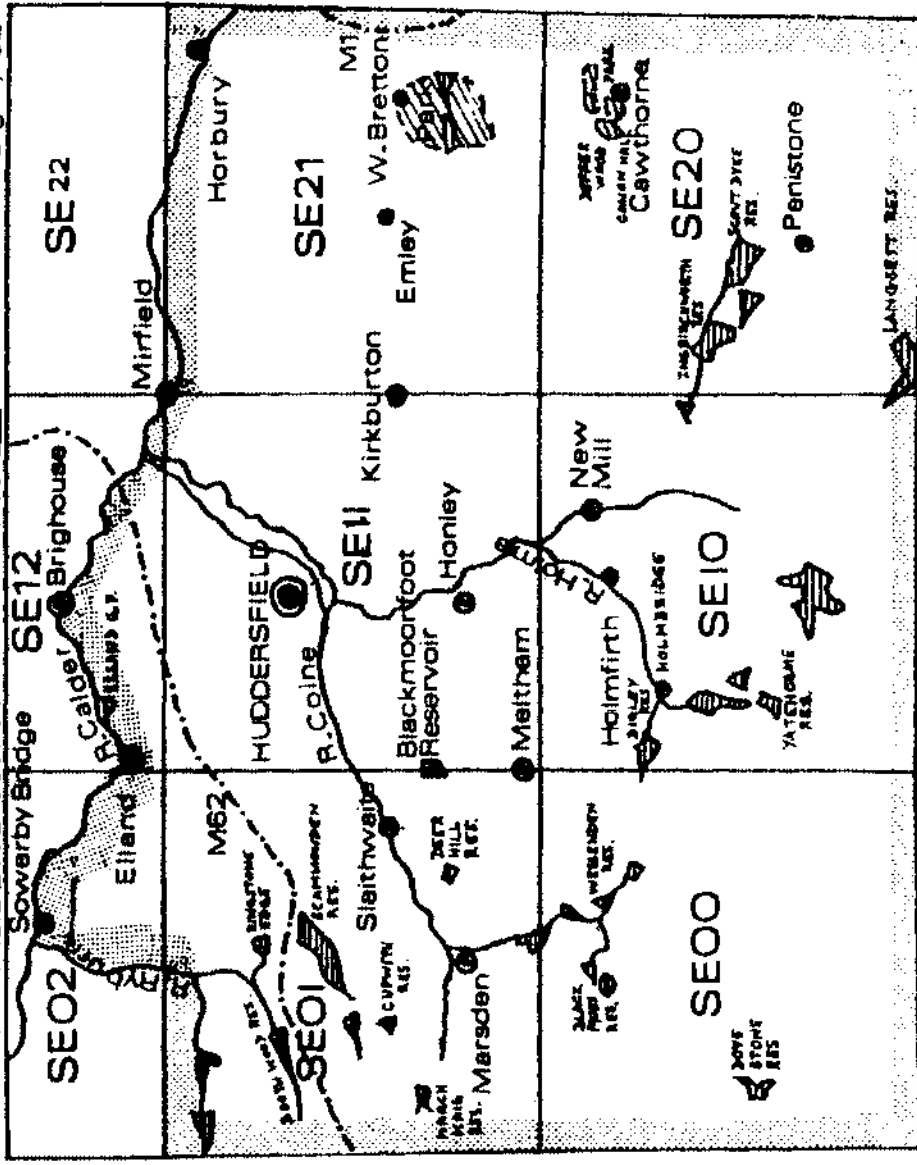
Birds in Huddersfield 1999



ANNUAL REPORT

Huddersfield BMC: boundaries of Club area.

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BIRDS IN HUDDERSFIELD 1999

Report of the Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club

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by Stuart Brocklehurst

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1999

This is my second, and final, report as President before handing over to Malcolm Charnock and I therefore wish to take the opportunity to thank fellow committee members for their support and hard work. And to those who regularly turn up to club meetings – thank you also.

In my first report I expressed my concern that the post of President-Elect was vacant. It still is! Fortunately, John Walker stepped forward as the new organiser for indoor meetings therefore taking a good deal of pressure off our secretary David Butterfield. The club is, however, still faced with the same predicament as similar organisations: where are the club officials of tomorrow? If you attend meetings regularly I urge you to cast aside your inhibitions and join the committee.

The club continued its reputation for informative and entertaining talks with a series of excellent lectures taking us to areas such as Peru, Lesbos, Namibia, Trinidad and Tobago, New Zealand, New Mexico, Spain and Africa. We explored issues of biodiversity with Tim Kobler, visited Dorset and considered the changes in local wader populations and the possible effects wind farms might have on birds.

This last talk (by John Dale) is a possible indicator of the direction that club talks might take. There seems to be a general feeling that there should be a few more topics focusing on our own area but without narrowing the range of subjects. If this is possible to arrange then it will be done.

Another suggestion that talks might not necessarily be restricted to slides is an interesting one. In the past we have had evenings devoted to birdwatching equipment and bird sounds. Michael Dale's visit in 2001 will be one to watch.

It was in this year that the club took the decision to extend the season of programmes through to May. This would appear to have been a success and so will be tried again. The committee would welcome any comments on this issue and indeed on any other matter which might help to improve the club.

At the last AGM there was a suggestion that time be set aside on club evenings for a systematic logging of birds recently seen. This I feel needs further consideration but finding that time may not be easy. I have, throughout the year, tried to encourage people to share their sightings be it a Little Bunting or a charm of Goldfinches. Can I ask that this be continued especially for those who do not normally submit written records.

I have enjoyed my time as President and having now entered a new millennium I am more aware of following a line of illustrious predecessors. I shall, then, conclude this report with a list of these past Presidents which will remind us, if we need reminding, of the great tradition the club has established since its inception : Bisiker, Riley, Disbrey, Cocking, Woodcock, Dale, Frost, Armitage, Yates, Reynolds, Denton, Dale, Charnock, Haigh, Charnock.

Welcome back, Malcolm!

David Holloway June 2000

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASSIFIED LIST

I must begin with a postscript to 1998. As a result of records received from Halifax Birdwatchers' Club, four additional species (Shag, Bewick's Swan, Sanderling, Turtle Dove) were added to the total for that year, thus creating a new record total of 182 species, eclipsing the 179 in 1993.

The number of species recorded in 1999 was 174 and included one new species, a Little Bunting at Shepley which remained into April 2000. In addition, consequent to the splitting of Common Redpoll into Lesser and Mealy Redpolls, an extra species has been gained; both previously regarded races have occurred of course in many previous years.

Probably the most striking aspect of the year was the number of species of raptor recorded, Honey Buzzard, two Red Kites, three species of harrier, at least 16 Common Buzzards, six Ospreys and six Hobbies as well as the more usual species. Amongst other uncommon species, four Black-necked Grebes at Blackmoorfoot represent the first multiple arrival of the species in the area, and White Stork, Spoonbill, Ruddy Shelduck, a party of 12 Little Gulls, several Yellow-legged Gulls, Wryneck, Waxwings, Black Redstart, Firecrest and Snow Bunting added spice to the year (for those fortunate enough to see them).

As a result of the appeal last year, many more records were received than are usual for several formerly common breeding species; I hope that members will continue to report them (Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Skylark, Song Thrush, Willow Tit, Linnet, Twite, Lesser Redpoll, Bullfinch, Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting) in the future. Once again numbers of some summer visitors continued to decrease, but Sedge Warbler, Lesser and Common Whitethroat and Whinchat appeared to do well, as again did Stonechat, Long-eared Owl, Raven and Nuthatch; Tree Sparrow bred again after a blank year in 1998.

My thanks are due to all those members and non-members who have contributed records, especially to those such as John Hamilton (Dewsbury S.F.), Russell Smithson (Horbury, Thornhill and Ravensthorpe), Russ Boland and David and Sandra Holloway (Ingbirchworth area), Mick Cunningham (Winscar and Ingbirchworth areas) and John Beaumont and John Daie (Scammonden) who have devoted themselves to local patchwatching and sent in very comprehensive records for their areas; also to Mike Denton again for his monthly summaries of sightings at Blackmoorfoot (and the other regulars there), to Martin Wells for providing records from Bamsley Bird Study Group and Nick Carter and Nick Dawtrey for Halifax records without which this report would be much less complete. I should also like to thank Stuart Brocklehurst for again providing the illustrations to brighten up this report and David Woodhouse for his evocative accounts of the year's field trips.

A new feature this year has been the start in the Ingbirchworth area of visible migration watching, which has already begun to produce results and will undoubtedly repay further efforts in the future.

Sadly, regulars will note that there is no separate Ringing Report this year. This is because during 1999 only four birds, a brood of Merlin chicks, were ringed, but they did produce a recovery which is detailed in the report.

NOTES ON THE CLASSIFIED LIST

The area covered by the Club comprises Ordnance Survey ten-kilometre squares SE 00, 01, 10, 11, 20 and 21, along with those parts of SE 02 and SE 12 south of the Rivers Ryburn and Calder.

The status of each species occurring within the area has been indicated by one of the following classifications :-

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

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

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

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

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

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

CLASSIFIED LIST

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

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Resident breeder (1)

Birds were scarce in the early months, with in January and February records only from Bretton Lakes, Ingbirchworth Res, Scout Dike Res, Gunthwaite Dam, Dewsbury S.F., Baitings Res and Elland GP, followed in March by birds at Blackmoorfoot Res, Horbury Wyke and Royd Moor Res, with maxima of six at Elland on 16th January and 10th March.

The Ingbirchworth group of reservoirs provided the majority of the breeding records; at Royd Moor one pair raised two young from three which hatched, two pairs reared four young at Scout Dike and at Ingbirchworth of three pairs on territory, at least two bred, rearing four young including a late brood of two present on 12th September. A pair at Castle Dam, Penistone reared two young and at Ravensthorpe Gravel Pits two pairs attempted, with one successfully raising a single chick. At Elland GPs at least one pair bred, raising four young and a pair at Baitings Res had a well grown chick in August. A pair was sitting at Dewsbury S.F. on 25th April, but the nest was destroyed by a Mute Swan which had taken up territory.

The highest post-breeding count was up to 12 on the R.Calder at Elland in September, with four there to the year end, otherwise no more than five reported at both Ingbirchworth and Scout Dike in September.

In the late months, birds were present at Blackmoorfoot Res continuously from 1st July to the end of October, with a maximum of two adults and two immatures in September, one was at Broadstoues Res on 12th September, one at Ringstone Edge Res from 1st to 25th October, up to two at Square Wood Res, Denby Dale from late July to the year end, three adults on the R.Calder at Dewsbury from 30th October to the year end, two at Boshaw Whams on 27th November and one at Baitings Res on 27th December.

Additions to 1998 Report:- one pair raised two young at Elland GPs, where max. counts were 15 on 3rd Jan, 10 on 31st Jan and 6th Sept.

Great Crested Grebe
Resident breeder (1)

Podiceps cristatus



The highest counts in the early months were 11 at Blackmoorfoot Res on 11th and 27th March, otherwise no more than six (at Scout Dike Res on 18th March) at any site.

The breeding season was very disappointing, the only successes being at Ingbirchworth Res, where one pair raised one young, Scout Dike Res – three pairs bred raising four young, Hill Top Res, Slaithwaite – one pair, two young and Ringstone Edge, where after display was observed on 6th April, an adult and two juveniles were present on 16th and

17th July. At Blackmoorfoot Res, where up to ten adults were present, two pairs failed at the egg stage and two attempts at Elland GPs failed as a result of human disturbance. The species was reported to have bred at Bretton Lakes but no details were received.

Presumably as a result of the poor breeding season, post-breeding numbers were low, maxima being at Blackmoorfoot 13 on 6th July and 16th August, with an isolated peak of 14 on 17th October, and at Scout Dike Res 13 on 23rd August.

Away from breeding sites, the only records came from Digley Res – one on 13th February, Scammonden – one on 2nd and two on 12th April, with one on 13th June, Deanhead Res – one on 18th April, Baitings Res – one on 12th August and finally one at Broadstones Res on 17th October.

Addition to 1998 Report - at Elland GPs one pair had broods of two and four young, all surviving.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Rare visitor

The best year ever for this species with birds at Blackmoorfoot Res continuously from 16th August to 17th September as follows:- in August one from 16th to 25th, four on 26th, two on 27th to 31st, with two from 1st to 9th September, one remaining to 17th (MLD, PDB, DHP et al).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Uncommon passage and winter visitor, becoming more frequent

Birds were recorded in all months and included a record count for the area of 17 at Bretton Lakes on 10th January (SI), the previous highest number being nine at Ingbirchworth Res on 2nd April 1992.

Records were most frequent at Horbury Wyke and on the R.Calder adjacent to Dewsbury S.F., both sites presumably attracting feeding birds from Pugney's Country Park, Wakefield.

Horbury Wyke – singles on 7th January, 22nd and 27th March, 24th April, 12th and 15th May, 12th June, 15th, 17th and 25th August with three on 23rd August, in September two on 1st and 5th, one on 11th, two on 12th, four on 24th and three on 30th and finally five on 18th October.

Dewsbury S.F./R.Calder – small numbers all year, with four on 27th April, eight on 16th July, two “sinensis” types on 31st August, five on 27th September and two on 28th November.

Elland GPs – one “sinensis” type on 11th March, one on 21st April, one on 1st and two on 23rd May and one on 5th October.

Ingbirchworth Res – singles (unless otherwise stated) on 20th January, 31st March, 10th April (two northwest, including one “sinensis” type), 25th April, 16th May, 20th August (two northeast) and 3rd October (two south).

Blackmoorfoot Res – two adults west on 31st March, one adult west on 19th April, two on 18th and one south on 25th October.

Ringstone Edge Res – one on 19th and two immatures on 26th July, two on 12th and an immature on 26th September.

Elsewhere, one flew southwest at Scammonden on 4th April, an immature at Royd Moor Res on 17th April, with two birds there on 16th May, two flew west at Meltham on 21st June and one west over

Denby Dale on 20th December.

Additions to 1998 Report - at Elland GPs four on 3rd February, a single on 24 dates from April to October, with two on 4th October.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*
Rare visitor

No records in 1999.

Addition to 1998 Report - One was at Ryburn Res on the evening of 29th July (via HBC).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
Resident breeder (2)

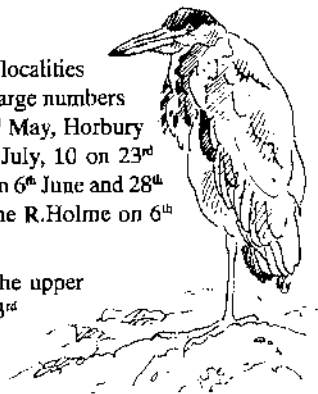
Once again birds were reported, mainly singly, from upwards of 30 localities covering all habitats and in all months of the year. Sites where large numbers occurred were Dewsbury S.F. with a maximum of eight on 23rd May, Horbury Wyke with eight on 25th April, seven on 12th June, 12 on 19th July, 10 on 23rd August and nine on 28th September, Ravensthorpe GPs with six on 6th June and 28th July and five on 4th October, Berry Brow four in a field near the R.Holme on 6th January and Scout Dike Res which had six on 16th August.

At Bretton Lakes on 22nd April 51 nests were counted, 28 on the upper lake and 23 on the lower lake; one brood was still in the nest on 23rd July, but overall breeding success is unknown. The colony at Scammonden continues to increase; one pair was on a nest on 12th February, increasing to five occupied nests on 23rd March and by 13th June seven young were counted in four nests with a further empty nest from which the young could have already flown. Whether a sixth nest was also occupied could not be determined, but HBC reported a total of nine young raised.

A pair also nested near the canal between Milnsbridge and Longroyd Bridge, fledging three young and photographic evidence was obtained (per JKP). The site occupied at Marsden in 1998 was not occupied this year. Once again breeding was suspected, but could not be proven, on private land near Lepton Great Wood.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*
Rare visitor

Probably again referable to a free-flying individual's spring wanderings from Harewood, sightings came from Spicer House Lane about the end of March (via DBar), Bretton Park on 8th and 25th April (BLNE) and 14th May (SRG), Cawthorne Park on 27th April (BLNE) and Horbury Wyke on the morning of 8th May (DHP), but not present in the afternoon.



Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*
Rare visitor

One was present at Horbury Wyke on 24th May (IB via JH). The 5th record for the area, the last being at the same site on 22nd April 1988.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*
Resident, occasional breeder (1)

The great majority of records came from Cooper Bridge and the R.Calder downstream as far as Horbury Wyke and probably involved sightings of the same individuals at more than one locality. At Cooper Bridge one was seen on the R.Colne on 22nd March, 4th and 24th April, at Battyeford one on 1st May, at Dewsbury S.F. a pair on the lagoons or adjacent R.Calder on several dates in April, at Millbank Flash, Thornhill two on 17th October and 7th November, a pair throughout the year at Horbury Bridge and a pair was at Horbury Wyke from 24th March. At this last site, breeding was attempted but the nest was abandoned by 16th May; two adults continued to be seen intermittently to the year end.

Elsewhere in the Calder Valley, one appeared at Elland GPs on 18th February, was joined by a second bird from 17th March to the year end with a third bird present on 20th March and 3rd November. Two were at Ingbirchworth Res on 9th January, one was on a mill pond at Denby Dale on several dates and at Boshaw Whams, two adults and up to four immatures were present from 20th to 31st December.

Bewick's (Tundra) Swan *Cygnus columbianus*
Scarce winter visitor

No records in 1999.

Addition to 1998 Report - six were at Ringstone Edge Res on 5th November (via HBC).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
Scarce winter visitor

Royd Moor Res provided the only early season record with 17 on 27th March (RJB).

In the second winter period two were at Elland GPs on 3rd November, an adult at Blackmoorfoot Res on 9th November (KW) and three flew west over Dewsbury S.F. on 13th November (JH).

Additions to 1998 Report - one at Ryburn Res from 6th to 14th November, two at Baitings Res on 11th November and four at Ringstone Edge Res on 29th November (via HBC).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*
Uncommon to common passage visitor

Passage was heavy in the first two months of the year, with birds recorded on 13 dates. Unless otherwise stated the direction of flight was northwest.

1st January - c.400 over Langsett, 170 north over Crosland Moor and two west at Upper Denby; 6th January - 200 over Bradley Park G.C.; 7th January - 140 over Bradley Park G.C., 200 west over Elland and c.115 in two skeins of c.50 and c.65 over Salendine Nook; 9th January - 160 east at Blackmoorfoot Res and c.200 over West Slaithwaite; 22nd January - 128 over Shepley, 5 over the Little Don Valley, c.1400 in 10 or 11 skeins over Ingbirchworth between 1045 and 1200 hrs. and c.1200 in six skeins over Penistone, four birds landing in a potato field at Cranberry (it is likely that there is some overlap between records at these last two sites); 28th January - 150 west over Birkby; 29th January - 80 west over Ringstone Edge Res, 85 over Bradley Park G.C.; 12th February - 150 over Shepley; 13th February - c.320 over Dunford Bridge Cycle Track and c.50 over Ingbirchworth; 14th February - 48 west at Dewsbury S.F.; 18th February - 130 over Lindley Moor; 20th February - 150 west over Elland GPs, 250 over Shepley, 100 over Bradley Park G.C. and c.75 over Ingbirchworth; 23rd February - seven at Ringstone Edge, c.70 west over Bretton Park and 70 north over Lindley Moor – same birds?

In addition, unidentified grey geese, probably this species, passed over Linthwaite on 15th January and 8th February, with 80 northwest over New Mill on 20th February.

The only grounded birds during this period were one at Scout Dike on 31st January with two there on 20th February and one at Boshaw Whams on 20th February.

As usual there were fewer reports in the second half of the year, but 21 west at Dewshury S.F. on 30th September were quite early, as were 21 in fields at Ringstone Edge on 1st October, 22 on 2nd and 27 on 3rd, one remaining to 10th. Also in October 70+ passed southeast at Ingbirchworth on 10th, a singleton southwest then north at Scammonden plus one grounded bird on 12th and again at Ringstone Edge 39 on 14th.

A party of 26 over Royd Moor on 6th was the only November record, but December saw increased movement with 11 west at dusk at Scammonden on 4th, 100+ over Royd Moor/Scout Dike on 13th, 60 west at Ingbirchworth on 27th with 43 east there on 28th. Unidentified grey geese passed over Linthwaite on 4th (c.100) and 10th December.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*
Uncommon passage and feral visitor

All records were in the first half of the year as follows :-

Ingbirchworth Res :- two south on 24th January and two east on 15th May; Bretton Lakes :- four on 31st January; Elland GPs :- one on 19th March and 18th April; Ringstone Edge Res :- two on 20th March; Horbury Wyke :- one on 10th May; Blackmoorfoot Res:- five on 19th June.

Additions to 1998 Report:- one at Ringstone Edge on 19th March and two over Elland GPs on 17th April (via HBC).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*
Resident breeder (2)

At the beginning of the year maximum counts were :- Bretton Park c.130 on 10th January, Scout Dike Res 175 on 23rd January increasing to 241 on 20th February, Royd Moor Res c.75 on 28th January, Boshaw Whams 88 on 11th February, Scammonden Dam 32 on 4th March and 81 on 28th

April and Ringstone Edge Res 54 on 28th April.

Breeding was reported from the following sites, with minimum number of breeding pairs and/or young as follows:- Bailings Res (two pairs), Wessenden Head Res (2+ pairs, six young), Winscar Res (10+ pairs), Harden Res (at least one pair), Lower Windleden Res (two pairs), Yateholme Res (2+ pairs, five young), Deanhead Res (eight young), March Haigh Res (one pair), Langsett Res (at least one pair), Bretton Lakes (at least 50 goslings on 5th June) and Horbury Wyke (two pairs, nine young). An additional ten sites held birds during the breeding season but no breeding evidence was obtained.

Post-breeding season maxima were 109 at Winscar on 10th July, 45 at Digley on 27th July, 62 at Ringstone Edge on 27th August increasing to 64 on 5th September and 72 at Scammonden on 3rd September.

Highest counts in the later months were c.80 at Bretton Lakes on 30th September, 162 at Royd Moor Res on 25th October, 92 at Ringstone Edge on 30th October with 65 on 21st November, 114 at Horbury Wyke in November, 34 at Blackmoorfoot Res on 11th November, 112 at Scammonden on 27th November and 190 at Scout Dike Res on 16th December.

An additional 12 sites held up to 20 birds during the year.

Canada Goose x Greylag Goose hybrid

Scout Dike Res - one from 25th April to 31st May.

Canada Goose x Barnacle Goose hybrid

Bretton Lakes - one on 3rd April.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Rare visitor and occasional feral breeder

Once again the majority of reports came from Bretton Lakes, although there were fewer records than in previous years, probably due to this site being watched less frequently than formerly. Three on 10th and one on 31st January, three on 9th and four on 15th February and one on 30th September were the only reports received.

Single birds were on the R. Calder at Dewsbury S.F. on 7th March, Horbury Wyke on 9th April, Shepley (with 11 Canada Geese) on 5th June and Elland GPs on 5th October, all presumed to be feral/escaped individuals.

Addition to 1998 Report - one at Elland Gravel Pits on 1st and 2nd May.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Rare? feral visitor

One at Bretton Lakes on 15th and 30th September was probably an immature bird, showing white fringes to the tail (SH, KW). The fourth record of this species, all from this site.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Uncommon passage visitor

Birds were present in all months except March, May and September. The earliest was a singleton at Ingbirchworth Res on 22nd January, with another at the same site on 25th April, followed by one at Horbny Wyke on 30th January. Blackmoorfoot Res had birds on 6th and 24th February (one), 29th August (13 -- eight adults and five juveniles), 7th October (four), 15th October (two), 3rd November (two) and 17th December (four).

Dewsbury S.F. had a good series of records with in April one on 16th, four on 24th, two flying east on 30th, then two on 30th June and 6th July and four on 21st July.

One flew west at Scout Dike Res on 17th April, four juveniles were at Ringstone Edge on 10th August and five birds there on 17th October, at Elland GPs two on 23rd August and three on 7th November, eight were at Royd Moor Res also on 17th October, whilst in December two adults and an immature were at Boshaw Whams on 6th and two adults at Horbny Wyke on 16th.

Additions to 1998 Report - Ringstone Edge had one on 4th February, one in April, a juvenile on 16th August, one on 6th and two on 17th September and singles on 28th October and 2nd November. At least ten birds were at Elland GPs on 16th September.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Rare feral visitor

The male present intermittently since November 1997 in the Brighthouse/Elland area was seen on 21st April, 19th and 31st May (DM,SH,DSI), whilst two males were present on 10th January (JB). A female also appeared here on 21st December (via HBC).

Elsewhere a male was seen occasionally on the R.Holme at Holmfirth and Holmbridge (MC) and a female was at Boshaw Whams on 27th November and 20th December (HQ).

Addition to 1998 Report - a female was at Ringstone Edge on 28th January (HBC).

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Rare feral visitor

A male and a female were both seen on various dates in October and November on the R.Holme at Holmfirth, sometimes coming to feed on bread with Mallards (CDA,MC).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Common passage and winter visitor

The species was recorded at twelve waters from 1st January to 19th May and 5th August to 31st December. Numbers in the early months were again low and at the year end birds were relatively scarce.

Blackmoorfoot Res - present daily in January, singly apart from seven on 11th, on only nine dates in February with a maximum of two birds, with two on 13th March. In the second period birds were

present on eight dates in September, max. 14 on 2nd, twenty dates in October, max. 31 on 6th and 22 on 16th, then daily in November and December, with maxima of three and nine birds respectively.

Horbury Wyke - regular in the early months, peaking at 16 on 13th March, a female with a damaged wing remaining to 19th May at least. One on 5th August was unseasonal, then six on 4th October and 16 from 25th to 28th November. Millbank Flash, Thornhill - four on 13th April and five on 7th November. Scout Dike Res - reported on seven dates, with max. in January of 15 on 3rd and seven on 10th, the last being two on 13th March. Royd Moor Res - 12 on 1st January, six on 13th March; later in the year nine on 2nd October, 19 on 6th November and an exceptional 65 on 30th December were the only records. Ingbirchworth Res - the only early record was three on 3rd January. All autumn records were in October, with max. of 30 on 11th and 16th. Broadstones Res - two on 31st January. Elland Gravel Pits - two on 3rd and five on 4th March, three on 6th October. Ringstone Edge Res - in September nine on 4th, two on 17th, three on 19th and in October four on 5th, two on 16th, one on 17th, two on 25th, 28th and 29th. Scammonden - 11 on 17th October. Boshaw Whams - a male on 14th November. Square Wood Res, Denby Dale - a female on 29th October and 3rd December, but a high count of 16, including four males, on 25th November.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Scarce passage and winter visitor

A male and a female at Royd Moor Res on 3rd April (RJB), a male at Ingbirchworth Res on 7th May (RJB) and at Blackmoorfoot a female type on 14th - 16th October and a male and a female on 25th October (MLD) were the only records.

Addition to 1998 Report - male and female at Ringstone Edge on 22nd March (via HBC).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Resident breeder (1). Common passage and winter visitor

The waters in the northeast of our area along the Calder Valley are the stronghold of the species in winter, with a smaller concentration at the Ingbirchworth group of reservoirs, especially Royd Moor Res. Elsewhere birds are scarce and generally involve small numbers.

As in 1998 the only proof of breeding came from Lower Windleden Res, where a female with six ducklings was present on 20th June (BBSG). Ravensthorpe Gravel Pits - none in the early part of the year, but 32 on 26th August and 96 on 22nd September. Dewsbury S.F. - some of the very high numbers from late 1998 remained, with 55 on 17th January and 62 on 7th March. Numbers in the later part of the year increased from five on 9th August to 84 on 3rd October, peaking at 245 on 28th October then reducing to 180 on 4th November. Millbank Flash, Thornhill - 22 on 13th April down to one on 2nd May, then 16 on 12th August, 62 on 12th September, 86 on 22nd September and a peak of 163 on 7th November, with 63 on the adjacent R.Calder on 28th November. Horbury Wyke - present from the beginning of the year to 26th April, with max. of 30 on 30th January and 27th February and 21 on 22nd March. After an isolated male on 14th June, birds were present from early August with highest counts of 37 on 5th August, 46 on 22nd September and 63 on 12th October. Elland Gravel Pits - present from January to April and September to December, but with low maxima of only 12 in January, 16 in February and seven in March, otherwise no more than four birds.

Royd Moor Res - max. early season counts were 30+ on 30th January, 53 on 20th February, c.30 on 13th March, seven on 4th April with the last two on 9th April. A male was present both here and at nearby Scout Dike Res (same bird?) on 1st June. After one on 17th October, max. were 34 on 19th and 44 on 27th November and 25 on 30th December. Ingbirchworth Res - max. of only three in January/February and four in March/April, one in September, seven on 17th October and four in November. Blackmoorfoot Res - first of the year was on 16th February, then two on most days to the month's end. Occurred on only two dates in March with six on 13th. More frequently reported in the second period, but in only small numbers; in August on four dates, max. five on 28th, in September on nine dates, max. 15 on 3rd and 4th and 14 on 14th, on four days in October, max. seven on 29th, singles on two days in November and on five days in December with a max. of five birds. Bretton Lakes - eight were on the upper lake on 15th February, 12 on 14th March and up to ten in November.

The only other counts received were of three birds at Broadstones Res on 31st January, 18 at Ringstone Edge Res on 31st July and eight at Scammonden on 12th September.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Resident breeder (3) and common winter visitor

Although this is a very common, widespread and conspicuous species, it is obvious that it is being under-reported. The only waters from which regular counts were received were Elland GPs, Blackmoorfoot Res and Ingbirchworth Res.

Breeding was reported from 13 waters as follows:- Blackmoorfoot Res 52 ducklings of which only four survived to the flying stage (an exact replica of the situation in 1998), Ingbirchworth Res at least six pairs, with the first brood of small ducklings noted on 18th April, Blacker Brook a nest with nine eggs on 9th May, Royd Moor Res three pairs bred, Scout Dike Res five pairs bred, Bretton Park (no details), Horbury Wyke (no details), Winscar Res at least three pairs bred, Ravenshorpe GPs three pairs bred, Dewsbury S.F. at least two pairs bred, Snailsden Res one pair bred, Lower Windleden Res at least two pairs bred and Square Wood Res, Denby Dale where a female with six ducklings was observed on 2nd July.

Monthly maxima at Blackmoorfoot, Ingbirchworth and Elland were:-

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Blackmoorfoot	42	25	23	14	23	14	43	58	56	67	51	41
Ingbirchworth	13	5	3	5	1	8	6	32	93	34	46	9
Elland GP	80	36	16	23	n/c	30	31	60	45	35	11	80

The only other significant counts in the early months were 41 at Royd Moor Res on 31st January, 27 at Boshaw Whams on 11th February and 18 at Ravenshorpe GPs on 4th April, numbers increasing at the last site to 32 on 28th July and in August to 40 on 14th and a peak of 72 on 23rd. Dewsbury S.F. had 32 on 3rd July, 29 on 13th September and 34 on 5th November, 62 were at Scammonden on 12th September, 50-70 at Cupwith Res in November/December, 28 at Horbury Wyke on 28th November, c.90 at Royd Moor Res on 30th December and 23 at Boshaw Whams on 31st December.

Smaller numbers were reported from a few other sites, but none from Bretton Lakes.

Pintail *Anas acuta*
Uncommon passage and winter visitor

All records were in the second half of the year. Dewsbury S.F. - four flew west on 25th July (JH). Ringsstone Edge Res - eight on 26th August and in October four on 3rd, one on 5th and two on 17th (via HBC). Blackmoorfoot Res - singles on 2nd September, 7th and 16th October (MLD et al).

Additions to 1998 Report - one at Elland GPs on 23rd March, and at Ringstone Edge one on 23rd April and four on 8th December (via HBC).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*
Rare summer migrant

A male was at Horbury Strands on 2nd April (JH) and two female-types at Horbury Wyke on 11th, 12th and 20th August (DHP) and presumably on intervening dates. The lower Calder Valley seems to be a reliable site to see this species in early spring.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*
Uncommon passage and winter visitor

A much better year with twelve records spread throughout the year. Blackmoorfoot Res - a male on 23rd January, five on 10th July, singles on 19th August and 4th September, with two on 30th October. Dewsbury S.F. - a pair present from 26th May to 13th June, then singles on 12th August and 10th September. Ringsstone Edge Res - three on 4th September, four on 21st-22nd September. Millbank Flash, Thornhill - a female on 7th November and 22nd December.

Addition to 1998 Report - at Elland male and female flying downriver on 5th May (HBC).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*
Common passage and winter visitor

Once again birds were rather scarce particularly in the first winter period and in low numbers in the later months, although there was an excellent flock at Blackmoorfoot on one October date.

Blackmoorfoot Res - in January a single individual on three dates, nil in February and just one in March. Three on 7th July were unusual, then in August a single on two days, up to three on four dates in September and on four days in October with 13 on 16th and an exceptionally high count of 68 on 17th. In November, four were present on 11th and in December on only two dates with a maximum of four on 22nd. Ingbirchworth Res - early season maxima were 26 on 22nd January and 13 on 13th February. No records after four on 15th March until a male appeared on 21st July, then none again until October, which had a peak of 11 on 30th. Max. in November and December were nine and 23 (on 19th) respectively. Scout Dike Res - seven on 13th and a male on 18th March, a male on 18th April, a female on 3rd August and ten on 25th October were the only records. Scammonden Dam - monthly maxima were January one, February two, March three, September, November and December one.

Bretton Lakes - in January max. was six on the upper lake, 11 on 15th February and a male on 23rd

July. Elland Gravel Pits - up to three in January, eight in February, six in March, one on 23rd September, two in October, one in November and four on 27th December.

Birds were reported from seven other sites – Digley Res two on 13th February and 21st December, Horbury Wyke a max. of eight on 13th March, Ringstone Edge Res two on 21st September, Royd Moor Res two on 17th October, Square Wood Res, Denby Dale a male on 26th November, R. Calder at Thornhill Millbank six on 22nd December and at Boshaw Whams on three dates at end of year, max. of four on 24th December.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Resident breeder (1). Common passage and winter visitor

Breeding was proved at Ingbirchworth Res, which had two pairs (one of which produced three ducklings), from 3rd April, Scout Dike Res where three pairs reared eight young and Horbury Wyke, where two nests, one with eight eggs, the other with ten newly hatched young and a single egg, were found on 27th June and a female with four young was seen on 7th July. Pairs were also present in the breeding season at Bilberry, Harden and Winscar Reservoirs but no positive evidence of breeding was obtained.

The moulting flock which has been a feature of the Ingbirchworth group of reservoirs was again further reduced. Numbers generally appear to be declining.

Blackmoorfoot Res - early season maxima were in January only three, in February a single on two dates only, with up to seven in March, down to three again in April. After six in May, numbers increased to 13 in June, there was an isolated peak of 29 (28 males) on 19th July, otherwise no more than 13, with max. in August of 11, September 15, October 13, November seven and December six. Elland Gravel Pits - monthly maxima were January 28, February and March 16, October nine, November 17, December 14 with up to four in April, May and September. Ingbirchworth Res - present throughout the year with monthly max. as follows – January 11, February six, March 12, April 25, May 11, June 12, July 14, August 18, September eight, October and November nine, December 12. Scout Dike Res - monthly max. were January four, February five, March six, April 18, July 11, August 26, September six, October four. Scammonden Dam - the only records in the first half of the year were eight in January and seven (males) on 12th February. Birds were present from August onwards with maxima of nine in August, 20 in September, 18 in October, 13 in November and 12 in December. Horbury Wyke - 16 on 13th March, 20 on 25th April and up to six "pairs" in the breeding season.

Other records came from Bretton Lakes (max. 27 on upper lake on 25th January), Dewsbury S.F. (up to eight in April), Square Wood Res (six on 14th June), Ringstone Edge Res (ten males on 5th September), with smaller numbers at Boshaw Whams (max. five), Baitings Res (max. three), Ryburn Res (max. three), Bilberry Res (max. four) and Gunthwaite Dam (max. three).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce passage and winter visitor

Blackmoorfoot Res had a good series of records with four (two males, two females) on 12th October (PDB,MLD), a male and a female on 17th October (MLD,DMO) and a female on 4th November (MLD).

In addition a first-winter male was at Scammonden on 5th December (JB).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce to uncommon passage visitor

A poor year for the species, with just two records. A male was at Booth Wood Res on 2nd July (via HBC) and three birds (a male and two females) at Blackmoorfoot Res on 9th July, the male remaining to the following day.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Regular, but uncommon, winter visitor

Birds were reported from 13 waters, but were extremely scarce in the second winter period except at Blackmoorfoot Res, which once again produced the great majority of sightings.

Blackmoorfoot Res - present throughout January, with one bird on 15 dates, two on seven dates and a maximum of three on 5th; in February four on 18th, with one to three on an additional 22 days; in March three throughout except for four on 15th and 19th/20th. In April ten, including five males, on 3rd otherwise three from 1st to 22nd, followed by a late male from 19th to 24th May. The first returning birds were three on 15th/16th October followed by a very high count of 26 on 17th, but then none until three again on 30th. Up to eight (on 10th) on ten dates in November, but in December a maximum of only two on 15 dates from mid-month.

Ingbirchworth Res - up to four present in January, two in February/March with the last on 5th April. In the second half of the year the only records were in December, with two as max. Scout Dike Res - only recorded in the early months with max. of four in January and three in February/March and the last record on 20th March. Royd Moor Res - in January, one on 1st and two on 23rd, with one on 13th March. Scammonden Dam - two on 12th February, a male on 21st March and up to three in April. Deanhead Res - three on 11th April. Elland Gravel Pits - three on 1st January and one on 10th March. Ringstone Edge Res - up to six in February and four in April; singles in October and November - no dates available (via HBC). Broadstones Res - a male on 24th February. Ryburn Res - one on an unspecified date in February (via HBC). Boshaw Whams - a female on 20th and 27th November and 20th December. R.Calder, Dewsbury/Thornhill - three on 28th November and two on 22nd December. Digley Res - two on 21st and one on 31st December.

Smew *Mergus albellus*

Rare visitor

Two redheads were at Ringstone Edge Res on 1st and 2nd January (JB.HBC), single redheads at Blackmoorfoot Res from 2nd to 9th January and 20th to 28th February (M.L.D,JKP et al) and at Bretton Lakes from 7th to 15th February (DSI,JED,BA,DM).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Scarce to uncommon passage and winter visitor

A redhead at Elland GPs on five January dates with the last report on 20th February and what was presumed to be the same bird reappeared on 23rd November remaining to the year end. This could well also have been the individual present at Ringstone Edge Res on 29th November, 1st, 10th, 17th

and 29th December (via HBC). A male was at Blackmoorfoot Res on 11th April (MLD) and two redheads at Royd Moor Res on 15th October (JMD,DHP).

Addition to 1998 Report - a redhead was at Ringstone Edge Res on 28th/29th September (via HBC).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*
Regular passage and winter visitor

There was a further increase in the number of sites from which this species was reported.

Blackmoorfoot Res - birds were present from 2nd January to 14th March on 21 dates, with maxima of three in January, five on 15th February and six on 1st March. In the second period two on 27th September, one on 13th and 26th October, a singleton on four November dates, three on 14th December with singles on a further seven dates in that month. Bretton Lakes - few counts received but max. of c.30 on 4th January and in the later months seven on 16th November and 16 on 18th December. Elland Gravel Pits - in the early months, maxima of 35 in January, 36 in February, 12 in March, five in April and three remaining into May. At the year end, maxima of ten in October, 24 in November and 33 in December. Scammonden Dam - five on 1st January with three on 4th, up to four in February and four on 16th November. Ringstone Edge Res - in January on four dates, max. 11, February max. six, four in September and October, six in November and two in December.

Birds were also reported from the R.Calder at Thornhill/Ravensthorpe up to 4th April from the beginning of the year, with a maximum of three, Scont Dike Res two on 23rd January, R.Calder at Battleyford a male on 23rd March, Broadstones Res two on 3rd April, Dewsbury S.F. one on 2nd May, two on 10th October and three on 15th November, R.Colne near the McAlpine Stadium two on 12th October, Royd Moor Res singles on 22nd October and 20th November, Oak Scar Res, Longwood two on 2nd November, Deer Hill Res a male on 12th November and finally one at Ingbirchworth Res on 27th November. The great majority were redheads.

Additions to 1998 Report - at Elland GPs maxima were 71 in January and 24 in February (HBC).

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*
Irregular breeder (1) and infrequent visitor

Bred at Horbury Wyke, where after the first birds were observed on 3rd April, three nests with eggs were found in June and a female with four young seen on 27th June. At least six mates were present at this site.

At Ingbirchworth Res birds were seen in January, April, May and September, with a male displaying on 5th May and a maximum of six birds on 18th September, but no breeding evidence was obtained.

Elsewhere single birds were at Scout Dike on 18th April (male) and 12th September (female/immature), at Bretton Lakes on several dates mainly in winter and at Blackmoorfoot Res, which had single males on 11th July and 16th October.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare visitor

One at Swinden Walls near the Flouch Inn on 9th June was watched for about two minutes down to c.50 yards range (PDB). It came from the south and returned in the same direction when mobbed by Carrion Crows. The sixth record for the Club area and the first since 1991. Subject to acceptance by the YNU Rarities Committee.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Rare visitor

One reported flying east at Waterloo at 0535hrs on 19th July (T.Wimpenny via MLD) being mobbed by corvids.

In the Hepworth area one was reported in mid-October by a local farmer. The bird was seen on three or four occasions, both perched in a tree and foraging on the ground around molchills; a good verbal description was supplied (via BWW) after the bird had disappeared.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Rare visitor

On 16th May a cream-crown flew low over Meltham Cop towards Blackmoorfoot Res, gaining height on thermals before drifting off high to the northeast (DMP,TD,JJ).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Rare visitor

One was at Salter's Brook on 12th October (via BBSG).

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Rare visitor

On 20th May a ringtail was seen at Salter's Brook; earlier in the day one had flown over Denby Dale and was presumably the same individual (via BBSG).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Sporadic breeder and uncommon visitor

Displaying birds were again seen at three sites in March and April, but no further evidence of breeding was forthcoming.

A male once again favoured a Lindley Moor garden with sightings at both ends of the year. In April a feral pigeon was hit on 4th, on 6th the bird perched for about a minute, was seen again on 14th and on 26th a pigeon kill, with some breast feathers removed, was found. In autumn there were brief

sightings on 26th October and 3rd November (JE&SMD).

Elsewhere a probable male was at Holme Moss on 13th February (MC), a female fed on a "fantail" pigeon near Broadstones Res on 20th February (BBSG) and a male and a female were hunting rabbits near Lower Hardron in the Little Don Valley on 19th April (BBSG).

Later in the year one soared above Brookfoot, Elland on 11th April (JED) and in the Thornhill area a female gave eye level views as it hunted at Millbank on 26th September (JRS) and one was mobbed by 15 Magpies on 4th and by 12 Magpies and four Jays on 5th October (JH).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Resident breeder (2)

This species continues to do well, with records received from 55 localities. Nearly half of these had birds during the breeding season, but proof of breeding was obtained only at Nethererton (Wakefield), near Scammonden (two young), Scout Dike Res, Denby Dale (two pairs), Shepley (two pairs) and Digley.

Yet again garden sightings were frequent, with reports from Fixby, Salendine Nook, Wooldate, Almondbury, Lockwood, Shelley, New Mill and Dalton, where on 19th March a female chased a feral pigeon into patio doors. Other prey pursued in gardens included Collared Dove and Greenfinch.

With the exception of displaying pairs, most sightings were of single individuals but in September three were at Dewsbury S.F. on 27th and three at Skelmanthorpe on 29th.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Rare visitor, becoming more frequent

The number of sightings of this species continues to increase, with 1999 the best year on record.

First of the year was on 13th March at Millbank, Thornhill where one dropped into cover for ten minutes before flying high to the east over Horbury (JRS), followed by one over Elland Park Wood on 20th March (HBC). In April sightings were made at the Wessenden Valley on 1st (JHod), a displaying pair was reported and watched for half an hour in the Kirkheaton/Gawthorpe area on 3rd (MM) and one flew northeast over Scout Dike Res on 4th.

A very pale individual flew east over the Wessenden Valley and was mobbed by a Peregrine on 1st May (DMP,TD,JHod) and may have been the bird seen there on 1st April, and one flew west over Spicer House Lane on 29th May (RJB). June saw birds over Dogley on 8th (JMD), Ramsden Clough on 13th mobbed by four Ravens (MC) and in the Little Don Valley on 30th (BBSG).

One flew across the road between Bretton crossroads and Clayton West on 27th August (B.Clasper via MB) and one was near Langsett on 31st August (BBSG).

There were fewer sightings towards the year end but a juvenile north over Ringstone Edge on 5th September (HBC) and one at Ingbirchworth on 10th October (MC), one feeding on the corpse of a sheep at Broadstones Lodge Farm on 6th November (DJS), one southwest over Meltham Mills on 14th December (DM,JT) and the following day what was possibly the same bird over Litherop Lane flying towards High Hoylaud (JMD).

Osprey
Rare visitor

Pandion haliaetus

Another good year for the species, with reports of six individuals, all except one in spring.

One which flew west over Dewsbury Town Centre on 22nd March was the earliest ever in the club area by ten days (Wakefield RSPB via JH).

The remaining spring records were all in April: on 1st one flying northeast over Shelley at 1440hrs (SRG), on 15th one west over Dewsbury S.F. at 0850hrs, on 25th one over Shepley at 1045hrs (DBar) and on 27th one north-northeast over Hinchliffe Mill at 1130hrs (SA).

The single autumn record was of a bird flying south-southwest over Skelmanthorpe at 1905hrs on 5th September (JMD).

Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

Resident breeder (2-3)

Once again reported from almost exactly the same number of localities as Sparrowhawk, breeding being confirmed at Blackmoorfoot (three young), Winscar (four young), Elland GPs (four young), Scammouden (at least one young), Yatcholme, Royd Moor, Scont Dike (two young), Upperthong (four young), Shepley and Denby Dale.

Additional pairs and/or probable breeding were reported from Ingbirchworth, Lindley Moor, Bretton, Lepton Great Wood, Emley Moor, Woodsome and the Calder Valley between Dewsbury and Horbury where approximately five pairs were located.

Birds were seen at a further 15 sites during the breeding season.

Counts of nine birds at Winscar Res on 31st July and ten in the Little Don Valley on 20th August probably indicate successful breeding.

Sightings along the M62 Motorway are rare now compared with numbers in 1988, when up to five per day could be seen (JED) and suggests that the species may be in decline locally.

Merlin

Falco columbarius

Partial migrant breeder (1) and scarce visitor

In the earlier months singles were at Harden Edge on 20th February, Broadstones on 21st March, Dearne Dike Lane (male) on 27th March, Blackmoorfoot on 31st March and 4th April (both males - ? same individual), between Holme and Holmbridge on 9th April and at Brown's Edge (probably female) on 22nd April. A male was at Blackmoorfoot on 15th May.

Only one breeding pair was found this year compared with three in 1998, with the male back on territory in mid-April, joined by a female on 1st May and three fledged young were flying strongly on 18th July. Four young had been ringed on 29th June and sadly one of these was killed by flying against a window whilst in pursuit of a Corn Bunting at Ormskirk, Lancashire, 65 kms. to the west, on 2nd December 1999.

A female or immature was at Royd Moor on 20th June, with another at Carlecotes on 20th July, one was hunting Swallows at Scammouden on 9th July, a female at Ringstone Edge on 12th August, a

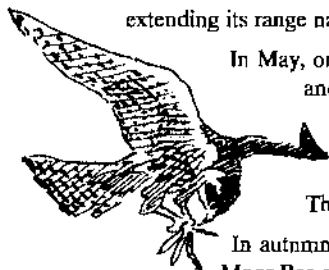
juvenile at Windle Edge on 28th September and males at Digley on 5th October and Denby Dale on 1st November.

The only records away from the moorland/moorland fringes came from Dewsbury S.F., which had singles on 6th and 9th September and 10th and 28th December.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Rare visitor

There was a welcome increase in the number of records of this attractive falcon, which is extending its range nationally.



In May, one was hunting hirundines over Thornhill Church on 14th (JRS) and another chased Swifts and House Martins over Morrison's Supermarket at Waterloo whilst being harried by Carrion Crows on 22nd (BA). One was present in the Salter's Brook area from 26th June to at least 3rd July (BBSG) and one flew south near Thurgoland on 2nd July (BBSG).

In autumn singles were over Penistone on 8th August (BBSG) and Royd Moor Res on 7th September (RJB).

Addition to 1998 Report - one was chasing Swallows at Elland GPs at dusk on 10th September (via HBC).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Resident breeder (1)

A pair bred at a new site and fledged three young successfully (TM,BA). Apart from this success, however, the breeding situation is very unclear. Pairs were seen at or in the vicinity of three established breeding sites, but no further information was received from any of them except that at one the male was an immature and possibly not old enough to breed. No information was available from a fourth known site.

Further apparent pairs were present at three other new sites, but again no breeding evidence was forthcoming. One site which was successful in 1998 was not occupied, possibly this involved the successful pair at this year's new site.

Away from breeding sites birds were observed at about a dozen locations throughout the year:- at Denby Dale on 25th January (female) and 9th November and 9th December (males), Hinchliffe Mill (two) on 13th March, Buckstones on 9th April and two at Windleden Edge on the same date, when a young male presented a racing pigeon to a female, at Winscar Res on 31st May and 22nd June, at Townhead and Suailsden on 17th June, at Ringstone Edge Res a juvenile on 16th/17th July, at Blackmoorfoot on 29th August, Greenfield Road Holmfirth on 23rd September, Ingbirchworth Res on 2nd and 10th October, with undated records from Blackstone Edge and Deer Hill.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Resident breeder (3)

Reports of this species were even fewer than in previous years, the maximum counts received being of c.6 on the Dunford Bridge Cycle Track on 5th May and four on 4th April in the Holme Styes/Snailsden area.

The only proof of breeding came from Featherbed Moss, where a nest containing nine eggs was found on 1st May. Breeding season reports came from six other sites only.

An interesting observation was of one perched in a hawthorn bush eating berries on 16th November in the Little Don Valley (GMC).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Resident breeder (1)

Even fewer reports than last year.

Dearne Dike Lane - one on 3rd April (BA) and nearby on 15th June (SH,BA). Digley - a pair on 1st May (DM). Denby Dale - one on 24th June was a first record for the area and presumed to be a released bird (TM).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Resident breeder (2)

Recorded from almost 25 localities, the majority in the breeding season, with breeding confirmed in four of these, a distinct improvement on recent years. All reports of this species would be appreciated.

Broadstones - a pair on 9th April and 19th May and one well-grown young bird on 3rd July. Brown's Edge - a pair with 18 small young c.10th June reported by a farm worker. Bird's Edge - a pair reported by farm worker. Dearne Dike Lane - one pair reported by farm worker. Ingbirchworth - a pair reported on 7th February and 8th April. Royd Moor Res - two on 20th February and one on 16th June. Scout Dike Res - two on 18th March and a female with 11 small, but flying young on 26th July; maximum count of 13 on 3rd October. Denby Dale - one on 9th November. Shepley - two on 28th March, three on 21st November, 3rd and 22nd December. Cheese Gate Nab, New Mill - a pair on 8th April. Mount Scar, New Mill - a pair on 28th April. Blackmoorfoot - six in fields to the east on 15th December. Meltham - eight on a track leading to the moors on 19th December. Harden Quarries - a pair present on 13th June and possibly bred. Scammonden - one calling on 20th April. Digley - one calling from a rushy field on 4th April. Lepton - occasional sightings reported by a farm worker. Lumb Lane, Almondbury - singles on 17th and 20th May. Thurstonland - reported as being present, no further details. Emley Colliery area - reported as probably breeding but in smaller numbers than in previous years. Shelley - a pair flushed from the roadside between here and Emley Moor in late May. Silkstone Common - a pair on 3rd May. Bullecliff Wood - one in nearby fields on 16th May. Millbank, Thornhill - one or two present most months with a maximum of seven on 4th October. Horbury Wyke - on 5th June a pair was flushed from an area where there had been a failed nesting attempt in May. One on 14th June in fields to the west. Elland Gravel Pits - seven on 6th October.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*
Scarce summer visitor, occasional breeder

The only record was of one calling near the Windmill Lane/Dearne Dike Lane crossroads at c.2200hrs on 17th June, but not subsequently (JMD).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*
Resident breeder (2-3)

More reports were received this year but few related to breeding, which was reported only from Horbury S.F. (two pairs- nine young), Bretton Park, Farnley Tyas and Woodsome.

The species is widespread in a variety of habitats, from the lowest altitudes to moorland with a few bushes/trees, for example at Winscar Res and is probably increasing.

A female at Shepley on 28th September was a first record for the area (TM), where numbers had increased to four by the year end. Five males were in fields at Horbury Bridge on 14th May. One visited a garden bird-table at Shelley on 24th January.

Mass release pens appeared this year at Denby Dale (TM).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*
Scarce winter visitor

At Elland GPs single birds were present on 25th February and 26th September. Two calling males climbed up reeds at an overgrown pond near Healey Mills on 2nd and 4th April (JRS). One was at Horbury Wyke on the unusual date of 11th August (DHP) – is this an indication of breeding in the vicinity? One was at Bretton Lakes on 11th November.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
Resident breeder (2-3)

Probably grossly under-reported with records from only 21 sites, at 16 of which breeding was confirmed.

Blackmoorfoot Res - occurred daily throughout the year with a maximum of six on 3rd September, but usually only two or three. A pair had one chick on 29th May but the young bird was not seen in June. Almondbury - a pair reared four young on a garden pond in Lumb Lane. Bretton Lakes - at least one pair bred. Broadstones Res - one pair fledged two young. Gunthwaite Dam - a pair with one juvenile on 24th July. Scout Dike Res - three pairs bred producing five young; maximum of 11 on 12th September. Ingbirchworth Res - two pairs bred. Lepton Great Wood - one pair bred. Shelley - a pair probably bred on Shepley Dike. Denby Dale - a pair raised young from two broods. Scammonden Dam - a pair with three chicks in May, reduced to one in June. Bullhouse Ponds - one pair bred. Castle Dam, Penistone - two pairs reared three young. Blacker Beck - two pairs bred. Dewsbury S.F. - four pairs reared 18 young; maximum 47 on 27th January. Horbury Wyke/Strands - several pairs bred; maximum counts 40 on 30th January and 19 on 28th November. Elland Gravel Pits - monthly maxima were in January 25, February 12, December 30.

Coot*Fulica atra*

Resident breeder (2)

Breeding was reported from eight sites, with pairs at four other sites during the breeding season but with no nesting activity taking place. Very few winter counts were received.

Blackmoorfoot Res - breeding attempts resulted in five chicks in June/July but none apparently survived. Up to four adults present regularly late March to late September, but very scarce at the beginning and end of the year, with singles only on 28th February and 22nd December. Ingbirchworth Res - six pairs bred, fledging at least six young; max. counts were 15 on 17th and 31st January, 17 on 7th February with fewer at the year end. Scout Dike Res - nine pairs held breeding territories but only three pairs raised five young; max. count c.20 on 20th February. Gunthwaite Dam - a pair with two juveniles on 24th July. Broadstones Res - a pair present from the end of March to mid-May but did not breed. Bretton Lakes - reported as breeding but no details given. 26 were present on a small unfrozen part of the water on 22nd January; counts on the upper lake only of 30 on 25th January, 32 on 15th February and 12 on 30th September. Ringstone Edge Res - a half-grown juvenile on 9th July was still present on 22nd and presumed to have been bred here. Elland GPs - five pairs present but only two young were reared; max. counts were 20 in January, 19 in February, 15 in March, 25 in April and ten in December. Horbury Strands - two occupied nests on 4th April and two broods of young on 6th May. Horbury Wyke - three pairs with young on 3rd May. Dovestones Res - reported as probably breeding.

Birds were also present in the breeding season at Dewsbury S.F. and Ravensthorpe GPs.

In winter one was at Scammonden Dam on 1st January, five at Longwood Res on 20th January and up to five at Boshaw Whams in late December.

Addition to 1998 Report - at Elland GPs at least three pairs bred, raising four young.

Oystercatcher*Haematopus ostralegus*

Rare breeder (1). Uncommon passage visitor

For the first time, a pair bred successfully in the area. At Winscar Res a pair was present from at least 19th March and hatched one young which was probably predated. A replacement clutch however produced two young, one of which fledged successfully. Three birds were still present on 23rd August (BBSG).

A second pair made an unsuccessful breeding attempt at Ravensthorpe GPs. An adult from 4th April was joined by a second bird on 12th and a nest containing two eggs was found on 14th. Unfortunately it was disturbed by on-site contractors accidentally (?) on 16th; the adults were last seen on 16th May (JRS).

At Horbury Wyke two birds were present from 25th April, with display and mating observed on 4th May, but no breeding took place, although the birds remained to 23rd May. Could they have been the pair displaced from Ravensthorpe approx. 6kms upstream - it seems not unlikely.

There was an increase in the number of sightings from other localities, mainly in spring.

Ingbirchworth Res - singles on 14th and 27th February, 5th and 25th April, 7th, 9th and 27th May. Royd Moor Res - one on the dam wall on 28th April and one flew in calling before landing to feed on 2nd September. Broadstones Res - one on 27th May. Blackmoorfoot Res - one on 31st March, two from

the east on 1st May, singles on 22nd May, 4th and 22nd June and 10th July, four on 22nd July and one on 19th August. Ringstone Edge Res one on 3rd/4th April, two from 7th – 12th July. Elland GPs - one on 25th February. Dewsbury S.F. - two from 11th to 30th April and on 11th May, three on 10th June. Dewsbury - two in the car park of Somerfield's Supermarket in darkness at 2115hrs on 28th April. Millbank, Thornhill - one on 26th April - ? same as one of Dewsbury S.F. birds. Blacker Beck - two flew upstream towards Bullcliff Wood on 17th April. Langsett - two on 14th April. Linthwaite - one flew south on 21st May.

Additions to 1998 Report - at Ringstone Edge Res birds were recorded on an additional 15 dates between 23rd March and 3rd September, all ones or twos except for four on 19th June (HBC). Baitings Res:- two on 29th July, one on 13th September. Elland GPs:- two on 26th April and in May three on 17th, two on 24th and three on 26th.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce summer visitor and irregular breeder (1)

A much better year for the species, with breeding occurring at four sites.

At one site two pairs bred, a pair and three juveniles present on 22nd June and a pair still incubating eggs on 26th June also raised three young after a first attempt had been predated at the egg stage by Carrion Crows.

At the second and third sites single pairs both reared two young, while at the fourth site a pair bred but no other details were received.

Dewsbury S.F. - an excellent spring passage; after the first on 26th March, there were two on 30th March, in April one on 1st, four on 4th, five on 5th and 8th, with in May six on 5th and four on 26th. Ten present on 3rd July included two juveniles. Ringstone Edge Res - also had a good series of records, but post-breeding season and all in July, with three on eighth, a juvenile from 9th to 16th with an additional bird on 11th, three birds on 15th, two on 16th, an adult from 19th to 21st, two adults and one juvenile on 22nd, one adult and two juveniles from 23rd to 28th, an adult and three juveniles on 29th and one on 30th. How many birds were involved in total is open to conjecture. Winscar Res - a single juvenile from 14th to 30th July. Inghirchworth Res - an adult on 26th May and a juvenile on 4th August (probably the Royd Moor bird). Royd Moor Res - an adult on 25th April and a juvenile from 25th July to 5th August, when it was seen to fly off to the south in mid-afternoon.

Additions to 1998 Report - at Low Fields, Elland four on 29th March, five on 30th March, eight on 4th and 12th April, two on 28th April and 1st May, three on 18th May and one on 21st May (via HBC); at Elland GPs one on 24th May and at Ringstone Edge Res four on 8th May (HBC).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Uncommon passage visitor

There was a big increase in the number of records for this species, mainly from the Calder Valley.

Dewsbury S.F. - an excellent series of records, mainly in spring, with two on 20th and three on 31st March, in April one on 8th, two on 11th and one on 17th, nine on 26th May; in autumn two on 10th August (JH,JRS). Millbank, Thornhill three flew east on 3rd April (JRS). Ravensthorpe Gravel Pits - one from 4th April to 26th May (JRS). Ringstone Edge Res - singles in July on 15th, 16th, 19th (adult)

and 30th and a juvenile on 21st September (JB,HBC). Blackmoorfoot Res - an adult on 16th August (MLD).

Additions to 1998 Report - at Ringstone Edge Res three on 26th August, two on 13th and singles on 14th and 21st September (HBC).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*
Migrant breeder (2). Common passage and winter visitor

Birds were exceptionally scarce in the first three months of the year, with none at all in January except at Ringstone Edge which had a maximum count of 50, followed in February and March by maxima of 150 and 106 respectively. Blackmoorfoot had records on four dates in February -- one on 7th, 17 on 22nd, 26 on 23rd and 48 on 24th and in the same month two flew east over Castle Hill on 8th. Birds were reported from only three sites in March, with eight at Whitley Common on 14th, one at Marsden Golf Course on 19th and two at Deer Hill on 30th.

As is to be expected, there was an increase in numbers in April, but only five sites had birds:- in fields to the west of Blackmoorfoot Res on 11 dates, but with low maxima of 57 on 15th, 187 on 17th and 11 on 19th; Whitley Common had two on 6th, then no more until 59 on 19th increasing to a maximum of 228 on 22nd followed by a steady decrease to two on 30th; Broadstones had four on 14th and c.100 on 18th and Ringstone Edge 130 on 5th with 30 on 18th.

There was a very slight increase in the number of pairs reported in the breeding season, but confirmation of breeding is difficult to obtain. However, two pairs bred at Tinker Hill, single pairs bred at Snailsden and near Deer Hill, a pair was on territory at Fiddler's Green, 13 territories were occupied in the Dunford Bridge/Grain's Moss area and there were seven pairs in the Featherbed Moss/Birks Moss area on 1st April.

The only other May records came from Blackmoorfoot, where birds were present in adjacent fields daily from 5th, usually nine to 26 birds, but 32 on 9th, 34 on 10th and 53 on 17th and from Holmbridge, where one flew over on 27th. In June Blackmoorfoot had birds on seven dates, with maxima of 14 on 1st and 13 on 26th and Broadstones had up to three on three dates.

Post-breeding season numbers were very low, probably an indication of disastrous nesting failures. In July Blackmoorfoot had records on only seven dates with a maximum of five birds on 17th and there were four at Broadstones on 5th. The same was true of the August to October period; in August one only at Blackmoorfoot on three dates to 16th; September- Blackmoorfoot one on two dates, Deer Hill ten on 25th, Royd Moor Res one over on 26th; October -- Deer Hill 22 on 5th, four on 13th, Blackmoorfoot two on 16th, Broadstones eight on 18th and four on 26th.

In the last two months of the year the only records were at Blackmoorfoot three over on 8th and 38 over on 18th November, Broadstones 19 on 10th November, and in December 32+ at Ringstone Edge on 10th, five at Whitley Common on 20th and finally 70 near Ingbirchworth and 43+ at Broadstones on 29th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Rare passage visitor

No records in 1999.

Addition to 1998 Report - one at Ringstone Edge Res on 19th September (HBC).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Resident breeder (3). Numerous passage and winter visitor

In the early months, birds were reported from ten sites, but became very scarce after the end of January, with only two counts received for March, when many birds would have taken up breeding territories, and none for April.

In January at Lindley Moor there were two on 1st, 54 flew west on 6th, 16 on 18th, 12 on 22nd and 55 on 30th, at Scout Dike Res c.55 on 3rd and 200 on 18th, at Blackmoorfoot Res 237 on 7th, c.65 at Bretton on 10th, 215 at Dewsbury S.F. on 14th, c.70 at Ingbirchworth on 17th and 24th, with on 30th 52 east at Royd Moor and 150 at Horbury Wyke. February counts were three at Boshaw Whams on 6th, at Scout Dike 59 on 7th and 244 on 13th and maxima at Blackmoorfoot of 69 and 90 on the same dates, with 20 flying west at Bretton on 26th. 84 at Dewsbury S.F. on 7th and c.25 at Horbury Wyke on 22nd were the only counts in March.

About 70 breeding pairs were located, predominantly in the south and southwest of the area, mainly on the moorland fringes and areas of rough pasture, with very few (less than 20 pairs) in the lower, more agricultural, eastern and northern parts. Breeding success was not widely reported, but only 17 young were confirmed as having been reared successfully, ten of these in the vicinity of Lower Windliden Res. The strongholds of the species seem to be the Hade Edge – Winscar, Hazelhead – Flouch and Ingirchworth areas.

Generally, post-breeding gatherings were low. The more significant numbers and peak counts were as follows :-

Blackmoorfoot - July 310 on 10th, 130 on 16th and 150 on 17th; August 225 on 1st, 73 on 29th; September 97 on 6th, 102 on 10th; October 56 on 7th, 117 on 13th, 200 on 15th and 28 on 29th; November 132 on 3rd, 175 on 10th, 150 on 12th, 146 on 23rd and 150 on 25th; December 140 on 12th, 150 on 24th and 283 on 29th. Bretton - c.100 on 19th August. Broadstones - c.380 on 6th July (the highest count of the year anywhere in the Club area) and c.120 on 26th October. Dewsbury S.F. - July 28 on 7th, 42 on 11th, 38 on 12th and 48 on 18th; August 54 on 1st, 108 east on 7th, 78 east on 19th; September 237 on 22nd; November 142 east on 4th. Horbury Wyke - July 60 on 3rd, 90 on 24th; September 60 on 12th, 164 on 24th; October 174 on 12th. Ingbirchworth - 21 on 30th October, 30+ on 20th December. Lindley Moor - in November 10 east on 7th and 70 southeast on 9th. Millbank, Thornhill - c.100 on 23rd October and 56 on 28th December. Ringstone Edge - July 122+ (very few juveniles) on 6th, 140 on 9th, 142 on 19th and 129 on 31st; c.40 on 5th August; c.80 on 3rd September; 90 on 30th October.

Knot *Calidris canuta*

Rare passage visitor

There were two records, both single adults – at Blackmoorfoot Res, the first to have stayed for longer than two days, from 12th to 17th August (MLD,JKP,DHP) and at Ringstone Edge Res on the morning of 20th September (JB).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Rare passage visitor

Birds occurred at Ingbirchworth Res – two on 26th May (DJS) and at Ringstone Edge Res, an adult on 21st July (JB), both typical dates.

Addition to 1998 Report - one at Ringstone Edge Res on 8th May (HBC).

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Rare passage visitor

No records in 1999.

Addition to 1998 Report - one at Ringstone Edge Res on 20th September (HBC).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Migrat breeder (1 – 2). Uncommon passage visitor

Single pairs bred near Deer Hill and Harden Moor, where a small chick was seen on 13th June, and at least one pair was on territory at Featherbed Moss on 1st May. No records were received from other known breeding areas.

The majority of nonbreeding records came from Blackmoorfoot and Ringstone Edge Reservoirs, mainly in the post-breeding months as follows:-

Blackmoorfoot Res - one on 13th March, two west on 9th and a single on 31st May, singles west on 6th October and 15th December and finally one on 18th December. Whitley Common - two with Golden Plovers on 20th April. Ringstone Edge Res - in July an adult on 9th, a juvenile on 11th and 12th, adult and juvenile on 13th, two adults on 14th, five birds on 15th, two on 16th, adult on 19th, two adults west on 21st, one on 25th. Two present on 27th August, two on 20th September and one on 14th October. Dewsbury S.F. - two on 10th August and 22nd October. Ingbirchworth Res - singles flew over on 10th and 16th October.

Additions to 1998 Report - at Ringstone Edge ten on 6th August, two on 13th September, singles on 2nd and 17th November (HBC).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
Scarce passage visitor

Single birds were at Dewsbury S.F. on 23rd April (JH) and a male at Millbank, Thornhill on 20th August (JRS).

Additions to 1998 Report - singles at Ringstone Edge on 23rd March and 3rd September (HBC).

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*
Scarce passage and winter visitor

There were more records than in most recent years.

Elland Gravel Pits - singles on 3rd January, 6th and 11th March, 1st, 11th and 27th November and 31st December (JB,HBC). Bow Grain's (Deer Hill Moss) - one on 16th January (TD). Broadstones Res - one on 20th September (BBSG). Dewsbury S.F. - one on 30th September (JH). Ravensthorpe Gravel Pits - one nearby on the canal towpath on 5th December (JRS).

Additions to 1998 Report - singles at Elland GPs on 2nd January and Ringstone Edge on 28th February (HBC).

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*
Resident breeder (1 - 2). Common passage and winter visitor

Birds were very scarce in the early months with reports from only six sites, the only significant counts being at Royd Moor Res which held at least 28 on 30th January, 18 on 10th and 11 on 13th March, and Horbury Wyke where 15 were present on 29th March. Elsewhere Blackmoorfoot Res had just a single record of one bird on 22nd January, one was at Scammonden on 12th February, three at Deer Hill on 11th March and five at Dewsbury S.F. (where large numbers were present at the end of 1998) on 4th April.

The only proved breeding came from Tinker Hill (one pair), with a second pair on territory; other sites where birds were displaying and may have bred were Whitley Common, Broadstones, Lower Hardron, near the Dog and Partridge, Buckstones, Merrydale Clough (a new site), whilst juveniles at Ringstone Edge Res on 7th July and at Winscar Res on 17th and 30th July may have been bred locally.

There were more records after the breeding season, involving passage/winter visitors, as follows:-

Scout Dike Res - singles on 14th August and 30th October. Horbury Wyke - 28 on 23rd August, 29 on 30th September, 16 on 5th October, 18 on 22nd October. Dewsbury S.F. - maxima were 22 on 25th August and 6th September, 16 on 15th October, 26 on 6th December. Blackmoorfoot Res - on seven dates in September, max. four on 9th, six on 7th October, two on 19th November. Ringstone Edge Res - in September max. ten on 2nd, 11 on 5th, 15 on 20th, with 11 on 2nd December - numbers low due to high water levels. Holmfirth - one over Greenfield Road on 2nd October. Millbank, Thornhill - 11 on 4th October, where usually one to six. Ingbirchworth Res - one over on 16th October. Elland Gravel Pits - 15 on 13th November. Shepley - two on 27th/28th November.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*
Resident breeder (2). Uncommon winter visitor

Probably much under-recorded owing to its nocturnal habits.

Singles at Bow Grain's (Deer Hill Moss) on 2nd and at Bretton Park on 16th January were the only reports in the early months.

Roding birds were recorded between 29th March and 8th July at Storthes Hall Woods, near Kirkburton, Holme Styes (up to three birds), Stoneycliffe Wood, Scammonden (two birds), Yateholme (up to eight birds), Little Don Valley (eight birds), Crossley's Plantation and Winscar Res, a very similar situation to last year's.

Later in the year one was stunned flying into a window at Linthwaite but recovered on 16th October (MH via TM), in November singles were in the Little Don Valley on 16th, Honley Wood on 20th, Helme on 20th and 27th, Denby Dale on 29th and at Scammonden on 4th December.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
Rare passage visitor

A good year for the species.

At Dewsbury S.F. seven birds alighted briefly before flying off east on 5th April (JH) and at Horbury Wyke on 24th April four arrived at 0915hrs, leaving to the west 20 min later (JRS).

In autumn at Ringstone Edge Res a summer-plumaged adult of the nominate race arrived at 2050hrs on 6th July (JB), another was present on 15th July (HBC) and four adults of the Icelandic race (*L.l.islandica*) arrived at 2035hrs on 17th July, leaving to the west at 2100hrs (JB).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponicus*
Rare passage visitor

The sole record was one at Ringstone Edge Res on 26th August (HBC).

Addition to 1998 Report - one at Ringstone Edge on 23rd November (HBC).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce to uncommon passage visitor

A much better year for this species.

The earliest were two which flew west over Dewsbury S.F. on 23rd April (JH). In May singles flew over Holmbridge on 3rd (MC) and over Ingbirehworth on 15th (RJB), one arrived at Blackmoorfoot Res at 1500hrs on 31st (DMO) and on the same date one was feeding in fields with Lesser Black-backed and Yellow-legged Gull at 1615 hrs at Whitley Edge, whence it flew off to the southwest calling at 1635hrs (MC). A late individual passed over Winscar Res at c.2230hrs on 15th June (RJB,MC,JMcL.). One was at Ringstone Edge Res on 23rd July (HBC).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*
Migrant breeder (2). Common passage visitor

The first passage birds were two which flew north at Blackmoorfoot on the early date of 26th February, with the next at Winscar (one) and Scammonden (three) on 4th March, followed by one at Deer Hill on 6th, three at Ingbirchworth on 8th and a flock of 14 flying west at Blackmoorfoot on 10th. After these, there was little further evidence of movement apart from singles at Thornhill on 13th, Dewsbury S.F. on 13th, 14th and 24th, three more west at Blackmoorfoot on 15th and further singles over Crosland Moor and Thornhill on 4th April. Later birds at non-breeding sites were singles at Denby Dale on 19th May and 3rd June, and at Horbury Wyke two on 2nd and singles on a further three dates in May.

By mid-March birds had appeared at eleven potential breeding sites, although no particularly large parties were found, highest counts being eight at Annat Royd Lane on 12th and 12 calling/displaying in the Scammonden area on 17th.

During the breeding season birds were reported from 23 sites at six of which, all in the south of the area, breeding was proven, but no reports were received from some large areas of suitable habitat in the west, where birds are normally present.

At Broadstones a pair had young on 17th June, at least three pairs bred at Tinker Hill, three pairs in the Dunford Bridge/Upper Dead Edge area, at least two pairs on Thurlstone Moor, one pair at Fiddler's Green and at Snailsden on 1st July six juveniles were present in a party of ten birds. Other areas supporting birds on territory (single pairs unless otherwise stated) were near Lepton, Emley Moor, Netherton (Wakefield), Stockmoor Common, near New Mill, Dovestones (several), Royd Moor, Scout Dike (two), Winscar (two), Snailsden (six), Carlecotes, Townhead (two), Harden Res (two), Upper Windleden Res, Digley, Issues Road, Crossley's Plantation, Longdendale (several) and Lower Hardron (two).

The largest gatherings were ten in the Little Don Valley on 6th June and 29 near Broadstones on 22nd June.

There were very few records post-breeding season, the only ones notified being singles at Ringstone Edge on 5th August, with three there on 18th August, at Dewsbury S.F. on 2nd and 5th September and at Blackmoorfoot singles west on 21st August and 23rd October.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*
Migrant breeder (1)

A much better year for this species, with three pairs proved to breed and a fourth strongly suspected of doing so.

First of the year was one over Scout Dike Res on 13th March, followed by one at Ingbirchworth Res on 17th March. In April two were at Millbank Flash, Thornhill on 2nd, two at Dewsbury S.F. on 4th, at Horbury Wyke one on 8th, two on 9th and one on 14th and a further single at Ingbirchworth on 25th. Horbury Wyke also had one on 8th and two on 23rd May.

At Black Moss at least two pairs bred, a nest and eggs and a pair with young being found in late May and a pair bred successfully at Upper Maythorn. A pair was also present at Winscar Res from 3rd April into June, when three birds were seen and are presumed to have bred. A pair at Tinker Hill

were considered likely to have been the Winscar birds.

The only autumn records were at Ravensthorpe GPs one on 6th July, at Ringstone Edge Res one on 8th and two on 15th July with a further bird on 9th September, at Blackmoorfoot Res singles on 14th August, 15th and 21st November and at Scout Dike Res one on 22nd September.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage visitor

A much improved year, with birds recorded, mainly in autumn and particularly in August, from seven sites.

Dewsbury S.F. - one on 17th and two on 20th April, one on 5th May. An excellent showing in autumn, with in August one on 6th, two on 8th, three on 12th, six on 14th, ten on 18th, nine on 19th, seven on 22nd, eight on 23rd, four on 28th, three on 29th and 31st and in September three on 3rd and two on 7th (JH). Ravensthorpe GPs - one from 4th - 8th and three from 12th - 14th August (JRS). Ringstone Edge Res - two on 18th August (HBC). Millbank Flash, Thornhill - two from 20th - 22nd August (JRS). Blackmoorfoot Res - singles on 20th, 22nd and 29th August and 2nd September. Slaithwaite Road, Meltham - two along the Blackmoorfoot catchment on 28th August, with one on 29th (TD). Deer Hill Res - one on 5th September (DMP).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Uncommon passage and winter visitor

The only spring records were of single birds at Horbury Wyke on 8th/9th April (DHP) and at Elland GPs on 19th April (HBC). In autumn reported from five sites, all except one in the Calder Valley lowlands.

Dewsbury S.F. - one on 27th June; in August three on 11th and 14th, four on 19th and 25th, at least two on 29th; in September four on 1st, three on 16th; three on 18th October and one daily from 3rd November to 19th December (JH). Horbury Wyke - one from 9th July to 11th August, with two on 5th and 8th September. Ravensthorpe GPs - singles on 14th and 19th July and 12th September. Royd Moor Res - one for five minutes only on 5th August. Millbank Flash, Thornhill - singles on 20th August and 12th October.

Addition to 1998 Report - one at Ringstone Edge on 20th September (HBC).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Rare passage visitor

One was at Dewsbury S.F. on 19th August (JH) and what was probably the same bird at Millbank Flash, Thornhill just across the R. Calder on 20th (JRS).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleuca*
Migrant breeder (2)

The earliest returning bird by 11 days was at Blackmoorfoot Res on 11th April, followed by the next at the same site and also at Ingbirchworth Res on 22nd (and 23rd), Winscar Res on 24th and Dewsbury S.F. on 27th. Single birds appeared at a further six localities, including two potential breeding sites, in May – at Bretton Park and Digley Res (pair) on 1st, Scout Dike Res on 7th, R.Holme at Armitage Bridge on 17th, Wessenden Head Res on 20th, at Blackmoorfoot again on 22nd, with one there also in June, and at Scammonden on 29th.

Breeding took place at Snailsden (one pair, three young), Harden Res (one pair), Lower Windleden Res (at least two pairs), Upper Windleden Res (one pair) and Winscar Res (four pairs), where there were 12 birds including young on 21st June and a further two small young on 3rd July. At the same site on 17th July, a pair became very agitated, one of them swimming like a phalarope, the other on the bank giving a broken wing distraction display, as a Kestrel hunted on foot on the shore, searching under rocks, etc; presumably they had non-flying young nearby (MC). Further pairs were located at Langsett, Dovestones and Digley Reservoirs.

Lowland breeding in our area is unusual, so a pair at Ravensthorpe Gravel Pits from 25th May which raised two young is noteworthy. Six birds were present at this site from 8th to 19th July.

Post-breeding records came from Dewsbury S.F. – three on 1st and six on 25th July and two on 15th August; Blackmoorfoot Res on three July dates with a maximum of three on 30th and on three August dates, max. two on 26th, Ringstone Edge Res two on 4th and one on 22nd July, Royd Moor Res three on 2nd August then a maximum of two on 11 further dates in August, Horbury Wyke one from 4th – 12th August, Ingbirchworth Res three, including a juvenile on 15th August, with one on 16th, Scammonden one on 12th September and finally one at Baitings Res on 10th October.

Addition to 1998 Report - a pair bred successfully at Rishworth Moor (HBC).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
Rare passage visitor

Two adults present at Ringstone Edge Res on 21st July left to the west at 1945hrs (JB,HBC).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*
Rare visitor

There was just a single record of a sub-adult which flew along the R.Calder at Dewsbury S.F. on 13th May (JH).

Addition to 1998 Report - winter-plumaged adult at Ringstone Edge on 24th September.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*
Scarce passage visitor

At Dewsbury S.F. 12 (eight adults, four juveniles) flew east on 31st August (JH).

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Numerous passage and winter visitor. Former breeder (1)

No evidence of breeding was received and the former Black Moss colony was unoccupied on 19th June. Significant counts were:-

Royd Moor Res - c.150 on 1st and c.200 on 23rd January. Scout Dike Res - 20 on 10th and 58 on 23rd January, 300 on 24th October. Inghirchworth Res - maxima were in January 270, February c.320 (on 21st), October c.120, November 420 (on 6th), December c.120. Elland GPs - 120 on 16th January, 160 on 17th February and 31st December. Elland Lowfields - 340 on 3rd February. Dewsbury S.F. - c.5000 on 17th January, 2875 on 14th February, 500 on 21st November. Blackmoorfoot Res - 102 on 14th July, 103 on 4th August, 1100 on 13th October. No specific counts were made in the winter months at either end of the year; a single combined count of 5150 with Common Gull on 28th December was the only count in the winter months. Ringstone Edge Res - 200 on 19th August, 400 on 30th October, 250 on 18th December. Horbury Wyke - 72 on 22nd and 94 on 24th September, 150 on 12th October. Millbank, Thornhill - c.1000 east on 22nd October, 300 on 5th December. Baitings Res - 500+ roosting on 28th November. Blackley Tip - 500+ on 30th December.

Smaller numbers, up to 50 birds, were reported from Lindley Rec, Woodsome, Boshaw Whams, Broadstones Res and Kirkheaton.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Common passage and winter visitor

The species is scarce between the months of April and August.

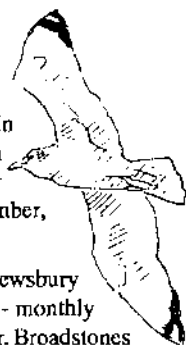
Blackmoorfoot Res - no counts were made between January and June nor in November/December. In July an adult on four dates, in August up to two on eight dates, on four dates in September with a maximum of eight and in October on three dates, max. 73 on 13th. In the combined count of 5150 on 28th December, Black-headed Gull was heavily predominant.

Scammonden - 21 on 4th January, 47 on 20th February, 61 on 27th November. Dewsbury S.F. - 200 west on 17th January was the maximum count. Inghirchworth Res - monthly maxima reported were 87 on 23rd January, c.60 on 21st February, 32 in December. Broadstones Res - 100+ on 30th January and 130 on 31st. Elland GPs - 35 on 17th February, 30+ on 31st December. Thornhill - 24 were on a school roof on the late date of 16th April. Millbank Flash, Thornhill - 16 on 22nd October. Kirkheaton - 20 on the cricket field on 27th October. Ringstone Edge Res - first autumn bird was on 9th July, 150 on 30th October, 50 on 18th December. Horbury Wyke - 14 on 28th November. Bretton Lakes - c.60 in mid-November. Boshaw Whams - c.25 on 31st December.

Smaller numbers were reported from Woodsome, Shelley, Marsh, Shepley and Denby Dale.

This species is still being largely ignored and under-reported.

Additions to 1998 Report - Elland GPs 200 on 3rd January, Blackley Tip 450 on 28th January, Ringstone Edge 200 on 27th December.



Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Common passage visitor

Most common from spring through the summer months to autumn, with often a pronounced passage of birds in May. Smaller numbers generally occur at the beginning and end of the year.

Blackmoorfoot Res - in January on five dates, max. 13 on 21st, on one date only in February with 63 on 20th; present but no counts in March, on only two dates in April, max. 67 on 17th, max. of 11 in May, six in June, increasing to 51 on 29th July, 507 on 20th August, 117 on 3rd September, 307 on 13th October, 284 on 3rd November, then a rapid drop in numbers to a maximum of only seven in December.

Blackley Tip - seven on 23rd February, 400 on 4th and 17th April, regularly 200 in June. Ingbirchworth Res - maxima in spring of 44 on 25th April and in autumn 101 on 30th October. Dewsbury S.F. - passage noted in May, with 15 east on 17th, 19 east on 18th and 98 south on 23rd. On 12th August 43 moved southeast. Thornhill - 12 moving west on 22nd May. Whitley Edge - small parties were noted on passage on 31st May, when 112 were also feeding in nearby cut fields. Ringstone Edge Res - maxima were 214 on 9th July, 197 on 12th August, 20 on 30th October. Royd Moor Res - in autumn counts of 110 on 2nd August, 67 on 28th August, 145 on 2nd September, with an increase in October to a maximum of 330 on 10th.

Smaller numbers were also noted, mainly in July/August, at Lindley, Denby Dale, Shepley and Shelley, with three at Hade Edge on 23rd December.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Common passage and winter visitor

In contrast to the last species, birds are most frequent in the winter months, with very few between March and September. Only a small number of records received, with the exception of counts at the Blackmoorfoot roost.

Blackmoorfoot Res - monthly maxima were 37 on 2nd January, 288 on 20th February, no count in March, two in April on seven dates, no birds in May – July, an adult on 23rd August, in September three adults on 23rd with one adult on five other days, two in October, in November 171 on 14th and 208 on 29th and 359 on 15th December.

Elsewhere in January c.40 were at Royd Moor Res on 1st, one at Scout Dike Res on 10th with ten at Elland GPs on the same date, 250 flew west at Dewsbury S.F. on 17th and in February there were 15 at Elland GPs on 7th, c.50 at Ingbirchworth Res on 20th and ten at Blackley Tip on 23rd. A 2nd-summer bird was at Whitley Edge on 31st May. Ringstone Edge Res had singles on four dates in July and on 19th August. In December 20 at Blackley Tip and 15 passing through Elland GPs on 30th. Small numbers were also noted flying over Shepley, Denby Dale and Shelley, mainly in December.

Additions to 1998 Report - Blackley Tip 180 on 28th and 100 on 31st January, 20 on 2nd December; Elland Lowfields up to 20 in the first winter period, 30 on 27th December; Ringstone Edge 50 on 28th October, 32 on 27th December.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus cachinnans*

Scarce passage visitor

Birds were observed at six sites, with the majority at Ringstone Edge and all on typical dates in late summer/early autumn. At other sites however this seasonal pattern of occurrence was interrupted; for example all the records from Blackmoorfoot, with one exception, were in the late winter months.

Dewsbury S.F. - one flew west on 14th February (JH). Blackley Tip - a 2nd-summer bird present on 17th April (JB). Whitley Edge - a probable 3rd-year present on 31st May flew towards Ingbirchworth Res where it was probably seen some time later that day (MC). Ringstone Edge Res - birds were present on eleven days in July, two in August and two in September. July - on 6th a moulting adult remained for 15 minutes before departing to the west, on 7th a 1st-summer present for 20 minutes, on 9th two adults, one of which flew west, on 11th two adults and a 3rd-summer, a 3rd-summer on 12th, 14th and 15th, an adult on 17th, a 3rd-year on 21st, a 3rd-summer again and an adult on 26th, with the adult again on 31st. In August an adult on 1st and an adult and a 3rd-summer on 5th, and in September one on 8th and an adult on 20th (JB,HBC). Presumably the same individuals were involved in many of these sightings. Blackmoorfoot Res - a sub-adult on 7th August was the only summer record here. All other reports were of adults as follows :- one on 19th/20th November (MLD,KW), one on 28th (JKP) and two on 29th November (MLD,KW) and one on 14th (KW) and 15th December (MLD). How many different birds were involved is intriguing. Royd Moor Res - an adult present on 28th August and 5th September (DHP).

Additions to 1998 Report - Blackley Tip had single adults on 29th August and 12th December; Ringstone Edge a single adult present on 25th and 28th July, 7th and 17th August (HBC).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

Scarce winter visitor

No records in 1999.

Addition to 1998 Report - the 1st-winter bird at Blackley Tip was present from 26th January to 5th February (HBC).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Common winter visitor

Few records were received apart from the Blackmoorfoot roost counts.

Blackmoorfoot Res - monthly maxima were 74 on 11th January, 46 on 10th February, one only in March on 23rd and 26th, no birds April - September, then one on five dates in October, 47 on 27th and 48 on 29th November and 107 on 15th and 114 on 16th December. Dewsbury S.F. - 135 flew west on 17th January. Elland Lowfields had 10 on 24th January, Elland GPs up to 12 in February and four in December and Blackley Tip only six in February and two in December, all much lower numbers than in the recent past.

Elsewhere five were at Royd Moor Res on 1st January, one at Skelmanthorpe on 10th January, up to three in March and one in December at Ingbirchworth Res, with small numbers also at Woodsome and over Shephey and Denby Dale.

Additions to 1998 Report - Elland GPs 25 on 3rd and 20 on 21st January; Elland Lowfields 10 on 6th January, 14 on 15th and 75 on 27th December; Blackley Tip 80 on 28th and 40 on 31st January, ten on 7th February, one on 15th November; Ringstone Edge 60 on 27th December.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Scarce passage visitor

There were four records, two of them untypically early in the year.

Dewsbury S.F. - one flew west at 1300hrs on 7th February (JH). Ingbirchworth Res - an adult on 27th February (RJB,DJS) and another adult on 11th April (RJB). Blackmoorfoot Res - an adult on 19th August (MLD).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Uncommon passage visitor, increasing

First of the year were one on 25th and three on 26th at Elland GPs. Although there were no May reports from this site, birds occurred here on eight dates in June, max. four on 28/29th, on most days in July, max. four on 18th and on 13 days in August, max. five on 10th, with the last on 20th.

A pair were displaying at Horbury Wyke on 3rd May and up to three birds remained in the area to at least 17th August, but no breeding took place.

Elsewhere in the Calder Valley four were at Dewsbury S.F. on 11th May, with two west there on 27th May and seven present on 29th June. At Ravensthorpe GPs a pair were holding territory on 12th May, were observed mating on 16th, but did not breed. They were joined by a second pair later, with the last sighting on 19th June.

Birds also occurred, singly unless otherwise stated, at Scout Dike Res on 3rd July, Blackmoorfoot Res two on 5th and one south on 6th July, Ringstone Edge Res two adults west on 12th and one on 15th July and on 5th August; at Royd Moor Res two birds which flew south on 18th July were either this or the next species.

Additions to 1998 Report- Elland GPs up to five birds present on a total of 26 dates, four in April, seven in May, 12 in July and three in August.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon passage visitor

One was present at Ingbirchworth Res on 20th April (DHP).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage visitor

One at Blackmoorfoot Res on 19th September (MLD) was the only record.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*
Resident breeder (3)

The only count was of 500+ in the town centre on 14th December (DMO).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*
Resident breeder (2 - 3)

Very few observers submit records of this species which is probably under-reported and therefore under-recorded. It is widespread throughout the area to the moorland fringes and large flocks, often in association with Wood Pigeons, can be found, particularly in March. The Ingbirchworth area supports large numbers at this time.

Blackmoorfoot Res - reported in every month, normally up to six, but 11 in January and an isolated high count of 26 on 24th December. Dewsbury S.F. - 34 on 26th March, 23 on 14th and 35 on 31st October. Scout Dike Res - 29 on 16th January, nine on 24th April. Ingbirchworth Res:- 20 on 24th April. Dearne Dike Lane:- 30+ on 30th January, max. of c.250 on 17th March, with over 100 still present on 4th April. Broadstones:- 100+ on 27th March. Haddingley Lane:- c.40 on 31st March. Horbury Wyke:- 55+ on 22nd March, 16 on 22nd September.

Breeding was reported from Emley Moor (2/3 pairs), Holme Styes, Lower Hardron (2 pairs), Shepley (5+ pairs), Denby Dale (c.5 pairs) and probably occurred at Bretton Park, Lepton Great Wood, Penny Spring Wood, Lower Stones Wood, Skelmanthorpe, Dunford Bridge and Outlane, with birds seen at several other localities in the breeding season.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*
Resident breeder (4). Numerous winter visitor

Common and widespread throughout the area including around moorland reservoirs, but much under-reported, with records received from only ten localities.

The only counts in three figures were from Dearne Dike Lane which had c.200 on 30th January, c.150 on 17th and c.100 on 27th March, from Ingbirchworth where 280 were counted on a visible migration watch on 30th October and c.700 passed southeast on 7th November and from Dewsbury S.F. where 95 moved south on 7th August and 144 south on 17th November.

No breeding evidence was submitted.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
Resident breeder (3)

Few records received and much under-recorded.

Reported as a common breeder in the Almondbury area with 10 to 12 pairs, at Shepley, Denby Dale and Thornhill (c.20 pairs) and breeding at Shelley, New Mill and Dalton.

The only counts received were of 31 roosting at Lockwood on 28th January, 26 at Millbank Farm, Thornhill on 20th September, a flock of 12 near Ingbirchworth on 17th October and 58 roosting at Ingbirchworth Treatment Works on 28th December.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Former breeder, now rare passage visitor

The only record was of one at Horbury Wyke, one of the species' last strongholds, on 3rd May (JRS).

Addition to 1998 Report - a juvenile on 28th August at Turner Wood, near Ringstone Edge (HBC).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Migrant breeder (2)

There has been a substantial decline in numbers in recent years, with birds now absent from many areas formerly occupied. The majority of reports now come from upland and moorland habitats, with relatively few in the lowlands. Recorded between 24th April and 11th August.

Dewsbury S.F. - one on 24th April, two on 8th May, singles on 3rd July and from 20th July to 11th August. Langsett Res - one on 25th April. Royd Edge, Meltham - two seen on 28th April and heard regularly in May. Digley - one on 25th April and in May with up to three different birds in the area in June. Wessenden Valley - one on 1st May and a male and a female on 3rd May. Little Don Valley - two males on 2nd May. Shelley - one on 4th May. Dunford Bridge - one on 5th and 11th May. Gawthorpe Green, Kirkheaton - a male on 7th May. Bretton Park - one on 14th May. Ramsden Clough - one on 27th May. Deer Hill area - one on 14th June. Millbank, Thornhill - one brown phase bird on 4th/5th and 28th July.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Resident breeder (2)

Records were again received from some 40 localities, well spread throughout the area, from the lowlands of the northeast to the moorland fringes, which are its stronghold locally.

Breeding was proved, single pairs unless otherwise stated, at Hazelhead Hall, near Castle Hill, Royd Moor, Wooldale, Tinker Hill, Roughbirchworth/Cubley (at least five pairs), Victoria, Thurlstone, Ossett, Earlsheaton and Healey Mills.

Further pairs were present and in many cases probably bred near Blackmoorfoot Res, Castle Hill/Lumb Lane (two), Horbury S.F., Digley, Hinchliffe Mill (two), New Mill, Scammonden, Totties, Shepley and Denby Dale (two), with sightings in the breeding season at a further seven sites.

The species is clearly in a healthy condition in the area.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Resident breeder (2 - 3)

Few observers reported this widespread and common species, which is obviously therefore greatly under-recorded.

Breeding was proved at just six sites - Orange Wood, Blackmoorfoot (two young raised), Windybank Wood, Blacker Beck, Dalton, Denby Dale (at least three calling pairs of which one certainly bred)

and Crossley's Plantation.

Further pairs and/or individuals calling in the breeding season were reported from Lumb Lane, Woodsome Valley, Storthes Hall Woods, Mollicar Wood, Lepton Great Wood, Farnley Tyas, Barkisland, Emley Moor, Shelley, Bretton Park, Quarmbly, Lockwood, Berry Brow, Honley, Golcar, Holmfirth, New Mill, Hinchliffe Mill and Lower Stones Wood and nesting probably occurred in some of these areas as well as in many others.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Resident breeder (1)

Three pairs bred at two localities, but different from the sites occupied in 1998. At the first, two or perhaps three young were calling in early July and the birds were still present into September, with the last recorded on 9th October. When young were being fed the adults could be seen in daylight, giving excellent views, perched on roadside fence posts.

At the second location, two pairs bred and again at least two young were calling in early July at one of the sites.

At one of the sites occupied last year an adult was seen on 22nd April (SH) and birds were also visible in September/October, but it is not known if any breeding attempt was made. In the previous winter much tree-felling had taken place here.

Away from breeding sites the only record was of a bird found on 31st August at Blackmoorfoot Res with a wing so badly injured that it had to be destroyed (via WB,MM).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Resident/migrant breeder (1). Scarce passage/winter visitor

Early year sightings were of singles at Holme Styes on 7th January (MC), near Hade Edge on 16th January (PMcG) and near Winscar Res on 30th January (HQ) all perhaps referable to the same individual, three over fields below Deer Hill Res on 8th February (DMO) and two at Scammonden on 14th April (JB).

At least three pairs again bred successfully in one moorland area, adults being watched carrying food back to young on 2nd July and there were several sightings throughout the breeding season of birds in adjacent moorland areas.

An individual at another moorland area well away from the known breeding site on 19th June suggests possible occupancy in the breeding season.

In the second half of the year, away from breeding areas, the only records were of singles near Broadstones Lodge on 22nd August (BBSG), at Scammonden on 9th/10th October (JB), with one also at Fox House Moss on the former date (MC).

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

One over Bradley Park Golf Course on 22nd April (DWB) equalled the earliest ever recorded in the area and was eleven days in advance of the next sighting of four at Waterloo on 3rd May. After three at Crosland Moor and one at Lepton on 7th and singles at Shelley and Dewsbury S.F. and 30 at Ravensthorpe on 8th, birds appeared at many sites from 9th May onwards and some significant gatherings/movements were apparent. As is usual, most birds had left the area by mid-August, although there were several very late records.

Breeding was reported only from Denby Dale, Dalton, Lindley and Thornhill, where c.20 pairs nested on a housing estate and c.80, mainly juveniles, were feeding on 6th August.

Blackmoorfoot Res:- in May 2 – 37 daily (after 9th) with max. of 80 on 24th and 26th, 130 on 30th and 90 on 31st; daily in June with max. of 95 on 3rd, 130 on 4th and 6th, 140 on 9th; smaller numbers in July and the last were 18 on 21st and 11 on 22nd August. Dewsbury S.F.- unprecedented numbers were observed on a regular basis in late spring/summer moving west. In May 58 on 13th, 208 on 14th; in June 393 on 27th, 1478 on 28th and 1138 on 30th; in July 1142 on 1st, 1686 on 2nd, 1790 on 7th, 302 on 8th, 180 on 18th, 332 on 20th, 230 on 27th, 280 on 28th; in August southerly movement on 7th (168), 8th (42) and 12th (67) with finally 180 moving west on 17th (JH). The cause of such large and extended movements is a mystery. On 4th July a large westerly movement of over 1000 birds was also noted over Ossett (JRS).

The only other substantial numbers reported were c.300 at Scout Dike Res on 20th June, with a similar number feeding over the Lepton/Fenay Bridge area on 17th July. Next highest totals were c.60 at Horbury S.F. on 23rd May, 30-40 at Ingbirchworth Res on 13th June and c.100 moving in front of approaching bad weather at Deame Dike Lane on 17th June.

Unusually late birds were at Lindley on 21st September and at Skelmanthorpe on 23rd and 30th September.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Resident breeder (1)

Records were received from more than 25 sites, with breeding confirmed at Elland GPs, Bretton Lakes (two pairs), Scout Dike Res, R.Don at Bullhouse and at three sites on the R.Calder between Dewsbury S.F. and Horbury Junction, but with no evidence of success here. An additional pair was present on the R.Calder near Ravensthorpe.

There were also regular sightings throughout the year in the Colne Valley between Tunnel End, Marsden and Milnsbridge and on the Fenay Beck. Outside the breeding season, particularly in the second half of the year, birds were reported, usually singly, from Blackmoorfoot Res (January/March and November/December), Ringstone Edge Res, Royd Moor Res, Gunthwaite Dam, Lockwood, Meltham, Damside, Chapel Hill, the R.Colne near the McAlpine Stadium, Hagg Wood, Holmfirth Sands and Hinchcliffe Mill.

Addition to 1998 Report - at Elland GPs two pairs nested, with a possible third pair nearby.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*
Rare visitor

One was found near the hide at Dewsbury S.F. at 0845hrs on 22nd August sitting in a small bush. It was watched for c.20 minutes and photographed as it frequently flew down to feed on an overgrown sewage bed (JH). A fitting reward for the persistence and dedication of the observer at this site.

The eighth record for the Club area.

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

The situation was very similar to that of previous years, although the number of sites from which birds were reported shows a decrease this year from c.45 to just over 30.



Breeding was confirmed only in the Scammonden Valley, Shepley and Millbank, Thornhill and a juvenile was seen at Elland GPs on 5th July. Other pairs were present near Horbury Wyke, at Digley, Bretton Park and Denby Dale. Elsewhere in the breeding season single birds were seen and/or heard at Helmc, Mollicar Wood, Woodsome Valley, Sangstry Wood, near Brockholes, Jenkinson Wood, Hall Dike, near Holmfirth and Honley, Healey House, Hinchcliffe Mill and Gunthwaite Dam.

At other times of the year birds were reported from Jagger Hill, Dunford Bridge, Cooper Bridge, New Mill, Dalton, Royd Moor Res, Kirkburton and in the Colne and Longwood Valleys, where birds twice visited a garden feeding station.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
Resident breeder (2 – 3)

This common and widespread species was reported from over 60 sites, but records of confirmed breeding were again few in number. Confirmation of breeding was mainly in the form of the presence of juvenile birds.

Bred at Beaumont Park, Lockwood (two pairs), Mollicar Wood, Sharpe Lane, Almondbury, Shepley (two pairs), Denby Dale (two pairs), Jenkinson Wood, Shelley, Scout Dike, Hagg Wood, New Mill and Holmbridge. During the breeding season birds were also present at Bretton Park (three “drumming”), Deffer Wood, Lepton Great Wood, Carr Wood, Anchor Wood, Mellor Wood, Royd House Wood, Smiths Wood, Riley Lane, Boothroyd Wood, Lower Stones Wood, Penny Spring Wood, Dutlane Golf Course, Longwood Valley, Butternab Wood, Big Valley, Round Wood (Brockholes), Slate Pits Wood, Wessenden, Stockmoor Common, Blacker Wood (Skelmanthorpe), Bullecliff Wood, Blacker Beck, Millbank Thornhill, Dewsbury S.F., Ingbirchworth and Cliff Wood. A further 15 sites had birds outside the breeding season

Gardens were visited in Edgerton, Wooldale, Shelley, Salendine Nook, Lockwood, Dalton, Almondbury and New Mill, but not this year at Hinchcliffe Mill.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

Resident breeder (1)

Once again there was a further increase to 15 in the number of sites from which this species was reported. With the exception of one site however, all sightings were between January and 22nd April at the beginning of the year and between 4th September and late December at the year's end, an indication of how elusive this species is during the breeding season.

Bretton Lakes:- one on 16th January, two males on 23rd February, one on 2nd and two on 9th April; regular sightings of both male and female near the lower lake from 23rd October onwards and at the western end of the upper lake on 27th December.

Denby Dale - one visited feeders at "In Focus" in January. Beanmont Park - a male on 7th February. Lumb Lane, Almondbury - a male "drumming" on 13th and 27th February and 30th March. Skelmanthorpe - one on 4th March. Lockwood - one calling near the railway viaduct on 10th March. Sharpe Lane, Almondbury - "drumming" heard on 1st and 4th April. Lower Woodsome Valley - "drumming" heard on 4th/5th April. Birks Wood, Farnley Line - "drumming" on 4th April. Mollicar Wood - "drumming" and calling on 14th and 19th April. Magdale - one seen "drumming" in Honley Church graveyard on 22nd April - attempting to waken the dead? Blacker Wood, Skelmanthorpe - a pair bred, four fledged young seen (DBut). Holmbridge a female or immature on 4th September. Dewsbury S.F. - a male feeding on peanuts for 20 minutes on 19th December before flying across the R.Calder towards Millbank, Thornhill. Elland GPs - one on 31st December.

It is not known how many different birds were involved in the Almondbury/Farnley/Woodsome records.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Partial migrant breeder (3)

Presumably as a result of last year's appeal, many more records were submitted for the species this year, giving a much better indication of its reduced status in the area.

A minimum of 107 singing males was located throughout the area, distributed as follows :-

SE 00 - eight males, SE 01 - eight males, SE 10 - 23 males, SE 11 - 13 males, SE 20 - 32+ males, SE21 - 23+ males. Localities with the largest concentrations were the Iughirchworth/Royd Moor/Scout Dike area with a minimum of 25 pairs (almost 25% of the overall total) breeding, Emley Moor with c.10 pairs, Deame Dike Lane/Broadstones with c.16 pairs, Denby Dale where 6+ pairs bred and Horbury Bridge/Bullecliff Wood which had c.9 pairs. A further 23 sites held pairs and/or singing males. The low numbers from the two westernmost ten kilometre squares, which contain much suitable habitat, most probably reflect lack of coverage rather than lack of birds.

The species is uncommon in the area now between November and late February and flocks of birds are almost a thing of the past, but autumn movements do occur.

Blackmoorfoot Res - a flock of 17 flew west on 1st January, three on 26th February, 27 west on 12th October; one on 28th December was very unusual. Dewsbury S.F. - southerly movement was apparent with 48 on 7th March, 34 on 11th October, 32 on 12th October and 85 on 28th October, with 22 east on 28th September. Royd Moor - 44 moved southeast on 26th September and c.15 were moving on 2nd October. Ingbirchworth - in October 55 flew over on 10th and 103 in 5.75 hours on 16th. Denby Dale - at least 20 on 18th October.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*
Migrant breeder (2)

Recorded on several dates between late March and late August, with birds breeding at two sites.

Dewsbury S.F. - one on 28th March and 88 flew west on 2nd May. Blackmoorfoot Res - in April singles on 2nd and 7th, four from 22nd to 24th and on 27th, two on 9th May, singles on 7th and 17th July and on 15th and 19th August, with two on 17th and the last, four on 26th August. Elland - one at Lowfields on 4th April; at the GPs one on 13th April and 1st May, with three on 9th May. Horbury Wyke - at least 14 on 8th April, with smaller numbers to the end of June. Horbury S.F. - four on 18th April. Bretton Lakes - ten on 22nd April. Ingbirchworth Res - three on 22nd and at least four on 26th April. Dalton - two over on 12th May. Ravensthorpe GPs - 16 on 2nd had increased to 86 by 13th May, when 16 pairs and 38 nest-holes were counted. 22 pairs present on 14th June and on 26th June 45 nest-holes were counted, but the number occupied could not be ascertained. Of 62 birds present on 8th August, 20 were juveniles; the last birds seen here were 16 on 22nd August. Healey Mills - a small colony on the R. Calder, but no further details received. Broadstones Res - two on 23rd June. Ringstone Edge Res - seven were included in a large movement of Swallows and House Martins on 5th July but on 22nd July, when 39 including a party of 22 birds flew west, there was no corresponding movement of other hirundine species. Ten were present on 18th August and singles on nine other dates in July/August. Scout Dike Res - one on 28th August. Shepley/Denby Dale - odd birds present on several dates in autumn hirundine flocks.

Addition to 1998 Report - a small colony (two nest-holes) in the bank of the R. Calder behind the Commill Hotel; young birds observed on 27th July and one hole still being visited on 18th August.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Migrant breeder (4)

Birds were much earlier in arriving than last year and were well distributed throughout the area in small numbers by the end of April. Few large gatherings were noted in either spring or autumn and there was relatively little evidence of movement.

In the first week of April early arrivals were at New Mill on 1st and 3rd, with one flying high to the north on the latter date at Ringstone Edge, at Elland, Meltham and Deer Hill on 4th, at Slaithwaite and Bretton Park (two) on 5th, Millhouse Green on 6th and Oldfield (two) on 7th, with three at Ingbirchworth, ten at Dewsbury S.F. and one at Ossett Spa S.F. all on 8th. A further 20 sites held birds by the end of April. Highest numbers reported in the spring were c.45 at Bretton on 12th April, 160 at Millbank, Thornhill on 2nd May, 11 still on passage west at Winscar on 11th May, 30+ at Blackmoorfoot on 17th May and 46 west at Dewsbury S.F. on 21st May.

Breeding was not widely reported, but c.12 pairs bred at Shelley and the species is a common breeder in the Shepley and Denby Dale areas and doubtless in many others.

Autumn gatherings included a flock of c.50 over Yateholme on 8th July, at Millbank, Thornhill 126 east on 8th and 187 east on 23rd August, c.200 at Scout Dike on 24th August, c.40 over Beestones Wood on 27th August, 28 at Blackmoorfoot on 29th August and 38 there on 4th September, 300 at Ringstone Edge on 14th September, 113 moving east at Dewsbury S.F. on 15th September and 177 moving southeast at Royd Moor in a four hour period on 26th September.

Several sites had birds to late September and in October birds were reported from Blackmoorfoot and Bradley Park G.C. on 1st, Hinchcliffe Mill on 2nd, Shelley on 3rd, Oldfield on 6th, Greetland on 11th (ten) and 14th (two) with the last four birds flying east at Dewsbury S.F. on 15th.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Migrant breeder (3)

Still a fairly common breeder throughout the area, mainly in suburban districts. Probably in reduced numbers in recent years and certainly in smaller colonies.

One at Lowfields, Elland on 4th April was the second earliest ever recorded in the Club area and was followed by two more very early arrivals at Dogley on 6th. Also in April singles appeared at Horbury Wyke and Beaumont Park, with three at Bretton Lakes, on 11th, two at Dogley, three at Blackmoorfoot and eight at Elland GPs all on 12th, singles at Dewsbury S.F. on 13th, Blackmoorfoot on 18th, Stockmoor Common on 19th and a flock of c.40 at Bretton on 22nd, with a singleton there on 25th. None were then reported until May and it was not until mid-month that significant numbers appeared, when 70+ were seen on 17th.

Spring movements were apparent at Dewsbury S.F. on 2nd and 14th May, with respectively 120 and 82 all flying west, and at Millbank, Thornhill, which also had 20 birds, moving northwest, on 2nd May.

Breeding colonies were reported at Lumb Lane, Almondbury (three nests), Skelmanthorpe (five nests and ten nests), Honley, Thornhill (ten nests), Newsome, Bretton Park (four nests), Outlane, Lindley (two nests, but 75 birds mainly juveniles feeding from roof of old chapel there on 2nd September), Farnley Tyas, Waterloo, Denby Dale and Shepley, with summer sightings from several other localities.

Larger gatherings and movements were recorded at :-

Swinden Plantation - c.30 on 19th June, an unusual number for this site. Scout Dike Res had a maximum of 100 on 28th July. Ringstone Edge - 100 on 31st July and 14th September. Thornhill - 60 east on 8th August. Elland GPs - c.40 on 19th August. Blackmoorfoot - max. were 26 on 27th August, 37 south on 7th and 54 on 16th September. Dewsbury S.F. - several large movements with 78 west on 17th July; in August 123 southeast on 23rd, 182 west on 27th; in September 80 west on 1st, 330 west on 8th, 568 east on 16th, 367 east on 23rd and 457 east on 24th.

October birds were at Barkisland, Ryburn Valley and Hinchcliffe Mill on 2nd, Crosland Moor on 5th (seven) and 6th, Blackmoorfoot on 7th, Dewsbury S.F. on 8th (three east) and Thornhill on 10th (three), indicating rather earlier departure than usual.

An unusual record was of an albino in the Rowley Lane/Fenay Bridge area on 13th September (JMD).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*
Migrant breeder (2)

The majority of birds occur in the south of the area, particularly in woodlands and coniferous plantations at the appropriate stage of growth, but currently appears to be decreasing in both numbers and range.

Recorded between 28th April and 26th September. North America Wood, Langsett - one on 28th April. Carr Wood, Woodsome - one on 1st May. Crossley's Plantation - singing male on 5th and 27th May. Scammonden - one singing on 9th May. Little Don Valley - eight males held breeding territories, including five at Swinden Plantation; one on 30th August. Winscar Res - two singing males on 11th May. Denby Dale - three singing males on 14th June. Dunford Bridge Cycle Track - one, probably a juvenile, on 30th July. Scout Dike Res - one on 31st July. Shelley - one on 25th August was a first site record. Broadstones Lodge - one on 30th August. Royd Moor Res - a single flyover migrant on 4th September, with two on 26th. Dalton - a flyover on 11th September.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*
Partial migrant breeder (4 - 5)

The commonest of the species found on the high moorland and its fringes, with a few pairs breeding at lower levels. Birds normally arrive from mid-March, leaving in September and early October. Records in January and February and December are unusual, but were more frequent this year than is normal.

In January, three were at Scammonden on 1st, one at Scapegoat Hill on 2nd and a flock of c.20 near Castle Hill on 17th, at least 14 being still present on 8th February. The first passage of the year at Shelley was noted on 13th March, after which date 50+ passed for several days, with others noted over Bretton Park on 14th, Lepton on 16th and Dalton on 23rd.

Dewsbury S.F. experienced a prolonged passage of birds from 20th March to 17th April, all going northwest, as follows :- 81 on 20th March, in April 69 on 5th, 111 on 6th, 172 on 8th, 277 on 10th, 180 on 11th, 185 on 15th and 228 on 17th.

Away from the moorland fringes, pairs were reported as breeding at Denby Dale (at least two), Farnley Tyas, near Penny Spring Wood and New Mill.

Autumn counts received included at :-

Royd Moor Res - 185 southeast on 25th and 315 in four hours on 26th September and c.300 on 2nd October. Ringstone Edge - 200 on 26th September. Dewsbury S.F. - 64 on 26th September; in October 42 on 3rd, 48 on 5th, 55 on 7th and 72 on 17th. Ingbirchworth - 70+ passage birds in fields on 2nd October. Denby Dale - 60+ on 5th October. Horbury Wyke - 37 on 5th October.

At the end of the year, late reports came from Cupwith, two on 21st November, Decr Hill one on 27th November, Horbury Wyke/S.F. 28 on 28th November, Shelley one on 29th November, Nopper Road near Blackmoorfoot 20 on 5th December, Wood Nook Lane one to 17th December, with two on 16th and Blackmoorfoot Res one almost daily in December to 15th, then one on 29th.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Rare passage visitor

One on 14th February at Dewsbury S.F. showed characters of the Scandinavian race "littoralis" (JH). In autumn singles at the same site on 13th and 17th October and 26th November (JH).

Water Pipit/Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta/petrosus*

Rare passage visitor

Addition to 1998 Report - a bird at Ringstone Edge on 21st March was either a Water Pipit or Rock Pipit of the Scandinavian race "littoralis", but its identity could not be confirmed specifically (HBC).

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Migrant breeder? (1) and passage migrant

A marked decline has taken place in the occurrences of this species in the area and breeding has not been proved for a number of years.

Elland GPs - one on 14th April.

Dewsbury S.F. had most records with the first bird on 19th April, then in May nine moved west on 2nd, after which birds were recorded on a daily basis to the month end. A juvenile was present on 27th June, three birds on 27th July then singles on several dates until the last on 28th September (JH). Blackmoorfoot Res - a male on 2nd May (DMP). Farnley Tyas - one flew over calling on 2nd May (SH). Royd Edge Clough - one flew over calling on 3rd May (DMP). Ravensthorpe GPs - one on 13th and two on 22nd June (BA,DM,JRS), with on 26th two birds carrying food, but no juveniles were seen (JRS). Ringstone Edge Res - two juveniles on 9th July, one on 12th and 20th, two birds on 3rd and one on 4th September (JB,HBC). Little Don Valley - one in fields near the Dog and Partridge on 30th August (MC). Royd Moor Res - one flyover on 4th September (MC). Shelley - two flew over on 12th September (SRG).

Additions to 1998 Report - at Ringstone Edge one on 19th April and at Baitings Res a juvenile on 27th August (HBC).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Resident breeder (2)

A common breeding bird in the area, found wherever there are watercourses of some kind, both in the uplands and increasingly in lowland areas.

Breeding was confirmed near Blackmoorfoot, at Horbury S.F., Lockwood Brewery, Scout Dike (double brooded), Millbank Thornhill, Hagg Wood, Black Brook, Rushfield Dike, Royd Moor Res, Eastergate, Bretton Lakes (two pairs), Denby Dale, West Vale and Elland GPs. Other pairs were reported and probably bred at Dogley N.R., near Sands Recreation Ground, Jackson Bridge, near Penny Spring Wood, Cliff Wood, Shepley, Little Don Valley, Silkstone, Dunford Bridge, Yateholme, Armitage Bridge, Penny Hill Bottom, Digley, Holmbridge and along the R.Colne.

Although most sightings were of one or two individuals, eight (two adults, six juveniles) were at Dewsbury S.F. on 19th August, seven at Ingbirchworth Res on 26th August and six at Royd Moor Res on 6th September; five were together by the lower lake overflow at Bretton on 27th March.

An additional dozen sites, including the town centre, recorded birds outside the breeding season.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Resident breeder (3) and passage migrant/winter visitor

This widespread and common species is much under-reported, especially with regard to breeding pairs.

In the town centre c.100 roosted near Huddersfield Technical College on 10th February and there was a pre-roost gathering of about 50 birds in the Springwood car park on 13th March.

Breeding was reported only from near Emley Moor Tx (two or three broods), Jagger Lane, Emley Moor, between Skelmanthorpe and Emley (up to six pairs), Denby Dale, Shepley and Ingbirchworth Res (two pairs).

The only counts of note were at Dewsbury S.F. which had 48 on 19th August, 25 and 16 respectively on 28th August at Ingbirchworth and Scout Dike Reservoirs, with 22 at the latter site on 2nd September, 55 passing over Royd Moor Res on 26th September in a four hour visible migration watch and 15 on Kirkheaton Cricket Field on 30th September.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Uncommon passage migrant

There were three records, all in spring, when identification is much easier.

Meltham - one near Cop Hill on 18th April (DMP, JJ). Ingbirchworth Res - one on 24th April (SA, BBSG). Scout Dike Res - one on 29th April (SA, BBSG).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Eruptive winter visitor, rare to uncommon

Birds were reported from five sites, but were often elusive and difficult to locate. Typically all were in heavily built-up areas.

Marsh - 21 in the Jim Lane/Heatherfield Road area on 29th November, with 19 on 30th November and 1st December, were the earliest (AJW et al). Birkby - present in the vicinity of Arnold Street/Birkby Hall Road from 13th to 27th December, by which date the rowan berries on which they had been feeding had all been eaten - 17 on 13th and 21st December, c.35 from 23rd to 25th, at least 57 on 26th and 30 flying over on 27th (DHP). Lockwood - 32 in sycamores near the Town Hall pub on 16th December, with c.10 briefly in flight there the following day (DM, BA). Huddersfield Town Centre - 14 on the Piazza on 28th December (TM). Crosland Moor - one at Hawthorne Terrace on 31st December (MLD).

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*
Resident breeder (2)

There was a considerable drop in the number of reports received and in the number of breeding pairs, largely a result of lack of information from the Rivers Don and Little Don.

Breeding was confirmed only at Jackson Bridge, where a pair and a juvenile were present on 11th June, and at Digley, near the waterfall with a further pair upstream.

Elsewhere in the breeding season, pairs were seen regularly on the R.Holme near Sands Rec. and on the R.Calder near Elland GPs. Two were in the Upper Little Don Valley on 28th March, one was on the Fenay Beck at Dogley on 3rd May and a singing male by the Dunford Bridge Cycle Track on 5th May.

Birds were also present at Meltham Mills in July, Slaithwaite West End on several occasions, the R.Holme near Lockwood C.C. in November, two on the stream below Scout Dike Res on 12th December and on the R.Holme at Burnlee on 28th December.



Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*
Resident breeder (4)

Few reports received of this very common species which is found in all habitats from heavily built-up areas to open moorland at 1500 feet. Up to 12 singing males in both Lepton Great and Penny Spring Woods and a minimum of 30 singing males in the Little Don Valley above Brookhouse.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*
Resident breeder (4)

A very common and widespread breeder, but the only reports submitted of breeding were at Emley Moor Tx station, Shelley, New Mill, Shepley, Denby Dale and Elland GPs, where six birds were present on 10th January.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*
Resident breeder (4 - 5)

Very common throughout the area, but much under-reported. About ten were at Bretton Lakes on 10th January and breeding records were received from Emley Moor Tx station (2/3 pairs), Shelley (two pairs in gorse), Wooldale, New Mill, Shepley, Denby Dale, Castle Hill, Dewsbury S.F., Horbury Strands and Yateholme.

No evidence was submitted which suggested an autumnal influx.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare visitor

A singing male was located near the White Hart Hotel in Huddersfield Town Centre on the morning of 23rd May (EJH via MLD) and was seen later in the day in yards off Westgate and the New Street shopping precinct (BA). On 26th what was presumably the same bird was heard singing from 0800 to 0815hrs on the large disused warehouse opposite Platform 8 of Huddersfield Railway Station (SH) and on 29th May from the Imperial Arcade (GBS).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Migrant breeder (1 – 2)

A breeding species in decreasing numbers in woodlands, both deciduous and coniferous, near the moorland fringes. The only known breeding this year occurred in the Langsett area and there were few reports of singing males elsewhere. Recorded between 18th April and 20th September, with evidence of passage birds in autumn.

Blackmoorfoot Res - a male on 18th April. Scammonden - a male in song on 25th April, with the same or another on 1st May. Cliff Wood, Langsett - a male on 28th and 30th April; one pair probably bred. Crossley's Plantation - a singing male on 3rd May. Holmbridge - a male at Dobb Dike on 3rd May. Little Don Valley - six males, including two at Swinden Plantation, held breeding territories. Fox Clough, Langsett - two pairs bred. Holme Styes - at least one male, possibly two, on 5th May. New Mill - a juvenile on 27th July. Dewsbury S.F. - a male visited the feeding station on 7th August. Royd Moor Res - one on 22nd August. Meltham - a female/immature on 14th September. Lindley Moor Road - one briefly in a garden on 20th September.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Migrant breeder (2) and passage visitor

A good year for the species. Confined to moorland and its fringes as a breeding species, with at least 12 pairs located, of which a minimum of seven pairs bred. Recorded between 25th April and 9th November with several noted on passage in autumn.

Deanhead - a male on 25th and 29th April. Dewsbury S.F. - a female on 2nd May was the only spring record. In autumn there was a constant presence from 6th August to 14th October, usually singles, but two on 6th, six on 22nd and three on 23rd August, with two on 1st September. Millbank, Thornhill - a female on 2nd May, probably same as at Dewsbury S.F. same day. Winscar Res - a pair on 5th May, then regularly. Two pairs bred, with young being fed in the nest on 18/19th June and 3rd July. The last report was of at least two on 5th September. Swinden Plantation - a singing male on 17th May. Little Don Valley - eight birds, including five males, on 19th May. At least three pairs bred. Wessenden Valley - singing males on 19th and 31st May. Royd Moor Res - a singing male on 31st May. Royd Edge, Meltham - at least one pair in May/June. Lower Wudleden Res - one pair bred. Harden Res - one pair bred. Meltham - two males held territories at the top of Millmoor Road. Eastergate, Marsden - a pair on 28th June and one on 14th July. Scammonden - three males on 25th May, a pair plus one male on 29th May, six (two pairs and two additional males) on 1st June, three singing males on 13th June. In autumn five (two adults, three immatures) on 3rd and one juvenile on

14th September and a juvenile on 9th November (JB,JED). This last bird is the latest ever to be recorded in the Club area by 14 days (the previous latest being on 26th October 1968) and there are only four later Yorkshire records. Scout Dike Res - two on 22nd August. Broadstones - two on 22nd August and one on 26th September. Healey Mills - one on 8th September.

Stonechat

Saxicola torquata

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



Another good year for the species, pairs breeding at two sites and another excellent series of records in the later months, all from moorland and fringe localities.

Scout Dike Res - a female on 13/14th March (RJB,DSI,DM). Digley - one on 11th April (PMcG) and two (male and female) on 28th December (DMP). Wessenden Valley - adults and a nest with two well-grown young on 31st May/1st June (TD,DMP,KW).

Winscar Res - a pair fledged at least two young and a "spotty" juvenile present on 4th September gives rise to the belief that a second brood may have been raised (MC,BBSG). Three birds still present on 12th October (DHP). Helme Edge - one, probably a juvenile, on 22nd August (TD). Holme Moss - one just off the road to the south on 4th October (DHP). Greenfield Road, Holmfirth - one on 4/5th October and three on 22nd October (DHP). Broadstones Lodge - immature male on 10th October and at least two birds on 31st December (RJB,MC). Scammonden - a male on 10th October; in November, five (adult male, immature male, three female types) on 3rd, male and female on 6th, male and two females on 20th, male on 23rd, two (one male) on 27th; in December, a male and a female on 4th, two males and a female on 5th and a male on 14th (JB,JED). Meltham - a male, with a female nearby, on 17th October (DMP). Deer Hill - three on 28/29th October, four (two males, two females) on 30th October and a male and a female on 27/28th November and 12th December (TD,DMP,KW). Harden Res - male and female present from 24th November to at least 4th December (MC). Will's o' Nat's - a female nearby on 28th December (TD).

Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe

Migrant breeder (1 - 2) and passage visitor

The first arrival on 17th March was nine days earlier than the next to arrive, with evidence of passage continuing to early May. In some years there are large parties of birds (50+), particularly in the Ingbirchworth area, but this was not a feature this year. In fact numbers on spring migration were very low, the largest counts being 11 near Blackmoorfoot and a maximum of five at Ingbirchworth. There was no definite proof of breeding anywhere in the area, the presence of juveniles in July and August possibly being examples of juvenile dispersal from outside the area (or not!). Birds were present between 17th March and 2nd October.

Meltham - a male off Wessenden Head Road on 17th March was the first of the year. Digley - singles on 26/27th March, male on 1st May and a pair and a juvenile on 27th July. Longdendale - two on 27th March. Blackmoorfoot area - three on 27th and one on 29/30th March; in April one on 3rd, nine on 14th, two on 15th, six on 21st, 11 on 23/24th, one on 28-30th; in May two on 1st-12th, one on 13th; just one in autumn on 16th August. Scammonden/Deanhead - four on 28th March, two on 9th April, three on 18th April, one on 29th May. Brown's Edge Road - two on 30th March. Issues Road,

Holme - four on 4th April. Ingbirchworth - in April one on 8th, two on 9th and a maximum of five on 11th; one on 3rd May; in autumn one on 8th August and two on 2nd October, the last of the year in the Chub area. Broadstones Lodge - one on 11th and three on 25th April, one on 16th May; in autumn one on 24th August. Dewsbury S.F. - singles on 9th April, 2nd and 11th May. Scout Dike Res - four on 24th April, two on 22nd August. Buckstones - a pair on 28/29th April. Deer Hill/Wessenden Valley - single males on 1st May and several sightings, including juveniles, later in the year.

Millbank, Thornhill - one on 2nd May (same as Dewsbury S.F.?). Cook's Study Hill - male on 5th May. Winscar Res - a pair on 8th May, two on 27th and one on 29th July, a juvenile on 7th August, one on 25th September. Dovestones area - up to 12 pairs may have bred. Harden Quarries - one on 13th June. Elland GPs - a juvenile on 1st July. Royd Moor Res - one on 26th September. Kirkheaton - passage birds present on 27th (two) and 30th September (one).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Migrant breeder (1) and scarce passage migrant

Breeds on the moorlands though in much reduced numbers compared with previous years. Reported between 26th March and 5th October.

Little Don Valley - one on 26th March was the first of the year. Seven, including four males, were present on 26th April. Three pairs bred and the last sighting here was a female/immature on 30th September. Broadstones Lodge - a male at this site on 31st March (RDFI) was unusual and obviously on passage. Deer Hill - a singing male on 2nd April. Digley - in spring single males on 2nd April and 8th and 27th May were the only records at this once popular breeding site. A male and a 1st-winter female on 2nd October were probably migrants grounded on a day of heavy movement and were associating with other immigrant thrush species. Wessenden Valley - two females present on 2nd April. On 1st May a bird was flushed from a nest with four eggs at a traditional site within feet of the 1998 nest. Dovestones Res - two or three pairs present in the area. Scammonden Valley - two on 25th April only. Harden Quarries - a juvenile on 13th and 22nd June had probably been raised locally. One on 5th July. Winscar Res - an adult on 26th June. Denby Dale - a passage migrant male on 5th October.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Resident breeder (5) and winter visitor

A common breeder throughout the area in all habitats except the high moorlands.

Breeding estimates of ten pairs in each of Lepton Great and Penny Spring Woods. Few records submitted, but counts of c.20 at Gunthwaite Dam on 1st January, c.20 in Beaumont Park on 13th March, 19 at Millbank Flash, Thornhill on 8th August, ten at Dewsbury S.F. on 18th November and 16 at Horbury Wyke on 28th November and an influx into the Digley area on 2nd October.

Fieldfare*Turdus pilaris*

Numerous passage and winter visitor. Has bred.

In the first winter period recorded between 1st January and 5th May, although birds were scarce in February and the first half of March, after which there was a significant increase.

January – reported from only eight sites, with c.60 at Gunthwaite Dam, 29 at Scammonden and c.200 at Inghirchworth on 1st. The last site had c.300 on 21st, 120 on 30th and 80 on 31st. At Greetland 200 were present on 14th and 600 on 16th and 200 near Ringstone Edge on 21st. Hade Edge had c.200 on 30th and c.20 were present at New Mill to 17th April.

February – apart from the party at New Mill the only other birds reported were c.30 at Boshaw Whams on 11th and c.20 at Bretton Lakes on 15th.

March – five at Scammonden on 4th, 33 at Crosland Hill on 8th and c.100 at Royd Moor were the only reports until 16th, when five were at Gawthorpe Green. On 17th 40+ flew over Scammonden and on 18th 100+ were again at Royd Moor, c.150 on Dearne Dike Lanc and two at Blackmoorfoot. More were apparent from 20th with 78 at Blackmoorfoot, c.300 at Inghirchworth and 13 west at Skelmanthorpe, followed by at least 1000 birds in the Whitley “Triangle” on 21st. 400 were at Hade Edge on 24th, then 65 moved northwest at Dewsbury S.F. on 26th and on 27th c.100 were at Hazelhead and 200 at Broadstones. A large flock of c.800 was at Litherop Lane, near Bretton on 31st.

April – most birds had obviously departed, with only four reports received. c.300 flew north at Shelley on 1st, the New Mill birds left on 17th, a male was in full song at Inghirchworth on 18th and there were ten at Windmill Lane on 21st.

May – reports of small numbers are not unusual, but c.70 at Broadstones on 2nd was a large number for May. Elsewhere two were at Inghirchworth on 1st and two flew north at Holme Styes on 5th.

The first returning birds were noted on 6th October, but only three sites reported birds before mid-month, after which passage and grounded birds became more obvious. Numbers then decreased generally, except in the Inghirchworth area, to the year end, by which time few remained.

October – 20 flew west at Dewsbury S.F. on 6th and 23 appeared at Blackmoorfoot on 7th, with two at Royd Moor on 10th. On 15th 247 flew southwest at Dewsbury S.F., with 244 southwest there on 16th and 149 southwest on 17th. After a small number of birds at Shelley on 15th and c.60 at Inghirchworth on 16th, several sites had birds on 17/18th – at Blackmoorfoot 143 south on 17th, 17 on 18th, c.200 at Royd Moor and 30 at Scout Dike on 17th, six at Millbank, Thornhill and c.600 at Denby Dale on 18th. Smaller numbers were then noted at Blackmoorfoot (27), Cowcliffe (5+), Shelley (30), Millbank (20+) and Penistone (50) until a further influx took place from 26th, when c.100 flew over Inghirchworth, c.120 were at Scout Dike and c.800 at Royd Moor. On 27th there were 100 at Shepley, on 28th at least 300 at Meltham Cop, up to 300 at Deer Hill, with further counts on 29th of 150+ at Deer Hill, 800 at Denby Dale, 200 at Shepley and 100 at New Mill. On 30th 123 were counted at Blackmoorfoot and 482 moved southeast at Dewsbury S.F.

November – reported from a dozen localities, with several high counts. At Dewsbury S.F. 239 on 4th, 310 south on 13th and 565 northeast on 14th, at Blackmoorfoot recorded on 14 dates, with a maximum of 117 on 11th, otherwise not more than 54. c.250 were at Shelley on 10th, 1000 at Bretton on 11th, 400 at Thornhill on 22nd, at Scammonden 70 came in from the southeast on 7th, 130+ southwest on 23rd and 63 on 27th. Gawthorpe Green had 80+ on 19th and Horbury Wyke 90 on 28th, 60 flew west at Salendine Nook on 23rd and 50+ remained at Deer Hill to 27th.

December – up to 30 were reported from five sites, with higher numbers at Blackmoorfoot, which had a maximum of 69 on 28th, Hade Edge c.120 on 12th, Ingbirchworth 500+ on 20th and c.750 on 27th and Whitley Common c.200 on 31st.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Resident breeder (3)

Despite its decline in numbers nationally, this species is still fairly widespread throughout our area. For the second year in succession, probably as a result of its declining status and an appeal for all records to be submitted, the species was well reported from approximately 65 sites, many of these in suburban locations.

The majority of reports were of singing males, between 20th January and 2nd July, with breeding confirmed only at Shelley, Denby Dale (four pairs), Dalton, Shepley (two pairs), Blacker Beck, Horbury area (two pairs) and Ravensthorpe, with additional pairs at Winscar Res (two), Bullcliff Wood (two), Wildermess Plantation (two), Stockmoor Common (three), Stonycliffe Wood, Blacker Beck, Horbury (three), Millbank Thornhill, Lower Stones Wood (two) and Bretton Lakes, most of which probably bred.

Additional singing males, involving at least 60 individuals, were located at a further 40 sites, the majority in SE 11.

The only reported evidence of autumn arrivals came in the form of three birds at Dewsbury S.F. on 10th October, with four there on 12th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Numerous passage and winter visitor

After the low numbers present in the area at the end of 1998, it is not surprising that few were encountered in the early months, particularly in January.

January – only five sites held birds in double figures, with c.20 at both Upper Denby and Gunthwaite Dam on 1st, 23 at Blackmoorfoot on 4th, 12 at Almondbury on 17th and 10 at Ingbirchworth on 31st, otherwise up to five were reported from just six localities.

February – birds were in very short supply with none until 9th when c.50 were at Bretton and c.40 at Mollicar Wood, followed by c.100 at New Mill on 12th, 16 at Quarmby and six at Almondbury on 14th, none again until 26th, when 11 were at Blackmoorfoot.

March – a small increase in numbers as birds began to head back north, but none until 10th when at least 100 were in the Lumb Lane area of Almondbury, 11 at Broadstones on 13th, four at Bullcliff Wood and 25 at Crossley's Plantation on 14th, a small number at Shelley till late in the month, c.10 at Gawthorpe Green on 16th, six on 18th and 65 at Scout Dike on 20th, 30 at Kirkbeaton on 19th, and at Blackmoorfoot 18 on 15th, seven on 20th and two on 25/26th.

April – 12 at Booth Wood on 5th were the only ones reported.

In autumn, numbers were again low, with the majority appearing, often as birds passing over the area, in October.

September – the first of the autumn were at least four feeding on rose hips in a Wooldale garden on

20th, followed by six passing south at Dewsbury S.F. on 27th and a few at Bretton Park on 30th.

October – very few records in the first half of the month, just 20 over Shelley on 5th, at Blackmoorfoot two on 7th, three on 13th and two on 15th, one at Horbury Wyke on 8th and c.40 at Royd Moor on 10th. Passage began in earnest on 16th with 137 south at Blackmoorfoot and 107 south there and 100 southeast at Dewsbury S.F., 79 west at Millbank Thornhill and c.100 at Royd Moor all on 17th and 100 at Denby Dale on 18th. 65 were at Ingbirchworth and c.200 at Bretton Park on 23rd, 27 at Blackmoorfoot on 25th, then on 27th c.40 at Woodsome, 100+ west at Lindley Moor and 200 at Shepley, with smaller numbers over Dalton. Numbers then decreased with the only records from Blackmoorfoot – three on 29th and six on 30th.

November – only small numbers, apart from 500 at Bretton and 120 at Millbank Thornhill on 22nd and 30 at Horbury Wyke on 28th, were reported from seven sites, Blackmoorfoot recording birds on six dates, max. 14 on 25th – 27th.

December – birds were located at 13 sites, mostly in the second half of the month, with maxima of 72 groundfeeding at Thornhill on 5th, 35 at Kirkheaton on 19th, 30+ near Clayton West on 26th and 17 at Blackmoorfoot on 27th, apart from a large number in a mixed flock with Fieldfares in very bad weather at Pole Moor on 11th. Recorded on only ten dates in the month, with single figures in suburban/urban localities at Lockwood, Lindley, Greenhead and Salendine Nook.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Resident breeder (3)

Common throughout the area, the small number of breeding records being no true reflection of the bird's status. Breeding was reported only at Emley Moor, Holme Styes, Lower Stones Wood (two pairs), Storthes Hall (two pairs), Carr Wood, Denby Dale (c.4 pairs) and Shepley (c.4 pairs). Song was noted from January to May and October to the year end.

No gatherings were notified in the early months, but as usual some high counts were made in the autumn :-

Dewsbury S.F. – 37 on 11th and 58 on 25th August, 12 on 27th September, 14 on 9th October. Barkisland – 30+ on 16th August. Edgerton – c.20 feeding on Rowan berries on 24th September. Millbank, Thornhill – 18 on 7th November.

A partial albino bird with an all white head was at Burnlee on 14th November (HQ).

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Occasional migrant breeder (1)

A better year for the species with breeding proved at one new site.

Horbury S.F. – one reeling on 30th April was the first of the year (JRS). Royd Moor Res – a male reeling from 6th May, with two birds reeling on 31st and 12th June. At least one pair bred, a first breeding record for this site. A male was reeling here again from 26th July to 6th August (RJB,MC,BBSG). Broadstones Lodge – a male reeling in gorse/rush/sedge habitat from 15th June to 4th July (RJB,MC,JMD,BA). Dewsbury S.F. – one reeling on 17th June (JH).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*
Migrant breeder (1)

Birds were recorded at ten sites, mainly in the Calder Valley, with breeding proved at two sites.

Healey Mills, Ossett – one on 1st April was the earliest ever in the Club area (JH). Horbury Wyke – two present on 30th April to at least 5th June. A bird was feeding young in the nest on 12th June (JHod,JRS et al). Elland GPs – two on 1st May, with singles only on 23rd May, 5th, 15th and 21st June and 5th July, a poor showing at this site. Matthew's Pond, Healey Mills – two on 2nd May, with two pairs on 23rd May (JRS). Dewsbury S.F. – singing males on 2nd May (two), 5th May (three) and 25th June (six). An adult was feeding three young on 27th June. Six present on 7th July, two on 22nd August and a late bird on 26th September (JH). Horbury Strands – three singing males on 6th May (BA,DM). Ingbirchworth Res – one on 9th May (RDH). Horbury S.F. – three pairs present on 23rd May, last seen 20th August (JRS). Blackmoorfoot Res – a male on 31st May (MLD). Scout Dike Res – a singing male on 1st June (DSI).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*
Rare breeder (1) and passage migrant

Elland GPs – first of the year was a singing male on 30th April, with two on 9th May and three on 8th June. At least one pair bred, with young seen in the nest on 7th and 9th July (JB,HBC). One still in song on 19th July was the last recorded. Horbury Wyke – a pair present on 6th May (BA,DM), male singing on 10th and 16th May (DHP). On 27th June two singing males, with one bird feeding young in the nest (JHod). Scammonden – one was seen well in Holly bushes near the Activity Centre on 12th September (JED) and was a most unexpected site record.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*
Migrant breeder (1)

A further increase in the number of sightings, particularly in the Calder Valley, with breeding occurring at four sites at least. Present between 25th April and 5th September.

Dewsbury S.F. – one on 25th April, then two singing males on the riverside on 2nd May, a single on 5th August and two males and a juvenile on 22nd August, indicating probable breeding (JH,JRS). Millbank, Thornhill – a singing male on 25th April, two on 2nd May; one pair bred (JRS). It is possible that there is some duplication of records at this and the previous site. Healey Locks – one pair bred (JRS). Horbury Wyke – a singing male on 4th, 6th and 12th May, but no subsequent reports (BA,DM,DHP). Shelley – singing male on 29th April and one pair bred; last sighting in mid-August (SRG). Denby Dale – one pair bred, with two young being seen in June (TM). Lumb Lane – a singing male below Castle Hill on 2nd May (SH). Dalton – a singing male on territory on 3rd and 12th May, but not heard again. Single birds calling on 3rd August and 1st September (BA). Possibly bred. Ingbirchworth Res – a singing male on territory from 4th to 23rd May and probably bred; also present on 30th May, with three on 15th June (RJB,BBSG). Golcar – one on 16th May (OWB). Scout Dike Res – one in a mixed flock of finches and sparrows on 31st July (MC); two on 5th September (RJB).

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*
Migrant breeder (2)

Commonest in the lowland areas of the east and northeast, particularly in the Calder Valley, where good numbers are to be found and with some high post-breeding counts. Much less common in the south and virtually absent from western upland areas, although it is increasing in the Ingbirchworth area.

Reported between 23rd April and the very late date of 12th October.

Dewsbury S.F. – two on 23rd April were the first reported; by 1st May five singing males were present and three broods of three young were being fed on 13th July. In autumn there were good numbers, probably comprising both locally bred and passage birds, with in August 22 on 9th, 27 on 12th, 30 on 22nd and 37 on 25th; five were present on 2nd September with the last on 12th October. Millbank, Thornhill – after two on 25th April, 14 singing males were counted along the canal between here and Ravensthorpe GPs, with nine pairs breeding. Horbury – two present at Horbury Wyke on 30th April and seven singing males between Horbury Bridge and the Wyke on 6th May. Elland GPs – first male reported on 28th April, with four by 4th May. Six pairs present on 5th June and an adult was feeding young on 19th July. Bretton Lakes – at least six males in song on 1st May; no further breeding season evidence was received but several pairs probably bred. Castle Hill – a male in song on 1st May and one present on 21st July. Shelley – first located on 2nd May, one pair bred and birds present until early September. Silkstone – on 3rd May single males at the sewage farm and High Fields Plantation. Dunford Bridge Cycle Track – two on 3rd May. Brockholes – a singing male on 5th May. Blackmoorfoot Res – a pair nested near the southwest corner.

Emley – a pair probably bred near the old colliery. Shepley – one pair probably bred; one on 8th May. Ingbirchworth Res – a singing male on 5th May and a family party was seen on 7th August. Royd Moor Res – two singing males on 16th May and 16th June; at least one pair bred, with two juveniles still present on 28th August. Scout Dike Res – one pair bred, a family party of four birds present on 10th July and a single juvenile to 14th August. Shelley/Emley Moor – up to five birds present on passage from late May, but not present after early June. Denby Dale – one on 3rd June. Dogley N.R. – two singing males on 24th June. Broadstones Lodge – one, probably a juvenile, on 11th July. Skelmanthorpe – a male on passage on 5th August. Dalton – a passage bird on 2nd September.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*
Migrant breeder (2)

Well distributed in woodlands throughout the area, particularly in the eastern and central parts. There has been a general increase since the 1970s, but fewer reports this year. Approximately 45 singing males were located. Extreme dates of occurrence were 28th April and 4th September, with general arrival in the first week of May.

Dogley N.R. – two singing males on 28th April and two pairs bred. Elland GPs – singing male on 28th April, with two on 29th; in May four singing males on 4th, two pairs present on 5th June and two singing on 21st June and 18th July. Last recorded on 16th August; breeding suspected but not proved. Bretton Lakes – first heard on 1st May, with up to four pairs breeding. Castle Hill – singing male on 1st May. Digley Bottom – singing male on 1st May. Carr Wood – at least one singing male on 1st May. Silkstone – singing males on 3rd May at the sewage farm and Blacker Dam. Woodsome Road

– singing male on 3rd May. Mollicar Wood – singing male on 4th May. Shelley – a pair present on 6th May and later bred; last seen on 4th September, this being the only post-breeding season report in the Club area. Horbury Wyke – one singing nearby on 10th May. Denby Dale – singing male present from 1st to 31st May. Golcar Tip – singing male on 16th May. Broadstones Res – singing male on 18th May. Deffer Wood – at least 2/3 pairs probably bred. Ingbirchworth area – on 12th June 14 were counted around the Ingbirchworth group of reservoirs. At least two pairs bred at Royd Moor and four males held breeding territories at Scout Dike Res. Blacker Wood, Skelmanthorpe – singing male on 23rd June.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*
Migrant breeder (3) and scarce winter visitor

A very widespread and increasingly common species, being found throughout the area in all areas of suitable habitat. There were five records of wintering birds, all in the second winter period.

The first of the year was a male at Elland GPs on 31st March (and possibly an overwintering bird), with the next not until 18th April at Woodsome Lees, followed by birds at Stocksmoor Common on 19th, Mellor Wood on 21st, Gunthwaite Dam on 22nd. Bretton Lakes on 23rd, Thornhill and Almondbury on 24th, Lockwood, Milnsbridge, Royd Moor Res, Broadstones and Ingbirchworth on 25th and at four other sites by the end of the month, including one male singing in St Peter's Gardens in the centre of Huddersfield on 30th JMN).

Arrivals continued into May and in total at least 125 singing males were reported from 64 sites, many of which involved just singles, but with concentrations of 25+, of which at least ten remained on territory, at Bretton, 10+ in both the Shepley and Denby Dale areas and up to five at several other sites. Breeding however was confirmed only at Blackmoorfoot, Dogley N.R., Scammonden, Shelley, Deffer Wood, Blacker Beck, Bullicliff Wood, Bretton Lakes and Millbank, Thornhill.

Very few were reported after the end of July, the only records being of a single bird at Shelley on 13/14th September and one killed by striking a window at Fixby on 30th September. There were no records at Blackmoorfoot after 7th July, presumably largely because no ringing took place there.

Wintering individuals occurred at Bretton Park on 8th November, Birkby – a female on 9th, 11th and 15th December, Lindley – a male on 15th December, Ossett – a male on 26th December and at Meltham, where a male was present on several dates in late December.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
Migrant breeder (1)

There were even fewer records than in 1998 of this fast declining species in our area.

Cliff Wood, Langsett – a singing male on 2nd and 30th May (BBSG). Langsett Banks – a singing male on 17th May (BBSG). Jenkinson Wood – a singing male on 13/14th and 16th June (SH,BA,DM,SRG). Swinden Plantation – a family party, including five young, was present on 18th July (BBSG).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*
Migrant breeder (3) and passage visitor

Widespread throughout the area and probably increasing in numbers. Reported from approximately 50 sites, involving at least 70 singing males. Birds were present between 24th March and 9th November.

The earliest arrivals were rather later than usual, the first not until 24th March at Digley, then at Hazelhead and Horbury Wyke on 27th, Beaumont Park on 28th and Elland GPs and Deffer Wood on 31st, with the main arrival taking place in April, when seven singing males were at Bretton Park on 3rd.

Breeding was confirmed, or strongly suspected, at Woodsome, Dogley N.R., Bretton Park, Dobb Dike, Denby Dale, Shepley and Millbank, Thornhill.

Evidence of autumn passage was obtained, particularly in late September, from Blackmoorfoot, which had singles on 6th and 17/18th September, Salendine Nook two on 13th, at least two on 15th and one on 20th September, Scout Dike Res two on 22nd September, Skelmanthorpe one on 25/26th September, Millbank, Thornhill two on 26th September, Royd Moor one on 26th September, Shelley one on 28th September, Fixby one on 8th October, Belle Royd Farm at least two on 9th October and finally one at Scammonden on 9th November.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*
Migrant breeder (4 – 5) and passage visitor

This is our commonest migrant breeding species, occurring in all suitable habitats. Recorded between 1st April and 26th September.

There was a widespread early arrival of birds in the first week of April, with two at Millbank, Thornhill and one at Royd Edge Clough on 1st, singles at Dewsbury S.F. and Horbury Wyke on 2nd, six at Bretton Lakes, one at Shelley and surprisingly one at Winscar on 3rd, three at Holme Styes on 4th, two at Golcar Tip, two at Outlane G.C. and singles at Penistone and Royd Moor Res on 5th.

A second influx was apparent from 9th and by 11th 19 singing males were present at Bretton, but it was not until the last week of April and the first week of May that the majority of birds arrived, with some very high counts made of singing birds, e.g. on 24th April there were 21 at Digley and 15 between Horbury Wyke and Thornhill, followed on 25th by 25 at Ingberhworth, 48 at Royd Moor and 53 at Scout Dike; on 26th there were 26 in the Little Don Valley and up to 45 birds along the Dunford Bridge Cycle Track on 3rd May. Elland GPs held 20 singing males on 5th June. Many observers referred to the species as being "numerous" at other sites.

About one hundred pairs were considered to have bred in the Ingberhworth/Scout Dike/Royd Moor area and the species is described as a common breeder in the Denby Dale/Shepley area.

Passage birds were apparent from late July onwards with up to five in braeken at Winscar on 31st July, a juvenile on Windleden Moor on 28th August and several observers reported birds in gardens. Blackmoorfoot had up to four daily in August, with singles on 1st - 3rd and 8th September. Other September reports came from Shelley and New Mill, where single birds remained to 17th and 18th respectively, Salendine Nook, where there were three on 13th, two on 14th, at least two on 15th and one on 20/21st, one at Lockwood and two at Elland GPs on 26th and a final one at the last site on 10th October.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Resident breeder (2 – 3). Common passage and winter visitor

Commonest in the coniferous plantations, the species is nonetheless well distributed in mixed and deciduous woodlands and is probably greatly under-recorded as a breeding bird. Numbers are augmented in autumn by continental birds and are frequent visitors in small numbers to gardens.

Reported this year from 40 sites, mainly outside the breeding season. In the early months up to three occurred at Blackmoorfoot on ten dates, Beaumont Park (at least four), Horbury Wyke, Broadstones, Tunnel End, Spring Wood Netherton, Shelley, Deffer Wood, Gunthwaite Dam, Bretton Lakes, Almondbury, Clayton West, Langsett Res (c.10 on 28th March), Scout Dike, Blacker Wood, Dalton and Kirkheaton.

The only breeding reports came from Royd House Wood, where a family party was watched on 21st June, Deffer Wood, Lower Stones Wood and Denby Dale, where it is described as a common breeder; additional breeding evidence in the form of singing males and/or pairs was noted at Woodsome, Beaumont Park, Langsett area, Upper Little Don Valley (20+ on 6th June), Holme Stycs (c.6 singing males on 4th April), Shepley, Bretton Lakes, Lindley Wood Silkstone, Stocksmoor, Blacker Beck, Yateholme and Storhcs Hall Woods.

Towards the year end birds reappeared at Blackmoorfoot from 10th September, with a maximum of four in late October, Crosland Moor, Lockwood, Shelley (up to four in October), Elland GPs where described as numerous on 29th December, Ravensthorpe, Hinchcliffe Mill, Inghirchworth, Royd Moor (five on 18th October), Scout Dike, Scammonden (up to ten on 5th December), Dewsbury S.F. (one on 5/6th October), Birkby, Salendine Nook and Dalton.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

Rare visitor

One was near the car park at the western end of Scammonden Dam on 6th, 8th and 9th November at least (JB, JED).

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Migrant breeder (1 – 2) and passage visitor

This species is becoming increasingly scarce as a breeder, with conclusive evidence from only four sites this year. Recorded between 8th May and 4th October.

Scout Dike Res – a singing male on 8th May; two juveniles on 28th August may have been locally bred or passage birds. Bretton Lakes – one on 14th May. Digley Bottom – one on 22nd May. Hinchcliffe Mill – two in a garden on 26th May, but no further sightings. Little Don Valley – two pairs bred, including one at Swinden Plantation. Denby Dale – three pairs bred. Blacker Wood, Skelmanthorpe – two pairs were attending nest-holes on 23rd June, with possibly a third pair present. Carr Wood, Woodsome – one on 2nd July. Gunthwaite Dam – one on 6th July. Blackmoorfoot Res – two on 22nd August and a late bird on 4th October. Royd Moor Res – one on 30th August.

Addition to 1998 Report – a family party of six birds at Elland GPs on 21st August (HBC).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleucos*

Migrant breeder (1)

Reported from four sites, three of which are in the Langsett area. Further provision of nest-boxes probably would help the species to increase its range and numbers.

Cliff Wood, Langsett – a pair had returned by 28th April. Later six singing males were located, of which one failed to find a mate. The five pairs which bred had a very successful season, raising 33 young (BBSG). Little Don Valley – a male on 26th April (BBSG). North America Wood, Langsett – a male from 28th April to 6th June at least (BBSG). Green Wood, Upper Cumberworth – two pairs nested in recently erected boxes, but the outcome is unknown (via MLD).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Resident breeder (2 – 3)

A very widespread breeding species wherever there is suitable habitat and which has been helped by a series of mild winters. Reported from more than 50 sites, including several gardens.

Bred at Elland GPs, Dogley N.R., Mollicar Wood, Bretton Lakes (two pairs at least), Beaumont Park (two pairs), Bullcliff Wood, Horbury Wyke (eight nests located), Stockmoor Common, Stonycliffe Wood (two nests), Blacker Beck and Litherop Lane, with further pairs at Gawthorpe Green (two), Carr Wood (at least two), Aspley, Horbury Strands, Butternab Wood, Hagg Wood, Denby Dale, Deffer Wood, Lower Stones Wood, Lepton Great Wood and Penny Spring Wood and sightings of single birds at several other sites.

Several parties in double figures were reported, mainly after the breeding season :- c.12 at Gunthwaite Dam on 1st January, 10 at Sharp Lane, Almondbury on 30th January, 15 in Mollicar Wood on 9th February, 18 at Fixby on 5th June, 18 in Lumb Lane, Almondbury on 10th June, 16+ at Woodsome Lees on 2nd July, 30+ on 31st July increasing to 50+ on 26th August at Elland GPs, 15 at Dewsbury S.F. on 8th August, c.15 at Scout Dike on 14th August and 22nd September, 40+ at Dogley in late August, c.25 at Bretton Lakes and 15 at Wilderness Plantation on 30th September, 11 on 1st and 6th October and 10 on 15th December at Blackmoorfoot, 10+ at Scammonden on 9th November and c.30 at Holme Styes on 11th November.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

Resident breeder (1)

The situation was very similar to that of last year, with breeding proved at just one site, but probably occurring in several other traditional locations.

Blacker Beck -- a nest with seven eggs was discovered on 3rd May and was later successful. Horbury Wyke -- recorded singly on five dates, 14th March, 14th April, 29th July, 11th August and 30th September, with at least three on 3rd April. Between this site and Blacker Beck six territorial birds were located on 25th April. Gunthwaite Dam -- two on 31st January. Scissett -- two pairs located between Scissett and Blacker Wood on 28th February. Bretton Lakes -- singles on 7th and 9th February, 30th September, 28th October and 8th November. Denby Dale -- two on 3rd February, singles on 15th June, 9th November and 3rd December. Longwood Valley -- two on 22nd March were presumed to be a pair establishing territory. Deffer Wood -- one pair probably bred. Lepton Great Wood -- one pair probably bred.

Royd Moor Res – singles on 16th June, 31st July, 17th August and 4th September, with one pair probably breeding. Scout Dike Res – at least two pairs present; post-breeding sightings on 31st July, 14th (2+), 27th and 28th (2+) August and 30th October. Dunford Bridge Cycle Track – one on 30th July. Ingbirchworth Res – two on 26th October, one on 7th November.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*
Resident breeder (3)

Breeds commonly, particularly in conifer plantations, but few records from breeding areas were submitted, most reports being of garden sightings. The species is often found in mixed flocks outside the breeding season.

Juveniles visited gardens in New Mill on 22nd May, Dalton on 1st June and Salendine Nook in July/August and a family party including four young was in Spring Wood, Netherton on 20th June.

The species is much under-recorded, with no flocks of any size notified, highest numbers being 7+ in Storthes Hall Woods on 11th February and c.9 at Bretton Lakes on 14th March.

The species was described as being common in the Denby Dale and Shepley areas.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*
Resident breeder (5)

A very common and widespread species encountered everywhere except on the high open moorland areas. Very few records submitted. Breeding was reported from Shelley, Penny Spring Wood, Lepton Great Wood, Hade Edge and Fixby.

Counts of c.20 at Bretton Lakes on 10th January and c.30 in Lumb Lane, Almondbury on 30th January, with “lots” in Beaumont Park on 13th February.

Additions to 1998 Report – 21 at Blackmoorfoot on 22nd February and 27 on 3rd May, 20 at North Dean on 1st June, 21 at Elland GPs on 6th September.

Great Tit *Parus major*
Resident breeder (4)

Less abundant than the previous species but still very widespread and common, though less catholic in its habitat preferences. Very few records received.

Breeding was reported from Lower Stones, Lepton Great and Penny Spring Woods, Dogley N.R. and Hade Edge. Common in the Denby Dale and Shepley areas.

Counts of c.30 at Bretton Lakes on 10th January and 11 at Elland GPs were the only ones submitted.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Resident breeder (2)

Birds were found in 32 woodland localities, a slight increase on last year, and included several new sites, indicating a further range expansion by this species. Breeding was proved at only six sites but doubtless occurred at many others. Several sites held more than one pair, with up to eight birds, including five singing males, seen at Bretton Lakes; surprisingly perhaps, no breeding evidence was obtained at this site.

The majority of records once again came from the valleys of the Fenay Beck, R. Holme, Hall Dike and New Mill Dike. In the Fenay Valley singing males or pairs were reported from Mollicar Woods, Bank Foot Lane, Royd House Wood (two singing males and one family party seen), Mellor Wood, Smith Wood, Birks Wood, Woodsome Road, Sharp Lane and Lumb Lane (Almondbury), Woodsome Lees, Dogley (a family party), Clough Wood (Thurstonland) and Cart Wood, with four pairs in the Shepley/Storthes Hall area.

In the Holme Valley birds were seen or heard at Brockholes, Armitage Bridge (Nag Wood and Old Spring Wood), Magdale, Hozley, Hagg Wood (bred), Park Wood (Berry Brow) and Beaumont Park, in the Hall Dike Valley at Windy Bank Wood and in the New Mill Dike Valley at Hepworth, with a nesting pair in Hall Acre Wood.

Further east in the area there were three pairs in Blacker Wood, Skelmanthorpe where a fledged juvenile was seen on 23rd June, three pairs in the Denby Dale area, a probable breeding pair in Lower Stones Wood and one in Deffer Wood on 31st March. No information was received from the Cannon Hall/Cawthorne district, where the species is also known to occur.

Several birds were present in a large mixed flock at Lepton in late August and one was at Gunthwaite on 22nd August.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Resident breeder (2 - 3)

Once again much under-reported with records submitted from only about 25 sites and little information regarding breeding.

The only confirmed breeding reports came from Orange Wood (Blackmoorfoot), Bretton Lakes and Bullicliff Farm, with probable breeding reported in the Denby Dale/Shepley area (c.5 pairs), Lepton Great Wood, Penny Spring Wood, Dogley N.R. and Langsett. Also in the breeding season birds were reported, often singly, at Stainland, Mollicar Woods, Horbury Wyke, Dean Wood, Cliff Wood, Millbank Thornhill, Blacker Wood, Thunderbridge, Woodsome, Gunthwaite, Beaumont Park, Bullicliff Wood and Blacker Beck.

Additional records outside the breeding season were received from New Mill, Hinchcliffe Mill, Scissett and the Little Don Valley, where there were four birds on 2nd November.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*
Resident breeder (2 – 3)

A much under-reported species, especially in the breeding season, with breeding only reported from Penny Spring Wood, Lepton Great Wood, Carr Wood, Lower Stones Wood and commonly in the Denby Dale and Shepley areas. A bird was watched carrying nest material during snowstorms at the Huddersfield University Holly Bank Campus on 13th April.

In the early months birds were reported from eight localities, usually one or two, but there were nine together in Beaumont Park on 31st March.

Birds become more obvious after the breeding season and several observers reported the species as being conspicuous, with birds moving about, from late September/early October. Blackmoorfoot Res had up to four birds at this time, Elland GPs seven on 26th September and six to ten were regular at Millbank, Thornhill.

Gardens were visited at Shelley, Meltham and New Mill and the species is a regular feeder at the bird tables at Dewsbury S.F.

Maggie *Pica pica*
Resident breeder (4 – 5)

Only two reports were received of this very widespread and abundant species, 15 at Elland GPs on 20th February and a maximum count of 12 in Lockwood, no date given.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*
Resident breeder (4)

Still common and widespread, but may be becoming scarcer due to the demolition of old textile mills, reducing the number of available nest sites in some areas. Few reports received.

In January c.200 at Royd Moor on 1st and c.60 at Scout Dike on 16th, c.200 at Honley on 15th March, c.80 between Wooldale and Totties in early October, 150 flying over Beaumont Park to feeding areas in the early morning of 20th October and 250 flying east over Lindley Moor to roost at 1600hrs is a regular feature in October/November. A similar flight line, but to the southwest, occurs over Dalton though no counts were made.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*
Resident breeder (5)

There has been no rookery survey in the area since 1983; counts were received from five rookeries. In the Longwood area alone, three rookeries have disappeared in the last twenty years.

Results from rookeries counted were – Crosland Moor 11 nests, New Mill three, Lower Stones Wood c.50, High Fields Plantation, Silkstone c.6, Thornhill Lees 26.

Non-breeding season flocks of 87 at Horbury Bridge on 14th January, 100 at New Mill in late January, 120 at Greetland on 3rd February and 160 feeding on plough at Thornhill on 9th August were the only ones reported.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Resident breeder (4)

Occurs throughout the area in all habitats and has increased in numbers enormously in recent years.

The only count received was of 20+ feeding at Lepton on 7th May.

Birds with "Magpie-like" wings were reported from Blackmoorfoot on 1st April and Kirkheaton regularly in autumn. An unusual sighting was of one swimming across the R. Calder at Elland GPs on 24th January (HBC).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Resident breeder (1).

Birds were reported in all months except January and July. A minimum of two pairs bred successfully, with at least four birds present at one of the sites in June (JHod,MC). The presence of up to five birds in the Little Don Valley on 12th October and 16th November (BBSG) was probably indicative of successful nesting at a third site.

Regular sightings were made in the Little Don Valley, Yateholme, Holme Moss and Winscar areas, with occasional sightings near Buckstones, Deer Hill, Dunford Bridge and the Windleden Reservoirs.

In August, two were present at Salter's Brook on 14th (BBSG), three flew over Hinchcliffe Mill on 15th and three also over Holmbridge on 29th (HQ).

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Resident breeder (5) and numerous winter visitor

Still remains very common in the area, although a decline has been apparent over recent years, particularly in the number of birds present in winter. Pre-roost gatherings are both less numerous and less frequently encountered and numbers at the town centre roost much reduced.

Few reports were received, maxima being c.1000 near Royd Moor on 13th March and c.1000 in fields off Litherop Lane on 31st March. About 800 were near Broadstones Res on 20th February, c.120 juveniles at Royd Moor on 31st May and c.300 at Whitley Common on 31st December.

Dewsbury S.F. had 520 on 20th March, 220 on 31st August, 435 on 16th September, 390 on 7th October and westerly movements occurred there of 220 on 30th October, and in November 190 on 21st and 240 on 22nd.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Resident breeder (5)

Very few records were submitted, but a general decline in recent years seems apparent.

Maximum numbers reported were c.40 at a Lumb Lane feeding station on 30th January, up to 26 in a garden at Lockwood and 12 on 27th November at New Mill, where juveniles were present in May and August, indicating double broods being produced. At Salendine Nook, 28 feeding in a garden on 1st/2nd December was the highest number for three years, but declines were reported from gardens

in Ossett and Longwood, where respectively maxima were 11 in December (compared with 20+ in 1996) and only three to five birds (compared with up to 20 a few years ago). In the Shepley/Denby Dale areas breeding was reported in diminished numbers.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Resident breeder (1)

Although there was little breeding evidence for this declining species, the situation may not be quite so bad as it appears and there are probably undiscovered breeding "pockets" in the area. Breeding was confirmed at only two sites.

Emley – a pair reared two broods of five young in a newly erected garden nest-box, after evicting a pair of Blue Tits and up to 12 birds fed in the garden during the winter (S.Horrock). Scout Oike Res – a singing male present on 8th May, three birds present on 26th July and at least two juveniles in a mixed flock indicates probable breeding nearby. A maximum of 14 counted on 4th December (RJB,MC,BBSG). Horbury S.F. – up to 20 birds present throughout the year in nearby hedgerows (JRS). Denby Dale – just two records of three birds on 11th January and two on 17th March represents a serious decline (TM). Almondbury – a maximum of eight at the traditional feeding site in Lamb Lane on 23rd February with smaller numbers on several other dates in the early months (DSI,BA et al). Singles at Royd House Farm on 26th February, 13th March and 22nd April and in Sharpe Lane on 23rd April (DSI). Presumably still breeding somewhere in the area. Up to ten in the Kaye Lane area in late November/December (SRG). Clayton West – 10+ on 14th March between here and Blacker Wood (SH). New Mill – one on 26th March (CDA). Dearne Dike Lane – c.20 on 22nd April (JED). Dewsbury S.F. – two on 23rd May, then on nine dates from 9th August to 9th October, usually less than ten birds, but 13 on 10th August and 14 on 25th September (JH). Royd Moor Res – c.10 in a field of wheat to the east on 1st August (BBSG). Belle Royd Farm – at least one on 9th October (MC). Litherop Lane – a small party at a former regular breeding site on 15th December (JMD).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Resident breeder (5) and winter visitor

A common breeding bird in suitable habitat throughout the area, with for example ten singing males in one section of the Holme Styes woodlands on 4th April.

Large winter flocks seem to be a thing of the past, with only one flock of over a hundred reported - 200 at Bretton Park on 9th February. Maxima reported at other sites were 38 at Broadstones Lodge on 17th January, up to 30 at Birds Edge Lane on 31st January, c.40 at Royd Moor on 17th October, c.25 near Broadstones on 1st December, 30+ at Shepley on 5th December and up to 20 in a Longwood garden during autumn and late winter. Smaller numbers were noted at Digley, New Mill, Dewsbury S.F., Thornhill Park, Horbury S.F. and Ravensthorpe GPs.

Visible migration watches produced 85 in four hours at Royd Moor on 26th September, 50 at Ingbirchworth on 30th October and 16 moving west at Scammonden on 7th November.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Uncommon to common winter visitor

The small numbers at the end of 1998 continued into 1999 with records from only seven sites – a female at Shepley on 1st/2nd January, 20 at Bretton Park on 9th and six on 15th February, two at Dewsbury S.F. on 7th March, a female in a Meltham garden on 13th March and one on the same date in Dearne Dike Lane, one at Scout Dike on 28th March and one on 1st April at Blackmoorfoot Res.

With the exception of Bretton Park and the Ravenshorpe area, birds were also relatively scarce in the second winter period, with few arrivals before mid-November. Birds visited gardens in Wooldale, Shepley, New Mill, Birkby, Fixby, Longwood, Meltham and Hade Edge.

Royd Moor – one in a four hour visible migration watch on 26th September was the first of the autumn. Blackmoorfoot Res – singles on 17th, 26th, 29th and 30th October and 4th, 15th and 25th November. Denby Dale – one on 18th October, seven on 1st November. Bretton Park – one on 23rd October, up to ten from 28th October increasing to an excellent count of c.300 on 11th November, then reducing to c.75 on 3rd and 30 on 23rd December. Inghirchworth – two on a visible migration watch on 30th October. Longwood – small numbers in a garden from late autumn, peaking at 17 in late December. Scammonden – at least 11 near the picnic area on 4th November. Wooldale – one or two regularly from 21st November to the year end. Shepley – one on 21st November, three on 1st December and a male on 9th December. New Mill – a male on 4th December, with three birds the following week. Birkby – four on 8th December. Fixby – first arrival on 8th December with just small numbers later in the month. Ravenshorpe – 34 feeding in pasture on 5th December with up to 50 nearby coming to seed later in the month. Hade Edge – three on 19th and 29th December. Meltham – up to three in late December.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Resident breeder (4)

A common breeder in suitable habitats throughout the area; breeding reported from Shelley, Lindley Moor, New Mill, Shepley, Denby Dale and Thornhill Park.

Flocks were notified as follows :- 200 on 9th February at Bretton Park, maxima at Dewsbury S.F. of 36 on 10th August and 22 on 18th September, Royd Moor c.70 on 22nd August, Thornhill Millbank 12 on 26th September and 7th November, Longwood up to 20 in a garden in late winter, Shelley up to 40 visiting garden at year end, Shepley 30+ on 5th December and at Blackmoorfoot Res maxima of 60 on 15th and 70 on 16th December roosting.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Resident breeder (2 – 3)

Quite widespread throughout the area and has probably increased in npland areas over recent years, although flock sizes are reduced. Reported from more than 30 localities.

Breeding was reported from Baitings Res, Denby Dale, Shepley, Broadstones Res and Ravenshorpe, with birds present in the breeding season also at Almondbury, Penny Spring Wood, Lower Stones Wood, Dogley N.R., Horbury, Mollicar Wood, Gawthorpe Green, Silkstone, Royd Moor, Dunford Bridge, Salendine Nook, Longwood Valley, Blackmoorfoot, Shelley, Dalton, Bretton Park,

Scammonden and Ingbirchworth.

The largest flocks reported were at Elland GPs 20 on 7th and 16th January, 30 on 19th September and 30 on 27th October, Bretton Park 50 on 9th and c.75 on 15th February, c.70 at Scont Dike on 12th September, c.60 at Royd Moor on 28th September, at Dewsbury S.F. 24 on 26th March, in August 11 on 8th, 42 on 28th and 92 on 31st, in September 42 on 1st, 101 on 5th, 52 on 6th and 41 on 15th, with 36 on 3rd October; at Healey Mills a party of 86 on 28th December. Up to ten birds were reported at several other sites.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Resident breeder (1) and winter visitor

Breeds sparsely mainly in the moorland conifer plantations, although there were few indications this year. Records increasingly are of birds attracted to garden feeding stations, with relatively low numbers only at other sites. Once again all garden reports were in the first months of the year, with none in autumn.

Elland GPs – up to 50 in canal side Alders in January, decreasing to 20 at the end of February, then 30 on 27th October and 4th November. Wooldale – two regularly in a garden in January. Lumb Lane – one in a garden on 10th January, two on 19th February, four on 4th March. Blackmoorfoot Res – nine on 11th January, four on 31st March, one on 15th November. Shelley – one in a garden on 15th January increasing to five on 16th March, with the last on 25th March. Two present on 21st June were unusual. Upper Little Don Valley – c.20 on 22nd January, several on 28th March, four on 17th June. One pair bred at Swinden Plantation. Ingbirchworth – singles on 24th January and 26th October, with 14 recorded on a visible migration watch on 30th October. New Mill – two on feeders on 6th February and 30th March, with five on 15th March. Hinchcliffe Mill – up to four on garden feeders for two weeks from 17th February. Dalton – first of the year were three males, one of which was bearing a BTO type ring, on 22nd February, then up to six daily to 10th March; probably about ten birds involved. Two flew over on 23rd March and four on 12th May. Bretton Lakes – eight groundfeeding under Alders on 26th February, then four on 14th March. Later in the year four on 30th September, c.15 on 23rd and 28th October and 3rd November increasing to c.30 on 9th and 15th November and c.50 on 23rd December. Wilderness Plantation – one on 14th March. Clayton West – eight on 14th March. Langsett Res – heard on 28th March. Holme Styes – two or three heard in this suitable breeding area on 4th April. Scammonden – at least two on 9th and 15 on 18th July, with seven on 7th and two on 9th November. Royd Moor – c.16 over in a four hour visible migration watch on 26th September. Dewsbury S.F. – two on 15th, one on 27th and two on 30th September, with ten moving south on 16th October. Thornhill Park – a flock of 23 on 22nd October. Shepley/Denby Dale – occasional winter records of small numbers.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Partial migrant breeder (3)

More reports than usual were received, probably as a result of the appeal made last year for all records of this species to be submitted. There were no records in the first two months, the first returning birds being at Shelley on 13th March, followed by three flying over Dearne Dike Lane and a single male at Castle Hill on 27th March. Birds were arriving still in flocks into May.

Breeding was confirmed at Norland Moor (at least 12 pairs attempting), Denby Dale (at least five pairs), Thurgory Lepton (about five pairs), Shelley (about six pairs) and Broadstones Lodge; further sites which had pairs or singing males and where breeding probably took place were Silkstone, Dunford Bridge, Spicer House Lane, Hade Edge, Grimescar Valley, Scout Dike, Royd Moor, Longwood Valley (young birds seen after breeding season), Horbury Bridge, Horbury Wyke, Gawthorpe Green, Ravenshorpe GPs, New Mill, Castle Hill, Chimney Lane and Lucy Lane (Lepton), Lumb Lane, Thurstonland, Dogley N.R., Quarmby Clough and Holme Styes.

Sizeable flocks were reported, many of them probably indicative of successful breeding in the area, at Royd Moor – 30 on 10th April, New Mill – c.20 from 11th April to June, Mellor Wood Almondbury – c.75 on stubble on 18th April, Ingbirchworth – c.20 on 18th April, Dearne Dike Lane – c.50 on 22nd April, Broadstones – c.30 on 3rd July, Earlsheaton – 350 on 10th August, Ringstone Edge – at least 100 on 10th August peaking at 130 on 19th August, Dewsbury S.F. – 48 on 15th and 138 on 20th/21st August and 78 on 2nd and 38 on 5th September, Quarmby Clough – c.25 on 28th August, Whitley Edge – 129 on 1st September, Scout Dike – c.120 on 7th September, Castle Hill – c.70 in September, Victoria – 200+ on 28th September, Kirkheaton – 13 on 11th October and Shepley – 24 on 27th November, 25 on 5th and 40 on 22nd December.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Partial migrant breeder (2 – 3)

This species has declined dramatically in the area in recent years, both as a breeder and as a passage bird, large flocks in spring and autumn apparently now things of the past. Encouragingly though, after a blank year in 1998, two pairs are known to have bred.

Blackmoorfoot Res hosted the first returning birds, a flock of 22, on 26th March (MLD). In April c.25 were at Bradshaw, Digley on 4th (KW), four with Linnets near Ingbirchworth on 18th (BBSG), one or two at Merrydale Clough (SH) on 28th and two pairs on territory at Buckstones on 29th April. In May four were present in the Wessenden Valley on 3rd (KW), one near Issues Road on 29th (SH), where there were two pairs on 9th June (BA,DM). Birds were also seen in the breeding season on Rishworth Moor (FBC).

Two pairs bred at Deer Hill (TD), where 32 were counted on 4th/5th September (DMP), probably indicating additional breeding in the area.

Elsewhere in autumn, three were at Cartworth Moor on 30th August (HQ), 10 – 15 just south of Holme Moss on 4th October (DHP) and in November two at Winscar Res on 9th and four with Linnets near the Victoria on 29th (BBSG).

It would appear that careful examination of Linnet flocks in both spring and autumn might reveal more of this species.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Partial migrant breeder (2) and winter visitor

This has recently become a species in its own right after being split from Mealy Redpoll, *Carduelis flammea*, thus adding a new species to the Club's list.

It is yet another species which appears to be on a downward curve locally as a breeding bird.

Birds were very scarce in the early months, the only reports being a maximum of 12 at Elland GPs on 1st January, two in a Shelley garden on 23rd January, with odd singles there until spring, one at Winscar Res on 14th March, one at Scammonden on 25th April and two at Royd Moor on 28th April.

In the breeding season five were at Holme Styes on 3rd May, with one on 13th June, one at Dunford Bridge on 5th May, while at Winscar Res at least three pairs were holding territories on 25th May with at least one pair breeding, and birds continued to be reported here to 30th July. Singles were at Blackmoorfoot Res on 15th June and 31st July.

Birds were reported more frequently in autumn, but only in small numbers, as follows :- one at Scout Dike Res on 22nd September, two over Dalton on 24th September, 12 during a four hour visible migration watch at Royd Moor Res on 26th September, one on 30th September and two on 28th October at Bretton Lakes, at Dewsbury S.F. southerly passage noted on four dates, with nine on 30th September and in October 44 on 9th, 11 on 16th and five on 17th, at Denby Dale one on 6th and three on 29th October, singles at Blackmoorfoot on 6th, 13th, 22nd, 26th and 29th October, one during a five hour v.m.w. on 16th October at Ingbirchworth, ten feeding in Alders at Dunford Bridge on 9th November with one over Scammonden on the same date, one over Shelley on 10th November and at New Mill six on 15th December.

Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Rare winter visitor

Four birds were at Elland GPs on 27th February (JB).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Irregular breeder (1). Uncommon passage visitor

All records were in the second half of what was a poor year for this species.

At Scout Dike Res two adults and a juvenile on 4th July possibly indicated local breeding (RJB) and one was also present on 14th August (MC).

Three were at Swinden Plantation on 18th July, two at Winscar Res on 4th August (BBSG) and an adult male at Scammonden on 5th December (JB,DHP).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Resident breeder (2 – 3)

Still widespread throughout the area, reaching the moorland fringes in places, but much more common at lower altitudes.

Reported from over 40 localities, including 28 in the breeding season, although breeding was confirmed at only a fraction of these.

Proved breeding occurred at Denby Dale (three pairs), Royd Moor Res, Horbury Wyke (one pair predated at the young stage), Lumb Lane and Dunford Bridge, with other breeding season sightings of pairs at Honley, Dogley N.R. (two pairs), Bretton Lakes, Bankfoot Lane, Royd Edge, Lepton Great Wood, Penny Spring Wood, Shelley (two pairs), Carr Wood, Longwood Valley (two pairs), Thornhill Park, Silkstone S.F., Blacker Dam Silkstone, Ingbirchworth, Horbury Wyke to Blacker Beck (four pairs), Blacker Beck to Bullecliff Wood (two pairs), Stonyciffe Wood, Stocksmoor

Common (two pairs), Litherop Lane, Elland GPs, Dalton and Gawthorpe Green.

Additional sites which had birds outside the breeding season were Blackmoorfoot Res (up to four), Lockwood (two), Fixby (feeding on Begonia seeds), Millbank Thornhill (three), Kilner Bank, Beaumont Park (four), Blacker Wood, Scissett, Dewsbury S.F., Snailsden, Digley Lane, Holme Styes, Cartworth Moor, Hinchcliffe Mill (two) and Hogley (two).

The largest parties reported were 12 at Holme Styes on 6th February, eight at Cartworth Moor in conifers on 31st January and seven at Royd Moor Res on 19th December.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare winter visitor

One by the Pennine Way west of Buckstones on 5th December was the only record (TP).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Resident breeder (3) and partial migrant

Although still widespread it appears to be decreasing both as a breeding bird, for which destruction of suitable habitat may be partially responsible, and in winter flock sizes.

Reported from 35 localities, the majority in the Broadstones/Ingbirchworth/Scout Dike/Royd Moor, Almondbury/Castle Hill/Farnley/Thurstonland and the Horbury to Thornhill areas.

In the early months a flock of up to 25 birds was in the Dearne Dike Lane area and c.18 between Clayton West and Blacker Wood in mid-March, but no other double figure gatherings were notified.

Breeding season reports came from :-

Royd Moor Res – 13 singing males on 18th April, with at least 11 pairs breeding. Scout Dike Res – 12 singing males on 8th May. Broadstones – four singing males, with at least two pairs breeding. Almondbury/Castle Hill/Farnley/Thurstonland area – at least ten singing males. Millbank, Thornhill – a maximum of ten singing males. Horbury Bridge to Horbury Wyke – at least five singing males. Dewsbury S.F. to Horbury Bridge – “good numbers” particularly along disused railway lines. Thurgory, Lepton – four singing males. Ravensthorpe GPs – three singing males on 22nd June. Silkstone – two singing males on 3rd May. New Mill – two pairs on the hills above in April/May. Smaller numbers of mainly singing males were at Inghirchworth Res, Spicer House Lane, Emley Moor, Lepton Great Wood and Kirkheaton. Post-breeding season numbers were extremely low, reported maxima being only nine at Broadstones on 26th October and eight at Millbank, Thornhill on 5th December. One flew southwest at Scammonden on 9th November.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

Rare visitor

A bird seen briefly on 27th December in a garden adjacent to Jos Lane, Shepley was considered to be this species but the observer was not 100% certain. It was not until 15th January 2000 that the bird was seen again and enabled thorough study, when the original identification was proven (TM).

A new species for the Club area.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*
Resident breeder (2) and partial migrant

Once again the Ingbirchworth group of reservoirs proved to be the stronghold of the species, but a second concentration is now known to occur in the wetlands alongside the R. Calder in the northeast of the area. Breeding also occurred at at least two moorland reservoirs. Few reports were received outside the breeding season, with only two records in double figures.

Dearne Dike Lane – a loose flock of at least 12 birds in mid-March with eight, including six males, still on 3rd April. One pair here in set-aside on 4th April. Blackmoorfoot Res – a single male on 11 dates from 25th March to 19th June, but no breeding evidence. One on 14th and 22nd October were the only other records. Royd Moor Res – first reported on 18th March, then six pairs bred. One flew over during a v.m.w. on 2nd October. Scout Dike Res – a pair present from 8th March; seven singing males on 20th June, with six pairs breeding. Ingbirchworth Res – two singing males on 8th May, but no further breeding evidence reported. Broadstones – seen regularly from 18th March; one pair bred in gorse at Broadstones Lodge Farm and at least two singing males were at Broadstones Res. Horbury S.F. – two pairs present. Horbury Wyke – at least two males holding territory in May/June. Horbury Strands – three singing males on 6th May, with at least one pair later. Healey Mills – two pairs present. Dewsbury S.F. – two pairs raised five young. Millbank, Thornhill – one pair present. Ravensthorpe GPs – one pair present. Elland GPs – ten roosted on 3rd January, with six present on 7th February; at least one pair bred. Winscar Res – one pair bred, raising three young. Wessenden Head Res – one pair bred, a nest containing five eggs being discovered. Norland Moor – one pair present. Tunnel End Res – two singing males on 25th March, with one in early July. Scammonden – two singing males on 29th May; at least two on 1st September, one on 12th September and two on 4th December. Bretton Lakes – two on 9th and one on 15th February. Greetland – one visited a garden on 29th March. Buckstones – a male on 29th April. Boshaw Whams – a male on 24th and 28th December.

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In Focus (Denby Dale)

RSPB

FIELD TRIPS REPORT 1999

Clumber Park and Blacktoft Sands RSPB 10th January

On a cold, clear day we had excellent birdwatching. As soon as we left the coach at Clumber we saw Hawfinch in the tall tree tops and around the Chapel were Jay, Nuthatch, Treecreeper and more Hawfinches; some of the party were also fortunate enough to see Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. On the lake birds included Goldeneye, Goosander and Ruddy Duck.

The highlights at Blacktoft were a female Hen Harrier performing well for us and a Kingfisher. 69 species recorded.

Aber Ogwen and Conwy RSPB 7th February

A new venue today which proved very successful with 69 species seen, including at Aber Ogwen a Spoonbill which we were able to watch from the hide whilst two Little Egrets flew in to land in front of us. Also seen here were Water Rail, Black-tailed Godwit, Greenshank and Green Woodpecker. After a snowstorm which forced us to close the viewing slots in the hide we moved on to the new RSPB Reserve at Conwy. Here we saw Little Grebe, Red-breasted Merganser and Yellow-legged Gull. As is usual in Wales we saw many Buzzards throughout the day and enjoyed the superb scenery.

Martin Mere, Banks Marsh, Southport, Mere Sands Wood, Seaforth Docks 7th March

Leaving the car park at Martin Mere we first went to view the Cattle Egret which was feeding in a field with a Shire Horse for company; it gave excellent views as did a Little Owl on a farm building behind us. At Marshside were a wide selection of duck, together with a hunting female Merlin and many Black-tailed Godwits as well as a couple of Weasels on the road. A call at nearby Banks Marsh produced a flock of Twite.

Mere Sands Wood, a reserve comprising gravel pits, woodland and reedbed, was another first for a Club trip, where we had Great Crested Grebe, Coal Tit, Treecreeper, Siskin and Bullfinch, etc. News filtered through of a Bittern showing from one of the hides and all the party managed to see it after a struggle, even though it was no more than ten metres from us. A visit to Seaforth Docks rounded off the day, with sightings of Red-breasted Merganser, Grey Plover, Little and Mediterranean Gull as highlights. 75 species seen.

Gibraltar Point 11th April

An excellent total of 70 species was recorded, the highlights being two drake Garganey, Sparrowhawk, Grey Partridge, a flock of 72 Shorelarks and Water Pipit. Despite cool, windy weather, the day was a good one, with a supporting cast of Brent Geese, Common Scoter, Red-legged Partridge, Sanderling, Ruff, Bar-tailed Godwit, Greenshank and Wheatear as well as excellent views of a Fox.

Bempton Cliffs RSPB, Tophill Low and Blacktoft Sands RSPB 7th May

A party of 15 members set off in cars, first for the magnificent views of seabirds at Bempton,

where there were Gannets, Kittiwakes, Puffins, Razorbills and Guillemots in vast numbers; the noise, smell and sheer spectacle is a great experience. In the bushes near the reserve entrance we had a migrant Garden Warbler.

Next to Tophill Low, where we had superb views of two Black-necked Grebes on the "D" Reservoir; also present were many Swifts and Hirundines as well as flyover Sparrowhawk and Great Spotted Woodpecker. Some were fortunate to see a Yellow Wagtail, but we all managed to find a perched Cuckoo.

Some of the party decided to finish the day with a visit to Blacktoft. En route we saw Grey Partridge and at Blacktoft were Pintail, Garganey, Black-tailed Godwit, Turtle Dove, Barn Owl and before we left we had also seen Avocets with chicks and a second Barn Owl.

Strid Woods 6th June

A small group visited this site for the woodland specialities. Birds seen included a young Great Spotted Woodpecker calling from its nest-hole, together with all the target species – Common Sandpiper, Grey Wagtail and Dipper on the river and Redstart, Wood Warbler and Pied and Spotted Flycatchers in the woodlands.

Wharnciffe Crag 16th June

The small group who participated in this evening visit were rewarded with a Tawny Owl being mobbed by small passerines, roding Woodcock, Tree Pipit and finally a Nightjar, which began its eerie churring at 1005p.m. We all managed to see it in flight before it landed and again as it took flight once more. The bird's churring could be heard as we walked back to the cars.

Flamborough Head, Filey Dams, Filey Brigg, Blacktoft Sands 5th September

A group in cars set off to the east coast, but at both Flamborough and Filey the mist over the sea was so impenetrable that we decided to go inland via Filey Dams. The hide here was packed owing to the presence of a Spotted Crane, but none of our party managed to see it.

Blacktoft was excellent with close views of a selection of waders to pick through – Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper, Wood and Common Sandpipers as well as Marsh Harrier, Water Rail and Yellow Wagtail.

Blacktoft Sands RSPB and Teesside 10th October

The coach failed to turn up, but this proved to be a blessing in disguise as we were able to take advantage of the greater flexibility offered by car travel to see a good number of unusual species. At Blacktoft we first visited Singleton Hide where we had good views of an American rarity in the form of a Wilson's Phalarope. Whilst we were watching it, news came through of an even rarer species at Teesside; most of us set off immediately and soon after we had parked on the bridge at Seal Sands we were watching at close range a Short-billed Dowitcher – a first for Britain on a HBWC trip!

Some members chose to go instead to Spurn, where they saw a Bluethroat.

Burton Constable and Flamborough Head 7th November

Another car trip and another chase after a rarity! We joined the huge number of people already at Burton Constable after being directed where to park by onsite police. Whilst we waited expectantly a Sparrowhawk, a late Chiffchaff and a Stoat were seen, then a shout went up and there it was – a huge juvenile White-tailed Eagle flying over, only to drop out of view into some trees. It

was relocated and gave excellent views as it perched in a tree,

At Flamborough we had Sooty Shearwater, Common Scoter and Little Auk and on the way home some excitement in the form of a pair of hunting Barn Owls.

Ribble Marshes, Banks, Mere Sands Wood, Pennington Flash 5th December

Yet another car trip. At the Ribble Marshes we had a good selection of geese, ducks and waders, while at Banks a hunting female Merlin was impressive. Mere Sands Wood held both Little and Great Crested Grebe, Grey Heron and Jay. More water birds were seen at Pennington Flash and we ended up with a total of 56 species for the day.

Those who visited the reserve at Martin Mere also managed to see both Hen Harrier and Peregrine.

Many thanks to all the participants in the trips during the past season.

David Woodhouse, June 2000.

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