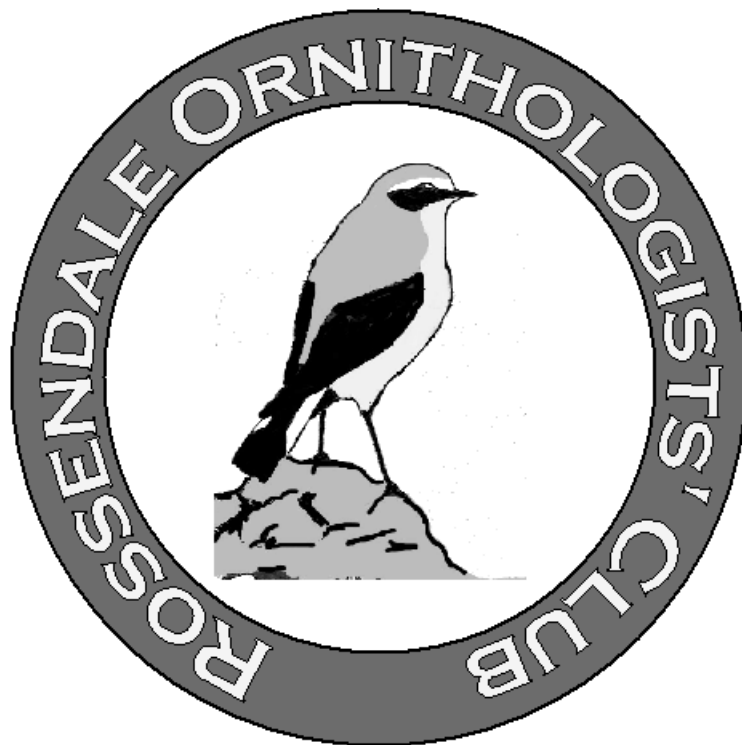

Rossendale Ornithologists' Club

Bird Report



1996

LITTLE GREBE - *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

An interesting record was of one on the River Irwell near Groundwork on 1st and 4th January. A pair had returned to Shortclough reservoir on 15th March and remained to breed. They were seen during May - only one regularly - the other probably on the nest. One young bird was seen later. A pair nested successfully at Syke reservoir - one was seen at a nest on 23rd June and one with young on its back on 7th July. Only the 2 adults were present on 20th July and then a single to 18th October. After the breeding season one was at A.M.R. on 15th July, one at Spring Mill on 20th October and one on the T.B.A. lodge at Healey Dell on 25th December.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE - *Podiceps cristatus*

One had returned to Shortclough by 29th February and a pair was in courtship display on 2nd March and again on 3rd and 6th April. One young bird was reared. This was probably the bird found dead at Clowbridge on 14th August having been present since late July. The pair had left Shortclough by 23rd July. A single was present at Holden Wood reservoir on 18th February and at Ogden on 29th February then a pair from 4th March. They were seen on Holden Wood on 9th April and in courtship display on Ogden on 21st April. There was no indication of successful nesting. The drought caused a large fall in water levels so that nesting areas were left high and dry. A single bird was at Ogden on 2nd and 15th September. At Spring Mill a pair was displaying on 15th May and another adult was present. The pair disappeared after 25th May but the single adult was present until 16th July.

SLAVONIAN GREBE - *Podiceps auritus*

There was a second-hand report of one at Deeply Vale in March, but this cannot be confirmed.

CORMORANT - *Phalacrocorax carbo*

One was present at Ogden on 18th September and 13th October and one at Clowbridge on 20th September. One flew north up the Whitworth valley on 29th December.

GREY HERON - *Ardea cinerea*

Recorded throughout the year from many reservoirs, lodges and ponds and often feeding along the Irwell and its tributaries, often near busy roads and even town centres. On 26th April one flew up from the Irwell - Limy confluence in Rawtenstall centre and in the autumn and winter one fished frequently in the River Whitewell in Waterfoot centre. Largest numbers were 10 including juveniles at Shortclough reservoir, 6 at Musbury on 6th April and 7 at Holden Wood on 18th August. 3 to 5 were regular at Spring Mill from April to September. In the Waterfoot area a Heron regularly visited garden ponds from September to the end of the year. It took a small goldfish from a pond in Waterfoot on 12th October in spite of there being a net over the pond. The remains of the fish were shredded being pulled through the net. The Heron was seen in the garden another five times to the end of the year. During the cold spell in December 7 were seen standing in a field on Helmsshore Road.

MUTE SWAN - *Cygnus olor*

A single bird was present in the Bacup / Whitworth area throughout the year, being seen on various dates at New Line and Cowm reservoirs. 3 of the records indicated that it was a male bird.

WHOOPER SWAN - *Cygnus cygnus*

On 27th February 7 were feeding in a field at Edgworth.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE - *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Late winter records of flocks flying over were 150 to the west over Edgeside on 16th January and 150 to the west over Fearn Moss on 28th February. In the autumn 20 flew west over Rawtenstall on 29th October.

GREYLAG GOOSE - *Anser anser*

The usual 2 birds were seen regularly with the flock of Canada Geese at Grane from about 12th June to the end of the year. Other records of a single bird were on 21st April (in company with 2 white geese), 19th May and 28th August.

CANADA GOOSE - *Branta canadensis*

Numbers continue to increase with maximum counts of 60 to 68 at Grane at the end of the year compared with 42 last year. Other counts include 9 at Wallbank on 25th February, 50 at A.M.R. on 13th October, 40 at Clowbridge on 20th October. There is, however, much movement between reservoirs. Nesting activity was recorded at Ogden reservoir where one was sitting on 30th April and a pair had 5 goslings on 7th June; Isle of Man lodge where a pair had 5 young on 9th June; Cowpe reservoir - a new site - where one was on a nest near the feeder tank above the main reservoirs on 8th May; Paddy's Pond in the H.M.T.C. and there were pairs at A.M.R., Clowbridge and Clough Bottom. In the Whitworth area up to 12 were present at Spring Mill from March to August, then 25 - 30 in late August and September and 47 on 27th December. A pair and 6 goslings were seen on a small lodge near Hopwood Hall, Broadley on 15th May and a pair with one young at Cowm reservoir on 23rd June. Canada Geese were also recorded at Healey Dell and Wallbank.

SHELDUCK - *Tadorna tadorna*

A pair visited A.M.R. on 5th May. On 31st July 14 flew over Rossendale presumably at the time of the moult migration. 2 were seen at Spring Mill on 29th August.

WIGEON - *Anas penelope*

Always a scarce duck in Rossendale, but this year there have been more records and in greater numbers than usual. On 31st March there were 3 pairs at Clowbridge, presumably on their way north to the main breeding areas in Scotland. In the autumn there were 11 at A.M.R. on 15th September - a large flock for Rossendale. At Spring Mill there were 11 (5 males and 6 females) on 5th September, 9 (4 males and 5 males) on 30th September and 9 (2 males and 7 females) on 17th November. In November there were singles at Wayoh reservoir on 10th and Holden Wood on 17th.

TEAL - *Anas crecca*

Numbers were considerably higher than last year during the mid- winter period and more pairs were recorded in the nesting season. 20 - 32 were recorded at A.M.R. from February to the end of March when many were paired. There were still 5 at A.M.R. on 14th April and a pair on 20th April. There was also a pair at a lodge at nearby Cheesden on 19th April. Elsewhere, there were 2 pairs at Wayoh on 3rd March and a pair at Shortclough on 3rd April and a pair at Spring Mill on 7th April. In the autumn one was at Clough Bottom on 25th August, 10 at A.M.R. on 15th September, 3 at Clowbridge reservoir on 20th October, 10 at A.M.R. on 13th October and 10 at Wayoh on 10th November

MALLARD - *Anas platyrhynchos*

The trend towards a change in use of habitat noted last year has continued. A.M.R., which used to have a winter flock of about 100, now holds only 15 - 20. In mid-winter, the largest numbers are now found along the rivers and at small local lodges, accessible to the public, who augment the ducks' natural diet by "throwing bread to the ducks". During January and February a regular flock of about 45 built up on the Limy at Lea Brook and a similar group on the Irwell in Rawtenstall centre. There were 20 to 25 at New Line. During this period the Grane reservoirs held about 20 to 30 Mallard and there were 44 at Spring Mill on 25th February. There were good numbers at Spring Mill - 85 in early September rising to 115 later in the month. Nesting was again widespread. By 25th March there were 7 pairs at Shortclough and 10 pairs on Ogden. On 3rd April a pair flew from a pool at 1,300 ft on Brex Heights. Later, the usual groups of ducklings were seen - 8 on the River Whitewell in Waterfoot on 30th June. Flocks built up in the autumn. There were 40 at A.M.R. on 15th September but only small numbers (10 - 15) thereafter. In October and November there were over 100 at Grane reservoirs but here too numbers decreased to 30 on 17th November and 10 or less thereafter. The flock on the Irwell in Rawtenstall numbered about 60 in late December. New Line had about 16.

PINTAIL - *Anas acuta*

A male was at A.M.R. on 23rd and 31st March and one was at Clowbridge reservoir on 12th August.

POCHARD - *Aythya ferina*

During the mid-winter and early spring period numbers were slightly higher than last year. There were 14 at A.M.R. on 21st and 22nd January. At Shortclough 5 or 6 were regular from 14th January to 3rd April with 8 on 10th March. After this there were 2 on 17th April and a single female was seen on 21st April and 12th May. Elsewhere, there were 5 at Holmes Terrace lodge on 17th March and a male at New Line on 25th March. Numbers were again low in the autumn - 2 at A.M.R. on 13th October, one at Ogden on 26th September and 18th October and 2 there on 24th November, one at Holden Wood on 17th November and 2 on 15th December. A larger flock of about 30 was at Wayoh on 10th November. Ones and twos were at Spring Mill from 17th November to 22nd December and one at Wallbank on 14th and 15th December.

TUFTED DUCK - *Aythya fuligula*

Present in small numbers throughout the year but with no June records this time. 2, 3 or 4 were recorded at Shortclough, Tip Lodge, Holden Wood, Holden Vale during late winter, 8 at Ogden on 29th February and 5 at Holmes Terrace lodge in March. Pairs formed in April and were recorded at Shortclough - 2 pairs there on 12th May; Holden Wood - one pair on 9th April; Tip Lodge - a pair 11th to 22nd April; Holmes Terrace lodge - 3 pairs on 15th April. There was no indication of successful nesting. In the autumn, small flocks of from 4 to 8 were recorded at A.M.R. and the Grane reservoirs. There were 10 at Ogden on 24th November and 8 at Holden Wood on 14th December. Ones and twos were at Spring Mill from 19th September to 19th October and one at Cowm on 26th December.

SCAUP - *Aythya marila*

One, probably a first-winter male, was at New Line from 7th December through to 21st January 1997.

COMMON SCOTER - *Melanitta nigra*

A female was at Cowpe reservoir on 9th July.

GOLDENEYE - *Bucephala clangula*

Numbers were again low. During late winter and early spring most records were of singles and twos from Clowbridge, Shortclough, Cowm Clough Bottom and Grane reservoirs. Highest numbers were 5 at Shortclough on 25th February and 4 at Cowm on 10th March. Display was noted on 16th January and 27th February. In the Whitworth area there were singles in January at Wallbank, then 4 or 5 here and at Syke reservoir in February. 2s and 3s remained late - into April at Syke reservoir and Spring Mill with a pair here on 21st April. Numbers were even lower during autumn and early winter. There were singles at Holden Wood on 17th and 24th November and at Cowm on 15th and 22nd December. There were 4 birds (2 pairs) at Clowbridge on 15th December. Numbers were similar in the Whitworth area until December when there were 5 on 14th, 4 on 26th and 7 on 27th December at Spring Mill.

SMEW - *Mergus albellus*

There were records for the third consecutive year. A first-winter male and a female were at Clowbridge on 10th January and the female was also seen there on 13th January. The male was seen on various dates to 25th March, mainly at Clowbridge and Shortclough, but also at Clough Bottom. It had gone by 30th March.

GOOSANDER - *Mergus merganser*

Goosanders were numerous and widespread throughout the winter and early spring to 24th April. A late pair flew in to Clowbridge reservoir on 24th May but left after 10 minutes. Records were from A.M.R. (170 on 27th February, 83 on 2nd March), Clowbridge, Grane, Spring Mill, Clough Bottom, Cowm and Cowpe. Most records were of numbers between 2 and 15. The autumn return was in mid-November with 6 at Wayoh on 10th November, 1 at A.M.R. on 17th November and 30 at Clough Bottom on 17th November. In December one flew east up the Irwell valley on 5th December, there were pairs on Ogden and A.M.R. on 14th December and 4 on Holden Wood on 15th December.

HEN HARRIER - *Circus cyaneus*

On 17th October a female flew over Cowpe reservoir putting up all the gulls, then continued down the Cowpe valley.

GOSHAWK - *Accipiter gentilis*

An escaped bird with jesses was seen in display flight over Grane on 20th April.

SPARROWHAWK - *Accipiter nisus*

A female was present in the Reedsholme area on 21st January and 3rd February and on 9th March in display flights with a male. A pair was seen over Musbury Height on 10th March then there were regular sightings throughout April. A nest with 6 young was found near Wallbank on 23rd June and eventually 2 fledged from it between 6th and 11th July. 2 - 3 pairs nested in the Crawshawbooth area. Two pairs were present at Grane and a pair had young near Hutch

Bank. There were sightings in April and May over Rawtenstall, Stoneholme, Clowbridge and Healey Dell. As in 1995, there were regular sightings of a female in the Waterfoot area from August to December. On 31st August it chased prey into a garden in Booth Road, missed and then finished on the clothes stoop. It passed through the same garden 4 times on 3rd November and twice on 16th November. On 6th October one was seen at Clough Bottom and on the same day one was lower down the Whitewell valley. On 8th November a female was seen over Haslingden centre. On 13th December one killed a Fieldfare at Musbury and on 15th December one was at Spring Mill.

COMMON BUZZARD - *Buteo buteo*

On the spring passage one was seen over Cowpe on 29th and 30th March, one over Musbury Tor on 3rd April and one over Lee Quarry on 21st April. On 15th June one was seen at Fern Isle Wood at 18:30 hrs. During the autumn one was present in the Alden valley on 22nd September and 1st October and possibly the same bird over Crawshawbooth on 24th September. 2 birds flying high over Swinshaw Moor, being mobbed by crows on 11th November, were thought to have been Buzzards.

OSPREY - *Pandion haliaetus*

On 25th October a bird seen briefly flying down the Irwell valley was almost certainly an Osprey. It showed angled wings, much white underneath and black patches under the wings. This is a late date but there is a precedent as one flew south over Sunderland Point on 17th October 1993 and possibly took up prolonged residence in the Clevely Mere area of Scorton from approximately 20th October to 27th November. (Lancashire Bird Report, 1993)

KESTREL - *Falco tinnunculus*

From January to June regular presence and / or other evidence suggested the following probable breeding territories: Reedsholme - one in nest hole 29th March; Broadley's Mill - 3 young fledged on 21st June; The Hile / Stacksteads; Shawclough / Whitewell valley; Grane; Clowbridge; Musbury; Healey Dell; Rising Bridge; Irwell Vale railway viaduct; Naden Dean; Upper Cowpe valley - 2 immatures hunting over Cowpe Moss on 4th August; Wallbank - a pair nested on a church; Britannia; Mitchell House reservoir (pair reared 6 young); Jamesons Quarry, Grane. After the breeding season to the end of the year there were records of singles at Grane, Alden, Haslingden, Edenfield, Musbury, Rossendale General Hospital, Cowpe valley, Holcombe, Staghills, Stubbins, Cowm and Spring Mill.

MERLIN - *Falco columbarius*

Singles were seen in several areas of Rossendale in February, March and April. 3 pairs were holding territories in April. One was sitting on 5 eggs on 23rd May and in this nest the young were active on 27th June and 3 fledged in July. Another pair failed, the eggs being predated. Two other pairs were seen briefly. After the breeding season singles were seen in the Waterfoot area on 1st August, The Brex on 22nd September and Grane on 16th and 18th October.

HOBBY - *Falco subbuteo*

One flew southwest over Shawforth towards Watergrove on 13th September at 15.00 hrs. (C. Morton)

PEREGRINE - *Falco peregrinus*

At least 2 pairs were present in Rossendale during the nesting season. One pair successfully hatched young but these were illegally taken from the nest on 28th June. Another pair reared 3 young. An immature was at Spring Mill on 4th August. After the breeding season there were several sightings in the Whitworth area. A male was seen over Cowm on 7th December and one over Musbury on 30th December.

RED GROUSE - *Lagopus lagopus scoticus*

Presence in the Cowpe Moss / Knowl Moor area was indicated by the finding of faeces in late winter and early spring but only one bird - a male - was seen on 5th and 22nd May. Later, a pair was seen on Knowl Moor on 7th July but there were no signs of young. On 21st May a pair was seen at Clough Bottom and 2 were seen on Haslingden Moor on 7th May. A sucked egg was found on Haslingden Moor on 11th August. A covey of 6 was present on Haslingden / Oswaldtwistle Moor on 13th October.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE - *Alectoris rufa*

On 8th June one was at Cowm reservoir. (J. Webb)

GREY PARTRIDGE - *Perdix perdix*

There were 3 at Sand Beds and 3 on The Hile in January. From March pairs were recorded in The Hile / Shawclough area, The Hile / Stacksteads area, the Stacksteads / Lee Quarry area, Thievely, Crown Point, Hoyle Dean / Smallshaw, Hawks Clough (Balladen), Musbury, Chapel Hill, Clowbridge (calling at dusk at 2 or 3 sites), Nutshaw Hill, Spring Mill, Cowm reservoir, Shawforth (calling on both sides of the valley on 4th June). In the autumn there were records of coveys: 7 on Liver Hill, 12 at Lench Top, 3 on The Brex, 6 at Holcombe, 4 on The Hile, 8 at Spring Mill and 9 at Clowbridge. It appears to have been quite a good year for Partridges.

QUAIL - *Coturnix coturnix*

One was calling at Clowbridge on 16th June (B. Lee per R. Ives)

PHEASANT - *Phasianus colchicus*

On 30th March there were many at Spenleach Farm on H.M.T.C. A male was heard calling, then seen at Clowbridge in spring. During June and July calls were heard daily at Musbury and one or two birds were regular here to December. On 23rd October a female was seen in the Rossendale General Hospital grounds.

MOORHEN - *Gallinula chloropus*

Present and breeding in all usual sites. A nest with 5 eggs was found at Loveclough on 2nd July. Young and immature birds were recorded at Holden Vale, New Line, Lench, River Ogden and Healey Dell. On 7th December 10 were present at New Line suggesting a good breeding season.

COOT - *Fulica atra*

Singles were seen at Shortclough on 25th February and 25th March and possibly a pair for a short time in April, but these moved away and there was no indication of nesting. One was at Wallbank lodge on 23rd and 24th April. On 2nd June there were 3 or 4 pairs with some young

present on the lodges along Deeply Vale. On 21st July 2 birds had 4 juveniles on Holden Vale. In August there were 2 at Holden Wood on 18th and one on Ogden on 28th.

OYSTERCATCHER - *Haematopus ostralegus*

A pair was present at A.M.R. on 14th and 21st April and one was feeding in a field at Cheesden on 2nd June. A pair had 3 eggs taken from the nest at A.M.R. just before they were due to hatch. A single bird was at Clowbridge on 21st April, 25th May and 19th June. There was a continuous presence at Spring Mill of 1 to 3 birds from 19th April to 29th July and a flock of 39 at 18.30 on 2nd August. One alighted briefly in a field at Shawforth on 11th June before flying off to the northwest.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER - *Charadrius dubius*

The first return was one at Clowbridge reservoir on 5th May then 3 from 17th May with possibly 4 on 27th May. A first nest had lost 4 eggs by 30th May. A pair was scrape making on 3rd June and one was sitting on 9th June. On 24th June one was still sitting and 2 more were feeding close by. On 6th July a pair had 3 small young and one other adult was present. On 14th July there were 2 pairs at Clowbridge each with 3 young. 2 birds were still present on 17th and 19th August (information from R. and A. Ives). Two pairs nested at A.M.R. and on 8th August 12 birds were seen. A single was seen at Holden Wood and on 9th June and 3 adults on 21st July. At Grane a pair had a nest with 4 eggs washed out. They re-laid at Holden Wood and reared 1 young (N. Burke). 3 adults were seen at Holden Wood on 21st July. A pair hatched 4 eggs at Mitchell House reservoir and 2 pairs bred at A.M.R. (N. Burke). During autumn one was at Spring Mill on 13th September.

RINGED PLOVER - *Charadrius hiaticula*

On spring passage there were 2 at Ogden on 30th April, one at Clowbridge from 17th to 24th May with 2 there from 20th to 25th May and a single to 28th May. One was at Holden Wood on 12th June and 3 were present at A.M.R. on 2nd August.

DOTTEREL - *Charadrius morinellus*

On spring passage there were 3 on Cowpe Moss on 19th April and one on Top o' Leach on 11th May.

GOLDEN PLOVER - *Pluvialis apricaria*

The usual early movements and arrivals were again recorded. On 18th January there were more than 50 on Cowpe Moss and 35 at Crown Point and 60 to 70 flew over Musbury. On 14th February a large flock of about 500 flew over Sharneyford. On 17th March there were 2 on Knowl Moor and 7 in the fields at Cheesden and on the following day 5 at A.M.R. On The Hile there were 5 on 18th March, 8 on 20th March and 9 on 24th March - a fraction of the hundreds once seen here on spring passage. On 21st April on Haslingden Moor 3 birds included a male with the very black throat and belly of a probable Northern. Nesting activity was noted at the usual sites. On Cowpe Moss there were 17 present on 3rd April and these had spread out by 7th April into a possible 9 territories. On 10th April 15 were seen at various points - 3 pairs, a single and 2 groups of 4. On 5th May 4 singles were seen on Cowpe Moss - perhaps the females were sitting. On 9th June only one was heard and on 14th June none was seen or heard. On Knowl Moor there were 2 pairs on 10th April - one in display flight and they were also seen on 20th April. On 5th May only one pair was present. Golden Plovers were also recorded on Whittle Pike - 2 on 7th May; Reaps Moss - one on 28th April; Rooley Moor - one

calling 7th April; Walstead Clough, Whitworth - one calling 7th and 28th April. A nest with 2 eggshells was found on Rooley Moor on 7th July. There were 7 birds on Knowl Moor and 4 on Cowpe Moss on the same date. There were 4 at Crown Point as late as 22nd December.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER - *Pluvialis dominica*

An individual thought to be of this species was seen by Bob and Andy Ives in a field at Cheesden with 7 *P. apricaria*. A description has been forwarded to the County Recorder so this record is subject to acceptance by the County Rarities Panel. Possibly the same bird was seen at Haslingden Moor about the same time. It was described as being very long-winged. It towered and then dropped to the ground. Its call was different from *apricaria* (N. Burke).

LAPWING - *Vanellus vanellus*

During the cold weather in January one was at Holden Wood on 21st and 2 at E.B.S.W. on 28th January. Returning Lapwings were noted in late February - 50 at A.M.R. on 25th February, 9 at Clough Bottom on 28th February. There were 100 at A.M.R. on 2nd and 10th March and on 4th March 12 were at New Line. There were 13 at Holden Wood on 10th March when some display flights were noted, 12 at Spring Mill on 24th March. On 15th March there were 7 displaying males on the former C.B.C. plot on The Hile (Eric Ward has given up the full census but continues an unofficial check on numbers). A lined scrape was found on 9th April in almost the identical site as last year but there was no further development. Most of the early nests must have failed. One was found with 3 eggs on 2nd June quite near to the scrape of 9th April but it had lost its eggs by 8th June. There were probably 7 territories on the plot - another drop on the 11, 12 and 10 pairs of the last 3 years. Elsewhere, 6 males were displaying in the Brex / Sma llshaw Height area, 4 pairs at Chapel Hill and 2 or 3 pairs towards Seat Naze, 1 or 2 pairs at Balladen, 2 or 3 pairs at Sand Beds, 1 or 2 pairs at H.M.T.C., 3 pairs at Clough Bottom, a pair at Ewood Bridge and a pair at Edenfield. In the Whitworth area 2 pairs nested on Moss Quarry Moors (young seen 1st June), 1 pair at Britannia (4 chicks on 13th May) and a pair above Taddy Lodge at Shawforth. At Holden Wood 2 pairs reared young on the dried-out bed of Holden Wood reservoir. Another pair was successful at Mitchell House reservoir. There were 3 pairs at Hutch Bank Quarry. The complete total comes to less than there were on The Hile alone during the 1970s. Flocks began to form in late June - 25 at Clough Bottom on 23rd June then 30 at Ogden on 19th July, 120 at Holden Wood on 21st July, 350 at A.M.R. on 21st July. In August and September numbers at A.M.R. were between 250 and 350 and on 13th October 120, falling to 50 on 17th November.

KNOT - *Calidris canutus*

One was at Clowbridge on 12th and 13th August.

SANDERLING - *Calidris alba*

One was at Clowbridge on 27th April and 4 on 27th May.

LITTLE STINT - *Calidris minuta*

One was at Clowbridge on 20th May and one was in company with the Sanderlings there on 27th May.

DUNLIN - *Calidris alpina*

One was at Clowbridge on 20th January fitting the pattern referred to by K. G. Spencer (The Status and Distribution of Birds in Lancashire) as "a curious tendency to appear in ones and

twos in the coldest days of midwinter". On the spring return movement 2 were at Clowbridge in early April, one at A.M.R. on 21st April and one at Clowbridge on 18th May. In the nesting season 2 were found on 9th June in different areas of wet moorland on Cowpe Moss. On 7th July one showed much anxiety on Knowl Moor. During autumn passage one was at A.M.R. on 8th August and one at Clowbridge on 15th September.

JACK SNIPE - *Lymnocyptes minimus*

There were 2 on Reaps Moss on 3rd March and one on Haslingden Moor on 9th April.

COMMON SNIPE - *Gallinago gallinago*

In late winter singles were recorded at Cowm on 1st January, the Limy at Crawshawbooth on 27th January, by a pool at Crown Point on 18th February and at Syke reservoir on 24th February. There were 18 at Syke reservoir on 17th March. In the nesting season one was on Harden Moor on 31st March, one at Sand Beds on 7th April, one drumming over Deerplay on 28th April, one on Knowl Moor on 5th May and one above Holden Wood on 26th May. One was drumming at Syke reservoir on 6th April and one calling from the ground. Snipe were also present in this area on 4th May and 3rd August. A nest with 4 eggs was found on Haslingden Moor on 5th May. Two were drumming on Haslingden Moor on 20th May. There were 5 different birds heard or seen on Harden Moor. Autumn passage movements brought 2 singles to The Hile on 6th September, 20 on Haslingden Moor on 6th September, 16 at A.M.R. on 15th September, one above Cowpe reservoir on 2nd October, 2 at A.M.R. on 13th October, one over The Glen, Waterfoot on 20th October, one on The Brex on 29th October and 1st November, one at Holden Wood on 24th November, 4 at Spring Mill on 24th November, 11 at Syke reservoir on 8th December, one at Ogden on 6th December and one at Syke on 23rd December.

WOODCOCK - *Scolopax rusticola*

Early in the year there was a series of records from the Limy valley in the Constablelee - Reedsholme area. 2 were seen on the west side of the valley at Reedsholme on 21st January, one at Bonfire Hill on 28th February, 3 at Bonfire Hill on 7th March and one was at Constablelee on 24th March. On 25th March one flew up from the Limy over the busy main road to the east and over the houses but at no great height. It is possible that a breeding attempt occurred in this area. During autumn and winter one was present on the edge of Cowpe Moss above the Cowpe valley on 13th November, one at Healey Dell on 25th December, one on Cowpe Moss on 27th December and 3 on Cribden in December.

CURLEW - *Numenius arquata*

First return was one at Clough Bottom on 10th March. On 17th March flocks of 7, 17 and 8 were seen in the A.M.R. / Cheesden area and there were 7 at Spring Mill on the same date. Calling birds were heard over The Hile on 20th March, on 22nd March there were 30 at A.M.R. and one was at Musbury on 23rd March. Territorial activity was noted in April - a pair at Smallshaw Height on 3rd April, 2 at H.M.T.C. on 5th April, one flew over Lee Quarry on 21st April and 4 at Clough Bottom on the same date. Later, successful breeding was suggested by the presence of anxious pairs or singles - at the head of the Plunge valley on 14th June, Brex Heights on 20th June, The Hile / Shawclough on 20th June, Musbury Heights on 13th June, above Cowpe reservoir on 27th June, Clough Bottom on 23rd June, Ogden from 17th to 22nd July. 2 pairs were present at Trough Edge and Deacon Pasture in the Shawforth area on 11th May, pairs were at Sand Beds and Seat Naze in April and pairs were noted at Haslingden Moor,

Knowl Moor, Hameldon and Nutshaw Hill. There were 3 pairs on Haslingden / Oswaldtwistle Moor on 5th May. A pair at Musbury had young on 9th June. A nest with 3 eggs was found in Plunge valley on 8th May. 11 Curlews flew west over Spring Mill on 5th July. One was calling in flight over Syke reservoir on 3rd August and one flying west over Spring Mill on 14th August.

REDSHANK - *Tringa totanus*

First returns were noted in March when 2 were feeding among Lapwings at Cheesden on 17th March and one was at Clowbridge on 27th March. There was a continuous presence in both these areas during the nesting season. Two were at A.M.R. on 10th April, one on 21st April and 2 on 6th May. In the Clowbridge area a pair was in the fields near The Waggoners on 7th May and at the reservoir on 11th, 17th and 19th May. Elsewhere, one was at Clough Bottom on 26th April and one at Holden Wood on 19th May.

GREENSHANK - *Tringa nebularia*

One was at A.M.R. on 14th August and one at Clowbridge on 21st August.

WOOD SANDPIPER - *Tringa glareola*

On 11th February one flew round above the River Ogden at Ravenshore. On 10th May one alighted at Ogden reservoir for about 10 minutes. During autumn passage one flew up from a pool on The Brex on 25th August and one was heard calling in flight high over Folly Tip on 18th September.

COMMON SANDPIPER - *Actitis hypoleucos*

First arrival was one at Clowbridge reservoir on 18th April - a "very approachable" bird, probably newly arrived. There were 2 there on 21st April then anything up to 10 birds by 27th April. Eventually, there were pairs in 5 distinct areas. A nest with 3 eggs was found on 18th May and later there were 4 eggs. The nest was robbed of one egg and was deserted by 30th May. A pair was showing anxiety on 17th June and birds were present at Clowbridge until 27th August. It is thought that 3 pairs succeeded in rearing young at Clowbridge (R. Ives). First arrival at Clough Bottom was one on 19th April then a pair on 26th April and 2 pairs on 5th and 12th May. A pair was seen on 23rd June and a single on 11th August (P. Fyldes). At Grane one was at Ogden on 25th April and 4 on 30th April (a similar timetable to the previous two sites). In June singles were seen at Ogden and Calf Hey reservoirs. One was still present at Ogden on 28th August. Elsewhere, pairs were noted at A.M.R. on 21st July and at Cowpe reservoir. There were pairs at Spring Mill and Cowm reservoirs recorded on various dates from 14th April to 5th September.

BLACK-HEADED GULL - *Larus ridibundus*

Numbers at Stacksteads Tip were probably a little higher than last year with estimates between 800 and 900 (600 - 800 last year). There were 350 on Cowpe reservoir on 29th February and then 300 at the Tip on 1st March with the usual gradual decrease during the next 2 or 3 weeks. On 10th March there were 80 at Holden Wood, 30 at Cowm and 10 at New Line. On 14th March 50 flew west from the Tip at 16.00. On 20th March there were 20 on The Hile and on 22nd March 16 at Cowpe reservoir. 11 flew south down the Limy valley on 27th March and there were 9 on Shortclough reservoir on 31st March and 3 there on 6th April. At A.M.R. there were 4 in full summer plumage on 10th April, 8 on 14th April and 4 on 20th April. A pair remained at Clowbridge throughout May and there were one or two at Spring Mill and

Cowm in April and May. Figures seem to suggest that more birds dallied longer in Rossendale than usual. Return from the breeding areas was also a little later than usual though there were 100 at A.M.R. on 15th July. The return in small numbers usually seen in June and early July was not noted until later in the month - 2 at Ogden on 17th July, 3 on The Hile on 22nd July and 3 or 4 in a mown field at Cowpe on 25th July. Numbers were increasing by the end of the month - 30 over Shawclough on 29th July included several immatures. There were 120 at Holden Wood on 21st July. About 70 came in to roost at Ogden reservoir on 30th July. There were 400 at Spring Mill on 3rd August and 250 to 300 at the end of the month. There were 100 at A.M.R. on 18th August. At Stacksteads Tip numbers rose to a maximum of about 500 by the end of the year - a much lower figure than that for last winter.

COMMON GULL - *Larus canus*

Present in the usual proportions with the flocks of Black-headed Gulls. There were 3 with 120 Black-heads on Fearn Moss on 19th February and 4 with 200 Black-heads on 25th February. In early spring there were some larger groups in the Whitworth area - 16 at Spring Mill on 10th March, 18 at Cowm on 31st March and 7 at Spring Mill on 18th April. Singles were noted returning from 8th July and there were 5 at A.M.R. on 21st July. In August 5 to 7 were recorded at Spring Mill and on 15th September 10 at A.M.R. There were 15 at Spring Mill on 13th September and 12 on 13th October. On 29th November at least 15 were counted in the late afternoon departure from Stacksteads Tip. On 29th December there were 10 with 300 Black-heads on Fearn Moss playing fields.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - *Larus fuscus*

The relatively low numbers noted in early winter continued into January and February with only about 10 visible at Stacksteads Tip. Numbers began to increase in late February and there were 25 on Cowpe reservoir on 29th February and 100 at the Tip on 2nd March. Numbers rose to 200 on 20th March and 450 on 28th March. In April estimates were about 300 and in May and June 200. Late June and July saw an increase to 400 with 500 in August. On 11th August there were 5 adults and 6 juveniles on Clough Bottom reservoir. On 19th August an adult with a juvenile harassed a Heron at A.M.R. Numbers at Stacksteads Tip fell to about 200 in September and 50 in October and November. On 13th November there were 30 on Cowpe reservoir and on 23rd November only 20 were counted on the morning flight to the Tip. On 29th November only a few were seen among 300 Herring Gulls leaving the Tip in the late afternoon and on 17th December only 3 were counted in the morning flight.

HERRING GULL - *Larus argentatus*

In late winter there were 100 - 200 visiting Stacksteads Tip in January and February reducing rapidly in March when there were mixed flocks of about 100 Herring and Lesser Black-backs. By April numbers were mostly in single figures. A few were with the Lesser Black-backs from July to October. Increased numbers appeared from November - 10 on 23rd November, 40 on 24th November. On 29th November there were 250 on the evening flight from Stacksteads and then at least another 200 coming through the head of Lench valley from the south, possibly from A.M.R. On 17th December there were at least 400 on the morning flight. Small numbers were recorded on various reservoirs, the largest being 12 on Cowm on 1st January and 14 over Cowm on 28th January.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - *Larus marinus*

The small number of mid-winter visitors continued to come to the Tip from January to March, maximum numbers being 4 or 5 and the latest 2 on 16th March. Singles were also recorded at Cowm on 1st January and a late one flying over Whitworth on 28th April. The return in the following winter began in late November with singles on 29th November and 4th December and one at Spring Mill on 7th December. On 17th December there were 3 on the morning flight to the Tip.

COMMON TERN - *Sterna hirundo*

One was at Clowbridge on 31st May.

FERAL PIGEON - *Columba livia*

Town centre colonies were much as usual with counts often about 50 to 70.

STOCK DOVE - *Columba oenas*

There were records from several areas. The usual small numbers were seen in The Hile / Stacksteads area, 4 on 1st March probably a return, then pairs during the summer and 3 on 2nd and 6th July. On 27th March there were 4 at Lee Quarry. These may be the birds which came to feed on The Hile but nest on ledges in the quarry - a pair was also seen there on 21st April. There was also a presence in the upper Cowpe valley with records of singles on 7th June and 5th August. A pair bred in the Bonfire Hill area of Crawshawbooth. Stock Doves were seen at Spring Mill from late January to the end of the year but with regular sightings from 9th March - a pair from March to May then 3 on 8th June and 5 on 13th and 23rd June. 3 were seen in Jamesons Quarry, Grane on 2nd April and a pair on 8th May.

WOODPIGEON - *Columba palumbus*

Large flocks were seen during the late winter - 600 at Healey Dell on 6th January, 300 flying over Spring Mill on 13th January, 2,000 flying west over Rawtenstall on 14th January, 250 at Broadclough on 14th January, 300 over Wallbank on 10th February. Many of these were probably associated with mid-winter movements in search of better feeding areas which have often been noted in previous winters. Flocks persisted in smaller numbers through to the spring - 200 at Fern Isle Wood on 10th March, 150 at Spring Mill on 17th March and similar numbers in Brooks' Wood, Crawshawbooth in March and April. Pairs formed from the end of March and display flights were noted on 24th March and 17th April. Nesting was widespread along the valleys. On 2nd July a pair and one juvenile were seen on The Hile and on 6th July a pair and 2 young at Shawclough. Flocks soon began to build up again - 20 to 30 at Spring Mill in July, 10 on The Hile and 12 at Lench in September, 12 at Musbury increasing to 40 then 60 in November but only 20 in December.

COLLARED DOVE - *Streptopelia decaocto*

Now widespread throughout Rossendale with increased numbers and reports of small flocks - 19 at Healey Dell on 10th February, 7 in Waterfoot on 30th January. Males were singing by 16th January in the Waterfoot area and a pair carried twigs into a cupressus on 3rd February. A broken or sucked eggshell was found beneath the nest on 11th February. A very tame bird in this garden would fly down to a picnic table close to people sitting there and wait for peanuts. It was accompanied by a newly-fledged juvenile on 6th July. Males were again in song from 26th December despite the cold spell at this time.

CUCKOO - *Cuculus canorus*

Still scarce. Calling birds were heard at Musbury on 20th April then on 5 or 6 occasions later, at Calf Hey on 6th and 21st May, at Whinberry Naze on 26th May, in Lench valley and Cowpe in June, on H.M.T.C. range on 1st June, Deeply Vale on 2nd and 6th June and at Plunge on 14th June. One was seen at Fern Isle Wood on 13th May and a pair was present in the Ashworth Valley.

BARN OWL - *Tyto alba*

On 28th August one was watched for 30 minutes at dusk flying round the road and fields near the Waggoners at Clowbridge. There were three reports of one at Rising Bridge in October and November.

LITTLE OWL - *Athene noctua*

Appears to be holding its own. In the Whitworth area there were over 20 sightings between 24th February and 25th December at Spring Mill, Jennie Rough, Hopwood Hall (Healey), Manstone Edge and Cowm. Little Owls bred in at least 4 areas round Crawshawbooth. A pair nested in the usual place at Higher Hollinbank and were seen mating on 4th April. A young one was seen fledged on 3rd, 4th and 5th July. 3 birds were present on 20th July (B. & J. Rostron). One was present at the usual site on West Hile on 2nd March and 26th May but with no evidence of breeding, and seen there again on 6th and 28th September. On 13th November one was present in the upper part of Lench valley.

TAWNY OWL - *Strix aluco*

Many records received. Probable territories at Piercy / Seat Naze where there was regular calling January to March and September to December; Crawshawbooth with pairs at Clowbridge, Shortclough and Stoneholme where remains of Magpies were found and a young bird was seen at Clowbridge on 19th June; Musbury - often heard and present at one of the farms; Longholme Road, Rawtenstall - a pair on 2nd March; Farholme, Stacksteads - calling 23rd January and 2 at a nest box at Tunstead Church on 23rd March; Healey Dell, Fern Isle Wood and Broadley Station in the Whitworth area. Pairs with single young were seen in nest holes at Alden and Grane and a pair at Musbury fledged 2 young. One was roosting at Sandybank, Waterfoot on several dates during December and into early 1997.

LONG-EARED OWL - *Asio otus*

Nested successfully in north Rossendale and at least 3 young were reared from 5 eggs. Also present and probably nesting at another site. There were records of calls heard on 23rd and 29th April and on 18th June.

SHORT-EARED OWL - *Asio flammeus*

On 20th and 28th April flight display was recorded by a pair on the moors near Crawshawbooth. During the autumn movement 2 were seen on Swinshaw Moor on 29th October and 2nd November.

SWIFT - *Apus apus*

There were several records of arrivals of single birds in late April against the general trend to later arrival noted in recent years. These were - Crawshawbooth on 23rd April, Waterfoot on 25th April, Lea Brook on 26th April, Goodshawfold on 27th April, then there were 3 over Dodbottom Wood on 28th April. There was then some delay due to the onset of cold northerly

winds. First double-figure counts were 14 on 19th May over Reedsholme and 10 on 25th May over Clowbridge. Many were seen feeding over the water at Clowbridge during cool weather on 17th June. At the Gaghills colony 10 or 11 Swifts flying round were the usual numbers. 3 nest sites were noted at Wood Top / Bury Road with 12 birds flying round. About 8 pairs were estimated to be nesting at a Tong Lane factory at Whitworth. There were 3 pairs at Facit on 20th May with one dead bird jammed in a crack. A pair engaged in a fight at a nest site in Britannia on 13th May grounded themselves at one point. Flocks noted later included 25 feeding high over G aghills on 30th July, 30 over Musbury up to 3rd August, 40 very high over Seat Naze on 4th August, 40 over Edgeside on 8th August, 25 at Wallbank on 11th August. After this passage a single was seen at Crawshawbooth on 18th August.

KINGFISHER - *Alcedo atthis*

There were several records along the Irwell from February to April between Townsendfold and Strongstry but with no evidence of nesting. Also an unusual sighting on the River Limy at Reedsholme on 19th and 20th May but not seen again. A pair bred in the Waterfoot area and after the breeding season one was seen regularly along the Cowpe valley at Cowpe and Lench lodges from July to December and along the Whitewell and Irwell at Waterfoot. One was seen at Wallbank and at Healey lodges on 3 dates in September and one along the River Ogden in November.

GREEN WOODPECKER - *Picus viridis*

Present at all last year's sites and continuing to spread. Two pairs were present in the Crawshawbooth area - one pair reared at least 3 young in Folly Wood and there was another pair in Conference House Wood. 3 juveniles were seen with adults at Shortclough on 17th July. There were records from the Musbury / Hare Clough area where nesting took place last year. Green Woodpeckers were recorded throughout the year at Healey Dell, Also in the Whitworth area a pair nested near Wallbank and there was a first sighting for Fern Isle Wood. There were records for Dodbottom Wood, Cliviger on 28th April and 1st July.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER - *Dendrocopos major*

Continues to be widespread in wooded areas and in parks and gardens. Visits to peanut feeders were noted at Hareholme, Newchurch and Waterfoot. On 3rd March damage to nest boxes was seen at Wayoh. One was drumming at Healey Dell on 25th February. There was a regular presence here and a fledged juvenile was seen with an adults on 19th June. One report said that Great Spotted Woodpeckers had spread to Shawforth moving up from Whitworth rather than down from Bacup.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER - *Dendrocopos minor*

There was an uncorroborated report of one feeding in a garden at Hareholme, flying in from Staghills Wood. It was apparently killed by hitting a window, but by the time the report reached the ears of a local birder the corpse was too decomposed to shed much light on the identification. One was recorded at Atherton Holme, Stacksteads on 21st September (P. Fyldes).

SKYLARK - *Alauda arvensis*

One was at Top o' Leach on 14th January but most first records were between 24th February and 2nd March. Singing birds were noted on 24th February at Syke reservoir, 26th February on The Hile and 2nd March at Clowbridge. Numbers were similar to those of last year. An

unofficial count on the former C.B.C. plot indicated 14 pairs, the same as last year, which was the lowest ever. Perhaps numbers are now stabilizing. It will be interesting to see if there is an eventual rise in numbers if and when measures are taken to modify farming practices to improve winter feeding. Song faded out during the first fortnight in July and numbers decreased in late July and August. The usual re- appearance on The Hile was noted in September with short song-flights and territorial behaviour - 5 on 8th September, 20 on 22nd September, 2 on 24th September. On 22nd September there was a movement of both Skylarks and Meadow Pipits over The Hile and a Merlin was also present. Passage was noted over Crawshawbooth on 11th October and a single bird was on The Brex on 29th October. An unusual record was of one above the Naden Dean reservoirs on 21st December.

SAND MARTIN - *Riparia riparia*

At the colony at Stubbins 2 had arrived on 14th April and there were 13 on 21st April when one was also seen flying over Holden Wood. About 10 pairs nested at the Stubbins colony. In autumn at least 3 were flying over Folly Tip on 29th August.

SWALLOW - *Hirundo rustica*

One was seen over Crawshawbooth on 11th April, then there was a cluster of first sightings between 15th and 19th April. There were 80 at E.B.S.W. on 25th April. During cold weather in May there were 24 over Meadow Lodge, Healey on 8th May and 40 on 15th May and there were 20 over Syke reservoir on the same date. Records of breeding included nests at 4 farms on Chapel Hill, 2 nests at Farm Hill Farm (both c/5 on 18th June), Cowpe valley (juveniles being fed on the wires near Kearns' Mill on 5th August), Shawclough (2 young on wires being fed on 2nd September), Water (nest being visited still on 26th September).

HOUSE MARTIN - *Delichon urbica*

Earliest was one visiting a nest in Park Road, Waterfoot on 16th April and there were 4 at Shortclough on 17th April. There were pairs at colonies in Cawl Terrace and Stacksteads on 20th April and at Helmshore on 26th April. There were 30 at E.B.S.W. on 25th April. On 31st May there were 2 nests on B.R.G.S., one nearby in Park Road and about 9 on The Arcade, Waterfoot and the Conservative Club, 10 nests at Constablelee and 2 pairs were regular in the Longholme Road area of Rawtenstall centre. Reports of flocks indicated a successful nesting season with good numbers in August and September - 50 to 60 then 100 at Higher Hollinbank, 50 over Stacksteads, 40 over Seat Naze. Like the Swallows, departure occurred in early October - several over Crawshawbooth on 2nd October, 20 over Waterfoot on 3rd October, 2 or 3 at Lench on 5th October and a few to the south over Waterfoot on 9th October.

TREE PIPIT - *Anthus trivialis*

2 were present at Holden Wood on 12th June but there was no evidence of nesting. During autumn passage 2 were calling in flight moving south over Crawshawbooth on 20th August and also on 3rd and 10th September.

MEADOW PIPIT - *Anthus pratensis*

The usual relatively small numbers were present in winter but there were 50 at E.B.S.W. on 28th January during a cold spell. There was evidence of movement in late March - 15 on Fearn Moss on 28th March, 60 at Spring Mill on 28th March and a big movement northwards along the Whitworth valley, flocks of 14, 9, 20 and odd ones moving north at Woodcroft Street, Crawshawbooth and over 20 flying north over Crawshawbooth on 29th March. A flock of 40

was seen on the B.B.S. plot at Mitchell House reservoir on 8th April and 55 at Musbury on 13th April. Meadow Pipits were described as being numerous on Cowpe Lowe and Whittle Pike on 7th May but only about 10 pairs nested on the former C.B.C. plot compared with 17 pairs in 1995 and 21 pairs in 1994. On 28th July a group of 15 on The Hile contained many juveniles - probably 3 family parties. In August and September there were flocks of 100 at Clough Bottom, 6, 10 and 20 on Reaps Moss, 100, 60 and 50 at Clowbridge, 35 at Syke reservoir. A heavy passage was noted at Crawshawbooth several mornings in September to the second week of October and Meadow Pipits were described as numerous at Musbury in September and early October. There was a flock of 20 in Cowpe valley on 2nd October, 10 at Clowbridge on 20th October and 10 flying south over The Hile on 29th October. Later records included 18 at Cowm on 19th November and 16 there on 26th December.

YELLOW WAGTAIL - *Motacilla flava*

The only records were one calling in flight moving south over Crawshawbooth on 20th August and an immature at The Glen, Waterfoot on 4th September.

GREY WAGTAIL - *Motacilla cinerea*

Several January records from the Limy valley, Rawtenstall centre and Waterfoot. Birds were seen to fly from the river to feed along nearby road edges and a pair at Reedsholme took insects from between the roof tiles of a house. During the breeding season there were indications of nesting activity along the Limy valley with 2 or 3 pairs in the Crawshawbooth area, but the Waterside Bird Survey carried out by Bob Ives was reduced to one pair. There were also pairs at Longholme at the Irwell - Limy confluence, on the Whitewell between Waterfoot and Piercy, on the Irwell at Stacksteads, at Ogden reservoir, Cliffe Lodge, Spring Mill, Healey Dell. Young were being fed at Shawforth Bridge on 15th May. After the breeding season singles and twos were seen regularly along the River Ogden in August and 3 on Musbury Brook on 28th August. A family group was at Holden Wood on 18th August. There were singles at Spring Mill and Wallbank during the same period. During the cold spell in December 2 were seen each day feeding on a muck heap at Shawforth.

PIED WAGTAIL - *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

There were 30 at EBSW. on 28th January but males were soon moving to nesting territories and pairs forming. A male was singing at Clowbridge on 25th February. There was evidence of a small spring passage in late March - 5 in Edgeside Park on 20th March and 12 males in company with 15 Meadow Pipits on Fearn Moss on 28th March. Breeding was widespread along rivers, at reservoirs and in farm buildings. There were records from Crawshawbooth, Clowbridge reservoir (2 pairs), Reedsholme (4 young in June), H.M.T.C. (nest building on 5th April), Musbury (3 or 4 young in mid-June), Edgeside (carrying food on 6th June and fledged young on 12th June, Cowpe Lodge (fledged young 1st June) and pairs at Clough Bottom, Lee Quarry, Spring Mill, Cowm reservoir (pair + 5 young on 23rd June). The large autumn passage noted at Fearn Moss during the last few years was not in evidence this year. There were, however, 36 at E.B.S.W. on 4th September and 70 there on 3rd November. Elsewhere the largest flock was 18 at Spring Mill on 14th September. There were 5 at Edgeside Park on 9th September and 4 on 21st September, these being the reduced figures for the Fearn Moss area (62 maximum last year). The maximum count at Clowbridge did not exceed 20 birds. Later there were singles in Waterfoot centre and in Park Road on the forecourt of a shop and nearby park. Both of these sites have shops selling food to schoolchildren at lunchtime.

WAXWING - *Bombycilla garrulus*

One was present at Wallbank Lodge where it was seen by John Webb on 27th and 28th January and then by Clive Morton on 29th January. One at Shawforth on 4th February was possibly the same bird moving north.

DIPPER - *Cinclus cinclus*

Present throughout the year along the Irwell and its tributaries. At least 4 territories were occupied between Rawtenstall and Goodshawfold. A Dipper was seen at the Irwell - Limy confluence at Longholme on 5th January and was in song on 10th and 11th January. A pair was present on 11th March and nest-material was being carried on 19th March and again on 30th April. 2 juveniles were present on 21st June. A pair at Reedsholme had fledged young on 21st May and a pair at Crawshawbooth had at least 3 young on 29th May. Pairs were also present on the Whitewell near Waterfoot centre and on Cowpe Brook near its junction with the Irwell, in the Cowpe valley below the reservoir dam, on the Whitewell at Piercy, on the River Ogden at Bowl Alley, at Healey Dell (a pair on 8th April and song on 22nd April), Fern Isle Wood (song on 1st May). One was singing on the River Spodden at Meadow Lodge, Whitworth on 11th October. After the breeding season there were 4 on Musbury Brook on 28th August and singles at Shawclough on 22nd September, Lench Lodge on 3rd October and 25th November, Gaghills, Waterfoot on 25th November and 12th December, Healey Dell on 17th November, Holden Wood reservoir on 17th November, Crawshawbooth on 15th December.

WREN - *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Song was heard at Lea Brook on 20th January and was noted generally in February and March. A brood of 5 young fledged in a garden in Whitworth on 26th July. Later in the year Wrens made their usual appearance in gardens as they dispersed after the nesting season. One was seen first in a garden in Waterfoot on 7th August and it sang regularly at least to 7th October. Song was heard in other sites in November. It is possible that numbers were reduced after the severe cold spell in late November and December.

DUNNOCK - *Prunella modularis*

At least 5 were in song in Healey Dell as early as 6th January. Song became general in February and March. There were 3 singing in Saplin Wood at H.M.T.C. on 30th March. A nest was being built in a garden in Waterfoot on 21st April. It held 2 eggs on 26th April and 4 on 28th April. This nest was eventually deserted some time in May. A replacement a few feet away was found with 5 small young on 15th July. They had eyes open by 19th July but, on 20th July there were only 3 dead chicks in the nest. Having better luck a garden in Whitworth had 3 pairs of which 2 successfully reared 7 young.

ROBIN - *Erithacus rubecula*

Song was heard at Waterfoot on 13th January and 4 were singing at Healey Dell on the same date. Song was heard at Broadclough on 14th January. On 16th January a pair was feeding together in a garden in Waterfoot and continued to do so at least through to 7th February. Similarly, there was a pair feeding at a bird table in Reedsholme on 27th January. 2 fledged juveniles were seen feeding on the lawn of a garden in Waterfoot on 29th June and on 27th July 2 juveniles feeding with adults at Haslingden. A pair in a Whitworth garden fledged 2 broods on 12th May and 31st July. First winter song was heard on 16th August and 4 were

singing at Meadow Lodge on 31st August. On 16th September one was back on the usual winter territory in a garden at Waterfoot.

BLACK REDSTART - *Phoenicurus ochruros*

One was observed for 30 minutes at Greenfold, Crawshawbooth on 4th November. It was thought to be a first-winter male (B. Bell)

REDSTART - *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

On 28th April there were 2 pairs at Dodbottom Wood - one in the Wood and one near the Fishponds. In the Crawshawbooth area a male was in song at the top of Folly Wood from 12th May until at least 1st June and almost certainly bred in the same area as in 1995. A male was in song at Calf Hey on 21st and 22nd May. Similarly a male was singing at Cowm reservoir on 18th and 19th May and one at Musbury on 12th May. WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra* During the spring passage there were 2 males near Syke reservoir on 27th April. At Clowbridge a male had arrived on 26th April and a pair on 28th April. Eventually there were at least 3 pairs in the area where breeding has been successful during the last 2 years. 2 fledged young were seen on 4th June. 3 birds were present until 15th September. Elsewhere a pair at Buckhurst on 9th June were in good nesting habitat. A nest with 5 eggs was found near Mitchell House reservoir on 6th June and 5 young fledged. During the autumn movement 4 immatures were seen along Coal Pits Lane near The Hile.

STONECHAT - *Saxicola torquata*

In mid-winter a male was seen at Cowm reservoir on 1st January, a pair on 21st January and one at Clowbridge on 13th January. A male was seen on The Hile at Farm Hill on 24th March and again on 28th March when it was in company with 2 male Wheatears. In the following winter a male was seen at Cowm reservoir on various dates from 17th November to 30th December.

WHEATEAR - *Oenanthe oenanthe*

First arrivals were 2 at Musbury on 24th March, 2 on Musbury Tor on 28th March, 2 on The Hile on 28th March, one at Cowpe reservoir on 30th March, 4 males at Cowm on 31st March and one at Clowbridge on the same date. A big movement was noted later when there were 2 groups of 20 to 30 birds on Great Hameldon and Nutshaw Hill on 27th April. Another peak occurred in May with 8 on 4th and 5th May at Clowbridge and 13 on 7th May. There were many reports of successful nesting. In the Cragg Quarry / Waugh's Well area a male was in song on 6th April, a female was present on 7th June and 3 fledged young on 14th June. At Clowbridge, a pair nested under a concrete slipway for boats and fledged 4 young on 20th June. At Cowm reservoir there were 5 pairs on 28th April. On 4th June a pair with 4 juveniles and a pair with 5 juveniles were seen there. At Healey a pair and 5 young were present on 7th July. At Moss Quarry, Whitworth at least 3 young were fledged on 2nd June. Pairs were also recorded at Holcombe Head, Swinshaw Moor, Musbury Tor, Lee Quarry, Brex Height, Spring Mill, Alden and Cribden. During autumn passage there were 5 birds at A.M.R. on 5th August and an immature there on 18th August, 6 at Cowm on 31st August, 7 on Haslingden Moor on 7th September, 2 on Knowl Moor and a male above Cowpe on 2nd October.

RING OUZEL - *Turdus torquatus*

A male was seen at Musbury on 13th April. BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula* One was in song at Crawshawbooth on 19th February, then at Piercy on 20th March, Waterfoot on 24th March.

On 3rd April there were 4 in song at Rushbed. On 4th and 5th April 2 pairs were carrying nest material in the Waterfoot area. The first fledged juvenile was seen in a garden in Waterfoot on 29th May and a male was feeding 3 young here on 31st May. A later brood of 3 or 4 was being fed here on 4th August. From 9th to 13th August up to 8 Blackbirds were feeding on rowan berries in this garden. On 30th October there were at least 10 with Redwings at Lench and similar numbers with Fieldfares on hawthorns in November and December.

FIELDFARE - *Turdus pilaris*

Flocks were numerous and widespread from January to March, mostly with numbers from 20 to 60. Large flocks included 350 at Broadclough and 500 on The Brex on 15th January, 120 at Britannia on 16th January, 100 at Cribden Clough on 21st January, 100 at Bent Gate on 28th January and 100 at Musbury on 10th February suggesting a big movement from mid-January to early February. This was further indicated by a report of 120 flying high to the northeast over Crawshawbooth on 14th January and 220 high over to the northeast on 19th January. Latest were 70 at Cowpe on 31st March, 12 at Shortclough on 6th April, 55 at Rawtenstall on 12th April, 20 at Spring Mill on 12th April, 10 at Folly Clough on 15th April and 2 at Whinberry Naze on 1st May. Return movement in the autumn began on 10th October with a few at Higher Hollinbank and several at Crawshawbooth on 11th October. On 23rd October there were 250 in Folly Clough and 20 in garden trees at Waterfoot. On 26th October 500 flew northwest over Crawshawbooth. There were many records of flocks to the end of the year mostly between 10 and 50. There were more than 100 in the Cowpe valley on 3rd November, 250 at Musbury on 25th November and 120 at Musbury on 7th December.

SONG THRUSH - *Turdus philomelos*

As usual song was noted early - 3 in song at Healey Dell on 6th January, at Crawshawbooth on 8th January, at Irwell Vale on 11th February and at Piercy on 14th February. On 16th February there were 3 in song at dusk between Reedsholme and Rushbed. On 6th March 6 birds were in song at Healey Dell. Song was noted until 28th June when 3 were singing between Cloughfold and Waterfoot. Widespread presence in good numbers suggest that Song Thrushes are doing quite well locally though threatened nationally. On 7th May a pair was nesting at Alden. In June one report spoke of pairs at 5 or 6 sites in the Constablelee / Crawshawbooth area. On 29th July one carried food to an ivy-covered wall in Waterfoot. On 5th July 5 were feeding at Higher Hollinbank. On 12th September there were at least 2 in the grounds of Rossendale General Hospital. Singles were seen to the end of the year in most areas.

REDWING - *Turdus iliacus*

As last year numbers were relatively low during the late winter - early spring period, usually between 10 and 20 in most flocks. Largest was a flock of 40 flying north over Shortclough on 16th February. Latest were 17 at Crawshawbooth on 2nd April, 12 over Shortclough on 3rd April and 5 over Whitworth on 5th April. Return began in mid-October - 15 over Crawshawbooth on 10th October and 10 over Musbury on the same date, 20 over Waterfoot on 13th October, and 6 over Wallbank on 14th October. A big movement was noted later in the month. On 17th October there were at least 50 feeding on rowans at Lench and on 20th October flocks of 50 and 30 over The Glen, Waterfoot. On 23rd October 20 flew west over Waterfoot. Small flocks - from 5 to 10 were recorded in many areas to the end of the year. On 15th November many calls from migrating birds were heard over Edgeside at 23.00 hrs. On 21st December there were 50 at Broadley - this was a period of very cold weather. During

this cold spell 2 arrived in a garden in Waterfoot where they virtually stripped the berries of a small holly tree when they were joined by 2 others in the New Year.

MISTLE THRUSH - *Turdus viscivorus*

Again no early song was noted, the first being 11th February when 3 were singing in Irwell Vale. A pair established territory from 19th January in Booth Road, Waterfoot. On 28th January and 5th February they used the bird-bath in a nearby garden and on 26th February ate peanuts scattered on the lawn, so joining the growing list of birds taking peanuts at the garden feeding-station. On 30th March they were gathering nest material here, flying to the garden next door where one was sitting on 9th April. Singing birds were reported at Hall Carr on 21st March, Saplin Wood on 5th April, E.B.S.W. on 21st April, Stacksteads on 6th May, Fern Isle Wood on 13th May, Cowm reservoir on 25th May. On 4th May a nest with 3 half-grown young was found at Broadley station and on 27th June another nest here with 4 eggs. Pairs nested at Shawforth and Facit. Post-breeding flocks included 15 at Healey Dell on 28th September, 7 in the Cowpe valley on 4th September, 8 at Holden Wood on 15th December, 24 and 20 at Higher Hollinbank on 23rd September and 13th October, 12 at Higher Hollinbank on 18th December. Pairs were noted at Waterfoot on 3rd November, at Gaghills on 9th November.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER - *Locustella naevia*

One was heard calling in brambles near Wallbank at 08:20 on 20th April. One also at Hoddlesden Moss on 22nd April.

SEDGE WARBLER - *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

The only record was of 2 on passage at Holden Vale on the morning of 13th October.

ICTERINE WARBLER - *Hippolais icterina*

A bird, almost certainly of this species was seen and heard at Crawshawbooth on 1st October. It was seen by Brian and Craig Bell who had previously seen Icterine Warbler at Spurn Point on 15th September. The genus was definitely Hippolais based on head shape and calls, and on its skulking behaviour when feeding hidden in bushes. It spent several hours in a cotoneaster bush and in a clump of snowberry, berberis and honeysuckle, feeding on the berries of honeysuckle and on insects on willowherb, willow and butterbur.

WHITETHROAT - *Sylvia communis*

A male was in song on the H.M.T.C. range on 25th May and 1st June. In the Crawshawbooth area one was in song at Folly Clough on 29th April and one at the Tip on 10th June when it was heard all morning. On 21st July there were 2 at Holden Vale.

GARDEN WARBLER - *Sylvia borin*

Males were in song at Crawshawbooth Tip from 4th to 10th May and below the Pets' Cemetery from 12th to 18th May. In the Whitworth area a male was in song near Wallbank from 6th June to 29th June and one was also seen here on 28th September. Two were seen near Broadley Station on 26th May and a male was in song there on 27th May.

BLACKCAP - *Sylvia atricapilla*

On 29th April one was seen feeding in High Street, Haslingden. A male was singing at Folly Tip on 9th May. Nesting followed and at least 3 juveniles were present in July. Nesting also took place in two other areas near Crawshawbooth. The latest here was 30th September.

Singing males were also heard at Stoneholme and Reedsholme. In the Whitworth area one was in song at Healey Dell on 27th April and 3 were singing by 18th May. 4 males and a female were seen at Healey Dell on 29th June. Singing males were also heard at Wallbank and Broadley. Latest was one at Wallbank on 17th September. A wintering male visited a bird table at Constablelee from 10th to 17th December and one was present in a garden in Haslingden feeding on small red berries from 28th to 31st December. **WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* In the Whitworth area of Healey Dell one had returned to the Broadley Station area on 28th April. One was in song there from 1st to 8th May and 2 males were singing there on 11th May. Also one was in song near Healey Hall on the same date. A nest was found at Broadley on 19th May and chicks were being fed in the nest on 9th June - there were 6 young in the nest on 15th and 17th June, fledging on 19th June. At least 3 fledged young were being fed nearby on 29th June. 2 were seen here on 7th July then singles to 7th August. Elsewhere, a male was in song at Cat Wood, Crawshawbooth from 5th to 8th May and on 12th May, one in song at Ogden reservoir, also on 12th May and one was heard in song at Stubbins.

CHIFFCHAFF - *Phylloscopus collybita*

Earliest was one singing in Saplin Wood at H.M.T.C. on 5th April. At Healey Dell a singing male was heard on 15th April, 4th May and 8th June and there was also one at Wallbank on 8th June. In the Crawshawbooth area one was singing in Brooks' Wood on 27th April and on 4th, 5th and 12th May. There was also one at Alden on 12th May and one at Lea Brook on 28th June. One on passage on 16th September at Fern Isle Wood with a mixed tit flock was described as being grey above and white below with a strongly-marked white supercilium.

WILLOW WARBLER - *Phylloscopus trochilus*

An early arrival was one calling at Folly Tip on 2nd April and one in song there on 9th April with at least 2 on 11th April. One was also present in Park Road plantation, Waterfoot on 11th April. In the Whitworth area one was present at Wallbank on 14th April, 4 singing at Healey Dell on 17th April and 7 singing there on 20th April. From 21st to 28th April there were records of many in song throughout Rossendale. A nest with 6 eggs was found at Broadley Station on 24th May and a pair with 5 chicks near Wallbank on 8th June. A nest with 6 eggs was found on Haslingden Old Road on 3rd June. Song was heard at Blackwood on 7th July. On passage there were 9 at Spring Mill on 3rd August, 5 at Broadley on 31st August, one with Blue Tits at Lench on 3rd September, one at Broadley on 23rd September and one at Crawshawbooth on 27th September.

GOLDCREST - *Regulus regulus*

Present in small numbers - none exceeding 6 - from January to 4th May, often in mixed flocks with tits at Healey Dell, Wallbank, Spring Mill, Clowbridge, Lench, Waterfoot, Calf Hey, Plunge, Crawshawbooth. No indications of nesting. At Crawshawbooth there were none until 16th July when several were present at the Tip then none until 2nd October with at least 6 birds, then daily to 14th December. In the autumn 3 were with a tit flock at Cowpe in conifers on 2nd October, 2 at Meadow Lodge on 18th October, 6 at Clough Bottom on 15th December when Goldcrests were also recorded at Healey Dell. There were also records from Wayoh in November.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER - *Muscicapa striata*

Earliest was one at Crawshawbooth on 3rd May, then one at Healey Dell on 24th May, Broadley on 26th May, Stoneholme on 29th May. Singles and pairs were seen continuously

through to 12th July at Healey Dell and Wallbank. A male was in song in Folly Wood on 3rd May and a pair bred here. A pair was also present at Shortclough on 9th June. A pair occupied a territory in the Cowpe valley where they have moved from the rock face of Rock View to a riverside garden site further up the valley. They were active here on 27th June and 5th August and on 3rd September at least 4 were present in the area. On 20th July one was at Higher Hollinbank and on 21st July one at Holden Vale. On passage one lingered in a Waterfoot garden from 8th to 10th September. a very late bird at Folly Tip on 7th November was the latest ever for Brian and Craig Bell. It was thought to be a possible continental bird. A Black Redstart was seen on the same day about half a mile away.

PIED FLYCATCHER - *Ficedula hypoleuca*

One was seen at Irwell Vale on 27th April and one at Calf Hey on 6th May. A male was present in gardens in the Holden Vale area for 5 to 6 weeks from early May and a male was present at Alden on 12th May.

LONG-TAILED TIT - *Aegithalos caudatus*

Continues to thrive. Present throughout the year with good numbers in flocks - 18 at Balladen on 4th January, 12 at Hall Carr on 14th January, 20 at Rushbed on 20th January, 13 at Helmshore on 6th February, 6 apparently feeding on bread in a garden in Helmshore on 17th February. On 6th April a pair was collecting lichen and flying into a conifer at Rushbed. There were pairs at 5 sites between Lea Brook and Stoneholme plantation. On 1st June about 10 juveniles were seen at Reedsholme and another good sized family group at Stoneholme. Two pairs nested at Folly Tip. Flocks of 15 on 28th August and 17 on 25th September were recorded in this area. There were good numbers also in the Whitworth area - at Healey there were 9 on 27th January, 11 on 11th February. An adult with 6 juveniles was seen at Meadow Lodge on 11th June. There were 23 in a flock at Broadley on 16th July and 20 on 13th October and 7th December. Elsewhere small numbers were recorded - 3 near Helmshore Museum on 7th March, 2 at H.M.T.C. on 30th March and 21st April, 4 at Irwell Vale on 7th May and 2 at Alden on the same date. Post-breeding flocks were 10 at Piper Bank on 12th and 28th November and 15 at E.B.S.W. on 17th December.

WILLOW TIT - *Parus montanus*

One was heard and seen at Rakehead, Stacksteads on 15th January.

COAL TIT - *Parus ater*

Present throughout the year and regular visitors to garden peanut feeders. A pair was active and the male singing at a garden feeding station in Waterfoot as late as 15th April and one came to the feeder on 28th May. Also in winter, Coal Tits are recorded with mixed flocks of tits and Goldcrests in most woodlands, especially conifers. A male was singing at Stacksteads on 26th February and one in a garden in Waterfoot on the same date. There were 3 singing in Healey Dell on 17th April and an adult and 2 juveniles were seen here on 19th June. A pair nested on Folly Tip. The largest group seen was one of 7 with Goldcrests on 8th October.

BLUE TIT - *Parus caeruleus*

Good numbers recorded this year. On 27th January an estimated 20 birds were feeding from a bird table in Brooks' Wood and in February 40 or 50 were present in Irwell Vale. On 14th February a pair was examining nest holes at Higher Hollinbank. On 30th October there was a

large flock of about 50 including some Great and Coal Tits at Lench and there was a similar flock in Park Road plantation on 11th November.

GREAT TIT - *Parus major*

In January at least 5 fed from a bird-table in Brooks' Wood, Crawshawbooth. In Healey Dell there were 13 in one group on 8th April. A male was in song at Crawshawbooth on 4th February, one at Higher Hollinbank on 14th February and one at Waterfoot on 21st February. On 19th and 20th April a pair was showing anxiety at a nest box in Waterfoot but there was no nest-material. A nest foundation was in place on 26th April and there were eggs in the material on 3rd May. The cup was formed and contained 8 eggs on 4th May. The adults were taking food in on 24th May and on 2nd June there were 8 well-grown young. They fledged before 07:00 on 9th June.

NUTHATCH - *Sitta europaea*

There were regular sightings in Healey Dell from 6th January to 20th December mostly of singles but of pairs on 27th April and 7th July. Elsewhere, there were 2 records from the Limy valley - one near the Craven Heifer on 22nd February and one at Folly Tip on 12th August.

TREECREEPER - *Certhia familiaris*

Along the Limy valley a pair bred in Folly Wood where juveniles were seen on 1st June. There were 2 pairs near Stoneholme and one at Brooks' Wood and at least one near Reedsholme. There were records from February to December in the Healey Dell area at Broadley Station and Meadow Lodge. In February there were records from Irwell Vale and Calf Hey. In April a pair was present in Bacup Park. One was seen at Ravenshore on 7th September. In December singles were seen in the S.N.A. and in Edgeside Park. There were also records from Ravenshore and Ogden reservoir.

JAY - *Garrulus glandarius*

Present in all the usual areas mentioned in last year's R.O.C. Report and still increasing and expanding. Continuously present along the line of the Limy and Irwell valleys from Holcombe to Crawshawbooth. At the northern end of this line Jays were said to be increasing in the Crawshawbooth area with a large group of 8 in Folly Wood on 29th September. Most records referred to 1,2 or 3 birds. 2 fed at a garden bird table in Helmshore in December. Also regular in the Whitworth valley where 8 were seen in a group at Healey Dell on 30th March. On 4th May 5 were seen in flight over Healey Dell and a nest was found near Wallbank. An adult and 2 juveniles were seen here on 31st July. There were 4 at Healey Dell on 18th October and 30th December. In the autumn wanderers were seen outside these areas - one over Piper Bank, Waterfoot flying towards Bacup on 7th September, one at Clough Bottom on 8th and 14th September, 1 at Ogden and 1 at Calf Hey on 13th Oct.

MAGPIE - *Pica pica*

Numerous and widespread. Social gatherings involving chasing flights and presumably mate selection were observed from early in the year - 8 at Piper Bank on 2nd January, 12 in Edgeside Park on 16th January, 6 in a Waterfoot garden with strong aggression between 2 birds on 26th January, 12 at Dunnockshaw on 31st March. Magpies were carrying twigs to a nest site in Waterfoot on 5th and 6th March. One report indicated a reduction in numbers of Magpies and Crows in the Musbury area, possibly due to shooting and trapping. During December,

however, there were 8 to 12 daily at Higher Hollinbank and on 2nd December there were about 40 at Holcombe.

JACKDAW - *Corvus monedula*

Numbers and distribution similar to last year. About 50 birds were counted over Ilex Mill in February / March. 10 were seen at Rossendale General Hospital, some carrying nest material on 1st May with 23 there on 16th September; 25 to 30 were on the old goods station in Waterfoot on 31st March. A pair nested under roof tiles at Crawshawbooth. During the winter period, Jackdaws formed mixed flocks with Rooks feeding on grassland and at Stacksteads Tip - the only count available was 15 with 50 Rooks on 2nd January.

ROOK - *Corvus frugilegus*

A census of nests this year produced a total of 450, the largest rookeries being Rook Hill - 67, Crawshawbooth - 63, Broadclough - 47, Weir - 44, Shuttleworth - 36, Belmont School - 35 and Healey Dell - 27. Referring to figures of past censuses indicates a decline from 1979 when 901 nests were counted, 692 in 1986 and 590 in 1990. This year's figure is almost exactly half of the 1979 level. There may have been slight discrepancies due to some of the smaller rookeries not always being counted but the overall downward trend is obvious. After the breeding season the flock feeding in the Stacksteads area numbered about 220. There were 67 nests at Rook Hill and 7 at Honey Hole, Stacksteads - a total of 74 nests or 148 individuals, suggesting about 72 young birds in the flock - about one surviving young per pair. Rooks are said to be scarce in the Crawshawbooth area in winter, probably because most Rooks fly to a large communal roost.

CARRION CROW - *Corvus corone corone*

Numbers in flocks were lower than last year. Early spring flocks which seem characteristic were seen - on The Hile with 30 in February / March, Whitworth with 20 on 24th March. No large groups were noted in the Crawshawbooth area. About 12 was the usual number in the Musbury Tor area. One was seen to break off a twig on 4th February in Crawshawbooth, and one was seen carrying twigs in Waterfoot from 17th to 24th March. 2 adults with 2 juveniles were seen on The Hile on 13th July. In autumn a flock of 30 was present on Reaps Moss on 15th September and 25 near The Brex on 16th September. Up to 12 were regular in the Musbury area. There were 19 at Spring Mill on 24th September. About 400 roosted above Calf Hey in winter.

RAVEN - *Corvus corax*

On 2nd September 2 birds were seen flying from Holcombe Moor into Alden.

STARLING - *Sturnus vulgaris*

During winter foraging flocks in suburban habitats moving between fields and gardens numbered from 30 to 60. A larger flock of 200 was seen on Newchurch Road at Waingate on 4th January and 150 at Wallbank on 6th January. On 3rd March about 1,000 flew up the valley from Todmorden to Sharneyford. Also in early March there were 100 with Fieldfares at Plunge and 200 over Healey Dell. A pair nested in an old woodpecker nest near Wallbank Lodge. First juveniles were seen on 26th May and by 29th May they were numerous. There were records of flocks containing many juveniles - over 100 at Clough Bottom on 23rd June and over 100 at Wallbank on 29th June and flocks of more than 300 at Cheesden and Deeply Vale in June and July. There were 300 at Spring Mill on 3rd August. There were fewer in the autumn as flocks moved away - 100 at Weir on 29th September, 50 on The Brex on 1st November. In

mid-November flocks were reported from many areas presumably as the continental birds arrived but there were no large numbers.

HOUSE SPARROW - *Passer domesticus*

Winter groups of about 10 or 12 were recorded as last year at Helmshore, Constablelee, Waterfoot. Significantly larger numbers were recorded in Whitworth where 30 to 35 were regular in one garden in January and February. There were also groups of 13 and 17 at Wallbank. Later in the year 50 to 60 were present along Wallbank Drive on 28th July. On 2nd January 10 were in a noisy gathering in Waterfoot and on 11th February a male was in song at Irwell Vale. A pair visited a peanut feeder in a garden in Waterfoot during April and May and brought a juvenile there on 29th May. From September the usual groups of 8 to 12 were reported from several areas. The old assembly point in Edgeside Park held 20 on 25th September but this did not continue during the winter.

CHAFFINCH - *Fringilla coelebs*

Winter groups reported from many areas in small numbers - 4 to 15 - but with larger flocks at good feeding sites - 50 on beech trees at Musbury in March reducing to 30 at the end of the month. Also 40 in Folly Wood from January to April. First songs were heard on 21st February, 2nd March and 3rd March. A pair regularly visited a peanut feeder in a garden in Waterfoot in April and May. On 8th April there were about 6 pairs in Bacup Park. At least 6 males were in song at Healey Dell on 2nd May and a juvenile was being fed here on 27th May. The usual numbers were present in Winter. The flocks at the beech trees in Musbury again built up to over 50. The flock in Folly Wood reached over 60 by 18th November.

BRAMBLING - *Fringilla montifringilla*

From late winter to early spring flocks of Brambling were seen throughout the valleys. There were flocks of 30 at Shortclough on 21st January, 50 at Cowm reservoir on 1st January and 4th February, 30 at Broadclough on 14th January, 40 at Musbury on 17th February, 50 at Bacup on 3rd March, 40 at Irwell Vale on 11th February. At Folly Wood there were flocks of varying numbers then a large migratory group of 100 feeding on fallen beech mast on 16th April. Some males were in song, several pairs had formed and mating was observed. They had moved on on 17th April. Also at this time there was a flock with Redpolls at Stubbins on 18th April and 15 at Strongstry on 21st April. There were many records of smaller flocks and of birds visiting feeding tables. The following winter 2 had arrived at Crawshawbooth on 13th November and were seen here and at a bird table to the end of the year. The largest group was one of about 17 on 14th December. In December there were 2 at Strongstry on 8th December, 5 at Helmshore on 17th December, 10 at Helmshore and 36 at Musbury on 20th December. In Waterfoot a small group of up to 6 Brambling visited a food table regularly from 25th December and into the New Year.

GREENFINCH - *Carduelis chloris*

Winter flocks were mostly small - 4 to 6 - possibly family groups with occasional larger groups. 12 were feeding on ash keys at Edgeside Park on 16th January and 7 to 9 visited a bird table in Waterfoot. An unusual flock of 20 at Edgeside on 17th April was possibly on passage. Song was heard from 20th January in Crawshawbooth but most records were from 1st March. Much activity, including song-flights was noted on 30th March in Crawshawbooth. An adult and a juvenile were seen at Broadley on 9th June. Nesting occurred in *leylandii* hedges in Crawshawbooth. In the autumn small flocks returned to garden feeders - at Waterfoot in

September - usually 6 or 7 birds but rising to 8 to 12 in December. A southerly movement was noted over Crawshawbooth from 21st September. The largest garden group here was 15.

GOLDFINCH - *Carduelis carduelis*

From January to March there were records of flocks usually of 10 to 30 birds. On 9th April 2 birds came to a peanut feeder in a garden in Waterfoot - a first record. The feeder was maintained throughout the summer and was regularly visited by 3 or 4 birds. One was in song in the garden and nearby road on 13th June and on 11th July 2 pairs were active nearby. On 18th and 23rd July a brood of newly-fledged young was being fed here. A first song was heard at Reedsholme on 8th April. Pairs were recorded at Clowbridge, Loveclough, Goodshawfold, Crawshawbooth, Lea Brook, Irwell Vale, Harden Clough and Healey Dell. An adult with juveniles was seen at Syke reservoir on 3rd August. Juveniles were also seen at Folly Tip. Flocks built up during the autumn. At Musbury in early August there were family parties of about 5 rising to flocks of 25 by 15th August and 50 to 60 on 30th August and 2nd September. In October there were 20 in the grounds of Rossendale General Hospital, 20 at Higher Hollinbank and 20 at Holden Vale. In November there were 50 with Siskins in Park Road plantation and 10 in a nearby garden. Passage was noted at Crawshawbooth on several days from 11th October then there were small numbers at the Tip to the year end. Other reports also were of only small numbers 2 to 4. Up to 4 were regular at the peanut feeder in Waterfoot.

SISKIN - *Carduelis spinus*

Continuing the trend noted in last year's report, numbers remained low during the late winter and early spring, usually less than 5, often with Goldcrests or Redpolls. Visits to peanut feeders were recorded at Haslingden, Crawshawbooth and Waterfoot. A female was seen as late as 30th May on the peanut feeder in Waterfoot. Larger flocks included 20 at Healey Dell on 1st January, 12 at Irwell Vale on 28th January. Autumn saw a return to the larger numbers of previous years. There were at least 100 in the trees above Asda in Rawtenstall on 4th October, 40 to 60 in the Crawshawbooth area from 13th November to the end of the year, 15 in the Park Road plantation on 11th December and 40 with Goldfinches in the alders on Piper Bank on 29th December. There were 16 at Shawforth on 24th December and 24 at Musbury on 17th December.

LINNET - *Carduelis cannabina*

The large flocks noted at the end of 1996 continued into the present year - over 50 at Spring Mill on 21st January then flocks of 12 to 27 on dates to 28th April, 30 at Cowm reservoir in January and 23 in March, 50 to 60 at Ogden on 13th April. Nesting activity was noted at Clowbridge (2 or 3 pairs), Cribden Clough, Oakenhead, Chapel Hill, The Hile (pair with 2 fledged young on 28th July), Haslingden, Spring Mill, Cowm (at least 6 pairs nesting in gorse). Again a successful breeding season was indicated by large flocks - 20 to 30 at Musbury in August, 30 in Shawclough - Coal Pits Lane in September, 24 at Shawforth in September, a huge flock of 250 at Chapel Hill on 16th August and over 100 at Grane on 8th September.

TWITE - *Carduelis flavirostris*

The late winter period was notable for the unusual presence of good-sized flocks at Farm Hill - Edgeside on the western slopes of The Hile. There were about 60 Twites here on 16th January mixed with some Goldfinches and Greenfinches. The flock was seen here in numbers from 40 to 50 during February and March. On several occasions between 28th February and 5th March the birds in the flock were singing in unison perched in the highest twigs of tall trees -

a most remarkable sound. They were heard by E. Ward and J. Ormerod on separate occasions. On 6th March only a single bird remained. It is possible that these mid-winter flocks are of Scandinavian Twites. There are two previous records of a similar type. E. Ward (Rossendale Birds, 1988) says "January 1974 was especially notable and flocks of 20 to 40 were seen in several parts of Rossendale, and one flock of 300 on The Hile on 20th January. In the winter of 1985/86 about 30 birds were present in the Glen area of Stacksteads from December to January. On 31st March about 40 were seen feeding on the enclosed ground of the reservoir bed at Clowbridge. A. Ives scattered some bird seed at the site and this was rapidly eaten. There were still 20 present on 9th April and 3 on 27th April. There was no evidence of any remaining to breed nearby so this was presumably another migrant flock. On 3rd April a flock of 40 to 50 flew west over The Brex which lies between the two sites. On 21st April there were 6 at Lee Quarry - site of one of the regular colonies - and a male was in song. A pair was also recorded here on 28th April but there are no further details of breeding success. On 30th March about 24 in company with Linnets had returned to the Shawforth area. Also in the Whitworth area 3 flew over Shawforth on 13th May and there were 2 pairs at Back Cowm. A pair was at Spring Mill on 13th April when the female was picking up sheep's wool and they were seen again on 17th May. Some autumn flocks were seen but with lower numbers than last year - 10 on The Hile / Stacksteads on 28th July, 16 at Coalpits Lane on 9th September, 23 on thistles on The Brex on 22nd September. An unusual late appearance was of 8 very bright birds near Farm Hill on 28th November. Were these continentals from the large mid-winter flock?

REDPOLL - *Carduelis flammea*

There were many records of flocks from January to April. On 4th and 5th January there were 40 at Rawtenstall Cemetery and 15 at Waingate; 20 at Clowbridge on 14th January; 35 at Lea Brook on 13th January; 32 at Healey Dell on 3rd February; 13 with 5 Mealy Redpolls at Healey Dell on 9th March; 12 at Healey Dell on 30th March; 50 at Irwell Vale with Bramblings on 21st April. A pair nested at Clowbridge where a family party of 5 was seen in late summer. Singles and twos were seen from April to July at Healey Dell. There were fewer records during the autumn and early winter. A flock of 3 or 4 was seen at Folly Tip in August and 8 or 9 fed on birches here in September. At least 10 flew over on 11th October. There were 20 at Holcombe on 15th November and 4 at Helmsore and 2 at Wallbank in December.

COMMON CROSSBILL - *Loxia curvirostra*

The only record is of 3 calling in flight over Crawshawbooth towards Bonfire Hill on 11th October.

BULLFINCH - *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

There were regular sightings in small numbers throughout the year. In January 3 at Constablelee, a pair at Reedsholme and a pair in Irwell Vale. In March a group of 5 at Wayoh was made up of a pair, a male and 3 females and another single male was also seen. Also in March at least one was present on the H.M.T.C. In April one was seen along Haslingden Road near All Saints School and a male was calling at Buckden. In June one was seen on H.M.T.C. A pair nested at Folly Tip where the adults and 5 juveniles were seen on 4th July. This group probably remained in the area as 5 were seen there on 1st October and 3 or 4 to the year end. There were also records of a party of 5 - 3 males and 2 females - from 30th November to the year end in Irwell Vale during December.

SNOW BUNTING - *Plectrophenax nivalis*

The group at Crown Point recorded in December 1995 lingered into January but only 2 birds out of the original 8. Also at least one at Greenfold from 26th December 1995 to 14th February 1996.

REED BUNTING - *Emberiza schoeniclus*

During late winter small groups up to 6 were recorded at Cowm reservoir and Spring Mill. On 8th February a few more were in a flock with Siskins and Bramblings at Musbury. 3 males were feeding in a garden at Whitworth on 28th January and 3rd February. A male was present in the Haslingden High School Nature Area on 28th January. 3 males were in song at Cowm by 10th March and one at Syke reservoir on 17th March. Singing males were also heard at Holden Wood on 10th March and at H.M.T.C. on 5th April. Nesting activity was noted at Cowm, Spring Mill, H.M.T.C., Sand Beds, Clowbridge (3 pairs), Holden Vale. On 2nd June about 8 males were on territory between Cheesden Bar and Deeply Vale. One pair nested on the old C.B.C. plot on The Hile (2 last year). Autumn and winter records included 6 at Holden Vale on 21st July, 3 at Mitchell House reservoir on 15th September, a female at Holden Wood on 13th October, one near the bird table at Folly Tip on 16th November, 5 at Spring Mill on 23rd November, 6 at Cowm on 24th November, 3 at Cowm on 7th and 14th December and 3 pairs on 30th December.