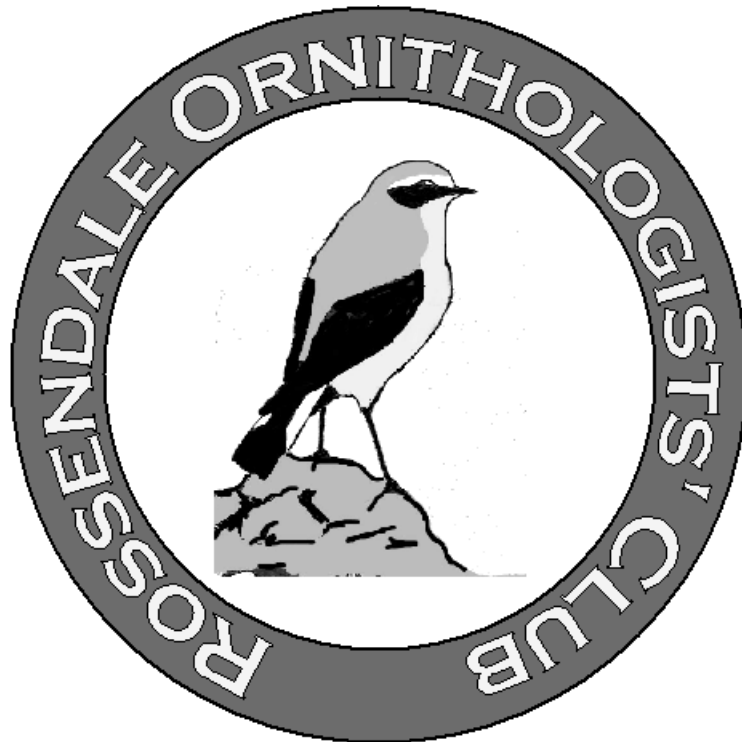

Rossendale Ornithologists' Club

Bird Report



1999

LITTLE GREBE - *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A pair reared 2 young at a site near Haslingden and Little Grebes were also seen on Holden Wood reservoir. A pair was present at Shortclough from 1st to 18th April but with no indication of nesting. Ones and twos were present at Syke reservoir from 21st March to 8th May and on 2nd September. A pair nested at a lodge at Townsendfold.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE - *Podiceps cristatus*

Present at Holden Wood and Ogden reservoirs from 10th March and a pair on 21st March and 18th April but no indication of breeding, although an immature bird was seen here on 12th October. Present also at Shortclough on 9th, 11th and 16th April and a pair at Clowbridge from 14th to 27th April (3 on 29th April). A single was seen at Clough Bottom on 21st and 23rd April. Post-breeding-season there were singles at Clowbridge on 10th October and 9th November.

CORMORANT - *Phalacrocorax carbo*

One was present on Ogden on 21st February, 2 during March at Holden Wood and Ogden and 3 from 8th to 15th March. Singles were present again on 13th June, 15th August and 2nd September. One flew west over Clowbridge on 23rd August and one was at Clough Bottom on 14th September.

GREY HERON - *Ardea cinerea*

Present all year. A small heronry was reported between Waterfoot and Rawtenstall. However, on further investigation, there was only a single nest containing two young birds. Nevertheless, this is the first record of Heron breeding within the Rossendale boundary.

MUTE SWAN - *Cygnus olor*

A pair was present at Cowm reservoir from 2nd January to 10th July. The pen was sitting on 20th March but there were no reports from later in the season so the outcome of this nest was not known.

WHOOPER SWAN - *Cygnus cygnus*

One flew off Clowbridge reservoir to the south at 1100 on 28th November and - possibly the same bird - one was present at Holden Wood on 28th November.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE - *Anser brachyrhynchus*

On 6th January 70 flew southwest over Musbury. There was a considerable movement to the west during February - 100 over Waterfoot on 13th February, 18 and 30 over Dunnockshaw on 20th February and 120 over Wallbank on the same date and some over Rawtenstall in late February. One, thought to be a hybrid escape, was at Clough Bottom with Canada Geese on several dates from 25th June.

GREYLAG GOOSE - *Anser anser*

A single was seen at Ogden on 30th April. On 13th October a flock of 5, possibly a family group, flew west over The Brex.

CANADA GOOSE - *Branta canadensis*

Numerous and increasing. Successful nesting was recorded at Grane, Troy Quarry, Isle of Man Lodge, Scout Moor reservoir, Spring Mill and Broadley. Post-breeding, we had the largest flocks yet recorded of 100 - 150 at Grane in August.

BARNACLE GOOSE - *Branta leucopsis*

An unusual record - a flock of 9 flying south, low along the side of Musbury Tor on 5th October (J. Rostron).

WIGEON - *Anas penelope*

During autumn there were 5 at Grane on 18th October, 4 at Calf Hey on 6th November and 2 on 16th November.

TEAL - *Anas crecca*

Few records and small numbers this year. There were 8 at Holden Wood on 12th February and several on 8th April. There were 1 to 3 at Spring Mill from 3rd January to 18th April. In the autumn 1 or 2 were recorded at Spring Mill from 17th August to 18th December and 6 on 8th October. Close to this date there were 10 at A.M.R. on 10th October.

MALLARD - *Anas platyrhynchos*

Numerous and widespread nesting around reservoirs and lodges, along rivers and up to 1,300 feet on the moors (a female with 9 young was present on a small pond on Brex Height on 12th May). It is difficult to estimate winter numbers now as so many Mallards spend much of their time along rivers - as many as 60 on the River Irwell in Rawtenstall centre alone. A wildfowl count on 10th October found 50 at A.M.R.

PINTAIL - *Anas acuta*

3 were present at A.M.R. on 19th September.

GARGANEY - *Anas querquedula*

A male was present at A.M.R. on 19th September. This appears to be only the second record.

SHOVELER - *Anas clypeata*

A female with Goosanders was seen at Spring Mill on 18th October.

POCHARD - *Aythya ferina*

Very scarce this year. There were 6 at Holden Wood on 10th January. Pochards were virtually absent during the following autumn and winter. A single male was seen at Holden Wood on 13th and 28th November. There were no sightings at Clowbridge or Spring Mill.

TUFTED DUCK - *Aythya fuligula*

At Holden Wood there were 2 pairs on 5th February and 4 pairs on 12th February with similar numbers through to 18th April. These birds must have moved on to breed elsewhere and there were no further records until 18th July from which date singles, mostly males were seen to 15th August and then a pair in November and December. There was a similar pattern at Clowbridge with 2 to 4 seen from 26th March to 23rd April. In the Whitworth area there were records of ones and twos for every month except February and June at Spring Mill, Cowm and Wallbank.

Larger flocks of 11 to 15 were seen at Spring Mill in September. There were 9 at Clowbridge on 30th August and 15th September and ones and twos in October and November.

COMMON SCOTER - *Melanitta nigra*

One was present at Clowbridge on 14th June.

GOLDENEYE - *Bucephala clangula*

An increase in numbers in contrast to Pochard and Tufted Duck. At Clowbridge there was a continuous presence on spring passage from 3rd January to 26th March. Numbers were often from 9 to 12 until 27th February and from 5 to 8 to the end of March. There was also a good presence in the Whitworth area with 1 to 8 on many dates from 2nd January to 26th April and again from 13th November to the end of the year. At Clowbridge a female was back on 9th November then 2 males and 4 females on 11th November.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - *Mergus serrator*

A single female was again with Goosanders at Spring Mill on dates from 30th January to 16th March and again from 7th October to the end of the year. This was first recorded in 1997 and is presumably the same individual which has somehow become imprinted on Goosanders. A single female, possibly the same bird, was also seen at Clowbridge on 10th October.

GOOSANDER - *Mergus merganser*

There were numerous records from 2nd January to 3rd April and from 29th August to the end of the year for Spring Mill, Grane and A.M.R. and occasional birds on the River Ogden. Most were of flocks of 6 to 12 but there were 38 at A.M.R. on 18th December.

HEN HARRIER - *Circus cyaneus*

There were 3 records during autumn - one probable soaring over Musbury on 6th September, one at Clowbridge on 2nd October (B. Lee) and one over the upper Whitewell valley on 18th October.

SPARROWHAWK - *Accipiter nisus*

Seen regularly throughout the year in all parts of the valleys and nesting wherever suitable woodland is found. One pair reared 3 young in a nest in a small Alder tree - an unusual site.

COMMON BUZZARD - *Buteo buteo*

There were 2 records - 2 flying northwest over Musbury on 15th January and one moving east over Helmshore on 1st March.

OSPREY - *Pandion haliaetus*

One was present over the Grane reservoirs during the afternoon of 17th April.

KESTREL - *Falco tinnunculus*

There were records of successful nesting from the Limy valley, Musbury and Grane, The Hile / Stacksteads, Lee Quarry and Whitworth. 4 young fledged from the Musbury nest and immatures were seen in several areas during September, October and November.

MERLIN - *Falco columbarius*

Two or three pairs returned to nesting areas from mid-March. One pair reared 3 young and another had eggs taken. Elsewhere, a female was seen carrying prey on 17th June.

Post-breeding-season a male was at Clowbridge roosting in Hawthorns on 7th October and a female was at Loveclough on 25th November.

PEREGRINE - *Falco peregrinus*

Several pairs present. Return took place in January and there were records through to August. Two pairs and an immature were seen on 12th August and an immature flew west over Waterfoot on 14th July. A male was seen at Scout Moor on 18th November and a pair over Cragg Quarry an hour later.

RED GROUSE - *Lagopus lagopus scoticus*

During the breeding season there were records of pairs at Alden and at the top of Musbury, 3 pairs on Wet Moss, 3 males on Haslingden / Oswaldtwistle Moor, a pair on Knowl Moor and a single on Cowpe Moss.

GREY PARTRIDGE - *Perdix perdix*

The roost site of one or more coveys was found on Great Hameldon on 3rd February. There were records of pairs on at least 15 sites. Post-breeding there were records of coveys - 7 at Cowm on 13th November, 5 at Fern Isle on 20th November, 5 at Whitewell Bottom on 15th December and 12 at Musbury on 20th December.

PHEASANT - *Phasianus colchicus*

Seen regularly in the Musbury area and Alden with as many as 5 males in November and December. Also heard and seen frequently in spring on the Burnley side of Clowbridge.

MOORHEN - *Gallinula chloropus*

Resident in all suitable habitats round ponds, lodges and reservoirs and along the rivers.

COOT - *Fulica atra*

Up to 10 were present at Holden Wood to 18th April. Two pairs eventually nested. One pair had small young on 12th May and a single juvenile was seen on 29th May. Three remained to the end of the year.

OYSTERCATCHER - *Haematopus ostralegus*

There was an almost continuous presence at Spring Mill and Wallbank from 10th March to 11th July with a maximum of 3 at Spring Mill on 29th May and 2 on 31st May. A single was present briefly at Clowbridge on 20th May and a pair was there for a short while on 19th July. One was seen at Cheesden on 11th July.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER - *Charadrius dubius*

Two pairs were present in a quarry near Whitworth from 15th May to 11th July. One female was sitting on 29th May. Two pairs and at least one young bird were seen on 15th June and 11th July. A pair was present at Holden Wood reservoir on 18th July and 15th August. A pair also nested at Hutch Bank Quarry. The first nest failed but young were seen from a second attempt.

DOTTEREL - *Charadrius morinellus*

The only record was of 4 on Cowpe Moss on 1st May.

GOLDEN PLOVER - *Pluvialis apricaria*

Flocks of 5 to 30 were present on Hailstorm Hill from 11th January to 21st February. Later in the spring at least 6 pairs were found in the Cowpe Moss / Knowl Moor area. Two nests were found on 10th June but both lost eggs by predation. Elsewhere, a pair nested on Haslingden / Oswaldtwistle Moor and on 13th March a male was making display flights over the moor at the head of Musbury. 12 were present on Cowpe Moss on 11th November, 20 on 18th November and 3 on 21st November.

LAPWING - *Vanellus vanellus*

Largest winter flock was 116 at A.M.R. on 24th January - lower than in recent years. Records of birds returning to breeding fields included 23 at Spring Mill on 24th February, 10 at Holden Wood on 21st February and 8 near the Farmer's Glory, Haslingden on 9th February. Numbers were low everywhere - 8 pairs on Seat Naze, 5 or 6 pairs at Balladen, 6 pairs at Laund Hey, Haslingden, 3 pairs at Loveclough, 5 pairs in Dean Valley, 2 pairs on Musbury Tor and 2 pairs on The Hile. Autumn flock numbers were also low - 50 at Holden Wood on 18th July, 80 at A.M.R. on 18th July and 50 there on 10th October and 50 on 28th November.

DUNLIN - *Calidris alpina*

Breeding season presence was noted on Cowpe Moss with a single on 18th May and 2 pairs on 24th June. Also on 1st May, a pair was on Wet Moss at the head of Alden. Autumn passage brought 2 to A.M.R. on 15th August and 3 there on 10th October.

RUFF - *Philomachus pugnax*

Two probables were at A.M.R. on 10th October.

JACK SNIFE - *Lymnocyptes minimus*

More records than usual, mainly as a result of J. Webb's observations on Whitworth Lower End Moor. These were on 6 dates from 9th January to 24th April with numbers between 2 and 4. In the same area there was an autumn record of one on 20th November. Records from elsewhere were of one on Haslingden Moor on 27th April and 3 at A.M.R. on 10th October.

COMMON SNIFE - *Gallinago gallinago*

There were records of singles from several areas in winter and early spring. Larger numbers were 7 on 13th March and 9 on 24th April on Whitworth Lower End Moor. During the breeding season drumming males were heard on Swinshaw Moor - 2 on 28th April and 3 on 15th June; Smallshaw Height - 1 on 5th May; Lower Bagden (Whitworth) on 6th July. Breeding season presence was also noted at Haslingden Moor (2 pairs), Holden Wood, Alden, Buckhurst, Syke reservoir, Laund Hey (1 pair). Small numbers of 1 to 3 were recorded again from September to the end of the year. 12 were seen on Great Hameldon on 26th October and 4 there on 25th November.

WOODCOCK - *Scolopax rusticola*

There were 6 records from 3rd January to 13th February and 8 from 6th November to 16th December. Six of these were between 6th and 21st November. This is the period when there is often a 'fall' of Woodcock with the autumn arrival. There were 11 records last year between 28th October and 20th November. A similar occurrence is quoted in Rossendale Birds (E. Ward, 1988) of 11 records between 2nd and 21st November 1983.

WHIMBREL - *Numenius phaeopus*

Single birds flew north over Clowbridge on 2nd and 4th May and one was on Oswaldtwistle Moor on 25th May.

CURLEW - *Numenius arquata*

Return dates were from 1st to 21st March. Nesting pairs were located at Musbury (2 pairs), Alden / Bull Hill (2 pairs), Haslingden Moor (3 pairs), Hoddlesden Moss (nest c/4 on 25th May), Clough Bottom, Crown Point, Whitworth Lower End Moor (2 pairs), Spring Mill, Plunge valley. One report indicated that Curlews were 'present in good numbers in north Rossendale'. Curlews were present at Spring Mill reservoir to the end of August then a single on 21st September.

REDSHANK - *Tringa totanus*

Return to nesting areas was noted on 10th April on Knowl Moor, 18th April at A.M.R. and Spring Mill. There was no definite evidence of nesting but later records were of one on Knowl Moor on 30th April, one at A.M.R. on 13th May and one at Spring Mill on 30th June. There were no records for Clowbridge this year.

COMMON SANDPIPER - *Actitis hypoleucos*

At Ogden reservoir one was back by 9th April, 2 by 17th April and 3 on 23rd April. Thereafter a pair was seen on dates to 1st August. At A.M.R. one was back on 18th April with later records of 2 until 18th July. At Clough Bottom one was back on 18th April. 3 on 30th April, a pair on 2nd May and 2 pairs from 9th May to 20th August. Young were seen here on 4th July. At Clowbridge one was back on 22nd April and 3 by 27th April then 3 pairs by 6th May. At Spring Mill one was back by 22nd April then a pair from 10th May to 6th August. A pair was also seen at Whitworth Quarry. This gives a total of 9 recorded pairs.

BLACK-HEADED GULL - *Larus ridibundus*

Estimates of numbers at Stacksteads Tip in January and February were from 700 to 800. 1,000 to 1,500 roosted at Clowbridge reservoir until March but numbers had fallen considerably by 19th March. Flocks of 50 to 100 were recorded at Spring Mill, Cowm, A.M.R. and New Line. There were none at Stacksteads by 18th March. First return was of 6 at Spring Mill on 30th June and 48 including a juvenile there on 10th July. There were 40 at Holden Wood on 18th July. Numbers remained at this level until 7th October when there were 200 on the morning flight to Stacksteads Tip, then 350 on 25th October, 400 on 9th November and 500 on 20th December.

COMMON GULL - *Larus canus*

Present with the Black-headed Gull flocks in winter in the usual proportions of about 1 to 50. Large flocks include 13 at Cowm on 16th January, 30 at A.M.R. on 24th January, 22 at Spring Mill on 24th January, 90 at A.M.R. on 18th December and 11 at Spring Mill on 26th December - all during the mid-winter period.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - *Larus fuscus*

The usual small numbers were present in mid-winter at Stacksteads - usually 3 to 6 and there were 7 at the Clowbridge roost on 4th January. The northwest movement began on 11th March when at least 20 were seen leaving the tip in late afternoon. Numbers rose to 50 on 18th March and 300 on 26th March. By 15th April there were 750 at Stacksteads. A northward movement

was also noted along the Limy valley from 7th to 24th March. Numbers during the summer were about 200 to 300. There was another peak of 700 on 19th July as the southward move began. On 8th August, of 100 on Cowpe reservoir, only 6 were adults. Numbers remained high during September. There were 400 on a ploughed field on The Hile on 12th September. On 7th October there were 100 at Stacksteads after which numbers fell to the usual winter handful.

HERRING GULL - *Larus argentatus*

Mid-winter numbers at Stacksteads Tip remained between 300 and 400 to the end of March, then they were absent, apart from a few among the Lesser Black-backs. There were 50 at A.M.R. on 24th January. On 4th January 60 adults and 120 immatures were seen at Clowbridge as they came in to roost. A regular daily movement to the roost was noted by R. Ives. About 200 from the Burnley direction came over Clowbridge then turned west, probably towards Guide reservoir. On 11th January there were about 200 at Horncliffe Tip. Herring Gulls began to return to Stacksteads Tip on 9th November when about 40 were seen, then 150 on 12th November, 300 on 26th November and 500 on 29th November. 300 to 400 were regular on late afternoon flights to the northwest from the Tip, probably to Guide reservoir.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - *Larus marinus*

Numbers up to 10 were present at Stacksteads in January and February. During this period there were also 3 adults and 4 immatures at Clowbridge on 3rd January, 18 adults there on 4th January, 16 adults at Dunnockshaw on 10th January and 1 or 2 at Spring Mill.

BLACK TERN - *Chlidonias niger*

A single at Clowbridge reservoir was feeding amongst the Swifts on 18th May (A. Ives per R. Ives).

FERAL PIGEON - *Columba livia*

The local town centre colonies were much as usual.

STOCK DOVE - *Columba oenas*

The increased number of records last year was sustained. They ranged from January to October indicating that most birds leave Rossendale in winter. The January / February return has been noted previously. Many records are from the Whitworth area, perhaps because the many quarries along the valley sides provide nest sites. There were 7 at Spring Mill on 16th March and pairs were seen here, at Goat Hill Quarry and at Cowm. The latest was at Spring Mill on 13th October. Elsewhere there were 2 pairs at Lee Quarry and pairs at Clough Bottom, Chapel Hill, Clowbridge, Cragg Quarry, Gin Clough, Cheesden and Cowpe.

WOODPIGEON - *Columba palumbus*

A few large winter flocks were 250 over Whitworth on 31st January, 25 at Musbury in February, 220 over Spring Mill on 27th November. An unusual record was of 22 roosting under conifers in the snow in a garden in New Line on 22nd February. Males were making display flights from 18th March and nesting was widespread.

COLLARED DOVE - *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common and widespread throughout the valleys.

CUCKOO - *Cuculus canorus*

There were singing males at Goodshawfold on 25th April, Calf Hey on 6th May, Musbury on 26th and 29th May and 1st June and at Cheesden on 6th June.

LITTLE OWL - *Athene noctua*

In the Whitworth area there were 2 pairs at Spring Mill where 2 young were seen on 18th July. Little Owls were also seen at Broadley and Jenny Rough. A pair nested at the usual site at Higher Hollinbank, Musbury where a young one was seen on 12th July. There were probably 2 other pairs in this area at Alden and Hare Clough. In the Limy valley Little Owls were present at Clowbridge, Loveclough and Chapel Hill and 2 were seen in Cribden Clough in mid-September. Other pairs were reported from Plunge valley, Buckhurst, The Hile, Dean and Balladen. One was seen in full sunlight on a wall near Crown Point on 30th July. These figures suggest about 15 recorded pairs.

TAWNY OWL - *Strix aluco*

In the Whitworth area pairs were present at Fern Isle Wood and Broadley in Healey Dell. Pairs were also recorded in Musbury and the Glen / Booth Road area of Waterfoot. A fledged juvenile was rescued from an open dustbin at B.R.G.S. on 10th May. Tawny Owls were heard frequently, calling in gardens along Booth Road. The familiar roosting hole in a building near Warth Bridge, Waterfoot was once again occupied in January and February and again from 15th August.

LONG-EARED OWL - *Asio otus*

Nested in the Grane area. Young were heard calling from 10th August to 20th September.

SHORT-EARED OWL - *Asio flammeus*

A pair was present at Hoddlesden Moss in March and April but there was no further evidence of breeding. Elsewhere in north Rossendale a single bird was seen from 6th June to 15th August.

SWIFT - *Apus apus*

First arrivals were from 1st to 6th May. At least 40 were regular over Helmshore in the Park Mill area and more than 20 were counted over Haslingden centre. There were 20 over Stacksteads and 10 over Edgeside estate during the nesting season. Numbers were down at the Staghill colony but a screaming party of 8 was seen on 8th July. 100 to 200 fed over Clowbridge reservoir on 7th and 9th July and there were 400 over this area on 22nd July. Most had gone by 20th August but 5 flew high to the southeast over Waterfoot on 28th August.

KINGFISHER - *Alcedo atthis*

Few records received this year. No definite evidence of breeding but a pair was present at Isle of Man Lodge and along the Dean valley in April and May - one of the traditional areas. There were singles in the Whitworth area in January and June. Post-breeding season there were 2 at Holden Wood on 18th July, one along the Whitewell on 18th September and one at Wallbank Lodge on 28th November.

GREEN WOODPECKER - *Picus viridis*

Present in the Musbury area from 30th March to 14th November and in the Whitworth area at Healey Dell, Spring Mill and Fern Isle from April to December. Later records after dispersal

were - one at Deeply Vale on 11th July, one at Clough Bottom on 14th and 20th September and one at Calf Hey from 27th August to 12th December.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER - *Dendrocopos major*

Widespread in all wooded areas, seen commonly in gardens and visiting nut feeders. Such visits were noted at New Line, Haslingden, Helmshore and Waterfoot. A male at the latter site also drilled a hole through the ice on a bird bath. Drumming males were heard on 13th February, 20th March and 3rd April from 3 areas of Healey Dell. Young were seen at Helmshore in early June. Adults were seen leaving a nest hole in a tree in the Stubbins area carrying faecal sacs on 17th May.

SKYLARK - *Alauda arvensis*

There were 2 back and singing at Crown Point as early as 2nd February and in the Whitworth area on 20th and 27th February but dates for the rest of Rossendale were from 3rd to 14th March. Numbers on the C.B.C. plot were 12 pairs, the same as last year but down on the 14 or 15 pairs of the previous 3 years. On The Hile adults were feeding young as late as 11th July and one was still present on 29th July. At Spring Mill and Cowpe there were records for 17th and 23rd October and an unusual record of a single on Rooley moor on 20th December.

SAND MARTIN - *Riparia riparia*

On spring passage there were 2 at Spring Mill on 2nd May and one on 4th May. On autumn passage there were 3 at Ogden on 18th July.

SWALLOW - *Hirundo rustica*

Spring arrivals were from 8th April to 14th April. About 30 were regular in the Musbury area of Helmshore where 5 pairs nested in Carr Lane barns and over 40 were often seen later to 18th September. There were the usual 4 pairs on the C.B.C. plot on The Hile. Passage was heavy from 22nd to 26th September and there were 42 at Spring Mill on 25th September. Latest were 2 over Wallbank on 1st October.

HOUSE MARTIN - *Delichon urbica*

First arrivals were 3 in Helmshore on 12th April, 1 at Cawl Terrace on 27th April and at Crawshawbooth on 30th April. The main arrival at nesting colonies was in May. There were 14 nests at Park Road, Helmshore, about 12 nests in Waterfoot centre, 3 nests on B.R.G.S. and a first-time nest on the nearby Jolly Sailor Inn. Post-breeding flocks in September include - 40 over Bacup, 60 over Musbury, 35 over B.R.G.S. area, 40 over Constablelee, 100 over Crawshawbooth. Numbers fell by the end of September. The latest at Musbury was 29th September. Latest overall was a single flying southwest over Waterfoot on 2nd October.

TREE PIPIT - *Anthus trivialis*

Two were present at Musbury on 23rd April and 1st May but there was no further evidence of nesting. A male was in song in Deeply Vale on 6th June.

MEADOW PIPIT - *Anthus pratensis*

There was an unusually early movement of flocks in January - 40 on The Hile on 11th January, 30 at Jack Lodge on 17th January and 10 by the Rooley Moor Road on 22nd January. There were a few similar records last year also. Main arrival, however, was mid-March, as is more usual. A 'perceptible return' at Crown Point on 15th March with one in song (K.G.S.), at least

one in song on The Hile on 14th March, 6 on Musbury Tor on 16th March. There were 6 in song on the C.B.C. plot by 28th March and 14 pairs were eventually recorded. On 1st May a timed count for the Breeding Birds Survey on a tetrad at the head of Alden found 44 Meadow Pipits. Autumn flocks were 16 at Spring Mill on 21st August, 50 at Spring Mill on 25th September, 18 on Hameldon on 15th October and 11 at Cowm on 20th November. One report commented on the fact that there was no large-scale passage as is sometimes noted (R. Ives).

YELLOW WAGTAIL - *Motacilla flava*

During autumn passage there were records for Spring Mill of one on 25th August, 4 on 28th August, 2 on 29th August and 2 on 30th August.

GREY WAGTAIL - *Motacilla cinerea*

Common resident. Nesting widespread along rivers and in the vicinity of reservoirs. Two pairs nested along the 3km stretch of the River Limy observed for the B.T.O. Water Birds Survey by R. Ives.

PIED / WHITE WAGTAIL - *Motacilla alba*

Common resident though many move away in winter. Spring passage brought 24 to Fearn Moss on 1st February, 25 on 3rd February, 32 on 5th February, 33 on 9th February, 15 on 1st March, 20 on 28th March. In the same period there were 12 at Broadway, Haslingden on 9th February. Nesting was recorded in many areas. 2 pairs nested on the C.B.C. plot. Autumn passage was less well-marked. There were 7 at Spring Mill on 10th August, 11 on 27th August and 9 on 12th October.

DIPPER - *Cinclus cinclus*

Present as usual along almost all stretches of river. A pair was seen entering possible nest-sites in the bank of the River Whitewell at Waterfoot on 17th March. At the same place 2 males were in territorial confrontation on 21st October. 2 pairs nested in the W.B.S. 3km stretch of the River Limy.

WREN - *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Continues to do well after a series of mild winters.

DUNNOCK - *Prunella modularis*

Common resident. Song and territorial activity were noted from the end of February.

ROBIN - *Erithacus rubecula*

Common resident. Pair-formation was in full swing during the second half of January. A fledged juvenile was seen at Healey Dell on 22nd May.

BLACK REDSTART - *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A first-winter female was present at Higher Hollinbank, Musbury from 6th August to 11th August (J. & B. Rostron).

REDSTART - *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A male was in song at Clough Bottom from 23rd April to 26th June and one in the Cowpe valley on 16th May.

WHINCHAT - *Saxicola rubetra*

2 pairs were present on the south side of Musbury Tor on 1st May and 1 pair on 2nd June. A pair was also present in the Dean valley on 5th May. It is probable that nesting attempts were made at both these sites. At Clowbridge a pair was feeding 3 fledged young on 28th June. During autumn passage 2 were at Clowbridge on 24th August, 1 on 30th August and 2 at Clough Bottom on 13th September.

STONECHAT - *Saxicola torquata*

A pair was present at Holden Wood in January and February. One was seen at Clowbridge on 29th April. There were several records during autumn passage - 3 at Clowbridge on 10th October, 2 adults and an immature at Clough Bottom on 20th October, singles at Loveclough and Plunge on 10th and 18th November and a female at Spring Mill on 21st, 27th and 28th November.

WHEATEAR - *Oenanthe oenanthe*

First spring arrivals were one on Musbury Tor on 15th March, one at Clowbridge on the same date and one at Plunge on 16th March, then many records from 27th March to 5th April. No large numbers were seen on spring passage at Clowbridge this year. There were 11 at Cowm on 3rd April and 7 at Plunge on 10th April. General opinion was that numbers were down this year. The autumn passage was also rather sparse. Latest were singles at Clowbridge on 15th September and Lower Bagden on 20th September.

RING OUZEL - *Turdus torquatus*

A pair was present on White Hill, Broadley on 25th April and 4 (thought to be a male and 3 females) at the head of Alden on 1st May - all probably on spring passage.

BLACKBIRD - *Turdus merula*

A change in behaviour to territorial and mating behaviour was noted as early as 19th January but first song was heard on 7th and 20th March. Fledged young were seen in a garden at New Line on 17th May and in Waterfoot on 28th May. There are some indications of a fall in numbers. Records of autumn and winter flocks have often been 8 to 10 but 5 to 7 is more usual now.

FIELDFARE - *Turdus pilaris*

Flocks of 50 - 100 were seen in all parts in January and February and in early March. One larger flock of about 250 was seen in the Whitworth area on 7th February. Numbers fell to 20 - 40 later in March and into April, the latest being one at Fern Isle on 27th April. Return was from 9th October - a single at Spring Mill, then 24 there on 11th October. On 15th October over 100 flew southeast over Musbury. On 30th October a huge flock of over 1,000 flew west in low cloud at 0845hrs over Musbury. Numbers then reduced. There were 62 at Cowm on 13th November and 28 there on 19th December.

SONG THRUSH - *Turdus philomelos*

In song from 23rd January to 29th June in all parts of the valleys. Six pairs were recorded in the tetrad for the Haslingden area in the count for the Lancashire Breeding Atlas. Sightings at the moorland area of Cowm on 8th and 17th October and 19th December and 2 feeding with Blackbirds at Lomas Lane on 18th November may well have been continental birds.

REDWING - *Turdus iliacus*

Numbers were low, often single figure flocks, from January to March. Largest flocks were 25 at Rawtenstall on 13th January and 35 over Wallbank on 5th March. Latest were 2 on 18th March. Numbers were again low in the autumn. First back were 15 at Broadley on 14th October. There were 20 at Musbury on 28th October, 17 at Cowm on 13th November, but other flocks were only in single figures and there were none after 27th November.

MISTLE THRUSH - *Turdus viscivorus*

A flock of 12 was seen at Newchurch on 6th January. First song was heard on 29th January and pairs were reported from several sites in late January and February. On 16th April a male was singing from a tree in Asda car park. A fledged juvenile was seen at Clough Bottom on 1st June and one at Farm Hill, Edgeside on 4th July. Family groups had joined to form a flock of 14 at Musbury on 22nd July. Later, 3 were regular here from September to the end of the year.

SEDGE WARBLER - *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Present at Holden Wood on 12th and 13th June and nested later at the upper end of the reservoir. Still present on 18th July and 1st August. One also at Buckhurst - Deeply Vale on 6th June.

WHITETHROAT - *Sylvia communis*

Singing males were heard at Chapel Hill from 5th June to 15th June, Healey Dell on 26th May and Hurst Lane, Rawtenstall to 17th June.

GARDEN WARBLER - *Sylvia borin*

The only record is of one at Calf Hey on 13th June.

BLACKCAP - *Sylvia atricapilla*

There were records of singing males from at least 17 sites, 6 in the Healey Dell area alone. The earliest date was 4th April at Healey dell but most dates were from 27th April and the latest was 13th October at Spring Mill. There were no records of wintering this year.

WOOD WARBLER - *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

A male was in song at Broadley, Healey Dell on 1st May and was still present on 3rd and 4th May.

CHIFFCHAFF - *Phylloscopus collybita*

One was heard at Calf Hey on 19th April and one at Clough Bottom on 14th May. A nest with 6 eggs was found in Lumb Vale on 7th May and young were present on 14th May (N. Burke). Chiffchaffs were present at Healey Dell from 7th April to 23rd July and 2 males were in song there on 13th May. Latest dates were 25th September and 18th October at Spring Mill.

WILLOW WARBLER - *Phylloscopus trochilus*

First dates were from 3rd to 7th April at Healey Dell and 9th April at Holden Wood and Bacup. There were 13 males in song between Wallbank and Broadley on 3rd May. Nesting was, as usual, widespread. Latest was one which bathed in a garden bird bath in Waterfoot on 24th September.

GOLDCREST - *Regulus regulus*

Present in small numbers all year. Song was heard at Healey on 3rd April and Clowbridge on 7th April. Goldcrests were described as numerous at Calf Hey in March. Post-breeding flocks were 10 at Spring Mill on 6th October, 5 at Alden on 11th November, 5 at Healey on 23rd December. There were the usual records of ones and twos in gardens, parks etc., often with wandering tit flocks during autumn and winter.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER - *Muscicapa striata*

First back was one at Hare Clough, Musbury on 1st May. Pairs were recorded at West End Park, Helmshore (feeding young in July), Spring Mill, Stacksteads, Reedsholme, Stoneholme (feeding young 18th June), Prinny Hill, Haslingden, Strongstry (feeding young 18th July), Woodlea, Waterfoot, Lower Cowpe valley. This indicates about 8 pairs.

LONG-TAILED TIT - *Aegithalos caudatus*

Flocks of 9 to 11 were recorded during both winter periods from most areas of woodland and gardens. Visits to garden nut feeders were reported from New Line, Waterfoot, Haslingden and Wallbank. During the nesting season pairs were recorded at Healey Dell, Helmshore, Buckden, Alderbottom, Ravenshore and Spring Mill.

COAL TIT - *Parus ater*

Now a regular visitor to garden nut feeders but often absent from gardens during the nesting season. A note from a garden in New Line mentioned a return of Coal Tits on 17th May after a gap of over 2 months. Likewise, an adult returned to a garden in Waterfoot on 11th June and was accompanied by two immatures on 18th June. Coal Tits are seen regularly in winter in mixed flocks with other species of tits, Goldcrests and Treecreepers, especially in coniferous woodland such as those at Grane, Clough Bottom and Clowbridge.

BLUE TIT - *Parus caeruleus*

Common and widespread, now taking full advantage of the facilities provided in many gardens. Two pairs were building on 7th April in two nest boxes only 15 yards apart in a garden in Waterfoot. Another pair was building in a nest box in Wallbank on 17th April. On 30th May Blue Tits were seen carrying food at several sites both at nest boxes and to holes in walls and buildings. First fledged young were seen on 12th June.

GREAT TIT - *Parus major*

In vigorous song from 19th January and visiting a nest box from 21st January. One pair brought a fledged brood of about 6 to a peanut feeder in Waterfoot on 15th June. A family group of 5 or 6 was also regular at a peanut feeder in a garden in New Line during June.

NUTHATCH - *Sitta europaea*

One visited a nut feeder in a garden in New Line on 18th April - a first record for this area. There were further visits of singles on 23rd June and 16th October (S.E. Brook). On 16th June a pair was seen feeding young at Strongstry by one of the teams taking part in the Bird Race.

TREECREEPER - *Certhia familiaris*

Seen regularly in the woods at Grane but did not use the nest site in the anglers' hut this year. Recorded also at Lea Bank and Healey Dell.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE - *Lanius excubitor*

One was seen from 7th to 11th April at Watergrove reservoir less than half a mile outside the Rossendale boundary.

JAY - *Garrulus glandarius*

Now present in all wooded areas as far up the Irwell valley as Bacup Park and along all the tributaries. Jays nested in both front and back gardens of a house along Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall where at least 3 young were seen. 5 over Reedsholme on 7th July were probably a family group. In the Whitworth valley Healey Dell is the main centre and 4 were seen here on 4th July, probably another family group. There were 2 records of Jays visiting gardens to feed on peanuts - at Waterfoot on 13th April and at Goodshaw in November.

MAGPIE - *Pica pica*

Common and widespread. Numbers over 100 were again noted at a winter roost in the Whitworth area. Communal activity was recorded from January to early March - 10 at Edgeside, 10 over Waterfoot, 15 at Britannia. 14 at New Line were described as 'chasing through the trees' into Moorlands Park, probably to do with mate-selection. Such behaviour was described by E. Ward in a paper printed in British Birds vol. 45 (1952) after a winter of observations at a Magpie roost at Newchurch. The paper was quoted in the references in 'The Magpies' by T.R. Birkhead (Poyser 1991). It is of interest to note that other members of the crow family - Jackdaws and Rooks - also carry out noisy chasing flights at the same time of the year.

JACKDAW - *Corvus monedula*

Still thriving. 40 - 50 were regular over the Waterfoot colonies and 90 were counted round the Ilex chimney on 8th February. 20 were seen for the first time at Higher Hollinbank, Musbury and there were 60 at a roost with 20 Carrion Crows at Calf Hey near the car park. There were records of 17 with Rooks at Healey Dell in March and December.

ROOK - *Corvus frugilegus*

No complete census this year but there were 60 nests at Rook Hill on 31st March, about the usual number. There were 19 nests at Healey Dell on 25th April. On 16th May a flock of 90 on The Hile, not far from Rook Hill, included fledged juveniles. On 5th September a flock of 100 was present in the same area. 30 at Balladen on 18th November were probably from the rookery at Belmont School. There were 20 in the Healey Dell area on 12th October. Not much in evidence in winter, though some visit the rubbish tip.

CARRION CROW - *Corvus corone corone*

Common in all habitats and probably still increasing. Some large numbers have been recorded in winter flocks and even in summer flocks, presumably made up of unmated birds and failed breeders. 70 were feeding among cattle at 1,300 feet altitude on Brandwood Moor on 22nd January attracted by the supplementary cattle food. There were 23 at Goat Hill Quarry, Whitworth on 16th January. There were flocks of 40 at Musbury and at least 200 at the communal roost above Calf Hey. Summer flocks included 40 on 11th May and 100 on 2nd June on Musbury Tor.

RAVEN - *Corvus corax*

Regular sightings in the Musbury area from 5th February to 16th March and again on 31st December by J. & B. Rostron, including the carrying of twigs on 5th and 8th March and also carrying a white egg on one occasion. There were also regular sightings of Ravens flying over the Whitworth valley from 10th January to 8th May.

STARLING - *Sturnus vulgaris*

Flocks numbering from 100 to 200 in January increased to 300 to 500 in February as the spring passage got under way. Post-breeding flocks of 150 on 29th May and 25 on 11th June were seen at Musbury with many juveniles. The autumn passage brought some of the largest flocks recorded for a while - 300 at Shawclough on 25th October, 600 on The Hile on 9th November, 400 at Loveclough on 11th November, 1,500 on The Brex on 14th November, over 2,000 at Musbury on 18th November and 25th December.

HOUSE SPARROW - *Passer domesticus*

Records received showed the usual pattern of small colonies of 8 to 12 in many areas and some larger groups - 20 in Deardengate, Haslingden and 20 to 27 in a garden at Wallbank in late winter and again in November. Noisy spring gatherings were noted on 24th January and 28th February. Fledged young were seen on 17th May at New Line, 20th May at Wallbank and 25th May at Waterfoot.

TREE SPARROW - *Passer montanus*

One at Buckhurst, Deeply Vale on 6th June was the first recorded since 1992.

CHAFFINCH - *Fringilla coelebs*

Described as numerous in the Musbury area in February as winter flocks found food available and 8 to 12 daily along Musbury Road in the vicinity of beech trees. First song was heard on 28th February at Healey Dell and Fearn Moss and 1st April at Waterfoot. Post-breeding flocks of 20 were noted in Musbury and Helmshore and 6 to 12 elsewhere.

BRAMBLING - *Fringilla montifringilla*

Few records this year. There were 3 at Crawshawbooth on 11th January. The following winter a single with Goldfinches visited a nut feeder in a garden at New Line and a female was seen at Cowm on 26th December.

GREENFINCH - *Carduelis chloris*

Records of winter flocks were - 15 at Goodshawfold on 3rd January, 13 at Cowm on 10th January, 6 at Waterfoot in February. 2 to 6 were regular at nut feeders. Song was heard at Waterfoot on 20th February and Healey Dell on 28th February. Post-breeding-season flocks were 8 at Shawclough on 13th July, 16 at Healey Dell on 19th July, 40 at Musbury on 29th September and 10 at Cowm in November.

GOLDFINCH - *Carduelis carduelis*

Winter flocks of 8 to 12 were seen in most parts and 45 on Musbury Road on 18th February. Post-breeding flocks indicated a successful season - more than 100 at Musbury on 31st August, 70 remaining in the area in October and 25 on 24th December. Flocks of 15 to 20 were recorded in the Whitworth area from August to December.

SISKIN - *Carduelis spinus*

Fewer records than in recent years. In the eastern area of Rossendale there were 8 at Healey Dell on 7th February, 32 there on 20th February, 8 at Cowm on 20th March and at New Line a pair on nut feeders on 13th March and 3 on 18th March. On the western side up to 8 were regular at nut feeders in Rawtenstall from January to March. The only record for the second winter period was a single at Healey Dell on 9th October.

LINNET - *Carduelis cannabina*

Return dates were 20 at Ogden reservoir on 15th April and 1 flying north over Goodshawfold on 25th April. A pair was at Clowbridge on 29th April, 9th and 15th May but there was no evidence of nesting. A pair was nest building at Loveclough on 2nd May. 2 pairs were present at Chapel Hill where up to 10 pairs have been seen in past years. A female had returned to the C.B.C. plot on 15th May and a pair was carrying nest material on 6th June. A pair was present in the Dean valley on 5th May and 2 pairs at Musbury on 2nd June. A flock of 12 at Musbury on 31st August and 25 on 16th September indicated successful nesting. Numbers were certainly lower than those of the last few years and the autumn passage at Clowbridge was described as 'unremarkable, with no flock exceeding 10'. There was a slightly better picture from the Whitworth area - 3 pairs at Syke reservoir, a flock of 8 at Cowm on 22nd May, 43 at Jennie Rough on 31st July, 27 at Spring Mill on 11th August and 23 at Spring Mill on 17th October.

TWITE - *Carduelis flavirostris*

Records suggested probable nesting in 4 areas. On 29th March 4 males were singing and 3 females seen at Lee Quarry and a flock of 30 was seen in the area on 18th October. 15 had returned to the Alden area by 10th February and a flock of 50 - 60 was seen at Musbury Head on 26th September. From 2 to 4 were seen regularly at Cowm from 3rd April to 11th July and a male was in song there on 15th May. There were 3 pairs in the Naden valley on 11th July. Other records were of one at Deeply Vale on 6th June and 3 on The Hile on 5th September.

REDPOLL - *Carduelis flammea*

There were 30 at Haslingden on 24th January and there were records of singles calling in flight over the Whitworth area on 13th March, 3rd April and 3rd May. 2 pairs nested near Pickup Bank.

COMMON CROSSBILL - *Loxia curvirostra*

Calling at Calf Hey on 18th June and there were 3 at Clough Bottom on 1st July.

BULLFINCH - *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Not widespread but seen regularly in a few favoured locations. 4 to 7 were present in a garden near Rossendale General Hospital and in the hospital grounds, Whitaker Park and at Road End. A pair nested in a Holly bush in the garden of the house. Present in Healey Dell throughout the year - juveniles were seen on 19th July and 21st September. Also recorded regularly in the Limy Valley and present during the nesting season at Gin Clough, Tip Lodge and Lea Brook. 2 fledged young were seen on 28th July. Elsewhere, a male fed in a garden at New Line on 28th June. There were records for Calf Hey on 18th May, 27th May and 18th June.

SNOW BUNTING - *Plectrophenax nivalis*

During February there were at least 55 in the Bull Hill area of Holcombe Moor on 5th February and 2 at Ding Quarry on 27th February. In the second winter period there were singles over Cowpe Moss on 21st November and Bull Hill on 23rd December.

REED BUNTING - *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Mid-winter presence was again noted at Cwm reservoir and it was also favoured as a nesting area - 4 males were in song there on 2nd May. Similar reservoir-side sites were also chosen at Holden Wood, Clough Bottom, Clowbridge, Cowpe and Spring Mill. A pair arrived back on the C.B.C. plot on The Hile rather late - 20th June, perhaps after a failed attempt elsewhere.