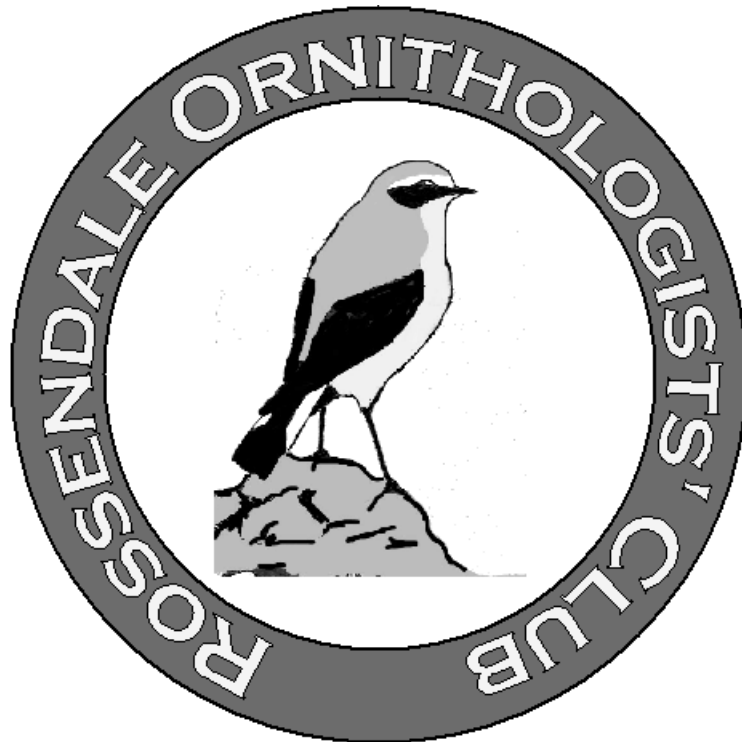

Rossendale Ornithologists' Club

Bird Report



2000

BLACK-THROATED DIVER - *Gavia arctica*

One was at Holden Wood from 24th - 27th December.

LITTLE GREBE - *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

One arrived at Troy Quarry by 23rd March. Successful nesting occurred here. The nest contained 5 eggs on 19th April. A pair was present at Shortclough - once the most successful nesting site - on 9th March and a single on 26th March. There was no further indication of nesting. Post-breeding, one was at Calf Hey on 26th July, 2 there on 20th August and again on 8th and 17th September. At Clowbridge there were 2 on 30th August and one at 5th October.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE - *Podiceps cristatus*

From 1 to 3 were recorded at all three Grane reservoirs on dates from 4th March to 6th June, most sightings being on Ogden, not the usual nesting locality. There was only one record from Holden Wood where emergent vegetation at the inlet end has provided suitable nesting habitat in past years. Elsewhere there were singles, presumably returning birds, at Clough Bottom on 15th April and at Clowbridge on 21st March, 7th, 8th and 20th May. Disturbance by mink has been suggested as a problem at Holden Wood in previous years. At Spring Mill, one and then a pair were seen from 28th March to 26th June and a juvenile from 3rd to 24th September. Post-breeding there were singles at Clowbridge on 16th July, 7th and 8th October, then from 11th to 13th and 19th to 26th October, 19th to 21st November and 30th December. Ones and twos were at Spring Mill to 21st November.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE - *Podiceps nigricollis*

An immature was present at A.M.R. from 28th August to 4th September. There are 2 previous records - one also for 28th August at A.M.R. in 1983 and one at Calf Hey on 19th and 20th August 1995.

CORMORANT - *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Two at Ogden on 4th March and one flew north over Clowbridge on 17th September. One also at Spring Mill on 17th September.

GREY HERON - *Ardea cinerea*

Again widespread throughout the year along the Irwell and its tributaries and at lodges and reservoirs. Some individuals again showed great disregard for the presence of humans, especially the one also seen in previous years on the River Irwell near to busy roads and footpaths adjacent to the Asda store in Rawtenstall. Another visited the garden fishponds in Booth Road, Waterfoot though these are now protected by wire mesh covers. Up to 6 were at Spring Mill in July. There were no reports as to whether last year's nesting had continued at Waterfoot.

MUTE SWAN - *Cygnus olor*

No records this year.

WHOOPEE SWAN - *Cygnus cygnus*

There were 3 adults at Clowbridge on 13th October and 3 flying north over Wallbank on 19th October.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE - *Anser brachyrhynchus*

In early January there was a distinct southward movement, possibly ahead of cold weather. On 4th January large flocks of at least 250 and 100 flew south over Musbury, half-an-hour apart just before a heavy snowstorm and on 5th January a further 20 flew over at 08.15. On 8th January several hundred flew south over Holcombe. On 20th February 240 in 4 groups flew over Whitworth to the northwest. One at Ogden on 7th April was possibly an escaped bird. One thought to be a hybrid escape was at Clough Bottom in June last year.

LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - *Anser erythropus*

One seen at Troy Quarry on 23rd July was probably the one seen with Canada Geese in this area for several years, although it was not recorded last year.

CANADA GOOSE - *Branta canadensis*

Numbers were lower than in recent years in late winter with flocks of only 17 to 27 at Ogden, New Line and Tip Lodge. 60 flew northeast over Stacksteads on 5th January suggesting some movement away. Nesting was recorded at Ogden where one was sitting on 20th April, Weir Dam where there was a pair with 5 young on 4th June. Two pairs were at Cowpe reservoir on 29th February and one pair from 4th to 11th May but there was no successful outcome and the geese had left by the end of May. There was also a pair at Clough Bottom on 14th May. There was no nesting at Clowbridge for the second year in succession. Post-breeding season there were 20 at Ogden and 40 at Holden Wood on 21st August, 52 at Clowbridge on 24th August and 80 at Ogden on 5th September. Numbers fell again as last winter to maxima of 16 to 27. Records of 20 flying northwest over Musbury on 20th August and 60 to northwest on 1st September suggested a movement to different winter quarters. There were 18 at New Line on 26th November.

BARNACLE GOOSE - *Branta leucopsis*

One feral bird was at Cowm on 29th February.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE - *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

One, presumably an escape flew over Clowbridge on 4th June.

MANDARIN - *Aix galericulata*

A male was present with domestic ducks and Mallards at Lumb Bridge, Irwell Vale in October or November.

WIGEON - *Anas penelope*

A male was seen at Spring Mill on 13th March. There were 3 at Clowbridge on 19th September (A. Jones) and a female on flooded fields at Broadley, Whitworth on 25th September. A pair visited Ogden on 28th December.

GADWALL - *Anas strepera*

An unusual record of a pair at Spring Mill on 23rd December.

TEAL - *Anas crecca*

Numbers were again low and records few. On 16th January there were 2 at Holden Wood and on 13th February 4 at A.M.R. A female at Cheesden Bar on 22nd May continued the trend of possible nesting in this area. In the autumn numbers were slightly improved with 2 at Clough

Bottom on 21st August, 5 there on 10th September and 11 on 10th October. There were 2 birds at Clowbridge on 21st September (K.G Spencer) and singles there on 27th September and 26th December (A. Jones). Three were feeding on flooded fields at Broadley on 10th September and one on 19th September. Singles were present at various sites in the Whitworth area on dates in October, November and December.

MALLARD - *Anas platyrhynchos*

As last year, numerous and widespread with some of the largest flocks counted along rivers and at small lodges where there was supplementary feeding by the general public e.g. 35 at New Line on 6th August, 60 on the Irwell in Rawtenstall town centre. Elsewhere, the largest counts were 35 at A.M.R. on 17th September, 28 at the Grane reservoirs on 12th March, 12 at Shortclough on 9th March. There were the usual records of females with up to 8 ducklings at reservoirs and along the rivers.

PINTAIL - *Anas acuta*

A male and 4 females were present at Spring Mill on 29th October.

SHOVELER - *Anas clypeata*

At A.M.R. an immature was present on 22nd and 23rd July and 4 females or immatures on 21st August.

POCHARD - *Aythya ferina*

The scarcity and, indeed, virtual absence noted in autumn and winter last year has continued. At the moment of writing the only records are of a pair at Clowbridge on 30th September and a pair at Holden Wood on 25th December. None was seen at Spring Mill.

TUFTED DUCK - *Aythya fuligula*

Small numbers, usually one or two pairs were seen at Holden Wood from 26th February, one pair remaining to 9th April. On 24th March 3 were at Holmes Terrace Lodge, Townsendfold. At Clowbridge there were 5 on 16th April and 19th April, then 2 to 4 from 22nd April and a pair on 10th, 11th, and 20th May and 2 birds on 8th June. A male was also at Clough Bottom on 21st April. All moved on for the breeding season. There was a continuous presence at Spring Mill from 5th March to late November with a regular one or two pairs but no evidence of nesting. During the autumn at A.M.R. there were 3 on 21st August, 11 on 29th August and 5 or 6 during September and ones and twos to 27th November. At Clowbridge 2 flew in from the northeast on 8th June but flew off almost at once. There were ones and twos at Clowbridge on 17th July, 23rd and 30th August, 4th, 23rd and 27th September.

COMMON SCOTER - *Melanitta nigra*

Two males were at A.M.R. on 21st, 22nd and 23rd July. A female was at Clowbridge on 19th November.

GOLDENEYE - *Bucephala clangula*

At Spring Mill there was a continuous presence in numbers up to 8 from 2nd January to 28th April. At Clowbridge numbers up to 8 were recorded from 11th January to 4th April. There were only occasional singles at A.M.R. during this time, latest being 3 on 9th April. A single female, presumably the same individual, was seen at Calf Hey on various dates from 13th February to 9th April. A female was seen at a lodge in Deeply Vale on the unusual date of

4th June. Was this perhaps the lone female seen at Calf Hey, possibly having some disability? A single female was again recorded at A.M.R. on various dates in July and August. At Clowbridge the first returning bird was a female on 19th November and 2 on 21st November. Three females were present on 15th December, then 4 females and a male to the end of the year. At Spring Mill a pair was present on 29th October then 1 to 5 to the end of the year.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER - *Mergus serrator*

A single female with Goosanders at Spring Mill in January was probably the one recorded in several years since 1997. It was again seen on dates from 1st November to 31st December.

GOOSANDER - *Mergus merganser*

Present as usual mainly on spring and autumn passage with some remaining for the winter. There were flocks from 12 to 23 at Spring Mill in January and February. Elsewhere, there were 13 at Ogden, 14 at A.M.R. during this period. Latest were 13 at Ogden and Calf Hey on 10th March and a pair at Spring Mill, then a female at A.M.R. as late as 4th May. Return began with 4 at A.M.R. on 15th July - an early date. There were up to 7 at A.M.R. by 29th August. First back at Spring Mill were 9 'redheads' on 2nd September then varying numbers to the end of the year with 14 on 26th December. The largest flock was one of 50 at A.M.R. on 17th September. At Clowbridge the first return was of 2 on 11th September, then small numbers to the end of the month and a male on 27th November. During December there were small flocks at Grane on 29th December and 14 at Spring Mill on 26th December - probably the start of the northward movement. A single female at Lench Lodges on 13th December was unusual - a first for this location in a small water area.

SPARROWHAWK - *Accipiter nisus*

Again recorded throughout Rossendale with records received from Grane, Musbury, the lower Whitewell valley, Clough Bottom, Stacksteads, Healey Dell, Wallbank and Spring Mill. Three flying together over Musbury Tor on 1st September suggested successful nesting. On 19th August one was eating prey on a drystone wall on The Hile. One flushed by J. Webb on 5th February was found to be eating Grey Partridge.

HONEY BUZZARD - *Pernis apivorus*

One identified by J. Webb over Harden Moor and Ashworth Moor then flying down the valley towards Norden was seen for about 15 minutes from 14.50 on 22nd September. The record has been submitted to the Rarities Committee.

COMMON BUZZARD - *Buteo buteo*

One was seen by the Countryside Ranger over Grane in January. On 22nd February one flew south over Clough Bottom. On 9th April one was chased by Crows over Deeply Vale - an unusual appearance at this time of the year. On 20th June a probable was seen soaring over the Cowpe valley. In the autumn - the more usual time for Rossendale records - one was seen over Helmshore on 1st September. There was also a second-hand report of one soaring over Stubbins in late August, possibly the same bird.

OSPREY - *Pandion haliaetus*

One was seen moving south over Spring Mill on 22nd September.

KESTREL - *Falco tinnunculus*

There was evidence of nesting pairs at Musbury (2 pairs), Clowbridge, Hile / Brex, Lee Quarry, Cheesden, Ashworth Moor, Buckden, Healey Dell. At Musbury the female was seen daily at Higher Hollinbank from February and the male arrived on 12th March. On 2nd July 2 juveniles were airborne and 2 adults and 3 young were seen on a wall 200m from the nest on 4th July - almost the same date as in 1999 (J. & B. Rostron). The nest at Clowbridge was on an electricity pylon and 4 pairs were seen hunting in July

MERLIN - *Falco columbarius*

One pair reared 5 young. A second pair were in noisy display activity on 24th April but were not seen again. A third pair was also seen in April but only the male in May and June. Post-breeding, singles were seen in Plunge Valley on 1st July, Alden on 20th August, Spring Mill on 26th September, Cowpe valley on 1st October and Mitchell House reservoir on 5th November. On 31st December 2 were chasing passerines at Clough Head, Grane.

PEREGRINE - *Falco peregrinus*

There were a number of sightings from 16th January in northwest Rossendale. A male was found dead in Hutch Bank Quarry on 23rd March. One was seen in the Stacksteads area on 24th May. Two pairs nested. At one site the birds were poisoned but were replaced by another pair which reared two young. There were several sightings later in the year. A female was at Clowbridge on 27th July. One circled high over Waterfoot on 14th September with Starlings balled into defensive flocks beneath. One was seen on Ilex chimney on 9th October, one near Rossendale General Hospital on 25th December chasing Jackdaws and one over Wallbank on 27th December.

RED GROUSE - *Lagopus lagopus scoticus*

On 2nd January a covey of 8 was seen on Cowpe Moss and pairs recorded here on 17th March and 6th May. On 4th March 4 were present on Musden Head Moor near the head of the Musbury Valley and 6 on Musbury Heights on 7th May. A male was present on Haslingden / Oswaldtwistle Moor in May. On 26th December 2 were seen at the head of the Alden Valley.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE - *Alectoris rufa*

A report from J. Rostron in September said that a farmer from the Musbury area had "put some down" 2 years ago and now at least 20 were feeding in his turnip field. On 4th June one was seen at Buckhurst.

GREY PARTRIDGE - *Perdix perdix*

A pair was seen regularly in the area between The Hile and Edgeside Lane and a covey of 7 was present on 28th September. A pair was seen at Clowbridge on 13th June. Lower down the Limy valley a covey of 7 was present on 19th October. Elsewhere, a pair was seen at Broadley, Whitworth in April and a covey of 7 in November. There were 2 pairs in Deeply Vale, a pair at Cribden End, both in May and a pair at Musbury, also in May. A covey of 7 was seen at Hutch Bank Quarry on 27th December.

PHEASANT - *Phasianus colchicus*

Heard and seen almost daily in the area near Musbury Tor where there were at least 3 males and 5 females in September and October. Elsewhere pairs were seen at Clowbridge on 23rd April and in Deeply Vale on 5th April and 22nd May.

MOORHEN - *Gallinula chloropus*

Common and widespread at lodges, reservoirs and along rivers. Nesting late in the year - newly hatched young were seen at Clowbridge on 11th September and one of the adults was nest building on the same day.

COOT - *Fulica atra*

At Holden Wood a single was present from 8th January and a pair on 19th March then 5 on 23rd March. Also in March one was present at the lodge near All Saints playing fields on Haslingden Road. The other area of occupation was Deeply Vale where there were 2 pairs on 9th April and 3 pairs on 16th April. On 4th June a pair was seen here with 5 young.

OYSTERCATCHER - *Haematopus ostralegus*

One was at Spring Mill on 21st February and one had arrived back in the Buckhurst area on 5th March then Oystercatchers were present on 9th April, 24th April (a pair), 30th April and 21st July. A pair was also present in Deeply Vale on 4th June. Birds on spring passage were also recorded at Clough Bottom (27th April) and Ogden (22nd May, 3 birds and 25th May a single). A pair was present in the Spring Mill / Whitworth Quarry area on dates from 28th March and 4 were seen at Spring Mill on 16th June. One was at Clowbridge on 25th July and 2 on 8th August.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER - *Charadrius dubius*

Up to 3 were present at Ogden reservoir and at the old bleach works site at Holden Vale from 26th June to 30th July. Later 2 pairs were present. One pair hatched eggs. One was seen at Clowbridge on 11th July. Two juveniles were present on 7th July and 1 on 18th July. An immature was at A.M.R. on 3rd September.

RINGED PLOVER - *Charadrius hiaticula*

During autumn passage at Clowbridge there were 6 on 11th September, 4 on 14th September and 3 on 24th / 25th September. One was at A.M.R. on 27th August.

DOTTEREL - *Charadrius morinellus*

The only record was of one at Top o' Leach on 6th May.

GOLDEN PLOVER - *Pluvialis apricaria*

There was a return to nesting areas from 6th February when there were at least 12 on Cowpe Moss, then 8 on Knowl Moor on 17th March, 12 on Haslingden Moor on 23rd March and 2 on Burnt Hill, Musbury on 11th April. On 29th June there were at least 20 Golden Plovers spread over Cowpe Moss and almost all were on territory. On 7th July similar numbers were seen but in groups of 3 or 4 and again well spread over the moor. All birds were adults (R. Ives). N. Burke reported at least 12 pairs in this area. Eight nests were found but only one hatched eggs. Six nests suffered egg-predation by Crows. A Peregrine was seen to kill a Golden Plover at one site. These are probably the highest numbers recorded for breeding season presence and it is to be hoped that some pairs managed to fledge young. On 26th December 2 were present on Hailstorm Hill.

LAPWING - *Vanellus vanellus*

Only small numbers were recorded in the late winter period with ones and twos at Grane on 16th January and 13th February and no records for A.M.R. 20 were back at A.M.R. on

13th March. Flocks of 17 and 10 had returned to The Hile area on 5th March but the 17 flock flew across the valley to Seat Naze. On 12th March there were 6 in fields near A.M.R. On 23rd March 11 were back on Haslingden Moor. On 15th March 10 flew over New Line. On 26th February 12 were on territory at Loveclough. Three pairs held territory on the old C.B.C. plot on The Hile. One pair had a nest c/4 on 23rd April. The eggs had gone by 30th April. A second attempt two fields away produced 2 young, seen on 27th June when about a week old. Elsewhere there were records of 5 pairs in the Musbury Tor area; 10 to 15 pairs in Deeply Vale, some with young; 30 pairs on Seat Naze; 3 pairs on Cowpe Lowe; 2 pairs Holden Wood; 4 pairs near the White Horse, Helmshore; 2 pairs Hutch Bank Quarry. Post-breeding flocks included 150 at A.M.R. in July, 70 at A.M.R. in September and 140 in October, 25 at Clowbridge in September, 100 at Mitchell House reservoirs on 15th October and 200 on 17th December. About 50 flew over Haslingden Golf Course on 27th December.

DUNLIN - *Calidris alpina*

One had returned to Cowpe Moss by 22nd April. Three were seen on Cowpe Moss on 5th, 6th and 7th May. R. Ives had six "contacts" with Dunlins on Cowpe Moss on 29th June and again on 6th July. One on Haslingden Moor on 7th May was the first seen there for many years (N. Burke). On the autumn passage one was present at Ogden on several dates around 27th June and one at A.M.R. on 25th August.

JACK SNIFE - *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Three were seen on Cowpe Moss on 2nd January and one there on 6th February. A single was also recorded at Nutshaw Hill on 22nd February. In the autumn one was on Whitworth Lower End Moor on 19th November.

COMMON SNIFE - *Gallinago gallinago*

Records in winter and early spring were - 1 on Cowpe Moss on 15th January, 4 on Great Hameldon on 21st January and 5 there on 5th February, 2 on Cowpe Moss on 6th February and 5 on 29th February. Possibly on nesting territory were singles on Cowpe Moss and Knowl Moor on 17th March, on The Hile on 6th April and on Reaps Moss on 26th April. On 25th April 5 males were drumming in the Swinshaw Moor area and a pair was seen at Holden Wood on 26th April. One was present on Cowpe Moss on 6th and 7th May. Snipe were present at Spring Mill / Lower Bagden during the nesting season. On autumn passage there were 32 at A.M.R. in August and then 2 at Clowbridge on 23rd August and 15 at A.M.R. on 17th September. Later, on Great Hameldon there were 5 on 13th November and 3 on 27th November, at Spring Mill 3 on 27th December and at Holden Wood 2 on 29th December.

WOODCOCK - *Scolopax rusticola*

There were several records of ones and twos from 20th January to 22nd March at Clowbridge, Heap Clough, Cowpe Moss and Deep Clough. First of the autumn was one at Fern Isle on 5th November and also two here on 19th November. One was on Great Hameldon on 13th November and 2 there on 27th November. Also on 27th November one was seen on Nutshaw Hill. On 30th December 2 were present in woodland at Clowbridge.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT - *Limosa lapponica*

One was seen at Clowbridge reservoir on 10th October (B. Lee).

WHIMBREL - *Numenius phaeopus*

On 4th May 3 were seen in flight low over A.M.R. then away to the north. On 11th September one flew south over Clowbridge, calling.

CURLEW - *Numenius arquata*

An early return. There were singles at Calf Hey and Spring Mill on 26th and 28th February then records for Musbury, Haslingden Moor, Holcombe Moor, A.M.R., and Nutshaw Hill from 4th to 30th March. In the nesting season there were records of 2 pairs on Higher Tanpits (Musbury), 10 Curlews at Alden on a B.B.S. count for the B.T.O., 4 pairs on Cowpe Moss, 2 pairs on Bull Hill, 1 pair on Brex Height, 2 to 3 pairs on Haslingden Moor, 2 pairs at Naden, one pair at Wet Moss. Presence was also noted on Great Hameldon, Nutshaw Hill, Crown Point, Knowl Moor and Clough Bottom. R. Ives noted an early departure this year. Flocks were seen as early as 13th June in the Crown Point area and none was seen after this date. He suggests this may have been caused by nesting failure due to heavy rain in early June. Few birds were recorded on late summer passage, which is unusual. One flew west over Spring Mill on 18th July. One was at Clough Bottom on 13th August and one flew west over Ogden on 12th September. One flew over Lench on 26th December, possibly a hard-weather movement.

REDSHANK - *Tringa totanus*

Scarce in north Rossendale with "a poor spring at Clowbridge" (R. Ives), the only records being one on 31st March and one on 25th April. Also at Clough Bottom the only records were for 5th and 7th April when 2 birds were present. Most records were for the Cheesden / Deeply Vale area where there were one or two birds on dates between 16th April and 1st July and on Knowl Moor where there were 2 pairs on 28th April. One, presumably on passage, was at Clowbridge on 7th July.

GREENSHANK - *Tringa nebularia*

An immature was present at Spring Mill on 10th August and one, possibly the same bird, was at A.M.R. on 11th August.

COMMON SANDPIPER - *Actitis hypoleucos*

First return was of one at Clowbridge on 18th April, then 2 at Ogden on 20th April. By 22nd April there were 4 at Clowbridge and on 24th April 4 at Clough Bottom. At Clowbridge 3 pairs were regular through May and display and pairing were observed. There was also a pair on the River Limy at Loveclough, which was unusual. The sandpipers remained at Ogden and on one occasion in early July a pair and 4 singles were seen in flight, probably a family group. There were also birds present at Calf Hey and Holden Wood. A pair was recorded at Clough Bottom during May and 3 on 14th May. There was also a breeding season presence at Spring Mill. Most had left Clowbridge by 22nd June, then a gap until 7th July when 2 were seen. Later dates there were singles on 15th August and on 7 dates to 19th September. Two were at A.M.R. on 21st August and 1 on 27th August.

BLACK-HEADED GULL - *Larus ridibundus*

Numbers were about 600 at Stacksteads Tip during January and February and 1,000 to 1,500 roosted at Clowbridge reservoir in January falling to 400 later in the month. On 3rd March there were about 100 at the Tip and on 5th March 200 on The Hile. By 9th March there were very few at the Tip. At Clowbridge there was a single immature on 24th March then 13 on 9th April and 2 on 6th May with a last date there of 1 on 11th May. First returns were 1 at

Shawclough on 9th July, 3 flying over Waterfoot on 11th July and 3 at Clowbridge on 15th July. Winter flocks were slow to build up and numbers difficult to estimate with the closing down of Stacksteads Tip. This caused some confusion among the returning birds. They flew towards the Tip on the usual flight-lines which have been used for at least 50 years, then came back down the Irwell valley to settle on the playing fields along The Glen - as many as 270 by 21st November. There were 40 at A.M.R. on 17th September, 80 at Holden Wood on 22nd October and 50 at A.M.R. on the same date. There were 60 at Loveclough on 27th July and numbers at the Clowbridge roost were about 1,000 by 20th November. Winter counts included 300 at Holden Wood on 25th December and 100 at Spring Mill in December.

COMMON GULL - *Larus canus*

Some large flocks were again present in January when there were 100 at Clowbridge on 11th January and 57 on 13th January. During the same period there were also 23 at Spring Mill, 11 at New Line and 50 at A.M.R. There were still good numbers at Clowbridge on 14th and 17th February and they were still there on 9th March, the last being with Lesser Black-backs on 31st March. Returns in small numbers were recorded from 14th July at Spring Mill but return elsewhere was later than usual - one at Rawtenstall on 11th October and one over Waterfoot on 20th October. There were 5 at Clowbridge on 27th October and 20 there on 11th November. One to three were regular with about 70 Black-headed Gulls on The Glen fields at this time. By 20th November at least 25 were using the Clowbridge roost.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - *Larus fuscus*

As usual, the mid-winter numbers were in single figures. The spring influx began about 19th March when at least 100 flew up the Irwell valley towards Stacksteads. An increase was again noted on 31st March when 200 moved in the evening from the north to Clowbridge then west - a movement repeated during the following few weeks, then changing to a movement into the valley during the morning. On 9th April there were more than 50 in the A.M.R. area. During July and August only a few gulls were seen in the Waterfoot, Stacksteads and Cowpe area and on 30th July there were none on Cowpe reservoir - a most unusual occurrence, this being the "loafing" place between feeds at the tip. However, there were 100 at A.M.R. on 23rd July and for a week after 5th August 400 - 500 fed in newly ploughed fields at Musbury. Numbers from 50 - 200 were recorded at A.M.R. and Clough Bottom in August and September with a maximum of 400 at A.M.R. on 8th August. Numbers then decreased - a flock of 17 (only 2 adults) moved down the Whitewell valley on 15th October and there were 2 at Calf Hey on 22nd October. The mid-winter presence of 100 at Ogden on 29th December was unusual as numbers are generally at their lowest at this time.

HERRING GULL - *Larus argentatus*

During the mid-winter period 100 to 150 were regular at Stacksteads Tip and on 16th January there were 100 at A.M.R. On 11th January 200 - 300 came to Clowbridge before dusk from the Burnley direction but moved on to the west, probably to Guide reservoir. 100 - 150 continued to use Stacksteads Tip to about 9th March. Returning gulls in the autumn were 50 on 5th December and similar flocks approaching Stacksteads Tip then moving elsewhere. On 26th December there were 60 at Clowbridge, 200 at Clough Bottom and 400, including a large proportion of immatures, flew up the Limy valley on the same date. These figures and dates suggest a similar pattern to previous years but the birds are presumably feeding at other tips such as Horncliffe.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - *Larus marinus*

During the mid-winter period there were up to 9 at Stacksteads Tip and 8 to 11 were present at the Clowbridge roost in January and February with 7 at A.M.R. on 2nd January. The latest record was of one on 10th March. The first returns were an adult and an immature at Clowbridge on 15th December. There were 3 on 26th December increasing to 13 adults and 1 immature on 30th December. On 26th December there were 2 at Clough Bottom.

FERAL PIGEON - *Columba livia*

There were the usual town-centre colonies. On 5th July and other dates about this time at least 20 were feeding on Fearn Moss playing fields and schoolyard.

STOCK DOVE - *Columba oenas*

In late January 5 fed regularly on manured fields at Lench. Pairs were recorded during the nesting season at The Hile, Lee Quarry, Stacksteads, Clough Bottom, Deeply Vale, Chapel Hill, Lumb, Heap Clough, Calf Hey, Spring Mill and Cowm.

WOODPIGEON - *Columba palumbus*

No large winter flocks were recorded, all being between 15 and 25 birds. Courtship and display activity were noted from 20th March. On 14th April a pair started nest building in a Cupressus in a garden in Waterfoot. Nesting was again widespread. Post-breeding flocks recorded were larger than last winter - 230 over Fern isle Wood on 13th November and 300 over Healey Dell on 16th November, 70 in Crawshawbooth Wood on 8th October. Some very large winter flocks were seen - 500 at Dunnockshaw on 15th December, 240 at Wallbank on 31st December and about 1,000 in the Cliviger area on 17th December (K.G. Spencer). Song and display flights were noted at Waterfoot from mid-December.

COLLARED DOVE - *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common and widespread and very active in gardens. Song and territorial activity begins in mid-winter and mating attempts were seen as early as 25th January. A pair brought 2 fledged young to a bird table in a garden in Waterfoot on 1st May.

CUCKOO - *Cuculus canorus*

Becoming a rare bird in Rossendale. One was calling at Holcombe Head on 24th April. One was heard also at Whitewell Bottom in May but not heard again. Not heard in the Cowpe valley this year and many former habitats are deserted.

BARN OWL - *Tyto alba*

One was seen at the end of October near Pennine Road, Bacup.

LITTLE OWL - *Athene noctua*

A similar pattern to last year. There was evidence of pairs holding territories at Musbury (fledged young seen from 20th June), Alden, Deeply Vale, Balladen, Clowbridge (nest in the pump-house on 26th June), The Hile, Scout Quarry, Chapel Hill, Hutch Bank Quarry, Naden, Lee Quarry, Spring Mill, Jenny Rough (2 juveniles on 16th July).

TAWNY OWL - *Strix aluco*

In the Limy valley there was much vocal activity in January and February at Reedsholme. There were probably 2 pairs there and another at Constablelee. One roosted in the old wood at

Clowbridge during spring and a pair nested in the vicinity. Two pairs nested in the Grane area and one reared 2 young. Tawny Owls were also present at Musbury and were heard regularly in garden trees on Booth Road during January and February and presence was noted around B.R.G.S. The well-known roosting hole near Warth Bridge was again occupied to April, then irregularly in May and June. It was re-occupied from 21st September.

LONG-EARED OWL - *Asio otus*

A pair again nested in the Grane area and 3 young birds were calling in late June.

SHORT-EARED OWL - *Asio flammeus*

No nesting was discovered but one was at Crown Point on 31st May and then on dates from 13th September to 9th November. On 18th September there were 4 at Clowbridge and another report said that 4 had been seen at one time at Crown Point.

SWIFT - *Apus apus*

Arrival dates were from 5th to 8th May. Six were back over Rawtenstall town centre on 18th May. A pair was flying to the old nest site in Park Road on 10th May. There were double figure counts at Clowbridge on 21st May and 20 at Stubbins on the same date. During the nesting season there were about 60 over Park Mill, Helmshore on 22nd July and 8 over the Gaghills colony on the same date. During May and June there were usually about 200 over Clowbridge reservoir and 700 to 1,000 in mid-June. On 24th June there were about 100 over Deeply Vale. These larger flocks had presumably gathered in areas where insects were more plentiful during a period of cooler weather. By 7th August there were only 13 at Clowbridge and the latest there were 12 flying east on 13th August. Elsewhere, there were a few over Fearn Moss on 8th August, 2 over Waterfoot on 11th August and 6 over Chapel Hill on 20th August - the latest date.

KINGFISHER - *Alcedo atthis*

There were no breeding records but one was reported as being seen along the River Whitewell above Piercy during April and May. Post-breeding, one was recorded at Cowpe Lodge on 1st October, at Wallbank on 3rd September and a Meadow Lodge, Healey on dates from 29th September to 25th November. Also recorded were 2 at Calf Hey on 26th July, one at Loveclough in early August and 2 at The Holme on the Irwell on 21st July. One was seen along the Irwell at Stacksteads on 15th December and there was a mid-winter sighting of one at Wallbank Lodge on 23rd January.

GREEN WOODPECKER - *Picus viridis*

There were regular records for the Alden / Musbury area throughout the year and also at Spring Mill where young were seen on 26th July and 3rd September. Present also in Healey Dell. None was heard in Crawshawbooth this year until 25th June. There were records for Calf Hey on 29th February and 16th October.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER - *Dendrocopos major*

There were records throughout the year from all wooded areas. Breeding season records were from Calf Hey (drumming 6th March), Stacksteads (at least 2 pairs), Rushbed (pair nested and fledged young mid-May), Healey Dell (drumming on 11th and 19th March and 6th April). Birds continued to visit nut feeders - a single regular at Higher Hollinbank from 1st to 13th June - the same period as last year. There was a similar short-term visit by a male to a feeder

in Waterfoot from 9th to 20th August and once on 8th November. In a garden in New Line there were visits - sometimes of 2 males from 31st January to 21st February.

SKYLARK - *Alauda arvensis*

One was back on Great Hameldon on 21st January and 5 there on 5th February. Several had returned to Cowpe Moss and were in song by 6th February and there were 3 on Red Moss on 20th February. On 4th March there were 10 present at Head of Musbury and on 5th March 4 were in song on The Hile. By 17th March good numbers were in song around Clowbridge reservoir and on 8th April 7 were singing at the same time. On 21st May Skylarks were carrying food on The Hile. On 7th June 13 were counted on the B.B.S. square for the B.T.O. at Alden. On 26th April there were about 20 on Reaps Moss and on 6th May about 30 on Cowpe Moss. 18 pairs nested on the old C.B.C. plot - a continuing improvement. Two were still in song on The Hile on 16th July. Movement was noted on 8th October when 6 were seen flying south over Waterfoot and on 15th October 4 flew south over Clowbridge.

SAND MARTIN - *Riparia riparia*

Earliest were 3 over Wallbank on 25th March and then one at Mitchell House reservoir on 25th April and one at Spring Mill on 27th April. There were 2 at the Stubbins colony on 21st May, about 6 on 4th June and 4 on 13th June. Further up the Irwell in the vicinity of the old colony at Townsendfold, singles were seen on 25th May and 11th June. Two pairs nested in the riverbank at Goodshawfold but the nests were destroyed by high river levels after heavy rain on 3rd June (R. Ives). On the autumn passage one was with Swallows at Clowbridge on 16th July and 3 at Spring Mill on the same date. There were singles at Spring Mill on 11th and 14th July and at Clowbridge on 23rd July and 11th September.

SWALLOW - *Hirundo rustica*

Earliest were singles at Deeply Vale on 3rd April, Spring Mill on 8th April and Goodshawfold on 10th April, then a cluster of records from 15th to 21st April. At Clowbridge there were 35 to 40 from 3rd to 11th May and in May / June an average of 30 round Higher Hollinbank, Musbury. About 4 pairs nested on the old C.B.C. plot - a normal figure, 4 pairs at Lower Tippet Farm, Lench, 3 pairs in a small building at a quarry in Grane. On 27th June adults were feeding 5 or 6 fledged young on wires along Coal Pits Lane. On 13th July there were 8, mostly immatures over Farm Hill. Movement was noted from 4th September to the end of the month mostly in small groups. Latest and the only October record was a big movement of about 200 over Cowpe and moving south 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 or three in Deeply Vale on 14th May appears to be the only record.

MEADOW PIPIT - *Anthus pratensis*

A flock of 20 was back on The Hile on 6th February. Elsewhere, apart from odd winter sightings of 2 or 3 most returns were in March - 12 at Musbury on 4th March, 12 on Haslingden Moor on 23rd March. The breeding population had returned to Clowbridge by 24th March when many males were in song and flight display. Nesting was again widespread. On 7th June 63 were counted in the B.B.S. square at Alden. On 2nd May a nest with 4 eggs was found at Buckden and on 27th June one with 6 eggs on The Hile. On 21st May food was being carried by adults on The Hile. There was a good build-up of flocks and passage during September - 50 at Clowbridge on 11th, 100 at Spring Mill on 17th, 200 at Clowbridge on 24th, 100 at Spring Mill and 40 at Clough Bottom on 1st October. At Clowbridge passage peaked at 200 to 250 on 4th October then reduced to 20 or less. There were 9 at Broadley on 26th December.

YELLOW WAGTAIL - *Motacilla flava*

The only records were during the autumn passage. On 16th July one flew over The Hile to the west. On 16th August one was calling in flight over Broadley and on 20th August one calling, flying south over Chapel Hill. On 10th September one was feeding with Pied Wagtails at Spring Mill and on 29th September one flew high over Waterfoot to the south.

GREY WAGTAIL - *Motacilla cinerea*

Pairs were returning to nesting areas from 13th February (Reedsholme), Calf Hey on 26th February and Lee Mill on 12th March. Two pairs were in territorial conflict at Lea Brook on 9th March. Three pairs nested on the W.B.S. transect on 3km of the Limy - a good year. Pairs were recorded at Waterfoot, Longholme, Ogden, Musbury, Clough Bottom, Spring Mill and Rawtenstall centre. All 3 pairs on the W.B.S. survey reared 2 broods. Adults were seen with at least 2 juveniles at Spring Mill on 27th June and 2nd July. Post-breeding and passage records were - 2 or 3 by a garden pond in Waterfoot on 16th September, 1 or 2 at Ogden on 17th September, up to 4 with Pied Wagtails at Clowbridge in September and one at Clough Bottom, one on the Whitewell at Waterfoot on 20th October and one feeding on the main path in Edgeside Park on 24th October.

PIED WAGTAIL - *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

There were 25 at E.B.S.W. on 23rd January and a distinct movement from then to about 25th March. On The Hile / Fearn Moss area there were 4 on 3rd February, 18 on 6th February, 15 on 14th March. At Musbury Road there were 5 on 9th and 15th February, 7 on 23rd February, 14 on 26th February, 12 on 28th / 29th February and 20 on 3rd March. On the W.B.S. site 2 pairs were back by 7th April. Nesting pairs were widespread. Fledged young were seen on 28th May at Clowbridge where three pairs held territory. Pied Wagtails were described as being quite numerous around Ogden reservoir and at Musbury and young were seen at Carr Lane. From 21st August the roost in Rawtenstall re-formed. On 21st August at least 30 flew from the cricket field to trees and roofs in Kay Street and there were over 100 here at dusk on 17th / 18th September (R. Ives). During September there were also 10 to 17 at Clowbridge, 9 to 11 at Spring Mill. On 8th October a move to the south was noted at Clowbridge together with Meadow Pipits and Skylarks the last on passage being seen on 17th October.

DIPPER - *Cinclus cinclus*

Again present on all stretches of the Irwell and its tributaries and extending into the hitherto polluted area above Lee Mill. On 8th May Dippers were seen flying into the Irwell tunnel at

Stubblee Bridge, New Line. Evidence of successful nesting was - one carrying food at Ogden on 7th April, 2 pairs on the W.B.S. stretch of the Limy, both fledging young in early May, an adult with a fledged juvenile seen on the Whitewell at Waterfoot on 12th July. Post-breeding there were records from Holden Wood, Hareholme, Lee Mill, Clowbridge and Loveclough from September to the end of the year. Males were in song at Loveclough on 13th November and Clowbridge on 30th December.

WREN - *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Remaining numerous and widespread in suitable areas of gardens, parks and woodland. Song was noted from 10th March. 15 were counted in the B.B.S. square at Alden on 30th April. A pair was carrying feed all day at Musbury on 13th May. On August family groups were seen at Hare Clough and Longfield House.

DUNNOCK - *Prunella modularis*

Common and widespread and feeding regularly at bird tables and beneath nut feeders. Song was heard from 6th February.

ROBIN - *Erithacus rubecula*

Status as usual. Pair-formation had taken place by 11th January in a garden in Waterfoot. On 9th July 4 fledged young were seen and on 11th July 2 immatures were present in a Waterfoot garden. Winter song was heard from 11th September, rather later than usual.

BLACK REDSTART - *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A female was seen at Spring Mill on 22nd October. A female or immature bird was seen on 3rd November near to The Waggoner's pub (K.G. Spencer).

REDSTART - *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Nested at Clowbridge. The male was seen from 22nd to 25th June, together with a juvenile on the latter date. A male was constantly in song at Clough Bottom from 28th April to 15th June but probably failed to attract a female as there was no evidence of successful nesting. On autumn passage females were seen at Chapel Hill on 20th August and at Deeply Vale on 28th August.

WHINCHAT - *Saxicola rubetra*

During spring passage the first was one at Clowbridge on 3rd May, then 3 there on 4th May, 2 on 6th May, 2 on 11th May and 1 on 13th May. A pair with 2 newly fledged young were seen at Clowbridge on 16th June and a pair with 2 juveniles on 14th and 16th July. There were 5 present on 25th July. Numbers during autumn at Clowbridge were 6 on 23rd August, 2 on 30th August, then 3 on dates from 11th to 17th September, 1 on 26th September and the latest - 2 on 2nd October.

STONECHAT - *Saxicola torquata*

There has been a remarkable increase in the number of records of Stonechats this year, following a gradual increase in the past 2 to 3 years. Most records are for the vicinity of reservoirs - Grane, Clowbridge, Clough Bottom, Cowpe, Cowm, and Spring Mill but also for upper valley sides at Alden, Musbury, Naden, Heap Clough, and Lench. In The Atlas of Wintering Birds in Britain and Ireland (Lack, 1986), E.D.H. Jackson writes of Stonechats - "There may be a marked preference for some sites in winter and others during the breeding

season....by some time in October all pairs occupy the territories in which they will remain for the winter." Most records for Rossendale are from late July to mid-March, presumably being for pairs settling in to winter territories. The last local nesting was that recorded by J.B. Sykes from 1976 to 1978 in the Holcombe area. This year has seen the first nesting since then, by a pair in the Naden valley. The nest held 6 eggs on 10th May (N. Burke). It is of interest to note that E. Ward found a pair holding territory in Naden as long ago as 1949.

WHEATEAR - *Oenanthe oenanthe*

First records were of one at Clowbridge on 15th March and one at Higher Hill on 17th March. At Clowbridge there were 2 males on 25th March then a gap until 10th April. From 2 to 7 were recorded there on dates from 18th April to 10th May during the spring passage movement. On 30th April there was a count of 8 in the B.B.S. square at Alden. On 7th May there were 5 by Rooley Moor Road. During the breeding season there were records of pairs present on The Hile (male in song 30th April), Fo' Edge (feeding young 7th July), Low Lodge, Head of Lench (2 juveniles 29th June), Scout Moor, Cragg Quarry, Lower Bagden (3 juveniles 12th July), Spring Mill (pair with 4 juveniles 2nd July), Cwm reservoir (adults and 2 juveniles 16th July). Autumn passage was noted through August and September, the latest being one on 2nd October at Clowbridge.

RING OUZEL - *Turdus torquatus*

There were records during the spring passage of a male at Alden on 9th April and a male on Nutshaw Hill on 4th May. Two males at Lee Quarry in May.

BLACKBIRD - *Turdus merula*

Pair-formation was noted on 2nd February and a female was carrying straw on 23rd March and dead leaves on 26th March. First song was heard at Spring Mill on 21st February. In a garden in Waterfoot where the first fledged young are usually seen in May and June, none was seen until 11th August. A pair in Waterfoot was still feeding young from 20th to 25th August. A pair in Waterfoot was still feeding young from 20th to 25th August. Autumn flocks included 12 in Bacup Park on 17th September, 20 at Broadclough on 5th November, 6 at Musbury and 6 at New Line in November, 20 at Broadclough in December and 10 at New Line in December.

FIELDFARE - *Turdus pilaris*

Flocks of 30 to 60 were seen in most areas from January to 24th March when 60 flew to the west over Dunnockshaw. Autumn return began in October with numbers mainly from 10 to 35 but a larger flock of 200 was at Cribden Clough on 10th October. Some large flocks were seen during November - 300 moving west down the Irwell valley on 4th November, 300 and 200 at Higher Hollinbank and Musbury on 14th November, 120 at Broadley on 25th November. Numbers also rose towards the end of December - 60 in Irwell Vale on 26th, 100 and 40 at Musbury on 31st December.

SONG THRUSH - *Turdus philomelos*

Song was heard on 30th January in Rawtenstall and then from most parts of the valley intermittently until 28th April. Four were heard in song in the Haslingden area and 4 were in song at E.B.S.W. on 19th March. One report said that it had been a much better year for Song Thrushes. Adults were feeding 3 or 4 mature nestlings in a nest at St. Saviour's Church on 18th April. There were records of singles to 28th December.

REDWING - *Turdus iliacus*

Present in small flocks, mostly 4 to 20 from January to 10th April. One larger flock of 30 was recorded at Marl Pits on 14th January. Return was from 16th October, again with mostly small flocks through to 29th December. A peak of movement occurred in late October and early November when there were 120 at Grane on 22nd October, 70 at Broadley on 5th November and 85 at Broadley on 9th November.

MISTLE THRUSH - *Turdus viscivorus*

First song was heard on 23rd January and 5th February. Pairs were in evidence from this time at Lench, Chapel Hill, New Line, Musbury, and Broadley. A nest with 3 eggs was found at Broadley on 30th March. Family groups and larger flocks were seen from late June - 4 at Musbury on 25th June then up to 12 during July and August and 9 on 11th September (J. & B. Rostron). Up to 4 began coming to Rowan trees in a Waterfoot garden from 14th August. There was a large flock of 24 at Musbury Road on 9th December. Song was heard in Waterfoot on 5th and 10th December, Hall Carr on 7th December and Crawshawbooth on 15th December.

SEDGE WARBLER - *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

One was present at last year's site at Holden Wood on 25th June and a pair on 23rd July. One was still there on 15th October. At Ewood Bridge a male was in song on 5th June and was seen on 11th June. One was at Clowbridge in August during autumn passage.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER - *Locustella naevia*

A pair bred near Gambleside at Clowbridge and provided opportunities for many observers to hear 'reeling' song between 30th April and 7th August. At Hoddlesden Moss a male was heard on heather moor on 5th July.

WHITETHROAT - *Sylvia communis*

There was a continued presence along the Irwell valley between Townsendfold and Stubbins from 27th May to 11th June. During autumn passage one was at Spring Mill on 17th and 20th September.

GARDEN WARBLER - *Sylvia borin*

A male was in song at Townsendfold on 27th May and 4th June.

BLACKCAP - *Sylvia atricapilla*

First arrivals were from 20th to 24th April at Broadley, Reedsholme, and Healey. Singing males and pairs were recorded from at least 25 sites. Two fledged young were seen at Broadley on 29th July. The latest record was of a male at the old sewage works near Wallbank on 24th September.

CHIFFCHAFF - *Phylloscopus collybita*

Singing males were heard at Healey, Wallbank and Fern Isle Wood in the Whitworth area from 25th March and song was heard as late as October. A female was carrying nest material at Healey Hall Wood on 22nd April (J. Webb). Also, in Brooks' Wood, Crawshawbooth song was heard from 7th April to 12th August. Elsewhere, there were singles at Strongstry on 21st May, Calf Hey on 25th June, Rawtenstall on 1st July, Buckden Clough on 13th June. At Clowbridge passage birds were present on 23rd and 27th August and 25th September.

WILLOW WARBLER - *Phylloscopus trochilus*

First arrivals were at Deeply Vale on 9th April and Clowbridge on 10th April. On 2nd May about 20 were singing in the Strongstry area (D. Nuttall). Seven males were in song in the Clowbridge area through the summer and 4 pairs had young in mid-June (R. Ives). Nesting season presence was again widespread and the species numerous. Movement was in progress by late July when one was feeding in a garden in Waterfoot. Latest was one at Spring Mill on 30th September.

GOLDCREST - *Regulus regulus*

Numbers have been relatively low this year. Most records have been of 1 or 2 often with flocks of tits the largest being of 6 at E.B.S.W. on 23rd January. On 18th March there were 2 at Musbury, on 23rd March 2 in the wood at Troy Quarry. On 13th February Goldcrests were heard in conifers at Clowbridge and on 19th March there were 4 in Gin Clough. Two at Lea Brook on 18th April were said to be unusual there at this date. On 4th June 3 at Calf Hey were probable breeders. Singing males were heard at Broadley and Healey Hall Wood during June.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER - *Muscicapa striata*

In the Limy valley a pair was inspecting a nest site at Reedsholme on 21st May and the male of another pair was in song at Crawshawbooth on the same date. One had also arrived back at Strongstry on 21st May, one at Cowm on 20th May and one at Clough Bottom on 1st June. A pair had arrived back at the site on the River Whitewell at Waterfoot on 12th June and were seen on dates to 6th July. A pair had arrived back in Stacksteads on 14th May and 2 broods were reared here. The pair at Reedsholme had young on 30th July. On passage 2 were seen at Clowbridge on 24th August and one with Whinchats on 30th August.

LONG-TAILED TIT - *Aegithalos caudatus*

Flocks of 3 to 8 were recorded in January and February. A pair was nest building at Haslingden Sports Centre in March. Breeding pairs were noted at Reedsholme, Lea Brook, Marl Pits, and Deeply Vale. Post-breeding flocks of 9 to 12 were recorded from several areas and there were visits to nut feeders in gardens at Waterfoot on 16th October and New Line in November.

MARSH TIT - *Parus palustris*

One was present at Broadley - Healey Dell during November and December (J. Webb). There are 4 previous records - Redisher, February 1976; Crawshawbooth, February 1987; Calf Hey, May 1997 and Helmsore, April 1998.

COAL TIT - *Parus ater*

Becoming increasingly adapted to suburban garden life. On 11th and 12th February a pair was in conflict with Blue Tits in the vicinity of a nest box and the male was singing regularly to at least 13th May. In June a mixed flock of juvenile Coal, Blue and Great Tits visited a peanut feeder in the garden for 2 or 3 weeks. In June a family group of at least 4 was seen at Calf Hey. Coal Tits continued to feed at peanut feeders throughout the winter and were often seen making their own caches of sunflower seeds under dead vegetation.

BLUE TIT - *Parus caeruleus*

Remaining common and widespread but one report said that no large flocks had been seen in the late winter period. Blue Tits were already prospecting nest boxes in New Line on 18th January and in Waterfoot on 14th February. The latter pair were nest-building on 24th April

and carrying food from 22nd May, often from a nearby peanut feeder, breaking the nuts down to small pieces if they came out whole. The young fledged early on the morning of 12th June. The presence of nut feeders is obviously an advantage, helping the survival of juvenile tits. On 10th August there were 10 juvenile Blue Tits on the feeder at one time. Likewise there were 26 juveniles on 3 nut feeders at New Line on 11th July and Rev. S. E. Brook commented that the feeders were used more at this time than in winter.

GREAT TIT - *Parus major*

Status much as usual. Song was heard from 12th January and on 26th January 3 were in aggressive courtship behaviour at Lench. Nesting was again widespread and groups of 6 seen on 17th September at Bacup Park and on 5th November at Broadclough. There were 5 at Broadley on 19th October and at least 10 there on 26th November. More usually seen in pairs.

NUTHATCH - *Sitta europaea*

Present in the Healey Dell area throughout the year with 11 records on dates from 9th January to 16th December. One was present at the feeding station at New Line on 29th February where it was first recorded on 18th April last year with further visits on 23rd June and 16th October (S.E. Brook).

TREECREEPER - *Certhia familiaris*

There were records for a pair at Staghills on 23rd January, one at Whitaker Park on 14th January, a pair at Reedsholme on 21st April, 1 at Calf Hey on 26th June, 1 at Clough Bottom on 8th October and 1 in the Moorlands Park area of Bacup on 30th November. Also seen at Healey Dell from 3rd May to 31st October.

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*

There were regular sightings at Healey Dell with 6 on 15th April and 4 on 28th April; in the Helmshore / Musbury area; from Waterfoot to Stacksteads where one made an attempt to land on a hanging nut feeder; Calf Hey; Lumb Vale, where a nest with small young was found on 29th May.

MAGPIE - *Pica pica*

Common and widespread. The usual communal gatherings were noticed from 13th January to 26th March with from 9 to 14 birds engaged in what are thought to be mate-selection activities. In an area of Musbury where usual numbers are recorded as being from 6 to 8, there were 14 on 26th February. On 26th March a pair was seen carrying twigs. On 25th May one was seen killing and eating a juvenile Starling on a roof in Waterfoot. On 24th June 2 adults with 2 fledged young were present at Higher Hollinbank. On 9th October 5 together with 2 immature jackdaws were feeding on sunflower seeds on a lawn in Waterfoot. In October 30 were feeding with 20 Carrion Crows on a manured field at Shawclough and on 28th December 14 were feeding on a turkey carcass in a garden on New Line.

JACKDAW - *Corvus monedula*

Probably still spreading and increasing in numbers. On 24th January there were 15 on a building in Bacup. On 28th January about 100 circled over Waterfoot to the east. On 3rd February 30 indulged in aerial chases over B.R.G.S. On 23rd March about 30 were present at the old goods yard building at Waterfoot and 40 at Ilex Mill chimney. Up to 9 were seen daily at Higher Hollinbank - a new area last year. Adults were carrying twigs on 26th March. On 26th May a fledged juvenile dodged among the feet of passers-by to snatch some food in Kay Street, Rawtenstall. On 5th July there were about 10 juveniles feeding on Fearn Moss. On 21st September a flock of at least 200 Jackdaws and Crows were playing in the updraft above the steep valley side at Lench.

ROOK - *Corvus frugilegus*

No full count of rookeries but there were 60 nests at Rook Hill on 2nd May - about the usual number and 22 nests at Healey Dell on 13th June. Useful counts of flocks in the vicinity of rookeries were 70 at Crawshawbooth on 4th February, 72 at Balladen on 29th February when courtship feeding was observed, 30 at Broadclough. A single pair was nest building at St Veronica's, Helmshore on 10th March. Post-breeding flocks include 200 at Lumb Vale on 13th June. The Rooks from Rook Hill, Stacksteads often fed at the local tip. Since this has closed down they have changed habits to feed at Horncliffe Tip. During June and July up to 170 regularly came in from the southwest over Cowpe Low to the rookery. This is similar to the normal post-breeding flock from this rookery of 60 pairs plus immatures. In good years the number is nearer 200.

CARRION CROW - *Corvus corone corone*

On 14th January at dusk at least 100 flew northwest from Stacksteads Tip which was due to close later in the year. On 23rd January there were about 200 feeding at Horncliffe Tip which may be expected to be taken over by gulls and corvids as a main feeding centre. Apart from these records of flock numbers appeared to be lower than usual. There were 25 on Musbury Tor on 18th March and 20 on Haslingden Moor on 23rd March. One report said that in September and October there were only 2 regulars on Musbury Tor. During the nesting season one was sitting on a nest in a low thorn bush on The Hile on 23rd April and a fledged juvenile was seen on 4th June. On 2nd July 2 juveniles were being fed in fields by The Glen, Waterfoot. A flock of 80 at Clough Bottom on 1st October was one of the largest. A leucistic bird was seen at Clowbridge in April and May.

RAVEN - *Corvus corax*

Present and nesting in at least two quarries in eastern Rossendale. Presence at a nest was noted on 17th April, 22nd April and 3rd June. Ravens were also recorded in the Musbury area on 30th April, 4 on 17th September, 2nd November, and 5th November. Other records were 1 to the north over Clowbridge on 16th April, a pair over Clough Bottom on 21st August, 2 over Nutshaw Hill on 3rd October. Ones and twos were seen the Whitworth area from 22nd October to 29th December.

STARLING - *Sturnus vulgaris*

In late winter recorded flock numbers were mainly between 50 and 150 and one flock of 200 at Edgeside on 2nd January. On 15th March there were 600, presumably on spring passage, at Clowbridge. During May many adults carried food from hillside fields to nests in buildings in

the valley. On 25th May a juvenile was killed and eaten by a Magpie on a roof in Waterfoot. On 26th May fledged juveniles were feeding with adults on a lawn in Waterfoot. Post-breeding flocks were 150 at Musbury on 22nd May, 200 on 5th June, 500 on 7th June. Flocks of about 200 were recorded in several parts in September and October then there was an increase to 500 on 11th November and at least 5,000 in fields near Clowbridge on 13th November moving on by 14th November. Also in November there were 200 with Fieldfares in Cribden Clough and 300 on Chapel Hill.

HOUSE SPARROW - *Passer domesticus*

The usual small groups were recorded, one of the largest being of 12 to 16 at Higher Deardengate in Haslingden (20 last year). Elsewhere, numbers were thought to be down with only the occasional 2 or 3 for instance at Park Road, Helmshore. A pair began visiting a nut feeder in a garden in Waterfoot in May and numbers gradually built up to 8.

CHAFFINCH - *Fringilla coelebs*

Winter flocks were small - 10 at Staghills on 20th January, 5 at Tunstead on 20th February, and 6 at Musbury Brook on 19th February. A flock of 20 at Reedsholme on 29th January was said to be the largest flock this year. First song was heard from 19th February. Numbers were a little better in the autumn, with up to 24 in the favoured area of Beech trees at Musbury. A male in song at Clowbridge on 17th October was unusual.

BRAMBLING - *Fringilla montifringilla*

There had been only a few singles towards the end of 1999 and there were no records for the late winter period in 2000. There was a limited arrival in November but no large flocks. There were 15 to 25 with Chaffinches in Fern Isle Wood from 19th November to 23rd December. In the Musbury area there were about 25 at Higher Hollinbank on 23rd November and 12 on 28th November.

GREENFINCH - *Carduelis chloris*

Only small flocks recorded during the late winter period - 5 to 10 at Cowm reservoir in January. Scarce at the garden bird feeder in Waterfoot. Song was heard from 6th March. There were 2 pairs at Stacksteads on 14th May. A pair fed a juvenile at the nut feeder in Waterfoot on 2nd July and 4 were present on 3rd July. On 7th July an immature was at the feeder on and off virtually all day. This seemed to mark the end of the observed scarcity. A regular 4 came to the feeding station, rising to 10 in September. On 11th September a flock of 45 was seen at Broadley Fold and on 27th November, 20 in High Street, Haslingden.

GOLDFINCH - *Carduelis carduelis*

There were records of late winter flocks of 5 to 10 regularly seen at Musbury, Tunstead, Crawshawbooth and one flock of over 20 at Higher Hollinbank on 11th March. Song was heard from 21st February and nesting pairs were recorded from many parts of the valley from March to July. A male was in song on 11th July in Waterfoot. Post-breeding flocks reached reasonable numbers - 25 at Shawclough on 16th July, 30 at Edgeside on 22nd August, 30 on Coal Pits Lane on 13th August, 20 at Ogden on 30th September and 25 at Clowbridge on 3rd and 4th October.

SISKIN - *Carduelis spinus*

Smaller numbers were present during late winter - 1 to 3 at Tunstead on 23rd January, Staghills on 23rd January, New Line on 31st January. A pair visited nut feeders in gardens in Helmshore and Waterfoot in late March. At the Waterfoot feeding station there was a pair on 1st April, 3 males and a female on 11th April. Later one visited a garden in Haslingden on 30th April and one was seen at Musbury on 25th April. Six flew over Wallbank on 1st May and one was seen at Grane on 7th May. Numbers were slightly larger in the autumn - 9 in conifers at Edgeside on 8th October, 1 over Broadley on 10th November, 1 at Rushbed on 21st November, 8 at Stacksteads on 12th December and 25 at Calf Hey on 9th December.

LINNET - *Carduelis cannabina*

As with Greenfinch, numbers were low early in the year. One report from Clowbridge said there were only 2 sightings of singles all spring and there was a similar position at Spring Mill and Healey. First song was reported on 3rd and 7th May. Nesting was said to be at an all-time low at Clowbridge. There were records of scattered nesting pairs at Fearn's, on The Brex, in Deeply Vale and 3 pairs near the Ski Slope. Later there were flocks of 10 at Deeply Vale, 22 at Chapel Hill. The best area, however, was at Spring Mill with flocks of 17 on 5th August, 23 on 13th August, 60 to 65 on 18th September. There were also over 50 at Jenny Rough in the Whitworth area on 22nd September.

TWITE - *Carduelis flavirostris*

Still very much in decline. There were spring records from Alden (flock of 30 on 19th March), Naden (pair on 9th April) and Lee Quarry (only a single seen on 3rd and 4th June). Also heard calling in flight over Stacksteads in the Lee Quarry area on 7th July. A pair was seen at Whitworth Quarry on 22nd April and a single on 20th May. K.G. Spencer saw and heard no Twites this year on visits to the Crown Point / Clowbridge area. Post-breeding flocks indicated a little local success - 12 at Farm Hill on the southwest edge of The Hile on 22nd August and 6 in the same area on 3rd September, 20 near Jack Lodge on 24th September, 20 at Musbury on 14th November and one at Clowbridge on 23rd September.

REDPOLL - *Carduelis flammea*

Recorded in small numbers from 4 main areas. At Deeply Vale there were records of up to 8 on dates from 14th May to 1st July. In the Whitworth area there were 20 flying over Wallbank on 8th January then on 1st May. There were singles at Clough Bottom on 2nd and 8th May. A pair nested in the area between Rossendale General Hospital and Road End.

BULLFINCH - *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

A similar pattern to last year with groups of up to 7 or 8 in a few favoured localities. In the Reedsholme / Constablelee area especially at Tip Lodge there were as many as 6 males and 2 females in January and 3 females and a male in scrub at Reedsholme on 21st and 22nd February. There were records for the Marl Pits area on 1st July, 20th August and 3rd December. The usual group was present in the gardens near Rossendale General Hospital. A pair was present at Broadley from 1st May then 4 on 16th October and 7 on 18th October with further records of 2 or 3 to 3rd December. Elsewhere, there were occasional records for Ewood Bridge - a pair on 23rd January, Calf Hey - 1 on 27th May, Helmshore - 1 in a garden on 26th March, Holden Vale - a male on 28th December and a pair on 31st December.

SNOW BUNTING - *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Main records were for Great Hameldon where 3 were seen on 5th February, a single on 22nd February. A continual presence shown by droppings was indicated throughout January and February. On 8th March one was seen on Bull Hill. Autumn return was noted when a small flock flew over the road at Deerplay on 15th October.

REED BUNTING - *Emberiza schoeniclus*

A few were again present at Cowm during January. First return at Clowbridge was on 13th February. There were 3 males holding territory by 20th April and 5 in May. A pair was feeding young on 28th May. Only twos and threes were seen here in September and October, the last 2 being on 17th October. There was an upturn in numbers this year. The old C.B.C. plot which has had only one pair for the past few years had 3 and possibly 4 territories. Nesting was recorded as usual elsewhere e.g. at Holden Wood, Clough Bottom. There was a continuous presence at Spring Mill from 3rd January. Adults with juveniles were seen in July. One or two remained into December and there were 6 at neighbouring Cowm reservoir on 27th December.