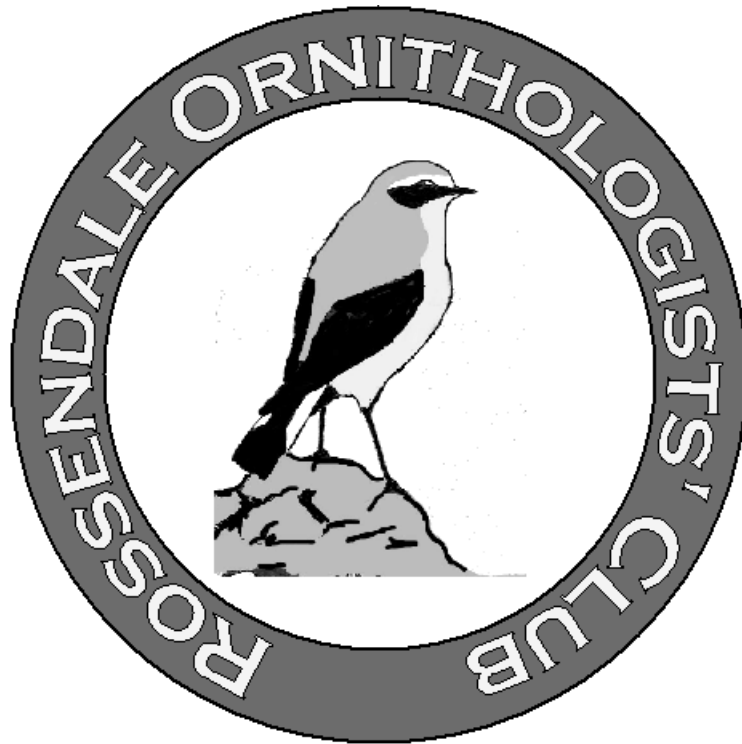

Rossendale Ornithologists' Club

Bird Report



2003

LITTLE GREBE - *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Fewer records received than last year but 2 were reported as being "at the nest site" at Troy Quarry on 6th March. On 1st January a pair was at Holmes Terrace Lodge, Townsendfold where breeding occurred last year. One bird was sitting on 19th April and on 4th August one of the pair was sitting and a juvenile bird was nearby. One was seen at Groundwork on the Bird Race on 1st June. At A.M.R. there was 1 on 4th August. Later in the year one was present at Doctor Dam Fishery, Naden on 24th October and 12th December and one was at Holden Wood on 29th November.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE - *Podiceps cristatus*

Again fewer records. A pair had returned to Holden Wood on 18th March but there were no later indications of successful breeding. There have been suggestions in recent years that nesting birds have been suffering from predation by Mink. Present at Spring Mill from 26th March to 29th December - a pair from 3rd April to 13th June. A single bird was at A.M.R. on 16th and 20th April.

CORMORANT - *Phalacrocorax carbo*

One was present at Ogden on 5th January, 2 there on 4th February and one at Holden Wood on 6th April. One flying round over Ogden on 17th May flew off in a westerly direction. Later in the year one was seen feeding at A.M.R. on 8th August and later flying off towards Naden and one at the same site on 16th November. A single bird was at Clowbridge on 31st August. Two were at Holden Wood on 26th December and one was at Cowm on the same date.

GREY HERON - *Ardea cinerea*

There were many records throughout the year of sightings along the Irwell and its tributaries and most reservoirs and lodges. Five pairs nested in the Waterfoot heronry rearing at least 7 young - 3 from one nest and one each from the other 4. The young started to leave the nests on about 6th June and all were gone by 15th June. Adults and young continued to use the nest site to roost (Kevin Lister). During June and July up to 5 were seen at Spring Mill reservoir, Whitworth, including 2 or 3 juvenile birds. There was a regular presence along the Limy valley and at the Grane reservoirs where herons were seen perching in roadside trees above Ogden. During a hard frost in late February one spent some time on the lawn of a Waterfoot garden where the pond had been visited by herons in previous years. An amusing sighting was of a heron perching on a "No Fishing" notice at Jack Lodge on 27th October!

MUTE SWAN - *Cygnus olor*

There have been few records in recent years. A juvenile was seen at Clowbridge on several dates from 5th October to 1st November. One observer (Kevin Lister) identified a blue ring on its right leg bearing the letters PAU, and a metal ring on the left leg. The bird was also seen at Shortclough reservoir during this period.

WHOOOPER SWAN - *Cygnus cygnus*

Three birds flew over Oaklands Drive, off Haslingden Road on 28th March. A flock of 7 was seen at, or in the vicinity of, A.M.R. on dates from 1st November to 16th November. It consisted of 2 adults and 5 juveniles. 7 birds, possibly the same ones, flew north up the Limy valley on 12th November. 2 flew over Clowbridge on 25th November, heading south

but being blown towards the east by strong winds. There was a single adult bird at Clowbridge on 7th December.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE - *Anser brachyrhynchus*

A flock of about 40 geese flying high to the west on 13th February were thought to have most likely been Pinkfeet. One was with 8 Canada Geese at Spring Mill on 31st March. The only record of the autumn was a flock of 50 flying southwest over Loveclough on 16th November.

GREYLAG GOOSE - *Anser anser*

On 3rd June a flock of over 30 was sighted by Bertha Rostron flying over Higher Hollinbank from the south and flying off to the northwest. A few minutes later Jim Rostron counted 37 circling Ogden reservoir and flying off to the north. 1 was with 6 Canada Geese at Spring Mill on 29th April. 1 was at Cowm on 16th June with 2 there on 27th June. On 14th December a single was with the Canada Geese at A.M.R.

CANADA GOOSE - *Branta canadensis*

As last year there were fewer wintering birds in January apart from 9 at Ogden and 45 at New Line on 5th January. At Clowbridge they were absent all winter then 3 on 25th February, 4 on 20th March and 6 in pairs on 30th March. At Grane there were 3 at Ogden on 16th February and a pair in early March. At Troy Quarry 2 were at the nest site on 6th March. The only definite record of successful breeding was of a pair with 5 young at Healey Dell on the Bird Race on 1st June but pairs were reported from several sites during the breeding season: Grane, Ewood Bridge, All Saints Lodge, Spring Mill, Loveclough, Cowpe, Lee Quarry. There were 2 pairs at Clough Bottom on 13th April. There was also a report of continuous presence at the bleaker moorland reservoirs at Scout Moor and Cowpe all year. The build-up of autumn flocks found 45 at A.M.R. on 14th September, 50 at Ogden on 15th September, 90 at Green Booth reservoir, Naden on 21st September, 34 at Clowbridge on 28th September, 40 at Ogden on 29th September, 34 at Holden Wood on 3rd October, 39 at New Line on 26th October and 40 there on 18th and 19th October, 65 at A.M.R. on 12th December.

SHELDUCK - *Tadorna tadorna*

Three were seen at A.M.R. 21st July on the way back from a ramble at Naden. On 27th July 34 flew northeast over Clowbridge.

WIGEON - *Anas penelope*

There were several sightings during autumn: at A.M.R. there were 6 on 20th September, 3 on 12th October and a male on 24th October. At least one female was at Spring Mill between 21st September and 29th December, with 2 females on the latter date. One was at Clowbridge on 13th October, a pair there on 7th December and a female at Clough Bottom on 16th October.

TEAL - *Anas crecca*

Numbers remain low. In spring 10 were seen at Deeply Vale on 16th February and 23rd March, a pair was at Holden Wood on 15th and 23rd March, a pair at Clowbridge on 7th April and a pair at A.M.R. on 23rd April. At Spring Mill 4 were seen on 26th February, a pair in April and one or 2 birds in summer and autumn. A few more were seen in the autumn when there were 4 at Clough Bottom on 7th September, 5 at A.M.R. on 14th September, 8 - 9 there on 20th September, 8 at Holden Wood on 28th September, a female and an immature at Holden Wood on 18th October, 2 at A.M.R. on 16th November then 4 or 5 females at Holden Wood

to 6th December. At Clowbridge numbers in autumn were the best for some time - mostly single figures but a count of 24 on 10th October was exceptional.

MALLARD - *Anas platyrhynchos*

Counts along the rivers again exceeded those at the reservoirs. Numbers at Grane and A.M.R. were mostly in single figures though Holden Wood had 15 on 23rd September and 11 on 2nd November. More favoured were Cowm - 40 on 24th August, 50 on 7th September and New Line which had 20 on 7th September and 25 on 2nd October. On 10th January there were 65 on the Irwell near Asda and 45 on Limy at Lea Brook. Breeding was widespread with pairs appearing in nesting areas from early March. On 19th July there were 3 females each with at least 4 young. An interesting note was of a female at Ogden with 8 young apparently guarded by a Canada Goose for about a fortnight. On 19th October there were at least 80 on the Irwell from Rawtenstall town centre to Irwell Vale including at least 50 near Asda. The latter site has probably the largest single flock in Rossendale - 79 were there on 18th September, 80+ on 22nd November and 70 on 28th December.

PINTAIL - *Anas acuta*

The only record this year was of 2 birds - either females or first-winter males - on 20th September at A.M.R.

POCHARD - *Aythya ferina*

Numbers are still low. At Clowbridge the regular 7 noted by Bob Ives in November 2002 remained until 25th February when there were 6, then only 1 on 6th March. First to return was one at Clowbridge on 7th September with a pair there on 30th and 31st October. Also a male at Holden Wood on the same date, being seen on several dates to 14th December. There were 3 males at Holden Wood on 6th December.

TUFTED DUCK - *Aythya fuligula*

Small numbers again, often only single wintering males - at Clowbridge and New Line. Twos and threes were noted on spring passage at Holden Wood on 1st March, Clowbridge on 15th March and Clough Bottom on 13th April. Singles and twos were at Clowbridge to 7th April and at Calf Hey and Holden Wood to 1st June but there was no indication of breeding. Numbers were slightly up on the autumn passage. One to 3 were seen at Cowm, New Line, Clowbridge during August and September. Later there were 4 at A.M.R. on 21st September, 4 at Cowm on 5th October, 10 at Clowbridge on 24th October and 7 there on 30th October, with smaller numbers present until the end of the year. Similar numbers were present at Spring Mill during the same period.

COMMON SCOTER - *Melanitta nigra*

Six males were at A.M.R. on 18th July then 3 males and a female on 8th August (John Webb).

GOLDENEYE - *Bucephala clangula*

Again numbers were down. Wintering birds at Clowbridge numbered only 3 or 4. Last of the year was a pair seen on 3rd and 7th April. Similar numbers, sometimes only singles, were seen at Calf Hey, A.M.R., Cowpe and Naden on dates to 6th April (male and 2 females at Calf Hey). In the autumn singles were at Clowbridge on 8th and 9th September and there were 3 there on 24th and 30th October and 7th December with a similar pattern at Spring Mill - a poor showing in comparison with previous years.

GOOSANDER - *Mergus merganser*

The large flocks which were a feature of the 1990s are no longer seen (e.g. 87 at A.M.R. in February 1997). Numbers between 3 and 6 were recorded from January to 6th April at A.M.R., Grane, Clough Bottom, Jack Lodge, Holmes Terrace and on the Irwell at Townsendfold. One larger flock was one of 18 at A.M.R. on 16th February. Return began in late August with 8 redheads at Spring Mill on 29th and on 7th September 6 redheads were at Clowbridge. On 14th September 8 were on the Irwell at Ewood Bridge and 3 at A.M.R. Slightly higher numbers to the end of the year included 19 at A.M.R. on 21st September and 10 at A.M.R. on 9th November.

RUDDY DUCK - *Oxyura jamaicensis*

A single bird, probably a female or immature, was at Calf Hey on 22nd August. This was probably the first Rossendale record of this species.

HEN HARRIER - *Circus cyaneus*

A ringtail was at Deeply Vale on 4th January. There were several records for the Musbury area (Jim and Bertha Rostron) with a female over Musbury on 11th February and 13th March. In the autumn movement a female was seen chasing 2 Ravens and a Kestrel over Musbury Tor on 24th October. There was also a record of a probable female over Naden on 16th November. A ringtail bird at Rooley Moor on 25th November was mentioned on the GMBRC website. One was at Grane on 28th December and was filmed by the Ranger.

GOSHAWK - *Accipiter gentilis*

There were 2 records for the Musbury area (Jim Rostron) - one on 26th May and 2 soaring then flying off to the southwest on 23rd October. One, probably this species, was seen at Calf Hey on 4th November.

SPARROWHAWK - *Accipiter nisus*

There were the usual visits to garden feeding stations during the winter periods but fewer than normal. Noted at Gaghills and Booth Road in Waterfoot, where attacks were seen in January, February and March at Gaghills. Here one was nearly caught by a cat after an unsuccessful attack on a Blackbird. Collared Dove feathers were also found. There were regular sightings at a Whitworth garden throughout the year. On 18th November one killed a Blackbird in a garden at Helmshore and on 16th November a Blackbird was seen to be taken at Naden. There was a regular presence in the breeding season at Grane, Rawtenstall, Stacksteads, Lee Mill, Lumb Vale and Ravenshore. Possibly less common than in recent years.

COMMON BUZZARD - *Buteo buteo*

There were records in spring of one over Stacksteads on 16th March, a single over Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall on 3rd and 23rd March and one chased by a Raven over Musbury on 26th April. In autumn 1 was reported near Hameldon Hill on 4th September, 1 moving south over the Waggoner's on 5th September, 2 flying west over Musbury on 14th September, 1 over the bypass at Townsendfold on 16th September. One was over the Sandybank, Waterfoot area on 2nd December.

OSPREY - *Pandion haliaetus*

One was reported at Naden on 27th April on the Greater Manchester Bird Recording Club website. One was in the Grane area for several days in early April. It was seen flying west

over Ogden on 4th, had 4 attempts at catching fish on Ogden on 5th and was seen to take a fish there on 9th (Jim Rostron). 1 flew northwest over Higher Hollinbank, Musbury on 26th July.

KESTREL - *Falco tinnunculus*

More Kestrels appear to be wintering in Rossendale than in past years with records for all months. Return to nest sites was noted during February in several places - in February and March a pair daily at Higher Hollinbank, 14th February at Reedsholme where the pair was mating on 18th March. Nesting presence and behaviour was recorded at more sites this year and was noted as successful at Clowbridge, Goodshawfold, Rossendale General Hospital, Higher Hollinbank. At least 8 pairs were thought to have bred in the Haslingden area (Neil Burke). A successful breeding season was also indicated by the number of records of immatures post breeding-season. There were reports of sightings of adults and immatures to the end of the year - at least 6 birds between Clough Bottom and Clowbridge in September, sightings at Cowpe, Naden, Turn, Edenfield and Ewood Bridge on 12th December. Also at Musbury, Clough Bottom, Newchurch, Fearn Moss and Grane in November and December.

MERLIN - *Falco columbarius*

Singles were seen over Cowpe Moss on 15th March, a pair over Crown Point on 16th March and one over Musbury on 26th May. 3 pairs bred in the Rossendale area: 1 pair reared 4 young; 1 pair had its young robbed; the third pair failed at the egg stage - probably due to egg collectors (Neil Burke). Post-breeding one flew from Crown Point to Red Moss on 24th October and one was seen at Clough Bottom on 30th October. One was at Spring Mill on 8th September and one was at Clough Bottom on 28th September.

PEREGRINE - *Falco peregrinus*

One was seen in the Bacup area on 31st March and 12th May. One was hunting flocks of juvenile Starlings at Clowbridge on 11th June and one chasing pigeons over Knowl Moor on 14th June. A pair bred in the Haslingden area rearing 4 young and a pair bred near Edenfield rearing 1 young. A third pair was thought to have nested at Whitworth but the outcome was unknown. In the autumn one was seen over the head of Plunge valley and one near Turn on 21st September. One was present in the Musbury area on 19th and 20th October.

RED GROUSE - *Lagopus lagopus scoticus*

On 7th January one was seen on Knowl Moor and a nest with 6 eggs was found on 5th May. A pair was seen on Cowpe Moss on 16th February and 15th March and on 16th April one was sitting tight on 2 eggs. There were 6 eggs on 24th April and these had been covered by the bird leaving the nest. The nest was empty on 1st June (Bob Ives). On 11th May a pair was present on Cowpe Low. Elsewhere one was on Haslingden Moor, 2 on Bentley Moss, Grane and 2 at Alden Ratchers - all on 6th March. On 21st September one was at Top of Leach and 4 more nearby suggesting a small colony. On 12th October there were 10 on Haslingden Moor and on 9th November a pair was present above Naden.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE - *Alectoris rufa*

There were no records this year of those introduced by a farmer in the Musbury area, but a pair was seen in the Plunge area during June and July.

GREY PARTRIDGE - *Perdix perdix*

Fewer records than usual (possibly fewer observers). A pair was present in the Musbury area on 26th May and 15th July and at Alden on 5th May and 12th June (3 birds). A pair was also present at Clowbridge on 3 occasions from 4th May to 15th June. Pairs or single birds were seen on dates from April to June at Calf Hey, and Cowpe and breeding took place at Spring Mill (10 on 2nd September and an adult with 6 young on 7th September).

QUAIL - *Coturnix coturnix*

A male was seen at Sharneyford on 13th August, crossing the A681.

PHEASANT - *Phasianus colchicus*

Seen regularly in the Higher Hollinbank area of Musbury and increasing at a number of other sites. On 20th April at least 3 were seen in the Ewood Bridge / Irwell Vale area and one at Calf Hey. During June Pheasants were present at Cowm reservoir on several dates. On 7th June there were at least 3 at Marl Pits plantation and on 16th June one at Clowbridge. Later in the year at least 4 were calling at Naden on 21st September and there were 2 males there on 24th October. During December there were 2 to 4 daily at Higher Hollinbank.

MOORHEN - *Gallinula chloropus*

Present on all the usual waters and along the rivers. Successful breeding took place at Holden Wood; Holmes Terrace Lodge; Lancashire Sock Lodge, New Line (1 with 5 young on 12th June and on the Irwell at Warth Lane, Waterfoot . Later in the year at Holden Wood there were 6 on 18th October and 7 on 22nd November.

COOT - *Fulica atra*

Bred at Holden Wood (pair with 3 juveniles 2nd August), All Saints Lodge (pair with 3 - 4 young on 1st June) and Holmes Terrace Lodge (pair 28th May).

OYSTERCATCHER - *Haematopus ostralegus*

The earliest record was 1 at Spring Mill on 26th to 28th February. 1 was at A.M.R. on 23rd March, there were 3 at Clowbridge on 30th April and 1 there on 16th June. At Grane 2 were at Holden Wood on 17th May and flew off to the west; 1 - 3 birds were at Ogden on several occasions to 9th June and may well have bred. There was a single at Clough Bottom on 1st and 2nd June. At A.M.R. there was 1 on 15th June, and up to 4 birds until 10th July. At Spring Mill at least a pair was present between March and mid-July. One or 2 birds were at Deeply Vale in March and April. Three birds were at Gorpley on 26th April.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER - *Charadrius dubius*

Singles were recorded at Ogden and Holden Wood on 18th March, 9th May, 20th May, 24th June and 19th July and 2 birds at Ogden on 9th June but there was no evidence of breeding. A single was at Holden Wood from 2nd to 4th August. Singles were at Whitworth Quarry on 1st May and at Lee Quarry on 4th May. Up to 4 adults and 4 juveniles were at A.M.R. between 10th June and 8th August.

RINGED PLOVER - *Charadrius hiaticula*

Two adults were at A.M.R. on 9th August. 3 adults were at Clowbridge on 24th August and 1 on 25th. A juvenile was there on 7th September.

GOLDEN PLOVER - *Pluvialis apricaria*

Return noted to Cowpe Moss on 2nd February and Haslingden Moor - 2 on 6th March. On Cowpe Moss pairs were recorded in at least 5 areas on 16th April. On 24th April a flock of 5 was flushed plus birds on 6 territories. A partial coverage on 1st June found anxious birds on 4 territories. 6 - 8 birds were on Cowpe Moss on 4th July. On 14th June 2 pairs were seen on Knowl Moor together with one large juvenile (Bob Ives). Golden Plover were also seen during the breeding season on Bentley Moss, Musden Head Moor and Haslingden Moor. 40 were on Cowpe Moss on 12th October with 10 on 16th November. 3 flew north over Clowbridge on 18th October and 1 was on Great Hameldon on 16th November. At A.M.R. there was a flock of about 50 on 19th and 24th October.

LAPWING - *Vanellus vanellus*

Other than an unusual January record of 8 flying north over Spring Mill on 30th, return dates were - 2 at Clowbridge on 12th and 13th February, one on The Hile on 14th and 15th February. On 2nd March 7 flew southwest over New Line. On 15th March flocks of 15 and 10 were back at Holden Wood and in display flights. On 29th March there were about 30 on Whitaker Pasture, Cowpe Lowe. About 4 pairs nested at Holden Wood and on 15th June one or two pairs each had at least 2 chicks and also one full-grown. On 7th June there were 14 in the Seat Naze / Marl Pits area, an increase over last year (Kevin Lister). On 1st May there were 2 pairs at Higher Tan Pits, Musbury and one pair on Musbury Heights. On 5th May there were 2 at Alden and on 12th May 2 at Lee Quarry. A pair attempted nesting at E.B.S.W. in April and May. Post-breeding season flocks built up from 15th June when there were 35 in fields near The Waggoner's, Clowbridge. On 31st July there were 26 at Ogden. At Clough Bottom there were 20 on 15th June, 50 on 27th July, 60 on 7th September and 15 on 12th October. At A.M.R. there were 100 on 19th October but fewer after this date with a maximum of 50 on 12th December. Elsewhere, there were varying numbers at Spring Mill during August with a maximum of 127 on 23rd and there were 50 over Nutshaw on 24th October.

DUNLIN - *Calidris alpina*

The first two birds of the spring were seen on Cowpe Moss on 16th April. Thereafter one was seen on 24th April and 3 on 1st June when one was flushed from 4 eggs. On 14th June at least 4 pairs were present over a small area of wet moor and there was much calling and display. A pair was also seen on Knowl Moor on the same date (Bob Ives). 1 was seen at Scholes Height on 22nd June. Elsewhere, singles - probably birds on passage - were seen at Ogden on 27th June by Jim Rostron and also by anglers on several dates about this time. At A.M.R. there were 6 on 18th July, 2 on 9th August, 1 on 25th August and 2 on 24th October.

JACK SNIBE - *Lymnocyptes minimus*

One was seen on Great Hameldon on 17th February and one put up twice on Cowpe Moss on 24th April.

COMMON SNIBE - *Gallinago gallinago*

On 23rd January there were 9 on Great Hameldon, 14 on Hameldon and one on Nutshaw Hill. Spring passage and return to nesting areas included 2 on Bull Hill on 2nd February then on 6th March 1 at Haslingden Moor; one on Bentley Moss, Grane and one at Alden Ratchers. No breeding records were received but there was one on Great Hameldon on 14th March and one at Plunge on 24th April, 13 at Holden Wood on 16th September, 4 over Cowpe Lowe

on 21st September, 2 at Whitewell Bottom on 2nd October, 1 over Holden Wood on 19th October, 5 at A.M.R. on 24th October, 1 Seat Naze on 26th October, 1 Musbury Tor on 31st October, 1 Cowpe Moss on 16th November and 1 at Musbury Road on 17th November. In the Clowbridge area 1 was on Nutshaw Hill on 10th September, 9 on Great Hameldon on 5th October with 3 at Nutshaw Hill on the same date. 13 were on Great Hameldon on 19th October, 2 on Nutshaw on 22nd October, 27 on Great Hameldon on 16th November with 15 on Hameldon Hill and 6 on Nutshaw Hill on the same date.

WOODCOCK - *Scolopax rusticola*

One was in the plantation at Clowbridge on 2nd January, 1 at Fern Isle Wood on 9th January and 2 above Calf Hey on 16th February. In the second winter period there were singles on Great Hameldon and Hameldon Hill on 16th November and 2 at Clough Bottom on 7th December.

CURLEW - *Numenius arquata*

Returning birds were recorded from 11th to 15th March at Musbury, Clough Bottom and Lowe Lodge. On 20th March there were 5 on the moors above Clowbridge. On 11th May there were an estimated 4 pairs in the area from Lowe Lodge to Cowpe Moss (Bob Ives). Curlews were also seen at Grane on several dates in the breeding season. On 7th June there were 3 on Seat Naze. At Clough Bottom there were 10 flying above the reservoir on 4th April and one or two were present in June. 4 birds were at Spring Mill on 13th June. Many birds were very vocal in the Crown Point area in June suggesting the presence of young. On 7th August 2 flew over Higher Hollinbank and on 10th and 16th August birds were heard calling overhead over Reedsholme - probably departing birds. Even so, a bird with a full-grown youngster was still on the moors between Clowbridge and Clough Bottom on 11th and 14th August.

REDSHANK - *Tringa totanus*

The decline noted during the last few years has continued. In the breeding season one was at Mitchell House reservoirs on 8th April, 1 was at A.M.R. on 21st July, and 1 or 2 birds were seen at Spring Mill on 5 dates between 15th April and 8th May. There were records of birds on autumn passage with 1 at Spring Mill on 10th August, 2 at Clowbridge on 25th August, 1 there on 4th September, 1 at A.M.R. on 21st September, 2 there on 19th October and singles at Holden Wood on 1st and 2nd November.

GREENSHANK - *Tringa nebularia*

Only 2 records this year - 1 seen at Spring Mill on the morning of 25th April and 1 at A.M.R. on 19th October.

GREEN SANDPIPER - *Tringa ochropus*

One was at Holden Wood on 19th August.

WOOD SANDPIPER - *Tringa glareola*

One was seen at Holden Wood by several observers between 10th and 14th September. There are only 4 previous local records.

COMMON SANDPIPER - *Actitis hypoleucos*

First noted at Clowbridge on 4th May when 4 were seen. Thereafter 2 pairs were observed calling anxiously from 8th June as if young were present. There were 3 birds there on 27th July but only single records after this to 24th August. One or 2 birds were seen on 4 occasions

between 23rd April and 19th June at Spring Mill. On 4th and 16th June there were 2 pairs at Clough Bottom. On 19th July one was at Calf Hey and on 21st July 2 with 2 young at Ogden. Two birds were seen at Ogden on 29th and 31st July and one at Holden Wood on 14th September. One, probably a bird on passage, was seen on the Irwell at Townsendfold on 10th August.

TURNSTONE - *Arenaria interpres*

One was at A.M.R. on 18th July.

BLACK-HEADED GULL - *Larus ridibundus*

The year began with a roost of up to 1000 or 1500 birds at Clowbridge reservoir in January and 50 to 70 birds typical at other sites such as Grane and New Line. Numbers fell sharply during March with 20 on 12th and 3 on 20th at Clowbridge. Apart from ones and twos, the post breeding numbers began to build up in late June (45 at Cowm on 26th), though at Clowbridge numbers remained in the teens until mid-October when they rose to about 60. However, at other sites there were higher counts during this time - 180 at Holden Wood on 11th August, 80 at A.M.R. on 21st September. Numbers then increased again with 300 at E.B.S.W. on 14th December 175 at Holden Wood on 24th December and at least 800 to 1000 birds at the Clowbridge roost in December.

COMMON GULL - *Larus canus*

The usual numbers were at the Clowbridge roost with over 100 among the Black-headed. Small numbers of 2 to 6 mostly were recorded at the eastern side of Rossendale at Cowm and New Line and one was with the Black-headed on the Glen fields on 9th February. Latest were 2 at New Line on 2nd March. First return was 10th July at Spring Mill, there was an adult and a juvenile at Clowbridge on 31st August and one was with 6 Black-headed at Clowbridge on 17th September. Later, some larger flocks were seen - 24th October 35 at Clowbridge, 28th October 16 on the Glen fields, 9th November 30 at A.M.R. and 7th December 40 at Clough Bottom.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - *Larus fuscus*

The large flocks once usual in Rossendale no longer appear since the reduction in local rubbish tips. First birds returning to nesting areas in north Lancashire were seen on 23rd February when a few flew over Haslingden. On 31st March birds moving unusually to the south over Irwell Vale totalled 25 in 3 hours. On 6th April about 400 moved south over Stubbins between 11:30 and 14:00. Later only small groups were seen. Later movements and post-breeding dispersal brought several over Helmshore on 15th July and 16 over Grane on 11th August. At A.M.R. there were 170 on 18th July and 35 including 2 immatures on 4th August.

HERRING GULL - *Larus argentatus*

The usual mid-winter presence was only patchily recorded - one was at Cowm on 19th January and 70 at Holden Wood on 4th February. On 31st August there were 3 at Clough Bottom. 27 flew north over Goodshawfold on 19th October and 60 flew north over Clowbridge on 16th November. This is another change of behaviour resulting from the closing down of rubbish tips.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - *Larus marinus*

A mid-winter presence was noted at Clowbridge in the first half of January by Bob Ives. On 2nd January one flew over the reservoir, on 8th 2 adults were present on the ice, on 16th 2 adults flew west at dusk and an immature was on the water. On 9th January 12 adults flew north over Crawshawbooth. One was at Mitchell House reservoirs on 19th January. One was at Clough Bottom reservoir with Herring Gulls on 31st August, presumably a post breeding season dispersal movement. Two were at Clowbridge on 30th December.

FERAL PIGEON - *Columba livia*

There were the usual numbers in town centre areas but also moving out into playing fields and gardens. Two were regular at a bird table in Waterfoot where they had not been recorded before and 7 were regular at a bird table at Gaghills.

STOCK DOVE - *Columba oenas*

There were records of 5 at Lee Quarry on 29th March and up to 5 at Ewood Bridge between 18th April and 10th May. Two were at Deeply Vale on 18th May. From January to March 2 to 6 were recorded at Clowbridge and 2 at Loveclough. At Spring Mill there were 2 - 3 birds between January and early September with 5 on 11th April; it is not known whether they bred. In Whitworth a single bird was a regular visitor to a garden from January to August.

WOODPIGEON - *Columba palumbus*

No very large flocks recorded in either winter period - 40 at Ravenshore on 3rd January, 30 at Clough Bottom on 10th February, 45 at Grane on 1st March, 40 at Waterfoot on 7th September and 28 at Clowbridge on 24th October. A pair carried twigs in a garden in Waterfoot on 27th March and a newly-fledged juvenile was seen there on 7th July. Two immatures were feeding at Cowm on 23rd July. Like the other species of doves and pigeons they are increasingly taking advantage of garden feeding tables. There were 5 regulars at a garden in Waterfoot in January and February and up to 10 during a cold spell in February. In the autumn and winter flock sizes were again around 30 to 50 (40 at Waterfoot on 7th September, 28 at Clowbridge on 24th October).

COLLARED DOVE - *Streptopelia decaocto*

Numerous in suburban areas and gardens - 40 or more reported in a garden at Gaghills in November and December, and up to 36 at a garden in Whitworth during October. Birds were noted carrying nest material on 24th February. Two adults and 2 juveniles fed on a bird table in Waterfoot on 6th May.

TURTLE DOVE - *Streptopelia turtur*

A single bird was with Collared Doves at a garden in Whitworth on 21st April, probably a first for Rossendale and certainly quite an early date for Lancashire.

CUCKOO - *Cuculus canorus*

Only one record of a calling bird at Calf Hey on 28th May.

LITTLE OWL - *Athene noctua*

The regular pair was present at Higher Hollinbank throughout and there were 4 from 26th July to 21st September (Jim and Bertha Rostron). Elsewhere there were records for Hurdles Quarry and the quarry behind Lowe Lodge from 29th March to 29th June (Kevin Lister). On

21st September one was seen on Cowpe Lowe and one on the hillside above Cowpe reservoir. Also present and breeding at Clowbridge from 25th February and at a site near Hoyle Street in Whitworth.

TAWNY OWL - *Strix aluco*

Tawny Owls were heard calling in the Waterfoot area, Fearn Moss and Booth Road and also at Gaghills. They were very vocal in gardens in Booth Road in February. There was a second-hand report of a family group at Clough Bottom during late August and owls were heard calling there at that time. On 1st June one was seen at Healey Dell and on 31st August one at Clowbridge. Owls were heard regularly at Higher Hollinbank during July and August. Calls were heard at Reedsholme on 23rd March and a pair nested at Clowbridge where 1 young one was seen in the nest on 18th May.

LONG-EARED OWL - *Asio otus*

This species bred in north Rossendale for the second successive year. Three young fledged on 2nd June. As last year prey was being brought in to the young from 20:00 and there were good views of the hunting adults (Bob Ives). The adults and three young were seen by several members on a Club ramble on 16th June. At another location in west Rossendale a nest had 4 eggs on 15th April but the outcome of the nest was unknown.

SHORT-EARED OWL - *Asio flammeus*

Birds were present in north Rossendale from Windy Bank to Clowbridge through the spring and summer. Three or four birds were seen hunting over moorland throughout August and breeding was probably successful (Bob Ives). One was also seen at Red Moss in the same area on 7th December. A pair bred at a site in west Rossendale and had flying young on 29th June.

SWIFT - *Apus apus*

One was at Gorphey on 26th April, 1 over Staghills on 27th April and singles over Waterfoot and Lee Quarry on 28th April demonstrate a somewhat earlier than usual arrival. Most first dates reported were between 3rd and 10th May. At E.B.S.W. there were 6 on 27th April, 30 on 29th, 2 on 4th May, 2 on 10th May then 1000 on 18th May feeding low over the filter beds after heavy rain. This was an unusual arrival pattern, presumably influenced by the weather. At Clowbridge reservoir there were single figure groups from 5th May then 50 on 5th June, 100 on 8th June, 60 on 15th June and 130 on 20th June. There were 1500 - 2000 birds feeding over the area on 27th July, the largest count the observer can recall for the site (Bob Ives). Numbers at the breeding colonies appeared to be lower. The Gaghills colony has virtually disappeared with only twos and threes seen in the neighbourhood. At Reedsholme birds were back on 9th May and 20 counted on 14th May. At Edgeside housing estate there were about 10 on 7th August. Latest record was of two over Edgeside on 12th September.

KINGFISHER - *Alcedo atthis*

Kingfishers were recorded along the Irwell from Rawtenstall to Irwell Vale on 7th and 19th January, 31st March, 1st April, 21st April, 2nd November, 16th November and 12th December - though there was a significant gap between 21st April and 2nd November suggesting no breeding in this area, anecdotal evidence from Brian Oldfield was that a pair had indeed bred. Birds were also recorded in the Waterfoot area on the Irwell from 10th to 25th August and on the Whitewell on 7th December.

GREEN WOODPECKER - *Picus viridis*

Birds were heard and seen during January and February at Higher Hollinbank, Musbury; Broadclough, Bacup; Spring Mill; Fern Isle Wood; Healey Dell and Reedsholme. They were then heard consistently through the spring between Reedsholme and Stoneholme at Crawshawbooth; at Spring Mill and at Higher Hollinbank. A pair nested at Naden (Kevin Lister). On 7th August one was present at Hare Clough, Musbury. During autumn singles were at Calf Hey, Naden, Buckhurst and Cowm.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER - *Dendrocopos major*

Present in all the usual areas and visiting peanut feeders in several gardens through out the year though somewhat less during the breeding season. At least 3 pairs nested in Staghills Wood. A juvenile was seen at Lea Bank on 29th June. A pair nested in a totem pole wood sculpture at Groundwork and large young were being fed on 31st May. They were also seen on 3rd and 8th June and had fledged by 15th June. There were also records of breeding at Oak Mount, Haslingden Road, Lench, Calf Hey and Healey Dell. Post-breeding birds were seen at Hoyle Street, Whitworth and at Gaghills.

SKYLARK - *Alauda arvensis*

There were singles on Great Hameldon and Nutshaw Hill as early as 23rd January. Two were in song at Rooley Moor on 10th February, two were in song near The Waggoner's on 11th February (K. G. Spencer) and one in song on Great Hameldon on 17th February. Eight males were in song there on 14th March. Elsewhere on 6th March there were 3 on Haslingden Moor, 3 on Bentley Moss, 3 at Alden Ratchers. On 9th March there were 4 on Bull Hill. On 7th July 2 were in song on The Hile above Edgeside Lane. Numbers remain low compared to past years. Birds on passage were seen on 28th September over Plunge, between 2nd and 5th October in the Clowbridge area and on 1st November - 2 flying over Cowpe reservoir and 4 over Rooley Moor.

SAND MARTIN - *Riparia riparia*

There were no March records this year - the first was one at Groundwork on 16th April then 6 birds at E.B.S.W. on 17th April, 3 on 18th April then 2 to 4 to late May. Counts for the colony on the Irwell at Townsendfold were "about 12" in late May and June, 10 on 1st June and 20 on 8th June. There were few records of autumn passage: 2 at Spring Mill on 4th August; 2 at Holden Wood on 6th August; 2 moving west over Clowbridge on 21st September and there were about 10 in a mixed flock with Swallows and House Martins feeding low over the playing fields by The Glen, Waterfoot.

SWALLOW - *Hirundo rustica*

First arrivals were all on the 14th April - 11 at E.B.S.W., 4 flying north over Townsendfold and 1 at Musbury. Increasing numbers of arrivals at E.B.S.W. were 20 on 21st April, 20 on 6th May, 60 on 6th May, 60 on 10th May and 30 on 18th May. Family groups with fledged young appeared at Clowbridge from 25th June. In the Musbury area 20-30 were present daily with at least 12 young at Carr Lane on 16th July. Post-breeding flocks noted were 70 on the wires at Shawclough on 7th August, at least 200 coming to roost at Holden Wood on 11th August rising to about 800 on 14th, 50 over Cowpe reservoir on 7th September. There was a roost at Clowbridge for the first time that Bob Ives could recall - a maximum of about 300 birds was there on 17th August. On 21st September there were 40 over Cowpe and groups

of 6 to 12 moving over Cowpe Lowe and Cowpe Moss all day (Kevin Lister). There were 2 over Stacksteads on 24th September, 6 over Turn on 28th September, 2 over Ogden on 29th September. The latest were one at Lumb on 8th August and one over Bacup on 10th October.

HOUSE MARTIN - *Delichon urbica*

First of the year was 1 at Hoyle Street, Whitworth on 15th April and there were 10 at E.B.S.W. on 17th April building up to 30 on 6th May and 60 on 18th May. Return to colonies was noted from 26th April when there were 12 at Cawl Terrace but most were later in May - Rawtenstall on 3rd, Stacksteads and Waterfoot on 5th, 4 at Reedsholme on 15th. There were counts of 6 nests on the Jolly Sailor Inn, 10 on the Regency Club and 5 nests in Park Road, Waterfoot. Good numbers built up in flocks - 100 over Waterfoot on 27th August, 40 daily over Higher Hollinbank in July and August rising to 70 then 100 until 6th September. A few birds were still at colonies at the end of September - 8 on the Jolly Sailor on 25th September. Latest dates were 3 at Lench on 5th October, 12 at Irwell Vale on 7th October and 2 at Helmshore on 10th October.

MEADOW PIPIT - *Anthus pratensis*

Some early returns were 5 on the moors above Loveclough and 1 on Great Hameldon on 8th January, 7 on Nutshaw hill on 17th February. On 6th March there were 4 on Haslingden Moor and on 18th March 4 at Ogden and 2 at Musbury. There were some good numbers recorded on B.B.S. counts - 43 at Alden on 12th June, 60 at Musbury on 13th July. On The Hile there were 3 pairs in the northwest corner of the old C.B.C. plot on 7th July. At Lee Quarry a flock of 10 had returned on 18th April. Some good numbers were reported on passage during autumn. On 21st August there were about 100 at Clough Bottom and on 17th September 40 on the dam. On 21st September there were large numbers over Cowpe Lowe and Cowpe Moss - over 200 were counted on Cowpe Moss (Kevin Lister). On 3rd October there were 40 at Musbury, on 9th November 20 at Naden, on 16th November 20 at E.B.S.W. and 40 to the south over A.M.R. Up to 12 were recorded through November and to 14th December at Holden Wood reservoir.

YELLOW WAGTAIL - *Motacilla flava*

Now rarely recorded on passage. A brightly coloured male was seen among the Pied Wagtails at E.B.S.W. by Bob Ives on 18th April on spring passage. In the autumn a juvenile bird was at A.M.R. on 1st August and a juvenile or female bird on 29th August at Spring Mill.

GREY WAGTAIL - *Motacilla cinerea*

Widespread along the Irwell and its tributaries. There were records from Reedsholme, Tup Bridge, Longholme on the Limy then on down the Irwell to Ewood Bridge, Stubbins and Irwell Vale, also along the Ogden from Grane to Helmshore. Presence was noted along the Whitewell from Piercy to Waterfoot and the Irwell from Stubbylee to Waterfoot. On 27th April a pair fed young on the Irwell at Stacksteads Rec. On 4th June a juvenile was seen at Clough Bottom, on 10th July a male and 4 juveniles was seen at Spring Mill. Later in the year there were records of 3 at Clough Bottom on 31st August, 2 at Cowm reservoir on 19th October, 2 at Naden, 2 at Holden Wood and one at Townsendfold on 16th November.

PIED WAGTAIL - *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

As last year numbers appeared to be lower than in recent years with none of the large autumn flocks or roosts. Recorded during the breeding season mainly at or near reservoirs - A.M.R. one with 5 young, Ogden 8 to 10 post-breeding, Clowbridge over 30 in a pre-roost flock on 17th

August, 12 there on 17th September mainly juveniles, Clough Bottom 4, Cowm 2 immatures in August. On 19th July a pair with 6 juveniles were recorded at Musbury. Passage noted from late September with over 30 at Ogden on 29th September, 8 at E.B.S.W. on 2nd November and 12 at Ogden on 3rd November.

WHITE WAGTAIL - *Motacilla alba alba*

Two birds were at Spring Mill on 3rd May and one was at A.M.R. on 1st August.

DIPPER - *Cinclus cinclus*

Well distributed with records from along the Irwell and its tributaries and some reservoirs and minor streams. On 1st January 2 were at Green Lodges, Stacksteads and on 7th January 2 in conflict on the River Ogden at Ravenshore. One bird spent the mid-winter period from 8th to 16th January on the outflow at Ogden reservoir and later in the year Dippers were seen carrying food in the Ogden area on 15th April and 23rd May. A bird was seen flying to a nest at Reedsholme on 28th March. Autumn numbers indicated a good breeding season - 10th August 6 on the Irwell between Waterfoot and Rawtenstall and at least 2 were immatures. On 17th October there were 3 on Musbury Brook. Singing males were heard on 14th September at Townsendfold and Station Road, Helmshore on 19th October one at Ewood Bridge. There were records also from Irwell Vale, Strongstry, Crawshawbooth, Reedsholme, Spring Mill, Naden and Plunge.

WREN - *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Numbers were possibly down this year. There were only 3 and 2 on visits to the B.B.S. square at Alden compared to 10 and 6 last year. Also, none wintered in a garden in Waterfoot where they had done so for several past years. The first one returned on 15th February. However, in the second winter period one was present from mid-November. At other sites (Hoyle Street, Whitworth and Oak Mount, Rawtenstall) Wrens were recorded throughout the year.

DUNNOCK - *Prunella modularis*

In song from 4th January when heard at Newchurch. On 5th February 5 were in song at Calf Hey. On 27th March 3 were in active chasing displays in a garden in Waterfoot and were seen carrying nest material on 7th April. An immature came to the bird table here on 25th May and 8th June. At Hoyle Street, Whitworth Dunnocks were present throughout and on 15th May there were 4 adults and 2 juvenile birds.

ROBIN - *Erithacus rubecula*

A pair fed together at a bird table on 18th February and there was much song. At Whitworth a pair carried nest material to a nest box on 11th February. First winter song was heard on 31st August. On 28th September there was much song and "ticking". At Hoyle Street, Whitworth a nest was being built on 7th March and young birds were seen from 16th April. A juvenile bird from a late second brood was seen with its parents on 26th August.

REDSTART - *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

There was only one record this year, of a female and a juvenile bird at Deeply Vale on 27th July.

WHINCHAT - *Saxicola rubetra*

Yet again a poor spring at Clowbridge with none recorded until 1st June when a male was in song. A pair was present on 2nd June and a female on 8th June then not seen after that date (Bob Ives). Two were present at Ogden on the Musbury side of Ogden reservoir on 19th July. A female or juvenile was at Broadley Fold, Healey Dell on 8th August, one at Spring Mill on 23rd August and 5 on 25th. Two passage birds were at Clowbridge on 27th September.

STONECHAT - *Saxicola torquata*

Continues to increase with more records than ever this year. Nearly all records are in the vicinity of reservoirs or valleys descending to them. There were 3 at Clowbridge on 5th January and one at Holden Wood on 16th February. This winter presence and formation of pairs in winter territories has often been the prelude to the establishment of nesting pairs (see E Ward, Rossendale Birds Millennium Update). At Holden Wood 3 juveniles and a female were seen on 1st June by one of the groups in the R.O.C. Bird Race (Ian Brady). Other significant records were - a pair at Deeply Vale on 16th February, a pair at Alden on 27th April, 5th May, 28th May, 3 on 12th June and 2 on 6th July (Jim Rostron). In the Ogden / Calf Hey area a pair was present on 18th March and 1st May and later on 11th August a group of 8, presumably a family. On 28th September a family group of 4 fed at Turn, 5 at Plunge feeding in soft rush and 7 at Scout Moor reservoir (Ian Brady). Present at Spring Mill on 9th February to 26th December - feeding young at the nest on 15th May. Later in the year there was continued presence to the end of the year with records, often of pairs, from Holden Wood, Naden, Clough Bottom, Clowbridge, Cowm and Great Hameldon (9 birds).

WHEATEAR - *Oenanthe oenanthe*

An early male was seen at Hurdles Quarry on 15th March but most first dates were between 20th and 29th March. Breeding season presence was noted at Musbury, Haslingden Moor, Cowpe Lowe, Cowpe Moss, Lee Quarry, Plunge, Scout Moor, Spring Mill and Cowm. On 29th June juveniles were seen at Waugh's Well, Hurdles Quarry, Lowe Lodge and Cowpe (Kevin Lister). On 26th May a pair was carrying food at Musbury. Latest dates were one on Cowpe Lowe on 21st September, one female at Scout Moor reservoir and at least 3 in the Lowe Lodge area on 28th September.

RING OUZEL - *Turdus torquatus*

Just two records this year - one for each migration period. A female was at Gorpley reservoir on 26th April and 4 were at Lee Quarry on 13th October.

BLACKBIRD - *Turdus merula*

A flock of 10 on Bonfire Hill on 9th January were probably continental migrants. Early song was heard on 26th January at Whitworth and 12th February at Reedsholme. Courtship chasing behaviour was noted in a garden in Waterfoot on 20th January. On 6th March a female was seen carrying food at Hall Carr (Peter Fyldes). A nest at Whitworth was under construction on 6th April and food was being carried to the nest on 20th April. On 15th August 3 full-grown immatures were feeding in a Waterfoot garden. On 8th November a flock of 6 or 7 males was seen at Holden Wood, probably movement from the continent. During November up to 13 birds were seen at the Whitworth garden.

FIELDFARE - *Turdus pilaris*

Present in relatively small numbers in January and early February, increasing in late February and March as migrants moved north. 70 were feeding with Starlings in the Cowpe valley on 16th February and 50 on The Hile on 22nd February. The latest were 50 at Clough Bottom on 13th April and 26 over Holden Wood on 26th April. First return was noted on 13th October when there were 12 at Staghill and 12 at Higher Hollinbank. At Higher Hollinbank a large scale movement was noted by Jim Rostron from the following day, 14th October, when large numbers (up to 2-300) flew over each day to 18th October. Also during this period there were 100 at Cheesden, 60 at Holden Wood, 90 + 20 + 40 at Clowbridge on 22nd October. At least 200 moved west down the Irwell valley on 17th October. Flocks of 20 to 70 were regular in November and on 7th December there were 50 at Clough Bottom with 200 Starlings.

SONG THRUSH - *Turdus philomelos*

There were 3 at E.B.S.W. on 7th January, one with Redwings at Crawshawbooth on 9th January and one at Reedsholme on 14th January. One fed in a garden at Whitworth on 13th February and one was heard in song on the same date. Song was heard at Reedsholme on 22nd and 23rd January, at Crawshawbooth on 10th February and at Clowbridge on 12th March. On 23rd March at least 4 were present in §© Stacksteads Cemetery. A pair was present in Musbury Road on 8th July and 5 young were seen in the garden at Higher Hollinbank on 10th July. Two were present here from 2nd November to December. Singles were noted at Plunge, Calf Hey and Staghill during November and December.

REDWING - *Turdus iliacus*

Flocks were mostly in single figures in January apart from 40 over Musbury on 12th January. Numbers increased during February and March - on 6th February 30 at Hall Carr, on 9th February 40 at Constablelee, 11th February 40 at Broadclough, 1st March 80 - 100 at Grane. Latest were 3 or 4 at Lea Bank on 29th March and 7 at Spring Mill on 31st March. First returns were 6 at Fo' Edge near Waugh's Well on 12th October, 8 at Clowbridge on 18th, 20 at Holden Wood with Fieldfares on 18th October and on 19th October 200 were over Road End, Haslingden, 30 at Ravenshore and 20 near E.B.S.W. During November numbers were a little lower, though there were 200 over Clowbridge on 13th. In December there were 40 at Staghill Wood on 21st and 65 at Trickett's Memorial Garden on 30th, with small flocks noted at other sites.

MISTLE THRUSH - *Turdus viscivorus*

First song was heard on 15th January at Spring Mill, 30th January at Carrs Industrial Estate and on 20th February at Calf Hey. Three pairs bred in the Clowbridge area and large young were seen on 5th May. A pair was present in a Whitworth garden throughout February. On 31st May one sang from a telegraph pole in Booth Road, Waterfoot. The pair was then seen regularly in the area and carrying food. On 24th June one had a fledged juvenile and again on 8th July. A pair was regular round Higher Hollinbank and there were 5 on 31st July. One fed regularly on Holly berries in the garden at Waterfoot during November and December. On 3rd October there were 6 near Lee Quarry, on 20th September 8 at Higher Hollinbank, on 2nd October 18 at Clowbridge and on 28th October 8 above Rake Head, Stacksteads. One was in song on 20th December at Whitworth and on 24th December at Waterfoot.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER - *Locustella naevia*

A pair bred in a field next to Holden Wood reservoir and later one was seen on 19th July. (Jim Rostron, Neil Burke). A pair is believed to have bred at Plunge and there was a singing male at Spring Mill from 25th to 27th June.

SEDGE WARBLER - *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

At least 3 pairs bred at Holden Wood reservoir and birds were present until at least 19th August. One was in song at Spring Mill between 21st and 24th June.

LESSER WHITETHROAT - *Sylvia curruca*

One was in song in the Groundwork area from 27th May to 8th June but was not known to have bred (David Nuttall and heard by Ian Brady and Bob Ives).

WHITETHROAT - *Sylvia communis*

A singing male was heard at Broadley Station, Healey Dell on 7 occasions between 7th and 27th May. A male was singing at Deeply Vale on 26th May and 2 birds were seen there on 27th July. On 26th May singing males were heard at Groundwork and at Sykeside Hotel, Road End.

GARDEN WARBLER - *Sylvia borin*

One was singing on several occasions between 2nd May and 3rd June near to the old sewage works, Healey Dell.

BLACKCAP - *Sylvia atricapilla*

One frequented the feeding station in a garden at Gagghills from 4th to 27th February (Kevin Lister). On 27th April first song was heard at Stagghills and Trickett's Memorial Ground where numbers were thought to be down this year (Kevin Lister). At Whitworth 2 males were in song at Broadley Station and 2 at the old sewage works from May to July. On 3rd August an immature was present at Trickett's Memorial Ground. Elsewhere, singing males were heard at Stubbylee Park, Bacup and at Grane: at Holden Wood on 24th April and at Calf Hey on 17th June. Based on these records numbers and sites appear to be reduced compared to previous years

CHIFFCHAFF - *Phylloscopus collybita*

Singing birds were at Healey Dell on 20th March, at Whitewell Bottom on 30th March, at Healey Dell, Lumb Vale and Strongstry on 31st March and a pair with the male in song at E.B.S.W. on the same day. Recorded on 6 dates in April and May here and 2 males singing on 21st April. Three were in song at Strongstry on 29th June and there was consistent song from Brooks' Wood, Reedsholme throughout May and June (Bob Ives). Elsewhere a singing male was heard at Healey Dell through to 13th September. Later on autumn passage song was heard on 14th September at Groundwork, Townsendfold and Calf Hey.

WILLOW WARBLER - *Phylloscopus trochilus*

A singing bird was at Irwell Vale on 31st March (Bob Ives' earliest date ever). E. Ward's Rossendale Birds, Millennium Update gives 2nd April to 14th April for the first arrival dates. Good numbers were singing at Calf Hey on 24th April and 11th May. One was heard on 6th April at Groundwork, one at E.B.S.W. and on 16th April one at Park Road, Bacup. Numbers appeared to be down in some of the more outlying or more recently occupied locations. At Spring Mill up to 4 were seen between 4th August and 13th September, during autumn passage

GOLDCREST - *Regulus regulus*

Three were at Cowm on 19th January and one visited a garden feeding station at Gaghills with flocks of tits on 27th February and 2nd March. One was seen at Trickett's Memorial Ground and possibly nested here (Kevin Lister). At Oak Mount, Rawtenstall, Goldcrests were present throughout the year and nesting took place. Described as a "good year" at Clough Bottom with 3 large parties seen on 31st August and again on 17th September. On 15th September a group of about 10 was present at Calf Hey. Family groups were also seen in Plunge valley on 21st September and 28th September and at Lea Bank on 28th September, in Staghills Wood on 5th October, in Newchurch on 19th October, at Cowpe on 26th October and at Clough Bottom on 22nd November (2 groups 12 and 20). These figures suggest a very good breeding season. Goldcrests were seen on several occasions at a garden in Whitworth during October and November, including a ringed bird. There were records of 5 at Calf Hey in November and December.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER - *Muscicapa striata*

Numbers remain very low. One was seen at Lee Mill, Stacksteads on the Bird Race on 1st June. A pair probably bred at Clowbridge and were showing anxiety on 25th June. A pair was at Clough Bottom on 25th May and 15th June. The only other location birds were seen in the breeding season was Stubbins. Most traditional nest sites are now deserted. During late summer ones and twos were at Deeply Vale, Spring Mill and Fern Isle Wood.

LONG-TAILED TIT - *Aegithalos caudatus*

Appears to be thriving. Winter flocks included 12 at Hoyle Street, Whitworth on 5th January, 10 at Ravenshore on 7th January, 11 at Crawshawbooth on 9th January, 6 at Longholme on 19th January and 6 at Stacksteads Cemetery on 1st January. Smaller flocks and pairs were noted in February. Reported as very common along the Irwell valley from Rawtenstall to Stubbins on 31st March. An adult with one juvenile was seen on 1st June. Some large post-breeding flocks were recorded - 23 at Crawshawbooth on 25th June, at least 43 at Buckden Clough on 29th June and over 24 there on 16th July. Flocks of 7 to 12 were reported to the end of the year at Gaghills, Staghills Wood, Trickett's Memorial Ground, Ravenshore, Townsendfold, Carrs Industrial Estate, Healey Dell and Hoyle Street (Whitworth).

WILLOW TIT - *Parus montanus*

One visited a garden at Sykeside, Haslingden for a short time on 30th November.

COAL TIT - *Parus ater*

Continues to do well and still a regular visitor to garden feeders. Heard in song from 20th February. Fewer in gardens during the nesting season - probably more natural nest sites in woodland. One noted visiting a feeder in a garden at Waterfoot - the first for some time on 29th January. Again, at a garden in Hoyle Street, Whitworth Coal Tits were not seen until 30th March. A successful breeding season was noted with family groups at Clough Bottom, Staghills, Lea Bank and Ogden. An unusual record was of 2 near Compston's Cross on the moors above Clough Bottom plantation.

BLUE TIT - *Parus caeruleus*

Unlike the two previous species is not as numerous as in the past decade. A B.T.O. report said that Blue Tits were having a bad year. Song was heard from 7th February. A nest box at Todd Carr was found deserted with only 5 eggs. However, in Waterfoot a nest box was visited

by Blue Tits from 9th February. First feeding of young was noticed from 10th May and they fledged 12th and 13th June. Two or three juveniles visited the nut feeder from 15th June. At a garden in Whitworth birds were inspecting a nest box on 11th November and they roosted in it after this date. On 16th November one was seen along the stream that flows off Cowpe Moss towards Naden - an unusually high location with no tree cover.

GREAT TIT - *Parus major*

Heard in song from 20th February at Oak Mount, Rawtenstall. At Whitworth nesting began on 29th April and 4 fledged juveniles were seen from 21st May. Great Tits occupied a nest box in a garden in Waterfoot where young were being fed on 25th May. They fledged on 4th and 5th June and on 6th 3 juveniles were being fed by adults on the bird table. On 25th June 4 juveniles were on the peanut feeder for most of the day. When the nest box was cleaned out on 12th August there were 3 dead, well-grown chicks in the nest. It would seem that, like the previous species, Great Tits are being less successful than in the recent past.

NUTHATCH - *Sitta europaea*

One was calling from possible breeding habitat at Crawshawbooth on 24th March, 18th and 22nd April (Bob Ives). A pair was seen at Healey Hall Wood, Whitworth on 31st March and one was calling there on 9th April. One was present at Oak Mount, Rawtenstall for a short time on 28th August and one was with a mixed flock of tits and Chaffinches at Staghills Wood on 28th September.

TREECREEPER - *Certhia familiaris*

Few records. Singles at Ravenshore on 7th January, Crawshawbooth on 9th January, Calf Hey car park on 26th February, Strongstry on 31st March and Staghills Wood on 8th November. Thought to have nested in Stubblee Park, Bacup (second-hand report via Kevin Lister).

JAY - *Garrulus glandarius*

Becoming well-established and making more and more use of suburban gardens. Recorded visiting garden feeding centres in Waterfoot at Gaghills, Booth Road and Lench and at Helmshore taking peanuts, bread and fat balls with embedded nuts. On 22nd June 3 flew over from The Glen towards Gaghills. On 28th September there were 4 or 5 in Staghills Wood and in October Jays were seen at Clough Bottom, Naden, Lench, Holden Wood and Greenbooth.

MAGPIE - *Pica pica*

As numerous as ever. Twelve were in a garden at Irwell Vale on 7th January. Nest-building was noted from 23rd February at Reedsholme. On 24th June a pair with 2 juveniles were on the bird bath in a garden in Waterfoot. Earlier they had been in conflict with a cat. There were wing and body feathers on the lawn but the cat was pecked and it retreated. The usual 8 were seen daily in the Higher Hollinbank / Musbury Tor area. Communal gatherings of 10 to 15 birds were noted on 29th and 30th December in the Glen fields / Booth Road area. On 12th December at least 50 were roosting behind E.B.S.W. This is a traditional roost first noted in the 1950s.

JACKDAW - *Corvus monedula*

Present in about the usual numbers and colonies. There were counts of 40 and 70 in the Rawtenstall area near Ilex Mill. This colony will be affected by the present re-construction work being carried out. During August and September a late afternoon movement of 70 - 100

birds was noted from over Cowpe Lowe to the east across Waterfoot, possibly from the tip at Horncliffe to the Rook Hill roost that is still in use by the Rooks at this time of year. On 21st September about 130 birds were in a mixed roost of Jackdaws and Carrion Crows at Calf Hey. On 19th December there was a gathering of 30 Jackdaws in trees near B.R.G.S. similar to Magpie communal gatherings.

ROOK - *Corvus frugilegus*

Twenty were present at Broadclough rookery on 11th February and Rooks were building at Crawshawbooth rookery on 23rd February. There were 49 nests there on 13th April. Healey Dell rookery held 27 nests on 5th March. There were 18 nests and 36 birds at Acre rookery on 11th May.

CARRION CROW - *Corvus corone corone*

A flock of 50 was seen at Clough Bottom on 30th January, 18 to 20 were regular at Musbury Tor during January and February and one was carrying twigs at Higher Hollinbank on 7th February. A flock of 70 was present at Alden on 12th June and at least 70 at Holmefield, Musbury on 18th August then 12 to 20 daily. On 21st September there was a mixed flock of 130 Carrion Crows and Jackdaws going to roost at Calf Hey. During October and November there were flocks of 20 to 72 in the Musbury area.

RAVEN - *Corvus corax*

On 16th February there were 2, possibly 3 at Lee Quarry and on 23rd March a pair. They nested successfully - there were 3 young in the nest on 18th April, 5 birds - presumably the family group - were seen on 12th May (Peter Fyldes, Kevin Lister). After the breeding season singles were seen - over Stacksteads on 1st June, Cowpe Lowe, Plunge, Cowpe Moss and Cowpe reservoir. In the Musbury area one was seen over Higher Hollinbank on 26th April and one at Causeway Head on 1st May. There were 2 there on 13th July and 14th September. Also on this date one flew west with 2 Buzzards. Two birds were seen on 24th October, 31st October and 14th November (Jim Rostron). One flew over Holden Wood from Musbury Tor on 18th October (Ian Brady). There were sightings of Ravens from as far afield as Grane and Spring Mill during November and December.

STARLING - *Sturnus vulgaris*

Mid-winter flocks were generally about 50 to 100. Numbers increased in late February as continental migrants began to move - often in the company of Fieldfares - 500 with Fieldfares in the Hile area on 22nd February and 200 over Crown Point on 11th February. On 20th June and adult with 2 juveniles came to a garden feeder in Waterfoot, on 25th June a flock of 30 included juveniles, in July 2 adults with 3 juveniles came to feed on fat balls in Gaghills. Flocks soon built up: on 7th June there were over 150 in a conifer plantation at Marl Pits and about 400 in fields near Waugh's Well. On 15th June a flock of 800 was at Clough Bottom. One report (Bob Ives) said that flocks of 3000 to 4000 were feeding on moorland above Clowbridge on 11th and 13th June and moving east all the time - some of the largest flocks seen since the days of great Starling abundance. During December birds coming in to roost near Clowbridge totalled up to 10,000 birds.

HOUSE SPARROW - *Passer domesticus*

Records as usual of small groups, usually around 10, during winter at various sites - the largest being 40 in Edgeside estate on 10th February. On 16th May 8 to 10 were at a bird table in

Waterfoot including 2 fledged young. Similar numbers came to feed at a bird table in Gaghills to the end of July but not later. A post-breeding flock at Clowbridge numbered up to 50 birds during August. Visits to the bird table at Booth Road, Waterfoot also decreased from the end of August. Numbers were slightly higher in the second winter period - 15 at Stacksteads, 20 at Park Road, Helmshore seen daily into December. At least 12 came to seed put down in Clowbridge car park in the winter.

CHAFFINCH - *Fringilla coelebs*

About 8 came regularly to a bird table in Waterfoot during January, rising to 13 on 3rd February. 20 were regular at the Gaghills feeding station. Flocks of up to 30 were seen along Musbury Road near beech trees until 30th January, then just 5 or 6. First song was heard from 2 males at Crawshawbooth on 7th February, becoming general by 15th February. At Whitworth young birds were seen from 17th May. Post-breeding season there were 50 at Ogden car park on 21st September, 12 at New Line on 2nd October, 13 at Clough Bottom on 24th October and 25 in fields at Cloughfold near Bocholt Way.

BRAMBLING - *Fringilla montifringilla*

A female came to the bird table in Booth Road, Waterfoot from 15th January to 9th February. At Healey Dell 12 were seen with about 30 Chaffinch on 19th January. There were good numbers at the Gaghills feeding centre in the valley below from 19th January - a few at first then increasing to 22 on 9th March, 80 on 16th April, 20 on 23rd and 26th April - last seen on 27th April. On 6th April the birds feeding at Gaghills were in the Trickett's Memorial Ground where many were singing (Kevin Lister). Three or four Bramblings were in the plantation at Clowbridge on 22nd March and a single at Stubbins on 4th April. A male and a female were with Chaffinches at Hoyle Street, Whitworth on 19th April.

GREENFINCH - *Carduelis chloris*

Numbers and sightings are much influenced by the provision of suitable food. At Waterfoot numbers in the garden increased to 10 when a feeder with sunflower seeds was put up. Several pairs nested at Oak Mount, Rawtenstall and about 20 birds were seen the rest of the year. At the feeding centre at Gaghills an estimated 60 were often present in the area during much of the year (Kevin Lister). Six came to seed put down in the Clowbridge car park on 2nd January. At Hoyle Street, Whitworth up to 27 birds were at feeders between August and November.

GOLDFINCH - *Carduelis carduelis*

Numbers were thought to be low early in the year. One and occasionally a pair came to the feeder in Waterfoot on dates between 13th February and 27th March. Up to 7 visited to feed at Gaghills until the end of July. There were 6 near the car park at Calf Hey on 26th February. One returned to the usual site in Booth Road, Waterfoot and sang on 25th June, attracting a mate by 3rd July. The male continued to sing from the telephone wires throughout July and both birds used the nut feeders. They were present to 13th August but there was no indication of successful breeding. Elsewhere there were 3 at Tip Lodge with one in song on 9th February and song was also heard at Calf Hey in February. A pair with the male in song was at Irwell Vale on 31st March. Birds had returned to Clowbridge by 15th April and increased from then on. Juveniles were seen on 21st June at Gaghills and on 17th September at Clough Bottom. Some good numbers were recorded in post-breeding flocks - 100 at Holden Wood on 11th August, 30 in fields at Clough Bottom and 70 at Clowbridge on 17th September, 20 at Lumb on 29th September, 40 over Cowpe Lowe on 5th October, 35 at Musbury on 18th September and

40 there on 30th September. At Hoyle Street, Whitworth there were 36 regularly in January, 10 or 12 adults during the breeding season, and up to 40 in late summer and autumn. There were records of flocks of 10 to 20 from several other areas.

SISKIN - *Carduelis spinus*

Quite widespread in small numbers during January and February. On 16th January there were 20 in tree tops at Reedsholme and on 23rd January about 20 at Hall Carr. During January Siskins spent long periods at a bird table in Whitworth. Four were regular at a bird table in Reedsholme from 20th to 23rd February then 2 until 3rd March. On 3rd January 10 were seen at Gaghills with a Goldfinch. At Hoyle Street, Whitworth up to 5 were seen on the feeder with the latest date being 31st March. An interesting record was of 3 juveniles at Clough Bottom on 11th August (check with P Fyldes). In the autumn 4 were at Calf Hey with a Crossbill on 25th October. On 8th November a female was in a mixed flock at Staghills and on 9th November 10 in a mixed flock at Naden. 5 were at Spring Mill on 7th December.

LINNET - *Carduelis cannabina*

Breeding season records were received from the following areas: Marl Pits plantation, where there were several pairs; Alden, one pair on 5th May; Cowm, 2 males in song on 1st June; Groundwork, at least 4 pairs with singing males on 1st June; The Hile, a pair in the south west of the area on 13th July. Some good-sized flocks were seen after the breeding season: 20 at Musbury in August; over 40 on Swinshaw Moor in August; 50 at Holden Wood on 14th September; up to 70 at Spring Mill on 21st September, 10 at Ogden on 29th September; 6 at Musbury on 18th October

TWITE - *Carduelis flavirostris*

Some mid-winter records of 2 at Hutch Bank Quarry on 9th January, 30 at Higher Hollinbank on 12th, 13th and 14th January during cold weather, 20 at Musbury Road on 1st February. The only records of breeding season presence were 2 at Gorpley reservoir on 26th April and 2 at Lee Quarry on 28th April. On 27th November a flock of 24 was seen on Harcles Hill.

REDPOLL - *Carduelis flammea*

Two were with 16 Siskins at Chapel Hill on 5th January and one was seen in Healey Dell on 19th January. During the nesting season 2 were seen in the plantation at Clowbridge on 22nd March, then 2 pairs were present from 7th May through the summer. Much display was seen but no family groups (Bob Ives). On 21st May and 2nd June 2 were seen flying over willows in Clod Lane, Helmshore (Ian Brady). One was at Calf Hey on 19th July. A flock of 20 was seen at Bacup on 27th December.

COMMON CROSSBILL - *Loxia curvirostra*

Few records. On 9th February 9 were at Calf Hey, on 10th February 4 were at Clough Bottom, on 26th February 1 at Calf Hey car park. Two were at Clowbridge on 26th June, on 25th October one was at Calf Hey with Siskins and on 14th and 15th November heard at Calf Hey.

BULLFINCH - *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

A male visited a bird table at Helmshore on 7th and 17th May. Four were seen on Chapel Hill on 1st June. Post-breeding there was a female near E.B.S.W. on 9th October, a male at Jack Lodge, Shawclough on 26th October, 2 males in Trickett's Memorial Ground on 8th November one of which possibly visited a bird table nearby at Gaghills on 22nd November. On 12th

December a male was at E.B.S.W. Other than a pair at Oak Mount, Rawtenstall there were no confirmed reports of breeding but pairs were present at Gaghills, Healey Dell, Groundwork, Grane and Deeply Vale.

SNOW BUNTING - *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A report of 20 on Knowl Moor seen by Jimmy Stanners on 5th January was followed up by a visit by Bob Ives on 7th January. No Snow Buntings were seen but there was evidence of their presence in the form of a mass of droppings.

REED BUNTING - *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Winter presence noted - 4 at Deeply Vale on 4th January, a single at A.M.R. on 7th January, 5 on the south side of Great Hameldon and one at Great Clough (Loveclough) on 8th January. Singles here later on 17th February and 14th March. At Clowbridge the first back was heard on 25th February then regular to the end of March with males occupying at least 7 sites round the reservoir and surrounding moors. A pair had arrived at Holden Wood on 26th April and later at least 4 males and 2 females were regularly seen. On 3rd April 8 birds probably on passage were seen on the sprinklers at E.B.S.W. Then recorded on 9 dates up to 5th May then a regular 2 - 5 seen amongst Pied Wagtails, probably breeding birds. A juvenile was seen at Clough Bottom on 3rd August. Two were in song at Newchurch on 17th May. One was at Holden Wood on 14th September and one at Clough Bottom on 24th October. A total of 25 were seen in the upper Naden Valley on 12th December and 2 at A.M.R. on the same date.