

Nosterfield Nature Reserve



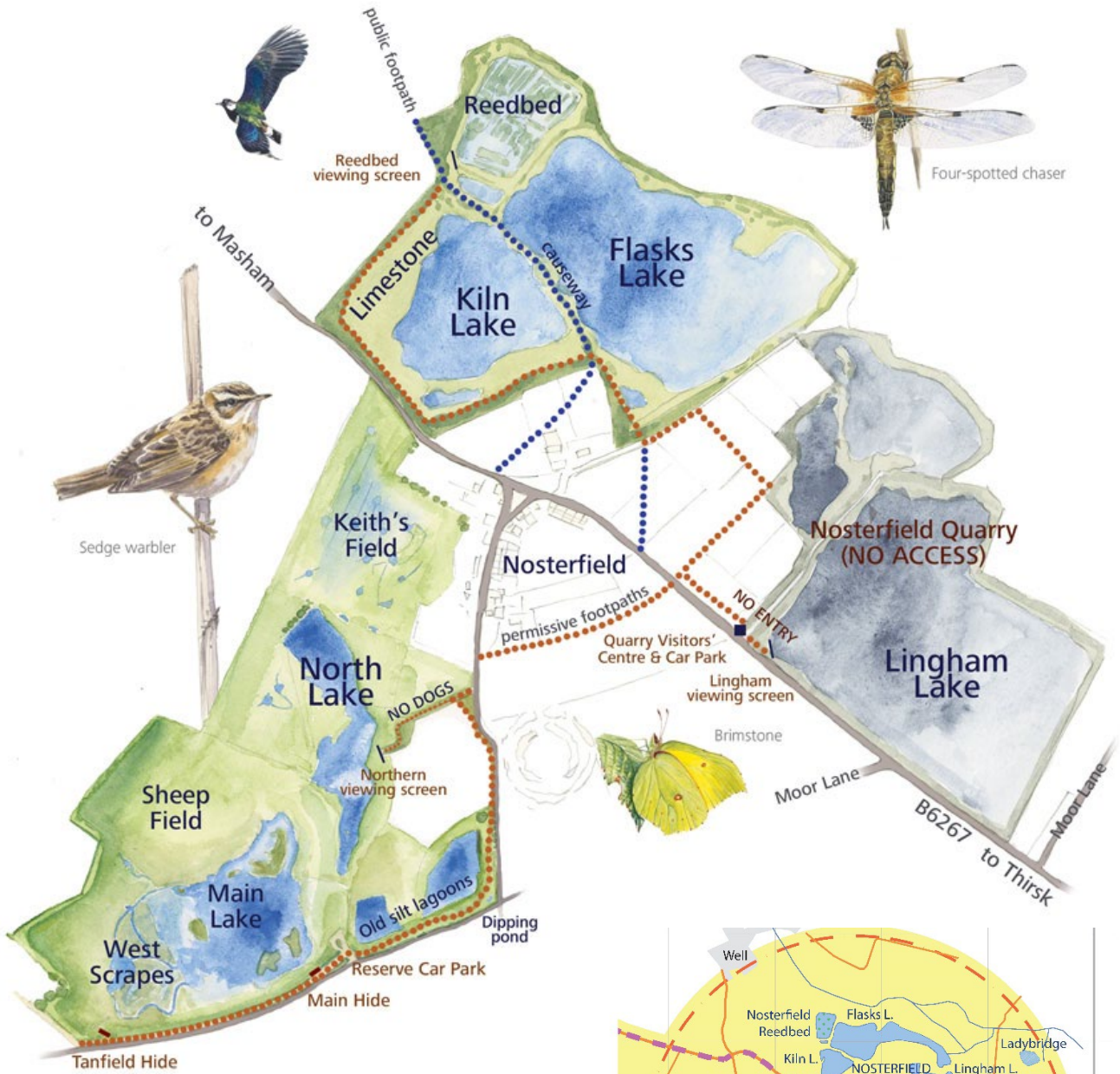
Bird & Natural History Report

2022

by *Andrew (Andy) M Hanby*
edited by *Jill Warwick*

INTRODUCTION

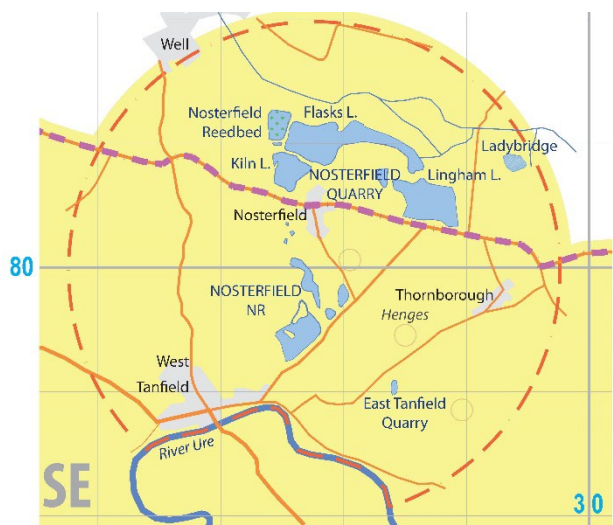
In an ideal world, this report would cover all aspects of natural history and arguably local archaeology in the recording area (see maps). However, it is still early days and in the fullness of time, in a perfect world where time and money permit, a shiny printed report may one day emerge.



Reserve Recording Area

The reserve recording area is taken as a two-kilometre radius from the Northern Viewing Screen but excluding south of the River Ure. The River Ure historically formed the boundary between the North and West 'Ridings', or Vice-counties (VC) 65 and 64 – the whole recording area is therefore in VC65 (North-west Yorkshire).

A map showing wider area names is at the back of the report.



Overview

Despite the year often seeming to be 'slow' a record number of species, 177 (excluding *exotica*), were documented in the recording area, largely through the hard work of many observers, some of whom appear to live on site! As the monthly summaries show, days of little activity were often punctuated by days of frenetic action. The recipe for success seemed to be rain, the heavier the better and south-easterly winds, preferably with poor visibility. This was the weather that produced both the rare grebes, most of the Common Scoter, Grey Phalarope, Wood Warbler and terns of all types.

There were notable absences, in particular no Grasshopper Warbler records and reduced numbers of many species. Bizarrely, one of the highest counts of Swallows was in October in stark contrast to the relatively low numbers of local birds during the summer.

Notes on Systematic List

The totals are from the whole recording area. Unlike the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts, the wildfowl numbers are the aggregate from the whole area and not individualised for specific waters. Both methods have merit. Individualised counts help support focused actions for a particular area, aggregated counts similarly for the whole area. The latter also partly adjust for birds that may be mobile between lakes, particularly true for Goldeneye which regularly commute between Lingham, Langwith and Ladybridge Lakes.

I have only been able to access some of the WeBS data and only for the Reserve, therefore these have only partly been incorporated in this list.

Where there are no records of a notable or scarce species, the count has usually been recorded here as '0', but where it is a species known to be common/regular in the area, the term 'No counts' has been used.

The term 'peak present' refers to peak count of birds in the recording area rather than transiting the airspace over it. Of course, in nearly all cases the true number of birds, particularly in the case of small passerines, is not known. There are some who commented that I had missed counts out in the last report, to which I would say clairvoyance is not a virtue and the more records I receive, the better this report can be.

Monthly Bird Summary 2022

by Andrew Hanby

January

Naturalists and birdwatchers in particular, often burst into the New Year with enthusiasm on New Year's day, tempered by aching heads, but then can experience a dreary metaphorical trudge towards February, with little of interest. This January was certainly an exception, with something of note most weeks.

On 1st, several birders were out and a combined day total of 70 species was a decent start to the year in unseasonably mild weather. The following day was rainy, but hardy souls were out and one was rewarded by a cracking male **Marsh Harrier**, possibly the first ever January record for the recording area. The 4th saw two **Whooper Swans** briefly on Langwith Lake, before heading off north and by 6th, the weather was more appropriate for the time of year, with a temperature of -1°C first thing and snow. Undeterred, at least one birder was on site to watch a satellite-tagged ringtail **Hen Harrier** hunting along the edge of Flasks Lake and over the Reedbed. **The species is** surprisingly rare at Nosterfield, with at most four previous records. It was seen again on 8th and 11th.



Hen Harrier over the Reedbed.

It remained cold on 8th but delivered the goods, when a **Red-necked Grebe** was found on Langwith Lake. It stayed long enough for several of the Nosterfield regulars to get distant views amongst the Pochard, but sadly, was gone the next day.



Bittern, Reedbed (photo 2021)

The same day saw the first sighting of **Bittern** for the year, in the Reedbed.

The next day, 9th, the Bittern was seen flying the full length of Flasks Lake before being reported again in the evening. That day also saw a huge flock, c1500, of **Pink-footed Geese** fly into Nosterfield airspace from the north, presumably disturbed from Carthorpe Mires by some of the extensive shooting that had been going on. Two days later, in milder weather, two **Stonechat** put in an appearance around the south side of Ladybridge Lake. This elusive pair was last seen in December. An expedition to the portion of the River Ure within the recording area added **Dipper** to the area year list on 13th, always good to see.

It was a red-letter day on 14th, with the area's first confirmed **Siberian Chiffchaff 'tristis'** found at the Nosterfield village and on Flasks Lane. It had the decency to stay all month and pose for numerous high quality photographs. Sound recordings of its distinctive 'peep' call were made – perhaps it thought it was in the foothills of the Himalayas, where it should have been, but we knew otherwise.



Tristis Chiffchaff

The first sightings of **Eurasian White-fronted Goose** for the year (two) occurred on 15th, with a single the next day. On 21st it was cold, 1°C at first light, but with bright skies - after an alert to a big movement of **Pink-footed Geese** moving west up the River Humber, at around 11am onwards the skies were full of them moving in various permutations of west from the direction of the Vale of York, with a total of 1348 moving through, a visible migration record for the Nosterfield recording area. The following few days remained cold and more Pink-footed Geese passed through as well as were present in the area, with a peak of 206 on the Reserve on 22nd.



Pink-footed geese

The same day also added an immature male **Scaup** to the year's tally and the male **Marsh Harrier** was present again, soaring above Keith's Field. The exhausting pace continued, with a **Great White Egret** flying south-east over the polytunnels by Flasks Lake, also on 22nd. Three **Eurasian White-fronted Geese** posed by the side of Ladybridge Lake on 26th and 27th where they were seen by many. The penultimate day of the month saw the Scaup still present, likewise the *tristis* Chiffchaff and amazingly a nominate race **Chiffchaff** (the usual sort!) was found at the sewage farm. Other notable observations during the month were regular flights of **Starling** over the area to and from roosts to the south, peaking at c19,000 just after dawn on 23rd, a **Curlew** roost with a maximum count at dawn on 23rd of 448 and 185 **Coot** on Lingham Lake the same day.

February

The weather was generally average concerning temperature, but striking in terms of wind, with three named storms, Dudley, Eunice and Franklin between 16th and 21st. Despite many enthusiastic predictions as to what remarkable birds might turn up, only one prediction came true, that there would be 'nowt'.

The first day of the month saw long stayers from January still present, with the *tristis* **Chiffchaff** still holding court in the vicinity of Flasks Lane and Nosterfield village. The next day the *nominate* **Chiffchaff** was seen again at the sewage farm. On 2nd, the long-staying **Scaup** from January was relocated and subsequently seen on most days of the month.

Also on 2nd the Langwith roost contained a minimum of 475 **Curlew**. Made for insomniacs, these birds need to be counted as near to dawn as possible, as they soon split up and distribute themselves around the whole recording area and beyond. This roost fragmented and was no longer present after the middle of the month

On 4th a thorough walk around the northern part of the area amassed 38 **Long-Tailed Tits**, including one flock of 15. I suspect the total for the whole recording area could be as high as 70, but did not have the stamina for such a mammoth statistical exercise. The lurking **Bittern** appeared in the Reedbed on 6th and the first **Ringed Plover** of the year was at Flasks Lake the next day. All the while the **Oystercatcher** numbers started to creep up, with 56 on 7th. The three **Eurasian White-fronted Geese** put in the first of several sporadic appearances during the month, on 9th.

Two days later, one lucky/skilful observer added a **Jack Snipe** to the area year list, a lurking, as always, individual by the plant nursery. An impressive 48 **Goldeneye** were counted in the area on 12th and **Ringed Plover** numbers rose to three. The male **Marsh Harrier** from January reappeared and a stroll by the River Ure within the recording area was rewarded by good views of two **Dipper**. There was also a hint of spring with three **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** passing south-west during the day.

Two **Whoopers Swans** were present on Langwith Lake first thing on 13th which then flew south-east to a field to the south of Ladybridge Lake, where they were found later in the day.

From the middle of the month, the **Skylark** which hunker down in secretive gangs in stubble fields, where we can't see them without enduring levels of inconvenience coupled with trespass, started to become obvious, with singing males distributing themselves about and passage birds starting to push through. This really became noticeable on 18th when 39 were counted in the area, notably around the Reserve and the region of the Henges. On the same date, a magnificent count of 47 **Shoveler** was achieved and the highest **Dunlin** count of the year thus far - five.

The next day the wind was relatively light and the area well birded. The Oystercatcher count reached its monthly maximum of 119, the *tristis* **Chiffchaff** popped up again in Nosterfield village and a total of 73 species was seen.

On 22nd and 23rd rather unpleasant windy weather marked the onset of more obvious visible migration, again. Highlights on 22nd were 110 **Pink-Footed Geese** north, 30 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** north, 25 **Skylark** north and a new *nominate* **Chiffchaff** south down the hedge at the main reserve. A fine adult *sinensis* (continental) **Cormorant** was also present on Lingham Lake. The next day included 302 **Pink-Footed Geese** moving north, 44 **Skylark** doing likewise and 14 **Reed Buntings** heading south-west. The **Linnet** flock also peaked at 91 in that day.

Whilst visible migration was very meagre in amount on 25th, it made up for it in quality, with a flock of eight **Corn Buntings** north past Ladybridge Farm. These historically once common breeders in the area are now a scarce, bordering on rare, species now.

As indicated, the best is often saved till the last and 26th proved to be a fantastic day to be birding at Nosterfield. The first birder was on site just before 7am in punishingly cold 'double gloves' weather, -1°C

and a Force 3-4 SSE wind. Within 20 minutes a flock of **Whooper Swans** announced their presence and headed through in a west-north-west direction.



Moving Whooper Swans

This coincided with news from Spurn of a heavy movement of **Pink-footed Geese** there (nearly 4000 passed through eventually). Further reports indicated many were going up the coast and would therefore miss us. Meanwhile two further flocks of **Whooper Swans** went through, then the Pink-footed Geese started, with a 'starter pack' flock of at least 500 birds! By the end of the day, but mostly before lunch, 1405 Pink-footed geese headed through west-north-west on a broad front, a new record for the patch.

The total number of **Whooper Swans** which passed through was 157, a count that maintains Nosterfield's premier position for **this species** moving north in the spring. To put it into context, on the visible migration web site, *Trektellen*, there are only two higher counts of moving **Whooper Swans** in February since the system went live.

The day had other treats too, a **Turnstone** briefly dropped in on Flasks Lake and the first **Avocet** of the year appeared at Langwith Lake around midday. The cherry topping were two **Ravens** heading north-east over Langwith, seen by observers 'twitching' the **Avocet**. All in all, a truly memorable day and a tiring one too.

The penultimate day of the month saw a few more Whooper Swans and an adult female **Marsh Harrier** head through west-north-west after a rest in the Ladybridge area. One observer thought he heard a **Mediterranean Gull**, but it could not be found; however, the next day one was located on the Reserve, another new species for the year.

March

The weather was again average with regard to temperature, and had none of the extremes of winds noted last month. For the visible migration enthusiasts, the main feature for some time at the end of the month was the presence of high pressure, with winds frequently from the south-east quarter and often slack, with some frosts overnight. This all culminated in a nice warm spell in the last week, in which tans as well as bird lists, were topped up.

I make no apologies for again having **Whooper Swan** as the header for this review. In February 2021 there were exactly zero Whooper Swans counted in the recording area, but in February this year 171 were reported. Hopes were therefore high of a bumper crop to get close to last year's near 1200 through our patch during the spring. March 2022 however failed to step up to the plate, with only 307 bird days and 260 different birds variously grounded or flying through.

Regular performers throughout the month included **Common Buzzards**, which became increasingly visible, with counts of over 30 commonplace, and up to three **Sinensis Cormorants** as well as **Dippers** on the River Ure - viewable when looked for.

The modest start to the month manifested in a flyover flock of nine Dunlin over the Reserve and four **Song Thrushes** heading north on 2nd, in a day of drizzle and south-east winds.

The next day the female **Marsh Harrier**, first seen at the end of February, put in another appearance. Also on 3rd, two adult **Mediterranean Gulls** from the end of last month reappeared and were seen on and off throughout the month. The long-staying **Scaup** was still present on 4th, whilst four **Avocet**, a **Black-tailed Godwit** and 42 **Siskin** flew south.

On 5th the winds changed to northerly, which seems to be the wind for visible migration at Nosterfield. Whilst not epic, it was good to see birds on the move, including 40 **Skylark**, 13 **alba Wagtails**, two **Grey Wagtails**, with a **Corn Bunting** as the bonus bird. The next day the northerly winds continued, with an aggregate total of 1376 birds through, including most of the above and 149 **Golden Plover**, 128 **Fieldfare** and seven **Reed Buntings** included in the mix.

A big headline day occurred on 7th, with a **Starling** roost of up to 50,000 'murmuring' around Nosterfield village and the Reedbed. This occurred for a few days before dispersing. Two random Starling heads on the causeway at Flasks Lake, spoke of the presence of predators taking advantage of this food source. Also that day, the erratically observed trio of **Eurasian White-fronted Geese** appeared in the field behind Flasks Lake.

On 8th, 95 **Whoopers Swans** left roost in the recording area and headed north-west. The next day, a **Chiffchaff** visibly migrated north across the fields around Langwith, the first of a general build-up of the species in the area, with four present the next day. By 12th, 17 were counted, a day when 79 species were recorded in the area, including the first **Wheatear** and **Sand Martin** of the year and also **Merlin**, the female **Marsh Harrier** from earlier, as well as an impressive count of 37 **Stock Dove** behind the main Reserve.



Despite all this worthy stuff, a star bird was outstanding and on 13th it was delivered in the form of a **Black-necked Grebe** on the Reserve, which posed both with its smaller and larger resident cousins. Sadly, it was only a one-day wonder, but was nevertheless seen by many.

Mid-month saw the area within the high pressure, south-easterly wind doldrums and allowed for diligent counting of small birds, such as Dunnock and included 37 **Chiffchaffs** in the area. These counts also documented the return of **Yellowhammers** to their breeding territories

Black-necked Grebe lurks behind an island on the Reserve

Relentless plodding around also produced the month's only **Woodcock** on 16th. Unexpectedly on 19th, a day with weather similar to earlier in the week, 100 **Whooper Swans** materialised on various lakes in the recording area, only to have largely gone by the next day. However, the next day did reward two lucky observers with a **Great White Egret** located at the Reedbed, with presumably the same individual heading south over Camp Wood two days later.

On 23rd 400 **Pink-footed Geese** flew over Kiln Lake, and more headed over the next day, with 177 deciding to drop onto the Reserve and feed. On the latter date, two **Mandarin Duck** were found on the River Ure. A new **Marsh Harrier** was at Ladybridge Lake on 24th, but the most impressive record that day was a flock of ten **Little Gulls** photographed on Kiln Lake, easily the largest flock ever documented in the recording area and part of a notable UK-wide inland movement. Sadly, these delightful gulls eluded all the Nosterfield regulars, who could only admire the space they had occupied, the next day.



Dunnock singing

As the month slowly drew to a close, the glacial arrival of spring migrants continued, with the first **Little Ringed Plover** flying north over Langwith Lake, just after dawn on 25th. As previously noted, northerly winds are good for visible migration at Nosterfield; this was the wind direction on 26th when a record breaking 1788 **Black-headed Gulls** flew through the recording area. This species is both a strong diurnal and nocturnal migrant, whose movements are often overlooked. In addition to the continued presence of the adult **Mediterranean Gulls** on the Reserve, it was good to have an itinerant first-year bird fly over on 27th.

The first **Blackcap** of the year also appeared at Lingham Lake and **Sand Martin** numbers built up to nine. The next day the first real taste of **Meadow Pipit** (aka 'Mipit') migration occurred, with 145 moving north in east-north-east winds, whilst possibly the same, or another, **Great White Egret** was found by the River Ure.

The month's encore occurred on 29th. A large nocturnal movement of **Common Scoter** was noted all over northern England, including Ripon, where one observer documented 18 flocks passing over his house in a one hour period. It was therefore not a surprise that eight were found on various lakes in the recording area (with a further nine on Ripon Racecourse Lake, east of Ripon). The next day they were gone, but a **Kittiwake** and 17 **Whooper Swans** were some consolation.

The month ended with the first Osprey of the year and 565 Redwing heading north.

April

The first day of the month featured a truly impressive movement of 1997 **Redwing** and 479 **Fieldfare** in a Force 3 north-westerly wind, with snow showers. To put this in perspective, this is the fifth highest April count for moving Redwing for the whole of the UK and 13th for the whole of Europe ever recorded on the visible migration website *Trektellen*.



Redwings making a move

Also present that day was an **Osprey**, a species which was recorded on 13 days during the month, with two on both 15th and 24th. Most of the records refer to a pristine male which was seen on and off throughout the month. Also present intermittently during the month were **Mediterranean Gulls**, with a pair early in the month disappearing, only to be replaced by another pair, one of which was colour ringed. Early promise failed to lead to egg-laying, sadly.

Also on 1st, rated as quite a good day, a nice male **White Wagtail** put in an appearance at Flasks Lake, with two groups of three White Wagtails later in the month, at Lingham Lake on 13th and in the big field on 15th.

If the first day of the month was good, the 2nd was brilliant, when a juvenile **White-tailed Eagle**, **G547** (one of the Isle of Wight re-introduction scheme birds), made its way slowly through the recording area. The only negative was one of the birders ripping the trim off his car in the enthusiastic scramble to see the bird. Truly memorable.



White-tailed Eagle agitating the locals

Mike Smithson (L) and Tim Jones (R)

Also on 2nd, the **Golden Plover** flock building up just outside the area made one of its excursions into our airspace; a magnificent 300 count (estimate of course). Overall, it was also a good month for moving Golden Plover, as they headed north to breeding grounds. A total of 791 north was a creditable tally and nearly 50% up on last year. Mention must also be made of **Shoveler**, with a count of 80 on 2nd.

The very next day, **Fieldfare** took the thrush plaudits, with 603 moving north. A **Great White Egret** was seen heading south over Thornborough village from Yorwaste mountain and moving **Meadow Pipits** started to increase, with 412 through during the morning. A **Brambling** flew past heading north on the same watch, whilst another was still present along the West Tanfield ridge.

Meadow Pipits continued to escalate. On 6th, the best vantage point was not manned in the face of a Force 7 plus gale. This proved to be ill-judged, as throughout Yorkshire, counts of thousands were recorded at several locations; even through the Reserve, which generally has lower numbers than the Vale of York, 826 birds were logged moving through. The next day, in slightly moderated Force 6 winds, numbers were much reduced. However, on 8th, 1830 moved through north-west, a new record for us.

Also on 8th, a group of four **Brambling**, 39 **Sand Martins** and the first **Hobby** of the year moved through along the West Tanfield Ridge. Later, another Hobby appeared over the Reedbed and **Black-tailed Godwits** peaked at 39 on the main Reserve.

Twenty-three **Whoopers Swans** moved north on 9th, a much scarcer sight than in April 2021. More spectacular was at least 1200 **Pink-footed Geese**, which, presumably disturbed from Carthorpe Mires, flew into the recording area airspace, with 420 peeling off and landing on the Reserve making quite a din. Also moving that day were 30 **Swallows** and the biggest counts of **Golden Plover** and **Black-headed Gull** for the month, with 471 and 2154 respectively heading north during the first half of the day.

On 10th **Meadow Pipits** continued to move, and four **House Martins** headed south down the River Ure. However, the star bird was a **Ruddy Shelduck** with a group of Pink-footed Geese which came into the Reserve. This was almost certainly the long staying bird from Carthorpe Mires, just to the north of the area. Whilst regarded as 'plastic' (a birding term often used for species that may have just popped out of an aviary), it was still a smart bird to see.

Ruddy Shelduck failing to blend in! - Gary Harrer



After a few fallow days, there was more excitement on 13th, with 164 **Sand Martins** heading west-north-west, plus another 137 in the area. The gem, however, was a **Hawfinch** flying in the same direction over Yorwaste mountain. The next day saw the first **Yellow Wagtail** and **Common Sandpiper** of the year and on 15th, the first **Whitethroat** and **Reed Warbler**. The latter was unusual as it pipped the first **Sedge Warbler** arrival by three days, a reversal of the standard chronological order.

Nationally, there was quite a northerly movement of **Jays**, mainly up the west side of the country. On 19th we scraped in on the act with a flock of four heading north and three in the area, two of the latter in 'non-regular' places. The last third of the month pootled along at a gentle pace, with the first **Common** and **Arctic Terns** and **Garden Warbler** all appearing. It was also nice to see five **Pochard** on Ladybridge Lake on 21st and a **Greenshank** on 22nd.

As well as regular sightings of Osprey mentioned earlier, **Great White Egrets** were seen on four dates, with at least two different individuals, one in breeding plumage, one not (black versus yellow bills, obvious in flight).

As the month trundled to its end, the box of delights was again opened, with a **Spoonbill** on the Reserve on 27th, sharing it with the four **Barnacle Geese** found the day before. The last day saw an observer highly distracted from his lunch by a **Rough-legged Buzzard** flying through the area - another great 'cherry' to put on top of the April 2022 birding cake.

Spoonbill on Reserve - photo: Val Normington via Twitter



May

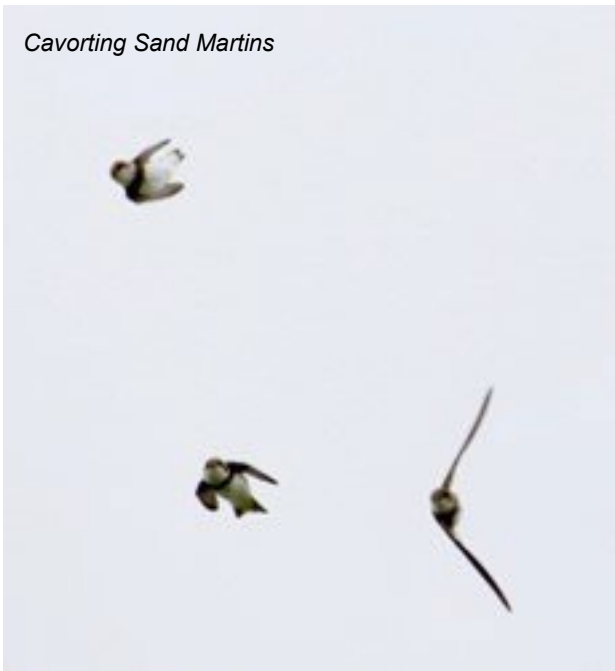
The first day of the month started well, with an observer on the early shift rewarded by a ringtail **Hen Harrier** drifting north through the area. The day was also improved by a group of five **Arctic Terns** on Lingham Lake that eventually headed off west and a **Whimbrel** through north. Rarest of all were two **Bar-tailed Godwits** on Langwith Lake, a species that was only recorded once in 2021. The next day the first two **Swifts** of the year were seen and the following day, 3rd, both a tardy **Whooper Swan** and a laggard of a **Pink-footed Goose** were still present - a reflection of the continuing cool weather which now seems standard for May. Two new **Bar-tailed Godwits** dropped into the Reserve and stayed for two more days. Interestingly the arrival of the godwits coincided with the peak count of this species on the south coast, at Dungeness, with the May peak of 559 east occurring on 2nd. The first of a run of **Wood Sandpiper** records occurred on 3rd, with at least two involved over the next few days.



Black-headed Gull on the River Ure

The same mix of species presided over the next few days, during which time there was very little activity on the visible migration front. Things were a bit different on 5th however, with warmer weather reaching 18°C and relatively light west-north-west winds producing an interesting day. Notable records included the first of a run of three **Cuckoo** observations during the next few days, a flock of eight **Black-tailed Godwits** powering north past Yorwaste mountain and a good supporting cast of assorted other migrants. Most spectacular, however, was a kettle of three migrant **Osprey** which rose up from the River Ure area to an astronomic height before disappearing north. A single **Osprey** later in the day was thought to have been one of the regular birds loafing around the area, on and off, since April. Overall, there were seven bird days of single **Osprey** present in the area involving two different males.

The **Pink-footed Goose** and **Whooper Swan** were still in the area on 7th, whilst **Mandarin Duck** was again seen, part of a regular, albeit erratic, set of sightings of one, or other, or both of a pair lurking in the Flasks/Kiln Lakes area. The following day saw the only **Garganey** record of the month (quite a contrast with 2021, when there were 24 bird days of this species), with a peak count of three. On 10th there were two **Sanderling** on Flasks Lake 'beach', the first of a run of six bird days on four dates between then and 22nd.



Cavorting Sand Martins

On 11th an observer was astonished to see/hear a **Tree Pipit** singing by Ladybridge Farm and Friday 13th was not so unlucky, with a really good movement of 401 **Swifts** and 289 **House Martins** west into a Force 5 west-south-west wind, through a blur of resident **Sand Martins**. Another **Tree Pipit** passed through west-north-west also.

Bizarrely, the Pink-footed Goose count crept up to five by 15th, but the star birds on that day were a **Woodlark** north over the Silt Lagoons and yet another ringtail **Hen Harrier** north. The following day was notable for two things in particular - very heavy rain and a **Black Tern** on the Reserve, which performed well for many of the local observers.

On 17th both the usual suspects were in the area, as well as one of the only two observations of **Marsh Harrier** during the month. Arguably more exciting was the discovery of a pair of **Meadow Pipits** at the South Henge. This is a species that has never been recorded as breeding in the area, so this was truly exciting news.

The last few days of the month were exceedingly underwhelming overall, with minor highlights in the form of **Whimbrel** and the ever-popular **Ospreys**. Good numbers of breeding warblers were counted.

As is traditional though, the last birded day of the month went out in style with a **Grey Plover**, another real scarcity here, through Langwith Lake.



Sedge warbler numbers were generally good throughout the month.

For someone solely focused on migrant birds at Nosterfield, that would be a disaster, as it is fair to say June 2022 was not the most inspiring month. It is also fair to say that outside the birdwatching bubble, in the world of plants and insects, it was altogether much better, but that is beyond the remit of this avian round-up.

One thing that we can pretty much take for granted in the summer months are the regular visits of **Osprey** to pick up a snack in the Flasks/Langwith/Lingham triad of lakes and this month was no exception, with single males being seen on eight days during the month.



Osprey gets lucky over Flasks Lake - Tim Jones

Also heartening was a count of 43 **Skylark**, mostly in the area of the Henges during the common bird census on 2nd.

Also on that date, a male **Garganey**, a very scarce bird this year, was found at the North Lake. Other wildfowl observations of note included up to three of both **Wigeon** and **Teal** present during the month.

June

This is very much the month when success and failure in the bird breeding world becomes evident, with fluffy, young **Avocets** present both on the Reserve and Langwith Lake, but definite disappointment with the **Common Terns** attempting to breed on the Reserve.

A **Meadow Pipit** was carrying food in exactly the same place as last month at the South Henge, indicative of young being nearby. The species has never been proven to have bred in the recording area before and therefore this observation was quite exciting, although not conclusive.

Avocet success - Mike Smithson

On 4th, notable for the wrong reasons, was a **Common Sandpiper**. This species used to be a regular breeder, with sometimes as many as three pairs in the recording area. Unfortunately, this record was one of only three during the month, an indication of the decline of the species locally.

Visible migration is generally at a low ebb in the first half of June throughout Europe and therefore it was encouraging to have a most impressive movement of 477 **Swifts** and three **Hobbys** straight through south on 11th, plus a good performance by one of the local **Hobbys** around the Ladybridge/Langwith Lakes area.

It was a red-letter day on 12th, when one sharp-eyed observer picked up the first **Willow Tit** for several years, around Kiln Lake. This is a Red-listed and critically endangered species in our area and as such, every record needs to be cherished as if it might be the last.

Good counts of **Gadwall** (67) and **Reed Bunting** (17) on 14th were perhaps more reflective of an effort to count rather than any unexpected influx!

An adult **Kittiwake** on Langwith Lake on 18th was soon spiralling up high and then lost to view as it drifted away south-west.

Adult Kittiwake preparing to leave Langwith



The 21st brought the first of several sightings of up to two juvenile **Redstarts** in the Flasks/Lingham Lakes area, indicative of successful breeding nearby.

Returning wader passage was heralded by two **Wood Sandpipers** on the Reserve on 23rd and a **Black-tailed Godwit** there the next day. The fourth sighting of **Cuckoo** for the year occurred on 25th, with one along the Flasks Lake causeway.

The last days of the month ended with two unseasonal records, an adult **Great Black-backed Gull** on 25th and a female **Scaup** on Lingham Lake on 29th.

Juvenile Redstart, Flasks Lake

'Fozzy'

July

The first half of the month was thematically similar to June, relatively disappointing, but some regular performers such as **Osprey** to liven the days up. Towards the end of the month a red colour-ringed **Great White Egret** 'APB' took up residence, although was often elusive. APB had been ringed in late April this year at RSPB Ham Wall reserve in Somerset, the origin of last year's colour-ringed bird (AAU). Another rather nice thread was the continued presence of **Common Redstart** down the end of Flasks Lane in the small fields, peaking at five on 7th. On this date, both an adult male and female were present, with the splendid male lingering until the end of the month. If they hadn't bred in the area, they clearly had done so nearby.

On 3rd a flock of 33 **Long-Tailed Tits** flew along the hedge by the Reserve car park - a most impressive count. In addition, six very smart, summer-plumaged **Black-tailed Godwits** were also on the Reserve - difficult to know if they were still heading north, or more likely, heading back south from Iceland. A build-up of **Stock Doves** was also notable, with 45 between the Reserve and Langwith Lake, the two most popular sites for this species.

More **Black-tailed Godwit** action occurred on 9th, when 22 appeared on Flasks Lake.

A build-up of **Pochard** in the Lingham/Ladybridge Lakes area became noticeable on 14th, with seven on Lingham Lake. More exciting however, were two **Quail** flushed from the edge of a field by Flasks Lane.

In the intense heat in the middle of the month, where 40°C was narrowly exceeded further south, **Little Owl** breeding success was manifest by up to two grown photogenic young along Flasks Lane.

The last nine days of the month showed a distinct upturn in the tempo. Starting on 20th, a **Common Scoter** was located on Lingham Lake, with 18 **Little Egrets** and a group of 21 **Grey Partridge** along Green Lane, comprising two adults and 19 almost fully grown young. The **Scoter** theme was repeated on 22nd, with a drake flying east over Langwith Lake, the day proving to be one of the best of the month so far, with two **Turnstone**, two **Sanderling** and four **Arctic Terns** also through Langwith during the day and elsewhere, 18 **Little Egrets** and a **Wood Sandpiper**.

A further **Turnstone**, two **Wood Sandpipers** and one of a handful of sightings of **Mediterranean Gull** enlivened 24th. The continued build-up of **Tufted Duck** and **Pochard** was sustained (see later) on the following day and the first of a handful of **Green Sandpiper** observations was noted on the main Reserve.



Little Gulls, Flasks Lake - Tim Jones



The avian escalation continued on 26th, with two splendid summer plumaged **Little Gulls** on Flasks Lake beach, with the regular **Osprey** and **Great White Egret** as supporting cast.

Generally, rain deters many birders at Nosterfield, but for the diehards it is the nectar of the Gods, with many of the very best days being somewhat damp. The rule book was followed on 28th - just by Lingham Lake car park, the third-ever **Wood Warbler** for the area was found, but only seen by two observers as it fed enthusiastically in the tall trees. Also notable was a fantastic count of 521 **Curlew**. The morning of

29th was also wet, with low heavy cloud and reduced visibility. Not to be outdone by the previous day, a phenomenal flock (estimated to be in the region of 200) of **Common Scoter** appeared to the east of Langwith Lake and flew through west-north-west; a magnificent sight and easily the most recorded in the Nosterfield area on a single day. A summer-plumaged **Arctic Tern** and a summer-plumaged **Knot** headed south, the first **Ruff** for some while and two **Green Sandpiper** were a commendable supporting cast.

The next day was relatively calm, with **Whimbrel** and **Marsh Harrier** supplying some of the interest. With only one day left, a betting person might think that the best days of the month had passed. Not so, it was outstanding on 31st; with rain varying from light to heavy at times and often very reduced visibility, the stage was set for a decent Nosterfield day. The first observer to arrive at Langwith Lake decided to improve the visibility at the site by giving 'attention' to the long grass obscuring some of the view. These efforts came to an abrupt halt as a flock of ten terns flew through. By the end of the day, a minimum of 26 **Common** and 23 **Arctic Terns** passed through the recording area.

At 07.36 a flock of waders appeared out the gloom to the south, a stunning 11 **Turnstones** and a splendid **Knot**. Through the morning three flocks of **Black-tailed Godwits** passed through, totalling 44 and a flock of ten **Wigeon** headed north. A harder look at the water at Langwith Lake revealed five **Common Scoter**. Later a call on the group chat announced six further **Common Scoter** on Flasks Lake, which prompted another look at the Langwith flock, which had miraculously grown to 11. The six at Flasks Lake later headed off north, leaving the Langwith group still sleeping.

In general, it was a great day for duck, with 208 **Tufted Duck**, 24 **Pochard** and 308 **Mallard** across all sites. The last notable bird of a fantastic day was a gull, an adult **Yellow-legged Gull** found on Ladybridge Lake. All in all, a terrific *finale* to the month.

August

Continuing the theme of 'Steady Eddie', which has characterised much of the summer months, with some reliable performers such as **Osprey** and **Marsh Harrier** being seen with some regularity, sparse new quality birds and only modest numbers of moving birds.

After relatively low numbers early on, **Swallows** seemed to pick up during the month, whilst 3rd saw the first of a run of **Great White Egret** records and the continuing presence of the male **Common Scoter** on Flasks Lake, initially found on 1st.



Common Scoter, a smart male, gave great views and had the decency to stay until 9th - Tim Jones

The next day two colour-ringed **Great White Egrets** were photographed together on the edge of Flasks Lake, at the reedbed end. Red ABP (male) was ringed as a nestling at RSPB Ham Wall Reserve, Somerset on 29th April this year, whilst Red ABU (also male) was ringed on 7th May at another wetland site 2-3 km west of Ham Wall. After fledging, the latter was later seen at North Somercotes, Lincs on 18th July and ours is the next sighting!



Then there were two Great White Egrets - Tim Jones

Also notable on 4th was a **Knot** on Flasks Lake and over the next few days a variety of waders, including **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Common Sandpiper** and **Golden Plover** popped in to join the rising numbers of **Lapwing**, with Flasks 'beach' and the ever-enlarging Flasks island, the favoured spots.

On 6th the male **Redstart** from last month was still present at the end of Flasks Lane, whilst a **Spotted Flycatcher**, normally a scarce bird here, hawked for insects around the trees near Camp Wood. The only **Wheatear** of the month was also found on the Middle Henge.

A **Mediterranean Gull** was recorded on 7th and the next day saw the start of a good run of **Greenshank** records, with four heading south over Flasks Lake. More uncommon was a **Grey Plover**, moving south, on the same day. A morning's bird ringing in the fen area adjoining Flasks Lake also on 8th, resulted in 59 birds ringed, including 12 **Blackcap**, 11 **Willow Warbler**, 8 **Reed Warbler**, also **Sedge** and **Garden Warbler** and **Whitethroat**.



On 9th the **Spotted Flycatcher** saga hit a new level, with the discovery of a family party of at least four birds, including three juveniles down the Flasks Lane passerine hot spot.

Even more exciting, and a truly rare bird at Nosterfield, was a **Pied Flycatcher** calling down Flasks Lane on the same date.

The next few days were relatively uneventful, with a **Whimbrel** south on 11th. Things perked up on 14th, with a **Greenshank** on Flasks Lake and five **Knot** moved north-east. On 15th a nice covey of **Grey Partridge** was seen from the North Hide. The species seems to have done well this year with, in addition to this covey, different family parties down Flasks Lane, Green Lane and at the Carthorpe road junction.

The Spotted Flycatchers were seen intermittently until the end of the month - Mike Smithson

During the month, very yellow juvenile Willow Warblers became increasingly evident

The 16th heralded a stunning first for the Nosterfield area, with a calling **Corncrake** heard from Lingham Lake carpark by two observers well experienced with the species. As Simon Warwick's mobile phone was not on site (with its Corncrake ring tone!), this consolidates a great record.

Wader variety continued with two **Turnstone** on Flasks Lake on 17th, but was followed by a relatively quiet period, with low-key highlights such as three **Common Terns** on 20th, two **Osprey** and two **Marsh Harriers** on 21st and, best of all, an eclipse-plumaged **Scaup** on 22nd.

On 24th at least one **Spotted Flycatcher** was in residence down Flasks Lane, but interestingly, another individual visibly migrated south over two observers at the Reserve screen. Also on the same day, in addition to two juvenile **Shelduck** still lingering on the Reserve, a flock of 13 was present on Langwith Lake, but soon departed west-south-west. The following day, 13 were at Bury Reservoir, Lancs, where the species is very scarce at this time of year - the coincidence of numbers and timing strongly suggests that they were the same birds.

It was a "Big Gull" day on 27th, with 1020 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** and 522 **Common Gulls** in the recording area and on 29th, the post-roost gathering of wagtails at Ladybridge Lake achieved a reasonably respectable total of 16 **Yellow** and 34 **Pied Wagtails**.

Unlike previous months, there was no grand finale and like an old soldier, August merely faded away.

September

Black-tailed Godwits go for it

September very much started fast off the blocks, but gradually ran out of steam towards the end of the month, with a few long-staying quality birds going the distance, so I think the old friend alluded to above fell asleep for a while!

In the first couple of days, there was a scattering of autumnal waders with a few **Ringed Plover**, **Dunlin**, **Ruff** and **Black-tailed Godwit** to bulk out the keen birder's notebook.

Light south-easterlies on 3rd saw a distinct spike in action, with two **Whimbrel** and a creditable nine **Greenshank** flying through south. The first of a run of **Curlew Sandpipers** arrived on the Reserve and a male **Osprey** appeared over Flasks Lake. Additionally, a new female-type **Redstart** was located down Flasks Lane and three **Goldcrests** were also notable. The following day was not to be outdone and yielded 35 **Little Egrets**, a record for the recording area! A **Little Stint** and **Little Ringed Plover** joined the **Curlew Sandpiper** from the day before, and a flyover **Green Sandpiper** added to the wader fest. The theme continued on 5th with a mixed flock of 92 **Dunlin** and five **Turnstone** briefly on Flasks Lake before heading off south. The previous day's **Little Egret** record was broken, with a count of 40 and two **Little Stint** present. More great birding was to be had on 6th, with now two **Curlew Sandpipers** and a **Wood Sandpiper** present, whilst two **Wheatear** and two **Whinchat** were also notable that day.

The pinnacle of this exhausting avian entertainment was attained on 7th, with a very decent visible migration including a **Great White Egret**, 60 **Ringed Plover**, four **Curlew Sandpipers** and 226 **Meadow Pipits**, all moving south. A further two **Curlew Sandpipers** were present, as well as 12 **Ruff**, a **Marsh Harrier**, two **Hobbys**, 53 **Pied** and 7 **Yellow Wagtails** - not a bad day all in all.



Over the next few days the pace calmed, but a **Spotted Flycatcher** was new on 8th and a **Whimbrel** went south and a creditable four **Little Stint** were present on 9th.

On 10th, the first **Great Black-backed gulls** (four) for a while were present and on 11th, 337 **Curlew** were counted. **Bar-tailed Godwit** was added to the month's list on 13th, with a single on the Reserve lingering with the Curlew until the next day.

Any doubt about the arrival of autumn was quelled on 15th, when 52 **Pink-footed Geese** moved south over the recording area. On 17th the first **Stonechat** of the autumn put in a one-day appearance from the Northern Viewing Screen.

The month then went into a very gentle finale, with minor interest now and then. On 21st this took the form of a colour-ringed **Barnacle Goose**, all the way from Scorton Quarry where it had acquired its jewellery. A **Grey Plover**, always a good bird here, was present on Flasks Lake on 22nd, and one, possibly two **Curlew Sandpipers** on 24th most likely were new. Further flocks of **Pink-footed Geese** were seen over the closing days of the month, which ended on a high note with a single migrant **Brambling**.

October

The usual regulars were expected for the time of year, highlights including **Barn Owl**, flocks of **Pink-footed Geese** and sporadic sightings of **Whooper Swans** on, or over the area.

The month was ushered in by a **Spotted Redshank** on the Reserve on 1st. This was the first record of a once-regular species for a few years and a very welcome addition to the year list for the area. A late **Hobby** and a **Grey Plover** from the previous month were still present on Flasks Lake.

The following day was busy with considerable movement, including, bizarrely, the best **Swallow** movement of the year, with 82 south. More impressive were 246 **Skylark**, 146 **Goldfinch**, 38 **Redpoll**, and five **Grey Wagtails**. The previous day's **Spotted Redshank** lingered and both **Jack Snipe** and **Curlew Sandpiper** added to the impressive 57 species day list.

On 3rd, a **Great White Egret** moved south, as well as 21 **Blackbirds** on the move.

The next few days were quieter, with a showy **Jack Snipe** the chief attraction.

The action perked up again on 8th, with a female-type **Scaup** on Langwith Lake and now two **Grey Plover** on Flasks Lake. The momentum carried on into the next day, with a female **Red-breasted Merganser** also on Flasks Lake and single **Cetti's Warblers** at both Ladybridge Lake and the Reedbed, the latter species being seen on and off throughout the month.



Grey Plovers - Gareth Jones

On 10th an adult **Yellow-legged Gull** was on the mud at Flasks Lake and **Bittern** was seen in the Reedbed.

Another relatively fallow period followed, with scattered items of note, including for us, a rather late **Blackcap** on 15th and similarly tardy **Avocet** on 19th.

Rain and south-easterly winds are a recipe for misted-up, unusable optics, but they are also a recipe for interesting birding at Nosterfield. In this regard, 20th did not disappoint, with a marked upturn in duck, including six **Common Scoter** on Flasks Lake and some wader movement, with a flock of 32 **Dunlin** moving north-east. Best of all, however, was a **Rock Pipit**, another species not recorded in the area for a few years.



Four of the Common Scoter on Flasks Lake on 20th



Jack Snipe - Tim Jones

Similar weather the next day continued to produce the goods, including one of the star birds of the year, a **Grey Phalarope**, on the Reserve. A tern seen and photographed as it shot through was most likely an Arctic on date, but the evidence of an obvious messy, dark trailing edge to the primaries indicated that it was a **Common Tern**. It is interesting to note that although only 20 **Redwing** were counted overhead, at nearby Ripon Parks, an estimated 13,800 Redwings flew south-west, so we may have missed a few in the phalarope excitement.



Tern sp, presumed Common - Joe Fryer



Grey Phalarope -Tim Jones

It therefore was not a surprise to record a few **Redwing** on 22nd, when an excellent visible migration session included 2211 **Redwing**, 1125 **Fieldfare**, two **Great White Egrets** and two **Ravens** moving south.

Notable as the month slowly drew to a close, were a first calendar-year **Little Gull** briefly on the Silt Lagoons on 25th, 635 **Golden Plover** on 27th, a **Great White Egret** on 28th, with two south on 29th.

November

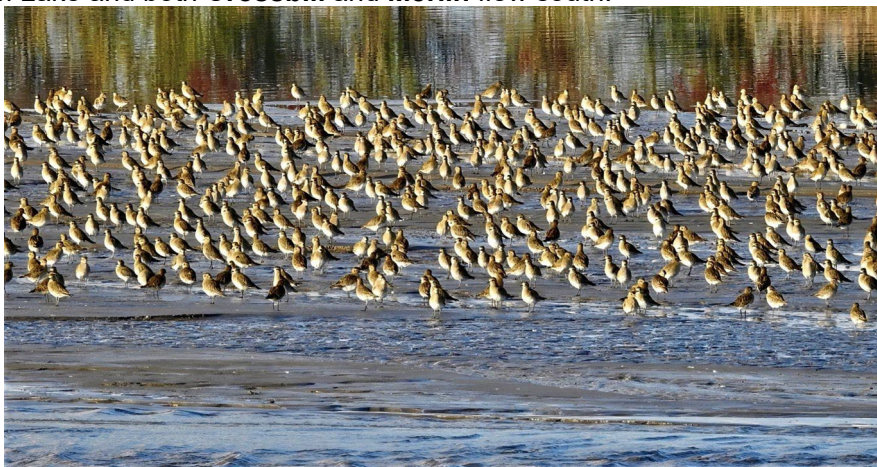
A good part of the penultimate month was beset by mist and when it wasn't misty, it was out and out foggy. It was also mild, as evidenced by butterfly sightings continuing - for example a **Brimstone** on 7th. In this gloom, several of the recording team still fumbled through to record some interesting species.

An **Oystercatcher** continued to linger in the area and was noted on 1st. This species generally leaves the area from October onwards until around the Christmas period, when numbers start to build up again. Two **Raven** moved north on 2nd and the following day, saw the first of several **Chiffchaff** records throughout the month. Last year there was only one record of **Chiffchaff** in October and November, this year there were 13 bird days, involving up to three. As I write this on a sub-zero early December day, I wonder if that is them finished for the year?

On 5th, yet another **Great White Egret** record and the/another unseasonal **Avocet** sighting and a **Cetti's Warbler** still shouting from the Reedbed. The **Avocet** was still around the next day when more colour was added to the autumnal greyness by a male **Mandarin Duck** on Langwith Lake.

Possibly our latest ever **House Martin** was sighted over North Lake on 8th, with a supporting cast of **Whooper Swan** and **Goosander**.

A decent 'vis mig' on 9th was dominated by 4156 **Fieldfare** south, with 131 **Goldfinch** south also being notable for this site. The next day 1610 **Golden Plover** were counted on Flasks Lake, four **Pintail** were on Lingham Lake and both **Crossbill** and **Merlin** flew south.



Golden Plover - Gareth Jones

Visible migration was evident again on 12th, with 2002 birds comprising 21 species through. Good species were dotted about the lakes, with a **Stonechat** at Langwith most notable and 282 **Herring Gull** there also of interest. The next few days were relatively quiet, with **Brambling** on 13th and **Ringed Plover** on 15th the most notable.

Following a sighting last month, a *tristis* **Chiffchaff** was reported along the causeway on 20th. It was very wet on 25th, but 19 **Tree Sparrows** and 1046 **Teal** were noted and represent good counts of both species. Generally, the end of the month had what could be called a soft landing, with no avian fireworks.

December

The month started well, with a **Woodcock** flushed from the path to the causeway near the plant nursery, the first of the winter.

Throughout the month the usual to-ing and fro-ing of low numbers of **Pink-footed Geese** occurred and duck numbers generally built up in the area. The increase in duck included up to seven **Pintail**, always a great species to have around the place. A regular performer was a very showy **Barn Owl** which regularly hunted around the main Reserve. Also regular were **Great Black-backed Gulls**, a species that nowadays can be elusive outside the months of December and January.

Two **Oystercatchers** appeared on 5th, possibly heralds to the post-Christmas build up expected in January. Interest levels increased considerably on 8th, with both **Green Sandpiper** and **Bar-tailed Godwit**, both scarce species for us and a welcome bit of variety at what can be an uneventful time of the year.

A covey of 20 **Grey Partridge** was present on 10th, whilst the next day saw a **Grey Plover** fly through south-west and a **Great White Egret** was on Flasks Lake.

Two **Eurasian White-fronted Geese** were located in a field between Lingham Lake and Camp Wood on 13th. This species was then present for most of the month, peaking at seven on 18th. The previous day was 'Goosetastic', with a flock of 529 **Pink-footed Geese** feeding in the same field mentioned above, as well as a **Barnacle Goose**. Probably one of the rarest birds for us, for this time of year, also occurred on 17th, when a **Common Sandpiper** was seen over Flasks Lake.

On 20th an impressive count of 47 **Cormorants** was reported and on 22nd, the first sighting a male **Marsh Harrier**, seen again a few days later.

Throughout the month increased attention was focused on a muddy field by Ladybridge Lake, christened '*Stercorare agrum*' by one of our number. Here many birds accumulated, including a highly unusual looking, silvery-grey individual amongst a flock of **Skylark** which exceeded 200 at times. On 27th this birding throng was augmented by at least three **Twite**, with a minimum nine there by the end of the month and a **Water Pipit** on 31st.

The rest of the area was not overlooked however, with notables including a **Stonechat** at Lingham Lake on 26th and best of all, a **Pomarine Skua** photographed on the Reserve on 27th. Finally, a high count of six **Little Egrets** were feeding on a dung heap in fields to the north of Flasks Lake on 29th.



The mysterious 'grey' Skylark - Tim Jones

Photo credits in legend, otherwise AMH

SYSTEMATIC BIRD LIST 2022

Canada Goose

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS. Counts here are anecdotal observations and will fall short, often markedly so, from the data systematically collected by the above survey.

Peak present:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
97	56	29	22	20	21	36	1	76	29	nc	

Presumably a moult-related movement was noted in June, with 15 heading south-west on 12th and another 74 south-west on 19th.

Canada Goose x Greylag Goose

Undercounted but commonly present hybrid, with a maximum of four reported on 1st January and ones and twos throughout the rest of the year.

Barnacle Goose

A tricky one, with both migrant and feral birds and some of mixed origin visiting, some resident in the country or near continent.

Singles reported on 1st January, 28th February (ringed) and two on 7/8th March. Four from 26th April into May, with five on 19th of that month. In autumn a bird ringed at nearby Scorton Gravel Pits was reported on 21st September, with two (unringed) on 28th and a single from 7th -10th October. Lastly, two were present between 17th and 19th December.

Bar-headed Goose

Singles on 6th January, three dates in August and two in September.

Snow Goose

A single accompanied the Greylag flocks on eight dates between 4th and 24th September.

Greylag Goose

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBs. Counts here are anecdotal observations and will fall short, often markedly so, from the data systematically collected by the above survey. The numbers curiously dwindled over the Christmas/New Year period at the end of the year and anecdotal evidence suggested a relocation of many to the Bolton-on-Swale complex.

Peak present:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
800	399	nc	102	420	76	1041	1649	3194	170	551	150

Pink-footed Goose

Migrant and wintering species, in numbers which vary from year to year. The nearby area of Carthorpe Mires, just outside the northern limits of the recording area, has an increasing wintering population, approaching 2500 at its peak. Geese possibly also commute irregularly to and from the Humber, the north-west and also Norfolk.

The peak count on 9th January of at least 1500 refers to what must have been the greater part of the Carthorpe flock flying into the recording area territory *en masse*, similarly c1200 did the same on 9th April, with 420 settling on the Reserve. These bulk arrivals are presumably due to shooting activity at their favoured feeding area. Also notable in January was a flock of 206 feeding on the Reserve on 22nd. The last of spring were three present on 19th May. The next record marked the start of the autumn passage, with 52 moving south on 15th September.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1500 (9th)	90 (1st)	177 (24th)	1200 (9th)	5	0	9	100	29	529

Visible migration:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2470, 2460 N, 10SW. Peak 1348N on 21st	1947, all N. Peak 1405N on 26th	566, of which 564 N. Peak 400N on 23rd	7, all N on 2nd	247 S, peak 75S 24th	228, 100 N, 128SW. Peak 100N on 9th	72, all SW. Peak 48 on 25th	432, all SW. Peak 150 on 17th

Eurasian White-fronted Goose

A regular but scarce visitor to the area in low numbers almost every winter.

After two possibles on 15th January and a definite the next day over Lingham Lake, birds were irregularly seen, peaking at three from 26th/27th of the month and through the month of February and March, although often elusive. In December, a presence on three dates, with a peak of seven on 18th.

Black Swan

The long-staying bird remained on Lingham Lake until the last day of the year.

Mute Swan

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS. At least four dead individuals were found in January and at least another four during the autumn, although it is unclear whether the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) epidemic was implicated in any of the deaths.

At least two pairs raised four and five cygnets on Lingham Lake and the Reedbed respectively.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
29	12	24	32	28	23	61	39	36	3	6	9

Whooper Swan

Regular migrant especially in late March and early April, when flocks both pass overhead or stop and feed on their journey north.

Two flying north on 4th January, after brief stop on Langwith Lake, was the only record that month (TS). The anticipated first decent movement was confidently predicted for the end of March, so it was a huge surprise to have 157 through on 26th February, a count which is the third highest-ever February movement recorded on *Trektellen* for the whole of Europe! Spring was otherwise very poor, but a single lingered with the Mute Swans until 7th May.

Peak Present (aggregate total of all 'present' **different** flocks during the month)

Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	131	16 (16)	17 (32)	2	5

Visible migration

Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct
169 all N: peaks 157 on 26th Largest flock 81	129 all N: peaks 95 on 8th and 31st Largest flock 57 on 8th	39 all N, 23 on 9th and 16 on 15th	31SW - 17 on 25th and 14 on 7th

Shelduck

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS. An interesting record involved a flock of 13 over Langwith Lake on 24th August, which headed off south-west. The next day 13 were over Bury Reservoir near Manchester, 81 miles to the south-west. The species is scarce at both sites at that time of year and it seems likely that this flock represented the same birds.

Peak Present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
28 (14th)	27 (12th)	11 (2nd)	12 (21st)	15 (17th)	10	4	3	2	5	7	17 (22nd)

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	7N on 25th	0	48, of which 37 N. Peak 12N on 10th	5S, 3N	0	13S/SE, peak 11SE on 31st	13SW	0	0	0	0

Ruddy Shelduck

The presumed Carthorpe individual flew onto the Reserve with a group of Pink-footed Geese on 10th April (VO).

Mandarin Duck

Rare visitor to the recording area, but which breeds not far away. A pair on the River Ure at West Tanfield on 24th and 31st March raises the possibility of future breeding within the recording area. Presumably the same pair was seen on 6th and 13th April and on several dates throughout May. The only end of year record was a male on Langwith Lake on 6th November.

Garganey

Regular but very scarce visitor. A drake on 8th May and it or another, on North Lake on 2nd June.

Shoveler

Resident and partial migrant

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10	47 (18th)	71 (31st)	80 (2nd)	13 (11th)	14 (2nd)	3	2	12	14	13	6

Gadwall

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
74 (6th)	47 (26th)	50 (7th)	28 (21st)	16 (19th)	67 (14th)	15 (15th)	nc	15	62	66 (25th)	116 (11th)

Wigeon

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS. Counts here are anecdotal observations and will fall short, often markedly so, from the data systematically collected by the above survey.

Peak present (moving birds)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
608 (11N 22nd)	172 (26th)	504 (7th)	7	5	3	3 (10N 31st)	10	22	430 (20th)	362	743 (11th)

Mallard

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
169	127	30	32	54	22	308 (31st)	293	nc	32	nc	109 (31st)

Pintail

Regular wintering species in small numbers.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
12 (23rd)	6	6	0	1	2	4	8 (31st)

Teal

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS. Counts here are anecdotal observations and will fall short, often markedly so, from the data systematically collected by the above survey.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
270	198	366 (7th)	15	4	3	11	14	35	221 (20th)	1046 (25th)	360 (31st)

Pochard

No longer the common species it once was.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
22 (6th)	8	16 (5th)	5 (21st) Ladybridge	3	0	24 (31st)	20	5	8	5	14 (26th)

Tufted Duck

A common species and breeder in the area.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
85 (14th)	67	56	60	33	45	208 (31st)	192 (6th)	nc	20	86	50

Scaup

An immature male was present on Lingham Lake from 22nd January until 11th April at least (TS). A female was on Lingham Lake on 29th June, another female type on 22nd August (TJ) and a third on 8th October (MB).

Common Scoter

After a night of substantial nocturnal migration involving this species on 29th March, eight were found, four on Langwith and two on Flasks Lakes (MS), with a further two on Ladybridge Lake (SWor). An adult male was on Lingham Lake on 18th April (MB). A further single was on Lingham Lake on 22nd July (TS), whilst another flew east over Langwith Lake on 22nd July.

On 29th July AMH saw a distant wisp of birds to the west of Langwith Lake, flying in a WNW direction. As they drew closer, telescope views revealed them as Common Scoter. Precise counting was tricky because this fast-moving flock moved through the base of the low cloud, but was in the region of 200 and was possibly the highest count of the species for the Nosterfield recording area.

On 31st July, a day of heavy rain and poor visibility, 11 were found on Langwith (AMH) and another six on Flasks Lakes, the latter departing north mid-morning. A splendid and obliging photogenic drake was present on Flasks Lake from 3rd-9th August. The next were six (one male) on Flasks Lake on 20th October, a murky wet day, when the lake was full of an overnight arrival of duck (AMH).

Goldeneye

Regular wintering bird in moderate numbers, especially favouring Lingham Lake.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
53	48	42	12	1 (7th)	0	0	0	0	11	27	47 (28th)

Goosander

A species that often flies over the area or frequents the River Ure.

Visible migration (Peak present)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1NE 14th (0)	0(0)	2 SW. 1N (1 on 25th)	1	(2 on 6th)	(2 Flasks 13th both juvs)	0	0	0	7SW, 1 N, peak 4 on 2nd	0	0 (4)

Red-breasted Merganser

A female type was present on Flasks Lake on 9th October before heading off south-west (TS).

Grey Partridge

Scarce breeder in the area, but this year apparently did very well, with the local, small shoot members commenting how well they have done, which was borne out by our observations. Regular spots are Yorwaste mountain (two pairs), Middle Henge/Big Field (two to three pairs), Ladybridge Lake (one pair), Langwith Lake (one pair), Reserve (two pairs). Also, up to two pairs on the West Tanfield ridge.

Peak counts

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10 (11th)	2	5	4	4	0	21* (20th)	15	8	16	31 (9th)	20 (10th)

Quail

One calling in field near North Hide on 1st June (GJ). Two flushed from the edge of a field along Flasks Lane on 14th July (SWor).

Pheasant

Constantly present, but rarely counted with any enthusiasm, as released by shooting interests adjacent to the recording area.

Peak counts

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	11	9	1	4	5	1	nc	2	4	4	2

Red-legged Partridge

Small numbers present throughout the year. A regular covey in the Ladybridge area in the first half of the year, but distinctly scarce in the second half of the year, possibly due to less birds being released this autumn by the game shooting fraternity.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
20	2	6	2	2	1	2	4	0	0	7	0

Stock Dove

Breeder and migrant. No high 'about' counts.

Peak present (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	17	37 (13NE)	25 (27N, peak 16 1st)	6 (0)	6	45 on 3rd (0)	7	6	11 (23 SW all 27th)	6 (25 SW)	5 (6NE all on 31st)

Woodpigeon

Common breeder, present all year round. Also, a strong migrant particularly in late autumn

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
757	800	500	250	63	65	30	40	200	nc	600	199

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	690 of which 167 SW, 523 N. Peak 421 N on 26th	842 of which 3 S, 839 N. Peak 260 N on 13th	1469 of which 1379 N. Peak 358 NE on 10th	0	0	0	No counts	No counts	267SW, inc 138 on 27th	512 all SW, peak 307 9th	16NE

Collared Dove

Breeds, with resident birds around West Tanfield, Thornborough, Nosterfield and Well. Ladybridge Farm is a favoured place for this species.

Peak present count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
34	16	11 (4N)	14-17th (17S, 8N)	2	8	10 on 26th (2s)	1	9	24	27	9

Water Rail

Regular but under-recorded winter visitor, with the Reedbed and the small lakes at Ladybridge and Flasks Lakes being regular haunts. Sparse records after March as birds become quiet during the breeding season.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	1	0	0	-	1*	0	0	1 (Reed bed)	0	1	1

Corncrake

A bird called for a prolonged period near Lingham Lake on 16th August and was heard by two observers very familiar with the species (MB, JFra)

Moorhen

Common regular breeder, but generally overlooked outside the WeBS counts.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
20	16	19	14	4	nc	26 (20th)	ncs	nc	9	5	3

Coot

Another common regular breeder, which outside the WeBS counts is generally overlooked.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
185 (23rd)	125 (5th)	62	19	21	18	108 (28th)	98	nc	63	nc	70

Little Grebe

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS. Counts here are anecdotal observations and will fall short, often markedly so, from the data systematically collected by the above survey.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	6	8	9	2	11	24	12	nc	4	nc	2

Red-necked Grebe

A one-day individual was found on Langwith Lake on 7th January, a day of heavy rain (AMH).

Great Crested Grebe

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS. Counts here are anecdotal observations and will fall short, often markedly so, from the data systematically collected by the above survey.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	12	24	24	22	35 (8th)	27 (28th)	29	12	6	4	1

Black-necked Grebe

One in stunning breeding plumage was present on the Reserve on a rainy 13th March only (AMH).

Oystercatcher

Regular breeder in the area and also pre-season build-up location. From April and into the summer months, they are dotted around and fly around the area regularly, making accurate counts tricky. Very rarely, some are seen that are clearly moving, but in general, it is difficult to be precise.

Peak present /visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
26	119 (19th)	105 (5th)	37	35 (11th)	19	11/ 6N 3rd	2	1	0	1	2

Avocet

Local breeder as well as a migrant. The first arrived on Langwith Lake on 26th February for a few hours in the early afternoon. The breeding birds (four) were last seen on 28th July. A single on 19th October and it, or another, on 5th and 6th November were unseasonal records for the recording area.

Peak present during breeding season.

Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
1 (26th)	8 (16th)	9	18 (7th)	7	4

Lapwing

Breeder and present in large flocks outside the breeding season.

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS. Counts here are anecdotal observations and will fall short, often markedly so, from the data systematically collected by the above survey.

It is often a matter of judgement as to whether there are birds on the move, as many foraging flights in and out of the Vale of York, or to and from fields along West Tanfield ridge, cloud the picture. Generally, movers are recorded when birds fly right through the recording area and continue on or are seen moving for a prolonged distance down the visible length of the Vale of York. This is best appreciated from high points such as Yorwaste mountain.

Peak count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
978	750 (2nd)	264	39	nc	31	400 (18th)	2000	1773	2000	870 (17th)	2460 (31st)

Moving

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	26 N, 6th	5 NE	3N	34 (32SW, 2N)	4N 20th	108 S, all 29th 18th	0	844SW, peak 681 22nd	262SW, peak 250 9th	0

Golden Plover

Present in large flocks outside the breeding system, but noticeably smaller numbers than 20 years ago, when flocks of multiple thousands were not uncommon.

Peak Present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
46	5	41	300	0	0	2 (31st)	54	2	960	1610 (10th)	293

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Jul	Aug	Oct	Nov	Dec
6N on 7th	97 WNW 41S (peak 36 WNW on 2nd)	97 WNW 149S (latter also the peak on 6th)	791N, (peak 471 on 9th)	4SW 28th	61, all NE,	56 SW	59 SW, peak 40 on 27th	4SW

Grey Plover

One flew north over Langwith Lake on 29th May (SWor), with further singles south over Flasks Lake on 28th August (SWor) and again at Flasks Lake on 22nd September (GJ). One to two were present with the Golden Plover flock, mostly on Flasks Lake, from 1st to 8th October (SWor, AMH). The last was one flying south-west on 11th December (SWor).

Ringed Plover

A regular migrant and breeder in the area.

Peak present count/visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	8 (26th)	10 (17th)	6 (2nd)	14 (16th)	6	5 (22nd) /5N	6 (15th) /13S all on 27th	27 (8th) /72 S inc 60S on 7th	0	1 (15th)	0

Little Ringed Plover

A regular and once plentiful breeder, but now considerably declined as suitable habitat has diminished. The available data does not reflect the true status of this species.

Peak present count

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1 (25th - first)	6	4	5	5 (17th)	2	1 (5th - last)

Whimbrel

Another reasonable May for this species, with one moving north on the first day of the month, two on 15th, six north on 16th, one on 20th and two about on 22nd.

The autumn season started with one heading south on 29th July, another south on 30th July and two north the next day. Singles moved south on 11th and 15th August, two on 3rd September and the last was a single flying south on 9th September.

Curlew

A regular but declining breeding species across the UK, but with a reasonably healthy population in the Reserve area.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
448 (23rd)	475 (2nd)	111 (8th)	84	12	12 (30th)	521 (28th)	293 (6th)	337 (11th)	142 (6th)	52 (25th)	183 (29th)

Visible migration.

Mar	Apr	May	Jul
16N- all on 6th	30 NE, 2 S; peak 6 on 5th	17NE, 16SW peak 9SW, 3N on 10th*	22S on 2nd June.

*Arriving from the E then splitting either N or S when they reach the high ground

Bar-tailed Godwit

Two were on Langwith Lake on 1st May (TS), then a different two on the Reserve on 3rd and 4th May (MS). These spring sightings coincided with a large movement on the south coast. In autumn, a single appeared on 13th September and stayed until 15th, preferring the company of the Curlew (TS). Three on 8th December were the last of the year (DB).

Black-tailed Godwit

A regular migrant, sometimes in large flocks. A single present on Langwith Lake on the late date of 31st December was additional to those detailed below.

Bird days/Peak present (visible migration)

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
156/24	394/49-14th (0) (20SW 1st)	29/9 (4 N 4th, 8 N 5th)	1/1 (0)	106/22,9th (12S, 46NE peak 44 NE on 31st)	43/16 7th (6S on 24th)	8/3 (0)	2/1/0

Turnstone

The first of the year was on the early date of 26th February (SWor), after which there were no further sightings during the rest of the spring period, unlike 2021.

This was more than compensated for by a strong showing from the end of July, with two through Langwith Lake on 22nd, a single there the next day (TS) and a magnificent flock of 11 (and single Knot), which blundered around the airspace above Langwith Lake before heading off north-east in the murk and heavy rain on the morning of 31st (AMH). This is possibly the highest count documented in the Nosterfield recording area. Two were at Langwith Lake on 17th August (AMH, GCS) and the last of the year, five on Flasks Lake with a flock of 92 Dunlin on 5th September, eventually flew off north-east with them (SWor).

Knot

A single in summer-plumage went south on 29th July (AMH) and another flew north with a flock of 11 Turnstone on 31st July (AMH). In August, one was on Flasks Lake on 4th (MH) and five went north-east on 14th (SWor).

Ruff

A regular wintering species and migrant, with birds possible most months of the year. During the first winter period and much of spring, birds were mostly present in the Flasks/Langwith/Ladybridge Lakes area.

Peak present (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
7 (19th)	4	6	5	1	0	1	2	12 on 7th & 14th	5 (2SW)	6	6

Curlew Sandpiper

After a blank year in 2021, this year was much improved, starting in May, with three on Flasks Lake on 16th. In autumn there were 26 bird days, from September between 5th and 30th, with a peak 'on the deck' count of three on 5th and four visibly migrating south on 7th. The last of the autumn was a single present between 1st and 2nd October.

Sanderling

One on 18th April was the first, followed by two on 10th, one on 11th, two again on 13th and the last of spring, a single on 22nd. All except one were on the Flasks Lake 'beach'. Two at Langwith Lake on 22nd July and two at Flasks Lake two days later, represented the first returning birds of the autumn.

Dunlin

Passage migrant, but can be seen in any month. Decidedly lower numbers in the spring versus 2021, but a very much better second half of the year for the species, with frequent records right into December.

Birds days/ Peak present (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2/2 (0)	13/8 (0)	54/7 (9S on 2nd)	1/1 (0)	70/12 (16N- peak 11 25th)	10/4 (0)	64/8 (20S, peak 19 on 22nd)	20/3 (9S, 17th)	280/105* (126, 92NE, 34S, peak 92- single flock-5th)	128/14 (32 NW as a single flock 20th)	77/12 (0)	26/6 (0)

*Peak count also includes peak moving count as 92 flock moved of NE in a single flock

Little Stint

The first of the year appeared on the Reserve on 31st August (TJ). In September, birds were present continuously from 4th to 9th, with a peak of four on the last date.

Woodcock

Irregular and scarce and probably vastly under-recorded visitor. Expect more in cold weather.

In January, one was at East Tanfield Quarry between 16th and 23rd, with two flushed together from the edge of Lingham Lake on 21st (all AMH, plus AN 23rd). One frequented the East Tanfield Quarry pine belt on 16th March. Lastly, one was flushed from the wood leading to the causeway, near to the plant nursery on 2nd December (TJ).

Jack Snipe

One at the plant nursery on 11th February was the first of the year (MHam). On the Reserve between 2nd and 6th October, one mostly, but two on 3rd (SWor, IW). The last were two flushed from the nursery area on 20th December (MHam).

Snipe

A regular species both on, and as a migrant, over the Reserve. No recent breeding in the area (last 20+ years).

Peak present count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	2 (2NW on 23 rd)	2 (1 NW on 17th)	6 (2N on 5th)	0 (0)	3 (6S, peak 4 on 28th)	5	7 (5; 3SW, 2N)	11 (4SW)	51 (1S 2nd, 16N on 29th, 1)	30 on 17th	12 (30SW all on 6th during the cold snap)

Grey Phalarope

One performed fantastically in front of the hide on the main Reserve on the afternoon of 21st October. A great find by Rob Normington and one of, if not THE highlight of the autumn.

Common Sandpiper

A regular migrant breeder. The first of spring appeared on 14th April. Unlike 2021, birds were present into September until 26th. This was followed by the first winter record, one over Flasks Lake causeway in cold weather on 17th December (SWor).

Peak present count

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
2	3	1	5 (24 and 30th)	3	3

Green Sandpiper

A surprisingly scarce species at this site in comparison to other places. One calling over Flasks Lake on 14th January (JF). In July present on three dates, with two on 29th. There was a run of records on five dates between 4th and 14th September, including two on the last date and a visible migrant SW over Kiln Lake on 4th. In December a single was recorded on three dates in the Ladybridge area.

Redshank

Breeder, present throughout the year, with numbers augmented by migrants from time to time.

Peak present count(visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
7	15	15	26 - 2 nd	14	14, 8th	9, 3rd (16 NE, peak 15 on 22nd)	1	1	4	10	7

Spotted Redshank

A single on 1st and 2nd October was the first sighting of this species in the last three years.

Wood Sandpiper

A regular migrant in low numbers. Seen on 18 dates between 6th May and 14th September.

Peak/Bird days (moving)

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
0	2/5 (0)	7 (1 SW on 16th)	2/ 5 (0) 23rd	0	1/8 (0)

Greenshank

A regular but increasingly sparse migrant through the area, with a downward curve in occurrences. The first of the year was on 22nd April, the last on 14th September.

Peak/Bird days (visible migration)

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
3/5 (1N on 24th)	0/0 (0)	1/1 (0)	0!	4/7 (2SW)	10/20 (11, peak 9 SW on 3rd)

Kittiwake

One 1st calendar year bird on the Reserve on 30th March (TS). An adult at Lingham Lake on 18th June flew up very high and eventually headed south-west (AMH, MB)

Black-headed Gull

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS. Counts of grounded birds detailed here may fall short from the data systematically collected by the above survey.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1800*	2,500 on 26th	3200*	nc	499	405	530	nc	20	150	300	136

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
329 N all 27th	720, comprised of 327S and 393N.	3054, comprised of 561 S and 3054N, peak 1788 N on 26th	5449 (5245 N, peak 2154 on 9th)	792, - 139S, 653N, peak 420 N on 28th	2509, 1225 SW, 1284N, peak 771N, 258S 19th	115N, peak 70N on 30th	130 SW, peak 115 on 24th	0	272SW, peak 143 on 2nd	267 2nd, peak 205 on 12th	0

As a general rule, birds are not counted until an hour after dawn and then those individuals moving steadily. This method tries to exclude birds commuting between the lakes.

Little Gull

A good year by recent standards. A count of ten briefly on Kiln Lake on 23rd March, during a day of much Black-headed Gull activity, was a record for the area (observer's name unknown). A single was present on Ladybridge Lake on 10th May (DB). Two superb adults loafed on Flasks Lake 'beach' on 26th July (TJ), with the last of the year, a single on the silt lagoons on 25th October ('Mac @scarper Mac' on Twitter- Pictures).

Mediterranean Gull

In addition to birds present, a first-winter flew south over Yorwaste mountain on 27th March. Two different pairs briefly made the Reserve their home at either end of April - the latter pair included one colour-ringed in the Czech Republic (ringed as a chick on 2nd June 2018 near Senov in Moravia-Silesia. Senov lies in the Ostrava Basin lowland on the River Lucina (large wetland areas on the map)), some 1446km from Nosterfield (per JCW)! This pair was last present on 1st May, with a single adult on Langwith Lake on 19th May the last spring record.

Peak present count/bird days

Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
1/1 (28 th)	2/16	2 /66	2/3	1/3	1	1

Common Gull

The wetland areas are regularly counted as part of the monthly WeBS. Counts here are anecdotal observations and will fall short, often markedly so, from the data systematically collected by the above survey.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
360*	10	33	44 (23rd)	72 (4th)	3	37	522 (27th)	33	nc	15	24

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3N	48, 27 SW, 21NE: peak 12 SW 27th	79, 20 SW, 59N: peak 12 SW on 27th	74, 72 N, peak 44N on 23rd	74, all NE, peak 64NE on 1st	3SW 4N	12, (5SW, 7N)	0	46 SW, peak 29 on 2nd	No counts	73 SW, peak 53 on 9th	0

Great Black-backed Gull

In the past when the local rubbish tip was active, there was a regular presence in the winter, but now very scarce.

In the first winter quarter, 67 bird days were recorded in January, with a peak count of five on the deck. The biggest movement during the month was 24 north on 12th.

Only five birds in February, one in March, two in April and a very late bird south on 10th May. A single adult heading north on 25th June was highly unusual.

Also unusual, was one on 27th August and four on 27th September. In October an adult was on Langwith Lake on 27th and 28th, whilst in November two went south on 9th with one present on 22nd. Finally in December, four headed south on 29th, with up to two around on three other dates.

Herring Gull

A declining species in the area. Most records refer to the subspecies *argenteus*, but a single *argentatus* flew north on 2nd February.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
35	4	2	49	84	4	4	5	30	16	282 (12th)	21

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
352, 307 SW, 45E: peak 112 SW on 30th	118*, 90 SW, 28N: peak 24 SW on 27th	226, 90 S, 22E: peak 36 SW on 27th	362, 63 SW, 299N: peak 108 N on 23rd	96, 81 SW, 15N: peak 60 SW on 5th	33, 28 SW, 5N: peak 18 SW on 11th	7, 6 SW, 1N	0	13SW all on 7th	50, 23 SW, 27N:	87, 83 SW, 3N, peak 29 on 9th	21SW, all on 29th

Yellow-legged Gull

An adult on 31st July (SWor) and another adult on 10th October (SMR).

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Present in moderate numbers in the autumn, but nothing like the many hundreds from the early 2000s.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	2	48 (26th)	12	10	21	1020 (27th)	375	169	1	0

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1SW on 30th	45, 12 SW, 33N: peak 30N SW on 22nd	33 of which 29NE: peak 9 on 6th	131, 114N: peak 33N on 8th	69, 45 SW, 24N: peak 20 (11SW, 9N) on 10th	66, 53SW: peak 25 SW on 11th	36, 15 SW, 21N: peak 19N on 31st	12 SW, all 24th	159, 129 SW, 30N: peak 119 SW on 20th	100, 89 SW, 11N: peak 44 on 3rd	0	0

Skua species

A first calendar-year on the Reserve on 27th December was the first for many years (DB). The finder, with a wealth of experience, having lived at a seawatching location for many years, believed this to be a Pomarine Skua in hindsight, whereas the local Rarities Committee reckoned this was an Arctic Skua, based on a single challenging photograph. On balance, best regarded as *sp* for the purposes of our records.

Common Tern

The first of spring were two on 21st April, with a presence throughout May, breeding on the cobble island on the Reserve. In addition, a further three were present on 16th (total five) and another single on 25th (total three). By the end of June, it was clear that the breeding attempt had failed; however, one or two lingered until the end of July. On 31st July in heavy rain and cloud, the local birds were augmented by a further 22 heading north, the biggest flocks being 13 and eight. In August, reported on four dates between 1st and 20th, with three on the latter date.

Arctic Tern

Regular migrant, varying greatly in numbers from year to year.

In April one went north-east on 23rd, followed by two north-east the next day, the first of the year. Eight flew north on three dates in May, with a peak of five on 1st.

Peak present/bird days (visible migration)

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
0 (3NE)	5/8 (8NE)	0	0/28 (27N, 1S, peaks 4N on 22nd, 23N on 31st)	0

Black Tern

Scarce migrant. A single was present on the Reserve during a very wet 16th May (SWor).

Tern species

A tern which moved through the Reserve very fast on 21st October had to compete with the Grey Phalarope for attention. The single photo suggested Arctic Tern on elements of the *jizz*, but there appeared to be very obvious black on the trailing edge of the left wing. Overall, probably best labelled as 'sp'.

Cormorant

Present in variable numbers throughout the year. Because visible migration counts are most common in the morning, there may be a bias towards/contribution from 'pseudo-migration' of birds moving north off a roost to the south. However, the numbers vary from day to day, so some genuine movement is likely to be in the mix too. A count of 47 on 20th December was the highest for some while.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
18	13	13	8	3	2	4	11	9	6	14	47 (20th)

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	28 (7S, 10N), peak 10 on 22nd	28 (4S, 7N), peak 4 on 16th	47(7s 40N) Peak 11N, 1S on 5th	9 (1S, 8N)	3S, 2N	4S	16 (13S, 3N), peak 5 on 19th	15 (12SW)	7S 1N 2nd	4S 17N	0

Cormorant (*ssp sinensis*)

Likely regular, but under-recorded. An adult at Lingham Lake on 22nd February (AMH), then up to two on several dates in March, with another adult heading north on 2nd April.

Spoonbill

A single appeared briefly at the West Tanfield end of the Reserve on 27th April (VN) and eluded a good number of the birders in the area at that time.

Bittern

A single in the Reedbed, 8th and 9th January (MB, SWor) and 6th February (HH). In the autumn, recorded on three dates in October, including a bird moving north-west over Ladybridge on 7th. No further sightings reported for the last two months of the year.

Grey Heron

Present all year round and also a migrant, but difficult at times to know if birds moving, mostly up or down the Vale of York, are local commuters or genuine movers.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	11	4	3	5	8	5	5	5	15	12	8

Visible migration

Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
1N on 26th	5S, 7N	20N, 7S	2N, 1S	5 (2N/3S): peak 2 on 10th

Great White Egret

One flew south-east over the Flasks Lake polytunnels on 25th January (IP), whilst in March, one was in the Reedbed on 20th (Ka&BT), another went south on 22nd (AMH), with one by the River Ure on 27th (HH). Presumably the same individual in winter plumage was present on 3rd and 16th April, whilst a different, summer plumaged bird was seen on 23rd and 24th April.

In July, one went north on 2nd, with another lingering from 26th to 31st, the latter having a red colour ring 'ABP' which had been ringed at RSPB Ham Wall, Somerset as a nestling this year. The same origin as last year's visiting colour-ringed bird AAU. In August 'ABP' was joined by 'ABU' (TJ), which had been ringed at an adjoining reserve near Ham Wall (the latter had most recently been seen at North Somercotes, Lincolnshire on 18th July).

In autumn, one flew WSW on 7th August, whilst two were present on 5th and 15th, one of which was not ringed and therefore new (SW). 'ABP' was seen again on 17th and then no more sightings until 7th September (AMH). In October five birds days comprised two moving south-west on two dates, 22nd (MB and DH) and 29th respectively (AMH and MB) and a single south on 28th (MB). With birds on the move on a daily basis at many sites in the UK during October, it is equally possible these records refer to two birds or five. Now overwintering, one went south-west on 5th November (MB), whilst a single was at Flasks Lake on 11th December (SWor).

Based on the upward trend in records continuing, with 35 bird-days during the year, a more summarised approach to documenting them will be used in next year's report.

Little Egret

Present in variable numbers throughout the year, dwindling somewhat during the winter months. In September, a rapid build-up of numbers, based on the main Reserve, peaked at a new record count of 40 on 5th.

Peak present (moving)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6 (2SW, 1N)	5	4	3 (4N on 24th)	2 (2N on 28th)	9 (2SW, singles 8th and 18th)	18 on 20th (1S same day)	11	40 (3SW on 7th)	3	1	6

Osprey

In spring there were long-staying males on and off from March, with appearances of other obvious migrants and also recurring wanderers. In May at least two different males were present, plus a group of three that soared high out of the Ure catchment before heading off north on 5th May, a day when one of the loafing males was also seen around Flasks Lake. Fewer different individuals and fewer sightings in August compared with last year, despite the news of Yorkshire's first successful breeding in centuries not far away.

Bird days (different birds)

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
1 on 31st (1)	14 inc 2 about 15th and 2 N on 24th (3)	10 (5) inc 3N together 5th and one about	8 (1-2 males)	11 (1) One of males from June	11 (2)	1 (1)

Sparrowhawk

Constantly around although often elusive, the counts below are poorly reflective of the true numbers. Breeding numbers likely to be in the region of four pairs at least.

Peak counts

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5 (9th)	2	4	6 (10th)	5	2	3	2	1	3	2	2

Goshawk

Display was observed distantly on 12th March (SWor).

Marsh Harrier

An increasingly common visitor to the area, particularly in the summer and early autumn

The year started well with a cracking adult male through on the second of the month, followed by presumably the same individual on 22nd. From July juveniles started to appear.

Total Bird Days/different birds (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2/1 (1SW 2nd)	4/2 (1WN W 26 th)	4/2/ (1SW)	8/3 (0)	2 /1 (0)	2/1 (0)	2/1 (0)	9/3 (0)	3/2 (0)	0/0 (0)	0	0

A male around the reedbed in December was mentioned in conversation, but no specific information was supplied.

Hen Harrier

A rare visitor to the recording area, despite the proximity to roost(s) up in the Dales not far away.

A wing-tagged female was observed and photographed in the Flasks Lake/Reedbed area on a very snowy 6th January (AMH) and later seen briefly in the same area on 7th and 11th of that month. Amazingly in May, a single 'ringtail' was over Lingham Lake on 1st (GJ) and one flying north past the North Hide on 15th (GJ) was the last record.

Red Kite

A bird that is increasing from the south, with individuals seen most days.

Bird days/peak present (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9/1 (0)	6/2 (0)	18/5 (0)	27/3 (0)	21/4 (2N- 5th)	9/2 (1SW)	9/3/ (0)	3/2 (0)	8/3 (0)	8/4 (0)	4/2 (0)	0

White-tailed Eagle

Probably the star bird of the spring and arguably the year. First sighted over the West Tanfield ridge by TS (who had recently been watching them in Estonia), it delighted many present in the area as it drifted north-east. It was later confirmed as female G547 from the Isle of Wight captive release program.

Rough-legged Buzzard

One flew south-west over Lingham Lake car park on 30th April (MB).

Common Buzzard

A common species seen from the area.

Although probably at most five pairs locally, from some of the vantage points it is possible to see many soaring over or by the area from nearby territories. These almost certainly include migrant birds at certain times of the year, but only when they are seen to travel right across the area and continue, can they be confidently called as such.

Peak count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
27 (2SW on 30th)	19 (single s SW on two dates)	38	45 – 2nd (1N)	18 (3NE 1st)	10	7	14	13	25	3	6

Cuckoo

Increasingly rare bird both locally and scarce nationally. One moving WNW on 5th May, was followed by one south the next day over Yorwaste mountain (both AMH). One flew very close past the observers at Ladybridge Lake on 13th May (AMH, TJ) and lastly, one frequented the Flasks Lake causeway on 24th June (SWar).

Barn Owl

Distinct individuals

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2 (Lang with and Flasks)	1 (Flask)	1 (N of Flasks)	2 (Middle Henge, Langwith/Flask/Kiln)	2 (1 Flasks region, the other reserve)	0	2 (Green Lane/Res and Langwith)	No rec.	No rec.	2	1	1

Tawny Owl

Recorded in woodland by Flasks/Kiln Lakes area on 2nd and 14th January and 6th March. A different calling bird was in the Langwith area on 2nd April.

Little Owl

Regular breeder with as many as five pairs in the recording area. Two young regularly along Flasks Lane in July.

Peak count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	1	0	1

Swift

Summer visitor, breeder and migrant through the area.

The first appeared on 2nd May, the last was a single 24th August.

Peak present count (visible migration)

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
No records	97 25th (735, of which 477 W, Max 401 W on 13th)	25 (596, of which 592 SW, Max 477 on 11th)	40 (130, 124 S 6N, Max 121 on 3rd)	23 (1S on 24th)	No records

Kingfisher

Peak count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2 on 30th on Ure and on Langwith	0	2 (both Ure)	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	0

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Regular breeder in the area.

Peak count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3 (23rd)	2	4 (3N)	3	1	3	1	2	2	1	3	1

Green Woodpecker

Up to three seen regularly in the Reedbed area throughout most of the year. Away from here, one by the North Hide sporadically and another heard along the West Tanfield ridge near Well on one occasion.

Kestrel

At least three pairs in the area.

Peak present (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	3	4	3 (2N, 14th and 18th)	4 (0)	3 (0)	3 (0)	3 (0)	3 (0)	4 (0)	2 (0)	1 (0)

Merlin

Regular, but scarce. A good start to the year with three sightings of probably the same individual, a female, during January. First sighted over the South Henge, chasing a Skylark on 9th, it upped its ambitions and was seen having a go at one of the regular Peregrines on 29th. The next sighting was again on the Reserve on 12th March. In the second half of the year, a single on 10th November was the only record.

Hobby

Nearly a month earlier than last year, with the first two on 8th April (one north and one about). Regular in the area from mid-May onwards, with probable breeding not far away. The last was recorded on 1st October.

Peak present /Bird days (visible migration)

April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
1 (2N)	2/5/ (0)	2/11 (3 singles SW on the Swift movement day- 11th, with also one local bird about that day)	1/ 4 (0)	2/9 (1S)	2/7 (0)	1/1 (0)

Peregrine

A regular species over the Reserve and known to breed not far away. In November and December, at least three different individuals - an adult, a first-year female and an adult male.

Peak count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2*	3	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	1

*Although two not definitely seen on the same day, a colour-ringed and an unringed bird were regularly seen.

Jay

Six moving birds were also noted in April, peaking at four together on 19th. Very much a poor shadow of a substantial movement noted during the month elsewhere, most notably in the south-west of the country.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	2	3	3	1	1	1	2	1	4	2	2

Magpie

Kept under tight control in the area.

Peak present count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	5	5 (6N, peak 4 6th)	1 (5N)	1	2	1	nc	nc	1 (3SW high on 2nd)	0	1

Jackdaw

There is a considerable local breeding population. An element affecting the number variation is the degree of enthusiasm to count them!

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
194	84	72	50	49	27	73 (3rd)	nc	62	45	151	34

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
nc	6N 26th	29NE, peak 17 on 5th	0	0	0	0	0	0	193SW, peak 181 on 3rd	0	0

Rook

Another overlooked and under-counted species in the area.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
150	100	43	15	40	157	35	nc	nc	60	18	12

Carrion Crow

An under-recorded, thinly spread species, tightly controlled in the area.

Peak present count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	11	25 (13N, peak 8 on 6th)	11 (8 all N)	4	3	8	nc	7	8	12	14

Raven

A rare bird at Nosterfield. Two flew north-east over Langwith on the afternoon of 26th February (TS, SWor). Two flew south on 22nd October (AMH) and again on 2nd November (IW).

Coal Tit

Under-recorded and likely breeder.

Regular sites include East Tanfield sewage farm, the fir trees in Nosterfield village and along Flasks Lane.

Peak about count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	3	4	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0

Marsh Tit

A species in national decline following the trajectory of Willow Tit, although a few years behind and locally scarce. The location of sightings across the year were Camp Wood/Reserve to North Lake path, the road by Langwith and East Tanfield Quarry.

Peak count (bird days)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1 (5)	1 (2)	1	2 (5)	2 (2)	0	0	2	0	2 (3)	1 (3)	2 (4)

Willow Tit

A single bird around Kiln Lake on 12th June was probably the bird of the summer and the first in the recording area for some while (SWor).

Blue Tit

Common breeder. The counts represent only a proportion of the number likely to be present, but over several years may provide some useful reflection of the population trends.

Peak count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
50 (21st)	34 (4th)	1	14	5	15	8	9	17	8	6	29

Great Tit

Common breeder.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
15	13	20	14	5	2	3	6	9	4	3	11

Woodlark

One flew north over the silt lagoons on 15th May (SWor).

Skylark

Regular breeder, particularly in the region encompassing the 'big field', Middle and South Henges. In late November and December, there was a very impressive build up in a field (site christened '*Stercorare agrum*' by SWar), between the minor road and Ladybridge where sheep were feeding on turnips.

The flock included a very unusual looking, frosty-grey Skylark which was still present in early 2023. This bird had been seen by SWor and AMH, but not mentioned. Photos were posted on the WhatsApp group (TJ), which prompted more investigation. Efforts to work out an explanation only reached so far and photographs were sent to Per Alstrom at Uppsala University, Sweden by TJ. His reply read:

"It's indeed a very pale Skylark. It might come from C. Asia (dulcivox), but it's impossible to exclude an aberrant individual of the nominate subspecies."

Since both possibilities are very rare, we are none the wiser and further comments without firm evidence represent guesswork.

Peak about count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
25	70 (25th)	33	48 (15th)	27	43	35	1	nc	nc	74	207

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
34SW	83 of which 77 N. Peak 46 N, on 23rd	104 of which 100 N. Peak 48 N on 6th	46 all NE, peak 15 on 1st	0	3N (19th)	0	0	0	434 of which 414 SW. Peak 266 on 2nd	317 of which 25 SW, 6 NE. Peak 24 on 12th	0

Sand Martin

Transient migrant, summer visitor and breeder and typically one of the first trans-Saharan migrants to arrive.

The first was present on 12th March, with numbers escalating steadily through the month.

There appeared to be colonies in two places around Langwith, but too far away to accurately count. Many birds feeding on the Reserve commute from a larger colony on the River Ure, to the south.

The best spot to count visible migration is at the Langwith gate as new birds entering or leaving the area are much easier to determine.

The new artificial Sand Martin nesting bank became available this year, but was not occupied.

Peak present count

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
30 (30th)	500 (26th)	200	200	450 (28th)	200	1

Visible migration

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
10, 9 of which N, peak 4 on 31st	386 of which 382 N. Peak 163 on 13th	48 of which 2 SW, 46 N. Peak 17 N on 7th	19 SW, peak 13 on 10th	47S, peak 27 on 28th	51 SW, Peak 33 on 24th	50 SW, Peak 32 on 7th

Swallow

Breeder and regular migrant. A very poor spring everywhere, with Nosterfield being no exception. The first of the year was a single on 2nd April and thereafter generally very sparse. Much more movement and presence noted into October, with the highest count of the year occurring on 2nd.

Peak present count

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
0	10 (10th)	14	16	10	20	45	5

Visible migration

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
0	93N 3S, peak 30 on 9th	85, 75N, 10S, peak 49N on 5th	0	31 S, peak 19 on 28th	138, 130S, peak 53 on 6th	104S, peak 56 on 7th	87S, peak 82 on 2nd

House Martin

Breeds in West Tanfield, Thornborough and Well villages, as well as a regular migrant.

The first were four south on 10th April. As last year, local numbers stayed generally low in spring, though there was a notable movement early in May. The last was probably the area's latest record, over the North Lake on 8th November (MH).

Peak present count

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
5	18	12	17 (20th)	35 (29th)	100 (7th)	0	1

Visible migration

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
0	14 (4S 10N)	379 (all WN W Peak 289 on 13th)	1SW	0	20 (6N 14S)	69SW, peak 39 on 7th	4S, incl 3 on 2nd

Cetti's Warbler

One calling in the Reedbed on 7th January (JF). A lull until October, when one was recorded on three dates, again at the Reedbed, with a second bird at Ladybridge Lake on 9th. Thereafter recorded at the Reedbed on three dates in November and two in December.

Spotted Flycatcher

Presumed ex-breeder in the area, now a scarce to rare migrant. A great autumn for this species, which was recorded on nine dates between 6th August and 8th September.

A single was present at Camp Wood on 6th, then a family party of up to four was present at the end of Flasks Lane between 9th and 27th. The last, also along Flasks Lane, was presumed to be a new individual.

Pied Flycatcher

A very rare bird in the area. One was calling down Flasks Lane on 9th August (DB).

Long-tailed Tit

A common breeding species in the area. Not consistently counted. I suspect the totals in the recording area could reach between 50 and 100 some years.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
16	38 (4th)	12	5	21 (19th)	6	33*	16	12	16	9	8

*A single flock moving S along the hedge around the Reserve car park

Willow Warbler

Common breeder and migrant, but showing a national decline in comparison with Chiffchaff.

The first arrived on cue on 1st April and the last was recorded on 3rd September.

Peak present count

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
12 (16th)	5	8	10	16 (6th)	1

Chiffchaff

Breeder and common migrant in the area, but generally under-recorded.

A presumed wintering bird was found at the sewage farm on 30th January (AMH) and was last seen on 4th February. Another bird 'vis migged' south down the hedge at the Reserve on 22nd and a third different individual was located on Flasks Lane on 26th January. In March there was a good arrival, with numbers in the area hovering around the 30 mark for the last ten days or so. Six bird days in November was a good tally for the area, with a peak of two on 26th.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	1- incl one SW along hedge at Reserve	37 (16th)	35 (16th)	13 (19th)	8	6	8	19 (3rd)	3 (13th)	2	0

Siberian Chiffchaff (*tristis*)

An example of this scarce migrant was found feeding at the Nosterfield village end of Flasks Lane on 14th January and last seen in Nosterfield village on 19th February (JF). It performed well most of the time, but sometimes was elusive and many great photographs were taken. Another noted on 20th November eluded photography (AW) but coincided with a notable influx of this race into the country.

The race breeds in Siberia, east of the Pechora River and normally winters in the lower Himalaya. This January/February was the first confirmed record of this subspecies in the recording area.

Wood Warbler

One found in the trees by the Lingham Lake car park on the very wet morning of 28th July (AMH), was seen later in the same place (SWor). This represents only the third record for the recording area.

Sedge Warbler

Local breeder. No counts. The first was recorded on 18th April and the last on 8th August.

Peak present count/bird days

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
2/4	8/21	9/22	7/11	2/3	0

Reed Warbler

Local breeder.

The first was reported on 15th April and last also on 8th August.

Peak present /bird days

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1 (15th)	5/6	10/22	3/7	8/8	0

Blackcap

A common breeding species in the area.

The first arrivals were singles at Lingham Lake on 26th and the Reserve on 29th March, with the last at the Reserve car park on 15th October.

Peak present count /Bird days

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
1	14/43	12/31	4/13	10/22	13/20	2/2	1/1 15th

Garden Warbler

Regular summer visitor and breeder, with probably three pairs in the area. Often overlooked.

The first in song was on 18th April. The last were two on 21st August, at the Silt Lagoons and East Tanfield Quarry.

Peak count/Bird days

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
1/6	3/13	2/2	1/2	2/2

Lesser Whitethroat

Breeder, generally under-recorded.

In spring, the first two arrived on 18th April. The last was by the Silt lagoons on 4th September.

Peak present count/Bird days

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
3 /11	3/9	3/6	2/4	0	1/3

Whitethroat

Common breeder.

The first was recorded on 15th April, with the last on 3rd September.

Peak count/Bird days

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1 (3)	3/8	8/13	3/6	3/6	1/1

Goldcrest

Breeder and common migrant in the area, but generally under-recorded. The sewage farm at East Tanfield is the most reliable site.

Peak count/bird days

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	2/4	6/15	2/2	1/1	0	0	0	3/6	2/4	2/3	1/1

Wren

Common breeder but under-counted, through a mix of relative elusiveness and low enthusiasm to count.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Ju	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	13	30	25	1 (not properly counted)	16	8	4	5	2	8	8

Nuthatch

Regular, but scarcely recorded and probably does not breed.

This year was no exception, with one in Camp Wood on 14th and two by the River Ure on 16th January. These are the two most favoured spots for the species in the area and more birding in these locations would likely lead to regular observations. Four dates in March included a new site at the Well end of the West Tanfield ridge. Just one report along the River Ure on 8th April, with the next on 3rd July. The last were singles on 2nd and 24th December.

Treecreeper

A breeding species, but elusive. Knowing the call is very helpful in recording the species. Given the spread of observations, there could at least eight pairs in the area.

Peak count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2

Starling

Breeder and common migrant present throughout the year.

Peak about count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
19000 (23rd)*	45	50000 at roost reedbed/Nosterfield village- 7-12 March.	30 (2nd)	6	70	11	72	400	500	700	500

*Largest estimated counts of birds flying north at dawn from roosts to the south

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	99N, peak 46 on 23rd	283 of which 277 N	39N, peak 12 on 9th	0	190 of which 108 N, 82S.	8N, 15S	528, 31N, 21S	0	2474 of which 2320S	151, all on 12th	0

Redwing

Regular wintering thrush and migrant in both spring and autumn.

The spring migration pattern was phenomenal, with the peak count of 1997 moving north on 1st April, the highest count in Europe, for April 2022 and the 13th highest ever for this month, documented on the *Trektellen* migration website.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
102	51	62	0	0	225 (25th)	68

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	21 of which 4 SW, 17N. Peak 20 NE on 26th	877 of which 101 SW, 776N. Peak 565 N on 20th	2807 of which 2775N. Peak 1997 N on 20th	2831 S, peak 2211 on 22nd	669 of which 633 SW, 36N. Peak 392 S on 9th	331SW all on 4th

Blackbird

Common breeder and migrant, with late autumn and early spring influxes a regular occurrence.

Peak present count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
74	69	70 (2N)	34 (2N)	17 on 11th	33	38 on 20th	8	35	22 (31S, peak 21 on 3rd)	92 (11SW all on 19th)	58

Fieldfare

Winter visitor, spring and summer migrant through the area.

The last of the spring were three heading north on 19th April and the first of the autumn were reported on 20th October. A very good year overall for birds on the move, with a particularly good movement of 4156 south on 9th November.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Nov	Dec
89 (7th)	51 (23rd)	119 (8th)	26 (5th)	200	19

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov	Dec
133 of which 80 SW,53NE. Peak 72 SW on 6th	61 of which 54N. Peak 36 N on 26th	735 of which 679N Peak 161 N on 26th	2139 of which 470 2084N. Peak 603 N on 3rd	1532 of which 1382 SW, Peak 1125 on 22nd	5276 of which 5193 SW,83N. Peak 4156 SW on 9th	0

Song Thrush

Regular wintering species and migrant in both spring and autumn.

Peak present count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	9 (2)	10 (4N all on 2nd)	18 on 6th	4	5	2	nc	1	4 (6SW, peak 4 on 27th)	0 (2SW)	2

Mistle Thrush

Breeder and migrant. Generally under-recorded. Sometimes large gatherings in early to mid-autumn.

Peak present count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4 on 14th	9 (2 singles NE)	8 (0)	2 (0)	2	3 (4NE on 12th)	2	nc	nc	3	1 (4S on 9th)	4

Robin

Under-recorded, common breeder and migrant.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
24	31	36	11	2 - no proper counts	7	10	nc	nc	12	10	26

Common Redstart

Hitherto a very scarce migrant. Single juveniles in the Flasks Lake area on 21st (Fozz) and Lingham Lake car park on 25th June (HH). In July there was an unprecedented and constant presence at the north end of Flasks Lane in the small sheep paddocks (MS *et al*) involving five birds, comprising an adult pair and three juveniles on 7th. The adult male and at least one juvenile stayed until the month's end

and the male until 13th August. It seems highly likely that if they had not bred in the area, they bred very close by.

Stonechat

A scarce visitor, which could conceivably breed.

The two at Ladybridge Lake at the end of 2021, were again there on 7th and 11th January (AMH), with a single near the North Hide on 23rd January (AW). In autumn, singles were reported on 17th September (MS), 12th November (AW) and 26th December (SWor).

Whinchat

A scarce migrant in the area. The only records for the year were two from the North Hide on 6th September (TJ).

Wheatear

Regular but sparse passage migrant. The first was at East Tanfield Quarry on 12th March.

Peak Present /individuals/bird days.

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
1	3/5/11	1/4/5	0	0	1/1/1	2/3/3	0

Dipper

Probably regular along the River Ure, a small stretch of which is within the recording area. The number of records is highly influenced by the regularity of visits to this area.

The only records were from the River Ure on several dates scattered through the year, with two on 30th January and 12th February. The only time they are not seen is generally when they are not looked for, with the River Ure stretch of the recording area massively under-watched.

House Sparrow

Under-recorded, occurs pretty much wherever there is human habitation in the area.

Peak count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
45	32	10	22	15	17	nc	67	nc	10	nc	51

*Combined count over two days in complementary, non-overlapping parts of the recording area

Tree Sparrow

A local breeder in the area which seems to be in decline. Breeds in Nosterfield village, by Ladybridge Farm and near Well. No records from the old regular site at the West Tanfield end of the Reserve in 2022.

Peak count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
16 (23rd)	7 12th	4	2	3	2	2	1	5	nc	19 Nosterfield village (25th)	3

Duncock

Common breeder, overlooked, ignored and undercounted! Also a migrant.

Peak present (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
7	25	31	19	9	5	6	8	9	nc (2S)	13	4

Yellow Wagtail

Declining summer visitor. The first was at a male from North Hide on 15th April and the last, a single on 28th September.

A pair was regularly present in the arable field next to Ladybridge Lake in the first half of May.

In September, birds roosted in the vegetation bordering the west side of Ladybridge Lake, feeding in the fields next to the farm during the day, especially first thing in the morning, and again in the evening.

Peak count/Bird days

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1/3	2/8	1/1	1/1	16/37	7/24

Yellow Wagtail sp.

Flyover birds for which subspecies was not determined included one south on 14th April, two north and one south on 7th May and a single south on 11th June.

Grey Wagtail

Singles present on 23rd January and 18th February. In March, two went north on 5th, three were at East Tanfield Quarry on 20th with another single north on 22nd. In May, a single went north on 5th, with another present on 7th.

In autumn, singles were present on two dates in September and one in November.

Visible migration totalled eight moving south in September to November, with a peak of five on 2nd October.

Pied Wagtail

A common breeder in the area and regular migrant. Flyover birds are not always assignable to species, so included under '*alba*' below.

No outstanding counts in the spring, but a reasonable roost built up in September, with birds feeding in the fields by Ladybridge Farm first and last thing, pre and post-roost in the vegetation around Ladybridge Lake, where they were joined by small numbers of Yellow Wagtails. In November and December good numbers were present in the '*Stercorare agrum*' field.

Peak count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	11	6	7	7	8	15 (6th)	34 (29th)	53 (7th)	5	17	29 (31st)

White Wagtail

A scarce migrant, occasionally occurs in reasonable numbers. Seven bird days in April including the first, a single on 1st, with three together at Langwith on 13th and three in the big field on 15th.

alba wagtail sp.

Since flyover birds are not always easy to assign to species, they are generally lumped under the above heading.

A noticeable passage in spring, but almost none in the autumn.

Moving birds

Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1N 19th	1N 23rd	43, all N. Peak 13 on 5th	26 all. Peak 5 N on 18th	0	0	0	0	0	38SW, 1 N	3 SW	0

The pattern of migrants mirrored the national picture well, see below (Nosterfield top, national bottom)

Meadow Pipit

A regular spring and autumn migrant, also over-winters.

A strong spring passage was not matched in the autumn, possibly down to coverage, as autumn passage elsewhere was reasonable.

The peak in December amounted to a single flock near the Reedbed, with odd singles elsewhere. Given other odd birds in other places in the recording area during the month, the likely late winter population was probably in the region of 60.

Two present at the southern end of the South Henge from May, with at least one appearing to carry food into 2nd June, showed high indications of successful breeding, a first for the recording area.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
29 (6th)	6	145 (27th)	0	2	1	0	0	20	16	10	3

Moving birds

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6 of which 2 S,4N. Peak 4 N on 27th	11 of which 7 S,4N. Peak 1 N, 5S on 27th	317 of which 312 N Peak 145 N on 27th	5609 all N Peak 1830 N on 8th	0	2S	246 all SW, Peak 226 on 7th	349 all SW, Peak 253 on 2nd	6SW	4, 3SW, 1N

Tree Pipit

Surprisingly scarce migrant in the recording area, especially given the numbers recorded nationally, even from the nearby Ripon Parks site. A single was singing by Ladybridge Lake on 11th May (DB) and another flew WNW on 13th May (AMH).

Rock Pipit

Once a regular scarcity, now very rare in the area.

The first for several years was on the main Reserve on a very wet 20th October (AMH, TS).

Water Pipit

A local rarity.

A single in the '*Stercorare agrum*' field with a Meadow Pipit on 31st December soon flew off (SWor).

Chaffinch

Widespread breeder in the area. A strong migrant, but the area does not appear to be on a particular flyway for this species, meagre numbers of moving birds in the spring and only seven in the autumn. As always, coverage plays a part in these figures.

Peak present count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	12	41	24	17	12	2	19 (3rd)	nc	12	41	15

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Oct	Nov
7N all 19th	0	38, all N, peak 7 on 2nd	0	56SW, peak 20 all 20th	43, peak 29, 12th

Brambling

Regular, but fairly scarce species in the area during migration periods and winter. Up to two in a crop field along West Tanfield ridge from 20th March to 1st April, with another in the village on the late date of 28th April. One flew north over the Langwith area on 17th March and two groups of four moved north on 8th and 15th April respectively. In autumn, singles were present on 30th September and 13th November (site data not supplied)

Hawfinch

A single flew north-west on 13th April (AMH).

Bullfinch

Under-recorded resident and migrant. Judging from the spread of records, between five and seven pairs in the area.

Peak count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
12 (30th)	5	6	4 (1N)	2	2	1	nc	nc	5 (5SW all 27th)	2 (2S)	9

Greenfinch

Resident and sparse breeder in the area, which has undergone considerable national decline in recent years, with a suggestion of some recovery in the last two years. Also a migrant.

Peak present count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6 (21st)	2	5	3 (1N)	4	5	0	2	nc	1 (10SW, peak 8 on 2nd)	0	1

Linnet

Regular breeder and migrant, which appears to have declined over the last few years. Big early winter flocks included 120 in a crop field along West Tanfield ridge on 22nd March and 95 on the Reserve on 8th March. In autumn a steadily growing flock accumulated in the 'Stercorare agrum' field.

Peak count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
25 (30th)	91 (23rd)	120	7	15	2	6	3	45	26	24	60

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	38, 33 of which N, peak 23 on 26th	97 of which 69N, peak 35 on 26th	185, all N, peak 38 on 14th	9, all S	6SW, 4NE	0	0	0	100 SW, peak 45 on 27th	14SW	0

Twite

A once regular wintering species in the area, but much scarcer and cannot be relied on, the last few years.

In December, an increasing number joined the Linnet flock in the 'Stercorare agrum' field, peaking at nine on 29th (DB *et al*).

Lesser Redpoll/Redpoll sp

A scarce species in most years, but can be irruptive, with many more sightings in some years.

Peak present count (visible migration)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	21 (4th)	6	2 (2N)	0	0	0	0	0	0 (52SW, peak 38 on 2nd)	10 (1S)	5

Crossbill

Irregular migrant over the area, with a huge year on year variation.

A single moving south on 10th November was the year's only record (DB).

Goldfinch

Widespread breeder in the area and common migrant, generally under-recorded.

Peak about count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
69 (11th)	21 (19th)	27	16	9	14	9	10	12	14	3	7

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	47 of which 43SW peak 27SW on 5th	41, of which 35N, peak 23 on 26th	121 all N. Peak 24 on 18th	34, 22S, 12N	5 N 12th	0	0	63SW 7th	213SW peak 146 on 2nd	193, of which 183SW peak 141 on 9th	0

Siskin

Generally, a wintering bird and fly-over migrant in the area. Prone to good and bad years, depending on food bounty on breeding grounds and what is available locally.

Peak present

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
28 (23rd)	14	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	0

Visible migration

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	23, all S, peak 19 27th	69 of which 58S, peak 42 on the 4th	24, all N,. Peak 14 on 1st	0	0	0	0	0	50 SW, peak 39 on 27th	39 SW, peak 30 9th	0

Corn Bunting.

A flock of eight flew low and fast past AMH at Ladybridge on 25th February, the largest flock for some years. Another singleton flew north past Langwith on 5th March.

Interestingly, one was singing by the North Hide on 3rd July (DB).

Yellowhammer

Probably in decline, but still a healthy breeding population in the area, with good wintering flocks. In the region of ten to 12 pairs in the recording area.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	3	15	8	5	7	4	12	nc	10	25 (12th)	17

Reed Bunting

Regular breeder in the area, often undercounted and this year was no exception. The species can also be a strong migrant, with peaks in early spring and again in autumn.

Peak present count (moving)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	6 (15 SW inc 14 on 23rd)	9 (12 N, peak 7 on 6th)	9 - 16th (3N)	4	17	4 (4N 6th - prob actually local feeding movement)	2	1	8 (6SW)	3	3

Contributors.

This is pretty much all the *WhatsApp* group, plus a few others who post casual records on social media. Unfortunately, some observers are only known by rather cryptic identifiers, so shout out your name if you have been missed off this list. As far as we are concerned, contributing to the conversation about wildlife in the area on the forum or in other ways is a valued contribution. Enthusiasm is generated by mutual interest and dialogue and benefits to the overall effort, even if no novel records are provided.

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