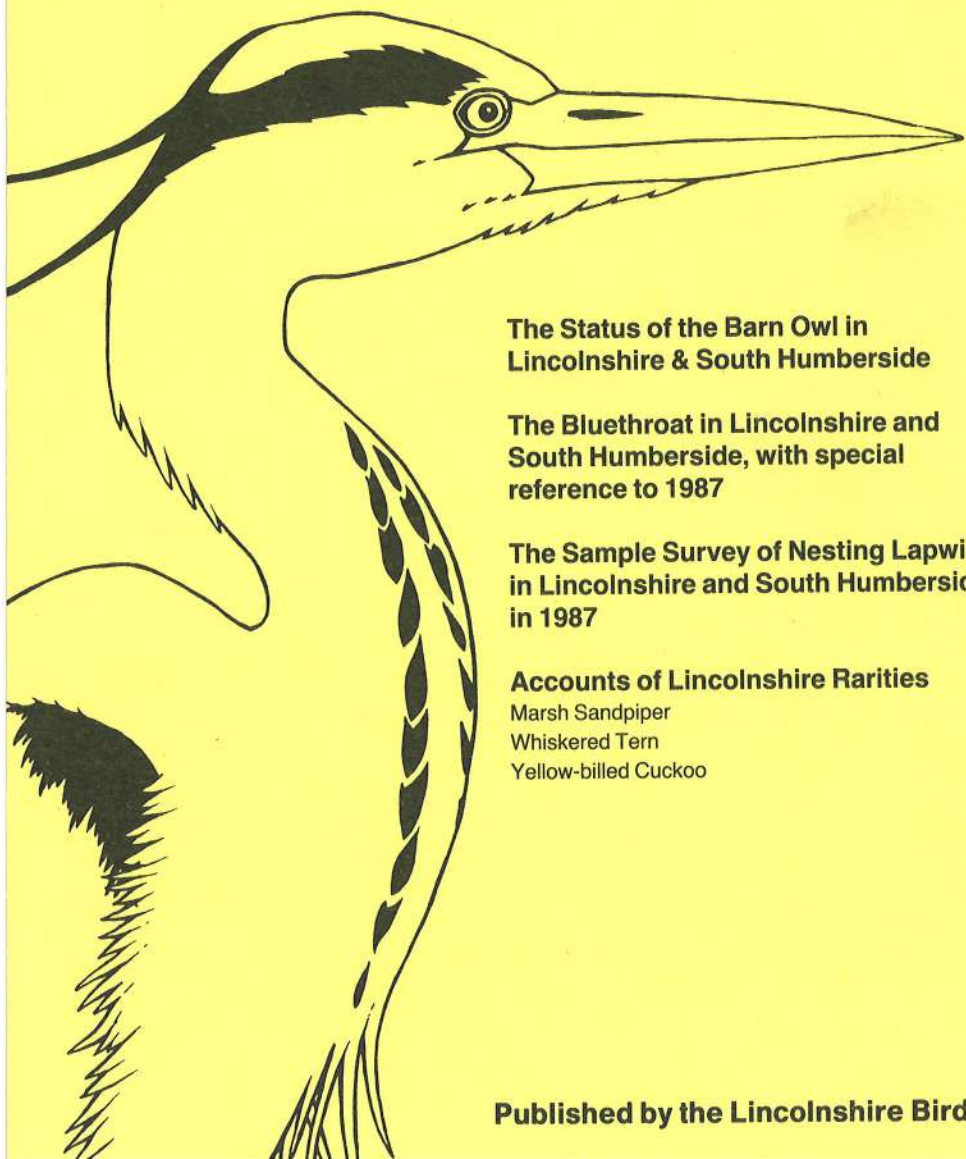


LINCOLNSHIRE BIRD REPORT 1987

Including the Gibraltar Point Observatory Report



**The Status of the Barn Owl in
Lincolnshire & South Humberside**

**The Bluethroat in Lincolnshire and
South Humberside, with special
reference to 1987**

**The Sample Survey of Nesting Lapwings
in Lincolnshire and South Humberside
in 1987**

Accounts of Lincolnshire Rarities

Marsh Sandpiper

Whiskered Tern

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Published by the Lincolnshire Bird Club

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1987-88

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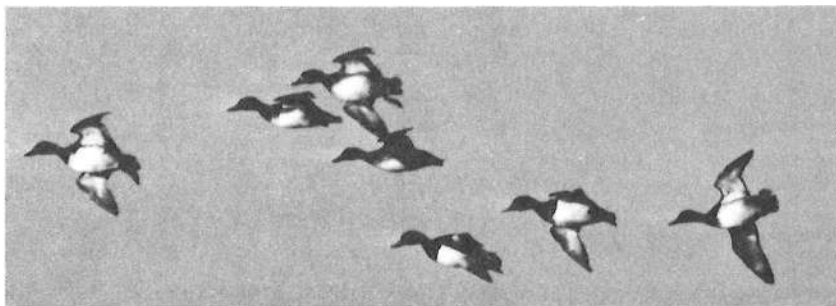
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Illustrations:

Cover; I.G.Shepherd
Line Drawings: C.R.Casey, I.G.Shepherd
Photographs: K.Atkin, G.P.Catley, P.Haywood

Tufted Ducks (K.Atkin)

Waterbird Counts 1986-87

During the winter of 1986-87, 35 observers counted birds on 39 waters and the gross monthly totals are shown in Table 1. The locations are listed in Table 2, with the months for which each water was counted and the maximum monthly count. Two species reached qualifying levels for flocks of National Importance, as follows:

Mute Swan (QL=180) River Welland, 254–Nov 86
Goosander (QL= 50) River Welland, 69–Feb 87
Tallington Lakes, 66–Jan 87, 77–Feb 87

The weather from September to December 1986 was mostly mild with westerly winds. In early January cold weather from the north-east brought snow and ice to many areas, and some waters were ice-locked. February started with mild weather followed in the middle of the month by colder northerly winds. The end of the month was again mild, but then colder conditions with north-easterly winds returned in early March and delayed the departure of northbound wildfowl. The noticeable reduction in the number of Shelduck in March was attributable to a 'no-count' at Winteringham Haven, not to departure of birds.

Thanks are due to all the counters who provided records for the Wildfowl Trust counts. (Scientific names of species are given in the Systematic List)

John Redshaw

Table 1 – Monthly Waterbird totals 1986-87

<i>Species</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>
Little Grebe	29	18	15	22	20	7	16
Great Crested Grebe	50	60	65	47	33	58	117
Red-necked Grebe	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Black-necked Grebe	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Cormorant	7	3	2	3	15	3	—
Mute Swan	190	294	398	311	361	254	271
Bewick's Swan	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
Whooper Swan	—	—	—	—	—	4	2
Pink-footed Goose	—	1	1	154	203	—	—
Greylag Goose	50	149	576	432	485	438	123
Canada Goose	812	913	1627	1231	540	934	467
Barnacle Goose *	1	3	1	27	—	2	1
Egyptian Goose *	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
Shelduck	713	559	306	670	246	260	74
Wigeon	126	291	144	536	1200	1186	307
Gadwall	10	16	20	67	16	52	70
Teal	1181	788	889	543	289	140	196
Mallard	1847	2355	3159	3651	3138	2315	1244
Pintail	9	3	1	—	2	—	4
Shoveler	16	70	30	5	3	9	22
Pochard	30	285	455	502	343	975	679
Tufted Duck	271	372	646	663	628	963	774
Scaup	—	—	—	2	3	—	5
Long-tailed Duck	—	—	—	1	1	1	—
Goldeneye	—	2	67	67	82	79	94
Velvet Scoter	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Smew	—	—	—	—	12	7	—
Red-breasted Merganser	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Goosander	—	—	—	20	67	148	99
Ruddy Duck	8	2	1	4	4	1	7
Moorhen	61	40	45	65	36	27	57
Coot	1014	1649	2708	2423	2037	1745	1256
Waters Counted	21	21	30	37	26	38	36

* Includes some birds which are definitely or probably escapes.

Table 2 – Waters Counted in 1986-87

Grid Square	Location	Months Counted												Month Max
North:														
SE 92	Read's Island	S	O	N	D	J	F	M						1328 N
SE 92	Winteringham Haven	S	O	–	D	J	F	–						1054 S
TF 39	Covenham Reservoir	S	O	N	D	J	F	M						953 J
TA 02	Barton-Barrow Clay Pits	S	O	N	D	J	F	M						829 J
SE 80	Holme Lane Quarry, Messingham	–	–	N	D	J	F	M						347 N
SE 71	Ealand Lake	–	–	–	D	J	F	M						170 J
TA 00	Cadney Reservoir	S	O	N	D	J	F	M						132 D
SE 81	Burton-upon-Stather Brick Pits	S	O	N	D	J	F	M						107 N
SE 80	Messingham Landfill Area	–	–	N	D	J	F	M						103 F
West:														
SE 96	Whisby Gravel Pits	–	O	N	D	J	F	M						957 D
SK 97	Burton Gravel Pits	S	O	N	D	–	F	M						520 N
TF 04	Sleaford Ballast Pit	S	O	N	D	–	F	M						419 D
SK 98	Fillingham Lake	–	O	N	D	J	F	M						415 O
SK 97	Birchwood Skellingthorpe	–	–	–	D	J	–	M						247 J
TF 07	R.Witham Fiskerton-Bardney	S	O	N	D	J	F	M						168 F
TF 08	Toft Newton Reservoir	S	–	N	D	J	F	M						164 D
SK 86	Norton Gravel Pits	–	–	–	–	J	F	M						150 J
SK 97	Brayford Pool	S	O	N	D	–	F	M						110 F
SK 97	Riseholme Lake	S	O	N	D	J	F	M						95 N
TF 18	Woodlands Pits, Market Rasen	–	–	–	D	J	F	M						30 F
TF 15	Billinghay Skirth	–	–	–	D	J	F	M						21 J
SK 98	Hackthorn Hall Lake	–	–	–	D	J	F	M						19 J
TF 07	Sudbrooke Park Lake	S	O	N	D	–	F	M						7 O
East:														
TF 26	Kirkby-on-Bain Pits	S	O	N	D	J	F	M						1182 J
TF 57/58	Sea Bank Clay Pits	S	O	N	D	–	F	M						1132 S
TF 55	Gibraltar Point Mere	S	O	N	D	–	F	M						700 S
TF 27	West Ashby Pits	S	O	N	D	–	F	M						383 N
TF 25/16	R.Witham Chapel Hill – Kirkstead Bridge	–	–	–	D	J	F	M						108 J
TF 58	Brickyard Pond, Sutton-on-Sea	–	–	N	D	–	F	M						44 D
South:														
TF 10	Tallington/West Deeping	–	O	N	–	J	F	M						1744 J
TF 11	Langtoft West End Pits	–	–	N	D	–	F	–						1029 D
TF 02	Grimsthorpe Park Lake	S	O	N	D	J	F	M						905 N
TF 24/34	South Forty-foot Drain, Boston	–	–	N	D	J	F	M						657 J
SK 83	Denton Reservoir	S	–	N	D	J	F	M						637 N
TF 22	Coronation Channel, Spalding	–	O	N	D	–	F	M						586 N
TF 11	Boston Fen NR	S	–	N	D	–	F	M						560 F
TF 10/22	R.Welland Spalding-Borough Fen	S	O	N	D	J	F	M						439 M
TF 03	Culverthorpe Lake	S	–	N	D	–	F	M						296 S
TF 11	Langtoft Common Pits	–	–	N	D	–	F	–						188 F

The following waters, known to hold important numbers of birds, were not counted during 1986-87. Offers to cover them or others, or to assist with counting any other waters, would be gratefully received. Please contact the county organiser, John Redshaw, 7 Fennell Road, Pinchbeck, Spalding.

Boston GP	Frieston Flashes	Ashbyville Lake
Deeping Mere	Asgarby Pit	Bagmoor Lake
Deeping Lake	Bardney Ponds	Messingham SQ
Ancaster GP	River Till	Tattershall Pits
Swanholme (Lincoln)	Tower Farm Pits	Revesby Reservoir
Hartsholme Lake		

The Status of the Barn Owl in Lincolnshire and South Humberside

Exact information about the population of the Barn Owl *Tyto alba* has always been very difficult to obtain. It is generally agreed to be one of the most difficult species to census and only two full-scale national surveys have ever been attempted.

The first, covering only England and Wales, was carried out in 1932 by George Blaker on behalf of the RSPB, following a general feeling that even then the bird was declining. Newspapers, natural history societies and similar organisations across the country were canvassed for volunteers and more than four thousand people contributed information nationally in one way or another. Unfortunately the original census forms completed by observers and all the survey data, including figures on local observer coverage, were lost during the war in a bombing raid. However, Blaker's work was considered so good that he was awarded the RSPB's highest honour, their Gold Medal, in 1934 for the thoroughness of his research and the subsequent publication.

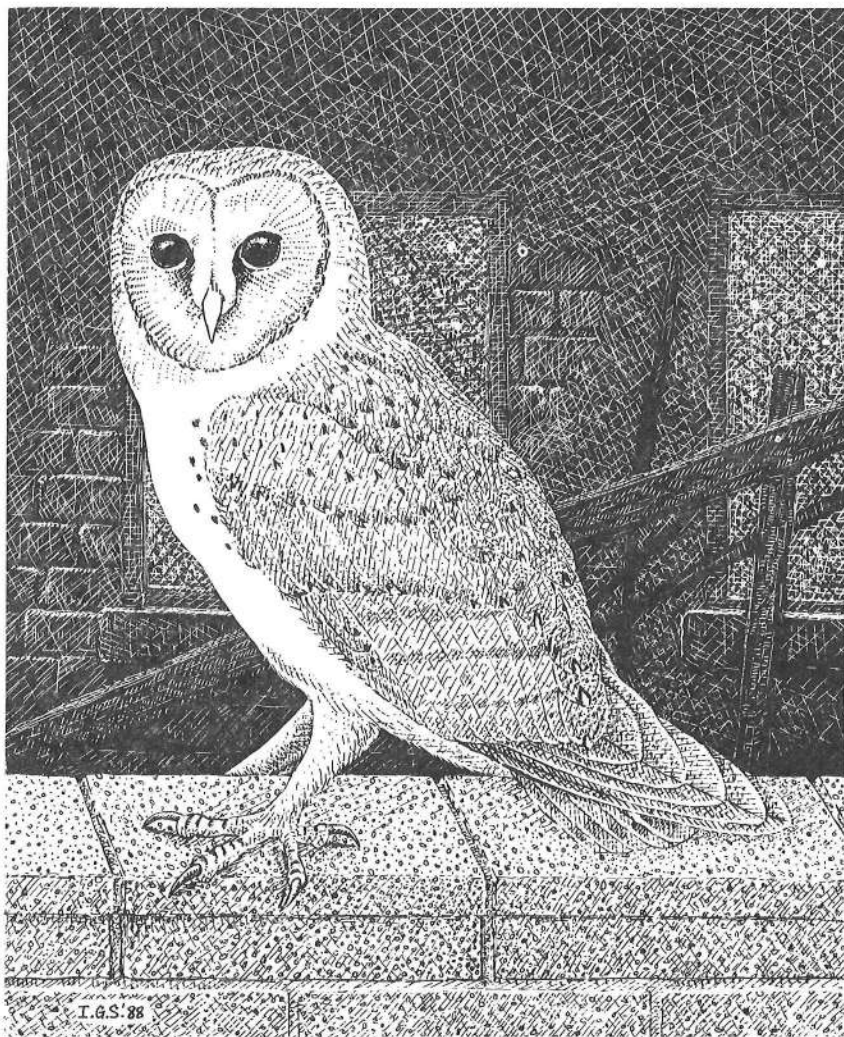
Blaker came up with a figure of 12,000 pairs in England and Wales and, including unpaired birds, he estimated a total population in 1932 of 25,000 Barn Owls. It is difficult to interpret his figure exactly because the survey was conducted over one breeding season only, and we do not know whether this coincided with a peak or trough in the number of Field Voles, *Microtus agrestis*. Nationally Field Voles form the major part of the Barn Owl's diet and their ups and downs are mirrored in the fortunes of the owls. When the vole population is at a peak the relatively easy hunting enables the owls to raise large broods, with occasional second clutches in the same season. However when vole numbers slump clutch sizes are smaller, fewer youngsters are raised to fledging and sometimes nesting is a total failure due to the inability of the female to put on enough pre-season fat to come into egg-laying condition.

However there is a clue to the vole cycle in Blaker's paper, in which he says: "in 1932 the average clutch of 214 nests was only 3.77, chiefly 3 and 4, and the number of second broods was comparatively small." (These were all first or only clutches, followed from laying to fledging or other outcome as part of the survey.) He also records that of those eggs which survived to hatch (some were taken by collectors) about 94% fledged. Nationally the average clutch size from BTO nest record cards is about 4.78 (Bunn et al), mostly 4 and 5. So with smallish clutches but reasonable fledging success, 1932 was probably around the middle of the 3-5 year cycle. In addition Middleton (1930; quoted in Tapper 1976) carried out a survey of foresters and others for the period 1890-1928 and found an approximately 4 year cycle of vole 'plagues' with the most recent in 1922 and 1926.

Blaker gives no break-down of numbers by county, and his published map gives density only as pairs per hundred square miles in 5-pair bands (i.e. 0-5, 6-10 pairs and so on). Taking a very approximate figure from this map gives the Barn Owl population of Lincolnshire and South Humberside in 1932 as some 520-640 pairs. The highest densities then (26-30 pairs per 100 square miles, or approx 1 pair to 3-4 square miles) were found in a band along the Wolds from Market Rasen to Spilsby, and in the Trent valley west of Lincoln; the lowest densities (1 pair to 7-10 square miles) were in the Fens and the Isle of Axholme.

The BTO Atlas of 1968-72 was a survey of distribution rather than numbers but Sharrock (1976) gives a conservative estimate of 2-4 pairs of Barn Owls per occupied 10 km square. Although he admitted that breeding pairs of Barn Owls are easily overlooked, this would give a minimum estimate of Lincolnshire's population of between 137-274 pairs at that time.

The most recent survey from 1982 to 1985 by Colin Shawyer for the Hawk Trust shows a huge decline in numbers since 1932 to only 5000 pairs for the whole of the British Isles. This covered a three year period equivalent to a vole cycle. The objectives of the survey



were to determine the abundance of the Barn Owl in each ten-kilometre square, to find out what population changes there had been since 1932, to learn of any factors which could be identified as influencing the decline and to provide a baseline for future population studies. Sawyer realised how difficult the species is to survey in a pilot census prior to the main survey. He found that, on average, the number of breeding Barn Owls notified to county recorders underestimated the true county populations by a massive 85%. The coverage for his survey was estimated to be between 70-100% and reports received totalled 11,500, but some 15% were rejected where there was insufficient detail or any doubt of their accuracy.

Since 1980 the Lincolnshire Bird Club has been collecting breeding records of Barn Owls on a one km square basis, as part of its forthcoming atlas of breeding birds. By combining the known Barn Owl breeding sites from the Hawk Trust with LBC 'proved' records, we find that 302 one kilometre squares have been occupied during 1980-87. Blaker's 1932 estimate looks very healthy when compared with today's figures, but

taken in a national context there are indications that Lincolnshire at least has a relatively stable population, which may even be increasing. This is backed by returns to the Hawk Trust. Observers were asked whether, in their view, Barn Owl numbers had increased, decreased or remained static in their area over the previous ten years. Table 1 shows the replies for England and Wales as a whole and for Lincolnshire/South Humberside alone.

Table 1. Observers opinions of local Barn Owl numbers (percentage in each class)

	<i>England & Wales</i>	<i>Lincs/S.Humbs</i>
Decreased	71	23
Increased	8	31
Static	21	46

Prestt's 1965 enquiry found that only the Sparrowhawk had suffered more than the Barn Owl when the pesticide problem of the late 50's was at its peak. The response to Shawyer's survey may indicate that in this county the Barn Owl, like the Sparrowhawk (Catley 1984) is still spreading back into areas from which it was lost. Unlike the Sparrowhawk however, there is no reservoir of birds to the west of the county to replenish our stocks.

Blaker asked a similar question in the 1932 survey, and though he doesn't give any figures he records that Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland were the only counties then recording an increase, that in Devon and parts of Somerset and Cornwall Barn Owls were holding their own, and that in Essex and Suffolk the decline was less marked. Over the rest of the country the decline was even then severe.

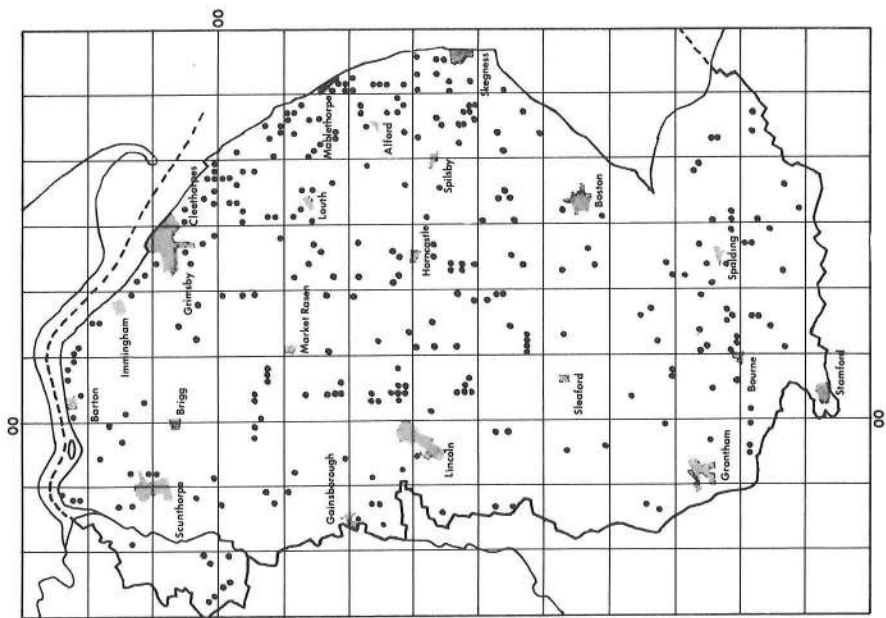
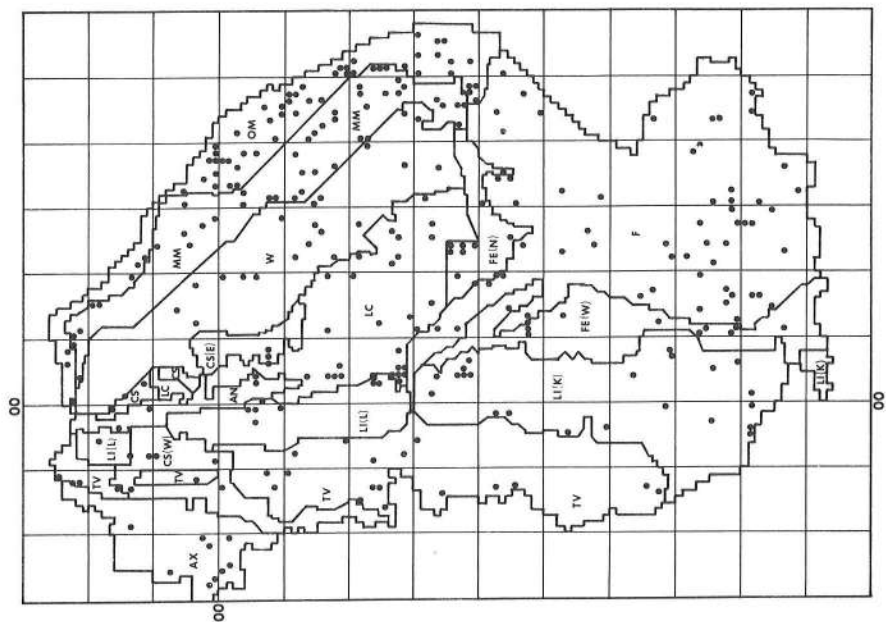
Figure 1 shows the distribution of squares occupied between 1980-87 with the major towns and rivers, and the variation in numbers at first seems to have no obvious pattern. Figure 2 shows the distribution related to the (much simplified) natural regions of the county (adapted from Blackwood 1972) however, and table 2 gives the numbers and density of occupied squares in each region. Considered in this way a definite pattern emerges and the densities can be seen to fall into a small number of groups.

Table 2. Barn Owl densities 1980-87 by natural regions of Lincolnshire

<i>Code</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Approx area (sq km)</i>	<i>Pairs of Owls</i>	<i>Pairs per 100 sq km</i>
TV	Trent Valley	800	21	2.6
W	Wolds	786	20.5	2.6
Li(L)	(Lindsey) Limestone – 'The Cliff'	313.5	8	2.6
Li(K)	(Kesteven) Limestone – 'The Heath'	786	21	2.7
FE(W)	(Western) Fen Edge	356	10	2.8
CS(W)	(Western) Cover Sands	213	6	2.8
Ax	Isle of Axholme	276	10	3.6
F	Fens	1582	58	3.7
An	Ancholme Valley	105.5	4	3.8
LC	Lindsey Clay triangle	588	29.5	5.0
CS(E)	(Eastern) Cover Sands	100.5	5	5.0
FE(N)	(Northern) Fen Edge	145	11	7.6
MM	Middle Marsh boulder clay	532	44.5	8.4
OM	Outmarsh estuarine silts	471.5	53.5	11.3

These figures total 7055 square km with an average density of 4.3 pairs of breeding Barn Owls per 100 sq km.

(Note that half pairs are on the boundary between two regions.)



One km square nesting distribution of Barn Owls during 1980-87, related to:
 (Figure 1) major towns and river systems; (Figure 2) natural regions of the county

It is only possible to speculate at some of these variations, though it is notable that Barn Owl density is very low all the way down the west of the county and, with the exception of the Wolds, it increases from south-west to north-east. Also within several of the regions there are clusters of higher density. It would be worthwhile to compare conditions in these higher density areas with other parts of the same region where density is lower.

One factor which could be inhibiting the build-up of owls in some areas is a lack of nest sites. When nest sites were analysed, the Hawk Trust survey found that across the country there was a ratio of buildings to trees used of 65:35. The various categories, with totals for Lincolnshire are shown in table 3.

Table 3 Barn Owl nest sites in Lincolnshire/South Humberside in 1982-85

<i>Site</i>	<i>Number</i>
Farm Buildings	70
Domestic Buildings	22
Churches	7
Industrial Buildings	9
Trees	58
Total	166

The 1932 survey gave a ratio of 54:44 nests in buildings to trees. The apparent increase in the proportion of owls using buildings may indicate that this is where Barn Owls prefer to nest and that with a smaller total population a higher proportion are able to find suitable buildings. However, especially since we have no information on the availability of different sites in the county, it may simply be a reflection of the fact that nests in buildings are much more likely to be found and reported. Even if this is so, well over half the nests in the county are likely to be in buildings and the significance of these figures for the future of the Barn Owl should not be overlooked. Many of the agricultural nest sites will not be here in the future, as they are in old barns, etc, in a dilapidated condition and there is little incentive for the farmer to restore them. Will the owls adapt to new sites? Old trees may be the answer and it is notable that D.Scott (pers comm in Bunn et al 1982) believed that at that time tree-nesting was increasing in north Nottinghamshire and west Lincolnshire. However old trees are scarce in many areas of the county and suitable holes are often taken by Kestrels, a bird which already suffers from a shortage of suitable nesting places in some areas.

Experiments are going on with various artificial sites. For example, the Hawk Trust's Riverside Link scheme is being operated in South Lincolnshire in conjunction with Anglian Water. This experimental work, which I am co-ordinating, involves siting nestboxes on poles by the banks of the South Forty-foot Drain and is one example of the attempts that are being made to safeguard the future of the Barn Owl. My own scheme, sponsored by WWF, with over one hundred nestboxes on farms throughout the county is now bearing fruit and is providing useful information which will be written up in due course.

Other factors which must certainly be important are availability of food and of suitable feeding habitat. The importance of the Field Vole has been mentioned above and table 4 shows the results of pellet analysis undertaken by Maurice Johnson (Lincoln Museum) on 600 pellets collected by Derick Scott from 30 Barn Owl roosts in Lincolnshire during the winter of 1967/68 (adapted from Bunn et al 1982).

Here we can see the importance of voles as food, with Field Vole alone accounting for 47% of prey items taken and about 44% of the weight of food eaten by these owls, mainly in the northern half of the county (M.Johnson, pers com).

Table 4 Numbers and percentages of prey species from 30 Barn Owl roosts in Lincolnshire during winter 1967/68 (after Bunn et al 1982).

<i>Species</i>	<i>Number% by number</i>		<i>% by weight</i>
Common Shrew <i>Sorex araneus</i>	539	20.3	9.6
Pygmy Shrew <i>Sorex minutus</i>	76	2.9	<1.0
Bank Vole <i>Clethrionomys glareolus</i>	171	6.5	6.1
Field Vole <i>Microtus agrestis</i>	1240	46.8	44.0
Water Vole <i>Arvicola terrestris</i>	34	1.3	6.0
Wood Mouse <i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>	269	10.1	9.5
Harvest Mouse <i>Micromys minutus</i>	31	1.2	<1.0
House Mouse <i>Mus musculus</i>	30	1.1	1.1
Brown Rat <i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	91	3.4	16.1
Birds	149	5.6	5.3
Other *	20	<1.0	<1.0
Total	2650		

*15 Water Shrew, 2 young Rabbit, 2 Moles, 1 bat
Average number of items per pellet: 4.5

Looked at in a wider context though, there is some evidence that these figures may not be typical of the country as a whole. Table 5 shows a regional analysis of pellets, adapted from Glue 1974. The pellet samples used were collected from a wide variety of habitats and over all seasons of the year in each region, with between 3500-9300 pellets examined for each region.

Table 5 Regional analysis of Barn Owl pellet samples collected between 1960-71 by prey weight (from Glue 1974)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Common Shrew</i>	<i>Bank Vole</i>	<i>Field Vole</i>	<i>Wood Mouse</i>	<i>House Mouse</i>	<i>Brown Rat</i>	<i>Other</i>
South-west England	14	6	59	13	<1	1	7
South-east England	11	3	54	12	1	11	8
Eastern England	10	4	40	8	3	28	7
Midlands	16	7	50	11	<1	7	9
Northern England	19	3	60	8	<1	2	8
Wales	17	5	56	10	<1	6	6
Scotland	21	3	56	12	<1	2	6

Two things stand out particularly from the table. Firstly, Field Voles appear to form a lower percentage of the diet by weight in Eastern England (including Lincolnshire/South Humberside) than in other regions. This is probably because they are herbivores and in Britain their main habitat is rough grassland, though they are also common in young forestry plantations while the grass is still lush. Use of, and damage to, arable crops is rare and slight by comparison with other species (Corbet and Southern 1977). This is confirmed by John Lill (MAFF, Lincoln, pers comm); Field Voles in this county have been known to reach 'plague' proportions in young conifer plantations (and especially in roadside amenity plantings beside, e.g. the M180 motorway) but not on farmland.

Conversely, Brown Rats form a much higher percentage of the diet in this region than in any other. Although the density of rats overall in this county is probably no higher than in the rest of the country, it is possible that the density of available, rural rats is

considerably higher (J.Lill, pers comm). Rats are attracted to cereal crops and particularly to sugar beet, remaining beside beet fields even after the beets have gone, to feed on broken pieces left by the harvesting. When the food supply is good they are also capable of breeding continuously throughout the year, unlike voles and shrews whose breeding season is normally confined to the spring and summer (Corbet & Southern 1977). So a constant supply of young rats is potentially available through the winter in arable counties, just when other food is at its scarcest, and a young rat is 'worth' up to 5 Field Voles in weight to a Barn Owl. Above all, rats love watercourses and are very common in the county wherever grassy dykes run through arable, so one factor in favour of Lincolnshire's Barn Owls is the criss-crossing throughout the county of thousands of miles of small dykes, substantial drains and major rivers. Other counties with rapidly declining Barn Owl populations must envy our waterways. They are linear territories which provide potentially good hunting on their lush banks. Young birds of the year can move away from the nest into the best possible habitat, meeting up with other unattached owls to fill vacant territories, or to make up complete pairs again where one adult has perished, as they are capable of breeding at one year old.

A number of other factors which almost certainly affect owls in some areas have been suggested, including disturbance, persecution, rodenticide poisoning, increased road traffic and competition from the more aggressive Tawny Owl. It is noteworthy that, apart from road traffic, all of these factors, including nest-site loss and problems of food supply, were also suggested by Blaker in 1932 as possibly contributing to the decline even then. However, now as then, no one doubts that habitat is in some way the major factor in those counties where Barn Owl numbers have plummeted. Even in Lincolnshire there is no room for complacency. Landowners must recognise the needs of the owls if the population is to remain stable. Although 300 plus pairs may seem a good baseline for the future, in 1932 it would have seemed like an impending disaster. But with the present climate of goodwill towards wildlife in general, and the Barn Owl in particular, the future looks fairly promising.

In the longer term further work on intimate studies in particular areas will be needed. To help the continuation of this work, I should be grateful for reports of all confirmed breeding sites. The map covers the majority of known nesting birds in the county, but no doubt many will have been missed.

Finally I must express my grateful thanks to all those fieldworkers, too numerous to mention, who have contributed their observations. My special thanks go to Colin Shawyer, who has made available much of his own data and has given me tremendous encouragement over the past few years.

Bob Sheppard

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The Bluethroat in Lincolnshire and South Humberside, with special reference to 1987

As many people will be aware, the spring of 1987 was an impressive one for the occurrence of Bluethroats, *Luscinia svecica*, in the county. Looking back through the past records there would appear to have been a notable change of status of this scarce passage migrant during the last 17 years, but is it as real as is suggested?

Prior to 1954 there were just 8 records for the county with 7 of these in September and one in the first week of October, leading to its being described as 'a rare autumn passage migrant'. In the following 15 years there were a further 16 records, all conforming to the same pattern with all being in autumn and only occurring in 9 of the 15 years concerned. Then 1969 produced the first spring record, at Donna Nook, with a further 4 records there in September that year. The next year, 1970, saw the first of what have become rare spring influxes of overshooting Bluethroats in May. A total of 8 birds were recorded between May 12-16th, 7 of them at the well-watched locality Donna Nook and one at Anderby Creek. The next 6 years reverted to the old pattern with just 4 records all between August 30th, an early autumn date, and September 24th, but 1977 again came up with 4 records in May from 19-30th and also 2 in autumn, on August 21st and October 30th, both extreme autumn dates. Records were then scarce with none in 1978, a marked autumn influx of 5 between September 27-October 2nd in 1979, and the next 5 years producing only one, on May 12th 1981. In May 1985 however, there was the best-documented spring arrival to date, with a minimum of 12 males being found between 12-15th in a very concentrated period; note the coincidence of dates with the 1970 records. All racially identified birds up to 1986 showed characteristics of the red-spotted race, *L.s.svecica*, except for one at Chapel Point on September 4th 1963 which 'was thought to be of the white-spotted race *L.s.cyanecula*'.

In 1987 a minimum of 9 birds were recorded, but as postulated later more individuals than this may have been involved. An early record concerned a singing male found at Saltfleetby on April 5-6th which apparently showed no colour spot on the blue breast patch. The very early date of this record however, and the simultaneous occurrence of a number of white-spotted males *L.s.cyanecula* at other east coast localities at this time suggest that it was probably of this race. Males of the red-spotted race almost invariably show the red spot quite clearly even when not singing but white-spotted birds tend to just show a blue throat most of the time and the white spot only becomes clearly visible when the bird sings and fluffs out its throat feathers. This was the first April record for the county, associated with a large influx of Black Redstarts, and pre-dates the earliest spring record by 37 days.

Light east to north-east winds with low cloud and drizzle on May 22nd led to an obvious displacement of north-bound red-spotted Bluethroats which culminated in the arrival of a number of birds on the east coast over the next 3 days. First birds on the 23rd were a female at Gibraltar Point, amazingly the first spring record there, and a male found on the edge of a cabbage field at Donna Nook at 0600 hrs. The latter bird, after escaping the clutches of a black and white cat by about 1 inch gradually worked its way south over a distance of some 300 yards by 0645 hrs when it flew off to the south and was not relocated. Another male was located in the same cabbage field at 1000 hrs and there were 2 males there that evening. On the same day a male in full song was found at Saltfleetby. Although no Bluethroats were seen at Donna Nook, despite searching, during most of the 24th, 2 males were again noted in the evening and again despite searching the Saltfleetby bird was not seen on the 24th. However, what was presumably the same bird was found again in the original location at Saltfleetby on the 25th when it was again in full song and display flighting, vigorously defending a territory in the Sea Buckthorn/Elder scrub on the dunes. At Donna Nook 2 males and a female were present on the 25th in the same field and another singing male was located at Pyes Hall with what was almost certainly a second bird calling from dense Elder scrub there. All males seen were of the red-spotted race and none were seen after the 25th when the weather



Bluethroat (G.P.Catley)

improved sufficiently to allow them to resume their migration.

It is interesting here to speculate on just how many birds were involved in this influx. On the one hand what was presumably the same male at Saltfleetby, although obvious enough on 23rd and 25th, could not be found on 24th, and yet at Donna Nook the first male on the 23rd flew off very purposefully south and seemed unlikely to have returned. The birds in the cabbage field were often not seen for very long periods, notably all day on 24th, and may well have involved more individuals than two. The very restricted dates and brevity of some of the records fits in well with those of previous spring arrivals and suggests that influxes prior to 1970 may well have been missed when coastal coverage was much more restricted.

On June 21st a singing male Bluethroat of the white-spotted race was found at Whisby Pits, Lincoln. Only singing in the late evening after 2100 hrs and skulking in dense willow/salix scrub it is possible that it may have been present for some time prior to this date and gone undetected. A tape of its song recorded on June 29th included a great deal of mimicry of a wide variety of species and most notably that of Common Sandpiper which it only did while in flight. The first definite record of this race for the county, this ties in well with recent British records of an apparently 'spotless' male in Nottinghamshire for six weeks from early April to May 12th 1979 and of a singing male white-spotted bird at Blacktoft Sands RSPB Reserve from May 12-19th 1981.

Thus in total to the end of 1986 there had been 65 records of Bluethroat for the county. Of these, the 24 to 1968 were all in the autumn; in 1969-86 there were 41, of which 15 were in autumn between August 21st-October 29th, and 26 were in spring, all in May. There would therefore appear to have been an upsurge of spring records in recent years, since autumn birds are much more skulking and less likely to be found than spring males which often sing and show themselves frequently. There are obviously many factors involved in this apparent change. Taking into account that the coast is now probably better watched, and that the precise weather conditions which tend to produce spring influxes are now well known, it is likely that many short-staying birds, which could have been missed in the past, are now located. However, changes in spring weather patterns must also have played a part as well, since the occurrence of easterly winds in May has become more frequent since 1970. The occurrence in 1987 of one or possibly two birds of the race *cyaneola* which seems to be expanding its range in certain parts of Europe is of particular interest.

Whatever the reasons the sight of a spring male Bluethroat with its superb bright blue, red, orange and white underparts, striking white supercilia and orange basal tail patches will always be a real heart-stopper for anyone fortunate enough to come across one of these splendid chats in spring.

Graham P. Catley

The Survey of Nesting Lapwings in Lincolnshire and South Humberside in 1987

During the spring of 1987 the British Trust for Ornithology organised a national sample survey of breeding Lapwings. Observers were asked to count all nesting Lapwings in one tetrad in each 10km square. The choice of the tetrads within each square was generated randomly by the BTO's computer. For each tetrad a record card was completed during field visits, to show the estimated numbers of pairs of Lapwings present in relation to a previously selected range of habitats. Pairs of birds were assessed from contacts with displaying birds, birds standing near nests and birds sitting on eggs. The counts were carried out during the last two weeks of April when nesting is generally reckoned to be at its peak (though it is recognised that this can vary from place to place, or where displaced or failed breeding birds subsequently relay). Observers were also provided with 1/25000 tetrad maps on which the locations of pairs could be plotted, and on which habitat and cropping details were to be noted.

Of the seventy eight 10km squares covering Lincolnshire and South Humberside for the purposes of this survey, six of the randomly selected tetrads were in the sea! Only eight of remaining tetrads, mainly in the north-west of the area, were uncouned. The grid map in Figure 1 shows the estimated number of pairs recorded in each of the tetrads counted. NC indicates that there was no count in the relevant tetrad, and M indicates those squares whose selected tetrad was in the sea.

The Lincolnshire Bird Club's provisional tetrad atlas map for breeding Lapwings for the period 1980 to 1987 inclusive is shown in Figure 2, and it will be noted that there is some correlation with the higher numbers recorded from parts of the Wolds and the reduced numbers in the Fens in the southern third of the county. However it would seem that the randomly selected tetrads in the south-west missed the birds found for the Atlas, although the latter may represent presence in the earlier rather than more recent part of the Club's eight Atlas project survey years.

The survey also asked observers to record nesting habitat, and a summary of the Lincolnshire results is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Nesting habitat of Lapwings in Lincolnshire/
South Humberside**

<i>Habitat</i>	<i>Pairs</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Autumn-sown cereals	21	3 on bare patches, 7 on tramlines
Spring-sown cereals	24	
Sugar Beet	1	
Other spring crops	4	2 in peas, 1 in oil-seed rape
Ploughed land	3	
Stubble	6	
Ley grass – grazed	4	1 with horses, 3 with cattle
ungrazed	10	
Permanent grass – grazed	12	all with cattle
ungrazed	5	
Airfields	4	all RAF Binbrook
Totals: arable 80 pairs;		grassland 35 pairs.

O'Connor and Shrubbs (1986) found that tilled land was often preferred for nesting purposes but that regular farm management may disturb birds so that they move onto

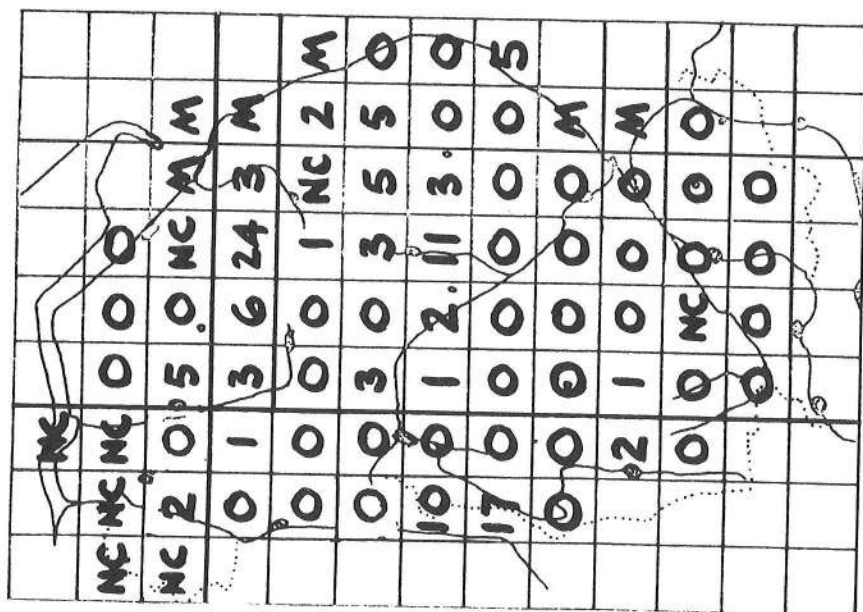
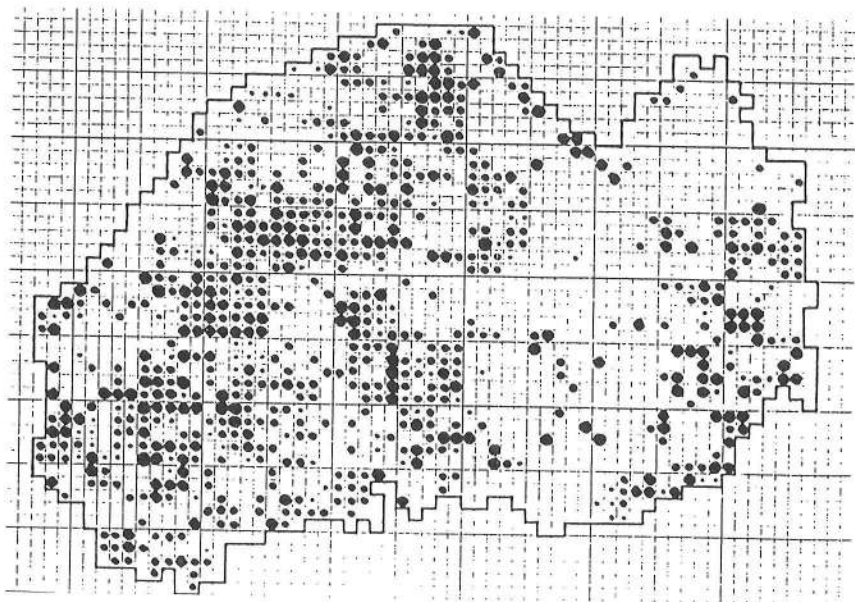


Figure 1. Estimated number of pairs in the sampled tetrad in each 10km square.

Figure 2. Provisional Lapwing Tetrad map, showing breeding records during 1980-87.

grassland. Lister (1963) found that there was a preference for nesting in spring-sown crops because more bare ground was available within and around the crop than was found in autumn-sown crops. This is probably because in April spring-sown crops have a shorter sward, giving better all-round visibility for the incubating bird, and perhaps a greater availability of invertebrate food for adults and chicks. Although the survey indicates only a marginally larger number of pairs nesting in spring-sown than in autumn-sown crops, this takes no account of the relative availability of the two types. It should be borne in mind that in the last 20 years there has been a dramatic decline of spring sowing in favour of autumn sowing and spring-sown crops in many areas are now rather scarce. Lapwings in a given area (if there are no suitable alternative habitats) may have to breed in autumn-sown crops if they are to breed at all. This option is highlighted by the fact that 10 of the 21 pairs which nested in autumn-sown cereals placed their nests in bare patches or tramlines. Intensification of crop management would put nests along tramlines at risk of accidental destruction and may over a period cause a reduction in numbers of breeding birds using this habitat.

Due to the lack of mapped information on cropping within many tetrads it is not possible to assess from the survey if there was any regional bias towards autumn or spring sowing. However it is interesting to note that although there has been a marked increase in acreage of spring-sown oil seed rape, only 1 pair was found in this habitat, probably because the vegetation is quite dense.

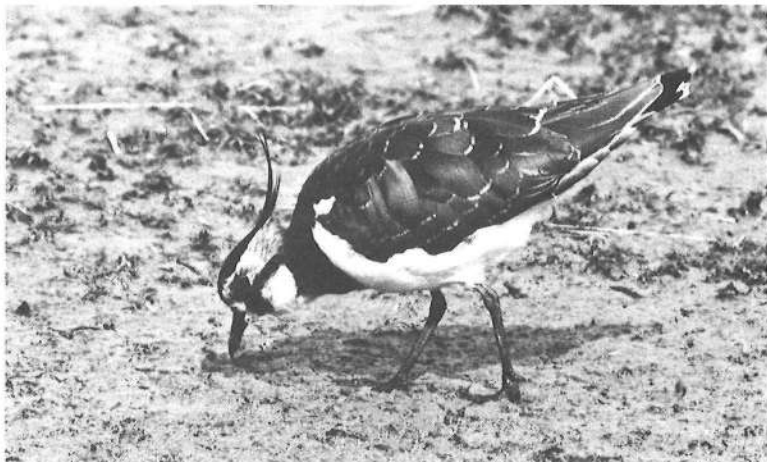
Although Lapwings are present in Lincolnshire in thousands during the winter months on grassland and ploughed land, these birds are of continental origin and leave for their breeding areas in March. If there is a change in farming practises favouring a return to a greater acreage of spring-sown cereals numbers of breeding Lapwings could perhaps increase again. However current farm practices, together with the decline in damp grasslands as nesting sites or to which chicks can be moved to feed (Smith 1988) do not bode well for the Lapwing as a breeding species in Eastern England.

Thanks are expressed to all the observers who took part in the survey.

John Redshaw

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Lapwing (K.Atkin)

Systematic List 1987

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Introduction

Once again the number of records received to produce the Systematic List and the number of new observers submitting records was most encouraging. Nearly all the lists were in the requested Voous order and most were received before the deadline which, for 1988, will be January 31st 1989. The main concern is that observers are not supplying descriptions of rarer birds and time is wasted in having to chase observers up for these. A list of species which require descriptions in the county is again included and it should be noted that there are one or two changes to the last one. If the species concerned is a national rarity, requiring a description to be forwarded to British Birds, then it would be appreciated if the description is sent to me as soon as possible after the observation. Please do not wait until the end of the year because I will then be unlikely to have the decision from British Birds in time for our own report. Your full co-operation is appreciated and helps to reduce the workload in what, with the size of our county, is becoming quite a task.

Review of the Year

The year proved to be quite a good one for variety of species which included one new one for the county, Whiskered Tern, and two recorded for only the second time, Marsh Sandpiper and Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

The year began relatively mild with few records of notable cold weather birds though a few parties of Waxwings were the exception. However a brief cold-spell from mid-January produced influxes of wildfowl, notably 260 Scaup in the Humber, over 20 Smew and high numbers of Goldeneye including 270 in the Humber, 150 at Covenham Reservoir and 330 at the Witham Mouth.

The mild and rather damp days in February and March proved to be rather disappointing but interesting birds began appearing in April. At the beginning of the month there was an early Bluethroat, the forerunner of several later in the spring, and the rest of the month produced a couple of Spoonbill records and later a few of Hoopoe and Golden Oriole. There was yet another Ortolan Bunting at Covenham Reservoir and an Alpine Swift at Gibraltar Point was found dead nearby a week later.

With the arrival of May there was an almost Mediterranean feel to birdwatching, particularly at Gibraltar Point with overshooting migrants such as two Night Herons on 3rd – 4th, a Red-rumped Swallow on 2nd – 6th, three Bee-eaters on 5th and a Kentish Plover on 7th. Other 'goodies' at this time included a Purple Heron at Messingham and elsewhere a couple of Temminck's Stints and, on the coast a few Red-backed Shrikes, several Bluethroats, over 20 Black Redstarts and a Scarlet Rosefinch.

Notable birds in June were three Bee-eaters at Holbeach Marsh, a superb summer-plumaged female Wilson's Phalarope at Gibraltar Point and a Whiskered Tern at Covenham Reservoir. This is the first record of Whiskered Tern in Lincolnshire and South Humberside. It remained at Covenham for several days though it did have the habit of flying off for long periods frustrating many birdwatchers who had gone to see it. At the end of the month a male Bluethroat of the 'white spotted' race took up residence at Whisby Pits for a fortnight.

There were some encouraging breeding reports during July. Both Hobby and Montagu's Harriers are known to have raised one brood each, whilst the welcome increase in Marsh Harriers was marred by the taking of one clutch of eggs though at least two pairs were successful. Amongst the wildfowl one pair of Garganey and a few pairs of Ruddy Ducks were successful and the latter were recorded breeding away from the Humber Pits for the first time. There were also two pairs of Woodlark and at least six breeding pairs of Black Redstart and although there were possible signs that Marsh Tit and Nuthatch might be expanding their range a little in the southwest of the county the story of Bearded Tit was the opposite with a very poor year indeed.

August and September were disappointing for the variety and numbers of the usual passage migrants, especially passerines, though there were still some interesting records. A Marsh Sandpiper was seen from the new Lincolnshire Bird Club's hide at the Witham Mouth for a week and also there at the same time a Little Egret began its elusive stay being seen infrequently in August and September. Waders during this period included juvenile Red-necked Phalaropes at Bardney, Covenham Reservoir and Marshchapel, Pectoral Sandpiper at Cadney Reservoir, Temminck's Stint at Covenham Reservoir and Black-winged Stilt on the Humber. At least 26 different Pomarine Skuas graced the beach at Saltfleetby during September and the month ended with two Great Northern Divers on the coast and two Leach's Petrels being found exhausted inland.

After a few Red-breasted Flycatchers and a Stonechat of one of the Siberian races early in the month, the noteworthy event of October was the hurricane on the 16th. Unfortunately (or fortunately?) Lincolnshire was just a little too far north and escaped the main strength of the winds and the birds which were associated with it. The only storm blown birds were a Sabine's Gull briefly that day at Baston Fen and two Grey Phalaropes the next day, although the winds probably contributed in bringing a Yellow-billed Cuckoo to Rauceby Warren which was found on the 18th. This was the first live record of this vagrant American cuckoo for the county as the previous record was of a dead specimen near Skegness in October 1978. At the end of the month three Goshawks arrived on the coast on the 22nd, two Red-rumped Swallows were at Gibraltar Point from 24th – 28th and a juvenile Spotted Crake was found dead near Horncastle on 29th.

The early winter was again mild with few noteworthy events or cold-weather movements though November produced a few Little Auks early in the month and several more later in the month and another Leach's Petrel inland. The year ended rather quietly, birdwise, the most interesting being a Red Kite over Ropsley on December 22nd and a Little Egret at Frampton Marsh on the last day of the year.

Alan Ball

Systematic List 1987

Note; The tables accompanying the species texts are the maximum daily total recorded in each month except for species counted on the Wash 'Birds of Estuaries Enquiry'. Counts as co-ordinated counts give a more realistic figure to the numbers involved.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Donna Nook – Saltfleetby	20	33	–	–	–	–	–	3	35	–	–	2
Theddlethorpe – Huttoft	3	–	1	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	8	10
Gibraltar Point	50	70	2	3	–	–	–	1	5	40	30	23

In addition, to the table above showing daily maxima for each month, in January – May there were singles at the Nene Mouth, Witham Mouth, Barrow Haven and Cleethorpes and an inland bird at Covenham Res on January 24th. There were 17 at Barton on January 14th and 5 at Humberston on April 5th. The earliest autumn birds were 3 at Saltfleetby on August 2nd and 1 in full summer plumage at Gibraltar Point on 19th. In September – December there were 13 at the Witham Mouth on November 11th and singles at Barton, Killingholme and Humberston.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

The only January record was of 3 at Gibraltar Point on 25th. Singles in February were at Tetney on 8th, Thurlby Fen on 10th and an oiled bird at Gibraltar Point on 28th which eventually died. The only other record for the first part of the year was 2 at Donna Nook on March 14th. A record of 2 at Gibraltar Point on September 16th is the second earliest autumn record for the reserve and 1 – 2 birds were recorded there until December 16th. Elsewhere in November, 1 was at Huttoft on 22nd and 1 flew up river at Cleethorpes on 24th.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

In autumn there were singles at Saltfleetby on September 25th (GPC) and south at Donna Nook on 27th (MM).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Recorded at over 20 sites throughout the county all year with maximum numbers in winter of 9 at Barrow Haven on January 13th, 10 at Bagmoor on 22nd with 14 there on March 13th. Breeding was confirmed at Twigmoor, Messingham, Moor Farm, and Biscathorpe Lake with up to 10 pairs at Bagmoor and 12 pairs at Barton/Barrow Haven

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Witham Mouth	2	2	9	2	3	1	12	60	78	24	10	6
Covenham Reservoir	6	6	6	—	—	—	—	7	19	28	30	25
Cadney Reservoir	4	1	7	16	1	—	3	2	—	4	4	4
Deeping High Bank	0	1	—	—	3	—	—	25	8	21	5	5

Recorded throughout the county with maximum numbers at localities other than those above of 15 at Tattershall Pits in February, 14 at Thorpe Pits in March and 9 at Messingham in April. Breeding was confirmed at Ancaster, Bagmoor, Culverthorpe, Denton Res, Messingham, Swineshead, West Ashby and at Barton – Goxhill Pits where there were 14 pairs. Coastal birds in autumn included 14 at Saltfleetby on September 20th and 14 at Gedney Drove End on November 8th.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

All records during the year were of single birds. Records in January were from Ashbyville from 16th – 30th, Croxton Pond on 28th which was found dead on 29th and Grimsby Docks on 30th. In February birds were at Tetney from 3rd – 21st, Cadney Res from 12th – 16th and on the River Welland between Spalding and Deeping on 7th with possibly the same bird later that day at Tallington. Birds in summer plumage were at the Witham Mouth on March 22nd and at Gibraltar Point on April 5th. The only autumn records were a juvenile at Covenham Res from August 11th – 18th, one at Tetney on October 10th and one at Covenham Res on November 11th.



Red-necked Grebe (K.Atkin)

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

There were only 4 records during the year, 1 at Covenham Res from January 18th – February 1st and 1 from October 11th – November 1st with another bird there on November 5th – 6th. The only other record was on the sea at Gibraltar Point on October 10th.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

The only bird early in the year was at Huttoft Pit on January 4th – 5th. There was 1 at Covenham Res from April 28th – May 3rd, 1 at Grainthorpe on May 6th, 2 in full breeding plumage at Fulstow on June 14th and 24th. Single autumn birds were at Covenham Res on September 26th – October 11th, Toft Newton Res on September 28th, Lollycocks Field (Sleaford) on November 1st, Gibraltar Point on 2nd and Covenham Res on 22nd.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Apart from 1 that flew south-west in an easterly gale at Barton on January 14th, all other records were from April – September. Northerly movement started with 20 at Witham Mouth and 33 at Gibraltar Point on April 25th. During May to early July 1 – 8 birds were at Cleethorpes, Tetney, Huttoft, Gibraltar Point, Kirton Marsh, and Gedney Marsh. In autumn there were 17 at Gibraltar Point on July 25th, 13 there on 30th, 30 at Witham Mouth on August 24th, 11 at Saltfleetby on 22nd, 20 there on 26th, 12 at Huttoft on 27th and 6 there on 31st. The last records were singles at Gibraltar Point on September 18th and 19th.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

First record of the year was 1 south at Saltfleetby on July 19th. In August 5 flew south at Huttoft on 1st, 12 were seen off Gibraltar Point on 24th, which is the highest daily total recorded for the reserve, 1 flew west at Chowder Ness (Barton) on 27th, which is the first recorded up the Humber and 1 was at Saltfleetby on 30th. In September 1 flew south at Donna Nook on 12th and 1 north at Gibraltar Point on 16th. The only other record was of 1 south at Huttoft on November 25th.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Tetney – Saltfleetby	–	–	–	–	–	–	18	1	4	1	–	–
Huttoft	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	–	5	5	–	–
Gibraltar Point	–	–	–	5	20	–	31	3	23	3	1	–
Witham – Welland Mouths	–	–	–	–	–	–	19	1	5	1	–	–

The only other records were in September with 1 at Goxhill Haven on 17th and 1 found exhausted at Boston on 20th and released on 27th.

Petrel sp.

A non-specifically identified bird which was probably a Leach's was seen some distance offshore at the Witham Mouth on September 13th (SK).

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

One was found dead on the tideline at Anderby Creek on January 25th (RKW).

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

There were three records which all referred to exhausted individuals found inland. The first was found at Grantham on September 25th which was released at Gibraltar Point on 27th (AWP), another found dodging lorries at Boston Dock on September 26th was released on October 1st (AGB) and the last was found at Sleaford on November 23rd and released the same day at Gibraltar Point (AWP).

Gannet *Sula bassana*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Donna Nook – Huttoft	–	–	–	–	–	–	40	80	156	65	–	–
Gibraltar Point	2	–	–	1	29	10	12	23	25	50	2	–
Witham Mouth	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	18	43	–	–	–

Reported from most coastal sites with the largest movements in September along the coast in the northern half of the county at Tetney, Donna Nook, Saltfleetby and Huttoft. In addition to the maximum daily totals shown above, there were 20 at Lutton Outmarsh on 20th, 4 juveniles at Barton on 26th, and 10 juveniles at East Halton on 27th.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Winteringham – Barton	20	–	34	5	8	–	1	2	8	8	40	–
Tetney	–	–	–	19	13	12	12	18	14	7	16	20
Gibraltar Point	32	32	26	20	10	3	3	23	14	28	31	34
Witham Mouth	15	80	31	30	6	5	6	30	52	50	36	95
Covenham Reservoir	49	42	28	–	7	–	–	–	18	27	20	27
Cadney Reservoir	2	0	–	7	–	–	–	–	4	–	5	5

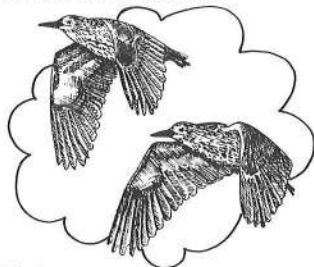
There were 1 – 5 birds in many places around the county in every month including 19 at Terrington during January and the following south-flying birds in September; 37 at Huttoft on 13th, 25 at Saltfleet on 25th and 13 at Huttoft on 27th. Inland birds were recorded from Bourne Wood, Swanholme Pits, Whisby Pits, Denton Res, Trent Falls and Brigg.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The only records early in the year were singles at Cadney Res on January 18th and at Ingoldmells Point on March 22nd. At the end of the year there were singles at Cleethorpes on October 10th, Gibraltar Point on 13th, Barton on November 26th and 2 at the Witham Mouth on December 5th.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Records from January to early April were a single at Lincoln Ballast Pit from December 1986 – February 19th, 2 at Barton from January 30th – February 7th with singles there on February 24th and again on March 3rd, Grimsthorpe Park Lake on February 15th, Winters Pit at East Halton during February and March and 2 at Killingholme from March 23rd – April 5th. The only record for the end of the year was a single at Thurlby Fen on November 3rd.

**Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax***

Two first summer birds flew in off the sea in the early morning and went to roost in the plantation at Gibraltar Point on May 3rd and were still present on 4th when seen flying out to Wainfleet Marsh. (AWP, KMW et al.).

Accepted by BBRC and is the first record for the reserve and the seventh record for the county.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

There were several records of a single bird which are assumed to refer to the same individual. It was first seen at Holbeach Marsh on August 15th (PCI) and the same day flew over the river at the Witham Mouth (LP). One was on the Mere at Gibraltar Point on August 26th (MH) which is the second record for the reserve. In September records were at Frampton Marsh on 7th (CRC, KC), Leverton Marsh on 29th (DM). Finally in December 1 was at Moulton Marsh on 27th (RML) and at Frampton Marsh on 31st (WAT, AG).

All records accepted by BBRC. This is the 13th county record and all have been since 1966.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Abbey Wood	22	Kingerby Wood	3	Evedon Wood	23
Howsham Wood	9	Muckton Wood	34	The Mere /	
Laughton Forest/		Willoughby Wood	19	Deeping St James	82
Tuetoes Wood	12	Gatecliff Wood	8	Hospital Wood/	
Laughton Forest/		Old Hag Wood	14	Holbeach	8
Village	18	Troy Wood	70		

Heronry counts resulted in a total of 320 nests as shown above which is about the average over the last ten years except for the peak of 380/385 in 1984/1985. A nearly all white bird was nesting in the Laughton colony in June.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

An adult at Messingham on May 14th (CJ) is the 17th record for the county and all except three have been in April to June.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

One was present on the River Steeping at Gibraltar Point on April 20th. Two birds present at Grainthorpe on April 25th – 26th included one bird colour-ringed as a nestling in the Netherlands during 1984. In August one was present in the Alkborough/Blacktoft Sands area coming over the county boundary occasionally from 8th – 17th.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

	J	F	M	S	O	N	D
Deeping High Bank	70	72	91	47	140	164	73
Brayford Pool	117	75	65	63	77	80	101

Other notable numbers in January were 64 at Tallington, 50 on the River Trent at Whartons Wharf, 25 at Lea Marsh and 37 until March at Cleethorpes Boating Lake. Breeding was recorded at Burton Pits, Brigg, Twiggmoor, Messingham (3 pairs) and Barton – Barrow Haven Pits (5 pairs).

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

In January there were 69 at Lea Marsh on 5th, 10 at Holbeach St Marks on 31st, 3 at Messingham until 11th, 2 at Tetney on 3rd and 8 flew north at South Witham on 15th. There were slightly fewer in February but numbers increased in March with 17 at Holbeach St Marks on 1st, 20 at Goxhill on 3rd decreasing to 12 on 17th, 18 at Messingham on 10th, 31 at Huttoft on 5th and 22 at Saltfleetby on 8th. Last of the winter were 2 at Covenham Res on April 8th. First in the autumn were 12 at Kexby on October 20th. November records were 2 over Tongue End on 1st, 9 flying south at Tetney and the same party at Donna Nook on 8th, 2 at Barton on 11th and a party of 9 at Gibraltar Point on 14th with 14 on 15th. In December there were 2 at Lincoln Ballast Pit from 12th to the end of the year, 2 at Covenham Res on 19th, 2 at Donna Nook on 20th, 2 at North Somercotes on 31st and a maximum of 31 at Lea Marsh.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

In January there were 5 at Lea Marsh, 2 at Holbeach St Marks, 2 at Baston Fen, 6 at Saltfleetby, 4 north at Hanthorpe all on 3rd, 2 at Tattershall on 10th, 1 at Killingholme on 11th, 4 south at Gibraltar Point on 16th with 8 south there on 22nd and 15 south on 23rd, 4 at Barrow Haven on 24th and 1 at Messingham from 30th until March 12th. In February there was 1 at Skidbrooke on 1st, 4 at Gibraltar Point on 14th, 4 at Huttoft on 8th to March 15th and 2 at Tattershall on 28th. An immature released by the RSPCA on North Somercotes Lido in February stayed there into May. March records were 12 at Gibraltar Point on 15th – 16th, 2 at Covenham Res on 22nd with 3 there on 31st and 2 at Donna Nook on 29th. The last was at Covenham Res on April 6th.

Returning birds arrived in October with the first 5 at Gibraltar Point on 9th, 6 on 11th and 6 on 24th – 28th there, 3 at Donna Nook, 5 over Covenham Res, 4 at Tetney, 2 at Huttoft all on 11th, 5 at Holbeach St Marks on 24th, 2 at Tetney on 25th and 3 at the Witham Mouth on 28th. In November there were records of 1 at Killingholme, 3 at West Ashby and 5 at Gibraltar Point all on 1st, 6 at the Witham Mouth on 6th, 9 north-west at Tetney on 8th, 1 at Cleethorpes on 10th, 7 at East Laceby on 26th and 2 at Gibraltar Point on 21st with 3 there on 28th. The only records in December were 3 at Gibraltar Point until 19th, with another 5 there on 10th and 1 at the Witham Mouth on 13th.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

One was at Covenham Res on January 24th and 1 was with Greylag Geese at Huttoft on February 11th – 14th. In December there was a party of 4 at Winteringham from 14th – 19th.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

In January there were 125 at the Nene Mouth on 2nd, 18 at Saltfleet on 3rd, 85 at Gibraltar Point on 3rd with 30 on 5th, 80 at Holbeach St Marks on 10th, 150 heading west over Fosdyke and probably the same flock over Frampton Fen and then Sleaford still heading west on 12th, 190 at Barton on 21st, 50 at Skegness on 24th with 450 at nearby Winthorpe the next day, 150 at the Welland mouth on 26th, 75 on Kirton Marsh on 29th and 110 at Winteringham on 30th. In February there were 34 at Kirton Marsh on 1st and 300 there on 24th. There were 2 – 4 at Messingham from the end of January throughout the year and 1 summered at West Ashby/Kirkby-on-Bain/Tattershall Pits paired with a Greylag.

First in the autumn were in September with 50 at South Witham on 17th, 20 at Holbeach St Marks on 20th, 14 at Reads Island from 21st – 23rd, 30 at Saltfleetby on 23rd and 40 at South Ferriby on 28th. Most records were in October with 138 at Huttoft and 60 at Tetney on 11th with 46 there on 12th and 140 on 14th – 18th and 50 at Theddlethorpe on 24th. Flocks of between 130 – 230 were seen heading south over Tetney then Grainthorpe, Saltfleetby, Theddlethorpe and Huttoft on 25th and finally in the month there were 50 at Reads Island on 29th and 65 at Gibraltar Point on 31st. In November there were 22 at the Witham Mouth on 9th, 90 at Huttoft and Gibraltar Point on 11th with 95 there on 16th, 150 south at Mablethorpe on 17th, 400 at Saltfleetby and 200 at Humberston on 18th, 220 at Gibraltar Point on 21st and 48 there next day, 40 over Boston on 24th, 100 west inland over Morkery Wood with 57 at Gibraltar Point on 28th. The only records in December were 45 east at Fleet Fen on 1st, 650 at Reads Island from 2nd – 19th and finally 150 at Saltfleet on 30th.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Records at the beginning of the year were a single at Gibraltar Point on January 2nd, over 50 heading west at Osbournby on 13th and a single at Covenham on February 1st. In December there were 11 at the Witham Mouth on 8th, 32 at the Deeping High Bank on 11th with the same 32 at nearby Cowbit on 12th and, finally, 2 at Messingham Sand Pits from 5th – 23rd with 5 there from 24th – 28th.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Coastal records were of 1 – 10 birds from January – April and again from October – December probably involving local birds from inland sites. Breeding was recorded from Thorpe Pits, Messingham, Tattershall and Kirkby-on-Bain Pits though the exact numbers of pairs are unknown. Large numbers and movements recorded during the year were 480 at Tattershall on January 10th, 39 flying north-west over Barton on January 22nd, 39 flying north-west over Sleaford on February 9th, 150 at Huttoft on October 25th and in December, 800 at Tattershall on 19th, 77 at Messingham on 25th and 70 at West Ashby on 29th.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Records of birds of 'doubtful' origin were 1 at Barlings Island on April 11th and 1 at Barton on September 7th – 9th.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Present on most inland lakes and gravel pits throughout the year. There were up to 300 at Grimsthorpe, 200 at Ancaster and 100 at West Ashby throughout. Other maximum numbers in the early part of the year were 230 at Denton declining to 75 in March, 76 at Burton Pits and 92 at Chapel St Leonards Boating Lake in March. Single pairs bred at Ashbyvillé, Biscathorpe Lake and South Ferriby, 5 pairs at Ancaster, 7 at Barton – Barrow Haven Pits and 10 at Messingham with no other breeding information received. Peak numbers were in November with 510 at Denton Res and 200 at West Ashby.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Probable 'wild' birds, associating with Brent Geese, were singles at Humberston on January 3rd, Gibraltar Point on October 13th and November 4th and Wrangle Marsh on November 11th. In addition 4 flew north at Gibraltar Point on April 23rd. Birds of 'doubtful' origin were 1 – 2 with Canada Geese at Burton Pits all year, 1 at Tattershall on January 10th, Denton Res on February 7th, Winterton Road Lake on February 20th, 2 at Covenham Res on September 29th and up to 7 at Chapel St Leonards Boating Lake all year.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Cleethorpes/North Cotes	210	—	—	30	30	—	3	—	1	667	435	642
Donna Nook/Saltfleetby	750	1400	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	300	1000	600
Gibraltar Point/Wainfleet	2754	1829	318	1720	150	26	—	1	3	10	574	483
Friskney	200	400	600	—	—	—	—	—	—	27	220	1500
Wrangle	1335	1060	1395	650	115	—	—	—	—	723	825	1984
Benington	1460	1007	1070	250	932	—	—	14	16	656	863	1164
Butterwick/Witham Mouth	2500	2172	1553	1310	617	6	10	1	10	1500	550	1700
Frampton	950	1600	2650	800	670	3	3	—	—	2300	2650	650
Kirton	2500	250	500	57	—	—	—	—	—	—	295	3570
Holbeach	1120	5500	1500	1500	1565	—	—	—	—	1120	800	1557
Gedney	1127	1410	1365	1905	1245	—	—	—	—	779	555	1073
Terrington	285	56	441	612	500	—	—	—	—	—	32	263

The above table shows a mid-winter population of about 1,500 birds in the north of the county and 15,000 for the Lincolnshire side of the Wash. In addition to the above there were inland records of singles in January at Lea Marsh on 18th and Baston Fen on 31st and 10 up the Humber at Barton on November 4th.

Records of pale-bellied Brent *B. b. hrota*. were in January at Barrow Haven on 13th, Saltfleet on 25th and up to 4 at Kirton Marsh in March, with 1 at Tetney from November 6th until the end of the year and 1 at the Witham Mouth on December 13th.

There was a 'Black Brant', the eastern Siberian/western Canadian race *B. b. nigricans*, at Kirton Marsh on February 19th (DS) which if accepted by BBRC will be the second county record; the first being in January 1982.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Birds of 'doubtful' origin were present all year at Tattershall and 2 at Ingoldmells Pond. One at Gibraltar point on April 20th was only the second reserve record.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Reads Island	223	355	294	480	900	620	420	48	1060	794	800	650
Cleethorpes/North Cotes	460	100	80	68	62	36	30	17	7	89	291	400
Donna Nook/Saltfleetby	400	168	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gibraltar Point/Wainfleet	104	109	97	66	22	—	29	—	18	229	130	186
Friskney	21	27	—	14	28	—	—	—	—	71	90	63
Wrangle	224	470	165	23	36	—	—	—	—	91	229	120
Benington	267	1543	704	44	10	—	19	—	17	56	87	528
Butterwick/Witham Mouth	650	1379	589	11	20	—	10	30	26	550	77	250
Frampton/Kirton	165	380	126	73	50	—	2	—	2	108	330	515
Holbeach	825	6250	4236	1500	244	—	186	14	90	850	2050	2462
Gedney	439	546	674	1905	24	—	—	—	12	254	552	1107
Terrington	520	3053	1035	612	45	—	241	27	72	1188	1436	2228

Inland breeding records were 2 pairs at Covenham with a total of 25 young, 1 pair at Kirkby-on-Bain with 12 young and other pairs at West Ashby, Twigmoor and Biscathorpe Lake.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

The same male as reported in the 1986 Report was present at North Somercotes Lido; being frequently seen up to March, then infrequently until August 29th. What was almost certainly the same bird was then seen at Covenham on September 23rd and accidentally shot flying with Teal at South Somercotes in October.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

	J	F	M	A	J	A	S	O	N	D
Reads Island	650	690	730	6	1	—	150	110	362	2980
Tetney	150	100	100	39	—	20	—	300	198	190
Gibraltar Point	3000	1000	1170	20	2	136	970	2000	2000	500
Witham Mouth	36	203	3	—	—	29	36	360	175	500
Holbeach St Marks	650	500	35	2	2	10	420	50	280	530
Messingham	8	0	14	—	2	1	16	20	33	30
Lincoln Pits (combined)	100	107	117	—	2	5	29	100	60	200
Tattershall Pits	30	20	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Baston Fen	0	350	150	—	—	—	—	—	5	52

In addition to the above in January there were 110 flying west at East Halton on 10th, 25 at Covenham Res on 22nd and 40 at Cadney Res on 26th. Huttoft Pits held 110 on March 15th. May records were 2 males and 1 female at Reads Island, 1 bird at Tetney and 1 male at Goxhill and in June there were 3 males at Whisby, 3 birds at Tetney, 1 at Huttoft and up to 5 at Gibraltar Point.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

	J	F	M	A	A	S	O	N	D
Denton Reservoir	—	2	1	2	—	—	5	4	2
Kirkby-on-Bain/Tattershall Pits	57	4	—	2	—	35	11	28	36
Lincoln Pits (combined)	62	12	32	4	15	6	42	32	32
Covenham	2	4	—	1	—	6	34	32	—
Gibraltar Point	—	2	—	—	5	8	2	4	2
Messingham	—	6	10	9	—	3	—	6	—
Hollywell	8	16	10	—	—	—	2	10	—
Barton – Barrow Haven	0	5	13	—	—	1	1	2	6

In addition there were pairs in spring at Holbeach St Marks, Bourne South Fen and Grainthorpe with 2 pairs at Kirton Marsh and Grantham but the only proof of breeding was at Burton Pits. Not included in the table above were 4 at Fulstow on January 25th, a pair at Fiskerton in August and 4 on the Deeping High Bank on December 12th.

Teal *Anas crecca*

	J	F	M	A	A	S	O	N	D
Reads Island	32	25	6	4	440	800	690	210	430
Killingholme Pits	95	66	—	—	—	—	—	—	50
Gibraltar Point	380	20	52	32	400	950	525	53	60
Witham Mouth	10	203	2	1	1	10	25	14	2
Holbeach St Marks	11	520	16	2	4	44	44	15	186
Baston Fen	146	19	58	—	—	—	0	0	220
Lincoln Pits (combined)	246	30	4	14	—	—	—	5	—
Messingham	0	0	0	—	—	15	100	200	—
Covenham Res	85	31	0	—	—	—	0	1	2

In addition in the early part of the year there were 60 at East Halton on February 25th and 35 at Barton on March 9th. Breeding was reported from Twigmoor (one pair) and Grainthorpe (female and 6 downy young on June 10th). A pair were also on Kirton Marsh in June but there was no proof of breeding. In autumn there were 20 at Tetney on August 19th and 75 there on September 1st, 73 at Huttoft on September 28th with 67 there on October 18th.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

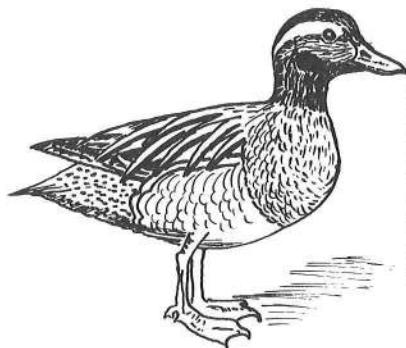
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Reads Island	407	210	78	28	12	170	62	525	690	260	435	427
Barton	300	200	150	—	—	—	—	—	150	194	270	415
Covenham Res	800	500	125	5 pairs raised 35 ducklings					—	164	269	786
Messingham	—	7	6	—	—	—	—	—	250	250	250	250
Lincoln Pits (combined)	267	105	33	20	—	29	18	15	85	30	8	34
Gibraltar Point	300	300	30	10	8	27	44	213	310	1000	270	134
Witham Mouth	56	139	89	26	18	2	10	12	17	88	150	207
Holbeach St Marks	47	1520	165	34	60	35	110	180	260	46	305	142
Baston Fen	126	105	80	15 pairs breeding					—	150	160	180
Kirkby on Bain Pits	580	—	96	—	—	—	—	—	—	162	325	240

Other records included 160 at Tattershall in January with 100 there in February, 105 on the Upper Barlings Eau on August 30th and 60 at Scopwick on September 20th.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	A	S	O	N	D
Messingham	2	5	4	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tetney	4	3	2	2	—	—	—	—	10	6	22
Gibraltar Point	0	1	4	10	—	1	2	4	36	14	0
Witham Mouth	0	27	4	—	—	—	8	8	5	0	10
Holbeach Marsh	13	57	100	5	5	1	—	57	36	16	305
Terrington	2500	2000	325	—	—	—	—	—	22	1429	796

Note the large numbers now present along the southern shore of the Wash in the winter months. In the early part of the year there were also 1–2 birds at Holywell Lake, Deeping High Bank, Saltfleetby, Cleethorpes and Barton. Denton Res recorded its first for at least 7 years with 3 from January 8th – 14th. There were 3 at Baston Fen on March 7th and 6 at Goxhill on 9th. In the autumn 60 flew past Huttoft on October 18th and there were 1–7 birds on later occasions, at Huttoft, Covenham Res, Saltfleetby, and Whisby.



Garganey *Anas querquedula*

In April pairs on passage were reported from Kirton Marsh, Burton Pits, and Messingham (where a male summered) with a single male at Saltfleetby. In May a single male was present at Gibraltar Point on 25th. A pair bred at South Killingholme fledging at least 3 from an original brood of 6. In August a juvenile was at Bardney on 6th, another juvenile at Gibraltar Point from 23rd – 28th and 1 at Snarford on 30th.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Generally in small numbers during the year. In January – March there were 1–2 at Barrow, Digby, Tattershall and Messingham with 10 at Theddlethorpe on February 7th. Again single figures were reported from April to July with pairs in April at Kirton Marsh, Covenham Res and the River Glen near Grantham, none of which was proved to breed. The only breeding record was from Baston Fen where a pair raised 5 juveniles. Numbers were again low in autumn – winter with single figures at Barton, Tetney, Lincoln and Holbeach Marsh except for 13 at Tetney on August 12th, 12 at Barton on September 4th and 18 at Huttoft on December 5th.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Concentrations in the early part of the year were 120 at Goxhill – New Holland on January 8th increasing to 250 on 16th with 520 at Barrow Haven Pits on February 7th, 115 at Tattershall on January 10th, 60 at Covenham Res on 15th, 34 at Apex Pit on 18th and 100 at Winterton Road Lakes at Scunthorpe on 30th. In March there were 80 at Barrow Haven on 3rd and 80 at North Killingholme Pits on 7th. Breeding records included 3 pairs at Messingham, 4 pairs at Lincoln, 1 pair with 8 ducklings at Barrow Haven where other females were present but not known to have bred. Although there was a pair at North Killingholme no young were seen. In autumn a marked movement occurred on October 11th with 110 north at Donna Nook and 129 south at Gibraltar Point (the only date in the month that any were recorded at the reserve). Concentrations at the end of the year included 111 at Toft Newton Res on December 6th and 100 at Whisby Pits from 20th.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Barrow Haven – Goxhill	250	250	50	—	—	27	—	—	29	27	130	37
Covenham Reservoir	174	110	1	—	—	—	—	—	26	63	24	94
Burton Pits	43	92	68	—	—	18	—	—	16	—	91	100
Lincoln Ballast Pit	51	120	60	48	—	6	13	5	4	—	—	100
Tattershall Pits	185	93	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	220
Kirkby on Bain Pits	45	156	94	—	—	—	—	—	—	33	76	59
Deeping High Bank	75	29	95	—	—	—	—	—	4	20	24	122
Tallington	145	117	128	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Other notable numbers were 200 at Apex Pit on January 28th, 94 at Cadney Res in the same month, 60 on the River Witham at Boston on February 1st and 100 at Messingham on March 28th. Breeding records were received from Lincoln Ballast Pit (3 pairs), Baston Fen (7 pairs), the River Ancholme between Bishopbridge and Snitterby (5 pairs), Messingham (5 pairs), South Ferriby (2 pairs) with single pairs at Denton Village, Kirton Quarries, Barrow Haven, Culverthorpe Lake, Cawkwell and Asterby. In December there were 102 at Toft Newton Res on 6th and 100 at Tallington on 19th.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

In January a large number of 46 at Huttoft on 11th was completely overshadowed by a very impressive concentration at Goxhill – New Holland which built up from just 2 on 8th to 260 on 16th before decreasing to 57 on February 7th. Elsewhere in January there were 25 off Grimsby Docks from 23rd – 30th and 1 – 6 birds at Whartons Wharf on the River Trent, Cadney Res, Barrow Haven, Gibraltar Point and Witham Mouth. In February there were 12 at Benington Marsh and 1 at Terrington Marsh on 1st, 1 at Baston Fen on 7th, 1 at Winterton Road Lakes at Scunthorpe on 13th and 5 at Barrow Haven on 20th. In March, 1 was at Tetney on 24th whilst 4 birds remained at Barrow Haven to 21st with a female staying to April 21st and 2 summered at Tetney from June 10th to September 16th. Returning birds began arriving in August with 2 at Holbeach Marsh on 8th and singles at Covenham Res from 10th and North Killingholme on 21st. There were 2 females at Covenham Res from September 1st, 2 at Gibraltar Point on 3rd and an immature male at Toft Newton Res from 28th – end of the year. In October a pair was at Gibraltar Point on 12th with the female remaining to 17th, 3 at Covenham from the end of the month to mid November and 38 at Goxhill – New Holland on November 28th.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Gibraltar Point	20	32	—	10	3	5	8	1	—	8	5	47
Friskney – Benington	42	91	480	—	95	—	—	15	—	—	7	23
Witham Mouth	7	61	2	—	1	—	1	4	3	5	1	7

Elsewhere there were 48 at Holbeach Marsh on February 1st, up to 22 in the Humber at Grimsby – Cleethorpes in January with 1 – 3 at other coastal locations throughout the year. Later in the year was a movement of 108 north and 20 south at Huttoft on November 11th.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

At Covenham Res there was a female from 1986 to March 16th joined by a male on January 24th and in autumn a female from October 29th and a second female from November 13th both birds remaining into 1988. Also in the late autumn there was 1 at Gibraltar Point on November 11th and, in December, 2 at the Witham Mouth on 6th, 1 at Cleethorpes on 11th and 1 at Chapel St Leonards the same day.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

In January there were 60 at Huttoft on 11th, small numbers at Gibraltar Point with a maximum of 10 south on 16th, 180 north at North Cotes on 18th, 16 at East Halton on 29th and 40 at Trusthorpe on 31st. There were 83 at the Witham Mouth on February 1st and 30 at Gibraltar Point on 23rd. On March 1st there were 17 at the Witham Mouth and 14 at Wrangle Marsh with no more records until April with 2 at Cadney and 5 at Kirton Quarries on 5th and odd birds at Gibraltar Point from mid month. In summer 25 flew

south at Gibraltar Point on May 15th, 30 were at Tetney on June 11th, 1 was at Gibraltar Point on July 14th with 25 there on 16th and 25 were at Tetney on 20th. Birds were more numerous from August with up to 20 at Gibraltar Point, Huttoft and Tetney and 3 inland at Covenham Res. In September there were 30 at Gibraltar Point on 9th with 19 there on 16th and 79 at Huttoft on 28th. October records were 14 at Tetney on 1st, 13 at Saltfleetby on 11th and 40 at Gibraltar Point 18th. There was a single female at Covenham Res from 31st to November 11th. Other November records were 50 at Mablethorpe on 5th, 71 at Goxhill on 13th with 56 there on 28th, 79 at Gibraltar Point on 21st with 51 there on 22nd, 4 at Huttoft on 25th and 6 at Saltfleetby on 27th and 29th. Finally in December there were 42 at Goxhill on 4th, a male at Toft Newton Res on 6th, 21 north at Gibraltar Point on 10th with 14 on 12th, a female at Barrow Haven on 22nd and 40 north at Holbeach Marsh on 23rd.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

In January 1 flew south at Gibraltar Point on 18th, with 4 there on 25th and 2 there on July 18th. In the latter part of the year 1 was off Tetney on October 21st, 1 flew south at Gibraltar Point on November 1st, a party of 3 were present on Covenham Res from November 7th – 27th and finally 1 flew south at Gibraltar Point on December 20th.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

	J	F	M	A	O	N	D
Goxhill – New Holland	270	127	70	–	–	18	–
Covenham Reservoir	150	110	85	26	5	70	98
Messingham	2	8	8	10	–	3	–
Lincoln Pits (combined)	20	50	36	2	–	–	–
Gibraltar Point	1	5	4	2	1	1	1
Tattershall Pits	4	25	–	–	–	3	5
Witham Mouth	200	330	132	3	3	5	13
Holbeach St Marks	57	16	160	–	2	–	–
Gedney Dawsmere	23	16	8	–	–	22	7
South Fortyfoot, Boston	12	1	1	–	–	1	1



Goldeneyes (K. Atkin)

Records, other than above, included 6 at Bardney Lock on January 11th, 20 at Tallington on February 7th, a female at Denton Res from February 8th – March 10th, 1 on the River Steeping at Thorpe Culvert on April 24th and 1 at Kirkby Moor on May 15th. In August there were records of 1 at Tetney on 12th and 12 at Huttoft on 25th and finally there were 7 at Toft Newton Res in December.

Smew *Mergus albellus*

A reasonable year with at least 25 different birds present on January 25th although this compares with a peak of 109 in 1985 and 45 in 1986. The majority of records were of 'redheads' and the only males reported were at Barrow Haven with 1 on January 23rd and 2 on February 5th.

	January				February				week no.
Deeping High Bank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Baston Fen	—	—	—	9	2	1	—	—	
North Somercotes	—	—	2	2	1	1	—	—	
Tetney	—	7	2	—	—	—	—	—	
Covenham Res	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	
Cleethorpes	—	3	3	3	—	—	—	—	
Barrow/Barton	—	11	4	6	5	—	3	—	

In addition in January there were 2 at Whartons Wharf on the River Trent on 25th and 1 at Goxhill Haven 29th. In February there were some in the Wash on 1st with 3 at Terrington and singles at Holbeach and the Witham Mouth and there was 1 at Tallington on 7th. March records were of singles at Winterton Road Lake at Scunthorpe on 12th and at Fulstow on 14th. The only record in the latter part of the year was 1 at Covenham Res on November 25th.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Lower than usual numbers were recorded during the year. During January – March 1 – 4 birds were at coastal locations with a maximum of 6 at Gibraltar Point in February and 10 at Terrington in March. In April there were up to 5 at the Witham Mouth, 3 at Gibraltar Point, 3 at Gedney and 1 at Denton which is the first there for several years. In May there were 6 at Wrangle on 4th and 3 at Gibraltar Point on 10th. During the summer 1 was at Butterwick on June 26th, 5 at Tetney on July 22nd, with 4 remaining to 28th, and 3 at Gibraltar Point on August 11th. Apart from 5 at the Witham Mouth and 6 at Saltfleetby in September, the main autumn arrival was from mid October with 5 at the Witham Mouth, 9 at Gibraltar Point and 6 at Huttoft with smaller numbers elsewhere. Numbers tailed off towards the end of the year although 16 off Wrangle in November was an exception.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

	J	F	M	A		O	N	D
River Trent	36	35	15	—		—	—	—
Apex Pit	26	41	28	6		—	—	14
Covenham Res	2	1	2	2		3	—	1
Deeping High Bank	27	19	49	23		—	—	23
Tallington	66	77	—	—		—	—	—

In addition to the above there were 1 – 3 birds at several other locations during January – March with 9 at the Nene Mouth on January 18th, 7 at Pote Hole on February 7th and 5 on the Keadby Canal on March 7th. In October there were 4 on the Mere at Gibraltar Point on 11th and 3 at Anderby Creek on 17th and 1 – 2 at a few other locations up to the end of the year.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

In January there were 2 females at Covenham Res, 1 male and 5 females at Barton/Barrow Haven, 2 males and 1 female at Lincoln Apex Pit. There was a male at the Witham Mouth on February 3rd and 3 males and 5 females at Barton – Barrow Haven Pits on March 21st. Singles in spring were recorded at Messingham and Lincoln Ballast Pit with pairs at Barrow Haven, Denton, Whisby Pits and Fulstow. Breeding was confirmed at Barrow Haven with a pair and 8 juvs on June 28th and also at Fulstow. In Autumn there was a female at Covenham Res from mid-July to November joined by a male on October 11th, and a female at Toft Newton Res in September. Birds were more widespread in November with a female at Messingham from 7th to 26th, an immature male at Ancaster on 9th, a female at Denton on 10th with two females on 14th, 1 male and 2 females at Tallington on 28th and up to 12 at Barton/Barrow Haven with 6 remaining to the end of the year. The above records suggest that this species is becoming reasonably established in the county since the first confirmed breeding in 1984 with regular summering at several sites, although the Fulstow pair is the only confirmed breeding record away from the Humber pits.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

One flew in off the sea then flew south-west at Donna Nook on May 25th. (GPC)

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

A single record of one soaring northwards near Ropsley on December 22nd (PNW) is the 13th recent county record.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

The increase continues with 3, possibly 4, pairs breeding. One pair laid 5 eggs at a previously used site which, unfortunately, were later taken. Elsewhere a pair fledged 4 young and another pair 3 young. At another site a pair were seen on several occasions in early summer and flying young and adults were seen later. First of the year was the pair that failed which arrived on April 5th and a male at Barton on 6th. There were widespread records from mid-April to October with a wintering female remaining at Frampton Marsh into 1988.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

In January there were up to 4 at Tetney, 7 at Saltfleet, 3 at Baston Fen with 1-2 during January to April widespread at mainly coastal locations. The Wash roost held only 4 in January but built up to 11 in March. A late bird was soaring over Wyberton Marsh on May 16th. First of the autumn were singles at Saltfleetby on August 20th and at Gibraltar Point the next day with the main arrival after mid-October. There were up to 4 at Tetney in November – December and the Wash roost built up to 10 in December.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

One pair bred in the county and raised two young (RSPB). In June there was a first-summer male at Gibraltar Point on the morning of the 24th (GWA) with the same bird at Butterwick on the same evening staying until 26th (AGB,SK,GWO,PAH) with a female there on 25th (CRC,AGP). Another female was at Gibraltar Point from July 29th – August 6th (SB,JL et al.).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

In April one was seen at Colsterworth on 14th (RL) and one at Stenigot on 29th (KA). Two males flew in from the north-east at Donna Nook on October 22nd and a third bird, either a female or immature was at Saltfleet the same day (GPC).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

The welcome increase continues with about 400 records received. Most records were of 1 – 2 birds mainly in January – April and September onwards but there were also many records throughout the summer with a minimum of 9 pairs confirmed breeding and another 7 pairs probably breeding and many possible breeding records. This species is clearly now well established in the county.

Buzzard sp.

Non-specifically identified buzzards were at Gibraltar Point on February 21st, April 18th and May 3rd, Donna Nook on April 29th, Burton Stather on September 25th and south over Pinchbeck on October 23rd.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

In January 1 flew north along the railway line at Sleaford on 27th (JDM). Another at Denton Res on March 13th (IEHS) and 1 at Easton Wood on June 21st (KEW) may have been the same bird that was in the Bourne – Castle Bytham – Irnham area from Feb 27th to September 12th (TB,RL,RCS). Autumn records were of singles at Crowle Waste on August 8th (SJM,WJM,WRM), Saltfleetby on September 9th – 13th (PH,DJ,JM,ACS et al.) and finally at Manton Warren on September 22nd (GPC).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

In spring 1 was at Whisby Pits on April 13th and 1 on the River Glen between Bourne and Spalding on May 13th was probably the same bird that was at Denton Res on 15th. Also

in May, at Gibraltar Point one flew south on 12th and another west on 17th. In autumn one flew in off the sea at Donna Nook on August 27th.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

The maximum number recorded was 12 at Gibraltar Point on August 8th.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

A good year with well over 200 records received. January – March records involved 1 – 2 birds at mainly coastal locations with inland records from Grantham, Bourne Fen, Thurlby Fen, Sleaford, Byards Leap, Scotter, Lincoln and Laughton. April birds included a first-year female which hit a window in Boston on 2nd and a male and female at Gibraltar Point on 19th. Also at Gibraltar Point were records of a male on May 7th and a female on May 19th. First bird back in the autumn was a female/juvenile at Goxhill on August 6th with 1 at Gibraltar Point the next day. Birds later in August were regular at Saltfleetby, Tetney and Donna Nook with records more widespread again from September to the end of the year.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Another good year with about 70 records starting with a very unusual winter record of 1 at Covenham on January 20th (KEW). First of the spring was 1 at Leasingham on April 20th with other birds in April at Gedney Drove End on 22nd, Whisby on 27th, Denton Res 28th and 30th, and 2 at Donna Nook on 29th. Records in May – July were from Grantham, Bourne, Kirton, Holbeach St Marks, Stickney, Navenby, Whisby, Swanpool, Fiskerton, Nettleton and Tetney. At one site, a pair are known to have successfully raised 3 young. At another site adults were seen carrying food on a few occasions in August and 3 birds including at least 1 juvenile were seen on September 8th. Birds were widely reported in August and September with the last at Saltfleetby on October 4th.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

In January there was a male at Baston Fen from 1st-17th (DW, R+KH), a female at Gibraltar Point from 7-12th (DB) and an adult in the Skidbrooke – Saltfleetby area from 3rd to February 1st (AN,KEW,RN,ACS,GPC,HB,MM) with immatures at Winteringham on February 7th (MJK) and Skidbrooke on February 8th (PAH,GMO). In autumn there was an early bird at Gibraltar Point on August 26th (CJM). September records were of a juvenile at Nocton Fen from 8 – 13th (ACS,KDD,DJ), an immature female flying west along the Humber at Barton on 14th (CJ), an adult at Biscathorpe Lake on 15th (KA) and an immature at Holbeach St Marks on 27th (GMO). At the end of the year there was a female at Goxhill on November 22nd (SR) and one at Saltfleet on December 30th (MM).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Most records of numbers of up to 20 were from the south of the county throughout the year with other records of 22 near Scamblesby on February 21st, 20 at Scopwick on 24th and the largest number reported of 44 at Covenham on October 17th.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Generally, small numbers were reported throughout the year with the highest numbers of 8 at West Ashby on January 31st, 8 at Digby Quarry on September 7th and, in December, 12 at Normanby Park on 5th, 8 at North Thoresby on 14th, and 20 at Cadney Carrs on 13th. Gibraltar Point only recorded 2 in March and 1 in April during the year.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

A very early bird was at Thurlby Fen on April 29th with birds more regular there from mid June to mid August with a maximum of three on June 20th. Along the Lincoln Edge there was 1 at South Witham on July 2nd, 1 at Stroxton on July 8th, a male at Byards Leap on May 31st with 2 at nearby Leadenham until the end of July, and up to 3 at Scotter in June. On the Wolds there was 1 at Fulletby on July 6th, 2 at Nettleton in June and July with 2 nearby at Claxby in July. To complete a good year for this species there was a male at Goxhill from June 1st – 24th and East Halton from August 2nd – 9th.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Up to 20 were regularly noted at Gibraltar Point and the only other record of interest was of a pure white male at Temple Wood from May 31st to July 15th.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

In January to early April 1 – 2 were recorded at Baston Fen, Lincoln, Gibraltar Point, Grimsby, Tetney, Sleaford, Messingham, North Thoresby, West Ashby, Denton Res, up to 4 at Barrow Haven, and 2 dead on the tide-line at Leverton on February 8th. Records in summer were of birds calling at Tetney in June and at Messingham throughout where the presence of 2 juveniles in September suggest that breeding occurred. Birds were more widespread from October with the highest numbers being 7 at Saltfleetby on 28th and 14 at Far Ings, Barton on November 9th.

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

The only record was of a juvenile found dead on the roadside at Minting near Horncastle on October 29th (MEH).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

The maximum recorded was 65 at Holywell Lake on January 8th.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Tattershall Pits held 887 on January 10th and 590 on February 7th. Other sites with over 200 in January-February were Apex Pit, Burton Pits, Bagmoor, Covenham Res, Tallington Pits, Barton and Barrow Haven. November maxima were 380 at Burton Pits on 29th, 119 at Covenham on 13th, and December maxima were 153 at Covenham Res on 12th, 195 at Huttoft Pits on 24th and 500 at Whisby Pits on 21st.

Crane *Grus grus*

An adult flying south from Seacroft over Gibraltar Point onto Wainfleet Marsh on October 25th (CRC,KDD,PAH,RKW) is the 13th county record (22 birds). Accepted by BBRC.

Note that, as from 1988, this species is no longer considered as a national rarity, but will still require supporting details for consideration by LRC.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Tetney	—	—	755	386	76	50	84	340	630	1310	1330	—
Gibraltar Point	—	3750	54	10	17	54	6	6560	400	2550	160	—
Friskney	3500	1000	4000	1200	600	—	1000	400	5000	6000	9000	—
Witham Mouth	15	147	123	12	69	—	125	70	63	20	220	4000
Holbeach Marsh	2200	5600	1670	2320	1350	—	1575	3750	4700	4800	5670	5250

The only other large flocks early in the year were 2,450 at Wrangle on January 4th and 2,750 at Leverton on February 8th. In March there were 8 at Reads Island, 4 at Winteringham and 2 inland at Messingham on 23rd – 31st. Singles were recorded in April at Messingham on 24th and Torksey on 26th. Estimates of around 20 breeding pairs at Reads Island, 11 at Terrington Marsh and 40 at Holbeach Marsh were recorded with one pair at Ferriby Cement Works. Other breeding season records were single birds at Swanpool on May 15th and Scotton Common on June 15th. Autumn records included 450 in the Welland Estuary on July 4th, 50 in the Winteringham/Reads Island area on August 2nd, singles inland at Baumber (with Lapwings) also on 2nd, Bardney on 27th and 519 at Cleethorpes on 29th. A completely white adult was at Tetney on September 1st and other records in September were 10,400 at Wainfleet on 13th, 3,000 at Terrington the same day, and a single bird at Toft Newton Res on 20th. Towards the end of the year large flocks other than those above were 850 at Frampton Marsh and 495 in the Welland Estuary on December 27th.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

A first summer bird in the Barton-on-Humber/South Ferriby area from September 6th – 13th (GPC,CJ,PH,KA et al.) is the fourth county record. Accepted by BBRC.



Black-winged Stilt (P. Haywood)

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

The first record for the year was a single bird at Holbeach Marsh on March 1st. Another was at Grainthorpe on April 25th and 4 were at Reads Island from May 26th – 29th. Two were seen briefly at Gibraltar Point on June 11th followed by 2 more there on July 28th. The last record of the year was a party of 6 at Holbeach Marsh on August 29th.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

The approximate county totals were;

M	A	M	J	J	A	S
3	30	35	16	17	12	8

The first record was 3 at Digby on March 22nd, followed by early April records of 2 at Thorpe Pits on 4th, 2 at Spalding S.B.F. on 5th, Kirton Quarries also on 5th and with 1 – 4 (max 6) at a number of sites during April – May. Successful breeding records were of 3 pairs at Spalding S.B.F., 2 pairs at Digby and a pair at Messingham with possible breeding at Killingholme and Caistor. Display was also recorded at South Ferriby. In July up to 8 were present at Bardney with August records of 3 there on 4th, 1 at Covenham Res on 10th, 2 at Holbeach on 23rd with up to 6 at Gibraltar Point during the month. In September singles were recorded at Saltfleetby on 6th, Gibraltar Point on 10th, 5 at Bardney on 3rd with the last there on 22nd.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Winteringham/Reads Is.	83	9	46	10	620	13	17	200	150	50	150	160
Cleethorpes	—	—	—	116	—	73	—	320	—	—	—	—
Tetney	—	—	—	—	29	46	—	142	35	—	—	11
Gibraltar Point	14	5	30	47	50	—	—	100	100	40	40	8

Few early year records away from the sites shown were received except for 2 at Tattershall on February 28th, 2 at Cadney Res on March 3rd, 12 at South Witham on 15th and 1 at Messingham on 23rd. Thereafter numbers built up rapidly in May. Large flocks were widely scattered including 54 at Goxhill on 6th, 229 on Kirton Marsh on 16th and 103 at Holbeach on 17th with inland records of up to 5 at Messingham. The 63 breeding pairs reported were from 7 sites namely Moulton Marsh, Messingham, Kirkby-on-Bain Pits, South Ferriby Pits, Tetney, Bardney SBF and 75 juveniles from 26 pairs at Gibraltar Point. Other summer records were 1 at Brigg SBF on July 9th and 4 at Bagmoor on 30th with the first notable autumn flock of 118 at South Ferriby also on 30th. Later, there were up to 9 at Bardney, August 8th, 216 at South Ferriby on 13th and 250 on Holbeach Marsh on 15th. In September there were 4 at Covenham Res on 12th, 53 on Frampton Marsh on 13th, 3 at Toft Newton Res on 20th and 74 at Barton-upon-Humber on 21st. Birds showing characteristics of the race *C.h.tundrarum* were recorded in the Winteringham/Reads Island area with a maximum of 620 of May 10th.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

The only record was a female at Gibraltar Point on May 7th (GWA)

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

In spring, records were of 5 at Boothby Graffoe on April 29th – 30th followed by 5 at Wrangle Marsh on May 4th and 1 at Tetney on 19th. In autumn a juvenile was present at Saltfleetby on September 12th.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Winteringham	–	75	120	350	4	56	250	1100	1680	1670	850	3100
Reads Island	–	3	120	19	4	8	270	580	295	95	1420	6500
Tetney	–	–	–	170	6	12	215	550	300	460	1005	1250

After 800 at Goxhill, 400 at Hogsthorpe and 200 at Barrow up to January 10th there were few records of birds in the county during the severe weather of early 1987. The only other February records were of 83 at the Witham Mouth on 1st and singles at Gibraltar Point. During the early spring 100 were at Stainfield on March 21st, 150 at Holbeach on 29th with 600 there on April 16th. Other April records were 47 at Wrangle on 18th, 70 at Cadney Res on 19th and 150 at Kelstern on 22nd. Numbers started building up again in July with 600 at Saltfleet on 29th and with the large flocks recorded on the Humber (max of 460 on 30th) continuing to increase to the end of the year. There were 1,000 at Holbeach on September 11th and 300 at Toft Newton on 20th. Throughout October many places recorded flocks of up to 300 with larger numbers of 700 at Witham Common on 12th and 600 at Cadney Carrs on 23rd. November records included 500 at Fiskerton on 4th, 1,000 at Humberston on 11th and in December 1,100 at Skidbrooke on 5th, 1150 at Cleethorpes on 6th, 88 at Kilingholme Pits on 18th and 2,000 at Huttoft on 24th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Tetney	–	–	–	540	202	12	41	437	364	458	470	–
Gibraltar Point	2	1000	270	3	3	–	19	15	18	1200	310	6
Wrangle	125	1015	1080	345	1009	–	16	174	1805	797	970	630
Welland Estuary	–	500	250	1160	1420	–	93	500	1100	350	1100	1015
Holbeach Marsh	4	–	7	1102	351	10	100	1380	416	–	391	1336
Terrington Marsh	20	300	72	83	2100	–	3	314	330	16	732	505

Peak counts extra to the Birds of Estuaries Enquiry early in the year were 1200 at Gibraltar Point on March 30th and 750 at Holbeach on the same date. There were 114 at Cleethorpes on April 28th and away from the coast the only inland records were of single birds at Bardney on August 8th and Covenham Reservoir on September 2nd. A late year peak count of 2000 was recorded at Gibraltar Point on October 8th.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Some flocks were present in early January with 600 recorded at Thornton Abbey on 3rd, 115 at Wrangle on 4th, 350 at Witham Mouth on the same date and a maximum of 100 at Gibraltar Point. Following the cold weather in mid month this species was more or less absent from the county until a southerly movement was noted in early February with a maximum of 72 south at Gibraltar Point on 5th. Other early flocks were 100 at Scopwick on February 14th, 200 at Gibraltar Point regularly in March and up to 1000 at Hungerton Quarry on March 13th. In summer there were 70 at Goxhill on June 16th, 70 at the Witham Mouth on July 12th, 160 at Messingham on 13th and up to 300 at Tetney. Autumn concentrations included 250 at the Witham Mouth on August 15th, 440 at Bagmoor on 16th, 200 at Messingham on 18th and 520 in the Reads Island area on 19th. In September there were 115 at Scopwick on 5th, 800 at Toft Newton on 20th and in October a peak of 840 at Cadney Carrs on 23rd. November and December were the main months with flocks of up to 1000 being recorded from several sites. A north easterly movement was noted in the north of the county on November 1st continuing to mid month during which peak counts of 1100 were recorded at Reads Island and 2000 at Covenham Res with up to 5000 between Langworth and Cold Hanworth on 21st.

December peaks were 2500 at Tetney on 5th, 3000 near New Holland on 7th and 4000 in the Reads Island area on 29th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

	J	F	M	A	J	A	S	O	N	D
Tetney	—	—	—	24	100	120	480	410	500	2700
Gibraltar Point	—	27500	1800	143	90	1400	25	38000	12850	2000
Friskney	20000	10000	12000	6000	100	—	10565	—	30000	—
Welland Estuary	300	1400	4000	—	—	—	1500	—	6000	5420
Holbeach Marsh	10000	4100	4800	—	2500	12	3424	3500	11500	4120
Terrington Marsh	8000	2650	3550	—	—	—	480	6520	1000	12000

Typically, smaller numbers were seen away from the Wash. The main sites are shown above but extra to those was a flock of 250 at Cleethorpes on February 21st. There were 1500 at Gibraltar Point on May 9th whereas the Birds of Estuary Enquiry revealed only a total of 163 on May 17th with 2 at Reads Island on the 29th. There were 2200 at Gibraltar Point on June 21st decreasing to around 100 on July 26th. Later in the year Donna Nook recorded a maximum of 1500 on November 22nd and 2000 on December 20th. The peak count for the Lincolnshire side of the Wash was nearly 62,000 in November.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Cleethorpes	—	—	—	400	1200	—	—	624	—	—	—	—
Tetney	—	—	—	260	730	50	317	250	55	50	130	280
Gibraltar Point	280	100	70	40	500	40	170	552	1100	270	150	52

Elsewhere in May there were 8 at Goxhill on 14th, 2 at Reads Island on 19th, 2 at Barton on the same day, 420 at Donna Nook on 25th, 16 at Winteringham on 29th and inland, singles at Toft Newton on 3rd, Messingham from 14th – 25th with up to 8 (on 17th) at Covenham Res. In June 34 were at Winteringham on 5th and 9 were recorded moving west at Goxhill on 17th. In early autumn a single bird was at Messingham on July 18th, 70 at Saltfleetby on 21st, 2 at Bagmoor on 23rd and 2 at Covenham Res on August 17th.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

The first April record since 1980 was a single bird at Tetney on 26th which remained there until the 28th. Other spring records were all in May with 1 at Kirkby on Bain on 10th, 5 at Gibraltar Point on 17th, 3 at Reads Island on 26th and 6 at South Ferriby Cement Works on 28th. Few early autumn records were received with singles at Tetney on July 12th, Saltfleetby on 27th, Gibraltar Point and Winteringham on 31st. In August there were singles at South Ferriby on 6th, Welland Estuary on 8th and Benington on 15th but elsewhere maxima of 9 at Saltfleetby, 3 at Gibraltar Point and 3 at Holbeach. Inland there were 2 at Covenham Res and 8 at Bardney on 28th. Later autumn birds were 8 at Reads Island on September 4th, 2 at Bardney on 6th, 3 at Holbeach on 10th, 2 at Winteringham on 23rd, up to 5 at Gibraltar Point and 3 at Covenham Res, 1 of which remained there until October 11th. Also in October 6 were seen flying south at Donna Nook on 1st, singles at South Ferriby and Reads Island mid month and, the last of the year, 3 at Gibraltar Point on 28th.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

In May there were records of a single bird at Gibraltar Point from 15th – 17th, 2 in the Winteringham/South Ferriby area from 17th – 21st (HB,JH,CJ et al.) and 1 at Covenham Res on 28th – 29th (RN,MM,KEW et al.). In autumn the only record was of a single bird at Covenham Res from September 3rd – 10th (RN,MM,KEW et al.).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

A juvenile was present at Cadney Res from September 24th – 28th (JH,GPC et al.).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

A fairly poor year, the approximate monthly county totals being:-

M	J	J	A	S	O
4	—	6	45	38	12

The spring records were 1 at Kirkby-on-Bain Pits on May 16th, 1 at Kirton Marsh on 17th and 2 at Reads Island on 24th. First of the autumn were singles at Goxhill, Winteringham and Gibraltar Point on July 27th with 3 at Tetney on 30th. In early August up to 5 were seen at several coastal sites with peaks during mid month of 5 inland at Bardney SBF on 12th, 8 at North Killingholme on 14th and 7 at Reads Island on 19th. All records in September were coastal with peaks of 3 in the Humber, 3 at Saltfleetby, 4 at Gibraltar Point, 6 in the Welland Estuary and a flock of 15 at Holbeach Marsh. Numbers dropped considerably during early October with a maximum of 3 at Gibraltar Point on 4th, 4 at Reads Island on 11th and the last record for the year of 2 at Barton on 19th.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The only early year records were up to 2 at Cleethorpes on January 20th and a single at the Witham Mouth on 24th. In autumn there were singles at Gibraltar Point on August 20th and 27th, 2 in the Welland Estuary on September 13th and singles at Anderby Creek on October 4th, Gibraltar Point on November 20th and the Witham Mouth from November 7th – December 6th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Winteringham	1100	1000	1200	750	2500	33	62	32	165	130	350	1200
Reads Island	790	650	330	300	2000	5	120	220	39	214	290	1250
Tetney	—	—	—	980	1040	38	500	360	25	795	500	420
Gibraltar Point	1300	700	500	500	2000	225	650	800	1200	3000	1300	250
Witham Mouth	1000	5000	600	370	170	—	175	250	50	1260	500	1200
Holbeach Marsh	3750	1300	800	3476	5000	—	900	310	1586	2800	4000	1360
Terrington Marsh	3000	10000	460	5980	—	—	440	1180	2810	50	2710	—

Other large winter flocks were 660 at Wrangle on January 4th, 530 at Cleethorpes on 24th, over 1000 at Benington on February 1st and over 2000 there on March 1st. Spring passage inland occurred from mid April until the end of June when up to 8 birds were seen at Low Barlings, Messingham, Hungerton Quarry, West Ashby, Bagmoor and Cadney Res. Early inland autumn records were of up to 9 at Messingham on July 2nd – August 2nd, 1 at Covenham Res on July 18th, 5 at Bagmoor on 2nd, 22 at Bardney SBF on August 8th and 1 at Langworth on 18th. Additional late autumn/early winter peaks were 1500 at Wrangle on October 25th, almost 1600 there on November 8th and 1350 at Benington on December 27th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
County Total	13	10	14	190	46	1	63	241	88	24	9	11
Winteringham	3	—	—	—	—	—	4	43	—	—	—	1
Reads Island	—	—	—	—	27	—	8	24	19	4	—	—
Tetney	6	9	2	19	7	—	—	9	13	17	5	—
Covenham	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	4	—	—	—
Saltfleetby	—	—	—	49	4	—	—	20	1	—	—	—
Gibraltar Point	—	—	3	3	1	1	38	30	3	—	—	—
Bardney	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	10	5	—	—	—

In the early part of the year, wintering birds were relatively few with 6 at Tetney on January 4th, 1 at Covenham Res on 10th, 3 at Winteringham on 30th and 1 at Cadney Res on 31st. In February the only records were from the north-east with 9 at Tetney and 1 at Cleethorpes on 18th. Thealby Pits recorded a maximum of 9 on March 28th before the main spring influx in April and May. In addition to those in the table above, there were 14 at Bagmoor on April 7th, 10 at Messingham on 15th, 9 at Cadney Res from 16th – 18th and 10 at Wainfleet on 23rd. Autumn passage occurred from mid July onwards with 8 at Butterwick on 12th, 35 observed moving south at Gibraltar Point on 24th and an inland record of 1 at Bardney SBF on 29th. The bulk of the autumn records were in August with additional records of 15 at Grantham SF and 30 at Trent Falls. December records were 10 at Grainthorpe on 14th and the last bird of the year at Winteringham on 31st.

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

During the early part of the year there were records of 1 – 2 birds at Pinchbeck, Crosby

Mines, Gibraltar Point and West Ashby with the last being seen at Saltfleetby on April 26th. Returning birds were rather scarce with the first at Gibraltar Point on October 1st with 2–4 at Winteringham/Reads Island from 11th to mid December, 1 at Messingham on November 29th and singles in December at Baston Fen, West Ashby, North Killingholme, Tetney and Saltfleetby and one caught and ringed at Wainfleet on 30th.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

The cold weather early in the year seemed to displace may birds and only small parties were evident until March when maximum numbers were 43 at Alkborough on 21st, 32 at Baston Fen on 28th and 32 at Bratoft on April 12th. Breeding season records were received from Tetney, Whisby Pits and Gibraltar Point with singles in May and 'drumming' birds at Saltfleetby (6), Guthrums Bourne (6), Messingham (4) and Barton (1). Numbers in July–September were low with maxima of 5 at Tetney, 5 at Bardney, 8 at Gibraltar Point, 8 at Whisby, 24 at Donna Nook, 35 at Alkborough and 100 throughout September at Grantham SF. A party of 22 flying over Gibraltar Point was recorded on September 17th. Thereafter there were early winter records of 54 at Messingham on October 31st, a maximum of 60 at Denton in November – December, 100 at Deeping High Bank on December 12th and 75 at Huttoft on 24th.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

In January there were 4 at Tattershall on 18th, 5 at Gibraltar Point on 20th and single birds at several sites including Louth, Tetney, Barton, Messingham and even Immingham town centre! There were 3 at Theddlethorpe on February 7th. April and May records were received from Ashbyville and Theddlethorpe with 'roding' birds at Messingham, Twigmoor, Scotton Common, Scrubbs Wood, Temple Wood, Bourne Wood and Stapleford Wood with up to 6 at Laughton Forest. Autumn records were 5 at Skellingthorpe on September 8th, singles on Cleethorpes putting green on October 27th, Leasingham on 28th, Tetney in October and November, up to 4 at Gibraltar Point in November and December and 1 at Theddlethorpe in December.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

No wintering birds were recorded, the first in the early part of the year being 2 at Holbeach Marsh on March 29th. Spring passage was rather poor, with 1 at Messingham on April 24th, 3 at Reads Island on May 1st, 3 at Frampton Marsh on May 17th and 1 at Tetney on June 3rd. First of the autumn were 9 at Messingham on July 8th, 2 at Kirton Marsh on 12th and 2 at Reads Island on 23rd. By mid August numbers had reached 420 at Holbeach Marsh and away from the Wash there were singles at Bardney SBF, Trent Falls, Winteringham, and Saltfleetby with 2 at Tetney, Covenham Res and Reads Island and 4 at Gibraltar Point. By mid September the Wash flock dropped to 150 and elsewhere there were records of 1 at Winteringham on 12th, 2 at Gibraltar Point on 19th and 3 at Trent Falls on 30th. Late records were singles at Saltfleetby on October 22nd and Goxhill on December 10th with 40 in the Welland Estuary on December 27th.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Winteringham / Reads Island	1	1	4	11	12	2	24	26	7	–	–	–
Cleethorpes	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	98	–	–	70	472
Tetney	–	–	–	40	14	12	80	172	44	25	150	31
Gibraltar Point	60	240	100	250	30	150	500	3000	5000	8000	2000	200
Wrangle Marsh	850	1500	515	–	–	–	151	257	1049	800	607	437

There was a massive movement recorded at Leverton Marsh on February 2nd when it was estimated that 20,000 flew south. In addition to the figures above, in autumn there were 28 at Goxhill on July 5th, 200 at Holbeach on July 12th with up to 2000 there by mid August, 6500 at Wainfleet on September 13th and 1650 at Holbeach on October 25th.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

The first of the year was at Gibraltar Point on March 31st with the main influx occurring from mid April onwards with 10 at Holbeach on 12th and, towards the end of the month, birds were widespread with singles at Messingham and Covenham Res, up to 20 at

Tetney on 24th and 7 at Goxhill on 27th. Thereafter passage was recorded almost daily at Gibraltar Point throughout May, with a total of around 95 birds moving north. There were 16 at Tetney and 6 at Goxhill on 10th and singles in June at Gibraltar Point and Grainthorpe and 7 at Tetney on 26th. Early autumn birds were again widespread with 1–4 at coastal locations and 1 inland at Caistor in July and larger numbers of 57 at Holbeach on 12th, 35 at Witham Mouth on 13th, 28 at Tetney and 35 south at Theddlethorpe on 26th. Numbers continued to increase into August with 25 at Saltfleetby on 2nd, 47 at Tetney on 4th, 2 at Bardney SBF on 6th, 3 at Bratoft on 9th, 2 at Covenham Res on 14th and the Holbeach total was up to 170 by the 15th. There were 16 at Cleethorpes on September 1st, 5 at Tetney on 2nd, 12 at Gibraltar Point and 20 at Frampton Marsh on 9th and the last records of the year were a single at Gibraltar Point on October 9th and 2 at Tetney on 22nd although a single bird was reported from Benington on December 27th.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Winteringham	171	190	85	350	45	56	190	400	450	98	92	109
Reads Island	38	128	48	170	38	75	600	800	139	500	650	108
Goxhill	253	200	160	210	—	—	80	138	—	220	277	235
Tetney	—	—	—	23	7	20	31	9	8	11	13	10
Gibraltar Point	30	50	50	250	75	89	250	200	137	480	280	52
Holbeach Marsh	60	36	20	498	165	160	1100	1600	2000	245	156	68
Terrington Marsh	152	282	382	269	15	—	40	226	24	507	690	260

There were no records away from the coast in the early part of the year apart from singles at Denton Res on January 6th and Lea Marsh on 11th. During March – May there were 1–3 birds at six inland sites with breeding confirmed at Messingham and Scotter. Post breeding concentrations were as usual in the Humber and the Wash but inland there were 10 at Grantham SF on July 4th increasing to 30 during August to mid September, 4 at Bardney SBF on August 9th and 3 at Messingham on 19th. The autumn flock at Holbeach was remarkably high although numbers dropped to near normal thereafter.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Approx county totals were:-	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	3	3	4	57	7	14	20	134	213	70	1	—

There were none recorded at the end of 1986 yet the Cleethorpes/Tetney area recorded birds from January – March and there were other records of 1 at Boston Docks on January 19th and 2 at Gibraltar Point in March. In April 1–2 birds were widely scattered at coastal sites but with inland records of 32 at Hubberts Bridge on 6th and a single at Messingham on 28th. May records were few with 1–2 birds recorded at Grainthorpe, Tetney, Cleethorpes and Holbeach. There were 2 at Gibraltar Point mid-June and, later in the month, 11 in the Welland Estuary on 22nd and 1 at Tetney on 23rd. Singles were recorded in July at Tetney, Grainthorpe, Saltfleetby and Gedney Drove End but the main autumn passage was in August/September. Parties of up to 12 birds were at most coastal locations with the only inland record of a single at Covenham Res on August 31st – September 4th. Of special note was the flock in the Welland Estuary which peaked at 175 on September 13th decreasing to 45 by October 4th when there was also a single at Gibraltar Point and 22 at Donna Nook, one of which remained to November 1st.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Reads Island	31	32	91	8	31	26	150	32	200	100	200	—
Tetney	—	212	—	100	90	120	150	200	300	514	440	275
Gibraltar Point	100	100	60	55	35	—	35	210	350	130	175	65
Wrangle	245	14	166	415	105	—	233	300	257	86	144	470
Witham Mouth	100	430	207	24	37	—	220	70	352	555	34	85
Welland Estuary	143	150	110	70	66	—	20	85	130	50	130	590
Holbeach Marsh	73	27	12	468	35	10	108	441	204	410	243	193
Terrington Marsh	17	4	78	402	5	—	302	—	628	19	538	235

In the first part of the year other notable concentrations were 16 at Fulstow on January 15th, 12 at Cadney on 26th, 22 at Baston Fen during February and March and 139 at Cleethorpes on April 15th. Breeding was recorded at many localities; single pairs at Baston Fen, Cadney, Messingham and Bagmoor, 10–12 pairs at Gibraltar Point, 40 pairs at Tetney and a sample census in the Wash revealed 20pairs/25 hectares of grazed saltmarsh. Later in the year there were 2 at Bardney on July 26th, up to 2 at Covenham Res, 450 at Cleethorpes and 1000 at Holbeach in August. Early winter concentrations were 80 at Barrow Haven and 250 at Immingham Dock in December.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

One at the Witham Mouth from August 8th – 15th (CRC,SK et al) is the second county record. Accepted by BBRC.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Approx county totals were	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	1	–	–	23	4	4	76	293	366	29	5	1

A wintering bird was at Gibraltar Point during early January. Spring records were rather few with 1 – 3 birds at Tetney, Saltfleetby, Gibraltar Point, Moulton Marsh, Gedney Dawsmere and Baston Fen, but 14 flew south at Donna Nook on April 25th where the last record in spring of 3 were recorded on June 20th. Return passage began in July on the coast with notable southerly movements at Donna Nook and Gibraltar Point and up to 10 at Tetney, 12 at Terrington and 20 at Holbeach. Numbers in August and September comprised 1 – 10 birds at many inland sites and 10 – 20 at most coastal locations. During those two months the totals from the Lincolnshire side of the Wash from the 'Birds of Estuaries Enquiry' counts were 175 and 317 respectively and included 105 in the Welland Estuary on September 13th. October sightings were from Cleethorpes, Tetney, Saltfleetby, Gibraltar Point and the Wash whilst late records were 3 at Donna Nook on November 1st, 1 at Donna Nook on 8th, Witham Mouth on 9th and Cleethorpes on 23rd with one bird, possibly a wintering individual, at Grainthorpe Haven on December 24th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Approx county totals were	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	8	3	3	15	3	5	30	56	27	12	8	9

In the early part of the year there were 2 at Bardney SBF, up to 3 at Thorpe/Whisby Pits with widespread singles elsewhere. There were 3 at Goxhill Marsh on April 22nd, with singles in May at Humberston, Tetney, Saltfleetby, Binbrook, Kirkby on Bain, Heighington and Louth SF. Singles were at Grimsby Dock and Tetney on June 27th. Birds in autumn were again widespread and peaks were 11 at Moulton Marsh on July 27th, 4 at Thorpe/Whisby Pits on 30th, 20 at Bardney SBF on August 6th, 5 at Bratoft on 9th, 2 at Covenham on 11th, 4 at Messingham and 3 at Saltfleetby on 28th. Later there were 5 at Gibraltar Point and 9 at Brigg SBF on September 7th and 5 at Frampton Marsh on 8th. In October birds were present at Lincoln Ballast Pit on 2nd, 2 at Newsham Lakes on 7th, Wrangle Marsh on 11th and up to 3 at Whisby Pits on 16th. The last records of the year were in December with 2 at West Ashby Pits on 14th, 5 at Louth also on 14th, singles at Grainsby Beck on 15th and Kirkby on Bain on 19th, 2 at Binbrook on 20th, 1 at Newsham Lake on 24th and 2 at Whisby Pits on 27th with 1 there on 28th.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Approx county totals were :–

A	M	J	J	A	S
5	2	1	5	23	9

The earliest spring record since at least 1979 was of 2 at Kirkby on Bain on April 18th followed by singles at Goxhill on 21st, Saltfleetby on 25th and Gibraltar Point on 30th. There were only 2 in May; at Gibraltar Point and Saltfleetby and the last of the spring was 1 at Tetney on June 5th. Autumn records began with a single at Gibraltar Point on July 2nd, 2 at Tetney on 21st and a single bird at Bardney SBF on 30th with 2 there throughout August. Also in August there were 2 at Killingholme, Alkborough Flats and Holbeach, 4 at Saltfleetby and 6 at Gibraltar Point. In September 2 birds remained at Bardney SBF

until at least 3rd, 1 at Tetney on 5th, 2 at Saltfleetby on 6th, 1 at Covenham Res on 9th, 1 at Denton Res on 13th and the last of the year at Gibraltar Point on 27th.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Approx county totals were :-

A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N
22	36	9	126	193	97	6	1

First records of the year were single birds at Tetney on April 17th, Gibraltar Point on 18th, 2 at Cadney Res on 19th, 2 at Denton Res on 20th. Birds were widespread up to the end of the month with up to 11 at Covenham Res on 30th remaining into May. Other May records included Denton Res, Cadney Res, Moulton Marsh, West Ashby Pits, Gibraltar Point, Tetney and the Humber. June records were of singles at Tetney from 7th – 9th, South Ferriby on 24th, Gibraltar Point on 29th and up to 6 in the Winteringham/Reads Island area. During a good autumn passage in which birds were recorded throughout the county, the main counts were 14 at Tetney and 17 at Covenham Res on July 19th, 39 at Moulton Marsh on 27th, 8 at Bardney on 29th, 5 at West Ashby on August 9th, 24 in the Wash on 15th, 12 at Killingholme and 45 at Covenham Res on September 3rd, 10 at Tetney on 6th, 15 at Bardney and 20 at Gibraltar Point also in September. All October records were singles except for 2 at Gibraltar Point on 23rd. A single at Apex Pit on November 29th was the latest county record since the overwintering individual in 1982/83.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Winteringham/Reads Island	–	–	3	–	2	2	2	8	19	5	3	2
Cleethorpes	–	100	–	230	–	–	–	50	150	515	–	–
Tetney	–	–	–	200	40	5	20	20	5	3	9	7
Gibraltar Point	5	3	37	2	5	4	10	25	4	16	5	–
Benington/Witham Mouth	60	124	108	32	328	–	6	100	135	190	70	100
Holbeach Marsh	–	2	90	150	20	39	129	77	120	7	–	–

The above figures clearly show the importance of the south-western corner of the Wash and the Tetney to Cleethorpes area for this species. In spring there were inland records of 1 at Bagmoor on April 26th and 7 at Messingham on May 18th with 19 at Barton on 22nd. In autumn there were singles at Messingham on July 22nd, Bardney from 29th – August 8th, 5 at Covenham Res also in August with up to 8 there in September and 17 at Barton on November 21st.

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

A female in breeding plumage at Gibraltar Point on June 8th (AJB,MRB,KMW et al) is the ninth county record. Under consideration by BBRC.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

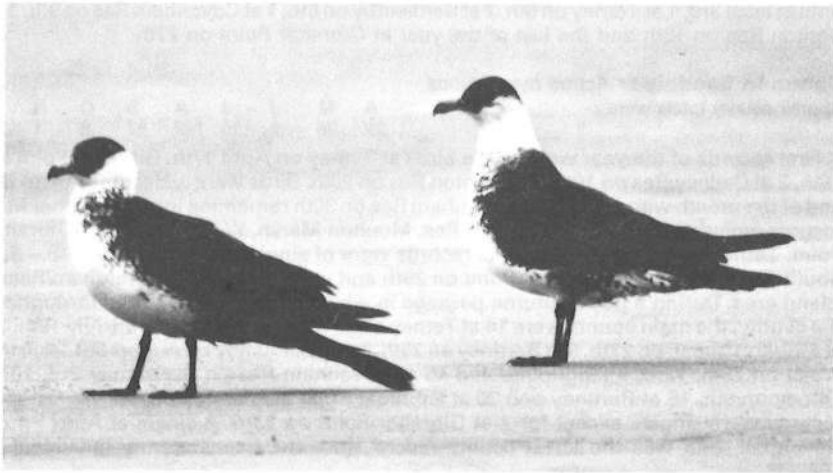
A juvenile was recorded at Bardney from August 27th – 28th (ACS,DMJ), then a juvenile at Marshchapel from August 30th – September 4th (MM,DJB,KEW,HB et al.) and a juvenile at Covenham Res from September 8th – 20th (AN,DJB et al.).

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

A single bird was seen at Gibraltar Point on January 25th (MAW,JA,SPB,JDM et al). In autumn a single bird was recorded at Donna Nook on October 17th (RJB) and Gibraltar Point on 17th and 18th. (EA,GE).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

There was one early year record of an immature flying north at Gibraltar Point on January 4th. First in the autumn were 2 at Saltfleetby on July 27th, 1 at Anderby on 29th, 1 at Saltfleetby on August 2nd, 1 at Tetney on 8th and 2 at Donna Nook on 9th. The majority of records were from late August to September with 3 at Saltfleetby, 3 at Huttoft and 1 at Holbeach Marsh all on August 23rd, 1 at Gibraltar Point and another at Huttoft on 24th with 3 there on 27th and 3 at Gibraltar Point on 31st. There was an influx in September with 1 – 3 at the Witham Mouth, Gibraltar Point, Huttoft and Theddlethorpe. At Saltfleetby there were 16 on the beach on September 6th, then peaks of 15 (including



Pomarine Skuas (G.P.Catley)

at least 10 different birds to those on the 6th) there on 12th, 12 on 20th, 10 on 25th and 3 on 27th. October records were 2 at Gibraltar Point on 3rd and singles at Donna Nook, Saltfleetby and the Witham Mouth all on 11th.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Spring records were singles at Gibraltar Point on April 20th and May 2nd, 2 there on 15th and 1 on 23rd with 1 at Holbeach St Marks on 25th. Returning birds heading south in autumn began to drift through in July with singles at the Witham Mouth, Holbeach Marsh and Gibraltar Point where there were 9 on 26th and 2 at Saltfleetby on 29th. The main passage was from mid-August to mid-September with the bulk of the records occurring in late August with maxima of 48 at Gibraltar Point on 21st, 30 at Saltfleetby on 22nd with 40 there next day, 43 at Holbeach Marsh and 89 at Huttoft on 23rd and 49 at the Witham Mouth on 24th. In September there were 1 – 10 at many coastal sites with 46 south at Huttoft on 13th and 15 south at Gibraltar Point on the same day and 18 at the Witham Mouth on 26th. There were a few in October with 4 at Gibraltar Point on 3rd, 13 at the Witham Mouth on 11th with 2 there on 21st, 1 at Holbeach on 24th, 5 at Gibraltar Point on 24th with the last record there of 1 on November 3rd.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

There were two records in late August. The first was at Gibraltar Point on 24th (KMW,PMG) and an adult was at Huttoft on August 25th (RJC).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

There were a few records of a single bird in January which probably referred to the same wintering individual, at Gibraltar Point on 1st, 11th and 17th and at the Nene Mouth on 25th. There was one spring record of 5 at Saltfleetby on May 23rd. Early returning birds in July were 1 south at Saltfleetby on 19th, 1 at Huttoft on 26th and 3 north at Anderby on 27th. In August 2 were at Saltfleetby on 2nd and 1 at Tetney on 8th, which later died. There were no more records until the main passage at the end of the month with 10 at Huttoft on 23rd then 1 – 3 there over the next few days and singles at the Witham Mouth on 24th and Gibraltar Point from 21st – 30th. September records were 3 at Saltfleetby on 6th with 1 there on 13th, 5 on 20th, 2 on 25th and 10 on 27th, 3 at Gibraltar Point on 16th with 5 there on 26th, singles at the Witham Mouth on 20th and 26th and 8 at Huttoft on 20th – 26th with 9 there on 27th. In October there were 3 at the Witham Mouth and 1 at Gibraltar Point on 3rd, 7 at Donna Nook on 11th, 9 at Gibraltar Point from 11th – 13th, 23 south at Huttoft also on 11th with 16 there on 18th and 8 at Saltfleetby on 21st. The last record was of 3 at Gibraltar Point on November 21st.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

A good year; all records refer to first winter birds unless stated otherwise. In January there was 1 at Apex Pit, Lincoln on 1st with an adult there on 24th and 1 was at Cleethorpes on 20th with an adult there on 22nd. One at Skellingthorpe on February 1st may have been the earlier Lincoln bird. In April there was an adult at Covenham Res on 7th, singles at Bagmoor on 7th and Tetney on 19th and May 28th. One was at Gibraltar Point on July 5th. There were singles again at Bagmoor on July 9th and August 13th, then 1 at Cadney Res on September 20th with an adult at Huttoft on the same day and a second winter at Huttoft on 25th. Later in the year singles were at Apex Pit from October 25th intermittently until December 20th, Cadney Res on November 7th and Lincoln's West Common on November 21st.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

In January 14 flew north at Huttoft on 5th and there were singles at Gibraltar Point on 16th, 19th and 29th. A dead bird was found at Wrangle Marsh on March 8th. The first spring records were in April with 1 at Messingham on 15th, 2 there on 24th, 2 at Covenham Res on 23rd and 8 at Barton on 28th. During May – June there were 1 – 2 occasionally at coastal sites, 1 was present at Messingham until mid June and another summered at Whisby Pits. During July – September 1 – 4 birds, mainly juveniles, were present at many coastal sites with a maximum of 7 north at Saltfleetby on September 20th and inland records of singles at Messingham on August 9th and 11th, a juvenile at Bardney SBF on August 9th – 15th and up to 3 at Covenham Res throughout. In October there were 4 adults and 5 juveniles at the Witham Mouth on 3rd, 7 at Gibraltar Point also on 3rd, with 13 north and 15 south there on 11th, 4 at Donna Nook also on 11th, 8 at Gibraltar Point on 12th, 5 at Huttoft on 24th and a few singles elsewhere. Late records were 7 at Gibraltar Point on November 1st, 1 north at Huttoft on 25th and the last, a first winter bird, at Toft Newton Res on December 6th.

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*

Rather disappointing considering the number of Sabine's Gulls which occurred in southern England after the hurricane in October. There was only one record of an adult which paid a brief visit to Baston Fen on the afternoon of the day of the hurricane on the 16th October (DW).

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Maximum numbers in January were 15,000 at Goxhill on 8th and 10,000 at the Apex Pit roost on 28th. Breeding records included 160 pairs at Messingham and 1000 pairs at Frampton Marsh. None attempted to breed at Holbeach Marsh and a single pair at Spalding SBF which laid eggs which were thought to have been predated by a fox. Large numbers later in the year were up to 5,000 at Gibraltar Point from July to October, 5,000 at the Boston Tip from October to the end of the year, 15,000 roosting at Toft Newton Res in early December and up to 30,000 at the Apex Pit roost at the end of the year.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The largest numbers reported during the year were 5,000 roosting at Goxhill on January 8th, 6,000 at Gibraltar Point on January 19th with up to 1000 there in July and 2,500 there in November.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Recorded in every month although winter records were mainly singles. At the beginning of the year in January – February there were 1 – 2 at Apex Pit, Scopwick, Barrow Haven, Goxhill and North Cotes with 4 at North Killingholme Tip on January 19th and a single showing characteristics of the race *L. f. intermedius* at Barton on February 24th. There were generally small numbers until the end of May when there were 20 at Winterton Tip on 27th. There were 180 at Apex Pit on June 18th, 100 at Bagmoor on July 17th and 60 at Covenham Res the next day. In August there were 175 north at Swanpool on 21st and 3 birds of the race *L. f. fuscus* were in a party of 8 at Goxhill on 28th. The maximum in September was 400 at Apex Pit on 27th, then smaller numbers through October with 1 –

3 at various sites to the end of the year. Another bird of the race *L. f. fuscus* was at Saltfleetby on November 27th.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

The highest count at the beginning of the year was 1,500 at Gibraltar Point on February 1st with smaller numbers elsewhere. From September there were generally up to 200 at many sites with up to 5,000 at the Boston Tip in September and October with 2,500 there to the end of the year, 220 at the Winterton Tip in November with 325 there in December and 500 at the Killingholme Tip at the end of the year.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

The only records were singles at Bagmoor on April 30th (CJ) and on the Winterton Tip on December 3rd (JH).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

In January there were 1st winter birds at Covenham Res on 18th and 28th, Cleethorpes on 19th – 30th with a 3rd winter there on February 8th and a 1st winter again on 21st. At Grimsby /Pyewipe there was a 1st winter on January 22nd joined by another on 23rd which stayed to February 8th. At Lincoln there was a 1st winter at Apex Pit from January 21st – 27th then a 1st winter at Barton on Humber on February 25th and a 1st winter at Thealby Pits from March 27th – 29th. Also in March there were 3 first winter birds at North Killingholme between 17th – 20th and at Goxhill Marsh there was a 1st winter from 8th – 19th and another there on 30th. A first summer at Bagmoor/Winterton Tip summered from April 1st – September 17th and was probably the same bird as 1 at Reads Island/Winterringham on August 6th and 13th. Other records were a 2nd winter at Saltfleetby on September 12th, a 1st winter at Tetney on November 25th and Covenham Res on 29th and single coastal birds in December at Huttoft on 6th and 20th and at the Witham Mouth on 27th.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

At the beginning of the year there were up to 800 at Gibraltar Point in January with 50 – 100 there until September then 200 – 300 until the end of the year. The Bagmoor/Winterton Tip recorded up to 100 throughout the year with 300 there in December. Other large numbers included 630 on Cleethorpes shore on October 22nd, a maximum of 800 at the Boston Tip in October and 250 at South Killingholme at the end of the year.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

In January, Gibraltar Point recorded 80 south on 11th and 50 south on 13th each in 30 minutes duration in hard weather. There was 1 inland at Freiston on 10th and 42 in the Wash at the Welland Estuary on 26th. In March 100 flew south at Anderby on 19th and there was a first year inland at Cadney Res on 31st. In April there were 7 at Goxhill on 23rd and 55 at the Witham Mouth on 25th. May records were 100 at Tetney on 12th with 60 there on 23rd. There were no June records and most records were in July and August including a dead juvenile inland at Bagmoor on July 23rd, 50 at Huttoft on 25th and a juvenile at Goxhill on 27th. August maxima were 100 at Tetney on 4th with 60 there next day, 160 south at Gibraltar Point on 24th with inland records of a juvenile at Covenham Res on 11th joined by another on 14th. One of these juveniles was found dead on 14th and had been ringed as a nestling in July on the Isle of May. Late in the year there were 80 south at Huttoft on November 20th with 9 there on 25th and 80 at Tetney also on 25th.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

First in spring was a single bird at Tetney on April 1st followed by 2 at the Witham Mouth and 2 at Gibraltar Point on 16th with 38 there on 21st and 7 at Tetney on 22nd. The main passage occurred in May with a maximum of 50 at Gibraltar Point on 8th, then smaller numbers into June. Returning birds heading south were recorded from late July with maxima of 73 at Saltfleetby on 12th, 90 at Tetney on 28th with 140 there next day and 191 at Gibraltar Point on 30th. The main passage was in August with up to 200 daily at several coastal sites and over 1000 were recorded at Gibraltar Point on 24th. Passage continued into September with up to 100 daily and included 200 south at Huttoft on 12th

and 668 there next day. Late birds in October included 1 at Covenham Res on 17th, 8 at the Witham Mouth on 21st and 1 at Gibraltar Point on 25th.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

There were records of single adults at Huttoft during the morning of the hurricane on October 16th (AGB) and there on 18th (BMC,MJT).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

The first record was of 2 at Gibraltar Point on April 22nd then 5 at the Witham Mouth on 25th. Breeding records were 20 pairs at Frampton Marsh, 2 pairs at Tetney, Kirkby on Bain Pits and Lincoln Ballast Pit. Returning birds in the autumn were mainly in August with maxima of 60 at Thorpe Pits on 18th, 30 – 50 at Holbeach St Marks all month and 15 there on September 5th, 1 at Tetney on 6th and stragglers into October at Gibraltar Point with the last record on 24th.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Few spring records were received and the first was at Gibraltar Point on April 20th. There was 1 at Messingham on May 3rd with 2 there on 25th and 12 at Tetney on 26th. Returning birds were at the Witham Mouth on July 26th with 20 at Tetney and 37 at Saltfleetby on August 2nd and 1 – 10 at coastal sites later in the month. There were a few in September including 34 heading south-east at Tetney on 7th. October records included 1 inland at Denton Res from 9th – 11th when it had to be released after becoming entangled in fishing line, singles at Gibraltar Point on 10th, 14th and 17th with 3 there on 18th and the last was at Thorpe Pits on 21st.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

First spring records were arrivals at Tetney on April 18th with a pair at Gibraltar Point on 19th. About 3 pairs attempted to breed at Gibraltar Point but all failed, though further north at Tetney 91 pairs raised about 80 young which is a record season for the Tetney colony. The last record for Tetney was a single bird on August 23rd and the only September record was 2 at Holbeach Marsh on 5th.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Spring birds arrived both earlier and in greater numbers than in recent years with several records in late April. First were 4 at Messingham on April 16th and there were up to 4 there until 27th and 12 there on 28th, followed by 2 at Barton on 19th with 21 there on 28th, 5 at West Ashby on 25th, 2 at Covenham Res on 26th and 1 there on 30th. There were up to 6 at Covenham Res through May into early June. Return passage in August began with the first at Reads Island on 14th and 16 at Kirton Marsh on 19th. During the last week of August there were 1 – 6 at Gibraltar Point, Covenham Res, Donna Nook, West Ashby, Messingham, Wrangle, Saltfleetby, Goxhill Haven and the Witham Mouth where there were 26 on 29th. There were similar numbers during the first week of September with 23 at Holbeach Marsh from 5th – 8th, 13 at the Witham Mouth on 13th, 14 again at Holbeach Marsh on 14th – 20th and up to 3 at Covenham Res until 23rd. Late birds in October were 4 at the Witham Mouth on 3rd and singles at Thorpe Pits on 21st and at Gibraltar Point on 24th.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*

A bird probably in first summer plumage at Covenham Reservoir from June 10th – 15th (KEW,S.Lan) is a new county record. See the article later in this report. Accepted by BBRC.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

The only records early in the year were 3 at Mablethorpe on January 16th and singles at Gibraltar Point on January 4th, 17th and 25th and February 1st. There were also singles at Gibraltar Point on May 17th, July 2nd and 30th. In August there were singles at Saltfleetby on 2nd and again on 23rd with one the same day at Gibraltar Point. They were more regular in September with 2 at Saltfleetby on 20th, 3 there on 25th and on 5 dates in the month at Gibraltar Point with a maximum of 4 on 19th. Gibraltar Point recorded birds

on 6 dates in October with a maximum of 5 on 18th and there was 1 at Huttoft also on 18th. November records began with 1 found dead at Mablethorpe on 17th, then 4 at the Witham Mouth on 23rd, 4 at Huttoft on 25th and at Gibraltar Point birds on 6 dates in the month and on 4 dates in December.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

The only bird at the beginning of the year was at Gibraltar Point on January 25th. No more were recorded until 2 at Gibraltar Point on July 19th with 3 at Tetney on 30th. In August 5 were at Saltfleetby on 2nd with 2 at Gibraltar Point on 21st and 3 there on 24th, 1 there on September 16th and 20th with 1 at Saltfleetby on 25th. Singles in October were at Saltfleetby on 11th and on five dates at Gibraltar Point where there was 1 on November 8th. The last record was of 3 at Huttoft on November 20th.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

At the beginning of the year 3 were found dead on the tide-line at Chapel St Leonards on January 25th with another found dead at Anderby Creek on February 22nd. Apart from 2 birds at Gibraltar Point on October 25th, all records of live birds were in November. There was a small influx during the first week of November with 3 at Gibraltar Point on 1st, 2 there the next day, 1 at Barton on 3rd, and 1 inland at Covenham Res from 3rd–5th. There were 13 at Gibraltar Point on 10th, singles on 14th, 15th, 20th and 22nd, then 11 north and 1 south at Huttoft on 22nd, 16 north and 2 south there on 24th, 29 north and 3 south there on 25th, 2 at Gibraltar Point also on 25th, 2 at East Halton on 26th and finally 1 north at Huttoft on 27th. Three single birds were picked up inland on 25th. The first at Habrough was released the same day, the others at Boston and Sleaford were released at Huttoft on 26th. During the first influx 2 were found dead at Mablethorpe on 5th and during the second influx a further 6 or so were found along the Lincolnshire coast. A further 3 found dead on the tide-line in mid-December probably resulted from the second influx.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

The only record was of 2 flying north off Sandilands on November 22nd.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

The only significant record was a concentration of over 350 at New Holland from the end of November into December.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

In January there were concentrations of 56 at Thornton Abbey on 3rd, 55 at North Killingholme on 12th, 60 at Gibraltar Point from 5th – 23rd with up to 25 recorded at Denton, Bagmoor and Barrow Haven. Goxhill had 40 on February 26th and Gibraltar Point recorded 30 in February and 20 in March but only up to 6 for the rest of the year. Large numbers were again recorded in November with 40 at East Halton on 8th, 25 at Worlaby on 21st and 22 at Winteringham Haven on 31st.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Large numbers in January included 1,200 at Blyborough Grange on 6th, 1,500 at Killingholme on 17th and 700 at Messingham on 30th. In spring Gibraltar Point had 400 in April and Theddlethorpe 300 in May. In autumn numbers built up in October with Gibraltar Point recording 219 on 11th, 740 on 14th and 1,500 on 28th while a maximum of 600 at Theddlethorpe occurred on November 21st.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Numbers at Boston attracted by grain at the docks exceeded 200 during January – March and October–December. There were 100 at New Holland on June 28th increasing to 170 during July and 220 during November–December. Elsewhere there were 143 at Theddlethorpe on December 5th and 120 at Bourne in December.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

In April the first was at Baumber on 14th – 15th, then 1 at Morkery Wood and 2 at

Holbeach St Marks on 19th, Willoughby on 21st, Lincoln and Gibraltar Point on 22nd with the main arrival from 24th. The only large numbers reported were in August with 91 near Bourne on 2nd and 61 at Nocton Fen on 31st. Late records in October were 1 at Tetney on 7th, 2 south at Gibraltar Point on 13th and the final bird at Gosberton on 18th.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

The first arrivals were in April with singles at Bulby Wood on 14th, Donna Nook on 19th, Messingham on 21st records from Bourne Wood, Saltfleetby, Humberston, Goxhill and Gibraltar Point all on 23rd. There were just two September reports, at Marshchapel on 2nd and Gibraltar Point on 8th.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

One was found just before dusk at Rauceby Warren on October 18th (DB,SB,BJH et al.), was seen by many observers on the 19th but could not be found the next day. This is the second county record of this American vagrant; the previous one being found dead at Welton in October 1978. Accepted by BBRC.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

There were no unusual records during the year and most referred to single birds. Around 300 pairs are known to nest in the county; see the article in this report.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Records of 1 – 2 birds were widely scattered during the year. The only breeding records received were from Norton Disney and Tetney Lock with pairs during the breeding season at Grantham, Fishtoft, Freiston, Kirton (2 pairs), Holbeach St Marks, Burton, Saltfleetby and Goxhill.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Widespread throughout the county during the year. The only breeding records came from Scotter, Laughton, Boultham Park and Temple Wood which is surely a very poor indication of breeding status of what is a common widespread bird in the county.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Largest roosts in January were 8 at the Witham/Brant Rivers confluence, 7 at Barrow Haven, 6 at the Hobhole, 5 at Goxhill and 4 at Gibraltar Point with up to 3 at several other locations. Breeding records were 2 pairs at Bourne Wood and at Gibraltar Point, with single pairs at Branston Delph, Aubourn, Laughton Forest and Stapleford Wood.



Long-eared Owl (G.P.Catley)

Although at birds were at Messingham throughout the summer there was no proof of breeding. The only birds recorded in autumn/winter were singles at Donna Nook on October 1st and Gibraltar Point during December.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

During January – March there were 1 – 2 birds at coastal locations with the occasional sighting inland including Baston Fen, Tongue End, Deeping High Bank and Tattershall. In February there were 5 at Frampton Marsh on 15th, 5 at Gibraltar Point on 21st, 6 at Holbeach Marsh on 28th, 5 at Alkborough Flats on February 1st, 7 there on March 21st, 5 at East Halton on March 23rd and 10 there on April 5th. There were no breeding records and no summer records apart from one seen at Winteringham in July. There were a few records in August but birds became widespread by October with 1 – 2 birds at most coastal locations until the end of the year and 3 at Gibraltar Point on October 11th, 3 at Donna Nook on October 24th and 3 at Alkborough on December 4th.

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

There were at least 4 males and 2 females present at Laughton Forest from June 8th and at least 2 males and 1 female at Stapleford Wood during the summer but the breeding success is not known. The only records away from these two traditional sites were of one at Gibraltar Point on May 21st and of a 'churring' male at Whisby on June 18th. The last records were of 3 at Laughton Forest on August 21st and a single bird at Messingham on September 15th.

Swift *Apus apus*

Early birds in April were at Kirton Marsh on 19th and Gibraltar Point on the same day, followed by others at Bourne on 23rd and 30th, Barton on 29th and 4 at Gibraltar Point on 30th. The main spring passage occurred on May 10th with 145 north off the sea at Gibraltar Point, 150 north at Theddlethorpe, 250 at Saltfleetby, 100 in one hour at Donna Nook, 600 at Tetney and 50 in half an hour at Goxhill. There were 500 at Covenham on May 13th and 400 at Messingham on 15th. The largest numbers noted in summer were at Gibraltar Point with 850 south on June 7th and 400 daily from the end of June to a maximum of 2,250 on July 4th. Late birds in September were 2 at Scopwick on 20th, then singles at Barton on 22nd, North Somercotes on 23rd, Barrow on 24th, Langworth on 26th and Gibraltar Point on 27th. Two stragglers into October were a single at Donna Nook on 2nd and a late bird found grounded at Bourne on 9th and released successfully.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*

One was seen at Gibraltar Point on April 24th (AJB,ME,KMW et al.) and presumably the same bird was found dead at Seacroft on May 2nd. This was the third record for the reserve and the eighth county record. Accepted by BBRC.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Early year records were widespread including coastal ones at Donna Nook and pairs in the breeding season were noted at Holywell Lake, Ancaster, West Ashby, Metherringham Delph, Burton Pits, Whisby Pits, Lincoln LNER Pits, Messingham where breeding was proved, Barton and Barrow Haven. Post breeding season coastal records from August to October included 1 – 2 at Tetney and Theddlethorpe and 1 at Gibraltar Point. Birds were more widespread during November – December and included 1 at Frampton Marsh on December 14th.

Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Gibraltar Point recorded 3 on May 5th (RPM,AS,KMW et al.) which was the fifth record (12 birds) for the reserve. Another party of 3 were seen at Holbeach St Marks on June 13th (KH,RH). Prior to these there have only been 7 county records with 5 this century all since 1957 (12 birds). Records accepted by BBRC.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Singles were seen flying over Grantham on April 24th (PAD), at Ludborough on April 26th (WPB) and at Twyford Wood from April 29th to May 1st (ES).

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

There was one spring record of 1 at Saltfleetby on May 7th. In August one was trapped at Anderby Creek on 26th and there were singles at Gibraltar Point on 26th, 28th and 30th, at Saltfleetby on 26th to 30th with 2 on 29th and 1 at Donna Nook on September 9th. There was just one inland record, at Temple Wood on September 1st.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Records of resident pairs were received from Bourne Wood, Denton Res, Temple Wood, Kirkby Moor, Moor Farm, Woodhall, Tattershall, Lincoln, Linwood Warren, Messingham and Normanby Park. Apart from these there were singles at Willoughby Wood on March 3rd and Gibraltar Point on May 30th. Coastal records included 1 – 2 from Tetney, Saltfleetby and Theddlethorpe from August 8th – October 24th with 1 at North Somercotes on November 21st.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

In the early part of the year 1 – 2 birds were regularly seen at Bourne Wood, Burton Pits, Woodhall Spa and Gibraltar Point. Few records were received during the summer and the only breeding reported was at Burton Coggles and Weelsby Wood with probable breeding at Laughton and Normanby Park. Coastal records in autumn included singles at Saltfleetby on July 26th, Gibraltar Point from August 12th to end of year and, from October, at Cleethorpes, Donna Nook, North Somercotes and Saltfleetby.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

Records early in the year came from Bourne, Denton, Whisby and Burton Pits. At Burton a male was drumming and excavating a nest hole on April 15th and a pair were displaying on 19th, at Boston a male excavated a nest hole and was present all summer but no female was seen and at Hoplands Wood 2 males were drumming on March 31st. Two pairs bred successfully at Weelsby Wood which was the only positive breeding record received, but other breeding season records were received from Welton Wood, Bourne Wood, Temple Wood, Kirton, Rauceby, Messingham, Swinderby and West Ashby. Later in the year records were of singles at Roxton Wood on October 17th, Bourne Wood throughout October and at Denton Res on October 25th and December 6th.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

At the county breeding site where a pair was proved breeding in 1984 after an absence of 25 years and at least one pair has bred annually since, there were two pairs and a single male. One pair raised three juveniles.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Large concentrations in early January were 220 at Tetney and 100 at Donna Nook on 3rd, 200 at Gibraltar Point on 1st – 6th, 100 at Immingham on 12th and a south-westerly movement of 250 over Bourne also on 12th. Gibraltar Point recorded 100 daily for the rest of the month with an influx of 500 on 19th and there were 150 at Goxhill on 16th, 100 at the Witham Mouth on 18th and 200 at Holbeach Marsh on February 1st. At Gibraltar Point there was a marked southerly movement in mid October with 1500 on 11th, 800 on 13th and 100 on most other days in the month. There were 100 at Holbeach Marsh on October 24th and 220 at Tetney on December 23rd.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

At Donna Nook there were 6 on January 6th, 7 on 11th then 4 until March 29th. Nearby, at Tetney, there were 2 on April 12th – 13th. The only autumn record was of 1 at Humberston on October 2nd.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

The early arrivals were in March with the first at Messingham on 27th, then 1 at Gibraltar Point on 28th, 1 at Thorpe Pits and 2 at Grimsby on 29th and 5 at Sleaford Ballast Pit on 30th. Birds were more widespread during the early part of April and by mid month were recorded in good numbers including 100 at Messingham on 18th, 170 at Barton also on

18th, with 260 there on 19th and 100 at Whisby Pits on 21st. Several observers reported a welcome increase over last years figures though no figures were received for many colonies. Numbers later in the year included 2000 at Alkborough Flats on July 17th with over 500 at Gibraltar Point on July 23rd, 24th and 30th. In September, Gibraltar Point recorded a peak of over 500 on 9th and the Barton roost peaked at 5000 on the 4th. The last birds were recorded at Gibraltar Point with 6 on October 17th.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

First were at Kirton Marsh and Messingham on April 8th, then at Baston Fen and Tetney on 9th, with 1 at Spalding and 5 at Whisby Pits on 10th. The first 2 at Gibraltar Point were on the 11th with the main arrival of 62 on 18th, 50 on 19th and 500 on 30th. Major roosts in the autumn were 4,000 at Baston Fen on September 9th, 15,000 at Barton on 4th declining to 5,000 on 16th with 20,000 at Barrow Haven on 22nd increasing to 35,000 on 24th. Birds were still widespread until the end of October and November records were 10 at Gibraltar Point and 6 at Skegness on 1st, 2 at Gibraltar Point on 2nd with the last at the Hobhole near Boston on 4th.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

One was present at Gibraltar Point from May 2nd – 5th (KMW,IEE et al.) giving many observers the chance to see this rare bird for the county. Then also at Gibraltar Point 2 were present from October 24th – 28th (RAJ,CB et al.). These constitute the second, third and fourth records for the county.

Spring record accepted by BBRC; October records still under consideration.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

There was a very early record of 1 at Gibraltar Point on March 28th which is the earliest record ever by over a week for the reserve. No more were recorded until April 12th with 1 at Lincoln Ballast Pit, and others in April at Gibraltar Point on 16th, with 22 there and 1 at South Witham on 18th, Tetney, Barton and Burton Pits on 19th. Returning southerly movement was recorded at coastal locations in mid September with 150 at Gibraltar Point on 10th, 300 there on 17th and 120 on 24th, 300 at Theddlethorpe on 16th and 80 there on 19th. There were several records in October and late birds in November included 1 at Horncastle, 4 at Skegness and 4 at Gibraltar Point all on 1st, with the last at both Gibraltar Point and Fulstow on 14th.



Richard's Pipit (P.Haywood)

Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

In autumn 1 was at Tetney on September 30th – October 1st (DJW) , 1 at Donna Nook on October 2nd (GPC) and 1 at Saltfleetby on 4th (DH). One was present at Grainthorpe from October 11th joined by another on 17th both staying to 25th (MM et al.) and 1 was at Gibraltar Point on 12th (JPS).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

First was at Tetney on April 12th with others at Callan's Lane Wood and Gibraltar Point from 17th, Donna Nook on 18th, Snipe Dales and South Witham from 19th, Barton on 22nd, Whaplode Fen on 23rd, Barrow Haven on 24th and at several other locations after 26th. Reports during the breeding season included 25 singing males at Laughton, with others at Scrubbs Wood, Twyford Wood, Bourne Wood, Twigmoor and Easton Wood. Autumn passage was noted at Gibraltar Point in the latter half of August with 8 on 22nd, 6 on 23rd and 5 on 28th with singles up to mid September. The last birds were singles at Tetney on October 1st and Saltfleetby on 4th and 3 at Donna Nook on 2nd – 4th .

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

There were few records involving large numbers in the early part of the year; maximum was 45 at Messingham on February 5th. There was a significant arrival at the end of March with 60 at Gibraltar Point on 26th, 50 at Holbeach Marsh, 200 at Barton and 100 at Goxhill on 29th, 55 at Ashbyville on April 2nd and 70 at Theddlethorpe on 5th. The main autumn southerly passage occurred in September; Theddlethorpe recording 200 on 13th, 400 on 16th and 50 on 19th, Gibraltar Point recording 100 on 8th and 150 on 16th and there were 100 at Witham Mouth on 25th. In October there was a very marked southerly movement at Gibraltar Point with 1540 on 11th, 2000 on 12th and 800 on 13th.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Birds were recorded in ones and twos at most coastal locations from the beginning of the year to mid April. Higher numbers were 27 at Gibraltar Point on January 3rd with 7 there on 19th and 8 at Holbeach Marsh on April 12th. First report in the autumn was 1 at Toft Newton Res on August 28th then again 1 – 2 at coastal locations from September to the end of the year with maximum numbers of 10 at Tetney in November and 12 at the Witham Mouth on December 27th.

Single birds of the Scandinavian race *A. p. littoralis* were recorded in April at Covenham Res on 10th and on the Mere at Gibraltar Point on 16th.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

A single bird at Holbeach St Marks on January 25th (PCI) is the first record for the county since this species was split from Rock Pipit.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

First records were in April with singles at West Firsby on 5th and Covenham Res from 5th with 5 there on 10th, Holbeach Fen on 11th and Hubberts Bridge on 12th. Records were widespread from 16th with passage lasting until mid May. During this period Covenham Res recorded up to 200 on the first few days in May. Breeding was recorded at Cleethorpes shore, Rothwell, Caistor Top, with 2 pairs at Mablethorpe, 3 pairs at Nene Point and 'many' pairs at Cadney Res with other birds present in the breeding season from several other localities. The peak of the autumn passage at Gibraltar Point was 50 on September 4th with other September records of 5 at Mablethorpe from 6th – 13th, 1 at Messingham up to 7th, 2 at Baston Fen up to 9th and 67 at the Witham Mouth on 12th. October records were at Donna Nook on 3rd and Gibraltar Point up to 15th.

M. f. flava; Birds showing characteristics of Blue-headed Wagtails were as follows; a male at Humberston Fitties on April 24th, a male at Tetney on April 26th – 27th, a male at Donna Nook on April 29th, 3 males at Covenham Res on April 25th where 2 remained until 30th and 1 to May 28th with 1 there on June 20th. Finally in autumn there was a female at North Cotes on October 2nd.

M. f. thunbergi; males showing characteristics of Grey-headed Wagtails were at South Ferriby on May 8th and at Goxhill Haven on June 21st.

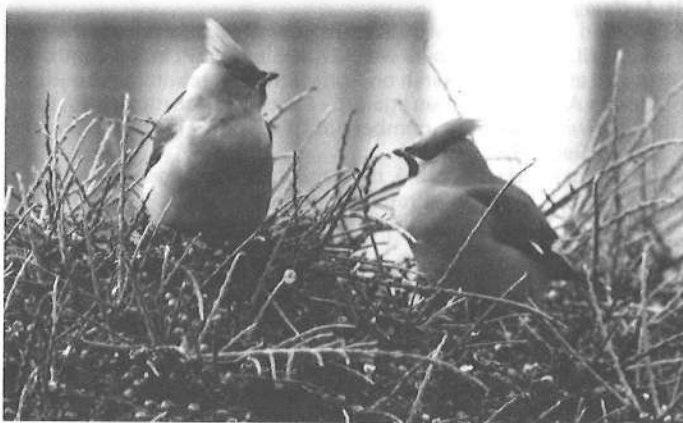
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Birds at the beginning of the year included singles at Corby Glen, Bourne, Lea Marsh, Scopwick, Nettleham, Louth and up to 4 on the Sincil Drain at Lincoln until mid March. There was 1 at Covenham Res during April and a female was at Snitterby Weir on June 20th. There were no breeding records. First in the autumn was 1 at Covenham Res on August 11th with the main arrivals in September with 1 at Bardney Pits from 1st – 20th, Covenham Res on 2nd, Bourne from 23rd to the end of year, Whisby Pits on 7th, Louth on 29th, West Rasen on 30th and 1 occasionally at Gibraltar Point from 20th – October 18th. There were more from October including singles at Baumber, Donna Nook, Tetney and Apex Pits and 2 at New Waltham and Sleaford. Birds in November included singles at Lincoln, Nettleham, Grimsby, Burton Pits and Fulstow most staying to the end of the year.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Generally small numbers reported throughout the year from widespread localities with the maximum numbers, not unexpectedly, from late year roosts with 98 at Baston Fen on November 1st, 35 at Scunthorpe Steelworks and 25 at Lincoln Ballast Pits in December being the highest numbers at roosts reported.

M. a. alba: The first White Wagtail in spring was at Covenham Res on March 30th where there were singles up to April 9th then, 2 on 10th – 15th, 7 on 16th, 3 on 18th, 4 on 22nd, 2 on 23rd then 1 until May 2nd. Other spring records were 2 at Goxhill on April 27th, 3 at Humberston on 29th and singles in April at Cadney Res, Ashbyville, Messingham, Donna Nook and Tetney. May records were singles at Messingham on 4th, Humberston on 8th, Tetney and Covenham Res on 14th. There was just one autumn bird, at the Witham Mouth on September 12th.



Waxwings (K.Atkin)

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

All records were in January. There were 6 at the Cortaulds Factory on the South Humber Bank from 1st – 7th, 1 at Gibraltar Point on 3rd, 2 at Scunthorpe on 5th, up to 6 at Skegness from 7th – 14th, 1 at Horncastle and 1 at Tetney on 11th, 1 at Immingham on 17th and 5 at Heckington on 29th.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A general increase on last years low figures was reported. At Theddlethorpe 164 were ringed during the year compared with 93 in 1986.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

There were no significant records of this common and widespread species throughout the county.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

There were widespread reports of 1 – 10 birds throughout the year. There were no widespread falls reported in autumn but a small influx of around 30 birds was recorded between Tetney and Saltfleetby on October 1st with up to 30 at Gibraltar Point from the same date peaking at over 100 on 21st – 23rd.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Birds arrived in April with the first at Bourne Wood on 18th, Temple Wood and Whisby on 19th, Saltfleetby on 21st and a singing male at Gibraltar Point on 21st and 22nd with possibly the same bird on May 8th and 17th. There were probably in excess of 6 pairs at both Bourne and Temple Woods with 1 pair raising 3 juveniles at Castle Bytham and other breeding season records of up to 4 males at Whisby Pits and up to 3 males at Kirkby Moor and others at Tortoiseshell Wood, Chambers Wood, St Helens Wood and Messingham. The last record was of one trapped at Gibraltar Point on September 13th and retrapped on 20th which is the latest ever record for the reserve.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

There was an early record of a almost spotless male at Saltfleetby on April 5 – 6th (KA,KEW,MM). In May there was a female at Gibraltar Point on 23rd (GWA) which is the first spring record for the reserve, and a female at Donna Nook on 25th (KEW). Males of the Red-spotted race *L. s. svecica* were a single at Saltfleetby from 23rd – 25th (GPC et al.) and at least 3 males at Donna Nook on 23rd with a minimum of 2 daily to 25th (KEW, GPC et al.).

There was an inland record of a singing male of the 'white-spotted' race, *L. s. cyanecula*, at Whisby Pits from June 21st to July 4th (KDD et al.).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

An excellent year with over 90 records though obviously many involving the same birds. The first was a female at Freiston Shore remaining from late 1986 to January 3rd. Spring arrival began in March with a female at Goxhill Haven from 3rd – 19th, then 1 at Donna Nook from 27th and a female at Gibraltar point on 31st. There was a marked passage in April with maxima of 10 at Donna Nook, 5 at Grainthorpe and 6 at Gibraltar Point on 5th, with 2 at Humberston and 2 at Tetney on 9th, 4 at Covenham Res on 19th with singles at Ashbyville on 2nd – 6th, Skegness on 4th and East Halton on 5th. Breeding season records included a singing male in Louth Market Place in June, a pair at Boston's Pilgrim Hospital from end of May to mid June though there was no proof of breeding. Two pairs bred at Spalding with 1 pair being double brooded, 3 pairs bred at Grimsby and 1 pair at Scunthorpe Steelworks. There was a single at Gibraltar Point on July 1st. Autumn passage in October included 1 – 3 at coastal locations and late birds in November were 1 at Gibraltar Point on 1st and up to 2 at Covenham Res from 1st to 9th.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

The first spring record was of 1 at Saltfleetby on April 5th, followed by 1 inland at Waddingham on 12th and 1 at Covenham Res on 16th. The bulk of records occurred between 23rd and 27th with most records of 1 – 3 in the Saltfleetby area. A smaller movement took place in May with singles at Theddlethorpe on 10th and 11th, Humberston Fitties on 16th, Saltfleetby on 22nd – 23rd and Donna Nook on 23rd. In autumn 1 was at Tetney on August 26th with 3 at Donna Nook on September 30th. Most records were in October and the largest numbers reported were 8 at Donna Nook on 2nd, 8 at Gibraltar Point on 3rd and 12 at Donna Nook on 4th. The last record was at Gibraltar Point on October 27th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

First was a single at Ashbyville on April 2nd followed by 2 at North Cotes on 6th with 10 at Ashbyville on 8th. Other records for April were mostly between 23rd – 26th with maxima of 10 at Donna Nook on 25th and 6 at Saltfleetby on 26th. The last spring record was 6 at Donna Nook on May 23rd. In July there were 3 to 12 birds at Lincoln Ballast Pit from 13th to 28th then from August birds were more widespread especially in coastal locations and included 6 at Saltfleetby on 7th, with 12 there on 29th, 10 at Gibraltar Point on 26th

and 3 at Donna Nook from 28th to September 4th. Also in September there were 5 at Frampton Marsh on 13th with 3 at East Halton Skitter on the same day. The last records were in October with 2 at Gibraltar Point on 20th, 1 at Tetney on 21st and 2 at Donna Nook on 22nd.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

There were no records of wintering birds during the early part of the year and the first spring birds were in April at Ashbyville on 3rd followed by a female at Tetney on 5th, Gibraltar Point on 18th and males at Tetney on 27th and Donna Nook on May 2nd. A male was present at Tetney on June 17th but the first autumn record was at Gibraltar Point on September 6th. Birds were widespread in October with up to 4 at Gibraltar Point from 9th – 23rd, up to 4 at Donna Nook, Tetney, Saltfleetby and 2 at Huttoft on 11th, singles at Anderby Creek on 21st and Saltfleet on 22nd. The last were in November with a female at East Halton on 1st and a late bird at Gibraltar Point on 15th.

S.t.maura – *S.t.stejnegeri* :- a female/immature showing characteristics of one or other of the Siberian races was at Donna Nook on October 2nd (GPC,DH). Accepted by BBRC.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The first arrivals were in March at Tetney on 14th and Donna Nook on 15th with the main arrival from 28th when there were 5 at Covenham Res and 1 at Gibraltar Point with others at Thurlby Fen, East Halton and Saltfleetby on 29th, Ashbyville on 30th and 2 at Wolla Bank Pits on 31st. Maximum numbers in April were 8 at Humberston and 10 at Covenham Res on 9th increasing to 19 there by 12th. Smaller movements were recorded in May although there were 12 at Humberston Fitties on 4th. Juveniles were reported from the Nene Mouth in June and there were 4 other juvenile sightings at coastal sites in July. There was generally little movement in August except that Gibraltar Point had at least 10 all month which increased to 20 in early September. There were 8 at Tetney on September 23rd and singles at many coastal sites in October with the last record at Tetney on October 27th.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Spring passage through the county began in April with the first at Tetney, Anderby Creek and Humberston Fitties on 5th, then none until 16th when there was 1 at Gibraltar Point and another at Theddlethorpe. Inland there was a male with a party of Fieldfares at Ancaster Pits on 17th with another inland at West Rasen on 21st, then generally 1 – 2 at most coastal locations from then until the last week of May. First in the autumn were in late September with a single bird at Gibraltar Point on 26th and a juvenile at West Rasen on 30th. There were only a few records in October with a maximum of 3 at Gibraltar Point on 11th. November records were singles at Grainthorpe and Donna Nook on 1st, 1 at Saltfleetby on 1st and 8th and an immature with Blackbirds at Roxton on 15th – 22nd.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Gibraltar Point recorded up to 100 throughout January then 20 – 50 until the autumn. The only other significant records were of pre-emigration flocks of 30 at North Cotes and 50 at Donna Nook both on April 6th. In autumn there was a small fall of around 100 birds at Gibraltar Point on October 4th with the main arrival of up to 400 there occurring on 24th. Peak numbers of 60 at Theddlethorpe and 70 at Tetney were recorded on 27th with 60 seen arriving at Donna Nook on 28th. Regular numbers of up to 100 were present at several coastal locations throughout November with generally smaller numbers in December although there were 160 at Barton on 14th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

There were few records of large numbers in the early part of the year though Gibraltar Point recorded 200 – 300 during January – March and there were 450 heading north at Theddlethorpe on February 7th. There were several records of returning birds in April with late records in May of 1 at Weelsby Woods on 1st, Barrow Haven on 6th, 2 at the Witham Mouth on 16th and 1 at North Somercotes Warren on 17th. There was an unusual record of 1 at Hemingby on June 11th. First arrivals in autumn were in September with 2 at Gibraltar Point on 5th and 1 there on 18th and 1 at Tetney on 26th.

The main arrival occurred throughout October with up to 200 at coastal locations with 390 arriving off the sea at Skidbrooke on 25th and 675 at Gibraltar Point on 26th. In November there were up to 100 at coastal locations with up to 200 at Gibraltar Point, 166 at Holbeach Marsh on 14th and 210 at Frampton Marsh on 29th. In December there were inland records of 400 at Baston Fen on 12th, over 300 at Rauceby Warren on 27th and 500 at Barton on 22nd.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

There were no records of significant numbers early in the year. The first of the autumn 'falls' occurred in early October with 400 between Saltfleetby and Tetney on 1st, 125 at Donna Nook on 2nd and 200 at Gibraltar Point on 3rd and 4th. There was another influx late in the month with 112 at Gibraltar Point on 20th, 200 there on 21st–22nd and 70 at Tetney on 21st.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

There were low numbers early in the year; Gibraltar Point recorded single figures only in January and February and the maximum number recorded was 29 at Barton on February 25th. Mainly single figures were again reported in March and April with a maximum of 50 at Willoughby Wood on April 13th. Late birds in May were singles trapped at Theddlethorpe on 10th, 25th and 26th. First in the autumn was at South Witham on September 19th with 2 at Gibraltar Point on 27th and 1 at Wrangle Marsh on 28th. Birds became widespread in October with influxes of over 200 at Gibraltar Point on 21st and 24th and an autumn maximum of 40 at Tetney on 27th. Maxima in December were 100 at Bourne on 11th, 280 at Barton on 14th and 100 at Rauceby Warren on 27th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

The only concentrations of 20 or more were 58 heading west over Pinchbeck on August 15th, 20 at Goxhill Marsh on September 27th and 40 at Rauceby Warren on December 27th.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

The first was a singing male at Gibraltar Point on April 15th. This was followed by singing males at Wolla Bank Pit and Goxhill on 17th, Bourne Wood on 18th, Killingholme, Tetney and Chapel Six Marshes on 19th, Saltfleetby on 20th, Messingham and Whisby on 21st and at many other locations from the last week of April through to August. Although birds undoubtedly bred at many sites, there were no confirmed breeding records. Departure dates are difficult to assess for this species which are normally only heard during the breeding season but the last records were a juvenile trapped and ringed at Seacroft on September 19th and another bird seen at Saltfleetby on October 1st.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

The first was at Spalding on April 16th followed by others at Cleethorpes, Humberston, Barton, Snitterby Carrs and Covenham Res on 18th, Killingholme, Messingham and Chapel Pit on 19th then at other locations from 20th. Breeding season records included 30 males at Messingham, 22 at Whisby Pits and 127 pairs between Barton and Barrow Haven. At Theddlethorpe 68 were ringed during the year compared with the previous highest annual total of 30. Returning birds were recorded in small numbers at coastal locations during mid August to mid September with the last records at Barton on September 21st and Gibraltar point on 25th.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

April records included 1 at Barton on 20th with 4 there, 1 at Gibraltar Point and 1 at Humberston on 21st, 1 at Saltfleetby on 22nd, 1 at Lincoln and 4 at Messingham on 23rd with birds recorded at many sites during the following week including 33 males at Barton on 28th. Breeding season records included 40 males at Messingham and 337 pairs between Barton and Barrow Haven. The main autumn passage occurred in the first week of September and late records were of 2 at Saltfleetby up to October 4th, 1 at Barton up to 13th and singles at Gibraltar Point on 13th, 14th, 23rd and 24th which is the

second latest ever date for the reserve.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

The only records during the year were 3 singles in autumn. One was at Donna Nook on August 26th with another caught and ringed the same day at Anderby Creek and the last was caught and ringed at Theddlethorpe on September 21st.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

The only record was of a single bird caught and ringed at Theddlethorpe on August 22nd.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

An early arrival was at Barton on April 19th – 21st with others at Theddlethorpe and Gibraltar Point from 24th, Donna Nook, Tetney and Grimsby from 25th, Denton Res, Bourne and Messingham from 26th with others arriving at many localities during the last week of the month. At Theddlethorpe 112 were ringed during the year compared with the previous highest annual total of 93. The last records were in October with singles at Gibraltar Point and Donna Nook on 1st, Gibraltar Point on 4th, Tetney and Lincoln Ballast Pit on 5th and the last at Gibraltar Point on 12th.

Single birds showing characteristics of the Siberian race, *S.c. blythi*, were caught and ringed at Gibraltar Point on September 27th (KWW) and seen at Donna Nook on October 4th. (GPC)

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

First was at Gibraltar Point from April 16th, then Theddlethorpe and Goxhill from 21st, Saltfleetby and Denton Res from 22nd, Tetney and Humberston from 23rd, Bourne, Messingham, Bagmoor and Whisby from 24th with others becoming widespread during the last week of April. Summer records included 43 singing males at Gibraltar Point. The main autumn passage was in the latter half of August which continued into September with the last records at Donna Nook, Saltfleetby and Gibraltar Point on October 3rd – 4th and the last at Theddlethorpe on 11th.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

First in the spring was at Gibraltar Point on April 22nd – 24th with others at Theddlethorpe on 25th, Denton Res on 26th, Bourne Wood and Barton on 28th, Cleethorpes and Donna Nook on 29th with other arrivals elsewhere in early May. During the year 68 were ringed at Temple Wood compared with 38 in the previous best year. The main autumn passage was during the last week of August with smaller numbers in September. Late records were singles at Tetney on October 3rd, Gibraltar Point on 3rd, 4th and 11th, 2 at Theddlethorpe on 11th and the last at Tetney on 31st.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Birds were recorded in every month. In January there were 2 females and a male at Gibraltar Point on 3rd with singles there on other dates in the month and a female at Denton on 10th. A male was seen at Cleethorpes on February 3rd. Birds began arriving at the end of March and were widespread by early April. Breeding records included 6 pairs at Messingham, 9 pairs at Twigmoor and 6 pairs at Barton. The main return passage was in September with many present to the end of October. November records included singles on four dates at Gibraltar Point, 2 at Immingham on 2nd, 1 at Saltfleet on 8th, a female at East Halton on 18th, 3 at Mablethorpe on 17th with 1 there on 28th, 1 at North Somercotes on 18th with 3 there on 26th and 2 there on 30th and 1 at Rauceby Warren and 1 at Denton on 29th. In December there were 1 – 4 at Theddlethorpe to mid month, a male at Gibraltar Point on 8th with a female there on 17th and 3 at North Somercotes on 20th.

Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

One was present at Pyes Hall, Donna Nook on October 21st (GPC, MM et al.). One seen nearby later the same day (HB) was almost certainly a different bird. Accepted as 'at least one' by BBRC.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

There were several records in late autumn with the first at North Somercotes Warren on September 29th (GPC). In October there was 1 at Saltfleetby on 1st (MWS,KDD), 1 at Donna Nook from 1st – 11th (KEW,KDD et al.), and 1 at Tetney on 21st – 22nd (HB). In November 1 was at North Somercotes Warren on 7th, 8th, 13th and 14th (PH,DMJ,PJW et al.).

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

One was at Donna Nook on October 3rd (GPC) which may have been the same bird nearby on October 5th (JH). Under consideration by BBRC.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Single birds in April were at Chapel Pit on 25th, Grimsthorpe Park on 27th and Humberston on 30th with others in May at Weelsby Wood on 1st, Saltfleetby and Donna Nook on 2nd, Morkery Wood on 4th and Burton Pits on 10th. The only autumn records were singles at Swayfield on July 28th and Wyberton on September 6th.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Recorded in every month. Birds in January and February were reported from Saltfleetby, Messingham and Gibraltar Point. Migrants arrived at the end of March at many sites throughout the county. The main return passage was in September – October with 1 – 5 at many coastal sites during November. December records were 2 all month at Gibraltar Point, 1 at South Hykeham on 24th and 1 at Kirton on 28th into 1988. Birds showing characteristics of the race *P. c. abietenus* were at Donna Nook on October 28th and at Gibraltar Point on November 8th. Birds showing characteristics of the race *P. c. tristis* were at Messingham from late 1986 to at least February 15th, Gibraltar Point from January 1st – 3rd, Waddingham on 6th, Tetney on October 11th, Donna Nook on 22nd, North Somercotes in mid November and at Barton on December 14th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Birds arrived in early April with singles at Callans Lane Wood, Humberston Fitties and Tetney on 5th, Rigsby Wood, Boultham Park, Messingham and 3 at Lincoln Ballast Pit on 6th, 1 at Barton and 3 at Denton on 7th, 2 at Ashbyville and 4 at Messingham on 8th with the first at Gibraltar Point on 9th. Breeding records included 20 males at Gibraltar Point and 34 pairs at Barton/Barrow Haven Pits. The main autumn passage was from mid August to early September with the last in October at Tetney on 3rd, Donna Nook on 5th and 1 – 2 at Gibraltar Point on 8th.

Details of one bird showing characteristics of the race *P. t. yakutensis* at Donna Nook on October 21st – 22nd (GPC,MM,KA et al.) have been submitted to BBRC.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Resident birds were recorded throughout in small numbers. On the coast, Gibraltar Point recorded 1 – 3 during January – March then recorded an influx of 8 on April 4th and 10 on 5th with the spring maxima of 19 at Tetney occurring on April 4th and 11 at Theddlethorpe occurring on 5th. The autumn passage began in September increasing during early October with 45 at Gibraltar Point on 9th, 60 there on 11th, 50 at Theddlethorpe on 11th, 70 at Gibraltar Point on 12th, 100 there on 22nd, decreasing to 60 by the end of the month and single figures by the end of the year.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

There were no inland records during the year. The first was a male at Gibraltar Point on March 29th and either it or other males were seen intermittently until July 21st, one having taken up territory in the Plantation from the end of May onwards. Other spring records were all in April, with 2 at North Somercotes on 2nd, singles there on 3rd, Anderby Creek, Grainthorpe and Donna Nook on 5th, North Somercotes and Tetney on 8th and one trapped at Theddlethorpe on 16th. First in the autumn was at Gibraltar Point on September 5th, with 2 there and 2 trapped at Theddlethorpe on October 11th and another at Gibraltar Point on 28th. One was trapped at Theddlethorpe on November 7th and one of the earlier birds re-trapped there on November 11th with another at Gibraltar

Point on 12th. The last record was a single at Gibraltar Point on December 30th.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

The first birds in spring arrived on May 16th with singles at Boston, Bourne Wood and Temple Wood and 3 at Gibraltar Point. Other May records included 2 at Swallow on 20th, 3 at Burton Pits on 24th and 5 at Gibraltar Point on 25th with others widespread throughout the county after that date. Main autumn passage was in September with several present to the first week of October. Late October records were at Gibraltar Point on 11th – 12th, Rauceby Warren on 22nd and Tetney on 27th.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

In October there were singles at Donna Nook (RJB) and Saltfleetby (GPC) on 3rd and singles at Anderby Creek (DH), Theddlethorpe (MWS,KDD), Donna Nook (GPC,KEW) and 2 at Saltfleetby (KDD,MWS,CRC,HB,MM et al.) on 4th. Later in the month there were singles at Saltfleetby on 18th (PCr) and at Donna Nook on 21st – 22nd (JTH,CRC et al.).



Red-breasted Flycatcher (G.P.Catley)

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Spring passage began in April with a male at Stallingborough on 18th, a female at Morkery Wood, 1 at Tetney and a male at Gibraltar Point on 22nd, a male at Covenham on 23rd, 1 at Tetney on 25th and a female at Denton on 26th. There was also 1 at Tetney on May 24th with 1 at Donna Nook the next day. Autumn passage began in August with the first trapped at Seacroft and another trapped at Theddlethorpe on 22nd and 1 – 10 at Donna Nook, Saltfleetby, Theddlethorpe and Gibraltar Point until September 7th. There were up to 3 at Donna Nook from September 30th – October 4th, with other October records of 4 at Saltfleetby on 4th, 1 at Gibraltar Point on 3rd – 5th, Tetney on 5th, 2 at North Cotes on 15th and the last records at Donna Nook and Mablethorpe on 22nd.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

The only records away from the Humber were 5 at Lincoln Ballast Pit from 1986 to January 17th with 4 remaining to February 22nd, 1 or 2 at Wolla Bank Pits on February 7th and 3 at Tetney on October 25th. On the Humber at Barton – Barrow Haven there were only 3 pairs during the breeding season and a pair bred at Goxhill which makes 1987 the poorest breeding year for 9 years and continues the decline since the peak of 30 – 40 pairs in 1983.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Several observers reported a 'good' year for this species following the recent milder winters. Records of large numbers were 30 at Twigmoor on January 26th, 22 at Messingham August – November, 30 at North Somercotes from end October to end November and 21 at Bourne on October 25th.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*

The breeding area for this species is the south-west corner of the county around Bourne and Grantham where there were several records of usually singles and pairs throughout the year. There were a few records up the west of the county to Lincoln with up to 3 at Rauceby Warren, 2 at Haverholme, 1 at Scopwick, 3 at Neville Wood near Potterhanworth, 3 at Nocton, 1 at Lincoln Birchwood and 1 at Burton Pits. There was a record of one further north at Atkinsons Warren, Scunthorpe on January 8th.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

There were widespread reports of 1 – 6 birds. Breeding records came from Scrubbs Wood, Morkery Wood, Temple Wood and from Messingham where 2 pairs bred in nestboxes. At Theddlethorpe 11 were ringed during the year which is the highest total since 1972.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

At Willingham Woods there were 14 on January 31st and 21 there on July 5th. Elsewhere, there were widespread reports of 1 – 10 birds throughout the year. On the coast, Theddlethorpe recorded none for the second successive year although there were 1 – 3 at Gibraltar Point in most months.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Several observers reported a good year for this species and there were widespread reports of 10 – 40 birds, Twigmoor recording 50 in January and Roxton Wood recording 60 in February. At Temple Wood it was a very successful breeding year due to an infestation of caterpillars on the oaks during the nesting season with one brood of 14 and 'many' broods of 12 fledging successfully. Theddlethorpe recorded their best ever year with 232 birds ringed there.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Like the Blue Tit, many observers reported a good year for this species with widespread reports of 10 – 40 birds throughout. Several broods of 11 all fledged successfully at Temple Wood and Theddlethorpe recorded their best ever year for this species.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

The stronghold for this species is the south-western corner of the county where there were records of mainly singles and pairs throughout the year at localities including Bourne Wood, Dole Wood, Temple Wood, Elsea Wood, Easton Wood, Sleight's Wood, and Tortoiseshell Wood. Further north records were received from Rauceby Hall, Haverholme Park, Nocton Wood and nearby Neville Wood. A pair were also present at Burton Pits in November. Well away from the usual area, 1 was at Hoplands Wood on January 7th and March 22nd and 1 ringed at Gibraltar Point on April 25th constitutes a new reserve record.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Recorded throughout the year in small numbers at suitable locations. Away from the more usual areas one pair bred at Boston and there were several coastal records from July onwards.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

A good year with the first, a male at Gibraltar Point on April 30th. A male was at North Killingholme on May 8th and one was at Saltfleetby on the 10th. At Gibraltar Point there was a pair on May 28th including the male singing, and a female was seen there on June 11th. A male was seen and heard at Kirkby Moor on June 14th.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

In spring there were single males at Donna Nook and Saltfleetby on May 24th, a female at Gibraltar Point on 28th to June 5th and a male at Ashbyville on June 27th. In autumn there was an adult female and a juvenile at Saltfleetby, a juvenile trapped at Theddlethorpe and another bird at Gibraltar Point all on August 30th and a single at Gibraltar Point on September 3rd – 4th.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

The recent trend of few records continues. The wintering individual from 1986 at Rauceby Warren was last recorded on March 8th and one was at Gibraltar Point from April 18th – 25th. One was seen at Rauceby Warren from October 22nd into 1988 which is probably the same bird which has been present in the last three winters.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Mostly seen in singles and pairs in the usual breeding areas of suitable wooded habitat in the county with a maximum of 7 at Messingham on April 2nd. There were 4 at East Halton on September 13th and, on the coast, 1 at Gibraltar Point on May 16th with 2 there on October 12th.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Some observers reported a slight increase in several areas. Largest flock sizes in January were 20 at Barrow on 9th, 45 at Goxhill on 29th and up to 49 at Lincoln Ballast Pit. Smaller flock sizes were recorded throughout the spring and summer until late autumn. In October 42 were at Goxhill on 25th and 40 at Gibraltar Point from mid month to the end of the year. In November there were 30 at West Ashby and during December there were up to 35 at Goxhill, 35 at Fulstow, 33 at Lincoln Ballast Pit and 20 at Whisby Pits.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Widely reported throughout the year with flock sizes of up to 100. Larger numbers were 300 at Elsham Wold on January 28th, 200 at West Rasen on December 13th and up to 1000 in a winter roost at Willoughby Wood.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

In January there were over 1000 feeding in a field at Killingholme on 17th and major roosts contained 2300 at Thornton Abbey on January 3rd, 2000 at Willoughby Wood in December and 4000 at Thornton Abbey on December 28th.

Carriion Crow *Corvus corone*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Carriion Crow at GPBO	16	11	12	17	5	2	2	6	8	39	24	18
Hooded Crow at GPBO	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	—
Hooded Crow in rest of county	—	1	14	—	1	—	—	—	—	8	2	—

Most records for this species were from the northern and eastern half of the county, its preferred habitat, where records of larger numbers were 65 at Theddlethorpe in February with 100 there in November, 50 at Goxhill in March and 60 there in November and December.

Hooded Crow *C. c. cornix* : There were more records than in recent years of this formerly common wintering subspecies and these records suggest a well defined spring and late autumn passage as shown in the table above. First of the year was inland at Lincoln Ballast Pit on March 30th. Other spring records were in April with birds at East Kirkby on 12th, Corby Glen and Threkingham on 13th. There were 3 at Gibraltar Point on 12th, 1 there on 18th – 21st, Saltfleetby on 16th, 2 at Donna Nook on 18th, Tetney on 12th and 19th, Stallingborough on 27th, Grimsby on 24th and Goxhill on 27th. There was, unusually, one in summer at Anderby Creek on June 27th. First in the autumn was at Gibraltar Point on October 12th – 15th with another there on November 16th. Other November records were at East Halton on 8th – 18th, Killingholme from 15th to end of year, Donna Nook on 22nd, Theddlethorpe on 17th, Louth on 31st and 3 at Saltfleetby on 29th. Apart from the one at Killingholme the only other December record was one at Tetney on 22nd – 31st.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

There were no large numbers reported early in the year, maximum number was 1200 at Gibraltar Point during January. A pure white bird was seen at Saltfleetby from July to September. Major roosts from October to December were 250,000 at Holbeach St Mathew, 50,000 at Cleethorpes Boating Lake, 30,000 at Scunthorpe Steelworks. There were 50,000 at Goxhill on December 6th and Barton Pit numbers built up to 25,000 on December 7th.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

A juvenile came into a garden with other starlings at South Witham on August 23rd (ES). There have only been seven previous county records. Under consideration by BBRC.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

No significant records received of this common and widespread species throughout the county.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

The reports received indicate a continuing decline throughout the county. At Theddlethorpe only 14 birds were ringed in 1987 compared with 194 in 1970 and 92 in 1983. Generally flock sizes were small. At Gibraltar Point there were 30 on grain put out in January with up to 5 breeding pairs in April, and there was a flock of 20 at Donna Nook on April 6th. Autumn passage was noted at Gibraltar Point with 10 to 35 daily from October 11th – 14th. Flocks started building up again with 21 at Swallow on September 23rd, 19 at Tetney on October 12th, 30 at Ruskington on November 7th, 50 at Moulton Marsh NR on December 28th and 20 at Whitton on the 29th.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Large winter flocks were 70 at Birchwood Lincoln on January 2nd and 100 on the Willoughby Branch Line on the 3rd. Northerly movements were 150 over Theddlethorpe on February 2nd and 75 over Saltfleetby on the 22nd. Spring passage at Gibraltar Point peaked at 800 on March 26th where the autumn passage maximum was 568 south on October 11th, while 164 was the highest passage count over South Witham between September 13th and October 14th.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Numbers were low this year with 25 sites recording single birds and only the following with more than 10. The only significant flock was 250 at Woodhall Spa on March 8th. There were 13 at Gibraltar Point on March 28th, 20 at Sleaford on April 6th, 20 at Messingham from April 9th – 21st and 10 at Theddlethorpe on April 16th. The first autumn sighting was one at Cleethorpes on September 9th. The maximum at Gibraltar Point was 20 on October 24th. There were 15 at Theddlethorpe on October 25th with 12 at Market Rasen on the same day and 15 at Goxhill on November 14th.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Gibraltar Point recorded reasonable numbers in January with a maximum of 280 on the 3rd. There was autumn passage of 150 south-west over South Witham on September 28th. October passage at Gibraltar Point included peaks of 95 on the 11th and 100 on the 28th with 300 there on November 2nd. The autumn maximum at Tetney was 30 on October 16th.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Reported flocks were 30 – 40 at Gibraltar Point up to January 18th, 32 at East Ferry on February 8th and 50 at Donna Nook on April 12th. In autumn there were 34 at Towns Holt, Grimsby on September 25th, 70 at Holbeach St Marks on September 28th, 60 at Covenham St Mary in October and 40 at Barton on October 3rd. October passage at Gibraltar Point included peaks of 230 south on the 11th and 120 south on the 13th.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Single figure counts in the first half of the year were recorded at Gibraltar Point, Bourne, Burwell, North Somercotes, Hoplands Wood, Scopwick, Barton, Messingham, Theddlethorpe and Tetney. A regular flock at Boultham Park consisted of 27 on January 28th, 33 on February 14th and 35 on March 15th. There were 20 at Hartsholme Park on January 10th, 10 at Denton Reservoir on the 31st, 18 at Willingham Woods on February 28th, 20 at Laceby on March 20th and 10 at Lincoln on April 5th when 2 were seen feeding on peanuts. There was a single at Threkingham on May 4th, a male singing in Twigmoor Woods on May 14th and a female at Laughton Forest on June 3rd but there was no proof of breeding. First autumn birds were 2 at Gibraltar Point on September

18th, with 1 at Theddlethorpe on the 19th and 12 at Castle Bytham on 23rd. The only autumn flocks were 12 at Gibraltar Point on October 20th and 32 at Willingham Woods on November 11th. Single figure counts in the latter part of the year came from Boultham Park, North Somercotes, Saltfleetby, Barton, Tetney, Boston and Denton.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Gibraltar Point recorded a maximum in January of 170 on the 5th with 100 at Tetney and 16 at Baston Fen both on the 18th. In April there was a southerly movement of 80 at Gibraltar Point on the 20th. A good breeding season was reported from Theddlethorpe and Gibraltar Point where around 20 pairs bred. Marked southerly passage was observed at Gibraltar Point in October with a maximum of 2,300 on the 11th and 800 on the 12th.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

	J	F	M	A	O	N	D
Humberston	—	60	—	—	—	120	80
Tetney	100	122	30	9	75	270	160
Donna Nook	54	100	—	50	300	—	160
Gibraltar Point	120	42	20	—	30	5	30
Wainfleet – Friskney	75	158	—	—	30	—	150
Wrangle – Benington	800	858	80	—	360	208	55
Butterwick – Witham Mouth	1000	50	150	—	93	1175	203
Welland – Holbeach	210	35	200	—	372	300	205
Gedney – Terrington	—	230	146	—	220	20	—

Other flocks during the year were 44 inland at Baston Fen on January 18th and 80 at Saltfleetby on October 11th. There was an all white bird at Donna Nook on October 22nd.

Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

The few records received suggested much lower numbers than usual during the year. There were 10 at Burton Pits on January 18th, 20 at Theddlethorpe in September and 30 at Messingham on April 8th was the highest recorded during the year in the county. Mealy Redpoll:- Birds showing the characteristics of the nominate race *C. f. flammea* were one bird at Gibraltar Point on February 5th and a male at Messingham on April 28th.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Birds remained at Denton Reservoir from July 1986 with 9 on January 1st – 18th. A female was at Moor Farm on April 24th. Three birds were at North Somercotes on May 5th with 2 males remaining there until the 17th. In June Gibraltar Point recorded single males on 1st and 10th, then 4 birds on 11th, 3 on 12th and 4 on 29th. Finally 2 were calling in Laughton Forest on December 12th.

Scarlet Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

A female/immature was at Donna Nook on May 27th (WRM,SJM,WJM). This is the fourth county record; the previous records, all in spring, were at Donna Nook in May 1979 and May 1983 with the other at North Somercotes Warren in June 1986.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Theddlethorpe reported 'a good year'. Few concentrations were reported but there were 11 in Willingham Woods on February 28th and Gibraltar Point had up to 14 in July with maxima of 10 and 12 in September and October respectively.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

The only records were 2 at Brumby Woods on March 13th – 31st, then singles at Sudbrooke on March 25th – 31st, Gibraltar Point on April 4th, Twigmoor Woods on May 10th and Temple Wood on August 16th.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

In January – March there were up to 4 birds at many coastal locations between Cleethorpes and Holbeach Marsh. Larger numbers were 5 at Goxhill – East Halton on

January 7th with 8 there on March 15th, 6 at Tetney in early January increasing to 30 on 18th to February 15th with 9 there on 21st. In the Wash there were 15 at Wrangle Marsh on February 1st and the recently discovered wintering area at Butterwick Marsh recorded in excess of 200 throughout January to mid February decreasing to 22 by March 9th with 2 there on 22nd. Last in the spring were 2 at Gibraltar Point on March 31st. First in the autumn were in September at Saltfleetby on 17th, Tetney on 21st, Holbeach Marsh on 27th and also at Gibraltar Point on 27th. From October up to 6 were recorded at most coastal locations with 14 at Tetney on October 26th increasing to 25 on November 4th, 7 at Donna Nook on October 4th increasing to 20 on 11th then decreasing to 13 on November 8th and 7 by the end of the year. In the Wash there were 9 at Frampton Marsh on November 25th but, with the milder winter weather, birds failed to concentrate at Butterwick Marsh with just 10 there through October increasing to 20 by mid December.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

	J	F	M	A	O	N	D
Tetney	2	29	—	5	5	44	4
Donna Nook	80	90	—	—	—	—	80
Gibraltar Point	85	60	14	—	10	14	74

Other flocks were 40 at Trusthorpe on January 1st, 17 at Goxhill Haven and 35 at Frampton Marsh both on November 25th and 17 at Saltfleetby on December 12th. Single figure counts were reported for Grimsby Docks, Humberston Fitties, Mablethorpe, Huttoft and Anderby Creek. Inland records were singles at Covenham Res on January 25th, Fulstow the next day and at Covenham Res on November 7th.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

In the early part of the year notable flocks were 160 at Thurlby Fen on January 7th, 60 at Goxhill—East Halton on January 8th, 70 at Messingham on February 13th, 60 at Weelsby Wood on March 25th, 50 at Covenham Reservoir on April 10th. In the latter part of the year there were 50 at Roxton on November 5th, 66 at Immingham and 100 at Bourne both on December 11th. A partial albino bird was at Covenham Reservoir on March 21st.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

An immature male was at Covenham Reservoir from April 29th – May 8th (SB,RJFC et al.) which is the fourth record for this inland site.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Gibraltar Point recorded 10 – 15 pairs breeding and a notable southerly passage from October 11th – 14th with 45 – 85 daily. The only other records of significant numbers were 40 at East Halton Skitter on December 12th and 30 at Barton on 22nd.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandria*

Notable flocks early in the year were 40 at Scopwick on February 14th, 30 at Barton Wold on the 26th, 54 at Gibraltar Point on March 29th and 90 at Blythborough Grange also on March 29th. In the autumn there were 20 at Donna Nook on August 27th, 200 at Skidbrooke on November 26th, 20 at Butterwick on December 12th, 42 at Baston Fen on 22nd and 60 at Barton also on the 22nd.

Escapes etc. 1987

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Barlings Eau below Short Ferry on April 11th (AG,RG).

'Ferruginous Type' Hybrid

Barrow Haven, a female, on November 14th (GPC).

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

The same individual at Saltfleetby at the end of 1986 remained there to April 28th.

1986 Additions and Corrections

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Chapel Pit on May 25th and Gibraltar Point same day. Accepted by BBRC.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Tetney and North Cotes, July 21st – 28th and intermittently to August 19th. Accepted by BBRC.

NOTE. An additional adult bird at North Cotes on August 7th has also been accepted by BBRC as 'either *P. fulva* or *P. dominica*.'

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Additional record: Two birds were seen moving up the Humber at Tetney on May 15th (ARB).

1984 Additions and Corrections

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Gibraltar Point on September 22nd. This has finally been accepted by BBRC after review.

Species requiring a description for consideration by the County Records Committee

All species considered by British Birds Rarities Committee, plus the following:

Great Northern Diver
Cory's Shearwater
Great Shearwater
Storm Petrel
Leach's Petrel
Purple Heron
White Stork
Ferruginous Duck
Honey Buzzard
Red Kite
Montagu's Harrier
Goshawk
Buzzard
Rough-legged Buzzard
Golden Eagle
Peregrine
Black Grouse
Spotted Crake
Corncrake
Crane
Stone-curlew
Kentish Plover
Dotterel (autumn)
Temminck's Stint
Pectoral Sandpiper
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Red-necked Phalarope

Grey Phalarope
Long-tailed Skua
Mediterranean Gull
Sabine's Gull
Iceland Gull
Roseate Gull
Black Guillemot
Woodlark
Richard's Pipit
Tawny Pipit
Water Pipit
Yellow Wagtail (races other than *flavissima* and *flava*)
Dipper
Bluethroat
Cetti's Warbler
Savi's Warbler
Aquatic Warbler
Marsh Warbler
Dartford Warbler
Yellow-browed Warbler
Red-breasted Flycatcher
Raven
Serin
Scarlet Rosefinch
Cirl Bunting
Ortolan Bunting

ESCAPES ETC

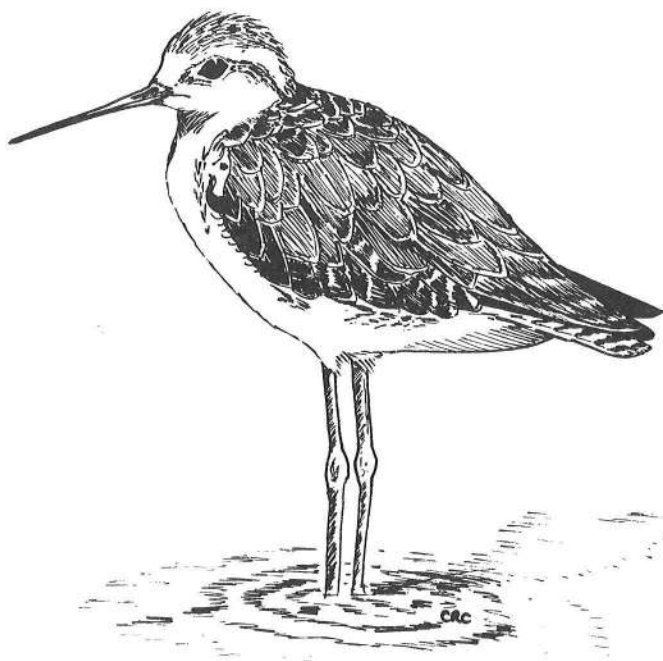
Barrow's Goldeneye
Greater Flamingo

Ring-necked Parakeet
Red-headed Bunting

Accounts of Lincolnshire Rarities

Marsh Sandpiper at the Witham Mouth, Boston August 8th – 15th

An early morning "Sea-watch" by myself and Colin Casey from the new Lincolnshire Bird Club hide was drawing to a close with the highlights being a steady passage of 150 Sandwich Terns, 13 Arctic Skuas and a few Gannet, Scaup and Fulmar. We were scanning through the waders which were spread out on the mudflats exposed by the falling tide when Colin drew my attention to a group of Greenshank and a bird he thought was a Marsh Sandpiper about 200 metres from our position. I had a very brief view of a small slender "Greenshank-type" wader as it dropped out of sight in one of the small creeks. After a while the bird walked back into full view and through telescopes we instantly recognised it as a Marsh Sandpiper, having seen the individual at Cley in Norfolk two weeks earlier. Owing to the distance involved a detailed plumage description was not possible on this occasion but it resembled a small long-legged delicate Greenshank with a longer straighter and finer bill, a small head and longer neck. The nearest bird to it for a size comparison was a Redshank and the Marsh Sandpiper was taller though slightly smaller bodied.



A different feeding action was noted to Greenshank as it carefully stalked along, occasionally lunging or running to seize small food items. Unfortunately an Arctic Skua chose this time to overfly the marsh and several hundred gulls and terns took to the air. The Sandpiper adopted a crouched stance and stayed motionless with its bill parallel to the ground as the Arctic Skua approached. Then an estimated 1000 waders took to the air along with the Marsh Sandpiper which was soon lost amongst the melee. The majority of the birds quickly resettled but, even though we searched from 0730 to 1030

the bird could not be relocated. We again searched the area the following day without success but the bird was apparently seen by some visiting birdwatchers after our departure. It was seen on several subsequent dates, very well at close range by Colin Casey on 13th and finally by myself and Phil Hyde on 15th. The following description was made on dates subsequent to the 8th.

Upperparts: pale grey with brown flecking, becoming browner towards mantle and hind neck although the nape and crown were grey. The forehead was white (obvious when the bird was facing head on). There was a grey eyestripe which merged into the hindneck and a white supercilium. The uppertail was basically white finely barred with black. A distinct black, or very dark, patch was visible along the leading edge of the closed wing, running from the carpal and overlying the flanks.

Underparts: pure white except for brownish grey smudging on sides of lower neck. Bare parts: The bill was black except for the grey base and was finer than that of Greenshank but proportionately longer. The legs were yellowish-green and rather long giving an elegant appearance.

Colin and I had seen the Marsh Sandpiper at Cley, Norfolk some two weeks earlier and although it appeared greyer at the time; owing to its departure from Cley and subsequent appearance at Titchwell, Norfolk and disappearance again we assume the Witham Mouth bird to be the same individual.

The Marsh Sandpiper has a breeding range from Bulgaria and Romania east through central Asia to Mongolia, wintering from Africa through India to Australia. The Witham Mouth bird is likely to involve a bird from the western edge of its range.

This record has been accepted by British Birds and constitutes the second county record. The first record was 33 years previously, exactly to the day, at Holbeach Marsh on August 8th 1954.

Steve Keightley.

Whiskered Tern at Covenham Reservoir June 10th – 15th

On the evening of June 10th, Simon Lancaster had reasonable views of a 'marsh' tern in flight and resting on a large buoy in the north-eastern corner of Covenham Reservoir, which he tentatively identified as a Whiskered Tern from its contrasting black cap, white cheeks and dusky underparts. The bird was then seen to fly off north before dusk.

Next morning I arrived at the reservoir shortly before 0800 via the official car park forsaking my usual approach from Grange Lane. Scanning the water, I soon picked up a smallish dark-looking tern roosting on the buoy in the north-east corner. Visibility was poor with low cloud and mist so I moved along the north wall to obtain better views. Closer inspection revealed that the tern had an overall dusky appearance, with prominent white cheeks below its black cap which enabled me to confirm the identification as a Whiskered Tern.

After taking some hurried notes, I left the reservoir and alerted as many local birdwatchers as possible, returning at 0930 with Keith Atkin and Roger Labbett. The tern was still sitting on the buoy and was still present when I left at 1030 to alert more birdwatchers. Unfortunately it flew off during the afternoon and many would-be observers left disappointed. However it was back on the buoy next morning and remained at the reservoir, with several long absences, until June 15th.

Description ; Fairly similar to Black Tern though appeared slightly larger with a slightly longer bill.

Legs and feet were dark red, bill also dark red and darker towards the tip. At rest the wings projected just beyond the tail which had a shallow fork. Upperparts were uniformly pale to mid grey with a black cap extending from the forehead level with the eyes, over the crown and some distance to nape. Cheeks white. Throat and underparts appeared dusky and on closer inspection were dark grey with white tips to feathers giving it a mottled effect. Vent and undertail coverts pure white.



Whiskered Tern (P.Haywood)

The Whiskered Tern is an almost annual vagrant to the British Isles, overshooting its breeding range in southern Spain and central France. This record has been accepted by British Birds and is the first occurrence in Lincolnshire and South Humberside.

Ken Wilson.

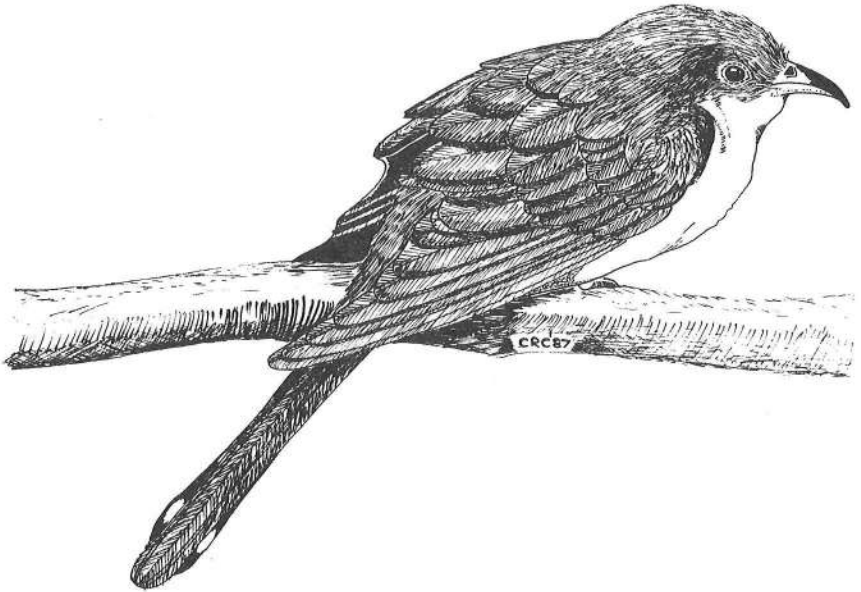
Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Rauceby Warren October 18th -19th

The bird was discovered by Mr and Mrs Brooks at the LSHTNC reserve at Rauceby Warren near Sleaford in the afternoon of 18th October. They were sure of its identification and told several observers that night. The local 'birders' were presented with something of a problem in that this was a bird obviously brought across country during the hurricane force winds two days earlier and its condition was not known. Given the fact that most Yellow-billed Cuckoos that are found in Britain are usually found dead or dying, it was decided not to 'put the news out' until the state of the bird was ascertained the next morning. The last thing wanted was for birders to be accused of harassing a bird to death on a nature reserve if it was dying anyway.

An hours search in the morning revealed nothing and it was assumed that the bird had gone or had not survived the night. However the bird was re-discovered by Barry Hancock about mid morning. It was judged to be in good health and the 'news' was immediately put out allowing many birdwatchers to see this bird during that afternoon and evening. It was fairly active and looked quite settled, feeding quite well, and it was hoped that it might stay for several days.

However it was not be found the next day.

Description : A smaller and slimmer version of Cuckoo with a comparatively longer tail and rounded wings. Upperparts, head, wings and upper tail grey-brown except for the primaries which were rufous. Underparts were white with a buffish wash to breast. Underside of long graduated tail dark grey with extensive white tips. Bill decurved; upper mandible black with a yellowish base and lower mandible yellow with just the extreme tip dark. Eyes dark with yellow eye-ring. Legs and feet were slate grey. The flight was generally fast and low (worrying when crossing the main road in front of lorries). In flight the rufous in the wings and the white tips to the tail could clearly be seen. The bird was fairly active, usually perching on the tops of bushes or on the roadside fence from which it would drop down onto the ground to feed. It was seen to take several crane flies and a caterpillar.



The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is a summer visitor to much of North America as far north as the Canadian border and winters in South America. This record has been accepted by British Birds and is the first live specimen of this trans-Atlantic vagrant to be found in Lincolnshire and South Humberside, with an earlier record of one found dead at Welton near Skegness in October 1978.

Alan Ball

Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory Report 1987

**Compiled by M.R.Curry, D.R.Bromwich, G.W.Allison
for the Lincolnshire and South Humberside Trust
for Nature Conservation**

1987 began as one of the most exciting years for a long time, leading up to an exceptional spring with a decidedly Mediterranean feel to the birds on the Reserve. Unfortunately the weather could not keep it up and yet another of the recent damp, cool summers followed. Not content with that, the prevailing summer conditions stayed with us right through to December producing a merely average autumn migration and low numbers of the typical winter birds. Nonetheless it was a good year producing a creditable 211 species (including **Nuthatch** and **Night Heron** – both new to the Reserve) and giving many birdwatchers a rewarding time. Thanks are due as usual to all contributors to the daily log and in particular to the excellent and regular records provided by seasonal staff. Special thanks are due to Gordon Allison for assisting with the time-consuming task of maintaining the daily log from which the following records are compiled.

January-March

The year began with mild south-westerly conditions but it became very wintry as the winds veered to the north on the 6th, backing to the east by the 10th. By the 11th snow flurries had turned to prolonged snow showers, whipped into drifts by strong winds. Particularly harsh weather occurred on the 14th with force 8-10 winds making conditions extremely difficult for birds. Unusual feeding behaviour was recorded under these adverse conditions, including two **Dunlin** feeding on Sea Buckthorn berries, **Duncock** cannibalism, a **Water Rail** consuming most of a **Red-legged Partridge** carcass over a three-day period, and **Starlings** carrying branches with Buckthorn berries to sheltered areas.

Despite the establishment of several feeding stations mortality was high, particularly among **Starlings**. A **Sparrowhawk** took up residence adjacent to a feeding station in Sykes Farm and the numerous kills found in this area indicated that this bird at least would survive. Perhaps the most exciting record of this period was a **Waxwing** on the 3rd, the first Reserve record since 1981, though rather overshadowed by up to six birds being recorded in Skegness between 7th and 14th. The only **White-fronted Goose** of the year was seen on the 2nd.

The easterly winds of the 10-19th brought seabirds close inshore and an unseasonal **Great Skua** was seen on three days. Single **Scaup** and **Velvet Scoter** (on 17th and 18th respectively), large numbers of **Kittiwakes** heading south on the 11th and 13th and three **Little Gull** sightings were other notable seabird records. Mild weather returned by the 20th and because the bad weather was both a long time coming and short-lived, the predominantly benign conditions through most of the month did not produce the usual concentrations of finches and buntings on the shore. **Snow Bunting** and **Twite** were regularly seen but only in small numbers, together with occasional **Lapland Buntings**. The best record of the month was a **Grey Phalarope** on the Mill Hill saltings on the 25th - the third Reserve record.

February proved to be a somewhat unsettled month with mild westerly winds dominating up to the 13th, then moving round to the north and east as a high pressure system centred over Greenland brought down cold Arctic air until the 24th. A gradual warming of the air was encouraged by Atlantic westerlies, bringing 11mm of rain on the 26th (a quarter of the months total rainfall) and a temperature of 13.4 degrees C on the 28th – the warmest February day since 1961 both here and across the country.

The month was rather quiet ornithologically. Seawatching produced **Red-** and **Black-throated Divers**, **Eider**, **Common Scoter**, **Red-breasted Merganser** and

Guillemot in small numbers, whilst the shore held the usual variety of waders and a regular Snow Bunting flock of 40-60 birds, although Twite remained scarce. Farmland adjacent to the Reserve held 1500 **Brent Geese** and over 1000 **Wigeon**, but wildfowl interest on the Reserve was centred on the Mere, with **Goldeneye**, **Pochard**, **Tufted Duck**, **Gadwall** and **Canada Goose** all putting in their first regular appearances during the month. Four **Whooper Swans** were seen on the 14th. An unidentified **Buzzard** flew south on 21st, though generally raptors were down in number. Passerines were also present in small numbers only, with **Fieldfare**, **Corn Bunting** and an occasional **Brambling** providing the most interest and **Redwings** remaining a rarity.

Bitingly cold east and south-easterly winds dominated the first third of March, producing few records of note. Slight increases in **Fieldfares** and **Snow Buntings** were noted, and **Brent Goose** numbers reached 2400 by the 12th, followed by a rapid dispersal which left about 180 by the end of the month. Winds turned to the north and west from the 12th and **Lapwings** were observed heading east on a number of the following days. Twelve **Whooper Swans** were present on 15-16th. **Great Tits** also began to migrate at this time, notably 50 counted in one small area on the 21st, and **Corn Bunting** numbers reached 35 on the 18th.

The wind swung from predominantly north to a southerly aspect on the 21st, heralding the start of the spring migration. A **Spotted Redshank** was recorded on the 22nd and the first **White Wagtail** of the year appeared on 26th, when a remarkable **Chaffinch** migration also took place, with many hundreds passing south down the East Dunes.

A particularly vigorous depression on the 27th with gale force southerly winds must have influenced the arrival of the first **Wheatear**, **Sand Martin** and **House Martin** on 28th. The Sand Martin was the third earliest ever recorded and the House Martin was a week ahead of the previous earliest record. The 29th saw a **Firecrest** and **Chiffchaff** as new arrivals and a **Black Redstart** rounded off the month, noted at the Field Station on the 31st.

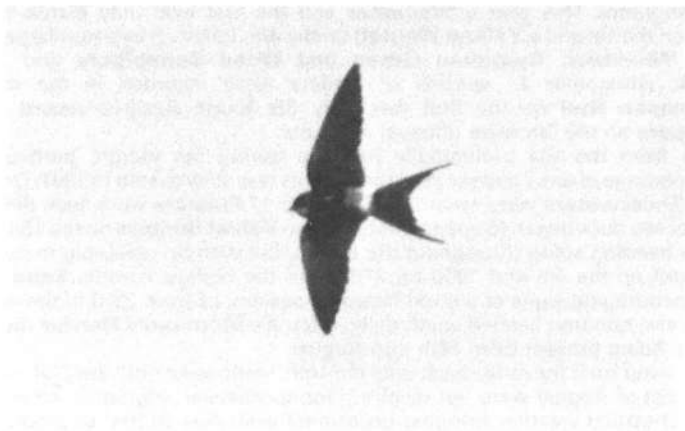
April-June

After the flurry of new arrivals at the end of March, April was initially something of an anticlimax. A low pressure area over Britain gave cool, changeable weather, which brought only **Blackcap** on the 2nd and **Willow Warbler** on 9th. Of particular interest at this time were a **Hawfinch** on the 4th, only the third record for the 1980's, a **Red-necked Grebe** on the 5th and three **Hooded Crows** on the 12th.

A high pressure system developed on the 12th when temperatures warmed and winds became calmer, bringing an excellent spell of migration from the 13th to 25th. Variety rather than numbers was the key, although **Sand Martins**, **Grasshopper Warblers** and **Whitethroats** all showed better numbers than for a few years. The pattern was also noted at Spurn and 1987 has come to be regarded as one of the best spring passages for many years. More than 30 species were recorded as "new for the year" during this time. Some 'early date' records were: 15th – **Grasshopper Warbler**, second earliest ever; 18th – **Common Sandpiper**, second earliest ever; 19th – **Swift**, second earliest ever; 20th – **Arctic Tern**, earliest ever; and on the 22nd the earliest ever **Pied Flycatcher**. Also notable at this time were **Great Grey Shrike** from 18-25th; **Spoonbill** and **Egyptian Goose** (second Reserve record) on 20th; **Alpine Swift** on the 24th (third Reserve record) and the first record of **Nuthatch** on the 25th.

No new migrants arrived between the 26th and 29th, but the 30th produced a male **Golden Oriole** flying down the East Dunes and a **Wood Sandpiper** on the Mere, the earliest record by a week, so rounding off a memorable month's records.

These unusual weather systems that had encouraged such a marked arrival of birds from the south continued to show their effect into May. Another Mediterranean species, a **Red-rumped Swallow**, appeared over the Mere on 2nd and during its stay until the 6th gave many people superb views as it hawked for insects right in front of the hide on numerous occasions. This was the second record for the Reserve. Then, after a washout of a dawn chorus on the morning of the 3rd, two **Night Herons** surprised observers as they flew in off the sea at 0630 hrs, landing in Hawthorn bushes in the West Dunes. These were the first Night Herons to be recorded at the Reserve and stayed until late the next day, so observers on the 3rd and 4th were treated to two Mediterranean species. As if



Red-rumped Swallow (G.P.Catley)

this were not enough, after the Night Herons departed on the 4th, three **Bee-eaters** arrived on the 5th to keep up the flavour! Unfortunately they didn't stay more than half an hour. This was the Reserve's fifth record of Bee-eaters.

Also adding to the interest during this spell was a female **Kentish Plover** on the beach on the 7th, and a few late birds were still being recorded, with 140 **Brent Geese** on the 8th and the second latest **Brambling** on the 9th. Highlights over the next fortnight included **Osprey** on the 12th and 17th; the Reserve's fourth **Temminck's Stint** on the 15th (associating with four **Little Stints**); a **Nightingale** singing in the Plantation on the 17th; a **Nightjar** flushed from the East Dunes (eighth Reserve record) on 21st; the first spring record of **Bluethroat** ever on the 23rd and a male **Garganey** on the Mere on 25th. To round off an excellent month, a female **Red-backed Shrike**, two **Golden Orioles**, a **Firecrest** and a **Ring Ousel** were all recorded on 28th!

June was a very wet, cold and cloudy month, which made conditions difficult for breeding birds though early mornings, when activity is at its peak, were generally fine. The first fortnight saw the last of the spring migrants and most notably a full summer plumage female **Wilson's Phalarope**, the second Reserve record, on the 8th. The bird was first noted mid-afternoon and seen into the evening, but could not be found the next day. Another or the same female Red-backed Shrike was seen on 5th and the fourth record of Golden Oriole of the spring on the 11th. On the same day two **Avocets** alighted briefly on the Mere, with one seen next day, and two **Spotted Redshanks** there on the 14th were presumed to be early returning breeding birds. **Crossbills** were noted on several dates with a male on 1st and 10th being followed by two males and two female/immatures on the 11th and three birds seen the next day. No further records were received until the 29th, when two males, a female and an immature were noted – perhaps the same party as on the 11th?

The last half of the month was quiet, as usual for June, though a Firecrest was heard on the 18th, singing in the same area as the one on 28th May. A first summer male **Montagu's Harrier** delighted the summer warden by perching on the fence at the Tern Hut for a few minutes on the 24th. A **Little Ringed Plover** on the 30th was an early sign of autumn passage, perhaps a failed breeding bird due to the poor weather? This was the second earliest autumn date for this species.

July-September

After the first week, which was warm and sunny, July was again disappointing with a cloudy, cool and wet run of weather, giving 50% more rainfall than average. The winds were predominantly westerly, frequently north-westerly.

The most interesting records in July usually come from the first arrivals of autumn

passage migrants. This year a **Wheatear** and the first ever July **Black Redstart** appeared on the 1st and a **Yellow Wagtail** on the 4th, followed by a number of waders including **Whimbrel**, **Common**, **Green** and **Wood Sandpipers** and **Spotted Redshank**. Altogether 21 species of waders were recorded in the month. A **Mediterranean Gull** on the first was only the fourth Reserve record and two **Treecreepers** on the 5th were unusual migrants.

Records from the sea traditionally improve during the month, particularly the southerly passage of terns and skuas, although this was slow to start in 1987. On the 11th 31 **Manx Shearwaters** were recorded, and up to 17 **Fulmars** were seen daily. Small numbers of sea duck began to appear, notably two **Velvet Scoters** on the 18th. **Swifts** were seen heading south throughout the month, but with no really big movements – 2000+ south on the 4th and 1000 on 27th were the highest counts. **Sand Martins** showed encouraging signs of a good breeding season, as from 23rd to the end of the month several hundred headed south daily. A female **Montagu's Harrier** rounded off the month, being present from 28th into August.

With the wind from the north-west until the 10th, south-west until the 21st, conditions through most of August were not inspiring for spectacular migration. After this date however, unsettled weather bringing occasional easterlies started to produce better records.

The most interesting bird early in the month was the female Montagu's Harrier, which remained up to the 6th. Migration continued at a slow rate, with few records of note until the 15th, when 39 **Yellow Wagtails** were recorded. A passage of some 500+ **Swallows** and 100+ **House Martins** on the 18th was followed by an early returning **Red-throated Diver** on the 19th and a **Hen Harrier** on the 21st. The next ten days proved to be the best spell of the autumn, with departing summer migrants, arriving winter visitors and passage birds all providing a high and varied species list. Most noteworthy was the Reserve's second ever **Little Egret** on 26th, but warblers, chats and flycatchers all showed well, with 10 **Pied Flycatchers** and 28 **Garden Warblers** ringed between 23-28th. Other good counts included 13 **Blackcaps** on 22nd, 10 **Whinchats** on 26th and 16 **Wheatears** on the 27th. Single **Wrynecks** were noted on 26th, 28th and 30th.

During the month wader highlights included up to 6 **Little Ringed Plover** and 20 **Common Sandpipers**, single **Purple Sandpipers** on the 20th and 27th, and 12 **Spotted Redshanks** with 10 **Greenshanks** on the 23rd. Altogether 25 wader species were recorded. As well as the Montagu's Harrier, raptor interest came from **Hobbies** on the 7th and 28th, a **Peregrine** on 26th and a pair of **Sparrowhawk** fledging three young – the first breeding record for over 30 years. This, coupled with the success of **Kestrels** and **Long-eared Owls** on or near the Reserve was most satisfying.

The sea always provides good watching in August. Three species of skuas were recorded during the month, with a small number of **Pomarine**s and **Greats** and a peak **Arctic Skua** passage from 16-27th, the maximum being 48 on the 21st. Twelve **Sooty Shearwaters** on the 24th was the largest count made for the Reserve, and **Manx Shearwaters** were seen on several days. **Gannets** reached up to 23 on the 27th and 160 **Kittiwakes** headed south on the 24th. **Sandwich Terns** were seen in their hundreds on most days, reaching up to a thousand, but "Commic" passage was very disappointing with 50 being the maximum count for the month.

The mild weather continued into September with the wind having nearly always a westerly influence. Early in the month departing summer migrants continued to provide the bulk of the records, but very little in the way of exciting or unusual species/counts occurred. A **Red-backed Shrike** on the 3rd and 4th and a **Firecrest** on the 5th were noteworthy. Among the commoner species, the 5th also provided counts of 20 **Common Sandpipers** and 20 **Wheatears**, the 6th saw at least 9 **Reed Warblers**, the 7th 12 **Spotted Flycatchers**, the 8th eight **Whinchats**, with over 20 **Yellow Wagtails** on each of the last three days. The 4-6th also saw another flurry of **Sandwich Tern** activity with up to 240 daily and many thousands of **Swallows** headed south throughout the period, with 500+ **Sand Martins** counted on the 9th.

As well as the migration, the traditional autumn build-up of **Teal** peaked at 950 birds roosting on the Mere. Ten **Blackcaps** were counted on the 13th and a **Nightingale** ringed at the Observatory on the same day and retrapped on 20th was the latest ever recorded. Sea-watching provided interest between the 16-20th and two **Black-**

throated Divers were noted on the 16th – an early arrival date for this species. Small numbers of auks and skuas were also recorded, with up to 23 Manx Shearwaters and 98 Sandwich Terns. **Little Gulls** were recorded on the 20th (2) and 24th (1), 25 **Brent Geese** were observed on Croft Marsh on the 26th, and the 27th saw an early returning **Lapland Bunting**. A **Leach's Petrel** which had been blown inland to Grnatham on the 25th was successfully released at Gib on the 27th.

October-December

Strong southerly winds for the first half of October peaked on the 16th with the edge of the infamous hurricane that wreaked havoc further south. Winds reached force 9 with the barograph dipping to 956 mB.

A number of new winter arrivals appeared early in the month, with **Jack Snipe** on the 1st, **Twite** on the 4th, **Whooper Swan** on the 9th and **Snow Bunting**, together with a late **Marsh Harrier** on the 11th. A wreck of **Song Thrushes** was discovered on the tideline on the 3rd, with 17 corpses along a mile of beach. The next day over 200 Song Thrushes were counted on the Reserve. A marked southerly passage of passerines took place just before mid-month. On the 11th 1500 each of **Meadow Pipit** and **Skylark**, 2000+ **Linnet** and many hundreds of other finches and buntings, including over 500 **Chaffinches** and 200 **Goldfinches** passed through. The passage continued on the 12th, with over 2000 Meadow Pipits and 800 Linnets being the most numerous species, and 800 Skylarks on the 13th together with many hundreds more Linnets and Goldfinches ended this excellent spell. Amongst the larger numbers were late records of **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Lesser Whitethroat**, two **Firecrests**, and notably the Reserve's third ever **Richard's Pipit** on the 12th. Sea passage was also good at this time with a **Shag**, up to 43 **Gannets**, 15 **Little Gulls** and 9 **Great Skuas** between 11-13th. A pair of **Scaup** were seen on the Mere on 13th, the female remaining to the 17th.

The 15th and 16th – the days of the 'hurricane' – produced little in the way of weather-induced movement, other than the presence of a single **Grey Phalarope** on the shore on 17th and 18th, the fourth Reserve record. Migrants were again in evidence on the 22nd-24th however, with a fall of thrushes involving at least 400 **Blackbirds**, 200 **Song Thrushes** and 200 **Redwings**. A conservative estimate of 100 **Goldcrests** was made, but these small secretive birds were present all over the Reserve, their thin piping calls seemingly coming from every bush at times! Estimates of 100 **Robins** and 50 **Wrens** were also made at this time. The 24th saw two **Red-rumped Swallows** darting about, with two again on the 27th and 28th. It is difficult to know whether these were different birds, but there was an unprecedented fall of this species nationally. Other highlights at the end of the month included a **Crane** on the 25th (fifth Reserve record), 675 **Fieldfares** on 26th and a **Black Redstart** on the 31st.

With the continuation of the mild late autumn weather the Reserve was very quiet in November, with nearly all the summer birds and passage migrants having moved on and a good selection of winter visitors already in residence. A notable late record was of a **House Martin** on the 14th. Up to 30 **Red-throated Divers** and two **Black-throated Divers** were present offshore, with an ever-changing selection of sea duck, most notably a **Velvet Scoter** on the 1st and single **Goosanders** on the 12th and 21st. The occasional auks seen were mainly **Guillemots**, but included one or two **Razorbills** and **Little Auks**, with singles of the latter species on 14th and 15th and two on 20th. The numbers and variety of wildfowl built up during the month. All three species of swan were recorded, the local **Brent Goose** flock reached over 250 birds and several skeins of **Pink-footed Geese** were seen heading south into the Wash. Flocks of up to 2000 **Wigeon** flew over the Reserve on most days, journeying between the saltmarshes and the fields. Waders were also much in evidence on the high tide roosts, with 40,000 **Knot** on the morning of the 12th proving rather difficult to count accurately! Other monthly wader maxima were 7500 **Oystercatchers** on the 20th and 2000 **Bar-tailed Godwits**. Only the third **Purple Sandpiper** of the year was recorded on the 20th. Apart from a flock of 300 **Greenfinches** and one of 200 **Linnets**, no prolonged concentrations of passerines were recorded and the winter 'specialities', **Snow Bunting**, **Twite** and **Lapland Bunting** were also recorded infrequently.

December continued very mild, with only half the average rainfall, and ornithological

indicators of these conditions were two **Chiffchaffs** in the Farm area for most of the month, and **Blackcaps** on the 9th and 17th. Passerines generally were still present only in low numbers. A **Treecreeper** on 7th was a good record but no **Redpolls** or Lapland Buntings were seen and there were only single records of **Corn Bunting** (one on 3rd), **Siskin** (five on 8th) and **Twite** (30 on 10th). Snow Buntings were recorded on only four days. Three **Whooper Swans** were seen on a number of days and a **Little Owl** on the 26th was an unusual record. With the main high tides occurring during the hours of darkness however, no sizeable wader roosts were noted, with only 2000 **Knot** being the month's maximum. The most interesting wader records were of regular **Woodcock** sightings, mainly from the West Dunes area. A quiet end, but overall a very interesting year.

Observatory Ringing Report 1987

Compiled by A.W.Paul

On reflection the report for 1987 could be a copy of that for 1986, especially in respect of the low numbers of birds caught in the spring and of the inclement weather in the first six months of the year. Once again there were more bird-watching days than bird-ringing days – days when the rain and wind made a mockery of putting up nets. As the Observatory Report details, the finch flocks were again low in numbers, and this was reflected in the ringing totals with all but two of the finch species showing a decrease. The first six months of the year showed a combined ringing total of only 350 birds, following the trend of the last few years. As well as the weather, a factor here is the low number of visiting ringers using the Observatory facilities during the early part of the year; excluding our three regulars, only six ringers had worked at the Observatory up to the BTO ringing course.

The course again suffered mixed fortunes; anyone who has attended one of these courses will understand what I mean when I write that on three mornings participants had a cooked breakfast. In other words, it was too wet or windy to do any ringing that morning. Fortunately we did not have a day when we did not catch a bird, although we came very near to it. Imagine thirty people looking out of the Field Station windows, willing someone to pull the release on a whoosh net to catch the only bird of the day – a Starling! There was even competition to ring it.

The latter part of the year produced better results and this is reflected in the totals. September was an exceptional month, both in numbers of birds ringed and in the number of people working the Observatory. Twenty-five visitors worked on twenty days, catching more than 1200 new birds out of a handling total of nearly 2000.

The number of species caught in 1987 was down on the previous year, (69 as against 81) but two new species were added to the Observatory totals during 1987. First, a Nuthatch was ringed in the West Dunes on 25th April. Two years ago a watcher thought he heard a Nuthatch singing in the Plantation but this was not confirmed; in 1986 one was thought to have been seen, but again the sighting was so brief that it was never confirmed. Now with one ringed there can be no dispute that Gibraltar Point has at last added this species to its list. Secondly, two storm-blown Leach's Petrels were brought to Gibraltar Point in September and November, the first from Grantham, the second from Skegness. Both birds flew away to sea after being ringed.

A few of the controls and recoveries reported during the year are worth high-lighting. Once again we controlled a Willow Warbler ringed in 1983 at Ancaster Gravel Pits and controlled here every year since, each time in the breeding season. A Common Gull ringed in January 1985 was recovered in 1987 and a Reed Warbler ringed in September 1986 as a first year bird was controlled at a breeding colony at St Ouen, Jersey, in 1987.

As usual I make no apologies for thanking all visiting ringers who helped us during 1987; without their help our ringing totals would be very low indeed. During the year 60 ringers used the Observatory and three of these came to us from Australia!

Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory Ringing Totals 1987

SPECIES	FG	Pull	1987 Total	Grand Total	RECOVERIES	
					1987 Total	Grand Total
Leach's Petrel	2	—	2	2	—	—
Sparrowhawk	2	—	2	43	—	5
Water Rail	1	—	1	17	—	—
Oystercatcher	1	—	1	600	—	13
Ringed Plover	1	11	12	616	—	8
Lapwing	—	3	3	27	—	—
Dunlin	11	—	11	625	—	10
Ruff	1	—	1	5	—	1
Woodcock	3	—	3	47	—	2
Green Sandpiper	1	—	1	5	—	—
Wood Sandpiper	1	—	1	2	—	—
Common Sandpiper	10	—	10	33	—	1
Woodpigeon	6	—	6	193	—	7
Turtle Dove	2	—	2	101	—	1
Cuckoo	3	—	3	218	—	10
Long-eared Owl	2	—	2	21	—	2
Kingfisher	2	—	2	35	—	1
Wryneck	1	—	1	55	—	—
Great Spotted Woodpecker	2	—	2	34	—	1
Skylark	4	7	11	893	—	6
Swallow	41	16	57	5712	1	35
House Martin	1	—	1	37	—	—
Tree Pipit	4	—	4	89	—	—
Meadow Pipit	93	—	93	1377	—	12
Wren	136	—	136	2520	—	18
Dunnock	308	—	308	10233	3	86
Robin	133	—	133	2924	—	32
Nightingale	1	—	1	13	—	1
Black Redstart	2	—	2	27	—	—
Redstart	13	—	13	1405	—	10
Whinchat	18	—	18	359	—	—
Stonechat	1	—	1	32	—	—
Wheatear	20	—	20	277	—	2
Ring Ouzel	1	—	1	59	—	3
Blackbird	385	4	389	11850	5	270
Fieldfare	8	—	8	844	—	23
Song Thrush	155	—	155	4450	2	69
Redwing	32	—	32	1452	—	16
Sedge Warbler	34	—	34	966	—	6
Reed Warbler	73	—	73	1240	1	12
Lesser Whitethroat	144	—	144	1738	1	1
Whitethroat	251	—	251	6588	1	27
Garden Warbler	38	—	38	1332	—	2
Blackcap	116	—	116	2198	—	10
Chiffchaff	46	—	46	617	—	5
Willow Warbler	422	—	422	11361	—	22
Goldcrest	199	—	199	3416	—	19
Firecrest	2	—	2	45	—	—
Spotted Flycatcher	13	—	13	448	1	3
Pied Flycatcher	12	—	12	1384	—	14
Willow Tit	1	—	1	110	—	3
Coal Tit	4	—	4	91	—	—
Blue Tit	231	64	295	4025	—	69
Great Tit	65	6	71	1295	—	21
Nuthatch	1	—	1	1	—	—
Treecreeper	3	—	3	37	—	—
Magpie	5	—	5	93	1	12
Starling	50	—	50	3601	5	106
House Sparrow	20	—	20	7676	—	89
Tree Sparrow	6	13	19	4495	—	23
Chaffinch	30	—	30	1677	—	16
Brambling	1	—	1	592	—	1
Greenfinch	87	—	87	3399	—	40
Goldfinch	17	—	17	2564	—	23
Linnet	24	5	29	3075	—	15
Redpoll	39	—	39	2851	—	37
Bullfinch	34	—	34	745	—	16
Yellowhammer	18	—	18	749	—	7
Reed Bunting	47	—	47	3319	—	14
Totals	3441	129	3570	121724	21	1327
Species			69	157		

NOTE: Only species ringed or recovered in 1987 are included in the table, although the "Grand Total" columns show the total of all birds handled in previous years. For a full list see the Lincolnshire Bird Report 1986.

County Ringing Report 1987

Compiled by K.Winfield

By nobody's standards will 1987 go down as one of the real momentous years of ringing. The total number of birds ringed in Lincolnshire and South Humberside during the year was 20785 (19056 fully grown and 1729 pulli) of 123 species, one of the lowest since 1979 when this series of Reports began. Few of the 'usual' semi-rarities of the autumn were caught, the only exceptions being Barred and Icterine Warbler and Red-backed Shrike.

Although the total is slightly lower than that of 1986, the number of fully grown birds was marginally higher (+343), the overall decrease being due to a drop in the number of pulli ringed. This may well be an effect of the weather in June which was very wet, cold and cloudy (e.g. a total rainfall of 61.9mm at Gibraltar Point), making conditions difficult for open-nesting species. The only species to show a decrease in both fully grown birds and pulli ringed was the Swallow with a drop from 483 FG and 383 pulli in 1986 to 155 FG and 136 pulli in 1987. Totals of this species have shown large swings in recent years but overall since 1979 there has been a downward trend as the table below shows.

Year:	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Total:	1821	3066	3174	1269	954	1840	1270	866	291

Only one new species, Montagu's Harrier, was added to the County list in 1987, bringing the total of species ringed since 1979 to 179. There were no recoveries which were outstanding but many of interest; for example the Bewick Swan on Lea Marshes near Gainsborough, the Willow Warbler from Ancaster which has made the journey across the Sahara at least 8 times and the two Lapland Buntings retrapped at Butterwick, which are the first ever birds of this species to be retrapped in a subsequent winter.

As usual I would like to thank all the ringers and other observers who submitted their totals and recovery data, and so made this report possible.

Selected Ringing Recoveries Received during 1987

Key to symbols and terms used in the following list of recoveries.

Arrangement of entry: recoveries are arranged by species. The ringing details are given on the first line and the recovery data on the second. Age when ringed: this is given according to the 'EURING' code. The figures DO NOT represent age in years.

- 1 = pullus, nestling or chick
- 2 = full grown, but year of hatching unknown
- 3 = hatched during calendar year for ringing
- 4 = hatched before current year, exact age unknown
- 5 = hatched during previous calendar year
- 6 = hatched 1+ years before, exact age unknown
- 8 = hatched 2+ years before, exact age unknown
- 12 = hatched 4+ years before, exact age unknown

J = still in juvenile plumage when ringed

Sex: M = Male, F = Female

Manner of recovery:

v = caught or retrapped

vv = ring number read in field

+ = shot or killed by man

x = found dead or dying

? = manner of recovery unknown

Movement: where given, distances and directions are approximate.

Bewick Swan

12M01.12.77 Slimbridge, Gloucester
vv 01.02.87 Lea Marshes 213km NE

Shelduck

4M 10.08.75 Wesser Estuary
WEST GERMANY
x 03.03.86 Wrangle Marsh 551km W

Coot

3 21.11.79 Deeping St James
x 29.01.87 Stoke by Nayland,
Suffolk 111km SE

Oystercatcher

8 03.08.73 Friskney
x 21.01.87 Flinthore Langeoog
WEST GERMANY

This bird was one of 279 Oystercatchers all found dead in cold weather.

There were also Wash-ringed Oystercatchers to: France 1, Finland 2, Germany 2, Netherlands 3, Jersey 1, Norway 3, Shetland 1, Sweden 1; and one each to Lincs from the Netherlands and Germany.

Knot

6 26.05.85 Balsfjord NORWAY
v 21.08.86 Gibraltar Point 2056km SSW

Other recoveries include 5 birds from the Wash to the Alt Estuary, Merseyside.

County Ringing Totals in 1987

Species	1987 FG	1987 Pull	1987 Total	79-87 Grand Total	Species	1987 FG	1987 Pull	1987 Total	79-87 Grand Total
Little Grebe	—	—	—	6	House Martin	146	—	146	650
Great Crested Grebe	—	—	—	13	Tree Pipit	4	—	4	71
Manx Shearwater	1	—	—	7	Meadow Pipit	170	—	170	1097
Leach's Petrel	3	—	3	5	Rock Pipit	—	—	—	7
Shag	—	—	—	1	Yellow Wagtail	—	—	—	85
Grey Heron	—	50	50	196	Grey Wagtail	—	6	—	1
Mute Swan	33	—	33	140	Pied Wagtail	3	—	—	517
Greylag Goose	—	—	—	19	Wren	515	—	515	4809
Canada Goose	5	—	5	59	Duncock	1000	2	1002	12360
Brent Goose	5	—	5	14	Robin	536	19	555	6375
Shelduck	—	—	—	10	Nightingale	8	—	8	68
Wigeon	—	—	—	32	Thrush Nightingale	—	—	—	1
Gadwall	—	—	—	22	Bluethroat	—	—	—	2
Teal	—	—	—	52	Black Redstart	2	—	2	11
Mallard	2	—	2	2044	Redstart	20	—	20	483
Pintail	—	—	—	2	Whinchat	18	—	18	180
Shoveler	—	—	—	9	Stonechat	2	—	2	7
Pochard	—	—	—	40	Wheatear	20	—	20	105
Tufted Duck	—	—	—	478	Ring Ouzel	1	—	1	19
Scaup	—	—	—	1	Blackbird	1721	115	1836	22818
Marsh Harrier	—	—	—	2	Fieldfare	15	—	15	885
Montagu's Harrier	—	2	2	2	Song Thrush	479	42	521	7459
Sparrowhawk	11	3	14	50	Redwing	113	—	113	2442
Kestrel	5	15	20	193	Mistle Thrush	6	—	6	205
Merlin	—	—	—	2	Cetti's Warbler	—	—	—	1
Hobby	—	—	—	1	Grasshopper Warbler	4	—	4	123
Red-legged Partridge	—	—	—	25	Sedge Warbler	191	—	191	2192
Grey Partridge	—	—	—	1	Marsh Warbler	—	—	—	2
Pheasant	1	—	1	28	Reed Warbler	217	—	217	3632
Water Rail	1	—	1	9	Booted Warbler	—	—	—	1
Moorhen	2	1	3	107	Icterine Warbler	2	—	2	13
Coot	—	—	—	464	Sardinian Warbler	—	—	—	2
Oystercatcher	805	—	805	3881	Subalpine Warbler	—	—	—	1
Little Ringed Plover	7	—	7	52	Barred Warbler	1	—	1	31
Ringed Plover	21	11	32	562	Lesser Whitethroat	300	—	300	2574
Golden Plover	—	—	—	10	Whitethroat	854	16	870	6497
Grey Plover	96	—	96	981	Garden Warbler	210	—	210	1517
Lapwing	2	3	5	92	Blackcap	469	—	469	4628
Knot	236	—	236	2250	Greenish Warbler	—	—	—	2
Sanderling	—	—	—	19	Arctic Warbler	—	—	—	3
Little Stint	—	—	—	10	Pallas's Warbler	—	—	—	2
Curlew Sandpiper	—	—	—	4	Yellow-browed Warbler	—	—	—	14
Purple Sandpiper	1	—	1	4	Wood Warbler	—	—	—	25
Dunlin	745	—	745	10364	Chiffchaff	136	—	136	1104
Ruff	4	—	4	68	Willow Warbler	1219	62	1281	14152
Jack Snipe	1	—	1	20	Goldcrest	449	—	449	5905
Snipe	1	—	1	132	Firecrest	7	—	7	82
Woodcock	6	—	6	70	Spotted Flycatcher	50	—50	—	662
Black-tailed Godwit	—	—	—	2	Red-breasted Flycatcher	—	—	—	6
Bar-tailed Godwit	422	—	422	1119	Pied Flycatcher	18	—	18	403
Whimbrel	—	—	—	3	Bearded Tit	—	—	—	19
Curlew	15	—	15	111	Long-tailed Tit	171	—	171	1940
Spotted Redshank	1	—	1	4	Marsh Tit	7	—	7	75
Redshank	311	—	311	1142	Willow Tit	62	—	62	681
Greenshank	2	—	2	15	Coal Tit	48	2	50	739
Green Sandpiper	3	—	3	10	Blue Tit	1538	602	2140	14645
Wood Sandpiper	1	—	1	2	Great Tit	632	453	1085	6984
Common Sandpiper	15	—	15	46	Nuthatch	1	—	1	8
Turnstone	94	—	94	405	Treecreeper	35	—	35	349
Black-headed Gull	159	34	193	3500	Golden Oriole	—	—	—	1
Common Gull	57	—	57	271	Red-backed Shrike	1	—	1	6
Herring Gull	60	—	60	217	Great Grey Shrike	—	—	—	3
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	—	1	2	Jay	8	—	8	122
Great Black-backed Gull	9	—	9	32	Maggie	10	—	10	86
Sandwich Tern	15	—	15	38	Jackdaw	1	6	7	48
Common Tern	—	6	6	310	Rook	—	24	24	625
Little Tern	—	—	—	337	Carriac Crow	—	—	—	18
Guillemot	—	—	—	3	Starling	1651	3	1664	19782
Razorbill	—	—	—	3	House Sparrow	134	—	134	2942
Little Auk	3	—	3	7	Tree Sparrow	77	24	101	4346
Puffin	—	—	—	1	Chaffinch	358	6	364	4145
Stock Dove	—	11	11	351	Brambling	11	—	11	935
Woodpigeon	24	—	24	335	Greenfinch	640	—	640	12094
Collared Dove	3	2	5	240	Goldfinch	40	—	40	2119
Turtle Dove	13	—	13	247	Siskin	1	—	1	169
Cuckoo	5	1	6	113	Linnet	306	5	311	5048
Barn Owl	2	24	26	92	Twite	161	—	161	600
Little Owl	2	—	2	42	Redpoll	149	3	152	4847
Tawny Owl	6	22	28	113	Crossbill	—	—	—	21
Long-eared Owl	4	—	4	45	Bullfinch	313	—	313	3491
Short-eared Owl	—	—	—	9	Hawfinch	—	—	—	1
Nightjar	—	—	—	2	American Redstart	—	—	—	1
Swift	12	—	12	172	Lapland Bunting	85	—	85	301
Kingfisher	7	—	7	101	Snow Bunting	—	—	—	59
Wryneck	2	—	2	13	Yellowhammer	111	—	111	3117
Green Woodpecker	3	—	3	14	Reed Bunting	142	6	148	3638
Great Spotted Woodpecker	6	—	6	55	Red-headed Bunting	—	—	—	1
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	—	—	—	12	Corn Bunting	1	—	1	259
Skylark	284	12	296	1455					
Sand Martin	143	—	143	2571					
Swallow	155	136	291	14551					
Totals	19056	1729	20785	248419					

Dunlin

Birds to Lincs include from Norway 2, Poland 1, Sweden 2; from Lincs to France 1, Ireland 1.

Snipe

4 03.04.79 Market Rasen
+ 26.12.86 Co Mayo
EIRE 583km W
2 23.08.86 Marston SF, Grantham
+ 31.01.87 Santander
SPAIN 1081km SSW

Turnstone

4 13.08.83 Benington
v 01.01.87 Tina das Areias
GUINEA BISSAU

Black-headed Gull

Birds to Lincs from Estonia 1, West Germany 3, Lithuania 1; from Lincs to Denmark 3, Netherlands 1, Norway 1, Sweden 1, Finland 1.

Common Gull

6 17.05.81 Halland SWEDEN
x 30.11.86 North Hykeham 913km SW
1 18.06.83 Fyn DENMARK
x 18.11.86 Skegness 672km WSW

Kittiwake

1 05.07.87 Isle of May
x 14.08.87 Covenham Res 345km SSE

Sand Martin

4F 11.06.83 Donington-on-Bain
v 06.08.87 Hagworthingham 19km SE
Controlled at a different colony

Blackbird

4M 13.11.82 Theddlethorpe Dunes
x 17.10.86 Sjaelland
DENMARK 791km ENE
3M 09.11.84 Theddlethorpe Dunes
x 11.04.87 Vaasa
FINLAND 1681km NE
3F 16.10.86 Theddlethorpe Dunes
x 20.04.87 Hamburg
WEST GERMANY 638km E
3M 15.11.86 Gibraltar Point
x 20.04.87 Jylland
DENMARK 655km ENE

Song Thrush

3 25.09.85 Theddlethorpe Dunes
x 11.04.87 Finisterre
FRANCE 637km SW

Reed Warbler

3J 05.08.86 Epworth
v 11.09.86 Loire-Atlantique
FRANCE 713km SSW
3 11.09.86 Gibraltar Point
v 05.06.87 St Ouen
JERSEY 467km SSW

Whitethroat

3J 23.08.86 Theddlethorpe Dunes
v 20.09.86 Beachy Head, Sussex 295km S

Blackcap

3M 13.08.86 Market Rasen
v 29.09.86 Portland BO,
Dorset 349km SW

Chiffchaff

4M 02.05.87 Dungeness BO, Kent
v 26.06.87 Theddlethorpe Dunes
277km NNW

Willow Warbler

3 09.08.83 Ancaster Pit
v 09.06.87 Gibraltar Point 60km ENE
Previously controlled at Gibraltar Point April 84,
July 85, July 86

Great Tit

6M 04.01.84 Bonehill, Staffs
v 17.05.87 Gibraltar Point 148km NE
3M 10.12.86 Shrewsbury, Salop
v 08.04.87 Market Rasen 178km NE

Starling

3F 06.11.83 Theddlethorpe Dunes
x 24.04.87 Koszalin
POLAND 1047km E
4 17.02.85 Overijssel NETHERLANDS
v 15.01.87 Boston 401km W
5M 07.01.86 Bourne
x 25.07.87 Rostock
EAST GERMANY 947km E
3F 02.03.86 Doddington
x 11.04.87 Weser-Ems
WEST GERMANY 589km ENE
3F 29.12.86 Skegness
x 22.02.87 Middenbeemster
NETHERLANDS 314km E
3M 03.07.85 Ventes Ragas LITHUANIA
v 07.01.87 Skegness 1378km W
See the 1986 Report for five other birds all
ringed at Ventes Ragas within a 34 day period
and all controlled between Boston and
Skegness

Siskin

3F 13.03.87 Egham Surrey
v 01.04.87 Market Rasen 219km N

Linnet

3JM 02.07.85 Gibraltar Point
x 15.01.87 Sevilla
SPAIN 1337km SSW

Lapland Bunting

5F 01.01.86 Butterwick
v 14.12.86 Butterwick
6F 22.02.86 Butterwick
v 24.01.87 Butterwick
v 01.02.87 Butterwick

In addition two ringed birds were seen in the 1987/88 winter before any were ringed in 87/88. Since so few have ever been ringed nationally, these were almost certainly ringed at Butterwick in previous winters, suggesting that the Wash is a regular wintering area for this species.

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