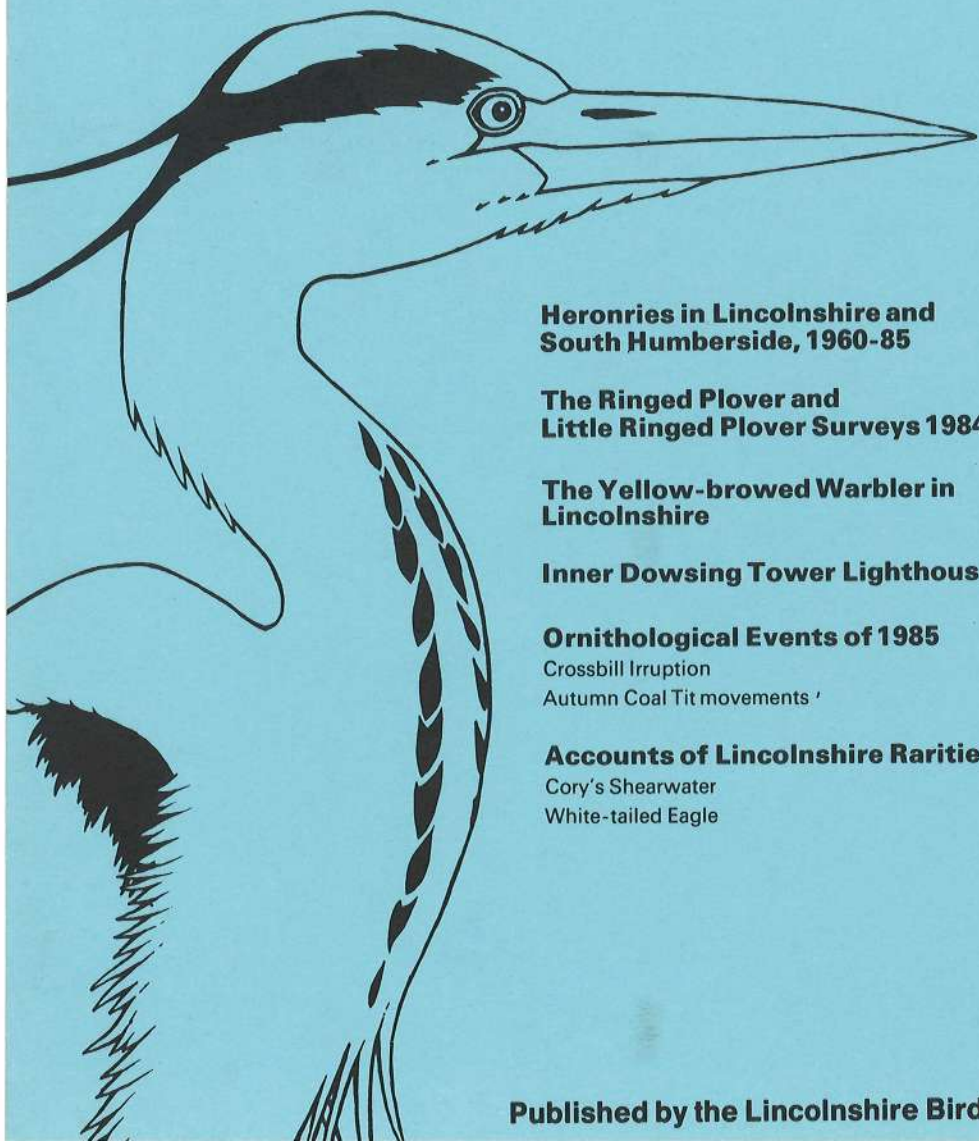


# **LINCOLNSHIRE BIRD REPORT 1985**

**Including the Gibraltar Point Observatory Report**



**Heronries in Lincolnshire and  
South Humberside, 1960-85**

**The Ringed Plover and  
Little Ringed Plover Surveys 1984**

**The Yellow-browed Warbler in  
Lincolnshire**

**Inner Dowsing Tower Lighthouse**

**Ornithological Events of 1985**

Crossbill Irruption

Autumn Coal Tit movements '

**Accounts of Lincolnshire Rarities**

Cory's Shearwater

White-tailed Eagle

**Published by the Lincolnshire Bird Club**

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ISSN 0261-5525

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# Waterbird Counts 1984-85

During the winter of 1984-85 observers counted birds at 25 waters, 23 of these being covered in at least 6 months from September to March.

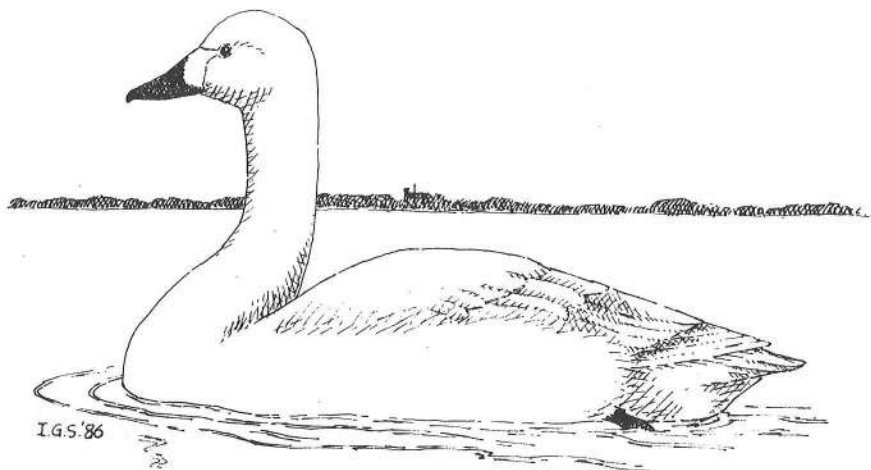
The weather during the period started with cool, wet conditions and NW winds in September changing to warmer SW winds in November, but remaining predominantly wet. In mid December easterlies brought cold, damp weather and by the end of the month light frosts had created thin ice on some waters. Early January saw drizzle and snow showers, with increasing severity of frosts, until 12th when hard frosts to about 20th closed many waters with thick ice. Winds then turned warmer and cleared much of the ice away. However a return of colder conditions meant that many sites were again ice-bound from February 8th to 20th. After 20th winds turned S to SW bringing warmer air which supported mild conditions until the March count when northerlies brought colder weather heralding a cold, wet spring. 1984-85 was the third hard winter in the last seven years.

Highest numbers of Little Grebe, Tufted Duck, Scaup, Goldeneye and Coot occurred during the cold weather in January though Great Crested Grebes were at their lowest then, having probably moved out onto coastal waters. Numbers of inland Cormorants were at their highest during December-January, whilst Goosander did not reach their maximum until February-March. Mute Swans on the River Welland reached their highest total yet recorded, with 316 birds on November 16th, only to plummet to 32 by December 14th and remain at a maximum of 60 until the end of the count period.

No records have been received for additional waters counted for the January International Census.

(Scientific names of species are given in the Systematic List.)

John Redshaw





# **Table 1 – Monthly Waterbird Totals, 1984-85**

<i>Species</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>
Red-throated Diver	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Little Grebe	2	10	6	8	23	22	7
Great Crested Grebe	91	61	49	39	18	31	74
Black-necked Grebe	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Cormorant	4	1	4	10	11	4	6
Mute Swan	154	345	383	114	101	98	96
Bewick's Swan	–	–	2	18	–	17	10
Whooper Swan	–	–	9	–	–	1	–
Pink-footed Goose	–	–	–	–	–	22	1
Greylag Goose	200	188	94	113	155	119	171
Canada Goose	921	1129	389	675	707	340	359
Barnacle Goose	2	1	2	–	1	–	7
Egyptian Goose	2	1	1	–	2	2	2
Shelduck	278	198	568	391	267	403	276
Wigeon	255	649	487	527	1072	140	173
Gadwall	3	24	22	40	13	14	19
Teal	1375	473	585	269	272	425	119
Mallard	2965	2246	1864	1896	1816	1722	671
Pintail	6	3	–	2	2	1	1
Shoveler	54	31	45	17	18	16	20
Pochard	141	154	278	355	264	411	153
Tufted Duck	328	437	607	570	718	633	388
Scaup	–	–	2	1	60	3	5
Eider	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
Long-tailed Duck	–	–	2	2	2	–	2
Common Scoter	–	–	2	–	–	–	–
Goldeneye	–	–	77	83	96	82	88
Smew	–	–	–	–	–	2	–
Red-breasted Merganser	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
Goosander	10	–	14	26	23	40	38
Ruddy Duck	2	–	9	6	1	4	–
Moorhen	55	47	33	33	29	43	23
Coot	1777	1630	1655	1679	2003	1613	757
Waters Counted:	25	24	22	22	20	25	21

# **Table 2 – Waters Counted in 1984-85**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Months Counted</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Months Counted</i>
R. Welland, Spalding	S O N D J F M	Baston Fen	S O N D J F M
Grimsthorpe Lake	S O N D J F M	Ashbyville	S O – – – F –
Baston Gravel Pits	S O N D J F M	Bagmoor Lake	S O – – – F –
Riseholme Lake	S O N D – F M	Barton Pits	S O N D J F –
Fillingham Lake	S O N D J F M	Messingham S.Q.	S O N D J F –
Winteringham Haven	S O N – J F M	Brickyard Pond, Sutton	S O N D J F M
Read's Island	S O N D J F M	West Ashby G.P.	S O N D J F M
Pyewipe	S O N D J F M	N. Killingholme Pits	S O N D J F M
Covenham Resr	S – N D J F M	S.40 Foot Drain	S O – D J F M
R. Witham, Fiskerton	S O N D J F M	Kirkby on Bain G.P.	S O N D J F M
Sea Bank Clay Pits	S O N D J F M	Gib Point Mere	S O N D – F M
Coronation Channel	S O N D – F M	Denton Resr	S O N D J F M
Burton Gravel Pits	S O N D J F M		

# The Late Summer Wildfowl Survey 1985

The survey was organised by the Wildfowl Trust and local counters were asked to visit their regular winter count sites at least once between July 13th and August 31st 1985 to record numbers of grebes, wildfowl and Coots. Counters were also asked to note plumage details and sex ratios of birds present, and to indicate those species which had bred at the site during 1985. Not all counters provided records of plumage and sex ratios, and consequently these details are omitted from the table, which shows the results of the counts. The total numbers given in the table include juvenile birds.

**Table 1 – Counts of Summering Wildfowl 1985**

<i>Species</i>	<i>Total No</i>	<i>No of Sites n = 14</i>	<i>Largest number of birds</i>	<i>No of Breeding Sites</i>
Little Grebe	17	3	7 Sea Bank Clay Pits	3
Great Crested Grebe	36	8	10 R. Welland	3
Mute Swan	77	10	21 R. Welland	6
Greylag Goose	18	2	15 Messingham N.R.	1
Canada Goose	98	4	45 Langtoft Common	4
Shelduck	1	1	1 R. Welland	nil
Wigeon	1	1	1 Barton Pits	nil
Gadwall	5	1	5 Barton Pits	nil
Teal	78	3	65 Messingham N.R.	nil
Mallard	665	11	220 Sea Bank Clay Pits	7
Pintail	nil	nil	—	nil
Garganey	4	2	2 each site	2?
Shoveler	31	3	25 Barton Pits	2
Pochard	40	5	34 Barton Pits	1
Tufted Duck	183	12	46 Barton Pits	5
Eider	nil	nil	—	nil
Common Scoter	nil	nil	—	nil
Red-breasted	nil	nil	—	nil
Merganser				
Goosander	nil	nil	—	nil
Ruddy Duck	29	1	29 Barton Pits	1
Mandarin	nil	nil	—	nil
Coot	1110	13	310 Messingham N.R. 312 Barton Pits	10

Records were received from the following sites: Ashbyville Lake, Barton-Barrow Haven Pits, Baston Fen N.R., Fillingham Lake, Langtoft Common Gravel Pits, Langtoft Fen G.P., Messingham B.I.S. Quarry N.R., Messingham Heath Quarry, Messingham Sand Quarry, North Killingholme Pits, River Witham (Fiskerton), Riseholme Lake, River Welland (Spalding-Borough Fen), and Sea Bank Clay Pits.

Thanks are due to the counters who took part in these surveys.

John Redshaw

# Heronries in Lincolnshire and South Humberside, 1960-85

Every ten years the British Trust for Ornithology carries out a full national heronries census, 1985 being such a full census year. Between full censuses an annual "sample" count is made though in a number of counties, including Lincs/South Humberside, this sample is in fact a full count of all known heronries. In this county more or less complete counts are available back to at least 1960, and the results of the last 26 years heronry counts are reported here. (See Table 1.)

Figure 1 shows the total number of Heron nests in each year since 1960. Note that where one or two heronries were not counted in a particular year, an approximate total has been arrived at by "allocating" to the missed heronries the mean of their counts for the year before and after. These extrapolated totals are shown by a separate symbol on the graph.

The fortunes of individual heronries over the period are shown in figure 2. In 1960 eight heronries were in regular occupation, compared with 10 in 1985. Only six of these endured throughout however, two of the original heronries having become extinct and four new ones being founded during this time. In addition two others arose and died out during the period and a number of sites have intermittently held one or two nests. Further notes on individual heronries are given below.

From the figures it appears that the Heron population of the county can be considered in three periods:

1. A steep decline from 1960-63, with partial recovery to 1965. This decline is usually attributed to severe winter weather but note that the decline, which was common to all heronries, was under way at least two years before the very bad winter of 1962/63. In Willoughby Wood, for which figures are available back to 1928 (Milstein et al 1970) the number of nests was in decline from 1959.

Note also that no winter since 1962/63 appears to have had such a grave effect on the heron population.

2. A period of fairly steady numbers from the mid-sixties to the early seventies, though individual heronries may show fluctuations.

3. From the early seventies, a period of overall increase. Although the heronry at Fiskerton became extinct during this time and two others, in Old Hag and Willoughby Woods, have reduced their numbers, most others have increased. This period also saw the foundation (or discovery) of three new heronries in the north of the county.

Taken together these results suggest that in earlier years Herons in the county may have been under some stress, causing a more serious reaction to severe winters for example, and holding the population at a lower level than it has since attained. According to this model the stress appears to have been lifted or reduced in the early seventies, and an obvious candidate for this stressing factor is the level of pesticides in the environment. (Compare the effect on Sparrowhawk records, Catley 1984.)

However, the effects of other factors, eg forestry operations, control of Herons at fisheries, and the increase of fish-farming and put-and-take fisheries in the county should also be considered.

## Notes on Individual Heronries

**Abbey Wood** Well recorded right from the start and showing steady increase in numbers except in 1985.

**Brocklesby** A single nest occasionally up to 1964.

**Double Rivers** A single nest in 1983.

**Howsham Wood/Laughton Forest** It seems likely that these colonies had been going for some time before they were found. A "new" site in Laughton Forest, reported in 1985 has been included with the original site in Fig 2.

**Wharton Wood/Long Nursery** Felling operations disrupted the Wharton colony and the birds moved to Long Nursery where they survived for a time. Reason for leaving Long Nursery is unknown.

Fig 1. Heron nests in Lincs/South Humbs 1960-85

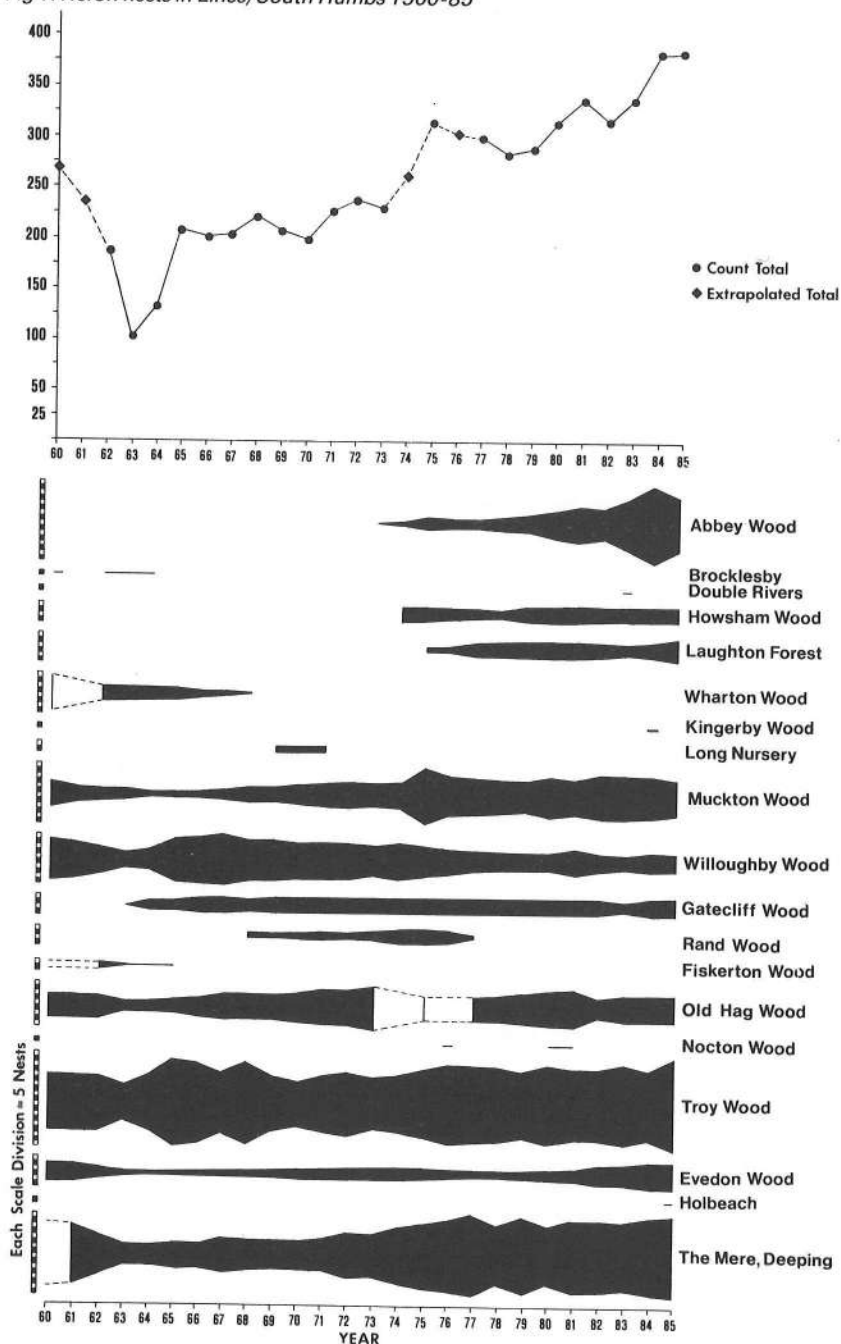


Fig 2. Changes in individual Heronries 1960-85



**Kingerby Wood** Two occupied nests in 1984 and 1985.

**Muckton Wood** Lincolnshire & S Humberside Trust reserve since 1984.

**Willoughby Wood** Completely deserted in 1948. Declined in the 1940's before the 1946/47 winter due to "the activities of woodmen". Only 3 occupied nests in 1950.

**Gatecliff Wood** Often reported as Newball in LNU *Transactions* but the heronry has always been in Gatecliff and not Newball Wood.

**Rand Wood** This colony seemed to be going well up to and including 1976 then in 1977 there were only two nests and in 1978 it was deserted. No definite reason for this is known, though it was reported to have been badly disturbed by someone during the breeding season.

**Fiskerton Long Wood** Probably deserted because of tree felling operations.

**Old Hag Wood** Counting here may have been erratic before 1977, so some of the reported figures in LNU *Transactions* are possibly not reliable. The counts used here are those supplied by the owner for the period 1960-73. A count was made in 1975 and reliable counts have been made since 1977.

**Nocton Wood** Single nests in 1976, 1980 and 1981.

**Troy Wood** Counted regularly by Nature Conservancy staff from 1965 to 1975 then by ITE to the present day.

**Evedon Wood** Well documented and increasing nicely in spite of tree thinning in adjacent compartments. The owner is sympathetic and has agreed to leave the heronry area undisturbed.

**The Mere** Well documented over a long period.

**Hospital Cottages** (Holbeach St Marks) Two occupied nests in 1985.

## Acknowledgements

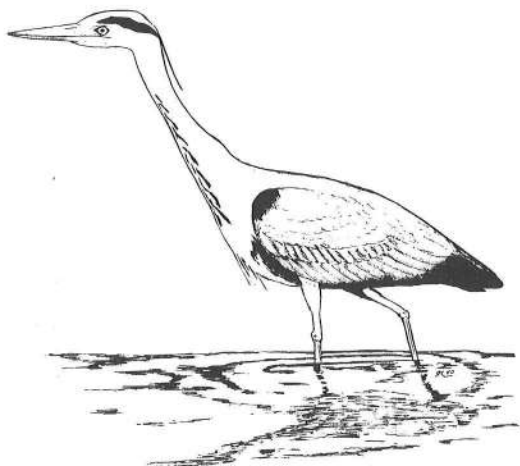
Thanks are due to the many people who have taken part in the heronry counts over the years; particular thanks also to Mr Jarvis for additional counts and comments on the heronry in Old Hag Wood.

A. L. Goodall  
R. B. Wilkinson

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Catley G.P. Return of the Sparrowhawk in Lincolnshire/South Humberside. Lincolnshire Bird Report 1984.

Milstein P. le S., Presst I. & Bell A.A. The Breeding Cycle of the Grey Heron. *Ardea* 58, 171 -, 1970.



**Table 1 – Number of nests in Lincolnshire heronries, 1960-85**

Heronry	Year																											
	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985		
Abbey Wood-														1	3	13	11	9	15	18	27	35	31	51	76	53		
Brocklesby	1		1	1	1																							
Double Rivers																												
Howsham Wood																											1	
Laughton Forest															14	13	10	9	8	12	13	17	15	15	15	14	14	
Wharton Wood	35	(25)	15	12	12	12	7	4	1							7	8	16	14	15	18	14	15	10				
Kingerby Wood																												
Long Nursery																											2	2
Muckton Wood	24	13	12	10	4	7	7	10	17	13	19	22	26	22	27	55	40	37	33	30	41	34	43	42	40	35		
Willoughby Wood	39	37	28	15	20	42	44	49	41	39	33	37	33	31	34	30	26	20	21	18	18	26	18	15	20	18		
Gatecliff Wood				1	11	11	15	17	12	16	17	16	16	16	16	16	17	16	16	17	16	17	16	12	16	18		
Rand Wood										5	8	8	4	10	14	14	12	2	0									
Fiskerton Long Wood	(6)	(6)	6	1	1	1																						
Old Hag Wood	22	23	22	10	13	16	19	28	25	28	31	34	37	43	(33)	22	(24)	26	26	29	33	36	19	26	27	25		
Nocton Wood																												
Troy Wood	56	52	53	34	52	88	79	59	79	55	45	57	62	50	56	67	79	78	75	65	77	71	70	80	70	90		
Evedon Wood	21	18	9	4	2	4	3	3	6	8	10	11	12	13	13	13	7	6	7	8	10	12	20	21	26	26		
Holbeach St Marks																												
The Mere, Deeping	(65)	59	39	19	20	25	26	35	31	31	31	28	33	47	43	54	66	70	82	69	77	73	69	64	75		2	
TOTAL	(269)	(235)	185	107	136	206	200	205	218	202	198	225	237	229	(264)	316	(305)	301	284	289	316	336	316	337	381	385		

#### Sources of Information

1960-68 LNU Transactions

1969 onwards Annual heron census cards and other correspondence, the latter deposited in the L&SHTNC Heron file.

# The Ringed Plover and Little Ringed Plover Surveys, 1984

## Objectives

A nationwide survey of Little Ringed and Ringed Plover, to assess the number of territories in Ringed Plover and total summering population of Little Ringed Plover, and to compare both with the last surveys of 1973-74.

## Method

1. **Ringed Plover.** Recorders were asked to visit any likely sites twice between May 1st and June 15th, to record breeding or territorial pairs and to indicate the habitat from a given list. Habitats were divided into coastal or inland. For coastal sites categories were beach (various sub-categories), sand-dunes, saltmarsh, machair or adjacent farmland. For inland sites, relevant categories were lake or reservoir shore, gravel pit, chalkpit or other habitat.

2. **Little Ringed Plover.** Recorders were asked to visit possible sites once a month between April and July and record the total number of adult Little Ringed Plovers seen, with any observations of breeding activity or evidence of interaction with Ringed Plover. They were also asked to describe the habitat and finally to estimate the number of pairs which nested or attempted to nest.

## Results

### Ringed Plover

A total of 242 pairs of Ringed Plovers were found to be holding territories in 1984 compared with 152 in 1973. Of these 206 pairs were coastal and 36 pairs were inland. Table 1 shows the breeding habitats used in 1984, with inland habitats in 1973 for comparison; unfortunately this information was not collected for coastal pairs in the earlier survey. Table 2 shows the coastal distribution by stretches for the two years, and Maps 1 and 2 the inland distribution by 10km square. Ringed Plover pairs were reported from 6 inland sites in 1973 and 19 in 1984.

### Little Ringed Plover

Thirty-three pairs of Little Ringed Plover were found at 24 sites in 1984, compared with 30 pairs at 15 sites in 1973. (The report of the 1973 survey (Wilkinson & Atkin 1974) notes however that the ironstone area, north of Scunthorpe, known to hold 8-10 pairs at that time, were not surveyed fully, and gives "a more realistic estimate" as 35 pairs in 1973.)

Table 3 gives the breeding habitats used in the two years, and Maps 3 and 4 the distribution of pairs by 10km square.

## Discussion

While some breeding species are decreasing nationally it is very pleasing to see the number of Ringed Plover breeding in Lincolnshire and South Humberside increasing by 60% in 10 years. It is quite clear though that the increase is not uniform all over the county.

Along the Wash coastline to the south-west of Friskney numbers have increased slightly from 47 pairs in 1973 to 52 in 1984. In this area sand and shingle is scarce and most of the coast is mud and saltmarsh. As Ringed Plover do not like long vegetation, 34 of the 52 pairs bred on the adjacent farmland – probably fewer than in 1973 when "most" of the 47 pairs were reported to be on the fields. (K. Atkin, pers comm.) Here there are bare patches or just what appears to be bare fields, ie spring sown crops such as sugar beet, peas, onions or brassicas. Nationally there has been a decrease in peas and perhaps onions and brassicas and an increase in winter cereals. Also farming has become more efficient, which has meant fewer gaps in winter sown crops. All this means less suitable habitat for nesting Ringed Plovers. However, human interference should be less as farmers and farmworkers go into the fields less often nowadays.

### Table 1 – Breeding Habitats of Ringed Plover

<i>Coastal</i>	<i>Pairs 1984</i>	<i>Inland</i>	<i>Pairs</i>	
			<i>1984</i>	<i>1973</i>
Beach: Sand	10	Lake/reservoir	7	2
Sand/shingle	43	Sand/gravel pit	15	7
Shingle	45	Chalk pit	2	0
Sand Dune	39	Ironstone mine	7	0
Saltmarsh	8	Industrial site	5	0
Adjacent: Farmland	45	Sewage farm	0	2
Chalk rubble	8			
Industrial site	8			
Total (coastal)	206	(inland)	36	11

### Table 2 – Coastal Distribution of Ringed Plover

	<i>Pairs</i>	
	<i>1984</i>	<i>1973</i>
Winteringham Haven (SE 936231) – R. Ancholme (SE 975212)	9	0
R. Ancholme – Barton Haven (TA 029235)	2	0
N. Killingholme (TA 165200) – Grimsby Docks (TA 275110)	8	0
Cleethorpes (TA 310090) – Humberstone Fitties (TA 340050)	2	0
Humberstone Fitties – Horseshoe Point (TA 382018)	50	28
Horseshoe Point – Saltfleet Haven (TF 465940)	14	17
Saltfleet Haven – Mablethorpe (TF 507855)	8	5
Mablethorpe – Ingoldmells (TF 572697)	0	2
Ingoldmells – Seacroft (TF 570600)	17	6
Seacroft – Friskney (TF 504536)	44	27
Friskney – R. Witham (TF 365395)	21	19
R. Witham – R. Welland (TF 344342)	10	12
R. Welland – Norfolk Border (TF 526253)	21	16
Totals:	206	141

### Table 3 – Breeding Habitats of Little Ringed Plover

	<i>Pairs</i>	
	<i>1984</i>	<i>1973</i>
Ironstone mines	7	3
Reservoir/lake	3	2
SBF Settling ponds	3	7
Sand/gravel pit	13	18
Limestone/chalk pit	5	0
Disused airfield	1	0
Industrial site	1	0
Totals:	33	30



The two reserves, Gibraltar Point and Tetney, have full-time wardens and the birds have reasonable security; so much so that they have increased by nearly 50%. These birds may well be at maximum density and as their breeding success is quite high they provide a reserve of young birds available to move onto habitat outside the reserve, north towards Skegness for example. Few of these pairs seem to breed successfully (R. Lambert, pers comm) probably mainly due to disturbance but numbers are maintained by the reserves.

Between Tetney and Mablethorpe numbers on the reserves at Donna Nook and Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe have held steady. Between Mablethorpe and Skegness however no Ringed Plover now attempt to breed on the shore, although the habitat is suitable. Disturbance from holidaymakers is very high along this stretch. In some years 1 or 2 pairs have bred on adjacent farmland (K. Atkin, pers comm) in this area, but a thorough search was not made for this survey.

The Humber shore to the north of Cleethorpes was covered less systematically than the rest of the coast in 1973 because at that time no regular breeding sites were known. The most likely spots were visited and there were no reports of breeding birds from local observers. An occasional pair might have been missed in the earlier survey, but most of this increase is certainly real.

Inland, the first breeding record in the county was as recent as 1963. Since then Ringed Plover have shown a steady increase with numbers more than trebling between 1973 and 1984. Three factors probably important in this increase are:

1. An increase in habitat: more acres per year of gravel are now being dug than 20 years ago, iron ore mines have increased in area and there is more factory waste ground.

2. Relatively successful breeding, without too much interference; access is restricted at many of the sites, and though the area of ironstone mines has increased, activity is less as mining is decreasing.

3. More thorough coverage in 1984. At least one group of gravel pits in existence in 1973 was not surveyed then and there may be others. A total of 19 sites are known to have been checked in 1973 (though sites with negative results are not listed in the report) compared with more than 30 in 1984.

The Little Ringed Plover is a relative newcomer to the breeding list. It first bred in England in 1938 (Parrinder & Parrinder 1975) and was first noted in Lincolnshire in 1950 (Smith & Cornwallis 1955). By the 60's it was a regular breeder in the county (Atkin & Townsend 1970) and in 1970 40 pairs were found at 20 sites (Trans LNU). In 1973, the year of the national survey, there were at least 30 pairs, but as noted above some of the iron ore quarries in the north of the county were not covered properly. Due to problems of access this was also the case in 1984, and this total could therefore also be slightly higher. So it appears that the Little Ringed Plover population is static in Lincolnshire.

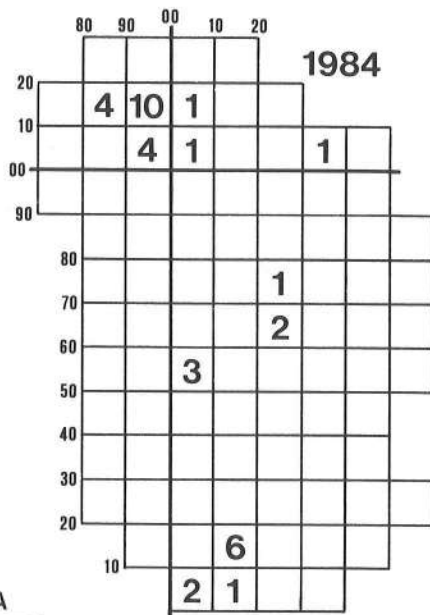
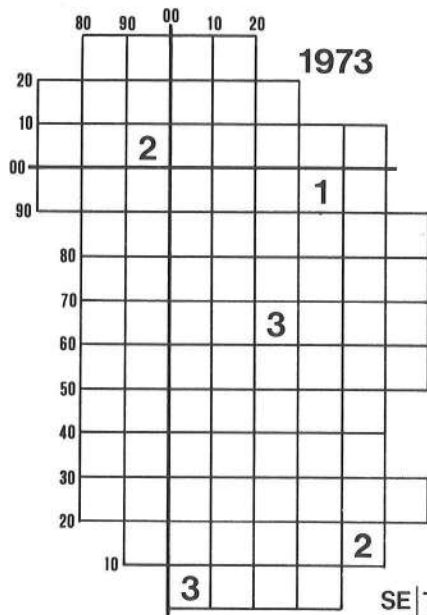
However, as noted for the Ringed Plover, apparently suitable habitat is increasing annually, so there are more sites for Little Ringed Plover than 20 years ago and they might therefore have been expected to increase.

A possible answer is given by Table 4 which gives inland breeding totals for the two plovers in the two survey years.

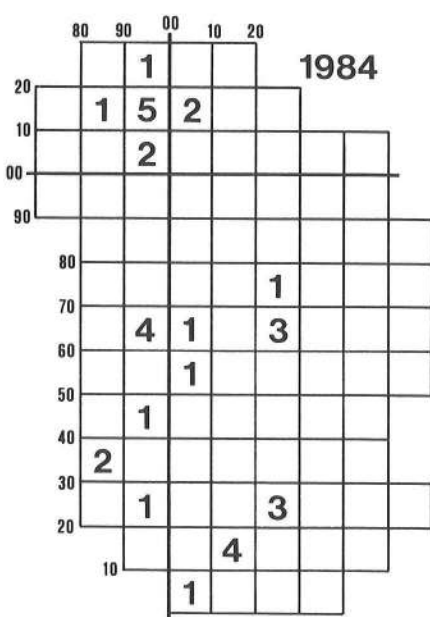
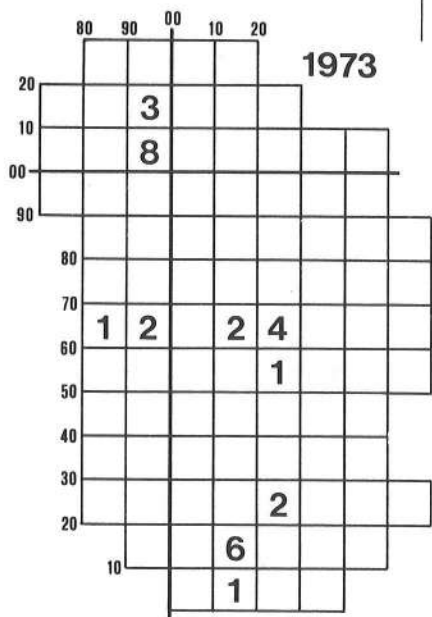
**Table 4 – Inland breeding totals for Ringed & Little Ringed Plover**

	1973	1984
Little Ringed Plover	30	33
Ringed Plover	11	36
Total	41	69

Breeding distribution of Ringed Plover (pairs)



SE TA  
SK TF



Breeding distribution of Little Ringed Plover (pairs)

This shows that there has been almost a 70% increase in breeding pairs with the increase in habitat but that it is the Ringed Plover which is taking up the inland sites. Ringed Plovers are not total summer migrants and normally arrive at their breeding territories before the Little Ringed Plovers, so they could take the prime sites. Where there is competition they appear to be the dominant species.

Table 3 also shows that Little Ringed Plovers have expanded into other habitats since 1973. In that year over half the pairs were found in gravel pits, compared with just over a third in 1984. This could also be due to competition from Ringed Plovers.

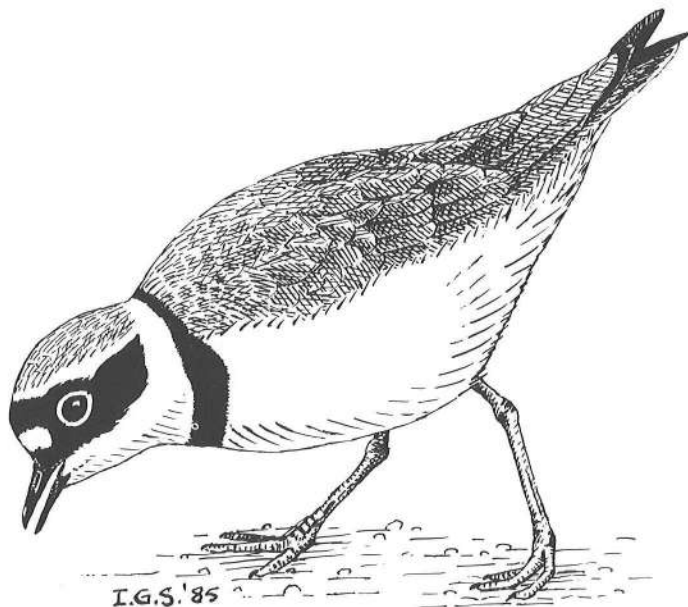
## Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the many observers who took part in the survey, and especially to the regional organisers who directed the effort and provided the results.

Nicholas Watts

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# The Yellow-browed Warbler in Lincolnshire

On October 7th 1892 Lincolnshire's first Yellow-browed Warbler, *Phylloscopus inornatus*, was shot by Caton Haigh at North Cotes. During the next 40 years he recorded another 12 birds, all in autumn and most in October, and established the species as more than just a vagrant; more a casual irregular passage migrant in the late autumn. However, despite three further records from Gibraltar Point 1949-52 it was not recorded again until September 28th 1960. This gap must surely have been due to a lack of observations during the period.

The Yellow-browed Warbler breeds in Siberia between 30°N and 70°N and extends west to the Northern Urals and east to Northern Mongolia. It is said to be one of the commonest birds in Siberia (Dementiev & Gladkov 1954) and is not surprisingly therefore one of the commonest Siberian vagrants in Britain with 275 records between 1958-67 (Sharrock 1974) and over 1,750 from 1968-84 (Catley & Baker in prep).

In Lincolnshire the number of records per annum from 1960-84 varied from 0-7 (Fig 1), with an average of under 2 per annum over that period. There has, however, been a steady increase since 1975, no doubt in line with the increasing number of observers and better coastal coverage, but also related to a recent trend of increased westward vagrancy noted throughout Western Europe. The number of records in 1985 (see systematic list) at 21 was unprecedented for the county and was part of a huge influx into Britain, with over 600 records, and other West European countries.

Yellow-browed Warblers usually arrive on the Lincolnshire coast in association with periods of easterly winds from mid September-early November and are often associated with "falls" of continental and Scandinavian migrants particularly Goldcrest and Robins but also winter thrushes etc.

The precise timing of arrivals during 1960-84 is shown in Fig 2 by date of arrival and in Fig 3a by standard 7 day periods. All records fall between September 16th and November 14th. Fig 2 shows an interesting pattern with a suggestion of three peaks, around 28/9-2/10, 9-13/10 and 18-21/10. When condensed into 7 day periods (Fig 3a) the records are more uniform rising from 17/9 to peak during 1-7/10 and 15-21/10 and falling off rapidly after 28/10. Adding the 1985 records (Figs 3b & 4) simply enhances the 29/9-2/10 and 18-21/10 periods in Fig 3b, and in Fig 4 shows a steady rise in records from 17/9 to a peak during 15-21/10 again falling rapidly after 28/10.

Comparisons with the county records of the more easterly/southerly breeding Pallas's Warbler, *Phylloscopus proregulus*, with 15 records during 1960-84, first in 1968, show no real correlation in years of occurrence. As far as timing is concerned, Figs 5 & 6 show the Pallas's records in daily and 7 day periods, and it can be seen that the peak period of occurrence is the same as Yellow-browed ie; 15-21/10. However only one record of Pallas's is before this date, while no less than 53% of the records are after 21/10; in Yellow-browed more of the records occur before the peak and only 18% afterwards. Thus Pallas's is generally a later arrival overall, though the latest bird of both species was a Yellow-browed at Saltfleetby on November 14th 1981, 5 days later than the latest Pallas' at Pyes Hall on November 9th 1980.

All the records considered here are coastal, two inland records are currently under review, and the numbers recorded at each site in most cases simply reflect the degree of observer coverage at each place. Birds tend to be seen on only one or two days with the longest stay being only 5 days: Tetney 11-15/10/1962 and Saltfleetby 1-5/10/1979. No fewer than 52 out of a total of 66 records were seen on only one date and a further 9 on only 2 days. Thus sporadic coverage is much less likely to locate birds than daily observations, reflected in the site totals of 22 Saltfleetby, 11 Gibraltar Point, 11 Donna Nook with, in decreasing numbers, 5 Theddlethorpe, 3 at Anderby Creek, North Cotes/Tetney, Donna Nook (N) and Pye's Hall, and one each at Seacroft, Huttoft and Cleethorpes.



Fig 1. Annual totals of Yellow-browed Warbler in Lincolnshire 1960-84

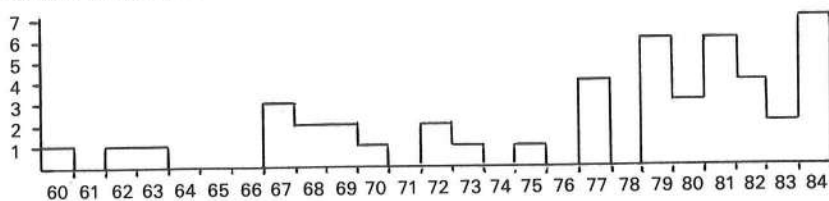


Fig 2. Arrival dates of Yellow-browed Warblers in Lincolnshire 1960-84

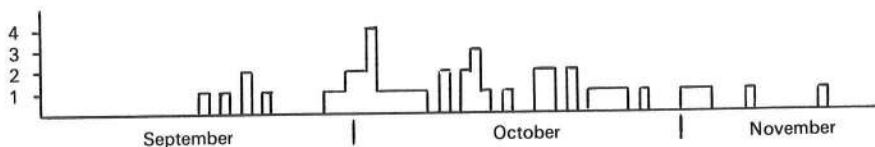


Fig 6. Arrival of Pallas's Warbler in Lincolnshire by 7-day periods, 1960-85

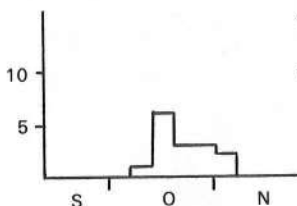
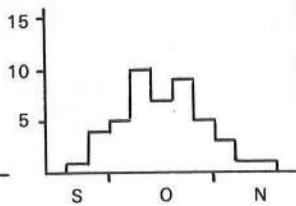


Fig 3. Arrival of Yellow-browed Warblers in Lincolnshire by 7 day periods.  
a) in 1960-84 (incl)



b) in 1960-85 (incl)

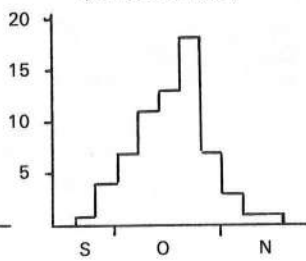


Fig 4. Arrival dates of Yellow-browed Warblers in Lincolnshire 1960-85

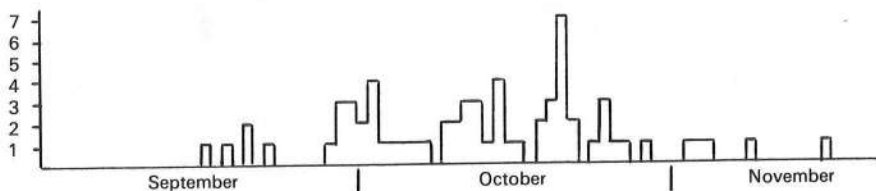


Fig 5. Arrival dates of Pallas's Warbler in Lincolnshire 1960-85



Comparison of the Lincs total of 66 records 1960-84 with neighbouring counties, Yorkshire 200 1968-84 and Norfolk 166 1968-84 suggest that Lincs does not fare so well for the species. However, when one takes into account the vast area of suitable coastal habitat in Lincs and the very low observer numbers, (there may be 30 times as many observers at Spurn Point alone on an October weekend as there are covering the whole Lincs coast) then the actual figures are set in a better perspective. There are still areas of the coast which are never covered at all – Seacroft to Ingoldmells is a very good example with some excellent habitat – and other areas in which observations are very sporadic, so we still have a lot of untapped potential. Indeed if more observers were familiar with the Yellow-browed's distinctive call note more birds would probably be located in the canopy of coastal Sycamores, one of their favourite and most frustrating (for the would-be observers) habitats.

Graham P. Catley

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# Systematic List 1985

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## Review of the year

1985 continued the trend of an increasing number of submissions to the Annual Report and it was a year with some very notable and spectacular ornithological events.

In January some very cold easterly weather around the 19th-20th brought in a notable influx of wildfowl from the continent with particularly high numbers of Scaup and all three sawbills, Smew being the most prominent with 191 records in January/February. Associated with these were small numbers of Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes, a couple of Rough-legged Buzzards and a Goshawk seen in February. Two adult Red-breasted Geese found with the very high numbers of Brent in the Wash were the 3rd and 4th county records. An immature Spoonbill which wintered in the Wash could have chosen a better winter and there may just have been two birds as one seen well at two localities was seen to be colour-ringed.

It was generally an early spring for many migrants with some notably early "firsts" for the year but by the 10th of May a true easterly component was apparent in the coastal "falls" with no fewer than 12 Bluethroats, 9 Red-backed Shrikes, the first spring Richard's Pipit, the second spring Red-breasted Flycatcher and a Stone Curlew. Other rarities from the south or south-east included 4 Golden Orioles, and a Subalpine Warbler with a Marsh Warbler, Serin and Red-necked Phalarope in early June; the only vagrant heron being a Purple in late May.

On the breeding front Marsh Harriers again bred successfully rearing 2 young, 2 female Ruddy Ducks each reared two broods and at least one and possibly two pairs of Woodlarks bred. Hobbies again looked as if they must be breeding but refused to be tied down. By the late summer a marked invasion of Crossbills was taking place along with some flocks of Siskins which was most unusual.

August turned out to be a bumper month all round with very large numbers of terns and Arctic Skuas at sea, the first county Cory's Shearwater and the first Roseate Tern since 1978. Gibraltar Point had a really purple spell with Bee-eater, Alpine Swift and Spotted Crake and there was a notable trio of rare waders - a Wilson's Phalarope, White-rumped Sandpiper and the second county Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.

September saw yet more activity at sea with high tern and Arctic Skua numbers, a good influx of Long-tailed Skuas and 5 Sabine's Gulls. There was a marked invasion of Curlew Sandpipers and on land large numbers of tits, Treecreepers and Great Spotted Woodpeckers were on the move with the 5th county Arctic Warbler being trapped.

October was a good month for variety with record numbers of Pomarine Skuas on the move and leading into more in November, 3 Richard's Pipits, an all time record of 21 Yellow-browed Warblers, a Pallas's Warbler, and a marked influx of northern raptors late in the month with 3-4 Rough-legged Buzzards, a Red Kite, the first White-tailed Eagle since 1933, a Peregrine and later in November a coastal Goshawk.

In November the full extent of the Pomarine Skua influx became apparent around the 10th in northerly gales with a huge movement which also included 2 late Long-tails and a Black Guillemot as well as late records of Sooty and Manx Shearwater. An exceptional year for sea-watching ended with a remarkable watch at Huttoft on Boxing day when amongst the birds noted were 14 Glaucous Gulls, an Iceland Gull, Leach's Petrel and Little Auk with 19 late Pomarine Skuas.

**Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata***

There were no large numbers counted this year. Wintering parties were small with 1-7 at Donna Nook. Inland birds were at Covenham Reservoir January 19th to February 2nd, Barrow Haven February 7-11th, Killingholme 17th and Sutton Ings Pit March 7th. In March there were 6 at Gibraltar Point on 2nd, 1-4 at Inner Dowsing 10-15th with the last of the spring also recorded there on May 16th. Autumn passage started with birds at Donna Nook and Inner Dowsing on September 7th. Numbers increased slowly with 5 Huttoft Bank September 15th, 22 October 6th, 40 9th, 15 Saltfleetby 12th, 10 Anderby 16th with one at Goxhill 13th. Gibraltar Point's peak was later with 7 October 20th, 11 November 1st, 19 on 2nd, 17 on 4th and 25 on 7th. Donna Nook had 10 November 3rd and 9 on 23rd. Throughout November and December, Inner Dowsing recorded 1-3 with 5 Saltfleetby December 15th. Parties in the Wash were 7 Nene Mouth and 4 Witham Mouth December 11th and 9 Gibraltar Point 7th with 6 on 31st.

**Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica***

There were several reports of birds sighted in the Wash, including singles at the Witham Mouth on February 2nd and 7th, Nene Mouth on 3rd and one found dead at Lutton Outmarsh on April 7th. During the year, Gibraltar Point recorded six sightings, Saltfleetby five, Huttoft two and North Cotes one. Inland, there was a single bird at Covenham Reservoir from January 26th to February 9th which flew south-west inland on 10th, a first-winter at Barton-on-Humber Pits February 9-12th with others at Denton Reservoir on February 10th and Apex Pit, Lincoln November 16th-24th.

**Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer***

Single sightings of wintering birds were off Gibraltar Point on January 26th, at the Nene Mouth on February 23rd (IJS) and at Saltfleetby on October 10th (JRW) and November 9th (BMC). There was also a northward returning bird at Donna Nook on May 6th (RLo).

**Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis***

Reported throughout the county with maxima of 8 Tetney January 17th, 9 North Killingholme 9th, 17 Barton-on-Humber Pits 17th, 11 Ashbyville 14th and 11 West Deeping Pits on February 18th. Breeding records showed that 13 pairs reared 26+ young at the Barton-on-Humber - Goxhill Pits. The largest concentrations in the latter part of the year were 10 Tetney October 12th, 13 Barrow Haven and 9 Burton Pits November 14th and 8 Barrow Haven/Barton-on-Humber December 30th.

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

Most large counts in the early winter were at Covenham Reservoir with peaks of 24 in January, 31 in February and 14 in March, with 18 at West Deeping Pits on February 18th and 14 at Denton Reservoir March 7th. There were no significant pre-breeding concentrations but 10 pairs reared 10 young at the Humber Bank Pits, with other breeding pairs noted at Market Rasen, Brigg Island, Messingham with 2 pairs at Black Bank and one pair with 2 juveniles at Winterton Road Lake. Once again, owing to low water levels, there were no nests at Denton Reservoir. Typical post-breeding numbers were 70 Witham Mouth August 4th, 20 18th, 25 South Forty-foot drain, Boston September 9th and October 13th, and 21 Covenham Reservoir October 12th. By the end of the year, numbers had stabilised to around 12 at Covenham Reservoir and 20 at the Witham Mouth.

**Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena***

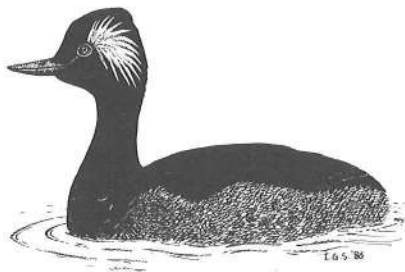
When the northerly winds turned easterly on January 12th, a blast of freezing air brought a small influx of these grebes from the continent. One flew north at Donna Nook and 2 were seen at the Witham Mouth on January 12th. A single flew south at Donna Nook on January 19th, one Bagmoor 20th, and another was recorded at Covenham Reservoir on the 19th. This individual stayed until February 13th. Two were seen there on February 17th, 3 23rd and 2 24th. One remained until March 2nd when there were 2 until 10th. At least one stayed until April 5th. Also in February, one was at North Cotes on 5th and one at Holbeach on 10th.

In autumn, a single was seen off-shore at Huttoft on September 15th. A juvenile, the second in 3 years, appeared at Covenham Reservoir on September 27th.

**Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus***

In winter, 7 birds were noted: a single at Donna Nook on January 19th, 3 together at the Witham Mouth on January 13th and single sightings at Covenham Reservoir January 7th, February 14th and 19th. In autumn, another visited Covenham Reservoir on October 6th and a single sighting in November at Gibraltar Point on 5th.





**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*  
(illustrated)

A wintering bird was at Holbeach Marsh on February 10th and one was found dead on February 24th at Freiston. In spring, 2 were seen at Messingham on May 20th. Passage birds in August were seen at Bardney on 21st and Covenham Reservoir on 23rd. In addition, one was at Bardney on October 1st.

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

Small numbers were present off the coast from March to December, but major movement was barely detectable except in the period August 14th to September 4th. A northerly movement

of 42 at Saltfleetby on August 14th was followed by a passage of 41 south on 18th with 24 south on 24th. Off Inner Dowsing up to 10 were seen regularly from August 14th to September 9th and 4 were at the Witham Mouth August 17th. After a northerly passage of 21 at Saltfleetby on August 26th, a large southwards movement took place on September 1st: 26 at Saltfleetby and 89 in 2½ hours off Huttoft. A December bird was seen off Inner Dowsing on 25th.

**Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris diomedea*

One flew south close inshore at Saltfleetby on August 14th and is accepted as the first authenticated county record. (MJT/BMC). (See Report.)

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*

It is noticeable with this species that most of the records off the Lincolnshire coast are of birds moving north. In August and September, northerly moving birds included one at Huttoft August 2nd (BMC, MJT), 2 Inner Dowsing August 4th and one September 5th (PL), Saltfleetby one September 28th (BMC, MJT) and 2 September 30th (KA, JRC). This year, further northerly movement was recorded at Saltfleetby, 2 October 12th (GPC), Donna Nook 2 October 23rd (RLo) and Inner Dowsing singles on October 11th, 13th and 25th (PL). Sightings in November are most likely to be non-breeding birds: Donna Nook, one north 11th, one south 19th (RLo) and Gibraltar Point, one north 2nd and one north 6th (JPS).

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*

There were no spring records. The first was noted off Inner Dowsing on June 23rd, but movement was not detected from the shore until mid-July. There was a series of records from Gibraltar Point with 4 south on July 12th, 6 north 21st, one north 28th and 9 north August 26th. This year there were no double-figure counts, so 4 south on August 5th and 5 on September 17th at Saltfleetby were of note. It is of interest that of the 72 sightings in the year, 23 were reported from Inner Dowsing. The only October record was of one north at Saltfleetby on 12th.

In a year when unusually late sightings of seabirds were commonplace, there were 6 records in November: singles off Inner Dowsing (PL) and Gibraltar Point on 2nd, 2 north Donna Nook on 3rd (RLo) and further singles north at Gibraltar Point on 6th and Huttoft Bank 10th (MJT/BMC).

**Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

A single bird was seen on August 22nd and 2 on October 26th from the Inner Dowsing Tower (PL).

**Leach's Petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Following a period of south-easterlies, a single bird stayed at Covenham Reservoir for most of September 21st; viewing conditions were unfavourable but the petrel was seen to be constantly harassed by Black-headed Gulls (WJM, SJM, WRM, KA, MM, ACS, KW et al). During the northerlies of December 26th, a single was seen to move steadily north and then south at Huttoft Bank (BMC/MJT).

**Gannet** *Sula bassana*

From January to July, 1-10 were seen at several sites with a northward passage in late-April of 27 at Huttoft on 28th and 15 on 29th; 20 on 28th and 15 on 29th at Inner Dowsing. At Gibraltar Point, 14 were seen on 31st July. Movement was mainly southerly in August with up to 20 a day seen from several sites and notably 23 at Saltfleetby on 18th and 25 Gibraltar

Point on 27th. At Witham Mouth, 7 on 17th increased to 44 on 30th, with 15 at Nene Mouth the following day. Increasing numbers continued into September with 39 south at Saltfleetby on 5th and 20 north at Donna Nook on 7th. In mid-month 136 moved south at Huttoft on 15th with 15 Witham Mouth the same day. On 18th, 54 moved north at Saltfleetby and 5 west at Killingholme. October peak passage produced 40 at Huttoft on 9th, 66 south at Saltfleetby on 10th with 30 north there on 12th and 25 south at Donna Nook on the same day followed by one at Goxhill on 13th. Gibraltar Point had 19 north and Inner Dowsing 50 on 19th and 20 on 20th. At Witham Mouth, there were 15 with 25 at Gibraltar Point on November 2nd and 12 at Huttoft Bank on 10th. In strong northerlies on 26th December, 12 moved north at Huttoft with 3 at Inner Dowsing.

#### **Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Witham Mouth	60	67	26	12	7	16	2	43	20	40	52	-
Gibraltar Point	27	30	25	12	9	4	6	7	20	12	30	30
Covenham Reservoir	42	25	15	23	10	3	-	-	-	-	25	29
Saltfleetby	5	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	24	18
Donna Nook	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	9	-	45	-
Tetney	-	20	12	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26

Other significant records were: in the Wash, 57 Freiston September 13th, 45 Gedney Drove End October 13th and 24 Butterwick October 30th.

Along the Humber at Grimsby Pyewipe 24 were counted on January 13th, 12 on November 18th, Cleethorpes 19 on September 19th and Barton-on-Humber 19 from the 4th-20th February.

Birds showing characteristics of the race *P.c.sinensis* were recorded at Saltfleetby February 21st, Barton-on-Humber Pits February 22nd, 24th and 30th, and March 4th. Also in March, 3 were at Covenham Reservoir on 15th, 2 16th, 3 22nd with others at Witham Mouth March 14th and Holbeach Marsh March 24th.

#### **Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotellus*

Records were spread throughout the year, but mainly in the winter months. A notable movement of 20 south took place at Donna Nook on January 19th with mainly ones and twos at other sites: Anderby Creek February 10th, Nene Mouth March 2nd, Witham Mouth April 20/21st and Inner Dowsing May 16th. After a lull in records in summer, birds were noted on the coast again in early autumn with singles at Cleethorpes, Donna Nook, Inner Dowsing and the Witham Mouth. During November and December larger numbers appeared with 2 at Huttoft November 10th and 2 Witham Mouth November 11th with 7 on 21st. Two flew north at Donna Nook on November 20th and at Nene Mouth there were 3 on December 19th and 4 on 25th.

#### **Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

In April and May, one was in the Anderby Creek/Wolla Bank reedbeds but there was no proof of breeding (TMcG, KS). Elsewhere, there was one at East Halton Pit on January 9th (JdeL, JW), Huttoft Pit February 3rd-4th (MJT, BMC) and Barton-on-Humber Pits on February 20th (GPC). Towards the end of the year, one was at Farlesthorpe, near Alford on November 17th (TMcG), whilst in December there were singles at Messingham on 2nd (CJ) and Lincoln Ballast Pit on 27th (MWS et al) both staying into 1986.

#### **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

A total of 385 nests were counted in 1985 as follows:

Deeping (Mere)	81	Laughton	8	Evedon	26
Troy	90	Newball (Gatecliffe)	18	Kingerby Wood	2
Muckton	35	Thornton Curtis	53	Laughton (village)	13
Donnington (Old Hag)	25	Howsham	14	Holbeach (Hospital cottages)	2
Willoughby	18				

In addition, a pair was seen displaying at Covenham on June 15th, and as a large nest was found in autumn a pair may have bred. Other records of significance were 10 at Nene Mouth August 30th, 6 at Grainthorpe September 26th and 7 at Gibraltar Point on August 23rd were flying north.

#### **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

At Wolla Bank Pit, there were two sightings of probably the same individual; the first on May 31st (KS, JRW) and again on June 2nd (MM) when it was aged as a first-summer.

**Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia***

A colour-ringed first-winter bird, was seen at Huttoft Pit on February 3rd (BMC, MJT) and again at Kirton Marsh on the 10th (PHY). Previously, a first-winter was seen at Gibraltar Point on January 1st (NL, RSPB) and Wainfleet Marsh on January 20th (GPC), but the observers did not report any rings on this bird.

**Mute Swan *Cygnus olor***

The unusually low numbers on the river Welland, Spalding to Borough Fen, peaked at 148 in February; 267 in December showed a promising improvement. Other high numbers were 23 at Cleethorpes in January, rising to 47 in February. Also in February, West Deeping Pits had 69 on 18th and Brayford Pool 91 on 12th. Brayford Pool had peaks of 57 August 17th and 73 September 14th. In November highest numbers were 38 at Whisby Pits on 17th.

**Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus***

In January 1 to 8 birds at Deeping High Bank (River Welland), Goxhill Marsh and Gibraltar Point. Lea Marshes had 22 to 33, Denton Res 12 on 10th. During February 2-7 were at Covenham Reservoir, Thorpe Pits, Huttoft and Croft Marsh, with 10 Deeping High Bank on 16th, 17 Gibraltar Point 28th and 15 Baston Pit 17th. Apart from 36 flying east at Saltfleetby on March 17th there were 14-15 at Gibraltar Point from 17th-23rd and 1-7 at North Cotes, Barton, Anderby Creek, Huttoft, Covenham and Skellingthorpe.

Winter birds started to arrive in October with 1 at Donna Nook on 23rd, 4 Apex Pit 26th and 3 Gibraltar Point 30th. In November there were 1-7 birds at most regular sites with 31 to the north at Saltfleetby on 15th and 11 Lincoln Ballast Pit 17th. In December birds were present at Messingham, Cleethorpes, Tetney, North Cotes, Holbeach Marsh and Donna Nook with max numbers of 39-47 at Lea Marshes 3rd-20th and 13 at East Butterwick from 18th into 1986.

**Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus***

In January-February 1-5 birds at Anderby Creek, North Cotes, Deeping High Bank, Anwick, Alkborough and Fulstow, with maximum of 9 flying north at Covenham on January 4th, 10 Donna Nook 18th and 7 at North Cotes February 23rd. Late birds in March were 8 at North Cotes from 21st-23rd and at Huttoft 8 on 2nd and 7 16th. An immature at Messingham from 1984 was last seen on May 11th. Earliest of the winter arrivals were 2 south at Saltfleetby on October 21st and 3 south at Huttoft on 27th. In November-December 2-3 present at Saltfleetby, Huttoft, Cleethorpes, Donna Nook and Messingham on single days. Others were 4 at Bourne on November 18th, 6 at Frampton Fen same day, 13 at Deeping High Bank 21st, whilst Gibraltar Point had 10 on 2nd and 4-6 on several days during the month. In December 8 flew south at Cleethorpes on 2nd with 4 there 4th and 4 at Leverton on 1st.

**Wild Swan *sp***

40 flew east over Alford in early March, most probably Bewick's but reported as Whoopers and 32 SE at Gibraltar Point November 15th.

**Bean Goose *Anser fabalis***

In February 1 at Croft Marsh 7th-20th. At the end of the year 3 flew NW at Donna Nook on 13th November, 6 south at Humberston Fitties on 4th December, 1 west at Tetney on 11th then 5 between 12th-15th in Tetney - North Cotes area and 6 at North Cotes on 12th. Donna Nook had 2 on 31st. One at North Cotes on December 1st showed characteristics of the tundra race *A.f. rossicus*.

**Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus***

In January there were 500 at Reads Island/Winteringham area on 7th falling to 230 on 27th. Winterton/South Ferriby had 690 on 1st, Gibraltar Point 43 south-east on 2nd, Kirton (Boston) 110 north on 5th, Holbeach Marsh 500 on 10th, Deeping High Bank 17 SW on 26th and Nene Mouth 37 SW on 26th, Swanpool (Lincoln) 250 E also on 26th, Kirkby Laythorpe 80 W on 15th, Saltfleetby 74 on 30th and Tetney 130 SE on 31st. February produced 57 at Gibraltar Point on 2nd and 92 W 3rd, 500 at Read's Island 5th and 104 at Holbeach Marsh 10th. In March Messingham had 1 on 4th, Holbeach 62 2nd and Goxhill Marsh 11 19th. One remained at Donna Nook on May 27th. In autumn the first were 5 S at Gibraltar Point at September 29th. October saw 80 at Pyewipe (Grimsby) on 19th, at Saltfleetby 72 S 28th and 76 S 29th. Gibraltar Point had 8 on 31st. On November 9th, 550 at Reads Island, 110 S at Saltfleetby, 120 S at Huttoft Bank and 140 SE at Nocton Fen. Scamblesby had 100 on 23rd, 200 at Butterwick on 24th, 70 at Holbeach Marsh on 25th, 60

in off the sea at Huttoft on 27th, 120 NW at Kirton on 28th, 50 at Grimsby on 29th and at Gibraltar Point 12 S on 24th and 10 S on 30th. In December 30-50 recorded from Barton on Humber, Tetney, Hoplands Wood (flying over) Lincoln, Chapel St Leonards and Pinchbeck. Other December records were Covenham Res 14 SW on 1st, Saltfleetby 66 S on 6th and 150 SE on 8th, Alkborough 700 N on 8th to roost. Donna Nook 80 S on 8th, Ashby by Partney 250 E also on 8th. Butterwick had 123 on 7th and Covenham Res 95 E on 8th. At Gibraltar Point 130 E on 7th and 61 NE on 12th. Swanpool (Lincoln) had 90 E on 14th, Baston Fen 130 E and Terrington Marsh 14 on same date. At Tetney 19 flew south on 15th and Holbeach Marsh had 800 from 16th-19th, 1,000 from 29th-30th.

#### **White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*

A poor year with few sightings; 1 at Messingham from February 28th-April 14th, 16 there from November 19th-20th and 2 at Covenham Res November 18th. In December there were 60 at North Cotes on 1st and 6 on 31st. Saltfleetby had 6 south on 31st.

#### **Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

Up to 10 were reported during the year from Tetney, Covenham Res, Thurlby Fen, Messingham, North Cotes, Gibraltar Point, Barton-on-Humber, Denton Res and Humberston. In January-February flocks of 20-60 were at Baston Common Pits, Grimsthorpe Lake, Kirkby-on-Bain Pits, Saltfleetby, Cowbit (18) and Whisby Pits. Maximum numbers were 200 at Tattershall on February 23rd and 176 at West Deeping Pits. In March 2 flew south at Gibraltar Point on 10th and 40-50 were at Grimsthorpe, Kirkby-on-Bain and Baston Common. April/May breeding records were received from Kirkby-on-Bain and Holme Lake. Present in small numbers at Messingham and Baston during August and September. In November Whisby Pits, Apex Pits and Saltfleetby had 22-25 birds, and 250 at Tattershall on 30th. In December, at Barton-on-Humber 1 on 24th, Humberston 5 on 6th and Alkborough 11 on 8th.

#### **Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

One blue phase at Messingham October 13th-December 26th then at Ashbyville on 31st and again Messingham in January 1986.

#### **Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

	J	F	M	A	M	A	S	O	N	D
Grimsthorpe	396	149	107	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Baston Pits	91	55	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Messingham	20	132	77	55	-	255	20	130	140	182
Denton Res	93	-	-	-	-	-	200	285	116	177
Burton Pits	130	100	-	25	-	-	-	-	56	95

Other large flocks were 329 at West Deeping Pits on February 18th, 125 at Thorpe Pit on August 19th and 120-150 at Gibraltar Point September 6th-November 1st. Elsewhere 20-80 at Barton-on-Humber, Kingerby, Reads Island, Whisby Pits, Ancaster Pits, West Ashby and Gibraltar Point. One to 6 pairs during breeding season at Baston Fen, Sea Bank Clay Pits, Burton Pits, Barton-on-Humber, Ashbyville, Messingham and Kirkby-on-Bain.

#### **Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

Records of 1-6 feral birds in all months except June/July from Messingham, West Deeping, Whisby Pits, Fillingham Lakes, Thorpe Pit, Denton Res, Covenham Res and Ashbyville. A flock of 6-7 free flying feral birds from Ingoldmells visited various coastal localities, Gibraltar Point to Huttoft all year. Possibly genuine birds included. Four N at Anderby Creek October 12th and 1 Witham Mouth with Brent on October 1st may have been wild stock.

#### **Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Cleethorpes/ Humberston	44	120	70	-	-	-	-	-	-	150	200	200
Tetney/North Cotes	600	170	70	6	-	-	-	-	-	420	-	1000
Donna Nook/Saltfleet	800	354	-	7	-	-	-	-	9	?	2500	1500
Saltfleetby	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	283	146	215
Gibraltar Point	1400	1600	300	160	180	9	1	1	24	400	360	800
Wainfleet	750	1200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wrangle	-	3000	1500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Butterwick	-	-	-	2000	-	10	1	1	-	2500	1000	-
Witham Mouth	1500	2000	4500	3449	500	3	-	1	-	1362	2000	2000
Holbeach Marsh	1500	500	3000	1200	1500	15	-	-	-	700	500	2000
Nene Mouth	-	-	2000	350	1500	17	-	-	-	?	?	?

In January the total Wash count on 13th recorded 11,165 birds. In addition to the above counts, in February there were 35 at Barrow Haven/Barton on 24th and 1,500 at Friskney on 7th. In November 7 flew west at Goxhill on 14th and in December 70-75 were at Huttoft Bank 7th-29th, 800 at Leverton 5th and 4,500 at Kirton 23rd. These latter two possibly being part of the Gibraltar Point-Witham Mouth flocks recorded in the tables.

*B.b. hrota* 6 at Saltfleet January 19th, 1 North Cotes January 1st-March 16th, 4 at Saltfleetby on February 17th and 6 on 26th. Two at Cleethorpes February 22nd and 2 Tetney on 20th may have been same birds. In March 6 Friskney on 2nd and 6 North Cotes on 31st. There were 2 at Butterwick October 20th then none until December when 1 Saltfleet 8th, 6 Saltfleetby 8th, 1 North Cotes 7th-22nd with 7 on 12th and 11 Saltfleetby on 25th. A good year for records of this race.

#### **Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis***

In February single adults at Gibraltar Point 9th-16th (ACS, DJ, RLa, RHNR et al), Leverton 13th-14th (AB, SK), Friskney 16th-17th, (PHY, R&KH) Wrangle 20th (JAC) and Wainfleet 27th (KW). Two adults were at Wrangle on 23rd (DHu), with one still there on March 3rd (PH). The third and fourth county records, one probably same bird as present on NE coast in November 1984.

#### **Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus***

Two in Grimsthorpe Park January – March were most probably local releases.

#### **Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna***

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Messingham	—	—	36	24	34	40	—	—	—	1	3	4
Winteringham/Read Is	212	620	157	—	500	—	—	500	1000	400	—	—
Reads Island	55	186	84	186	134	600	—	—	57	26	147	50
Grimsby Pyewipe	1195	450	335	—	—	—	—	—	168	100	101	1444
Tetney/North Cotes	635	210	160	45	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	500
Donna Nook/Saltfleet	200	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	360	—
Saltfleetby	470	340	78	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	202	76
Gibraltar Point	160	200	50	64	32	146	80	38	174	90	161	320
Witham Mouth	500	1000	150	4	12	10	—	5	15	—	500	1000
Holbeach Marsh	1320	1000	500	50	100	—	50	50	71	100	500	1000

Other inland records were 1-2 Thorpe Pits/Swanpool February 10th-April 28th, 3 West Deeping Pits March 5th, 7 Pairs Butterwick Hale April 28th, 12 displaying Twigmoor April 6th, 2 North Scarle Pit April 30th, 2 Thorpe Pits May 27th and at Denton Res 1-3 from May 5th-18th. Broods were inland at Atterby Carr, Morrison's Pit Gainsborough and Covenham Res in June. Other coastal records were 100 + 65 juveniles Nene Mouth July 7th, 350 Butterwick November 17th and 1,500 there on December 22nd.

#### **Mandarin *Aix galericulata***

A male was at North Somercotes January 20th, February 17th-24th, March 2nd, May 23rd, then October through to November 3rd. Also one at Cleethorpes Boating Lake May 27th-29th.

#### **Wigeon *Anas penelope***

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Reads Island	1022	163	17	60	—	—	—	—	4	100	350	38
Gibraltar Point	1700	90	50	7	—	—	—	38	600	1000	850	800
Witham Mouth	600	4	—	—	—	—	—	20	9	—	500	500
Holbeach Marsh	1500	120	10	—	—	—	—	4	4	7	200	200

Other large numbers in January were 300 at Tetney/North Cotes, 350 Donna Nook, 400 Saltfleetby and 100 Huttoft. In February Butterwick Hale had 150, Alkborough 850 and Baston Fen 300 into early March. In autumn 105 were at Saltfleetby on September 9th, then 150 at Tetney in November/December, 220 Donna Nook November 19th, 300 Apex Pit November 23rd and 294 Saltfleetby December 9th. In Summer up to 4 present Gibraltar Point, Reads Island and Messingham.

#### **Gadwall *Anas strepera***

During January-March there were 1-10 at Lincoln Ballast Pit, Barrow Haven, Huttoft, Nene Mouth, Deeping High Bank (R Welland), Baston Pits, Denton Res, Saltfleetby, Gibraltar Point, Kirkby-on-Bain Pits, Ancaster Pits, Thorpe Pits, Whisby and Messingham Pits. At Baston Pits there were 11 on February 17th and 42 at West Deeping Pits February 18th. In April-July 1-2 pairs were present at Barton-on-Humber Pits (and may have bred), Goxhill

Marsh, Whisby Pit, Covenham Res, Huttoft Pit, Baston Fen and Gibraltar Point. In August at Gibraltar Point there were up to 23 from 15th-31st with 60 on 19th. During September-October 1-3 were present at seven sites with up to 16 at Gibraltar Point 1st-28th. Maximum in November was 20 at Apex Pit on 23rd, and in December up to 35 at Whisby Pits to the end of month and 23 at Apex Pit on 7th.

#### **Teal** *Anas crecca*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Messingham	80	100	—	—	—	—	—	90	180	260	400	80
Winterringham/ Reads Is	90	40	—	—	—	—	—	300	800	1400	78	
Gibraltar Point	26	200	—	—	—	—	—	400	690	750	600	200
Witham Mouth	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	178	—	—	60	
Holbeach Marsh	135	15	—	—	—	—	—	100	—	—	45	

During January-early April up to 55 at Baston Fen, Covenham Res, Denton Res, Anderby Creek, Gibraltar Point and Goxhill Marsh with 70 at Donna Nook on January 4th and 360 at Saltfleetby also on 4th. In May-June birds were present in single numbers at Gibraltar Point, Reads Island and East Halton Skitter with 11 at Messingham on June 23rd where one pair bred. There were 34 at Cleethorpes on July 31st then 50-100 during August/November at Goxhill Marsh, Saltfleetby, Sea Bank Clay Pits, Brigg SBF, Cleethorpes, Baston Fen and Covenham Res, with 110 Donna Nook on November 23rd and 230 Whisby Pits December 26th.

A male of the North American-race *A.c. carolinensis* was at Gibraltar Point on March 28th (P. Palmer, R. Palmer, RLa, et al). Accepted BBRC. Probably same bird as present in November 1984.

#### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Messingham	105	100	—	18	—	52	—	200	22	43	33	111
Winterringham/ Reads Is	400	161	6	—	—	—	—	100	400	500	95	15
Covenham Res	771	600	95	17	35	62	16	46	250	360	600	720
Sea Bank Pits	110	—	—	—	—	—	—	212	158	248	289	176
Gibraltar Point	200	723	30	28	20	43	66	475	948	400	300	1000
Holbeach	318	44	40	50	—	—	55	150	300	57	30	200

Elsewhere there were high counts in January of 124 at Barrow Haven, 202 Bagmoor, 400 Winterton Road Lake, 200 Cleethorpes, 195 Kirkby-on-Bain and 215 at Fillingham Lake. In February there were 254 Bagmoor, 450 Winterton Road Lake, 228 Saltfleetby and 100-200 at Cleethorpes, Ancaster, Boston Docks, West Deeping Pits, Kirkby-on-Bain and Grimsthorpe. In autumn highest counts were 282 Baston Fen September, 200-286 Whisby, Baston Fen and Bagmoor in November and 373 Whisby Pits and 619 Whitton/Winterringham in December.

#### **Pintail** *Anas acuta*

Highest counts during January/April were 100-150 Nene Mouth January 19th-26th and Holbeach Marsh 80 on February 10th. Elsewhere single numbers were at Covenham, Saltfleetby, Huttoft, Witham Mouth, Gibraltar Point, Barton-on-Humber, Freiston, Goxhill, N Killingholme, Tetney and West Deeping Pit with 15 Baston Fen on January 31st. In autumn small numbers were at many of above sites with 20 Witham Mouth September 14th, 30 North Cotes October 1st, 32 Witham Mouth 12th and 170 Gibraltar Point 26th. In November 59 were at Witham Mouth and 65 there December 1st. December maximum at Holbeach Marsh was 43.

#### **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

One pair was present at Baston Fen April 25th-June 14th then a female until July 19th. No brood was seen. In May there were males at Covenham Res/Fulstow Pit on 5th and 17th, at Tetney with a female on 16th, at Lincoln Ballast Pit on 16th, Spalding NR on 19th and Messingham on 25th-26th. In July a pair was at Barrow Haven on 23rd and one at Gibraltar Point from 31st to August 9th. Goxhill Marsh had one August 19th-26th and Gibraltar Point 2-3 from 10th-18th with 9 on 18th, then 15 on 19th followed by 2-6 to end of month. In September 1-4 were there from 1st-5th.

#### **Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

From 1-13 birds were present throughout the year, regular sites being Barrow Haven, North Killingholme, Covenham Res, Saltfleetby, Sea Bank Clay Pits, Whisby Pits, Gibraltar Point,



Lincoln Ballast Pit, Messingham, Huttoft Pit, Holbeach Marsh, Goxhill Marsh, also East Halton Skitter, Denton Res, Burton Pits and West Deeping Pits. At Goxhill Marsh there were 38 on August 19th, with up to 20 Barton-on-Humber Pits and Sea Bank Clay Pits August-December, Winteringham Haven October 18th and Whisby Pits November 9th, up to 30 at Gibraltar Point August 25th-27th, 29 Messingham 28th and 27 there on October 31st. One- two pairs bred at Baston Fen and breeding was confirmed at Barton-on-Humber Pits with 3 broods seen.

#### **Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina***

One male on R Welland at Deeping High Bank March 17th (DGMO) Crowland March 20th (RAF) and on R Glen at Guthram on March 24th (EJR); all probably same bird and most probably of escape origin.

#### **Pochard *Aythya ferina***

From January to March there were 30-100 birds at Barton-on-Humber Pits, Toft Newton Res, Baston Pits, Whisby Pits, Barrow Haven, Messingham, Covenham Res, Ancaster Pits, Baston Fen, Lincoln Ballast Pit, Deeping High Bank, Sutton, Ingoldmells and Gibraltar Point. Highest counts were 130-140 at Apex Pit and R Witham (Hobhole Sluice) in January with maximum 155 at Covenham Res on 3rd. In February, New Holland had 150-300 between 1st and 24th and West Deeping 128 on 18th. Pairs were present during April - June at Huttoft Pit, Twiggmoor, Barton-on-Humber/Barrow Haven (5 broods), Messingham (2 pairs bred), and Lincoln Ballast Pit (5-6 pairs bred). During the rest of year Messingham had 30-72, Covenham Res 30 on September 27th, Gibraltar Point 31 on November 5th and Whisby Pits 81 on December 26th.

A hybrid male Pochard × Tufted "Lesser Scaup type" was present at Covenham Res from January 12th-February 28th (MM, KW, DHu, GPC et al).

#### **Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula***

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Lincoln Ballast Pit	12	89	49	46	24	24	-	-	-	-	-	50
Burton Pits	-	103	39	42	9	9	-	-	-	-	93	105
Barton-on-Humber/ Barrow Haven	114	160	-	-	-	-	65	60	50	-	90	70
Covenham Res	227	224	7	38	12	19	-	31	100	195	130	210
Deeping High Bank	170	250	144	-	-	-	-	-	47	95	96	58

Messingham had 20-60 all year. During January-March 40-100 were present at R Witham (South Delph), Baston Fen, Tattershall (R Witham), Baston Pits and Sutton Ings, with 200 R Witham (Hobhole Sluice) on January 20th, 150-300 New Holland during February, 144 R Witham (Sth Delph) on February 16th and 140 West Deeping Pits on 18th. Breeding records came from Barton-on-Humber/Barrow Haven (5 pairs), Butterwick Hale (2 pairs), Lincoln Ballast Pit (1 brood), Covenham Res (3 broods), Messingham (6 pairs), Fiskerton (R Witham) (1 brood), South Ferriby (3 broods), Gainsborough (1 brood) and Baston Fen (2 broods).

#### **Scaup *Aythya marila***

A good year with 1-6 in January/February at Barrow Haven/Barton-on-Humber, North Killingholme, Humberston/Cleethorpes, Tetney, Covenham Res, Fulstow, Huttoft, Wainfleet, Thorpe Pits, Tattershall, Moulton Marsh, Sutton Ings, R Witham (Kirkstead) and Wainfleet.

Higher numbers in January were 15 Humberston/Cleethorpes 16/17th, 26-59 Grimsby Docks 4th-26th, 7 Tetney 26th, 19 North Cotes 17th and 17 max at Witham Mouth on 19th. In February max 117 Grimsby Docks on 24th, 19-84 New Holland 1st-24th, 27-35 Witham Mouth 2nd-10th. At Grimsby Docks 24 stayed to March 9th with 1-2 at Barrow Haven (30th), North Somercotes Warren, Thoresby Bridge and Witham Mouth. One was found dead at Lutton Marsh April 7th. From July-October there were singles at Nene Mouth, Saltfleetby and Kirkby on Bain (28th September). Covenham Res and Huttoft had singles on 26th and 10th November with 6 Witham Mouth on 2nd and 14 16th. In December there were singles at Messingham, Grimsby Pyewipe and Covenham Res with 3 Witham Mouth on 1st and 7 in The Wash (Inner Gat) on 11th.

#### **Eider *Somateria mollissima***

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Witham Mouth	25	60	203	60	62	66	-	85	80	60	39	12

In January-February 1-5 were at Cleethorpes/Grimsby Docks, New Holland, Saltfleetby and



Gibraltar Point with 10 Nene Mouth January 17th and 6 19th, 42 at Donna Nook 19th with 10 at Saltfleetby and 11 at Gibraltar Point same day. In February 9 were at Holbeach Marsh on 10th. During March there were 2 Nene Mouth and 1 Gibraltar Point on 2nd, 12 there 10th, 1 Fosdyke on 10th and 14 Holbeach Marsh 24th. Holbeach Marsh had 14 and Nene Mouth 5 on April 7th whilst Gibraltar Point had 4 on 5th and 7th, then 20 at Nene Mouth June 3rd. One was at Saltfleetby July 15th and Cleethorpes August 3-6th, with 50 at Butterwick August 18th and 4 Freiston August 16th. In September there were 18 at Butterwick 1st and 17 15th, 5 Cleethorpes 16th. Max numbers in October/November were 115 Holbeach Marsh October 16th, 20 Gibraltar Point 12th and 30 Saltfleetby 28th, then 25 Donna Nook on November 19th. Elsewhere October-December 1-8 at usual sites.

#### **Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

Few records in first half of year. Singles were at Donna Nook 1st and Witham Mouth 3rd January with 2 Covenham Res from 1984 to April 12th. Singles also at Saltfleetby August 26th and North Cotes September 28th. Numbers increased in October with 1 Saltfleetby 13th and up to 7 Covenham Res 17th with 2-5 from 16th to end of year. November-December produced 1-4 at Tetney Lock, Grainthorpe Haven, Donna Nook, Saltfleetby, Huttoft Bank, Chapel Pit, Witham Mouth, Gibraltar Point and Gat Sand (Wash) with 9 Huttoft Bank on November 2nd.

#### **Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

Early maximum numbers were 17 Donna Nook January 19th, 60 Saltfleetby 17th and 90 Nene Mouth 26th whilst Grimsby Dock had 43 on February 6th. In April Gibraltar Point had 43 on 7th, 4 at Covenham Res 10th and 5 Inner Dowsing 28th. At Barton-on-Humber there were 11 May 4th with 6 Inner Dowsing 20th and 7 Goxhill Haven 30th. In July numbers increased with 30 Saltfleetby 9th, 50 Gibraltar Point 21st and 48 Saltfleetby 28th, then 37 at Huttoft Bank August 26th whilst 41 were still at Saltfleetby on 18th. Max in September were 30 Anderby Creek 4th, 34 Cleethorpes 23rd, 25-30 Saltfleetby and 62 Gibraltar Point 28th. By October there were notable increases with 190-380 at Saltfleetby; 300-350 there for the rest of the year. Also 111 at Goxhill Haven November 14th, 125 Donna Nook 2nd, 180-300 Huttoft Bank and 500 Witham Mouth 16th. In December 100 were at Mablethorpe 13th, 150 Gat Sand (Wash) on 11th and 70 at Gibraltar Point on 7th.

#### **Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

Single birds were at Cleethorpes January 5th – February, Grimsby Docks January 15th and Gibraltar Point January 19th and February 2nd, with two at Grimsby Docks March 9th and 2 Gibraltar Point July 12th. One was at Butterwick July 21st. In autumn 1 was at North Cotes September 10th, then 2 Mablethorpe October 12th, 1 Gibraltar Point 20th and 2 Donna Nook 25th with 3 Goxhill Haven November 14th and 4 Huttoft Bank 17th. Singles were at Gibraltar Point November 8th and Covenham Res 25th-December 15th. In December there were 3 at Gat Sands (Wash) on 11th and 2 Huttoft 26th.

#### **Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

	J	F	M	O	N	D
Witham Mouth	160	170	15	–	80	2
Holbeach Marsh	17	5	70	3	2	–
Covenham Res	98	105	118	15	75	98

In January-February 1-10 were at Tetney, Donna Nook, Gibraltar Point, Whisby Pits, Lincoln Ballast Pit, Messingham, Scunthorpe and South Forty Foot Drain. Max on coast were Nene Mouth 30 on January 26th, Hobhole Sluice (Witham) 150-175 January 18th-20th and New Holland 94-205 February 1st-17th declining to 96 on 24th. Max inland was 15 West Deeping Pits on February 18th. In March Thorpe Pits had 16-25 from 3rd-31st and Messingham had 6-8 during the month; 12 were at Gibraltar Point on 16th and 12 Nene Mouth 23rd. Messingham continued with 9 on April 1st, down to 1 18th. Also 1 at Huttoft Pit and Chapel Pit on 27th-28th April. In August a juvenile was at Barrow Haven on 28th through to end of September. In October-December 1-8 were at Messingham, Saltfleetby and Donna Nook with 10 Whisby Pit November 17th, 24 Cleethorpes November 13th, 15-20 in December at Thorpe/Whisby Pits and 14 Goxhill Haven December 29th.

#### **Smew** *Mergus albellus*

1985 was an extremely good year for this normally scarce species with 109 records in January and 82 in February; as usual a predominance of redheads. There were 1-2 birds at Barrow Haven, North Killingholme, East Halton, Cleethorpes, Covenham Res, Huttoft Pit,

Timberland Delph, Spalding, Wainfleet, Nene Mouth, Messingham, and Fulstow with 3-10 birds at New Holland, Grainthorpe, Tetney, Donna Nook, Holbeach Marsh, North Somercotes Lido, Surfleet, Tattershall Pits, Saltfleetby, Wolla Bank, West Deeping Pits and Gibraltar Point. Max numbers were 14 New Holland January 25th and 16 Holbeach Marsh 28th. Best sites for continuous sightings were New Holland and Tetney/North Cotes in January and North Somercotes Lido with 3-7 birds throughout both months. In March 2 were at Wolla Bank Pit and 5 at North Somercotes Lido 2nd and a redhead at Messingham on 4th. In November a drake and a redhead were at Tattershall on 30th, a drake at Covenham on December 23rd and a redhead at Barrow Haven on December 30th. (Photo: P. Haywood)



### Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

	J	F	M	A	M	O	N	D
Witham Mouth	24	15	1	1	2	1	15	4
Holbeach Marsh	51	14	2	—	—	—	—	—
Tetney/North Cotes	3	6	3	—	—	—	—	—

In January/February 1-3 birds were on the coast at Grimsby, Donna Nook, Saltfleetby, Cleethorpes, Huttoft and Gibraltar Point, also 51 at Holbeach Marsh on January 28th, 12-27 Witham Mouth 13th and 27th, 6 Tetney/North Cotes February 20th, 7 Nene Mouth 23rd and 2-15 R Witham, Boston 11th-24th. Gibraltar Point had 8 on February 3rd. Inland there was 1 at Fulstow January 19-20th, 1 Surfleet Seas End January 20th, 5 27th and 2 February 16th. In March-April 1-3 were at Gibraltar Point March 2nd-April 9th and 1 Witham Mouth April 20th. Singles were at Donna Nook, Witham Mouth and Inner Dowsing in May/June with 4 at Goxhill Haven on May 30th. Singles were present in autumn from August 3rd at Witham Mouth and September 21st at Goxhill Haven. In October-December there were 1-3 at Cleethorpes, Barrow Haven, Anderby Creek, Covenham Res, Gibraltar Point, Huttoft, Donna Nook, Sea Bank Clay Pits, Saltfleetby and Gedney Drove End, with 14 Saltfleetby October 13th, 5-15 Witham Mouth November 1st-16th and 26 Inner Gat (Wash) December 11th.

### Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Main winter flocks were 22-34 at Apex Pit January 25-27th, 35 Surfleet January 20th, 65-79 Deeping High Bank January 26-27th, 40 at Swanholme Lakes, Lincoln February 10th, 59 Amcotts February 20th, 41 Apex Pits 24th, 21 Grimsthorpe Lake 17th, 12-36 Deeping High Bank during month and 27 West Deeping Pits February 26th. By March only remaining large numbers were 34 Thorpe Pits on 2nd and 32 Deeping High Bank on 16th. Elsewhere 1-10 birds during January-March were at Messingham, Cleethorpes, Grimsby Pyewipe, North Somercotes, Covenham Res, Saltfleetby, Tetney, Gibraltar Point, Boston,

Holbeach Marsh, Nene Mouth, Reads Island, Amcotts, South Ferriby, Whitton Winterton Lakes and similar numbers at most other inland pits/lakes. In late summer 2 were at Gibraltar Point on August 28th and 1 on 30th. Singles in November were at Goxhill Marsh, Messingham, Apex Pit, Cleethorpes and Toft Newton. In December there were max 8 at Deeping High Bank, 12 at Hartsholme/Swanpool on 23rd and 11 West Deeping Pit on 30th with 1-2 at Messingham, Barrow Haven, Covenham, Apex and Thorpe Pits, Donna Nook, North Somercotes, Saltfleetby and Witham Mouth.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

In January-May and November-December there were 1-2 at Whisby/Thorpe and Apex Pits, Barton-on-Humber, Denton Res, Covenham Res, Tattershall and Deeping High Bank. At Barrow Haven Pits there were up to 7 January 1st-February 11th, a single male and female February 22nd-late April increasing then to 5 males and 2 females in July. Both females reared 2 broods, totalling 23 juvs. In August a maximum of 6 adults and 11 juvs which dispersed during September-October leaving 4 adults and 5 juvs in November and 6 birds in December.

**Buzzard** *sp Buteo/Pernis*

Singles flew south at Saltfleetby (BMC) and Seacroft (SK, AB) August 26th.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

One flew south at Butterwick on October 26th (AGB, MDa) and another in the same direction over Skegness on December 3rd (KWW).

**White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla*

An immature flew south along the coast on October 27th and was seen from Grainthorpe (PH, AP) Saltfleetby (MM, JWa) and Gibraltar Point (JT, AS, CU, AB). The first county record since 1933 (see report). Accepted BBRC

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

A pair bred successfully at the 1983/84 breeding site rearing two young, which fledged on July 6th. The female had been ringed as a juv in Kent in 1983 and was thus exceptionally breeding at 2 years old. Two immatures were also present at this site all summer. A reasonable spring passage began in March with an early bird at the Nene Mouth 26th and one Saltfleetby 31st. In April singles were at Barrow Haven 27th and Gibraltar Point 27th-28th, with males at Goxhill Marsh 5th, Humberston 7th, North Kyme 19th, Donna Nook 25th and Saltfleetby 26th. A minimum of 3-4 birds passed through Tetney/North Cotes on nine dates from 1st-26th May, with other records for that month from Donna Nook 24th and 30th, Grainthorpe 18th, Saltfleetby 15th-18th, Gibraltar Point 30th and two in the Wash area from 11th, remaining into September. Males were at the Nene Mouth 13th and Gibraltar Point 26th. In June singles were at Sleaford 1st and Gibraltar Point 2nd with one at Baston Fen July 2nd. An autumn influx began in early August at Gibraltar Point with records on six dates from 8th-30th, Risby Warren 11th, Barton Pits 12th, Witham Mouth 18th, Goxhill 21st, Cleethorpes 24th, Freiston 26th and Grantham 27th. In September Gibraltar Point again had birds on six dates from 6th-24th, and 4-5 were at Nocton Fen all month to October 2nd. Last reports from Leverton and Gibraltar Point on October 5th. All fem/imm unless stated otherwise.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

During January-March, 1-2 were seen at several sites along the NE coast from Humberston to Saltfleetby, with the roost at Donna Nook holding 2 males and 2 ringtails. One was at Chapel Point February 23rd and Gibraltar Point had up to 5 during this period. In the Wash a male and 3 ringtails were reported between Wainfleet and Leverton from mid February-mid March, and a male and 2 ringtails were in the Holbeach/Nene Mouth area. Two males and 4 ringtails roosted at a site in the south Wash until mid March. Inland, Baston Fen had a maximum of 3 January 12th with one nearby at Braceborough 29th. An inland roost in the south of the county held 3-4 ringtails until early February, while the Fulstow roost had a max of 4 ringtails and 2 males on January 26th. Elsewhere there were ringtails at Raventhorpe January 22nd, Blyborough Grange February 3rd, South Ferriby 16th and a male Barton Pits 24th with singles at Kirton Lindsey March 5th and Elsham Wold 24th. In April 5 were at Gibraltar Point 5th with 1-4 remaining to 28th and single ringtails at Kirkby Underwood 3rd, Reads Island 4th, Holbeach 5th, Donna Nook 13th and 26th, Saltfleetby 15th and a male and ringtail at Fulstow 13th. Late May birds were ringtails at Donna Nook 5th and 12th, 2 at

Gibraltar Point 5th, and a first summer male in the Donna Nook-Saltfleetby area 12-14th. Except for a ringtail at Snipe Dales September 7th, the first returning birds were not noted regularly until late October with a male and ringtail along the NE coast from 24th, and ringtails at Nocton Fen 20th, Butterwick 26th and Gibraltar Point from 10th. Birds were more widespread in November-December with up to 4 along the NE coast, 2 males and 2 ringtails roosting at Donna Nook, 4 Gibraltar Point, 3 in the Wash with 3 males and 3 ringtails roosting in the south Wash, 4 ringtails and a male in the south Fen roost November 22nd, and a male and ringtail roosting at Fulstow. Elsewhere in November there were 1-2 Baston Fen, a male and ringtail Wispington 2nd, and males at North Ormsby 11th, Bagmoor 18th and Kirkby Laythorpe 30th. Additional records for December were males at Bourne South Fen 5th, Lincoln South Common 19th, Bulby 18th, Temple Wood 19th and 2 Covenham 7th.

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

In May, a male was seen near Skendleby/Claxby on 31st (RBW), a first summer male flew north-east at Saltfleetby on 15th (MJT) and a ringtail was at Gibraltar Point on 26th (RAM et al). A second summer male was at Saltfleetby on June 27th (JRW) and a ringtail flew south at Gibraltar Point on July 6th (PRB, KWW, IH).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

A female was at Grimoldby Ings on February 8th (MJT) and a male at Saltfleetby on November 13th (KA).

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Five pairs definitely bred in the county and another four pairs most probably did so. In addition breeding could also have occurred at several of the other 17 sites from which records were received during the breeding season. The highest concentrations reported were in the south-west of the county with 47 sightings, and within a 15 mile radius of Scunthorpe, producing 48 sightings (RNH) and 26 sightings (WG). Elsewhere there were reports of 1-2 at 40 different sites from January-April (6 coastal), and again from 52 sites from August-December. One or two were reported from the Inner Dowsing platform on five dates October 13th-27th.

**Buzzard** *Buteo sp*

Grainthorpe 1, probable Rough-legged January 26th (WG).

**Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

One at Fulstow on January 16th (MM) and another at Gibraltar Point 12th-28th, with what was probably the same bird seen again on February 5th and 24th. Spring passage birds flew south-west at North Cotes March 31st (RLo) and in April moved north-east at Barton-on-Humber 1st (GPC) and south at Gibraltar Point on 5th and 10th, with two south-west at Deeping High Bank on May 16th (GC). In September one was at Well Vale 6th (TMcG) and 3 flew south over Hoplands Wood 22nd (RR).

**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*

A first winter bird was seen intermittently at Fulstow from January 18th-April 3rd, and was observed displaying towards the end of its stay (KW, MM, GPC, R Lab et al). At Baston Fen one was seen on January 25th (KKH) with another there October 28th (PNW). Other late autumn records were one at Gibraltar Point October 20th and in November, one at North Cotes 5th (RLo), Saltfleetby 6th (JRW) and Gibraltar Point south (JPS), also on 6th, the latter two possibly involving the same bird. Finally one at Laughton Forest on December 15th (JTH).

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

Records in April from Deeping St James on 8th (CF) and Gedney Hill on 9th (GC) probably relate to the same bird. The only other sightings were from Tetney on May 16th (HB) and flying south-west at Saltfleetby on June 21st (JRW).

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

No notable concentrations reported, although a light autumn coastal passage was apparent. In August there were 5 Risby Warren 17th, 6 at Frampton Marsh 4th and 5 at Gedney 26th, rising to 12+ at Gedney/Nene Mouth in early September with 12+ Holbeach Marsh also early September. Gibraltar Point had maxima of 6 August 23rd and September 13th, with 4 south 15th. Three flew south at Donna Nook 18th, and at Huttoft Bank and Saltfleetby, 6 and 2 respectively flew in off the sea on 15th with 3 in off the sea at Donna Nook October 5th. Records from the Inner Dowsing platform involved singles in spring on May 18th-19th and 20th, four dates in August and October 28th.

### **Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Records of 1-2 birds fairly regularly from January-March came from Fulstow, Tetney, Donna Nook, Saltfleetby, Gibraltar Point/Wainfleet, Friskney/Witham Mouth and Holbeach/Nene Mouth. Other singles were at Bottesford January 4th, Baston Fen 12th, Reads Island 13th, Snitterby and Dragonby Mine 20th, Welby 22nd and in February at Cranwell 2nd, Messingham 4th, Winterton Road Lake 17th, Barton-on-Humber 19th, New Holland 27th and Swinderby-Collingham March 27th. April birds were at Barrow Haven 17th, Saltfleetby 19th, Tetney and Donna Nook 20th and Gibraltar Point 4th-9th and 14th, with the last at Tetney May 11th. Early returning birds in August were at Stallingborough 9th, Goxhill 16th and Tetney 26th. In September eight localities along the Humber, NE coast and Wash reported singles. Birds were again widespread from October-December with up to 3 at Saltfleetby and Holbeach and 1-2 regularly at Fulstow, along the Humber from Barrow Haven-Immingham Docks, along the NE coast from Cleethorpes-Saltfleetby, Anderby Creek, and at Gibraltar Point around the Wash to the Nene Mouth. Away from these areas singles were at Sleaford October 11th, Alford 19th, Scampton November 17th, Wilsford 27th, Messingham December 15th and Blyborough Grange 16th.

### **Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

The increase continues with 38 sightings, exceeding the previous highest yearly total this century by 12. All records given. The first records were in May at Sleaford 1st (SK), Denton Res 6th (IEHS), Tetney 7th (HB), Inner Dowsing 10-11th (PL), Nr Lincoln 12th (ALG), Barton-on-Humber Pits 15th (GPC), Asgarby 16th (SK), Sutton Bridge 17th (RLo), Stenigot 18th (BP) and Saltfleetby 24th (JRW). In June singles were at Messingham 3rd (GPC), Nene Mouth 7th (PC), and Atkinson's Warren 14th-15th (WG, RNH), then in July Laughton Forest 6th (GPC, HB), Saltfleetby 26th (BMC), Kirkby Underwood 28th (RLam), and one at Swanpool from 20th-mid August with two 22nd (KD, ACS, MWS, KA et al). Also in August, one found injured at South Kyme 8th and released two weeks later (per RJA), North Scarle 7th (DJ), Hartsholme (PH) and South Witham 9th (ES), Sedgebrook 13th (CJJ), Snipe Dales 14th (SL), Kingerby 16th and 20th-22nd (DL), Evedon (RJA) and Norton Disney 19th (MJW), Screddington 25th (RJA), and Gibraltar Point 30th. One at Kirton (Boston) September 4th (Phy), was followed by one Messingham 10th (CJ), South Witham 16th (ES), Kingerby 18th (DL) and Chapel Point 22nd (WPB). Last was seen coming in off the sea at Gibraltar Point October 5th (PC).

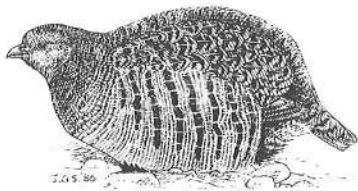
Additional 1984 record. A juvenile found dead at Beckingham October 10th had been ringed as a pullus in south Buckinghamshire on August 1st.

### **Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

A first winter female at Donna Nook/Saltfleet January 19th (GPC, RLab) and February 26th (KW) was also seen at Saltfleetby on February 17th (MM, JRC). Another was at Gibraltar Point May 11th (EB). There was a male at Risby Warren August 10th (RNH) and one at Donna Nook October 27th (WPB). An adult at Saltfleetby November 24th (BMC) was most likely to be the adult male seen at Donna Nook/Saltfleet from December 4th to the year end (JRW, MM, ACS, DJ, KD et al). Also in December one between South Reston and Legbourne flew north-east 21st (ACS) and one at Hubberts Bridge 31st (SK).

### **Red-legged Partridge** *Alectoris rufa*

Maximum numbers during the early part of the year were 22 Donna Nook January 7th and 14 Lincoln Ballast Pit 30th, with 17 Gibraltar Point February 19th. Breeding pairs were 2 at Donna Nook, 4-5 at Saltfleetby and 6 at Tetney. There were then 25 Glenthams October 6th, 18 Gibraltar Point November 3rd, 20 Donna Nook 18th and 30 Black Bank December 26th.



### **Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix* (illustrated)

Notable records were 22 at Coleby January 22nd, then in October 15 at Donna Nook 20th and 20 at Wolla Bank 26th, with December counts of 40 at Butterwick 10th, 29 at Snitterby 20th, and 33 at Swanpool 23rd. The general paucity of reports and the fact that Tetney only had a maximum of three all year, compared to counts of 150 in the same area during the 1960's, emphasises this species' drastic decline.



**Quail *Coturnix coturnix***

In July there were males at Baston Fen 9th, and Thurlby Fen 8th (GMO) and 9th (EJR), with 1-2 from 19th-August 7th. A female was found dead at Dawsmere 28th and two were at Saltfleetby August 1st (JRW).

Additional 1983 Record: Two males at Beelsby July 17th (SJM, WRM, WJM).

**Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus***

The only reports received were of 13-14 pairs breeding at Snipe Dales and max counts at Gibraltar Point of 35 in February and 40 from October-December.

**Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus***

There were 5 at Messingham January 8th, 16 at Barton-on-Humber Pits February 18th, 2 at Tetney March 24th-April 5th, with 3 at Chapel Pit 7th, and 2 Lincoln Ballast Pit May 3rd. Five males were displaying at the Barton-on-Humber-Barrow Haven Pits, where 3-5 pairs bred. Another pair bred at Saltfleetby. In October there was one at the Inner Dowsing platform 17th with 2 26th, and singles Tetney 26th and Tetney Blow Wells 24th. Five were at Gibraltar Point November 3rd.

**Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana***

One was seen intermittently at Gibraltar Point from August 17th. It was claimed until October 21st but not adequately substantiated after September 8th (ADT, RKW, RLa, MM, AGB, SK et al). The first county record since 1978.

**Corncrake *Crex crex***

One three miles west of Horncastle May 24th (MJT) and another near Bradley June 27th (TN, JdeL). Both were seen flying across the main road into arable fields.

**Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

Deeping High Bank had 202 February 14th and there was one at the Inner Dowsing Platform March 23rd. During November/December there were 80+ at Barton-on-Humber Pits and 40 at Tetney, with 40 at Sutton Bridge December 26th.

**Coot *Fulica atra***

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Barton-on-Humber/ Barrow Haven	712	400	178	—	—	130	—	312	—	—	350	—
Messingham	227	211	133	100	—	—	—	—	295	308	298	310
Lincoln Ballast Pit	100	50	93	82	37	67	68	57	77	—	—	102
Sea Bank Clay Pits	195	148	98	—	—	—	85	80	117	174	254	201
Covenham Res	75	28	23	6	6	4	6	93	250	290	300	48
Burton Pits	—	43	40	—	—	—	—	—	98	—	111	139

In addition to those above, Ashbyville had 150 January 9th, Kirkby-on-Bain 185 on 12th and 169 February 17th, West Deeping Pits 1,200 February 13th and 1,800 on 18th, Tattershall 250 on 24th, Holme Lake 300 January 9th and 360 November 20th, Whisby/Thorpe Pits 205 January 25th, 368 November 17th and 382 December 26th and Toft Newton Res 86 October 13th with 160 November 17th. At the Barton/Barrow Haven Pits, where 56 non-breeders were present May-July, 35-50 pairs reared at least 55 juvs.

**Crane *Grus grus***

Two flew north-east over Tetney May 17th (D. Johnson). Accepted BBRC.

**Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus***

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Cleethorpes	460	460	—	—	200	—	—	600	647	470	470	—
Grimsby Pyewipes/ Grainthorpe	1105	—	1877	—	—	—	—	—	1044	1290	876	2368
Gibraltar Point	2	320	2909	1800	300	20	100	3500	12000	10500	10000	5360
Witham Mouth	500	25	200	—	—	—	—	100	50	—	—	200
Holbeach Marsh	1000	100	300	750	500	1000	1000	500	605	800	—	—

Other large flocks early in the year included 4,000 at Wrangle February 15th with 2,000 there on 23rd, and 300 at Friskney March 2nd. One was inland at Toft Newton Res January 21st and there were up to 35 at Saltfleetby January-May. In the Humber there were up to 20 between Barton and N Killingholme April-June, with max 10 Read's Island in March, 20 in April, 11 in May and 35 June 22nd. On the coast there were 30 at Anderby Creek April 7th and 5 pairs nested at Saltfleet but no juvs were reared. In the Wash ten pairs were holding territory on Terrington Marsh in April, and 3 pairs with juvs were at Gedney Drove End on July 28th. Inland there were 2 at Messingham April 10th-May 20th, with singles at Baston Fen April 24th, Covenham Res 29th and Cadney Res May 29th. Then in June singles at

Messingham 4th, 19th and 25th, 2 Lincoln Ballast Pit 24th, 2 Covenham Res 19th with 11 there 30th.

In early autumn there were 2,000 at Terrington Marsh July 24th, 1 Messingham July 30th and 20 Winterringham Haven 31st. Saltfleetby had 50-160 from July to October 20th and the autumn max at Donna Nook was 300 on October 15th, with 3 at Covenham Res the same date.

#### **Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Three were at N Killingholme Pits on April 5th (JRM, GB, JWa), followed by a number of records in the Wash in early May: 2 Gibraltar Point 4-5th, 2 Frampton Marsh 5th (RH, KH), 1 W at Nene Mouth 6th (PC) and 1 Butterwick 7th (SK). Then 1 at Pyes Hall 15th (GB) and at Donna Nook the same date (RLo). In autumn an exceptional party of 10 was at Gibraltar Point August 18th.

#### **Stone Curlew** *Burhinus oedicnemus*

One at North Cotes May 23rd (MM, HB).

#### **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

After the first at Gibraltar Point on March 31st there were records of 1-2 in early April at Thurlby GP 2nd, Saltfleetby 3rd, Spalding NR 4th and Messingham 6th, with 1-4 at 11 other sites in April-May. In June there were single birds at Hungerton Quarry 5th, Atkinson's Warren 16th, Denton Res 17th and Saltfleetby 24th, with 3 at Kirkby-on-Bain 23rd and 1-3 Thorpe Pits from June-August. Single pairs bred at Spalding SBF and Messingham and possibly 2 pairs at Thurlby GP, where 2 broods of 2 and 3 juvs were seen. Possible breeding also at the Welland estuary and Kirton Lindsey quarries where displays were recorded and at Brigg SBF where 2 juvs were seen July 24th.

Up to 4 birds were recorded on autumn passage at 10 sites, with 7 at Gibraltar Point August 4th, 5 Saltfleetby 5th and 7 Messingham 26th, but September records were few: single birds at Cleethorpes on 1st, Bardney SBF on 22nd and 29th.

#### **Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Winterringham/ Read's Island	—	34	—	—	100	—	—	200	200	50	—	35
Cleethorpes	197	35	—	—	—	—	—	300	453	312	337	228
Saltfleetby	28	—	—	—	74	24	—	192	—	—	—	37
Gibraltar Point	36	—	90	65	67	44	—	200	—	—	276	—

Other records early in the year included 38 at Barton-on-Humber February 14th, a single bird at Lincoln Ballast Pits March 19th with 4 at Tattershall 16th and 10 displaying between Gedney and Nene Mouth same date. Thorpe/Whisby Pits had 1-2 March-June and there were 2 at Thurlby Pits April 2nd. Additional spring passage flocks were at Donna Nook, with max 80 May 6th, Tetney 250 20th and Goxhill, 42 30th. Five birds passed Inner Dowsing on May 14th and in June there were 30 at Holbeach 1st, 37 East Halton Skitter 10th and *tundrae* birds at Saltfleetby 5-8th. Inland breeding records came from Messingham and Bardney while at Saltfleet 6 pairs laid 16 clutches, hatching 22 juvs and fledging 14.

Autumn passage was good with additional coastal peak counts in August of 120 at Holbeach 10th, 200 North Cotes 14th, 404 N Killingholme 16th and 209 Goxhill Haven 26th. Inland there were up to 16 at Messingham in August, 4-6 in September and up to 9 at Bardney from September to October 10th.

#### **Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

Baston Fen had an early trip for the second year with 3 on April 23rd (RCETitman) and all the May records came from traditional sites: 9 at Bourne South Fen on 3rd, with 15 4th, 10 5th (AF, PNW), one at Tetney 19th (HB) and a male at Donna Nook 28th (RLo).

#### **Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Goxhill Haven/ New Holland	—	180	145	—	—	21	126	200	—	—	—	1100
Tetney/N Cotes	300	—	95	620	—	—	—	300	1250	—	400	700
Winterringham Haven	—	—	—	—	—	—	500	710	700	1100	—	—
Read's Island	—	—	—	27	—	—	—	580	1136	202	—	—
Saltfleetby	—	—	260	—	—	—	160	—	—	—	300	520

Early in the year other large flocks were at Bardney, 700 January 3rd, Scopwick 200 March 10th, 300 April 4th, Pode Hole 200 March 30th and Nene Mouth 300 31st, with spring



passage flocks of 170 at Evedon April 16th, 500 Hungerton Quarry 17th and 135 Brandy Wharf on 28th. First autumn flock was at Goxhill Haven, 21 on June 27th.

Later in autumn there were flocks of up to 400 at several sites with larger numbers at East Butterwick, 600 September 11th, 1,700 at Gibraltar Point 28th and 850 Donna Nook October 19th. Five hundred were at S Hykeham November 23rd with 527 at Cleethorpes 25th, 1,020 there 27th, and in December 1,300 at Huttoft 13th, 4,000 on Lea Marshes 23rd, 1,000 at Cleethorpes/Humberston on 25th.

#### **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Cleethorpes	250	447	—	—	31	2	2	51	—	108	—	228
Tetney/N Cotes	90	—	300	—	—	—	—	—	490	50	70	250
Saltfleetby	62	57	—	—	—	—	—	5	239	43	82	54
Gibraltar Point	189	145	57	550	400	8	18	250	500	1350	600	60
Witham Mouth	20	100	—	50	300	20	—	200	100	—	200	—
Holbeach	100	50	800	75	150	50	150	450	440	880	300	500
Nene Mouth	—	—	—	230	150	100	—	—	1500	—	—	—
Terrington	300	—	350	400	350	—	—	—	—	—	—	593

One was inland at Baston Fen February 11th and in the Humber there were 23 at Whitton on 17th, 2 Read's Island May 8th, 2 at Winteringham Haven June 2nd and in the autumn 1-10 there from July 24th to September. Also in September there were 6 at Covenham Res on 27th with 1 there December 1st.

Donna Nook had its autumn max of 200 on October 17th and Humber records to the year's end included 4 Barton-on-Humber October 30th, 12 at Whitton 31st. At Winteringham-Read's Island there were single birds 18th and 20th with 2 November 17th, 1 December 8th and 3 at Alkborough on the last date.

#### **Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

A southerly movement was recorded at Saltfleetby at the end of January, with 250 birds past on 29th, 1,000 30th, 1,800 31st, and 500 S at Gibraltar Point February 2nd. In early February large flocks were at Baston Fen, 228 3rd with 500 in the lower Ancholme valley same date, 500 between Brigg and Lincoln on 4th with 6,000 around Sturton-by-Stow same date, 1,000 Read's Island 5th, 800 Goxhill Haven and 300 Saxilby 6th. Another "cold-weather" movement occurred at the end of the month, with 3,000 S at Huttoft and 1,500 S at Gibraltar Point on 23rd, 200 at Donna Nook 27th. Large migrant flocks in March included 800 at Goxhill and 1,500 Kirton Lindsey 5th, 500 Scopwick 10th and 1,000 Brauncewell 13th. A flock of 400 at Scampton May 5th was unusual and June flocks included 150 Holbeach Marsh 9th, 140 on 20th at Messingham, where 10 pairs bred. Other breeding records were 5 pairs at Baston Fen, 14 pairs at Butterwick Hale. Returning flocks built up from mid July with 500 at Messingham on 25th, 250 Baston Fen 31st and 320 Scopwick August 26th. Flocks of 300-400 occurred at several sites in autumn, larger numbers were the 500 which arrived overnight at Waddington October 10th, 800 at Winteringham/Read's Island 30th. In December numbers were higher; 1,000 birds each at S Killingholme 22nd and Fulstow 25th, 1,500 at Huttoft 13th, at least 2,000 in the Ancholme valley between Waddingham and S Feriby on 8th, with the same number between Huttoft and Saltfleetby 21st, 3,000 on 26th, and 4,000 on Lea Marshes 23rd.

#### **Knot** *Calidris canutus*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Grimsby Pyewipe/ Grainthorpe	3386	4500	2340	—	—	—	—	—	3085	4065	8140	7234
Cleethorpes	1200	4500	—	—	—	—	—	116	3000	7000	7000	—
Tetney/N Cotes	1600	500	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1100	5000
Donna Nook/Saltfleet	5000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1500	—	3500
Saltfleetby	906	1700	1050	—	—	—	—	157	—	—	—	1100
Gibraltar Point	10	250	6000	18000	150	1000	400	7000	12500	15000	22000	1100
Butterwick	—	—	—	1000	—	—	30	—	—	—	—	5000
Holbeach Marsh	10000	8400	5000	1600	70	12	120	150	450	500	500	7000

Other large flocks occurred at Terrington Marsh, 5,000 January 17th, Wrangle 500 February 23rd and Leverton, 1,000 December 5th. In June there were 1,000 at Gibraltar Point on 22nd, with 600 there 25-26th, 4-500 on 28-29th. Inland, one was at Tattershall February 23rd and 2 at Messingham July 22nd, while Humber records early in the year included 57 at N Killingholme February 16th, 8 Goxhill Haven 19th. In autumn 2 were at Goxhill Haven July

20th, 11 Winteringham Haven 24th and 50 there September 28th. Also in September there were 27 at Whitton on 5th, max 34 at Goxhill Haven 16th, with October max 35 at the latter site on 13th.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Cleethorpes	—	121	82	—	—	—	60	410	240	143	107	154
Tetney/N Cotes	—	—	—	—	300	100	—	—	—	70	—	—
Saltfleetby	113	200	92	121	—	—	45	130	160	173	250	102
Gibraltar Point	134	60	40	140	200	381	30	750	300	250	100	130

In addition to those tabled, 20-50 were recorded at several coastal sites early in the year, with singles inland at Covenham March 26th and April 5-6th, 3 10th, 1 19th and 1 at Messingham also April 19th. Spring passage peaked at the end of May/early June, but numbers were low: 300 Tetney/N Cotes 26th, 100 June 2nd; 50 Donna Nook 28th; 350 Gibraltar Point June 2nd, 381 6th and the last of the spring, 80 on 16th. In the Humber there were 2 at Barton May 2nd, 2 Goxhill 10th with 5 30th, and inland 1-2 at Messingham and Covenham on several dates, 4 Covenham May 24th.

In autumn 3 were up the Humber at Winteringham Haven July 24th, 1 Goxhill Haven August 14th, but passage numbers on the NE coast were again low. Singles were at Covenham Res November 3-18th and December 8th.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

Spring records were as usual few, with singles in May at Gibraltar Point 19th and 24th, Saltfleetby 28th and June 28th. Autumn passage began with singles at Butterwick July 21st and 31st, then 1-2 in August-September at Messingham, Cadney Res, Cleethorpes, Humberston Fitties, Tetney, Saltfleetby, Huttoft, Bardney, Gibraltar Point, Holbeach and Nene Mouth, with 12 S at Gibraltar Point September 8th and at least 11 Winteringham Haven 28th. The only other substantial numbers were recorded at Covenham Res where there were 2 September 11th, 1 14th, 15 24th, 21 25th, 18-20 to 30th, then up to 16 October 1-3rd, 3 7-10th, 2 to 15th, 1 20th and 2 23rd. Other October records were 1 Messingham 6th, 1-3 at Gibraltar Point to 12th, 2 Read's Island 13th, 1 Bardney 20th and the last single at Saltfleetby 28th.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

Singles in May at Donna Nook 25th (SL) and Saltfleetby 28th (BMC), and an autumn bird again at Saltfleetby September 13th (MJT/BMC).

**White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*

An adult at Holbeach Marsh on August 25th (PC) was the first since 1976 and the 8th county record. Accepted by BBRC.

**Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

A poorer year than the last few, with only two records; single birds at Baston Fen July 31st (EJR) and Gibraltar Point September 21st (IDSmith).

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata*

One at Holbeach Marsh August 24th (PC). The second county record, following a September bird in 1982. Accepted by BBRC.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

Only one spring record, a bird at Humberston Fitties May 14th, but after a slow start the autumn was outstanding. First returning birds were at Winteringham Haven, a single July 25th, and at Butterwick where there were 1-5 from the end of July to mid-August. Other August birds were 2 at Moulton Marsh 2nd, 1 Nene Mouth 3rd, 1 Holbeach 11th with 4 there 25th, and on 26th 4 at Dawsmere, 1 Grantham SF staying until September 6th, and a juvenile at Goxhill Haven until August 30th, with 3 juvs on 31st. At Gibraltar Point there was 1 28th, 4 29th and 5 31st; at Tetney 16 31st; at Butterwick 7 30th, 1 September 1st, and at Cleethorpes/Humberston a max of 13 from August 30th to October 17th. In September large flocks were widespread. Up the Humber there were 6 at Winteringham Haven 9th, 48 22nd, 3 28th; at least 10 at Read's Island 12th; 24 Goxhill Haven 10th, 12 21st, 5 30th; 20 at N Killingholme 8th, 15 9th, 7 12th, 1 14th; 45 Immingham 19th; 110 Stallingborough 15th; 70 Grimsby/Pewwipes 22nd; max 26 Humberston Fitties 5th, 11 10th; 7 Tetney 2nd, 15 4th and 1-6 to 22nd. On the coast there were 9 Saltfleet 18th, 12 Saltfleetby 15th with 9 18th, 5 22nd, 1 29th; 1 at Inner Dowsing 7-8th and at Gibraltar Point 2 1st, 3 21st, 1 22-24th. In the Wash 1 was at Butterwick 1st with 4 Holbeach same date and 10 there 8th, 21 18th, 22 29th.

Good numbers were also present inland with 5 Cadney Res 9th, 2 Covenham Res 11th and at Messingham 6 4th, 1 8th, 10-12 9-22nd, 4 23-26th and 2 27th. October by contrast was average, with 7 N Killingholme 4th and singles at Bardney 6th, Huttoft Pit 12th and the last at Cleethorpes 17th.

#### **Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

Continues scarce, with most records single birds. Early in the year one was at the Witham Mouth January 13th and 28th, February 2-10th and March 9th, with February singles also at Trusthorpe 20th and Chapel Point 23rd. In autumn singles were seen at Inner Dowsing August 30th, September 7th and October 18th. At Cleethorpes there was 1 September 15th, 2 October 9th, and at Saltfleetby also 1 September 15th, 1 29th, 2 October 5th, 1 29th. One flew north at Donna Nook November 2nd, and further singles were at Huttoft November 16th and Trusthorpe December 7th.

#### **Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Read's Island	319	385	146	417	268	5	—	—	138	—	—	345
Winteringham Haven	—	1250	—	—	800	—	250	—	350	300	—	—
Pyewipe-Grainthorpe	3310	2610	3550	—	—	—	—	—	5024	4734	5000	13764
Cleethorpes	2000	—	—	—	—	—	1750	3500	4500	10000	2500	—
Tetney/North Cotes	320	250	170	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	650	550
Saltfleetby	1881	2100	400	209	—	—	118	—	—	690	1853	2244
Gibraltar Point	480	1500	958	4000	1000	200	300	600	2500	3836	2000	500
Witham Mouth	500	500	500	300	1000	25	—	500	200	—	—	1000
Holbeach Marsh	1000	2000	2000	500	500	40	—	2000	2360	2000	—	500
Nene Mouth	—	—	—	—	500	—	—	200	5500	—	—	—
Terrington	200	—	—	3000	2000	—	—	3000	—	—	—	—

In January large flocks additional to those tabled included up to 1,000 at Donna Nook, 800 Theddlethorpe 2nd. Inland spring passage birds were at Tattershall Pits, 10 March 16th, and Messingham, 1-4 April 18th to May 23rd, while 10 were at Inner Dowsing May 10th. Returning autumn birds were also at Messingham, with 2-10 from July 24th to September 27th, then up to 26 occasionally from October to December. At Butterwick there were 2,600 July 31st, with 230 Saltfleet August 1st. Autumn max at Bardney was 14, September 29th. Other large flocks later in the year were 800 Donna Nook October 17th with 250 Barton-on-Humber 30th, and 1,000 Butterwick December 15th.

#### **Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

Birds were present all year and widespread, but nowhere in very large numbers. In January-March 1-9 were recorded at 11 sites, with up to 14 at Grimsby Pyewipe, 1-15 at Tetney/N Cotes to March 13th, 23 March 25th. In April there were up to 6 at Read's Island, N Killingholme, Butterwick, Covenham Res and Navenby with higher numbers at Tetney/N Cotes, 8 17th, 20 20th; Saltfleetby 10 19th and Messingham, 27 18th, 13 20th. May singles were at Gibraltar Point 4th, Nene Mouth 12th and Covenham Res 23rd, with 9 Saltfleetby 19th, 3 June 5th, and 1 at Messingham June 4th. No lekking birds were reported in 1985.

In autumn single birds in July were at Messingham 6th, Saltfleetby 13th, Gibraltar Point 14th, with 3 Holbeach Marsh 27th, then in August and September up to 8 at many sites, with higher numbers only at Tetney/N Cotes, 25 September 28th, Saltfleetby 33 same date, and Covenham Res where there were up to 15 in August, up to 21 in September. Later in the year Donna Nook had a peak of 16 October 19th and the same month Grainthorpe had 25 26th, 28 30th and 27 November 9th. There were 37 at Tetney/N Cotes December 8th with 23 12th, 18 16th and 6 29th.

#### **Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

An average year for records but with no pronounced autumn peak. Early in the year there were singles at Saltfleetby January 4th and 24th, Cleethorpes 17th, Donna Nook 27th and February 27th, Baston Fen January 13th and 27th, March 24th and 30th, with 2 at Tetney Blow Wells February 15th and Thorpe Pits 16-17th and 1 N Killingholme Pits March 2nd. Spring passage at Saltfleetby included single birds on March 10th and 15th, April 14th and 20th, May 20th, with 1 at Gibraltar Point April 19th and 1 Inner Dowsing May 9th. Autumn passage birds were present from the end of September, with singles at Donna Nook 20th, Cleethorpes 27th, Gibraltar Point 28th and Saltfleetby 30th, then at Gibraltar Point again on 5 dates in October and November 2nd and 4th, and at Saltfleetby 1 October 22nd, 2 24th, 3 27th and 3 November 25th. One was at Barton-on-Humber Pits November 16th, singles at Baston Fen 17th and 21st and a December bird at Leverton 3rd.

**Snipe *Gallinago gallinago***

Peak counts early in the year were 30-40 Denton Res, January 5th-February 8th, 39 Donna Nook February 27th and max 25 Saltfleetby March 10th. At Baston Fen there were 250 March 3rd, 165 on 11th and 6 drummers in May. Other breeding records came from Butterwick Hale with 3 drummers and Snipe Dales with 2. In the autumn there were 40 at Grantham SF August 9th, 67 at Huttoft October 12th and 50 Saltfleetby St Peter November 7th. December peaks were 132 at Huttoft 13th, at least 30 around Denton Res 15th, 170 at N Killingholme 25th, 30 Alford 28th and 50 Goxhill Marsh 29th.

**Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola***

On the coast there were up to 6 at several sites January-April, with 9 at Gibraltar Point January 17th, 12 Seacroft 20th, 10 Saltfleetby 15th, at least 15 there 23rd and 20 February 16th. Records of 1-3 roding males were widespread in summer with at least 6 in Laughton forest. After 6 at Inner Dowsing October 26th there were up to 5 at Gibraltar Point and Donna Nook to the year's end, 15 at Saltfleetby November 19th and December 6th.

**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa***

Read's Island/	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Wiringham Haven	-	-	-	12	-	17	6	2	1	-	-	-
Holbeach Marsh	21	1	1	2	1	-	2	188	345	5	-	53

Wintering birds at the beginning of the year were 5 at Gibraltar Point January 16th, 2 19th. Spring passage began in March with 1S Saltfleetby 9th, singles Nene Mouth 26th, Tetney 30th and April 9th, Gibraltar Point April 7th and 12th. First birds arriving at Read's Island were 5 April 4th, increasing to 12 by 21st. In May there were singles at North Cotes 3rd, Thorpe Pits 6th, 1 N Lincoln Ballast Pit 9th, with 3 Donna Nook 21-22nd, 2 S 24th. In autumn 3 were at Nene Mouth July 24th and Gibraltar Point had 1-2 through August with 17 14th, 5 20th and 27th and 3 September 14th. In the Humber, apart from the Read's Island birds there were 6 at Barton July 17th, 12 August 11th, 8 13th, 1 17-22nd; 1 N Killingholme 7th, 2 Tetney 3rd and 2 Saltfleetby July 29th, 1 August 24th. Late autumn birds were 2 S Donna Nook October 15th, 6 S Grainthorpe 26th with 2 Baston Fen and Gibraltar Point same date, 1 S Gibraltar Point November 5th, singles there 9th and 26th and 6 at Barton-on-Humber 8th.

**Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica***

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Pyewipe/Grainthorpe	381	422	456	-	-	-	-	-	479	348	347	987
Cleethorpes	160	300	-	-	-	-	-	13	120	120	90	573
Tetney/North Cotes	290	-	242	-	-	-	-	-	-	70	-	300
Saltfleetby	86	77	-	-	-	-	-	-	52	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	300	300	300	600	30	90	250	3000	7000	4175	6000	37
Holbeach Marsh	-	-	100	-	85	100	-	-	160	-	-	-

Peak counts elsewhere early in the year were 55 Donna Nook January 19th, 20 Wiringham Haven February 20th, 32 Goxhill Haven April 5th and 60 Nene Mouth 9th. One at Barton-on-Humber February 9th was in summer plumage. Witham Mouth had 20 May 5th with 1 inland at Messingham 16th and the Read's Island max were 29 May, 22 June; 30 were at Holbeach June 16th.

Large flocks in autumn were at Goxhill Haven 114 September 16th, Donna Nook max 100 October 17th, Wiringham/Read's Island 140 October 18th. At Nene Mouth 170 flew SW inland September 11th, 65 SW 24th and 1 flew NW at Covenham Res 8th. In December there were 16 between Whitton and Wiringham on 8th, 15 Read's Island same date.

**Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus***

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Tetney	-	-	-	6	10	-	-	14	20	2	-	-
Saltfleetby	-	-	-	-	10	25	-	50+	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar Point	-	-	1	4	20	2	8	16	7	1	-	-
Holbeach Marsh	-	-	-	-	20	1	45	40	40	4	-	-
Nene Mouth	-	-	-	-	10	3	7	15	-	-	-	-

Elsewhere on the coast in spring, after the first at Gibraltar Point March 30th, there were singles at Donna Nook April 21st and 23rd, 2 East Halton 18th, 6 Tetney 20th, then in May 1-11 Donna Nook, up to 10 at Tetney and Saltfleet with 14 East Halton 5th. Inland there were singles at Thorpe Pits April 16th, Denton Res 26th and Messingham 3 dates in May; also 4 at Navenby April 18th and 2 at Waithe May 1st. Northerly passage at Gibraltar Point in

May included counts of 12 birds 5th, 9th and 13th, 17 14th, 25 15th.

On the coast in autumn there was 1 Saltfleet July 3rd and max counts of 6 Cleethorpes July 31st, 20 Butterwick July 21st, 44 August 14th, 20 Witham Mouth August 4th, 2 October 1st and 12th. Birds moving south at Gibraltar Point were 25 August 29th, 17 30th, 15 31st. Inland in July-September there were 1-2 at Messingham, Covenham Res, Thorpe Pits and Grantham SF, with 3 SW Kirkby Underwood July 9th, 27 Baston Fen and 12 Covenham Res all on 27th.

#### **Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

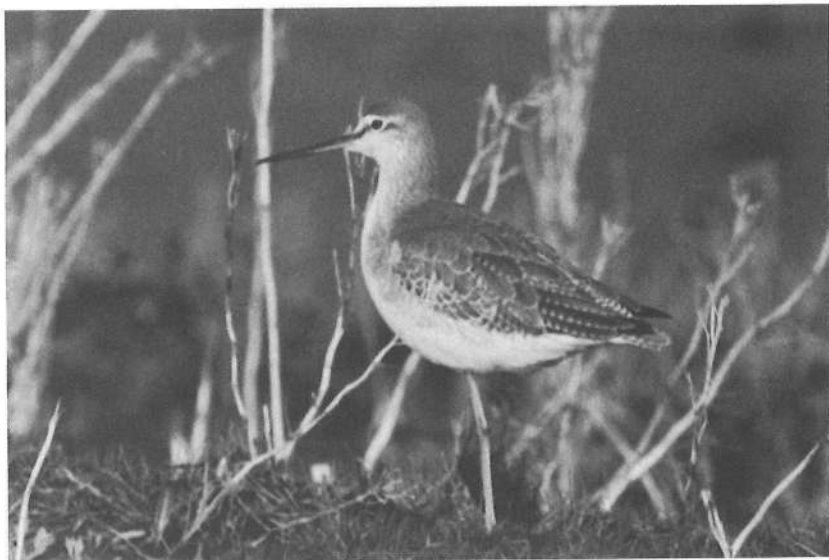
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Winteringham	—	229	—	—	100	—	400	400	500	400	—	—
Read's Island	39	117	81	210	65	141	—	—	—	50	—	—
Goxhill Marsh	—	213	160	160	—	—	62	70	85	90	—	—
Cleethorpes	60	60	—	—	—	—	73	81	—	80	110	110
Saltfleetby	114	72	145	—	—	—	252	112	112	—	—	—
Grimsby Pyewipe	270	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	459	693	—	761
Gibraltar Point	390	300	230	510	40	156	293	300	200	55	60	67
Holbeach	200	150	600	300	60	250	100	20	200	120	20	30

At Inner Dowsing there were 22 April 19th and birds were seen displaying April-June at Twigmoor, Greetwell (Scunthorpe), Hungerton Quarry and Stapleford Moor. Other large flocks in autumn included 30 at Witham Mouth and 100 Nene Mouth July 7th, 20 Grantham SF August 9th, 50 Dunsby Wood September 1-7th and 12-18 Kingerby September 10-20th.

#### **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

The wintering bird at Humberston/Cleethorpes was present to March 10th with 2 February 17th; occasional singles were also seen at Tetney and Saltfleetby January-February, with 1 Wrangle February 27th and March 17th. In April-May there were single birds at Tetney, Donna Nook, Saltfleetby and Holbeach with 1-2 at Gibraltar Point and 3 there April 7th. June birds were at Read's Island 10th, East Halton 16th with 9 Holbeach also 16th and 6 there 25th.

An inland bird was at Covenham Res July 28th and on the coast there were 1-3 at many sites July-September, with peaks 7 N Killingholme July 7th and 23-27th, at least 10 August 17th; 17 W at Holbeach Marsh August 4th and 5 at Gibraltar Point 14th. In October singles were at Gibraltar Point 1st and 26th, 5 Grainthorpe 20th; the wintering bird returned to Humberston/Cleethorpes on 15th and was present into 1986, and occasional singles were again seen at Tetney and Saltfleetby October-December. (Photo K. Atkin).





**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Read's Island	61	87	173	167	31	30	—	59	72	27	62	79
Winteringham Haven	—	70	—	—	—	—	—	50	—	300	—	—
Pyewipe-Grainthorpe	850	659	674	—	—	—	—	—	1085	910	625	1620
Tetney/N Cotes	80	75	185	—	—	—	—	—	—	150	—	250
Saltfleetby	288	272	—	266	—	—	124	145	162	201	277	280
Gibraltar Point	150	60	63	160	50	15	24	600	300	100	100	45
Witham Mouth	10	50	200	10	25	10	80	570	100	—	100	20
Holbeach	52	50	300	20	30	—	50	400	565	50	20	90

There were 11-14 birds inland at Cadney Res January 2-26th, and flocks early in the year additional to the table were 56 Donna Nook March 10th and at least 30 Inner Dowsing April 29th. Breeding records came from Butterwick Hale, 3 pairs, Messingham 1-2 pairs, Baston Fen 1 pair. In autumn there were 150 Cleethorpes July 24th with 230 there 31st, 512 September 30th, and at N Killingholme 90 August 3rd, 70 16th. Other large flocks were at Nene Mouth, 400 August 3rd, Donna Nook 50 October 17th and Barton-on-Humber 80 30th. Nine were inland at Thorpe Pits September 3rd.

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

Presumed wintering birds were at Gibraltar Point February 9th and Huttoft 23rd, with March records from Friskney 2nd, Saltfleet 30th. In April-May 1-3 birds were present at many coastal sites and also inland at Messingham, Denton Res and Baston Fen, with 4 Holbeach Marsh May 5th, 5 Saltfleet 8th. Saltfleetby had 1-2 June 1-5th, with singles also in June at Nene Mouth 2nd and 15th, Holbeach 9th, Saltfleet 22-23rd and Gibraltar Point 2nd and 30th; 2S there on 23rd. Birds were as usual more numerous and widespread in autumn with 1-6, occasionally 8 at coastal sites and inland at Messingham, Thorpe Pits, Denton Res, Snipe Dales, Bardney, Brigg SBF and Grantham SF, in July-September. Higher numbers were 11 Tetney September 18th, but otherwise in the Wash: Gibraltar Point 20 August 15th, 20S 29th; 37 Freiston July 31st, 11 Butterwick 21st, 15 August 30th; 9 Holbeach July 21st, 10 August 17th and 31st with 30 25th, and at least 30 between Holbeach and the River Welland September 24th; 20 Dawsmere August 26th and 22 Nene Mouth September 11th. Single birds were at 9 sites in October, with up to 3 at Tetney to 10th, 1-2 at Gibraltar Point, 3 12th and December birds at Tetney 7th, North Cotes 2 8th and 1 Nene Mouth 25-29th after 1 found dead there 23rd.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Birds were again present at Thorpe/Whisby Pits almost all year; 1-2 January-April 16th, 3 April 2nd, and 1-4 July 3rd to the year's end, 5 August 8th and up to 6 in September. Other wintering birds early in the year were at Newsham Lake to March 26th, 2 January 9-25th, and Willoughby to April 23rd with 1 at Gibraltar Point February 17th, and at Alford 16th and March 27th. Spring passage birds were singles in April and early May at Barrow Haven, North Cotes, Fulstow, Saltfleetby and Gibraltar Point, with 2 Baston Fen April 24th. From July-September 1-5 birds were at many sites with the highest numbers in August and peak counts of 8 Donna Nook July 24th, 10 Messingham August 19th, 9 Fulstow 28th. Late autumn birds were singles at Saltfleetby October 21st and Gibraltar Point November 4th with December singles at Orby 9th, Aunsby 20th, 2 at Branston Island and Newsham Lake 22nd.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

Single birds on spring passage were at North Cotes May 22nd, Saltfleetby June 3-5th (in song) and East Halton Skitter 10th. Autumn passage was poor; 2 Grantham SF August 9th, 1 17th, otherwise singles only, at Haltham July 3rd, Saltfleetby 22nd and August 27th, Gibraltar Point August 14-15th, 23rd and 26-27th, Donna Nook September 10th and Goxhill Marsh 10-13th.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Spring passage birds were widespread April-June after the first at Covenham Res April 8th; 1-3 at most sites with 11 Covenham Res May 4th, 7 23rd and 6 June 13th, 6 Surfleet June 26th. In autumn there were 1-6 at coastal and inland sites July-September with larger numbers at Goxhill Marsh, 11 July 20th, Covenham Res 25 30th and up to 15 in August with 20 8th, 7 September 4th, Cadney Res 14 July 14th, 8 30th, Bardney 7 August 2nd, Gibraltar Point 19 4th, Tetney 18 17th, Holbeach 10 11th, and at Fosdyke on 5th, 62 flew upriver at

20.30 hours (presumably to roost?). The last birds were singles in October at Bardney 6th, S Ferriby 11th and Gibraltar Point 7th and 13th.

### **Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Up the Humber at Barrow Haven there were 12, February 2nd, and spring passage flocks included 40, Terrington Marsh April 9th, 200 Tetney May 4th, 40 Nene Mouth June 2nd and 30 Gibraltar Point 16th. At Covenham Res there were 1-3 from May-June 2nd, at Messingham 5 May 14th, 2 17th, 1 20th and in the Humber 8 East Halton Skitter June 10th, 13 Goxhill Haven 27th. In autumn a single bird was at Messingham July 26th, with 21 Goxhill Haven August 3rd, 22 19th, 14S at Saltfleetby 18th, 30 Gibraltar Point 19th, and a flock of 200 at Butterwick September 15th.

### **Wilson's Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor*

A juvenile-1st winter bird was at Covenham Res August 19-22nd (KR et al). The 6th county record and 3rd bird in 2 years. Accepted BBRC.

### **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

A male at Frampton Marsh June 2nd (KH, RH).

### **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

A good year with 6 records, typically all coastal. Early in the year single birds flew north at Donna Nook January 13th (RLo) and Huttoft Bank February 1st (MJT). In August an adult moulting to winter plumage was at Barton-on-Humber Pits 12-13th (GPC et al), one was on the flashes at Saltfleet/Donna Nook on September 23rd (WG), and in November singles again flew north at Donna Nook 2nd (RLo) and Huttoft Bank 10th (MJT/BMC).



### **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus* (illustrated)

The 1985 passage of this species was remarkable both in its duration and intensity. A measure of its magnitude can be gauged from the fact that in a typical year up to twenty sightings are recorded; in 1985 there were 295! There follows a month-by-month account.

**August:** A pale-phase adult with a full tail was at Saltfleetby on 1st, a first-year south 11th, 1 north 14th (BMC/MJT) and 1 south 18th (JRW). Another adult flew south at Butterwick 14th (SK) with single sightings at Huttoft 29th (WPB), Inner Dowsing 30th (PL) and Cleethorpes 31st (RKN).

**September:** Numbers increased steadily with most sightings being made at Saltfleetby where almost daily sea-watches were carried out. Three flew south on 1st (JRW), 1 on 4th (JRW), 5 on 13th (MJT/BMC), 1 15th (JRW), 1 17th, 8 on 28th (BMC/MJT/KA), 2

29th (KA) and 2 30th (JRW). Other records came from Huttoft Bank 1 14th (BMC/MJT), 1 22nd (WPB), Butterwick 1 adult 1st (MDa) and Inner Dowsing 1 2nd, 3 3rd and 1 4th (PL).

**October:** There was a series of records from Huttoft Bank with 1 south (MM) and 6 south (IGS) on 6th, 1 7th (BMC/MJT), 5 9th (GPC), 6 south 10th (WPB) and 8 south 12th (KW). Another series was recorded off Inner Dowsing (PL) of 2 10th, 1 11th, 3 12th, 1 16th, 2 20th, 1 23rd-27th, 1 29th and 1 31st. An October peak of 17 was seen at Saltfleetby on 12th (GPC) with 1 south 27th (MM) and at Donna Nook 1 north 5th, 1 north 1 south 23rd and 11 south 25th (all RLo); only a single record from Gibraltar Point on 21st.

**November:** Although the main passage of Pomarines postdates that of Arctics by up to a month, it was, nevertheless, not anticipated that there should be such a heavy movement, indeed the peak numbers, as late as November. Once again, the movement was detected mainly on the north-east coast from Donna Nook to Chapel Point with very few elsewhere, the exceptions being a juvenile east at Goxhill 9th (GPC), 1 Tetney 17th (HB), an adult Covenham Res 10th (MM), 4 south Gibraltar Point 8th (JPS) and 1 Witham Mouth on 2nd (SK, RH, KH). At Donna Nook, 1 flew south 11th, 6 north 19th (RLo), at Saltfleetby 7 south + 7 3rd (BMC, MJT, MM, GPC, HB), 37 south 10th (BMC, MJT, JRW, MM), 1 south 25th (JRW), at Huttoft 30 south 2nd (WPB), 46 south in 3½ hours 10th, 1 south 30th (BMC, MJT), at Chapel Point 7 north 10th (HB), 1 south 21st (WPB) and at Inner Dowsing 2 2nd and 1 3rd (both PL).

**December:** Several lingered on towards the end of the year, being mainly immatures recorded with 1 south Saltfleet 22nd (WPB), 1 south Saltfleetby 25th (BMC, MJT) 1 Inner Dowsing on 5th, 1 7th, 2 9th and 1 25th (all PL). Finally, to complete a truly eventful skua



year, 19 immatures were blown south in the gale-force northerlies at Huttoft on the 26th (BMC/MJT).

#### **Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Movement was noted in the spring with records of 4 at Huttoft on April 28th, one north at Gibraltar Point on May 5th, one at Tetney on 11th and a single at Saltfleet on June 19th.

Autumn passage lasted from July 3rd until the last day of the year and included three periods of significant movement. The gales late in August were probably responsible for the first large movement which continued into early September. Records included 40 south at Gibraltar Point on August 26th, 41 at Huttoft same day, 55 at Gibraltar Point 27th and 100 there 29th. August 30th saw 50 south into the Wash, with 45 next day and 44 recorded moving south at Saltfleetby. Passage was heavy on September 1st with counts of 162 at Huttoft and 77 Gibraltar Point. To complete this movement, 49 flew south at Saltfleetby on September 4th.

The next storms were responsible for the second movement from the middle of September until the end of the month. It included large counts of 130 south at Saltfleetby on September 13th with 154 north four days later, 204 south at Huttoft 15th and again at Saltfleetby, 60 23rd and 75 28th.

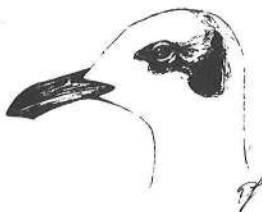
The third movement was highlighted by a peak count of 157 south at Huttoft on October 6th, but individuals were still being noted later in the year until the last at Gibraltar Point on December 31st. It is perhaps worthwhile to note that 3,110 sightings were made of this species during the year.

#### **Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

The adult seen flying south at Saltfleetby on July 21st (BMC) was early, and probably was a failed or non-breeding bird. An immature stayed at Theddlethorpe August 31st (BMC). All the records in September were of juveniles: one at Huttoft Bank on 1st (BMC, MJT) was followed by a marked movement in mid-month. There were 2 at Saltfleetby 13th (BMC, MJT), 1 Huttoft Bank 14th (BMC, MJT) and three seen at Saltfleetby 15th (BMC, MJT, MM, GPC). More juveniles were recorded at Huttoft Bank on October 9th (GPC) and Inner Dowsing 14th and 16th (PL) where an adult was also present same day (PL). November records are unusual but an adult/second-summer bird moved south at Huttoft on 2nd (BMC, MJT, WPB). Finally a moulting adult flew south in a movement of Kittiwakes at Saltfleetby on the late date of November 10th (BMC).

#### **Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

Spring records are unusual and it is of interest that three of the records were from Inner Dowsing: singles on March 1st, 11th and April 29th. Another flew south at Huttoft the previous day. Autumn passage began on July 13th but large numbers were not recorded until September when 32 were at Saltfleetby on 13th, 42 south 28th and 10 south the following day. Off Huttoft, 30 were seen on September 15th and 20 October 9th. A total of 52 was counted at Donna Nook on the late date of November 11th. Occasional sightings continued until December 26th when 3 moved south at Huttoft in the northerly gales. In what has turned out to be a notable skua year, the total sightings of Bonxies was 455.



#### **Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus* (illustrated)

On February 16th, there was a second-winter bird at Fulstow (MM) and there were adults at Humberston Fitties on March 16th (MM) and the Witham Mouth April 9th (SK). Autumn passage began with an adult at the Welland Mouth on August 24th (PC) and continued with a second-winter bird at the Nene Mouth September 11th (IJS). In October, a first-winter bird was seen from the Inner Dowsing Tower on 16th-17th (PL) and an adult passed Huttoft on October 24th (KW) with another there on November 2nd (WPB).

Inland birds were recorded at Covenham Res on November 9th (MM) and at Apex Pit, Lincoln on December 22nd (KD); both were in first-winter plumage.

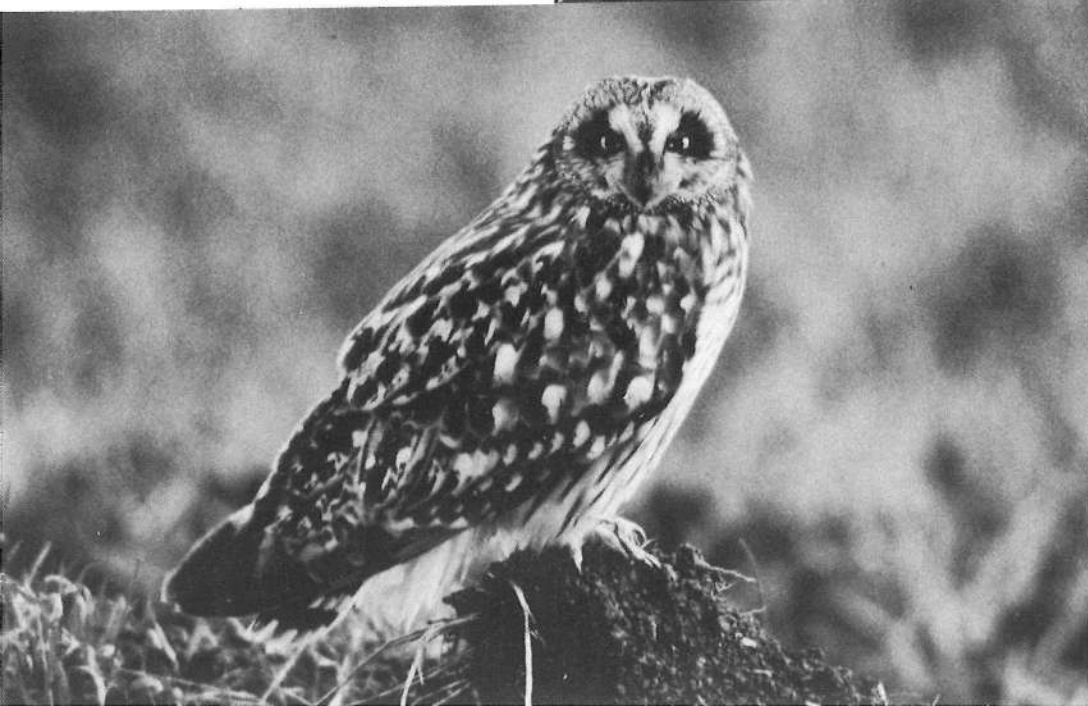
#### **Little Gull** *Larus minutus*

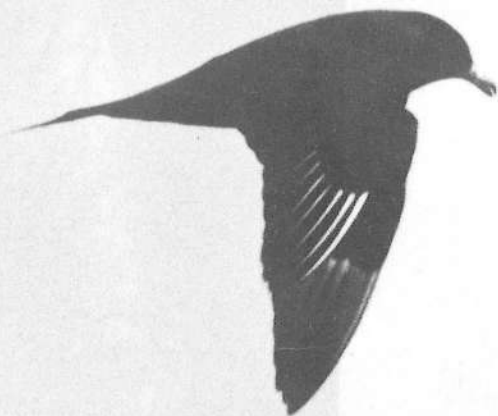
There was a total of 32 records of wintering birds in January and February with peaks of 13 at Gibraltar Point on January 3rd and 8 Huttoft February 8th. Spring passage started with 5 at

*Long-eared Owl at  
Hobhole roost  
(P. Haywood)*



*Short-eared Owl at  
Fulstow (M. J. Tarrant)*





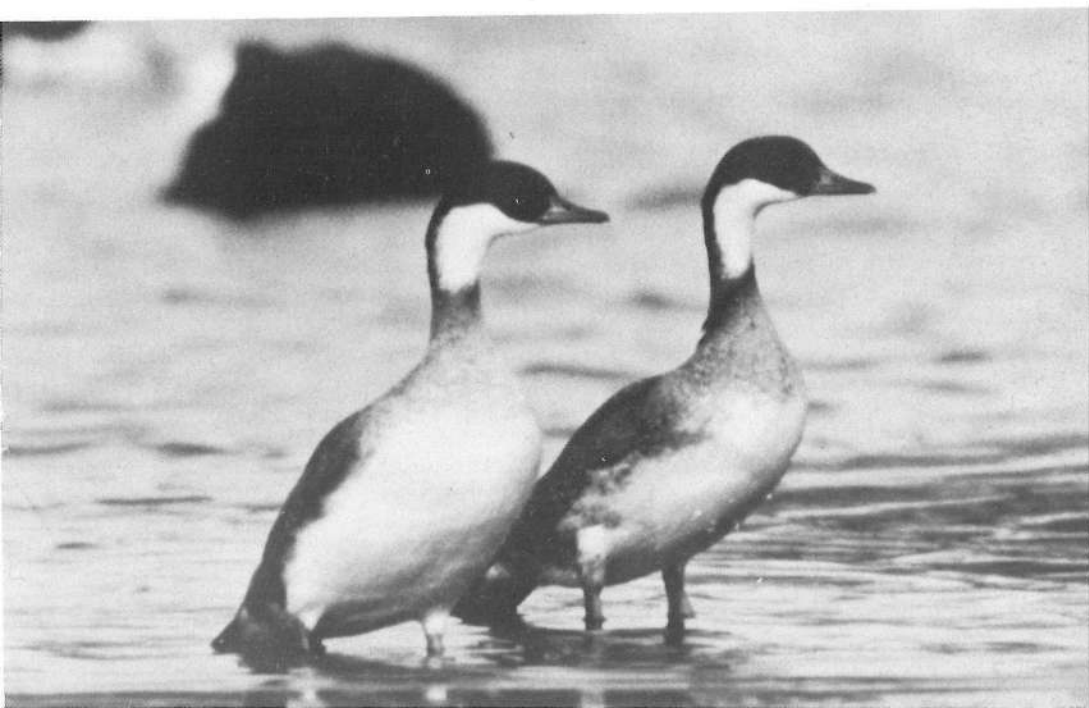
*Arctic Skua (K. Atkin)*

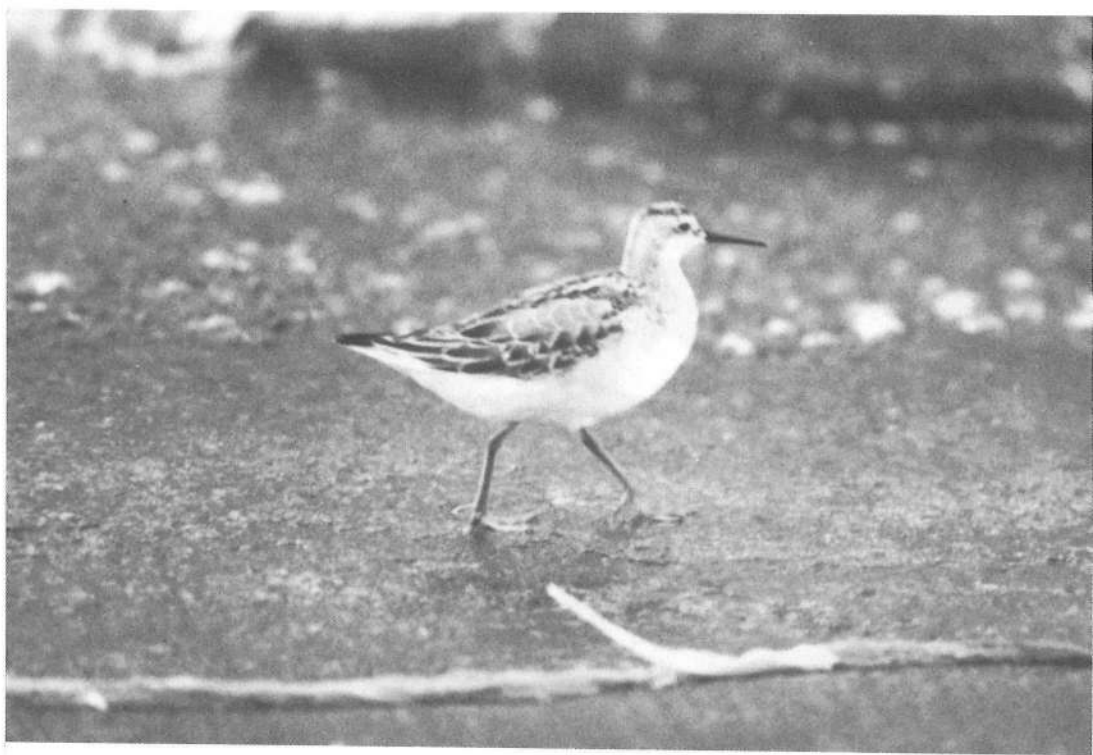
*Little Gull (M. J. Tarrant)*





*Female Smew at North Somercotes Lido (M. J. Tarrant, above; B. M. Clarkson, below)*





*Wilson's Phalarope at Covenham Reservoir (J. T. Harriman)*

*Grey Phalarope at Barton-on-Humber (Graham P. Catley)*



Covenham Res April 19th. A marked feature of the spring records was that most of the birds passing through during late May and June were first-summers. Autumn passage was recorded from July 7th with the peak numbers at Saltfleetby in September: 15 on 13th, 9 on 15th and 11 on 22nd. Numbers then dwindled until later peaks of 25 north at Saltfleetby on October 12th, 20 at Inner Dowsing 17th-25th reducing to 14 by the 30th.

Inland, Covenham Res had a peak of 8 June 1st, Messingham a first-summer 19th-26th and Apex Pit, Lincoln one on October 20th. There were further sightings in November and December bringing the total number of records for the year to 351.

#### **Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini***

An adult was seen at Gibraltar Point on September 12th (WAV) with a second between Humberston Fitties and Cleethorpes from September 13th-18th (RKN, GPC, MM, IGS, MH et al). A juvenile stayed at Saltfleetby from September 13th-19th (BMC, MJT, MM, GPC, JRW). In October, two juveniles were seen from the Inner Dowsing Tower on 15th with one of the same on 16th, 18th and 19th (PL).

#### **Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus***

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Gibraltar Point	1500	-	-	2300	-	-	1000	1500	5000	-	4000	2500

In the Grimsby-Cleethorpes-Humberston area, peak counts were 5-6,000 January 4th, 6,500 on February 6th and 8,000 September 16th; Winterton Tip 3,000 February 13th and 5,000 March 12th; Winterringham/Read's Island 4,200 February 20th, 1,000 July 31st and 4,000 October 30th; Barton-on-Humber 1,000 February 24th. At Saltfleetby, 580 on September 30th was followed by 2,480 on December 28th with 1,500 at Donna Nook October 12th and 19th.

The breeding colonies held at Messingham 150 pairs with 250 juveniles in June, Holbeach 350 pairs and North Scarle 130 pairs with 50 juveniles in June.

#### **Common Gull *Larus canus***

	J	F	M	A	A	S	O	N	D
Gibraltar Point	3000	-	-	300	1500	1440	-	500	3000
Donna Nook	507	-	-	-	-	-	1000	1500	-
Saltfleetby	-	2500	-	-	-	400	450	1500	3240
Cleethorpes	-	3000	-	-	-	500	-	-	-
Huttoft	-	3000	-	-	-	-	-	-	530

In addition, 300 were at Barton-on-Humber on January 14th with 200 at Ashbyville on the 18th. A count between Whitton and Winterringham produced 704 on December 8th.

#### **Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus***

Winter records are unusual so the following are noteworthy: singles at Barton January 25th, Cleethorpes 28th and 29th, Barrow Haven February 22nd and 25th with up to 5 at Apex Pit, North Hykeham roost during the winter months. Spring passage was evident from March with 1-5 at Barrow/Barton until June, 1-3 at Gibraltar Point with up to 12 during May and 20 on June 29th. There were occasional birds at Messingham from April to October and daily sightings at Saltfleet from April 29th to August 4th, with a peak of 22 on June 27th. In July, up to 20 birds of the race *L.f.intermedius* arrived at Saltfleetby and stayed until September 15th. The first juvenile was at Goxhill on July 20th. Another *intermedius* bird was at Barrow Haven on August 28th. Mid-September saw peaks of 400 at the North Hykeham roost on 19th and 580 on 23rd. Late individuals appeared at Goxhill on November 9th, Cleethorpes 21st and 22nd with 2 December 9th and 3 more *L.f.intermedius* at Saltfleetby on November 11th. Finally, 3 flew south at Huttoft on December 26th.

#### **Herring Gull *Larus argentatus***

There were counts of up to 500 at Donna Nook and 200 at Cleethorpes during the year. Larger numbers were recorded at Gibraltar Point with peaks of 700 in August and 500 in January and December and a peak of 800 at Saltfleetby in November. At Huttoft Bank 491 passed south in two hours on February 10th and a staggering figure of 7,280 south in 3½ hours during storm-force northerlies on December 26th. Inland, there was a peak of 800 at Winterton Tip on March 12th. Two individuals of one of the yellow-legged races were together on the beach at Saltfleetby on June 5th (BMC/MJT).

#### **Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus***

This arctic gull continues to be a rare visitor to the county although almost annual. The pattern continued into 1985 with just two sightings. A first-winter was recorded at Covenham Res on February 23rd (DHu), and another first-winter flew south at Huttoft Bank



on December 26th (MJT/BMC) in the company of four Glaucous Gulls during a northerly gale.

A Glaucous/Herring Gull hybrid, resembling Iceland Gull, was observed at Winterton Tip on February 13th (GPC).

### **Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

Ageing of these gulls by observers makes it easier to assess numbers present and of 38 records this year, only six were not specifically aged. A first-winter, first observed at Winterton Tip on January 10th stayed until March 7th; another first-winter flew south at Huttoft on February 10th and a first-winter seen at Humberston on January 1st was probably the same seen in the Grimsby area on 3rd and possibly the one at Grimsby Docks on March 9th. A second-winter was identified at Cleethorpes on February 6th with an indeterminate-aged at Witham Mouth on February 7th. In the spring, a first-summer north at Wolla Bank on April 21st may have been the same bird flying north at Donna Nook on 23rd. An adult stayed at Holbeach Marsh from May 6th to 12th and a first-summer was seen at Saltfleetby on June 27th. In September an adult at Gibraltar Point on 8th was followed by 2 at Nene Mouth on 24th. Covenham Res, Cleethorpes, Holbeach and Donna Nook had singles in the autumn and in November an adult was seen at Saltfleet on 2nd. Several were recorded in December. After a first-winter at Covenham Res on 1st, there was an obvious influx towards the end of the month. The northerly gales of 26th brought the incredible total of 14 (9 1st winter, 3 2nd winter, 2 adults) south at Huttoft (MJT/BMC) with a first-winter at Chapel Point the following day and others at Donna Nook and Cleethorpes on 31st.

### **Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Gibraltar Point	400	—	—	—	—	400	250	300	400	—	600	150
Cleethorpes	242	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	700	—	—	—
Saltfleetby	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	162	378	195	350	—

Other high counts were 200 at Winterton Tip on March 12th, 200 at Read's Island October 30th, 200 at Donna Nook November 11th and 1,800 south at Huttoft on December 26th.

### **Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Notable winter movements took place on January 1st with 55 south at Donna Nook, 60 at North Cotes, then 59 north, 554 south at Gibraltar Point and 150 Nene Mouth on January 6th. In April, 300 flew south at Huttoft and 150 off Inner Dowsing on 28th. Autumn movements included 400 Inner Dowsing September 6th, 180 south Saltfleetby 25th with 212 on 30th. There was a series of records from Inner Dowsing in October with a peak of 300 on 25th. It was November, however, that produced the highest counts with a pronounced southerly passage from 10th to 12th. At Saltfleetby, 3,000 south, Chapel Point 3,100 south and Huttoft 4,493 south in 3½ hours all on the 10th, 600 south Saltfleetby, 450 south Donna Nook on 11th and 128 south at Saltfleetby on 12th.

Inland, one was found dead at Swanholme Lakes, Lincoln on February 10th and in April 3 adults Covenham Res 30th, one remaining until May 5th.

### **Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

The first was seen off-shore at Inner Dowsing on April 28th. Numbers remained low until late June at Saltfleet, where 30 gradually increased to 200 by July 22nd. On the Humber there were 3 at Barrow Haven June 17th, 10 Goxhill Haven September 10th and Winterringham Haven 4 11th. At Gibraltar Point from August 1st to 25th, 2,166 were counted moving south over eight days, with 680 at the Point on August 14th. From August 26th to September 1st, a significant passage south of 21,000 birds was recorded. Further southerly movements noted were 800 September 12th, 250 13th, 45 October 3rd, 100 4th and the final bird seen there on October 19th. Counts in the Wash reflected only a small proportion of the heavy passage at Gibraltar Point with the following noteworthy counts: Witham Mouth 100 August 31st; Holbeach 106 on 29th, 100 30th and 31st; Nene Mouth 50 south on 30th, 30 south September 11th, 110 24th, and at Butterwick 200 September 1st. The counts at Cleethorpes were markedly lower than in the south, with 155 on August 15th, 99 16th, 75 29th, 260 September 4th and 19 on 20th. At Saltfleetby, there were 320 on August 10th, 280 18th, 417 19th, 480 20th, 150 24th and 1,200 south on 31st. In September, 250 south on 1st, 673 4th,



282 9th and 237 15th. The only inland record was of 7 at Covenham Res on September 22nd, and a final bird flew south at Huttoft Bank on November 9th.

### **Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii***

A single seen from the Inner Dowsing Tower on August 21st (PL) was the first accepted record this decade.

### **Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

The first was seen at Witham Mouth on April 20th. There were high spring counts of 20 Nene Mouth on May 3rd and 23 at Ashbyville on 23rd. Breeding was noted at South Kyme where there was one pair and 3 juveniles, another pair with a nest on a small island in the middle of a farm pool with yet another pair there feeding juveniles and at Baston Fen, one pair in summer. Another pair with 3 juveniles was seen at Gedney Drove End on July 28th. Numbers increased in the Wash from mid-July with 20 at Holbeach 21st, 10 Witham Mouth 20th, 50 August 4th and 30th. Post-breeding peaks gave Saltfleetby 29 August 12th, 40 13th; Gibraltar Point 240 on 14th; Saltfleetby 50 south 18th, 540 north 19th, 530 north 20th, 40 south 24th, 102 26th, and Theddlethorpe 200 on 31st. In September, further high counts at Saltfleetby were 204 on 4th, 133 15th, 55 17th and 48 30th. In the Humber, peak counts included 25 North Killingholme 8th, 10 Goxhill 10th with 35 there 16th. Similar counts were made in the Wash. Birds identified at Gibraltar Point were 300 on 8th and 100 on 22nd. The last large counts were on October 1st, at Witham Mouth 165 and Holbeach 30. The last of the year were at Gibraltar Point October 19th and a very late bird there November 1st.

### **Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea***

The first were noted at the Nene Mouth where 10 flew north on April 21st into the Wash. The main spring passage occurred between April 27th and May 9th the most notable at Covenham Res as the following table shows:

Apr	27	28	29	30	May	1	3	4	9
	8	15	45	42		18	70	55	12

Other notable movements within this period were 23 north Huttoft Bank April 28th, 17 north (am) Manby and 19 north Fulstow both on May 3rd, 12 west Barton-on-Humber 4th, 8 Messingham and 30 south at Saltfleetby on 5th. There were 1-4 noted at nine sites until August. Up to 16 were recorded along the Humber on 10 dates from September 10th to 24th. August post-breeding dispersal numbers were low but 35 Witham Mouth on 4th, then 22 on 19th and 16 20th at Saltfleetby, 23 south at Gibraltar Point on 28th were noteworthy. It was significant that peak numbers on passage postdated *S. hirundo* by two weeks, and this was verified by the following counts: 100 identified at Gibraltar Point September 1st and 30 on 8th, 155 Saltfleetby on 13th, 165 on 17th, 35 on 28th and 18 on 30th. At Huttoft Bank, 42 flew south on September 14th and there was a single flock of 60+ on October 9th (GPC). At the Witham Mouth, 25 were noted on October 1st with the last birds of the year seen there and at Inner Dowsing on October 16th.

### **Little Tern *Sterna albibrons***

	A	M	J	J	A	S	O
Saltfleet	4	31	50	57	4	-	-
Tetney	1	-	132	-	-	1	-
Gibraltar Point	2	17	20	20	12	8	1
Saltfleetby	5	-	40	31	16	-	-

After the first at Tetney on April 18th, birds appeared in numbers towards the end of the month with 4 Saltfleet on 29th and 2 Saltfleetby and 5 Gibraltar Point on 30th. In May, numbers built up rapidly with 22 Saltfleet 10th increasing to 28 the following day and 31 on 14th. Similarly, Gibraltar Point's maximum occurred on 31st when 17 were counted. The peak count at Saltfleet was 50 on June 8th and although 15 pairs bred there, only two juveniles fledged. Likewise at Saltfleetby, the breeding success rate was as catastrophic with no fledglings surviving. At Tetney, of 153 nests and 18 hatched birds only 12 fledged to complete a bleak year for this sensitive species. The breeding season results were somewhat reflected in the high percentage of adults seen in the 57 that had congregated at Saltfleet on July 10th. In August, the Witham Mouth recorded 37 on 4th and the Nene Mouth 12 on 3rd. Numbers had dwindled by September but there were still 20 at Witham Mouth on 18th and interestingly one on the River Witham at Tattershall Bridge on 30th. In October, one was at Gibraltar Point on 7th and 4 at Witham Mouth from 15th to 19th were unusually late.



### **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* (illustrated)

Spring passage birds were noted from early May with singles at the Nene Mouth on 4th, Covenham Res on 6th and 18th, Gibraltar Point on 15th and 16th with 2 at Messingham on 5th and 22nd. One to four were noted mainly at inland sites and the Wash from June to late-August with a notable record of 9 east at Goxhill Haven on August 14th. There was a strong movement between August 29th and September 3rd. On the 29th, there were 20 at Gibraltar Point increasing to 38 the following day when peaks of 55 at Covenham Res and 100+ at Nene Mouth were also recorded. There were 13 at Holbeach on August 31st and 17 Covenham Res reducing to 7 there on September 1st. Tetney and Witham Mouth held 5 on September 2nd and the Covenham flock increased to 15 on 3rd. Numbers then dwindled until October when 4 were at Covenham Res on 6th with the last recorded bird there on 16th.

### **Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

From January to May, sightings ranged from 1-5 at seven sites with on February 2nd 10 at Inner Dowsing and 21 at Gibraltar Point highlighting a marked movement. Dispersal from the breeding colonies was witnessed offshore from Inner Dowsing throughout August with a daily maximum of 15 and a similar number at Saltfleetby on 18th. Another 16 were seen off Huttoft Bank on 29th and 20 off Inner Dowsing on September 4th. Auk passage increased in early October with the following numbers specifically identified as Guillemots: Witham Mouth 10 on 2nd and 12 16th, Huttoft 50+ on 9th, Goxhill 4 11th and Donna Nook 28 north 27th. In November, there were 5 Witham Mouth 2nd and 10th with 10 on 16th, 7 south at Huttoft 2nd and 9 10th and 20 south at Gibraltar Point 4th. There were 1-4 present in the Wash until the end of the year.

### **Razorbill** *Alca torda*

There were winter sightings of singles off Cleethorpes on January 15th and Inner Dowsing March 2nd where a late bird was seen on May 14th. Eight flying south at Saltfleetby on June 8th were probably immatures or non-breeding individuals. The only August movement noted was 4 Saltfleetby on 17th and 18th and one 26th. Singles were seen in September at Cleethorpes 21st, Saltfleetby 25th, Huttoft 14th, Gibraltar Point 28th and 29th and Inner Dowsing 4th, with 2 5th followed by 3 on 6th. The highest count in October was 10 Huttoft on 9th. Small numbers were recorded at several sites along the coast in November and December with 5 Saltfleetby in mid-November, 3 Inner Gat December 11th and 2 north Huttoft on 26th.

### **Black Guillemot** *Cephus grylle*

Strong winds out at sea on November 2nd may have been responsible for the appearance of a single south at Huttoft Bank (BMC, MJT). This is only the 11th county record.

### **Little Auk** *Alle alle*

One was found dead on March 14th (IGS) at Tetney. In October, there was an obvious northerly movement on 27th with one Trusthorpe (BMC, MJT), 2 Inner Dowsing (PL), 5 Saltfleetby (MM) and 5 Donna Nook (RLo) with another north at Saltfleetby on 28th (KA). Several birds were seen during the first three days of November including 2 Gibraltar Point on 1st, 18 north Donna Nook (RLo), 13 north Huttoft (MJT, BMC) and 6 south there (WPB), 2 Witham Mouth (SK, RH, KH), 1 Inner Dowsing (PL) and 2 Gibraltar Point all on the 2nd. On November 3rd, 4 north Donna Nook (RLo), 2 north Saltfleetby (MM), 2 Huttoft Bank (PH), 1 south Gibraltar Point and one on the Tetney Canal (MT) were also recorded. Further records in November were singles north at Donna Nook on 19th and 23rd (RLo), Saltfleetby 10th (MM) and 12th (JRW). Finally, one flew south at Huttoft on December 26th (BMC, MJT).

### **Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

Spring records of this species are rather unusual so a single at the Witham Mouth on April 7th and a sighting from the Inner Dowsing Tower on May 12th were of interest. In the autumn, 1-4 were recorded off-shore from Saltfleetby on August 17th, October 24th and November 24th, Donna Nook 2 October 23rd and Trusthorpe 2 on October 12th. Further sightings from Inner Dowsing of 3 in early September whilst in the same month one at Goxhill Haven on 16th was unusual.

**Stock Dove *Columba oenas***

Records received from two sites only. Donna Nook had maxima of 110 January, 14 February and 83 March, while Gibraltar Point noted 52 January 13th and 40 October 19th.

**Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus***

Large flocks during the early year were noted in January with 600 Donna Nook, 300-500 Goxhill, 2,000 Skegness 20th, 850 Gibraltar Point 1st and 400 Barton 17th. In February there were 400 at Donna Nook, 650 Blyborough Grange 3rd, 2,000 Saltfleetby St Peter 8th, 350 Barrow-New Holland 7-11th, and 350 near Sleaford 10th. March produced 500 Goxhill 22nd and 300 Fulstow 15th, and the first signs of spring passage were noted with 500 Saltfleetby 5th and 100 south at Theddlethorpe 9th. Further movements were noted at Gibraltar Point with 200 S April 5th, 300 S 7th and 200 there May 5-6th, while at Theddlethorpe 400 flew south May 18th, with northerly movements of 350 on 1st and 400 25th. Additional records for this period were 500 Scopwick and 400 Cadney, both April 2nd. Ninety pairs bred at Snipe Dales. Winter immigrants were at Gibraltar Point in October with 1,000 south 14th and 250 south 19th, with November counts of 700 1st, 450 2nd 900 S 6th and 200 16th. Finally in December there were 800 at Goxhill Marsh 29th and 2,000 Bourne South Fen 15th.

**Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

Notable gatherings were 132 at Goxhill January 24th, 80 at Snitterby February 9th, 50-80 at New Holland in February and 80+ there November-December, 200 roosting at Bourne all November, and a roost of 361 at Cleethorpes boating lake December 23rd. Southerly passage was noted at Gibraltar Point in May with 2 on 25th and 7 on 26th, while the Inner Dowsing platform had 1-2 May 7th, June 23-26th and July 4-13th.

**Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur***

The first was at Donna Nook April 22nd, but it was late May before concentrated coastal passage took place, with southerly movements at Gibraltar Point of 20 on 15th, 51 on 22nd, 404 between 24-28th and 25 on 9th June. Others flying south in May were 40 at Tetney 24th, 39 Donna Nook 25th and 115 Theddlethorpe 25-26th, with 17 at Holbeach Marsh 26th and 80 at Saltfleetby 27th. Twelve pairs bred at Snipe Dales in July and 70 were at Saltfleetby 11th. The only autumn movement noted was of 14 south at Gibraltar Point August 30th. Several sites reported 1-3 throughout September and early October with the last at Gibraltar Point on 19th.

**Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus***

After the first in Newball Wood April 13th there were singles at 9 other sites before the month end, with 4 at Messingham 28th. After the main influx in early May there were max 6 at Frampton, 5 Gibraltar Point and 8 Saltfleetby, including a rufous phase female 17th (BMC). Singles were at the Inner Dowsing Platform May 14th and August 19th. Also in August 4 at Saltfleetby, 3 Anderby Creek, and 6 Gibraltar Point, and a male was still in song at Boston on 26th, an exceptionally late date. Singles remained into September at five sites with the last at Saltfleetby 29th.

**Barn Owl *Tyto alba***

Although birds were reported from 22 sites during the breeding season, including 4 pairs at Fulstow, only a single pair was proved breeding. Another 34 sites recorded birds from January-March and August-December.

**Little Owl *Athene noctua***

During the breeding season 17 pairs were recorded from 10 localities and birds were reported to be very common in the south-west of the county. Sightings were also received from another 21 widespread sites, with coastal reports from Gibraltar Point August 31st, and one found dead on the road at Saltfleetby in October.

**Tawny Owl *Strix aluco***

A common and widespread species. Apart from single records there were reports of 4 at Loughton Forest August 1st, 2-3 pairs in the Theddlethorpe area and 1-2 at Gibraltar Point January-June and August-November.

**Long-eared Owl *Asio otus***

Winter roosts contained up to 6 at Hobhole January 1-18th, with 2-4 seen sporadically to March 10th, 6 at Bourne South Fen February 3rd, 4 near Spalding February 14th and 3 at Seacroft January 20th, with one February 2nd and 2 April 10th. One at Goxhill March 2nd. Probable spring passage migrants were at Saltfleetby March 29th, Gibraltar Point May 4-5th

and North Cotes 26th. The only definite breeding record received concerned a pair with 2 juvs at Laughton Forest June 23rd, but breeding most probably occurred at Theddlethorpe (suspected in 1983) as one was present April-May and a female was trapped there May 18th and September 10th. Other breeding contenders were singles at Messingham late May-mid August, Stapleford Wood June 20-26th and Swallow April 4th (noted here during April and June of previous year). Breeding was reported to have ceased at Bourne Wood. Autumn immigrants were 3 at Seacroft September 28th, 2 at the Inner Dowsing Platform October 24th, 1 28th, and singles Theddlethorpe 26th, Saltfleetby 29th, Donna Nook November 18th, flying north at Saltfleet December 8th and North Cotes 22nd. Additionally there was one at Atkinson's Warren throughout November, and singles Sleaford Ballast Pit 17th, Bulby Wood 30th and 1-2 Saltfleetby in December.

#### **Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Monthly totals for numbers of individual birds.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
26	45	42	25	15	2	3	4	6	21	19	33

1-3 were present at many sites from January-April, with several remaining into May. Maximum numbers during this period were 4 Tetney March-April, 4 Gibraltar Point March 2nd, 4 Wainfleet February 17th and up to 5 at Leverton/Wrangle February-March. A pair were displaying and food passing at Stallingborough/Immingham Docks during April. The only mid summer records were of one at Winteringham Haven July 24th, and 1-2 at Gibraltar Point throughout June/July. First returning birds were in August and September at 2-3 sites, but the main arrival was not until October. There were then widespread reports of 1-3 to the year end, with 5 at East Halton November 25th, 5 Alkborough December 8th and 4 Frampton 12th.

#### **Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Records were received from two traditional breeding localities and a hitherto unrecorded site at Atkinsons Warren (Scunthorpe), where two males and a female were present June 17th with a pair and possible juv to the end of August. One was at Stapleford Wood from May 30th, with two males and a female to at least July 20th. At Laughton Forest two were present May 31st, with minimum 8 males to at least August 1st, and one pair known to have reared two juvs.

#### **Swift** *Apus apus*

After the first at Burton Pits April 19th (MWS) an early date, there was a small influx in early May with singles at several sites and max 20 Covenham Res 5th and 25 Messingham 6th. The main arrival occurred from mid month with southerly movements at Gibraltar Point of 30 on 15th, 125 22nd, 350 25th and 200 26th, with 100 south Theddlethorpe 25th, and 150 Covenham Res, 100 Messingham, both 19th. In June there were 500 at Barrow Haven 13th, 400 Messingham 21st, 200 Toft Newton Res 24th, 500 Covenham Res 9th, with 650 23rd and up to 300 into late August, 200 north Theddlethorpe 16th and southerly passage at Gibraltar Point of 250 17th and 230 23rd. Spectacular "weather movements" occurred at Gibraltar Point in July with a southerly passage of 1,000 1st, 3,000 9th, 2,000 10th, 7,000 11th, 20,000 12th, 5,000 16th, 3,500 18th and 2,500 27th. Passage to the south continued into August with 2,000 4th, 3,000 15th, 2,500 19th, 20th and 27th, and 2,000 30th. Smaller southerly movements were also noted at Theddlethorpe, 500 July 6th; Saltfleetby, with 530 July 11th, 200 12th, 300 27th, 800 August 14th and 250 15th; Butterwick, 600 August 14th and Cleethorpes 1,000 24th. Further August records were of 1,000 each at Flixborough 10th and Goxhill 14th, 100 W at Frampton and 350 W at the Witham Mouth both on 4th. Up to 5 noted from several sites in September, with 95 Covenham Res 1st, 29 8th, and 150 south at Gibraltar Point 1st, 30 8th. The last record was of a single south at Theddlethorpe and Huttoft October 6th.

#### **Alpine Swift** *Apus melba*

One flew south at Gibraltar Point August 31st (P. J. Curow, M. Kennewell, MM et al). The sixth county record. Accepted BBRC.

#### **Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Despite widespread reports, equalling those of the preceding two years, low breeding numbers suggest that it may have been affected by the harshness of the early winter. A maximum of five pairs attempted breeding, and another pair were present at a site in mid summer with a further seven localities reporting singles May-July.

**Bee-eater *Merops apiaster***

One at Gibraltar Point August 26th-29th (EW, IH, S. Britton, M. Kennewell et al). There have been six previous records in the county involving nine birds. Accepted BBRC.

**Hoopoe *Upupa epops***

One at Saltfleetby June 25th-29th (JRW), and possibly a different bird flying south at Theddlethorpe 26th (MB). A late bird was at Butterwick October 6th (ACo).

**Wryneck *Jynx torquilla***

Spring records were from Tetney April 20th-24th, with birds in May at Donna Nook 5th and 22nd, Donna Nook (N) 14-15th and 2 at Saltfleetby 15th with singles 16th and 23rd. The only autumn record was at Gibraltar Point August 31st.

**Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis***

Away from the more traditional areas there was one at Weelsby Woods (Grimsby) from August 30th-September 27th and on the coast in spring, at Tetney May 15th, North Somercotes Warren 20th and Gibraltar Point 17th-June 4th.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major***

A large influx occurred on the coast during the autumn, undoubtedly involving some birds of continental origin. In August there were singles at Theddlethorpe flying north 18th, Cleethorpes 21st and on ten dates at Gibraltar Point, with two south there 23rd. Records from several sites along the Humber Bank in September, including one south-west at Barrow Haven 12th and two west at Barton-on-Humber Pits 19th may have been involved with this immigration, but could also refer to post fledging dispersal by local birds. Coastal records in September came from Anderby Creek 4th, 1 S at Saltfleetby 4th with odd singles to 19th, 1-2 Gibraltar Point all month involving 14+ birds, singles regularly at Theddlethorpe 7-28th, Donna Nook 25th and 28th, Grainthorpe 27th and Humberston 30th. Gibraltar Point had 1-2 throughout October with others at Saltfleetby 5th, 15th and 21st, 2 27th and singles Donna Nook 6th and 26th, North Somercotes Warren 12th, Cleethorpes 14th, 25-26th and North Killingholme Pits 13th. November birds were at Donna Nook and Saltfleet 1st, Cleethorpes 6th, Saltfleetby 17th, Immingham 21st and on six dates at Gibraltar Point, with one there December 5th, 17th and 31st and one Huttoft Bank December 7th. Additional records away from the breeding areas were singles at Baston Fen in January, June, September and December, Gibraltar Point March 16th, Fulstow December 10th and one west at Covenham 29th. Breeding was reported from Burton Stather Wood, Brumby Common, Stallingborough, Kirton Hall Weir, Bourne and Temple Woods.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor***

A pair bred at Atkinsons Warren (Scunthorpe) rearing four juv's and breeding may also have occurred at Bourne and Temple Woods, Burton Pits, Hoplands Wood, Lincoln Ballast Pit, Brumby Wood, Barrow and Newsham Wood. Other reports during the breeding season came from Denton Res April 9th and May 9th, Weelsby Woods May 2nd, a female trapped Ancaster GP in June and one on several days in July at Scopwick, with two males 11th. Elsewhere there were singles at Roxton Wood January 8th, Hartsholme Park 12th, near Stow February 16th, Swanpool and Boultham Park March 17th, near Scunthorpe Museum April 1st, Denton Res September 9th, Swanpool again 17th, in October Crowland Wood 17th, Bardney Scrubs Meadow 22nd and Brackenborough Wood December 25th.

**Woodlark *Lullula arborea***

At the 1984 breeding site the first bird had returned and was in song on April 4th. At least 6 were present May 17th with a family party of 7 seen during mid June. Young were being fed at the nest by both parents June 23rd, and up to 4 were present to July 31st. Two pairs may have been involved, but the possibility that one pair double brooded cannot be dismissed.

**Skylark *Alauda arvensis***

Wintering flocks in January numbered 150 at the Witham Mouth, 700 Saltfleetby 6th and 250 29th, 100 Donna Nook 7th, 100 Nene Mouth 17th, 450 Goxhill Marsh 18th, 200 Fulstow 19th, 150 Wainfleet and 100 Scopwick 20th, 400 Saltfleet 26th and 340 Gibraltar Point 3rd, with upto 110 to the end of February. There were 300 Holbeach Marsh February 10th, with 108 at Blyborough Grange and 100 Scopwick 17th.

The first autumn movements were noted at Gibraltar Point on September 16th when 50 flew south; 70 S there October 13th, with 500 Saltfleetby 20th, 600 24th. In November Gibraltar Point had 100 all month with 200 W on 1st, 150 at the Witham Mouth 16th and 200 inland at Swallow 27th. Up to 400 were at Donna Nook in December, with 240 at



Saltfleetby 25th, 100 Messingham 28th, 200 at East Butterwick 29th, and a massive southerly movement at Gibraltar Point of 4,250 on 29th, 500 30th.

**Shore Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*

Another poor year with the only records from Donna Nook; 4 January-March, a single April 15th-16th, and 12 flying south-west in off the sea December 1st. (photo P. Haywood)



**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

Rather unusually there were no March records. In April one was at Messingham 1-17th; 8 at Barton-on-Humber Pits 8th was the spring max there and singles were noted at North Killingholme 6th, Huttoft and West Deeping Pits 14th. There were a few at Denton Res 19-21st and 8 Ancaster 19th. During May numbers were again low with mainly singles at Donna Nook, 3 on 4th; 1-5 Gibraltar Point with 30 south 22nd whilst the max at Messingham was 30 on 19th. At Pinchbeck only 5 pairs bred compared with 100 in 1982. Autumn birds were also few with 150 Barton-on-Humber July 29th, 100 east at Winteringham Haven August 6th, 200 south Gibraltar Point 26th and 150 30th. In September there were 100 Barton-on-Humber Pits 9th, the only significant count. There were 6 Gibraltar Point October 2nd, 1 4th, 4 18th; singles at Huttoft 6th, Saltfleetby 6th, Barton-on-Humber 10th, Goxhill 13th and finally 21 south at Theddlethorpe 20th.

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

The first birds were noted on April 1st at Barton-on-Humber Pits, Messingham and Bourne; thereafter small numbers were recorded widely with 150 Barrow Haven 27th. The main influx was throughout May with 400 Barrow Haven and 400 Covenham Res 2nd, 200 Thorpe/Whisby Pits 3rd, 200 north at Saltfleetby 15th, 300 Gibraltar Point 22nd and 200 south at Theddlethorpe 25th. An early autumn movement occurred at Gibraltar Point in July with 2,000 south 23rd and 200 24th. The main autumn migration at Gibraltar Point took place at the end of August with 8,000 23rd, 10,000 25th, 15,000 26th and 20,000 30th. In September 1,250 were at Butterwick and 2,000 Gibraltar Point 1st, 1,200 Saltfleetby 3rd and a roost of 10,000 Barton-on-Humber 24th. Albino birds were noted at Scopwick until late September and Gibraltar Point 24th. The October max was 300 Anderby Creek 1st with 40 Scopwick 2nd, 50 Gibraltar Point 5th and smaller numbers noted widely. Late birds in November were singles at N Somercotes Warren 3rd, Saltfleetby 5th, Theddlethorpe 6th and 2 Gibraltar Point 9th.



### **House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

After the first bird at Little Bytham April 9th ones and twos were noted at a number of sites with max for the month of 40 Messingham 20th and 60 Barrow Haven 26th. During May peaks were: 140 Barton-on-Humber Pits 2nd, 100 Thorpe/Whisby Pits 3rd, 250 Gibraltar Point 22nd and 300 south at Theddlethorpe 25th. Arrival continued during June with 120 Messingham 6th, 140 Ashbyville 6th, 75 Burton Pits 8th and 50 Covenham Res 9th. During August and September 40 to 200 birds were noted widely with a peak of 300 Saltfleetby September 3rd. In October 200 flew south at Cleethorpes 2nd, 30 Lincoln West Common 4th, 20 Leasingham 5th, 28 Gibraltar Point 11th, 7 Anderby 12th, 3 Scopwick 16th and 2 Scunthorpe 17th. After 2 N Somercotes Warren November 3rd other late birds were singles Wyberton 7th-8th and Gibraltar Point 5th, 8th, and 9th.

### **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

An unusual record of one at Donna Nook May 9th (RLo) was the first spring record for the county.

There was a typical autumn showing with singles in October at Saltfleetby 7th (BMC, MJT), Donna Nook 21st-23rd (RLo) and Grainthorpe Haven 23rd-27th (GPC-et al).

### **Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

The first birds of the spring were singles at Laughton Forest April 4th, Castle Bytham 9th, Donna Nook 17th, Gibraltar Point 27th and 2 there 28th. In May singles were widespread and there were 1-7 at Donna Nook throughout the month, 5 Inner Dowsing 14th, 3 Laughton Forest 31st and 2 singing males Denton Res 6-31st. Breeding records came from Bourne and Temple Woods and Scotton/Laughton Forest where there were at least 15 pairs. After one at Saltfleetby July 22nd the main autumn migration was in August with singles at Theddlethorpe, and Holbeach Marsh 19th, then 2 Gibraltar Point 22nd, 7 south 23rd, 14 south 25th, 10 south 26th and 27th, 8 29-30th and 4 31st. Passage continued throughout September with singles at Donna Nook, 6 Gibraltar Point 7th, 2 10th, 3 13th and singles thereafter. The last bird was noted at Gibraltar Point October 6th.

### **Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

Peak counts in the early part of the year were 20 Denton Res early January, 30 Cadney Res 9th, 50 Holbeach Marsh 13th. In March 30 were at Gibraltar Point 22nd and in April 150 North Cotes 2nd and 60 plus 100 south Gibraltar Point 6th. In the autumn there were 20 Cleethorpes 29th. Passage was most marked in September with 1,000 south Cleethorpes 18th and 50-250 Gibraltar Point from 12th to the month end, with 85 Covenham Res 27th. In October there were 1-20 Inner Dowsing with 200 there 16th; 200 Saltfleetby 17th and 100 Butterwick 19th.

### **Rock Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

During January-March small numbers were recorded widely at coastal sites with 1-4 Cleethorpes/Humberston, 8-10 Tetney, 1-4 Donna Nook, 1-8 Gibraltar Point with max 16 January 2nd. Inland there were 1-2 Covenham Res during the same period. In April one was at Gibraltar Point 5th and 7th. Birds began returning to their wintering sites in September with 3 Covenham Res 24th, 15 26th and 1-6 until the end of the year with 10 on October 25th. At Cleethorpes there were 1-5 from 28th until the end of the year. Records were more widespread from October with 1-5 Goxhill Haven/East Halton Skitter and 10 on 13th, 1-6 Gibraltar Point, 3-5 Tetney and 1-4 Trusthorpe. Peaks were: 10 Butterwick October 26th, 13 Gibraltar Point November 6th. Other records included 4 Gedney November 5th, 4 Witham Mouth 17th, 4 Nene Mouth 8th, 5 Goxhill Haven December 29th, 5 Surfleet 15th, 3 Saltfleetby 15th and 9 Gibraltar Point 31st.

*A.s. littoralis*: a bird showing characteristics of the Scandinavian race was noted at Barton-on-Humber Pits December 1st.

*A.s. spinoletta*: Most Water Pipit records came from Saltfleetby with singles February 17th and 26th (KW), March 12th (KA) and April 10th (BMC, MJT). Also one at Nene Mouth March 31st (PC).

### **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*

There was an early bird at Throckenholt March 26th then 3 Covenham Res April 4th, 3 Barton-on-Humber 5th and one Baston Fen 5th. There was a more general arrival towards the end of April with 14 Guthram 20th, 60 Covenham Res 25th, 11 Barton-on-Humber Pits 26th and 35 Barrow Haven 27th. Arrivals continued in the first half of May with 20 Barrow Haven 2nd, 36 Barton Pits and 13 Gibraltar Point 4th, 60 Covenham Res also 4th and 100

there 14th. In the autumn 17-30 were recorded widely at coastal sites and at Covenham Res there were 45 July 7th, 100 August 7th and 200 September 6th. The last birds were 2 there October 6th.

*M.f. flava* Birds showing characteristics of Blue-headed Wagtails were noted as follows: one Barton-on-Humber Pits April 26-27th, one Guthram 20th, 1-2 Covenham Res April 9th-May 20th, one Donna Nook May 10th with a female Donna Nook (N) 18th and one Nene Mouth 16th. A pair was at Cadney Res from May 16th-June 3rd and a male was seen feeding young there August 21st.

*M.f. thunbergi* A first summer male showing characteristics of the Grey-headed race was at Barrow Haven June 13th (GPC).

#### **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*

The 1977 Gibraltar Point record has now been rejected. Therefore the 1983 record is the first for the county.

#### **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

In the early part of the year singles were noted at eleven sites with birds staying well into March at Louth and Denton Res. Other records were: Lincoln January 4th, Newsham Lake 8th, Spalding 12th, Thorpe/Whisby Pits 20th and February 10th, Grimsby February 15th, Cleethorpes Beach 24th, New Waltham March 15th and Gibraltar Point April 6th.

The only records suggestive of breeding came from Screddington July 24th when there were 2 adults and a juvenile.

In the autumn 5 were at Witham Mouth August 30th and in September 1-2 were noted at nine sites with one staying at Denton Res until November 17th and one at New Waltham until November 3rd. In October 2 were at Lincoln 2nd and singles at Fulstow 1st, Covenham 6th, Alford Sewage Farm 8th and Snipe Dales 19th. Other November records were of singles at Alford 6th, Fulstow 17th, Grimsby 24th and Tetney Blow Wells 24th. Finally one was at Lincoln December 5-11th and Alford 10th.

#### **Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

The only notable concentrations were: 10 Alford Sewage Farm February 17th, 40 Ashbyville March 14th, 40 Brigg SBF July 30th, 30 there August 7th and 40 September 4th, 20 Cadney Res September 19th, 20 Covenham Res September 27th and 11 there November 4th.

*M.a. alba*. White Wagtails were widespread. After the first at Nene Mouth March 31st birds were recorded at eleven sites throughout April and May, peaks being: 3 Huttoft Pit April 28th, 8 Covenham Res 29th, 4 Gibraltar Point 12-13th and up to 3 until May 9th, 6 Holbeach Marsh April 13th, 4 Barton-on-Humber/Barrow Haven May 2nd, 7 Barrow Haven 4th and 16 Covenham Res 4th. The last bird was at Gibraltar Point May 25th.

#### **Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*

One was at Humberston February 24th (RKN). The first record since 1981.

#### **Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Monthly maxima at Gibraltar Point were:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
18	18	12	35	13	18	16	15	24	30	25	12

Other notable records included 34 Twigmoor March 12th, 13 pairs Snipe Dales, 10 pairs bred at Donna Nook with an autumn maximum of 25, at Saltfleetby 25 pairs bred – the highest total in the last ten years – and there were 30 there September 30th. At Theddlethorpe ringing totals were the highest ever:

'81	'82	'83	'84	'85
117	127	134	189	263

#### **Dunnoch** *Prunella modularis*

At Gibraltar Point there were up to 40 all year with 75 in January, 65 on April 5th, 55 September 26th, and 100 on November 1st. One was at Inner Dowsing March 23rd. Breeding pairs included 90 pairs at Saltfleetby, 15 pairs Donna Nook and 25 pairs at Snipe Dales. At Theddlethorpe 385 were ringed, equalling the highest previous total.

#### **Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

The highest counts in the early part of the year were 25 Brumby Woods February 28th and 17 Twigmoor March 12th. The only indication of any spring movement was one at Inner Dowsing March 23rd. 25 pairs bred at Snipe Dales and 6-8 pairs at Saltfleetby. One bird ringed at Theddlethorpe September 22nd was controlled at Cantley, Norfolk November 2nd, 123km south-east. Autumn max were: 45 Anderby Creek October 12th, 12 Humberston Fitties 23rd, 10 Grainthorpe-Pye's Hall 26th, 60 Saltfleetby 26th, one Inner Dowsing

26-27th and 25 Gibraltar Point 31st. In November there were 30 Gibraltar Point 1-3rd and 20 8th whilst Saltfleetby had 20-30 throughout November and December.

**Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

The first bird was at Messingham April 18th and was recorded there until June 11th. Next was one at Thorpe/Whisby Pits 30th and the main arrival took place in the first week of May when records were widespread. During the summer 18 were ringed at Temple Wood. In the autumn a male ringed at Theddlethorpe July 3rd remained there until August 31st. One was at Gibraltar Point September 9th and a 1st-winter bird was ringed at Theddlethorpe 16th.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*

In May there was an exceptional series of records beginning with one on Inner Dowsing 12th (PL), one Saltfleetby 12th (KA, JRC, KD, DJ, MM) and 2 on 15th (MJT), one Humberston Fitties/Tetney 13th (WPB et al), one Pye's Hall 14th (MM), 2 Donna Nook (N) 14th and 4 on 15th (DW), one Saltfleet 15th (DW) and one Humberston Fitties 15th (HB, JWa). All records were of males of the Red-spotted race *L.s. svecica*.

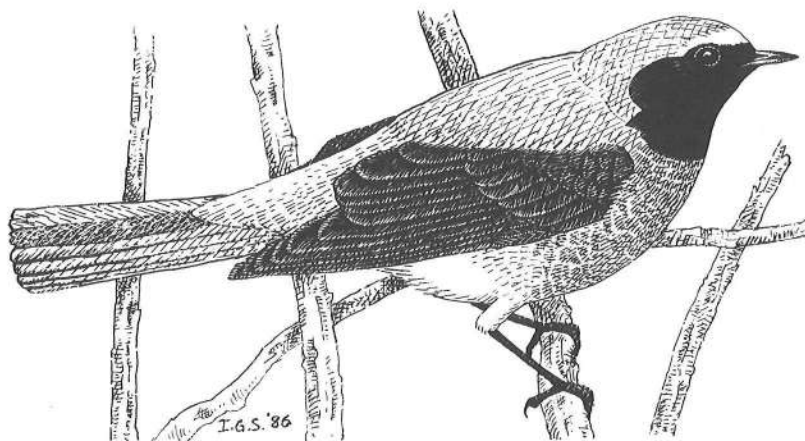
**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

The first birds of the spring were 2 at Gibraltar Point March 24th with one remaining until 27th. In April 1-3 were at Gibraltar Point 4-19th, one was at Donna Nook 3rd, 2 6th and one 8th and 3 were at Tetney 5th with singles 8th and 12th. Singles were also at Saltfleetby and Humberston Fitties 4th, Theddlethorpe St Helen 5th, Saltfleetby St Peter 8th, Barton-on-Humber Pits 6th, 21st and 24th, and Goxhill 18th. There were also a few May records: singles at Witham Mouth 6th, Humberston Fitties 14th, RAF Holbeach 15th, Donna Nook 16th, Saltfleetby 19th and 23rd, and Gibraltar Point 28th.

A pair was at Spalding SBF June 11th-August 31st and a male until November 3rd but there was no evidence of breeding, and a male in song was in Boston Market Place July 15th-31st. Autumn passage was light with singles in October at Saltfleetby 14th, Inner Dowsing 14th-17th, Pye's Hall 23rd, Humberston Fitties 24th, Donna Nook 26th and Covenham 30th. In November singles were noted at Gibraltar Point 15th, Sandilands 17th, North Cotes 17th, Covenham 17th-25th, Anderby Creek 27th and Lincoln 29th.

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (illustrated)

First birds of the spring were at Covenham and Gibraltar Point April 18th, one at Stallingborough 20th and 4 Theddlethorpe 21st. The main influx was from the end of the month until May 21st with singles recorded widely and peaks being 3 Saltfleetby 3rd, 8 Donna Nook 14th, 3 Humberston Fitties 14th, 5 Inner Dowsing 14th. The only June record was one at Gibraltar Point 8th. Returning birds were first noted at Gibraltar Point from August 22nd but migration was at its most intense throughout September with small numbers seen widely. In October singles were at Tetney 1st, Saltfleetby 5th and 14th and Gibraltar Point 24th.



**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

Spring migration began with 1-2 Tetney from April 27th and one Hungerton Quarry 28th. In the first half of May 1-3 were widespread and there were 5 New Holland 6th, 10 Donna Nook 15th and 15 Saltfleetby 15th. An early autumn bird was at Saltfleet July 25th and migration began in earnest towards the end of August with 1-2 noted widely, 4 Gibraltar Point, 2-6 Tetney until September 27th, 3 Witham Mouth 26th-September 1st, 5 Saltfleetby 6th, and 1-6 Gibraltar Point with 10 on 11th. In October singles were at Saltfleetby 2nd, 7th and 12th with 8 on 11th; also at Wingland Grange 8th, Great Cotes 11th, Humberston Fitties 13th and Gibraltar Point 26th.

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

There were 1-2 birds, all at coastal sites in ten months of the year. A pair was at North Killingholme/East Halton January 9-26th and one was at Saltfleetby 10th and February 2nd. A female was at N Killingholme/East Halton March 2-7th then one North Cotes and 2 Seacroft April 5th, one Gibraltar Point May 5th and June 29th, one Seacroft July 20th and one Gibraltar Point September 6th. There was evidence of autumn migration in October with one Sandilands 2nd, one Gibraltar Point 10th, a male Saltfleetby 12-20th and a female also 20th, one Humberston 20th, one Cleethorpes 16th and a first winter male Barton-on-Humber Pits 29th. In November there were singles at Huttoft Golf Course 4th and at Saltfleetby 1st and 13-17th.

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

First birds of the spring were singles at Kirkby Underwood March 19th, Bradley Village 24th and Tetney 25th, then 1-3 at several sites in the last two days of the month. There was an influx at the beginning of April with peaks being 12 North Cotes 2nd, 14 Saltfleetby 4th, 12 Ashbyville 3-4th, 8 Donna Nook 4th, 13 Tetney 4th, 17 Humberston Fitties 4th and 19 Goxhill Haven 5th. Another influx occurred in May with 1-6 Inner Dowsing 5-16th, 27 Donna Nook 13th, 15 Gibraltar Point 14th, 18 15th, 14 Tetney 15th and 9 Holbeach Marsh 15th. In June there were singles Saltfleetby and Kirkby-on-Bain 8th and Gibraltar Point 30th. In July 1-2 were at Gibraltar Point with 6 on 21st, one Snipe Dales 3rd, one Atkinson's Warren 30th whilst juveniles were noted at Saltfleetby 21st, 26th, 2 on 27th, and 31st with one Gedney Drove End 28th. The August maximum was 15 Gibraltar Point 27th and in September 1-5 were widely noted. October birds were: 1-2 Gibraltar Point 4-7th with 4 on 5th and one 14th, one Baston Fen 6th, one Donna Nook 7th, one Anderby Creek 10th, one Covenham Res 13th and the last on 28th.

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

Spring counts were, like the previous two years, rather low. In April there were singles Covenham Res 18th, Tetney/North Cotes 18-19th and 28-29th, Gibraltar Point 28th and Chapel Pit 28th. In May there were: one Weelsby Woods 2nd, one Covenham Res 5th, one Tetney 5th, 3 Gibraltar Point 5th, 2 Donna Nook 3rd. 2 14th, 3 15th and 1 16th, 2 Saltfleetby 10th, 1 12th, 4 15th, 1 16-17th and 1 19-21st, one Humberston Fitties 13-14th, one Inner Dowsing 14th and 2 Theddlethorpe 17th. Autumn passage was light with 2 North Cotes September 2nd, 3 Saltfleetby 25th and one 27th. In October singles were at Saltfleetby 5th and 13th, 2 Saltfleet 8th, one Theddlethorpe 22nd, 3 Pye's Hall 23rd, one Humberston Fitties 25th, one Cleethorpes 26th, 3 Donna Nook 26th and the last bird at Pye's Hall 27th.

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

Maximum counts in the early part of the year included 70 Gibraltar Point January 4th, 70 Donna Nook 12th, 60 Brumby Wood/Kingsway Golf Course February 28th and 49 Gibraltar Point March 16th. There was evidence of migration in March with 1-3 at Inner Dowsing and 6 on 12th; 45 pairs bred at Snipe Dales. Autumn numbers were fairly low with peaks in October of 85 N Somercotes Warren 16th, 20 Inner Dowsing 17th, 200 Saltfleetby 15th and 230 23rd, 50 Gibraltar Point 17th and 150 24th, 200 Humberston Fitties 23rd, 80 Theddlethorpe 26th, 150 Pye's Hall 26th and 250 Donna Nook 26th. In November there were 125 Gibraltar Point 2nd and 100 15th, 50 Barton-on-Humber 6th, 100 Saltfleetby 5th and 180 22nd. Winter movement was noted at Inner Dowsing in December with one 8th, 4 10th and 2 on 11th.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

In the first three months of the year numbers remained fairly static with no significant movements noted. Peaks were 400 Saltfleetby January 25th, 450 East Halton February 6th,

350 Gibraltar Point 17th, 400 Bourne March 3rd, and 200 Gibraltar Point 17th. April counts were much lower with 30-60 seen at a few sites whilst in May there were 30 Tetney Blow Wells 5th, 21 Blyborough 12th and the last birds of the spring were 2 Seacroft 25th. The first autumn arrival was at Saltfleetby St Peter August 18th, followed by scattered singles before migration began in earnest in October with: 23 south Bourne 1st and 90 west 13th, 250 west Kirkby Underwood 15th, 50 Saltfleetby 22nd, 50 Anderby Creek 26th, 288 north-east Baston Fen 26th and 100 Gibraltar Point 26th and 31st. Greater numbers were noted in November with 300 Brigg Island 17th, 1,000 south Lincoln 24th and 600 Barton-on-Humber Pits 26th increasing to over 1,000 December 12-20th with 200 remaining until 31st.

#### **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

Fifty were at Theddlethorpe January 19th and 50 Gibraltar Point February 17th, 25 pairs bred at Snipe Dales and 179 were ringed at Theddlethorpe. Autumn migration was light with 100 Theddlethorpe September 28th, 81 Gibraltar Point 26th. In October up to 50 were noted at several coastal sites and 120 Saltfleetby 15th. In December 100 flew south Gibraltar Point 29th.

#### **Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

Counts in the early part of the year were moderate. In January there were up to 70 at Donna Nook, 80 Saltfleetby 23rd and 100 Gibraltar Point 27th. In February there were 120 Saltfleetby 1st, 130 Barton-on-Humber 7th and 50 Gibraltar Point 17th whilst numbers were lower in March with 57 Goxhill Marsh 19th and 60 Castle Bytham 21st. A few singles were noted during the next three months with the last bird of the spring at Gibraltar Point June 15th. First of the autumn was at Gibraltar Point September 23rd. In October 20-150 were noted widely and there were 300 Gibraltar Point 20th, 300 24th and 240 26th, 200 Tetney 26th, 200 Pye's Hall 26th, 500 Donna Nook 26th whilst on Inner Dowsing there were 200-400 16-26th with a remarkable count of 3,000 17th. In November peaks were 500 Barrow Haven 21st, 600 Barton-on-Humber 26th and in December 100 Brumby Woods/Kingsway Golf Course 6th and 100 south Gibraltar Point 29th and 31st.

#### **Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

In March there were 7 Gibraltar Point 8th and one on Inner Dowsing 23rd. There were up to 8 Gibraltar Point during June and July, 8 Barton-on-Humber Pits July 22nd, 9 Saltfleetby August 5th, 14 Seacroft 8th and 10 Gibraltar Point September 7-9th.

#### **Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

After an early bird at Bourne on April 6th there were other April singles at Saltfleetby 14th, Wolla Bank 21st and Tetney 24th. Migrants in May included singles at East Halton Pit 5th, Barrow Haven 5-9th, Weelsby Woods 17th, Pyes Hall 14th & 23rd, Donna Nook (N) 20th, Fosdyke 14-16th and North Killingholme Pits 5th. Breeding records came from Messingham with a male May 7th then 2 males 21st and one to at least August 17th; at New Holland a pair from May 9th reared 3 juvs, Boothby Great Wood one pair, Saltfleetby 2 pair, Temple Wood 4 pair, Snipe Dales 4 pair and Market Rasen with a male from May 5th to August and a pair breeding. In July there were males at Burton Stather and Denton Res area 27th with late birds at Saltfleetby August 29th and Snipe Dales September 9th.

#### **Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Reported as generally very scarce in 1985; the only April records were at East Halton Pit 18th, Messingham 22nd, Sleaford Ballast Pit 24th and Chapel Pit 28th. In May there were singles on the Inner Dowsing on 5th, 16th and 3 21st while Saltfleetby had 11 on 15th and Baston Fen 3 18th. A total of 17 males were present between Barton-on-Humber Pits and New Holland on 19th and there were 37 including 35 singing males at Messingham on 16th. Eight pairs bred at Snipe Dales and 5-7 at the Sea Bank Clay Pits. There were 20+ at Barton-on-Humber Pits on September 2nd and the last was at Theddlethorpe on 29th.

#### **Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*

One in song at Messingham on June 3rd (CJ, GPC, ACS). The second record for this site, the last being in 1983.

#### **Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

An early male was at Barton-on-Humber Pits from April 9th being joined by a second from 21st. The only other April bird was at Messingham 27th. Firsts in May included Lincoln Ballast Pit 3rd and Chapel Pit 4th. At the Sea Bank Clay Pits 19-22 pair bred and there were 35 males at Messingham June 17th with 120+ singing males at Barton-on-Humber Pits in



June. A male trapped at Theddlethorpe had been ringed in Belgium in September 1984, but only 37 were ringed at Theddlethorpe in 1985 compared with 88 in '82, 75 '83, 54 '84. Coastal maxima in August were 10 Anderby Creek 18th and 18 Gibraltar Point 31st. There were still 40+ at Barton-on-Humber Pits on September 2nd with newly fledged juvs there 19th. October birds were 4 Saltfleetby 5th with one 20-21st, Barton-on-Humber Pits 13th, Chapel Pit 2 5th, Gibraltar Point 2 on 14th and the last at Donna Nook 26th.

#### **Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina*

A very poor autumn with just two records at Saltfleetby July 31st (JRW) and August 6th (BMC); possibly the same bird.

#### *Hippolais* sp

A bird most probably Melodious but not satisfactorily confirmed was seen at Donna Nook (N) on September 28th (HB).

#### **Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans*

A male in song at Pye's Hall on May 23rd showed characteristics of the nominate race (MM). The 5th county record, all in May. Accepted BBRC.

#### **Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

First of the spring were at Barton-on-Humber Pits and Theddlethorpe on April 24th followed by Denton Res and Grimsby Pyewipe 26th, Messingham 2 on 27th, Fiskerton, Gibraltar Point and Chapel Pit all 28th. May maxima were 4 Barton-on-Humber Pits 1st, 4 Donna Nook, 4 Gibraltar Point and 4 Messingham 9th with 5 males 16th. The total of 63 ringed at Theddlethorpe in 85 was the lowest since 1980. Coastal maxima were, in August 12 Saltfleetby 26th, 20 Gibraltar Point 31st then in September 8 Saltfleetby 10th and 9 Gibraltar Point 12th with 8 at Barton-on-Humber Pits 2nd and October birds at Chapel Pit 5th, Gibraltar Point 2nd and 21st, and one at Saltfleetby on 23rd.

#### **Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

First of the spring was a male at Saltfleetby April 18th followed by singles at Theddlethorpe and Gibraltar Point 21st, Messingham 27th and Donna Nook 29th. The main arrival was in early May with 20 Saltfleetby 17th and 19 Gibraltar Point 30th. There were 4 males at Messingham 16th and 4 pair at Market Rasen. On the coast Saltfleetby had 45-50 pair while Donna Nook had only 9 pair; Inland there were 55 pair at Snipe Dales. Theddlethorpe birds ringed;

82		83		84		85	
ad	juv	ad	juv	ad	juv	ad	juv
98	381	82	287	35	123	42	190

The autumn maximum at Gibraltar Point was only 30 on August 26th and the last stragglers were at Denton Res and Anderby Creek on October 1st.

#### **Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

Very few on spring passage with early birds at Gibraltar Point May 4-5th, Scopwick 5th and Denton 6th. Maxima were 4 on the Inner Dowsing on 21st and 5 at Messingham 28th. Pairs bred for the first time at Saltfleetby and Theddlethorpe and 13 pairs were located at Snipe Dales. The total of 19 ringed at Theddlethorpe in 85 was the lowest since 1980. Apart from up to 7 at Gibraltar Point with a peak of 10 August 26th there were just coastal singles during the autumn with the only October birds at Saltfleetby 2nd, Snipe Dales 9th and Gibraltar Point 13th.

#### **Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Overwintering birds in January were at Gibraltar Point 2nd and 4th, Saltfleetby 19th and Denton 17-28th, visiting a bird table. In February there were singles at Gibraltar Point 16th and Theddlethorpe 17th with another there March 9th and others in that month at Gibraltar Point, 2 on 9th and one 24th, and Spalding 29th. There was a scatter of records from April 5-9th with up to 6 at Barton-on-Humber Pits then 4 at Messingham May 6th, 4 Holme Plantation 16th and 7 Gibraltar Point 5th. There were 4-5 pair at Saltfleetby and 13 pair at Snipe Dales. Autumn coastal maxima were 20 Gibraltar Point August 26th, 15 there September 8th and 12 trapped Theddlethorpe 28th. Generally scarce in October with 1-4 at coastal sites, then in November 2 Wyberton to December, 2 Gibraltar Point 2nd, singles Donna Nook 8th and Barton-on-Humber Pits 14th. Other December birds were at Gibraltar Point 7th, Market Rasen 8th and Pinchbeck 8-22nd.



**Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*

A first winter male trapped at Theddlethorpe on September 10th (MB) was the 5th County record. Accepted BBRC

**Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*

One on the Inner Dowsing Tower on October 24th (PL). Accepted BBRC

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

An exceptional autumn with a total of 21 records, easily the highest ever annual total.

The first birds were in September at Donna Nook (N) 29th (GPC, HB, MM) with one trapped at Donna Nook the same day and a second trapped there 30th (RL0). In October there were about 9 birds at Saltfleetby as follows; one 1st (DW) one 10th, 2 11th, 3 14th (JRW, BMC), 3 15th (BMC) with one to 21st (KA, GPC, MJT, BMC et al), 2 more 20th and one 24-5th (MJT, JRW). Others all in October were at Donna Nook, one trapped 14th (RL0), North Somercotes Warren 16th (BMC, MJT), North Cotes/Grainthorpe 19th (WRM, WJM, SJM) then a notable influx on 20th with 2 Pyes Hall (GPC, HB), 2 Donna Nook (N) (GPC) and one trapped at Gibraltar Point (RLa et al) with the last at Anderby Creek on 24th (GPC).

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

The only April record was at Sweeting Thorns, 28th (WG).

In May there were singles at North Somercotes Warren 4th (MM), one trapped at Theddlethorpe 5th (MB), Normanby Park 17th (RKN) and Willingham Forest 18th (WJM, SJM, WRM). Two were trapped in August at Theddlethorpe on 7th and 10th (MB), there was one at Saltfleetby 31st (BMC) and at Gibraltar Point 2 on 6th, one 9th and 17th and 2 on 25th (RLa et al). A late migrant was at Donna Nook (N) on September 28-29th (HB, GPC, MM).

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Overwintering birds were noted at Gibraltar Point with one January 3rd and 2 on 4th and at Brigg on 5th. The first spring bird was at Messingham March 17th and 20-26th with others in March at Denton 23rd, Bourne South Fen 29th and Baston Fen and North Somercotes Warren 30th. A good coastal passage in April produced maxima of 5 Gibraltar Point and 5 Saltfleetby 18th with 1-3 at the former to June 16th. There were 6 at Twigmoor on April 6th and 4 in Hartsholme Park on 5th. One to three were noted at Donna Nook in May with 2 on the Inner Dowsing on 15th and 4 pair at Snipe Dales. There were 1-3 at coastal sites from September to late October with 4 at Anderby Creek October 24th and maxima at Saltfleetby of 7 October 1st, 5 on 2nd and 15 on the 15th. There were 4 at Messingham September 11th and one in Louth October 29th. Birds suggesting characteristics of the race *P.c.abietenus* were noted at Donna Nook (N) on September 29th and at Anderby Creek October 27th while "tristis" type birds were at Saltfleetby on 20th and 24th. In November there were singles at Gibraltar Point 2nd and 11th with 2 at North Somercotes Warren 3rd. One in Bourne on December 3rd was followed by a bird of one of the Eastern races at Tetney Blow Wells from 18-21st (KW, MM).

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Following the first at Donna Nook on April 3rd there were records from a further 12 localities on 4-5th showing a marked arrival. April peaks were of 6 Saltfleetby 5th, 11 Messingham 6th, 12 Barton-on-Humber Pits 15th, 8 Ashbyville 18th and 8 Laughton 18th with 16 Gibraltar Point 6th and 20 on 29th. Records of note in May included 1-6 on the Inner Dowsing with 10+ on 14th and 21st, 9 on Holbeach Marsh 6th, 16 Donna Nook 14th and 38 Saltfleetby 20th with a max of 30 at Gibraltar Point 5th. Six *acredula* type birds were at Pye's Hall on 14th. Breeding records of note were 22-25 pair at Saltfleetby, 40 males at Laughton Forest May 1st, 48 including 45 singing males at Messingham May 6th and 100+ pairs at Snipe Dales. Constant westerly winds in August brought large numbers of departing British birds to the East coast with record numbers late in the month, hence; 400 Saltfleetby 10th, 600 21st; 140 Gibraltar Point 17th then 300 25th, 1,000 26th, 250 29-30th and 150 31st; a total of 461 ringed at Theddlethorpe in '85 was the highest ever for that site by more than 100. One trapped there on 14th had been ringed as a juv in Cumbria on July 25th and one ringed there on 10th was retrapped in Sussex on 26th. In early September Gibraltar Point still held 60 on 4th and there were 25 at Barton-on-Humber Pits on 2nd. October birds were noted at 5 sites to 12th with singles at Saltfleetby 20th and Donna Nook (N) 26th.

**Goldcrest *Regulus regulus***

Saltfleetby had 10-20 in January-February and there were flocks of up to 40 in Willingham Woods. At Twigmoor 25 were counted on March 12th and 30+ pairs found at Snipe Dales. Autumn passage commenced in September with maxima of 45 Saltfleetby 11th and 48 Gibraltar Point 28th; at Snipe Dales there were 300 from 19th onwards through October. Coastal falls in October were most obvious from 20-27th with 20 at Humberston Fitties 24th, 110 Saltfleetby 26th, 50 Donna Nook 23-24th, 40 Donna Nook (N) 26th, 21 Pye's Hall 27th, 10 Inner Dowsing 26th and 50 Gibraltar Point 21st & 26th. There were 100 at Saltfleetby in early November and 50 at Gibraltar Point 2nd. Twenty remained at Saltfleetby in December and there were 20 at Messingham 28th.

**Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus***

One was at Saltfleetby on March 31st with others April 2nd and 17th. Also in April Gibraltar Point had one 4-5th and 2 on 6th, Donna Nook one 23rd and a singing male was at East Halton Pit on 5th. A male was recorded on the Inner Dowsing Tower on May 5th. All the autumn records were in October with singles at Donna Nook 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th (2 trapped), Saltfleetby 11th, Donna Nook (N) 26th, Anderby Creek 2 on 24th, Pye's Hall 27th and Gibraltar Point 20-22nd, 24th, 2 on 26th and 31st.

**Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata***

First of the spring were singles at Laceby and Fishtoft on May 5th followed by Gibraltar Point 9th with 8 there 26th, Market Rasen 13th, Tetney and Donna Nook 16th with 4 at Tetney 28th. One was on the Inner Dowsing on July 11th and 8 were at Gibraltar Point August 28th. Several lingered well into September with maxima of 8 Gibraltar Point 2nd and 7 on 28th, 4 Kingerby 18th and 3 North Somercotes Warren 24th. After one at Scopwick on October 6th Gibraltar Point held a monopoly with 2 on 2nd, one 3rd, 2 on 5th, 3 on 7th and the last 19th.

**Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva***

A female/imm male was seen at Donna Nook (N) on May 22nd (MM). Only the second spring record for the County. In autumn there was one at Saltfleetby on October 20th (AC, BMC, PHy, GPC, MM, MJT).

**Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca***

A male was seen at Baston Fen from April 27-May 13th; there was then a notable influx of birds in May associated with a prolonged period of easterly winds. Singles were at Donna Nook 7th, 11th, 12th and 3 from 14-16th, and at Donna Nook (N) 16th and 19th, Saltfleetby held 8 on 15th with singles 16th and 21st, Pye's Hall one 19th, Grimsby 13th, Holbeach Marsh a male 12th, Seacroft 18th, Theddlethorpe St Helen 19th, Gibraltar Point 14-16th and a male on the Inner Dowsing on 10th. Autumn passage was again poor with 1-3 at coastal sites from August 14th through September and small peaks of 5 Saltfleetby September 25th, 6 Donna Nook 26th, 7 Donna Nook (N) 12th and October records from Gibraltar Point 5th, 2 on 12th, 14th and Saltfleetby 19th.

**Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus***

Away from the breeding areas wintering birds were seen at Huttoft Pit, a male and 3 females January-March 18th, Messingham 2 January 20th and Immingham Docks a male February 14th. Along the South Humber Bank Pits 15-20 pairs bred with good success. Autumn migrants were 6 west at Brigg SBF September 27th and a female Wolla Bank 28th then in October there were up to 5 Saltfleetby 13-24th, 4 Gibraltar Point 19th, 8 came "in off the Wash" at Butterwick 26th, 10 south at Theddlethorpe 8th, 2 north Donna Nook 28th, 2 North Killingholme Pits 7th, 4 at Huttoft Pit 12th-late November with 6 November 27th, 2 Bardney SBF 20th and 4 Messingham 9th with 2 to 21st. In November 4 flew south at Gibraltar Point 1st and 2 were at Chapel Pit 9th.

**Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus***

The only reports in double figures were in the autumn with 10 Scopwick September 26th, 30+ Saltfleetby September-October, 15 Barton-on-Humber Pits October 13th, 11 Donna Nook 19th, 15 Gibraltar Point 19th and in November 10 Burton Pits 24th+ Saltfleetby to December and 10 Scopwick 23rd.

**Marsh Tit *Parus palustris***

The only records noted were of 2 at Baston Fen on September 22nd and "still fairly numerous" in Bourne and Temple Woods. None of the extra-limital records submitted were sufficiently well documented.

**Willow Tit *Parus montanus***

A fairly widespread breeding species which tends to be recorded in only ones and twos; 2 pairs bred at Messingham where there were up to 6 all year. Six pair bred at Snipe Dales and on the coast the maxima were 3 Gibraltar Point November 2nd and 2-3 Saltfleetby October 14-20th.

**Coal Tit *Parus ater***

In the spring there were 12 at Twigmoor March 12th with 10 April 8th; 2 were at Gibraltar Point on April 14th and 40 pairs were located at Snipe Dales. The autumn produced a large number of coastal records and records in unusual sites which is summarised more fully in the Events section.

**Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus***

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Gibraltar Point												
monthly maxima	25	14	20	22	19	32	40	26	32	50	14	25

Brumby Woods had 30 on January 9th and 50 February 28th while 20 were at Messingham 19th and 11 Donna Nook 5th. 36 were noted at Twigmoor on March 12th and 20 at North Somercotes Warren on June 7th. Autumn flocks of note were 22 Saltfleetby September 20th and 32 there October 5th with 25 December 18th and 20 at Cleethorpes boating lake 16th.

**Great Tit *Parus major***

7-10 pair bred at Saltfleetby where 50 were ringed while 85 were ringed at Theddlethorpe. In February 14 were at Barton-on-Humber Pits on 24th and 10 in Brumby Woods 28th while 24 were counted at Twigmoor March 12th. Gibraltar Point recorded some movements in April with 9 and 21 south on 5th and 10 with 9 south 6th, 15 being there 9th, and 20 June 6th. Six pair bred at Snipe Dales and Gibraltar Point had 19 on August 10th with 10 at Swallow November 20th.

**Nuthatch *Sitta europaea***

Birds were present all year at Auster Wood, Bourne Wood, Temple Wood and Callan's Lane Wood with 3 in Tortoiseshell Wood April 12th, one Denton Res August 5th with 1-2 Denton village August 17-29th. (All in the south-west stronghold). A single bird at Blyborough churchyard on September 23rd (1H) was well outside the normal county range.

**Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris***

Five pairs were located at Snipe Dales and records of coastal birds came from Gibraltar Point July 10th with 1-2 September 4th-November 7th and December 24th with 2 31st; Saltfleetby 3 September 24th with 7 ringed September-October 19th; Theddlethorpe "several" ringed late September-November; North Cotes August 28-29th, Humbertston Fitties October 2nd. North Somercotes Warren 2 October 16th and one November 17th. Obviously a good autumn coastal passage took place. Two were seen at Baston Fen on March 24th.

**Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus***

All records were in May and all referred to males as follows; Goxhill Marsh 7-8th (DAR, GPC et al), Gibraltar Point in song, 26th (RLa et al), Weelsby Woods in song 29th (WJM, SJM) and finally Saltfleetby St Peter 30-31st in song (MJT).

**Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio***

There were a good series of spring records with a female at Saltfleetby May 5th then a male Gibraltar Point 11-12th, 2 at Donna Nook (males) 13-14th with singles to 20th, a male in song at Pye's Hall 18-23rd and then in June one Donna Nook 1st, one Gibraltar Point 2nd, a female Saltfleetby 5th and then a male inland at Messingham 30th. The only autumn bird was at Theddlethorpe on October 3rd.

**Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor***

The recent decline in records of this species continued through 1985 with just 3 recorded at Humbertston Fitties/Tetney on March 28th, Donna Nook November 22nd and Rauceby Warren November 20th into 1986.

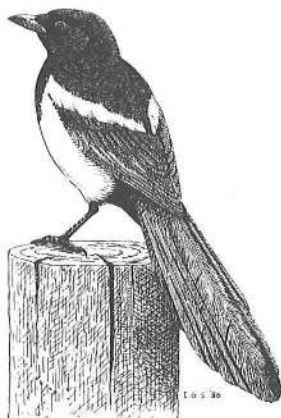
**Jay *Garrulus glandarius***

Apart from 9 at Kirkby Moor on June 23rd and 7 at Roxton Wood October 12th all records submitted were from coastal sites; Gibraltar Point had singles May 2nd, 18th and 25-26th with 4 6th, Theddlethorpe one 18th and one west 30th then one North Somercotes Warren July 7th and in the autumn singles south Saltfleetby September 25th and Theddlethorpe the same day, Donna Nook 2 October 12th and one 14th, Saltfleetby one 7th and Gibraltar Point one 23rd and then 7 24th.

### **Magpie** *Pica pica* (illustrated)

Gibraltar Point  
monthly maxima

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
24	27	20	21	20	11	11	14	10	12	15	12



Flocks in excess of 20 in the early winter were noted at Saltfleetby 26 on January 30th, 29 Lincoln Ballast Pit 10th, 24 New Waltham 30th and a roost of 100+ at Fulstow on 26th with February records of 26 Barton-on-Humber Pits and 21 Messingham 25th. Numbers increased to 32 at Saltfleetby March 4th and 34 at Lincoln Ballast Pit on 1st.

Up to 27 were at Barton-on-Humber Pits from October-December while the Fulstow roost contained 44 birds November 16th. Saltfleetby held 30+ November-December and the Lincoln Ballast Pit flock numbered 30 on December 26th.

### **Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

There were up to 33 at Barton-on-Humber quarry February-March with a maximum of 60 April 5th. A flock of 350 was counted at Snipe Dales on July 22nd and in September there were 50 at Messingham 11th. Some October movements included 60 east at Scopwick 17th, 26 south at Gibraltar Point 30th and 2 on the Inner Dowsing 27-28th. Flocks of 200 were noted in December at Blyborough and

West Rasen on 8th and a large number were roosting at Willoughby Wood.

### **Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

Maxima in the early winter included 120 at Donna Nook January 19th, 258 Snitterby 27th and 550 at North Killingholme February 7th. At Snipe Dales 75 pairs bred and 200 were counted in Cadney Carrs August 10th. September produced counts of 470 at Saltfleet 30th and 500 Messingham 11th but only 100 there 27th. At Thornton Abbey 700 roosted on October 4th and 170 were at Baston Fen 6th with one on the Inner Dowsing 26th. Large concentrations in December included 500 Ulceby 12th, 400 Blyborough 8th, 500 West Rasen 8th, 1,100 Osbournby 20th and 2,000 in the Willoughby Wood roost.

### **Carriion Crow** *Corvus corone*

The wintering coastal flock at Saltfleetby/Theddlethorpe numbered 120 on January 2nd and 230 on 23rd. Goxhill Marsh held 22 on April 5th and 69 flew south at Gibraltar Point between 4-10th. Forty were at Messingham August 20th and the Goxhill Marsh flock increased to 36 from September 30th-late November. At Saltfleetby the flock built up from 14 on September 15th to 66 on 30th then 80 October 10th, 123 on 20th with up to 112 through November-December, with a peak of 270 at Theddlethorpe November 3rd. A flock on Cleethorpes shore built up from 12 in mid October to 21 on November 13th. Southerly movements at Gibraltar Point amounted to 47 birds from October 21-25th with 25 there 30th and up to 19 through November-December.

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus corone corone* Another very poor year continuing the decline in records of this once common wintering subspecies. The only records were singles at Winterton Tip January 24-February 13th, Willoughby March 13th and unusually North Cotes June 22nd. October birds were at Tetney Lock 2nd, Gibraltar Point 24th and Saltfleetby 20th onwards with 2 November 11-17th; the only other bird being at Coleby December 20th.

### **Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

The maximum count at Gibraltar Point in January was 2,500 while 1,200 flew north at Saltfleetby 19th and the Scunthorpe steelworks roost numbered 30,000 on 13th. The regular movement of juveniles in June was prominent on 16th with 830 north-west at East Halton Skitter, 1,000 north-west at Cleethorpes and 500 north at Theddlethorpe while 3,000 flew north at Saltfleetby on 26th. Autumn maxima were 2,000 Messingham September 18th, 4,000 Saltfleetby 16th, 1,500 Donna Nook October 19th, 1,000 Theddlethorpe 6th and 2,500 14th, 2-3,000 Gibraltar Point with 3,000 south 14th and 500 Inner Dowsing 22nd. Large roosts were 5,000 Barton-on-Humber Pits September 24th and 10,000 Saltfleet October 24-30th, 2,000 Risby Warren November 1st, 30,000 Scunthorpe steel works 29th

and 3,700 Lincoln 29th. At Cleethorpes 1,025 flew north-west November 13th and maxima at Gibraltar Point were 3,500 November 2nd and 1,100 south December 29th.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

The only notable records received were of 250 at Gibraltar Point January 2nd with 100 to 25th, 100+ at Saltfleetby June-July and 300 Gibraltar Point November 7th.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

The early winter produced some good concentrations with up to 150 at Donna Nook in January and up to 100 in February while maxima at Holbeach were 75 and 120. There were 200 at Moulton Marsh NR in January and 50 at the Nene Mouth 26th with 60 Barton-on-Humber Pits 27th, 40 there February 26th, with the largest flock of 300 at Fulstow February 16th. In the autumn 70 flew south at Theddlethorpe September 25th and there were 100 there October 14th. Also in October 120 flew west at Goxhill Haven 13th and 50 were at East Halton Skitter 13th. Numbers reached 80 at Holbeach Marsh in December with 43 at Swallow 23rd, 35 the Nene Mouth 28th and 85 Lutton Outmarsh 31st.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

Southerly movements at Theddlethorpe in spring peaked at 20 March 31st, 50 April 5th and 350 6th, while at Gibraltar Point 60 flew south March 30th then in April 250 on 4th, 120 5th, 320 on 6th and a peak of 650 south on 7th. Eighty pairs were located at Snipe Dales. Autumn numbers were low with September maxima at Theddlethorpe of 20 south 12th and 20th and in November 30 south Gibraltar Point 6th with 60 south 7th. Forty were at Twigmoor on November 27th and 31 flew south at Gibraltar Point on December 21st.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Very few were recorded in January-March with 1-6 at only 7 sites and maxima of 10 Hubbards Hills January 6th, 11 Swallow 30th and 20 at Market Rasen January-March, with 25 at Harmston March 16th. April passage birds included 4 singles at Barton-on-Humber Pits 5th-17th, singles Donna Nook 3rd, Saltfleetby 26th and 10 south at Theddlethorpe 6th with 2 at Laughton Forest 4th and 2 Broughton Wood 26th. One was at Saltfleetby May 17-19th and 3 on the Inner Dowsing on 14th. After the first autumn bird at Butterwick on September 19th there were numerous coastal records of up to 10 birds through late September-November with peaks of 24 Tetney October 26th, 56 west at Pye's Hall 23rd, 53 North Somercotes Warren 27th, 20 Seacroft 27th, 20+ Inner Dowsing 26th, and at Theddlethorpe 60 on 14th, 20 south 20th and 10 south 27th. Six flew south-west at Goxhill Haven 13th. There were up to 20 at Saltfleetby in November with 25 at Gibraltar Point 24th and 20 Driby 3rd. The only December records were at North Cotes 8th, Market Rasen 30th, 5+ Saltfleetby and 17 Holbeach St Marks 12th.

**Serín** *Serinus serinus*

A female was seen at Saltfleetby on June 4th (JdeL) and 5th (HB).

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

A flock of up to 96 was at Market Rasen from January-February with 50 at Holme Plantation January 28th and maxima at Gibraltar Point of 230 January 4th and 160 February 3rd; 80 flew south there April 6th and 280 on 7th. In the autumn 100 were in Weelsby Woods on September 27th, then in October 80 Gibraltar Point 18th and 500 Leasingham 1st with November maxima of 100 at Gibraltar Point and 150 Saltfleetby. Covenham Res had a flock of 75 December 22nd and Gibraltar Point 90 12th.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* (illustrated)

Gibraltar Point had a maximum of 145 on January 3rd with up to 80 to early March. There were 32 in Boultham Park on March 19th, 60-70 in Willingham Woods in April and 50-65 at Barton-on-Humber Pits late April-May. Also in May southerly coastal passage included 44 at Gibraltar Point 5th, 25 15th, and 60 at Theddlethorpe 18th while there were 50 at Saltfleetby 17th and 30 Donna Nook 13th. Gibraltar Point recorded up to 60 in August-September, maxima of 130 October 18th, 160 November 3rd, 200 24th and up to 70 in December. Thirty were

at the Nene Mouth September 24th and in October 30 Covenham Res 7th, 30 Anderby Creek 26th, 35 Tetney 10th and 40 flew south at Theddlethorpe 12th. North Cotes had a flock of 30 in December.





### **Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

The only January records were at Burton Pits 8 on 5th, Twigmoor 3 on 20th and Skellingthorpe Woods 25 on 20th. Small numbers were in the Denton Res area February 19-March 15th with 30 in Roxton Wood February 11th and 30 Boultham Park 10th while 5 flew north at Gibraltar Point 5th. There were 20 at Walesby in March and 3 south Theddlethorpe 9th with 18 at Twigmoor 12th. In April there were 3 at Laughton Forest 4th, 8 Burton Pits 5th and 3 Immingham 22nd with single males on the Inner Dowsing on May 6th and 14th. There was a most unusual influx of birds in July with a flock of 20 flying south at Messingham on 1st, 2 juvs at North Somercotes Warren 7th, a male on the Inner Dowsing 14th, 9 west at Barton-on-Humber Pits 17th, 15 south at Gibraltar Point 18th and 16 south on 21st with small numbers on Atkinson's Warren from late July-December.

At Snipe Dales there were 6 pairs in July with 2 males holding territory and 8 juveniles first seen 13th with 18 juveniles 15th. These juveniles were being fed by adults on regurgitated seeds and insects for 2-3 days after they first appeared (SL).

The summer influx was apparently associated with a marked irruption of Crossbills into Britain (see report).

The autumn passage was also very heavy with regular coastal records from September-December and up to 10 birds at many inland localities. 25-30 were at Snipe Dales in September with up to 34 in October; 40 Brumby Woods September 24th. September coastal peaks were 47 at Gibraltar Point 28th and 20-45 on 5 other dates, 32 Saltfleetby 18th with 20 19th, 50 Theddlethorpe 18th and 28th with 150+ on 25th. Numbers were generally lower in October with maxima of 15 Saltfleetby 1st, 50 Theddlethorpe 14th and 20 20th, 30 26th with 50 in Bourne Woods 31st and 45 Twigmoor 28th. November-December still produced widespread records of up to 15 birds but the maxima were all inland with 50 Willingham Woods November 24th, 25 Hartsholme Park December 8th, 40 Twigmoor 15th and 60 27th but 22 Gibraltar Point 29th.

### **Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

Large wintering concentrations included 150 Fulstow January 19th, up to 300 at Donna Nook in January with up to 400 at Gibraltar Point and up to 200 there in February. At Theddlethorpe 100 flew north March 31st and 250 south April 5th with 200 south 6th while at Gibraltar Point 110 flew south 5th, 100 6th, 200 7th and up to 120 were there all month. 150 were at Barton-on-Humber Pits on 24th and 200 Gibraltar Point May 5th. Large autumn flocks were noted at Cadney Carrs 100 August 11th, Goxhill Marsh 300 September 13th, Saltfleetby up to 500 September-October, Donna Nook up to 150, Theddlethorpe 100 south September 18th, 350 south 25th, 150 28th and Gibraltar Point with up to 200 and a peak of 500 October 6th. Also in October were 150 East Halton Skitter 8th, 100 Humberston Fitties 25th, 150 Theddlethorpe 14th. December maxima were only 100 Gibraltar Point, 70 Saltfleetby 4th and 60 Swallow 23rd.

### **Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

	J	F	M	O	N	D
Cleethorpes/ Humberston	100	10	-	-	80	25
Tetney/N Cotes	50	75	4	-	100	130
Grainthorpe Marsh	-	-	-	75	70	-
Donna Nook	300	300	-	-	50	-
Saltfleetby	-	42	28	42	48	66
Gibraltar Point	60	200	100	100	300	31
Butterwick	-	-	-	120	-	2000
Witham Mouth	200	100	-	-	50	100
Holbeach Marsh	400	150	40	300	400	1000
Nene Mouth	100	60	60	30	200	240

The only April records were at Donna Nook with 30 on 3rd and the last on 23rd. There was an unusual record of 5 inland at Covenham Res on September 28th, the only other September bird being at Holbeach Marsh 24th.

### **Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea*

Some good inland flocks early in the year included 30 at Holme Plantation January 28th, 60 Laughton Forest March 3rd and 20 Twigmoor 12th with 100+ in Market Rasen Woods in April-May and 60 Twigmoor April 6th. There were 80 at Saltfleetby May 20th and 20 pairs bred there, with 40 pairs at Snipe Dales. Autumn maxima were 65 Saltfleetby September



22nd, 70 Gibraltar Point 24th, 100 south at Theddlethorpe 25th and 70 south 28th, then in October 50 Gibraltar Point 5th and 100 Messingham 23rd, including a few Mealy.

Mealy Redpoll; Birds showing characteristics of the nominate race *C.f. flammea* were seen at Gibraltar Point January 5th with 2 on 6th and Saltfleet 4-24th. There was a good autumn influx with the first at Saltfleetby September 24th, one Gibraltar Point October 25th, 4 at Covenham St Mary October-December and an obvious arrival around November 20-24th with 4 Saltfleetby 20-21st and 11 22nd, 3 Alford 24th, one North Somercotes 24th, one Humberston Fitties 22nd, 3 Cleethorpes 11th, 4 Barton-on-Humber Pits 28th with 3 to December 29th and 1-2 Thorpe-Whisby Pits 24th-December 1st. 2 were at Alford December 10th.

#### **Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

For a full description of the 85 irruption involving several hundred birds see separate report.

#### **Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

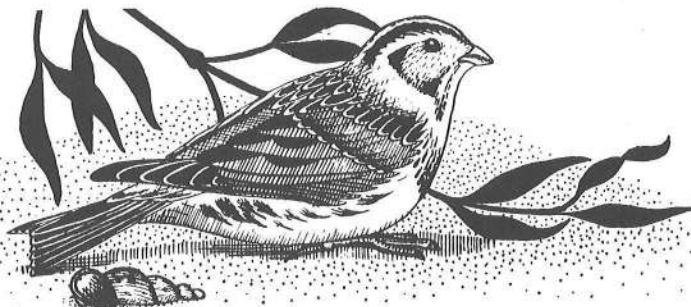
Notable concentrations of this widespread species were of 16 at Gibraltar Point January 3rd, 10 Barton-on-Humber Pits February 24th with 20 there March 6th and 9 Twigmoor 12th. There were 14 at Saltfleetby October 14th and 13 Gibraltar Point November 1st. At Theddlethorpe 55 were ringed in 1985.

#### **Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Up to 8 were present in Brumby Woods from February 17-March 31st (WG, GPC, MM, ACS, DJ et al) and one May 11th (WG). There were 3 in Broughton Woods March 24th with one April 29th (WG), one Scunthorpe Queensway April 6th (WG) and 2 on Atkinson's Warren June 14th (RNH). There was a coastal record of one at Seacroft on September 28th (SK).

#### **Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus* (illustrated)

Numbers in the early winter were low with 1-3 at Donna Nook in January, 6 Saltfleetby 19th, 2 the Witham Mouth 13th and singles Saltfleet 27th, Fulstow 19th, Nene Mouth 17-19th, Tetney 27th and Wainfleet 20th. Three were at Fishtoft February 2nd and one Gibraltar Point 4th. In March 2 flew west at Goxhill Haven 5th and there were singles at Wrangle 17th and the Nene Mouth 28-April 7th. First of the autumn was at Saltfleetby September 15th followed by singles at Pye's Hall 25th and 27th and Cleethorpes 30th. There were then 1-2 at several sites around the coast from October-December with 1-7 at Tetney, 10-15 Grainthorpe Marsh/Pye's Hall October 20-27th, up to 10 Donna Nook October and 5 November, 10 Grainthorpe Marsh November 9th, 4 the Witham Mouth 16th and 6 Butterwick 17th where numbers increased rapidly in December with 10 on 5th, 25 8th, 28 14th, 100+ 22nd and 120 27th. Donna Nook had up to 5 in December, 6 were at Holbeach Marsh 16th and at the Nene Mouth 10 on 14th and 5 on 25th.



#### **Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

	J	F	M	S	O	N	D
Donna Nook	—	200	—	—	2	?	?
Saltfleetby	130	12	—	—	—	35	65
Gibraltar Point	200	300	19	—	2	71	160
Holbeach Marsh	150	50	—				

Away from these sites 2 were at Surfleet January 20th and in March 2 Tetney 14th, one the Witham Mouth 9th and one west at Goxhill Haven 5th; the last was at Tetney on April 13th.

First of the autumn was one at Huttoft Bank on September 15th with 2-3 there from 22nd-October 31st and 27 on November 10th. In October one was at Cleethorpes 26th and 4 Anderby Creek 16-26th with in November one Covenham Res 28th, 2 Goxhill Haven 11th with one to 14th and one 25th. A party of 6 were inland at Covenham Res December 14th and 6 at Humberston Fitties 1st while Tetney/North Cotes had 3 1st and one 12th.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

Fewer large flocks were recorded than in recent years; the early winter peak at Gibraltar Point was only 40 on January 3rd while Donna Nook had 80 on 8th and 35 were at Gedney Drove End 26th. A flock of 65+ was at Saltfleetby in February-March and 55 were trapped at Bourne on 24th February. Between 20-25 pairs bred at Saltfleetby.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Again no really good numbers occurred; maxima were 40 at Gibraltar Point in January and 30 at the Nene Mouth 17th. Fifty were on Holbeach Marsh on February 10th with 40 to March 2nd, 15 pairs bred at Snipe Dales and 25 at Saltfleetby. Fifty flew south at Theddlethorpe on September 25th and in October Goxhill Marsh had 50+ 13th and Grainthorpe Marsh 100+ 26th.

**Corn Bunting** *Miliaria calandra*

High January counts were made at Barton-on-Humber Pits with 50 on 6th and 80 by 27th, North Cotes with 30 on 30th, Gibraltar Point 33 on 3rd, Theddlethorpe 25 on 12th and Saltfleetby 56 on 31st, where there were 60 February 16th. Maximum in February at Gibraltar Point was 35 20th and 30 were in Snitterby Carrs 3rd, with 20 there April 14th. A large flock of 100+ had gathered at Fulstow on March 31st and 25 were on Holbeach Marsh on 15th. The only December counts of note were up to 34 at Tetney/North Cotes and 60 Donna Nook 30th.

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## Inner Dowsing Tower Lighthouse

The Inner Dowsing Tower (53° 20'N, 0° 34'E) is 12 miles off-shore from Mablethorpe. As we work month on and month off, I spend six months of the year on the tower.

Most of the birds which visit the tower are attracted by the light, a white light flashing every 5 seconds with a range of 24 miles. Many thousands of birds are attracted spring and autumn, on nights when the visibility is poor and the sky is overcast. They will usually stay until first light in the morning or until the skies clear enough for them to reorientate themselves. A few birds come onto the tower during the day, but finding little food or cover they soon move on.

During 1985 109 species were recorded on or near the tower. These are just some of the highlights:

May started with a Firecrest on the 1st, then a female Hobby 10th and 11th and a male Bluethroat on 12th. On 21st August an adult Roseate Tern flew around the station for 20 minutes and 2 Sooty Shearwaters were present on 14th, with singles 11th-13th October. Imm Long-tailed Skuas were recorded on 14th and 16th October, plus a superb adult on 16th, and 2 imm Sabine's Gulls came in to feed with the resident flock of Kittiwakes on 15th October, one of these birds being seen daily until 18th.

Bird of the autumn was a Pallas's Warbler on 24th October. It was first picked up flying towards the tower about 10ft above the waves, then landing on one of the main legs and working its way to the top before disappearing for good. Three Long-eared and 2 Short-eared Owls were recorded during October. The Short-eared Owls were seen to take migrants from around the light, but the Long-eared Owls were all during daylight. Pomarine Skua and Arctic Skua were recorded almost daily during the autumn.

Paul Lee

# Ornithological Events of 1985

## The 1985 Crossbill irruption into Lincolnshire/South Humberside

The Common Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra*, is prone to irregular irruptions from its main breeding areas in Scandinavia and the Soviet Union into the rest of Western Europe. The ecological reasons for these irruptions are obviously rather complex but probably depend upon an interrelationship of food availability/shortage, population pressures and climatic variations. The number of birds reaching Britain varies enormously during different irruptions, probably affected by the area of origin and the existing synoptic conditions at the time of the first movements as well as the number of birds involved and the availability of food en route.

In Lincolnshire small numbers of Crossbills are recorded in most years but the most recent large scale influx was as long ago as 1959. Since then other years with more than normal records have been 1962-3 with 30+, 1966 with 40+, 1972-3 with about 40 then 1977 with 5 in April, 8 June and 9 July followed by 23 in June 1978. Most irruptions begin to affect Britain in June with peak numbers in June-August and fewer arrivals in September-November. Varying numbers may then remain to winter providing that they locate a suitable feeding area with enough food to sustain them through to the following spring. As with other species there is evidence to suggest that the quality of the winter food supply determines whether birds will breed in the following spring and obviously in some instances pairs do settle and rear young in years following irruptions, well outside their normal breeding areas. The last such recorded instance in Lincolnshire was in 1964 at Hartsholme Pits Lincoln.

In 1985 the first birds seen were 4 flying south at Donna Nook on May 25th (RL0) followed by one at Gibraltar Point on 26th. Probably associated with this "firstwave" were 14 birds at Ancaster Pits from June 2-4th (SK, AGB, GP). A flock of 29 at Laughton Forest on June 23rd (GPC) were feeding briefly on a pine but were very excitable and noisy, calling continuously in flight, and were not seen again at this site. Two males and 2 juveniles were trapped at Gibraltar Point on 29th and a female trapped on 30th was still present on July 1st (RLa et al). A juvenile trapped at Theddlethorpe on June 30th (MB) was newly fledged, having not commenced its post-juvenile moult. This second wave influx was obviously the most prominent with 7 seen on the Inner Dowsing Tower on July 1st (PL) then 23 at North Somercotes Warren on 2nd (MM) but only 9 there 3rd then 5 on 4th but 10 on 7th (MM, GPC et al). The latter party were feeding on a heavy infestation of aphids on the undersides of Silver Birch leaves, licking the insects off the leaves with their tongues while acrobatically hanging from the thin branches. A flock of 16 were flying around Broughton Woods on 3rd (GPC) and 2 were at Gibraltar Point on 6th. On July 8th a flock of 19 were found at Linwood Warren (HB), 20+ at Wrawby Moor (GPC) and a flock of 8 was a most unusual sight flying west over the reed beds at Barrow Haven Pits (GPC) needless to say not stopping to feed! Fifteen flew south-west at Snipe Dales on 10th and there were 2 there on 15th (SL) but the largest flock of the month was 35 at Twigmoor on 21st (RNH) reducing to 14 by Oct 28th and 4 to December 22nd (WG), while a male, female and at least one juvenile were at Rauceby Warren on 30th (CJJ).

Fewer new birds were found in August but there was a series of records at Gibraltar Point with 3 on the 6th, 7 north on 26th, 3 south 27th and one north 30th (RLa et al) with 2 at Snipe Dales on 24th (SL).

At Bourne Woods a flock of 12 was first located on September 2nd and this flock increased to 20-30 from mid September; feeding on the abundant local Larch cone crop the flock remained to at least February 1986 (RS, HG et al). A single bird flew west at Barton-on-Humber Pits on September 9th (GPC) and one was at Gibraltar Point on the 28th with other singles there October 20th and November 1st. Others occurred in the south of the county with singles in October between Swayfield and Creeton, a male, 12th (ES) and one Callan's Lane Wood 13th (R. Lam) with 6 present at this latter locality on December 10th (R. Lam) completing a notable influx of about 270 birds.

Graham P. Catley

## Unusual numbers of Coal Tits away from breeding sites in autumn '85

Coal Tits are known to occur occasionally on the coast in autumn either as continental migrants or wandering British birds. Racial identification is, however, rather subjective and it is not clear whether the 1986 influx was of continental or British birds, but it was clearly associated with higher than average numbers of Treecreepers and Great Spotted Woodpeckers also on the coast during the autumn.

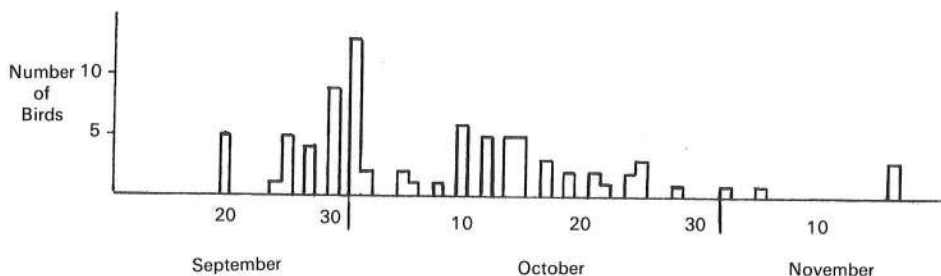
The first coastal record during the autumn was at Gibraltar Point on August 23rd before a notable passage of birds from September 20-October 5th. This movement was associated with the arrival of numbers of Scandinavian and continental night migrants but does not rule out British origin. At Cleethorpes after a single on 25th there were 2 from 27-28th with 4 at Saltfleetby on 20th and 4 25-29th; Gibraltar Point had singles 20th, 24th and 27th and 10 were ringed at Theddlethorpe 21-28th. A single at Donna Nook on the 27th was followed by a party of 9 at Donna Nook (N) on 29th with presumably 7 of the same at Donna Nook on October 1st. The same day 5 flew west at New Holland, up the Humber, with another west there 19th and 2 west at Barton-on-Humber Pits on 14th, rising up to fly over the Humber Bridge approach road; October records at Cleethorpes were a single 8th with daily records from 13-22nd and 2 on 25th and one 28th, while Tetney had 2 on the 2nd and one 21st and 2 were at Humberston Fitties on the 17th with one at Pye's Hall on 12th. Other singles were noted at Donna Nook on the 6th and 10th, and at Saltfleetby there were: one 1st, 2 on 5th, 2 on 10th, 3 on 12th, 4 on 15th, and one 21st with 5 ringed. Two were seen at Theddlethorpe on 14th and 2 at Anderby Creek on the 24th shared the same bushes with 5 Chiffchaffs, 2 Firecrests and a Yellow-browed Warbler! Gibraltar Point had 3 on 10th, one 12th, 2 13th and singles November 1-2nd, 4th and 2 on 15th. The only other coastal record in November was at Saltfleetby on the 15th but unusual inland records came from Louth 21-23rd, Wyberton with 2 from 3rd-December 14th, and Saltfleetby St Peter 14-24th. December singles wintered in scrub at Barton-on-Humber Pits, there were 11 at Swallow 23rd, one Louth 13th and 2 Cleethorpes 3-5th with a single 9-12th and 15th.

It will be interesting to see if there is a return coastal passage in spring 1986 or if any of the ringed birds are subsequently recovered to give a suggestion of origin.

Fig 1 gives the dates of first occurrence plotted through Sept-November.

Graham P. Catley

Fig 1. Dated Records of passage Coal Tits September-November 1985



# Accounts of Lincolnshire Rarities

## Cory's Shearwater at Saltfleetby, August 14th 1985

The late afternoon of the 14th was sunny, with a light on-shore south-easterly wind; conditions not particularly favourable for a heavy sea-passage, but the easterly component to the wind direction was promising. We arrived at the tide-edge at about 1700 hours and immediately noticed a northward movement of Fulmars with an occasional Gannet flying south. Some 45 minutes later, with only 4 Arctic Skuas, 2 Great Skuas and 46 Fulmars in the notebook, we had resigned ourselves to another uneventful sea-watch.

Looking northwards, MJT saw an approaching bird some 150m distant, gliding in the manner of a shearwater on bowed wings, close to the surface of the sea. As it drew closer, it became clear that it was a large shearwater, but when it flapped its wings with four deep, slow strokes and the medium-brown upperwing and white underwing were clearly seen, it gave the initial impression of an immature Herring Gull. Although there were no other birds in the immediate vicinity for size comparison, it appeared to be longer than Fulmar but not as stocky as Herring Gull.

By now, BMC had been alerted, and we both mentally took notes as the bird sheared across our field of view: these are the points we noted.

Flight action: Low over the waves mainly on bowed wings, occasionally flapping (4 beats) in the light breeze. The flaps were deep and slow. When gliding, the wings were held so that the hand was angled back and curved down at the wrist.

Size: Slightly larger and less compact than Fulmar.

Structure: Head large, giving bull-neck impression. Forehead steep rounding to flat crown. The eye was centrally placed within the face. The bill was long and stout along its entire length. Full-girthed from breast to belly, vent tapering markedly to long undertail-coverts. Tail very short and rounded. The wings were broad-based, long and slightly rounded at the primary tips.

Head: Forehead and crown, down to just below the eye, greyish. Nape greyish-brown extending on to sides of neck and down the sides of breast. The grey-brown colouring reached below the edge of the open wing.

Underparts: Chin to undertail coverts, white. Tail brown.

Wings: Upperwing, scapulars darker than the rest of the wing. Coverts, grey-brown broadly edged grey-buff. Secondaries and primaries brown. The fore-edge of the wing was darker than the rest of the coverts. The details of the underwing were not fully noted in the field.

Upperparts: Back to rump greyish-brown. Uppertail coverts were distally one-third white forming a horseshoe band, contrasting sharply with the tail but becoming progressively indistinct towards the rump.

Bare parts: Bill was pale yellow, eye dark. Leg colour not determined.

The shearwater banked and moved further out and the chance of a close photograph was missed, but one was taken, albeit a poor one and at some distance. We realised then that we had obtained virtually no detail of the underwing, but fortunately later scrutiny of the transparency revealed that the white underwing showed a narrow, dark leading and trailing edge, with primary tips broader and an indistinct dusky line from carpal through the coverts.

At the tide-edge, we determined that the bird was a Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* having experience of the species in Mallorca in 1981, but wished to verify our deduction with the aid of the photograph and available literature to determine any possible confusion species. The only other large shearwater with a pale bill is the Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas* occurring in the NW Pacific, and whose diagnostic features are a white face with streaked hindcrown and nape (Harrison 1983).

This is the first county record of this species.

Michael Tarrant and Barry Clarkson

### Reference:

SEABIRDS: an identification guide. Harrison P. Croom Helm 1983.

## **White-tailed Eagle at Saltfleetby, October 27th 1985**

A dull October day with a north-easterly wind usually guarantees some interesting passerine migrants, but this afternoon an extensive search of various suitable habitats between Saltfleet village and the "Rimac" car park resulted in a distinct lack of small birds. I therefore decided that I had nothing to lose by walking out to sea, where several large parties of Great Black-backed Gulls and some Shelducks were standing on the beach close to the mouth of Saltfleet Haven.

Accompanied by John Walton, some thirty minutes was spent sea-watching, the highlight being 5 Little Auks flying north, until I noticed that the gull flocks had dispersed out to sea. As I turned to face inland I could see that every bird on the beach had taken flight, including the Shelducks, and were flying off in all directions. Suspecting a skua to be passing over I quickly scanned the area and was immediately struck by an immense black shape in the sky, approaching from a north-westerly direction. I identified the "beast" as a White-tailed Eagle and drew JW's attention to it; the bird was by then about level with us and approx 100m away. It continued flying south on steady ponderous wing beats at a height of about 50m above the beach until lost to sight in the direction of Mablethorpe.

This bird was obviously an immature but the encounter was so much of a shock that I could only stand and admire it, resulting in a rather basic description, but it was easily identified on "jizz" alone, notably by the huge, deep bill almost merging into the head contours, the rather long bulky neck and huge wings, the latter features forming the impression of nearly all head and wings, and the short, all dark, round-tipped tail. The wings were enormous square-looking structures (as viewed from 45°) with prominent "fingered" tips; the underbody was noticeably wide and bulky.

The general plumage tone from below was very dark with all black flight-feathers and dark blackish-brown wing-linings. The underwing-coverts were only glimpsed but showed a few large individual feathers with much paler colouration, these seemed to be a dirty greyish-white colour, in a rather untidy row confined to the inner part of the wing and the axillaries. The upper-wings were noticeably paler on the coverts and formed a contrast with the flight feathers, these being a mixture of browns (light and dull browns) forming a mottled effect as the bird flew away from us.

The bill was dark grey and the head/neck a darker blackish-brown becoming subtly paler under the body; the tail appeared all dark, blackish to me, but I paid little attention to this feature, JW however noticed some paleness to part of each feather; the feet appeared pale but the exact colour was not determined. The wing beats were very steady with a supple "hand" movement and quite shallow.

The sighting took place at about 14.40hrs and later upon returning home that evening I discovered that what was undoubtedly the same individual had been seen earlier in the day flying south over Filey Brigg and Flamborough Head, Yorkshire, at Grainthorpe/Pye's Hall and was finally seen, apparently by several observers heading south into the Wash at Gibraltar Point.

M. Mellor



# **Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory Report 1985**

**Compiled by M. R. Curry and D. R. Bromwich on  
behalf of the Lincolnshire and South Humberside  
Trust for Nature Conservation**

1985 proved to be a good year for birdwatching at Gibraltar Point. The species total for the reserve was just over 200, the exact figure open to debate as to whether sub-species, escapes orerals should be included, but there were at least 201 unquestionable "ticks".

The recent trend of two or three new species per annum continued, Red-breasted Goose and White-tailed Eagle being this years' contribution to the list.

Other excellent records of birds rarely recorded included Alpine Swift (2nd record), Green-winged Teal (2nd record), Bee-eater, Spotted Crake and Pectoral Sandpiper, backed up with irregular species such as Slavonian Grebe, Smew, Montagu's Harrier, Rough-legged Buzzard, Sabine's Gull, Yellow-browed Warbler and Golden Oriole, to complement the generally high standard of observations. A paragraph in the daily log suggests that the last week of August was arguably one of the best weeks birding in the history of the Observatory, and an impressive total of 96 species was recorded on the 18th August.

A notable but not unexpected absence was Grasshopper Warbler, a declining species in the county, and Sedge Warbler numbers were much reduced. Sand Martin records were also well down. One of the most interesting observations involving common species was the autumn movement of Great Spotted Woodpeckers. With the benefit of hindsight from ringing data, it is possible that at least 13 individuals, all thought to be juveniles, passed through during the end of August and into September – unprecedented numbers for Gib.

While the birdwatching was good, breeding species did not have such a good year. The wet, cold spring and early summer saw a consequent reduction in insect activity, limiting food supplies for many species. This was highlighted by the early movements of Swifts heading south from the middle of June – an indication that many had not attempted to breed?

The autumn weather proved very favourable for a spectacular migration period with predominantly westerly winds pushing the birds to the east coast. This coincided with huge tern movements, and the well documented skua passage. The winter was generally mild, resulting in few large concentrations, apart from the regular Twite/Snow Bunting flocks on the saltings and the occasional comparatively small cold weather movements, notably of Lapwings and Skylarks. The winter highlights were provided by the resident raptors, frequently seen over the saltings and dunes.

No report from Gibraltar Point for 1985 would be complete without reference to the departure of Dick Lambert to take up a post as a Warden with the Nature Conservancy Council. His ornithological expertise has been invaluable in the work of the Bird Observatory in its widest sense, including the maintenance of the daily log from which this report has been compiled. We wish Dick and his family well in his new post and look forward to continuing the high standards that he maintained in all aspects of Bird Observatory work.

Finally, a note of thanks to all those contributors to the log, especially local members and a plea to all those who visit the Reserve to submit your records on the field list available free of charge from the Visitor Centre or Warden's office.

## **January**

In general, temperatures were well below normal for the month though it began with one of the several mild wet periods which brought higher than usual rainfall.

The early part of the month provided good opportunities for sea-watching and included a large southerly movement of over 500 Kittiwakes on the 1st with records of Little Gulls, Gannets, divers, sea ducks and a small number of Bewick's Swans on subsequent days. Much of the Reserve remained quiet during this period with relatively low numbers of small passerines, though a Blackcap and 2 Chiffchaffs were noted in the East Dunes on the 4th.

Adverse conditions with snow from 5th-18th produced a few cold weather records in the early part of that period including a Mealy Redpoll on 5th and a further 6 Bewick's on 6th. Four Goosanders on 16th and 9 Woodcocks on 17th indicated the continuing cold spell whilst numbers of wildfowl, finches and buntings increased during this period. Peaks included 1,700 Wigeon, 350 Linnets, 80 Twite and 145 Snow Buntings.

A further period of colder weather beginning on 22nd increased the numbers of Brent Geese to over 1,000 and on the 24th 9 Woodcocks were again counted in the Plantation. By the 26th the variety and number of species was noted to be increasing with the month's peak of 200 Snow Buntings recorded on that day. Significant southerly movements of Lapwings and Redwings occurred during this time.

Raptors were much in evidence throughout with up to 3 Hen Harriers, Sparrowhawk and Kestrel present, single Merlins regularly and a Buzzard intermittently. Short-eared Owls were well below normal, however, and Barn Owl and Tawny Owl were recorded only on one day for each species.

## February

Monthly temperatures were again well below normal though it was a sunny and dry month with only 5% of normal rainfall. The month began with a continuation of the mild conditions of late January. There were high numbers of common resident species, whilst other records included a flock of 25 Corn Buntings, a Kingfisher on the 2nd, 3 Smew on the 3rd, a single Lapland Bunting on the 4th and 5 Siskins on the 5th. The winter peak of 300 Snow Buntings was recorded on the 1st and 2nd whilst movements of Lapwings (1,500 south on the second) and Pink-footed Geese (92 west on the 3rd) were noted.

Cooler easterly airstreams became established and remained until the 18th, bringing very cold but bright conditions. On the 9th the Red-breasted Goose previously reported from Friskney was seen with Brent Geese on Croft Marsh and in the rivermouth: the first record of this species for the Reserve. Over the next ten days Brent Geese numbers increased to their winter maximum of 1,600 birds. The 9th also produced 2 Scaup and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers on the Mere and Greenshank on the shore. Finch numbers fluctuated to a small extent and only the second record of Brambling for the year so far, occurred on the 16th. Twite numbers rose to a maximum of 200 on the 17th when there was an increase in the numbers of Fieldfare (350) and Redwing (50), though thrush numbers remained generally low.

Warmer weather with predominantly southwesterly winds prevailed until nearly the end of the month, during which time the most notable records were of Lapwings moving south (230 on the 22nd, 1,500 on the 23rd). A single Water Rail was reported near the Field Station on the 20th.

Raptor records remained the most rewarding aspect of the month, Hen Harriers being seen on most days with 5 birds on the 24th. Two Sparrowhawks were present during the period and Merlin was again a regular feature. As many as 6 Kestrels were present on the 11th and a Buzzard was seen on the 5th and 24th. Apart from 3 Short-eared Owls seen on the 4th, records of this species remained disappointingly low. A pair of Tawny Owls took up territory in the plantation during the latter part of the month.

Regular Beached Bird Surveys at this time produced the usual crop of dead auks, gulls and waders in no significant numbers, though the arrival of a 50' long dead Sperm Whale on the 27th enlivened this aspect of the months work.

## March

March was a very changeable month with an average rainfall total but temperatures were generally lower than usual. About 80 different species were present on the Reserve at the beginning of the month and sea-watching in particular, was productive with records including Red-throated Diver, Great Crested Grebe, Velvet Scoter and other sea-ducks and small parties of auks. Brent Goose numbers were well down by the start of March and never rose above 300 during the rest of the month.

Wildfowl were well represented on 9th and 10th with Gadwall, Pintail, Goldeneye, Shoveler and up to 57 Pochard on the Mere. The high tide wader roost on 9th and 10th brought up 6,000 Knots, 3,000 Oystercatchers, 1,000 Dunlin and smaller numbers of Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Sanderling and Bar-tailed Godwit.

A frontal system with associated rain passed through on the 11th bringing cooler conditions. During this period until the 24th the only records of note included a Great Spotted Woodpecker in the plantation and a slight increase in the number of Twite on the 14th. This period was typified by an entry in the log on the 21st to the effect that the East Dunes held only 2 Blue Tits and a Dunnock.

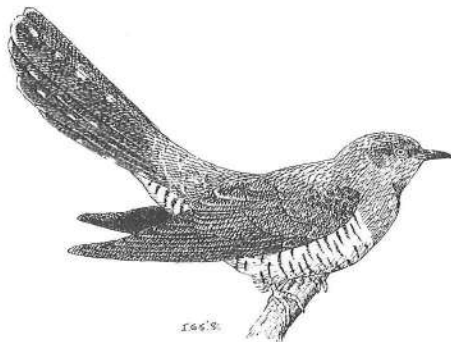
Even with a changeable period from 23rd, there was little evidence of passage though numbers of some species such as Meadow Pipits increased and 4 Bewick's Swans were reported on the Mere on 24th. That day also provided the first summer migrants when two Black Redstarts were recorded. The continued changeable weather until the end of the month brought little else of note. A small easterly movement of 21 Lapwings on 28th was noted when also a Green-winged Teal appeared on the Mere. Another Black Redstart on 27th, the first Whimbrel and a southerly movement of 60 Chaffinches on 30th completed the months records.

## April

The unsettled weather continued into the first week of April though predominantly southerly winds provided favourable conditions for the first real migration of the year. Blackbirds and Redwings were noted moving north on 2nd whilst the following day produced the first Wheatear and a singing Chiffchaff. On the 4th new species included 2 Blackcaps, Willow Warbler and Firecrest whilst the next three days added Swallow, Redstart, Spotted Redshank, Black-tailed Godwit and Yellow Wagtail. This period also provided dramatic southerly movements of several species including 100 Meadow Pipits on the 6th and over 1,000 finches (including 650 Chaffinch) on the 7th. Corvids, Starlings and tits were all on the move and over 35 Wrens were counted at this time. During this period the high tide roosts provided good numbers of common waders including 18,000 Knot on 6th and 7th.

By the 8th an area of high pressure was bringing cooler north-westerlies. During the ensuing period of unsettled weather which lasted until the 16th, there were few records of note though a small movement of Woodcocks was noted on the 13th. Sea watching during this time provided a variety of records and with the arrival of better weather on 16th the first "Commic" Terns were seen. Migration generally remained slow though the 19th was a better day with 2 Greenshank and Jack Snipe, increased numbers of Swallows and the first House Martins. Despite poor weather conditions associated with northerly winds the following two days provided first records of Common Sandpiper, Whitethroat and Cuckoo. The colder conditions continued until the last day of the month during which time other first arrivals included Little Tern on 24th, Marsh Harrier, Tree Pipit and Sand Martin on 27th, Lesser Whitethroat and Ring Ouzel on 28th.

Although most expected species were represented by the end of the month, late arrival dates and significantly low numbers of most species indicates what a poor spring this was. At least the raptors continued to provide a positive interest with up to 5 Hen Harriers present to the 5th and 3 until the end of the month, 2 Sparrowhawks throughout, a Merlin until the middle of April and a pair of Kestrels. Short-eared Owls became more more regular with up to 3 birds at times.



## May

The pattern of high pressure to the west with consequent cool north to north-westerly winds persisted into May delaying further the return of many summer visitors. The first three days produced very little except the first Sedge Warblers on 3rd and the fine sight of two Short-eared Owls displaying over the Old Saltmarsh. A Long-eared Owl displaying the next day in the West Dunes, a pair of Tawny's in the farm and two Barn Owls seen on the 9th heightened speculation about breeding owls on the Reserve. The 4th provided an excellent series of first of the year records with Turtle Dove, Whinchat, Ruff, 8 Swifts and 2 Avocets. This suggested an influx of migrants supported by a general increase in other species such as 13 Yellow Wagtails, though it is difficult to relate this apparent movement with prevailing weather conditions dominated by northerly winds. On the next day with more promising southerlies, migrants continued to appear with first records of Arctic Skua and Reed Warbler. By the 6th there were a variety of warblers in low numbers and many other species had shown an increase.

The 7th to the 10th reverted to fresh, northerly, overcast conditions though the first Spotted Flycatcher was recorded on the 9th. On the 11th the pattern changed and with high pressure now to the north and unsettled weather over the North Sea the resulting easterly winds were probably responsible for the appearance of a Red-backed Shrike on 11th and the same day produced a Peregrine. Similar weather conditions over the next ten days were responsible for the well recorded fall of north European migrants on the east coast, particularly Bluethroats, though unhappily we were not able to add this species to the Reserve list for the year. That period however produced other interesting records, particularly falls on the 14th when the first Pied Flycatcher was noted and 15th, when Wheatear numbers rose to 18. Amongst a general movement of migrants during this period 11 Greenshanks flying north and small groups of Whimbrel doing likewise were, with a single Black Tern over the Mere, the most notable records. The latest ever Goldeneye on the Mere was recorded from 16th to 20th and fears about Sand Martins were not eased by only the fifth record for the year on 18th. On the 19th Little Stint and Green Sandpiper were recorded.

After the 22nd unsettled conditions brought south and westerly winds with thundery weather by the 25th. This period produced some of the best records of the month particularly on 26th when Montagu's Harrier (imm/female) and Marsh Harrier (male) were recorded in the marshes on the south of the Reserve, whilst a Crossbill and a singing Golden Oriole provided good records from the Plantation. There also occurred at this time a significant southerly passage of 200 Turtle Doves, Swifts and hirundines (including a slightly more encouraging sight of 30 Sand Martins moving south on 22nd).

The month ended quietly as was anticipated considering the predominantly northerly and unsettled weather conditions though a slightly warmer easterly airstream became established during the last two days.

## June

As usual June was a particularly quiet month. Numbers of several species such as Little Tern, Spotted Flycatcher and Sedge Warbler were noted as being well down and some species such as Grasshopper Warbler were completely absent. Disappointing weather conditions throughout the month no doubt hampered breeding success – low temperatures reducing insect activity and hence the availability of food.

Features of the month included regular southerly movements of Swifts and in the latter half of the period an unusually high number of Knot (over 1,000) recorded on the 23rd when a marked southerly movement of Lapwings (55), and House Martins (30) was also noted.

Very little else of note was recorded until the final days of the month when from the 27th onwards signs of movement were suggested by wildfowl including Wigeon, Shoveler and Teal on the Mere, a Yellow Wagtail, Common Sandpiper, Stonechat and an early juvenile Wheatear on 30th. Two young Treecreepers were also noted at this time. Crossbills provided interest with two juveniles on 29th and an adult female on the 30th all recorded at the northern end of the West Dunes. On the whole an unsettled month of cool, cloudy conditions with excessive rainfall for the time of year – very disappointing.

## July

Warmer continental weather from the southwest raised hopes of a better summer in the early part of the month though this was not reflected in an increase in ornithological activity. Few records of note from this period included a female Crossbill on the 1st and two on the 6th. The usual passage of Swifts first noted in mid-June built up earlier in the month than usual with 1,000 on 1st, 3,000 on 8th, 7,000 on 11th rising to a peak of 20,000 on 12th. A regular passage continued after this date including occasional large counts. Four Manx Shearwaters and two Velvet Scoters moving into the Wash were also seen on 12th. Unsettled westerly weather in the latter half of the month brought rain on most days and the rainfall total for July was again nearly twice the mean for 1972-1984.

There were few notable records, with the exception of Green Sandpiper and Ruff, until the 18th when an excellent selection of records indicated a small but significant increase in late summer migrants. Also noted was a southerly movement of 2,000 Swallows and a surprising record of 15 Siskins moving south – a very early record.

The best day of the month came on the 21st with sea records including 6 Manx Shearwater moving north and 50 Common Scoters. Two new species for the Mere in the autumn were Garganey and Little Gull. There was also a small southerly passage of Swifts, Sand Martins and a further small flock of Siskins. On the 25th waders included two Greenshanks, Green Sandpipers and 5 Common Sandpipers and a single Brent Goose was noted. Sandwich Tern numbers began to increase with a peak of 200 on 31st when both Arctic and Great Skuas were in attendance. That day also provided 14 Gannets and 3 Little Gulls.

## August

Reporting the weather by now becomes tedious as the unsettled conditions experienced throughout the summer continued into August. However August did provide the best records of the year with virtually every day being of note and the following summary does not really do justice to the quality of the month.

A predominantly westerly period from 3rd to 10th saw an excellent influx with 84 species recorded on the 9th. Wader highlights included 7 Little Ringed Plovers, 19 Common Sandpipers, 3 Greenshanks and individuals of Spotted Redshank, Black-tailed Godwit, Green Sandpiper and Ruff. Raptors were in evidence with a Marsh Harrier, Sparrowhawk and up to five young Kestrels. Swift and hirundine passage continued with 14 Sand Martins on 9th providing a welcome sight for the years low total. Sea passage of terns remained heavy accompanied by 22 Arctic Skuas on 9th. The 9th and 10th were notable for small passage migrants including 40 Whitethroats, 120 Willow Warblers, Garden Warblers, Blackcaps and Great Tits. Only three Sedge Warblers on 9th emphasised the poor year for this species. Two Wood Warblers on 6th and one on 9th were good records for the Reserve, as was the Great Spotted Woodpecker that had been reported every day since the 5th.

Wet and windy conditions on the 11th and 12th diminished records, although the Mere still held 3 Garganey, 3 Little Ringed Plovers, two Spotted Redshanks, two Black-tailed Godwits, a Ruff and a Greenshank. By the 13th it could be seen that the traditional late summer roost of ducks on the Mere was beginning to develop with Mallard and Teal increasing in number, and 16 Shoveler being well above normal. By the 14th Wigeon numbers had increased to 24 on the Mere, and records from the 19th included an exciting total of 15 Garganey, 60 Gadwall and the first Pochard. From the 14th to the 19th the Mere provided excellent wader records – peak numbers for this period being 17 Black-tailed Godwit, 5 Spotted Redshanks and the first Wood Sandpiper on the 14th, 17 Greenshanks and two Ruffs on the 15th and 10 Avocets and a Little Stint on the 18th. On the 17th a Spotted Crane was first recorded at Mill Pond.

The 20th provided a break – wind and heavy rain hindering observation. A period of favourable south and westerly winds for east coast migration then followed between the 21st and the end of the month providing the best birdwatching of the year and possibly of the previous 10 years. The first Whinchat of the Autumn appeared on the 21st followed by Redstart and two Tree Pipits on the 22nd. Seventeen Yellow Wagtails on that date moved south along with an impressive hirundine passage which lasted for several days. Peak figures were 4,000 House Martins on 22nd, 200 Sand Martins on 26th and 20,000 Swallows on 30th. The period from the 22nd to the 25th included the Spotted Crane, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Wood Sandpiper, 7 Herons flying north and high numbers of Willow Warblers



(up to 300). Reed Warblers, two Wood Warblers and a single Marsh Harrier on 25th were other notable records for this period. The period 26th-31st proved to be quite spectacular with impressive numbers of many species, particularly small passage migrants – most obviously well over 1,000 Willow Warblers and also 10 Tree Pipits and 7 Crossbills on the 26th. That same day gave sight of a superb Bee-eater – only the fourth record for the Reserve. The 27th was quieter but still managed two Kingfishers amongst other good records. The first Curlew Sandpiper arrived on the 28th together with the first Pied Flycatcher and Black Terns of the autumn and two early Goosanders. A marked southerly movement occurred on the 29th including 25 Whimbrel, 20 Greenshanks and 20 Black Terns. This movement continued on the 30th and 31st with 120 Lapwing, 14 Turtle Doves, 8 Tree Pipits and the 20,000 Swallows mentioned above.

Throughout the last week of August, sea passage had also been outstanding with over 17,000 Sandwich Terns and thousands of Comms moving south, with unprecedented numbers of skuas in attendance (over 100 recorded on 29th).

To round off, a Hobby on the 30th, a Wryneck and an Alpine Swift on the 31st capped an excellent month for many observers.

## September

The freshening south-westerly winds first experienced late on 31st August continued into September becoming north-westerly on the 3rd. After the 1st, this was a comparatively quiet period with few new arrivals – Marsh Harrier, Whinchat and Stonechat being the most interesting of these. Good coverage of the Reserve on the 8th confirmed the opinion that most migrants had moved on. The shore continued to provide the best watching with Glaucous Gull, Arctic Skuas, and 12 Little Stints. The only record of Nightingale for the year occurred on the 9th and the first Siskin of the month was prelude to an exceptional southerly movement of this species thereafter.

The period 10th-16th witnessed increased southerly passage through the Reserve. The 12th saw an adult Sabine's Gull and the first autumn Water Rail, while the Canada Goose flock on the Mere peaked at 158. A strong movement of hirundines occurred on 13th along with 49 Meadow Pipits and 3 Tree Pipits.

The high tides at this time produced well over 20,000 waders on the 15th which included 12,000 Oystercatchers, 5,500 Knot and 4,000 Bar-tailed Godwits.

By the 20th thrushes were more evident with increased numbers of Blackbirds and Song Thrushes and the first Redwing on the 24th. On the 21st a Pectoral Sandpiper appeared on the Mere with two Little Stints and 7 Ruffs. Also noted were a Marsh Harrier, Sparrowhawk and the first small flock of Brent Geese (24).

Another good week of records from Sunday 22nd then followed with 80 species present on the 24th. Thrush numbers building further included 41 Blackbirds on the 24th and 81 Song Thrushes on 26th, when two Redwings were also present. The first Merlin of the winter appeared on the 25th and Jack Snipe on the 28th. Southerly movement of passerines continued with Redstarts on 24th and 27th, Pied Flycatcher on the 28th and the last Yellow Wagtail on the 29th. A few late Swifts also passed through. Good offshore movements continued with 43 Arctic and two Great Skuas on 24th and similar numbers on 27th. A late movement of Little Terns was recorded on the 23rd whilst on the 29th a few divers, 5 Great Crested Grebes, 8 Gannets, 5 Pink-footed Geese and a few more Brents were seen.

## October

The first period of the month was marked by warm conditions in predominantly south and westerly airstreams and below average rainfall. The warm weather was probably responsible for the lack of winter migrants recorded at this time though the first Fieldfares appeared on the 2nd, Brambling on the 5th, Twite on the 6th and Hen Harrier on the 10th.

Fewer birds were passing south by this time and the last Swift was seen on the 2nd. Late warblers included Willow on the 12th, Garden on the 13th, Reed on the 14th and Lesser Whitethroat on the 21st. Sea passage continued with a late Little Tern on the 7th.

An anticyclone had developed over Britain by the 12th and brought a fine settled period. The gentle northerly winds eased the passage of north European migrants bringing a small influx of 17 Twite and a southerly movement of 70 Skylarks on the 13th. Twite numbers rose to 55 on the 14th, Blackbirds to 92 and Fieldfare to 15. The next day saw a westerly passage



of Fieldfare, 50 Song Thrushes and 100 Redwings. The local Woodpigeon flock had risen to over 1,000. The last Sand Martin was recorded on the 18th.

High tides between the 14th and the 18th produced huge flocks of waders with counts of up to 13,000 Knot, 10,500 Oystercatchers, 4,600 Bar-tailed Godwits, 4,000 Dunlin, 1,350 Grey Plovers and 250 Sanderling.

The weekend of the 19th and 20th gave many observers some of the best records of the month. These included late sightings of Ring Ouzel, Turtle Dove, Whimbrel and a few Swallows whilst the highlights of the weekend were a Yellow-browed Warbler, 4 Bearded Tits and a Firecrest. Wintering species provided an interesting contrast with the arrival of the first two Snow Buntings, a Rough-legged Buzzard and an increase in Brent Geese to 130. The Wigeon flock in the river mouth increased to a peak number of 1,000 birds at this time.

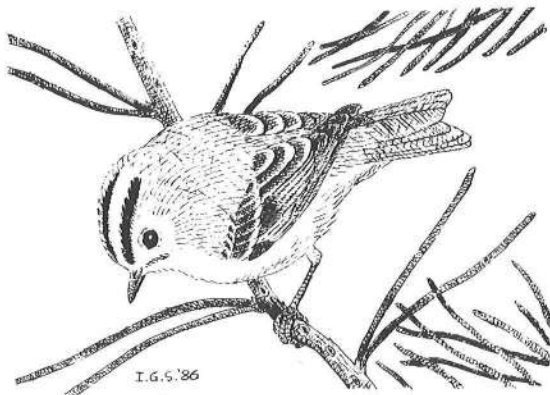
Sea-watching was also productive with 15 Great Crested Grebes, and 19 Gannets on the 19th; 60 Common Scoters, singles of Scaup and Velvet Scoter and good numbers of divers (including 7 Red-throated that were positively identified), on the 20th.

The last 10 days of the month were dominated by cooler airstreams. As to be expected, the end of October was characterised by the arrival of greater numbers of wintering birds including Brent Geese, thrushes, Goldcrests and increased numbers of finches, including Brambling. Notable records included the arrival of Lapland Buntings on the 24th, though numbers of this species were never to match those recorded in the Wash during the Winter. Autumn movement included Kingfishers on the 21st and 23rd, a late Redstart on the 24th, Whinchat on the 26th and a corvid movement over several days that included 2 Hooded Crows.

The most interesting species of the final few days was the first Woodcock on the 27th whilst 3 Bewick's Swans, 8 Pink-footed Geese and 6 Barnacles left observers in no doubt that winter was approaching. Arguably the most interesting bird of the year was the immature White-tailed Eagle which was tracked down the east coast on the 27th from Filey to Gibraltar Point before continuing south into the Wash. This was the second new species for the Reserve during 1985.

## November

The cold northerly airstream continued for the first three days of November, pushing more birds southwards. An unusually high count of Dunnocks (150) as well as 30 Robins, 100 Greenfinches and 300 Twite (the 1985 winter maximum total), 100 Fieldfares and 220 Blackbirds, indicated an influx of migrants on the 1st. Noticeable movements of birds included 30 Lapwings and 200 Skylarks west, a late Common Tern and four Bearded Tits flying south. Three Goldeneyes on the 1st and a Long-tailed Duck on the 3rd were the first winter records for these species. Two Lapland Buntings and 9 Snow Buntings contributed to a developing population of finches and buntings. The wind changed to south-westerly on the 4th, shore and sea watching becoming productive. Skuas and auks moved into the Wash in good numbers (42 and 200 respectively). Southerly movements on 5th included 15 Red-throated Divers, 214 Teal, 31 Pochard and a single Slavonian Grebe. On the 6th the second



Sooty Shearwater of the week and a small party of Whooper Swans were noted.

This marked passage continued on 7th notably amongst small passerines with Skylarks (40) and Chaffinches (60) well represented and smaller numbers of Meadow Pipits, Brambling and Siskins. The 8th turned out to be the last day of the almost continual skua movement that had been such a feature of the autumn and it was fitting that included in this count were four Pomarine Skuas which had had one of their best passages for many years. The 8th also produced the last House Martin of the year whilst two Swallows made their final appearance on the following day.

The high tides of the 14th and 15th were once again spectacular for the numbers of roosting waders estimated at over 40,000 individuals on the 4th. This included 22,000 Knot, 10,000 Oystercatchers 6,000 Bar-tailed Godwits, 2,000 Dunlin, 600 Grey Plovers and 276 Ringed Plovers. On the 15th, 29 Whoopers were noted passing south and 17 Red-breasted Mergansers were on the sea. Influxes of Blackbirds, Fieldfares and Snow Buntings were evident but numbers were low. A single Black Redstart provided an interesting late record.

The wind veered from the south-west on the 17th to take up a predominantly north-easterly phase until the 25th. This was a very quiet period with only an increase in numbers of Fieldfares (100), Bramblings (25) and Snow Buntings (60). Twelve Pink-footed Geese flew south on the 24th.

The quiet period continued from the 26th-29th when north-westerlies caused a marked fall in temperature with associated snow showers. Much warmer conditions arrived on the last day of the month but did nothing to stimulate increased activity.

Winter raptors began to show again during the month with up to four Hen Harriers, three Sparrowhawks, four Kestrels a single Merlin and one record of a Rough-legged Buzzard flying south on the 6th.

## December

December proved to be an exceptionally mild and wet month dominated by south-westerly winds until the last few days when cold anticyclonic winds centred over Greenland extended over the country.

The first week was characterised by the usual flocks of wildfowl, thrushes and finches, but with no significant changes in movement or numbers. The first large count of Pink-footed Geese was made on the 7th when 130 flew east. A dull and misty period from the 8th to the 10th hampered observation though brighter weather on the 12th gave a better day for birds with a flock of 61 Pink-footed Geese heading north-east. Finches and buntings were uncharacteristically low at this time probably because of the mild conditions, well illustrated by a monthly maximum of only 6 Corn Buntings on the 12th and a notable lack of Snow Buntings.

The sea and shore still continued to provide good records with increasing numbers of Brent Geese (up to 1,000) and a variety of sea duck. Skuas were seen on four days during the month. Little else to report until the 21st when on that day and on the 22nd and 24th there were marked southerly movements of an assortment of small passerines. These included Meadow Pipit, Rock Pipit, Skylark and a variety of finches. Other species on the move were Lapwing, Fieldfare and a single Treecreeper. This movement was no doubt in response to the advance of cold northerly airstreams from an anticyclone again situated over Greenland.

This brought very cold and bright conditions with some snow over the Christmas period. Cold weather records were to be expected and occurred mainly on the 29th with 480 Lapwing, 1,100 Starlings, 100 Song Thrushes, 100 Redwings and a spectacular movement of well over 4,000 Skylarks. Finches and buntings increased at this time with maximum flock numbers as follows: 75 Greenfinches, 75 Goldfinches, 22 Siskins, 100 Linnets, 160 Snow Buntings, 15 Yellowhammers and 30 Reed Buntings. Twite numbers were surprisingly low at this stage as were resident Fieldfares and Redwings – neither of which species had achieved typical numbers during the winter.

The last day of the year saw an end of the cold snap and produced some good sea and raptor records. Raptors for the month had been generally low with maxima of two birds for Hen Harrier and Sparrowhawk and three Kestrels. Surprisingly, a single Merlin was seen on only three days during the month.

## Observatory Ringing Report 1985

### Compiled by A. W. Paul

We are often told that we should never look back, always forward. It is however a rewarding pastime to look back over old logs and ringing records. It gives an insight into what is happening in the bird world which is unobtainable to the non-ringer. Ringing is not just about totals, or whether one has achieved a greater number than the previous year; it is about birds – the numbers of each species visiting the ringing area during a given period, and the controls and recoveries which show us migration patterns and the ages birds attain. Having just stated that numbers shouldn't be paramount though, it is nice to report an increase over the 1984 totals, and that once again we are over the six thousand mark for individuals ringed at the Observatory in 1985! The first four months of 1985 were a disaster as far as ringing was concerned, the weather curtailing activity to only 26 days during this time. It was only the "whoosh net" trapping that gave us any results; indeed it enabled us to increase the number of gulls caught at Gibraltar Point. In 1984 a total of six gulls were caught, one Black-headed and 5 Common Gulls. In 1985, with the help of the whoosh net we were able to net 44 Black-headed Gulls and 57 Common Gulls. But for this kind of trapping we would indeed have had a lean time. Thankfully the rest of the year proved more fruitful with record numbers caught on the ringing course in August and September.

Compared with 1984 losses and gains in the species ringed in 1985 were about even: 29 species showing an increase and 32 species showing a decline. On looking more closely at these numbers it becomes apparent that the finches, except for Goldfinch and Siskin, all showed an appreciable decrease, no doubt due to the number of days lost to mist-netting through the inclement weather. There was also an appreciable decrease in Skylark and Meadow Pipit pulli ringed, and these lower numbers may be attributable to the changing habitat and also the increase in Magpies and Carrion Crows. The Sedge Warbler is still declining in numbers; during the last three years there has been a decrease of somewhere in the region of 80%. This again is probably due to habitat change as the national ringing totals over the last 5 years show a decrease of only 9%.

There can be no doubt that the species which showed the greatest increase over 1984 must be the Willow Warbler. During the BTO ringing course just short of one thousand Willow Warblers were ringed and the total for the year was a record 1,552. This was the first time that over a thousand had been ringed in one year at the Observatory. It was also on the ringing course that we had the second highest bird-handling day ever at Gibraltar Point; 755 ringed and 170 retraps, a total of 925 handlings.

Not only can the totals of birds be compared when looking back through the records. It is also of interest to note how the ringing sites have changed through the years. A few years ago most of the net rides were in the Sea Buckthorn north of the sleeper track. At the same time we were using the Heligoland traps around the ringing laboratory. Most of the ringing now takes place in rides in the Aylmer Avenue area around the Assistant Warden's bungalow, and also extensively used is the area known as the Ring; a series of rides cut in a circle in the Buckthorn to the south of the sleeper track. There is usually a good roost of thrushes in the thick hedgerow to the north of Sykes' Farm but unfortunately this did not realise its potential in 1985. Early in the year it also became apparent that the Swallow roost at the brickpits in Skegness would not be available to us during 1985, as the owner had extensively cleared the reeds to make way for the fishing interests. We were, however compensated in a small way by finding a roost of Swallows in the reeds close to Shovelers' Pool, having the added bonus of being on the Reserve. Recoveries are included in the county Ringing Report, but I would like to mention here three of special interest. A Black-headed Gull was controlled here from Lithuania, while a Meadow Pipit ringed here in 1982 was recovered in Morocco in 1985. Finally, a Sedge Warbler ringed at Gibraltar Point as a juvenile in 1983 was controlled in Merseyside in both 1984 and 1985 as a breeding adult. The number of ringers visiting the Observatory during the year was 92, just one less than in 1984. These visitors included two ringers from Belgium, one from Saudi Arabia and also the members of the BTO course. I know this plea has been made in earlier reports, but it would be nice if a few more of our Lincolnshire ringers could help us occasionally, especially as we have now lost Dick Lambert to pastures new. This has left us with only two or three ringers at the Observatory on a regular basis.

# Gibraltar Point Bird Observatory Ringing Totals 1985

	FG	RINGED Pull	1984 Total	Grand Total	1984	RECOVERED Grand Total
Mallard	-	8	8	12	-	-
Sparrowhawk	5	-	5	40	-	5
Water Rail	1	-	1	16	-	-
Ringed Plover	-	36	36	596	2	6
Little Stint	1	-	1	22	-	-
Dunlin	25	-	25	569	-	10
Woodcock	6	-	6	43	-	2
Common Sandpiper	1	-	1	23	-	1
Turnstone	1	-	1	5	-	1
Black-headed Gull	44	-	44	85	1	2
Common Gull	57	-	57	63	-	-
Little Tern	-	7	7	197	-	1
Stock Dove	-	2	2	63	-	2
Woodpigeon	2	8	10	181	-	7
Turtle Dove	4	-	4	96	-	1
Cuckoo	9	-	9	203	1	11
Little Owl	1	-	1	11	-	1
Kingfisher	1	-	1	33	-	1
Wryneck	1	-	1	53	-	-
Gt Spotted Woodpecker	8	-	8	28	-	1
Skylark	9	6	15	860	-	5
Sand Martin	3	-	3	33	-	-
Swallow	295	33	328	4111	4	32
House Martin	1	-	1	34	-	-
Tree Pipit	5	-	5	79	-	-
Meadow Pipit	5	-	5	1097	1	11
Pied Wagtail	1	-	1	46	-	2
Wren	201	9	210	2297	2	20
Duncock	383	6	389	9654	1	77
Robin	148	-	148	2721	-	32
Redstart	6	-	6	1374	-	10
Whinchat	5	-	5	336	-	-
Wheatear	3	-	3	255	-	2
Blackbird	414	-	414	11144	13	258
Fieldfare	13	-	13	835	-	23
Song Thrush	174	-	174	3905	3	70
Redwing	57	-	57	1393	-	15
Mistle Thrush	7	-	7	185	2	9
Sedge Warbler	13	-	13	925	1	7
Reed Warbler	138	-	138	1099	-	11
Lesser Whitethroat	111	-	111	1468	1	9
Whitethroat	297	4	301	6102	1	27
Garden Warbler	56	-	56	1242	-	2
Blackcap	155	-	155	1994	-	10
Yellow-browed Warbler	1	-	1	7	-	-
Wood Warbler	5	-	5	38	-	-
Chiffchaff	27	-	27	556	-	5
Willow Warbler	1552	-	1552	10416	1	20
Goldcrest	208	-	208	3200	-	19
Firecrest	4	-	4	42	-	-
Spotted Flycatcher	10	-	10	450	-	2
Pied Flycatcher	5	-	5	1365	-	14
Long-tailed Tit	9	-	9	549	-	5
Willow Tit	5	-	5	106	-	2
Coal Tit	1	-	1	85	-	-
Blue Tit	142	69	211	3550	1	64
Great Tit	79	5	84	1073	1	18
Treecreeper	5	-	5	34	-	-
Jay	1	-	1	12	1	-
Magpie	1	-	1	83	-	11
Starling	408	-	408	3437	11	98
House Sparrow	109	-	109	7594	1	90
Tree Sparrow	16	65	81	4449	-	23
Chaffinch	27	-	27	1562	-	15
Brambling	3	-	3	570	-	1
Greenfinch	90	-	90	3177	2	39
Goldfinch	99	-	99	2511	1	24
Siskin	4	-	4	81	-	2
Linnet	125	4	129	2922	-	15
Twite	1	-	1	171	-	3
Redpoll	118	-	118	2744	1	34
Crossbill	5	-	5	18	-	1
Bullfinch	35	-	35	684	-	15
Snow Bunting	36	-	36	212	-	2
Yellowhammer	16	-	16	726	-	7
Reed Bunting	111	-	111	3224	1	15
Totals	5925	262	6187	113089	54	1276
Species			76	154	23	83

Note: Only species ringed or recovered in 1985 are included in the table, although the "Grand Total" column shows the total of all birds ringed in previous years. For a full list see the Lincolnshire Bird Report 1981.

# County Ringing Report 1985

## Compiled by Alan Ball

Nearly 28,000 birds of 124 species were ringed in Lincolnshire and South Humberside during 1985, making this an "average" year.

It was very difficult to draw conclusions about the breeding success or winter survival, based on the numbers of each species ringed in one county in one year, as many factors influence the totals. If the same species are taken for analysis in 1985 as were taken in 1984 and the 1985 total expressed as percentage of the "average annual total", they are as follows:

species	1984	1985
Sand Martin	16%	47%
Sedge Warbler	40%	43%
Whitethroat	58%	92%
Lesser Whitethroat	93%	90%

Looking at these figures, it is very easy to think that Sand Martins were well on the way to recovering to their usual numbers. However, 139 of the 166 Sand Martins ringed in 1985 were caught by a ringer on one day, visiting a site where ringing had not been carried out for many years. If this is taken into account the true figure is closer to 7%. Sedge Warblers are perhaps a good guide to what is happening to summer migrants, for as they do not nest colonially or roost communally no single ringing catch is going to influence the figures. Whitethroats show an increase that can only be explained by having had a good breeding year, as the vast majority caught were juveniles in late summer. General opinion is that the summer migrants have not declined any further since last year, which is encouraging because the drought in the wintering area is now improving, so it can be hoped that they will increase over the new few years.

Looking at some of the individual species totals, one or two are of note. Nearly 3,000 Willow Warblers were ringed in 1985 compared with 1,000 in 1984. There was a very pronounced passage of Willow Warblers down the east coast during the early autumn, coinciding with the BTO Ringing Course when over 1,000 were ringed in one week! Wood Warblers also featured during this period when 9 were ringed compared to only 12 in the previous 6 years. The result of the numbers of parties of Crossbills present in the county from June onwards was that 17 were ringed compared to only 1 in the previous 6 years.

Three new species were added to the county ringing totals list during 1985. These were Merlin (1), Spotted Redshank (3) and Lapland Bunting (17), which brings the total since 1979 to 174 species.

The list of recoveries includes a few noteworthy ones; a Heron to Spain and two Oystercatchers to the USSR where only 3 British-ringed Oystercatchers have been found before. Only a handful of British-ringed bird species have been recovered in the Canary Isles, and the Lincolnshire-ringed Dunlin is the first British-ringed Dunlin to be found there.

Once again my thanks go to all the ringers and non-ringers who have sent me their ringing totals, recoveries and details of ringed birds they have found, for inclusion in this report.

## Selected Ringing Recoveries Received during 1985

Key to symbols and terms used in the following list.  
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 years.

1 = pullus, nestling or chick.

2 = fully grown, but year of hatching unknown.

3 = hatched during calendar year of ringing.

4 = hatched before calendar year of ringing, exact year unknown.

5 = hatched during previous calendar year.

6 = hatched before previous calendar year, but exact year unknown.

Sex: M = Male. F = Female.

Manner of recovery:

v = caught and released with ring.

vv = ring number read in the field.

± = shot or killed by man.

x = found dead or dying.

() = caught and not released or released without ring.

Movement: distances given in kilometres, and directions are approximate where given.

### Grey Heron

1	08.05.84	Laughton Forest, Gainsborough
x	06.10.84	Luarca, Oviedo, SPAIN 1182 km SSW

Very few British bred Herons get as far south as this, and this is only the tenth recovery of a British-ringed Heron from the Iberian peninsula.

### Shag

1	09.07.84	Isle of May, Fife, Scotland
x	10.02.85	Friskney 391 km SSE

# County Ringing Totals 1985 (Gibraltar Point totals included)

Species	79-'85				Species	1985			
	1985 FG	1985 Pull	1985 Total	Grand Total		1985 FG	1985 Pull	1985 Total	Grand Total
Little Grebe	-	-	-	6	Swallow	872	398	1270	13394
Great Crested Grebe	1	-	1	13	House Martin	159	-	159	381
Manx Shearwater	2	-	2	6	Tree Pipit	6	-	6	57
Leach's Petrel	-	-	-	2	Meadow Pipit	37	4	41	712
Shag	-	-	-	1	Rock Pipit	1	-	1	6
Grey Heron	-	20	20	71	Yellow Wagtail	3	-	3	77
Mute Swan	-	25	25	61	Pied Wagtail	9	11	20	471
Greylag Goose	-	3	3	19	Wren	888	22	910	3929
Canada Goose	-	-	-	49	Dunnock	1476	77	1553	10254
Brent Goose	2	-	2	9	Robin	702	49	751	5366
Shelduck	-	-	-	10	Nightingale	16	5	21	50
Wigeon	-	-	-	32	Thrush Nightingale	-	-	-	2
Gadwall	-	-	-	22	Bluethroat	-	-	-	8
Teal	-	-	-	52	Black Redstart	-	-	-	2
Mallard	10	-	10	2041	Redstart	31	-	31	432
Pintail	-	-	-	2	Whinchat	9	-	9	155
Shoveler	-	-	-	9	Stonechat	-	-	-	5
Pochard	-	-	-	40	Wheatear	5	-	5	81
Tufted Duck	-	-	-	478	Ring Ouzel	-	-	-	18
Scaup	-	-	-	1	Blackbird	2221	375	2596	19180
Marsh Harrier	-	2	2	7	Fieldfare	70	-	70	865
Sparrowhawk	12	-	12	27	Song Thrush	751	93	844	6412
Kestrel	6	25	31	139	Redwing	258	-	258	2237
Merlin	1	-	1	1	Mistle Thrush	11	8	19	170
Hobby	-	-	-	1	Cetti's Warbler	-	-	-	1
Red-legged Partridge	-	-	-	25	Grasshopper Warbler	11	-	11	115
Grey Partridge	-	-	-	1	Sedge Warbler	121	4	125	1862
Pheasant	-	-	-	27	Marsh Warbler	-	-	-	2
Water Rail	1	-	1	8	Reed Warbler	336	40	376	3129
Moorhen	1	3	4	103	Booted Warbler	-	-	-	1
Coot	1	-	1	463	Icterine Warbler	-	-	-	11
Oystercatcher	390	1	391	2559	Sardinian Warbler	-	-	-	1
Little Ringed Plover	-	3	3	44	Subalpine Warbler	-	-	-	1
Ringed Plover	3	44	47	498	Barred Warbler	-	-	-	29
Golden Plover	-	-	-	10	Lesser Whitethroat	262	-	262	2009
Grey Plover	170	-	170	852	Whitethroat	638	19	657	4908
Lapwing	7	4	11	72	Garden Warbler	142	5	147	1159
Knot	191	-	191	1988	Blackcap	435	-	435	3424
Sanderling	1	-	1	19	Greenish Warbler	-	-	-	2
Little Stint	1	-	1	9	Arctic Warbler	1	-	1	2
Curlew Sandpiper	1	-	1	4	Pallas's Warbler	-	-	-	2
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	2	Yellow-browed Warbler	6	-	6	11
Dunlin	751	-	751	8359	Wood Warbler	9	-	9	21
Ruff	16	-	16	51	Chiffchaff	120	6	126	847
Jack Snipe	1	-	1	17	Willow Warbler	2845	144	2989	11250
Snipe	20	-	20	118	Goldcrest	810	-	810	5401
Woodcock	8	-	8	57	Firecrest	8	-	8	72
Black-tailed Godwit	1	-	1	2	Spotted Flycatcher	50	8	58	535
Bar-tailed Godwit	239	-	239	675	Red-breasted Flycatcher	-	-	-	6
Whimbrel	1	-	1	2	Pied Flycatcher	25	-	25	368
Curlew	34	-	34	96	Bearded Tit	-	-	-	19
Spotted Redshank	3	-	3	3	Long-tailed Tit	219	-	219	1660
Redshank	76	-	76	780	Marsh Tit	2	-	2	64
Greenshank	6	-	6	12	Willow Tit	75	-	75	550
Green Sandpiper	2	-	2	7	Coal Tit	44	80	124	636
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	Blue Tit	1245	809	2054	10857
Common Sandpiper	1	-	1	31	Great Tit	595	495	1090	4754
Turnstone	7	-	7	252	Nuthatch	-	-	-	7
Black-headed Gull	185	-	185	3109	Treecreeper	44	6	50	300
Common Gull	100	-	100	189	Red-backed Shrike	1	-	1	5
Herring Gull	-	-	-	1	Great Grey Shrike	-	-	-	3
Great Black-backed Gull	-	-	-	1	Jay	13	1	14	105
Sandwich Tern	1	-	1	23	Magpie	7	3	10	69
Common Tern	-	-	-	304	Jackdaw	7	9	16	34
Little Tern	-	7	7	322	Rook	-	121	121	398
Guillemot	-	-	-	3	Starling	2532	6	2538	16077
Razorbill	-	-	-	3	House Sparrow	229	-	229	2564
Little Auk	-	-	-	4	Tree Sparrow	287	127	414	4062
Puffin	-	-	-	1	Chaffinch	373	16	389	3408
Stock Dove	7	60	67	332	Brambling	20	-	20	850
Woodpigeon	9	34	43	285	Greenfinch	665	-	665	10519
Collared Dove	34	9	43	207	Goldfinch	189	-	189	2003
Turtle Dove	24	7	31	209	Siskin	29	-	29	161
Cuckoo	20	-	20	92	Linnet	360	57	417	4491
Barn Owl	4	12	16	51	Twite	74	-	74	349
Little Owl	3	4	7	39	Redpoll	463	3	466	4489
Tawny Owl	2	16	18	74	Crossbill	17	-	17	18
Long-eared Owl	2	1	3	30	Bullfinch	461	4	465	2819
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	9	Hawfinch	-	-	-	1
Nightjar	-	-	-	1	American Redstart	-	-	-	1
Swift	14	3	17	122	Lapland Bunting	17	-	17	17
Kingfisher	13	-	13	88	Snow Bunting	36	-	36	55
Wynneck	2	-	2	10	Yellowhammer	233	2	235	2892
Green Woodpecker	2	-	2	8	Reed Bunting	332	19	351	3310
Great Sp Woodpecker	15	-	15	43	Red-headed Bunting	-	-	-	1
Lesser Sp Woodpecker	2	-	2	11	Corn Bunting	2	-	2	251
Skylark	100	13	113	972					
Sand Martin	166	-	166	2267					
Totals	24572	3337	27909	206287					



**Bewick Swan**

8F	10.02.82	Caerlaverock, Solway, Scotland	
vv	14.03.85	Deeping High Bank, Spalding	320 km SE

**Marsh Harrier**

1	02.07.84	"Suffolk"	
x	17.09.84	Pinchbeck	

1 Summer 83 "Kent"

vB	21.04.85	Lincolnshire	
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As is usual with rare breeding species the exact ringing sites are withheld. Note the movement of birds northwards, illustrating the encouraging expansion of its range. The Kent bird bred successfully, which is the only known instance of a two year old bird doing so.

**Kestrel**

1	09.07.85	nr Market Rasen	
x	27.09.85	Dengie, Southminster, Essex	207 km SSE
1	09.06.84	Great Missenden, Bucks	
x	15.09.84	Market Deeping	112 km NNE

**Hobby**

1	01.08.84	"South Buckinghamshire"	
x	10.10.84	Beckingham	160 km N

**Oystercatcher**

6	29.08.69	Dawsmere	
x	15.09.84	Haugane, Rogaland, NORWAY	810 km NE
8	30.07.76	Friskney	
+	15.11.84	Megan, Arkhangelsk, USSR	2300 km NE
8	01.08.73	Benington	
x	16.06.83	Lodeynny Is, Murmansk, USSR	2360 km NE

Before the two recoveries above, there had only been three British ringed Oystercatchers recovered in the USSR.

**Grey Plover**

4M	02.09.81	Leverton Marsh	
x	14.06.85	Oxstedt, Luneburg, WEST GERMANY	550 km ENE

There have only been six Grey Plovers recovered in West Germany.

**Knot**

6	18.08.74	Friskney	
x	23.05.85	Finnmark, NORWAY	2420 km NNE
4	10.09.83	Wainfleet	
v	11.08.85	Revtangen, Rogaland, NORWAY	800 km NE
3	24.11.79	Dawlish Warren, Devon	
v	10.09.85	Wainfleet	350 km NE

There have only been five British-ringed Knot recovered in Norway prior to 1985.

**Dunlin**

4	29.07.84	Great Ainov Island, USSR	
v	30.08.84	Butterwick	2300 km SW

4	04.11.82	Cherrueve, Ille-et-Villaine, FRANCE	
v	30.08.84	Butterwick	300 km N
4	09.09.75	Dawsmere	
v	18.01.85	Pancras, Lisbon, PORTUGAL	1650 km SSW
3	31.08.84	Benington	
v	11.10.84	Aguimes, CANARY ISLANDS	3075 km SSW

This is the first Dunlin to be recovered in the Canary Islands.

In addition to the above birds were found on the Wash having been ringed in Poland (3), Norway (4) and Sweden (3). Lincolnshire-ringed birds were found in West Germany, France, Sweden (2), Norway, Finland and Holland.

**Snipe**

2	16.09.84	Grantham SF	
+	27.01.85	Otur, Oviedo, SPAIN	1133 km SSW
2	17.08.85	Grantham SF	
+	26.10.85	Bolvantor, Cornwall	380 km SW

**Redshank**

3	18.08.85	Friskney	
+	24.08.85	Fort Mahon, Somme, FRANCE	320 km SSE
3	17.11.85	Butterwick	
+	29.11.85	Bourgneuf, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE	675 km S
4	13.01.83	Benington	
+	10.11.84	Cartavia, Huelva, SPAIN	1835 km SSW

The majority of British-ringed Redshanks which are recovered abroad are from France, but the latter is only the second Redshank to be recovered in Spain.

**Turnstone**

6	20.08.74	Holbeach Marsh	
+	15.05.84	Moana, Pontevedra, SPAIN	1350 km SSW

This is only the third British-ringed Turnstone to be recovered in Spain.

**Black-headed Gull**

1	10.06.82	Lake Zhuvintas, LITHUANIA	
v	17.02.85	Gibraltar Point	1537 km W
1	31.05.84	Endla Lake, Jogeva, ESTONIA	
v	00.01.85	Skegness	1724 km WSW
1	24.05.59	Ratmirov, CZECHOSLOVAKIA	
+	30.06.62	Holbeach March	1124 km W

This last recovery was reported by our club's chairman, 22 years later and as a "Shot duck"!

3	01.11.65	Deeping St James	
x	29.06.85	Skovsgaard, Jyllan, DENMARK	793 km NE
5	12.01.83	Deeping St James	
x	21.05.85	Barther Oie, Rostock, EAST GERMANY	881 km ENE
4	27.12.81	Boston	
x	19.05.85	Leangbukta, Asker, NORWAY	997 km NE

**Herring Gull**

1	summer 79	Firth of Forth, Scotland	
vv	27.10.85	Saltfleetby	340 km SSE
1	summer 80	Firth of Forth, Scotland	
vv	10.08.85	Saltfleetby	340 km SSE

**Kittiwake**

4	28.07.72	North Shields, Tyne & Wear	
vv	21.04.85	Saltfleetby	240 km SSE

**Sandwich Tern**

Birds ringed as chicks on the Farne Islands in Northumberland in 1975, 1977, 1980, 1981, 1982(2) and 1985(5) were all seen at Saltfleetby during the summer.

**Swallow**

3	19.09.84	Gibraltar Point	
×	10.07.85	Hermes, Oise, FRANCE	436 km SSE

**Meadow Pipit**

3	29.09.82	Gibraltar Point	
×	20.11.85	El Borouj, Settat, MOROCCO	2649 km S

**Wren**

3	07.07.84	Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe	
×	02.02.85	Grimsby	30 km NW

**Robin**

4	04.01.85	Wilnecote, Stafford	
vB	28.05.85	Temple Wood	86 km ENE
4	16.09.84	Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe	
×	18.10.84	Heligoland, WEST GERMANY	313 km E

**Blackbird**

4M	26.10.80	Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe	
v	08.01.85	Rosbrien, Limerick, EIRE	597 km W
3	18.12.82	Gibraltar Point	
×	29.06.85	Pyhtaa, Kymi, FINLAND	1788 km ENE
4M	05.12.84	Peaks Coverts, Grimsby	
×	02.05.85	Mansikkamaki, Mikkeli, FINLAND	1801 km ENE

In addition Blackbirds ringed in Holland, France and West Germany were controlled in Lincolnshire, whilst birds ringed here were subsequently found in West Germany (3), Sweden and Holland (3).

**Song Thrush**

3	01.10.79	Gibraltar Point	
+	15.12.84	St Ciers, Charante, FRANCE	806 km S

**Sedge Warbler**

3	12.09.83	Gibraltar Point	
v	16.05.84	Marshside, Southport, Merseyside	228 km WNW
v	22.05.85	Marshside	
3	13.08.85	Ancaster G P	
v	15.09.85	Flag Creek, St Osyth, Essex	170 km SE

**Reed Warbler**

4M	06.09.84	Den Haag, BELGIUM	
v	08.06.85	Crook Bank	301 km SW

**Blackcap**

3	20.08.84	Crook Bank	
×	08.04.85	Clacton, Essex	185 km SSE

**Chiffchaff**

3	18.09.85	Market Rasen	
v	28.09.85	Byfield Res, Northampton	150 km SSW

**Willow Warbler**

3	25.07.85	Eaglesfield, Cumbria	
v	14.08.85	Crook Bank	251 km SE
3	09.08.83	Ancaster G P	
v	30.04.84	Gibraltar Point	60 km ENE
v	04.07.85	Gibraltar Point	
3	10.08.85	Crook Bank	
v	26.08.85	Litlington, Sussex	287 km S

**Goldcrest**

3F	06.09.85	Swarland, Northumberland	
v	26.10.85	Crook Bank	253 km SSE

**Starling**

3F	10.11.80	Castricum, HOLLAND	
v	12.01.85	Boston	315 km W
1	02.06.84	Lundevagen, West Agder, NORWAY	
v	13.11.84	Donna Nook	659 km SSW
2	30.08.75	Swidwie, Szczecin, POLAND	
+	01.04.83	Quadrang, Boston	969 km W

Starlings ringed in Lincolnshire were recovered in 1985 in West Germany, Poland and Holland.

**Goldfinch**

3M	22.10.83	Gibraltar Point	
×	20.02.85	Maine-et-Loire, FRANCE	630 km SSW
3M	06.07.85	Loosegate, Moulton	
()	08.11.85	Douro Litoral, PORTUGAL	1458 km SSW

This is only the fifth British Goldfinch to be recovered in Portugal.

**Linnet**

4F	15.04.85	Middlekerke, BELGIUM	
v	28.04.84	Crook Bank	229 km SE
4M	17.05.83	Market Rasen	
×	27.01.85	Pelahutan, Toledo, SPAIN	1505 km S

**Redpoll**

3M	24.09.85	Crook Bank	
v	19.10.85	Wicken Fen, Cambridge	119 km S

**Bullfinch**

3M	04.12.83	Peaks Covert, Grimsby	
v	10.06.84	Crook Bank,	28 km SE
v	29.07.84	Crook Bank	
×	18.01.85	Waltham, Grimsby	24 km NW

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