

Northumbrian Water
Whittle Dene Reservoirs

Bird report
2007

Compiled by
Michael Richardson

Classified List

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Well represented visitor, and occasional breeding species.

A good year, with up to 16 accompanying wintering Whooper Swans. Present throughout the summer, but there was no evidence of breeding.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
16	9	12	15	7	5	4	2	3	3	5	8

Whooper Swan *Cygnus Cygnus*

Well represented winter visitor.

A wintering flock produced one of the highlights of the year. Attracted by emerging cereal crops, numbers increased from 32 in mid-January to 77 by the 11th March. 124 on the 18th March is one of the largest herds to be recorded in the area. A maximum of 6 remained into April, the last record on the 14th. Return passage began with one on the 17th October, increasing to 38 by the end of the year.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
43	34	124	6						1	25	38

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Well represented winter visitor.

Continues to increase as a passage migrant and winter visitor. Numbers peaked in early March to an impressive 189 on the 4th, most of which moved on very quickly. The figures below for January and February are much more typical, this latter count representing an influx of passage birds. A single bird accompanied Grey-lags from the 21st September, to the end of the year.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10	39	189						1	1		1

White-fronted Goose *Anser.a.flavirostris*

Rare winter visitor.

An unusually early individual of the **Geenland race** *A.a.flavirostris* arrived with an influx of Canada Geese on August 21st. It was un-ringed, and had departed the following day.

Grey-lag Goose *Anser anser*

Common winter visitor.

Numbers were relatively high this year, a wintering flock of 300 increasing to 650 by the 5th March as passage birds began to move through. Small numbers during the summer were unusual, as was a large increase in August, which peaked at 207 by the end of the month. Icelandic breeding birds began arriving towards the end of September, the highest count, 357 on the 3rd October.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
300	534	650	2	6	3	8	207	227	357	172	300

Canada Goose *Branta Canadensis*

Well represented visitor.

Record numbers this year. A flock of 23-24 in January-February was considered a good count for this

area, small numbers remaining throughout the summer. Nine on the 20th August increased to 86 the following day, further arrivals bringing the total to 121 by the 28th. September produced a huge influx, numbers reaching an estimated 400 by the 20th, and perhaps more accurately 386 on the 1st October, declining to only 2 by the 1st November.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
24	23		3	13	24	7	121	400	386	2	2

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Uncommon winter visitor.

Only one record this year. A single bird on September 18th.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Two on April 3rd were the first, followed by a further 2 on April 19th-22nd. In May, 3 arrived on the 7th. Two on the 27th-28th increased to 4 by the 30th, two remaining until the 7th June. Autumn passage produced a single juvenile on the 22nd August, and 6 adults on the 23rd September. One on the 22nd November was more unusual.

Wigeon *Anas Penelope*

Common winter visitor.

The counts below typically depict the current status of the species, although the mid Summer occurrence was more unusual.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
264	279	81	4	2	2	2		4	67	152	242

Gadwall *Anas stepera*

Uncommon visitor.

A female, found during a WeBS count on March 21st was the only record.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Mid winter counts were encouraging, particularly towards the end of December, after a period of very cold weather. Autumn passage was disappointing.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
147	116	41	17		1		12	17	25	17	177

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Resident breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Peak numbers occurred in January-February. A post breeding influx, which is not uncommon, produced a count of 58 on the 25th June, numbers increasing during the autumn. At least four broods were noted (25 young)

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
157	165	55	18	36	58	63	110	135	147	104	84

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

A single bird was found on the 23rd August. Three were reported on the 24th September, and 5 on the 3rd October.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Uncommon visitor.

One on the 24th January was a rather unusual mid-winter record. More typical were passage birds on the 22nd April and another in May. Another single was found on October 3rd.

Pochard *Aythya farina*

Common winter visitor.

A disappointing year for this species, with only 1-5 during the first quarter. 1-2 passage birds were noted on the 15th and 27th May, and again on the 18th September (2) and 3rd October (3)

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Resident breeding species and winter visitor.

Another poor year, the large gatherings of the past no longer a feature. Even by recent standards 2007 was a disappointing year with 18 on the 26th January, 23 on the 21st December, raising to 31 on the 26th, by far the largest counts. There was no evidence of breeding this year.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
18	6	n/c	9	5	3	13	1	5	5	7	31

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Common winter visitor.

9-14 during the first quarter, decreasing to 5 by mid April. A single first year drake spent the early summer in the area and was last seen on the 30th June. An influx occurred in early November with 20 recorded on the 4th. An historical roost, of birds from the nearby River Tyne may still be a feature, but no appropriate visits were made.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	14	12	5	1	1				4	20	10

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Common winter visitor.

As with the previous species a traditional roost may still exist, but no visits were made at appropriate times. Eleven in January suggests birds may still commute between the reservoirs and the River Tyne, and it seems likely roosting still occurs. Unsurprisingly there were no mid summer records.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	8	3	2	5			5	1	1	3	7

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Has been introduced recently.

Two were reported on the 30th April, the first record for this site. 22 recently released birds were reported from nearby Harlow Hill on the 16th July.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Common resident and breeding species.

11 on the 26th January was the highest count, 1-4 thereafter. In keeping with the general trend in Britain, there are signs of a steep decline in this area, the species not nearly as common as it once was.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Rare summer visitor.

A report of a bird calling in cereal fields adjacent to the Stamfordham road on the 2nd June was followed by another (or the same) calling in a wheat field next to the hide on the 18th.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Common resident and breeding species.
Small numbers only in 2007.

Little Grebe *Tochybaptus ruficollis*

Well represented visitor, occasional breeding species.

There was no evidence of breeding in 2007. This years records, as listed below are typical, an occasional winter visitor, and some time passage migrant.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	4	1				2	1	3	3	2	1

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Common. Regular breeding species.

Low water levels from early March, necessary to facilitate repair work to the Great Northern Reservoir, rendered the reed bed inaccessible to this species, therefore prevented any breeding attempt in 2007. Nevertheless impressive numbers gathered from early spring until the autumn, peaking at a record 19 on the 11th April, most of which gathered on the Southern Reservoir. The chart below clearly illustrates a continued and obvious presence throughout the summer and into October. Smaller numbers wintered in the area.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	9	12	19	14	11	12	13	17	13	6	3

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common winter visitor.

14 on the 19th January was the largest count. 1-8 thereafter. A bird showing "white headed" characteristics of the *Continental race P.c.sinensis* was reported on April 12th.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Common visitor.

2-4 regularly. Numbers increased to a maximum of 17 on the 21st June, with 8-10 still present from August-October, and up to 7 thereafter.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Extremely rare visitor.

A bird from the Gateshead reintroduction scheme was seen in the area on the 3rd and 7th April, and again on the 7th May.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Extremely rare visitor.

Two records this year. A male flew N.E on the 25th June, and a "cream crown" was reported on the 2nd August.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Well represented visitor.

Single birds were noted regularly.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Well represented visitor, formerly rare.

Single birds were noted regularly throughout the year. In August up to 6 were seen, indicating local breeding.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Rare passage migrant.

There was an early record on the 31st March. Another, very popular bird, first recorded on June 12th, remained in the area until the 23rd August. During its visit it was seen to take fish from the ponds on many occasions, providing its numerous admirers an opportunity to witness a wildlife spectacle not readily available in the County.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Well represented visitor.

1-2 were noted regularly, favouring the fields between the Great Northern Reservoir and Albemarle Barracks.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Well represented winter visitor.

The only record was a male, reported on the 2nd May.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Well represented winter visitor.

Rather scarce this year with only three confirmed records, on the 10th January, 23rd September and 2nd November.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Rare summer visitor.

A bird reported on the 14th June was seen again on the 16th June.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Well represented visitor, uncommon breeding species.

Although a pair was noted in mid summer, there was no confirmation of breeding. Four birds in December included two juveniles, which may have been locally bred.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Common winter visitor. Regular breeding species.

26 in January-February was a typical recent count. Numbers then fell alarmingly, probably due to the lack of suitable breeding habitat, a consequence of falling water levels on the Great Northern Reservoir where the reed bed is a favoured site. A pair were seen occasionally during the summer months in the vicinity of the Western Reservoir, but breeding was not proven, and considered unlikely as there was no recovery in numbers. A single bird in mid September was the only record of the autumn. Unusually for this site there followed a period of absence, as there were no further records two on the 26th December.

Maximum monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
26	26	1		1	2	1		1			2

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Well represented passage migrant, and irregular breeding species.

One on the 5th February was the first record, increasing to 10 by the 23rd. 10-15 were noted regularly throughout March, with a peak of 25 on the 18th. Numbers declined steadily during April, from 19 on the 1st, to only 3 by the 21st. Three remained in May, although there was a suggestion of further movement on the 30th-31st, when 8 were present. 1-3 in June and July increased to 6 on the 1st August, and although breeding was strongly suspected, this was not proven. Four birds on the 22nd August was the last record of the year.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Uncommon summer visitor, which has bred.

Repairs to the dam wall in 2007 offered a further breeding opportunity for this species, as water levels

began to fall. A very early bird arrived on the 18th March, remaining until at least the 25th. In April two were found on the 21st, with possibly the same birds returning in early May. Up to 4 adults were noted in May, with display noted, and breeding strongly suspected. Any breeding attempt was abandoned by early June, as water levels began to rise. A single bird reappeared on the 27th June remaining until the 30th. In July two were found on the 17th, one remaining until the 22nd. Little Ringed Plover is still a rare breeding bird in Northumberland.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Well represented passage migrant when suitable habitat is available. Otherwise uncommon. Rare breeding species.

Spring passage was excellent this year, due to the availability of suitable feeding habitat, a total of at least 106 birds passing through. The chart below shows a pattern of almost continuous passage through the area, beginning in March, reaching a peak towards the end of May, and tailing off rapidly by early June. The count of 64 on the 30th May was a record for the site. Autumn passage was disappointing despite the continued availability of habitat.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Well represented passage migrant and winter visitor.

Numbers continue to decline here. Nine were seen with Lapwings on the 25th August, 18th September, and again on the 17th October. A light influx produced 23 on the 1st October.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Common breeding species and winter visitor.

Noted throughout the year, with some evidence of a decline in the local breeding population. Numbers increased by mid August to 486 and peaked at 1000+ on the 1st-11th October.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Rare passage migrant.

A juvenile made a brief appearance on the 22nd August.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Rare passage migrant.

Three arrived on the 25th May, followed by a single from the 27th-30th May.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Uncommon passage migrant.

A single bird was found on the 24th May, and another reported on the 10th June.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Well represented passage migrant. Uncommon winter visitor.

One on March 10th was the first, followed by another on April 22nd. Passage was much more conspicuous in May, with 15 on the 12th, a lone bird on the 16th-17th, and 4 on the 24th-26th, a single bird remaining to the 29th. 11 arrived on the 30th, three remaining the following day. The final spring records were single birds on the 5th & 9th June. A total of at least 34 birds. Autumn passage began with 1-2 on the 11th-14th July, and 3 on the 19th July. In August another arrived on the 9th remaining to the 11th. On the 22nd two birds were found. One on the 23rd, showed characteristics of one of the long billed races, while another on the 29th was more typical. A single followed on the 1st-2nd September. A total of 11 birds.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Well represented passage migrant.

Three were reported on the 12th August.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Well represented passage migrant and winter visitor.

Never numerous, most records referring to passage birds. Highest counts included 4 on the 21st March, 3-5 in July and August, and 3 in December.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Rare passage migrant.

In April, 3 were recorded on the 19th, 2 on the 21st, and 4 from the 22nd-24th

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Rare passage migrant.

One, 28th-30th May was the only record.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Rare passage migrant.

A single bird on the 19th April was followed by 2 on the 27th April, and another on the 9th May.

Return passage produced a report of a single bird on the 18th August.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Well represented passage migrant. Breeds locally.

12 on the 23rd February, increased to 85 by the 10th March. A pair almost certainly bred on fields adjacent to the Great Northern Reservoir, remaining in the area until at least the end of June. Two birds on the 13th-14th July may have been passing through, as were a further two on the 4th August and another on the 22nd-24th August. The final record of the year was on the 1st September.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Well represented passage migrant. Uncommon in winter.

1-2 were present from the 7th April to the month's end. In July there were 5 on the 11th and one on the 14th.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage migrant.

One on the 4th June was the only record.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Well represented passage migrant and winter visitor.

One on the 19th July, was followed by 3 on the 25th. Another on the 23rd August remained to the 28th. One on December 12th was a typical mid winter record.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Two had returned by the 11th April. By early June there were probably three breeding pairs, one of which had young by the middle of the month. At least two young fledged at the Great Northern Reservoir, where there were up to 8 birds in July. 3-4 were noted regularly in August, the last bird reported on the 28th.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Extremely rare visitor.

An adult was reported on the 26th August, in association with a large influx of Black-headed and Common Gulls.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Extremely rare visitor.

A first summer bird was present, 4th-9th June.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Common passage and winter visitor, scarce in summer.

Never numerous, apart from a significant build up in August, estimated at between 700-1000 birds.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Common passage and winter visitor, scarce in summer.

The peak periods of passage in March and August-September produced counts of 600 and 1000 respectively. Numbers fell sharply by mid summer, although a flock of 50 passed North on the 25th June.

Lesser black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graellsii*

Well represented summer visitor.

3 on the 21st March were the first of the year, small numbers noted thereafter. A conspicuous

movement occurred from mid August and peaked at 58 on the 26th. The final record was an adult and 1st winter on the 23rd September.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Well represented passage and winter visitor.

1-3 mostly winter records. Five N.W. on the 16th June was more unusual.

Great black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Well represented winter visitor.

1-2, January-March and September-December.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Extremely rare visitor.

One, 2nd-4th May 2007 is the first record.

Common Tern *Sterna hirunda*

Well represented passage migrant and summer visitor, which has bred.

First reported on the 2nd May, with up to 4 noted by mid-May, and breeding activity by the end of the month. The peak count for May was 6 on the 29th. In June there was 6 on the 17th, and 8 on the 30th numbers increased to at least 10 by the 6th July and to 12 on the 25th. Four adults and a recently fledged juvenile on August 4th was confirmation of breeding, the juvenile and one adult remaining to the 20th.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Extremely rare passage migrant.

An adult on the 30th May flew off to the west. Two juveniles / 1st winters arrived during heavy rain on the 21st September, one remaining until the 25th.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Extremely rare.

During an unprecedented east coast movement in November, a single disorientated bird appeared on the reservoirs. This was the first record of the species at Whittle Dene.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia (domestic)*

Resident breeding species.

Small numbers noted again this year.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Resident breeding species.

1-14 throughout the year. 50 on the 1st December was by far the highest count.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Resident breeding species.

1000 on the 24th January was by far the largest count.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Resident breeding species.

Never numerous. 1-4 noted regularly at Welton Hall Farm.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Uncommon summer visitor.

One on the 2nd June was the only record.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Well represented breeding species.

A juvenile was reported in an Ash tree on the 2nd July, the same tree where adults had been seen mating in April.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Well represented breeding species.

One in the west wood in May was the only report. Likely to have bred here.

Swift *Apus apus*

Common summer visitor.

Up to 7 were noted in May. The largest gatherings included 50 on the 25th June, including an unusual aberrant bird, with a white rump and vent. What was presumably the same individual was reported again on the 26th July. Also in July, at least 50 were counted on the 22nd. Autumn passage produced 10 moving east on the 19th August, and 3 on the 5th September.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Well represented winter visitor.

At least one bird from July to the end of the year, and two on October 17th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Well represented visitor.

One in January and 1-2 from July to the end of the year.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Never numerous and possibly in decline. 20 on the 3rd October was by far the largest count.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Common summer visitor.

Never numerous. The first record was a single bird on the 11th April. Post breeding flocks included 20 on the 13th June and over 30 on the 6th July. Numbers declined in August, none seen after the 23rd. One was seen on the 1st September, and another passed through with Swallows and House Martins on September 21st.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor.

The first record was on the 6th April. Larger gatherings included 26 on the 15th May, 30+ on the 22nd July, over 100 on the evening of August 22nd, which may have been a pre-roost gathering and about 50 on the 21st September. Five moving south on September 23rd was the final record of the year. Several breeding pairs were noted.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Well represented summer visitor.

Never numerous. First reported on the 16th May. Very scarce by mid-summer, increasing by the end of August, with 10 noted on the 24th. Autumn passage produced 13 west on September 16th, and smaller numbers with a passage of Swallows on the 21st.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Common passage migrant and breeding species.

The first record was on the 21st March. Surprisingly inconspicuous this year, with only one breeding pair. Autumn passage produced 36 on the 21st September, by far the largest count of the year.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Extremely rare summer visitor.

One on the 17th April.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Rare winter visitor.

One on the Lower Reservoir on the 1st November was the only record, and the first since 1992.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla f.flavissima*

Common summer visitor.

3 on the 19th April were the first of the year, increasing to 5 by the 22nd. Three breeding pairs were located, in cereal fields adjacent to the Great Northern and Lower Reservoirs, and in similar habitat adjacent to the Stamfordham Road. Young were being fed by early June, all three pairs breeding successfully. At least five young fledged. A juvenile on the 2nd September was the last record.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Resident breeding species.

Noted throughout the year, with at least two breeding pairs. 8-9 in July-August included several juveniles.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla a.yarrillii*

Common breeding species, passage migrant.

Three breeding pairs including a nest in the "mesh" wall adjacent to the hide. Juveniles and family parties were conspicuous from June-August, with counts of 12-17. Uncommon in winter.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*,

Uncommon passage migrant.

In April there were singles on the 16th-17th, 2 on the 19th increasing to 6 by the 21st. Five were still present the following day, and 4 on the 24th. In the autumn a single bird was identified on the 28th August.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Uncommon breeding species.

A single bird was found on the inlet channel to the Great Northern Reservoir 24th January-5th February, and again October-November.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident breeding species.

Continues to be well represented.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Resident breeding species.

Continues to be well represented.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Resident breeding species.

Well represented, and particularly conspicuous in the late autumn, when birds were more vocal. The highest count was 9 on the 17th October.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Rare summer visitor.

Single male birds in May and early June were the only records.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Formerly a well represented summer visitor, now uncommon.

A single bird appeared from the 8th-13th August, followed by 3 on the 25th, one remaining to the 5th September.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Uncommon visitor.

A female appeared on the 24th June, followed by a male and two juveniles on the 19th July, suggesting local breeding. Three juveniles were found in early August, the count rising to 7 birds in total by the end of the month, possibly two adults and 5 juveniles. This is the first confirmed breeding record for the area, and highlights the continuing spread of the species in the County. 1-2 remained until the end of the year.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Well represented summer visitor and passage migrant.

First recorded on the 21st April, increasing to 5 by the 24th. Up to 3 were noted in May. Three in July included a suggestion of local breeding, when a juvenile appeared from the 13th, remaining to early August. Up to 5 were present from the 8th-22nd August. In September there was one on the 1st and again on the 17th, 2 on the 22nd, and one on the 23rd. A late bird was reported on October 13th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Resident breeding species.

Again well represented. 14 on January 10th was by far the highest count.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter visitor.

Over 300 on the 24th January was the highest count. Return passage was late the first birds not appearing until the 19th October. 230 flew in from the N.E on the 26th, and 100 were seen on the 1st November. Up to 180 were present in December.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Resident breeding species.

Not common. Six on the 24th January was unusual for mid-winter.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Well represented winter visitor.

Much less conspicuous than the Fieldfare with only 10 in January. Returning birds were noted from the 3rd October. 42 arrived with Fieldfares on the 26th, and up to 50 likewise on the 1st November.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Resident breeding species.

One breeding pair. Flocks of 12-14 in July and August were typical.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Uncommon summer visitor.

One singing on the 2nd May.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common summer visitor.

Three on the 23rd April was the first of the year. Up to 7 singing males held territory, all of which were considered to be breeding pairs. The last record was a single bird on the 28th August.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Rare summer visitor.

A probable singing bird was heard on the 2nd May, followed by a confirmed record on the 17th June

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Common summer visitor.

One on the 2nd May was the first record of the year. Probably 2-3 breeding pairs, from what appears to have been four territories. Last recorded on the 27th August.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Probably annual, and therefore well represented summer visitor.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Well represented summer visitor.

Surprisingly only one record this year, a singing bird on the 21st June.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common summer visitor.

Comparatively few were heard, although there were undoubtedly several breeding pairs.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Resident breeding species.

Continues to be well represented, breeding in the coniferous shelter belts.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Well represented breeding species, which may be declining.

One in the West wood on the 21st June was probably a breeding bird.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Extremely rare visitor.

A male was reported on the 10th June.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Uncommon visitor.

10 were present from mid October until the end of the year.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Resident breeding species.

Lack of suitable breeding habitat continues to restrict the status of this species.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Resident breeding species.

Suffers from the same constraints as the previous species, but perhaps more numerous.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Resident breeding species.

Still well represented, favouring the coniferous shelter belts.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

Rare visitor, which has bred.

A single bird was reported on the 3rd November.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Well represented visitor, which has bred.

1-2 were noted in January, June and November– December.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Uncommon visitor.

One on January 4th, on Stamfordham Road, and 1-2 in the same area in August were the only records.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Well represented visitor.

1-2 occasionally, and up to 5 in August.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Common resident, particularly, post-breeding and winter.

No counts in 2007.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Common resident, particularly, post-breeding and winter.

No counts in 2007.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Common resident.

Regularly 4-9 throughout.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Declining. Still common as a winter visitor.

Numbers increased from the end of August, reaching a peak of at least 1000 by the 23rd September. It seems likely the reed bed was again used as a roosting site during this period, but this was not confirmed

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common breeding species.

A regular flock in hedgerows at Welton Hall Farm numbered 15-36.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Well represented visitor. Declining.

5 on the 19th August was the only record.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common breeding species.

No estimate was made of the breeding population, but it remains relatively small. Up to 50 were noted

at Welton Hall Farm during the final quarter.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Common breeding species.

1-2 breeding pairs were noted. An impressive flock of 150 gathered on stubble fields on the 28th August, quickly moving on, 10-30 remaining during the final quarter.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common breeding species.

A poor year by recent standards, with 12 on the 19th January the highest count. Probably bred, but there was no confirmation of such.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Uncommon visitor.

A single bird was noted on several dates from October-December.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Common summer visitor.

Numbers were disappointingly low, 50 on the 11th August by far the highest count. Two on the 12th December was an unusual mid winter record.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Extremely rare visitor.

A report of a flock of at least 55 on the 4th March was very unusual.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis carabaret*

Uncommon visitor.

1-2, 11th-17th October.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Rare visitor.

Single birds flew over on the 17th and 25th October. 1-2 were in conifers at the Southern Reservoir on the 22nd November.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*

Common breeding species.

Only 1-4 suggests a decline in recent years.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Common breeding species.

Perhaps 4 breeding pairs. A female was feeding young in the reed bed at the Great Northern Reservoir in early June, when a male was also in a hedgerow on the Stamfordham road. Another male was at the Lower Reservoir / Welton Hall Farm area, and a pair in a ditch on the Southern Reservoir. Birds were conspicuous at the Great Northern in September, when up to 15 were in the reed bed.

Exotics and species of dubious origin;

Fulvous Whistling Duck

Two on the 20th June 2007, flew off to the south in the evening.

Acknowledgements; Graham Waugh, for use of his counts and records; members of the Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club, who submitted sightings via the clubs monthly bulletins; and BirdGuides, the on-line bird recording service.

The hide log was trawled for useful and interesting records, some of which were considered unlikely or not proven; these were ignored in the interests of accuracy.