

**CHORLEY & DISTRICT
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Chorley & District Natural History Society

is a Registered Charity

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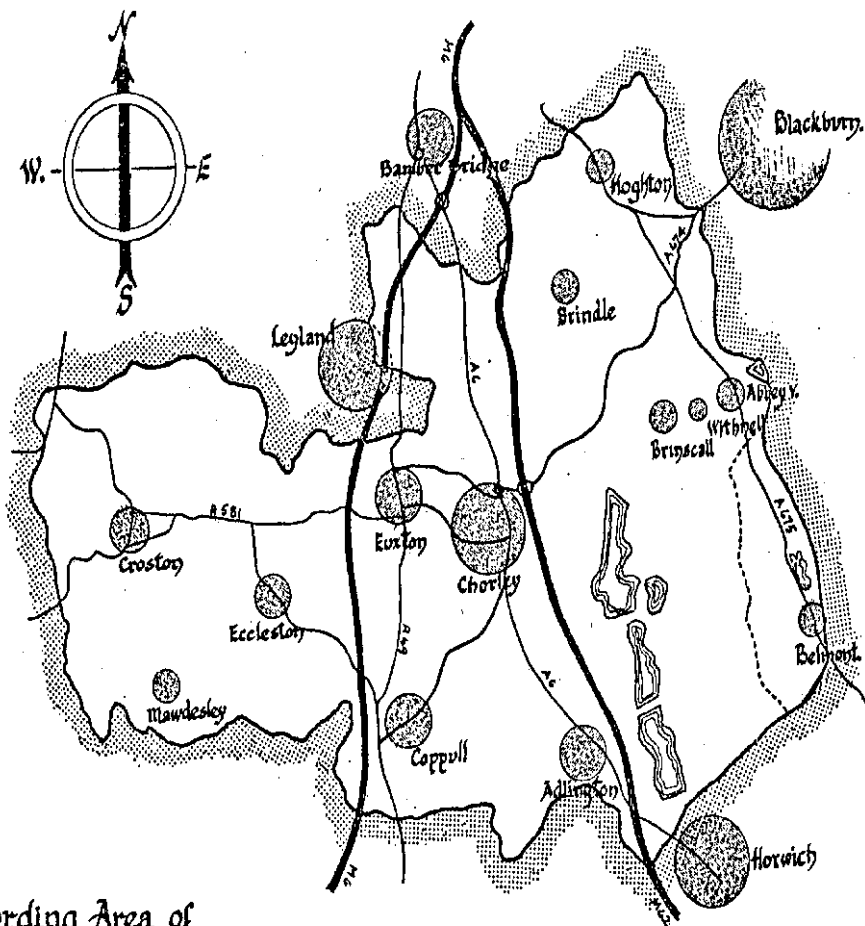
ANNUAL REPORT

2011

Editor

N.T.Southworth,
9, Queensgate,
Chorley PR7 2PX
(01257 276065)





Recording Area of Chorley & District Natural History Society

The Society's recording area follows the boundary of the Chorley Borough in the north, west and south but extends beyond the boundary in the east to include Belmont reservoir plus the whole of the Roddlesworth reservoir system and Tockholes Plantations.

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RECORDERS

Flora	David Beattie
Fungi	Joyce Riley
Insects	Phil Kirk
Birds	Neil Southworth
Mammals and Amphibia	Joyce Riley

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The new year started with a damp, foggy day, but the following two days were fine with overnight frost, then snow on the 4th. This led to fears that **January** might bring a repeat of the freezing conditions of December. This was not to be as milder weather arrived mid-month, with temperatures climbing into double figures with a maximum of 11°C on the 15th. However, as the weather turned fine, the temperatures fell and sharp frosts returned with -5°C on the 20th, and apart from a wet day on the 25th, dry, fine weather persisted to the end of the month 4th frosts of -4°C on 28th and 29th. Our evening talk was a voyage of discovery in the company of Colin and Rhona Balls. An impromptu field trip took us to Mawdesley Moss, where the sight of a Merlin chasing a Skylark was probably the highlight of the visit. Elsewhere, plenty of waxwings were still in town and Peregrine Falcons were seen regularly on Morrison's chimney.

February quickly became mild with temperatures creeping into double figures. The month as a whole was unsettled, with frost recorded on just a single day. The 24th was springlike – warm and sunny with a maximum of 13°C. Our evening talk was 'Gravel to Grebes' by Sophie Leadsom, detailing her experiences of project managing the construction of Brockholes nature reserve from inception to completion. Our Field trip was to Marshside for the high tide, when we managed to see 5 Short-eared Owls, 3 Merlin and a Water Rail. Locally, waxwings continued to entertain and one lucky member at Eccleston saw a Red Kite.

March started with a slight frost and then a fine sunny day. This along with a south-east wind characterized the first week of the month. The second week was more unsettled before fine weather returned for the third week with a glorious sunny day on the 18th and a maximum of 12°C. This fine weather continued into the fourth week with a maximum of 16° achieved on the 23rd, 24th and 29th, with just one or two brief spells of rain. Our evening talk was given by our own Cliff Jones, regaling us with his experiences of Borneo. In the field we visited Hesketh Outmarsh where both Hen and Marsh Harrier were seen along with Merlin, Avocet and our first Swallow and Sand martin of the year. Red Kite was again recorded in the area – this time at Mawdesley – and Waxwings were still in town.

The first few days of **April** were mixed but then fine, warm weather when the maximum was 18°C, increasing to 22°C by the 9th. It then turned breezier and cooler for a week, although remaining essentially dry, before warm weather returned on the 17th with a glorious sunny day and a maximum of 18°C. The temperature continued to climb until the 22nd when a maximum of 24°C precipitated a thunderstorm and a return to relatively cooler weather. A cool easterly wind dominated the last week of the month, but it remained dry and sunny and the temperature climbed back up to 19° by the 30th. Our final indoor meeting of the season was a fascinating talk by Laura Sivell on the 'Private Lives of Butterflies'. The Bird Race took place on the weekend of 16th / 17th, but this was a one-sided affair as only one side took part! Ring Ouzel, Short-eared Owl, Mediterranean Gull and Woodcock were among the goodies seen. The warm weather had been good for Spring butterflies with a couple of Brimstone the best of those seen. Waxwings were reluctant to go home, but had left before the Bird Race.

The fine weather continued into **May**, still with a dominant east wind and temperatures climbing to 21°. The second week saw the arrival of much cooler, unsettled weather with the 15th being a wet, miserable day with a maximum of 11°C. The unsettled weather then characterized the rest of the month with just the odd fine day, 13 rain days in the last 16, a best temperature of 16°C, but 12 - 14°C more typical. The first of the summer evening walks program was to White Coppice, where highlights were Tree Pipit and Cuckoo. Local excitement was provided by the breeding pair of Peregrines at St George's, which with a little help from their friends, successfully fledged three young.

June started off fine, and the 3rd was a glorious sunny day with a maximum of 25°C. It didn't last. By the 5th cooler, unsettled weather had returned and the 12th was a wet, miserable day with a maximum of 11°C. Two days later we had a fine, sunny day with a maximum of 21°C! Unsettled weather then prevailed for the next ten days with a temperature range of 16 - 18°C. The 26th was a very warm day with a maximum of 25°C and the weather then remained fine to the end of the month, but with a maximum of 18°C. Our evening walk took us from Withnell to Abbey Village via the old railway nature trail. Highlights were Barn Owl, Curlew, Oystercatcher and Lesser Redpoll. The arrival of Quail on Mawdesley Moss was part of a national influx this year.

July started off dry and sunny with a maximum of 25°C on the 4th. There then followed four days of thundery showers before a week of dry weather culminating in a glorious sunny day with a maximum of 22°C on the 14th. We then had another five days of cool, wet weather with a maximum temperature as low as 13°C for three of the days. From the 20th to the end of the month, the weather became settled again with a glorious sunny day at 22°C on the 30th. Our evening walk took us to Eyes Lane, Bretherton. A family party of Kestrels, a couple of Brown Hares and a Pippistrelle were among the species seen. Hobby, Red Kite and Osprey were amongst the raptors recorded locally during the month. Purple and White Letter Hairstreak and Hummingbird Hawk Moth were among the interesting insects seen.

The first week of **August** was a mixture of dry and showery days with a maximum of 22°C. The second week was similar except that the rain was more prolonged and the maximum was 18°C. The third week was again showery with just one dry day. The maximum was 19°C on most days. The first two days of the fourth week were lovely sunny days, before the showery weather returned. Maximum was 21°C on the 22nd, before temperatures fell away to 14°C by the 28th, and the final three days of the month were no better. A damp evening walk around the north end of Cuerden Valley Park found buzzard and Grey Heron plus Noctule and pippistrelle bats. Elsewhere, Quail were still calling on Mawdesley Moss, where a Marsh Harrier was also seen.

The first two days of **September** were warm and sunny with a maximum of 21°C on the 2nd. Any hopes of an Indian summer, however, soon faded as a spell of unsettled weather followed and the first two weeks saw plenty of wet and windy weather with temperatures fluctuating between 14° and 21°C. In fact the third week, although containing a couple of fine, sunny days also had spells of very wet weather. Summer did return at the end of the month with the year's highest temperature of 26°C on the 30th. Indoor meetings resumed with the AGM followed by a talk by Phil Kirk illustrating his experiences of Goa. The first Pink-footed Geese returned mid-month, and Marsh Harrier was again seen on Mawdesley Moss. Another Hummingbird Hawk Moth was

seen in an Euxton garden. A fungal foray was held at White Coppice, where a good selection of species was found.

The summery weather only lasted for the first day of **October** when 24°C was achieved, before unsettled, very often wet and windy weather took over, with temperatures falling as low as 12°C on some days. Three fine days were enjoyed mid-month with a maximum of 17°C, before unsettled, wet and often windy weather returned. The maximum temperature from 18th to 20th was only 10°C. The last week of the month was mainly dry with a couple of sunny days and a best of 16°C. Indoors, Gordon Yates took us through 40 years of his filming in the Pennines. Our field trip to Brockholes was our first to the site as a group. Highlights were the sighting of 4 migrating Whooper Swans dropping in for a few minutes and a skein of Pink-footed Geese passing over. A Red-throated Diver paid a fleeting visit to Belmont Reservoir, a couple of Water Rails were at Yarrow Valley Park and a stunning male Hen Harrier was on Croston Moss.

Fine days, alternating with wet days, formed the pattern for early **November**, with some of them windy and also the first light frost on the 6th. Best temperature was 14°C on the 13th. This unsettled sequence continued throughout the month with fog joining the equation on the 20th and temperatures falling as low as 8°C. Flocks of up to 1000 Pink-footed Geese and 100 Whooper Swans could be found feeding on the mosses, and one or two Barnacle and White-fronted Geese could be found amongst them. The indoor meeting was a talk on the 'Wildlife of Walls' given in difficult circumstances by founder member Ken Green, following the untimely death two days earlier of another founder member, and arguably the Society's most talented contributor, Colin Smith FRPS.

December started wet and windy with temperatures steadily falling until the first snow fell on the 16th, giving a covering of 10 mm. This took two or three days to clear as overnight temperatures fell to -2°C with daytime maximum only 2°C. From the 19th onwards, the weather became much milder, with a mixture of wet and dry days, the best of which was Christmas day when the temperature climbed to 13°C. The last four days of the year were wet, windy and even stormy on the 29th, but at least it was mild. The last talk of the year was given by Dr Phil Smith on the 'Wild Orchids of the Sefton Coast'. Wild geese on the mosses continued to be the centre of attention, although a couple of Snow Buntings became a cause for pilgrimage to the TV masts on the summit of Winter Hill.

Thanks to all the recorders and others for compiling their contributions to the report, and for all those who submitted records for use therein. Please continue to send them in – without them we would not be able to record the area's flora and fauna. Thanks to all those who have helped out one way or another at the indoor meetings. Your assistance is appreciated. Thanks to Richard Kirk for continuing to maintain the website and forum – without his help we'd be lost! Finally, thanks to Joan Smith for granting us permission to continue to use Colin's photographic images in our publications.

Neil Southworth (Editor)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

As far as the committee is concerned, the event of 2011 which overshadowed all others was the death of Colin Smith in November. He had suffered a major heart attack in September and never recovered from it. He finally succumbed to complications after a two month struggle.

He was a founder member of the society and had acted as Programme Secretary for the whole of that time. He was, in fact, the only person to have served continuously on the committee throughout the society's existence. He had entertained members with many talks, all illustrated by his simply wonderful photography. He could always be relied upon to fill in at short notice if a speaker had to cancel. He most generously donated his photographs to us for use in our displays and publications. As a committee man he will be sorely missed.

As a friend he will be missed more.

His knowledge and love of wildlife was something that he managed to transmit to all who knew him. His enthusiasm for the subject never wavered. Although he possessed literally thousands of absolutely top class photographs, he was always eager to add to them and indeed to improve upon them. He once told me that he only had two pictures that he felt he could not improve upon! Most of us would be happy to have some half as good as any of his.

In his working life he was a teacher. He retired early, but never really stopped teaching. He was free with his advice about his beloved photography. I can't imagine how often he would be approached by members asking advice on what type of camera or lens they should buy, or how they should approach a photographic subject. Similarly, in the field, he would delight in sharing his wide knowledge of most forms of Natural History and would be as happy giving advice to an absolute beginner as he would sharing thoughts with experts.

His sense of fun was enormous. On the last occasion that I photographed wildlife with him, we were working close up at a wasps' nest. Wary of being stung, he had constructed protective headwear from a collapsable laundry basket! Laugh? We were in tears. In fact, tears of laughter is probably how I will always think of Colin – but he never let the tears blur his pictures!

Our sympathy is with his wife, Joan and daughter, Janet.

Phil Kirk

COMMITTEE

The committee at the end of 2011 comprised:

Chairman	Keith Woan	80, Carleton Road, Chorley Tel 01257 278759
Secretary	Phil Kirk	Mill End, Dawbers Lane, Euxton Tel 01257 266783
Treasurer	Carol Thistlethwaite	63, Earlsway, Euxton Tel 01257 275233
Committee:	David Beattie Tony Dunn Chris Rae Joyce Riley Neil Southworth Nora West	

FLORA REPORT

Despite a relatively mild start to the year, flowerburst of the first spring flowers was not much earlier than in the previous two hard winters. Presumably this was as a result of the severe weather in the previous December. Only two bloomers were recorded in January – these being Gorse, which in any event flowers in every month of the year, and Snowdrop.

In February, first in bloom were Butterbur (3rd) and Lesser Celandine (4th), both in Cuerden Valley Park. In March, expected flowering dates began to return to normal, but it was not until April and May that normality was fully restored. Flowerburst dates for 230 species were entered by recorders onto the Society's Website Forum, which is an impressive total.

Unusual plants for the area recorded during the year included Thale Cress at Cuerden Valley Park in early April, Hoary Plantain – normally a limestone species – in June, also at Cuerden, and Bogbean on Lower Burgh Meadows. There has only been one previous record for the latter in the recording area.

It was a good year for acorns, but hawthorn berries were in short supply in contrast to last year's bumper harvest.

The mild early winter meant that many plants continued flowerin right up to Christmas, including Red Campion, Herb Robert, Hogweed, Buttercup and Dandelion. By this time next year's plants were starting to put in an appearance in the form of early Snowdrops around Christmas Day!

Thanks to Diana Downing, Gary Lilley, Joyce Riley, Peter Ross, Neil Southworth, Nora West and Carol Winder for contributing records throughout the year.

FUNGI REPORT 2011

The unusual weather conditions during the year were reflected in the appearance of fruiting bodies of fungi. The very cold winter delayed early species and very few records were received in the first five months of the year. However, 10 Cellar Cups (*Peziza cerea*) by a path at Coppull were a good find on 27th March. On 15th May a group of St George's Mushrooms (*Calocybe gambosa*) were discovered growing in a fairly undisturbed part of a member's garden in Euxton. Meadowsweet Rust Gall (*Triphagmium ulmariae*) was recorded in another member's garden at Rivington on 6th June, whilst the unusual Myxomycete, *Stemonitis fuscus*, was found growing on a dead Apple tree in the same garden during July. The latter species starts off as 'reddy-brown blobs' which develop into 'tentacles' with the whole mass standing proud of the trunk on black 'hairs'.

The North West Fungus Group (NWFG) held the first of three forays in our area at Lever Park, Rivington on 12th June. Although a total of 68 species were recorded, most were small species growing on wood, including the uncommon *Simocybe haustellaris*. It was in general a similar situation for the foray in Duxbury Woods on a very wet day, 17th July, although included in the 72 species listed there were several interesting finds. The attractive Yellow Shield (*Pluteus chrysophaeus*) was found at the first stop, an old rotten felled Beech trunk in the field next to the car park. The Group has been monitoring this trunk for several years, regularly recording the species colonising the decaying wood. Another uncommon Shield fungus (*Pluteus semibulbosus*), which is whitish and has a grooved stem that is swollen at the base, was also found, as well as the common Deer Shield (*P. cervinus*). A large cluster of Sheathed Woodtuft (*Kuehneromyces mutabilis*) was thriving in the wet summer and the uncommon *Helvella ephippium* was noteworthy.

After the wet summer, lots of species produced abundant fruiting bodies at the end of August and early September. As in 2010, White Coppice was again a very productive locality with 38 species of larger fungi identified on an evening walk there on 31st August, including nine Boletes and five *Amanita* species plus the unusual Earthtongue, *Geoglossum cookeanum*. Thankfully, many of the species were still present for the society's foray at White Coppice on 17th September but it was another very wet morning and abandoned early after 30 species had been recorded in the woodland along the path by The Goit. Lists from these two forays are on the forum on the society's website.

Ellerbeck also had an abundance of Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) and lovely photographs of these were posted on the forum together with one of Orange Birch Bolete (*Leccinum versipelle*) on 29th August. There were also photographs of species at Birkacre/Yarrow Valley Park with the Myxomycete sometimes known as Red Raspberry Slime Mould (*Tubifera ferruginosa*) on 21st September and Orange Peel Fungus (*Aleuria aurantia*) plus Jellybaby (*Leotia lubrica*) on 25th September. Shaggy



Inkcaps (*Coprinus comatus*) were recorded at several sites including Astley Park and Hic Bibi between 13th September and 13th November but in general the normally good period for fungi from mid September to end October was relatively poor. The exception on 13th October was the cricket field at White Coppice which was described as being 'carpeted with Waxcaps and other grassland fungi - yellow, orange, red, cream, buff, brown, grey of all shapes and sizes'. Unfortunately, before this was reported to an 'expert' who planned to go the following day, the grass was mown in spite of it being after the cricket season had ended and so the fungi were removed before they could be identified!

The NWFG held their final foray in the area at Cuerden Valley Park on 16th October. Although not many larger fungi were found but there were good numbers of Russet Toughshank (*Collybia dryophila*) and a few Butter Cap (*Collybia butyracea*) in the nature reserve area of Ice House Wood. Bulbous Bonnet (*Mycena stylobates*), one of the few *Mycenas* that can be identified in the field due to its distinctive disc at the base of the stem, and the long slender Pipe Club (*Macrotyphula fistulosa*) growing on twigs, were interesting smaller species. Most conspicuous were lots of Hairy Curtain Crust (*Stereum hirsutum*) on the log piles near the charcoal burner. A total of 91 species was recorded on the foray.

As there was little frost in autumn, there was another flush of fungi from early November to the end of the year. A fine cluster of Shaggy Scalycap (*Pholiota squarrosa*) was growing at the base of a Beech tree in Astley Park on 1st November and about 15 Wood Blewits (*Lepista nuda*) were found in the woodland by Anglezarke Reservoir on 20th November. When, on 23rd November, a member found growing under an Oak tree in the field behind his home in Euxton, a group of what he thought were the good edible Cavalier species *Melanoleuca grammopodia*, although he was 95% certain of identification he wisely didn't prepare them for the table!

The garden at Rivington again had an unusual fungus, this time a type of Wood Mushroom found growing under a Yew tree on 4th December. Although photographs and specimens were brought to the society's meeting on 15th December, by this time they were too old for positive identification but from general features were most likely to be either *Agaricus impudicus* or *A. variagans*. At the end of the year, photographs of species were again posted on the forum, this time of Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) on a tree trunk in Chorley Cemetary and Yellow Brain (*Tremella mesenterica*) found on Healey Nab on 27th December.

Throughout the report, I have used the officially recognised English names for fungi as recommended by the British Mycological Society.

Thanks to the following members, plus recorders on the forum, for their records, etc. Dave Barker, John Cobham, Tony Dunn, Alan Hogarth, Chris and Tony Johnson, Phil Kirk, Leonard Poxon, Joyce Riley, Neil Southworth, Mervyn Thornhill, Nora West and Carol Winder.

Apologies to anyone I may have missed.

Thank you also to NWFG for records from the Group's forays at Duxbury, Rivington and Cuerden Valley Park.

Joyce Riley

LEPIDOPTERA

Moth Species:

My thanks again to the Lancashire Moth Group (www.lancashiremoths.co.uk) for providing information about moths trapped in the Chorley recording area in 2011. Special thanks to Eddie Langrish, Peter Krischkiw and Steve Martin who, between them, have provided most (but not all!) of the records.

New species added to the local moth list in 2011 were:

Adela reaumurella	
Tinea trinotella	
Phyllonorycter quercifoliella	
Coleophora lutipennella	
Agonopterix ocellana	
Bryotropha terrella	
Aethes smeathmanniana	
Eupoecilia angustana	
Epinotia bilunana	
Zeiraphera isertana	
Operophtera fagata	Northern Winter Moth
Aplocera plagiata	Treble-bar
Actinotia polyodon	Purple Cloud

Butterfly Species:

Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*)

This species was first encountered locally in 1993 and has become relatively common. 2010 was the first time since 1994 that no records were received after July. Admittedly it had an early start – a single at Yarrow Valley Park on June 4th was the earliest ever, beating the previous record of 5th June 2006 by a single day. Perhaps its flight period is moving earlier in the year. We shall see. As many as 10 were counted on a couple of occasions in July (14th at Yarrow Valley Park and 30th at Belmont).

Large Skipper (*Ochlodes venata*)

In 2005 the status of the Large Skipper locally seemed under threat, but fortunately its decline seems to have stabilized in recent years. There were no exceptional counts this year. The highest numbers were at Belmont (20 on 9th July and 25 on 24th July). The flight period was from 18h June, when 2 were at Great Knowley, until 30th July, when 4 were at Belmont.

Brimstone (*Goepteryx rhamni*)

Only 5 records of single insects in 2011. All of these were between 8th April and 2nd May.

Large White (*Pieris brassica*)

Very common throughout the area. There were, again, no high numbers recorded. The species was seen in flight more or less continuously between 10th April (Euxton) and 1st October (Syd Brook, Eccleston)

Small White (*Pieris rapae*)

Similar in numbers and distribution to the last species. The flight time was 8th April (Euxton) until 22nd September (Cuerden). Unlike the Large White, there was a definite break in records between broods. The last of the spring generation was seen at Euxton on 31st May and the first of the later brood at Chorley on 2nd July.

Green Veined White (*Peiris napi*)

Although we get more records of the Large and Small Whites, the Green-Veined is the one most likely to be seen in high numbers. The highest reported was 30 at Belmont on 30th July, but a dozen or more were seen on many occasions throughout the area. Flight time was from 9th April (Belmont) until 30th September (Ellerbeck).

Orange Tip (*Anthrocharis cardamines*)

The first seen was on the 5th April at Cuerden. This is quite an early date for the species, but not the earliest we have had. However, the last date for the species was 2nd May – which is incredibly early. Perhaps recorders forgot to mention them? We certainly usually have OT's until mid June and have had them into July. They occur everywhere in our area.

Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*)

36 at Belmont on 24th April and 30 at Drinkwaters on 19th April were the highest counts, but the species was also seen in reasonable numbers at its White Coppice stronghold. First date was 10th April at Drinkwaters and the last the 6th of May on the moors above White Coppice.

Purple Hairstreak (*Quercusia quercus*)

Counts of 6, 17 and 22 were made at 3 Belmont sites. Additionally a single was seen at Cuerden Valley Park on 14th July. The flight time recorded was 14th July until 3rd August.

White Letter Hairstreak (*Satyrrium w-album*)

Eggs were found on 3 trees at Cuerden Valley Park in February, but I have no records of adults at the site later in the year. Adults were seen between the 10th and 26th of July at previously recorded sites at Burgh Tip, Dam Wood and Pincock.

Small Copper (*Lacaena phlaeas*)

Although there were no high numbers reported, this species did seem to have a reasonable year. It was seen at 14 sites, normally in ones or twos. It has a definite break between generations and was not recorded between 4th June and 27th July. In spring it emerged on 25th April when it was seen in flight at the Burgh Hall pond. Its last appearance was at Great Knowley on October 1st.

Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*)

In many years we don't get Common Blue records until June, but 2011 almost provided one in April! The species was seen at 2 sites (Worthington Lakes and Common Bank) on May 1st. Early "blue" sightings often turn out to be the Holly Blue and should be viewed with caution. I have no doubt at all that the two early records in 2011 are genuine. There was a bit of a decline in the numbers seen and also the sites recorded for the species compared with 2012. The last date for the species was 15th September when 10 were counted at Ellerbeck.

Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*)

The first generation was seen flying in the last two weeks of April. Then the second generation flew between August 6th (Chorley) and September 2nd (Euxton). There were never more than 2 seen at a time, but it is widely distributed locally.

Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

In recent years, spring records have been few. A single was found hibernating in a garage in Euxton during January, but adults were seen in flight on several occasions in April and May. (6th April at Birkacre was the first date). It was common in summer and autumn. The maximum count was 20 at Croston Finney on 1st October. The last date was 13th November in the late sunshine at Euxton.



Painted Lady (*Cynthia cardui*)

Not a great year for this migrant, but one member was blessed with 6 in his Adlington garden in September. Other than this there was just a scattering of singles from 3rd July onwards.

Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*)

As with the Red Admiral, the Small Tortoiseshell hibernates in winter. Like its larger cousin it was quite frequent in spring – flight time 14th March (Chorley) until 2nd May (several sites). There were large numbers at Healey Nab, with a maximum of 20 on April 17th. This is unusual for our area. Hibernation must have been easy in 2010/11. The species was a frequent sighting in summer, flying from 4th June until 16th October.

The Peacock (*Inachis io*)

I don't know why the Peacock should have had such a poor year, when other Vanessids did well. As with other hibernating species, the Peacock was common in spring. We had a February record on Brinscall Moors (24th Feb). From 18th March until 2nd May it was seen commonly with 6 at Healy Nab on April 11th. It was summer that was disappointing. The flight period was 16th June until 19th November, but the numbers of records was far fewer than normal. The only double figure count was 12 at Belmont on 4th September. It will be interesting to see what effect the poor summer has on the spring emergence in 2012.

Comma (*Polygonia c-album*)

As with Peacock, 2011 was not a great year for Commas. After an early emerger was seen at Astley Village on February 24th, there were only 2 more spring sightings. In summer it was around from 27th June until 2nd November, but numbers were low.

Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria tircis*)

This species is found throughout the area and is seen flying more or less throughout the warmer months. There is no discernable mid year generation gap. The flight time was 10th April (Birkacre) until 13th October (White Coppice). There were no really high numbers.

Wall Brown (*Lassiommatia megera*)

Another desperately bad year for the Wall. It was seen twice at a site in Euxton (27th July and 5th August). Please report any sightings next year.

Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*)

Common and widespread in the area. The maximum count was over 100 at Ellerbeck on 21st July. Belmont, Hic Bibi, Holland Fold and Birkacre also produce decent numbers. Overall it flew from 27th June until 15th September.

Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*)

Abundant in high summer. It flew from 4th June until 30th September. It is surely our most numerous local butterfly.

Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*)

In some years I have barely received any records for the Small Heath. 2011 produced the best record for ages - 150 estimated at Belmont on 26th June. It was also reported from the Rivington area where 12 insects were counted on 3rd July. Flight time was 4th June until 24th July.

ODONATA

Species recorded this year were:

ZYGOPTERA (Damselflies)

Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*)

Records were received this year from the River Yarrow between Common Bank and Pincok, Syd Brook, and of course the River Lostock at Cuerden. No exceptional numbers were reported. The insects were in flight from 18th May until 18th August with a peak of 10 at Cuerden in late June. Nymphs were found at Cuerden in the autumn.

Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes sponsa*)

Large numbers were again present at Belmont Reservoir, with as many as 300 seen on 30th July. The earliest date was 24th July (250 at Belmont) and the latest the 1st October when 3 were still present at Belmont. Away from Belmont the only records were from Healey Nab.

Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrrosoma nymphula*)

On 9th May 12 were seen (all paired) at Ulles Walton and this proved to be the highest count of the year. The entire flight period was from 19th April (Cuerden) until 26th July (Healey Nab).

Blue Tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*)

Reported from only 5 locations. The flight time was 9th May (Wymott) until 23rd July (Belmont). Large numbers were reported at Withnell Fold.

Azure Damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*)

As usual, this species was reported from all the “odonata sites”. Counts of 20 were seen at Wymott and Cuerdn. The first and last dates were 9th May and 30th July.

Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*)

This was the most commonly recorded “blue” in 2011. High numbers (50) were at Healy Nab at the end of July. The flight period was 27th June (Cuerden until 30th July (Healey Nab).

ANISOPTERA (Dragonflies)

Southern Hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*)

As in 2010, this species was seen at only 3 sites. It was observed ovipositing at Belmont on two days. The highest count was at Healey Nab, where 8 were together on 26th September. Flight period was 18th August until 1st October.

Brown Hawker (*Aeshna grandis*)

No large numbers were seen – 4 at Withnell Fold on 20th August was the best. It is a widespread species, seen locally from 27th June until 1st October.

Common Hawker (*Aeshna juncea*)

A. juncea was seen at only 5 sites in 2011. The flight period was 9th July until 29th September, with no more than 2 insects recorded at any time.

Migrant Hawker (*Aeshna mixta*)

After a blank in 2010, it is pleasing to report a return of *A. mixta*. It was seen on 26th August and 3rd September. Both sightings were at Hic Bibi.

Emperor Dragonfly (*Anax imperator*)

Seen at 5 sites between 20th June and 30th July. The maximum count was 3 insects at the pond on Healey Nab on 26th July.

Four-spotted Chaser (*Libellula quadrimaculata*)

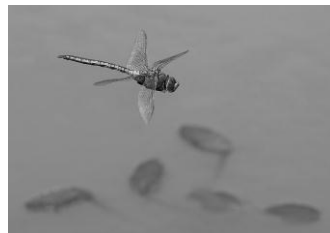
Seen at 6 sites locally between 9th May and 14th July. No more than 3 were seen at any one time.

Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*)

A disappointing year for this species. It was seen at only 2 sites – Wymott and Cuerden. First date was 9th May and the last 13th of July.

Black Tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*)

No records since 2009.



Black Darter (*Sympetrum danae*)

Belmont and (especially) Healey Nab are the places to see this species locally. The highest count was at the Healey Nab pond on 26th July when 18 were counted. It also occurs at Ellerbeck. First date 25th July. Last date 1st October.

Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*)

No large numbers reported, but the species was seen at 7 sites between 9th May and 15th October.

This report was compiled with reference to records received from the following:

D Barker, D Beattie, D Beevers, J Catterall, P Catterall, J Cobham, B Derbyshire, D Downing, T Dunn, M Greenhalgh, R Hoyle, C Johnson, P Krischkiw, E Langrish, A Leach, G Lilley, D S Martin, S J Martin, S Palmer, L Poxon, C Rae, R W Rhodes, J Riley, P Rimmer, L Rose, A Ryding, C Smith, N Southworth, M Thornhill, N West, P West, I Whittle, C Winder and to the members of the Lancashire Moth Group.

My apologies to anyone I may have missed.

Flight periods of Dragonfly species recorded in 2011								
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234
Calopteryx splendens			x..	xx...x	..x....	x x		
Lestes sponsa					.....x	x . xx	x	
Pyrrhosoma nymphula		.....x	xx x	...xxx	.....x			
Ischnura elegans			. x	... ..x	xx x	xxx		
Coenagrion puella				.....x	x....x			
Enallagma cyathigerum			..x..x	x...xx	..x x			
Aeschna cyanea						.. x	xx	x
Aeshna grandis				x	xx x	..xxx	x..x	x
Aeshna juncea					x x	x	x xx	
Aeshna mixta						x	x	
Anax imperator				xx	xx x	x		
Libellula depressa			xx		x			
Libellula quadrimaculata			x x	x xx	x			
Orthetrum cancellatum				x				
Sympetrum danae					x	x	x xx	x
Sympetrum striolatum			x	xx	x	xx	x x	xx

Flight periods of butterfly species recorded in 2011									
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234
Small Skipper					x x	xx x			
Large Skipper					xx	xxxx			
Brimstone			xx	x					
Large White			xxx	x xx	x x	xxxx	xxxx	xxx	x
Small White			xxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxx	xx x		
Green Veined White			xxx	xx	x x	xxxx	xx		
Orange Tip			xxxx	x					
Green Hairstreak			xxx	x					
Purple Hairstreak						x x	x		
White Letter Hairs/k						x x			
Small Copper			x	x x	x	x	x xx	x xx	X
Common Blue				x x		xxx	x xx	x x	
Holly Blue			xx			x	x x	x	
Red Admiral			x x	xxx	xx	xx x	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
Painted Lady						x x	xx	x	
Small Tortoiseshell		xxx	xxxx	x	x xx	xxxx	x x	xxxx	x x
The Peacock	....x	x	xxxx	x	x	x x	xxxx	xxx x	x
The Comma	x		x	x	x	xx x	xx	xx	x xx
Speckled Wood			xxx	xx x	xxxx	xx x	xxxx	xxxx	xx
The Wall				x		x	X		
The Gatekeeper					X	xxx	xxxx	x x	
Meadow Brown					xxxx	Xxxx	xxx	x x	
Small Heath					x x	x x			

Phil Kirk

BIRD REPORT

Introduction

A total of 160 species, including escapes, was recorded this year, ten more than last year! The improvement has no doubt been helped by better coverage of the mosslands, which contributed White-fronted Goose, Marsh and Hen Harrier, Quail and Yellow Wagtail amongst others. Records from the Chorley side of Winter Hill via the Manchester Birding Website also added the likes of Black Redstart, Richard's Pipit and Snow Bunting.

Neil Southworth (Records Secretary)

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Uncommon but increasing breeding bird

Five juveniles from Yarrow Valley Park temporarily relocated to Astley Park around the 17th January. The resident breeding pair had returned to Lower Healey on the 20th January.

The pair in Yarrow Valley Park had two young by 17th May, and those at Lower Healey had three young by 21st May.

A pair and three juveniles were on the River Douglas at Great Hanging Bridge on 3rd September.

In October, a juvenile was on Rake Brook Reservoir on the 6th. 2 were on Astley Park lake on the 9th, looking as if they were becoming an item, which may make them the first breeding pair at the park for well over 20 years. The two adult, 2 cygnets and single juvenile were still at Yarrow Valley Park on the same date, and a single bird was on Common Bank Lodge. Two adults and three juveniles were on Lower Healey lodge on 30th October. A family of two adult and 4 juvenile Mute Swans was seen on Park Hall lake on 29th December.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

Occasional winter visitor

Four were seen flying over Eccleston on 23rd January.

A single bird was noted over Euxton on 13th October. Two were over Croston Moss on 12th November and 9 on the 13th. A herd of around 100 birds was feeding on the moss on 19th November. A flock of 9 flying over Croston Moss on the 16th was the only record for December.

Pink-Footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

Mainly recorded on passage during the winter months.

Return migration from East Anglia was noted on several dates in January, including 100 north over Anglezarke Reservoir (2nd), 120 over Mawdesley Moss (8th), 400 east over Jepson's Clough (9th), 135 over Eccleston (11th), 250 over Eccleston (18th), four

skeins west over Belmont totaling 610 birds on the same date, 120 north west over Belmont in a Blizzard (25th) 300 north west over Jepson's Clough (30th), 130 west over Belmont (30th) and 500 in three skeins over Eccleston (30th).

One was down on Belmont Reservoir on 16th January.

The first in Autumn was a skein of 50 birds over Mawdesley Moss on 17th September. Numbers quickly increased in October with 500 over Croston Moss on the 2nd, 200 over Croston on the 9th, 200 over Eccleston on the 13th, 50 and 120 west over Belmont again on the 13th, 120 west over Belmont on the 15th and a further 100 over Eccleston on the 20th, when 60 were also seen flying west over Jepson's Clough. In November, many nocturnal skeins headed north west over Belmont (1st), skeins of 100 over Hartwood and Anglezarke (6th), 70 over Croston Moss (12th) and 200 over on the 14th were also noted.

Birds were then recorded feeding in the area with 200 on Croston Moss on 19th November, and over 1000 on Mawdesley Moss on the 27th. 100 were seen in fields off Jolly Tar Lane, Coppull on 25th November. There were again around 1000 birds feeding on Mawdesley Moss on 3rd December. Other flocks feeding in December included 100 at Wymott (7th), 250 at Ellerbeck (10th) and 40 at Heskin (18th).

On 1st December 70 were seen over Yarrow Reservoir. A skein of 500 birds was noted flying high north-east between Croston and Mawdesley on 8th December. Three skeins totaling 350 flew south east over Belmont on 10th December, and two skeins totaling 60 flew over on the 18th.

Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)
Rare winter visitor

Four flew over Croston Finney on 18th November. Three were in a flock of Pink-feet at Heskin on 18th December.

Greylag Goose (Feral/escape) (*Anser anser*)
Scarce feral species

Eleven were on the edge of Pilkington Wood, Upper Rivington Reservoir on 20th February. One pair and a single were largely resident at Belmont Reservoir from February to July, but did not breed.

One pair bred at Upper Rivington Reservoir. raising 6 young. Up to 5 were regular on Rivington Water Treatment Works during April and May. 15 were noted on Upper Rivington Reservoir on 4th July.

Greater Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)
Common resident

Monthly maxima at Belmont Reservoir. :

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
12	40	48	45	69	104	100	94	120	42	25	20

The above represent the highest totals at the site since 2005.

One of subspecies ***B. c. parvipes*** (presumed escaped as ringed) was at Belmont Reservoir on 16th August.

13 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir., raising only 9 young due to licenced control measures (55 eggs 'pricked' and 10 adults shot). A bird shot at Belmont on 2nd April had been ringed at Doffcocker Lodge, Bolton on 31st December 2010.

July moulting flocks were noted as follows:-

- 93 at Belmont Reservoir.
- 141 at Anglezarke Reservoir.
- 25 on Upper Rivington Reservoir.
- 19 on Lower Rivington Reservoir.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)
Rare winter visitor and former feral breeder

Two with Pinkfeet on Mawdesley Moss on 27th November were presumably wild birds.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)
Regular breeder in the west. Occasional visitor in the east.

Singles were at Belmont reservoir on 19th January, 12th February and 21st April

A single bird was noted at Ecclestone on 11th March and 2 were at Bretherton on the 29th.

Four were on Yarrow Reservoir on 13th November.

Mandarin Duck (*Aix galericulata*)
Uncommon feral resident and escapee

A pair was noted at Arley nature reserve on the 18th January. Two pairs bred at Arley nature reserve, where a female was noted with 6 young on 13th August. Four were on Adlington Reservoir on 13th November.



Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)
Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

One was at Belmont on 1st and 2nd January.

Two were at Belmont on 18th September and again on 31st December.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Rare visitor

Four were noted on a pool on Croston Moss on 2nd, 8th and 16th October.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeder.

20 were noted on a pond on Mawdesley Moss on 10th January. Four males and a female were on a pond near Lower house, Rivinton on 24th January. Two were on the River Yarrow near Croston on the 31st. 54 were at Belmont Reservoir on 5th March, and 6 were near Waterman's Cottage, Anglezarke Reservoir on 17th March.

Two pairs bred at Arley Nature Reserve. Breeding also took place at Belmont Reservoir for the first time since 2006, with two broods of 6 and 2 young seen.

A single bird was at Eccleston on 29th September. 92 were on Belmont Reservoir on 9th October. Four were on Syd Brook at Eccleston on 12th October and a single bird was on the old canal spur at Whittle on the 15th October.

In November, 20 were on a pond at Eccleston (20th) and 125 were on Upper Rivington Reservoir (13th). 36 were on a small pond near Belmont on 26th November. 17 were at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 24th December and 12 were on Lower Rivington Reservoir on the 28th. 30 were on a pond at Withnell Fold on 27th December, and 58 were at Belmont reservoir on 31st December.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Common winter visitor and breeding resident

155 were at Belmont Reservoir on 5th February.

An early breeding record was of a duck with 12 chicks at Ulles Walton on 17th March. Ducks were also seen with 7 chicks at Clayton Hall quarry on 8th April, 9 chicks at Anglezarke Reservoir on 27th April and 12 at High Bullough on 28th April.

In May, ducks with 11 young were at Yarrow Valley Park (3rd) and with 4 young in Astley Park (30th). 32 females with broods totaling 183 young were seen in the Belmont area during the breeding season, although only a minority fledged. One female was incubating on a nest 7m up a tree at Belmont Reservoir.

145 were at Belmont Reservoir on 9th October, 80 were at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 13th November, and 141 were on Belmont Reservoir on 31st December.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Rare visitor

A pair was an unusual record on Anglezarke Reservoir on 13th February.

A single bird was at Yarrow Valley Park on 21st August.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Increasingly scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

A single male was on Anglezarke Reservoir on 13th February, and again on 16th October, presumably the same bird returning for the winter. It was joined by a female on 24th December.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce breeder.

Numbers of the species at Yarrow Valley Park peaked at 15 on the 7th January. A pair was at the reserve on 22nd July.

Two pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir with broods of 5 and 4 seen.

In September, 7 were at Croston Twin Lakes (5th), 2 were at Lower Healey (10th). 2 were seen on several dates on High Bullough Reservoir between 31st August and 7th October and 6 were there on 3rd December..

Scaup (*Aythya marila*)

Rare winter visitor

A male was on Belmont Reservoir on 28th December (first at the site since January 1986).

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

Rare visitor

A male was on Belmont Reservoir on 18th September.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

Declining winter visitor and passage migrant

Two on Anglezarke Reservoir on 1st January were possibly the only ones in the recording area, because of the freezing conditions. Numbers increased in February with 4 at White Coppice on the 6th and 5 at Heapey Lodges on the 12th.

In December single birds on High Bullough Reservoir (3rd), Anglezarke Reservoir (24th) and at Twin Lakes Croston (29th) were the only records for the second winter period.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

Winter visitor in increasing numbers

Three were on the River Yarrow at Eccleston on the 5th January, and four were on the River Douglas at Bretherton on 11th January. 17 were on Yarrow Reservoir on 8th January with smaller numbers on other dates.

Records in February were widespread but in small numbers, including 2 at White Coppice (6th), 1 at Cuerden Valley Park (10th), 1 on Common Bank Lodge (12th), 3 in

Yarrow Valley Park, 3 on the River Yarrow in Ecclestone, 3 on Yarrow reservoir and 3 on the canal (all 13th).

One was on the Yarrow at Ecclestone on 4th October, and 11 were further downriver at Croston on 19th November. Four were on Common Bank Lodge on 20th November.

Eight were on Big Lodge at Yarrow Valley Park on 10th December, and 5 were on Yarrow reservoir on 5th and 24th December.

Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*)
Resident in small numbers on the moors

One was noted on Withnell Moor on 9th January.

The severe moorland fires over approximately 10km² of Anglezarke and Withnell Moors from 29th April to 8th May burnt out numerous nests and displaced many pairs. Counts in the days immediately following the fires located at least 9 pairs over the burnt out section of Anglezarke Moor and 2 burnt out nests were found. Shooting on the moor was cancelled for the year because of the effects of the fire.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)
Scarce resident boosted by birds released for shooting

Up to 50 were still present from past releases in the Belmont area in January, with a covey of 21 seen on 20th February.

Pairs were seen at 3 sites around Belmont during the breeding season. Pairs were also recorded in the Brindle area.

A covey of at least 20 birds was seen working its way across a field off Eyes Lane Bretherton on 26th September. 19 were noted on the mosses on 2nd October. 13 were noted on Croston Moss on 12th February.

Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)
Uncommon resident boosted by birds released for shooting

Pairs were observed on Croston Moss on 7th March and at Ecclestone on 22nd March.

A better year around Belmont with 4 pairs noted in the breeding season, but still well down on the 9 pairs recorded in 2007.

Two were noted near Croston on 11th July.

In September, coveys of 9 were on Croston Moss (9th) and of 30 on Mawdesley Moss (27th). A total of 40 birds in 3 coveys were noted on the mosses on 2nd October. 20 were seen on Croston Moss on 12th November.

Quail (*Cotumix cotumix*)
Rare summer visitor

One was heard calling on Mawdesley Moss on 26th June and was still present at the end of the month. At least three were then heard on 7th July, and away from the mosses, one was heard near the Yarrow at Croston on 15th July. Two were still calling on Mawdesley Moss on 6th August.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)
Common resident boosted by birds released for shooting

Around 50 birds were noted on Mawdesley Moss on 8th January. 40 were on the island in Belmont Reservoir on 19th January.

Many males in the breeding season hold atypical moorland territories at up to 430m above sea level. Gamekeepers in the Belmont area reported an excellent breeding season for 'wild' birds around Belmont with an estimated 50 broods up to 10 young in size.

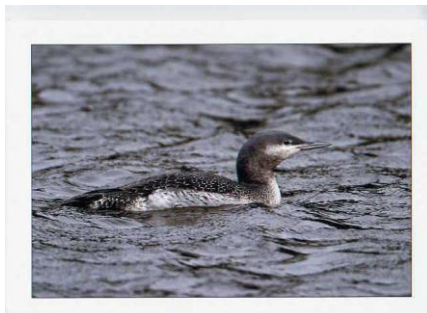
A female with 7 young was noted on the motorway roundabout at Hartwood on 6th August.

Over 300 were at Belmont on 27th November. 21 were seen near the Top Lock at Whittle on 4th December.

Red-throated Diver (*Gavia stellata*)
Rare passage migrant

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 8th October, but had gone by the next day. It was a first record for the site.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)
Regular visitor

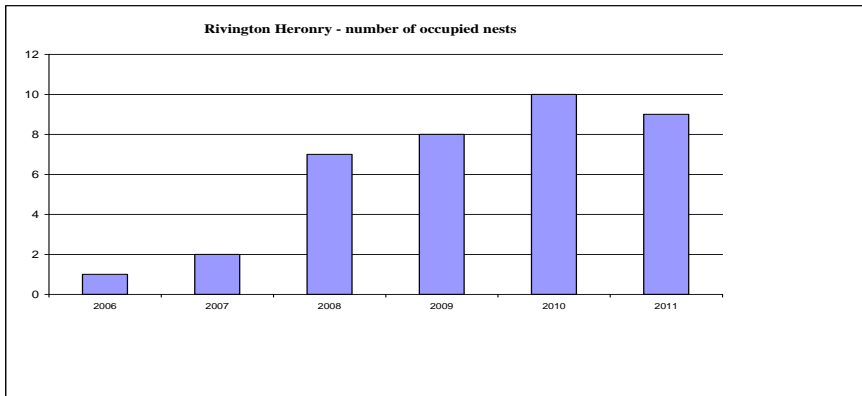


Flocks of 30 birds were seen flying inland over Eccleston on 11th and 13th March. Coincidentally, a site record 26 were at Belmont Reservoir on 22nd March. 24 roosted at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 24th March.

One took a fancy to Big Lodge at Yarrow Valley Park from 1st November, and was seen on a daily basis to the year end, presumably roosting overnight at Upper Rivington. 14 were at the roost on Upper Rivington Reservoir on 13th November, from where they usually disperse to various waters around the area during the day. 10 were at Belmont Reservoir on 18th December.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)
Common visitor and scarce breeder

The Rivington heronry held 9 occupied nests, one down on 2010.



Up to five daily were feeding on an abundance of voles in fields around Belmont between August and December.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)
Uncommon breeding bird

One was noted on the River Yarrow at Ecclestone on the 17th January. One of the resident birds had returned to Astley Park lake by 19th February. One was at Belmont Reservoir from 16th to 23rd March.

The pair in Astley Park had two young by the 23rd April. In August, they appeared to be attempting a second brood, but didn't seem to be able to agree on a nest site, and in the event no further breeding occurred. A pair bred at Ulnes Walton and another pair bred in a quarry at Whittle.



In June birds were still resident in Astley Park, High Bullough Reservoir and in a quarry at Whittle.

In October, the resident pair remained on Astley Park lake, but there was no sign of any offspring. A single bird was noted at Cuerden Valley Park on the 22nd.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)
Common breeding bird, less common in winter

A pair was on Cuerden Valley Park lake on 10th February. A single bird was on Withnell fishing lodges on 12th February.

The species seems to have had a reasonable breeding season. Two pairs bred on Anglezarke Reservoir with one and two (initially 3) young respectively. A battle took

place between the pairs in the centre of the reservoir on 15th July, but all birds remained at the site until at least 5th August. A pair at Withnell fisheries had a single young, and a pair at Adlington reservoir had three young. Croston Twin Lakes had two pairs with three young. Pairs at Heapey Lodges had two and one young respectively, and even the pair at Yarrow Valley Park managed a single young at the umpteenth attempt by the 6th August. However, a pair at Belmont was unsuccessful due to fluctuating water levels.

A single bird was at Yarrow Valley Park on 10th December.

Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*)

Rare passage migrant / visitor from reintroduction schemes.

One was seen at Eccleston on 11th February, and another or possibly the same bird was noted over Mawdesley on 28th March.

One was seen at White Coppice on 6th April, another over the M61 at Anderton on 2nd May and one at Eccleston on the 21st May. One was then seen at Belmont on 13th June and another over Cuerden on 26th June.

For the sixth month in succession the species was recorded in the area with a sighting near St Mary's Church, Eccleston on 14th July.

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

Scarce passage migrant

A female / immature was on Mawdesley Moss on 14th August, and again on 17th September.

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

Scarce passage migrant. Occasionally lingers in winter

A ring-tail was seen over Stronstrey Bank on 15th April, which may have been the same bird seen at Belmont around the same time.

A male was seen along the River Yarrow between Croston and Eccleston on 27th October, then possibly the same bird was seen on Croston Moss on 28th and 30th October, and on the 1st and 4th November. A ring-tail was over Anglezarke Moor on 6th November and one was on Croston Moss on 27th November.



Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

Rare vagrant

A male was noted near Belmont on 21st and 22nd January. One was reported from Cuerden Valley Park on 7th February.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)
Increasingly common resident

The species was well recorded in January with sightings at Whittle (3rd), Eccleston (13th), Chorley (17th and 22nd), Euxton (24th) and Withnell Fold (30th), with similar sightings throughout February.

Birds were noted throughout the year in Rivington and Anglezarke, from the moorland plantations, through woodlands and gardens to the reservoir embankments. On 24th January, one was on the ground in Rivington village with a Jay, but the Jay escaped. One was seen carrying prey over Jepson's Clough on 14th May. Probably 6 or 7 territories were indicated in the area.

Records in July were usually of hunting birds, many from gardens, and included sightings at Bretherton, Eccleston, Great Knowley, Mawdesley Moss and Whittle.

September sightings came from Coppull, Croston, Eccleston, White Coppice and Withnell Fold.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)
Fairly common resident

Sightings in January included birds at Eccleston and Croston (3rd), Yarrow Valley Park (6th), Cuerden Valley Park (10th), Lower Healey (17th) and 2 at Withnell Fold (30th).

A pair in the Buckshaw area successfully raised two young. The bird is also well established as a breeding species in the Belmont area.

In July, birds were seen at Buckshaw, Cuerden Valley Park, around Croston, Eccleston and Mawdesley, at Withnell Fold and Ulmes Walton. Some of these included juvenile birds in family groups.

In August, records came from Cuerden Valley Park, Heskin, White Coppice, Withnell Fold, Yarrow Valley Park and seven together at Eccleston on the 22nd. One was seen being mobbed by four Kestrels over an Anglezarke plantation on 20th August.

In September, records continued to be received from across the area including 3 at Whittle (1st), 6 over Croston Moss (17th) and one over Rivington High School (29th). Six were over Hartwood on 1st November, 3 over Whittle (5th) and 2 at Yarrow Valley Park (5th).

In December, 2 were on Mawdesley Moss (3rd), five were together at Whittle (22nd) and four were over Coppull on the same day.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)
Regular passage migrant

One was seen over Arley nature reserve on 13th April and another over Lower Burgh Meadow on 17th April.

One was seen over Hartwood on 20th May and another (or possibly the same bird) was at Adlington reservoir on 23rd and 24th, when it apparently roosted in Arley nature reserve.

One was noted in Yarrow Valley Park on 18th July.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Fairly common resident

Birds were noted in Rivington and Anglezarke in all months of the year from the moorland fringe and plantations down to Grimeford Lane, Anderton with probably 7 territories indicated.

A pair was noted setting up home in Croston in April.

Pairs at Hic Bibi and Whittle each had four young in June. Two pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir.

Sightings in July were widespread with records from Anglezarke, Bretherton, Brinscall, Croston, Charnock Richard, Eccleston, Healey Nab, Mawdesley, White Coppice, Whittle and Ulnes Walton, many of which involved young birds or family groups. On 8th July, one was living dangerously by hunting around the wind turbine at Wilcock's Farm, Rivington.

Adult and juvenile birds were seen in August at Eccleston (4th), Mawdesley Moss (6th), Anglezarke Reservoir (9th) and a family group of 4 at White Coppice on 15th and 28th. At least 15 were counted in the Belmont area on the 27th.

September records came from Bretherton, Eccleston, Great Knowley, White Coppice and Withnell Fold. A count in the Belmont area in late September produced approximately 30 birds.

Six were counted on Mawdesley Moss on 3rd December. A male was found dead off Dean Wood House Drive, Rivington on 18th December.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

Scarce resident and passage migrant

A female / juvenile was on Mawdesley Moss on 8th January, seen at one stage in pursuit of a Skylark, which seemed to escape the raptor's clutches. One was noted over the moors on 28th April.

Birds were seen on Croston Moss on 23rd and 30th October. December records came from Mawdesley Moss (17th) and Whittle (31st).

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

Rare summer visitor

First back was one at Belmont on 24th April, seen hunting day-flying Emperor Moths.

In July, birds were seen on Mawdesley Moss (4th) and at Eccleston (5th). One was seen at Belmont on 15th July and 22nd August. Another was at Croston on 8th September.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)

Scarce resident and winter visitor. Has bred

A male and female were seen regularly on Morrison's supermarket chimney during January and February. Another was seen at Eccleston on the 9th January.

The pair which had been frequenting Morrison's chimney since the beginning of the year finally set up home in an old Raven's nest on St George's church tower, and were incubating by mid-April. Three young were produced, which were then ringed, and which were out of the nest and on the ledge by 27th May. Two of the young had to be taken into care after they crash landed in the surrounding streets. They were successfully returned to the nest and eventually flew off safely. The three young at a second site thankfully fledged without problem.



Two were calling together over Anglezarke Moor on 10th May, and one was over Dean Black Brook (31st).

At Jepson's Clough, Rivington, one was seen on 23rd July, 2 on 24th July, and three screaming together for half an hour on 4th August. A single bird was again seen on 27th August.

Birds were seen regularly around their breeding sites during August, but away from there one was over Bradley Wood, Rivington on 5th August, and a couple of juveniles were seen at White Coppice on 17th. In September, sightings of single birds came from Lead Mines Clough (1st), Croston (8th), Great Knowley (19th) and White Coppice (26th) plus two on Mawdesley Moss (27th).

October sightings came from Eccleston (10th), Eyes Lane Bretherton (15th) and Croston Moss (30th). One was up the Yarrow Valley, Anglezarke Moor on 30th November.

The breeding pair was regularly seen around Morrison's chimney and St George's church during November, but there was no sign of the young. Hopefully they had dispersed safely. A single bird was again noted on Croston Moss on 13th November.

In December, birds were recorded on Croston Moss (3rd), E-shaped pond (4th), Coppull (19th) and Whittle (22nd).

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

One was calling at a site near Belmont on 30th July.

A juvenile was noted at Yarrow Valley Park on 19th, and 25th September, and again on 2nd October, before an adult and juvenile were seen together on the 16th October..

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)
Common resident

Pairs had young in Astley Park (25th May) and at Eccleston (27th May). A pair on the old canal at Whittle had seven young on 5th June.

A pair on Rivington Hall Barn pond had a youngster on 5th September. Only five pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir because of the reduced water level.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)
Common resident

12 were on a small ice free patch of water on Big Lodge at Yarrow Valley Park on 7th January.

A pair with 5 young was noted at Eccleston on 20th April, and a pair with two young was on Astley Park lake on the 22nd. A pair at Yarrow Valley Park had 7 young on 3rd June.

A pair at Withnell cricket field lodge was seen to drown a Black-headed Gull in July!

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)
Increasing passage migrant and summer visitor. Scarce breeder.

In February, first back was one seen flying up Upper Rivington Reservoir on the 7th and again on the 8th. One was then at Belmont Reservoir on the 10th, increasing to 10 by 5th March. Pairs had returned to Lower Rivington Reservoir 13th, Anglezarke Reservoir (25th), Whittle (26th) and Buckshaw (27th). Records were even more widespread in March when birds were noted at Eccleston (5th), Withnell Fold and Heapey lodges (6th), both ends of Anglezarke reservoir (13th), Buckshaw (20th) and Bretherton (29th). A pair was seen mating on a farm track in Rivington on 23rd April.

One pair bred at Adlington Hall Farm. Pairs were on territory in the Brindle area during the breeding season. Five pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir with three pairs successfully fledging 4 young, but two nests were washed out by rising water levels in mid-May.

Three were together on Anglezarke reservoir on 20th July, and birds were at Yarrow Reservoir until at least 22nd July. Last record from Belmont was on 16th August.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)
Uncommon summer visitor

The first back was one at Belmont Reservoir on 3rd April. Two were then noted at Buckshaw on the 14th, followed by another at Anglezarke reservoir on the 16th. One was noted on the drained lodge at White Coppice on 31st May.

Four pairs bred at Belmont reservoir, but all nests were washed out due to rising water levels in mid-May. Thereafter, only two pairs remained on territory, and only one brood was seen in mid-July.

An adult and juvenile were noted on Anglezarke reservoir on 14th June. A single bird was there on 27th July. Two very agitated birds were flying round Yarrow reservoir, calling incessantly on 9th July. One was still at Anglezarke Reservoir on 30th August.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred

One was back on the moors above Belmont on 14th February with 3 there on 6th March. One was seen flying over Anglezarke Moor on 25th April. Five pairs were located on territory on the moors, including one pair which had its nest burnt out by a moorland fire on 29th April and a pair on Winter Hill for the first time since 2005, which had young in mid-May. A single bird was seen piping from a spot above White Coppice on 30th June, after the fires, suggesting possible breeding.

A single bird was on Winter Hill on 2nd October, four were near Great Hanging Bridge on 8th October and 4 were elsewhere on Croston Moss on 16th October.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Common resident and winter visitor

Flocks in January included 80 on Mawdesley Moss (8th) and 40 at Brindle (30th). In February, 20 were on Gale Moss (18th) and 20 were on Mawdesley Moss, also 18th. 85 were at Belmont Reservoir on 12th February increasing to 170 on 27th.

A flock of 110 was at Withnell Fold flashes on 6th March and a further 30 were at Eccleston on the 7th.

A single bird was back at a regular breeding site at Rivington on 20th January and 10th February, increasing to three by 17th. Then on the 22nd, 58 gathered in a group in one field, almost as if they were allocating nest sites, particularly as this turned out to be the nesting population at this farm. 29th April saw two broods of young here, with another brood of young at an adjacent site on 1st May. During June and July, birds began to gather in post-breeding flocks with the last 18 at Moses Cocker on 1st August.

Eight pairs bred at Adlington Hall Farm. 20 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir with at least 5 broods noted later despite several nests being washed out by rising water levels in mid-May. Moorland pairs bred at up to 425 m above sea level and 6 pairs were noted to have settled on the recently burnt out Anglezarke moor on 8th May.

A post-breeding flock of 50 birds was on Croston Moss on 16th July, and 150 were at Belmont Reservoir on 23rd July. 60 were on Gale Moss on 2nd August, 120 were at Withnell Fold Flash on 20th August and a similar number was at the site on 25th September. This flock had reduced to 60 by 23rd October.

A flock of around 100 birds were on Croston Moss on 12th November, and an unseasonal flock of 90 was at Belmont Reservoir on 13th November with 55 still there on 23rd December..

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Scarce breeder and passage migrant

Two were early returning to Belmont Reservoir on 1st March. A party of four flew north north east over Clayton on 2nd April.

Birds in display were noted on several occasions at Belmont Reservoir in April and May. Birds were present at 3 sites in the West Pennine Moors around Belmont during the breeding season including one displaying at a moorland site not used for many years in late April, a displaying bird at another site in May & breeding confirmed at a third site on 18th June when two pairs, both with young, were located within close proximity.

Four were heard in flight over Arley Nature Reserve on 29th August.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyrtus minimus*)

Rare winter visitor

One was at Ecclestone on 3rd November, and 2 were there on 26th December.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Fairly common passage / winter visitor; scarce breeder

Just a single record was received in January from Ecclestone on the 30th. One was also recorded at the same location on 24th February.

The breeding population in the central West Pennine Moors remained healthy with 6+ 'pairs' on territory around Belmont Reservoir with a minimum of a further 13 'drummers' recorded on in-bye fields/moorland elsewhere in the Belmont area.

Return migration in September was noted with 2 at Ecclestone (8th), 2 at Yarrow Valley Park (23rd), and 10 on Mawdesley Moss (27th). Numbers in Yarrow Valley Park increased to 5 on 2nd October and 7 on the 16th but had reduced to a single bird by 1st November. Five were on Croston Moss on 2nd October, increasing to 30 by the 16th, but were down to 10 by 12th November. Two were on a pond on Tinklers Lane fields, Ecclestone on 4th October, 6 were there on the 10th, then 10 on 2nd November. At least 16 were in the Belmont area on 15th October.

December sightings included 12 on the mosslands (3rd), 10 at Ecclestone (26th), 13 at the E-shaped pond (29th) and 8 at Belmont Reservoir on 31st.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

Fairly common resident and winter visitor

On 2nd January, birds were noted at two sites above Lead Mines Clough. 'Pheasant beaters' flushed 20+ during shoots at Belmont on 26th and 29th January. Woodcock

were also noted at several lowland locations in January including singles at sites in Eccleston on 2nd and 12th, 2 in Cuerden Valley Park (13th) and 3 at Park Hall, Charnock Richard on the 4th. 5 were flushed from the swampwood at Arley (21st). Birds were also recorded in Eccleston on 5th and 12th February.

A minimum of 5 were recorded roding around Belmont with the first on 12th March. Two were seen roding over Spring Wood, Duxbury on 1st June and at least three were regularly seen roding at Black Coppice between early April and 13th June. On 25th May, a bird, probably breeding nearby, was flushed from the side of a stream at Anglezarke.

A presumed migrant was flushed from moorland above Belmont on 13th November. 'Pheasant beaters' flushed 5 during shoots at Belmont on 30th November and 8+ on 28th December. Wintering birds were also seen at Eccleston on 9th and 14th November and 11th December. Birds were also seen at the E-shaped pond on 4th December and at Chisnall on 8th December.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)
Rare passage migrant and summer visitor

A flock of 35 was seen flying east over Croston Moss on 2nd June.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)
Regular passage migrant

The first through were 3 in fields near Croston on 24th April, increasing to 13 by the 28th. Elsewhere 5 were in Tinklers Lane fields at Eccleston on the 26th and 3 flew over the main road through the village on the 30th. In May, a single bird was at Eccleston on the 1st, 18 were in fields off Sarscow Lane, Croston on the 2nd and three were near Knowles Wood, Eccleston on the 5th. A flock of 15 was located in fields along Bannister Green on the 6th, increasing to 33 by the 9th, before reducing to 6 on the 11th, when the farmer was manuring the field. A



single bird was at North Road, Bretherton, on the 9th.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)
Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor

Four were noted at Croston on 3rd January. Three were noted over Eccleston on 20th February. First back at Rivington was noted flying over the village towards the moors on 12th February, and another was over Yarrow Reservoir on the 20th. First back at Belmont was one on 10th February, increasing to 40 on the 24th.

Roost counts at Belmont Reservoir:-

- 129 on 27/2 (February record site count)
- 125 on 1/3
- 144 on 10/3
- 142 on 11/3
- 70 on 14/3
- 45 on 16/3
- 10 on 12/5 (presumed failed/non-breeders)

In March numbers in the Eccleston area increased from 15 on the 5th to 60 on the 28th. Just two were noted at Withnell Fold on the 6th.

Many pairs had their nests burnt out on Anglezarke and Withnell Moors in the moor fires over late-April/early-May with counts in the days immediately following the fires locating only 2 remaining pairs on the burnt area of Anglezarke Moor with an estimated 10 pairs on territory over 4km² of adjacent unburnt moorland.

An adult and at least one well grown young were in a field above Yarrow Reservoir on 26th July. Two late birds were at Belmont Reservoir on 27th July.

Three were heard in flight over Clayton at 23.40 on 19th September, and one was over Belmont on 24th September.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor; has wintered.

First back in Spring was one at Belmont Reservoir on 11th April, followed by one at Yarrow Valley Park (14th).

Five pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir. A pair was noted on Yarrow Reservoir on 20th June. Singles were seen on Anglezarke Reservoir and Upper Rivington Reservoir on 20th July, and an adult and juvenile were at the latter site on the 25th.

Last was on Belmont Reservoir on 5th September.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Scarce passage migrant. Has wintered.

One was noted on the feeder stream in Arley Nature Reserve on several dates during the winter period.

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 1st May. One was noted along the Yarrow at Eccleston on 24th June, and again on 3rd and 4th August.

A juvenile was at Yarrow Valley Park on 23rd September. One was at a pond in Tinklers Lane fields, Eccleston, on 12th October.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)
Scarce passage migrant

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 27th August.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)
Rare passage migrant

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 1st May.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)
Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor

First was back at Belmont on 13th March. One was noted at Bretherton on 29th March.

Again only two pairs bred around Belmont Reservoir (probably due to low water levels) with one pair fledging 2 young.

Last at Belmont Reservoir were three on 9th July. One was heard in flight over Clayton on 19th September.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)
Present in good numbers throughout the year. Now breeds in large numbers

5000 were in the Lower Rivington gull roost on 7th February.

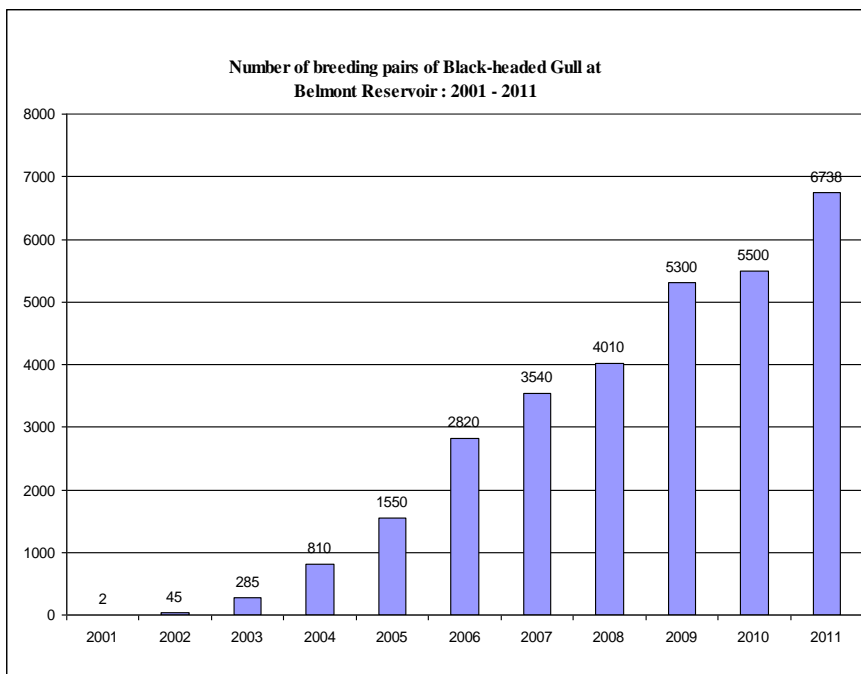
The first birds returned in numbers (400) to the Belmont Reservoir gullery on 24th February, with numbers building up rapidly to 3000 by 5th March, to peak at 12,000 on 29th March.

The colony was censused by means of aerial photography from a light aircraft on 4th May, which produced a count of 6738 nests – including 350 nests on the drawdown (that were mostly washed-out by rising water levels in mid-May). Overspill from the colony resulted in 2 nests on the sailing club pontoon for the first time.

The 6738 nests in 2011 represents over 5% of the UK breeding population and it is thought highly likely that the Belmont colony is now the largest, both *coastal & inland*, Black-headed Gull colony in the UK (per R Mavor – JNCC Seabird Monitoring Team).

With no Fox predation/disturbance in 2011, productivity was excellent with an estimated 10,000 juveniles fledging.

3000 were feeding on a mass of dusk-flying moths (Map-winged Swift) over Belmont Moor on 21st June.



Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)
Rare visitor now also breeding

One was in the gull roost on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 7th February.

The first bird was back in the Black-headed Gull colony at Belmont Reservoir on 8th March rising to 6 on 28th March with 12+ present on 28th April.

The increasing height & early growth of vegetation severely hampered monitoring of Mediterranean Gulls in 2011, although some 9 pairs were noted on territory with 4 of these pairs confirmed as breeding.

Following last year's Fox disturbance/predation, a decision was made not to disturb the colony, so no Mediterranean Gull nests were monitored or young ringed in 2011.

Several pairs were known to have been successful as at least 4 separate fledged juveniles were seen on the drawdown between 7th July and 14th August.

A juvenile was on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 6th August.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)
Common winter visitor

400 were in the gull roost on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 7th February.

Lesser Black-Backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)
Common in most months; has bred

Two pairs were on territory in the gullery at Belmont Reservoir with one pair thought to have bred unsuccessfully.

A steady stream of birds were observed flying south over Belmont on 31st July at a rate of at least 20/hour. 160+ were on fields near Belmont on 15th August.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)
Common winter visitor and on passage

Up to 500 birds were present in the winter gull roost on Lower Rivington Reservoir during the winter months.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)
Scarce winter visitor

Up to 20 birds were present in the winter gull roost on Lower Rivington Reservoir during the winter months.

Gull Roost (*Laridae spp.*)

Numbers in the roost on Lower Rivington Reservoir during the winter months varied between 6000 and 7000 birds, of which 80% were usually Black-headed.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)
Scarce passage migrant

A pair was back on the tern raft at Yarrow Valley Park by 21st April. They had produced three young by 29th May. One of the young quickly perished. The remaining two were ringed on 6th June, but sadly they disappeared overnight on the 16th June. The pair then appeared to attempt a second brood but was unsuccessful. A second pair was at the site on 3rd July, but was chased off by the resident pair.

Other sightings came from Withnell Fold cricket field lodge on several dates and Upper Rivington Reservoir on 25th July.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)
Rare passage migrant

One was reported from Lower Rivington Reservoir on 16th June.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)
Common resident

Despite the presence of a pair of Peregrine Falcons, the town centre still holds good numbers.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Uncommon breeding bird

Over 25 were near Belmont on 6th March. 18 were around breeding sites at Belmont Reservoir on 28th April. (A pair in a Belmont garden on 6th June was a garden first). Pairs were at regular breeding sites in quarries at White Coppice, Whittle and Withnell, and at farms in the Rivington area.

A flock of 7 birds was noted at Eccleston on 1st August, and over 25 were near Belmont on 17th August.

A flock of 16 was on Croston Moss on 12th November. This increased to an impressive 60 birds by 17th December.

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Abundant resident and passage migrant

A flock of over 500 was on Mawdesley Moss on 8th January.

Around 100 birds were feeding on moorland whimberries above Belmont in late June and early July. A post-breeding flock of in excess of 1000 birds was seen on Croston Moss on 11th August.

A flock of over 100 was feeding on beechmast / acorns near Belmont throughout October. A flock of 200 was at Eccleston on 31st October. Several hundred were noted on Mawdesley Moss on 26th November, and at least 500 were present on 31st December.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common resident

A pair was noted nest building in a Christmas Tree on Chorley Market on 6th January.

A pair at Great Knowley had a young bird in tow by the beginning of April.

23 were in a Belmont garden on 12th November and 4th December.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one at Heskin on 17th April. The first at Rivington was one near the primary school on 27th April, and again at this site on 14th and 18th May. The first at Belmont were 2 calling males on 4th May.

It was a better year for records, with a minimum of two calling males and possibly four in the Anglezarke to Brinscall area. Regular sightings came from Anglezarke viewpoint, Healey Nab, Stronstrey Bank, White Coppice Quarry and Heatherlea Woods, where a pair was seen together on the 8th May. At Rivington, birds were recorded at Roynton Lane (29th April), Terraced Gardens (7th May) and near the Hall

Barn (13th and 25th May). Calling males, possibly on passage, were recorded from 5 sites in the Belmont area until 21st May.

Two females in the Belmont area throughout May and June was indicative of breeding. A juvenile was at Belmont Reservoir on 4th September.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Uncommon resident - increasing

One was noted in the Coppull area on 3rd and 6th January. Another was at Chisnall on 1st February.

One was seen hunting at Great Knowley on 13th May.

A pair in the Withnell area successfully fledged five young at great expense to the local vole population, which may militate against a repeat success this year. The birds had left the site by 20th August. Another pair bred in Croston village raising 3 young. Two pairs bred at Belmont, one fledging a late second brood in mid-October. Breeding almost certainly occurred at an inaccessible third site, whilst a regular fourth site was unoccupied in 2011.

In July, hunting birds were noted at Great Knowley, Whittle and Mawdesley Moss, and in August on Croston Finney. One (close ringed) bird found dead in the road near Belmont on 29th August had escaped from captivity at Heywood three weeks previously.

In September, birds were recorded at Croston Twin Lakes (8th) and again at Great Knowley (19th). One was noted in German Lane, Euxton on 22nd October.

November sightings included birds at Buckshaw (3rd) and Croston Moss (13th and 19th). In December, one was again at Buckshaw (5th) and one was on Mawdesley Moss (8th).

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

Fairly common resident

In January, birds were recorded in Cuerden Valley Park (24th) and at Eccleston (31st). One was again recorded at Eccleston on 16th February.

In March, birds were recorded at Buckshaw (2nd), Eccleston (22nd), and Hoghton Bottoms (26th).

A pair bred at a farm in the Whittle area and two pairs bred at farms in the Croston area. One pair bred at Belmont.

July records came from Croston (11th), Wheelton (14th) and Heskin (28th). In August records came again from Heskin (8th), Croston Finney (14th) and Eccleston (22nd).

One was at a regular site near Great Hanging Bridge, Croston on 30th October, and on several dates in November.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)
Common resident

Birds were vocal in January and were recorded at White Coppice (7th), Eccleston (12th), Burgh Lane, Chorley (12th), Clayton (22nd) and Hartwood (29th). February records came from Eccleston (3rd), Astley Park (18th) and Withnell nature reserve (27th).

In Rivington and Anglezarke birds were noted around Jepson's Clough throughout the year, and also from all suitable woodlands. On 1st April one was by Yarrow reservoir. In May, birds were noted at Joan Meadow Wood (2nd), Ward Hill Wood (8th), and Dean Wood (19th). On 21st May, 2 young were seen peering from a nest hole at Rivington and were still there on 5th June. On 4th June, 2 birds were in the Yarrow valley, and possibly the same birds were well up the valley from the 'Bomber Memorial' on 27th August. Birds were recorded throughout Lever Park, with the last noted at Gilsbrook on 4th December.

A pair at Eccleston had three young in June.

In August, roosting birds were noted at Eccleston (5th), Cuerden Valley Park (11th) and Mawdesley Moss (15th).

In September, birds were recorded at White Coppice (1st), Eccleston (regularly between 2nd and 15th) and Great Knowley (17th).

Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)
Scarce breeding resident; rare winter visitor

A pair in the west of the area made an unsuccessful breeding attempt.

One was found dead in the road at Belmont on 23rd July.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)
Scarce summer visitor

Two pairs were on territory on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont with one pair relocating locally having had its nest burnt out by a moorland fire on 29th April.

The last at Belmont was a juvenile on 20th August.

Swift (*Apus apus*)
Common summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one over Gillibrand North on 24th April.

The first of the year for Rivington & Anglezarke appeared on 3rd May with one over Anglezarke car park and 8 over Jepson's Clough. The latter site hosted birds



throughout the breeding season with 'screaming' birds noted 5th – 12, 8th – 30, in May; 27th June - 40; 27th July – 30; 6th August – 12 and finally 12th August – 16

Nine pairs bred at a school at Clayton Green. Other pairs were on territory in the Eaves Lane area and at Coppull. Birds were seen accessing breeding sites in two areas of Belmont village

20 at Eccleston on 21st July suggested that return migration was under way.

August records diminished as the month progressed with the last being one over Chorley on the 25th. A very late bird for the recording area was noted over Astley Road, Chorley on 11th September.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)
Fairly common resident

Birds were noted in February at regular sites in Yarrow Valley Park (24th) and Cuerden Valley Park (28th), which came as a relief after the hard weather before Christmas.

Up to 2 were regular at 5 sites in the Belmont area throughout the year although these all probably relate to just one pair and their offspring.

Two were noted on the River Douglas at Rivington on 3rd July. Multiple sightings in August came from Eccleston, White Coppice, Whittle and Yarrow Valley Park.

Sightings in October came from Heapey Lodges (16th) and Yarrow Valley Park (18th), and in November from Common Bank Lodge (6th), Park Hall lake (8th) and Withnell Fold Nature Reserve (27th).

In December, birds were noted on Croston Moss (16th) and Withnell Fold (27th).

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)
Uncommon resident

Widespread records were received in March of yaffling birds at Heatherlea Woods, Brinscall (8th), Yarrow Valley Park (15th), Lead Mines Clough (16th), and White Coppice and Healey Nab (both 29th).

Birds were recorded from a wide area of Rivington & Anglezarke covering most months of the year, from Jepson's Clough, through Rivington village, Dean Wood, Lead Mines Clough, and across to Cliffe Farm at Anglezarke. On 22nd July by Yarrow overflow, and on 5th August in Lead Mines Clough birds were noted feeding on the ground.

One, possibly two, pairs were on territory near Belmont during the breeding season.

Records were received from White Coppice in September on 1st and 17th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus major*)
Common resident

Records were received from all suitable woodland throughout the recording area.

Rivington & Anglezarke continues to be an excellent place to observe this species, still having many suitable woodlands with dead timber and seen in all months of the year throughout the area. At least 14 nest sites were identified, with young birds very vocal within the nest holes from mid May.

Noted at White Coppice on 1st September.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus minor*)
Uncommon resident

Birds were calling in Duxbury Woods on 6th March and in Burgh Wood at Yarrow Valley Park on 7th March.

One was reported from White Coppice on 25th September.

Great Grey Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*)
Rare winter visitor and passage migrant

Two gamekeepers reported seeing one at close range, perched along the same fence-line and on top of the same lone tree, on several occasions near Belmont from 28th September to 2nd October.

This would seem at first, given the extremely early date, to be a case of misidentification - until one considers that in 2008, a bird was found and correctly identified (later seen/confirmed by R Rhodes) by the same two gamekeepers on the relatively early date of 8th until 11th October. Unfortunately, the 2011 bird was not seen by any other observers.

Magpie (*Pica pica*)
Common resident

Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting/trapping 56 Magpies in 2011

A pair at Ecclestone had two chicks on 27th May.

One was seen taking a Chaffinch in a Chorley garden on 21st December.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)
Common resident

Particularly conspicuous in Spring when birds are pairing up, and again in Autumn when family parties are harvesting the acorn crop.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)
Common resident; increasing

250 were at the Upper Rivington roost on 9th January. 80 were in the Belmont area where they are normally scarce on 6th February.

825 were counted going to roost at Buckshaw on 28th October, and 400 were at the Upper Rivington roost on 13th November. 400 were noted feeding in a field at Croston on 2nd December.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)
Common resident

400 were in the Upper Rivington roost on 9th January.

The results of the rookery census carried out at the beginning of April are tabulated at the end of this report. Sadly, it indicates a continuing decline with the number of nests recorded having halved since the beginning of the century. This contrasts sharply with the apparent large increase in the number of Jackdaws over the same period.

150 were in the Upper Rivington roost on 13th November.

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*)
Common resident

150 were in the Upper Rivington roost on 9th January.

Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting / trapping 140 during the year

200 were in the Upper Rivington roost on 13th November, and 200 were in the Roddlesworth Plantations roost on 2nd December.

Raven (*Corvus corax*)
Scarce but increasing resident

21 were feeding on a dead sheep at Belmont on 10th February.

A pair had returned to a site at Whittle by 24th February. Now relatively common throughout the central West Pennine Moors with at least four pairs breeding. A recent trend is for additional pairs to hold territory & display, but do not appear to breed.

Sightings in August included 5 over Coppull on 16th, one at Eccleston on the 20th and 2 over Pall Mall, Chorley on the 22nd.

A pair was noted on Croston Moss on 1st November. A pair was at Whittle on 17th December. 14 were near Belmont on 21st December.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Scarce breeding bird. Common passage migrant and winter visitor in variable numbers

Birds were noted in Jepson's Clough, Rivington on many dates, and from the 15th April in Dean Wood. Other dates were 8th May at Rivington High School and Ward Hill wood, 10th May at Pike Stones Plantation, 29th May at Dryfield, 7th June at Shaws Drive, Anderton and 8th June at Rivington village.

At least 10 were in Belmont Plantations on 11th September. Sightings in November included 2 at Eccleston (7th), one at Euxton (9th) and two in Coppull (also 9th).

Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)

Abundant resident

The species appears to have survived the recent severe winters in good numbers, and continues to contest first place in the winter garden bird survey with Blackbird and Robin.

Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Very common resident

As with Blue Tit, the species appears to have survived the recent severe winters in good numbers.

Coal Tit (*Periparus ater*)

Common resident and winter visitor

Another frequent visitor to garden feeding stations, and increasingly so in summer.

Willow Tit (*Poecile montana*)

Scarce resident

Two pairs bred at Arley Nature Reserve, raising eight young.

Singles were at Euxton on 17th October, on Croston Moss on 30th October and 1st November and at Chisnall near Coppull on 10th November. Two were seen at Chisnall on 12th December, one was on Croston Moss (16th) and 2 were in a Croston garden (31st). Hopefully, this increase in the number of records is an indication of a good breeding season in the area.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Common resident and summer visitor; declining;

Two were back at Belmont on 1st January. The first in song there was on 6th March.

It appears to have been lost as a breeding species from a BBS square in the Brindle area, and from Lower Burgh Meadow. Its days as a breeding bird at Buckshaw village are numbered as continuing development is eliminating all the regular breeding sites.

However, it still seems to be breeding successfully on the moors and on the arable farmland in the west of the area.

A flock of around 50 birds was on Croston Finney on 1st October.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

First in Spring were singles at Belmont and Ecclestone on 25th March.

At least 26 pairs were in a regular colony along the Yarrow at Ecclestone.

Approximately 7 per hour were seen flying south over Belmont on 10th September. Four were at Ecclestone on 13th September and 10 were at Heapey Lodges on the 18th.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

First in Spring were eight over Yarrow Reservoir on 29th March. By 5th April, nesting birds were back at Jepson's Farm, Anglezarke. Birds had also returned to all the regular breeding sites in the Brindle and Withnell areas by mid-April.

Over 100 were feeding over Mawdesley Moss on 6th August. Over 150 were around Belmont on 28th August. Good numbers moved through during September including 100 at Croston sewage works (3rd), 110 per hour south over Belmont (10th), 100 at Anglezarke reservoir (15th), 43 per hour south over Belmont (24th) and a steady trickle south along the Goit at White Coppice (26th). Up to 1500 went to roost on several dates at Withnell Fold Nature Reserve during autumn. Small numbers were still around Wilcock's Farm, Rivington during September with 6 still there on 1st October.

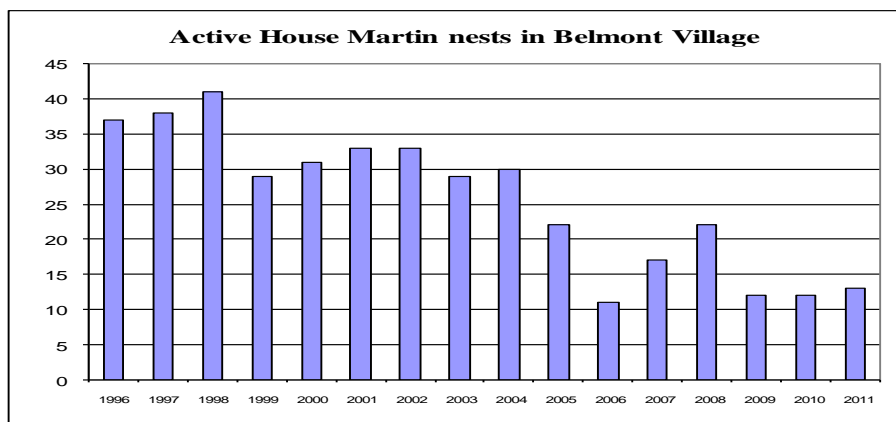
Last sightings of the year were 10 at Ecclestone on 3rd October, 7 at Bretherton (10th), 2 near Belmont (14th) and 2 at Great Knowley (15th).

House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one at Mawdesley on 9th April. On 29th May, 'hordes' were seen feeding over Rivington water Treatment Works, although investigations revealed species to be absent from many local nesting sites. They were also late returning to other regular sites.

A full survey of Belmont Village located 13 active nests.



Birds were still around the nest in Coppull on 7th September. Over 50 were feeding over Belmont on 15th September. 20 moved through Eccleston on 24th September. Last record for the year was one at Eccleston on 7th October.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Common resident; increasing

The species is common in Rivington & Anglezarke, and no longer suffers the steep declines following spells of very cold weather as it has now adapted to feed at feeders in gardens and elsewhere. Large flocks were noted throughout in the early part of the year, for example 12 were at Pilkinton Wood on 18th January. By 28th March birds were collecting nesting material at Dean Wood and Jepson's Clough. Family groups were at these sites on 27th & 28th May.

A flock of 18 birds was at Great Knowley on 1st October. 28 were near Belmont on 19th November. On 3rd December 16 were on the edge of Anglezarke reservoir.

Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*)

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

No record was received this year.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Common summer visitor and occasional winter visitor

One in Euxton on 6th March was presumably an over-wintering bird, but those seen at Croston and Withnell Fold on 14th March would have been new arrivals. Rivington arrivals in March included Dean Wood (24th), Pall Mall cottages (27th), Crosses Cottage (30th) and Jepson's Clough (31st).

Only two singing birds were noted near Belmont during the breeding season.

Singing birds in September were noted throughout the recording area with the last being at White Coppice on the 25th. Last for the year at Belmont was on 1st October. Birds were still at sites in Rivington in early October.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)
Common summer visitor

First back was one at Anglezarke on 2nd April, followed by one at Yarrow reservoir (4th) and two each near the Bomber Memorial and Anglezarke car park on the 5th.

The moorland fringe still remains the hot spot for the species with much smaller numbers out in the west of the recording area.

Over 30 were in song around Belmont on 9th April. Survey work (BTO BBS's, BTO Atlas squares, etc.) later suggested in excess of 50 singing males in the Belmont area. One pair bred in a Belmont garden with the male in song for 57 days from 9th April until 4th June. Last one at Belmont was noted on 18th September.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)
Summer and winter visitor

Wintering birds were recorded in Chorley gardens in January on 2nd, 13th and 16th, and again on 6th and 16th March. One singing in Cuerden Valley Park on 29th March is more likely to have been a new arrival, but who knows? In Rivington, birds were back in Dean Wood and Jepson's Clough by 15th April, and by 3rd June a family party was noted in Dean Wood.

15 territories were noted in the Belmont area during the breeding season. One pair bred in a Belmont garden with the male in song for 29 days from 6th May until 4th June.

A male and a female were noted in a Chorley garden on 16th and 17th November, and a male was in an Euxton garden on the 17th. In December, females were at Great Knowley (10th) and along Syd Brook at Eccleston (11th).

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)
Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one on Lower Burgh Meadow on 21st April. Birds were noted at Anglezarke car park on 24th April, and in Rivington at Crosses Cottage on 28th May and at Chapel house on 29th. Pairs were also recorded at White Coppice during the breeding season.

Four territories were noted in the Belmont area during the breeding season.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)
Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

First Spring record was one at Great Knowley on 17th April.

A pair bred at Hic Bibi nature reserve.

One was noted at Eccleston on 7th July.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Common summer visitor

First back was one singing at Eccleston on 15th April. One was off Roynton Lane Rivington on 1st May

2/3 pairs bred at Belmont – representing a recent expansion of range. The species is now widespread throughout the recording area, but its stronghold remains the Bretherton, Croston, Eccleston, Mawdesley area, where it is by far and away our commonest warbler.

A family party of six was seen at Heapey Lodges on 28th June.

One was rescued by one of our members after it became trapped in Morrison's warehouse on 14th September. Other September records included one on Croston Moss (3rd), one at Belmont (4th) and 2 at Eccleston (4th).

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor

First record was of one on Anglezarke Moor on 10th April.

On 25th April two separate birds were reeling in the Yarrow valley; Rivington. On 4th May one was below Drinkwaters and on 3rd July one was off Roynton Lane, Rivington all in rush patches.

Still increasing as a breeder in *juncus*-beds in the West Pennine Moors around Belmont with an amazing 27 'reelers' recorded on territory, including 6 around Belmont Reservoir. One was still reeling at Belmont on 30th July. One was seen near Belmont on 29th August.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Fairly common summer visitor to the limited suitable habitat

First back was one at Croston Reed Bed on 17th April.

Five pairs bred at Croston Marsh, 4 pairs bred at Ulnes Walton and two or three pairs bred on Lower Burgh Meadow at Yarrow Valley Park.. One pair bred near Belmont fledging 2 young in a moorland habitat at 270 m above sea level.

One was noted on Mawdesley Moss on 6th August and one was at Belmont on 20th August. Last record was one at Croston on 15th September.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)
Scarce summer visitor

First back was one at Croston Reed Bed on 17th April.

12 pairs bred at Ulnes Walton, 7 pairs bred at Croston Marsh and at least one pair bred at Yarrow Valley Park.

Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*)
Irregular winter visitor

The Waxwing invasion continued from last year into January with 12 at Clayton (5th), 5 at Gillibrands (9th), 5 in Eccleston from 10th – 14th and 7 in Adlington from 20th – 22nd. At Belmont 30 were seen on the 14th, 9 (20th), 7 (22nd) and 11 (25th).

In February, 12 were in Brinscall on the 8th and on the same day 33 turned up outside Macdonalds in Chorley. These increased to 58 the next day and were seen until the 13th. 30 were then seen in Adlington on the 15th and 12 were seen in Harpers Lane, Chorley on the 18th.

Birds returned to MacDonald's in March with 11 there on the 7th, increasing to 30 by the 9th. They then transferred their affections to the Parker Street area, where up to 32 were seen between 14th and 29th. Other sightings in the town included 5 at Eaves Green (8th), 70 in Duke Street (17th), 20 in Bolton Street (18th) and 56 in flight over Buckshaw Village (30th). Seven were at Belmont on the 8th.



Birds were still around in April. 25 were at Belmont on the 1st. 20 were at the old parish church in Coppull on the 2nd, and a similar number were still in the Parker Street area on the 3rd. Then, up to 100 were in the Eaves Green area between 3rd and 7th. No further record was received until a party of three dropped into a member's garden at Whittle on the 16th. Four were seen flying over Chorley Hospital on the 29th. The last reported sighting was of a single bird in Chorley on 2nd May.

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)
Fairly common resident; increasing

At least five territories were noted in Roddlesworth plantations in late February.

The species continued to expand its range in Rivington & Anglezarke, even into the moorland cloughs. At least 25 territories were identified. 3 pairs nested in boxes.

Six pairs bred in nest boxes in the west of the area. Another pair bred in a natural site just on the edge of Wheelton Plantation. Three pairs were on territory near Belmont with at least 2 successfully fledging young.

Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Fairly common resident in the area's woodlands

In April, birds were seen carrying nesting material at Lower Healey and Cuerden Valley Park (both 6th), and at Eccleston (11th). One pair bred on the edge of Cuerden Valley Park lake – the species seems to like nest sites at the edge of water.

Birds were recorded in Rivington & Anglezarke throughout the year and in all suitable woodlands. Pairs were already noted in February at Rivington village and Dean Wood, and in March at Street Wood and Lead Mines Clough. On the 2nd May a pair was collecting food at Joan Meadow Wood, and on 13th a family group was noted in the Terraced Gardens. On 20th May a bird was carrying food near the 'Bomber Memorial', and on 31st a family group was seen at White Coppice.

A family party was in Yarrow Valley Park on 21st August.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Abundant resident

Another species which seems to have survived the recent severe winters in reasonable numbers with plenty of family groups seen in early August.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Abundant resident and winter visitor

For the first time birds roosted within Belmont Village with over 350 in evergreens nightly from 10th February to the month end.

On 22nd February 100 were feeding off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington, and 200 were at the same site on 13th & 24th December.

The first juveniles were seen at Belmont on 21st May with 60 in a Belmont garden on 28th May. A flock of over 100 was at Belmont Reservoir on 29th May.

A flock of over 300 was at Belmont Reservoir on 27th December. Flocks of around 200 birds could usually be found in fields at Withnell Fold in both winter periods.

Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*)

Fairly common resident on the faster flowing rivers of the area

Birds were back on territory in February at Yarrow Valley Park (6th), White Coppice (6th) and Cuerden Valley Park (8th).

The birds at White Coppice/ Dean Black Brook area were noted in February on 8th & 15th. Pairs were established by April, and food being carried on 4th May. On 10th June a bird was bathing in the Knowsley embankment outflow.

The usual 3/4 territories were occupied throughout the year around Belmont with some movement of birds to the feeder streams above the reservoirs noted in winter.

Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*)
Scarce passage migrant

First back was one at Belmont on 10th April, followed by two pairs on 16th April. A male was on Stronstrey Bank on 19th April.

Singles were at Belmont on 6th and 13th October.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)
Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Continues to occupy first place in the winter garden bird survey in terms of numbers of gardens occupied.

At least 15 were in a Belmont garden on 9th January.

The birds in a Rivington garden were particularly attracted to sultanas, although on occasions seed was preferred. Often many family groups vied for the 'goodies' on offer. Cats, magpies, and increasingly grey squirrels present a problem at nesting time.

On 27th July a young bird was rescued from a magpie at Knowle House, Rivington.

At least 12 were in a Belmont garden on 17th December.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)
Winter visitor, often in large numbers

Flocks in January included 40 near Peewit Hall, Anglezarke (2nd) increasing to 200 by 11th, 40 in Mawdesley (8th), 20 on Healey Nab (9th), 50 in Ecclestone (11th) and 100 at Belmont (16th). In February, 40 were seen in Ecclestone (14th) and 100 off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington (22nd). More were seen in March, including 20 at Belmont (17th), 100 in Ecclestone (26th), 30 at Withnell Fold (26th) and 400 at Rivington (28th).

In April, 13 were at Withnell Fold Nature Reserve on the 3rd. Two were seen flying north along Stronstrey Bank on the 22nd. The latest sighting was of two birds in Ecclestone on the very late date of 2nd May.

There was a widespread arrival in Autumn on 13th October with 200 south over Belmont, 150 north over Jepson's Clough, 27 along Stronstrey Bank, 50 at Heapey, 30 at Ecclestone and 18 at Cuerden. On the following day a large movement was noted over Chorley, 200 flew north over Anglezarke Moor, flocks of 300, 200 and 60 were noted flying south over Belmont, and up to 200 birds were seen at Ecclestone. In the following days, 20 were at Whittle (17th), 40 at Withnell Fold (23rd) and 60 at Bretherton (23rd).

The only records of note in November were 20 at Makinson's Farm, Rivington (3rd), 40 at Ecclestone on the 8th, and 50 at Intack, Rivington on the 15th suggesting that October's arrival may have moved on in view of the poor berry crop this year. A flock

of 160 at Sheephouse Lane, Rivington (24th), one of 20 at Withnell Fold Flash (27th) and one of 40 near Belmont (30th) were the only noteworthy December records.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Fairly common resident;

Usually inconspicuous in winter, but reasonably common once they start singing again in February.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Winter visitor, often in large numbers.

In January, flocks of 20 were in Peewit Hall fields, Anglezarke (2nd), and 50 were in the woodlands around Rivington Castle on the 5th. 100 were seen in Eccleston (12th) and in Cuerden Valley Park (16th). The species was also well represented in a mixed flock of 70 with Fieldfare at Withnell Fold on the 30th. Flocks in February included the flock of around 100 birds in Eccleston on the 27th, and these remained in the area until at least 6th March. A flock of 170 was at Belmont on 13th March.

A flock of 7 birds was seen at Withnell Fold nature reserve on 3rd April, and 5 still remained at Belmont on 14th April.

In Autumn, they were a little later than normal returning, with the first record being 16 at Lower Healey on the 9th October, followed by birds at Clayton (10th), Belmont and Eccleston (13th). A flock of over 100 was noted flying south over Belmont on the following day, when a flock of 200 also flew north over Anglezarke Moor. 10 were at Intack, Rivington on 14th November, several were noted on Coppull Moor on 16th November, and 20 were in a holly bush below the Terraced Gardens on 29th November. 40 were in a field off Dryfield, Rivington on 28th December. Over 30 were near Belmont on 30th December.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Common resident

A pair was feeding four young at Yarrow Valley Park on 9th April.

Post-breeding flocks included 14 near Rivington Hall Barn on 1st July, 13 at Twin Lakes, Croston on 11th July and 20 on Mawdesley Moss on 16th July. In October 8 were on the Barn Drive (9th), and 10 were in Dean Wood House Drive (11th). 15 were near Belmont on 5th November.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one at Limbrick on 1st May. Also in May a bird was noted on the edge of Street Wood on the 9th, in the Terraced Gardens on 13th, and at Gilsbrook on 15th & 24th – all Rivington. On 12th July one was at Hall Barn Cottage.

Pairs bred at regular sites at White Coppice and Anglezarke. One was along the Goit at White Coppice on 31st July. A pair bred at Withnell Fold nature reserve and a

family party of at least four birds was along the canal at the site on 6th August. One pair bred at Belmont Reservoir.

One was in a Chorley garden on 25th September.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)
Abundant resident

One frequented the aisles of Tesco in Chorley throughout most of January.

Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)
Rare visitor

A female / immature was on Winter Hill on 20th October, and again on 20th November.

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)
Fairly common summer visitor in the east of the area



First back was one at Belmont on 10th April.

Two males were singing at Roddlesworth in late April. Two pairs held territory and probably bred near Belmont. Other singing males were noted at Black Coppice and Wheelton Plantation.

Birds were back singing in Lead Mines Clough by the 16th April. Birds were also singing at 5 sites in Rivington & Anglezarke during April, May &

June and although the nest boxes were checked they were not being used, so it has to be assumed that most of the birds were unmated males. Only one site held a pair, which was carrying food to a natural site on the 1st June. At the end of May and into June male birds were singing at adjacent sites indicating movement away from preferred areas.

On the 1st July a female with 2 juveniles was near the Hall Barn, and on the 2nd 4 juvenile birds were on the edge of Anglezarke viewpoint feeding in the field.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)
Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 4th September and two were there on the 11th. One was on Mawdesley Moss on 17th September.

Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)
Scarce resident

5 pairs were located on territory in the West Pennine Moors around Belmont with at least 2 pairs successfully fledging young.

Two juveniles were at White Coppice on 13th July. In August a single juvenile was at the site on the 24th and 3 were there on the 28th. Two juveniles were near a ruin on Anglezarke moor on 23rd July.

A pair was on the fence line near Morris Barn, Rivington on 1st October.

2 pairs were still around Belmont in early December. A female / immature was on Croston Moss on 23rd December.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Fairly common passage migrant and scarce summer visitor

The first in Spring was one on Anglezarke Moor on 18th March, with 2 at Bradley's Farm, Rivington on the 28th. In April birds were at Jepson's Gate (5th), 'many' along the top of Stronstrey Bank (19th), and at Peewit Hall (24th) and near Simms ruin (3pairs on 25th). In May, 2 pairs were disputing by the side of Dean Black Brook on the 4th and a pair had found a nest site below the Pike road on the 13th. These last were also seen there on the 3rd July. On 23rd August 2 were in Yarrow res fields and on the 9th September 3 were in the field above Alance Bridge, Anglezarke.

126 passed through Belmont during April including 16 on the 10th and 25 on the 16th. 21 passed through during May. 5 pairs were on territory near Belmont in the breeding season with at least 3 pairs successfully fledging young.

A juvenile on Mawdesley Moss on 7th July was unexpected.

7 passed through Belmont during August. In September birds were recorded in Eccleston (7th) and on Croston Moss (18th). 14 passed through Belmont during the month. In October one was at Croston Finney (1st), 2 were at Belmont (1st), 2 were on Winter Hill (2nd) and 2 were at Eccleston (3rd).

Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

The first back was one at Belmont on 17th April, at a regular breeding site. The species was once more absent from many of its former nest sites in Rivington & Anglezarke. Only 1 pair bred, producing 6 young which fledged successfully.

Dunnoek (*Prunella modularis*)

Abundant resident

Regular at garden feeding stations, its population appears to be stable.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Abundant resident

Numbers in gardens in Belmont Village remained much reduced with a maximum of only 20. Anecdotal evidence from elsewhere suggests that the species is making a good recovery.

Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)
Fairly common resident

The small population around Back Lane, Anglezarke reservoir was noted with 8 there on 21st January and 3 on 17th March. Local knowledge suggests the species still breeds in small numbers. A flock of 30 was noted coming to feeders in Eccleston on 24th January.

Eight pairs used nestboxes on Mawdesley Moss.

One in a Belmont garden on 8th October was the first in that locality since 2008. A flock of at least 30 birds frequented a feeding station on Croston Moss during December.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava flavissima*)
Rare summer visitor

The first record for many years was of one on Mawdesley Moss on 24th April. One was then recorded at the same site on 10th September!

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)
Common resident by the rivers and reservoirs of the area

Separate pairs in Yarrow Valley Park were feeding young on 1st and 29th May respectively. Records indicate that five sites were occupied during the breeding season at Rivington and Anglezarke.

5 pairs were on territory near Belmont during the breeding season. However 2 regular sites were unoccupied in 2011.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)
Common resident

A further increase (from the 4/5 pairs in 2010) to 6 pairs breeding at Belmont Reservoir in 2011.

At least 15 roosted at Belmont Reservoir on 16th August. Sixteen were on Eccleston cricket field on 4th August, and 18 were at the same site on 3rd October.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)
Scarce passage migrant, mainly in Spring

One was at Belmont on 2nd April.

Richard's Pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*)
Rare passage migrant

One was seen flying west off Winter Hill on 12th November.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant

First record was one at White Coppice on 18th April, where it held territory. At least one other singing male was in the locality.

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 27th August.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

Common resident and passage migrant; scarcer in winter

There still appear to be good numbers on the moors during the breeding season. A post-breeding flock of 40 birds was along the Jepson's Gate track at Anglezarke on 21st July.

Over 100 were near Belmont on 20th August, and over 120 were at Belmont Reservoir on 27th August, with a similar number at the site on 25th September. Heavy passage south over Belmont was noted through the afternoon of 1st October averaging 280 per hour.

Autumn flocks on the mosses included 50 on Croston Finney on 1st October and 100 on Croston Moss on 8th October.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Common resident and winter visitor

Over 50 roosted in Belmont Plantations on 23rd January.

Breeding Bird Surveys in the Brindle area indicate that this remains one of our commonest breeding birds in farmland areas.

20 were in a Belmont garden on 31st July and again on 16th October. At least 40 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 27th November.

One was taken by a Magpie in a Chorley garden on 21st December.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Winter visitor in variable numbers

In January, birds were noted in gardens at Euxton (7th) and Chorley (16th). At least 10 were in a Belmont garden on 22nd and 25th January. A flock of around 25 birds was at Whittle between 5th and 25th February. Individuals were also recorded in February in gardens in Chorley (18th) and Euxton (22nd).

A single bird was noted near High Bullough Reservoir on 4th April. Two were still in a Belmont garden on 17th April.

In the second winter period one was in an Euxton garden in November, and another was in a Chorley garden on 13th December. Roost counts from rhododendron thickets

at Belmont were again a shadow of previous years with a maximum of 10 on 27th November.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common resident

A flock of 100 birds on Croston Moss on 8th October was a reassuring sight after the crash in numbers as a result of the trichomonosis outbreak in previous years. At least 12 were in a Belmont garden on the same day.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Common resident

A flock of 21 was in a Coppull garden on the 7th January. 140 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 16th January. 67 were caught and ringed in a garden at Clayton.

Post-breeding flocks in August included 120 at Belmont Reservoir, 30 at Hic Bibi, 60 at Eccleston and 50 on Croston Finney. A flock of 80 was on thistle heads at Lower House car park, Rivington on 10th September. 80 were still at Belmont reservoir on 11th September. Up to 200 were on Croston Moss on 8th October. At least 60 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 27th December.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce resident

Flocks in January included 50 at Eccleston (23rd), 40 in Cuerden Valley Park (24th) and 15 in Yarrow Valley Park (27th). In February, a flock of 35 was along the Yarrow at Eccleston (21st), a flock of 14 was in Cuerden Valley Park (22nd) and 10 were in a Belmont garden (27th). The 14th February saw an influx of birds into gardens in Chorley, Great Knowley, Eccleston and Euxton, where one was showing signs of Trichomonosis. Up to 150 visited a garden at Clayton during March, of which 87 were caught and ringed.

Two pairs bred at Belmont with a minimum of 3 juveniles seen in early June.

A flock of 20 was at White Coppice during August. 7 were in a Belmont garden on the 27th, and 12 were at Belmont on 21st September. 12 were feeding in birch trees in Lead Mines Clough on 13th September. Passage through the area was evident on 22nd October with birds recorded at Euxton, Eccleston and Lower Healey. Six were noted in Duke Street, Chorley on 18th December.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Fairly common resident

Ten were at Bradley's Farm, Rivington on 23rd April. A flock of 30 was at Belmont on 30th May.

At least four pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir, and two or three pairs were on territory at White Coppice.

A flock of over 200 was on Mawdesley Moss during August, and a large flock was in the fields around Jepson's Farm, Anglezarke on 5th August. A flock of 100 was on Croston Finney on 1st October and was noted again during November.

Twite (*Carduelis flavirostris*)

Very scarce resident

No record was received this year.

Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*)

Common winter visitor; uncommon resident

One was caught and ringed in a garden at Clayton on 4th March.

White Coppice continues to be the stronghold for this species in the area with several birds on territory during the breeding season. In addition at least five pairs bred in moorland plantations.

At least 8 were in a Belmont garden on several dates in June and July. Elsewhere one was still in song in the Mormon Temple grounds in August. A flock of 30 was at Belmont on 17th September.

Common Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)

Scarce visitor

In July, small parties were noted in Cuerden Valley Park (7th), at Belmont (9th) and on Healey Nab (27th).

Records from Lead Mines Clough were as follows:-

- 12 on 23rd July
- 12 on 21st October
- 30 on 12th November
- 8 on 28th November

12 were in Belmont Plantations between 2nd and 10th September. In October, a party was heard over Chorley Town Centre on the 2nd.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Fairly common resident

5 were off Roynton Lane, Rivington on 15th January, 4 were near Anglezarke car park on 18th February, and 4 males and 4 females were near Anglezarke car park on 3rd December. All other records were of single or pairs.

Records from Rivington & Anglezarke throughout the year indicate up to 12 breeding territories were occupied. In addition birds were noted in areas with heather seed, and in hard weather coming to supplementary feeding sites.

Two pairs bred in Belmont Village with a male later noted feeding two recently fledged juveniles in a Belmont garden on the late date of 23rd September. 8 were near Belmont on 16th October.

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenas nivalis*)
Rare winter visitor

One was on the Lancashire side of Winter Hill from 3rd December, increasing to two on the 18th. Five were at Belmont Reservoir on 15th December.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)
Fairly common resident; declining

A female which had been in a Belmont garden at the end of 2010 remained until 19th January. A flock of 40 was noted at Eccleston on 6th January.

Good numbers held territories during the breeding season on Croston and Mawdesley Moss.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)
Fairly common resident

Present in small numbers above 300m above sea level on moorland in the winter months. 16 were in a Belmont garden on 16th January, with 18 there on 17th March and one still present on 25th April. 25 were at Belmont Reservoir on 5th February.

Two were near Simms ruin on Anglezarke Moor on 23rd July.

8 pairs bred around Belmont Reservoir. Several pairs bred in Yarrow valley Park with the greatest concentration on Lower Burgh Meadow. A widespread & locally common moorland breeder above Belmont at up to 400m above sea level, mainly in *juncus* & bracken beds.

Several pairs bred on the mosslands and good numbers were present in winter feeding flocks.

Corn Bunting (*Emberiza calandra*)
Scarce resident; confined to the mosslands

Several birds were on territory on the mosses during the breeding season.

ESCAPES

Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*)

One was in a herd of Whooper Swans on Croston Moss on 19th November.

Embden Goose

One was at Belmont Reservoir in February and March.

Golden Pheasant (*Chrysolophus pictus*)

A male (part hybrid) was noted near Belmont in November and early December

North American Turkey (*Meleagris gallipavo*)

Numbers of birds are still present and breeding in the Belmont Plantations with 20 seen on 19th March and two incubating females located on nests on 22nd May. The population is being maintained by artificial feeding by gamekeepers, the birds freely associating with Pheasants on feed rides

Eagle sp

An unidentified eagle was seen over White Coppice on 21st April. Apparently, a Russian Steppe Eagle had escaped from Cuerden a couple of days earlier, so it may have been this bird.

Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*)

One was seen at Ellerbeck on 26th June.

Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*)

One, presumed male, seen regularly around Belmont from late April to late September, preying largely on Pheasants.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS FOR BIRD REPORT

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Apologies to anyone I may have omitted.

ROOKERY CENSUS

<u>Site</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>1999</u>
A49 Euxton	45	50	42	40	56
Howard Arms, Whittle Springs	24	25	41	49	30
Rawlinson La, Heath Charnock	7	15	14	14	18
Railway Road, Adlington	36	30	22	24	24
Prospect House, Wheelton	29	32	50	81	101
Lower Wheelton	9	10	11	16	20
Red Cat, Wheelton	6	10	N/C	N/C	N/C
St Chad's Wheelton	11	6	N/C	N/C	N/C
Croston	76	80	130	135	130
Wild Bottoms Wood, Hoghton	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C
Town House Farm, Brindle	35	40	23	22	18
Brindle Village	8	11	N/C	N/C	N/C
Buckshaw Village	18	21	30	N/C	N/C

WATERFOWL COUNTS

The mid-month waterfowl counts covered the Anglezarke/Rivington Reservoirs together with Heapey and Birkacre Lodges.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
Little Grebe						2	
Great Crested Grebe		1	6	8	1	1	1
Cormorant		2	17	4	2		1
Grey Heron		3	7	1	1		1
Mute Swan	4	3	3	4	5	5	5
Canada Goose	10	18	42	37	7		2
Hybrid Goose			2	5	3	4	5
Greylag Goose		2	8				
Shoveler		2					
Teal						10	17
Mallard	194	128	113	178	202	370	358
Pochard	1	1	2		1		2
Tufted Duck	13		4	2	3	11	2
Goldeneye	3	3	4				3
Goosander	4	7				4	6
Moorhen	10	6	7	5	10	9	8
Coot	13	6	11	11	11	9	8
Water Rail					2		

RINGING REPORT

Introduction

Last year saw the return of the Ringing Report to these hallowed pages. The first since 1999, and thanks to popular demand (well at least one person other than me read it), it looks like being an annual addition to the report.

During 2011, a total of 924 birds of 25 species were ringed, of which 862 were ringed in the CDNHS recording area and of that total, 699 were ringed in our garden.

2011: Ringing Yearly Summary

During the first quarter of the year, 15 ringing sessions took place at just two sites – our own garden and Worthington Lakes (which is outside the CDNHS recording area).

Highlights were 4 Goldfinch and Starling in the garden on January 28th, 2 Nuthatch at Worthington Lakes on 19th February, a Lesser Redpoll in the garden on 4th March, 2 Starling in the garden on 7th March, and between 1st and 21st March, up to 150 Siskin were in the garden on a daily basis. On a few days during this period, the weather was good for ringing, so the nets were put up on 1st, 4th, 12th, 13th, 16th and 21st, resulting in a total of 79 Siskins being caught and ringed, several of which were subsequently caught by other ringers outside the county (further details still awaited from the BTO). The last bird of the quarter was a Chiffchaff ringed in the garden on the 27th March. The total number of birds ringed in the first quarter of the year came to 242.

During the second quarter, ringing sessions took place at 8 different sites, including, Yarrow Valley Park, Duxbury Woods, Wood End Farm on Mawdesley Moss and Withnell Nature Reserve. At these 4 sites, nest boxes were checked and all pulli of a suitable age were ringed. These included 82 Blue Tit, 48 Great Tit, 6 Nuthatch, and 3 Tree Sparrow. As well as pulli in nest boxes 2 broods of Robin and 1 brood of Blackbird were ringed. The stars of June involved another epic adventure in the good ship HMS Birkacre Bathtub to ring the two Common Tern pulli. The total for the second quarter was 393, bringing the half year total to 635.

During the third quarter, poor weather (mostly on my days off) for ringing took its toll on the totals, but what ringing was done took place in the garden due to the excellent numbers of titmice coming to the feeders. Of the 155 birds caught and ringed during the quarter, only 18 were birds born prior to 2011. All the rest were juveniles of the year. That brought the third quarter to a close, and the total for the three quarters stood at 790.

During the last quarter, a total of 8 ringing sessions took place at just one site – our garden. A total of 134 birds of 12 different species were caught to bring the total for the year to 924.

Garden Ringing 2011

This year proved to be a very good year for garden ringing with 699 birds caught and ringed in our very small garden whose dimensions are only 27 feet long x 22 feet wide. It has five small tables dotted about in the main flower and shrub beds and three metal frame hangers for peanut and seed feeders along with 4 further feeders in the small trees. At the height of the Siskin invasion in March, the garden was having the majority of the feeders refilled every other day and on many a day the five feeders containing sunflower hearts were full of birds, with birds also queueing on the fence and in the bushes at the woodland edge. With up to 150 birds on some days, the contact calls of Siskins filling the air made a truly amazing sight and sound.

Table 1: Garden ringing totals for 2011

Species	Full grown	Pulli	Retraps/ Recoveries	Total
Great Spotted Woodpecker	3	0	0	3
Wren	2	0	0	2
Duncock	8	0	1	9
Robin	10	4	6	20
Blackbird	9	0	3	12
Chiffchaff	1	0	0	1
Long-tailed Tit	18	0	5	23
Coal Tit	22	0	15	37
Blue Tit	102	7	73	182
Great Tit	125	0	70	195
Nuthatch	3	0	5	8
Magpie	2	0	0	2
Starling	3	0	0	3
House Sparrow	3	0	0	3
Chaffinch	13	0	1	14
Greenfinch	19	0	2	21
Goldfinch	65	0	2	67
Siskin	84	0	3	87
Lesser Redpoll	1	0	0	1
Bullfinch	7	0	2	9
Annual Total for Garden	500	11	188	699

Table 2 Area ringing totals for 2011

Species	Full grown	Pulli	Retraps/ Recoveries	Total
Common Tern	0	2	0	2
Great Spotted Woodpecker	3	0	0	3
Sand Martin	11	0	0	11
Wren	2	0	0	2
Duncock	11	0	1	12
Robin	11	8	6	25
Blackbird	9	3	3	15
Chiffchaff	1	0	0	1
Willow Warbler	2	0	0	2
Long-tailed Tit	28	0	11	39
Coal Tit	22	0	16	38
Blue Tit	118	82	76	276
Great Tit	141	48	75	264
Nuthatch	4	6	6	16
Magpie	2	0	0	2
Starling	3	0	0	3
House Sparrow	3	0	0	3
Tree Sparrow	0	3	0	3
Chaffinch	20	0	1	21
Greenfinch	19	0	2	21
Goldfinch	65	0	2	67
Siskin	84	0	3	87
Lesser Redpoll	1	0	0	1
Bullfinch	7	0	2	9
Reed Bunting	1	0	0	1
Annual Total for Chorley	568	152	204	924

Colour Ringed Coot

Over the last three years, fellow ringers have been catching and colour ringing Coot across the north West of England and beyond. Below are several sightings of colour ringed Coot recorded to date in the Chorley area.

Table 3 Colour Ringed Coot

Coot Recapture History

Ring No.	Ring colours	Type	Age	Capture	Date	Initial	Details
GR25251	Pink/BTO Mauve/Dark Blue	N	4		3/12/10	KB	Southport Southport Worthington Lakes (26km, ESE, 189 days)
		O	4	Sighted	28/12/10	KB	
		S	6	Sighted	10/06/11		
GR25271	Orange/BTO Pink/Green	N	3		3/12/10	KB	Southport Birkacre lodge (24km,E, 152 days) Birkacre lodge (24km, E, 189 days)
		S	5	Sighted	4/05/11		
		S	5	Sighted	10/06/11		
GR26301	Orange/BTO Mauve/Pink	N	4		3/12/10	CMB	Stanley Park, Blackpool Stanley Pk, Blackpool Stanley Pk, Blackpool Birkacre Lodge (32km, SE, 189 days)
		O	4	Sighted	5/12/10	CMB	
		O	4	Sighted	18/01/11	CMB	
		S	6	Sighted	10/06/11	AL	

Recoveries and retraps 2011

Siskin

Ring no. L788907

Age ringed:- 6 male

Where / when ringed:- Garden, Clayton Green – 12th March 2011

Where / when retrapped:- Tarbet, Loch Lomond, Argyll and Bute – 22nd June 2011

Comments:- 102 days Distance 306 km

Siskin

Ring no.:- L788823

Age ringed:- 5 female

Where / when ringed:- Garden, Clayton Green – 21st January 2011

Where / when retrapped – Haybridge Nature Reserve, Cumbria – 9th March 2011

Comments:- 47 days distance 67 km



Lesser Redpoll

Ring No.:- L788898

Age ringed:- 5 female

Where / when ringed:- Garden, Clayton Green – 4th March 2011

Where / when retrapped:- New Laithe Farm, Newton, Lancs

Comments:- 5 Days Distance 27km

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Andy Leach

MAMMAL, REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN REPORT 2011

The report is based mainly on the sightings 'posted' on the forum on the society's website plus the reports from the recorders in the Belmont and Rivington areas.

MAMMALS

Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)

Only eight records, all of singles, were submitted from within the Chorley Borough. Sadly three of the four records from the Rivington area relate to dead animals on the road but one was found alive and full grown in Dean Wood on 31st May. Records from members' gardens were Adlington on 10th May (dropping), Euxton on 17th June, Whittle on 23 July and Chorley on 19th August, the later being the first seen in the garden for many years.

The situation at Belmont appears to be better with the first seen in a garden there being amazingly a half-grown juvenile on 17th March. It was remarkable that it had survived the severe winter. The first adult was seen at Belmont on 27th March and thereafter up to five were present nightly up until 1st November.

Common Shrew (*Sorex araneus*)

Dead ones were found in Blainscough Woods, Coppull on 13th April, 22nd August and 12th September and one was rescued from a pile of logs being taken to be burnt in Cuerden Valley Park on 3rd February. Singles were also recorded on Mawdesley Moss on 9th and 25th April and in a Belmont garden on 17th June and 20th July. These were all the records received.

Water Shrew (*Neomys fodiens*)

The only record was of one seen at close quarters by a moorland stream near Belmont on 18th June.

Mole (*Talpa europaea*)

Although molehills were widespread and abundant, there were no reports of live animals seen. However, about forty corpses were strung up on a fence at Brindle in April. The increase reported from the Belmont area is possibly due to the withdrawal of strychnine in 2006, as trapping is considered labour intensive and now only two farmers near Belmont still expand time/money trapping moles.

Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentoni*)

Reported from just two sites; Healey Nab on 22nd May and Cuerden Valley Park on 6th and 23rd August.

Pipistrelle Bat Species (*Pipistrellus* spp.) includes **Common Pipistrelle** (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and **Soprano or Pygmy Pipistrelle** (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)

Small bats, presumed to be Pipistrelle species, were first recorded in Eccleston on 25th February and were then widespread throughout the area, mainly in small numbers, with the last one again in Eccleston on 22nd November. The first individual was seen at Belmont on 12th February, with over five on 8th September and the last on 28th September.

Noctule Bat (*Nyctalus noctula*)

Recorded from two sites using bat detectors on bat walks; Healey Nab on 22nd May and Cuerden Valley Park on 6th, 11th and 23rd August.

Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*)

Five were 'hibernating' in an old shippon in Wheelton Plantation on 2nd January with three there on 6th February and one on 6th March. Two were 'hibernating' in an old mine adit at Belmont on 6th March.

Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*)

One was 'hibernating' in an old shippon in Wheelton Plantation on 2nd January with five there on 6th February and two on 6th March.

Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*)

The strongholds continue to be the mosslands in the west of the area and moorland fringes in the east with sightings throughout the year. Away from these areas, three were seen in fields off Coppull Moor Lane on 3rd April and one at Denham Quarry, Whittle on 3rd June was the first sighting by the observer in this vicinity.

There were 33 sightings in the Belmont area with a peak count of nine on 7th June.



Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

The population around Belmont grew rapidly from an estimated 65+ in March to some 400 in late July including 300+ in the Belmont Reservoir area on 25th July. The first young were seen on 17th April and some sub-populations contained several 'piebald' individuals. No outbreaks of myxomatosis were reported in the Belmont area with the population (following control by shooting) reduced to an estimated 200 at the year end.

Away from Belmont, the highest numbers were recorded at Mawdesley Moss, with 10 there on 25th April and 16th July and the same number at Ellerbeck on 10th May. One

with myxomatosis, seen off Lower Burgh Way, Chorley on 27th December, was the only one reported as having the disease.

Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

Common and widespread throughout the area, including members' gardens.

Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting/trapping 90 during the year including 15 adults in eight days from one small copse in May. The cull undertaken annually in the Roddlesworth Plantations in since 2008 was repeated in February 2011 to reduce numbers of this species in those parts of the plantations where widespread bark-stripping to trees & severe damage to nestbox schemes (plus predation of eggs and young) has been rife in previous years. Shooting in conjunction with drey poking resulted in 53 killed giving a density of 1.2 squirrels/hectare, which extrapolated would give a total estimated population of 250 throughout the whole of the Roddlesworth Plantations.

Over 30 were feeding on acorns in one wood near Belmont on 19th November.

Bank Vole (*Clethrionomys glareolus*)

The only record was one in the Walled Orchard at Cuerden Valley Park on 6th April.

Field Vole (*Microtus agrestis*)

One was found dead in a garden at Euxton on 1st May, a sick one was on Croston Finney on 14th August and singles were in a garden at Whittle on 15th September and 19th November.

Described as being super-abundant on fields around Belmont from the autumn onwards with 1000+ estimated in one rough field in December.

Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)

A letter in the local press reported rats were frequently seen in the town centre between the Leisure Centre and Halfords but there were no records from members who live in the town. Three were seen at Cuerden Valley Park picnic area on 25th February, one was in a garden at Whittle on 23rd July and one was found dead near Anglezarke on 25th August.

The number of individuals trapped by gamekeepers at Belmont rose from 112 in 2010 to 323 during 2011. As in 2010, an additional substantial number (estimated at 200+) were poisoned.

Long-tailed Field Mouse / Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*)

Common throughout the year around Belmont with several individuals entering outhouses in the village in the winter. Also occasionally seen in members' gardens where birds are fed and a family was found in a compost bin in a Chorley garden on 10th November.

Stoat (*Mustela erminea*)

There were 21 sightings throughout the year at Belmont, including up to three individuals in ermine in February, March and December. Just four other records received; one running across the former tip at Ellerback on 27th June, one at Cuerden Valley Park picnic area on 9th July, one running along the bank of the River Yarrow at Eccleston on 3rd August and one in Wood Nook Lane, Croston on 29th August.

Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*)

An increase in the number of sightings, twenty in total around Belmont, was undoubtedly due to the abundance of Field Voles and included two together on 1st October. Away from Belmont, just five singles were recorded including a cheeky individual who took fishing bait at Heath Charnock on 15th December.

American Mink (*Mustela vison*)

One was seen in the Kem Mill area of Cuerden Valley Park on 22nd February and a large one was in a drainage ditch on Croston Moss on 27th September. Year round trapping at Belmont resulted in seven killed during the year.

Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

There was a secondhand report of a reliable sighting in Cuerden Valley Park on 16th August and another of a photograph taken of prints seen by the junction of the rivers Douglas and Yarrow being confirmed as this species.

Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

Widespread throughout the area with ones and occasionally two being seen throughout the year, including in members' gardens at Great Knowley where an animal with an injured leg was occasionally seen.

Two were shot at the nationally important gullery at Belmont during May when they appeared intent on raiding the colony.

Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)

A small herd was seen in the Ulmes Walton area on 8th May and there were several sightings of up to four individuals throughout the year near Belmont. These are known to be wanderers from a small semi-domestic population in an adjacent area.

Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)

A good number of sightings were received of a species that seems to be increasing throughout the area and occasionally visits members' gardens at Great Knowley. Maximum counts were seven at Withnell Fold on 30th January, nine at Belmont on 29th January and an impressive seventeen seen there on 10th December.

REPTILES

Common Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*)

The only records received were of singles seen at Belmont on 9th April and 9th July and one at Whittle Hills Quarries on 17th June.

AMPHIBIANS

Smooth Newt (*Triturus vulgaris*)

The earliest one recorded was rescued from the road on its way to the Millennium Pond, Eccleston on 23rd February. Four males and a female were in a garden pond in Euxton on 23rd March whilst the following day some were spotted in the wheel wash at Whittle Quarry.

Palmate Newt (*Triturus helveticus*)

The only ones reported were in a garden pond at Belmont where the maximum seen was five on 24th March.

Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)

The only record was of one found squashed on the road by the corner of Longworth Avenue and Sunny Brow, Coppull on 17th September.

Toad (*Bufo bufo*)



First one at Belmont was seen on 26th February. Totals of freshly dead individuals killed whilst crossing the A675 at Belmont Reservoir included 70 on 27th March, 35 on 3rd April and 65 on 23th April. The only other records received were of one seen in a Chorley garden on 23rd and 29th July. None were seen in the small fishing lodge at Birkacre where they used to occur annually.

Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*)

During the very cold weather at the start of the year, 20 dead ones were removed from a garden pond at Great Knowley on 17th January and a total of 15 had been removed from a garden pond in Euxton by 24th January. However, there were still lots of frogs and spawn in the latter pond during March.

Another member in Euxton kept a record for her garden pond, where the first were heard on 5th February with 14 present on 10th. The first frog spawn appeared on 21st

February and by 27th there was masses of spawn and around 100 frogs. The first spawn hatched on 23rd March.

Likewise, the first were seen in a Belmont garden pond on 5th February. Maximum numbers were seen on 5th March with 130 in a Belmont garden pond and 50+ in one pond at Belmont Reservoir. Over 300 clumps of spawn were later counted at four sites in the Belmont area with 'thousands' of tadpoles present in mid April.

What was described as a 'frog orgy' took place in Cuerden Valley Park on 17th March and several other water bodies in the Chorley area were used for breeding.

Thanks to the following members and forum users who submitted records this year:

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Apologies to anyone I may have missed.

Joyce Riley

FISH REPORT

Although in general fish species and numbers, unlike birds and insects, do not change greatly over short periods of time, given it is 10 years since the last fish report perhaps a further update would be appropriate. As stated in the last report, fish are probably subject to man's intervention more than any other plant or animal and this report mainly concerns itself with those fish species which are self sustaining (i.e. not relying on man to continually re-stock e.g Rainbow Trout, Sterlets etc)

Although in the intervening 10 years commercial fisheries have continued to thrive with new waters being created at regular intervals, this report will concentrate on the fish from the rivers and 'semi-naturalised' lakes, lodges and reservoirs of the area. Probably one of the most positive events has been the completion of the fish passes along the River Yarrow which now allow fish populations, particularly Trout (both 'Brown' and 'Sea') and maybe Salmon, to reach suitable spawning redds. Much credit should go to the Friends of the River Yarrow ('FRY') for their hard work and endeavours in making these improvements possible.

On the downside, serious pollution was experienced in 2002 with major fish kill (and undoubtedly invertebrate kill) along the Yarrow from Foxholes through Euxton and probably as far as Ecclestone. Similar pollution issues have also affected the River Douglas, River Darwen and one or two lodges in the area in the last 10 years.

However, without the involvement of anglers many pollution incidents would go unnoticed and the very presence of anglers on the bank is in itself a deterrent to uncaring industry and landowners. The Environment Agency also plays a major role in preventative work, continually monitoring waters and providing help, advice and re-stocking programmes when required.

All anglers are to some extent naturalists and many anglers are indeed first class naturalists with a wealth of experience and knowledge of waterside wildlife. Their presence at and guardianship of the waterside has ensured over the years that we can all enjoy some of the most beautiful and bio-diverse sites not only in our area but throughout the country.

Class
Order
Family
Sea Lamprey

Marsipobranchii
Petromyzoniformes
Petromyzonidae
Petromyzon marinus

Recorded in recent years by the Environment Agency in the River Yarrow as far upstream as Croston. Sea Lamprey are ancient fish which breed in fresh water and the ammocoete larvae live in the silt for approximately 2 to 5 years before metamorphosing into adults and migrating to the sea. They then return to fresh water after 3 to 4 years to spawn communally and for the whole cycle to begin again. Sea Lamprey are the most oceanic of the Lamprey family with individuals being recorded up to 750 kilometres out in the Atlantic.

Brook Lamprey **Lampetra planeri**

Previously recorded in large numbers in the Goyt and recorded regularly by the Environment Agency in the River Yarrow around Limbrick and in the River Douglas below Horwich. Brook Lamprey live virtually all their lives as ammocoete larvae before metamorphosing into adults over a very short period of time (6 to 8 weeks). The adult Brook Lamprey do not feed in adult form, migrate en-masse to suitable breeding areas, breed communally, then die!

Class **Osteichthyes**
Order **Chodrostei**
Family **Salmonidae**
Atlantic Salmon **Salmo salar**

In previous years recorded on the River Yarrow but passage was impeded by Croston Weir. However, since the installation of fish passes along the length of the Yarrow, fish are very occasionally seen as far upstream as Duxbury – and possibly even further. As far as is known there are no records of successful spawning – or at least there are no records of Salmon Parr or Smolts in the river.

Trout **Salmo trutta**

Stocked in the past for commercial purposes in many rivers and reservoirs and there are still several commercial trout fisheries in the area. In those still waters no longer stocked on a commercial basis the remaining Trout populations have decreased, e.g. Heapey reservoirs and the Anglezarke/Rivington complex. However, since the completion of the fish passes along the River Yarrow the trout population has increased significantly due to the ability of the Trout to move throughout the river to find suitable spawning areas. The perception of those angling the River Yarrow is that this increase in the Trout population has, to some extent, been at the expense of the coarse fish population, which have probably been marginalised by the increasing Trout population in terms of competition for food and predation.

Migratory trout, generally known as 'Sea Trout', but which are exactly the same species as 'Brown' trout, have benefited from the building of the fish passes, with fish being recorded along the length of the River Yarrow and as far upstream as Temple Fields on the Black Brook on the Chorley/Heapey boarder. Additionally, a 'Sea Trout' was recorded excavating a redd in the River Lostock in Cuerden Valley Park some two years ago, although its endeavours were eventually disturbed by a dog jumping into the river.

Order **Ostariophysi**
Family **Cyprinidae**
Minnnow **Phoxinus phoxinus**

This species has suffered in recent years through pollution but of late has been recorded in most areas of the River Yarrow and River Lostock. The species is an important food source for many predatory fish and its return augers well for predatory fish in these rivers.

Gudgeon **Gobio gobio**

Was previously considered common in the Heapey reservoir complex and along the Leeds Liverpool Canal but appears to have declined in the last few years. Any records of this small fish would be most welcome.

Barbel**Barbus barbus**

The fish can now be found in both the lower reaches of the River Douglas, River Yarrow and possibly River Lostock. The appearance of this species is no doubt due to the illegal introduction by anglers wishing to 'improve' the variety of fish present in their fisheries. This species can reach 9 kilos in favourable conditions but to date the largest specimen recorded in these rivers is approximately 2.5 kilo. The introduced fish appear to have found these rivers suitable and evidence of breeding has been seen with smaller fish found in the River Yarrow.

Family**Cobitidae****Stone Loach****Noemacheilus barbatulus**

Recorded in the past in Dean Brook, Rivington but this small fish is not angled for and therefore easily overlooked. However records from the Environment Agency show this small fish to be present in the Rivers Douglas, Yarrow and Lostock and their tributaries.

Order**Apodes****Family****Anguillidae****Eel****Anguilla Anguilla**

Eels can be found throughout the area, often in the most surprising location, but their numbers have fallen dramatically in recent years (possibly as much as 90%+ in last 25 years). Whilst Eels are long lived, often reaching 20 years of age and recorded up to 40 years of age, they face considerable problems in terms of migration and possible parasitological infestation. Whilst Elvers are still recorded annually in our rivers overall Eel populations are significantly reduced and as a result The Environment Agency has issued guidelines to anglers to release all Eels caught. This contrasts considerably with the almost universal practice of anglers 30/40 years ago of killing all Eels caught and most anglers today treat Eels with the utmost care and respect to protect this most enigmatic resident of our lakes and rivers.

Order**Thoracostei****Family****Gasterosteidae****Three-spined Stickleback****Gasterosteus aculeatus**

This tiny fish continues to decline in numbers although it can still be found in many small ponds and also in the River Chor. However, in those waters where it was previous common, eg Leeds Liverpool canal, it would no longer appear to be present. In fact evidence would suggest that it is in those waters that are isolated and contain few or no other fish that populations still remain stable, but there is no scientific evidence to support or explain this general observation. This is almost a parallel story to that of the House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, in the avian world, the population dynamics have changed and, through our so called familiarity, the reasons have to some extent escaped us.

Order**Perciformes****Family****Percidae****Ruffe****Gymnocephalus cernua**

This small fish appears to come and go in cycles, 30 years ago the fish was comparatively rare, then 10 years ago was reasonably common in many waters but now we are back again to years of scarcity. Like their close relation Perch, *Perca*

fluviatilis, Ruffe may suffer from disease but they are also affected by water temperature with particularly cold conditions affecting their survival rates.

Order	Scleroparei
Family	Cottidae
Bullhead	Cottus gobio

This very small fish is rarely caught by anglers but the Environment Agency report that it is found commonly along the rivers Lostock, Douglas and Yarrow and their tributaries. It was formerly found in the Heapey complex of lodges and those at Lower Healey and may well still be present in these waters but just not caught by anglers.

Order	Mugiliformes
Family	Mugilidae
Mullet species	Mugil capito/Mugil labrosus

Whilst Mullet have been recorded in the River Yarrow they are impossible to identify as to the exact species without examination in the hand. Mullet are notoriously difficult to catch and neither anglers nor the Environment Agency have been successful in actually examining a fish. In all probability the species seen are Thin-lipped Mullet, *Mugil capito*, which are generally commoner in the North West, but Thick-lipped Mullet, *Mugil labrosus*, also frequent in fresh/brackish water and are known from north west estuaries etc.

Fish Species (self-sustaining populations) found in Chorley Natural History Society area.

Sea Lamprey – *Petromyzon marinus*; Brook Lamprey – *Lampetra planeri*; Atlantic Salmon – *Salmo salar*; Trout – *Salmo trutta*; Pike - *Esox lucius*; Roach – *Rutilus rutilus*; Dace – *Leuciscus leuciscus*; Chub – *Leuciscus cephalus*; Minnow – *Phoxinus phoxinus*; Rudd – *Scardinius erythrophthalmus*; Tench – *Tinca tinca*; Gudgeon – *Gobio gobio*; Barbel – *Barbus barbus*; Bream – *Abramis ballerus*; Crucian carp – *Carassius carassius*; Goldfish – *Carassius auratus*; Carp – *Cyprinus carpio*; Stone Loach – *Noemacheilus barbatulus*; Eel – *Anguilla Anguilla*; Three-spined Stickleback – *Gasterosteus aculeatus*; Mullet, Thinlipped/Thicklipped – *Mugil capito/labrosus*; Perch – *Perca fluviatilis*; Ruffe – *Gymnocephalus cernua*; Bullhead – *Cottus gobio*; Flounder – *Platichthys flesus*

Brian Derbyshire