

**CHORLEY & DISTRICT  
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

*Chorley & District Natural History Society*

*is a Registered Charity*

*Registration Number 513466*

**ANNUAL REPORT**

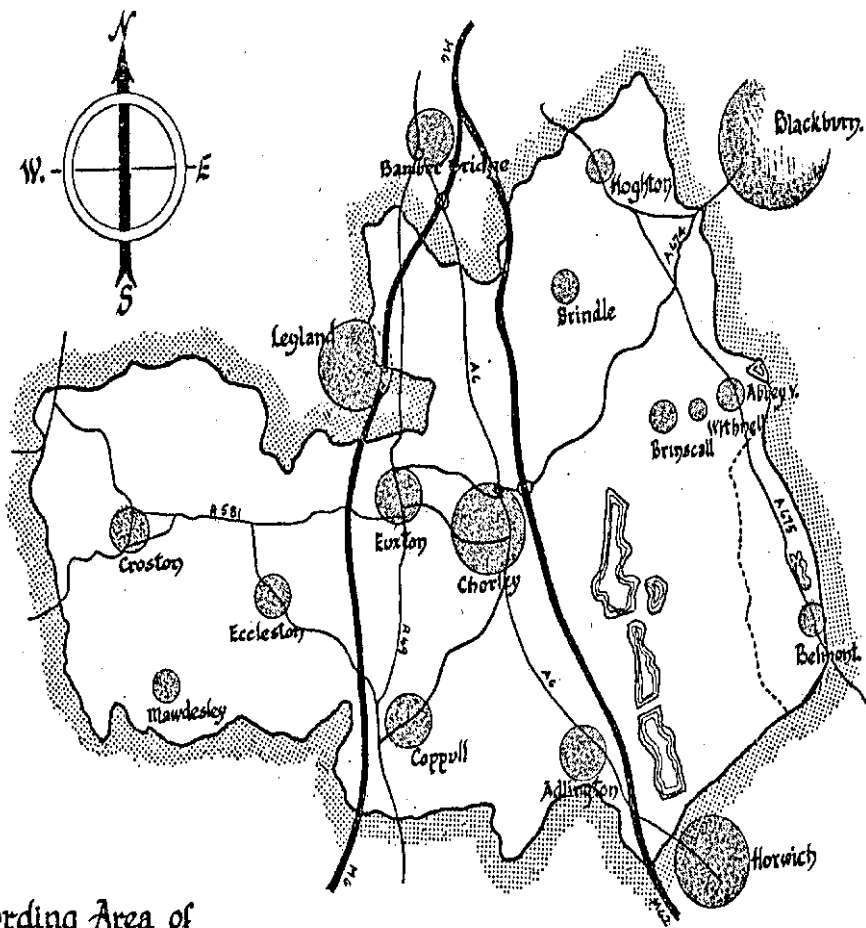
**2012**

**Editor**

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

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## 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 first two weeks of **January** were mild and unsettled with some stormy weather in the first week and a high of 10°C on the 8<sup>th</sup>. High pressure then took over for a few days with fine, dry days and frosty nights with lows of -2° and highs of 4°C. The weather turned unsettled again from 17<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> with a thoroughly wet day on the 20<sup>th</sup> and a maximum temperature of 10°C on the 25<sup>th</sup>. High pressure then reasserted itself with dry, cold days and frosty nights and lows of -2°C. Our first evening talk of the year was given by Mark Champion about his work in converting Wigan Flashes into a Bittern friendly nature reserve. Before that we had a post Christmas ramble around Mawdesley and Croston Moss. It was a good month for scarcer bird species including White-fronted Geese on the mosses, a Great White Egret at Anglezarke Reservoir and six Snow Buntings on Winter Hill.

**February** began with sunny but frosty weather and a low of -4°C on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, followed by light snow on the 4<sup>th</sup>, then more fine, but frosty weather until the 11<sup>th</sup>, when milder weather arrived. This lasted for a week and was also mainly dry with just occasional light rain and a maximum of 10°C on the 17<sup>th</sup>. A frosty start on the 19<sup>th</sup> was followed by a sunny day, but it became mild and unsettled again from 20<sup>th</sup> to the end of the month, but with a fine Spring-like day on the 23<sup>rd</sup> with a maximum of 13°C. In the field we followed up January's talk with a visit to Wigan Flashes, where we were lucky enough to see a Smew. Locally, scarce birds recorded included Knot at Belmont Reservoir and Hen Harrier on the mosses. Our evening talk was 'Seagulls to Eagles' given by Peter Smith.

The first two weeks of **March** were also fine and sunny with a maximum of 13°C, but a band of rain on the 3<sup>rd</sup> was followed by three cold and frosty days. Milder weather then returned with a few drizzly days followed by several days of anti-cyclonic gloom until the sun finally broke through on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The high pressure and dry, fine weather continued to the end of the month with a week of glorious, sunny weather from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> and highs of 21°C on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Our evening talk was a little different, being an Underwater Safari of Morecambe Bay by Gordon Fletcher. An Osprey, seen at the E-shaped Pond was the first of several sightings of the species passing through the area in Spring.

**April** started off with a fine, sunny day but the weather immediately turned unsettled with a stormy night between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, then a sharp frost on the 5<sup>th</sup>. The unsettled, showery theme continued until the 12<sup>th</sup>, which was a sunny day with a maximum of 12°C. The mixed pattern of weather with a predominantly easterly airflow continued until the 29<sup>th</sup>, which was a filthy day by any standards – very wet, very windy and very cold with a maximum of 5°C. The next day was warm and sunny with a maximum of 16°C. Indoors we had an informative talk by Steve Palmer on Lancashire Moths. Outdoors, the Annual Bird Race took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of the month. A White Stork was seen near the canal at Whittle.

The first week of **May** was dry with a particularly sunny day on the 2<sup>nd</sup> with a maximum of 17°C. Rain arrived on the 7<sup>th</sup> heralding two weeks of a mixture of rain and sunshine with a best temperature of 15°C on the 10<sup>th</sup>. The next 10 days were warm and sunny with a maximum of 25°C from 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>. However, the month

ended with a much cooler, wet day on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Our first evening walk was around the reservoirs at Roddlesworth in overcast conditions, but we did see a couple of Common Sandpiper and a roding Woodcock. A Little Egret was seen at Anglezarke Reservoir.

**June** was an unsettled month from start to finish. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> were all shockers and often cold with a maximum of 10°C on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The 4<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> were the only unreservedly fine days, although the top temperature of 22°C was achieved on the 28<sup>th</sup>, which was a day of thundery showers. The evening walk was to Mawdesley Moss, hoping for Quail. Again it was an overcast evening with drizzle, and the Quail failed to materialize, but we did see a family of Little Owls.

**July** was also unsettled throughout, with a month's rain falling in a day on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Dry, sunny days were limited to 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, when the highest maximum of 23°C was achieved. The daytime maximum temperature was less than 20°C on no fewer than 23 days. Despite July's poor weather we did manage a fine evening for our visit to Chisnall. Undoubted highlight was a Hobby passing through

The unsettled theme continued through the first week of **August** with some rain every day. The 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> gave us 4 days of summer and a maximum of 23°, but the the unsettled weather returned with rain on most bays and a real shocker on Bank Holiday Monday when it rained all day with a maximum temperature of only 14°C. Best temperature during the month was 24°C on the 14<sup>th</sup>, which was one of the few sunny days. Last evening walk of the summer was a walk around the Whittle countryside. Best birds of the month were probably the Bar-tailed Godwit seen at Lower Rivington Reservoir.

The first week of **September** was mainly dry, sunny and warm with a maximum of 21°C on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Heavy rain arrived on the 10<sup>th</sup> and the weather became more unsettled and cooler. With the exception of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, which was a glorious, sunny day, the rest of the month was unsettled with a period of persistent rain from the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup> until mid-morning on the 26<sup>th</sup>. The best temperature in this period was 20°C on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the lowest was 10°C on the 25<sup>th</sup>. For the start of the new indoor season, Steve Halliwell took us on a tour of the lesser known Hebridean Islands. Our field trip was a visit to the Pinetum at Rivington, which also served as a fungal foray. A Black Redstart was recorded on Winter Hill.

The first five days of **October** were typified by sunshine and showers, which were then followed by four sunny days with a maximum of 13°C. The 11<sup>th</sup> was wet, but was followed by three fine but cool days. Cool, wet weather with a maximum of 8°C followed for the next three days, before the wind turned south-westerly and introduced warmer air and sunny days from 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> with a maximum of 15°C. High pressure continued to dominate for the next five days, but the wind turned easterly and it became cold and overcast. The skies cleared on the 27<sup>th</sup>, when a sunny day followed a frosty start. The last four days of the month were unsettled and cold. Our field trip was a visit to Leighton Moss which coincided with the opening of a new hide at the Eric Morecambe pools. Indoors, Gordon Yates treated us to his 'World of Birds'. Visible migration watches at Rivington recorded Crossbill and Twite amongst other more common species.

The first three days of **November** were cold and showery with a maximum of 6°C. The next two days were sunny after frost with a minimum of -2°C and a maximum of 8°C. The next three weeks were unsettled with just the odd fine day. Lowest maximum was 7°C on several dates and the best was 14°C on the 20<sup>th</sup>. High pressure took over for the last three days with frosty nights and sunny days, with a minimum of -4°C and a maximum of +4°C. Our evening talk was on Lancashire Wildlife given by Jim Clift. Waxwings arrived in numbers in what would turn out to be an invasion year, following the previous winter's blank.

The first two weeks of **December** were characterized by a battle between high pressure and a few weak fronts. Frost occurred on 10 days with a minimum of -3°C, but rain fell on the 8<sup>th</sup> with a highest maximum of 8°C. The second half of the month was very unsettled with no frost and only two dry days. Best temperature was 10°C on the 28<sup>th</sup> and the typical was 6° or 7°C. In the field we had a good morning at Pennington Flash, albeit in somewhat icy conditions. Locally, Waxwings continued to arrive, and Whooper Swans were seen regularly on the mosses.

During the year as a whole, the Society was represented on Advisory Groups for both Astley Park and Yarrow Valley Park. At the latter we were involved in the construction of a feeding station and of a second tern raft. We also contributed to the forthcoming BTO and Lancashire Bird Atlases, by validating local records following completion of survey work. Ongoing survey work included the annual rookery census, and the monthly winter wildfowl counts. Data from the latter are also contributed to the BTO's WeBs Survey. The committee has also examined planning applications insofar as they may have an impact on wildlife, and submitted comments to the council where appropriate. The committee has also considered the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 and submitted comments on relevant issues.

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. Several images – particularly of butterflies have also been supplied by Phil Kirk.

**Neil Southworth (Editor)**

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Society activities have continued to be well supported, although in the case of field outings this support tends to be the same knot of members with a few occasional new faces. Tony Dunn has taken over the role of Programme Secretary and the speakers he has chosen have so far been a great success. Long may it continue! In December we revived the concept of a Members' Evening, and I think that the event was enjoyed by all. The Photographic Competition attracted some really excellent work and the presentations given by members were varied in content and of a uniformly very high standard.

The hard fact remains that membership numbers have declined slowly in recent years and that the core of long time members is inevitably an ageing one. For example, when the society began in 1979, I was one of many members aged between our mid-twenties and forty. At that time we even had a scattering of junior members – mostly children of full members (and so included in the lists of Family members).

I give these membership figures as an example of what I see as a problem. The totals assume that a Family membership comprises two persons:

	Dec 1991			Dec 2011		
Adult	34			32		
Family	37	Total sub 65's	108	16	Total sub 65's	64
Senior	18			36		
Senior Family	15	Total over 65's	48	16	Total over 65's	68

From these figures one can see that 20 years ago only 48 of the total 156 members (30%) admitted to having passed their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. Now the total is 68 of 132 members (51.5%).

My point is that we need new members. If we wish to continue to be the active group which we have been for the last 32 years, then it behoves each one of us to try our best to encourage newcomers.

The committee at the end of 2012 comprised:

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

**Phil Kirk**

## FLORA REPORT

This year, as we all know, has been the second wettest this century, though I cannot remember 2000 being that bad. Records have been sparse except for the two faithful recorders who reliably send their sightings to me. We did have two very early sightings of Lesser Celandine on January 1<sup>st</sup> and Butterbur on January 21<sup>st</sup>. The scarcity of rain up to March meant we were able to note most of the early flowers:- snowdrops, coltsfoot, wood anemone, wood sorrel and golden saxifrage. The rest of the 'summer' made up for this with an almost non-stop deluge until October. The results of this were seen in autumn when acorns and horse chestnuts were in almost famine proportions. I think I saw two horse chestnuts and four acorns in the whole of Cuerden Valley Park. We had an early appearance of snowdrops on December 27<sup>th</sup> near Kem Mill. Most of the year has been notable for diseases affecting two sorts of trees.

Larch has suffered from *Phytophthora ramorum*. This is a fungus like pathogen which thrives in the kind of wet weather we have endured this year. It is the disease that produces "sudden oak death". Sadly the only treatment to prevent this disease from killing millions more larch trees is to fell the infected trees as quickly as possible, before they can produce the spores that can be spread by wind and mist to affect more trees. Many at Cuerden Valley Park have had to be felled.

Another problem was *Chalara* dieback of ash. It is a serious disease of ash trees caused by a fungus called *Chalara fraxinea*, including its sexual stage *Hymenoscyphus pseudoalbidus*. The disease causes leaf loss and crown dieback in affected trees and usually leads to death. Several tree experts in this country had been warning of the dangers of using imported trees, but as usual they were ignored. At the time of writing (early 2013) there have been no reports of any infected trees in the Chorley area. Government scientists have set out the most up-to-date understanding of the disease. Their assessment agreed with an earlier Pest Risk Analysis carried out in August and concluded that:

- The spores are unlikely to survive more than a few days
- Spore dispersal on the wind is possible from Europe
- Trees need a high dose of spores to become infected
- The spores are produced from infected dead leaves during the months of June to September
- There is a low probability of dispersal on clothing or animals and birds
- The disease will attack any species of ash
- The disease becomes obvious in trees within months rather than years
- Wood products would not spread the disease if treated properly
- Once infected, trees cannot be cured
- Not all trees die of the infection and some are likely to have natural resistance to the disease

It appears that the best long-term solution for managing ash dieback in the UK may be identifying and breeding from ash trees that show natural resistance to the disease.

**David Beattie**



## FUNGI REPORT

It was a poor year in general for fungi, probably due to the cool wet summer. This was reflected in the number of photographs of fungi placed on the forum of the society's website and the number of records submitted. No record was received of some of the usually common and easily identifiable species such as Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*).

Early fungi included Scarlet Elf cups (*Sarcoscypha austriaca*), which seem to be continuing to spread throughout the area with sightings reported from 16<sup>th</sup> February to 17<sup>th</sup> March and from two new areas, Mawdesley Moss and Belmont. Another colourful species, Yellow Brain (*Tremella mesenterica*), was seen at Birkacre on 23<sup>rd</sup> February and also a day later at Great Knowley.

The North West Fungus Group (NWFG) held a foray in Duxbury Woods on 11<sup>th</sup> March and their expert eyes found 68 species. Although most of the fungi were growing on wood, these included the larger 'mushroom types' (Agarics) Velvet shank (*Flammulina velutipes*) and surprisingly early Sulphur Tuft (*Hypholoma fasciculare*). The group held another foray in our area at Roddlesworth on 13<sup>th</sup> May and found several interesting microspecies but as expected, there were few Agarics at this time of year. Several Myxomycetes were in evidence as the damp conditions suited them. Also of interest was the first record for the society of Beeswax Bracket (*Ganoderma pfeifferi*) that is similar to the common Southern Bracket (*G. adspersum*) which was also recorded, but with a yellowish waxy coating on the upper surface.



A member posted photographs of a clump of St. George's Mushrooms (*Calocybe gambosa*) growing at the base of a pine tree in Adlington Cemetery on 13<sup>th</sup> May and a fine specimen of Chicken of the Woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) found by Heapey Lodges on 20<sup>th</sup> June. The latter species was also found on a tree by the canal at Withnell Fold on 1<sup>st</sup> September.



On a walk on the Chisnall Reclamation Site at Coppull on 5<sup>th</sup> July, two small Magic Mushrooms (*Psilocybe semilanceata*) were spotted growing in a field but a group of Egghead Mottlegill (*Panaeolus semiovatus*) on a patch of horse dung along Chisnall Lane was much more conspicuous. On 14<sup>th</sup> August, I was shown a recently taken photo of a cluster of Bird's Nest fungi growing on an old Hebe stump in a garden at Mawdesley. Although identification wasn't positive from

just a small photo, it was most likely to be the Common Bird's Nest (*Crucibulum laeve*).

Dr Irene Ridge, Chair of the North West Fungus Group, led a fungal foray for the 'Friends' in Cuerden Valley Park on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Growing in the grassland by the Walled Orchard were Yellow Club and the related Meadow Coral (*Clavulinopsis helvola* & *C. corniculata*), giving a good opportunity for comparison of the two species. By the path in Ice House Wood were fine specimens of Orange Peel Fungus (*Aleuria aurantia*), which together with a selection of Brittleghills, Poison Pies and Earthballs, etc on the ground and several species on wood, made an interesting foray.

Due to the poor Autumn season for fungi, the society's walk at Rivington on 29<sup>th</sup> September was a combined fungal foray and visit to the Pinetum. On the way to the Pinetum, a Beech tree that had been felled several years ago and usually has interesting fungi growing on it, didn't let us down this year with eight species being identified. These included both Glistening and Fairy Inkcaps (*Coprinus micaceus* & *C. disseminatus*) and Sheathed Woodtuft (*Kuehneromyces mutabilis*). Unfortunately, no fungi at all were found in the Pinetum itself but the trees were interesting!



Photographs on the forum in the autumn included White Saddle (*Helvella crispa*) on 26<sup>th</sup> September and Collared Earthstars (*Geastrum triplex*) on 27<sup>th</sup> September and 7<sup>th</sup> October at Birkacre. Also photographed was a large Shaggy Parasol (*Macrolepiota rhacodes*) growing by the River Yarrow at Pincok on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

A member of the NWFG, Tony bond, who volunteered to take part in the West Pennine Moors Survey for Waxcaps as part of the data gathering for possible designation of SSSI status, was allocated the Cricket Field at White Coppice and the nearly grassland area by number 8 lodge, known as The Lowe, to survey. On his first survey on 18th October the waxcaps were only just appearing on the cricket field and four species were identified. The situation had improved by the second visit on 1<sup>st</sup> November when seven species were recorded. On 14<sup>th</sup> November, the final survey for 2012 produced the only species for The Lowe, Heath Waxcap (*Hygrocybe laeta*), whilst the four species found on the cricket field added another one for that site giving a total of eight, these being *Hygrocybe ceracea*, *H. chlorophana*, *H. coccinea*, *H. irrigata*, *H. pratensis*, *H. punicea*,



*H. reidii* and *H. virginea*. The minimum number needed for SSSI designation is ten. In the year 2000 when I invited Lancashire County Council's former ecologist, Richard Thompson to look at the cricket field, we recorded nine species including four species, *H. calyptriformis*, *H. laeta*, *H. miniata*, *H. psittinicina*, not recorded there in 2012 so hopefully, if funding is available for further surveys in future years, the critical figure of ten can be achieved and the cricket field, that is already a LCC Biological Heritage Site for fungi, will qualify for SSSI status.

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, Tony Dunn, Chris and Tony Johnson, Phil Kirk, Gary Lilley, Stephen Martin, Leonard Poxon, Joyce Riley, Neil Southworth, Mervyn Thornhill, and Nora West.

Apologies to anyone I may have missed.

Thank you also to NWFG for records from the Group's forays at Duxbury and Roddlesworth and Tony Bond for results of his Waxcap Survey at White Coppice.

**Joyce Riley**

# INVERTEBRATE REPORT

## LEPIDOPTERA

### Moth Species:

My thanks go to the Lancashire Moth Group ([www.lancashiremoths.co.uk](http://www.lancashiremoths.co.uk)) for providing information about moths trapped in the Chorley recording area in 2011. Special thanks to Peter Krischkiw who provided the vast majority of records this year.

New species added to the local moth list in 2012 were:

Monopis laevigella	Skin Moth
Sesia bembeciformis	Lunar Hornet Moth
Argyresthia bonnetella	
Elachista atricomella	
Elachista subalbidella	
Bryotropha affinis	
Pseudargyrotoza conwagana	
Rhopobota naevana	Holly Tortrix
Dichrorampha acuminatana	
Dipleurina lacustrata	

### Butterfly Species:

#### Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*)

Large numbers were recorded at Belmont during August. As many as 50 being counted on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, then 30 on 12<sup>th</sup>. The overall status locally seems healthy with sightings between 7<sup>th</sup> July at Withnell Fold and 20<sup>th</sup> August at Cuerden.

#### Large Skipper (*Ochlodes venata*)

The highest count was again at Belmont on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, when 10 were seen. Otherwise it was recorded in low numbers from various sites between 12<sup>th</sup> June at Hich Bibi and 12<sup>th</sup> August at Belmont. Not long ago I thought the species was under threat locally. It is pleasing to see it being more widely reported in recent years.

#### Brimstone (*Goepteryx rhamni*)

A poor year, with only 2 records. One was seen at Birkacre on 21st May and a further two near white Coppice on 25<sup>th</sup> May.

#### Large White (*Pieris brassica*)

Very common throughout the area. Large numbers were reported at Cuerden on 11<sup>th</sup> August (50 counted). The species flew for a few weeks in May then from 15<sup>th</sup> July until 22<sup>nd</sup> September. It is seen in all parts of the area.



### **Small White** (*Pieris rapae*)

Along with the previous species, it was seen in large numbers at Cuerden on 11<sup>th</sup> August (40 counted). There was a cluster of early records in the warmth of March and the last record was in Chorley on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Green Veined White** (*Peiris napi*)

There were two fairly distinct generations with a gap between 14<sup>th</sup> June and 27<sup>th</sup> July. Large numbers were seen at Belmont with over 100 feeding on thistles on 5<sup>th</sup> August. Away from Belmont, the high count was only 8 at Cuerden in 20<sup>th</sup> August. The first record was at Adlington on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and the last was at Withnell Fold on 1st September.

### **Orange Tip** (*Anthrocharis cardamines*)

The high temperatures of March produced ridiculously early records for the species. It was seen at Spring Wood on March 26<sup>th</sup> and the following day at Coppull. These are the first March dates for the species locally. Belmont once again supplied the excitement with a high count of 55 on 26<sup>th</sup> May. The last record was for 2 insects seen at Hic Bibi on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

### **Green Hairstreak** (*Callophrys rubi*)

A poor year, with only 3 records received. Individuals were seen at Belmont on 6<sup>th</sup> May, White Coppice on 14<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Purple Hairstreak** (*Quercusia quercus*)

Counts of 11 were made at sites in Belmont on 30<sup>th</sup> July and 9<sup>th</sup> August. No records from elsewhere in the area.

### **White Letter Hairstreak** (*Satyrrium w-album*)

This species was recorded at Cuerden on 14<sup>th</sup> July when two adults were seen and then on 9<sup>th</sup> August at Duxbury when a single adult was seen.

### **Small Copper** (*Lacaena phlaeas*)

A very poor year for the species. It was seen on only 4 occasions. The first was at Cuerden on 21<sup>st</sup> May and the last in Euxton on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.



### **Common Blue** (*Polyommatus icarus*)

The Spring generation was reported from Adlington and Hic Bibi between 29<sup>th</sup> May and 14<sup>th</sup> June. The summer generation flew between 2<sup>nd</sup> August and 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Numbers were generally low with a count of 7 at Rawlinson Lane Adlington on 29<sup>th</sup> May being the greatest.

### **Holly Blue** (*Celastrina argiolus*)

Although its emergence was a little later than 2011, this species was widely reported in its spring generation. It was seen at a total of 10 locations between 2<sup>nd</sup> of May (Belmont) and 18<sup>th</sup> June (Chorley). Thereafter it re-emerged on 11<sup>th</sup> August and was seen last in a Chorley garden on 29<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Red Admiral** (*Vanessa atalanta*)

2012 was a truly miserable year for the Red Admiral. This once abundant species has been in something of a decline locally in recent years. 2012 provided no early records at all. It flew from 17<sup>th</sup> June (Croston Finney) until 8<sup>th</sup> October (Euxton). It was only ever recorded in ones and twos.

### **Painted Lady** (*Cynthia cardui*)

Only two sightings of this migrant. First was at Hic Bibi on 1<sup>st</sup> June and the other at Belmont on 30<sup>th</sup> June. Disappointing, but migrant species can be so for a few years and then bounce back. Lets hope so.

### **Small Tortoiseshell** (*Aglais urticae*)

Unlike the Red Admiral, this species seems to have overwintered successfully. There were frequent sightings in the second half of March (while the good weather lasted) and into April and May. The late summer generation flew until 23<sup>rd</sup> October when an individual was seen at Belmont. Large numbers were present at Belmont in August and September, with a maximum count of 55 on 5<sup>th</sup> August.

### **The Peacock** (*Inachis io*)

This species, like the previous one, must have overwintered successfully as it was seen on the very early date of 26<sup>th</sup> February (Spring Wood). Then from 11<sup>th</sup> March until the end of May it was seen throughout the area on many occasions. The summer generation emerged on 9<sup>th</sup> August when it was seen in Chorley and Euxton gardens. It was then flying until 21<sup>st</sup> October (Chorley garden). Modest numbers were seen at several sites with maximum counts of 14 in a Chorley garden on 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> August. An adult was observed hibernating at Belmont on 11<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Comma** (*Polygonia c-album*)

There were only 3 sightings in March relating to overwintered insects. On 25<sup>th</sup> March it was seen in Belmont and Copthurst, and on the 26<sup>th</sup> at Euxton. The summer generation flew from 12<sup>th</sup> July (Dob Brow) until 21<sup>st</sup> October (Chorley). No large counts were reported.

### **Speckled Wood** (*Pararge aegeria tircis*)

The Speckled Wood was reported throughout the area more or less continuously from 15<sup>th</sup> April (Croston Finney) until 7<sup>th</sup> October (Belmont). However, it was less often reported than in recent years. The maximum count was 8 at Belmont on 26<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Wall Brown** (*Lassiommat megera*)

A sighting of a single insect at Rivington on 8<sup>th</sup> September was the only record this year. A great cause for concern.

### **Gatekeeper** (*Pyronia tithonus*)

Huge numbers were reported at Belmont, with as many as 900 estimated feeding on thistles on 2<sup>nd</sup> August. Its flight period was from 22<sup>nd</sup> July (Shaw Green) until 3<sup>rd</sup> September (Wymott).



### **Meadow Brown** (*Maniola jurtina*)

Estimated 300 feeding along with the Gatekeepers at Belmont on 2<sup>nd</sup> August. It flew from 6<sup>th</sup> May (White Coppice) until 26<sup>th</sup> August (Belmont).

### **Small Heath** (*Coenonympha pamphilus*)

After a good year in 2011, it was back to normal in 2012. Only 3 records received. Two records of singles at Belmont (17<sup>th</sup> June and 22<sup>nd</sup> July) and one record of 2 insects at White Coppice on 5<sup>th</sup> July.

## **ODONATA**

Species recorded this year were:

### **ZYGOPTERA** (Damselflies)

#### **Banded Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx splendens*)

The species seems to be present on most of the major local watercourses, including the Leeds Liverpool Canal. Good numbers were reported from the mosslands in the west of the area. The flight period was 21<sup>st</sup> May (Cuerden) until 18<sup>th</sup> August (Withnell Fold).

#### **Emerald Damselfly** (*Lestes sponsa*)

The estimated count at Belmont was a remarkable 310 on 5<sup>th</sup> August. This continues to be the place to see the species locally, although it was also present at Hic Bibi, Healey Nab and Wymott. The flight period was 8<sup>th</sup> July until 9<sup>th</sup> September (both dates relate to Belmont records).



#### **Large Red Damselfly** (*Pyrhosoma nymphula*)

Although reported from most local Odonata sites, it was never seen in high numbers. The maximum count was 8 at Cuerden on 21<sup>st</sup> May – which was also the earliest date. The insect flew until 12<sup>th</sup> August (Belmont).

#### **Blue Tailed Damselfly** (*Ischnura elegans*)

Records were received from 21<sup>st</sup> May until 20<sup>th</sup> August (both dates at Cuerden), giving this species a slightly shorter flight period than the other two “blue” species found locally. The highest numbers reported were at Withnell Fold where over 100 were estimated on 27<sup>th</sup> July. It is also frequent and numerous at Belmont.

#### **Azure Damselfly** (*Coenagrion puella*)

The first date was 23<sup>rd</sup> May (Cuerden) and the last the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September (at Wymott). Large numbers were seen at the pond by the Gillibrand bypass on 14<sup>th</sup> June.

**Common Blue Damsel** (*Enallagma cyathigerum*)

Healey Nab, Withnell Fold and Belmont all produced good numbers of the species. Counts in excess of 100 were reported from the first two of these sites in late July. Flight time was 21<sup>st</sup> May (Cuerden) until 8<sup>th</sup> September (Belmont)

**ANISOPTERA (Dragonflies)**

**Southern Hawker** (*Aeshna cyanea*)

A miserable 4 records for the species in 2012. It was first seen at Charnock Richard Golf Course on 9<sup>th</sup> August. In September it was seen at Astley Park on 1<sup>st</sup> and Belmont on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Brown Hawker** (*Aeshna grandis*)

As usual, this was the most frequently recorded species locally. It flew from 7<sup>th</sup> July until 7<sup>th</sup> October with reports from most parts of the area. Highest numbers were seen at Cuerden and on the Golf Course at Charnock Richard. Hic Bibi is also a reliable site.

**Common Hawker** (*Aeshna juncea*)

*A. juncea* was seen at only 3 sites in 2012. The flight period was 4<sup>th</sup> August to 7<sup>th</sup> October, with no more than 2 insects recorded at any time.

**Migrant Hawker** (*Aeshna mixta*)

In August (9<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>) it showed up in the gardens of members in Chorley and Euxton. In September there were reports from the Gillibrand Link pond (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Hic Bibi (13<sup>th</sup>).

**Emperor Dragonfly** (*Anax imperator*)

Seen at Hic Bibi, Healey Nab and Belmont. Surprisingly there were no records from Cuerden this year. First date was 26<sup>th</sup> June and the last the 13<sup>th</sup> August.

**Four-spotted Chaser** (*Libellula quadrimaculata*)

The flight time for this species was 21<sup>st</sup> May until 18<sup>th</sup> July. It was seen at five sites, but never in great numbers.

**Broad-bodied Chaser** (*Libellula depressa*)

2011 was disappointing for this species but this year was better. It was seen at 8 sites between 26<sup>th</sup> May and 16<sup>th</sup> August.

**Black Tailed Skimmer** (*Orthetrum cancellatum*)

No records since 2009.

**Black Darter** (*Sympetrum danae*)

Belmont and Healey Nab are the places to see this species locally. The highest count was at Belmont on 12<sup>th</sup> August when 9 were reported. It also occurs at Ellerbeck. First date 3<sup>rd</sup> August (Ellerbeck). Last date 15<sup>th</sup> September (Belmont).



**Ruddy Darter** (*Sympetrum sanguineum*)

I had to re-check to believe it, but the insect seen at Withnell Fold on 1<sup>st</sup> September was the first record since 2004.

**Common Darter** (*Sympetrum striolatum*)

Seen at most of the sites from which Odonata records are received. Its flight period was 8<sup>th</sup> July until 23<sup>rd</sup> September (both at Hic Bibi). There was a count of 10 at Cuerden on 20<sup>th</sup> August but otherwise no high numbers.

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

D.Barker, D.Beattie, D.Beevers, J.Cobham, D.Downing, T.Dunn, K.Haydock, D.Holland, C.Johnson, P.Krischkiw, E.Langrish, G.Lilley, D.S.Martin, S.J.Martin, S.Palmer, L.Poxon, C.Rae, R.W.Rhodes, J.Riley, L.Rose, N.Southworth, C.Stones, T.Stones, N.West, P.West, T.West, P.Whittaker, I.Whittle, C.Wood and to the members of the Lancashire Moth Group.

My apologies to anyone I may have missed.

Flight periods of Dragonfly species recorded in 2012								
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234
Calopteryx splendens			xx	xx	xxx.	xxx		
Lestes sponsa					xx	xx x	xx	
Pyrrhosoma nymphula			xx	x x	...x	x		
Ischnura elegans			. x	..x	xxxx	xxx		
Coenagrion puella			x	xxx	x...	xxx	x	
Enallagma cyathigerum			..x	x	xxxx	xxxx	x	
Aeschna cyanea						..x	xx	
Aeshna grandis					xxxx	xxx	xx x	x
Aeshna juncea						xxx	xx	x
Aeshna mixta						xxx	x x	
Anax imperator				x	x x	x		
Libellula depressa			x	xxxx	x x	xx		
Libellula quadrimaculata			xx	xx	xx			
Sympetrum sanguineum				x			x	
Sympetrum danae					xx	xxxx	x xx	
Sympetrum striolatum						xx	xxx	

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 xx	xxx		
Large Skipper					x x	xxxx	xx		
Brimstone				xx					
Large White				xxxx		xx	xxxx	xxxx	
Small White		x	x	xxxx	xx	xx	xxxx	x	
Green Veined White				xxxx	xx	x	xxxx	x	
Orange Tip		x	xx	xxxx	x				
Green Hairstreak				xx x					
Purple Hairstreak						x	x		
White Letter Hairs/k						x	x		
Small Copper				x			xx x		
Common Blue				x	xx		xx x	x	
Holly Blue				xx x	x		xx	x	
Red Admiral					x	xxx	x x	x x	xx
Painted Lady					x x				
Small Tortoiseshell		xx	x	xxxx	xx	xxxx	xxxx	xxx	xxxx
The Peacock	x	x x	xx	xxxx			xxx	xxx	x
The Comma		x				x x	xxx	x	xxx
Speckled Wood			x	xx x	x x	x x	xxx	xx x	x
The Wall								x	
The Gatekeeper						x	xxxx	x	
Meadow Brown				x x	x	xxxx	xxxx		
Small Heath					x	x x			

Phil Kirk

## **BIRD REPORT**

### **Introduction**

A total of 161 species, including escapes, was recorded this year, one more than last year's excellent total! Rarities included Little and Great White Egret and White Stork, all of which were unfortunately single observer sightings. Other scarce species seen included Common Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Red Kite, Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit and Hawfinch.

**Neil Southworth (Records Secretary)**

### **Mute Swan** (*Cygnus olor*)

#### ***Uncommon but increasing breeding bird***

The resident pair in Yarrow Valley Park had 4 young by 9<sup>th</sup> May, but the pair at Lower Healey failed in suspicious circumstances. A new pair in Astley Park gave up trying to hatch their eggs, which were presumably infertile, as one of the pair was still immature.

One was at Park Hall Lake, Charnock Richard on 6<sup>th</sup> July. A pair summered on Common Bank Lodge.

One of the cygnets at Yarrow Valley Park perished to fishing line on 7<sup>th</sup> August.

Three dropped onto Upper Rivington Reservoir on 29<sup>th</sup> September, but didn't stay. Wandering family groups in October included one of two adults and 5 juveniles on the River Douglas at Croston (6<sup>th</sup>) and another of 2 adults and 3 juveniles which landed on one of the flash pools at Withnell Fold (20<sup>th</sup>).

The family of Mute Swans at Yarrow Valley Park went on a training flight in early November, but unfortunately one of the juveniles didn't return. Happily, it found its own way back about 10 days later. A juvenile Mute Swan which turned up on Brinscall Lodge on the 13<sup>th</sup> had been ringed at a site in Rochdale.

In December, two adult and two juvenile Mute Swans arrived at Yarrow Valley Park, but were only tolerated for a few days by the resident male.

### **Whooper Swan** (*Cygnus cygnus*)

#### ***Occasional winter visitor***

A flock of 26 flew over Mawdesley Moss on 8<sup>th</sup> January.

Sightings in October were limited to 21 over Croston Moss (13<sup>th</sup>), 22 east over Belmont (27<sup>th</sup>) and 3 over Lower Rivington Reservoir (27<sup>th</sup>).

A couple of flocks totalling 67 birds were seen over Croston Moss on the 11<sup>th</sup> November. In December, 15 flew over the site on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7 on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 24 on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Pink-footed Goose** (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

***Mainly recorded on passage during the winter months. Some feral birds occur usually with Canada Geese.***

Three small skeins totaling less than 30 flew west and north over Belmont on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> January. On 12<sup>th</sup> January 20 flew West over Rivington, on 14<sup>th</sup> 160 also flew West over Jepsons Clough and then on 15<sup>th</sup> three skeins (300, 200, 300) were again over Jepsons Clough going Northwest. A flock of 300 was feeding on Croston Moss on 11<sup>th</sup> January, and this had increased to 1500 by the end of the month. Around 1000 were seen feeding on the moss on 6<sup>th</sup> February, but just two were there by 8<sup>th</sup> March. However, up to 3 birds were seen around the mosses until 16<sup>th</sup> April.

Return in Autumn was early with a skein of 14 over Eccleston (7<sup>th</sup> September), a small skein over Ulnes Walton (11<sup>th</sup>), skeins of 34 and 90 over Croston Moss (15<sup>th</sup>) and 100 and 60 over Eccleston (28<sup>th</sup>). Two nocturnal skeins were heard heading west over Belmont on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.

Skeins of Pink-footed Geese were recorded throughout October with most sightings over Eccleston and Croston, but 200 flew over Cuerden Valley Park (12<sup>th</sup>) and a significant southerly movement took place across the area on the 27<sup>th</sup>. In the east 120 flew west over Jepsons Clough (8<sup>th</sup>), 250 flew west over Belmont (9<sup>th</sup>), 53 flew east over Belmont (19<sup>th</sup>), and two skeins totalling 220 flew east over Belmont on 27<sup>th</sup>.

In November, skeins of Pink-footed Geese continued to be seen, and flocks of 30 (10<sup>th</sup>), 300 (11<sup>th</sup>) and 200 (17<sup>th</sup>) were seen feeding on Croston Moss. A skein of 60 sought refuge on Belmont Reservoir during a violent hail-storm (2<sup>nd</sup>) 80 flew south-east over Belmont (9<sup>th</sup>) and 40 flew west over Belmont (15<sup>th</sup>). A large skein was heard flying over Jepsons Clough also on 15<sup>th</sup>.

Skeins over the area in December included 100 west over Whittle (13<sup>th</sup>) and 1000 south over Croston Moss (30<sup>th</sup>). Flocks of up to 20 birds were feeding on the mosses on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. On 30<sup>th</sup> 120 were over Anglezarke moor flying south then veering west.

**Greater White-fronted Goose** (*Anser albifrons*)

***Rare winter visitor***

Seven were feeding with Pinkfeet on Croston Moss on 11<sup>th</sup> January, and at least one was with them on 6<sup>th</sup> February.

**Greylag Goose** (Feral/escape) (*Anser anser*)

***Scarce feral species***

An unseasonal single bird was near Belmont on 14<sup>th</sup> January.

A single bird was on the River Douglas at Croston on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. On the 8<sup>th</sup> March a pair was on the edge of Pilkington Wood adjacent to Upper Rivington Reservoir. Nine were on Upper Rivington Reservoir on 11<sup>th</sup> March and these had increased to 17 in a post-breeding moulting flock on 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

One pair was resident at Belmont Reservoir throughout March to mid-April with just one bird thereafter (mate presumed incubating) until late May when a pair was again present into June – presumably a nearby failed breeding attempt.

On 13<sup>th</sup> April a pair was on a pond at Hall Barn, Rivington. On 22<sup>nd</sup> a pair was on Anglezarke moor and on the same date 4 were on Lower Rivington Reservoir. The 25<sup>th</sup> May saw six birds by a pond off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington.

### **Greater Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)**

#### **Common resident**

150 were off the Castle, Lower Rivington Reservoir on 30<sup>th</sup> January, and 200 were on fields by Lower Rivington Reservoir on 10<sup>th</sup> February.

Monthly maxima at Belmont Reservoir:-

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2011	12	40	48	45	69	104	100	94	120	42	25	20
2012	23	46	48	46	57	148	148	68	68	21	26	28

There was an increase to 21 pairs breeding at Belmont Reservoir, but only 7 young raised due to licenced control measures (111 eggs 'pricked' & 23 adults shot). Elsewhere in the West Pennine Moors, continuing licenced control by egg 'pricking' on 25 United Utilities reservoirs/water bodies resulted in 32 nests totalling 167 eggs controlled between 21<sup>st</sup> April and 12<sup>th</sup> May. Additionally, at least 6 pairs bred on the moorland plateaux at up to 350m above sea level & one pair bred successfully in the Terraced Gardens, Rivington.



16 were at Brook House Bay, Anglezarke on 16<sup>th</sup> April, and on 22<sup>nd</sup> a pair was nesting near Yarrow reservoir. A pair on Anglezarke Reservoir had 4 goslings on 17<sup>th</sup> June.

Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

The July moulting flock totals suggest a movement in 2012 away from the Rivington system to Belmont:-

148 at Belmont Reservoir (93 in 2011)  
94 at Anglezarke Reservoir (141 in 2011)  
11 on Upper Rivington Reservoir (25 in 2011)  
2 on Lower Rivington Reservoir (19 in 2011)

260 were with Pink-footed Geese on Croston Moss on the 10<sup>th</sup> November.

**Shelduck** (*Tadorna tadorna*)

**Regular breeder in the west. Occasional visitor in the east.**

Five were on the River Douglas in the Croston / Mawdesley area on 28<sup>th</sup> January, and 4 were there on 10<sup>th</sup> February. These increased to 23 by 26<sup>th</sup> March. 20 were counted on Croston Moss on 3<sup>rd</sup> April.



A pair with 6 young was on the Douglas at Croston on the 6<sup>th</sup> May. A pair was also on North Park Croston throughout May.

Records in June included pairs at Brindle (2<sup>nd</sup>), Charnock Richard (7<sup>th</sup>) and North Park, Croston (10<sup>th</sup>). A pair with 4 young on Mawdesley Moss on 16<sup>th</sup> June may have been the family group on the Douglas in May.

One was on Belmont Reservoir on 30<sup>th</sup> September.

**Mandarin Duck** (*Aix galericulata*)

**Uncommon feral resident and escapee**

Four males and a female were noted at Arley Nature Reserve on 9<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> January, and a total of 7 were present on 15<sup>th</sup> February.

Four were again noted at Arley nature reserve on 26<sup>th</sup> October. A drake was on Common Bank Lodge on 29<sup>th</sup> November.

The male from 2011, again moved around several Belmont waterbodies from January until March & then again from August until November.

**Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*)

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor**

5 were on Belmont Reservoir on 21<sup>st</sup> September, with 4 there on the 24<sup>th</sup>, 2 on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 19<sup>th</sup> October. A pair was at Withnell Fold flashes on 20<sup>th</sup> October.

**Gadwall** (*Anas strepera*)

**Rare visitor**

A male was at Arley nature reserve on 15<sup>th</sup> February. A pair was on the River Douglas at Croston on 24<sup>th</sup> March.

**Teal** (*Anas crecca*)

**Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeder.**

The good wintering numbers of recent years were maintained at Belmont with 94 at Belmont Reservoir on 15<sup>th</sup> January and 120 on flooded fields near Belmont on 21<sup>st</sup> February. 20 were on the River Douglas in the Croston / Mawdesley area on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February, increasing to 50 by the 7<sup>th</sup>. 200 were on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 4<sup>th</sup>

February and 140 were still there on the 7<sup>th</sup>. 30 were at Withnell Fold Flashes on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

One pair bred at Belmont Reservoir fledging 2 young and another pair bred by moorland pools nearby.

Seven were on a pond on Mawdesley Moss on 13<sup>th</sup> August, increasing to 20 by 26<sup>th</sup> September. Numbers at Withnell Fold flashes increased from 6 on 1<sup>st</sup> September to 30 by the 28<sup>th</sup>, and 50 by 20<sup>th</sup> October, which remained throughout November. Teal sightings in December included 20 on the River Douglas (1<sup>st</sup>), 30 on Lower Rivington Reservoir (16<sup>th</sup>) and 40 at Withnell Fold (26<sup>th</sup>). In the Belmont area, 91 were on flooded fields on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 105 were at Belmont Reservoir on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 85 were on a pond near Belmont on 18<sup>th</sup> October and 108 were at Belmont Reservoir on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

#### ***Common winter visitor and breeding resident***

125 were at Belmont Reservoir on 15<sup>th</sup> January. Maximum number counted in Cuerden Valley Park was 74 in January.

A female with chick was noted at a site at Ulmes Walton on 20<sup>th</sup> January. In April, in the Croston area, a pair on the River Douglas had three young (15<sup>th</sup>), and a pair on the River Yarrow had 7 young (16<sup>th</sup>). A pair bred in a Belmont garden hatching 5 young. A pair at Yarrow Valley Park had 5 chicks on 4<sup>th</sup> July. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

128 were at Belmont Reservoir on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 125 were on flooded fields near Belmont on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 270 were on a large private pond near Belmont on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 151 were at Belmont Reservoir on 18<sup>th</sup> November. 350 were on a large private pond near Belmont on 14<sup>th</sup> December attracted by artificial feeding during hard weather when all other waterbodies were frozen.

### **Pintail** (*Anas acuta*)

#### ***Rare visitor***

One was on Loch Meadow, Croston Moss on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. A pair was in the same locality on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Pochard** (*Aythya ferina*)

#### ***Increasingly scarce winter visitor and passage migrant***

A male and female were on Anglezarke Reservoir on 2<sup>nd</sup> January. A female at Yarrow Valley Park on the 16<sup>th</sup> may well have been from this pair. It remained there until at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Three were on the River Douglas at Croston on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

One was at Yarrow Valley Park on 7<sup>th</sup> October. A pair was on Anglezarke reservoir on 31<sup>st</sup> December.

### **Tufted Duck** (*Aythya fuligula*)

#### ***Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce breeder.***

On 28<sup>th</sup> April a pair was at High Bullough reservoir.

One pair bred at Belmont Reservoir with brood of 4 young seen.

On 4<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August a male was at High Bullough reservoir. Four were on Croston Twin Lakes on 11<sup>th</sup> August, and 8 were there on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Six were on High Bullough Reservoir on 14<sup>th</sup> October, with a pair there on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

**Common Scoter** (*Melanitta nigra*)

**Rare visitor**

6 males were on Belmont Reservoir on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

**Goldeneye** (*Bucephala clangula*)

**Declining winter visitor and passage migrant**

Three were on High Bullough reservoir on 13<sup>th</sup> January. Five were on Heapey No.3 lodge on 29<sup>th</sup> January, and three were there in February. The WeBs count on 11<sup>th</sup> March recorded 3 on Heapey Lodges, 2 on High Bullough Reservoir and one on Yarrow Reservoir. A female at Twin Lakes, Croston was the only April record.

First back was a female/immature at Belmont Reservoir on 25<sup>th</sup> October. 2 were there on 27<sup>th</sup> December. Two were at High Bullough reservoir on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. Two were at Lower Healey (8<sup>th</sup> December), followed by 9 at High Bullough (16<sup>th</sup>) with a male and six females there on 21<sup>st</sup> December..

**Red-breasted Merganser** (*Mergus serrator*)

**Rare visitor**

3 females were on Belmont Reservoir on 29<sup>th</sup> July – the first record at the site since 1995.

**Goosander** (*Mergus merganser*)

**Winter visitor in decreasing numbers**

In January, sightings included a pair on Common Bank Lodge and a pair in the Millstone corner of Lower Rivington Reservoir (1<sup>st</sup>), 4 on the River Douglas at Croston (8<sup>th</sup>), 6 on Anglezarke Reservoir (16<sup>th</sup>) and 3 in Cuerden Valley Park (26<sup>th</sup>). Records were again widespread in February but usually in single figures – 6 on the Douglas at Croston (4<sup>th</sup>), 5 on Lower Rivington Reservoir (7<sup>th</sup>), 7 on Anglezarke Reservoir (8<sup>th</sup>), and 4 at Belmont (12<sup>th</sup>). An exception was at Yarrow Reservoir where 17 were present on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

In March, 4 were on the River Douglas at Croston (1<sup>st</sup>), and 2 were on the River Yarrow at Eccleston (5<sup>th</sup>).

In April, 2 were on Anglezarke Reservoir (7<sup>th</sup>), and 2 were again on the River Yarrow but this time in the Croston area (17<sup>th</sup>).

In May, a female with 7 young was on the Yarrow at Croston – the first known breeding record for that area.

One was seen flying east over Eccleston on 4<sup>th</sup> October. In November, singles were at Yarrow Valley Park (2<sup>nd</sup>) and on Yarrow Reservoir (18<sup>th</sup>). On 5<sup>th</sup> November 3 were



on Yarrow Reservoir with 8 there on the 8th. In December, Goosander were seen across the area but mainly in single figures, including 2 on the River Yarrow at Ecclestone, 4 on the River Douglas (2<sup>nd</sup>), 4 on Yarrow Reservoir (16<sup>th</sup>), 2 in Yarrow Valley Park (25<sup>th</sup>) one on Adlington Reservoir (26<sup>th</sup>), 12 on Yarrow Reservoir (27<sup>th</sup>) and 5 on Brinscall Lodge (31<sup>st</sup>).

### **Red Grouse** (*Lagopus lagopus*)

#### ***Resident in small numbers on the moors***

Nine were noted on the moors on 4<sup>th</sup> March and up to 20 on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Sample counts by gamekeepers with dogs prior to the shooting season realised 5 pairs with 25 juveniles in a 1km<sup>2</sup> sample of Withnell Moor and 7 pairs with 14 juveniles in 1 km<sup>2</sup> sample of Anglezarke Moor in late July. 100+ were driven over guns on Anglezarke Moor on 30<sup>th</sup> August with 21 shot. 19 were seen during a shoot on Belmont Moor on 25<sup>th</sup> August.

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

#### ***Scarce resident boosted by birds released for shooting***

2 pairs were on territory around Belmont during the breeding season.

A regular pair was noted on a BBS square at Brindle during the breeding season.

Good numbers were on the mosses in Autumn.

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

#### ***Uncommon resident boosted by birds released for shooting***

One was seen on Croston Moss on 2<sup>nd</sup> March and two were noted at Bretherton on the same day.

3 pairs were on territory around Belmont during the breeding season.

Coveys of 16, 12 and 4 were in the Belmont area during November and December, albeit originating from released stock.

### **Quail** (*Coturnix coturnix*)

#### ***Rare summer visitor to mosslands mainly in influx years.***

One was heard calling on Mawdesley Moss on 24<sup>th</sup> June and again on 29<sup>th</sup>. However, that was the end of it, so it seems that it was probably just on passage, with no repeat of last year's influx.

### **Pheasant** (*Phasianus colchicus*)

#### ***Common resident boosted by birds released for shooting***

Noted in all parts of Cuerden Valley Park, on farmland and on the mosses throughout the year.

A pair with 5 young was at Withnell on 10<sup>th</sup> July, and a pair with young was noted on Croston Moss on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Several males were noted holding atypical moorland territories above Belmont in the breeding season, some at the upper end of the 'grouse zone' locally at up to 430m above sea level.

300+ were near Belmont Reservoir on 14<sup>th</sup> October. The Belmont gamekeeper relates that one particularly distinctive male has been present in the same wood now for 8 years.

**Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)  
**Regular visitor**

One spent most of January on Big Lodge at Yarrow Valley Park, spending much of the time perched up on the tern raft. It was joined occasionally by a second bird. 14 roosted at a local roost site on 8<sup>th</sup> January with 36 there on 26<sup>th</sup> February.

A flock of 24 flew south over Lower Rivington Reservoir on 25<sup>th</sup> July, with a few landing briefly before moving on.

21 roosted at a local roost site on 18<sup>th</sup> November with 24 there on 27<sup>th</sup> December.

**Little Egret** (*Egretta garzetta*)  
**Rare but increasing visitor**

One was seen circling over the north end of Anglezarke Reservoir on 14<sup>th</sup> May.

**Great White Egret** (*Egretta alba*)  
**Rare vagrant**

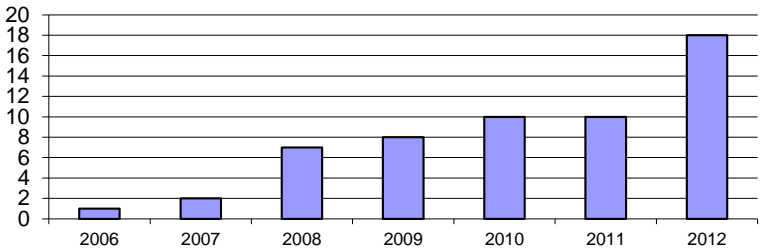
One was photographed by a United Utilities employee at Anglezarke Reservoir on 10<sup>th</sup> January. Unfortunately, it then flew off and presumably out of the area and on to the coast.



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

The original Rivington heronry held 15 occupied nests, with the second Rivington heronry (first occupied in 2011) holding a further 3 nests.

**Rivington Heronries - number of occupied nests**  
(note: one site 2006 - 2010, two sites 2011 - 2012)



Three were on Mawdesley Moss on 3<sup>rd</sup> January. Four were at Croston on 13<sup>th</sup> August.

**White Stork** (*Ciconia ciconia*)

**Rare vagrant**

One was seen in a field near Top Lock, Whittle, on 14<sup>th</sup> April. This bird had been tracked through Cheshire, Greater Manchester and later in North Lancs, and may have been part of a small influx into the country around that time.

**Little Grebe** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

**Uncommon breeding bird**

In January singles were noted on Common Bank Lodge (1<sup>st</sup>), the River Douglas at Mawdesley (8<sup>th</sup>) and on Astley Park lake (16<sup>th</sup>). One was again noted on the Douglas on 7<sup>th</sup> February.

A pair was back on Astley Park lake by 4<sup>th</sup> March, but did not manage to produce until 2 young hatched on 19<sup>th</sup> August. They remained at the site throughout September. One of the juveniles disappeared in October, hopefully under its own steam.

A pair at a Whittle quarry had at least one young on 9<sup>th</sup> August.

In October, one was noted in a ditch on Croston Moss (6<sup>th</sup>) and two were on Common Bank Lodge (24<sup>th</sup>). These were again seen in November, plus one on the Yarrow at Eccleston on the 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Great Crested Grebe** (*Podiceps cristatus*)

**Common breeding bird, less common in winter**

Seven had returned to Anglezarke Reservoir by 26<sup>th</sup> February. A pair was in the centre of Anglezarke reservoir on 16<sup>th</sup> April with another pair at the south end. On 21<sup>st</sup> a pair was at the Millstone Corner, Lower Rivington Reservoir. On 17<sup>th</sup> May a pair was at the nest on south end of Anglezarke. A pair was noted on the edge of Clog Inn Bay, Anglezarke on 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

The pair at Yarrow Valley Park was nest building by 4<sup>th</sup> March, and had produced a single young by 24<sup>th</sup> April. The pair then went on to produce a second brood of 4 young by 10<sup>th</sup> June, but these had reduced to 2 by 1<sup>st</sup> August. A pair with a well grown young was noted at Croston Twin Lakes on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. A single pair bred unsuccessfully (due to fluctuating water levels) at Belmont Reservoir. A pair at Cuerden Valley Park successfully raised two young. A juvenile was at Ulnes Walton on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Three adults and two juveniles were at Croston Twin Lakes on 13<sup>th</sup> September.

**Red Kite** (*Milvus milvus*)

**Rare passage migrant / visitor from reintroduction schemes.**

One was near Belmont on 30<sup>th</sup> April.

**Marsh Harrier** (*Circus aeruginosus*)

**Scarce passage migrant**

A female / juvenile was seen on Mawdesley Moss on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

**Hen Harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*)

***Scarce passage migrant. Occasionally lingers in winter***

A ring-tail was seen on several dates on Croston Moss during February and March until the 24<sup>th</sup>. One was also seen on 1<sup>st</sup> May.

A ring-tail was near Belmont from 7<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

A male was seen on Winter Hill on 6<sup>th</sup> October, and presumably the same bird on Anglezarke Moor on 9<sup>th</sup> October. A ring-tail was around Belmont in mid-October.

**Sparrowhawk** (*Accipiter nisus*)

***Increasingly common resident***

Birds were noted throughout Rivington and Anglezarke during all months of the year. A garden at Rivington seemed to be visited daily often causing mayhem amongst birds on the feeders. Collared Doves were a particular favourite and as soon as a new pair appeared they were gone! On 1<sup>st</sup> June a pair, the female carrying prey, were there. On 17<sup>th</sup> July a bird was perched on a bird feeder and on 28<sup>th</sup> a juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker was the target but it escaped. However, a female Blackbird on the 7<sup>th</sup> December was not so lucky.

A pair bred in Cuerden Valley Park and individuals were seen there throughout the year.

Hunting birds seen in July included one being mobbed by hirundines at Heath Charnock (6<sup>th</sup>), and one at Eccleston (27<sup>th</sup>), taking a Collared Dove which managed to break free.

Hunting birds in October included Great Knowley (5<sup>th</sup>), Croston Moss (6<sup>th</sup>) and Eccleston (14<sup>th</sup>). In November, birds were seen at Withnell Fold (3<sup>rd</sup>), Chorley (6<sup>th</sup>), Lower Healey (10<sup>th</sup>) and Croston (16<sup>th</sup>).

In December, Sparrowhawks were noted at Croston Moss (1<sup>st</sup>), Eccleston (6<sup>th</sup>), Croston Finney (9<sup>th</sup>), Eyes Lane (15<sup>th</sup>) and a Chorley garden (23<sup>rd</sup>)

**Buzzard** (*Buteo buteo*)

***Fairly common resident***

Recorded throughout the area in January with the most notable count being 5 over Croston on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Four were seen together in Cuerden Valley Park in March.

In Rivington and Anglezarke birds are increasingly noted throughout the year, and it is no longer unusual to see one or two birds soaring overhead.

Now a common breeder in the central West Pennine Moors with several successful nests/juveniles seen. A half-grown Fox cub was noted in a nest near Belmont on 30<sup>th</sup> May.

A pair was at Chisnall on 12<sup>th</sup> July. August sightings included a juvenile at Withnell Fold (4<sup>th</sup>), 2 on Mawdesley Moss (5<sup>th</sup>), 3 over Knowles Wood, Eccleston (6<sup>th</sup>), 5 at Euxton (8<sup>th</sup>) and 3 over Coppull (20<sup>th</sup>).

Seven were seen together over Mawdesley Moss on 15<sup>th</sup> September, and four were seen together at Eccleston on 7<sup>th</sup> October. Records of sightings from across the area were received throughout November, and in December records came from three sites.

**Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*)

***Regular passage migrant***

One on migration was seen at the E-shaped pond, Bretherton on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. One was at Belmont Reservoir for most of the afternoon on 4<sup>th</sup> April. One was at Croston on 5<sup>th</sup> April and another was at White Coppice on 28<sup>th</sup> April. In May one was seen over Anglezarke Reservoir on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

One was seen at Eccleston on 24<sup>th</sup> August.

**Kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus*)

***Fairly common resident***

This species is frequently cited as being in decline, but it still appears to be a widespread and successful breeding bird in the Chorley area.

Three birds were seen together at Bretherton on 7<sup>th</sup> January.

A family party of 5 was noted at Eccleston on 17<sup>th</sup> June. An adult and two young were at Croston on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. A family party of three was at Chisnall on 12<sup>th</sup> July. Several were seen on Croston Moss on 10<sup>th</sup> July and may well have been a couple of family groups. Definitely a family were the 2 adults and 4 juveniles at Euxton on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Two pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir. At least one pair bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

On 11<sup>th</sup> July an adult and juvenile were near Anglezarke reservoir and on 4<sup>th</sup> September two juvenile birds appeared to be 'playing' around Yarrow embankment.

Four birds were seen on Croston Moss on 6<sup>th</sup> October, and the species was seen regularly at the site throughout November. Records were received from six sites in December.

**Merlin** (*Falco columbarius*)

***Scarce resident and passage migrant***

One was noted on Mawdesley Moss on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Males and females were seen on the mosses on 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February. Away from there, one was seen at Lower Healey on the 16<sup>th</sup>. One was seen on Croston Finney on 28<sup>th</sup> March.

At least 2 were around Belmont in October. One was on Mawdesley Moss on 8<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October. In December, sightings were noted on Mawdesley Moss (2<sup>nd</sup>), Croston Moss (9<sup>th</sup>) and Croston Finney (26<sup>th</sup>). These may well all have related to the same bird.

**Hobby** (*Falco subbuteo*)

***Rare summer visitor***

Two, together were seen in chasing flight, near Belmont on 29<sup>th</sup> June. One was seen at Eccleston on 30<sup>th</sup> June, drawn to the observer's attention by the usual cacophony of hirundine alarm calls as it swept through. One was seen at Chisnall on 12<sup>th</sup> July, and another was seen over Mawdesley on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

In August, birds were seen in Back Lane, Heath Charnock (3<sup>rd</sup>) and at Knowles Wood, Eccleston (31<sup>st</sup>) – in both cases being mobbed by hirundines.

One was watched for five minutes at Top Lock, Whittle on 1<sup>st</sup> September chasing hirundines. Possibly the same bird was seen again at the site on the 14<sup>th</sup>. A late bird was near Belmont on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

**Peregrine** (*Falco peregrinus*)

***Scarce resident and winter visitor. Has bred***

In January, one was on Morrison's chimney on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Other sightings during the month included birds at Whittle (15<sup>th</sup>), Croston Finney (16<sup>th</sup>) and Coppull (18<sup>th</sup>).

In February, birds were seen on Croston Moss on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. The town centre pair was back at St George's by the 11<sup>th</sup>. In March, as well as the town centre pair, three were at Whittle (8<sup>th</sup>), one at Hoghton Bottoms (17<sup>th</sup>) and a pair at White Coppice (19<sup>th</sup>).

The breeding pair at St George's Church in Chorley unfortunately failed. It is believed that hatching coincided with atrocious weather and the chicks consequently perished. The pair subsequently bred at another site to the east of Chorley in July / August and fledged two young, one of which was ringed. The other chick had disappeared possibly to Raven predation. However, better news from a site at Whittle where three young fledged successfully. Birds again bred at a site in the central West Pennine Moors where breeding has occurred since 2007.

In May a bird was noted high over Jepsons Clough on 14<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> being mobbed by gulls.

Casual sightings in July came from Croston Moss (10<sup>th</sup>), Morrison's chimney (13<sup>th</sup>), and Ulmes Walton (27<sup>th</sup>). In August, one was on Morrison's chimney on the 2<sup>nd</sup> with 2 there from 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>. Ones/twos were almost a daily occurrence (except winter) around Belmont.

Suburban raptors are usually Sparrowhawks, but an unholy commotion of scolding Magpies and Jackdaws from a neighbour's roof on 28<sup>th</sup> September was centred on a Peregrine with a pigeon in its talons. A juvenile on Mawdesley Moss on the 30<sup>th</sup> took a Mallard and had to defend its kill from a kestrel, a grey heron and a carrion crow.

October sightings away from the town centre were at Eccleston (4<sup>th</sup>), Winter Hill (6<sup>th</sup>) and Croston Finney (23<sup>rd</sup>). In November the town centre pair continued to be seen around Morrison's and St George's. In December, in addition to town centre sightings, Peregrines were noted on Croston Moss (2<sup>nd</sup>), Eccleston (10<sup>th</sup>) and Mawdesley Moss (24<sup>th</sup>).

**Water Rail** (*Rallus aquaticus*)

***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant***

Two were at Arley nature reserve on 26<sup>th</sup> February. One was heard squealing in Cuerden Valley Park, also in February.

One was seen regularly at Yarrow Valley Park between 7<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October. One was heard at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton on 25<sup>th</sup> November.

**Moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*)

***Common resident***

On 16<sup>th</sup> January a pair was at Anderton Bridge, Rivington. On 13<sup>th</sup> February, 5 were on the Hall Barn ponds, Rivington, a pair was there on 7<sup>th</sup> April and by 18<sup>th</sup> May these had 4 young.

A pair was noted with two young on Croston Finney on 7<sup>th</sup> May. A pair at Anderton had 3 young on 10<sup>th</sup> June. Pairs bred on every available stretch of water in Cuerden Valley Park.

5 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir, including 3 pairs within the gully. An 'overlooked' population breeds on in-bye fields & moorland ponds in the Belmont area with probably in excess of 10 pairs at up to 300m above sea level.

At least 15 were at Belmont Reservoir from 25<sup>th</sup> August to 11<sup>th</sup> September with 10+ still there from 21<sup>st</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> November.

**Coot** (*Fulica atra*)

***Common resident***

A pair had two young at Yarrow Valley Park on 8<sup>th</sup> May. Another pair had two young at the site on 4<sup>th</sup> July. A pair on Park Hall Lake at Charnock Richard had three young on 6<sup>th</sup> July. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park. Three or four pairs each had at least two broods on Astley Park lake. One or two pairs bred at Lower Healey.

**Oystercatcher** (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

***Increasing passage migrant and summer visitor. Scarce breeder.***

The first returning bird was one at Ulnes Walton on the 25<sup>th</sup> January, with three back at Belmont Reservoir on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Eight were along the River Douglas at Croston on 17<sup>th</sup> February, increasing to 15 by the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 16 by 1<sup>st</sup> March. Two were at the south end of Anglezarke reservoir on the 25<sup>th</sup> February. Five were at Belmont Reservoir by 26<sup>th</sup> February. The March WeBs count on the 11<sup>th</sup> found 3 at Anglezarke Reservoir, 2 at Yarrow Reservoir and 3 at Lower Rivington Reservoir. Other March sightings included one at Coppull (13<sup>th</sup>), 12 at Belmont (5<sup>th</sup>) and 2 at Withnell Fold (18<sup>th</sup>).

In April, 8 were along the River Douglas at Croston on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4 were at Anglezarke Reservoir on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Pairs are increasingly to be seen during the breeding season at Rivington and Anglezarke, on the quieter areas of the reservoir margins and in the nearby fields. On the 15<sup>th</sup> March a pair was displaying over a Rivington farm

and remained to the month end. In the following 3 months, pairs were noted at 7 regular sites in Rivington and Anglezarke.

4 or 5 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir, but with only 2 pairs successfully fledging 2 young. A pair with a single young was on Mawdesley Moss on 24<sup>th</sup> June. In July, 4 were at Heath Charnock (6<sup>th</sup>), 2 were at Withnell Fold (7<sup>th</sup>) and 2 were on Lower Rivington Reservoir (14<sup>th</sup>). The last 2 were at Belmont Reservoir on 31<sup>st</sup> July.

No record was received in August which suggests a poor breeding season for the species locally. However, an unseasonal single was at Belmont Reservoir on 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

### **Little Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius dubius*)

#### ***Uncommon summer visitor***

First back was one at Belmont Reservoir on 1<sup>st</sup> April, with 3 there on 14<sup>th</sup>. First returning bird at Anglezarke Reservoir was on 6<sup>th</sup> April, then 3 were at the site on the following day. Two pairs were displaying at the site in late April. At Belmont Reservoir, 3 pairs held territory with 2 pairs breeding but these subsequently had their nests washed out by rising water levels and all had departed by 10<sup>th</sup> June. Two were in a flooded field at Charnock Richard on the 25<sup>th</sup> April. They were still present during June and throughout July, so presumably breeding was taking place.

One was on Loch Meadow by the Douglas at Mawdesley from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> August. One flew over Gillibrands North, Chorley on 26<sup>th</sup> August.

### **Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

#### ***Rare visitor***

One was in a landfill quarry at Adlington on 17<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Golden Plover** (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

#### ***Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred***

8 were back on the moors above Belmont on 15<sup>th</sup> January with 20 there on 25<sup>th</sup>. A single bird flew over Alance Bridge, Yarrow Reservoir, calling noisily on 26<sup>th</sup> January.

Around 100 birds were seen on Croston Finney in the first two weeks of February, peaking at 200 on the 4<sup>th</sup>. A flock of 50 was at Bretherton on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. A single bird was noted on the moors on 4<sup>th</sup> March, followed by a pair on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Two were again seen on Anglezarke Moor on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

5 pairs were located on territory on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont during the breeding season

3 flew over Belmont on 13<sup>th</sup> August and one flew south-west over Belmont on 18<sup>th</sup> September. Three flew over Ecclestone on 14<sup>th</sup> September and 2 were on Mawdesley Moss on the 18<sup>th</sup>.



**Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*)

**Common resident and winter visitor**

In January, flocks on Croston Moss numbered 120 on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 200 on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere, 23 were at Belmont Reservoir (2<sup>nd</sup>), 25 were on Gale Moss (15<sup>th</sup>) and 15 were at Ellerbeck (16<sup>th</sup>). 114 were at Belmont Reservoir on 9<sup>th</sup> January rising to 165 on 17<sup>th</sup> February.

Other February flocks included over 100 birds on Croston Moss (6<sup>th</sup>), 30 at Withnell Fold flashes (23<sup>rd</sup>) and 80 at Belmont Reservoir (26<sup>th</sup>).

March flocks included the 30 at Withnell Fold (18<sup>th</sup>).

Two young were seen amongst 6 adults at Buckshaw on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. An adult with young was near Park Hall on 7<sup>th</sup> June, and 3 young were amongst adults at a site at Eccleston on 10<sup>th</sup> June.

The species suffered a disastrous breeding season around Belmont in 2012 due to initial drought conditions with many females reluctant to 'go down', followed by persistent heavy rain that flooded out many nests with further relentless wet weather reducing chick survival to almost nil. A decline in breeding numbers in the central West Pennine Moors is now clearly evident with approximately 70 territories in 2012 in the 25km<sup>2</sup> of the former Belmont Study Area that compares unfavourably with the 110 territories in the same area in 1998 and a mean of 107 territories for the years 1990-1994. Infestation of in-bye with *juncus* is the obvious reason for abandonment of many fields but some now seemingly ideal pastures (devoid of rushes) are now vacant, indicating a wider problem for this species. In contrast, the figure of 25 pairs breeding at Belmont Reservoir was the best total for 4 years due mainly to 9 pairs breeding on the drawdown. However, these nests were subsequently flooded out in April/May with even those pairs initially successful on adjacent fields (4+ broods seen on 27<sup>th</sup> May) suffering under relentless wet weather with probably only 3 juveniles fledging from the original 25 pairs.

An RSPB Volunteer & Farmer Alliance survey at a Rivington Farm took place again in 2012, following surveys done in 2008 and 2004. The Lapwing numbers at this site are particularly significant, with many pairs nesting in the hay meadows, and then feeding in the lower, wetter fields once the young birds are more mobile. 12 birds were back at the site by 12<sup>th</sup> January with 40 on 27<sup>th</sup> February and 50 on 5<sup>th</sup> March. 32 birds were present on 11<sup>th</sup> April and 48 on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Six birds were sitting by 16<sup>th</sup> May, and successful breeding was noted with juvenile birds seen on 19<sup>th</sup> May. Although successful breeding did take place, the numbers were affected by very wet conditions. The problems were compounded by an unauthorized vehicle around the nesting fields at night. Analysis of the results indicated 24 occupied territories. There was no sign of the usual post breeding flock at this site.

A pair with at least one young was noted at Higher Knoll Farm, Rivington on 8<sup>th</sup> July and 8 flew over Alance Bridge, Yarrow Reservoir on 25<sup>th</sup> July.

Flocks of abandoned breeders formed as early as May with a post-breeding flock of 55 at Belmont Reservoir on 1<sup>st</sup> July containing just 5 juveniles. Post breeding flocks in July included 12 at Withnell Fold flashes (7<sup>th</sup>), 120 at Belmont Reservoir (14<sup>th</sup>) and over 50 on Croston Moss (30<sup>th</sup>).

160 were at Belmont Reservoir on 25<sup>th</sup> August, with 155 at there on 4<sup>th</sup> September, 135 on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 85 on 5<sup>th</sup> November and 33 still there on 31<sup>st</sup> December.

35 In two flocks were noted on Croston Moss on 15<sup>th</sup> September. A flock of 200 was at Bretherton on 6<sup>th</sup> October.

**Knot** (*Calidris canutus*)

***Rare vagrant***

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 12<sup>th</sup> February

**Dunlin** (*Calidris alpina*)

***Scarce breeder and passage migrant***

Up to three birds were feeding with Golden Plover on Croston Finney during the first two weeks of February. One was on Anglezarke Reservoir on 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

One was 'trilling' at a regular breeding site above Belmont on 24<sup>th</sup> May.

Three flew over Clayton on 16<sup>th</sup> September.

**Jack Snipe** (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

***Rare winter visitor***

Three were at Eccleston on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, and a single was at Bretherton on the 4<sup>th</sup>. One was at Belmont on 30<sup>th</sup> January.

Singles were noted with common snipe on Croston Moss (13<sup>th</sup> October) and Arley nature reserve (26<sup>th</sup>). Two were near Belmont (7<sup>th</sup>). In December, birds were noted at Belmont reservoir (8<sup>th</sup>), on Croston Finney (16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>) and Eyes lane, Bretherton (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*)

***Fairly common passage / winter visitor; scarce breeder***

Six were at Bretherton on 4<sup>th</sup> January and a couple were on Croston Moss on the 8<sup>th</sup>. In February, birds were seen along the Douglas at Croston (4<sup>th</sup>), at Arley nature reserve (4 on the 15<sup>th</sup>) and at Withnell Fold flashes (19<sup>th</sup>). One was at Croston on 12<sup>th</sup> April.

6 'pairs' were on territory around Belmont Reservoir with a minimum of a further 11 'drummers' recorded on in-by fields/moorland elsewhere in the Belmont area.

Two were on Croston Moss on 30<sup>th</sup> July. Numbers then built up to 26 by the 12<sup>th</sup> August and peaked at 81 on 29<sup>th</sup> September, with 77 still there on 13<sup>th</sup> October and 50 remained on 10<sup>th</sup> November. 19+ were at Belmont Reservoir on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 40+ around Belmont in late October including 22 at Belmont Reservoir on 28<sup>th</sup> October, and at least 10 were at Belmont Reservoir on 24<sup>th</sup> November. Other Autumn records

included one at Arley nature reserve (26<sup>th</sup> October) and 3 at Yarrow Valley Park (28<sup>th</sup>). In November, 5 were at Eccleston (2<sup>nd</sup>), 10 at Withnell Fold flashes (3<sup>rd</sup>), 4 at Yarrow Valley Park (17<sup>th</sup>), 13 at Buckshaw (11<sup>th</sup>) and 10 at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton (25<sup>th</sup>).

In December, at least 20 Snipe were again on Croston Moss (9<sup>th</sup>) and 34 were in fields off Eyes Lane (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Woodcock** (*Scolopax rusticola*)

***Fairly common resident and winter visitor***

A single was at Eccleston on 2<sup>nd</sup> January. 'Pheasant beaters' flushed 7 at Belmont on 30<sup>th</sup> January. A single bird was noted at Lead Mines Clough on 11<sup>th</sup> February. Single birds were flushed in Cuerden Valley Park in January and February. Three were flushed at Arley nature reserve on 15<sup>th</sup> February. In March, singles were at Great Knowley (11<sup>th</sup>) and on Croston Moss (12<sup>th</sup>). The first roding male at Belmont was seen on 14<sup>th</sup> March.

In May, roding birds were noted at Roddlesworth (10<sup>th</sup>) and at White Coppice where at least three were seen on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

One was flushed at Park Hall on 20<sup>th</sup> October, and 2 were at Arley nature reserve on 26<sup>th</sup> October. In November, birds were flushed at Belmont (5 on 7<sup>th</sup>), Eccleston (11<sup>th</sup>) and at the E-shaped Pond (25<sup>th</sup>). One was at Dean Wood, Rivington, on 27<sup>th</sup>.

In December three were noted at Heskin (8<sup>th</sup>) and a single at Eyes Lane, Bretherton (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*)

***Rare passage migrant and summer visitor***

A flock of 15 flew over Mawdesley Moss on 4<sup>th</sup> August.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*)

***Rare passage migrant***

Three flew over Lower Rivington Reservoir on 4<sup>th</sup> August.

**Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus*)

***Regular passage migrant***

The annual Spring passage began with two at Croston on 17<sup>th</sup> April, followed by 7 at Eccleston on the 20<sup>th</sup>, increasing to 38 by the 23<sup>rd</sup> and peaking at 80 on the 27<sup>th</sup> with two main feeding sites involved. In May these reduced to 40 on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 30 on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 13 on the 9<sup>th</sup>. A flock of 30 was noted at Hoghton on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Singles were noted at Belmont on 28<sup>th</sup> April and 5<sup>th</sup> May.

**Curlew** (*Numenius arquata*)

***Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor***

The first back at Belmont were 3 on 15<sup>th</sup> February and at Anglezarke on 21<sup>st</sup>. The first back at Withnell Fold flashes was a single on 19<sup>th</sup> February, increasing to 9 by the 22<sup>nd</sup>, but reducing to 4 by 10<sup>th</sup> March as they dispersed to breeding territories. Other

March sightings included single birds at Eccleston (5<sup>th</sup>) and Anglezarke Reservoir (11<sup>th</sup>), 6 at Coppull (14<sup>th</sup>) and 30 at Croston (31<sup>st</sup>).

Roost counts at Belmont Reservoir –     59 on 25/2  
   119 on 29/2  
   153 on 5/3  
   171 on 7/3  
   157 on 8/3  
   106 on 13/3

Breeding densities in the central West Pennine Moors were remarkably consistent averaging at between 2.5 & 3 pairs/km<sup>2</sup> on sample areas of Belmont Moor (5 pairs in 2km<sup>2</sup>), Winter Hill (3 pairs in 1km<sup>2</sup>) and Withnell Moor (5 pairs in 2km<sup>2</sup>). One pair was noted with 2 young on fields at Belmont Reservoir on 27<sup>th</sup> May.

The last (one) at Belmont was on 2<sup>nd</sup> August. On 9<sup>th</sup> August pairs were alarming from two fields at Moses Cocker Farm, Rivington, indicating that young were still present. One was seen over Croston Moss on 27<sup>th</sup> August, and another flew over Gillibrands, Chorley on 28<sup>th</sup>. One was at Eccleston on 7<sup>th</sup> September, and another was on Croston Moss on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Common Sandpiper** (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

***Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor; has wintered.***

First returning bird was one at Anglezarke reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup> April and two separate pairs were there on 16<sup>th</sup>. 3 were back at Belmont Reservoir on 14<sup>th</sup> April with at least 16 in the Belmont area on 27<sup>th</sup> April.

In May, one was along the Douglas at Croston (6<sup>th</sup>), 2 were on Lower Roddlesworth Reservoir (10<sup>th</sup>) and one was on Anglezarke Reservoir (13<sup>th</sup>). 5/6 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir. One pair was on territory at Wards Reservoir in early May but didn't breed.

One was again on Anglezarke Reservoir on 31<sup>st</sup> July. Last (2) were at Wards Reservoir on 5<sup>th</sup> August. One was on Loch Meadow, Croston on 27<sup>th</sup> August. Singles were noted on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 8<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September.



An unseasonal single was at Belmont Reservoir on 26<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Green Sandpiper** (*Tringa ochropus*)

***Scarce passage migrant. Has wintered.***

One was at Belmont Reservoir from 10<sup>th</sup> January to 3<sup>rd</sup> February. One was on the feeder stream at Arley nature reserve on 15<sup>th</sup> February. One was seen along the River Douglas at Croston on 27<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March.

In July, one was at Belmont Reservoir (14<sup>th</sup>) and 3 were along the Douglas at Croston (30<sup>th</sup>). These remained until at least 14<sup>th</sup> August, and two were present on 15<sup>th</sup> September. One was again on the feeder stream at Arley nature reserve on 26<sup>th</sup> October.

**Greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*)

**Scarce passage migrant**

Two were on the Douglas at Mawdesley on 12<sup>th</sup> August.

**Redshank** (*Tringa totanus*)

**Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor**

A single bird was along the River Douglas at Croston on 17<sup>th</sup> February, and 4 were there on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. First (one) back at Belmont Reservoir on 10<sup>th</sup> March with 7 there on 24<sup>th</sup>.

In April, 4 were along the River Douglas at Croston (3<sup>rd</sup>), one was at Anglezarke Reservoir (6<sup>th</sup>), and a flock of 15 was seen over Eccleston on the 17<sup>th</sup>. May sightings included three on Anglezarke Reservoir (5<sup>th</sup>), and a single on the Douglas at Croston (6<sup>th</sup>).

Three pairs bred around Belmont Reservoir with one pair fledging 3 young.

One was on Croston Moss on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

**Black-headed Gull** (*Larus ridibundus*)

**Present in good numbers throughout the year. Now breeds in large numbers**

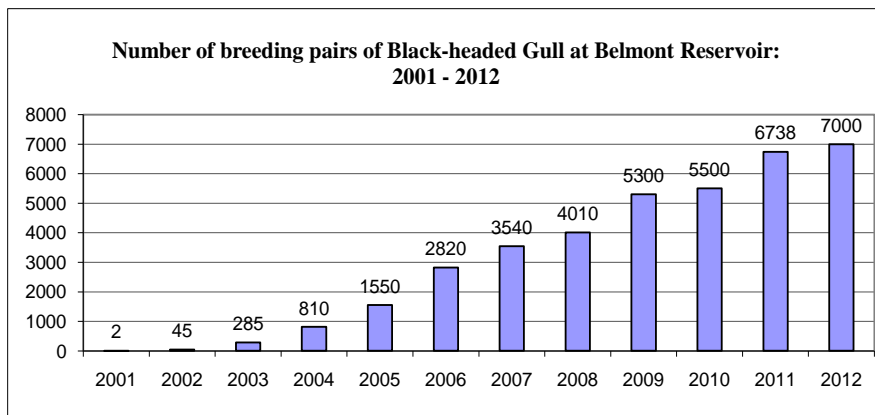
The first birds returned in numbers (300) to the Belmont Reservoir gully on 7<sup>th</sup> February despite the frozen conditions, with numbers building to 7000 by 10<sup>th</sup> March, to peak with a record site roost count of 17,000 on 12<sup>th</sup> April.

2000 were in the Lower Rivington gull roost on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. A flock of over 1000 birds was at Withnell Fold flashes on 18<sup>th</sup> March, presumably gathering before returning to the breeding colony at Belmont.



There was no repeat of the aerial photographic census at Belmont this year; the estimate of 7000 breeding pairs in 2012 coming from a sample of land-based counts. Unusually, one pair nested successfully 2.5m up a stunted Spruce tree. Despite the wet conditions prevailing that caused some mortality of young plus the rising water levels that flooded out approximately

50 nests, production was again considered good with an estimate of around one young per pair fledging from the colony in 2012.



**Little Gull** (*hydrocoloeus minutus*)

***Rare vagrant***

One was seen over Anglezarke Moor on 21<sup>st</sup> April.

**Mediterranean Gull** (*Larus melanocephalus*)

***Rare visitor now also breeding***

Mediterranean Gulls enjoyed an excellent season at Belmont Reservoir in 2012, both in respect of a record number of pairs nesting and good production.

The first bird was back in the Black-headed Gull colony on 29<sup>th</sup> February, with numbers rising to 10 on 27<sup>th</sup> March and on to a simultaneous count of 30 birds on 21<sup>st</sup> April - considered to be a new record for Lancashire.

Slow vegetation growth in 2012 gave the opportunity for extended viewing of those parts of the colony favoured by this species, which allowed for a more accurate count and confirmation of nesting. 18 pairs were present within the colony with 15 pairs confirmed to have bred.

Counts of dependant juveniles later suggested that at least 15 Mediterranean Gulls fledged from the colony in 2012 and from the study of these birds with their attendant adults, it was considered that these 15 juveniles were the product of 10 successful pairs.

**Common Gull** (*Larus canus*)

***Common winter visitor***

100 were in the Lower Rivington gull roost on 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

**Lesser Black-Backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*)

***Common in most months; has bred***

12 were in the Lower Rivington gull roost on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. At least 30 were at Belmont Reservoir on 21<sup>st</sup> April.

One pair bred unsuccessfully within the Belmont Reservoir gullery.

**Herring Gull** (*Larus argentatus*)

***Common winter visitor and on passage***

40 were in the Lower Rivington gull roost on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. 25 were at Belmont Reservoir on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

One pair held territory in the gullery at Belmont Reservoir in the breeding season but did not nest.

**Great Black-backed Gull** (*Larus marinus*)

***Scarce winter visitor***

Two were in the Lower Rivington gull roost on 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

**Gull Roost** (*Laridae spp.*)

The Lower Rivington gull roost was only counted in early February, when total numbers were less than 2500, mainly Black-headed.

**Common Tern** (*Sterna hirundo*)

***Scarce passage migrant***

The first returning bird to Yarrow Valley Park was on 19<sup>th</sup> April. The earliest date since the tern raft was installed. Its mate finally arrived on 10<sup>th</sup> May and the pair settled down to breeding. One was at the fishing lodges off Grimeford Lane, Anderton on 26<sup>th</sup> April. Elsewhere in May, single birds were noted at Twin Lakes, Croston (12<sup>th</sup>) and the E-shaped pond, Bretherton (23<sup>rd</sup>).

The pair at Yarrow Valley Park hatched three young from the 10<sup>th</sup> June. The possibility of a second pair breeding on the new raft fizzled out. A single bird was seen at Withnell Fold cricket field lodge (26<sup>th</sup>).

In July, 5 adults and 3 juveniles were at Yarrow Valley Park on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 6 adults and 2 juveniles were there on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere, a pair was seen flying west over Eccleston on the 5<sup>th</sup> and one was at Chisnall on the 12<sup>th</sup>. The Yarrow Valley Park birds were last seen on 1<sup>st</sup> August. Birds were noted flying over Jepsons Clough, Rivington, during July, no doubt commuting between Doffcocker Lodge, Bolton and Lower Rivington Reservoir. Two were noted feeding on the lake in Cuerden Valley Park in August.

**Feral Pigeon** (*Columba livia*)

***Common resident***

Three pairs bred in the steeple of St Peter's church, Belmont.

Numbers around Chorley Town Centre do not appear to be being affected by the presence of the pair of Peregrines, which appear to prefer more exotic species.

**Stock Dove** (*Columba oenas*)

**Uncommon breeding bird**

At least 20 were at Belmont on 20<sup>th</sup> January. Numbers on Croston Moss peaked at 100 on 3<sup>rd</sup> February.

18 were at Belmont Reservoir on 30<sup>th</sup> April.

25+ roosted at Upper Rivington on 18<sup>th</sup> November. 50 were at Belmont on 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

**Woodpigeon** (*Columba palumbus*)

**Abundant resident and passage migrant**

800+ roosted at Upper Rivington on 8<sup>th</sup> January.

Passage of approximately 200/hour south over Belmont was noted on 14<sup>th</sup> October, followed by approximately 250/hour south over Belmont on 27<sup>th</sup> October.

200 roosted at Upper Rivington on 18<sup>th</sup> November.

A feature of the second winter period on the mosses was the massive number of Woodpigeon, particularly on the Mawdesley side, where at least 3000 were noted on the 24<sup>th</sup> December.

**Collared Dove** (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

**Common resident**

A maximum of 17 were in a Belmont garden on 15<sup>th</sup> January and again on 10<sup>th</sup> November.

A pair was on the nest at Great Knowley on 4<sup>th</sup> March, and another pair had two young at Eccleston on 18<sup>th</sup> March.

**Cuckoo** (*Cuculus canorus*)

**Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant**

The first back was one at White Coppice on 21<sup>st</sup> April, followed by a pair on the 28<sup>th</sup>. One was also noted at Cuerden Valley Park on 26<sup>th</sup> April.

May sightings included 3 at White Coppice (3<sup>rd</sup>), and singles in Heather Lea Woods, Brinscall (7<sup>th</sup>), Healey Nab (7<sup>th</sup>), Anglezarke moor (23<sup>rd</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>), and the Terraced Gardens, Rivington, (29<sup>th</sup>). Away from the moorlands, one was seen at Heskin on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

First back at Belmont was a calling male on 5<sup>th</sup> May. Thereafter, apart from a calling male at another Belmont site on 14<sup>th</sup> May, there was no record until a relatively heavy (for recent years), albeit brief, influx of calling males on passage from 7 sites around Belmont from 22<sup>nd</sup> May up until 1<sup>st</sup> June.



Other June sightings came from Healey Nab where two were seen on the 4<sup>th</sup>, and another was at White Coppice on the same day. One was again near Heather Lea Woods on the 7<sup>th</sup>, when one was also noted in the Terraced Gardens, Rivington.

### **Barn Owl** (*Tyto alba*)

#### **Uncommon resident - increasing**

In January, one was seen on Mawdesley Moss on several dates, and another was at Croston on the 9<sup>th</sup>. The bird on Mawdesley Moss was seen again in February on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. One was hunting on Croston Moss on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

In May birds were seen at Great Knowley (6<sup>th</sup>) and Mawdesley Moss (8<sup>th</sup>) and (30<sup>th</sup>) when two birds were seen. June sightings were similar with records from Great Knowley (4<sup>th</sup>), Mawdesley Moss (2 on 9<sup>th</sup>), Croston Moss (26<sup>th</sup>) and Croston Finney (28<sup>th</sup>). Pairs were also feeding young at at least two and possibly three sites in the east of the area.

Three pairs were confirmed as breeding around Belmont with some young not fledging until October. Additionally, breeding was highly suspected at two further inaccessible locations including one new site.

In July, sightings again came from Mawdesley Moss (11<sup>th</sup>) and Great Knowley (23<sup>rd</sup>).

In October, sightings came from Mawdesley Moss (8<sup>th</sup>) and Eccleston (24<sup>th</sup>), and in December from Croston Moss (9<sup>th</sup>). Up to 7 were hunting throughout the day during hard weather in late November/early December in the West Pennine Moors at up to 350m above sea level, including 3 together at Belmont on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Little Owl** (*Athene noctua*)

#### **Fairly common resident**

One was on Croston Finney on 14<sup>th</sup> January. In February, birds were seen at Heskin (11<sup>th</sup>) and Heapey (19<sup>th</sup>). Records in March were widespread including sightings from Heskin (11<sup>th</sup>), Eccleston (12<sup>th</sup>), Hoghton Bottoms (2 on 12<sup>th</sup>), Cuerden Valley Park (27<sup>th</sup>) and Croston Moss (28<sup>th</sup>), where one was also seen on 27<sup>th</sup> April and again on 7<sup>th</sup> May. Seen occasionally in Ice House Wood, Cuerden Valley Park.

One pair bred at the regular Belmont Reservoir site. In June, family parties of 4 birds were seen at Heskin (4<sup>th</sup>) and on Croston Moss (26<sup>th</sup>), and birds continued to be seen at both locations during July.

### **Tawny Owl** (*Strix aluco*)

#### **Common resident**

January records included one at Eccleston (5<sup>th</sup>) and one in Chorley (15<sup>th</sup>).

Although 2 pairs bred successfully at Dean Wood, Rivington there did not seem to be as many records from other sites compared to recent years.

A chick was seen at Heskin on 16<sup>th</sup> May. Adult birds were recorded at Eccleston and Ulnes Walton on the same day.

One was found dead at Croston on 10<sup>th</sup> June, victim of an RTA. More happily two young were seen at Eccleston on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park, with one of them using a newly installed nest box.

In July, one was seen at Great Knowley (15<sup>th</sup>) and another at Eccleston (25<sup>th</sup>).

**Short-eared Owl** (*Asio flammeus*)

***Scarce winter visitor and breeding resident***

A minimum of 6 birds spent the winter in a field of rough grass just outside the area in Rufford. One or two of them occasionally strayed onto Mawdesley Moss (17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> January), 2 on 3<sup>rd</sup> February and singles on 12<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> February and 28<sup>th</sup> March. One was noted at Rivington on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

One was seen quartering Anglezarke Moor on 21<sup>st</sup> April, and another was still on Croston Moss on 27<sup>th</sup> April.

3/4 pairs were on territory on the central West Pennine Moors during the breeding season with birds present from 28<sup>th</sup> March until 25<sup>th</sup> August.

**Swift** (*Apus apus*)

***Common summer visitor and passage migrant***

First back was one at Eccleston on 28<sup>th</sup> April, followed by one at Belmont on the 29<sup>th</sup>. There was a noticeable influx into the area on the 10<sup>th</sup> May. On the 12<sup>th</sup> May 8 were screaming over Jepsons Clough, Rivington.

Breeding birds were noted entering 3 houses along High Street in Belmont Village.

A loose group of 110+ feeding birds drifted west over Belmont on 17<sup>th</sup> June. Around 50 birds were feeding over Croston sewage works on 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

Birds were regularly feeding above Jepsons Clough, Rivington, throughout the breeding season, and August birds were 16 on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 30 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the last being 3 on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Swifts normally leave us in the first week of August, but perhaps because of poor early weather, pairs were still feeding young at Clayton and Eccleston and didn't finally leave until 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> respectively. The last at Belmont was on 11<sup>th</sup> August. Later sightings included 3 at Eccleston (20<sup>th</sup>), one over Chorley (25<sup>th</sup>) and one at Coppull (31<sup>st</sup>).

**Kingfisher** (*Alcedo atthis*)

***Fairly common resident***

Sightings in January came from Mawdesley Moss (3<sup>rd</sup>), Yarrow Valley Park (10<sup>th</sup>), Withnell Fold (13<sup>th</sup>), Rivington (14<sup>th</sup>), Common Bank Lodge (15<sup>th</sup>) and Arley nature reserve (26<sup>th</sup>).

February sightings included the Douglas at Croston (4<sup>th</sup>), Arley nature reserve (17<sup>th</sup>), Rivington (22<sup>nd</sup>), Heath Charnock (26<sup>th</sup>) and Yarrow Valley Park (26<sup>th</sup>).

March sightings included the Douglas at Croston (1<sup>st</sup>), Yarrow Valley Park (6<sup>th</sup>), Hoghton Bottoms (18<sup>th</sup>), Syd Brook, Eccleston (23<sup>rd</sup>), Cuerden Valley Park (27<sup>th</sup>) and the Yarrow at Euxton (27<sup>th</sup>).

April sightings came from the River Yarrow at Eccleston (5<sup>th</sup>), Yarrow Valley Park (6<sup>th</sup>) and Syd Brook, Eccleston (18<sup>th</sup>).

Regular at several sites in the Belmont area throughout the year - all probably relating to just one pair and their offspring. Single birds were seen in Cuerden Valley Park in the first part of the year with a pair on 6<sup>th</sup> May, but no evidence of breeding.



Sightings during the breeding season are usually less common, presumably because they are breeding on private stretches of river, subject to less disturbance. Nevertheless, in May, there were sightings from Yarrow Valley Park (9<sup>th</sup>) and from the Yarrow in Charnock Richard also on the 9<sup>th</sup>. A pair is known to have bred at a regular (private!) site at Heath Charnock, but the 5 young were apparently killed by a rogue male.

The pair at Heath Charnock had a second brood, this time of 6, in July. Elsewhere in July, birds were seen in Yarrow Valley Park, and on Syd Brook at Eccleston.

Dispersal was evident in August with sightings from Yarrow Valley Park (1<sup>st</sup>), Knowles Wood, Eccleston (1<sup>st</sup>), Heskin (3<sup>rd</sup>), Gillibrands North (7<sup>th</sup>), Astley Park Lake (21<sup>st</sup>), Anglezarke (25<sup>th</sup>), Brinscall Lodge (26<sup>th</sup>) and Common Bank Lodge (26<sup>th</sup>).

In September, sightings came from Astley Park (1<sup>st</sup>), Common Bank Lodge (2<sup>nd</sup>), Yarrow Valley Park (2 on 6<sup>th</sup>), the Douglas at Croston (10<sup>th</sup>) and the canal spur at Whittle (26<sup>th</sup>).

In October, widespread sightings came from Yarrow Valley Park (7<sup>th</sup>), River Douglas, Croston (13<sup>th</sup>), Heapey Lodges (14<sup>th</sup>), Anglezarke Reservoir (14<sup>th</sup>), Withnell Fold (20<sup>th</sup>) and Cuerden Valley Park (29<sup>th</sup>), suggesting a healthy population in the area.

In December, birds were noted on Mawdesley Moss (1<sup>st</sup>), Lower Healey (8<sup>th</sup>), Yarrow Valley Park (9<sup>th</sup>) and Croston Finney (26<sup>th</sup>).

### **Green Woodpecker** (*Picus viridis*)

#### **Uncommon resident**

One was noted in Cuerden Valley Park on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Birds in Rivington were noted 31<sup>st</sup> January, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 11<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March.

One was at Anglezarke Reservoir on 7<sup>th</sup> April. One, possibly two, pairs were on territory near Belmont during the breeding season

Birds were noted in the breeding season at Rivington, but in August birds had dispersed more widely and were also noted on Anglezarke Moor.

One was at White Coppice on 12<sup>th</sup> August, where the species had been conspicuous by its absence this summer. Another was seen along Georges Lane, Rivington on 8<sup>th</sup> September. One was at Anglezarke Reservoir on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Two were at White Coppice on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopus major*)

**Common resident**

In January, birds were seen at Bretherton (4<sup>th</sup>), on Croston Moss (8<sup>th</sup>) and at Cuerden Valley Park (19<sup>th</sup>). One was drumming in Astley Park on 13<sup>th</sup> February.

It was felt that there were not as many sightings as usual in Rivington and Anglezarke, although 14 territories were indicated. Young birds were coming to a garden feeder by 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

Three pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park. One with young was at Roddlesworth on 19<sup>th</sup> June. A family party was at Eccleston on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

In July, juveniles were seen at Euxton (9<sup>th</sup>) and in Chorley (23<sup>rd</sup>). A pair with two young was at Chisnall (12<sup>th</sup>).

At least 3 juveniles were regular in a Belmont garden in August. There were also records from Anglezarke moorland plantations during Autumn.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopus minor*)

**Uncommon resident**

One was heard calling in Burgh Wood, Yarrow Valley Park on 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January, 5<sup>th</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> March. Another was heard calling in Duxbury Woods on 15<sup>th</sup> February.

One was seen at Withnell Fold cricket field lodge on 19<sup>th</sup> May. A pair was seen along the Yarrow near Eccleston on 18<sup>th</sup> June.

In October, one was along the Yarrow near Parker's Wood.

**Magpie** (*Pica pica*)

**Common resident**

Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting/trapping 57 Magpies in 2012.

**Jay** (*Garrulus glandarius*)

**Common resident**

A pair was noted nesting in a Rivington woodland on 14<sup>th</sup> May and were observed until 24<sup>th</sup> June when the young had left the nest

A juvenile was noted in a Chorley garden on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Up to 4 birds were regular visitors to a Rivington garden feeder at both ends of the year, showing their increased confidence. 5 were in a Belmont garden on 20<sup>th</sup> September.

Very conspicuous in October, when 107 separate sightings from across the area were recorded of single birds and small parties, but it is believed that these related to local birds on foraging missions, rather than an influx of continental birds.

**Jackdaw** (*Corvus monedula*)

**Common resident; increasing**

1000 were at the Upper Rivington roost on 8<sup>th</sup> January and 400 were there on 26<sup>th</sup> February. 2000 were counted going to roost in Cuerden Valley Park in February. 40 were by Belmont Village on 10<sup>th</sup> March where they have been previously scarce.

Lack of building maintenance allowed 3+ pairs to breed in the steeple of St. Peters Church, Belmont where breeding has previously been only sporadic by a single pair. An estimate of 30+ pairs bred in Withnell Quarry despite the site being actively worked. Increasing numbers are noted around a Rivington garden throughout the year; breeding on nearby buildings.

Well represented in a post-breeding flock of around 500 birds at Withnell Fold on 27<sup>th</sup> July.

500 were at the Upper Rivington roost on 18<sup>th</sup> November with 200 there on 27<sup>th</sup> December.

**Rook** (*Corvus frugilegus*)

**Common resident**

Details of the annual rookery census are tabulated at the end of this report.

350 were at the Upper Rivington roost on 8<sup>th</sup> January.

250 were at the Upper Rivington roost on 18<sup>th</sup> November, and 150 were there on 27<sup>th</sup> December.

**Carrion Crow** (*Corvus corone*)

**Common resident**

100 were in the Upper Rivington roost on 8<sup>th</sup> January.

Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting/trapping 132 Carrion Crows during 2012.

A leucistic (almost white) bird was at Anglezarke on 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

150 were in the Upper Rivington roost on 18<sup>th</sup> November.

**Raven** (*Corvus corax*)

**Scarce but increasing resident**

Birds were noted over Rivington on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> January and over Anglezarke on 26<sup>th</sup>. Sightings continued throughout the year, often of pairs passing over the moorlands. A pair was noted over Chorley on 15<sup>th</sup> February.

Breeding took place at two or three quarry sites in the area

Two were attempting to catch young Rabbits at Belmont Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup> May

A family party of six was seen at Whittle on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

**Goldcrest** (*Regulus regulus*)

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

Seven were counted in Astley Park on 8<sup>th</sup> March and 2 were at Heskin on 11<sup>th</sup>.

Birds were regularly seen around a Rivington garden throughout the year thanks to associated mature conifers, but only seen year round at 4 other Rivington sites.

Singing birds were noted in June at Croston (4<sup>th</sup>), Chorley (18<sup>th</sup>) and Duxbury (30<sup>th</sup>).

10+ were with Coal Tits near Belmont on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. A 'flock' of 10 was flitting about in young conifers along Georges Lane, Rivington on 7<sup>th</sup> October. 3 groups of migrants totalling 13 birds came in over the moors from the north at Belmont on 21<sup>st</sup> October.

**Firecrest** (*Regulus ignicapilla*)

***Rare visitor***

One was found dead in a garden bordering Cuerden Valley Park in December.

**Blue Tit** (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)

***Abundant resident***

Pairs with young were noted at Coppull, Eccleston, Euxton, Rivington and Anglezarke in June. Common throughout Cuerden Valley Park.

**Great Tit** (*Parus major*)

***Very common resident***

Pairs with young were noted at Coppull, Eccleston, Euxton, Rivington and Anglezarke in June. Common throughout Cuerden Valley Park.

**Coal Tit** (*Periparus ater*)

***Common resident and winter visitor***



Pairs with young were noted at Rivington and Anglezarke in June. At least one pair bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

20+ were with Goldcrests near Belmont on 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

Common visitor to garden feeding stations from which it takes and 'stores' sunflower seeds.

**Willow Tit** (*Poecile montana*)

**Scarce resident**

January records included two at Coppull on the 9<sup>th</sup>, one at Arley nature reserve (26<sup>th</sup>) and 2 on Croston Moss (29<sup>th</sup>). February records included further sightings of the birds on Croston Moss (3<sup>rd</sup>) and at Arley (15<sup>th</sup>), and in March sightings were similarly from Croston Moss (3<sup>rd</sup>), Coppull (10<sup>th</sup>) and Arley (16<sup>th</sup>).

One was seen on Croston Moss on 14<sup>th</sup> July. Possibly a family party of three was seen on Mawdesley Moss on 4<sup>th</sup> August. The species was again recorded in September on Croston Moss (8<sup>th</sup>) and at Arley nature reserve (16<sup>th</sup>). In October, in addition to the two previous sites, one was noted at Lower Healey (13<sup>th</sup>). At least one continued to frequent the feeding station on Croston Moss during December.

The apparent good number of records this year disguises the fact that the species is in serious decline nationally. It would be appreciated, therefore, if observers would submit all records of sightings.

**Skylark** (*Alauda arvensis*)

**Common resident and summer visitor**

Around 100 were on Croston Moss on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. At least 5 were back in song at Great Knowley on 18<sup>th</sup> February, and 2 were singing adjacent to Pike Stones plantation, Anglezarke on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

Good numbers of singing birds were noted on the mosses and moorlands during the breeding season, but the species appears to have been lost from the Brindle area.

**Sand Martin** (*Riparia riparia*)

**Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant**

First back was one at Eccleston on 24<sup>th</sup> March. A pair was visiting a regular breeding site in Yarrow Valley Park by 29<sup>th</sup> May.

**Swallow** (*Hirundo rustica*)

**Common summer visitor and passage migrant**

A very early bird was near Belmont on 24<sup>th</sup> March with none seen thereafter until 6 on 14<sup>th</sup> April. The first back at Jepsons Farm, Anglezarke was on 14<sup>th</sup> with 6 there by the 16<sup>th</sup> April. First back elsewhere were birds at Great Knowley and Eccleston on 6<sup>th</sup> April. Passage of approximately 20 per hour north over Belmont was noted on 12<sup>th</sup> May.

80 were noted flying south along the Douglas at Croston on 2<sup>nd</sup> August. A flock of 120 flew south-east at dusk at Belmont on 22<sup>nd</sup> August. On 27<sup>th</sup> August a flock of 20 were observed flying south low over Lead Mines Clough, they suddenly turned back north in the face of advancing black clouds and rain. In September, heavy passage with other hirundines was noted at Withnell Fold (1<sup>st</sup>) and Ulnes Walton (2<sup>nd</sup>) when hundreds of birds passed through. 100 were feeding near Belmont on the 4<sup>th</sup>. 40 were noted on Croston Moss on the 5<sup>th</sup>, passage of approximately 50 per hour south over Belmont on 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> and 12 were at Yarrow Valley Park (30<sup>th</sup>). Meanwhile, on 9<sup>th</sup> September 16 were still around the breeding site at Wilcock's Farm, Rivington. Highest count in

October was of 20 at Eccleston (4<sup>th</sup>), with last records being one over Chorley and 2 over Eccleston (16<sup>th</sup>) and one at Belmont (21<sup>st</sup>).

A late bird was recorded at Eccleston on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

**House Martin** (*Delichon urbicum*)

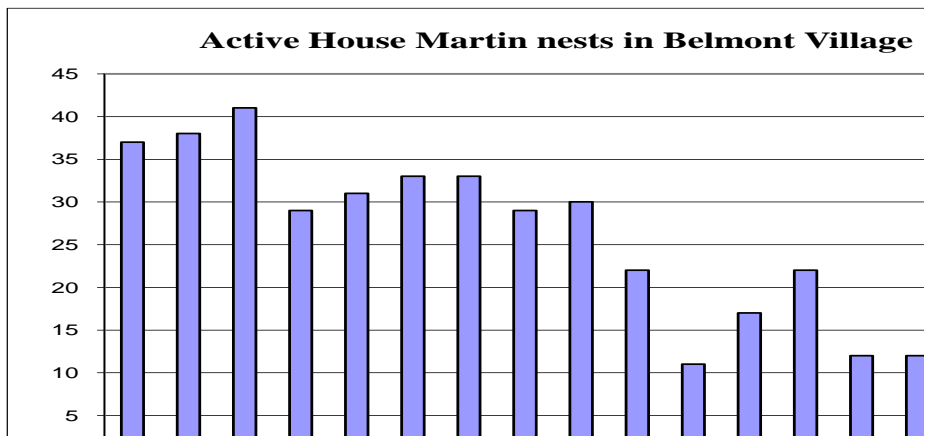
**Common summer visitor and passage migrant**

First back was one at Eccleston on 13<sup>th</sup> April. The first birds back in Belmont Village were noted on 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

Pairs bred at two locations in Cuerden Valley Park. Pairs were also noted feeding young in Croston on 11<sup>th</sup> July. Up to 5 birds were seen feeding young at a nest site in Coppull on 31<sup>st</sup> August. However, 60 at White Coppice on the 26<sup>th</sup> were definitely on the move.

September sightings included those in the hirundine movement on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> mentioned above, 150 near Belmont on the 4<sup>th</sup>, plus 30 at Eccleston on the 19<sup>th</sup> and a similar number at Withnell Fold on the 28<sup>th</sup>. In October, parties of 3 and 12 were noted at Eccleston on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

A full survey of Belmont Village located 11 active nests – the lowest total (along with 2006) on record.



**Long-tailed Tit** (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

**Common resident; increasing**

A pair was noted nest building in a Rivington garden on 9<sup>th</sup> March, and at another Rivington site on 11<sup>th</sup> April. A pair was carrying food off Grimeford Lane, Anderton on 26<sup>th</sup> April. Family groups were seen in Rivington on 26<sup>th</sup> April, with large flocks from August onwards.

One pair bred in a Belmont garden. At least two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.



6 groups of migrants totalling 78 birds came in over the moors from the north at Belmont on 21<sup>st</sup> October. 25+ were near Belmont on 25<sup>th</sup> November.

**Wood Warbler** (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*)

***Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant***

The first back was one in Heather Lea Woods on 5<sup>th</sup> May. Probably the same bird was noted again on the 9<sup>th</sup>, one was singing at Roddlesworth on 8<sup>th</sup> May, and two were in Nab Wood on 29<sup>th</sup> May. There is no evidence that they stayed to breed. A single bird was singing at Gilsbrook, Rivington on 31<sup>st</sup> May, but was not seen again although this area was once a regular breeding site.

**Chiffchaff** (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

***Common summer visitor and occasional winter visitor***

First back were birds at Euxton and Cuerden Valley Park on 16<sup>th</sup> March – a fairly typical date. In contrast, first (2) back near Belmont were on 31<sup>st</sup> March.

The first bird back at Rivington was 3<sup>rd</sup> April at one of the regular sites, Pall Mall Croft, Rivington; following this birds sang at numerous sites during April and were noted until 18<sup>th</sup> July in Rivington Village. A bird was singing off Grimeford Lane, Anderton on 26<sup>th</sup> April. Three territories were noted in Cuerden Valley Park. Remains a scarce breeder around Belmont with only 2 calling birds noted on territory during the breeding season in contrast to surrounding areas.

Singing birds in September were heard in Chorley (4<sup>th</sup>), Ulmes Walton (9<sup>th</sup>), Withnell Fold (15<sup>th</sup>), Eccleston (16<sup>th</sup>) and White Coppice (22<sup>nd</sup>). One was at Belmont on 7<sup>th</sup> October.

One at Euxton on 15<sup>th</sup> November was presumably an over-wintering bird. Another over-wintering bird was in Buckshaw village on 6<sup>th</sup> December.

**Willow Warbler** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

***Common summer visitor***

First back was one at White Coppice on 31<sup>st</sup> March, with the first (2) back at Belmont on 8<sup>th</sup> April, and another at Rivington near the castle on the same day.

5+ pairs bred around Belmont Reservoir, where formerly only a couple of pairs bred, due to recent growth of scrub in two areas.

8 'migrants' were in moorland bracken beds above Belmont on 5<sup>th</sup> August. One was still in song at White Coppice on 12<sup>th</sup> August. A bird was noted at Eccleston on 17<sup>th</sup>.

One or two were at Ulmes Walton on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, and also off Dean Wood Drive, Rivington. Several were at Arley nature reserve on 16<sup>th</sup> September. The last one at Belmont was on 4<sup>th</sup> October.

**Blackcap** (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

***Summer and winter visitor***

A male was in a Chorley garden on 21<sup>st</sup> January and again on 4<sup>th</sup> February.

Two in Cuerden Valley Park on 26<sup>th</sup> March could have been winter or summer visitors. One at Heskin on 1<sup>st</sup> April was more likely to have been a summer arrival. First (one) back at Belmont was on 8<sup>th</sup> April.

The first birds back in Rivington were noted on 11<sup>th</sup> April at The Vicarage and the Breeding Pond. Birds were noted off Grimeford Lane, Anderton, during April and May and throughout Rivington and Anglezarke until July.

Three pairs held territories in Cuerden Valley Park.

Last (one) at Belmont was on 4<sup>th</sup> October.

An over-wintering bird was at Great Knowley on 17<sup>th</sup> November.

### **Garden Warbler** (*Sylvia borin*)

#### ***Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant***

The first back was at Croston on 24<sup>th</sup> April. In May singing birds were noted at Lower Burgh Meadow (2<sup>nd</sup>), Hic Bibi (4<sup>th</sup>), Croston (4<sup>th</sup>), White Coppice and Healey Nab (29<sup>th</sup>).

Birds were noted at regular sites in Rivington and Anglezarke during May and June.

One was singing in Cuerden Valley Park at the end of June. One was again noted at Croston on 11<sup>th</sup> July.

### **Lesser Whitethroat** (*Sylvia curruca*)

#### ***Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant***

The first back was at Brindle on 28<sup>th</sup> April. May sightings came from Hic Bibi, where there was a pair on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Eccleston (6<sup>th</sup>) and the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton (12<sup>th</sup>).

### **Whitethroat** (*Sylvia communis*)

#### ***Common summer visitor***

The first back was at Croston Sewage Works on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. One was present off Grimeford Lane, Anderton on 26<sup>th</sup> April and during May. First (one) back at Belmont was noted on 6<sup>th</sup> May.

3 pairs bred at Belmont – the consolidation of a recent expansion of range here. There were also more records from Rivington and Anglezarke than in previous years, with birds seen during May and June. Two pairs held territories in Cuerden Valley Park.

20 singing males were counted on a section of Croston Moss on 8<sup>th</sup> July. A family party was on Mawdesley Moss on 5<sup>th</sup> August.

Last (2) were at Belmont on 16<sup>th</sup> September.

**Grasshopper Warbler** (*Locustella naevia*)

***Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor***

A very early bird seen at Belmont Reservoir on 8<sup>th</sup> April with the first 'reeling' bird heard on 21<sup>st</sup> April. Elsewhere, the first back was at Croston Finney on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. One was reeling at Black Coppice on 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

Reduced numbers, compared to both 2010/2011, 'reeling' from *juncus*-beds in the West Pennine Moors around Belmont, with 11 'reelers' recorded on territory in 2012 (27 in 2011) including 4 around Belmont Reservoir (6 in 2011).

One was still 'reeling' at Rivington on 9<sup>th</sup> and at Belmont on 15<sup>th</sup> August.

**Sedge Warbler** (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

***Fairly common summer visitor to the limited suitable habitat***

The first back was at Croston Reed Bed on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. One was at a pond in Eccleston on 6<sup>th</sup> May. One or two held territories on Lower Burgh Meadow and at Withnell Fold Flash.

One was in song near Belmont in late June

**Reed Warbler** (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

***Scarce summer visitor***

The first back was at Croston Reed Bed on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. One was back at Yarrow Valley Park on 5<sup>th</sup> May. Three were singing in the reed bed on Top Lodge on 17<sup>th</sup> July.

Several – possibly a family group - were still at Yarrow Valley Park on 8<sup>th</sup> September.

**Waxwing** (*Bombycilla garrulus*)

***Irregular winter visitor***

No record was received for the first winter period.

In November, Waxwings arrived in town as part of another invasion year. First of all, one was in Belmont village on the 6<sup>th</sup>, then a party of 4 was found feeding on rowans by the side of the A6 in Adlington on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and they were seen again by the canal on the 18<sup>th</sup>. A single bird was seen at Eccleston also on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and on the same day 15 turned up in Chorley at Botany. These quickly turned their affections to a couple of rowans by the former Hygienic Laundry and another in the grounds of St Peter's School, using taller trees at the school as a vantage point. These remained to the end of the month when 6 were still present, having peaked at 19 on the 21<sup>st</sup>. In December, a single bird was seen at Whittle on the 11<sup>th</sup> and a party of 6 was in Walgarth Drive, Chorley, on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Nuthatch** (*Sitta europaea*)

***Fairly common resident; increasing***

The species is widespread in Rivington and Anglezarke, and is often the most vocal in early spring. Family groups were noted from 1<sup>st</sup> June. There were at least 30 territories indicated, with birds breeding in boxes and natural sites. The species

regularly visited feeding stations in gardens and where residents put out fat balls, seed, and nuts.

Family parties were seen at two locations in Eccleston in June. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

Colonisation of the Belmont area would appear to not yet to be complete as some areas of apparently suitable woodland remain devoid of Nuthatches.

**Treecreeper** (*Certhia familiaris*)

***Fairly common resident in the area's woodlands***

The species was recorded from all the regular sites in Rivington and Anglezarke with family groups noted from 30<sup>th</sup> May.

Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

**Wren** (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

***Abundant resident***

Seems to have survived the recent severe winters without too much damage. Plenty of family parties were noted around the area during the breeding season.

**Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

***Abundant resident and winter visitor***

A flock of 300 was at Belmont Reservoir on 15<sup>th</sup> January. A flock of around 300 was in fields off Eyes Lane, Bretherton on 12<sup>th</sup> February. A similar sized flock was at Withnell Fold flashes on 18<sup>th</sup> March.

First juveniles were seen at Belmont on the early date of 10<sup>th</sup> May. Breeding occurred at two locations in Cuerden Valley Park.

A post-breeding flock of 100 birds was at Eccleston on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, and another of 150 was at Withnell Fold on the 24<sup>th</sup>. These had increased to 200 by 18<sup>th</sup> August. Birds again roosted overnight in evergreens in a Belmont garden with 100+ present in mid-July. A post breeding flock of 200 were feeding on the ground at Higher Knoll Farm, Rivington on 8<sup>th</sup> July.

A flock estimated at 150 was off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington on 19<sup>th</sup> November, and on 10<sup>th</sup> December 50 were feeding in fields above Lead Mines Clough. A flock of 150 was at Belmont Reservoir on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

**Dipper** (*Cinclus cinclus*)

***Fairly common resident on the faster flowing rivers of the area***

In January, pairs were recorded in Cuerden Valley Park (12<sup>th</sup>), Yarrow Valley Park (14<sup>th</sup>) and at White Coppice (28<sup>th</sup>).

Birds were seen in the Lead Mines Clough area from 23<sup>rd</sup> February and in the following months. In March birds were on territory on the Yarrow at Birkacre (1<sup>st</sup>), the Goit at Anglezarke (18<sup>th</sup>) and the Lostock at Whittle (18<sup>th</sup>).

A pair was feeding two young at Yarrow Valley Park by 21<sup>st</sup> April. One was seen feeding a newly fledged young bird at the same site on 10<sup>th</sup> June and three young were seen the next day – presumably a second brood. A pair was also feeding young at White Coppice, and another pair in Cuerden Valley Park successfully fledged one young.

On 8<sup>th</sup> August a bird was high up the stream near the 'Old Shooting Hut' site. On 7<sup>th</sup> September an individual was noted on a stream in Rivington, presumably a dispersing bird.

One was on the River Chor in Astley Park on 6<sup>th</sup> October. Another was on the Yarrow in Spring Wood, Duxbury on 24<sup>th</sup> November. An unusual sight on 28<sup>th</sup> November was a bird feeding in a track side ditch on Anglezarke moor, before flying towards Yarrow reservoir. In December, singles were at Lower Healey (8<sup>th</sup>) and at Common Bank Lodge (23<sup>rd</sup>).

### **Ring Ouzel** (*Turdus torquatus*)

#### ***Scarce passage migrant***

First through on passage was one on Winter Hill on 28<sup>th</sup> March. Passage at White Coppice was exceptional with three seen on 14<sup>th</sup> April, three (22<sup>nd</sup>), 8 (26<sup>th</sup>) and 2 (28<sup>th</sup>). Singles were then recorded until 6<sup>th</sup> May. Four birds were seen at Georges Lane, Rivington on 5<sup>th</sup> May with at least 2 still there on the following day.

In Autumn, a male was at Belmont on 6<sup>th</sup> October and a female was there on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Blackbird** (*Turdus merula*)

#### ***Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor***

15 migrants were on the moor edge above Belmont on 1<sup>st</sup> October. 12+ were in a Belmont garden on 27/10/12, and up to 35 were regular in two adjacent Belmont gardens during hard weather in December.

20+ roosted at Upper Rivington on 18<sup>th</sup> November.

### **Fieldfare** (*Turdus pilaris*)

#### ***Winter visitor, often in large numbers***

Two birds were noted near the Bomber Memorial, Anglezarke, on 6<sup>th</sup> January. A flock of 200 was recorded at Great Hanging Bridge, Croston on 16<sup>th</sup> January, but the only other record for the month was a small party in Coppull on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Around 100 were still on Croston Moss on 4<sup>th</sup> February and 50 were at Hoghton Bottoms on 26<sup>th</sup> February. Flocks in March included 100 on Croston Moss (5<sup>th</sup>), 70 at Withnell Fold (10<sup>th</sup>), 3 at Belmont 11<sup>th</sup>, 20 at Dean Wood, Rivington (16<sup>th</sup>), and 50 in Marsh Lane, Brindle (24<sup>th</sup>).

Seven were seen flying north at Moses Cocker Farm, Rivington, on 7<sup>th</sup> April, and then a surprisingly late record of an individual in full breeding plumage feeding on the ground in Rivington on 12<sup>th</sup> May.



Apart from a small group at Great Knowley on the 10<sup>th</sup> October, and a single at Belmont on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Fieldfare did not return until the late date of 25<sup>th</sup> when around 100 were at Whittle, followed by 90 at Eccleston, 100 at White Coppice and 350 at Arley (all on the 26<sup>th</sup>), 111 at Belmont (27<sup>th</sup>) and 140 on Croston Moss (28<sup>th</sup>).

In November, flocks included 50 at Eccleston (2<sup>nd</sup>), 42 at Great Knowley (3<sup>rd</sup>), 200 on Croston Moss (4<sup>th</sup>), 200 at Whittle (4<sup>th</sup>), 150 at Rivington (7<sup>th</sup>), 280 at Belmont (18<sup>th</sup>), 30 at Withnell Fold (23<sup>rd</sup>), 120 at Anglezarke (28<sup>th</sup>), and 80 at Rivington (29<sup>th</sup>). A mixed thrush flock of 100 birds at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton on 25<sup>th</sup> contained good numbers of Fieldfare. December sightings included 20 feeding on holly berries at Rivington (5<sup>th</sup>), 7 at Heskin (8<sup>th</sup>), 200 on Croston Moss (16<sup>th</sup>) and 100 at Withnell Fold (26<sup>th</sup>).

### **Song Thrush** (*Turdus philomelos*)

#### ***Fairly common resident;***

The population in Rivington is still thriving, with singing birds noted from all the regular sites.

An adult and at least one juvenile were at Chisnall on 12<sup>th</sup> July. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

### **Redwing** (*Turdus iliacus*)

#### ***Winter visitor, often in large numbers.***

January sightings included a small flock at Eccleston on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 12 at Alance Bridge, Yarrow reservoir on 10<sup>th</sup>, and 30 at Whittle on the 15<sup>th</sup>. 50 roosted at Upper Rivington on the 8<sup>th</sup>. A large flock of 300 were feeding in fields off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington on 19<sup>th</sup> January. In February, flocks were again smallish including 12 at Coppull (17<sup>th</sup>), 20 at Whittle (19<sup>th</sup>), 15 in Yarrow Valley Park (21<sup>st</sup>) and 12 at Hoghton Bottoms (26<sup>th</sup>). In March, 10 were at Eccleston (10<sup>th</sup>), 90 were at Belmont and 10 were in Yarrow Valley Park (11<sup>th</sup>), 300 were near Makinsons Farm, Rivington (13<sup>th</sup>), and 50 were at Belmont 17<sup>th</sup>.

April records included one at Belmont and 7 at Heskin (1<sup>st</sup>), 10 at White Coppice (7<sup>th</sup>), 15 near Rivington High School (8<sup>th</sup>), and 20 at Croston (12<sup>th</sup>).

Winter thrushes were late returning in any sort of number. Redwing as usual were first with a couple in Cuerden Valley Park (2<sup>nd</sup> October), several at Eccleston (4<sup>th</sup>), 20 at Belmont (7<sup>th</sup>) 4 at White Coppice (10<sup>th</sup>), when two flocks of 60 and 80 flew north over Anglezarke Moor, and when 30 were also at Eccleston. 80 flew south-east over Belmont on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 120 were in the Belmont area on the 14<sup>th</sup>. 20 were at the E-shaped pond, Bretherton, on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Flocks in November included 10 at Eccleston (2<sup>nd</sup>), 30 on Croston Moss (4<sup>th</sup>) and good numbers in a mixed flock of 100 thrushes at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton on 25<sup>th</sup>. In December, 10 were seen at Heskin (8<sup>th</sup>), 60 were at Eccleston (10<sup>th</sup>), 40 near Lower Rivington Reservoir (10<sup>th</sup>), and at least 30 were near Belmont on the 29<sup>th</sup>. 60 roosted at Upper Rivington on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Mistle Thrush** (*Turdus viscivorus*)

***Fairly Common resident***

The species is not as frequently seen in the Rivington area, possibly due to predation by squirrels, magpies and crows. One pair bred in a Belmont garden.

Post-breeding flocks in July included 18 on Croston Finney (8<sup>th</sup>) and 12 at Withnell Fold (27<sup>th</sup>). A party of 6 was at Whittle on 9<sup>th</sup> August.

Parties in September included 8 at Eccleston (10<sup>th</sup>), 8 at Lead Mines Clough, Anglezarke (22<sup>nd</sup>), and 7 at Whittle (24<sup>th</sup>). 40 were near Belmont on 5<sup>th</sup> October. Three were together in Cuerden Valley Park in November. Up to 5 were in a Belmont garden in December.

**Spotted Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa striata*)

***Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant***

First back were birds at White Coppice and Withnell Fold on 12<sup>th</sup> May. Birds were also noted at regular breeding sites in Heather Lea Woods and at Anglezarke on 25<sup>th</sup> May. First (one) back at Belmont was on 26<sup>th</sup> May. A pair was late back at a usual Rivington site on 30<sup>th</sup> May.

July sightings included one at White Coppice (5<sup>th</sup>) and 3 at Withnell Fold (7<sup>th</sup>). At least 3 or 4 were still present around their breeding site at Withnell Fold on 4<sup>th</sup> August, but one seen on Mawdesley Moss on the same date was probably on migration. Another was seen in Georges Lane, Rivington on 10<sup>th</sup> August. One was at Belmont on 9<sup>th</sup> September.

**Robin** (*Erithacus rubecula*)

***Abundant resident***

One was noted with young at Euxton on 27<sup>th</sup> March. A juvenile was noted at Clayton on 17<sup>th</sup> April.

Nocturnal feeding was noted in a Belmont garden on 20<sup>th</sup> December.

**Black Redstart** (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)

***Rare visitor***

One was reported from Tatton Recreation Ground, Chorley, on 14<sup>th</sup> January.

One was on Winter Hill on 28<sup>th</sup> March. Another or the same was on Winter Hill on 21<sup>st</sup> July. A female / immature was there on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> September followed by a male on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. A female was with Wheatears near Belmont Reservoir on 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

**Redstart** (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

***Fairly common summer visitor in the east of the area***

First back was a bird at Anglezarke on 19<sup>th</sup> April, with birds at Belmont and at Black Coppice on 21<sup>st</sup> April. At least 4 singing males were noted between Black Coppice and Heather Lea Woods, plus at least two in Lead Mines Clough. 3/4 pairs held territory and probably bred near Belmont, an increase on recent years. One in Pet's corner in Astley Park on the 5<sup>th</sup> May was presumably on passage.

One pair bred successfully at Rivington with a family group noted in June (25<sup>th</sup>) and still into July. Two pairs bred at Anglezarke with family groups around from the end of June (23<sup>rd</sup>).

Return passage in September included 4 at Rivington (8<sup>th</sup>) and one in the grounds of Chorley Hospital (10<sup>th</sup>). Last at Belmont was a juvenile on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Whinchat** (*Saxicola rubetra*)

***Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant***

First back was a male at Belmont Reservoir on 7<sup>th</sup> May, followed by a male and female at Georges Lane, Rivington on 12<sup>th</sup> May.

A juvenile was at Belmont on 9<sup>th</sup> September. A returning bird was on Lower Burgh Meadow on 16<sup>th</sup> September. Another was at Rivington on 7<sup>th</sup> October.

**Stonechat** (*Saxicola torquata*)

***Scarce resident***

A female was off Roynton Lane, Rivington on 8<sup>th</sup> January, and another female was near Simms ruin, Anglezarke on 1<sup>st</sup> March. A female was at a regular wintering site on Croston Finney on 29<sup>th</sup> January and again on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. A female was also at White Coppice on 15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> March.

A male was at Roynton Lane, Rivington on 8<sup>th</sup> July. 6 pairs were located on territory in the West Pennine Moors around Belmont (5 in 2011) with at least 3 pairs successfully fledging young.

Two were at Rivington on 8<sup>th</sup> September. A minimum of 13 were in the Belmont area in early October. A female / immature was on Croston Finney on 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> November, and again on 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> December. A pair was near Simms on 28<sup>th</sup> November with a male there on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

**Wheatear** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

***Fairly common passage migrant and scarce summer visitor***

The first in Spring were two at Withnell Fold and 3 at Belmont on 24<sup>th</sup> March with a further 7 through Belmont in March. One was at Cuerden Valley Park on 14<sup>th</sup> April, and steady passage was recorded throughout April at White Coppice and on the mosslands. 31 passed through Belmont during April including a group of 18 on 15<sup>th</sup>.

In May, passage at White Coppice continued throughout the first week. At Georges Lane, Rivington, 30 passed through on the 6<sup>th</sup>. 81 passed through Belmont during May including a group of 22 on the 6<sup>th</sup>. On Mawdesley Moss, 20 were noted on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 29 on the 14<sup>th</sup>. A single bird was at Buckshaw on the 20<sup>th</sup>. A pair on the moors on 6<sup>th</sup> June was hopefully a breeding pair.

Seven return migrants were noted above the quarry at White Coppice on 24<sup>th</sup> August. Passage continued in September including 3 at Withnell Fold flashes (1<sup>st</sup>), 2 at Rivington (8<sup>th</sup>), a single on Mawdesley Moss (10<sup>th</sup>), 2 at Belmont (13<sup>th</sup>), 4 at Arley



(16<sup>th</sup>) and 2 on Winter Hill (23<sup>rd</sup>). October records included 3 on Winter Hill (6<sup>th</sup>), 3 at Rivington (7<sup>th</sup>) and one at Great Knowley (13<sup>th</sup>).

**Pied Flycatcher** (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

***Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant***

The first back at Anglezarke was a male on 14<sup>th</sup> April. One male was back in song at the regular Belmont breeding site from 28<sup>th</sup> April onwards. Singing birds were then noted in the Anglezarke area throughout May, but there is no evidence that they stayed to breed.

One was, however, in Georges Lane, Rivington on 10<sup>th</sup> August, and may have been a local breeder on the move. One was at Arley nature reserve on 16<sup>th</sup> September.

**Dunnock** (*Prunella modularis*)

***Abundant resident***

Unusual was the presence of two moorland territories in bracken beds above Belmont up to 310m above sea level in the breeding season.

**House Sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*)

***Abundant resident***

The species seems to be recovering locally after recent declines.

Breeding occurred at two locations in Cuerden Valley Park.

A flock of 30+ was in Belmont Village on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

**Tree Sparrow** (*Passer montanus*)

***Fairly common resident***

A flock of around 20 birds was seen regularly on Croston Moss in January. A flock of around 30 birds was at the same site on 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

A post breeding flock of 20 birds was on Croston Moss on 8<sup>th</sup> July, and a similar sized flock was in the same location on 29<sup>th</sup> September. Two were in a garden at Great Knowley on the same day.

**Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla flava flavissima*)

***Rare summer visitor / passage migrant***

A late bird was reported from the edge of Croston Moss on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

**Grey Wagtail** (*Motacilla cinerea*)

***Common resident by the rivers and reservoirs of the area***

In March, birds were on territory on the Yarrow at Birkacre (1<sup>st</sup>), the Douglas at Croston (1<sup>st</sup>) and the Yarrow at Bretherton (2<sup>nd</sup>). Birds were regularly seen around Lead Mines Clough from March onwards. A pair was also on territory on Dean Black Brook, White Coppice.

One with young was at Anglezarke Reservoir on 4<sup>th</sup> June. 3 successful pairs with fledged juveniles were seen near Belmont in the breeding season. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.



In August, 3 were at Knowles Wood, Eccleston (1<sup>st</sup>), a single was in Astley Park (21<sup>st</sup>) and a pair was on the River Darwen at Hoghton on the same date. A party of 5 was at Knowles Wood, Eccleston on 11<sup>th</sup> September.

**Pied Wagtail** (*Motacilla alba*)

**Common resident**

At least 30 were at Eccleston on 10<sup>th</sup> February.

6 pairs again bred at Belmont Reservoir.

Ten were together in Chorley on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Up to 30 roosted nightly at Belmont Reservoir in early September. A flock of 42 was counted on Eccleston cricket field on 5<sup>th</sup> October, and at least 10 were feeding in a field at Rivington (7<sup>th</sup>). Over 20 were seen going to roost at Chorley Hospital on 12<sup>th</sup> December.

**White Wagtail** (*Motacilla alba alba*)

**Scarce passage migrant, mainly in Spring**

2 were at Belmont Reservoir on 21<sup>st</sup> April.

**Tree Pipit** (*Anthus trivialis*)

**Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant**

First back was one at Black Coppice on 17<sup>th</sup> April, followed by one near Heather Lea Woods on the 24<sup>th</sup>. One was off Roynton Lane, Rivington on 20<sup>th</sup> May.

**Meadow Pipit** (*Anthus pratensis*)

**Common resident and passage migrant; scarcer in winter**

At least 60 were above Belmont on 25<sup>th</sup> August. Counts of 190+ at Belmont Reservoir on 9<sup>th</sup> September and 170 on 13<sup>th</sup> disguise the true numbers present as scores of birds were observed to be dropping in from the north with others moving off south. 90+ were at the site on 7<sup>th</sup> October. Small numbers were still present at Belmont at the end of December.

**Chaffinch** (*Fringilla coelebs*)

**Common resident and winter visitor**

30+ roosted near Belmont on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, with at least 50 there on 10<sup>th</sup> March. Up to 15 were also in a Belmont garden in March.

A total of 48 was counted in 2 BBS squares in the Brindle area in early May.

20 were in a Belmont garden on 26<sup>th</sup> August and 15<sup>th</sup> September. The species was well represented in a large mixed finch / bunting flock on Croston Finney in October. 40+ were at Belmont on 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

**Brambling** (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

**Winter visitor in variable numbers**

Four were in a Chorley garden on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, increasing to 5 by the 15<sup>th</sup>. 3 were still there on 5<sup>th</sup> February. 12 were in a Belmont garden on 10<sup>th</sup> February and up to 10 remained during March with the last there on 13<sup>th</sup> April. One was in an Euxton garden on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. First back in Autumn was one in a Belmont garden on 12<sup>th</sup> October, followed by one at Euxton on 26<sup>th</sup> October, and another at Great Knowley on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Numbers in the Belmont garden increased to 15 (21<sup>st</sup>) with 10 still there on the 28<sup>th</sup>.



The species was well represented in a large mixed finch / bunting flock on Croston Finney in October. In November, birds were at Belmont Reservoir (6 on 21<sup>st</sup>) and also at Euxton (28<sup>th</sup>) and at Clayton (29<sup>th</sup>). Up to 50 were counted in the finch flock on Croston Finney on 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> December. Up to 3 visited a member's garden in Eccleston throughout the month and up to 10 in a Belmont garden.

**Greenfinch** (*Carduelis chloris*)

**Common resident**

30+ were in a Belmont garden on 20<sup>th</sup> October with 40 there on 28<sup>th</sup> – the latter being the largest flock locally since 2006.

Well represented in a large mixed finch / bunting flock on Croston Finney in October, and 60 were counted in a flock at the site on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

**Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis*)

**Common resident**

January flocks included 15 at Lower Healey (7<sup>th</sup>) and 28 in Coppull (20<sup>th</sup>). 50 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 15<sup>th</sup> January.

50 were at Belmont on 10<sup>th</sup> March and 36 were in a Belmont garden on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

Charms of 50 on 15<sup>th</sup> July and 70 on 26<sup>th</sup> August were noted at Belmont, then a total of 185 in 4 charms were there on 9<sup>th</sup> September. Other flocks in September included 30 at Croston sewage works (13<sup>th</sup>), 30 on Croston Moss (15<sup>th</sup>) and 60 at Eccleston (16<sup>th</sup>).

Well represented in a large mixed finch / bunting flock on Croston Finney in October. A flock visiting a Coppull garden had built up to 50 by 29<sup>th</sup> October.

55 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

**Siskin** (*Carduelis spinus*)

**Common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce resident**

Nine were in a Coppull garden on 24<sup>th</sup> January into March. Six were at Great Knowley on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

In May, birds were noted in Euxton (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Chorley (5<sup>th</sup>) gardens. 3+ pairs bred at Belmont with 6 juveniles seen in May/June. A party of 6 birds was at White Coppice on 5<sup>th</sup> July. Parties of 12 on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 13 on 30<sup>th</sup> August and 16 on 15<sup>th</sup> September were noted in a Belmont garden.

A party of 5 on migration was noted in the Rivington / Winter Hill area on 7<sup>th</sup> October. Parties in November included 6 at Lower Healey (10<sup>th</sup>), 2 at Clayton (29<sup>th</sup>) and 3 at Common Bank Lodge (29<sup>th</sup>). A flock of 30 birds was feeding on alders by the Yarrow at Common Bank on 9<sup>th</sup> December, and a party of 7 was in Eccleston on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Flocks of 50 and 20 were at Belmont on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. 24 were in Cuerden Valley Park at the end of the year.

**Linnet** (*Carduelis cannabina*)

**Fairly common resident**

A massive flock of over 500 birds was seen regularly on Croston Finney from 14<sup>th</sup> January to the end of the month. There were still around 200 in the area on the 25<sup>th</sup> February, reducing to 100 by 12<sup>th</sup> March.

30 were at Belmont on 30<sup>th</sup> May. At least 5 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir. Two or three pairs bred around White Coppice, but the species is now scarcer in the Rivington area, only being recorded at two sites, one of which held 8 pairs on 20<sup>th</sup> May.

A post-breeding flock of 60 birds was on Mawdesley Moss on 24<sup>th</sup> June. A party of nine was at Whittle on 9<sup>th</sup> August. A flock of around 200 birds was on Croston Finney during October. Numbers there had increased to 300 by 10<sup>th</sup> November, and to 400 by 16<sup>th</sup> December.

**Twite** (*Carduelis flavirostris*)

**Very scarce resident**

A flock of 20 was reported from Charnock Richard on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January. One was at White Coppice on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. One was noted near Rivington Pike on 7<sup>th</sup> October, and three were recorded over Arley nature reserve on 26<sup>th</sup> October.

**Lesser Redpoll** (*Carduelis cabaret*)

**Common winter visitor; uncommon resident**

Four were seen near Kem Mill in February. A flock of 32 was at White Coppice on 17<sup>th</sup> April. Up to 11 were in a Belmont garden in April and 12 in May.

15+ were in a Belmont garden on 20<sup>th</sup> July. Three were feeding along the canal at Withnell Fold on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

**Common Crossbill** (*Loxia curvirostra*)

***Scarce visitor***

Singles were noted at Lead Mines Clough on 30<sup>th</sup> January and 2<sup>nd</sup> February, and 3 were there on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

A flock of 20 was at Belmont from 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> July. Two flew over Chorley town centre on 10<sup>th</sup> August.

Two were noted near Rivington Pike on 7<sup>th</sup> October and 3 on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Five were near Belmont on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Bullfinch** (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

***Fairly common resident***

The species was noted at all the regular sites in Rivington and Anglezarke in all months of the year. A pair was feeding on bramble seed on the edge of Anglezarke reservoir on 13<sup>th</sup> January, a family group was noted on 14<sup>th</sup> July at Jepsons Clough and on 21<sup>st</sup> December 6 were feeding on heather seed at Anglezarke. Up to 6 were in a Belmont garden in March. 5 were at Belmont on 18<sup>th</sup> November.

One or two pairs were noted at Yarrow Valley Park during the breeding season.

**Hawfinch** (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*)

***Rare vagrant***

One was seen in Duxbury Woods on 15<sup>th</sup> February. The first record for the species for several years.

**Snow Bunting** (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)

***Rare winter visitor***

Two were found among the television masts on Winter Hill on 1<sup>st</sup> January, and these had increased to 6 by the 29<sup>th</sup>. Five were still there on 12<sup>th</sup> February, but had decreased to a single bird by 29<sup>th</sup>. One was on Belmont Moor on 1<sup>st</sup> February.

**Yellowhammer** (*Emberiza citrinella*)

***Fairly common resident; declining***

At least 20 were noted on Croston Moss on 8<sup>th</sup> January. In March, flocks of 7 at Bretherton (2<sup>nd</sup>), 10 on Croston Moss (12<sup>th</sup>) and 25 at Arley (16<sup>th</sup>) were recorded.

Well represented in a large mixed finch / bunting flock on Croston Finney in October.

**Reed Bunting** (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

***Fairly common resident***

Over 20 were on Mawdesley Moss on 11<sup>th</sup> January. Up to 16 were in a Belmont garden in February/March and 8 in April with birds still visiting feeders there throughout April, May and June.

Small numbers were seen around the moorland plantation edges at Anglezarke throughout the year.

Nine singing males were on Lower Burgh Meadow on 7<sup>th</sup> April. There was an increase to 12 pairs breeding around Belmont Reservoir (8 pairs in 2011).

Well represented in a large mixed finch / bunting flock on Croston Finney in October. 20+ were at Belmont Reservoir throughout October and November.

**Corn Bunting** (*Emberiza calandra*)

**Scarce resident; confined to the mosslands**

A flock of 10 was on Mawdesley Moss on 8<sup>th</sup> January, and 14 were there on 25<sup>th</sup> February. An impressive flock of 100 birds was on Croston Moss on 12<sup>th</sup> March.

A flock of 21 was noted on Croston Moss on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

**ESCAPES**

**Egyptian Goose** (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*)

One was on Adlington Reservoir on 25<sup>th</sup> January.

**Muscovy Duck** (*Cairina moschata*)

4 birds were near Belmont on 8<sup>th</sup> April with a nest (C13) located. A brood of 9 young was seen on 12<sup>th</sup> May with 7 there on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

**North American Turkey** (*Meleagris gallipavo*)

The artificially maintained population in Belmont Plantations continues with a count of 12+ on 25<sup>th</sup> March, with a female found predated on the nest (by a Fox) on 7<sup>th</sup> May. 11 were present there on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

**Bobwhite Quail** (*Colinus virginianus*)

One was in a Belmont garden on 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

**Cockatiel** (*Nymphicus hollandicus*)

One was in an Euxton garden on 31<sup>st</sup> May.

**LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS FOR BIRD REPORT**

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Apologies to anyone I may have omitted.

## ROOKERY CENSUS

<u>Site</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>1999</u>
A49 Euxton	48	50	42	40	56
Howard Arms, Whittle Springs	28	25	41	49	30
Rawlinson La, Heath Charnock	0	15	14	14	18
Railway Road, Adlington	37	30	22	24	24
Prospect House, Wheelton	31	32	50	81	101
Lower Wheelton	11	10	11	16	20
Red Cat, Wheelton	1	10	N/C	N/C	N/C
St Chad's Wheelton	6	6	N/C	N/C	N/C
Croston Bowling Green	80	80	130	135	130
Croston Town Road	3	0	0	0	0
Croston Westhead Road	5	0	0	0	0
Wild Bottoms Wood, Hoghton	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C
Town House Farm, Brindle	29	40	23	22	18
Brindle Village	7	11	N/C	N/C	N/C
Buckshaw Village	8	21	30	N/C	N/C
<b><u>Totals</u></b>	<b>294</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>397</b>

## 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							
Great Crested Grebe	2		13	5	2	1	1
Cormorant	4	7	8	9	5	11	6
Mute Swan	5	4	5	5	5	5	8
Canada Goose	80	78	24	9	1	3	
Hybrid Goose	5	2	6	3	3	2	3
Greylag Goose			11				
Wigeon							
Teal		14					30
Mallard	215	257	114	292	250	243	244
Pochard	1	1					
Tufted Duck		7		1	6	2	6
Goldeneye		4	6			1	10
Goosander	8	9	1			1	4
Moorhen	7	7	7	17	13	9	6
Coot	10	13	10	10	8	16	17

## RINGING REPORT

### Introduction

2012 can be summed up in one word – 'WET!' The weather during 2012 played havoc with nesting birds with many nests flooded out and young starving and dying. On a less important note it also caused the abandonment of many a ringing session with nets being hurriedly taken down due to weather fronts blowing in, or the complete postponement of planned ringing sessions due to adverse weather conditions - much to our annoyance, especially if it was all planned round days off work. Nevertheless, during 2012 a total of 972 birds of 27 species were ringed, of which 295 were ringed in our garden

### 2012 Ringing yearly summary

During the first quarter of the year a total of 17 ringing sessions took place at just 2 sites - our garden and a feeding station in a local wood (within CDNHS recording area)

Highlights were 12 Goldfinch in the garden on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 5 Bullfinch at the woodland feeding station 28<sup>th</sup> January, Great Spotted Woodpecker and 9 Long tailed Tits in the garden 29<sup>th</sup> February. From the 5<sup>th</sup> March Siskin numbers began to build up in the garden and wood to the rear of the garden though not in the same dramatic numbers as last year with just 33 birds caught and ringed, the majority of which were caught during early March, bringing the first quarter total to 293 birds of 11 species

During the second quarter ringing sessions took place at 9 different sites in the area including Hic Bibi, Yarrow Valley Park, Duxbury Woods, Wood End Farm on Mawdsley Moss and Withnell NR. At these 5 sites nest boxes were checked and all pulli of a suitable age and size were ringed. This year saw many young in nest boxes going un-ringed due to their very small size (many runts) compared to their brothers and sisters in the same broods. Just over 2/3 of most broods were ringed. These included 73 Blue Tits, 86 Great Tits, 9 Coal Tits, 5 Nuthatch and 10 Tree Sparrow. As well as pulli in nest boxes, 1 brood of Robin and 2 broods of Blackbird were also ringed along with 10 Lapwing chicks on Mawdsley Moss. Many open nesting species suffered large mortality rates during June with over 70% of the nests we were monitoring flooded out and the young drowned/chilled/starved. The total for the second quarter was 309 of 13 species and the half year total came to 602 birds ringed.

No trip out in HMS Birkacre Bath tub this year to ring the tern chicks due to adverse weather with regard to the disturbance and ringing of the tern chicks

During the third quarter the very poor weather conditions took its toll on the number of ringing sessions with just 2 in July, 1 in August and 1 in September. Highlights included Blackbird pulli (4) on 4<sup>th</sup> July and Willow Warbler (1), Chiffchaff(1) and 4 Long-tailed Tits at Lower Burgh Meadow on 16<sup>th</sup> September, bringing the third quarter total to just 43 birds and the yearly total so far to 645 birds(PANTS!!!).



The final quarter saw a total of 13 ringing sessions at just 2 sites - our garden and a woodland feeding station with a total of 327 of 12 species being caught to bring the total for the year to 972 of 27 species

### **RINGING TOTALS 2012**

<b><u>Species</u></b>	<b><u>Full Grown</u></b>	<b><u>Pulli</u></b>	<b><u>Re trap/Recoveries</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Lapwing	0	10	0	10
Wood pigeon	1	0	0	1
Great spotted woodpecker	1	0	0	1
Wren	4	0	1	5
Dunnock	9	0	3	12
Robin	24	6	10	40
Blackbird	13	9	0	22
Song thrush	2	0	0	2
Sedge warbler	2	0	0	2
Black cap	2	0	0	2
Chiff Chaff	1	0	0	1
Willow Warbler	3	0	0	3
Gold Crest	3	0	0	3
Long Tailed tit	59	0	22	81
Coal tit	39	9	29	77
Blue tit	185	84	71	346
Great tit	117	87	24	228
Nuthatch	7	5	6	18
Magpie	1	0	0	1
Starling	1	0	1	2
House sparrow	1	0	0	1
Tree Sparrow	0	10	0	10
Chaffinch	13	0	1	14
Greenfinch	3	0	0	3
Goldfinch	28	0	5	33
Siskin	33	0	2	35
Bullfinch	<u>22</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>25</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>972</b>

## Garden Ringing 2012

This year proved to be just average for garden ringing with just 295 birds caught and ringed in the garden. Two things caused the drop in numbers - the very wet and windy weather put paid to many a planned garden ringing session and the wet weather also took its toll of young birds with very few post fledged titmice seen in the garden during June and July, let alone ringed. Here's hoping for a better 2013 breeding season.

### **Garden Ringing 2012**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Full Grown</b>	<b>Pulli</b>	<b>Re traps/Controls</b>	<b>Total</b>
Wood pigeon	1	0	0	1
G.S. Woodpecker	1	0	0	1
Wren	3	0	1	4
Robin	4	0	5	9
Blackbird	3	4	0	7
Blackcap	1	0	0	1
Long tailed tit	20	0	12	32
Coal tit	14	0	20	34
Blue tit	24	6	26	56
Great tit	36	0	11	47
Nuthatch	2	0	3	5
Starling	1	0	1	2
House sparrow	1	0	0	1
Chaffinch	5	0	1	6
Goldfinch	28	0	5	33
Siskin	33	0	2	35
Bullfinch	<u>15</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>18</u>
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>295</b>

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**Andy Leach**

## Retraps and Recoveries

### Great Tit

Ring No; TJ95236

Age ringed; 1 pulli in nest box

Where/when ringed - Withnell Nature Reserve 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2012

Where/When found - Darwen Nr Blackburn 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012

Comments: 163 days Distance 7km Taken by cat

### Siskin

Ring no; L789962

Age ringed; 5 Male

Where/when ringed; - Garden 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011

Where/when found; -Damhead farm Carluke, South Lanarkshire - 21<sup>st</sup> July 2012

Comments; 488 days Distance 235km controlled by ringer

### Robin

Ring no; T152009

Age ringed:- 5

Where/when ringed:- Garden Clayton Green 8<sup>th</sup> June 2006

Where/when found:- Garden Clayton Green 13<sup>th</sup> December 2012

Comments; 2191 days distance 0km over 6 years between first ringing and re-trapping in the garden - where the hell had this bird been in between times!!!

### Blackbird

Ring no; RK56296

Age ringed; 4 Female

When/where:- Hic Bibi, Coppull - 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2000

Where/when found:- Billingham Beck Country Park, Stockton on Tees 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Comments; 4146 days Distance 141km. One of 2 male and female caught side by side in a net on Hic Bibi on Autumn passage? Over 12 years old at time of re trap did this bird originally come from that area and was it on autumn passage when first caught?

### Siskin

Ring no; V69570

Age ringed 5 female

Where/when;- Drakelow near Burton on Trent Derbyshire - 21<sup>st</sup> February 2009

Where/when found;- Garden Clayton Green - 5<sup>th</sup> March 2012

Comments; 1108 days, Distance 123km, controlled by ringer

### Great Tit

Ring no; X640168

Age ringed 3 female

Where/when; Garden Clayton green 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2010

Where/when found; Hadfield Glossop Derbyshire 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Comments; 570 days distance 54km taken by cat

## **MAMMAL, REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN REPORT**

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

### **MAMMALS**

#### **Hedgehog** (*Erinaceus europaeus*)

The total of 28 submitted records was the most for several years and hopefully indicates that the species is recovering from the decline suffered recently. Most sightings were of singles although a family bred in a garden at Euxton and juveniles were seen feeding under the bird feeders. Two adults and a juvenile were seen regularly during August in a garden at Ulmes Walton, whilst at least four, including two juveniles from 5<sup>th</sup> August, were seen nightly in a garden at Belmont from the first sighting on 18<sup>th</sup> March to 19<sup>th</sup> November. Sadly, several road casualties were also reported including four in the Belmont area on 27<sup>th</sup> August on roads up to 280 m above sea level!

#### **Common Shrew** (*Sorex araneus*)

Singles were seen in a Belmont garden on 29<sup>th</sup> June, Cuerden Valley Park on 2<sup>nd</sup> July and a garden in Euxton on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> August. Another was on Mawdesley Moss on 17<sup>th</sup> January and on 26<sup>th</sup> September, one was seen swimming as the mossland was flooded!

#### **Mole** (*Talpa europaea*)

Abundant molehills in suitable habitat throughout the year but no reports of live animals seen.

#### **Daubenton's Bat** (*Myotis daubentonii*)

One was 'hibernating' in an old shippon in Wheelton Plantation on 26<sup>th</sup> February and two were 'hibernating' in an old mine adit at Belmont on 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February. Two were also seen near Belmont on 8<sup>th</sup> October. Four were along the River Yarrow at Birkacre on 28<sup>th</sup> June. Recorded by bat detector at Birkacre on 11<sup>th</sup> July and the lake in Cuerden Valley Park on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

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

Recorded by bat detector at both 45 kHz and 55 kHz at Yarrow Valley Park during July and August and at 45 kHz at Cuerden Valley Park on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

Small bats were seen flying around the area from 2<sup>nd</sup> March to the late date of 29<sup>th</sup> December, maximum seen together being four at Belmont on 8<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Noctule Bat** (*Nyctalus noctula*)

During a survey of the bat boxes in Duxbury Woods by South Lancashire Bat Group, a total of seven were counted.

There were four sightings near Belmont between 18<sup>th</sup> September and 20<sup>th</sup> October and also on 20<sup>th</sup> October, one was seen hunting over trees at Clayton Brook well before dusk.

### **Brown Long-eared Bat** (*Plecotus auritus*)

Three were 'hibernating' in an old shippon in Wheelton Plantation on 8<sup>th</sup> January, with two there on 6<sup>th</sup> February and one on 26<sup>th</sup> February.

During a survey of the bat boxes in Duxbury Woods by South Lancashire Bat Group, a total of seventeen were counted.

### **Whiskered/Brandt's Bat** (*Myotis mystacinus* / *M. brandtii*)

The only records were from near Belmont with three on 27<sup>th</sup> March, two on 27<sup>th</sup> September and one on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Natterer's Bat** (*Myotis nattereri*)

Singles were 'hibernating' in an old shippon in Wheelton Plantation on 8<sup>th</sup> January and 26<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Brown Hare** (*Lepus europaeus*)

Sightings throughout the year of small numbers in the mosslands in the west of the area and moorland in the east. The peak count from the Belmont area was a poor six on 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

### **Rabbit** (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

The population around Belmont grew rapidly from an estimated 40 in January to 200+ from May to July with the first young being seen on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. No outbreaks of myxomatosis were reported in the Belmont area but the population had been reduced to around 70 in December following control by shooting.

Away from Belmont, small numbers were widespread, the maximum totals being seven on Croston Moss on 12<sup>th</sup> June and six on the society's evening walk at Whittle-le-Woods on 9<sup>th</sup> August. A black one was seen on Blainscough Fields, Coppull on 26<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Grey Squirrel** (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

Common and widespread throughout the area, including members' gardens and the feeding station in Yarrow Valley Park! One was on open moorland above Belmont at 430m above sea level on 25<sup>th</sup> August.

Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting/trapping 144, an increase on recent years. The cull undertaken annually in the Roddlesworth Plantations since 2008 was repeated in February 2012 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 37 killed giving a density of 1.2 squirrels/hectare, which extrapolated would give a total estimated population of 185

throughout the whole of the Roddlesworth Plantations compared to a maximum population estimate of 1000 in 2008.

**Bank Vole** (*Clethrionomys glareolus*)

The only record was of one at Common Bank on 29<sup>th</sup> November.

**Field Vole** (*Microtus agrestis*)

Super abundant on fields around Belmont in the early part of the year with 1000+ estimated in one rough field on 28<sup>th</sup> January and 20+ on the island in Belmont reservoir on 12<sup>th</sup> February. The only other record was of one on Mawdesley Moss on 26<sup>th</sup> September.

**Brown Rat** (*Rattus norvegicus*)

Interesting sightings included one being taken as prey by a Buzzard in Eccleston on 29<sup>th</sup> April. The feeding station by the railway crossing at Croston attracted around 20, mainly young animals, on 4<sup>th</sup> November and there were 11 there on 11<sup>th</sup> November. After 20 were shot, the number had reduced to three on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

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

Widespread throughout the area including members' gardens where the birds are fed.

**Stoat** (*Mustela erminea*)

A total of 34 sightings in the Belmont area throughout the year including four individuals in ermine during January and February. Away from Belmont there were just eight reported sightings from across the area.

**Weasel** (*Mustela nivalis*)

Only seven widespread sightings throughout the year plus 15 from the Belmont area. An unusual evening sighting was one crossing the A674 Blackburn Road at 11pm on 7<sup>th</sup> November.

**American Mink** (*Mustela vison*)

One was in a drainage ditch on Croston Moss on 25<sup>th</sup> February. There were four sightings of singles in Cuerden Valley Park during March. Year round trapping at Belmont resulted in four killed.

**Badger** (*Meles meles*)

Signs of this species presence were seen in three areas of West Pennine Moors, albeit in reduced numbers than in 2011.

**Fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*)

Small numbers widespread throughout the area, the maximum being seen together was a family of an adult with three young in fields at Adlington between A6 and the canal on 18<sup>th</sup> July.

In addition to year round control in the general Belmont area for game/agricultural purposes,



Foxes are controlled during the breeding season at Belmont Reservoir to protect the nationally important gullery & ground nesting wader populations from predation/disturbance. This resulted in a pair being killed at the site in March & a female in May.

Outside an active earth near Belmont in late May were the remains of 20+ Pheasants (mostly males) plus a few Rabbit skins and a Pheasant egg. A half-grown cub was found in a Buzzard nest near Belmont on 30<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Fallow Deer** (*Dama dama*)

A small herd of up to seven was seen occasionally in the Bretherton, Eccleston and Ulnes Walton area from February to May but no sightings were reported later in the year. A small herd of up to five, (buck with 4 females/juveniles) were occasionally seen near Belmont. They are known to be wanderers from a small feral population in an adjacent area.

### **Roe Deer** (*Capreolus capreolus*)

More sightings were reported for this species than any other Mammal! It is widespread throughout the area but the maximum counts all came from the Belmont area with 14 on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 12 on 8<sup>th</sup> March and even 8 in the village on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Four was the maximum number elsewhere – Cuerden Valley Park on 16<sup>th</sup> January and Spring Wood, Duxbury on 18<sup>th</sup> November.



## REPTILES

### Common Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*)

Just three records of singles received; Brinscall quarry on 27<sup>th</sup> July and Belmont on 1<sup>st</sup> April and 26<sup>th</sup> July.

## AMPHIBIANS

### Smooth Newt (*Triturus vulgaris*)

Both males and females were seen in a garden pond in Euxton on 17<sup>th</sup> March. A total of 12 individuals were seen in four ponds near Belmont during May and June.

### Palmate Newt (*Triturus helveticus*)

The only records received were from the Belmont area with a total of 34 seen in five ponds during May and June. The maximum seen in a Belmont garden pond was 3+ on 26<sup>th</sup> March.

### Toad (*Bufo bufo*)

The first seen was one at Belmont Reservoir on 23<sup>rd</sup> February and by 31<sup>st</sup> March there were large numbers there and also at Wards Reservoir and nearby ponds. Sadly 20 were found dead on Burgh Hall Road on 13<sup>th</sup> March. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March, mating was observed in the small fishing lodge at Birkacre and six were seen at Kem Mill area of Cuerden Valley Park. A pond in a field at Burgh Lane South had spawn on 1<sup>st</sup> April. A very late individual was seen at Belmont on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

### Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*)

Widespread throughout the area with breeding taking place at many ponds including some members' garden ponds. The earliest seen was one being taken by a Heron from a pond at Chisnall, Coppull on 6<sup>th</sup> February!

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**