

**CHORLEY & DISTRICT
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Chorley & District Natural History Society

is a Registered Charity

Registration Number 513466

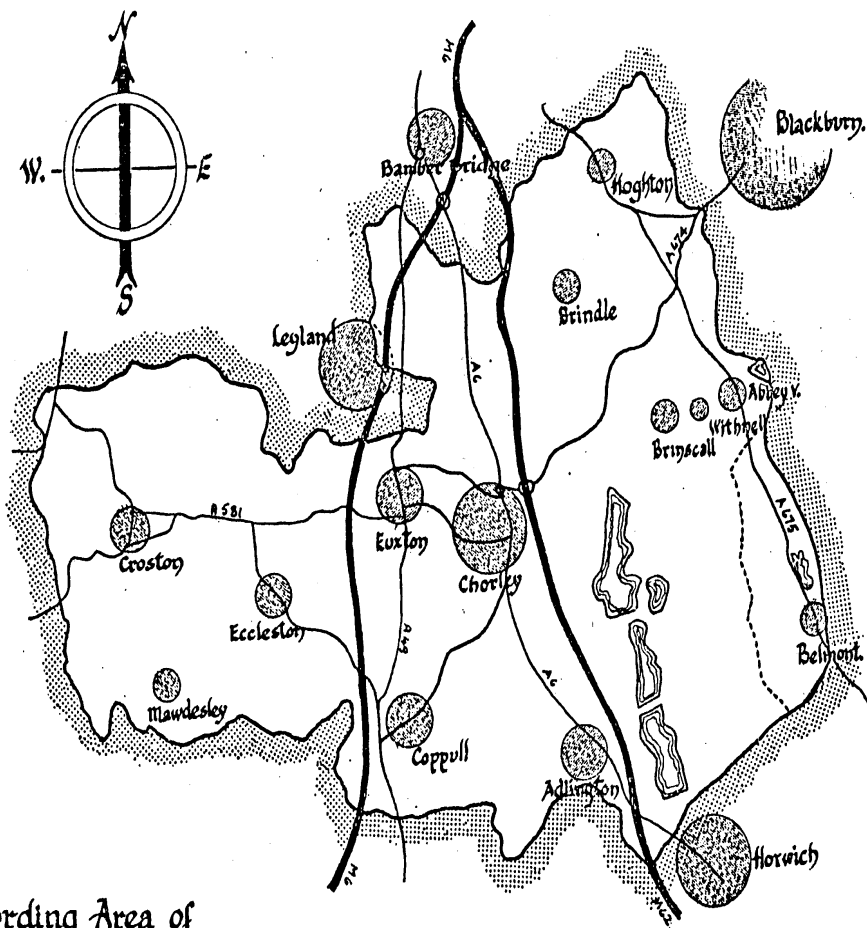
ANNUAL REPORT

2014

Editor

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9, Queensgate,
Chorley PR7 2PX





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	David Beattie
and	
Amphibia	

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The first two weeks of **January** were mild but unsettled and often windy, with a maximum temperature of 9°C on the 6th & 7th. The third week was slightly drier with a glorious day on the 20th. The rest of the month was again unsettled with just a smattering of snow on the 23rd and cooler with a typical maximum of 6°C, but no frosts. Our indoor talk was a 'Tour Through The Seasons' with Peter Smith. The field trip to Croston Moss was cancelled because of adverse weather, which was a pity since the area had a good winter with large numbers of birds, including Whooper Swan, Pink-footed Goose, Little Egret and Hen Harrier.

The unsettled theme continued into **February** with a mixture of wind, rain and one or two dry days. The wind reached storm force for a time on the 12th. The 16th broke the pattern with a dry, sunny day and lighter winds. It didn't last and it became unsettled for the rest of the month. Frost occurred on just three days and maximum temperatures ranged from 4°C on 10th to 11°C on 23rd and 24th. Indoors, our secretary took us on a Tour of the Scottish Isles. The Field Trip was an afternoon visit to Bretherton Eyes. A single Waxwing which spent a few days in Collingwood Road was the only record of the species in the 2013 / 14 winter.

The first week of **March** was again unsettled and often windy, but with a glorious day on the 3rd following a frost. The second week, however, was generally dry and sunny after frosty starts with a high of 14°C on the 9th. Unsettled weather resumed for the last two weeks, but with a fine sunny

day on the 19th, just one frosty start on the 24th and a warm end with a maximum of 16°C on the 30th. Dr Kath Edwards gave us a fascinating talk on the Mountain Gorillas of Rwanda and Uganda. We finally made it onto Croston Moss for our field trip. Notable bird records were Hen Harrier at Bretherton and Osprey at Arley nature reserve.

The warmer weather continued into **April** with some dry, sunny days, punctuated by the inevitable showery days. It was a generally warm month with maximum temperatures ranging between 10°C and 18°C, with the average being around 14°C. The final meeting of the season was a talk on dragonflies by Rick Parker. The annual Bird Race took place on the weekend of 26th / 27th. A Red Kite was seen at Rivington and the annual Whimbrel passage started from the 18th.

After the promise of April, the first two weeks of **May** took us back to the unsettled weather of earlier in the year with rain on most days and temperatures a degree or two lower with a maximum of only 16°C. The third week, however, was warm and sunny with a maximum of 23°C on the 19th. Unsettled weather returned for the last 10 days, interrupted by just a couple of sunny days, both with a maximum of 18°C. Our first summer evening walk took us to Anglezarke Reservoir where we managed to see Barn Owl and Wood Warbler. A Black Stork seen over Rivington Pike on the 26th was an extremely rare visitor to the area.

The first 10 days of **June** were a mixture of sunshine and showers, heavy and thundery on the 10th, but reasonably warm with a high of 22°C. The remainder of the month was essentially warm and sunny with just a trace of rain on three days and a maximum of 24°C. Our evening walk explored the Euxton area, with a bit of pond dipping thrown in. Quail on Winter Hill and Avocet in the Croston area were exciting but unfortunately transient visits.

The fine weather continued into **July** but was interrupted by a couple of wet days in the middle of the first week. The second week began with four warm, sunny days followed by three wet days. The 20th – 26th saw a week of hot, sunny weather and a maximum of 28°C, before cooler, unsettled weather ended the month. Our evening walk took us to Hic Bibi nature reserve where we explored the flora and pond life. It was a good month for sightings of the rarer butterflies including Brimstone, Clouded Yellow, and Painted Lady. Three Little Egrets visited Belmont Reservoir and a Red Kite was at White Coppice.

The unsettled weather continued through the first week of **August**. The second and third weeks were essentially a mixture of sunshine and showers and were often windy, particularly on the 10th when the tail end of hurricane Bertha passed through. The last 10 days were very unsettled with spells of heavy rain. Best temperature was 21°C, but 16°C was more typical. Our evening walk around the Wheelton area had us sheltering from a heavy shower at one point. Clouded Yellows were seen at two sites. Hobbies were at Croston and Eccleston.

September was mainly dominated by high pressure with several sunny days in the first three weeks and a best temperature of 23°C on the 18th. Three or four days of rain occurred at the start of the fourth week before a return to settled conditions for the last few days of the month. The new indoor season started with David Winnard taking us foraging for edible plants and fungi. As an experiment, the AGM was held as a separate event the following week and was deemed a success. A fungal foray was again held in Chorley Cemetery and whilst not as productive as

2013, it was nevertheless an interesting and informative event. Pink-footed Geese were back in town by the 8th and a juvenile Red Kite was recorded at Rivington. A Clouded Yellow was recorded on Lower Burgh Meadow.

The first few days of **October** saw a continuation of the fine weather from September with a high of 19°C on the 3rd. This was followed by a few days of unsettled weather before a warm sunny weekend on the 11th & 12th with a high of 15°C. Unsettled weather then returned, often breezy and with gale force winds on the 21st. The inclement and frequently windy weather persisted to the end of the month except that the 31st was dry and warm with a maximum of 18°C. Our evening talk was a visit to the Gambia in the company of Denis Atherton. Our field trip was a visit to Hesketh Outmarsh RSPB reserve. Great White Egret and Black Redstart were amongst birds seen in the Rivington area during the month.

The unsettled weather continued into **November** and temperatures started to fall. The 5th, however, was a glorious sunny day but with a maximum of just 9°C. The 9th was also a sunny day, but in general unsettled conditions prevailed for the next week until a dry, sunny day on the 16th brought some respite from wind and rain. After overnight rain on the 17th, sunny and dry conditions took us to 21st with a best of 10°C. The first slight frost occurred on the 24th. After a mixture of wet and dry days, the month ended with a glorious sunny day and a high of 11°C. Indoors, Graham Clarkson took us out onto the Ribble marshes. Outdoors we visited Sunderland Point. A mixed flock of Mute and Whooper Swans on Croston Moss also included a single Bewick's – a species which is hard to come by in South West Lancs these days.

The unsettled theme persisted into **December** except for a couple of fine, sunny days with a sharp frost of -3°C on the 3rd. It was also frosty on the 6th & 8th when showers were also wintry. Strong winds and wintry showers also occurred on the 10th. It remained unsettled but cold with wintry showers and frost on the 12th and 13th. Temperatures picked up for a while with a maximum of 13°C on the 18th. The days leading up to Christmas were unsettled and mild. From the 26th to 30th, however, it was dry, sunny and cold with sharp frost to -3°C and a maximum of 4°C. New Year's Eve saw light rain and a slightly higher temperature of 8°C. The indoor season continued with another successful member's evening. In the field, Red Kite, Hen Harrier and Merlin were seen on the mosses.

Thanks to all the recorders and others for compiling their contributions to the report, and to all those who submitted records. Please continue to send them in – without them we could not record the area's flora and fauna. Many thanks also to those who have submitted articles for the quarterly Newsletter – please keep them coming! Thanks to all those who have helped out at the indoor meetings. 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 and fungi have also been supplied by Phil Kirk.

Neil Southworth (Editor)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

2014 marked 35 years since the Society was founded.

Obviously there have been many changes in that time, but the core society activities remain the same. Our indoor meetings continue to be well attended. Gordon Yates has shown his wonderful films in all but one of our winter programmes. Sadly he has decided to stop doing the talks, so will no longer be the first name on our speaker list. Field outings are still less well attended than we would like, which is a shame because those who do attend invariably enjoy the outings. The newsletters and annual reports now form a unique history of the changes in wildlife in the Chorley area since 1979 and are a tribute to the present editor and to all his predecessors in the post.

Some things do change. 35 years ago, the internet was still a decade away. Now we have embraced the technology and the majority of our records are received online. Our website is regularly updated and offers lots of information about the society and local wildlife to the casual visitor. We would welcome ideas to improve our site. In particular we would like to develop a set of local site guides. If you have a favourite patch, why not share it with us? Contact me if you feel able to help. The Forum is well used (and occasionally abused) even by people from outside the area. I often bump into people who know my name from the forum when I am out and about in other areas.

Who knows what the future holds for small groups such as ours. Maintaining membership is a worry. We simply don't attract young members. Getting volunteers for the committee is difficult, although we did welcome two new faces at the 2014 AGM to replace the two who left. The onus is really on you, the membership, to make sure that my successors in future years still have a report to write.

The committee at the end of 2014 comprised:

Chairman Keith Woan 80, Carleton Road, Chorley

Secretary Phil Kirk Mill End, Dawbers Lane, Euxton

Treasurer Carol Thistlethwaite 63, Earlsway, Euxton

Committee: David Beattie, John Howlett, Lydia Rose, Neil Southworth, and
 Nora West

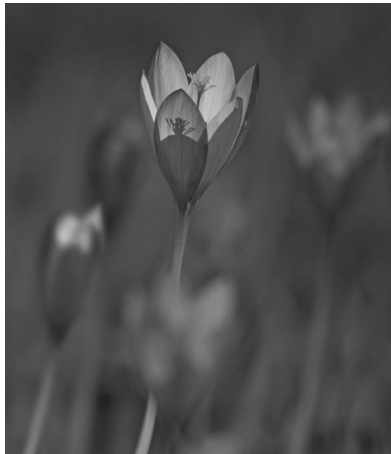
Phil Kirk

FLORA REPORT

2014 will be my tenth year as flora recorder. Each time I write I seemed to mention the large contrast there is compared to previous years. My recollections are not always reflected in the dates of first flowerings. I decided to re-introduce the table which shows three years flowering times so you can do your own comparison. The big differences this year are only noted in Bluebells and Ragged Robin which were back to normal after, being affected by the very cold March in 2013. All the other flowers in the table managed to flower before that lower than normal temperature. This year we have had a very mild first three months though quite wet. This made for a very colourful year as well as a bumper harvest crop.

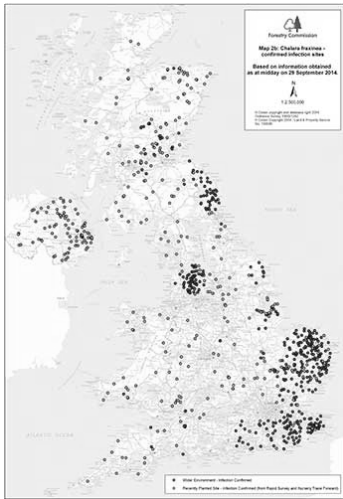
species	2012	2013	2014
Snowdrop	Jan 1	Feb 16	Jan 13
Lesser Celandine	Jan 21	Feb 16	Feb 25
Bluebell	March 6	May 9	April 4
Butterbur	Jan 22	Feb 16	Jan 6
Primrose	Feb 24	Feb 9	Feb 26
Ragged Robin	May 18	June 12	May 19

Scarlet Pimpernel which re-appeared last year after a nine year absence, was seen again on Cuerden. It was also good to note autumn crocus in Chorley Cemetery. Joyce had reported it in previous years but I had missed it. The records have been updated. (errare humanum est) The photo is by Phil Kirk.



The other photo is Broad-leaved Helleborine which seemed to be reported from all over. Thanks again to all those sharp eyed members who let us know. Autumn held on for a long time this year with several flowers still in bloom in the middle of December.

The bad news from this year is the rapid onslaught of Ash Die Back. I have written about this in our 2012 Annual Report, which may be viewed on our website. There was a report of this disease



in Clitheroe in 2014, which resulted in a survey of all the trees in that area by the Forestry Commission. A map is reproduced with their permission here. It has not been reported yet in our area, but I suspect it may be that folks have not been looking for it.

The other significant observation for 2014 was the way so many more flowers were still in bloom at the end of December. I had creeping buttercup, daisy, balsam, and bramble. I wish to thank all those who send records in but especially Nora West and Peter Ross. Between them they provided about 85% of the submissions

David Beattie

FUNGI REPORT

It was a mixed year for fungi as a result of the weather conditions. The dry spells tended to reduce numbers early in the year and the very dry month of September had a dire effect on woodland species. However, as it remained mild into December, fungi continued producing fruiting bodies until the frosts came the first week in the month,

Fungi seen early in the year included Scarlet (*Sarcoscypha austriaca*), which seem to be spread throughout the area with the first records where they were seen in Ransnap Wood on 4th were still present on 6th March

At the end of August a fine specimen of Chicken (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) was spotted growing on Spring Meadow at Clayton. According to David Winnard who gave a talk to the society in September on 'Foraging for Edible Fungi and Plants' this species is edible if growing on its usual host, Oak, but it becomes poisonous if growing on its alternative host, the poisonous Yew. Even after more than thirty years of being interested in fungi, there are still many facts I have yet to learn about these fascinating species!



Elfcups continuing to from Euxton February and

of the Woods an Oak tree in

The autumn saw the hedgerows laden with berries. The Woodland Trust reported that it was the best crop of autumn berries since the society's records began when the Trust was set up 13 years ago. The lovely warm weather of June and July followed by the wet weather during August had contributed to this bumper crop and early fruiting bodies of fungi seen during August gave hope of a good foray season. Unfortunately, this wasn't to materialize as the Meteorological Office

reported a total of just 7% of the normal rainfall during the first two weeks of September and by the middle of the month, fungi were conspicuous by their absence.

However, two poisonous species, Yellow Stainer (*Agaricus xanthodermus*) and Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*), were abundant this year and appeared unusually early. I was delighted when 12 of the latter species appeared in my Chorley suburban garden for the first time, being one of the 10 species that I identified in the garden on 12th September, mainly growing in association with two large Silver Birch trees.

After the very productive foray in Chorley Cemetery last year, the society repeated the venue for the 2014 foray. Unfortunately, the date selected, 28th September, was at the end of a very dry month and few fungi were found compared to the number seen on the foray last year but most of the site's specialities and unusual species were recorded again, albeit in smaller numbers. However, with several pairs of eyes searching for fungi a list totalling 19 species was produced and the fine morning was enjoyed by all. Thanks to Tony Dunn, for leading this event.

No Waxcap species were found on the cricket field at White Coppice when I joined Tony Bond from the North West Fungus Group on 25th September for the first of his three visits in this third and final year of surveying the site as part of potential designation of the West Pennine Moors SSSI. However, a young Meadow Puffball (*Lycoperdon (Vascellum) pratense*) growing in the outfield grassland was a new site record and a large Hen of the Woods (*Grifola frondosa*) was again growing on the Oak tree at the corner of the cricket field near the gate by The Goit path. This species has been known to grow on this old tree since at least 1996. The second site visit on 14th October was more productive for Waxcaps but mainly just lots of Meadow Waxcaps (*Hygrocybe pratensis*) together with a few Earthy Powdercaps (*Cystoderma amianthinum*). A third and final visit to the site was made on 5th November when thankfully Waxcaps were abundant, as Tony and I were accompanied by Phil Kirk, the society's secretary who has recently discovered what attractive and challenging subjects fungi can make for a keen photographer! We recorded 8 species of Waxcaps, with lots of Golden, Heath, Meadow, Scarlet and Slimy plus a few Parrot, just one Snowy and best of all a single Pink Waxcap, a species of that isn't found every year (*Hygrocybe chlorophana*, *H. laeta*, *H. coccinea*, *H. irrigata*, *H. psittacina*, *H. virginea calyptriformis*, respectively). Other grassland found including Orange and Collared Mosscaps (*fibula* and *R. swartzii*), Yellow Club (*Clavulinopsis helvola*), Earthy Powdercap (*amianthinum*), Star Pinkgill (*Entoloma conferendum*), and a blue/black Pinkgill, probably Pinkgill (*Entoloma serrulatum*), plus several LBJs Conecaps (*Conocybe sp.*).



pratensis, *H.*
and *H.*
fungi were
(*Rickenella*

(*Cystoderma*

Blue Edge
including

Although the White Coppice Cricket field is one of the most important sites in Lancashire for grassland fungi, unfortunately it does not meet the criteria for SSSI designation. The proposed SSSI conspectus for the whole of the West Pennine Moors designation, which does meet the criteria for birds, etc. and should have been presented to the Board of Natural England several months ago, has been delayed awaiting the outcome of the General Election in May 2015. This is

very disappointing for the Amateur Naturalists, including several members of the society, who have put in so much effort to the survey work in the area for many years.

The most surprising site for fungi this year has been one of the front lawns in Phil and Joanna Kirk's garden. The lawn isn't fertilised as it is adjacent to a 'wildlife-friendly' pond that is above another pond connected by a waterfall and obviously Phil and Joanna don't want the water to be polluted by any fertiliser run-off from the lawn. These uncommon Earthtongues that don't have a common English name, usually grow in sandy grassland and have only been recorded in the area once before, by The Goit watercourse at White Coppice. Although there are several similar looking species that can only be separated by their microscopic characteristics, the species on Kirk's lawn is most likely to be *Geoglossum cookeanum*.



Two Waxcap species were also identified: Snowy Waxcap (*Hygrocybe virginea*) - this species seemed to have a good year locally in 2014 with sightings from several other grasslands as well - and the yellow form of Blackening Waxcap (*Hygrocybe conica*) which was first photographed on 4th November at the young stage when the black colour was just beginning to appear but by 25th November, they had turned much blacker although still showed some yellow. A few Yellow Club (*Clavulinopsis helvola*) a species that prefers unimproved grassland, typically with mosses growing amongst the grass (sorry Phil but that description of the habitat for the species from one of my books on fungi applies perfectly to your lawn!)

The identification of this lovely coral evaded me as I had never seen one of before. After much discussion, including of the North West Fungus Group it was agreed that it is most likely to be (*Clavulinopsis corniculata*) that is the only fungi book that I have that species, as being common in grassland, including old lawns, although never seen it before in over 30 years of forays, I would argue about its the species appears again in 2015, I have been instructed by NWFG to examine some characteristics under my microscope to confirm identification as there have been few records of this species in Northern England.



fungus initially this colour with members eventually Meadow Coral described in includes this unimproved as I have doing fungal frequency. If

The North West Fungus Group held just one foray in the Chorley area during the year, Duxbury Woods being the venue on 19th October. Thankfully, I was fit enough to join the other members of the group for the morning session. Of particular interest to me was the finding of a single old specimen of a large buff coloured funnel shaped fungus in the area where I had seen this or a similar-looking species growing many years ago. Experts in the NWFG identified the specimen as Trooping Funnel (*Clitocybe geotropa*). [I had probably misidentified the fungus as Giant Funnel (*Leucopaxillus giganteus*) when I had found the original several specimens.] A large, decaying

felled Beech tree trunk had a beautiful display of Jelly Rot (*Phlebia tremellosa* = *Merulius tremellosus*), while a smaller log had a fine group of Angel's Bonnets, *Mycena archangeliana*, which was duly photographed, the one taken by Tony Bond, FRPS being reproduced with his permission.

On the same day, 19th October, a member on Croston Moss noted that lots of Field (*Agaricus campestris*) had appeared in the end of October and early November there was 'flush' of Fly Agarics, with 3 seen in my garden October when I returned from a few days of 15 Fly Agarics were counted throughout the Woodlands on 1st November and 2 were by White Coppice on 2nd November. Also worthy reappearance on 8th November of several Clouded Funnels (*Clitocybe nebularis*) by the gate near the entrance to Euxton Hall Woods where they had been first recorded in October 2013. Snowy Waxcap (*Hygrocybe virginea*) seen in Pincock Street at Euxton on 27th November was the last fungus record submitted for the year.



birdwatching
Mushrooms
fields. At the
a second
on 31st
away. A total
Rivington
The Goit at
of note was the

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.
Tony Dunn, Geoff Ind, Tony Johnson, Phil Kirk, John Love, Leonard Poxon, Joyce Riley, Lydia Rose, Neil Southworth and Keith Woan.
Apologies to anyone I may have missed.
Thank you also to NWFG for records from the Group's foray at Duxbury.
Special thanks to Tony Bond, FRPS for results of the Waxcap Survey at White Coppice and for allowing his beautiful photograph of Angel's Bonnets to be reproduced in this report. Other fungi photos used in this report were taken by Phil Kirk.

Joyce Riley

INVERTEBRATE REPORT

LEPIDOPTERA

Moth Species:

Sadly I have no new species of moths to report for 2014. Of interest were larval records of Vapourer Moth (on a doorframe in Chorley), Lime Hawk Moth in a Coppull garden, and Elephant Hawk Moth feeding on Bogbean in a garden pond in Euxton.

Butterfly Species:

Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*)

The flight period was somewhat earlier than last year. The first appearance was at Eccleston on 8th June when 3 insects were seen. A very tatty looking specimen was seen on August 22nd at Hic Bibi. In between these dates, the highest count (as usual) was at Belmont. 25 were estimated on 12th July.

Large Skipper (*Ochlodes venata*)

2014 was a much better year for this species. High numbers were seen at Belmont in last June (70 on 22nd being the best count). In all the species was seen at 9 sites between 31st May (Ellerbeck) and 24th July (Euxton).

Clouded Yellow (*Colias croceus*)

This species turned up at a few local sites. Valley Park on 31st July was followed by 1 Walton on 6th August and 2 at Hic Bibi on August. Finally one was seen at Lower Meadows on September 15th. These are records for this migrant since 2006.



1 in Yarrow
at Ulnes
22nd to 24th
Burgh
the first local

Brimstone (*Goepteryx rhamni*)

As with the previous 2 species, 2014 was a the Brimstone. Its first appearances were at Coppull both on March 10th. Its latest was at Adlington on September 26th. Highlights between these dates included a remarkable 5 insects near Dean Wood on 18th April, and the more or less continual presence of the species at Belmont between 1st April and 12th July, with as many as 4 present on 18th June. Maybe best of all was an ovipositing female at Lower Burch Meadows on 2nd July. This is thanks to Butterfly Conservation having planted the foodplant a decade or so ago. Well done them.

good year for
Cuerden and

Large White (*Pieris brassica*)

Either the Large White had a very bad year, or it was simply not reported. There were no high numbers at all (5 at Belmont on 12th July being the highest) First record was on 14th April near the Goit at White Coppice. The latest was a single in a Chorley garden on 16th September.

Small White (*Pieris rapae*)

As with the Large White, no high numbers were reported. 11 at Withnell Fold on 6th August was the best. The last date was 21st September at Belmont.

Green Veined White (*Peiris napi*)

High numbers were seen at Belmont on 17th May (65) and 1st June (100). This white was reported often and widely. Last date was 3rd October (Belmont).

Orange Tip (*Anthrocharis cardamines*)

This year the flight period was from 11th April (Croston) until the 11th June (Huyton Terrace, Adlington). Generally, numbers were not that high, but 15 at Belmont on 17th May was a good record.

Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*)

Another disappointing year, with only a few records received. It has been absent from previous strongholds at Belmont in the last 2 years. The first record was at Healey Nab on 3rd May, Subsequently 3 were seen at White Coppice on 17th May and another on the same day at Withnell.

Purple Hairstreak (*Quercusia quercus*)

Reported from 2 sites. 12 were counted at Anglezarke on 26th July and 11 at Belmont on 4th August.

White Letter Hairstreak (*Satyrrium w-album*)

Two records only received. Singles at Cuerden on 10th July and Euxton on 15th July.

Small Copper (*Lacaena phlaeas*)

The first generation flew from 17th May (White Coppice) until 11th June (Adlington). The second emerged on 4th August and flew until 16th September. 10 at Anglezarke on 31st May was a good record.

Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*)

Probably the best year for the Blue for a long time. The two flew from 25th May until 18th June; 22nd July until 31st August. Large were seen at Hic Bibi, Ellerbeck and One recorder estimated 50 at Ulmes 27th May.



Common
generations
then from
numbers
Ulmes Walton.
Walton on

Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*)

In contrast to the last species, the Holly Blue was represented by only 2 sightings. 1 at Euxton on 11th April and 1 at Belmont on 17th July. Clearly differing climatic conditions are required by our two "blue" species. Hopefully 2015 will be better.

Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

An insect seen at Eccleston on January 15th had obviously been disturbed from hibernation. The one seen at Belmont on March 21st had probably overwintered and woken up on its own. The main body of records began on May 6th (Bretherton) and the insect was seen in flight until November 20th (Euxton). A steady stream of migrants were observed flying through the Belmont area at the beginning of October, with about 12 per hour estimated on 22nd.

Painted Lady (*Cynthia cardui*)

Like in 2013, this migratory species was seen at only four sites. Apart from the two seen in an Euxton garden on 4th August, the rest were singles. First seen was on 11th June and the latest was September 18th (both from Chorley gardens).

Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*)

Early records for this species vary a lot in number from year to year. This year we had one disturbed from hibernation at Belmont on 9th January. Then there was a wholesale emergence around the 10/11th March when they were suddenly seen at lots of sites. They were plentiful throughout the area in later months. The last record was at Belmont on November 29th.

The Peacock (*Inachis io*)

Like our other hibernating Vanessids, the Peacock was seen flying early in the year – probably disturbed or woken by some unseasonably warm temperatures. It was seen at 5 sites in mid February. Then like the Small Tortoiseshell, there was a rush of sightings around the 10/11th March. It was most numerous in early August when counts of 35 were made on separate days in Belmont. The last date for the species was 26th October (Belmont).

Comma (*Polygonia c-album*)

Unlike the Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell, there was no mass emergence in March, although a single did appear on 18th at Cuerden. Other early records were at Chorley on 1st April, Rivington on 18th April and Limbrick on 19th April. The summer generation was around from 13th July (Adlington) until 3rd October (Belmont) No large numbers seen.

Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria tircis*)

Overall the flight period for this species was 18th April until 3rd October. It is widely spread throughout the area. The highest count was 39 on a society field trip at Withnell on September 13th.

Wall Brown (*Lassioimmata megera*)

Horrors!!! No records at all for the Wall in 2014.

Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*)

Large numbers seen at several sites, notably at Belmont on 4th August (60 seen). A single was reported at Charnock Richard on 20th May – which is an exceptionally early date. The main flight period was from 24th June (Croston Moss) until 9th August (Withnell Fold).

Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*)

Very common in the area with the highest numbers from the Belmont area (100+ on 12th July). Good numbers also reported at Chisnall and Lower Burgh Meadows. Flight period was 8th June (Eccleston) until 24th August (Hic Bibi)

Ringlet (*Phanotus hyperantus*)



A new butterfly species for the area. This species is known to be expanding in range and has no habitat requirements which would exclude its presence locally. Therefore, there is a real chance that it may become a fixture locally. A single was seen at Belmont on 8th July, then one was found dead in a Belmont conservatory on 7th September, but it could have been dead for a few weeks!

Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*)

Although only reported from 3 sites in 2014, the record of an estimated 120 at Belmont on 21st

June is far and away the largest number we have had locally. Also seen at Healey Nab and at Wheelton Moor.

ODONATA

I recommend to readers the booklet written by Steve White and published recently (2015) by the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society – “The Dragonflies of Lancashire and North Merseyside”. It is a must for those interested in the Odonata of our area.

Species recorded this year were:

ZYGOPTERA (Damselflies)

Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*)

Although no records were received from Cuerden, I am sure that this is merely an oversight. I have little doubt that the species was present there. First date was 18th May (Mawdesley). Highest numbers this year were reported from the River Yarrow at the northern end of Yarrow Valley Park, where at least 24 males were counted on 25th July. On 2nd September (which was also the last date for the species) a single was seen at Belmont. This was the first record for that part of the area.

Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes sponsa*)

The Belmont area produced both an early and also huge numbers of the Emerald. There was an exceptionally early first date (26th a full month earlier than our previous earliest years the insect does not appear until July. 150 estimated on 28th July and 290 on 4th August. remained high until 13th September when 50 present. A single at the Burgh Hall Pond was second record for Yarrow Valley Park, and the 2005. Other sites are Healey Nab, Hic Bibi and Last date was 21st September (again at



appearance
Damselfly.
May). This is
date. In some
were
Numbers
were still
only the
first since
Withnell Fold.
Belmont).

Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*)

Good numbers reported from Burgh Hall and Flight period was 26th May until 26th July (both Belmont)

Belmont.
from

Blue Tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*)

This species flew from 27th May (Ulmes Walton) until 8th September (Hic Bibi). It was plentiful at several local sites.

Azure Damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*)

Common locally and reported in high numbers at Belmont (75 on 12th July) and Euxton (32 in a small garden pond on 26th May). Flight period was 18th May (Burgh Hall Pond) until 22nd August (Hic Bibi).

Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*)

Less widely recorded than the Azure, but high numbers again at Belmont where 65 were estimated on 22nd June and on 6th July. Flight period was 20th May (Kem Mill) until 2nd September (Belmont).

ANISOPTERA (Dragonflies)

Southern Hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*)

Seen at only 3 sites this year – Withnell Fold, Hic Bibi and Belmont. Flight period was 9th August (Withnell) until 21st September (Belmont).

Brown Hawker (*Aeshna grandis*)

As usual, this species was the most often recorded of the Odonata species. Almost certainly this is because it is the easiest to identify in flight and is a great wanderer. No large numbers, but several females were observed laying eggs at Hic Bibi. Flight period was 5th July (Chisnall) until 21st September (Lower Burgh Meadows).

Common Hawker (*Aeshna juncea*)

Largely confined to the East of the area, with records from Healey Nab, White Coppice and Belmont., where a high count of 7 was made on 13th September. Two were also seen at Lower Burgh Meadows on 21st September. Overall the flight period was 21st June until 30th September.

Migrant Hawker (*Aeshna mixta*)

Singles were seen at 6 sites between 31st July (Dean Black Brook) and 16th October (Cuerden Valley Park).

Emperor Dragonfly (*Anax imperator*)

Fewer sightings than in recent years, but was present at Cuerden, Withnell Fold, Belmont and Healey Nab. Flight period was 17th June until 26th July.

Four-spotted Chaser (*Libellula quadrimaculata*)

A high count of 7 was made at b Belmont on 12th July. It was seen at a further 6 sites between 18th May (Burgh Hall Pond) and 24th August (Hic Bibi).

Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*)

Like the Four Spotted, it was seen at a total of 7 locations. There were no high numbers. Flight period was 10th May (Burgh Lane) until 22nd July (Hic Bibi).

Black Tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*)

No records since 2009.

Black Darter (*Sympetrum danae*)

Seen at Hic Bibi and at Healey Nab, but no large numbers were reported from either site. However, at Belmont there were as many as 100 on 28th July, rising to 500 on 13th September before numbers fell to 50 by 2nd October. Last record was at Belmont on 3rd October.

Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*)

Common at several local sites. 22 were counted at Belmont on 21st September, but good numbers were also seen at Hic Bibi in late August and early September. First date was 12th July (and last was 30th September (both from Belmont).

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

I Ball, D Beattie, D Beevers, J Cobham, B Derbyshire, D Downing, T Dunn, M Fishwick, P Gravett, L Harrison, K Haydock, A Johnson, C Johnson, P Kruschkiw, E Langrish, G Lilley, I Lynas, D S Martin, S J Martin, G Parsons, L Poxon, C Rae, R W Rhodes, J Riley, L Rose, P Rowlands, I Ryding, N Southworth, M Thornhill, N West, P West, P Whittaker, I Whittle, C Wood and to the members of the Lancashire Moth Group.

My apologies to anyone I may have missed.

Phil Kirk

Flight periods of butterfly species recorded in 2014									
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234
Small Skipper					xxx	xxxx	xx x		
Large Skipper				x	x xx	xxxx			
Clouded Yellow						x	x xx	x	
Brimstone		x x	x xx	xx	x x	xx		x	
Large White			x	xx		xxxx	x x	x	
Small White			x x	xxx	x	xx	xxxx	xxx	
G V White			xx	xx	x	xx	x x	xxx	x
Orange Tip			xxx	xxxx	x				
Green Hairstreak				x x					
Purple Hairstreak						x	x		
W L Hairstreak						xx			
Small Copper				xx	x x		x x	x x	
Common Blue				x	xxx	x	xxx x		
Holly Blue				x		x			
Red Admiral		x		x xx	x x	x x	xxxx	xxxx	xx x
Painted Lady					x		xx	x	
Small Tortoiseshell		xxx	xxxx	xxxx		xxxx	x x	xx	x
The Peacock	xx	x x	xxx	xxx	x	x	xxxx	x	x
The Comma		x	x x	x		x	x	xxx	x
Speckled Wood			xx	x xx	xxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	x
The Gatekeeper				x	x	xxxx	xx		
Meadow Brown					xx x	xxxx	x x		
Ringlet						x			
Small Heath					xxxx		x		

Flight periods of Dragonfly species recorded in 2014								
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234
Calopteryx splendens			x	xxx	xxx		x	
Lestes sponsa			x		xxx	x x	xxx	
Pyrrhosoma nymphula		x	x x	xx x	xx x			
Ischnura elegans			x	.. xx	xxx	xx	x	
Coenagrion puella			xx	xxxx	xxx	x x		
Enallagma cyathigerum			xx	xx xx	xxxx	x	x	
Aeschna cyanea						x x	xxx	
Aeshna grandis					xxxx	x xx	xxx	
Aeshna juncea				x	x x		xx x	
Aeshna mixta					x	x	xx	x
Anax imperator				x	xx			
Libellula depressa			xxx	xx xx				
Libellula quadrimaculata			xx	xx	xx x	x x		
Sympetrum danae					x		xxx	x
Sympetrum striolatum					xx x	xxxx	xxxx	



BIRD REPORT

Introduction

154 species including escapes were recorded this year, one more than last year, but still a long way short of 2012's figure of 161. Rarities for the area included Bewick's Swan, Quail, Great White and Little Egret, Black Stork, Avocet, Grey Plover, Little Gull and Black Redstart. Ring-necked Parakeets appear to be gaining a foothold in the town so we may be in for a noisy time in the years to come. Following on from the decline of its Lesser Spotted cousin, Green Woodpecker is becoming increasingly difficult to find. Would members please report ALL sightings of this species?

Neil Southworth (Records Secretary)

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Uncommon but increasing breeding bird

Six were on Croston Twin Lakes on 1st January.

The male at Lower Healey was savaged to death by a dog sometime during March. The female, however, continued to incubate the 7 eggs. A single bird was on Belmont Reservoir on 8th March. A young pair turned up on Cuerden Valley Park Lake on 3rd April.

The resident pair in Yarrow Valley Park produced just a single cygnet on 8th May, whereas the pair in Astley Park produced 6 by the 17th. The Mute Swan family at Astley Park had reduced to 5 young by 6th June, and this was a sign of things to come as two more died. The remaining three sick cygnets were then removed to a swan sanctuary, where they appear to have survived. It is believed that the problem was a worm infection *Echinuriasis*, carried by the Water-flea *Daphnia*, to which young water fowl appear to be susceptible.

A party of 6 was on the Douglas at Croston during June. 3 were on Belmont Reservoir on 26th October. Up to 15 were in a mixed flock of swans on Loch Meadow, Croston Moss from 23rd November until at least 17th December..

Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)

Rare winter visitor

A single Bewick's was in a mixed herd of swans on Loch Meadow, Croston Moss from 23rd November until 5th December.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

Occasional winter visitor

Five were on Mawdesley Moss on 6th January. Two flew over Eccleston on 19th January. A single bird was on Croston Moss on 10th February. Two flew along the Douglas at Croston and a flock of 30 was seen over Roddlesworth on the 26th March.

The first back in Autumn were a flock of 14 seen flying west over Euxton on the 12th October, followed by 10 sheltering on Croston Twin Lakes in bad weather on the 21st. 19 flew over Eccleston on the 24th. 9 were on Belmont Reservoir on 29th October.

In November a mixed flock of swans took a liking to Loch Meadow on Croston Moss from 23rd, including 30 Whoopers on the 27th and 42 on 4th December, with the last record being on 17th December.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)
Mainly recorded on passage and feeding on the mosslands during the winter months. Some feral birds occur usually with Canada Geese.

Large numbers were noted feeding on Croston and Mawdesley Moss during January, including 2000 on the 5th and around 1000 on the 12th. Skeins were regularly seen flying over in January, including 12 over Belmont (11th), 70 over Croston (23rd), 200 over Euxton (28th) and 90 over Eccleston (29th), all heading west and possibly returning from East Anglia.

Birds continued to feed on the mosses in February but in lesser numbers such as 700 on the 22nd and 150 on the 24th. The last record of birds feeding on the mosses was 11th March, when around 1500 were present. 2 were ‘down’ at Belmont Reservoir on 19th April.

First record in Autumn of 50 flying west over September. 10 flew over Rivington on the recorded over Belmont in included 80 and 40 east east on 27th, 60 west 28th, and 80 east on 29th. 1500 were feeding on (5th), and 200 were on Moss on the 18th. There noticeable movement on including 450 east over 200 south over Thornhill, followed by 170 east over Belmont on the 24th and 60, 30 and 21 east there on the 26th.



was of a skein Chorley on 8th south-east 22nd. Skeins September on 24th, 15 north west on In October, Croston Moss Mawdesley was a the 23rd Hartley and

During November, birds feeding on the mosses exceeded 2000 for most of the month. However, numbers had reduced to 150 by 13th December. Skeins over Belmont included 100 west on 4th November, 50 west on 3rd December and 14 west on 13th December. A skein of around 100 birds flew east over Rivington on 24th November.

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

Scarce feral species

The species is increasing in the West Pennine Moors in comparison to the locally declining Canada Goose – undoubtedly due to the control measures levelled at the latter species.

Up to 4 around Belmont, Reservoir from March to June but no signs of breeding observed. However, whilst no pairs were thought to have bred at Belmont Reservoir, a single young was fledged by Canada Geese foster parents!!

Two pairs bred at Upper Rivington Reservoir fledging 6 young.

46 (including the 6 young) were on Upper Rivington Reservoir on 11th June. The July moulting flock on Upper/Lower Rivington Reservoirs numbered 39 (20 in 2013 & 17 in 2012).

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Common resident

Monthly maxima at Belmont Reservoir:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	26	36	30	44	32	76	76	92	47	28	24	6
2014	15	17	27	36	34	62*	63	55	24	28	18	11

* - Plus a minimum of 113 birds in several flocks on 8th June that arrived from the S & departed later N - a presumed moult migration movement.

Only 11 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir & again no young were raised there, due to the ongoing control measures which resulted in 60 eggs 'pricked' & 18 adults shot in 2014.

Elsewhere in the West Pennine Moors, continuing licenced control by egg 'pricking' on 25 United Utilities reservoirs/water bodies again indicated a notable decline in breeding numbers over the last decade with just 21 nests totalling 92 eggs located in 2014. However, 5 pairs breeding on the moorland catchment areas raised Y14+ including a pair that brought Y2 onto Anglezarke Reservoir. Two pairs raised young in Cuerden Valley Park.

The July moulting flock totals again pointed to declining numbers in the West Pennine Moors:-

60 at Belmont Reservoir (76 in 2013 & 148 in 2012)

88 at Anglezarke Reservoir (108 in 2013 & 94 in 2012)

34 on Upper/Lower Rivington & Yarrow Resrs. (13 in 2013)

There were also 30 in Yarrow Valley Park.

A flock of 300 appeared on Croston Twin Lakes on 25th September. What were described as "hundreds" of Canada Geese dropped in to roost on Croston Moss on the 1st October, and could well have been the same birds.

Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla*)

Rare visitor

A flock of 20 dropped in briefly to Belmont Reservoir on 3rd November.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

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

One was on Croston Twin Lakes on 11th January. In February, 3 were at Eccleston (17th), 2 at Bretherton (22nd) and 2 on Croston Moss (27th).

March records included 10 along the Douglas (11th), 7 on Croston Moss (16th) and 4 on Bretherton Eyes (16th). In April, birds were noted at Charnock Richard (2nd), Cuerden Valley Park (3rd) and Croston Moss where at least 20 were counted on the 22nd.

A pair at Clayton produced 6 young in May in an essentially suburban location, but they were quickly predated to a single young.

One was on several Belmont waterbodies from 4th to 6th August. Two were on Croston Twin Lakes on 15th November.

Mandarin Duck (*Aix galericulata*)

Uncommon feral resident and escapee

In January Mandarin Duck were resident at two locations – the Yarrow between Croston and Eccleston (3 on 21st) and Arley nature reserve (10 on 9th).

The 'resident' male that has moved around several Belmont waterbodies from 2011 to 2014 was last seen on 28th March.

Birds were again noted on the Yarrow between Eccleston and Croston on several dates in April, and eventually a pair was seen with 5 young on 28th May. A pair at Arley had 12 chicks by the 25th.

A pair was regularly seen on the Yarrow in the Croston / Eccleston area during August.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Eight were on Croston Twin Lakes on 1st January. Three were at the site on 1st February. A male was at Cuerden Valley Park on 20th January.

One was at Belmont Reservoir from 28th to 30th August, then 2 were there on 4th September. One was around several Belmont waterbodies from 20th September to 2nd October. Four were on Croston Twin Lakes on 2nd September, and 3 were there on 4th October. Eight were on Anglezarke Reservoir on 15th October. 2 were again on Croston Twin Lakes on 2nd November. Singles were recorded on Yarrow Reservoir on 9th December and Croston Twin Lakes on 15th.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Rare visitor

Gadwall numbers at Croston Twin Lakes peaked at 35 on 12th January, with 20 still there on 14th February. 12 were still there until at least 21st March, and two were still present on 18th April.

Away from Croston, 4 were on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 23rd March.

The first in Autumn were 8 on Croston Twin Lakes on 2nd September. These had increased to 40 by 11th October, but had reduced to 20 by 2nd November, and to 12 by 5th December, presumably indicating that conditions were not really to their liking.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Scarce breeder.

38 were on Anglezarke Reservoir on 12th January. Nine had returned to Withnell Fold Flash by the 19th, increasing to 34 by 4th March. 15 were on the Douglas at Croston on the 11th.

One pair bred successfully at Belmont Reservoir fledging 2/3 young.

Monthly maxima at Belmont Reservoir :

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May, Jun, Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	65	78	72	22	Breeding birds	48	105	168	260	290
2014	225	118	85	12	Breeding birds	35	90	270	230	314*

Wintering numbers at Belmont Reservoir were exceptional for the second year in succession.

* -Culminating in a new record count for the site & West Pennine Moors of 314 on 7th December.

Four wintering birds had returned to Anglezarke Reservoir by 26th August. Two were on Croston Twin lakes on 5th October. 20 were on Anglezarke Reservoir on 4th October and 10 were in Yarrow Valley Park on the 15th.

In November, 17 were on Anglezarke Reservoir (9th) and 7 were at Yarrow Valley Park (1st), with similar numbers being recorded in December. In addition, 40 were also recorded on the Douglas at Croston during December.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Common winter visitor and breeding resident

68 were on Upper Rivington Reservoir on 26th January

A Mallard with 7 chicks was at Ulnes Walton on 30th March. One with 12 chicks was on Croston Moss on 24th April. Three pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

Broods in May included broods of 7 at Lower Healey (10th), 2 of 8 on the Yarrow at Croston (18th) and 11 in Yarrow Valley Park (18th). 39 broods of young were seen in the Belmont area including a brood of 17 young on 15th April. Fledging success was considered to be the best for many years.

Monthly maxima at Belmont Reservoir :

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	211	75	53	40	Breeding birds			48	55	148	105	122
2014	128	92	40	30	Breeding birds			25	50	120	190	146

74 were on Anglezarke Reservoir on 7th July. 250 were on a large private pond near Belmont in late October. 60 were feeding under beech trees in Brook House Plantation, Anglezarke on 5th December.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Rare winter visitor

One was on a large private pond near 23rd September. Two were at Arley reserve on 18th November.



Belmont on nature

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Scarce winter visitor

A drake was on the E-shaped pond at on 1st April.

Bretherton

Two were on Croston Twin Lakes on 2nd September. A female of unknown origin was at Yarrow Valley Park throughout November and December. Singles were also at Croston Twin Lakes on 15th December and at Lower Healey (21st & 24th).

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Increasingly scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

A single male on Anglezarke Reservoir on 8th and 9th March was the only local record for the first winter period.

Five were on Anglezarke Reservoir on 12th October. A drake was at Yarrow Valley Park on 2nd November.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce breeder.

A raft of 19 was noted on Croston Twin Lakes on 12th January, with 10 there on 9th February, and just 4 on 21st March. In April, pairs were noted at Lower Healey (12th) and at High Bullough (18th).

Seven were on Anglezarke Reservoir on 5th July. A female with 10 recently hatched chicks was on Anglezarke Reservoir on 3rd August. 5 birds were regular on High Bullough Reservoir in July, August and September, and on 28th October, 10 were present.

A party of 8 was on Croston Twin Lakes on 2nd September, and had increased to 16 by 11th October, which remained into November, before increasing in numbers to 25 on 16th December. Numbers at Yarrow Valley Park peaked at 11 on 1st November, with at least 10 remaining throughout December.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

Declining winter visitor and passage migrant

Goldeneye in January, were confined to the lodges at Lower Healey and Heapey and at High Bullough Reservoir. These were all of ones and twos. Two were also on Croston Twin Lakes on 23rd February. One was still present on Heapey No. 3 Lodge on 26th April.

A female / immature was a mystery arrival on the river Yarrow between Croston and Eccleston during September and was again noted on 11th October, and throughout November and December. The first 'genuine' bird of the winter was at Lower Healey on 29th November. In December, one was on Croston Twin Lakes (16th), 3 at Lower Healey (24th) and 2 on High Bullough Reservoir (31st).

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

Winter visitor in decreasing numbers

In January, Goosander were scattered around the area including 12 in Cuerden Valley Park (6th) 4 on the Douglas at Croston (11th) and 9 on Yarrow Reservoir (16th). In February, 19 were on Yarrow Reservoir on the 2nd, 34 on 18th and 23 on 25th. 13 were still there on 10th March.

A female Goosander with 11 young was on the Yarrow at Eccleston on 20th April and one with 10 young was on the Yarrow at Croston on the 21st. It is not known if these were different family parties, or just the same family which had moved down river.

Goosander with young were again noted on the Yarrow in the Croston / Eccleston area in May with 13 recently hatched seen on the 12th, and 12 – perhaps the same brood - on the 18th. It does seem though that there have been at least two and possibly three broods this year.

The first returning wintering birds were 3 at Anglezarke Reservoir on 9th November. Few records were received in December, with just 2 on the canal at Whittle and one on the Douglas at Croston (both 13th).

Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*)

Resident in small numbers on the moors

Three were on Anglezarke Moor on 2nd February, and 3 were on Withnell moor on 9th March.

49 were seen during a shoot on Belmont Moor on 16th August.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

Scarce resident boosted by birds released for shooting

Coveys of 6 & 2 were at Belmont 25th January. Two were noted on Croston Finney on 6th February.

2 pairs were on territory at Belmont in the breeding season - one pair breeding successfully with a just-hatched brood of 7 young seen on 3rd July but only one juvenile fledged from that brood later.

Releases were responsible for 35 near Belmont in late September & 50 there in late November. A covey of 10 was on Croston Moss on 22nd December.

Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

Uncommon resident boosted by birds released for shooting

One was noted on Mawdesley Moss on 19th February, and 4 were on Croston Moss on 11th March.

5 pairs were on territory around Belmont during the breeding season with 2 broods seen later. A family party was seen on Croston Moss on 4th August. Releases were responsible for coveys of 19 & 15 near Belmont on 25th September.

Coveys in October on Croston Moss included 8 on the 14th and 6 on the 19th. A covey of 8 was at Eccleston on 1st November. In December a covey of 7 was on Croston Moss (13th). Covey of 12 was at Belmont Reservoir on 20th December.

Quail (*Cotumix cotumix*)

Rare summer visitor

A Quail on Winter Hill on 1st June proved to be a false dawn as no other records were received except for one just 25 metres outside the boundary in Much Hoole (11th).

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Common resident boosted by birds released for shooting

30 were in Belmont Village on 27th March and 60+ at Belmont Reservoir on 1st April. Birds were seen regularly throughout Cuerden Valley Park. A white male present at Belmont since 2008 was reported killed by a Buzzard on 6th May.

13 females with broods of young were noted around Belmont Reservoir on 3rd August – exceptional productivity for a species that struggles raising young in the wild locally.

200+ on Croston Moss on 31st August were presumably shooting releases. 30 were in a field at Whittle on 1st November.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Regular visitor

Winter roost counts at a local site included 19 on 26th January, 53 on 25th February, 10 on 30th March and 9 on 14th December.

In Cuerden Valley Park, a maximum of three were seen in January and two in December.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Rare but increasing visitor

One was seen flying from a ditch on Croston Moss on 16th January. One was at Belmont on 30th March. Two were seen flying west over Eccleston on 8th May.

Three juveniles were at Belmont Reservoir on 12th July and another was at Eccleston (24th). One was seen flying south from Anglezarke Reservoir on 14th December and possibly the same bird was on the shore of Lower Rivington Reservoir on 16th December.

Great White Egret (*Egretta alba*)

Rare vagrant

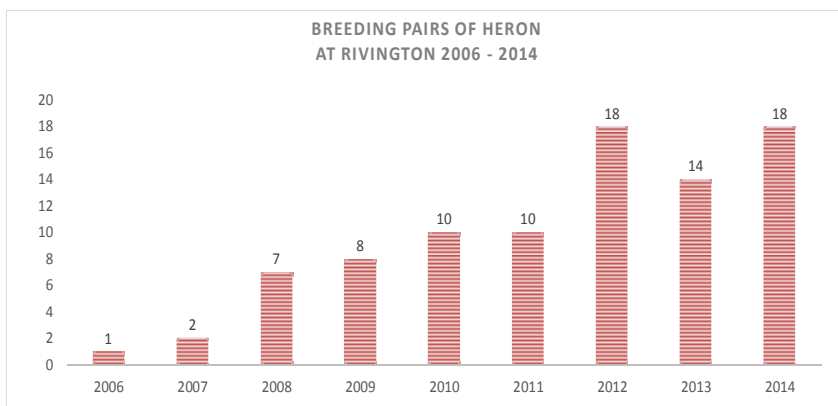
A Great White Egret was seen flying east over George's Lane, Rivington on the 24th October, and perhaps the same bird was reported on the Leeds Liverpool canal at Hoghton on the 26th.

Great White Egret was again reported from Rivington Moor on the 9th November and the Withnell Fold area on the 29th. This may well have been the same bird that was wandering around East Lancashire at the time.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Common visitor and scarce breeder

The 'original' Rivington heronry increased from 14 nests in 2013 to 18 active nests in 2014 but the second Rivington site (colonised in 2011) was unoccupied in 2014.



In Cuerden Valley Park, a pair bred for the first time for 9 years.

Individuals were seen regularly at most water bodies throughout the year. In Yarrow Valley Park, one frequently alternated between Top Lodge and the fish pass on the Yarrow. 15 roosted at Upper Rivington on 10/11/14.

Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*)

Rare vagrant

One was seen flying over Rivington Pike on 26th May.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Uncommon breeding bird

Two were on Croston Twin Lakes on 1st January. Others recorded during January were at Astley Park, Common Bank Lodge (5 on 13th), Croston Moss and Yarrow Valley Park.

A pair on Common Bank Lodge had two chicks by 25th May. The pair in Astley Park finally produced 3 young by 21st July. Three were also noted on Croston Twin Lakes on 29th July. The Astley Park young appeared to have perished by early August, but there was a later suggestion that one may have survived. Other August sightings included a pair on a pond at Wheelton (14th) and 4 at Croston Twin Lakes (25th).

Individuals were noted in Astley Park and Yarrow Valley Park on 2nd October and four were on Croston Twin Lakes on 17th October and again on 2nd November. In December, birds were again recorded on Croston Twin Lakes, Yarrow Valley Park and also on Croston Moss.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Common breeding bird, less common in winter

Four were noted on Croston Twin Lakes on 13th January, increasing to seven by 14th February, and 10 by 31st March. Four were back on Anglezarke Reservoir on 28th February. Pairs bred unsuccessfully on both Anglezarke Reservoir and Lower Rivington Reservoir. The pair in Yarrow valley Park also failed despite several attempts.

One pair bred at Belmont Reservoir and after several failed attempts, successfully fledged 3 young – the first successful breeding here since 2009 despite multiple attempts annually.

Two pairs at Croston Twin Lakes were noted with a minimum of 4 young on 3rd July. A pair in Cuerden Valley Park successfully raised one young.

Four birds remained on Croston Twin Lakes on 5th October.

Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*)

Rare passage migrant / visitor from reintroduction schemes.

One was reported from Rivington on 24th April. In June, Birds were reported at Eccleston (1st) and over the M61 at Anderton (10th), plus a possible sighting of three birds together flying east on the 4th. One was seen by several observers at White Coppice on 17th July.

A juvenile was noted at Rivington on 14th & 21st September. One was at Charnock Richard on 15th November, and another was on Croston Moss on 31st December.

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

Scarce passage migrant

One was over Croston Moss on 27th February.

One was over Gillibrand North on the southern edge of Chorley on 24th August. A male was near Belmont in mid-September

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

Scarce passage migrant. Occasionally lingers in winter

A ring-tail was seen heading west over Croston on 6th January. A male was over Bretherton Eyes on 15th March.

A female/immature was around Belmont from 22nd August until 20th September. One was on Rivington Moor on 6th November. A ring-tail was on Croston Moss on 11th December, and another was at Belmont on 15th December.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Increasingly common resident

A pair bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

Birds were recorded in 12 gardens during the Winter Garden Bird Survey.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Fairly common resident

Multiple sightings of Buzzard in February included 4 at Eccleston (7th) and 4 at Withnell Fold (18th). On 3rd March, one was found dead in Rivington. The corpse was sent for analysis, but no results are available.

In April, 5 were at Euxton (1st), 4 at White Coppice (7th) and 6 over Yarrow Valley Park (8th).

A pair in a woodland in the Eccleston / Heskin area was noted with 2 nearly fledged young on 29th June. Three active nests were located at Belmont in June/July.

Multiple sightings in September included 12 over Belmont (2nd), 13 over Coppull (5th), 7 over Gillibrand North (7th) and 5 at Great Knowley (18th). In October 6 were together over Croston Moss (17th), 4 were at Cuerden Valley Park and 3 were at White Coppice (24th). Three were over Croston Moss on 3rd December.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Regular passage migrant

One was seen over Arley Nature Reserve on 24th March.

A returning bird was seen over Rivington on 11th August.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

One was seen and/or heard at Yarrow Valley Park between 21st and 26th February.

One was at Arley nature reserve on 19th April.

One was seen at Yarrow Valley Park on several dates from 10th October until 9th December. One was heard near Cuerden Valley Park Lake. One was also recorded at the E-shaped pond, Bretherton on 14th and 23rd December.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Common resident

6 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir, including 4 pairs within the gully.

Away from Belmont Reservoir and following on from observations in 2012 - an 'overlooked' population estimated at 25+ pairs, breeds by ponds on in-bye fields, moorland ponds (at up to 300m asl) and mill lodges in the Belmont area.

Pairs bred on all available water bodies in Cuerden Valley Park, and on Astley Park lake, Common Bank Lodge and in Yarrow Valley Park.

5 were at Upper Rivington on 14th December, 8 were at the north end of Anlezarke reservoir on 24th December and 8 were at Belmont Reservoir on 28th December.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Common resident

Numbers at Croston Twin Lakes had reached an impressive 130 on 1st January but these had reduced to 30 by 21st February. A count of 40, however, was made on 2nd March.

Three pairs on Common Bank Lodge were noted with 2, 2 and one young on 25th May. A pair at Birkacre had 2 young on 18th May. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

Numbers on Croston Twin Lakes had built up to 120 by 19th August, and a similar number were still there on 8th October and 15th November. Numbers then reduced slightly to around 90 by 11th December.

Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

Rare visitor

One was noted at the Yarrow / Douglas confluence in June, and two were seen flying over Great Knowley on 21st June.



Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Increasing passage migrant and summer visitor. Scarce breeder.

First (2) were back at Belmont Reservoir on 6th February with 10 there on 22nd. A pair was on Yarrow Reservoir on the 16th. One was on Lower Rivington reservoir on 22nd February and 2 were on the edge of Anglezarke reservoir by the 26th. Numbers on the Douglas at Croston had built up to 15 by 22nd February. March sightings included 12 on the Douglas at Croston (1st) and 11 at Ulles Walton (5th). Birds also continued to move east with records from Euxton, Lower Rivington and Withnell Fold. 30 were in the Belmont area from 15th to 29th March including 24 at Belmont Reservoir.

In April birds were back at potential nesting sites at Anglezarke and Yarrow. In May a pair was at a site in Rivington and a pair produced young near High Bullough with well grown young on 9th July. Information received about a further site in Rivington indicated that a nest with eggs on 13th May was predated by ravens. 5 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir with 3 broods seen later. Away from waterbodies, breeding is still unusual in the West Pennine Moors, so single pairs again nesting in Withnell Quarry & at an agrarian site near Belmont were noteworthy. A pair with 2 young was noted at Charnock Richard on 7th June.

Last (2) were at Belmont Reservoir on 4th September.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred

One was back on moors above Belmont on 15th January with 9+ there on 22nd February.

A party of 4 was seen over Great Knowley on 9th April and a single bird was on Croston Moss on 27th April.

8+ pairs were located on territory on the West Pennine Moors around Belmont during the breeding season.

Five were on Croston Moss on 18th August, and a single bird was at the same site on 15th & 27th September, and again on 28th December. One was with Lapwings at Belmont Reservoir on 24th October.

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Rare vagrant

One was on Yarrow Reservoir on 26th April.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Common resident and winter visitor

Flocks in January included 100 on Bretherton Eyes (1st), and 60 on Gale Moss, Chorley (12th). In February, 260 were at Withnell Fold (18th). On 23rd January 4 birds were back at the usual breeding site in Rivington with 14 by the 13th February which had risen to 62 by the 17th.

By March, flocks had begun to dissipate as they set about breeding, but around 100 were spread about Croston Moss (1st) and 40 were on the fields between Withnell Fold and Brindle (21st).

First breeding success was noted at Withnell Fold where there were at least 2 chicks on the 4th April and at Charnock Richard where there were 2 on the 21st. By May 12th the 3 main breeding fields at Rivington already had young birds and by the beginning of June young were seen in another field at the same site. 29 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir and enjoyed excellent success with at least 13 broods seen later and good numbers of fledged juveniles were noted from 8th June onwards, albeit 2 large young were predated by a Stoat on 22/6/14.

Monthly maxima at Belmont Resr. :

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr/May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	36	78	100	Breeding	77	190	345	130	60	70	156
2014	140	360	150	Breeding	80	110	200	200	360	280	370*

* - The 370 at Belmont Resr. during snow conditions on 28th December was the largest site & West Pennine Moors count since 1982. This was unprecedented as Lapwing were, until the last decade, largely absent from the Belmont area during mid-winter.

Post-breeding flocks in August included 40 on Croston Moss (1st), 120 at Belmont Reservoir (3rd) and 100 at Lower Rivington Reservoir (30th). In September a flock of 171 was at Lower Rivington Reservoir (7th), one of 120 was at Belmont Reservoir (9th) and one of 220 was on Croston Moss (21st). In October, flocks of 100+ were on Croston Moss (5th) and 150 were at Withnell Fold (26th). November flocks included 70 on Lower Rivington Reservoir (9th), 120 at Belmont Reservoir (15th) and 25 on Gale Moss (26th). Finally, in December, a flock of 220 was at Charnock Richard (8th) and the flock on Gale Moss had built up to 70 (30th).

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

Uncommon summer visitor

First back was one at Charnock Richard on 29th March, and a second bird was noted at the site on 22nd April. First (2) back in Belmont area were on 17th April. One was also noted at a quarry at Whittle on 27th April. In May birds were noted in Buckshaw Village and again at Charnock Richard.

Two pairs were on territory at Belmont Reservoir but only one pair definitely bred (unsuccessfully, despite 2 attempts).

A pair at Charnock Richard had a single young by 21st June. Also in June, individuals were seen at Yarrow Reservoir (7th) and at Whittle (25th).

In August, records came from Belmont Reservoir, Anglezarke and Whittle,

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Rare visitor

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 6th May, and another was at the site from 28th July to 1st August. Another was on Anglezarke Reservoir on 17th-20th August.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Regular passage migrant

First on passage in Spring were 10 over Bretherton Moss on 18th April. A single was at Rivington (24th), 2 were over Great Knowley (25th), 25 in three parties over Croston (27th) and 16 over Hoghton (29th).

Early May saw 16 on Bretherton Moss (4th), 7 at Eccleston (8th), 13 roosting on Yarrow Reservoir (9th) and finally a single bird at Eccleston (13th).

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 25th August – almost unknown on autumn passage locally.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor

The first returning Curlew were singles at Eccleston (19th February) and Croston (24th), with 5 low over Anglezarke reservoir on the 26th.

Prenuptial flocks included 40 at Euxton on 25th March and 28 at Eccleston on 29th March. A flock of 7 was near Morris Barn, Rivington on 3rd April.

Roost counts at Belmont Reservoir began with 26 on 22nd February, increasing to 46 on 28th February, 85 on 3rd March, 108 on 7th March, peaking at 143 on 12th March, before reducing to 82 on 17th March, 58 on 21st March and finally 36 on 26th March

Breeding densities on sample plots in the central West Pennine Moors varied between 2 & 6 pairs/km², including:-

5 pairs in 1 km² of Belmont Moor, 11 pairs in 3 km² of Withnell Moors, and 2 pairs in 1 km² of Winter Hill.

Several small post-breeding groups were noted heading W & SW over Belmont on 30th June. Roosting parties were noted at Anglezarke Reservoir (12 on 5th June) and on Yarrow Reservoir (8 on 7th June). The last one at Belmont Reservoir was on 25th August, although one flew over west on 16th September.

One was noted at Eccleston on 13th, 14th and 17th October, and up to 3 were there on several dates in November.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Rare passage migrant and summer visitor

All sightings were from Belmont Reservoir:

- 2 on 28th April
- 4 on 30th June
- 5 on 27th July

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Scarce breeder and passage migrant

Birds were on territory & 'trilling' traditional, and one occasional sites above Belmont during the season.



at 2
breeding
breeding

All records from Belmont

- One on 2nd February
- One on 13th April
- 6 on 6th May
- 2 on 10th and 11th May
- One on 30th June
- One on 28th July

Reservoir:-

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor; has wintered.

First (1) back was at Belmont Reservoir on 14th April. Next was at Adlington Reservoir on 19th April, followed by one at Anglezarke Reservoir (21st & 26th) and 3 at Belmont Reservoir (28th). One was in Cuerden Valley Park on 10th May.

4/5 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir and 1 pair was territorial at Wards Reservoir.

One was again noted at Anglezarke Reservoir on 5th June. Records in August came from Anglezarke and Belmont Reservoirs.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Scarce passage migrant. Winters most years.

The species was recorded in 10 of the 12 months of the year, mainly in the Croston / Ecclestone area. The sightings presumably relate to a mixture of wintering, non-breeding and passage birds.

One was on Croston Twin Lakes on 30th January and again on 22nd February and 2nd March. Birds were also noted on Syd Brook, Ecclestone on 22nd February, along the Yarrow at Ecclestone on 13th March and on a pond in Ecclestone on the 24th February and 18th & 19th March.

In April, birds were again seen on the Yarrow at Ecclestone (20th & 25th) plus sightings on the Douglas at Croston (18th) and at Arley nature reserve (15th).

One was seen on Syd Brook at Ecclestone on 8th June, and again on 22nd July. Possibly the same bird was on the Yarrow at Ecclestone on 30th July, and regularly through August and September. One was at Belmont Reservoir on 12th July. One was seen along Syd Brook on 5th, 18th and 26th October. In November, one was seen on several dates on the Yarrow and on Syd Brook.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Scarce passage migrant

All sightings:-

- One was on Croston Moss on 16th April.
- One was at Belmont Reservoir on 12th July.
- One was on Anglezarke Reservoir from 20th to 26th August.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor

Birds were seen at two sites in the Croston area on 10th and 14th February. First (1) was back at Belmont Reservoir on 12th March. 17 were at Belmont Reservoir on 10th April. One was predated by a Sparrowhawk at Belmont Reservoir on 13th April.

4/5 pairs were on territory around Belmont Reservoir with 3+ broods seen later and the first fledged young seen on 8th June. A further 2 pairs bred on adjacent moorland (one at 380m asl) – at least one breeding successfully.

One was noted on Anglezarke Reservoir on several dates towards the end of August. Last was one at Belmont Reservoir on 14th September.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

Rare winter visitor

In January, singles were recorded at Ecclestone (3rd) and in Buckshaw Village (7th). One was at Ecclestone on 28th March.

4 were on Belmont Moor on 18th October with one there on 29th November. First in Autumn at Arley nature reserve was on 18th November. Another was at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton on 23rd December.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

Fairly common resident and winter visitor

One was noted at Ecclestone on 18th January and another was noted in Dean Wood, Rivington on 22nd January. Pheasant 'beaters' flushed 25+ at Belmont on 31st January.

The first 'roding' male at Belmont was seen on 31st January. Birds were also seen in March in Astley Park, Croston Moss and Heskin. Birds were noted roding at Black Coppice on several dates in April.

An early presumed migrant was flushed on Hoddlesden Moss on 11th October. Sightings in November came from Anglezarke (3rd), Bretherton (5th), Mawdesley Moss (5th), Croston Moss (15 on the 9th), White Coppice (15th) and Arley nature reserve (18th). 7 were seen at dusk over fields near Belmont on 28th November.

December records came from Ecclestone (8th) and Heskin (14th). 'Pheasant beaters' flushed 7 at Belmont on 27th December.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Fairly common passage / winter visitor; scarce breeder

January sightings included 31 at Buckshaw Village (7th), 40+ were on Belmont Moor (15th) and 9 on Bretherton Eyes (26th). A flock of over 50 birds was seen flying over Croston Twin Lakes on 16th February.

20+ were around Belmont Reservoir in mid-March where the first 'chipping' birds were heard on the 8th. Birds were recorded elsewhere in March at Croston Moss, Eccleston, Heskin and Lower Burgh Meadow.

The breeding population in the central West Pennine Moors is at least holding its own, if not increasing, in response to the increasing encroachment of *juncus* onto wet in-bye fields. A record 10 'pairs' were on territory around Belmont Reservoir with successful breeding again confirmed with 2 broods (1 large young plus 3 recently fledged juveniles) seen on 9th June. A minimum of a further 19 'drummers' were recorded on in-bye fields/moorland elsewhere in the central West Pennine Moors including one at over 425m asl and further young noted (on in-bye) on 26th June.

One was noted on Syd Brook, Eccleston on 29th June. Four were also noted in the Eccleston area on 12th August. 13 were at Belmont Reservoir on 13th August

Up to 15 were regular at Belmont Reservoir throughout September and October. Other October sightings included 7 at Anglezarke Reservoir (4th), one at Great Knowley (9th), 6 at Eccleston (10th) and 10 at Adlington (11th). Very large numbers were on blanket bog moorland in the West Pennine Moors in October/November including 160+ on Belmont Moor on 18th October, and 60 on Belmont Moor on 29th November. Other November sightings included a single at Eccleston (8th), 6 on Croston Moss (9th) and one on Arley nature reserve (18th). In December, 7 were on Mawdesley Moss (6th) and 16 were at Bretherton Eyes (14th). 40 were on fields near Belmont on 6th December.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

Scarce breeding bird and passage migrant

The first returning bird was one at Croston Twin Lakes on 3rd April. The Yarrow Valley Park resident first returned on 19th April. They had successfully hatched 3 chicks by 1st June, and were close to fledging by the 29th. The family had left the site by 10th July.

Away from Yarrow Valley Park, birds were recorded at Croston Twin Lakes on 6th May, and along the canal at Crosse Hall (18th) and Withnell Fold (24th), and in June at Eccleston (1st) and Mawdesley Moss (5th).

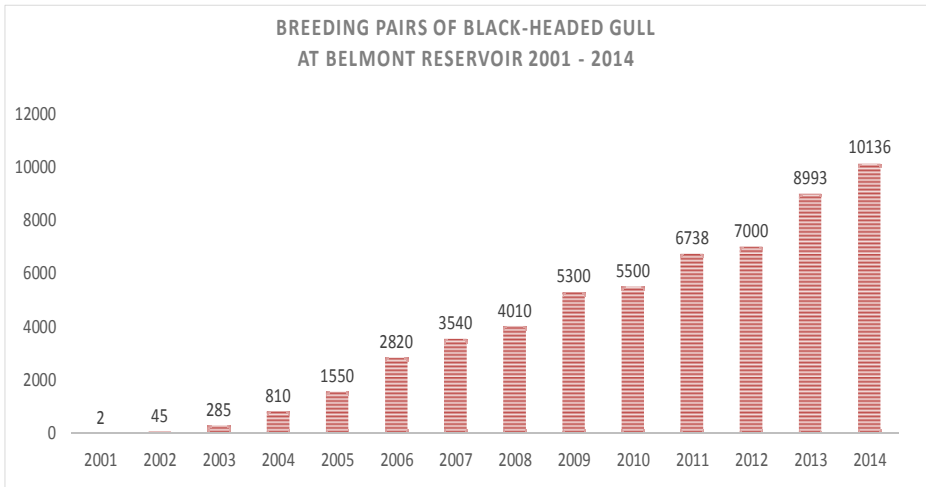
Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

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

700 were feeding in a field at Eccleston on 7th February. Around 4000 were in the gull roost on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 21st February.

Pre-breeding flocks included 3000 at Hoghton (14th March) and 2000 at Withnell Fold (21st March).

The first birds (2000) returned en masse to the Belmont Reservoir gullery on 22nd February with pre-breeding numbers building to 11,000 by 9th March, 18,000 on 16th March, 22,000 by 26th March to peak at a record count of 25,000 at roost on 3rd April.



The gulls' breeding season was approximately a week ahead of the mean dates (and a fortnight ahead of the late 2013 season) with the first young noted on 29th April in comparison to the recent mean date of 4th May. The gullery was again censused by means of aerial photography from a light aircraft. The population total obtained by this aerial survey on 15th May was 10,136 nests which indicated an increase of 13% on the 8993 pairs estimated during a similar aerial survey in 2013. This reinforces the site's credential as probably Britain's largest Black-headed Gull colony holding c7.2% of the UK breeding population. Production of young at the site also continues to be good with an estimate of around one young per pair fledging from the colony in 2014.

Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*)

Rare vagrant

One was with Black-headed Gulls at Bretherton on 20th January.

A first winter was at Croston Twin Lakes from 16th to 30th March.

One was noted on Croston Moss on 20th August with Black-headed Gulls.

Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)

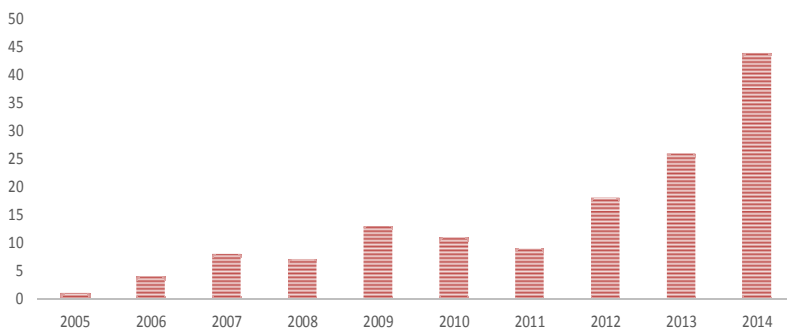
Rare visitor now also breeding

One was in the Lower Rivington gull roost on 21st February. Another was at Charnock Richard on 14th April.

Mediterranean Gulls again enjoyed another excellent season at Belmont Reservoir in 2014, both in respect to a record number of pairs nesting & good production. The first birds (4) were back in the Black-headed Gull colony on 1st March, with pre-breeding numbers rising to 14 on 15th March, to 39 on 19th and on to a record simultaneous count of 56 birds on 22nd April.

The colony was initially censused in late-April & this realised 41 active nests with a further 6 nests located later, in mid to late-May, although it was not known whether these were 'new' pairs or pairs that had relocated from elsewhere in the colony as most of the 'original' nests were not visible by then due to vegetation growth. The 41-47 confirmed pairs in 2014 was an increase of 70% on the 2013 figure and is highly significant as Belmont now holds some c6.2% of the UK population in addition to being the largest ***inland*** colony in Britain.

BREEDING PAIRS OF MEDITERRANEAN GULL
AT BELMONT RESERVOIR 2005 - 2014



Sample counts in July of successful pairs realised 24 fledged Mediterranean Gull juveniles with 16 distinct attendant adult/s giving an average for that sample of 1.5 young per successful pair in 2014. The total number of Mediterranean Gull young to fledge from the colony in 2014 is unknown but given the above ratio and known nest failures it is thought likely to exceed 50.

In June, birds were seen on both Anglezarke and Yarrow Reservoirs (7th).

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

Common winter visitor

50 were in the gull roost on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 21st February.

Lesser Black-Backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Common in most months; has bred

40 were feeding in a field at Eccleston on 7th February. 350 flew WNW over Belmont at dusk on 7th April.

Three pairs held territory at Belmont Reservoir during the breeding season with two pairs nesting successfully – these two nests held six eggs (C3 and C3), hatched five young (Y3 and Y2) and ultimately fledged 3 juveniles (1 and 2) in late July.

80+ were on the Rivington Reservoirs on 2nd July.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Common winter visitor and on passage

220 flew West over Belmont at dusk on 12th January and 300 flew West over Belmont at dusk on 19th. 50 were feeding in a field at Eccleston on 7th February.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Scarce winter visitor

9 immatures roosted at Belmont Reservoir on 9th March. Adults were also seen regularly on Lower Rivington Reservoir.

One pair held a territory at Belmont Reservoir and were observed copulating & nest-building in April, but subsequently abandoned the site. This was the first case of attempted breeding by this species at the site or indeed at any site historically in the West Pennine Moors.

Gull Roost (*Laridae spp.*)

The gull roost on Lower Rivington reservoir contained around 4000 birds on 21st February, the majority of which were Black-headed Gulls.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Common resident

Nest with 2 young was noted at a moorland farm (at 300m asl) above Belmont on 10th June.

The presence of a breeding pair of Peregrines does not appear to have diminished the town centre population.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Uncommon breeding bird

A count of 200 on Croston Moss on 30th January was exceptional, and at least 150 were still there on 4th February.

5+ pairs bred in an unoccupied waterworks building at Belmont Reservoir and 2 pairs bred in a barn at Roddlesworth. In April pairs were noted at 4 breeding sites in Rivington and at regular quarry sites at White Coppice and Whittle.

32 were at Belmont Reservoir on 15th June.

11 birds per hour flew south over Belmont (recorded in first hour after sunrise) on 1st November. A flock of at least 20 was on Croston Moss on 17th December.

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Abundant resident and passage migrant

Numbers on Croston Moss were a relatively modest 700 on 4th January. A flock of 600 flew SW over Belmont on 2nd January and a similar number roosted in Belmont Plantations on the same day. 2000, in 3 flocks, flew South over Belmont on 12th January. 650 roosted at Upper Rivington on 26th January. 150 were feeding at Dean Wood, Rivington on 13th February.

A site record 105 were feeding on clover, at Belmont Reservoir on 30th May. 200 were near Belmont on 3rd August.

Birds per hour South over Belmont (recorded in first hour after sunrise) included 39 on 27th September, 12 on 3rd October, 54 on 5th October, 348 on 10th October, 70 on 19th October, 1097 on 25th October and 1160 on 1st November

3000 were feeding on beechmast at Roddlesworth on 20th November, increasing to 5000 there on 30th November, but only 300 were present on 13th December.

21 were in a Belmont garden on 13th December.

The species came 6th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in 20 out of 22 gardens.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common resident

In February, flocks of 20 were on Croston Moss (6th) and 40 were at Eccleston (7th).

Slowly decreasing in Belmont Village probably in response to increasing Woodpigeon numbers with a maximum count of 12+ in a Belmont garden on 11th November. A white individual (not albino) was in a Belmont garden in mid-June.

The species came 12th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey – its lowest position for several years – and was recorded in 17 of the 22 gardens.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Fairly common resident

A bird was found dead at Morris Barn Rivington on 10th March. The corpse was sent for analysis which revealed that it had died of starvation.

One pair bred successfully at Belmont Reservoir fledging 4 young. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park. A pair bred successfully at a regular site in the White Coppice area. A pair in the

Eccleston / Heskin area was noted with 3 young on 23rd June. Two juveniles were seen fighting near Syd Brook, Eccleston on 25th August.

8+ were at Belmont Reservoir on 24th August with approximately 15 in the general Belmont area during September/October.

Three were over Croston Moss on 3rd December.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

Scarce resident and passage migrant

One was seen on Croston Finney on 25th January, and on Croston Moss on 22nd February, then on several dates during March. One was on Bretherton Eyes on 22nd March. A female was around Belmont in February, but no breeding territories were noted to be occupied in the central West Pennine Moors in 2014.

One was at White Coppice on 15th April.

One was seen over Georges Lane, Rivington on 31st August.

A male was regularly seen hunting migrants near Belmont in October plus a female in November. One was seen chasing Skylarks on Croston Moss on 9th November, and again on 4th December.

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

Rare summer visitor

One pair was on territory & displaying at a site in the central West Pennine Moors in late May but was not seen locally thereafter. A pair apparently present throughout the breeding season in an adjacent area could well have been this pair that had relocated. Elsewhere in May there were several sightings, including Eccleston (20th), White Coppice (21st & 26th), Euxton (23rd) and Great Knowley (25th).

June sightings came from Eccleston (1st and 30th) and Croston (21st and 29th). July sightings included 2 at White Coppice on several dates, and birds at Eccleston (13th) and Croston (14th). The regular sightings from three specific areas over an extended period opens the possibility of three separate breeding pairs.

Birds continued to be seen regularly in the Croston / Eccleston area during August and September. One was also seen at Lower Rivington on 22nd September.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)

Scarce resident and winter visitor. Has bred

Peregrines were seen regularly on Morrison's chimney in January with a pair there on the 18th. Birds were also seen perched up on the pylons on Croston Moss. Birds were again seen regularly during February at both Morrison's and also on Croston Moss. Regular at Belmont throughout the year from pairs in adjacent territories.



A fascinating symbiotic relationship involved a pair of Ravens appearing from nowhere to build a nest on Morrison's chimney in the first week of March, which the pair of Peregrines then took over and used to breed. The pair was believed to be feeding young by the end of May, and a single chick was out of the nest and on the ledge by 18th June. The family had left the site by 10th July. It is not known if the single young bird had fledged successfully, but it seems unlikely.

In April, a pair was also on territory at a site in Whittle. This pair had just one young which was approaching fledging by end of May.

Single birds were seen regularly on Morrison's chimney during September and October. Birds were also seen regularly on Croston Moss during October. December sightings came from High Bullough (7th), Morrison's (12th), Bretherton Eyes (14th), and Mawdesley Moss (16th).

Ring-necked Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)

Probable escape

Ring-necked Parakeets were recorded at Whittle on the 3rd October and at Eccleston (2 on the 16th).

In December, birds were noted near Chorley Hospital and in Burgh Lane, Chorley.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant

The first back at Belmont was an early calling male on 14th April with no further birds noted until 23rd. Elsewhere the first returning bird was one at Roddlesworth on 22nd April. They were seen regularly at White Coppice from 23rd, and at least 5 were estimated to be in the area on the 28th. Birds continued to be noted in the White Coppice area throughout May with at least 4 there on the 11th. On 12th May a bird was seen and heard around the new plantation near Lower House, Rivington, and on 16th birds were noted from 3 separate sites – near the Horwich boundary, around the Terraced Gardens and in Lead Mines Clough.

In June, one was noted at Brook House, Anglezarke (3rd) and birds continued to be recorded in the White Coppice area on a regular basis with 3 or 4 on the 8th and the last (2) on the 17th.

A juvenile at Eccleston on 26th July was a good record as very few records of juveniles are ever received.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Uncommon resident - increasing

One was observed on a couple of occasions on Mawdesley Moss during February. Records in March came again from Mawdesley Moss and also Great Knowley. One was on Croston Moss on 24th April.

There were 4 occupied territories near Belmont with at least 2 pairs breeding successfully, fledging 3 and 6 young. One pair bred at Roddlesworth successfully fledging 3 young. A breeding pair was noted at a site at Anglezarke during May, and young were being fed in June. Pairs at Adlington and Mawdesley were also feeding young in June. July sightings came from Great Knowley (7th), Anglezarke and Mawdesley (7th & 28th).

One was observed hunting over Croston Moss on 19th August. In October birds were noted on Mawdesley Moss (23rd), Eccleston (25th) and Croston Moss (29th). 3 were noted out hunting mid-afternoon near Belmont on 17th November. One was also noted on Croston Moss on 27th November and 13th December.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

Fairly common resident

One was noted near the Traveller's Rest, Euxton on 31st January. Another was at Heskin on 28th February and 3rd March. March sightings also included birds at Eccleston (16th) and Croston Moss (23rd). Individuals were seen occasionally in Cuerden Valley Park.

A pair made a welcome return to White Coppice, where the species had been unrecorded for a few years, and was seen feeding young in June. One and possibly two young were fledged by mid-July.

Other sightings in June came from Eccleston (10th) and Croston (9th & 13th).

One was noted on Croston Finney on 15th September. December sightings came from Croston Moss (6th) and Adlington (28th).

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Common resident

Seen and heard at several sites on several occasions in the Eccleston / Heskin area during February.

Records in April came from Arley nature reserve, Eccleston, Higher Wheelton, Rivington, Stronstrey Bank, White Coppice and Withnell Fold.

Young birds were noted at 2 sites in Rivington (5th & 9th May), Anglezarke (22nd May) and White Coppice (2 on 30th). In June, juveniles were noted in Heatherlea Woods (3rd), Eccleston (2 on 6th) and Heskin (23rd). Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

One was a road casualty at Bretherton on 26th August, and corpses of dead birds were found at both Great Knowley and Mawdesley on 28th September. In October, 4 were noted in the

Eccleston / Heskin area (7th) and at Ulnes Walton also on the 7th. One was noted at Eccleston on 8th December.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

Scarce winter visitor and breeding resident

At least one pair bred on the Chorley section of the West Pennine Moors.

One was on Croston Moss on 9th November and another was at Adlington on 18th November.

Swift (*Apus apus*)

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one at Clayton on 3rd May. First back at Belmont were 2 on 6th May. On 6th May 10 were back over the regular site of Jepsons Clough, Rivington with 14 there by the 14th and over 30 by the 22nd. On 30th June 20 were there with 20 still present on 4th August.

Breeding birds were noted entering at least 4/5 properties within Belmont Village. Birds were also on territory in Chorley at at least three sites, and also at a regular site in Coppull.

At least 50 were seen over Anglezarke Moor on 21st June. A post-breeding flock of 80 birds was seen over Coppull Moor on 18th July.

As usual, most birds had left by the end of the first week of August, with the last record being one over Astley Road on the 25th. 40+ were feeding over Belmont on 5th August with the last 3 over Belmont Reservoir on 24th.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Fairly common resident

Sightings in January came from across the area at Arley Nature Reserve, Croston Moss, Croston Twin Lakes, Kem Mill at Whittle, Lower Healey and Yarrow Valley Park. Birds were noted on several occasions during February in the Croston and Eccleston areas.

One pair bred near Belmont with 2/3 juveniles seen together in July. One pair bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

July sightings of Kingfisher came from Common Bank, Eccleston, Heskin, Rivington and Whittle-le-Woods. In August birds were noted at 2 sites at Anglezarke reservoir and still into September. Other September sightings came from Croston Twin Lakes, Eccleston and Yarrow Valley Park.

Sightings in November and December came from Astley Park, Cuerden Valley Park, Yarrow Valley Park, Croston Moss and Eccleston.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Uncommon resident, declining

One, possibly two, pairs were on territory near Belmont during the breeding season. 4 were in the Belmont area in early to mid-September.

Away from Belmont, one calling near Heatherlea Woods on 13th May was the first record for the year. There was just a single sighting in Cuerden Valley Park. There were no early season records from Rivington which is unusual. However on 20th August a bird was seen near Wilcock's Farm, Rivington and another into a moorland plantation on 31st

A juvenile was at White Coppice on 22nd July and subsequent dates. There was no sign of any adult. Maybe it had come over from Belmont!

Several records were received in August from both White Coppice / Anglezarke and from Georges Lane Rivington, and another was noted being harassed by a Kestrel at White Coppice on 7th September. On 7th September a bird was noted at a traditional site near the Horwich boundary. Another was at Stronstrey Bank on 27th September.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus major*)

Common resident; possibly declining

Although birds were noted regularly at some of the traditional sites in Rivington numbers continue to decline. A nest with young was noted at Anglezarke on 3rd June.

Four pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

A family party of 3 was at Shaw Hill golf course on 20th August.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus minor*)

Uncommon resident; nearing extinction locally

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was heard and Yarrow Valley Park on 2nd March and was calling on a few other occasions during the again on 6th April.

One was noted in a Hoghton garden on 15th



then seen at
then heard
month, and

September.

Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Common resident

Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting/trapping 74 Magpies in 2014.

It made 8th position in the Winter Garden Bird survey, being recorded in 21 out of the 22 gardens surveyed,

221 were counted going to roost in Yarrow Valley Park on 16th November.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

Common resident

Very conspicuous in late April, as pre-nuptial groups roamed noisily around the area.

It made 20th position in the Winter Garden Bird survey, being recorded in 13 out of the 22 gardens surveyed,

Four were noted heading south over Belmont on 10th October.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Common resident; increasing

1500 were counted going to roost in Cuerden Valley Park in January.

Increasing around Belmont annually, with a resident flock of 50/70 present throughout the year with a maximum of 120 around sheep-feeders on 23rd February.

80+ were around breeding cliffs in Withnell Quarry in late May, with similar numbers at Whittle Quarry.

Approximately 5 pairs bred in the church steeple of St Peter's, Belmont with 30+ (presumably including fledged juveniles) around the spire on 27th July. Pairs also bred at St John's Church, Coppull.

300 were observed going to roost at Cuerden Valley Park on 20th December.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

Common resident

150 roosted at Upper Rivington on 26th January.

The rookery census on 30th March recorded a total of 306 nests, which was a welcome increase for the second consecutive year. Details of the census are tabulated at the end of this report.

100 were in the Upper Rivington Roost on 10th November

Rare at Belmont with 2 high over North there on 27th September and 8 'resident' on fields by Belmont in November & December notable.

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*)

Common resident

Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting/trapping 192 Carrion Crows in 2014.

200 roosted at Upper Rivington on 26th January, 200 on 10th November and 150 there on 14th December.

A white bird was seen regularly on Belmont Moor in November & December.

Raven (*Corvus corax*)

Scarce but increasing resident

Birds were seen in Chorley on 14th February and at Anglezarke on 16th February.

A pair again bred at a quarry site to the north of Chorley.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

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

A family party of 4 was at Ecclestone on 1st July.

Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)

Abundant resident

12+ were regular in a Belmont garden in late August with 9 still present in mid-November.

It came equal first in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in all 22 gardens surveyed.

Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Very common resident

Birds recorded over Belmont were 24 on 5th October and 13 on 10th October.

The species came 4th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in all 22 of the gardens surveyed.

Coal Tit (*Periparus ater*)

Common resident and winter visitor

At least one pair bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

Birds recorded over Belmont in autumn were 11 on 27th September, 52 on 5th October, and 7 on 1st November.

The species was 9th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in 17 of the 22 gardens.

Willow Tit (*Poecile montana*)

Scarce resident

January sightings included birds at Lower Healey (4th), Hic Bibi (9th) and Arley (12th). In February, birds were recorded at Great Knowley (2nd), Croston Moss (4th) and Hic Bibi (25th). One was at Arley nature reserve on 23rd March and again on 15th April.

One was in a Croston garden on 1st May. July records came from Yarrow Valley Park (23rd) and Croston Moss (28th).

September records came from Great Knowley (4th) and Chisnall (28th), and in October, one was at Lower Healey (15th). In November, one was again at Great Knowley (4th), at Croston Moss (9th), Hartwood (26th) and Lower Healey (29th). December sightings came from the same sites including Croston Moss (2nd), Hartwood (8th) and Great Knowley (16th).

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Common resident and summer visitor

A flock of around 40 birds was on Croston Moss on 3rd January, increasing to around 100 birds by 6th February.

10+ were in song at Belmont on 22nd February. The species remains absent from the Brindle area and Yarrow Valley Park, where it used to be present in good numbers, and continuing development at Buckshaw probable means imminent extinction from another previous stronghold. Birds were however still present on the southern edge of Cuerden Valley Park. Coppull Moor and the mosslands are now the main strongholds away from the moors.

A flock of approximately 100 birds was on Croston Moss on 2nd December.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one at Croston Twin Lakes on 23rd March, followed by 3 each at Arley and the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton (24th) and one at Belmont reservoir (29th).

A regular colony in the Adlington area was again reported to have around 70 breeding pairs. No record was received of any breeding in the Euxton / Eccleston area, nor at Hoghton.

Birds were noted at Withnell Fold (9th) and Wheelton (14th) during August. 7 were at Belmont on 22nd September.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one at Withnell landfill on 22nd March, followed by one at Croston on 30th March. First (1) back at Belmont was on 6th April with 20/hour passing North on 13th April,

Recorded at all farms in 2 BBS squares in the Brindle area. Pairs were also seen going into containers at the local recycling centre.

80 were noted gathering on wires at a Belmont farm on 20th August. Approximately 100/hour passed South over Belmont on 22nd August. 300 were on wires near Belmont on 6th September.

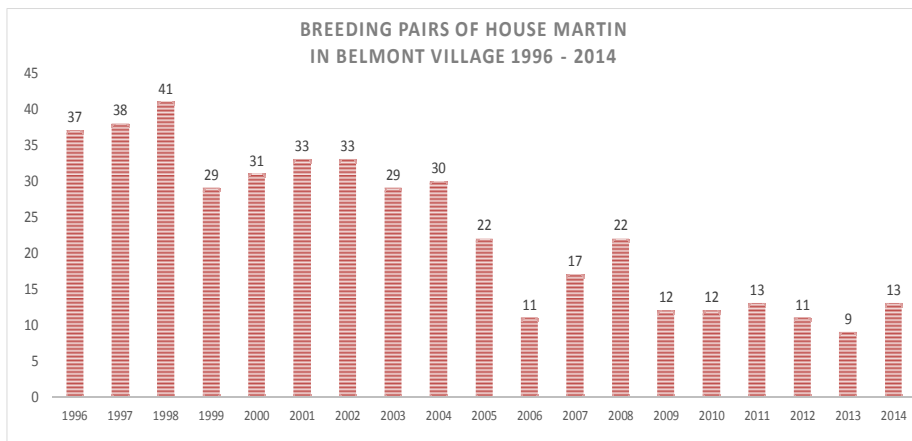
One was seen in Froom Street, Chorley, on 30th September. In October one flew south over Belmont on 3rd and 4 flew south on 5th. 16 were at Wilcock's Farm, Rivington (11th) and the last were 2 at Yarrow Valley Park (12th).

House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)

Common summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one at Cuerden Valley Park on the early date of 3rd April. Breeding took place at two locations in the park.

First (1) back at Belmont was on 13th April. A full survey of Belmont Village located 13 active nests.



In August, House Martins were still feeding young at Heath Charnock (27th), Eaves Lane, Chorley (28th) and Kittiwake Close, Heapey (29th). In September, a pair still had young in the nest at a site in Chorley on the 27th, whilst in Rivington on the 11th there was a huge migration gathering, estimated at 200 birds around Wilcock's Farm and all the wires. The last 2 recorded were at Adlington on the 8th October.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Common resident; increasing

The species came 13th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in 19 of the 22 gardens.

Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park. A family party was noted near Waterman's Cottage on 27th May.

35 were near Belmont on 25th October.

Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*)

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one at Roddlesworth on 25th April, followed by one at Rivington on 26th April. One was singing in High Bullough woods from 4th to 22nd May. Others were noted in Heatherlea Woods (24th), Siddow Fold (31st) and two were reported from Roddlesworth during the month.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Common summer visitor and occasional winter visitor

One at Arley nature reserve in January was believed to be of the Siberian race *tristis*. Another possible *tristis* was at Croston sewage works on the 23rd February.

The first singing bird was one along the Douglas at Mawdesley on the 9th March. By mid-March, birds were singing virtually everywhere. First (one) back near Belmont was on 30th March, and 3 were at sites in Rivington on the same day.

5 singing males were in the Belmont area during the breeding season including one at Belmont Reservoir. Six territories were noted in Cuerden Valley Park.

23 passed through Belmont between 4th September and 3rd October. One was singing at Coppull on 16th October. A wintering bird was in a Chorley garden on 30th November. Two were noted at Croston Sewage Works on 16th & 30th December.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Common summer visitor

The first returning bird was at White Coppice on 3rd April, which remains the stronghold for the species in the area, with birds singing from virtually every bush.

First (2) were back at Belmont on 6th April, and two singing males were back at Pall Mall croft, Rivington on the same day. A singing male was in a Belmont garden from 28th April to 24th May. 19 singing males were recoded in a 1km² BTO-BBS near Belmont on 19th April and 26th May. There were 7/9 singing males around Belmont Reservoir during the breeding season.

Elsewhere the species is widespread but in much smaller numbers. There was only one territory in Cuerden Valley Park.

The last (one) at Belmont was on 20th September.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Summer and winter visitor

One was at Eccleston on 22nd January. In February, birds were recorded in Chorley (14th) and at Eccleston (17th and 26th).

The first singing birds were in Croston and Euxton on 31st March. Four territories were noted in Cuerden Valley Park. A male had returned to Jepsens Clough, Rivington on 9th April and was seen carrying food on the 23rd May.

A male was in song in a Belmont garden from 8th to 17th June. Fairly common breeder around Belmont with 12+ territories in 2014 including one at Belmont Reservoir. 9 passed through Belmont between 4th and 20th September.

One was in an Euxton garden on 4th October. Wintering birds in November were recorded on Croston Moss (16th) and in an Eccleston garden (29th). December records came from Euxton (17th & 24th), Great Knowley (21st) and Chorley and Eccleston (both 25th).

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant

The first returning bird was one at Croston on 25th April.

In May, birds were noted on Croston Moss (3rd), Anglezarke (3rd), Lower Healey (4th), Lower Burgh Meadow (6th), Rivington (16th), Cuerden Valley Park and at White Coppice (31st).

Only one territory was located near Belmont during the breeding season

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was at Eccleston on 15th April. Singing birds were also located at Heskin (18th), Croston Moss (21st) and Croston Twin Lakes (27th).

In May, birds were noted at Chisnall (1st), Bretherton (6th) and 3 in the Eccleston area (18th). A pair with young was noted at Chisnall on 5th July.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Common summer visitor

First back were birds at Arley and Eccleston on 15th April.

Common on farmland in the west of the area, fifteen singing birds were counted on a small section of Croston Moss on 11th May. On 15th May, three were noted at White Coppice where a pair with young was noted on 12th July. Two territories were noted in Cuerden Valley Park.

Increasing around Belmont with up to 7 singing males present in 2014 including a pair that bred at Belmont Reservoir for the first time.

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor

First back were 2 at Belmont on 18th April, followed by one reeling on Lower Burgh Meadow on 20th April. Other birds were heard reeling at Belmont (5th May) and at White Coppice (25th).

In the Belmont area, 16 territories were identified from 'reeling' birds (14 in 2013, 11 in 2012 & 27 in 2011) including 6 around Belmont Reservoir (4 in 2013, 4 in 2012 & 6 in 2011). Breeding was confirmed at 3 sites with adults feeding young and recently fledged juveniles seen.

One was reeling near Lower House car park, Rivington on 2nd June. Birds still reeling in July were at White Coppice (10th) and Anglezarke Moor (18th). One was still reeling at Belmont on 29th August.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Fairly common summer visitor to the limited suitable habitat

First back was one near Croston Twin Lakes on 18th April, with birds also recorded at Croston Reed Bed and the E-shaped Pond on 27th April.

Singing birds were noted in May at Withnell Fold (4th), Lower Burgh Meadow (6th) and along the Yarrow at Eccleston (15th).

Migrants passed through Belmont on 26th July, 17th August and 24th August.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Scarce summer visitor

First back was one reported on Lower Burgh Meadow on the very early date of 6th April. Birds were noted on territory at Croston Reed Bed and Yarrow Valley Park.

Latest record was one at Yarrow Valley Park on 11th September.

Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulous*)

Irregular winter visitor

The only records were of a single bird which spent a few days in a Rowan in Collingwood Road, Chorley between the 4th and 7th February, and a second hand report of a small flock in Runshaw Lane, Euxton on 4th February.

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

Fairly common resident; increasing

A pair with young was noted in Heatherlea Woods on 3rd June. Another pair again nested in a hole in a stone bridge in the White Coppice area. Three pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

A surreal sight was 2 moving South within Tit flocks high over the moors at Belmont on 5th October.

Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Fairly common resident in the area's woodlands

A pair was noted feeding young at Eccleston on 20th May. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Abundant resident

The species came 17th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in 18 of the 22 gardens surveyed.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Abundant resident and winter visitor

Flocks in January included 500 at Belmont reservoir on the 4th increasing to 600 (12th) and 800 (21st). 250 were on Croston Moss (5th), 100 at Withnell Fold (11th), 300 at White Coppice (19th) and 60 at Charnock Richard (20th). In February flocks of approximately 100 birds were on Croston

Moss (1st), Brindle (2nd) and 700 were at Belmont Reservoir (23rd). 300 were at Belmont reservoir on 8th March.

First juveniles were seen at Belmont on 15th May with 200 at Belmont Reservoir on 1st June. A second brood of juveniles was seen from 3rd July. Breeding was noted in two locations in Cuerden Valley Park.

100 were in gardens in Belmont village on 20th September. 250 were at Belmont Reservoir on 28th October. 90+ roosted within Belmont Village on 7th November.

Elsewhere In the second winter period, a flock of 2000+ was on Croston Moss on 2nd November. This had reduced to 400 by 2nd December.

Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*)

Fairly common resident on the faster flowing rivers of the area

On 15th January and then on 15th February a bird was noted from Jepsons Bridge, Rivington. A bird was noted in Lead Mines Clough on 10th February. A pair was back on territory in Yarrow Valley Park by the 23rd February. The pair had fledged three young by 24th April. The pair was feeding young from a second brood by 5th June.

Common resident along Belmont Brook. Pairs were also noted at Duxbury, in Lead Mines Clough, Upper Rivington and at White Coppice. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park. In August a bird was noted below the Yarrow embankment (9th) and from under Alance Bridge (24th).

A pair in Yarrow Valley Park was seen carrying nesting material on 29th November. 2 birds were on Dean Black Brook, White Coppice on 24th December.

Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*)

Scarce passage migrant

First on passage was at Hordern Stoops on Anglezarke Moor on 8th April. Birds were also recorded at Belmont (18th and 24th), on Withnell Moor (19th) and at White Coppice (26th).

In September, there was a steady passage along George's Lane, Rivington / Winter Hill, and in October 7 were seen on Georges Lane between the 16th and 22nd. At Belmont, 3 were noted on 16th October, 2 on the 17th and 4 on 1st November.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Remained in first position in the Winter Garden Bird Survey.

16 and 21 respectively, were recorded in two BBS squares in the Brindle area.

7 presumed migrants were on the moor edge at Belmont on 19th October with 8 there on 25th. 20+ roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 16th November. 30+ were near Belmont on 6th December. 20 roosted at Upper Rivington on 14th December.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

Winter visitor, often in large numbers

Flocks recorded in January included 80 at Eccleston (3rd), 250 on Croston Moss (5th), 60 at Charnock Richard (20th), 200 off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington (23rd) and 200 at Brindle (26th). 100+ were at Belmont Reservoir on 2nd rising to 300 on 12th and on to 400 there on 21st. In February, 100 were at Brindle (2nd), 250 were at Belmont (9th), 80 were at Eccleston (11th), 100 were on Croston Finney (14th) and 50 were at Bretherton Eyes (22nd).

In March, flocks of 50 were noted on Croston Moss (8th & 16th), 100 at Eccleston (16th) and 30 at Bretherton (25th). 600 were in the Belmont area on 8th March, 210 there on 29th, 80 on 1st April with the last 20 on 5th April.

The first returning birds in Autumn were 6 over Great Knowley on the relatively early date of 28th September. In October, 2 were at Belmont (10th), and 6 were at Lower House, Rivington (15th) but the main arrival did not take place until 31st with flocks of 90 at Eccleston and 40 at Rivington recorded, probably a good two weeks later than normal.

Birds per hour South over Belmont (recorded in first hour after sunrise) were 3 on 20th October, 15 on 23rd October, 18 on 25th October, 555 on 1st November and 290 on 8th November. Fieldfare continued to arrive in numbers at the beginning of November with around 100 at Great Knowley (1st), 200 at Eccleston (7th) and 50 over Chorley (13th). In December, flocks included 100 on Croston Moss (15th) and 140 at Eccleston also on the 15th.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Fairly common resident;

A species which often appears to be absent in winter, suddenly becomes common enough when singing starts again in February. In the Garden Bird Survey, it languished in 19th place, only being recorded in 14 of the 22 gardens taking part.

At least two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Winter visitor, often in large numbers.

Flocks recorded in January included 100 at Adlington (4th & 19th), 40 at Eccleston (17th) and 60 at Charnock Richard (26th). 300 were in the Belmont area on 11th and 12th. On 25th January 8 birds were noted feeding on ivy berries in Rivington. In February, 400 were in Rivington in fields off Sheephouse Lane, 16 were at Eccleston (10th), increasing to 30 (21st).

In March, 110 were at Belmont (8th), reducing to 20 by the 31st. 20 were at Anglezarke (12th), 30 at Eccleston (16th) and 10 in Lead Mines Clough (22nd). Last sightings were at Euxton and in Yarrow Valley Park on 1st April and at Belmont on the 3rd.

First back in Autumn were 5 at Belmont on 3rd October, but the main arrival was around a week late with flocks of up to 50 being seen over Chorley, Coppull and Eccleston (14th) and 250 over Eccleston (17th).

Birds per hour South over Belmont (recorded in first hour after sunrise) included 25 on 14th October, 34 on 15th October, 105 on 25th October, 55 on 1st November.

A flock of 50 was at Whittle on 1st November. December flocks included 30 feeding on holly berries near Great House Barn, Rivington (13th), 50 at Upper Rivington (14th), 20 at Eccleston (21st) and 100 at Whittle (31st).

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Fairly Common resident

A post-breeding flock of 35 birds was at Shaw Hill golf course on 20th August. 10 were together at the top of Sheephouse Lane, Rivington on 28th August. 12 were near Belmont on 27th September.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one at Croston on 15th May. Birds were also on territory at Anglezarke from the same date. At least one was at Jack Green Brindle on 24th May.

A pair was noted at White Coppice on 1st June and took up residence. One was noted at Withnell Fold in July. The only sign of breeding at Belmont Reservoir was a territorial bird in early June.

A migrant was at Belmont on 6th August and one was in Belmont from 4th to 7th September. One, presumably on passage, was at Eccleston on 5th September.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

Abundant resident

Came third in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in all gardens surveyed.

In two BBS squares in the Brindle area, 18 and 27 were recorded respectively.

Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant

Two males were back in song at the regular Belmont breeding site from 21st April onwards. First back elsewhere was one at Anglezarke on 28th April. There was no evidence of breeding at this or any of the former sites in Rivington and Anglezarke.

Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)

Rare visitor

In August, birds were recorded in Georges Lane, Rivington (15th & 19th) and on Winter Hill (23rd). In September, one was again at George's Lane (2nd) and on Winter Hill (17th), and again on 5th October and 16th November.

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

Fairly common summer visitor in the east of

First back was at Lead Mines Clough on 16th pair was seen feeding young there in June, and Coppice. First back at Belmont was a male in regular Belmont breeding site on 21st April. On males were singing and feeding as if moving separate places around Brook House Anglezarke. Birds sang at 2 other sites at during May but there was no evidence of

A family party noted at White Coppice in July from a second breeding pair.

A passage bird was in Belmont Village on 28th August and a male was at Belmont on 17th September.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant

One pair bred successfully at Belmont – fledged young being seen in late June.

A male was at White Coppice from 5th July. It remained on territory for the rest of the month. A family party of 5 birds at the site on 19th August may have been evidence that it had found a mate.

13 passed through Belmont between 4th August and 28th September including 3 on 24th August and 14th September and 2 on 21st September. A few birds were noted on passage along George's Lane, Rivington in September.

Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

Scarce resident

A pair was noted on Croston Moss from 25th to 31st January and again on 4th February. A single bird was in Eyes Lane, Bretherton on 22nd February.

A pair was noted in the White Coppice area in April, a welcome return for a species, which had been hit hard by the recent run of hard winters. The pair eventually produced 3 young. A good increase noted at Belmont with 12 pairs located on territory (6 pairs in 2013, and 2012 & 5 in 2011) with many double-broods noted.

In addition to Belmont and White Coppice, July sightings came from Anglezarke Moor and Rivington. At least 16 were around Belmont from late-August to mid-September.



the area

April, and a also at White song at a 25th April through in 3 plantation, Anglezarke breeding.

was probably

A family party of 5 birds was seen on several dates in September along George's Lane, Rivington. In October, birds were recorded on Winter Hill (3 on 4th), Eccleston (2 on 8th), George's Lane (11th), Croston Moss (21st) and White Coppice (4 on 24th). Five were recorded on Croston Moss on 16th November. Pairs were recorded at Belmont Reservoir and on Croston Moss on 6th December.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Fairly common passage migrant and scarce summer visitor

The first back was on Withnell Moor on 13th March, followed by 3 at Belmont (22nd), 2 at Arley (24th) and singles on Anglezarke Moor and Croston Moss (26th). 9 passed through Belmont during March.

In April, passage was noted on the mosses with 6 on Mawdesley Moss (14th), and 15 on Croston Moss (18th & 24th). 35 passed through Belmont during April including a group of 12 on 13th. 31 passed through Belmont during May.

At least 4 pairs were located on territory in the West Pennine Moors around Belmont in the breeding season. A female was a surprising find on Mawdesley Moss on 2nd & 5th June.

23 passed through Belmont during August, 18 during September and a further last single bird on 2nd October. Autumn passage was noted on Anglezarke Moor, Georges Lane, Rivington and Croston Moss during August and September. In October, birds were seen regularly on the moors with the last being one on George's Lane Rivington (18th).

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)

Abundant resident

Came 5th in the Winter Garden Bird noted in 20 of the 22 gardens



Survey, being surveyed.

House Sparrow

(*Passer*

domesticus)

Abundant resident

25+ were in a Belmont garden in January and March with 30+ (including 10+ juveniles) there on 21st June.

Breeding took place at two locations in Cuerden Valley Park.

Came 10th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in 19 of the 22 gardens surveyed, although numerically it vied for first place with Starling.

Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Fairly common resident

Up to 30 birds again frequented a feeding station on Croston Moss during both winter periods.

Several pairs again bred in boxes on Mawdesley Moss.

One was in a Belmont garden on 28th September, 4 from 27th to 29th October and 2 on 13th December. These were the first Belmont records since 2011.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Common resident by the rivers and reservoirs of the area

A pair was noted displaying by the Yarrow Reservoir overflow on 10th March, and in April birds were noted on Knowsley embankment (7th), Lead Mines Clough (8th), Terraced Gardens (11th) and Hall Brook (19th). On 4th June a bird was noted on river Yarrow below Street embankment. On 19th August a juvenile was noted below the Yarrow embankment.

8+ pairs were on territory by brooks & reservoirs around Belmont in the breeding season. Family parties were noted in Astley Park on 4th June and at White Coppice (16th). Breeding pairs were noted along the Yarrow at Duxbury, Birkacre and Common Bank. Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)

Common resident

Around 50 birds were at Croston Sewage Works on 2nd March.

8 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir (5+ pairs in 2013). 25 were at Belmont Reservoir on 7th September rising to 65 there on 14th September. 12 (presumed *yarrellii*) flew south over Belmont on 3rd October.

Around 100 birds were at Croston Sewage Works on 21st December.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in Spring

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 18th April, and another was at Belmont on 13th May. One was on Croston Moss on 27th April.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant

First back was one at Belmont Reservoir on 22nd April.

Two unconfirmed records were received from the White Coppice area on 12th & 17th May of a species which seems to be in severe decline in the area.

One was noted in Georges Lane, Rivington on 19th August. Another flew south over Belmont on 13th September.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

Common resident and passage migrant; scarcer in winter

A flock of 24 was on Croston Moss on 5th January, increasing to 50 by 6th February. 50+ were at Belmont on 30th March.

During the breeding season, birds seemed to occupy every square metre of Withnell moor, providing plenty of opportunities for the local Cuckoos.

100 were at Belmont Reservoir on 24th August with 80+ there on 31st. 350+ were at the site on 7th September, 200 on 14th, and 320 there on 21st. 120 flew south over Belmont on 28th September. Hundreds were also noted on passage along Georges Lane, Rivington during September. There was also noticeable movement on 7th and 8th October with in excess of 100 birds counted at both Adlington and Eccleston.

Odd small flocks (up to 10) were still present around Belmont in January and December.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Common resident and winter visitor

100+ were at a roost in Belmont Plantations on 15th March. Up to 20+ were regular in a Belmont garden through March/April.

The species was 7th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey being recorded in 20 of the 22 gardens surveyed. It was also the dominant species in a mixed finch / bunting flock on the mosslands in both winter periods.

BBS Surveys of two squares in the Brindle area confirmed the species as our commonest finch with 21 and 24 being recorded in the respective squares.

25+ were in a Belmont garden in August. Birds per hour South over Belmont (recorded in first hour after sunrise) were 93 on 27th September, 108 on 3rd October, 116 on 5th October, 85 on 19th October, 25 on 25th October and 27 on 1st November. 30 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 13th December.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Winter visitor in variable numbers

In January a flock of up to 200 were in woodland at Anglezarke / High Bullough (16th) and 40 were at Duxbury golf course on the 29th. 350 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on the 12th.

A bird was still vocal in woodland at Anglezarke on 10th April. 4 were in a Belmont garden on 1st April, rising to 8 there on 4th, on to a maximum of 15 on 19th, with 3 still there on 27th and a single still present on 29th April.

First back in Autumn was a male at Belmont on 10th October, followed by 3 at Rivington on the 29th.

Birds per hour South over Belmont (recorded in first hour after sunrise) were 11 on 19th October and 51 on 25th October.

30 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 16th November, rising to 90 there on 7th December, peaking at 310 on 13th December with 235 still present on 22nd December.

One was with Chaffinches at Sheephouse Lane, Rivington on 29th November. 20 were at Belmont Reservoir on 20th December, with up to 3 in a Belmont garden in December.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common resident

The species remained in 16th place in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, but there are signs that it is perhaps starting to recover from the trichomonosis outbreak. It was well represented in mixed finch / bunting flocks on the mosslands in both winter periods.

Birds per hour South over Belmont (recorded in first hour after sunrise):-
13 on 10th October.

35 were in a Belmont garden on 1st October.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Common resident

A flock of 30 was in a Whittle garden on 11th January. 70 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 19th January. 50 were in a Belmont garden on 20th January, and up to 25+ were regular in a Belmont garden through March/April.

4 nests were recorded around two streets in Belmont Village.

The species was 11th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in 16 of the 22 gardens surveyed.

On 28th August an estimated 50 birds were feeding on thistle heads at the top of Sheephouse Lane, Rivington, and on 9th September 35 were near the Bomber memorial, Lead Mines Clough. 200 were at Croston Sewage Works on 25th August. 95+ were around Belmont on 4th August with 70 at Belmont Reservoir on 31st August. 230 were in 6 charms at Belmont on 21st September.

Birds per hour South over Belmont (recorded in first hour after sunrise) were 15 on 3rd October, 19 on 19th October and 45 on 1st November.

30 were regular in a Belmont garden in early October. 50 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 16th November.

70 in a Belmont garden on 7/12/14.

In December, charms of 70 were at Belmont (7th), 42 were at Hartwood (18th) and 40 at Heskin (25th).

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce resident

Up to 50 visited a garden at Clayton during February and March.

Up to 6 were regular in a Belmont garden from February to May. 2 pairs bred at Belmont with 2 fledged juveniles seen on 18th June. Additionally, birds were present in the breeding season in two plantations near Belmont. A pair was noted in Heatherlea Woods on 5th May.

In Autumn, birds per hour South over Belmont (recorded in first hour after sunrise) were 14 on 3rd October, 7 on 5th October, 15 on 10th October, 12 on 19th October and 8 on 1st November.

A party of 6 was noted in Cuerden Valley Park in November.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Fairly common resident

A flock of around 200 birds was on Croston Moss throughout January, and had increased to around 400 by 6th February.



Several pairs held territories on the moorland edge at White Coppice during the breeding season. 3+ pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir.

A post-breeding flock of around 100 birds was on Croston Moss on 28th July. This had increased to 150 by 31st August, and a flock of a similar number was at the site on 16th November. 12 were on Gale Moss on 26th November. 50 were at Belmont Reservoir in September/October. The flock on Croston Moss had increased to 200 by

28th December.

Twite (*Carduelis flavirostris*)

Very scarce resident

Groups of up to 4 in March and 2 up to late April feeding on in-bye around Belmont were suggestive of breeding on adjacent moorland.

Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*)

Common winter visitor; uncommon resident

A party of 6 was noted in Cuerden Valley Park on 18th March. Up to 20+ were regular in a Belmont garden through March/April with up to 4 birds showing strong characteristics of **Common (Mealy) Redpoll** present from 3rd to 12th April.

Fairly common (estimate of 20+ pairs) breeding bird in birch woods & conifer plantations around Belmont – family groups of 2, 3, 4 & 4 recently fledged juveniles were seen between 21st June and 7th August. One or two pairs bred at a regular site at White Coppice.

Two were in a Great Knowley garden on 25th December.

Common Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)

Scarce visitor

A party of 6 dropped into a larch at White Coppice on 22nd March. One was seen at Brinscall on 15th April.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Fairly common resident

The species was 18th in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in 13 of the 22 gardens which submitted records.

Two pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park with a similar number in Yarrow Valley Park.

4 flew South over Belmont on 19th October. 13+ were around Belmont in mid-December including 5 in a Belmont garden on 10th December.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)

Fairly common resident; declining

A flock of 20 was near Arley nature reserve on 18th January. Good numbers were noted in mixed finch and bunting flocks on the mosses in both winter periods.

The species remains present in good numbers on the mosslands, and at Bretheron, Eccleston and Coppull Moor / Chisnall.

A male was singing at Bretherton Eyes on 15th November.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

Fairly common resident

Good numbers were noted in mixed finch and bunting flocks on the mosses in both winter periods. 15+ were at Belmont Reservoir throughout January and February. 12 were in a Belmont garden on 23rd March with singles still visiting feeders there until 17th June.

15 pairs bred around Belmont Reservoir (14 pairs in 2013). 6 males were in song in a 1km² BTO-BBS square of in-bye near Belmont in April.

Several pairs bred in Yarrow Valley Park, particularly on Lower Burgh Meadow. also bred at Croston Marsh, the E-shaped and Withnell Fold Flash

60 were around Belmont from 23rd August September. 70+ were around Belmont in December including 25 in a Belmont and 10+ at a 'baited site' on Belmont Moor asl) on 29th December.



Pairs
Pond

to 28th
late
garden
(at 330m

Corn Bunting (*Emberiza calandra*)

Scarce resident; confined to the mosslands

A flock of 22 birds was on Croston Moss on 25th January.

Several singing birds were noted on Mawdesley Moss during the breeding season.

A flock of 45 was on Croston Moss on 24th November, and one of 40 on 16th December.

ESCAPES

Muscovy Duck (*Cairina moschata*)

One was at the north end of Anglezarke Reservoir for much of the year. Another was at Belmont on 1st June and 16th December.

Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*)

The bird present around Belmont since 2013 (thought different to the 2011 bird) was last seen on 10th April.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS FOR BIRD REPORT

Thanks to the following for submitting records for possible inclusion in this report:-

D.Allen, I.Ball, D.Beattie, D.Beevers, J.Bolton, S.Bottomley, I.Cameron, J.Catt, J.Cobham, B.Derbyshire, D.Downing, S.Driver, A.Dunn, J.Edwards, P.Farnworth, S.Field, M.Fishwick, J.Frankland, M.Greenhalgh, R.Hargreaves, I.M.Harper, L.Harrison, M.Hilton, D.Holland, J.Howlett, R.E.Hoyle, A.Johnson, C.Johnson, P.King, P.Kirk, P.Krischkiw, E.Langrish, A.Leach, G.Lilley, J.Love, I.Lynas, A.Makin, B.Makinson, S.J.Martin, D.S.Martin, T.Morton, M.Nightingale, D.North, G.Parsons, L.Poxon, C.Rae, P.Rhodes, R.W.Rhodes, J.Riley, L.Rose, P.Ross, P.Rowlands, A.Ryding, J.Smith, N.T.Southworth, R.Spencer, C.Stanley, M.Stuart, D.Tennant, C.Thistlethwaite, M.Thornhill, J.Waidson, T.West, N.West, P.West, T.Westhead, E.Whitehead, P.Whittaker, I.Whittle, C.Winder, K.Woan, and all those who submitted Garden Bird Survey Forms.

Apologies to anyone I may have omitted.

ROOKERY CENSUS

Site	2014	2013	2010	2004	1999
A49 Euxton	36	48	50	40	56
Howard Arms, Whittle Springs	35	28	25	49	30
Rawlinson La, Heath Charnock	0	0	15	14	18
Railway Road, Adlington	41	37	30	24	24
Prospect House, Wheelton	45	31	32	81	101
Lower Wheelton	8	11	10	16	20
Red Cat, Wheelton	1	1	10	N/C	N/C
St Chad's Wheelton	8	6	6	N/C	N/C
Croston Bowling Green	88	80	80	135	130
Croston Town Road	5	3	0	0	0
Croston Westhead Road	5	5	0	0	0
Wild Bottoms Wood, Hoghton	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C
Town House Farm, Brindle	27	29	40	22	18
Brindle Village	3	7	11	N/C	N/C
Buckshaw Village	4	8	21	N/C	N/C
Totals	306	294	330	381	397

WATERFOWL COUNTS

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

Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Little Grebe	5	3	2			1	1
Great Crested Grebe	4	6	6	3	3	5	2
Cormorant	6	17	38	13	9	2	
Mute Swan	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
Canada Goose	80	33	12	28	4	3	3
Hybrid Goose	2	1	2	2	2	2	3
Greylag Goose		1	1				
Shoveler						1	1
Teal	38	16		6	27	18	1
Mallard	471	166	123	221	273	201	246
Pochard					5		
Tufted Duck	9	10	6	4	16	9	20
Goldeneye	4	3	5				
Goosander	4	18	12			3	
Moorhen	9	16	12	17	31	29	28
Coot	25	21	13	14	15	22	21
Water Rail						1	1

RINGING REPORT

Introduction

2014 was a much quieter year ringing wise due to two factors. Firstly, working shifts, including weekends, and secondly and more importantly the weather gods throwing up some very unseasonal weather at times throughout the year, limited our opportunities. Nevertheless, a total of 756 birds were caught and ringed in the CDNHS area, of which 462 were ringed in the garden.

2014 Ringing – Yearly Summary

During the first quarter of the year, 15 ringing sessions took place at just two sites – the garden and a woodland baited site, with a total of 273 caught between the two sites. Highlights included Bullfinch, Goldfinch and reasonable numbers of Siskin in the garden.

During the second quarter, ringing took place at 10 different sites in the area, including Arley, Astley Park, Duxbury Woods, Hic Bibi, Withnell Nature reserve and Yarrow Valley Park (Birkacre). At many of these sites, nestboxes were checked and all pullus of a suitable age were ringed. This year was a reasonably good year for productivity of titmice with the average clutch of eggs being 8, and hatching and fledging rates were also good with average fledged broods being 6. Following nestbox ringing, the half year total was 546.

During the third quarter, ringing took place on 11 occasions at just one site ie the garden, where a total of 132 birds were caught and ringed. These were mainly titmice in small post-fledging flocks. Apart from titmice, Bullfinch, Nuthatch and Robins made up the other species caught.

Into the fourth quarter and only 7 ringing sessions took place, mainly due to the unfavourable weather conditions – either wind or rain and sometimes both!! Of the seven sessions, two took place away from the garden at a woodland baited site, where such delights as Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Bullfinch and Blackbird were caught and ringed. That brought the fourth quarter total to 78 birds and the year's grand total to 756 birds.

Garden Ringing 2014

This year was a less productive year in the garden, ringing wise, due mostly to adverse weather conditions on a lot of the planned ringing days. On the successful ringing days, the lack of Siskins in the garden compared to 2013 didn't help. (394 were ringed in 2013, which would have been hard to beat). In 2014, a total of 151 Siskins were caught and ringed, including retraps and controls from elsewhere.

Siskin Totals 2014

The first birds arrived in 3rd January (6). The 3 were caught and Numbers then slowly January, then pace until 22nd the 34 birds caught and day, 32 were Siskin, the being single Bullfinch Goldfinch. Numbers throughout March, and numbers continued to April, with the last two 13th April.



the garden on following day, ringed. built up during quickened the February. Of ringed that other two and were steady fewer appear into ringed on the

2014 Retraps / Controls

Great Tit

Where / when ringed:- Garden Camwood 2nd February 2013

Where / when controlled:- Greenwood 12th August 2014

Comments:- 556 days distance 0km. Dead bird found

Age 5. Sex female

Long-tailed Tit

Where / when ringed:- Haigh Hall, Wigan 29th September 2012

Where / when controlled:- Arley Nature Reserve 20th January 2014

Comments:- 478 days. Distance 3 km. Controlled by ringer

Age 2

Blackcap (late information return)

Where / when ringed:- Garden Camwood 11th April 2012

Where / when controlled:- Zaframagon, Seville, Spain 21st October 2012

Comments:- 193 days. Distance 1872 km. Controlled by ringer

Age 4, Sex female

Siskin

Where / when ringed:- Fort Augustus, Highlands, Scotland 16th May 2013

Where / when controlled:- Garden Camwood 5th March 2014

Comments:- 293 days. Distance 401 km. Controlled by ringer

Age 5. Sex female

Four further Siskins ringed in the garden were all controlled by a fellow ringer at Kemple Gate, Lancs just 20 km distance. The following table shows date ringed, date controlled and time between ringing and control;-

9 th February	31 st March	50 days
14 th February	31 st March	45 days
16 th March	19 th March	3 days
19 th March	7 th April	19 days

It just goes to show where large flocks of Siskin can roam over the winter period.

Acknowledgements

Once again, many thanks to all landowners and local farmers who granted Michelle and me permission to access their land to carry out ringing, including Ian Harper (United Utilities), senior ranger John Bolton and ranger Steve jolly (Yarrow Valley Park), Andrew Greenwood (LCC ranger) for access to Withnell Fold nature reserve, Alan Silcock of Wood Lane Farm, Mawdesley Moss and Chris Kearton of Midge Hall Farm, Croston Moss. Biggest thank you goes to wife, Michelle - bird bag carrier, biometric recorder, nest finder, scribe, brew maker and one hell of a good ringing companion, although she's still not cracked the 3.00 am starts!. Finally, thanks to my trainers past and present, Ian Spence and Dave Fletcher, without whose assistance this report would not be possible.

Andrew Leach

MAMMAL REPORT

Western Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)



Seen from February to November but mostly small numbers. There was a reported sighting of 10 in Coppull in June. One was photographed in my garden at the end of September, and another spotted in a Belmont garden in January

Northern Mole (*Talpa europaea*)

Very few records sent in, but looking at the number of mole hills, they are not under any threat. There were reports from Belmont of several molehills and in September of an individual seen above ground.

Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)

Most records came from either Cuerden or Yarrow Valley Parks, varying from 7 to 1 individuals. There was a record from Belmont of a hibernating animal and another record from near the River Yarrow at Mill Lane in Euxton

Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) 45khz

Records from Cuerden, Wheelton, Belmont and Birkacre. No numbers were mentioned, just that they were present

Soprano or Pygmy Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)

None reported

Noctule Bat (*Nyctalus noctula*)

Several locations but not many individuals reported. Cuerden, Clayton Brook, Birkacre and Euxton.

Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*)

There is still the roost of "regional significance" in the Stable Block of the Sue Ryder home on Cuerden. A record of 3 individuals hibernating in an old mine pit in Belmont. There were two reports again of Brown Long-eared detected on Cuerden using a bat detector in August

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

Were photographed on a private house bordering Cuerden



Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*)

No records sent in this year of this elusive bat

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 highest number was 7 on Croston Moss. The peak count from the Belmont area was 4 on 3rd August, but 12 sightings throughout the year.

Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

The population around Belmont grew rapidly from an estimated 50 in March to 200+ from May. There were 173 shot by gamekeepers in late summer. Away from Belmont this is a very unrecorded animal. Only four records with the maximum being 12 on Croston Finney in September. Myxomatosis was widespread and only 10 survivors remained in the Belmont area

Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

.Another unrecorded animal away from Belmont. There, gamekeepers eliminated 126. In Roddlesworth 24 were disposed of to protect both birds eggs and bark stripping of some trees. Estimated population there is now 93, down from 1,000 in 2008.

Bank Vole (*Clethrionomys glareolus*).

Only a single report from Cuerden Valley Park

Field Vole (*Microtus agrestis*)

Abundant in the Belmont area noted both visually and counting the number of runs/holes

Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)

Another species that is managed at Belmont. 540+ trapped plus 300 by other methods. The number round the reservoir was down to 5. Cuerden and Birkacre reported one each

Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*).

Apart from several sightings in a Belmont garden there were only a few sightings from Cuerden, Birkacre and White Coppice

Stoat (*Mustela ermine*)

Twenty one sightings throughout our area including one in ermine near Belmont on 5th February.

Wease (*Mustela nivalis*).

Nine reports from throughout the borough with the exception of 29 reported sightings on Belmont

American Mink (*Mustela vison*)

Four sightings from Birkacre and Croston Moss. Three were trapped and killed on Belmont.

Badger (*Meles meles*.)

This lovely animal is reasonably present in suitable habitat. Lancashire Badger Group have the locations but they are confidential.

Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*).

Nine records submitted from throughout the borough. On Belmont six were shot humanely to protect the ground nesting bird colony. We did not lose any birds to fox predation in 2014. As I write the report our Prime Minister is trying to bring back hunting with hounds. I have written to our MP who voted for the ban on hunting with dogs last time. He has said he cannot see any reason for its re-introduction

Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*).

A small herd of 9/10 were seen occasionally at Belmont and another group observed from time to time in the Euxton area. This latter group has a white individual with them.

Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)

Small numbers noted all over our area throughout the year. The highest count was 15 near Belmont in January and one brazen individual walking past the Black Dog public house in broad daylight in May

AMPHIBIA

Smooth Newt (*Triturus vulgaris*)

One was at Belmont on 1st April

Palmate Newt (*Triturus helveticus*)

Common in ponds/reservoirs around Belmont but no surveys carried out in 2014.

Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)

Still present at regular sites in the area..

Toad (*Bufo bufo*)

First (2) seen at Belmont on 30th March with 65+ in breeding ponds at Belmont on 4th April. 6 active (due to mild weather) near Belmont on 22nd November.

One overwintered in a member's garage.

Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*)

Frogs were first seen in members' garden ponds during the last week of February with spawn appearing during the second week of March. A similar timetable applied to the pond on Lower Burgh Meadow, but the arrival of tadpoles at the beginning of April attracted the attention of a heron.

First (1) was seen at Belmont on 27th February. 80+ Frogs & 250+ clumps of spawn were noted at Belmont on 9th March rising to 300+ Frogs & 1450+ clumps of spawn on 16th March with ca1900 clumps of spawn on 23rd. Later, 'thousands' of tadpoles were present on 17th May. Due to the mild second winter period, small numbers were active, & calling, at Belmont on 15th November.

REPTILES

Common Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*)

Singles were seen near Belmont on 24th May, 22nd August and 28th September.

Conclusion

May I remind members again of the website : <http://projectsplatter.co.uk/>

If you see any animal killed on the roads anywhere in the country, could you report the sighting on that website address

My thanks to all those people who continue faithfully to report all their sightings. Without you all our reports would be blank.

David Beattie