

**CHORLEY & DISTRICT  
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

*Chorley & District Natural History Society*

*is a Registered Charity*

*Registration Number 513466*

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2016**

**Editor**

N.T.Southworth,

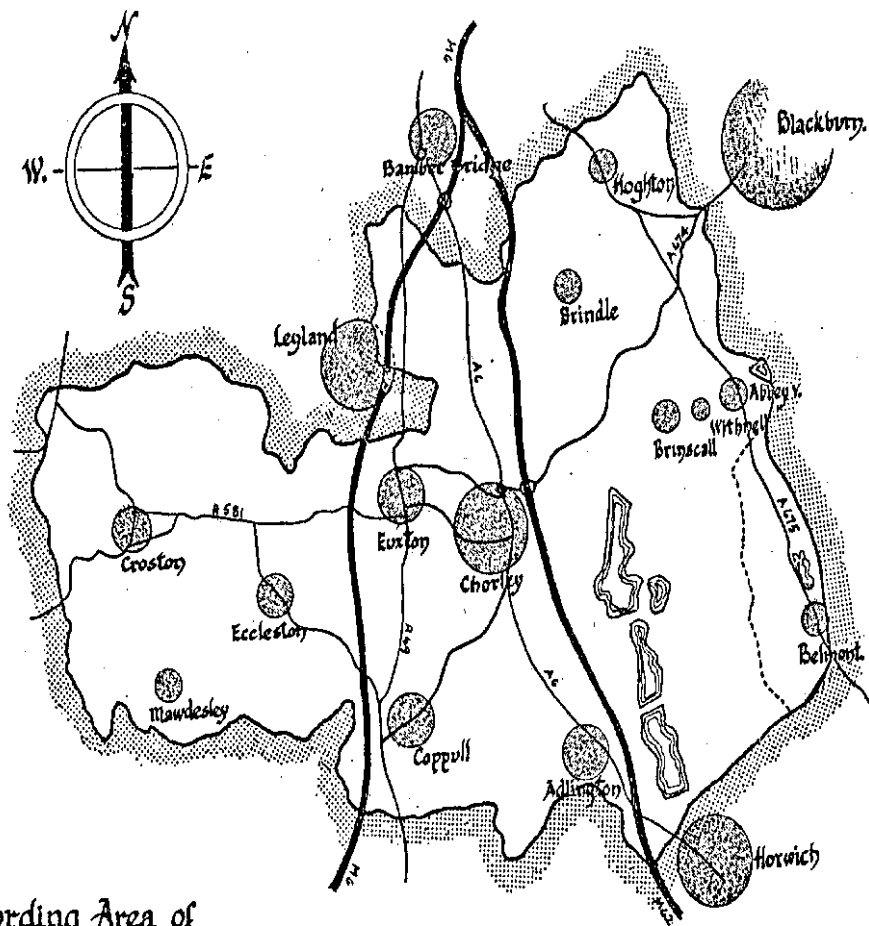
9, Queensgate,

Chorley PR7 2PX

(01257 276065)

\*\*\*\*\*





## Recording Area of Chorley & District Natural History Society

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

## CONTENTS

Review of the Year	3
Flora Report	7
Fungi Report	7
Invertebrate Report	9
Flight periods of Butterflies	15
Flight periods of Dragonflies	16
Bird Report	17
Rookery Census	66
Waterfowl Counts	66
Ringing Report	67
Mammal and Amphibian Report	72

## RECORDERS

Flora	David Beattie
Fungi	Leonard Poxon
Insects	Phil Kirk
Birds	Neil Southworth
Mammals	David Beattie

## REVIEW OF THE YEAR

**January** saw a mild but wet start with a maximum of 10° on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The sun made its first appearance on the 5<sup>th</sup>, but the unsettled conditions continued. The weather turned cooler from the 11<sup>th</sup> when the first frost of the year occurred, but unsettled weather persisted despite a frost of -3° on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. An inch of snow fell on 17<sup>th</sup> but thawed throughout the day. The cooler weather continued with a dry, sunny day on 20<sup>th</sup> before milder weather from 22<sup>nd</sup> saw 14° achieved on the 24<sup>th</sup>. It was then mild to the end of the month but wet and windy and it was particularly wild on the 29<sup>th</sup>. The floods at Bretherton Eyes attracted a good selection of wildflow and waders, including Wigeon, Pintail, Golden Plover, Ruff and Black-tailed Godwit. Needless to say, our field trip concentrated on that area. Indoors, Pauline and Ian Greehalgh gave us a "Shot at Wildlife 2014".

The 1<sup>st</sup> **February** was wild but at least the temperature made 11°. Thereafter the wind abated and average temperatures fell by 3°, but it was still essentially mild and unsettled. The 8<sup>th</sup> saw a day of torrential rain, following which a spell of cooler weather set in for the next two weeks, with frost to -1° on seven days and 11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> were dry and sunny. The weather changed briefly from 20<sup>th</sup> with 8 hours rain then a mild day on the 21<sup>st</sup> (12°). The 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> saw a return to frost (-1°) and a snow shower on 24<sup>th</sup>. The month ended with a few dry frost-free days. The floods at Bretherton continued to attract wildfowl and waders. A party of Crossbills at Rivington was a good sighting. Our Field Trip was very local, involving a look around Astley Park. Our talk was by John Ball on the wild flowers of Lancashire.

**March** opened with heavy rain and a temperature of 9°, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> was wild and windy with wintry showers. Snow fell on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> but soon melted. The 7<sup>th</sup>

saw a frosty start at -1° followed by a glorious sunny day. High pressure took control with dry, sunny days and a high of 14° on the 13<sup>th</sup>. The dry sunny weather continued until the 23<sup>rd</sup> with easterly winds prevalent. It then turned wet and windy from 24<sup>th</sup> and although temperatures averaged 9°, snow fell on the 29<sup>th</sup>, but again melted quickly. The month did, however, finish with a sunny day on 31<sup>st</sup> and a temperature of 11°. Two Ospreys passed through the area and a Ring Ouzel was at Belmont during a snowstorm. Our field trip was a visit to the new LWT reserve at Lunt Meadows. Richard Hall gave us a talk on the "Plight of the Humble Bee"

Unsettled weather returned in **April**, however, and persisted until the 9<sup>th</sup>. It was mild but with cold winds at times and a maximum of 13° on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The 10<sup>th</sup> saw a sharp frost then a fine sunny day and a maximum of 12°. This persisted for the next two weeks as high pressure dominated. The 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> saw temperatures of 17°. Unsettled weather returned from 24<sup>th</sup> along with northerly winds, frost on 27<sup>th</sup> and snow on 29<sup>th</sup>. Maximum temperatures fell to 7°. Spring migration, however, was in full swing with Osprey, Marsh Harrier and Red Kite passing through and Whimbrel passage commencing from 18<sup>th</sup>. The Annual 24 hour Bird Race took place on 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup>. The indoor season closed with Phil Kirk sharing his passion for "Great British Trees" with us.

**May** started unsettled with a wet day on the 1<sup>st</sup>, but warm, dry weather then returned and temperatures rose quickly to 26° by the 8<sup>th</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup>. Two unsettled days followed but the 12<sup>th</sup> was again warm (24°) and sunny. Dry, sunny weather continued to 17<sup>th</sup>, but temperatures dropped to an average of 14° as winds turned northerly. Four days of unsettled weather were followed by three fine days, two cold, miserable days and finally five warm, sunny days with an average maximum temperature of 19°. A Hobby was seen in Cuerden Valley Park, and, gratifyingly, good numbers of Wood Warbler were noted on territory. Our first summer evening walk was at White Coppice, where the highlight was a hunting Barn Owl.

**June** set off as May had finished with warm, sunny weather until the 9<sup>th</sup>, with a maximum temperature of 26° on the 6<sup>th</sup>. The next seven days were unsettled with showers, thundery at times and some more persistent rain, and maximum temperatures typically 18°. A couple of dry, sunny days followed before unsettled conditions returned until the 20<sup>th</sup>. Dry, sunny days from 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> (21°) were followed by a very wet last week of the month and temperatures of only 15°. Red Kite and Hobby were again recorded in the area, but Cuckoos had already left us to return to Africa by the end of the month. Our evening walk took us to Withnell Nature Reserve, which had avoided the thunderstorm which had just hit Chorley.

The first two days of **July** were wet and windy, followed by a few dry days with sunny spells. The 7<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> saw a lot of unsettled weather with a best temperature of 19° on the one dry day. Things picked up from the 16<sup>th</sup> with temperatures rising to an impressive 32° on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Needless to say, a thunderstorm followed plus more unsettled weather for the last 10 days, although the 31<sup>st</sup> was dry with good sunny spells but a cooler 17°. Painted Ladies were a bright spot in an otherwise poor year for butterflies. Our evening walk took us to Cuerden Valley Park.

**August** began unsettled with showers and wind at times. The 6<sup>th</sup> was warm (22°) and sunny. The 7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> saw more unsettled weather, wet and windy at times, with a high of 19°. The 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> were warm and sunny with a maximum of 24° for four consecutive days. The 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> were very wet with 25 mm rain falling on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, but then the 23<sup>rd</sup> was hot (26°) and sunny! The unsettled weather then continued to the end of the month with a violent thunderstorm on the 28<sup>th</sup>, but a fine sunny day on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Best temperature was 21° on the 27<sup>th</sup>. 5 Common Scoter dropped into Belmont Reservoir and Marsh Harrier, Hen Harrier and Osprey all passed through during a purple patch for the site. Red Kite and Hobby were also recorded in the area. Our evening walk took us to Worthington Lakes.

The first week of **September** continued with the unsettled theme, but the 7<sup>th</sup> was warm (24°) and humid. The second week was showery and windy at first before becoming warm and sunny with 24° reached on 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>. The third week remained mainly dry with sunny spells but cooler with a maximum of 18°. The fourth week was unsettled and breezy with a maximum of 19° before two dry but cool (14°) days ended the month. A Little Egret was at Anglezarke Reservoir and Osprey and Red Kite again passed through. The first talk of the new indoor season was a return visit by John Gardner showing us "Wildlife / Wild Places".

**October** opened with a wet day on the 1<sup>st</sup> but then a period of anti-cyclonic weather set in for the next two weeks with fine sunny days but often a cool east wind. The best temperature was 17° on the 4<sup>th</sup> and just one wet day on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Heavy rain with strong winds arrived on the 16<sup>th</sup> and persisted to the 18<sup>th</sup>. High pressure re-established itself from the 19<sup>th</sup> and lasted to the 25<sup>th</sup>, but temperatures fell to 10° on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Anti-cyclonic gloom with some drizzle took over until the month ended with a warm (16°), sunny day. Hen Harrier and Red Kite again passed through, and Grey Plover and Black Redstart were among the scarcer birds recorded. David Winnard gave us another excellent talk – this time on "Greater Manchester's Hidden Wildlife". Our field trip took the form of a Fungal Foray at White Coppice.

The high pressure continued into **November** with the first frost (-1°) of autumn on the 2<sup>nd</sup> with further frosts on 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> and rain on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. The best temperature was 10° on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the lowest maximum was 6° on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. The weather was unsettled from 12<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> with frequent heavy, squally showers and a covering of wet snow on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The best temperature was 13° on the 15<sup>th</sup>, which was the only fine day in the spell. The 21<sup>st</sup> was a shocking day with strong winds and heavy rain throughout as we caught the edge of winter storm Angus. The period from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> was dominated by high pressure with four days of frost including -4° on the 26<sup>th</sup>, plenty of sunshine, but a high of only 9°. Both Great and Little Egret were recorded, plus a Yellow-browed Warbler at Euxton and the first Waxwing of the winter in Steeley Lane. Tim Melling gave us an excellent talk on "Wildlife of the Pennines", which fitted in nicely with the announcement that the West Pennine Moors had been notified as a SSSI by Natural England. Our field trip was a visit to Knott End.

High pressure continued into **December** for a few days with frost at -1° on two of them. The weather turned milder from the 6<sup>th</sup> with 14° achieved on the 7<sup>th</sup> and

heavy rain on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Unsettled weather continued with a mixture of December gloom, fog, occasional rain and the odd fine day. The 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> were mainly dry and sunny, but storm Barbara passed through on the 23<sup>rd</sup> with strong winds and torrential rain, quickly followed by storm Connor on Christmas Day which saw an otherwise balmy 12°. The last week was mainly dry with sunny spells, frost on 3 days including -2° on the 29<sup>th</sup> and a high of 9° on 31<sup>st</sup>. The final talk of the year was "Woodland Ecology" by Irene Ridge. Little Egret and Red Kite were again recorded and Waxwings arrived in the town in numbers.

Survey work carried out during the year included the monthly wildfowl counts, the rookery census and the winter garden bird survey. Thanks to all who took part. Members have also again assisted Lancashire Wildlife Trust's Biodiverse Society surveys of Biological Heritage Sites in our area and with Willow Tit surveys.

With great sadness, we learned of the death of former chairman, Tony Stott, and former committee member, Maureen Neath. I have included some of Tony's sketches in the Mammal Report, which he produced for many years.

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. 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 and Len Poxon.

Thanks to Phil Kirk, our Secretary for 35 years, who stepped down at the AGM because of family commitments. He is irreplaceable as has been proved! We do not currently have a Secretary – secretarial functions are currently being shared around the Committee. If any member feels they could fulfil the role of Secretary, please let us know.

The committee at the end of 2016 was as follows:-

Chairman	Keith Woan	80, Carleton Road, Chorley Tel 01257 278759
Treasurer	Carol Thistlethwaite	63, Earlsway, Euxton Tel 01257 275233
Committee:	David Beattie John Howlett Phil Kirk Len Poxon Lydia Rose Neil Southworth Nora West	

## **FLORA REPORT**

The main botanical focus for the Society for the past couple of years has been in assisting Lancashire Wildlife Trust's Biodiverse Society reviews of Biological Heritage Sites within the Chorley area. 2015 saw Duxbury Woods, Healey Nab, Yarrow Valley Park and a site at White Coppice surveyed. In 2016, we surveyed Astley Park and Tan House Valley at Great Knowley.

The species recorded in Astley Park on 28<sup>th</sup> April were:-

garlic mustard, dogs mercury, daisy, nettle, bluebell, ivy, lesser celandine, dandelion, broad dock, common sorrell, himalayan/indian balsam, cleavers, hairy bittercress, ribwort and greater plantains, ladies smock, speedwells(common,lilac ivy leaved,slender,wood,brooklime), pignut, cow parsley, hogweed, wood anemone, wood sorrell, giant and wood horsetails, marsh marigold, bramble, flag iris, opposite leaved golden saxifrage, red campion, wood avens, bistort, enchanters nightshade, herb robert, ramsons, butterbur, angelica, creeping and meadow buttercup, raspberry, gooseberry, rosebay willowherb, common duckweed, broadleaved pondweed, gypsywort, meadowsweet, moschatel, primrose, honeysuckle, yellow archangel(silvery leaved hybrid), early dog violet, fringe cups, italian lords and ladies, forget-me-not

The Tan House Valley survey on 26<sup>th</sup> May produced:-

In flower:- herb bennet/wood avens, creeping buttercup, bluebell, ladies mantle, gorse, common sorrel, wood forget-me-not, tormentil, wavy bittercress, ladies smock, lesser trefoil, variegated yellow archangel, welsh poppy, germander speedwell, ribwort plantain, mouse ear, birds foot trefoil, red campion, white dead nettle, pignut (in profusion), ragged robin, dandelion, daisy, fringe cups, raspberry, russian compfrey hemlock water dropwort,  
Present but not flowering:- cleavers, bramble agg, nettle, dock, marsh thistle, honeysuckle, enchanters nightshade, brooklime, groundsel, bindweed, devils bit scabious, hogweed, willow herb, knapweed, round leaved plantain, bush vetch, silverweed, tufted vetch, himalayan.balsam

## **FUNGI REPORT**

January, whilst rather wet to begin with was a good start to the year for fungi with several species normally associated with autumn still having fruiting bodies, with specimens of Weeping Widow (*Lacrymaria lacrymabunda*), Orange Peel fungus (*Aleuria aurantia*) and Clustered Brittlestem (*Psathyrella multipedata*) being recorded in Chorley Cemetery until the frosts of mid January put an end to them.

As Spring progressed the hardier species came into their own with specimens of Velvet Shank (*Flammulina velutipes*), being noted along Syd Brook in Eccleston, Great Knowley Woods, Yarrow Valley Park, Eyes Lane Bretherton and Croston Moss. Scarlet Elfcap (*Scroscypha austriaca*) was seen in Yarrow Valley Park, Cuerden Valley Park and Great Knowley Woods, but the best place to see this fungus is Withnell Fold Nature Reserve. Spring also saw a record of Glistening Inkcap (*Coprinellus micaceus*) in a hollow trunk in Yarrow Valley Park and Jelly Ear fungus (*Auricularia auricular-judae*) in Great Knowley Woods, along Syd

Brook and Croston Moss. This year the summer months have been unusually dry and consequently have not produced the conditions that fungi prefer. However, a total of 27 species were recorded including such less common species as Fused Tooth (*Phellodon confluens*) and Bruising Webcap (*Cortinarius purpurascens*), both in Chorley Cemetery, with the outstanding fungus for the Summer months undoubtedly being a specimen of Silky Rosegill (*Volvariella bombycina*) seen on an Ash tree along the Anglezarke trail. The late autumn and early winter months proved to be a better period for fungi than the early autumn, although the frosts in November soon cut the numbers down.

The society's annual fungal foray on 22<sup>nd</sup> October was well attended with 12 members and guests enjoying an amble at White Coppice from the cricket ground to the Goit and back via the Lowe. In all 47 species were positively identified with several other lbj's proving that identifying fungi is no easy task. Highlights were the usual display of waxcaps on the cricket field, with Golden Waxcap (*Hygrocybe chlorophana*), Meadow Waxcap (*Hygrocybe pratensis*), Slimy Waxcap (*Hygrocybe irrigata*), Honey Waxcap (*Hygrocybe reidii*) and a single specimen of Parrot Waxcap (*Gliophorus pssitacinus*) ably supported by a number of pinkgills, Star Pinkgill (*Entoloma confederum*) and Silky Pinkgill (*Entoloma sericeum*) and



Earthy Powdercap (*Cystoderma amianthum*). The outstanding find though was a Powdercap Strangler (*Squamanita paradoxa*) which is a fungus that is parasitic on the Earthy Powdercap, a very uncommon find and a first for the CDNHS area. Along the woods adjacent to the Goit were several common woodland species including Common Earthball (*Scleroderma citrinum*), Common Cavalier (*Melanoleuca polioleuca*) Oakbug Mikcap (*Lactarius quietus*) and some not quite so common such as the Blackfoot Polypore (*Polyporus leptcephalus*), Shaggy Scalycap (*Pholiota squarrosa*), Variable Webcap (*Cortinarius anomalus*) and a golden

coloured fungi, which was either Golden Bootleg or Spectacular Rustgill.

Elsewhere in the CDNHS area a total of 25 further species were seen and identified including less common species such as Yellowing Knight (*Tricholoma scalpturatum*) in Chorley Cemetery, Porcelain Fungus (*Oudemansiella mucida*) on Slacks Lane Heath Charnock, Orange Birch Bolete (*Leccinum versipelle*) and Ochre Brittlegill (*Russula ochroleuca*) adjacent the Goit at White Coppice, Wood Woolyfoot (*Gymnopus peronatus*) in Yarrow Valley Park, Olive Oysterling (*Sarcomyxa cogniz*) at Great Knowley woods and a Pale Waxcap (*Hygrocybe pratensis pallida*) was noted at White Coppice cricket field.

Throughout the report I have used the officially recognized 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:

Joyce Riley, Tony Dunn, Dave Russell, Peter Krischkiw, Neil Southworth, Phil Kirk, Chris and Tony Johnson, Len Poxon, Peter Ross and Nora West.

Apologies to anyone I may have missed.

**Leonard Poxon**



# INVERTEBRATE REPORT

## LEPIDOPTERA

### Moth Species:

No new species were added to the local list in 2016. The Mother Shipton was new in 2015 and found again in 2016 near Belmont.

### Butterfly Species:

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

As usual the high count came from Belmont, but numbers were lower than in previous years. The count was 25 insects on 31<sup>st</sup> July. Overall the flight period was 24<sup>th</sup> June until 17<sup>th</sup> August. Good counts (20) were also made at Great Knowley.

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

As with the Small Skipper, numbers were down compared with previous years. Low numbers were reported at 8 sites between 5<sup>th</sup> June and 5<sup>th</sup> August. The peak activity was in the month of June, with a maximum of 6 insects at Adlington on 20<sup>th</sup> June.

#### Clouded Yellow (*Colias croceus*)

No records for this migrant in 2016.

#### Brimstone (*Goepteryx rhamni*)

There were no reports of ovipositing or larval activity. There was a curious pattern to the records during 2016. Insects were seen regularly in late April and May. Records of 1's and 2's were received in this period from several sites spread over the whole area. In June and July records came solely from the Belmont area (again only 1's or 2's). In August and October we had single records from Croston and Mawdesley. The first date was April 13<sup>th</sup> (Cuerden) and the latest the 9<sup>th</sup> of October (Croston Moss).

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

Low numbers were reported in spring between 20<sup>th</sup> April and 5<sup>th</sup> June. The next generation fared better with a high count of 50 at Great Knowley on 6<sup>th</sup> August and good numbers reported from Mawdesley, Croston and Blainscough Fields. The last date was 6<sup>th</sup> October (Chorley).

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

Numbers and flight periods paralleled almost exactly with the Large White. The high count was 50 at Great Knowley on 6<sup>th</sup> August. First date was 20<sup>th</sup> April and the last was the 9<sup>th</sup> October.

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

The maximum count was 20 at Belmont on June 5<sup>th</sup>. This was also the last date for the spring generation (20<sup>th</sup> April to 5<sup>th</sup> June). The summer generation flew between 18<sup>th</sup> July and 18<sup>th</sup> September with good numbers reported from Mawdesley and Croston Mosses and from Blainscough Fields.

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

This year the flight period was from April 17<sup>th</sup> (Croston) until June 7<sup>th</sup> (Cuerden). Between 10 and 20 insects were at Withnell Fold on May 8<sup>th</sup> and 15 were counted at Belmont on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Well Lane, Brinscall also proved to be a popular location for the species.

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

Recorded more often than in 2015, but the maximum count was still only a paltry 5 insects (White Coppice 12<sup>th</sup> May and at Belmont on 14<sup>th</sup> May). Other sites were Healey Nab (1 on 25<sup>th</sup> May) and Dean Black Brook Wood (2 on 16<sup>th</sup> August).

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

The new site at Roddlesworth which was found in 2015 was confirmed this year with 3 seen on 17<sup>th</sup> August. The regular sites in Belmont produced counts of 24 on 15<sup>th</sup> August and 13 the following day. Insects were also seen at sites in Coppull, Duxbury, Charnock Richard and Anglezarke with an overall flight period from 20<sup>th</sup> July until 18<sup>th</sup> August.

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

I am grateful for excellent records submitted by two local recorders. They found 25 eggs at a site in the Anglezarke area (March). In July and August they located adults at 9 sites with a maximum count of 5 at Duxbury on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. Overall the adult flight period was from 3<sup>rd</sup> July until the 7<sup>th</sup> of August.

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

Not a great year for this species. We received only 4 records in the spring between 12<sup>th</sup> May and 5<sup>th</sup> June. The later generation was also poorly represented with only 3 sightings on 29<sup>th</sup> August, 13<sup>th</sup> September and 6<sup>th</sup> October. The maximum count was 3 at Belmont on 29<sup>th</sup> August.

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

2016 was the worst year for some time for this species. Four sightings in early summer included a maximum count of 4 at Wymott on 28<sup>th</sup> May. The later generation was represented by a paltry 2 sightings, Hic Bibi on 15<sup>th</sup> August and Ellerbeck on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

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

This species fared better than the Common Blue. Singles were seen at 5 sites between 6<sup>th</sup> May and 10<sup>th</sup> June. Later it was seen between 31<sup>st</sup> July and 13<sup>th</sup> September (both in an Euxton garden).



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

As in 2015, there were no records of insects surviving hibernation and emerging early in the year. From 1<sup>st</sup> June (Croston) to 1<sup>st</sup> November (Chorley) it was seen in small numbers at many locations. There were no high numbers, the greatest being 6 at Pilling Lane on 10<sup>th</sup> September and the same number at Belmont on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

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

Although marginally fewer records were received than in 2015, numbers of insects seen were perhaps greater. There were several reports of 4 or more insects at sites in the west of the area – Bretherton, Croston and Mawdesley areas seemed to be favoured. In all records were received between 4<sup>th</sup> June (Belmont) and 20<sup>th</sup> September (Euxton).

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

This species emerged from its winter hibernation on 13<sup>th</sup> March (Eccleston and Chorley Town Centre) and was present until 17<sup>th</sup> December, when a single was flying around a member's living room – presumably disturbed from hibernation. The high count was only 20 – at Croston on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

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

The first butterfly of the year was a Peacock found at Euxton on January 24<sup>th</sup>. That was an exception – presumably disturbed from its winter torpor. The real emergence began on 13<sup>th</sup> March with 2 being seen at Birkacre. The spring generation was then in evidence until 28<sup>th</sup> May, with a high count of 12 at Croston on 20<sup>th</sup> April. The later generation flew until 10<sup>th</sup> September (Belmont) with a high count of 200 estimated at Mawdesley Moss on 6<sup>th</sup> August.

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

The spring emergence started on 17<sup>th</sup> March (Cuerden) and singles were seen until 4<sup>th</sup> May (White Coppice) with a report of 2 at Birkacre on 20<sup>th</sup> April. The summer generation was present from 13<sup>th</sup> July (Euxton) until 9<sup>th</sup> October (Chorley). There were no large numbers reported. The best was 4 at Belmont on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

### **Dark Green Fritillary** (*Argynnis aglaja*)

A single insect was seen in a sheltered spot in an Adlington garden on 3<sup>rd</sup> August after a period of strong winds. This is only the fourth record for the area. The previous two were both on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2013, so maybe early August is a time when they like to move around a bit.

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

The Speckled Wood was once more the most frequently reported butterfly. It was present in the area from 9<sup>th</sup> April (Withnell Fold) until 16<sup>th</sup> October (Eccleston). The high count was 50 on Anglezarke Moor on 16<sup>th</sup> August.

**Wall Brown** (*Lassiommatata megera*)

Three records received in 2016. An increase of 1 on 2015! Singles were seen at Croston Moss on 6<sup>th</sup> August and at Eyes Lane Bretherton on 12<sup>th</sup> August. The latter site held 2 on August 14<sup>th</sup>. Hardly earth shattering numbers, but this is a species doing very badly everywhere and is well worth keeping on your watch list.



**Gatekeeper** (*Pyronia tithonus*)

The flight period was from 17<sup>th</sup> July (Rawlinson Lane) until 1<sup>st</sup> September (Ellerbeck). The high count was 50 at Great Knowley on 28<sup>th</sup> July.

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

Numbers may have been a bit down on previous years, but this species is still common in all suitable habitats. Counts of 60 at Belmont on 31<sup>st</sup> July and 40 at Cuerden on 19<sup>th</sup> July were the greatest numbers. The overall flight period was 16<sup>th</sup> June until 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

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

Reported from 5 sites on the higher ground to the east of the reservoirs. It was seen at Belmont (max 12 on 12<sup>th</sup> June), Great Hill and Roddlesworth, but the high counts were of 57 at Dean Black Brook on 6<sup>th</sup> June and of 19 at the same site on 25<sup>th</sup> June, which was its last record for the year.

**Ringlet** (*Aphantopus hyperantus*)

Sadly there were no reports of the Ringlet in 2016.

**ODONATA**

Species recorded this year were:

**ZYGOPTERA** (Damselflies)

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

The species was reported from 8 sites this year with a high count of 70 at Cuerden on 7<sup>th</sup> June. The other good count was from Lower Healey Lodges where 20 were found on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. The flight period was 24<sup>th</sup> May until 5<sup>th</sup> August.

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

This species was reported from Hic Bibi and Cuerden, but overwhelmingly the greatest numbers were seen in the Belmont area. A massive count of 650 was the estimate on 5<sup>th</sup> August with numbers remaining high for two weeks thereafter. Overall the flight period was 3<sup>rd</sup> July (Hic Bibi) until 9<sup>th</sup> October (Belmont).

**Large Red Damselfly** (*Pyrrosoma nymphula*)

This is generally the earliest of our Odonata species to emerge. This year the first date was 8<sup>th</sup> May. 15 were at the pond near Burgh Hall on 12<sup>th</sup> May, but the

largest numbers were at Belmont where the peak was 40 on 5<sup>th</sup> June. The last record was at Lower Burgh Meadows on 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

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

Chorley Cemetery and Birkacre produced good numbers of this species, but the highest counts were at Ulmes Walton Brickpit, where 100 were estimated on 24<sup>th</sup> June. The flight period was from 21<sup>st</sup> May until 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

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

Seemingly less numerous than in 2015, as the high count was only 42 at Belmont on 3<sup>rd</sup> July compared with 140 on the same date the previous year. This is the most numerous of our local blue damsels. The flight period was 28<sup>th</sup> May until 16<sup>th</sup> August.

#### **Common Blue Damselfly** (*Enallagma cyathigerum*)

High counts of 20 at Belmont on 2<sup>nd</sup> July and Birkacre on 23<sup>rd</sup> July were the best for the year. The flight period was 29<sup>th</sup> May (Hic Bibi) until 16<sup>th</sup> August (Belmont).

### **ANISOPTERA** (Dragonflies)

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

This species was reported from only 4 sites in 2016. These were Hic Bibi, Kem Mill, Withnell Fold and Belmont. The flight period was 23<sup>rd</sup> June until 17<sup>th</sup> September.

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

As usual, this species was the most often recorded of the Odonata species. It occurs all over the area with Birkacre Top Lodge producing the best count of 10 insects. Mating and/or egg laying was reported at several sites including Great Hill, Lower Burgh Meadows and Hic Bibi. The flight period was 22<sup>nd</sup> June until 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

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

Hic Bibi and Lower Healey Lodges were the only sites for this species away from the West Pennine Moors. A single was seen at Great Hill on 20<sup>th</sup> September, but Belmont produced most records including the high count of 12 on 15<sup>th</sup> August. The first date was 31<sup>st</sup> July and the last was 2<sup>nd</sup> October (both Belmont).

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

Seen at 3 sites between 6<sup>th</sup> August and 13<sup>th</sup> September. As many as 6 were counted at Anglezarke on 16<sup>th</sup> August. Additionally a larva was identified at Cuerden on 21<sup>st</sup> of May.

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

Singles were seen at 6 sites between 7<sup>th</sup> June (Cuerden) and 23<sup>rd</sup> August (Lower Burgh Meadows). There were no reports of mated pairs or ovipositing.

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

The highest count this year was 12 at Cuerden on 7<sup>th</sup> June. Overall the flight period was 28<sup>th</sup> May until 31<sup>st</sup> July. It was seen at a total of 10 sites.

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

Seen at 7 sites between 14<sup>th</sup> May and 14<sup>th</sup> August. The maximum count was 3 males and 1 female at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 5<sup>th</sup> June.

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

Last year, 2015, produced the first records for the species since 2009. It was seen again locally in 2016. This time it appeared at Pump House Lane, Ulnes Walton on 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

**Ruddy Darter** (*Sympetrum sanguinum*)

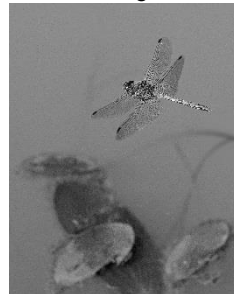
A single seen at Hic Bibi on 7<sup>th</sup> September was the first record since 2012, which in turn was the first since 2004. So this is quite an uncommon species locally. As it could fairly easily be confused with the slightly larger Common Darter, it may in fact be more frequent than we think!

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

Much more localized than the next species, the Black Darter can be numerous where it occurs. Small numbers occur at Hic Bibi and at Ellerbeck. Some small ponds on the moors normally have a pair or two, but Belmont holds huge numbers. 210 were counted on 15<sup>th</sup> August. The flight period was from 5<sup>th</sup> August until 17<sup>th</sup> October (both at Belmont).

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

Our most widespread Darter, it occurs in most suitable parts of the area. A count of 23 was made at Belmont on 14<sup>th</sup> September. Mating and/or ovipositing was reported at several sites. The flight period was 5<sup>th</sup> June until 6<sup>th</sup> October.



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

I Ball, D Beattie, D Beevers, J Catterall, J Cobham, D Downing, T Dunn, P Gravett, L Griffiths, K Haydock, P Hodson, J Howlett, R Hoyle, A Johnson, C Johnson, P Krischkiw, E Langrish, G Lilley, D S Martin, S J Martin, J Mills, L Poxon, R W Rhodes, J Riley, L Rose, P. Ross, N Root, P Rowlands, N Southworth, N West, P West, T West, P Whittaker, and I Whittle.

My apologies to anyone I may have missed.

**Phil Kirk**

# Flight periods of Butterfly species recorded in area during 2016

	Jan				Feb				Mar				Apr				May				Jun				Jul				Aug				Sep				Oct				Nov				Dec			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				
Small Skipper																																																
Large Skipper																																																
Brimstone																																																
Large White																																																
Small White																																																
Green Veined White																																																
Orange Tip																																																
Green Hairstreak																																																
Purple Hairstreak																																																
White-Letter Hairstreak																																																
Small Copper																																																
Common Blue																																																
Holly Blue																																																
Red Admiral																																																
Painted Lady																																																
Small Tortoiseshell																																																
The Peacock																																																
The Comma																																																
Dark Green Frillary																																																
Speckled Wood																																																
The Wall																																																
The Gatekeeper																																																
Meadow Brown																																																
Small Heath																																																

**Flight periods of Dragonfly and Damselfly species recorded in area during 2016**

	Jan				Feb				Mar				Apr				May				Jun				Jul				Aug				Sep				Oct				Nov				Dec			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				
<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>																																																
<i>Lestes sponsa</i>																																																
<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>																	X	X	X	X																												
<i>Ischnura elegans</i>																	X	X	X	X																												
<i>Coenagrion puella</i>																	X	X	X	X																												
<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																									
<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>																					X	X	X																									
<i>Aeshna grandis</i>																				X	X	X	X																									
<i>Aeshna juncea</i>																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																									
<i>Aesna mixta</i>																																																
<i>Anax imperator</i>																	X	X	X	X	X																											
<i>Libellula depressa</i>																	X																															
<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>																	X	X	X	X																												
<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>																				X																												
<i>Simpetrum sanguineum</i>																																																
<i>Sympetrum danae</i>																																																
<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																									



## **BIRD REPORT**

### **Introduction**

A total of 159 species including escapes was recorded during the year, exactly the same number as last year. Amongst them were our first Yellow-browed Warblers, a Firecrest, Black Redstart, a good mixture of raptors, Great and Little Egret and one or 2 Quail. On the negative side, no record was received again of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

**Neil Southworth (Records Secretary)**

### **Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) *Uncommon but increasing breeding bird***

Three were on Croston Moss in the company of Whoopers from 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> January. Two were on Belmont reservoir on 1<sup>st</sup> February. Three were seen on the canal at Withnell Fold on 7<sup>th</sup> February and another two were on Croston Moss on the same day. Sadly, two of the juvenile Mute Swans in Yarrow Valley Park were killed in flying accidents during February. A young bird was noted on Heapey Lodges on 12<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February and 14<sup>th</sup> March. On 26<sup>th</sup> February, a pair were briefly on Anglezarke reservoir and again on 15<sup>th</sup> March.

Sightings in April other than usual residents included 7 on Bretherton Eyes (3<sup>rd</sup>), one at Buckshaw Village (4<sup>th</sup>) and 2 in Eccleston (9<sup>th</sup>). The pair in Astley Park had 2 young by 30<sup>th</sup> May, although anecdotal evidence suggests there may have been 4 originally. This very quickly became one, but fortunately it has survived to maturity.



A female arrived on Big Lodge in Yarrow Valley Park around 3<sup>rd</sup> September, and was apparently welcomed by the widowed male as they were both still together at the year end.

Three Mute Swans were at Lower Healey on the 1<sup>st</sup> October but did not stay, 4 were on Croston Moss on 9<sup>th</sup>, while the resident family at Astley Park and the newly formed pair at Yarrow Valley Park remained throughout. On 15<sup>th</sup> October, a pair flew in over Healey Nab onto Anglezarke reservoir.

One arrived on Common Bank Lodge around 18<sup>th</sup> November and remained there until the end of the year. 4 were at Eccleston on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and a juvenile was on Heapey Lodges from the 27<sup>th</sup>.

4 were with the whooper swan flock on Croston Moss on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December and another 2 were on Croston Twin Lakes on the same day.

**Whooper Swan** (*Cygnus cygnus*)  
***Occasional winter visitor***

Five were on Croston Moss from 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> January, and a second-hand report was received of a flock of around 100 there on the 12<sup>th</sup>. One was on Belmont Reservoir on 24<sup>th</sup> January and 20 were there on 28<sup>th</sup> February.

A flock of 40 arrived at Lower Rivington Reservoir from an easterly direction during the WeBs count on 13<sup>th</sup> March, but only 5 dropped down onto the water. with the remainder flying on in a northerly direction. A flock of 30+ flying north west over Belmont on the same day could have been the same birds.

The first back in autumn were 4 on Anglezarke Reservoir on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Two were on Belmont Reservoir on 21<sup>st</sup> October. A very large flock of 250 was seen flying west over Bretherton on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and one of 26 birds was over Coppull on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

In November, birds were seen or heard flying over Belmont on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. A flock of 24 flew east over Coppull on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 13 were over Ecclestone on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. 35 were feeding on Croston Finney on the 5<sup>th</sup>, increasing to 57 by the 22<sup>nd</sup>. 5 were on Mawdesley Moss on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Whooper Swans continued to grace Croston Moss in December with the flock increasing from 70 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 108 by the 11<sup>th</sup>. Sadly, there were a couple of dead birds amongst them.

**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.***

On 1<sup>st</sup> January, a skein of 120 flew west over High Bullough Reservoir. A few skeins were noted over Bretherton Eyes on 9<sup>th</sup> January, when 130 also flew west northwest over Belmont Reservoir. 250 were feeding on Croston Moss on 13<sup>th</sup> January, but these were down to 60 by 24<sup>th</sup> February. Several skeins of around 100 birds were noted returning from the east during February, including over Belmont Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. No record was received in March.

30 geese in two small skeins over Croston on 16<sup>th</sup> September were the first back in autumn. 30 were seen over Belmont on the 21<sup>st</sup>. 11 were seen feeding on Croston Moss on 26<sup>th</sup> September. Geese continued to arrive in numbers in October with many skeins reported. On the 9<sup>th</sup> a skein of 250 flew SE over Jepsons Clough Rivington, with skeins going over on 21<sup>st</sup> of 200 and 80, and on 25<sup>th</sup> two skeins of 150 and 300 flew west. 350 flew south over Belmont on the 20<sup>th</sup>. On 31<sup>st</sup> a skein of 220 over Yarrow reservoir appeared to show some indecision and ultimately went off NE. 500 feeding on Croston Moss on the 9<sup>th</sup> had increased to 3,000 by the 23<sup>rd</sup>, with similar numbers also feeding on Mawdesley Moss.

Skeins continued to pass over in November, with an estimated 1000 hard to count in a tight pack flying east over Jepsons Clough Rivington. Up to 2000 birds continued to feed on Mawdesley Moss throughout November and December. On the 10<sup>th</sup> December, there seemed to be a movement to the south-east with several skeins of up to 100 birds being noted over Chorley and Eccleston. Skeins of 850+ also passed south west over Clayton Green on the same date, and an estimated 500 were over Jepsons Clough Rivington, going south east early in the morning, but in the afternoon 800 were noted over the same site going west and 140 were seen flying west over Belmont!

**Greylag Goose** (*Anser anser*)  
**Scarce feral species**

On 28<sup>th</sup> February 15 were in a field by Upper Rivington Reservoir. 27 were on Upper Rivington Reservoir on 13<sup>th</sup> March, increasing to 34 by the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Increasing around Belmont with up to 19 birds in the area in the spring. Up to 6 were regular at Belmont Reservoir throughout the year with two nesting attempts noted - one brood of 5 young successfully fledged plus one bird bred with a feral Barnacle Goose but nest (C4) was unsuccessful.

4 pairs bred at Upper Rivington and Anglezarke reservoirs fledging 15 young. 41 birds plus young were on Upper Rivington Reservoir on 4<sup>th</sup> July. The July moulting flock of 53 on Upper Rivington & Anglezarke Resrs. indicated a stabilisation of numbers after several years of increase (59 in 2015, 39 in 2014, 20 in 2013 & 17 in 2012).

**Greater Canada Goose** (*Branta canadensis*)  
**Common resident**

A pair in Yarrow Valley Park had three young in May but these quickly reduced to two. Six pairs at Withnell Fold had 28 young between them during June. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 18 were on Yarrow reservoir including a pair with 3 young. On 28<sup>th</sup>, a pair with 3 young was on High Bullough Reservoir. Only 8 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir with one pair fledging Y5. Ongoing control measures at Belmont resulted in 47 eggs 'pricked' & 14 adults shot in 2016.

Monthly maxima at Belmont Reservoir :

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
28	32	59	30	24	68	63	43	89	32	20	29

Increasing numbers of pairs/birds are holding territories (some nesting) on the moorland plateaux; with 4 pairs (2 nests located) on Anglezarke Moor (up to 340m asl), and 2 pairs on Withnell Moor. July moulting flock totals:

Belmont Reservoir	63
Anglezarke Reservoir	109
U/L Rivington/Yarrow/HB Resrs.	14

**Barnacle Goose** (*Branta leucopsis*)

***Rare visitor and feral species***

One feral bird was at Belmont Reservoir throughout the year. This bird paired with a Greylag Goose and nested at the reservoir but nest (C4) was unsuccessful.

**Shelduck** (*Tadorna tadorna*)

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

A count of 80 was made on the floods on Bretherton Eyes on 9<sup>th</sup> January, but these had reduced to 8 by 20<sup>th</sup> February. One was at Belmont Reservoir on 26<sup>th</sup> March. In April, 4 were at Ulnes Walton (2<sup>nd</sup>), and 10 were on Croston Moss (4<sup>th</sup>).

A pair was at Withnell Fold flashes on 8<sup>th</sup> May.

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

***Uncommon feral resident and escapee***

Three were at Arley nature reserve on 10<sup>th</sup> January, and again on 18<sup>th</sup> March. Pairs were on the Douglas at Croston on 6<sup>th</sup> March, in Yarrow Valley Park (12<sup>th</sup>) and 4 pairs were on ponds at Croston (22<sup>nd</sup>). Pairs were again noted during April at Arley Nature Reserve and at Croston.

Four pairs bred at Arley nature reserve with two females using nest boxes.

A pair at Eccleston was noted with 8 young on 20<sup>th</sup> June, and a female with 3 young was on Syd Brook, Eccleston on 20<sup>th</sup> July, but just 2 were seen on 11<sup>th</sup> August. 10 were on Adlington Reservoir on 11<sup>th</sup> August and 5 juveniles were on the Yarrow at Eccleston on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

A male was on Common Bank lodge on 16<sup>th</sup> October.

**Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*)

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

Up to 200 were on the floods at Bretherton Eyes on the 9<sup>th</sup> January, an exceptional count for the Chorley area, but only ones and twos were seen in February.

Two were on a large private pond at Belmont between 10<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October. 12 were on Anglezarke Reservoir on 28<sup>th</sup> October, and 9 were there on 13<sup>th</sup> November.

**Gadwall** (*Anas strepera*)

***Scarce visitor***

At least one pair was on the floods at Bretherton Eyes on 9<sup>th</sup> January. Another pair was on Adlington reservoir on 11<sup>th</sup> February. A pair was at Withnell Fold flash on 9<sup>th</sup> April and remained at the site until at least 15<sup>th</sup> May.

A male was on Cuerden Valley Park lake on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. A count of 34 on Anglezarke Reservoir on 13<sup>th</sup> November was exceptional for the area. A pair was on Croston Twin Lakes on the 30<sup>th</sup> December.

**Teal** (*Anas crecca*)

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

Around 300 were on the floods at Bretherton Eyes on 9<sup>th</sup> January. Numbers at Withnell Fold flashes had built up to 30 by 26<sup>th</sup> February. March counts included 20 on the Douglas at Coston (1<sup>st</sup>), and 25 at Withnell Fold (25<sup>th</sup>), with 20 still there on 9<sup>th</sup> April.

One pair bred successfully at Belmont Reservoir fledging 5 young.

In September, birds had started to return with numbers on Anglezarke Reservoir building up to 15 by the 24<sup>th</sup>, singles arriving at Lower Healey and Yarrow Valley Park (17<sup>th</sup>) and 3 at Withnell Fold (24<sup>th</sup>). Numbers on Anglezarke Reservoir had increased to 43 by 7<sup>th</sup> October and at Withnell Fold to 12 by the 8<sup>th</sup>. 40 were on Upper Rivington Reservoir on 25<sup>th</sup> November.

Monthly maxima at Belmont Reservoir. :

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
140	85	70	17	Breeding birds			20	80	260	205	245

Wintering Teal numbers at Belmont Reservoir were lower in the first winter period, possibly in response to the widespread flooding throughout north-west England providing ideal conditions elsewhere; but had returned to more 'normal' levels in the second winter period. Good numbers of Teal reported by the gamekeeper during duck-shoots at Belmont with 200+ on 28<sup>th</sup> December including 120 over one moorland pool (at 320m asl).

**Mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

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

A female with 16 ducklings was on the Douglas at Mawdesley on 31<sup>st</sup> March, and another had 11 chicks at Bretherton on 16<sup>th</sup> April. One in Yarrow Valley Park had 7 chicks on 12<sup>th</sup> May. Another at Heapey Lodges had 4 on 13<sup>th</sup> July.

At Belmont Reservoir, the breeding population was estimated at 30+ nesting females with 40 males present during June with later 24 females with broods totalling 143 young seen. Two moorland nests were found (at 340 & 350m asl) on Belmont Moor.

Monthly maxima at Belmont Resr. :

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
209	100	58	Breeding birds				80	91	120	232*	218

\* - The 232 present on 27<sup>th</sup> November was a new site record count surpassing the 211 there on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

The November WeBS count realised an aggregated total of 750 Mallard on six waters around Belmont. 72 on Upper Rivington Reservoir on 4<sup>th</sup> November was an unusually high count for the site.

**Pintail** (*Anas acuta*)  
***Rare winter visitor***

Ten were on the flooded fields at Bretherton Eyes on 9<sup>th</sup> January, a good count for a species which is normally less than annual in the Chorley area. Two were on Croston Twin Lakes on 30<sup>th</sup> January.



**Shoveler** (*Anas clypeata*)  
***Scarce winter visitor***

One was on Belmont Reservoir on 1<sup>st</sup> January. A pair was on the floods at Bretherton Eyes on 9<sup>th</sup> January and 5 were on Anglezarke Reservoir on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

One was on Anglezarke reservoir on 26<sup>th</sup> November.

**Pochard** (*Aythya ferina*)  
***Increasingly scarce winter visitor and passage migrant***

The regular single male was at the north end of Anglezarke Reservoir on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

**Tufted Duck** (*Aythya fuligula*)  
***Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Scarce breeder.***

Eight were on the lodges at Lower Healey on 13<sup>th</sup> February and 11 were on the E-shaped Pond at Bretherton on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Pairs possibly on territory were at Croston Twin Lakes and at High Bullough Reservoir in April.

On 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2 females and 3 males were below Yarrow embankment, Anglezarke reservoir and on 3<sup>rd</sup> June a pair were at the same site.

A pair at High Bullough Reservoir was noted with 5 young on 21<sup>st</sup> June, but there appeared to be only one survivor there in the company of 8 adults by August. Two pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir successfully fledging 7 & 4 young.

In September, 8 were at Lower Healey (17<sup>th</sup>) and 6 were at Yarrow Valley Park (21<sup>st</sup>). The local population seems to move between Lower Healey (14 on 9<sup>th</sup> October) and High Bullough ((16 on 22<sup>nd</sup>) with a few occasionally finding their way to Yarrow Valley Park.

In December, rafts included 14 on Croston Twin Lakes (3<sup>rd</sup>), 14 at Lower Healey (10<sup>th</sup>), 6 on Yarrow Reservoir (19<sup>th</sup>) and 13 in Yarrow Valley Park (30<sup>th</sup>).

**Scaup** (*Aythya manila*)

***Rare winter visitor***

A pair was on the floods at Bretherton Eyes on 5<sup>th</sup> January.

**Common Scoter** (*Melanitta negra*)

***Vagrant***

A flock of 5 was on Belmont Reservoir on 9<sup>th</sup> August.

**Goldeneye** (*Bucephala clangula*)

***Declining winter visitor and passage migrant***

One was on the floods at Bretherton Eyes on 13<sup>th</sup> January. The WeBs count on 21<sup>st</sup> February found 2 on Heapey lodges, 2 on Anglezarke Reservoir and 4 on High Bullough Reservoir. Birds in fact were present on High Bullough Reservoir during January, February and March, with the last being 3 pairs on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

First back in autumn were 4 on High Bullough Reservoir on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December with 5 there on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Goosander** (*Mergus merganser*)

***Winter visitor in decreasing numbers***

29 were on Yarrow Reservoir on 11<sup>th</sup> January. Nine on the Douglas at Bretherton on 12<sup>th</sup> February were probably from the local breeding population, whereas the 20 on Yarrow reservoir on 12<sup>th</sup> February were probably wintering birds. March sightings included 31 on Yarrow Reservoir (7<sup>th</sup>) and 18 on a lodge at Brinscall (10<sup>th</sup>), when a pair was also in the centre of Anglezarke reservoir.

Three males on the Yarrow at Eccleston in April were possibly part of the local breeding population, and to confirm this a female was seen with 8 young on the Yarrow at Croston on a couple of occasions in May. A juvenile was on the river in Yarrow Valley Park on 24<sup>th</sup> July, a female / juvenile was on Anglezarke Reservoir on 3<sup>rd</sup> August and again on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. 5 juveniles were on the Yarrow at Eccleston on 5<sup>th</sup> August. A juvenile was on Cuerden Valley Park lake on 4<sup>th</sup> August and 29<sup>th</sup> September. Two were on Common Bank Lodge on 11<sup>th</sup> September and one was on the Douglas at Croston (18<sup>th</sup>), with two there on 9<sup>th</sup> October. Three were on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 19<sup>th</sup> October.

35 were on Yarrow Reservoir on 25<sup>th</sup> November. In December, birds were seen across the area with the best count being 12 on Yarrow Reservoir on the 18<sup>th</sup>. A female on High Bullough reservoir on 14<sup>th</sup> was an unusual record for the site. 11 in Cuerden Valley Park on the 20<sup>th</sup> was a good count for that site.

**Quail** (*Cotumix cotumix*)  
***Rare summer visitor***

One was heard calling in wheat fields at Bretherton Moss on 29<sup>th</sup> June. Two were there on 4<sup>th</sup> July and at least 3 different birds on 21<sup>st</sup> July.

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

Singles were near Belmont on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1<sup>st</sup> April and 29<sup>th</sup> August, reflecting the fact that no releases have taken place there since 2013.

A covey of 20 birds were in fields at Eccleston on 20<sup>th</sup> October. A covey of 13 was on Bretherton Eyes on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

Coveys in December included 20 on Croston Finney (3<sup>rd</sup>) and 28 on Bretherton Eyes (30<sup>th</sup>).

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

Seven territories were located in 1km<sup>2</sup> on Anglezarke Moor and 5 in 1km<sup>2</sup> on Belmont Moor in April. 69 were reported during a shoot on Belmont Moor 13<sup>th</sup> August.

A party of 8 was on Withnell Moor on 5<sup>th</sup> November and 4 were on Anglezarke Moor on the next day.

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

The species continues to be very scarce in the recording area. Belmont's only records were 3 on 29<sup>th</sup> January and one on 24<sup>th</sup> October.

A covey of 30 was noted on Croston Moss on 5<sup>th</sup> August, and a covey of 5 was noted there on 9<sup>th</sup> October.

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

A large release took place at Croston, where around 100 birds, including a white individual were seen in late October. 400+ were near Belmont on 20<sup>th</sup> November.



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

A strange record was of a Cormorant standing by a footpath at White Coppice on the 24<sup>th</sup> August. The observer was able to pass close by the bird which appeared to be quite healthy.

Birds were recorded regularly on the reservoirs throughout the year, with variable numbers at a local roost site. A record count of 89 was made on 7<sup>th</sup> March

Up to 7 were on Cuerden Valley Park lake on several dates from October to December.

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



One was briefly at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Two were at Belmont Reservoir on 18<sup>th</sup> August. One was seen at the north end of Anglezarke Reservoir on 19<sup>th</sup> September

Two records were received in November – one on Mawdesley Moss (6<sup>th</sup>) and one at Eccleston (27<sup>th</sup>). In December, birds were noted on Syd

Brook, Eccleston (6<sup>th</sup>), Cuerden Valley Park (29<sup>th</sup>) and 2 together on the Lostock at Croston on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

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

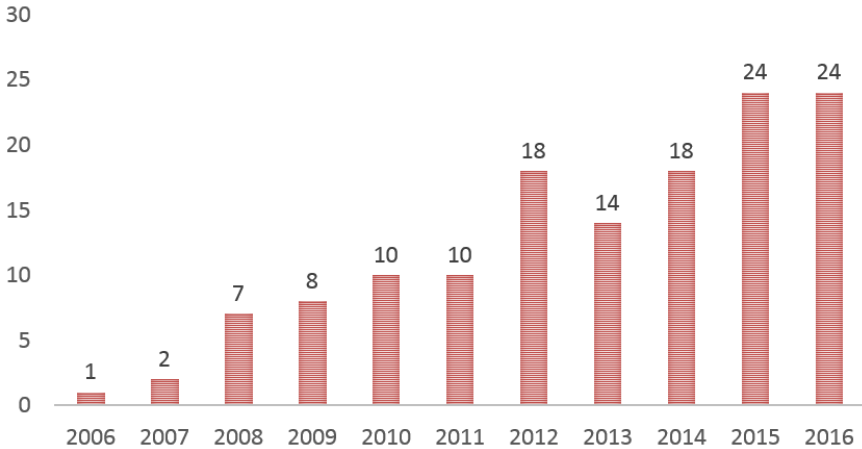
There were two sightings in November, one in the west on Bretherton Eyes (4<sup>th</sup>) and one in the east at Belmont on the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup>.

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

A pair bred in Cuerden Valley Park, raising two young.

The Rivington heronry remained stable at 24 active nests in 2016 and whilst birds were seen in trees at the second Rivington site (unoccupied since 2013) no active nests were located there.

## BREEDING PAIRS OF HERON AT RIVINGTON 2006 - 2016



Individuals were seen regularly at most water bodies throughout the year.

### **Little Grebe** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) ***Uncommon breeding bird***

A pair was on Astley Park lake during April.

A single bird was noted on Lower Healey Top Lodge on 27<sup>th</sup> August. A Little Grebe was noted on Common Bank Lodge on the 11<sup>th</sup> September but it wasn't until the 18<sup>th</sup> that a pair with 3 chicks suddenly appeared, although by 16<sup>th</sup> October there only appeared to be one young remaining. One was on Heapey No.6 lodge also on the 18<sup>th</sup> September.

One at Belmont between 4<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September was the only record from the site.

Three remained on Common Bank Lodge at least until the 18<sup>th</sup> December. Perhaps one of them relocated to Yarrow Valley Park where one was noted on the 24<sup>th</sup>. One at Eccleston Delph on the 30<sup>th</sup> was a surprise find.

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

Pairs on territory in April were noted on Anglezarke Reservoir, Croston Twin Lakes, Cuerden Valley Park and Yarrow Valley Park.

It was a better year for breeding success. The pair in Yarrow Valley Park had two young by the 3<sup>rd</sup> July, a pair at Croston Twin Lakes had 3 young (4<sup>th</sup>), a pair at

Heapey Lodges had 2 young (13<sup>th</sup>), a pair on Lower Rivington Reservoir had one small young on the back on 21<sup>st</sup> and a pair on Anglezarke Reservoir had produced a chick by the 27<sup>th</sup>. Two pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir with one of them fledging 3 young. Only one of the young at Yarrow Valley Park survived into August. Two pairs with 2 and 3 young respectively were noted at Croston Twin Lakes in August. Eight birds were noted at Belmont Reservoir on 5<sup>th</sup> August.

A pair raised two young in Cuerden Valley Park. 7 adults and 3 juveniles were on Croston Twin Lakes on the 17<sup>th</sup> August.

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

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

Nine records for the year:-

- One over Yarrow Valley Park on 26<sup>th</sup> April
- One over Ulnes Walton on 30<sup>th</sup> April
- One again over Ulnes Walton on 3<sup>rd</sup> June
- One over White Coppice on 6<sup>th</sup> June.
- One over Ecclestone on 13<sup>th</sup> August.
- One over Croston Moss on 18<sup>th</sup> September.
- One over Ecclestone on 19<sup>th</sup> October.
- One over Euxton on 11<sup>th</sup> December
- One over Ecclestone on 15<sup>th</sup> December.

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

***Scarce passage migrant***

One was seen at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton on 18<sup>th</sup> April.

A female / immature was at Belmont Reservoir from 11<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> August, and a different female / immature was there from 4<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September.

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

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

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 13<sup>th</sup> August.

An exceptional October at Belmont saw a female/immature at Belmont from 3<sup>rd</sup> onwards increasing to a minimum of 3, and possibly as many as 5, female/immatures present 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> with 2 still present on 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Sparrowhawk** (*Accipiter nisus*)

***Increasingly common resident***

Records in January came from Croston Moss, Ecclestone, Foxhole Wood, Great Knowley, and Withnell nature reserve. Birds visited a garden in Rivington

throughout the year, and were noted from 7 other areas during the year in Rivington and Anglezarke.

Birds were noted on territory at 3 locations in April, with breeding confirmed in Cuerden Valley Park.

Hunting birds were recorded at several sites in July. On 4<sup>th</sup> September, a bird was mobbed by hirundines over Jepsons Clough Rivington.

In October sightings came from Ecclestone (8<sup>th</sup>), Withnell Fold (8<sup>th</sup>), one which was robbed of its prey on Croston Moss (9<sup>th</sup>), White Coppice (14<sup>th</sup>), Knowsley embankment, Anglezarke (15<sup>th</sup>), and Coppull (19<sup>th</sup>). Up to 4 at times were seen mobbing the Hen Harriers at Belmont on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

November sightings came from across the area, including 2 in Duxbury Woods (5<sup>th</sup>), and singles at Lower Healey (6<sup>th</sup>), Croston Moss (11<sup>th</sup>), Coppull (15<sup>th</sup>) and Great Knowley (19<sup>th</sup>). In December, records were received from 7 sites.

**Buzzard** (*Buteo buteo*)  
***Fairly common resident***

Birds were recorded throughout the area in January, including 6 over Bretherton Eyes (9<sup>th</sup>) and 3 over Croston Moss (10<sup>th</sup>). February sightings came from Bretherton Eyes, High Bullough, Healey Nab and Withnell Fold.

There were numerous records from the Rivington and Anglezarke area indicating 7 possible territories.

Birds were noted on territory at a further nine locations in April, and breeding was confirmed at at least eight. Six birds were in the air together over Great Knowley on 24<sup>th</sup> May.

Three were at Withnell Fold (3<sup>rd</sup> July), 2 at White Coppice (17<sup>th</sup>) and 2 over Lower Burgh Meadow (22<sup>nd</sup>), with singles at Hic Bibi (14<sup>th</sup>), Mawdesley Moss (18<sup>th</sup>) and a juvenile at Ecclestone (21<sup>st</sup>).

August records included 4 at Ecclestone (26<sup>th</sup>) and 4 at Euxton (28<sup>th</sup>). Multiple sightings in September included 3 at Ecclestone (8<sup>th</sup>), 7 at Great Knowley (10<sup>th</sup>) and 8 at Rivington (11<sup>th</sup>). Also in September family groups were noted circling over Rivington on 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

Buzzards were seen regularly over the mosslands in October with 4 on Croston Moss on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and one which robbed a Sparrowhawk of its prey on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere, birds were seen at Lower Healey (1<sup>st</sup>), Cuerden Valley Park (3<sup>rd</sup>), Withnell Fold (8<sup>th</sup>) and Ecclestone (10<sup>th</sup>). In November, records again came from across the area with an impressive 10 over Yarrow Valley Way on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. One at Heapey Lodges on the 13<sup>th</sup> was eating prey with 3 Carrion Crows in attendance. A very pale individual was noted in Cuerden Valley Park on 19<sup>th</sup> November.

In December, birds were seen at several sites including 3 at Eccleston (4<sup>th</sup>), 5 at Belmont (11<sup>th</sup>) and 4 on Croston Moss (16<sup>th</sup>).

**Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*)  
***Regular passage migrant***

First through on passage was one over Croston on 28<sup>th</sup> March, followed by two over Lower Rivington Reservoir on 31<sup>st</sup> March and 15<sup>th</sup> April.

A returning bird was at Belmont Reservoir on 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> August, and another was there on 17<sup>th</sup> September.

**Water Rail** (*Rallus aquaticus*)  
***Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant***

One was noted in Yarrow Valley Park on 11<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> January. Another was on the Goit at White Coppice on 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 17<sup>th</sup> August and one was at White Coppice on 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

One was on Top Lodge in Yarrow Valley Park on 10<sup>th</sup> October, and again on 1<sup>st</sup> November, and 3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> December. Two were seen at close quarters at Belmont on 24<sup>th</sup> October. One was also at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton on 30<sup>th</sup> December.

**Moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*)  
***Common resident***

30 were seen on a field at Eccleston on 5<sup>th</sup> January.

Pairs were noted at 8 sites in the breeding season in Rivington and Anglezarke, with 4 producing young. A record number of 14 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir. Birds with young in May were noted at White Coppice (2 on 6<sup>th</sup>) and at Brindle (3 on 20<sup>th</sup>). A pair with 5 young was noted at Ulmes Walton in June. Pairs with young were noted at Common Bank Lodge, Heapey Lodges and Withnell Fold in July.

At least 10 were at Belmont Reservoir in September.

**Coot** (*Fulica atra*)  
***Common resident***

One was seen with three chicks at a pond at Eccleston on 30<sup>th</sup> April. Another pair in Astley Park had 5 young in June. It was into July before two pairs in Yarrow Valley Park produced 2 and 3 young. The return to high water levels at Belmont Reservoir allowed for the return of Coot as a breeding species at the site for the first time since 2005; albeit neither of the 2 pairs were successful.

Big Lodge in Yarrow Valley Park seems to hold most of the local wintering population with 28 there on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

**Oystercatcher** (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

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

First back alongside the Douglas at Croston were 2 on the 7<sup>th</sup> February, increasing to 22 by the 21<sup>st</sup>, and peaking at 26 on 6<sup>th</sup> March, falling to 17 on 7<sup>th</sup> April. Similarly, the first back at Belmont Reservoir were 2 on 7<sup>th</sup> February, increasing to 12 by 21<sup>st</sup> and peaking at 20 by 4<sup>th</sup> March. Others in February were at Croston Twin Lakes (20<sup>th</sup>) and Anglezarke Reservoir (21<sup>st</sup>).



On 15<sup>th</sup> March, a bird was found dead on the edge of High Bullough Reservoir. From March to July pairs were noted regularly at Anglezarke reservoir and around. At least 6 territories were noted in the area in May and birds were also recorded at Euxton, Shaw Hill and Withnell Fold during June.

Pairs at Adlington Hall Farm and Buckshaw industrial estate raised 2 and 1 young respectively. 4 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir with 3 broods seen later with at least 3 young fledging. One pair here repeatedly moved its brood back-and-forth across the A675 to/from in-by fields west of the reservoir! Another pair bred again at the still active Withnell quarry.

Sightings in July came from Withnell Fold, Croston Twin Lakes and Anglezarke Reservoir, where four were seen together. The last at Belmont were 7 on 8<sup>th</sup> August except for an unseasonal bird on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

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

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

Birds were seen regularly in the Lapwing flocks on Bretherton Eyes and Croston Moss during January including around 100 on Croston Finney on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 25 on Bretherton Eyes on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. A flock of around 30 birds continued to be seen amongst the Lapwings on Croston Moss and Bretherton Eyes throughout February. A flock of 8 was on Croston Moss on 6<sup>th</sup> March.

One was back on the moors above Belmont on 15<sup>th</sup> January with 35 there by 28<sup>th</sup> February.

Survey work in the central West Pennine Moors located 11+ pairs with several in the Chorley area.

Two on Croston Moss were disturbed by a Peregrine on 26<sup>th</sup> July. Singles were noted at Belmont on 14<sup>th</sup> August, and 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October.

**Grey Plover** (*Pluvialis squatarola*)  
***Rare vagrant***

One flew south over Belmont on 9<sup>th</sup> October.

**Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*)  
***Common resident and winter visitor***

Up to 500 birds moved between the flooded fields at Bretherton Eyes and Croston Moss during January. A further 250 spent the month on fields between Brindle and Withnell Fold. These flocks reduced in number throughout February as they dispersed to breeding territories, although around 200 were still together on Bretherton Eyes on 11<sup>th</sup> March. Six were back on territory at Lower Healey by 12<sup>th</sup> March. A flock of 30 was still on Croston Moss on 4<sup>th</sup> April.

Monthly maxima at Belmont Reservoir. :

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
120	180	100	Breeding birds		95	85	70	130	230	270	205

There were 26 territories around Belmont Reservoir in the breeding season. However, some regular fields were unoccupied due to lack of rush-control. The first young were noted on 15<sup>th</sup> May with 15+ broods present in mid-June, although a flock of 50 failed/non breeders had formed by 5<sup>th</sup> June. The breeding season was clearly more productive than 2015 with post-breeding flocks later containing good numbers of juveniles. 14 pairs bred on another section of in-bye near Belmont following effective rush-control. The habit of pairs breeding on moorland blanket-bog is widespread in the central West Pennine Moors. Examples include 13 pairs (including 9 on mown fire breaks) on north Belmont Moor, 6 pairs on Rivington Moor/Winter Hill (up to 430m asl) and 13 pairs on Withnell Moor (3 on blanket bog & 10 on adjacent in-bye).

The regular breeding fields at Rivington were affected by a temporary change in farming practice. Hopefully, when carefully managed grazing, preferably by cattle, is restored the population will return in the usual numbers. 38 were there on the 10<sup>th</sup> February and then 70 on 22<sup>nd</sup>. In March these numbers reduced to 12 on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 4 on the 17<sup>th</sup>. In April there were only 2 on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> with no sign of any birds by the 19<sup>th</sup> and no breeding. Away from this site pairs were noted from fields around the moorland edge in Rivington and Anglezarke in April.

At Withnell Fold, 3 or 4 pairs had produced a minimum of 7 chicks by 8<sup>th</sup> May, although there were several more pairs in the area which probably also had young. However, the young from 3 pairs are thought to have fallen victim to silage harvesting on fields between Withnell Fold and Brindle. A pair by the Douglas at Croston had at least 2 chicks, again by 8<sup>th</sup> May. Six pairs bred on Mawdesley Moss. A pair at Whittle was noted with 2 young on 3<sup>rd</sup> June and three pairs bred on Buckshaw industrial estate.

A post-breeding flock of 70 birds was on Croston Moss on 5<sup>th</sup> June, one of 50 was at Withnell Fold on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, with an estimated 100 birds in a field near Lower House Rivington on 10<sup>th</sup>, and one of 20 was at Eccleston on 19<sup>th</sup> July. Post-breeding flocks in August included 40 on Croston Moss (5<sup>th</sup>), 20 on Anglezarke reservoir (10<sup>th</sup>) and 200 at the south end of Lower Rivington Reservoir (21<sup>st</sup>). Around 100 were still at the site on 11<sup>th</sup> September.

October flocks included one of around 100 birds at Withnell Fold on the 8<sup>th</sup> and another of 300 on Croston Moss on the 10<sup>th</sup>. November flocks included 100 on Bretherton Eyes (6<sup>th</sup>), 70 on Croston Moss (11<sup>th</sup>), and 150 at Brindle also on the 12<sup>th</sup>. December flocks included 50 on Croston Finney (3<sup>rd</sup>), 150 at Withnell Fold (28<sup>th</sup>) and 150 at Bretherton Eyes (30<sup>th</sup>).

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

***Uncommon summer visitor***

First back was one at Charnock Richard on 27<sup>th</sup> March. Two were on Bretherton Eyes on 15<sup>th</sup> April. Three were at Belmont Reservoir on 24<sup>th</sup> April. Birds were present at Belmont Reservoir in May but high water levels prevented breeding.

A pair at Buckshaw was noted with at least one young in June, but another pair on Buckshaw industrial estate was -predated by crows at the egg stage.

**Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius Hiaticula*)

***Regular passage migrant***

One was on Bretherton Eyes on 21<sup>st</sup> March. 4 were on Croston Moss on 26<sup>th</sup> April, with a single there on 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

**Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus*)

***Regular passage migrant***

Annual Whimbrel passage began on the 18<sup>th</sup> April with 24 over Bretherton. Most records then were of flocks of birds feeding in fields in the Charnock Richard / Croston and Eccleston areas with some impressive numbers including 60 at Croston (26<sup>th</sup>), 70 at Charnock Richard (27<sup>th</sup>) and 80 at Eccleston (28<sup>th</sup>). It isn't known whether these are all the same flock moving around or separate flocks in the area. It may be worth doing a simultaneous coordinated count at all the regular sites next year. The only record away from these sites was 3 at Coppull on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Whimbrel passage continued into May until around the 12<sup>th</sup> but mainly in single figures. As well as at the Charnock / Croston / Eccleston sites, records came from Bretherton Eyes, Hic Bibi, Ulles Walton and White Coppice.

One was seen flying over Lower Rivington Reservoir on 16<sup>th</sup> July.



**Curlew** (*Numenius arquata*)

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

Numbers by the Yarrow at Eccleston increased from a single bird on 14<sup>th</sup> February to 6 by the end of the month, and to 30 by 23<sup>rd</sup> March, reducing to 20 by 4<sup>th</sup> April. A flock of 40 was at Charnock Richard on 7<sup>th</sup> April. Two were on Croston Moss on 20<sup>th</sup> April.

First back at Belmont Reservoir was one on 1<sup>st</sup> February. The roost there built up from 7 on 21<sup>st</sup> February to a peak of 196 on 13<sup>th</sup> March before decreasing to 42 on the 25<sup>th</sup>, as birds dispersed to their breeding territories.

Breeding densities on sample plots in the central West Pennine Moors:

- 4 pairs in 1 km<sup>2</sup> of Belmont Moor
- 17 pairs in 7 km<sup>2</sup> of Anglezarke Moor
- 3 pairs in 1 km<sup>2</sup> E of Winter Hill
- 8 pairs in 2 km<sup>2</sup> of Withnell Moor

Pairs back on territory during April were noted at Brindle, Ulmes Walton and White Coppice, and were located at at least 6 sites in May. By the beginning of April pairs were displaying around 5 sites around the Yarrow and Lead Mines moorland. Birds were still on territory at Anglezarke Moor, Ulmes Walton, Withnell Fold and Withnell Moor during June. However, a pair in fields near Brindle lost its nest and eggs to silage harvesting. 4 pairs of Curlew bred adjacent to Belmont Reservoir, with 2 broods of young present on in-bye there from 6<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July. The highest post-breeding roost count at the site was 29 on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

One was at Eccleston on 3<sup>rd</sup> August. The last over Belmont was on 18<sup>th</sup> August. One at Withnell Fold on 8<sup>th</sup> October was a late record for the site.

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

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

A single bird was at Bretherton Eyes on 9<sup>th</sup> January with 5 there on the 16<sup>th</sup>. A flock of 43 was at the site on 21<sup>st</sup> March and another 2 were on Croston Moss on the 28<sup>th</sup>, with a single there on 29<sup>th</sup> April.

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, then 14 were there on 30<sup>th</sup>, 13 on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 12 on 4<sup>th</sup> and finally 5 on 5<sup>th</sup>.

One dropped in to Yarrow Valley Park on 26<sup>th</sup> July, and another dropped into Withnell Fold Flash briefly on 21<sup>st</sup> August.

**Ruff** (*Calidris pugnax*)

***Rare visitor***

A flock of 18 was on the fields at Bretherton Eyes on 12<sup>th</sup> January. One seen alongside the Douglas at Croston on several dates from 14<sup>th</sup> February was joined

by another bird on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Presumably the same 2 birds were again at the site on 19<sup>th</sup> March, and one or two were noted at the site on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April.

A Ruff was in a flock of Lapwings along George's Lane Rivington on several days in mid-August, and presumably the same bird was in the same flock of Lapwings at the south end of Lower Rivington reservoir (21<sup>st</sup>).

**Dunlin** (*Calidris alpina*)

***Scarce breeder and passage migrant***

Pairs were present at 2 sites on the moors during the breeding season.

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

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

First back was one at Adlington Reservoir on 9<sup>th</sup> April., followed by one at the north end of Anglezarke reservoir on 13<sup>th</sup>, and on the Douglas at Croston on the 25<sup>th</sup>. First back in the Belmont area were two on 22<sup>nd</sup> with 10+ present on 30<sup>th</sup>. May records came from the Douglas at Croston, and Anglezarke (pair), High Bullough and Yarrow Reservoirs.

A pair was resident on the Douglas in Adlington but breeding could not be proven. 3 pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir with a brood of 4 seen on 13<sup>th</sup> June and juveniles present there until 28<sup>th</sup> July. One pair was territorial at Wards Reservoir.

On 6<sup>th</sup> June, a bird was calling at length at Yarrow Reservoir, and on 14<sup>th</sup> July one was on the edge of Upper Rivington Reservoir. One was at Anglezarke Reservoir on 27<sup>th</sup> July. In August, birds were recorded at Common Bank Lodge (7<sup>th</sup>), 2 on Upper Rivington Reservoir (17<sup>th</sup>) and one on Lower Rivington Reservoir (21<sup>st</sup>).

In September, singles were noted on Anglezarke Reservoir (3<sup>rd</sup>) and in Yarrow Valley Park (22<sup>nd</sup>).

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

***Scarce passage migrant. Winters most years.***

A wintering bird was seen on Syd Brook, Ecclestone, on 1<sup>st</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January, and then again on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> February and 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Possibly a different bird was on the Yarrow at Ecclestone on 16<sup>th</sup> March. One was seen regularly on the feeder stream in Arley nature reserve in both winter periods.

On 12<sup>th</sup> August, a bird was noted on the edge of Anglezarke Reservoir. At least 2 were seen regularly on Syd Brook, Ecclestone, during August, September, October, November and December. One was also seen on the Yarrow at Ecclestone on the 15<sup>th</sup> August, 10<sup>th</sup> September and 10<sup>th</sup> October, which could well have been one of the Syd Brook birds. The last at Belmont were 2 on 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

Two were at Adlington Reservoir on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

**Greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*)  
***Scarce passage migrant***

One was on Withnell Fold Flash on 8<sup>th</sup> May.

One was at Belmont Reservoir on 3<sup>rd</sup> September and another was at Adlington Reservoir on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

**Wood Sandpiper** (*Tringa glareola*)  
***Rare passage migrant***

One was heard and then seen over Hic Bibi nature reserve on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

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

First record for the year was one at Bretherton Eyes on 17<sup>th</sup> January. Numbers by the Douglas at Croston increased from 2 on 14<sup>th</sup> February to 7 by the end of the month, peaking at 11 on 6<sup>th</sup> March, with 5 still there on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

First back at Belmont Reservoir was on 13<sup>th</sup> March. 4 pairs bred at the site with broods of 3 and 2 seen in June.

One was at Withnell Fold Flash on 8<sup>th</sup> May, and a pair was still on the Douglas at Croston.

The last at Belmont was on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. Three were on Anglezarke Reservoir on 8<sup>th</sup> August.

**Jack Snipe** (*Limnocryptes minimus*)  
***Rare winter visitor***

One was at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton on 21<sup>st</sup> February, and another was at a pond near Eccleston on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

2 were at Belmont Reservoir on 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October with 3 there on 29<sup>th</sup>. In December, birds were noted at an Eccleston pond (3<sup>rd</sup>), Croston Moss (2 on 25<sup>th</sup>) and the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Woodcock** (*Scolopax rusticola*)  
***Fairly common resident and winter visitor***

In January, 2 were at Charnock Richard (8<sup>th</sup>) and one was on Withnell Moor (14<sup>th</sup>). 'Pheasant beaters' flushed 16+ at Belmont on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. 5 were seen at dusk near Belmont on 13<sup>th</sup> February with 3 at dusk over a Belmont garden on 23<sup>rd</sup>. 4 were seen feeding on in-bye fields at Belmont at dusk on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. One was in Yarrow Valley Park on 13<sup>th</sup> March and another was at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton on 25<sup>th</sup> March.

One was seen roding at White Coppice on 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

Presumed migrants were back at Belmont from 22<sup>nd</sup> October – including 16 on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 20 on 26<sup>th</sup> & 12 on 27<sup>th</sup> December reported flushed by 'Pheasant beaters'. Two were seen at Eccleston the 26<sup>th</sup> November, and another over Lower Rivington Reservoir on the 27<sup>th</sup>. December sightings included one on Syd Brook, Eccleston (16<sup>th</sup>), and another at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*)

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

January sightings included 5 at the E-shaped pond, Bretherton (2<sup>nd</sup>), 4 at Bretherton Eyes (3<sup>rd</sup>) and 6 on Croston Finney (16<sup>th</sup>). 15+ were at Belmont throughout January & a feeding flock of 10+ was still present on 24<sup>th</sup> March. In February 3 were on Syd Brook, Eccleston (6<sup>th</sup>), 5 were on Croston Moss (14<sup>th</sup>) and 12 were at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton (21<sup>st</sup>).

Birds possibly on territory were noted on Withnell Moor on 5<sup>th</sup> April and at Brindle (24<sup>th</sup>). 10 'pairs' were again recorded on territory around Belmont Reservoir with successful breeding again confirmed with a juvenile seen on 20<sup>th</sup> July and survey work elsewhere in the central West Pennine Moors located an additional 24 'drummers' with many in the Chorley area.

In July, birds were noted at Withnell Fold (25<sup>th</sup>) and Great Knowley (31<sup>st</sup>). In August, birds were noted on Syd Brook Eccleston (17<sup>th</sup>) and again at Withnell Fold (21<sup>st</sup>). 18 were counted at Belmont Reservoir on 18<sup>th</sup> September. 60+ were on Belmont Moor on 7<sup>th</sup> October and 25 were at Belmont Reservoir on 18<sup>th</sup> September rising to 45 there on 11<sup>th</sup> October.

In October, birds were also seen on several dates at Eccleston including 6 on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 2 were at Heath Charnock on the 9<sup>th</sup>. 3 were on Mawdesley Moss on 5<sup>th</sup> November and 12 were at Eccleston on the 10<sup>th</sup>. 25 were at Belmont on 26<sup>th</sup> November with 32 there on 29<sup>th</sup> December. Also in December, birds were recorded on Croston Moss, Great Knowley and at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton, where 26 were seen on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

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

***Scarce breeding bird and passage migrant***

First record for the year was one at Croston Twin Lakes on 16<sup>th</sup> April. The resident pair in Yarrow Valley Park were back on territory by 25<sup>th</sup> April, and set about breeding during May. Other birds were seen at Withnell Fold and Croston Twin Lakes during May.

The pair in Yarrow Valley Park had 3 chicks by 11<sup>th</sup> June, but sadly they had all been predated by 19<sup>th</sup> June. Despite the breeding failure, up to 2 Common Terns remained at Yarrow Valley Park until the 12<sup>th</sup> July. Two more were at Croston Twin lakes (4<sup>th</sup>) and 3 juveniles were at Lower Rivington Reservoir (16<sup>th</sup>).

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

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

Around 500 birds were on the floods at Bretherton Eyes during January. A similar number was roosting on Lower Rivington Reservoir on 27<sup>th</sup> February.

The first birds (2000) returned to the Belmont Reservoir gullery on 25<sup>th</sup> February with pre-breeding numbers building to 5,000 by 5<sup>th</sup> March, 11,000 on 13<sup>th</sup>, 18,000 by 22<sup>nd</sup>, to peak at 23,000 at roost on 5<sup>th</sup> April. The timing of the gulls' breeding season was similar to the 2015 season and was also about average for recent mean dates for 2011-2015 with the first young noted on 1<sup>st</sup> May and the first fledged juvenile seen on 4<sup>th</sup> June. The gullery was not surveyed in 2016. However, it was considered that numbers occupying the colony were similar, if not slightly higher than the estimated 11,000 pairs in 2015. However, caution is advised here as the reduction in the size of the island in 2016 could be masking any true increase or decrease not evident to casual observation. Additionally, a single pair bred successfully on the mainland, with the nest located in a flooded rush-bed.

The 2016 breeding season was again extremely productive with many pairs noted with two or even three juveniles. Counts of adults with large young/juveniles in attendance in late June & early July realised 1.8 young per successful pair from a sample of 1000 birds, the same productivity ratio as in 2015.

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

***Rare visitor now also breeding***

In February singles were on Lower Rivington Reservoir (18<sup>th</sup>) and Anglezarke Reservoir (27<sup>th</sup>). Towards the end of March birds were seen in pre-nuptial flocks of Black-headed Gulls at Adlington, Charnock Richard, Ecclestone and Ulles Walton. In early April, 2 were at Ulles Walton (6<sup>th</sup>), 4 at Charnock Richard (10<sup>th</sup>) and at least one at Ecclestone (11<sup>th</sup>), again all with feeding Black-headed Gull flocks. Similarly, one was at Ecclestone on 24<sup>th</sup> May.

The first birds (3) were back in the Black-headed Gull colony at Belmont Reservoir on 25<sup>th</sup> February, with pre-breeding numbers rising to a notable 62 by 17<sup>th</sup> April. The breeding colony held at least 39 pairs, although the impaired viewing conditions prevailing must be taken into account in assessing this minimum estimate. The 39+ pairs in 2016 would relate to the Belmont colony holding some c.4.8% of the UK population and is considered to be the largest inland colony of Mediterranean Gulls in the UK and the only 'substantial' colony away from the S & SE coasts of England.

Counts in July of successful 'family groups' realised 38 fledged Mediterranean Gull juveniles with 21 distinct attendant adults giving a very encouraging average for that sample of 1.8 young per successful pair in 2016, coincidentally the same productivity ratio as Black-headed Gull.

On 31<sup>st</sup> October, a single bird was harassing black headed gulls on the edge of Upper Rivington Reservoir.

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

***Common winter visitor***

Anecdotal evidence suggests there were fewer than usual of this species around the reservoirs during the winter months.

A small number of birds were present around the Belmont Reservoir gullery up until 30<sup>th</sup> April.

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

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

The second most common species of gull within the recording area. A maximum of 70 were at Belmont Reservoir on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

One pair was territorial throughout the breeding season at Belmont Reservoir with nest-building noted. However, no incubating birds were observed this year and it was thought that the decrease in the size of the island, causing the Lesser Black-backs territory to be surrounded by Black-headed Gulls which constantly mobbed them, was not conducive to breeding.

Adults with fledged juveniles present at Belmont Reservoir from mid-July onwards were considered to have fledged from elsewhere (presumably from the Ribble or Bowland colonies).

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

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

85 flew NW over Belmont at dusk on 5<sup>th</sup> March and 30 were at Belmont Reservoir on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

A flock of 120 was on Bretherton Eyes on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

Still to be found in small numbers in the Lower Rivington gull roost.

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

***Scarce winter visitor***

There are usually one or two to be found on the reservoirs during the winter months.

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

No systematic count of the gull roost was made this year.

**Feral Pigeon** (*Columba livia*)  
**Common resident**

Approximately 3 pairs bred in the church steeple of St Peter's, Belmont.

There are still plenty to be found around Chorley town centre despite the presence of a breeding pair of Peregrines.

**Stock Dove** (*Columba oenas*)  
**Uncommon breeding bird**

A flock of up to 40 birds could be found on the mosses during the winter months.

Pairs were present at the usual farm and quarry sites in White Coppice, Rivington and Anglezarke. 7 active nests were found in 2 outbuildings/farms at Belmont Reservoir in June.

**Woodpigeon** (*Columba palumbus*)  
**Abundant resident and passage migrant**

200 roosted at Upper Rivington Reservoir on 7<sup>th</sup> March. 110 were feeding on clover near Belmont on 19<sup>th</sup> March.

A steady movement of hundreds of birds heading west over Ulnes Walton was noted on 8<sup>th</sup> August.

It came second in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen.

300 were in Belmont Plantations on 25<sup>th</sup> October and 1300+ were in Roddlesworth Plantations on 31<sup>st</sup> October. 4082 (in 51 flocks) over Belmont in one hour on 2<sup>nd</sup> November included 3421 (in 42 flocks) in just 30 minutes. A flock of 250 birds was at Eccleston on 15<sup>th</sup> November. There was a huge influx of birds to the woodlands at Rivington and Anglezarke which appeared to be feeding on the acorn crop. On 15<sup>th</sup> November, 120 were at Stronstrey Bank, White Coppice, and by the 24<sup>th</sup> massive numbers of at least 500 at a time seen daily in Rivington. 850 roosted at Upper Rivington on 25<sup>th</sup> November. On 30<sup>th</sup> November to the year end 60 were at Jepsons Clough Rivington. On 10<sup>th</sup> December, 120 were on the edge of Brook House plantation, Anglezarke.

**Collared Dove** (*Streptopelia decaocto*)  
**Common resident**

A maximum of 8 were in a Belmont garden on 20<sup>th</sup> November. A flock of 10 flew high NW over Belmont Moor on 29<sup>th</sup> November.

It came fifteenth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen – a substantial fall from its highest position of seventh in 2011.

**Cuckoo** (*Cuculus canorus*)

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

First back was one up the Dean Black Brook valley, White Coppice, on 13<sup>th</sup> April followed by birds at Hoghton and the Round Loaf area, Anglezarke on 19<sup>th</sup> April and the first back at Belmont on 1<sup>st</sup> May. Sightings in May came gratifyingly from several sites – Anglezarke, Belmont, Croston, Great Knowley, Healey Nab, Roddlesworth, Rivington Moor, Withnell Moor and White Coppice, with at least 3 of the sightings relating to 3 birds together. More unusual was a bird moving down Jepsons Clough Rivington on the 18<sup>th</sup> May and of one near High Knoll Farm, Rivington on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Last record was a female at Belmont on the relatively late date of 14<sup>th</sup> July.

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

***Uncommon resident - increasing***

One was seen regularly at Great Knowley during January. One was hunting in mid-afternoon over moorland (at 320m asl) above Belmont on 11<sup>th</sup> January. Sightings in February came from across the area including Ulmes Walton (1<sup>st</sup>), Anglezarke (7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>), Bretherton (14<sup>th</sup>), Hoghton (2 on 16<sup>th</sup>) and Croston Moss (24<sup>th</sup>).

Sightings in April came from Croston and Great Knowley, and in May from White Coppice. One was noted at Eccleston in July. There was a reduction to 3 occupied territories near Belmont in 2016 with both of the 2 nests monitored failing at the egg stage. A pair also bred at Withnell.

In August, birds were noted at Eccleston (3<sup>rd</sup>), White Coppice (15<sup>th</sup>) and 2 at Great Knowley (27<sup>th</sup>). One was again seen at Eccleston on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 21<sup>st</sup> October and 9<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> November. One was also seen near the E-shaped Pond at Bretherton on 17<sup>th</sup> November.

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

***Fairly common resident***

One was seen at a regular site at Heath Charnock in January and February. Sightings also came from White Coppice (23<sup>rd</sup>) and Ulmes Walton (28<sup>th</sup>) in February.

April sightings came from regular territories on Croston Moss and at White Coppice, with sightings from the latter site continuing through May. One seen at Belmont in April was the only sighting there of what used to be a much commoner species.



One was again noted on Croston Moss in September and October.

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

***Common resident***

January records came from Cuerden Valley Park, Ecclestone and Heskin, and in February from Astley Park, Ecclestone and White Coppice. Birds were noted regularly throughout the year from Jepsons Clough Rivington.

Birds were recorded at Anglezarke, Ecclestone and Great Knowley during April. A pair with at least one young was noted at Ecclestone on 9<sup>th</sup> May. Other records in May came from Duxbury Woods and Yarrow Reservoir.

A young bird was noted at Ecclestone in July.

A pair were calling to each other at Cuerden Valley Park on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September. A single was at Bretherton Eyes on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 3 were at the north end of Anglezarke Reservoir on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Birds were again quite vocal in October with records coming from Withnell Fold (8<sup>th</sup>), Grey Heights and White Coppice (14<sup>th</sup>), Croston Moss (16<sup>th</sup>) and Ecclestone on several dates including 4 on the 31<sup>st</sup>. All November records came from Ecclestone including 3 on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 2 on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Long-eared Owl** (*Asio otus*)

***Scarce breeding resident***

There was a possible sighting at Hic Bibi nature reserve on 14<sup>th</sup> April.

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

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

There was no repeat of the excellent 2015 breeding season. Birds were seen in April/May/June on the moors, but no established territories were determined and the birds were deemed to be transient, non-breeding individuals. At least one remained around Belmont from September to the year-end.

One was noted over Bretherton Eyes on 4<sup>th</sup> June, presumably a non-breeding bird. Another was seen at the same site on 29<sup>th</sup> December.

**Swift** (*Apus apus*)

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

First back was one over Ecclestone on 30<sup>th</sup> April. The first back over the regular site at Jepsons Clough, Rivington were 2 in the morning and then 12 by afternoon on 5<sup>th</sup> May. After this, birds were noted every day feeding over the trees. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July, an estimated 50 birds were feeding in a tight mass and after this numbers declined until the 12<sup>th</sup> August when 6 were seen.

First back at Belmont was one on 5<sup>th</sup> May. 90+ were feeding high over the moors above Belmont on 18<sup>th</sup> June.

Birds were seen going to the nest in Eccleston (6<sup>th</sup> July), 4 were around a breeding site in Coppull (22<sup>nd</sup>), but the 40 or so in Pilling Lane on the 23<sup>rd</sup> must have been a local colony gathering for the flight south.

40 plus Swift over Croston Moss on the 4<sup>th</sup> August were a sign that they were on their way south. 15 were also at White Coppice on the same day. 12 were at Belmont on 5<sup>th</sup> August with the last (6) there on 6<sup>th</sup> August. 12 were over Ulnes Walton (8<sup>th</sup>), 7 over Syd Brook (13<sup>th</sup>), with the final sighting being one at Eccleston (17<sup>th</sup>).

**Kingfisher** (*Alcedo atthis*)  
***Fairly common resident***

January sightings came from Yarrow Valley Park throughout, Croston Moss (10<sup>th</sup>) and Cuerden Valley Park (11<sup>th</sup>). In February birds were recorded at five sites – the canal at Heath Charnock (3<sup>rd</sup>), Syd Brook Eccleston (10<sup>th</sup>), Arley nature reserve (11<sup>th</sup>), Withnell Fold (27<sup>th</sup>) and Yarrow Valley Park throughout.

April records came from Yarrow Valley Park (3<sup>rd</sup>), Syd Brook, Eccleston (13<sup>th</sup>) and Cuerden Valley Park (14<sup>th</sup>). One was seen carrying food along the Yarrow at Croston during May. Other birds were seen along Syd Brook Eccleston and at Withnell Fold during the month. The young of a pair in Cuerden Valley Park were predated by mink.



There was a report in July of 4 Kingfishers together, perched on the tern raft in Yarrow Valley Park and presumably, therefore, a family group. An adult and juvenile were on Syd Brook (14<sup>th</sup>). Other records came from Cuerden Valley Park, Withnell Fold and Yarrow Valley golf course. On 21<sup>st</sup> July, a bird flew along the edge of Horrobin embankment Upper Rivington Reservoir and over to the Street overflow.

In August, Kingfisher records came from all parts as dispersal took place, with sightings on the Syd Brook and the Yarrow at Eccleston, the Douglas at Croston, Common Bank Lodge and Yarrow Valley Park in Chorley, Arley nature reserve and Anglezarke Reservoir. Similarly, in September sightings were widespread including from Syd Brook Eccleston, the Yarrow at Eccleston, Anglezarke reservoir, Astley Park, White Coppice, the canal at Withnell Fold and the ditches on Croston Moss.

In October, birds were again noted at several sites including Eccleston (10<sup>th</sup>), Astley Park (13<sup>th</sup>), the Lostock at Croston (2 on 15<sup>th</sup>), Yarrow Valley Park (16<sup>th</sup>), Heapey Lodges (16<sup>th</sup>) and Anglezarke Reservoir (22<sup>nd</sup>).

November sightings came from Astley Park (3<sup>rd</sup>), Lower Healey (27<sup>th</sup>) and Yarrow Valley Park throughout.

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

***Uncommon resident, declining***

There were two records in May from the White Coppice area. A bird was noted at Lower House, Rivington on 25<sup>th</sup> August. One pair was on territory at a regular breeding site near Belmont.

Dispersing birds (presumably juveniles) were seen/heard in several (non-breeding) localities around Belmont in July/August. One was noted on a couple of occasions in September off George's Lane, Rivington, and again on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopos major*)

***Common resident***

Well recorded in January with sightings from Chorley Cemetery, Common Bank, Croston Moss, Cuerden Valley Park, Eccleston, Withnell nature reserve and Yarrow Valley Park. Birds were noted from many suitable woodlands in Rivington and Anglezarke with at least 10 sites indicated.

Three pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park. A pair with young was noted at Croston in June. Another pair with two young visited a garden at Clayton Green.

July sightings came from Mawdesley, Adlington, Cuerden Valley Park, Eccleston and Withnell Fold, where a juvenile was seen.

2 migrants flew south over Belmont on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

November sightings came from Yarrow Valley Park (19<sup>th</sup>) and Lower Healey (2 on 27<sup>th</sup>).

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopos minor*)

***Uncommon resident***

Again, no record was received of this species this year.

**Kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus*)

***Fairly common resident***

January sightings came from Cuerden Valley Park, Eccleston, Great Knowley, Heath Charnock and White Coppice, plus a count of 4 on Croston Moss on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Records in February came from Bretherton Eyes, Lower Healey and Cuerden Valley Park.

From breeding records and regular sightings from Rivington and Anglezarke a possible six sites were identified. A minimum of five pairs were noted on territory

elsewhere in April. One pair bred successfully at Belmont Reservoir raising 5 young.

July records came from Anglezarke Moor, Hic Bibi, White Coppice, Cuerden Valley Park, Mawdesley Moss and Great Knowley, with three birds at each of the last 2 sites. August sightings included 4 on Croston Moss (4<sup>th</sup>) and 2 at White Coppice (28<sup>th</sup>). 8+ were around Belmont on 4<sup>th</sup> September.

October sightings included 2 at White Coppice (5<sup>th</sup>), 4 on Croston Moss (9<sup>th</sup>) and singles at Croston Sewage Works (12<sup>th</sup>) and Withnell Moor (13<sup>th</sup>). Birds were recorded at 4 sites in December including 4 on Croston Moss on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Merlin** (*Falco columbarius*)  
***Scarce resident and passage migrant***

One was seen in pursuit of a Skylark on Croston Moss on 13<sup>th</sup> January. One flew low over Anglezarke carpark on 20<sup>th</sup> January. Another was seen flying east over Ecclestone on 29<sup>th</sup> February.

Birds were seen on the moorland during the spring. Two females / immatures were around Belmont from late-August to late-September.

Birds were again seen in pursuit of a Skylarks on Croston Moss on 19<sup>th</sup> October and 11<sup>th</sup> December – they never seem to catch them!

**Hobby** (*Falco subbuteo*)  
***Rare summer visitor***

First record for the year came from Cuerden Valley Park on 13<sup>th</sup> May, followed by one at Croston on the 27<sup>th</sup>. One was at Belmont Reservoir on 28<sup>th</sup> May. June records came from Chorley (3<sup>rd</sup>), Mawdesley (13<sup>th</sup>) and Bretherton (15<sup>th</sup>). July sightings came from Mawdesley Moss (3<sup>rd</sup>), and Chisnall (11<sup>th</sup>).

One was seen on Croston Moss on 3<sup>rd</sup> August chasing Swallows. Others were seen over Bretherton Eyes on 12<sup>th</sup> September and Ecclestone on 26<sup>th</sup> September.

**Peregrine** (*Falco peregrinus*)  
***Scarce resident and winter visitor. Has bred***

Birds were noted around Morrison's chimney throughout January and February with three there on the 10<sup>th</sup> February.

The pair at Morrison's produced 2 young which fledged successfully, but not without a little bit of drama. One of the young crash landed but was taken to a local vet who arranged for it to be returned to the breeding site. Pairs also bred again at a couple of sites in the north and east of the area.

One disturbed a couple of Golden Plover on Croston Moss on 26<sup>th</sup> July. Another was at Bretherton Eyes on 15<sup>th</sup> August, whilst a juvenile was seen on Winter Hill

on 17<sup>th</sup>. 4 were counted at Belmont Reservoir on 23<sup>rd</sup> August. The Morrison's birds continued to be seen around the chimney during the month, but they were also seen at a site in Wigan, Greater Manchester. However, at least 2 were at the chimney on 19<sup>th</sup> September. One was at Eccleston on 22<sup>nd</sup> September and 2 were on Croston Moss (26<sup>th</sup>).

In October, one was seen over Parkland's School (14<sup>th</sup>), one at Eccleston (17<sup>th</sup>) and 2 still around Morrison's chimney (23<sup>rd</sup>), and throughout November. There were also sightings from Croston Moss on 5<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> November.

Birds were seen regularly on Croston Moss during December, and one was also seen at Yarrow Reservoir (11<sup>th</sup>).

**Ring-necked Parakeet** (*Psittacula krameri*)  
***Probable escape***

Birds were seen in the Burgh Lane area of Chorley on 9<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January, and again in February when three were seen on the 19<sup>th</sup>. One was at Bank Hall, Bretherton on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, and 4 flew over Yarrow Valley Park (13<sup>th</sup>). Records in April came from Astley Park, Chorley Hospital and Yarrow Valley Park. One was in Duxbury Woods on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

A pair was seen in Astley Park on 28<sup>th</sup> July and again on 2<sup>nd</sup> August.

One was seen over Yarrow Valley Way on 30<sup>th</sup> October and again on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

**Magpie** (*Pica pica*)

***Common resident***

It came sixth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen.

**Jay** (*Garrulus glandarius*)

***Common resident***

A pair occupied a Rivington garden from January onwards performing acrobatics to obtain peanuts. This became a family group by the 11<sup>th</sup> July.

It came sixteenth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen.

**Jackdaw** (*Corvus monedula*)

***Common resident; increasing***

A flock of 800 was on Croston Moss on 30<sup>th</sup> January.

Jackdaws continue to increase with good numbers breeding in quarries, and pairs also breeding in classic chimney pot locations across the area!

300 roosted at Upper Rivington reservoir in November.

**Rook** (*Corvus frugilegus*)

***Common resident***

A maximum of 100 roosted at Upper Rivington in February.

The rookery census on 3<sup>rd</sup> April recorded a total of 310 nests, which was a decrease of five after three years of increases. Details of the census are tabulated at the end of this report.

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

***Common resident***

At least 100 roosted in both Roddlesworth and Upper Rivington plantations in January and February.

It came twentieth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen, being recorded in 10 of the 19 gardens surveyed.

One or two (white) leucistic birds were seen regularly around the area.

November roosts included 120 at Upper Rivington and 300 at Roddlesworth.

**Raven** (*Corvus corax*)

***Scarce but increasing resident***

Nest building was noted near Belmont on 1<sup>st</sup> January. A pair flew over Chorley on 20<sup>th</sup> January. The species was seen in very small numbers in all months of the year in Rivington and Anglezarke.

8 were at Belmont on 28<sup>th</sup> February with 12 regularly in July/August; but these counts were dwarfed by a remarkable 21 at Belmont Reervoir on 8<sup>th</sup> October. Also in October, six were over Anglezarke Moor (22<sup>nd</sup>), 2 were over Croston on the same day and one was over Coppull (25<sup>th</sup>).

**Goldcrest** (*Regulus regulus*)

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

The species was seen in all months in a Rivington garden, often in a large yew tree. A family group was seen there from 28<sup>th</sup> June. This unobtrusive species was noted in small numbers throughout suitable woodlands in Rivington and

Anglezarke usually from its quiet distinctive call. Four pairs were found elsewhere during the breeding season.

Eleven birds were ringed during autumn passage through Cuerden Valley Park. A maximum of 9 per hour flew south over Belmont on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

Goldcrests were much in evidence in December with records from a Chorley garden (2<sup>nd</sup>), 3 at Croston sewage works (3<sup>rd</sup>), 2 in the cemetery (11<sup>th</sup>), singles in Yarrow Valley Park (18<sup>th</sup>) and along Syd Brook (25<sup>th</sup>) and finally 3 near Croston Twin Lakes (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Firecrest** (*Regulus ignicapilla*)  
***Rare passage migrant***

One was seen with a mixed Goldcrest / Long-tailed Tit flock in Cuerden Valley Park on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

**Skylark** (*Alauda arvensis*)  
***Common resident and summer visitor***

A flock of 150 was on Croston Moss on 16<sup>th</sup> January, but these had reduced to 40 by 14<sup>th</sup> February. 8 were in song above Belmont by 27<sup>th</sup> February.

A maximum of 10 in one hour flew south over Belmont on 1<sup>st</sup> October. A flock of 50 was on Croston Moss during October, increasing to 70 on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> November.

December flocks included 50 near Croston sewage works (3<sup>rd</sup>), 100 on Bretherton Eyes (3<sup>rd</sup>) and 50 at the E-shaped Pond (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Blue Tit** (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)  
***Abundant resident***

It came equal second in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen.

**Great Tit** (*Parus major*)  
***Very common resident***

It came fifth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen. A maximum of 17 in one hour flew south over Belmont on 8<sup>th</sup> October.

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

***Common resident and winter visitor***

It came eighth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen – a rise of three places.

A maximum of 51 in one hour flew south over Belmont on 8<sup>th</sup> October.

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

***Scarce resident***

Birds were noted at Hic Bibi nature reserve on 15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> January. Another was at Old Bagganley Lane, Chorley on 13<sup>th</sup> February. In March, pairs were seen at Arley nature reserve (18<sup>th</sup>) and at Great Knowley (30<sup>th</sup>).

Willow Tit surveys in April produced records from 7 sites. One pair bred at Arley nature reserve raising 4 young and another pair bred at Hic Bibi nature reserve raising five young. A family party was seen at Hic Bibi on 8<sup>th</sup> June, and 2 juveniles were caught and ringed there on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

The 11<sup>th</sup> August produced an unexpected record from a Rivington garden. Huge numbers of tits were moving through feeding in very heavy drizzly rain when a single Willow Tit appeared in sweet peas, next to a nut feeder, outside a back window. One was at Lower Healey on 17<sup>th</sup> September.

November sightings came from two regular sites – Great Knowley (9<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>) and Hartwood (2 on 19<sup>th</sup>). December records again came from Great Knowley (2 on 15<sup>th</sup>) and Hic Bibi (18<sup>th</sup>).

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

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

First back in Spring were 2 in Cuerden Valley Park on 24<sup>th</sup> March. First back at Belmont Reservoir were 3 on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

There were 91 active nest holes at Adlington sand quarry during the breeding season, a number of which were double brooded.

One (with a Swallow) in direct flight south over Belmont Moor on 21<sup>st</sup> June was considered to be the first departing migrant. A flock of 15 migrants flew south over Belmont on 17<sup>th</sup> August.

**Swallow** (*Hirundo rustica*)

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

First back was one at Croston Twin Lakes on 28<sup>th</sup> March. The first back at Belmont Reservoir in comparison was not until 9<sup>th</sup> April.

Four local stables held 29 breeding pairs between them. Farms in the Brindle area all had their barns occupied by breeding birds. 14 were counted around breeding sites at a Belmont farm on 13<sup>th</sup> April

A feeding flock of around 100 birds was at Withnell Fold on 24<sup>th</sup> July. Large flocks were also seen during August including 100 over Croston Moss (4<sup>th</sup>), 100 at Belmont reservoir (8<sup>th</sup>), 50 over Bretherton Eyes (14<sup>th</sup>), 40 over Yarrow Reservoir



(21<sup>st</sup>). Roosting numbers at Buckshaw industrial estate during August and September peaked at 1500 on 11<sup>th</sup> September.

Flocks on the move in September included 10 at Great Knowley (11<sup>th</sup>), 50 over Bretherton Eyes (12<sup>th</sup>) and 20 on Croston Moss (20<sup>th</sup>). 50 roosted at Belmont on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

In October, Swallows were seen at Belmont, Heskin, Lower Healey, Rivington and White Coppice in the first week of the month, 4 were at Withnell Fold on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 6 were over Croston Moss on the 9<sup>th</sup> with 16 over Belmont on the 10<sup>th</sup> the last record.

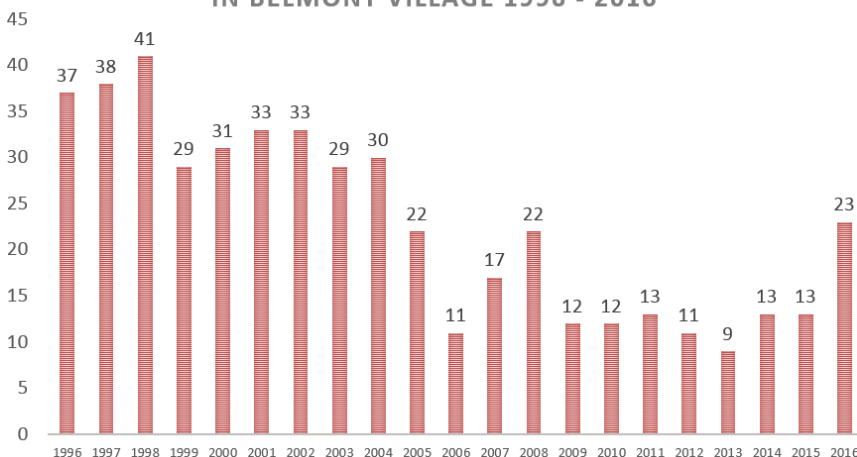
### **House Martin** (*Delichon urbicum*)

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

First back was one over Bretherton Eyes on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, and in comparison, the first back at Belmont Reservoir didn't arrive until 17<sup>th</sup> April.

A full survey of Belmont Village realised a good increase to 23 active nests, with birds still entering nests there on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

**BREEDING PAIRS OF HOUSE MARTIN  
IN BELMONT VILLAGE 1996 - 2016**



A feeding flock of 30 was over Anglezarke Reservoir on 17<sup>th</sup> July. 40 at Eccleston on 23<sup>rd</sup> August were presumably preparing to leave.

Numbers in September were impressive. On 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> September, birds were moving south in steady numbers over Jepsons Clough, Rivington, feeding as they went. Numbers were estimated at 100+ per hour throughout from continuous monitoring. Passage at White Coppice which seems to be an annual event included 300 on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 500 on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere, 30 were over

Astley Park (1<sup>st</sup>), 20 over Syd Brook (2<sup>nd</sup>) and 100 at Withnell (8<sup>th</sup>). As is often the case, as the majority were leaving, pairs were still feeding young including 2 or 3 at a small colony on Eaves Lane.

In October, House Martins were still around breeding sites at Heskin (1<sup>st</sup>), Eaves Lane (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Harpers Lane, Chorley (4<sup>th</sup>). Birds on the move were over Belmont (2<sup>nd</sup>), Stronstrey Bank quarry, White Coppice (15 on the 5<sup>th</sup>), Withnell Fold (4 on 8<sup>th</sup>), 2 at Eccleston (11<sup>th</sup>) and finally 3 at Adlington (12<sup>th</sup>).

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

**Common resident; increasing**

It came 11<sup>th</sup> in the Winter Garden Bird Survey, being recorded in 17 of the 19 gardens surveyed, and represents its highest ever position. The species was present in a Rivington garden throughout the year. A family group was there on 30<sup>th</sup> May and again on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

A total of 70 were counted near Belmont in three flocks in late October. A maximum of 17 in one hour flew south over Belmont on 20<sup>th</sup> October.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

**Rare passage migrant**

One was seen at Hic Bibi nature reserve on 25<sup>th</sup> September, just after a ringing session had finished.

One was in a garden at Euxton on 12<sup>th</sup> November.

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

**Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant**

First back was one singing in Heatherlea Woods, Brinscall on 5<sup>th</sup> May. No fewer than 6 of the species were recorded at the site on 15<sup>th</sup> May. Other records came from Stronstrey Bank and Lead Mines Clough.

**Chiffchaff** (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

**Common summer visitor and occasional winter visitor**

Wintering birds were in gardens in Chorley (4<sup>th</sup>) and at Hartwood (14<sup>th</sup>). One was in a garden at Clayton Brook on 4<sup>th</sup> February and another was at Croston sewage works on the 20<sup>th</sup>. One singing alongside Syd Brook, Eccleston on 20<sup>th</sup> March was probably a summer visitor.

The first back at Jepsons Clough Rivington was on 27<sup>th</sup> March and then present throughout the breeding season in many sites in Rivington and Anglezarke. The first back at Belmont was not till 1<sup>st</sup> April.

Five singing males were noted in Cuerden Valley Park where three pairs were known to have bred. Three singing males were noted at Hic Bibi nature reserve where at least two pairs were found to be breeding.

Birds were still singing across the area in September, and 6 were counted in a tit flock along Syd Brook, Eccleston on 22<sup>nd</sup>. Still singing in October were birds at Heskin (1<sup>st</sup>) and at Coppull (29<sup>th</sup>). The last recorded at Rivington were birds on 3<sup>rd</sup> October at Pall Mall croft and then on the 12<sup>th</sup> in Jepsons Clough. 6 passed through Belmont during October with the last on 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Willow Warbler** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)  
**Common summer visitor**

The first returning bird was at White Coppice on 4<sup>th</sup> April. On 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2 were singing by Anglezarke carpark, and 4 had arrived back at Belmont followed by a mass arrival there on the 17<sup>th</sup>

Bracken beds often receive a bed press from naturalists but there is no doubting their popularity with Willow Warblers for breeding sites at both Belmont and White Coppice and no doubt everywhere in between.

Nine singing males were noted at Hic Bibi nature reserve where at least four pairs were found to be breeding.



Last record was one at Belmont on 17<sup>th</sup> September.

**Blackcap** (*Sylvia atricapilla*)  
**Summer and winter visitor**

A male bird was on the bird table in a Rivington garden on 3<sup>rd</sup> January. One was at Croston on 7<sup>th</sup> January. Another was at Clayton Brook on the 4<sup>th</sup> February and one was regular in a Belmont garden in mid-February. Two were at Euxton on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

The first singing bird was one at Ulnes Walton on 6<sup>th</sup> April. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, 2 birds were singing in a Rivington garden, and the species was present regularly until the 16<sup>th</sup> August. The first back at Belmont was on 20<sup>th</sup> April. Breeding pairs included 2 at Arley nature reserve, 3 in Cuerden Valley Park, one at Ellerbeck, 2 at Hic Bibi and one on Lower Burgh Meadow. 20 territories were identified around Belmont during the breeding season.

Over-wintering birds in November included a male in a Chorley garden (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>) and a female at Eccleston (24<sup>th</sup>), and again on 29<sup>th</sup> December.

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

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

The first returning bird was one at Ellerbeck on 17<sup>th</sup> April. In May, birds were on territory at White Coppice and Withnell Fold. On the 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2 birds were singing and seen at the Clog Inn site, Anglezarke. Two territories were noted at Belmont. A pair in Cuerden Valley Park fledged three young.

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

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

First back was one at Ulnes Walton on 13<sup>th</sup> April. In May, birds were on territory at Bretherton, Eccleston, Hic Bibi and Ulnes Walton.

One was noted at Eccleston on 12<sup>th</sup> August.

**Whitethroat** (*Sylvia communis*)

***Common summer visitor***

First back was one in Cuerden Valley Park on 13<sup>th</sup> April. On 27<sup>th</sup> May, a bird was noted along the Goit near White Coppice.

Pairs bred at Arley nature reserve, Ellerbeck and Hic Bibi. There were also several singing males on Croston and Mawdesley Moss, and 6 in the Belmont area during the breeding season.

July records came from Great Knowley, Hic Bibi and Mawdesley Moss. Ten were counted in a section of Croston Moss on 5<sup>th</sup> August.

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

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

First back was one at Belmont on 15<sup>th</sup> April. Reeling birds were noted in May at Croston Moss, Great Knowley, Lower Burgh Meadow and White Coppice. In the Belmont area, 21 territories were identified from 'reeling' birds (17 in 2015), including 7 around Belmont Reservoir (6 in 2015).

Birds still reeling were noted on Anglezarke Moor (14<sup>th</sup> July), at Great Knowley (31<sup>st</sup>) and at Belmont on 27<sup>th</sup> August. The last record was one at Belmont on 4<sup>th</sup> September.

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

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

First back was one at Croston Reed Bed on 9<sup>th</sup> April.

Two pairs bred on Lower Burgh Meadow. In July, birds were at Hic Bibi (3<sup>rd</sup>), Lower Burgh Meadow, where young were being fed (22<sup>nd</sup>) and Great Knowley (31<sup>st</sup>). Three were on Bretherton Eyes on 15<sup>th</sup> August.

Seven migrants passed through Belmont between 30<sup>th</sup> July and 20<sup>th</sup> September.

**Reed Warbler** (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)  
***Scarce summer visitor***

First record was one at Croston Reed Bed on 1<sup>st</sup> May, following which birds were also noted on territory at Ulnes Walton and in Yarrow Valley Park.

3 males were singing on Top Lodge in Yarrow Valley Park on 8<sup>th</sup> July.

**Waxwing** (*Bombycilla garrulous*)  
***Fairly common but irregular winter visitor***

One was feeding on rowan berries in Steeley Lane, Chorley on 8<sup>th</sup> November. Waxwings finally arrived in numbers in December and were seen at four sites. The first were in Eccleston with 10 on the 24<sup>th</sup>, increasing to 17 by the 29<sup>th</sup>. 3 were near St Peter's school on the 27<sup>th</sup>, increasing to 16 by the 30<sup>th</sup>. 4 were behind the council offices in Union Street (30<sup>th</sup>) and an unknown number were in Adlington at the junction of Railway Road and Market Street (31<sup>st</sup>).

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

The species is now widespread in all the area's woodlands. On 27<sup>th</sup> April, at least 5 were singing by the Yarrow reservoir overflow. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July, a family group were in a Rivington garden.

Five pairs were located in Cuerden Valley Park with one using a nest box.

It came eighteenth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen.

**Treecreeper** (*Certhia familiaris*)  
***Fairly common resident in the area's woodlands***

A bird visited a Rivington garden occasionally throughout the year.

**Wren** (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)  
***Abundant resident***

On 19<sup>th</sup> July, a family group was noted in a Rivington garden.

It came tenth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen.

**Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

***Abundant resident and winter visitor***

A flock of around 1000 birds was at Euxton on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 400 were at Adlington (5<sup>th</sup>) and 500 at Ecclestone, also on the 5<sup>th</sup>. On 10<sup>th</sup> February, the usual flock estimated at 60 were feeding with fieldfare and redwing in fields off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington. 700 were around Belmont from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> February.

The first juveniles were seen at Belmont on 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

A flock of 530 was on Croston Moss on 19<sup>th</sup> September.

Sizeable flocks in November included 700 on Croston Moss (5<sup>th</sup>), 700 on Anglezarke Moor (6<sup>th</sup>), and 400 on Bretherton Eyes (6<sup>th</sup>). On 5<sup>th</sup> November, a flock estimated at 200 were near Higher Knoll Farm, Rivington, and on the 27<sup>th</sup> a flock of about 100 were near White Coppice farm. Around 300 were regular at Belmont from October through to December.

At the end of December, the usual flock off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington, again in company with fieldfare and redwings, was feeding in the fields.

**Dipper** (*Cinclus cinclus*)

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

Birds were noted at White Coppice during January and February. All three local parks had Dippers on territory in February – Astley Park (6<sup>th</sup>), Cuerden Valley Park (24<sup>th</sup>) and Yarrow Valley Park 24<sup>th</sup>. In addition, birds were noted on territory at White Coppice (3<sup>rd</sup> April) and on the Yarrow at Euxton (10<sup>th</sup>).

The pair in Yarrow Valley Park had fledged 3 young by 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Unfortunately these birds were harassed by photographers, and the outcome for the young is unknown. However, the pair had produced a second brood of 4 by 24<sup>th</sup> June. Other pairs bred on the Douglas in Adlington, on Belmont Brook, at Common Bank, in Cuerden Valley Park, at Duxbury, at Heath Charnock, in Spring Wood, at Upper Rivington, White Coppice and Lead Mines Clough.

On 4<sup>th</sup> November, a bird was noted on the outflow from Yarrow reservoir., and a pair was on the Yarrow at Euxton on 27<sup>th</sup> November.

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

***Scarce passage migrant***

First on Spring passage was one in a snow storm at Belmont on 29<sup>th</sup> March. Passage this year seemed to be light with fewer records than usual. These included 2 on George's Lane, Rivington (13<sup>th</sup> April), one on Rivington Moor (17<sup>th</sup>) and one at White Coppice (21<sup>st</sup>).

The only autumn records were a female on 10<sup>th</sup> September and a male on 9<sup>th</sup> October, both at Belmont.

**Blackbird** (*Turdus merula*)

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

It retained top spot in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen. Over 10 regularly in a Belmont garden were testament to this.

One pair raised two broods in an old kettle in a Clayton Green garden. A pair was on territory in a bracken bed on Anglezarke moor during the breeding season.

Several migrants were noted south over Belmont with the maximum birds per hour:- 10 on 8<sup>th</sup> October.

Winter roosts included 27 in rhododendrons at Belmont on 20<sup>th</sup> November and 30 at Upper Rivington on 25<sup>th</sup> November.

**Fieldfare** (*Turdus pilaris*)

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

The largest flock in January was one of 300 birds on Croston Moss (13<sup>th</sup>). 25 were at Whittle 17<sup>th</sup> and a small flock was on Bretherton Eyes (23<sup>rd</sup>). The flock on Bretherton Eyes numbered 150 on 14<sup>th</sup> February. In February and March the usual flock was feeding in the fields off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington. The only other record of note in February was of a dozen birds at Anglezarke on the 21<sup>st</sup>. March records included 50 at Bretherton Eyes (3<sup>rd</sup>), 30 at Croston Twin Lakes (20<sup>th</sup>) and 45 at Belmont (27<sup>th</sup>). There were still good numbers around Ecclestone in April, including 120 on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 40 on the 8<sup>th</sup> and still 12 on the very late date of the 29<sup>th</sup>.

First back in Autumn were 12 at White Coppice on 27<sup>th</sup> September, followed by 9 over Belmont (28<sup>th</sup>). October arrivals included 21 in George's Lane, Rivington (8<sup>th</sup>), 400 at Belmont (15<sup>th</sup>), 50 at Heapey Lodges (16<sup>th</sup>), and an influx on the 22<sup>nd</sup> with 70 at Ecclestone, 100 at White Coppice and 100 at High Bullough. On 25<sup>th</sup>, 60 were at Lower House, Rivington. Maximum birds per hour south over Belmont were 107 on 22<sup>nd</sup> October



Flocks in November were recorded across the area with 350 near Belmont on the 22<sup>nd</sup> being the largest. Others included 150 at Bretherton Eyes on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 30 at Lead Mines Clough (6<sup>th</sup>), 40 on Croston Moss (12<sup>th</sup>), 40 at Ecclestone (15<sup>th</sup>) and 50 at Euxton (25<sup>th</sup>).

Sightings in December included 20 on Mawdesley Moss (4<sup>th</sup>), 40 at Great Knowley (13<sup>th</sup>), 60 at Hic Bibi (18<sup>th</sup>), 50 at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton (26<sup>th</sup>) and 50 at

Belmont Reservoir (29<sup>th</sup>). Throughout December birds were around the Lead Mines and Yarrow fields feeding on the ground, with 30 on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 20 on the 27<sup>th</sup>. By the end of December, the usual flock had reappeared off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington.

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

***Fairly common resident;***

On 24<sup>th</sup> January, an early bird was singing at Ward Hill, Rivington. Seven in song in Eccleston on 23<sup>rd</sup> February was a sign that Spring was on its way.

Three pairs raised young in Cuerden Valley Park.

One or two migrants were seen during vismig watches at Belmont in September and October.

**Redwing** (*Turdus iliacus*)

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

The largest flock in January was one of 150 birds along Holker Lane, Ulmes Walton (30<sup>th</sup>). Flocks of 30 birds were seen at Adlington (5<sup>th</sup>) and Cuerden Valley Park (25<sup>th</sup>). 20 roosted at Upper Rivington on 11<sup>th</sup> January and again on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. In February, around 100 birds were at the E-shaped pond at Bretherton. 20 were at Eccleston on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. The last at Belmont were 2 on 31<sup>st</sup> March. The usual flock was off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington.

First back in Autumn were four south over Belmont on 28<sup>th</sup> September, followed by 30 at Eccleston on 3<sup>rd</sup> October in small parties, then 510 in one hour over Belmont (8<sup>th</sup>), 10 at Lower Healey (9<sup>th</sup>), two separate flocks of 50 over Stronstrey Bank, White Coppice (12<sup>th</sup>), and 20 in Yarrow Valley Park (16<sup>th</sup>). November records included 10 at Lower Healey (6<sup>th</sup>), and 15 at Euxton (7<sup>th</sup>). On the 12<sup>th</sup>, 25 were feeding on holly berries at Makinson's Farm, Rivington. 20 at Great Knowley, 60 on George's Lane, Rivington and 30 at Lower Healey all on the 27<sup>th</sup> might have indicated some kind of movement. A vismig count over Cuerden Valley Park on 29<sup>th</sup> produced a count of over 1000 in the first hour and half of daylight.

Flocks in December included 20 on Mawdesley Moss (4<sup>th</sup>), 100+ at Lower Healey (10<sup>th</sup>), 150 on Croston Moss (11<sup>th</sup>) and 100+ at Anglezarke on the same day. 60 were at Heath Charnock (14<sup>th</sup>) and 30 were at Great Knowley on the 15<sup>th</sup>. At the end of the month the usual flock was off Sheephouse Lane, Rivington. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, 50 were at Belmont and on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 20 were feeding in fields off Lead Mines Clough.

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

***Fairly Common resident***

A pair in Yarrow Valley Park had fledged 4 young by 24<sup>th</sup> April.



Post-breeding flocks in August included 12 at Eccleston and 20 on Croston Moss both on the 5<sup>th</sup>. A flock of 12 was near Moses Cocker, Rivington, on the 18<sup>th</sup>. 12 were at Belmont on 23<sup>rd</sup> September and 15 were at Buckshaw Village on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

**Spotted Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa striata*)  
***Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant***

First back was one in Heatherlea Woods, Brinscall on 7<sup>th</sup> May. Other records came from Anglezarke and Withnell Fold.

A Spotted Flycatcher at Eccleston on the 13<sup>th</sup> July was an intriguing find. There has been no breeding record of the species in that locality for many years, but it seems an early date for a returning bird. Birds were then also seen on Syd Brook, Eccleston on 21<sup>st</sup> August and on the Yarrow at Eccleston (25<sup>th</sup>). A migrant was seen in a moorland bracken bed near Belmont on 23<sup>rd</sup> July.

**Robin** (*Erithacus rubecula*)  
***Abundant resident***

It came fourth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen.

Five pairs bred in Cuerden Valley Park.

**Pied Flycatcher** (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)  
***Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant***

First back was one at Belmont on 14<sup>th</sup> April. Reports also indicate that a bird was singing in the Rivington area in April.

**Black Redstart** (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)  
***Rare visitor***

A juvenile bird was noted on Winter Hill on 2<sup>nd</sup> August.

One was in George's Lane, Rivington on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

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

First record was of one on passage at Eccleston on 9<sup>th</sup> April followed on 15<sup>th</sup> by singing males at Lead Mines Clough. In May, two pairs were on territory at both Lead Mines Clough and White Coppice and a single pair was on territory at Belmont.

Reports indicate that 6 sites in Rivington and Anglezarke were occupied in the breeding season. A pair was feeding young in Lead Mines Clough on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. One was at White Coppice on 14<sup>th</sup> August.

**Whinchat** (*Saxicola rubetra*)

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

A juvenile was on Mawdesley Moss on 26<sup>th</sup> July and a single migrant was at Belmont (30<sup>th</sup>). Three birds were noted on Croston Moss on 5<sup>th</sup> August with 4 there on the 24<sup>th</sup>. A single migrant was again at Belmont (29<sup>th</sup>). An intriguing record was of 1 at White Coppice on 7<sup>th</sup> September. Further passage was noted in September at Belmont (10<sup>th</sup>), and on Buckshaw industrial estate with a male and female (6<sup>th</sup>), 2 females (12<sup>th</sup>) and 2 males and a female (19<sup>th</sup>).

**Stonechat** (*Saxicola torquata*)

***Scarce resident***

Sightings in January came from Belmont Reservoir, Croston Moss and Withnell Moor. Two were on Winter Hill on 28<sup>th</sup> February.

On 31<sup>st</sup> March a male bird was near Simms, Anglezarke. On 26<sup>th</sup> April, a male was off Roynton Lane, Rivington.

A pair with young was noted at White Coppice in June. Pairs with 4 and 3 young respectively were at White Coppice on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, and again on 14<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> August. 10 pairs were located on territory around Belmont during the breeding season. Several broods were noted later resulting in 23 post-breeding birds around Belmont in late-July, increasing to a notable 35 estimated to be in the Belmont area in mid-September.

In October, 5 Stonechats in a family group were seen in George's Lane, Rivington on the 1<sup>st</sup>. Three were seen on Withnell Moor (13<sup>th</sup>), 2 on Winter Hill (15<sup>th</sup>), a single on Croston Moss (16<sup>th</sup>) and 4 on Anglezarke Moor (22<sup>nd</sup>).

Several records were received in November – 2 at Rivington (5<sup>th</sup>), 2 on Anglezarke Moor (5<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>), 2 at Great Knowley (19<sup>th</sup>) and one at Belmont Reservoir (20<sup>th</sup>). December sightings included 2 on Croston Moss (4<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>), 3 on Mawdesley Moss (4<sup>th</sup>) and one at Great Knowley (13<sup>th</sup>).

**Wheatear** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

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

First back in Spring were birds on Bretheton Eyes and at Belmont, both on the 25<sup>th</sup>. On 31<sup>st</sup> March a male bird was at Simms, Anglezarke and, on 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2 pairs were nearby at Peewit Hall, Anglezarke. Also in April on 26<sup>th</sup>, 6 were near Higher Knoll Farm, Rivington, and on 27<sup>th</sup>, 3 were near the Bomber Memorial, Anglezarke. 45 passed through Belmont during April and a further 11 in May.

2 pairs were located on territory near Belmont in the breeding season including one successful pair with fledged juvenile/s seen later. 14 passed through Belmont during August, 11 through during September with 4 through during October with the last on 13/10/16.

There was a good return passage in August with 14 through Belmont, 4 at Rivington (16<sup>th</sup>), 1 at Anglezarke on (17<sup>th</sup>), 3 on Winter Hill (17<sup>th</sup>), 3 in George's Lane (18<sup>th</sup>), 3 on Croston Moss (21<sup>st</sup>), 4 on Great Hill (23<sup>rd</sup>) and one on Coppull Moor (31<sup>st</sup>).

Passage continued in September with birds seen on several dates on Croston Moss, 11 passed through Belmont, 6 were on Winter Hill (11<sup>th</sup>) and singles were on Withnell Moor (18<sup>th</sup>), and Great Hill (20<sup>th</sup>). In October, two were seen in George's Lane, Rivington on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 4 passed through Belmont with the last on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and birds were seen regularly on Croston Moss, peaking at 3 on the 17<sup>th</sup> with the final 2 seen on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Dunnock** (*Prunella modularis*)  
***Abundant resident***

It came seventh in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen.

**House Sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*)  
***Abundant resident***

It came fourteenth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen, being completely absent from a few of the gardens completing the survey, although in those gardens where it was present, it was probably the most numerous.

The maximum count in a Belmont garden was 30+ adults and juveniles. throughout in June/July, with later 2 flocks totalling 40+ seen in September.

**Tree Sparrow** (*Passer montanus*)  
***Fairly common resident***

Nine pairs bred at a farm on Mawdesley Moss, raising 30 young, some double brooded. One was seen in a Belmont garden on 30<sup>th</sup> June.

A flock of 30 was on Bretherton Eyes during August.



**Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla flava flavissima*)  
***Scarce passage migrant***

Two were noted on Mawdesley Moss on 29<sup>th</sup> July. One was on Croston Moss on 6<sup>th</sup> August and 2 were on Bretherton Eyes on 8<sup>th</sup> August. One was at Belmont on 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

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

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

There were a few records of birds away from water in January with one on the track side at Middle Derbyshire's, Rivington, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and one on the roadside near Siddow Fold, Anglezarke on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Pairs on territory in April included 3 in Yarrow Valley Park, 5 in the White Coppice area, 6 around Belmont and at least one at Euxton and Lead Mines Clough. Birds were then seen feeding young in Yarrow Valley Park during May, with a juvenile seen in Duxbury Woods (4<sup>th</sup>) and an adult and juvenile seen at Croston (15<sup>th</sup>). Three broods of young were seen at Belmont.

Pairs with young in Yarrow Valley Park (5<sup>th</sup> July) and at White Coppice (6<sup>th</sup>) were presumably second broods.

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

**Common resident**

Nine pairs bred at Belmont Reservoir. A pair with young was on the cricket field at White Coppice on 29<sup>th</sup> July.

40 plus roosted at Belmont on 11<sup>th</sup> September. A flock of 20 was at Croston sewage works on 12<sup>th</sup> October. In November, 40 were on Croston Moss (2<sup>nd</sup>) and 15 were at Lower Healey on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

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

**Scarce passage migrant, mainly in Spring**

Birds on passage were noted at Croston Moss, Croston sewage works, Bretherton Eyes and Buckshaw Village between 4<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> April.

**Richard's Pipit** (*Anthus richardi*)

**Rare passage migrant**

One was noted over the Gillibrands area of Chorley on 15<sup>th</sup> October. This record is currently under consideration by the Rarities Committee of Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society.

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

**Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant**

First back was one in the White Coppice area on 20<sup>th</sup> April, followed by one near Belmont on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Bird(s) were noted on territory in Roddlesworth plantations during the breeding season.

A migrant was noted over Belmont on 24<sup>th</sup> September.

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

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

Approximately 30/hour moved north over Belmont on the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> March, and flocks of 45 and 25 were near Belmont on 28<sup>th</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> April respectively.

Breeding numbers included an estimated 9 territories on  $\frac{1}{3}$  km<sup>2</sup> of in-bye (not moorland) near Belmont in April.

On 5<sup>th</sup> and again on 24<sup>th</sup> August, on walls and wires near Jepson's Gate, Anglezarke, flocks estimated at 100 indicated a movement from the moorlands. 60 were at Belmont Reservoir on 17<sup>th</sup> September increasing to 270 on the 25<sup>th</sup>. 100+ were on Belmont Moor on 7<sup>th</sup> October. A maximum of 165 birds per hour flew south over Belmont on 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

Vismig observations over Hic Bibi on 30<sup>th</sup> September produced a count of over 1600 birds in a two hour period.

20 were on Bretherton Eyes on the 30<sup>th</sup> December including one very odd looking individual.

**Brambling** (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

***Winter visitor in variable numbers***

9 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 16<sup>th</sup> January. Other sightings in January were mainly of ones and twos in gardens at Adlington, Belmont and Chorley, but at least one was in a Chaffinch flock in Eyes Lane, Bretherton on the 28<sup>th</sup>. In February, numbers in the Adlington garden had increased to five by the 21<sup>st</sup>. March records again came from gardens at Adlington, Belmont and Great Knowley, and all three had birds into April with 2 still at Great Knowley (5<sup>th</sup>) and one at Adlington (14<sup>th</sup>). Numbers in the Belmont garden, however, increased to 19 by 12<sup>th</sup> April before reducing to 2 on 27<sup>th</sup> and then a single female until 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

First back in autumn were singles at Belmont and Great Knowley on 8<sup>th</sup> October. 20 roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 20<sup>th</sup> November, with 85 there on 11<sup>th</sup> December and 70 on 30<sup>th</sup>. One was on Croston Finney on 28<sup>th</sup> December. In October, November and December single birds were noted with a small chaffinch flock near the Hall Barn, Rivington.

Maximum birds per hour south over Belmont:- 37 on 24<sup>th</sup> October and 47 on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

**Chaffinch** (*Fringilla coelebs*)

***Common resident and winter visitor***

Maximum counts in a Belmont garden were 20+ in January, 25 in February and 30+ in March. There was a wintering flock of around 50 birds in Eyes Lane, Bretherton throughout January and February.

20+ were regular in a Belmont garden from August through to November then increasing to 40 in December. A maximum of 150 per hour flew south over Belmont on 6<sup>th</sup> October. 50+ roosted in Belmont Plantations on 26<sup>th</sup> December.

It came ninth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen.

**Bullfinch** (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)  
**Fairly common resident**

On 1<sup>st</sup> January, 10 were on heather and bramble near the Clog Inn site, Anglezarke. Four were in a Belmont garden throughout January.

During the year pairs visited an informal feeding site at Anglezarke car park and regularly visited a Rivington garden.

A maximum of five in one hour flew south over Belmont on 10<sup>th</sup> October. On the same day 4 males and 2 females were in a bushy rowan near the Bomber Memorial, Anglezarke. On 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 6 were again at the Clog Inn site.

It came seventeenth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen – two places higher than Greenfinch. Up to 10 visited a garden at Clayton Green during the winter period.

**Greenfinch** (*Chloris chloris*)  
**Common resident**

Maximum counts in a Belmont garden were 16 in January and 10 in February, November and December.

A maximum of 12 in one hour flew south over Belmont on 6<sup>th</sup> October during a vismig watch.

It came nineteenth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen, as its decline seems to continue unabated.

**Linnet** (*Linaria cannabina*)  
**Fairly common resident**

A flock of 100 was on Croston Moss on 10<sup>th</sup> January and one of 40 was at the E-shaped Pond, Bretherton during the month. Flocks of up to 70 birds were still to be found in April on Croston Moss (5<sup>th</sup>) and at Hic Bibi (18<sup>th</sup>).

Four pairs were on territory around Ward's reservoir during the breeding season.

A flock of 30 on Mawdesley Moss on 18<sup>th</sup> July was presumably a post-breeding flock. This had increased to a massive 500 by 18<sup>th</sup> August. 25 at Belmont on 30<sup>th</sup> July had increased to 60 in two flocks by mid-September.

A few were regulars at a garden feeding station in Coppull during October. A flock on Croston Moss numbered around 100 on 12<sup>th</sup> November and again on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. A flock of 75 was on Mawdesley Moss on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

**Twite** (*Linaria flavirostris*)

***Very scarce resident***

A flock of 25 was feeding on *Molinia* seed on Belmont Moor between 22<sup>nd</sup> October and 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

**Lesser Redpoll** (*Acanthis cabaret*)

***Common winter visitor; uncommon resident***

Maximum counts in a Belmont garden were 12 in January, 14 in February, 10+ regularly throughout March increasing to 12+ from 18<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> April, with 15 still visiting the garden on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Local breeding birds continued to visit feeders in Belmont gardens through the breeding season with a maximum of 3 pairs with recently-fledged juveniles present in June.

On 31<sup>st</sup> March, birds were singing in small numbers along Lead Mines Clough, Anglezarke. On 5<sup>th</sup> May, a pair was noted in Healey Nab conifers. Birds were seen throughout the breeding season at a regular site at White Coppice.

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

***Scarce visitor***

Two were near Belmont on 18<sup>th</sup> February. Nine were noted in the small conifer plantation on George's Lane, Rivington on 24<sup>th</sup> February, and again on 12<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March.

6 near Belmont on 14<sup>th</sup> July, with 2 there on 29<sup>th</sup> and one on 9<sup>th</sup> December. Maximum birds per hour south over Belmont during vismig counts:- 10 on 20/10 and 8 on 22/10. Small numbers were in Belmont Plantations during October

**Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis*)

***Common resident***

Flocks in January included 40 in Chorley and at Withnell, and 60 on Croston Moss (30<sup>th</sup>). There were maximum counts in a Belmont garden of 44 in January, 40 in February, 35 in March and still 35 on 3<sup>rd</sup> April. 80+ roosted in rhododendrons at Belmont on 28<sup>th</sup> February.

The species came twelfth in the Winter Garden Bird Survey in terms of number of gardens visited and frequency seen.

Pairs with young were noted at Withnell in June.

Up to 50 were in a Belmont garden during September. A flock of 20 birds at Common Bank Lodge on 31<sup>st</sup> October was surprisingly the largest reported in the month. Larger flocks were noted in December with 40 along Syd Brook, Eccleston (10<sup>th</sup>), 50+ at Heath Charnock (14<sup>th</sup>) and 45 at Belmont.

Maximum birds per hour south over Belmont:- 43 on 30<sup>th</sup> October.

**Siskin** (*Spinus spinus*)

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

A flock of 70 was by Syd Brook, Eccleston in January. Numbers in a garden at Clayton Green built up to a massive 190 on 20<sup>th</sup> February. A total of 177 were ringed. 70 were in a Belmont garden on 20<sup>th</sup> February, with 50 there on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, reducing to 25 by 3<sup>rd</sup> April but with 12 still present on 3<sup>rd</sup> May.



In Belmont, 5+ pairs/males continued to regularly visit a garden throughout May and June were undoubtedly nesting close-by. This was confirmed when pairs with recently-fledged juveniles began to appear from 23<sup>rd</sup> May onwards with a maximum count of 5 pairs with 20 recently-fledged juveniles present on 20<sup>th</sup> June. Additionally, another post-breeding family group was seen in Belmont Plantations on 14<sup>th</sup> July. Birds at Lead Mines Clough on 2<sup>nd</sup> July and White Coppice (4 on 10<sup>th</sup>) could have been local breeding birds.

Maximum birds per hour south over Belmont:- 45 on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

On 13<sup>th</sup> December, 25 were feeding on birch at White Coppice. 50 were in alders at Belmont on 15<sup>th</sup> December.

**Yellowhammer** (*Emberiza citrinella*)

***Fairly common resident; declining***

A flock of 40 was at Croston Twin Lakes on 23<sup>rd</sup> January.

A flock of 10 was on Croston Moss on 5<sup>th</sup> August. A flock of 15 was there on 25<sup>th</sup> December.

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

***Fairly common resident***

A pair was at Stronstrey Bank on 14<sup>th</sup> March.

12 pairs bred at Belmont reservoir, slightly down on previous years. Other sites holding multiple pairs included White Coppice, Withnell Fold and Yarrow Valley Park, plus Croston and Mawdesley Moss.



A flock of 20 was on Croston Moss on 5<sup>th</sup> August. 20+ were above Belmont on 6<sup>th</sup> August increasing to 55+ on 19<sup>th</sup> October. Four wintering flocks totalling 95+ were around Belmont in early December including one flock of 50 on moorland (at 325m asl) on 2nd. A party of 7 was on Bretherton Eyes on 30<sup>th</sup> December.

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

A party of 5 was on Croston Moss on 5<sup>th</sup> August. This had increased to 15 by 2<sup>nd</sup> November. 12 were noted at the site on 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

**ESCAPES**

**Snow Goose** (*Anser caerulescens*)

One circled Belmont Reservoir at altitude on 8<sup>th</sup> September.

**Ruddy Shelduck** (*Tadorna ferruginea*)

One of unknown origin was on a pond on Croston Finney on 9<sup>th</sup> October.

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

One was at the north end of Anglezarke Reservoir for most of the year, and another was in Yarrow Valley Park. Two were regular at Belmont throughout the year.

**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, D.Brown, I.Cameron, J.Catt, J.Cobham, B.Derbyshire, D.Downing, S.Driver, A.Dunn, J.Edwards, M.Fishwick, J.Frankland, M.Greenhalgh, N.Hancock, R.Hargreaves, I.M.Harper, L.Harrison, K.Haydock, J.Howlett, R.E.Hoyle, A.Johnson, C.Johnson, P.King, P.Kirk, P.Krischkiw, E.Langrish, A.Leach, G.Lilley, J.Love, A.Makin, B.Makinson, S.J.Martin, D.S.Martin, T.Morton, M.Nightingale, L.Poxon, C.Rae, P.Rhodes, R.W.Rhodes, J.Riley, N.Root, L.Rose, P.Ross, P.Rowlands, A.Ryding, J.Smith, N.T.Southworth, R.Spencer, C.Stanley, M.Stuart, J.Sutton, C.Thistlethwaite, M.Thornhill, T.West, N.West, P.West, T.Westhead, P.Whittaker, I.Whittle, K.Woan, and all those who submitted Garden Bird Survey Forms.

Apologies to anyone I may have omitted.

## **ROOKERY CENSUS**

<b>Site</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>1999</b>
Astley Park	4	3	0	0	0
A49 Euxton	37	41	50	40	56
Howard Arms, Whittle Springs	30	28	25	49	30
Rawlinson La, Heath Charnock	0	0	15	14	18
Railway Road, Adlington	39	41	30	24	24
Prospect House, Wheelton	69	56	32	81	101
Lower Wheelton	4	6	10	16	20
Red Cat, Wheelton	3	1	10	N/C	N/C
St Chad's Wheelton	12	8	6	N/C	N/C
Croston Bowling Green	75	86	80	135	130
Croston Town Road	5	7	0	0	0
Croston Westhead Road	6	5	0	0	0
Wild Bottoms Wood, Hoghton	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C
Town House Farm, Brindle	25	32	40	22	18
Brindle Village	0	0	11	N/C	N/C
Buckshaw Village	1	1	21	N/C	N/C
<b><u>Totals</u></b>	<b>310</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>397</b>

## **WATERFOWL COUNTS**

The monthly waterfowl counts cover Anglezarke/Rivington Reservoirs and Heapey and Birkacre Lodges.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Little Grebe	2			6	3	1	3
Great Crested Grebe	1	3	9	4	1	2	2
Cormorant	27	8	20	4	20	6	8
Whooper Swan			5				
Mute Swan	5	7	2	4	2	3	4
Pink-footed Goose	1						
Canada Goose	22	23	26				
Hybrid Goose	2	2	3	3	2	3	2
Greylag Goose		6	28				2
Mandarin					1		
Wigeon						9	
Teal	4			6	10	10	
Gadwall						34	
Mallard	229	90	69	240	299	347	280
Shoveler			2				
Pochard		1					
Tufted Duck	11		8	6	8	14	9
Goldeneye	5	8	4				5
Goosander	9	7	9		3	4	18
Moorhen	23	21	27	14	17	19	18
Coot	13	15	13	13	14	22	25

## RINGING REPORT

### Introduction

2016 started as 2015 had ended with three named storms blowing through during January and February – Gertrude on 30<sup>th</sup> January, Henry on 2<sup>nd</sup> February and finally Imogen on 8<sup>th</sup> February. That was followed by a few days of less windy weather, but still too blowy for mist netting. March produced some wet and windy weather with snow on the 4<sup>th</sup>, but it didn't linger long, unlike Siskin numbers, which again reached invasion proportions, with many coming into the garden until 10<sup>th</sup> April.

### 2016 Ringing Year Summary

**January.** Ringing was all undertaken in the garden with only six sessions managed due to unfavourable weather, catching mostly common garden birds. The month's total was just 35 birds.

**February** saw just four species of bird ringed – Long-tailed Tit, Goldfinch, Bullfinch and 194 Siskin (yes 194!). Siskins were well and truly back in force this year.

**March and April** continued in the same vein as February with all the ringing done in the garden due to the continued influx of Siskin. Another 65 were caught in March and 54 in April.

**May and June** are the months when the main emphasis is on pullus ringing, either at open nests or at nest boxes. A total of 212 passerine pulli were ringed. Unfortunately, this year we didn't set sail in the good ship "Birkacre Bathtub" to tern island due to the predation of the tern chicks in mid-June.

**August and September** saw only 9 ringing sessions – 2 in August and 7 in September. August saw one session in the garden and one at Hic Bibi where Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Whitethroat and Willow Warbler were ringed. In September, there were 5 sessions in the garden and 2 at Hic Bibi, catching Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Whitethroat, Bullfinch and 2 juvenile Willow Tit.

**October** saw ringing at 3 sites at one of our woodland feeding stations, where we hoped for a passage of Goldcrest. Lower numbers than expected passed through but with a bit of luck and help from the weather gods, we caught and ringed 21 Goldcrest and 2 Wrens in the garden and the woodland site

**November and December.** Ringing took place at just 2 sites – the garden and a woodland feeding station, catching mainly titmice and finches with the odd Nuthatch and Great Spotted Woodpecker (lovely bleeding knuckles – oh the joy!). So at the end of the year the total for 2016 was 1141 birds of 26 species caught - the 4<sup>th</sup> highest total since ringing began in the CDNHS recording area in 1983

### Garden Ringing

2016 garden ringing totals would have been just about average, with the total (excluding Siskins) standing at 387 (including retraps), but the year once again, as in 2013, was a Siskin invasion year with a total of 315 caught (including retraps and controls). In an invasion year, our tiny garden – 27 feet long x 22 feet wide, is quite literally a Siskin magnet. Once we know that it's going to be a Siskin year, we increase the number of feeders from 15 to 25, as due to their gregarious

nature, the more feeders you put out, the more Siskins will come in, and our 25 feeders brought them in big time. The Siskin horde could pretty much empty our feeders in 2 days, if not topped up regularly. It cost a fortune keeping the well fed, but boy, it was worth every penny.

### **Garden Ringing Totals 2016**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Full grown</b>	<b>Pulli</b>	<b>Retraps/ recoveries</b>	<b>Total</b>
GS Woodpecker	3	0	2	5
Wren	2	0	0	2
Duncock	8	0	2	10
Robin	28	0	7	35
Blackbird	18	7	6	31
Song Thrush	1	0	0	1
Goldcrest	10	0	0	10
Long-tailed Tit	22	0	4	26
Coal Tit	18	0	16	34
Blue Tit	65	0	23	88
Great Tit	56	0	17	73
Nuthatch	1	0	2	3
Jay	0	0	1	1
Starling	4	0	1	5
House Sparrow	2	0	0	2
Chaffinch	5	0	0	5
Goldfinch	37	0	1	38
Siskin	287	0	28	315
Bullfinch	14	0	4	18
<b>Annual totals</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>702</b>

### **Siskin Invasion 2016**

This year's invasion was the first major influx into the garden since 2013. The first seen was a male on 7<sup>th</sup> January, which was caught and ringed on 11<sup>th</sup> January. No further bird was seen until 24<sup>th</sup> January when 2 more males were caught and ringed. It was then quiet until the beginning of February when the invasion began on the 5<sup>th</sup> with 23 birds caught in just over an hour. The next few days were observation days only as it was too windy for mist netting. The next suitable day was 11<sup>th</sup> February with 46 birds caught in an hour and twenty minutes. It could have been more but we chose to close the net so that we could record all the biometrics of the birds we had caught. My scribe was going hell for leather to record everything! The next 2 days were too windy for mist netting which was a shame because Siskins swarmed in with up to 90 in the garden at any one time. The next good day weather-wise was 14<sup>th</sup> February, and the gods smiled on us that day. Just after I had put the nest up, Michelle asked if we might catch as many as in 2013 when we caught 53 in an hour also on 14<sup>th</sup> February. "Not a chance," said I, "that's got to have been just a one-off". Oh, how wrong was I! In less than an hour we caught 48 birds – 23 in the first catch with birds dropping in

around me as I extracted – and a further 25 less than 10 minutes later at which point the net was taken down so that we could concentrate on the biometrics and ringing of the birds already caught. Another day of perfecting our Siskin ageing skills! What a cracking day it was too, and one of the main reasons why I never tire of ringing, with the pleasure of seeing such little gems in the hand. And yes, we did catch almost as many as in 2013 (just 5 birds less). Siskins continued visiting the garden throughout March and April, with 65 caught in March and a further 54 in early April. The last bird seen in the garden was a male on 20<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Siskin Garden Totals 2016**

<b>February</b>	5th	11th	12th	14th	19th	22nd	24th	26th	28th
Ringed	23	46	0	48	20	0	20	23	19
Count	50+	100+	90+	150+	100+	200+	150+	80+	70+
<b>March</b>	3rd	7th	10th	12th	17th	20th	22nd	25th	29th
Ringed	6	0	0	38	5	0	16	0	0
Count	40*	100+	90+	60+	25*	60+	40	100+	75+
<b>April</b>	4th	7th	9th	11th	12th	19th	20th		
Ringed	18	0	20	0	6*	10*			
Count	40+	30+	50+	40+	25	25	1		

\* A male Sparrowhawk flew through the garden and scattered all the Siskins, but missed the net on all 4 occasions!

### **Recoveries / controls**

Species Siskin  
 Ring number Z301760  
 Age ringed 5 male  
 Where / when ringed Garden Camwood, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016  
 Where / when controlled Drummond, Inverness, Highlands 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016  
 Comments 66 days Distance 427 km Possibly on breeding grounds

Species Siskin  
 Ring number Z301761  
 Age ringed 6 female  
 Where / when ringed Garden Camwood, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016  
 Where / when controlled Kildary, Highlands 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016  
 Comments 60 days Distance 457 km the subsequent bird from the ring series also caught in the Highlands

Species Siskin  
 Ring number Z301964  
 Age ringed 6 female  
 Where / when ringed Garden Camwood, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2016  
 Where / when controlled Redmire, North Yorks 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016  
 Comments 99 days Distance 82 km Freshly dead

## Ringling Totals 2016

Species	Full grown	Pulli	Retraps/ recoveries	Total
GS Woodpecker	3	0	2	5
Wren	4	0	0	4
Dunnock	8	0	2	10
Robin	34	5	10	49
Blackbird	19	7	6	32
Song Thrush	1	0	0	1
Whitethroat	3	0	0	3
Blackcap	2	0	0	2
Chiffchaff	3	0	0	3
Willow Warbler	7	0	0	7
Goldcrest	21	0	0	21
Long-tailed Tit	33	0	6	39
Willow Tit	2	0	0	2
Coal Tit	29	0	20	49
Blue Tit	143	94	46	283
Great Tit	95	76	21	192
Nuthatch	3	7	4	14
Jay	0	0	1	1
Starling	4	0	1	5
House Sparrow	2	0	0	2
Tree Sparrow	0	23	0	23
Chaffinch	14	0	0	14
Greenfinch	1	0	0	1
Goldfinch	37	0	1	38
Siskin	287	0	28	315
Bullfinch	21	0	5	26
<b>Annual totals</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>1141</b>

## Nest recording

142 nest record cards were submitted to the BTO nest recording scheme. Many of these were from nest boxes that we monitor regularly at various sites in the area, and also from natural sites which we managed to find.

Species	No. cards	Eggs laid	Eggs hatched	Young fledged
Blackbird	4	18	15	7
Clue Tit	24	142	130	100
Canada Goose	4	30	24	18
Collared Dove	2	3	3	3
Common Tern	45 *	82	80	47
Coot	2	12	10	8
Curlew	1	4	0	0

Species	No. cards	Eggs laid	Eggs hatched	Young fledged
Dipper	1	5	4	3
Goosander	1	10	8	5
Great Tit	23	129	120	89
Grey Wagtail	1	6	5	3
Greylag Goose	2	18	11	9
Kestrel	1	4	4	4
Lapwing	4	12	3	2
Little Grebe	1	5	8	2
Long-tailed tit	1	10	0	0
Mallard	2	24	16	9
Moorhen	3	16	10	8
Mute Swan	1	7	5	4
Song Thrush	1	4	4	3
Tawny Owl	1	3	2	1
Tree Sparrow	6	30	28	23
Woodpigeon	6	10	8	6
Nuthatch	1	7	7	7
Robin	3	14	10	5
Shelduck	1	10	8	6

\*44 of the Common Terns were recorded at Preston Docks

### **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. Finally, thanks to my trainers, past and present, Ian Spence and Dave Fletcher, without whose assistance this report would not be possible. On a sad note, may I dedicate this report to Jim Longbotham, senior ranger / park manager at Cuerden Valley Park, who sadly passed away in August 2016. For a good number of years, Michelle and I had several ringing sites in the park, one of which was a very good Redwing roost, but unfortunately, due to the removal of Rhododendrons, the site was no longer used as a roost. In early 2016, Jim and I were in discussion about the erection of more nest boxes within the park and permission was granted for this and also to mist net in several of the nature reserve areas. During spring / summer 2017, regular survey work will be carried out in several of the reserve areas. Many thanks to Jim and his deputy ranger James for their help in making this possible.

**Andy Leach**

## **MAMMAL REPORT**

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

First of the year were one in a Belmont garden and another at Croston sewage works, both on 25<sup>th</sup> March. Records were received from 8 sites, spread across the area suggesting it is still widespread. This is backed up by the news that a new Hedgehog sanctuary in Chorley had 40 sick animals in its care in September. There were regular sightings from a Belmont garden of up to 3 until 8<sup>th</sup> October. 3 were found dead on A675 at Belmont Reservoir in late-July.

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

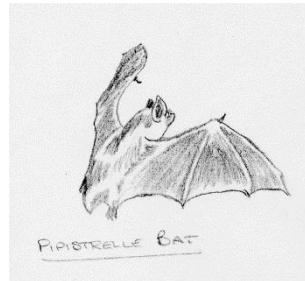
Abundant across the area. Many molehills were noted on Belmont Reservoir Island in January. Fresh mole hills were also recorded in Tan House Valley in March, White Coppice in September, where a dead animal was also found, and Astley Park in October where one of the hills was still being formed as soil cascaded down the sides, but the animal didn't show its face!

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

One was noted 'hibernating' in an old mine adit at Belmont on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. All other records came from Astley Park (May and August) and Cuerden Valley Park (August) during 'bat walks'.

### **Common Pipistrelle** (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) 45khz

The first seen were near Heapey Lodges on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. The first (2) seen at Belmont were on 20<sup>th</sup> April with the last (2) on 28<sup>th</sup> October. A maximum of 4 were at Belmont on 5<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> September. Away from Belmont, records were received from 15 sites, many of them from members' gardens, suggesting that on a good evening in summer, the skies of Chorley must be swarming with the species.



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

Four records were received from White Coppice in April, from Astley Park in May and August and from Cuerden Valley Park in August.

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

3 were noted 'hibernating' in Wheelton Plantation on 3<sup>rd</sup> January and 5<sup>th</sup> February. The species was recorded on a 'bat walk' in Cuerden Valley Park on 31<sup>st</sup> August. 4 were noted 'hibernating' in an old mine adit at Belmont on 6<sup>th</sup> February and 5<sup>th</sup> March.



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

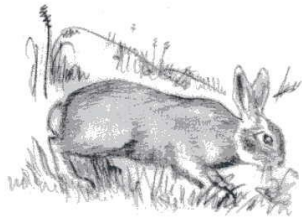
One was 'hibernating' in an old mine adit at Belmont on 6<sup>th</sup> February with 2 noted there on 6<sup>th</sup> March. Bats were recorded on 'bat walks' in Astley Park on 27<sup>th</sup> August and in Cuerden Valley Park on 31<sup>st</sup> August.

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

There were 31 sightings throughout the year from the Belmont area (15 in 2015) with a maximum count of 8 on 14<sup>th</sup> September. The first leveret was seen on 5<sup>th</sup> June. Elsewhere there were over 50 sightings reported from all areas, including Bretherton, Croston, Eccleston, Euxton, Mawdesley and Shaw Green in the west, Brindle, Jack Green and Withnell Fold to the north, Anglezarke and Rivington to the east and Hic Bibi to the south. Best counts were 7 on Croston Moss on 30<sup>th</sup> April and 7 at Withnell Fold on 8<sup>th</sup> May.

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

Following the myxomatosis outbreak in summer 2014, Rabbits were only present in very low numbers around Belmont throughout 2015 & 2016. From only 3+ early in the year the population peaked at only 15 in September with only 5+ at the year-end - a far cry from the 1100+ around Belmont in July 2007. A report of possible myxomatosis was also received from Great



Knowley where several diseased animals were noted in October. A sighting of 25 near Heapey Lodges at midday on 13<sup>th</sup> July seemed unusual.

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

The species was very much reduced in numbers locally probably due to the widespread failure of tree seed/nut crops in 2015. Nevertheless, 54 records were submitted for the Chorley area in general, making it, unsurprisingly, our most recorded mammal. Young animals were noted at Euxton on 18<sup>th</sup> June. Gamekeepers at Belmont reported shooting/trapping 71 Grey Squirrels during 2016 (compared with 229 in 2015). Very low numbers were present in the Roddlesworth Plantations in the first winter period. The cull undertaken in there annually since 2008 was repeated in February 2016 to reduce numbers of this species in those parts of the plantations where widespread bark-stripping to trees and severe damage to nestbox schemes (plus predation of eggs/young) has been rife in previous years. Shooting in conjunction with drey poking resulted in a mere 11 Grey Squirrels killed giving a density of 0.11 squirrels/hectare, which extrapolated would give a total estimated population of just 23 Grey Squirrels throughout the whole of the Roddlesworth Plantations. Unusual encounters included one on moorland on Winter Hill (at 350m asl) on 24<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Bank Vole** (*Clethrionomys glareolus*).

Records came principally from three sites – Cuerden Valley Park, Duxbury Woods and Yarrow Valley Park. The animals at the latter site were regularly seen feeding on bird seed at two separate locations. Two families were seen there on 5<sup>th</sup> April. One was also noted in a Belmont garden on 29<sup>th</sup> August.

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

Very few were noted in the first half of the year which was reflected in reduced numbers of Weasels, Short-eared Owls plus Barn Owl breeding failures etc. However, the population had returned to large numbers in some fields by the year-end judging by the abundance of vole runs/holes present plus multitudes of sightings. Apart from moorland sites, one or two records were received from Croston Moss, Cuerden Valley Park and Great Knowley.

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

441 were trapped by gamekeepers at Belmont during 2016 (including 21 trapped around Belmont Reservoir) with an additional substantial number (estimated at 300) poisoned.

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

Common throughout the year around Belmont including 11 trapped in one garden shed in Belmont Village. The species was recorded in Cuerden Valley Park during small mammal trapping sessions in April and December when 14 were caught. Two were found dead on Rivington Road above Belmont on 27<sup>th</sup> August.

### **Otter** (*Lutra lutra*)

One was reported by the bailiff at Ulnes Walton brick pits.

### **Stoat** (*Mustela ermine*)

There were 24 sightings throughout the year around Belmont, including individuals in Ermine in January and December. There were, however, only 12 sightings from the rest of the area, albeit from all parts of the area.

### **Weasel** (*Mustela nivalis*)

There were only 7 sightings throughout the year around Belmont during 2016 probably linked with low vole numbers in the first half of the year. Only three records were received from elsewhere including two from White Coppice within days of each other.

### **Ferret** (*Mustela putorius*)

One was present at Belmont in 2016.

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

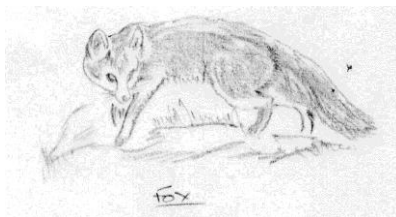
Following a worrying year in 2015 when 6 were killed at Belmont; thankfully with permanent traps running to prevent colonisation, no Mink appeared there in 2016. However, records were received from Yarrow Valley Park and Croston Moss.

### **Badger** (*Meles meles*.)

Signs of this species continued residence were ascertained in four areas of the West Pennine Moors. Additionally, 3 road casualties were recorded one in Dawber's Lane, Euxton on 27<sup>th</sup> March, and two near Belmont on 6<sup>th</sup> August and 9<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Red Fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*)

In addition to the ongoing annual control in the Belmont area for game and agricultural purposes; Foxes are also seasonally controlled to protect the nationally important gullery and ground nesting wader populations at Belmont Reservoir from predation/disturbance during the breeding season. This preventative control resulted in 4 Foxes being shot adjacent to the reservoir during April-June. This action was successful in precluding predation of the gull colony. Away from Belmont, just 8 records were received, but from 8 different sites from across the area, indicating the species to be widespread, if localized.



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

A small herd totalling up to 10 individuals are occasionally seen near Belmont. These are known to be wanderers from a small feral population in an adjacent area. No record was received of the Euxton / Ulmes Walton herd(s).

### **Roe Deer** (*Capreolus capreolus*)

The species is seen commonly around Belmont with at least 18 present in January. Maximum groups seen were 8 in April and October. One was on moorland (at 320m asl) above Belmont on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Two, six-week-old kids, were seen at Belmont on 19<sup>th</sup> July. Away from Belmont, 31 records were received from across the area, 6 of which were from Heatherlea Woods and 5 from White Coppice, with the largest group being 5 at Anglezarke on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

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

One was seen taken by a stoat in Yarrow Valley Park on 18<sup>th</sup> June. The species was also recorded in Cuerden Valley Park during small mammal surveys in April and December.

## AMPHIBIA

### Smooth Newt (*Triturus vulgaris*)

5 were seen near Belmont on 27<sup>th</sup> May. Two were found in an Euxton garden on 9<sup>th</sup> October.

### Palmate Newt (*Triturus helveticus*)

Common in ponds/reservoirs around Belmont but no surveys were carried out in 2016. Singles were found dead on Rivington Road above Belmont (at 320m asl) on 23<sup>rd</sup> July and 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

### Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)

One was noted in a pond on Lower Burgh Meadows on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

### Toad (*Bufo bufo*)

All records from Belmont relate to animals found dead on roads: The first 2 were on the A675 near Belmont Reservoir on 17<sup>th</sup> April, with casualties rising to 30+ there on 8<sup>th</sup> May. 5+ were found on Rivington Road above Belmont (at 320m asl) on 12<sup>th</sup> June. The only record of a live toad received was one in Cuerden Valley Park on 1<sup>st</sup> September! Please report all sightings.

### Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*)

First (1) was seen at Belmont on 24<sup>th</sup> January. First (5) clumps of spawn at Belmont were seen on 27<sup>th</sup> February. 330+ clumps of spawn were in two adjacent ponds at Belmont on 20<sup>th</sup> March. Elsewhere, there were many reports of frog spawn or frogs mating during March, from both garden ponds and sites such as Heapey Lodges, Tan House Valley and Yarrow Valley Park. A puddle on a track on Wheelton Moor also contained spawn with zero chance of success! Tadpoles were noted in Astley Village on 12<sup>th</sup> April. 20+ were found dead on Rivington Road above Belmont (at 320m asl) on 10<sup>th</sup> September. Due to the mild second winter period, singles were seen in a Belmont pond on 25<sup>th</sup> September and 18<sup>th</sup> December.

## REPTILES

### Adder (*Vipera berus*)

A male was seen at close quarters above Belmont on 28<sup>th</sup> August.

### Common Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*)

One was noted near Belmont on 25<sup>th</sup> March with two seen there on both 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July.