

2018 During inclement weather, typical of this April, Shovelers were once more evident with up to four at Snaygill and Silsden Floods and a male remained at Yeadon Tarn for a number of days (6th-18th). A couple of Shelducks were also present at Silsden Floods (7th-13th), whilst a Pochard was a surprise visitor to Harold Park, Wibsey (22nd) and a pair of Gadwall appeared at Snaygill (11th).

A flock of 60 Golden Plovers at the traditional site of Reva Hill was by far the largest reported. There were up to 12 Redshanks at Snaygill, six at Kex Gill and a possible breeding pair at Glovershaw, where they have bred in the past. The flood plains along the Aire Valley, north of Keighley also attracted a Greenshank (11th-13th) and a Little Ringed Plover had been noted at an undisclosed site (15th) and another flew through Caldene Fields (7th).

It was proving to be a poor start to spring, the cold weather at the start of the month was certainly holding back the surge in migrating birds. Ten Sand Martins at Esholt (4th) were amongst the first arrivals with numbers climbing to 25 at Apperley Bridge by the middle of the month. There was a dearth of Swallows with just ten, feeding over Yeadon Tarn being the largest flock reported during the month. Warblers were also late in arriving. Early reports of a Sedge Warbler at Otley Wetland (18th) and Stockbridge (25th), were in addition to a Lesser Whitethroat (25th) at Toad Holes Beck and Whitethroats at Glovershaw (27th) and Apperley Bridge (30th). Common Terns reached Otley Wetland (18th) and Cuckoos were calling from the 20th whilst the first Swifts were seen over Apperley Bridge (27th).

Ring Ouzels were seen in Upper Wharfedale from the 5th and there was an outstanding report of seven on Hazlewood Moor (20th). A pair of Stonechats were also seen here on the same day, the only other report concerned a pair seen across the valley on Barden Moor. Redstarts and Pied Flycatchers had arrived at Barden, a male Whinchat was at Leeseshaw Reservoir (30th), and single Ospreys flew north over Silsden (4th) and Barden Scale (8th). Finally, there was the surprise report of a female Goosander with five chicks at Apperley Bridge.

2017 A Great Grey Shrike, first seen on Barden Moor on the 18th, remained in the area for a further five days. An Osprey passed over watchers at the beginning of the month (2nd), and another of this species gave very close views as it flew over Apperley Bridge a week later. It was on the moorland around Barden that up to three Ring Ouzels were seen whilst a female was seen in trees near Queensbury.

Over 350 Wheatears were recorded during the month, and of the seven double-figure counts, the highest was 26 at Warley Moor Reservoir (Fly Flatts) on the 25th. Other high counts included 24 at Trough Lane (21st) and Warley Moor Reservoir (30th), and 21 at Denholme Gate (16th). Visitors to Stockbridge included a Lesser Whitethroat and a Reed Warbler, whilst a Grasshopper Warbler was located in fields around Yeadon Tarn (all on the 30th).

Female Whinchats were in fields by Glovershaw Lane, Baildon (20th & 24th) and a male was noted here two days later whilst another was seen with Wheatears at Trough Lane (22nd). A female Whinchat was seen briefly near Top Withins (26th) and a male was photographed at Warley Moor Reservoir (30th). Male Stonechats were seen at Nab Water Lane and in the quarry area below Whetstone Gate. A surprise was a pair of Tree Sparrows near Golcar Farm, Glovershaw.

A Cuckoo was at Pennythorn on the 22nd and another was heard over Bingley Moor a week later, whilst a third was seen disturbing Meadow Pipits at Leeseshaw on the same day. Flocks of over 300 Golden Plovers had gathered on Reva Hill and Moorside Lane, Oxenhope in the early part of the month and Little Ringed Plovers were reported in Upper Wharfedale and three birds spent at least six days on a flooded area at Raggalds, Queensbury. To the west of here, at Ogden Reservoir a Whimbrel made a brief visit on the 11th.

2016 April was relatively mild and mostly dry, until the final week when temperatures dropped and the weather turned wet. Conditions were excellent for migration watchers and birders were rewarded with sightings of six Ospreys, record counts of Wheatears and a good haul of Ring Ouzels.

An Osprey was seen fishing in Lower Barden Reservoir on 3rd April and the following day two more singles, one at Bradup and another over Hazlewood Moor, were seen flying north. On the 13th, one flew near Scargill Reservoir and on the same day another was seen from Barden Scale. The final sighting was of a single, this time over Keighley Moor (19th).

A huge passage of over 300 Wheatears were recorded during the month with double-figure counts reported at Slippery Ford, Warley Moor Reservoir, Whetstone Gate and Glovershaw. On the 4th, a male Ring Ouzel was seen at Slippery Ford. There were then almost daily reports of up to five of this species, some of which could be seen from near the car park.

Two Yellow Wagtails visited a Hazlewood garden on the early date of 21st, and a Grasshopper Warbler spent an evening reeling from a bramble patch alongside the Glen Road, Baildon. A Cuckoo was in full voice singing from trees and wires on the edge of Baildon Moor (20th), this was followed by reports of others at Slippery Ford, Strid Wood, Ben Rhydding, and Barden Moor.

Two Whimbrel were brief visitors to Warley Moor Reservoir (11th) and the developing shoreline at Thornton Moor Reservoir encouraged a couple of Ringed Plovers (9th)). Common Sandpipers were established at both these sites and also at Keighley Moor.

A Whinchat was located on Barden Moor at the end of the month, and four pairs of Stonechats had been recorded in the area: two at Whetstone Gate, one at Keighley Moor and the other on Sandwith Moor.

At the beginning of the there were two reports of flocks of about 100 Fieldfares and two large roosts of Golden Plover: 260 at Moorside Lane, Oxenhope, only surpassed by 330 at Reva Reservoir on the 18th.

Barn Owls, Short-eared Owls, Long-eared Owls and a single Marsh Harrier were all reported by members over the course of the month.

2015 April was mostly dry, sunny and pleasant until the final week when easterly winds dominated the weather. Golden Plovers amassed in flocks of between 230 and 320 at three locations: Glovershaw, Moorside Lane Oxenhope and on the Whetstone Allotment. Earlier in the month a flock of eight Whoopers visited Lower Barden Reservoir and nearby, 130 Fieldfare flew northwards. The first Cuckoo was seen and photographed at St Ives (16th) and another was at the regular site of Lower Barden towards the end of the month. Three Sand Martins were reported at Ben Rhydding during the first week (7th) and the first Swallow was recorded at Riddlesden on the following day.

Two Common Terns, first seen at Yeadon (18th), were probably the same pair that were noted at Otley Wetlands a few days later. Pied Flycatchers and Redstarts were well-established by the end of the month at Timble, Strid Wood and in locations in the Upper Washburn. Tree Pipits were also in evidence at their favoured sites at Stainburn, Hazlewood Moor and Timble. Garden Warblers were singing at Otley Wetland (21st), Bolton Bridge and East Riddlesden and a Wood Warbler was heard in St. Ives (26th).

A pair of Stonechats were seen in Coldstone Beck and a male Whinchat, the first of the year, was located at Nab Water Lane Oxenhope (24th). Fly Flatts were visited by three Shelducks (19th), a Common Scoter dropped onto Ogden Reservoir (14th) and a pair of Gadwall were seen once more at Esholt (12th).

An Osprey passed over Keighley Moor (6th) and on the same day a Black Redstart was seen with Wheatears near Nab Water Lane. Ring Ouzel passage was particularly well-recorded with four reports. The first was two birds at Burley Woodhead (9th) and a few days later there was another report of a bird at Timble. Three pairs were feeding on Soil Hill (20th) and later in the month a young male was in the vicinity of Barden Reservoirs. The passage of Wheatears continued throughout the month with 113 birds recorded, the largest gatherings were at Glovershaw. Whilst breeding was reported from many locations, the sight of a female Goosander with 20 juveniles battling the currents on the River Wharfe was particularly memorable.

2014 April was a predominantly dry and mild month with only small amounts of rain which fell in the final few days. This excellent spell of weather had certainly encouraged our breeding birds with some juveniles already reported. Migration was also well underway and there were some significant reports of interesting species. At the beginning of the month an Osprey drifted over East Morton (5th) and a week later a Hobby was seen in the Washburn. During a period of easterly winds, towards the end of the month, there was a Little Gull at Yeadon Tarn (20th). The following day, the Tarn was host to an Arctic Tern and in the afternoon, a Roseate Tern paid a brief visit. Three Common Terns rested here on the 24th and there was a report, yet to be confirmed, of six more of this species and a couple of Black Terns scything through the mist over Rombalds Moor. Two Dotterels were watched on Round Hill (23rd) and at Addingham High Moor on the following day, six Ring Ouzels were feeding seen. Another of this species was reported from Hazelwood Moor (25th) and two days later, a Little Egret happily spent time along the Wharfe at Ben Rhydding.

Eight Whooper Swans were seen through thick fog on Ogden Reservoir (3rd), another two spent at least ten days on Silsden Ings, but the most spectacular was a flock of 40 flying SW over Baildon (5th). On 6th April, three Little Ringed Plovers stopped briefly at Lower Laithe Reservoir and at about this time waders at Silsden Ings included Dunlin, Ruff and Ringed Plover. Numbers of Redshank at Silsden Ings reached 12 on the 9th and later there were various moorland sightings. Common Sandpipers had returned by 16th when one was seen at Lower Laithe Reservoir. A flock of 263 Golden Plovers, the biggest by some margin, many of which were of the northern race, was at Upper Marsh, in the south of the area (20th). At Silsden Ings there were 110 Teal and a couple of Shovelers (4th) and on the same day three Mandarin Ducks were on Tong Park Lake.

Over 125 Wheatears were reported passing through the area with the highest day a count of 16, around Baildon Golf Course on the 24th and a couple of the females were of the Greenland race *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa*. Pairs of Stonechats were seen at Nab Water Lane (4th), Trough Lane (11th), Whetstone Gate (14th), Bradup and Sconce (19th) with a female at Leeshaw (18th). A pair of Whinchats passed through Glovershaw (24th) and a single bird was at Bradup a few days later.

Sand Martins had returned to their traditional breeding sites by the 7th and early Swallows were reported from the 4th and there was a report of 13 of these birds resting in a dead tree on the Higher Coach Road Baildon. The first House Martins were reported from the 13th and a Swift flew over Crossflats a week later.

Willow Warblers, first heard in the area on the 6th, were here in good numbers by the middle of the month. A walk around Sconce and Baildon Moor produced 19 birds in full song and earlier at nearby at Easholt, 15 Chiffchaffs were similarly noted (4th).

Active Redstarts and Pied Flycatchers were seen from the 13th in the Washburn and in the Strid Wood areas. Pairs of Green Woodpeckers were seen at St. Ives, Shipley Glen and at Pitty Beck, Thornton and during the final week, five Cuckoos were heard and occasionally seen in the area.

2013 April was a very cold, mainly dry month as the breeding season stuttered into action. Moorland birds such as Lapwings, Curlews, Snipes and Oystercatchers were all seen on their traditional territory despite the poor conditions. During the first three weeks, Glovershaw and Scargill Pasture maintained flocks of up to 150 and 200 Golden Plovers, Redshank had returned to their breeding sites and Common Sandpipers had arrived. Three of these migrant waders were seen passing along the Aire in Bingley and those with more permanent intentions were noted in the south of the area.

Elsewhere, a female Common Scoter was on Scargill Reservoir (7th), a single Barnacle Goose was at the nearby John o' Gaunt's (13th) and Woodcocks were disturbed at Stockbridge and alongside Graincliffe Plantation.

Amazingly, Waxwings continued to be seen right up until the final day of the month when 30 were feeding on trees behind Asda in Shipley. In the middle of the month, Morrisons HQ in Bradford

grabbed the plaudits when 67 were reported in their adjacent trees (19th) and smaller flocks were seen at Queensbury, Thackley, Wilsden, Riddlesden and Hawksworth throughout this time.

Siskins and Redpolls were often seen in gardens, but there was a major invasion of 20, with ten at one time on the feeders at Stockbridge (21st). Observers in Baildon and Riddlesden reported visiting Brambling and Blackcaps making an occasional visit to bird-tables.

A post-breeding flock of Crossbills was seen on a couple of occasions at Graincliffe Plantation, but the surprise bird at this location was a Firecrest which was also photographed (13th).

Only two Stonechats were recorded during this period, at Whetstone and Oxenhope, but Tree Sparrows and Marsh Tits were reported from their more reliable locations around Beaverdyke Reservoir.

The cold easterly winds severely reduced the passage of summer migrants. Two male Wheatears were feeding on Baildon Golf Course (8th), but it was another ten days before there was any significant numbers of these birds passing through. Strid Wood and the Upper Washburn held small numbers of Pied Flycatchers and Redstarts at the end of the month and a Cuckoo called near Dob Park (26th). Two Swifts were seen heading northwards over Yews Green, Queensbury (26th) and two Whinchats rested at the end of Birch Close Lane (30th). Yet, a flock of 250 winter Thrushes at Stainburn Plantation seemed more in keeping with the weather (13th).

2012 Following a record dry March, we endured a record wet April and this poor weather, combined with a period of NE winds probably accounted for a delay in the arrival and passage of migrants. By the final weekend, no Garden Warbler, Sedge Warbler or Whitethroat had been heard at Stockbridge. Although a Willow Warbler was heard on Baildon Bank (1st), it was another two weeks before this species had become more noticeable. Blackcaps were also only heard spasmodically, with Chiffchaffs being the most prominent early warbler. At the end of the month a Grasshopper Warbler was calling from deep undergrowth on Sconce Lane, Baildon (30th) and a Cuckoo was heard over Rombald's Moor (22nd).

A couple of Redstarts and 6 male Pied Flycatchers were reported at Strid Wood (21st), a male Whinchat was near the Scout Camp on Sconce Lane, Baildon (30th) and a pair of Stonchats gave every indication of breeding at Glovershaw.

A flock of up to 250 Golden Plover were regularly seen in fields adjacent to Glovershaw Lane, Baildon, 11 Black-tailed Godwits were on the flooded Silsden Ings (30th) and a Little Gull was photographed at Redcar Tarn (10th).

A Whooper Swan was on Leeshaw Reservoir (8th) and a pair of Selduck were present at Kex Gill at about the same time.

During the Group walk around the Leathley and Farnley, a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was the star bird of the 49 species seen (14th). Green Woodpeckers were heard in a few areas, particularly Shipley Glen where breeding is expected.

A Marsh Harrier and two Ospreys passed observers in the Wharfe Valley (12th), and another flew low over the road and reservoir at Swinsty (16th).

Wheatear passage did not gather momentum until the 20th when nine birds were seen at Glovershaw and on the 30th, 15 birds were feeding on the Golf Course amongst Skylarks and Meadow Pipits. A Ring Ouzel was seen on Embsay Moor (5th) and another was photographed in the Oxenhope area (14th).

Fieldfares were still in the area when 130 were seen from the Swinsty embankment (7th) and later in the month 20 were in trees at Bradup. Brambling were also reported from the north of the area (4th & 5th).

2011 Bradford Lister Park, with records back to 1906, recorded its driest, sunniest warmest April on record making conditions perfect for birds and birders alike.

A Rock Pipit spent a few hours in the overfall at Leeming Reservoir (29th) and a Yellow Wagtail was near Leeshaw Reservoir (20th). A pair of Common Terns were giving positive signs of courtship at the private wetland site where three Whimbrel had flown in and settled for a little while (18th). A male Yellowhammer was singing on Baildon Moor (9th) and a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was drumming in Woodlands Drive, Rawdon (19th). A Spotted Redshank, in summer plumage, was feeding at Silsden Reservoir (28th) and a Common Crane flew over this area a few days earlier (20th). Along the Upper Wharfe, Mandarin ducks were present, with a group of five seen beyond Barden Bridge (25th). Twite were again seen at the feeding station at Fly Flatts and a White Wagtail was in the area (6th).

The last of the winter migrants were still with us in the shape of Brambling and Waxwing. Farnley held 12 of the former in resplendent summer plumage (14th), and the final report of Waxwings was on the 21st when 20 flew over Sandbeds.

Three singing Wood Warblers were heard in Strid Wood (29th) and two males were noted at the Racecourse Plantation, St. Ives (24th). A Lesser Whitethroat had returned to Caldene Fields (25th), four pairs of Pied Flycatchers were using the boxes in Strid Wood and a single male was present by Monk Pond, St. Ives (24th). Stockbridge held Sedge and Garden Warbler and at the private wetlands, Reed Warblers were in residence (18th).

Birds of prey passing over the area included an Osprey which disturbed a flock of 30 Golden Plover at Glovershaw (2nd) and three Marsh Harriers, one, a cream-crowned, was seen in the early morning of the 10th heading ENE over St. Ives. Another passed over Ilkley Moor (14th) and the third bird went across Scone Lane (21st).

Early Redstarts were recorded in trees at the top end of Thruscross on the 6th and three days later another was at St. Ives. Four more were seen near Laund House (29th) and up to 12 at Lindley Wood where there were obvious signs of nest building (20th).

Wheatears passed through the area with about 60 recorded, the main spots being at Trough Lane and Glovershaw where 11 birds were feeding at the bottom of Birch Close Lane (8th). Cuckoo was first heard on the 18th at Coldstone Beck and later at four other locations, a Ring Ouzel was near Thruscross Reservoir (6th) and a male Whinchat was near the bridge at Bradup (25th).

2010 High pressure over the UK meant April was largely a settled month with long spells of sunshine, but cold northerly winds kept the temperature down. However, ash from the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland caused severe air travel disruption.

The highlight of the month was undoubtedly a White-tailed Eagle that was seen on moorlands between Thruscross and Barden and later in the Wharfe Valley (10th). An Osprey sailed high over Barden Scale (17th), a male Common Scoter was on the water at Fly Flatts (10th) and a Black-tailed Godwit paid a visit to Wharfedale's private wetlands (19th). At the beginning of the month a first winter Mediterranean Gull was on Redcar Tarn and on the nearby A650 at Keighley, two Little Ringed Plovers were seen. Whilst towards the end of the month, a pair of Garganey were resting on the shore at Leeshaw Reservoir (22nd).

The migration of species was somewhat hampered by a persistent northerly air-flow with the expected Wheatear passage being delayed until about the 18th when conditions improved. On that day 21 Wheatears were recorded at the Oxenhope watch-point with over 50 at Trough Lane during a three day period (20th to 22nd). During the month 150 of these attractive migrants were reported by members.

Swallows were reported from the 2nd and over 15 Sand Martins were feeding at Marley on the following day. A Ring Ouzel was noted at Trough Lane (3rd) and three more were at Nab End, Rombalds Moor (20th) and then another above Oxenhope (24th). Two female Whinchats were reported at Trough Lane (30th) and six Tree Pipits were established at Stainburn Plantation (29th). Redstarts, Pied Flycatchers were watched in the Folly Hall Wood area and in Strid Wood.

A large flock of 51 Whooper Swans were seen on Fewston Reservoir (5th) and on the same day, there was a couple of juvenile birds on Coppice Pond, St. Ives. On the 12th, eight rather tame Whoopers spent a little while at the Oxenhope watch-point.

Of our winter visitors, up to 250 Golden Plovers, resplendent in their breeding plumage, occupied the fields alongside Glovershaw Lane, Baildon and a similar flock was by Scargill Reservoir, before they dispersed to their moorland breeding grounds. During the first few days, Fieldfares lingered awhile in ever diminishing flocks, up to six Waxwings were frequently seen in Kings Road, Ilkley, and a little later a pair were seen in Eldwick (15th).

Of the waders, Redshanks were recorded at Leeshaw, Bradup, John o' Gaunts, Beaverdyke, Reva Hill, Stockbridge, Kex Gill and Common Sandpipers were just at widespread, being seen at Leeming Reservoir, Fly Flatts Reservoir, Oxenhope Watchpoint, Barden Bridge, Strid Wood, Kex Gill, Leeshaw Reservoir and Hirstwood. A Green Sandpiper was at Lindley Reservoir (25th), a Greenshank made a brief visit to Redcar Tarn (11th) and a Dunlin was on Leeshaw Reservoir (30th).

During this busy month, Cuckoos were heard at Coldstone Beck (19th), Blubberhouses (21st), Lindley Wood (26th), near Haworth (24th). Pairs of Grasshopper Warblers were recorded in the Skipton area (26th) and at Cragg Wood, Appleby Bridge (28th). Two Common Terns were seen at the private wetland site (25th) where three Shovelers were present along with three Egyptian Geese (3rd). In the woods below Beaverdyke Reservoir a pair of Willow Tits were located (11th) and at the other end of our region, at Caldene Fields, a Lesser Whitethroat was in full song (23rd).

On the 8th members at Stockbridge witnessed feathers flying when a pair of Stock Dove ventured into the Kestrel box whilst they were away. When the male Kestrel returned it flew directly towards the box. Contact was made with a Dove and observers saw feathers in the air from the impact. Fortunately, no bird was badly injured in the encounter.

2009 April was a very dry month, with long sunny spells, spoilt only by a persistent northerly wind that probably delayed much of the migration until the final week when warmer, more unsettled weather brought an influx of migrants.

On the 1st a Swallow was reported at Dowley Gap, the first of many that flooded in during the month, and the first Swift was probably the one over Oxenhope on the 19th. Other notable arrivals included Whitethroat (18th) and Sedge Warbler at Stockbridge (19th), a Grasshopper Warbler at the moorland watchpoint and in the Skipton area (23rd) and a Wood Warbler in Strid Wood (28th). It was here that seven male Pied Flycatchers were seen, with six being observed by member's on the Group's morning walk through the Washburn valley (25th).

On the 7th, an adult Osprey was watched whilst it fished and perched near Barden Bridge. There were four reports of Ring Ouzels, a male at the Oxenhope watchpoint (5th), two at the moorland watchpoint (11th), one near Shaw Lane, Oxenhope (12th), and a female on Otley Chevin (14th). A Redstart was seen at Storiths (17th) and then others were reported from Timble (20th) and the Washburn valley, as Cuckoos moved into the area with up to six heard at Thruscross (25th). Reports of Whinchats came from Trough Lane (18th), Nab Water Lane (20th), the moorland watchpoint (26th) and Glovershaw (29th), but Stonechat numbers seemed down on previous years, however, a pair were seen feeding young at Farnhill (29th).

April is the month when members indulge in Wheatear counting, and this time we had to wait until the 26th before birds arrived in good numbers. 42 went through Trough Lane over a three day period from the 28th to 30th and 25 were seen at Glovershaw at the same time. During the month, over 175 Wheatears were reported by members.

Whilst this influx was taking place there were still the remnants of winter migration in the form of flocks of Waxwings in the Keighley area (3rd to 9th), Bradford Road, Shipley (19th to 23rd), and 125 Fieldfare at the Doubler Stones (9th) and Glovershaw (5th) where they lingered in diminishing numbers until the 22nd.

Surprise visitors included a Red-throated Diver on Swinsty Reservoir (18th to 23rd) and a pair of Garganey in the Skipton area (24th to 26th). Birds flying over the area included a Mediterranean Gull over the moorland watchpoint (30th), a Whimbrel over Wilsden (23rd) and a couple of Ravens in East Morton area (10th & 14th). A very active female Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was noted in Hirst Wood and presumably the same bird on the Coach Road, Baildon (9th & 10th), whilst a male bird was near a private lake in Wharfedale (5th).

2008 April was a cool month dominated by winds from the north or north-east for the first three weeks which then developed into an unsettled period with rain and showers as the wind changed to the north west.

There were some spectacular reports of migrating birds moving through the area mixed with sightings of those returning to breed. The four Waxwings, which were first seen in Bingley during March, continued to feed in trees in the Church Street area until finally reported on the 20th. Observers decided that they formed a family group of two adults and two first year juveniles.

Of the summer migrants, a Grasshopper Warbler at Stockbridge attracted member's attention (24th), as did a single Dotterel on Soil Hill which also arrived on the 27th, when there was an influx of birds into the area. Included in this movement was a Montegu's Harrier seen flying north, west of Soil Hill (27th) and Ospreys passed our watchpoints on the 3rd, 4th and 10th. There was the sighting of four different Terns: Arctic Tern (18th), Common Tern, Sandwich Tern (27th) all at the Private Wetlands and Little Tern at Skipton Sewage Works (28th). Three Yellow Wagtails were at John o' Gaunt's (20th) and two at Trough Lane (28th) and there was also a Black Redstart near Queensbury (13th), seven Ring Ouzels at Nab End, near Silsden (18th) and the first Cuckoo was heard at Barden (25th). Pied Flycatchers and Redstarts could be seen using boxes at Strid Wood and Folly Hall Wood and Tree Pipits were becoming established amongst the felled plantations at Timble and Stainburn. Double-figure counts of Sand Martins were seen in the early part of the month with over 50 at Knotford Nook on the 6th and two days earlier, a couple of Swallows crossed Warley Moor.

The first Swifts were first seen in the Aire Valley on the 26th. Over 250 returning Wheatears were recorded in good numbers, if not to same amazing levels as in 2007, their presence was noted at the usual locations around Oxenhope, Glovershaw, Whetstone Gate and Barden. Of the waders, there were two Black-tailed Godwits on the flooded fields at Snaygill (2nd), a Dunlin at Bradup, Common Sandpipers on the Wharfe, and small numbers of Redshank and Snipe were seen returning to our upland areas.

At Kex Gill a Ringed Plover (27th) and 21 Oystercatchers (8th) were there, whilst three reports of Little Ringed Plovers in the Aire Valley were received and 156 Golden Plovers, in their full breeding plumage, had gathered at Birch Close Lane (20th). Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers had been noted at two locations: a private lake in Wharfedale (1st) and in Hirst Wood, Saltaire, where a pair of birds were keenly watched (3rd). Up to four pairs of Stonechats were established on Baildon Moor where a female was seen carrying nesting materials (4th) and at Barden Moor where six males were prominent (25th). The first Whinchat was reported on the 28th and a Marsh Tit was at John o' Gaunt's where they have been seen in the past (20th).

The Red-throated Diver that was present during March was still on Embsay Reservoir (6th) and the Red-crested Pochard was occasionally seen at the private wetland site.

2007 April 2007 was the warmest on record and probably the sunniest with very long dry spells and excellent conditions for migration.

Approximately 700 Wheatears had been recorded passing through the area by the end of April, with over 300 at Trough Lane. At times big flocks were noted with 20+ being often seen, but on the 20th, during drizzle and heavy clouds, an amazing 44 birds passed through. However, the biggest total was recorded on the slopes of Soil Hill on the 25th, when an astonishing 90 birds were seen feeding following a night of heavy rain.

Ring Ouzels on passage, have also created lots of excitement, with at least 40 birds reported during the month. Fifteen birds 'dropped' into Newsholme Dene on the 21st when conditions for movement were excellent with low clouds, fine drizzle and light winds.

Three Ospreys were seen passing through the area over the Easter weekend. One was seen over Oxenhope Moor (6th), and on the 10th, one went over the Aire Valley and another was seen sitting in a tree at Barden. Stonechats have been seen at a variety of places with the biggest congregation between Lower and Upper Barden Reservoirs where five pairs were noted. At Whetstone Gate and Bradup there were three pairs and a lone female, (3rd), and pairs have also been seen at Trough Lane, Glovershaw, the moorland watch-point and Fly Flatts. A few Whinchats were also reported with the first seen on the 19th at Bradup and others were noted at Glovershaw (23rd to 25th), Soil Hill (24th) and Trough Lane (26th).

Winter visitors lingering in the area included up to two pairs of Brambling near East Riddlesden Hall, which stayed until at least the 23rd. On the 11th a male Brambling was in song at this location, and a day later twelve Fieldfares were noted along Street Lane, East Morton and a late Redwing was seen in the Shibden Head area on the 21st. Up to 16 Twite were at the feeding area at Fly Flatts (13th) and smaller numbers were seen during the month at Soil Hill, Leeshaw and the moorland watch-point.

On the 21st two pairs of Yellowhammers had returned to the Sconce area of Baildon and Common Sandpipers were reported from likely sites including Leeshaw and Lindley Wood Reservoirs, Lower Barden, Fly Flatts, the moorland watch-point and Kex Gill. A pair of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers were watched in Shipley Glen over the Easter weekend. Notable visitors included a Common Scoter on Leeshaw Reservoir (3rd to 6th), a Greenshank at Otley Wetlands (22nd), a Whimbrel flew over Wilsden Cricket Ground on the 19th and a Rock Pipit at the moorland watch-point (18th) where a Hobby had been seen four days earlier. Spring migrants continued to arrive in small numbers with Swallows and House Martins noted at Stockbridge (3rd); a Willow Warbler at Glovershaw (8th); a reeling Grasshopper Warbler at Low Moor (15th); three Redstarts at Timble Ings (18th); a singing Lesser Whitethroat at Toad Halls Beck (18th); a surprise Common Whitethroat on Barden Moor of all places (20th) and the first Sedge Warbler at Stockbridge (22nd). Swifts were appearing from the 22nd; Little Ringed Plovers were thankfully back at two locations by the 13th; Pied Flycatchers were at nest boxes in the Strid Wood and Folly Hall Woods (21st); a Yellow Wagtail was noted at Kex Gill (21st) and the first Cuckoo was heard at Burley Woodhead on the 24th.

2006 The weather during early April was particularly cold with northerly winds dominating. During the second week there was a westerly air flow with rain and typical April weather of showers and more sustained rain. The latter two weeks were noticeably warmer and brighter and spring had duly arrived by the end of the month with warm sunshine and dry days.

It was natural to expect a slowing in the flow of migrants into the country, but generally this was not so, Swallows had been seen by the 2nd April over the Aire Valley and Sand Martins were flooding into Wharfedale with over 50 at Knotford Nook (2nd). A colony of Sand Martins had been established at Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits and at Ponden Reservoir, where they were using drainage pipes as nest sites and. A House Martin was seen over Baildon Green (3rd) and at Knotord Nook (5th).

Chiffchaffs were singing at many places from the 1st of the month and Willow Warblers were heard for the first time at Otley Wetland on the 9th and three days later, Blackcap could be heard at Dob Park. Whitethroats were in the area from the 23rd with a few seen at a variety of locations including the canal bank at Thackley, Shibden Head and Stockbridge. Other warblers reported were Wood Warblers in Strid Woods, Garden Warbler and Sedge Warbler at Marley, a Grasshopper Warbler by the Glen Road at Baildon and a Lesser Whitethroat in Bradford City Centre (28th).

Redshanks were reported from numerous places including Otley Wetland (2nd) Leeshaw Reservoir (3rd), Swinsty Reservoir (3rd), Stockbridge (5th), Sandbeds (9th), Reva (16th), Whetstone Gate (23rd) and Scargill Reservoir (28th). Other wader reports have included a Green Sandpiper at Caldene Fields, Low Moor (8th and 9th), Snipe in the fields around Glovershaw and

at Whetstone Gate, a Wimbrel over Wilsden (23rd) and Greenshank from a private site (20th). The first Common Sandpipers passed through Birdholme on the 16th and over Keighley Moor (22nd), they were also reported from Otley Wetland (23rd) and the River Wharfe at Strid Woods (25th). A Dunlin was noted at Birdholme on the 27th. Watching for Wheatears has proved particularly profitable with a total of 228 being reported from a wide variety of locations including Trough Lane, Oxenhope, Fly Flatts, Glovershaw, Baildon, Caldene Fields, Barden, Otley Wetland and Nab Water Lane.

An unusual report concerned a Woodcock over Bradford City Centre at 8.20am on the 3rd and sightings of 'roding' males came from St. Ives (10th), Shipley Glen, Sandwith Moor Plantation and Timble Ings.

On the 2nd large flocks of Fieldfares were reported, with numbers of over 200 from two places in the north of the region, and a report of over a 1000 in the Sandwith Moor area on the 7th. Fieldfares continued to be seen, albeit in much smaller numbers, until the end of the month with ten at John o' Gaunts (28th) and three at Doe Park (30th). Other winter visitors still present included 30 Waxwings in a Harden garden (10th), a male Brambling in Queensbury (2nd) and three at Riddlesden (15th). There were 25 Crosbills at Timble Ings (15th) and three at Sandwith Moor Plantation. 23 Redpolls were seen at Toad Holes Beck (23rd).

Good views could be had of a pair of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers in Shipley Glen during early April, and at a private site where there is early evidence of breeding taking place. A bird was also seen in Middleton Woods, Ilkley (23rd).

Golden Plover had assembled at Sandwith Moor in a very large flock, where over 2000 were noted on the 20th, much smaller flocks were seen at Sconce (14th) and by Golcar Farm (29th). The only reports of Yellowhammer were from the Sconce Lane and Glovershaw area of Baildon where up to four males were heard at various times during the month.

Redstarts began appearing in the area from the 26th April with Timble and John o' Gaunts being the best places to see these attractive birds. Two Common Terns appeared at Otley Wetland on 26th April.

Members watching for raptors reported sightings of Osprey (7th, 14th and 18th), Goshawk (2nd) as well as Peregrines, Red Kites, Buzzards, Short-eared Owls, Hen Harrier, Merlin and a number of Ravens over the high moorlands. Last year's successful breeding bird, the Long-eared Owl has already been located and seen performing their wing-clapping display.

Tree Pipits were first noted on the 15th at Barden Fell along with an unusually high number of seven Ring Ouzels. Another Ring Ouzel was at Birdholme on the following day, as were two birds on the 29th. Eight Twite were seen around Leeshaw Reservoir on 15th and 20 at Fly Flatts on the last day of April. The first Yellow Wagtail into the area was reported from Birdholme (16th) and another was noted at Leeshaw (30th). The first report of a Pied Flycatcher was on 17th April at Strid Woods where the boxes are being used.

A Spotted Flycatcher was noted at Beamsley (27th). The first Cuckoos were heard at Burley Woodhead and around Lower Barden Reservoir (22nd) and on the next day, the first report of a Swift came from Wharfedale.

A few ducks were reported from around the area, namely a Gadwall at Otley Wetland (2nd), a Shelduck at Stockbridge (23rd), a pair of Shoveler at Knotford Nook (24th), a pair of Mandarin ducks at Strid Woods (25th). An early breeding record came from Kildwick where a Goosander was seen carrying five young birds.

Of the unusual reports a White Stork over Saltaire on the 11th April.

2005 The weather was typically April with some unsettled spells, showers and bright, clear days that lift the spirit. The month opened with singing Chiffchaff at St. Ives and Otley Wetlands and Willow Warbler at Barden (2nd).

Short-eared Owls were reported back on upland areas and drumming Great Spotted Woodpeckers were many and well spread throughout the region.

On the 2nd ten Sand Martin were noted in the Otley area, by the 9th numbers had risen to over 200. On the 3rd a Swallow was seen over Stockbridge and Marley had a Green Sandpiper. Eight Twite were noted at our Reservoir Watchpoint and a few at Fly Flatts and Cold Edge Dams where they also had a Raven and a Wheatear. Silsden Reservoir had two Whoopers also on this day (3rd). Up to 200 Golden Plover had assembled at Glovershaw (4th) and a Wheatear passed through Whetstone Gate.

It was a good time to be at Barden Scale with displaying raptors entertaining the members, 17 Whoopers passed on the 5th. On the 6th the first of six Ospreys noted throughout the area, passed the watch site and another went by at 10.50am on the 8th. Members watching at Leeshaw saw an Osprey on 15th and 21st. Wharfedale watchers again were rewarded on the 16th when an Osprey went towards the east, and another passed by on the 19th.

The first Common Sandpiper was seen, having just arrived, at Cottingley on the 9th. Two Ring Ouzel were noted around Coldstone Beck (11th) and a Little Ringed Plover was seen in Wharfedale (12th). Trough Lane was undoubtedly the most reliable spot for Wheatears with six on the 13th rising to 18 by the 29th.

The first Pied Flycatchers (a pair) were spotted in Hirst Wood (17th). Sunday 23rd was a settled, sunny day which brought forth a clutch of early arrivals with the first Sedge Warbler and House Martin, and a very obliging Whitethroat at Stockbridge, Tree Pipit at St. Ives and Timble where there was also a Redstart. A Common Tern and a Swift passed through Otley on this date (23rd). The improvement in the weather produced a Spotted Flycatcher in Middleton Woods (24th) and a Cuckoo and Yellow Wagtail at Leeshaw (25th). The first Garden Warbler was heard at Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits on the 29th.

In contrast to summer migrants, some of our winter visitors were still with us. 150 Fieldfare were at Clifton (3rd), 20 Redpoll at Norwood Edge (5th) and over 30 were in St. Ives (9th) and 50 by 23rd. A few Brambling visited a Riddlesden garden on the (11th), and some were seen in Queensbury (16th), but over 50 of these birds had congregated on the Chevin on the 22nd. Over 50 Waxwing attracted attention outside the Surgery in Baildon (17th), 20 were counted in Queensbury and 4 in Cullingworth (26th).

Other interesting records from around the region showed that six Mandarin ducks were on the Wharfe near Bolton Abbey (12th), a Sandwich Tern passed over Laycock (19th), a couple of Whimbrel at Otley Wetlands (20th), from an undisclosed site a male Marsh Harrier (21st) and on that date at Trough Lane a pair of Black Redstart.

It was pleasing to report that during the month, Yellowhammers had been seen at Sconce and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker were seen in the Washburn (10th) and Strid Woods (19th) together with a Marsh Tit.