

## **December 2017**

Pink-footed Geese movement was once again witnessed with large flocks traversing eastwards (2nd & 3rd). However, this trend was reversed at the end of the month when a skein of 290 moved westwards (29th). Three Shelduck visited Lower Laithe Reservoir (1st) and a single female was present on Leeshaw Reservoir (22nd). A male Shoveler spent time on Hewenden Reservoir (9th) and a pair were seen feeding on Ogden Reservoir (22nd). The conditions at Cononley Ings, just prior to Christmas, encouraged the Wigeon flock to grow to a total of 220. A Little Egret stayed at least two days at Bingley Bog North (4th & 5th) and another was on the river Wharfe by Otley Wetland (9th). A third bird, or possibly the same one, was seen at Low Mill, Addingham (24th) and there was yet another bird seen in flight in the Aire valley near Kildwick (26th).

There were four sightings of Hen Harrier, probably referring to the same male bird, over a moorland in the north and two references to male Merlins, one on the Chevin (1st) and the other seen chasing finches at Barden Scale (6th).

A roost of Curlews at Weston had grown to over 200 (15th) and the flock of Golden Plover on Sandwith Moor was estimated to about 500 (22nd). There were two Lapwing flocks, one of 300 on Scargill Pasture and another of similar size by Chelker Reservoir. A single Jack Snipe was present at Keelham Bog on five occasions along with a couple of Snipe, whilst eight others were seen at High Royds Pond and up to four at Braithwaite Edge near Redcar Tarn.

Roosts attracted attention with up to 1,500 Common Gulls and 2,500 Black-headed Gulls at Thornton Moor Reservoir and amongst the throng, a Yellow-legged Gull (16th). There was also a report of 2,000 small gulls on Chelker Reservoir. An adult and a 3rd-winter Great Black-backed Gull visited Cullingworth Fields (15th), whilst a single adult was at Brown Royd on two occasions. The close observations of Herring Gulls continued with even higher monthly totals logged. At Brown Royd a total of 1,641 birds were counted with a day maximum of 310, and at Cullingworth Fields the month's total of 2,580 included a day maximum of 650.

A Barn Owl was occasionally seen at Stockbridge and a Short-eared was seen hunting at Barden Scale (3rd). There was a Chiffchaff at Kildwick Hall (24th) and single male Blackcaps, the first in an Ilkley garden (17th) and another was regularly in a Menston garden (23rd to 31st). A Marsh Tit was located in Middleton Woods (28th) and a small number of Tree Sparrows could be seen in the hedges around Dobrudden Farm on Baildon Moor. A large flock of 300 Fieldfares was watched in Silsden, on the same day that one of half that size had flown east over Marley Hall Farm (29th).

Otley Wetland had attracted a roost of 1,000 Starlings to the conservation lake reed bed (18th) and the surrounding trees held a visiting flock of over 30 Siskin (9th). Ten Lesser Redpoll were feeding on silver birch at Stockbridge (10th) and at least 15 Crossbill were attracted to pine trees at Timble Ings (3rd). Hawfinch were still seen in the Ilkley area with reports of two birds in Middleton Woods (28th) and up three on trees in the cemetery (28th to 30th).

## **December 2016**

A "waxwing winter" was confirmed with the report of a flock of up to 65 birds at Keighley Golf Course in the early part of the month. There was another similar flock of 80 in Morrison's car park in Guiseley during the Christmas period. Smaller single-figure flocks were seen at Ilkley station and Sandbeds, Riddlesden at the end of the month. Other interesting seasonal visitors included a Lapland Bunting flying over Soil Hill (14th) and a suspected Snow Bunting in the same area (11th). A flock of 30 Siskin was watched at Stockbridge NR and Stonechats were found at Soil Hill, Fly Flats, Whetstone Gate and a single female was on Baildon Golf Course. Near here, at Dobrudden Farm, a small number of Tree Sparrows had been attracted to the profusion of feeders.

The passage of Pink-footed Geese was reported with three significant skeins. The first seen from Queensbury contained 108 birds (12th) and the next, one of 200, moved west over Soil Hill two days later. The final skein was watched from Stockbridge NR as between 80 to 100 flew west along the Aire Valley on the 29th.

Little Egrets continued to visit the area with four reported: at Caldene Fields (6th), along the canal at Silsden, at Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits (4th) and at Leeshaw Reservoir (18th).

A flock of about 30 Golden Plovers was occasionally seen on Baildon Moor, but another much larger one of 200 flew over B&Q at Thornbury (10th). In the same area, there was a roost on the roof of B&M Bargains which contained 30 'goldies' and 50 Lapwings. A roost of gulls at Thornton Moor Reservoir reached 4,000 during the month.

Over 60 Wigeon were seen at Knotford Nook with another 24 at nearby Otley Wetland (10th). A week later, 12 more had appeared at Silsden Reservoir. During the same period Goldeneye numbers had reached 15 at Knotford and nine were at Otley Wetland with seven at each of TMR and Silsden Reservoir. A pair of Gadwall, the first ever recorded at Toads Hole Beck (28th) and a single female Pochard at Yeadon Tarn were the most notable records.

On Christmas Day, up nine Red Kites were seen from Denton Moor and earlier in the month a single Kite was seen drifting towards the City Centre.

## **December 2015**

It was the wettest and the mildest December on record with flooded valleys, soggy farmland and moorland. At Stockbridge, there had never been so much water with both islands awash, the fences submerged and the feeder, next to the willows, was completely out of view. On Boxing Day the River Aire looked more like the River Trent. The road at Stockbridge was closed due to flooding and just eight Goosanders were sitting out the torrent on our devastated reserve.

The watery meadows at Cononley attracted 120 Wigeon, 25 Tufted Duck and 350 Lapwings at the beginning of the month. The nine intrepid members who braved the atrocious conditions on the planned walk saw 12 Great Crested Grebes on Yeadon Tarn as well as a single Pochard and a female Goldeneye. Whilst at Otley Wetland a Woodcock flew across the fields towards cover.

Short-eared Owls were again evident with five hunting over the Whetstone Allotment (2nd) with another seen a few days later (7th) and there was a further sighting, a bird reported at Fly Flatts. Birders watching at Bradup on the 21st saw two Spoonbills fly over Whetstone Gate, this was only the third record and the fourth ever sighting of these graceful birds in the BOG area.

Pairs of Ravens were reported at Whetstone Gate (7th) and at Fewston Reservoir (18th). A skein of 80 Pink-footed Geese flew towards Silsden (7th) and a roost of 13 Grey Herons was present in Shipley Glen (7th).

In Bradford City Centre a Peregrine was calling in flight and upsetting the local pigeons (16th) and the following day another one flashed over Stockbridge. The feeders in a Riddlesden garden attracted a flock of 20 Siskins along with five Bullfinch and six Lesser Redpoll (15th) whilst a male Blackcap visited a Bingley Garden (16th). At Stockbridge Siskins were feeding on alders and a Kingfisher made regular visits whilst a Kestrel had taken a liking to the nestbox. At Cony Warren, 50 Fieldfare were feeding and a flock of 31 Red-legged Partridge awaited their fate! During this exceptionally mild month Mistle Thrushes could be heard singing across the area. The year drew to a close on an encouraging note when eight Twite were seen at Redcar Tarn (20th).

## **December 2014**

December was mild and pleasant until a change to colder conditions around Christmas. The month opened with two sightings of Snow Buntings, a single at Slippery Ford and another at Whetstone Gate. A Hen Harrier was seen at Barden Scale (5th) and a Ruff was watched as it fed with a flock of Lapwings at Redcar Tarn in the middle of the month. Bramblings were also seen here and also at Swinsty and Upwood where eight birds were feeding. Pairs of Stonechats were reported at Whetstone, Barden and Sconce.

The single most spectacular event was probably a roost of 300 Pied Wagtails at Keighley Bus Station (12th). Further west, along the Aire Valley, Cononley Ings had attracted 300 Lapwings, a 100 Teal and 50 Wigeon (19th). Knotford Nook held a similar number of Wigeon and 26 Tufted Duck and six Goldeneye (6th). Yeadon Tarn held up to three Pochards and there was another of these attractive ducks at Royds Dam.

A total of 62 Mandarin Ducks was a good count at Strid Woods (19th) and three Pink-footed Geese had been seen feeding near Redcar Tarn (6th). Also in this area were 20 Golden Plovers and there

was a slightly smaller flock on the edge of Hope Hill, Baildon. During this period Water Rail were heard at Otley Wetland and, as expected, there was a sighting of a bird at Stockbridge. Reports of the exotic consisted of a Wood Duck on the Aire and three Ring-necked Parakeets in Northcliffe Woods, Shipley (22nd). The year ended with a Blackcap in a Thackley garden.

### **December 2013**

Early December, with one stormy exception, was mild and pleasant but the weather took a downturn towards Christmas with gales and heavy rain sweeping in from the west. Those intrepid birders that ventured to the 'less salubrious' parts of the area discovered a number of excellent finds. Soil Hill was just one of these inhospitable places where a Snow Bunting was watched in the fading light (21st). A few days earlier (17th), a Jack Snipe had also been recorded at this remote spot.

At the beginning of the month 49 Mandarin Ducks were on the Wharfe at Strid Woods where 100 Brambling were feeding on the north bank of the river just east of the aqueduct (3rd). On the same day, four of these finches were noted at Fewston Reservoir and there were a couple more at Upwood, Riddlesden. Further up the road at Bradup, a male and a female Stonechat were recorded (17th) and at Dowley Gap, two Chiff-Chaffs were over-wintering (16th). Over at Stainburn Forest a member reported a flock of 20 Crossbills (4th).

A good number of invading flocks of winter thrushes were recorded with over 200 at Stockbridge (8th) and as always, at this time of year, a morning spent at Stockbridge could be most rewarding. On the 15th members recorded 34 species including - Reed Bunting, Sparrowhawk, Kingfisher, Snipe, Water Rail, Redpoll, Siskin, Goosander, Fieldfare, Kestrel and a Tawny Owl in its box.

Following strong gales, 14 Pochards had settled onto Yeadon Tarn along with a couple of Great Crested Grebes, 12 Tufted Ducks, a male Goldeneye and 19 Goosander (7th). At Denton Hall, 44 Wigeon were grazing and 100 Curlew were probing the nearby fields (10th). There was a flock of 100 Golden Plovers around Barden Scale (9th) and one of about half that size around Baildon Moor in the early part of the month. An adult Mediterranean Gull, in winter plumage, was seen with several gulls on Redcar Tarn (9th).

Pergrines were seen in the north and the south of the area and seven Common Buzzards in the Bradley, Snaygill area was a notable record (29th).

Exotic species included an American Wood Duck on the canal at Bingley and a Rose-ringed Parakeet calling from a garden off Lucy Hall Drive, Baildon (3rd).

### **December 2012**

Despite a week long cold spell at the beginning of the month, December, like the eight preceding months was mild and wet, all contributing to making 2012 the wettest on record. Almost daily reports of flocks of Waxwings were received from a range of locations. Allotments near the Five Rise Locks at Bingley, trees outside Crossflatts station and bushes at Saltaire roundabout had attracted the birds. There were 27 Waxwings on yellow rowan berries on Spring Lane, Ilkley (3rd) and a flock of 30 had descended on a Yeadon garden on Christmas Eve.

A male Brambling was seen on an Embsay feeder (2nd) and another at East Riddlesden (9th). Two flocks of Siskins, one of 17 and the other of 50 were seen feeding on Alder near the canalside at Riddlesden (13th) and 20 were also seen at Yeadon Tarn. Two Chiffchaffs were again overwintering at Dowley Gap and a male Blackcap visited a Baildon garden (16th). A Willow Tit was regularly seen at the feeder at Otley Wetland and Kingfishers were reported along the Leeds and Liverpool canal at Bingley.

Four Whooper Swans flew over Redcar Tarn (18th), and the heavily flooded fields at Cononley and Silsden had attracted good numbers of Wigeon and Teal. Four Pochard were noted at Yeadon Tarn, a few Goldeneye had been seen in Wharfedale and over 60 Curlew were wintering in fields adjacent to the main road in flooded fields at Ilkley.

Overall this was a very quiet month, the miserable weather conditions were not conducive to good birding.

## **December 2011**

December was mild and at times very windy, with a period of heavy rain in mid month. Up to nine Snow Buntings were first spotted on Soil Hill on the 1st of the month, and were present in smaller numbers until the year end. Small numbers of Brambling were seen around the area and a Willow Tit was a regular visitor to the feeder at the private wetland site. Two over-wintering Chiffchaffs were reported from Dowley Gap (19th).

On the flooded areas of Connonley Ings, 13 Pintail had gathered with 1800 Lapwing, 200 Wigeon and 180 Teal (13th). Nine Gadwall were at Knotford Nook (7th), where up to 120 Wigeon were seen three days earlier. A Whooper Swan was also seen here (10th) and a female Smew was at the nearby private wetland site (6th to 13th). Seven Pochard were present on Yeadon Tarn (12th) and Goldeneye were reported here, on Chelker Reservoir (5th), at Fewston and Knotford.

270 Golden Plovers had gathered in the fields around Redcar Tarn (4th) and 18 Goosanders were counted whilst walking along the riverside, from Bingley to Saltaire (19th). Two Water Rail were heard in reedbeds, near Skipton (6th) and good views were had, of a wintering bird, from the hide at Stockbridge.

Peregrines were occasionally seen in the Keighley area and one flew over Five Rise, Bingley (26th). Sparrowhawks, following wintering birds, were regulars in Shipley Glen and at Stockbridge. Three Short-eared Owls were present on Rombalds Moor (19th) and others were seen in the Denholme and Haworth areas during the Christmas period.

## **December 2010**

It was the coldest December for 120 years with widespread snow and ice throughout the month. When there was a respite, in the last few days, a blanket of fog descended making this a particularly poor month for birding. However, Waxwings were seen on most days with the biggest flocks being in Lumb Lane (13th), where over 100 birds were feeding, and on the rowan trees in Ferncliffe Road Bingley, where 71 birds were noted (29th). Altogether, there were 23 reports of mostly smaller groups from all parts of the area.

A Great Grey Shrike was present for about two weeks at Storiths, above Bolton Abbey. It was first reported on the 4th, though locals say it was certainly there for a while before this date. A Bittern was at the private wetland site on Christmas Day, and again on the 29th. Earlier in the month a Little Egret was seen flying west over Otley Road, just before Dick Hudsons (10th).

In the bitterly cold weather around Christmas the river between Bingley and Shipley was completely frozen on some stretches with steam rising where the water was fast flowing. 17 Goosander and a female Goldeneye were on the open water and five Little Grebes had congregated below the weir at Hirst Wood. These were desperate times for birds, during which, a cold and rather sick Tawny Owl was found at Cottingley (21st).

Water Rail were often reported with sightings at Stockbridge and the private wetlands (27th). Woodcock were seen at dusk at Timble, when at least ten birds moved out onto the moor to feed. There was also a report of a Woodcock in an Oxenhope garden (12th), three at Stockbridge (4th) and a dead one at the private wetlands (29th). At the beginning of the month a Jack Snipe was noted at Toad Holes Beck where five Snipe were feeding (3rd).

Brambling have also been seen at a few locations. Up to ten birds were in gardens at Riddlesden and Embsay (19th) and a similar number on Beck Road, Keighley (30th). Thirty Siskin were also seen at this Keighley location on the same day and other reports of this species came from the private wetlands (29th) and a Riddlesden garden (19th). At Beaverdyke, below the farm, 40 Lesser Redpoll were bathing and nearby, in a cottage garden, a Marsh Tit was feeding on soft crab apples along with three Tree Sparrows (14th).

A female Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was at Denso Marston Nature Reserve (30th), thirty Grey Partridges were near Hope Farm, Baildon (24th), male Blackcaps were reported at Bolton Road, Bradford (18th) and Baildon Bank (4th) and a Whooper Swan flew up the Aire Valley (5th). The most unsettling incident of the month was at Stockbridge where members witnessed a Black-headed Gull fly onto the frozen lake with a vole which it proceeded to swallow whole!



## **December 2009**

The wet weather of November continued into December until about the middle of the month when there was a distinct change to easterly winds which brought snow and ice into the new year.

The Black-necked Grebe, which was first seen on 23rd November, was present at the private wetland site until at least the 14th. Low numbers of wintering ducks were reported, with 20 Wigeon at this site (3rd) and 35 on the flooded Ings at Bradley (10th). It was on these temporary lakes that over 40 Pintail and five Shoveler were gathered (12th). There were also a few Goldeneye at the private wetland site and at Chelker (12th) and two or three Pochard at the former site and at Yeadon Tarn.

There were no reports of visiting Waxwings but Bramblings were noted at various locations including a healthy 25 at John o' Gaunts (13th) and about ten in a field of kale at Whiteley Head, Silsden. There were also two reports of single birds visiting gardens in the Aire Valley whilst small flocks of Siskin were noted at the private wetlands and Stockbridge.

In a rather quiet month it was encouraging to learn that Tree Sparrows were seen at Timble village and Sun Lane Burley. Around Dowley Gap, a Chiffchaff was located and there was a Water Pipit in the Skipton area where four Brent Geese flew over (8th).

Up to two Water Rail were often seen at Stockbridge where a Rail ran across the ice, changed direction, slipped and continued forward on its backside! It was here that Snipe and a Woodcock were flushed and rather bizarrely, one of these birds flew from a garden in Mornington Road Bingley and over Britannia Wharf towards the canal area (21st).

## **December 2008**

December was a settled, dry, rather cold month and generally very quiet with only a fraction of the normal number of bird reports. The month was however dominated by Waxwings with birds turning up a variety of parks, gardens and those hedgerows with decorative foliage. Reports of these colourful visitors were received from urban areas across the region; Thackley, Shipley, Yeadon, Bradford University, Bingley and the biggest group of 174 on Barkerend Road in Bradford (15th) and 118 in a tree on St. Stephen's Road, West Bowling (27th). A roost of approximately 50 Waxwings was found at Timble Ings (27th).

Despite the quiet conditions there were, however, some notable sightings, particularly at Snaygill where a Little Egret was flushed by Gulls (2nd) and a Water Pipit was seen (7th to 11th) and photographed. A Water Rail was also heard here and at the Private Wetlands in Wharfedale, but at Stockbridge up to three of these birds could be regularly located. Large flocks of wintering birds were noted at Denton Hall where a mixed flock of 155 Curlew and over 700 Lapwings had become well established. A flock of 150 Redwing and 50 Fieldfare spent time in the fields behind Brackenhall Centre and a roost of 140 Goldfinch was seen at the 'triangle' on Sconce Lane. The numbers of ducks in the area remained at a very low level with only a Gadwall at Knotford Nook (6th) worthy of note.

The year ended with Mistle Thrush singing at East Riddlesden Hall and Shipley Glen, a Chiffchaff at Dowley Gap, and a male Eider, seen swimming down the River Aire, just above Ireland Bridge (31st).

## **December 2007**

December started very wet and windy and then a settled period of cold, dry weather preceded a return to wet weather as the year ended.

This was a month of few highlights, with the exception of a very late Greenshank at Fly Flatts (9th) and a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, west of Silsden (2nd). Duck numbers built up during the month, but not to the levels we associate with winters of ten or more years ago.

A Red-crested Pochard and a male Scaup were at the private wetlands in Wharfedale, the latter being there for most of the month. Here Tufted Duck numbers had reached a high of 38 (9th) and there was a flock of 25 at Redcar Tarn (5th). Goldeneye were reported in small numbers from various sites around the area with the biggest group, a flock of over 20, seen at the Private

Wetlands (16th) and a flock of nine along the Wharfe near Manor Park Bends. Single numbers of Pochards were reported from Redcar Tarn (30th), Yeadon Tarn (18th), Knotford Nook (8th) and the private wetlands (16th) where 24 Wigeons had gathered (16th). The heavy rain of early December produced ideal conditions for ducks on the water meadows of Airedale. A flock of 45 Teal had assembled at Cononley Ings (5th) and two days later, they were joined by three Shoveler and three Pintail. On this day (7th), two Redshanks were feeding on the flooded area accompanied by over 350 Lapwings. All this activity attracted the attention of a Merlin which was seen hunting over Silsden Floods on the 30th.

Other over-wintering flocks of Lapwings could be seen at Cullingworth Fields (150), Yeadon Tarn (150), Chelker Reservoir (600) and Redcar Tarn (400), and it was on this small lake where a male Shoveler was seen (23rd). A Golden Plover flock was noted at Chelker (9th) and Water Rails continued to be heard and occasionally seen at Stockbridge, reports suggesting that they were also present at Bingley South Bog and at the private wetlands in Wharfedale. A group of six Snipe were airborne on Soil Hill (16th) and a Jack Snipe was flushed at Fly Flatts on the same day. Crossbills continued to be seen at Timble Ings during the month, and at the private wetland site, 75 Siskins were feeding (16th) whilst another smaller group of 30 were seen at East Riddlesden Hall (22nd). A roost of 40 Goldfinchs was discovered near Weecher Reservoir (25th) and at Stockbridge there was evidence of Water Vole activity (30th).

## **December 2006**

December was a mild month with heavy rain during the first part giving way to a settled period in which fog and mist predominated. The year ended with strong winds and blustery showers. The highlights during this period came at the month's end when a Firecrest was seen at Dowley Gap Sewage Works on the 19th and a Shorelark was present at Catherine Slack, near Queensbury from the 27th. Both birds were still at these sites at the end of the year. Other sightings were much more predictable with the heavy rain providing good conditions for ducks, waders and gulls.

A 1st winter Mediterranean Gull was at Bradley Ings (19th) and an adult at Cullingworth Fields (31st). Silsden Floods had attracted over 3000 Black-headed Gulls (17th), at Cullingworth Fields there were 1200 (24th) and the roost at Embsay Reservoir totaled 3400 (23rd). 500 Common Gulls were present at Cullingworth (24th). The flooded area at Silsden was occupied by 400 Lapwings (17th) and 300 were counted at John o' Gaunts (27th). Bowling Back Lane in Bradford is often home to congregating Lapwings and there were 300 there on the 18th. Reports of Golden Plovers came from Redcar Tarn (75 on the 9th), and Penny Pot Lane, John o' Gaunts where there were 150 in fields (27th). At Denton Park, 165 Curlew were feeding at the beginning of December.

A Knot was on the shoreline at Fly Flatts (24th), three Ruff were noted at Cononley Ings (8th) when there was lots of water and a Jack Snipe was at Soil Hill (19th). Stockbridge was the place to see Water Rails with three birds present throughout the month and Woodcock were reported from Harden Moor and Milnerfields, Gilstead. Four Whooper Swans flew low heading towards Halifax (4th) and 175 Pink-footed Geese went north-westwards over Shipley Glen (21st). Tufted Ducks were reported from Redcar Tarn (28 on the 24th), there were over 30 at Chelker Reservoir (3rd), and 14 at Silsden Reservoir (17th). 75 Teal were seen at Sandbeds (6th) and 36 were at Cononley Ings (8th). There was also two Pintails at Farnhill Ings (18th) and 14 Goosander at St. Ives (2nd). Mandarin Ducks continued to be reported from the Strid Wood area, but a surprise was a male bird which was found at Hirst Wood, Saltaire.

Short-eared Owls were seen over Sconce Lane, Baildon, Nosker Brow (2nd) and over the Halifax road beyond Oxenhope (5th). Over-wintering birds included a female Blackcap at Stockbridge (2nd) and a male bird along the River Aire at Bingley (22nd) whilst another was seen feeding amongst ivy in Riddlesden (24th). Member's watching for the Firecrest at Dowley Gap (19th) noticed a Chiffchaff and other's sighted 17 Redpoll feeding in Hirst Wood (22nd) and 70 Siskin (26th). Stockbridge was the place to see Bullfinches with six there on the 24th.

Brambling numbers were comparatively low but there was a flock of 40 seen with Chaffinches in the area of the Strid (13th), St. Ives (2nd) and Swinsty (4th). Stonechats were reported from Whetstone Gate, Bradup, Kex Gill and Baildon Moor and surprisingly Sandbeds (19th). A female Lesser-spotted Woodpecker was seen by the small private lake at Farnley (31st).

## **December 2005**

December was a mainly mild, dry month with a short cold spell with frosty nights and some snow and easterly winds in the days that followed Christmas.

Goosanders were using St. Ives Coppice Pond in good numbers, with thirteen on the 1st building to 29 on the 22nd at 3pm. Wintering duck numbers were still well down. At the usual spots in Wharfedale, small numbers of Tufted, Wigeon and Goldeneye were reported. A pair of Gadwall visited Knotford (11th) and by the 24th that number had risen to five. A female Scaup was present at Otley Wetlands throughout the month. In the south of the area Leeshaw saw ten Teal (2nd), but at Sandbeds, Marley had reached 90 by the 31st. Mandarin Ducks had not assembled in the numbers of recent years with only three at the Strid (26th). Numbers of wintering Geese were also disappointing with a high of five Pink-footed Geese at Leeshaw (27th). At Knotford Nook a 1st winter Mediterranean Gull (3rd) was present. Two Water Rails were present at Stockbridge throughout the month and also, possibly, at Otley Wetlands where they were heard on the 11th. A Green Sandpiper flew over Stockbridge on the 9th and two Snipe were there on the 18th. There were 400 Lapwings at Toad Holes Beck, Low Moor and 250 at Bowling Back Lane, Bradford (21st).

A few Waxwings were seen in the area with two at Ilkley (3rd), four at Crossflatts station (10th), two in Bradford City Centre (13th) and three near Shipley Baths (17th). 45 Siskin were recorded at Stockbridge (4th), thirty Redpoll (18th) and one or two Brambling (24th). A Greenfinch roost of 200 birds was discovered below the reservoir at Weecher (10th). There was also a report of a Dipper singing on the River Aire at Myrtle Park (24th and 26th). In Shipley Glen a flock of twelve Goldcrests (26th), eight Reed Buntings (28th) and a single male Stonechat (26th). Stonechats were also reported at Glovershaw and Sandwith Moor and near the Stonehouse Inn.

Summer visitors were still recorded with a male Blackcap at Haworth (10th) and a female in a Crossflatts garden (24th) and two Chiffchaffs at Marley (10th) and one on the 24th.

## **December 2004**

December was a particularly mild month with very pleasant seasonal weather until the 17th when there was a change to more unsettled conditions. The second half brought strong winds and an increase in precipitation with a light snow shower on Christmas Day and some frosty nights.

At Strid Woods, Mandarin numbers continued to hold up well and by the end of December a total of 45 birds were noted (20 females and 25 males). This probably is the highest ever recorded in the BOG area. Waxwings were also much in evidence, with significant numbers being seen on most days throughout the area. A high of over 300 was noted by the Keighley Medical Centre on the 28th and other sizeable flocks were seen by Crossflatts Railway Station, Bingley Little Theatre, Bogthorn Oakworth, and Jacob's Well, Bradford. One or two were found dead after flying into a window on the toilet block in Ilkley main car park.

Soil Hill recorded a Jack Snipe on the 3rd, and this bird was present for a week or so. A Snow Bunting was there on the 7th.

On the 5th at Knotford Nook, an impressive 345 Coot, 5 Gadwall, 9 Little Grebe, and on the 7th a Scaup was on the lake. On this day at Tong Park Reservoir a Whooper Swan was there and it stayed around for a few days. Three very vocal Whoopers were on Thruscross Reservoir on the 26th. Boxing Day birders on Dolphin Lane Cullingworth recorded over 400 Lapwing. A similar number of Lapwing were present at Knotford and by the lake at Farnley a male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, and a Willow Tit.

There were at least two Water Rail present at Stockbridge throughout the month. On the 20th December, two female Hawfinch were seen, on the north side of Timble Wood. They were to remain there until into the New Year. Brambling were recorded in reasonable flocks at Timble and on the Chevin. Numbers of Golden Plover at Sandwith Moor had reached 400 by the end of the month and Pinkfooted Geese were on the move towards the North West with about 300 seen passing over Shipley.