

1987 – Surprisingly few records. The first flew west at Otley Gravel Pits on 14th April. Subsequently, family parties were noted in June at Otley Gravel Pits (five juveniles) and at Chelker Reservoir. Birds were also seen at Bolton Bridge, Sowerby Bridge and Knotford Nook. Maxima were seven + roosting at Chelker on 30th April with 44 at Otley Gravel Pits on 22nd August. The last was a single at Chelker on 20th September. A male of the nominate race, Blue-headed Wagtail (*M. f. flava*) was present at Otley Gravel Pits from 24th – 26th January.

1988 – The first were two at Knotford Nook on 12th April with two also at Otley Gravel Pits the same day. These two sites produced most reports. The next was at Addingham on 17th but numbers were low until May when the main arrival took place. Although many records were received, they were from relatively few locations which were, in addition to those mentioned, Esholt Sewage Works, Chelker Reservoir, Ogden's Pond, Northcliffe and Leeshaw Reservoir. The lack of records from other localities seems to indicate that this species is not over-common. Post-breeding flocks began to congregate in July and the year's maximum of 42+ at Otley Gravel Pits on 7th August. The last seen were two at Chelker Reservoir on 16th September.

1989 – Only reported from Leeshaw, Chelker and March Ghyll Reservoirs, Dowley Gap, Esholt and High Royd Sewage Works and Knotford Nook, Ogden's Pond and Otley Gravel Pits. This last site produced the first, a single, on 31st March and held c20 birds throughout August, peaking at 23 on 22nd. The last was one at Westfield Farm, Oxenhope, on 1st October.

1990 – The first to arrive was a male at Otley Gravel Pits on 16th April with at least seven birds present there next day. The species appeared to be very scarce into June with only Otley Gravel Pits, Chelker Reservoir and, to a lesser extent, Knotford Nook regularly mentioned as favoured sites. Other spring birds were seen at March Ghyll Reservoir, Barden Bridge and Lindley Wood Reservoir. In August and September, single passage birds were noted at the additional sites of Scholebrook Farm, Stockbridge and Weecher Reservoir while the last of the year was a bird which over-flew Westroyd Avenue, Shipley, on 25th September. Aside from the Wharfedale sites, this is evidently a scarce species. The maximum count reported was 12 at Chelker Reservoir on 26th August, although Otley Gravel Pits had ten on 7th May.

1991 – The least common wagtail and only recorded from seven sites. The first was a single bird beside the River Aire at Kildwick on 26th April with small numbers (one/four) arriving in Wharfedale over the next few days at Chelker Reservoir, Otley Gravel Pits and Knotford Nook. A passage bird at Tong on 8th May was the only record from the south of the recording area. Sizeable roosts at Otley Gravel Pits now seem to be a thing of the past and the year's best count was a paltry eight plus there in late August/early September. Also in September, Marley Sewage Works produced a single on 1st and another lingered at Chelker Reservoir until mid-month while the last was one at Stockbridge on 21st. Breeding was proved at Chelker and probable at both Knotford Nook/Ogden's Pond and Otley Gravel Pits but was unlikely to involve more than one pair at each site.

1992 – Records were only received from nine locations including Esholt, Stockbridge, Mount Tabor, Weecher, Leeshaw and Chelker Reservoirs; the majority being spring passage birds recorded in May. The first of the year were two at Otley Gravel Pits on 20th April. The only proven breeding was of a pair feeding a single young at the same site on 11th July. No sizeable roosts were noted, the highest number being nine at Knotford Nook on 9th September. This was also the last sighting of the year.

1993 – The first of the spring were five at Otley Gravel Pits on 20th April. This site continued to hold birds throughout the summer with both the maximum, ten on 29th July, and the last record, a single on 12th September. Nine were reported at a roost at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 28th July. At Thornton Moor Reservoir a male sang daily from 21st May until 6th June. Presumed passage birds were reported from Norland on 23rd August, Midgley on 30th August, Chelker Reservoir on 2nd September and Bolton Woods on 14th August and 10th September.

1994 – The only site which produced records during the breeding season was Otley Gravel Pits with up to six birds noted in May, June and July. No evidence of nesting was reported although two juvenile birds were seen here on 29th August. Birds on spring passage were recorded at Knotford, Leeshaw and Dowley Gap, with the first being three at Elland on 17th April. In autumn, reports came from Beaver Dyke (seven on 11th September), Lindley Wood and Thornton Moor Reservoirs.

The last site produced the final record, a single on 23rd September. Generally a poor year with reports received from only 11 sites.

1995 – The first was at Otley Gravel Pits on 11th April, an early date. Twelve at East Bierley on 24th May was a good count. There were regular sightings of two at Otley Gravel Pits up to the end of May increasing to five in mid-June and ten on 1st July. The first indication of nesting here was a pair carrying food on 21st June. On 7th August two adults were seen with two juveniles. A pair was at Otley Old Sewage Works on 30th May and on 6th August a female was seen feeding a juvenile on the river bank at Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits.

Throughout August and up to mid-September migrating birds were seen at a number of sites including five at Weecher Reservoir on 11th September and (a site first) Raw Nook on 28th August. The last was at Wyke Banks on 16th September.

1996 – The only site at which this species was seen throughout the summer was Otley Gravel Pits. The first record of the year at that site was of a single bird on 14th April, with two present on 20th and nine passage birds (including eight males) on 21st, followed by up to two birds throughout May. In July, breeding was confirmed there – a female of the *M.f.flava* (blue-headed) race breeding with a *flavissima* male (a female concerned is probably one of the female birds which was seen at Otley Gravel Pits in 1995). The last sighting at Otley Gravel Pits was of a single bird on 9th August.

As with Otley Gravel Pits, passage was noted around mid-April at other sites, with five birds at Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits on 21st and a single male passing through Caldene Fields on the same date. The only evidence of breeding elsewhere was of a bird carrying food at Thruscross Reservoir on 12th June. The last records of the year were of two birds flying over Birch Close, Baildon on 4th September and a single bird at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 5th September.

1997 – All 1997 sightings of this bird were of passage birds. The habitat restoration work being carried out at Otley Gravel Pits is probably the reason for this being the first year in which no breeding records were received from this location. However, Otley Gravel Pits did produce a sighting of a passage male bird on 13th April, two birds flying over on 20th April, a single bird on 26th April and five on 5th May. At Knotford Nook on 18th May, two birds were present, one of which exhibited characteristics of a *M.flava/flavissima* hybrid. Single birds were then seen at Knotford Nook on 22nd May and 14th June. An adult and three young were present at Oxenhope on 19th August and migrating birds were also seen in August at Paul Clough, Thornton Moor Reservoir, Newsholme Dean, Kex Gill Quarry, Marley Sewage Works and Ben Rhydding Sports Ground. In September, passage birds were at Thornton Moor Reservoir, Kex Gill Quarry, Otley Gravel Pits and Fly Flatts Reservoir, and the year's final record was of five birds feeding in fields on the south side of Thruscross Reservoir on 17th September.

1998 – The majority of 1998's sightings came from just two locations – Otley Gravel Pits and Knotford Nook. The year's earliest record, however, came from North Bierley Sewage Works, where a passage bird provided a 'first' for the site on 3rd April. All other April records came from the above-mentioned two main sites, and were usually of either one or two birds, although Knotford Nook produced six birds on 23rd April. Sightings continued through May – almost all from Otley Gravel Pits, including two or three male birds on 2nd, the only exceptions that month being a single bird on passage at the Twelve Apostle Stones on Ilkley Moor on 2nd May and a single bird at Knotford Nook, including a sighting of five birds on 20th, complete with proof of breeding – the only confirmation received throughout the entire recording area. There was an unusual sighting on 23rd August, when a single bird was observed moving south at Doe Park. The year's final record – of a bird moving east – was from Otley Gravel Pits on 1st September.

1999 – The year's first record of this species occurred on 17th April at Otley Gravel Pits, when a single bird was seen; the only other April sighting was of a pair at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 29th. The lower Wharfe then provided all the sightings from May to July, with one pair achieving breeding success and raising at least one brood. This was probably the only successful breeding attempt in the whole of the Group's recording area. By the end of August, migrating birds were being observed at several sites, including Leeming Reservoir, Denholme Clough, Beaverdyke Reservoir, Thornton Moor Reservoir, Paul Clough and Doe Park Reservoir. Several sightings

concerned birds mixing with Grey and Pied Wagtails. There was apparent movement over and along the Aire-Calder watershed during the autumn visible migration watches; this occurred on several dates in the first weeks in September, with a peak early-morning watch-count of three birds moving south-west on 11th September. The year's final record of Yellow Wagtail was of a bird at Paul Clough moving south on 15th September.

2000 – The year's first record was of a bird at Ghyll Grange Farm, Rombald's Moor, on 24th April. Subsequent spring passage was then confirmed mainly to May, with most records emanating from Otley Gravel Pits. Most records in this period were of single birds. Early return passage started at the end of July, and up to three birds were seen at Otley Gravel Pits, John O'Gaunt's Reservoir, Thornton Moor Reservoir and Denholme Clough. The year's last report was of a bird at Thornton Moor Reservoir on the notably late date of 1st October – the latest Group record for the species.

Only one breeding record was received – at Gallows Hill, Otley – and it clear that the species' decline in our area continues.

2001 – Although the first spring bird was at Marley Sewage Works on 21st April, most of the subsequent spring migrants were concentrated in the Knotford Nook/Otley Gravel Pits area, and on 9th May, four birds

were watched at the former site, including one of the nominate race *M.f.flava* (Blue-headed Wagtail). Another was at Otley Gravel Pits on 17th May.

Early autumn passage again focussed on Otley Gravel Pits, which produced all the July records, then birds were seen on the western side of our area in August at Leeshaw, Thornton Moor Reservoir and Wilsden.

The last record of the year was of three migrants at Denholme Clough on 16th September.

Though two juveniles were observed at Otley Gravel Pits, no breeding successes were confirmed, and the species continues to become increasingly scarce in the recording area.

2002 – A fairly typical year, with over 70% of the records coming from Knotford Nook and Otley Gravel Pits. The first of the year, and the year's highest count, comprised six birds at Knotford Nook on 21st April. The rest of April and the three subsequent months had records of mainly ones and twos at these locations, and only sightings at Upper Kellbeck, John o'Gaunt's Reservoir, Newsholme Dean and Gallows Hill broke their monopoly. Four further sites had birds on autumn passage, including Denholme Clough, where two on 8th September were the year's last. Singles of the nominate race *M.f.flava* (Blue-headed Wagtail) were seen near Knotford Nook on 21st April and 20th May.

A pair with two young at Knotford Nook represented the only breeding record.

2003 - A pretty bleak picture locally for this declining species. Otley Gravel Pits managed just one record all year on 1st June while passage birds were noted in the autumn at Barden, Caldene Fields and Thornton Moor Reservoir in August and over Sandwith Moor on 14th September. A single was seen at Cold Edge Dams on 26th May. 3 were observed over Luddenden Dean on 24th August.

Knotford Nook was the only regular site to hold birds. From the 19th – 21st April there were eight birds here including two males of the race *m. f. flava* or Blue Headed Wagtail. At least two birds hung around this site throughout the breeding season and while breeding was suspected it was not proven.

2004 - The first sighting was a single at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 12th April.

Otley Wetland, once a main site, yielded only one bird all year, a male on 18th April, and this tends to confirm the gloomy picture painted by the fortunes of this species locally. Knotford Nook barely managed any better, with two on 10th May and one on 23rd.

Autumn passage was also thin, with only two birds at Thornton Moor Reservoir, and one, the year's last, at Fewston Reservoir on 22nd September.

2005 - The dramatic decline of the Yellow Wagtail as a breeding species in many parts of Yorkshire has been well-documented, and this is reflected in the scant number of records of passage in the BOG area.

Birds were seen on only five dates, all but one in autumn. A pair was present at Otley Wetland on 1st May, and nearly four months elapsed before the next record of two at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 21st August. Two more were seen there eight days later and on 4th September, with the final record one at this location on the 25th.

The 1995 Report has records of well over 40 birds, and includes several of breeding. Thus, in ten years the species has gone from being relatively common in the area to extremely scarce.

2006 - Last year's Report detailed the dramatic decline of Yellow Wagtail in the area, and it is now, at best, an uncommon passage migrant, though, on a slightly brighter note, there were four more records than in 2005.

As last year, there were few spring reports: a single at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 16th April, another at Leeshaw Reservoir a fortnight later, and two birds at Knotford Nook on 7th May.

Autumn passage was noted at five locations, commencing with a single bird at Thornton Moor on 26th August, and another was seen there on 16th September. The other August record was of at least two birds in a mixed wagtail flock at Barden on the 28th, and the remaining reports were all in September, comprising individuals at Knotford on the 2nd, Otley Wetland on the 23rd, and Denholme Clough on the 26th, a fairly late last date for the species.

2007 - The ongoing decline of this species in the area has been well-documented, and it is, alas, another bird to suffer its worst year on record.

There were two spring records: a single at Kex Gill Quarry on 23rd April, and, at Trough Lane, a bird showing characteristics of one of the Continental blue-headed races. Consequently accepted as Grey-headed Wagtail (*M.f.thunbergi*): The only autumn record also came from Kex Gill, on 24th August.

2008 - A slight, but welcome, upturn on 2007's poor showing, with late April records of a bird at Marley Hall Farm, two at Trough Lane, and three at John o' Gaunt's Reservoir. These were followed by singles: in early May at Otley Wetland, Warley Moor Reservoir and Barden Scale, and autumn migrants at Marley and Thornton Moor at the end of August.

However, most welcome was the first substantiated breeding record since 2002, at Gallows Hill Nature Reserve (Otley) in June.

2009 - With no breeding records, and only four reports, all of migrants, the poor showing of many previous years again prevails. A total of five birds were seen at Thornton Moor in August (DCB), and one was at Haverah Park in September.

2010 - Compared to other recent years, a pleasing increase in the number of records. Two birds were at Weecher Reservoir on 20th June, and at Bolton Abbey on 7th September, with a single at Marley Farm the day after. Migration at Thornton Moor produced one record of flava wagtail species in May, two in April and September, and three in August.

2011 - With seven records of 10 birds, the recent improvement has been maintained. In April, singles were seen at Leeshaw on the 20th, and at Oxenhope on the 25th. Return passage produced a total of four birds at Caldene Fields, and, in September, individuals at Barden on the 3rd and Warley Moor on the 11th, and two were above Riddlesden on the 8th.

2012 - The recent improvement has, alas, been short-lived, as there were only three records in 2012. Spring migration produced singles at Otley Wetland on 14th April, and Caldene Fields on 6th May, and the one autumn report was of a bird at Menston on 2nd October.

2013 - There was a slight improvement on 2012, but the number of sightings remains pitifully small. Two males and a female were reported at Dowley Gap Sewage Works on 17th April and on the 13th May a male bird was feeding on grass cropped by horses at a once traditional site by Knotford Nook. The other reports concerned six birds all seen within seven days at the beginning of September. Firstly there was a single bird at Lindley Wood Reservoir (2nd), then three birds flew south over Caldene Fields, and finally a couple briefly dropped into fields at Glovershaw (9th).

2014 - The number of these birds locally, as well as nationally, has collapsed dramatically over the past 25 years, due to significant changes in farming methods. The species is now unable to sustain sufficient breeding numbers and sightings have become rare. However, there were two reports, the first being a female at Manywells on 17th April and the second a bird seen amongst horses at Faweather Farm, Sconce on 31st August.

2015 - Two males seen near the show ground at Otley on 4th May were on passage, but another on the river at Gallows Hill in June and July, was possibly breeding, though this was unconfirmed. A bird was in Denholme Clough at the end of August and another was present at the watchpoint at Oxenhope on 15th September.

2016 - Increasingly uncommon passage visitor. Two birds visited a garden at Hazlewood on 21st April and a single was seen at Leathley a month later. There were four reports of a pair seen at a regular site between Gallows Hill and Knotford Nook in May and June. The final two reports involved a single over the watchpoint at Oxenhope on 10th September and another at Scargill Reservoir on 24th September.

2017 - May records concerned singles at Glovershaw on the 3rd, Burley Moor on the 11th and Gallow's Hill (Otley) on the 9th, a male which was joined by a female on 16th June, and both remained until 6th July. A bird over Silsden on 27th August was the only autumn record. There was apparently no breeding activity from the long-staying Otley pair.

2018 - Numbers continue to reduce, with only two reports of singles at John o' Gaunt's Reservoir on 27th August (AJ) and Denholme Clough on 2nd September (MD).