

North Yorkshire Water Park WILDLIFE REPORT Jan-Dec 2022



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Hare – Paul Malton

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third wildlife report covering North Yorkshire Water Park (formerly Wykeham Lakes). The report covers the Water Park, an area of 250 acres, plus adjoining woodland and arable land. A total of 148 species of bird were recorded in 2022. Two new bird species were added to the site list, Long-eared Owl and Black Redstart, bringing the total to 212 species. Other highlights in the year included Great Northern Diver, Bittern, Curlew Sandpiper, Little and Temminck's Stints, Golden Oriole, Hooded Crow, Bearded Tit, and Snow Bunting. It was great to see Little Ringed Plover breed successfully this year.

The dragonfly highlight of the year was the finding of a new species, a Lesser Emperor on 16th July, this was followed by a further three individuals found in the summer. The dragonfly list now stands at an impressive 22 species.

One new species of butterfly, a Marbled White was recorded in July, and new moths included Small Ranunculus, Celypha Rosaceana, the micro moth Celypha Rosaceana, Merveille du Jour, Pearly Underwing and White Point, the latter a moth rarely recorded in Yorkshire.

Another interesting year of recording other insects, bugs etc for Dan Lombard. His report is a fascinating read.

Willow Tit is recognized as one of the most important bird species to be present at the site, a species in decline nationally, and of conservational concern. A small summary of a conservation initiative being trialed at the site is included.

Special thanks to Allan Rodda, Chris Bull, and Dan Lombard for their expert reports, and to the members of Scarborough Birders, Allan's moth team, and the photographers for their contributions. We would also like to thank Dawnay Estates and Hansons Quarry for their continued support.

Nick Addey

Cover photo – Displaying Curlew (Wal Smith)



“ Wykeham Lakes is a mosaic of wetlands, woodlands and meadows which is home to a complex and diverse community of animals and plants. The importance of Wykeham Lakes to our local ecology should not be understated, with the site contributing to the recovery and safeguarding of some of the region’s scarcest species.
Dan Lombard - Senior Ecologist, Wold Ecology Ltd ”

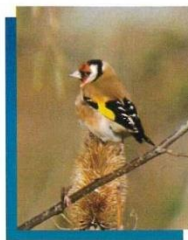
24 SPECIES OF BUTTERFLIES



263 SPECIES OF INSECTS



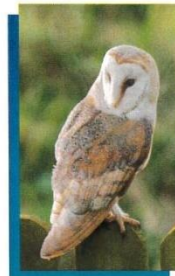
22 SPECIES OF DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES



“ There are justifiable concerns today about the effects of human activities on our flora and fauna. The North Yorkshire Water Park lakes and Long Causeway areas are successfully bucking that trend providing a thriving natural sanctuary for a whole host of flora and fauna.
Allan Rodda - Conservation Officer, Butterfly Conservation Yorkshire ”



272 SPECIES OF BIRDS



“ The North Yorkshire Waterpark plays host to a fantastic variety of bird species, somewhat akin to a thriving oasis created from what once was a ‘farmland desert’ in ecology terms.
Nick Addey - Head of Scarborough Birders ”



7 SPECIES OF BATS



65% OF YORKSHIRE'S DRAGONFLY & DAMSELFLY SPECIES HAVE BEEN FOUND AT THE WATERPARK



547 SPECIES OF MOTHS

“ Dragonflies are dependant on cleanwater to complete their life cycle and are an excellent indicator of a rich and biodiverse habitat. At North Yorkshire Water Park, away from the waterparks main activities, many species of dragonflies and damselflies are flourishing.
Keith Gittens - British Dragonfly Society ”



Marbled White Butterfly, a first sighting for this species – Allan Rodda

WILLOW TIT CONSERVATION

Following severe population declines and contractions in breeding range, the Willow Tit has been on the Birds of Conservation Concern Red List since 2002. It is the UK's most threatened resident bird.



Willow Tit – Dave Mansell

The core range is now limited to mid-Wales, the Midlands, Northern England and South-West Scotland. Willow Tits are very localized in the Scarborough area, small numbers in the Carrs of the Vale of Pickering, and others in the large forested areas.

Occasional sightings around the Water Park suggest breeding pairs nearby. During the year Scarborough Birders in conjunction with Dawnay Estates commenced a conservation initiative in woodland around the lakes in an attempt to provide additional nesting options. Willow Tits rely on stands of rotting deadwood to excavate nest holes. Pairs will use a new nest hole each year.

Lots of research on Willow Tits and nest boxes has taken place. Generally, due to the nature of their breeding habits, Willow Tits will not use traditional nest boxes. Scarborough Birders has obtained a design of nest box that is currently being trialed. A wooden frame forming the box, filled with deadwood for the tits to excavate a hole. Boxes are in place in woodland to the west of the Water Sports Lake and fingers are crossed for 2023.

Thanks goes to Bobby Gant, a Scarborough Birders member, the driving force behind this project. Monitoring will take place in 2023.



A Willow Tit box.

North Yorkshire Water Park



The viewing screen/hide for East Lake can be located by taking the path along the southern side of Match Lake. (access to Causeway Lake is by permit)

BIRD SPECIES RECORDED IN 2022

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

One pair nested raising six cygnets and remained in the area to the year end. Up to 11 birds were present September to the year end.

WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

A single bird flew over on 21st January. On 25th February six flew north over the Water Sports Lake. Five at the Water Sports Lake on 8th March. An unseasonal bird was at East Lake on 23rd May. The first returning birds were seven adults resting on East Lake on 27th September. Two were seen on 3rd and 11th October, three on 9th November, two on 21st November, and seven on 30th.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

230 flew SSE on 9th January. Five were present on 19th January. One with the Greylag flock 19th – 26th February. A flock of 77 flew north on 23rd February. Singles were in the Greylag flock on 19th March and 14th and 20th April. In autumn the first was at the Water Sports Lake on 17th September, 17 flew SW on 21st, 50 north the next day, and 43 SW on 27th. Four were at East Lake on 1st October, 240 NW on 3rd, six present on 4th, 17 on 9th, 11 on 10th (103 west, 39 north), 15 on 12th, 80 NE on 14th, 17 south on 25th. In November two were at East Lake on 9th, and 92 flew south on 29th. December saw three on 9th, and four on 17th, 16 over on 20th, 90 SW on 29th.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

A Russian race bird was feeding with Greylags south of the lakes on 17th December.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Ever present, several pairs nested. Large numbers were present late in the year peaking at 750 on 17th December.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Several pairs nested. 186 on 13th September was the highest count.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

One was at East Lake on 19th November, plus one was seen on 17th December.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

The family party (4 juveniles) were still present in January/February. Up to three were present in March and April, and four on 13th May. Frequently observed around the Water Sports Lake to October, the pair appeared with three small goslings on 9th September, by the 17th September only two goslings were in attendance. Only one chick remained by 3rd October, and by 11th October the chick was feeding alone!



Egyptian Goose family – Stephen Beaver

SHELDUCK *Tandorna tandorna*

Singles were reported on four dates in January and February, two present on 3rd March, one on 6th, and three on 24th. One on 26th March, a pair on 25th April, and lastly four on 28th August.

GARGANEY *Spatula querquedula*

A pair frequented the island at the Water Park 21st to 28th April. A female/juvenile was at East Lake on 4th September.

SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata*

1-3 were occasionally present January to 7th April, eight on 26th March. A drake was seen on 18th May, followed by one on 21st June plus two on 11th July. 1-3 regularly recorded from 11th August to the year end, six were seen on 10th October and 15th December.

GADWALL *Mareca strepera*

An increasingly regular visitor, only absent in July. Eleven on 7th January was the early year peak. A maximum count of 31 on 21st November. Often on the Old Silt Lake / Water Sports Lake.

WIGEON *Mareca penelope*

A regular autumn/winter visitor, small numbers in spring. Low numbers in the early part of the year, a peak of just 16 on 19th January. The last of spring was one on East Lake on 10th May. Returning birds were seen from 18th July, 13 by the end of August, rising to 52 on 25th September, up to 80 in October, and a peak count of 120 on 8th December.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

In spring two were seen on 23rd March, one lingering to the following day. In autumn one was at East Lake on 9th September, and another there on 17th. None then until December when a drake frequented the Water Sports Lake 9th – 20th, joined by a second bird on 15th.

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Good numbers were present early in the year, 400 on 19th January was a particularly high count for the lakes. A rapid reduction by March, the last of spring were four on 28th April. Post breeding birds began with five on 21st June, six on 12th July, and then nine on 18th July. Thereafter frequently recorded, increasing to 155 by 23rd August, 260 on 10th October, and 160 on 20th December.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

A breeding bird, although the only brood reported were nine ducklings on Coarse Lake in mid-June. Numbers are swollen in late autumn and winter by arrivals from the continent. 142 on 9th December was the year's maximum count. 120 were on East Lake on 31st August, a good count for that month.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

One to four were seen regularly between 4th January and 19th February, eight on 19th January. A drake was at the Water Park on 24th May. In autumn three were present on 10th October, four on 1st November, two on 9th, three on 19th November, four on 20th December, and a single on 23rd December.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Ever present, mostly at the Water Sports Lake. A record early year count of 86 on 24th January, and up to 57 (19th) in February. Two broods were seen on Coarse Lake in June. A good August count of 64 on East Lake on 17th, thereafter numbers generally remained under 30, a late year peak of 80 on 20th December.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

A juvenile/female was at East Lake on 31st July. A scarce visitor to the lakes.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

A good series of records for this sea duck, all records were from the larger Water Sports lake. The first was a drake on 24th March, three females present the next day. Next was a female on 28th March, still present the next morning, replaced by a drake that afternoon. A drake was present on 1st April. Next was a female on 7th April.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

A regular winter visitor, mostly frequenting the Water Sports Lake, often relocating to East Lake when boating activity increases. Up to 19 were wintering in January, 20 counted on 20th February. Fourteen were still present on 3rd March, 15 on 24th March. Just seven remained on 7th April, then one on 1st May was the last of spring. No more records until November, 10 present on 9th, 13 by 13th December, and a good influx of 35 on 20th December.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Two drakes were at the Water Sports Lake on 28th January.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Singles were at the Water Park lake on 26th March and 14th April. One on East Lake on 9th November. A drake at the Water Sports Lake 19th November which stayed to the year end. It was joined by a "redhead" on 9th and 26th.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

A common game bird in adjacent fields.



Red-legged Partridge – Stephen Beaver

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

One pair seen south of the lakes on 8th March, and another pair was spotted in the same area on 23rd April.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

A common resident.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

A juvenile bird was at the Water Sports Lake 20th December into 2023.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A resident breeder, breeding pairs present at Match and Causeway Lakes. A maximum daily count of 19 on 9th December.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Higher numbers are recorded in the non-breeding period, up to 14 in January (9th), 11 in November, and 12 in December. Some display was observed in the spring but no breeding attempt was evident.



Great Crested Grebe with Perch – Simon Temlett

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

One feeding in the reeds at Trout Lake on 7th January.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

One to three birds were seen regularly throughout the year. Five were on East Lake on 11th July.

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba*

One flew over Causeway Plantation on 1st January, followed by one at the Water Sports Lake on 14th February. One feeding on East Lake (silt lake) on 19th February. Next one was seen flying over Causeway Plantation on 11th March. One was at East Lake on 14th September, and the last one was seen in fields to the south on 17th December.



Great White Egret, East Lake – Nick Addey

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

The first bird of the year was at East Lake on 20th January. One was at East Lake on 8th March. Later in the year another at East Lake on 8th August, two there on 27th August, one on 27th September. Lastly one was recorded on 9th November.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Often to be seen on the Water Sports Lake island where birds also roost. Least numerous in the summer months. Up to 20 were present in January, 26 in February, and a peak of 31 on 5th / 6th March. Lower numbers later in the year with a maximum count of 13 on 23rd December.



Cormorant – Daniel Morley

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Surprisingly the only record of the year was one flying west on 10th September.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

A breeding resident.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

An unusual winter record involved an immature male quartering fields east of the lakes on 3rd February. In spring a male flew west on 17th April, and a female was recorded on 19th. In May a male was at the Water Sports Lake on 7th, and a "cream crown" south of the lakes on 25th. In August a second-calendar male was hunting over East Lake on 14th and 15th, and a juvenile flew south-west on 24th. A "cream crown" was seen at East Lake on 1st September. On 4th September three circled high over the lakes before moving off south-east, next was a cream crown over the Water Sports Lake on 25th September.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

A male was hunting over fields to the south on 9th November.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

The only record received involved one seen over the lakes on 17th May.

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

A breeding resident. Several birds can be up in the sky at once on a fine day.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

As usual, only recorded in the winter months, up to three in January, the last one on 13th March. Late in the year one was recorded on 3rd October, two on 9th and 21st November.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Small numbers breed at the lakes. A maximum daily count of 20 on 9th December.

COOT *Fulica atra*

An early year peak of 121 on 24th January. 91 were still present on 19th February, Broods were seen at the Water Sports Lake (2) and Causeway Lake (1). Returning winterers appeared from August, 103 by 13th September, the same number counted on 10th October, and 118 on 21st November.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

One was seen on 30th January. Two pairs were recorded from 12th February. One pair attempted to nest by the quarry operations at East Lake, plus another pair on the island at the Water Sports Lake. None were successful. Seven were recorded on 5th March. Regularly seen up to May, three were present on 4th July, two on 11th July, and one on 28th August.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

A good year for this species with three records. The first was at East Lake in the afternoon of 28th March, resting on the silt pool. Another was on the silt pond at East Lake on 17th and 18th July. Four were photographed at East Lake in the morning of 27th August, seen later on the Water Sports Lake.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

A regular visitor, often resting and feeding on East Lake in the early months, 108 on 12th February the largest count. The first returning birds post breeding were two on East Lake on 25th May. By 3rd September 65 were at East Lake. 158 were resting on East Lake on 10th October, 410 there on 13th, and 600 on 9th November flying round The Carrs to the south-east.



Lapwings over East Lake – Daniel Morley

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Generally a scarce visitor, occasionally wintering birds from Binnington Carr are seen fling around the Carrs to the south. On 9th November 1100+ were seen in flight to the south-east.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

One was at East Lake on 15th August. A scarce visitor to the lakes.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

A pair were first seen at East Lake on 1st April. By 18th April there were four birds at East Lake, four again reported on 10th May. One pair nested at the lakes complex, three chicks seen in early July. Later records included, three adults and three juveniles on 12th July. The three juveniles were present until 28th July, four on 31st July, the last sighting a single on 10th August.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

In spring two were at East Lake on 11th and 13th May. Seven dropped into East Lake with a Dunlin on 8th June. One was at East Lake on 15th August, two there on 22nd August, singles briefly on 2nd and 7th September, and four on 8th September.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

In spring one flew north-east on 22nd April.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

A pair were present in fields south of the lakes in the breeding season, a chick seen in June. One was at East Lake on 30th March. Three were recorded on 1st April. Just two autumn records; singles on 2nd September, and 2nd October. Two were feeding in fields to the SW on 16th December.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

One was at East Lake on 18th July, followed by a flock of ten at East Lake on 3rd August. Three dropped on to the silt lagoon at East Lake on 14th August (one a colour ringed bird...), all were present the next day, two remaining to the 16th. Another bird dropped in to East Lake on 19th August before leaving east. A juvenile was at East Lake on 9th September.

RUFF *Calidris pugnax*

A male in full breeding dress was resting on the Water Sports Lake island during strong winds on 13th May. On return passage, one was at East Lake on 8th August, with another on 28th September. Three dropped onto East Lake for twenty minutes on 4th October before leaving.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

One flew into East Lake to feed briefly with three Dunlin on 5th October before being chased off by a Lapwing.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

The first of spring were three at East Lake on 17th March. One was at the Sports Lake on 7th May and one at East Lake on 11th, increasing to two the next day, both remaining to 13th. One dropped into East Lake with 7 Ringed Plover on 8th June. On return passage, one was at East Lake on 4th/ 5th and 29th / 30th July, 8th, 14th and 30th August, 1st and 3rd September. Two were seen on 8th September, singles on 19th and 25th. In October one on 3rd, three on 5th, four on 10th, two on 23rd

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

A juvenile was at East Lake with a Dunlin on 27th August.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*

A juvenile was on the silt lagoon at East Lake 07.45am on 9th September. It flew off east after five minutes. The third lakes record, previous ones on 13th May 1999, and 9th August 2013.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Singles recorded on 9th, 16th and 23rd December.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Three at the Water Sports Lake on 19th February, followed by a single there on 13th March. The first of autumn was one at East Lake on 29th September, one in the Water Sports Lake reed bed on 10th October, and one at the same location on 9th December.

SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Four were at the Water Sports Lake on 20th January, 13 were feeding there on 19th February. Two on 13th March, and singles on 26th and 30th March. The last of spring was one on 19th April. The first returning bird was on East Lake on 19th August. Followed by two there on 1st September and three on 11th, then regular sightings to the year end, five on 19th September and a good count of 19 on 14th November.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Four on the 8th April were the first of spring. A single was reported on 21st April, then five were present on 2nd May, three on 6th, one on 10th, two on 11th-12th and 16th, two on 24th. Return passage commenced with one at East Lake on 8th July, two there on 12th July, one on 8th – 11th August. Fog/mist on 14th August brought an influx of 21 (2 East Lake, 19 Water Sports Lake). A single on 15th August, two on 19th/20th, increasing to three by 23rd August, and six on 27th August. In September singles were seen on 1st, 3rd, eight on 4th, one on 7th, and two on 12th. A gap, then one on 10th and 13th October.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Just one spring sighting; a single at East Lake on 4th April. In autumn one was at East Lake on 11th July. Further singles there on 17th July, 14th – 15th August, and two on 31st August. Singles were at East Lake on 1st and 8th September.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Surprisingly no spring records. The first was at East Lake on 1st July, followed by three there on 8th August, and two on 16th – 17th August.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

One was feeding at East Lake on 1st July, presumably the same bird was resting there on 8th July, was seen again on 11th July. One dropped in briefly on 14th August before leaving south.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

One dropped onto East Lake from height in the evening of 11th July, three at East Lake on 17th July, one remaining to the next day. One flew south over the Water Sports Lake on 14th August, one feeding at East Lake on 1st September, and another on 4th. A flock of seven spent ten minutes at East Lake on 7th September before continuing on their way to the south-west.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

A common visitor in the non-breeding season, especially in winter when good numbers roost at night. 700 were in the East Lake roost on 4th January, the late year maximum of 1300 roosting there on 9th November. An influx in September saw 366 on East Lake silt on 13th.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

Two adults were with Black-headed Gulls at East Lake in the afternoon of 12th November, a day when good numbers were seen at the coast.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

An adult at East Lake on 8th March, followed by a second-summer bird there on 14th March. Single juveniles was at East Lake on 3rd and 8th August, followed by a second calendar-year bird on East Lake on 4th September. Two were present on 13th September, a juvenile and adult, and a first-winter on 19th September, and an adult on 12th October. In November a first-winter in the East Lake roost on 14th November.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Large roost gatherings build up in winter. East Lake held roosts of 1,850 on 4th January, and 2,300 on 9th November. A regular visitor January to March and August to December.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Resting birds are often with the Herring Gulls on East Lake March to September, less so in October/November. First were three on 3rd March, six on 21st March being the spring maximum. 22 were counted on 12th July as birds started their post-breeding southerly movements. Three juveniles were identified on 30th July. Ever present in August, eight were present on 17th. Two in the gull roost on 9th November were the last.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

The most regular gull seen throughout the year, often in good numbers around the quarry workings. 260 were estimated in the roost on 4th January. 460 at East Lake on 3rd March was the highest count received.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

The first of the year was an adult on East Lake on 12th July, followed by a juvenile there on 29th July. Another juvenile was at East Lake on 3rd August, an adult on 17th, plus a juvenile on 28th August. A typical set of records.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Often loafing around with Herring Gulls at East Lake. Seventeen were in the roost there on 4th January, a good count of 70 on 11th September, 15 on 9th November, 32 on 14th November, and 29 on 23rd December.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Two were at the Water Sports Lake on 23rd – 26th May, when display was observed.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

One was seen at the Water Park on 26th April.

ROCK DOVE/FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Small numbers observed through the year.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

A breeding resident around the lakes, recorded frequently in single figures. A flock of 30 was around East Lake on 2nd September, increasing to 55 on 27th September.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

A common breeding bird.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

A scarce visitor to the lakes nowadays. One was around the fields to the south of the Sports Lake on 8th May, followed by one near the hide at East Lake on 21st June.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

A regular visitor to fields south of the lakes. Often seen from Long Causeway Road.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Two pairs around the lakes complex.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

A breeding bird in woodland around the lakes. Two young were located on 15th May.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

One was seen briefly at Causeway Plantation on 12th December. A new species for the lakes.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Present again in the summer in woodland near the lakes.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

The first were three over on 9th May, a day of mass arrivals in the Scarborough district. By 11th May there were 45 feeding over the lakes, and 90 moved through the next day. A regular visitor to August.

SWIFT sp. *Apus*

During an influx of Pallid Swifts into the UK two unidentified swifts were seen high over the Water Sports Lake on 25th October.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Frequently recorded around the lakes complex.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Recorded frequently from woodland around the lakes, especially to the west where one breeding pair were located.



Great Spotted Woodpecker – Stephen Beaver

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

One or two birds often seen around the lakes throughout the year.



Kestrel – Stephen Beaver

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Singles over on 14th May, 3rd and 6th June. In July an adult and a juvenile were hawking around Match/East Lake on 30th July. The juvenile was seen again on the same overhead wires by East Lake on 6th August. One reported there on 11th August, followed by one over the Water Sports Lake on 4th September. The last was seen on 12th September.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Singles occasionally visited throughout the year.

GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*

A singing bird was seen and heard in Causeway Plantation on 18th May. What was presumed to be the same individual was photographed in the same area on 1st June. The plumage suggested a second calendar-year male. It was subsequently seen or heard on 2nd, 3rd and 5th June.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Regularly reported from Causeway Plantation, normally ones and twos, but on 27th February a group of seven were seen.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

A regular visitor to surrounding fields.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

A pre-roost flight of 280 over the lakes on 4th January, a similar gathering of 800 at dusk on 9th November.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Ever present in fields around the lakes.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

A common breeding resident.

HOODED CROW *Corvus cornix*

One flew east on 2nd May. A scarce visitor.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

A breeding resident in small numbers.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Breeds in small numbers in woodland around the lakes. More often heard than seen. Seven were counted on 3rd October.



Marsh Tit – Phil Bennett

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montanus*

Increasingly recorded around the lakes, singing birds heard, and presence in the breeding season suggests nesting nearby.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A common resident. The maximum count was 17 on 9th November.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Ever present around the lakes, small numbers breeding. Six were counted on 3rd October.

BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

Two were seen in a reedbed at the Water Sports Lake on 14th March. A rare visitor.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

A breeding resident in adjacent fields.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

One at the Water Sports Lake on 7th April was a late first sighting, ten present the next day. By 21st April 110 were present. Good numbers were nesting at East Lake, 85+ active nest holes counted on 18th May. The last were two at East Lake on 3rd September.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Seven arrived at the Water Sports Lake on 7th April, increasing to ten the next day. Most numerous on spring and autumn passage. The last to be reported were two on 17th September.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

One at the Water Sports Lake on 8th April was the first reported. Next were four flying north-east on 22nd April. A regular visitor in small numbers April to September.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Several pairs nest in adjacent woodland. The largest count was 27 on 10th October.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

A large arrival mid-April saw 21 singing birds present by 14th April, and a count of 30 singing birds on 18th April. Several pairs remained to nest.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Two wintering birds located on 7th January. The first of spring were three on 13th March, by 19th March there were 13 present, increasing to 19 on 26th March. A common breeder in woodland around the lakes. Autumn records included two on 10th October, and singles on 21st November and 9th December were presumably wintering birds.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

The first was one at the Water Sports Lake on 21st April. By 4th May there were eight singing birds. Several pairs nested. The last was at the Water Sports Lake on 13th September.



Sedge Warblers, Water Sports Lake reeds – Diane Todd

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

The first were two singing at the Water Sports Lake on 1st May. Three were recorded on 9th May. Good numbers nested around the complex, two still present on 28th August. One at the Water Sports Lake on 13th September.



Reed Warbler – Phil Bennett

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

The first was a singing bird on 14th April. By 21st April ten were present. A common breeding bird in the woodland. One on 9th October was the last report.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

One at the Water Sports Lake on the early date of 14th April occurred during a large arrival of warblers to the lakes. This was followed by another at Causeway Plantation on 16th April. Good numbers were breeding in the woodland. No late records received.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

One was recorded at the Water Sports Lake on 4th May.

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

The first was on 14th April., two recorded on 18th. Four were seen on 4th May. Nesting occurred at the south and east sides of the Water sports Lake. One on 13th September was the last reported.



Common Whitethroat – Phil Bennett

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

A resident breeder in small numbers. Numbers are swollen by wintering birds from elsewhere. 21 on 9th November was the highest count.
21 9/11

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A common breeding resident.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Present in woodland in small numbers.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Several pairs nest in the area.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Often appear at dusk, a roost presumably somewhere around the lakes. The largest number was 150 on 9th November.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

A common breeder around the site. Numbers are swollen in winter with continental birds. A concentration of 120 around Causeway Plantation/Long Causeway Road on 12th December.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

The first to be reported was a single on 26th March. In autumn 150 were at Long Causeway Road on 25th November. 60 were still there on 12th December.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Single figures recorded early in the year, and from October onwards. Forty were along Long Causeway Road on 12th December.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

A common breeding resident.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

One or two pairs were present throughout the breeding season. One was observed collecting nesting material on 3rd April. One pair nested in Causeway Plantation. A flock of seven were observed on 31st October, and 12th December.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

A common breeding resident. 13 were counted on 26th March. A concentration of 20 at Causeway Plantation on 12th December.

BLACK REDSTART

A male was photographed on posts at the Water Park car park on 8th April. A new species for the lakes. It occurred at a time when there was a significant influx into the UK.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

This species is becoming increasingly scarce at the lakes and only recorded on passage nowadays. The only record was one south of the Water Park lake on 15th April.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

One at the Water Sports Lake on 7th and 24th January.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Just two spring records; one on 14th April, and two on 16th April.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Present in small numbers throughout the year but rarely reported. Five were seen on 16th April, plus one on 18th May. Later in the year, one was seen on 30th October.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

A common breeding resident.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

No breeding reports were received from nearby fields. The first of spring was at East Lake on 16th April, one on 9th May. Next was one at East Lake on 8th July, followed by singles on 12th July and 17th July. Singles there on 22nd and 27th August. In September one was at East Lake on 19th.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

First noted on 5th March. A regular visitor, especially in autumn and winter. Mostly singles reported but two were seen on 30th October.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Single figures reported through the year.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Occasional sightings, mostly of birds flying over on passage.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

A common breeding resident.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Good numbers were feeding in cover crops along Long Causeway Road at the beginning of the year, 120 estimated on 10th February. Later in the year six were at Long Causeway Road on 25th November, and 12th December.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Regularly seen around the lakes, where it is a resident breeder. Six were seen on 16th November.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*

Occasionally reported in woodland.

LINNET *Linaria cannabina*

More numerous in the winter months, but recorded throughout the year, small numbers nesting. Up to 150 at Long Causeway Road on 10th February. Up to 50 there in November.

LESSER REDPOLL *Acanthis cabaret*

Essentially a winter visitor. Two Causeway Plantation on 4th January, and four on 19th January. Better numbers later in the year; 15 on 9th November, and a good count of 32 on 20th December.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Present throughout the year in small numbers.

A family party were observed in Causeway Plantation on 8th June. In the autumn larger numbers were recorded peaking at 30 on 10th October.

SISKIN *Spinus spinus*

Small numbers present in the winter months. One on 8th June was an unusual date. Larger numbers were reported in November and December, peaking at 100 feeding around Coarse Lake on 29th November.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

One was just east of the lakes near Darrell's Low Farm on 18th-19th September.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

A breeding resident in adjacent fields. Seventeen around the Water Park on 12th January was the largest count of the year.



Yellowhammer – Stephen Beaver

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

A breeding resident in small numbers. Six were at East Lake on 16th January. Six singing males around the Water Park on 6th March, and twenty were feeding at the Water Sports lake peninsular on 24th March. Twelve were counted on 3rd October.



Reed Bunting, Water Sports Lake – Phil Bennett

Wildfowl Counts 2022



	24/1	19/2	26/3	13/9	10/10	9/11	9/12
Mute Swan			2	11	8	9	7
Whooper Swan						3	
Pink-footed Goose		1			11	2	3
Greylag Goose	133	152	26	420	365	7	420
Canada Goose	3	26	35	186	15	2	1
Egyptian Goose	5		3		3		
Shelduck		1	1				
Mallard	76	56	17	54	60	39	142
Gadwall	9	6	4	2	6	12	32
Pintail				1			1
Teal	3	10	7	31	260	12	47
Shoveler			8	3	6		2
Wigeon		11		9	80	2	114
Pochard	6	4			3	2	
Tufted Duck	89	57	17	15	20	32	30
Goldeneye	11	20	10			10	
Goosander			1			1	2
Little Grebe	7	6	5	4	5	6	19
Great Crested Grebe	4	7	9	3	7	9	7
Cormorant	18	22	13	10	8	10	12
Grey Heron	1		2	1	1	3	1
Moorhen	21	9	9	7	11	6	20
Coot	126	91	37	103	103	114	59
Water Rail	2	2				2	1



Pheasant - Wal Smith

Dragonfly highlights **Chris Bull**

The first damselflies (**Azures**, **Blue-tailed**, **Common Blues** and **Large Reds**) emerged on May 5th, a couple of weeks earlier than the last 3 years. **Red-eyed Damselflies**, once a Yorkshire rarity, are well-established now on the lakes wherever there are lily pads and several hundred were recorded on May 22nd, especially on Coarse, Trout and Predator Lakes. The first true dragonfly, the magnificent **Four-spotted Chaser**, was seen on Match Lake on May 23rd, one of the most rewarding to photograph as they always pose with

wings outstretched. **Hairy Dragonflies** soon followed but they remain uncommon and only 6 were seen this year, mainly on Match Lake. In the last 3 years the numbers of **Black-tailed Skimmers** has been low but this year we recorded dozens of them, especially on Predator lake and the Waterpark. Britain's largest dragonfly, the beautiful **Emperor**, has a strong breeding population at Wykeham and by late June they made a great spectacle on each lake as they battled for territory and females. **Brown Hawkers** are also abundant at this time, easy to find on all of the lakes. In July, around a dozen **Ruddy Darters** were seen, especially on Trout and Match Lakes, looking stunning with their scarlet abdomens.



Ruddy Darter – Chris Bull

Undoubtedly the highlight this year was the appearance of our first ever **Lesser Emperors**. Michael McNaghten spotted one at the Waterpark on July 16th and 3 more followed on Predator Lake over the next few weeks taking the total number of species recorded at Wykeham Lakes to a very impressive 22. Only males were seen so it seems unlikely they will have bred here. The only previous record in Yorkshire was a single male in 2006.



Lesser Emperor – Chris Bull (wing damage due to fights with other dragonflies!)

Finally, while we were thrilled to find our first **Willow Emerald** damselfly three years ago at Wykeham they are gradually building up a strong population here, as well as the rest of Yorkshire, as they continue to spread rapidly north. Numbers were low throughout August but on 5th September, along with dragonfly experts Keith and June Gittens, we recorded 27 of them: 2 on Causeway Lake, 2 on Coarse Lake and 23 on Match Lake. One of the largest damselflies, they are a wonderful sight and are unique amongst the Odonata in Britain for laying their eggs into soft bark, mainly willow trees overhanging still water. In Spring, the larvae hatch and drop into the water to continue their life cycle, leaving a characteristic pattern of scars on the bark.



Willow Emerald Damselfly – Chris Bull (female inserting eggs into willow bark)



Willow Emerald Damselfly egg scars on willow bark – Chris Bull

Moths and Butterflies 2022

Allan Rodda

There was a question on many moth recorders minds, was 2022 the best ever year for moths? In terms of migrant moths in a lot of areas the answer was yes. For the team that record at the Long Causeway area things were a bit under par. The weather played a big part in our recording efforts July saw record temperatures, resulting in the earth being baked like concrete, Larval food plants burnt to a crisp and pupae cooked where they hung.

January saw us visit the site twice, with 20 moths recorded. We moved into February and at one of the early sessions a total of 107 Pale Brindled Beauty were recorded, a fantastic total for the site. Into March, and the stand out moth was Lead-coloured Drab, a moth we only see at the Causeway area, eight were recorded on 21/3/22, a record count for the site. April and May passed with very little to report, in some cases due to the team recording at other sites in the North Yorkshire area. Into June and our first new moths for the site were recorded, Small Ranunculus, and the micro moth Celypha Rosaceana, the latter not only being new for the site, but also new for North East Yorkshire, VC62. We also recorded the moth two days later at Ings Farm also in the Long Causeway area. On the butterfly front July saw a new species arrive at the site, Marbled White a stunning addition to the butterfly list.

August was special for a moth species that we had always hoped would turn up at the Long Causeway site, Merveille du Jour. Not only was it a first for the site but our earliest record by a long way.



Merveille du Jour – Allan Rodda

September saw our first migrant moth visit the light in the form of Pearly Underwing, a new moth for both the site and the recording team. We move into October and the stand-out moth for 2022 visited the light, White Point a new moth for the area, and the team. White Point is a moth seldom recorded in Yorkshire.



White Point – Allan Rodda

The moth recording team: Allan Rodda, Jackie Holder, Sam Newton, Robert Woods, Graham Featherstone, Steve Farrish, Antony Wren, Ian Marshall, Logan Corney, Phil Winters, Victoria Franklin and Andy Nunn.

Insect Highlights 2022 **Dan Lombard**

2022 represented a good year overall for recording the less popular insect groups at Wykeham Lakes, with an increase in active recorders over previous years. Whilst 2022 produced less nationally or regionally significant records in comparison to the previous year it did continue to build upon the increasing species list for the site. Despite more recorders contributing, recording effort was down overall, which was reflective in the total number of species observed.

The weather started off poorly with a cold start to the spring with high pressure and cool days. This progressively advanced into one of the hottest and driest summers on record with a prolonged drought and quite extreme conditions for the area, lasting well into the autumn.

Hymenoptera (Bees, Wasps et al) – A total of 8 Bumblebee species were recorded on site this year, as with previous years including the Cuckoo Bumblebee *Bombus vestalis*. This species is a parasite of the buff-tail bumblebee, which are common on site. The queen enters the buff-tailed bumblebee nest in the spring killing the buff-tailed queen and taking over her nest. She lays her eggs which the buff-tailed workers, already in the nest, rear as their own, hence the name cuckoo. Wool carder bee was another nice addition to the site list, a species commonly associated with Mullein and Lamb's-ear plants, which has really increased in the local area over the past 10 years or so.

Wasp highlights include the gall forming *Diplolepis eglanteriae* agg. on rose and *Andricus foecundatrix* on oak, the latter producing a little artichoke like gall, both species are common and widespread. All other wasp records submitted were of social wasps with a total of 6 species recorded, interestingly *Dolichovespula norwica* was finally found within the recording area, a species which must have just been previously missed given its common status in this part of North Yorkshire.

Solomon's seal sawfly larvae were observed on the host plant within a private garden in the boundaries of the wider site and was a new species for the estate. As with previous years the larger more distinctive *Tenthredo mesomela* and *T. maculata* sawflies could be found in damp woodland rides, with the latter a scarce species in this region.

Coleoptera (Beetles) – Both *Aphodius rufipes* and *Geotrupes spiniger* are dung feeding species being associated with livestock in grazed pasture and were both new additions to the species list. With the latter being a large species, which can commonly be seen walking across paths near fields with livestock. The Brown Chafer *Serica brunnea* was a nice find, a species which has a local distribution and is much smaller and scarcer than its close relative the Cockchafer which was also recorded during moth trapping sessions. Both of these species feed on the roots of grasses as larvae.

A number of soldier beetles could be seen and were conspicuous during the warm summer weather particularly on umbellifer flower heads these included *Rhagonycha fulva*, *Cantharis flavilabris* and *Rhagonycha lignosa*.

Ladybirds also appeared to have a good year with records of 14 Spot Ladybird, 7 Spot ladybird, Harlequin Ladybird, Pine Ladybird, 22 Spot Ladybird and 24 Spot Ladybird. The latter species was new for the site with a couple of records from different grassland areas. Adonis ladybird was also recorded for the first time on site this year. This species favours warm sandy sites and clearly benefitted from a very hot summer with large numbers throughout the region.

Weevils included *Nedyus quadrimaculatus* associated with nettles, *Deporaus betulae* associated with birch and *Dorytomus tortrix* associated with aspen were noted.

Whilst still numerous the plague like proportions of *Agelastica alni* on alder had decreased quite significantly this year. Fluctuations like this within insects are very common and whilst last year seemed excessive there has been no lasting damage to the alders on site. 2023 seemed to be a poor year for longhorn beetles on site with none of the scarce species from the previous year recorded on site. Numbers of the common species also seemed to

be relatively low. Only *Agapanthia villosoviridescens* and *Rutpela maculata* were recorded, both species are very common, although as spectacular looking insects always welcome sightings.

Diptera (True Flies) – As with other years most records involve hoverflies, this bright distinctive group had a great summer with a wide variety of species noted, this included *Eristalis nemorum*, *Eristalis tenax*, *Episyrphus balteatus*, *Cheilosia illustrate*, *Xylota segnis*, *Myathropa florea*, *Criorhina floccosa*, *Cheilosia impressa*, *Volucella bombylans*, *Cheilosia illustrate*, *Helophilus pendulus*, *Melanostoma scalare*, *Eristalis pertinax* and *Eristalis intricarius*. The soldier fly *Oplodontha viridula* was new to our records, a distinctive species associated with ditches around the edges of the site. *Beris chalybata* was another soldierfly new to the site, associated with woodland rides, this is a relatively common species.

The tachinid fly *Phasia hemiptera* was a new species for the site and a relatively scarce and unusual looking fly. This broad-headed species is a parasite on shieldbugs particularly the Forest Bug and Green Shieldbug, both of which are common here in woodland environments. *Tachina ursina* another distinctive tachinid, commonly called the bear fly, was also recorded in the spring around the causeway in sheltered open glade edges, with short grassy areas. Gall flies included *Dasineura pustulans* and *Dasineura ulmaria* both on meadowsweet and *Phytomyza heracleana* on hogweed were noted.

Dark-bordered Bee fly *Bombylius major* was recorded during the spring around the causeway and is likely present at other parts of the site. This is a common and widespread species which is popular amongst naturalists. *Norellia spinipes* was one of the dipteran highlights of the year, a species of small relatively indistinctive species associated with daffodils, on which its larvae mine the leaves. This is a scarce species in North Yorkshire, with few records, so was a nice find.

Hemiptera (True Bugs) – As with other groups there was nothing of national rarity but certainly plenty of interest at a site level. A wide range of mirid bugs were found within marginal tussocky grassland habitats throughout the summer including *Plagiognathus arbustorum*, *Leptopterna dolabrata*, *Grypocoris stysi*, *Closterotomus norwegicus*, *Capsus ater*, *Orthops campestris*, *Orthops basalis* and *Stenodema calcarata* with *Deraeocoris flavilinea* being frequent on willows. Where possible road verges and similar habitats like this should remain uncut to support insect communities like this, which in turn support breeding bird communities.

Speudotettix subfuscus a leaf hopper commonly associated with oak, was a new species for the site, along with the much more common and conspicuous common spittle bug which leaves its distinctive cuckoo spit on grasses from around late May. Another more arboreal species of hopper is the lacehopper *Cixius nervosus*, a common species which usually occurs in the canopy of trees, this species seemed particularly numerous this year especially after periods of windy weather.

Blue Shieldbug was surprisingly a new species for the site this year, with a sizable colony being found in the open gravels along the northern edge of the Water Sports lake. This is a predatory species which likes open warm sunny situations like this, where it feeds on soft bodied beetle larvae. Most other common and widespread species were recorded again this year, with an absence of Crucifer Shieldbug which was first recorded here last year, and a much lower abundance of both Woundwort Shieldbug and Parent Shieldbug.

Notes on two Non-insect highlights

Plants – A small number of spikes of Common Twayblade were discovered on the access track to the causeway lake. This is a rather indistinct orchid species, but one which has been lost from many sites in this region. Its importance here should not be understated and appropriate management could help this plant flourish on the small corner of the site where it occurs.

Reptiles – A colony of Common Lizards was found along the ditch side which runs parallel with Long Causeway Road. Given the surrounding open Birch woodland and sandy soils there is a likelihood that this species may be distributed in other wider areas of the site. This is the first reptile we have recorded from the site whilst undertaking invertebrate surveys, and presumably has previously gone unnoticed, or is potentially a recent colonist.



Common Lizzard, Long Causeway – Allan Rodda