



Long Preston Bird Report 2020

Compiled by Ian Court

The Long Preston Floodplain Project is a partnership between the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, North Yorkshire County Council, Ribble Rivers Trust, RSPB, Natural England, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, local landowners and farmers

INTRODUCTION

Long Preston Deeps is in the area of the upper Ribble valley between Long Preston and Settle, lying between the Forest of Bowland and Yorkshire Dales National Park. This unique area of lowland wet grassland stretches from Settle south to Cow Bridge, where the Wigglesworth to Long Preston Road crosses the river and is bordered on the east by Long Preston and the A65 and the Wigglesworth to Rathmell road on the west.

LONG PRESTON RECORDING AREA

The recording area combines the Long Preston Floodplain Project area and the adjacent area to the south, including Hellifield Flash. A map of the recording area that includes details of access points can be found on the following page.

The conservation management that has been implemented by the project has only been possible because of the close cooperation with the local farmers, other land users and local residents. We would ask that visitors are considerate when parking and do not block any access. Visitors should also be aware that fishermen are regularly present along the river and wildfowling takes place between 1st September and 31st January.

In order to maintain these positive relationships, the project would like to remind visitors that the Long Preston floodplain is in private ownership and should only be accessed using the public rights of way shown on the project trail map. Please note that other than the short section of footpath heading north from Cow Bridge, there is no public access along the River Ribble. There are good but limited opportunities for watching the area from the surrounding roads, with a series of viewpoints also shown on the trail map, but please be aware that the birds can be distant and a telescope is strongly recommended.

The bird hide can be accessed along the Ribble Way, north from Cow Bridge. Car parking is very limited so please ensure that you do not block any roads or access tracks. Park carefully by the bridge at SD 82799 57022.

Development is being undertaken at and around Hellifield Flash that will have a significant detrimental impact on the site. It should be noted that Waterside Lane is reported to be a private road, but the Flash can also be viewed from public footpaths.

BIRD RECORDS

If visiting the area, we hope that you will take the time to submit your records. We would encourage all observers to enter their records on BirdTrack as this will help in the production of both the local and county bird report, the latter published by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union. For more details on using BirdTrack see [here](#). Records can also be entered into the log book in the bird hide, entered on the East Lancashire Ornithologists' Club website [here](#), or sent to the local recorder Ian Court ian.court@mypostoffice.co.uk

PREVIOUS BIRD REPORTS

The Long Preston Bird reports from 2014 onwards can be downloaded from the project website [here](#).

For more information on the Long Preston Floodplain Project visit [here](#).

2020 SUMMARY

It was an uneventful start to the year with little of note in January, but February was dominated by persistent strong westerly winds and heavy rain that caused severe flooding, resulting in an influx of wildfowl including Gadwall, with 15 at Mearbeck on 8th February the second highest count for the area. The flooded valley proved attractive to Wigeon with at least 1800 present just on the Hollow Gill area of the floodplain on 23rd February with 1690 in the same area on 25th. A more comprehensive count across the whole area on the 8th March WeBS count revealed at least 2578, a new record count. More records were broken with a new record account of 154 Oystercatcher present below Hollow Gill on 29th February and with the poor weather and floodwater continuing into March, Pintail numbers increased from 114 on 2nd to the second highest count for the area of 228 on 8th March.

An adult male Ring-necked Duck that was present on the southern floodplain from 7th March arrived with a large influx of Tufted Duck and remained until at least 22nd, and was the second record for the area. The timings would suggest that this was the same bird that had been at Leighton Moss and Pine Lakes, Lancashire earlier in the winter. Given their rarity in Craven and dearth of recent records, a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker briefly drumming and seen in the tree tops in Hollow Gill Wood on 5th March was a remarkable record but was unfortunately not seen subsequently.

Easier to see but extremely difficult to count was the Black-tailed Godwit flock that was present on Wigglesworth Moss in February and March. There were clearly 'several hundred' present, often seen roosting in a tight group with other birds feeding in amongst the vegetation the Middle Marsh area, but it wasn't until examination of photos of the flock in flight, a one-by-count showed that there was a minimum of 380 present on 7th March. On this date an eagle species caused havoc amongst the large numbers of wildfowl and waders present on the floodplain and although there was some initial uncertainty about the identification, it was confirmed to be a second calendar-year Bald Eagle that had escaped from the bird of prey centre near Horton-in-Ribblesdale in December. There is no doubt that this bird accounted for the claims of White-tailed Eagle reported in the area at the same time. A total of 85 Whooper Swans on the southern floodplain near Sour Dale Lane on 14th March was second highest count for the area.

The growing threat of the Covid pandemic resulted in the unprecedented global lockdown that included national restrictions lasting from late March until mid-May making it an incredibly difficult time for all. It did, however, highlight the importance that being out in the countryside and birdwatching is to the mental well-being of many people. During this period the area was only accessible to local residents and so a Spotted Redshank on Wigglesworth Moss on 1st April was a species that many patch birders would like to have seen given that this is an incredibly rare species in the western dales. An Osprey headed north over the floodplain on 3rd April, a species that despite an increasing population in northern England, is still a rare species in the area.

As restrictions eased and access was possible there were several good records in May including a calling Quail on the southern floodplain between 10th and 16th, the third area record of Reed Warbler was along Wigglesworth Beck on 15th May and a Common Tern flew up the river viewed from the bird hide on 24th May.

In June what was thought to be a different Quail to the bird heard in May was below Hollow Gill on 7th and 8th, and again near the 'big willow' just up from the bird hide on 13th. There were also two new breeding records for the area: a pair of Greylag Geese with four well grown young in the Wigglesworth Moss area on 7th June and despite being strongly suspected in recent years, a female Gadwall with eight young seen on 14th June where Long Preston Beck meets the Ribble. Also in June, a juvenile Cuckoo that flew over Snipe Ground and dropped onto riverside bushes on 8th was a good local record with, surprisingly, another juvenile in the same area on 18th August. Later in the month 833 Canada Geese on the southern floodplain was a new high count.

In September, two Great Crested Grebes in non-breeding plumage were seen flying high south over the floodplain on 13th were the 11th and 12th records for the area. Also on 13th, a Hobby flew over Hellifield School and then over Hellifield Flash with what was presumed to be the same bird over the southern floodplain near Cow Bridge on 15th September. A Red Kite was also seen over the southern floodplain on the latter date; only the sixth record for the area.

There were few notable records towards the end of the year other than a Grey Plover that flew over the floodplain on 11th November, a new record count of 113 Greylag Geese present on the Mearbeck area of Long Preston Deeps on 15th November, and a Water Pipit seen on the river near Snipe Ground on 28th December, the first local record since one near Cow Bridge on 29th Dec 1992.

Despite the access restrictions that were in place for several months in spring, a total of 130 species was seen during 2020, several more than the annual totals in recent years.

A SYSTEMATIC LIST OF THE BIRDS OF HELLIFIELD FLASH AND LONG PRESTON DEEPS

There is considerable movement of birds between Hellifield Flash and the Long Preston Deeps area, even on a daily basis, and so for some species the monthly WeBs counts and peak monthly counts derived from casual observations outside of the core WeBS count dates are included.

The WeBS survey dates in 2020 were 12th January, 9th February, 8th March, 12th April, 10th May, 7th June, 5th July, 23rd August, 20th September, 18th October, 15th November and 13th December.

Where appropriate, only records of rare birds that have been accepted by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union have been published.

The sequence and nomenclature used is that detailed within British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC): 52nd Report (January 2021). First published: 16 December 2020. Vernacular as well as international names are now included in The British List and the former are generally used in this Report.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* C1E*

Singles were at Hellifield Flash on 2nd, 17th, 24th and 27th May.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix* AE*

One was calling at Long Preston on 10th and 16th May (*per* Bird Information Services). One was also calling below Hollow Gill on 7th and 8th June (IRC) and was probably the same bird calling near the 'big willow' just up from the bird hide on 13th June (RC: IRC). Given the time period between the May and June records it is thought that at least two different birds were present.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* C1E*

This species was present at most of the regularly visited sites within the recording area, but no notable records were received.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* AC2E*

Numbers were variable during the year with 833 on 29th August on Long Preston Deeps a new high count in the recording area. At least five broods were present on the floodplain below Hollow Gill lay-by on 7th July.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 374 | 5 | 8 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 39 | 610 |
| Long Preston | 50 | 237 | 227 | NC | NC | 89 | 65 | 465 | 672 | 122 | 425 | 202 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 374 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 87 | 2 | - | - |
| Long Preston | 476 | 257 | 82 | - | 24 | - | 300 | 833 | 692 | 43 | 420 | - |

Single hybrid Canada x Barnacle Geese were at Hollow Gill on 3rd January and 23rd February, Hellifield Flash on 12th January and Cow Bridge on 18th January,

A single Canada x Greylag was at Hollow Gill on 3rd March.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* AC2E*

One was on the floodplain below Hollow Gill on 13th September.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* AC2C4E*

There were records on only five dates at Hellifield Flash, including three dates in May. The slow increase in numbers on the floodplain continued, with a new record count of 113 on 15th November in the Mearbeck area of Long Preston Deeps that was only the second three figure number following 103 on 9th December

2018. There was also the first confirmed breeding record in the area with a pair with four well grown young were on Wigglesworth Moss on 7th June.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 0 | 0 | 0 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Long Preston | 44 | 59 | 18 | NC | NC | 3 | 13 | 31 | 21 | 39 | 108 | 32 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 1 | - | - | - | 13 | - | - | - | - | - | - | P |
| Long Preston | 92 | 8 | 30 | - | 46 | - | - | 22 | 32 | 67 | 113 | 90 |

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* AE*

Most records were from, or perhaps more accurately, seen over the Long Preston Deeps area with January records of 60 heading west on 15th, 20 north west on 12th and seven on 24th January. Nine were also present feeding on the floodplain on 23rd February with ten still present on 25th. March records comprised two on the floodplain on 14th March and a total of 720 that flew north west in six separate skeins. A rather late bird was still present with Greylag Geese on 17th May.

The first birds of the autumn were in September when a single was present on 13th followed by 32 that flew west on 26th. Records in October included a single present on 12th, with 102 going west on 13th, 25 also heading west on 13th before circling the floodplain and dropping in, 200 flying west on 30th with 75 on 31st. There were very few records in the last two months of the year with 220 on 7th and a single below Wigglesworth Hall Farm on 15th November, with 140 over on 28th December.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* AE*

There was a family party of two adults and two juveniles with two other adults in fields below Wigglesworth Hall Farm on 3rd January, with what were presumed to be the same two adults still present below Hollow Gill on 12th January. The family party of four were also present again in the early afternoon on 18th January, and were joined by a newly arrived group later that day with at least 18 adults and nine juveniles present late afternoon. Presumably the same group were present again on 27th January. In the second winter period a juvenile was present on floods at Mearbeck on 15th November. All were of the race *albifrons*.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* AC2

One or two were reported primarily on the Ribble in the southern area of the floodplain throughout the year, with three on the north east floodplain on 12th January and six on 15th November.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* AE*

The only records at Hellifield Flash were six on 20th November. All the other records were on the southern floodplain with five on 26th January on floods adjacent to Sour Dale Lane and four adults on 29th February. Numbers increased in March as birds began their journey north included 48 on 7th and 8th, with 85 on 14th off Sour Dale the second highest count in the recording area following c.140 on 23rd March 2017. The only other record during the spring was 22 on 18th March.

In autumn three adults were present on 26th September, with three also on 27th October and two on 30th. In November there were eight on 4th, six adults on 7th, with two adults and two juveniles on 8th.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* A

There were some reasonable numbers present in the early part of the year including Hellifield Flash, where at least four pairs were present in May with three pairs hatching young with broods of nine, ten and seven present on 25th May. This was the second year that three pairs bred at this site.

Numbers on the floodplain were similar to those in recent years apart from 25 on 14th March that was the second highest count following 26 at Hellifield on 7th May 2017.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 0 | 2 | 0 | NC | NC | 32* | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Long Preston | 3 | 13 | 6 | NC | NC | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |

*includes three broods totalling 26 young.

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Long Preston | 12 | 10 | 25 | - | 6 | 1 | - | - | - | 5 | 4 | 1 |

Garganey *Spatula querquedula* A

This remains virtually an annual visitor to the recording area with a pair in April on the floodplain (KM: CM) and a cracking male present on Hellifield Flash on 25th May that remained until at least 27th (*per* Bird Information Services).



Photo: IR Court

Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* A

Overall, numbers were lower than in previous years. Once again, a few lingered into the start of the breeding season with two pairs Hellifield Flash on 16th May and a pair and a female the following day. The first birds of the autumn were two at Hellifield Flash on 2nd September, increasing to seven on 12th.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 32 | 33 | 1 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 41 | 0 | 21 |
| Long Preston | 1 | 11 | 78 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 26 | 4 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 44 | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | 40 | 41 | 26 | - |
| Long Preston | P | 52 | 51 | - | - | - | - | 7 | 7 | P | 14 | - |

Gadwall *Mareca strepera* AC2E*

The relatively high numbers recorded in previous years continued with 15 at Mearbeck on 8th February the second highest count for the area, followed by nine on 23rd February and 7th March also in the Sour Dale

Lane/Mearbeck area. In the latter half of the year the highest count was ten at Hellifield Flash on 25th October.

A pair lingered at Hellifield Flash until 17th May when they were joined by another male, with a male still present on at least 24th. On the floodplain a pair were present in April and May, with a female and eight young seen on 14th June where Long Preston Beck meets the river constituting the first breeding record for the site.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 0 | 0 | 0 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Long Preston | 0 | 15 | 7 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 0 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 10 | - | - |
| Long Preston | - | 9 | 9 | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | 4 | - |

Wigeon *Mareca penelope* AE*

There is no doubt that numbers have been increasing in recent years. In February there were at least 1800 present just on the Hollow Gill area of the floodplain on 23rd with 1690 in the same area on 25th. A more comprehensive count across the area on the 8th March WeBS count revealed at least 2578 on 8th, a new single highest count for the area.

Following the first birds in autumn on 29th August, numbers increased until the year end but were slightly lower than in previous years.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 1114 | 106 | 0 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 53 | 28 | 97 | 268 |
| Long Preston | 440 | 1164 | 2578 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 43 | 242 | 1215 | 437 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 1114 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 53 | 28 | 97 | P |
| Long Preston | 670 | 1800 | 20 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 57 | - | 829 | - |

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* AC2C4E*

There was no noticeable change in status during the year. The only breeding record was a brood of two at Hellifield Flash on 16th May, although there were undoubtedly more breeding birds present in the area.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 34 | 44 | 2 | NC | NC | 0 | 7 | 4 | 53 | 107 | 83 | 110 |
| Long Preston | 79 | 13 | 39 | NC | NC | 0 | 28 | 188 | 9 | 12 | 93 | 17 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 127 | - | 10 | - | 5 | - | 7 | 5 | 161 | 107 | 83 | - |
| Long Preston | 79 | 20 | 39 | - | 7 | - | 10 | 157 | 35 | 12 | 52 | - |

Pintail *Anas acuta* AE

Numbers were unremarkable throughout both winter periods until an influx into the floodplain in March with 114 on 2nd increasing to 228 on 8th March. The latter just surpassed the second previous highest count

of 222 on 20th December 2015 but was way short of the record 633 on 10th January 2016. A female present at Hellifield Flash on 16th May was a late date for this area.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 29 | 31 | 0 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 35 |
| Long Preston | 12 | 33 | 228 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 103 | 2 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 64 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 12 | - | P |
| Long Preston | 98 | 138 | 114 | - | - | - | - | - | 8 | - | 73 | - |

Teal *Anas crecca* A

There was no real change in status recorded. A male on 25th June was an unusual late spring record at Hellifield Flash.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 37 | 7 | 0 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| Long Preston | 323 | 229 | 417 | NC | NC | 0 | 4 | 63 | 87 | 78 | 387 | 142 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 40 | - | 7 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 6 | - | 4 | - |
| Long Preston | 300 | 850 | 749 | - | - | - | - | 12 | 292 | 80 | 399 | - |

Pochard *Aythya ferina* AE*

The number of records continues to decline with two males at Hellifield Flash on 26th January the only record for the site. The only other record was a male on floods at Mearbeck on 15th November.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* AE

An adult male was located on floodwater from the hide on 7th March and independently re-found on the WeBS count below Mearbeck the following day (TH: IRC). It arrived with a large influx of Tufted Duck and remained until at least 22nd March and is thought to have been the same bird that was present at Leighton Moss and Pine Lakes, Lancashire earlier in the winter. It was the second record for the area following a male at Hellifield Flash between 20th and 24th April 1986.



Photo: IR Court

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* A

There were some notable counts during the year with heavy rain and flooding resulting in an influx of 47 onto floods in the Sour Dale and Mearbeck area on 8th March, with 48 still present on 14th. Later in the year there were between 22 and 35 at Hellifield Flash during October.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 7 | 9 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 22 | 30 | 7 |
| Long Preston | 0 | 0 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 30 | 0 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 15 | - | 10 | - | 3 | - | - | - | 7 | 35 | - | P |
| Long Preston | - | 13 | 48 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | - |

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* AE*

It was an average year with floods at Sour Dale attracting eight on 8th March increasing to ten on 14th.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 2 | 0 | 0 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Long Preston | 0 | 0 | 8 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 3 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | 4 | - |
| Long Preston | - | 8 | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 5 | - |

Goosander *Mergus merganser* A

There was no change in status during the year. Two pairs were present along the Ribble in March, with a female and nine small young at Cow Bridge on 17th May confirming that at least one pair bred. The only record at Hellifield Flash was of a single on 12th October.

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Long Preston | 2 | 1 | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | 3 | - | 2 | - | - |

Swift *Apus apus* A

Only a few records were received, with the first over Long Preston Deeps at Hellifield Flash on 15th May and the last at Cow Bridge on 23rd August. Most were low single figure counts apart from ten at Hellifield Flash on 26th June 27 over Long Preston Deeps on 17th May

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* A

A juvenile flew over Snipe Ground and dropped onto riverside bushes on 8th June (RC) with another juvenile in the same area on 18th August (PC). These were the first records since at least 2014.

Rock Dove *Columba livia* AC4E*

Two or three feral birds were noted on a number of dates during year.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas* A

One to three birds were present regularly throughout the year on the southern floodplain in the Cow Bridge and Sour Dale Lane area, with four on 12th July, with six on 8th and five on 20th August. A group of 30 feeding in stubble near Wigglesworth Hall Farm on 23rd August was a notable high count.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* A

Very few notable records were received apart from 200 on the floodplain on 13th April.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* A

There were one to three birds at Hellifield Flash during the year. Elsewhere, there were two in the Cow Bridge area in January with what was likely to be have been the same birds in the Sour Dale Lane area in March and August at least. There were also two on the north east floodplain on 22nd March.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* A

There were only two records, with one in the Middle Marsh area on 1st May and one calling near the scrape opposite the bird hide on 22nd November.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* A

A pair were present at Hellifield Flash in May with singles noted on 4th July, 14th and 18th October, 15th November and 28th December. On the floodplain there were singles between Cow Bridge and Wigglesworth Hall on 3rd and 21st January, 15th March, 24th and 25th May, and 20th September. There were also singles at Hollow Dene Flash 18th January, and on the north eastern floodplain on 12th January and 8th March. No juveniles were seen and so there is no evidence of any successful breeding.

Coot *Fulica atra* A

At Hellifield Flash there were eight birds present in mid-May including at least two nesting pairs but neither were successful, with only a single present in mid-June and into July. Flooding in the valley attracted two below Hollow Gill on 23rd February, with four present two days later. Similarly there were five on 8th and seven on 14th March on floods in the Sour Dale area.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A

Following singles at Hellifield Flash on 4th and 13th July there were eight on 6th August, increasing to ten on 23rd. In September there were six on 5th, eight on 13th and four on 20th, with three of four present regularly in October, and one or two on several dates in November and December. With up to six reported along the Ribble in some years, the records in August appear to be the highest counts for the area.

As usual, there were one or two present on the Ribble in the early part of the year, that were presumably the same birds pushed onto floodwater in the Sour Dale Lane area in March. There were very few records in the second winter period so five on 20th September were unexpected. The only other record was of one on the north east floodplain on 8th March.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* A

Two in non-breeding plumage were seen flying high south over the floodplain on 13th September (IRC: RC). These were the 11th and 12th records for the area with the most recent a juvenile on the Ribble on 19th July 2015.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* A

Four at Hellifield Flash four on 12th January were the first of the year. There were some notable counts of passage birds in spring particularly below Hollow Gill where there were 30 on 25th, and a new record account for the area of 154 on 29th February. Other notable counts in March included 33 in the Sour Dale area and 58 on the north eastern floodplain on 8th, with 65 near Settle SW on 14th and 48 the following day. Very few birds lingered into the breeding season, although there was at least one territorial pair in the Cow Bridge area up to early July.

There were very few records in the latter half of the year with singles on 12th October, one with a badly injured and trailing leg that flew downriver on 18th October and another on 28th December.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 4 | 15 | 2 | NC | NC | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Long Preston | 0 | 48 | 33 | NC | NC | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* AE

A pair was present on the central floodplain on at least 9th, 15th and 19th April (KM: CM). These represent the 10th and 11th records for the area.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* A

This species was present in most months of the year at Hellifield Flash although numbers were lower than in previous years, with a peak count of 170 on 2nd January. At least one pair bred with an adult with at least one small chick present on 2nd July.

On the floodplain there were at least 2500 on 12th January, with 200 on 25th February increasing to 700 on 29th. There were peak monthly counts of 270 in August, 800 on 25th October, 1050 on 7th November and 1900 on 20th December. The only breeding records were of four territorial pairs that were viewable from the public rights of way.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 106 | 22 | 0 | NC | NC | 9 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Long Preston | 100 | 608 | 18 | NC | NC | 7 | 48 | 110 | 320 | 507 | 0 | 257 |

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* A

All the records were on the southern floodplain with 68 on 25th and 156 on 29th February the only reports during the first winter period. Later in the year there were 50 on 18th and 115 on 25th October, 20 on 7th and 180 on 15th November, with nine on 13th and one on 29th December.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* A

One flew over the floodplain calling on 11th November (RC) was the first record since one at Hellifield Flash on 4th October 2015.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* A

At Hellifield Flash there was a good number of passage birds in May with two on 16th and 17th, 12 on 24th, nine on 25th and six on 27th. The only record on the floodplain was one on a small flood pool near Cow Bridge on 25th February.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* A

Following a single at Hellifield Flash on 16th May, two pairs were present by the end of the month. At least one pair was successful with at least one chick present on 16th June and two fledged young on 25th June. Single adults were still present on 4th, 6th and 13th July.

Curlew *Numenius arquata* A

There were some notable counts of passage birds in spring with 291 in the Hollow Gill area on 25th February, and a total of 309 comprising 172 on Rathmell Bottoms and 137 below Hollow Gill on 29th. There were still 208 below Hollow Gill on 7th March declining to 102 on 14th. The only breeding records were of three territorial pairs in June on the southern floodplain.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deepes.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 0 | 0 | 0 | NC | NC | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Long Preston | 0 | 1 | 234 | NC | NC | 0 | 13 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |



Photo: IR Court

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* A

The number of Icelandic birds that linger in the area in spring continues to increase with a staggering 380 present in the Middle Marsh area on 7th March, just over three times the previous highest count of 124 on 27th March 2019. Numbers remained high during the remainder of the month with at least 200 still present on 14th, 342 on 15th, 200 on 16th and 250 still present on 22nd. There was only a single record in the latter half of the year with a single on 18th October.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* A

There were two records at Hellifield Flash in May with four on 17th (IRC) and a single on 24th (*per* Bird Information Services).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* A

It was a poor year for this species with the only records at Hellifield Flash in May when a single was present on 16th with two the following day. Two were also seen on 24th with one still present on 25th. The only other records were on the flooded ground below Hollow Gill where there were two on 7th March and four on 29th November.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* A

There were two records, both on WeBS counts, with one reported on the north east floodplain on 8th March and one present on Wigglesworth Moss on 18th October.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* A

There were low single figure numbers seen on Long Preston Deepes in most months of the year with more notable counts of 43 on north east flood plain on 8th March and in October, when there were 32 on 12th, 25 on 13th, 30 on 27th and 50 on 30th. During the breeding season there were at least four 'drumming' over Middle Marsh, with two 'chipping' in Snipe Ground opposite the bird hide on 27th May.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deepes.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 0 | 2 | 0 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Long Preston | 1 | 21 | 43 | NC | NC | 1 | 4 | 0 | 9 | 12 | 23 | 18 |

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* A

There were singles at Hellifield Flash one on 16th, 24th and 25th May, with an adult and a chick present on the access road on 4th July. There were a number of records in the Cow Bridge area, most likely relating to a breeding pair along Wigglesworth Beck, where adults with three small chicks were seen on 8th June and with at least one fledged young later in the month on 20th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* A

All the records were from the Cow Bridge to Wigglesworth Hall area where at least one bird was present in the first winter period with sightings on 1st, 2nd, 6th, 19th, 24th and 25th January. There were further records on 23rd and 25th February and again on 7th and 22nd March. One on 20th August may have been a passage bird before records of a wintering bird(s) on 13th, 25th and 30th October and 7th and 22nd November. Two were seen on 7th December.

Redshank *Tringa totanus* A

At Hellifield Flash there was a single on 15th March, with other records in May when there were five on 16th, two on 17th and 24th and three on 27th. There was no evidence of breeding but a notable 15 were present on 16th June. One was on the southern floodplain on 24th January, with one or two seen in the Cow Bridge area on several dates in March and May, when just a single was in the Hollow Gill are. Two were also present near Settle SW in March.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deepes.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 0 | 0 | 0 | NC | NC | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Long Preston | 0 | 0 | 3 | NC | NC | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* A

A single was present on Middle Marsh on 1st April (KM: CM). This is an incredibly rare species in the western dales with a record of two birds reported at Hellifield Flash on 24th June 2009 the first since the 1980s.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* A

A single was present on the southern floodplain on 8th August (AG).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* A

There were reports in most months of the year with no notably high counts.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deepes.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 16 | 22 | 0 | NC | NC | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 70 | 4 |
| Long Preston | 180 | 503 | 264 | NC | NC | 1 | 16 | 0 | 7 | 35 | 840 | 28 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deepes.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 65 | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | 4 | - | - |
| Long Preston | 375 | 500 | 350 | - | 10 | - | 2 | - | - | 200 | 600 | 300 |

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* A

Two adults were present on a small flood pool near Cow Bridge on 15th March (IRC: RC).



Photo: IR Court

Common Gull *Larus canus* A

There were no notable records of this widespread and common wintering species.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Hellifield Flash | 11 | 46 | 0 | NC | NC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 320 | 3 |
| Long Preston | 20 | 426 | 124 | NC | NC | 1 | 4 | 4 | 30 | 432 | 270 | 400 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Hellifield Flash and Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Hellifield Flash | 20 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 230 | - |
| Long Preston | 340 | - | 50 | - | 1 | - | - | 249 | 362 | 37 | 200 | 2150 |

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* A

There was an increase in records compared to the previous year including singles at Hellifield Flash on 1st January, 20th September and 18th October. On Long Preston Deeps there were two on 3rd, one on 12th, January, with two on 23rd, one on 25th and two on 29th February. In March there were two on 14th and three on 15th, with a single on 24th May. In the latter half of the year there were singles on 23rd August, 13th, 18th and 25th October, with further singles on 15th to 18th November and on 20th December.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* A

This species is also becoming more regular in the area. At Hellifield Flash there were singles in 21st January and 29th November with the peak monthly counts on Long Preston Deeps shown below.

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Long Preston | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 4 | 1 | 1 |

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* A

There was a number of sightings at Hellifield Flash from 16th May, with a peak count of 18 on 24th May. Singles were also present on 18th October and 15th November. Large numbers were on the floodplain again during the year including a notable 17 on 12th January with two on 18th and one the following day. In February there were 20 on 23rd and 27 on 25th, increasing in March when 178 below Hollow Gill on 14th was third highest count for the area. Other notable counts included 32 on 25th May and 158 on 5th September, but only up to four present in October. There were a few records at the end of the year including one on 11th and nine on 22nd November, with nine also on 20th and two on 28th December.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* A

One was watching flying up the river from the bird hide at 1325 hrs on 24th May (IRC). The first record since seven at Hellifield Flash on 30th April 2012.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* A

Numbers remained fairly stable as shown in the tables below.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Long Preston | 1 | 1 | 2 | NC | NC | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Long Preston | 2 | 2 | 1 | NC | NC | NC | 1 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 |

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* A

This species appears to have become more regular at Hellifield Flash with singles on 1st, 2nd, 21st and 25th, January. Also singles on 3rd, 12th and 13th with two on 20th September, and singles on 13th, 14th, 25th October. There was also a single on 28th December.

On Long Preston Deeps numbers were very similar to previous years apart from ten that were present on 7th March on the north west floodplain, the highest count of the year.

Monthly WeBs Counts for Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Long Preston | 3 | 2 | 2 | NC | NC | 0 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Long Preston | 3 | | 10 | | 5 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 4 | |

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* A

There were regular sightings along the Ribble primarily on the southern floodplain but away from this area there were singles at Hollow Dene flash on 1st, 3rd and 18th January, 15th March and also on 29th November.

Max. Monthly Counts Outside of Core WeBS Dates for Long Preston Deeps.

| Site/Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Long Preston | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* AE*

One flew over the floodplain before heading north on 3rd April (K & CM). It is perhaps surprising that despite an increase in the number of breeding records in northern England, this remains a rare species in the area.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* A

There were very few records with one was at Hellifield Flash on 12th January and only nine records on Long Preston Deeps.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A

There was only a single spring record of one over the southern floodplain on 16th March. In contrast it was a good autumn with singles on 2nd, 6th, 12th, 13th and 20th August. There were three birds on 29th August when a juvenile male and female were over the northern flood plain as a third flew past Sour Dale Lane. Further singles were present on 1st, 4th, 7th, 20th when two were present and 29th September. There were two in October when what was presumably the same bird was present on 13th and 14th.



Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* A

There were multiple sightings in both winter periods, with up to three different individual birds seen in the first winter period, and what was presumed to be the same adult female seen on a number of dates in November and December.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus* AC3E*

One that flew over the floodplain on 15th September (RC) was only the sixth record for the area.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo* AE*

There were regular sightings throughout the year of between one and four birds. Five were seen on 25th February and 7th March, with notable records in September of six present on 15th and seven on 20th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba* AE*

There were only four records during the year with one on the north east floodplain on 8th March, a single at Hellifield Flash on 2nd July, one below Hollow Gill on 25th October and one over the southern floodplain on 22nd November.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* A

One was reported near Wigglesworth Hall on 25th January. One was calling mid-afternoon on 29th February in trees below Rathmell village car park.

Little Owl *Athene noctua* C1E*

At least one territorial pair were present along Sour Dale Lane, presumably accounting for most, if not all, records on the southern floodplain.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* A

All records were along the Ribble or Wigglesworth Beck with singles on 22nd March, 4th July, 23rd and 29th August, 14th, 18th, 25th and 27th October and 7th November. Two birds were noted on 26th September and 13th October.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* A

There were a number of records of single birds in the hedgerow along Wigglesworth Beck, the hawthorns on the southern floodplain and Hollow Gill Wood but no evidence of breeding.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* A

A bird was heard drumming and seen in the tree tops in Hollow Gill Wood on 5th March (RC). This is only the eight record in the area and the first since one in Reaker Plantation on 3rd Jan 1986.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* A

There were two at Hellifield Flash on 4th July, with singles on 5th and 12th September and 28th December. One or two were regularly seen on the southern floodplain during the year with three on 18th October.

Merlin *Falco columbarius* A

There were two records, most likely of the same female or immature, seen over the southern floodplain on 14th and 25th October.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo* A

One flew over Hellifield School and then over the Flash on 13th September (IRC) with what was likely the same bird over the southern floodplain near Cow Bridge on 15th September (RC). This represents the fifth record in the area.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* AE

There were regular sightings of one, occasionally two, in the southern area of the floodplain from January until March and again from 27th July until the year end. There were three on 26th September.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius* A

One flew over Reaker Plantation on 16th March.

Magpie *Pica pica* A

This species was present at all the regularly visited sites within the recording area, but no notable records were received.

Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula* A

This species was present at all the regularly visited sites within the recording area, but no notable records were received. The only record of note was 150 at Hellifield Flash on 4th July.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* A

There were regular sightings, presumably relating to birds breeding, at Wigglesworth Hall Farm.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* A

This species was present at all the regularly visited sites within the recording area, but no notable records were received.

Raven *Corvus corax* A

One flew over Hellifield Flash on 18th January with two over on 13th October. The number of records over the floodplain were lower than in previous years with peak counts of five on 1st, seven on 3rd and 12th January, all heading north west during the late afternoon.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater* A

There were regular sightings at Hollow Gill throughout the year with a single along Sour Dale Lane on 22nd March the only other record.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* A

This species was present at all the regularly visited sites within the recording area, but no notable records were received.

Great Tit *Parus major* A

This species was present at all the regularly visited sites within the recording area, but no notable records were received.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis* A

There was some evidence of spring passage with records of five flying over on 25th February, then one or two on a number of dates up until mid-March. At least two singing males were present on the southern floodplain on many dates in May and so presumably bred. There were very few sightings in autumn with one on 13th, and two on both 29th September and 14th October all heading south over the southern floodplain.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* A

The early arrivals will have returned during Covid lockdown restrictions and so like many spring migrant species, it is not clear when the exact dates were. There were low numbers present at Hellifield Flash on many dates, with 150 on 24th May by far the highest count of the year. Similarly on Long Preston Deepes there were single figure counts on the floodplain on many dates with notable records of 27 on 24th May and at least 80 birds perched on fence lines on the edge of Snipe Ground on 4th July. The last records in August were singles on 12th, 23rd and 29th.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica* AE

There were low single figure counts at Hellifield Flash and the Long Preston floodplain on many dates from May until the end of August. Notable counts were 11 on 24th May, 20 on 12th July, and totals of 37 south on 5th September and 29 flew south on 20th September, the latter the last records of the year.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum* A

There were low single figure counts at Hellifield and the Long Preston floodplain from mid-May onwards. Notable counts over the floodplain included 16 on 23rd with at least 100 on 29th August. The last records of the year were 20 on 13th September.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* A

Other than one at Hellifield Flash on 25th May all the other records were on the floodplain. Up to eight were seen along Wigglesworth Beck during the year with two on the north east floodplain on 12th January.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* A

There was only a single singing male reported around Hellifield Flash with up to four singing males along Wigglesworth Beck. There were regular records in the latter area in late July and August with five present on 12th August, and two birds on 23rd August the last records of the year.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* A

On the southern floodplain there was a single along Sour Dale Lane on 14th March, two were present on 23rd March with a further single on 20th September. Other than a singing male that was at Hellifield station on 24th May, the only other records were between Cow Bridge and Wigglesworth Hall where there were singles on 16th, two on 19th and one on 29th August, with the final record of the year on 27th September.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* A

There were at least four singing males in Snipe Ground from May onwards with regular sightings until the last record of the year on 20th August.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* A

One along Wigglesworth Beck on 15th May (RC) was only the third record in the recording area following singles in the same general area on 7th May 2016 and 5th May 2019.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* A

The only record was a female or juvenile along Wigglesworth Beck on 20th June.

Whitethroat *Curruca communis* A

One along Wigglesworth Beck on 15th May was the only record.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* A

One was at Settle SW on 1st January with two at Hellifield Flash and three along Sour Dale Lane on 18th October suggesting a mini-influx into the area.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* A

This species was present at all the regularly visited sites within the recording area, but no notable records were received.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* A

One at Hellifield Flash on 4th July was an unusual record for the site. The only other records were at Hollow Gill Wood where at least one bird was recorded on many dates during the year.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* A

Singles along Wigglesworth Beck on 18th January and Hollow Gill Wood on 7th March were the only records.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* A

There were regular sightings throughout the year with 100+ birds on many dates in both winter periods. Notable counts included a total of 2000 heading NW during the late afternoon on 1st with 1250 doing the same on 19th January, 3000 on 23rd February and 900 on the southern floodplain on 14th March. Numbers were generally lower in the second winter period with 200 on 14th October the highest count.

Blackbird *Turdus merula* A

This species was present at all the regularly visited sites within the recording area with nine along Wigglesworth Beck on 27th October the only notable record.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* A

The highest numbers were present in January when 400 on 15th increased to 900 on 18th. Numbers were much lower in the subsequent months with counts of less than 50 until to mid-March at least. It was a poor autumn for this species and other than October when 60 were present on 12th, 80 the following day and 275 on 18th, this species was very scarce in the latter months of the year.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus* A

There were no counts over 20 in the first three months of the year. As with Fieldfare, numbers were low in autumn and other than 20 over Hellifield Flash on 14th October and 93 over Cow Bridge on the same day, there were very few records up to the end of the year.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* A

There were singles reported at Hellifield Flash, Sour Dale Lane. Cow Bridge and along Wigglesworth Beck, Hollow Gill, Rathmell and on the north-eastern floodplain.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* A

There were territorial pairs at Cow Bridge and below Rathmell. Outside the breeding season there were 11 at Cow Bridge on 12th October and seven on 14th October.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* A

There were two records during the year, both along Wigglesworth Beck area near the bird hide, with singles on 24th May and 12th August.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula* A

This species was present at all the regularly visited sites within the recording area, but no notable records were received.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* A

All records were between Cow Bridge and the bird hide. In July an adult male and female with one, possibly two juveniles, were present with a single later in the month on 26th. A female-type was present on 23rd August with another on 1st September.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* A

A female was present near the bird hide on 19th May. Later in the year there was an adult male in the horse fields near Cow Bridge on 11th July, with a juvenile near the bird hide on 23rd August and an adult female there on 13th September. A juvenile with no tail was near Sour Dale Lane on 29th August and another juvenile in the same area on 20th September.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* A

It was a very good second winter period with five on 20th September: a male and female near the double metal hand gates on the Ribble Way, with an additional female and two males seen earlier in the day along Sour Dale Lane. In October there was one on 14th, an adult male on 25th and another single on 30th, all in or around Snipe Ground. In the Sour Dale Lane area there were also two juveniles on 23rd and 29th October. Further singles were around Snipe Ground on 8th November and in December along the Ribble on 7th and on Snipe Ground on 28th.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* A

The only records were in September on the southern floodplain with a male and female on 20th and a juvenile on 26th.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus* A

The only records were along Wigglesworth Beck where there were two on 1st January and one on 12th October.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* A

There are still good numbers at sites along the edge of the recording area including Cow Bridge, Long Preston and Rathmell.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* A

One or two were at Hellifield Flash in late May with four on 18th October and two on 15th November. At least one pair bred at Cow Bridge, with an adult and two food-begging juveniles on 24th May. Post breeding numbers included six on 15th and two on 26th September, three on 12th October and singles on 14th and 27th October.

Two were reported along Sour Dale Lane on 7th and 22nd March.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis* A

This species was present at all the regularly visited sites within the recording area, but no notable records were received.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* A

A former breeding species that is now just about an annual passage migrant. A female on 19th April on the southern floodplain was the only record of the year.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* A

Singles were at Hellifield Flash on 12th January, 4th July and 20th September. Although not as regular as in previous years, there were singles also noted near Wigglesworth Hall on 2nd January and in the Cow Bridge area on 29th September, 14th and 18th October, and 7th and 8th November. One was also at Settle SW on 18th January.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba* A

One to three birds were regularly reported at Hellifield Flash and Cow Bridge area during the year. Elsewhere there were nine on the north east floodplain on 8th March with the highest number at Settle SW where there were 25 on 1st, ten on 18th and 36 on 19th January, with 12 on 15th March.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* A

This species was present in most of the well watched areas with peak counts at Hellifield Flash of 15 on 5th and 20 on 13th September. Notable counts on the floodplain included 20 at Hollow Gill 20 on 3rd January, with counts in the Cow Bridge area of 12 on 24th May, ten on 12th July and 60 on 27th October. Low single figure counts were also regular along Sour Dale Lane but a Marsh Harrier flushed at least 70 on 29th August as it hunted over the area, giving an indication of just how many are present but not seen.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* A

One on the river near Snipe Ground on 28th December (KM: CM) was the first since one near Cow Bridge on 29th December 1992.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* AE

This species was present at all the regularly visited sites within the recording area, with the peak counts at the bird hide feeders of 20 on 12th and 25 on 27th October.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* A

The only record was one in the Cow Bridge area on 19th March.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* AE

There were multiple low single figure records all from the area around the bird hide, with nine at the bird feeders on 15th January the highest count of the year.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina* A

In the first half of the year there were only singles noted at Hellifield Flash on several dates in May. Post-breeding numbers built up at this site in September with modest totals of 25 on 12th, 40 on 23rd and 30 on 26th. One or two were also present in the Cow Bridge area in May and again in August and September, with further records in October of 12 on 14th and 15 on 27th.

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret* A

A flock of 38 that flew over Hellifield Flash on 12th January appears to be the highest count in the area. There were also singles at this site on 16th June, 6th August, 20th September and 18th October. All the other sightings were in the Cow Bridge area with two on 18th January, singles on 25th February, 14th March and three feeding on detritus on the edges of the stream in front of the bird hide the following day. In the latter half of the year there were two on 29th September and 12th October with one on 7th November.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* A

There were widespread records at many sites in the recording area with notable counts at Cow Bridge of 30 on 3rd and 26th January, with 24 on 13th September. The only other record of note was 40 at Hollow Gill on 7th March.

Siskin *Spinus spinus* A

In the Cow Bridge area a single was present on 18th January with 11 flying north on 14th March. There were 26 at Hollow Gill Wood on 14th March with six there on 23rd August and 5th September. Elsewhere there were two along Sour Dale Lane on 3rd January with three on 20th September and 20 below Rathmell village CP on 29th February.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* A

There were regular sightings of between one and eight present at the bird hide with up to four singing males in Snipe Ground during the breeding season. There were also seven on the north east floodplain on 8th March with up to three along Sour Dale Lane during the year.

CATEGORY E SPECIES

Species recorded as introductions, human-assisted transportees or escapees from captivity, and whose breeding populations (if any) are thought not to be self-sustaining. Species in Category E that have bred in the wild in Britain are designated as E*. Category E species form no part of the British List (unless already included within Categories A, B or C).

Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides* E*

One was present in the Canada Goose flock on at least 23rd and 29th August and 13th and 20th September.

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* AE

A large eagle first seen over the Hollow Gill area on 7th March proved to be a second calendar-year Bald Eagle that had escaped from a nearby falconry collection and was seen on many occasions up until at least 25th May.

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A MAP OF THE LONG PRESTON RECORDING AREA AND ACCESS INFORMATION

