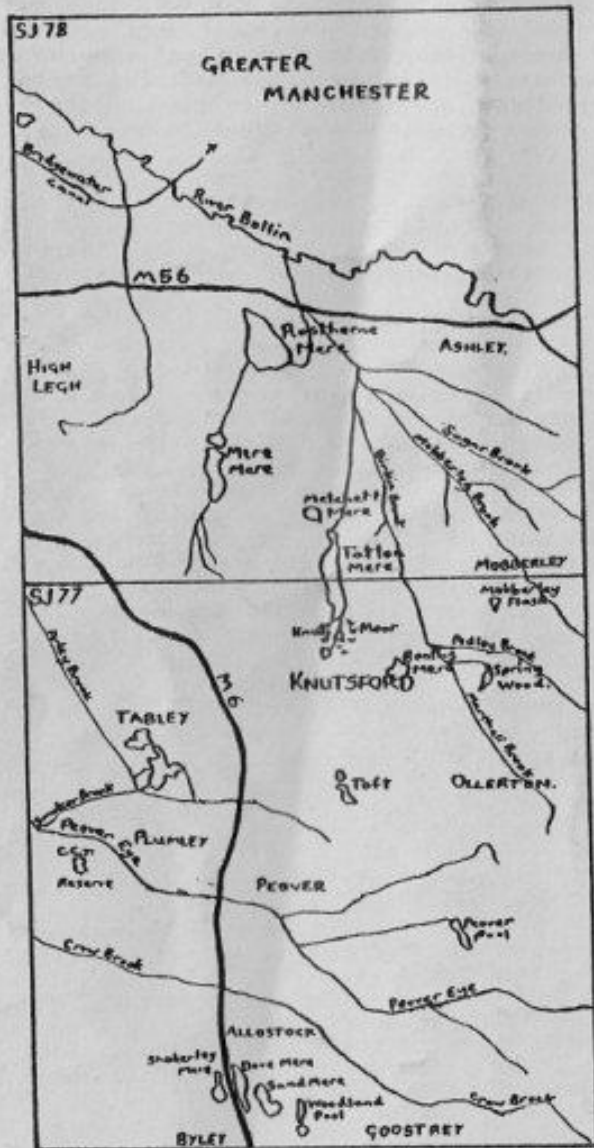
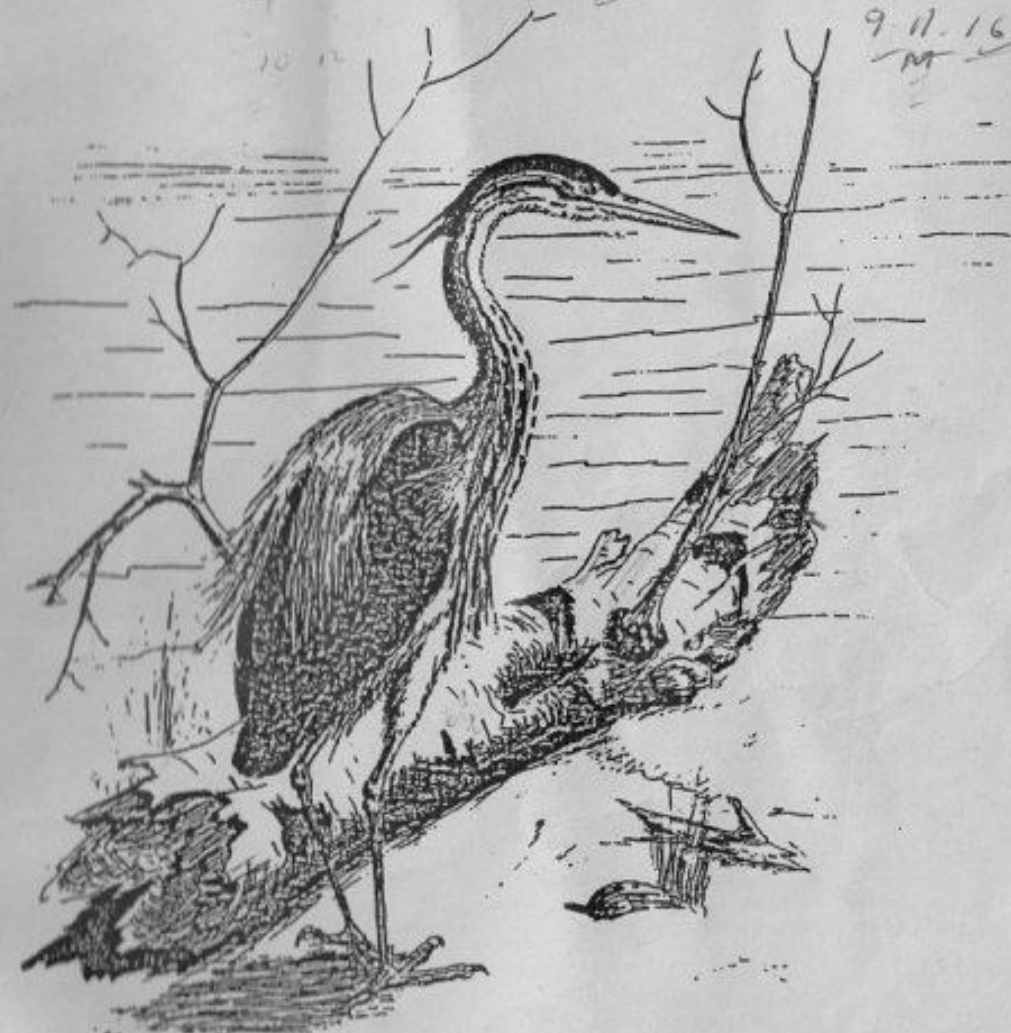


THE K.O.S. RECORDING AREA:- Excluding
the area North of the River Bollin



The Knutsford Ornithological Society



Bird Report 1980

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Knutsford Ornithological Society.



OFFICERS

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	Mrs.J.Maurice	" 3352
	Mrs.R.Tivey	" 3352

MEETINGS

<u>Indoors.</u>		<u>Outdoors</u>	
May 22nd		May 16/17	Wales Trip
June 26th		June 14th	Coombes Valley
July 24th		July 11th	Trough of Bowland
Sept 25th	Gordan Yates 'Golden Eagle'	Sept 12th	Spurn Head
Oct 23rd	Mr. Burgess 'Birds & Beasties'	Oct 9/10/11	Holy Island
Nov 27th	Films	Nov 14th	Wirral
Dec 11th	Christmas Party	Dec 6th	Blithfield
<u>1982</u>			
Jan 22nd	Valerie McFarland 'Birds of Arizona'	Jan 9th	Slimbridge
Feb 26th	Mr. Linfoot 'Birds of Staffordshire'	Feb 14th	Mid Wales
Mar 26th	Eric Hardy 'Birds of the Highlands'	Mar 13/14th	to be decided
Apr 23rd	Emyris Edwards 'Birds Eye View'	Apr 3rd	Leighton Moss
		May 8th	Anglesey
		June 8/5/6	Minsmere

THE KNUTSFORD ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY BIRD REPORT 1980

It was unfortunate that the run of reports since 1974 was broken in 1979. So few records were submitted that any report would have been heavily biased, with many records for Rostherne and very few for elsewhere. Would members please make more effort in 1981 and have their records in as early as possible in 1982.

Also I would like to make a plea on behalf of Mr. A.C. Usher who, as you all know is the Tetrads Co-ordinator for the Breeding Bird Survey. Any member or indeed non-member wishing to take part in this important project should contact Tony either at one of the Society's meetings or at the address below. The Survey will finish at the end of the 1983 season and so there is still time for observers to add greatly to our knowledge of the distribution of breeding species within the area.

B. A. Armitt
Report Editor

Mr. A.C. Usher
118, Mobberley Road
Knutsford

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED IN THE AREA IN 1980

m = Male f = Female ad = Adult imm = Immature juv = Juvenile

Jan, Feb, etc. = January, February etc. N = North S = South

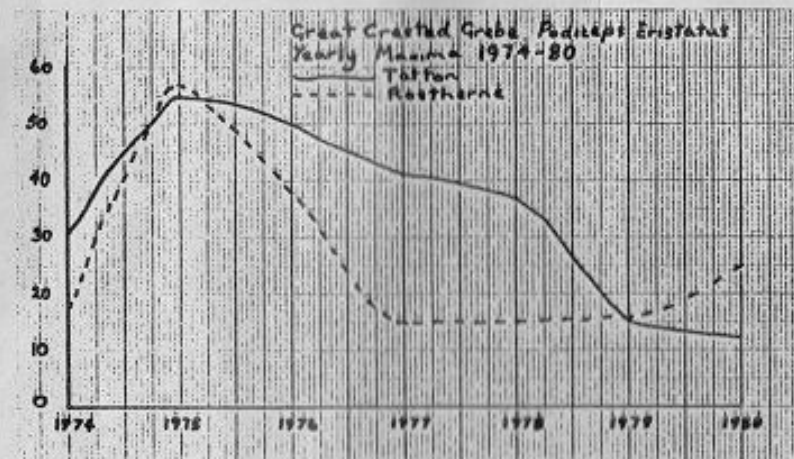
Black-throated Diver (*Gavia arctica*)

A very scarce visitor inland, 1 on Melchett on Jan 24th to 26th being the first record for the area since a bird at Rostherne in Jan 1960.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Recorded throughout the year at most of the local waters. A concentration of 20 at Tatton on Oct 12th coincided with many birds completing their post breeding/juvenile moult. Subsequently numbers fluctuated as birds moved around the area. Pairs bred at Mere, Tabley and Tatton, in all 4 young were reared.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)



Following a trend of recent years, Tatton's maxima counts continued to fall below those of previous years. Figures for Rostherne have also been lower although 1980 was a slight improvement in 1979. Obviously a more favourable wintering area is being used and Great Budworth seems the most likely place, and the cause of the drain on 'our' birds. Young were reared at Rostherne, Tabley and Mere with at least 11 young

noted. A pair attempted but failed to breed on Melchett mere.

Monthly Maxima at Rostherne and Tatton

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	7	5	8	4	16	10	25	20	11	12	14	5
Tatton	0	5	6	2	6	NC	1	3	3	4	12	12

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Rostherne is the most important inland winter roost site for this species in Cheshire. In the early part of the year numbers rose to 82 in March but fell thereafter as birds moved off to breeding grounds on the coast. An imm. summered. Birds arrived from Sep. onwards and a new high was reached on Dec. 31st when 89 were counted. Birds dispersing from this roost site to feed were noted at all the favourable waters in the area.

Monthly Maxima at Rostherne

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	74	64	82	37	3	1	2	6	20	30	61	89

Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Unfortunately no counts of breeding birds at Tabley were submitted for inclusion. However birds were noted feeding at many sites within the area and it is hoped that numbers breeding at Tabley will be better than the poor year in 1979 which had a 50% fall on 1978 figures.

Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*)

One was seen at Rostherne on Apr 17th and 20th.

Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*)

One at Tabley on Feb 1st and another possibly the same, at Tatton on Feb 9th.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Records for all months from Tatton and less regular sightings from notably Rostherne, but also Moberley lake, Tabley and Booths mere. Numbers in the area are low and although 2 pairs were present at suitable breeding sites only 2 young were reared at 1 site and none at the other.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

The only record for the early part of the year comes from Rostherne where 9 flew in from the SW on Jan 17th. Other sightings included 2 on Dec 2nd flying E accompanied by 3 Mute, 2 on Dec 7th and 14th, 3 birds which flew N on Dec 14th were not specifically identified but were considered to be of this species.

Bewicks Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)

Only 2 records, both from Rostherne, 2 on Nov 5th and 2 on Dec 14th.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

November produced the main crop of records for this species and unless stated all records refer to that month. The first record came on the 10th when 80 were seen over Mobberley. At Rostherne a skein of 100 followed by one of 25 a few minutes later passed SE on the 12th. 37 flew NW over Mobberley and Tatton on 26th and earlier in the day parties of 40 and 20 had passed E over Mobberley. On the 30th 200 flew WSW over Rostherne and 60 S over Tatton. The last record was of 1 among Canadas at Rostherne on Dec 28th.

Grey Lag Goose (*Anser anser*)

A flock again moulted at Rostherne where up to 36 were counted. Otherwise singles were frequently seen accompanying the Canada flocks with records for Tatton, Mobberley, Booth and Tabley. A Grey Lag x Canada hybrid was seen on several occasions at Tatton and also Tabley where 3 such hybrids originated.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

As is usual, outside of the breeding season some large numbers were reported from Rostherne, Tatton, Booth and Tabley, with numbers fluctuating greatly as birds moved freely between these waters and others. The yearly maxima was 562 at Rostherne on Aug 30th. Breeding data is incomplete, although 63 young were counted, places like Tabley, Booth and the meres around Shakerley were not checked. A bird with leucistic plumage has been seen around the area since at least 1969. It was joined by a second bird that was seen paired with a Canada on May 8th.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Between Jan and May there were several records at Rostherne of singles and small numbers with maximum of 7 on Mar 17th. No further records then until 4 on Sep 21st, 1 on Oct 26th and 4 on Dec 3rd, 1 m 1 f were seen on Tatton on Nov 30th.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Away from Rostherne only small numbers were seen, the most being 17 on Tatton on Feb 29th. The yearly maxima at Rostherne was the lowest since 1975 with 73 on Nov 18th. Probably a result of the relatively mild weather during the winter months.

Monthly Maxima at Rostherne and Tatton

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	41	37	30	5	0	0	0	1	5	16	73	55
Tatton	7	17	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	1	4	0

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Tatton had records only for the earlier part of the year beginning with 1 f on Jan 2nd, 1 m, 1 f on Apr 3rd and 1 m on May 11th. At Rostherne generally fewer records than usual, 1 m on Mar 9th, 1 m, 1 f on Apr 3rd, 1 m on Oct 24th and finally 1 f on Nov 21st.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Taken as a whole wintering maxima figures were relatively low this year excepting a sudden influx in mid-Dec. In the early year numbers peaked at 704 on Jan 17th at Rostherne, and then as to be expected numbers rapidly dwindled to 100 on Feb 17th and 1 or 2 birds that summered. On Nov 16th 280 birds were present but this had risen to over a 1,000 by the 18th and fallen again to 390 the next day. Tatton had the highest count since the K.O.S began in 1974 with 101 on Nov 30th

Monthly Maxima at Rostherne and Tatton

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	704	100	54	7	8	2	2	3	87	240	1000+	770
Tatton	12	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	101	45

At Rostherne a bird showing characteristics of the race carolinesis, colloquially known as the Green-winged Teal was seen from Dec 16th to year end. This is an annual transatlantic vagrant to the country. The last record for the area was also at Rostherne, a m on Nov 18th 1978.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Numbers at Rostherne were higher during the earlier part of the year than they were during the latter, with 800 on Jan 31st being the maxima. Otherwise smaller concentrations at Tatton with 426 on Nov 30th and Tabley with 320 on Nov 6th. Many breeding pairs noted and many more of course going undetected as the area is rich in suitable breeding sites in areas too scantily covered.

Monthly Maxima at Rostherne and Tatton

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	800	290	45	NC	94	160	200	550	600	750	700	620
Tatton	410	143	53	NC	NC	NC	222	NC	140	235	426	420

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

After the exceptional maxima at Rostherne of 435 in Nov 1979, 1980 produced on Feb 10th 426 which, although slightly less than the 1979 maxima was still a staggering count when one considers the counts prior to 1976. Numbers then fell and the last birds were seen on Apr 23rd when 4 were present.

Return birds were noted from late Aug and numbers peaked at 145 on Dec 14th. Away from Rostherne, Tatton had several visits of 1 or 2 birds up to early April and from mid-Sep to year end. The Pintail x Aythya hybrid which appeared in Nov 1979 was seen on Jan 6th.

Monthly Maxima at Rostherne

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	186	426	200	16	0	0	0	5	30	58	112	145

Shoveler (Anas clypeata)

As in 1979, numbers at Rostherne were low during the early year with 17 on Mar 9th being the largest number. 2 birds summered in the reserve and then numbers rose from Aug to only 100 on Sep 7th and 96 on Oct 12th before falling off at year end. At Tatton there were sporadic records up to May 8th when 2 m were present. Only 1 post-breeding record was received, 1 f on Jul 29th.

Monthly Maxima at Rostherne and Tatton

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	10	8	17	11	40	3	2	60	100	96	15	2
Tatton	0	3	2	7	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Pochard (Aythya ferina)

The cold weather conditions that prevailed during the 1978/79 winter and that produced the very high numbers in the early part of 1979 were not prevalent in 1980 as maxima figures indicate. In the early year numbers at Rostherne peaked at 375 on Feb 3rd and had fallen to 93 by the 15th. Winter numbers rose rapidly in Dec from 200 on the 14th to 390 by the 17th. Numbers rose still further to 530 on the 23rd and a sudden influx produced 900 on the 28th. Tatton had its maxima on Dec 14th when 128 were present.

Monthly Maxima at Rostherne in 1979 and 1980

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1979	590	1390	547	30	1	26	20	18	40	134	90	264
1980	280	375	2	1	9	18	40	30	72	105	43	900

Ferruginous Duck (Aythya nyroca)

Arriving just in time to be included, a m was found at Rostherne on Dec 31st.

Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula)

Rostherne had 245 on Jan 20th from when a noticeable exodus took place leaving only 20 by Feb 7th. Post-breeding numbers

peaked at 200 on Aug 18th and fell thereafter. The fall in Rostherne's numbers coincided with a rise in Tatton's to 362 on Sep 14th. Breeding pairs were noted at Rostherne (17 young), Tatton (20) and Tabley (19). Tatton's figures of young almost certainly represent too small a total where it is thriving.

Monthly Maxima at Rostherne and Tatton

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	245	20	18	NC	20	43	112	200	40	68	35	58
Tatton	0	107	111	110	50	NC	121	120	362	252	140	96

Scaup (Aythya marila)

At Tatton 1 m, was seen on Feb 17th, 19th and 20th. Rostherne had 2 m 1 f on Feb 23rd and then no further records until a f on Sep 7th another on Oct 1st and 2 on Oct 29th.

Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra)

The only record concerns 1 m at Rostherne on Sep 28th.

Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula)

Numbers at Tatton remained fairly high from Jan-Apr with no pronounced passage fluctuation noted. At Rostherne passage was a little more obvious, 12 on Feb 27th had risen to 22 by Mar 7th a week later than the 33 maximum of Tatton. 2 birds were present at Rostherne in Jun with a f remaining throughout Jul and Aug. Sep saw return birds at Rostherne with 5 on the first rising to a maximum of 14 on Oct 27th. At Tatton birds were seen from Oct 12th peaking at 23 on Dec 12th.

Monthly Maxima at Rostherne and Tatton

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	15	12	22	7	4	2	1	1	5	14	6	7
Tatton	23	32	33	27	0	0	0	0	0	10	21	23

Smew (Mergus albellus)

Rostherne holds the monopoly of records this year with 1 f seen from Dec 18th to year end.

Goosander (Mergus merganser)

Only a single record for the early year with a m on Rostherne on Feb 17th. 3 further records again at Rostherne, 1 m on Nov 26th and a f on Dec 14th and 28th.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

A species that continues to do well as a wintering and breeding bird. Wintering maxima figures this year doubled those of 1979 with 76 on Jan 1st at Rostherne. Tatton had 26 on Sep 14th, Tabley 18 on Feb 17th and Mere 15 on Mar 9th. Breeding was confirmed at Tatton and Mere and young totalling 13 were seen.

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

The Tatton area has produced a record each year since 1978. In 1980 a m bird was seen flying S over Tatton on Oct 19th. Interestingly it was almost certainly this bird that was seen shortly after flying S over Elton Hall flash at Sandbach.

Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

At Rostherne birds were recorded on 4 occasions 1 m on Mar 22nd, 1 on Apr 13th that was strangely not identified m or f, 1 f on Jun 10th and 1 on Dec 13th, again not identified m or f.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Many sightings throughout the area. In the breeding season birds were observed carrying food at 3 sites, display was noted at another and breeding confirmed on 1 other site. In the autumn Sparrowhawks were seen several times hunting the Redwing roost at Tatton.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

At Tatton 1 was found dead early in the year and singles were seen occasionally by Park staff. At Rostherne 2 on Apr 10th and then singles on Sep 14th, 15th, 26th, 30th and Dec 21st. One flew high over Mobberley lake mobbed by Starlings on May 25th.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Many widespread records throughout the year although breeding season records were fewer. Confirmed breeding came from only 1 site but flying juvs. were seen at another.

Merlin (*Falco columbianus*)

A single record of 1 at Rostherne on Dec 21st.

Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

Many summering pairs noted, but otherwise small numbers seen with a maximum of 11 at Tatton on Jan 20th.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Records of this species are of little or no value as large numbers are reared and released in the area to provide 'sport' for the shooting fraternity.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

In the early part of the year wintering numbers were small. At Rostherne there were 10 records of singles between Jan 4th and Mar 23rd. Tatton had birds on Jan 20th and Mar 30th. Autumn records were more numerous beginning with an early record at Tabley of 1 on Jul 27th suggestive of possible breeding. Otherwise records of 1 - 3 at Rostherne from Aug 31st to Dec 16th and at Tatton fewer records but 5 on Nov 12th indicated some kind of influx as only 1 or 2 were seen and heard subsequently.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Numerous records throughout the year.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Numbers were higher at Rostherne during the early part of the year than elsewhere. Maxima figures were 300 at Rostherne on Jan 6th, Tatton 97 on Jan 2nd and 262 at Tabley on Jan 12th. At the latter end of the year Tatton attracted the largest concentration with 260 on Aug 16th although figures were not available for Tabley usually a stronghold for wintering numbers of this species.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

The first passage bird was at Mobberley on Feb 27th. Rostherne had sightings of singles on Mar 30th, Apr 27th, Jun 29th, Jul 13th, 18th and 29th, and Aug 6th and 9th. Tatton had 2 on Aug 26th.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

A single bird arrived at Mobberley on Apr 4th and by the 9th 3 were present and display noted. 2 birds were present from the 13th and 1 was sitting by the 27th. Unfortunately this attempt was to end in desertion brought about in part by successive disturbances by certain irresponsible juveniles even after being warned of the inevitable consequences. On May 5th 3 were present and display again noted. 2 birds settled and were sitting again by May 13th. The next stage was a little unclear but after further disturbance from the youths both birds were not seen sitting until Jun 4th and happily 3 young were seen on Jul 7th. The last record was of a juv on Jul 24th. Other records for the area were - 1 flying N over Lower Peover on May 1st, 2 at Rostherne on May 4th and 3 on the 5th.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Records for the area span between Jan 6th and Feb 17th and return birds from Sep 9th to Nov 26th. No maxima counts were received for Ashley but others include 100 at Byley on Jan 12th, 200 at Rostherne on Oct 25th and Nov 23rd, 500 at Stubbs Lane Nov 12th and 350 on 26th.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Maxima's include 500 Holford Moss on Oct 11th and 500 Allostock on Dec 28th.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

The only spring record was 1 at Mobberley lake on May 24th. In the Autumn what could have been an interesting record was of 20 birds not certainly identified but thought to be Dunlin that flew W to E across the Rostherne reserve on Oct 12th.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

Very scarce this year with only 2 records both of singles flushed from the reeds by Melchett on Jan 27th and Feb 20th.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

No breeding season records but several of wintering birds from the usual sites. The maximum was 6 at Tatton on Sep 8th.

Woodcock (*Scalopax rusticola*)

No wintering birds were reported during the early part of the year but roding birds were seen at Rostherne 1 on Feb 28th an early date, 2 at Spring Wood on Mar 29th and 1 at Tatton on Apr 11th. 1 confirmed breeding at Tabley. The only winter records were from Rostherne of singles in Oct, Nov and Dec.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

One in nearly full summer plumage at Rostherne on Apr 26th.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Two records, both from Rostherne - 1 calling with Curlews on May 11th and 1 on Jun 6th.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Recorded in all months with numbers and frequency of occurrence lower during the winter months as to a greater extent birds gather to feed and roost S and W of the area during that period. Breeding pairs were reported from many sites.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

The majority of sightings came between Mar and Jun. In Mar Rostherne had 1 on the 16th and Mobberley lake 1 on the 23rd and 24th. Tatton had 1 on Apr 7th. In May Mobberley lake had singles on the 9th and 13th and Rostherne had a further bird on Jun 29th. 2 winter records and both from Tatton - 1 on Nov 23rd and 1 on Dec 24th.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

No spring records but things picked up in the autumn with 1 at Rostherne on Jul 27th, 2 on Aug 25th and 2 on Sep 12th. Mobberley lake had 1 on Aug 14th and 1 on Oct 21st.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

4 localities produced 6 records of singles this year. Tatton on Jul 25th, Aug 5th and Oct 12th and Rostherne on Oct 13th and 21st. Plumley Reserve which normally produces the majority of sightings did not receive much attention in 1980 and so the Aug records on the 20th and 21st, the only sightings reflects the coverage. An interesting record concerns a bird flying over a corn field near Lymm on Jun 18th.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

This scarce summer passage migrant to the area has only occurred 3 times since reports began in 1974. This year 1 at Mobberley lake on May 12th made the 2nd spring record, the other being 1 over Knutsford on Jul 22nd 1979.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Records for every month between Apr - Sep. The first record was at Rostherne on Apr 4th with heavier passage from Mid-Apr into May. 1 June record from Rostherne on the 3rd. At Tatton 1 - 2 birds were noted on 9 occasions from Apr 13th to May 7th. 1 was at Mobberley lake on May 10th. Return passage began with an influx on Jul 6th with 3 at Tatton and 14 at Rostherne. Otherwise 1 - 3 at Rostherne and Tatton with the last record on Sep 6th.

Arctic Skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

A juv was present at Rostherne on Sep 9th.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)

1 was at Rostherne on May 17th, an imm at Tatton from Oct 24th - 26th and again on the 29th. Finally 1 ad at Tatton on Dec 27th.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

As usual the largest percentage of the roost at Rostherne was of this species. Numbers increased from Jul onwards with 750 on Jul 30th increasing to 2,500 by Aug 20th. The maxima count came on Dec 3rd when 10,000 were estimated present. In the early year 1,000 were at Tatton on Mar 26th.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

This year's maxima at Rostherne of 850 on Dec 3rd was lower than the 1979 count of 1,000 on Mar 7th.

Lesser Black-headed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Rostherne Maxima Counts

1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
1000	1500	490	1300	592	703	400

Lower numbers this year, the maxima falling on Oct 1st.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Low numbers of this species also, with numbers peaking at 750 on Dec 4th. An adult bird present on Dec 17th was, owing to its very dark mantle colour which approached that of the palest Lesser Black-back mantle colour, considered as probably belonging to one of the northern races.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*)

A single record of a 1st winter bird at Rostherne on Nov 9th.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

In the early part of the year Rostherne had an imm bird on Jan 27th. This was the only record.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Never numerous at the Rostherne roost, counts of 14 on Jan 4th and 13 on Dec 15th were typical numbers.

Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

After the exceptional count of 100 plus on Mar 31st last year circling over Mere covert at Rostherne records this year were of a more normal nature. 1 on Jan 20th, an imm on Mar 2nd and a dead 1st winter bird retrieved from the mere on May 6th.

Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*)

One at Rostherne on Apr 13th.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

Passage birds arrived at Rostherne on May 4th and Tatton on the 7th. Numbers were typically small with 4 at Rostherne on Jun 25th being the maximum. The last record was 1 at Tatton on Sep 14th.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

A good year for Arctic Tern passage. The first record was 1 at Tatton on Apr 30th. Heavier passage was noted in early May when 13 were at Tatton on May 6th and 40 passing E along the Peover Eye the next day, when there were 8 more at Tatton. The last record comes from Tatton with 1 on Aug 12th. There were no records for Rostherne.

Commic Tern (*Genus sterna sp*)

The only indeterminate records come from Rostherne with 9 on May 12th, 5 on Jun 1st, 2 on Jun 12th and 13th, 3 on Jun 16th and 1 on the 25th and finally 1 on Sep 14th.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

In 1979 birds were sighted on 14 dates with a maximum of 6 on May 12th at Tatton. 1980 proved a slightly better year with 18 dates from May 6th at Tatton. The maximum was 9 at Tatton on May 13th and the last record came on Sep 24th with 2 at Tatton.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Many records throughout the year of wintering and paired birds in summer. Display was noted at Rostherne as early as Jan 27th. The maximum count was 80 at Rostherne on May 13th.

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Large numbers congregated at a roost in Harpers Bank wood at Rostherne during the winter months with 4,000 plus on Dec 26th.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Up to 70 have been counted between Nov - Jan in the grounds at an ornamental wildfowl collection at Moberley.

Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

The only record of a summer arrival were 2 at Shakerley on May 7th. Birds were noted at Rostherne on 2 dates in Aug the 14th and 27th.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

The earliest record was 1 at Rostherne on May 1st, with more widespread records from the middle of May. The last record was of a juv at Tatton on Aug 23rd.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

The majority of records come from Rostherne but this species is common and fairly evenly distributed throughout the area. The only confirmed record of breeding was 3 young reared at Tatton.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

The number of records received would indicate that this species is outnumbered by the last species, however owing to the Tawny Owls more crepuscular and nocturnal habits it is frequently overlooked.

Swift (*Apus apus*)

Birds had returned to the area by Apr 30th when 3 were at Tatton. Numbers increased from then on with 150 plus at

Rostherne on May 28th and 700 at Tatton the same day. Post-breeding concentrations included c200 at Tatton on Aug 5th. The last record was of a late bird at Rostherne on Oct 6th.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

No confirmed breeding records were submitted and fewer sightings suggest a decrease in numbers. Birds were seen at Tatton, Rostherne, Birkin brook and Plumley reserve.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Many records from the well watched areas of Rostherne and Tatton with as to be expected fewer from elsewhere.

Greater Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*)

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Apart from widespread breeding records larger numbers during the winter months were 20 at Tatton on Nov 16th and 60 at Mobberley on Nov 20th.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Birds arrived back in the area on Apr 3rd when 2 were at Tatton. Numbers were small until the 14th when an influx brought 40 to Tatton. The only breeding site was at Mobberley lake where 3 nest holes were excavated. Unfortunately these were deserted very early on due to disturbance. The last record was 1 at Tatton on Oct 18th.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

A single bird was at Mobberley lake on Apr 5th. Numbers increased steadily with 50 - 60 at Rostherne on Apr 28th. Post-breeding concentrations included c2,500 roosting on Knutsford Moor on Aug 19th and c1,800 on Sep 26th. Rostherne had 500 on Sep 19th. The final record was 1 at Tatton on Nov 11th.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

The first arrival was at Tatton on Apr 11th with no large pre breeding-numbers as birds generally moved straight onto the breeding sites. Larger gatherings reported in the autumn were 100 at Tatton on Oct 9th and 150 the next day. The last birds were seen at Rostherne and Tatton on Oct 19th.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

The only record refers to newly arrived birds with no autumn sightings. 1 at Tatton on Apr 14th, 2 at Rostherne on May 5th, 1 at Tatton on May 10th, 1 at Rostherne on the 11th and finally 1 there on May 25th.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

Passage birds included 40 at Tatton on Jan 31st. From then on generally small numbers but with a noticeable influx on Mar 23rd at Tatton with 70 the next day at Mobberley lake.

Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta spinoletta*)

One at Mobberley lake on Oct 6th.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

The first arrival was at Mobberley lake on Apr 13th. Numbers of passage birds were small with a maximum of only 5 at Tatton on Apr 25th and 29th. Compare this maxima with 100 at Rostherne on Aug 27th in 1979. Several breeding records were received but post-breeding records were few with none at all for Tatton. The last bird was seen at Rostherne on Sep 15th.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

No breeding records were received. Sightings were more numerous and widespread during the winter months as birds largely forsake their hill site breeding areas at this time. Rostherne and Tatton had the majority of records of 1 or 2 birds and Mobberley lake had a single record of 1 on May 12th.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)

The first passage bird was at Tatton on Mar 23rd with occasional sightings into May. In the autumn 6 at Mere on Sep 14th was the only record.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

In the early year the small numbers of wintering birds were augmented with passage birds that had moved S for the winter. 60 on Knutsford Moor on Mar 22nd being typical. In the autumn 150 were roosting on Knutsford Moor on Aug 13th.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Duncock (*Prunella modularis*)

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

A m at Tatton on Apr 19th was the only record of returning summer passage migrants. In the autumn Rostherne had 4 records all of singles and all in Sep: 1 on 3rd, 5th, 7th and 23rd.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

This is usually a regular bird of passage in small numbers to the area so no records for 1979 is surprising. In 1980 there were May records on the 5th - a m at Rostherne and the 7th - 2 m 1 f at Plumley. A single autumn record of an ad f at Rostherne on Aug 10th.

Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

One at Tatton on Oct 28th.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Following the first at Mobberley on Mar 25th no marked passage took place. 1 at Tatton and 1 at Lower Peover on May 1st. 1 f at Mobberley lake on May 12th were the only records of arrivals. A bird considered to be of the Greenland race - *Oenanthe o leucorrhoea* was at Mobberley lake on Jun 6th. Autumn birds were as thin on the ground with just 4 records from late Jul. The last bird was seen at Plumley on Sep 4th.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

The last wintering birds were seen over Tatton with 7 on Apr 9th. The first autumn bird was at Mobberley on Oct 13th and larger numbers included 510 flying W over Rostherne on Nov 12th.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Very small numbers in the early year, the last being seen on Mar 23rd at Rostherne. Return birds were noted from Sep 27th with 250 roosting in Higmere on Nov 19th.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

30 at Tatton on Oct 3rd was the largest number seen.

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

Two birds were reeling on Knutsford Moor from Apr 25th. There were no records for Rostherne.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Birds were first recorded on Knutsford Moor where 3 were singing on May 4th. Numbers did not increase. Nocturnal singing was noted for this and the last species. The last bird was recorded at Rostherne on Aug 31st.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Birds had arrived back at the traditional sites of Knutsford Moor and Rostherne by Apr 26th and May 5th respectively, with singing birds noted at Tabley and Holford Moss. An excellent breeding season with the number of pulli ringed at Rostherne exceeding all previous figures. 34 pairs bred and 152 pulli were ringed.

Ringling Results Since 1976

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Number of pairs	32	37	29	32	34
Pullis ringed	103	73	102	132	152

The last record was 1 at Rostherne on Sep 27th.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

The firsts were singing m's at Mobberley on May 5th and Lower Peover the next day. The number of breeding sites increased over last year. A passage bird was at Tatton on Aug 18th.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

One was singing in Tatton on May 2nd but soon moved on. 2 pairs reared young at Rostherne but a traditional area in Mobberley was not found to have any breeding pairs. The final bird was at Rostherne on Sep 3rd.

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

One at Rostherne on May 3rd was the first of an increased number of records in the area with the majority from Rostherne and Tatton but with scattered records elsewhere. Last record was 1 at Rostherne on Sep 13th.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Locally common in areas providing suitable habitat. 3 were singing at Rostherne on Apr 20th with 7 on May 11th. The mild winter produced many records in the county of overwintering birds. A f was seen at Tatton on Nov 30th and Dec 7th.

Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*)

Singing birds were located at Rostherne, Tatton and Mobberley. The first was at Tatton on May 4th with 2 singing at 1 site in Mobberley on May 24th but only 1 on Jun 6th. Departing birds in autumn seem to just disappear and so 1 at Rostherne on Sep 17th is of note. Certainly this is the first documented Sep record since at least 1969.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Many records between Mar 27th at Mobberley and Sep 23rd at Rostherne.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

This, one of the most abundant summer visitors to the area was recorded between Apr 10th and Sep 23rd.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Numbers were obviously affected by the severity of the 78/79 winter but the paucity of breeding records is in part due to incomplete coverage of the area.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

This is usually the last of the summer migrants to arrive in the area. Birds were first seen at Rostherne on May 17th and subsequently breeding pairs were noted at at least 4 sites. The last bird was seen at Rostherne on Sep 28th.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Marsh Tit (*Parus palustris*)

The only records come from Rostherne and Tatton. No confirmed breeding was reported but in Tatton birds were singing as early as Jan 2nd.

Willow Tit (*Parus montanus*)

Reported from only 1 site - Tatton where birds were noted singing on 1 occasion. Certainly less frequent sightings than for its closely related relative the Marsh Tit.

Coal Tit (*Parus ater*)

Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)

Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Many gathered to roost in Harpers Bank at Rostherne during the winter months. 1100 on Nov 24th.

Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Apart from increasing breeding numbers, concentrations included 25 at Mobberley on Feb 18th and 30 on May 19th.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

Unfortunately no counts are available of local breeding numbers at the rookeries of Tabley, Tatton etc.

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*)

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

The only record of any concentrations was of c2,500 roosting on Knutsford Moor on Nov 16th.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

No large numbers were reported during the winter months, 50 at Ashley on Oct 22nd being the largest.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

No autumn or winter flocks of any size were reported.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Birds were in the area up until May 8th and from Oct 9th. Numbers were smaller and sightings fewer than usual.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Outside the breeding season the largest flocks reported were all in the Ashley area. 200 on Feb 17th and 125 on Aug 31st.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

30 at Tatton on Jan 20th was the largest flock recorded.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

The last wintering bird was at Tatton on Apr 4th and return birds were at Rostherne on Sep 21st. Many records of small flocks of up to 40 were received with 120 on Jan 6th at Tatton the largest.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*)

More frequent records outside of the breeding season at Rostherne and Tatton the maximum number being 17 at Tatton on Apr 11th. Breeding season records were very few.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

Corn Bunting (*Emberiza calandra*)

The number of singing males was certainly higher than has been usual.

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Wildfowl counts: Monthly Maxima at Rostherne and Tatton in 1979

Great Crested Grebe

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	16	11	9	7	7	13	11	12	12	7	1	2
Tatton	1	2	15	4	8	3	NC	7	3	1	15	6

Wigeon

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	27	152	59	6	1	0	1	0	12	18	26	50
Tatton	0	0	3	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	0	0	11	0

Teal

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	487	220	65	318	2	3	6	15	356	427	800	735
Tatton	6	2	12	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	2	12	6	32

Mallard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	976	489	60	35	NC	325	320	437	550	1079	602	460
Tatton	400	336	99	NC	NC	NC	NC	179	235	140	184	294

Pintail

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	50	70	65	4	0	0	0	5	60	6	435	320
Tatton	0	0	1	1	0	0	NC	0	0	0	0	0

Shoveler

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	7	2	10	7	5	4	20	50	410	292	137	125
Tatton	4	1	1	8	4	0	NC	0	3	38	6	6

Pochard

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	590	1390	547	30	1	26	20	18	40	134	90	264
Tatton	4	12	18	0	1	40	NC	45	34	70	36	56

Tufted Duck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	285	700	36	NC	8	22	107	94	69	50	35	25
Tatton	29	27	96	120	75	95	72	254	144	163	134	82

Goldeneye

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	13	9	10	8	8	2	0	0	0	4	9	10
Tatton	3	37	26	25	5	0	0	0	0	4	15	16

First & Last Dates of the Summer Visitors in 1979 & 1980

Species	First Record				Last Record			
	1979	Location	1980	Location	1979	Location	1980	Location
Marsh Harrier	3/5	Rostherne	-	-	-	-	-	-
Osprey	1/6	Rostherne	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hobby	23/5	Knuts-Moor	-	-	-	-	-	-
Little Ringed Plover	12/4	Mobb-Lake	4/4	Mobb. Lake	28/8	Mobb. Lake	24/7	Mobb. Lake
Whimbrel	-	-	11/5	Rostherne	-	-	-	-
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	12/5	Mobb. Lake	22/7	Knuts.	-	-
Common Sandpiper	22/4	Rostherne	4/4	Rostherne	22/7	Tatton	6/9	Rostherne
Sandwich Tern	-	-	13/4	Rostherne	-	-	-	-
Common Tern	12/5	Rostherne	4/5	Rostherne	-	-	14/9	Tatton
Arctic Tern	30/4	Tatton	30/4	Tatton	-	-	12/8	Tatton
'Commie' Tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black Tern	12/5	Tatton	6/5	Tatton	11/9	Rostherne	24/9	Tatton
Turtle Dove	27/4	Rostherne	7/5	Shakerley	-	-	27/8	Rostherne
Cuckoo	8/5	Rostherne	1/5	Rostherne	26/8	Rostherne	23/8	Tatton
Swift	6/5	Rostherne	30/4	Tatton	16/9	Rostherne	6/10	Rostherne
Sand Martin	4/4	Tatton	3/4	Tatton	23/9	Tatton	18/10	Tatton
Swallow	8/4	Tatton	5/4	Mobb. Lake	21/10	Rostherne	11/11	Knuts-Moor
House Martin	11/4	Tatton	11/4	Tatton	21/10	Rostherne	19/10	Tatton

Tufted Duck

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	285	700	36	NC	8	22	107	94	69	50	35	25
Tatton	29	27	96	120	75	95	72	254	144	163	134	82

Goldeneye

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rostherne	13	9	10	8	8	2	0	0	0	4	9	10
Tatton	3	37	26	25	5	0	0	0	0	4	15	16

First & Last Dates of the Summer Visitors in 1979 & 1980

Species	First Record				Last Record			
	1979	Location	1980	Location	1979	Location	1980	Location
Marsh Harrier	3/5	Rostherne	-	-	-	-	-	-
Osprey	1/6	Rostherne	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hobby	23/5	Knuts-Moor	-	-	-	-	-	-
Little Ringed Plover	12/4	Mobb-Lake	4/4	Mobb. Lake	28/8	Mobb. Lake	24/7	Mobb. Lake
Whimbrel	-	-	11/5	Rostherne	-	-	-	-
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	12/5	Mobb. Lake	22/7	Knuts.	-	-
Common Sandpiper	22/4	Rostherne	4/4	Rostherne	22/7	Tatton	6/9	Rostherne
Sandwich Tern	-	-	13/4	Rostherne	-	-	-	-
Common Tern	12/5	Rostherne	4/5	Rostherne	-	-	14/9	Tatton
Arctic Tern	30/4	Tatton	30/4	Tatton	-	-	12/8	Tatton
'Commie' Tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black Tern	12/5	Tatton	6/5	Tatton	11/9	Rostherne	24/9	Tatton
Turtle Dove	27/4	Rostherne	7/5	Shakerley	-	-	27/8	Rostherne
Cuckoo	8/5	Rostherne	1/5	Rostherne	26/8	Rostherne	23/8	Tatton
Swift	6/5	Rostherne	30/4	Tatton	16/9	Rostherne	6/10	Rostherne
Sand Martin	4/4	Tatton	3/4	Tatton	23/9	Tatton	18/10	Tatton
Swallow	8/4	Tatton	5/4	Mobb. Lake	21/10	Rostherne	11/11	Knuts-Moor
House Martin	11/4	Tatton	11/4	Tatton	21/10	Rostherne	19/10	Tatton

First & Last Dates of the Summer Visitors in 1979 & 1980 cont'd

Species	First Record				Last Record			
	1979	Location	1980	Location	1979	Location	1980	Location
Tree Pipit	11/5	Rostherne	14/4	Tatton	-	-	-	-
Yellow Wagtail	10/4	Tatton	13/4	Mobb. Lake	16/9	Rostherne	15/9	Rostherne
Redstart	-	-	19/4	Tatton	25/8	Rostherne	23/9	Rostherne
Whinchat	-	-	5/5	Rostherne	-	-	10/8	Rostherne
Wheatear	1/4	Tatton	25/3	Mobb.	27/8	Mobb.	4/9	Plumley
Grasshopper Warbler	-	-	25/4	Tatton	12/8	Knuts. Moor	-	-
Sedge Warbler	9/5	Rostherne	4/5	Knuts. Moor	4/9	Rostherne	31/8	Rostherne
Reed Warbler	9/5	Rostherne	24/4	Knuts. Moor	25/9	Rostherne	27/9	Rostherne
Lesser Whitethroat	4/5	Rostherne	5/5	Mobb.	1/9	Rostherne	13/8	Tatton
Whitethroat	13/5	Rostherne	2/5	Tatton	9/9	Rostherne	3/9	Rostherne
Garden Warbler	9/5	Rostherne	3/5	Rostherne	-	-	13/9	Rostherne
Blackcap	24/4	Rostherne	20/4	Rostherne	2/9	Rostherne	1 over wintered	Tatton
Wood Warbler	19/5	Rostherne	4/5	Tatton	-	-	17/9	Rostherne
Chiffchaff	26/3	Rostherne	27/3	Mobb.	23/9	Tatton	28/9	Rostherne
Willow Warbler	11/4	Tatton	10/4	Tatton	9/9	Rostherne	23/9	Rostherne
Spotted Flycatcher	19/5	Rostherne	17/5	Rostherne	7/10	Rostherne	28/9	Rostherne
Pied Flycatcher	9/5	Rostherne	-	-	-	-	2/9	Rostherne

Some Additional Records Omitted from past Reports

1974

Slavonian Grebe 1 Tatton Dec 14th
 Heron 88 occupied nests at Tabley
 Mallard Maxima at Tatton was 345 on Nov 2nd
 Tufted Duck Maxima at Tatton was 203. Month was not traceable.
 Common Scoter at Tatton 2 ♂ May 27th and 4 ♂ Aug 10th
 Goldeneye 45 at Tatton Jan 6th
 Red-breasted Merganser 1 f at Tatton Nov 2nd - 9th.
 1 ♂ Tatton Dec 4th
 Rough-legged Buzzard 1 in the Rostherne/Tatton area Nov 19th.
 Hen Harrier 1 Byley Aug 29th.
 Merlin 1 Lymm in Feb, 1 Lower Peover Nov.
 Black Tern First record for the year at Tatton Apr 28th.
 Swallow First record from Tatton Apr 4th.
 House Martin First record from Tatton Apr 6th.
 Water Pipit 1 Tatton Mar 23rd.

1975

Great Crested Grebe Maxima for Tatton 55 in Dec.
 Black Necked Grebe First seen at Tatton Aug 1st.
 Heron 102 occupied nests at Tabley.
 Bewicks Swan 11 Tatton Nov 23rd.
 Whooper Swan 7 Tatton Nov 1st.
 Roseate Tern 1 Tatton May 18th.
 Sand Martin Last record from Mobblerley Oct 6th.
 Waxwing 8 Tatton Jan 12th.
 Fieldfare Last record Rostherne Apr 25th.

1976

Coot Maxima Tatton 228 in Sep.
 Ruff 1 or 2 at Mobblerley lake in Aug.
 Bar-tailed Godwit 5 flying over Tatton Dec 31st.
 Whimbrel 1 Knutsford moor in May.
 Common Sandpiper 2 at Rostherne Apr 1st.
 Merlin 1 at Tatton in Dec.
 Cuckoo Last record from Rostherne Sep 18th.
 Yellow Wag Last Record Knutsford moor Sep 26th.
 Reed Warbler First Record from Knutsford moor May 4th.

1977

Black-necked Grebe 1 Tatton Oct 18th.
 Heron 100 occupied nests at Tabley.
 Ring-necked Parakeet 1 in the Rostherne area Oct 1st - Nov 27th.

1978

Little Grebe Maxima for Tatton 22 in Nov.
 Leaches Petrel 1 Tatton Sep 30th, 1 in Mid-Nov almost certainly Leaches.
 Bittern 1 flushed from Melchett Mar 4th.
 Pink-footed Goose 43 on field at Tabley Oct 1st.
 Garganey 2 records from Tatton 1 on Sep 9th, 1 on Sep 15th.
 Shoveler 2 pairs summered on Knutsford moor.
 Goldeneye 52 Tatton during the spring.
 Coot Yearly maxima at Tatton was 485 in Sep.
 Black Tern 6 at Tatton May 3rd, 2 Rostherne Jun 3rd, 1 Tatton Aug 10th.
 Water Pipit 1 Tatton on Mar 26th.
 Blue-headed Wagtail 1 Tatton Apr 25th.
 Nealy Redpoll 1 Tatton Dec 6th

Some exotic escapees also occurred.

All records refer to Tatton.

Chinese Spotbill 1 on Dec 3rd.
 Argentine Red Shoveler 1 on Nov 1st.
 Australian Pochard 4 m 2 f Nov 1st to year end.

THE BIRDS OF SUOMI

by: Jeff. Teasdale

The scene of much of what follows is a tiny island in the Vaasa Archipelago off the west coast of Finland in the Gulf of Bothnia, about 63° North. On the island there is a small wooden summer house and sauna, a landing stage, a beach and a lot of ice-worn rocks and trees.

It lies in a bay of a much larger island, Replot, the biggest of over 100,000 in Finland. The terrain in Ostra Botnia is flat, heavily forested and an unspoilt chaos of lakes, swamps, eskeis, boulders and gravel. In terms of fauna, the swamps are Finland's greatest asset, reflected in the Finns name for their country - "Suomi" - "land of swamps". As well as providing plentiful fish, the 'Suo' are breeding grounds for vast swarms of insects which support a varied bird population. The sea is brackish rather than saline and so supports a strange variety of fish, so in one's nets one can catch herring, pike, perch and salmon. The forest starts here at the edge of the sea and runs unbroken as far east as one can go - to the Russian border and way beyond. It was in this area in the north-east that I have not unpleasant memories of being attacked by a Hawk Owl on a long trek on the Beais Wag in the Kuusamo district.

To the north, where we do most of our climbing, the trees give way to the arctic tundra of Lapland. Here the bleak wastes support Reindeer, majestic Eagles, Buzzards and the smaller and friendlier Lapland Buntings, Red-throated Pipits and Stints. But we always come back to the island, footsore, bruised and weary, to rest and watch

Summer days are long and balmy, when the sun sets for minutes rather than hours and the Siberian high pressure can keep the temperature hanging at a steady 25°C for days and weeks on end. One is surrounded by shimmering light, cut by dancing mirages of rock, water and the dark omnipresent line of forest across the sea. In winter you can put a minus sign before that temperature and the scene becomes a grey desolation of dark trees, frozen sea and windswept ice and snow. It is a harsh climate and the Finns therefore value all things living after freezing death.....

It is early morning in summer and the silence is total, absolut. Nothing stirs. Even the gentle creak of the door and the soft padding of feet is an intrusion into the stillness. The sun which has been down for four hours is climbing and casting a pink glow over sky and water. The forest looks threatening, impenetrable as though it goes on for a million miles. A fish cuts the water, causing the barest ripple, the noise seems loud and startling. Mist wreathes out of the trees, hangs over the boulders in silence and in the forest the Cranes stir. Their cry is lonely, a harsh guttural croak that echoes back and forth across the bay and then, grey

and graceful they break the trees - a family - and fly over the water to another "suo" feeding ground, where they will wade shy and watchful in the expanses of bog and cotton grass. On one day in August they will all leave and fly south in V formation and their cries will seem to emanate from the very land itself.

On the other side of the island a gentle splash suggests the movement of something larger - an elk has entered the water and swims across an inlet to greener pasture where he will browse on blueberries, moss and lichen. As the ripples of his wake slap on the beach the Arctic Terns rise noisily from their rock at the end of the island and remind us they are hungry and should raise our nets so they can breakfast on fish guts. Their acrobatic flight provides ceaseless entertainment as their bills dip the water. They are old friends and come back year after year to nest under the same rock. As we go to raise the nets we are observed by one of six Great Black-backed Gulls in the Bay. This vasser and plunderer shuffles from foot to foot and he chuckles as we draw near, his hunger for fish overcoming his respect for us. Our catch is average - a pike and eight perch which we will smoke this evening.

From the forest we catch the "kvi krri krri" of a Black Woodpecker and as we row back to the island we see, off the shore, a pair each of Goosanders and Red-breasted Merganser, whilst among pebbles a Common Sandpiper looks for insects "Common" maybe but here welcomed as though he were the last on earth.

During the mornings hundreds of ducks congregate on the water off the island - Mallard, Teal, Goldeneye, Tufted Duck, Long-tailed Duck - the latter always the first to arrive in the icy spring - and occasionally Velvet Scoter. Oystercatchers comb the shore for mussels. All keep an eye out for the Ospreys and Sea-Eagles which nest near here, on the very edges of West Replot. Later a "dopping" or Great Crested Grebe swims by with her young, while on the shore further from the house one can see Turnstones, Redshanks and Curlews.

In the afternoons we venture into the forest to collect mushrooms and berries. The ground is springy with a myriad of small pools. Here we have seen a pair of Slavonian Grebes on such a pool. The birds are not numerous but varied and while the forest is still one is always aware of animals and birds moving just outside one's circle of vision. However patience and a good pair of binoculars have been rewarded by Pied Wagtails, Chaffinches, Black Grouse, Greater and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, Chiffchaffs, Bullfinches, Goldcrest (Finland's smallest bird), Siskins, Bramblings, Snipe and - very rarely - Cranes.

Back on the island, in the heat of the afternoon the bird life is quiet, when a commotion in the air heralds only one thing - a Sea Eagle. This August (1980) we saw three together -

two adults and one young circling effortlessly. A drama unfolds as the Gulls fly up to mob, but at a safe distance. The Gulls are at best ignored or at worst treated with the contempt they deserve in such company. A derisory flick of a huge wing tip and the Gulls tumble away shrieking in terror. The Eagles drift over the tree tops and the bay settles down once again. Other birds of prey seen have been the Ospreys, Buzzards flying west towards Sweden and in the spring seven Rough-legged Buzzards flying north towards Lapland. Such events are rare but provide conversation and excitement late into the evenings as we sit in the house with a beer after a sauna.

The sky reddens and the incessant drone of the mosquitoes and other insects in the trees attract the Swallows who dive and swoop through the swirling clouds. The Cranes return and call to each other and echo their presence.

Soon the summer will end dramatically - the air becomes chill and wet as low pressure areas eat into the edges of the high pressure and push it eastwards. Now the Finns burn their Kokko Brassa bonfires, light their candles and shoot rockets into the sky to celebrate the last Saturday of summer - the last in August - and stand around in sad silence, knowing the winter to come.

And magically and mysteriously the next day dawns grey, wet and cold - and the birds are gone. Gradually over the weeks the rain turns to sleet and then snow, the sea freezes over and all that remains behind are the black Crows hopping around the frozen carcasses left on the ice by the fishermen for their friends the Sea-Eagles.