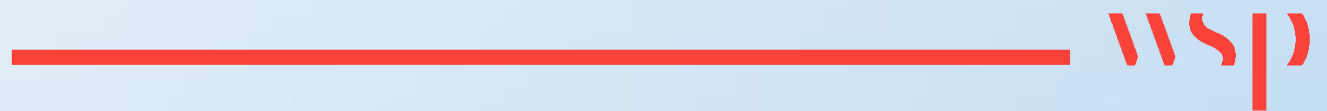


Appendix 5.6

Winter Birds (Part 3 of 3)



Weather:

Between the first and second survey dates the area was affected by a period of unsettled weather with the passage of frontal systems bringing some periods of heavy rainfall interspersed between warmer sunny periods. The heaviest rain fell on the 6th with 6cm recorded in some areas and this left standing water in parts of the survey area which had been dry for several weeks.

On the survey date winds were light to moderate, force 3 – 4 from the south-west; showers and a band of heavier rain passed through the region from early morning clearing in the afternoon with temperatures reaching 16C, cooler than of late. There was total cloud cover throughout the survey.

Waders and Wildfowl:

Some of the fields in the survey area had been harvested and odd stubbles dragged but in general environmental conditions were very similar to the previous week. Changes in field conditions are highlighted in the spreadsheet. Many of the permanent pasture fields were still unsuitable for roosting and feeding waders due to the height and density of the grass.

Nine Black-tailed Godwits were feeding with Curlew in field 110, permanent pasture that was being grazed by cattle but this was the only wader species recorded other than Curlew. Only 46 Curlew were found in the fields within the survey area with an additional 23 birds being seen in the extra fields, outside the survey area as shown on the map and described in week one. All of the Curlew within the survey area were feeding on permanent pasture fields or those mown for hay but the stubble field C again held birds just outside the boundary of the surveyed site. The same parties of 14 and 30 birds moved between adjacent fields as shown in the sheet but there were no other notable movements of birds observed during the survey.

As it was a high spring tide there was no mud available to waders on the upper inter-tidal and as the vegetation on the foreshore is still long and rank no birds were found on the high tide roosting area with the three Common Sandpipers being present on the base of the rocky seawall.

Other observations:

A Little Egret was again seen along the Skitter Beck flying north-east adjacent to field number 84. At least three Willow Tits were in the hedgerows between Dawson City and Parker's plantation but there was no further sign of the pair of Turtle Doves found nest building in the previous week. Likewise all of the Marsh Harriers appeared to have dispersed from the Dawson City area with no observations during the entire survey.

Week 3 August 15th – 21st 2009

Survey date August 18th

High tide 05:00 and 17:30 mid tide at 6.5m

Weather:

During the intervening week the weather had been quite settled with occasional light rain but mainly dry with some extensive sunny periods throughout and temperatures reaching peaks of 23C to 25C during the day falling to 13C to 16C at night.

At 05:00hrs there was only a very light south-south-west wind, force one, with 2 octas cloud cover and a temperature of 14C. as the day progressed the wind increased from the south-west to force 3 – 4 as temperatures rose to a peak of 21C; cloud cover varied from 3 to 7 octas throughout the day.

Waders and Wildfowl:

There had been a dramatic change in environmental conditions by the start of week three with harvesting of oilseed rape, wheat and barley changing the bulk of the fields to stubbles;

dragging of stubbles was also underway and a number of fields had been dragged and one ploughed. [see excel sheet and map for details of changes in field conditions].

Curlew was the wader found in the most fields but in terms of absolute numbers there were more **Lapwing** on the surveyed fields, all but one of which were roosting on the dragged oilseed rape stubble in field number 38. The remaining single Lapwing was foraging on a dragged field of wheat stubble, field number 14 where there were also nine **Curlew** feeding. Over high tide Curlew were found scattered around the stubbles and dragged fields within the survey area but the total number of birds found was only 42 in addition to which 16 remained on the upper inter-tidal. All of the birds found on inland fields were actively foraging as opposed to roosting. In contrast to the previous two weeks there were very few birds on permanent pastures with most birds seeking out worked fields and harvested stubbles. Some birds were observed moving from inland fields towards the estuary as the tide fell and by low water there were a total of 108 Curlew feeding on the inter-tidal mainly on the extensive sand bank off Skitter Ness. Where the additional birds found at low water came from is not clear but there were no noted movements from the north bank and it is assumed that they came from fields further inland or from those fields to the south-west of the survey area.

A **Greenshank** and 9 **Redshank** were roosting on the pools on the grues at East Halton Skitter moving to the foreshore at the tide fell.

As it was not a high spring tide there was some mud available on the upper inter-tidal at high water and a number of waders remained there throughout the high tide period of which 42 **Ringed Plover** and 86 **Black-tailed Godwits** were the most notable.

Seven Mallard were feeding on the stubbles in field 122 at dawn.

Other observations

An adult male Marsh Harrier left the roost at Dawson City at 06:14hrs with a juvenile seen at the same time of the adjacent grues. A juvenile was later seen hunting rough fields along the Skitter Beck north of the old railway bridge in field 136 and a male came in off the Humber over the grues late morning.

Two juvenile Common Buzzards were in the hay field number 13 with one of the same later seen over Langmire Wood where it is suspected that they bred in 2009.

A total of four juvenile Kestrels was feeding over the grues. This Autumn concentration has been a feature of the grues for 40+ years with past peak counts exceeding 15 birds in good years. The attraction is the number of butterflies feeding on the sea aster on the grues but in recent years the area of sea aster has declined and rough rank grass has invaded with the subsequent reduction in the number of Kestrels; this species is though also in steep decline at a population level and this will presumably also affect the number of birds using the area in the autumn.

Between 06:40 and 06:55 a total of 110 Common Terns and one juvenile Arctic Tern flew west along the southern edge of the Humber on the high tide.

A male Quail was calling from the standing wheat crop in field 108 from first light to 07:00.

A Little Egret was feeding along the Skitter Beck and the Little Beck between fields 73 and the railway bridge during the morning.

A pair of Mute Swans with 5 cygnets was along the Skitter Beck by field 78 / 75 and a Kingfisher in the same area.

Three Turtle Doves were in the bushes around Parker's pond with a further two in the hedge on the embankment by field 130 where a nest was being built in week 1, and singles on the embankment by field 117 and in field 120 making a total of seven birds during the survey.

A Willow Tit was in the large hedge over the Little Beck by field 78 / 75.

A male and two female Roe Deer were present in field 136 during the morning and a Brown Hare was in the stubbles in field 16.

Week 4 August 22nd – 28th 2009

Survey date August 24th

High tide 09:20 a high spring tide at 7.4m

Weather:

Between the two surveys, week 3 and week 4, the weather was rather hot with daytime temperatures peaking at 27C and nighttime temperatures seldom falling below 15C. Rainfall was usually light and amounted to less than the seasonal average while winds were mainly from the south to south-west and typically light to moderate.

On the survey date cloud cover varied from 3 to 7 octas with the wind light from the south-west at dawn swinging to a very light south-easterly late morning before returning to the south-west by mid afternoon. Temperatures varied from 15C at dawn to 26C at midday when it became particularly humid. As cloud cover increased in the evening a series of heavy showers passed through the area with winds increasing locally to force 5 around the more intense shower clouds.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 269 Curlew found on the fields at high water confirmed a large increase in the local population from the previous week. In contrast to previous weeks the majority of the birds were feeding on recently harvested stubble fields or dragged stubbles; several of these fields had not been used in the previous survey series between January and March 2009. Most of these birds remained on the fields as the tide fell with a total of 69 birds being seen on the inter-tidal at mid tide. Short movements between adjacent fields were observed in addition to birds commuting to the inter-tidal.

A total of 398 Golden Plovers were located roosting on dragged and ploughed fields number 99 and 122 with an additional six birds on pea stubbles in field F (see map). A total of 62 Lapwing was feeding on the recently dragged stubbles in field 14 and a similar sized flock of 58 birds was roosting in the dragged rape field number 38; the similar size of the two flocks suggests that they could be one and the same but there was no observed movement between the two fields and thus they are counted as different individuals. An additional three birds were feeding in field 77. Only two Golden Plover were seen on the inter-tidal at low water and to date there have been no observations of Lapwing on the inter-tidal at low water. At low water there was a mixed flock of waders between Goxhill haven and East Halton Skitter with 81 Ringed Plover and 75 Dunlin being notable. At high tide some of these birds roosted on a dragged field of pea stubbles inland from Goxhill Haven, designated F on the crop map. This field has in the past held large roosting flocks of Lapwing and Golden Plovers as well as smaller waders.

Other observations

Both of the breeding male Marsh Harrier were in the area around Dawson City during the morning with an additional full adult male being seen over fields 20 and 22 at midday.

A Peregrine was chasing a Black-tailed Godwit over the estuary off the grues late morning.

There was again an up river movement of Common Terns leaving the overnight roost at North Cotes with 172 birds being counted.

A flock of 14 Yellow Wagtails was feeding on the embankment at Goxhill Haven and there were at least 200 Swallows and Sand Martins in the same area. a further concentration of hirundines over the Skitter Beck by field 13 included two late Swifts.

Two Little Egrets and three Grey Herons were roosting in the old thorn hedgerow between the Skitter Beck and little beck adjacent to field 13.

Willow Tits were again present in the hedge between Dawson City and Parker's plantation along with a mixed flock of warblers including, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Chiffchaffs, Willow, Sedge and Reed Warblers. At least 8 Sedge Warblers were in the borrow pit reedbeds along the grues.

Week 5 August 29th – September 5th 2009

Survey date August 31st

High tide 16:55 a neap tide at 5.7m

Weather:

A hot and often humid week had passed between the two surveys with temperatures reaching the mid 20's centigrade often accompanied by fresh to strong south to westerly winds producing excessive evaporation. Apart from a few light showers there was very little rainfall during the period.

On the survey date cloud cover varied markedly from 3 octas to eight octas throughout the day with the cloud generally clearing through the afternoon producing some of the highest temperatures of the day around 17:00hrs before cloud increased again in the late evening. Winds were rather fresh force four to five from the south with peak temperatures recorded being 25C.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 126 Curlew were located in the fields of the survey area most of which were feeding although there was a mix of feeding and roosting birds in some of the fields. Again there was a spread of birds through different fields that had been worked down and dragged as well as recently harvested stubbles. Notably the largest group of 51 birds was found in field 87 where the crop of spring barley had been half harvested leaving stubbles over the highest part of the field. This same field had been frequented by feeding Curlews in the previous winter when it was left as over-wintered stubbles from the previous year. There was again a lack of birds on the permanent pasture fields that had held the majority of the Curlew in the first part of the survey prior to the start of harvesting in the majority of the cereal fields. The rapid conversion of stubbles to dragged fields over a wide area has however, produced a large variety of potential feeding sites for Curlew and the reduced total number of birds found over this week's survey compared to week 4 was most probably due to the spread of birds throughout the adjacent areas of Goxhill and East Halton Marshes. In fact parties of 5 – 15 birds were seen in several stubbles and dragged fields in the western part of Goxhill Marsh on the evening of the survey date confirming this suggestion.

Only two Lapwing were found roosting in the recently ploughed field 16; there were no birds in the dragged fields where they were located in the previous week and none were seen on the inter-tidal or on any of the adjacent fields in the marshes. Golden Plovers were found in field 100, where 39 were roosting and field 125 where 52 birds were feeding on the field that was being ploughed; these birds moved onto field 101 to roost.

The most unusual occurrence of the survey was the discovery of a flock of 161 Black-tailed Godwits feeding on the recently dragged field number 17. The majority of the birds were juvenile *islandica* and it is assumed that they had moved onto the field on the rising tide as four birds were seen arriving from the direction of the East Halton – Killingholme inter-tidal during the course of the observations.

As it was a low neap tide there was mud available to waders even at high water and the inter-tidal held totals of 32 Ringed Plover and 24 Dunlin but just five Curlew and no Black-tailed Godwits.

Other observations:

Two juvenile Marsh Harriers were in the area of Dawson City and a female was over the fields near Halton Grange including fields 8 and 12. A juvenile Common Buzzard was again in the area of field 13.

A Kingfisher was feeding along the skitter beck between fields 13 and 3.

Filed 16 held two Wheatears and a Whinchat and 2 Wheatears and a juvenile Whinchat were also seen along the foreshore by Goxhill Haven.

The borage? crop in field 68 had been harvested and dragged and held a mixed feeding flock of 100+ Greenfinch and 100 Tree and House Sparrows.

Water levels in the Skitter Beck were very low having fallen by at least half a metre with up to 1m of mud exposed along the edges in most places along the beck side.

A wildfowler / shooter was shooting in fields 19 / 136 when I arrived in the area he disappeared in a white Corsa that had accessed the area via a track from Manor House Farm (this was of course before the start of the wildfowl shooting season).

A Southern Hawker dragonfly was feeding along the Skitter Beck side by field 78 / 3; Common Darters and Migrant Hawkers were also seen in several places during the survey.

Week 6 September 6th - 11th 2009

Survey date September 9th

High tide 09:15 a high spring at 6.9m falling from 7.1m on the 6th and 7th

Weather:

The intervening week had been mainly dry with odd showers and frequently windy with south to south-westerly winds often reaching force five. Temperatures ranged from highs of 15C to 23C with overnight lows seldom dropping below 10C.

September 9th dawned cooler than of late at 11C with a force 4 south-westerly wind and 3 octas cloud cover but as the wind veered into the north-west the cloud cleared by late morning allowing temperatures to reach 23C with the wind dropping lighter in the afternoon as some high cloud built up. The more settled weather resulted from the Azores Anti-cyclone pushing north-east over Eastern Britain.

Waders and Wildfowl

Curlew was again the most numerous wader found on the fields within the survey area with a total of 208 birds being found mainly on stubbles and dragged stubbles but 33 were roosting on the permanent pasture in field 112 along with two **Bar-tailed Godwits** over high tide. The largest number of Curlew was again found in the stubbles in field 87 where they were actively feeding before 78 of the birds were disturbed and flew directly towards the estuary. Only two birds were roosting on the mown area of the grues at high tide.

A flock of small waders comprising 51 **Ringed Plover**, 28 **Dunlin**, 2 **Curlew Sandpiper** and 2 **Little Stints** roosted on the drilled field number 122 adjacent to Goxhill Haven over the whole of the high tide period.

The only **Lapwing** found was a single bird in field 18 and there were only 16 **Golden Plover** that were also roosting in field 125 at high tide.

Other observations:

A single Little Egret was in Skitter Beck by railway bridge; the local farmer reported two birds fishing in the pond between fields 87 and 91 during the week.

A single Grey Partridge was seen in field 108.

A flock of 46 Teal was feeding in Dawson City on a day when there was a marked westerly movement up the estuary with 163 counted during the survey. Large numbers of Teal arriving from Scandinavia move west up the Humber in September and October en route for central and western England and Ireland.

There were still two Sedge Warblers in Parker's Pond plus Lesser Whitethroat, Reed Warblers, Chiffchaffs in the bank side hedgerows.

A female Marsh Harrier seen in Dawson City and hunting the grues was also seen over field 8 and around Skitter Beck appeared.

A juvenile Common Buzzard again along Skitter Beck by Langmire

A Southern Hawker was again by field 78 and there were good numbers of Painted Ladies along the Humber embankment; 10's of 1000's of 7-spot Ladybirds were evident throughout with the phragmites seed heads in Parkers Pond being laden with them.

Week 7 September 12th - 18th 2009

Survey date September 14th
High tide 15:100 a neap at 5.8m

Weather:

The week had been generally settled but with a distinct change in pressure as the Azores anti-cyclone pushed north-east to cover central England. This brought a change from predominant westerly and southerly winds to north-north-easterlies by the end of the intervening week. Temperatures had been variable during the week but it was often very warm with 23C recorded on some days while over-night temperatures fell as low as 7C. There was no rain during the period.

The survey date was dominated by the north-north-easterly wind that reached force 4 and occasionally force 5 on the coast but was much lighter inland. Cloud cover varied from two to seven octas during the day with temperatures rising to 17C in the sunny periods but it was generally much cooler than the previous week.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 183 **Curlew** were located on the fields in the survey area but an additional flock of 101 birds was seen in flight although it was not ascertained where they had been feeding. The direction of movement of the flock (larger arrow on map) suggests that they may have been feeding in field 22 which was being worked down on the survey date but this was not proven. The flock was not relocated in spite of their movement towards the estuary as there was little mud available over the high water period in spite of the neap tide partly as a result of the onshore wind pushing water higher onto the remaining mudflats. This suggests that these birds moved outside the survey area over the high tide period after being disturbed from their feeding area. The stubbles in field 87 again held a sizeable flock of Curlew which moved off towards the estuary after high tide with smaller flocks being located on various other worked and dragged fields and stubbles. No birds were found on the inter-tidal over high water. Two flocks of **Lapwing** were found both feeding in fields that were being worked during the survey with 43 in field 70, oilseed rape stubble being ploughed, and 148 in field 76 that was being sown. Only five **Golden Plover** were found feeding with Lapwing in field 70. There was very little mud available on the upper inter-tidal at high water and hence the only birds located were a small flock of Teal and Mallard off the northern grues but as the tide started to fall a total of 101 Dunlin, 12 Ringed Plover, two Curlew and a single Turnstone arrived on the inter-tidal but these birds were not located on any of the adjacent fields at high water and seemed to arrive from down the estuary.

Other observations:

Five Common Buzzards were present in the area of fields 6, 7, 9, 10, 84 and 85 with three of these birds frequenting the plantation between fields 84 and 85. At least three of the birds were juveniles with one of the other two being a 2cy bird.

A single juvenile Marsh Harrier was seen moving west over field 78 but none were seen in the Dawson City area.

Week 8 September 19th - 25th 2009

Survey date September 22nd

High tide 09:00 a high spring at 7.3m

Weather:

The Azores high had dominated the intervening week until the 21st when an Atlantic depression brought a change to south then south-westerly winds with some light rain late on the 21st. Temperatures had remained high during the previous week reaching 24C on some days with winds having been in the north-east quadrant.

The survey date dawned with a force four south-westerly wind and two octas cloud cover but with a temperatures of 16C being high for late September. During the morning cloud cover increased towards midday forming seven octas by 12:00hrs as the wind swung to west and increased to force five. Cloud cover then varied through the afternoon and evening with the wind strength easing to force four again by 18:00hrs.

Following a very dry period with little rainfall having occurred for ten weeks environmental conditions in the survey area showed that water levels even in permanent water bodies were the lowest for many years while soil was hard and baked in all of the worked fields. Even some of the permanent ponds on the grues at East Halton Skitter had dried out for the first time in 15 years.

Waders and Wildfowl

Curlew were scattered over several fields with small groups being the norm as opposed to larger flocks. The main concentration of birds was in the fields adjacent to the Humber embankment between Dawson City and East Halton Skitter. Here birds were found in dragged stubbles, permanent pastures and on ploughed fields. The 24 birds on the rough plough on field 129 were concentrated in a small area at the western end of the field where slurry had accumulated prior to ploughing. The dragged stubbles in field 126 again held 34 birds. Only 8 birds were in field 87 the favoured spring barley stubble but baling was being carried out in adjacent fields and a further 38 birds were found in the recently worked field 86 to the north of field 87. Further concentrations of birds were found in the Thornton Abbey area where fields had recently been sown or were being worked. The soils in these fields are light and sandy and easily probed for food.

Lapwing were found in three fields with a single bird in field 51 and the remaining 216 in fields 68 and 59, adjacent fields that were being sown during the survey. Both of these fields were organic farmed in recent years and have proved particularly attractive to Lapwing and Golden Plovers. This flock of Lapwing is presumed to consist of the same birds found in the area around Thornton Abbey on all of the latest surveys. There has been no evidence to date that they move to the inter-tidal unless this occurs at night.

The only **Golden Plovers** found were a flock of 64 birds in field 68 where they fed with Lapwing and Curlew. As noted above these former organic fields regularly hold Golden Plover in winter.

A single Curlew was roosting on the mown area of the grues at high tide but apart from 15 Mallard there were no other birds on the foreshore as all of the area was covered by the high spring tide. Three hours after high water a group of waders arrived from the south-east consisting of 33 Dunlin, 3 Ringed Plover, a Curlew Sandpiper, 24 Black-tailed and 3 Bar-tailed Godwits and 7 Curlew and all of these birds fed on the inter-tidal adjacent to Skitter Ness.

Other observations:

Two Common Buzzards were seen along the Skitter Beck around field 8 to 136; a Jay was mobbing a Tawny Owl in the old oaks along the beck by field number 8 and there were 21 Teal in the Beck adjacent to field 136.

A Hornets nest was discovered in the base of an old oak tree on the northern edge of Langmire wood. Although this species is known to be spreading northwards I believe this is the first nest located along the Humber to date.

Week 9 September 26th – October 2nd 2009

Survey date September 30th

High tide 04:15 at 5.8m and 17:10 a neap at 5.9m

Weather:

Anti-cyclonic conditions had again dominated the local weather during the intervening week with some high temperatures, reaching the low 20's centigrade during hot and sunny days but with night time temperatures starting to fall to <10C. There had again been no rainfall and with the sun and light winds evapo-transpiration continued to lower water levels in the major permanent water bodies including the Skitter Beck. Worked fields were very dry and with hard caked clay on the surface there was little feeding available for waders; permanent pastures were beginning to show signs of die back of the grasses and shriveling due to the continuing drought.

The 30th began with a light force three westerly and five octas cloud cover with a temperature of 14C at 07:00hrs. During the day the wind increased to force four and veered to west-north-west as the cloud cleared and temperatures rose to 20C by midday. During the afternoon cloud cover increased again with the wind veering north-west but temperatures were still relatively high at 12C by darkness.

Waders and Wildfowl

No Lapwing were found at high or low water throughout the day. Most of the **Curlew** found were roosting on a rough ploughed field, number 129 with only low numbers located feeding in other favoured fields most notably dragged stubbles in field 108 and the harvested spring barley stubbles in fields 87 and 90. The fact that most of the fields in the survey area had already been worked and sown and there was little activity during the survey suggests that in previous weeks birds had been exploiting food resources made available by such operations and with the continuing drought and the difficulty of feeding on the rock hard clay soils that this was why there were fewer birds recorded in week 9 and why most of those found were roosting. Even at low water however, only 26 Curlew were found feeding on the inter-tidal while most of the roosting birds remained on the ploughed field possibly indicating that they had been night feeding?

A single flock of **Golden Plovers** was found over high tide roosting on the ploughed field number 129 where most of the Curlew were also present. The flock was typically difficult to count as the birds were squatting in the furrows with an initial count suggesting the presence of just 202 birds. Further counts from different angles showed how low this count was as 354 birds were in fact present the highest total for this species yet recorded on the survey series this autumn. This flock of Golden Plovers roosted on the field from at least 09:00 hrs to 16:00 hrs.

Even though there was about 20m of upper inter-tidal not covered at high water the only birds present were 9 Curlew and a flock of 22 Mallard and 56 Teal with a single Wigeon. As the tide receded most of the waders arrived from the south-east from the direction of North Killingholme pits but the Turnstone flock arrived from the west. The high count of Turnstone, 350 birds was exceptional for this stretch of the estuary but a similar sized flock typically frequents the area around New Holland pier.

Amongst the Black-tailed Godwits feeding on the inter-tidal at Goxhill Skitter Ness at low water was a colour ringed bird, left tibia Orange / Black right tibia Yellow / Red flag; this bird had been ringed as a fledgling at Sakka, Dalvik, north of Akureyri, N Iceland on July 10th 2009 and was then recorded at Alkborough Flats on August 14th 2009 prior to this observation at Goxhill.

Other observations:

A juvenile Hen Harrier was seen in the region of Dawson City and the grues in the early morning moving off to hunt field 108 before moving west inland. At 13:00 hrs it was seen coming from the south-east by Langmire Wood and moved north-west towards field 101. At 14:00 hrs it was seen again at Dawson City and it returned there at 17:30 and stayed in the area possibly looking to roost.

Two juvenile Marsh Harriers were seen near Dawson City in the morning and they returned there from 17:00 hrs presumably in preparation for roosting.

A Common Buzzard was hunting near by Parker's Plantation where four Roe Deer were also seen.

During the day there was a notable up river movement of wildfowl with 41 Pintail, 24 Wigeon, 4 Goldeneye and 208 Teal passing during a 4-hour period. All of these birds are assumed to have been recent arrivals from Scandinavia as other sites on the east coast recorded other species in the movement that were indicative of an origin in this area. the movement of wildfowl also included Common Snipe of which 20 birds were seen arriving in off the estuary and during the morning there was visible migration of Skylarks, Meadow Pipits, Reed Buntings and the arrival of the first Rock Pipit of the autumn.

Week 10 October 3rd – 9th 2009

Survey date October 7th

High tide 08:32 at 7.1m a high spring

Weather:

There was a notable change in the weather during the intervening week; a vigorous depression passed north-west through Scotland on the 3rd bringing strong westerly winds and cooler conditions as the wind swung to north-west on the following night. It remained cooler through the 4th with winds dropping overnight to leave a calm dawn to the 5th with temperatures falling to 7C. During the day cloud broke occasionally with temperatures rising to 17C in the early afternoon before cloud increased again overnight with rain increasing by dawn on a moderate southerly wind. Substantial rainfall on the 6th was the first in the area for over 12 weeks.

The 7th began with a light, force three, north-north-westerly wind and 7 octas cloud cover being cool at 7C. During the morning the cloud cleared and temperatures rose so that by midday there was only one octa cloud with a temperature of 13C and a light north-north-westerly force two.

Waders and Wildfowl

Only two species of wader were located on the fields **Curlew** and **Lapwing** with no Golden Plover being seen throughout the day. All of the Lapwing recorded were on two fields, number 129 where four birds were roosting at high tide and field number 85 where 43 birds were feeding on the recently drilled field.

Curlew were more widespread but there was a marked concentration of birds in the fields around Thornton Abbey where all of the birds were feeding on recently drilled fields. The recent rain had made the surface layers of the fields more pliable and presumably easier for Curlew probing for food. The other major concentration of Curlew was again in field 87 where 48 birds were concentrated in the spring barley stubbles. This field is cultivated by a farm tenant who tends to farm in the manner of the 1950's rather than the present and hence there

is little spraying or intensification which presumably has a positive effect upon the population of soil invertebrates and hence produces more available food for the Curlew. Curlew were noted commuting between the Humber and field 87 and fields 85 and 86 passing over Langmire Wood.

As this was a very high spring tide there was just a single Dunlin roosting on the embankment and a flock of 27 Mallard that were also commuting to field 108 where they fed on the stubbles.

Other observations:

A Barn Owl was roosting in the hedge on the side of the Skitter Beck by field 13.

Two Common Buzzards were seen over the fields around Langmire Wood and two Marsh Harriers were seen hunting in the same area but there were no birds near Dawson City for the first time.

Week 11 October 10th – 16th 2009

Survey date October 13th
High tide 15:00 a neap at 5.9m

Weather:

A quiet week passed between the week 10 and week 11 surveys with generally light winds and virtually no rainfall. Winds were typically from the north through to west with midday temperatures rising above the seasonal norm as high pressure built towards the end of the period; over-night temperatures dropped to 5C on some nights.

The 13th was another quiet day with high pressure in charge and a very light north-north-west wind of force 1-2; cloud cover was 5 octas early morning clearing by midday to one octa when temperatures rose to 18C before cloud cover increased from the north-west by mid afternoon and temperatures fell to 14C.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 178 **Curlew** was found on the fields in the survey area but other birds were seen on arable fields in Goxhill Marsh to the west and south of those surveyed and also to the west of the fields at Thornton Abbey. Only three birds were roosting on the upper inter-tidal at high water. The birds located on the fields were in three main areas, around Thornton Abbey, along the strip of fields immediately inland of the Humber between Goxhill Haven and East Halton Skitter and in the recently worked fields 85 and 93 east of Goxhill airfield. All of the birds located were feeding with the exception of some of the birds in field 114 that were roosting.

Only six **Lapwing** were found roosting on two fields 120 and 122 adjacent to the Humber at Goxhill Haven. Additionally a flock of 12 birds was seen to come in from the Humber and fly north-west towards field 101 as high tide approached but they could not be found on field 101 or any of the adjacent fields later in the day. A total of 58 birds were feeding on the inter-tidal by field 130 just before high tide but they then all moved off west inland but passed out of the survey area and did not roost on any of the fields surveyed.

The only **Golden Plover** seen during the day was a flock of 342 that roosted on field 129 at high tide. The flock arrived from high to the south-east 90 minutes before high water and may have come from the north bank of the estuary where a total of 6000+ Golden Plovers was seen in the air to the east of Paul Holme Strays. The similarity in size of this flock to the 354 found roosting on the same field in the previous week strongly suggests that the same flock of birds was involved.

On the foreshore the Mallard flock reached a new peak of 68 birds and four Goldeneye drifted east on the falling tide. As noted above 58 Lapwing were present up to high water along with a flock of 31 Dunlin and a single Knot, eight Redshank plus one Black-tailed and four Bar-tailed Godwits all of which roosted on the remaining area of mud on the upper inter-tidal that was not covered at high water.

Other observations:

A flock of ten Teal was in the Skitter Beck by field number 81.

A notable arrival of winter thrushes in England during the morning, with 21,000 **Redwing** being counted moving west at one spot in Bedfordshire and several thousands being noted at many sites, also included a single flock of 125 birds in one tree by field 135 in East Halton village. A single **Buzzard** was in the region of the Skitter Beck by field 93 and one of the breeding male **Marsh Harriers** from Dawson City was seen in the vicinity of the grues. Two **Kingfishers** were along the Skitter Beck by field number 1 where the pair of Mute Swans and their two remaining cygnets were also present.

A few Migrant Hawker and Common Darter dragonflies were still on the wing on a hot and sunny day.

Week 12 October 17th – 23rd 2009

Survey date October 19th

High tide 07:15 and 19:30 high springs at 7.3m and 7.1m

Weather:

Mainly light northerly winds affected the area in the intervening week with no precipitation of note; temperatures ranged from highs of 14C to over-night lows of 5C, around the seasonal average.

The survey date dawned with a light force three south-westerly wind and five octas cloud cover at 7C; cloud increased rapidly to eight octas with some light drizzle before cloud broke again by midday the wind veering to south and allowing temperatures to rise to 14C with some warm sunshine during the afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl

There was a dramatic change in **Curlew** distribution during week 12 that appeared to be the result of the extreme spring tides. At low water an extensive new sand and mud bar has developed in the middle of the Humber running south from east Halton Skitter. This bar attracted a minimum of 134 Curlew over the low water period with another 70 birds being located on the inter-tidal mudflats between Goxhill Haven and Skitter Ness. All of the birds that had been feeding on the sand bar moved into field 129 as the tide began to rise and the birds roosted in this field for 90 minutes before being disturbed when all the flock moved to the inter-tidal off field 130. Here the birds remained for about 30 minutes before all of the birds joined other Curlew in moving to field 113 where they fed on the sown field. This field had been beans and was harvested late in the autumn before being sown. All of the birds remained in this field with 34 moving into the adjacent field 114 over the high water period in the evening. Elsewhere there were very few Curlew during the survey; a party of 13 birds that had been feeding on field 85 flew north-east past Langmire Wood towards the estuary and were suspected as having gone straight out onto the sand bar noted above. The favoured fields around Thornton Abbey only held six birds that were on the previously unused field number 50 with none on the regular fields and no birds were present on field 87.

A total of 145 **Lapwing** was on the inter-tidal off Skitter Ness up to two hours before high tide in the evening but only 23 birds moved onto field 120 where they then roosted with all of the remainder of the flock flying inland and out of the survey area into Goxhill Marsh. Inland a flock of 20 birds was feeding on field 85 and 45 roosted on field 70 but none of these were birds from the inter-tidal.

A flock of 238 **Golden Plovers** was on the inter-tidal off Skitter Ness at low water but most of the flock flew south-east across the estuary towards the large roost at Cherry Cobb as the tide rose with 51 birds moving to field 119 where they roosted with two Knot.

Good numbers of waders were using the inter-tidal at low water including 70 Curlew, 238 Golden Plover, 145 Lapwing, 213 Dunlin, 16 Ringed Plover, 14 Bar-tailed and 47 Black-tailed Godwits; the only wildfowl present were 76 Mallard.

Other observations:

One of the male Marsh Harriers from Dawson City was over the grues. A Barn Owl was hunting the grues in the late evening and a male Stonechat was also seen in the same area. A Chiffchaff was still Parker Plantation and one in the plantation by field number 1 where there were 6 Teal in the Beck and the pair of Mute Swans with two remaining cygnets. A juvenile Gannet flew west up the Humber off Skitter Ness.

During the afternoon a total of eight Painted Ladies, single Peacock and Red Admiral were along the Humber embankment between Goxhill Haven and Dawson City where Migrant Hawker and Common Darter dragonflies were also still on the wing.

Week 13 October 24th – 30th 2009

Survey date October 27th
High tide 13:10 a neap at 5.3m

Weather:

Some substantial amounts of rainfall had reached the area in the intervening week the first for over two months. Temperatures had been around the seasonal average or higher with winds initially from the south-east and then south to south-west increasing to strong over the weekend with rain and mist on the 24th.

The survey date was mostly murky with low cloud and a very light southerly wind; there was a period of drizzle and light rain in the morning petering out by early afternoon. Temperatures rose from 11C at first light to 14C by early afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl

The majority of the 120 **Curlew** located were found in the Thornton Abbey area where there were 58 birds; of these 58 birds 36 were feeding in a newly sown arable field south of the survey area adjacent to Thornton Abbey itself noted as field G on the map. The remainder were in the two organic fields 59 and 68. Of the remaining birds 22 were feeding in field 111 a permanent pasture field that had been dragged and re-sown with grass? with the other birds scattered through previously favoured fields of permanent pasture and tilled areas. As it was a neap tide just one Curlew was found on the inter-tidal at low water and this same bird remained there throughout high water.

Only 13 **Golden Plover** were found during the survey two roosting in a winter cereal field number 30 and 11 with Lapwing in field 129. Field 129 that had held a large Curlew roost in week 12 and a flock of Golden Plovers in previous weeks held a roosting flock of 268 **Lapwings** during the survey; the Lapwing were accompanied by three Ruffs that were feeding throughout the observation period. An additional flock of 34 Lapwings were roosting on the inter-tidal but moved off inland and were found on field F where there was a total of 276 Lapwing. It could not be confirmed whether this was the same flock of birds as previously located on field 129. No other Lapwing were found in any of the fields used previously by this species.

As it was a low neap tide there was quite a large area of mud remaining uncovered at high tide and this held 24 Black-tailed and 3 Bar-tailed Godwits, 8 Redshanks, 3 Dunlin and 14 Turnstone while 21 Teal and 33 Mallard were offshore with a single Goldeneye.

A flock of 62 **Pink-footed Geese** was feeding on the stubbles in field 126.

Other observations:

A single juvenile Marsh Harrier was in the vicinity of Dawson City and a juvenile Merlin was seen over the grues where there were also a pair of Stonechat and a hunting Barn Owl.

A large arrival of winter thrushes produced several sightings of flocks of up to 200 Redwings and 150 Fieldfares moving over the survey area with many other heard calling in the misty low cloud.

A flock of eight Common Crossbills flew north-west up the estuary at East Halton Skitter.

Week 14 October 31st – November 6th 2009

Survey date November 3rd

High tide 06:00 and 18:25 high springs at 7m and 6.9m respectively

Sunrise 07:01 and sunset 16:22

Weather:

The previous week had seen some very mixed weather but the most significant event was the torrential and persistent rain that affected the region through most of November 1st as a deep depression tracked north-west across the British Isles. A month's rainfall fell in many areas in the space of 14 hours; this rain belt cleared the area by late afternoon but there were further spells of rain in the period and this had the effect of breaking the drought and leaving many pools of surface water around the survey area. After such a long dry period many of the arable fields and the permanent pastures were again suitable for feeding waders. Winds in the period were mainly from the south-east to west and were strong on the 1st. Temperatures were well above the seasonal average through to the 2nd when they fell to around the average with daytime peaks of 13C and over-night lows of 5C – 7C.

Light rain from dawn on the 3rd soon gave way to a period of heavy rain that lasted through to mid morning with a freshening south-west wind. A period of sunshine developed with a fresh south-west wind through to midday when another period of heavy rain arrived in the form of a thundery shower. This shower cleared the area again by 13:00 hours and the remainder of the day was fine and dry but cool with the westerly wind decreasing.

Waders and Wildfowl

The majority of the **Curlew** located were in the fields adjacent to the estuary on both of the high tide periods with very few birds found on the favoured inland field around Thornton Abbey. At low water up to 150 Curlew were feeding on the inter-tidal areas of Skitter Ness and the new sandbar off East Halton Skitter. Most of the birds that feed on this sandbar moved to the permanent pasture field 103 from 3 hours before the evening high tide. Birds that had been feeding on the sand bar off Skitter Ness mainly moved into the permanent pasture field 110 but there were movements between the two fields and also between other fields in the area particularly field 118, another permanent pasture field. The total of 310 Curlew found on this survey was the highest count of the series thus far.

Lapwing were mainly located in the fields adjacent to the estuary at high water and on the inter-tidal areas off Goxhill Haven and Skitter Ness at low water. At low water two main flocks of 280 and 510 were found off Goxhill Haven and on the large sand bar off Skitter Ness. At high tide there was considerable movement of the flocks between different fields as disturbance affected the roosts. Most of the birds found in the fields were roosting but there was some feeding and this appeared to increase in the late evening. Away from the survey area two flocks of 285 and 264 were found on other fields in Goxhill Marsh and these involved some of the birds recorded from the survey area. Away from the estuary 64 birds were feeding on field 93, sown winter cereals, and it seemed that these birds were separate from the main flocks found on the estuary.

The week's survey produced the highest number of **Golden Plover** recorded thus far but they were not located at roost. No Golden Plover were seen on the early morning high tide and there were <30 birds on the foreshore through most of the low water period but as the tide turned 3 hours before the evening high tide a total of 680 Golden Plover gathered on the remaining inter-tidal off Dawson City with all of the Lapwing. From here the birds flew up with the Lapwings and moved inland and then turned westwards but only 14 birds landed on field 112 and 48 on 111 the remainder being lost to view towards Goxhill Haven. Later searches failed to locate these birds on any of the fields in Goxhill Marsh or on the fields between New Holland and Goxhill Tilery that are often used as a roost so where the birds went is a mystery. Flocks of Golden Plovers do though make long movements up and down the estuary on winter days and it is possible that they moved west towards Read's Island or the upper estuary.

On the inter-tidal at low water in addition to the species noted above there were 138 Turnstone, 144 Dunlin and 15 Ringed Plovers plus 3 Knot and 8 Bar-tailed Godwit but only 22

Redshank. The small flock of 15 Black-tailed Godwits included a colour ringed juvenile Red Yellow, Red Red flag; this bird had been seen on the Humber through the autumn after being ringed as a chick in Iceland in July 2009. All of these waders moved off down the estuary as the tide rose and it is assumed that they moved to North Killingholme Haven pits to roost.

Red Yellow Red Red flag

11.07.2009	Ringed one from brood of two Langhus. Fljot, W of Siglufjordur Iceland
12.08.09	Alkborough Flats
14.08.09	Alkborough Flats
18.10.09	Killingholme
3.11.09	Goxhill Skitter Ness

A notable flock of 118 **Pink-footed Geese** was feeding on the permanent pasture in field 110 during the afternoon with a further 16 birds in the dragged stubbles in field 126.

Other observations:

A juvenile Marsh Harrier was in the region of Dawson City at midday and two different Barn Owls were hunting the grues in the afternoon.

A single male Stonechat was on the grues and a Snow Bunting flew west up the estuary.

Week 15 November 7th – 13th 2009

Survey date November 11th

High tide 13:36 a median at 6.0m

Sunrise 07:16 and sunset 16:08

Weather:

There was some further light rainfall during the first part of the intervening week with heavier rain falling on the 8th as a frontal system became static over the North Sea bringing light north-easterly winds but some really heavy showers with thunder, lightning and hail. Thereafter winds fell light and with cold nights and the first ground frosts of the winter there was persistent fog on several mornings with temperatures only rising to a maximum of 11C and overnight lows of 1C – 4C being recorded.

The survey date started out with mist and fog affecting the areas adjacent to the estuary but with bright sunshine only a short distance inland by 08:00 hrs. An overnight frost saw temperatures drop to 2C and it was still only 3C at 09:00 hrs. At the east Halton end of the survey area a lack of fog and a long period of sunshine saw temperatures rise to 11C by late morning before several banks of fog drifted through the area on a light south-west wind sending temperatures tumbling to 5C by late afternoon when mist and fog patches again started to develop.

Waders and Wildfowl

The first large-scale winter arrival of **Lapwing** on the Humber occurred in the previous week and this was reflected in the sudden increase in the number of birds recorded during the survey. With the exception of three birds found on field 93 all of the Lapwing were roosting and feeding on the fields close to the estuary near Goxhill Skitter. There was considerable movement of birds during the course of the survey and over the high tide period as disturbance caused birds to move between different roosting fields and also onto field F just outside the survey area; this field has been used by roosting waders on past survey dates and is a well known winter roost and feeding area for Lapwing and Golden Plovers. As the high tide did not cover all of the inter-tidal Lapwing flocks moved between the upper mudflats and the fields over high water with a peak count of 800 birds occurring on the inter-tidal adjacent to field 130 at high tide before the flocks moved back to the pasture fields. It was notable that at high tide most of the Lapwing found in the permanent pasture fields 110 and 111 were actively feeding whereas the birds roosting in the winter cereal field 120 were split about 60% to 40% roosting and feeding. A single **Ruff** was feeding with the Lapwings in the

permanent pasture field 111 and there were 15 **Turnstone** amongst the roosting Lapwings in field 120.

Around the estuary there had also been a large arrival of **Golden Plovers** with 7000+ in the upper Humber but amazingly just one bird was found with the Lapwing flocks on the survey area and none were seen in any of the adjacent fields.

Curlew numbers were down on the previous week and birds were found in differing areas with a notable concentration in fields around Thornton Abbey and a winter cereal field just west of the survey area where there were 52 birds (H). In another cereal field in South End Goxhill (J) 43 birds were feeding (see map). Fewer birds were found in fields adjacent to the estuary but 31 were in the permanent pasture in 116 and small numbers in the other permanent pasture fields adjacent to the foreshore. Field 103 a permanent pasture field that is sometimes favoured by the species was disturbed by an angler with uncontrolled dogs in the area of Parker's Pit.

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** was again found in field 110 where there were 131 birds with another two in field 120.

Along the Skitter Beck there were 14 **Teal** by field 75 and another 12 by field 13.

Other observations:

One of the 2009 breeding male **Marsh Harriers** from Dawson City was in the area of the pits throughout the afternoon. A **Common Buzzard** was seen along the Skitter Beck by field 13. A pair of **Stonechats** were on the grues and two **Water Pipits** at East Halton Skitter where 4 Jack Snipe and 50 Common Snipe were on the saltmarsh. Two **Snow Buntings** were feeding on the estuary embankment just east of Goxhill Haven.

Week 16 November 14th – 21st 2009

Survey date November 16th

High tide 17:44 a spring at 6.8m

Sunrise 07:25 and sunset 16:00

Weather:

A procession of Atlantic fronts had brought substantial amounts of rainfall to the area in the intervening week often accompanied by quite fresh to strong west to southerly winds. Temperatures were on the mild side for the time of year ranging from 8C to 10C at midday to 4C to 6C at night. While there was no substantial flooding water levels rose in all of the major water bodies and the Skitter Beck was particularly full while standing water appeared in some of the fields left under autumn stubbles.

On the morning of the survey heavy rain fell from midnight to 10:00 am after which some light showers affected the region pushed eastwards by a strong westerly wind that reached force 6 to 7 in the early afternoon. The day ended with long spells of sunshine but the wind remained particularly strong and gusty and cloud cover varied from three to seven octas.

Waders and Wildfowl

At low water all of the 480 **Lapwing** were found on the inter-tidal but as the tide started to rise in the early afternoon most of the birds moved onto adjacent fields to roost. A total of 202 gathered on field 129, a ploughed field used by this species in recent weeks but the flock was disturbed by a man driving a vehicle to Parker's Pond where he subsequently proceeded to work on fishing platforms. This party of Lapwing then moved back to the inter-tidal off field 113 before splitting into two groups and moving to roost in field 112 and field 120. The remaining birds from the inter-tidal had already gathered on field 120 where an eventual total of 368 birds were counted towards high water at dusk. The flock on field 112 numbered 88 birds and a further 251 were roosting on a cereal field to the west of the survey area towards Goxhill tillery. In spite of the large numbers of Golden Plover present around the estuary during the period none were seen on the survey date within the survey area or in any of the adjacent fields in Goxhill or East Halton Marshes.

Only 11 **Curlew** were seen on the inter-tidal even at low water as all of the local birds appeared to be feeding in inland fields. A total of 45 birds was found in the fields around

South End Goxhill, fields H and J on the map, outside the survey area, with just a few birds being found in fields 60 (15) and 85, 86 and 93 (16) while most of the population were located in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary, 103, 111, 112 and 118.

The strong winds may well have affected the number of birds feeding on the inter-tidal which were very exposed as the number of most waders were well down on recent spring tide low water surveys.

A significant flock of **Pink-footed Geese** was again found in field 110 where 193 birds were counted; the flock moved into field 112 during the survey having been disturbed from field 110 but their reluctance to leave the area demonstrated a preference for feeding in the permanent pasture fields in the area and also the lack of persecution of this flock in this area.

Other observations:

The male and adult female Marsh Harriers from one of the 2009 nests in Dawson City were seen over Clondyke early afternoon.

The female Stonechat was on the grues but in the very windy conditions no other passerines were identified.

To the west of the survey area on the estuary embankment 200m west of Goxhill Haven a flock of 10 Snow Buntings and 7 Twite were feeding on the tide wrack.

Week 17 November 22nd – 27th 2009

Survey date November 23rd
High tide 09:59 a neap at 5.8m
Sunrise 07:38 and sunset 15:50

Weather:

The weather continued to be dominated by fast moving Atlantic frontal systems with some substantial amounts of rainfall again falling during the intervening week often accompanied by strong south-west to westerly winds. Temperatures however, remained above the seasonal average reaching 12C to 13 on some days.

The 23rd started out bright with a force five south-westerly wind but clearing skies producing a sunny morning before cloud increased from the west to produce a cloudy afternoon. Temperatures increased from 8C at dawn to 10C before falling again to 8C by darkness. Some light rain fell in a short spell in the early afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 264 **Curlew** was found in the surveyed fields with an additional 13 birds on the inter-tidal at high water. The bulk of the birds on the fields were gain feeding in permanent pasture adjacent to the estuary with fields 103, 110, 111, 113, 114, 118 and 123 holding 93% of the birds located. Only six birds were on field number 60, in the Thornton Abbey area and 3 in fields 3, 4 and 5 at East Halton Skitter. There was some movement of birds between the different fields in response to disturbance from farming activities and some interchange with birds on the inter-tidal particularly in the late afternoon when birds gathered there prior to roosting producing a count of 78 birds in total. All of the birds seen in the pastures were actively feeding whereas those on the inter-tidal were roosting or loafing.

Similarly almost all of the **Lapwing** observed were found in fields immediately adjacent to the estuary at high water with 360 of the total of 775 birds moving back to the estuary as the tide fell in the late afternoon period. As with Curlew there was some movement of flocks between different roost sites in response to disturbance particularly of field 129. This field and 103 lie next to Parker's Pond where fishing has started gain after a long absence. The tenant and another person have taking to driving to the pond along the embankment on a regular basis, often daily, with their activities in and around the pond leading to disturbance of the two fields in question. This is a most unfortunate development.

No **Golden Plover** were found in any of the fields during the day but a large flock estimated at 8-10,000 birds was seen in the air over Paul Holme Strays and a total of 550 birds arrived on the inter-tidal off Dawson City at 15:20 settling on the upper reaches of the mudflats with other waders.

Although there were very few waders remaining on the upper inter-tidal at high water birds arrived in the late afternoon and concentrated in the area off Dawson City; most notable were totals of 216 **Bar-tailed Godwits**, all of which were roosting, 230 **Dunlin** and the above mentioned Golden Plover and Lapwings. While the Lapwings originated from the adjacent fields the other waders appeared to come in from the north bank of the estuary.

Other observations:

Two Marsh Harriers were seen in the vicinity of Dawson City and the grues both of which were different birds to those seen in recent weeks; a 2cy male and a new female. On the grues there were one possibly two Short-eared Owls and three Barn Owls. A further two Barn Owls were hunting along the Skitter Beck between the Haven and field number 13 where one owl was roosting in an ivy covered tree. The pair of Stonechats were again present on the grues and a party of five Snow Buntings flew west up the estuary.

Week 18 November 28th – December 4th 2009

Survey date December 2nd

High tide 05:30 and 18:00 spring tides at 6.8m and 6.9m

Sunrise 07:52 and sunset 15:42

Weather:

Another week of westerly weather with substantial amounts of rainfall falling in the local area produced some standing water in a few fields while the level in the Skitter Beck was particularly high. Some of the winter flood pools in fields such as number 13 started to fill with water and there was extensive water on the grues particularly at the East Halton Skitter end.

Over-night rain had cleared by dawn on the 2nd but it remained dull with low cloud and a light south-south westerly wind throughout the day. Temperatures varied little from 6C at dawn to 8C at midday.

Waders and Wildfowl

Only 13 **Curllew** were found on fields 68 and 60 but an additional 27 were in fields H and J outside the survey area but in the same general area around Thornton Abbey. In fact there was a general dearth of Curllew in most of the regular fields during the day. The sand bar off East Halton Skitter had 34 birds feeding at low water and there were also 48 birds feeding on the inter-tidal off Skitter Ness / field 130 but the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary had few birds until late afternoon when flocks arrived from inland from the south-west down Horsegate field road, (see map) dropping into fields 110 and 112 where there were 125 birds by dark. It was not known where these flocks came from but they were flying at height when first seen to the west of the survey area and had presumably travelled quite a way. Another flock of 11 birds arrived from the south appearing to come from somewhere south of the old railway track and possibly from fields in the Thornton Abbey area. The overall total of 183 birds was still well down on the last two weeks and it is assumed that some birds were still feeding outside the survey area.

Golden Plover were not seen on any of the fields but 165 were roosting with Lapwings on the inter-tidal off Dawson City at low water and subsequently moved off south-east as the tide rose, towards Paul Holme Strays. Another flock of 80 Golden Plover flew towards PHS over field 126 from inland. At times during the afternoon there were huge flocks of Golden Plovers over Paul with a conservative estimate of 20,000 birds being made from the south bank.

The only **Lapwing** found on the fields were on 85 and 91; winter cereals and a recently ploughed field inland of the Skitter Beck. This total of 417 birds was considered to be different to the large number 2050 found on the inter-tidal off Goxhill Skitter Ness at low water. There was a lot of movement of flocks of Lapwing during the day and some of the movements were tied to the birds on field 85. Flocks of 29, 90, 210 and 95 were seen flying quite high NW or

WNW from the Humber over Langmire Wood and fields to the north during the late morning prior to the flock being found on field 85. These flocks appeared to originate from the large sand bar off East Halton Skitter where a total of 400 birds was present at low water. These birds were thus different to the large flock on the inter-tidal at Goxhill Skitter but there was some interchange between the flocks with up to 20 birds seen moving between the two areas in the afternoon. Other flocks from moved north-west from the Humber and passed further inland outside the survey area. as the tide rose the birds from the Goxhill Skitter Ness flock moved off west inland or along the Humber to the higher areas of the inter-tidal between Goxhill Tilery and New Holland moving onto adjacent fields, outside the survey area, later in the evening. Why these birds did not move to fields closer to the estuary in the survey area as they have in previous weeks is unknown but one of the Marsh Harriers was hunting around Clondyke and fields 119 and 120.

A flock of **Pink-footed Geese** was again feeding on the permanent pasture in field 112; the flock contained 288 birds and was accompanied by three **Barnacle Geese**.

Other observations:

Two Marsh Harriers were present in the area around Dawson City, the breeding male from one nest in 2009 and a juvenile, female; both birds appeared to be going to roost in the reedbed there.

Two Buzzards were around field number 13.

A Willow Tit was in the hedge by Dawson City and three Stonechats were on the grues. A Barn Owl was hunting the northern end of the grues throughout the afternoon and flew off carrying food to the north west so was presumably feeding young in the nest. Another bird at East Halton Skitter end was seen hunting the beck banks but was then in the new owl box at the western end of field 72.

A Little Egret was standing in arable fields south of East Halton school and flew off south.

A total of 25 Meadow Pipits and a Common Snipe were in field 13 where there were also 32 Mallard and 5 Teal on the adjacent beck.

A flock of 190 Stock Doves was feeding in field 108.

In an exceptional autumn – winter for records of this species a **Cetti's Warbler** was heard several times in Dawson City in the late afternoon forming the first record for this site and the adjacent pits.

Week 19 December 5th – 11th 2009

Survey date December 8th

High tide 10:40 a falling spring at 6.3m

Sunrise 08:01 and sunset 15:39

Weather:

The run of Atlantic depressions continued through the intervening week with a particularly virulent front passing the area on the morning of the 6th bringing torrential rain for a period of two hours and considerable rainfall amounts through the morning before clearing during the afternoon. Several days in the week also produced considerable rainfall accumulations typically with rain occurring overnight. The result of this persistent rainfall was an increase in the areas of surface flooding in the survey area in particular along the edges of the Skitter Beck where fields 13 and 136 regained their flood water pools; field 13 had up to 20 cms of water over 70% of the field area by the date of the survey. Other fields holding standing water were 28 and 36. Several other fields in the area were also much wetter than in recent weeks. Temperatures were generally close to the season average or slightly higher reaching peaks of 10C on the 6th but falling to 3C to 5C at night. Winds were mainly from the west or south. The 8th was a day of sunshine with cloud increasing from the west during the afternoon as another frontal system pushed into the area from the west. In the morning winds were light southerly with temperatures of 5C to 8C during the day.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 246 **Curlew** was found in the survey area with an additional 102 birds in adjacent fields mostly in South End Goxhill. In the South End - Thornton Abbey area only three birds were in the surveyed fields in the stubbles in field 60 but on the other side of the road there were 81 birds in fields E and J both under winter cereals. Both of these fields have been known as traditional feeding areas for Curlew for many years. A flock 19 birds was feeding in a small wet pasture field opposite field 101 (K on the map). This is one of several small pasture fields just outside the survey area used for cattle grazing and attracts feeding thrushes as well as Curlew and sometimes Snipe. Of the birds found in the survey area 231 of the 246 were feeding in the favoured permanent pasture fields in Goxhill Marsh; fields 103, 110-112, 114 and 118 are all traditional Curlew fields. All of the birds found were actively feeding rather than roosting. Away from these areas just one bird was on the winter cereals in field 85 and 6 were on the permanent pasture field number 3 alongside the Skitter Beck at East Halton.

Large numbers of **Golden Plover** are still present around the estuary but the totals being recorded from the survey area remain very limited. Some of the larger flocks seen around the estuary have included 20,000 over Paul Holme Strays, 20,000 at North Cotes, 6000 Donna Nook, 12,000 Alkborough Flats – Whitton and 5000 Pywipe.

A flock of 220 birds flew WNW over fields 103 – 108 during the survey and continued in the direction of New Holland. Otherwise the only record was of 314 birds roosting amongst the Lapwings in field 120 over the high tide period. Why this species is not occurring in the survey area when so many are on adjacent parts of the estuary and yet large numbers of Lapwing are present seems strange.

The most spectacular sight during the survey was the gathering of **Lapwings** in the fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh. Large flocks were found in the permanent pasture fields 111, 112 and 118 and in the winter cereal field number 120. There was considerable movement between the different fields over the high tide period and the maximum number recorded in each field has been recorded in the excel sheet. In such circumstances it is usually difficult to obtain an objective total of birds present but counts of the roost in field 120 followed within five minutes by a count of the pasture fields with no movement between the two areas revealed a total of 5500 birds were present. Exceptional numbers of Lapwing seem to be present around the Humber with for example a count of 12,000 in the Alkborough Flats – Whitton area on the 9th. The winter cereals in field 120 were sown quite late and are still only 5-10 cms in height making the field suitable for waders. The crops in some of the earlier sown fields are already becoming too long for wader usage. This is more apparent in fields of oilseed rape where rapid autumnal growth has produced 100% ground cover and a crop height of 10-30 cms making these fields totally unsuitable for roosting / feeding waders.

A total of 58 **Turnstones** was feeding amongst the roosting Lapwing in field 120; 15 Turnstones were found in the same field in week 15. This field also held three **Redshank** and four birds were feeding in pools on the side of the road at Goxhill Haven moving into field 123 at the approach of vehicles. A flock of 62 **Dunlin** was roosting in the permanent pasture field 111 with Lapwings and Curlew.

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** in the permanent pasture fields 110 – 112 were all feeding in field 112 during the entire survey period; the total of 285 birds present was very close to the 288 counted in the previous week and suggests that the same birds are using the fields in consecutive weeks.

There were only five Black-tailed Godwits on foreshore at low water but one was a colour-ringed bird RY RRflag last seen at the same locality on November 3rd 2009. It had not been located at Killingholme of Pywipe in spite of intensive searches for colour ringed birds over the intervening period and this suggests that it's wintering area is restricted to the area of the Humber away from these areas and probably that between Goxhill and North Killingholme Haven.

11.07.2009	Ringed one from brood of two Langhus. Fljot, W of Siglufjordur Iceland
12.08.09	Alkborough Flats
14.08.09	Alkborough Flats
18.10.09	Killingholme
3.11.09	Goxhill Skitter Ness
8.12.09	Goxhill Skitter Ness

Other observations:

A single **Buzzard** was present in the area around field 13 where there were also 22 **Meadow Pipits**; two **Common Snipe** were flushed from the rough vegetation in the flooded area of field 136 where there were also three **Song Thrushes**. A **Kingfisher** was present on Parkers Pond.

On the grues three **Stonechats** were still present and a single **Barn Owl** was hunting.

Week 20 December 12th – 18th 2009

Survey date December 14th

High tide 16:43 a falling spring at 6.4m

Sunrise 08:07 and sunset 15:37

Weather:

Further rainfall fell over the area between the week 19 and week 20 surveys with substantial amounts adding to the already saturated ground and producing areas of standing water in some fields while the surface layers of the soil became very wet. Temperatures were close to the seasonal average through to the 10th when a sharp overnight frost affected the local area. a ridge of high pressure turned winds into the north-east on the 13th but increasing cloud cover brought heavy rain showers during the afternoon and evening. Winds swung to west overnight but in general were light.

Light rain was falling at dawn on the 14th with a light force 2 -3 westerly wind but low cloud and temperatures of 5C made the day feel rather miserable. Although the rain eased for a short period in the late morning it increased again from 12:00 hrs becoming heavy and persistent during the afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 1550 **Lapwings** was found in the area during the survey split between the inter-tidal off field 113 and the permanent pasture fields 110, 111 and 112. The number of birds in each of the fields varied as they moved between the fields and commuted to the upper inter-tidal which remained available to the birds even at high water due to the tidal height. No other Lapwings were located around the survey area in spite of the apparent suitability of several of the fields that were wet. In addition to the birds noted above 1200 Lapwing were noted on the inter-tidal mudflats west of Goxhill Haven but none were seen on any of the inland fields in Goxhill Marsh. The number of birds recorded from sites in the upper estuary had also fallen from the record counts of the previous week and several flocks were noted moving down the Ancholme Valley from the Humber suggesting that feeding areas further inland were being exploited by birds from the estuary.

Similarly the number of **Curlew** found on the survey was well down on recent weeks and it seems likely that they had also moved inland to exploit feeding areas affected by the recent rainfall. The only birds found in the survey area were concentrated in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary with 115 in fields 110 – 118 in addition to which there were seven birds in the permanent pasture field number three at East Halton Skitter. In South End Goxhill 58 birds were feeding in winter cereal fields E and H. No Curlew were found in any other fields in Goxhill Marsh in spite of a search of the area and it seemed that the lost birds had moved well inland. Interestingly the count at Alkborough Flats on the 13th was the highest there this winter.

No **Golden Plover** were seen in the area throughout the day. Seven **Redshank** fed in the permanent pasture field 131. On the inter-tidal as well as the large Lapwing flock there were few birds but an increase to 56 Teal was notable. The three **Turnstones** on the foreshore were feeding on the carcass of a dead sheep!

A total of 1400 **Dunlin** was feeding on the inter-tidal west of Goxhill Haven.

Other observations:

A flock of 10 **Tree Sparrows** was feeding with Yellowhammers and Reed Bunting on the dragged stubbles in field 129 where 20 Fieldfares were also feeding on the hawthorn berries. A single **Marsh Harrier** was seen briefly in the vicinity of Dawson City but the light was so poor that it was not individually identifiable.

Week 21 December 19th – 25th 2009

Survey date December 22nd

High tide 09:00 a falling spring at 6.0m

Sunrise 08:13 and sunset 15:40

Weather:

From the 17th the weather took on a decidedly wintery feel with temperatures dropping to around freezing and light snow and hail falling. Further intermittent snow falls continued through to the 20th with an accumulation of 10 cms over the local area. As temperatures remained at or below zero through to the survey date there was no snow melt even in lengthy spells of sunshine so all the area was covered in a solid layer of snow. The only crops protruding above the snow cover were well-grown oilseed rape where leaves were visible above the snow cover. All of the ponds and lakes in the survey area were frozen over and most of the drainage ditches were also frozen. The Skitter Beck was ice-free as were some of the ditches that drain into the beck. The upper foreshore was also frozen over with ice on the upper mudflats and the saltmarsh. A hard hoar frost also coated most of the trees and bushes during the survey.

The 22nd dawned with some fog and low cloud and temperatures of -4C; the actual temperatures felt colder with a wind chill produced by the force four westerly wind. The day brightened somewhat from late morning as cloud thinned and the sun came through but this was short-lived with cloud increasing again from early afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl

Many of the waders encountered during the day were concentrated on the upper inter-tidal at high tide moving lower down the shore as the tide fell. With all of the fields snow covered and deep frozen there was no feeding to be had on inland fields and the only birds found on the fields were roosting.

A flock of 26 **Curlew** roosted on field 107 taking shelter from the oilseed rape crop. A further 72 birds were roosting on the upper inter-tidal adjacent to field 130 but apart from single birds in field 2 and field 129 there were no other birds in the survey area. A minimum of 75 Curlew was observed flying inland down Middle Marsh Road prior to high tide towards Goxhill village but it was not ascertained where they were heading; it is possible that other birds also moved in this direction but were not detected earlier in the day.

Most of the **Lapwing** located were roosting along the inter-tidal from East Halton Skitter right through to Goxhill Haven where birds were roosting on the stone embankment. Birds were attempting to feed on the upper inter-tidal but even this area was frozen. Birds fed along the tide edge as the water fell. In addition to the birds on the foreshore a flock of 52 roosted throughout in field 129 and another flock of 104 roosted in field 68 near Thornton Abbey. The latter flock had been observed earlier in the week feeding in the permanent pasture field to the south where sheep were grazing but during the survey the birds were not seen to move from the roost. Five birds moved from the foreshore at East Halton Skitter and roosted on field 76.

Golden Plover were found in two areas with 92 roosting with Lapwing in field 68 at Thornton Abbey where they remained throughout. The remainder of the birds recorded were found near Goxhill Haven with 220 roosting in the oilseed rape field 122 adjacent to the Humber and 12 roosting on the embankment at high tide. As the tide started to fall all the birds from this flock moved to the adjacent areas of the inter-tidal and spread round the corner to the area adjacent to field 130. An additional 70 birds arrived from the west and joined the birds on the inter-tidal; these may well have roosted on fields by Goxhill tiliary.

No other birds were found on the fields but in addition to the birds above the foreshore had 380 Dunlin, 27 Turnstone, 17 Redshank, a single Ringed Plover, two Black-tailed and 7 Bar-tailed Godwits and two Snipe. A few Snipe were also seen in the unfrozen ditches during the

survey and a single **Woodcock** got up from the edge of Dawson City. A female **Goosander** flew west up the estuary.

Other observations:

Two **Little Egrets** were in the ditch between fields 88 and 89 and a single bird possibly one of the same was seen between 82 and 83. Eight **Teal** were in the Skitter Beck by field 1 and a further 80 by field 113 with an additional 44 birds feeding in the mouth of the Haven at East Halton Skitter.

On the foreshore two **Twite**, two Rock Pipits and a single **Water Pipit** were foraging between Goxhill Haven and Dawson City where there were also 20+ Meadow Pipits many of which looked rather bedraggled. A flock of 180 Fieldfares were feeding along the hedgerows and in the stubbles in field 126. Field 108 had a large flock of small passerines with 60+ Skylarks, 30+ Reed Buntings and 20+ Meadow Pipits visible from the embankment. A flock of 120 **Skylarks** was feeding on the oilseed rape in field 122.

Single **Buzzards** were seen over field 60 and field 113. A single **Barn Owl** was hunting along the edge of the grues.

Week 22 December 26th – January 1st 2010

Survey date December 29th

High tide 15:37 a rising spring at 6.2m

Sunrise 08:15 and sunset 15:45

Weather:

The spell of freezing weather continued to affect the area through to the 26th when temperatures rose above 0C for the first time in four days. Night frosts though, continued and the snow was slow to thaw but had mostly disappeared by the 27th. The large water bodies in the survey area remained locked in ice as did some of the ditches but the Skitter Beck was ice-free and the water level dropped by the survey date revealing some muddy edges. The fields in the survey area were free of snow and ice and the surface layers of the soil appeared to have also thawed out but it was the permanent pasture fields that seemed to be softer at soil level than the arable fields.

The survey date was cloudy with total cloud cover throughout the day and an east-north-easterly wind increasing from force four at first light to force six by mid afternoon. Some early rain showers petered out but heavier cloud began to appear again by darkness as a frontal system arrived from the North Sea. Temperatures remained at a fairly constant 4C to 5C throughout the day but it felt much cooler in the afternoon in the freshening easterly wind that was blowing off the cold North Sea.

Waders and Wildfowl

In contrast to the previous week when the waders and wildfowl were highly concentrated around the estuary due to the total snow and ice cover on the inland fields in this week birds were very widely distributed around the area with the three main species, Curlew, Lapwing and Golden Plover occurring on a much higher number of fields than normal. It was also notable that birds were generally feeding in small numbers with individuals occupying larger areas of each field presumably as a response to a low density of potential prey species in the still partly frozen ground.

A total of 136 **Curlew** were found in the surveyed fields with an additional 34 in fields adjacent to the survey area. Of the latter 17 were in the winter cereal field H and 17 in the small permanent pasture field K. It was most notable that there were only 8 Curlew in the usually favoured fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh, in field 118, and none on the foreshore or Grues. In fact most of the birds that were found were all in fields that do not usually hold feeding Curlew. Notably 33 birds were in the very small permanent pasture field 133 at East Halton, a field that has held birds in past winters during hard weather. There were also 28 birds in the winter cereal fields 49 and 50, the same birds occurring in both fields; again these are fields that seldom hold feeding waders but seem to be utilized at times of prolonged frost possibly due to the structure of the soil in the fields making them more accessible to feeding birds? The count of 59 birds in the permanent pasture fields 2 and 3 at

East Halton Skitter reiterates the importance of these fields to the species during hard weather.

Lapwing were much more widespread than in previous weeks and there was a notable concentration in permanent pasture fields some of which have not held Lapwing at all during the present surveys. The total of 315 birds found during the survey was an increase on the previous week but was still only 20% of week 20 and suggests that the hard weather had led to an exodus of birds from the area or at least a movement to inland feeding areas. Like Curlew there were very few birds on the usually favoured fields adjacent to the estuary.

Of the 258 **Golden Plover** found on the survey area 186 were in fields around Thornton Abbey; initially 162 birds were feeding in the permanent pasture field X south of the survey area but these birds then moved into the winter cereal fields 49 and 59 where they fed with Lapwings. The remaining birds were all feeding in the small permanent pasture field number 131 at Goxhill Haven. This small cattle and sheep grazed field appears to be an important feeding area for waders in times of hard frosts.

A single **Ruff** was feeding with three **Redshank** and Lapwings and Golden Plovers in the small permanent pasture field 131 at Goxhill Haven.

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** was again feeding in field 112 where 248 birds were present along with two Greylags. The birds flushed and flew down the estuary but later in the afternoon c140 birds presumed to be from the same flock landed in a permanent pasture field along Middle Marsh Road. This small complex of permanent pasture fields could well be where the Curlew had been feeding during the hard weather as some of the fields are difficult to see from the roads.

Nine **Teal** were in the Skitter Beck by field number 1 and a further 27 birds in the Beck by field 18.

As the upper inter-tidal was very wind blown there were very few birds feeding on the survey section even at low water but a flock of c90 Dunlin and 3 Black-tailed Godwits flew down the estuary at high tide towards East Halton Skitter. A total of 105 Mallard was present on the foreshore and some of these birds were commuting to adjacent fields notably field 110 and also feeding on the grues. Five Shoveler were also feeding on the grues and 14 Teal.

Other observations:

A single first-winter **Common Buzzard** was in the area around field number 113; this is assumed to be one of the two juveniles that have been recorded in this general area since August. Two **Marsh Harriers** were hunting in the fields around Dawson City, the adult male that bred in 2009 and an adult female.

The **Water Pipit** was still along the shore between Goxhill Haven and Dawson City and a female **Stonechat** was feeding on the grues. Flocks of 18 **Stock Doves** were feeding in fields 49 and 111.

Week 23 January 2nd – 8th 2010

Survey date January 5th
High tide 09:15 a high spring 6.8m

Weather:

The hard winter weather continued to affect the area intensifying through the week with severe over-night frosts and some extensive periods of snowfall. Daytime temperatures seldom rose above freezing but did reach 3C on odd days. The whole area was covered in a 2cms – 10cms snow blanket by the survey date and all of the standing water bodies were frozen solid, only the Skitter Beck remained ice-free. All of the arable fields walked were also frozen to a considerable depth whereas the permanent pasture fields were a little softer in places but most of these were also frozen.

With temperatures falling below zero for the 16th consecutive day this was the hardest spell of weather to hit the local area for 15 years.

A light north-westerly wind blew throughout the survey date with continuous light snow falling from 08:30 through to darkness. Although the fall was light an accumulation of 5cms occurred during the day. Temperatures varied from 0C at first light to 1C around midday falling again to -5C overnight.

Waders and Wildfowl:

There was another decline in the total number of **Curlew** found during this week's survey with a maximum of 82 birds being found. Most of these, 58 were roosting on field 107 from where they moved into fields 105 and 106 where they fed in the permanent pastures. Otherwise there were just four birds in the permanent pasture fields 3 and 4 at East Halton Skitter and 13 in 130 and 5 on 119 with two in field 126. Note that almost all the birds found were feeding in permanent pasture fields while the roost was in the oilseed rape field 107. Only two birds were seen on the grues but there were a further six birds on the edge of the embankment as all of the mud was covered by the high spring tide. Six birds were seen flying inland but a search of fields in Goxhill Marsh failed to locate where they had moved to and it is assumed that they travelled further inland.

Flocks of 22, 31 and 8 **Dunlin** were roosting on the Humber embankment between Goxhill Haven and Skitter Ness. An additional flock of 102 birds was roosting on the grues with Lapwings adjacent to field 113. The whole flock later moved into field 113 where they again roosted amongst the flock of Lapwings.

The number of **Lapwings**, 349 was very similar to the previous week and suggests that this small number of birds is attempting to see through the freeze without migrating. With no possibility of feeding on arable fields during the day all of the birds located were roosting with the exception of the 12 birds that were attempting to feed on the upper inter-tidal at high water. Of the total 144 birds were on the favoured fields near Thornton Abbey with an additional 12 birds being seen on field H and a further 42 birds were roosting on a field south of East Halton School. A total of 98 birds were roosting on the grues between Dawson City and field 107 and 52 of these birds moved onto field 107 during the survey. Taking the additional birds into account produces a total of 395 Lapwing in the area in total.

The 34 **Golden Plover** recorded were mainly roosting in fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh with 11 birds roosting with Lapwing on field 68 at Thornton Abbey. All of the birds near the estuary started to fly to the shore as the tide dropped suggesting that this is the area where they are being forced to feed.

A flock of 34 **Bar-tailed Godwits** roosted with Curlew and Lapwing in field 107 over high water. This is presumably the flock, of varying size that has been feeding on the inter-tidal off Dawson City. Just three **Redshank** roosted on field 107 with the other waders but 23 birds were roosting on the Humber embankment between Goxhill Haven and Dawson City. Redshank seems to be the species that remains on the inter-tidal areas during high water in preference to using field roosts if at all possible.

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** were grazing in field 111 where a total of just 66 birds was found.

In addition to the other waders noted above seven **Turnstone** were feeding on the Humber embankment and a flock of 28 **Wigeon** was grazing on the small area of saltmarsh above the high water mark adjacent tot Dawson City.

Other observations:

A single juvenile **Marsh Harrier** was seen in the vicinity of Dawson City and later towards East Halton Skitter on the grues.

A **Little Egret** was attempting to feed in the Skitter Beck and the adjacent little beck between fields numbered 3 and 13 and a **Barn Owl** was present in the same area with an additional bird hunting the grues. Three **Stonechats** were still on the grues, a pair and a single female. In field 108 there were at least 80 Skylarks and 40 Reed Buntings.

Only 12 **Teal** were found on the Skitter Beck by the old railway bridge.

Week 24 January 9th – 15th 2010

Survey date January 11th

High tide 15:30 a median tide at 5.9m

Weather:

From the 5th to the 9th some of the hardest weather of the winter hit the local area with sub-zero temperatures throughout and some extensive snow falls during the week leading to accumulations of up to 10cms on open ground with an increasing easterly wind on the 8th leading to drifting. The persistent overnight frosts had locked all of the standing water bodies in ice to a thickness of 4cms but the Skitter Beck and some of the adjacent ditches remained ice-free. All of the fields were hard frozen with the exception of areas exposed to the sun where snow had melted. Winds were from the north to north-east and fresh to strong on some days. On the 10th a sudden change occurred with the wind swinging to north-east and then east-north-east and cloud increasing to bring some long spells of light rain to the area. With the thick cloud blanket temperatures rose to 3C and a thaw set in with standing areas of snow visibly disappearing on the 10th. Heavier rain overnight accelerated the thaw and by dawn on the 11th, the survey date, there was little snow remaining on most of the survey area. Surprisingly the surface soil in the fields and on the Humber embankments softened rapidly and allowed birds to feed. All of the ponds though remained locked in ice with water forming on top of the thick layer of ice.

The 11th was a day permeated by thick low cloud and showers of mainly light rain blow in by a light east-north-east wind. Temperatures started out at 2C and only increased to 3C by midday but the thaw continued throughout the day.

Waders and Wildfowl:

A total of 438 **Pink-footed Geese** was found in fields 110 and 111 where there has been a consistent presence of this species for several weeks. The birds were all grazing in the permanent pastures and remained in the fields throughout the day returning to the favoured areas even after being flushed by dog walkers. At present there only appear to be about 1000 Pink-feet on the upper estuary so the addition of this flock makes a significant difference to the Humber total.

Only 64 **Curlew** were located during the survey apparently confirming that a large proportion of the local flock has left the area during the severe weather. Interestingly 32 of the birds located were feeding in the rough grass field number 78; this field had never held any feeding or roosting waders up until this particular survey; in addition six birds were in the nearby permanent pasture field number 3. Of the other birds 14 were in field 118 and 4 in field 114 with 4 in field 110 all regularly used permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary. Outside of the survey area 18 birds were feeding in the sheep grazed permanent pasture to the south of the survey area at Thornton Abbey in field X on the map. A small permanent pasture field grazed by horses on New Holland village at TA084236 also held 26 birds later in the afternoon.

Lapwing numbers fell to just 14 in the survey area clearly showing the effect of the severe weather having precipitated hard weather movements away from the estuary. Outside the survey area there were 15 birds in the pasture field south of the survey site at Thornton Abbey. Just one **Golden Plover** was seen in flight over field 120; a single **Redshank** was feeding with Curlew in field 114.

As this was a median tide even at high water there was mud on the upper inter-tidal available for roosting waders but the only birds present were 16 Knot, 103 Dunlin, two Turnstone and a single Redshank. The number of wildfowl had increased with 56 Teal and 74 Mallard present but Wigeon were down to 10 birds; four Gadwall had been forced off the freshwater by the freeze but surprisingly there were not more dabbling ducks present.

A check of New Holland later in the day located 16 Black-tailed Godwits including the colour ringed juvenile RY RRflag that had been seen on several occasions at Goxhill Haven in the survey area.

Other observations:

A ringtail **Hen Harrier** flew west over fields 2, 75 and 77 heading north-west; this was the first record of this species since September and is presumably a new bird in the area. A **Common Buzzard** flew south over East Halton Skitter but none were seen along the Beck. A **Long-eared Owl** was surprisingly flushed from the grass on the edge of Dawson City and flew into the hawthorn hedge; this is the first sighting of this species since August but the habitat is

correct for the species and this observation may suggest that at least one bird is resident in the area. A **Water Rail** was also heard in Dawson City.

A flock of 100 **Skylarks** was feeding in the oilseed rape field 122 and there were at least 40 in field 108.

Week 25 January 16th – 22nd 2010

Survey date January 20th

High tide 09:00 a falling spring tide at 6.3m

Weather:

Temperatures remained above freezing reaching 5C during the intervening week with low cloud and mist often affecting the area as frontal systems stagnated over the North Sea giving rise to light to moderate north-east to south-easterly winds. Rainfall amounts were small but melted snow added to the amounts and left some increasing areas of flood water in some of the fields particularly those prone to flooding such as field 13. All of the ice and snow had disappeared from the fields but there was still some vestigial ice in some of the larger ponds.

The 20th dawned dull, damp and cool with low cloud being drifted across the region on a freshening south-easterly wind that continued throughout the day. Light showers and drizzle continued to affect the area and overall it remained very dull with the low cloud persisting through the day; temperatures rose to 4C at a maximum.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** feeding in field 111 had increased to 581 birds a particularly significant total for January around the Humber when numbers typically start to decline from mid January onwards as birds move back to the west coast anticipation of the first staging flights in the migration back to Iceland.

The number of **Curlew** located in the survey area rose slightly from the previous week to 84 birds with an additional 36 birds being found in the winter cereal fields in South End Goxhill, fields E and J. Of the 84 birds in the survey area 14 were in field 49 and 4 in field 59, in the Thornton Abbey area but the majority were feeding in permanent pasture field sin Goxhill Marsh adjacent to the Humber. A flock of 13 birds in field 78 continued the presence of feeding birds in this formerly unused rough grass field by the Skitter Beck. Birds were noted moving between the South End fields and field 49 and field 49 and field 13 where three birds were seen of the first time in this survey.

Only 36 **Lapwing** were roosting on the fields in the area with 35 of these on the arable fields adjacent to the Humber, fields 113, 125 and 129 with the final bird on field 75. There were though considerably more birds roosting at high water on the upper inter-tidal adjacent to field 130 where 312 birds were counted. The combined counts of field roosting and shore roosting birds produces a total similar to the counts obtained in weeks 22 and 23 December 26th – January 8th suggesting that this number of birds remained in the local area during the hard weather.

A party of four **Mute Swans** was feeding on field 13.

A single **Woodcock** was flushed from the ditch at the eastern end of field 78.

As the high tide left the upper inter-tidal uncovered there were a number of waders feeding on the upper mudflats in addition to the roosting Lapwing flock with 268 Dunlin, 7 Redshank, 4 Bar-tailed Godwit and 4 Turnstone. The number of Mallard had increased to 108 but these birds are part of the larger local population that feeds mainly east of New Holland Pier and commutes between there and Goxhill Skitter Ness where a proportion of the birds roost.

Other observations:

A 3cy **Marsh Harrier** was in the fields around Dawson City during the morning and two different **Barn Owls** were hunting the grues with an additional two birds being seen further inland in Goxhill Marsh soon after first light. A **Merlin** was eating prey on field 85. A pair of **Stonechats** remained on the grues at East Halton Skitter and two flocks of **Stock Doves** were seen with 34 in field 108 and 16 in field 61.

Week 26 January 23rd – 29th 2010

Survey date January 24th

High tide 11:32 a neap tide at 5.6m

Weather:

The intervening week was dull and dank with some periods of light rainfall. Low cloud and light winds meant that temperatures remained above freezing throughout but daytime peaks were only in the region of 6C with overnight lows falling to 2-3C. The continued snow and ice melt combined with rainfall meant that there were extensive areas of standing water in many of the fields through the survey area by the survey date with the permanent pasture fields being most obviously affected. The East Halton Skitter Beck was very high with the water a murky brown due to excessive run-off from the arable fields.

The 24th started off quite bright with a higher cloud base but the weather changed quite quickly with low and thick cloud arriving from the west by 09:00 hrs. Some light drizzle dissipated by mid morning and temperatures rose from 4C at dawn to 6C by midday. By 13:00 hrs cloud thickened and light rain turned heavier during the afternoon. Winds were very light from the west-north-west.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** was still present and again feeding in field 111 where they were accompanied by a single **Barnacle** and a single **Greylag** Goose. A total of 562 Pink-feet were present a very similar total to the previous week.

There was a huge jump in the number of **Curlew** found in the survey from the previous weeks with an overall total of 361 birds being counted. The birds were also highly concentrated with all but one bird being found in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh. There was considerable movement of birds between fields 103, 106, 110, 111, 112, 114, 118 and 120 but consecutive counts undertaken on two separate occasions produced a total of 360 birds within these fields. The totals in the excel table reflect the highest number of birds seen in each single field during the survey and these combined obviously add up to a higher total than the number of birds found in the coordinated counts. The only bird found away from these fields was a single in field 78. No birds were found in any of the favoured fields in the Thornton Abbey area.

No **Lapwings** were found on any of the fields but 410 birds were roosting on the inter-tidal off the grues adjacent to field 130 in the area usually adopted by this and other wader species. No Golden Plover were seen at all during the day.

Duck numbers on the inter-tidal off the grues were impressive with 156 Mallard forming the bulk of the flock but also of note were three Goosanders and 12 Wigeon. Waders were thinly distributed with the exception of the Lapwing above and there were only 6 Redshank and 63 Dunlin plus 7 Bar-tailed Godwit, 9 Knot and 2 Turnstones.

A flock of 14 **Whooper Swans** arrived from the west having been reported over Barton earlier in the morning and flew down the grues before landing in the middle of the estuary.

Other observations:

The usual 3cy **Marsh Harrier** was in the fields around Dawson City during the morning; a **Common Buzzard** was in the same area and was also seen on the grues and hunting field 108. A second Common Buzzard was perched on the hedge by field 59 at Thornton Abbey. A **Barn Owl** that had caught prey on the grues was attacked by a Kestrel that flew at the owl from at least 800m away, with the Kestrel taking the owl's prey and flying off only to be chased by a second Kestrel. This type of food piracy is well documented and usually involves Kestrels robbing Barn and Short-eared Owls. A single **Short-eared Owl** was seen perched on the grues in the early morning. A male **Stonechat** was on the grues.

Week 27 January 30th – February 5th 2010

Survey date January 30th
High tide 18:15 a high spring tide at 7.2m

Weather:

The dull and dismal weather of the previous week continued through to the 27th after which a change occurred with a freshening north-westerly wind bringing a return to colder weather and sleet and snow showers falling on the 29th. Temperatures having been close to the average for late January fell rapidly overnight with a hard frost occurring and a covering of snow falling; some of the smaller water bodies were again frozen over by the 30th but all of the larger ponds remained ice-free.

Clear skies and a temperature of -2C greeted the survey date with a moderate north-westerly wind blowing; during the morning cloud cover varied from 3/8 to 6/8 but this cleared by midday and the remainder of the day was cold and bright. Temperatures rose to 3C by early afternoon but fell again towards darkness as another frost developed.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The **Pink-footed Geese** had been feeding in field 111 during the morning with c500 birds present but before an accurate count could be undertaken they were flushed by shooting on field 108 and moved off across the estuary landing to the east of Paul Holme Strays where they were still present in the afternoon.

Curlew were only found in three closely connected permanent pasture fields in Goxhill Marsh; 88 were feeding in field 111 with 54 in the adjacent field 112 while a further 93 birds were in the small field 102 another field not previously used by this species although the adjacent field 103 is a regular Curlew feeding area. the total of 235 birds was down on the previous week and no birds were found in peripheral areas.

Lapwings were found in two areas; a total of 33 birds was feeding in field 69, a field with long cereal stubbles where the species has not been recorded previously during the winter; in Goxhill Marsh 78 birds were feeding on field 110 and a further 163 on field 111; some of these birds were flushed by shooting and 66 moved to field 129 where they roosted at high water. A single **Ruff** accompanied the Lapwing in field 110. No Golden Plover were seen again during the day.

Four **Mute Swans** were grazing in field 13 and seven **Teal** were on the Skitter Beck by field number 3.

On the inter-tidal prior to high tide there were 11 **Black-tailed Godwits** including the colour ringed bird RYRRflag, the juvenile bird that has been present in the same area on and off throughout the winter. Towards high water it flew off with a party of six birds towards New Holland where it has been found roosting on previous dates. An impressive count of 1060 **Dunlin** was also notable with the birds feeding on the area adjacent to the grues by field 130 where there were also 9 Bar-tailed Godwits and three Redshank. Duck numbers were well down on the previous week with just 46 Mallard, 2 Gadwall and 3 Wigeon present.

Other observations:

The usual pair of **Marsh Harrier** roosted at Dawson City in the evening. On the grues two different **Barn Owls** and a single **Short-eared Owl** were hunting in the late afternoon and a **Merlin** was seen briefly moving towards East Halton Skitter. Two **Little Egrets** were roosting on the edge of the ditch between fields 82 and 84. A flock of 33 **Fieldfares** was in field 118.

Week 28 February 6th – February 12th 2010

Survey date February 6th
High tide 11:10 a neap tide at 6.0m

Weather:

Although temperatures overall remained below the seasonal average the week was warmer than most of the winter but a severe overnight frost from 2nd – 3rd was one of the hardest of the winter with temperatures down to -4C and some light snow falling in the evening before temperatures rose again overnight thawing the snow cover. Rain fell for most of the 5th only

clearing in the late afternoon as temperatures rose to 6C during the day with light southerly winds and low cloud.

The survey date dawned with fog, mist and drizzle slowly lifting and clearing during the mid morning as a light north-easterly wind picked up slightly. It remained dull and cloudy throughout the day with low cloud and temperatures of 5C.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The **Pink-footed Geese** flock was split into two with 340 birds feeding on the newly seeded grass field 104 and the remaining 138 being noted flying over the estuary before landing in field 112 where they remained over high water.

The total of 231 **Curlew** located in the survey area were again all in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary between field 103 and field 118. There was movement between the different fields as the birds were disturbed by predators and walkers / farm workers but the total recorded was an absolute count obtained by subsequent surveys of the different fields. The only other birds found were five in field E in South End Goxhill. The total of 231 birds was very similar to the 235 located in the previous week.

The bulk of the **Lapwings** roosted on the upper inter-tidal over high water in the section between Goxhill Skitter Ness and Parker's Plantation adjacent to field 130. Here there were 630 birds at high water. In addition 134 birds moved to feed in field 111 while an additional 85 birds moved to field 129 where they landed briefly before returning to the inter-tidal. Two birds remained in field 129 throughout but none were seen in fields away from the estuary although flocks of birds were seen arriving on the inter-tidal for fields further inland than the survey area. The total of 766 birds recorded was though the highest number noted in the survey series since December 12th – 18th.

Three **Golden Plover** were seen in flight over the grues at high water heading for the inter-tidal but they were not seen subsequently.

Two **Mute Swans** were grazing in field 13 and the pair were back on territory in Dawson City. Only 8 **Teal** were found in the Skitter Beck by field 13.

In addition to the large flock of Lapwings on the inter-tidal there were 56 Dunlin, 19 Turnstone and 15 Redshank. There were also a good number of wildfowl with 36 Teal and 28 Wigeon plus 94 Mallard and two Shoveler. Several of the Teal, a maximum of 29 birds, were feeding on the flooded areas of the grues at the Goxhill Skitter End where there were also two Shoveler and 16 Mallard.

Other observations:

The usual pair of **Marsh Harriers** were seen in Dawson City during the morning and a **Common Buzzard** seen over field 101 was later seen over fields 111 and 112 heading for Parker's Plantation. A single **Barn Owl** was hunting in fields 112 and 110. A male **Stonechat** remained on the grues. A flock of 90 **Stock Doves** seen on field 108 moved to field 110 where they fed with Curlew before moving back to field 108.

Week 29 February 13th – 19th 2010

Survey date February 16th

High tide 07:35 a low spring tide at 6.6m

Weather:

Temperatures remained below the seasonal norm during the intervening week with some bright days but also periods of rain and cool winds. The 15th was cold with a fresh south-westerly wind and light rain turning into persistent rain in the late afternoon with a considerable accumulation occurring by dawn.

The survey date was mainly bright in the morning with variable cloud and a light west-south-west wind varying from force three to four and temperatures ranging from 2C at first light to 5C in the early afternoon. Cloud increased during the early afternoon bringing localised showers of hail and sleet before clearer weather led to a ground frost developing soon after dark.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The **Pink-footed Geese** flock declined to 272 birds probably as a result of the first movements of birds back to the north-west of the UK in preparation for departures to Iceland. All off the birds were feeding in the permanent pasture field 110.

Curlew were again highly concentrated in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh with a total of 349 birds being located between fields 118 / 119 and field 128 to the south-east. Only two birds were present on the upper inter-tidal at high water and all of those located in the fields were actively feeding. No birds were again found in any of the fields around Thornton Abbey or in South End Goxhill. The total of 349 birds formed the highest count of the series thus far exceeding the two previous highest counts in late October and early November. The count was calculated from successive observations of the adjacent fields but note that the figures in the excel sheet refer to the maximum number of birds observed in each individual field during the survey as there was considerable movement between the different fields during the course of the day.

Most of the **Lapwings** located were again on the upper inter-tidal where 93 birds were present with the only field roost holding 49 birds in the ploughed field 129 that has been used on several previous high tide series. No Lapwing were found anywhere else in the survey area and the general fall in numbers accords with the typical departure date of continental wintering birds that usually leave the estuary from mid February and have all but departed by the first week in March in most years.

A single **Ruff** was feeding in the permanent pasture field 114 with a small group of Curlew.

Two **Mute Swans** were grazing in field 13 and two **Little Egrets** were seen along the Skitter Beck from field 78 to field number 1. Only two **Teal** were found in the Skitter Beck by field 3.

Totals of 18 **Bar-tailed** and 11 **Black-tailed Godwits** roosted on the inter-tidal over high tide and the Black-tailed Godwits again included the colour-ringed bird RY R Rflag that has been present in the area since November 2009. Other waders included 93 Lapwing, two Curlew, 7 **Redshanks**, 330 **Dunlin** and 18 **Turnstone**; all of these birds were on the narrow strip of inter-tidal mud adjacent to the grues by field 130. Totals of 14 **Teal**, 19 **Wigeon**, 4 **Shoveler**, 4 **Shelduck** and 116 **Mallard** were also resting on the upper inter or just offshore in the same area as the waders.

Other observations:

The same pair of **Marsh Harriers** were seen in Dawson City and single **Barn Owl** was hunting the ditch between fields 120 / 122 with an additional bird on the grues. A male **Stonechat** also remained on the grues and as in the previous week a flock of 90 **Stock Doves** seen on field 108 moved to field 110 where they fed with Curlew and Pink-footed Geese.

Week 30 February 20th – 26th 2010

Survey date February 22nd

High tide 11:05 a neap at 5.7m

Weather:

Another cold week saw some sharp overnight frosts particularly during 20th – 21st when temperatures dropped to -4C locally. Although mainly dry it was often cloudy and with generally light winds. A frontal system approaching from the south-west came up against the cold block of Arctic air covering the north of the British Isles and 5 cms of snow fell during the morning of the 21st before the front moved into the North Sea allowing temperatures to rise the snow to melt before nightfall.

Another sharp frost occurred during 21st – 22nd leaving ice around the area at dawn on the 22nd with a temperature of 0C and a fairly light east-north east wind. This wind increased through the morning to force five to six with complete cloud cover allowing temperatures to rise to 3C although the wind chill factor made the day feel particularly cold.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The **Pink-footed Geese** flock had increased slightly to 344 birds and they were feeding in the permanent pasture fields 110 and 112 but during the survey period in the late morning they were frequently disturbed by the farm workers and moved back and forth between these fields and field 128 where they roosted briefly. After several disturbance events the flock broke up and most of them moved off north-west across the Humber.

Curlew numbers fell slightly from the previous week but an additional 47 birds were located on the same day in the ABLE UK field to the west of the survey area and adding these birds to the survey total produces an overall count very similar to the previous week's record total. The vast majority of the Curlew were again feeding in a restricted area of permanent pasture fields in Goxhill Marsh from field 118 to field 103 with a few additional bird in field 126 and two inland in field 78 a rough grass field used by the species in mid-winter. The combined total from the survey was 303 but there were movements of birds between the different fields in the same area, between fields 126 and 118, and the total is the result of consecutive counts. All of the birds located were actively feeding with none noted as roosting.

With the exception of three **Lapwings** feeding on the winter cereal field 30 all of the birds found were initially feeding on the permanent pasture in field 111 where there were 446 birds at high tide. As the flock was disturbed later in the morning 27 birds moved to field 129 where they remained briefly before rerunning to field 111.

A total of 111 **Golden Plover** were feeding with the Lapwing flock on field number 111 and a further 17 birds were feeding in field 38 the first time that this field has hosted this species during the survey series.

Two **Mute Swans** were grazing in field 13 and the presumed breeding pair had returned to the Skitter Beck by field number 3 where there were also four Teal.

Although it was a neap tide the moderate onshore wind was creating a significant wash across much of the upper inter-tidal and this presumably affected the number of birds that remained there at high tide. Roosting wildfowl formed the bulk of the birds present with 44 **Wigeon** forming the highest count of this species to date while 14 Teal and 82 Mallard were typical counts; the only significant wader total was that of **Dunlin** with 134 birds feeding while four Black-tailed Godwits were roosting, 9 Turnstone and 4 Redshank were roosting on the stone embankment west of Skitter Ness.

Other observations:

For the first time for several weeks no Marsh Harriers were seen during the survey and the only Barn Owl was hunting around the edge of field 113. The flock of **Stock Doves** in field 108 had increased significantly to 155 birds a notable concentration for this declining species. A flock of 76 Fieldfares was feeding in field X and occasionally in field 61.

Week 31 February 27th – March 5th 2010

Survey date March 1st

High tide 18:40 a high spring at 7.5m

Weather:

It was again a generally cold week but the most significant events occurred at the weekend as a particularly deep Atlantic depression tracked north-east across Iberia and France into the low countries; Britain lay on the northern fringe of the depression but on the 27th it produced a day of almost continuous rain turning to sleet and snow in the evening. The amount of precipitation falling on already sodden surfaces produced localized flooding in the survey area. The Skitter Beck was at its highest level for many months but the level fell quickly prior to the survey date. Some of the fields on the beck side remained flooded at the time of the survey particularly fields 13, 136 and 36 and 13 and 136 attracted large numbers of feeding ducks. There was also extensive standing water in the permanent pasture fields 114, 112 and 103 with small flood-water pools in several other fields.

The willow plantation between field 82 and the Skitter Beck had been harvested and the plantation between field 87 and the beck was being harvested during the survey date.

March 1st dawned with a light westerly wind and a ground frost at -1C with a clear sky but the wind increased to force 3 – 4 by midday from the west before dropping away again to leave a

calm evening. Cloud cover varied from midday onwards with a general increase occurring to darkness. Temperatures rose to a dizzy 7C in the early afternoon but fell away again towards dark.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The **Pink-footed Geese** flock was again located in field 112 where they grazed throughout the survey only being flushed on one occasion by a passing aircraft. There were 210 birds with a single Barnacle Goose in the flock.

Curlew were again highly concentrated in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary. Initially 214 birds were roosting on the upper edge of the inter-tidal but as the tide rose all of the birds moved to the permanent pasture fields with birds being split between two major feeding areas. As in previous weeks successive counts of the different fields produced an absolute total for the flock but also peak counts of the different individual fields between which the birds commuted. The overall total of **491** birds obtained from successive counts of the different fields is by far the highest total of this species recorded from this area during the present winter but also in records dating back to the late 1970's when the highest count was 330 in 1982 -1983. The birds present on the inter-tidal prior to high tide were all roosting while all of the birds seen on the permanent pasture fields were actively feeding and this continued through to 18:00 hrs when 35 were noted roosting in field 114 at a time when birds in the other fields were still feeding.

Three **Lapwings** were feeding amongst the Teal and Mallard on the flood-water pools in field 136 but the only other birds seen were on the estuary by field 130 where there were 54 birds prior to high tide. As the tide rose 15 birds moved to roost with Curlew in field 114 but the remainder moved of high north-west and could be seen flying around over the estuary towards Goxhill tilery. In addition to these birds a minimum of 130 Lapwing came up the estuary at high tide in several small groups and all moved west towards New Holland.

Two **Mute Swans** were grazing in field 13 and an additional two birds were in field 136.

The extensive flooding in fields 13 and 136 had attracted exceptional numbers of both Teal and Mallard for this part of the survey area and oddly a drake **Goldeneye** was also present on flood-water adjacent to the beck in field 136. The totals of **Mallard** in fields 13 and 136 were 24 and 54 while there were 152 **Teal** in field 136.

Good numbers of wildfowl were loafing on the upper inter-tidal off field 130 prior to high water before moving out onto the Humber as the tide rose. There were 104 **Mallard** and 30 **Wigeon** plus 16 **Shelduck** and six **Pintail**, three pairs. At 15:00 hrs there were 35 Bar-tailed and 7 Black-tailed Godwits feeding off Skitter Ness. As the tide rose these birds moved down the estuary and gathered with Lapwings and Dunlin off the southern end of field 130 on the inter-tidal. Only 120 Dunlin were present at this stage. In the 90 minutes prior to high water a total of 240 **Bar-tailed Godwits** arrived from the north bank, from the direction of Paul Holme Strays, along with 1200 **Dunlin** and 32 **Knot**. There was considerable movement of all these birds and the flock of Lapwing as the tide flushed them off the remaining areas of inter-tidal with some of the Bar-tailed Godwits returning to the north bank while 58 Lapwing moved off north-west high inland with 11 Knot and 30 Dunlin passing over all of the adjacent fields and being lost to view. The last Curlew moved from the inter-tidal to fields 103 and 112; as these Curlew moved into field 112 they were accompanied by two parties of Bar-tailed Godwits, total 42, the latter birds landing amongst the flock of Pink-footed Geese where they roosted. The remaining Knot and 57 Dunlin flew off high to the south over field 110. Thereafter the bulk of the **Dunlin** split into two flocks of 500 and 600 and these birds flew up and down the centre of the estuary ranging between Goxhill Haven and field 130; this behaviour continued for 90 minutes with the birds often flying slowly low over roosting gulls off Skitter Ness. The water surface at this time was particularly flat due to the lack of wind but was being disturbed by the strength of the running tide. Why these small waders did not roost on the fields or even on the grues is most odd as there was no disturbance of these areas and with extensive flood-water pools present many of the fields looked very suitable.

Other observations:

The pair of **Marsh Harriers** were in the area around Dawson City and both roosted there in the evening. **Barn Owls** were hunting along the Skitter Beck by field number 75, on the grues at East Halton Skitter, perched in the hedge by field 96 and down the edge of field 113. Two **Jays** were along the beck side by field 78 where there was also a flock of 38 **Fieldfares**.

Week 32 March 6th – 12th 2010

Survey date March 8th
High tide 11:25 a neap at 5.6m

Weather:

Winds from the north and east dominated the intervening week and this meant that temperatures were again below the season average as the winds originated over the cold North Sea. Rainfall amounts were very small and with some long spells of sunshine and the drying wind the flood water pools present in the previous week had largely disappeared by the survey on the 8th with the exception of those in fields 13 and 136 but all of these pools were frozen during the whole of the survey date. The night of the 6th – 7th saw temperatures fall to -5C in the local area and frost persisted in sites not open to the sun throughout the day. Another hard overnight frost with temperatures down to -3C left the start of the 8th as cold but bright as there was no cloud cover and the sun rose at 06:30 hrs. The wind was force three from the north-north-east but it dropped and was almost calm by midday after which the wind picked up again to force three by mid afternoon. Temperatures rose to 7C by late morning but the wind chill reduced the ambient effect of this spring like weather. Cloud cover increased slowly from mid morning as high cloud pushed west from the North Sea but the day remained bright and clear throughout.

As noted in the previous week the willow plantation between field 82 and the Skitter Beck had been harvested and the plantation between field 87 and the beck was still being harvested but the area was mostly cleared by the end of the survey date.

Waders and Wildfowl:

There was no sign of the Pink-footed Goose flock during the survey but a party of 16 **Barnacle Geese** flew west past Goxhill Haven. With a large semi-resident population of Barnacle Geese on the upper Humber around Whitton Sand, peaking at 634 birds in September 2009, it is impossible to know whether any Barnacle Geese that occur are truly wild vagrants but those associating with Pink-footed Geese are often assumed to be birds that have originated in Greenland and have joined migrating Pink-feet flocks in the autumn.

Curlew numbers dropped dramatically and as all fields in the area were well covered and fields in the adjacent areas of Goxhill Marsh and Thornton Abbey were also searched there was certainly a large reduction in Curlew abundance but whether this was due to an early spring departure of birds or movements to other areas of the estuary is not known. Waders and wildfowl have certainly been moving in recent days however, with late evening departures of wader flocks being seen on bright nights and it seems likely that the large peak of birds noted in the previous week involved pre-emigration groups in addition to the local wintering population. The total of 187 birds was the lowest count since the end of the freeze in mid January. Most of the birds were in the usual fields in Goxhill Marsh but the count of 43 in field 102, immediately behind a house, was unusual and more birds were in the dragged stubbles with nine being found inland on winter cereals in field 49.

The only **Lapwings** found during the day were 8 feeding in the permanent pasture field 111 and 27 in field 93 a winter cereal field that has been used by this species on a number of occasions during the survey.

Two **Mute Swans** were again grazing in field 13 before moving to the adjacent Beck.

As the pools in fields 13 and 136 were still frozen there were no duck on these pools but a total of 41 Teal were on the adjacent Skitter Beck and 8 Common Snipe were in field 13.

On the upper inter-tidal and the Humber off field 130 there were 93 **Mallard**, 22 **Teal** and 18 **Wigeon** plus 7 **Shelduck** and a single drake **Shoveler**. There were fewer waders on the inter-tidal but a flock of 12 **Avocets** formed the first spring occurrence of this species in the area for 2010; totals of 130 **Dunlin**, 7 **Redshank**, 2 **Ringed Plover**, 12 **Curlew** and single **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Lapwing** and **Ruff** completed the wader presence.

Other observations:

One **Marsh Harriers** was seen briefly in the area around Dawson City and a **Common Buzzard** flew west over the Grues mid morning; a second Common Buzzard was perched in old oak trees on the Beck side by field 84. Two **Barn Owls** were hunting the grues and a single **Jay** was again along the beck side by field 78. Two **Rock Pipits** were on the Grues and a **Kingfisher** was seen on the Beck by field 81 the first sighting of this species since the hard winter weather. A **Little Egret** flew down the Beck towards East Halton Skitter over field 75.

Week 33 March 13th – 19th 2010

Survey date March 14th

High tide 17:30 a rising spring at 6.6m

Weather:

A fairly benign week with little rain and generally light winds were the result of a dominant high pressure system sitting over the British Isles during the period. Temperatures remained below the season average at the start of the week but rose towards the weekend as long sunny spells helped to lift midday highs to 10C – 12C; it remained cool at night with overnight frosts still evident early in the period. Winds were mainly from the northern quarter and with the sunshine there was a considerable evaporation during the week with flood-water pools shrinking and water levels dropping in the major bodies; ploughed fields and the surface of oilseed rape fields became very dry and baked.

The 14th dawned with extensive high cloud and a light north-westerly wind and temperatures of 5C but it felt considerably cooler with the freshening wind. Cloud thinned during the morning as the wind increased and allowed temperatures to reach 12C in the early afternoon. By 13:00 hrs cloud increased again from the north and some showers of rain developed pushing south across the area. The showers intensified later in the afternoon with fresh and gusty winds around the showers but it became calm in the spells of sunshine between the showers and these died out by darkness as the winds fell light.

All of the willow plantation between field 82 and the Skitter Beck and the plantation between field 87 and the beck had been harvested was still being harvested and the ground left clear with small stumps.

Waders and Wildfowl:

A flock of 20 **Barnacle Geese** flew in and landed in field 103 where they fed throughout the afternoon; these birds seemed quite tolerant of human beings on the Humber bank and seem unlikely to be truly wild birds.

A total of 247 **Curlew** was a notable increase on the previous week; all but two of the birds were in the usual mainly permanent pasture fields in Goxhill Marsh; the other two were on the edge of the flood-water pool in field 136. There was considerable interchange between the different fields as the flocks were disturbed by a variety of raptors and the heavy downpours but a concentrated count produced the total of 245 birds in the fields between 103 and 120; the highest counts for each field are shown in the table.

No **Lapwings** or **Golden Plovers** were found in the survey area.

The pools in field 136 held 24 feeding **Teal** and 12 **Mallard** plus a Little Egret that later moved onto the beck. There were an additional 23 Teal on the Beck itself.

A total of 122 **Mallard** roosting on the upper inter-tidal by field 130 was the second highest count of this species in the area during the winter. The Mallard were accompanied by 12 **Teal**

and 12 **Wigeon** while 7 **Shelduck** were on the Humber along with 25 **Goldeneye**. Although there were 180 **Dunlin** feeding on the inter-tidal as the tide rose only 35 remained at high tide as there was a very restricted area of mud available.

Other observations:

The usual pair of **Marsh Harriers** were around Dawson City and a **Common Buzzard** was seen on the Beck side by field 84. A **Peregrine** flushed all of the Curlew from the permanent pasture fields as it moved north-east late afternoon. A **Barn Owls** were hunting the grues and a single **Jay** was again along the beck side by field 78. A **Little Egret** noted above was in field 136 and then fishing along the beck by field 13.

Week 34 March 20th – 26th 2010

Survey date March 21st

High tide 09:00 a falling spring at 6.3m

Weather:

A series of frontal systems tracked across northern Britain during the week but their effects were fairly muted in the local area until the 19th when rain fell for most of the night. Although the 20th started out fine but cloudy and dull some heavy rain arrived by midday and a substantial amount fell during the afternoon and evening leaving the Skitter Beck particularly full. Evaporation on the other hand had reduced the size of many of the flood water pools particularly those in fields 13 and 136 that had shrunk to <40% of their maximum extent.

A ground frost overnight from 20th to 21st left some ice at dawn but this soon disappeared as the temperature rose to 4C by 07:30 hrs. A clear sky and a light, force three, west-north-westerly wind made it feel cool but temperatures rose during the day as the sun warmed the air until early afternoon when cloud increased from the west clearing again by early evening.

Field 117 had been ploughed during the intervening week.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The only species of wader and wildfowl found on the surveyed fields was **Curlew** the majority of which were again in the series of fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh from field 126 to 131. The total number of birds located was 286 with just two birds being recorded away from the main fields on the floodwater pool in field 136 by the Skitter Beck railway bridge. The total was again calculated from successive counts of the different fields although the individual field totals were much higher due to movements of birds between the different fields. At least 11 birds were noted flying south-west along Middle Marsh road soon after first light out of the surveyed area.

No **Lapwings** or **Golden Plovers** were found in the survey area.

There were just four **Teal** and 22 **Mallard** on the East Halton Skitter Beck by field 136.

The number of wildfowl on the inter-tidal had fallen markedly with just 25 **Mallard**, 10 **Teal** and 12 **Wigeon**. As the whole of the inter-tidal was covered by the high tide there were just two **Ringed Plover** and 9 **Redshank** roosting on the rocky foreshore.

Other observations:

The usual pair of **Marsh Harriers** were around Dawson City where the male was nest building. Two **Common Buzzards** were soaring north of Langmire Wood and another was along the Skitter Beck by field 136. Two **Barn Owls** were hunting the grues and a single **Jay** was again along the beck side by field 78 where a **Kingfisher** was heard along with a **Chiffchaff**. At least three **Water Rails** were singing in Dawson City with others calling in Clondyke and Parker Pond.

The first Small Tortoiseshell was on the wing by East Halton Skitter.

Week 35 March 27th – 31st 2010

Survey date March 27th
High tide 16:00 a rising spring at 6.5m

Weather:

Generally dry weather had dominated the previous week with some showers including thunder and hail on the afternoon of the 26th. Temperatures had finally risen consistently to peak at 10C – 12C daily with overnight lows only falling to 4C – 6C. Although bright and sunny early on the 27th cloud increased quickly from the north-west as the wind increased to force 5 – 6 by midday. Temperatures reached 12C in the early afternoon but fell back to 8C by late afternoon as the wind eased and the sky cleared again to produce a touch of ground frost by darkness.

Waders and Wildfowl:

Most of the **Curlew** were again concentrated in the fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh with the vast majority between fields 118 and 103. The total of 222 birds was down on the previous week but at least 10 birds were noted flying inland to the west of East Marsh road into a small pasture field between K and B; this field is not visible from the road and could have held more birds than the ten seen flying into the field. The only birds found away from the above fields were two birds that were again found in field 136 as in the previous two weeks.

The only **Lapwing** seen was flying west over field 120 towards high water; no **Golden Plovers** were found in the survey area.

There were just two **Teal** on the East Halton Skitter Beck by field 136 most of the **Mallard** seen were already in pairs and were located in potential breeding areas.

The only wildfowl on the inter-tidal were 18 **Mallard**. As the high tide covered all of the inter-tidal the only waders found roosting were 3 **Ringed Plover**, 12 **Turnstone** and 5 **Dunlin** on the stone bank while there were 9 **Redshank** roosting on upper foreshore.

Other observations:

The usual pair of **Marsh Harriers** were in Dawson City where a new adult male was also present disputing the territory with the young adult male. A single **Common Buzzards** was along the Skitter Beck by field 136 and one **Barn Owl** was hunting the grues: a single **Jay** was again along the beck side by field 78.

Weekly survey reports:

Week 1 August 1st – 7th 2009

Survey date August 1st

High tide 15:32 neap tide at 5.6m

Weather:

The week prior to the survey saw a continuing theme of unsettled conditions with some hot and sunny periods but with frequent often thundery showers that were isolated and affected different parts of the region. According to the Met Office provisionally, it was the wettest July on record over England and Wales (in a series from 1914), being slightly wetter than July 2007 and much wetter than July 2008.

The survey date was mostly cloudy with outbreaks of light rain becoming thundery in the afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl:

As the majority of the arable fields in the survey area were still under growing crops there were limited areas where waders could roost and feed and these were mainly in permanent pasture or on the set-aside, dragged / ploughed fields and harvested stubbles.

Many of the permanent pasture fields were in fact also unsuitable for waders due to the height and density of the grass. This also applied to the grues where there had been no grazing and the grass was rank, up to 1m high, and dense and thus not suitable for even the longest legged waders.

Three species of wader were found in the fields but Curlew was typically the most frequent. A single Whimbrel and three Black-tailed Godwits were in field 112 with Curlew but these were the only waders other than Curlew recorded from the surveyed area. Only 52 Curlew were found within the survey area most of these on areas of permanent pasture with two in a dragged field that had been stubble in the previous winter. In addition to the 52 birds found within the survey area incidental observations of fields around the surveyed area revealed the presence of an additional 102 birds in four fields shown on the attached map as A – D. Field A was over-wintered stubbles, fields B and C were harvested cereal stubbles and field D was permanent pasture that had been cut and baled for hay. The location of these fields is shown on the map.

As it was a neap tide there was an extensive area of mud still available to waders at high water and counts produced totals of 74 Black-tailed Godwits, 6 Dunlin, 3 Ringed Plover, two Bar-tailed Godwit and two Knot plus 18 Turnstone and a family party of five Shelduck, three juveniles, the only wildfowl present. In the late evening a total of 131 Curlew had gathered on the upper inter-tidal presumably in preparation for the over-night roost.

Other observations:

A flock of 31 Tree Sparrows was feeding in the edge of the oilseed rape and wheat fields between Goxhill Haven and Dawson City. Willow Tits were seen in Dawson City, three birds, and in the hedge just north of Parker's Plantation confirming records at both localities in the earlier part of the year.

Two broods of Little Grebes were present on the Skitter Beck by the bridge adjacent to field number 3 and by field 113. A kingfisher was feeding along the beck by field 73.

Week 2 August 8th – 14th 2009

Survey date August 10th

High tide 09:15 a falling spring at 6.9m

Weather:

Between the first and second survey dates the area was affected by a period of unsettled weather with the passage of frontal systems bringing some periods of heavy rainfall interspersed between warmer sunny periods. The heaviest rain fell on the 6th with 6cm recorded in some areas and this left standing water in parts of the survey area which had been dry for several weeks.

On the survey date winds were light to moderate, force 3 – 4 from the south-west; showers and a band of heavier rain passed through the region from early morning clearing in the afternoon with temperatures reaching 16C, cooler than of late. There was total cloud cover throughout the survey.

Waders and Wildfowl:

Some of the fields in the survey area had been harvested and odd stubbles dragged but in general environmental conditions were very similar to the previous week. Changes in field conditions are highlighted in the spreadsheet. Many of the permanent pasture fields were still unsuitable for roosting and feeding waders due to the height and density of the grass.

Nine Black-tailed Godwits were feeding with Curlew in field 110, permanent pasture that was being grazed by cattle but this was the only wader species recorded other than Curlew. Only 46 Curlew were found in the fields within the survey area with an additional 23 birds being seen in the extra fields, outside the survey area as shown on the map and described in week one. All of the Curlew within the survey area were feeding on permanent pasture fields or those mown for hay but the stubble field C again held birds just outside the boundary of the surveyed site. The same parties of 14 and 30 birds moved between adjacent fields as shown in the sheet but there were no other notable movements of birds observed during the survey.

As it was a high spring tide there was no mud available to waders on the upper inter-tidal and as the vegetation on the foreshore is still long and rank no birds were found on the high tide roosting area with the three Common Sandpipers being present on the base of the rocky seawall.

Other observations:

A Little Egret was again seen along the Skitter Beck flying north-east adjacent to field number 84. At least three Willow Tits were in the hedgerows between Dawson City and Parker's plantation but there was no further sign of the pair of Turtle Doves found nest building in the previous week. Likewise all of the Marsh Harriers appeared to have dispersed from the Dawson City area with no observations during the entire survey.

Week 3 August 15th – 21st 2009

Survey date August 18th

High tide 05:00 and 17:30 mid tide at 6.5m

Weather:

During the intervening week the weather had been quite settled with occasional light rain but mainly dry with some extensive sunny periods throughout and temperatures reaching peaks of 23C to 25C during the day falling to 13C to 16C at night.

At 05:00hrs there was only a very light south-south-west wind, force one, with 2 octas cloud cover and a temperature of 14C. as the day progressed the wind increased from the south-west to force 3 – 4 as temperatures rose to a peak of 21C; cloud cover varied from 3 to 7 octas throughout the day.

Waders and Wildfowl:

There had been a dramatic change in environmental conditions by the start of week three with harvesting of oilseed rape, wheat and barley changing the bulk of the fields to stubbles;

dragging of stubbles was also underway and a number of fields had been dragged and one ploughed. [see excel sheet and map for details of changes in field conditions].

Curlew was the wader found in the most fields but in terms of absolute numbers there were more **Lapwing** on the surveyed fields, all but one of which were roosting on the dragged oilseed rape stubble in field number 38. The remaining single Lapwing was foraging on a dragged field of wheat stubble, field number 14 where there were also nine **Curlew** feeding. Over high tide Curlew were found scattered around the stubbles and dragged fields within the survey area but the total number of birds found was only 42 in addition to which 16 remained on the upper inter-tidal. All of the birds found on inland fields were actively foraging as opposed to roosting. In contrast to the previous two weeks there were very few birds on permanent pastures with most birds seeking out worked fields and harvested stubbles. Some birds were observed moving from inland fields towards the estuary as the tide fell and by low water there were a total of 108 Curlew feeding on the inter-tidal mainly on the extensive sand bank off Skitter Ness. Where the additional birds found at low water came from is not clear but there were no noted movements from the north bank and it is assumed that they came from fields further inland or from those fields to the south-west of the survey area.

A **Greenshank** and 9 **Redshank** were roosting on the pools on the grues at East Halton Skitter moving to the foreshore at the tide fell.

As it was not a high spring tide there was some mud available on the upper inter-tidal at high water and a number of waders remained there throughout the high tide period of which 42 **Ringed Plover** and 86 **Black-tailed Godwits** were the most notable.

Seven Mallard were feeding on the stubbles in field 122 at dawn.

Other observations

An adult male Marsh Harrier left the roost at Dawson City at 06:14hrs with a juvenile seen at the same time of the adjacent grues. A juvenile was later seen hunting rough fields along the Skitter Beck north of the old railway bridge in field 136 and a male came in off the Humber over the grues late morning.

Two juvenile Common Buzzards were in the hay field number 13 with one of the same later seen over Langmire Wood where it is suspected that they bred in 2009.

A total of four juvenile Kestrels was feeding over the grues. This Autumn concentration has been a feature of the grues for 40+ years with past peak counts exceeding 15 birds in good years. The attraction is the number of butterflies feeding on the sea aster on the grues but in recent years the area of sea aster has declined and rough rank grass has invaded with the subsequent reduction in the number of Kestrels; this species is though also in steep decline at a population level and this will presumably also affect the number of birds using the area in the autumn.

Between 06:40 and 06:55 a total of 110 Common Terns and one juvenile Arctic Tern flew west along the southern edge of the Humber on the high tide.

A male Quail was calling from the standing wheat crop in field 108 from first light to 07:00.

A Little Egret was feeding along the Skitter Beck and the Little Beck between fields 73 and the railway bridge during the morning.

A pair of Mute Swans with 5 cygnets was along the Skitter Beck by field 78 / 75 and a Kingfisher in the same area.

Three Turtle Doves were in the bushes around Parker's pond with a further two in the hedge on the embankment by field 130 where a nest was being built in week 1, and singles on the embankment by field 117 and in field 120 making a total of seven birds during the survey.

A Willow Tit was in the large hedge over the Little Beck by field 78 / 75.

A male and two female Roe Deer were present in field 136 during the morning and a Brown Hare was in the stubbles in field 16.

Week 4 August 22nd – 28th 2009

Survey date August 24th

High tide 09:20 a high spring tide at 7.4m

Weather:

Between the two surveys, week 3 and week 4, the weather was rather hot with daytime temperatures peaking at 27C and nighttime temperatures seldom falling below 15C. Rainfall was usually light and amounted to less than the seasonal average while winds were mainly from the south to south-west and typically light to moderate.

On the survey date cloud cover varied from 3 to 7 octas with the wind light from the south-west at dawn swinging to a very light south-easterly late morning before returning to the south-west by mid afternoon. Temperatures varied from 15C at dawn to 26C at midday when it became particularly humid. As cloud cover increased in the evening a series of heavy showers passed through the area with winds increasing locally to force 5 around the more intense shower clouds.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 269 Curlew found on the fields at high water confirmed a large increase in the local population from the previous week. In contrast to previous weeks the majority of the birds were feeding on recently harvested stubble fields or dragged stubbles; several of these fields had not been used in the previous survey series between January and March 2009. Most of these birds remained on the fields as the tide fell with a total of 69 birds being seen on the inter-tidal at mid tide. Short movements between adjacent fields were observed in addition to birds commuting to the inter-tidal.

A total of 398 Golden Plovers were located roosting on dragged and ploughed fields number 99 and 122 with an additional six birds on pea stubbles in field F (see map). A total of 62 Lapwing was feeding on the recently dragged stubbles in field 14 and a similar sized flock of 58 birds was roosting in the dragged rape field number 38; the similar size of the two flocks suggests that they could be one and the same but there was no observed movement between the two fields and thus they are counted as different individuals. An additional three birds were feeding in field 77. Only two Golden Plover were seen on the inter-tidal at low water and to date there have been no observations of Lapwing on the inter-tidal at low water. At low water there was a mixed flock of waders between Goxhill haven and East Halton Skitter with 81 Ringed Plover and 75 Dunlin being notable. At high tide some of these birds roosted on a dragged field of pea stubbles inland from Goxhill Haven, designated F on the crop map. This field has in the past held large roosting flocks of Lapwing and Golden Plovers as well as smaller waders.

Other observations

Both of the breeding male Marsh Harrier were in the area around Dawson City during the morning with an additional full adult male being seen over fields 20 and 22 at midday.

A Peregrine was chasing a Black-tailed Godwit over the estuary off the grues late morning.

There was again an up river movement of Common Terns leaving the overnight roost at North Cotes with 172 birds being counted.

A flock of 14 Yellow Wagtails was feeding on the embankment at Goxhill Haven and there were at least 200 Swallows and Sand Martins in the same area. a further concentration of hirundines over the Skitter Beck by field 13 included two late Swifts.

Two Little Egrets and three Grey Herons were roosting in the old thorn hedgerow between the Skitter Beck and little beck adjacent to field 13.

Willow Tits were again present in the hedge between Dawson City and Parker's plantation along with a mixed flock of warblers including, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Chiffchaffs, Willow, Sedge and Reed Warblers. At least 8 Sedge Warblers were in the borrow pit reedbeds along the grues.

Week 5 August 29th – September 5th 2009

Survey date August 31st

High tide 16:55 a neap tide at 5.7m

Weather:

A hot and often humid week had passed between the two surveys with temperatures reaching the mid 20's centigrade often accompanied by fresh to strong south to westerly winds producing excessive evaporation. Apart from a few light showers there was very little rainfall during the period.

On the survey date cloud cover varied markedly from 3 octas to eight octas throughout the day with the cloud generally clearing through the afternoon producing some of the highest temperatures of the day around 17:00hrs before cloud increased again in the late evening. Winds were rather fresh force four to five from the south with peak temperatures recorded being 25C.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 126 Curlew were located in the fields of the survey area most of which were feeding although there was a mix of feeding and roosting birds in some of the fields. Again there was a spread of birds through different fields that had been worked down and dragged as well as recently harvested stubbles. Notably the largest group of 51 birds was found in field 87 where the crop of spring barley had been half harvested leaving stubbles over the highest part of the field. This same field had been frequented by feeding Curlews in the previous winter when it was left as over-wintered stubbles from the previous year. There was again a lack of birds on the permanent pasture fields that had held the majority of the Curlew in the first part of the survey prior to the start of harvesting in the majority of the cereal fields. The rapid conversion of stubbles to dragged fields over a wide area has however, produced a large variety of potential feeding sites for Curlew and the reduced total number of birds found over this week's survey compared to week 4 was most probably due to the spread of birds throughout the adjacent areas of Goxhill and East Halton Marshes. In fact parties of 5 – 15 birds were seen in several stubbles and dragged fields in the western part of Goxhill Marsh on the evening of the survey date confirming this suggestion.

Only two Lapwing were found roosting in the recently ploughed field 16; there were no birds in the dragged fields where they were located in the previous week and none were seen on the inter-tidal or on any of the adjacent fields in the marshes. Golden Plovers were found in field 100, where 39 were roosting and field 125 where 52 birds were feeding on the field that was being ploughed; these birds moved onto field 101 to roost.

The most unusual occurrence of the survey was the discovery of a flock of 161 Black-tailed Godwits feeding on the recently dragged field number 17. The majority of the birds were juvenile *islandica* and it is assumed that they had moved onto the field on the rising tide as four birds were seen arriving from the direction of the East Halton – Killingholme inter-tidal during the course of the observations.

As it was a low neap tide there was mud available to waders even at high water and the inter-tidal held totals of 32 Ringed Plover and 24 Dunlin but just five Curlew and no Black-tailed Godwits.

Other observations:

Two juvenile Marsh Harriers were in the area of Dawson City and a female was over the fields near Halton Grange including fields 8 and 12. A juvenile Common Buzzard was again in the area of field 13.

A Kingfisher was feeding along the skitter beck between fields 13 and 3.

Filed 16 held two Wheatears and a Whinchat and 2 Wheatears and a juvenile Whinchat were also seen along the foreshore by Goxhill Haven.

The borage? crop in field 68 had been harvested and dragged and held a mixed feeding flock of 100+ Greenfinch and 100 Tree and House Sparrows.

Water levels in the Skitter Beck were very low having fallen by at least half a metre with up to 1m of mud exposed along the edges in most places along the beck side.

A wildfowler / shooter was shooting in fields 19 / 136 when I arrived in the area he disappeared in a white Corsa that had accessed the area via a track from Manor House Farm (this was of course before the start of the wildfowl shooting season).

A Southern Hawker dragonfly was feeding along the Skitter Beck side by field 78 / 3; Common Darters and Migrant Hawkers were also seen in several places during the survey.

Week 6 September 6th - 11th 2009

Survey date September 9th

High tide 09:15 a high spring at 6.9m falling from 7.1m on the 6th and 7th

Weather:

The intervening week had been mainly dry with odd showers and frequently windy with south to south-westerly winds often reaching force five. Temperatures ranged from highs of 15C to 23C with overnight lows seldom dropping below 10C.

September 9th dawned cooler than of late at 11C with a force 4 south-westerly wind and 3 octas cloud cover but as the wind veered into the north-west the cloud cleared by late morning allowing temperatures to reach 23C with the wind dropping lighter in the afternoon as some high cloud built up. The more settled weather resulted from the Azores Anti-cyclone pushing north-east over Eastern Britain.

Waders and Wildfowl

Curlew was again the most numerous wader found on the fields within the survey area with a total of 208 birds being found mainly on stubbles and dragged stubbles but 33 were roosting on the permanent pasture in field 112 along with two **Bar-tailed Godwits** over high tide. The largest number of Curlew was again found in the stubbles in field 87 where they were actively feeding before 78 of the birds were disturbed and flew directly towards the estuary. Only two birds were roosting on the mown area of the grues at high tide.

A flock of small waders comprising 51 **Ringed Plover**, 28 **Dunlin**, 2 **Curlew Sandpiper** and 2 **Little Stints** roosted on the drilled field number 122 adjacent to Goxhill Haven over the whole of the high tide period.

The only **Lapwing** found was a single bird in field 18 and there were only 16 **Golden Plover** that were also roosting in field 125 at high tide.

Other observations:

A single Little Egret was in Skitter Beck by railway bridge; the local farmer reported two birds fishing in the pond between fields 87 and 91 during the week.

A single Grey Partridge was seen in field 108.

A flock of 46 Teal was feeding in Dawson City on a day when there was a marked westerly movement up the estuary with 163 counted during the survey. Large numbers of Teal arriving from Scandinavia move west up the Humber in September and October en route for central and western England and Ireland.

There were still two Sedge Warblers in Parker's Pond plus Lesser Whitethroat, Reed Warblers, Chiffchaffs in the bank side hedgerows.

A female Marsh Harrier seen in Dawson City and hunting the grues was also seen over field 8 and around Skitter Beck appeared.

A juvenile Common Buzzard again along Skitter Beck by Langmire

A Southern Hawker was again by field 78 and there were good numbers of Painted Ladies along the Humber embankment; 10's of 1000's of 7-spot Ladybirds were evident throughout with the phragmites seed heads in Parkers Pond being laden with them.

Week 7 September 12th - 18th 2009

Survey date September 14th
High tide 15:100 a neap at 5.8m

Weather:

The week had been generally settled but with a distinct change in pressure as the Azores anti-cyclone pushed north-east to cover central England. This brought a change from predominant westerly and southerly winds to north-north-easterlies by the end of the intervening week. Temperatures had been variable during the week but it was often very warm with 23C recorded on some days while over-night temperatures fell as low as 7C. There was no rain during the period.

The survey date was dominated by the north-north-easterly wind that reached force 4 and occasionally force 5 on the coast but was much lighter inland. Cloud cover varied from two to seven octas during the day with temperatures rising to 17C in the sunny periods but it was generally much cooler than the previous week.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 183 **Curlew** were located on the fields in the survey area but an additional flock of 101 birds was seen in flight although it was not ascertained where they had been feeding. The direction of movement of the flock (larger arrow on map) suggests that they may have been feeding in field 22 which was being worked down on the survey date but this was not proven. The flock was not relocated in spite of their movement towards the estuary as there was little mud available over the high water period in spite of the neap tide partly as a result of the onshore wind pushing water higher onto the remaining mudflats. This suggests that these birds moved outside the survey area over the high tide period after being disturbed from their feeding area. The stubbles in field 87 again held a sizeable flock of Curlew which moved off towards the estuary after high tide with smaller flocks being located on various other worked and dragged fields and stubbles. No birds were found on the inter-tidal over high water. Two flocks of **Lapwing** were found both feeding in fields that were being worked during the survey with 43 in field 70, oilseed rape stubble being ploughed, and 148 in field 76 that was being sown. Only five **Golden Plover** were found feeding with Lapwing in field 70. There was very little mud available on the upper inter-tidal at high water and hence the only birds located were a small flock of Teal and Mallard off the northern grues but as the tide started to fall a total of 101 Dunlin, 12 Ringed Plover, two Curlew and a single Turnstone arrived on the inter-tidal but these birds were not located on any of the adjacent fields at high water and seemed to arrive from down the estuary.

Other observations:

Five Common Buzzards were present in the area of fields 6, 7, 9, 10, 84 and 85 with three of these birds frequenting the plantation between fields 84 and 85. At least three of the birds were juveniles with one of the other two being a 2cy bird.

A single juvenile Marsh Harrier was seen moving west over field 78 but none were seen in the Dawson City area.

Week 8 September 19th - 25th 2009

Survey date September 22nd

High tide 09:00 a high spring at 7.3m

Weather:

The Azores high had dominated the intervening week until the 21st when an Atlantic depression brought a change to south then south-westerly winds with some light rain late on the 21st. Temperatures had remained high during the previous week reaching 24C on some days with winds having been in the north-east quadrant.

The survey date dawned with a force four south-westerly wind and two octas cloud cover but with a temperatures of 16C being high for late September. During the morning cloud cover increased towards midday forming seven octas by 12:00hrs as the wind swung to west and increased to force five. Cloud cover then varied through the afternoon and evening with the wind strength easing to force four again by 18:00hrs.

Following a very dry period with little rainfall having occurred for ten weeks environmental conditions in the survey area showed that water levels even in permanent water bodies were the lowest for many years while soil was hard and baked in all of the worked fields. Even some of the permanent ponds on the grues at East Halton Skitter had dried out for the first time in 15 years.

Waders and Wildfowl

Curlew were scattered over several fields with small groups being the norm as opposed to larger flocks. The main concentration of birds was in the fields adjacent to the Humber embankment between Dawson City and East Halton Skitter. Here birds were found in dragged stubbles, permanent pastures and on ploughed fields. The 24 birds on the rough plough on field 129 were concentrated in a small area at the western end of the field where slurry had accumulated prior to ploughing. The dragged stubbles in field 126 again held 34 birds. Only 8 birds were in field 87 the favoured spring barley stubble but baling was being carried out in adjacent fields and a further 38 birds were found in the recently worked field 86 to the north of field 87. Further concentrations of birds were found in the Thornton Abbey area where fields had recently been sown or were being worked. The soils in these fields are light and sandy and easily probed for food.

Lapwing were found in three fields with a single bird in field 51 and the remaining 216 in fields 68 and 59, adjacent fields that were being sown during the survey. Both of these fields were organic farmed in recent years and have proved particularly attractive to Lapwing and Golden Plovers. This flock of Lapwing is presumed to consist of the same birds found in the area around Thornton Abbey on all of the latest surveys. There has been no evidence to date that they move to the inter-tidal unless this occurs at night.

The only **Golden Plovers** found were a flock of 64 birds in field 68 where they fed with Lapwing and Curlew. As noted above these former organic fields regularly hold Golden Plover in winter.

A single Curlew was roosting on the mown area of the grues at high tide but apart from 15 Mallard there were no other birds on the foreshore as all of the area was covered by the high spring tide. Three hours after high water a group of waders arrived from the south-east consisting of 33 Dunlin, 3 Ringed Plover, a Curlew Sandpiper, 24 Black-tailed and 3 Bar-tailed Godwits and 7 Curlew and all of these birds fed on the inter-tidal adjacent to Skitter Ness.

Other observations:

Two Common Buzzards were seen along the Skitter Beck around field 8 to 136; a Jay was mobbing a Tawny Owl in the old oaks along the beck by field number 8 and there were 21 Teal in the Beck adjacent to field 136.

A Hornets nest was discovered in the base of an old oak tree on the northern edge of Langmire wood. Although this species is known to be spreading northwards I believe this is the first nest located along the Humber to date.

Week 9 September 26th – October 2nd 2009

Survey date September 30th

High tide 04:15 at 5.8m and 17:10 a neap at 5.9m

Weather:

Anti-cyclonic conditions had again dominated the local weather during the intervening week with some high temperatures, reaching the low 20's centigrade during hot and sunny days but with night time temperatures starting to fall to <10C. There had again been no rainfall and with the sun and light winds evapo-transpiration continued to lower water levels in the major permanent water bodies including the Skitter Beck. Worked fields were very dry and with hard caked clay on the surface there was little feeding available for waders; permanent pastures were beginning to show signs of die back of the grasses and shriveling due to the continuing drought.

The 30th began with a light force three westerly and five octas cloud cover with a temperature of 14C at 07:00hrs. During the day the wind increased to force four and veered to west-north-west as the cloud cleared and temperatures rose to 20C by midday. During the afternoon cloud cover increased again with the wind veering north-west but temperatures were still relatively high at 12C by darkness.

Waders and Wildfowl

No Lapwing were found at high or low water throughout the day. Most of the **Curlew** found were roosting on a rough ploughed field, number 129 with only low numbers located feeding in other favoured fields most notably dragged stubbles in field 108 and the harvested spring barley stubbles in fields 87 and 90. The fact that most of the fields in the survey area had already been worked and sown and there was little activity during the survey suggests that in previous weeks birds had been exploiting food resources made available by such operations and with the continuing drought and the difficulty of feeding on the rock hard clay soils that this was why there were fewer birds recorded in week 9 and why most of those found were roosting. Even at low water however, only 26 Curlew were found feeding on the inter-tidal while most of the roosting birds remained on the ploughed field possibly indicating that they had been night feeding?

A single flock of **Golden Plovers** was found over high tide roosting on the ploughed field number 129 where most of the Curlew were also present. The flock was typically difficult to count as the birds were squatting in the furrows with an initial count suggesting the presence of just 202 birds. Further counts from different angles showed how low this count was as 354 birds were in fact present the highest total for this species yet recorded on the survey series this autumn. This flock of Golden Plovers roosted on the field from at least 09:00 hrs to 16:00 hrs.

Even though there was about 20m of upper inter-tidal not covered at high water the only birds present were 9 Curlew and a flock of 22 Mallard and 56 Teal with a single Wigeon. As the tide receded most of the waders arrived from the south-east from the direction of North Killingholme pits but the Turnstone flock arrived from the west. The high count of Turnstone, 350 birds was exceptional for this stretch of the estuary but a similar sized flock typically frequents the area around New Holland pier.

Amongst the Black-tailed Godwits feeding on the inter-tidal at Goxhill Skitter Ness at low water was a colour ringed bird, left tibia Orange / Black right tibia Yellow / Red flag; this bird had been ringed as a fledgling at Sakka, Dalvik, north of Akureyri, N Iceland on July 10th 2009 and was then recorded at Alkborough Flats on August 14th 2009 prior to this observation at Goxhill.

Other observations:

A juvenile Hen Harrier was seen in the region of Dawson City and the grues in the early morning moving off to hunt field 108 before moving west inland. At 13:00 hrs it was seen coming from the south-east by Langmire Wood and moved north-west towards field 101. At 14:00 hrs it was seen again at Dawson City and it returned there at 17:30 and stayed in the area possibly looking to roost.

Two juvenile Marsh Harriers were seen near Dawson City in the morning and they returned there from 17:00 hrs presumably in preparation for roosting.

A Common Buzzard was hunting near by Parker's Plantation where four Roe Deer were also seen.

During the day there was a notable up river movement of wildfowl with 41 Pintail, 24 Wigeon, 4 Goldeneye and 208 Teal passing during a 4-hour period. All of these birds are assumed to have been recent arrivals from Scandinavia as other sites on the east coast recorded other species in the movement that were indicative of an origin in this area. the movement of wildfowl also included Common Snipe of which 20 birds were seen arriving in off the estuary and during the morning there was visible migration of Skylarks, Meadow Pipits, Reed Buntings and the arrival of the first Rock Pipit of the autumn.

Week 10 October 3rd – 9th 2009

Survey date October 7th

High tide 08:32 at 7.1m a high spring

Weather:

There was a notable change in the weather during the intervening week; a vigorous depression passed north-west through Scotland on the 3rd bringing strong westerly winds and cooler conditions as the wind swung to north-west on the following night. It remained cooler through the 4th with winds dropping overnight to leave a calm dawn to the 5th with temperatures falling to 7C. During the day cloud broke occasionally with temperatures rising to 17C in the early afternoon before cloud increased again overnight with rain increasing by dawn on a moderate southerly wind. Substantial rainfall on the 6th was the first in the area for over 12 weeks.

The 7th began with a light, force three, north-north-westerly wind and 7 octas cloud cover being cool at 7C. During the morning the cloud cleared and temperatures rose so that by midday there was only one octa cloud with a temperature of 13C and a light north-north-westerly force two.

Waders and Wildfowl

Only two species of wader were located on the fields **Curlew** and **Lapwing** with no Golden Plover being seen throughout the day. All of the Lapwing recorded were on two fields, number 129 where four birds were roosting at high tide and field number 85 where 43 birds were feeding on the recently drilled field.

Curlew were more widespread but there was a marked concentration of birds in the fields around Thornton Abbey where all of the birds were feeding on recently drilled fields. The recent rain had made the surface layers of the fields more pliable and presumably easier for Curlew probing for food. The other major concentration of Curlew was again in field 87 where 48 birds were concentrated in the spring barley stubbles. This field is cultivated by a farm tenant who tends to farm in the manner of the 1950's rather than the present and hence there

is little spraying or intensification which presumably has a positive effect upon the population of soil invertebrates and hence produces more available food for the Curlew. Curlew were noted commuting between the Humber and field 87 and fields 85 and 86 passing over Langmire Wood.

As this was a very high spring tide there was just a single Dunlin roosting on the embankment and a flock of 27 Mallard that were also commuting to field 108 where they fed on the stubbles.

Other observations:

A Barn Owl was roosting in the hedge on the side of the Skitter Beck by field 13.

Two Common Buzzards were seen over the fields around Langmire Wood and two Marsh Harriers were seen hunting in the same area but there were no birds near Dawson City for the first time.

Week 11 October 10th – 16th 2009

Survey date October 13th
High tide 15:00 a neap at 5.9m

Weather:

A quiet week passed between the week 10 and week 11 surveys with generally light winds and virtually no rainfall. Winds were typically from the north through to west with midday temperatures rising above the seasonal norm as high pressure built towards the end of the period; over-night temperatures dropped to 5C on some nights.

The 13th was another quiet day with high pressure in charge and a very light north-north-west wind of force 1-2; cloud cover was 5 octas early morning clearing by midday to one octa when temperatures rose to 18C before cloud cover increased from the north-west by mid afternoon and temperatures fell to 14C.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 178 **Curlew** was found on the fields in the survey area but other birds were seen on arable fields in Goxhill Marsh to the west and south of those surveyed and also to the west of the fields at Thornton Abbey. Only three birds were roosting on the upper inter-tidal at high water. The birds located on the fields were in three main areas, around Thornton Abbey, along the strip of fields immediately inland of the Humber between Goxhill Haven and East Halton Skitter and in the recently worked fields 85 and 93 east of Goxhill airfield. All of the birds located were feeding with the exception of some of the birds in field 114 that were roosting.

Only six **Lapwing** were found roosting on two fields 120 and 122 adjacent to the Humber at Goxhill Haven. Additionally a flock of 12 birds was seen to come in from the Humber and fly north-west towards field 101 as high tide approached but they could not be found on field 101 or any of the adjacent fields later in the day. A total of 58 birds were feeding on the inter-tidal by field 130 just before high tide but they then all moved off west inland but passed out of the survey area and did not roost on any of the fields surveyed.

The only **Golden Plover** seen during the day was a flock of 342 that roosted on field 129 at high tide. The flock arrived from high to the south-east 90 minutes before high water and may have come from the north bank of the estuary where a total of 6000+ Golden Plovers was seen in the air to the east of Paul Holme Strays. The similarity in size of this flock to the 354 found roosting on the same field in the previous week strongly suggests that the same flock of birds was involved.

On the foreshore the Mallard flock reached a new peak of 68 birds and four Goldeneye drifted east on the falling tide. As noted above 58 Lapwing were present up to high water along with a flock of 31 Dunlin and a single Knot, eight Redshank plus one Black-tailed and four Bar-tailed Godwits all of which roosted on the remaining area of mud on the upper inter-tidal that was not covered at high water.

Other observations:

A flock of ten Teal was in the Skitter Beck by field number 81.

A notable arrival of winter thrushes in England during the morning, with 21,000 **Redwing** being counted moving west at one spot in Bedfordshire and several thousands being noted at many sites, also included a single flock of 125 birds in one tree by field 135 in East Halton village. A single **Buzzard** was in the region of the Skitter Beck by field 93 and one of the breeding male **Marsh Harriers** from Dawson City was seen in the vicinity of the grues. Two **Kingfishers** were along the Skitter Beck by field number 1 where the pair of Mute Swans and their two remaining cygnets were also present.

A few Migrant Hawker and Common Darter dragonflies were still on the wing on a hot and sunny day.

Week 12 October 17th – 23rd 2009

Survey date October 19th

High tide 07:15 and 19:30 high springs at 7.3m and 7.1m

Weather:

Mainly light northerly winds affected the area in the intervening week with no precipitation of note; temperatures ranged from highs of 14C to over-night lows of 5C, around the seasonal average.

The survey date dawned with a light force three south-westerly wind and five octas cloud cover at 7C; cloud increased rapidly to eight octas with some light drizzle before cloud broke again by midday the wind veering to south and allowing temperatures to rise to 14C with some warm sunshine during the afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl

There was a dramatic change in **Curlew** distribution during week 12 that appeared to be the result of the extreme spring tides. At low water an extensive new sand and mud bar has developed in the middle of the Humber running south from east Halton Skitter. This bar attracted a minimum of 134 Curlew over the low water period with another 70 birds being located on the inter-tidal mudflats between Goxhill Haven and Skitter Ness. All of the birds that had been feeding on the sand bar moved into field 129 as the tide began to rise and the birds roosted in this field for 90 minutes before being disturbed when all the flock moved to the inter-tidal off field 130. Here the birds remained for about 30 minutes before all of the birds joined other Curlew in moving to field 113 where they fed on the sown field. This field had been beans and was harvested late in the autumn before being sown. All of the birds remained in this field with 34 moving into the adjacent field 114 over the high water period in the evening. Elsewhere there were very few Curlew during the survey; a party of 13 birds that had been feeding on field 85 flew north-east past Langmire Wood towards the estuary and were suspected as having gone straight out onto the sand bar noted above. The favoured fields around Thornton Abbey only held six birds that were on the previously unused field number 50 with none on the regular fields and no birds were present on field 87.

A total of 145 **Lapwing** was on the inter-tidal off Skitter Ness up to two hours before high tide in the evening but only 23 birds moved onto field 120 where they then roosted with all of the remainder of the flock flying inland and out of the survey area into Goxhill Marsh. Inland a flock of 20 birds was feeding on field 85 and 45 roosted on field 70 but none of these were birds from the inter-tidal.

A flock of 238 **Golden Plovers** was on the inter-tidal off Skitter Ness at low water but most of the flock flew south-east across the estuary towards the large roost at Cherry Cobb as the tide rose with 51 birds moving to field 119 where they roosted with two Knot.

Good numbers of waders were using the inter-tidal at low water including 70 Curlew, 238 Golden Plover, 145 Lapwing, 213 Dunlin, 16 Ringed Plover, 14 Bar-tailed and 47 Black-tailed Godwits; the only wildfowl present were 76 Mallard.

Other observations:

One of the male Marsh Harriers from Dawson City was over the grues. A Barn Owl was hunting the grues in the late evening and a male Stonechat was also seen in the same area. A Chiffchaff was still Parker Plantation and one in the plantation by field number 1 where there were 6 Teal in the Beck and the pair of Mute Swans with two remaining cygnets. A juvenile Gannet flew west up the Humber off Skitter Ness.

During the afternoon a total of eight Painted Ladies, single Peacock and Red Admiral were along the Humber embankment between Goxhill Haven and Dawson City where Migrant Hawker and Common Darter dragonflies were also still on the wing.

Week 13 October 24th – 30th 2009

Survey date October 27th
High tide 13:10 a neap at 5.3m

Weather:

Some substantial amounts of rainfall had reached the area in the intervening week the first for over two months. Temperatures had been around the seasonal average or higher with winds initially from the south-east and then south to south-west increasing to strong over the weekend with rain and mist on the 24th.

The survey date was mostly murky with low cloud and a very light southerly wind; there was a period of drizzle and light rain in the morning petering out by early afternoon. Temperatures rose from 11C at first light to 14C by early afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl

The majority of the 120 **Curlew** located were found in the Thornton Abbey area where there were 58 birds; of these 58 birds 36 were feeding in a newly sown arable field south of the survey area adjacent to Thornton Abbey itself noted as field G on the map. The remainder were in the two organic fields 59 and 68. Of the remaining birds 22 were feeding in field 111 a permanent pasture field that had been dragged and re-sown with grass? with the other birds scattered through previously favoured fields of permanent pasture and tilled areas. As it was a neap tide just one Curlew was found on the inter-tidal at low water and this same bird remained there throughout high water.

Only 13 **Golden Plover** were found during the survey two roosting in a winter cereal field number 30 and 11 with Lapwing in field 129. Field 129 that had held a large Curlew roost in week 12 and a flock of Golden Plovers in previous weeks held a roosting flock of 268 **Lapwings** during the survey; the Lapwing were accompanied by three Ruffs that were feeding throughout the observation period. An additional flock of 34 Lapwings were roosting on the inter-tidal but moved off inland and were found on field F where there was a total of 276 Lapwing. It could not be confirmed whether this was the same flock of birds as previously located on field 129. No other Lapwing were found in any of the fields used previously by this species.

As it was a low neap tide there was quite a large area of mud remaining uncovered at high tide and this held 24 Black-tailed and 3 Bar-tailed Godwits, 8 Redshanks, 3 Dunlin and 14 Turnstone while 21 Teal and 33 Mallard were offshore with a single Goldeneye.

A flock of 62 **Pink-footed Geese** was feeding on the stubbles in field 126.

Other observations:

A single juvenile Marsh Harrier was in the vicinity of Dawson City and a juvenile Merlin was seen over the grues where there were also a pair of Stonechat and a hunting Barn Owl.

A large arrival of winter thrushes produced several sightings of flocks of up to 200 Redwings and 150 Fieldfares moving over the survey area with many other heard calling in the misty low cloud.

A flock of eight Common Crossbills flew north-west up the estuary at East Halton Skitter.

Week 14 October 31st – November 6th 2009

Survey date November 3rd

High tide 06:00 and 18:25 high springs at 7m and 6.9m respectively

Sunrise 07:01 and sunset 16:22

Weather:

The previous week had seen some very mixed weather but the most significant event was the torrential and persistent rain that affected the region through most of November 1st as a deep depression tracked north-west across the British Isles. A month's rainfall fell in many areas in the space of 14 hours; this rain belt cleared the area by late afternoon but there were further spells of rain in the period and this had the effect of breaking the drought and leaving many pools of surface water around the survey area. After such a long dry period many of the arable fields and the permanent pastures were again suitable for feeding waders. Winds in the period were mainly from the south-east to west and were strong on the 1st. Temperatures were well above the seasonal average through to the 2nd when they fell to around the average with daytime peaks of 13C and over-night lows of 5C – 7C.

Light rain from dawn on the 3rd soon gave way to a period of heavy rain that lasted through to mid morning with a freshening south-west wind. A period of sunshine developed with a fresh south-west wind through to midday when another period of heavy rain arrived in the form of a thundery shower. This shower cleared the area again by 13:00 hours and the remainder of the day was fine and dry but cool with the westerly wind decreasing.

Waders and Wildfowl

The majority of the **Curlew** located were in the fields adjacent to the estuary on both of the high tide periods with very few birds found on the favoured inland field around Thornton Abbey. At low water up to 150 Curlew were feeding on the inter-tidal areas of Skitter Ness and the new sandbar off East Halton Skitter. Most of the birds that feed on this sandbar moved to the permanent pasture field 103 from 3 hours before the evening high tide. Birds that had been feeding on the sand bar off Skitter Ness mainly moved into the permanent pasture field 110 but there were movements between the two fields and also between other fields in the area particularly field 118, another permanent pasture field. The total of 310 Curlew found on this survey was the highest count of the series thus far.

Lapwing were mainly located in the fields adjacent to the estuary at high water and on the inter-tidal areas off Goxhill Haven and Skitter Ness at low water. At low water two main flocks of 280 and 510 were found off Goxhill Haven and on the large sand bar off Skitter Ness. At high tide there was considerable movement of the flocks between different fields as disturbance affected the roosts. Most of the birds found in the fields were roosting but there was some feeding and this appeared to increase in the late evening. Away from the survey area two flocks of 285 and 264 were found on other fields in Goxhill Marsh and these involved some of the birds recorded from the survey area. Away from the estuary 64 birds were feeding on field 93, sown winter cereals, and it seemed that these birds were separate from the main flocks found on the estuary.

The week's survey produced the highest number of **Golden Plover** recorded thus far but they were not located at roost. No Golden Plover were seen on the early morning high tide and there were <30 birds on the foreshore through most of the low water period but as the tide turned 3 hours before the evening high tide a total of 680 Golden Plover gathered on the remaining inter-tidal off Dawson City with all of the Lapwing. From here the birds flew up with the Lapwings and moved inland and then turned westwards but only 14 birds landed on field 112 and 48 on 111 the remainder being lost to view towards Goxhill Haven. Later searches failed to locate these birds on any of the fields in Goxhill Marsh or on the fields between New Holland and Goxhill Tilery that are often used as a roost so where the birds went is a mystery. Flocks of Golden Plovers do though make long movements up and down the estuary on winter days and it is possible that they moved west towards Read's Island or the upper estuary.

On the inter-tidal at low water in addition to the species noted above there were 138 Turnstone, 144 Dunlin and 15 Ringed Plovers plus 3 Knot and 8 Bar-tailed Godwit but only 22

Redshank. The small flock of 15 Black-tailed Godwits included a colour ringed juvenile Red Yellow, Red Red flag; this bird had been seen on the Humber through the autumn after being ringed as a chick in Iceland in July 2009. All of these waders moved off down the estuary as the tide rose and it is assumed that they moved to North Killingholme Haven pits to roost.

Red Yellow Red Red flag

11.07.2009	Ringed one from brood of two Langhus. Fljot, W of Siglufjordur Iceland
12.08.09	Alkborough Flats
14.08.09	Alkborough Flats
18.10.09	Killingholme
3.11.09	Goxhill Skitter Ness

A notable flock of 118 **Pink-footed Geese** was feeding on the permanent pasture in field 110 during the afternoon with a further 16 birds in the dragged stubbles in field 126.

Other observations:

A juvenile Marsh Harrier was in the region of Dawson City at midday and two different Barn Owls were hunting the grues in the afternoon.

A single male Stonechat was on the grues and a Snow Bunting flew west up the estuary.

Week 15 November 7th – 13th 2009

Survey date November 11th

High tide 13:36 a median at 6.0m

Sunrise 07:16 and sunset 16:08

Weather:

There was some further light rainfall during the first part of the intervening week with heavier rain falling on the 8th as a frontal system became static over the North Sea bringing light north-easterly winds but some really heavy showers with thunder, lightning and hail. Thereafter winds fell light and with cold nights and the first ground frosts of the winter there was persistent fog on several mornings with temperatures only rising to a maximum of 11C and overnight lows of 1C – 4C being recorded.

The survey date started out with mist and fog affecting the areas adjacent to the estuary but with bright sunshine only a short distance inland by 08:00 hrs. An overnight frost saw temperatures drop to 2C and it was still only 3C at 09:00 hrs. At the east Halton end of the survey area a lack of fog and a long period of sunshine saw temperatures rise to 11C by late morning before several banks of fog drifted through the area on a light south-west wind sending temperatures tumbling to 5C by late afternoon when mist and fog patches again started to develop.

Waders and Wildfowl

The first large-scale winter arrival of **Lapwing** on the Humber occurred in the previous week and this was reflected in the sudden increase in the number of birds recorded during the survey. With the exception of three birds found on field 93 all of the Lapwing were roosting and feeding on the fields close to the estuary near Goxhill Skitter. There was considerable movement of birds during the course of the survey and over the high tide period as disturbance caused birds to move between different roosting fields and also onto field F just outside the survey area; this field has been used by roosting waders on past survey dates and is a well known winter roost and feeding area for Lapwing and Golden Plovers. As the high tide did not cover all of the inter-tidal Lapwing flocks moved between the upper mudflats and the fields over high water with a peak count of 800 birds occurring on the inter-tidal adjacent to field 130 at high tide before the flocks moved back to the pasture fields. It was notable that at high tide most of the Lapwing found in the permanent pasture fields 110 and 111 were actively feeding whereas the birds roosting in the winter cereal field 120 were split about 60% to 40% roosting and feeding. A single **Ruff** was feeding with the Lapwings in the

permanent pasture field 111 and there were 15 **Turnstone** amongst the roosting Lapwings in field 120.

Around the estuary there had also been a large arrival of **Golden Plovers** with 7000+ in the upper Humber but amazingly just one bird was found with the Lapwing flocks on the survey area and none were seen in any of the adjacent fields.

Curlew numbers were down on the previous week and birds were found in differing areas with a notable concentration in fields around Thornton Abbey and a winter cereal field just west of the survey area where there were 52 birds (H). In another cereal field in South End Goxhill (J) 43 birds were feeding (see map). Fewer birds were found in fields adjacent to the estuary but 31 were in the permanent pasture in 116 and small numbers in the other permanent pasture fields adjacent to the foreshore. Field 103 a permanent pasture field that is sometimes favoured by the species was disturbed by an angler with uncontrolled dogs in the area of Parker's Pit.

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** was again found in field 110 where there were 131 birds with another two in field 120.

Along the Skitter Beck there were 14 **Teal** by field 75 and another 12 by field 13.

Other observations:

One of the 2009 breeding male **Marsh Harriers** from Dawson City was in the area of the pits throughout the afternoon. A **Common Buzzard** was seen along the Skitter Beck by field 13. A pair of **Stonechats** were on the grues and two **Water Pipits** at East Halton Skitter where 4 Jack Snipe and 50 Common Snipe were on the saltmarsh. Two **Snow Buntings** were feeding on the estuary embankment just east of Goxhill Haven.

Week 16 November 14th – 21st 2009

Survey date November 16th

High tide 17:44 a spring at 6.8m

Sunrise 07:25 and sunset 16:00

Weather:

A procession of Atlantic fronts had brought substantial amounts of rainfall to the area in the intervening week often accompanied by quite fresh to strong west to southerly winds. Temperatures were on the mild side for the time of year ranging from 8C to 10C at midday to 4C to 6C at night. While there was no substantial flooding water levels rose in all of the major water bodies and the Skitter Beck was particularly full while standing water appeared in some of the fields left under autumn stubbles.

On the morning of the survey heavy rain fell from midnight to 10:00 am after which some light showers affected the region pushed eastwards by a strong westerly wind that reached force 6 to 7 in the early afternoon. The day ended with long spells of sunshine but the wind remained particularly strong and gusty and cloud cover varied from three to seven octas.

Waders and Wildfowl

At low water all of the 480 **Lapwing** were found on the inter-tidal but as the tide started to rise in the early afternoon most of the birds moved onto adjacent fields to roost. A total of 202 gathered on field 129, a ploughed field used by this species in recent weeks but the flock was disturbed by a man driving a vehicle to Parker's Pond where he subsequently proceeded to work on fishing platforms. This party of Lapwing then moved back to the inter-tidal off field 113 before splitting into two groups and moving to roost in field 112 and field 120. The remaining birds from the inter-tidal had already gathered on field 120 where an eventual total of 368 birds were counted towards high water at dusk. The flock on field 112 numbered 88 birds and a further 251 were roosting on a cereal field to the west of the survey area towards Goxhill tilery. In spite of the large numbers of Golden Plover present around the estuary during the period none were seen on the survey date within the survey area or in any of the adjacent fields in Goxhill or East Halton Marshes.

Only 11 **Curlew** were seen on the inter-tidal even at low water as all of the local birds appeared to be feeding in inland fields. A total of 45 birds was found in the fields around

South End Goxhill, fields H and J on the map, outside the survey area, with just a few birds being found in fields 60 (15) and 85, 86 and 93 (16) while most of the population were located in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary, 103, 111, 112 and 118.

The strong winds may well have affected the number of birds feeding on the inter-tidal which were very exposed as the number of most waders were well down on recent spring tide low water surveys.

A significant flock of **Pink-footed Geese** was again found in field 110 where 193 birds were counted; the flock moved into field 112 during the survey having been disturbed from field 110 but their reluctance to leave the area demonstrated a preference for feeding in the permanent pasture fields in the area and also the lack of persecution of this flock in this area.

Other observations:

The male and adult female Marsh Harriers from one of the 2009 nests in Dawson City were seen over Clondyke early afternoon.

The female Stonechat was on the grues but in the very windy conditions no other passerines were identified.

To the west of the survey area on the estuary embankment 200m west of Goxhill Haven a flock of 10 Snow Buntings and 7 Twite were feeding on the tide wrack.

Week 17 November 22nd – 27th 2009

Survey date November 23rd
High tide 09:59 a neap at 5.8m
Sunrise 07:38 and sunset 15:50

Weather:

The weather continued to be dominated by fast moving Atlantic frontal systems with some substantial amounts of rainfall again falling during the intervening week often accompanied by strong south-west to westerly winds. Temperatures however, remained above the seasonal average reaching 12C to 13 on some days.

The 23rd started out bright with a force five south-westerly wind but clearing skies producing a sunny morning before cloud increased from the west to produce a cloudy afternoon. Temperatures increased from 8C at dawn to 10C before falling again to 8C by darkness. Some light rain fell in a short spell in the early afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 264 **Curlew** was found in the surveyed fields with an additional 13 birds on the inter-tidal at high water. The bulk of the birds on the fields were gain feeding in permanent pasture adjacent to the estuary with fields 103, 110, 111, 113, 114, 118 and 123 holding 93% of the birds located. Only six birds were on field number 60, in the Thornton Abbey area and 3 in fields 3, 4 and 5 at East Halton Skitter. There was some movement of birds between the different fields in response to disturbance from farming activities and some interchange with birds on the inter-tidal particularly in the late afternoon when birds gathered there prior to roosting producing a count of 78 birds in total. All of the birds seen in the pastures were actively feeding whereas those on the inter-tidal were roosting or loafing.

Similarly almost all of the **Lapwing** observed were found in fields immediately adjacent to the estuary at high water with 360 of the total of 775 birds moving back to the estuary as the tide fell in the late afternoon period. As with Curlew there was some movement of flocks between different roost sites in response to disturbance particularly of field 129. This field and 103 lie next to Parker's Pond where fishing has started gain after a long absence. The tenant and another person have taking to driving to the pond along the embankment on a regular basis, often daily, with their activities in and around the pond leading to disturbance of the two fields in question. This is a most unfortunate development.

No **Golden Plover** were found in any of the fields during the day but a large flock estimated at 8-10,000 birds was seen in the air over Paul Holme Strays and a total of 550 birds arrived on the inter-tidal off Dawson City at 15:20 settling on the upper reaches of the mudflats with other waders.

Although there were very few waders remaining on the upper inter-tidal at high water birds arrived in the late afternoon and concentrated in the area off Dawson City; most notable were totals of 216 **Bar-tailed Godwits**, all of which were roosting, 230 **Dunlin** and the above mentioned Golden Plover and Lapwings. While the Lapwings originated from the adjacent fields the other waders appeared to come in from the north bank of the estuary.

Other observations:

Two Marsh Harriers were seen in the vicinity of Dawson City and the grues both of which were different birds to those seen in recent weeks; a 2cy male and a new female. On the grues there were one possibly two Short-eared Owls and three Barn Owls. A further two Barn Owls were hunting along the Skitter Beck between the Haven and field number 13 where one owl was roosting in an ivy covered tree. The pair of Stonechats were again present on the grues and a party of five Snow Buntings flew west up the estuary.

Week 18 November 28th – December 4th 2009

Survey date December 2nd

High tide 05:30 and 18:00 spring tides at 6.8m and 6.9m

Sunrise 07:52 and sunset 15:42

Weather:

Another week of westerly weather with substantial amounts of rainfall falling in the local area produced some standing water in a few fields while the level in the Skitter Beck was particularly high. Some of the winter flood pools in fields such as number 13 started to fill with water and there was extensive water on the grues particularly at the East Halton Skitter end.

Over-night rain had cleared by dawn on the 2nd but it remained dull with low cloud and a light south-south westerly wind throughout the day. Temperatures varied little from 6C at dawn to 8C at midday.

Waders and Wildfowl

Only 13 **Curllew** were found on fields 68 and 60 but an additional 27 were in fields H and J outside the survey area but in the same general area around Thornton Abbey. In fact there was a general dearth of Curllew in most of the regular fields during the day. The sand bar off East Halton Skitter had 34 birds feeding at low water and there were also 48 birds feeding on the inter-tidal off Skitter Ness / field 130 but the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary had few birds until late afternoon when flocks arrived from inland from the south-west down Horsegate field road, (see map) dropping into fields 110 and 112 where there were 125 birds by dark. It was not known where these flocks came from but they were flying at height when first seen to the west of the survey area and had presumably travelled quite a way. Another flock of 11 birds arrived from the south appearing to come from somewhere south of the old railway track and possibly from fields in the Thornton Abbey area. The overall total of 183 birds was still well down on the last two weeks and it is assumed that some birds were still feeding outside the survey area.

Golden Plover were not seen on any of the fields but 165 were roosting with Lapwings on the inter-tidal off Dawson City at low water and subsequently moved off south-east as the tide rose, towards Paul Holme Strays. Another flock of 80 Golden Plover flew towards PHS over field 126 from inland. At times during the afternoon there were huge flocks of Golden Plovers over Paul with a conservative estimate of 20,000 birds being made from the south bank.

The only **Lapwing** found on the fields were on 85 and 91; winter cereals and a recently ploughed field inland of the Skitter Beck. This total of 417 birds was considered to be different to the large number 2050 found on the inter-tidal off Goxhill Skitter Ness at low water. There was a lot of movement of flocks of Lapwing during the day and some of the movements were tied to the birds on field 85. Flocks of 29, 90, 210 and 95 were seen flying quite high NW or

WNW from the Humber over Langmire Wood and fields to the north during the late morning prior to the flock being found on field 85. These flocks appeared to originate from the large sand bar off East Halton Skitter where a total of 400 birds was present at low water. These birds were thus different to the large flock on the inter-tidal at Goxhill Skitter but there was some interchange between the flocks with up to 20 birds seen moving between the two areas in the afternoon. Other flocks from moved north-west from the Humber and passed further inland outside the survey area. as the tide rose the birds from the Goxhill Skitter Ness flock moved off west inland or along the Humber to the higher areas of the inter-tidal between Goxhill Tilery and New Holland moving onto adjacent fields, outside the survey area, later in the evening. Why these birds did not move to fields closer to the estuary in the survey area as they have in previous weeks is unknown but one of the Marsh Harriers was hunting around Clondyke and fields 119 and 120.

A flock of **Pink-footed Geese** was again feeding on the permanent pasture in field 112; the flock contained 288 birds and was accompanied by three **Barnacle Geese**.

Other observations:

Two Marsh Harriers were present in the area around Dawson City, the breeding male from one nest in 2009 and a juvenile, female; both birds appeared to be going to roost in the reedbed there.

Two Buzzards were around field number 13.

A Willow Tit was in the hedge by Dawson City and three Stonechats were on the grues. A Barn Owl was hunting the northern end of the grues throughout the afternoon and flew off carrying food to the north west so was presumably feeding young in the nest. Another bird at East Halton Skitter end was seen hunting the beck banks but was then in the new owl box at the western end of field 72.

A Little Egret was standing in arable fields south of East Halton school and flew off south.

A total of 25 Meadow Pipits and a Common Snipe were in field 13 where there were also 32 Mallard and 5 Teal on the adjacent beck.

A flock of 190 Stock Doves was feeding in field 108.

In an exceptional autumn – winter for records of this species a **Cetti's Warbler** was heard several times in Dawson City in the late afternoon forming the first record for this site and the adjacent pits.

Week 19 December 5th – 11th 2009

Survey date December 8th

High tide 10:40 a falling spring at 6.3m

Sunrise 08:01 and sunset 15:39

Weather:

The run of Atlantic depressions continued through the intervening week with a particularly virulent front passing the area on the morning of the 6th bringing torrential rain for a period of two hours and considerable rainfall amounts through the morning before clearing during the afternoon. Several days in the week also produced considerable rainfall accumulations typically with rain occurring overnight. The result of this persistent rainfall was an increase in the areas of surface flooding in the survey area in particular along the edges of the Skitter Beck where fields 13 and 136 regained their flood water pools; field 13 had up to 20 cms of water over 70% of the field area by the date of the survey. Other fields holding standing water were 28 and 36. Several other fields in the area were also much wetter than in recent weeks. Temperatures were generally close to the season average or slightly higher reaching peaks of 10C on the 6th but falling to 3C to 5C at night. Winds were mainly from the west or south. The 8th was a day of sunshine with cloud increasing from the west during the afternoon as another frontal system pushed into the area from the west. In the morning winds were light southerly with temperatures of 5C to 8C during the day.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 246 **Curlew** was found in the survey area with an additional 102 birds in adjacent fields mostly in South End Goxhill. In the South End - Thornton Abbey area only three birds were in the surveyed fields in the stubbles in field 60 but on the other side of the road there were 81 birds in fields E and J both under winter cereals. Both of these fields have been known as traditional feeding areas for Curlew for many years. A flock 19 birds was feeding in a small wet pasture field opposite field 101 (K on the map). This is one of several small pasture fields just outside the survey area used for cattle grazing and attracts feeding thrushes as well as Curlew and sometimes Snipe. Of the birds found in the survey area 231 of the 246 were feeding in the favoured permanent pasture fields in Goxhill Marsh; fields 103, 110-112, 114 and 118 are all traditional Curlew fields. All of the birds found were actively feeding rather than roosting. Away from these areas just one bird was on the winter cereals in field 85 and 6 were on the permanent pasture field number 3 alongside the Skitter Beck at East Halton.

Large numbers of **Golden Plover** are still present around the estuary but the totals being recorded from the survey area remain very limited. Some of the larger flocks seen around the estuary have included 20,000 over Paul Holme Strays, 20,000 at North Cotes, 6000 Donna Nook, 12,000 Alkborough Flats – Whitton and 5000 Pywipe.

A flock of 220 birds flew WNW over fields 103 – 108 during the survey and continued in the direction of New Holland. Otherwise the only record was of 314 birds roosting amongst the Lapwings in field 120 over the high tide period. Why this species is not occurring in the survey area when so many are on adjacent parts of the estuary and yet large numbers of Lapwing are present seems strange.

The most spectacular sight during the survey was the gathering of **Lapwings** in the fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh. Large flocks were found in the permanent pasture fields 111, 112 and 118 and in the winter cereal field number 120. There was considerable movement between the different fields over the high tide period and the maximum number recorded in each field has been recorded in the excel sheet. In such circumstances it is usually difficult to obtain an objective total of birds present but counts of the roost in field 120 followed within five minutes by a count of the pasture fields with no movement between the two areas revealed a total of 5500 birds were present. Exceptional numbers of Lapwing seem to be present around the Humber with for example a count of 12,000 in the Alkborough Flats – Whitton area on the 9th. The winter cereals in field 120 were sown quite late and are still only 5-10 cms in height making the field suitable for waders. The crops in some of the earlier sown fields are already becoming too long for wader usage. This is more apparent in fields of oilseed rape where rapid autumnal growth has produced 100% ground cover and a crop height of 10-30 cms making these fields totally unsuitable for roosting / feeding waders.

A total of 58 **Turnstones** was feeding amongst the roosting Lapwing in field 120; 15 Turnstones were found in the same field in week 15. This field also held three **Redshank** and four birds were feeding in pools on the side of the road at Goxhill Haven moving into field 123 at the approach of vehicles. A flock of 62 **Dunlin** was roosting in the permanent pasture field 111 with Lapwings and Curlew.

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** in the permanent pasture fields 110 – 112 were all feeding in field 112 during the entire survey period; the total of 285 birds present was very close to the 288 counted in the previous week and suggests that the same birds are using the fields in consecutive weeks.

There were only five Black-tailed Godwits on foreshore at low water but one was a colour-ringed bird RY RRflag last seen at the same locality on November 3rd 2009. It had not been located at Killingholme of Pywipe in spite of intensive searches for colour ringed birds over the intervening period and this suggests that it's wintering area is restricted to the area of the Humber away from these areas and probably that between Goxhill and North Killingholme Haven.

11.07.2009	Ringed one from brood of two Langhus. Fljot, W of Siglufjordur Iceland
12.08.09	Alkborough Flats
14.08.09	Alkborough Flats
18.10.09	Killingholme
3.11.09	Goxhill Skitter Ness
8.12.09	Goxhill Skitter Ness

Other observations:

A single **Buzzard** was present in the area around field 13 where there were also 22 **Meadow Pipits**; two **Common Snipe** were flushed from the rough vegetation in the flooded area of field 136 where there were also three **Song Thrushes**. A **Kingfisher** was present on Parkers Pond.

On the grues three **Stonechats** were still present and a single **Barn Owl** was hunting.

Week 20 December 12th – 18th 2009

Survey date December 14th

High tide 16:43 a falling spring at 6.4m

Sunrise 08:07 and sunset 15:37

Weather:

Further rainfall fell over the area between the week 19 and week 20 surveys with substantial amounts adding to the already saturated ground and producing areas of standing water in some fields while the surface layers of the soil became very wet. Temperatures were close to the seasonal average through to the 10th when a sharp overnight frost affected the local area. a ridge of high pressure turned winds into the north-east on the 13th but increasing cloud cover brought heavy rain showers during the afternoon and evening. Winds swung to west overnight but in general were light.

Light rain was falling at dawn on the 14th with a light force 2 -3 westerly wind but low cloud and temperatures of 5C made the day feel rather miserable. Although the rain eased for a short period in the late morning it increased again from 12:00 hrs becoming heavy and persistent during the afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl

A total of 1550 **Lapwings** was found in the area during the survey split between the inter-tidal off field 113 and the permanent pasture fields 110, 111 and 112. The number of birds in each of the fields varied as they moved between the fields and commuted to the upper inter-tidal which remained available to the birds even at high water due to the tidal height. No other Lapwings were located around the survey area in spite of the apparent suitability of several of the fields that were wet. In addition to the birds noted above 1200 Lapwing were noted on the inter-tidal mudflats west of Goxhill Haven but none were seen on any of the inland fields in Goxhill Marsh. The number of birds recorded from sites in the upper estuary had also fallen from the record counts of the previous week and several flocks were noted moving down the Ancholme Valley from the Humber suggesting that feeding areas further inland were being exploited by birds from the estuary.

Similarly the number of **Curlew** found on the survey was well down on recent weeks and it seems likely that they had also moved inland to exploit feeding areas affected by the recent rainfall. The only birds found in the survey area were concentrated in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary with 115 in fields 110 – 118 in addition to which there were seven birds in the permanent pasture field number three at East Halton Skitter. In South End Goxhill 58 birds were feeding in winter cereal fields E and H. No Curlew were found in any other fields in Goxhill Marsh in spite of a search of the area and it seemed that the lost birds had moved well inland. Interestingly the count at Alkborough Flats on the 13th was the highest there this winter.

No **Golden Plover** were seen in the area throughout the day. Seven **Redshank** fed in the permanent pasture field 131. On the inter-tidal as well as the large Lapwing flock there were few birds but an increase to 56 Teal was notable. The three **Turnstones** on the foreshore were feeding on the carcass of a dead sheep!

A total of 1400 **Dunlin** was feeding on the inter-tidal west of Goxhill Haven.

Other observations:

A flock of 10 **Tree Sparrows** was feeding with Yellowhammers and Reed Bunting on the dragged stubbles in field 129 where 20 Fieldfares were also feeding on the hawthorn berries. A single **Marsh Harrier** was seen briefly in the vicinity of Dawson City but the light was so poor that it was not individually identifiable.

Week 21 December 19th – 25th 2009

Survey date December 22nd

High tide 09:00 a falling spring at 6.0m

Sunrise 08:13 and sunset 15:40

Weather:

From the 17th the weather took on a decidedly wintery feel with temperatures dropping to around freezing and light snow and hail falling. Further intermittent snow falls continued through to the 20th with an accumulation of 10 cms over the local area. As temperatures remained at or below zero through to the survey date there was no snow melt even in lengthy spells of sunshine so all the area was covered in a solid layer of snow. The only crops protruding above the snow cover were well-grown oilseed rape where leaves were visible above the snow cover. All of the ponds and lakes in the survey area were frozen over and most of the drainage ditches were also frozen. The Skitter Beck was ice-free as were some of the ditches that drain into the beck. The upper foreshore was also frozen over with ice on the upper mudflats and the saltmarsh. A hard hoar frost also coated most of the trees and bushes during the survey.

The 22nd dawned with some fog and low cloud and temperatures of -4C; the actual temperatures felt colder with a wind chill produced by the force four westerly wind. The day brightened somewhat from late morning as cloud thinned and the sun came through but this was short-lived with cloud increasing again from early afternoon.

Waders and Wildfowl

Many of the waders encountered during the day were concentrated on the upper inter-tidal at high tide moving lower down the shore as the tide fell. With all of the fields snow covered and deep frozen there was no feeding to be had on inland fields and the only birds found on the fields were roosting.

A flock of 26 **Curlew** roosted on field 107 taking shelter from the oilseed rape crop. A further 72 birds were roosting on the upper inter-tidal adjacent to field 130 but apart from single birds in field 2 and field 129 there were no other birds in the survey area. A minimum of 75 Curlew was observed flying inland down Middle Marsh Road prior to high tide towards Goxhill village but it was not ascertained where they were heading; it is possible that other birds also moved in this direction but were not detected earlier in the day.

Most of the **Lapwing** located were roosting along the inter-tidal from East Halton Skitter right through to Goxhill Haven where birds were roosting on the stone embankment. Birds were attempting to feed on the upper inter-tidal but even this area was frozen. Birds fed along the tide edge as the water fell. In addition to the birds on the foreshore a flock of 52 roosted throughout in field 129 and another flock of 104 roosted in field 68 near Thornton Abbey. The latter flock had been observed earlier in the week feeding in the permanent pasture field to the south where sheep were grazing but during the survey the birds were not seen to move from the roost. Five birds moved from the foreshore at East Halton Skitter and roosted on field 76.

Golden Plover were found in two areas with 92 roosting with Lapwing in field 68 at Thornton Abbey where they remained throughout. The remainder of the birds recorded were found near Goxhill Haven with 220 roosting in the oilseed rape field 122 adjacent to the Humber and 12 roosting on the embankment at high tide. As the tide started to fall all the birds from this flock moved to the adjacent areas of the inter-tidal and spread round the corner to the area adjacent to field 130. An additional 70 birds arrived from the west and joined the birds on the inter-tidal; these may well have roosted on fields by Goxhill tiliary.

No other birds were found on the fields but in addition to the birds above the foreshore had 380 Dunlin, 27 Turnstone, 17 Redshank, a single Ringed Plover, two Black-tailed and 7 Bar-tailed Godwits and two Snipe. A few Snipe were also seen in the unfrozen ditches during the

survey and a single **Woodcock** got up from the edge of Dawson City. A female **Goosander** flew west up the estuary.

Other observations:

Two **Little Egrets** were in the ditch between fields 88 and 89 and a single bird possibly one of the same was seen between 82 and 83. Eight **Teal** were in the Skitter Beck by field 1 and a further 80 by field 113 with an additional 44 birds feeding in the mouth of the Haven at East Halton Skitter.

On the foreshore two **Twite**, two Rock Pipits and a single **Water Pipit** were foraging between Goxhill Haven and Dawson City where there were also 20+ Meadow Pipits many of which looked rather bedraggled. A flock of 180 Fieldfares were feeding along the hedgerows and in the stubbles in field 126. Field 108 had a large flock of small passerines with 60+ Skylarks, 30+ Reed Buntings and 20+ Meadow Pipits visible from the embankment. A flock of 120 **Skylarks** was feeding on the oilseed rape in field 122.

Single **Buzzards** were seen over field 60 and field 113. A single **Barn Owl** was hunting along the edge of the grues.

Week 22 December 26th – January 1st 2010

Survey date December 29th

High tide 15:37 a rising spring at 6.2m

Sunrise 08:15 and sunset 15:45

Weather:

The spell of freezing weather continued to affect the area through to the 26th when temperatures rose above 0C for the first time in four days. Night frosts though, continued and the snow was slow to thaw but had mostly disappeared by the 27th. The large water bodies in the survey area remained locked in ice as did some of the ditches but the Skitter Beck was ice-free and the water level dropped by the survey date revealing some muddy edges. The fields in the survey area were free of snow and ice and the surface layers of the soil appeared to have also thawed out but it was the permanent pasture fields that seemed to be softer at soil level than the arable fields.

The survey date was cloudy with total cloud cover throughout the day and an east-north-easterly wind increasing from force four at first light to force six by mid afternoon. Some early rain showers petered out but heavier cloud began to appear again by darkness as a frontal system arrived from the North Sea. Temperatures remained at a fairly constant 4C to 5C throughout the day but it felt much cooler in the afternoon in the freshening easterly wind that was blowing off the cold North Sea.

Waders and Wildfowl

In contrast to the previous week when the waders and wildfowl were highly concentrated around the estuary due to the total snow and ice cover on the inland fields in this week birds were very widely distributed around the area with the three main species, Curlew, Lapwing and Golden Plover occurring on a much higher number of fields than normal. It was also notable that birds were generally feeding in small numbers with individuals occupying larger areas of each field presumably as a response to a low density of potential prey species in the still partly frozen ground.

A total of 136 **Curlew** were found in the surveyed fields with an additional 34 in fields adjacent to the survey area. Of the latter 17 were in the winter cereal field H and 17 in the small permanent pasture field K. It was most notable that there were only 8 Curlew in the usually favoured fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh, in field 118, and none on the foreshore or Grues. In fact most of the birds that were found were all in fields that do not usually hold feeding Curlew. Notably 33 birds were in the very small permanent pasture field 133 at East Halton, a field that has held birds in past winters during hard weather. There were also 28 birds in the winter cereal fields 49 and 50, the same birds occurring in both fields; again these are fields that seldom hold feeding waders but seem to be utilized at times of prolonged frost possibly due to the structure of the soil in the fields making them more accessible to feeding birds? The count of 59 birds in the permanent pasture fields 2 and 3 at

East Halton Skitter reiterates the importance of these fields to the species during hard weather.

Lapwing were much more widespread than in previous weeks and there was a notable concentration in permanent pasture fields some of which have not held Lapwing at all during the present surveys. The total of 315 birds found during the survey was an increase on the previous week but was still only 20% of week 20 and suggests that the hard weather had led to an exodus of birds from the area or at least a movement to inland feeding areas. Like Curlew there were very few birds on the usually favoured fields adjacent to the estuary.

Of the 258 **Golden Plover** found on the survey area 186 were in fields around Thornton Abbey; initially 162 birds were feeding in the permanent pasture field X south of the survey area but these birds then moved into the winter cereal fields 49 and 59 where they fed with Lapwings. The remaining birds were all feeding in the small permanent pasture field number 131 at Goxhill Haven. This small cattle and sheep grazed field appears to be an important feeding area for waders in times of hard frosts.

A single **Ruff** was feeding with three **Redshank** and Lapwings and Golden Plovers in the small permanent pasture field 131 at Goxhill Haven.

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** was again feeding in field 112 where 248 birds were present along with two Greylags. The birds flushed and flew down the estuary but later in the afternoon c140 birds presumed to be from the same flock landed in a permanent pasture field along Middle Marsh Road. This small complex of permanent pasture fields could well be where the Curlew had been feeding during the hard weather as some of the fields are difficult to see from the roads.

Nine **Teal** were in the Skitter Beck by field number 1 and a further 27 birds in the Beck by field 18.

As the upper inter-tidal was very wind blown there were very few birds feeding on the survey section even at low water but a flock of c90 Dunlin and 3 Black-tailed Godwits flew down the estuary at high tide towards East Halton Skitter. A total of 105 Mallard was present on the foreshore and some of these birds were commuting to adjacent fields notably field 110 and also feeding on the grues. Five Shoveler were also feeding on the grues and 14 Teal.

Other observations:

A single first-winter **Common Buzzard** was in the area around field number 113; this is assumed to be one of the two juveniles that have been recorded in this general area since August. Two **Marsh Harriers** were hunting in the fields around Dawson City, the adult male that bred in 2009 and an adult female.

The **Water Pipit** was still along the shore between Goxhill Haven and Dawson City and a female **Stonechat** was feeding on the grues. Flocks of 18 **Stock Doves** were feeding in fields 49 and 111.

Week 23 January 2nd – 8th 2010

Survey date January 5th
High tide 09:15 a high spring 6.8m

Weather:

The hard winter weather continued to affect the area intensifying through the week with severe over-night frosts and some extensive periods of snowfall. Daytime temperatures seldom rose above freezing but did reach 3C on odd days. The whole area was covered in a 2cms – 10cms snow blanket by the survey date and all of the standing water bodies were frozen solid, only the Skitter Beck remained ice-free. All of the arable fields walked were also frozen to a considerable depth whereas the permanent pasture fields were a little softer in places but most of these were also frozen.

With temperatures falling below zero for the 16th consecutive day this was the hardest spell of weather to hit the local area for 15 years.

A light north-westerly wind blew throughout the survey date with continuous light snow falling from 08:30 through to darkness. Although the fall was light an accumulation of 5cms occurred during the day. Temperatures varied from 0C at first light to 1C around midday falling again to -5C overnight.

Waders and Wildfowl:

There was another decline in the total number of **Curlew** found during this week's survey with a maximum of 82 birds being found. Most of these, 58 were roosting on field 107 from where they moved into fields 105 and 106 where they fed in the permanent pastures. Otherwise there were just four birds in the permanent pasture fields 3 and 4 at East Halton Skitter and 13 in 130 and 5 on 119 with two in field 126. Note that almost all the birds found were feeding in permanent pasture fields while the roost was in the oilseed rape field 107. Only two birds were seen on the grues but there were a further six birds on the edge of the embankment as all of the mud was covered by the high spring tide. Six birds were seen flying inland but a search of fields in Goxhill Marsh failed to locate where they had moved to and it is assumed that they travelled further inland.

Flocks of 22, 31 and 8 **Dunlin** were roosting on the Humber embankment between Goxhill Haven and Skitter Ness. An additional flock of 102 birds was roosting on the grues with Lapwings adjacent to field 113. The whole flock later moved into field 113 where they again roosted amongst the flock of Lapwings.

The number of **Lapwings**, 349 was very similar to the previous week and suggests that this small number of birds is attempting to see through the freeze without migrating. With no possibility of feeding on arable fields during the day all of the birds located were roosting with the exception of the 12 birds that were attempting to feed on the upper inter-tidal at high water. Of the total 144 birds were on the favoured fields near Thornton Abbey with an additional 12 birds being seen on field H and a further 42 birds were roosting on a field south of East Halton School. A total of 98 birds were roosting on the grues between Dawson City and field 107 and 52 of these birds moved onto field 107 during the survey. Taking the additional birds into account produces a total of 395 Lapwing in the area in total.

The 34 **Golden Plover** recorded were mainly roosting in fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh with 11 birds roosting with Lapwing on field 68 at Thornton Abbey. All of the birds near the estuary started to fly to the shore as the tide dropped suggesting that this is the area where they are being forced to feed.

A flock of 34 **Bar-tailed Godwits** roosted with Curlew and Lapwing in field 107 over high water. This is presumably the flock, of varying size that has been feeding on the inter-tidal off Dawson City. Just three **Redshank** roosted on field 107 with the other waders but 23 birds were roosting on the Humber embankment between Goxhill Haven and Dawson City. Redshank seems to be the species that remains on the inter-tidal areas during high water in preference to using field roosts if at all possible.

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** were grazing in field 111 where a total of just 66 birds was found.

In addition to the other waders noted above seven **Turnstone** were feeding on the Humber embankment and a flock of 28 **Wigeon** was grazing on the small area of saltmarsh above the high water mark adjacent tot Dawson City.

Other observations:

A single juvenile **Marsh Harrier** was seen in the vicinity of Dawson City and later towards East Halton Skitter on the grues.

A **Little Egret** was attempting to feed in the Skitter Beck and the adjacent little beck between fields numbered 3 and 13 and a **Barn Owl** was present in the same area with an additional bird hunting the grues. Three **Stonechats** were still on the grues, a pair and a single female. In field 108 there were at least 80 Skylarks and 40 Reed Buntings.

Only 12 **Teal** were found on the Skitter Beck by the old railway bridge.

Week 24 January 9th – 15th 2010

Survey date January 11th

High tide 15:30 a median tide at 5.9m

Weather:

From the 5th to the 9th some of the hardest weather of the winter hit the local area with sub-zero temperatures throughout and some extensive snow falls during the week leading to accumulations of up to 10cms on open ground with an increasing easterly wind on the 8th leading to drifting. The persistent overnight frosts had locked all of the standing water bodies in ice to a thickness of 4cms but the Skitter Beck and some of the adjacent ditches remained ice-free. All of the fields were hard frozen with the exception of areas exposed to the sun where snow had melted. Winds were from the north to north-east and fresh to strong on some days. On the 10th a sudden change occurred with the wind swinging to north-east and then east-north-east and cloud increasing to bring some long spells of light rain to the area. With the thick cloud blanket temperatures rose to 3C and a thaw set in with standing areas of snow visibly disappearing on the 10th. Heavier rain overnight accelerated the thaw and by dawn on the 11th, the survey date, there was little snow remaining on most of the survey area. Surprisingly the surface soil in the fields and on the Humber embankments softened rapidly and allowed birds to feed. All of the ponds though remained locked in ice with water forming on top of the thick layer of ice.

The 11th was a day permeated by thick low cloud and showers of mainly light rain blow in by a light east-north-east wind. Temperatures started out at 2C and only increased to 3C by midday but the thaw continued throughout the day.

Waders and Wildfowl:

A total of 438 **Pink-footed Geese** was found in fields 110 and 111 where there has been a consistent presence of this species for several weeks. The birds were all grazing in the permanent pastures and remained in the fields throughout the day returning to the favoured areas even after being flushed by dog walkers. At present there only appear to be about 1000 Pink-feet on the upper estuary so the addition of this flock makes a significant difference to the Humber total.

Only 64 **Curlew** were located during the survey apparently confirming that a large proportion of the local flock has left the area during the severe weather. Interestingly 32 of the birds located were feeding in the rough grass field number 78; this field had never held any feeding or roosting waders up until this particular survey; in addition six birds were in the nearby permanent pasture field number 3. Of the other birds 14 were in field 118 and 4 in field 114 with 4 in field 110 all regularly used permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary. Outside of the survey area 18 birds were feeding in the sheep grazed permanent pasture to the south of the survey area at Thornton Abbey in field X on the map. A small permanent pasture field grazed by horses on New Holland village at TA084236 also held 26 birds later in the afternoon.

Lapwing numbers fell to just 14 in the survey area clearly showing the effect of the severe weather having precipitated hard weather movements away from the estuary. Outside the survey area there were 15 birds in the pasture field south of the survey site at Thornton Abbey. Just one **Golden Plover** was seen in flight over field 120; a single **Redshank** was feeding with Curlew in field 114.

As this was a median tide even at high water there was mud on the upper inter-tidal available for roosting waders but the only birds present were 16 Knot, 103 Dunlin, two Turnstone and a single Redshank. The number of wildfowl had increased with 56 Teal and 74 Mallard present but Wigeon were down to 10 birds; four Gadwall had been forced off the freshwater by the freeze but surprisingly there were not more dabbling ducks present.

A check of New Holland later in the day located 16 Black-tailed Godwits including the colour ringed juvenile RY RRflag that had been seen on several occasions at Goxhill Haven in the survey area.

Other observations:

A ringtail **Hen Harrier** flew west over fields 2, 75 and 77 heading north-west; this was the first record of this species since September and is presumably a new bird in the area. A **Common Buzzard** flew south over East Halton Skitter but none were seen along the Beck. A **Long-eared Owl** was surprisingly flushed from the grass on the edge of Dawson City and flew into the hawthorn hedge; this is the first sighting of this species since August but the habitat is

correct for the species and this observation may suggest that at least one bird is resident in the area. A **Water Rail** was also heard in Dawson City.

A flock of 100 **Skylarks** was feeding in the oilseed rape field 122 and there were at least 40 in field 108.

Week 25 January 16th – 22nd 2010

Survey date January 20th

High tide 09:00 a falling spring tide at 6.3m

Weather:

Temperatures remained above freezing reaching 5C during the intervening week with low cloud and mist often affecting the area as frontal systems stagnated over the North Sea giving rise to light to moderate north-east to south-easterly winds. Rainfall amounts were small but melted snow added to the amounts and left some increasing areas of flood water in some of the fields particularly those prone to flooding such as field 13. All of the ice and snow had disappeared from the fields but there was still some vestigial ice in some of the larger ponds.

The 20th dawned dull, damp and cool with low cloud being drifted across the region on a freshening south-easterly wind that continued throughout the day. Light showers and drizzle continued to affect the area and overall it remained very dull with the low cloud persisting through the day; temperatures rose to 4C at a maximum.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** feeding in field 111 had increased to 581 birds a particularly significant total for January around the Humber when numbers typically start to decline from mid January onwards as birds move back to the west coast anticipation of the first staging flights in the migration back to Iceland.

The number of **Curlew** located in the survey area rose slightly from the previous week to 84 birds with an additional 36 birds being found in the winter cereal fields in South End Goxhill, fields E and J. Of the 84 birds in the survey area 14 were in field 49 and 4 in field 59, in the Thornton Abbey area but the majority were feeding in permanent pasture field sin Goxhill Marsh adjacent to the Humber. A flock of 13 birds in field 78 continued the presence of feeding birds in this formerly unused rough grass field by the Skitter Beck. Birds were noted moving between the South End fields and field 49 and field 49 and field 13 where three birds were seen of the first time in this survey.

Only 36 **Lapwing** were roosting on the fields in the area with 35 of these on the arable fields adjacent to the Humber, fields 113, 125 and 129 with the final bird on field 75. There were though considerably more birds roosting at high water on the upper inter-tidal adjacent to field 130 where 312 birds were counted. The combined counts of field roosting and shore roosting birds produces a total similar to the counts obtained in weeks 22 and 23 December 26th – January 8th suggesting that this number of birds remained in the local area during the hard weather.

A party of four **Mute Swans** was feeding on field 13.

A single **Woodcock** was flushed from the ditch at the eastern end of field 78.

As the high tide left the upper inter-tidal uncovered there were a number of waders feeding on the upper mudflats in addition to the roosting Lapwing flock with 268 Dunlin, 7 Redshank, 4 Bar-tailed Godwit and 4 Turnstone. The number of Mallard had increased to 108 but these birds are part of the larger local population that feeds mainly east of New Holland Pier and commutes between there and Goxhill Skitter Ness where a proportion of the birds roost.

Other observations:

A 3cy **Marsh Harrier** was in the fields around Dawson City during the morning and two different **Barn Owls** were hunting the grues with an additional two birds being seen further inland in Goxhill Marsh soon after first light. A **Merlin** was eating prey on field 85. A pair of **Stonechats** remained on the grues at East Halton Skitter and two flocks of **Stock Doves** were seen with 34 in field 108 and 16 in field 61.

Week 26 January 23rd – 29th 2010

Survey date January 24th

High tide 11:32 a neap tide at 5.6m

Weather:

The intervening week was dull and dank with some periods of light rainfall. Low cloud and light winds meant that temperatures remained above freezing throughout but daytime peaks were only in the region of 6C with overnight lows falling to 2-3C. The continued snow and ice melt combined with rainfall meant that there were extensive areas of standing water in many of the fields through the survey area by the survey date with the permanent pasture fields being most obviously affected. The East Halton Skitter Beck was very high with the water a murky brown due to excessive run-off from the arable fields.

The 24th started off quite bright with a higher cloud base but the weather changed quite quickly with low and thick cloud arriving from the west by 09:00 hrs. Some light drizzle dissipated by mid morning and temperatures rose from 4C at dawn to 6C by midday. By 13:00 hrs cloud thickened and light rain turned heavier during the afternoon. Winds were very light from the west-north-west.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The flock of **Pink-footed Geese** was still present and again feeding in field 111 where they were accompanied by a single **Barnacle** and a single **Greylag** Goose. A total of 562 Pink-feet were present a very similar total to the previous week.

There was a huge jump in the number of **Curlew** found in the survey from the previous weeks with an overall total of 361 birds being counted. The birds were also highly concentrated with all but one bird being found in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh. There was considerable movement of birds between fields 103, 106, 110, 111, 112, 114, 118 and 120 but consecutive counts undertaken on two separate occasions produced a total of 360 birds within these fields. The totals in the excel table reflect the highest number of birds seen in each single field during the survey and these combined obviously add up to a higher total than the number of birds found in the coordinated counts. The only bird found away from these fields was a single in field 78. No birds were found in any of the favoured fields in the Thornton Abbey area.

No **Lapwings** were found on any of the fields but 410 birds were roosting on the inter-tidal off the grues adjacent to field 130 in the area usually adopted by this and other wader species. No Golden Plover were seen at all during the day.

Duck numbers on the inter-tidal off the grues were impressive with 156 Mallard forming the bulk of the flock but also of note were three Goosanders and 12 Wigeon. Waders were thinly distributed with the exception of the Lapwing above and there were only 6 Redshank and 63 Dunlin plus 7 Bar-tailed Godwit, 9 Knot and 2 Turnstones.

A flock of 14 **Whooper Swans** arrived from the west having been reported over Barton earlier in the morning and flew down the grues before landing in the middle of the estuary.

Other observations:

The usual 3cy **Marsh Harrier** was in the fields around Dawson City during the morning; a **Common Buzzard** was in the same area and was also seen on the grues and hunting field 108. A second Common Buzzard was perched on the hedge by field 59 at Thornton Abbey. A **Barn Owl** that had caught prey on the grues was attacked by a Kestrel that flew at the owl from at least 800m away, with the Kestrel taking the owl's prey and flying off only to be chased by a second Kestrel. This type of food piracy is well documented and usually involves Kestrels robbing Barn and Short-eared Owls. A single **Short-eared Owl** was seen perched on the grues in the early morning. A male **Stonechat** was on the grues.

Week 27 January 30th – February 5th 2010

Survey date January 30th
High tide 18:15 a high spring tide at 7.2m

Weather:

The dull and dismal weather of the previous week continued through to the 27th after which a change occurred with a freshening north-westerly wind bringing a return to colder weather and sleet and snow showers falling on the 29th. Temperatures having been close to the average for late January fell rapidly overnight with a hard frost occurring and a covering of snow falling; some of the smaller water bodies were again frozen over by the 30th but all of the larger ponds remained ice-free.

Clear skies and a temperature of -2C greeted the survey date with a moderate north-westerly wind blowing; during the morning cloud cover varied from 3/8 to 6/8 but this cleared by midday and the remainder of the day was cold and bright. Temperatures rose to 3C by early afternoon but fell again towards darkness as another frost developed.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The **Pink-footed Geese** had been feeding in field 111 during the morning with c500 birds present but before an accurate count could be undertaken they were flushed by shooting on field 108 and moved off across the estuary landing to the east of Paul Holme Strays where they were still present in the afternoon.

Curlew were only found in three closely connected permanent pasture fields in Goxhill Marsh; 88 were feeding in field 111 with 54 in the adjacent field 112 while a further 93 birds were in the small field 102 another field not previously used by this species although the adjacent field 103 is a regular Curlew feeding area. the total of 235 birds was down on the previous week and no birds were found in peripheral areas.

Lapwings were found in two areas; a total of 33 birds was feeding in field 69, a field with long cereal stubbles where the species has not been recorded previously during the winter; in Goxhill Marsh 78 birds were feeding on field 110 and a further 163 on field 111; some of these birds were flushed by shooting and 66 moved to field 129 where they roosted at high water. A single **Ruff** accompanied the Lapwing in field 110. No Golden Plover were seen again during the day.

Four **Mute Swans** were grazing in field 13 and seven **Teal** were on the Skitter Beck by field number 3.

On the inter-tidal prior to high tide there were 11 **Black-tailed Godwits** including the colour ringed bird RYRRflag, the juvenile bird that has been present in the same area on and off throughout the winter. Towards high water it flew off with a party of six birds towards New Holland where it has been found roosting on previous dates. An impressive count of 1060 **Dunlin** was also notable with the birds feeding on the area adjacent to the grues by field 130 where there were also 9 Bar-tailed Godwits and three Redshank. Duck numbers were well down on the previous week with just 46 Mallard, 2 Gadwall and 3 Wigeon present.

Other observations:

The usual pair of **Marsh Harrier** roosted at Dawson City in the evening. On the grues two different **Barn Owls** and a single **Short-eared Owl** were hunting in the late afternoon and a **Merlin** was seen briefly moving towards East Halton Skitter. Two **Little Egrets** were roosting on the edge of the ditch between fields 82 and 84. A flock of 33 **Fieldfares** was in field 118.

Week 28 February 6th – February 12th 2010

Survey date February 6th
High tide 11:10 a neap tide at 6.0m

Weather:

Although temperatures overall remained below the seasonal average the week was warmer than most of the winter but a severe overnight frost from 2nd – 3rd was one of the hardest of the winter with temperatures down to -4C and some light snow falling in the evening before temperatures rose again overnight thawing the snow cover. Rain fell for most of the 5th only

clearing in the late afternoon as temperatures rose to 6C during the day with light southerly winds and low cloud.

The survey date dawned with fog, mist and drizzle slowly lifting and clearing during the mid morning as a light north-easterly wind picked up slightly. It remained dull and cloudy throughout the day with low cloud and temperatures of 5C.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The **Pink-footed Geese** flock was split into two with 340 birds feeding on the newly seeded grass field 104 and the remaining 138 being noted flying over the estuary before landing in field 112 where they remained over high water.

The total of 231 **Curlew** located in the survey area were again all in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary between field 103 and field 118. There was movement between the different fields as the birds were disturbed by predators and walkers / farm workers but the total recorded was an absolute count obtained by subsequent surveys of the different fields. The only other birds found were five in field E in South End Goxhill. The total of 231 birds was very similar to the 235 located in the previous week.

The bulk of the **Lapwings** roosted on the upper inter-tidal over high water in the section between Goxhill Skitter Ness and Parker's Plantation adjacent to field 130. Here there were 630 birds at high water. In addition 134 birds moved to feed in field 111 while an additional 85 birds moved to field 129 where they landed briefly before returning to the inter-tidal. Two birds remained in field 129 throughout but none were seen in fields away from the estuary although flocks of birds were seen arriving on the inter-tidal for fields further inland than the survey area. The total of 766 birds recorded was though the highest number noted in the survey series since December 12th – 18th.

Three **Golden Plover** were seen in flight over the grues at high water heading for the inter-tidal but they were not seen subsequently.

Two **Mute Swans** were grazing in field 13 and the pair were back on territory in Dawson City. Only 8 **Teal** were found in the Skitter Beck by field 13.

In addition to the large flock of Lapwings on the inter-tidal there were 56 Dunlin, 19 Turnstone and 15 Redshank. There were also a good number of wildfowl with 36 Teal and 28 Wigeon plus 94 Mallard and two Shoveler. Several of the Teal, a maximum of 29 birds, were feeding on the flooded areas of the grues at the Goxhill Skitter End where there were also two Shoveler and 16 Mallard.

Other observations:

The usual pair of **Marsh Harriers** were seen in Dawson City during the morning and a **Common Buzzard** seen over field 101 was later seen over fields 111 and 112 heading for Parker's Plantation. A single **Barn Owl** was hunting in fields 112 and 110. A male **Stonechat** remained on the grues. A flock of 90 **Stock Doves** seen on field 108 moved to field 110 where they fed with Curlew before moving back to field 108.

Week 29 February 13th – 19th 2010

Survey date February 16th

High tide 07:35 a low spring tide at 6.6m

Weather:

Temperatures remained below the seasonal norm during the intervening week with some bright days but also periods of rain and cool winds. The 15th was cold with a fresh south-westerly wind and light rain turning into persistent rain in the late afternoon with a considerable accumulation occurring by dawn.

The survey date was mainly bright in the morning with variable cloud and a light west-south-west wind varying from force three to four and temperatures ranging from 2C at first light to 5C in the early afternoon. Cloud increased during the early afternoon bringing localised showers of hail and sleet before clearer weather led to a ground frost developing soon after dark.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The **Pink-footed Geese** flock declined to 272 birds probably as a result of the first movements of birds back to the north-west of the UK in preparation for departures to Iceland. All off the birds were feeding in the permanent pasture field 110.

Curlew were again highly concentrated in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh with a total of 349 birds being located between fields 118 / 119 and field 128 to the south-east. Only two birds were present on the upper inter-tidal at high water and all of those located in the fields were actively feeding. No birds were again found in any of the fields around Thornton Abbey or in South End Goxhill. The total of 349 birds formed the highest count of the series thus far exceeding the two previous highest counts in late October and early November. The count was calculated from successive observations of the adjacent fields but note that the figures in the excel sheet refer to the maximum number of birds observed in each individual field during the survey as there was considerable movement between the different fields during the course of the day.

Most of the **Lapwings** located were again on the upper inter-tidal where 93 birds were present with the only field roost holding 49 birds in the ploughed field 129 that has been used on several previous high tide series. No Lapwing were found anywhere else in the survey area and the general fall in numbers accords with the typical departure date of continental wintering birds that usually leave the estuary from mid February and have all but departed by the first week in March in most years.

A single **Ruff** was feeding in the permanent pasture field 114 with a small group of Curlew.

Two **Mute Swans** were grazing in field 13 and two **Little Egrets** were seen along the Skitter Beck from field 78 to field number 1. Only two **Teal** were found in the Skitter Beck by field 3.

Totals of 18 **Bar-tailed** and 11 **Black-tailed Godwits** roosted on the inter-tidal over high tide and the Black-tailed Godwits again included the colour-ringed bird RY R Rflag that has been present in the area since November 2009. Other waders included 93 Lapwing, two Curlew, 7 **Redshanks**, 330 **Dunlin** and 18 **Turnstone**; all of these birds were on the narrow strip of inter-tidal mud adjacent to the grues by field 130. Totals of 14 **Teal**, 19 **Wigeon**, 4 **Shoveler**, 4 **Shelduck** and 116 **Mallard** were also resting on the upper inter or just offshore in the same area as the waders.

Other observations:

The same pair of **Marsh Harriers** were seen in Dawson City and single **Barn Owl** was hunting the ditch between fields 120 / 122 with an additional bird on the grues. A male **Stonechat** also remained on the grues and as in the previous week a flock of 90 **Stock Doves** seen on field 108 moved to field 110 where they fed with Curlew and Pink-footed Geese.

Week 30 February 20th – 26th 2010

Survey date February 22nd

High tide 11:05 a neap at 5.7m

Weather:

Another cold week saw some sharp overnight frosts particularly during 20th – 21st when temperatures dropped to -4C locally. Although mainly dry it was often cloudy and with generally light winds. A frontal system approaching from the south-west came up against the cold block of Arctic air covering the north of the British Isles and 5 cms of snow fell during the morning of the 21st before the front moved into the North Sea allowing temperatures to rise the snow to melt before nightfall.

Another sharp frost occurred during 21st – 22nd leaving ice around the area at dawn on the 22nd with a temperature of 0C and a fairly light east-north east wind. This wind increased through the morning to force five to six with complete cloud cover allowing temperatures to rise to 3C although the wind chill factor made the day feel particularly cold.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The **Pink-footed Geese** flock had increased slightly to 344 birds and they were feeding in the permanent pasture fields 110 and 112 but during the survey period in the late morning they were frequently disturbed by the farm workers and moved back and forth between these fields and field 128 where they roosted briefly. After several disturbance events the flock broke up and most of them moved off north-west across the Humber.

Curlew numbers fell slightly from the previous week but an additional 47 birds were located on the same day in the ABLE UK field to the west of the survey area and adding these birds to the survey total produces an overall count very similar to the previous week's record total. The vast majority of the Curlew were again feeding in a restricted area of permanent pasture fields in Goxhill Marsh from field 118 to field 103 with a few additional bird in field 126 and two inland in field 78 a rough grass field used by the species in mid-winter. The combined total from the survey was 303 but there were movements of birds between the different fields in the same area, between fields 126 and 118, and the total is the result of consecutive counts. All of the birds located were actively feeding with none noted as roosting.

With the exception of three **Lapwings** feeding on the winter cereal field 30 all of the birds found were initially feeding on the permanent pasture in field 111 where there were 446 birds at high tide. As the flock was disturbed later in the morning 27 birds moved to field 129 where they remained briefly before rerunning to field 111.

A total of 111 **Golden Plover** were feeding with the Lapwing flock on field number 111 and a further 17 birds were feeding in field 38 the first time that this field has hosted this species during the survey series.

Two **Mute Swans** were grazing in field 13 and the presumed breeding pair had returned to the Skitter Beck by field number 3 where there were also four Teal.

Although it was a neap tide the moderate onshore wind was creating a significant wash across much of the upper inter-tidal and this presumably affected the number of birds that remained there at high tide. Roosting wildfowl formed the bulk of the birds present with 44 **Wigeon** forming the highest count of this species to date while 14 Teal and 82 Mallard were typical counts; the only significant wader total was that of **Dunlin** with 134 birds feeding while four Black-tailed Godwits were roosting, 9 Turnstone and 4 Redshank were roosting on the stone embankment west of Skitter Ness.

Other observations:

For the first time for several weeks no Marsh Harriers were seen during the survey and the only Barn Owl was hunting around the edge of field 113. The flock of **Stock Doves** in field 108 had increased significantly to 155 birds a notable concentration for this declining species. A flock of 76 Fieldfares was feeding in field X and occasionally in field 61.

Week 31 February 27th – March 5th 2010

Survey date March 1st

High tide 18:40 a high spring at 7.5m

Weather:

It was again a generally cold week but the most significant events occurred at the weekend as a particularly deep Atlantic depression tracked north-east across Iberia and France into the low countries; Britain lay on the northern fringe of the depression but on the 27th it produced a day of almost continuous rain turning to sleet and snow in the evening. The amount of precipitation falling on already sodden surfaces produced localized flooding in the survey area. The Skitter Beck was at its highest level for many months but the level fell quickly prior to the survey date. Some of the fields on the beck side remained flooded at the time of the survey particularly fields 13, 136 and 36 and 13 and 136 attracted large numbers of feeding ducks. There was also extensive standing water in the permanent pasture fields 114, 112 and 103 with small flood-water pools in several other fields.

The willow plantation between field 82 and the Skitter Beck had been harvested and the plantation between field 87 and the beck was being harvested during the survey date.

March 1st dawned with a light westerly wind and a ground frost at -1C with a clear sky but the wind increased to force 3 – 4 by midday from the west before dropping away again to leave a

calm evening. Cloud cover varied from midday onwards with a general increase occurring to darkness. Temperatures rose to a dizzy 7C in the early afternoon but fell away again towards dark.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The **Pink-footed Geese** flock was again located in field 112 where they grazed throughout the survey only being flushed on one occasion by a passing aircraft. There were 210 birds with a single Barnacle Goose in the flock.

Curlew were again highly concentrated in the permanent pasture fields adjacent to the estuary. Initially 214 birds were roosting on the upper edge of the inter-tidal but as the tide rose all of the birds moved to the permanent pasture fields with birds being split between two major feeding areas. As in previous weeks successive counts of the different fields produced an absolute total for the flock but also peak counts of the different individual fields between which the birds commuted. The overall total of **491** birds obtained from successive counts of the different fields is by far the highest total of this species recorded from this area during the present winter but also in records dating back to the late 1970's when the highest count was 330 in 1982 -1983. The birds present on the inter-tidal prior to high tide were all roosting while all of the birds seen on the permanent pasture fields were actively feeding and this continued through to 18:00 hrs when 35 were noted roosting in field 114 at a time when birds in the other fields were still feeding.

Three **Lapwings** were feeding amongst the Teal and Mallard on the flood-water pools in field 136 but the only other birds seen were on the estuary by field 130 where there were 54 birds prior to high tide. As the tide rose 15 birds moved to roost with Curlew in field 114 but the remainder moved of high north-west and could be seen flying around over the estuary towards Goxhill tilerly. In addition to these birds a minimum of 130 Lapwing came up the estuary at high tide in several small groups and all moved west towards New Holland.

Two **Mute Swans** were grazing in field 13 and an additional two birds were in field 136.

The extensive flooding in fields 13 and 136 had attracted exceptional numbers of both Teal and Mallard for this part of the survey area and oddly a drake **Goldeneye** was also present on flood-water adjacent to the beck in field 136. The totals of **Mallard** in fields 13 and 136 were 24 and 54 while there were 152 **Teal** in field 136.

Good numbers of wildfowl were loafing on the upper inter-tidal off field 130 prior to high water before moving out onto the Humber as the tide rose. There were 104 **Mallard** and 30 **Wigeon** plus 16 **Shelduck** and six **Pintail**, three pairs. At 15:00 hrs there were 35 Bar-tailed and 7 Black-tailed Godwits feeding off Skitter Ness. As the tide rose these birds moved down the estuary and gathered with Lapwings and Dunlin off the southern end of field 130 on the inter-tidal. Only 120 Dunlin were present at this stage. In the 90 minutes prior to high water a total of 240 **Bar-tailed Godwits** arrived from the north bank, from the direction of Paul Holme Strays, along with 1200 **Dunlin** and 32 **Knot**. There was considerable movement of all these birds and the flock of Lapwing as the tide flushed them off the remaining areas of inter-tidal with some of the Bar-tailed Godwits returning to the north bank while 58 Lapwing moved off north-west high inland with 11 Knot and 30 Dunlin passing over all of the adjacent fields and being lost to view. The last Curlew moved from the inter-tidal to fields 103 and 112; as these Curlew moved into field 112 they were accompanied by two parties of Bar-tailed Godwits, total 42, the latter birds landing amongst the flock of Pink-footed Geese where they roosted. The remaining Knot and 57 Dunlin flew off high to the south over field 110. Thereafter the bulk of the **Dunlin** split into two flocks of 500 and 600 and these birds flew up and down the centre of the estuary ranging between Goxhill Haven and field 130; this behaviour continued for 90 minutes with the birds often flying slowly low over roosting gulls off Skitter Ness. The water surface at this time was particularly flat due to the lack of wind but was being disturbed by the strength of the running tide. Why these small waders did not roost on the fields or even on the grues is most odd as there was no disturbance of these areas and with extensive flood-water pools present many of the fields looked very suitable.

Other observations:

The pair of **Marsh Harriers** were in the area around Dawson City and both roosted there in the evening. **Barn Owls** were hunting along the Skitter Beck by field number 75, on the grues at East Halton Skitter, perched in the hedge by field 96 and down the edge of field 113. Two **Jays** were along the beck side by field 78 where there was also a flock of 38 **Fieldfares**.

Week 32 March 6th – 12th 2010

Survey date March 8th
High tide 11:25 a neap at 5.6m

Weather:

Winds from the north and east dominated the intervening week and this meant that temperatures were again below the season average as the winds originated over the cold North Sea. Rainfall amounts were very small and with some long spells of sunshine and the drying wind the flood water pools present in the previous week had largely disappeared by the survey on the 8th with the exception of those in fields 13 and 136 but all of these pools were frozen during the whole of the survey date. The night of the 6th – 7th saw temperatures fall to -5C in the local area and frost persisted in sites not open to the sun throughout the day. Another hard overnight frost with temperatures down to -3C left the start of the 8th as cold but bright as there was no cloud cover and the sun rose at 06:30 hrs. The wind was force three from the north-north-east but it dropped and was almost calm by midday after which the wind picked up again to force three by mid afternoon. Temperatures rose to 7C by late morning but the wind chill reduced the ambient effect of this spring like weather. Cloud cover increased slowly from mid morning as high cloud pushed west from the North Sea but the day remained bright and clear throughout.

As noted in the previous week the willow plantation between field 82 and the Skitter Beck had been harvested and the plantation between field 87 and the beck was still being harvested but the area was mostly cleared by the end of the survey date.

Waders and Wildfowl:

There was no sign of the Pink-footed Goose flock during the survey but a party of 16 **Barnacle Geese** flew west past Goxhill Haven. With a large semi-resident population of Barnacle Geese on the upper Humber around Whitton Sand, peaking at 634 birds in September 2009, it is impossible to know whether any Barnacle Geese that occur are truly wild vagrants but those associating with Pink-footed Geese are often assumed to be birds that have originated in Greenland and have joined migrating Pink-feet flocks in the autumn.

Curlew numbers dropped dramatically and as all fields in the area were well covered and fields in the adjacent areas of Goxhill Marsh and Thornton Abbey were also searched there was certainly a large reduction in Curlew abundance but whether this was due to an early spring departure of birds or movements to other areas of the estuary is not known. Waders and wildfowl have certainly been moving in recent days however, with late evening departures of wader flocks being seen on bright nights and it seems likely that the large peak of birds noted in the previous week involved pre-emigration groups in addition to the local wintering population. The total of 187 birds was the lowest count since the end of the freeze in mid January. Most of the birds were in the usual fields in Goxhill Marsh but the count of 43 in field 102, immediately behind a house, was unusual and more birds were in the dragged stubbles with nine being found inland on winter cereals in field 49.

The only **Lapwings** found during the day were 8 feeding in the permanent pasture field 111 and 27 in field 93 a winter cereal field that has been used by this species on a number of occasions during the survey.

Two **Mute Swans** were again grazing in field 13 before moving to the adjacent Beck.

As the pools in fields 13 and 136 were still frozen there were no duck on these pools but a total of 41 Teal were on the adjacent Skitter Beck and 8 Common Snipe were in field 13.

On the upper inter-tidal and the Humber off field 130 there were 93 **Mallard**, 22 **Teal** and 18 **Wigeon** plus 7 **Shelduck** and a single drake **Shoveler**. There were fewer waders on the inter-tidal but a flock of 12 **Avocets** formed the first spring occurrence of this species in the area for 2010; totals of 130 **Dunlin**, 7 **Redshank**, 2 **Ringed Plover**, 12 **Curlew** and single **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Lapwing** and **Ruff** completed the wader presence.

Other observations:

One **Marsh Harriers** was seen briefly in the area around Dawson City and a **Common Buzzard** flew west over the Grues mid morning; a second Common Buzzard was perched in old oak trees on the Beck side by field 84. Two **Barn Owls** were hunting the grues and a single **Jay** was again along the beck side by field 78. Two **Rock Pipits** were on the Grues and a **Kingfisher** was seen on the Beck by field 81 the first sighting of this species since the hard winter weather. A **Little Egret** flew down the Beck towards East Halton Skitter over field 75.

Week 33 March 13th – 19th 2010

Survey date March 14th

High tide 17:30 a rising spring at 6.6m

Weather:

A fairly benign week with little rain and generally light winds were the result of a dominant high pressure system sitting over the British Isles during the period. Temperatures remained below the season average at the start of the week but rose towards the weekend as long sunny spells helped to lift midday highs to 10C – 12C; it remained cool at night with overnight frosts still evident early in the period. Winds were mainly from the northern quarter and with the sunshine there was a considerable evaporation during the week with flood-water pools shrinking and water levels dropping in the major bodies; ploughed fields and the surface of oilseed rape fields became very dry and baked.

The 14th dawned with extensive high cloud and a light north-westerly wind and temperatures of 5C but it felt considerably cooler with the freshening wind. Cloud thinned during the morning as the wind increased and allowed temperatures to reach 12C in the early afternoon. By 13:00 hrs cloud increased again from the north and some showers of rain developed pushing south across the area. The showers intensified later in the afternoon with fresh and gusty winds around the showers but it became calm in the spells of sunshine between the showers and these died out by darkness as the winds fell light.

All of the willow plantation between field 82 and the Skitter Beck and the plantation between field 87 and the beck had been harvested was still being harvested and the ground left clear with small stumps.

Waders and Wildfowl:

A flock of 20 **Barnacle Geese** flew in and landed in field 103 where they fed throughout the afternoon; these birds seemed quite tolerant of human beings on the Humber bank and seem unlikely to be truly wild birds.

A total of 247 **Curlew** was a notable increase on the previous week; all but two of the birds were in the usual mainly permanent pasture fields in Goxhill Marsh; the other two were on the edge of the flood-water pool in field 136. There was considerable interchange between the different fields as the flocks were disturbed by a variety of raptors and the heavy downpours but a concentrated count produced the total of 245 birds in the fields between 103 and 120; the highest counts for each field are shown in the table.

No **Lapwings** or **Golden Plovers** were found in the survey area.

The pools in field 136 held 24 feeding **Teal** and 12 **Mallard** plus a Little Egret that later moved onto the beck. There were an additional 23 Teal on the Beck itself.

A total of 122 **Mallard** roosting on the upper inter-tidal by field 130 was the second highest count of this species in the area during the winter. The Mallard were accompanied by 12 **Teal**

and 12 **Wigeon** while 7 **Shelduck** were on the Humber along with 25 **Goldeneye**. Although there were 180 **Dunlin** feeding on the inter-tidal as the tide rose only 35 remained at high tide as there was a very restricted area of mud available.

Other observations:

The usual pair of **Marsh Harriers** were around Dawson City and a **Common Buzzard** was seen on the Beck side by field 84. A **Peregrine** flushed all of the Curlew from the permanent pasture fields as it moved north-east late afternoon. A **Barn Owls** were hunting the grues and a single **Jay** was again along the beck side by field 78. A **Little Egret** noted above was in field 136 and then fishing along the beck by field 13.

Week 34 March 20th – 26th 2010

Survey date March 21st

High tide 09:00 a falling spring at 6.3m

Weather:

A series of frontal systems tracked across northern Britain during the week but their effects were fairly muted in the local area until the 19th when rain fell for most of the night. Although the 20th started out fine but cloudy and dull some heavy rain arrived by midday and a substantial amount fell during the afternoon and evening leaving the Skitter Beck particularly full. Evaporation on the other hand had reduced the size of many of the flood water pools particularly those in fields 13 and 136 that had shrunk to <40% of their maximum extent.

A ground frost overnight from 20th to 21st left some ice at dawn but this soon disappeared as the temperature rose to 4C by 07:30 hrs. A clear sky and a light, force three, west-north-westerly wind made it feel cool but temperatures rose during the day as the sun warmed the air until early afternoon when cloud increased from the west clearing again by early evening.

Field 117 had been ploughed during the intervening week.

Waders and Wildfowl:

The only species of wader and wildfowl found on the surveyed fields was **Curlew** the majority of which were again in the series of fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh from field 126 to 131. The total number of birds located was 286 with just two birds being recorded away from the main fields on the floodwater pool in field 136 by the Skitter Beck railway bridge. The total was again calculated from successive counts of the different fields although the individual field totals were much higher due to movements of birds between the different fields. At least 11 birds were noted flying south-west along Middle Marsh road soon after first light out of the surveyed area.

No **Lapwings** or **Golden Plovers** were found in the survey area.

There were just four **Teal** and 22 **Mallard** on the East Halton Skitter Beck by field 136.

The number of wildfowl on the inter-tidal had fallen markedly with just 25 **Mallard**, 10 **Teal** and 12 **Wigeon**. As the whole of the inter-tidal was covered by the high tide there were just two **Ringed Plover** and 9 **Redshank** roosting on the rocky foreshore.

Other observations:

The usual pair of **Marsh Harriers** were around Dawson City where the male was nest building. Two **Common Buzzards** were soaring north of Langmire Wood and another was along the Skitter Beck by field 136. Two **Barn Owls** were hunting the grues and a single **Jay** was again along the beck side by field 78 where a **Kingfisher** was heard along with a **Chiffchaff**. At least three **Water Rails** were singing in Dawson City with others calling in Clondyke and Parker Pond.

The first Small Tortoiseshell was on the wing by East Halton Skitter.

Week 35 March 27th – 31st 2010

Survey date March 27th
High tide 16:00 a rising spring at 6.5m

Weather:

Generally dry weather had dominated the previous week with some showers including thunder and hail on the afternoon of the 26th. Temperatures had finally risen consistently to peak at 10C – 12C daily with overnight lows only falling to 4C – 6C. Although bright and sunny early on the 27th cloud increased quickly from the north-west as the wind increased to force 5 – 6 by midday. Temperatures reached 12C in the early afternoon but fell back to 8C by late afternoon as the wind eased and the sky cleared again to produce a touch of ground frost by darkness.

Waders and Wildfowl:

Most of the **Curlew** were again concentrated in the fields adjacent to the estuary in Goxhill Marsh with the vast majority between fields 118 and 103. The total of 222 birds was down on the previous week but at least 10 birds were noted flying inland to the west of East Marsh road into a small pasture field between K and B; this field is not visible from the road and could have held more birds than the ten seen flying into the field. The only birds found away from the above fields were two birds that were again found in field 136 as in the previous two weeks.

The only **Lapwing** seen was flying west over field 120 towards high water; no **Golden Plovers** were found in the survey area.

There were just two **Teal** on the East Halton Skitter Beck by field 136 most of the **Mallard** seen were already in pairs and were located in potential breeding areas.

The only wildfowl on the inter-tidal were 18 **Mallard**. As the high tide covered all of the inter-tidal the only waders found roosting were 3 **Ringed Plover**, 12 **Turnstone** and 5 **Dunlin** on the stone bank while there were 9 **Redshank** roosting on upper foreshore.

Other observations:

The usual pair of **Marsh Harriers** were in Dawson City where a new adult male was also present disputing the territory with the young adult male. A single **Common Buzzards** was along the Skitter Beck by field 136 and one **Barn Owl** was hunting the grues: a single **Jay** was again along the beck side by field 78.

APPENDIX G

**HUMBER INCA NORTH AND NORTH-EAST LINCOLNSHIRE AUTUMN AND
WINTER BIRD SURVEYS SEPTEMBER 2010 – APRIL 2011. G.P. CATLEY.
NYCTEA LTD.**

Humber INCA North and North-east Lincolnshire autumn and winter bird surveys
September 2010 - April 2011

G P Catley BSc Env,
Nyctea Ltd



Contents:

4	Introduction
4 - 5	Methodology
5 - 7	Field numbers
8 - 12	Table of field numbers, Grid References, crop types
13	Map of crop types end of August 2010
14	Map of crop types first week of November 2010
15 - 18	Weather September 2010 - March 2011
19	Disturbance
20	Disturbance map
21 - 99	Individual species accounts
100 - 109	Data tables

Introduction:

Nyctea Ltd were commissioned by Humber INCA to undertake winter bird surveys of the area covered by the attached map in North and North East Lincolnshire between August 30th 2010 and April 3rd 2011. The boundary of the survey area combined three previously separate areas covered by wintering birds surveys carried out between 2007 – 2008 and 2009 – 2010.

The area lies adjacent to five of the Humber estuary Wetland Bird Survey, hereafter WeBS, inter-tidal sectors and encompasses North Killingholme pits, a different sector, and these are referred to in the species texts. The WeBS sectors involved are;

Inner South H ISH Goxhill Haven to East Halton Skitter TA 120 254 to 147 230

Inner South I ISI East Halton Skitter to North Killingholme Haven TA 147 230 to 167 201

Inner South JJ ISJJ North Killingholme Haven pits centre TA 167 198

Inner South J ISJ1 North Killingholme Haven to South Killingholme Haven TA 184 178 - 188 172

Inner South K ISK South Killingholme Haven to beyond Immingham Dock TA 188 172 to 223 148

Mid South A MSA south of Immingham dock to Grimsby Dock tower TA 223 148 to 277 114

The aim of the surveys was to determine which of the fields within the survey area were used by wintering wildfowl and waders in particular those species associated with the adjacent Humber estuary; species included in the Humber estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) citation were to be highlighted.

Methodology:

Within the survey area separate fields and individual sites that were considered as being of possible use by wintering waders and wildfowl were all given a specific number to which counts of waders and wildfowl were referred in ensuing surveys. The numbers of the fields in the North Lincolnshire extension area, covered during winter 2009 – 2010, were the same in both surveys but the field numbers used in the North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire were changed to allow specific identification of all the fields.

As a precursor to the start of the survey the whole of the survey area was walked and the cropping regime in all of the fields was noted. A map showing the cropping regime at the end of August 2010 is attached below. Clearly as the autumn progressed the physical condition of many of the fields not under permanent pasture, changed as harvesting and ensuing cultivation of the fields took place through the autumn period and thus a further survey of cropping regime was undertaken at the end of October and a second map produced showing field conditions at this time. Some of the later sown autumn crops had not emerged at the time of this survey and thus some of the fields are shown as tilled rather than winter cereals. Most of the fields that were tilled at this time were in fact winter cereals later in the winter as oilseed rape crops had been sown earlier and were mostly evident as such by the end of October.

The whole of the survey area was covered during each of the 31 weeks of the survey period including the two weeks in early December when access to some of the fields was difficult due to snow cover and severe winter weather.

Due to the extensive size of the survey area surveys were undertaken on three days in each weekly period with additional observations being added as and when they were considered relevant to the outcome of the surveys.

All surveys were concentrated around the high tide period, when waders were likely to roost on fields inland of the estuary, but extended to three hours either side of high water and occasionally longer. On some dates surveys continued through to the mid tide or even low water periods but these data from low water are not used in the main survey results but are added as additional information.

All of the fields in the survey area were examined from a suitable vantage point, where practicable outside the field to prevent disturbance to any birds present, and all waders and wildfowl present in the field were counted and details logged on an individual field basis. Any movements of birds between different fields or different parts of the survey area were recorded on large-scale maps with the number of birds involved being monitored. Lines of movement were recorded on maps of the survey area for each species involved on each survey date. Locations of any roosts were also mapped and any relevant information with regard to bird behaviour was noted and included in a weekly summary of the survey. Observations of species other than wildfowl and waders were recorded where these were considered to be of local or national interest and these are included in the individual species summaries with some species also being shown on distribution maps with the month of recording being indicated by different coloured symbols.

Monthly reports were compiled and supplied to Humber INCA including relevant observations and a brief weather summary with tidal heights at Grimsby and monthly maps of wader movements were also added. A copy of all monthly / weekly

summaries is attached to this report. Copies of all of movement maps are also attached.

As the prevailing weather conditions play an important part in determining the abundance and distribution of waders and wildfowl around the estuary a summary of the monthly weather conditions is given below; in addition the maximum, minimum and mean temperatures recorded from the survey area during each of the survey weeks is also presented and where relevant these are compared with the individual species analyses where weather conditions were clearly implicated in the sudden changes in abundance.

Notes were also recorded on obvious disturbance events where these were considered to be implicated in the observed movements of or the distribution of roosting or feeding waders and wildfowl.

Note in the maps that cover wader movements and single additional species that September has five weeks, August 30th – October 3rd, October four weeks, 4th – 31st, November 4 weeks 1st – 28th, December 5 weeks November 29th – January 2nd, January 4 weeks, 3rd – 30th, February 4 weeks, January 31st – February 27th and March 5 weeks, February 28th – April 3rd.

Survey area September 2010 - April 2011 showing individual field numbers

Field numbers winter survey September 2010 - April 2011







Field numbers and crop types survey 2010-2011

Old No	NGR	New No	Crops at August 29th 2010	crops at mid November
1	TA138224	1	dragged	wc
2	TA135223	2	pp	pp
3	TA131221	3	pp	pp
4	TA135220	4	stubble	stubble
5	TA138222	5	pp	pp
6	TA132218	6	dragged	sown
7	TA135218	7	stubble	stubble
8	TA138218	8	stubble	stubble
9	TA131215	9	wheat	sown
10	TA134214	10	dragged	wc
11	TA136215	11	stubble	osr
12	TA138215	12	dragged	wc
13	TA128213	13	dragged	wc
14	TA131213	14	wheat	wc
15	TA138213	15	osr	wc
16	TA131211	16	dragged	osr stubble
17	TA138209	17	dragged	wc
18	TA125208	18	stubble	wc
19	TA128209	19	dragged	wc
20	TA130207	20	wheat	osr stubble
21	TA133208	21	dragged	wc
22	TA135208	22	dragged	wc
23	TA137207	23	wheat	rough grass
24	TA125204	24	stubble	ploughed
25	TA131204	25	dragged	wc
26	TA130203	26	dragged	wc
27	TA125202	27	dragged	wc
28	TA123198	28	wheat	wc
29	TA126199	29	stubble	wc
30	TA131200	30	dragged	wc
31	TA133199	31	pp	pp
32	TA130198	32	stubble	wc
33	TA127197	33	pp	pp
34	TA125197	34	pp	pp
35	TA124196	35	stubble	wc
36	TA121193	36	pp	pp
139	TA134202	37	pp	pp
38	TA125195	38	stubble	ploughed
39	TA128195	39	dragged	wc
40	TA130195	40	pp	pp
41	TA132197	41	pp	pp
42	TA133197	42	pp	pp
43	TA133196	43	dragged	wc
44	TA135200	44	pp	pp
45	TA134199	45	pp	pp
46	TA135198	46	pp	pp
47	TA136197	47	pp	pp
48	TA135197	48	pp	pp
49	TA120203	49	dragged	osr
50	TA121199	50	dragged	osr
51	TA119200	51	stubble	osr
52	TA115203	52	stubble	stubble osr
53	TA117200	53	stubble	stubble osr
54	TA118197	54	dragged	stubble osr
55	TA117197	55	dragged	stubble osr
56	TA114199	56	worked	stubble osr
57	TA113198	57	worked	osr
58	TA114200	58	pp	pp
59	TA114192	59	stubble	sown
60	TA110196	60	worked	osr
61	TA109192	61	stubble	sown
62	TA114196	62	dragged	wc
63	TA117206	63	pp	pp
64	TA119195	64	dragged	stubble osr
65	TA115196	65	dragged	wc
66	TA117195	66	pp	pp
67	TA120205	67	maize	sown
68	TA111193	68	stubble	sown
69	TA108196	69	stubble	sown
70	TA127204	70	stubble	ploughed
71	TA124219	71	pp	pp
72	TA143231	72	dragged	wc
73	TA142228	73	dragged	stubble osr
74	TA141230	74	dragged	stubble osr
75	TA135225	75	dragged	wc
76	TA138228	76	dragged	stubble osr
77	TA133226	77	stubble	osr stubble
78	TA128223	78	rough grass	rough grass
79	TA131227	79	stubble	stubble
80	TA134251	80	rough grass / pp	rough grass / pp
81	TA128219	81	pp	pp
82	TA126218	82	wheat	wc
83	TA124218	83	wheat	wc
84	TA125214	84	stubble	sown
85	TA124216	85	stubble	sown
86	TA122214	86	stubble	sown
87	TA120210	87	wheat / maize	wc
88	TA116208	88	stubble	wc
89	TA116207	89	stubble	wc
90	TA118210	90	osr	wc

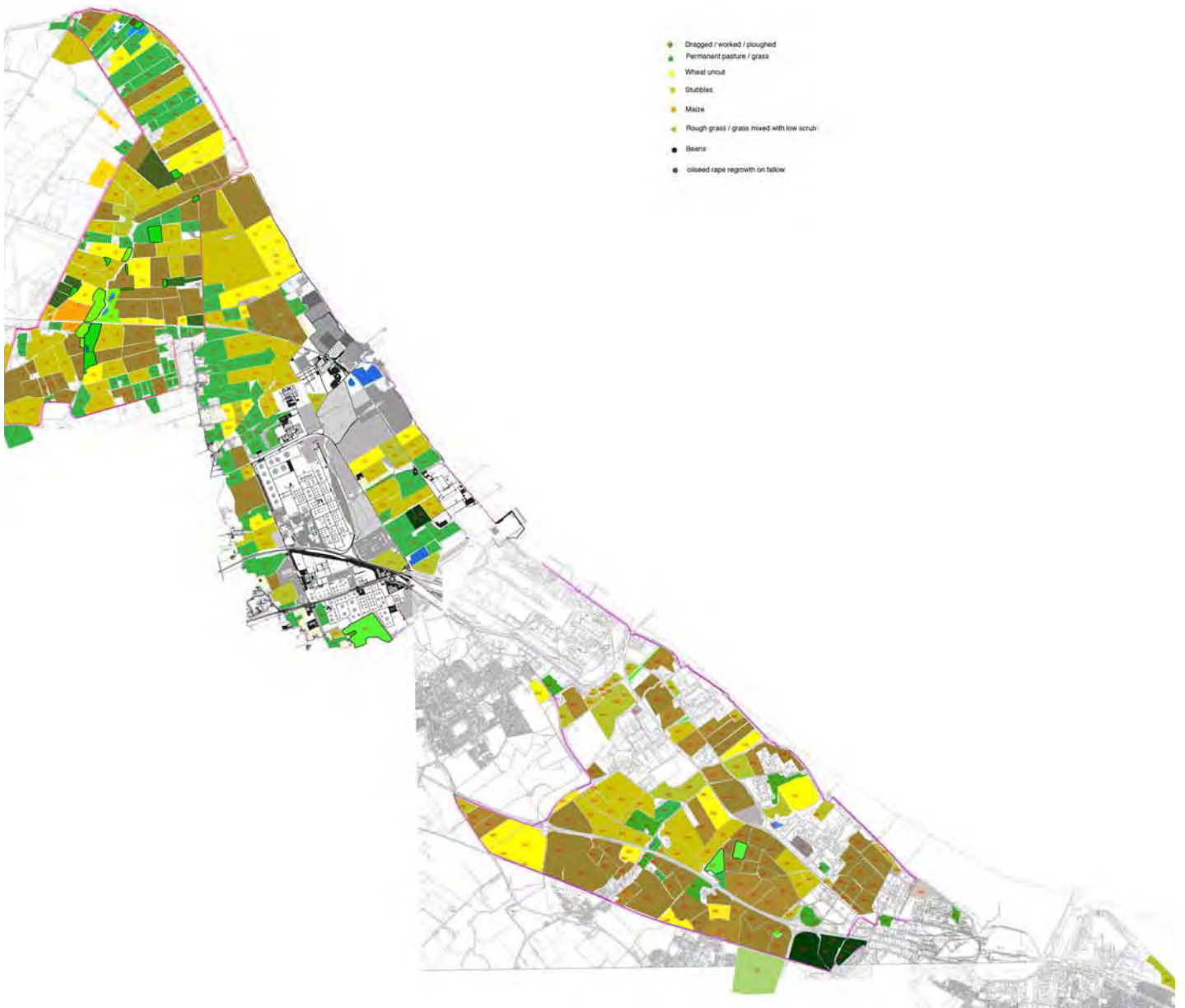
Old No	NGR	New No	Crops at August 29th 2010	crops at mid November
91	TA119212	91	osr	sown
92	TA120212	92	osr	sown
93	TA121216	93	stubble	sown
94	TA121218	94	pp	pp
96	TA122220	96	pp	pp
97	TA125221	97	stubble	osr
98	TA125224	98	dragged	stubble
99	TA126227	99	stubble	sown
100	TA129229	100	stubble	stubble
101	TA132231	101	plough / rough grass	wc
102	TA133237	102	pp	pp
103	TA137240	103	pp	pp
104	TA132239	104	pp	pp
105	TA136241	105	pp	pp
106	TA138242	106	pp	pp
107	TA134242	107	stubble	wc
108	TA136246	108	dragged	wc
109	TA129243	109	pp	pp
110	TA132245	110	pp	pp
111	TA128245	111	pp	pp
112	TA132248	112	pp	pp
113	TA129248	113	wheat	ploughed
114	TA129250	114	pp	pp
115	TA127250	115	pp	pp
116	TA125249	116	pp	pp
117	TA129253	117	long weed crop	long weed crop
118	TA125250	118	pp	pp
119	TA128254	119	pp	pp
120	TA125252	120	stubble	dragged stubble
121	TA122252	121	pp	pp
122	TA122253	122	dragged	wc
123	TA120253	123	pp	pp
124	TA140232	124	wheat	wc
125	TA139233	125	wheat	wc
126	TA138238	126	plough	wc
127	TA134235	127	stubble	wc
128	TA136236	128	stubble	wc
129	TA139238	129	stubble	wc
130	TA136248	130	pp	pp
131	TA118253	131	pp	pp
132	TA139206	132	osr	wc
133	TA139205	133	pp	pp
134	TA138205	134	pp	pp
135	TA137205	135	pp	pp
136	TA126210	136	rough grass	rough grass
137	TA136205	137	pp	pp
A	TA122241	A		
B	TA126238	B		
C	TA125230	C		
D	TA132193	D		
E	TA108199	E		
F	TA120249	F	stubble	
G	TA117192	G		
H	TA104192	H		
J	TA109202	J		
K	TA128234	K		
M	TA128233	M	pp	pp
X	TA112189	X	pp	pp
Y	TA127191	Y		
Z	TA124190	Z		
SHB NL09 Foreshore	TA141242			
SHB NL09 Pond	TA140241			
1	TA 147225	138	dragged / wheat	sown / dragged
2	TA 141224	139	dragged	wc
3	TA 144223	140	stubble	wc
4	TA 145216	141	stubble	stubble osr
5	TA 149220	142	wheat	stubble osr
6	TA 151222	143	wheat	stubble osr
7	TA 152219	144	wheat	stubble osr
8	TA 150218	145	wheat	stubble osr
9	TA 152217	146	wheat	stubble osr
10	TA 152216	147	wheat	stubble osr
11	TA 152214	148	wheat	stubble osr
12	TA 152215	149	wheat	stubble osr
13	TA 141211	150	pp	pp
14	TA 142209	151	pp	pp
15	TA 145210	152	wheat	stubble osr
16	TA 147209	153	site	site
17	TA 150212	154	wheat	stubble osr
18	TA 142207	155	stubble	ploughed
19	TA 144208	156	pp	pp
20	TA 146208	157	pp	pp
21	TA 147208	158	barley	wc
22	TA 146206	159	stubble	wc
23	TA 148206	160	pp	pp
24	TA 150208	161	dragged	wc
25	TA 152209	162	dragged	wc
26	TA 152205	163	dragged	wc
27	TA 154206	164	dragged	wc

Old No	NGR	New No	Crops at August 29th 2010	crops at mid November
28	TA 155204	165	dragged	wc
29	TA 155209	166	pp	pp
30	TA 142204	167	pp	pp
31	TA 142202	168	pp	pp
32	TA 145202	169	stubble	wc
33	TA 147203	170	stubble	wc
34	TA 151203	171	stubble	wc
35	TA 142199	172	pp	pp
36	TA 144199	173	pp	pp
37	TA 148200	174	pp	pp
38	TA 151199	175	stubble	ploughed
39	TA 143197	176	pp	pp
40	TA 143196	177	pp	pp
41	TA 144199	178	pp	pp
42	TA 146195	179	pp	pp
43	TA 149196	180	pp	pp
44	TA 150197	181	stubble	stubble
45	TA 144193	182	wheat	osr
46	TA 146192	183	rough grass	rough grass
47	TA 147193	184	wheat	ploughed
48	TA 141188	185	pp	pp
49	TA 143189	186	pp	pp
50	TA 144190	187	wheat	osr
51	TA 146191	188	rough grass	rough grass
52	TA 146190	189	pp	pp
53	TA 147189	190	pp	pp
54	TA 147190	191	pp	pp
55	TA 149191	192	pp	pp
56	TA 150193	193	stubble	stubble
57	TA 151193	194	stubble	stubble
58	TA 152197	195	stubble	wc
59	TA 154198	196	stubble	wc
60	TA 147188	197	pp	pp
61	TA 147189	198	pp	pp
62	TA 149189	199	pp	pp
63	TA 151190	200	pp	pp
64	TA 144184	201	pp	pp
65	TA 146185	202	dragged	sown
66	TA 148187	203	pp	pp
67	TA 151188	204	pp	pp
68	TA147184	205	stubble	wc
69	TA 144179	206	pp	pp
70	TA 147179	207	dragged	wc
71	TA 147176	208	pp	pp
72	TA 150177	209	pp	pp
73	TA 147174	210	pp	pp
74	TA 149175	211	wheat	stubble
75	TA 149173	212	stubble	stubble osr
76	TA 150172	213	stubble / pp	ploughed
77	TA 150168	214	pp	pp
78	TA 151166	215	worked	osr
79	TA 153164	216	rough grass	grass
80	TA 153162	217	pp	pp
81	TA 156160	218	pp / dragged	
82	TA 159156	219	pp	pp
83	TA 161157	220	rough grass	rough grass
84	TA 164157	221	pp	pp
85	TA 167158	222	wood	wood
86	TA 176168	223	rough grass	rough grass
87	TA 170169	224	rough grass	rough grass
88	TA 175173	225	pp	pp
89	TA 171174	226	pp	pp
90	TA 173176	227	beans	sown
91	TA 175176	228	beans	sown
92	TA 176178	229	stubble	stubble
93	TA 177177	230	stubble	sown
94	TA 173178	231	stubble	stubble
95	TA 169176	232	pp	pp
96	TA 170179	233	stubble	sown
97	TA 169180	234	stubble	stubble osr
98	TA 173181	235	pp	pp
99	TA 166181	236	pp	pp
100	TA 168173	237	stubble	wc
101	TA 171184	238	rough grass	baled hay
102	TA 171186	239	rough grass	baled hay
103	TA 176186	240	rough grass	pp
104	TA 174186	241	stubble	wc
105	TA 173187	242	stubble	wc
106	TA 173189	243	wheat	osr
107	TA 170187	244	rough grass	baled hay
108	TA 166184	245	wheat	stubble osr
109	TA 158194	246	rough grass	rough grass
110	TA178174	247	rough grass	rough grass
111	TA159162	248	pp	pp

Old No	NGR	New No	Crops at August 29th 2010	crops at mid November
1	TA195149	249	pp	pp
2	TA194148	250	wheat	stubble
3	TA196147	251	site	site
4	TA199146	252	rough grass	rough grass
5	TA198144	253	rough grass	rough grass
6	TA202147	254	rough grass	rough grass
7	TA202148	255	rough grass	rough grass
8	TA204149	256	rough grass	rough grass
9	TA204148	257	rough grass	rough grass
10	TA205150	258	rough grass	rough grass
11	TA205148	259	rough grass	rough grass
12	TA206150	260	rough grass	rough grass
13	TA207148	261	rough grass	rough grass
14	TA206147	262	rough grass	rough grass
15	TA204144	263	gypsum beds	gypsum beds
16	TA211149	264	dragged	wc
17	TA209145	265	steel girders	steel girders
18	TA212147	266	worked	wc
19	TA209151	267	rough grass hardcore	rough grass hardcore
20	TA213153	268	ploughed	wc
21	TA215149	269	rough grass	rough grass
22	TA214144	270	dragged	osr
23	TA216142	271	stubble	wc
24	TA217140	272	dragged	wc
25	TA221142	273	dragged	wc
26	TA223142	274	dragged	wc
27	TA224141	275	dragged	osr
28	TA225140	276	wheat	ploughed
29	TA221135	277	dragged	wc
30	TA225136	278	rough grass	sown
31	TA227137	279	dragged	wc
32	TA226131	280	worked	worked chalk
33	TA225131	281	worked	worked chalk
34	TA224131	282	worked	worked chalk
35	TA223131	283	worked	worked chalk
36	TA222131	284	worked / chalk	worked chalk
37	TA233131	285	wheat rough grass	ploughed
38	TA231127	286	pond	pond
39	TA230133	287	mown grass	pp
40	TA231138	288	dragged	osr
41	TA225144	289	bramble	bramble
42	TA244124	290	dragged	sown
43	TA247121	291	dragged	sown
44	TA248123	292	rough grass	rough grass
45	TA244120	293	dragged	sown
46	TA246118	294	dragged	sown
47	TA249120	295	rough grass / hard	rough grass / hard standing
48	TA254117	296	hardcore pools	open soil
49	TA259113	297	grass	pp
50	TA220132	298	wheat	osr
51	TA221129	299	wheat	osr
52	TA219128	300	dragged	wc
53	TA211125	301	pp	pp
54	TA213123	302	rough grass	rough grass
55	TA215123	303	stubble	osr stubble
56	TA214126	304	stubble	osr stubble
57	TA216126	305	stubble	wc
58	TA218133	306	rough grass	mown rough grass
59	TA214132	307	rough grass	mown rough grass
60	TA213130	308	pp	pp
61	TA209125	309	stubble peas	wc
62	TA207126	310	stubble peas	wc
63	TA204127	311	stubble peas	wc
64	TA211127	312	pp	pp
65	TA208128	313	pp	pp
66	TA208130	314	stubble peas	wc
67	TA205129	315	stubble peas	wc
68	TA207131	316	stubble peas	wc
69	TA205133	317	stubble	stubble osr
70	TA202131	318	stubble peas	stubble osr
71	TA203134	319	stubble	stubble osr
72	TA197131	320	wheat	stubble
73	TA202130	321	stubble peas	wc
74	TA198129	322	dragged	wc
75	TA203136	323	worked	wc
76	TA221119	324	grass	grass
77	TA220121	325	scrub	scrub
78	TA219123	326	stubble	wc
79	TA223126	327	stubble	osr
80	TA224118	328	dragged	osr
81	TA224121	329	dragged	wc
82	TA227123	330	dragged	wc
83	TA226121	331	dragged	wc
84	TA230121	332	dragged	osr
85	TA229119	333	dragged	osr

Old No	NGR	New No	Crops at August 29th 2010	crops at mid November
86	TA225126	334	dragged	wc
87	TA228124	335	dragged	wc
88	TA230123	336	stubble	ploughed
89	TA227117	337	dragged	osr
90	TA229115	338	dragged	osr
91	TA232114	339	rough grass	rough rass
92	TA232117	340	dragged	osr
93	TA234118	341	osr stubble	wc
94	TA236119	342	osr stubble	wc
95	TA233122	343	osr stubble	ploughed
96	TA235113	344	reedmace grass	reedmace grass
97	TA237112	345	reedmace grass	reedmace grass
98	TA241118	346	dragged	sown
99	TA243117	347	dragged	sown
100	TA245115	348	dragged	sown
101	TA243114	349	dragged	dragged
102	TA242116	350	dragged	dragged
103	TA240117	351	dragged	dragged
104	TA238119	352	rough grass	rough grass
105	TA191124	353	wheat	sown
106	TA188124	354	wheat	sown
107	TA191121	355	wheat	sown
108	TA187126	356	wheat	sown
109	TA185128	357	ploughed	sown
110	TA184129	358	dragged	sown
111	TA182131	359	rough grass	sown
112	TA208123	360	wheat	wc
113	TA204123	361	dragged	osr
114	TA207123	362	wheat	wc
115	TA204121	363	dragged	osr
116	TA202123	364	dragged	osr
117	TA203125	365	dragged	osr
118	TA197123	366	dragged	wc
119	TA200120	367	dragged	wc
120	TA206120	368	dragged	osr
121	TA210123	369	pp	pp
122	TA212122	370	pp	pp
123	TA213121	371	dragged	wc
124	TA210117	372	dragged	wc
125	TA206116	373	grass	wc
126	TA207117	374	dragged	wc
127	TA209122	375	pp	pp
128	TA212120	376	pp	pp
129	TA214118	377	dragged	wc
130	TA216119	378	dragged	wc
131	TA232111	379	dragged	osr
132	TA230108	380	dragged	osr
133	TA227113	381	dragged	osr
134	TA227110	382	dragged	osr
135	TA222111	383	dragged	osr
136	TA221114	384	wheat	osr
137	TA224114	385	dragged	osr
138	TA221116	386	dragged	osr
139	TA218112	387	dragged	wc
140	TA214113	388	wheat	osr
141	TA164115	389	dragged	wc
142	TA218117	390	pp	pp
143	TA229111	391	dragged	osr
144	TA239109	392	beans	wc
145	TA242108	393	beans	wc
146	TA238107	394	beans	wc
147	TA235108	395	beans	wc
148	TA241107	396	beans	wc
149	TA223124	397	dragged	wc
150	TA242122	398	dragged	sown
151	TA235135	399	sewage workd	sewage works
152	TA237129	400	grass	rough grass
153	TA238121	401	grass	grass
	TA247113	402	playing field	playing field
	TA294103	403	rough grass / scrub	rough grass / scrub
	TA235124	404	concrete	concrete
	TA228104	ZZ		wc

Crop types end of August 2010



Crop types first week of November 2010

Crop types first week of November 2010

- Permanent Pasture
- Autumn sown cereals
- Stubbles
- Ploughed
- Rough grass / permanent pasture
- Oilseed rape sown into dragged stubbles
- Worked and sown
- Oilseed rape
- Long rough grass low scrub



Weather conditions September 2010 – March 2011:

Following a generally mild autumn cold weather set in during the second half of November making it the coldest November since 1993 but worse was to come with December being the coldest for over 100 years with extensive snow cover and persistent severe frosts affecting the survey area for over five weeks. During the hardest spell of weather extensive ice was present on the estuary edges with all of the mudflats being covered in a thick layer of ice; even rising and falling tides only lifted and re-deposited this ice making it virtually impossible for waders and wildfowl to feed on the inter-tidal mudflats. By mid January the thaw had set in but due to the depth of ice many of the local water bodies remained frozen for another two weeks.

September 2010

A changeable month with plenty of rain, especially across the northern half of Britain, but also some more settled spells. Although temperatures overall were close to or above normal, there were significant variations with several warm days but also some cold nights and localised frost. Mean temperatures were about 1 °C above normal across Northern Ireland and much of northern England, southern and western Scotland and close to average elsewhere. Rainfall varied from over 150% of the normal amount in much of Northern Ireland, parts of eastern Scotland and northern England to less than 75% of normal in parts of south-east England and the south Midlands. Sunshine duration was generally close to, or somewhat above, average.

A maximum temperature of 24.6 °C was recorded at Gravesend (Kent) on 22nd. A minimum temperature of -4.4 °C was recorded at Tyndrum (Stirling) early on 26th and at Kinbrace (Highland) early on 27th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 on 23rd, 67 mm of rainfall was recorded at Hunterston (Ayrshire). A wind gust of 68 mph was recorded at Capel Curig (Conwy) on 15th.

October 2010

The month began on a very wet note, with widespread heavy rain, which particularly affected central and southern England and Wales on the 2nd. Localised flooding was reported after 25 to 35 mm fell in just a few hours. On the 3rd the worst of the rain fell across southwest England, Wales and eventually northern England. A further 30 to 40 mm was recorded in some places. A quieter spell then followed over much of the country and it turned warm for several days before a northerly flow brought a sharp drop in temperature. Many places recorded their first frost of the season on the 17th.

The first few days were unsettled over most of the UK with copious amounts of rainfall, but pressure then built from the east to give more settled weather and some warm days. For about 10 days from mid-month it was then colder with northerly winds and some very low overnight temperatures. In the last week, frontal systems from the west resumed their influence bringing much milder air and rain at times.

Overall, temperatures were close to normal. Rainfall was also close to normal in many areas, but it was drier than average in the west. It was a sunny month, especially in the west. Provisionally, it was the sunniest October on record in Wales and Northern Ireland.

November 2010

The first week of November saw some unusually warm days and nights, with temperatures staying around 15C (59F) in the south-east overnight on the 3rd and 4th, rising to 18C (64F) in parts of south-east England and Somerset on the 4th. A very deep area of low pressure brought some strong winds and heavy rainfall to Scotland on the 8th, with delays to ferries and traffic restrictions on bridges. Overnight from the 8th to 9th, the bad weather had moved south and heavy rain caused localised flooding near the Hampshire coast.

[A cold north-easterly airstream became established on the 24th, bringing snow showers to eastern Scotland and north-east England. These persisted into the 25th, leading to depths of up to 10cm in many areas. Snowfalls continued to affect much of north, east and central Scotland and north-east England and occasionally spread to parts of Wales, south-west England and Northern Ireland. By the 29th the severe conditions were beginning to cause widespread disruption, with hundreds of school closures and delays to road, rail and air journeys. The worst affected areas continued to be eastern Scotland and north-east England, with depths now over 25cm in many areas.](#)

Temperatures were very low by day and night and almost all areas saw sharp frosts. Exceptionally low temperatures were recorded on the night of the 27th / 28th particularly in the west, with -18.0C (-0.4F) in Powys and -9.9C (14F) in County Down - setting new November records for Wales and Northern Ireland respectively.

The snowfalls spread to other parts of eastern and southern England on the 30th including Lincolnshire, Kent and Surrey. This was the most significant spell of snow in November since that of late November 1965.

Statistics

The first three weeks of November were characterised by areas of low pressure moving across the UK from the Atlantic, giving plenty of rain and some strong winds at times. Subsequently, northerly then easterly airstreams brought much colder weather with some significant snowfalls, especially in eastern Scotland and north-east England, and hard frosts in all areas.

Despite a generally mild first half, mean temperatures for the month as a whole were typically 1.5 to 2 degrees below the 1971-2000 average and it was the coldest November across the UK since 1993.

Rainfall was close to normal in most areas, but it was well above average near the coast of north-east England and well below average in north-west Scotland and the Northern Isles. It was a rather dull month across parts of East Anglia and

south-east England, but Northern Ireland and western Scotland enjoyed one of their sunniest Novembers on record. A maximum temperature of 19C (66F) was recorded at St James's Park (Greater London) on the 4th. A minimum temperature of -18C (-0.4F) was recorded at Llysindinam (Powys) early on the 28th.

December 2010

December 2010 was the coldest December in 100 years, with snow falling in most areas of the UK and temperatures struggling to get above freezing during the day.

Chronology of events

The very cold weather of late November continued for the first few days, with frequent snow showers in eastern Scotland and north-east England as well as across parts of south-east England. Most areas saw 20 to 30cm (8 to 12in) deep, even on low ground. Meanwhile, upland areas also saw up to 50cm (20in) of snow.

Rain falling on frozen surfaces in parts of north-west England early on the 9th led to road closures. The less cold weather lasted almost a week until very cold Arctic air spread southwards on the 16th, heralding more travel disruption. On the 17th, frequent snow showers affected northern Scotland, Northern Ireland, north and west Wales and south-west England. On the 18th, a band of snow moved eastwards across south Wales and southern England with temperatures becoming low during the day and night.

In the last few days of December, temperatures slowly rose towards normal and lying snow became increasingly confined to higher ground.

Statistics

It was the coldest December in over 100 years.

In the last 100 years, the UK has experienced five colder months - January 1940, February 1947, January 1963, February 1963 and February 1986.

England and Wales figures show that it was the coldest month since February 1986.

Mean temperatures were 5C below the 1971-2000 average, falling to low values on several nights and remaining below freezing during the day. The number of days with air frost was the highest for December for over 50 years.

Snowfalls occurred in almost all areas, especially in the first week and from mid-month until Christmas. December was however, generally drier and sunnier than normal. It was the driest December since 1963 and the third driest in 100 years. It was a very sunny month in the west and the north, with over twice the normal amount.

A minimum temperature of -21.3C (-6F) was recorded at Altnaharra in the Scottish Highlands on the 2nd.

The significant precipitation fell as snow, with accumulations of over 40cm (16in) in places.

Snow depths:

54cm (21in) at Nunraw Abbey, East Lothian on 7 December

55cm (21.5in) at Westgate, County Durham on 2 December

58cm (23in) at Balmoral, Aberdeenshire on 1 December

January 2011

A chilly but relatively quiet start to the New Year in most areas. However, ice and snow continued to cause some inconvenience to drivers, especially in Scotland and on higher routes elsewhere.

Statistics

The first half of January saw the weather gradually revert to a more 'normal' Atlantic type - milder with some rain at times, especially across southern parts. However, the cold air was reluctant to loosen its grip across the northern half of the UK, with temperatures there remaining lower and snow and ice at times. A very mild, wet and windy interlude followed around mid-month. The rest of the month was more settled, with high pressure nearby, but it was often cloudy and cold again at times.

Mean temperatures for the month as a whole were somewhat below the 1971-2000 average, especially over Northern Ireland and other western areas.

Rainfall was close to or somewhat below normal in most places, but well above normal in south-east England and well below in Northern Ireland.

It was a rather dull month across parts of East Anglia and south-east England but sunnier than normal towards the west and north, with Northern Ireland enjoying one of its sunniest Januarys on record.

A maximum temperature of 14.5 °C was recorded at Pershore College (Worcestershire) on 13th. A minimum temperature of -13.0 °C was recorded at Altnaharra (Highland) on 8th.

A wind gust of 76 m.p.h. was recorded overnight 15th/16th at Capel Curig (Conwy).

February 2011

During the first week, very strong winds and heavy rain caused damage and disruption across many northern and western areas. The remainder of the month was mostly uneventful, apart from some snow over northern hills on the 19th and 21st. A south-westerly airstream introduced milder weather in the last week with daytime temperatures in parts of eastern England rising to around 15 °C, the mildest it's been since last November.

Statistics

A 'westerly' weather type prevailed for most of the month, bringing plenty of cloud and bands of rain or showers at times. There were some strong winds in the first week, especially across northern areas. Temperatures were generally near or above normal throughout and there were few frosts.

The UK mean temperature for the month was about 2.0 °C above the 1971-2000 average, and it was particularly mild in central England. It was the mildest February since 2002 and the 9th mildest in the last 100 years.

The number of air frosts was the 4th lowest in February in the last 50 years. Rainfall was close to or somewhat below normal in the far south and far north but it was wetter than normal elsewhere. It was particularly wet in parts of northern England and southern Scotland, where it was one of the wettest Februaries in the last 100 years.

It was sunnier than normal in north-west Scotland and Northern Ireland but a relatively dull month elsewhere, especially across East Anglia and south-east England where it was one of the dullest Februaries on record.

A maximum temperature of 15.5 °C was recorded at Writtle (Essex) on 25th. A minimum temperature of -8.9 °C was recorded at Llysdimam (Powys) early on the 1st.

In the 24 hours ending at 0900 on the 6th, 121.6 mm of rainfall was measured at Capel Curig (Conwy).

A snow depth of 10 cm was recorded at Copley (County Durham) at 0900 on the 19th.

A wind gust of 93 mph was recorded at Lerwick (Shetland) early on the 4th, with gusts of over 130 mph on the summits of the Scottish mountains.

March 2011

Much of the month brought settled weather to the UK, though it was more unsettled during the period 7th to 15th in the north, then again over the last two or three days of the month.

Statistics

Rainfall amounts were notably low over large parts of England, with a number of stations totalling less than 5mm for the whole month. During the last ten days spring arrived across the UK, with temperatures climbing above 17°C widely on several days and approaching 20°C in a few places on the 25th. There was a return to unsettled weather at the end of the month, however, with strong winds across north-east England and eastern Scotland on the 31st.

The UK mean temperature for the month was 0.6°C above the 1971-2000 average and it was particularly mild in the second half with some fine spring weather. Maximum temperatures were well above average. However, there were some cold nights and the number of air frosts was close to normal for March. Rainfall was close to or just above normal over eastern and southern Scotland, but it was dry elsewhere, exceptionally so over much of central and eastern England where less than 20% of the average March rainfall was recorded.

Provisionally, East Anglia had its second driest March since 1910; only 1929 was drier. It was also sunnier than normal across most of the UK, especially Wales (5th sunniest March since 1929) but over Scotland sunshine amounts were closer to normal.

A maximum temperature of 19.8°C was recorded at Fontmell Magna (Dorset) on the 25th. A minimum temperature of -7.5°C was recorded at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) on the morning of 18th and -7.2°C was recorded at South Newington (Oxfordshire) early on the 8th.

A wind gust of 77 mph was recorded at Loftus (North Yorkshire) on the 31st.

Inter-tidal mudflats North Killingholme December 2010 © Graham Catley Nyctea Ltd





above Lapwings roosting in snow covered field 240 December 2010 © Graham Catley Nyctea Ltd
below inter-tidal covered in snow and sea ice Pywipe December 2010 © Graham Catley Nyctea Ltd



Disturbance:

Maintaining the integrity of roosting and feeding areas favoured by waders and wildfowl around the Humber is clearly of paramount importance in the protection of species' populations from declines that would affect the importance of the estuary and its conservation status.

Excluding the direct effects of development and loss of habitats it has become clear that disturbance is now one of the main factors that can adversely affect bird populations particularly during the winter months when birds need to feed for long periods often covering most of the hours of daylight. Birds that are disturbed from high tide roosts and preferred feeding areas suffer energy losses that have a detrimental effect upon the health of the birds and in and in severe weather conditions can even lead to direct mortality through starvation.

Within the survey area there are currently a number of disturbance factors, all of which are human related, that affect wader and wildfowl populations of which the following have been recorded during the present survey period:

1. Dog walking
2. Walking
3. Sea Angling
4. Wildfowling / shooting
5. Off road motorcycles and vehicles

Some of the more specific instances of disturbance are noted in the weekly reports detailed at the end of this report but general comments are presented below in relation to the distribution of the worst disturbance events and the areas that are currently worst affected by these factors. In addition a map shows the distribution of the main areas affected by dog walking and sea angling within the survey area.

The two factors observed most frequently, dog walking and sea angling, are concentrated in areas adjacent to the estuary where there is vehicular access either to car parking areas or to the Humber embankment itself. The levels of disturbance tend to decrease with increasing distance from car parks and access points. Dog walking is also most intense on the edges of areas of human habitation with the block of fields on the outskirts of Great Cotes, field 392 – 396 inclusive, suffering frequent circumnavigation. Uncontrolled dogs off leads will run into fields and areas not accessible to human beings where waders may be roosting and lead to disturbance. This is a feature of the foreshore by the sewage works at Pywipe where large numbers of waders will roost on certain tides.

Rambling is still quite an unusual activity within the survey area no doubt in part due to the less than aesthetic nature of the habitats and the proximity of industrial developments. There were no observations of large groups of people that can occur at other sites in the estuary and cause prolonged disturbance as a line of people may produce disturbance over a ten to twenty minute period compared to the relatively rapid passage of disturbance caused the passage of a single walker.

Sea angling would appear to be innocuous and have little direct effect upon waders and wildfowl but it is concentrated in parts of the Humber embankment where vehicular access allows vehicles to be parked on the sea wall for long periods. While this can affect the ability of birds to roost on some of the higher levels of the embankment the effect is intensified when angling continues through the falling or rising tide period with anglers accessing the inter-tidal and producing disturbance of wader feeding areas. This may be particularly important for some species such as Redshank and Lapwing that favour the upper reaches of the inter-tidal but it may also affect species like Dunlin that exhibit leap frog feeding behaviour moving up and down the estuary on rising and falling tides and feeding in different sites between high tide roost areas and low water feeding areas.

Wildfowling and shooting are also relatively restricted within the survey area but have a profound effect upon the areas where they occur. The smaller of the two pits at East Halton pit is fed and shot regularly from September – February and this decimates the population of wildfowl that area attracted to the site during this key winter period. An indication of how valuable the site could be is provided by the number of wildfowl recorded after the close of the season with a rapid and continuing rise in numbers noted through February and March. Some wildfowling also takes place at East Halton Skitter but the remainder of the grues currently has no regular shooting. This is particularly important in protecting the roost of waders and wildfowl on the upper foreshore and higher inter-tidal off field 80. It would appear however, that the lack of wildfowling is due to a lack of take up of the shooting rights and the wader and wildfowl roost would be under threat and would probably disappear IF shooting was again undertaken along this section of the estuary.

Off road motorcycles and vehicles are increasing around the banks of the Humber and East Halton Skitter has suffered intense pressure in recent months with vehicles accessing the site from East Halton as well as Goxhill, via minor roads. The grues have been subject to considerable disturbance on weekends and in school holidays with motorbikes and 4x4's tearing up the Humber embankment and the actual grassland on the foreshore. The lack of real fencing at both ends of the grues currently means that it is easy to access the area with these type of vehicles. The noise from these machines has been shown to disturb feeding and roosting birds up to 600m away from the embankment with noise carrying long distances from the raised banks both inland and out onto the foreshore and inter-tidal.



Wildfowler East Halton Skitter grues December 2010 © Graham Catley Nyctea Ltd



Individual species accounts:

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
	377	288	375	2400

Two pairs on Rosper Road and the pond in field 286 both had two cygnets at the start of the surveys and both pairs with cygnets remained in these localities through to October 21st after which there was a winter absence with pairs returning from January 18th, Rosper Road pools, and January 26th field 286.

At East Halton pit two birds were present from August 30th to November 28th but left as the pits froze over. Six birds were present briefly on November 16th; a pair were then regular again from late January with 4 on February 8th.

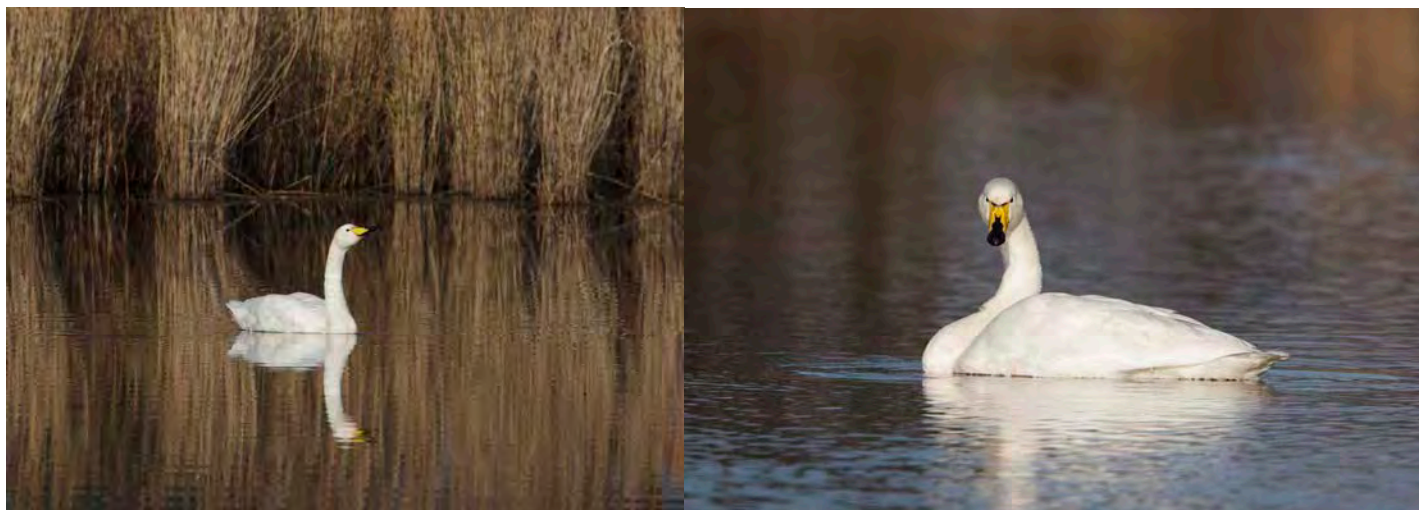
Four, two adults and two cygnets were on the Humber off Goxhill Skitter Ness on November 29th. The breeding pair were back on Dawson City ponds on February 20th.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National Imp	84	57	57	210

An adult was on Rosper Road pools on October 24th. On November 5th a party of four birds arrived from the Humber and flew south-west inland over Rosper Road pools. An adult accompanied two Mute Swans on East Halton pits from November 20th – 25th.



Whooper Swan East Halton pit November 2010 © Graham Catley

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	7108	4902	2400	2700

An early flock of 28 birds flew north-west over Stallingborough Power Station on September 20th. On January 10th a skein of 58 birds flew south-west over fields 1 and 3, at East Halton Skitter and headed inland. A flock of 92 birds got up from a field in Goxhill Marsh and flew to the Humber then across into Yorkshire on January 17th. On January 31st a flock of 82 flew west then north-west up the Humber off Goxhill Skitter Ness. Subsequently on March 2nd three skeins of 210, 43 and 82, total 335, flew north-west over Goxhill Skitter Ness then on March 22nd a flock of 140 flew north-west over Goxhill Skitter Ness.

In addition to the above a small flock of birds, peaking at 38 on November 24th, fed in the permanent pasture fields in Goxhill Marsh, using fields 110, 111 and 112, between November 1st and December 16th; during the period of snow cover the birds left but then 19 – 23 returned from January 25th to February 24th. These fields were used by a larger flock of birds in the previous winter with a regular presence being noted from October 27th to March 1st and a peak count of 562 being recorded on January 25th.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
	775	834		

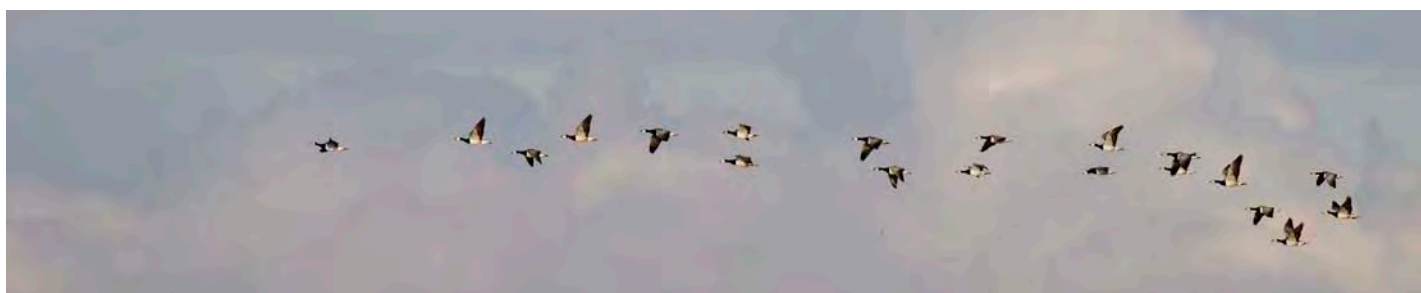
An exceptional total of 284 birds was found on East Halton pits in week 2; the birds were moving from the pits to feed on adjacent stubbles. As shooting commenced at the pits there were then no records until 4 returned on January 25th. A regular presence from then to April saw up to 12 birds frequenting the area with these birds being in obvious pairs. Two were on Rosper Road pools on February 22nd, two at North Killingholme pits on March 24th and a notable flock of 74 birds was on the foreshore off field 80 at Goxhill Skitter Ness on November 8th.



Greylag Geese off Goxhill Skitter Ness November 2010 © Graham Catley

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Amber Listed



A flock of 20 flew west along the edge of the grues between East Halton Skitter and Goxhill on December 5th.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	2801	4586	981	2000

Two flew west up the Humber at Pywipe on February 17th and two were feeding on the inter-tidal by the Bluestar site on March 16th.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	2892	5314	782	3000

No Shelduck were found roosting in the fields in the survey area but birds occurred in the wetland sites within the area. During the autumn migration a total of 81 birds flew west past Goxhill Skitter Ness on September 6th in strong south-easterly winds.

The major concentrations of Shelduck on the inter-tidal occur in the Pywipe basin, WeBS MSA with smaller numbers scattered along the other inter-tidal mudflats to Goxhill Haven. Numbers on the other sectors tended to increase through the early spring period as prospective breeding birds moved into feeding sites adjacent to known nesting areas. The inter-tidal between North Killingholme Haven and Immingham HIT terminal held a peak of 106 Shelduck in late March and this area also had up to 50 – 60 birds through most of the winter with the exception of the freeze. The section between Goxhill Haven and East Halton Skitter held increasing numbers through March with a peak of 52 on the 15th. No regular counts were undertaken at Pywipe but irregular surveys revealed up to 570 birds in the basin that accords with the type of numbers recorded in the area in recent winters meaning that the area supports in excess of 10% of the Humber population.

In the wetland sites East Halton pit held up to 20 birds from late February with the peak count on March 30th. North Killingholme pits held birds from late January with a peak of 17 in late March while up to four were at Rosper Road pools and in pond 286.

Shelduck counts from Pywipe MSA inter-tidal

Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
?	?	?	?	?	260	?	330	?	?	?	?	?	55	?	500	?	130	240	125	570	530	?	?	?	?	415	350	380	?	?

Shelducks North Killingholme inter-tidal March 2011 © Graham Catley



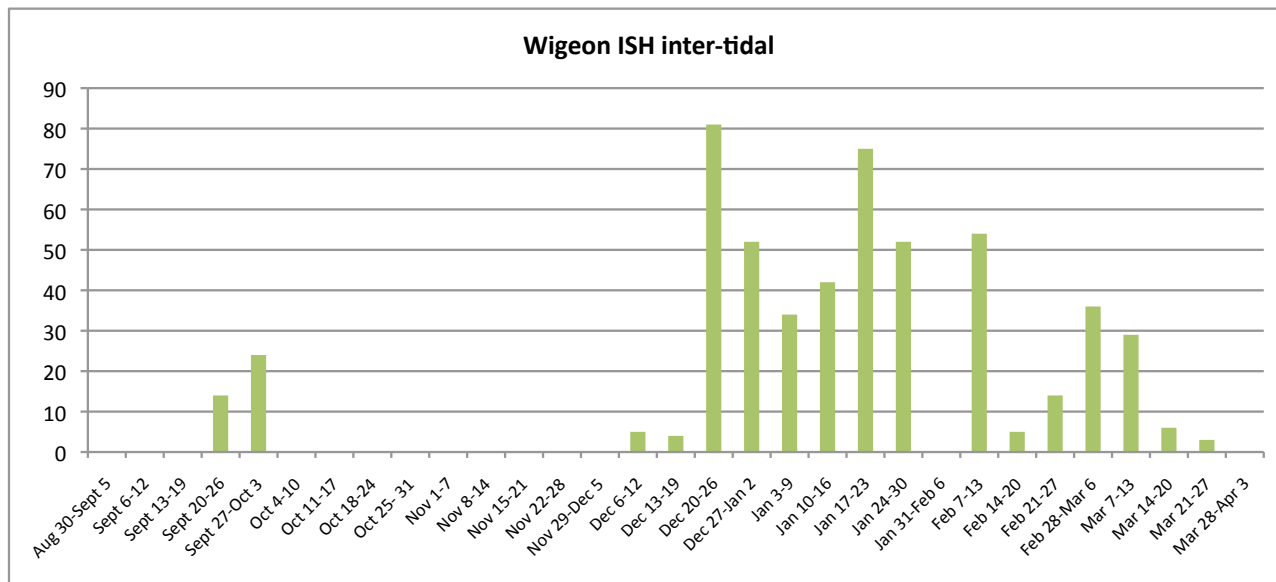
Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

A drake was roosting with Mallard on the ice on Rosper Road pools on December 13th.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*
Amber Listed

During the autumn arrivals a flock of 14 flew west up the Humber off Goxhill Skitter Ness on September 21st and a flock of 24 flew west up the Humber off Goxhill Skitter Ness on September 30th.

Along the inter-tidal Wigeon were regular on the upper mudflats off field 80 along the Goxhill grues ISH; it seems likely that these birds were grazing the grues at night as dropping were found on the shorter grass areas in field 80 and on the field to the south. Peak numbers occurred between December and early March with 34 to 81 birds being recorded. Numbers varied with tidal height and time of day and birds were observed moving up the estuary towards New Holland where birds are known to feed on the inter-tidal and were observed in the winter feeding on oilseed rape.



On the main wetland sites Wigeon were rare with 1 – 4 recorded on odd dates at East Halton pits and Rosper Road pools.

A total of 32 Wigeon, 3 Teal and 4 Mallard were feeding on the pond in field 201 on January 24th; this pond was regularly used by Wigeon and other dabbling ducks in the previous winter survey of this area. The pond dried out during the 2010 summer and only became suitable for wildfowl from late January after the thaw and local flooding. Numbers increased to 38 by February 16th but declined to 24 by the 21st with a small flock of 14 – 30 birds regular to the middle of March.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*
Amber Listed

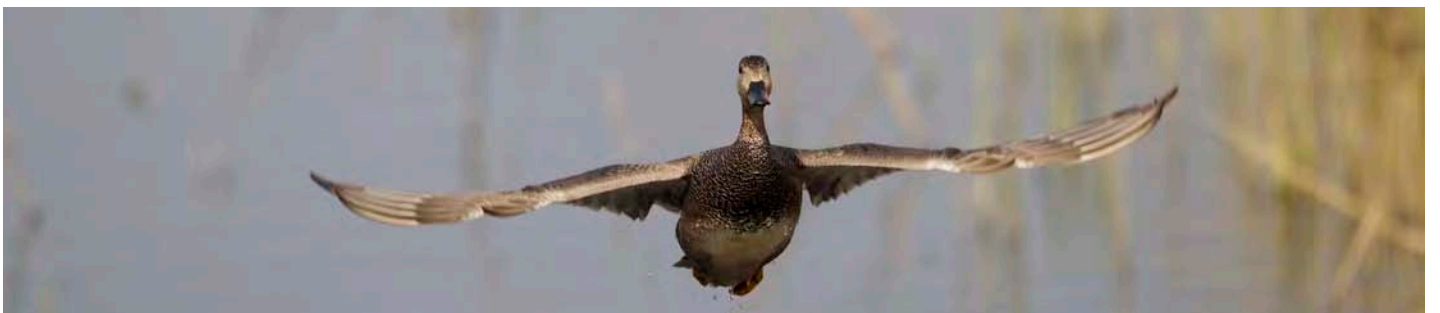
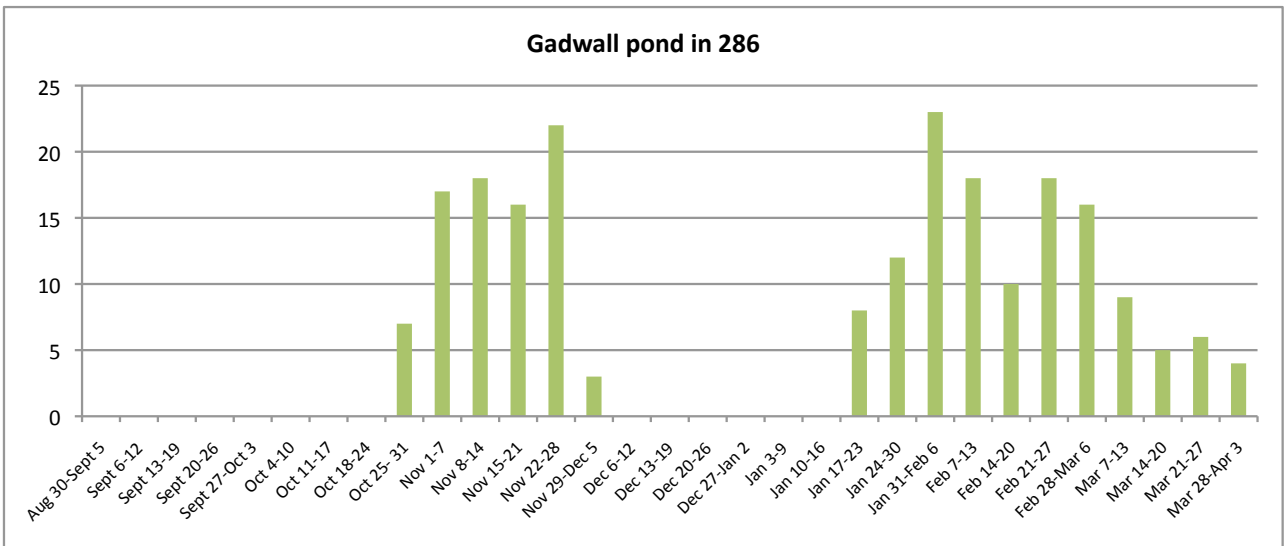
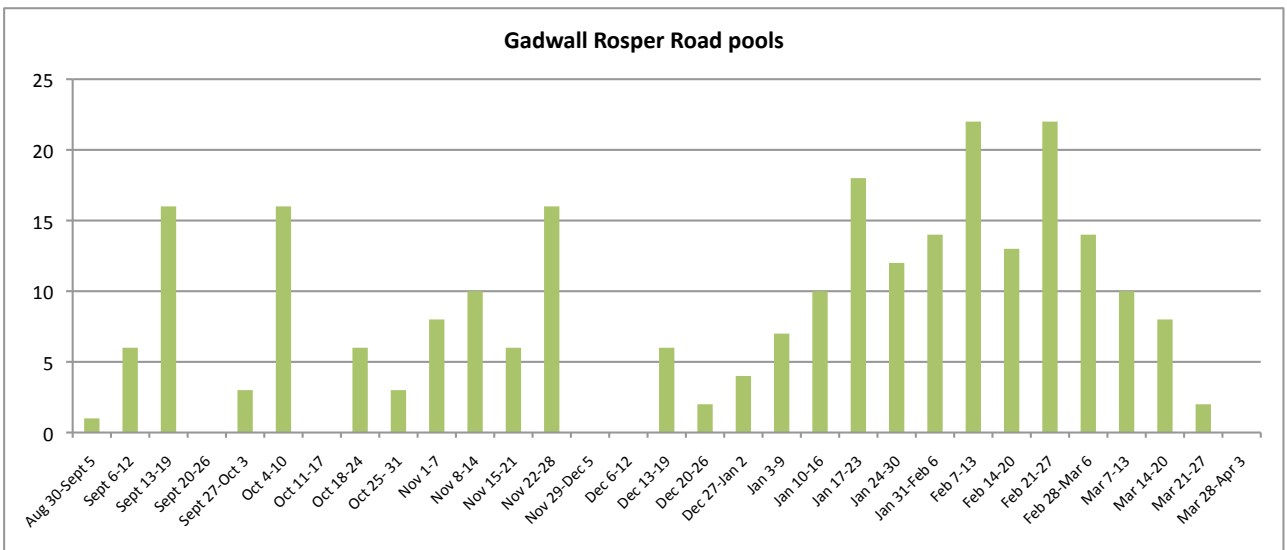
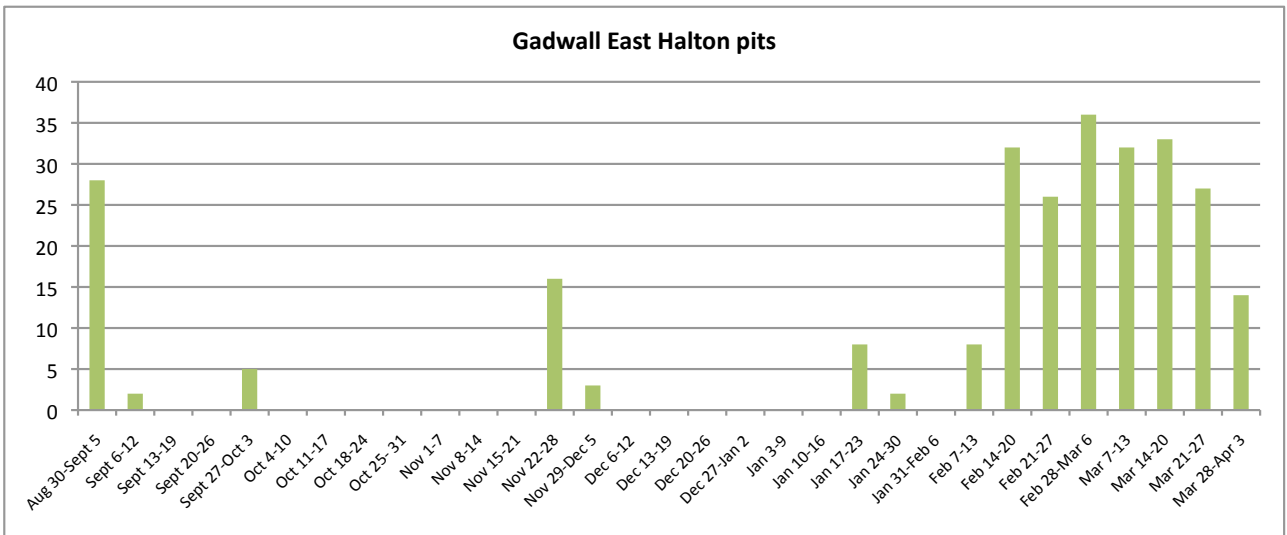
Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National	178	179	171	600

Up to 11 birds were seen on four dates with the other dabbling duck off field 80 on the Goxhill foreshore but the remainder of the records all came from the major wetland sites.

At East Halton pit 28 birds were still present on August 30th but following the start of the shooting season there was an almost complete absence of birds through to February 8th after which the number of birds began to increase again with the removal of the shooting disturbance. Up to 36 birds were then regular at this site to the end of the survey.

Only 7 birds were seen at North Killingholme pits on October 5th but Rosper Road pools was a major site for this species with only the period when the site was completely frozen not producing any records over two subsequent weeks. Numbers peaked in mid to late February falling from then onwards as pairs moved to breeding sites.

The small balancing pond in field 286 was also a productive site for Gadwall from late October onwards although there was a period of six weeks during December and early January when the pond was frozen solid and hence no birds occurred. With a peak of 22 birds occurring in November and 23 in February this small site is clearly of significance for this species on an estuarine context given the WeBS 5-year mean of 179 birds.



Teal *Anas crecca*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National	3234	2865	1920	5000

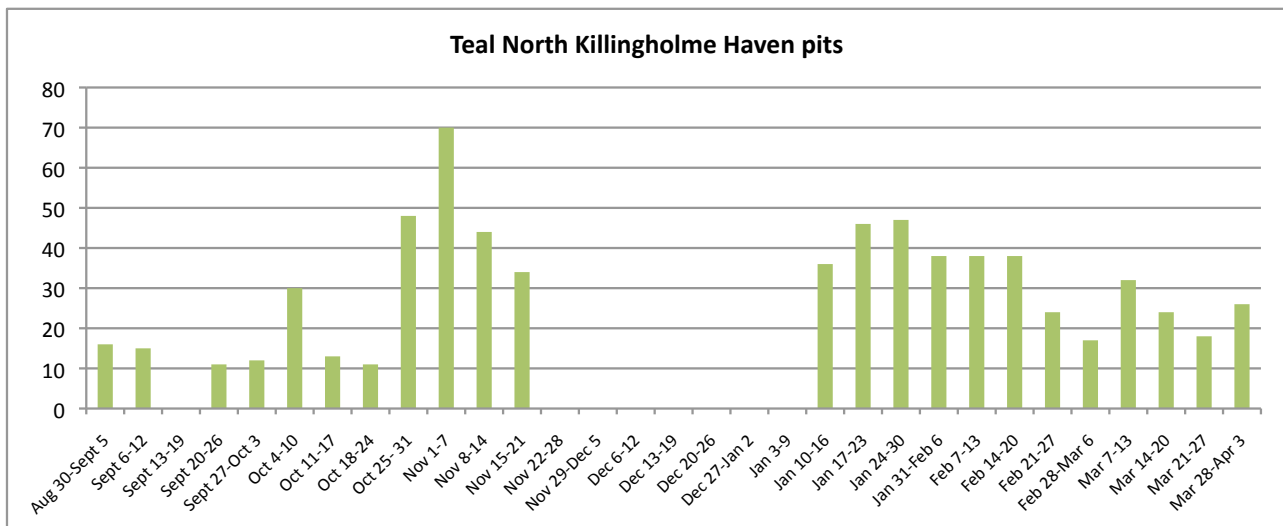
During the early autumn passage of this species ten birds were on Dawson City ponds and an additional 198 roosting on the adjacent foreshore. Up to 40 birds were found along the Skitter Beck mainly around fields 13 to 19 but no birds were present during December and early January when even this stream was frozen.

On the inter-tidal the only small number of Teal were found on the upper mudflats off field 80 and the grues. Even here the number of Teal was small with peak counts of just 18 – 26 birds from late February to mid March.

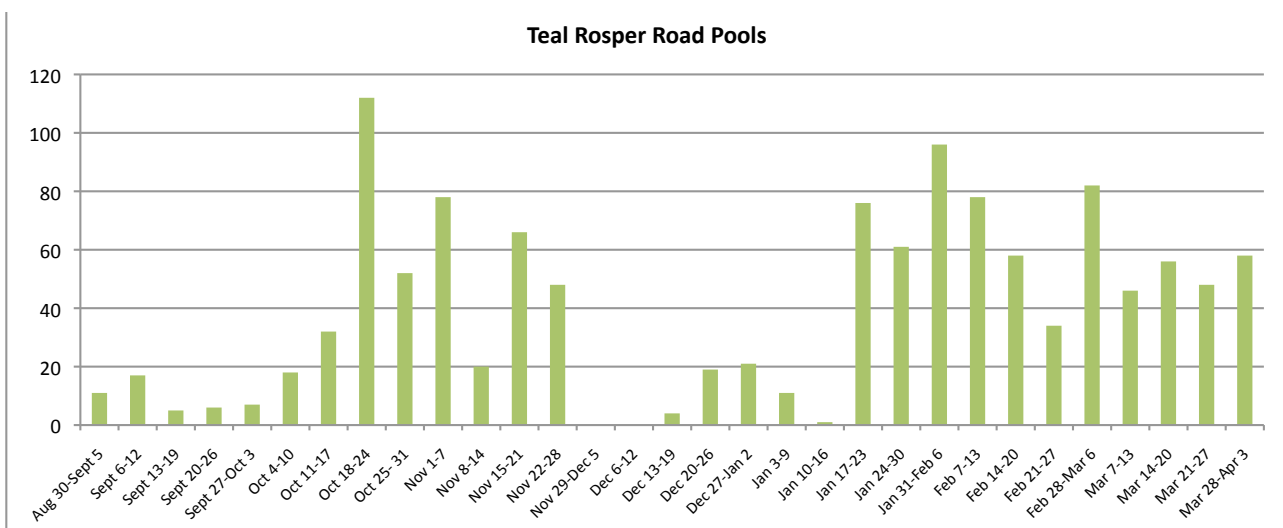
On the major water bodies numbers varied significantly throughout the survey period with the severe freeze in December and January having the greatest impact. At East Halton pit 71 birds were present on August 30th prior to the start of the shooting season with 18 remaining in the following week but thereafter the only significant records were of 38 on October 19th and 18 on November 9th. Unlike many species Teal did not reappear in significant numbers after the close of the shooting season with a peak of just 14 birds in February – March.

North Killingholme pits is a regular site for Teal and birds were present on the majority of surveys except when the site was completely frozen from late November to mid January. The number of birds was much reduced compared to previous winters but this reduction seemed to coincide with the increase in numbers at Rosper Road pools.

At Rosper Road pools there was a rapid build up in numbers through October, peaking at 112 on the 20th, prior to the



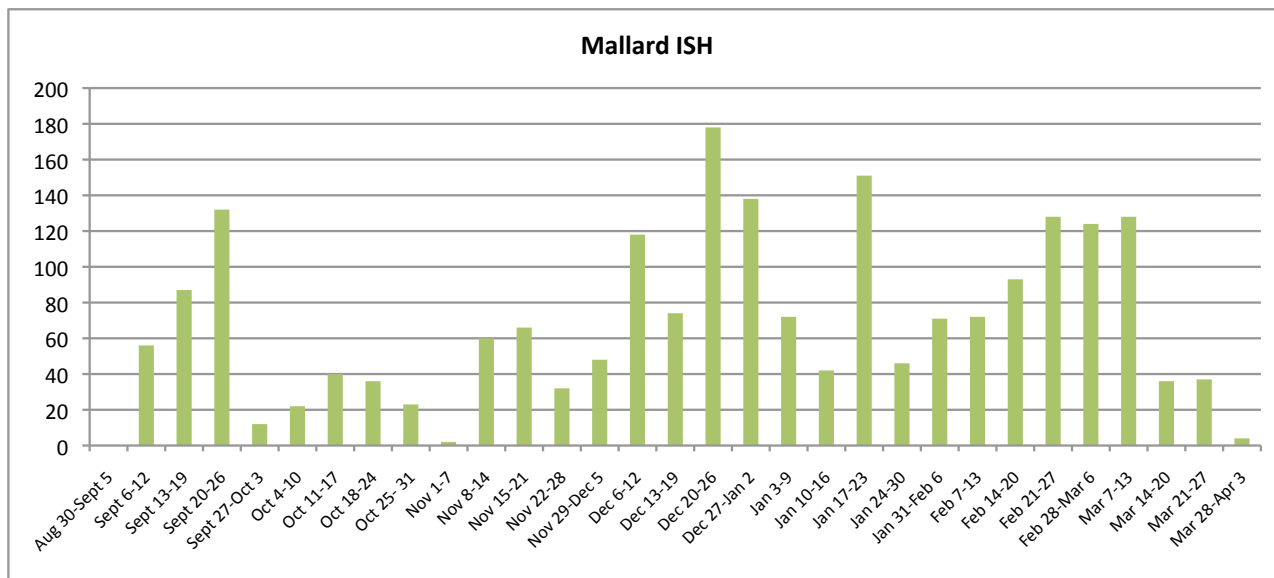
site freezing over in late November when <20 birds were present through to mid January after which the number of birds increased rapidly to the peak of 96 in the first week of February. At least 58 birds were still present at the end of the survey. The peak count forms 4% of the WeBS 5-year mean for the Humber and clearly shows the increasing significance of this small wetland site for this species.



Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

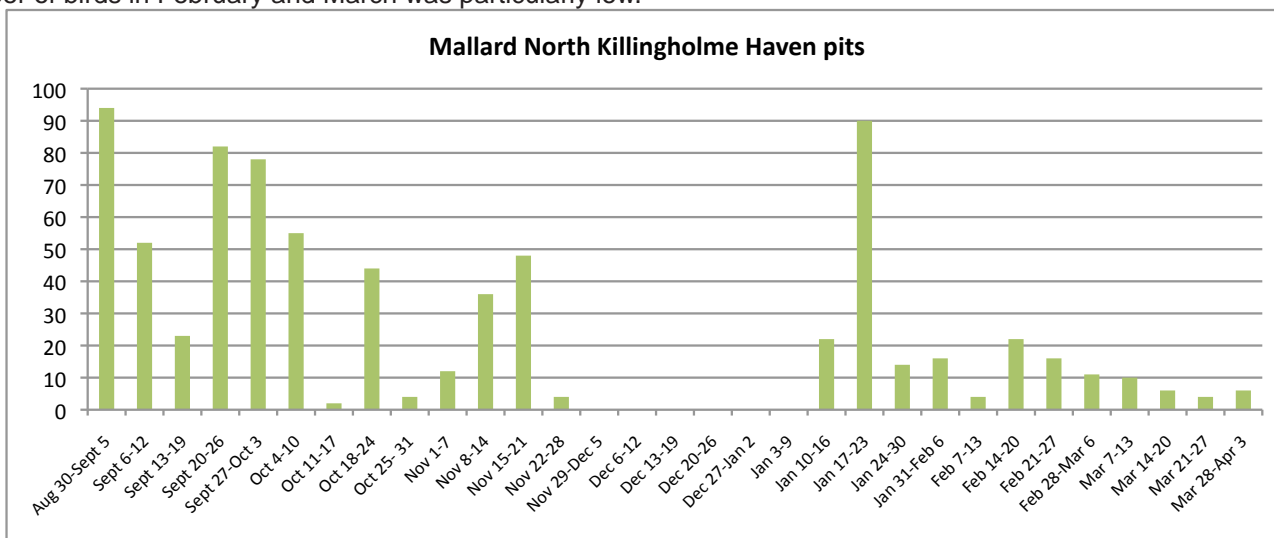
Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
	1607	2096	3520	20000

Although the total number of Mallard recorded from the survey area was not of great national significance the birds roosting and feeding off field 80 on the upper inter-tidal peaked at 178 in late December, during the worst of the freeze, and this total would equate to 8.5% of the Humber WeBS 5-year mean. This same area held an average of 120 birds during late February and early March. During September the birds in the Goxhill Skitter Ness area commuted between Klondyke pit, where they roosted, and stubble fields to the south, on occasions appearing on the inter-tidal off the grues by field 80. The inter-tidal at Pywipe also supported small numbers of Mallard with up to 34 birds recorded on a few low water surveys. Between September 27th and October 3rd a total of 66 birds was feeding in field 233 and commuting to North Killingholme pits; additionally 46 birds were feeding on the stubble in field 285 and commuting to the pond in field 286.

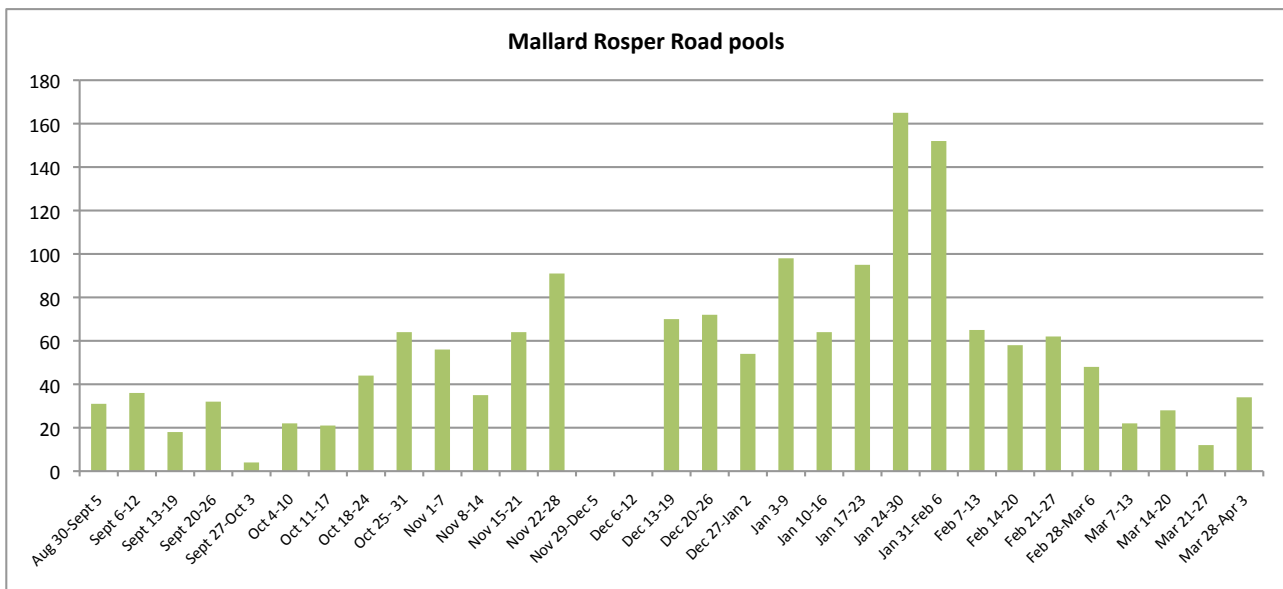


On the wetland sites East Halton pit held 88 birds on August 30th but as soon as shooting commenced numbers fell to <10 birds through the winter with only minor increases during the early spring when a peak of 18 birds was noted on March 1st.

At North Killingholme pits autumn produced by far the highest number of Mallard with birds roosting on the inland pit and moving east across the estuary to feed in addition to using local stubble fields as above. The gap in records reflects the period when the pits were frozen but with the exception of one high count on January 20th when 90 were present the number of birds in February and March was particularly low.



At Rosper Road pools numbers peaked during mid January to early February with a rapid decline from mid February presumably related to the dispersal of breeding pairs and the departure of wintering birds. The peak count of 165 forms 7.8% of the Humber WeBS 5-year mean. The pond in field 286 also held variable numbers of Mallard peaking in the autumn with 58 on September 22nd after which there was never more than 14 birds through to April.



Pintail *Anas acuta*

Amber Listed

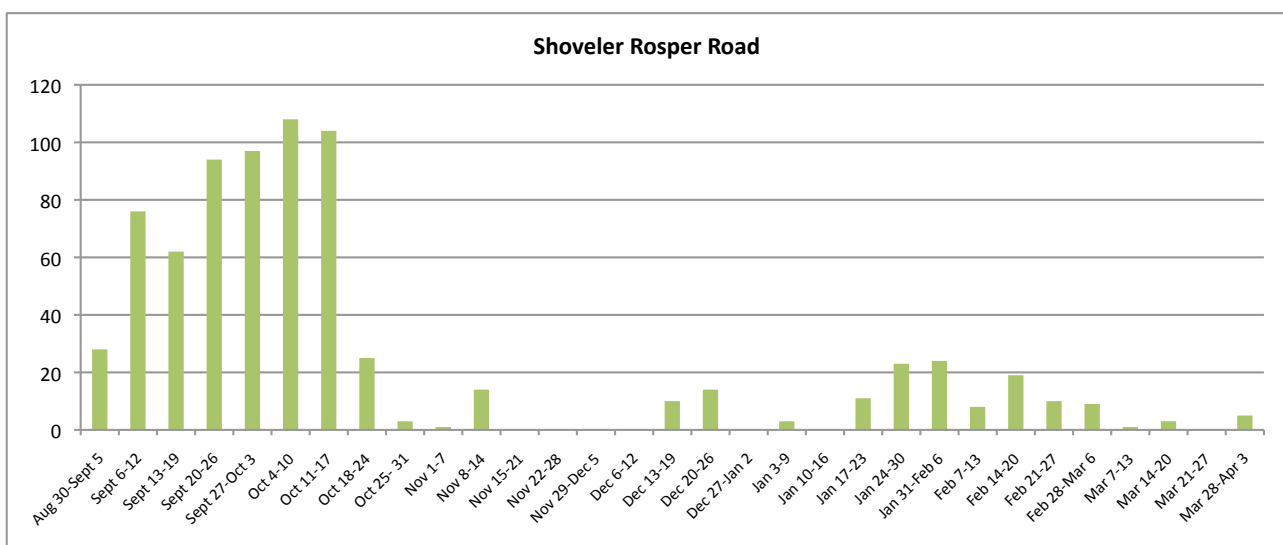
A party of ten birds was on the Humber of Goxhill Skitter Ness on September 6th. Two parties of five and four flew west past Goxhill Skitter Ness on the 25th and three birds flew west past Goxhill Skitter Ness October 5th while a juvenile / female was on East Halton pit on October 18th.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
	123	?	148	400

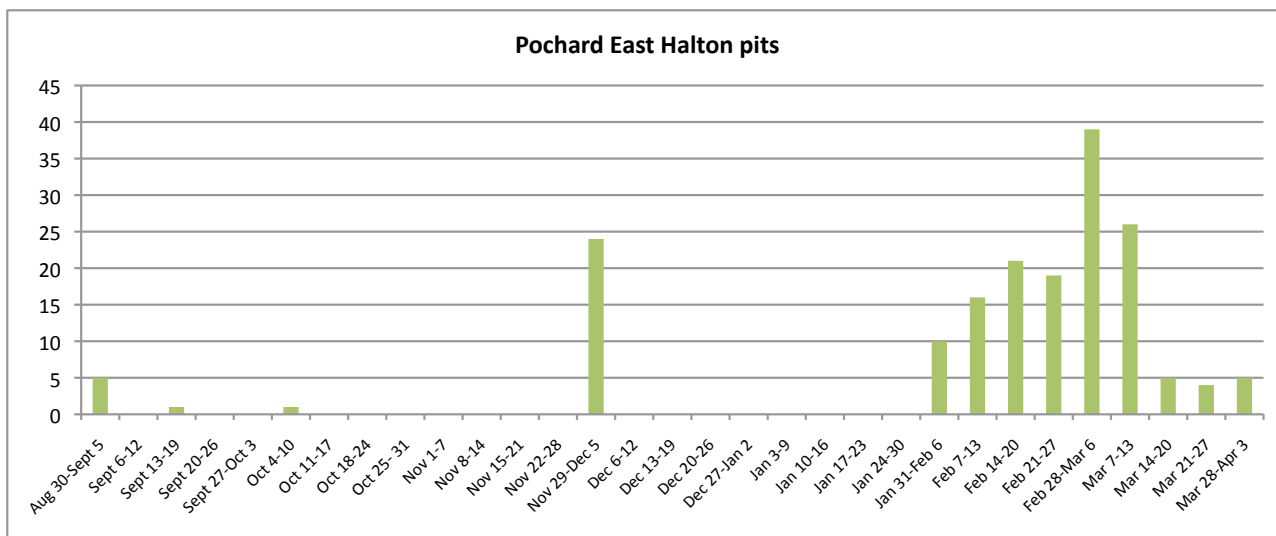
Between weeks 7 and week 8 a large proportion of the birds disappeared from Rosper Road pools but there was an increase at North Killingholme pits where 54 birds were recorded the first high total of the series. By week 9 only 3 birds remained at Rosper Road pools but 64 were at North Killingholme pits. These proved to be the only significant records at North Killingholme pits during the winter and this is most unusual as the site has been of considerable significance for this species in winter in recent years. Clearly Rosper Road pools has increased in significance with the bulk of the Shoveler from the survey area occurring at this site from August – mid October. The peak count of 108 birds during October 4th to 10th is close to the level of National significance demonstrating the value of this small wetland on the Humber. Following the hard freeze the number of Shoveler never recovered with a peak of just 24 occurring in January.



Pochard *Aythya ferina*

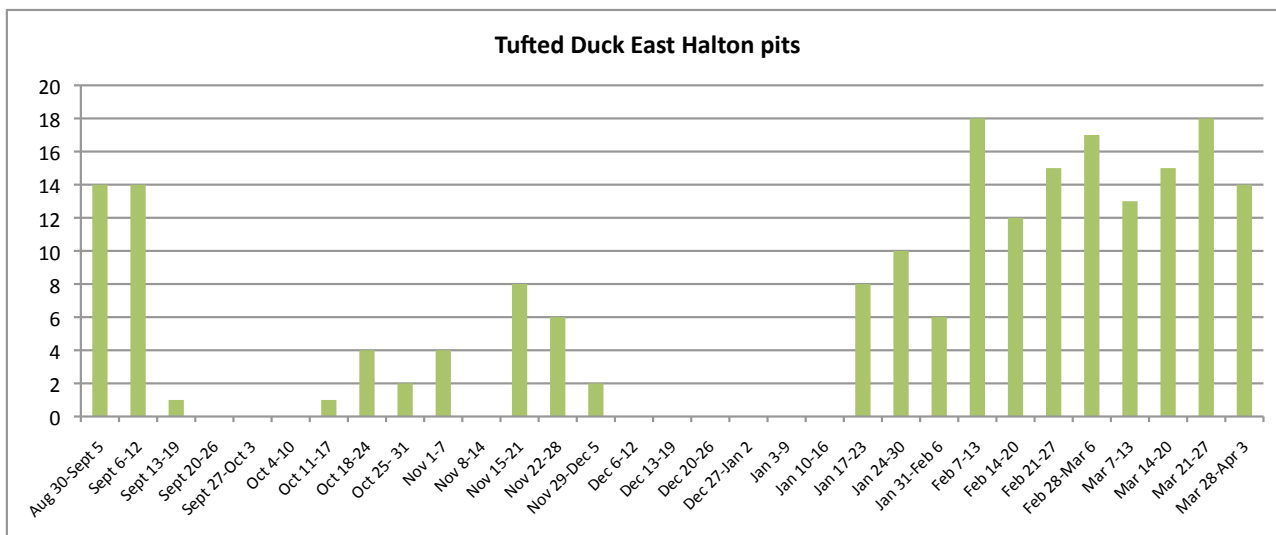
Amber Listed

The bulk of the Pochard records came from East Halton pits during late January to the end of the survey when a peak of 39 birds was recorded on March 2nd. Previously a one-off occurrence saw 24 birds there on November 30th. Up to 4 were on Rosper Road pools on three dates with 1 – 3 on the 286 pond on 12 dates and from late February onwards up to three males and three females were on Dawson City ponds where birds bred in 2010.



Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

The bulk of the Tufted Duck records came from East Halton pits with obvious peaks before and after the shooting season. Overall numbers were not really significant but peaked at 18 in January – March. up to 24 birds also occurred on the pond in 286 on 16 dates with peak numbers occurring in October – November. Two birds were on the Skitter Beck by field number 1 on September 13th. In March there was a pair on Dawson City ponds on several occasions; presumably prospective breeding birds.



Scaup *Aythya marila*

Amber Listed

A female was on the pond in field 286 from October 18th intermittently to at least November 23rd. A female accompanied 17 Tufted Ducks on the Humber off Goxhill Skitter Ness on December 20th.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Amber Listed

Two females were with Mallard on the Humber off field 80 on December 5th. Three drakes flew up the Humber to Goxhill Haven and then headed back down the estuary on December 19th.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Red Listed

One flew west past North Killingholme Haven on November 25th.

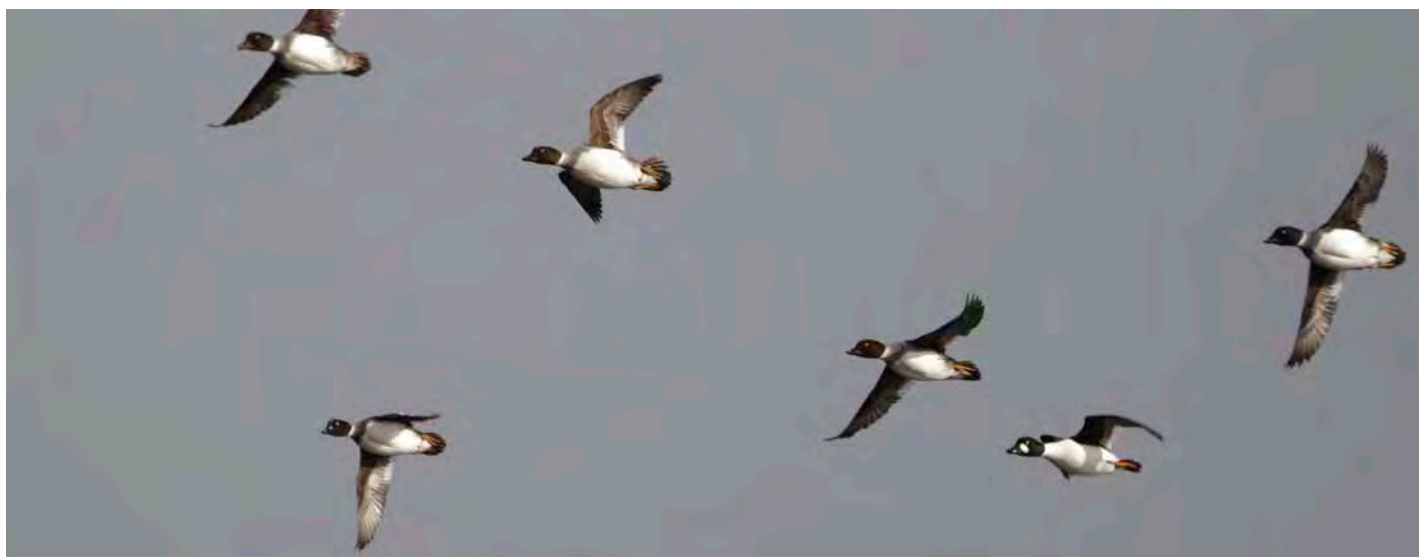
Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National	302	465	249	11500

A total of 220 birds drifted down the estuary past Goxhill Haven as far as East Halton Skitter on December 13th. There were known to be 440 birds on the Humber between New Holland and Goxhill tily on December 12th and it was part of this flock that had drifted out with the tide. The flock off New Holland increased to 530 birds in early January with a proportion of the flock drifting down river as far as East Halton Skitter on a falling tide before flying back towards New Holland. A total of 194 birds was loafing off Goxhill Haven – Skitter Ness on the evening high spring tide on January 17th with 68 in the same area on the morning spring tide on January 24th.

On the wetland sites only East Halton pit regularly held any Goldeneye with an adult drake on November 23rd with 1 – 3 birds present from January 17th to the end of the survey.



Smew *Mergellus albellus*

A redhead was on East Halton pit during severe weather on December 1st and two redheads were on the same pit on January 31st with one remaining on the same pit through to March 8th.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

One flew west past Goxhill Skitter Ness on September 25th and a female / immature flew west past the Grues on November 4th. An adult drake landed with Mallard on the Humber off field 80 on November 29th during a period of severe winter weather. A pair were feeding on East Halton pit on March 16th.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

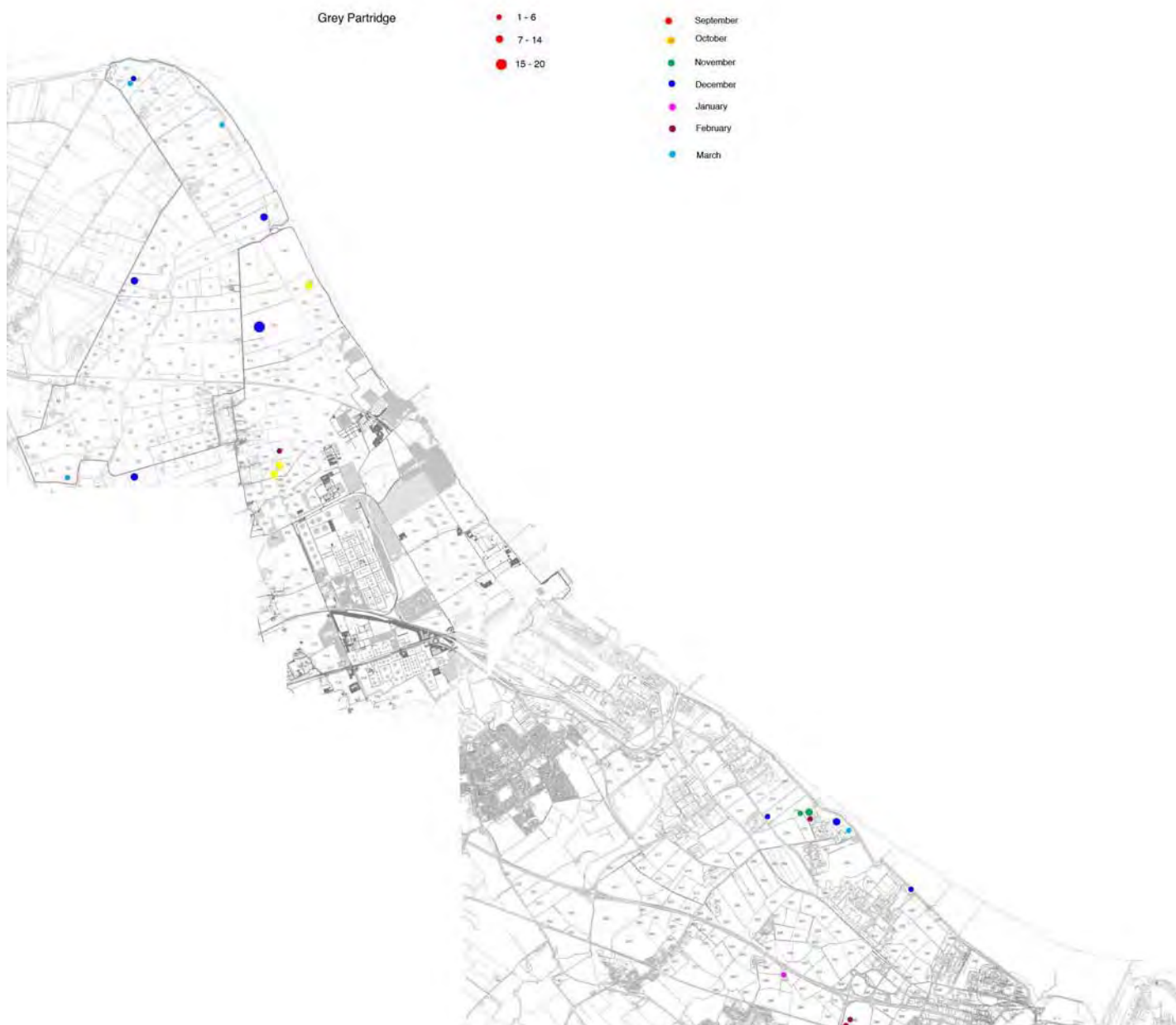
A redhead was on East Halton pit during severe weather on December 1st. Four birds, three drakes and a duck, landed with the Mallard on the Humber off Goxhill Skitter on February 16th and a single female was on the Humber in the same area on March 2nd with presumably the same female and a drake on March 6th.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Red Listed

A covey of 9 birds flew from field 182 to 183 on October 5th. Presumably the same covey of 11 birds recorded in week 5 was present in field 183 in week 8. A covey of 13 was in field 143 on October 25th. A covey of six birds was in the corner of field 279 and flew into field 276 on November 15th. With extensive snow cover coveys were easier to see than normal and this resulted in the discovery of 13 in field 97 and 6 in field 120 on December 5th; both were new localities for this species during the present surveys. In addition 9 were in field 288, 2 along the Humber embankment by the Bluestar site and 5 in field 275. A covey of 9 was in field 73 / 74 also feeding on the Humber embankment where the snow had melted on the upper bank. Coveys of 17 were in field 141, 9 in 73, 6 in 120, 8 in 97. A covey of three birds in field 385 were in a totally new area for the species.

A map showing the location of all of the records of Grey partridge is presented below.



Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National	91	92	78	4000

Up to 6 were on East Halton pits to November 29th after which the pits froze over; singles then returned from March 8th but the species clearly suffered heavy losses during the winter with many sites having no birds in spring 2011. At Dawson City one returned on March 6th and a pair were present to early April. Three on Rosper Road pools on August 31st were presumably birds that had bred on the site where breeding has been confirmed with 1-2 pairs in recent years; the only other record at the site was of one on October 19th. On the balancing pond in field 286 two pairs and young, totalling 8 or 9 birds were present from August to mid September with numbers falling to four from then to late October after which all the birds left and apart from one on November 9th there were no subsequent records until one on March 1st was followed by the presence of three through March.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Two breeding birds were still on East Halton pit on August 30th but then there was just a single to November 9th after which there were no birds present until 3 on February 16th with two then recorded on most dates to the end of the survey.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Two juveniles flew west off Goxhill Skitter Ness in strong northerly winds on August 30th. Three juveniles were on the Humber off Goxhill Skitter Ness and a further five flew west off East Halton Skitter during a period of very strong south-easterly winds on September 6th and finally a juvenile flew up the Humber off East Halton Skitter on September 21st.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
	95	38		

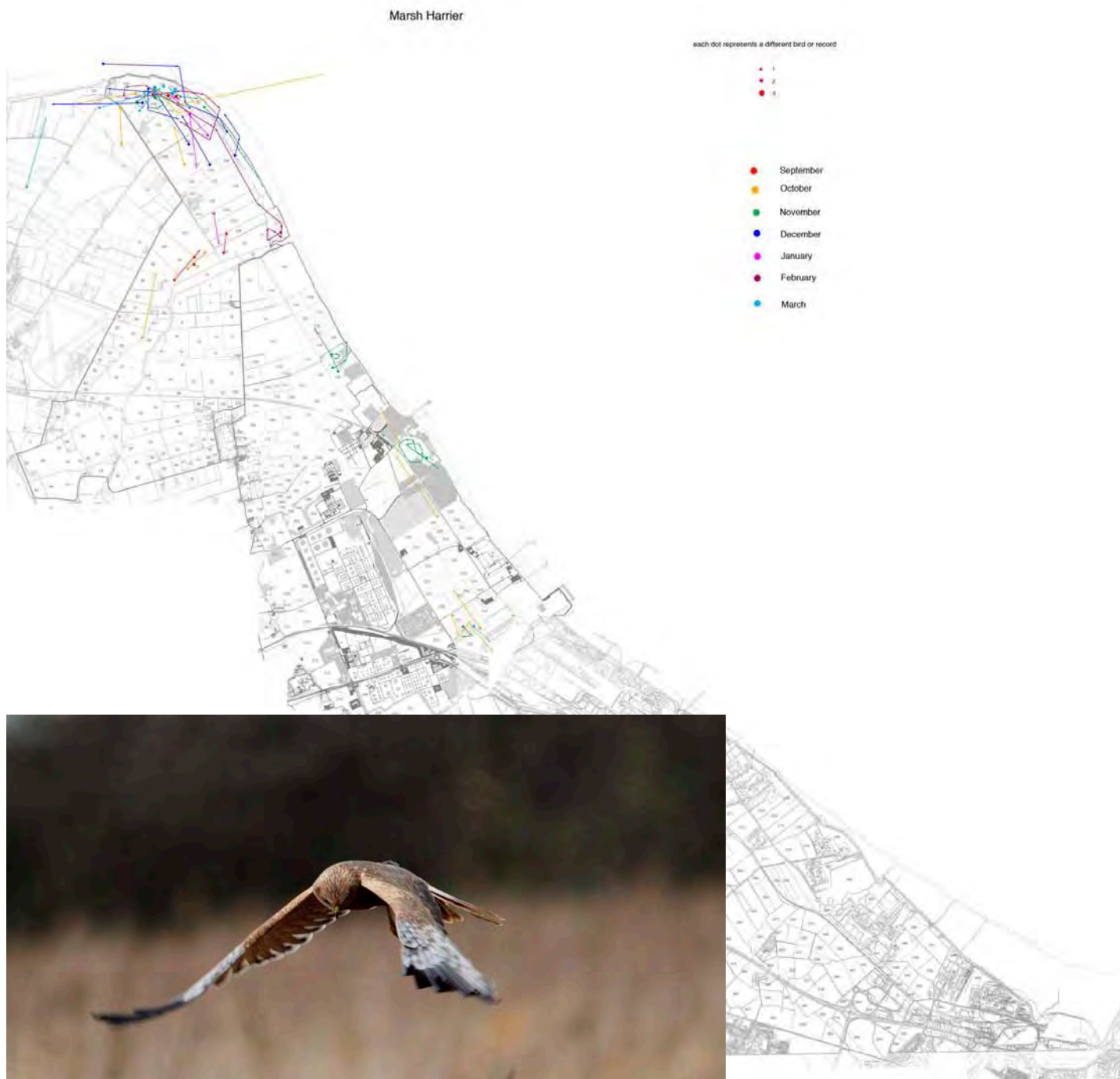
Two roosting on field 73 with Black-tailed Godwits and Curlew on August 30th later moved into East Halton Skitter when the tide fell. One was in East Halton pit on September 9th but none were seen elsewhere. The first sighting for many weeks involved a bird flying down the estuary off South Killingholme on December 1st. As the severe winter weather set in there was a complete departure of Little Egrets with the next sighting being of a single bird in the ditch by the Bluestar site on March 2nd. Subsequently two adults in breeding plumage, probably a pair, were at East Halton pit on March 8th and again on the 29th.



Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
Amber Listed

Up to six different birds were seen in the fields around Goxhill Marsh, particularly Dawson City ponds where birds roosted regularly, during the August – October period. In the early part of the winter two to three birds were recorded in the same area with birds moving as far as Rosper Road pools and Thornton Abbey during the day. During the severe weather in December there was an obvious decline in sightings but birds were again more numerous from January onwards with a pair establishing a territory at Dawson City and other birds occurring at North Killingholme pits and Rosper Road pools. Clearly the winter home range of birds is extensive and covers a greater area than the breeding home range. An example of observed movements is presented in the following text from the weekly summaries: [The same 3cy male seen roosting at Dawson City on September 28th was seen moving in that direction over North Killingholme pits in the late evening on October 19th and was hunting Rosper Road pools on October 25th before moving off south.](#) This shows the distances travelled by birds from their roosts to hunting areas during single dates in winter.

A map showing occurrences and movements of birds is attached below.



Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Red Listed

An adult female was hunting the grues between East Halton Skitter and Goxhill Skitter Ness on November 29th. Presumably the same bird was seen over Klondyke in the late afternoon of December 5th before flying up the estuary. On the same day, the 5th, an adult male was hunting the grues before flying inland over field 114.

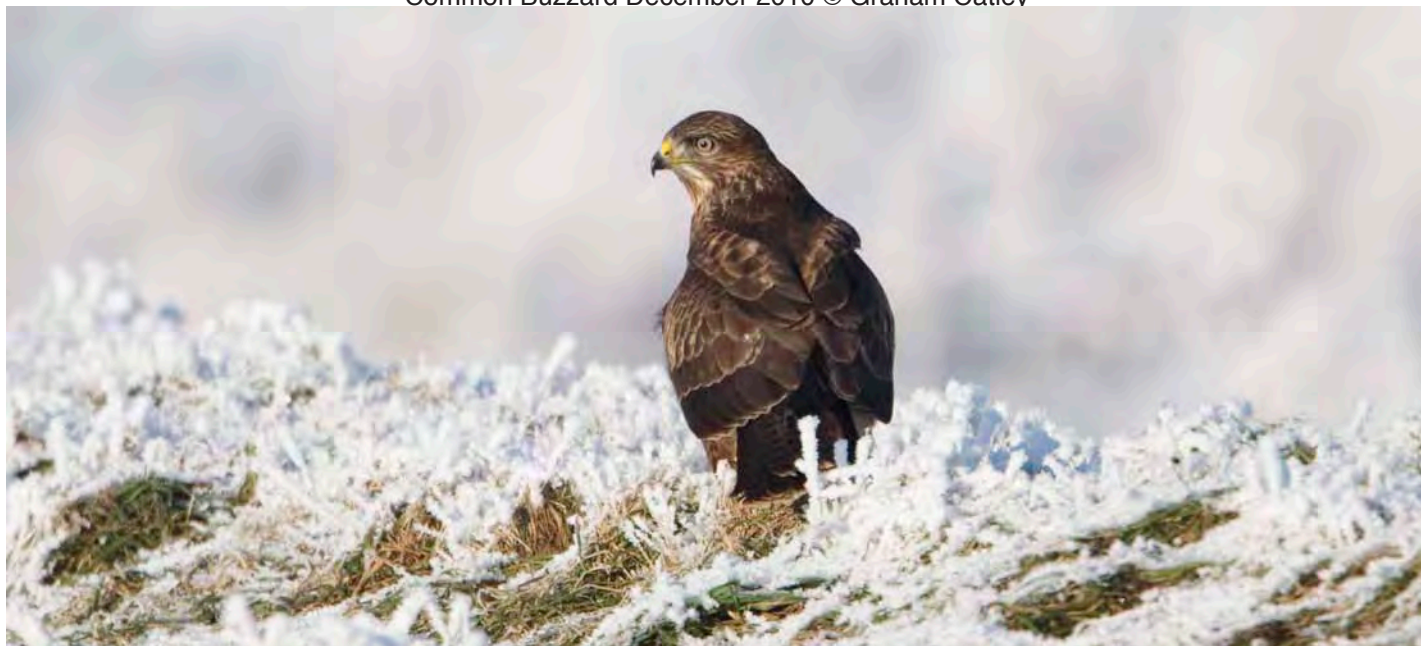


male Hen Harrier Goxhill Grues December 5th 2010

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

There were two centres of Common Buzzard activity clearly involving fledged broods of young birds that were still together at the end of August and in September. The two nest sites were assumed to have been in Langmire Wood and the small woodland between fields 329 to 334. These juvenile birds along with the breeding adults and occasional immatures were seen in the same areas through the ensuing winter but there were also a few records of birds well away from these primary areas. In particular one or two immature birds were observed on several occasions in the block of fields between Chase Hill Wood and East Halton village.

Common Buzzard December 2010 © Graham Catley



Common Buzzard



Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Amber Listed

One flew low north across field 75 on September 27th; at least two juvenile birds were seen in the North Lincolnshire area during late September 2010 including one bird colour ringed at a nest in Highland in July 2010.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Amber Listed

One or two were frequently hunting on the grues between East Halton Skitter and Goxhill Skitter Ness from September – late November with both birds parasitizing the hunting Barn and Short-eared Owls. During the period of snow cover just one male remained and it was seen through to mid February.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Amber Listed

An adult male was chasing Skylarks over field 129 on November 6th. A juvenile or female was chasing a Dunlin over the inter-tidal off field 80 on December 17th but the hapless wader was killed and eaten by a Great Black-backed Gull when it ditched in the water to avoid the raptor's attack. A juvenile or female was hunting waders over the grues on field 80 on the morning of January 24th and later perched on a branch on the grues before flying off across the estuary. On February 1st one was over the inter-tidal mudflats at Pywipe.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

An adult flew south-west past Little London on the September 9th.

Amber Listed

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

There were relatively few sightings of this species during the surveys but pairs were known to be roosting on Immingham Docks and at Grimsby Dock Tower at various times through the winter and particularly in the early spring. Sightings are mapped below with obvious concentrations along the Skitter Beck where there were large numbers of Woodpigeons throughout the winter and in Goxhill Marsh where Woodpigeons seemed again to be the main attraction for a hunting juvenile bird. One was chasing Golden Plovers over field 285 on December 1st and one chasing Woodpigeons in Goxhill Marsh on the 5th.



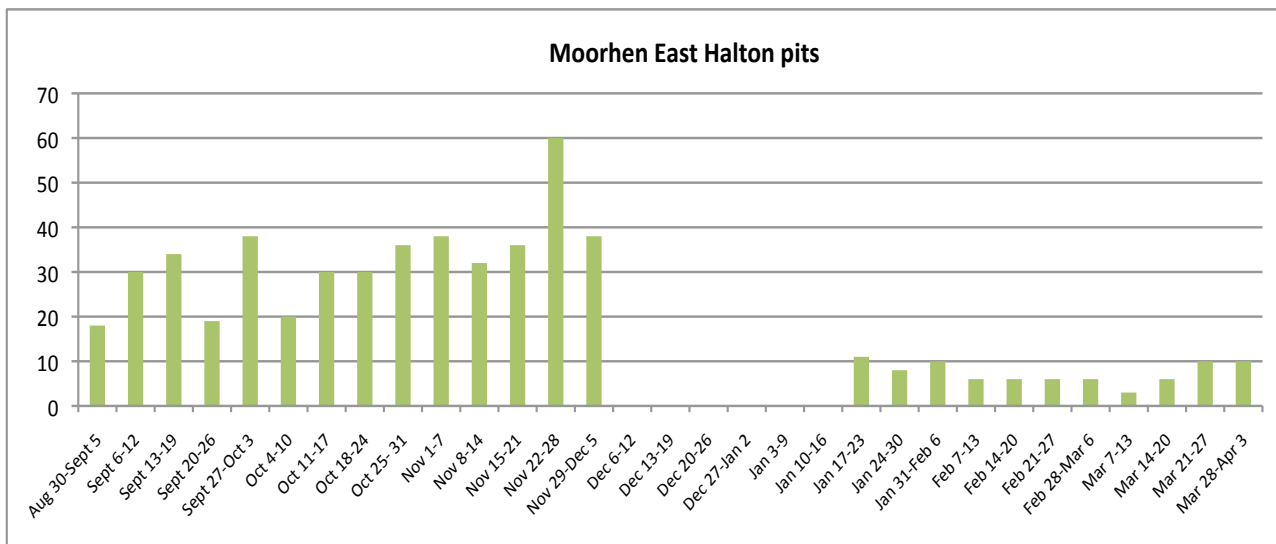
Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Amber Listed

Birds calling in Dawson City, where at least one pair bred in 2010, in early September. One was calling in Parker's Pond on September 21st and on November 20th at least four birds were heard at East Halton pit and three at Dawson City as temperatures fell and the hard weather set in. There were then no subsequent records until one returned to Dawson City from March 14th with the first heard at North Killingholme pits on the 25th.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

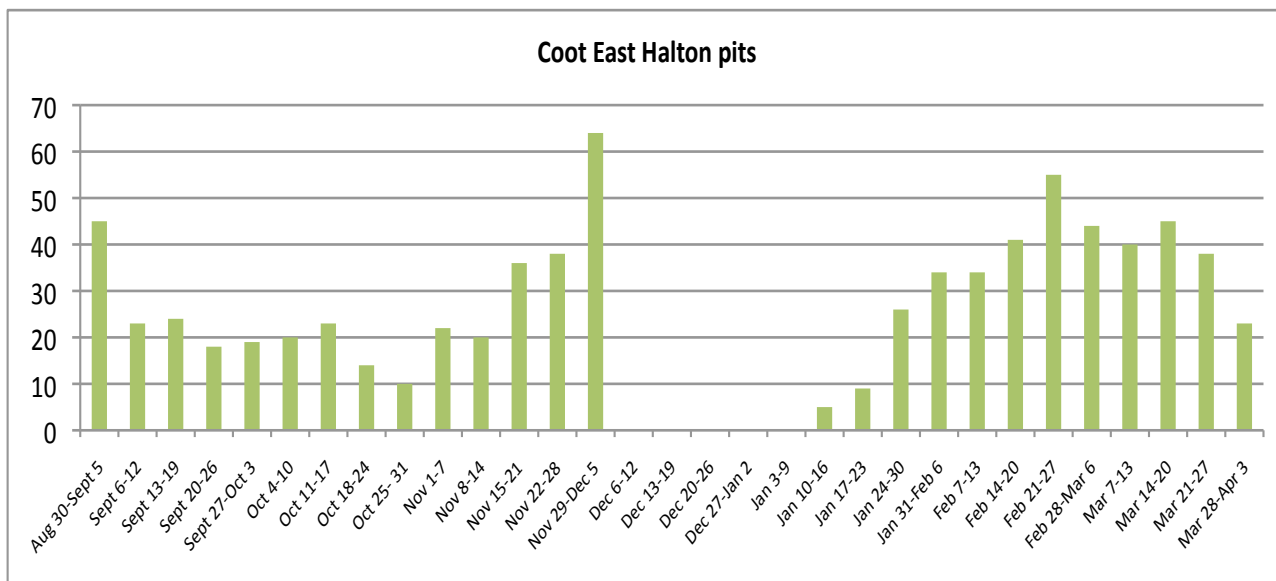
East Halton pits was the key site for this species with 30 – 38 birds regularly present from August to November 21st with a sudden increase to 60 on November 24th; 38 remained in the following week but after that the pits froze and there were no more sightings until January 18th when 11 birds had returned. From then until April there were never more than 10 birds and it seems that like several species Moorhens suffered some serious mortality in the December freeze. Up to 10 were noted at North Killingholme pits until the pits froze at the end of November but again there were never more than three in January – April 2011. Moorhen were harder to see in the vegetation at Rosper Road pools but there were generally six to 20 birds to the end of November when the hard weather led to an almost total exodus with two to 12 birds noted from December – April 3rd. Similar losses appeared to have occurred on the pond in field 286 where there were up to 12 birds from August – late November but a maximum of just four birds from late January – April. Birds were also scattered along the Skitter Beck but most of these also disappeared in the hard weather.



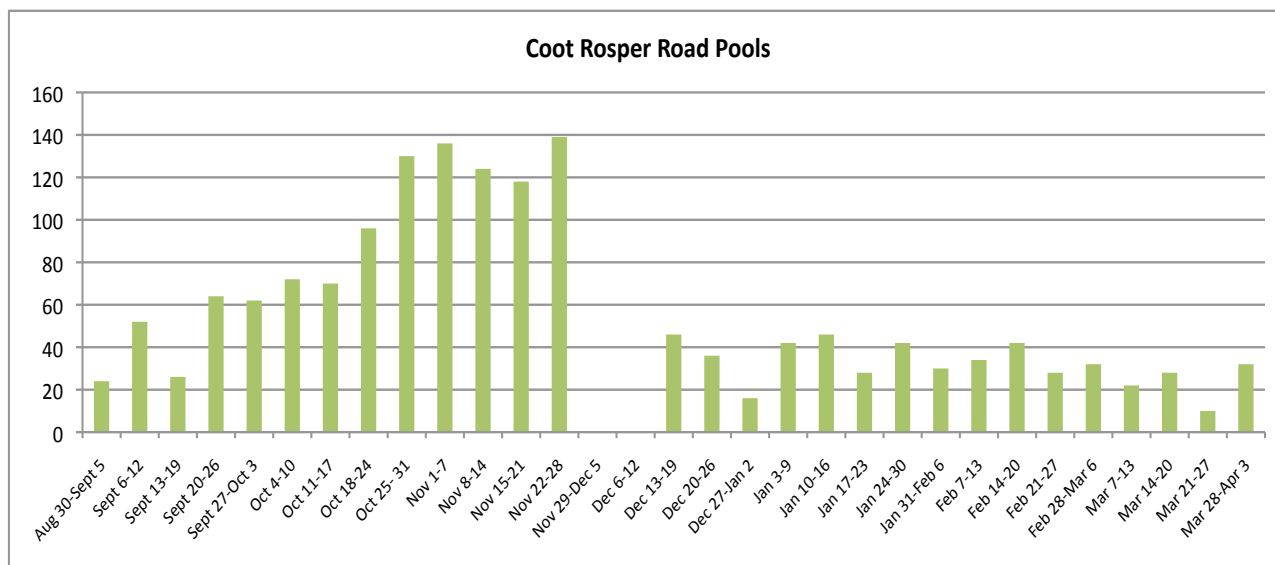
Coot *Fulica atra*

Movements of Coots in the winter are little studied or understood but it is clear that they are more complex than is appreciated. Britain holds large numbers of wintering Coot from Eastern Europe and even further east in addition to local breeding birds and their young. Within the study area East Halton pits and Rosper Road pools were important for the species but North Killingholme pits held very few birds in comparison with previous winters.

As shown numbers fell at East Halton pits as shooting started on September 1st remaining fairly stable to mid November when influxes of wildfowl were noted as the cold weather hit the near continent. Numbers increased to a peak of 64 at the end of November just before the pits all froze over and there was then a total absence until mid January after which numbers increased to a peak of 55 on February 23rd before falling towards the end of the survey as winter visitors departed.



At Rosper Road pools there was an exponential increase in Coot numbers from late August through to early November with the winter peak count of 139 recorded on November 23rd. the pool froze over in the following week but after two weeks small holes appeared in the ice and after a two-week absence Coots returned albeit in much smaller numbers with 10 – 46 birds recorded from mid December through to early April. Up to 16 birds were also noted on the pond in field 86 and one was on the Humber off Goxhill Skitter Ness on January 4th while the corpse of a second bird was on the Humber embankment in the same area during the worst of the winter freeze.



Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National	2746	3528	3200	10200

One or two birds were at North Killingholme pits in March, one was on Rosper Road pools on March 23rd and two were on the Goxhill inter-tidal on August 30th but the most regular site for the species was Pywipe where 18 were present on October 20th and a peak of 20 on March 2nd. The species was formerly much more common on the Pywipe inter-tidal but numbers are now dramatically reduced.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National	486	493	35	730

At North Killingholme pits 11 were still present on August 30th but there were then no further records until 38 were present on March 16th. These proved to be the only observations during the survey period.



Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

An early migrant was feeding on Rosper Road pools on March 22nd.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	781	2168	330	730

A total of 37 birds roosted on field 295 on August 31st when an additional 11 birds were on the adjacent upper inter-tidal; on September 15th a flock of 18 birds attempted to land in field 291 on several occasions but were disturbed by a dog walker. There were no other observations of birds roosting in the fields.

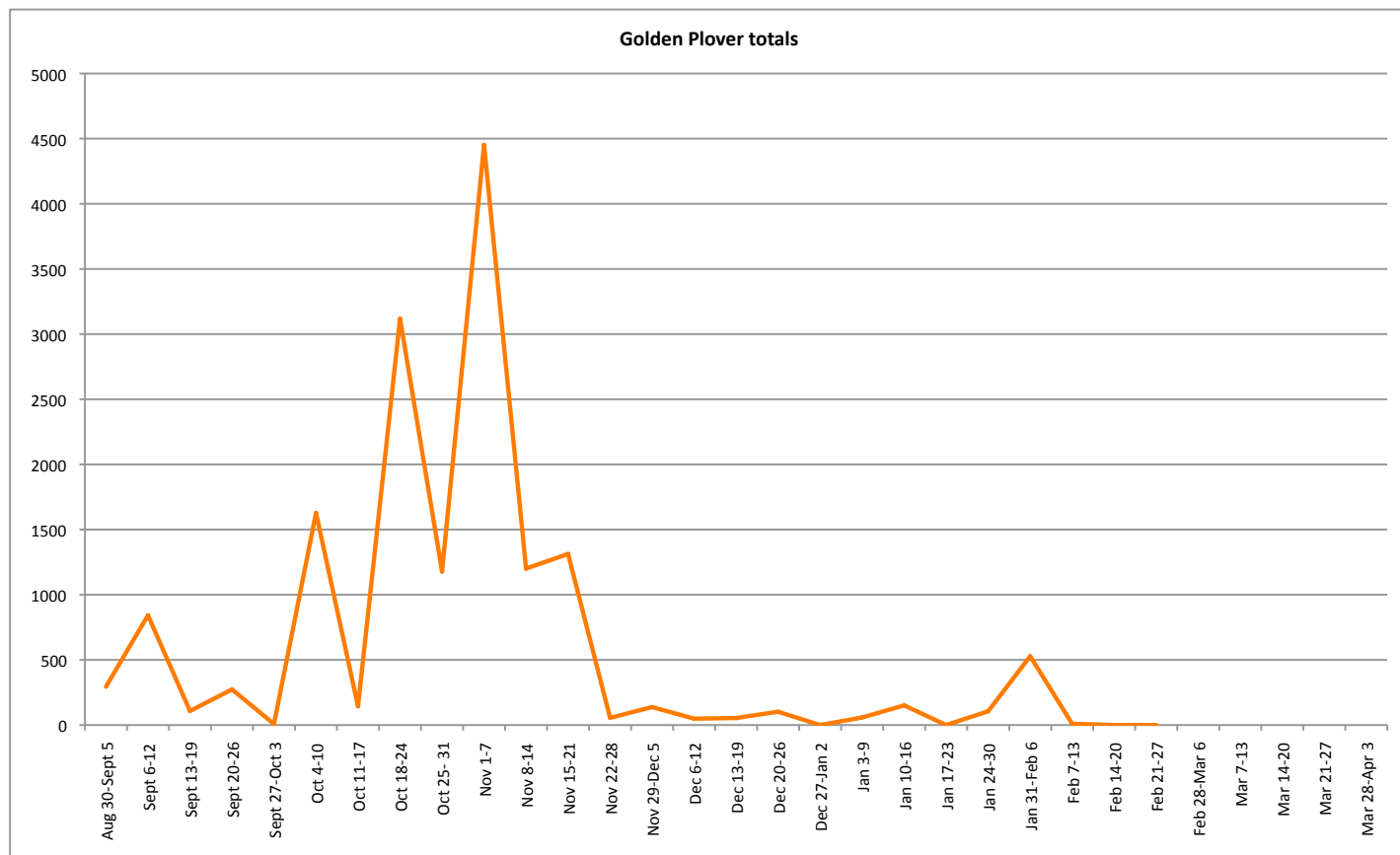
On the inter-tidal areas there was a notable total of 133 off Goxhill Skitter Ness on August 30th with 35 there on October 5th and 10 on November 9th but only 1 – 5 there in the intervening weeks. After a winter absence a total of 41 birds was in the same area on February 21st with 28 in the following week and 12 on March 8th; these birds were presumed to be early spring migrants probably British breeding birds. The maximum number of birds recorded at Pywipe was just 21 on October 20th.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	29172	46926	4000	9300

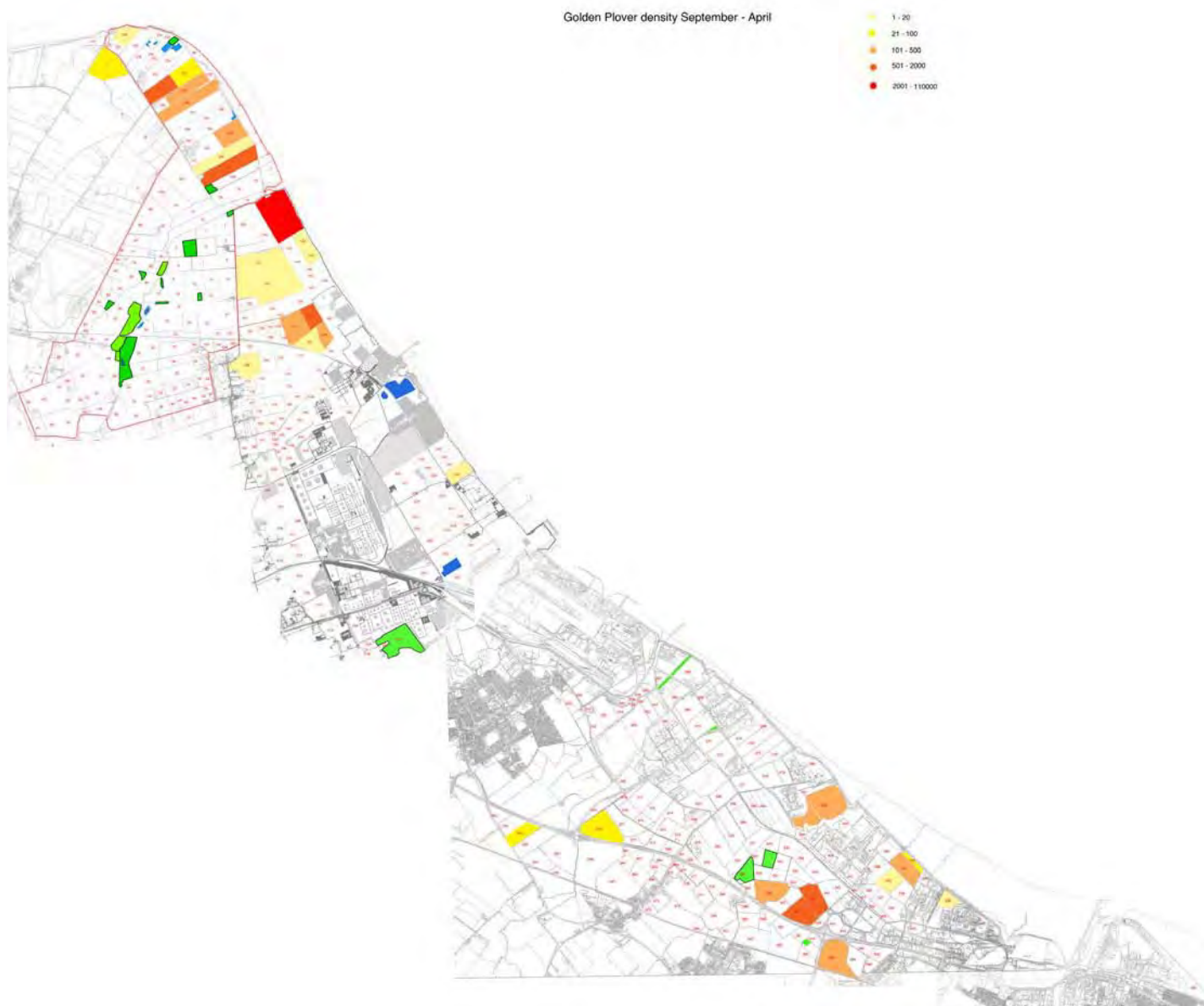
The number of Golden Plover recorded from the survey area during 2010 – 2011 was particularly poor; this was latterly due to the hard weather that affected the area in late November to mid January and produced a massive exodus of this species from the Humber but even during the autumn numbers were low with no more than 1628 recorded until mid October. Numbers then increased through late October to the winter peak of 4452 in the first week of November prior to the onset of the hard weather. The dramatic drop in numbers caused by the onset of the severe freezing weather is clearly shown in the chart but in contrast to other species including Lapwing and Curlew there was no real resurgence of Golden Plover numbers from mid January onwards as the weather eased with the 2011 peak being just 528 birds on January 31st.



The main concentration of roosting birds was found in field 138 at East Halton Skitter on large field previously used by large numbers of roosting Golden Plover. These birds appeared to be part of the large concentration found on the north bank of the estuary around Paul Holme Strays – Cherry Cobb – Patrington Haven as they were seen arriving from that direction and departing across the Humber on some dates. Movements were also noted inland from this roost and additionally odd flocks were seen moving west and east over Thornton Abbey and East Halton village. There were also observations of flocks moving up and down the estuary but not on the scale of previous winters when connections have been drawn between feeding and roosting areas between the north bank, East Halton marshes, Goxhill Marsh, New Holland, Read’s Island area and Alkborough Flats.

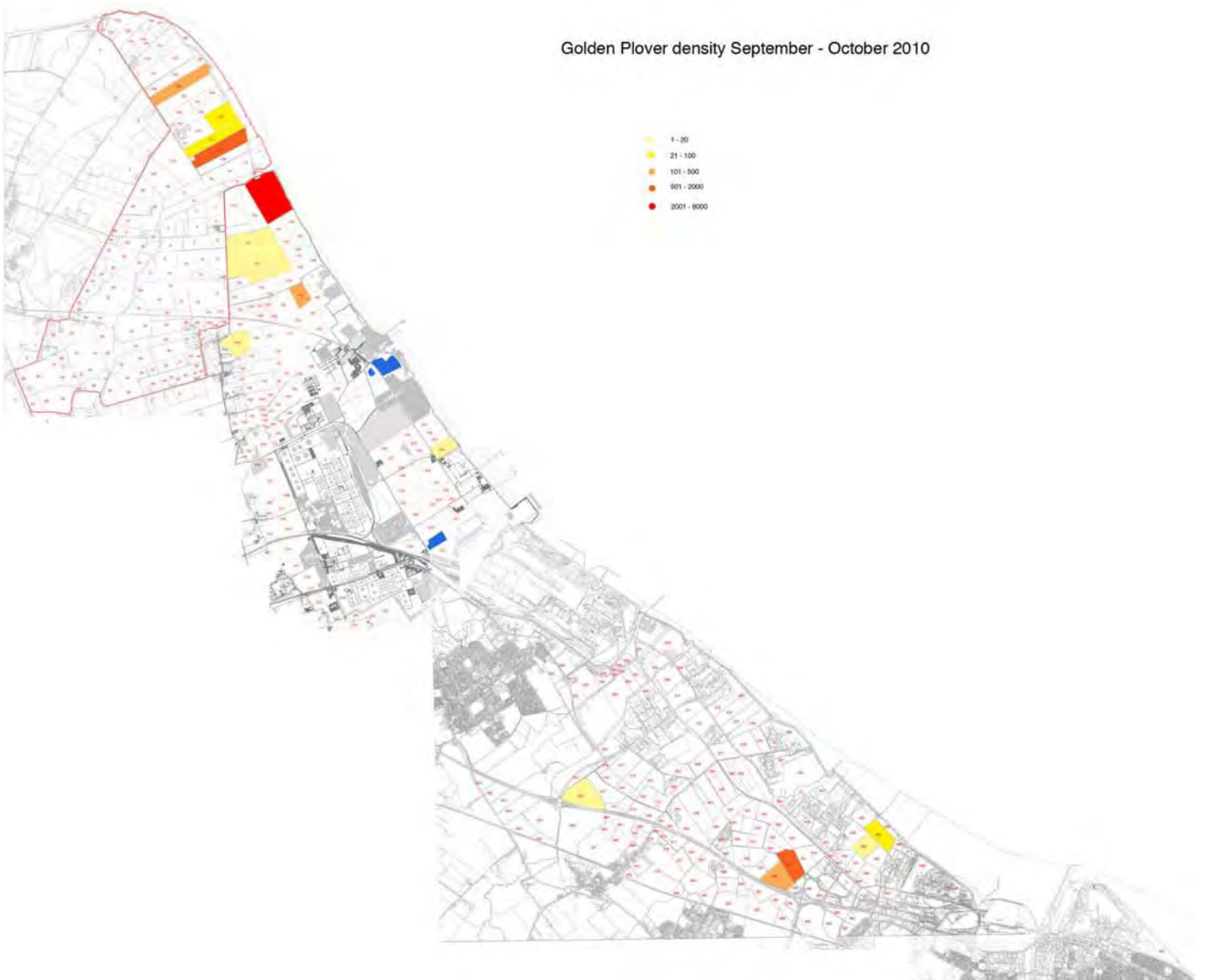
The number of birds recorded from the Pywipe area and fields inland of that inter-tidal sector were notably low throughout the winter with a maximum of only 590 birds seen on the mudflats throughout the entire winter. This appears to be part of a trend of declining occurrence in this area that may be the result of a greater concentration of birds on the north bank of the estuary in addition to increases noted on the outer south bank in the North Cotes – Grainthorpe area.

The distribution of birds in fields within the survey area is shown in the maps below that indicate the whole winter period and the split into autumn, September – October inclusive, and winter November – March. Maps indicate the overall number of birds using each field in the survey period of 31 weeks with weekly counts combined, as well as the two way split indicated above and also the frequency of occurrence that reflects the number of weeks in which a field was used out of the total of 31 for the whole winter and up to nine in the autumn period and 22 in the winter period.

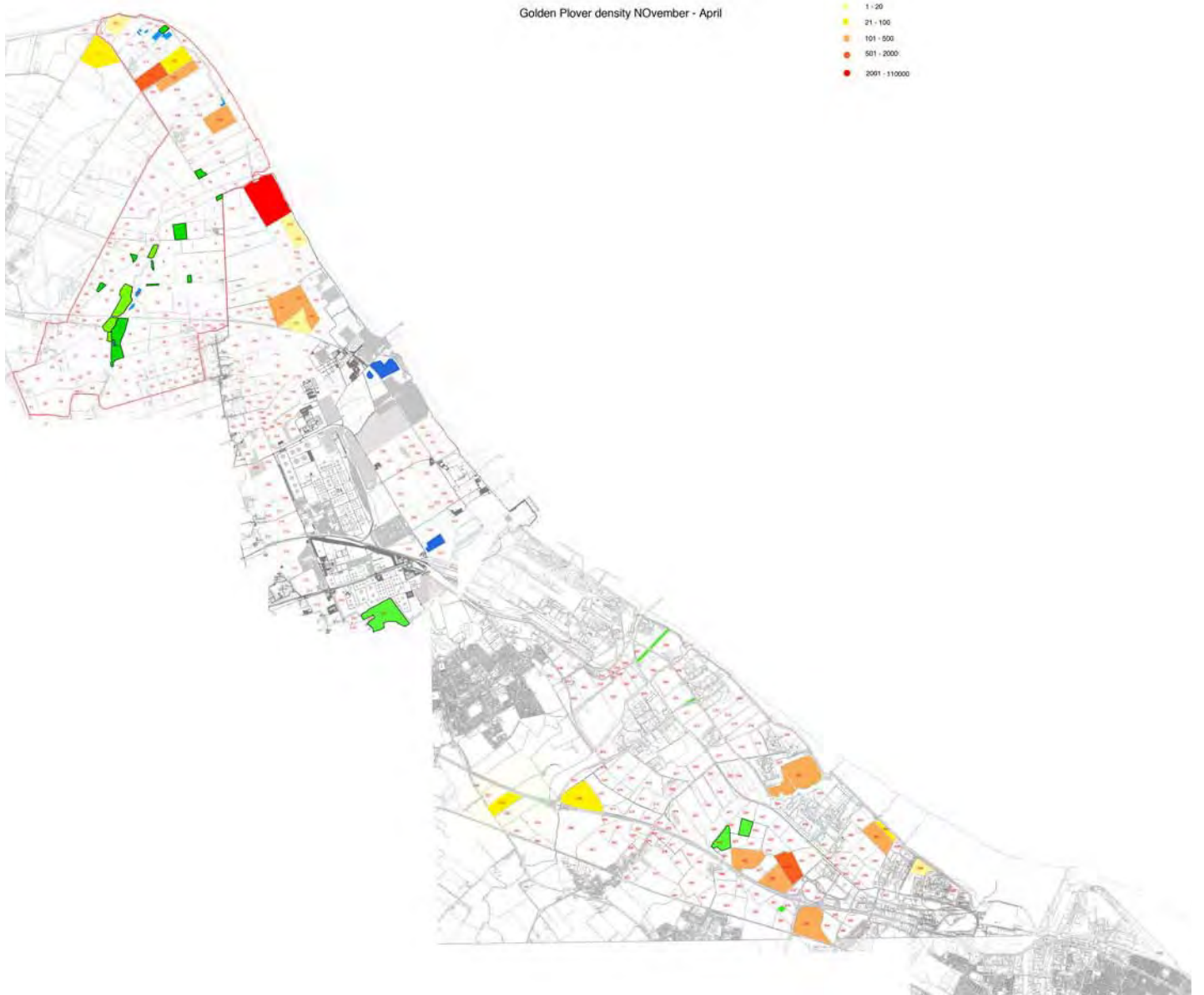




Golden Plover roosting on dragged stubbles field 138 September 2010 © Graham Catley Nyctea Ltd



Golden Plover density November - April



Golden Plover frequency September - April



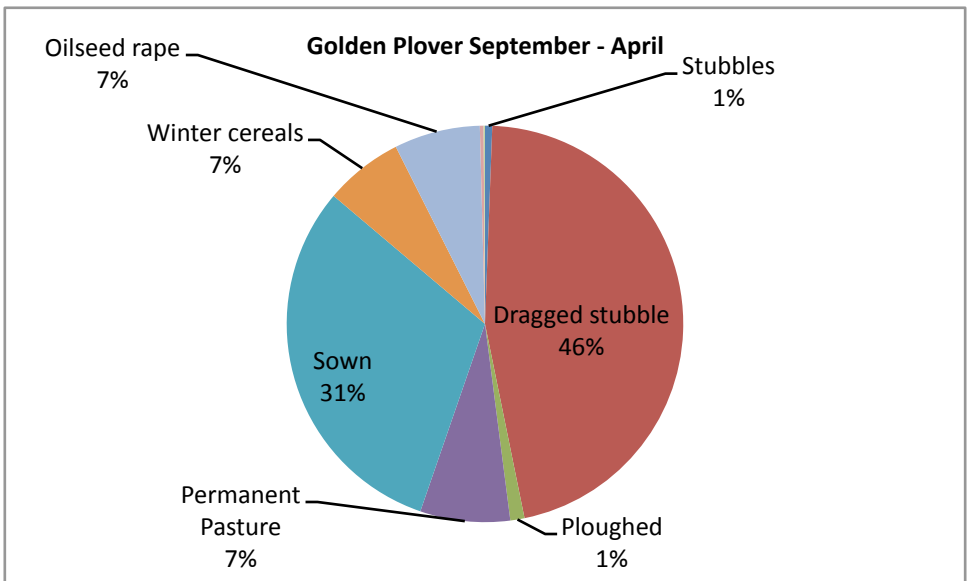
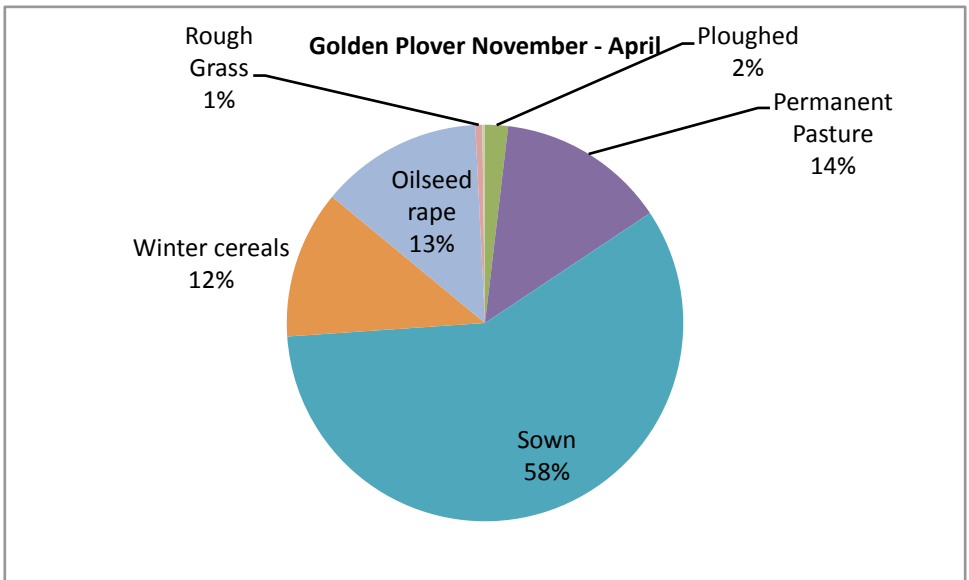
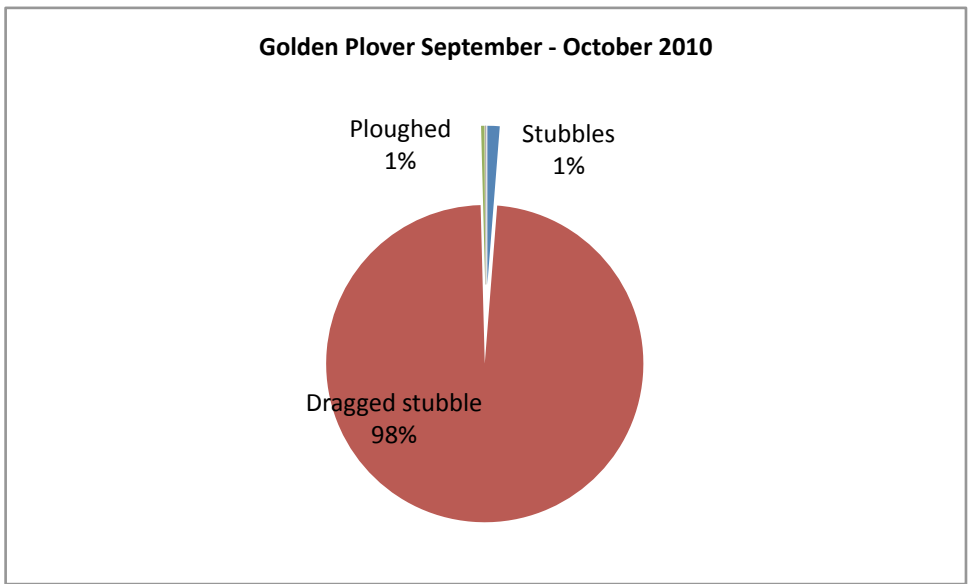
Golden Plover frequency September - October 2010



Golden Plover frequency November - April



The charts below show the habitat choice of roosting Golden Plovers during the same split and combined periods of the overall survey with percentage use being determined from the combined number of birds recorded from each crop / habitat type during the respective periods of the survey. Clearly in the early autumn period the choice of habitat is dictated by the fields that have been harvested or left fallow as growing crops are too tall for roosting birds. As the winter progresses oilseed rape also rapidly becomes too tall and dense to allow use by short-legged waders such as Golden Plover unless the crop is poor with open areas where the birds can still walk.



All of the movements of Golden Plovers during the survey period are shown in the maps below:



Golden Plover movements November 2010



Golden Plover movements December 2010



Golden Plover movements February 2011



Golden Plover movements March 2011



In addition to the notes above; on October 25th a flock of 108 birds arrived over field 126 from the south at high water and flew around the field twice but failed to join the birds on the ground and then headed off north-west (see map). A flock of 34 flew north over Goxhill Skitter Ness on March 2nd. A flock of 108 birds arrived over field 126 from the south at high water and flew around the field twice but failed to join the birds on the ground and then headed off north-west (see map). A flock of 34 flew north over Goxhill Skitter Ness on March 2nd.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Amber Listed

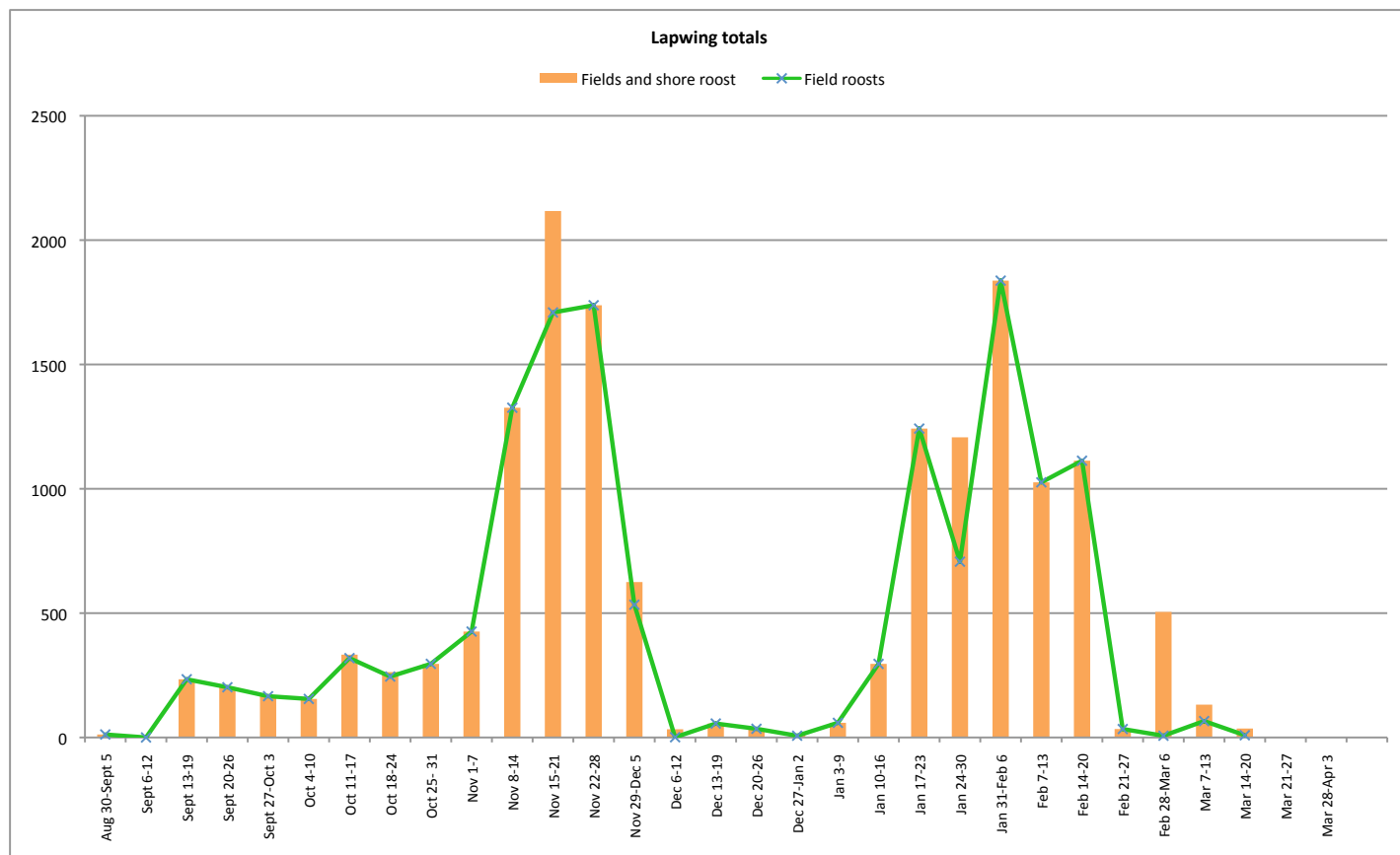
Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National	3530	2916	530	2500

The inter-tidal at Goxhill Skitter Ness held variable numbers of Grey Plover at low water with peaks of 25 on October 6th and 17 on November 9th and up to seven roosted on the upper inter-tidal off field 80 in October – November. Variable numbers were also noted feeding on the mudflats at Pywipe with peak counts of 26 on October 19th, 88 on January 10th and 84 on January 31st. These birds either left Pywipe on high springs or roosted on the upper inter-tidal or the rocky shoreline of the inner Pywipe basin.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	11700	18756	6200	20000



Autumn numbers of Lapwing in the survey area were particularly low only starting to increase from early November when there was a large arrival of birds from the continent producing the winter peak of 2117 on November 15th. The following week saw large numbers still present but as the severe frosts and extensive snow cover developed in the last week of November Lapwing began to leave the estuary with the four weeks from December 6th to January 9th producing a maximum of 59 birds in the whole of the survey area and these birds all appeared to be in poor condition often being very approachable and clearly struggling for food as even the inter-tidal mudflats were freezing. From mid January Lapwing numbers suddenly increased as birds returned to the Humber rising to a peak of 1837 on January 31st; numbers remained

relatively high at around 1000 birds through to February 20th after which most of the wintering birds left the estuary and numbers declined to nil by the end of March.

The majority of the Lapwing recorded throughout the winter were in the Goxhill Marsh area where the birds commuted between the inter-tidal off field 80 and the permanent pasture fields inland of the sea embankment with some movements to fields further inland of the survey area and also further up the estuary towards New Holland. Fields south-east of East Halton pit were used heavily for a short period and the previously favoured fields at Thornton Abbey were also used by good numbers of Lapwings for a limited number of weeks. This pattern of sporadic occurrence in some parts of the survey area seemed to be a feature of the winter as a whole and probably reflected the effects of the severe winter weather on the different fields and substrates as well as crop types and also possibly showed that different populations of Lapwing may have been using the area at different times during the winter. Certainly the small flocks seen in the autumn used different fields to the main wintering population, which is assumed to be composed mostly of birds from the continent and further east.

The only roost of any significance at North Killingholme pits was of 244 birds on February 24th. The number of birds using the Pywipe inter-tidal was very low with peaks of just 420 on November 23rd and 430 on January 18th and this was reflected in the low totals of birds found roosting in the fields inland of this inter-tidal sector. The birds that did roost in the Grimsby area were highly concentrated in four favoured fields north-west of the Europarc site where they fed and roosted on fields of oilseed rape.

The distribution of birds in fields within the survey area is shown in the maps below that indicate the whole winter period and the split into autumn, September – October inclusive, and winter November – March. Maps indicate the overall number of birds using each field in the survey period of 31 weeks with weekly counts combined, as well as the two way split indicated above and also the frequency of occurrence that reflects the number of weeks in which a field was used out of the total of 31 for the whole winter and up to nine in the autumn period and 22 in the winter period.

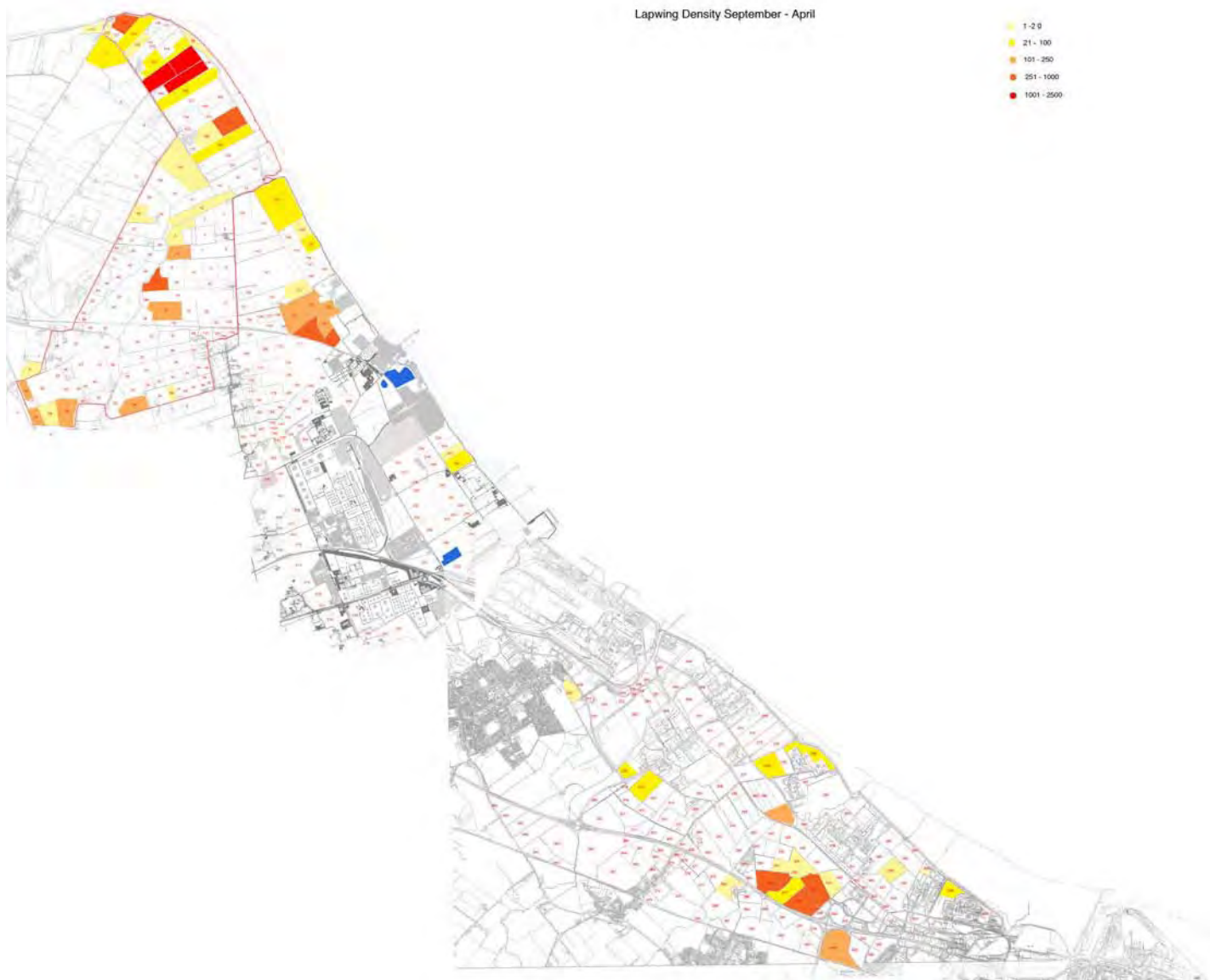
The charts below show the habitat choice of roosting Lapwings during the same split and combined periods of the overall survey with percentage use being determined from the combined number of birds recorded from each crop / habitat type during the respective periods of the survey. Clearly in the early autumn period the choice of habitat is dictated by the fields that have been harvested or left fallow as growing crops are too tall for roosting birds. As the winter progresses oilseed rape also rapidly becomes too tall and dense to allow use by short-legged waders such as Golden Plover unless the crop is poor with open areas where the birds can still walk.

Choice of crop type changed through the autumn primarily as harvested fields were dragged and then worked ready for sowing with autumn – winter cereals and oilseed rape. Most of the oilseed rape was sown into dragged stubbles and was concentrated in large blocks of adjacent fields. During the autumn September – October 73% of the Lapwing were found on dragged stubbles but as these were sown with winter cereals and oilseed rape the percentage of Lapwing using permanent pasture fields increased from 12% in September – October to 57% in November – April producing an autumn – winter value of 51% a higher value than found in previous surveys. Winter use of oilseed rape and winter cereals were equal at 15% overall and 17% in November – April with ploughed fields holding 3% - 4% of the total throughout. Birds found on permanent pasture fields were typically feeding rather than just roosting whereas birds on dragged stubbles were frequently roosting through the high tide period.



The distribution of birds in fields within the survey area is shown in the maps below that indicate the whole winter period and the split into autumn, September – October inclusive, and winter November – March. Maps indicate the overall number of birds using each field in the survey period of 31 weeks with weekly counts combined, as well as the two way split indicated above and also the frequency of occurrence that reflects the number of weeks in which a field was used out of the total of 31 for the whole winter and up to nine in the autumn period and 22 in the winter period.

The charts below show the habitat choice of roosting Lapwings during the same split and combined periods of the overall survey with percentage use being determined from the combined number of birds recorded from each crop / habitat type during the respective periods of the survey. Clearly in the early autumn period the choice of habitat is dictated by the fields that have been harvested or left fallow as growing crops are too tall for roosting birds. As the winter progresses oilseed rape also rapidly becomes too tall and dense to allow use by short-legged waders such as Golden Plover unless the crop is poor with open areas where the birds can still walk.

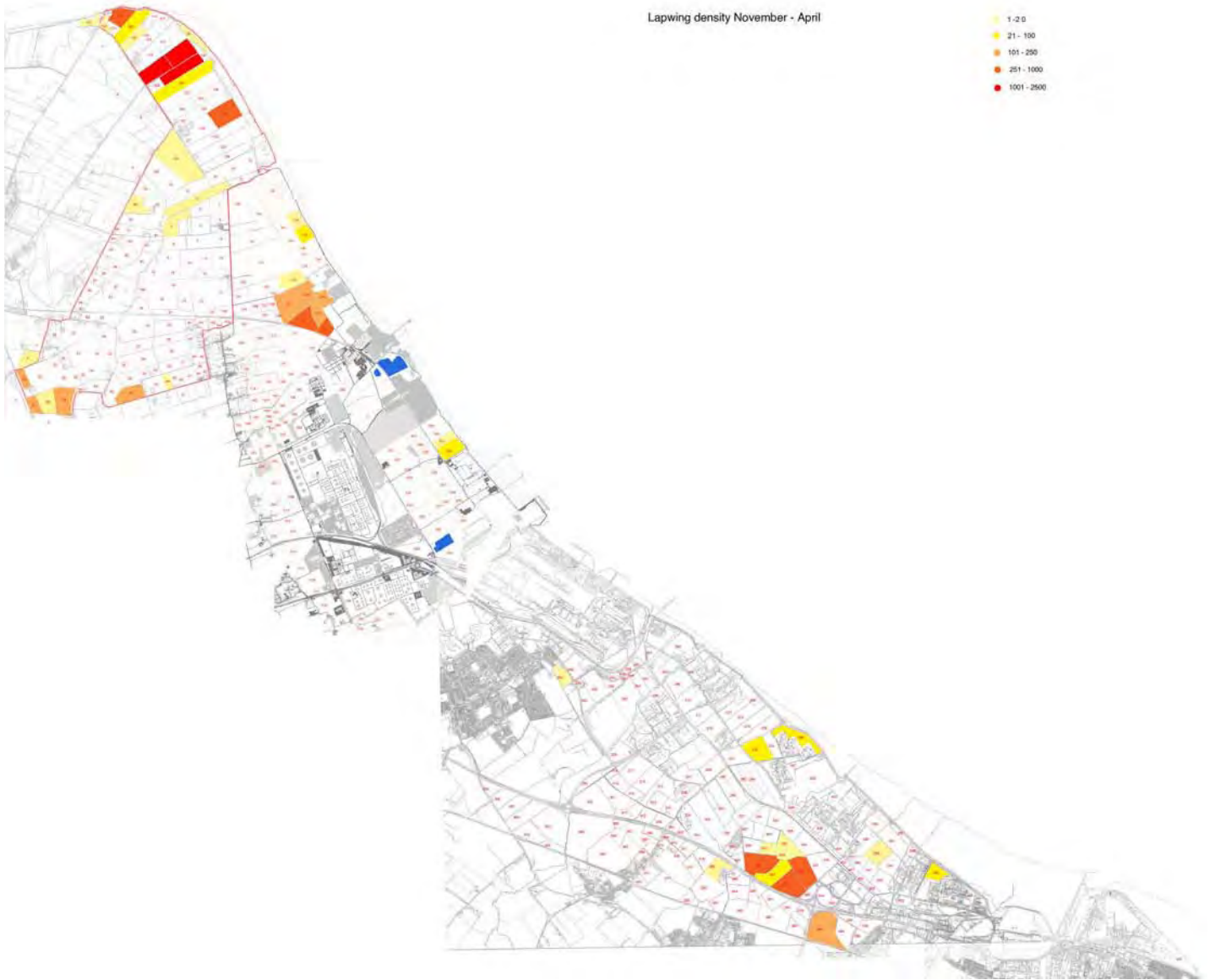


Lapwing density September - October

- 1 - 20
- 21 - 50
- 51 - 150
- 151 - 500
- 501 - 801



Lapwing density November - April



Lapwing frequency September - April

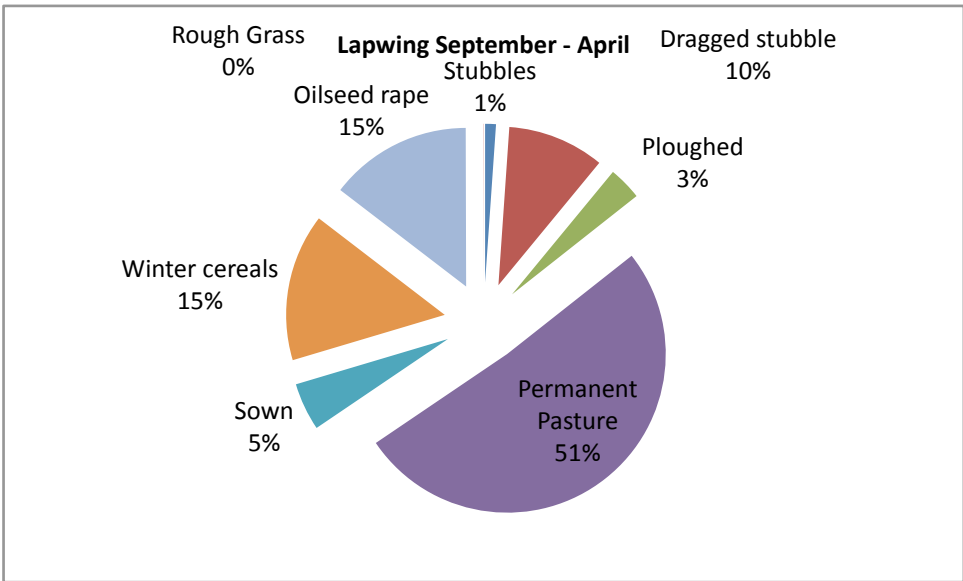
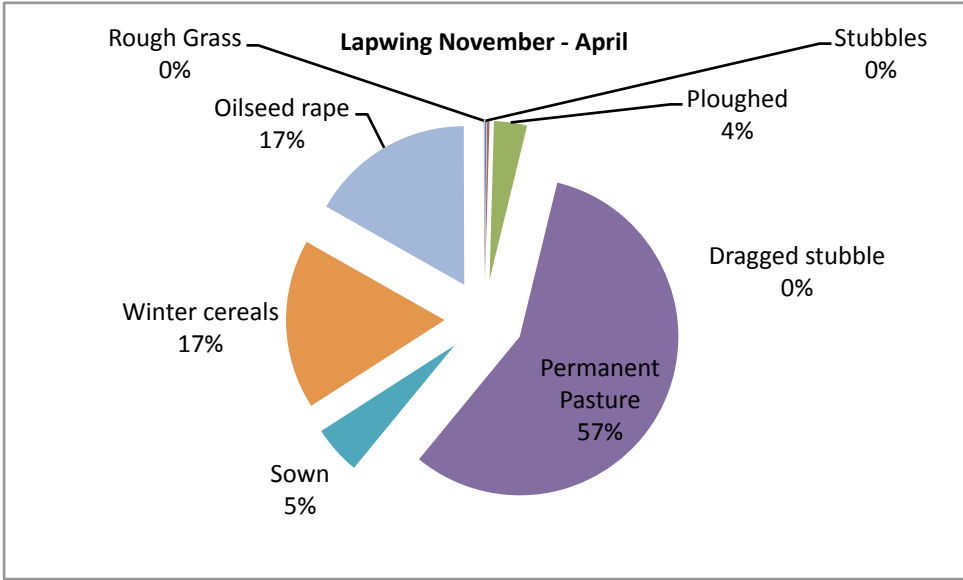
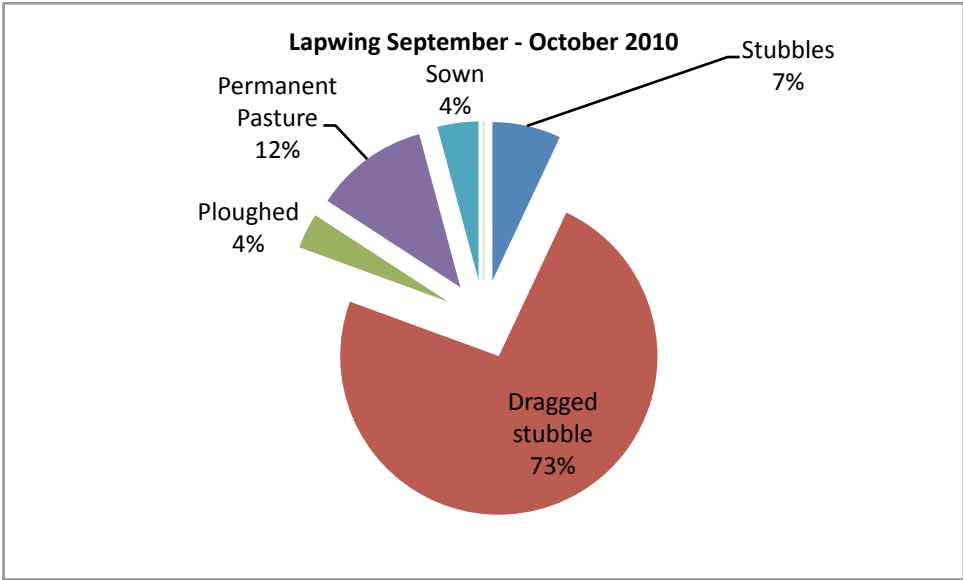


Lapwing frequency September - October



Lapwing frequency November - April





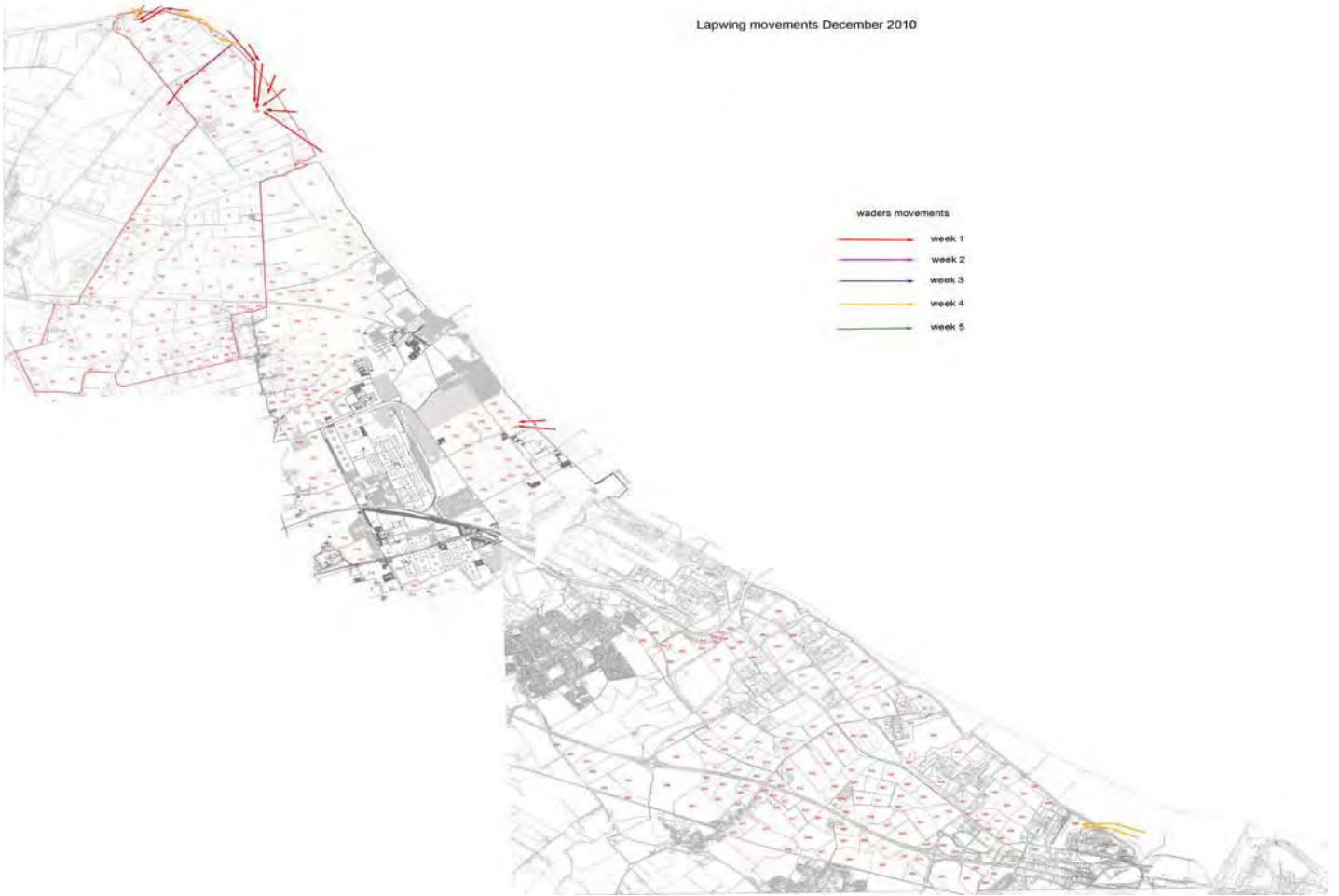
Lapwing movements October 2010



Lapwing movements November 2010



Lapwing movements December 2010



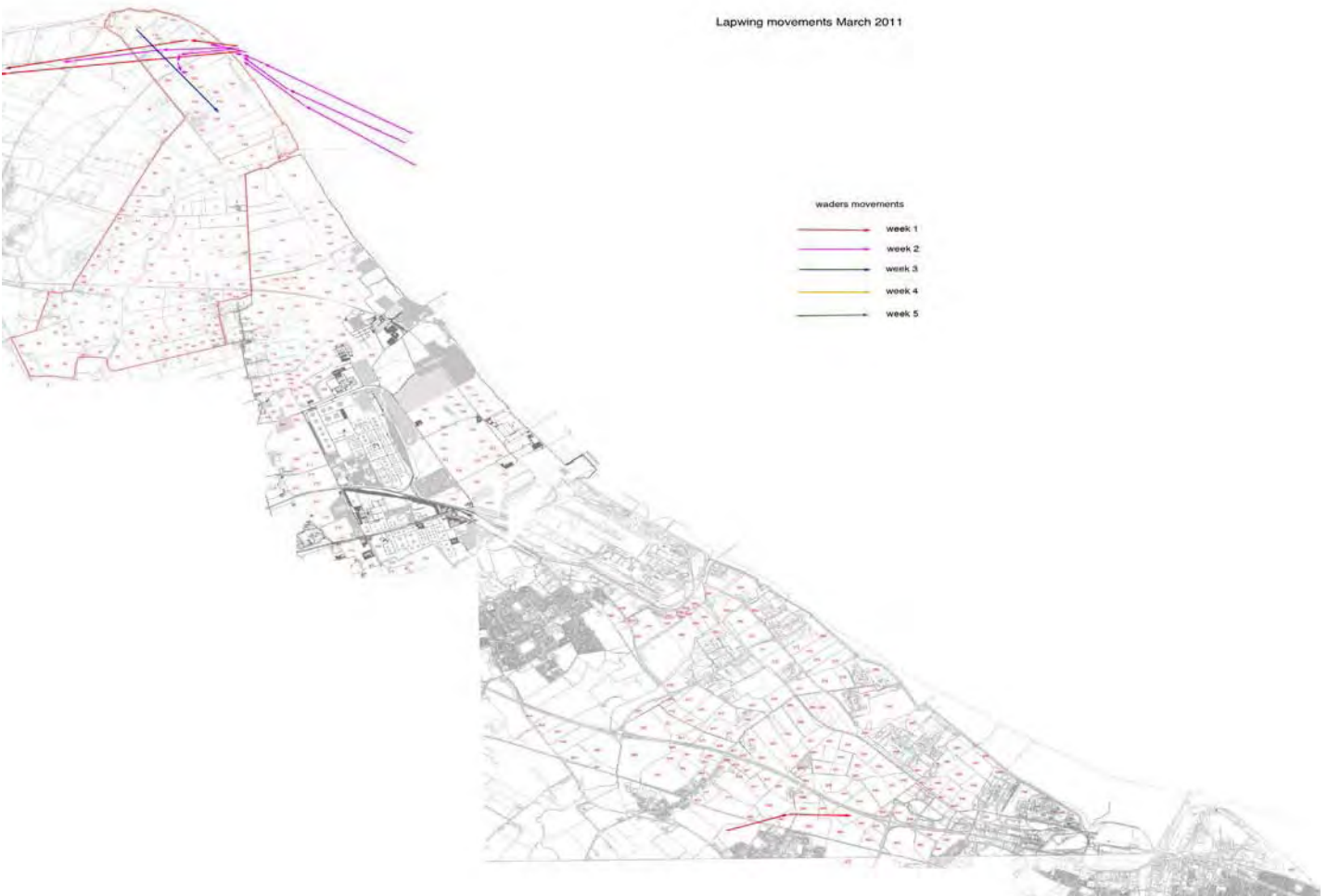
Lapwing movements January 2011



Lapwing movements February 2011



Lapwing movements March 2011



Knot *Calidris canutus*
Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	17552	41772	2800	4500

A total of 42 birds roosted at North Killingholme pits on September 1st with 8 there in the following week and four on September 28th. Small numbers were occasional on the Goxhill Haven to East Halton Skitter inter-tidal with a peak of 18 on February 22nd. Two flocks of 12 and 9 flew off west high inland from Goxhill Skitter Ness on the evening tide of January 17th.

Birds were scarce during the winter at Pywipe with 90 on October 5th and 19th being the only notable counts in the high water roosts on the upper inter-tidal mudflats.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

A juvenile was with Dunlin in North Killingholme pits on September 9th.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

A juvenile was flying over the estuary off Goxhill Skitter Ness on September 6th during strong south-easterly winds and a juvenile was feeding in North Killingholme pits on the evening high tide on September 21st.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*
Amber Listed

A juvenile was with Ringed Plovers and Dunlin on the foreshore off Goxhill Skitter Ness on August 30th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*
Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	15444	21518	5600	13300

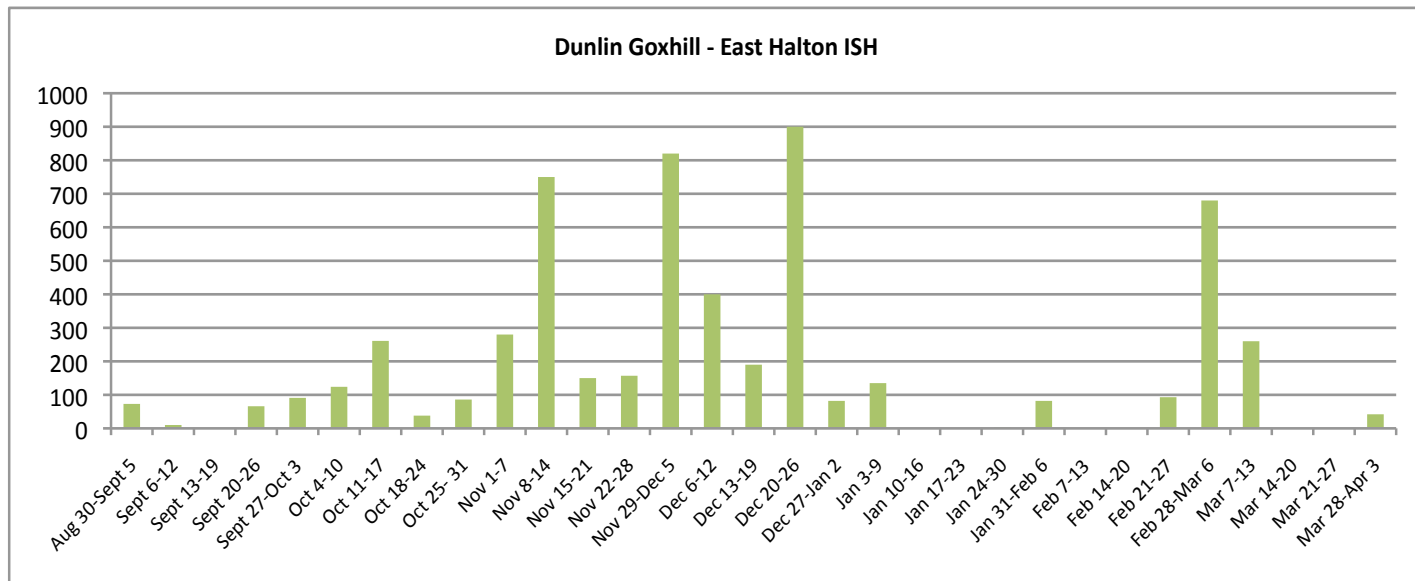
A flock of 14 birds roosted on field 295, by the Novartis factory on September 1st but the birds only stayed on the compound for 15 minutes before returning to the estuary. There were no other instances of Dunlin roosting on any of the fields in the survey area.

The wader roost at North Killingholme pits held variable numbers of Dunlin from August 30th to October 31st with 7 to 332 birds being recorded per week until an unprecedented 3050 birds were present on October 25th.

On the inter-tidal areas there were no regular counts of Dunlin but observations on falling and low tides as well as neap highs were recorded. On the section between Goxhill Haven and East Halton Skitter up to 900 birds were noted but numbers were very variable and were greatly reduced during January – February after the hard weather. The flocks of Dunlin observed along this stretch of the inter-tidal appeared to be indulging in staged feeding stops as they moved up estuary from at least South Killingholme to New Holland with the return flight, on the rising tide, being made in one movement. This clearly has implications in maintenance of inter-tidal feeding areas for this and some of the other species observed in the area including Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits. On occasions the birds that fed at Goxhill appeared to want to roost locally but instead of using the adjacent fields the birds spent long periods, up to two hours, around high water flying over the estuary and failing to land. As an example on November 5th a flock of 280 Dunlin moved back and forth over the Humber foreshore by field 80 for an hour up to dusk. Up to 600 birds were feeding on the mudflats between North Killingholme Haven and the HIT terminal with the birds either roosting at North Killingholme pits, on the upper foreshore by the South Killingholme lighthouses or moving down the estuary towards Pywipe. On November 23rd 177 Dunlin roosted on the upper inter-tidal between the South Killingholme lighthouses and Immingham Docks. On the Pywipe basin inter-tidal large numbers of Dunlin were present at low water with winter peaks being in the region of 2000 to 2400 birds and the maxima of 2800 and 2700 being recorded in mid October and early December. On neap tides these birds roosted or continued to feed on the upper inter mudflats in the basin. On median tides some of the flock roosted on the rocky upper shore between Doig's Creek and the Pywipe sewage works but on high springs most of the birds moved down the estuary towards Cleethorpes – Tetney with some also being observed departing and arriving from the north bank of the estuary in

the direction of Patrington Haven.

Movements of birds around the estuary are well known but departures and arrivals are easily overlooked so the following observation is of interest; On January 20th with clear skies and an increasingly full moon there were definite signs of wader movements on the evening tides with two flocks of 12 and 8 Knot and four flocks of Dunlin flying off high to the west from Goxhill Skitter in the later evening.



Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National	79	64	7	

A total of 13 birds were in the permanent pasture fields in Goxhill Marsh, 110 – 112 and 120 on October 5th and the same pastures produced records of 1 – 4 birds in nine subsequent weeks but there were no records in the East Halton marshes area where birds wintered on a previous survey and similarly after a very low autumn presence at North Killingholme pits there were no records at that site or in the fields by Rosper Road pools during the entire survey. None were observed at Pywipe. In addition to the above and records in the table below one flew north passing over field 112 where it looked set to land before flying on during severe weather on November 29th. One was on the upper inter-tidal off field 80 on January 17th and again on March 2nd presumably involving the same bird.

Field	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3	
1																																
80						8																										
110																																
111						12	4								2				1	2	1											
112							1						1																			
120						3																										

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Amber Listed

Seven were roosting with Lapwings in field 240 during heavy snow on December 1st. A total of 18 birds were flushed from flood-water pools in field 129 on January 17th; a search of East Halton grues on the same date only revealed one additional bird.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

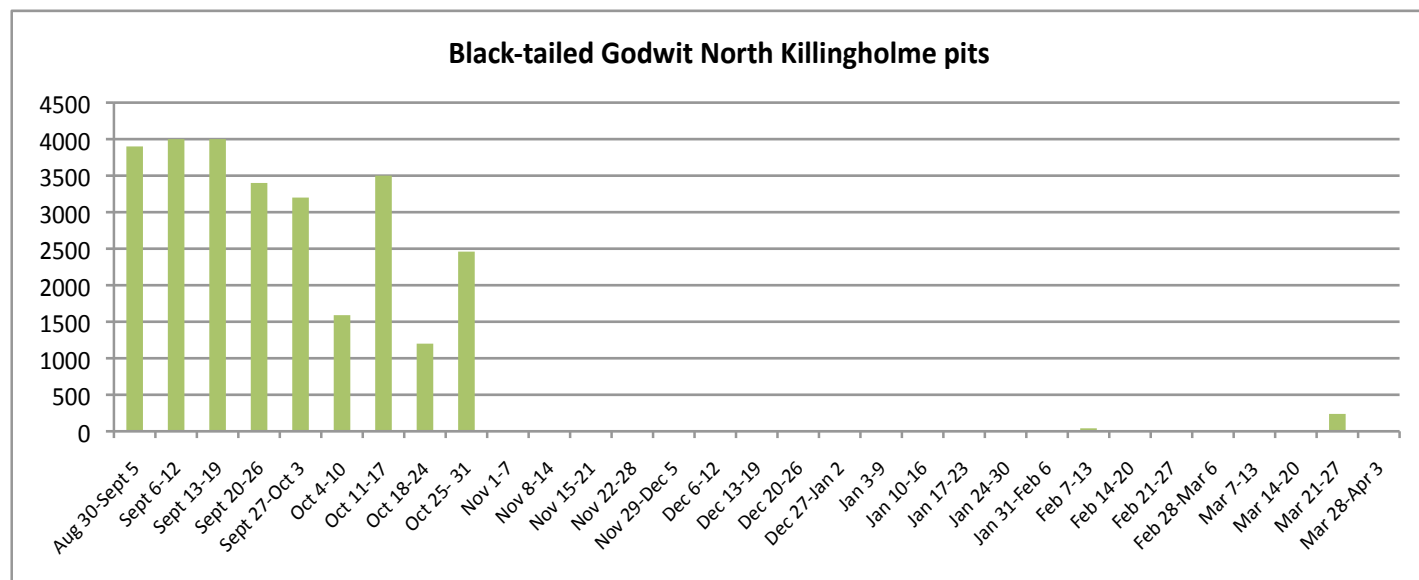
Amber Listed

One was in the small copse in field 184 on November 6th. One landed in a ditch by field 120 on December 5th. One was feeding on the Humber embankment on December 6th during the severe freeze; on the 7th one was in the scrub at North Killingholme pits and on in the ditch by field 150. Two were found dead and plucked on the Humber embankment between Goxhill Haven and Dawson City on December 13th. One was on the side of the Humber bank by the entrance to Dawson City on February 20th.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Red Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	3828	3887	150	470



The pattern of Black-tailed Godwit on the Humber occurrence followed that of recent years with increasing numbers through July peaking in August – October after which there was a fall in numbers with a fairly stable wintering population being established through late November to January albeit with some marked declines during the severe weather in December. The Humber holds a high percentage of the juvenile population of Icelandic Black-tailed Godwits in the early autumn with birds staging here before onward movements to wintering areas.

Counts of birds roosting at North Killingholme pits peaked in mid September with 4000 birds recorded falling to 2500 by late October after which there was a total lack of birds in the roost; this coincided with a ringing event in the roost but whether the two occurrences can be directly linked is impossible to state as the birds always tend to move their roost site to the Pywipe end of the survey area from mid November onwards. From November onwards the main roost site was in the inner Pywipe basin around Doig's Creek and on the upper inter-tidal and foreshore between Grimsby Docks and the Novartis foreshore. There was also some evidence of birds roosting on the north bank of the estuary at Patrington and Spurn and in the severe weather there was more widespread movement of birds than is normal in winter. There was also evidence of departures from the estuary in December and of some mortality during the long period of freezing weather. The number of birds counted on the inter-tidal at Pywipe peaked at the end of October at 3400 birds before declining to around 2200 in November. A slight resurgence occurred following the bad weather in January but peak numbers were only in the region of 540 birds well below the January norm of recent winters. The typical early departure of wintering birds saw a lack of godwits in February – March with a small passage noted in March at North Killingholme. Observations of 83 different colour ringed birds during the autumn and winter revealed that there was considerable interchange of birds between different sites around the estuary during the autumn and also that a part of the wintering population is formed of

birds that do not use the Humber in the autumn but return to wintering sites from November onwards. As usual there was evidence of strong site fidelity amongst passage and wintering individuals with some birds having occurred on the estuary for 15 – 16 years.

In the early autumn during September significant numbers of Black-tailed Godwits were using some of the fields adjacent to the estuary for feeding. Most of the birds involved were juveniles that part of the population that is usually outcompeted by adults in use of prime feeding sites. Most of the fields used were dragged stubbles where the birds were presumably feeding on worms and invertebrates. The primary fields used were those from Goxhill Haven to East Halton Skitter and were immediately inland of the sea wall. Flocks of birds were observed moving between the roost at North Killingholme pits and the fields on a regular basis not just at high tide with some individuals possibly commuting on more than two occasions on a tidal cycle. Details of some of these observations are given below. Later in the winter period virtually all of the Black-tailed Godwits found on the fields were those that joined roosting Curlew on the old Huntsman site where they roosting at high water.

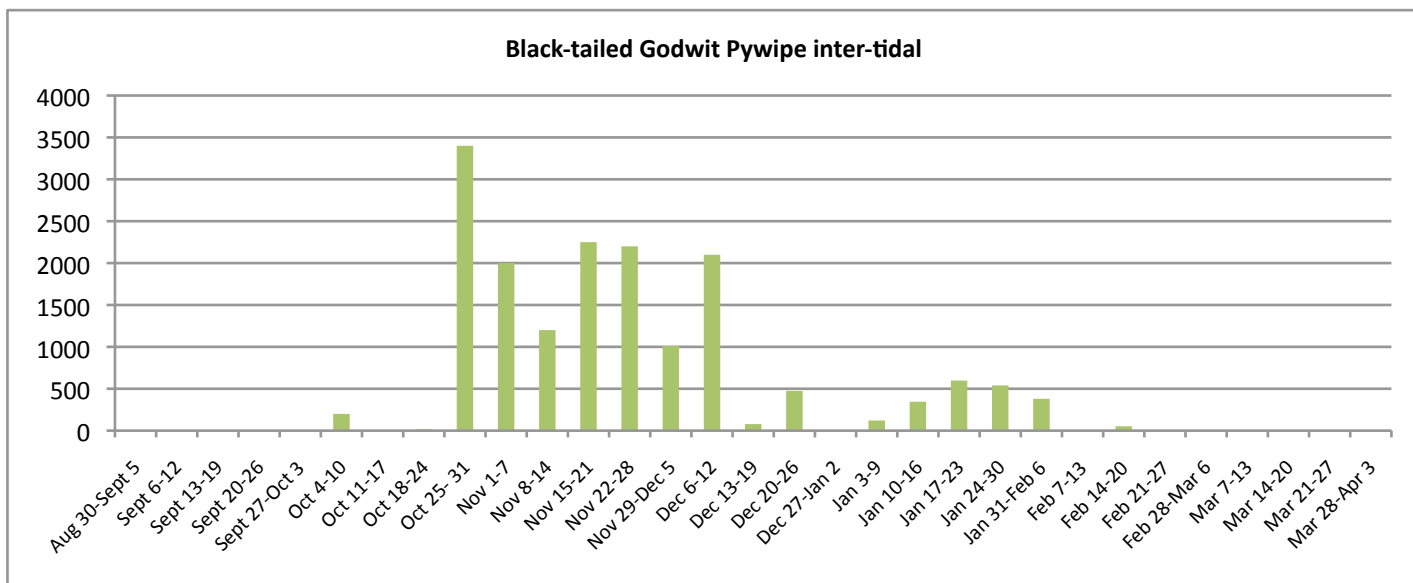
In week 2 during a very strong south-easterly wind a total of 392 birds was feeding in field 138 in a narrow strip of dragged stubble sheltered from the wind at the southern side of the field. 85% of the birds were juveniles.

Subsequently in week 3 a flock of 360 birds was feeding on four fields in Goxhill Marsh, 116, 118, both mown hay fields, and 120 and 122 the latter being dragged, rape stubble, and 120 wheat stubble with a small strip dragged on the southern side. 90% of the birds were juveniles and they were actively feeding in all of the fields before at and after high tide. Some of the birds commuted to the adjacent inter-tidal when this was available but at high tide flocks moved to North Killingholme pits and back again so it was not possible to ascertain whether the same birds were involved and the total number of birds using the fields could have been higher than that recorded.

In week four the activity noted in week three was repeated with a minimum of 338 birds being seen at one time. Two colour ringed birds were seen; one Red Yellow Red Red flag was feeding in the same spot off Goxhill Skitter Ness where it spent most of the previous winter as a juvenile bird being last seen on February 16th 2010; the second bird Black Green Orange flag Black was a French ringed bird recorded in the autumn of 2010 at North Killingholme pits from August 2nd.

In week 8, October 18th – 24th, almost all of the Black-tailed Godwits were feeding on the inter-tidal between Immingham Docks and Pywipe at low water with birds roosting in North Killingholme pits making short feeding and roosting stays on the inter-tidal between North Killingholme Haven and the HIT terminal.

By March 2nd only seven birds were found at Pywipe but 146 roosted on the upper inter-tidal by the South Killingholme lighthouses on March 8th with two of the latter being colour ringed birds.



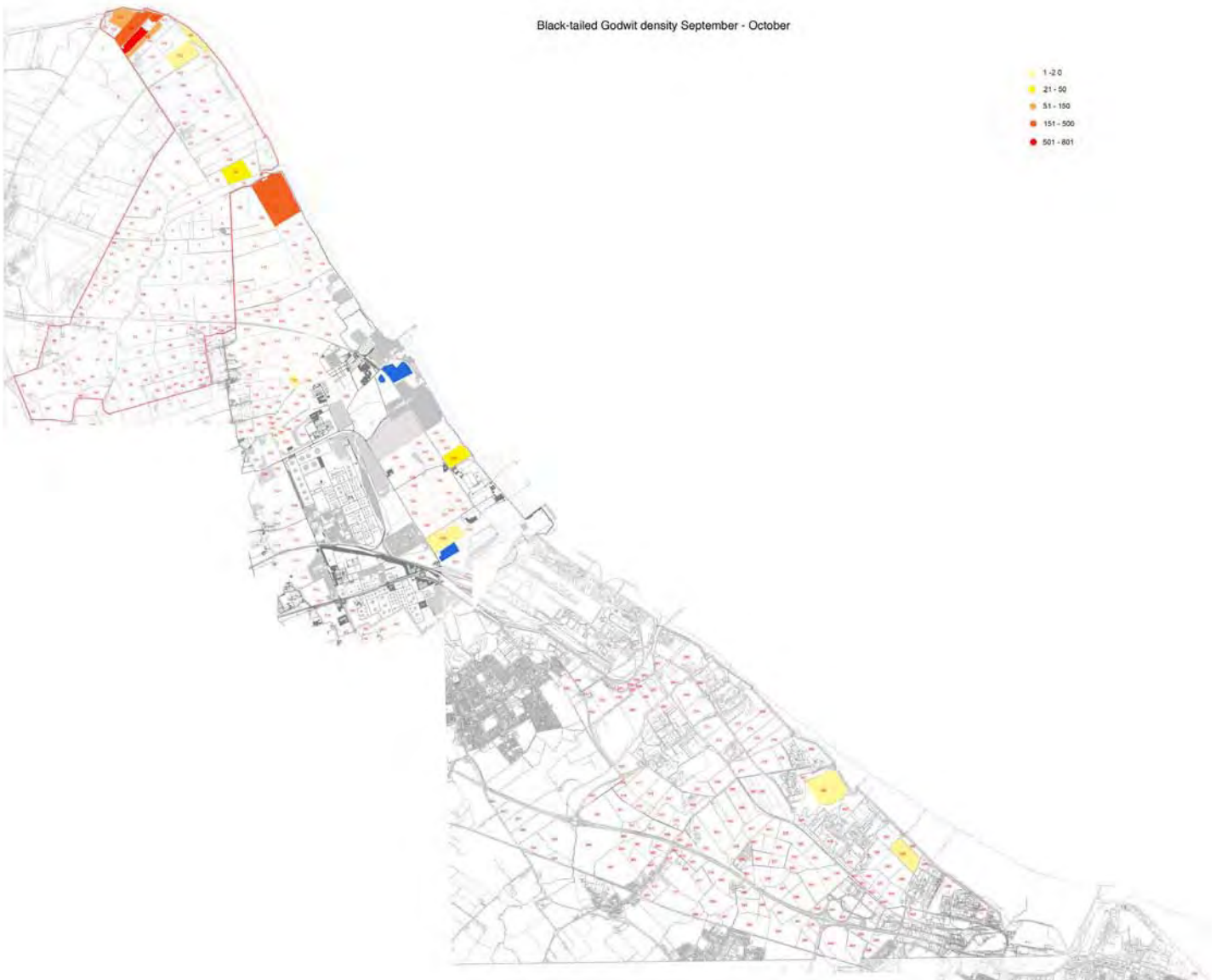
Black and Bar-tailed Godwits and Curlew roosting on Pywipe foreshore December 2010 © Graham Catley



Movements of Balck-tailed Godwits recorded on survey visits



Black-tailed Godwit density September - October



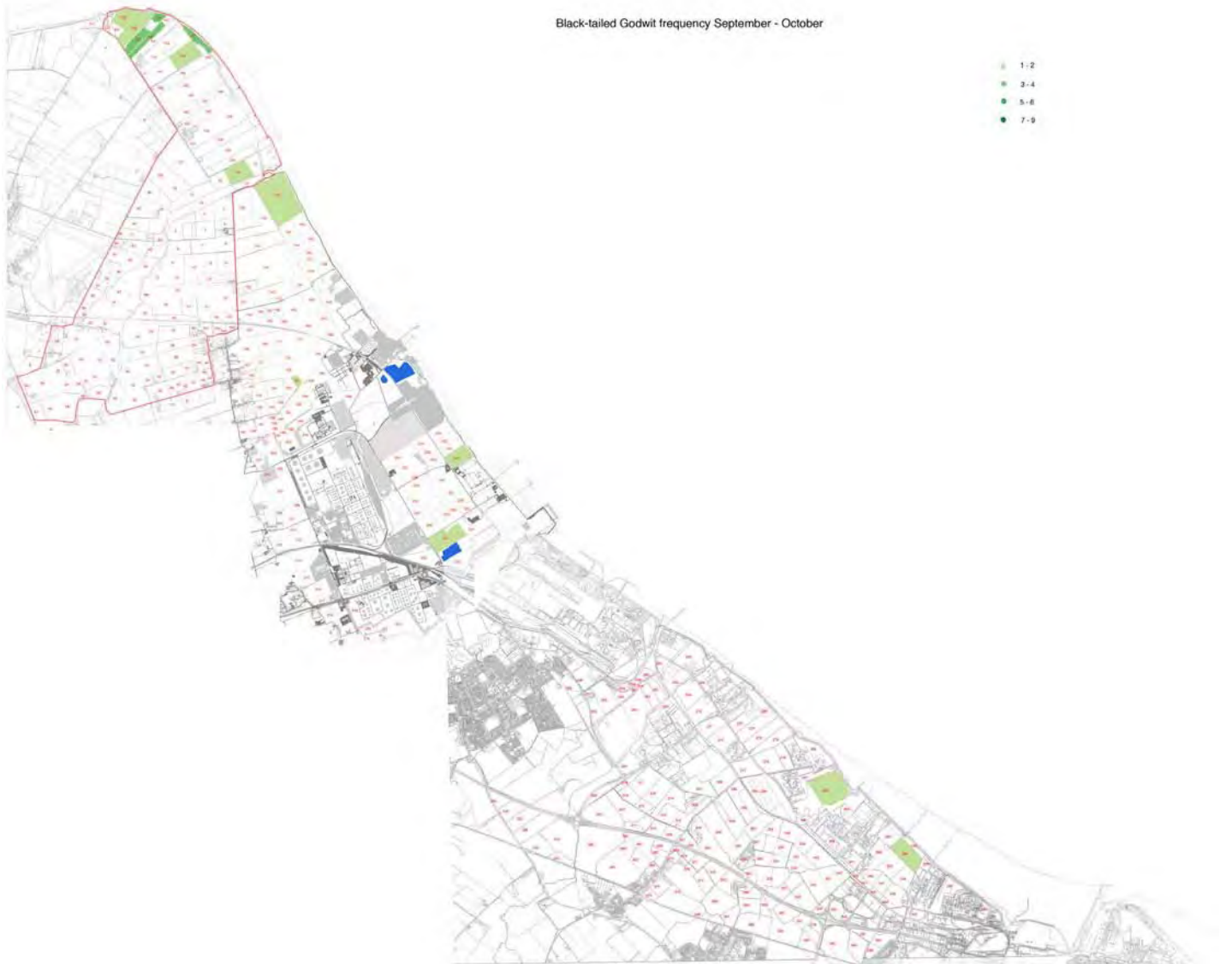
Black-tailed Godwit density November - April



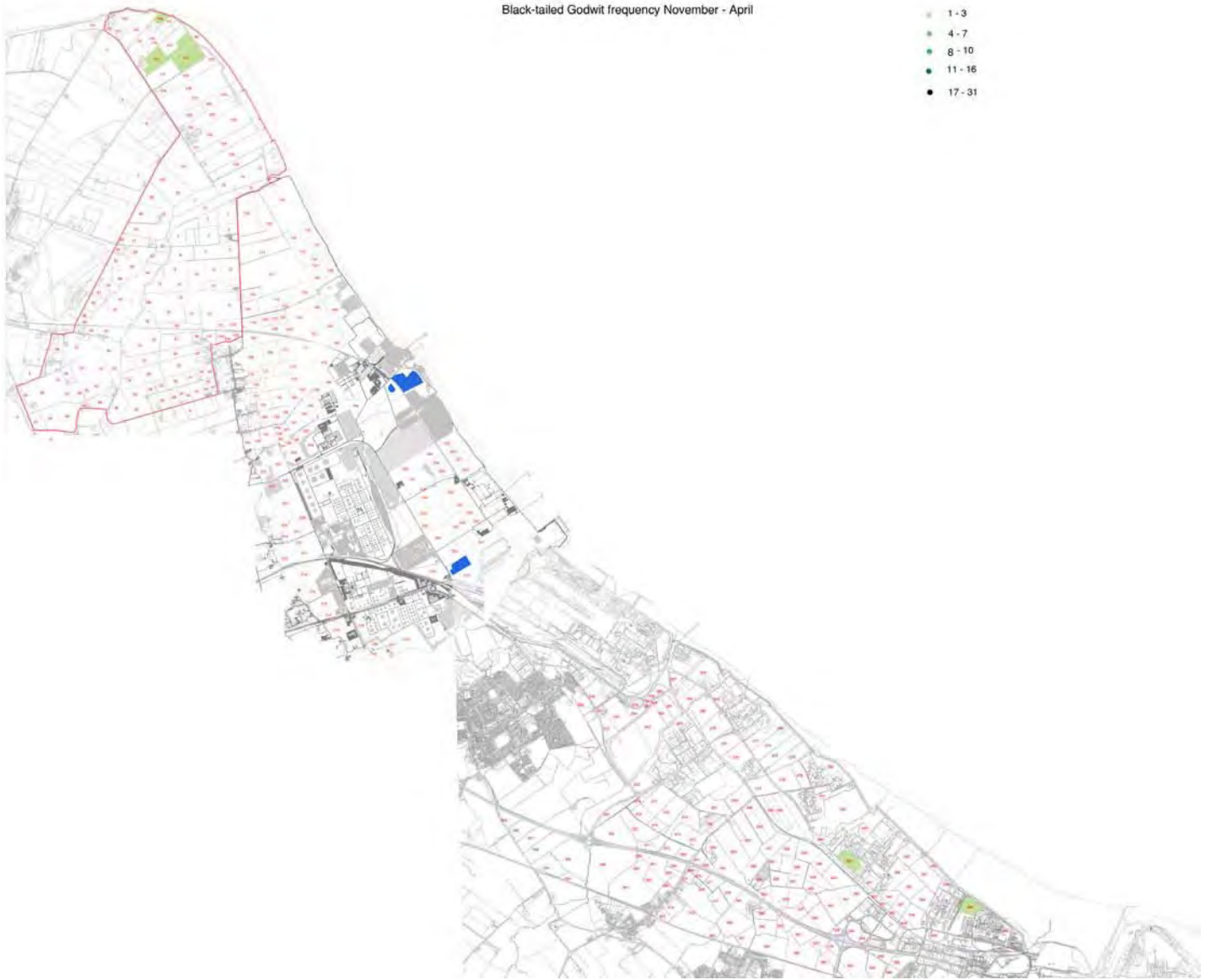
Black-tailed Godwit frequency September - April

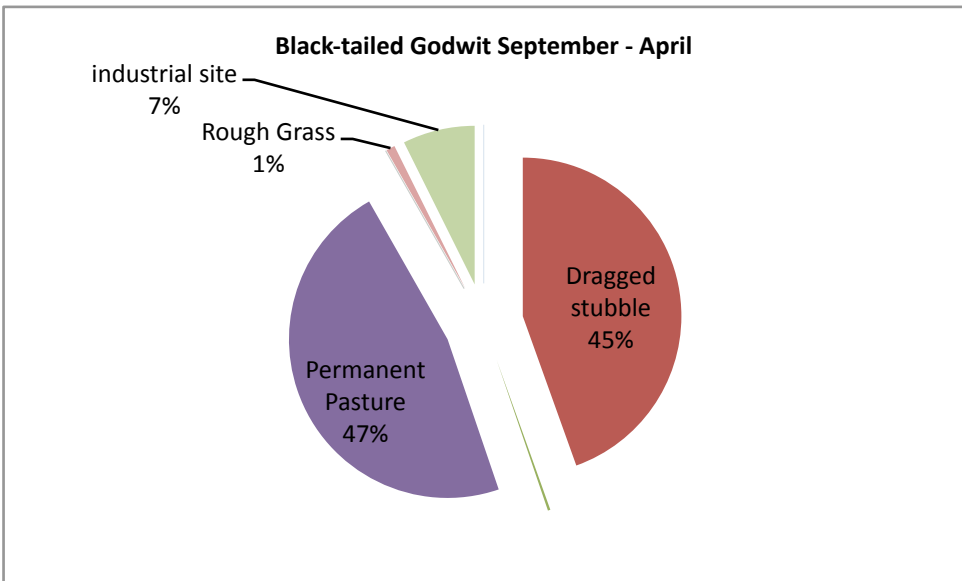
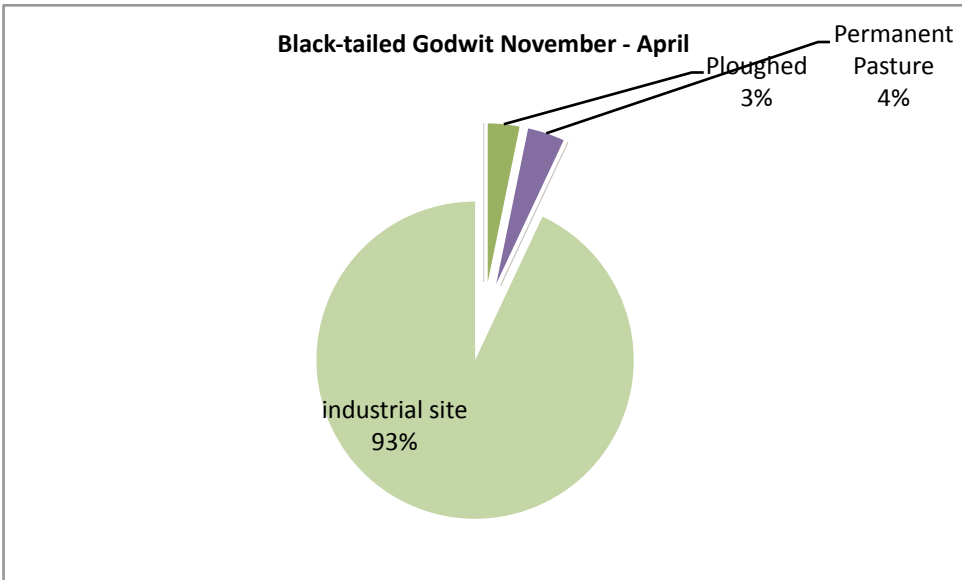
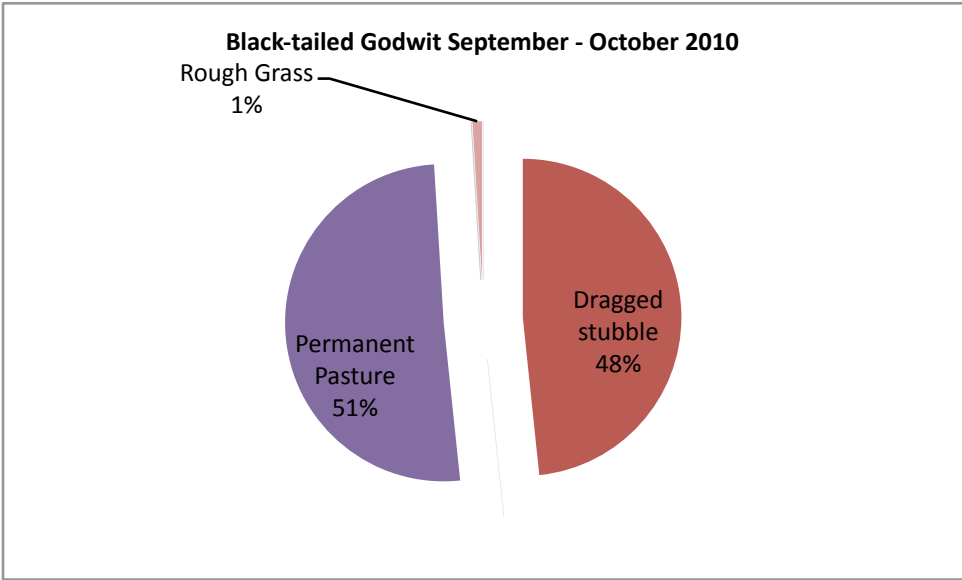


Black-tailed Godwit frequency September - October

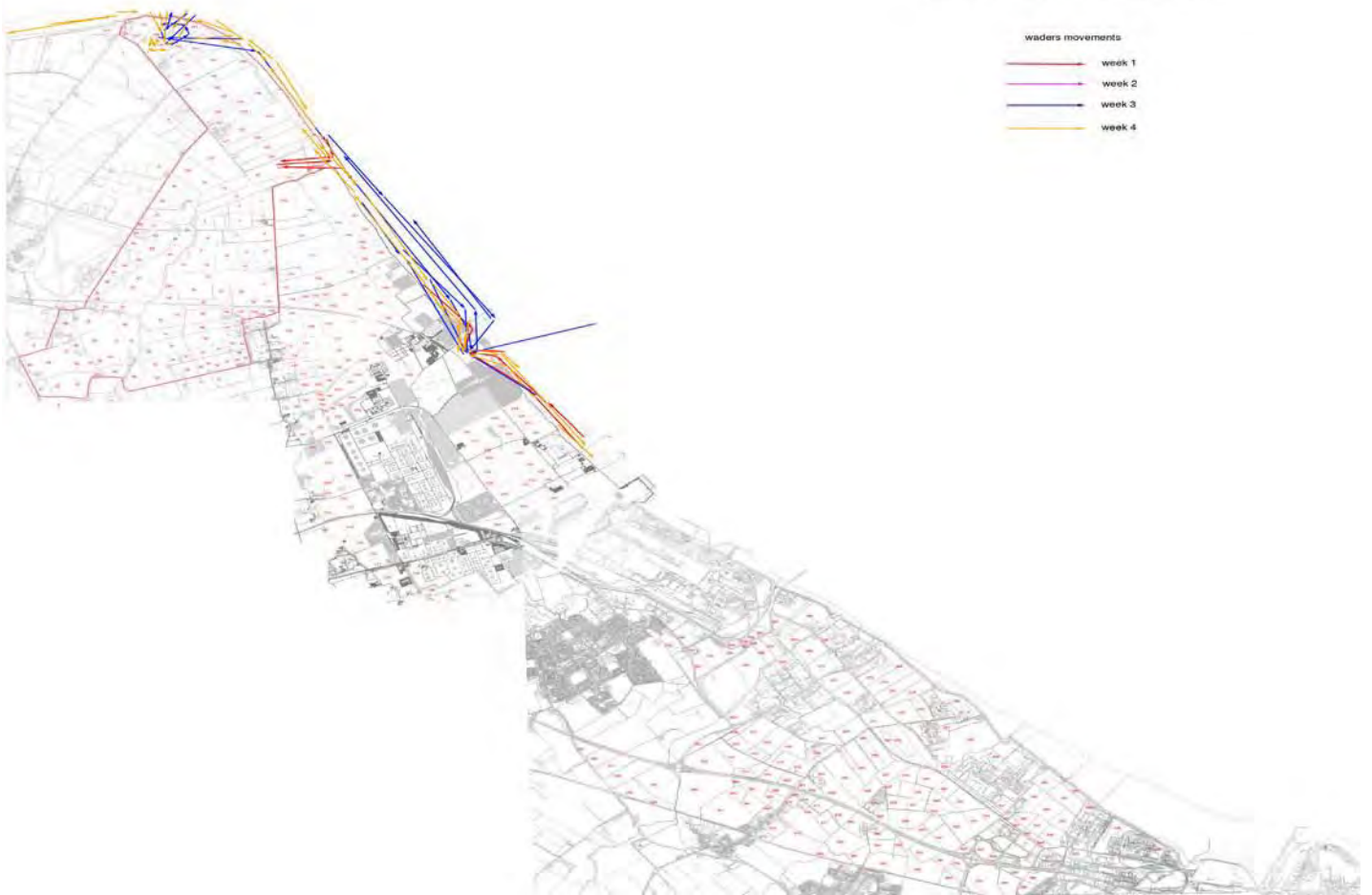


Black-tailed Godwit frequency November - April





Black-tailed Godwit movements September 2010



Black-tailed Godwit movements October 2010



Black-tailed Godwit movements November 2010



Black-tailed Godwit movements December 2010



Black-tailed Godwit movements January 2011



Black-tailed Godwit movements February 2011



Black-tailed Godwit movements March 2011



Black-tailed Godwits North Killingholme Pits September 2010 © Graham Catley Nyctea Ltd



Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	5926	5926	620	1200

Up to 22 birds roosted at North Killingholme pits in September and October but the only records from the fields were of 18 on the Goxhill grues, field 80 on August 30th with 2 in field 120 on the same day and again on September 14th when the same two birds were also seen on field 122; these two fields were both in Goxhill Marsh and the birds were feeding with Black-tailed Godwits. One was on field 235 on September 15th, 2 roosted on the Huntsman site, field 296 on August 31st and February 8th but there were no other records away from the inter-tidal. As a species that is typically most numerous on the outer estuary there were some notable low water counts from the inter-tidal mudflats within the survey area in fact there appears to have been a tendency for more frequent presence on the middle estuary in recent years with the Goxhill – East Halton Skitter sector, North Killingholme Haven to Immingham Docks and particularly Pywipe holding some good numbers of the species on certain dates. There is most probably frequent interchange between birds from the north bank and the outer estuary and the mudflats within the survey area. Notable records included the following: A total of 19 were feeding on the inter-tidal south of North Killingholme Haven on December 7th. An exceptional 380 birds were feeding at Pywipe on the rising tide on December 20th. In week 21, January 17th – 23rd at Pywipe 880 birds was an exceptional total but there were also 128 birds at Goxhill Skitter showing a marked movement of this species around the estuary during the week. The combined total of 1008 birds would form 17% of the estuary peak WeBS totals and 5-year mean to 2008 – 2009. The Goxhill Skitter site also produced a count of 150 birds roosting on the upper inter-tidal on January 26th.

A colour-ringed bird, Yellow Yellow Blue Black, seen on the inter-tidal off South Killingholme lighthouses on March 8th was a juvenile male ringed at North Killingholme pits on November 7th 2010. The bird arrived from the north bank and confirms the interchange of birds between the two banks of the estuary in this location.

Field	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Goxhill	19			5	15	15	19	1	27	1	23	6	4	1	26	2	10				128	150				10	24	110			
Pywipe						20		43	17				35	15	22	38	380	88	58	112	880		220		3		6				

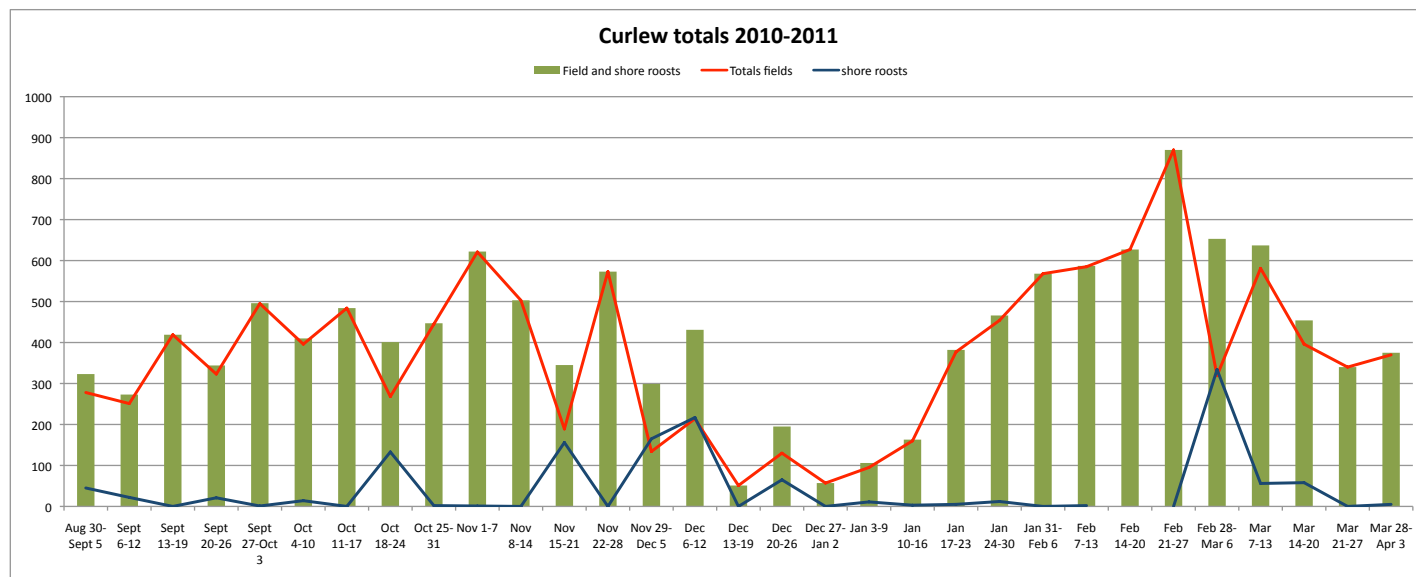


Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
Amber Listed

A juvenile was on the foreshore between Goxhill Haven and Skitter Ness on the August 30th.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*
Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National	3071	4440	1500	8500



Throughout the survey series Curlew was the most numerous and consistently recorded species occurring on both the inter-tidal and the fields within the survey area. The peak count of 870 birds recorded on February 22nd formed 19.5% of the WeBS 5-year mean to 2008 – 2009 showing the significance of the survey area for this species on the Humber estuary. Numbers were already quite high at the start of the survey but increased slowly through September and October to an early winter peak of 622 during November 1st – 7th. In spite of the onset of the severe weather and first heavy snow falls Curlew numbers remained high through to December 12th with 431 counted in that weeks survey. After this date though there was a marked departure of birds from the survey area and the estuary as a whole with numbers falling to just 106 in the following week. The low presence was maintained through to January 17th after which birds began to move back onto the estuary with a steady increase being evident through to the survey peak of 870 in week 26, February 21st – 27th. The overall number of birds fell after this peak but there were still 375 present in the last week of the survey demonstrating the long stay of wintering birds on the estuary where spring departures often take place throughout April with peaks in the 2nd and 3rd weeks. The winter clearly caused considerable mortality amongst the birds that remained on the estuary with 19 corpses being found on the foreshore between Goxhill haven and East Halton Skitter; this presumably represents only part of the losses as many corpses would have been scavenged by predators. It was therefore surprising that so many birds returned to the estuary in February and March and this population presumably included new birds that may have been using the estuary as a passage staging area or birds reorienting after south-westerly / westerly hard weather movements from the near continent or Scandinavia.

The distribution of birds within the survey area fields is shown in the following density and frequency maps. As shown there were four main centres of activity; Goxhill Marshes, East Halton marshes, South Killingholme Marshes and the Pywipe area.

The Goxhill Marsh population were highly concentrated in their feeding and roosting sites with the upper foreshore along the front of field 80 being used on most tides for roosting while the block of permanent pasture fields were used for feeding as well as roosting. On spring tides a high percentage of the birds fed on an exposed sand / mud bar off East Halton Skitter returning to the pasture fields as the tide rose. Some of these birds also used fields inland of the survey area and were seen flying south-west out of sight as well as moving further up the estuary towards New Holland. During the hardest weather it was no clear where the birds were feeding as they could not be located in any of the fields within Goxhill Marsh and apart from the birds that fed on the only snow-free areas on the Humber embankment none were found outside the roost. This population is clearly highly dependent upon the permanent pasture fields in the Goxhill Marsh area and although other fields were used for feeding and roosting there were clear concentrations in a small number of fields (see maps).

The birds that roosted in fields near East Halton pits mainly fed in the permanent pasture field to the south of the pits as well as in the oilseed rape fields to the north. In the early part of the winter some of the birds used the permanent pasture fields further inland from the pits towards East Halton village but less and less birds moved away from the immediate vicinity of the pasture south of the pits as the winter progressed. These birds occasionally used the inter-tidal but were very dependent upon the pasture fields. There was only limited use of the formerly favoured fields at Thornton Abbey during the survey period with the first part of the winter accounting for the majority of the sightings in that area. These birds are considered to be part of the East Halton pits group which have been seen moving between the two areas. The consistent

use of the fields near the pits in the mid – winter to spring period would support this theory with the lack of birds at Thornton Abbey being a result of the birds remaining in the Halton Marshes during the same period.

The birds in the south Killingholme area commuted between the inter-tidal from North Killingholme Haven to the HIT terminal to the pasture fields inland and south to those near Rosper Road pools. The latter fields were used more extensively as the winter progressed into early spring and this has been noted in previous surveys.

At Pywipe the Curlew flock fed almost exclusively on the inter-tidal mudflats demonstrating a different ecological strategy to the other birds with movements to the adjacent sites being mainly a response to high tides when the birds roosted on the industrial areas notable field 296 the old Huntsman site and the Bluestar site. As the Huntsman site was not available for roosting for several weeks during the survey the birds moved to a similar area of concrete and disused industrial ground on the Bluestar site. The later site was not accessible and thus the roosting birds there were not counted for most of the survey period with odd counts reflecting visible movements of flocks to and from the roost area. Some of these birds did occasionally feed on arable fields inland of the Pywipe area and there were observed movements to the grass playing fields at Healing School, a feeding area known from past surveys.

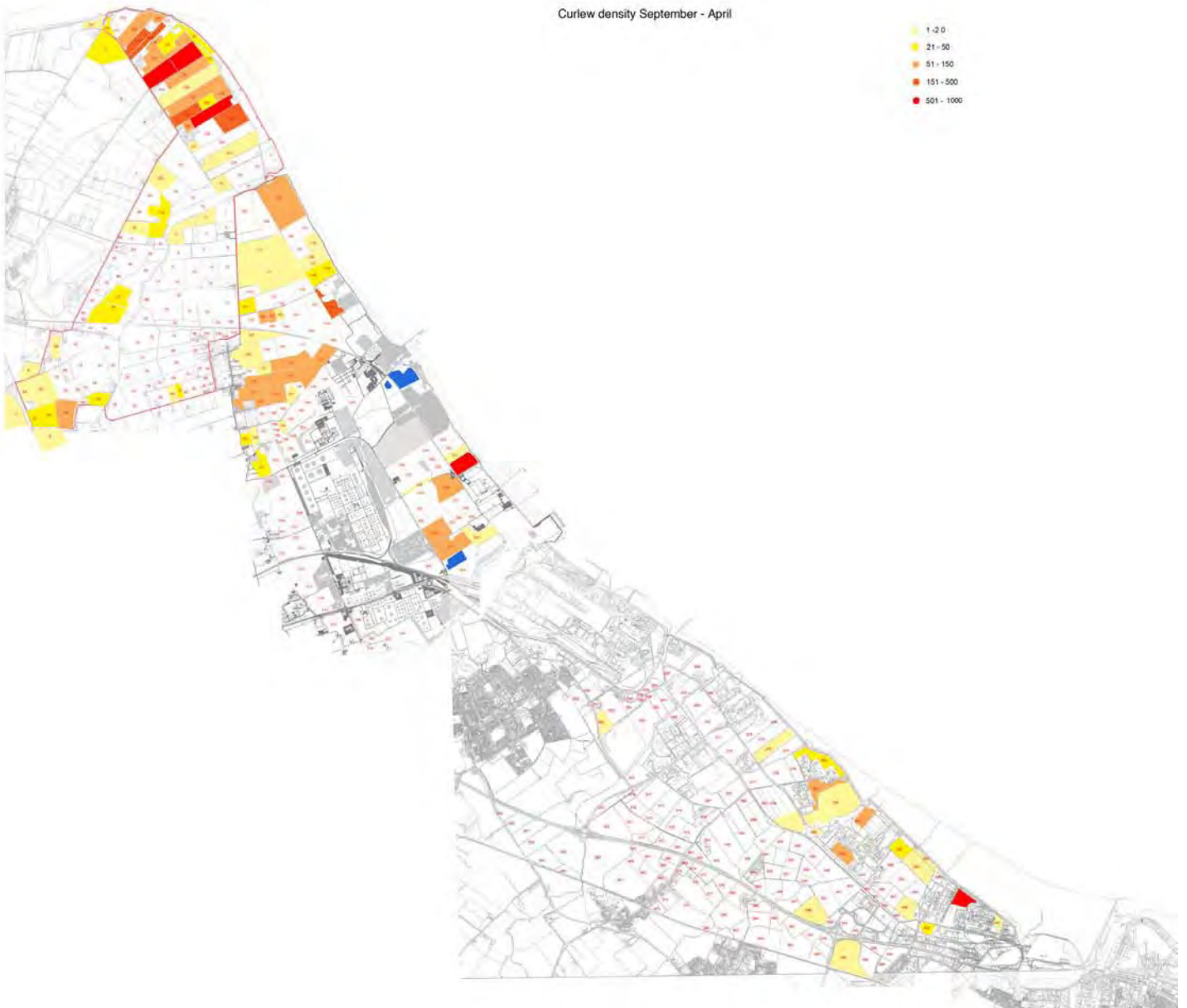
As shown in the pie charts permanent pasture accounted for 72% of all the Curlew observations in fields throughout the survey period rising to 77% in winter, November – April; autumn saw more use of stubbles and dragged stubbles but the use of oilseed rape and winter cereal fields was insignificant at 2% and 1% through the whole survey period. The use of the Huntsman and Bluestar sites for roosting at Grimsby accounted for the significance of the industrial sites in habitat choice.



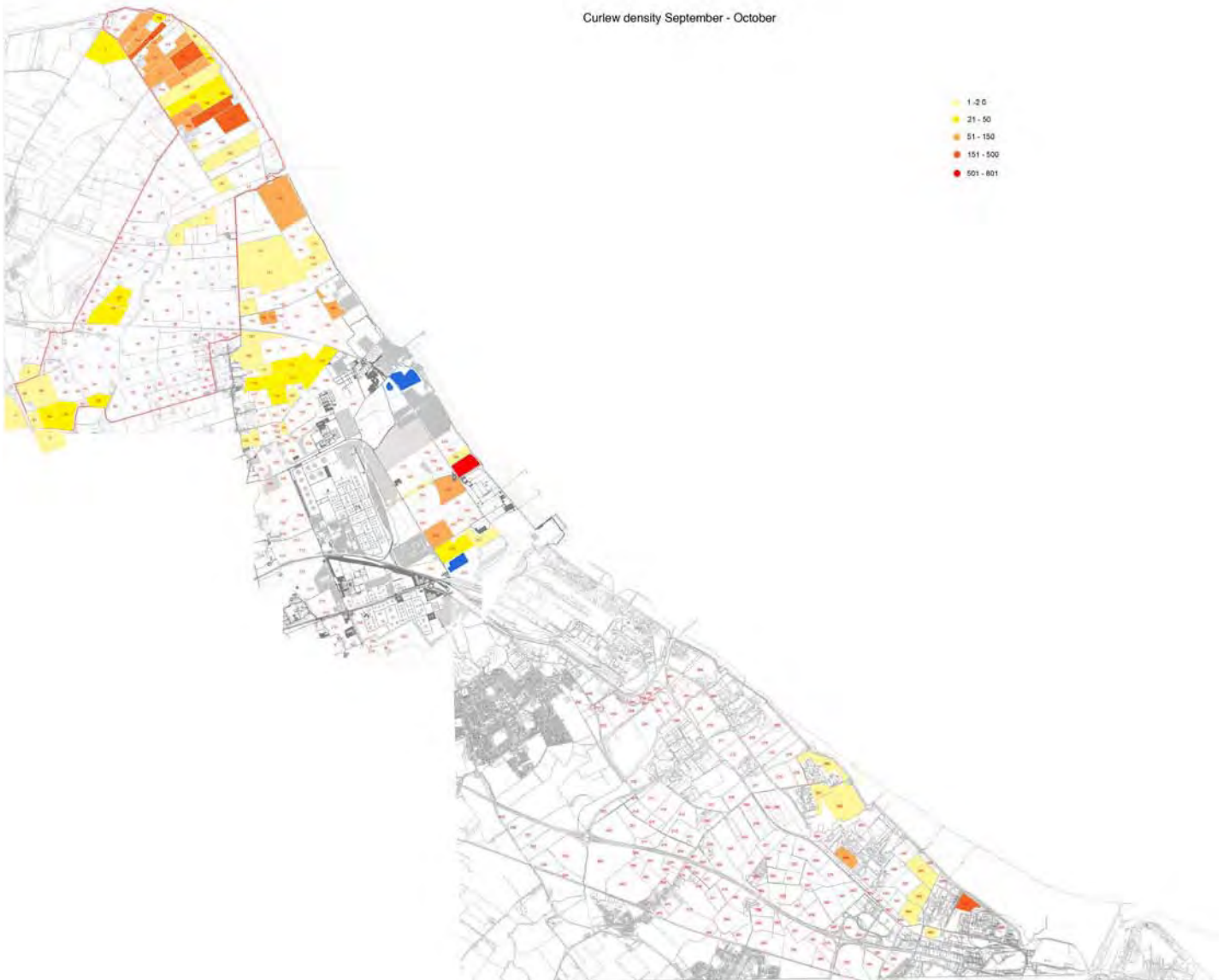
Curlew high tide roosts above Goxhill upper foreshore below Field 296 Huntsman site



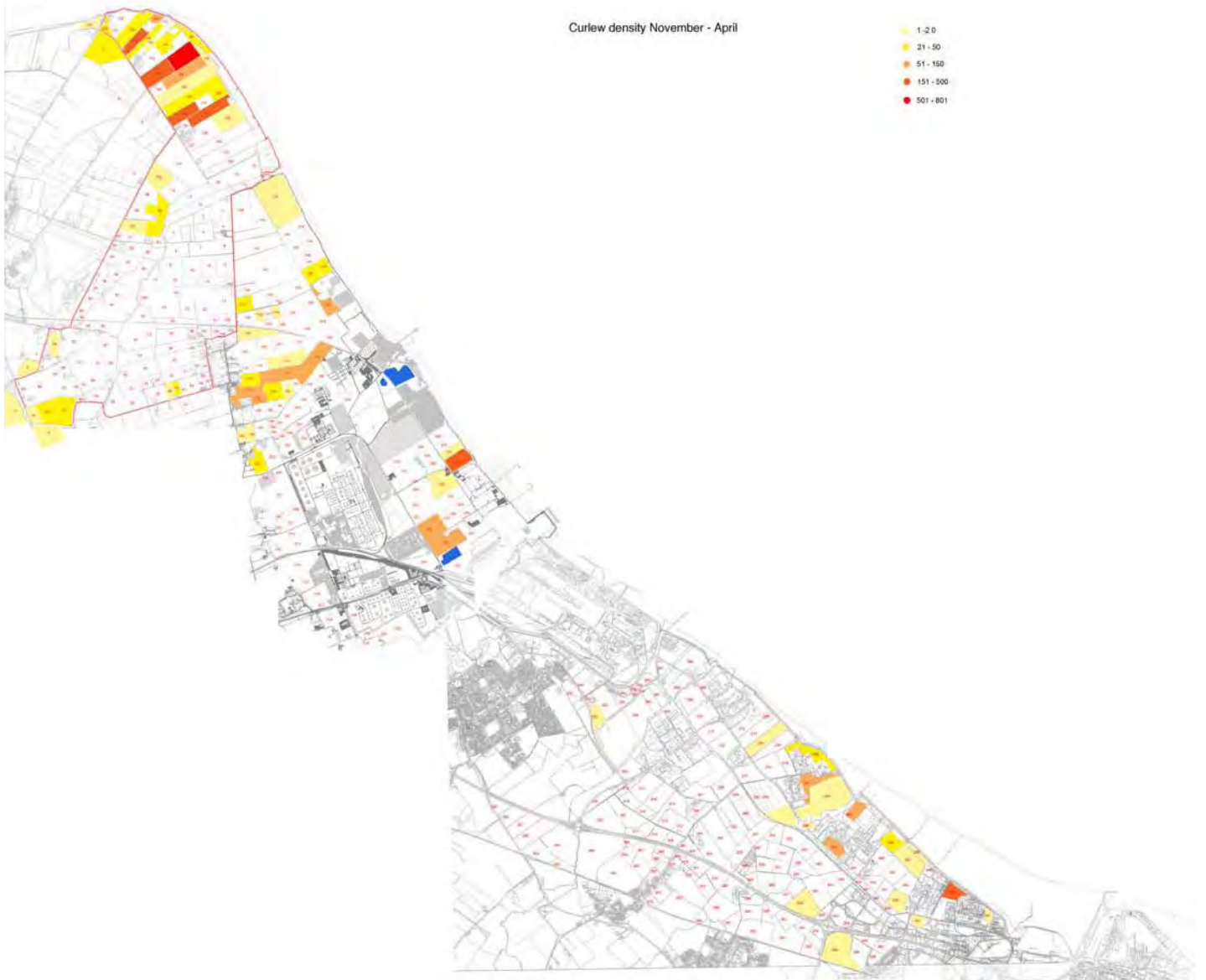
Curlew density September - April



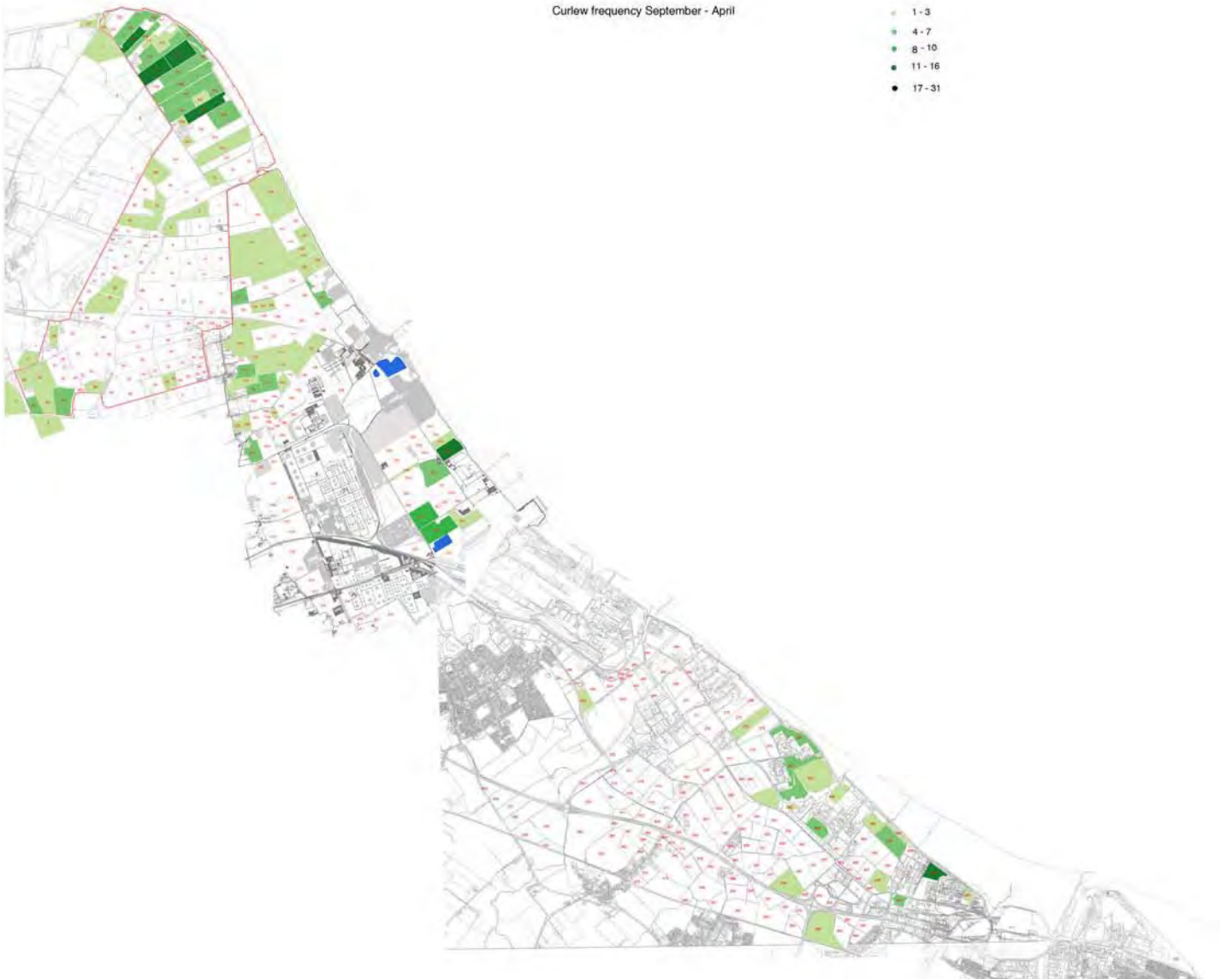
Curlew density September - October



Curlew density November - April



Curlew frequency September - April



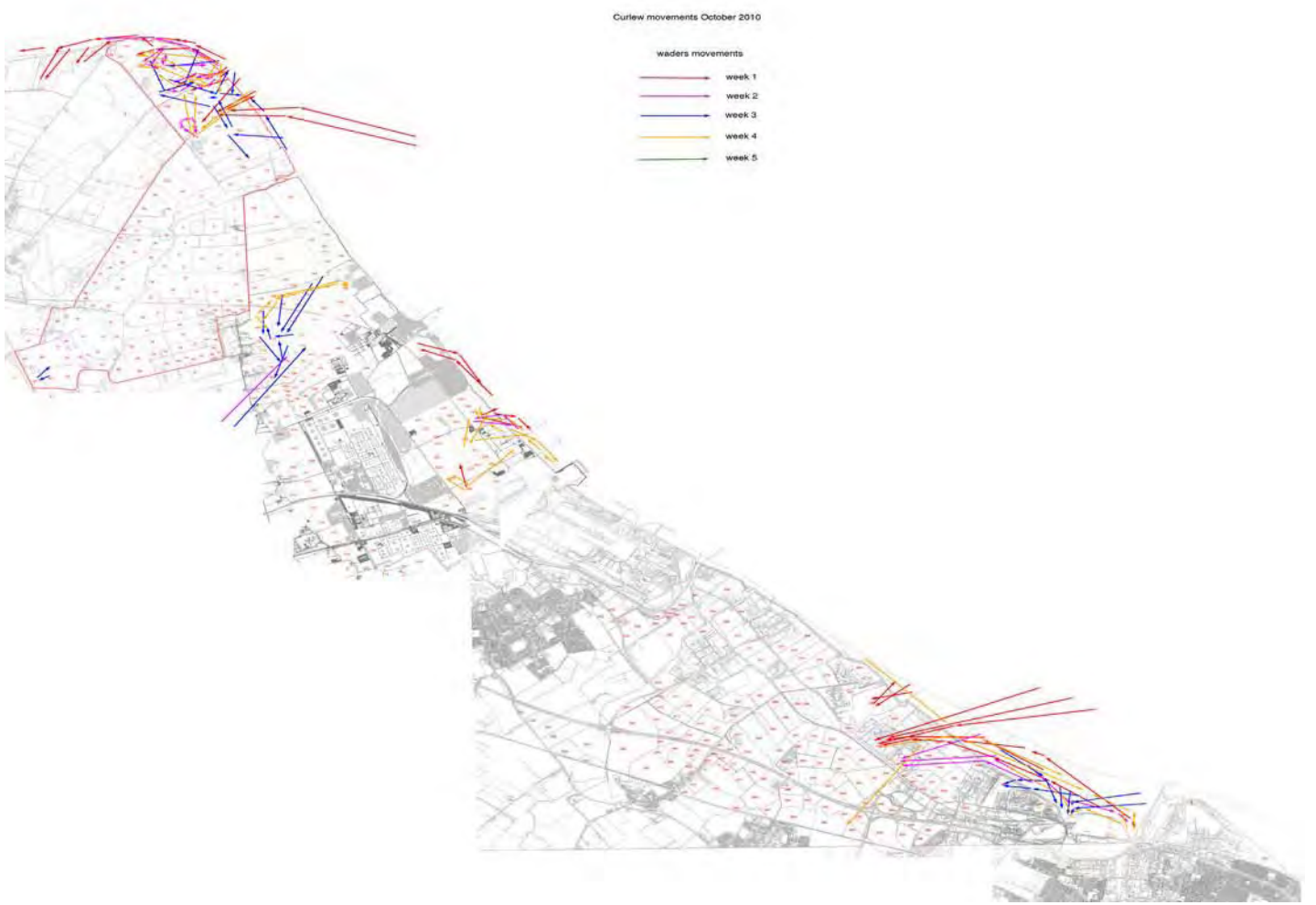
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-9



Curlew frequency November - April

- 1-3
- 4-7
- 8-10
- 11-16
- 17-31





Curlew movements November 2010



Curlew movements December 2010



Curlew movements January 2011



Curlew movements February 2011

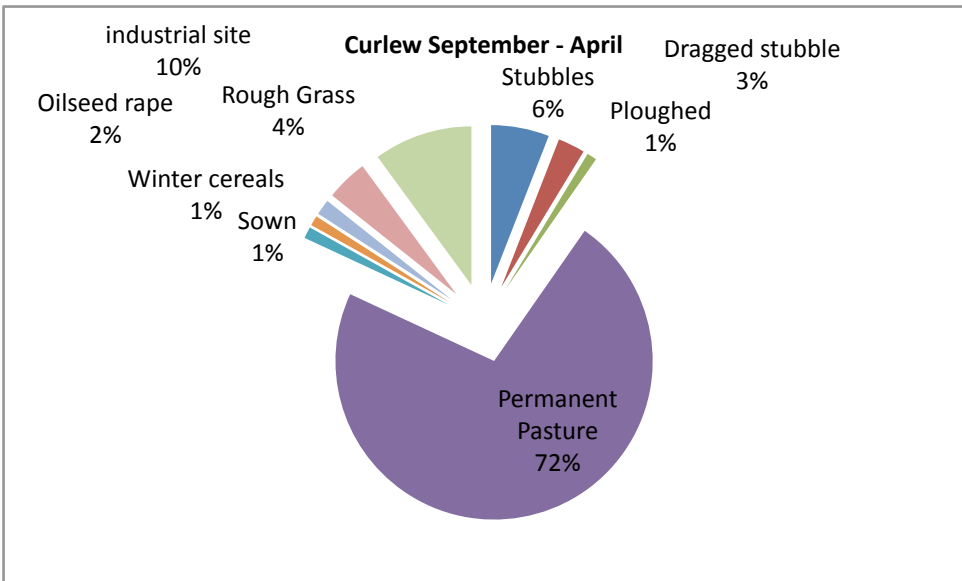
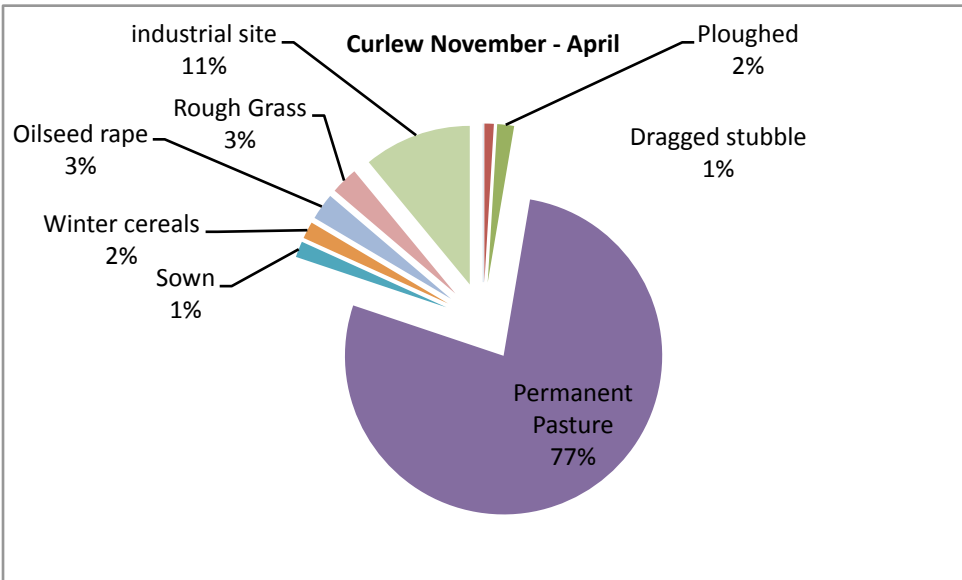
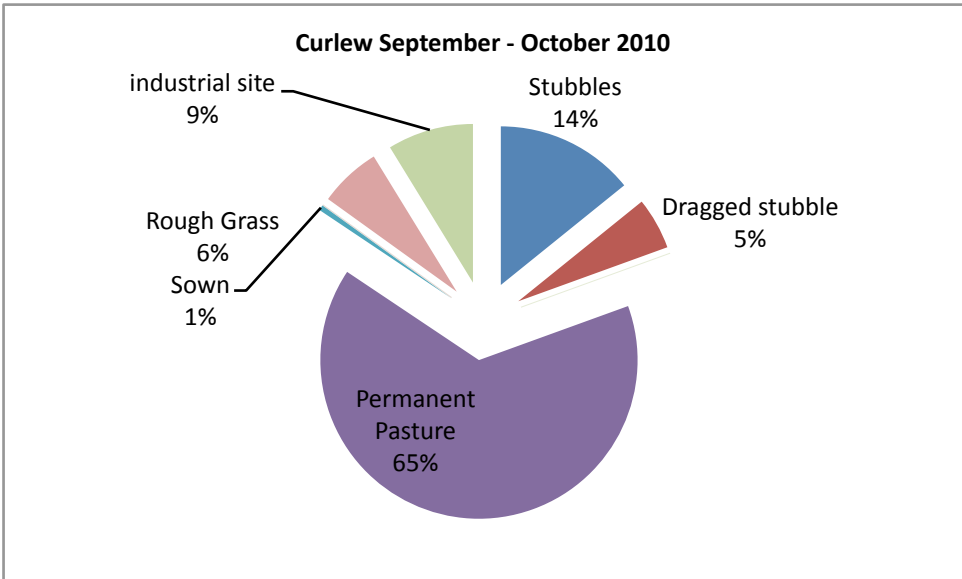


Curlew movements March 2011



Below Curlew roost field 240 © Graham Catley Nyctea Ltd





Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*
Amber Listed

One was roosting on the upper foreshore at Pywipe on December 1st.

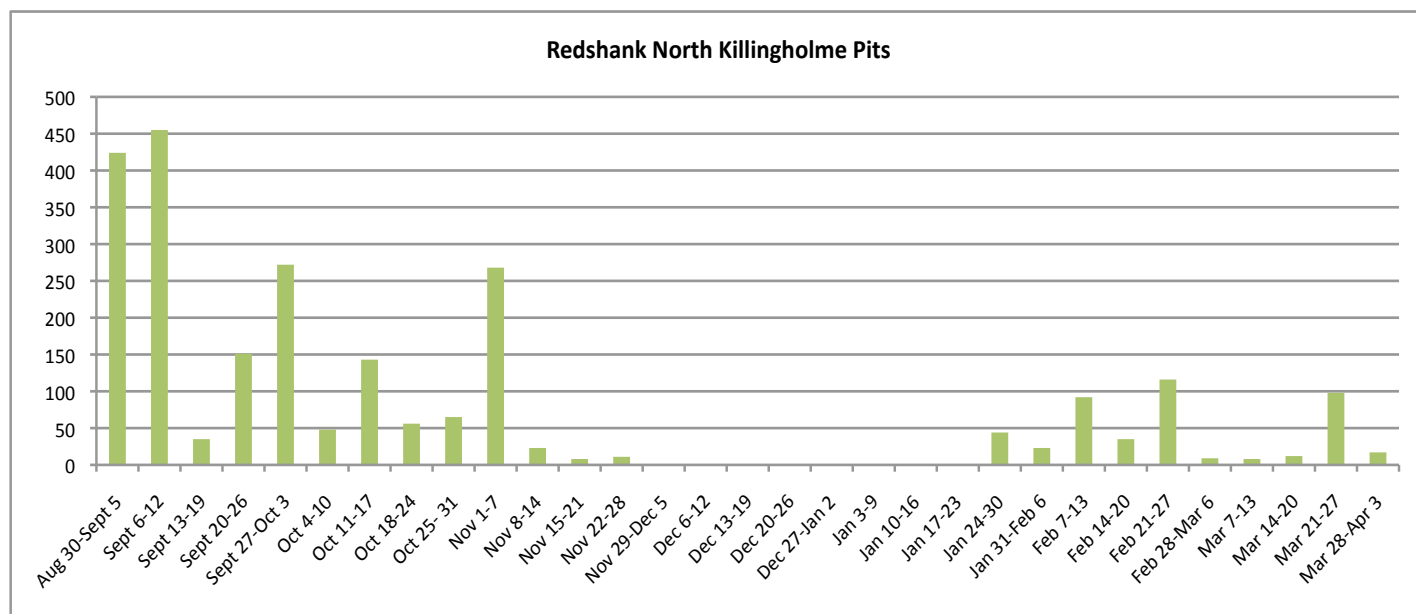
Redshank *Tringa totanus*
Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
International	4716	5445	330	730

The only Redshank found roosting away from the estuary were a single on field feeding on field 123 at Goxhill Haven on December 14th and 12 that roosted on the Bluestar site on January 5th.

The number of birds on the Goxhill - East Halton pit inter-tidal was very low in comparison with recent winters never exceeding 26 birds in total at low water.

At North Killingholme pits good numbers roosted on several dates through the autumn but numbers plummeted after the first week in November with a small resurgence in abundance being noted from mid February. Much larger numbers were feeding on the adjacent inter-tidal between North Killingholme Haven and the Immingham HIT terminal but these birds either roosted on the upper inter-tidal between the South Killingholme lighthouses and the HIT terminal or moved down the estuary towards Pywipe. The increasing growth of vegetation on the upper inter-tidal immediately north of the HIT terminal is providing an alternative high tide roost site to North Killingholme pits for this species on all but very high spring tides. At Pywipe up to 600 Redshank were counted at low water and in roosts on the upper inter-tidal during October but numbers fell quickly during November and were very low in December and January during the hard weather. Being an upper inter-tidal feeder Redshank suffer large losses in periods of hard weather when the upper inter-tidal remains frozen for long periods and there appeared to be large departures as well as losses of birds from the Humber in the latest winter. Some recovery occurred during February with 300 Redshank present on March 2nd prior to the large scale departure of wintering birds which are mainly from the Icelandic breeding population



Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
Amber Listed

A single bird was on the grues by field 106 on August 30th and three birds were in the Skitter Beck adjacent to field 136.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
Amber Listed

Humber status	WeBS 2008-09	5-year mean	GB qualification	International qualification
National	477	570	500	1500

No Turnstones were recorded roosting on any of the fields in the survey area. Up to 15 birds were seen along the inter-tidal at North Killingholme Haven and Pywipe but the main concentration of birds was on the rocky foreshore between Goxhill Haven and Goxhill Skitter Ness where good numbers of birds occurred on spring tides when the largest area of seaweed covered rocks was exposed. The highest counts were usually in the region of 80 – 90 birds but the winter peak was 144 on March 29th. These are all part of the population that is concentrated around New Holland pier where the birds roost but there are also movements up estuary towards Barton and across to the north bank.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A juvenile flew east along the tide edge off field 240 on December 1st and later in the afternoon what is presumed to have been the same bird was seen feeding on a Common Gull on the tide edge off field 288. Presumably the same juvenile bird was chasing gulls off the same area along to Pywipe on December 6th.

Pomarine Skua Pywipe December 1st 2010 © Graham Catley Nyctea Ltd



Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Two juveniles flew west up the Humber off Goxhill Skitter Ness on September 6th during a south-easterly gale.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Amber Listed

A second winter, 3cy bird, was with Black-headed Gulls in North Killingholme pits on the evening of September 9th. A 1cy, juvenile moulting to first-winter, was with other large gulls on field 323 on September 13th. A second winter bird was feeding with Black-headed and Common Gulls on the sown part of field 138 on October 5th. An adult was in the pre-roost of small gulls at Pywipe on December 20th. A first-winter was in the same area on the falling tide of January 7th 2011.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Amber Listed

A total of 200 adults roosting at Pywipe on March 2nd was part of the early spring passage of this species.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Amber Listed

Up to 30 regularly loafed on field 323 and commuted to the Immingham Tip in September – October.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Up to 50 regularly loafed on field 323 and commuted to the Immingham Tip in September – November. A total of 50 *argentatus* roosted at Pywipe during an easterly gale and snow on December 1st.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Up to 50 regularly loafed on field 323 and commuted to the Immingham Tip from September – March.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A flock of 90 birds was feeding with Woodpigeons in field 184 and a flock of 59 birds was on field 111 on January 4th. On February 16th a flock of 46 birds was feeding on field 101.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Red Listed

A single juvenile was feeding on rape stubble in field 107 on August 31st. A single bird was on telegraph wires on the side of the old light railway by field 89 on September 14th; this is a relatively late date for this species and an unusual location as no birds were seen in the area during the summer.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Red Listed

Most of the sightings of Barn Owls were concentrated on the Grues between Goxhill Skitter Ness and East Halton Skitter with other records in Goxhill Marsh and along there Skitter Beck. Up to five pairs of Barn Owls nest in the immediate environs of Goxhill Marsh and these birds accounted for most of the sightings. During the severe weather in December and January birds were also seen hunting the Humber shore around the Bluestar site and at North Killingholme pits. The latter bird appeared to be in very poor condition and the species is known to have suffered high mortality in the deep snow with up to 80% of the birds in some areas being found dead. Within the bounds of the survey area the only birds seen after the freeze were two hunting on the Goxhill Grues.



The map below shows the location of all sightings in the survey period.



Baron Owl Goxhill - East Halton Grues December 2010 © Graham Catley Nyctea Ltd



Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

One roosting in tall scrub on the side of the Skitter Beck opposite field 13 in week one.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Amber Listed

Two were hunting the grues between Dawson City and East Halton Skitter from at least November 3rd to 7th with one still present on December 5th. One arrived from the Humber and flew west over field 240 on November 25th. One was roosting in the hawthorn scrub at North Killingholme pits on December 7th.



Swift *Apus apus*

Three birds were with a flock of House Martins over Rosper Road pools on September 9th. One flew west along the Grues in a passage of Swallows and House Martins on September 14th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Amber Listed

One was in North Killingholme pits in the first week of September with two birds there and a single bird along the Skitter Beck by field 13 in week 4. One was again at North Killingholme pits September 29th but as the severe weather took hold there were no records from November to March 16th when a single bird was at East Halton pit.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Amber Listed

One flew from the area of field 180 – 181 towards field 178 on January 4th.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Red Listed

In heavy snow cover on November 29th a flock of 151 birds was feeding on field 97 and another flock of 45 flew south-west from the Humber over field 129. Additional flocks of 150 were on field 97 with 140 on field 294 and 130 on field 288; all of these fields were oilseed rape. A total of 350 birds were feeding on field 288 on December 6th as the hard winter weather worsened.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Amber Listed

At least 40 birds were feeding over Rosper Road pools on September 27th a late date for this number of birds; subsequently 23 birds flew south across the Humber and over Dawson City on October 5th.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardii*

One was heard calling as it appeared to fly south-west over the grues on October 5th.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Amber Listed

One flew into Dawson City on the morning of October 12th; this is a late date for this species but the occurrence was during an east coast arrival of birds of this species.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Amber Listed

After the usual winter absence birds had returned to the Grues between Goxhill and East Halton and were in song on March 22nd.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

The first of the winter was at Goxhill Haven on September 21st. Two birds were feeding around the edges of at East Halton Pits on September 27th. Four were along the foreshore between Goxhill Haven and East Halton Skitter on November 15th but the only bird seen during the big freeze was one that was still on the Goxhill Skitter Ness foreshore on December 19th. There were no observations in the ensuing late winter or spring periods.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

One was in Rosper Road pools on November 15th and three were on the grues in the traditional wintering area at East Halton Skitter on January 17th but there were no other observations during the survey.

Yellow Wagtail *Montacilla flava*

Amber Listed

Two were in field 225 and 3 on the Humber embankment by field 242 on September 13th.

Grey Wagtail *Montacilla cinerea*

Amber Listed

One was on the foreshore at North Killingholme Haven on December 7th.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

One flew north over field 183 on October 24th. On November 25th a flock of 36 birds arrived from the south and alighted briefly in the hedge at East Halton pits before being spooked by a Marsh Harrier and flying off north. A flock of five birds flew north-west over the grues off Goxhill Skitter Ness on January 4th.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

The first and only record of the winter was of a male on the Grues at East Halton Skitter on November 29th. After a period of local winter abundance the species declined markedly after the two successive hard winters of 2008-2009 and 2009-2010.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Single birds were feeding on the Humber embankment at Goxhill Haven and Pywipe on August 31st. On September 9th single birds were on the track by field 288 and on the Humber embankment by the Pywipe sewage works. One was on the Humber embankment by field 243 at North Killingholme on September 20th and finally one was on the seawall by the Bluestar site on October 5th.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Red Listed

A male was feeding on hawthorn berries in Dawson City on the morning of October 12th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Amber Listed

A minimum of 500 birds was feeding on the hawthorn hedgerows in Goxhill Marsh on December 19th.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Red Listed

An arrival of continental migrants produced a count of 18 Song Thrushes, that had roosted in the small hedge by field 117, on October 24th. The same hedge held 12 birds on November 15th. Four birds were feeding on the tide wrack just east of Goxhill Haven on January 4th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Amber Listed

A flock of 150 birds was feeding on the hawthorn hedges south of North Killingholme pits on December 7th.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

A female was calling from Dawson City ponds on November 6th – 7th the first record there since December 2009.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

A late bird was in bank side scrub by field 107 on September 21st.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

A single juvenile was on the edge of the Grues by field 113 on September 14th.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Several birds were heard along the Skitter Beck and in Goxhill Marsh during the surveys in week three, September 13th – 19th after which one was in the hedge along the Skitter Beck by field 13 on October 18th. The first spring arrivals saw at least three in Dawson City on March 22nd.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Amber Listed

An irrupting party of eight birds was in the reed strip growing in the borrow pit adjacent to field 107 on the morning of October 12th. At least two birds were in the reed filled borrow pits on the grues adjacent to field 129 on October 18th and four birds remained in the borrow pit on the edge of the grues by field 107 on October 25th.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Red Listed

In week one at least one bird was in a tit flock in the hedge along the Little Beck by fields 75 and 78; on September 22nd one was in the hedge by the hide at North Killingholme pits and two were in the hedge by Dawson City and one in the hedge by field 113. Two were in the thorn hedge along the old railway line by field 18 on October 12th. One was calling from the hedge in field 225 adjacent to Rosper Road pools on November 15th and one in East Halton pits on the 20th. One was calling in Dawson City from February 28th – March 6th. Three birds were in the hedge adjacent to Rosper Road pools on March 16th.

All observations are shown on the map below:

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

One favoured the scrub and open ground on field 403 on September 29th and early on the 30th.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Two were present along the Skitter Beck, often by field 136, on most survey visits. In week two 2 birds were in the small copse in field 180.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

In week 4 a gathering of 36 birds in field 179 and an additional 28 on field 192 appeared to be feeding on emergent Craneflies; a flock of 34 was also on field 108. A flock of 32 birds was feeding in field 181 in week 6 and a total of 38 birds were feeding on manure spread on the permanent pasture in field 112 on March 29th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Red Listed

A flock of 1500 birds was feeding on craneflies in field 192 on the September 20th. Up to 500 birds were feeding in permanent pasture fields 114 and 115 at Goxhill from mid March to the end of the survey.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Red Listed

A mixed finch and sparrow flock feeding on field 139 held at least 20 House Sparrows on September 13th. A flock of 90 birds was feeding on split grain on the road by the junction of fields 93 and 86 on September 14th.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Red Listed

In week 4 a flock of 65 birds was feeding in stubbles in field 175 and resting in the small hedge between fields 175 and 196; another flock of 24 birds was feeding on stubbles in field 7; in the following week a flock of 24 in the hedge by the Humber embankment alongside field 145 and a flock of 32 in the hedge between fields 175 and 181 were all feeding on stubbles. all observations are shown on the map below:

Brambling *Fringilla monifringilla*

At least one was in the Humber bank hedge by field 113 on October 14th.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

A mixed finch and sparrow flock feeding on field 139 held at least 200 Greenfinches on the 13th.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

A mixed finch and sparrow flock feeding on field 139 held at least 50 Goldfinches on the September 13th. A flock of 45 birds was feeding on the Grues on October 7th and a charm of 100 birds was feeding on oilseed rape that had not been harvested in field 91.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

During a major arrival of the species on the east coast two were feeding in alders in Dawson City Goxhill Haven and other birds flew west on October 13th. A flock of 50 birds arrived from the Humber and flew west inland over North Killingholme pits on November 5th.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Red Listed

A flock of 240 birds was feeding on oilseed rape stubble in field 122 on August 30th. A flock of 250 was feeding on stubble in field 279 on September 13th and a flock of 80 birds was on the Grues on the 22nd. On October 26th a flock of 110 birds was feeding on the recently sown field 108. A flock of 16 birds roosted at Dawson City on January 31st.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

One flew west up the Humber over Goxhill Skitter Ness on the morning of September 21st with one north over the Humber at Goxhill Haven on October 18th. One was on the grues by field 103 on January 17th and one flew north-west over the grues on March 22nd.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Amber Listed

One on the Humber embankment by North Killingholme pits on September 20th was an early winter arrival. The only other record was of one was on the Humber embankment alongside field 285 on January 7th.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Red Listed

A total of 22 birds were feeding in field 181 in week 7 with a flock of 28 birds in field 187 during week 20.

G P Catley BSc Env
Nyctea Ltd April 2011

Golden Plover	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27
New number																														
108	156																													
110												260																		
111												820																		
112										12																				
122																														
125		740														1	9													
126				26																										
129				1			16	26	44	235																				
F																														
138	138	84	62	246	8	1626	128	3090	192	4200	544	43							10											
141									6																					
143										5																				
145																														
161													114							13										
162									282		126	111								16										
163												8																		
164											73	33																		
168									5																					
240			2																											
285														138	1															
291			44																											
292											34																			
293															48															
296																														
322						2																								
328												148																		
338		5						3	110		424																			
339																														
340									540			36											8	465						
357													55																	
395																				109		28			9					

Lapwing	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3	
New number																																
3																			7													
6							145																									
13				202	166																											
19		234																														
38										138																						
40																																
59													178																			
61											12	12	33																			
68												7																				
69											173																					
74																																
75	12																															
80																																
98																																
101																																
108										29																						
110											488	214	110																			
111											688	340																				
112							76	6		33	127		1250		6				22	84												
113									32																							
118																7				3	9											
120							7									2																
121																																
122						1		1	34					196			8															
123															1			1	4													
126							55																									
128							8																									
129									62	164		22		288			1															
130																																
131												6							2	4	3											
E																	5															
F								34																								
M																						64										
138						61																										
143										1																						
145										24																						
154																						1										
161													55																			
162								12	162		92	128																				
163											206	56																				
164												120																				
166						68	28				195																					
240													4	49																		
241												1																				
250																																
276													36																			
278																																
283													21																			
285								64																								
288								64																								
288																36																
293													12																			
294										3																						
296															1		21															
316								64																								
322							25																									
328													78																			
331																																
332													12																			
333													16																			
337																																
338																																
340																																
340									3				81																			
390																																
391																																
395																																
395																																

Black-tailed Godwit	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3
New number																															
74	25																														
80	1					2		1																							
112					2		11			5																					
113												3	3																		
116			42	76			11																								
118			240	338	34	14																									
119				94	215				6																						
120			360	128																			2								
122			126																												
138		392																													
181				1																											
225									2																						
240									21																						
285						15																									
291			2																												
296														3			145							25							

East Halton Pits	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	5	2	2	1			1						6	4													1		1	1	
Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	2	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1													3		2	2	2	2	2	
Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	6	3	1	1		1	5	6	5	2	5	1	2	2									1								
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>																															
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>		1																									2			2	
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>		1			1	1	1		1		1		1	1													1	1		1	
Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	2	2	2		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	2		2					2		1	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>													1																		
Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>																															
Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>	122	284	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	5	7	7	11	14	12	12	8
Greater Canada Goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>																															
Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>																									1	2		8		9	20
Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>						1		1																					2	1	
Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>	28	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	0	8	32	26	36	32	33	27	14
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	71	18			7	1	2	38	9	3	18	4	6											9	12	8	8	14		3	1
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	88	22	2	2	2	2	4	12	2	2	4		4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	10	10	6	18	15	12	6	13
Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>								1																							
Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>	5																														
Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>	5	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	16	21	19	39	26	5	4	5
Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>	14	14	1	0	0	0	1	4	2	4	0	8	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	10	6	18	12	15	17	13	15	18	14
Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>																															
Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>													1								1	3		1	1	2	2	2	2	3	1
Smew <i>Mergellus albellus</i>														1									2	1		1	1	1			
Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i>																													2		
Goosander <i>Mergus merganser</i>														1																	
Ruddy Duck <i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	7	4	4	2	4	3		2			1																				
Water Rail <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>													4																		
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	18	30	34	19	38	20	30	30	36	38	32	36	60	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	8	10	6	6	6	6	3	6	10	10
Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	45	23	24	18	19	20	23	14	10	22	20	36	38	64	0	0	0	0	0	5	9	26	34	34	41	55	44	40	45	38	23
Total	418	407	72	44	78	53	69	111	68	74	84	91	147	146	0	2	0	0	0	7	37	56	72	112	148	149	186	177	139	135	118
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>																															
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>																															
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>																															
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>																															
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>																															
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>													28																		3
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>																															
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>																															
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>								2																							
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>																															
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>																															
Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>																															
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>																															
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>	40																														
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>																															
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	6								14																28		40		1	1	
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>																															
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>													12																		
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>																															
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>																															
Total waders	46						2	14					28	12	0										28		40		1	1	3

North Killingholme Haven Pits	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>																																		
Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>																																		
Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		2	2	2		2																												
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>																																		
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>																																		
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	3	2	2	3	1	4		2	1	1		1	1							1			1	1		1	1	1		1				
Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>																																		
Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>																																		
Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>																																		
Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>																																2		
Greater Canada Goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>																																		
Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>					1																	4	1	24	4	13	11	11		17	4			
Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>																																		
Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>						7																												
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	16	15	0	11	12	30	13	11	48	70	44	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	46	47	38	38	38	24	17	32	24	18	26		
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	94	52	23	82	78	55	2	44	4	12	36	48	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	90	14	16	4	22	16	11	10	6	4	6		
Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>																																		
Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>						2		54	64	54		2										2	3			1	1	9	8		2	5		
Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>										20																								
Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>										4																								
Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>																																		
Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>																																		
Smew <i>Mergellus albellus</i>																																		
Ruddy Duck <i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>																																		
Water Rail <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	2+	2	1	1																													1	
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	4	7	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	10	8	5	2										2	2				2	3		2	3		
Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>										8	8	8	6		2	2									2	3	3	2	2		2	2		
Total waterfowl	117	80	31	102	95	102	17	113	119	179	96	98	13	0	2	2	0	0	0	58	138	68	58	71	68	58	53	67	30	49	46			
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>																															1	2		
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	11																															38		
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>																																		
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>																																		
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>																																		
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		1		1	5	1	18		6			38														244	1	1		1	1			
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	42	8			4																													
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>		1																																
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	3			1																														
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>																																		
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	62	64	36	88	276	7	332	223	3050	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	0	0	4	0		
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>																																		
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>																																		
Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>				1																												4		
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>																																		
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>	3900	4000	4000	3400	3200	1590	3500	1200	2460	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	0	6	0	0	0	238	0	
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	2	9	2	1	21		16	1	22																									
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>																																		
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	45	22		21	1	5		3	2	21		1										2	5	2	12	10	2	1	2	1	1	2		
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>																																		
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	424	455	35	151	272	48	143	56	65	268	23	8	11	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	23	92	35	116	9	8	12	98	17		
Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>																																		
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>																																		
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	1																																	
Total waders	4490	4560	4073	3664	3779	1651	4009	1483	5605	289	24	9	53	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	54	25	145	45	400	11	12	51	348	20			

	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3
week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	3							1																							
Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>																															
Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			1			1																									
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>																															
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>																															
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>										1			3					1			2	2	6	1	2	2	1	3	1	1	3
Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1		1		1												2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>									1																						
Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>																															
Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>																									2						
Greater Canada Goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>																															
Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>																															4
Mandarin <i>Aix galericulata</i>															1																
Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>																					2	2	3	3	4						
Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>	1	6	16		3	16	0	6	3	8	10	6	16	0	0	6	2	4	7	10	18	12	14	22	13	22	14	10	8	2	0
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	11	17	5	6	7	18	32	112	52	78	20	66	48	0	0	4	19	21	11	1	76	61	96	78	58	34	82	46	56	48	58
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	31	36	18	32	4	22	21	44	64	56	35	64	91	0	0	70	72	54	98	64	95	165	152	65	58	62	48	22	28	12	34
Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>																															
Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>	28	76	62	94	97	108	104	25	3	1	14	0	0	0	0	10	14	0	3	0	11	23	24	8	19	10	9	1	3	0	5
Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>																		2		4							2				
Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>						2	1																								
Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>																															
Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>																															
Smew <i>Mergellus albellus</i>																															
Ruddy Duck <i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>																															
Water Rail <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>										1																					
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	12	14	12	11	6	8	20	34	12	18	14	6	11			2		12	6			6	2	2	8	6	10	8	8	6	8
Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	24	52	26	64	62	72	70	96	130	136	124	118	139	0	0	46	36	16	42	46	28	42	30	34	42	28	32	22	28	10	32
Total waterfowl	114	205	144	211	183	251	252	322	266	298	219	260	309	0	0	139	143	110	167	127	232	314	327	214	202	168	200	114	134	85	142
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>																															1
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>																															
Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>																															
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>																															
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>																															
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>																															
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>																												2	2	14	13
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>																															
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>																															
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>																															
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>																															
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>																															
Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>											1					1															
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>																															
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>																															
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>																															
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>																															
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>																															
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>											2																				
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>																															
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>																															

Field 286 / pond	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3		
week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	8	9	8	3	4	4	4	4			1																1	3	3	3	3		
Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	2	4	3	3	3	7	5	5	1	1	2											1	2	1	2	4							
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>						1																											
Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3						1		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Greater Canada Goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>																																	
Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>																															1	4	
Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	17	18	16	22	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	12	23	18	10	18	16	9	5	6	4		
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>							2																										
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	29	48	1	58	8	8	12	12	4	14	2		4	1							8	8	2		4	2	6		1	6	4		
Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>						1	1	2	1			2									3	3	3		3	2	3	2					
Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>		3	6	3		2		11	17	14		9	24								5	2	2		3	5	3	1					
Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>							1	1	1			1																					
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	12	8	18	12	12	8	12	11	6	8	8	6	6	1								2	2	2	2	4	4	2	2	3	4		
Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	11	7	10	12	13	10	6	12	16	14	12	7	16	10							3	5	9	5	11	9	10	8	14	11	13		
Total waterfowl	64	83	50	95	44	45	45	61	57	73	46	41	78	18	0	0	0	0	0	1	27	35	45	28	37	46	45	27	27	32	34		
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>																																	
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>									1																								
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>																																	
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>																																	
Total waders																																	

Goxhill Foreshore	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3	
week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>											74																					
Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		81				1		4				3										6		3	1	27	7	52	17	30		
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	198						4	3	1			2	8				15	2		14	18			12	8	4	26	26	22	5	10	
Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>	0	0	0	14	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	81	52	34	42	75	52	0	54	5	14	36	29	6	3	0	
Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>												11				2									5		8					
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	0	56	87	132	12	22	40	36	23	2	60	66	32	48	118	74	178	138	72	42	151	46	71	72	93	128	124	128	36	37	4	
Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>		10			9	3																										
Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>																2																
Pochar <i>Aythya ferina</i>																																
Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>																20	17															
Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>																	1															
Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>											22			1		220	11	2	2		194	62	3									
Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i>					1					1 west				1																		
Goosander <i>Mergus merganser</i>																									4		1	2				
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	2																															
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>																																
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	133	1	1	5	2	35		1	3		10	1														41	28	12			1	
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	34										31	15	12	18	5		9	3														
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	1			2		25	4	2	7		17	4	3	2			1		1							1						
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	215	14	18	0	0	760	408	1700	91	32	0	15	7	2	0	1100	500	0	0	0		650	96	0	0	0	
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	10						1	6					2		2			1				1				18						
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>		1																														
Purple Sandpiper <i>Calidris maritima</i>		1																														
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>		1																														
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	73	10	0	66	91	124	261	38	86	280	750	150	157	820	400	190	900	82	135	0	0	3	82	0	0	93	680	260	0	0	42	
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>						3		1														1	2				1					
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>														1																		
Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>																																
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>																																
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>				308	96	92	12	3	6		1	4	3	2	1	4						2	1	1								
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	19			5	15	15	19	1	27	1	23	6	4	1	26	2	10				128	150				10	24	110				
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	1																															
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	36			12	5	67	3	3	1	1	94	5	145	88	118 + 84	3	65	5	1	1		4				278	334	228	34		5	
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>																																
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	17		10	9	3	23	8	4	3	3	12	18	14	26	12	2	2	2	2	2	2	1			2	22	7	3	1	3	15	
Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>																																
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>																																
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	5			3	3	80	4		6	1	15	1	4	12	9	91		4								94	52	36	26		144	
Blue figures falling or low tide																																

Pywipe inter-tidal	Aug 30-Sept 5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Sept 20-26	Sept 27-Oct 3	Oct 4-10	Oct 11-17	Oct 18-24	Oct 25- 31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28	Nov 29-Dec 5	Dec 6-12	Dec 13-19	Dec 20-26	Dec 27-Jan 2	Jan 3-9	Jan 10-16	Jan 17-23	Jan 24-30	Jan 31-Feb 6	Feb 7-13	Feb 14-20	Feb 21-27	Feb 28-Mar 6	Mar 7-13	Mar 14-20	Mar 21-27	Mar 28-Apr 3		
	week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	?	?	?	?	?	260	?	330	?	?	?	?	?	55	?	500	?	130	240	125	570	530					415	350	380				
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>																																	
Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>																																	
Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>																																	
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>														45	32	22	34	?	12				?		8		12						
Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>																																	
Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>																																	
Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>																																	
Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>																																	
Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>																																	
Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>																																	
Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i>																																	
Goosander <i>Mergus merganser</i>																																	
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>						6		18						3	2	1			1	2	2				2		20						
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>																																	
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>								21						11	1		1		3	12													
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>															48		54					84	26	590		55							
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>						5		26						12	12	11	12	11	22	88	13	2	84		?								
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	0					11					120		420	42	39	14	21		18	164	430	340	132		200								
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>						90		90						2		2																	
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>																																	
Purple Sandpiper <i>Calidris maritima</i>																																	
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>																																	
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>								2800	2000		1500			67	1500	2700	900	64	2400	1800	2200	1200	2000		2100		800	400					
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>																																	
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>																																	
Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>														5	2																		
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>															1																		
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>	0					200	17	3400	2000	1200	2250	2200	1010	2100	78	475	1	121	345	598	540	380		52	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>						20	43	17					35	14	22	38	380	88	58	112	880		220		3		6						
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>																																	
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>						9		130						156	74	1	15	4	8	5	39	2			145	166	42	24					
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>														1		17																	
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>						600		500						54	?	?	5	12	57	38	164	80	120		200		300						
Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>																																	
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>																																	
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>														5																			
Blue figures falling or low tide																																	

APPENDIX H

**WINTERING BIRD DATA ALONG THE FORESHORE. 2009 – 2010. CENTRE FOR
MARIANNE AND COASTAL STUDIES (CMACS)**

AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

APPENDIX I

**WINTERING BIRD DATA ALONG THE FORESHORE. 2010 – 2011. CENTRE FOR
MARIANNE AND COASTAL STUDIES (CMACS)**

AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

APPENDIX J

ABLE HUMBER PORTS FACILITY, KILLINGHOLME. WINTER FARMLAND BIRD SURVEY, 2007. JUST ECOLOGY.



ABLE HUMBER PORTS FACILITY, KILLINGHOLME:

Winter Farmland Bird Survey

Strictly Confidential

Report to Able UK Ltd

by

Rodney West & Dr Jeff Kirby

February 2007

**Just Ecology Property:
Copyrighted to Just Ecology Ltd.**

© JUST ECOLOGY 2007

JUST ECOLOGY Limited
Woodend House, Woodend
Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 8AA

Notice to Readers

The advice contained in this report is based on the information available and/or collected during the period of study and within the resources available for the project. We cannot completely eliminate the possibility of important ecological features being found through further investigation and/or by survey at different times of the year or in different years. Reference to sections or particular paragraphs of this document taken out of context may lead to misrepresentation. JUST ECOLOGY takes care to ensure that balanced advice is provided based on the information available at the time.

Contents

1. Executive Summary	1
2. Introduction	1
3. Methods	2
3.1 Background	2
3.2 Field methods	3
4. Results	3
4.1 Overview	3
4.2 Key species	8
5. References	16
6. Appendices	17
Annex 1. Transect used for winter farmland bird survey	17
Annex 2. Month by month species totals for each sector	18

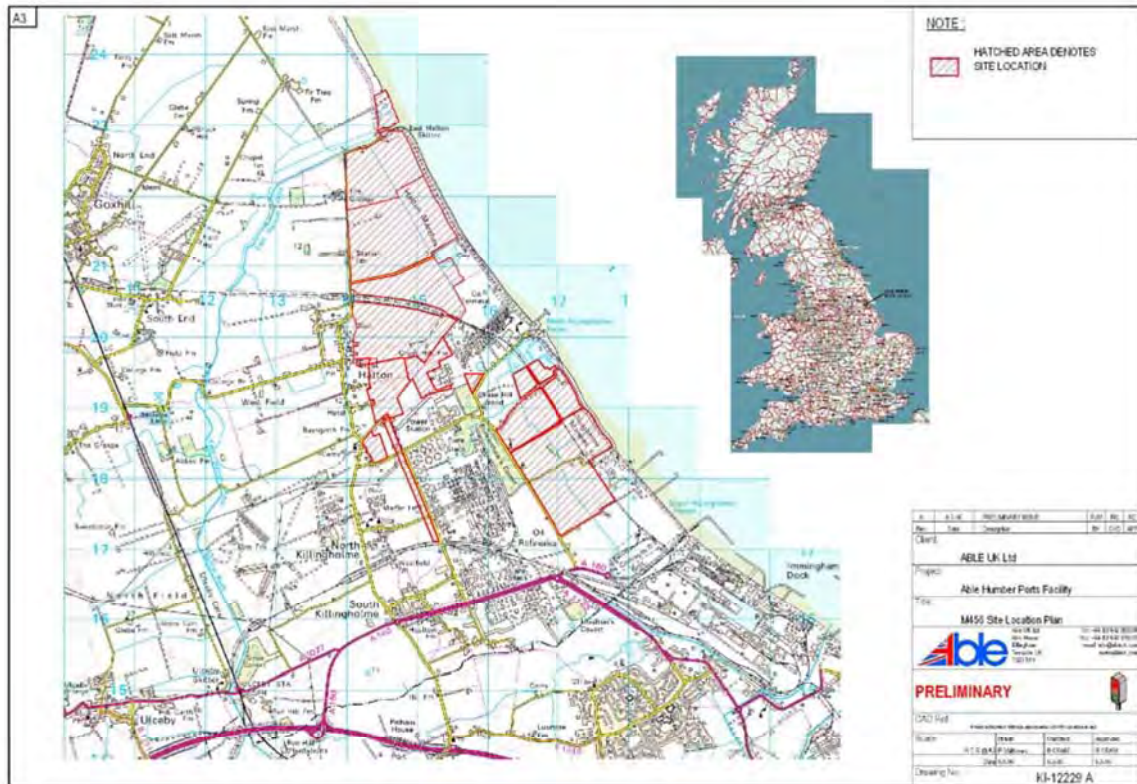
1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A wintering farmland bird survey was undertaken across an 800ha study site at Killingholme on the Humber Estuary. A standard methodology was used, with visits taking place during September 2006 to February 2007.
- 1.2 A total of 38 bird species was recorded within the core of the study area, and a further six species were found in the buffer zone around the site. These birds included some priority conservation species.
- 1.3 No major roost sites (sites with more than 100 individuals present) were found throughout the study. Of interest for roosting birds was a small area (1 hectare) of scrub adjacent to the Conoco entrance to the site. This held over thirty roosting thrushes during mid-winter.
- 1.4 Two 'hot spot' areas for winter farmland birds are identified: East Halton Grange and Red House Farm, both in the buffer zone, but immediately adjacent to the application site boundary.
- 1.5 For species with priority conservation status, detailed accounts are provided to describe their distribution in the study area.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 JUST ECOLOGY has been commissioned by Able UK Limited to carry out ecological surveys and assessments that will inform the preparation of an Environmental Statement for a proposed ports facility at Killingholme, Humber Estuary, North Lincolnshire. The application site is shown in Figure 2.1.
- 2.2 Important ecological receptors have been identified on the basis of desk research and Extended Phase 1 field survey (Kirby *et al.* 2006), including the presence of a diversity of birds in the non-breeding season, including Red- and Amber-listed Birds of Conservation Concern in the UK (Gregory *et al.* 2002). Winter farmland bird survey was therefore recommended.
- 2.3 Here we present the results of a winter farmland bird survey over the application site.

Figure 2.1: Site location (courtesy of Able UK)



3. Methods

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 During the non-breeding season for winter farmland birds (October to March) many birds still remain approximately within their summer breeding ranges and, in some species, their numbers are supplemented by the arrival of continental birds. These migrants arrive in Britain in late autumn and stay until the Spring. With leaves fallen from the trees, the birds are more conspicuous in winter; they also call and sing periodically and can be observed from some distance away.
- 3.1.2 Birds positions and numbers can be mapped onto field sheets and their numbers and distributions can be assessed.
- 3.1.3 For the study site at Killingholme, a transect route through typical farmland habitat was adopted (Annex 1), to assess the presence or absence of bird species during the winter months and to obtain approximate measures for relative abundance.

3.2 Field methods

- 3.2.1 The recording method involved laying out a route through the study area. The route was designed so that the surveyor would walk through a good representative sample of farmland habitats and, as far as practicable, into all parts of the site. The transect was devised so that it could still be covered in the short day length of mid-winter.
- 3.2.2 The surveyor, whilst walking the route, recorded all the birds that were seen or heard, recording their locations onto a large scale map using a standard BTO code, and a standard set of activity symbols. The surveyor was looking for any activity that showed that the birds were using the area for feeding or roosting. All bird species were included, including waders or wildfowl that are more closely associated with the estuary. Any roosts of birds found were recorded.
- 3.2.3 Visits commenced in September 2006 and continued with one visit per month until February 2007. Weather conditions were either good or reasonable (strong winds in November and December) for all visits.

4. Results

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 A total of 38 bird species were recorded as present within the study area during the non-breeding season of 2006-07 (September-February). In general they are a good representative suite of farmland bird species. Some are common, but others less so (e.g. Peregrine, Barn Owl, Grey Partridge and Twite) and some are afforded a special conservation status (e.g. Red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern) and presented in detail later in this report.
- 4.1.2 In general, Table 4.1 illustrates the dispersed distribution of each species throughout the sectioned areas of the application site. Area 2a held the most species and Area 5 nearly as many.
- 4.1.3 The largest numbers of birds were recorded in Area 2a in all months; Area 5 supporting the second most (Table 4.2).
- 4.1.4 Total counts per species (all sections combined) are shown in Table 4.3, with over 500 birds recorded on the transect in September, December and January. These included species such as Lapwing (details see Coastal Bird Report), Dunnock, Robin, Blackbird, Redwing,

Fieldfare, Blue tit, Great tit, Starling, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Linnet, Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting – all occurring in reasonable numbers.

4.1.5 Month by month counts per section are presented in Annex 2.

Table 4.1: 38 species found during the survey that were using the fields and boundaries for feeding or roosting. Carrion Crow, Woodpigeon, Pheasant and partridge and all gulls are omitted. Red- and Amber-listed Birds of Conservation Concern are identified as such.

Species/Area	2a	2b	2c	3	4	5	Buffer
Cormorant							present
Mallard	present	present					present
Tufted Duck							present
Kestrel	present	present				present	present
Sparrowhawk	present						present
Peregrine	present						present
Grey Partridge	present		present				
Moorhen	present	present					present
Coot							present
Oystercatcher							present
Shelduck							present
Ruddy Duck							present
Lapwing	present					present	present
Stock Dove	present					present	present
Barn Owl	present						present
Tawny Owl		present					
Skylark	present					present	present
Meadow Pipit	present					present	present
Pied Wagtail	present					present	present
Grey Wagtail	present						
Wren	present	present	present	present	present	present	present
Dunnock	present	present	present	present	present	present	present
Robin	present	present	present	present	present	present	present
Blackbird	present	present	present	present	present	present	present
Song Thrush	present					present	present
Mistle Thrush	present	present				present	present
Redwing	present					present	present
Fieldfare	present					present	present
Coal Tit	present			present			
Blue Tit	present	present		present	present	present	present
Great Tit	present	present		present	present	present	present
Long-tailed Tit	present						
Goldcrest							present
Jackdaw	present	present			present	present	present
Starling	present	present		present	present	present	present
House Sparrow	present	present			present	present	present
Chaffinch	present	present	present		present	present	present
Brambling	present						
Greenfinch	present				present	present	present

Species/Area	2a	2b	2c	3	4	5	Buffer
Goldfinch	present				present	present	present
Linnet	present					present	present
Bullfinch				present			
Twite	present						
Yellowhammer	present					present	present
Reed Bunting	present					present	present

Table 4.2: Month by month total bird counts per sector

Month/Area	2a	2b	2c	3	4	5
September	410	15	6	4	11	77
October	276	35	4	5	8	117
November	183	15	1	11	6	103
December	569	11	2	8	4	113
January	488	30	4	11	31	92
TOTALS	1926	106	17	42	64	507
Density						

Table 4.3: Total numbers of each species recorded per month in 2006/07 (all sectors combined). Red- and Amber-listed Birds of Conservation Concern are identified as such.

Species/Month	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Mallard	22	6	4	4	4
Tufted Duck	0	0	0	0	0
Kestrel	2	2	1	1	1
Sparrowhawk	1	1	0	1	1
Peregrine	0	0	0	1	0
Grey Partridge	0	7	0	4	0
Moorhen	5	1	2	2	6
Coot	1	1	0	0	0
Oystercatcher	2	0	0	2	0
Shelduck	2	4	0	2	4
Lapwing	0	58	9	0	8
Curlew	0	0	2	0	0
Stock Dove	3	2	2	0	0
Barn Owl	1	0	1	0	0
Tawny Owl	0	0	0	1	1
Skylark	3	5	0	3	10
Meadow Pipit	5	12	9	5	11
Pied Wagtail	9	10	7	9	5
Grey Wagtail	0	1	0	0	0
Wren	13	4	6	8	11
Dunnock	29	16	22	29	28

Species/Month	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Robin	32	15	19	21	16
Blackbird	47	40	25	77	71
Song Thrush	3	2	3	15	9
Mistle Thrush	2	2	1	4	3
Redwing	0	19	0	30	27
Fieldfare	0	0	2	50	32
Coal Tit	3	1	0	2	3
Blue Tit	37	20	8	24	28
Great Tit	47	0	13	32	39
Long-tailed Tit	8	0	5	6	6
Goldcrest	1	0	1	2	2
Jackdaw	6	10	3	9	0
Starling	71	31	18	233	200
House Sparrow	52	11	45	55	23
Chaffinch	41	16	28	16	51
Brambling	0	6	6	2	0
Greenfinch	10	47	0	6	10
Goldfinch	32	20	10	12	20
Linnet	18	24	35	4	17
Bullfinch	0	1	0	1	0
Twite	0	0	8	8	0
Yellowhammer	9	8	11	9	4
Reed Bunting	6	10	10	17	5
TOTALS	523	413	316	707	656

4.1.3 A description of each individual section within the application area and its importance for wintering farmland birds is now presented.

Area 2a

This sector is comprised of all farmland bounded by the East Halton/Skitter Beck road to the west; the Humber estuary to the east; the Skitter Beck to the north and industrial structures to the south. Most of the fields were in autumn-sown cereals during the survey period; and many others had cover crop of brassica, or were ploughed or fallow.

Birds recorded using the fields for feeding included: Curlew, Lapwing, Meadow Pipit and Skylark. The largest flock of Skylark recorded was 17 in January 2007. Barn Owls also quarter these fields, as do Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Peregrine Falcon. No field roosts were recorded.

Many fields have hedges as boundaries and these hold foraging flocks of thrushes, finches and tits. The hedges that border the East Halton/Skitter Beck road are the richest with, for example, Blackbirds present every 100 metres. Of note is the hedge that borders the Skitter beck and marks the northern edge of the application site; this held good numbers thrushes including Fieldfares, Blackbird and Song Thrush.

The 'hedge' that marks the disused railway line also held good numbers of thrushes and finches.

The small fields and hedges that are in the lower west corner of this sector were also good for Mistle Thrush and Fieldfare, whilst the permanent grazed grassland held Redwing and Starling feeding.

Area 2b

This is a small area against the northern boundary of North Killingholme parish, bordered on two sides by roads, and consisting of grazed grassland, a pond and a small copse.

A good selection of farmland birds were recorded here, as well as waterbirds that use the pond. No field roosts were recorded.

Tawny Owls were heard on several occasions which probably indicates they use this area for hunting. A pair was recorded from here during the breeding survey of 2006 (West & Kirby 2006).

Area 2c

This is a small triangle of land now out of agriculture and overgrown with weed species.

Several finch species were recorded feeding off the weed seeds in this area, including Goldfinch. Other birds like Robin and Wren are present on the western boundary where woodland abuts the site. No field roosts were recorded.

Area 3

This area comprises of a long thin strip of land that borders the western side of a road, and is mostly arable.

Few birds are present along the area that borders the road. The hedge at the northern end (adjacent to young woodland planting) is richer, with Song Thrush and Bullfinch present. No field roosts were recorded.

Area 4

This area is mostly hard standing and a suboptimal habitat for wildlife. Most records come from the western boundary hedgerow that runs by the side of the Conoco pipeline. No roosts were recorded.

Area 5

This area is mostly farmland, with a mixture of arable and permanent grassland. Curlew, Lapwing (see Coastal Bird Survey Report for details), Skylark and Meadow Pipit were recorded using these fields, Meadow Pipits clearly preferring the planted ley meadows. No field roosts were recorded.

Many of the hedgerows in this sector are 'gappy' but still hold some thrushes and tits. Linnets use this area. The hedge that borders Marsh

Lane is the richest in this sector with finches and tits abundant. House Sparrow flocks were present around the derelict farm buildings at TA173183.

'Hotspots'

Two hotspots for winter farmland birds were recorded, both on the East Halton to Skitter Beck road. Both are a group of farm buildings with their associated small copses. Both are in the buffer zone, which is an area which surrounds the entire study site to a depth of 500 metres and birds are also recorded from this area. For the two areas discussed here the East Halton Lane is the boundary between the study area 2a and the buffer zone, see also Appendix 1.

East Halton Grange

The farm buildings and the attendant farming operations attract flocks of 50 plus House Sparrows. Yellowhammers, Chaffinches and Reed Buntings also use this area in small groups. The mature woodland copse adjacent holds Goldcrest, Coal Tit and Mistle Thrush. Overall, approximately 10% of the birds recorded in Area 2a are recorded here.

Red House Farm

This farm has more modern farm buildings which might be the reason for the smaller numbers of birds (around 5% of the Area 2a total) compared to East Halton Grange. Yellowhammers, Chaffinches and Reed Buntings also use this area in small groups (eight Yellowhammers was the largest flock recorded). The mature woodland copse adjacent holds Goldcrest, Coal Tit and Mistle Thrush.

4.2 Key species

- 4.2.1 Certain bird species have been afforded a high conservation status in the UK, usually because of their threatened or declining status.
- 4.2.2 Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) in the UK have been listed under a partnership of Governmental and non-governmental organisations. Every five years the listings are reviewed for the 247 species included, with species categorised as – red, amber or green. Forty species are currently on the red-listed or most threatened category. Of those forty, ten species (25%) were recorded in the study area during the non-breeding season.
- 4.2.3 Also important are species flagged as a priority under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. This Plan combines new and existing conservation initiatives with an emphasis on a partnership approach. It contains 59 objectives for conserving and enhancing species and habitats as well as promoting public awareness and contributing to international conservation efforts. Also included are 391 Species Action

Plans (SAPs) and 45 Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) for the UK's most threatened (i.e. "priority") species and habitats. These plans describe the status of each habitat and species, outline the threats they face, set targets and objectives for their management, and propose actions necessary to achieve recovery.

4.2.4 In addition there are approximately 150 Local Biodiversity Action Plans, including one for Lincolnshire and Humberside, and these define species of local importance, i.e. Local BAP species.

4.2.5 The key species discussed below are the species found outside of the breeding period on the study site that have priority status under one or more of the provisions mentioned above.

Grey partridge *Perdix perdix*

UK BAP species; Lincolnshire Local BAP species; BoCC Red List species

This species was formerly common and widespread throughout Britain and Ireland but is now retreating east and becoming scarce wherever no special conservation measures are in place. Grey partridge nest in the rough grassland of field margins, road verges, and within certain crops. Adult birds feed on grain, seed and green leaves. Coveys of two to five adults and their young form in winter and remain together until the following spring.

Lincolnshire distribution

Breeding distribution is patchy but the highest numbers are found in central and north Lincolnshire, with particular concentrations in the Clay Vales, (Upper Witham Fens) and the Lincolnshire limestone around and north of Lincoln. Lower numbers are found on the Wolds and Middle Marsh. Other than along the main drains and major rivers, breeding birds are scarce in Fenland and over much of the limestone south of Sleaford, but there are concentrations along the county boundary in the south-west and in the Bourne-Deepings area.

Wintering distribution is similar, but even more closely concentrated in mid-Lincolnshire. No reports of more than 20 birds were received from anywhere in the southern Fens or from most of the limestone, the Trent and Witham Vales, the Marsh or the Ancholme Valley. Records of 20-50 birds came from only the Witham Fens, southern Wolds, the Wragby clays, the limestone immediately north and south of Lincoln and the Isle of Axholme. The population in 1989 was estimated from Lincolnshire Bird Atlas and Common Bird Census (CBC) data at about 7,000 pairs, but there is no information on any changes since then.

Study site

Recorded from Area 2a, a small covey was observed in October and November 2006, in the same general area as breeding pairs were observed in the Spring of 2006 (West & Kirby 2006). A pair of birds was recorded from Area 2c in February and another pair in a ploughed field in Area 2a, also in February.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

BoCC Amber List species; Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Schedule 1 species

The Barn Owl has experienced a decline in its population in England and Wales of an average of 69% between 1932 and 1985. The county of Cheshire showed a decline of 85%. The most recent estimate of the national population is 3750 pairs in England and Wales with a further 650 pairs in Scotland.

Study site

Observed hunting over fields at the northern end of the Halton Marshes. A single bird was observed on each visit in September, October and November 2006, hunting over the saltmarsh to the north of the Skitter Beck then moving south over the Beck and onto the Halton Marshes. It would then move along a hedgerow inland towards the East Halton Road and East Halton Grange.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

UKBAP species; Lincolnshire Local BAP species; BoCC Red List species

Resident in Lincolnshire all year, with numbers boosted outside the breeding season by passage migrants and winter visitors from north-east Europe. Breeding skylarks prefer mixed farms or at least those with a diversity of crops, which provide a series of nest-sites and food sources through the seasons. Spring-sown cereals (now infrequent in the county), mown grassland and set-aside are the preferred breeding areas. Wintering skylark form flocks on farmland and coastal marshes, feeding on seed or grain where this is available but otherwise grazing crop seedlings.

Lincolnshire distribution

Breeding skylarks were recorded in almost every tetrad throughout Lincolnshire but were highly concentrated on the coastal marshes from the Humber round to the Wash, in Fenland, and along the major rivers including the Trent, Ancholme and upper Witham. Wintering distribution is similar with

flocks of 1000+ birds found mainly along the coast and in a broad band across south Lincolnshire from Boston to Stamford.

Study site

Evenly-spread throughout the arable areas of the study area, recorded in Areas 2a, 4 and 5. They appear to be in most crop types throughout the study area.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

UKBAP species; BoCC Red List species

A resident, partial and passage migrant and winter visitor. Nationally song thrushes are still common and widespread, absent only from the highest mountains but with greatest density in south-east England and lowland Ireland. Many native birds move south and west in winter and are replaced by continental birds from Belgium and The Netherlands. Birds from Scandinavia and northern Europe also pass through Britain in autumn to winter in France and Iberia. Following the winter of 1962-63 the population declined but recovered to a stable level within three-four years. Numbers nationally subsequently remained stable until the mid-1970s after which they declined steadily.

Lincolnshire distribution

The Lincolnshire Atlas survey found song thrushes breeding throughout the county, occurring in almost every tetrad on the Wolds and in the Marsh and Fens. Distribution was patchier in the Trent Valley, on the limestone both north and south of Lincoln and down the western Fen edge. Wintering birds were concentrated close to the coast and in the south-west of the county, perhaps reflecting migrant distribution

Study site

A species locally abundant and recorded in Areas 2a and 5. They appear to favour areas with mature trees and where this if a habitat present, Song Thrushes are found throughout the study area.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

UKBAP species; Lincolnshire Local BAP species; BoCC Red List species

A resident and partial migrant in Lincolnshire. Some breeding birds may move south to France, Spain and Portugal in winter, and at the same time a small number may arrive from Scandinavia. The adults eat mainly weed

seeds, though oil-seed rape is also favoured. In winter linnets join flocks of other finches and buntings, once common but now scarce on farmland, and roost in thick shrubs.

Lincolnshire distribution

Linnets were found breeding over most of the county with particular concentrations in the north-east, especially in the northern half of the Marshes and on the coast south to Mablethorpe, and in all the main river valleys, particularly the Welland-Glen system. Winter flocks showed a similar distribution but were also more widespread throughout the Fens, along the coast to the Wash, and the limestone plateau just south of Lincoln.

Study site

Recorded using both arable fields and permanent grassland. Flocks generally comprised around 8-10 individuals.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

BoCC Red List species

Twite's breed commonly in northern and western Scotland and more commonly in northern England. A generally scarce breeding bird in Britain, they are perhaps easier to find in winter when they occur in flocks around the coast on both sides of the North Sea. In Britain the best wintering sites include Saltfleetby in north Lincolnshire, Druridge Bay in Northumberland, the North Norfolk Coast (particularly Titchwell and Holkham Gap), the Naze in Essex and Flint Castle in Clwyd.

Wintering flocks can get up to a 1,000 birds and can occur on saltmarsh, fields of turnips, rape or other stubbles and roosting in reedbeds or brambles.

Study site

A small group of eight birds were recorded first in November 2006 where they flew from the saltmarsh just north of the East Halton Skitter south to the borrowdyke behind the concrete river wall on the East Halton marshes. These birds were recorded again in December from the same borrowdyke, but further south near the derelict brick kiln site.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

UKBAP species; Lincolnshire Local BAP species; BoCC Red List species

Resident all year in Lincolnshire with rare influxes of continental birds. The breeding habitat is typically woodland, although untrimmed hedges, and scrub on farmland are also used. In late summer and autumn seeds of birch, nettle, dock and meadowsweet are collected, while ash seeds form the staple food in a good winter. In early spring, if the ash is finished, fruit buds are eaten.

Lincolnshire distribution

Bullfinch breeding distribution in Lincolnshire is closely linked to the distribution of woodland, including the Kesteven Woods, Bardney Forest, Willingham Forest, Skellingthorpe-Doddington Woods, Twigmoor Woods, Broughton Woods and woodland along the Fen edges and eastern side of the Wolds. Elsewhere smaller concentrations occur but distribution is patchy and breeding bullfinches are absent from most of the Fens and Marsh and much of the Lincolnshire limestone, Trent Valley, Ancholme valley and the northern half of the Isle of Axholme. Since the birds are resident winter distribution is similar. Family parties are also more conspicuous in winter, when they may move out of woodland along adjoining hedges. Bullfinches are not birds of deep woodland however, being associated with wood and ride edges, particularly where there is good cover of medium-tall blackthorn. They will also use this habitat away from woodland, in parks, large gardens and good dense patches of farmland scrub.

Study site

A secretive species, and only recorded from the northern section of Area 3 in the hedgerow that borders with the power station.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*

BoCC Red List species

Widespread and common throughout much of Europe, the yellowhammer is a resident species in the UK, and has a more restricted distribution in Scotland than the rest of the British Isles. Some of the Scandinavian population migrates in small numbers to the British Isles during winter.

Yellowhammer abundance began to decline on farmland in the mid 1980s and the decline has continued ever since. The species, now qualifies for the Red List. While there is some evidence that survival rates have decreased during the period of decline, Reductions in winter seed food availability as a result of agricultural intensification (for example, the loss of winter stubbles and a

reduction in weed densities) are widely believed to have contributed to the population decline.

Study site

Recorded from Areas 2a and 5 where they occupied mature hedges. Also present at the two hotspots of East Halton Grange and Red House Farm. Some birds were beginning to move back onto the breeding territories by February.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

UKBAP species; Lincolnshire Local BAP species; BoCC Red List species

Resident in Lincolnshire all year although some breeding birds may move south and some wintering birds may arrive from north-west Europe and Scandinavia, especially along the coast. Most breeding birds are found near water with the preferred habitats being reedbeds and marshy birch/willow/alder scrub on the margins of rivers, drains, ponds and gravel pits. Drier habitats, including farmland hedges, may also be used when the preferred habitat is not available. The adults eat seeds and grain, especially in winter. Wintering birds feed in mixed species flocks and roost in reedbeds or wetland scrub.

Lincolnshire distribution

Breeding birds were largely absent from the Wolds and the limestone plateau, all the Coversands and much of the Fens except where these areas are crossed by river valleys. The densest populations are found all the way along the coast, from the Humber to the Wash, in the Marsh, Ancholme Valley, Isle of Axholme and abroad band across South Lincolnshire from Boston to Stamford. Winter distribution was similar, again highlighting the coast and river valleys.

Study site

Recorded from Areas 2a and 5, and also the two hotspots. Found in hedges adjacent to the Humber estuary but also on the higher ground around the farmsteads. Some birds were back on their breeding territories by February.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

BoCC Red List species

Noisy and gregarious, starlings spend a lot of the year in flocks. Still one of the commonest of garden birds, its decline elsewhere makes it a Red List species.

It spends the winter in a wide range of habitats, from arable fields to pasture, in gardens and parks, and on the seashore. Large feeding flocks collect into even larger roosting flocks in plantations and reedbeds, and on cliffs and buildings.

Conspicuous and widespread in the UK, occurring everywhere except for the highest parts of the Scottish Highlands. They are most abundant in southern England and are more thinly distributed in upland areas with moorland. Still the UK's commonest garden bird with huge roosts found in plantations, reed beds and city centres.

Study site

Foraging flocks recorded from most areas that had permanent grasslands. Flocks over 200 individuals were recorded.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

BoCC Red List species

Noisy and gregarious, these cheerful exploiters of man's rubbish and wastefulness, have even managed to colonise most of the world. The ultimate opportunist perhaps, but now struggling to survive in the UK along with many other once common birds. They are clearly declining in both gardens and the wider countryside and their recent declines have earned them a place on the Red List.

Found from the centre of cities to the farmland of the countryside, it feeds and breeds near to people. Vanishing from the centre of many cities, but not uncommon in most towns and villages

Study site

Found around the two hot spots, and other chosen sites in Areas 2a, 2b, 4 and 5. A large flock of 44 was recorded by East Halton Grange in February.

5. References

- Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D., Hill, D.A., & Mustoe, S.H. 2000 *Bird Census Techniques* 2nd edition. Academic Press, London
- Brown, A. & Grice, P. 2005. *Birds in England*. Poyser, London
- Gregory, R.D., Wilkinson, N.I., Noble, D.G, Robinson, J.A., Brown, A.F., Hughes, J., Proctor, D.A., Gibbons, D.W. & Galbraith, C.A. 2002. The population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Isles and Isle of Man: an analysis of conservation concern 2002 - 2007. *British Birds* 95: 410-450
- Gibbons, D.W., Reid, J.B. & Chapman, R.A. 1993. *The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland 1988-1991*. British Trust for Ornithology, Scottish Ornithologist's Club and Irish Wildbird Conservancy, Poyser, London
- Kirby, J., Toogood, S., Plant, D. & Anthwal, V. 2006. Able Humber Ports Facility, Killingholme: Extended Phase 1 and Scoping Study. May 2006. Report to Able UK Limited. JUST ECOLOGY, Wotton-under-Edge
- Marchant, J.H. 1983. *BTO Common Bird Census Instructions*. British Trust for Ornithology, Tring
- West, R. & Kirby, J. 2006. Able Humber Ports Facility, Killingholme: Breeding Birds Survey. JUST ECOLOGY, Wotton-under-Edge

6. Appendices

Annex 1. Transect used for winter farmland bird survey

The area marked with a blue line is the 500m buffer zone adopted for our surveys, within which all birds are recorded.



Annex 2. Month by month species totals for each sector

MONTH - FEBRUARY 2007							TOTAL
Species	Area						
	2A	2B	2C	3	4	5	
Mallard							
Tufted Duck							
Kestrel	1					1	2
Sparrowhawk							
Peregrine Falcon							
Grey Partridge	2		2				4
Moorhen	2						
Coot							
Oystercatcher							
Shelduck							
Lapwing							
Stock Dove	3						3
Barn Owl							
Tawny Owl							
Skylark	9					4	13
Meadow Pipit							
Pied Wagtail						1	1
Grey Wagtail	2						1
Wren	5			1			6
Dunnock	9					3	12
Robin	8			1		4	13
Blackbird	10	2				8	20
Song Thrush	2	1				1	4
Mistle Thrush		1					1
Redwing							
Fieldfare							
Coal Tit							
Blue Tit	10	1	2	2	1		16
Great Tit	18	1	1	1			21
Long-tailed Tit			11				11
Goldcrest							
Jackdaw	2						2
Starling							
House Sparrow	44						44
Chaffinch	12	1					13
Brambling							
Greenfinch	4						4
Goldfinch						21	21
Linnet							
Bullfinch							
Twite							
Yellowhammer	1			1			1
Reed Bunting	1				1	1	1
TOTALS	145	7	16	9	6	49	214

MONTH - JANUARY 2007

Species	Area						TOTAL
	2A	2B	2C	3	4	5	
Mallard		4					4
Tufted Duck							
Kestrel	1						1
Sparrowhawk	1						1
Peregrine Falcon							
Grey Partridge							
Moorhen	2	4					6
Coot							
Oystercatcher							
Shelduck	4						4
Lapwing	8						8
Stock Dove							
Barn Owl							
Tawny Owl		1					1
Skylark	8					2	10
Meadow Pipit	11						11
Pied Wagtail	5						5
Grey Wagtail							
Wren	8	2				1	11
Dunnock	21	3	1	3			28
Robin	11	2	1	2			16
Blackbird	41	6		5	4	15	71
Song Thrush	6					3	9
Mistle Thrush	2	1					3
Redwing	4					23	27
Fieldfare	12				8	12	32
Coal Tit	2			1			3
Blue Tit	24		1		3		28
Great Tit	28				5	6	39
Long-tailed Tit	6						6
Goldcrest	2						2
Jackdaw							
Starling	200						200
House Sparrow	15					8	23
Chaffinch	39	3	1			8	51
Brambling							
Greenfinch		4			3	3	10
Goldfinch	12				8		20
Linnet	9					8	17
Bullfinch							
Twite							
Yellowhammer	3					1	4
Reed Bunting	3					2	5
TOTALS	488	30	4	11	31	92	

MONTH - DECEMBER 2006

Species	Area						TOTAL
	2A	2B	2C	3	4	5	
Mallard	4						4
Tufted Duck							
Kestrel	1						1
Sparrowhawk	1						1
Peregrine Falcon	1						1
Grey Partridge	4						4
Moorhen	2						2
Coot							
Oystercatcher	2						2
Shelduck	2						2
Lapwing							
Stock Dove							
Barn Owl							
Tawny Owl		1					1
Skylark	1					2	3
Meadow Pipit	1					4	5
Pied Wagtail	8	1					9
Grey Wagtail							
Wren	2	1	1			4	8
Duncock	16	2		1	1	9	29
Robin	8		1			12	21
Blackbird	27	4			3	43	77
Song Thrush	9					6	15
Mistle Thrush	3	1					4
Redwing	24					6	30
Fieldfare	48					2	50
Coal Tit	2						2
Blue Tit	19	1				4	24
Great Tit	28			4			32
Long-tailed Tit	6						6
Goldcrest	2						2
Jackdaw	9						9
Starling	233						233
House Sparrow	45					10	55
Chaffinch	9			2		5	16
Brambling	2						2
Greenfinch						6	6
Goldfinch	12						12
Linnet	4						4
Bullfinch				1			1
Twite	8						8
Yellowhammer	9						9
Reed Bunting	17						17
TOTALS	569	11	2	8	4	113	

MONTH - NOVEMBER 2006

Species	Area						TOTAL
	2A	2B	2C	3	4	5	
Cormorant							
Mallard		4					4
Tufted Duck							
Kestrel		1					1
Sparrowhawk							
Peregrine Falcon							
Grey Partridge							
Moorhen		2					2
Coot							
Oystercatcher							
Shelduck							
Ruddy Duck							
Lapwing						9	9
Curlew	2						2
Stock Dove						2	2
Barn Owl	1						1
Tawny Owl							
Skylark							
Meadow Pipit	1					8	9
Pied Wagtail	1					6	7
Grey Wagtail							
Wren	3	1				2	6
Dunnock	12	1			1	8	22
Robin	10	1	1	2		5	19
Blackbird	13	4		2		6	25
Song Thrush	1	1				1	3
Mistle Thrush	1						1
Redwing							
Fieldfare						2	2
Coal Tit							
Blue Tit	3			2	3		8
Great Tit	9			2	2		13
Long-tailed Tit	5						5
Goldcrest	1						1
Jackdaw	3						3
Starling	12					6	18
House Sparrow	22					23	45
Chaffinch	28						28
Brambling	6						6
Greenfinch							
Goldfinch						10	10
Linnet	27					8	35
Bullfinch							
Twite	8						8
Yellowhammer	8					3	11
Reed Bunting	6					4	10
TOTALS	183	15	1	11	6	103	

MONTH - OCTOBER 2006

Species	Area						TOTAL
	2A	2B	2C	3	4	5	
Mallard	4	2					6
Tufted Duck							
Kestrel	1					1	2
Sparrowhawk						1	1
Peregrine Falcon							
Grey Partridge	7						7
Moorhen		1					1
Coot		1					1
Oystercatcher							
Shelduck	4						4
Lapwing	47					11	58
Stock Dove	2						2
Barn Owl	1						
Tawny Owl							
Skylark	3					2	5
Meadow Pipit	6					6	12
Pied Wagtail	6					4	10
Grey Wagtail	1						1
Wren	1			1		2	4
Duncock	8	2		1	2	3	16
Robin	11		1			3	15
Blackbird	17	9		2	5	7	40
Song Thrush	1					1	2
Mistle Thrush	1	1					2
Redwing	19						19
Fieldfare							
Coal Tit	1						1
Blue Tit	12	3				5	20
Great Tit	19	6	1			5	
Long-tailed Tit							
Goldcrest							
Jackdaw	3	6				1	10
Starling	23					8	31
House Sparrow	6					5	11
Chaffinch	9	4	2		1		16
Brambling	6						6
Greenfinch	15					32	47
Goldfinch	20						20
Linnet	6					18	24
Bullfinch				1			1
Twite							
Yellowhammer	8						8
Reed Bunting	8					2	10
TOTALS	276	35	4	5	8	117	

MONTH - SEPTEMBER 2006

Species	Area						TOTAL
	2A	2B	2C	3	4	5	
Mallard	18	4					22
Tufted Duck							
Kestrel	1	1					2
Sparrowhawk	1						1
Peregrine Falcon							
Grey Partridge							
Moorhen	2	3					5
Coot		1					1
Oystercatcher	2						2
Shelduck	2						2
Lapwing							
Stock Dove	2	1					3
Barn Owl	1						1
Tawny Owl							
Skylark						3	3
Meadow Pipit						5	5
Pied Wagtail	6					3	9
Grey Wagtail							
Wren	10	1	1			1	13
Dunnock	18	1		1		9	29
Robin	27	1			1	3	32
Blackbird	33	1	1	1	2	9	47
Song Thrush	2					1	3
Mistle Thrush	2						2
Redwing							
Fieldfare							
Coal Tit	2			1			3
Blue Tit	29	1			2	5	37
Great Tit	42					5	47
Long-tailed Tit	8						8
Goldcrest	1						1
Jackdaw	6						6
Starling	60					11	71
House Sparrow	44					8	52
Chaffinch	27					14	41
Brambling							
Greenfinch	8				2		10
Goldfinch	24		4		4		32
Linnet	18						18
Bullfinch							
Twite							
Yellowhammer	8			1			9
Reed Bunting	6						6
TOTALS	410	15	6	4	11	77	