

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

1989 – A scarce bird in the recording area. As with Wigeon, low water levels at Knotford Nook attracted birds. The first were five flying east at Esholt Sewage Works on 8th January. A party of birds at Knotford Nook from at least 8th November peaked at eight on 11th November with up to five remaining to the year end.

1990 – At Knotford Nook, in January, birds remained from 1989 with up to six present until 20th when the last two were seen. The only other occurrence in the first winter period was a pair on 10th and 11th March. In the second winter period, a pair was seen between 1st and 3rd November while the last of the year were two males on 1st December. The sole record away from Knotford was a female at Silsden Reservoir from 2nd to 18th November.

1991 – All five reports came from the first winter period. The first was a male at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 3rd January. A series of February records then followed with a male at Otley Gravel Pits on 2nd, probably the same bird at Knotford Nook next day, another male at this last site from 22nd to 26th and three (two males and a female) there on 28th with one of the males remaining until 2nd March.

1992 – Never common, 1992 proved to be a poor year after signs of improvement from 1989 onwards. A pair at Otley Gravel Pits was present between 10th April and 10th May. There were only two sightings in the second winter period both at Knotford Nook, a female on 11th October and a male on Christmas Day.

1993 – The first record was a male at High Royd Sewage Works on 13th February. Pairs visited at Otley Gravel Pits on 6th March and 27th April, and Knotford Nook on 14th March. There was then a wait until November 3rd for the next and final record, a female at Elland Gravel Pits.

1994 – A pair was present at Elland Gravel Pits from 20th February until 16th March. Otley Gravel Pits held a male on 27th March while nearby Knotford Nook produced a pair on 17th April. A female was seen at the unusual site of Weecher Reservoir on 29th August. Finally, October saw a male at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 11th and four at Knotford Nook on 19th.

1995 – Our best year yet. It started with two pairs at both Knotford Nook on 7th January and Redcar Tarn between 8th and 22nd; the latter being joined by a third male on 15th. A female was at Silsden Reservoir on 30th January and a male visited Otley Gravel Pits on 18th February. Lindley Wood Reservoir held a pair on both 1st May and 2nd July. Records from the second winter period started with a pair at Knotford Nook on 6th October and two males and a female at Silsden Reservoir on 14th and 15th October. In December, Knotford Nook held a pair on 3rd. This increased to two males and three females on 11th with one of the females leaving by 16th. There were three pairs here from 23rd to 26th. On 2nd December, Fewston Reservoir held two and Otley Gravel Pits three. A pair at the latter site on 21st and 25th, and a male at Elland Gravel Pits on 29th and 30th concluded an excellent set of records.

1996 – Eleven records were received, covering three different sites. All of these records were from the first winter period, and began with a male at Otley Gravel Pits on 7th January; this site also produced a pair on 4th February, five birds on 11th and two on 15th, with two males and a female on 13th April and a pair still present on the 20th (the last record of the year). Elland Gravel Pits had two females on 4th February, three males and two females on 10th. A male was present at Knotford Nook from 15th to 25th February.

1997 – Only four locations produced records in 1997, with two in each of the spring and autumn periods. The first sightings were of a pair at Knotford Nook on 16th February, which were followed by three female birds at Fewston Reservoir on 27th May – two of which were still present two days later. In October, three birds were at Otley Gravel Pits on 16th; at Elland Gravel Pits, a male bird, which was on the river on 18th, was still present on 30th.

1998 – The only 1988 records of this species came from the first winter period. A juvenile bird was present at Knotford Nook on 5th January, and a male bird which was disturbed from the canal at Silsden on 14th January flew off to the south-east. A pair was seen at Otley Gravel Pits on 15th February, then a single bird was seen flying over Barden on 8th March; the year's final sighting was of a pair at Otley Gravel Pits on 14th May.

1999 – Up to 15 birds were seen, although reported sightings suggestive of movement between some of the sites. The first record was of a pair at Otley Gravel Pits on 8th May. The only other spring sighting was of a male bird seen on Silsden Reservoir on 16th May. In the second half of the year, sightings took up again at Otley Gravel Pits, with a pair on 12th September. These were possibly the same birds that were seen on 19th and 20th September (now divided) at Otley Gravel Pits and Knotford Nook. At Knotford Nook on 27th September, the year's highest count of three birds, was obtained. One female-type bird was present at the same site from 30th October until 16th November. Also on 16th November, a single bird was seen on Lindley Wood Reservoir. A female-plumaged bird with a dark bill was reported there from 18th November until 5th December. The year's final sighting of this species was of a pair at Chelker Reservoir on 23rd December.

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2000 – Numbers were down on 1999, but the year was rather better than average. The year started with a single male at Knotford Nook from 6th February until 13th March, and possibly the same bird at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 18th March. Also in March, a pair was at Elland Gravel Pits on 13th. On 10th and 12th May, another male was at Otley Gravel Pits, where there was also a drake on 11th and 14th September. Finally, on 23rd December, two pairs were at Otley Gravel Pits and a pair was on Fewston Reservoir, with the latter subsequently being seen on Swinsty Reservoir. A drake seen intermittently at High Road Sewage Works between 1st March and 10th April was considered to be a hybrid Gadwall x Teal.

2001 – About 43 individuals were seen this year making this the best year on record. The main concentrations were at Knotford Nook and Otley Gravel Pits, but birds were also seen at Manningham Park and Thorton Moor Reservoir, where they have not been previously recorded, and at Elland Gravel Pits. The highest totals at Knotford Nook were five birds during November and again on the 14th December and at Otley Gravel Pits three on 25th June.

2002 – After the record numbers of birds seen in 2001, this year was no more than average, with about 14 birds being seen in all.

At Knotford Nook, up to three birds were present in January, but none after that. Otley Gravel Pits then monopolised the remaining records, with two birds present at the end of April, and for three days in October, and singles briefly in May and December. Other records comprised individuals at Manningham Park on single dates in February and March, and in the Washburn Valley on three days in autumn.

2003 - The first of the year was an unexpected visitor to Doe Park Reservoir, a male on 16th March. Another male was found at Knotford Nook on 25th April. The first female was at Otley Gravel Pits on 15th June. 2 males at the same site accompanied a female on 21st September. A female was seen at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 30th November. Fewston Reservoir had 4 present on 8th December and 5 by the 15th. Numbers fluctuated greatly at Knotford Nook in the second winter period which is shown in the list below:

November	13 th	19 th	22 nd	23 rd	25 th	26 th	30 th
	8	3	5	6	4	4	3
December	5 th	6 th	13 th	14 th	19 th	20 th	28 th
	6	8	1	7	7	2	6

2004 - Virtually all records came from the Otley area, and it is possible the same birds visited a number of sites.

The highest counts were at both ends of the year, when seven were seen at a private location and Knotford Nook on 10th January and 23rd December. Knotford Nook held up to six birds in January, and Otley Wetland had a male on 19th and a pair on 31st March. The last records of the spring were a male at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 9th April, and a female there the following day.

On 30th August, two pairs commuted between Otley Wetland and Knotford Nook. Numbers then fluctuated at the latter site until the year-end, and up to four birds at other nearby locations in early October could well have been the Knotford ones.

2005 - The pattern of sightings was much in line with recent years, with the maximum counts being at the extreme ends of the year, and mainly emanating from the Otley area.

In January, between two and eight birds were seen at Knotford Nook during the 2nd to the 28th, with one remaining into the early part of February, and two there on 18th March (MD, AGG, SJ, KM, RHP). April produced two pairs at Otley Wetland on 15th, and there was a single bird on 1st May (SJ). The only autumn passage birds were two at this site on 4th September (MD).

All the other records for this general area came in December, when up to five birds were at Knotford Nook, and two at Otley Wetland and a private location (MD, AJ, SJ, KM, ES). Elsewhere, a single was seen at Lister Park, Manningham, on three dates in February, March and November, and could well be the returning bird of previous years.

2006 - The pattern of the 2006 records replicates almost exactly those of the previous year, and, indeed, other recent ones, although numbers were generally down.

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Whilst the Manningham Park bird was again present, its presence turns out to be permanent, so it is clearly an escape, limiting the only genuine birds to the Otley area once more. Two pairs were at Knotford Nook on 4th January, and one at a private lake later in the month, where four (possibly the Knotford birds) were seen on 15th February. Otley Wetland had two on the 28th of the month, and almost certainly the same birds on the first few days in March, though two birds at Knotford Nook around this period could have been different. The final birds of the first winter period were singles, possibly the same, at Otley Wetland on 25th March and 2nd April.

With one exception, all the birds in the latter part of the year were seen at Knotford. Two birds on 2nd and 9th September were clearly on passage, three turned up on 27th November, and two birds were then seen on four dates between the beginning and end of December. A pair seen on the private lake on Boxing Day could well have been the Knotford ones.

Given the proximity of all three locations, it is quite possible only a handful of mobile birds was involved.

2007 - Fairly predictably all the records came from lower Wharfedale, and didn't involve more than four birds at any site.

In January and early February, up to four were seen at Knotford Nook, and could have included a bird seen earlier at Otley Wetland, and at a private site. However, from the pattern of records, one at Lindley Wood Reservoir mid-month was different. After a gap of seven weeks, Otley Wetland had a pair on 28th March, and there was a scarce spring record of a bird there on 7th May.

There was then a marked scarcity of reports for autumn and the later winter months, consisting only of the same two birds at Otley Wetland and Knotford on 13th October, one at the second location on 9th November, and two on 22nd December.

2008 - Knotford Nook had the majority of sightings, with up to six there in the first winter period. Otherwise, no more than two birds were seen, with sporadic records from Thornton Moor Reservoir, Otley Wetland and Cononley Ings.