

## Jack Snipe

**1987** – An elusive species. Two were flushed at Elland Gravel Pits on 19<sup>th</sup> February and four were at Otley Gravel Pits on 21<sup>st</sup>. A single was at Esholt on 13<sup>th</sup> December.

**1988** – Records from both winter periods. Singles at Otley Gravel Pits on 14<sup>th</sup> February and at Draughton Heights on 17<sup>th</sup> April. There was a single October record of a bird at Wyke on 14<sup>th</sup>. In December, singles at Fly Flatts Reservoir on 16<sup>th</sup> and Otley Gravel Pits on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**1989** – In January, singles were at Otley Gravel Pits on 1<sup>st</sup> and Elland Gravel Pits on 6<sup>th</sup> with two at Dowley Gap between 19<sup>th</sup> January and 20<sup>th</sup> February. February also produced Esholt Sewage Work's only record, a single on 5<sup>th</sup>, while one to two birds were at Otley Gravel Pits from 18<sup>th</sup> February to 5<sup>th</sup> March. In April, a bird was flushed on Middleton Moor on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Singles at Otley Gravel Pits on 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> December were the only reports received for the second winter period.

**1990** – The hide at Stockbridge came into its own, often allowing close scrutiny of this normally elusive species. In January, singles were at Denton on 16<sup>th</sup>, Elland Gravel Pits from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> and Otley Gravel Pits on 28<sup>th</sup>. February saw the last two sites again producing birds with singles at Elland on 4<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and one at Otley Gravel Pits on 10<sup>th</sup>. The last birds of the first winter period were singles at the latter site in March on 8<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and two there on 24<sup>th</sup>. Later in the year, a single was at Stockbridge from 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October while one was on Haworth Moor on 27<sup>th</sup> of that month. Stockbridge also held a day-bird on 8<sup>th</sup> December and further singles were at Elland Gravel Pits on 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> December.

**1991** – In the first winter period, singles were at Elland Gravel Pits on 14<sup>th</sup> January and 3<sup>rd</sup> February. The next was not reported until 6<sup>th</sup> October when one was on Beaver Dyke Reservoir, while, in December, singles were flushed on Baildon Moor on 10<sup>th</sup>, at Elland Gravel Pits on 22<sup>nd</sup> and Otley Gravel Pits on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**1992** – A single bird was present at Elland Gravel Pits on 14<sup>th</sup> March.

**1993** – In the first winter period one was at Elland Gravel Pits on 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January and a single was flushed at first light on 30<sup>th</sup> January at Stockbridge Reserve. During the second winter period one was again at Elland Gravel Pits on 11<sup>th</sup> November followed by two there four days later and two on Christmas Eve. The final record for the year came from Stockbridge Reserve where a single was present on Boxing Day.

**1994** – An average year with records from two sites. Birds were present from January to March at Elland Gravel Pits with a maximum of five on 5<sup>th</sup> February. An early autumn passage bird was at Doe Park Reservoir on 5<sup>th</sup> September and finally two to three birds were recorded at Elland Gravel Pits from 23<sup>rd</sup> October to the year-end.

**1995** – A better year with records from six sites. In January singles were at Horton Bank Top on 1<sup>st</sup> and Elland Gravel Pits on 13<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> January. One was at Ovenden Wood on 9<sup>th</sup> March. Two were located at Otley Gravel Pits on 20<sup>th</sup> March and one was seen repeatedly here up to 1<sup>st</sup> April. There were three reports of singles in December at Elland Gravel Pits on 17<sup>th</sup>, Timble on 18<sup>th</sup> and Otley Gravel Pits on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**1996** – There were only two records this year, both from December at Otley Gravel Pits, and possibly relating to the same bird, being seen on 18<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**1997** – There were five records, from five different sites, of this elusive little wader in 1997 – all of single birds. Not surprisingly all these records occurred in winter, with the exception of a slightly anomalous sighting in April.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> January a bird was seen at Otley Gravel Pits; another bird was flushed twice at Wyke Banks on 1<sup>st</sup> February, and another exhibited the same behaviour at Spicey Gill (Ilkley Moor) on 21<sup>st</sup> April. A bird on Middleton Moor (Langbar) played 'hide and seek' with the observer on 7<sup>th</sup> November, and the final record of the year came from Stockbridge Nature Reserve on 21<sup>st</sup> December.

**1998** – As in 1997, there were five records of Jack Snipe in 1998, but this time from only two sites – Elland Gravel Pits and Hawksworth Moor. The four records from Elland Gravel Pits were of a single bird on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January, and of three birds on 9<sup>th</sup> March and 12<sup>th</sup> December. The Hawksworth record was of a single bird on 18<sup>th</sup> March.

**1999** – There were six records of this species in 1999, from three different sites and all single birds. The first came from Elland Gravel Pits on 11<sup>th</sup> March; the other five all came from the last three months of the year. On 22<sup>nd</sup> October a bird was flushed at the edge of Mucky Park (Barden), behaving in the usual way by flying a short distance before landing again nearby. The next two records came from Elland Gravel Pits, where single birds were seen on 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> November. The action then moved to Redcar Tarn where, on 25<sup>th</sup> No-

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vember, a bird was flushed from the edge, flying round the tarn before returning to the same place. The year's final record of the species, on 31<sup>st</sup> December, again came from Elland Gravel Pits.

**2000** – Five single birds were recorded: near Upper Barden Reservoir on 5<sup>th</sup> March, at Elland Gravel Pits on 31<sup>st</sup> March, at Kex Gill Quarry on 6<sup>th</sup> October, on moorland near Fly Flatts Reservoir on 26<sup>th</sup> December and at Otley Gravel Pits on 28<sup>th</sup> December.

**2001** – Single birds were recorded at Otley Gravel Pits on 24<sup>th</sup> February and 2<sup>nd</sup> March and at Chelker Reservoir on 28<sup>th</sup> November. However, Elland Gravel Pits held four birds on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

**2002** – Four of the seven records this year came from Otley Gravel Pits. At this location, a bird was seen on 4<sup>th</sup> January, two on 9<sup>th</sup>, another single on 14<sup>th</sup>, and two birds were flushed on 16<sup>th</sup> February. Elsewhere, singles were at Fly Flatts Reservoir on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, Ilkley Moor on 9<sup>th</sup> February, and on Burley Moor eight days later.

**2003** - The year started well with a series of observations located at Elland Gravel Pits, starting with 3 on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 5 on 26<sup>th</sup> and 3 still present on 19<sup>th</sup> March. One bird was recorded at Marley Sewage Works on the 18<sup>th</sup> March with another on Kex Gill Moor on 13<sup>th</sup> April.

At the latter end of the year singles were noted at Otley Gravel Pits on 24<sup>th</sup> October and on Soil Hill on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November.

**2004** - The year's only verified sightings came from the autumn/second winter period, and from the same location, Soil Hill, Queensbury. The first involved two birds on 17<sup>th</sup> October, and after that date there were nine other records right up until the end of December (KM et al). These could refer to a single wintering bird, or, as the location is a proven and well-watched migration site, to different individuals passing through.

**2005** - Records of this species continue to increase, probably due largely to the regular working of two apparent migration and wintering sites. These are Soil Hill, near Queensbury, and Otley Wetland.

At Soil Hill, where the birds are mainly on passage, verified records of individuals came on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 16<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October and 10<sup>th</sup> November (KM). Otley Wetland had two birds on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February, and three on 12<sup>th</sup>. In the second winter period, two were seen there on 16<sup>th</sup> December (MD, SJ, KM).

In October, individuals were also flushed at Esholt Sewage Works on 2<sup>nd</sup>, and on Burley Moor on 22<sup>nd</sup> (RS). The first of these accorded the observer the rare privilege of showing itself on the ground. Elland Gravel Pits, a traditional site for the species, had two birds on 30<sup>th</sup> December.

**2006** - Several excellent years for this species seem to have come to an end, due in large part to landfill operations at Soil Hill rendering this site far less attractive to the birds. Whilst one claim came from here, it cannot be included, in the absence of a description.

As it is, all the records emanate from Otley Wetland, and two or three at least might refer to the same bird. A single was flushed on 4<sup>th</sup> January, and again on 7<sup>th</sup> February, and some two weeks later (KM). After a gap of just over three weeks, another bird was seen on 15<sup>th</sup> March.

**2007** - A slightly better year with five records. Despite its current habitat limitations, Soil Hill produced three of these, comprising single birds on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, and 12<sup>th</sup> November. The remaining sightings were at Leeshaw Reservoir on 31<sup>st</sup> January, and at Otley Wetland on 24<sup>th</sup> December.

**2008** - Soil Hill is now the most likely location to see Jack Snipe, and individuals were present there on 28<sup>th</sup> October, and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> November.