

Ruddy Duck

1987 – Bred in the area, two broods of eight and five being seen on the same date in July, although only six juveniles were present on 14th September. Other records included two (females?) at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 10th, 17th and 25th September with one remaining to the 29th. Two, presumably the same birds, were there again on 3rd, 8th and 12th October. Finally, a female was at Knotford Nook from 3rd to 5th December; the possibility of it being a winter-plumaged male was ruled out due to the presence of a facial stripe.

1988 – There were records from Knotford Nook, Ogden's Pond and one other site. In January, a single Ruddy Duck was at Knotford Nook between 20th and 30th. A pair at the same place throughout February, being joined by a second female on 5th March and another male on various dates to the end of April. There was a female at Ogden's Pond on 1st May. A pair was noted on several dates at last year's breeding site but, although display was seen in June, no young were reported. The first had returned to Knotford Nook by 6th November, numbers there building to five on 19th. Numbers declined from that date with the last of the year, thought to be a first-winter drake, on 4th December.

1989 – Up to two, a male and a female, frequented Knotford Nook from 1st January until 28th April with a pair reappearing there on 21st May. Farnley Lake produced three drakes on 7th May and a single drake on 1st August. A female was present at Knotford Nook from 17th to 26th November, being joined by a male on 23rd.

1990 – Only three records: a female at Knotford Nook on 11th February with another there on 11th March and a male at the unusual site of Beaver Dyke Reservoirs on 2nd September. Breeding has not been proven since 1987 and less and less are being reported each year.

1991 – A female was present on and off at Knotford Nook from 20th January to 9th February. The only other record was a male at Swinsty Reservoir on 20th October.

1992 – There were three birds only, all females, being typical of the last few years. The first was at Knotford Nook from 28th February to 1st March. The second, at Chelker Reservoir, a first for this site, lingered from 25th September to 13th October. The third was at Lindley Wood Reservoir for three days from 23rd October.

1993 – Not a common duck in this area and there is no recent evidence of pairs trying to establish territories. A female at Knotford Nook on 23rd and 24th January and two males with a female at Otley Gravel Pits on 13th February were the only winter sightings. June provided four records, all possibly of the same male: on 1st and 15th at Knotford Nook and on 12th and 13th at Farnley Lake.

1994 – Knotford Nook held an adult male from 10th to 13th April. The only other record also a male, was at Farnley Lake between 22nd and 29th August.

1995 – The main site was Farnley Lake where two males and a female on 2nd April had increased to three pairs by 23rd May, with the last record there being three birds the following day. Elsewhere Otley Gravel Pits held a male between 22nd and 29th May, and a pair the following day. Two frequented Silsden Reservoir between 4th and 12th September.

1996 – A number of records were received, all from the Otley area. A male was present at Farnley Lake in April and May, and a pair present at the same site in August. A male was seen at Otley Gravel Pits on 9th August, and finally a male at Knotford Nook on 11th December.

1997 – The first reports came from Farnley Lake where a male bird was seen on 3rd and 15th April. A female bird was seen at this same location on 30th April and 4th June. A male bird was at Knotford Nook on 11th and 18th May. Beaverdyke Reservoir played host to a male bird on 12th July, and a male bird was seen at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 19th August. A team taking part in the Group's Bird Race on 7th September found two birds at Denton Hall Lake; these birds were still present the following morning.

Two juvenile birds were present at Lindley Wood Reservoir from 16th to 19th October. On 22nd November a male bird was at Swinsty Reservoir, and the final record of the year came from Thornton Moor Reservoir, where two birds were present on 30th November.

1998 – A very good year for this species; 36 reports were received in all, from seven different sites, mostly in the Otley area. All records were of birds seen between April and November.

The first sighting occurred at Farnley Lake, where two male birds and a female were seen on 5th April. This site may well be the origin of most of the year's recorded birds, as a remarkably high count of 11 birds and two nests were noted there in late July.

Ruddy Duck

At Knotford Nook, reports of at least two male birds and one female were received on several dates between 15th April and 30th May. During the second half of April, up to two males and two females were seen at Otley Gravel Pits. At this same site a female/juvenile bird was seen between 19th September and 10th October. A male bird was seen at John o'Gaunt's Reservoir on 15th May and again on 5th June. A male bird was seen at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 17th July, and a male and a female were present there between 6th August and 13th September. The year's final record of this species was of a female/juvenile bird at Silsden Reservoir on 7th November.

1999 - There were no reports of breeding this year at the species' usual stronghold, Farnley Lake, but could be down to the lack of visits during the season. That site did at least produce the year's first sighting, though, with two males and a female being present on 21st March; one week later the numbers there had grown to five males and three females. Also on 28th March; two males were present on the boating lake at Otley Gravel Pits. In late March and early April there were more reports from Farnley Lake and by 15th April five pairs were present. A single bird at Otley Gravel Pits on 3rd April, and two males (one of which was a sub-adult) on 25th. On the latter date, two birds were also found on Lindley Wood Reservoir. Knotford Nook had its only sightings during May, with a male bird on 3rd and 8th. Two male birds were seen at Otley Gravel Pits on 7th May, again on the boating lake. The only June sighting, of a single bird, was also at Otley Gravel Pits, on 6th.

After a summer break, the first sighting in the second half of the year was yet again at Otley Gravel Pits, of another single bird, on 4th August. One bird was present at Ogden Reservoir on 8th and 9th September. Eight birds were observed on Farnley Lake that day, and the same number was recorded at that site on 21st. A female and a juvenile were present at Otley Gravel Pits from 21st September until 11th October, one of this pair was possibly the same bird that was seen on 17th October at that site. The year's final sighting was of two birds on Yeadon Tarn on 18th November.

2000 – Whilst numbers of both records and individuals were down on the previous two years, an estimated 18 individual birds is still well up on what would have been expected before 1998. In particular, birds are now much more frequently recorded away from the species' local stronghold and probable breeding site, Farnley Lake.

In the early part of the year, a bird was present at Knotford Nook on 17th January, and there were two at Hawksworth Dam on 26th March. A pair was seen at Farnley Lake on 12th March, increasing to two pairs by 18th April, during which month a bird was at Otley Gravel Pits on 4th. The latter location provided many of the records for the rest of the year, with a pair on 10th May and different individuals from 13th August to 1st September and on 14th and 15th September.

Elsewhere, Lindley Wood Reservoir held single birds on 15th June and from 2nd to 12th August, while Hawksworth Dam again featured, with two birds on 23rd July, the same date as one was at Reva Reservoir, a new location for the species. The year's final record was bird at Knotford Nook on 4th October.

At least one of the Farnley Lake pairs was reported to have bred, but no details were available.

2001 – the majority of the year's records came from October and November, but there may have been under-recording in the early part of the year. No firm conclusions can, therefore, be drawn from the fact that the number of individuals seen was, at about 13, some five birds down on the previous year. The first eight months of the year saw only four records; single birds at Elland Gravel Pits on 24th January and Knotford Nook on 20th March, and two at Farnley Lake on 21st February and 31st August. In October a single bird was at Otley Gravel Pits on 3rd and 4th, and at Knotford Nook, what was presumably the same bird on various dates between 22nd and 27th. This site also held possibly different individuals on three dates between 6th and 16th November, and there were two birds there on 23rd. There was a further single at Otley Gravel Pits on 11th November. There were no breeding records.

2002 – It is fairly clear last year's reduced numbers were not entirely due to access restrictions, as this year's tally of about 13 birds is the same. Records were spread fairly evenly throughout the year, with all of them coming from Wharfedale and the Washburn Valley.

Between January and June, up to five birds were seen at a location where breeding has occurred in the past, and it took place again this year, with four young recorded. In the same period, a bird was at Otley Gravel Pits in April and three birds were there at the end of June. There were also one or two present for several days at the end of October and the beginning of November. Fewston and Lindley Wood Reservoirs also had single-date individuals in July and August. It is of course possible that all records are referable to birds from the main breeding site.

Ruddy Duck

2003 - All seven records came from two sites. A small private lake had the majority of these records and the first and last of the year. 2 pairs on 22nd April were also the highest count of the year (AJ). Knotford Nook had 1 on 29th April (PR). There were no records of breeding this year despite several sightings during the breeding season on the private lake. 2 females put in an appearance at Knotford Nook on 12th October (IPG). The final sighting was also of 2 females on 7th November (AJ).

2004 - The first sighting of the year was the only spring record, and was a single at Denton Park Lake on 6th May. A first-year female then spent two months at Otley Wetland from 9th September until 28th October, being joined by a second female for three days from 24th October. The final record was of a pair at this site on 3rd November.

2005 - The seven records received for the year is about the current average. Most came in the first winter period and spring, and none came from the south of the area.

Two females were present at Knotford Nook on 13th January (KM), and another was at Otley Wetland on 1st April (JF, KM). Two weeks later, a drake was there, with perhaps the same bird on 20th April (SJ, SJG). In May, two birds were seen at a private site on 12th (AJ).

The only records in the latter part of the year concerned two females at Otley Wetland on 9th September (AGG), and another bird there on 26th November.

2006 - The reasons for the decline of this species are well-documented, so that there are only three records is not unexpected. All came from Otley Wetland, where a pair was present on 7th May (MD), and singles on 8th June (KM), and 5th September.

2007 - The worst year on record, with just one sighting: a female at Yeadon Tarn on 22nd December.

2008 - The decline of this species in the recording area continues, as one of the two records (a female present on Yeadon Tarn on 1st January) referred to the bird seen there in late December, 2007. The other was at the unusual site of Lower Laithe Reservoir on 31st October.