

Whimbrel

1987 – A passage bird rested with Curlews on Timble Moor on 25th May and two birds were at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 16th July.

1988 - There was only one spring bird but an interesting series of autumn migrants. A single bird was at Fly Flatts Reservoir on 25th May. Two at Snow Hill, Addingham, from 24th to 27th July. On 30th July, three were at Reva Reservoir and a single at Esholt Sewage Works which remained until the following day when one flew over Haworth Moor. Two August records involved singles at Otley Gravel Pits on 4th and Chelker Reservoir on 16th.

1989 – Two at Nessfield on 9th April were the first with two also at Upper Bradshaw Head on 17th May. In autumn, singles were at Chelker Reservoir on 11th July, over Shipley on 18th July and at Draughton Heights on 13th August.

1990 – Single birds reported as follows: Thornton Moor on 30th April with two there on 9th May; Chelker Reservoir on 1st May and also 3rd May; and Leeshaw Reservoir on 7th May. The first returning birds were in July with singles at Enshaw Knoll on Haworth Moor on 14th, Fly Flatts Reservoir on 23rd and Thornton Moor Reservoir on 30th. In August, a bird flew over Glenside Road, Shipley, on 2nd and other singles were noted over Bingley Moor on 13th, at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 23rd and 25th and over Denholme on 27th while two passed over Clayton on 26th. Finally, one was seen at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 3rd September.

1991 – Well down on last year with seven records, all singles. In May, birds flew north at Thornton Moor Reservoirs on 25th, 26th and 27th. The remainder were in July: at Chelker Reservoir on 17th and at Otley Gravel Pits on 21st and 31st.

1992 – The 'seven-whistle' call was heard as a bird flew unseen over Eldwick on 8th March. This could have been a very early passage bird as nationally Whimbrel is a very scarce estuarine wintering species. The next were single flying north over Thornton Moor Reservoir on 2nd May and two at Barden Moor on 10th May. At Chelker Reservoir one flew west on 14th May and two days later a single was present in nearby fields. The final spring passage record was at Thornton Moor reservoir, a very late single flying north-west on 8th June. Autumn passage started on 15th July when a single was with Curlews at Timble. Two passed overhead at Thornton Moor reservoir flying from north-east to south-west on 20th July. One was at Fewston Reservoir on 26th July and a single flew north at Fly Flatts Reservoir on 30th July. The last of the year at Reva Reservoir was heard calling on 20th August.

1993 – Spring passage commenced with a single in fields at Timble on 6th April. Three were seen flying off south from Beaver Dyke Reservoir in the evening of 22nd April. One left Chelker Reservoir to the west on 27th April and finally four flew south-west over KNotford Nook on 1st May.

The first autumn passage bird overflowed Bolton Woods on 8th July. Next came a run of records in July from Otley Gravel Pits starting with two on 18th and 19th, five on 22nd, one on 23rd and finally two on 24th. At Weecher Reservoir two were present on 2nd August. On the same date two spent all evening at Thornton Moor Reservoir. These were joined by three coming in from the north-east at dusk. All five became exceedingly noisy and left high to the south just before dark. A single flew over Bolton Woods calling on 4th August and the final record for the year was of one at Reva Reservoir on 4th September.

1994 – An exceptional spring followed by moderate autumn. Spring passage commenced with calls heard from a single bird at Timble on 23rd April. Thornton Moor Reservoir then produced a run of records with all birds departing to the north-west. On 24th April one was feeding with Redshanks throughout the morning and another flew overhead calling during the early evening. The next was a single on 30th April during the early evening. On May 2nd three flew overhead, all constantly calling and very noisy and distant calls were heard from a further two birds. On the same date at Kex Gill Quarry one flew off west. A single was in fields near Fly Flatts Reservoir on 7th May. The next day Thornton Moor Reservoir produced yet another which left to the north during the early evening and one flew west low over Rombalds Moor at Whetstone Gate.

Autumn passage commenced early with a single west over Fly Flatts Reservoir on 24th June. Next came two at Swinsty Reservoir on 27th July followed by one south-west on 30th July at Thornton Moor Reservoir. Four were at Malt Kiln Lane, Thornton from 11th August for three days and the final record for the year was of one west at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 16th August.

1995 – Once again an exceptional spring combined with a moderate autumn. The first report was on 20th March from Chelker Reservoir when two were at the east end before flying off west. Next came a single at Otley Gravel Pits on 26th March. One flew over Ilkley on 6th April and another at Otley Gravel Pits on 20th April passed north. A calling bird went over Weecher Reservoir on 29th April. Two separate individuals flew through Thornton Moor Reservoir on 6th May; one arrived from the east and the other left to the north. Sin-

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gles were seen over Graincliffe Reservoir on 14th May and north over Barden Moor on 21st May. One was bathing preening at Chelker on 23rd May with two here on 27th May.

The first of the autumn was at Thornton Moor Reservoir, feeding and calling from the water's edge on 10th July. On 14th July singles passed south over Knotford Nook and south-east over Thornton Moor Reservoir, with one west over Otley Gravel Pits four days later. These were followed by singles north-west over Thornton Moor Reservoir on 21st July, east over Otley Gravel Pits on 30th July and west over Beaver Dyke Reservoir on 10th August. A single bird flying west on 29th August over both Horton Bank Top and Thornton Moor Reservoir could have been the same individual. The final record was a calling bird at Fly Flatts Reservoir on 31st August.

1996 – This was a good year, with at least 17 birds recorded. One flew north calling loudly overhead at Thornton Moor Reservoir just before dusk on 19th April, and another was with Eurasian Curlews at Otley Gravel Pits the next day. One flew west along Leeshaw Reservoir on 25th April, a day of strong south-westerly winds and heavy showers. The final spring record was of a single bird at Chelker Reservoir on 24th May.

Autumn records started on 24th July when a bird flew west overhead at Thornton Moor Reservoir; later the same day another left the same site to the north-west. Two flew west above Otley Gravel Pits on 9th August.

Next came a single bird on the shore at Thornton Moor Reservoir, which was joined by another three during the afternoon of 10th August, all then leaving to the west; later that same day, what may have been the same birds were seen at Leeshaw Reservoir. The following day, another bird arrived at Thornton Moor Reservoir and spent much time feeding, then loafing about, on the shore opposite the hide. One was heard calling in the distance as it flew west past Thornton Moor Reservoir on 14th August.

A single bird flew over Lindley Wood Reservoir on 25th August, followed by another over Marley Sewage Works on 30th August. The final record of the year was of a bird calling, out sight high overhead as it flew west at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 22nd September.

1997 – A very interesting set of records for 1997, with at least 24 birds in total, reported by 16 observers from 15 different sites scattered throughout the Group's recording area, ranging from Kex Gill Quarry and Dick Hudson's to Thornton Moor Reservoir.

Barden Moor provided the first record of the year, when four birds were seen over Mucky Park on 9th April. On 27th April, five birds were seen resting with European Golden Plovers in a field opposite Dick Hudson's (only to be flushed by a Short-eared Owl!). May records, nearly all of single birds flying over, came from Lindley Wood Reservoir, Beaverdyke Reservoir, Otley Gravel Pits and Askwith Moor. The end of July brought a spate of records, all of single birds and mostly from Thornton Moor Reservoir. However, birds were also seen at Thruscross Reservoir, Kex Gill Quarry, Denton Moor and Otley Gravel Pits around this time.

August records, with the exceptions of a single bird seen flying east over Burley-in-Wharfedale on 1st, and four at Malkiln Farm, Thornton on 6th to 10th, all came from Thornton Moor Reservoir. Records from that site were mainly of single birds and twos, but a noisy group of seven birds was seen flying over the hide on 24th. A solitary bird was seen on 25th August at Norwood.

1998 – There was far fewer records in 1998 than in 1997, almost all of which came from Otley Gravel Pits, with just one record from Thornton Moor Reservoir.

The first birds of the year were seen at Otley Gravel Pits, where two were present on 23rd April and two on 30th. Early May produced several more sightings at Otley Gravel Pits, including a single bird on 2nd and eight on 4th. May also produced the year's only record from Thornton Moor Reservoir, where a single bird was observed flying north-west at 19:55 on 16th; this also turned out to be the year's final record of this species.

1999 – This species was recorded at three different locations – mostly in May and August, but with one record in April and two in July.

The first record was of two birds seen at Otley Gravel Pits on 24th April. The May records came from Barden Moor and Otley Gravel Pits: on 8th, one observer found birds in three different places on Barden Moor, the highlight being three birds which left Lower Barden Reservoir and flew northwards, calling as they went. At Otley Gravel Pits on 7th, a bird left to the north, and on 15th a single bird was seen there. The August records came from Otley Gravel Pits on 22nd, when a calling passage bird was heard, and Thornton Moor Reservoir, where single birds were seen throughout the month. The year's final record of this species was of a single bird heard on 29th August.

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2000 – An average year for the species, with fifteen records from four locations. The first of the year was a bird at Barden on 25th April – the only record for that month. During May and July mostly single birds were recorded, with the notable exception of ten birds flying high over Thornton Moor Reservoir on 27th July, calling as they went. The next, and last, record of the year came from Otley Gravel Pits, where two birds were seen on 30th September.

2001 – There were rather fewer records than in previous years, and a total of 14 birds was seen, distributed fairly equally between spring and autumn passage.

In May, single birds flew over Otley Gravel Pits on 2nd and 20th, and four headed north there on 8th. A bird was also seen over Swinsty Reservoir on 9th May. Five birds moved south-east over Kex Gill on 7th July, and two were seen at Chelker Reservoir on 27th August.

2002 – Records were again sparse this year, with a total of 13 birds from seven sites, all but two of them fly-overs. The first was on 3rd May at White Hill, in the Newsholme Dean area, feeding with a small flock of Curlew. On 11th May, two were at John o'Gaunt's Reservoir, and on 19th a calling bird passed over Barden Scale with a Curlew. Another single bird was at March Ghyll Reservoir on 14th June, followed by one near Wilsden on 17th August. The next day, six birds were noted during a visible migration watch at Thornton Moor Reservoir, and the final record was a bird on 1st September at Kex Gill.

2003 - This year there were six records concerning seven birds. In the spring single birds were noted overflying Sword Point plantation on 11th April, Beaverdyke Reservoir on 20th April and Leeshaw Reservoir on 16th May.

Autumn passage consisted of two birds at Timble Ings on 15th July, a single there on 1st August and one at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 5th August.

2004 - Almost triple last year's records were received. The first of the spring was a single over Thornton Moor Reservoir on 21st April. On 2nd May, another was at the same site and one was at Otley Wetland. May continued to produce many sightings, with one seen from Barden watchpoint on 5th, further singles over Otley on 6th and 9th, and four on 12th. The previous day, one was in a field near Thruscross, and the final sighting in this period was of five birds at Burley on 26th.

Return passage was noted from 23rd July, when one passed over Burley, and singles were seen heading west from Thornton Moor the following day and on the 27th. Two arrived at Warley Moor Reservoir on the 29th, before quickly departing, and another flew past Thornton Moor Reservoir the same day. This location then had the Group's record total when, on 3rd August, a party of 26 was seen bathing as the mist cleared (BV). Thornton Moor maintained its monopoly of sightings, with the year's final bird a week later.

2005 - Another reasonable year, producing twelve records, mainly from the south of the area, and about twenty birds.

Spring passage was noted on three dates. On 20th April, two birds flew over Otley Wetland, and a single seen at Thornton Moor Reservoir could have been the one passing Cold Edge Dams. Two weeks later, another bird was seen at Otley Wetland, on 6th May, and three overflowed Timble Ings on the 8th.

Thornton Moor Reservoir had all the records of birds on their return movement. In July, singles were seen on 20th, 23rd and 31st. Another was there on 4th August, and one flew south-west with Curlews on the 19th. Two days later, four were seen, and on the 22nd one was heard in flight, followed by three more which spent a short time on the shoreline.

2006 - With only four records, and a total of five birds, 2006 was the quietest year since 1987, despite good shoreline conditions during the autumn migration period.

The sole spring report was a calling bird over Lower Barden Reservoir on 21st May. Autumn relocation commenced with two birds at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 6th August, but produced nothing else until the 23rd, when a bird overflowed Wilsden, and one was seen on the 31st with Curlews on Soil Hill.

2007 - This is another wader for which 2007 was the worst year on record, with just one report: a bird overflying Otley Wetland on 22nd July.

2008 - On 3rd May, single migrants overflowed Timble Ings and Thornton Moor Reservoir, and one passed Marley Hall Farm on 13th June. In July, there was another at Thornton Moor on the 25th.