

## Whooper Swan

**1987** – Five records received involving ten birds. There was only one record in the first winter period, a single on Silsden Reservoir on 1<sup>st</sup> February. Two adults were present at Knotford Nook from 1<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> October. In November four flew over Chelker Reservoir towards Silsden on the 1<sup>st</sup> whilst three flew north up the Washburn Valley near Timble on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**1988** – A poor year. Two flew over Otley on 9<sup>th</sup> October and were seen later at Otley Gravel Pits. Two birds also overflew Thornton Moor Reservoir on 12<sup>th</sup> November.

**1989** – The first were two over Silsden town centre on 21<sup>st</sup> February. In March, two were at Otley Gravel Pits on 27<sup>th</sup> while 55 were on Graincliffe Reservoir, Eldwick on 28<sup>th</sup>. The next day a flock counted as 50+ flew south through Esholt but these might account for 64 at Chelker Reservoir on the same day. Movement continued on 31<sup>st</sup> March as evidenced by a single at Knotford Nook and 46 at Lower Barden Reservoir. The last of the spring were three birds over Charlestown, Baildon, on 18<sup>th</sup> April.

In the autumn, a single visited Chelker Reservoir on 31<sup>st</sup> October and another was at Hewenden Reservoir, on 26<sup>th</sup> December.

**1990** – A total of four records relating to eight birds. A single at March Ghyll Reservoir on 27<sup>th</sup> January was the only report in the first winter period. In November, two birds at Leeshaw Reservoir on 3<sup>rd</sup> were seen to depart north-west whilst two more were at Fly Flatts Reservoir on 17<sup>th</sup>. Finally, three adults visited Swinsty Reservoir on 26<sup>th</sup> December.

**1991** – The first was a single on Chelker Reservoir on 11<sup>th</sup> January while six flew west over Baildon Moor on 17<sup>th</sup> March. In the second winter period, a restless party of 16 (14 adults and two juveniles) visited Fewston Reservoir on 27<sup>th</sup> October and November saw six flying west over Thornbury on 21<sup>st</sup> with a single next day at Royds Hall Reservoir, Bradford. The last were two at Denton Hall Lake on 7<sup>th</sup> December. A Group of five 'yellow-billed' swans flew east over Silsden on 14<sup>th</sup> December.

**1992** – A party of three was present at Kildwick Ings on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> January after torrential rain had flooded the area. Records in the second winter period were confined to two at Swinsty Reservoir on 16<sup>th</sup> October, two at Knotford Nook on 4<sup>th</sup> December and a single on the Aire at Shipley on 17<sup>th</sup> December.

**1993** – Silsden Ings held two on 25<sup>th</sup> January, Leeming Reservoir 14 on 9<sup>th</sup> March, Elland Gravel Pits 69 on 26<sup>th</sup> March and Lindley Wood Reservoir a single on 1<sup>st</sup> May.

**1994** – A party of three flew down the Aire Valley at Farnhill Ings on 6<sup>th</sup> January and c100 passed north over Elland Gravel Pits in early March.

In the second winter period four were at Elland Gravel Pits on 4<sup>th</sup> November and eight flew west over Timble Ings on 6<sup>th</sup> November, a day of heavy passage. The last of the year were two on Thornton Moor Reservoir on New Year's Eve.

**1995** – In April six flew north-west over Timble Ings on 8<sup>th</sup>, one was at Swinsty Reservoir the following day and two passed north over Blubberhouses on 19<sup>th</sup>. The remainder of the records relate to the second winter period and start on 22<sup>nd</sup> October with one west over Bingley; a telephone call ensured that it was soon seen passing over Silsden. Two moved south over Knotford Nook on 30<sup>th</sup> October and five, including three juveniles, were at this site on 4<sup>th</sup> December. Finally 29<sup>th</sup> December produced four north over Knotford Nook, four adults and two juveniles at Elland Gravel Pits, and one adult and two juveniles at High Royd Sewage Works.

**1996** – There were two spring records this year, commencing with three first-summer birds at Knotford Nook on 13<sup>th</sup> April. A single bird was observed with three Mute Swans on the River Aire at Kildwick on the relatively late date of 5<sup>th</sup> May.

During the second winter period, one bird spent at least 11 days in fields around Leathley from 22<sup>nd</sup> November; a single bird was at Thruscross Reservoir on 8<sup>th</sup> December and five flew north-west over Alderscholes Wood at Thornton on 15<sup>th</sup> December. The final record of the year was of two birds in flight over Timble Ings on 29<sup>th</sup> December.

**1997** – Yellow-billed swans continue to be very scarce in the Group's recording area. The only records during 1997 were of two birds at Hewenden Reservoir on 28<sup>th</sup> March, and of five birds which dropped in to Chelker Reservoir at dusk on 11<sup>th</sup> November but left before dawn the following morning.

**1998** – 1998 was a particularly good year for local records, commencing with four birds seen flying down the Washburn valley on 23<sup>rd</sup> January.

## Whooper Swan

An interesting record of no less than 18 birds dropping into Lindley Wood Reservoir just before dusk on 22<sup>nd</sup> March was followed by 15 birds seen at Otley Gravel Pits the following day. A single bird was then seen flying north-west at Barden on 31<sup>st</sup> March, and the final sighting from the early part of the year was of an immature bird at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

During the second winter period, a single bird arrived on flooded fields at Silsden Ings on 25<sup>th</sup> October, remaining there until at least 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

Two adult birds were reported from nearby Kildwick Ings on 1<sup>st</sup> November. The final record of the year was of 11 birds flying over Guiseley towards Shipley on 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

**1999** – No large flocks were noted moving through the Group's recording area this year, and counts stayed in single-figures.

The bird which had been present at Silsden at the end of October 1998 had spent the winter further up the valley at Cononley Ings; this bird strayed back into the recording area in the first winter period, when it was present at Farnhill Ings on 15<sup>th</sup> February; it had a yellow ring on its left leg, bearing the letters YYY. It was also seen at Kildwick Ings on 18<sup>th</sup> February, then again at Franhill Ings on 1<sup>st</sup> March. A single bird was seen at Silsden Ings on 24<sup>th</sup> April.

Away from the Aire Valley, a single bird was present at Lower Laithe on 1<sup>st</sup> January, but had gone the next day. Single birds were present at Knotford Nook on 24<sup>th</sup> January and 28<sup>th</sup> February.

In the Washburn valley, six birds were present at Lindley Wood Reservoir, but moved up to Fewston Reservoir on 26<sup>th</sup> March, and a single bird was present at Thruscross Reservoir on 17<sup>th</sup> April.

The first record of the second winter period was of four or five birds heard heading south over Guiseley at 7 pm on 11<sup>th</sup> October; six then flew west at Embsay Reservoir on 26<sup>th</sup> October, and two were present at Ogden Reservoir on 28<sup>th</sup> October. Two were present at Elland Gravel Pits on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, and the final record of the year was of two flying north-west at Popley Fields on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

**2000** – An excellent passage in the first half of the year began with a single bird flying west over Silsden on 15<sup>th</sup> February. March produced several records, with seven on Leeming Reservoir on 13<sup>th</sup>, a single at Lee-shaw Reservoir on 19<sup>th</sup>, and 15 two days later. Chelker Reservoir held 12 on 20<sup>th</sup> March, and 15 were present at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The year's highest count was of 51 birds at Fewston Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup> April. They were seen to depart north that evening.

The second winter period was much quieter, with only two records – a single bird on the river at Otley on 1<sup>st</sup> October, and two flying west at Otley Gravel Pits on 19<sup>th</sup> December.

**2001** – There was only one record during the first part of the year, with 10 birds at Thruscross Reservoir on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. In the second winter period there were three records, all at Otley Gravel Pits: six adult birds were present on 24<sup>th</sup> October, a single adult on 29<sup>th</sup> October, and a further nine birds were watched leaving the east, on 12<sup>th</sup> December.

**2002** – This was an excellent year with 13 records, probably involved 131 birds in all.

At Swinsty Reservoir, six birds were present in March for three days, quickly followed by a single at Lindley Wood Reservoir, which remained for a relatively lengthy three weeks. A bird was also at Elland Gravel Pits at the end of March.

Thirty birds spent the day at Thruscross Reservoir on 4<sup>th</sup> April, with a single on John o'Gaunts Reservoir on the same date, and 43 birds flew north-west over Burley on the following day. A good month was completed by 12 birds at Fewston Reservoir on 16<sup>th</sup>.

The first remaining birds were three briefly at Otley Gravel Pits on 26<sup>th</sup> October. In November there were four overflying birds at Doe Park Reservoir, six flying east near Silsden, and probably the same birds over Baildon a short time later. There were also two birds which flew down the valley at Barden and 22 birds over Elland Gravel Pits.

## Whooper Swan

**2003** - In the first winter period there were 4 sightings. The first of which was at Chelker Reservoir on 21<sup>st</sup> March when 17 were observed. Two days later 24 flew from Lower Barden Reservoir heading Northeast. Cold Edge Dams hosted 36 on 29<sup>th</sup> March. On 7<sup>th</sup> April 25 were present at Otley Gravel Pits.

The second winter period didn't produce the high numbers but did provide several sightings. The first was very early in the season on 21<sup>st</sup> September when 1 flew east in the accompaniment of 49 Pink-footed Geese during a vis-mig watch. A month later on 22<sup>nd</sup> October an immature was found on Fewston Reservoir and stayed until December. The adult at March Ghyll Reservoir on 26<sup>th</sup> October was joined by another 3 on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. The Fewston immature was probably the Whooper Swan seen on Swinsty Reservoir on 13<sup>th</sup> November. 2 were seen at Farnhill Ings on 20<sup>th</sup> November. An adult stayed most of the month of November at Knotford Nook and was possibly the individual chased away by Mute Swans from Otley Gravel Pits on 4<sup>th</sup> December. The last two sightings were of singles heading west in December. The first on 9<sup>th</sup> was over Leesshaw Reservoir with the final sighting of the year at Silsden on 13<sup>th</sup>.

**2004** - A first-year bird recorded in 2003 at Fewston and Swinsty Reservoirs stayed at Fewston throughout the summer. It was first recorded on 10<sup>th</sup> January, and the last definitive record, before the picture was confused by new arrivals, was 25<sup>th</sup> September. By late summer it had moulted to the all-white plumage of adulthood.

In the first winter period there were six birds on Ogden Water on 3<sup>rd</sup> January. March is a regular passage month, and on the 27<sup>th</sup> a flock of 28 was tracked across the Aire Valley from Trough Lane, Oxenhope, over St. Ives and then up the valley from Stockbridge. On the same day, another 24 were found at Warley Moor Reservoir, with two Bewick's Swans. Also on that date, 15 were on Thornton Moor Reservoir for their second day, and this location had flocks of 42 and 40 on the 28<sup>th</sup>. The last day of the month produced nine birds on Lower Barden Reservoir.

The second winter period produced fewer birds than the first, but there were more sightings. The first four of these involved family parties. Two adults with two immatures were seen in October over Oxenhope on 10<sup>th</sup>, Doe Park Reservoir on 16<sup>th</sup> and on Silsden floods on 24<sup>th</sup>. A pair with four immatures was at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 4<sup>th</sup> November, and three days later, three flew east past Stockbridge. On 14<sup>th</sup> November, two adults flew down the Wharfe Valley, only for one to return and the other to be found on Chelker Reservoir later the same day. A single was found on Tong Park Reservoir on 15<sup>th</sup> November and stayed into December. Twelve flew south-east past Thornton Moor on 28<sup>th</sup> November, and the final sighting of the year was of three at Thruscross Reservoir on 26<sup>th</sup> December.

**2005** - This was the quietest year since 2001, with only 12 records, almost all of which comprised birds on spring migration.

Double-figure counts came from Lindley Wood Reservoir, where 16 were present on 4<sup>th</sup> March, Swinsty Reservoir, which had 32 birds on 21<sup>st</sup> March, and Barden Scale, where 17 birds were seen flying north on 5<sup>th</sup> April. Elsewhere during this regular passage period there were three birds at Otley Wetland on 16<sup>th</sup> March and one on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, three at Mixenden Reservoir on 19<sup>th</sup>, two at Silsden Reservoir on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, and also two at Thornton Moor Reservoir a week later.

The only winter sightings were of two birds at Otley Wetland on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, two over Northowram on 10<sup>th</sup> November, four past Luddenden Dean on 14<sup>th</sup>, and one at Graincliffe Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup> December.

**2006** - With only eight records, 2006 was even quieter than the previous year, which had just twelve, and there were only two double-figure counts.

In contrast to 2005, there were few spring records, and all were in March, a typical month for returning birds. Ten birds were at Silsden Reservoir on the 9<sup>th</sup>, followed by 28, comfortably the year's biggest count, at Ogden Reservoir on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and two on Lindley Wood Reservoir three days later.

The first arrivals were seen on 24<sup>th</sup> October, with two birds on Silsden Reservoir, and the same number at Warley Moor Reservoir. In November, four flew west at Ponden on the 10<sup>th</sup>, and two were on Fewston Reservoir on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The final record was of four birds flying past Soil Hill on 17<sup>th</sup> December.

**2007** - A distinctly better year than the last two, particularly in the early months.

Five birds were present at Warley Moor Reservoir on 5<sup>th</sup> January, but the biggest numbers came in March, a regular month for relocating birds, starting with fifteen at John o' Gaunt's Reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>. A large movement of birds then clearly took place on the 26<sup>th</sup>, when there were two on Fewston Reservoir, thirteen on Lindley Wood Reservoir, and an impressive 74 birds at Lower Barden Reservoir, all of which departed in

## Whooper Swan

the early evening. This represents the largest individual flock seen in the recording area (AGG). On the following day, fifteen were found at Ogden Reservoir.

In recent years, numbers in autumn have been lower, and this was the case in 2007. October produced five birds at Otley Wetland on the 9th, followed by another on the 12th, and two on the 13th. Seven birds were seen at Thornton Moor Reservoir on the 19th, and two dropped in briefly at Leeshaw Reservoir the following day. The year was completed by two more birds at Thornton Moor on 3rd November, and nine at Otley Wetland six days later.

**2008** - Predictably, most of the reports came from the main migration months of March and October, but it was a generally quiet year, with 10 birds at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 20th March and 17 past Caldene Fields on 21st November the only double-figure counts. Also in March, three birds were seen at Chelker and Swinsty Reservoirs, one was at Otley Wetland, seven were on Warley Moor Reservoir and six over Wilsden.

In October, parties of four and eight were seen over Oxenhope, three were at Thornton Moor Reservoir, and two at Chelker on the 19th were probably the ones which had left north from Doe Park a short time earlier. Six birds were at Cononley Ings late in the month, and November contributed seven on Lower Laithe Reservoir, eight on Chelker and two on Leeshaw.