

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

1988 – The following records probably refer to at least two birds, all those reported were female/immatures. The first bird was in October, at Chelker Reservoir on 26th with a similar bird at Fewston Reservoir on 31st. There were singles at Knotford Nook from 3rd-5th November and at Leeshaw Reservoir from 11th to 25th. The last reported was at Knotford Nook on 21st November.

1991 – A female type was at Fly Flatts Reservoir on 27th October.

1993 – A pair spent the day at Leeshaw Reservoir on 17th April, this was the Group's first spring record. On 9th November a single was present at Thornton Moor Reservoir at sunrise.

1994 – A very good year. The first was an adult male at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 13th and 14th February. In May there were two records, a female at Elland Gravel Pits on 8th and two females on Upper Barden Reservoir on 29th. Embsay Reservoir held eight birds (six males, two females) on 25th June, while a record 19 were at Elland Gravel Pits in July.

1995 – Two first-summer males visited Otley Gravel Pits on 25th June with a single male here on 30th July. The third record related to a single male, found at Swinsty Reservoir on 2nd September.

An adult male at Kex Gill Quarry Ponds on 1st and 2nd October was followed by another male at Fly Flatts Reservoir a week later. Silsden Reservoir produced single females on 5th and 12th November and a separate sighting of a male on the latter date. A party of nine, females/immatures, turned up at March Ghyll Reservoir on 25th November with two remaining to the following day and on the same date a female/immature commenced a two-day stay at Leeshaw Reservoir.

1996 – Only two records this year; the first was of a female at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 19th September, the second was of a juvenile/female at Thruscross Reservoir on 2nd November.

1997 – Three records were received this year: the first, of a male bird at Swinsty Reservoir on 13th January, was followed by a male and two females at Otley Gravel Pits between 21st and 24th May. The year's final record was of a male bird on the water at Fly Flatts Reservoir on 26th July which only stayed a short while before heading south.

1998 – As with the previous species, just two sites provided any sightings during 1998; the first was of a female bird seen at Swinsty Reservoir on 2nd July. At Otley Gravel Pits, two juvenile birds were seen on 19th November. It is possible that one of these birds was the single juvenile bird reported from here between 21st and 23rd November.

1999 – Three records were received; the first was of a female bird that flew all round Fewston Reservoir on 26th February but was not seen to land. The second record of a male bird at Thruscross Reservoir on 13th March, and the third was of a female/immature-type bird at Otley Gravel Pits on 9th August.

2000 – April is a typical passage month for this species, and two were on Swinsty Reservoir on 6th, then one was on Leeshaw Reservoir on 11th. Birds are also seen fairly regularly in July, but no-one could have predicted the amazing total of 62 which, on 23rd, dropped out of the lowering clouds onto Thornton Moor Reservoir. This is comfortably the highest flock ever recorded in the Groups' area, and is nearly twice as many birds as the running total since 1987. Though all these birds were gone the next day, a pair was present at the site on 25th. Finally, a female/first-winter bird was at Otley Gravel Pits from 20th to 25th September.

2001 – Whilst not rivalling the number of birds seen in 2000, seven records for the year is a better than average showing, and 27 birds were seen in all.

In July, a regular passage month, six birds were at Chelker Reservoir on 1st and 2nd, and three at Otley Gravel Pits on 3rd. An adult male found at Kex Gill Quarry on 10th proved to be an unusually long stayer, and was last seen on 20th. A bird at Leeshaw Reservoir on 11th August was more true to form, staying only an hour, and there were two birds at Otley Gravel Pits on 25th. On 22nd September a bird was on Thornton Moor Reservoir, and finally, a flock of 13 female/immatures were on Swinsty Reservoir on 13th November.

2002 – This was a better than average year, with five records producing 23 birds, none of which stayed longer than a day.

Chelker Reservoir had a single on 12th May, and there were two records in July, a regular passage month, with five birds at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 7th, and 15 at Leeshaw Reservoir three weeks later. Thornton Moor had another bird on 7th August and there was one on Swinsty Reservoir on 14th October.

2003 - There were only three sightings of Common Scoter this year. The first was a female at Leeshaw Reservoir on 25th May (BS, SJ, MD). The highest count was the 6 males found at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 19th June (KM). 2 males and a female/immature were the last sighting of the year, spotted on Lindley Wood Reservoir on 9th August (MD, SJ).

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2004 - A poor year for this species within the recording area, with only two sightings. A first-summer male spent some time at Swinsty Reservoir on 25th May (AGG), and another male was at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 11th July.

2005 - A year well below average saw no spring records, and only three in the autumn passage period.

Thornton Moor Reservoir had a single bird on 23rd July (DCB, SJ), and five on 10th October (DCB), but an excellent count of at least 35 birds flying past the Barden Scale watch-point on 1st August represented the second highest number recorded for the Group.

2006 - A reasonable showing, with a total of 12 birds seen on seven dates, and at four sites.

Otley Wetland had a female on 28th and 29th June, (AGG, KM), and there was a pair at Thornton Moor Reservoir on 3rd July (BV, RHP, KM), and a drake at Warley Moor Reservoir three weeks later (HBC).

The three autumn reports concerned six birds at Thornton Moor on 5th September (RHP), one there on 9th October (RHP, SR, BV), and a male on Thruscross Reservoir, at the Group's other extremity, the day before.

2007 - In a reasonable showing, 11 different birds were seen, though consisting mainly of one party.

April often turns up passage birds, and a female was at Leeshaw Reservoir from the 3rd to the 6th (KM, RHP, BV, *et al*), and another at Knotford Nook on the 5th (KM, RHP). Another single was found on Lower Barden Reservoir on 16th July (FJ), and 6th August produced eight birds, one at Reva Reservoir (KM), and the others, including three drakes, at Thornton Moor Reservoir.

2008 - Almost all of this year's records were of single birds. In March, these appeared on Silsden Reservoir on the 28th (DO), and Chelker on the 31st (JLT), and there were two records on 28th June: at Leeshaw (BV, RHP) and Thornton Moor Reservoirs (DCB). On 4th July a bird overflew Oxenhope (RHP), one was on Lower Laithe Reservoir on 31st October (KM), and two at Cononley Ings on 12th September.