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29 October 2002

Mrs H Fenten
The Shaws
Selside
Settle BD24 OHZ

*2002 breeding bird
Survey, Selside*

Dear Hilary

Rather belatedly, for which our apologies, we have now completed our report on the breeding bird survey of Selside Moss and the Carrs this summer which Helen Sergeant, Clerk to Horton in Ribblesdale Parish Council, asked us to carry out. A copy is enclosed.

Thank you for helping us to arrange access for the survey. We have also written to thank, and send a copy to, the three principal graziers whose land we crossed (Mr Mason, Mr & Mrs Sedgwick and Mr White). As well as to Helen a copy has also gone to Tim Thom at YDNPA who was present at the meeting where we originally discussed the project. John further intends to show it to other appropriate parties within English Nature.

In terms of taking forward any proposal to restrict breeding season access to all or part of the site after CROW, we have stressed in the covering letters to Helen and to Tim that views expressed in the report are those of the observers as individuals. They do not in any way commit either English Nature, other members of which organisation may be part of the adjudication exercise, or Craven Conservation Group. If the Parish Council wishes to proceed once the maps have been published, presumably YDNPA will be able to tell them how to do so.

Yours sincerely

Gerald

f.p. John Osborne & Gerald Light

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY OF SELSIDE MOSS AND THE CARRS, 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

The survey was commissioned by Helen Sergeant, Clerk to Horton in Ribblesdale Parish Council, to gather data on the breeding birds of the registered common land known locally as Selside Moss and The Carrs before the publication of draft access maps for the area under the CROW Act 2000. The land lies near to, and partly adjacent to, the left bank of the upper River Ribble north of Selside (see map at Annex 1). The southern and northern limits respectively are at grid references SD789763 and 795793.

The survey was carried out by John Osborne, of English Nature, and Gerald Light, of Craven Conservation Group, using methodology recommended by Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority for enclosed grassland wader populations (O'Brien 1993 & 1994). The opportunity was also taken to map other breeding species within the survey area.

2. METHOD USED

To walk the whole area to within 100 metres of every part of all four fields would not be feasible for one person to complete within the recommended five hours. The task was therefore divided, with John Osborne surveying the two northern fields (shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map as Carrs and Carrs Gill Rigg) and Gerald Light the southern two (Nether Lodge Rigg and Selside Moss). For the first two of the three visits made both sections were surveyed on the same day; other commitments prevented this for the final visit.

The days were chosen to avoid strong winds, poor visibility or rain, albeit there were two sharp showers on the second visit, during which both observers temporarily halted. The first two visits were made on 24 April, starting at 06.08, and 21 May, starting at 05.30; the third on 1 June (Selside Moss), starting at 05.35, and 28 June (The Carrs), starting at 06.00.

The pre-planned transect lines, 200 metres apart, were followed as closely as the terrain allowed, the main variations being two short stretches on Selside Moss where diversions of up to 50 metres were required on the latter two visits to avoid the observer being caught in the bog. Visibility in these instances was not adversely affected.

3. HABITAT

The whole area is part of the Upper Ribble Valley drumlin field with wetter flushes between the areas of higher ground and, at the southern end, alongside the river.

Over half of the field shown on the map as Selside Moss is sheep grazed improved pasture on the drumlins, with an average vegetation height between 5-15cm. However nearly 40% of the field is wet ground, generally with sphagnum moss not exceeding 5cm but with small areas of rushes exceeding 15cm mostly close to the river.

Nether Lodge Rigg is nearly all tussock grassland with an average vegetation height exceeding 15cm. A narrow strip down the western edge, which adjoins the river at its southern end, is rushier but still tall.

The northern two fields are less contrasting. Carrs is 80% improved grassland with an average vegetation height below 5cm. The remainder is some 10% wet

ground with sphagnum and approximately 10% tall rushes. The larger Carrs Gill Rigg is 85% improved grassland, with an average vegetation height of 5-15cm, approximately 10% wet/flushed ground and 5% tall rushes.

4. BREEDING GRASSLAND WADER LEVELS

Annex 2 lists grassland waders seen and heard by field, and uses the YDNPA methodology to convert that data to breeding pairs. In some cases the observers feel the conversion needs amendment, and the annex shows where and why. The net result is a calculated total population for the four fields as follows:

Curlew	18 pairs
Snipe	8 pairs
Lapwing	6 pairs
Redshank	6 pairs
Oystercatcher	3 pairs

Within this total Nether Lodge Rigg was the least productive, with 2 pairs of Curlew. Selside Moss by contrast held 6 pairs of Curlew, 4 of Redshank, 3 of Snipe, 3 of Oystercatcher and 2 of Lapwing. The large Carrs Gill Rigg field held 15 pairs in total, eight of them Curlew. The distribution of all these breeding waders is shown at Annex 1.

5. OTHER BIRD POPULATIONS

Other species obviously or presumed breeding within the four fields were Mallard, Teal, Common Sandpiper (a riparian wader species), Skylark, Meadow Pipit and Reed Bunting. All except the numerous Meadow Pipit are mapped at Annex 3.

Further birds using the surveyed area for feeding or resting included Heron, Goosander, Black Grouse, Black-headed Gull, Swallow and Sand Martin.

6. COMMENTS

Selside Moss in particular is a rich area for breeding waders. Along the western margin alone, on the banks of the River Ribble, twelve pairs, of six different species, breed and that riparian area also holds Goosander, Teal and Reed Bunting. Given that river banks are popular recreational attractions, the designation of the Moss as open access land must put these breeding birds, and those on the sloping ground to either side of the river, at risk of increased disturbance. As five of the breeding wader species are included in the YDNP biodiversity action plan, there would seem to the observers to be an obvious case for restricting access to the area between April and July.

The other three fields surveyed are not so rich in breeding waders, albeit Carrs and Carrs Gill Rigg together hold 10 pairs of Curlew. However they constitute the last known area in Ribblesdale for Black Grouse, which is if anything YDNP's priority action species. While any chance remains of revitalising this endangered population there must also be an argument for restricting access here to the current rights of way throughout the breeding season.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The observers express their thanks to the landowners and graziers concerned

for allowing them free access (particularly Mr G Mason, Mr & Mrs T A Sedgwick and Mr M White), and to Mrs H Fenten for initially setting up the arrangements.

John Osborne

Gerald Light

John Osborne and Gerald Light
25 October 2002

Enclosures:

- Annex 1 Map of surveyed area showing location of breeding grassland waders
- 2 Summary of breeding grassland waders
- 3 Map of other breeding species in surveyed area

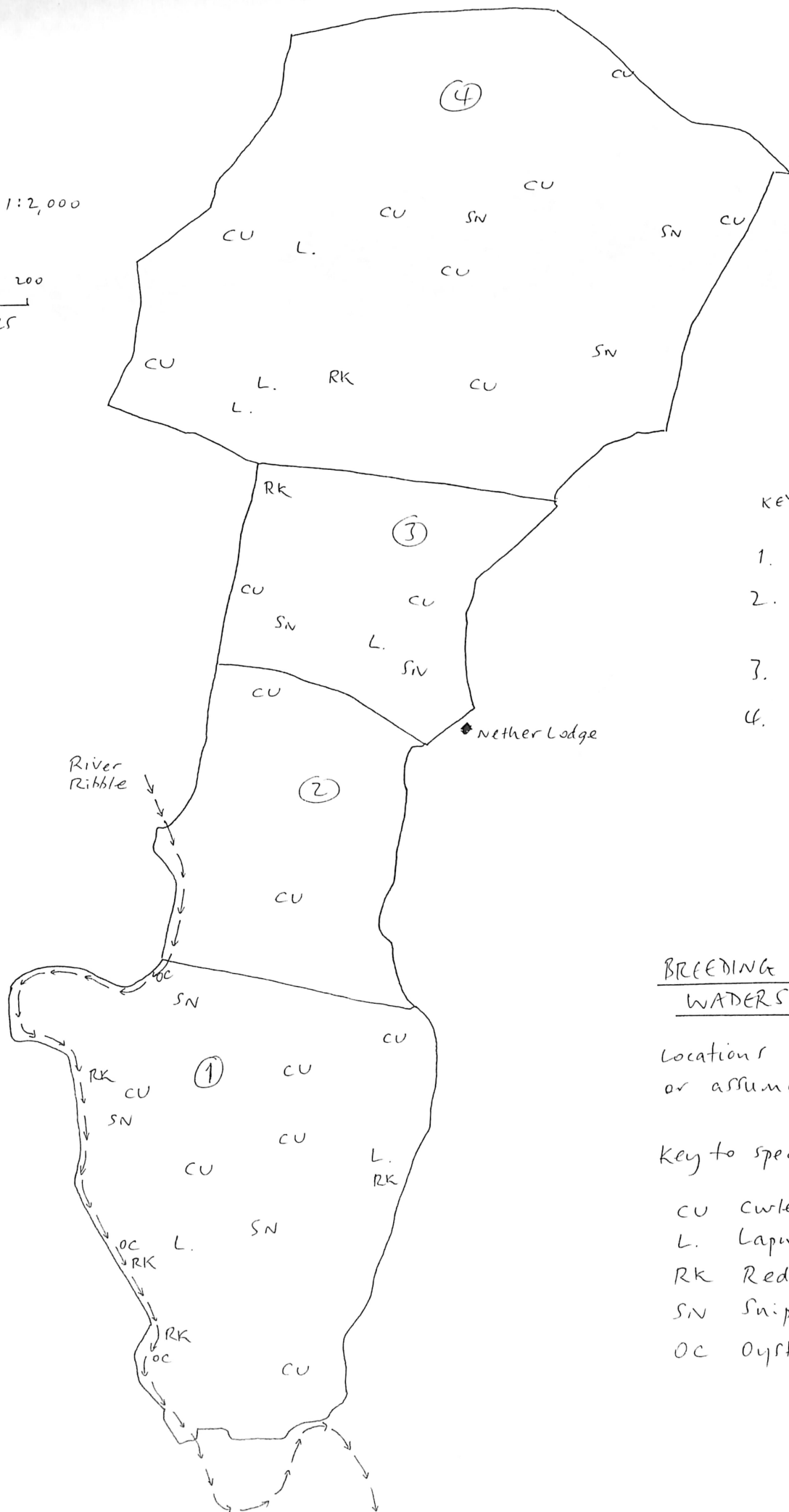
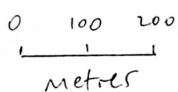
Copies to:

Mrs H Sergeant
Mr G Mason
Mr & Mrs T A Sedgwick
Mr M White
Mrs H Fenten
Mr T Thom (Ecologist, YDNPA)



SCALE

Approx. 1:2,000



KEY TO FIELD NAMES

1. Selside Moss
2. Nether Lodge Rigg
3. Carrs
4. Carrs Gill Rigg

BREEDING GRASSLAND WADERS

Locations of pairs or assumed pairs

Key to species codes:

- CU Curlew
- L. Lapwing
- RK Redshank
- SN Snipe
- OC Oystercatcher

ANNEX 2

SUMMARY OF BREEDING GRASSLAND WADERS - CALCULATION USING YDNP RECOMMENDED METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION

1. SELSIDE MOSS

	First visit	Second visit	Third visit	Calculated no. of pairs using YDNPA method
Curlew				
pairs	4	2	4)
other displaying males	1	1	1	) 7 pairs,
other single birds	2	3	1	) corrected to 6

Comment: On the undulating ground of this field there is a good chance that at least one of the single birds was part of an already counted pair. The observer would be sure of 5 pairs, possibly 6, but feels 7 is definitely too high.

Snipe				
drumming	0	1	0)
calling	1	2	2	) 3 pairs
other flushed	0	0	2)

Oystercatcher				
pairs	0	0	2)
other displaying males	0	0	0	) 3 pairs
other single birds	4	2	1)

Comment: the single bird on visit 3, and one on visits 1 and 2, were on the river bank just inside this field with a second bird just inside the next field (Nether Lodge Rigg) on visits 2 and 3. These two birds are deemed to be a pair, allocated to Selside Moss on a majority sighting basis in the absence of a definitely known nest site.

Lapwing				
pairs	2	2	2	) 2 pairs
single birds	0	0	2)

Comment: the 2 single birds on visit 3 were presumably the two observed in an unsurveyed field across the river on previous visits.

Redshank				
pairs	2	3	1	) 6 pairs,
single birds	0	2	1	) corrected to 4

Comment: the computation treats all birds seen as singles when averaging the first two visit numbers to estimate pairs. As most birds seen were in pairs, the observer prefers to average those as pairs and then add the average single birds.

2. NETHER LODGE RIGG

Curlew				
pairs	0	2	1)
other displaying males	0	0	0	) 2 pairs
other single birds	0	0	0)

cont.d overleaf

	First visit	Second visit	Third visit	Calculated no. of pairs using YDNPA method
Oystercatcher				
pairs	0	0	0)
other displaying males	0	0	0	) 0 pairs
other single birds	0	1	1	) (see comment)

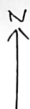
Comment: the single bird on both visits was that referred to in the comment on this species under Selside Moss, and is deemed to be part of a pair included there.

3. CARRS

Curlew				
pairs	0	1	1)
other displaying males	0	1	1	) 2 pairs
other single birds	1	0	0)
Snipe				
drumming	2	0	0)
calling	0	0	0	) 2 pairs
other flushed	0	0	0)
Lapwing				
pairs	0	0	0	) 1 pair
single birds	1	2	0)
Redshank				
pairs	0	1	0	) 1 pair
single birds	1	0	0)

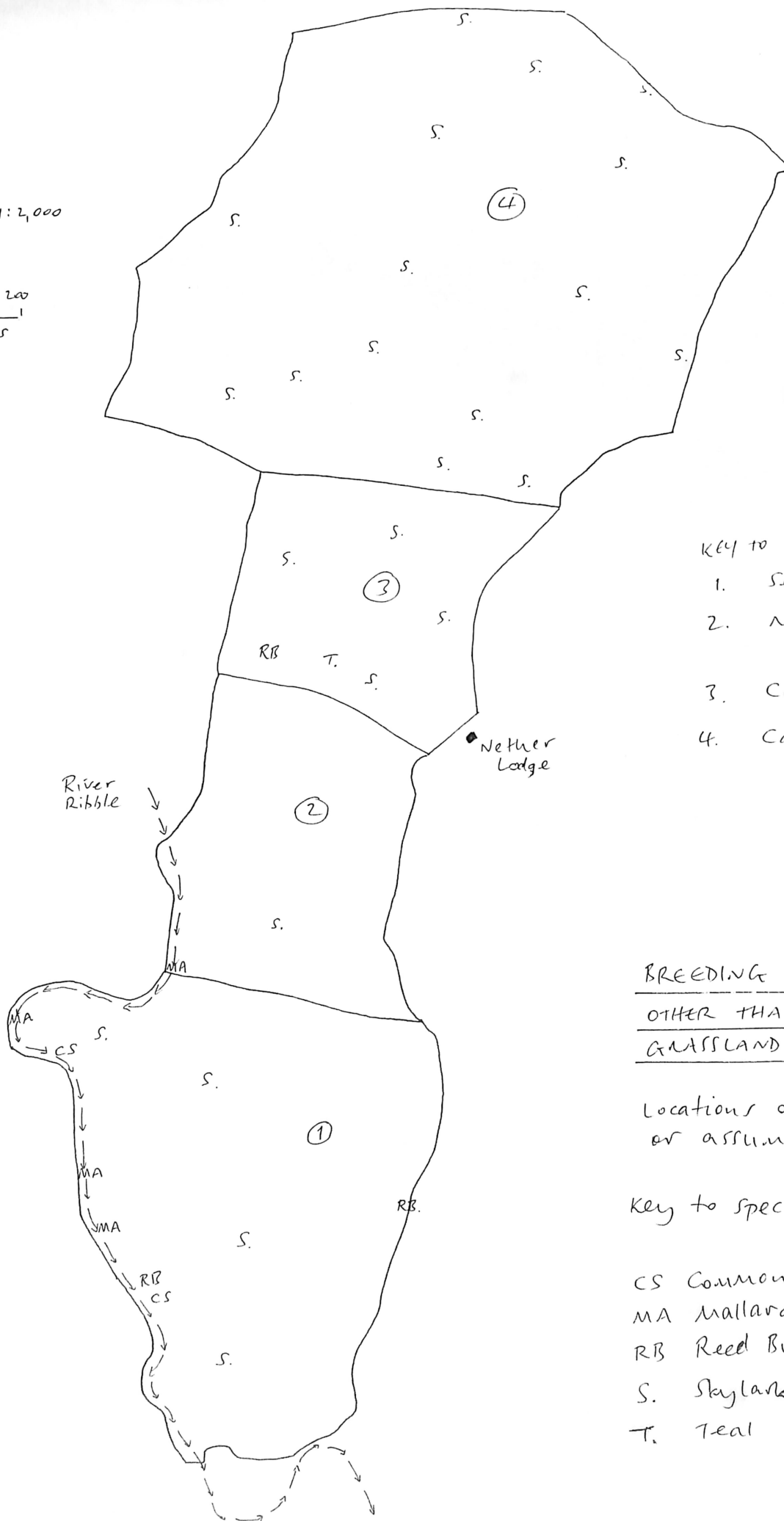
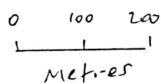
4. CARRS GILL RIGG

Curlew				
pairs	1	2	1)
other displaying males	3	2	6	) 8 pairs
other single birds	2	2	1)
Snipe				
drumming	2	1	0)
calling	1	1	1	) 3 pairs
other flushed	0	1	0)
Lapwing				
pairs	3	2	0	) 3 pairs
single birds	0	0	0)
Redshank				
pairs	0	1	0	) 1 pair
single birds	1	0	0)



SCALE

Approx. 1:2,000



- KEY TO FIELD NAMES
1. Selride Moss
 2. Nether Lodge Rigg
 3. Carrs
 4. Carrs Gill Rigg

BREEDING SPECIES
OTHER THAN
GRASSLAND WADERS

Locations of pairs
or assumed pairs

Key to species codes:

- CS Common Sandpiper
- MA Mallard
- RB Reed Bunting
- S. Skylark
- T. Teal