

DECEMBER 2006 BIRD NOTES

December Highlights: 3 Great Northern Divers, Black-necked Grebe, Green-winged Teal, Hen Harrier, Ring-billed Gull and Glaucous Gull.

Another excellent month for species and many birders travelled in to see the more sought after species. Last month's 2 Great Northern Divers increased to 3 from the 3rd to the 19th at least. One unclaimed report of an adult was made on 3rd but all other records refer to juveniles, including 3 seen together on several occasions and one of the juveniles is dark. Without further clarification, therefore, the records will show 3 juveniles 3rd to 19th. These Divers were heard calling at dusk on 12th and dawn on 19th. A Black-necked Grebe was found at Sheepwash on the 1st and remained there or at Paul Stanley Hide all month. Two Whooper Swans were seen flying northwest on 1st and 7 landed near Stones Island on 19th.

Remember the days of mist over Britain [17th – 22nd]? Carsington stood above it most of the time, bathed in sunshine and, probably due to it being the only water visible to overflying wildfowl, it attracted several species. Apart from the 7 Whoopers on the 19th, that day also included 9 Shelduck, 5 Pintail, 8 Shoveler and 12 Goldeneye. Out of this list only a few goldeneye were present on 17th and 22nd.

A Dark Bellied Brent Goose was reported near the dam wall on 22nd, a day when other Brents were reported in Notts and Staffs. The find of the month came on the 10th: a Drake Green-winged Teal. This is the second record for Carsington and thirteenth for Derbyshire. The previous Carsington record was seen by one observer and could not be relocated the following day, which is what happened again. Thankfully it was refound on 13th and stayed until 21st. A female Red-breasted Merganser was present on 1-2nd, 15 Goosanders were near the dam wall on 1st and a count of 2136 Coot on 17th proved to be a new site record.

Raptors also featured, with a male Hen Harrier being recorded twice around the main centre area on 22nd and Peregrine on 17th, 24th and 30th. Waders included an Oystercatcher at the Wildlife Centre on 31st, 15 Golden Plover flew low over Stones Island on 16th, 2 Woodcock were seen at separate locations on 2nd and last month's Black-tailed Godwit stayed on at the Wildlife Centre until 7th.

The Gull roost continued to attract a varied cast, including last month's adult Ring-billed Gull until the 20th, a first winter Mediterranean Gull on 29th, 5500 Black-headed Gulls on 17th, 4 Yellow-legged Gulls on 2nd and an adult Caspian Gull on 5th, 10th and 20th. A first winter Glaucous Gull was seen on Flat Island before flying off west at 1455hrs on 17th and an adult Kittiwake flew past Paul Stanley Hide on 15th.

The 4 Blackcaps seen near Sheepwash car park last month were there again on 2nd and a male was at the Wildlife Centre on 26th. At least 2000 Starlings flew north across the site at dawn on 19th and, together with other sightings, suggest there is a large roost somewhere south of Carsington Water. 2 Bramblings were

at Paul Stanley Hide on 31 st and the escapee Black Swan was at various locations from 1st -11th and off Stones Island on 31st .

98 Species were recorded, which is the greatest ever for a December and compares with 88 in 2005, 95 in 2004, 97 in 2003, 89 in 2002 and 86 in 2001. It should also be noted that this site held two American species at the same time, Green-winged Teal and Ring-billed Gull.

NOVEMBER 2006 BIRD NOTES

November Highlights: Great Northern Diver doubles, Whoopers here again, solitary Brent Goose, Red-breasted Merganser, Black-tailed Godwit, Turnstone, Mediterranean Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Kittiwake and Hawfinch and two Black Swans.

November proved to be an excellent month for the range of site rare species. A juvenile Great Northern Diver appeared on the 28 th near the dam wall and then there were two on the 30 th . Little Grebe numbers are building, with 70 on 21 st and 67 Great Crested Grebes on 6 th and 21 st . Two Whooper Swans were present on 2 nd and 9 th and two escapee Black Swans were at Millfields on 18 th and one stayed for the rest of the month, showing up at most locations around the site. A lone Brent Goose was seen to fly off south at 0900hrs on 27 th and one was reported later that morning near Bolsover at Carr Vale. A Shelduck was on Stones Island on 3 rd and another on Flat Island on 16 th . Gadwall reached a height of 91 on 6 th , with 85 still present on 21 st . Other Wildfowl included single Pintails on 3 rd , 8 th and 30 th , 2 Shoveler on 5 th , 4 Red-crested Pochard on 12 th , 10 Goldeneye on 2 nd , 10 Goosander at Millfields on 26 th and a female Red-breasted Merganser moving between Lane End and Paul Stanley Hides on 26 th .

Raptor sightings included an immature Sparrowhawk, which occasionally landed on the fence post alongside Paul Stanley Hide giving good photo opportunities. Four Buzzards over Hall Wood on 9 th , a Peregrine on 5 th , 13 th , 21 st and mobbed by 2 Raven on 18 th , and a frustratingly possible sighting of a male Hen Harrier was reported on the website for the 5 th , any other sightings of this bird in the area would be appreciated.

Waders included 408 Lapwing on 26 th , 4 Dunlin on 29 th , 27 Snipe at Paul Stanley Hide on 8 th , 21 Snipe at the Wildlife Centre on 15 th , a Black-tailed Godwit arrived at the Wildlife Centre on 15 th and was still there on 30 th , several Redshank at various locations, with a maximum count of 5 on 23 rd and a Turnstone was reported on Sheepwash Spit on 9 th .

A good month for Gulls, with the roost numbering 5000 Lesser Black-backed and 4000 Black-headed Gulls on the 26 th . A selection of rarer gulls includes an adult Mediterranean Gull on 12 th and 26 th , an adult Ring-billed Gull on 4 th , 10 th , 16 th , 17 th 26 th and 28 th , 5 Yellow-legged Gulls on 11 th , an adult Caspian Gull on 14 th and a juvenile Kittiwake, which spent an hour on Sheepwash Spit on 13 th .

A site record of 10 Collared Doves were around the Wildlife Centre feeders on 23rd, a Barn Owl was seen on 23rd, 1 Little Owl on 6th and other dates, a Stonechat was near Paul Stanley Hide on 4th and another in Wildlife Centre Creek on 6th, 4 late or wintering Blackcaps were at the west end of Sheepwash Car Park on 25th, a Chiffchaff on Stones Island on 1st and another at Hopton End on 16th, a male Brambling was on Stones Island feeders on 12th and a Hawfinch was noted as a fly-over between Sheepwash and Lane End on 25th.

97 Species were recorded, which matches the November site record of 97 in 2005, with 95 in 2004, 92 in 2003, 95 in 2002, 84 in 2001 and 70 in 2000.

OCTOBER 2006 BIRD NOTES

October Highlights: **Whooper Swan, Pink-footed Goose, Garganey, Common Scoter, Knot, Kittiwake and Rock Pipit pass on through, Redwing and Fieldfare arrive.**

A Whooper Swan was near Stones Island early on 23rd until chased off by the local territorial cob Mute Swan. Later in the day the Whooper flew low over the Wildlife Centre. Two Pink-footed Geese were flying with Canada Geese on 5th, skeins had been seen travelling southeast through Derbyshire during previous days. A flock of 150 Pinkfeet flew low northwards over Paul Stanley hide near to dusk on 10th and were probably disorientated in the misty conditions. Shelduck were recorded at several locations from 13th to 16th but never more than 1 until the 19th when 8 were present. An immature or female Garganey was seen from Paul Stanley hide during the morning of 21st, then refound at Millfields, where it stayed to the end of the month. Three drake Common Scoters were off Stones Island on 12th and the first wintering Goldeneye appeared on 15th and 2 on 31st. Counts of wintering wildfowl included 41 Little Grebe on 8th, 47 Great Crested Grebe on 8th, 51 Cormorant on 3rd, 7 Herons on 4th, 21 Mute Swan on 8th, 603 Wigeon on 8th, 70 Gadwall on 30th, 7 Pintail on 15th, 2 Red-crested Pochard all month, 108 Pochard on 8th, 312 Tufted Duck on 8th, 89 Moorhen on 8th and 1334 Coot on 8th.

Apart from the local Sparrowhawk, Buzzard and Kestrels, raptor activity included a Peregrine on 22nd and 26th and a male Merlin flew fast and low in front of Sheepwash hide on 31st. Waders included a Ringed Plover at Paul Stanley hide from 7th to 18th, a Golden Plover on 30th, 206 Lapwing on 8th, a Knot at the Wildlife Centre on 10th, Snipe maximum of 22 on 9th and a Common Sandpiper at Sheepwash on 12th. Gull records included 2 Yellow-legged Gulls on 19th and 21st, a second winter Caspian Gull in the roost on 29th, an adult Kittiwake briefly in front of Paul Stanley hide on 30th and a juvenile Common Tern flew past Sheepwash on 1st.

Turning away from the water orientated birds to the less frequently recorded birds at this site, those of farmland, scrub and woodland. A Stock Dove flew over the Wildlife Centre Creek on 26th, this species breeds in local quarries and must regularly fly over without being noted. Five Collared Doves were at the Ranger Base on 26th, setting a new site record for this species. A Green Woodpecker was near Paul Stanley Hide on 14th, only the second record of this species this year. A Skylark on 18th and 2 on 23rd flew over calling, this should also be a regular audible sighting during November. The last Swallow record was 4 on 8th, but no

House Martins were noted this month which is surprising when they were still attending young at the Visitor Centre on 29th Sept. Any later records would be appreciated. Pied Wagtails roost together in good numbers this time of year and 124 came out of roost and along the dam wall in the early morning of 1st [197 on 6th Sept]. Four Stonechats were noted this month, which is as good a number as in any previous month, 2 in the Wildlife Centre Creek on 1st, 1 in Tail Bay on 14th and 1 in front of Paul Stanley Hide on 28th. A Wheatear was noted on 8th and a Chiffchaff was calling on Stones Island on 29th, will it be the last this year?

Other significant sightings included a Rock Pipit on the dam wall on 19th, the first of the autumn Redwing, 1 on the 8th and 400 noted passing through during a 4 hour period on 26th, 8 Fieldfare on 28th, 2 Siskin on 4th, 3 lesser Redpoll on 8th and 2 now site rare Yellowhammers on 8th.

100 Species recorded compared with 99 in Oct 2005, 91 in 2004, 94 in 2003, 103 in 2002 and 91 in 2001

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SEPTEMBER 2006 BIRD NOTES

September Highlights: **Garganey; Osprey, Hobby and Peregrine; Curlew Sandpiper; Mediterranean, Little and Caspian Gulls; Black Tern and Rock Pipit.**

Wintering wildfowl, coot and grebe numbers are building up and include, 55 Little Grebe on 19th, 39 Great crested Grebe 11th, 41 Cormorant 11th, 5 Heron 25th, 26 Mute Swan 12th, 20 Greylag Geese 26th, 40 Barnacle 27th, 546 Canada's 19th, 3 escapee Cackling Geese 29th, 484 Wigeon 19th, 37 Gadwall 19th, 5 Pintail 14th, an elusive female or juvenile Garganey from the Wildlife Centre 24th to 28th, 1 Shoveler 18th, 2 Red-crested Pochard 16th, 90 Pochard 19th, 460 Tufted Duck 19th, 50 Moorhen 19th and 1694 Coot on 19th.

Raptors included 4 Common Buzzard on 7th and on many other dates. An Osprey pleased one observer as it circled Millfields but, mobbed by corvids, it flew on southwards. A Hobby sped low past the Wildlife Centre on 30th, a Peregrine was seen from the Wildlife Centre on 3rd, a juvenile female Peregrine gave a spectacular flying display to an observer in Sheepwash Hide on 20th and another Peregrine was seen to cross the site from Millfields to Middleton Top on 27th.

The wader passage this year has been exceptionally poor and reports from nearby sites are similar. Records include a Curlew Sandpiper on 11th and 12th which spent most of its stay out of sight on the end of Sheepwash spit, 3 Dunlin on 10th, 26 Snipe on 29th, 1 Back-tailed Godwit at the Wildlife Centre on 10th and 2 others at Paul Stanley Hide on 14th.

The Gull roost is now well established with 3000 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 12th increasing to 6000 by 25th, a first winter Mediterranean Gull joined them on 25th and 30th, with 17 adult and sub-adult Yellow-legged Gulls on 19th and a first winter Caspian Gull on 28th. Two juvenile Little Gulls were seen from fisheries bank on 8th, 4 Common Terns on 1st, which was the last record of the breeding family, two juvenile Arctic terns were on buoys near Millfields on 13th and a Black Tern was reported on Pager on 27th.

A late Swift was seen from the Wildlife Centre on 3rd, 2 Kingfishers on 11th and singles on many other dates at various locations, a fly-over Skylark on 21st and another on 25th, many records of Meadow Pipits on the dam wall with a maximum of 25 on 12th and, a Rock Pipit and 3 Wheatears there on 30th. The autumn passage of Yellow Wagtail started with 1 on Horseshoe Island on 3rd and then 5 in front of the Sailing Club on 12th. A massive 197 Pied Wagtails were on the dam wall early morning on 6th, these birds were moving on from their roost at Millfields. The last or latest records of migrants included a Redstart on 6th, 2 Lesser Whitethroats on 8th and a Whitethroat and a Garden Warbler on 25th, all in the Wildlife Centre Creek. Chiffchaff were still present at the end of the month with 20 noted on 11th and 4 Blackcaps and 3 Spotted Flycatchers also on 11th.

Willow Tits seem to have bred well this year with a probable family party of 8 noted in Tail Bay on 9th and many reports from other regular Willow Tit locations. Four Raven were seen from Sheepwash on 3rd, 70 Starlings were on the dam wall on 21st together with 30 Goldfinch, 5 Siskin moved into Millfields on 25th and 4 Lesser Redpoll were noted over Sheepwash on 25th.

102 Species recorded compared with 101 in Sep 2005, 94 in 2004, 104 in 2003 and 118 in 2002. Allowing for the lack of wader species, 102 is a good level of species for September.

AUGUST 2006 BIRD NOTES

August Highlights: **Ruddy Shelduck, Shelduck, and Red-crested Pochard; Marsh Harrier, Hobby and Peregrine; Black-tailed Godwit and Greenshank; Wheatear, Reed Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher.**

Coming out of breeding season, Grebes are now more obvious, with 46 Little Grebes on 16th, 51 on 21st and 46 Great Crested on 21st. Cormorants totalled 31 on 16th, Herons 3 on the same day, Mute Swans 31 on 15th, including their broods of 4, 2 and 1, Greylag Geese 8 on 2nd, Barnacle Geese 18 on 28th and Coot 808 on 16th.

Wintering ducks are trickling back to boost the resident population and include, 8 Shelduck off Lane End on 3rd, a Ruddy Shelduck all month, 9 Wigeon on 25th, 13 Gadwall on 21st, 36 Teal on 18th, 157 Mallard on 16th, 5 Shoveler on 23rd, 2 Red-crested Pochard on 25th, 7 Pochard on 8th, 382 Tufted on 16th, including 8 broods this year, and a female Goosander at the north end on 1st. The Ruddy Shelduck was found on Millfields Island on 1st and stayed all month at various locations around the site. Probably the same bird had been seen at Ogston and Wyver Lane just days earlier before arriving at Carsington. It is the first record for Carsington but this species is considered as feral/escapee. Briefly the evidence for this species is; it breeds in east Europe, a feral flock breed in west Europe, modern British records have not been accepted as wild by rarities committees, they are kept on ornamental ponds including JCB at Rocester. This bird arrived at the same time as other birds arrived at sites in Britain, which is similar to previous years and is coincident with post breeding dispersal/migration, and some British birders list this species. Apart from all that, this bird is worth viewing.

Raptors featured well this month with a juvenile Marsh Harrier being mobbed by the breeding Common Terns over the Wildlife Centre on 5th, Sparrowhawk young calling from a known usual breeding site, 4 Common Buzzards in the air on 14th and other dates, a Kestrel reported with a Moorhen in its talons on a fence post to the side of Paul Stanley hide [not known if a young Moorhen or a big kill for a Kestrel], 2 Hobby towards Hall Wood on both 11th and 12th and Peregrine reported on 4th and 5th and a juvenile on 15th and 28th.

Waders included 2 Oystercatchers at Paul Stanley Hide on 15th, 1 Little Ringed Plover on 3rd to 7th, 92 Lapwing on 16th, 3 Dunlin on 4th and 2 on 12th, 3 Snipe on 13th at the Wildlife Centre, 3 Black-tailed Godwit flying southeast on 1st, 2 Curlew on 3rd and 22nd, 3 Redshank on 4th, 2 Greenshank for 5 minutes at Sheepwash on 22nd and Common Sandpiper present most of the month, with 2 on 16th.

The gull roost has started to gather, with 470 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 25th and 2 Yellow-legged gulls on 4th. The pair of Common Terns breeding on the raft at the Wildlife Centre saw their two young take their first flight on 6th, 7 Common Terns were there on 14th and an immature Arctic tern was flying through south on 23rd.

Warblers included a Reed Warbler in Tail Bay on 5th and a Lesser Whitethroat in Shiningford Creek on 7th and 24th. A family of 4 Little Owls were on view from the Wildlife Centre on 12th and on many other dates, 2 Kingfisher were seen together on 9th and were recorded most days at various locations, 2 Redstarts were in the Wildlife Centre Creek on 5th and 10th, a Wheatear was on the dam wall early on 30th together with 57 Pied Wagtails, 4 Spotted Flycatchers were behind Sheepwash hide on 18th and remained several days, a flock of 30 Jackdaws were over Hall Wood on 10th, 2 Raven noted on 3rd and 15th and 110 Tree Sparrows were around the Visitor and Wildlife Centre on 17th.

97 species recorded compared with 105 in Aug 2005, 113 in 2004, 110 in 2003, 122 in 2002 and 86 in 2001

JULY 2006 BIRD NOTES

July Highlights: **Escape Whistling Swan and Bar-headed Goose, Shelduck, Common Scoter, Marsh Harrier, Hobby, Peregrine and Black-tailed Godwits, Common Terns breed and Reed Warblers sing.**

The **Bar-headed Goose** continued its stay, spending most of the month at Millfields, enjoying picnic titbits from the public. This bird first came in with a **Pink-footed Goose** during summer, which suggests that the Bar-head escaped from a collection, and is not direct from its homeland, high in Central Asia. There are feral breeding Bar-heads in England, in locations like the Norfolk Broads, but the likelihood of one travelling in with a Pinkfoot by chance is remote. Three **Cackling Geese** were on site most of the month and these are also considered escapees. This small race of Canada Goose originates from North America and has species status in Britain as Lesser Canada Goose. A **Whistling Swan** was found on the 9th, which is the first Derbyshire record. It had been at Tittesworth Reservoir and was back there on the 10th, then it returned to Carsington on 22nd and stayed until the 28th. Before the 28th this Whistling Swan had suffered an injury to the back of its head and, on the 28th, the male of a pair of **Mute Swans** with young,

aggressively approached the Whistling Swan on several occasions, eventually it took flight away from Carsington. This bird is also considered an escapee from a collection. Their home is North America and the bird is similar to our Bewick's Swan but has a black bill with a pale teardrop. These escapees/feral birds are interesting but knowledge of their origin would be beneficial so please let us know if you have any information on where these individuals may have come from. When the now resident **Barnacle Geese** and occasional Red-crested Pochards first came to Carsington, they were traced to the JCB Pond at Rocester

Other Geese records include 13 **Greylag** on 3rd and over 500 **Canada** on 6th. The **Mute Swans** totalled 25 on 28th, including 3pairs with 4+2+1 cygnets. Duck species include 7 **Shelduck** on 16th, 4 **Gadwall** on 4th, 3 **Teal** on 21st, 2 **Red-crested Pochard** on 14-16th, 12 **Pochard** on 16th, a drake **Common Scoter** on 16th, and 266 **Tufted Duck** on 11th. By the end of the month 7 broods of **Tufted Duck** had appeared, with brood sizes of 10+6+12+1+4+11+3. One further **Little Grebe** family was noted this month, taking the season total to 5 broods, **Great-crested Grebe** increased by 1 to 6 broods, **Moorhen** by 3 to 9 broods and **Coot** by 7 to 28 broods.

Raptors included a female/imm **Marsh Harrier** hunting the bank from Hall Wood and into Fishtail Creek on 17th, a **Hobby** flew towards Sheepwash on 30th and a **Peregrine** was seen from the Wildlife Centre on 9th.

No more Wader broods were noted during the month and, by the end of the month, all the site breeding adults and Juvenile Oystercatchers and Redshank had left Carsington. With water levels still high, Horseshoe Island is still the main area to see waders. Wader records include 13 **Oystercatcher** on 11th, 45 **Lapwing** on 16th, 1 **Dunlin** on 23rd, 2 **Snipe** on 16th, 2 **Curlew** on 4th, 1 **Greenshank** seen and heard flying over on 26th, 1 **Green Sandpiper** on 17th and 5 **Common Sandpiper** on 7th. **Black-tailed Godwits** have been stopping off on their journey south, with 1 on 4th, 2 on 13th, 11 on 17th, 10 in flight on 21st, 1 on 22nd and 1 on 30th.

The pair of **Common Terns** are breeding well on one of the rafts from the Wildlife Centre. On the 2nd they had an egg stolen by a **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, on the 14th 3 chicks were noted, from the 21st another pair of **Common Terns** were trying to get involved at the nest site, the next week saw one chick on a separate raft, one swimming and another on the island, but, by the 30th, there were only 2 chicks, both are being well fed on the raft next to the raft they were hatched on.

House Martin breeding success around the Visitor Centre was obvious on 27th, with 100 birds present, a **Kingfisher** was seen on 4th and 18th and a family party of **Redstart** were in Wildlife Centre Creek on 15th. Three different **Reed Warblers** were noted singing on 9th. Two were in the new reedbed in Hopton Arm and the other in the small reedbed in Brown Ale Bay. There are usually only one or two records of Reed Warbler per year, usually on passage, so these 3 were checked throughout the month for signs of breeding, but none were noted. However, STW Rangers efforts to establish the reedbed is already showing success and, hopefully, Carsington's first breeding Reed Warbler will be on site next year.

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93 Species were recorded this July excluding the obvious escapees, compared with 97 in 2005, 102 in 2004, 95 in 2003, 100 in 2002 and 90 in 2001. The annual variations are mostly to do with wader species passage and high water.

JUNE 2006 BIRD NOTES

June Highlights: Six Species of Geese [!] and Red-crested Pochard, Red Kite and Hobby, Common Terns, Grasshopper Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher.

Six species of geese at Carsington on the 1st of June? True, but one Pink-footed Goose initially travelled with one Bar-headed Goose, probably from a private collection, two Cackling Geese [rising to 5 on 11th] were certainly not fresh in from Canada, which leaves two Greylag Geese [rising to 11 on 13th] plus the breeding feral Barnacle Geese [21 on 22nd] and the abundant resident Canada Geese [320 on 4th]. This collection was soon followed by the first drake Red-crested Pochard of the year on 21st, with 2 on 25th. Interestingly they first arrived in June last year, from where?

On to truly wild and site rarer birds, a drake Common Scoter was off Lane End on 29th, a Red Kite [re-introduced?] flew over the Visitor Centre late afternoon on 11th, five sightings of Hobby on 1st, 8th, 10th and 12th covered all sides of the site, and the only Grasshopper Warbler recorded this year was reeling between Sheepwash and Lane End on 8th.

Two Common Terns took up residence on a breeding raft at the Wildlife Centre from 16th, seen mating on 20th and were sitting for the rest of the month, hopefully not too late in the season. Successful breeding noted on site so far by the end of June includes broods of 4 Little Grebe, 5 Great-crested Grebe, 2 Mute Swan, 8 Moorhen, a substantial 22 Coot and 12 Mallard. Wader broods include an encouraging 6 Lapwing, 2 Oystercatcher [reported last month] and 2 Redshank. Other breeding includes 31 House Martin nests around the Visitor Centre, Watersports and Sailing Club buildings, at least one pair of Redstart in the Wildlife Centre Creek, Sedge Warbler in the improved Hopton Arm reedbed, 3 Spotted Flycatcher territories in Hall Wood on 2nd and 13th and a further 2 pairs feeding young in Tail Bay on 20th, a Willow Tit family near Paul Stanley Hide on 8th, Coal Tit feeding young in Middle Wood on 13th, another Coal Tit family in Hall Wood on 20th and Treecreeper young in Hall Wood on 20th.

A walk round the site by a regular observer on 13th recorded an impressive 46 Wren, 40 Robin, 22 Dunnock, 7 Song Thrush, 47 Blackbird, 51 Chaffinch, 34 Great-crested Grebe, 11 Greylag Geese, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 5 Whitethroat, 22 Blackcap, 19 Chiffchaff, 32 Willow Warbler, 2 Jays and a Little Owl.

88 Species were recorded this June compared with 95 in 2005, 96 in 2004, 84 in 2003, 95 in 2002 and 75 in 2001. Traditionally June is a quiet birding month with local birds busily breeding and feeding young so, generally, birds stay local, but specie numbers can be swollen by passing waders and terns. Sadly, not this year.

MAY 2006 BIRD NOTES

May Highlights: Two Roseate Terns [a new species for the site], Little and Black Terns, Osprey, Merlin and Hobby, Garganey and Red-breasted Merganser, Reed Warbler and Pied Flycatcher.

May started with 20 **Arctic Terns** and the first **Little Tern** since May 2002, off Stones Island during the evening of the 1st. Terns kept coming, with 2 **Common** and 7 **Black** on 4th, a first summer **Kittiwake** on 5th, and then back to Terns, on the 7th, the day count totalled 2 **Roseate**, 4 **Common**, 15 **Arctic** and 1 **Black**. The Roseate Terns were the first in Derbyshire since 1979 and, following their identification by Simon Roddis at 1015hrs, modern communication systems mobilised over 30 birders to see them before they flew off high northeast at 1140hrs. The communication systems had already been well tested over the previous two weeks in Derbyshire with the first twitchable **Alpine Swift** at Ogston Reservoir and the first **Woodchat Shrike** in the county for 37 years at Long Eaton.

A **Pink-footed** and a **Bar-headed Goose** arrived on the 31st from an unknown source, probably a collection, which may also be missing 4 **Cackling Geese** present on 18th and other dates. A drake **Garganey** was viewable from the Wildlife Centre all day on 15th and was the first record since Nov 2003. Other duck included 5 **Shelduck** on 6th, an unseasonal drake **Pintail** 4-6th, a drake **Common Scoter** on 1st and a pair of **Red-breasted Merganser** near the dam wall on 23rd.

Raptor sightings were wide ranging for May, with 7 **Buzzard** species high above the ranger Base on 9th, and **Osprey** circling the water, then into Hall Wood on 16th, a **Merlin** mobbed by a **Kestrel** on 22nd, a **Hobby** reported early pm on 22nd, 2 seen late pm from the Wildlife Centre chasing Hirrundines, another **Hobby** seen the following evening 23rd over Hall Wood and a **Short-eared Owl** being mobbed by **Oystercatcher** and **Jackdaw** on 22nd near the Wildlife Centre.

Wader passage carried on steadily with 3 **Black-tailed Godwits** and 1 **Bar-tailed** left over from the April flock. Single **Ringed Plover** were noted on 7th and 22nd, a few **Dunlin** were around most of the month with a maximum of 11 on 1st. The last spring record of **Whimbrel** was 5 on 9th, a **Curlew** is regularly visiting Horseshoe Island for a preen suggesting it may be breeding in the area, 3 **Common Sandpiper** were reported on 5th and a **Turnstone** was present on several dates from 5th.

The first **Reed Warbler** for two years was found singing on Stones Island on the 8th only, and a singing male **Pied Flycatcher**, which is becoming an annual event, was found on 20th. A female had joined the male by 23rd but this proved to be the last sighting.

Breeding among waterside birds has been showing during the month and, so far, include 8 broods of **Mallard**, 4 of **Moorhen**, 4 of **Coot**, 1 of **Great Crested Grebe**, 2 broods of **Oystercatcher** from 6 pairs and 4 small broods of **Lapwing**.

107 species recorded this May compared with 107 in 2005, 114 in 2004, 110 in 2003 112 in 2002 and 106 in 2001. The lowish figure this year is part due to discounting two subspecies and to fewer passage wader species than usual, otherwise it has been a good bird month.

APRIL 2006 BIRD NOTES

April Highlights: **Little Egret** and **Red Kite** fly through, **Knot**, **Whimbrel** and **Godwits** boost the wader species, another **Bonxie** calls in, **Wagtails** of all colours show on Stones Island and spring migrants are welcomed.

Grebe numbers become difficult to count as they distribute into breeding pairs along the vegetated shoreline and others leave site. **Little Grebe** totalled 24 on 9th, **Great Crested** 32 also on 9th, long staying **Red-necked Grebe** was last reported on the 19th, 29 **Moorhen** on 9th and 140 **Coot** on 9th. Most of the adult **Cormorants** have gone on to their breeding sites and just 19 others were present on 2nd. A **Little Egret** flew in from the south at 1925hrs on 24th and continued through and off northwest. A **Whooper Swan** appeared at the Wildlife Centre on 10th and then gradually moved to Hopton Arm. The feral **Barnacle Geese** flock numbered 48 on 2nd and 2 minima 'cackling' **Canada Geese** were on Stones Island on 24th. These birds are smaller than Barnacle Geese and are considered escapees from a collection. **Shelduck** were passing through, with 4 on 9th, 3 on 15th and 2 on 29th. Other ducks included 21 **Wigeon** on 2nd and 1 male still present on 30th, 3 male **Gadwall** on 18th, 8 **Teal** on 30th, 43 **Mallard** on 9th, 248 **Tufted** on 9th and 182 still present on 30th, 3 **Common Scoter** on 30th, 17 **Goldeneye** on 9th and a pair of **Goosander** on 10th. On 19th a female **Mallard** was escorting 8 **ducklings** in Fishtail Creek. This is an early breeding record for Carsington. Eight **Pheasants** were noted on 5th and a leucistic [pale, lacking pigmentation] bird was around Shiningford on 6th.

Raptors included a wing tagged **Red Kite** over the dam wall at 1400hrs on 12th, a **Sparrow Hawk** with Woodpigeon kill on 9th, 7 **Buzzards** in the air on 23rd, a male **Merlin** south of Fishtail on 13th and a **Peregrine** over the dam wall on 19th and another on 23rd.

Wader sightings included **Oystercatchers** present all month with 12 on 9th, **Little Ringed Plovers** present most of the month with 3 on 21st, a **Golden Plover** flying west on 18th, 4 **Knot** at the Wildlife Centre on 13th and 1 on Stones Island on 19th, 20th and 25th, 42 **Black-tailed Godwit** around the Wildlife Centre on 28th, reducing to 10 on 29th and 3 on 30th, a summer plumage male **Bar-tailed Godwit** with the Black-tailed from 28th to 30th, 2 **Whimbrel** at the Wildlife Centre on 16th, 1 on 20th and 25th and 3 on 28th, **Redshank** present all month with 15 at the wildlife Centre on 16th, a **Common Sandpiper** was on Stones Island from the 3rd and 3 were noted on 13th and a **Turnstone** was reported at Paul Stanley hide on 11th.

Yet another **Bonxie [Great Skua]** at Carsington on 11th from 1915 to 1950hrs. The following statistics need to be checked but they give some idea of the Bonxie enigma at Carsington: this is the tenth record involving 12 birds since 1992, these records have nearly doubled the number of Derbyshire records since 1950 and this is the fourth spring record. Gull reports include an adult summer plumage **Mediterranean** gull on 1st, 112 **Common Gulls** roosting on 10th, a first summer **Caspian Gull** roosting on 21st, 22nd and 24th, 505 **Great Black-backed gulls** roosting on 4th and 540 on 10th and a late first summer **Iceland Gull** on 8th. The first spring **Tern** was a distant unidentified 'Commic' on 18th, a **Common Tern** on 21st and an **Arctic Tern** on 19th, 23rd, 28th, 29th with 3 on 27th.

First dates for migrants included a **Swift** over Stones Island on 21st, 2 now site rare **Tree Pipits** near Middle Wood on 22nd, a male **Redstart** in Wildlife Centre Creek on 5th with 4 on 18th, a **Sedge Warbler** next to the Watersports Centre on 23rd with 2 on Stones Island on 28th, a **Lesser Whitethroat** singing on Stones Island on 23rd, a **Common Whitethroat** singing in Shiningford Creek on 23rd, 3 **Garden Warblers** on 24th and a rare event of a **Wood Warbler** singing at Sheepwash on 18th. **Wagtails** gave splendid views, especially in the evening pre-roost gathering on Stones Island, with 1 **Yellow Wagtail** on 11th, rising to 19 on the 18th and 21st and just 2 on 30th. **Blue-headed** were also noted, 1 at Paul Stanley hide on 13th and singles on Stones Island on 18th, 19th and 21st. The first **White Wagtail** was on 4th, building up to 17 on 18th and 19th and had they not been so mobile the count would have exceeded 17. Also **Pied Wagtails** were present at 20 on 1st, 5 **meadow pipits** with the wagtails on 13th and 2 **Grey Wagtails** on the dam wall on 6th.

Other sightings included a **Skylark** on 18th, 200 **Sand Martins** on 21st, 300 **Swallows** on 19th and 400 on 21st, 4 **Wheatears** on the dam wall on 6th with less other dates, 25 **Blackbirds** on 5th, 130 **Fieldfare** over the Wildlife Centre on 3rd, 19 **Chiffchaff** on 9th, 8 **Willow Warblers** on 9th, 20 **Tree Sparrows** on 18th, a **Brambling** on 2nd and many other dates until 21st, a **Siskin** singing in Hall Wood on 19th and a pair there on 29th and 40 **Lesser Redpoll** at Millfields on 23rd.

117 Species recorded this month compared with 117 in April last year, 116 in 2004, 120 in 2003 and 107 in 2002.

MARCH 2006 BIRD NOTES

March Highlights: Black-necked Grebes leave, Red-necked Grebe returns, Curlews roost, Water Pipit and Ringed Plover make brief appearance, Spring arrives on 25th with Sand Martin, Swallow, Wheatear and Chiffchaff, followed by Little Ringed Plover, House Martin and Blackcap, also Little Gull, Jack Snipe and Common Scoter.

The two **Black-necked Grebes**, present since 20th Dec, were last reported on 11th and the **Red-necked Grebe** reappeared on the 3rd after being missing since 12th Feb. Most of the wintering wildfowl had left site by the end of the month. A few **Greylag Geese** have been visiting with a maximum of 4 on 21st, a drake **Pintail** was present on 21st, 2 **Shelduck** on 30th, 2 drake **Shoveler** on 25th, a drake **Common Scoter** on 11th and a pair of **Common Scoter** on 25th.

Common Buzzard seem to be appearing more regularly around the Sheepwash area and 11 **Buzzards** were in the air at the same time on the 11th, 9 were over Hall Wood using thermals to glide and gain height and 2 others were over Millfields.

Wader activity increased with **Oystercatchers** present all month and 13 counted on 11th, a **Ringed Plover** on 11th, **Little Ringed Plover** on 30th, 1 or 2 **Dunlin** most days and 4 on 31st, a **Jack Snipe** on 20th and 27th, up to 12 **Snipe** at Paul Stanley hide on 8th and a **Woodcock** on 16th. **Redshank** were present all month, with 8 on 11th and mid-month saw a large **Curlew** roost on Horseshoe Island with

a maximum dusk count of 87 on 17th which is way ahead of the previous record held at 57 in March 2002.

Gull records included an adult winter plumage **Mediterranean Gull** on 1st, 80 **Great Black-backed** on 19th, a first winter **Little Gull** off Stones Island on the windy 30th and a massive 800 **Common Gulls** in the roost on 22nd. Common Gull numbers have been building up in the past few months with good numbers present throughout the day and 800 [actually 794 as light failed and they were still coming in to roost] shatters all previous years maximums held at 200.

After about two weeks of freezing temperatures and occasional snow, spring arrived on the relatively warm Saturday 25th with spring migrants in small numbers including 2 **Sand Martins** off Stones Island, 1 **Swallow** off Lane End, 2 male **Wheatears** on the dam wall and a singing **Chiffchaff** on Stones Island. These were closely followed by another **Wheatear** on 27th, a **House Martin** on 28th, 100 **Sand Martin** and 20 **Swallows** on 29th and a male **Blackcap** on Stones Island on 30th but, as this **Blackcap** was not singing, it could have been a wintering bird and not a spring migrant.

Other notable sightings included **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** near Paul Stanley Hide on 2nd and 25th, 2 **Skylark** flying over calling on 9th and 11th, 2 **Water Pipit** and a **Meadow Pipit** on the sailing club end of the dam wall on 22nd, a female **Stonechat** on 20th and 27th, 6 **Goldcrest** on 1st, 24 **Chaffinch** on 1st, 14 **House Sparrows** around the Visitor Centre on 20th, 28 **Tree Sparrows** on 16th and 15 **Lesser Redpoll** on Stones Island on 21st.

100 Species recorded this month compared with 98 in March 2004, 101 in 2003 and 96 in 2002

FEBRUARY 2006 BIRD NOTES

February Highlights: **Black-necked Grebes** stay another month but **Red-necked Grebe** departs mid-month. **Whooper Swans** and **Smew** make short visits. **Goshawk**, **Merlin** and **Peregrine** reported and **Curlew** return.

The **Red-necked Grebe** was last reported at Millfields on 12th and, presuming that it was continuously the same bird, it had stayed since 17th November. The two **Black-necked Grebes** remained all month, usually found near Paul Stanley Hide but were seen, sometimes separately, anywhere between Lane End and Hopton End. Other **grebes** have reduced in numbers after the Dec/Jan highs with 65 **Little** and 38 **Great Crested** on 12th. **Cormorants** numbered 32 on 8th, **Moorhen** 76 on 12th, **Coot** 815 on 12th and **Mute Swans** just 9, including 3 of last years young on 8th and 12th, which is low for this site. On 26th a flight of 13 **Whooper Swans** came in over Millfields from the south at 08.30hrs, circled the water and flew on northwest towards their breeding grounds. Two flocks of **Whoopers** had been reported south of here during the previous afternoon so the sighting was more hoped for than surprising.

Duck numbers have dropped as expected, with 183 **Wigeon**, 32 **Gadwall**, 179 **Teal**, 144 **Mallard**, 66 **Pochard**, 558 **Tufted**, 151 **Ruddy**, and a high count of 33 **Goldeneye**, all on 12th. Other ducks included a pair of **Pintail** briefly at Sheepwash on 18th, a welcomed drake **Smew** at Sheepwash in the afternoon of

19th, a pair of **Shoveler** at Lane End on 19th and four pairs of **Goosander** along the dam wall on 7th.

Apart from the resident **Kestrels** and **Sparrow Hawks**, raptors included 4 **Common Buzzards** over Hall Wood on 21st, a **Goshawk** at Lane End on 17th, a male **Merlin** on 24th and a **Peregrine** on 1st and 19th.

Waders saw the **Oystercatcher** numbers rise to nine by the 22nd and potentially breeding pairs have already claimed territories on both Big and Millfields Islands. **Lapwing** numbers are gradually reducing as birds move on, with 671 on 3rd, 549 on 12th and 450 on 24th. A single **Dunlin** was at the Wildlife Centre on 4th and 5th, **Snipe** numbers reached 8 at the Wildlife Centre on 8th and 19 at Paul Stanley Hide on 27th, a **Woodcock** was flushed at Sheepwash on 3rd and two flushed in Tail Bay on 27th, **Redshank** were present all month with a maximum of 6 on 14th and **Curlew** first arrived on their movement northwards to breeding grounds with 5 at the Wildlife Centre on 20th and 6 on 25th and 28th.

Adult **Mediterranean Gulls** were seen in singles on 11th, 14th, 16th and 22nd. These records included two different birds, a winter plumage adult and a near full summer adult, and they were seen occasionally during the middle of the day as well as at roost.

Other records include 4 **Stock Doves** over Millfields on 16th, 70 **Woodpigeon** on 27th, 2 **Kingfishers** on 20th, with 1 seen most days, a **Skylark** over Fishtail on 10th, 26 **Meadow Pipits** on dam wall on 10th, 15 **Robin** on 8th, 29 **Fieldfare** on 24th, 6 **Treecreeper** on 8th, 120 **Jackdaw** over Hopton End on 16th, 500 **Starlings** over Watersports on 24th, 6 **House Sparrows** on 8th, a male **Brambling** on 16th, 3 male **Reed Bunting** on Paul Stanley feeders on 5th and 6th and an unseasonal **Linnet** seen and calling from Paul Stanley Hide on 12th.

89 species recorded compared with 90 in February 2005, 96 in 2004, 92 in 2003 and 78 in 2002.

January 2006 Bird Notes:

Highlights: Wildfowl numbers drop from December's records, **Red-necked and Black-necked Grebe** stay all month, **Pink-footed Geese** fly over, and Gull species, **Woodcock**, **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, **Blackcap**, **Chiffchaff** and **Hawfinch** start the year list.

With the majority of January spent in a dull, grey, cold, calm, boring, shroud, Carsington saw many visiting birders obviously seeking the rarer Grebes and then going on to find other good birds. December's record count of **Little Grebes** was matched exactly at 105 on 13th. The 2 **Black-necked Grebes** remained all month, initially faithful to the Paul Stanley Hide, then visiting Sheepwash and, towards the end of the month, were usually found at Hopton End and Big Island. The birds were seen offering each other fish so can be referred to as a pair, if only they would stay into breeding season. The **Red-necked Grebe** started the year at Millfields, then in front of the sailing club, then near Fishtail Creek on 3rd, then reported on two occasions in two places at once, then it was an adult and not a first winter. So were there two? Or had it matured and become very mobile?

Learned literature states little is known about maturing dates and periods for their bill and plumage, except that they are variable. So, checking photographs and any detailed records and dates available, the rational conclusion, so far, is that there is only one **Red-necked Grebe**, which is mobile, and the bill colouring matured from first winter over the Christmas and New Year period.

Pink-footed Geese were seen flying West, which is part of their staged journey back to their northern breeding grounds, with 66 on 18th and 300 plus 200 on 29th. Wildfowl numbers generally decreased from the mid December records, except **Ruddy Duck** with 182 on 16th and **Goldeneye** 24 on 16th. Also a **Shelduck** was present on 16th, a female **Shoveler** on 9th and a pair of **Pintail** on 22nd.

Raptors included 4 **Common Buzzards** over Hall Wood on 21st and a hunting **Peregrine** near Hall Wood on 19th. Waders included 2 **Oystercatchers** at Sheepwash on 29th, 840 **Lapwing** on 16th, 3 **Redshank** on Stones Island on 24th, up to 17 **Snipe** from Paul Stanley Hide on 15th, and a **Woodcock** flushed from the north edge of Fishtail on 18th.

The afternoon pre-roost plus the gull roost included an adult **Mediterranean Gull** on 4th, 9th and 12th, adult **Yellow-legged Gull** on 2nd, 12th 13th and 15th, **Caspian Gull** third winter on 14th, adult on 18th and adult plus first winter on 19th, a first winter **Glaucous Gull** on 8th, and an immature **Kittiwake** flew through low on 19th.

Other sightings listed are, a **Skylark** calling over Stones Island on 1st, 20 **Meadow Pipits** on the dam wall on 2nd, 50 **Redwings** at Sheepwash on 13th, a **Blackcap** near the Wildlife Centre on 18th, a **Chiffchaff** in short song at Sheepwash on 18th, 4 **Raven** over Hall Wood on 1st, a flock of 100plus **Siskin** at Millfields on 24th and a **Reed Bunting** at the Wildlife Centre on 9th and on Paul Stanley feeders on 27th. Also a **Hawfinch** was seen at the Millfields end of the dam wall feeding on seeds of the Field Maple on 20th. This is only the second record for the site for this species, the first was just last month on Stones Island.

90 species recorded compared with 88 in January 2005, 91 in 2004, 87 in 2003 and 75 in 2002.