

## **DECEMBER 2008 BIRD NOTES**

### **December Highlights: Great Northern Diver, possible Great White Egret, Whooper Swan, Brent Goose and Ring-billed Gull.**

Great Northern Divers totalled 4 from 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> at least, including an adult whereas, last month, all 4 were juveniles. A possible Great White Egret was noted briefly at 1115 hours on 7<sup>th</sup> in Shiningford Creek before flying off southeast. This would be a new species for Carsington if accepted by DOS. Two Whooper Swans were seen on 9<sup>th</sup> at the Wildlife Centre. A Pink-footed Goose was around the Wildlife Centre from 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> and 210 flew low over Millfields at 1030 hours on 15<sup>th</sup>, heading northwest. Two Brent Geese spent most of 13<sup>th</sup> at the Wildlife Centre and a Water Rail was again in the ditch below the dam wall on 1<sup>st</sup>. Maximum counts were similar to December counts of recent years and included; 105 little Grebe on 18<sup>th</sup>, 59 Great Crested Grebe on 14<sup>th</sup>, 51 Cormorant on 15<sup>th</sup>, 2 Heron on 14<sup>th</sup>, 2 Greylag Geese on 15<sup>th</sup>, 45 feral Barnacle Geese plus 1 hybrid on 19<sup>th</sup>, 1 Shelduck on 27<sup>th</sup>, 406 Wigeon on 14<sup>th</sup>, 40 Gadwall on 14<sup>th</sup>, 94 Teal on 14<sup>th</sup>, 1 female Pintail on 6<sup>th</sup>, 4 Shoveler on 29<sup>th</sup>, 308 Pochard on 14<sup>th</sup>, 844 Tufted Duck on 14<sup>th</sup>, 2 female Scaup on 11<sup>th</sup>, 1 drake Common Scoter on 14<sup>th</sup>, 16 Goldeneye on 14<sup>th</sup>, 1 female Red-breasted Merganser on 5<sup>th</sup>, 20 Goosander on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 53 Moorhen on 18<sup>th</sup> and 1890 Coot on 28<sup>th</sup>.

Raptor records are very few this month and waders included 20 Snipe at the Wildlife Centre on 20<sup>th</sup>, a Woodcock at Hopton End on 19<sup>th</sup> and 4 Redshank on 14<sup>th</sup>.

The adult Ring-billed Gull was seen only on 1<sup>st</sup> and the numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls significantly reduced from this date. The gull roost included a first winter Mediterranean Gull on 24<sup>th</sup>, 3 Yellow-legged Gulls on 1<sup>st</sup>, an adult Caspian Gull on 1<sup>st</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and a first winter Glaucous Gull on 21<sup>st</sup>.

A Little Owl was on Oldfield Lane on 15<sup>th</sup> and 2 Tawny Owls were reported on 21<sup>st</sup>. Kingfishers have been recorded all around the site on many dates and 2 were noted on 22<sup>nd</sup> at Paul Stanley Hide. A Skylark flew over the Dam Wall on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6 Meadow Pipits were in Tail Bay on 15<sup>th</sup>. A survey, covering most of the southern half of the site, on 15<sup>th</sup> noted 1 Skylark, 6 Meadow Pipit, 19 Robin, 24 Blackbird, 4 Fieldfare, 73 Redwing, 2 Mistle Thrush, 25 Long-tailed Tit, 17 Blue Tit, 15 Great Tit, 2 Treecreeper, 2 Jay, 8 Magpie, 18 Jackdaw, 16 House Sparrow, 18 Tree Sparrow, 12 Bullfinch and 1 Reed Bunting. Other significant records include a Chiffchaff near Warrington Knob on 15<sup>th</sup>, 30 Siskin at Paul Stanley Hide on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 Linnet near Fishtail Creek on 18<sup>th</sup>, 5 Lesser Redpoll at Lane End feeders on 19<sup>th</sup> and 2 large farmyard mallard type ducks at Millfields from 8<sup>th</sup>.

94 species recorded compared with 91 in December 2007, 99 in 2006, 88 in 2005, 95 in 2004, 97 in 2003 and 89 in 2002.

## **NOVEMBER 2008 BIRD NOTES**

November Highlights: Ring-billed Gull returns again, Great Northern Divers, Scaup, Common Scoters, Water Rail, Little Gull, Caspian Gull and Waxwing.

Last month's juvenile Great Northern Diver became 2 GNDs from the 1<sup>st</sup>, then a site record of 4 on 10<sup>th</sup>, only 3 on 12<sup>th</sup> and just 2 by 30<sup>th</sup>. Pink-footed Geese movements were 32 northeast on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 25 east on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 3 on the ground on 23<sup>rd</sup>. A female Scaup was near Big Island on 16<sup>th</sup> and there were 7 female/immature plus 1 drake Common Scoter on 3<sup>rd</sup>, the 7 female type stayed and were last reported on 16<sup>th</sup>. Wildfowl counts included: 88 Little Grebe on 12<sup>th</sup>, 60 Great Crested Grebe on 12<sup>th</sup>, 62 Cormorant on 16<sup>th</sup>, 44 feral Barnacle Geese on 19<sup>th</sup>, 1 escapee Cackling Goose on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 Shelduck on 19<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 341 Wigeon on 16<sup>th</sup>, 51 Gadwall on 16<sup>th</sup>, 75 Teal on 16<sup>th</sup>, 152 Mallard on 16<sup>th</sup>, 2 Pintail on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2 Shoveler on 7<sup>th</sup>, 210 Pochard on 16<sup>th</sup>, 343 Tufted Duck on 16<sup>th</sup>, 16 Goldeneye on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 drake Goosander on 12<sup>th</sup>, 26 Moorhen on 16<sup>th</sup>, 2175 Coot on 16<sup>th</sup>, and a Water Rail was heard on 28<sup>th</sup> in the ditch below the dam wall.

Three Common Buzzards were in the air on 16<sup>th</sup>, a female Merlin was around Millfields on 22<sup>nd</sup> and a Peregrine was seen from the Wildlife Centre on 3<sup>rd</sup> and on several other dates. Lapwings were counted on 16<sup>th</sup> at 274 and again on 27<sup>th</sup> at a close matching 275 birds. Snipe numbered 15 from the Wildlife Centre on 16<sup>th</sup> and a Snipe race Faroensis [more rufous plumage] was photographed here on 15<sup>th</sup> and seen on subsequent dates. Three Redshank were noted on 4<sup>th</sup> with individuals seen at most locations during the month and a Turnstone was close in to Sheepwash Hide on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Gulls attracted birders this month, with an adult Mediterranean Gull from 6<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> at least, the well forecast, and now annual, adult Ring-billed Gull turned-up in the gull roost on 7<sup>th</sup> and was seen on many evenings up to the end of the month, a first winter Little Gull was also in the roost on 7<sup>th</sup>, 3 Yellow-legged Gulls were present on 8<sup>th</sup> and other dates and a second winter Caspian Gull was in the roost on 25<sup>th</sup>.

Kingfishers were seen most days around the site and 2 were in front of Paul Stanley Hide on 3<sup>rd</sup>. Great Spotted Woodpeckers and Nuthatch were regularly on the feeders here. Two Skylarks flew over on 4<sup>th</sup>, 10 Meadow Pipits were at Sheepwash on 4<sup>th</sup> and 11 were on the other side of the Spit on 13<sup>th</sup>. A Rock Pipit was seen from Paul Stanley Hide on 3<sup>rd</sup> and a few lucky observers saw a Waxwing at the Visitor Centre on 16<sup>th</sup>. Note that many Waxwings have come into this country recently, they can turn up on any berry laden tree and bush, and supermarket car parks are a favourite. Wintering thrushes were moving through in flocks, stopping off to feed, with 50plus Fieldfare in Wildlife Centre Creek on 13<sup>th</sup>, 50 Redwing at Millfields on 7<sup>th</sup> and 50 around the Wildlife Centre area on 10<sup>th</sup>. Four Blackcaps were reported on 10<sup>th</sup> near the Wildlife Centre. Two flocks of Long-tailed Tits contained 29 birds on 24<sup>th</sup> and 8 Blue Tits plus 10 Great Tits were noted at Paul Stanley Hide on 19<sup>th</sup>. Starling flocks totalled 350 birds at dusk on 3<sup>rd</sup>, flocks of 30 Siskin were noted on 4<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 6 Lesser Redpoll were on Stones Island on 13<sup>th</sup>, 15 Chaffinch on Paul Stanley feeders on 19<sup>th</sup> and 11 Bullfinch were counted on 27<sup>th</sup>.

94 species recorded compared with 98 in November 2007, 97 in 2006, 97 in 2005, 95 in 2004 and 92 in 2003.

## **OCTOBER 2008 BIRD NOTES**

October Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Gannet, Shag and Brambling.

A Great Northern Diver\*\* was reported at 1430hrs on 26<sup>th</sup> from Sheepwash and probably the same bird, a juvenile, was seen regularly near Lane End Hide from 28<sup>th</sup>. A juvenile Gannet\*\* [last recorded in 2000] was seen flying over the reservoir at 1500hrs on 29<sup>th</sup> and one of the juvenile Shags found in October was still around the dam wall area on 4<sup>th</sup>. Maximum counts included: 33 Little Grebe on 12<sup>th</sup>, 39 Great Crested Grebe on 12<sup>th</sup>, 53 Cormorant on 8<sup>th</sup>, 31 Mute Swans on 12<sup>th</sup>, 3 Greylag Geese on 4<sup>th</sup>, 1 Shelduck on 11<sup>th</sup>, 295 Wigeon on 12<sup>th</sup>, 23 Gadwall on 12<sup>th</sup>, 51 Teal on 12<sup>th</sup>, 57 Mallard on 12<sup>th</sup>, 2 Pintail on 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 Shoveler on 7<sup>th</sup>, 144 Pochard on 29<sup>th</sup>, 500 Tufted Duck on 29<sup>th</sup>, 4 Common Scoter on 6<sup>th</sup>, 2 Goldeneye on 31<sup>st</sup>, 1 female Red-breasted Merganser on 29<sup>th</sup>, 26 Moorhen on 12<sup>th</sup>, 671 Coot on 12<sup>th</sup> and 1 Red-legged Partridge on Sheepwash Spit on 6<sup>th</sup>.

Four Common Buzzards and 2 Kestrels were reported on 6<sup>th</sup>. Also on 6<sup>th</sup>, a Peregrine was seen on the pylon from the Wildlife Centre and was recorded on many other dates around the site.

Wader sightings included a Ringed Plover on Stones Island or at the Wildlife Centre from 4<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, 8 Golden Plover flew past Sheepwash on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Dunlin was at the Wildlife Centre on several dates from 4<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, a juvenile Ruff was at the Wildlife Centre on 15<sup>th</sup> and a Redshank was noted on 7<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.

The gull roost held an adult Mediterranean Gull on 13<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 1200 Black-headed Gulls on 19<sup>th</sup>, 3000 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 19<sup>th</sup> and 5 Yellow-legged Gulls on 11<sup>th</sup>.

Late dates for summer migrants were 2 House Martins on 4<sup>th</sup>, 8 Swallows on 4<sup>th</sup>, 4 Wheatear on 4<sup>th</sup> and 2 Chiffchaff on 21<sup>st</sup>. Autumn/Winter movement included 3 Skylarks flying over on 18<sup>th</sup>, 47 Meadow Pipits on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 Rock Pipit on Sheepwash Spit on 11<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 1 Redwing on 6<sup>th</sup>, then 10 on 28<sup>th</sup>, 700 Starlings in a pre-roost flock at dusk on 31<sup>st</sup>, 2 Brambling at the Wildlife Centre on 27<sup>th</sup>, 20 Siskin on 28<sup>th</sup>, 10 Linnets over Stones Island on 6<sup>th</sup> and 6 Lesser Redpoll on 13<sup>th</sup>.

Several escapee species have been reported this month with the male plus 2 female Cape type Shelduck on 13<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, a Cackling Goose on 13<sup>th</sup> and a Black Swan [probably from Bradley pond] on 27<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*Both the Great Northern Diver and Gannet records require submission to the Derbyshire Ornithological Society Rarities sub-Committee with full supporting notes for consideration. Also any further details on possible records of Whooper Swan and Red-necked Grebe this month would be appreciated!

94 species recorded this October compared with 109 in 2007, 99 in 2006, 99 in 2005, 91 in 2004, 94 in 2003 and 103 in 2002.

## **SEPTEMBER 2008 BIRD NOTES**

September Highlights: Shag, Pink-footed Goose, Common Scoter, Honey Buzzard, Osprey, Merlin, Knot, Ruff, Grey Phalarope, Mediterranean Gull and Black Tern

41 Pink-footed Geese were noted going north-east on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2 juvenile Shags were found on the Draw-off Tower roof on 2<sup>nd</sup> and were still present on 16<sup>th</sup>, with 1 remaining until 23<sup>rd</sup>. Common wintering wildfowl numbers were increasing and maximum counts totalled: 39 Little Grebe on 14<sup>th</sup>, 32 Great Crested Grebe on 10<sup>th</sup>, 45 Cormorant on 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 Heron on 14-15<sup>th</sup>, 29 Mute Swans on 14<sup>th</sup>, 1 Greylag on 6<sup>th</sup>, 14 Barnacle on 14<sup>th</sup>, 1 Shelduck on 14<sup>th</sup>, 427 Wigeon on 19<sup>th</sup>, 17 Gadwall on 1<sup>st</sup>, 66 Teal on 14<sup>th</sup>, 148 Mallard on 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 Pintail on 10<sup>th</sup>, 6 Shoveler on 6<sup>th</sup>, 1 Red-crested Pochard from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, 39 Pochard on 14<sup>th</sup>, 512 Tufted Duck on 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 drake Common Scoter on 9<sup>th</sup>, 31 Moorhen on 14<sup>th</sup> and 1292 Coot on 14<sup>th</sup>.

A Honey Buzzard\*\* was reported flying southwest over Sheepwash Car Park at 1400hrs on 14<sup>th</sup>, this was part of a large movement through England around the 14<sup>th</sup>. Other raptor records this month included a Sparrowhawk with prey on the dam being harassed by another on 29<sup>th</sup>, 7 Buzzards over Hopton on 7<sup>th</sup>, Osprey on 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, a Merlin on 23<sup>rd</sup>, a Hobby on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> and Peregrine on many dates.

A Grey Phalarope\*\* was seen briefly flying and settled on the water from Millfields on 6<sup>th</sup>, further searching could not re-find the bird. Other waders included 2 Oystercatchers on 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 Golden Plover flying over the dam wall on 13<sup>th</sup>, 178 Lapwing on 14<sup>th</sup>, 1 Knot on 15<sup>th</sup>, 1 Dunlin on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 3 Ruff on 24<sup>th</sup>, 14 Snipe on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 Curlew on 25<sup>th</sup>, 1 Redshank on 9<sup>th</sup> and 2 Common Sandpipers on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was in the gull roost from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 Common Tern was seen at Millfields on 6<sup>th</sup>, a juvenile Arctic Tern on 23<sup>rd</sup> and a Black Tern on 14<sup>th</sup>.

A Yellow Wagtail was on the dam wall on 6<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> and a White Wagtail was there on 8<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. A juvenile Stonechat was in Tail Bay on 18<sup>th</sup>, 3 Wheatears on the dam wall on 3<sup>rd</sup>, a Sedge Warbler in Shiningford Creek on 25<sup>th</sup>, 1 Whitethroat on 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 Garden Warblers on 8<sup>th</sup> and 2 Willow Warblers on 19<sup>th</sup>. Two flocks of Goldfinch on 10<sup>th</sup> totalled 60 birds, 40 Siskins were seen on 10<sup>th</sup> and 6 Linnets were noted on 9<sup>th</sup>.

109 Species were recorded this September compared with 108 in 2007, 101 in 2006, 101 in 2005, 94 in 2004 and 104 in 2003.

N.B. both Honey Buzzard\*\* and Grey Phalarope\*\* species require the record and description details to be submitted to DOS for consideration.

## **AUGUST 2008 BIRD NOTES**

### **August Highlights: Little Egret, Osprey and Black Terns.**

A Little Egret at 1040hrs on 23<sup>rd</sup> was the second this year. The egret flew in from Shiningford Creek onto Horseshoe Island then towards the Visitor Centre and, later, at 1400hrs, it was seen from Paul Stanley Hide. Breeding noted included the third brood of Little Grebe this year, the eighteenth brood of Mallard, eleventh of Tufted Duck, fourth of Moorhen and thirteenth of Coot. Cormorant numbers increased through the month to 38 on 30<sup>th</sup> and Mute Swans totalled 36 on 13<sup>th</sup>, including 6 juveniles. Wildfowl numbers included 6 Shelduck on 26<sup>th</sup>, 7 Wigeon on 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 18 Gadwall on 25<sup>th</sup>, 18 Teal on 31<sup>st</sup>, 122 Mallard on 20<sup>th</sup>, 3 Shoveler on 30<sup>th</sup>, a female Red-crested Pochard on 13<sup>th</sup> and a male from 21<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, 3 Pochard on 20<sup>th</sup>, 288 Tufted Duck on 20<sup>th</sup>, a female Common Scoter on 30<sup>th</sup> and 741 Coot on 20<sup>th</sup>.

A young Sparrow Hawk was calling in Middle Wood on 14<sup>th</sup>, 4 Common Buzzards were in the air on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> and a young Buzzard was calling and flying over Hall Wood on many dates during the month. An Osprey was reported at 1630hrs on 30<sup>th</sup> and 2 Peregrines were seen on 17<sup>th</sup> and single Peregrines on most days.

This month's wader passage has been very poor due to high water levels and tall vegetation along shorelines. By the end of the month there were signs of falling water levels and vegetation was being cleared from islands so, hopefully, September will be better. Waders included 1 Ringed Plover on 17<sup>th</sup>, 2 Dunlin on 5<sup>th</sup> and singles from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, 3 Snipe on 31<sup>st</sup>, 1 Curlew on 18<sup>th</sup>, 1 Redshank on 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 1 Greenshank on 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 Common Sandpipers on 4<sup>th</sup>, singles other dates, and a Turnstone briefly on 26<sup>th</sup>.

The gull roost started this month with mainly Lesser Black-backed Gulls and a near adult Yellow-legged Gull has been on site all month. The breeding pair of Common Terns and their fledged juvenile were last recorded on 4<sup>th</sup> and 2 other Common Terns were present on 20<sup>th</sup> and 5 on 30<sup>th</sup>. Black Terns have been well noted on passage with 2 adults on 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, a juvenile off Stones Island from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> and an adult with 2 juveniles on 30<sup>th</sup>.

Two Stock Doves were noted on the tall dead tree trunk in Brown Ale Bay on 7<sup>th</sup> and were seen entering a hole in the trunk on 12<sup>th</sup>, suggesting probable breeding which would be the first for this site. A Barn Owl was near Sheepwash Hide at 1945hrs on 24<sup>th</sup> and Kingfishers have been seen most days at all ends of the site with 2 noted on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Four Meadow Pipits were on the Dam Wall on 18<sup>th</sup>, 63 Pied Wagtails were on there at 0715hrs on 28<sup>th</sup>, 2 Redstarts were noted on 10<sup>th</sup> and 1 Wheatear was on the Dam on 25<sup>th</sup>. There were two Spotted Flycatcher families recorded, an adult with 2 juveniles in Shiningford Creek on 12<sup>th</sup> and an adult plus a juvenile in Tail Bay on 23<sup>rd</sup>. A flock of 300 Jackdaws was noted on 4<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and a flock of 40 Goldfinch on Stones Island on 20<sup>th</sup> included at least 25 juveniles. An early Siskin was on feeders on 15<sup>th</sup>, 7 Linnets were noted on 20<sup>th</sup> and a female Bullfinch was seen feeding 2 juveniles on 18<sup>th</sup>.

99 Species were recorded this August compared with 109 in 2007, 97 in 2006, 105 in 2005, 113 in 2004 and 110 in 2003.

## **JULY 2008 BIRD NOTES**

**Breeding** records show the first two broods of **Little Grebe** by 29<sup>th</sup>, the seventeenth brood of **Mallard** this year by 16<sup>th</sup> and the seventh brood of **Tufted Duck** by 30<sup>th</sup>. The first two broods of **Moorhen** appeared on 21<sup>st</sup> and **Coots** reached twelve broods by 31<sup>st</sup>. Counts and records included 21 **Great Crested Grebe** on 21<sup>st</sup>, 3 **Heron** on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 28 **Mute Swan** plus 4+3+1 cygnets on 7<sup>th</sup>, 2 **Greylag Geese** on 1<sup>st</sup> and on later dates, 29 **Barnacle Geese** plus an oddity on 20<sup>th</sup>, 1 **Shelduck** on 14<sup>th</sup>, an early returning drake **Wigeon** on 14<sup>th</sup>, 4 **Gadwall** on 8<sup>th</sup>, 4 **Teal** on 14<sup>th</sup>, 10 **Pochard** on 31<sup>st</sup>, 154 **Tufted Duck** on 20<sup>th</sup>, 1 **Common Scoter** on 21<sup>st</sup> and 5 on 29<sup>th</sup> and a fox was seen from the Wildlife Centre taking a **Mallard** duckling on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Raptor** records included a **Sparrowhawk** mobbed by the Common Terns breeding at the Wildlife Centre on 14<sup>th</sup>, juvenile **Sparrowhawks** calling from their nest sites on 20<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, a juvenile **Buzzard** seen calling near its nest site on 18<sup>th</sup> and probably in flight with parents on 7<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> and several **Peregrine** records from 20<sup>th</sup>, with 1 seen on the pylon from the Wildlife Centre on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Waders** are currently difficult to see and may not be staying because of high water levels and tall vegetation leaving no open shoreline margin for feeding. Many of the local breeding **Oystercatchers** and all the local **Redshank** had left site by 16<sup>th</sup> although others moving south may call in. Other waders noted were **Little Ringed Plover** at Paul Stanley Hide until 23<sup>rd</sup>, including a maximum of 4 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, a **Knot** at Sheepwash at 2000hrs on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a **Dunlin** on Sheepwash Spit on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 **Black-tailed Godwit** on 11<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 12<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, then 1 on 29-31<sup>st</sup>. 2 **Whimbrel** were photographed from the Wildlife Centre on 4<sup>th</sup>, 2 **Curlew** flew south on 18<sup>th</sup>, a **Greenshank** was present on 1<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> and up to 2 **Common Sandpipers** were around the site all month.

**Gulls** included a near adult **Yellow-legged Gull** all month, seen at all ends of the site but most often on the raft near Paul Stanley Hide. A count of 27 juvenile **Black-headed Gulls** on 18<sup>th</sup> caused confusion as only 7 pairs had been noted breeding, with the first four broods totalling 4+3+3+3, and pairs evidently have just one brood per year. Maybe more pairs actually bred or additional juveniles flew in from elsewhere. The pair of **Common Terns** breeding at the Wildlife Centre had 2 chicks early in the month but only one remained by 21<sup>st</sup>. This chick left its raft and eventually showed on Horseshoe Island, being well fed by both parents. Following heavy rain early on 29<sup>th</sup> a **Black Tern** was feeding off Stones Island with 9 **Common Terns** and a further 14 **Common Terns** were roosting on the Sailing Club jetty. The sun came out and the terns had moved on by 0930hrs. Together with the breeding family, 26 **Common Terns** were on site on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Other records** include 2 **Stock Doves** flying over on 13<sup>th</sup>, 100 plus **Swifts** through on 7<sup>th</sup>, a **Kingfisher** on 9<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, all at different locations, a juvenile **Great Spotted Woodpecker** on Paul Stanley Hide nuts and a pair of **Swallows** are attempting a second brood in the Stone Shelter. The only **Redstart** record so far this year was an independent juvenile seen on 7<sup>th</sup>. A **Reed Warbler** is still singing at Hopton Pond and breeding is likely but viewing to check this is not possible. A **Spotted Flycatcher** family of 4 was in Hall Wood on 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> and another family of 4 appeared at Sheepwash on 13<sup>th</sup>. A family party of **Willow Tits** was in Hopton Arm on 24<sup>th</sup> and 2 **Marsh Tits** were reported near Brown Ale Bay on 2<sup>nd</sup>. A family of **Jays** was at Sheepwash on 29<sup>th</sup> and 7 **Linnets** were noted on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**97 Species recorded this July** compared with 94 in 2007, 94 in 2006, 97 in 2005 and 102 in 2004.

## June 2008 Bird Notes

Highlights: Breeding.

No broods of Little Grebe yet, but two broods of Great Crested Grebe with 1 young at Hopton End on 8<sup>th</sup> and 1 young at Wildlife Centre on 14<sup>th</sup>. The pair of Mute Swans at Millfields Car Park produced 1 cygnet on 2<sup>nd</sup> and another pair showed 4 cygnets on Sheepwash Spit on 20<sup>th</sup>. A total of 604 Canada Geese, including young, were counted on 19<sup>th</sup> and all the Barnacle Geese families went on a trip across the water to Millfields on 15<sup>th</sup>. This group consisted 5 pairs with 6, 5, 3, 2 and 2 young. The pair of Cackling Geese reported breeding on Watersports Island last month were seen defending their nest against Crows on 5<sup>th</sup> but were noted away from the nest on 11<sup>th</sup> and may well have failed breeding. Mallard broods this year totalled 15 by 29<sup>th</sup>, Coot have 8 broods, Moorhen have no broods reported but a Tufted Duck with 8 chicks in front of Paul Stanley Hide on 26<sup>th</sup> is the first of more expected this year. For comparison, by this stage last year wildfowl breeding included 2 broods of Swan, 5 broods of Barnacle Geese, 18 of Mallard, 5 of Moorhen, 6 of Coot and 1 of Tufted Duck. A Red-legged Partridge has been seen at Sheepwash, occasionally a pair, noted carrying vegetation, mainly early morning, by the Rangers opening up the car park, hopefully this will result in a breeding success. Two Red-crested Pochards were at the Wildlife Centre from 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> and 3 were there on 25<sup>th</sup>.

Wader breeding has been difficult to assess due to the tall vegetation growth on most islands and some breeding may have been missed. Of the 7 pairs of Oystercatchers, only 2 pairs are known to have produced young on Millfields and Sailing Club Islands. The Sailing Club Island pair had moved their 2 young onto Watersports Island by 16<sup>th</sup>. Lapwing young noted include 3 fresh young on Horseshoe Island on 4<sup>th</sup>, which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> brood noted. One young Redshank has been reported and a pair of Little Ringed Plovers were still displaying. This time last year there were 4 broods of Oystercatcher, 4 of Lapwing and 3 of Redshank. Other waders recorded include a Ringed Plover at Paul Stanley Hide on 30<sup>th</sup>, a male Black-tailed Godwit (race *Icelandica*) at Wildlife Centre on 20<sup>th</sup> and a different bird on 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup>. A Whimbrel was seen on 2<sup>nd</sup>, and a Curlew on 6<sup>th</sup> was one of many records of single Curlew which may be one of a pair seen and possibly breeding in fields towards Ashbourne.

The pair of Common Gulls reported breeding last month had sadly failed by 15<sup>th</sup>. The 7 pairs of Black-headed Gulls continued to raise young and a pair with 3 young vacated their raft whereupon the pair of frustrated Common Terns immediately moved in and had a chick by 30<sup>th</sup>.

A Barn Owl was noted carrying prey in the evening at Sheepwash on 30<sup>th</sup> and an adult Tawny Owl was perched near the memorial at Millfields end of the dam wall at lunchtime on 19<sup>th</sup>. A Kingfisher was at the Wildlife Centre on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> and was also seen in Tail Bay on 23<sup>rd</sup>. A pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers brought 2 juveniles to Paul Stanley feeders on 16<sup>th</sup> and a pair of Swallow were feeding young in the stone shelter near Millfields on 15<sup>th</sup>. Twenty House Martin nests were counted on the Visitor Centre, Watersports and Sailing Club buildings on 1<sup>st</sup>. A pair of Grey Wagtails were noted at Sheepwash on 2<sup>nd</sup>, at Hopton Arm and Shiningford Creek on 23<sup>rd</sup>, and a juvenile was near Paul Stanley Hide on 26<sup>th</sup>. Sedge Warbler were singing in Hopton Reedbed on 11<sup>th</sup>, Hopton Pond on 15<sup>th</sup>, Stones Island on 15<sup>th</sup> and Tail Bay on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. A Reed Warbler was singing in Hopton Reedbed until 15<sup>th</sup> at least, but not on 29<sup>th</sup>, and another was singing from Hopton Pond all month. A Willow Tit family was in Millfields Car Park on 19<sup>th</sup>, a Tree Creeper pair with 3 young were near Shiningford Creek on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4 Linnets were in fields by Fishtail Creek on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

90 Species recorded compared with 93 in June 2007, 89 in 2006, 94 in 2005, 96 in 2004 and 84 in 2003.

## **MAY 2008 BIRD NOTES**

May Highlights: Spoonbill, Great Northern Diver, Garganey, Red Kite, Hobby, Grey Plover, Turnstone, Black Tern, Turtle Dove, Cuckoo and Pied Flycatcher.

The bird of the month must be the Spoonbill. A first for Carsington. It was found at 1030hrs on 29<sup>th</sup> on Horseshoe Island and had gone, high northeast, by 1100 hours. The Great Northern Diver was last recorded on 2<sup>nd</sup>, it had been here since last November and was attaining summer plumage. No broods of Grebe, Swan or Moorhen have yet been recorded but there are 4 broods of Barnacle Geese around Stones Island area, 1 brood of Coot and 12 broods of Mallard on site. Coincidentally, by this time last year there were also 4 broods of Barnacle and 12 of Mallard. The long staying Pink-footed Goose was last noted on 9<sup>th</sup>. A Shelduck was on Sheepwash Spit on 25<sup>th</sup> and a drake Garganey gave excellent views from the Wildlife Centre on 11<sup>th</sup>. Other wildfowl included a Shoveler on 10<sup>th</sup>, 3 Pochard on 18<sup>th</sup>, 105 Tufted Duck on 18<sup>th</sup>, 64 Coot on 18<sup>th</sup> and a Goosander on 10<sup>th</sup>. A pair of presumed escapee Cackling Geese are breeding on Watersports Island.

Red Kite have been reported at several Derbyshire sites this month and at Carsington on 1<sup>st</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. The return of the migratory Hobby was noted by just 1 record of a bird flying south over the Dam Wall on 13<sup>th</sup> and a Peregrine was noted from the Wildlife Centre on 5<sup>th</sup>. Two pairs of Oystercatchers have young, 2 on Millfields Island on 8<sup>th</sup> and 2 on Sailing Club Island on 25<sup>th</sup>. Pairs on Big Island and Flat Island may have failed. Little Ringed Plovers have been around with a maximum of 3 at Paul Stanley Hide on 17<sup>th</sup>, but no signs of breeding. So far there is just 1 Lapwing brood of 3 chicks on Horseshoe Island on 18<sup>th</sup> and no Redshank young have yet been reported, which is the same as last year. Other waders on passage included 2 Ringed Plovers on Sheepwash Spit on 8<sup>th</sup>, a superb summer plumage male Grey Plover in front of the Wildlife Centre on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, a Sanderling at Sheepwash on 8<sup>th</sup> and another on 18<sup>th</sup>, 2 Dunlin on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Whimbrel on 1<sup>st</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2 Curlew on 10<sup>th</sup>, a Greenshank at the Wildlife Centre on 16<sup>th</sup>, a Green Sandpiper at the Wildlife Centre on 11<sup>th</sup> and 2 Turnstones there on 14<sup>th</sup>.

Little Gulls were again well recorded this month with single first summer birds on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. The Black-headed Gull colony at the Wildlife Centre has 7 nests, 4 with young by 27<sup>th</sup>. A pair of Common Gulls, possibly attracted by the BHG colony, was seen to be displaying/pair bonding on 16<sup>th</sup>. On 17<sup>th</sup> they started a nest on a raft but a Coot stole the material. The pair was noted mating on 27<sup>th</sup> and on other dates and it looks as though they have a nest which is out of general view. Could this be a first breeding of Common Gull at Carsington? And even for Derbyshire? A pair of Common Terns was around the rafts at the Wildlife Centre from 18<sup>th</sup>, finally finding nest space on 21<sup>st</sup>. This nest was lost by 30<sup>th</sup>, a brood of 3 young Black-headed Gulls were on the same raft. Tern passage included 5 Common on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 Arctic Tern on 9<sup>th</sup> and 2 Black Terns on 5<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 8<sup>th</sup>.

A Turtle Dove on the Wildlife Centre Feeders on 20<sup>th</sup> must have been a surprise. It stayed all day, showing only occasionally and is the first record since May 1996. A Cuckoo was seen flying north on 4<sup>th</sup>, this species was last seen in May 2004. A Yellow Wagtail was at the Wildlife Centre on 13<sup>th</sup>, 1 White Wagtail on 6<sup>th</sup>, 1 Wheatear on 17<sup>th</sup>, a Reed Warbler at Hopton Pond on 29<sup>th</sup>, 2 Spotted Flycatchers in Hall Wood from 11<sup>th</sup>, a pair of Brambling on 5<sup>th</sup>, a pair of Linnets on Stones Island on 11<sup>th</sup> and another pair in Fishtail on 19<sup>th</sup>. A singing Pied Flycatcher was found northeast of Millfields Spit on 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> and another in Hall Wood from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>. A count on a walk round the site by 2 observers on 7<sup>th</sup> totalled 40 Chiffchaff, 41 Willow Warblers, 15 Garden Warblers, 28 Blackcaps, 7 Whitethroats, 41 Blackbirds, 57 Robins, 51 Wrens, 31 Blue Tits, 23 Great tits, 42 Chaffinch, 14 Goldfinch and a Skylark singing over Upperfields Farm.

113 Species recorded compared with 103 in May 2007, 107 in 2006, 107 in 2005, 114 in 2004 and 110 in 2003.



## **APRIL 2008 BIRD NOTES**

April Highlights: Some littles, Little Egret, Little Gull, Little Tern, some bigger, Avocets, Osprey, Great Northern Diver, and many spring migrants.

The Great Northern Diver stayed another month and is gaining summer plumage. A Little Egret was on show from Paul Stanley Hide on 28<sup>th</sup>, last recorded here in April 2006. A Pink-footed Goose stayed with the local geese all month, a female Mandarin was in Tail Bay on 29<sup>th</sup>, a female Scaup at the Wildlife Centre from 13<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2 drake Common Scoters from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 4 Red-breasted Mergansers on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> and a Water Rail in Tail Bay on 2<sup>nd</sup>. Counts included 23 Little Grebe on 6<sup>th</sup>, 28 Great Crested Grebe on 6<sup>th</sup>, 14 Cormorants on 20<sup>th</sup>, 2 Shelduck on 4<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 4 Wigeon on 17<sup>th</sup>, 4 Gadwall on 18<sup>th</sup>, 40 Mallard on 6<sup>th</sup>, 2 Shoveler on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 298 Tufted Duck on 6<sup>th</sup>, 11 Goldeneye on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 163 Coot on 6<sup>th</sup>. Three fresh broods of Mallard were noted on 17<sup>th</sup> and another brood on 21<sup>st</sup>.

An Osprey was viewed from the Wildlife Centre for 10 minutes on 9<sup>th</sup>, and both immature and adult Peregrines were noted on several dates.

Waders included another record of 2 Avocets at the Wildlife Centre on 29<sup>th</sup>; see the photos on our website. Seven pairs of Oystercatcher have been busily establishing nest sites, Little Ringed Plover arrived with 1 on 8<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 19<sup>th</sup>, a Ringed Plover was seen on 4<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 1 Sanderling on 27<sup>th</sup>, 23 Dunlin on 27<sup>th</sup>, 7 Snipe on 7<sup>th</sup>, 1 Black-tailed Godwit on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 Whimbrel on 17<sup>th</sup> and 4 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 15 Curlew at dusk on 15<sup>th</sup>, 14 Redshank on 20<sup>th</sup>, a Greenshank on 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1 Green Sandpiper from 17-22<sup>nd</sup> at the Wildlife Centre and 1 Common Sandpiper on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

Gulls included a Kittiwake on 7<sup>th</sup> and 6 Little Gulls on 5<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, an immature on 24<sup>th</sup> and an adult on 27<sup>th</sup>. Terns started with a total of 18 Arctic Terns on 20<sup>th</sup> and another 18 on 24<sup>th</sup>, 4 Common Terns on 27<sup>th</sup> and 2 Little Terns also on 27<sup>th</sup>.

The first Swifts arrived with 5 on 26<sup>th</sup> and 30 on 29<sup>th</sup>, a Tree Pipit flew over on 19<sup>th</sup>, a Yellow Wagtail arrived on 11<sup>th</sup> and 30 were on Stones Island on 17<sup>th</sup>, 3 White Wagtails on 7<sup>th</sup>, a female Stonechat on 17<sup>th</sup>, 3 Wheatear on 8<sup>th</sup> and over 100 Redwing were noted on 7<sup>th</sup>. Warblers arrived with a Grasshopper Warbler on 14<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 1 Sedge Warbler on 24<sup>th</sup>, and 1 Reed Warbler on 26<sup>th</sup>, 1 Lesser Whitethroat on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 4 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 1 Whitethroat on 24<sup>th</sup> and 4 on 29<sup>th</sup>, and 2 Garden Warbler on 25<sup>th</sup> and 6 on 29<sup>th</sup>. Counts of warbler species arriving last month include 8 Blackcap on 29<sup>th</sup>, 20 Chiffchaff on 9<sup>th</sup> and 23 Willow Warbler on 20<sup>th</sup>. Two pairs of Willow Tit were noted excavating nest holes, Treecreepers totalled 6 in Hall plus Middle Wood on 13<sup>th</sup> and 2 Brambling were on Stones Island on 6<sup>th</sup>.

118 Species were recorded compared with 103 in April 2007, 118 in 2006, 117 in 2005, 116 in 2004, 120 in 2003 and 107 in 2002.

## **MARCH 2008 BIRD NOTES**

March Highlights: Whooper Swans, Egyptian Goose, Common Scoters and Osprey briefly. Long awaited Avocets stay a day, Long-eared Owl shows too well and Swallows and Martins arrive early.

The Great Northern Diver stays another month and is now showing some summer plumage markings on its back. Two Whooper Swans stayed all day on 17<sup>th</sup>. Last month's Pink-footed Goose and the regular Cackling Goose remained with the local Geese all month and an Egyptian Goose joined the goose circus for a day on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Twelve Common Scoter, including 8 drakes, were seen from Sheepwash Hide on 26<sup>th</sup>. Counts this month total 54 Little Grebe on 10<sup>th</sup>, 33 Great Crested Grebe on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 31 Cormorant on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 4 Heron on 10<sup>th</sup>, 11 Mute Swan on 10<sup>th</sup>, 3 Greylag on 17<sup>th</sup>, 85 Canada on 10<sup>th</sup>, 40 Barnacle on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 3 Shelduck on 15<sup>th</sup>, 124 Wigeon on 15<sup>th</sup>, 2 Gadwall on 20<sup>th</sup>, 6 Teal on 10<sup>th</sup>, 89 Mallard on 10<sup>th</sup>, 1 Pintail on 14<sup>th</sup>, 7 Shoveler on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 Pochard on 28<sup>th</sup>, 308 Tufted Duck on 10<sup>th</sup>, 20 Goldeneye on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7 Goosander on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 32 Moorhen on 10<sup>th</sup> and 284 Coot on 10<sup>th</sup>. A Water Rail was reported in the stream in Tail Bay on 31<sup>st</sup>.

An Osprey was seen from Sheepwash Hide at 1330hrs on 26<sup>th</sup> being mobbed by the local Oystercatchers and was reported again at 1215hrs over Sheepwash Car Park the following day. Ten Buzzards were in the air on 17<sup>th</sup> and 2 Peregrines noted on 10<sup>th</sup>.

This month's highlight must be the first formal record of Avocet for this site. Two were present on 15<sup>th</sup>, viewed from Sheepwash or Paul Stanley Hides, sometimes swimming over deep water or asleep on the spit. Either way, they delighted many birders. Six pairs of Oystercatcher were noted on 8<sup>th</sup> and another pair was probably on Millfields Island at that time. A Ringed Plover flew over calling on 10<sup>th</sup> and a Golden Plover was on Horseshoe Island on 15<sup>th</sup>. Lapwing totalled 82 on 10<sup>th</sup> and Redshank 7 on 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Thirteen Black-tailed Godwit flew west past Paul Stanley Hide on 8<sup>th</sup> and 5 Dunlin flew north past there on 19<sup>th</sup>. Curlew have been on passage and roosting all month, with a maximum count of 47 on Horseshoe Island at dusk on 24<sup>th</sup>.

An adult Mediterranean Gull in full summer plumage came in to roost on 5<sup>th</sup>, and a partial summer plumage bird roosted on 6<sup>th</sup>. An adult Yellow-legged Gull was on Flat Island on 9<sup>th</sup> and at the Wildlife Centre on 12<sup>th</sup>. A Kittiwake was noted on 12<sup>th</sup> and later in the roost that evening. The next sighting of Kittiwake was a series of possibly the same bird on 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. The number of Common Gulls roosting built up this month and 590 were counted on 28<sup>th</sup>.

Owls featured well this month with 2 Barn Owls out hunting on 27<sup>th</sup>, a pair of Little Owls mating on 28<sup>th</sup> and an over-obliging Long-eared Owl found among the swarms of visitors on Stones Island on Easter Monday 24<sup>th</sup>. This owl's daytime roost was obvious and close to the path and it was flushed several times before departing to, hopefully, unharassed roosts on 27<sup>th</sup>. Sand Martin and Swallow arrived along with the Avocets on 15<sup>th</sup>. There was 1 Sand Martin and 2 Swallows, these Swallows being 10 days earlier than any other swallow record for Carsington. House Martins followed later, with 1 on 29<sup>th</sup> and 10 on 30<sup>th</sup>. Thirty Meadow Pipits were noted on 26<sup>th</sup> and 19 Pied Wagtails were on Stones Island on 27<sup>th</sup>, with an early White Wagtail on the same day. The first Wheatear was on Stones Island on 21<sup>st</sup> and 2 were on site on 23<sup>rd</sup>. A Redwing was singing on Stones Island on 20<sup>th</sup> and 47 Redwing were counted in Tail Bay on 26<sup>th</sup>. Blackcap on 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> were probably wintering birds as, probably, were single Chiffchaffs between 11-16<sup>th</sup>. Three Chiffchaff were singing on 17<sup>th</sup> and 21 were counted singing during a walk round the reservoir on 29<sup>th</sup>. A Brambling was seen on Stones Island on 30<sup>th</sup> and Reed Bunting have again been showing well on feeders, with 11 noted on 7<sup>th</sup>.

105 Species recorded this March compared with 95 in 2007, 100 in 2006, 107 in 2005 and 98 in 2004.

## **FEBRUARY 2008 BIRD NOTES**

### **February Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swans, Pink-footed Goose, Curlew and Skylark.**

The Great Northern Diver stayed all month, sometimes elusive over by Fishtail Creek. Ten Whooper Swans flew over on 10<sup>th</sup>. A Pink-footed Goose was seen with the resident Canada, Barnacle and Cackling Geese on 7<sup>th</sup> and it remained for the rest of the month. Two Shelduck were present on 5<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 14<sup>th</sup>. Two Pintail were at Lane End on 13<sup>th</sup> and 4 at Sheepwash on 19<sup>th</sup>. Counts for February included: 59 Little Grebe on 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 36 Great Crested Grebe on 10<sup>th</sup>, 32 Cormorant on 8<sup>th</sup>, 12 Mute Swans on 10<sup>th</sup>, 42 Barnacle Geese on 11<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 162 Wigeon on 18<sup>th</sup>, 4 Gadwall on 12<sup>th</sup>, 42 Teal on 10<sup>th</sup>, 99 Mallard on 10<sup>th</sup>, 2 Shoveler on 19<sup>th</sup>, 3 Pochard on 10<sup>th</sup>, 284 Tufted on 10<sup>th</sup>, 17 Goldeneye on 10<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 20 Goosander on 5<sup>th</sup>, 39 Moorhen on 10<sup>th</sup> and 470 Coot on 10<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that most of the wintering wildfowl had gone by the end of the month.

There was little raptor activity this month. The regular Peregrine was seen mantling a coot or moorhen on 1<sup>st</sup> and Peregrines have not been seen since mid-month, suggesting they may well have gone to take command of their breeding site. Three Buzzards were noted towards Hopton on 3<sup>rd</sup>, a pair were displaying on 6<sup>th</sup> and 6 were in the air on 27<sup>th</sup>. Sparrowhawks have been much in evidence all around the site, darting through the leafless open woodland areas seeking prey.

Oystercatchers have been returning and claiming their breeding island. Although 7 birds on 15<sup>th</sup> was the maximum count, there could well be more, isolated on their islands, one familiar bird with a bar code type leg ring has returned and another pair looked as though they were mating at the Wildlife Centre on 27<sup>th</sup>. Lapwing numbers at the early morning roost near the Sailing Club totalled 340 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 2 Dunlin were on Stones Island on 5<sup>th</sup>. The first returning Curlew were on 19<sup>th</sup>, when at least 2 were heard in the day long mist of that period. By the end of the month 17 were noted at Sheepwash on 28<sup>th</sup>, with small numbers going to evening roost on Horseshoe Island. Redshanks have returned to their breeding grounds and 5 were counted on 8<sup>th</sup>, however, birds are scattered and site numbers may be greater than this.

The gull roost was much reduced, with 2000 Black-headed Gulls and 130 Common Gulls on 13<sup>th</sup>, 330 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 15<sup>th</sup> and 2 Yellow-legged Gulls on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1 on 15<sup>th</sup>.

Skylarks have been noted flying overhead, with a maximum of 5 over Stones Island on 27<sup>th</sup>. The wintering Meadow Pipit flock in Tail Bay and dam wall area numbered 21 on 6<sup>th</sup>. Wintering Redwing were always around, with 64 in Sheepwash car park on 4<sup>th</sup> and 70 near Oldfield Lane on 28<sup>th</sup>, but Fieldfare were difficult to come across, with just 2 recorded in Tail Bay on 20<sup>th</sup>, associating with 2 Mistle Thrush. Five Rooks flew over the Visitor Centre on 6<sup>th</sup> and 2 Raven were displaying on 6<sup>th</sup> and mating on 22<sup>nd</sup>. Siskin and Lesser Redpoll have been significantly absent this month, with just 3 Siskin in Shiningford Creek on 7<sup>th</sup> and 1 Redpoll at the Wildlife Centre on 3<sup>rd</sup>. Reed Buntings have been very prominent on feeding tables again this month, with 5 on Sheepwash and 2 on Lane End feeders on 4<sup>th</sup>.

Only 86 Species this month compared with 88 in Feb 2007, 89 in 2006, 90 in 2005 and 96 in 2004.

## **JANUARY 2008 BIRD NOTES**

### **January Highlights: Great Northern Diver and Bewick's Swan.**

Last month's adult Great Northern Diver stayed all this month, usually found off Stones Island. Two Bewick's Swans were in front of the Wildlife Centre briefly on the 5<sup>th</sup> before flying around the site to mid-water. They left site late morning. Five Pink-footed Geese flew high south west over Tail Bay at 1100hrs on 11<sup>th</sup> and 60 were reported over the north side at 1050hrs on 20<sup>th</sup>. Site counts this month included 58 Little Grebe on 29<sup>th</sup>, 40 Great Crested Grebe on 29<sup>th</sup>, 34 Cormorant on 13<sup>th</sup>, 14 Mute Swans on 13<sup>th</sup>, 13 Greylag Geese on 7<sup>th</sup>, 40 feral Barnacle Geese on 12<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 1 escapee Cackling Goose on 7<sup>th</sup> and on other dates with Barnacles, 2 Shelduck appeared on 21<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 229 Wigeon on 13<sup>th</sup>, 70 Gadwall on 13<sup>th</sup>, 162 Teal on 13<sup>th</sup>, 237 Mallard on 13<sup>th</sup>, 1 female Pintail on 2<sup>nd</sup> and other dates, 2 Shoveler on 19<sup>th</sup>, 113 Pochard on 13<sup>th</sup>, 495 Tufted Duck on 13<sup>th</sup>, 16 Goldeneye on 29<sup>th</sup>, 30 Goosander on 19<sup>th</sup> and 1880 Coot on 13<sup>th</sup>.

Peregrines have been active again this month, using the pylon seen from the Wildlife Centre as a perch, and 2 were noted from Paul Stanley Hide on 3<sup>rd</sup>. Oystercatchers are gradually returning to their breeding islands, with 1 on Millfields Island from 21<sup>st</sup>, 2 at the Wildlife Centre on 27<sup>th</sup> and a total of three seen on 29<sup>th</sup>. Lapwings have been roosting in front of the Sailing Club, numbering 350 on 19<sup>th</sup>. Seven Snipe were noted on 7<sup>th</sup> and 6 were flushed from Sheepwash Spit by a Heron on 8<sup>th</sup>. Five Redshank were at the Wildlife Centre on 27<sup>th</sup> and singles have been noted at various locations around the site all month.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was in Millfields Bay at 1100hrs on 3<sup>rd</sup> and probably the same bird was in the roost on 12<sup>th</sup>. An adult Yellow-legged Gull was in the roost on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The gull roost visible from Lane End Hide on 31<sup>st</sup> included circa 3000 Black-headed, 200 Common, 1500 Lesser Black-backed, 150 Herring and 30 Great Black-backed Gulls.

The Little Owl has been seen several times from the Wildlife Centre with 2 showing on 27<sup>th</sup>, and elsewhere, a pair of Tawny Owl was reported on 14<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. A Kingfisher at Paul Stanley Hide was one of the only birds recorded on the very misty 1<sup>st</sup> day of the New Year. The Kingfisher has since been seen at various shoreline locations throughout the month. A Green Woodpecker on 6<sup>th</sup> was a welcome record of this scarce visitor. Two Skylarks flew over Millfields on 27<sup>th</sup>, calling as they went northwards. Other records included 80 Redwing in the Oldfield Lane area on 16<sup>th</sup>, 4 Goldcrests at the Wildlife Centre on 27<sup>th</sup>, 90 Jackdaw on Flat Island on 27<sup>th</sup>, a flock of 60 Siskin in Shiningford Creek on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5 Lesser Redpoll on Stones Island on 2<sup>nd</sup>. Reed Bunting are occasionally using the feeding stations at the Wildlife Centre, Lane End and Sheepwash and 2 birds were noted on 6<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

Just 85 Species in what has turned out to be a relatively dull birding month. This 85 is compared with 89 in January 2007, 89 in 2006, 95 in 2005, 91 in 2004, 87 in 2003 and 75 in 2002.