

DECEMBER 2009 BIRD NOTES

December Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Little Egret, Bewick's Swan, Egyptian Goose, Ring-billed Gull, Caspian Gull and Water Pipit.

An adult winter plumage Great Northern Diver arrived on 1st, stayed all month and was joined by a juvenile from 6th. A Little Egret appeared at Sheepwash on 27th, then flew away southwest over the dam on 28th and returned to be found at the Wildlife Centre on 31st. Two Bewick's Swans were near the Sailing Club then Sheepwash before flying off west at 1015hrs on 2nd. Pink-footed Geese movement included 44 northwest at 1205hrs on 10th, 82 west at 0950hrs, closely followed by 130 west at 0958hrs on 12th and 1 landed near the dam wall about the same time. An Egyptian Goose showed at Sheepwash and the Wildlife Centre on 1st. Maximum counts were: 79 Little Grebe on 13th, 50 Great Crested Grebe on 23rd, 9 Greylag Geese on 10th and 12th, 280 Canada Geese on 20th, 4 Shelduck on 2nd, 116 Wigeon on 8th, 31 Gadwall on 23rd, 3 Pintail on 1st and 12th, 2 Shoveler on 22nd, 232 Pochard on 8th, a first winter female Scaup from 6th to 26th, 8 Goldeneye on 9th, 20 Goosander on 10th and 29 Moorhen on 17th.

A female Teal with a pale green nasal saddle was well noted on 13th and was traced as being marked at Grand-Mare in Normandy, France on 4th February 2009. A pair of Tufted Duck with bright blue/turquoise bills were recorded on 10th. This form of duck identification is carried out in France and Spain and consists of colour painted onto the top of the bill with large black numbers and letters painted on the colour. Note: the species, sex, bill colour and alpha-numerics and the individual can be traced on the colour ringing website.

The only notable raptor record was a Peregrine feeding on Woodpigeon, seen on the pylon from the Wildlife Centre on 8th. Waders included 27 Golden Plover flying southwest over Millfields on 22nd, a Grey Plover flying over Shiningford Creek on 2nd, 380 Lapwing on 20th, 1 Dunlin on 19th, 4 Snipe at the Wildlife Centre on 19th, a Woodcock flushed at Sheepwash on 3rd and 6th and at Millfields on 20th and 5 Redshank on 17th.

The gull roost included an adult Mediterranean Gull on 10th and 11th, last months adult Ring-billed Gull on 1st, 2nd and 6th, 200 Common Gulls on 17th, 1000 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 2nd, 2 Yellow-legged Gulls on 6th and an adult Caspian Gull on 27th. A healthy looking adult Yellow-legged Gull, which stays on site all day, never seen venturing off for food with the other gulls, has recently been reported eating a Little Grebe. Further information on this will be appreciated.

A Water Pipit was viewed on Stones Island for 10 minutes on 19th. This is the first winter record and fifth site record for this species; all previous records have been in early spring. Species counts include; 14 Meadow Pipit on 17th, 38 Blackbird on 17th, 12 Song Thrush on 23rd, 6 Willow Tit on 17th, 21 Carrion Crow on 3rd, 22 Tree Sparrow on 2nd, 20 Goldfinch on 3rd and 6th, 30 Siskin on 2nd, 1 Linnet on 17th, 4 Crossbill on 31st and 15 Bullfinch on 17th.

93 species recorded compared with 95 in December 2008, 91 in 2007, 99 in 2006, 88 in 2005, 95 in 2004, 97 in 2003 and 89 in 2002.

NOVEMBER 2009 BIRD NOTES

November Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Gannet, Whooper Swan, Garganey, Merlin, Ring-billed Gull and Black Redstart.

A summer plumage Great Northern Diver was found on 3rd and stayed to 18th and a juvenile was present on 21st and 22nd. The third record of Gannet for Carsington was an adult on 23rd and 24th. Three Whooper Swans stayed for an hour on 28th and Pink-footed Geese movements were 80 SE on 8th and 60 SE on 30th. A drake Mandarin was admired from 3rd to 24th and a photograph of a first winter Garganey, which stayed 1st to 16th, clearly showed a rarer drake Green-winged Teal present on 1st. The female Scaup from last month stayed until 7th and the female Common Scoter to 20th. Wildfowl maximum counts were from the WeBS count on 22nd except where stated: 71 Little Grebe, 47 Great Crested Grebe on 13th, 57 Cormorant on 18th, 41 feral Barnacle Geese on 20th, 1 escapee Cackling Goose on 1st, 407 Wigeon, 70 Gadwall, 253 Teal, 183 Mallard, 8 Pintail on 8th, 7 Shoveler on 2nd, 3 Red-crested Pochard on 8th, 256 Pochard, 889 Tufted Duck, 8 Goldeneye on 2nd, 2 Goosander on 7th, 2 Water Rail on 21st, 41 Moorhen and 1645 Coot.

A Merlin flew past Stones Island on 6th and a male flew down east bank on 25th. Two Peregrines were seen from the Wildlife Centre on 22nd and singles on many other dates.

Waders included a Golden Plover on 8th, 273 Lapwing roosting in front of the Sailing Club on 26th, 2 Dunlin on 6th and 22nd, a maximum of 7 Snipe at the Wildlife Centre on 12th, a Woodcock over Sheepwash car park on 7th and 19th at dusk, a Curlew on 3rd, a maximum of 5 Redshank on 28th and a Green Sandpiper on 6th.

Gulls attracted birders this month, with a first winter Mediterranean Gull on 1st and an adult from 11th to 17th, a first winter Little Gull flew through early on 24th, the adult Ring-billed Gull was in the roost all month, and roost counts included 3500 Black-headed Gulls on 15th, 200 Common Gulls on 15th, 3500 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 15th, 20 Herring Gulls on 15th, 5 Yellow-legged Gulls on 29th and 5 Great Black-backed Gulls on 21st. A surprise on 1st was a juvenile tern, probably Arctic, flying through.

A first Winter Black Redstart was a superb find on 7th. It attracted many birders and was present most of the day on the Sailing Club roof and dam wall. This is the second record for Carsington, the first was way back in 1996. Kingfishers were seen most days around the site. Five Stock Doves were reported near the Wildlife Centre on 9th, 25 Woodpigeon over Millfields on 13th, 6 Skylarks flew over Stones Island on 12th, 20 Meadow Pipits on 18th, 150 Fieldfare flew over the Wildlife Centre on 11th, 100 Redwing on 2nd, a Chiffchaff on 21st, 2 Raven mobbing a Buzzard on 17th, a flock of over 200 Starlings on 4th, 2 Brambling in Tail Bay on 21st, 40 Lesser Redpoll at Millfields on 13th, 7 Crossbills flying around Hall Wood on 15th and a now site rare Yellowhammer on 21st.

The best November ever with 104 species recorded compared with 94 in November 2008, 98 in 2007, 97 in 2006, 97 in 2005, 95 in 2004 and 92 in 2003.

OCTOBER 2009 BIRD NOTES

October Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Little Egret, Whooper Swan and Ring-billed Gull.

A Great Northern Diver circled the water for ten minutes at 1015hrs on 15th and then went northwards without landing. Two Little Egrets flew over the Gull roost into Fishtail Creek at dusk on 30th, having spent most of the day at Ogston Reservoir. Three Whooper Swans flew northwards past Sheepwash Hide at 1005hrs on 5th. The formal Wildfowl Count on 11th included: 83 Little Grebe, 42 Great Crested Grebe, 40 Mute Swans, 6 Shelduck, 590 Wigeon, 39 Gadwall, 123 Teal, 132 Mallard, 12 Red-crested Pochard, 148 Pochard, 733 Tufted Duck, 49 Moorhen and 1770 Coot. Other wildfowl maximum counts were 60 Cormorant on 4th, 6 Heron on 12th, 45 Barnacle Geese on 5th, 5 Pintail on 14th, 5 Common Scoter on 14th, 4 Goldeneye on 14th, 10 Goosander on 17th and a Water Rail on 17th, 18th and 23rd. There were 2 escapees; a Chiloe Wigeon 1-9th and a Speckled Teal on 17th.

Raptors included a Sparrowhawk and a Kestrel, both seen from the Wildlife Centre taking prey on 6th. Five Common Buzzards were in the air on 7th. A report of a late osprey on 26th needs further details please. A Peregrine and a Raven were mobbing each other on 6th.

Wader sightings were a Golden Plover on Stones Island and 28 over the Wildlife Centre on 31st, 160 Lapwing on 11th, 6 Dunlin flying north on 15th and singles most days, 7 Snipe at the Wildlife Centre on 16th, 1 Curlew on 17th and 29th and a Common Sandpiper most days up to 12th.

The Gull roost held an adult Mediterranean Gull many dates up to 25th and a first winter bird from 22nd. Both were present on 23rd plus a first winter Little Gull. On 31st the annual adult Ring-billed Gull returned, 1 week early. Gull counts were 100 Common Gull on 29th, 3000 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 5th, 1 Herring Gull on 2nd, 9 Yellow-legged Gulls on 19th, 1 adult Great Black-backed on 13th and a juvenile Arctic Tern passed through on 9th.

Late dates for summer migrants were 1 House Martin on 4th, 1 Wheatear on 2nd, 1 Blackcap on 7th and 5 Chiffchaff on 7th, one of which was singing. Autumn/Winter movement included a site rare Green Woodpecker on 17th, 4 Skylark flying over on 11th, 40 Meadow Pipit on 17th, 1 Rock Pipit on the dam wall on 6th, 7th and 24th, a Stonechat in Tail Bay on 6th, 20 Fieldfare on 17th followed by 400 on 27th, 3 Redwing on 10th and 60 on 11th, 200 Starling on 28th, 1 Brambling on 17th, 30 Siskin on 21st, 4 Linnets on 5th, 5 Lesser Redpoll on 27th, 6 Crossbills over Paul Stanley Hide on 5th and 1 on Stones Island on 11th, and another rare event of 2 Yellowhammers moving through on 17th. Other counts were 15 Collared Dove on 19th, 4 Great Spotted Woodpecker on 10th, 6 Grey Wagtail on 11th, 51 Pied Wagtail on the dam wall early morning on 5th, 10 Robin singing around the Wildlife Centre area on 5th and 36 Tree Sparrow at the Wildlife Centre on 23rd. Kingfishers have again been putting on a good show for observers in the hides. One bird was seen to catch 6 fish from the rock island close in to Paul Stanley Hide on 14th and combined efforts on 11th concluded that there are probably 4 birds on site.

106 species recorded this October compared with 94 in 2008, 109 in 2007, 99 in 2006, 99 in 2005, 91 in 2004, 94 in 2003 and 103 in 2002.

SEPTEMBER 2009 BIRD NOTES

September Highlights: Garganey, Red Kite, Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Med Gull and Kittiwake.

Two late broods of Little Grebe appeared this month, boosting a poor year for breeding grebes. An escape Chiloe Wigeon appeared on 28th, having spent most of the summer at Ogston Reservoir and a juvenile Garganey was around Horseshoe Island 15th to 17th. Common wintering wildfowl numbers are significantly increasing; the formal wildfowl count (WeBS) found twice the number of Tufted Duck compared with last year. Maximum counts totalled: 53 Little Grebe on 20th, 41 Great Crested Grebe on 20th, 54 Cormorant on 28th, 6 Heron on 28th, 23 Mute Swans on 20th, 1 Greylag on 22nd, 15 Barnacle on 8th, 7 Shelduck on 15th, 270 Wigeon on 20th, 27 Gadwall on 14th, 57 Teal on 20th, 170 Mallard on 20th, 2 Pintail on 12th, 1 Shoveler on 10th and 28th, 2 Red-crested Pochard on 11th and 12th, 85 Pochard on 28th, 1008 Tufted Duck on 20th, a female Common Scoter on 30th, 25 Moorhen on 20th and 1379 Coot on 20th.

Raptor species have put on a good show with a Red Kite being mobbed by a Buzzard near Hall Wood on 13th and a juvenile Marsh Harrier over Shiningford and Wildlife Centre Creeks on 7th. Other raptor records this month included 2 Sparrowhawks chasing Pied Wagtails over the dam wall on 9th, 14 Buzzards in the air on 7th, Osprey on 4th and 7th and one perched on the control tower roof on 10th, a Hobby over Stones Island on 4th and a Peregrine on the pylon on 4th and 6th, also seen on 7th and 8th.

Wader passage has been poor but included 1 Oystercatcher on 9th, a Grey Plover flying by Stones Island on 14th, 111 Lapwing counted on 20th, a Dunlin on 30th, 5 Snipe at the Wildlife Centre on 22nd, 1 Whimbrel on 9th, 1 Curlew on 10th, 2 Redshank on 14th, a Green Sandpiper briefly on 8th and 2 Common Sandpipers on 7th and 9th.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was in the gull roost on 17th and an adult Kittiwake on 30th. The roost held 3600 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 10th and 7 Yellow-legged Gulls on 15th. A juvenile Arctic Tern was off Sheepwash on 3rd, another Arctic Tern on 4th and a Black Tern off Sheepwash on 3rd.

Kingfishers have been giving exceptional views this month from many locations including 2 together at the Wildlife Centre on 6th, 2 at Sheepwash on 19th, 2 on Sailing Club jetty on 27th and seen fishing most days from the fence posts to the left of Paul Stanley Hide. Two Sand Martins were noted on 3rd, 10 Swallows on 14th and 1 on 30th, 55 House Martins around the Visitor Centre on 11th and 16 on 30th. Early morning counts along the dam wall have found 18 Meadow Pipits on 27th, 6 Grey Wagtails on 11th, 107 Pied Wagtails on 14th and 7 Linnets on 8th. A Yellow Wagtail was near Watersports on 11th and a White Wagtail on Stones Island on 15th. A Redstart was in Wildlife Centre Creek on 11th and a flock of 26 Mistle Thrushes seen on 2nd. Warblers were mainly seen in the Wildlife and Shiningford Creek areas and included a Lesser Whitethroat on 9th, 2 Common Whitethroats on 9th, 1 Garden Warbler on 11th, a male Blackcap on 27th, 14 Chiffchaff on 13th and 7 on 27th and a Willow Warbler on 9th. Four Willow Tit were noted on 14th, 2 Jays were around Paul Stanley Hide on 14th, 12 Rooks feeding in the dam wall fields on 8th and 4 Raven over Hall Wood on 13th.

104 Species were recorded this September compared with 108 in 2008, 108 in 2007, 101 in 2006, 101 in 2005, 94 in 2004 and 104 in 2003.

AUGUST 2009 BIRD NOTES

(to 27th Aug only)

August Highlights: Little Egret, Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Hobby and Black Tern.

The Little Egret stayed until 6th, having been on site for 3 weeks. Broods noted this month included the first brood this year of Great-crested Grebe on 24th, followed by another on 27th, Mallard now up to 22 broods this year, Tufted Duck to 24, Moorhen to 13 and Coot to 8. Wildfowl numbers included 1 Shelduck on 2nd, 4 Wigeon on 21st, 7 Gadwall on 21st, 6 Teal on 23rd, 83 Mallard on 23rd, 1 Shoveler on 2nd, 10 Pochard on 6th, 309 Tufted Duck on 23rd, 2 drake Common Scoter on 6th and 575 Coot on 23rd.

A cream head Marsh Harrier went through southeast early on 1st, starting off a month of many raptor sightings. A young Sparrow Hawk was calling in Tail Bay on 17th and 4 Common Buzzards were in the air on 19th. Ospreys were reported on 6th, 10th, catching a fish on 11th and throughout the day on 16th, including being mobbed by a Peregrine. These Osprey sightings probably involved 3 different birds, all during a period of noted passage southwards through Derbyshire. The number of Hobby sightings has also been numerous, with a pair hunting hirundines over Shiningford on 15th, taking the prey to a pylon. Another caught and carried prey off west on 21st and another was hunting in rain over Stones Island on 26th at dusk. Peregrines have been seen regularly and 3 were noted over the pylons on 16th.

Wader passage has been poor, several species being heard flying through but very few staying. They included 1 Little-ringed Plover at Sheepwash on 2nd, 1 Ringed Plover heard near Stones Island at dusk on 21st, an Oystercatcher with an abnormally long upper mandible on 3rd-7th, 55 Lapwing counted on 23rd, a Dunlin heard in flight on 16th, 3 Black-tailed Godwit landed on Horseshoe Island on 2nd, 2 Curlew on 1st, 1 Redshank on 12th, 1 Green Sandpiper heard at dusk flying around Watersports area on 5th and 2 Common Sandpipers on 24th and other days.

The gull roost started this month with mainly Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 180 counted on 5th, 1300 on 21st and still increasing. Two Common Gulls on 6th and a first summer Herring Gull on 23rd were also in the roost. An adult Yellow-legged Gull has been on site all month and 4 were in the roost on 26th. A Common Tern and 2 Black Terns were on site on 24th.

Two Stock Doves flew over on 7th and 20th, a Little Owl in the field between the Wildlife Centre and Car Park on 5th, 2 Swifts on 25th (were these the last this year? Please make a note of late migrants passing through) and 2 Kingfishers on 24th. A Kingfisher has been giving superb views fishing from fence posts to the left of Paul Stanley Hide. A pair of Swallows were recorded taking food under the canopy of the draw-off tower on 16th, all to the same location, confirming breeding here, which has been suspected over the past few years. At least 50 House Martins were around the breeding colony at the Visitor Centre on 1st. A Yellow Wagtail was seen during the evening with the pre-roost Pied Wagtail flock on 16th and 24th. A Redstart was near the Wildlife Centre on 9th and a Wheatear was on Millfields Island on 24th. There were four Spotted Flycatchers recorded on 18th and they have been seen in Hall Wood, Penn Carr and Tail Bay. A Goldfinch flock numbering well over 50, the majority being juveniles, was noted on 19th and seen on other dates and ranging from Stones Island to Shiningford Creek.

98 Species were recorded this August (to 27th) compared with 99 in 2008, 109 in 2007, 97 in 2006, 105 in 2005, 113 in 2004 and 110 in 2003.

JULY 2009 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Wildfowl Broods, Little Egret and Common Tern Chick.

By the end of July, numbers of broods totalled 2 Little Grebe [2 last year], 20 Mallard [17 last year], 20 Tufted Duck [7], 12 Moorhen [2] and 7 broods of Coot [12 last year]. Maximum counts, excluding young, were 17 Little Grebe on 13th, 32 Great Crested Grebe on 12th, 1 Little Egret from 16th to the end of the month, usually roosting in trees on Sailing Club Island, 3 Heron on 13th, 25 Mute Swan plus 6+6+5+2 cygnets on 26th, 334 Canada Geese on 13th, 8 Barnacle Geese on 13th, 2 Shelduck on 1st, 3 Wigeon on 8th, 4 Gadwall on 13th, 2 Teal on 3rd, 81 Mallard on 13th, 6 Red-crested Pochard on 5th, 1 Pochard on 26th and 113 Tufted Duck on 13th.

Raptors included 2 Buzzard in Hall Wood on 27th, a juvenile Kestrel on Horseshoe Island on 19th, a Hobby on 1st and several Peregrine records on the pylon from the Wildlife Centre, plus a juvenile on 14th and a Common Tern mobbing an adult Peregrine on 19th.

Wader numbers were 9 Oystercatchers on 1st, 34 Lapwing on 16th, a Dunlin on 22nd, 5 Black-tailed Godwit on 9th at Paul Stanley Hide, 1 Whimbrel flying north on 27th, 4 Curlew at the Wildlife Centre on 19th, 3 Redshank on 18th, a Green Sandpiper at the Wildlife Centre on 13th and 2 Common Sandpipers on 22nd. By the end of the month the local breeding Oystercatchers and Redshank had left site.

Breeding performance of the Black-headed Gulls was difficult to monitor due to overcrowding on the raft and nests hidden on Horseshoe Island and the best indicator was a total of 9 juveniles on 10th. An adult Yellow-legged Gull was on site all month, usually on buoys around the Sailing Club and Stones Island. The pair of Common Terns breeding on Flat Island successfully raised 1 chick, which took its first flight on 27th and then moved on to Sailing Club Island.

Other records include 2 Stock Doves over Stones Island on 26th, a Barn Owl carrying prey on 5th, and a Little Owl near the Wildlife Centre from 18th. 5 Swifts still around the eaves of the Visitor Centre on 26th are presumed to have 'probably bred'. A Kingfisher has been showing well, usually at Paul Stanley Hide but also at other locations, and 2 Kingfisher were noted on 21st. A Skylark, seldom heard at Carsington, was singing over the dam on 18th, 7 Sand Martins flew through on 27th, 31 House Martins were around the Visitor Centre nest site on 21st, 2 juvenile Grey Wagtails in front of Paul Stanley Hide on 20th, 2 Redstart on 30th, a Reed Warbler singing at Hopton Pond and another at Hopton Reedbed on 9th, 5 Raven on 1st, 11 Linnet at the Wildlife Centre on 15th, and 14 Bullfinch, including 4 juveniles, were noted on 8th.

95 Species were recorded this month compared with 97 in July 2008, 94 in 2007, 94 in 2006, 97 in 2005 and 102 in 2004.

JUNE 2009 BIRD NOTES

June Highlights: Red-crested Pochard, Common Scoter, Red Kite, Hobby, Black-tailed Godwit, Mediterranean Gull, Black Tern and Pied Flycatcher.

No broods of Grebe yet, but a pair of Great Crested Grebe with 1 juvenile appeared at Sheepwash on 19th. This pair and juv could have flown in, but maybe bred in a remote area here such as Fishtail Creek. Three pairs of Mute Swans had broods of 6,5 and 3 by 10th, and the pair on Big Island showed 6 fresh cygnets on 23rd, 4 broods in total is one up on last year. The fifth brood of Barnacle Geese was noted on 19th, matching last year. Mallard broods totalled 13 by 23rd compared with 15 last year and, so far, just 1 brood of Tufted Duck as last year. Moorhen broods totalled 9 by 22nd, which is very encouraging after none by this time last year, but Coot have just 3 broods, down from 8 last year. Two Red-crested Pochards were at the Wildlife Centre from 28th to 30th and 2 Common Scoter on 1st increased to 12 on 2nd. A count on 14th included 10 Little Grebe, 25 Great Crested Grebe, 537 Canada Geese, 47 Mallard, 129 Tufted and 68 Coot.

A Red Kite was mobbed by Crow on 13th, Sparrow Hawk young heard on 14th and Hobby noted on 6th and 29th.

Wader breeding has again been difficult to monitor due to the tall vegetation growth on most islands. Of the 7 pairs of Oystercatchers present, 4 pairs have bred, one each on Millfields, Sailing Club, Big and Flat Islands and probably another pair on Shiningford Island. Most, if not all broods had reduced to one by 19th. Two Lapwing juveniles and 1 young Redshank were still present on Big Island on 23rd. Two further broods of Redshank were noted, from Paul Stanley Hide on Sheepwash Spit on 4th and not since, and at the Wildlife Centre on 8th and 10th, these may have bred on the grass roof of the Wildlife Centre. Other waders recorded include a Dunlin at Paul Stanley Hide on 8th, 3 Black-tailed Godwit on Stones Island on 11th, 2 Black-tailed Godwit at the Wildlife Centre on 27th, a Curlew on 23rd and a Common Sandpiper on 7th and 19th.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was outside the Wildlife Centre at 1045hrs on 21st, 2 of the 10 pairs of Black-headed Gulls at the Wildlife Centre had young in nests on 22nd, and a pair started nest building outside Paul Stanley Hide on 10th and then settled to nest on Flat Island from 16th. The pair of Common Terns, which failed to secure a nest site near the Wildlife Centre, had set-up a nest on Flat Island by 8th and were still there on 19th but can only be seen from a boat. Four Common Terns were present on 2nd, 1 Arctic Tern on 2nd and 4 Black Terns on 1st.

A Barn Owl was seen hunting between Paul Stanley and Sheepwash Hides on the evening Club walk on 16th. Swifts continued to fly under the eaves of the Visitor Centre up to the 29th at least, suggesting the first breeding record here. A Kingfisher was in Penn Carr on 4th and 5th and then regularly at other locations from 11th. A count of House Martin nests around the Visitor Centre, Watersports and Sailing Club buildings on 14th totalled 29, this is ever growing at 9 up on last year. A Grey Wagtail was noted carrying food near Millfields on 15th and 2 Redstarts were reported near the Wildlife Centre on 2nd. The Pied Flycatcher in Fishtail Creek was singing from the top of an empty looking box on 1st but no sign of it on 15th. Four juvenile Jays were following their parents through Hall Wood begging for food on 16th. A Survey on 15th totalled 44 Wood Pigeon, 3 Grey Wagtail, 40 Wren, 15 Dunnock, 43 Robin, 52 Blackbird, 4 Mistle Thrush, 1 Reed Warbler, 2 Lesser Whitethroat, 10 Whitethroat, 19 Garden Warbler, 29 Blackcap, 16 Chiffchaff, 24 Willow Warbler, 2 Goldcrest [numbers of this species have recently crashed on site], 3 Spotted Flycatcher, 12 Long-tailed Tit, 9 Willow Tit, 2 Coal Tit, 47 Blue Tit, 17 Great Tit, 2 Nuthatch, 2 Tree Creeper, 16 Magpie, 34 Jackdaw, 12 Carrion Crow, 1 Raven, 16 House Sparrow, 20 Tree Sparrow, 39 Chaffinch, 5 Goldfinch, 17 Bullfinch and 3 Reed Bunting.

93 Species compared with 90 in June 2008, 93 in 2007, 89 in 2006, 94 in 2005, 96 in 2004 and 84 in 2003.

MAY 2009 BIRD NOTES

May Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Red Kite, Hobby, Turnstone, Kittiwake, Mediterranean Gull, Sandwich Tern, Black Tern, Cuckoo and Pied Flycatcher.

The adult Great Northern Diver, now in splendid summer plumage was seen flying around on 9th and was last recorded on 10th. No broods of Grebe yet but, by the 31st, there was 1 brood of Swan, 4 broods of Barnacle Geese, 4 of Moorhen, 1 of Coot and 8 of Mallard. A female Mandarin, seen on 19th and last month, may well have a nest at Penn Carr which would be a first breeding at Carsington. Wildfowl counts included a Shelduck on 6th and 16th, 3 Gadwall on 15th, 2 Teal on 30th, 34 Mallard on 10th, 2 Shoveler on 26th, 1 Pochard on 19th, 101 Tufted Duck on 10th and 80 Coot on 10th.

Red Kite have been notable this month with 2 on 16th, 1 on 30th and another on 31st. A Hobby was at Millfields on 11th and over Sheepwash on 18th. Last year's breeding Buzzards in Hall Wood may not have repeated but there is significant Buzzard activity between Green and Hopton Ponds!

Five pairs of Oystercatchers have young on islands, including the Oystercatcher with the barcode leg ring which has bred on Flat Island. Big Island had a pair of Redshank with 2 young on 18th, Lapwing with 3 young on 25th and another Lapwing brood of 3 on 30th. Wader maximums on passage included 4 Ringed Plover on 14th, 3 Sanderling on 15th, 8 Dunlin on 8th, 1 Bar-tailed Godwit on 1st, 8 Whimbrel on 5th, 4 Curlew on 5th, 6 Common Sandpiper on 15th and 8 Turnstone on 15th.

An adult Mediterranean Gull on Horseshoe Island on 13th was a surprise and it stayed around until 16th. The Black-headed Gull colony at the Wildlife Centre has 5 nests on the raft and 5 on the island, leaving no space for the pair of Common Terns which have been here all month. Two Common Gulls on Horseshoe Island on 1st fuelled hopes of breeding following last year's attempt but, sadly, only 1 bird kept returning up to 22nd. A third summer Herring Gull was well noted on 30th, and a Kittiwake early on 8th was followed by another briefly on 11th. A good Tern passage included 1 Sandwich Tern on 16th, a total of 84 Arctic Terns through in smaller flocks on 13th and 6 Black Terns, also on 13th.

A Collared Dove nest at the Wildlife Centre sadly collapsed shortly after 7th, which is a shame as this species still has not been proven as breeding on site. A Cuckoo was seen flying, then perched, from the Wildlife Centre on 16th, only the second record since May 2004. Over 200 Swift were noted on 14th and Swift activity around the Visitor Centre eaves at the end of the month suggest breeding may be on its way, which would be a first at Carsington for this species. A Great Spotted Woodpecker pair was feeding young in Tail Bay on 22nd and Swallows are again breeding in the stone barn. There were only single Yellow Wagtails early in the month; the last on Stones Island on 14th and a Wheatear was on the dam wall on 2nd and Sheepwash on 3rd. Two Sedge Warblers were noted on 7th, 3 Reed Warblers were singing at Hopton Pond on 30th, 2 Lesser Whitethroats between Wildlife Centre and Sheepwash on 1st and 5 Whitethroats on 6th. Three Spotted Flycatcher were in Hall and Middle Woods on 24th and a Pied Flycatcher was singing in Fishtail Creek from 11th to the end of the month. Three families of Willow Tit were noted by 31st, both Nuthatch and Treecreeper seen carrying food, and Jay activity suggest breeding on the edge of Hall Wood. Survey counts on 11th included 24 Wood Pigeon, 7 Collared Dove, 25 Wren, 14 Dunnock, 30 Robin, 18 Blackbird, 5 Song Thrush, 13 Garden Warbler, 14 Blackcap, 17 Chiffchaff, 26 Willow Warbler, 14 Blue Tit, 10 Great Tit, 9 Magpie, 17 Jackdaw, 16 Carrion Crow, 13 House Sparrow, 14 Tree Sparrow and 25 Chaffinch.

107 Species recorded compared with 113 in May 2008, 103 in 2007, 107 in 2006, 107 in 2005, 114 in 2004 and 110 in 2003.

APRIL 2009 BIRD NOTES

April Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Honey Buzzard, Hobby, Avocet, Sandwich and Black Terns, Pied Flycatcher and common spring migrants.

Three Great Northern Divers had reduced to one by the end of month, by which time this adult bird was in full summer plumage. There was a pair of Mandarin at Millfields on 20th and 26th and 4 Common Scoter were seen off Stones Island on 13th. Counts included 18 Little Grebe on 19th, 47 Great Crested Grebe on 21st, 2 Shelduck on 1st and 19th, 12 Wigeon on 1st, 2 Gadwall on 2nd, 48 Mallard on 19th, 2 Shoveler on 1st, 1 Pochard on 2nd, 215 Tufted Duck on 19th, 4 Goldeneye on 1st, 3 Goosander on 5th, 16 Moorhen on 19th and 115 Coot on 19th. Three broods of Mallard were noted by 30th.

A Honey Buzzard came in from the west at 1220hrs on 21st, circled Hopton End and was escorted off east by 2 Common Buzzard at 1230hrs. Two Hobby were noted on 15th at 1610hrs. Both sightings are early records at Carsington for these migrant raptors.

Wader passage was poor this month, but 5 Avocets on 2nd and another on 26th made up for the lack of species. Oystercatcher, Redshank and Lapwing were busily establishing nest sites on various islands. Wader counts included 5 Little Ringed Plover on 19th, 1 Dunlin on 21st and on later dates, 1 Snipe on 27th, 1 Black-tailed Godwit on 25th, 2 Bar-tailed Godwit on 24th, 1 Whimbrel on 16th and on subsequent dates, 4 Curlew on 4th, 7 Redshank on 18th and 2 Common Sandpiper on 17th.

Gulls included 4 Little Gulls on 15th, rising to 13 on 16th, and a third year Yellow-legged Gull on 11th. A good tern passage included a Sandwich Tern on 10th and another on 14th, 1 Common Tern on 4th and 13 on 25th, 5 Arctic Terns on 20th and 35 on 17th, 1 Black Tern on 24th and a different Black Tern on 25th.

The first Swift arrived, 7 days earlier than the previous record, on 8th. Swallows numbered 12 on 2nd and 200 plus on 28th. 4 House Martins were around their nest sites at the Visitor Centre on 11th. Migrant wagtail species were in low numbers this year, with 1 Yellow Wagtail on 8th and 8 on 18th and 2 White Wagtails on 18th. These wagtails were mainly seen on Stones Island in the evening feeding with the local Pied Wagtail flock which totalled 40 on 8th. Single Wheatears were noted on many dates and 2 were on the dam wall on 25th. Warbler species kept arriving, with 1 Lesser Whitethroat on 19th, 1 Whitethroat on 19th and 1 Garden Warbler on 21st. Counts of warbler species, first recorded last month, included 8 Blackcap on 20th, 12 Chiffchaff on 1st and 13 Willow Warbler on 20th. A Pied Flycatcher was singing in Hall Wood on 20th and a male Brambling was with Chaffinches on Stones Island on 5th. A pair of Willow Tit were feeding young in a nest hole in a tree stump on 28th, 3 Siskin were noted on 1st and 3 Redpoll were on Stones Island on 9th.

110 Species were recorded compared with 118 in April 2008, 103 in 2007, 118 in 2006, 117 in 2005, 116 in 2004, 120 in 2003 and 107 in 2002.

MARCH 2009 BIRD NOTES

March Highlights: Red Throated Diver, 4 Great Northern Divers, Iceland Gull, Kittiwake, Water Pipit and early summer migrants return.

The Great Northern Diver count remained at 4 to 22nd at least, and a Red Throated Diver flew in on 22nd for 50 minutes. Maximum counts this month total 39 Little Grebe on 9th, 41 Great Crested Grebe on 22nd, 43 Cormorant on 15th, 9 Mute Swan on 22nd, 3 Greylag on 9th and 23rd, 75 Canada on 22nd, 47 Barnacle on 2nd, 3 Shelduck on 6th, 44 Wigeon on 15th, 2 Gadwall on 17th, 18 Teal on 6th, 69 Mallard on 9th, 10 Pintail on 13th, 6 Shoveler on 21st, 264 Tufted Duck on 22nd, 17 Goldeneye on 20th, 8 Goosander on 22nd, 28 Moorhen on 6th and 199 Coot on 22nd. A female Mandarin was found under willows in Shiningford area on 31st, the long staying female Scaup was last recorded on 21st and a drake Common Scoter was in Millfields Bay on 1st.

Thirteen Buzzards were in the air on 15th and 10 on 30th. A pair of Peregrine was over Hall Wood on 22nd and again on 25th.

At least 5 pairs of Oystercatcher were noted on 9th and the first Little Ringed Plover record of the year was 2 at Paul Stanley Hide on 17th. Two Dunlin were on Horseshoe Island on 4th and 12th and a maximum count of 25 Snipe was there on 4th. A Woodcock was flushed near Paul Stanley Hide on 8th. A Black-tailed Godwit at the Wildlife Centre on 14th was followed by 2 early on 17th, and the largest Curlew roost there of 33 on 12th was outnumbered by a flock 44 of landing on Sheepwash Spit on 5th. A Common Sandpiper at Paul Stanley Hide on 31st was flushed by a Sparrow Hawk and 7 Redshank were noted around the Wildlife Centre and Stones Island on 16th.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was near Stones Island on 2nd, there was a first winter Iceland Gull in the morning of 17th, 39 Great Black-backed were on Horseshoe Island on 30th and an adult Kittiwake flew through northwards early on 14th. Gull roost counts included 2500 Black-headed on 4th, 220 Common on 4th, 425 Lesser Black-backed on 17th, 3 Herring on 16th and a near adult Yellow-legged on 7th and 10th.

A Barn Owl was around Sheepwash on 8th and 3 Skylark flew over the dam on 21st. The first Sand Martin flew through on 12th, with 20 noted on 21st. Swallows started with 1 on 23rd and 12 on 27th. At least 50 Meadow Pipits were on the dam wall on 21st. A Scandinavian Rock Pipit was found on the dam wall on 15th and a Rock Pipit was reported on Stones Island on 17th and dam on 19th. Two Water Pipits were recorded on the dam on 31st but no sign later. Over 50 Pied Wagtails were on Stones Island on 27th and 2 White Wagtails were noted on 26th, followed by 2 on the dam on 31st. A male Stonechat was in Tail Bay on 1st, a first Wheatear in front of Paul Stanley Hide on 22nd and 50 Redwing were near Lane End on 4th. The first singing Blackcap was at Millfields on 30th, and a singing Chiffchaff was there on 12th, building to 5 by 15th. A pair of Willow Tit was observed excavating a nest hole in a rotting stump on 22nd and 150 Jackdaw flew past the Wildlife Centre to roost on 26th.

103 Species recorded this March compared with 104 in March 2008, 95 in 2007, 100 in 2006, 107 in 2005 and 98 in 2004.

FEBRUARY 2009 BIRD NOTES

February Highlights: Great Northern Divers, Scaup and Common Scoter.

The Great Northern Diver population continued at 4 birds to 25th at least. Four Shelduck were seen at several locations on 22nd. Three drake Pintails were noted from the Wildlife Centre on 18th and a female Pintail was around Sheepwash Spit from 19th. A female Scaup stayed between Big Island and Sheepwash all month and a Drake Common Scoter was at Millfields from 22nd, with 3 present on 26th. Counts for February included: 49 Little Grebe on 19th, 27 Great Crested Grebe on 19th, 53 Cormorant on 22nd, 12 Mute Swans on 22nd, 46 Barnacle Geese on 15th, 117 Wigeon on 22nd, 7 Gadwall on 15th, 15 Teal on 22nd, 101 Mallard on 13th, 22 Pochard on 15th, 532 Tufted Duck on 22nd, 31 Goldeneye on 15th, 5 Goosander on 19th, 13 Moorhen on 22nd and 458 Coot on 22nd. These counts were similar to those in February last year and many of the wintering wildfowl had gone by the end of the month.

A Buzzard was watched eating prey to the left of Sheepwash Hide on 11th and 3 were seen on 17th and 23rd. A Peregrine was noted on 7th and a dark looking immature peregrine was chasing 2 newly arrived Oystercatchers low across the water on 17th.

Oystercatchers have been returning and claiming their breeding island and, by 22nd, numbered 12 birds. One notable returnee is a male wearing a bar-code type ring and can usually be found from Paul Stanley Hide. An elusive Ringed Plover was noted between 22nd to 25th, 295 Lapwing were counted on 22nd, a Dunlin was seen on 18th and 22nd and 23 Snipe were showing at the Wildlife Centre on 25th. Curlew are now moving through and 16 at the Wildlife Centre early on 26th had probably roosted there overnight. Redshank are seen in singles at many locations but the maximum count was only 4 on 22nd.

The gull roost is a little less than in February last year, with 1200 Black-headed Gulls, 250 Common Gulls and 130 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 19th. Other Gulls recorded include an adult Mediterranean Gull in the roost on 21st, a Yellow-legged Gull on 6th and 20th and an adult Kittiwake at 1000hrs on 28th.

Skylarks have been noted flying overhead, with a maximum of 5 on 17th. The wintering Meadow Pipit flock in Tail Bay and dam wall area numbered 14 on 23rd. Stonechat records have been notable this month, with 1 on 4th, 2 on the Dam Wall on 6th and 1 in Tail Bay from 23rd. Counts from a survey on 23rd found 51 Wood Pigeon, 8 Collared Dove, 9 Wren, 16 Dunnock, 38 Robin, 30 Blackbird, 8 Song Thrush, 5 Mistle Thrush, 5 Willow Tit, 26 Blue Tit, 49 Great Tit, 3 Treecreeper, 18 Magpie, 61 Jackdaw, 29 Rook, 33 Carrion Crow, 2 Raven, 36 Starling, 28 House Sparrow, 40 Tree Sparrow and 26 Bullfinch. Other counts include 60 Redwing on 2nd, an incredible 85 Long-tailed Tits heading towards Hopton on 7th and 20 Chaffinch on Paul Stanley feeders on 11th.

Only 86 Species this month compared with 86 in February 2008, 88 in 2007, 89 in 2006, 90 in 2005 and 96 in 2004.

JANUARY 2009 BIRD NOTES

January Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Pinkfeet, Scaup and Common Scoter.

Three of last month's Great Northern Divers, a drake Common Scoter and a female Scaup were all showing on 1st January, drawing in many admirers and new year listers. Four Divers were close together from Sheepwash hide for most of the afternoon of 30th. The Scoter was last noted on 23rd and Scaup on 26th. Fifty Pink-footed Geese flew low southeast over Millfields at 1400hrs on 13th. A surprise to observers at Sheepwash on 30th was a Heron consuming a large rat, whole and head first! Site counts this month included 74 Little Grebe on 18th, 36 Great Crested Grebe on 18th, 44 Cormorant on 3rd, 3 Heron on 5th, 25 Mute Swans on 18th, 43 feral Barnacle Geese on 26th, 1 Greylag on 30th, 1 Shelduck on 29th, 218 Wigeon on 18th, 53 Gadwall on 18th, 68 Teal on 18th, 122 Mallard on 18th, 1 female Pintail on 4th and other dates, 1 Shoveler on 3rd, 185 Pochard on 18th, 660 Tufted Duck on 18th, 24 Goldeneye on 18th, 20 Goosander on 7th, 40 Moorhen on 18th and 1844 Coot [1880 in Jan last year] on 18th.

A Peregrine was noted on 1st and 17th. Lapwings roosting in front of the Sailing Club totalled 440 on 14th and 545 on 18th, well up on last January's 350. Snipe numbered 11 at the Wildlife Centre on 12th and 19th and a Woodcock was noted flying over the Ranger Base on 6th. Two Redshank were seen together on 25th and other dates and singles have been noted at various locations around the site all month.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was in the roost on 3rd and an adult Yellow-legged Gull was around the site throughout the day on 1st and many other days. The gull roost visible from Lane End Hide on 13th included 3000 Black-headed, 600 Common, 500 Lesser Black-backed, 30 Herring, 2 Yellow-legged and 3 Great Black-backed Gulls. The numbers of large Gulls in the roost has dropped significantly over the past few months. The continuous freezing ground conditions in December may have sent some Lesser Black-backed Gulls to feed in warmer areas, but the major cause is probably due to the use of Hawks on the nearest refuse tip.

A pair of Tawny Owl, reported early in the month, has received so much close attention that a path has been worn to them and could well threaten this traditional breeding site. Please keep to the main path and do not linger. A Kingfisher is being seen regularly, flying in front of Sheepwash and Paul Stanley Hides and 2 were recorded on 18th. The annual wintering Meadow Pipit flock, seen around the Dam Wall and Tail Bay area, totalled only 6 birds on 18th compared with previous winter totals of 15 or more. Thrushes included 4 Fieldfare, 10 Song Thrush and 80 Redwing, all recorded on 5th. Four Willow Tits were reported on 7th, 2 were on Millfields Car Park feeders on 16th and 2 were near the Wildlife Centre on 26th. 20 Long-tailed Tits were at Sheepwash on 4th and 2 Nuthatch were on Paul Stanley feeders on 26th. A pair of Raven, seen on 5th and other dates, have been noted flying in to roost in woodland at dusk. Siskins totalled 37 in Tail Bay on 8th, a Linnet flew over Millfields on 7th, 7 Lesser Redpoll were noted at Millfields on 7th, then at the Wildlife Centre on 14th and Stones Island on 23rd, 7 Bullfinch were noted on 5th and 6 Reed Buntings were on Sheepwash Car Park Feeder on 22nd.

84 Species this month, which is relatively low compared with 85 in January 2008, 89 in 2007, 89 in 2006, 95 in 2005, 91 in 2004, 87 in 2003 and 75 in 2002.