

## **JULY 2010 BIRD NOTES**

### **Highlights: Wildfowl Broods and a Sanderling**

By the end of July, numbers of broods totalled: Little Grebe 1 (2 last year), Great Crested Grebe 8 (0), Mallard 20 (20), Tufted Duck 26 (20), Moorhen 7 (12) and Coot 12 (7). Maximum counts, excluding young, were 18 Little Grebe on the official WeBS count carried out on 25<sup>th</sup>, 36 Great Crested Grebe on 28<sup>th</sup>, 4 Heron on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 25 Mute Swan on 13<sup>th</sup> plus 4+5+3 cygnets, 273 Canada Geese on 13<sup>th</sup>, no Barnacle Geese this month, 2 Shelduck on 20<sup>th</sup>, 3 Gadwall on 6<sup>th</sup>, 2 Teal on 6<sup>th</sup>, 158 Mallard on 25<sup>th</sup>, 1 female Red-crested Pochard 19<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 4 Pochard on 30<sup>th</sup>, 155 Tufted Duck on 25<sup>th</sup> and 422 Coot on 25<sup>th</sup>.

Raptors included 2 Buzzards on 14<sup>th</sup>, a Hobby chasing hirundines over east bank on 20<sup>th</sup> and 2 Peregrines on 20<sup>th</sup>.

Wader numbers were 4 Oystercatchers on 6<sup>th</sup>, 67 Lapwing on 28<sup>th</sup>, a Sanderling at the Wildlife Centre in the evening of 26<sup>th</sup>, 2 Dunlin on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> and singles most days from 12<sup>th</sup>. Black-tailed Godwit were on passage with 5 on Stones Island on 5<sup>th</sup>, 6 flew through early on 12<sup>th</sup>, 1 was on Stones Island on 27<sup>th</sup> and 3 flew through southwards on 28<sup>th</sup>. A late Redshank chick showed on Flat Island with 1 adult on 13<sup>th</sup> and was last recorded on Sheepwash Spit on 24<sup>th</sup>. Common Sandpipers were also passing through with 2 on 4<sup>th</sup> and at least 6 on 14<sup>th</sup>.

Black-headed Gull young were well in evidence with flighted young seen on many shorelines, but surprise was in order when an adult pair marched 3 downy chicks from Flat Island, along the front of Sheepwash and were on Horseshoe Island less than 2 hours later. A pair on the raft by Paul Stanley Hide showed their second brood of at least 1 chick on 26<sup>th</sup>. Some Lesser Black-backed Gulls were visiting site, with 12 on 27<sup>th</sup>, but there is no noticeable gull roost yet. An adult Yellow-legged Gull was on site from 12<sup>th</sup> and 2 from 21<sup>st</sup>. One of the Yellow-legged Gulls was seen swallowing a Tufted Duck chick whole on 23<sup>rd</sup>. The pair of Common Terns breeding on Flat Island moved their 2 flighted young onto Watersports pontoon on 7<sup>th</sup> and they were last seen on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Three Arctic Terns flew through southeast on 19<sup>th</sup>.

Three Stock Doves were high over the water on 28<sup>th</sup> and a Kingfisher returned from 25<sup>th</sup>, hopefully after successfully breeding elsewhere. Corvids were showing well on 27<sup>th</sup> with 18 Magpie, 150 Jackdaw, 9 Rook and 4 Raven, all noted during the day. The Wildlife feeder table held 19 Tree Sparrows on 26<sup>th</sup> and 7 Linnet were on Stones Island on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**91 Species were recorded this month compared with 95 in July 2009, 97 in 2008, 94 in 2007, 94 in 2006, 97 in 2005 and 102 in 2004.**

## **JUNE 2010 BIRD NOTES**

### **June Highlights:**

#### **Hobby, Black-tailed Godwit, Spotted Redshank and Pied Flycatcher.**

No Little Grebe young yet, but 5 broods of Great Crested Grebe by the end of the month is an improvement on the past few years. Mute Swans had broods of 5 and 4 by 22<sup>nd</sup>. Barnacle Geese have failed on Horseshoe and Sailing Club Island and the birds have left site. Mallard broods totalled 9 by 30<sup>th</sup> compared with 13 and 15 in the past two years and no broods of Tufted Duck yet, always a late breeder on this site. Moorhen showed 3 broods by 23<sup>rd</sup> and Coot 6 broods by 24<sup>th</sup>, which compares reasonably with the past few years' performance. The WeBS count on 22<sup>nd</sup> included 27 Great Crested Grebe, 6 Heron, 504 Canada Geese, 1 Teal, 87 Mallard, 177 Tufted and 195 Coot. Other wildfowl sightings were a Pink-footed Goose with Canadas on 17<sup>th</sup> and a Shelduck on 14<sup>th</sup>.

A Hobby was noted over Stones Island on 17<sup>th</sup> and Fishtail Creek on 27<sup>th</sup>. There were probably 8 pairs of Oystercatchers present, based on Big Island, Flat Is/Sheepwash Spit, Shiningford Is, Horseshoe Is, Watersports Is, Sailing Club Is, Fishtail Creek and Millfields Is and 4 pairs successfully reached young stage. Other waders recorded include a Dunlin on Flat Island on 9<sup>th</sup>, a surprisingly early Snipe flushed by a balloon on 30<sup>th</sup>, a Black-tailed Godwit at the Wildlife Centre on 26<sup>th</sup> and a Spotted Redshank on 22<sup>nd</sup>. This Spotted Redshank was seen at Millfields during the WeBS count at 0600hrs and then flew west. It is 5 years since the last record and several others were reported in the Midlands and North on the same day.

11 young Black-headed Gulls could be seen from the Wildlife Centre on 6<sup>th</sup>. On 8<sup>th</sup>, there were 5 nests with young, 3 others probably on eggs and the only nest on Horseshoe Island had failed. The pair on the raft by Paul Stanley Hide had 3 young and another 2 or 3 pairs had nests on Flat Island, also on 8<sup>th</sup>. By 26<sup>th</sup> there were 4 big young/juveniles on Flat Island, at least 1 of which was well flighted. During thunderstorms on 6<sup>th</sup> there were a further 14 Common Terns on site, obviously taking refuge.

Two Little Owls were seen in fields near Fishtail on 25<sup>th</sup> and 2 separate groups of young Tawny Owls were noted on 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Great Spotted Woodpeckers were feeding at least 3 young in a hole in a tree in Middle Wood on 4<sup>th</sup> and 2 family parties were seen on 18<sup>th</sup>. A Swallow pair was feeding young in the Stone Barn on 4<sup>th</sup>, another pair was around the draw-off tower and House Martins have at least 24 active nests around the Visitor Centre. Juvenile Pied Wagtails were on Stones Island and Flat Island on 9<sup>th</sup>, a Sedge Warbler was singing at the ponds in Tail Bay on 15<sup>th</sup> and a Reed Warbler singing at Hopton Pond on 9<sup>th</sup> and Hopton Arm Reedbed on 22<sup>nd</sup>. A Spotted Flycatcher was in the woodland strip north of Hall Wood on 9<sup>th</sup> and 2 in Tail Bay on 15<sup>th</sup>. The lonely Pied Flycatcher was again singing in Warrington Knob on 4<sup>th</sup> but no sign later in the month. A pair of Great Tit was feeding young in the unmarked bird box among the display of bird boxes by the Wildlife Centre on 4<sup>th</sup> and many other dates. They obviously failed to notice the box marked Great Tit. Two family parties of Nuthatch were noted on 28<sup>th</sup>, a family party of Willow Tit on 30<sup>th</sup>, 25 House Sparrows, including this year's young, were around the Visitor Centre on 28<sup>th</sup> and 12 Tree Sparrows including young, were on the Wildlife Centre feeders on 18<sup>th</sup>.

87 Species this month compared with 93 in June 2009, 91 in 2008, 93 in 2007, 89 in 2006 and 84 in 2003. The low number is mainly due to few passage species calling in during a calm hot month.

## **MAY 2010 BIRD NOTES**

### **May Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Red Kite, Osprey, Hobby, Sanderling, Turnstone, Mediterranean Gull, Black Tern, Cuckoo and Pied Flycatcher.**

The long staying adult Great Northern Diver was last seen flying around in full summer plumage on 8<sup>th</sup>. There are no broods of Grebe, Swan, Barnacle Geese, Moorhen or Coot yet but, hopefully, this is only due to the late Spring, and June will be catch-up time. There was only 1 further brood of Mallard to add to last month's total of 4 broods, probably another indicator of delayed breeding for these water birds. Significant wildfowl counts were all from the WeBS survey on 16<sup>th</sup> and included 16 Little Grebe, 40 Great Crested Grebe, 40 Mallard, 147 Tufted Duck and 57 Coot. Additionally, there was a Shelduck on 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and a female Scaup, present from April, was last seen on 7<sup>th</sup>.

A Red Kite drifted over Sheepwash on 2<sup>nd</sup> and an Osprey perched on a buoy for an hour consuming a fish before flying up Fishtail Creek on 26<sup>th</sup>. The first Hobby was noted on 2<sup>nd</sup> and a Peregrine flew over on 1<sup>st</sup>. There has been little Buzzard activity recorded and there are no signs of breeding, which is not surprising following the well publicised local find of 6 dead buzzards, suspected of being poisoned.

At least 6 pairs of Oystercatchers have so far only produced 1 brood of 3, first noted on 5<sup>th</sup> on Millfields Island. Last month's Lapwing brood on Big Island showed 2 well grown young on 17<sup>th</sup> and there were further broods of 4 on 16<sup>th</sup> and 3 on 26<sup>th</sup>, both on Horseshoe Island. A pair of Redshank with 2 young were on Big Island on 12<sup>th</sup>. Passage waders included a Ringed Plover on 12<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2 Sanderling on 12<sup>th</sup>, a Dunlin on 1<sup>st</sup> and following days, 3 Black-tailed Godwit on 5<sup>th</sup>, 1 Bar-tailed Godwit on 21<sup>st</sup>, 15 Whimbrel on 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 Curlew on 10<sup>th</sup>, a Greenshank flying through on 10<sup>th</sup>, 3 Common Sandpiper on 7<sup>th</sup> and a Turnstone from 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>.

A first summer Mediterranean Gull on Horseshoe Island on 1<sup>st</sup> obviously stayed over from 30<sup>th</sup> May and an adult Little Gull was also on the island on 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Black-headed Gull colony at the Wildlife Centre took over the tern raft again, forcing off a nesting Moorhen. These gulls seem to have squeezed what looks like 8 nests onto the raft and 2 young were noted on 29<sup>th</sup>. A pair also have a nest on Horseshoe Island and another pair have bred on the raft at Paul Stanley Hide, showing 3 young on 31<sup>st</sup>. Three Common Terns were noted from 1<sup>st</sup> and a pair have settled on Flat Island again this year. The maximum number of Arctic Terns was 6 feeding off Stones Island on 7<sup>th</sup> and a Black Tern was present on 27-28<sup>th</sup>.

Three Stock Doves were feeding on spilled seed in Sheepwash car park on 13<sup>th</sup>, a Cuckoo was noted near Middle Wood on 19<sup>th</sup>, and a Barn Owl on 15<sup>th</sup> and a Tawny Owl on 16<sup>th</sup> were both around Sheepwash. The first Grey Wagtail since early January was recorded on 2<sup>nd</sup>. A Redstart was singing near the Wildlife Centre on 1<sup>st</sup> and there was a male Whinchat on the dam wall on 5<sup>th</sup>. A Greenland race female Wheatear, a Sedge and a Reed Warbler were all seen on 1<sup>st</sup> and 13 Garden Warblers plus 42 Blackcaps plus 29 Willow Warblers were counted on a circular walk on 17<sup>th</sup>. A Spotted Flycatcher was noted from 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2 singing Pied Flycatchers on 13<sup>th</sup>, a pair of Raven with 3 young on 20<sup>th</sup>, 4 Linnet on 2<sup>nd</sup> and a Bullfinch was heard singing on the Club Dawn Chorus Walk on 8<sup>th</sup>.

106 Species recorded compared with 108 in May 2009, 112 in 2008, 103 in 2007, 107 in 2006, 107 in 2005, 114 in 2004 and 110 in 2003.

**APRIL 2010 BIRD NOTES** (to 28<sup>th</sup> April only)

**April Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan, Osprey, Sanderling, Godwits, Little Gull, Sandwich Tern, Pied Flycatcher and Common Spring Migrants.**

The adult Great Northern Diver stayed all month and was in mostly summer plumage by 29<sup>th</sup>. A Whooper Swan was around the Wildlife Centre and Stones Island all Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>, 2 Red-crested Pochard on 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, a female Scaup stayed close in to the Wildlife Centre from 26<sup>th</sup> and 4 Common Scoter were seen off Stones Island on 13<sup>th</sup>. Counts included 12 Little Grebe on 18<sup>th</sup>, 42 Great Crested Grebe on 18<sup>th</sup>, 16 Cormorant on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3 Heron on 15<sup>th</sup>, 3 Greylag Geese on 7<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 80 Canadas on 18<sup>th</sup>, 38 Barnacles on 6<sup>th</sup>, 5 Shelduck on 10<sup>th</sup>, 7 Wigeon on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 3 Gadwall on 17<sup>th</sup>, 48 Mallard on 18<sup>th</sup>, 3 Shoveler on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1 Pochard on 8<sup>th</sup>, 189 Tufted Duck on 18<sup>th</sup>, 13 Goldeneye on 13<sup>th</sup>, 3 Goosander on 5<sup>th</sup>, 19 Moorhen on 18<sup>th</sup> and 106 Coot on 18<sup>th</sup>. Four broods of Mallard were noted by 28<sup>th</sup>.

Ospreys were seen again from Sheepwash, 1 at 1400hrs on 2<sup>nd</sup> and another 1230-1305hrs on 19<sup>th</sup>. An immature male Sparrow Hawk was perched close to Sheepwash Hide on 20<sup>th</sup>, 14 Buzzards were in the air on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2 Peregrines were over Hall Wood on 26<sup>th</sup>, with singles noted on other dates.

Wader passage included 1 Ringed Plover from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 Sanderling on 28<sup>th</sup>, 2 Black-tailed Godwit on 21<sup>st</sup> and 5 on 26<sup>th</sup>, 1 Bar-tailed Godwit on 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>, 2 Whimbrel on 21<sup>st</sup> and 6 on 27<sup>th</sup>, 4 Curlew on 18<sup>th</sup>, 4 Common Sandpiper on 19<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> and 1 Turnstone flew through northwards on 7<sup>th</sup>. Breeding Oystercatcher, Redshank and Lapwing were busy and a Lapwing showed 3 chicks on Big Island on 29<sup>th</sup>.

An adult Little Gull on 18<sup>th</sup> was followed a week later on 25<sup>th</sup> by 2 adults and 4 first summer birds. Other gulls were a first summer Herring Gull on 14<sup>th</sup>, an adult Yellow-legged on 23<sup>rd</sup>, an immature Great Black-backed on 17<sup>th</sup> and the breeding Black-headed Gulls, 60 present on 27<sup>th</sup>, were busily arguing about space on the tern raft. Tern passage included a Sandwich Tern early on 7<sup>th</sup>, 3 Common Terns early on 25<sup>th</sup> with the flock of Little Gulls, 4 Common Terns on 28<sup>th</sup> and single Arctic Terns on 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

The first Swift was on 19<sup>th</sup> but only small numbers have been seen since. Hirundine passage continued with 50 Sand Martin on 20<sup>th</sup> and over 500 Swallow feeding close to the water on a drizzly morning on 19<sup>th</sup>. The first House Martin was on 6<sup>th</sup> and, by the end of the month; some birds were around the Visitor Centre breeding colony. A Tree Pipit flew over on 24<sup>th</sup> and 40 Meadow Pipits were on the dam on 2<sup>nd</sup>. Migrant wagtail species were in low numbers again this year, with the first Yellow Wagtail on Sheepwash Spit on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3 on the dam wall on 11<sup>th</sup> and 4 on 19<sup>th</sup>. White Wagtail numbers peaked at 9 on Stones Island in the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> and Pied Wagtails totalled 37 there on 15<sup>th</sup>. There are no records of resident Grey Wagtails since January 1<sup>st</sup>. This species is susceptible to long spells of freezing winter weather when they cannot feed along the waters edge and, in case you have forgotten, we have just had an unusually severe winter, so please look out for this species at Carsington. Their former locations were Millfields, Tail Bay outlet stream, Fishtail Creek and Paul Stanley Hide. A Redstart was singing distantly upstream from WLC Creek from 24<sup>th</sup> and a male Whinchat was in the Creek on 25<sup>th</sup>. Single Wheatears were noted 3<sup>rd</sup> and many other dates. Warbler species kept arriving, with 2 Sedge on 24<sup>th</sup>, the earliest ever Reed at Carsington on 24<sup>th</sup>, 2 Lesser Whitethroat on 18<sup>th</sup>, 1 Whitethroat on 17<sup>th</sup> and 1 Garden Warbler on 24<sup>th</sup>. A count of warblers on 8<sup>th</sup> included 13 Blackcap, 52 Chiffchaff and 8 Willow Warbler. A Pied Flycatcher was singing in Warrington Knob on 29<sup>th</sup>, 100 Jackdaw were recorded on 3<sup>rd</sup>, a female Brambling was in Hall Wood on 22<sup>nd</sup> and a site rare Yellowhammer flew over Millfields on 18<sup>th</sup>.

116 Species were recorded compared with 110 in April 2009, 118 in 2008, 103 in 2007, 118 in 2006, 117 in 2005, 116 in 2004, 120 in 2003 and 107 in 2002.

## **MARCH 2010 BIRD NOTES**

### **March Highlights: Red Throated Diver, Great Northern Divers, Whooper Swans, Garganey, Osprey and early summer migrants return.**

A Red Throated Diver was off Stones Island from 1630hrs until dusk on 22<sup>nd</sup> and the Great Northern Diver count was a juvenile from last month to 5<sup>th</sup> plus an adult which remained all month. A Sunday treat for observers on 7<sup>th</sup> was 24 Whooper Swans landing at 0930hrs and a single Pink-footed Goose was with Canadas from 8<sup>th</sup>. The big surprise of the month was a very early Drake Garganey at the Wildlife Centre on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, a day when several were found around England. The earliest record at Carsington previously was 16<sup>th</sup> April but the extreme earliest Derbyshire record was on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1978. Maximum counts this month total 25 Little Grebe on 14<sup>th</sup>, 35 Great Crested Grebe on 14<sup>th</sup>, 8 Greylag on 6<sup>th</sup>, 46 Barnacle on 1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 Shelduck on 17<sup>th</sup>, 53 Wigeon on 5<sup>th</sup>, 3 Gadwall on 14<sup>th</sup>, 21 Teal on 8<sup>th</sup>, 109 Mallard on 8<sup>th</sup>, 4 Pintail on 5<sup>th</sup>, 5 drake Shoveler on 21<sup>st</sup>, 325 Tufted Duck on 14<sup>th</sup>, a female Scaup on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 28 Goldeneye on 21<sup>st</sup>, 8 Goosander on 15<sup>th</sup>, a Water Rail on 7<sup>th</sup>, 18 Moorhen on 19<sup>th</sup> and 247 Coot on 14<sup>th</sup>.

Four Sparrowhawks were noted on 21<sup>st</sup> and 8 Buzzards were in the air on 14<sup>th</sup>, with 10 on 21<sup>st</sup>. An Osprey was on site from 1550hrs on 26<sup>th</sup>, one day earlier than previous records at Carsington. It was seen from Stones Island and the Wildlife Centre and later it caught a fish and went to dine and roost in Blackbrook Plantation. An immature Peregrine flew north over Sheepwash on 28<sup>th</sup>.

At least 5 pairs of Oystercatcher were noted on 8<sup>th</sup> and the first Little Ringed Plover record of the year was 1 on Stones Island with a Dunlin on 26<sup>th</sup>. The first Dunlin of the year was 1 on 7<sup>th</sup> then 2 at the Wildlife Centre on 10<sup>th</sup>. Snipe totalled 8 on Horseshoe Island on 20<sup>th</sup> and 6 Snipe were seen in flight at Warrington Knob on 7<sup>th</sup>. A Woodcock was flushed near Paul Stanley Hide on 24<sup>th</sup>. The largest Curlew numbers were 12 at Sheepwash on 9<sup>th</sup>, 16 on 11<sup>th</sup> and 11 were in a field near Lane Ends on 13<sup>th</sup>. 6 Redshank were noted around the Wildlife Centre, Stones Island and Sheepwash on 8<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was at the Wildlife Centre on 10<sup>th</sup> and was subsequently seen in the gull roost on several evenings up to 24<sup>th</sup>. Counts of the gull roost proved difficult due to the spread of the roost this month but 242 Common and 65 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were counted in an early roost on 1<sup>st</sup>. There was a first winter plus a second winter Herring Gull on 20<sup>th</sup> and an adult Yellow-legged on 10<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

A Little Owl was seen in the field on the left between the main car park and Wildlife Centre on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. As expected, the first Sand Martins flew through, with 4 on 18<sup>th</sup> and a flock of 12 the following morning. Swallows started slowly with 1 on 25<sup>th</sup> then 1 on 28<sup>th</sup>. Meadow Pipit records have been unusually low for this time of year with 1 on 19<sup>th</sup> and several singles since. A Rock Pipit was on Sheepwash Spit for at least 2 hours on 19<sup>th</sup>, 2 White Wagtails were on Horseshoe Island on 31<sup>st</sup> and a female Stonechat was on Stones Island on 5<sup>th</sup>. The first Wheatear was on the dam wall early on 19<sup>th</sup> and 3 were at the Wildlife Centre on 22<sup>nd</sup>. A wintering Blackcap was near the Wildlife Centre on 10<sup>th</sup> and a pair there on 24<sup>th</sup>. Chiffchaff were first noted on 19<sup>th</sup> with 5 singing and 12 were singing between Millfields and Sheepwash on 31<sup>st</sup>. Two Willow Tits were singing on 8<sup>th</sup> and 2 Linnets flew over Sheepwash on 10<sup>th</sup>.

102 Species recorded this March compared with 103 in March 2009, 104 in 2008, 95 in 2007, 100 in 2006, 107 in 2005 and 98 in 2004.

## **FEBRUARY 2010 BIRD NOTES**

### **February Highlights: Great Northern Divers, Red-necked Grebes and Jack Snipe.**

A juvenile and an adult Great Northern Diver were present all month, quite often together at dawn and dusk. Early on 23<sup>rd</sup> the adult was calling while the juvenile was close by diving. As the mist cleared at 1320hrs on 15<sup>th</sup> a Red-necked Grebe was seen and photographed from Sheepwash and Lane End Hides and then lost to view. Searches were made by several birders and the bird was eventually relocated in Hopton Arm, in the rain and near to dusk. It was there that a second bird was noted. One bird remained in Hopton Arm, as far as the ice allowed, until 23<sup>rd</sup>, while the second bird was elusive, wandering as far as Millfields. Counts for February included: 27 Little Grebe on 8<sup>th</sup>, 41 Great Crested Grebe on 8<sup>th</sup>, 45 Cormorant on 15<sup>th</sup>, 6 Mute Swans on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 46 Barnacle Geese on 1<sup>st</sup>, 5 Shelduck on 25<sup>th</sup>, 48 Wigeon on 28<sup>th</sup>, 6 Gadwall on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 59 Teal on 1<sup>st</sup>, 141 Mallard on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2 Pintail on 18<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 5 Shoveler on 20<sup>th</sup>, 2 Red-crested Pochard on 18<sup>th</sup>, 2 Pochard on 28<sup>th</sup>, 442 Tufted Duck on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 19 Goldeneye on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 5 Goosander on 13<sup>th</sup>, 5 Moorhen on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 401 Coot on 23<sup>rd</sup>. These counts were low for winter but similar to or slightly less than those in February last year demonstrating that many of the wintering wildfowl had gone by the end of the month.

Two Sparrow Hawks were noted on 10<sup>th</sup>, 6 Buzzard were in the air at the same time on 10<sup>th</sup> and, on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Buzzard was perched on the cairn on Flat Island while another searched the island for food. Peregrine were noted on several days with a female on 13<sup>th</sup>, 1 over Hopton Arm on 16<sup>th</sup>, an immature on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 1 from Sheepwash on 28<sup>th</sup>.

Oystercatchers have been returning and claiming their breeding island and, by 28<sup>th</sup>, numbered 10 including a pair mating on Millfields Island and the male with a bar-code leg ring returning to Flat Island and Sheepwash area. A Jacksnipe flew in to Hopton Arm on 19<sup>th</sup> for 2 hours and temporarily stole the red-necked grebe's show, see photograph on our website. Snipe numbers have been low this winter with just 4 recorded on 13<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. A Woodcock was flushed from the path behind Sheepwash Hide on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Curlew are now moving through, with the first heard on 24<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 5 on 28<sup>th</sup> including 3 which landed to the right of Sheepwash Hide. Redshank were seen in singles at many locations but the maximum count was only 3 on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

The gull roost was larger than in mid-February last year, with at least 3000 Black-headed Gulls, 550 Common Gulls and 300 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 13<sup>th</sup>. The daytime resident, little grebe eating adult Yellow-legged Gull has not been recorded since 6<sup>th</sup>, and a heron was noted struggling to swallow a gull carcass on 16<sup>th</sup>!

A roost of 60 Woodpigeon was noted at Sheepwash on 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, a Kingfisher regularly between 14<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 3 Great Spotted Woodpeckers on 16<sup>th</sup>, 2 Skylark flew over on 16<sup>th</sup>, a singing wren on 28<sup>th</sup> highlighted how few were seen this month, in excess of 50 Fieldfare at Sheepwash on 16<sup>th</sup>, 4 Song Thrush singing on 28<sup>th</sup>, 8 Long-tailed Tits squeezed onto Paul Stanley feeders on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 4 Willow Tits on 24<sup>th</sup>, 15 Magpie on 11<sup>th</sup>, 50 Jackdaw over Sheepwash on 12<sup>th</sup>, 6 Rooks on the dam wall fields on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2 Raven on 6<sup>th</sup> and other dates, 4 Brambling in the Visitor Centre car park on 14<sup>th</sup>, 13 Siskin at Sheepwash on 15<sup>th</sup> and 10 Lesser Redpoll near the Wildlife Centre on 17<sup>th</sup>.

87 Species this month compared with 86 in Feb 2009, 86 in 2008, 88 in 2007, 89 in 2006 and 90 in 2005.

## **JANUARY 2010 BIRD NOTES**

### **January Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Little Egret, Scaup, Caspian Gull and Kittiwake.**

One of last month's Great Northern Divers, a juvenile, remained all month and December's Little Egret was around the Wildlife Centre area until 24<sup>th</sup>, with 2 present on Horseshoe Island from 1415hrs to 1500hrs on 18<sup>th</sup>. 150 Pink-footed Geese flew low east over the water at 1130hrs on 8<sup>th</sup>. Site counts this month were mainly the WeBS count on 17<sup>th</sup>, unless dated otherwise, and included 46 Little Grebe, 45 Great Crested Grebe, 45 Cormorant on 24<sup>th</sup>, 4 Heron on 27<sup>th</sup>, 28 Mute Swans, 5 Greylag on 20<sup>th</sup>, 45 feral Barnacle Geese on 20<sup>th</sup>, 6 Shelduck on 24<sup>th</sup>, 23 Wigeon (218 in Jan last year), 36 Gadwall, 49 Teal, 122 Mallard, 1 female Pintail on 11<sup>th</sup> and other dates, 134 Pochard, 596 Tufted Duck, an elusive first winter female Scaup on 10<sup>th</sup> and possibly all month, 12 Goldeneye, 11 Goosander on 31<sup>st</sup>, 11 Moorhen and 1424 Coot (1844 in Jan last year). Some of these counts are significantly down compared with recent years, probably due to the abnormally cold weather. Certainly any geese and ducks seeking grazing would have been struggling with the depth of snow. Escapee ducks seen were 2 Speckled Teal on 27<sup>th</sup> and a Chiloe Wigeon on 29<sup>th</sup>, both South American species.

Raptor records were few, with 4 Common Buzzards in the air on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Peregrine on the pylon observed from the Wildlife Centre on 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, elsewhere on site on 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, and a pair of Peregrine mobbing a Buzzard on 28<sup>th</sup>.

An Oystercatcher was seen on 11<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, Snipe numbered 12 at the Wildlife Centre on 24<sup>th</sup>, a Woodcock was near Lane End Hide on 4<sup>th</sup> and 3 Redshank were on site on 1<sup>st</sup> and subsequent dates.

The gull roost, visible from Lane End Hide, on 24<sup>th</sup> included 4000 Black-headed Gulls, 600 Common Gulls and 500 Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Other gull records included 20 Herring Gulls on 18<sup>th</sup>, an adult Caspian Gull in front of Sheepwash Hide from 1430hrs on 18<sup>th</sup>, 17 Great Black-backed Gulls on Sheepwash Spit early on 1<sup>st</sup>, an adult Kittiwake near Millfields at 1000hrs on 28<sup>th</sup>, and the resident Yellow-legged Gull was seen eating a Little Grebe on 18<sup>th</sup> and a dead fish on 25<sup>th</sup>.

The freezing weather and thick snow lying on the ground prevented much activity by non-water birds. Two Barn Owls were out hunting near the Wildlife Centre on 14<sup>th</sup> and another near Fishtail Creek later in the month. A Kingfisher was in Penn Carr on 16<sup>th</sup> and at other locations later in the month and 2 Skylark flew east over Millfields on 18<sup>th</sup>. The annual wintering Meadow Pipit flock, which can usually be located around the Dam Wall and Tail Bay area, has not been seen this January. Presumably this flock has gone south or to the coast where ground feeding is possible. Two Nuthatch were on Paul Stanley feeders on 1<sup>st</sup> and other subsequent dates and Siskin flocks have been regularly noted, with the largest totalling 40 on 11<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Four Linnets were near the Wildlife Centre on 1<sup>st</sup> and 68 Lesser Redpoll were noted at in the same area on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**86 Species this month comparing well with 86 in January 2009, 85 in 2008, 89 in 2007, 89 in 2006, 95 in 2005, 91 in 2004, 87 in 2003 and 75 in 2002.**