

DECEMBER 2013 BIRD NOTES

December Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Scaup, Common Scoter, Med Gull and Chiffchaff.

There were only 82 species this month compared with a December average of 92 and the 2013 provisional species tally is 161, which is an average year. However, 2 new species were added, taking the Carsington Water Bird List to 224 Species. The month's strong winds and rain rendered the adult Great Northern Diver elusive in choppy waters but it stayed all month and was joined by another from 27th. Maximum wildfowl numbers are from the WeBS count on 15th unless dated otherwise: 3 Little Grebe on 29th, 23 Great Crested Grebe, 18 Cormorant on 29th, 10 Mute Swan, 1 Pink-footed Goose on 29th, 8 Greylag Geese on 3rd, 110 Canada Geese, 26 feral Barnacle Geese on 29th, 45 Wigeon, 3 Gadwall, 153 Teal, 160 Mallard, 2 Pintail on 18th, 1 Shoveler on 23rd, at least 400 Pochard on 5th, 495 Tufted Duck, 5 Scaup on 1st, 1 Common Scoter 1-4th, 18 Goldeneye on 7th, 3 Goosander on 2nd and 985 Coot.

There was no notable raptor activity recorded. Waders proved a little better, with an Oystercatcher on 18th and the Lapwing flock which roosts on Sailing Club shore totalled 623 on 15th. At least 25 Snipe were flushed out of Horseshoe Island when a working party landed on there on 3rd. The lame Redshank was around all month and another Redshank was on site from 17th. This lame Redshank was in fact hatched on Millfields Island earlier this year and damaged its left foot before fledging. This must have affected its development and feeding as its sibling achieved flight and went on southwards with the adults leaving 'lame' behind but, the foot dropped off and the juvenile achieved flight and has stayed, visiting many locations on site, seeming to feed well on its left stump. There was a Green Sandpiper noted on 1st and 15th.

The gull roost held an adult Mediterranean Gull on 19-23rd, and there was a leucistic Black-headed Gull in the roost on 19th, reported as having snow white wings. The only gull counts are considered to be 'on the low side' due to poor visibility across choppy waters usually in dull light. These count maximums were: 1500 Black-headed Gull on 16th, at least 500 Common Gull on 4th, 600 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 16th, 7 Herring Gulls on 9th and a Great Black-backed Gull on 4th. The regular wintering Yellow-legged Gull was around all month, menacing water birds, he was joined by another adult from 10th and both were then regularly seen on Sheepwash Spit.

Woodpigeon movement on 4th prompted a count which totalled 1050 birds flying east during a 45 minute period. Kingfisher were seen most days and 2 males were present on 2nd. There was a flock of 24 Meadow Pipit in the fields below the dam wall road on 2nd and winter thrush flocks were 40 Fieldfare and 30 Redwing on 10th. Two Chiffchaff were at Lane End on 15th, 4 Willow Tit were on Paul Stanley Hide feeder on 21st and the leucistic Coal Tit was around Lane End feeder all month. A pair of displaying Raven was joined briefly by another Raven on 6th. Finch flocks included 20 Chaffinch in Sheepwash car park on 16th, 20 Chaffinch at the Wildlife Centre on 22nd, 25 Goldfinch at Millfields on 17th, 30 Siskin at Hopton End on 10th, a Linnet on 29th and 5 Lesser Redpoll in Shiningford Creek on 6th.

82 species recorded compared with 85 in December 2012, 91 in 2011, 89 in 2010 and 93 in 2009.

NOVEMBER 2013 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Bewick's Swan, Jack Snipe and Caspian and Iceland Gulls.

With water levels the same as last year and no adverse weather conditions, it is surprising to find that this November's species count is the lowest for over 10 years. It may of course be due to a noticeable lack of records and observer time this month, but it may simply be that there was very little bird movement to produce the usual range of species. An adult Great Northern Diver arrived on 9th, probably the returning bird that left on 9th May, which will hopefully stay again until next May. There were 2 adult plus 2 juvenile Bewick's Swan, looking like a family party, on 14th and again on 29th. Pink-footed Geese movements noted were flocks of 170 and 60 travelling SE on 10th and 45 SE on 22nd. Wildfowl maximum counts were: 7 Little Grebe on 10th, 32 Great Crested Grebe on 17th, 18 Cormorant on 10th, 21 Mute Swan on 10th, 9 Greylag Geese on 20th, 96 Wigeon on 10th, 7 Gadwall on 27th, 173 Teal on 10th, 162 Mallard on 10th, 1 Pintail on 4th, 2 Shoveler on 11th, a big 361 Pochard on 17th, 265 Tufted Duck on 10th, 5 Scaup from 23-29th at least, 1 Common Scoter on 23rd, 16 Goldeneye on 26th, 6 Goosander on 24th and 1020 Coot on 10th.

Raptor records were few, with a Sparrowhawk eating a Goldfinch on 6th, 3 Common Buzzard on 4th and 2 Peregrine on 6th. Waders included: a Ringed Plover 1-2nd, 305 Lapwing on 17th, 2 Dunlin on 22nd, a site rare Jack Snipe seen twice from the Wildlife Centre on 22nd, 16 Snipe on 9th, 2 Redshank on 16th, a Green Sandpiper occasionally 6-13th and a Common Sandpiper still around on 25th.

Gulls were interesting, with a first winter Mediterranean Gull in the roost on 5th and a colour-ringed Lesser Black-backed Gull on 6th proving to have been ringed in Gloucestershire in 2007. A Black-headed Gull was killed and eaten on 6th by the winter resident Yellow-legged Gull, which then went on to kill and devour a Little Grebe in front of many observers in Sheepwash Hide on 17th. The gull roost held both a sub-adult Caspian Gull and a distant immature Iceland Gull on 18th and 2 Kittiwake on 11th.

485 Woodpigeon flew over during a visible migration count on 6th and Collared Dove numbers around the Ranger Base increased to a site record of 34 on 21st. A Kingfisher was seen at many locations and 2 were at Sheepwash Hide on 6th and Paul Stanley Hide on 20th. A flock of 11 Skylark flew over northwards on 17th and 20 Meadow Pipit were on the dam wall on 6th. Thrush numbers, boosted by the autumn influx, were 15 Blackbirds in the Wildlife Centre fields on 26th and 40 Fieldfare plus 300 Redwing were noted between Wildlife Centre and Sheepwash on 29th. A late, or wintering, Chiffchaff was near Paul Stanley Hide on 13th and a leucistic Coal Tit was around Lane End feeder all month. Many small Starling flocks were noted and 400 birds passed Sheepwash Hide on 11th. There were 24 Tree Sparrow on Lane End feeder on 25th and 46 Chaffinch plus 3 Brambling flew over during a half hour visible migration count at Hopton End on 1st. There were 20 Siskin on 22nd, 3 Lesser Redpoll on 13th, and 13 Bullfinch were counted between Millfields and Sheepwash on 4th.

92 species recorded compared with 95 in November 2012, 99 in 2011, 95 in 2010 and 105 in 2009.

OCTOBER 2013 BIRD NOTES

October Highlights: A long list of rare birds seen at Carsington this month included 4 on the Derbyshire rarities list. The strong East and North winds, experienced mid-month, brought in some of these good birds and others just happened to land here, consisting of:

A juvenile Gannet on site for 20 minutes on a windy 12th, plunge diving and resting on the water.

An immature Gannet on the water and in flight on the foggy 18th, the sixth and seventh record here.

A Little Egret, mobile about the site on 6-8th.

1 Whooper Swan on 13th and another (or the same) on 19th.

A Brent Goose on the water on 1st, distant but probably dark-bellied.

A drake Green-winged Teal at Wildlife Centre from 19th, last recorded on 28th, the fourth record here.

A Garganey present from September and also last recorded on 28th.

A drake Common Scoter seen from Sheepwash on 12th.

6 redhead Red-breasted Merganser at Sheepwash on 13th.

A Grey Phalarope viewable from Sheepwash and Lane End Hides on 19th, the sixth record here.

2 Great Skua for 20 minutes on 11th, landed mid-water, then flew around Sheepwash, then southwest.

1 Great Skua 1000-1200hrs on 13th, then flew off northeast.

A first winter Little Gull seen from Sheepwash on 13th.

1 Rock Pipit on 1st and another on 20th.

A Male Stonechat in Wildlife Centre Creek 21-23rd.

2 Crossbill flew over Sheepwash on 13th.

Back to the usual birds here with maximum counts of waterbirds: 21 Little Grebe and 34 Great Crested Grebe on 15th, 23 Cormorant on 2nd, 4 Heron on 3rd, 30 Mute Swan on 2nd, 58 Greylag Geese on 8th, 29 feral Barnacle Geese on 16th, 2 Shelduck on 28th, 324 Wigeon on 11th, 19 Gadwall on 11th, 462 Teal on 15th, 7 Pintail on 7th, 4 Shoveler on 15th, 255 Pochard on 23rd, 448 Tufted Duck on 15th, 3 Goosander on 24th and 1184 Coot on the formal WeBS count on 15th.

Waders this month included: 1 Oystercatcher on 3rd, 2 Ringed Plover 1-21st, 4 Golden Plover on 20th, at least 300 Lapwing on 23rd, 3 Dunlin on 25-28th, 5 Snipe on 23rd, a Redshank on 25-26th, a Green Sandpiper on 26th and 2 Common Sandpiper on 26th. An Arctic Tern flew through on 14th and a juvenile also flew through on 20th, both of these being the latest ever at Carsington.

Kingfisher has been seen almost daily, but at various locations with 2 together on 8th, 14th and 15th. 7

Skylark flew over on 20th and a late Swallow went through on 27th. Winter thrushes passing through included 63 Fieldfare and 465 Redwing on 20th. A Blackcap was still around on 30th and 3 Chiffchaff on 21st were the last of the month. Corvids included 200 Jackdaw over Sheepwash at dawn on 27th, 13 Rook in dam fields on 1st and 5 Raven in the air on 28th. A small Starling flock (250 on 21st) have roosted near the Visitor Centre recently and there were 5 Greenfinch on 20th, 35 Goldfinch on 21st, 5 Siskin on 21st, 8 Linnet on 3rd and 2 Lesser Redpoll on 20th and 24th.

103 species recorded this October compared with 104 in 2012, 103 in 2011, 109 in 2010 and 108 in 2009.

SEPTEMBER 2013 BIRD NOTES

September Highlights: Garganey, Osprey, Curlew Sandpiper and Great Skua.

With winter wildfowl returning, notable and maximum wildfowl counts were as follows. There were 22 Little Grebe on 19th, 36 Great Crested Grebe on 22nd, 38 Cormorant on 16th, 8 Heron on 9th and 33 Mute Swan on 9th. Pink-footed Geese included a probable feral bird most days from 10-18th and migrating flocks of 27 on 16th, 29 heading east on 20th and 100 heading west on 27th. Other Geese included 22 Greylag on 20th, 590 Canada Geese on 13th and 26 feral Barnacle Geese on 13th. Ducks were: 27 Wigeon on 2nd increasing to 302 on 30th, 17 Gadwall on 22nd, 298 Teal on 13th, 246 Mallard on 22nd, 7 Pintail on 19th and 21st, a Garganey from 16th to the end of the month, 4 Shoveler on 13th, 1 Red-crested Pochard 1-14th, 13 Pochard on 6th rising to 107 by 30th, 408 Tufted Duck on 22nd, a Scaup on 8th, a Goosander on 16th and 1057 Coot on the WeBS count on 22nd. Raptors included a juvenile male Sparrowhawk drinking on Sheepwash shoreline on 9th, an Osprey seen from the Wildlife Centre on 3rd, 2 Hobby heading south on 13th and 2 Peregrine on 22nd. Wader passage was reasonable with 15 species including: an Oystercatcher on 2nd, a Little Ringed Plover on several days up to 25th, 24 Ringed Plover on 25th, a Grey Plover heard only on 25th, 300 Lapwing on 23rd, 2 Curlew Sandpiper on 11th, 12 Dunlin on 19-22nd, 2 Ruff on 6th, 6 Snipe on 5th, a Black-tailed Godwit on 2nd and 18th, 2 Bar-tailed Godwit on 17th, 5 Curlew on 6th, 2 Redshank on 6th, a Greenshank on 1st, 3rd and 11th and 1 to 2 Common Sandpiper all month.

A Great Skua was flying around Sheepwash at 0935hrs on 6th and flew off southwest over the dam wall just 10 minutes later. A first winter Little Gull was seen from Sheepwash on 13th. The gull roost held at least 4000 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 11th and 6 Yellow-legged Gull on 30th. An adult Kittiwake flew through heading north on 6th and a juvenile black Tern was on site most of the same day.

Summer migrants leaving were noted by the last Sand Martin on 19th, more than 100 Swallows on 20th, the last and late House Martin nest about to fledge on 8th, 3 Tree Pipit over on 12th, 33 Meadow Pipit on 18th, 2 Rock Pipit on 30th, 1 to 3 Yellow Wagtail most days up to the final 1 on 25th, 71 Pied Wagtail on the dam early on 20th, the last Wheatear on 21st, Sedge Warbler on 4th, 2 Whitethroat on 8th, 17 Chiffchaff still around on 11th, a Willow Warbler on 9th and a Spotted Flycatcher on 3rd.

There were 60 House Sparrow dust bathing together on Stones Island on 3rd, 57 Tree Sparrow on Wildlife Centre feeders on 8th, at least 90 Goldfinch on Stones Island on 13th, 19 Siskin on 25th, 4 Linnet on 12th, a Crossbill calling over Millfields on 12th and a Yellowhammer over Millfields on 20th.

109 Species this September compared with 106 in 2012, 124 in 2011, 117 in 2010 and 103 in 2009

AUGUST 2013 BIRD NOTES (+greylag +pinkfoot+ruddyD)

August Highlights: Little Egret, Turnstone, Black Tern, Tree Pipit and Crossbill.

A reasonable August with 106 species and generally calm, warm weather providing good feeding for the young broods, helping some species catch up after the bad start to their breeding season. There were a few fresh broods on the water, 1 of Great Crested Grebe, taking their total to 7 broods this year and 5 Tufted Duck, totalling 28 broods this year, which is just less than the record 29 during 2010. Waterbird maximum counts included: 11 Little Grebe on 28th, 27 Great Crested Grebe on 25th, 45 Cormorant on 28th, 1 Little Egret on most days from 9th to 18th, 11 Heron on 9th, 35 Mute Swan on 25th, a Cackling Goose (escapee) on 29th, 174 Canada Geese on 18th, a drake Mandarin Duck on 23rd, 32 Wigeon on 30th, 10 Gadwall on 25th, 110 Teal on 25th and 27th, 221 Mallard on 25th, 1 Pintail on 30-31st, 5 Shoveler on 24-25th, 2 Red-crested Pochard 23-28th, 12 Pochard on 25th, 382 Tufted Duck on 25th, 5 Common Scoter on 24th, 8 Goosander on 24th and 640 Coot on the WeBS count on 25th.

Raptors included Sparrowhawk activity showing breeding success at 2 locations, 7 Common Buzzard on 14th, a Kestrel taking a vole into the Sheepwash Hide dead tree to eat on 3rd, regular Kestrel activity around Stones Island and Wildlife Centre, Peregrine almost daily, with 2 on 25th and 28th and a Hobby on 27th.

There were 14 species of Wader noted, with the local breeding birds leaving by the end of the month. Counts, including passage birds were: 9 Oystercatcher on 1st and none after 9th, 2 Little Ringed Plover on 28th, 2 Ringed Plover on 21st, 21 Lapwing on 25th, 4 Dunlin on 6th, an unusual sight of a flock of 15 Snipe flying through on 24th, a Black-tailed Godwit on Millfields Island on 9th, Whimbrel heard on 7th, 9th, 14th and 24th, 31 Curlew flying through in flocks of 16 then 15 on 23rd, 3 Redshank on 10th, 2 Greenshank on 28th and singles on other days, a Green Sandpiper on 3rd and 10th, 6 Common Sandpiper on 7th and 2 Turnstone on 23rd and singles on 1st and 7th.

Gulls included 33 young Black-headed Gull still around their new breeding colony on Millfields Island on 11th, 3 Common Gull on 14th, 54 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 8th and a Herring Gull on 24th. The regular Yellow-legged Gull was around all month and was tentatively attacked during flight by a juvenile peregrine on 1st. There were 3 Common Tern on 1st and 11th and fewer on days between, a juvenile Arctic Tern on 24-25th, 5 Black Tern early on 24th and another later in the day.

The last Swift record was 3 on 14th, 2 Sand Martin on 23rd, a pair of Swallow were at last feeding their first brood in the Stone Barn on 21st, 100 Swallow were roosting on the dam wall early on 22nd and 120 House Martin noted on 19th. A House Martin was feeding nestlings at the Visitor Centre on 12th, this being only the second brood here when the usual is a colony of 20-plus nests. A Kingfisher was regularly noted, with 2 on 15th, 21st and 29th. Tree Pipit were heard flying over on their migration south, with 2 on 25th and 1 on 27th and 31st. Yellow Wagtail were also moving south with singles from 19th, 3 on 28th and 2 on 31st. There were 2 Redstart on 9th and 14th, a Wheatear on 25th and 28th, 2 Sedge Warbler on 7th, 8 Reed Warbler (including a presumed family of 6) on 1st, 3 Lesser Whitethroat on 7th and 14th, 3 Whitethroat on 7th, 3 Garden Warbler on 4th, 22 Chiffchaff on 10th, 8 Willow Warbler on 14th, 7 Spotted Flycatcher on 14th, 3 Willow Tit on 10th, 20 Blue Tit on 14th and 3 Nuthatch on 10th. Another unusual fly-by flock was 13 Raven on 26th and other local flocks were 58 House Sparrow together at the Visitor Centre on 9th, 85 Tree Sparrow at the Wildlife Centre on 18th, 56 Goldfinch on Stones Island on 28th and 24 Linnets in Shiningford Creek on 10th. A Lesser Redpoll was in Fishtail Creek on 10th and a Crossbill flew over Paul Stanley Hide on 4th.

106(9) Species recorded this August compared with 94 in 2012, 119 in 2011, 95 in 2010 and 102 in 2009.

JULY 2013 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Little Egret, Common Scoter, Osprey, Turnstone and Crossbill.

The sun and warm temperatures brought out many fresh broods of water birds, taking this year's total brood counts to: 7 Great Crested Grebe, 18 Mallard, 24 Tufted Duck, 2 Moorhen and 9 Coot. Maximum bird counts, excluding young, were logged on the WeBS count of 24th unless dated: 4 Little Grebe, 51 Great Crested Grebe, 22 Cormorant on 28th including a colour ringed bird, 2 Little Egret on 28-29th, 9 Heron from 17th, 31 Mute Swan on 23rd, 9 Greylag Geese on 5th, 348 Canada Geese, 20 Barnacle Geese on 5th, 2 Shelduck, 4 Teal on 17th, 140 Mallard, 2 Shoveler on 18th, 5 Pochard 17th, 111 Tufted Duck, 16 Common Scoter on 13th, 1 Goosander on 28th and 379 Coot. There were 2 notable, probable escapees this month: a Cackling Goose from 20th and 2 Ruddy Shelduck on 23rd.

Raptor records were few this month but they did include an Osprey catching a fish on 28th and 2 Peregrine on 23rd. Wader counts and records included: 6 Oystercatcher on 23rd, 2 Little Ringed Plover on 30th, 3 Ringed Plover on 24th, 69 Lapwing on 17th and 20th, a Dunlin on 28th, 2 Black-tailed Godwit on 24th, 1 Whimbrel on 24th and 26th, 2 Redshank on 24th, 4 Common Sandpiper on 27-31st and 2 Turnstone on 24th.

The Black-headed Gull colony expanded onto Millfields Island to breed this year and 38 young were counted on 25th. Other Gulls included: 9 Common Gull on 24th, 32 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 28th, a dead Herring Gull on 21st and 2 Yellow-legged Gull 23-26th. The only Terns were Common Tern, with singles on several days and 4 flew east on 23rd.

A Kingfisher was seen almost daily from 17th but never at the same location. Swifts were noted entering the Visitor Centre eaves but there were no further signs of any breeding. Swallow was at last noted on nest in the stone barn on 18th but there was no sign on 25th. The House Martin colony at the Visitor Centre, which usually has about 20 nests, has finally had just 1 brood out of a nest within the courtyard. There were 3 Grey Wagtail on 20th and 2 on 30th but no signs of breeding. Redstart have bred well on site this year, with a male and 3 juveniles in the field behind the Wildlife Centre on 5th, a pair feeding young in a box in Wildlife Centre Creek also on 5th, at least 2 birds in Warrington Knob on 9th where 2 pairs probably bred and a family of 4 was seen in the Shiningford area on 16th. Sedge Warblers have been notable on Stones Island with 1 displaying along the causeway and a pair feeding young, both on 17th and on other days. Reed Warblers were also active with 1 singing on Stones Island on 3rd, a pair taking food into Hopton Reedbed and another family feeding in the reeds on 17th and 1 singing near Paul Stanley Hide also on 17th. An adult and 2 juvenile Lesser Whitethroat were feeding together on Stones Island on 23rd. A pair of Spotted Flycatcher was regularly seen carrying food in Wildlife Centre Creek from 5th to 14th. There was a count of 6 Willow Tit on 30th, a flock of 80 Jackdaw over Sheepwash on 23rd, 32 House Sparrow around the Visitor Centre courtyard on 26th, a flock of 40 Goldfinch on Stones Island on 26th, 7 Linnet on 30th and 6 Reed Bunting on 5th. A notable fly-over on 20th was a Crossbill. This occurred when many had been coming over the east coast and, by the end of the month, Two-barred Crossbills were also being seen, so check out any you see or hear.

93 Species were recorded this July compared with 96 in 2012, 105 in 2011, 91 in 2010 and 95 in 2009.

JUNE 2013 BIRD NOTES

June Highlights: Osprey, Green Sandpiper and Marsh Warbler.

Following a wet and cold breeding season the weather finally warmed up in June, hopefully allowing some reasonable breeding success, but hirrundines were still not bothering. Birding also warmed up further on 10th with a super find of a Marsh Warbler which pulled in many local birders. The bird was found in bushes behind the toilet block between the Visitor Centre and Stones Island and it remained all day, giving many Derbyshire birders a chance to catch up with what is a new species for Carsington and only the sixth record for Derbyshire.

Water bird broods noted were: Great Crested Grebe with 1 chick from 5th, Mute Swan pair with 4 cygnets from 23rd, 2 pairs of Barnacle Geese with 1 young each from 4th, 8 broods of Mallard, taking this season's total to 15, 1 brood of Tufted Duck, 1 of Moorhen and 4 of Coot. Notable counts were from the WeBS count on 24th except where stated otherwise: 31 Great Crested Grebe, 21 Mute Swan from 28th, 396 Canada Geese (including 71 young) on 28th, 19 Barnacle Geese on 12th, 5 Shelduck on 2nd, 4 Teal on 21st, 67 Mallard excluding young, a drake Pochard, 60 Tufted Duck, 4 Common Scoter on 2nd and 68 Coot.

Raptors included an Osprey landing on Lane End post with a fish on 10th. Probably the same bird was photographed there on 11th and subsequent investigations showed it to be a 3 year old female born at Rutland Water. It had recently been in Wales and was back at Rutland on 13th. A Hobby was seen hunting on 24th and 26th.

Wader breeding so far this year is 3 Oystercatcher broods, 3 Lapwing and 1 Redshank brood, which is a little down on average but, with many species breeding late this year, more broods may yet appear. The only notable other wader this month was a Green Sandpiper on 30th, which is the first record since Nov 2011.

Black-headed Gull pairs at the Wildlife Centre showed 17 young on 12th and there were 6 young on Millfields Island on 28th with many more adults still on nests. There was no breeding Common Tern again this year although a pair was around from 5th to 14th. The second summer Yellow-legged Gull from last month was seen daily until 10th.

Swifts were prospecting the Visitor Centre eaves on 2nd and House Martins were there on 23rd but still no signs of breeding. Swallows repaired the nest in the Stone Barn and then abandoned it, but a pair was taking food into another traditional breeding site under the draw-off tower on 30th. Great Spotted Woodpecker were feeding young in a tree hole on 12th and a probable 5 pairs of Redstart have bred on site this year. Singing Reed Warblers included 2 in Hopton Arm Reedbed on 4th, 1 on Stones Island on 11th and 1 at Paul Stanley Hide on 30th. The day after 1000 had been reported on Portland Bill a Spotted Flycatcher was in Wildlife Centre Creek from 2-6th and another in Middle Wood on 4th. Tit families noted were 2 Willow, 2 Blue, 3 Great, and Nuthatch were feeding young in a box in Shiningford Creek on 2nd. A count on 5th found 38 Wren, 11 Dunnock, 32 Robin, 59 Blackbird, 23 Song Thrush, 24 Whitethroat, 11 Garden Warbler, 49 Blackcap, 47 Chiffchaff, 35 Willow Warbler, 13 Long-tailed Tit, 22 Blue Tit, 24 Great Tit, 24 Magpie, 45 Chaffinch, 19 Goldfinch and 10 Reed Bunting.

87 Species this month compared with 88 in June 2012, 95 in 2011, 88 in 2010, 93 in 2009 and 91 in 2008

MAY 2013 BIRD NOTES

May Highlights: Red Kite, Osprey, Turnstone, Black Tern, Water Pipit and Pied Flycatcher.

The cold spring continued, delaying some spring migrants and generally limiting breeding. Insects, which are essential protein for most nestlings, have been notably absent but, by the end of the month, things were improving rapidly with warmer weather. Three wintering Great Northern Divers were still present on 2nd, the adult and a juvenile were flying around on 7th and the last sighting was a juvenile flying, gaining height, early on 9th. Fresh broods of Wildfowl included an estimated 20 Canada Geese broods with young totalling 76 on 27th, and 7 Mallard broods. Notable water bird counts were: 46 Great Crested Grebe on 13th, 6 Cormorant on 8th and 24th, 1 Little Egret on 29-30th, 10 Mute Swan on 17th, 9 Greylag on 6th, 5 Gadwall on 3rd, a drake Teal on 21st, 48 Mallard on 13th, a drake Shoveler on 3-6th, a drake Pochard on 30th and 76 Tufted Duck and 53 Coot on the WeBS count on 13th.

Raptors put on a good show (if you were there at the time), with 3 Red Kite together over the dam on 1st, Sparrowhawk recorded on most days, 6 Common Buzzard in the air on 3rd and 13th, a long awaited Osprey at last on 31st, a Hobby regularly from 11th and a Peregrine on 9th and 15th.

Wader breeding so far is a brood of Oystercatcher and 2 broods of Lapwing. Wader passage has been exciting, with maximums being: at least 5 Little Ringed Plover on 3rd, 2 Ringed Plover on 15th, 8 Sanderling on 15th, 55 Dunlin on 15th, 1 Black-tailed Godwit on 1st, 6 Bar-tailed Godwit on 6th, 6 Whimbrel on 21st, 4 Curlew on 1st, 4 Common Sandpiper on 7th and a Derbyshire record breaking 36 Turnstone on 15th.

Last month's Little Gull stayed until 6th. The Black-headed Gull colony spread, with varying success. 10 nests were crammed on the Wildlife Centre raft by 10th, 6 nests were on Horseshoe Island on 10th, of which only 1 remained by 28th, 6 nests on Paul Stanley Hide raft on 5th all failed by 10th due to wind and wave action, 5 nests on Millfields Island and 1 on Sailing Club Island on 21st. There was a Common Gull present on 15th, 4 Herring Gull on 13th and a second summer Yellow-legged Gull on 7th. Tern passage included 6 Common Tern on 9th, 3 Arctic Tern on 22nd, 6 Black Tern on 4th and another on 15th.

Despite the cold weather fledged young of Robin, Sparrow and Long-tailed Tit were noted, but Hirundines, such as the well known House Martin colony at the Visitor Centre, had not even visited their nest site. Many Swift and Hirundines had been feeding over the open water (the only places their insect food source could be found on some days) in big numbers together: 80 Swift on 12th, 50 Sand Martin on 23rd, well over 1000, mainly Swallow, on 9th, 500 Swallow on 13th and 14th and 400 House Martin on 23rd. A summer plumage Water Pipit was on Horseshoe Island for a much too brief 15 minute stay on 9th and, following last month's bumper migrating wagtail numbers, there were 6 Yellow Wagtail on 3rd, the last on 15th and the last White Wagtail on 9th. Warblers were very vocal on the warmer days, with maximum counts being: 4 Sedge on 7th, 3 Reed in Hopton Reedbed on 21st, 3 Lesser Whitethroat on 4th, 11 Garden on 7th, 36 Blackcap on 3rd, a silent Wood Warbler on 1st and 27 Chiffchaff and 28 Willow Warbler on 3rd. A Pied Flycatcher was singing near Fishtail Creek on 6th and a site rare Marsh Tit was seen and heard on 1st. The first successful Tree Sparrow fledging this year was a pair feeding 2 young on the Wildlife Centre feeder on 28th. Some late small winter flocks still around were 7 Siskin on 1st, 9 Linnet on 9th and 24 Lesser Redpoll on 21st.

107 Species this month compared with 116 in May 2012, 111 in 2011, 106 in 2010 and 108 in 2009.

APRIL 2013 BIRD NOTES

April Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Red Kite, Little Gull, Kittiwake, Whiskered Tern, Water Pipit and record numbers of Wagtails.

The cold and windy winter weather carried on for most of April, holding back many migrants, but there were some exciting birding days such as Apr 12th with Kittiwakes, Terns, Hirrundines, Warblers and Winter Thrushes passing through in good numbers, many being the first for the year. The wintering 4 Great Northern Divers were still present on 15th, then 1 of the juveniles left, the rest stayed on all month and the adult attained full summer plumage. Wildfowl counts were: 58 Great Crested Grebe on 1st and 14th, 3 Mute Swan on 24th, 3 Whooper Swan on 2nd, 7 Greylag Geese on 22nd, 34 Canadas on 14th, 26 Barnacles on 2nd, 7 Shelduck on 20th, 110 Wigeon and 60 Teal during a big duck movement day on 6th, 38 Mallard on 14th, 3 Shoveler on 6th, 64 Tufted Duck on 14th, a drake Common Scoter on 16th, 9 Goldeneye on 14th, 2 Goosander on 3rd and 113 Coot on 14th. There were no early broods of Mallard seen this month which is unusual but reflects the bad weather conditions.

A Red Kite glided over the Wildlife Centre and Sheepwash on 12th. A Sparrowhawk took a bat from the eaves of the Wildlife Centre on 16th. Osprey passage missed Carsington this month but May may be better. There were 7 Common Buzzard in the air on 12th and a Peregrine was noted on 4th and 26th.

With no wader broods yet some Oystercatcher, Lapwing and Redshank were on nests. Maximum counts of waders, including passage and local breeding birds, were: 12 Oystercatcher on 19th, 4 Little Ringed Plover on 24th, 2 Ringed Plover on 26th, 14 Dunlin on 24th, 3 Snipe on 7th and 12th, 1 Woodcock on 12th, 7 Black-tailed Godwit on 26th, 1 Bar-tailed Godwit on 19th, a site record 17 Whimbrel through on 23rd, 8 Curlew on 16th, 7 Redshank on 8th, and 8 Common Sandpiper on 19th.

Three first summer Little Gull were present from 23rd to 26th when they were joined by an adult. Following this, 2 of the immature Little Gull stayed on to the end of the month. Counts were 600 Common Gull on 8th and 100 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 22nd. A second winter moulting into summer Yellow-legged Gull was on site from 4th. A flock of 12 adult Kittiwake landed at Sheepwash for half an hour on the windy 12th. Tern passage started with 3 Sandwich Tern on 7th, another on 12th and another on 13th. The only Common Tern were 2 on 28th but the first Arctic Tern were 2 days earlier than ever recorded here, with 5 on 12th, followed by 6 on 18th and 19th and 1 or 2 on many days. The Tern highlight of course was a Whiskered Tern at 0710hrs on 24th. This bird was seen for less than 2 minutes, before leaving and spending the rest of the day nearby at Blithfield Reservoir in Staffordshire. Whiskered Tern is a new species for Carsington Water and is only the sixth Derbyshire record.

Other migrant arrivals were: 1 Swift on 20th and 20 on 28th, a Sand Martin on 7th, which is very late for this species, 3 Swallow on 10th and over 100 on 12th, 1 House Martin on 12th, over 70 Meadow Pipit together in a field behind the Wildlife Centre on 8th, a rare Water Pipit on 19th, a Yellow Wagtail on 13th and a site record 31 on 29th, a 'Channel' type Blue-headed on 19th and a Blue-headed on 29th, 8 White Wagtail on 15th and a site record of at least 40 on 19th, 2 singing Redstart on 24th, a Wheatear on 10th, a Sedge Warbler on 25th, a Lesser Whitethroat on 22nd, a Whitethroat on 18th and 9 on 27th, 2 Garden Warbler on 28th, a Blackcap on 12th and 26 on 26th. A site rare Wood Warbler on Stones Island on 27th attracted many observers and Chiffchaff, which arrived last month, totalled 41 on 27th. A Willow Warbler arrived singing on 12th and there were 49 by 27th.

115 Species were recorded compared with 115 in April 2012, 111 in 2011, 118 in 2010 and 110 in 2009.

MARCH 2013 BIRD NOTES

March Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Great White Egret, Red Kite, Red Breasted Merganser and Kittiwake but the expected spring migrants are held back by freezing weather.

The prolonged cold easterly weather held back many spring migrants such as sand martin, swallow, wheatear and blackcap so a species tally of 96 this month is reasonable. All 4 Great Northern Divers remained all month, usually found off Stones Island. A Great White Egret flew over at 0745hrs on 30th heading east-northeast. A Whooper Swan resided at Millfields 12-24th and there were also 9 on 26th and 6 on 30th. Maximum waterbird counts this month were; 2 Little Grebe on 10th, 51 Great Crested Grebe on 20th, 8 Cormorant on 3rd, 5 Greylag on 3rd, 77 Canada Geese on 24th, 26 Barnacle on 1st and other days, 3 Shelduck on 17th, 43 Wigeon on 12th, 2 Gadwall on 3rd, 38 Teal on 11th, 93 Mallard on 3rd, 6 Pintail on 8th and 15th, 5 Shoveler on 5th, 13 Pochard on 1st, 129 Tufted Duck on 5th, 19 Goldeneye on 3rd, a drake Red-breasted Merganser on 28th, 4 Goosander on 18th and 275 Coot on 5th.

A Red Kite drifted over the dam wall on 12th and another was seen on 17th. There were 6 Common Buzzards in the air on 30th and a Kestrel was carrying large prey, possibly blackbird, on 24th. Oystercatchers were around their breeding areas all month and at least 11 were seen on 19th. A Golden Plover was heard flying over on 15th, the maximum Lapwing count was 80 on 12th and there were 4 Dunlin flying with the Lapwing flock on 1st. Snipe were regularly seen from the Wildlife Centre, with 16 there on 18th. There were 3 Bar-tailed Godwit at the Wildlife Centre on 7-8th and 2 Black-tailed Godwit there on 15-16th. Curlew passage was building up through the month with 5 on 1st, 37 on 13th and 56 roosted on Stones Island on 24th. Redshank numbered 4 on 17th and 20th.

The gull roost held an adult Mediterranean Gull on 1st, a first winter Med Gull on 14th and another was seen during the daytime on 29th. A full gull roost count from Stones Island was possible in reasonable weather on 1st and found 5000 Black-headed Gull and a new site record of 1500 Common Gull. Counts of 1000 plus Common Gull have been made from Sheepwash where only part of the roost is ever visible. There was a second winter Yellow-legged Gull in the roost on 1st and an adult around the site on 9th. Kittiwakes featured well this month with at least 3 adults on 10th, 1 staying until 15th, 2 flew through on 26th and at least 2 more flew through on 28th.

A Stock Dove flew over on 12th and 200 Woodpigeon were feeding at Hopton End on 11th. A Barn Owl was hunting around Sheepwash from 1430hrs on 12th and again on many other afternoons and a few early mornings up to the end of the month. This activity reflects their desperate search for food stretching into daylight hours during these days of freezing weather and snow covered ground. A Kingfisher was seen, mainly from Paul Stanley Hide, on 20-24th. Occasionally Skylark were noted moving northwards during the month, with a maximum of 5 on 10th and, similarly, Meadow Pipit but in bigger numbers, with 9 on the dam early on 17th and 30 over on 29th. A Rock Pipit was on the dam wall on 10th. A female Stonechat was briefly at Sheepwash on 12th, another or the same was near the Visitor Centre on the same day and a male was on Stones Island on 12th. Thrush numbers included 14 Blackbird on 28th, 8 Fieldfare on 10th, 2 Song Thrush on 28th and 200 Redwing on 31st. The first singing Chiffchaff was on Stones Island on 15th, then 3 on 17th but no more until 31st due to the freezing snowy conditions. There were 3 Raven around on 12th, 120 Starling on 18th, 51 Tree Sparrow on 7th, a female Brambling on the Ranger Base feeder on 13th and 4 Greenfinch on the Visitor Centre entrance feeder on 12th.

96 Species recorded this March compared with 97 in March 2012, 106 in 2011, 101 in 2010, 102 in 2009, 104 in 2008, 95 in 2007 and 100 in 2006.

JANUARY 2013 BIRD NOTES

January Highlights:

Great Northern Diver, Bewick's and Whooper Swans, Brent Goose, Red Kite, Sanderling and Little Gull.

This month water levels were high and constant at 93% full. Deep snow and ice caused access difficulties and car park closures for part of the month so 89 species is quite creditable. As 3 Great Northern Divers were present in December and seen on 1st February and on 5 days during January, it is reasonable to presume 3 all month. Other water bird counts included: 1 Little Grebe from 6th, 35 Great Crested Grebe on 12th, 16 Cormorant on 9th, 2 Heron on 12th, 9 Mute Swan on 12th, 2 Bewick's Swan briefly on 11th before being flushed by a boat, 2 Whooper Swan on 17th, 2 Pink-footed Geese on 15th, 8 Greylag on 27th, 129 Canada on 12th, 35 feral Barnacle Geese on 27th, a dark bellied Brent Goose on 15th, 5 Shelduck on 4th, 73 Wigeon on 3rd, 9 Gadwall on 15th and 22nd, 73 Teal and 155 Mallard on the WeBS count on 12th, 1 Pintail on 27th, 1 Shoveler on 22nd, 228 Pochard on 22nd, 251 Tufted Duck on 12th, 18 Goldeneye on 12th, 2 Goosander on 27th, 5 Moorhen on 11th and 613 Coot on 12th.

Very few raptors were seen, notables being a Red Kite on 3rd, 2 Common Buzzard on 23rd and a male Peregrine on 15th. Waders included a lonely Oystercatcher briefly on the dam wall on 9th and over 300 Lapwing on 4th. A Sanderling was mobile around Stones and Horseshoe Islands on 23rd, a Dunlin was at the Wildlife Centre on 9th, 15th and 23rd and a few Snipe were there all month with a maximum of 11 on 6th. A Woodcock flew across the path in Fishtail Creek on 13th and 3 Redshank were mobile on site on 1st with at least 1 on other days.

A first winter Little Gull flew into the gull roost at Sheepwash on 27th and was seen daily for the rest of the month. This is the first January record of Little Gull at Carsington. Also the gull roost held at least 700 Common Gull on 2nd and a site record of 1010 on 3rd. Lesser Black-backed Gull numbers were well down from December as usual with 235 on 3rd. There were 13 Herring Gull over Fishtail on 3rd and the winter resident Yellow-legged Gull was joined by another adult on many days throughout the month and the maximum on site was 3 in the gull roost on 2nd, 4th and 10th.

A Barn Owl was hunting Sheepwash car park at dawn on 17th and 20th and on Sheepwash Spit near to dusk on 22nd. A Little Owl was calling from just off-site near Fishtail Creek on 13th and Tawny Owl was heard on 9th and 17th. Kingfisher was seen on many days and 2 were together on 4th. Two separate circular walks round the water, on 9th and 20th, counted all birds present so it is surprising that several passerine species were notable by their absence this January, namely goldcrest, grey wagtail and linnets. Maximum counts from all records were: 4 Great Spotted Woodpecker on 20th, 5 Skylark over on 29th, 12 Meadow Pipit on 9th, 20 Wren on 9th, 16 Dunnock on 20th, 67 Robin, many singing, on 9th, 74 Blackbird on 20th, 8 Song Thrush on 20th, 22 Redwing on 13th, 2 Mistle Thrush on 15th, 13 Long-tailed Tit on 9th, 10 Willow Tit on 20th, 5 Coal Tit on 9th, 31 Blue Tit on 20th, 39 Great Tit on 9th, 5 Nuthatch on 20th, 3 Tree Creeper, including 1 singing, on 9th, 7 Jay on 20th, 16 Magpie on 9th, 49 Jackdaw on 20th, 25 Carrion Crow on 9th, 47 Tree Sparrow on 20th, 20 Chaffinch at Wildlife Centre on 17th, 14 Brambling mobile in Fishtail Creek on 24th, 60 Siskin on 2nd, 18 Lesser Redpoll on 9th, 23 Bullfinch on 9th and 3 Reed Bunting on Paul Stanley Hide feeder on 27th.

89 Species this month comparing well with 92 in January 2012, 89 in 2011, 86 in 2010, 86 in 2009, 85 in 2008, 89 in 2007, 89 in 2006, 95 in 2005, 91 in 2004, 87 in 2003 and 75 in 2002.