

## **DECEMBER 2014 BIRD NOTES**

### **December Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Whooper Swan, Pink-footed Geese, Common Scoter, Goshawk, Common Sandpiper, Med Gull and Caspian Gull.**

There were 91 species this month which is about average for December. Last month I commented about the absence of a Great Northern Diver and hoped December would bring our now to be expected Diver(s). Well on 6<sup>th</sup> the presumed returning adult duly arrived and was still present at the month's end. Maximum Wildfowl numbers are from the WeBS count on 13<sup>th</sup> unless stated: 6 Little Grebes, 48 Great Crested Grebes, the Black-necked Grebe last seen on 7<sup>th</sup>, 20 Cormorants on 21<sup>st</sup>, 2 Grey Herons on 15<sup>th</sup>, 11 Mute Swans, 2 Whooper Swans on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4 on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2 on 28<sup>th</sup>. Pink-footed Geese movement include 55 on 1<sup>st</sup> and 250 followed by 275 through on 28<sup>th</sup>. 4 Greylag Geese, 114 Canada Geese on 4<sup>th</sup>, 29 (feral) Barnacle Geese on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 Shelduck on 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, a Mandarin on 4<sup>th</sup>, 42 Wigeon, 17 Gadwall, 106 Teal, 140 Mallard, 15 Pintail on 2<sup>nd</sup> is the best count since 1992, 4 Shoveler on 26<sup>th</sup>, 2 Red-crested Pochard on 1<sup>st</sup>, 170 Pochard on 18<sup>th</sup>, 228 Tufted Duck, 5 Common Scoter on 9<sup>th</sup>, 19 Goldeneye on 18<sup>th</sup>, 13 Goosander on 1<sup>st</sup> and 1125 Coots.

Notable raptor activity this month includes a Goshawk on 6<sup>th</sup>, displaying Sparrowhawk observed on 12<sup>th</sup>, 3 Kestrel on 4<sup>th</sup> and a Peregrine on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Waders included: 850 Lapwings on 19<sup>th</sup>, 3 Dunlin on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 27 Snipe on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Woodcock on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Curlew on 6<sup>th</sup>, 2 Redshank on several dates. A Common Sandpiper reported on 5<sup>th</sup> is unusual given the time of year. Only one previous December record when one overwintered in 2001/02.

The gull roost held a 1<sup>st</sup> winter Mediterranean Gull on 28<sup>th</sup>, a leucistic Black-headed Gull on 14<sup>th</sup>, 400+ Common Gulls on 4<sup>th</sup>, 2 Herring Gulls on 1<sup>st</sup>, 3 Yellow-legged Gulls on 4<sup>th</sup>, an adult Caspian Gull roosted on 14<sup>th</sup> and 14 Great Black-backed Gulls on 16<sup>th</sup>.

A circular walk on 4<sup>th</sup> produced 7 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, 48 Wrens, 16 Dunnocks, 42 Robins, 104 Blackbirds, 9 Song Thrush, 77 Redwing, 6 Goldcrests, 40 Long-tailed Tits, 7 Willow Tits, 7 Coal Tits, 30 Blue Tits, 27 Great Tits, 4 Nuthatch, 5 Treecreepers, 17 Magpies, 41 Chaffinch, 6 Greenfinch, 51 Goldfinch, 3 Linnets and 22 Bullfinch.

Other notable sightings include: A Skylark on 1<sup>st</sup>, 18 Meadow Pipits on 28<sup>th</sup>, 3 Raven on 30<sup>th</sup>, 40 Tree Sparrows on 4<sup>th</sup>, 16 Siskin on 28<sup>th</sup>, a Yellowhammer on 28<sup>th</sup> and 6 Reed Buntings on 12<sup>th</sup>.

91 species recorded this December compared with 82 in 2013, 85 in 2012, 91 in 2011 and 89 in 2010.

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## **NOVEMBER 2014 BIRD NOTES**

### **November Highlights: Black-necked Grebe, Little Egret, Pink-footed Geese, Red-breasted Merganser, Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, and Mediterranean and Caspian Gulls.**

An average month species wise with 96, but maybe the real surprise was the absence of a Great Northern Diver. Only the second blank November since 2004. Hopefully December will bring our now to be expected Diver(s). Water bird maximums for November are on the WeBS on 16<sup>th</sup> unless stated: 17 Little Grebes on 7<sup>th</sup>, 41 Great-crested Grebes, the Black-necked Grebe last seen at Millfields on 10<sup>th</sup>, 23 Cormorants on 10<sup>th</sup>, a Little Egret on and off throughout the month, 3 Grey Herons, 40 Mute Swans. Movement of Pink-footed Geese were noted with 30 SE on 24<sup>th</sup>, and 130 E on 30<sup>th</sup>. 3 Greylag Geese on 1<sup>st</sup>, 60 Canada Geese on 21<sup>st</sup>, a Barnacle Goose on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5 Shelduck on 30<sup>th</sup>, 220 Wigeon on 7<sup>th</sup>, 18 Gadwall, 181 Teal on 7<sup>th</sup>, 172 Mallards, 4 Pintail on 7<sup>th</sup>, 9 Shoveler on 1<sup>st</sup>, 4 Red-crested Pochard up to 22<sup>nd</sup>, with just 2 thereafter, 132 Pochard on 30<sup>th</sup>, 299 Tufted Duck, 8 Goldeneye on 21<sup>st</sup>, a Red-breasted Merganser on 6<sup>th</sup>, and another on 17<sup>th</sup>, 15 Goosander on 24<sup>th</sup> and 1242 Coot.

Raptors this month include 3 Sparrowhawks up together over Hall Wood on 5<sup>th</sup>, 5 Common Buzzards on 5<sup>th</sup>, a Kestrel on many dates and a Peregrine on 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Waders include c30 Golden Plover on 16<sup>th</sup>, 571 Lapwing on 16<sup>th</sup>, a Knot on 9<sup>th</sup>, 2 Dunlin on 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 25 Snipe on 24<sup>th</sup>, a Woodcock flew over the dam wall on 22<sup>nd</sup>, a Bar-tailed Godwit on 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 3 Curlew on 30<sup>th</sup> and 3 Redshank on 21<sup>st</sup>.

Interestingly this month there has been three different ages of Mediterranean Gull recorded. Firstly an adult roosted on 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, then a 2<sup>nd</sup> winter on 24<sup>th</sup> followed by a 1<sup>st</sup> winter in the roost on 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>. An adult Black-headed Gull with a colour ring was seen from Sheepwash Hide on 21<sup>st</sup>. The digits on the ring were determined and traced back to being ringed in Oslo, Norway. 8 Herring Gulls on 9<sup>th</sup>, 5 Yellow-legged Gulls roosted on 22<sup>nd</sup>, an adult Caspian Gull on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> and 7 Great Black-backed Gulls on Sheepwash Spit on 9<sup>th</sup>.

3 Stock Doves were noted on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1200 Wood Pigeons migrating through on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Kingfisher seen at many locations including at Paul Stanley hide giving good photographic opportunities. A site rare Green Woodpecker at Millfields on 21<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 14 Skylarks through on 1<sup>st</sup>, 15 Meadow Pipits on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2 Stonechat on 2<sup>nd</sup>, then a lone female up to 16<sup>th</sup>, Thrush numbers boosted by wintering birds include 30 Blackbirds on 6<sup>th</sup>, 100 Fieldfare on 2<sup>nd</sup> with 125 on 6<sup>th</sup>, 5 Song Thrush on 6<sup>th</sup> and 50 Redwing on 6<sup>th</sup>. Either a very late or wintering Chiffchaff on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6 Goldcrest on 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 520 Jackdaws out of a nearby roost on 1<sup>st</sup>, 405 Starlings on 10<sup>th</sup>, 2 Brambling on 6<sup>th</sup>, 55 Goldfinch on 14<sup>th</sup>, c20 Siskin on 10<sup>th</sup>, 15 Linnets on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2 Lesser Redpoll on 6<sup>th</sup>, 2 Yellowhammers on 15<sup>th</sup> and 5 Reed Buntings on 30<sup>th</sup>.

96 species this month compared with 92 in 2013, 95 in 2012, 99 in 2011 and 95 in 2010.

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## OCTOBER 2014 BIRD NOTES

### **October Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Brent Goose, Merlin, Great Skua, Baltic Gull? and Rock Pipit.**

Quite a mixed bag this month weather wise with rain, wind, sun, and above average temperatures to finish the month off. And 98 species is the lowest since 2008. Maximum waterbird counts this month were on the WeBS count on 23<sup>rd</sup> unless stated: an adult Great Northern Diver on 28<sup>th</sup> only, 24 Little Grebe on 20<sup>th</sup>, 46 Great Crested Grebes on 20<sup>th</sup>, the Black-necked Grebe from last month present until the 29<sup>th</sup> at least, 25 Cormorants on 5<sup>th</sup>, 4 Grey Herons on 5<sup>th</sup>, 36 Mute Swans on 7<sup>th</sup>, 5 Whooper Swans on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 3 on 29<sup>th</sup>, 170 Pink-footed Geese through on 24<sup>th</sup>, and three skeins totalling 119 birds through on 29<sup>th</sup>, 11 Greylag Geese on 5<sup>th</sup>, 355 Canada Geese on 5<sup>th</sup>, 28 Barnacle Geese through high on 12<sup>th</sup> (wild birds?). A Brent Goose on 27<sup>th</sup> reported of the race Pale bellied would be only the second record for Derbyshire of this race, however, the bird was associating with Canada Geese so could be destined to fall into the category 'escapee'. 342 Wigeon, 15 Gadwall on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 173 Teal on 17<sup>th</sup>, 117 Mallard, 5 Pintail on 5<sup>th</sup>, 3 Shoveler on 5<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 Red-crested Pochard on 9<sup>th</sup>, 136 Pochard, 290 Tufted Duck on 17<sup>th</sup>, the first returning Goldeneye was on 18<sup>th</sup> with 2 on 31<sup>st</sup>, 6 Goosander on 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> and 1318 Coot. A presumed escapee Snow Goose present on 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.

Raptors include 2 Sparrowhawks on 14<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 5 Buzzards on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2 Kestrel on 14<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, a Merlin on 15<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> and a Peregrine seen on several dates. Waders this month include: 4 Ringed Plover on 4<sup>th</sup>, 6 Golden Plover through west on 27<sup>th</sup>, 139 Lapwing on 28<sup>th</sup>, 3 Dunlin on 31<sup>st</sup>, 8 Snipe on 31<sup>st</sup>, 4 Bar-tailed Godwits on 23<sup>rd</sup>, a single Redshank throughout most of the month, a Green Sandpiper on 4<sup>th</sup> and the last Common Sandpiper was on 19<sup>th</sup>.

A Great Skua was found flying near Lane End hide on 14<sup>th</sup> and was still present up until 12.00hrs the following day. This is the second record of 'Bonxie' this year and continues the enigma of Great Skuas at Carsington where over half the county records come from this one site alone. A 2<sup>nd</sup> winter Mediterranean Gull on 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> and an adult on 28<sup>th</sup>, c6'000 Black-headed Gulls on 23<sup>rd</sup>. A ringed Lesser Black-backed Gull on 15<sup>th</sup> was traced back to being ringed in Cumbria, and another on 18<sup>th</sup> traced a little further afield to Rotterdam. A Lesser Black-backed Gull type on 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> showed many characteristics of Baltic Gull (*Larus fuscus fuscus*). However, without a ring identification is difficult to prove. 3 Yellow-legged Gulls on 29<sup>th</sup>.

Autumn movement saw a massive 5430 Wood Pigeons through south on 20<sup>th</sup>. There were 3 Stock Doves on 31<sup>st</sup>, 25 Collared Doves on 24<sup>th</sup>. Skylark passage included 38 through on 5<sup>th</sup>, the last Swallows were 7 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 48 Meadow Pipits on 27<sup>th</sup>, a Rock Pipit on 15<sup>th</sup> and another on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 45 Pied Wagtails on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2 Stonechats on Wildlife Centre creek from 26<sup>th</sup>. Winter thrush passage include 352 Fieldfare on 31<sup>st</sup> and 1352 Redwings also on 31<sup>st</sup>. 7 Song Thrush on 24<sup>th</sup>, 3 Chiffchaffs on 7<sup>th</sup>, 4 Goldcrest on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 424 Jackdaws going to roost on 5<sup>th</sup>, a Raven on 31<sup>st</sup>. 320 Starlings on 31<sup>st</sup>, 25 Chaffinch on 23<sup>rd</sup>, a Brambling on 26<sup>th</sup>, 6 Greenfinch on 28<sup>th</sup>, 120 Goldfinch on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2 Siskin on 20<sup>th</sup>, 8 Linnets on 7<sup>th</sup>, a Lesser Redpoll on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 6 Bullfinch on 7<sup>th</sup>, a Yellowhammer on 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> and 4 Reed Buntings through on 5<sup>th</sup>.

98 species recorded this October compared with 103 in 2013, 104 in 2012, 103 in 2011 and 109 in 2010.

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## **SEPTEMBER 2014 BIRD NOTES**

### **September Highlights: Black-necked Grebe, Great White Egret, Marsh Harrier and Osprey.**

107 species this month which is about average for September. And although wader passage has been poor winter wildfowl has returned in good numbers. And there were several surprises along the way to whet the appetite. Waterbird maximums include: 35 Little Grebes on 26<sup>th</sup> which incidentally is the best count since 2010, 60 Great Crested Grebes on 26<sup>th</sup>. Not having a Black-necked Grebe for 7 years one would be forgiven for thinking that having 2 different birds in the month would be a little far fetched. But that's exactly what we had! One at Lane End hide on 4<sup>th</sup> only, and then another at the Wildlife Centre on 9<sup>th</sup> identified as different by plumage, which then re-located to Millfields and was still present at the end of the month. 44 Cormorants on 8<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>, 2 Little Egrets up to 21<sup>st</sup>, a Great White Egret on 24<sup>th</sup> is the second record this year, 8 Grey Herons on 12<sup>th</sup>, 36 Mute Swans throughout the month, a feral Pink-footed Goose on 1<sup>st</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>, and a skein of 144 over on 24<sup>th</sup>, 16 Greylag Geese on 26<sup>th</sup>, 572 Canada Geese on 26<sup>th</sup>, 13 Barnacle Geese on 29<sup>th</sup>, a Shelduck on 1<sup>st</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 311 Wigeon on 26<sup>th</sup>, 28 Gadwall on 7<sup>th</sup>, 277 Teal on 12<sup>th</sup>, 149 Mallard on the WeBS count on 8<sup>th</sup>, 5 Pintail on 11<sup>th</sup>, 5 Shoveler on 5<sup>th</sup>, 4 Red-crested Pochard on 5<sup>th</sup>, 95 Pochard on 26<sup>th</sup>, 638 Tufted Duck on 26<sup>th</sup>, 2 Common Scoters 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 6 Goosander on 11<sup>th</sup>, 7 Moorhen on 12<sup>th</sup> and 1141 Coots on 26<sup>th</sup>.

Raptors include a Red Kite on 12<sup>th</sup>, a juvenile Marsh Harrier flying NNE on 14<sup>th</sup>, 2 Sparrowhawks on 1<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>, 8 Buzzards on 15<sup>th</sup>, an Osprey on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2 Kestrels on 1<sup>st</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>, 2 Hobbies on 15<sup>th</sup>, and Peregrine seen on at least five dates.

11 species of Wader including: 13 Ringed Plover on 17<sup>th</sup>, 3 Golden Plover flying NW on 28<sup>th</sup>, c100 Lapwing on 12<sup>th</sup>, 3 Dunlin on 15<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, 3 Snipe on 17<sup>th</sup>, 4 Black-tailed Godwits on 27<sup>th</sup>, 2 Curlew on 28<sup>th</sup>, 2 Redshank on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>, a Greenshank on 3<sup>rd</sup>, a Green Sandpiper from 9<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> and 2 Common Sandpipers on 9<sup>th</sup>.

600+ Black-headed Gulls left the roost early morning on 30<sup>th</sup>, 2 Common Gulls on 12<sup>th</sup>, a pre roost gathering of 1500 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 17<sup>th</sup>, 7 Yellow-legged Gulls in the roost on 11<sup>th</sup> and 2 Sandwich Terns flew South on 20<sup>th</sup>.

5 Stock Doves on 28<sup>th</sup>, up to 2 Kingfishers seen at different locations, 5 Great Spotted Woodpeckers on 9<sup>th</sup>, 2 Skylarks on 21<sup>st</sup>, 51 Swallows through on 1<sup>st</sup>, and the last record was of 5 on 24<sup>th</sup>, c130 House Martins around the visitor centre on 9<sup>th</sup>, 48 Meadow Pipits on the dam wall on 5<sup>th</sup>, 5 Yellow Wagtails on 8<sup>th</sup>, 4 Grey Wagtails on 5<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>, 115 Pied Wagtails on 17<sup>th</sup>, a White Wagtail on 10<sup>th</sup>, 2 Redstarts on 5<sup>th</sup>, several records of Wheatear with the last on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 4 Song Thrush on 15<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> and 15 Mistle Thrush on 16<sup>th</sup>.

The last Sedge Warbler was on 13<sup>th</sup>, a Reed Warbler on 15<sup>th</sup> is the latest for the site, 2 Lesser Whitethroats on 15<sup>th</sup>, 2 Whitethroats on 3<sup>rd</sup>, a Garden Warbler on 5<sup>th</sup>, 10 Blackcaps on 11<sup>th</sup>, 27 Chiffchaffs counted during a circular walk on 7<sup>th</sup>, 3 Willow Warblers on 9<sup>th</sup>, 7 Goldcrest on 16<sup>th</sup>, 2 Spotted Flycatchers on 16<sup>th</sup>, 13 Jays through North on 15<sup>th</sup> including a flock of 7, 9 Magpies on 21<sup>st</sup>, 2 Ravens on 1<sup>st</sup>, c40 Starlings on 15<sup>th</sup>, a Tree Sparrow x House Sparrow hybrid on 16<sup>th</sup>, c60 Goldfinch on 20<sup>th</sup>, the first Siskin of the autumn on 25<sup>th</sup>, with 2 on 28<sup>th</sup>, 12 Linnets on 12<sup>th</sup> and a Lesser Redpoll on 28<sup>th</sup>.

107 species this September compared with 109 in 2013, 106 in 2012, 124 in 2011 and 117 in 2010.

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## **AUGUST 2014 BIRD NOTES**

### **August Highlights: Little Egret, Osprey, Curlew Sandpiper, Great Skua, Black Tern, Whinchat, Tree Pipit and Yellowhammer.**

Despite this August being the coldest for over 20 years, 108 species is more than satisfactory. Very few new water bird broods to report this month. One more each of Mallard and Tufted Duck take their totals to 23 and 14 respectively. Water bird maximum counts were: 11 Little Grebes on 27<sup>th</sup>, 53 Great Crested Grebes on 27<sup>th</sup>, 36 Cormorants on several dates, up to 4 Little Egrets up to 18<sup>th</sup>, with smaller numbers thereafter, 10 Grey Herons on 8<sup>th</sup>, 36 Mute Swans on 28<sup>th</sup>, 6 Greylag Geese on 27<sup>th</sup>, 719 Canada Geese on 29<sup>th</sup>, a juvenile Shelduck on and off from 6<sup>th</sup>, 6 Wigeon on 30<sup>th</sup>, 10 Gadwall on 27<sup>th</sup>, 97 Teal on 29<sup>th</sup>, 230 Mallards on 27<sup>th</sup>, 1 Shoveler on 4<sup>th</sup>, 7 Red-crested Pochard on 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 7 Pochard on 30<sup>th</sup>, 453 Tufted Duck on 27<sup>th</sup>, a drake Common Scoter on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2 Goosander on 13<sup>th</sup> and 988 Coot on 27<sup>th</sup>.

Raptors include: A Red Kite on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, up to 2 Sparrowhawks, and a female trapped in the Wildlife Centre and released unharmed on 26<sup>th</sup>, 5 Buzzards on several dates, an Osprey flying NW early afternoon on 19<sup>th</sup>, up to 2 Kestrels throughout the month, five sightings of Hobby on 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> and regular sightings of Peregrine from 5<sup>th</sup>.

There were 13 species of Wader recorded including an Oystercatcher on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6 Ringed Plover on 18<sup>th</sup>, 120 Lapwings on 20<sup>th</sup>, a Sanderling on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3 juvenile Curlew Sandpipers on the evening of 27<sup>th</sup>, 8 Dunlin on 26<sup>th</sup>, 3 juvenile Ruff on 28<sup>th</sup>, 1 Snipe on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, a Curlew on 17<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 4 Redshank on 24<sup>th</sup>, a Greenshank on 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2 Green Sandpipers on 6<sup>th</sup>, and a single on 28<sup>th</sup> and 5 Common Sandpipers on 8<sup>th</sup>.

In wet and windy conditions on 26<sup>th</sup> 2 Great skuas were found circling the res at 08.46hrs. They were watched for a further 7 minutes before they left south. Gulls this month include: Few records of Black-headed Gull as most had left site by early August, 2 Common Gulls on 27<sup>th</sup>, c980 Lesser Black-backed Gulls pre roost on 19<sup>th</sup> and 4 Yellow-legged Gulls on 3<sup>rd</sup>. 55 Common Terns through on 26<sup>th</sup> is a site record beating 45 in 2000, a Black Tern early morning on 26<sup>th</sup> is the first record this year.

6 Stock Doves on 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> is an encouraging number, 8 Collared Doves at Wildlife Centre on 18<sup>th</sup>, the last Swift was 1 on 27<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers were a regular sight at many locations, a Skylark heard over the dam wall on 24<sup>th</sup>, 20 Sand Martins on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 40 Swallows on 25<sup>th</sup>, c60 House Martins on 13<sup>th</sup>. Tree Pipits heading south include singles on 21<sup>st</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. 20+ Meadow Pipits SW on 31<sup>st</sup>. Yellow Wagtails were also moving south with regular records from 5<sup>th</sup> including 3 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. 8 Grey Wagtails on 4<sup>th</sup> is another site record, 76 Pied Wagtails on 20<sup>th</sup>. There were 4 Redstarts on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, a Whinchat on the dam wall on 21<sup>st</sup> is the first record since 2011, 3 Wheatear on 9<sup>th</sup>, 3 Reed Warblers on 22<sup>nd</sup>, a Lesser Whitethroat from 6<sup>th</sup>, 3 Whitethroat on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Garden Warbler on 24<sup>th</sup>, 5 Blackcap on 30<sup>th</sup>, 12 Chiffchaff on 29<sup>th</sup>, 3 Willow Warbler on 6<sup>th</sup>, 5 Spotted Flycatcher on 18<sup>th</sup>, 8 Willow Tit on 14<sup>th</sup>, 4 Raven on 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, c50 House Sparrow on Stones Island on 22<sup>nd</sup>, c80 Tree Sparrow at Wildlife Centre on 10<sup>th</sup>, 70+ Goldfinch on 13<sup>th</sup>, 22 Linnet on 4<sup>th</sup>, 5 Bullfinch on 24<sup>th</sup> and a Yellowhammer on Horseshoe Island on 3<sup>rd</sup> is a rare sight these days.

108 species this month compared with 106 in 2013, 94 in 2012, 119 in 2011 and 95 in 2010.

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## **JULY 2014 BIRD NOTES**

### **Highlights: Great White Egret, Common Scoter and Red Kite.**

The kind, warm, sunny weather continues to favour what looks to be the best breeding season for some years with plenty of families in woodland, scrub, car parks and on the water and the brood sizes seem to be up. Water bird brood counts so far this year (compared with last year): Little Grebe 1 (0), Great Crested Grebe 7 (7), Mute Swan 2 (1), Mallard 22 (18), Tufted Duck number only 13 (24) but with more to come in August and one single brood contained 22 chicks from the Wildlife Centre on 7-8<sup>th</sup>. A Great White Egret, first seen in flight at 1050hrs on 8<sup>th</sup>, was a good find. It was quickly relocated at Big then Flat Island and well communicated, giving birders the chance to catch up with this big white heron. It also had colour rings and was traced as being ringed as a nestling on 13/5/2013 at Besne, France and was recently seen in the Netherlands before visiting here. Maximum water bird counts were: 6 Little Grebe on 14<sup>th</sup>, 52 Great Crested Grebe including juveniles on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 42 Cormorant on 28<sup>th</sup>, 2 Little Egret on 2<sup>nd</sup>, then again from 15-31<sup>st</sup>, 11 Heron from 3-8<sup>th</sup>, 35 Mute Swan (including broods of 7 and 3) from 23<sup>rd</sup>, 4 Greylag Geese on 1-16<sup>th</sup>, 426 Canada Geese on 6<sup>th</sup>, 5 Barnacle Geese (pair with 3juvs) all month, a juvenile Shelduck 28-31<sup>st</sup>, a female Mandarin on 6<sup>th</sup>, a drake Wigeon on 28-30<sup>th</sup>, 3 Gadwall on 30<sup>th</sup>, 6 Teal on 9<sup>th</sup>, 338 Mallard on 16<sup>th</sup>, 4 Shoveler on 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 Red-crested Pochard on 14-15<sup>th</sup>, 4 Pochard on 14<sup>th</sup>, 319 Tufted Duck on 16<sup>th</sup> and a notable passage of, predominantly drake, Common Scoter with 7 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 5 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 12 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 10 on 13<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 19<sup>th</sup>, 10 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1 on 24<sup>th</sup> and 9 on 26<sup>th</sup>. The pair of escapee Australian Wood Duck from last month remained around the Wildlife Centre to 13<sup>th</sup> and 1 White plus 3 Blue Snow Geese (escapees!) in flight around the site on 1<sup>st</sup> July sounds like pure fantasy, but it happens at Carsington.

Raptor records this month included a Red Kite over Millfields on 7<sup>th</sup>, a Sparrowhawk nest with 3 fledglings and adult Sparrowhawks carrying prey at 2 other locations, 4 Buzzards on 22<sup>nd</sup>, a Hobby on 7<sup>th</sup> and Peregrine on 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

Waders included: 11 Oystercatcher on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9 Little Ringed Plover on 3<sup>rd</sup>, a Ringed Plover on 8<sup>th</sup>, 71 Lapwing on 16<sup>th</sup>, a Dunlin on 12-14<sup>th</sup>, a Snipe on 28<sup>th</sup>, a Black-tailed Godwit on 21<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, a Whimbrel on 11<sup>th</sup>, 5 Curlew through on 4<sup>th</sup>, 3 Redshank on 14<sup>th</sup>, a Greenshank on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9 Common Sandpiper on 16<sup>th</sup>. Sadly, 1 of the well grown Oystercatcher young was found dead on Big Island on 14<sup>th</sup> and the other was being devoured by a Crow on 16<sup>th</sup> despite a protesting adult.

The maximum count of Black-headed Gull young on Millfields Island was 36 on 1<sup>st</sup> and 28 at the Wildlife Centre on 7<sup>th</sup>. There were 6 first summer Common Gull on 17<sup>th</sup>, 340 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 3 Herring Gull on 7<sup>th</sup> and 6 Yellow-legged Gull on 11<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Tern passage was 6 Common Tern through on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 to 2 on other days and an Arctic Tern on 30<sup>th</sup>.

Kingfisher activity, including 3 together on 29<sup>th</sup>, strongly suggests breeding took place here this year and juvenile and adult Tawny Owls were noted at 3 locations. Other juveniles seen and bred here included Swift, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Redstart, Lesser Whitethroat and Goldfinch. Adult activity showing breeding included Sedge and Reed Warbler, but a Juvenile Yellow Wagtail on 3<sup>rd</sup> and juvenile Wheatear on 5<sup>th</sup> obviously bred elsewhere.

102 species were recorded this July compared with 92 in 2013, 97 in 2012, 105 in 2011 and 91 in 2010.

June Highlights: Little Egret, Scaup, Red Kite and Osprey.

The big species count of 99 is a new June record, beating the previous best of 96 in 2004. Generally, breeding is making up for last year's loss, with the warm weather promoting a glut of insects and big brood sizes are evident. Water bird broods noted so far this year are: Great Crested Grebe with 5 broods (1 last year), Mute Swan 1 brood of 7 (last year 1 brood of 4), Barnacle Geese 2 broods of 4+2 (2 broods of 1), Mallard 19 broods (15), Tufted Duck 6 broods (1) and Coot 5 broods (4). Notable counts, excluding obvious young, were from the WeBS count on 16<sup>th</sup> except where stated: 2 Little Grebe, 34 Great Crested Grebe, 22 Cormorant on 23<sup>rd</sup>, a Little Egret on 29<sup>th</sup>, 11 Heron from 18<sup>th</sup>, 23 Mute Swan on 30<sup>th</sup>, 402 Canada Geese on 30<sup>th</sup>, a female Mandarin on 23<sup>rd</sup>, a drake Wigeon on 29<sup>th</sup>, 5 drake Teal on 9<sup>th</sup>, 103 Mallard, 3 Shoveler on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2 drake Pochard on 29<sup>th</sup>, 83 Tufted Duck, a moulting drake Scaup on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7 drake Common Scoter on 26<sup>th</sup>, and 103 Coot. A Heron at Sheepwash with a yellow ring marked '61' has been traced to a this year's nestling from near York, proving some very early movement. Also, providing an identification challenge, has been a pair of Australian Wood Duck (presumed escapees) usually found around the Wildlife Centre since 21<sup>st</sup>.

Raptors included a Red Kite on 6<sup>th</sup>, an Osprey from Sheepwash on 2<sup>nd</sup>, another Osprey on 21<sup>st</sup> and a Hobby was seen hunting on 18<sup>th</sup>. Sadly, a dead Buzzard nestling was found under the nest on 13<sup>th</sup>, presumed to have fallen out, and a dead Kestrel was found on the dam on 20<sup>th</sup>.

Notable waders and their maximum counts this month were 12 Oystercatcher including 4 big young on 9<sup>th</sup>, 4 Little Ringed Plover on 29<sup>th</sup>, a Ringed Plover on 4<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 35 Lapwing on 23<sup>rd</sup>, a Snipe on 30<sup>th</sup>, 13 Black-tailed Godwit on 28<sup>th</sup>, 4 Curlew on 4<sup>th</sup>, 9 Redshank including 2 juveniles on 6<sup>th</sup>, a Greenshank on 8<sup>th</sup>, a Green Sandpiper on 27<sup>th</sup> and a Common Sandpiper on 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

Black-headed Gull pairs showed 22 young at the Wildlife Centre and 25 young on Millfields Island on 30<sup>th</sup>. There were 7 immature Common Gull on 20<sup>th</sup>, 104 mixed age Lesser Black-backed Gull on 23<sup>rd</sup>, a Herring Gull on 9<sup>th</sup> and Brutus, the Yellow-legged Gull, returned on 20<sup>th</sup> and was joined by another from 25<sup>th</sup>. A Sandwich Tern was at the Wildlife Centre briefly on 15<sup>th</sup> before going on to Ogston Reservoir and there were 2 Common Tern on 29<sup>th</sup> and an Arctic Tern on 20<sup>th</sup>.

Two Stock Dove flew over the Wildlife Centre on 24<sup>th</sup> and a young Tawny Owl was seen in a pathside tree on 27<sup>th</sup>. A pair of Swift looked to be feeding nestlings under the Visitor Centre eaves from 24<sup>th</sup> and regular sightings of 2 Kingfisher, occasionally carrying fish, suggested probable breeding. A family of Swallow were in and out of the overflow grill at Millfields on 25<sup>th</sup> and other adults looked to be attending nestlings under the nearby draw-off control tower. A pair of Grey Wagtail was around Paul Stanley Hide on 24<sup>th</sup> and 5 juvenile Pied Wagtail were on Stones Island on 9<sup>th</sup>. Tit families noted included a Long-tailed and a Willow in Wildlife Centre Creek on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Coal on 20<sup>th</sup>, 4 Great on 2<sup>nd</sup> and a Nuthatch was feeding young in Warrington Knob on 14<sup>th</sup>. Maximum counts on long walks were: 61 Wren, 26 Robin, 3 Redstart, 35 Blackbird and 9 Song Thrush on 6<sup>th</sup>, 6 Reed Warbler singing on 14<sup>th</sup>, 8 Whitethroat on 6<sup>th</sup>, 12 Garden Warbler on 16<sup>th</sup>, 33 Blackcap, 39 Chiffchaff and 39 Willow Warbler on 6<sup>th</sup>, a flock of 18 Long-tailed Tit on 27<sup>th</sup>, 32 Rook in a field above Wildlife Centre Creek on 14<sup>th</sup>, 19 Chaffinch on 6<sup>th</sup>, a Siskin and 3 Linnet on 16<sup>th</sup> and 8 Reed Bunting on 18<sup>th</sup>.

99 Species this June compared with 87 in 2013, 88 in 2012, 95 in 2011, 88 in 2010 and 93 in 2009.

**MAY 2014 BIRD NOTES (to 27<sup>th</sup>)**

May Highlights: Red Kite, Osprey, Little Tern, Cuckoo and Short-eared Owl.

A poor species count this May, however, more importantly, the warm weather has been highly suitable for breeding, although 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> were cooler and very wet, which must have caught out some fledging families. The wintering adult Great Northern Diver was present in full breeding plumage on 1<sup>st</sup> and left site that night. There were a further 7 broods of Mallard, taking their total to 13 broods this year. Notable water bird counts were: no Little Grebe this month, 16 Mute Swan on 12<sup>th</sup>, 2 Pink-footed Geese (feral/escapee?) on 13<sup>th</sup>, 3 Greylag on 23<sup>rd</sup>, a pair of Barnacle Geese with 7 young on 27<sup>th</sup>, 6 Shelduck on 13<sup>th</sup>, a pair of Mandarin from 12<sup>th</sup>, a drake Gadwall all month, 6 Teal on 4<sup>th</sup>, 55 Mallard on 19<sup>th</sup>, a drake Garganey on 17<sup>th</sup>, 70 Tufted Duck on 19<sup>th</sup>, a drake Goosander 11-13<sup>th</sup> and 40 Coot on the WeBS count on 19<sup>th</sup>.

Raptors included a Red Kite over Fishtail on 3<sup>rd</sup> and another over Sheepwash on 12<sup>th</sup>. There were 7 Common Buzzard in the air on 2<sup>nd</sup> and an Osprey drifted through, heading northwest, on 16<sup>th</sup>. A Hobby was noted during the evenings of 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> and 3 Peregrine, a pair and a well separated individual, were in the air at the same time on 10<sup>th</sup>.

There were 3 broods of Oystercatcher by 21<sup>st</sup>, sadly, one of the broods was lost during heavy rains before 27<sup>th</sup>. Lapwing had 1 brood from 15<sup>th</sup> and Redshank 1 brood, also from 15<sup>th</sup>. Wader passage had its moments with maximums of 5 Ringed Plover and 2 Sanderling on 6<sup>th</sup>, 36 Dunlin in total, through in small flocks on 11<sup>th</sup>, 2 Bar-tailed Godwit on 19<sup>th</sup>, 2 Whimbrel on 9<sup>th</sup>, 3 Curlew on 10<sup>th</sup>, 1 Greenshank on 4<sup>th</sup>, 4 Common Sandpiper on 4<sup>th</sup> and 6 Turnstone flew through on 11<sup>th</sup>.

The Black-headed Gull colonies consisted of 38 nests on Millfields Island and 9 nests on the Wildlife Centre raft by 18<sup>th</sup>. An adult Kittiwake was around for an hour on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Tern passage included 10 Common Tern plus 1 Arctic Tern trying to land on the same small buoy together on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 3 Arctic Tern on 10<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> and 4 Little Tern together on 20<sup>th</sup>.

Away from the water, breeding activity is heading towards a good season, hopefully replacing some of last year's loss due to the cold spring and lack of insects. Young already seen this month include Grey and Pied Wagtail, Dunnock, Robin, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Long-tailed, Blue and Great Tits, Tree Creeper and Tree Sparrow. Redstart have been noted singing at 4 locations, at least two of which also have females present. The first Spotted Flycatcher was seen on 16<sup>th</sup> and a pair was in Wildlife Centre Creek on 26<sup>th</sup>. The last spring passage Yellow Wagtail was on 15<sup>th</sup>. Unusual visitors to Carsington this month included a Cuckoo on 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, a Short-eared Owl on 11<sup>th</sup> (observer so surprised he eventually refound it to take photographic proof) and a Green Woodpecker on 3<sup>rd</sup>. With several counts done during round walks some of the maximum counts this month are: 56 Wren on 21<sup>st</sup>, 14 Dunnock on 15<sup>th</sup>, 35 Robin on 21<sup>st</sup>, 61 Blackbird on 21<sup>st</sup>, 13 Song Thrush on 15<sup>th</sup>, 13 Whitethroat on 15<sup>th</sup>, 18 Garden Warbler on 21<sup>st</sup>, 50 Blackcap and 50 Chiffchaff (yes, they are the accurate figures) on 21<sup>st</sup>, 27 Willow Warbler on 15<sup>th</sup>, 43 Blue Tit and 31 Great Tit on 15<sup>th</sup>, 11 Tree Creeper, most singing, on 21<sup>st</sup>, 35 House Sparrow on 21<sup>st</sup>, 35 Chaffinch on 21<sup>st</sup>, a Siskin on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16 Bullfinch on 9<sup>th</sup> and 7 male Reed Bunting on 15<sup>th</sup>.

104 Species this month compared with 106 in May 2013, 116 in 2012, 111 in 2011 and 106 in 2010.



## **APRIL 2014 BIRD NOTES**

Highlights: Cattle Egret, Barnacle Geese, lots of Terns and Great Grey Shrike.

Following several cold wet Aprils, this year April has been suitable breeding weather, and what a difference, plenty of singing, mating, nest building, some juveniles in bushes and broods on the water. Also 119 species, which is the second best ever April, second only to 120 in 2003 when there were resident Barn and Little Owls, which were finally lost to Carsington during the 2012/13 winter.

The wintering Great Northern Diver was in full summer plumage, calling and flying around on 23<sup>rd</sup>, roosted on 30<sup>th</sup>, but will be off northwards very soon. The find of the month was a Cattle Egret, which landed on Stones Island at 1930hrs on 9<sup>th</sup>, stayed only briefly but long enough for good views to two observers already on site. Another significant record was 9 Barnacle Geese on 26<sup>th</sup>, travelling high northeast in a 'V' formation and considered to be wild birds. These Geese occasionally travel up the east coast this time of year and presumably were driven west by winds (see terns). Wildfowl counts were: 46 Great Crested Grebe on 20<sup>th</sup>, a Pink-footed Goose on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7 Greylag Geese on 16<sup>th</sup>, 70 Canadas on 20<sup>th</sup>, 28 feral Barnacles on 8<sup>th</sup>, 3 Shelduck on 28<sup>th</sup>, 3 Mandarin from 21<sup>st</sup>, pair Gadwall on 10<sup>th</sup>, 8 Teal on 8<sup>th</sup>, 48 adult Mallard on 20<sup>th</sup>, 3 Pintail on 1<sup>st</sup>, pair of Shoveler on 3-6<sup>th</sup>, drake Pochard on 15<sup>th</sup>, 91 Tufted Duck on 20<sup>th</sup>, hybrid Tufted/Scaup on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3 Common Scoter on 18<sup>th</sup>, 11 Goldeneye on 1<sup>st</sup>, pair of Goosander on 27<sup>th</sup> and 30 Coot on 20<sup>th</sup>. There were 6 Mallard broods of 9+11+9+9+7+14 seen by 30<sup>th</sup>.

An Osprey flew past the Wildlife Centre at 1300hrs on 6<sup>th</sup> and stayed until 9<sup>th</sup> generating many records. Two Ospreys were seen from 1115hrs on 8<sup>th</sup>, Lane End perch was occasionally used and, finally, 2 were seen flying off northeast during the evening of 9<sup>th</sup>. Wader records were reasonable considering the lack of useable shoreline due to high water levels and temporary loss of screening at the Wildlife Centre. Maximum counts of waders, including passage and local breeding birds, were: 12 Oystercatcher on 8<sup>th</sup>, 3 Little Ringed Plover on 15<sup>th</sup>, a Ringed Plover on 5<sup>th</sup>, 2 Golden Plover on 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 Sanderling on 30<sup>th</sup>, 4 Dunlin on 17<sup>th</sup>, a Jack Snipe 1-8<sup>th</sup>, 18 Snipe on 1<sup>st</sup>, 5 Black-tailed Godwit on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 4 Bar-tailed Godwit on 25<sup>th</sup>, 2 Whimbrel on 30<sup>th</sup>, 5 Curlew on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9 Redshank on 20<sup>th</sup> and Common Sandpiper from 8<sup>th</sup>.

A first summer Little Gull arrived on 21<sup>st</sup> and stayed 2 days. Another 2 travelled through with terns on 22<sup>nd</sup> and an adult went through with terns on 27<sup>th</sup>. A first summer Caspian Gull was around on 11<sup>th</sup> and a near adult Yellow-legged Gull on 6<sup>th</sup>. Tern passage started with a Sandwich Tern on 2<sup>nd</sup> and another on 5<sup>th</sup>. A Common Tern was around the Wildlife Centre on 23<sup>rd</sup> and another on 27<sup>th</sup>. Arctic Tern moved through, heading northeast, mainly in small flocks, with totals of 46 through on 20<sup>th</sup>, 55 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 45 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 13 on 26<sup>th</sup>, 44 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 28<sup>th</sup>. A Little Tern was also seen on 26<sup>th</sup>, but too briefly as it went off southeast from near Stones Island. Most of this notable inland Tern passage is probably attributable to the east winds over the past few days having pushed the Terns up the west coast, with some travelling high on a Severn to Humber estuaries' cross country route over Carsington Water, which, at 600 feet on the slope of the only big hill range they pass over, clearly attracts the terns and other sea and coastal passage birds.

Other migrant arrivals were: 1 Swift on 20<sup>th</sup>, 2 House Martin on 11<sup>th</sup>, Tree Pipit over on 26<sup>th</sup>, Yellow Wagtail on 7<sup>th</sup>, White Wagtail on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Redstart on 11<sup>th</sup>, Wheatear on 1<sup>st</sup>, Sedge Warbler on 21<sup>st</sup>, Reed Warbler on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Lesser Whitethroat on 14<sup>th</sup>, Whitethroat on 22<sup>nd</sup> and Garden Warbler on 21<sup>st</sup>. A small flock of Yellow Wagtail on the dam on 30<sup>th</sup> contained a male of race 'thunbergi', known as 'Grey Headed', a rare sight in Derbyshire and a first for Carsington. A Great Grey Shrike was seen on bushes at Shiningford on 4<sup>th</sup> before disappearing into the nearby fields, on its way back east. There were 2 Brambling on Stones Island on 5<sup>th</sup>, a Siskin and 9 Linnet on 12<sup>th</sup> and 3 Lesser Redpoll on 17<sup>th</sup>.

119 Species were recorded compared with 114 in April 2013, 115 in 2012, 111 in 2011 and 118 in 2010.

### MARCH 2014 BIRD NOTES

March Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan, Red Kite, Jack Snipe, Caspian Gull, Kittiwake, Rock Pipit and Spring Migrants.

The reasonable winter to spring weather brought in early migrants as usual, in fact the first swallow arrival matched the earliest ever at Carsington on 23<sup>rd</sup>. The adult Great Northern Diver remained all month and was showing some small signs of breeding plumage by the end of the month. Whooper Swan were calling in on their way northwards, with 1 on 1<sup>st</sup>, 12 on 26-27<sup>th</sup> and 9 on 29<sup>th</sup>. Maximum waterbird counts this month were on the WeBS count on 16<sup>th</sup> unless dated; 1 Little Grebe, 53 Great Crested Grebe on 21<sup>st</sup>, 9 Cormorant on 7<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 6 Mute Swan on 13<sup>th</sup>, a Pink-footed Goose with Canadas most days, 3 Greylag on 30<sup>th</sup>, 89 Canada Geese, 27 Barnacle, 1 Shelduck on 1<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 4 Wigeon on 13<sup>th</sup>, 2 Gadwall on 25<sup>th</sup>, 19 Teal on 13<sup>th</sup>, 72 Mallard, 3 Pintail on 9<sup>th</sup>, 4 Shoveler on 13<sup>th</sup>, 1 Pochard on 25<sup>th</sup>, 125 Tufted Duck, a drake Tufted/Scaup hybrid 15-26<sup>th</sup>, 15 Goldeneye on 7<sup>th</sup>, a Goosander on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 130 Coot.

A Red Kite drifted over the Visitor Centre at 0800hrs on 17<sup>th</sup>. There were 5 Common Buzzards in the air on 13<sup>th</sup> and Peregrine was recorded on 14<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Oystercatchers were around their breeding areas all month and at least 12 were seen on 20<sup>th</sup>. The first Little Ringed Plover of their spring migration flew through northwards on 30<sup>th</sup> and a Dunlin was seen occasionally from 7<sup>th</sup>. The star wader was a Jack Snipe performing well, bouncing for many hours in front of the Wildlife Centre on the afternoon of Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>, to the delight of many observers and visitors. Common Snipe were also an attraction from the Wildlife Centre throughout the month, promoting many counts, the best of which was 38 on 1<sup>st</sup>, well behind last month's 77 as birds have been flying off to their breeding grounds. A Bar-tailed Godwit flew in at dusk on 30<sup>th</sup> and was still around the Wildlife Centre on 31<sup>st</sup>. Curlew passage peaked at 38 on 7<sup>th</sup> and Redshank were mobile but numbered at least 7 on 24<sup>th</sup>.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was seen regularly, at any time of day, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>. Another unusual gull species was Caspian Gull, a first winter bird well photographed late morning at Sheepwash on 3<sup>rd</sup> and also seen in the roost on 27<sup>th</sup>. There was an adult Yellow-legged Gull from Sheepwash on 19<sup>th</sup> and a Kittiwake was seen mid-afternoon on 18<sup>th</sup> from the Wildlife Centre, then Sheepwash and 2 were in front of Sheepwash on 19<sup>th</sup>.

Late winter to spring movement was also noted starting with 3 Skylark moving north on 1<sup>st</sup>. Sand Martin were flying through from 21<sup>st</sup>, when 8 were seen, and the first Swallow of the year was on 23<sup>rd</sup>. A few Meadow Pipit were moving through all month with at least 30 on 29<sup>th</sup>, the same day as a Rock Pipit also flew through, heading north, and 2 more were seen on the Sailing Club shore. Warblers started returning, with 2 Blackcap around Sheepwash on 31<sup>st</sup>, a singing Chiffchaff on Stones Island on 1<sup>st</sup>, building up to 23 between Millfields and Sheepwash on 28<sup>th</sup> and a Willow Warbler was singing early on 30<sup>th</sup> at Millfields.

95 Species recorded this March compared with 96 in March 2013, 97 in 2012, 106 in 2011, 101 in 2010, 102 in 2009, 104 in 2008, 95 in 2007 and 100 in 2006.

## **FEBRUARY 2014 BIRD NOTES**

February Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan, Red Kite, Mediterranean Gull, Little Gull and Kittiwake.

An uneventful month weatherwise, although strong winds on a few days were most probably responsible for bringing in some unexpected gull species but, even these, were not enough to lift the lowest February species count for 12 years. The adult Great Northern Diver had a lonely month and was elusive at times. The sight of the month must have been a magnificent 67 Whooper Swans during the afternoon of 28<sup>th</sup>. These birds had been seen earlier at Wyver Lane and, when they flew off, Carsington observers were alerted. This herd is a new record for Carsington site, the previous being 56 in 1993. Other significant water bird counts were: 3 Little Grebe on 13<sup>th</sup>, 42 Great Crested Grebe on 7<sup>th</sup>, 17 Cormorant on 15<sup>th</sup>, 28 feral Barnacle Geese on 7<sup>th</sup>, 3 Shelduck on 11<sup>th</sup>, 19 Wigeon on 19<sup>th</sup>, 3 Gadwall, 57 Teal and 100 Mallard on 13<sup>th</sup>, 217 Pochard and 190 Tufted Duck on the WeBS count on 15<sup>th</sup>, a first winter drake Scaup 1-16<sup>th</sup>, 14 Goldeneye on 15<sup>th</sup>, 1 Goosander on 1<sup>st</sup> and 391 Coot on 15<sup>th</sup>.

Raptor activity included a Red Kite flying close to the Wildlife Centre on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Sparrowhawk there on 19<sup>th</sup> and 3 Common Buzzard seen from there in the air on 4<sup>th</sup>.

Waders included the returning breeding Oystercatchers which increased from 1 on 1<sup>st</sup> to 9 on 21<sup>st</sup>. The male wearing a bar-code leg ring returned to the area between Sheepwash and Flat Island for his ninth breeding season, originally being ringed on the Exe Estuary in Devon. The wintering Lapwing flock totalled 391 on 15<sup>th</sup> but was reducing by the end of the month as some moved on towards their breeding grounds. There was a surprising number of Snipe viewable from the Wildlife Centre all month, with 48 on 1<sup>st</sup>, 74 on 4<sup>th</sup> and 77 on 13<sup>th</sup>. The best counts were during sunshine when the birds came out to sunbathe. They were showing mainly along the creek shore to the left of the Wildlife Centre, with a few on Horseshoe Island and some out of sight to the right, viewable from the windsurfing launch shore. It was presumed that these would be new site record numbers but they fall well short of the abnormal count of 130 in November 2003. Curlew passage started with 1 on 17<sup>th</sup>, then a few daily and 7 past Sheepwash on 25<sup>th</sup>. There was also Redshank around all month, with at least 3 from 9<sup>th</sup>.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was noted in the gull roost on many days, occasionally 2 and there were 3 on 10<sup>th</sup>. An adult Little Gull was briefly off Stones Island on 16<sup>th</sup>, this bird was mobile and elusive and was still present the following morning. The gull roost held 4000 Black-headed Gull on 18<sup>th</sup>, over 1000 Common Gull on 6<sup>th</sup>, 300 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 18<sup>th</sup>, 10 Herring Gull on 25<sup>th</sup> and 2 Yellow-legged Gulls from 13<sup>th</sup>. An adult Kittiwake was seen flying off southwest on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The wintering Kingfisher was seen at many locations throughout the month. There were a few Skylark flying over moving northwards with 2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and singles on other dates. A wintering Redwing flock at Sheepwash totalled 120 on 7<sup>th</sup> and a Brambling was in the same area on 25<sup>th</sup>.

81 Species compared with 90 in Feb 2013, 91 in 2012, 90 in 2011, 87 in 2010 and 86 in 2009.

## **JANUARY 2014 BIRD NOTES**

### **January Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan and Scaup.**

With plenty of rain, strong winds and very few records this month a species count of only 82 is not so surprising. There were 2 Great Northern Divers already on site on 1<sup>st</sup>. Both were adults, but one was generally rather pale and possibly a second winter bird. The divers were last seen together on 19<sup>th</sup> and, definitely, there was just the darker adult on site on 25<sup>th</sup>. Whooper Swan passage heading northwest included 21 flying over on 12<sup>th</sup>, 11 on the water, then flying on 19<sup>th</sup> and 2 from Sheepwash on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Water bird numbers are from the WeBS count on 19<sup>th</sup> unless dated otherwise: 3 Little Grebe, 40 Great Crested Grebe, 17 Cormorant, 2 Heron on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9 Mute Swan, 40 Pink-footed Geese flying southwest on 18<sup>th</sup>, 2 Greylag on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 28 feral Barnacle Geese on 6<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, a Shelduck on 17<sup>th</sup>, 35 Wigeon on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 11 Gadwall, 44 Teal, 82 Mallard, 515 Pochard, 492 Tufted Duck, 5 Scaup from 4<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, 18 Goldeneye, 2 Goosander on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4 Moorhen and 990 Coot.

Waders included an Oystercatcher from 27<sup>th</sup>, 945 Lapwing on 19<sup>th</sup>, a Dunlin on 25<sup>th</sup>, 36 Snipe on 19<sup>th</sup>, 2 Woodcock on 9<sup>th</sup> and 3 Redshank on 17-19<sup>th</sup>.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was in front of Sheepwash Hide late morning on 14<sup>th</sup> and the gull roost held: a Med Gull on 23<sup>rd</sup>, over 3000 Black-headed Gull on 9<sup>th</sup>, 800 Common Gull on 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 400 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 9<sup>th</sup>, 40 Herring Gull on 19<sup>th</sup>, 3 Yellow-legged Gull between 9<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> and 2 Great Black-backed Gull on 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. It was also noted that the winter resident Yellow-legged Gull was not seen on site after 19<sup>th</sup>.

The only Owl reported was a Tawny heard early one morning. There were 30 Collared Dove around the Ranger Base on 1<sup>st</sup> and Kingfisher was seen regularly throughout the month at various locations. A Fieldfare was on Stones Island on 13<sup>th</sup>, 60 Redwing at Penn Carr on 2<sup>nd</sup> and a Brambling by the Wildlife Centre on 12<sup>th</sup>.

The bird feeding stations around the site are well worth a visit and the following usually can be seen:

Paul Stanley Hide – Willow Tit, Coal Tit, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch, Pheasant.

Sheepwash car park – Tree Sparrow, Bullfinch, Reed Bunting, Jackdaw.

Lane End – Willow Tit, Coal Tit (currently including a leucistic bird), Tree Sparrow, Bullfinch, Nuthatch, Reed Bunting.

Wildlife Centre – Willow Tit, lots of Tree Sparrow, Collared Dove, Chaffinch, Reed Bunting.

Ranger Base, visible through the trees on the Wildlife Centre side – Tree Sparrow, Collared Dove.

Visitor Centre entrance – House and Tree Sparrow, Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Goldfinch.

82 Species this month compared with 89 in January 2013, 92 in 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.