

NOVEMBER 2015 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Red-throated Diver, Great Northern Diver, Shag, Common Scoter, Merlin, Water Rail, Mediterranean Gull, Little Gull, Caspian Gull, Kittiwake, Red-throated Pipit, Mealy Redpoll and Crossbill.

A long list of highlights this month helped to push the species count to above average for November, many of these birds arrived during a period of wet and windy weather in the second half of the month. A Red-throated Diver flew in on 21st and gave good, if brief, views to 2 observers but was not seen again after 0825hr, this is the 8th site record. As is now expected Great Northern Divers arrived during the month, a juvenile at Sheepwash on 15th was joined by what is most likely the returning adult from previous years on 17th, then on 22nd an unprecedented 6 different birds were seen! These 6 Divers consisted of the aforementioned 2, another juvenile which then flew south, a second adult which stayed until mid afternoon and a further 2 seen, flying high northwest, midmorning. Wildfowl maximum counts were: 18 Little Grebe on 20th, 38 Great Crested Grebe on 20th, 15 Cormorant on 4th, 3 site rare juvenile Shag all day on 17th with 1 remaining until 23rd, a Little Egret up to 6th, 2 Grey Heron on 24th, 28 Mute Swan on 10th, 14 Whooper Swan on 20th, 150 Pink-footed Geese southwest on 20th, 3 Shelduck on 22nd, 2 Greylag Geese on 24th, 81 Canada Geese on 20th, 145 Wigeon on 20th, 21 Gadwall on 20th, 242 Teal on 20th, 155 Mallard on 23rd, a female Pintail up to 9th, 5 Shoveler on 21st, a pair of Red-crested Pochard on 27th, 83 Pochard on 28th, 105 Tufted Duck on 20th, 15+ Goldeneye on 22nd, 11 Goosander on 17th, 2 Water Rail (heard squealing in the Hopton reed bed) on 2nd and 26th, 13 Moorhen and 1110 Coot both on 23rd.

Raptor records were Sparrowhawk on several dates, 7 Buzzard on 20th, a male Merlin in Shiningford Creek on 15th and a pair of Peregrine on 20th. Waders included: an Oystercatcher on 5th, a Ringed Plover on 22nd, 16 Golden Plover on 4th, 452 Lapwing on 26th, 21 Dunlin on 24th-25th, 24 Snipe on 5th (and a bird of the faeroensis race was seen on several occasions), 4 Curlew on 19th and 3 Redshank on 20th and 24th.

Gulls were well recorded with a total of 10 species including: a first winter Mediterranean Gull on 22nd, 4 Little Gull flying over on 21st, counts of 1000+ Black-headed Gull, 220 Common Gull and 1100 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 7th, 2 Herring Gull on 15th, an adult Caspian Gull on 18th, 19th and 26th, 3 Yellow-legged Gull on 10th, 2 Great Black-backed Gull on 23rd and 3 Kittiwake on 20th.

A count of 9 Stock Dove on 6th was excellent and equals the site record from 2004, 3630 Wood Pigeon flew over on southwest passage on 18th and there were 16 Collared Dove on 28th. A single observer on Stones Island on 13th was shocked when a Pipit, seen flying over, gave out the distinctive high pitched call of Red-throated Pipit, this far northern tundra breeding species which winters in Africa and the Middle East will be quite a coup for Carsington, if accepted by rarity committees. Winter Thrushes were present in good numbers with 200 Fieldfare on 16th and 60 Redwing, flying south, on 9th. A late, or wintering, Chiffchaff was at the Hopton end on 5th, 230 Jackdaw were going to roost on the east side on 16th, 4 Raven were seen on 9th, 16th and 28th. A small Starling roost formed in the Hopton reed bed, with 300 at dusk on 6th. Tree Sparrows were on the Wildlife Centre feeders all month and 60+ on 15th was good news. Brambling were heard on several dates, 45 Siskin were seen on 30th, 15 Linnet on 2nd, 50 Lesser Redpoll on 8th and a single Mealy Redpoll was among them on 28th and 29th. A Crossbill flew over on 27th and 2 Yellowhammer flew over south on 6th.

102 species recorded compared with 96 in November 2014, 92 in 2013, 95 in 2012 and 99 in 2011.

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OCTOBER 2015 BIRD NOTES

October Highlights: Great White Egret, Pink-footed Geese, Common Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Merlin, Stonechat, Ring Ouzel and Yellow-browed Warbler.

A month of above average temperatures and falling water levels produced the relatively low total of 96 species. Maximum waterbird counts this month were: 32 Little Grebe on 5th, 50 Great Crested Grebe on 18th, 22 Cormorant on 2nd, 7 Grey Heron on 14th, 23 Mute Swan on 5th, 53 Pink-footed Geese, through northeast, on 19th, 56 Greylag Geese on 27th, 620 Canada Geese on 18th, a single Barnacle Goose on 5th and 12th-13th, 142 Wigeon on 14th, 31 Gadwall on 29th, 161 Teal on 14th, 148 Mallard on 18th, a Pintail on 12th and 29th, 9 Shoveler on 30th, a pair of Red-crested Pochard on 3rd-18th, 121 Pochard on 14th, 128 Tufted Duck on 18th, 5 female/immature Common Scoter on 14th, 5 Goldeneye on 31st, a female Red-breasted Merganser on 23rd to month end, 3 Goosander on 22nd-23rd and 29th, 913 Coot on 18th and 9 Moorhen on 5th.

Raptors included: 2 Sparrowhawk on 12th and 14th, 4 Buzzard on 14th, Kestrel throughout the month, a female Merlin southeast over Stones Island on 19th and Peregrine on 5th and 22nd. Just 6 species of wader this month which included: an Oystercatcher on 26th, 15 Golden Plover through west on 25th and a further 28 on 26th, 210 Lapwing on 29th, the latest ever site record of Curlew Sandpiper on 29th, 3 Dunlin on 28th-29th and 7 Snipe on 31st.

Despite good numbers of Gulls in the evening roost there were few formal records made this month, in particular there were no counts of Black-headed or Lesser Black-backed, although they were present in large numbers. The few counts that were made included 100+ Common Gull on 12th, single Herring Gull on several dates, 4 Yellow-legged Gull on 27th and 3 Great Black-backed Gull on 12th.

Four Stock Dove flew over the Wildlife Centre Creek on 17th, Kingfisher were seen regularly and there were 3 Great spotted Woodpecker on 18th. Skylark passage included 13+ over south on 8th and 15 north, in brilliant sunshine, on 12th. Three Swallow, feeding high over Shiningford Creek on 25th were the second latest site record. There were 20 Meadow Pipit on 17th and 31st and 30 Pied Wagtail on Watersports Island on 8th. A male Stonechat was a good find on Stones Island on 15th. An even better find was a first winter female Ring Ouzel, heard calling and eventually tracked down among an obvious Blackbird influx, on Stones Island on 12th; which surprisingly, given they breed in the Dark Peak, represents a first site record of this species. Fieldfare arrived on 14th when a group of 60 flew over site and there were 100 by 31st, 10 Song Thrush were on Stones Island on 25th and the first Redwing were 25 on 13th rising to 150 by 17th. The final Blackcap was a male on 12th. A report of a Yellow-browed Warbler, on the east side among a mixed Tit flock on 20th, will require acceptance by the Derbyshire rarities committee before, hopefully, becoming another new species for the site. There were 30 Long-tailed Tit at the Wildlife Centre on 18th and 7 Willow Tit on 30th. The first Brambling of the autumn flew over on 14th and other finch counts were: 7 Greenfinch on 18th, 80 Goldfinch on 31st, 13 Siskin on 12th, 14 Linnet on 14th and 8 Lesser Redpoll on 31st. Two Yellowhammer flew over southwest on 25th.

96 species recorded this October compared with 98 in 2014, 103 in 2013, 104 in 2012 and 103 in 2011.

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SEPTEMBER 2015 BIRD NOTES

September Highlights: Great White Egret, Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Black Tern and Stonechat.

A disappointing month for wader passage, however wildfowl returned in reasonable numbers and there were still some quality birds for observers to admire. Water bird maximums were: 19 Little Grebe on 15th, 40 Great Crested Grebe on 29th, 39 Cormorant on 5th & 15th, 4 Little Egret on 26th, a Great White Egret flying east on 12th, 7 Grey Heron on 29th, 23 Mute Swan on 15th, 5 Greylag Geese on 6th & 10th, 399 Canada Geese on 15th, 1 Barnacle Goose on 15th, a Shelduck on 29th, 84 Wigeon on 29th, 13 Gadwall on 29th, 149 Teal on 15th, 154 Mallard on 29th, 2 Pintail on 20th and 28th-29th, 4 Shoveler on 20th, 1 Red-crested Pochard on 2nd-4th, 53 Pochard on 29th, 246 Tufted Duck on 29th, a very early Goldeneye on 20th, 5 Moorhen on 15th and 919 Coot on 29th.

Raptor records included: a report of a female/immature Marsh Harrier flying north on 9th, a female Sparrowhawk, perched in trees near the Wildlife Centre feeders on 14th and others seen on several dates, 11 Buzzard in the air simultaneously on 13th, Osprey on 4th, 6th (delighting 14 people on the bird watching for beginners walk) and 13th, Kestrel on a regular basis, a Hobby flying west over Horseshoe Island on 6th and Peregrine on several occasions including a bird which took to perching in a tree at Sheepwash.

As stated wader passage was poor but included: An Oystercatcher on 15th, 3 Ringed Plover on 1st & 9th, 28 Lapwing on 29th, a single Dunlin on many dates, a Snipe regularly at the Wildlife Centre, 2 Black-tailed Godwit on 16th and 5 Common Sandpiper on 9th.

The growing gull roost held 2,600 Lesser-Black backed Gull on 17th and 5 Yellow-legged Gull on 21st. A single Great-Black backed Gull was seen regularly from 4th. Terns were represented by 2 Common on 6th, juvenile Arctic on 5th and 15th and a Black Tern over the Sailing Club on 12th.

A female Tawny Owl was calling at dusk on 1st and up to 2 Kingfisher were seen on numerous dates with Paul Stanley hide probably the best place to see this species. The first Skylark of the autumn flew over on 18th the final Sand Martin report was on 14th, there were c80 Swallow on 15th and 200 House Martin on 4th. Meadow Pipits were trickling through all month with 18 on 9th, a single Yellow Wagtail was on 13th and 3 Grey Wagtail were at Millfields on 11th. A circular walk on 3rd gave counts of 27 Wren, 4 Dunnock and 8 Robin. Redstart were seen on 1st and 15th, Wheatear on 16th and a female/immature Stonechat on 20th. Counts of 12 Blackbird and 16 Mistle Thrush were also made on 3rd.

The last Sedge Warbler record was of 2+ on 18th, Reed Warbler adults were feeding at least 2 fledged young near the Wildlife centre on 18th-20th, which is the latest record for the site. Other Warblers were 2 Lesser Whitethroat on 6th, 2 Whitethroat on 3rd, 6 Blackcap on 4th, 25 Chiffchaff on 4th and a Willow Warbler on 18th. The last Spotted Flycatcher was on 3rd and Tit counts were 12 Long-tailed on 3rd, 6 Willow on 20th, 4 Coal, 24 Blue and 11 Great all on 3rd. There were 2 Raven on 4th and 7th, 60+ House Sparrow on 6th, 15 Chaffinch on 3rd and 2 Greenfinch on 6th. Large flocks of Goldfinch were around Stones Island and the Wildlife Centre Creek with 180 at those locations on 18th, 30+ Siskin on 19th is encouraging following last year's poor showing also 10+ Linnet on 6th, 6 Lesser Redpoll on 26th and 5 family parties of Bullfinch on 3rd.

104 species this September compared with 107 in 2014, 109 in 2013, 106 in 2012 and 124 in 2011.

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AUGUST 2015 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Little Egret, Osprey, Knot, Spotted Redshank, Turnstone, Green Woodpecker and Tree Pipit.

As the breeding season draws to a close 2 further broods of both Mallard and Tufted Duck takes their totals to 28 and 21 respectively. Maximum water bird counts were: 12 Little Grebe on 27th, 27 adult Great Crested Grebe on 27th, 4 Little Egret on 22nd and 27th, 4 Grey Heron on 27th, 27 adult Mute Swan on 12th, 10 Greylag Geese on 27th, 93 Canada Geese on 27th, 2 Shelduck on 28th, 4 Wigeon on 25th and 27th, 4 Gadwall on 24th, over 60 Teal on 31st, 160 Mallard on 27th, 2 Pintail on 29th and 30th, 2 Red Crested Pochard on 28th, 6 Pochard on 29th, 392 Tufted Duck on 27th, 3 drake Common Scoter on 8th, 7 redhead Goosander on 18th, 11 Moorhen on 13th and 979 Coot on 27th.

Raptor activity included: a Sparrowhawk taking a Tree Sparrow from the Wildlife Centre feeders on 17th and perched there again on 22nd, 4 Buzzard (including an adult carrying food towards a calling juvenile in the Wildlife Centre Creek) on 9th, an Osprey fishing at Sheepwash on 1st, another perched on Lane End platform on 7th and finally one through on 29th, a family of 3 Kestrel on 23rd, Hobby on 3 dates between 7th and 20th and a Peregrine on 1st then regularly from 17th.

Wader highlights this month were: 3 Little Ringed Plover on 6th, 10 Ringed Plover on 31st, 200 Lapwing on 17th, a Knot on 24th, 2 Dunlin on 9th, 26th and 30th, 5 Ruff on 23rd, 2 Snipe at the Wildlife Centre on 31st, a Whimbrel flying southeast, in heavy rain, on 14th, a juvenile Spotted Redshank at the Wildlife Centre, for 20 minutes, on 24th, 2 Redshank on 2nd, single Greenshank on 1st and 20th, a Green Sandpiper over Stones Island on 22nd, 5 Common Sandpiper on 23rd and a Turnstone on 31st.

The first signs of roosting Lesser Black-backed Gull were 200 on 12th then 250 on 17th and a single Yellow-legged Gull was among the roosting birds on the latter date. There were a few records of Great Black-backed Gull with 3 sub adults on 2nd being the maximum. The only Tern species recorded was Common with 1 on 6th, 2 on 12th and 3 on 31st.

There were 3 Stock Dove on 23rd and the last record of Swift was a group of 12 on 15th. Regular Kingfisher sightings were made, from many locations, although there was no evidence of breeding. A site scarce Green Woodpecker was heard on Stones Island on 9th and by the Sailing Club on 29th. Around 40 Swallow were at Millfields on 9th and c40 House Martin were over Stones Island on 27th. A return passage Tree Pipit flew over the Visitor Centre on 15th and the first autumn Meadow Pipit was on the dam wall on 28th. Wagtail records included 2 Yellow on the dam on 22nd, 7 Grey (including a family of 6) on 7th and a large count of 115 Pied on the dam on 28th. A count of 5 Redstart was made on 3rd and a single Wheatear was on the dam on 20th. Singles of Sedge and Reed Warbler were on 30th, at least 2 Lesser Whitethroat were seen on 24th and 2 Common Whitethroat, 20+ Chiffchaff and 15+ Willow Warbler were noted on the sunny morning of 19th. A family group of 3 Spotted Flycatcher was at Millfields on 17th and a single Raven flew over on 27th. Tree Sparrows, seen going in and out of a hole in the dead tree at Sheepwash, on 3rd must have been on their second or third brood. There were 100 Goldfinch on 26th, 5 Siskin on 12th, c20 Linnet on 27th and 4 Reed Bunting on 12th.

106 species this month compared with 108 in 2014, 109 in 2013, 94 in 2012, 119 in 2011 and 95 in 2010.

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JULY 2015 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Little Egret, Huge Tufted Duck brood, Scaup, Common Scoter, Osprey and Crossbill.

Water levels remained high during the peak breeding time, only starting to fall towards the end of the month, and this appears to have helped the breeding of Great Crested Grebe in particular. Water bird brood counts to date are (compared to last year, where data is available): Little Grebe 1 (1), Great Crested Grebe 12 (7), Mute Swan 2 (2), Mallard 26 (22), Tufted Duck 19 (13), this included the spectacle of a female seen with an incredible 30 small young on 22nd which must have been the result of multiple females laying in the same nest, Moorhen 2 and Coot 11. Maximum water bird counts were: 6 Little Grebe on 21st to the month end, 28 adult Great Crested Grebe on 29th, 30 Cormorant on 27th, single Little Egret on 19th and 31st, 6 Grey Heron on 3rd, 29 adult Mute Swan on 29th, 6 Greylag Geese on several dates, 117 Canada Geese on 29th, 10 Barnacle Geese (3 pairs with 4 surviving juvs) mid month, 2 juvenile Shelduck on 28th, 2 Gadwall on 28th-31st, 2 Teal on 26th, 130 Mallard on 29th, Red-crested Pochard on several dates from 11th, 4 Pochard on 28th, 302 Tufted Duck on 29th, an immature female Scaup on 12th and a female/immature Common Scoter on 26th. There were 10 Moorhen, including 6 juveniles and 613 Coot on 29th.

Raptor sightings were: hunting Sparrowhawk on several dates, 2 Buzzard regularly, an Osprey seen flying southwest and later fishing at Sheepwash, during the afternoon of 5th, Kestrel hunting around Stones and Horseshoe Islands daily, a Hobby flew west carrying prey on 21st and Peregrine were seen regularly from 18th.

Waders maximum counts were: 2 Oystercatcher on 21st, 3 Little Ringed Plover on several dates, over 100 Lapwing on 31st, 4 Dunlin on 28th, an early Ruff on 25th, a Snipe on 3rd, 6 Black-tailed Godwit on 5th, a Curlew through on 14th, 5 Redshank on 3rd and 25th, a Greenshank on 29th, Green Sandpiper on 18th and 3 Common Sandpiper on 13th.

There were 38 juvenile Black-headed Gull around Millfields Island on 13th, 3 Common Gull 29th-31st, 39 immature Lesser-black Backed Gull on 10th, a Herring Gull on 21st, Yellow-legged Gull on 20th and 23rd, and of note there was no sign of "Brutus" the killer Yellow-legged from previous years. Terns were represented by 2 Common on 26th, and a single return passage Arctic on 20th.

A group 8 Swift around the Visitor Centre eaves on 11th were considered to be family parties, Kingfisher were reported regularly, but were not considered to have bred this year. Tawny Owl records came on 21st and 28th but no young have been noted. Around 65 House Martin were over Stones Island on 28th. The first returning Yellow Wagtail were 2 on 20th and there were 6 Grey Wagtail on the dam on 28th. Redstart, with several juveniles, were seen daily and a pair of Spotted Flycatcher were feeding young. Very few Tit families were recorded and it appears the cold weather in the early breeding season has affected these species. A flock of 8 Crossbill flew over west on 6th.

99 species were recorded this July compared with 102 in 2014, 92 in 2013, 97 in 2012 and 105 in 2011.

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JUNE 2015 BIRD NOTES

June Highlights: Osprey, Grey Plover and Black-tailed Godwit.

Last year saw a record June count of 99 species, 2015 saw a more average return of 90. Water bird broods this year are: 1 Little Grebe (a flighted juvenile thought to have come from WLC Creek), 7 Great Crested Grebe, 2 Mute Swan, 2 Greylag Goose, numerous Canada Goose, with 25 young noted on 19th, 3 Barnacle Goose, 17 Mallard, 2 Tufted Duck, and 6 Coot. A large juvenile Moorhen, at the WLC on 28th, may not have come from this site. Maximum counts, excluding young, are from the WeBS on 19th unless stated: 2 Little Grebe on 22nd, 39 Great Crested Grebe, 12 Cormorant, 6 Heron on four dates, 18 Mute Swan, 11 Greylag Goose, 446 Canada Goose, 8 Barnacle Goose on 8th, 4 Gadwall on 7th, 2 drake Teal on 14th, 66 Mallard, 1 Shoveler on 11th, 3 Pochard on 16th, 197 Tufted Duck, a female Goosander on 8th and an eclipse drake Mandarin on 30th. There were 12 Cormorant on 19th, 6 Grey Heron on several dates, 2 Moorhen on 9th and 199 Coot.

Raptor sightings included 2 juvenile Buzzard over Hall Wood and a maximum of 3 on 23rd and 27th, an Osprey seen for an hour on 18th was most likely the same bird seen catching at least 1 fish on 21st and flying over the Visitor Centre on 23rd. A Kestrel was recorded catching voles, at the WLC, and was probably taking them to young close by. The only Peregrine was seen on 1st, and disappointingly a Sparrowhawk nest in Middle Wood was abandoned.

Maximum wader counts were 6 Oystercatcher (2 broods), 2 Little Ringed Plover, 2 Grey Plover on 2nd (first ever June record), 26 Lapwing on 19th (2 broods), a Black-tailed Godwit on 14th, Whimbrel on 3rd, single Curlew on several occasions towards the month end, 7 Redshank on 19th, with young seen on Millfields and Horseshoe Islands and 4 Common Sandpiper on 30th.

Apart from the growing Black-headed Gull colonies, which showed many young by the month's end, other species of Gull recorded were: Common on 20th, 12 Lesser Black-backed on 12th, Herring on 1st and Yellow-legged on 19th and 23rd. Common Terns have been scarce this year with a maximum of 6 on 8th and 6 late Arctic Terns flew through early morning on 14th.

A pair of Swift were going to a nest under the eaves of the Visitor Centre on 30th. Disappointingly, after last year's breeding success, there were only 3 sightings of Kingfisher. Early on 14th a Skylark was singing high over Stones Island. Another disappointment was the lack of interest at the Sand Martin bank but Swallow and House Martin were going to nests in traditional locations. Plenty of juvenile birds were reported with: 5 Pied Wagtail on 22nd, fledged Wren under the WLC eaves on 7th and a Redstart pair, seen feeding young in a box in the WLC Creek on 8th, were attending their young in the nearby fields on 22nd. A long singing Sedge Warbler at the WLC reed bed had obviously attracted a mate and they were feeding young by 22nd, Reed Warbler continued to sing at the Hopton end, but no young have been seen to date. A Lesser Whitethroat was singing in Tail Bay on 23rd, 4 families of Common Whitethroat were feeding young on the east side on 12th as were a pair of Garden Warbler on 9th. The first Spotted Flycatcher was at Penn Carr on 8th and it was joined by a second on 9th, the only other record being in the WLC Creek on 30th.

90 species this June compared with 99 in 2014, 87 in 2013, 88 in 2012, 95 in 2011, 88 in 2010

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MAY 2015 BIRD NOTES

May Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Garganey, Black Kite, Red Kite, Marsh Harrier, Roseate Tern and Little Tern.

A mixed bag of weather conditions this month, with cold winds and rain a feature on many days. The wintering Great Northern Diver was seen to fly high northwest on 2nd, though surprisingly it returned an hour later, and was last seen on 7th. Waterbird counts are from the WeBS on 30th, unless stated, and were 2 Little Grebe on 1st and 7th, 43 Great Crested Grebe, 9 Cormorant on 28th, 3 Grey Heron on 1st, Little Egret on 1st and 3rd, 9 Mute Swan on 19th, 2 Shelduck on 10th, a drake Mandarin on several dates, 2 Gadwall on 1st, 2 Teal on 8th, 46 Mallard, a drake Garganey on 17th, 107 Tufted Duck and a drake Goosander on 1st. There were 2 broods of 5 Greylag Geese, which is the first breeding record since 1996. Two pairs of Barnacle Geese raised young on Millfields Island, 3 Great Crested Grebe young were on Big Island and a further 6 broods of Mallard takes the total to 13.

A good set of raptor records this month. A bird was watched flying north from Sheepwash on 13th, the observer made extensive notes and sketches and is confident of the identification Black Kite. This record awaits the Derbyshire rarity committee's approval and will be the 4th county record and a new addition to the Carsington list, if accepted. Red Kites were seen on 16th and 23rd, a Marsh Harrier flew east on the morning of 9th, Hobby and Peregrine were reported on 3 dates each. The usual records of Sparrowhawk, Buzzard and Kestrel were made on a daily basis.

There were 2 broods each of Oystercatcher and Lapwing by 28th and hopefully they have survived the bad weather conditions in the final days of the month. Wader passage maximum counts were 6 Ringed Plover on 29th, 5 Sanderling on 13th, 22 Dunlin on 11th, 3 Whimbrel on 7th, Greenshank on 1st and 19th, 4 Common Sandpiper on 2nd and 3 Turnstone on 6th.

The noisy Black headed Gull colonies at the Wildlife Centre and Millfields had at least 52 nests combined by 15th and the first young were 4 at the Wildlife centre on 17th. Two sub adult Yellow legged Gulls were seen on 18th, 3 Kittiwake dropped in on the evening of 6th and another was noted near the Wildlife Centre on 17th. Tern passage again brought in some quality with 2 Sandwich Terns on 13th and an adult Roseate Tern on the morning of 16th will be the 8th county record, if accepted, and is the first at Carsington since 2 in 2006. There were 9 Arctic Terns on 14th and lower numbers on many other dates, 2 site rare Little Terns on 31st and a single Black Tern on 23rd.

There were several counts of other migrants, 200 Swift on 16th, 50 Sand Martin on 5th and 14th, 300 Swallow on 6th and 100+ House Martin on 31st. Yellow Wagtail on 18th, White Wagtail on 7th and Wheatear on 13th were the final spring records. Redstarts were seen in the Wildlife Centre Creek on several dates and a male was singing in the fields nearby on 20th. Several species were observed feeding young and included Robin, blackbird, Song Thrush, Long tailed Tit, Great Tit and both House and Tree Sparrows. Counts of warblers were 4 Reed Warbler singing in the Hopton reedbed on 26th, 2 Sedge Warblers on several dates, 2 Lesser whitethroat on 1st, 7 Whitethroat, 14 garden Warbler, 52 Blackcap, 51 Chiffchaff and 25 Willow Warblers all on 1st during a circular walk.

107 species this month compared with 105 in 2014, 106 in 2013, 116 in 2012 and 111 in 2011.

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APRIL 2015 BIRD NOTES

April Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Red Kite, Osprey, Sanderling, Jack Snipe, Whimbrel, Spotted Redshank, Turnstone, Arctic Tern, Black Tern and Tree Pipit

Rain, sun, warmth, cold and wind have all been a feature in what has been a mixed bag of weather this month. And 117 species is about par for April. The wintering adult Great Northern Diver remained all month and delighted those who could find it as it attained its summer plumage. From 24th to 30th it was seen in flight several times in readiness for its migration north.

Significant wildfowl counts are as follows: 3 Little Grebe on 1st, 45 Great Crested Grebe on 22nd, 9 Cormorant on 22nd, a Little Egret on 4th, 21st and 23rd, 3 Grey Herons on 22nd including a bird ringed at Attenborough NR in Notts as a chick in 2013. 9 Mute Swans on 10th, 8 Greylag Geese on 22nd, 100 Canada Geese on 22nd, 30 feral Barnacle Geese on 1st, 3 Shelduck on 15th, a pair of Mandarin seen on numerous dates, 8 Wigeon on 5th, 2 Gadwall on 5th, 21st and 22nd, 12 Teal on 2nd, 48 Mallard on 2nd, 2 Pintail on 10th, 14 Shoveler on 21st, 1 Pochard on 7th, 108 Tufted Duck on 22nd, a hybrid Pochard x Tufted Duck on 12th, 3 Common Scoter on 14th, 6 Goldeneye on 2nd and 123 Coot on 2nd. By the end of the month there were at least 7 Mallard broods of various sizes. It's often difficult to ascertain exactly how many broods there are on site as most are mobile and of course predation plays a part.

A Red Kite flew through on 5th and 8 Buzzards were seen across site on 2nd. A good run of Osprey records began with one early morning on 6th followed by two birds on 7th, one of which roosted and was seen on the morning of 8th. Further records were noted on 27th and 30th. A Hobby was noted on 28th. Considering the lack of shoreline due to high water levels 17 species of wader is more than reasonable. Counts are 16 Oystercatcher on 22nd, 5 Little Ringed Plover on 13th and 30th, up to 2 Ringed Plover, a Golden Plover on 19th, 12 Lapwing on 22nd, 2 Sanderling on 29th, 15 Dunlin on 28th, a Jack Snipe from 20th-22nd, 6 Snipe on 2nd and 12th, 5 Black-tailed Godwit on 28th, 2 Whimbrel on 29th, 4 Curlew on 17th, a Spotted Redshank on Horseshoe Island on 25th, up to 9 Redshank, 2 Greenshank on 22nd, 8 Common Sandpiper on 28th and 2 Turnstone on 30th.

There were two adult Mediterranean Gulls on 4th followed by a 1st summer on 5th and 6th. A Little Gull on 24th, 84 Black-headed Gulls on 22nd, 13 Common Gulls on 13th, 110 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 13th and an adult Kittiwake on 4th and 13th. Tern passage includes a Common Tern on 23rd with 6 on 29th. Arctic Terns heading northwards were 6 on 11th, 2 on 17th, 5 on 18th, 2 on 19th, 6 on 22nd, 2 on 24th and 8 on 30th. 4 Black Terns flew straight through on the morning of 24th.

Other migrants include 2 Swifts on 17th, c200 Sand Martins on 30th, the first Swallow on 3rd with 200 by 19th, 1 House Martin on 11th and 20 on 30th, a Tree Pipit over on 21st, a Yellow Wagtail on 11th and 13 on 30th, 5 White Wagtails on 12th, 3 Redstarts on 27th, a Wheatear on 11th, 17th and 26th, 2 Sedge Warblers on 24th, Reed Warbler on 27th, 2 Lesser Whitethroat on 22nd, Common Whitethroat on 22nd, Garden Warbler on 18th and 10+ by 28th, Blackcap on 8th with 20 by 17th, 37 Chiffchaff on 13th, Willow Warbler on 9th and 21 on 17th. On 15th a Willow Warbler showing characteristics of the northern form 'acredula' was noted near the Watersports centre. There were 2 Ravens on 2nd and 5th, 8 Linnets on 30th and 14 Bullfinch on 10th.

117 species were recorded compared with 119 in 2014, 114 in 2013, 115 in 2012 and 111 in 2011.

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MARCH 2015 BIRD NOTES

March Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Whooper Swan passage, Egyptian Goose, Avocet, Knot, Jack Snipe, Bar-tailed Godwit, Kittiwake, Rock Pipit and Spring Migrants slowly trickle in.

Although some spring migrants were slow to arrive there were some high quality birds in the offing this month. The adult Great Northern Diver remained all month and was showing some signs of moulting into summer plumage. Whooper Swan passage was impressive with a total of 144 birds moving through in two days. Firstly 48 flew northwest on 13th followed by 70, 24 and 2 in a similar direction on 14th. Maximum waterbird counts this month are from the WeBS on 8th, unless stated: 5 Little Grebe on 4th and 6th, 43 Great Crested Grebes on 4th, a summer plumaged Black-necked Grebe at Millfields on the afternoon of 29th only, 9 Cormorants, a Little Egret on 14th, 2 Grey Herons, 8 Mute Swans, 5 Greylag Geese on 22nd & 23rd, 137 Canada Geese, 33 feral Barnacle Geese all month with some having paired up on the islands, 3 Egyptian Geese at Millfields on 22nd, 4 Shelduck on 21st, 3 Mandarin on 27th, 26 Wigeon on 4th, 4 Gadwall on 17th, 88 Teal on 4th, 64 Mallard, a drake Shoveler on 18th and 30th, 2 Pochard on 1st and 18th, 77 Tufted Duck, a drake Common Scoter on 21st, 12 Goldeneye, 2 Goosander on 5th and 20th, 2 Moorhens and 192 Coots.

Raptors include 2 Sparrowhawks on 23rd, 5 Buzzards on 6th and 2 Peregrines on 30th. A good selection of waders this month despite the increasing water levels. Oystercatchers are now mostly settled on the various islands and 15 were noted on the WeBS. 2 Avocets were found on Watersports Island on the morning of 14th before eventually flying towards Millfields and lost to sight. This is only the fifth record for Carsington with the last being in 2009. A Ringed Plover on 3rd and 20th, a Grey Plover on 22nd, 132 Lapwing on 4th, a Knot on 13th and 20th, a Dunlin on 13th, 14th and 17th, a Jack Snipe found on Horseshoe Island on 23rd and was still present until 28th at least. 13 Common Snipe on 23rd, a Woodcock at Millfields on 16th, a Black-tailed Godwit from 20th-24th, a Bar-tailed Godwit on 7th and 14th, Curlew passage peaked at 32 on 18th and up to 5 Redshank by the end of the month.

3 adult Mediterranean Gulls roosted on 4th, over 1200 Common Gulls also roosted on 16th, 2 Herring Gulls on 7th and 6 Great Black-backed Gulls on 5th. An adult Kittiwake flew north on 14th. Further records include 2 adults on 20th and an adult on 21st and 22nd.

3 Stock Doves flew over on 21st, a Tawny Owl was heard calling at Millfields on 30th, 2 Kingfishers on 3rd and 27th and 4 Skylarks noted on 26th. The first Sand Martin was a single bird on 20th, followed by 2 on 21st and 3 on 28th. There were 6 Meadow Pipits on Horseshoe Island on 26th and a Rock Pipit seen on 24th and 27th. A Stonechat was in Wildlife Centre creek on 6th. The first Wheatears of the year were 2 males on the dam wall on 23rd. Further sightings of a male were noted on 26th, 27th, 28th and 30th and may relate to the same individual. 7 Song Thrush were noted on 6th including 5 in song. C130 Redwing were at Sheepwash on 19th. The first singing Chiffchaff was on 10th and by the end of the month 15 birds were noted although not all were singing. There were 3 Ravens on 26th, 50 Tree Sparrows on 26th, a good count of 26 Linnets flying over Stones Island on 3rd and 8 Reed Buntings at the Wildlife Centre on 1st.

103 species recorded this March compared with 95 in 2014, 96 in 2013, 97 in 2012, 106 in 2011, 101 in 2010, 102 in 2009, 104 in 2008 and 95 in 2007.

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FEBRUARY 2015 BIRD NOTES

February Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Red Kite, Mediterranean Gull and Barn Owl.

A mostly uneventful month weather wise which may be a reason behind another fairly low species count. Although there were a few surprises only last year's February tally of 81 species is lower than this month's tally of 85 since 2002. The adult Great Northern Diver was seen throughout the month and can be seen from many locations including Stones Island, Lane End hide and Sheepwash hide. Notable waterbird counts this month were on WeBS on 21st except where stated: 6 Little Grebes on 19th, 54 Great-crested Grebes, 21 Cormorants through in one flock on 18th were thought to have been migrants, 2 Grey Herons on several dates, 9 Mute Swans, c70 Pink-footed Geese NW on 8th, 122 Canada Geese, 33 feral Barnacle Geese on 23rd, a Shelduck on 10th, 18th and 20th, 74 Wigeon on 27th, 4 Gadwall on 12th, 84 Teal, 86 Mallard, a drake Pintail on 9th, a drake Shoveler on 22nd, 35 Pochard on 12th, 91 Tufted Ducks, 16 Goldeneye, 6 Goosander on 22nd, 4 Moorhens on 12th and 243 Coots.

Raptor activity included a Red Kite on 1st, regular Sparrowhawk sightings at various locations, 7 Buzzards on 27th and numerous Kestrel sightings.

Waders this month include Oystercatchers which have returned to breed on the various islands. Numbers increased from 1 on 10th to at least 8 by the end of the month. The male with the bar-code leg ring has returned to the Sheepwash area for his tenth successive year, having been ringed on the Exe Estuary in Devon. A single Golden Plover on the WeBS on 21st, 388 Lapwings on 11th, a Dunlin on 17th and 24th, 20 Snipe on 22nd. Curlew passage started with 1 on 20th which rose to 9 on 27th and up to 2 Redshank most of the month.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was in the roost on 18th and 27th, 500+ Common Gulls roosted on 27th, single Herring Gulls on 4th and 18th, a Yellow-legged Gull on 6th and a Great Black-backed Gull on 1st, 10th and 17th.

A Barn Owl was seen at Millfields on 2nd, this is the first site record for a couple of years. A pair of Tawny Owls were heard calling on 27th, Great Spotted Woodpecker drumming was first noted on 10th, 3 Skylarks were noted flying over on 27th, 5 Willow Tits on 18th including 3 in song, 3 Raven on 17th and 18th, a Brambling in Fishtail Creek on 2nd, a Yellowhammer on 1st and 3 Reed Buntings on 24th.

85 species this month compared with 81 in 2014, 90 in 2013, 91 in 2012, 90 in 2011, 87 in 2010, 86 in 2009, 86 in 2008, 88 in 2007, 89 in 2006 and 90 in 2005.

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JANUARY 2015 BIRD NOTES

January Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Little Egret, Whooper Swan and Yellowhammer.

Although 82 species is comparable with last January it is still a relatively low species count and more than likely indicative of lack of observer hours. As expected the adult Great Northern Diver that arrived in December stayed all month but was very mobile and often difficult to catch up with. Viewing from Stones Island and scanning towards Fishtail Creek or along the east bank will often produce the goods.

Water bird maximums are from WeBS count on 17th unless otherwise stated: 5 Little Grebes on 13th, 59 Great-crested Grebes also on 13th, 20 Cormorants on 27th, a Little Egret on 15th and 18th, a Grey Heron on 13th, 17th and 25th, 10 Mute Swans on 13th, there were 15 Whooper Swans on the water at Millfields on 18th, 14 the next day and 15 again on 20th and may relate to the same herd, 25 Greylag Geese on 5th, 134 Canada Geese on 13th, 29 feral Barnacle Geese on 11th and 13th, a Shelduck on 18th and 27th, 76 Wigeon on 13th, 16 Gadwall on 8th and WeBS, 100 Teal on 13th, 99 Mallard, 5 Shoveler on 22nd, 159 Pochard, 249 Tufted Ducks, 13 Goldeneye on 8th, 12 Goosander also on 8th, 2 Moorhens, and 1273 Coots.

Raptors this month include a Red Kite on 4th, numerous Sparrowhawk sightings including one displaying on 10th, 2 Buzzards on 30th and 2 Kestrels on 13th.

Waders for January include an Oystercatcher on 27th, a Golden Plover on 17th, c400 Lapwings on 30th, 16 Snipe on 18th, 3 Woodcock in Hall Wood on 8th and up to 2 Redshank for most of the month.

11 Common Gulls on 30th, 9 Herring Gulls on 2nd, the winter resident Yellow-legged Gull and his mate can often be found loafing around the spit at Sheepwash and were seen throughout the month, 11 Great Black-backed Gulls on 8th.

There were 11 Collared Doves on 13th, unfortunately the only Owl we now regularly get is Tawny Owl and one was heard calling near Sheepwash on 8th, Kingfisher sightings have been frequent and at many locations around the reservoir, a Great Spotted Woodpecker was heard drumming on 5th, 2 Meadow Pipits on 16th, a Grey Wagtail on 2nd and 16th, 27 Blackbirds counted on 30th, 20 Fieldfare on 22nd, 7 Song Thrush on 30th, c30 Redwing also on 30th, 49 Jackdaws on 2nd, 2 Ravens on 16th, 50 Tree Sparrows at the Wildlife Centre on 8th, 20 Chaffinch on 19th, c25 Goldfinch on 27th, 15 Bullfinch on 30th, a site rare Yellowhammer on 1st and 3 Reed Buntings on 11th and 25th.

82 species this month compared with 82 in 2014, 89 in 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 and 87 in 2003.

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