

DECEMBER 2017 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Jack Snipe, Stonechat and Hawfinch.

The adult Great Northern Diver, from November, remained all month as expected and other water bird maximum counts come from the WeBS survey on 16th unless indicated: 20 Little Grebe, 37 Great Crested Grebe, 2 Black-necked Grebe, 21 Cormorant, 1 Little Egret on 2nd, 2 Grey Heron on 1st, 44 Mute Swan on 1st, 80 Pink-footed Geese flew west on 2nd, 21 Greylag Geese on 2nd, 200 Canada Geese on 2nd and 14th, 27 Barnacle Geese on 24th, a Shelduck on 24th, 66 Wigeon, 17 Gadwall, 424 Teal, 198 Mallard, 4 Pintail on 23rd, 9 Shoveler on 2nd, 143 Pochard on 1st, 240 Tufted Duck, 13 Goldeneye, 10 Goosander on 13th, 2 Water Rail on 7th, 6 Moorhen and 948 Coot.

Nothing unusual to report in the raptor category but a healthy 6 Sparrowhawk on 5th, 7 Buzzard on 6th, 3 Kestrel on 6th and 2 Peregrine on 7th.

Waders noted this month were: 35 Golden Plover flying west on 22nd, 650 Lapwing on 12th and 15th, 4 Dunlin on 6th, 5 Ruff on many dates and possibly as many as 7 on 18th, a Jack Snipe at the Hopton end on 24th and another flushed on Stones Island on 30th, 25 Snipe on 3rd, 4 Woodcock on 21st and 8 Redshank on 8th and 9th.

Gull counts were: 6000 Black-headed at dawn on 25th, a massive 2000 Common was unsurprisingly a site record on 7th, 660 Lesser Black-backed on 5th, 24 Herring on 16th, 3 Yellow-legged on 7th and 2 Great Black-backed on several dates.

A count of 6 Stock Dove was made on 11th, 8 Tawny Owl were calling at dawn on 17th, occasional Kingfisher sightings were made, 6 Skylark flew over Millfields on 19th, 35 Meadow Pipit and 6 Grey wagtail were logged on 2nd. A Stonechat was at Paul Stanley hide on 15th and a female noted there on 31st was possibly the same bird. A walk between Millfields and Upperfields Farm produced a count of 40 Blackbird on 3rd, winter Thrushes were in evidence with 15 Fieldfare on 11th and 100 Redwing on 5th. Another walk on 2nd provided identical counts of 10 for both Nuthatch and Treecreeper, 40 Rook were around the dam wall on 7th and 5 Raven flew over on 31st. Continuing Tree Sparrow surveys produced a monthly maximum of 17 on 22nd, single Brambling were noted on 3 occasions, Siskin peaked at 60 on 21st, the Hawfinch phenomenon provided several records mainly of single birds with a maximum of 3 on 18th and 13 Bullfinch were seen on 23rd.

92 species recorded compared with 95 in 2016, 93 in 2015, 91 in 2014, 83 in 2013 and 85 in 2012.

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NOVEMBER 2017 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Great White Egret, Whooper Swan, Pink-footed Geese, Common Scoter, Jack Snipe, Bar-tailed Godwit, Mediterranean Gull, Caspian Gull, Kittiwake, Crossbill and Hawfinch.

101 species is very healthy and above average for November. And unsurprisingly there were some quality birds to see. Every winter we expect to see a Great Northern Diver or two and November didn't disappoint. One was seen in flight on the morning of the 19th and may have been down before leaving. Then on the 24th an adult was located off Stones Island and was still present at the month's end raising hopes that it's the returning adult. Water bird maximums come from the WeBS count on 19th unless stated: 30 Little Grebe, 42 Great Crested Grebe, 31 Cormorant, a Great White Egret at Sheepwash on 12th, 42 Mute Swan on 27th. The first Whooper Swans of the season were 16 on 2nd followed by several more records including 26 on 12th. Numerous Pink-footed Geese records were observed with notable skeins of 190 on 2nd, 160 on 5th and 100 on 16th. 390 Greylag Geese on 2nd, 270 Canada Geese, 339 Wigeon on 3rd, 48 Gadwall, 277 Teal, 108 Mallard, single Pintail on several dates, 5 Shoveler on 7th, 276 Pochard, 227 Tufted Duck, a female Common Scoter on 23rd, 14 Goldeneye on 2nd, 9 Goosander on 18th, up to 2 Water Rail in Hopton reedbed, 10 Moorhen and 860 Coot.

Raptors of note this month include 3 Sparrowhawk on 17th & 19th, 3 Buzzard on 5th, 3 Kestrel on 30th and Peregrine on 7th, 16th & 19th.

A good spread of wader records including 2 Ringed Plover on 6th, 4 Golden Plover on 5th with other smaller counts throughout the month, 650 Lapwing on 12th & 15th, 16 Dunlin on 14th & 17th, Ruff on site all month with a maximum of 5 on 29th & 30th, 2 Jack Snipe in Hopton reedbed on 30th, 43 Snipe on 15th, 3+ Woodcock on 23rd, a Black-tailed Godwit on 10th, a Bar-tailed Godwit on 9th and 9 Redshank on 19th.

Some good Gull counts this month with an adult Mediterranean Gull on 26th, c7000 Black-headed Gull on 9th, c1000 Common Gull on 8th & 9th, c2500 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 9th, a Caspian Gull on 4th & 5th, 4 Yellow-legged Gulls on 5th and a 1st winter Kittiwake on 20th.

A count of 16 Stock Dove was made on 11th, and 960 Wood Pigeons flew south on 5th. 7 Tawny Owls were calling at Hopton at first light on 26th, 10 Skylark over on 5th & 12th, 50 Meadow Pipits on 1st and a site record 19 Grey Wagtails left Hopton reedbed first thing on 12th. Some counts undertaken on 29th yielded 36 Wren, 24 Dunnock, 50 Robin, 50 Blackbird, 21 Fieldfare, 18 Song Thrush, 43 Redwing, 8 Goldcrest, 11 Willow Tit, 38 Blue Tit, 44 Great Tit, 9 Nuthatch, 24 Tree Sparrow, 21 Chaffinch and 18 Bullfinch. Other notable sightings include a Stonechat on 22nd, a Chiffchaff on 28th, 6+ Raven on 18th, 4000 Starling out of the Hopton reedbed roost on 12th, 22 Brambling on 7th, c50 Siskin on 21st, 17 Lesser Redpoll on 21st and 3 Crossbill over on 11th. The huge irruption of Hawfinch across the UK showed no sign of abating with records on 23 days in the month. Although generally in small numbers there were counts of 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 and a massive 28 on 7th. While most of these were heading South or Southwest, towards the end of the month some could be seen perched up at several locations, however the favoured area was at Millfields in the amphitheatre area.

101 species recorded compared with 99 in 2016, 101 in 2015, 96 in 2014, 92 in 2013 and 95 in 2012

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OCTOBER 2017 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great White Egret, Brent Goose, Green-winged Teal, Scaup, Merlin, Little Stint, Kittiwake, Water Pipit, Yellow-browed Warbler, Crossbill and Hawfinch.

Water levels remained low but there were some excellent birds to be seen and some impressive counts, including the best for Gadwall and Teal in a decade, the most Pintail since 1992 and site record highs for Shoveler, Wood Pigeon and Hawfinch. Water bird counts this month are from the WeBS count on 14th unless stated: 31 Little Grebe, 29 Great Crested Grebe on 4th, 12 Cormorant on 17th and 26th, 10 Little Egret on 4th, a Great White Egret, at Sheepwash, on 16th, 3 Grey Heron, 47 Mute Swan on 4th, 130 Pink-footed Geese on 30th, 401 Greylag Geese on 31st, 1,050 Canada Geese, 29 Barnacle Geese on 17th, a Brent Goose on 8th, 3 Shelduck on 31st, single Mandarin on 15th and 20th, 385 Wigeon on 11th, 86 Gadwall, a drake Green-winged Teal from 1st to 24th at least, 522 Teal on 4th, 156 Mallard, 23 Pintail on 4th, 17 Shoveler on 4th, 3 Red-crested Pochard on 4th, 167 Pochard on 20th, 336 Tufted Duck, 2 Scaup on 6th, 2 Common Scoter on 18th to 20th, 4 Goldeneye on 21st and 31st, 4 Goosander on 24th, a Water Rail in the Hopton reed bed from 15th to the month end, 5 Moorhen and 1,141 Coot.

Raptor records were: 2 Sparrowhawk on 6th, 7 Buzzard the same day, 3 Kestrel on 16th and 17th, a Merlin which flew south down the east side on 17th and 4 reports of Peregrine.

Waders maximum counts were represented by: 16 Ringed Plover on 12th, a Golden Plover on 15th, 213 Lapwing on 14th, a Little Stint on 4th, 8 Dunlin on several dates, 4 Ruff from 27th to the month end, 10 Snipe on 19th, 2 Black-tailed Godwit on 27th, 1 Curlew on 18th and 20th, 5 Redshank on 30th, a Greenshank on 6th and a Common Sandpiper on 29th.

Very few Gull records this month: 40 Common Gull on 30th, 2 Herring Gull on 20th, 7 Yellow-legged Gull on 9th, 3 Great Black-backed Gull on 13th and 2 adult Kittiwake on 22nd.

A massive 11,400 Wood Pigeon flew south on 18th, 8 Skylark on 25th, 80 Meadow Pipit on 18th, a site rare Water Pipit was seen briefly on 17th and there were 4 reports of Rock Pipit between 1st and 20th. A Grey Wagtail roost formed, again, in the Hopton reed bed and 11 left there at dawn on 29th, 2 late Wheatear were last seen on the dam wall on 22nd, 80 Fieldfare flew over on 28th, as did 500 Redwing on 15th and 2 Blackcap were on Stones Island on 25th. A Yellow-browed Warbler was heard calling near the Ranger Base on 16th but unfortunately it could not be seen, this will be the 3rd record in successive years subject to acceptance by the DOS rarity committee. Lingerling Chiffchaff included 3 on 6th and 1 still on 31st, 7 Raven flew over on 21st, 685 Starling moved southwest on 16th, 17 Tree Sparrow were counted on 12th and 13 Brambling on 15th. Other Finch counts included 40 Siskin on 15th, 50 Linnet on 5th, 13 Lesser Redpoll on 31st and 11 Crossbill on 29th. During the second half of the month it became clear that a huge irruption of Hawfinch was taking place across the south of the UK and Carsington did not miss out; 4 were seen flying southwest on 21st and then an incredible 26, including a group of 15, were recorded on 28th. Finally 25 Reed Bunting left their roost at the Hopton end on 15th.

108 species recorded this October compared with 108 in 2016, 96 in 2015, 98 in 2014 and 103 in 2013.

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SEPTEMBER 2017 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Manx Shearwater, Pink-footed Geese, Common Scoter, Osprey, Knot, Little Stint, Turnstone, Grey Phalarope, Caspian Gull, Sandwich Tern, Rock Pipit and Dipper.

An interesting month with a couple of county rarities, and a new bird for the site in Dipper! In a period of stormy weather numerous Manx Shearwaters were found inland. On the 11th one was found on the water off Stones Island. It remained the following day and was seen flying and attempting to feed. This is the 4th record for Carsington. Water bird maximums are 15 Little Grebe on 10th & 15th, 31 Great Crested Grebe on 10th, 37 Cormorant on 12th, a site record 12 Little Egrets on 21st, 10 Grey Herons on 5th, 53 Mute Swan on 15th, skeins of Pink-footed Geese include 29 on 14th, 78 on 15th, 102 in 2 skeins on 16th and c200 on 17th. 151 Greylag Geese on 30th, a huge 1'250 Canada Geese on 24th, 30 Barnacle Geese on 13th, 6 juv Shelduck on 11th, 200 Wigeon on 27th, 56 Gadwall on 27th, 374 Teal on 25th, 251 Mallard on 10th, 19 Pintail on 27th, 12 Shoveler on 4th, 4 Red-crested Pochard on several dates, 86 Pochard on 27th, 236 Tufted Duck on 10th, a female Common Scoter on 17th, 3 Goosander on 14th, 8 Moorhen and 778 Coots both on 10th.

Raptors include up to 3 Sparrowhawks on several dates, 20 Buzzards on 2nd, an Osprey on 12th, a Kestrel on 17th, 2 Hobby on 3rd and the last record on 19th. Peregrines were seen regularly throughout the month including 2 on 1st.

Low water levels have encouraged waders to stop off, these include: 2 Oystercatchers on 11th, 4 juvenile Little Ringed Plover on 14th, 18 Ringed Plover on 25th, 2 Golden Plover south on 5th, 120 Lapwing on 19th, 3 Knot briefly at Sheepwash on 20th then flew SW, 3 juvenile Little Stints on 18th and on subsequent dates, 16 Dunlin on 11th, a Ruff from 15th-25th, 5 Curlew on 3rd, 3 Redshank on 10th, 2 Greenshank on 10th, 4 Common Sandpipers on 5th, and a Turnstone on 25th. On the afternoon of the 13th a Grey Phalarope was found at Sheepwash. It was watched on and off until c17.30 when it flew towards Lane End and wasn't seen again. This is the 7th record for Carsington.

Gulls this month were 6000+ Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 13th, a Caspian Gull in the roost on 22nd, 5 Yellow-legged Gulls also in the roost on 11th. Two Sandwich Terns were seen in the evening rain on 3rd and was still present the following day and 2 juvenile Common Terns on 20th.

11 Stock Doves through on 10th, 6 Tawny Owls calling early morning at Hopton end on 20th, a single Swift still up to the late date of 14th, 3 Kingfishers on 3rd, 5 Skylark over on 28th, a Sand Martin on 25th equals the latest date, 100 Swallows on 3rd & 6th, 40 House Martins on 8th & 9th, a steady movement of 100+ Meadow Pipits on 12th, a Rock Pipit SW on 17th and another on 23rd, 5 Yellow Wagtails on 3rd with the last record on 22nd and 2 White Wagtails on 5th. On 3rd a Dipper was heard from the dam wall and seen near the stream by the settling ponds in tail bay. The last Redstart on 12th, a Stonechat on 26th, 2 Wheatear on 11th, a Reed Warbler on 10th, a Lesser Whitethroat on 2nd, the last Whitethroat on 25th, 6 Blackcap on 4th, 27 Chiffchaff on 17th, 5 Jays on 25th, 4 Raven on several dates, c150 Goldfinch on Stones during the first half of the month, 40 Linnets on several dates and 2 Yellowhammers on 24th.

118 species compared with 112 in 2016, 104 in 2015, 107 in 2014 and 109 in 2013

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JULY 2017 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Common Scoter, Red Kite, Sanderling, Black-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Mediterranean Gull, Yellow Wagtail, Wheatear and Spotted Flycatcher.

In what is generally regarded as a quiet month 105 species is very healthy and the best July since 2011. More observer hours certainly helps and some quality birds were on show although breeding success has been mixed. Water bird broods to date are Great Crested Grebe (2), Mute Swan (2), Greylag Goose (4), Canada Goose (7), Barnacle Goose (3), Gadwall (2), Mallard (19), Red-crested Pochard (1), Tufted Duck (7), Moorhen (3) and Coot (5). Maximum water bird counts (not including young) are from WeBS on 23rd unless stated: 8 Little Grebe, 31 Great Crested Grebe, 38 Cormorant on 28th, up to 6 Little Egret, 11 Heron on 26th, 50 Mute Swan on 15th, 35 Greylag Geese on 18th, 532 Canada Geese on 7th, Mandarin on 5th & 25th, 1 Wigeon, 10 Gadwall on 10th and 23rd, 4 Teal on 5th, 191 Mallard, 1 Shoveler on 4th, Red-crested Pochard all month, 2 Pochard on 3rd & 26th, 262 Tufted Duck, 4 records of Common Scoter were all single birds, 1 Goosander on 16th, 11 Moorhen and 510 Coot.

Raptors this month include: A Red Kite over the east side flying towards Hopton on 5th, 2 Sparrowhawk on 8th, 2 Kestrel on 8th, single Hobby sightings on 5 dates and 2 Peregrine on 23rd.

Notable waders were: 5 Oystercatchers on 21st, 18 Little Ringed Plover on 11th which included 13 juveniles, single Ringed Plover on several dates, 98 Lapwing on 18th, 2 Sanderling on 25th, 2 Dunlin on 13th & 26th, a Snipe on 10th, 11 Black-tailed Godwits on 9th & 27th. The flock on 27th included a colour ringed bird traced back to being ringed as an adult male on the River Alde in Suffolk in 2012. It was back there in the winter of 14/15 and September 15 interspersed with a visit to Iceland in April 2015. Two Whimbrel over on 19th were the first of the autumn, a Curlew south on 10th, 4 Redshank on 1st, a Greenshank on 13th and 14 Common Sandpipers on 9th.

An adult Mediterranean Gull on 11th, plus a juvenile on 23rd. Despite 240 nests counted on Millfields Island in May very few juvenile Black-headed Gulls were noted which was probably due to predation. Only 14 juvs were noted there among 87 birds on 27th. Two immature Common Gulls on 7th, 135 Lesser Black-backed Gulls flew south on 27th, adult and 1st summer Yellow-legged Gull on several dates, 2 Great Black-backed Gulls on several dates and 4 Common Terns on 24th.

Tawny Owls have been heard at a couple of locations, 30+ Swift on 28th, 2 Kingfishers on 27th, c100 Swallows on 26th, 60 House Martins over Stones Island causeway on 27th, a juvenile Yellow Wagtail on 29th is the first of the autumn, 3 Grey Wagtails on 21st, several Redstarts have been seen in fields behind the Wildlife Centre including a juvenile, and a pair were seen with food in Hopton end. A single Wheatear at Millfields on 25th, a family party of Reed Warblers in the small reedbed at the Wildlife Centre on 9th, 2 Lesser Whitethroat on 3rd, 2 family groups of Whitethroats at Hopton end and on Stones Island, up to 4 Spotted Flycatchers on 7th & 13th, 6 Raven on 7th & 23rd, 58 Tree Sparrows at the Wildlife Centre on 28th, 100 Goldfinch on 21st & 27th, c30 Linnet on 25th and a family group of Bullfinch near Paul Stanley hide on 21st.

105 species recorded compared with 100 in 2016, 99 in 2015, 102 in 2014, 92 in 2013 and 97 in 2012.

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JUNE 2017 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Breeding Red-crested Pochard, Common Scoter, Osprey, Knot, Sanderling, Black-tailed Godwit, breeding Common Sandpiper and Crossbill.

month of surprises saw the first Derbyshire breeding record of Red-crested Pochard, a brood of 6 being discovered on 18th, sadly only 1 remained by the month end. Mute Swan also surprised us, with all breeding attempts thought to have failed it was nice to be proved wrong when a single cygnet was seen around Sailing Club Island and then a pair with 5 cygnets was found in the road by Hopton Pond and were escorted to safety on the reservoir by STW Rangers. So water bird broods to date are: 2 Mute Swan, 4 Greylag Goose, several Canada Goose, 3 Barnacle Goose, 2 Gadwall, 18 Mallard, 1 Red-crested Pochard, 6 Tufted Duck and 4 Coot. Maximum counts come from the WeBS on 11th unless stated: 2 Little Grebe on several dates, 41 Great Crested Grebe, 12 Cormorant on 22nd, 4 Grey Heron on 27th, 47 Mute Swan on 27th and 30th, a Pink-footed Goose on 1st, 40 Greylag Geese, 580 Canada Geese on 20th, 10 Barnacle Geese on 16th, 10 Gadwall, 2 Teal on 25th, 78 Mallard, 4 Shoveler on 22nd, 2 Red-crested Pochard all month, single Pochard on 24th and 27th, 79 Tufted Duck, 6 Common Scoter on 6th, 3 Moorhen on 30th and 148 Coot.

Raptor sightings included 2 Sparrowhawk and 10 Buzzard on 9th, Osprey on 11th and 17th, 3 Kestrel on 11th, Hobby on 7th and 9th and a Peregrine also on 9th.

Maximum wader counts were: 15 Oystercatcher on 11th, 9 Little Ringed Plover on 11th, 7 Ringed Plover on 6th, 20 Lapwing on 22nd, 2 Knot on 29th, 2 Sanderling on 28th, 2 Dunlin on 6th, a Black-tailed Godwit on 28th, 2 Curlew on 13th and 13 Redshank on 11th. A pair of Common Sandpiper was suspected as breeding on 19th and this was confirmed the following day with young seen, this is the first breeding record since 1992.

Few formal Gull records this month but young Black-headed Gull were on the wing by the month end, there were 30 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 19th, 2 Herring Gull on 1st, a Yellow-legged Gull on 4th and 9th and 2 Great Black-backed Gull on 24th and 26th. A group of 4 Common Tern was noted on 16th and smaller numbers were seen on other days.

A juvenile Tawny Owl was recorded on 24th and there were several reports of Kingfisher. Sand Martin activity around the purpose built nest bank unfortunately ended but Swallow were feeding young near the draw off tower on 16th. Both Grey and Pied Wagtail were confirmed as breeding as were Redstart with young seen behind the Wildlife Centre from 23rd. Sedge Warbler appear to have bred on Sailing Club Island and an excellent count of 13 Reed Warbler on 30th included a fledged juvenile. There was plenty of evidence of success for other warblers with breeding activity noted for Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler. A walk from Millfields to Middle Wood, via Sheepwash, on 16th yielded 31 Blackcap, 32 Chiffchaff, 6 Willow Warbler and 6 Goldcrest all singing. Spotted Flycatcher had fledged young by midmonth as had all our resident Tits, Nuthatch and Treecreeper. Five Raven together on 27th were probably a family party, around 20 Tree Sparrow were seen on 9th and included juveniles, 2 Crossbill flew over Middle Wood on 13th and 7 Reed Bunting were counted on 16th.

97 Species this June compared with 94 in 2016, 90 in 2015, 99 in 2014, 87 in 2013 and 88 in 2012.

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MAY 2017 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Red Kite, Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Grey Plover, Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Greenshank, Turnstone, Little Gull, Sandwich Tern, Black Tern and Wood Warbler.

The summer plumage Great Northern Diver, which had drawn many admirers, was last seen on 2nd. Notable water bird records included: 2 Little Grebe on several dates, several pairs of Great Crested Grebe nest building, 11 Cormorant on 29th, a Little Egret on several dates, 3 Grey Heron on 10th, 13 Mute Swan on 27th (but all 3 breeding pairs had failed by midmonth), 27 adult Greylag Geese (at least 4 broods), 70 Canada Geese on 26th (numerous broods), 8 Barnacle Geese on 16th (at least 1 brood), 3 Shelduck on 9th, a pair of Mandarin all month, 7 Gadwall on 31st, a Teal on 15th, up to 13 broods of Mallard, a pair of Shoveler on 27th, a pair of Red-crested Pochard all month, 7 Common Scoter on 25th, 4 Goosander on 20th and several Coot nests around site.

Raptor highlights this month were: Red Kite on 20th and 28th, a cream crown Marsh Harrier on 9th, 2 Sparrowhawk on several dates, 12 Buzzard on 19th, Osprey on 4th and 8th, 2 Kestrel on numerous dates and a single record of Hobby on 6th.

A good selection of waders were drawn to the wide shoreline and included: 10 Oystercatcher on 9th, 11 Little Ringed Plover on 22nd, 12 Ringed Plover on 6th, 2 Grey Plover from 6th to 9th, Lapwing with at least 3 broods, a Knot on 20th, 7 Sanderling on 23rd including a colour ringed bird traced to Mauritania 2012, 8 Dunlin on 8th, 4 Bar-tailed Godwit on 6th, 6 Whimbrel on 14th, 4 Curlew on 9th, 6 Redshank on 24th, a Greenshank on 6th, c5 Common Sandpiper on 10th and 16 Turnstone on 14th.

Gulls were well represented and included 2 Mediterranean Gull on 2nd, 2 Little Gull on 7th, a huge count of 240 Black-headed Gull nests on Millfields Island on 4th, occasional Common Gull, 65 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 19th, 3 Herring Gull on 4th, a Yellow legged Gull and 3 Great Black-backed Gull both on several occasions. Records of Terns were made up of 2 Sandwich Tern on 19th and on 1st a good passage event included 4 Common Tern, c30 Arctic Tern and 4 Black Tern.

Swifts were moving through north on 6th with a count of 387 made and the only record of Kingfisher came on 28th. Sand Martin were at last showing interest in the purpose built nest bank at the Wildlife Centre and House Martin too were collecting mud from the shoreline and going to the Visitor Centre eaves. Wagtails included 2 Yellow on 10th, 6 Grey on 29th and a single White on 1st. The whole site was covered on 22nd and it produced some impressive counts as follows: 125 Wren, 20 Dunnock, 91 Robin, 3 Redstart, 91 Blackbird, 22 Song Thrush, 8 Whitethroat, 14 Garden Warbler, 55 Blackcap, 65 Chiffchaff, 32 Willow Warbler and 12 Goldcrest. Other notable Warblers this month included 2 Sedge Warbler, up to 5 Reed Warbler, 2 Lesser Whitethroat and a site scarce Wood Warbler which sang briefly in Hall Wood on 6th. A pair of Spotted Flycatcher arrived on 12th with 3 noted on 26th. Tree Sparrow surveys continued with a maximum of 19 counted on 26th with hopefully many more out of sight on breeding duties. A few finch records included 17 Chaffinch on 22nd, a single Siskin over the Hopton end on 18th and 13 Bullfinch on 22nd. A count of 7 singing male Reed Bunting was made on 10th.

113 Species this month compared with 112 in 2016, 107 in 2015, 105 in 2014 and 106 in 2013.

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APRIL 2017 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Common Scoter, Red Kite, Osprey, Grey Plover, Sanderling, Ruff, Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit, Turnstone, Mediterranean Gull, Arctic Tern, Little Tern, Black Tern, Cuckoo and Grasshopper Warbler.

Another good month and another record, 124 species eclipsing the 120 in April 2003. So unsurprisingly there was some good bird on show. The long staying Great Northern Diver attained its summer plumage late in the month and was seen flying around on several occasions in readiness for its migration north. Other notable water bird maximums were: 6 Little Grebes on 8th, 37 Great Crested Grebe on 8th, 12 Cormorants on 8th, Little Egret on 4th, 2 Grey Heron on 9th, 5 Mute Swan on 8th, a Whooper Swan on 1st, a Pink-footed Goose from 15th-17th, 9 Greylag Geese on 8th, 128 Canada Geese on 8th, 25 Barnacle Geese on 6th, 2 Shelduck on 5th & 16th, 3 Mandarin on 25th, the last record of Wigeon was 3 on 28th, 7 Gadwall on 26th, 11 Teal on 8th, 41 Mallard on 8th (plus up to 5 broods), 2 Shoveler on several dates, a pair of Red-crested Pochard from 19th, 58 Tufted Duck on 8th, 11 Common Scoter on the morning of the 30th had risen to 18 by the evening, 4 Goldeneye on 8th, a Goosander on 4th, 8 Moorhen on 8th and 72 Coot on 8th.

Two Red Kites were seen flying west together on 17th, and a single on 23rd, 4 Sparrowhawks seen together on 2nd, 11 Buzzard on 22nd, an Osprey on 7th was followed by records on 14th, 16th & 18th, and 2 Kestrel on 15th/16th.

Wader highlights include: 12 Oystercatcher on 8th, 6 Little Ringed Plover on 18th/19th, 7 Ringed Plover on 15th/16th, 3 Golden Plover flew through on 7th, a Grey Plover on 30th, 10 Sanderling on 30th is a site record, c20 Dunlin on 30th, a Ruff on 30th, 5 Snipe on 8th, 2 Black-tailed Godwits on 20th & 25th, a Bar-tailed Godwit on 18th & 30th, 11 Whimbrel on 30th, 4 Curlew on 30th, 5 Redshank on 16th, a Greenshank on 22nd & 30th, 5 Common Sandpiper on 25th and a Turnstone on several dates.

A 1st summer Mediterranean Gull from 15th then a different 1st summer bird on 27th, 4 1st summer Common Gulls on 28th, 90+ Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 28th, 3 Herring Gulls on 16th, single Yellow-legged Gull on several dates, 5 Common Tern on 30th, 3 Arctic Tern on 29th, 4 Little Tern on 30th and 10 Black Tern also on 30th.

A Cuckoo was heard from the Wildlife Centre on 23rd. The first Swift on 21st, and a Green Woodpecker in Tail Bay on 7th. Sand Martin peaked at 150 on 7th, and numerous Swallows mixed in with Sand Martins on 17th and just 10 House Martin on 26th. The first Yellow Wagtail on 9th but no big numbers throughout the month, White Wagtail arrived on 1st with 7 on 18th. As with last month some huge counts were undertaken on 26th when the whole site was covered. These include: 96 Wren, 20 Dunnock, 77 Robin, 80 Blackbird, 21 Song Thrush, 4 Sedge Warbler, 3 Garden Warbler, 52 Blackcap, 86 Chiffchaff and 46 Willow Warbler.

Other notable sightings include a Grasshopper Warbler heard reeling on 29th near Middle Wood which is the first record since 2011. The first Redstart on 8th, Reed Warbler arrived on 23rd with 2 on 29th. Other arrivals were Lesser Whitethroat on 23rd with 2 on 26th and Whitethroat on 26th with 5 on 30th. c15 Linnet on 8th and 8 Bullfinch on 4th finish off a quality month.

124 species were recorded compared with 119 in 2016, 117 in 2015, 119 in 2014, 114 in 2013 and 115 in 2012.

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MARCH 2017 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Whooper Swan, Common Scoter, Water Rail, Red Kite, Osprey, Avocet, Grey Plover, Jack Snipe, Kittiwake, Green Woodpecker, Stonechat and Crossbill.

A total of 110 species is a record March total and a glance at the highlights shows we had some really good birds to admire. The Great Northern Diver was present all month as expected and other water bird maximum counts were: 13 Little Grebe on 8th, 56 Great Crested Grebe on 11th, a Black-necked Grebe on the evening of 24th, 25 Cormorant on 11th, 3 Grey Heron on 15th, 8 Mute Swan on 11th, a Whooper Swan on 25th, a single Pink-footed Goose on 3 dates, 12 Greylag Geese on 26th, 189 Canada Geese on 21st, 25 Barnacle Geese on several dates, 2 Shelduck on 9th and 12th, 4 Mandarin on 21st, 30 Wigeon on 19th, a pair of Gadwall regularly, 50 Teal on 11th, 71 Mallard on 11th, 6 Pintail on 13th, 4 Shoveler on 23rd, 3 Pochard on 12th, 80 Tufted Duck on 21st, 2 Common Scoter on 13th and 29th, 17 Goldeneye on 21st, 5 Goosander on 5th, a Water Rail to 9th at least, 7 Moorhen on 11th and 242 Coot on 11th.

Some impressive raptor records were made on 25th when a Red Kite, 4 Sparrowhawk and a massive 23 Common Buzzard were all noted. Our earliest ever record of Osprey came on 20th when one flew west over Stones Island. Kestrel activity mainly concerned last year's breeding pair protecting their nest site from Jackdaws with regular skirmishes noted and Peregrine were seen on several occasions.

Wader highlights were: 19 Oystercatcher on 11th, a group of 7 Avocet on 10th, the first returning Little Ringed Plover on 23rd with 3 on 25th, a single Ringed Plover on 4 dates, a Grey Plover on 27th, 10 Lapwing on 4th, 3 Dunlin on 2nd and 22nd, the long staying Ruff last seen on 16th, 3 Jack Snipe in the Hopton reed bed on 15th, 78 Snipe on 10th, 2 Woodcock on 15th, 51 Curlew on 2nd, 9 Redshank on 21st and a Common Sandpiper on 30th.

Black-headed Gull were preparing nest sites around Millfields Island all month, 600 Common Gull and 150 Lesser Black-backed Gull roosted on 27th as did 7 Herring Gull on 21st. Other Gull records included 2 Yellow-legged Gull on 24th, 8 Great Black-backed Gull on 26th and a single Kittiwake on 1st.

A Green Woodpecker was calling in Tail Bay on 15th and an excellent count of 11 Great Spotted Woodpecker was made on 27th. The first Sand Martin flew through on 11th, which equals the earliest site record and 25 were counted on 30th. A single Swallow was around Stones Island on 31st. The dam wall held 21 Meadow Pipit on 28th, 11 Grey Wagtail left the Hopton reed bed at dawn on 4th and 80 Pied Wagtail were counted on 24th. Two of the regular observers covered the whole site on 27th and counts of singing birds were: 104 Wren, 31 Dunnock, 104 Robin, 14 Blackbird and 20 Song Thrush. A Stonechat was at Paul Stanley hide on 6th and the first Wheatear was on the dam wall on 16th. The Cetti's Warbler was last reported on 15th, a singing Blackcap was discovered on 28th and 2 Chiffchaff on 10th were the first but a huge 93 were counted on 27th. The only other warbler to arrive was Willow Warbler with 2 on 30th. A decline in Tree Sparrow numbers is being investigated and the highest count this month was 27 on 14th. Finch records included 50 Siskin on 11th, 24 Lesser Redpoll on 26th, at least 1 Crossbill over Millfields on 25th and 31 Bullfinch on 27th.

110 species this March compared with 108 in 2016, 103 in 2015, 95 in 2014, 96 in 2013 and 97 in 2012.

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FEBRUARY 2017 BIRD NOTES

February Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Water Rail, Ruff, Jack Snipe, Kittiwake and Cetti's Warbler.

Water levels remained low all month and as normal Wildfowl numbers began to fall as we move towards spring. The Great Northern Diver continued its stay to the month end and other water bird maximums were: 19 Little Grebe on 9th, 45 Great Crested Grebe on 9th, 27 Cormorant on 25th, Grey Heron on a few dates, 8 Mute Swan on 9th and 12th, a Pink-footed Goose among the Canada Geese on several occasions, 2 Greylag Geese on 20th and 25th, 156 Canada Geese on 9th, 26 Barnacle Geese on 20th, 2 Shelduck on 23rd, 18 Wigeon on 16th, 12 Gadwall on 9th, 159 Teal on 9th, 97 Mallard on 12th, a Pintail on 1st and 17th, a pair of Shoveler on 3rd, 17 Pochard on 9th, 84 Tufted Duck on 12th, 18 Goldeneye on 9th, 11 Goosander on 9th, a Water Rail at the Hopton reed bed on 14th and 16th, 8 Moorhen on 9th and 564 Coot during the WeBS count on 12th.

Notable raptor records included 2 Sparrowhawk on 16th, 8 Buzzard soaring on 28th, 2 Kestrel on 25th and several sightings of Peregrine.

Oystercatchers were back in good numbers with 9 on 7th and 20th including the ringed male returning for his 12th breeding season. Other waders were Ringed Plover on 3 dates, 2 Golden Plover also on 3 dates, 980 Lapwing on 14th, 6 Dunlin on 1st, the wintering Ruff all month, 3 Jack Snipe on 25th, some healthy counts of Common Snipe peaked at 79 on 19th, 4 Woodcock on 25th, 38 Curlew on 28th and 3 Redshank on several dates.

Roosting Gulls on 8th included 3000 Black-headed Gull, 700 Common Gull and 110 Lesser Black-backed Gull. The roost on 20th held at least 10 Herring Gull and 3 Yellow-legged Gull. Seven Great Black-backed Gull early on 20th had obviously roosted the previous evening and a Kittiwake was present on 22nd.

A count of 10 Stock Dove came on 16th, Kingfisher reports were made regularly, 6 Skylark moved through on 16th, 12 Meadow Pipit were on the dam on 17th and 13 Grey Wagtail left their roost at the Hopton end on 16th. A walk from the Hopton arm to Stones Island on 21st produced 35 Wren, 27 Dunnock, 88 Robin and 28 Blackbird. Thrushes were represented by 20 singing Song Thrush on 20th, 90 Redwing on 26th and 3 Mistle Thrush on 14th. The Cetti's Warbler remained on Stones Island all month and could often be heard singing. Other counts of common birds come from the walk on 21st unless stated: 7 Goldcrest, 13 Long-tailed Tit, 9 Willow Tit on 26th, 10 Coal Tit, 51 Blue Tit, 19 Great Tit, 6 Nuthatch and 4 Treecreeper. Jackdaw leaving a roost in Tail Bay numbered 200 on 9th, 7 Raven were aloft on 20th and 200 Starling moved north the same morning. The highest Tree Sparrow count was 28 on 10th. There were 30 Siskin on 3rd, 2 Lesser Redpoll on 24th and a healthy 18 Bullfinch on 21st.

90 species this month compared with 87 in 2016, 86 in 2015, 81 in 2014, 90 in 2013, 91 in 2012 and 90 in 2011.

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JANUARY 2017 BIRD NOTES

January Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan, Knot, Ruff, Jack Snipe and Cetti's Warbler.

A month in which visibility was hampered by fog on many days, produced a very respectable 91 species. The adult Great Northern Diver continued its stay throughout the month as was expected. Waterbird maximums come from the WeBS count on 14th unless stated: 12 Little Grebe, 33 Great Crested Grebe, 24 Cormorant on 22nd, Grey Heron on several dates, 22 Mute Swan, 38 Whooper Swan on 20th, 2 Pink-footed Geese on 4th, 10 Greylag Geese on 7th, 333 Canada Geese on 15th, 29 Barnacle Geese on several dates, 3 Brent Geese flew north on 1st, a Shelduck on 29th, 35 Wigeon, 33 Gadwall, 163 Teal, 143 Mallard, 5 Pintail, 12 Shoveler on 6th, 55 Pochard, 187 Tufted Duck, 17 Goldeneye, 24 Goosander on 8th, 9 Moorhen and 950 Coot.

Very few raptor reports this month but Sparrowhawk and Buzzard were present, there were 3 Kestrel on 4th and 2 male Peregrine on 14th.

An Oystercatcher returned on 20th and other waders included 8 Golden Plover on 1st, 1000 Lapwing on 10th, a Knot on 22nd, 9 Dunlin on 12th, the wintering Ruff all month, 4 Jack Snipe on 10th, 95 Snipe on 8th, 4 Woodcock on 6th and 10th, single Curlew on 6th and 3 other dates and up to 3 Redshank.

The only notable Gull records were a large count of 1400 Common Gull roosting on 11th, 500 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 70th, 12 Herring Gull on 15th, Yellow-legged Gull on 2 dates and 5 Great Black-backed Gull on 7th.

Three Tawny Owl were calling at dawn on 2 dates and Kingfisher were reported regularly with 2 on 12th. A Skylark flew over on 20th and 2 Meadow Pipit were seen on 15th. Grey Wagtail were roosting in the Hopton reed bed all month and 9 were counted at dawn on 5th and 10th. One observer walked from the Hopton end to Stones Island on 6th and recorded some good counts of common birds including: 27 Wren, 21 Dunnock, 47 Robin, 65 Blackbird, 19 Song Thrush and 82 Redwing. Two Mistle Thrush were singing on 10th and the Cetti's Warbler continued its stay on Stones Island to 20th at least and is probably still present. Other counts from the 6th included 3 Willow Tit, 10 Coal Tit, 52 Blue Tit, 30 Great Tit, 5 Nuthatch and 4 Treecreeper. Five Jay were noted around the Hopton arm on 23rd and there were 2 Raven on 8th. Finch counts were 28 Chaffinch on 6th, a single Brambling on 26th, 35 Siskin on 12th, a Linnet on 8th, 8 Lesser Redpoll on 19th and 15 Bullfinch on 12th.

91 species this month compared with 91 in 2016, 81 in 2015, 82 in 2014, 89 in 2013 and 92 in 2012.

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