

DECEMBER 2018 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Pink-footed Geese, Caspian Gull, Waxwing and Chiffchaff.

The now expected Great Northern Diver arrived on 2nd and remained all month, other water bird maximums are from the WeBS survey on 9th unless stated: 36 Little Grebe, 48 Great Crested Grebe, 32 Cormorant on 28th, 2 Grey Heron on 27th and 31st, 11 Mute Swan flew out on 8th, 220 Pink-footed Geese flew east on 7th, 179 Greylag Geese arrived at Sheepwash on 7th, 199 Canada Geese on 17th, 23 Barnacle Geese on 21st, 100 Wigeon on 19th, 20 Gadwall on 22nd, 451 Teal, 94 Mallard, 2 Shoveler on 3 dates, 19 Pochard on 31st, 181 Tufted Duck, 10 Goldeneye on 29th, 17 Goosander on 30th, 6 Moorhen on 3 dates and 1,050 Coot.

Raptor records included 2 Sparrowhawk on 9th and 21st, 5 Buzzard on 22nd, 2 Kestrel on 13th and 3 Peregrine on 31st.

At least 1 Golden Plover was heard calling over the Visitor Centre on 31st, c500 Lapwing on 22nd, 5 Dunlin on 9th and 11th, 4 Ruff from 13th to 17th (with 3 remaining all month), 47 Snipe on 17th, 4 Woodcock on 16th and 27th and 4 Redshank on 9th and 30th.

Black-headed Gull were roosting in huge numbers with an estimated 10,000 on 28th, 1,800 Common Gull on 22nd, 600 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 22nd, 71 Herring Gull on 19th, 2 Caspian Gull on 11th, 3 Yellow-legged Gull on 19th and 21st and 11 Great Black-backed Gull on 16th.

Seven Tawny Owl were calling at the Hopton end on 16th, a female Kingfisher was a regular sight in Brown Ale Bay, 3 Great Spotted Woodpecker took a liking to the seed kindly provided at Millfields, 24 wintering Meadow Pipit were present on 16th and 9 Grey Wagtail left their roost on 27th. The first records of Waxwing for 6 years were 4 flying over on 29th followed by another 3 the following day. Winter Thrushes were moving east on 12th with 110 Fieldfare and 1,210 Redwing reported. An over-wintering Chiffchaff was seen in Brown Ale Bay on 19th and 22nd. Other counts included 5 Willow Tit on 11th, 5 Nuthatch on 27th, 5 Jay on 12th, 700 Jackdaw on 6th, 60 Rook on 17th and 3 Raven on several occasions. Tree Sparrow were reported in increasing numbers at Millfields with an encouraging 17 there on 9th and a site count of 28 on 31st included 13 at the same location. Finch counts included 2 Brambling on 2nd and 9th, 4 Greenfinch on 11th and 16th, 60 Siskin on 30th, 6 Linnet on 28th, c12 Lesser Redpoll on 9th and 15 Bullfinch also on 9th.

87 species recorded compared with 92 in 2017, 95 in 2016, 93 in 2015, 91 in 2014 and 83 in 2013.

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NOVEMBER 2018 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Pink-footed Geese, Woodcock, Caspian Gull, Glaucous Gull, Crossbill, Hawfinch and Yellowhammer.

With foggy conditions a feature on many days this month it is not surprising that the species total is below average. The anticipated arrival of a Great Northern Diver failed to materialize but there were some good birds to be had, in particular the first Glaucous Gull for 10 years. Maximum water bird counts come from the WeBS survey on 11th unless stated: 37 Little Grebe, 50 Great Crested Grebe, 29 Cormorant on 26th, a Little Egret until 11th, 2 Grey Heron on several dates, 35 Mute Swan on 24th, 300 Pink-footed Geese flew east on 26th, 4 Greylag Geese on 25th, 167 Canada Geese on 2nd, 2 Barnacle Geese regularly, a Shelduck from 1st to 3rd (unfortunately found dead on 4th), a drake Mandarin on 2nd, 146 Wigeon, 42 Gadwall, 402 Teal, 108 Mallard, 2 Pintail from 3rd to 17th, 13 Shoveler on 2nd, 6 Red-crested Pochard on 5th, 69 Pochard on 3rd, 208 Tufted Duck on 26th, 10 Goldeneye on 26th, 11 Goosander on 25th, 5 Moorhen on 16th and 26th and 930 Coot on 26th.

Raptors of note this month included 2 Sparrowhawk on 25th, 5 Buzzard on 10th, 2 Kestrel on several days and Peregrine regularly all month with 2 on 23rd.

Only 7 species of wader this month but the highlights were: 72 Golden Plover circling site on 10th, 415 Lapwing on 16th, 14 Dunlin on 26th, 3 Ruff all month, 13 Snipe on 10th and 30th, a site record 8 Woodcock in to roost at the Hopton end at dawn on 24th and 4 Redshank on 25th.

Gulls were well reported, largely from the evening roost, and counts included 10,000 Black-headed Gull on 8th, 900 Common Gull on 22nd, 3,000 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 16th, 30 Herring Gull on 16th, several different Caspian Gull with 2 on 28th and 5 Yellow-legged Gull on 21st and 23rd. A second winter Glaucous Gull was found on 5th and it was reported regularly in the roost up to 15th where it gave the opportunity for a "site tick" for many. Nine Great Black-backed Gull were on the spit at Sheepwash on 11th. Interestingly a Gull at Sheepwash on 20th was identified as a hybrid Lesser Black-backed x Ring-billed Gull an odd sight indeed!

Wood Pigeon movements continued with 6,450 northeast on 12th, 7 Collared Dove on 12th is the highest count this year, Kingfisher were reported on several dates, 11 Skylark flew over on 3rd, 45 Meadow Pipit were around site on 24th and 6 Grey Wagtail came out of the Hopton reed bed roost on 30th. A huge count of c930 Fieldfare was made on 7th and there were 380 Redwing on 19th. Five Mistle Thrush on 25th included 3 singing and a late Chiffchaff was on Stones Island on 17th. Other counts made this month include 30 Long-tailed Tit on 5th, 6 Willow Tit on 12th and 28th, 600 Jackdaw leaving a roost in Tail Bay on 25th, 50 Rook on the dam wall on 3rd, 6 Raven on 1st and 8th, 700 Starling heading to roost on 10th, 19 Tree Sparrow on 26th, 30 Brambling over Millfields on 8th, 4 Greenfinch on 23rd, 30 Siskin on 21st, 32 Lesser Redpoll on 23rd, 4 Crossbill over Millfields on 14th and 10 Bullfinch on 27th. A lone Hawfinch was found at Millfields on 23rd and it was last seen on 27th. Yellowhammer were heard calling as they flew over on 3rd and 5th and 22 Reed Bunting came out of roost at Hopton reed bed at daybreak on 17th.

93 species recorded compared with 101 in 2017, 99 in 2016, 101 in 2015, 96 in 2014 and 92 in 2013.

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OCTOBER 2018 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Red-throated Diver, Great Egret, Scaup, Kittiwake, Little Owl, Rock Pipit, Crossbill and Yellowhammer.

The water level continued to fall all month leaving vast areas of open shore line. Two Red-throated Diver were found off Stones Island on the murky morning of 3rd but unfortunately flew West shortly after. Other Water bird maxima come from the WeBS survey on 14th unless stated: 27 Little Grebe, 49 Great Crested Grebe, 31 Cormorant on 6th, 5 Little Egret on 12th and 17th, a Great Egret on 10th, 3 Grey Heron on 8th, 38 Mute Swan, 18 Whooper Swan on 22nd, 70 Pink-footed Geese on 18th, 58 Greylag Geese on 26th, 580 Canada Geese on 4th, 13 Barnacle Geese on 3rd, 3 Shelduck on 3rd, 60 Wigeon on 2nd, 84 Gadwall on 30th, 465 Teal, 167 Mallard, 6 Pintail on 6th, 14 Shoveler on 3rd, 2 Red-crested Pochard on several dates, 132 Pochard on 8th, 223 Tufted Duck, a Scaup on 11th, a female Common Scoter on 6th, 8 Goldeneye on 27th, 5 Goosander on 19th, 15 Moorhen and 1,015 Coot.

Raptors were hard to come by just the usual reports of Sparrowhawk, Buzzard and Kestrel plus regular visits from Peregrine with 2 on 4th and 5th. A Red-legged Partridge flew in front of Sheepwash hide on 12th and 23 Pheasant were noted on 30th.

Waders of note were: 7 Ringed Plover on 20th, single Golden Plover on several dates, 212 Lapwing on 18th, 7 Dunlin on 21st and 31st, 3 Ruff from 25th, 10 Snipe on 20th and 31st, single Curlew on 1st and 19th, 3 Redshank on 30th and a late Common Sandpiper on 18th and 19th.

A first winter Mediterranean Gull was at Sheepwash on 14th, 3,000 Black-headed Gull at Millfields at dawn on 4th and 650 Common Gull at Sheepwash on 30th. Two colour ringed Lesser Black-backed Gull on 14th were noted to spend the winter in Spain with one having been seen at Carsington some 8 years ago. Three Herring Gull were present on 15th, 6 Yellow-legged Gull on 22nd and 2 Great Black-backed Gull on several dates. A first winter Kittiwake flew through on 28th and the only Terns were a Common on 11th and an Arctic on 4th.

Wood Pigeon movements included 2,325 Southwest, during a one-hour period, on 18th. A Little Owl calling at the Hopton End on 17th is the first for over 5 years so most welcome indeed! Just 2 reports of Kingfisher this month on 19th and 31st. At least 30 Skylark flew South on 17th, 2 Swallow on 2nd were the final hirundines and a Rock Pipit was around Stones Island on 10th and 11th. Winter Thrushes arrived and counts included 416 Fieldfare West on 29th and 65 Redwing on 30th. The final Warblers were a Blackcap in Brown Ale Bay on 3rd and 3 Chiffchaff on Stones Island on 17th. A good count of 9 Jay was made on 1st and 1,100 Jackdaw went to roost below the dam at dusk on 2nd. On a day of big Starling movement nationally 3,600 flew West over the site on 28th. Tree Sparrow surveys continued and 26 noted on 24th was an encouraging number given previous counts recently. At least 12 Brambling flew down the East side on 20th, 80 Siskin South over Brown Ale Bay on 5th, 25 Linnet were on Stones Island on 4th and 8 Crossbill flew over the Wildlife Centre on 28th.

106 species recorded this October compared with 107 in 2017, 108 in 2016, 96 in 2015 and 98 in 2014.

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SEPTEMBER 2018 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Egret, Pink-footed Geese, Common Scoter, Red Kite, Osprey, Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper, Turnstone, Grey Phalarope, Black Tern and Yellowhammer.

Water bird maximums come from the WeBS count on 9th unless stated: 38 Little Grebe on 30th, 48 Great Crested Grebe on 26th, 30 Cormorant on 27th, 10 Little Egret on 17th, a Great Egret on 5 dates, 6 Grey Heron on 3 dates, 41 Mute Swan, 1,070 Pink-footed Geese in 11 skeins on 28th, 325 Greylag Geese on 23rd, 1,150 Canada Geese on 12th, 23 Barnacle Geese on 11th, 4 Shelduck on 5th, a drake Mandarin on 8th, 81 Wigeon on 30th, 36 Gadwall, 467 Teal on 26th, 279 Mallard, 3 Pintail from 24th, 16 Shoveler on 26th, 3 Red-crested Pochard on several dates, 135 Pochard on 30th, 307 Tufted Duck, 2 Common Scoter on 16th, 5 Goosander on 13th, 15 Moorhen and 1148 Coot on 26th.

Raptor highlights included a Red Kite on 3rd, 3 Sparrowhawk on 28th, 10 Buzzard on 28th, an Osprey regularly from 1st to 7th, 2 Kestrel on 23rd and 25th, 2 Hobby on 11th and regular sightings of Peregrine.

A good selection of waders again this month included: 3 Little Ringed Plover on 3rd, 10 Ringed Plover on 21st, 73 Lapwing on 27th, 11 Dunlin on 26th, a Ruff from 20th to the month-end, 7 Snipe on 8th, 10 Curlew on 16th, a Redshank on 3 dates, 2 Greenshank from 8th to 19th, Green Sandpiper on 13th, a juvenile Wood Sandpiper on 7th, 3 Common Sandpiper on 3rd and 5th, a Turnstone on 21st and a Grey Phalarope from 21st to 23rd following westerly gales and heavy rain which saw many of this species turning up at inland waters.

Gulls and Terns were represented by, 1,000 Black-headed Gull at dawn on 27th, a first winter Common Gull on 26th, 3,800 Lesser Black-backed Gull at dusk on 12th, single Herring Gull on 11th and 27th, a Caspian type Gull on 14th was considered a hybrid by one learned observer, 4 Yellow-legged Gull on 3rd, 3 Great Black-backed Gull on 24th, 2 juvenile Common Tern on 21st and 3 Black Tern on 4th.

Following a crash in numbers recently 5 Collared Dove on 20th was a maximum count for the year, 6 Tawny Owl were calling at the Hopton end early morning on 12th and 28th, Kingfisher was noted several times up to 13th and 7 Great Spotted Woodpecker were recorded on 27th. Autumn movement was noted in the form of 18 Skylark south on 20th, 7 Sand Martin on 23rd, 100 Swallow south during a 15-minute period on 5th, 266 House Martin through on 23rd and a massive 710 Meadow Pipit southwest on 20th. Wagtail records included 2 Yellow on 23rd, 6 Grey on 6th and 2 White on 17th. The final dates for some of our summer visitors this month (and most likely this year) were Redstart 4th, Wheatear 7th, Sedge Warbler 6th, Reed Warbler 12th, Lesser Whitethroat 10th, Whitethroat 3rd, Garden Warbler 6th, Willow Warbler 12th and Spotted Flycatcher 9th. Some good counts of Corvids this month included 8 Jay on 26th, 300 Jackdaw on 16th, c100 Rook down the west side on 7th and 13 Raven on 23rd. Finch records included 22 Chaffinch and 4 Greenfinch over on 27th, 120 Goldfinch on Stones Island on 8th, 22 Siskin at the Hopton end on 13th, 24 Linnets on 27th and the first Lesser Redpoll of the autumn over Stones Island on 30th. A Yellowhammer flying over Stones Island on 26th was the first of the year.

115 species this month compared with 117 in 2017, 112 in 2016, 104 in 2015, 107 in 2014 and 109 in 2013.

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AUGUST 2018 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Knot, Sanderling, Ruff, Turnstone, Barn Owl, Green Woodpecker, Tree Pipit and Crossbill.

A good month no doubt helped by large areas of shoreline as water levels continue to fall. Water bird maximums come from the WeBS count on 11th unless stated: 20 Little Grebe on 18th, 39 Great Crested Grebe, 84 Cormorant on 27th, 6 Little Egret on 28th and 29th, 7 Grey Heron, 47 Mute Swan on 4th, a Pink-footed Goose on several dates, 16 Greylag Geese on 29th, 931 Canada Geese on 24th, a single Barnacle Goose regularly from 2nd, 8 Shelduck on 30th, a Wigeon on 23rd, 27 Gadwall on 29th, 239 Teal on 30th, 282 Mallard, 11 Shoveler on 23rd, 2 Red-crested Pochard all month, 7 Pochard on 27th, 456 Tufted Duck, a Common Scoter on 6th and 11th, 16 Goosander on 10th, 11 Moorhen and 563 Coot. A Ruddy Shelduck from 22nd to 29th is considered category E, introduced or escape in Britain.

Raptor highlights included a juvenile Marsh Harrier on 4th, 2 Sparrowhawk on 8th and 29th, 8 Buzzard on 31st, Osprey on 28th and 31st, 2 Kestrel on 31st, Hobby on 3 dates at the end of the month and 2 Peregrine on 4th.

Seventeen species of wader is an excellent total for an inland body of water and the highlights were: Oystercatcher on several dates, 5 Little Ringed Plover on 2nd and 9th, 17 Ringed Plover on 29th, 120 Lapwing on 3rd, 2 juvenile Knot on 27th and 28th, a Sanderling on 14th, 7 Dunlin on 11th, a Ruff on 25th, 3 Snipe on 8th and 28th, 3 Black-tailed Godwit on 7th, Whimbrel on 3 dates, Curlew on 28th and 30th, 3 Redshank on 17th, 2 Greenshank on 26th, Green Sandpiper on 5 dates, 8 Common Sandpiper on 2nd and 2 Turnstone on 4th.

Gulls this month included 280 Black-headed Gull on 30th, an adult Common Gull on 12th, 1600 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 30th, 2 Caspian Gull types on 3rd, 4 Yellow-legged Gull on 3rd and 14th and 2 Great Black-backed Gull on several dates. There were several reports of 2 Common Tern through the month.

A Barn Owl was seen at Millfields late on 7th and a Tawny Owl was disturbed in the same area on 22nd. The last Swift of the month went through on 23rd; a Kingfisher was in Tail Bay on 27th and a site scarce Green Woodpecker was at Millfields on 9th. Hirundine maximums were 10+ Sand Martin on 10th, 200 Swallow on 26th and 200 House Martin on 4th. A Tree Pipit flew over calling on 11th; Wagtail counts included 7 Yellow on 25th, 5+ Grey on 30th and 65 Pied on the same date. Other notable records were 3 Redstart on 23rd, 2 Wheatear on 23rd, 8 Mistle Thrush on 22nd, 7 Sedge Warbler on 9th, 9 Reed Warbler on 11th, 6 Lesser Whitethroat on 31st, 6 Whitethroat on 9th, 4 Garden Warbler on 9th, 8 Blackcap on 27th, 10 Chiffchaff on 28th and 3 Willow Warbler on 29th. Spotted Flycatcher were noted on 3 dates, 13 Raven flew over on 10th, 30 Tree Sparrow were at the Wildlife Centre on 28th, 130 Goldfinch in 2 flocks were counted on 30th and 2 Crossbill were seen on 4th and 11th.

113 species this month compared with 114 in 2017, 106 in 2016, 106 in 2015, 108 in 2014 and 109 in 2013.

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JULY 2018 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Common Scoter, Red Kite, Avocet, Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Wood Sandpiper, Turnstone, Mediterranean Gull, Caspian Gull, Sandwich Tern and Crossbill.

A very hot and dry month produced a record July total of 107 species. Breeding success was mixed but Great Crested Grebe in particular took a liking to conditions with at least 11 broods. Water bird maximum counts are from the WeBS survey on 14th unless stated: 9 Little Grebe on 4th, 33 Great Crested Grebe, 33 Cormorant on 14th and 21st, 4 Little Egret on 20th, 6 Grey Heron regularly, 46 Mute Swan on several occasions, 60 Greylag Geese on 12th, 524 Canada Geese on 4th, a single Barnacle Goose last seen on 19th, a Shelduck on 2 dates, 6 Wigeon on 22nd, 4 Gadwall on 26th, 16 Teal by the month-end, 160 Mallard, 2 Shoveler on 20th and 31st, 8 Pochard on 27th, 227 Tufted Duck, 7 Common Scoter on 13th, 9 Goosander on 30th, 7 Moorhen on 27th and 345 Coot.

Bird of prey records included a Red Kite on 2nd, 2 Sparrowhawk on 22nd, 5 Buzzard on two occasions, 2 Kestrel on 31st and Peregrine on 22nd and 31st.

Sixteen species of wader is an excellent haul for July and the highlights are: 3 Oystercatcher regularly, an Avocet on 14th, 10 Little Ringed Plover on 30th, a Ringed Plover on 19th and 28th, 122 Lapwing on 23rd, a Dunlin on two dates, a moulting male Ruff on 11th, a single Snipe from 10th, 2 Black-tailed Godwit on 17th and 31st, Whimbrel on 25th and 27th, 8 Curlew on 15th, 5 Redshank on 19th, a Green Sandpiper on 27th, a Wood Sandpiper on 31st was the first since 2007, at least 15 Common Sandpiper on 30th and a Turnstone flew through on 31st.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was at Sailing Club on 25th, 2 Common Gull were noted on 22nd, 1,340 Lesser Black-backed Gull came in to roost on 31st and an adult Caspian Gull from 25th was joined by a sub adult on 30th and 31st. The immature Yellow-legged Gull continued its stay all month and 2 Great Black-backed Gull were seen on several occasions. A Sandwich Tern was a good find on 22nd and there were 4 Common Tern on 20th.

Swift were moving by the month-end with 25 noted on 31st and there were 2 records of Kingfisher. Hirundine records of note were 6 Sand Martin on 20th and 31st, 40 Swallow on two occasions and 15 House Martin, considered to be the birds from Hopton village, at the north end on 5th. Signs of autumn included the first returning Meadow Pipit on 14th and 2 Yellow Wagtail on 20th and 26th. A group of 8 Grey Wagtail at Millfields on 12th were thought to be 2 adults with first and second brood young and 37 Pied Wagtail were counted on the dam on 14th, although there were many young around Stones Island as the month ended. A pair of Redstart was feeding 2 young on 21st and 12 Blackbird were noted feeding at the waters edge on 26th obviously in an attempt to find some moist ground. At least 2 families of Sedge warbler were on Stones Island all month and 2 pairs of Reed Warbler bred in Brown Ale Bay (as well as other locations). Other counts were 3 Lesser Whitethroat on 23rd at least 10 Whitethroat on 26th, 5 Garden Warbler on 27th, 5 Blackcap on 20th, more than 10 Chiffchaff on 31st and 2 singing Willow Warbler on 31st. The only Spotted Flycatcher this month was at Penn Carr on 25th. A group of 16 Raven flew over on 27th, 18 Tree Sparrow were at the Wildlife Centre on 31st, 45 Linnet were between the Hopton end and Lane End on 14th and another record of Crossbill concerned 8 over Blackwall plantation on 14th.

107 species recorded compared with 105 in 2017, 100 in 2016, 99 in 2015, 102 in 2014 and 92 in 2013.

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JUNE 2018 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Common Scoter, Red Kite, Hobby, Sanderling, Turnstone, Kittiwake and Crossbill.

A hot and dry month showing worrying signs of failed breeding for island breeding birds in particular. Water bird maximum counts are from the WeBS survey on 17th unless stated and brood numbers to date are shown in brackets: 5 Little Grebe on 27th, 29 Great Crested Grebe (8), 23 Cormorant on 29th, 8 Grey Heron on 29th, 26 Mute Swan on 30th (1), a Pink-footed Goose on 1st, 64 Greylag Geese on 23rd (5), 519 Canada Geese on 23rd (numerous), 4 Barnacle Geese from 5th to 10th (1), 7 Gadwall on 17th and 25th, 2 drake Teal from 21st, 63 Mallard (17), a pair of Pochard on 30th, 87 Tufted duck (3), 7 drake Common Scoter on 25th, 2 Moorhen on 10th and 23rd (1) and 133 Coot (4).

Raptor records were few and far between but included Red Kite on 2nd and 17th, 5 Buzzard on 21st, Hobby on 2nd and 30th as well as the usual reports of Sparrowhawk and Kestrel.

Maximum wader counts were: 10 Oystercatcher on 14th, 6 Little Ringed Plover on 17th, 2 Ringed Plover on 7th and 23rd, 15 Lapwing on 25th, a Sanderling on 2nd, a Dunlin on 3rd to 19th, single Curlew on 10th and 22nd, 8 Redshank on 17th and 18th, 3 Common Sandpiper on 23rd and a Turnstone from 1st to 3rd.

The only successful Black-headed Gull breeding was at the Wildlife Centre and just 12 juveniles were counted on 25th, a poor return indeed for the several hundred pairs which had started the breeding season. Other Gull records included 5 Lesser Black-backed on 9th a Herring on 25th an immature Yellow-legged all month and 2 Great Black-backed on 29th. An adult Kittiwake, which flew Southwest on 30th, was a surprise given the time of year and there were 2 Common Tern on 1st.

Swifts were on the move on 30th with 137 counted flying through into a gentle north-easterly breeze. There was no sign of any breeding hirundines with both Swallow and House Martin sadly absent from their usual areas, but on a more positive note 2 fledged Redstart were in Shiningford creek on 8th. At least 3 Sedge Warbler were on Stones Island and Sailing Club Island on 23rd and a juvenile was seen on 27th, Reed Warbler continued to sing from several locations and 6 were noted on 17th. Whitethroat, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler were all seen feeding young by the month-end and fledged Goldcrest were in Brown Ale Bay on 23rd. An adult Spotted Flycatcher was seen entering a nest box on 18th and there were many examples of successful breeding for all our resident Tit species. Other counts of note were 3 Jay on 17th and 22nd, 4 Raven on 23rd, 50+ House Sparrow, including juveniles, on 19th and 11 Tree Sparrow, again mainly juveniles, on 29th. A single Siskin flew over on 29th and a pair of Linnet was around Stones Island more much of the month. Another good record was of 6 Crossbill flying over Millfields on 10th, all considered to be females or immature birds.

91 Species this June compared with 97 in 2017, 94 in 2016, 90 in 2015, 99 in 2014 and 87 in 2013.

MAY 2018 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Red Kite, Marsh Harrier, Sanderling, Greenshank, Turnstone, Little Gull, Caspian Gull, Arctic Tern, Black Tern, Whinchat and Crossbill.

The summer plumage Great Northern Diver lingered a little longer this year and was last seen on 13th. Water bird maximums come from the WeBS survey on 21st unless stated: 4 Little Grebe, 45 Great Crested Grebe on 3rd, 21 Cormorant on 31st, a Little Egret on 12th, 3 Grey Heron on 18th, 11 Mute Swan on 4th, 28 Greylag Geese on 23rd, 71 Canada Geese, 8 Barnacle Geese on 12th, 2 Shelduck on 7th, 2 Mandarin on 2nd, 14 Gadwall, 52 Mallard, a pair of Shoveler on 25th, a drake Red-crested Pochard on 3 dates, a Pochard on 13th, 95 Tufted Duck, a Common Scoter from 3rd to 10th, a Goosander on 17th, 3 Moorhen and 61 Coot. The only broods of young for these species were 1 of Great Crested Grebe, 4 of Greylag Goose, at least 6 of Canada Goose and 8 of Mallard.

Raptor highlights included 3 records of Red Kite, a Marsh Harrier on 9th, 2 Sparrowhawk on several occasions including a pair taking a Song Thrush on 4th, 8 Buzzard on 10th, regular reports of 2 Kestrel and a single male Peregrine on 13th.

Despite the high-water level 14 species of wader put in an appearance, although many flew straight through. Maximum counts were: 12 Oystercatcher on 3rd, 7 Little Ringed Plover on 3rd, 15 Ringed Plover on 27th, 8 Lapwing on 18th, single Sanderling on 26th and 27th, 2 Dunlin on 2nd and 10th, a late Snipe on 3rd, 2 Whimbrel on 10th and 27th, a Curlew on 30th, 8 Redshank on 18th, Greenshank on 2nd and 12th, a Green Sandpiper on 11th, 3 Common Sandpiper on several occasions and 4 Turnstone on 22nd and 23rd.

Notable Gull records included 2 Little Gull on 2nd, 400 Black-headed Gull around Sailing Club Island (but once again all nests there were abandoned by the month's end, breeding was successful however at the Wildlife Centre), 2 Common Gull on 3rd, 20 Lesser Black-backed Gull through on 24th, a Herring Gull on 24th, a first summer Caspian Gull on 16th, an immature Yellow-legged Gull all month and 9 Great Black-backed Gull on 15th. One of the highlights of the month came on the wet morning of 2nd when 10 Common Tern and a massive 240 Arctic Tern moved through and 6 Black Tern were recorded on 24th.

A fledged Tawny Owl was seen on 26th, 70 Swift on 11th and 30th, 80 Sand Martin on 16th and 100 House Martin on 25th and 30th. The last passage Yellow Wagtail went through on 5th and a pair of Grey Wagtail was feeding young by the month's end. Two observers covered the whole site on 22nd and recorded 53 Wren, 15 Dunnock, 38 Robin, 91 Blackbird and 7 Song Thrush. Two Redstart were singing on 18th and a female Whinchat was found on the east side on 4th.

Three Sedge Warbler were singing on 6th and 5 Reed Warbler, at the Hopton end all month, were joined by a further 5 at other locations on 31st suggesting an influx overnight. Other counts on 22nd were 8 Whitethroat, 10 Garden Warbler, 54 Blackcap, 31 Chiffchaff and 17 Willow Warbler. A Spotted Flycatcher on 4th became our earliest arrival date for this species, a Willow Tit pair was feeding young on Stones Island and a Nuthatch was carrying food on 28th. Promisingly several Tree Sparrow nests were located and a pair with food was noted in the Millfields area. A Crossbill flew over Millfields on 31st, 11 Bullfinch were counted on 22nd and there were 2 active Reed Bunting nests on Stones Island.

109 Species this month compared with 114 in 2017, 112 in 2016, 107 in 2015 and 105 in 2014.

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APRIL 2018 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Common Scoter, Red Kite, Osprey, Avocet, Ruff, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Mediterranean Gull, Little Gull, Kittiwake, Sandwich Tern, Arctic Tern, Barn Owl and Pied Flycatcher.

A mainly cold month, with just one really warm spell, meant that most spring migrants were late to arrive but they trickled in eventually. The Great Northern Diver was near to full summer plumage at the month end and it was seen flying occasionally in preparation for its journey north to breeding grounds. Water bird maximums and highlights this month were: 8 Little Grebe on 15th, 32 Great Crested Grebe on 15th, a summer plumage Black-necked Grebe on 5th, 17 Cormorant on 12th, 3 Grey Heron on 7th, 12 Mute Swan on 15th, 18 Greylag Geese on 12th and 23rd, 110 Canada Geese on 15th, 26 Barnacle Geese on 24th, 2 Shelduck on 9th and 20th, 5 Mandarin on 11th, 6 Wigeon on 14th, 11 Gadwall on 16th, 12 Teal on 16th, 59 Mallard on 15th, 2 Shoveler on 3 dates, 5 Pochard on 5th, 96 Tufted Duck on 15th, a drake Scaup from 1st to 13th, 13 Common Scoter on 14th, 8 Goldeneye on 9th and 14th, 5 Goosander on 3rd, 2 Moorhen and 53 Coot both on 15th.

Raptor records included Red Kite on 14th, 18th and 22nd, 3 Sparrowhawk on 19th, 10 Buzzard on 23rd, Osprey on 3rd, 4th and 8th, a pair of Kestrel all month and 2 Peregrine on 3 occasions.

Wader maximums were 11 Oystercatcher on 15th, a single Avocet on 7th, 5 Little Ringed Plover on 19th and 30th, 4 Ringed Plover on 20th, 6 Lapwing on 19th, 10 Dunlin on 25th, 7 Ruff on 1st, 11 Snipe on 11th, a single Bar-tailed Godwit from 16th to 19th, 2 Whimbrel on 17th and 20th, 18 Curlew at dawn on 7th, 9 Redshank on 15th and 3 Common Sandpiper on 20th, 24th and 30th.

A sub adult Mediterranean Gull was at Millfields on 12th and 7 Little Gull flew through on 15th. The Black-headed Gull colony on Millfields Island numbered 400 on 16th but all had abandoned by 24th and Rangers are investigating, with the probable cause being mammalian presence on the Island (many of these breeding birds relocated to Sailing club and Horseshoe Islands). Other Gull counts were: 66 Common on 1st, 20 Herring on 3rd, 2 Yellow-legged on 12th, 39 Great Black-backed on 5th and 4 Kittiwake on 8th. At least 2 Sandwich Tern flew through on 19th followed by another 3 the following morning, 2 Common Tern were present on 25th and a probable total of 30 Arctic Tern passed through on 28th.

Following last month's Barn Owl records sadly one was found dead near the Wildlife Centre on 5th, but others were seen on 7th and 11th. Two Swift arrived on 21st, there were 100 Sand Martin by 25th, and the first Swallow and House Martin both arrived on 3rd. Other migrant records were 4 Yellow Wagtail on 29th, 6 White Wagtail on 14th, 5 Redstart on 24th and just 5 Wheatear all month follows the national pattern of late arrival for this species. The last records of winter Thrushes were 8 Fieldfare on 17th and 2 Redwing on 15th. Sedge Warbler arrived on 21st, Reed Warbler on 24th, Lesser Whitethroat on 19th, Whitethroat on 21st, Garden Warbler on 22nd and Blackcap on 6th. A site count on 24th produced 70 Blackcap, 52 Chiffchaff and 32 Willow Warbler. A male Pied Flycatcher was a good find on 16th and is the earliest ever record for Carsington. Other notable counts were 8 Willow Tit on 24th, 7 singing Treecreeper on 21st, 23 Tree Sparrow on 9th and 23rd and 16 Linnet on 7th.

117 species were recorded compared with 124 in 2017, 119 in 2016, 117 in 2015, 119 in 2014 and 114 in 2013.

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MARCH 2018 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan, Scaup, Merlin, Avocet, Jack Snipe, Bar-tailed Godwit, Little Gull, Kittiwake, Barn Owl, Rock Pipit, and Stonechat.

A cold month with snow and ice a regular feature, so not surprisingly spring migrants were slow to arrive. The Great Northern Diver continued to attract admirers all month and other water bird maximums are from the WeBS survey on 25th unless stated: 13 Little Grebe, 34 Great Crested Grebe, 25 Cormorant on 11th, 5 Grey Heron on 28th, 6 Mute Swan on 21st and 30th, a herd of 59 Whooper Swan from 3rd to 5th, 21 Greylag Geese on 25th, 88 Canada Geese, 28 Barnacle Geese on 9th and 16th, a single Shelduck on 5 dates, 5 Mandarin on 29th, 23 Wigeon, 24 Gadwall on 6th, 32 Teal, 44 Mallard, 4 Pintail on 3rd to 5th, 2 Shoveler on 3 dates, 4 Pochard, 70 Tufted Duck, a drake Scaup all month from 3rd, 16 Goldeneye on 29th, 3 Goosander on 6th, 4 Moorhen and 108 Coot.

Bird of prey highlights were 2 Sparrowhawk on several dates, 20 Buzzard on 25th, 3 Kestrel on 25th and 29th, 2 Merlin together on 26th and 2 Peregrine on 25th.

A nice range of waders included 16 Oystercatcher on 25th, a lone Avocet on 30th (which is the 4th year in a row for this species), the first Little Ringed Plover of the year on 26th, 8 Golden Plover on 5th, 130 Lapwing on 5th, a single Dunlin on several dates, 7 Ruff on 28th, a Jack Snipe on 9th, 21 Common Snipe on 13th, Woodcock on 6th and 22nd, single Bar-tailed Godwit on 6th, 16th and 19th, 55 roosting Curlew at dusk on 19th and 11 Redshank on 25th.

Gulls were well represented with an adult Little Gull on 5th, 4,500 roosting Black-headed Gull on 6th (and 540 potential breeding birds around Millfields Island on 28th), 1,300 Common Gull on 6th, 160 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 6th, 6 Herring Gull on 26th and 28th, 2 Yellow-legged Gull on 3rd and 15th, 5 Great Black-backed Gull on 28th and an adult Kittiwake also on 28th.

Four Stock Dove were feeding below Sheepwash car park feeders during a period of lying snow on 19th and 2, now site scarce, Collared Dove were noted on 14th and two other dates. A Barn Owl was a good find on 20th and it was seen again on 25th and 28th, 2 Tawny Owl were on the east side on 29th, there were 2 reports of Kingfisher midmonth and a site record 73 Skylark flew north during the morning of 5th. The first Sand Martin arrived on 28th, 56 Meadow Pipit trickled through north on 26th and a single Rock Pipit flew over on 11th. A female Stonechat was in Millfields car park on 6th but could not be re-found subsequently. Two observers covered the whole site on 29th and recorded the following counts: 24 Wren, 21 Dunnock, 52 Robin, 57 Blackbird, 7 Mistle Thrush, 14 Chiffchaff (first arrival 11th), 11 Willow Tit, 10 Nuthatch and 8 Treecreeper. A flock of 400 Jackdaw flew to a roost site at dusk on 6th, 27 Carrion Crow were near the main car park on 11th, 6 Raven were seen on 14th and 400 Starling flew northeast on 14th. Other counts included 24 Tree Sparrow on 26th, 18 Chaffinch on 29th, 3 Siskin on 29th, 4 Linnet on 21st, 7 Lesser Redpoll on 13th and 29th and 18 Bullfinch also on 29th.

102 species this March compared with 110 in 2017, 108 in 2016, 103 in 2015, 95 in 2014 and 96 in 2013.

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FEBRUARY 2018 BIRD NOTES

February Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan, Ruff, Jack Snipe and Kittiwake.

The month ended with freezing temperatures and heavy snow which limited observer hours, so 86 species is a little lower than normal. The Great Northern Diver continued its stay to the month end and will not be leaving soon as it was noted to have moulted many of its flight feathers. Other water bird maximum counts come from the WeBS survey on 22nd unless stated: 16 Little Grebe, 38 Great Crested Grebe, 28 Cormorant on 21st, single Grey Heron on several dates, 3 Mute Swan, 7 Whooper Swan, 60+ Pink-footed Geese on 5th, 8 Greylag Geese on 19th, 118 Canada Geese, 28 Barnacle Geese, a Shelduck on 20th, 42 Wigeon on 1st, 10 Gadwall on 21st, 190 Teal, 123 Mallard, 3 Pochard, 74 Tufted Duck, 14 Goldeneye, 3 Goosander, 6 Moorhen and 147 Coot.

Raptor records were few but included 2 Sparrowhawk displaying on 21st, 6 Buzzard on 19th and 21st, 3 Kestrel on 23rd and Peregrine on 1st and 24th.

Oystercatchers were back in good numbers with 10 on 22nd and 27th including the barcode ringed male returning for his 13th breeding season (and interestingly he appears to be paired with another colour ringed bird from Dawlish Warren). Other waders were 2 Ringed Plover on 4th, 600 Lapwing on 19th, a Dunlin on 21st and 22nd, the 5 wintering Ruff to 24th at least, 2 Jack Snipe on 16th, 19 Common Snipe on 21st, 4 Woodcock on 24th, 4 Curlew on 10th and 14th and 7 Redshank on 15th.

Gull highlights were 2 Herring Gull on 19th and 20th, a Yellow-legged Gull on 23rd, 4 Great Black-backed Gull on 20th and an adult Kittiwake on 11th.

A crash in Collared Dove numbers is emerging and there were just 2 records of single birds this month. Three Tawny Owl were calling on 18th and 24th and Kingfisher was reported on 3 dates. Other maximum counts included 3 Skylark on 21st, 25 Meadow Pipit on 6th, 4 Grey Wagtail on 16th, 16 Dunnock on 15th, 15 Redwing on 19th, 7 Mistle Thrush on 23rd, 5 Willow Tit on 19th, 6 Nuthatch on 19th, 2 Jay on 15th, 7 Magpie on 15th, 4 Raven on 21st, 60 Starling on 21st and 25th, 21 Tree Sparrow on 12th, 10 Chaffinch on 6th, 2 Brambling on 19th, 20 Siskin on 22nd and 4 Reed Bunting on 21st.

86 species this month compared with 90 in 2017, 87 in 2016, 86 in 2015, 81 in 2014, 90 in 2013 and 91 in 2012

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January Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruff, Jack Snipe, Kittiwake and Hawfinch

JANUARY 2018 BIRD NOTES

Considering fewer observer hours this month 96 species is the best count for some years. The adult Great Northern Diver continued its stay and was often seen either from Stones Island or Millfields. Two unidentified Divers flew south over the visitor centre on 7th and were thought not to be Great Northern. Waterbird maximums come from the WeBS count on 14th unless stated: 30 Little Grebe, 49 Great Crested Grebe, 23 Cormorant on 13th & 14th, a Little Egret on 24th, 2 Grey Heron on 11th & 14th, 7 Mute Swan on 10th, 12 Whooper Swan on 27th, Pink-footed Geese movement includes 3 skeins totalling 360 on 6th, 280 in 2 skeins on 7th and 420 in 2 skeins on 8th, 2 Greylag Geese on 3rd & 11th, 220 Canada Geese on 8th, 30 Barnacle Geese on 30th, 2 Shelduck on 30th, 62 Wigeon, 15 Gadwall, 243 Teal, 173 Mallard, female Pintail on 2nd and a male on 14th, 3 Shoveler on 10th, 13 Pochard, 117 Tufted Duck, 14 Goldeneye, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers on 25th, 10 Goosander on 27th, single Water Rail seen in Hopton reedbed on several dates and in the channel left of Paul Stanley hide on 20th, 8 Moorhen and 624 Coot.

A fairly quiet month raptor wise though 2 Sparrowhawks were seen on 7th & 11th, 8 Buzzard on 8th, 2 Kestrels on several dates, 6 sightings of Peregrine including a female and immature male.

The first returning Oystercatcher was 2 birds on 26th rising to 3 on 30th, a single Golden Plover flew over on 6th followed by another on 18th, 900 Lapwing on 11th, 3 Dunlin on 30th, up to 5 Ruff all month, 4 Jack Snipe on 4th, 25 Snipe on 12th, 3 Woodcock on 2nd and 14th, a Black-tailed Godwit on 11th and 6 Redshank on 2nd and 25th.

Some impressive counts of Gulls this month. c6000 Black-headed Gulls on 14th, 1700 Common Gulls on 13th, 250 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 13th, 18 Herring Gull on 13th, numerous Yellow-legged Gull records including 2 on 2nd, 12 adult Great Black-backed Gull on 6th and an adult Kittiwake on 24th.

Several Stock Dove records this month including 8 on 7th. A Barn Owl was seen over the dam wall early morning on 20th and again the following day. Four Tawny Owls were heard calling at Hopton on 13th, single Kingfisher records on 6 dates mostly at Paul Stanley but also Hopton. Great Spotted Woodpecker heard drumming on 19th. Two Skylark over on 25th and 18 Meadow Pipit on 18th. 2 Grey Wagtail on 7th. A Female Stonechat present in front of Paul Stanley hide most of the month. Forty Fieldfare on 19th, 180 Redwing on 2nd and 4 Mistle Thrush on 11th. A huge count of 16 Willow Tits on 11th was encouraging considering their national decline. Another huge count and also on 11th was a site record 17 Raven. Fifteen of these were flying SW together over the dam wall whilst what is thought to be a local pair briefly joined them. 80 Starling flew through on 7th. 18 Tree Sparrows at the Wildlife Centre feeders on 15th. 80 Siskin on 3rd, 4 Linnet on 3rd, 2 Lesser Redpoll on 19th, 15 Bullfinch on 18th, single Hawfinch at Millfields on 11th and 19th and 3 Reed Buntings on 2nd.

96 species this month compared with 91 in 2017, 91 in 2016, 81 in 2015, 82 in 2014, 89 in 2013 and 92 in 2012

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