

January Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan, Brent Goose, Water Rail, Jack Snipe, Caspian Gull and Waxwing.

JANUARY 2019 BIRD NOTES

Generally, a quiet month but there were a few decent birds for those prepared to put in the hours. The adult Great Northern Diver remained all month though it was often elusive. Water bird maximum counts come from the WeBS survey on 20th unless stated: 25 Little Grebe, a healthy 58 Great Crested Grebe on 23rd, 18 Cormorant on 23rd, 2 Grey Heron on several dates, 4 Mute Swan on 16th, 17 Whooper Swan, a single Pink-footed Goose from 26th, 36 Greylag Geese on 27th, 150 Canada Geese on 25th, 17 Barnacle Geese on 22nd, a dark-bellied Brent Goose on 4th, 9 Shelduck, 74 Wigeon, 47 Gadwall on 28th, 403 Teal, 91 Mallard, 6 Shoveler on 2nd and 4th, 19 Pochard on 1st, 89 Tufted Duck, 11 Goldeneye, 9 Goosander, a Water Rail in the Hopton reed bed on 1st and 3rd, 6 Moorhen on 2nd and 444 Coot.

Four species of raptor only but they included 3 Sparrowhawk on 27th, 8 Buzzard on 27th, 2 Kestrel on 26th and 2 Peregrine on numerous occasions, often perched on the Sheepwash shoreline.

The first returning Oystercatcher arrived on 28th and there were 3 the following day. Other waders of note were: single Golden Plover on 11th and 20th, 492 Lapwing on 17th, 3 Dunlin throughout the month, 4 Ruff on 28th and 30th, a Jack Snipe at the Hopton reed bed on 20th, 44 Common Snipe on 26th, at least 5 Woodcock early morning on 26th, a Curlew from 23rd and 5 Redshank on 14th and 31st.

Gulls were roosting in huge numbers with an estimated 10,000 Black-headed Gull at dawn on 17th, 900 Common Gull on 11th, 420 Lesser Black-backed Gull on the same date, 3 Yellow-legged Gull on 2nd and 3 Great Black-backed Gull on two dates.

Six Stock Dove flew over on 25th, 6 Tawny Owl were calling at the Hopton end early morning on 26th and there were several sightings of Kingfisher including a regular female perched in Willows in Brown Ale Bay. Five Great Spotted Woodpecker were noted on 21st and drumming was heard by the month-end, 9 Meadow Pipit were on Watersports Island on 11th and 9 Grey Wagtail left the Hopton reed bed roost site on two dates. Another record of Waxwing came on 17th when 3 birds flew over the road near to the Sailing Club junction. Wintering Chiffchaff were seen on 3 dates, 7 Willow Tit were on Stones Island on 30th, 50 Rook flew over the north end on 16th and 4 Raven were seen on 23rd. Five hundred Starling flew south following a cold snap on 30th at least 20 Tree Sparrow were recorded on 18th as were 35 Siskin on 1st, 7 Lesser Redpoll on 5th, 13 Bullfinch on 11th and 16 Reed Bunting leaving roost on 26th.

91 species this month compared with 96 in 2018, 91 in 2017, 91 in 2016, 81 in 2015, 82 in 2014 and 89 in 2013

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