

APRIL 2010 BIRD NOTES (to 28th April only)

April Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan, Osprey, Sanderling, Godwits, Little Gull, Sandwich Tern, Pied Flycatcher and Common Spring Migrants.

The adult Great Northern Diver stayed all month and was in mostly summer plumage by 29th. A Whooper Swan was around the Wildlife Centre and Stones Island all Saturday 17th, 2 Red-crested Pochard on 6th and 8th, a female Scaup stayed close in to the Wildlife Centre from 26th and 4 Common Scoter were seen off Stones Island on 13th. Counts included 12 Little Grebe on 18th, 42 Great Crested Grebe on 18th, 16 Cormorant on 2nd, 3 Heron on 15th, 3 Greylag Geese on 7th and 24th, 80 Canadas on 18th, 38 Barnacles on 6th, 5 Shelduck on 10th, 7 Wigeon on 7th and 8th, 3 Gadwall on 17th, 48 Mallard on 18th, 3 Shoveler on 22nd, 1 Pochard on 8th, 189 Tufted Duck on 18th, 13 Goldeneye on 13th, 3 Goosander on 5th, 19 Moorhen on 18th and 106 Coot on 18th. Four broods of Mallard were noted by 28th.

Ospreys were seen again from Sheepwash, 1 at 1400hrs on 2nd and another 1230-1305hrs on 19th. An immature male Sparrow Hawk was perched close to Sheepwash Hide on 20th, 14 Buzzards were in the air on 3rd and 2 Peregrines were over Hall Wood on 26th, with singles noted on other dates.

Wader passage included 1 Ringed Plover from 19th to 21st, 1 Sanderling on 28th, 2 Black-tailed Godwit on 21st and 5 on 26th, 1 Bar-tailed Godwit on 6th to 11th, 2 Whimbrel on 21st and 6 on 27th, 4 Curlew on 18th, 4 Common Sandpiper on 19th and 28th and 1 Turnstone flew through northwards on 7th. Breeding Oystercatcher, Redshank and Lapwing were busy and a Lapwing showed 3 chicks on Big Island on 29th.

An adult Little Gull on 18th was followed a week later on 25th by 2 adults and 4 first summer birds. Other gulls were a first summer Herring Gull on 14th, an adult Yellow-legged on 23rd, an immature Great Black-backed on 17th and the breeding Black-headed Gulls, 60 present on 27th, were busily arguing about space on the tern raft. Tern passage included a Sandwich Tern early on 7th, 3 Common Terns early on 25th with the flock of Little Gulls, 4 Common Terns on 28th and single Arctic Terns on 15th, 19th, 24th and 27th.

The first Swift was on 19th but only small numbers have been seen since. Hirundine passage continued with 50 Sand Martin on 20th and over 500 Swallow feeding close to the water on a drizzly morning on 19th. The first House Martin was on 6th and, by the end of the month, some birds were around the Visitor Centre breeding colony. A Tree Pipit flew over on 24th and 40 Meadow Pipits were on the dam on 2nd. Migrant wagtail species were in low numbers again this year, with the first Yellow Wagtail on Sheepwash Spit on 3rd, 3 on the dam wall on 11th and 4 on 19th. White Wagtail numbers peaked at 9 on Stones Island in the evening of 7th and Pied Wagtails totalled 37 there on 15th. There are no records of resident Grey Wagtails since January 1st. This species is susceptible to long spells of freezing winter weather when they cannot feed along the waters edge and, in case you have forgotten, we have just had an unusually severe winter, so please look out for this species at Carsington. Their former locations were Millfields, Tail Bay outlet stream, Fishtail Creek and Paul Stanley Hide. A Redstart was singing distantly upstream from WLC Creek from 24th and a male Whinchat was in the Creek on 25th. Single Wheatears were noted 3rd and many other dates. Warbler species kept arriving, with 2 Sedge on 24th, the earliest ever Reed at Carsington on 24th, 2 Lesser Whitethroat on 18th, 1 Whitethroat on 17th and 1 Garden Warbler on 24th. A count of warblers on 8th included 13 Blackcap, 52 Chiffchaff and 8 Willow Warbler. A Pied Flycatcher was singing in Warrington Knob on 29th, 100 Jackdaw were recorded on 3rd, a female Brambling was in Hall Wood on 22nd and a site rare Yellowhammer flew over Millfields on 18th.

116 Species were recorded compared with 110 in April 2009, 118 in 2008, 103 in 2007, 118 in 2006, 117 in 2005, 116 in 2004, 120 in 2003 and 107 in 2002.