

Carsington Bird Club



DECEMBER 2020 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Ruff and a record count of Common Gulls.

What is thought to be our regular wintering Great Northern Diver arrived back as a Christmas Box on 25th. Water bird maxima were: 24 Little Grebe on 31st, 55 Great Crested Grebe on 30th, 33 Cormorant on 29th, 1 Little Egret on 6th, 3 Grey Heron on 25th, 40 Mute Swan on 1st, 2 Whooper Swan on 6th, 170 Pink-footed Geese heading W on 29th, 466 Greylag Geese on 9th, 378 Canada Geese on 31st, 3 Barnacle Geese on 25th, 321 Wigeon on 1st, 91 Gadwall on 15th, 320 Teal on 24th, 145 Mallard on 30th, 3 Pintail on 15th, 8 Shoveler on 6th, 468 Pochard on 24th, 364 Tufted Duck on 1st, 10 Goldeneye on 15th, 5 Goosander on 31st, 1 Water Rail in Hopton reedbed on 15th and 28th and another in WLC Creek on 31st, 19 Moorhen on 1st, 1345 Coot on 24th, and an escapee Black Swan all month.

Very little raptor activity this month, with a Red Kite over Millfields on 26th, 6 Common Buzzards in the air on 15th and 2 Peregrine on 1st and 19th.

Wader sightings included the Lapwing flock still at last months high of 600 on 1st, 1 Dunlin on 1st and 2nd, a Ruff was around Stones Island 6th-31st, a flock of 54 Common Snipe took to the air from Horseshoe Island on 9th, 5 Woodcock flew into Hopton End at dawn on 12th, 1 Curlew on 16th and 20th and 4 Redshank from 29th.

Gull counts were 13000 Black-headed, 1500 Lesser Black-backed and 1000 Common from Millfields at dawn on 20th and a site and county record of 2250 Common Gulls off Stones Island at dusk on 29th. Other Gull maxima were 8 Herring on 27th, 3 Yellow-legged on 25th and 2 Great Black-backed on 19th.

A movement of 1240 Wood Pigeon on 19th showed the majority heading northeast, 11 Collared Dove were around feeders at Oldfield Lane cottages on 9th and another 5 were around the Ranger Base and WLC on 17th. From Hopton end at dawn on 28th 7 Tawny Owls were heard, and 2 Kingfishers were seen during the WeBS count on 15th at opposite ends of the site, Hopton end and Millfields. There were 2 dunnocks singing at Hopton end on 21st and 2 Mistle Thrushes singing on 17th. Wintering thrushes numbered 30 Fieldfare on 8th and 200 Redwing on 20th. The maximum day count of Chiffchaff was 2 but, with 2 on Stones Island on 2nd and several other dates plus singles seen at other locations remote from Stones Island, at least 3 and probably 4 birds were considered to have been on site this month. Further evidence of Chiffchaff came on 23rd when 2 similar birds were flushed from a litter bin being emptied at dusk by Rangers. A photograph of one of the birds clearly shows a Chiffchaff. Were they roosting in the bin? The regular early morning post-roost Jackdaw flock numbered 800 on 18th and 52 Rooks flew over the site on 10th. A flock of 700 Starlings left of Hopton reedbed at dawn on 17th, subsequent site checks since found no further roost there.

A typical 93 species this December compared with 93 in 2019, 87 in 2018, 92 in 2017, 95 in 2016, 94 in 2015 and 91 in 2014.