

MARCH 2010 BIRD NOTES

March Highlights: Red Throated Diver, Great Northern Divers, Whooper Swans, Garganey, Osprey and early summer migrants return.

A Red Throated Diver was off Stones Island from 1630hrs until dusk on 22nd and the Great Northern Diver count was a juvenile from last month to 5th plus an adult which remained all month. A Sunday treat for observers on 7th was 24 Whooper Swans landing at 0930hrs and a single Pink-footed Goose was with Canadas from 8th. The big surprise of the month was a very early Drake Garganey at the Wildlife Centre on 2nd March, a day when several were found around England. The earliest record at Carsington previously was 16th April but the extreme earliest Derbyshire record was on 1st March 1978. Maximum counts this month total 25 Little Grebe on 14th, 35 Great Crested Grebe on 14th, 8 Greylag on 6th, 46 Barnacle on 1st and 14th, 3 Shelduck on 17th, 53 Wigeon on 5th, 3 Gadwall on 14th, 21 Teal on 8th, 109 Mallard on 8th, 4 Pintail on 5th, 5 drake Shoveler on 21st, 325 Tufted Duck on 14th, a female Scaup on 2nd, 28 Goldeneye on 21st, 8 Goosander on 15th, a Water Rail on 7th, 18 Moorhen on 19th and 247 Coot on 14th.

Four Sparrowhawks were noted on 21st and 8 Buzzards were in the air on 14th, with 10 on 21st. An Osprey was on site from 1550hrs on 26th, one day earlier than previous records at Carsington. It was seen from Stones Island and the Wildlife Centre and later it caught a fish and went to dine and roost in Blackbrook Plantation. An immature Peregrine flew north over Sheepwash on 28th.

At least 5 pairs of Oystercatcher were noted on 8th and the first Little Ringed Plover record of the year was 1 on Stones Island with a Dunlin on 26th. The first Dunlin of the year was 1 on 7th then 2 at the Wildlife Centre on 10th. Snipe totalled 8 on Horseshoe Island on 20th and 6 Snipe were seen in flight at Warrington Knob on 7th. A Woodcock was flushed near Paul Stanley Hide on 24th. The largest Curlew numbers were 12 at Sheepwash on 9th, 16 on 11th and 11 were in a field near Lane Ends on 13th. 6 Redshank were noted around the Wildlife Centre, Stones Island and Sheepwash on 8th, 23rd and 31st.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was at the Wildlife Centre on 10th and was subsequently seen in the gull roost on several evenings up to 24th. Counts of the gull roost proved difficult due to the spread of the roost this month but 242 Common and 65 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were counted in an early roost on 1st. There was a first winter plus a second winter Herring Gull on 20th and an adult Yellow-legged on 10th and 23rd.

A Little Owl was seen in the field on the left between the main car park and Wildlife Centre on 2nd, 7th and 30th. As expected, the first Sand Martins flew through, with 4 on 18th and a flock of 12 the following morning. Swallows started slowly with 1 on 25th then 1 on 28th. Meadow Pipit records have been unusually low for this time of year with 1 on 19th and several singles since. A Rock Pipit was on Sheepwash Spit for at least 2 hours on 19th, 2 White Wagtails were on Horseshoe Island on 31st and a female Stonechat was on Stones Island on 5th. The first Wheatear was on the dam wall early on 19th and 3 were at the Wildlife Centre on 22nd. A wintering Blackcap was near the Wildlife Centre on 10th and a pair there on 24th. Chiffchaff were first noted on 19th with 5 singing and 12 were singing between Millfields and Sheepwash on 31st. Two Willow Tits were singing on 8th and 2 Linnets flew over Sheepwash on 10th.

102 Species recorded this March compared with 103 in March 2009, 104 in 2008, 95 in 2007, 100 in 2006, 107 in 2005 and 98 in 2004.