

Carsington Bird Club



MARCH 2017 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Whooper Swan, Common Scoter, Water Rail, Red Kite, Osprey, Avocet, Grey Plover, Jack Snipe, Kittiwake, Green Woodpecker, Stonechat and Crossbill.

A total of 110 species is a record March total and a glance at the highlights shows we had some really good birds to admire. The Great Northern Diver was present all month as expected and other water bird maximum counts were: 13 Little Grebe on 8th, 56 Great Crested Grebe on 11th, a Black-necked Grebe on the evening of 24th, 25 Cormorant on 11th, 3 Grey Heron on 15th, 8 Mute Swan on 11th, a Whooper Swan on 25th, a single Pink-footed Goose on 3 dates, 12 Greylag Geese on 26th, 189 Canada Geese on 21st, 25 Barnacle Geese on several dates, 2 Shelduck on 9th and 12th, 4 Mandarin on 21st, 30 Wigeon on 19th, a pair of Gadwall regularly, 50 Teal on 11th, 71 Mallard on 11th, 6 Pintail on 13th, 4 Shoveler on 23rd, 3 Pochard on 12th, 80 Tufted Duck on 21st, 2 Common Scoter on 13th and 29th, 17 Goldeneye on 21st, 5 Goosander on 5th, a Water Rail to 9th at least, 7 Moorhen on 11th and 242 Coot on 11th.

Some impressive raptor records were made on 25th when a Red Kite, 4 Sparrowhawk and a massive 23 Common Buzzard were all noted. Our earliest ever record of Osprey came on 20th when one flew west over Stones Island. Kestrel activity mainly concerned last year's breeding pair protecting their nest site from Jackdaws with regular skirmishes noted and Peregrine were seen on several occasions.

Wader highlights were: 19 Oystercatcher on 11th, a group of 7 Avocet on 10th, the first returning Little Ringed Plover on 23rd with 3 on 25th, a single Ringed Plover on 4 dates, a Grey Plover on 27th, 10 Lapwing on 4th, 3 Dunlin on 2nd and 22nd, the long staying Ruff last seen on 16th, 3 Jack Snipe in the Hopton reed bed on 15th, 78 Snipe on 10th, 2 Woodcock on 15th, 51 Curlew on 2nd, 9 Redshank on 21st and a Common Sandpiper on 30th.

Black-headed Gull were preparing nest sites around Millfields Island all month, 600 Common Gull and 150 Lesser Black-backed Gull roosted on 27th as did 7 Herring Gull on 21st. Other Gull records included 2 Yellow-legged Gull on 24th, 8 Great Black-backed Gull on 26th and a single Kittiwake on 1st.

A Green Woodpecker was calling in Tail Bay on 15th and an excellent count of 11 Great Spotted Woodpecker was made on 27th. The first Sand Martin flew through on 11th, which equals the earliest site record and 25 were counted on 30th. A single Swallow was around Stones Island on 31st. The dam wall held 21 Meadow Pipit on 28th, 11 Grey Wagtail left the Hopton reed bed at dawn on 4th and 80 Pied Wagtail were counted on 24th. Two of the regular observers covered the whole site on 27th and counts of singing birds were: 104 Wren, 31 Dunnock, 104 Robin, 14 Blackbird and 20 Song Thrush. A Stonechat was at Paul Stanley hide on 6th and the first Wheatear was on the dam wall on 16th. The Cetti's Warbler was last reported on 15th, a singing Blackcap was discovered on 28th and 2 Chiffchaff on 10th were the first but a huge 93 were counted on 27th. The only other warbler to arrive was Willow Warbler with 2 on 30th. A decline in Tree Sparrow numbers is being investigated and the highest count this month was 27 on 14th. Finch records included 50 Siskin on 11th, 24 Lesser Redpoll on 26th, at least 1 Crossbill over Millfields on 25th and 31 Bullfinch on 27th.

110 species this March compared with 108 in 2016, 103 in 2015, 95 in 2014, 96 in 2013 and 97 in 2012.

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