

Carsington Bird Club



APRIL 2014 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Cattle Egret, Barnacle Geese, lots of Terns and Great Grey Shrike.

Following several cold wet Aprils, this year April has been suitable breeding weather, and what a difference, plenty of singing, mating, nest building, some juveniles in bushes and broods on the water. Also 119 species, which is the second best ever April, second only to 120 in 2003 when there were resident Barn and Little Owls, which were finally lost to Carsington during the 2012/13 winter.

The wintering Great Northern Diver was in full summer plumage, calling and flying around on 23rd, roosted on 30th, but will be off northwards very soon. The find of the month was a Cattle Egret which landed on Stones Island at 1930hrs on 9th, stayed only briefly but long enough for good views to two observers already on site. Another significant record was 9 Barnacle Geese on 26th, travelling high northeast in a 'V' formation and considered to be wild birds. These Geese occasionally travel up the east coast this time of year and presumably were driven west by winds (see terns). Wildfowl counts were: 46 Great Crested Grebe on 20th, a Pink-footed Goose on 2nd, 7 Greylag Geese on 16th, 70 Canadas on 20th, 28 feral Barnacles on 8th, 3 Shelduck on 28th, 3 Mandarin from 21st, pair Gadwall on 10th, 8 Teal on 8th, 48 adult Mallard on 20th, 3 Pintail on 1st, pair of Shoveler on 3-6th, drake Pochard on 15th, 91 Tufted Duck on 20th, hybrid Tufted/Scaup on 2nd, 3 Common Scoter on 18th, 11 Goldeneye on 1st, pair of Goosander on 27th and 30 Coot on 20th. There were 6 Mallard broods of 9+11+9+9+7+14 seen by 30th.

An Osprey flew past the Wildlife Centre at 1300hrs on 6th and stayed until 9th generating many records. Two Ospreys were seen from 1115hrs on 8th, Lane End perch was occasionally used and, finally, 2 were seen flying off northeast during the evening of 9th. Wader records were reasonable considering the lack of useable shoreline due to high water levels and temporary loss of screening at the Wildlife Centre. Maximum counts of waders, including passage and local breeding birds, were: 12 Oystercatcher on 8th, 3 Little Ringed Plover on 15th, a Ringed Plover on 5th, 2 Golden Plover on 8th, 2 Sanderling on 30th, 4 Dunlin on 17th, a Jack Snipe 1-8th, 18 Snipe on 1st, 5 Black-tailed Godwit on 22nd, 4 Bar-tailed Godwit on 25th, 2 Whimbrel on 30th, 5 Curlew on 3rd, 9 Redshank on 20th and Common Sandpiper from 8th.

A first summer Little Gull arrived on 21st and stayed 2 days. Another 2 travelled through with terns on 22nd and an adult went through with terns on 27th. A first summer Caspian Gull was around on 11th and a near adult Yellow-legged Gull on 6th. Tern passage started with a Sandwich Tern on 2nd and another on 5th. A Common Tern was around the Wildlife Centre on 23rd and another on 27th. Arctic Tern moved through, heading northeast, mainly in small flocks, with totals of 46 through on 20th, 55 on 22nd, 45 on 25th, 13 on 26th, 44 on 27th and 1 on 28th. A Little Tern was also seen on 26th, but too briefly as it went off southeast from near Stones Island. Most of this notable inland Tern passage is probably attributable to the east winds over the past few days having pushed the Terns up the west coast, with some travelling high on a Severn to Humber estuaries' cross country route over Carsington Water, which, at 600 feet on the slope of the only big hill range they pass over, clearly attracts the terns and other sea and coastal passage birds.

Other migrant arrivals were: 1 Swift on 20th, 2 House Martin on 11th, Tree Pipit over on 26th, Yellow Wagtail on 7th, White Wagtail on 2nd, Redstart on 11th, Wheatear on 1st, Sedge Warbler on 21st, Reed Warbler on 23rd, Lesser Whitethroat on 14th, Whitethroat on 22nd and Garden Warbler on 21st. A small flock of Yellow Wagtail on the dam on 30th contained a male of race 'thunbergi', known as 'Grey Headed', a rare sight in Derbyshire and a first for Carsington. A Great Grey Shrike was seen on bushes at Shiningford on 4th before disappearing into the nearby fields, on its way back east. There were 2 Brambling on Stones Island on 5th, a Siskin and 9 Linnet on 12th and 3 Lesser Redpoll on 17th.

119 Species were recorded compared with 114 in April 2013, 115 in 2012, 111 in 2011 and 118 in 2010.

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