

Carsington Bird Club



MARCH 2014 BIRD NOTES

March Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Whooper Swan, Red Kite, Jack Snipe, Caspian Gull, Kittiwake, Rock Pipit and Spring Migrants.

The reasonable winter to spring weather brought in early migrants as usual, in fact the first swallow arrival matched the earliest ever at Carsington on 23rd. The adult Great Northern Diver remained all month and was showing some small signs of breeding plumage by the end of the month. Whooper Swan were calling in on their way northwards, with 1 on 1st, 12 on 26-27th and 9 on 29th. Maximum waterbird counts this month were on the WeBS count on 16th unless dated; 1 Little Grebe, 53 Great Crested Grebe on 21st, 9 Cormorant on 7th and 30th, 6 Mute Swan on 13th, a Pink-footed Goose with Canadas most days, 3 Greylag on 30th, 89 Canada Geese, 27 Barnacle, 1 Shelduck on 1st and 25th, 4 Wigeon on 13th, 2 Gadwall on 25th, 19 Teal on 13th, 72 Mallard, 3 Pintail on 9th, 4 Shoveler on 13th, 1 Pochard on 25th, 125 Tufted Duck, a drake Tufted/Scaup hybrid 15-26th, 15 Goldeneye on 7th, a Goosander on 23rd and 130 Coot.

A Red Kite drifted over the Visitor Centre at 0800hrs on 17th. There were 5 Common Buzzards in the air on 13th and Peregrine was recorded on 14th and 27th. Oystercatchers were around their breeding areas all month and at least 12 were seen on 20th. The first Little Ringed Plover of their spring migration flew through northwards on 30th and a Dunlin was seen occasionally from 7th. The star wader was a Jack Snipe performing well, bouncing for many hours in front of the Wildlife Centre on the afternoon of Sunday 30th, to the delight of many observers and visitors. Common Snipe were also an attraction from the Wildlife Centre throughout the month, promoting many counts, the best of which was 38 on 1st, well behind last month's 77 as birds have been flying off to their breeding grounds. A Bar-tailed Godwit flew in at dusk on 30th and was still around the Wildlife Centre on 31st. Curlew passage peaked at 38 on 7th and Redshank were mobile but numbered at least 7 on 24th.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was seen regularly, at any time of day, from 1st to 28th. Another unusual gull species was Caspian Gull, a first winter bird well photographed late morning at Sheepwash on 3rd and also seen in the roost on 27th. There was an adult Yellow-legged Gull from Sheepwash on 19th and a Kittiwake was seen mid-afternoon on 18th from the Wildlife Centre, then Sheepwash and 2 were in front of Sheepwash on 19th.

Late winter to spring movement was also noted starting with 3 Skylark moving north on 1st. Sand Martin were flying through from 21st, when 8 were seen, and the first Swallow of the year was on 23rd. A few Meadow Pipit were moving through all month with at least 30 on 29th, the same day as a Rock Pipit also flew through, heading north, and 2 more were seen on the Sailing Club shore. Warblers started returning, with 2 Blackcap around Sheepwash on 31st, a singing Chiffchaff on Stones Island on 1st, building up to 23 between Millfields and Sheepwash on 28th and a Willow Warbler was singing early on 30th at Millfields.

95 Species recorded this March compared with 96 in March 2013, 97 in 2012, 106 in 2011, 101 in 2010, 102 in 2009, 104 in 2008, 95 in 2007 and 100 in 2006.