

DECEMBER 2016 BIRD NOTES

December Highlights:

Great Northern Diver, White-fronted Goose, Little Stint, Jack Snipe, Cetti's Warbler and Crossbill.

There were 93 species this month, which is about average and the same as 2015. Rather later than previous years but, eventually we have a Great Northern Diver. An adult arrived on 20th and could well be the returning bird. Maximum water bird counts are from the WeBS on 18th, unless stated. 16 Little Grebe, 32 Great Crested Grebe, 26 Cormorants on 20th, a Little Egret on 1st, 2 Grey Heron on 20th, 20 Mute Swan, Pink-footed Geese movement include 250 E on 11th, 31 SE on 17th and a further 130 NW also on 17th. Two White-fronted Geese with Greylags on 15th, 49 Greylag Geese on 19th, 180 Canada Geese on 2nd, 29 feral Barnacle Geese on 19th & 20th, a Dark bellied Brent Goose on 25th, 3 Shelduck on 21st, 103 Wigeon, 27 Gadwall, 221 Teal, 148 Mallard, 10 Shoveler on 11th, female Red-crested Pochard on 23rd, 182 Pochard on 13th, 196 Tufted Duck, 16 Goldeneye, 17 Goosander on 1st, 11 Moorhen and 939 Coot.

The usual mix of Raptors includes Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Kestrel and Peregrine. The latter seen on several dates including two on 24th. Waders were represented by 280 Golden Plover on 20th, c1000 Lapwing on 11th, the late Little Stint from last month was last seen on 17th, up to 19 Dunlin, a Ruff up to 27th at least, 4 Jack Snipe in Hopton reedbed on 31st, c50 Common Snipe on 21st, 5 Woodcock at Hopton end on 31st, 2 Black-tailed Godwits on 3rd, 1 Curlew on 17th and 3 Redshank on several dates.

There were few Gull counts done this month. However, 800 Common Gulls were noted in the roost by 1530 on 15th, c40 Herring Gulls moved through south on 11th, 3 Yellow-legged Gulls on 16th, and a Great Black-backed Gull seen throughout the month.

A count of 10 Stock Doves were made on 11th, 150 Wood Pigeons N on 1st, 4 Tawny Owls at Hopton end on 31st, a Kingfisher on 10th & 20th, Great Spotted Woodpecker drumming on 26th, 2 Skylark over Stones Island on 8th. Some impressive counts of Grey Wagtails were noted leaving their reedbed roost at Hopton. There were many double figure counts but none better than the 15 on 13th. 32 Wrens were noted in the Sheepwash/Hopton area on 13th. As were 16 Dunnocks, 32 Robins, 26 Blackbirds and 11 Song Thrush. A male Stonechat present from 1st to 11th in the Wildlife Centre/Stones Island areas. 130 Fieldfare flew south on 11th. There were some big Redwing movements this month. These include 1400 on 8th and 2150 on 9th. 3 Mistle Thrush were at Sheepwash on 1st.

The Cetti's Warbler that arrived last month was still present up until 28th. Often elusive but occasionally calling and giving brief bursts of its explosive song. 3 Willow Tits were at the Wildlife Centre on 15th and 1 was heard singing near Paul Stanley hide on 26th. 600 Jackdaw flew over Hopton early morning on 2nd. 25 Carrion Crows were on Sheepwash Spit on 8th. 6 Raven were noted on 24th, single Brambling sightings on 9th, 12th & 13th. 4 Greenfinch on 14th, 70 Siskin on 23rd, 10 Lesser Redpoll on 10th & 15th, a Crossbill over on 17th, 6 Bullfinch on 17th and 5 on 26th which included 3 feeding on the ground.

93 species recorded compared with 93 in December 2015, 91 in 2014, 83 in 2013, 85 in 2012 and 91 in 2011.

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NOVEMBER 2016 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Whooper Swan, Pink-footed Geese, Common Scoter, Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser, Water Rail, Knot, Little Stint, Jack Snipe, Kittiwake, Cetti's Warbler and Hawfinch.

The first November without a Great Northern Diver since 2011 was more than compensated for with some excellent birds and another first for site in the form of a Cetti's Warbler. Water bird maximums come from the WeBS count on 13th unless stated: 21 Little Grebe, 44 Great Crested Grebe on 13th and 29th, 25 Cormorant on 19th, 2 Grey Heron, 29 Mute Swan, 31 Whooper Swan southeast in 3 groups on 2nd, 575 Pink-footed Geese through in 9 skeins also on 2nd, 78 Greylag Geese on 11th, 230 Canada Geese, 12 Barnacle Geese on 22nd, 5 Shelduck on 9th, a drake Mandarin on 2nd, 156 Wigeon on 29th, 19 Gadwall, 104 Teal, 140 Mallard, 4 Pintail on 12th, 3 Shoveler on 1st and 29th, a drake Red-crested Pochard on 1st, 219 Pochard on 14th, 185 Tufted Duck, a first winter drake Scaup from 14th to month end, 14 Common Scoter on 28th, 15 Goldeneye, a drake Red-breasted Merganser on 25th, 9 Goosander, a Water Rail all month in the Hopton reed bed, 10 Moorhen and 837 Coot.

Raptor records included: 2 Sparrowhawk on several dates, 5 Buzzard on 2nd, 3 Kestrel on 14th and 28th and a Peregrine on 24th. Wader highlights were: 3 Golden Plover over north on 6th, 500 Lapwing on 24th, a Knot on 9th, a very late Little Stint from 26th to month end, 12 Dunlin on 20th and 30th, 3 Jack Snipe on 26th, 44 Snipe on 30th, a Curlew on 3rd and 6 Redshank on 12th.

Counts of roosting Gulls included 4000 Black-headed on 25th, 700 Common on 28th and 900 Lesser-Black backed also on 28th. Around 30 Herring Gull flew through on 20th, 2 Yellow-legged Gull were seen on 1st with 2 Great Black-backed Gull on 8th and a first winter Kittiwake on 22nd being the other significant records.

A count of 11 Stock Dove on 2nd was somewhat eclipsed by the 6710 Wood Pigeon flying southwest on the same morning and 11 Collared Dove were around the Ranger base on 22nd. Five Tawny Owl were calling at Sheepwash on 13th, 2 Kingfisher were noted on 29th and 4 Great-spotted Woodpecker were seen on 11th and 14th. Skylark were on the move with 44 counted on 2nd. Nine Grey Wagtail came out of the roost in the Hopton reed bed on 3rd and a pair of Stonechat was around the Wildlife Centre until 22nd at least. Winter Thrushes were also on the move with 610 Fieldfare on 3rd and an amazing 9270 Redwing going through northeast during the morning of 27th.

A Cetti's Warbler was found on Stones Island on 19th and it stayed until the month end, this is the first record for Carsington and the range of this species is expanding. The only other warbler seen was Chiffchaff, with 3 records up to 28th. Other significant counts included 450 Jackdaw on 25th, 4 Raven on 1st and 870 Starling moving through on 27th. The first Hawfinch for 10 years flew northeast over the Hopton end on 30th and amazingly it was followed by a second bird just minutes later! Other finch counts were 10 Brambling over on 19th, 6 Greenfinch on 28th, 30 Goldfinch on 10th and 17th, 80 Siskin on 9th and 17 Lesser Redpoll on 3rd.

99 species recorded compared with 101 in 2015, 96 in 2014, 92 in 2013, 95 in 2012 and 99 in 2011.

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OCTOBER 2016 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Black-necked Grebe, White-fronted Goose, Red-breasted Merganser, Merlin, Grey Plover, Jack Snipe, Little Gull, Richard's Pipit, Stonechat, Yellow-browed Warbler and Crossbill.

Water bird counts this month included: 19 Little Grebe on 17th, 31 Great Crested Grebe on 3rd, a Black-necked Grebe on 10th, 35 Cormorant on 3rd and 4th, 2 Little Egret on 8th and 23rd, 4 Grey Heron on 7th to 11th, 31 Mute Swan on 13th, 6 Whooper Swan on 1st (earliest site record) and 9 more on 20th, 420 Pink-footed Geese on 20th, 2 White-fronted Geese on 9th, 154 Greylag Geese on 17th, 300+ Canada Geese on 25th, 26 Barnacle Geese on 29th, 77 Wigeon on 3rd, 45 Gadwall on 17th, 6 Pintail on 31st, 3 Shoveler on 26th and 31st, single Red-crested Pochard on many dates, 155 Pochard on 26th, 7 Common Scoter on 30th, a Goldeneye from 4th, a Red-breasted Merganser on 4th, 5 Goosander on 29th, a Water Rail in the Hopton reed bed from 4th and 8 Moorhen.

Raptor reports were on the thin side but included: Sparrowhawk occasionally, 9 Buzzard on 28th, 2 Kestrel on 23rd, a female Merlin on 10th and 3 sightings of Peregrine.

Waders were represented by: 4 Ringed Plover on 2nd, a Grey Plover, on and off, from 14th to 20th, 226 Lapwing on 31st, 4 Dunlin on 17th, a Jack Snipe on 16th and 25th, 13 Snipe on 30th, a Woodcock on 19th, 1 Curlew on 26th, a Redshank from 25th to the month end, a Green Sandpiper from 21st to 27th and 2 Common Sandpiper on 10th.

There were few counts of Gulls in the growing roost but some quality came in the shape of a first winter Mediterranean Gull on 23rd and a first winter Little Gull on 30th. Common Gull numbered 102 at roost on 31st, Herring Gull were reported on 17th and 18th and an adult Caspian Gull put in an appearance on 3rd. Yellow-legged Gull were seen on several occasions with 2 roosting on 2nd and an adult Great Black-backed Gull was in residence all month.

An impressive 10 Tawny Owl were calling at dawn on 30th and 2 Kingfisher were seen on 4th. The last Swallow was reported on 16th. Fifty Meadow Pipit were on the dam on 28th and they were joined briefly by a Richard's Pipit before, unfortunately, the flock was flushed by joggers. This Pipit is a first for the site and represents the 6th county record. Twelve Grey Wagtail left the Hopton reed bed at dawn on 27th and 110 Pied Wagtail were around Stones Island on 2nd. A pair of Stonechat were present from 26th to 30th and the final Wheatear was seen on 2nd. The first Fieldfare of autumn was noted on 7th and 130 flew south on 27th, 420 Redwing flew through on 12th and 8 Mistle Thrush were seen on 9th. A very late Reed Warbler was last seen at the Hopton end on 20th. A Yellow-browed Warbler was found on Stones Island on 2nd, at a time when many others had made their way inland following an east coast influx, this is the 2nd site record following last year's debut. Counts of Corvids included 5 Jay on 7th, 300 Jackdaw on 19th, 110 Rook on 11th and 6 Raven on 12th. A site record 33 Brambling flew through on 30th (including a flock of 30), 100 Siskin were at Sheepwash on 26th, 13 Linnet were counted on 5th as were 17 Lesser Redpoll on 19th. A Crossbill was heard calling at Millfields on 24th and 10 Bullfinch were feeding in Brown Ale Bay on 24th. Reed Bunting were noted coming out of the Hopton reed bed at dawn mid month and 31 were counted on 11th.

108 species recorded this October compared with 96 in 2015, 98 in 2014, 103 in 2013 and 104 in 2012.

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SEPTEMBER 2016 BIRD NOTES

September Highlights: Osprey, Merlin, Grey Plover, Black Tern, White-winged Black Tern, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Whinchat and Stonechat.

Another year of poor autumn wader passage but a glance at the highlights shows that once again we had some great birds on offer. Water bird maximums come from the WeBS count on 18th unless specified: 10 Little Grebe, 35 Great Crested Grebe, 32 Cormorant on 8th, 3 Little Egret on 8th, 36 Mute Swan on 8th, 23 Greylag Geese, 391 Canada Geese on 8th, a Barnacle Goose on 8th, 100 Wigeon on 23rd, 9 Gadwall on 4th and 8th, 164 Teal, 136 Mallard, 4 Pintail on 15th, 9 Shoveler on 15th, 2 Red-crested Pochard on 17th, 134 Pochard, 789 Tufted Duck (the latter 2 counts may have included duplicate counts due to disturbance from a low flying hot air balloon), 2 Common Scoter on 14th, 12 Goosander on 25th, 9 Moorhen and 801 Coot.

Raptor records included: Sparrowhawk regularly, 6 Buzzard on 6th, an Osprey on 5th, 2 Kestrel on 16th, a Merlin on 11th, 2 Hobby on 17th, and Peregrine on 3 dates.

Waders were represented by: 8 Ringed Plover on 7th, 2 Grey Plover on 21st, 61 Lapwing on 18th, 4 Dunlin on 13th, a Ruff on 18th, 4 Snipe on 19th and 22nd, 1 Redshank on 16th, 2 Greenshank on 8th, 4 Common Sandpiper on 8th and a Turnstone flying around Stones Island on 15th.

A first winter Mediterranean Gull was seen on 6th and a different first winter on 19th to 24th, 3000+ Lesser Black-backed Gull roosted on 13th, a second winter Caspian Gull came on 19th, at least 8 Yellow-legged Gull roosted on 23rd and an adult Great Black-backed Gull was present 18th to 24th.

The highlight of the month came on the evening of 12th when a flock of c50 Terns included roughly 20 each of Arctic and Common Tern, at least 4 Black Tern and a reservoir first White-winged Black Tern, which is probably the 7th county record of this species.

Two Kingfisher were noted on 15th and last month's Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was heard again in Blackwall Plantation on 13th and 18th. Two Skylark flew over on 15th and 2 Sand Martin on 17th will almost certainly be the last of the year. Swallow were on the move on 17th with 130 streaming past Sheepwash in a 5 minute period and around 35 House Martin were noted on 15th. A count of 38 Meadow Pipit, flying over site, was made on 16th and an early Rock Pipit was seen around Stones Island on 20th. Wagtails included 2 Yellow on 10th, 5 Grey on 3rd, 125 Pied, on the dam, on 21st and a single White on Stones Island on 17th. A Whinchat was found in a field of Thistles near to Sheepwash on 15th and a female/immature Stonechat was in the Wildlife Centre Creek on 20th which is coincidentally the same date as a female/immature was there last year. Warblers included Sedge Warbler on 3rd and 11th, Reed Warbler in Hopton reed bed on 15th, Lesser Whitethroat on Stones Island on 17th and 18th, Common Whitethroat on several dates, 8 Blackcap on 3rd, many Chiffchaff on Stones Island mid month and a Willow Warbler on 27th. Three Raven were seen on 17th.

112 species this September compared with 104 in 2015, 107 in 2014, 109 in 2013 and 106 in 2012.

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AUGUST 2016 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Little Gull, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Tree Pipit.

Two further broods of Tufted Duck this month means that 18 pairs have bred on site this year. Water bird maximum counts were: 13 Little Grebe, including juveniles, on 24th, 23 Great Crested Grebe on 23rd, 40 Cormorant on 17th and 19th, 3 Little Egret on several dates, 6 Grey Heron on 9th and 25th, 34 Mute Swan on 6th and 23rd (and the one breeding pair still have 3 surviving cygnets), 3 Greylag Geese on 2nd and 25th, 127 Canada Geese on 23rd, a Barnacle Goose on 3rd and 23rd, 2 Shelduck on 2nd, 3 Wigeon on 25th, 9 Gadwall on 29th, 77 Teal on 31st, 139 Mallard on 23rd, 3 Shoveler from 24th to 28th, a drake eclipse Red-crested Pochard from 27th, 8 Pochard from 28th, 127 Tufted Duck on 23rd, a drake Common Scoter on 28th, 12 Moorhen on 5th and 443 Coot on 23rd.

A juvenile Marsh Harrier flew southeast over Stones Island on the morning of 27th, 2 Sparrowhawk were noted on 2nd and a family of Buzzard, with calling young, were near the Wildlife Centre creek on 24th. Osprey noted on 3 dates mid month and an individual with a blue ring on its left leg was seen catching a fish on 18th. Hobby records came on 11th and 18th and Peregrine on 16th and 28th.

An Oystercatcher remained until 10th and a single Little Ringed Plover, reported on many dates, probably related to the same juvenile. Other maximum counts were 5 Ringed Plover on 9th, a Golden Plover on 28th, c80 Lapwing on 2nd, 2 Dunlin on 9th and 20th, a Snipe on 23rd, a Black-tailed Godwit on 7th, a Whimbrel on 18th, 4 Curlew on 17th, a Redshank up to 16th, 3 Greenshank on 15th, a Green Sandpiper all month to 27th at least and 7 Common Sandpiper on 2nd.

A juvenile Little Gull on 18th was a good record and other Gulls included 2 Common on 9th, 147 Lesser Black-backed on 6th, an immature Herring on 10th and 23rd, 3 Yellow-legged on 4th and 2 Great Black-backed on 25th. There were 3 Common Tern on 12th and 24th and a single juvenile Arctic Tern flew through on 27th.

Four Stock Dove flew over on 20th and 2 Tawny owl in Brown Ale Bay on 16th were possibly juveniles from a nearby breeding pair. What will probably be the last Swift of the summer was over Stones Island on 21st and 3 Kingfisher were seen on 18th. A Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was heard drumming and seen briefly at Millfields on 28th, before flying to Blackwall plantation. This represents the first record since 2011 and it was heard again on 31st. A group of 4 Tree Pipit flew over Sheepwash calling on 25th and the first returning Meadow Pipit was on the dam on 18th. Wagtails were represented by 2 Yellow on 15th and 20th, 3 Grey on 22nd and 42 Pied on the dam on 22nd. Four Redstart were seen on 11th and the first returning Wheatear was on the dam on 31st. Warbler breeding success was much in evidence with Sedge Warbler still feeding young on Sailing Club Island on 2nd, Reed Warbler families at 3 locations throughout the month and a Whitethroat family group at the Wildlife Centre creek on 24th. An adult Garden Warbler with 3 fledged young was reported on 17th as was a Chiffchaff family on 4th. Despite several pairs of Spotted Flycatcher being present in previous months there were no reports at all in August and it is assumed that all breeding attempts ended in failure. A group of 40 Jackdaw were feeding on freshly mown grass near the Wildlife Centre on 6th and 4 Rook were below the dam on 31st. Three Raven were seen on 16th and 21st. Tree Sparrow were taking advantage of the Wildlife Centre feeders with 20 noted on 12th. Groups of 40 Goldfinch and 10 Linnet were on 25th and 10th respectively and a family of Bullfinch was seen on 17th.

106 species this month compared with 106 in 2015, 108 in 2014, 109 in 2013, 94 in 2012, 119 in 2011.

JULY 2016 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Little Egret, breeding Gadwall, Garganey, Osprey, Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Mediterranean Gull and Caspian Gull.

A wet start to the month, following a very wet June, seems to have led to a reduction in water bird broods. There was some success however with: 3 broods each of Little and Great Crested Grebe, the first breeding record of Gadwall (2 pairs), 26 broods of Mallard and 16 of Tufted Duck. Maximum water bird counts were: 4 Little Grebe on 25th, 37 adult Great Crested Grebe on 25th, 23 Cormorant on 19th, a site record 6 Little Egret on 31st, 6 Grey Heron on 28th, 37 adult Mute Swan on 25th, 19 Greylag Geese on 5th and 8th, 516 Canada Geese on 8th, 23 Barnacle Geese on 1st and 7th, 5 Shelduck on 13th, 4 adult Gadwall on 19th, 3 Teal on 23rd, 118 Mallard on 25th, a female Garganey on 25th, 3 Shoveler on 5th, 3 Red-crested Pochard on 7th and 8th, 2 Pochard on 25th to 31st, 239 Tufted Duck on 25th, 17 Common Scoter on 2nd, 4 Moorhen on 23rd and 25th, and 441 Coot on 25th.

Raptors included Sparrowhawk carrying prey towards the east side on 4th, 2 Buzzard on several dates and an Osprey seen flying west at midday on 5th. Kestrel produced 4 young in a nest box, although one youngster was seen being carried away by a Buzzard and the only other raptor was Hobby seen on 6th, 14th and 29th.

Wader maximum counts were: 11 Oystercatcher on 4th, 6 Little Ringed Plover on 3rd to 5th, 40 Lapwing on 27th, 4 Dunlin on 13th, a Ruff on 19th, 5 Black-tailed Godwit on 3rd, single Whimbrel on 14th and 20th, 3 Curlew on 8th, 6 Redshank on 1st and 5th, a Greenshank on 20th, a Green Sandpiper on 14th and 31st and a site record 19 Common Sandpiper on 12th.

A Mediterranean Gull flew up the reservoir on 17th and a count of Black-headed Gull young on 5th recorded a large 183 visible youngsters around site. Single Common Gull were noted on 5th and 13th, 70 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 11th, a Herring Gull on 8th, a ringed Caspian Gull on 7th and Yellow-legged Gull on 26th and 31st. There were 5 records of lone Common Tern throughout the month.

Sadly a dead Tawny Owl youngster was found by dog walkers on 22nd. A juvenile Kingfisher, seen on 2nd, was probably evidence of another breeding success. Sand Martin numbered 22 on 26th, Swallow were still going to a nest on the draw off tower the same day and House Martin were feeding large young in the nests at the Visitor Centre toilet block on 18th with a 4th nest noted on the northeast side of the Visitor Centre building by the month end. Returning Yellow Wagtail were noted on 3 dates from 12th and 7 Grey Wagtail included a family group of 5 on 22nd. Two female Redstart with 3 juveniles were near the Wildlife Centre on 13th. A pair of Sedge Warbler were taking food to young on Sailing Club island on 23rd and Reed Warbler were feeding young at the Hopton reed bed on 2nd and Wildlife Centre reed bed on 19th. A family group of Lesser Whitethroat was seen on 1st and at least 2 family parties of Whitethroat were near the Wildlife Centre creek on 8th. Despite several pairs of Spotted Flycatcher being seen in previous months, there was just 1 record of an adult in July. A Willow Tit family was noted on 19th as were 4 Jay on 9th, 2 Raven on 14th and 27th, 40 House Sparrow on 1st and 30, mainly juvenile, Tree Sparrow on 5th. Reed Bunting were feeding youngsters on Stones Island from 18th.

100 species this July compared to 99 in 2015, 102 in 2014, 92 in 2013, 97 in 2012 and 105 in 2011.

JUNE 2016 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Common Scoter, Red Kite, Osprey, Crossbill and Yellowhammer.

A mainly wet month, with occasional sunny days saw a species count of 94, which is about par for course. Water bird broods so far are: 1 Little Grebe, 3 Great-crested Grebe, 1 Mute Swan, 4 Greylag Goose, numerous Canada Goose, 4 Barnacle Goose, 22 Mallard, 6 Tufted Duck, 1 Moorhen and 3 Coot. Maximum counts of adult water birds are from the WeBS on 23rd unless stated: 1 Little Grebe on numerous dates, 29 Great-crested Grebe, 9 Cormorant on 21st, single Little Egret on 25th and 28th, 2 Grey Heron on 18th and 29th, 28 Mute Swan on 29th, 16 Greylag Geese on 23rd, 442 Canada Geese on 27th, 19 Barnacle Geese on 30th, 2 Shelduck on 27th, a drake Mandarin on 4th and a female on 11th, 5 Gadwall on 10th-11th, 2 Teal on 26th, 54 Mallard, 2 Shoveler on 8th, 3 Red-crested Pochard on 27th-28th, a drake Pochard on 28th, 88 Tufted Duck, 11 Common Scoter on 26th, 3 Moorhen on 21st and 164 Coot.

Bird of prey sightings included a Red Kite over Carsington village on 9th, 4 Buzzard on 30th, 2 Osprey together on 21st, Kestrel seen hunting on a daily basis and feeding young in a nest box at one location and a Hobby on 26th.

Maximum wader counts were: 6 Oystercatcher (at least 4 broods), 2 Little Ringed Plover on several dates, 1 Ringed Plover on 6th, 20 Lapwing on 29th (at least 3 broods), a Dunlin on 8th, 4 Curlew on 26th, 4 Redshank on 23rd with 6 juveniles noted on 29th (at least 3 broods), a Green Sandpiper on 25th and 2 Common Sandpiper on 23rd and 29th.

A count of Black-headed Gull young on 22nd gave a total of 151 mainly from Millfields Island (now dubbed Bass Rock by some of the regulars)! The only other Gulls reported were 3 second summer Common Gull on 20th and a few groups of Lesser Black-backed Gull moving through all month. Common Tern have again been scarce with the only record being 3 on the raft at Watersports briefly on 30th and the final Arctic Tern record of the north bound migration concerned a group of 7 on 6th.

Swift numbered 100+ on 2nd and a pair was going to a nest under the Visitor Centre eaves by the month end. Kingfisher activity was reported throughout the month with 2 seen on 2nd and 3rd, so breeding is a distinct possibility. Great-spotted Woodpecker nests were discovered in Hall wood and Penn Carr on 1st and 2nd. Sand Martin were still failing to appreciate the improvements to the sand bank at the Wildlife Centre, however Swallow were finally going to a nest on the draw off tower on 22nd and 3 active House Martin nests were located on 21st. Many Pied Wagtail juveniles were around the shore lines as the month drew on, Wren were feeding young on 21st and a male Redstart was feeding 2 juveniles on 25th. Evidence of warbler breeding was all around with Sedge Warbler feeding young at Millfields on 21st, Reed Warbler carrying food to young in the Hopton reed bed on 29th, a Lesser Whitethroat family near the Wildlife Centre on 30th, several Whitethroat families, Garden Warbler carrying caterpillars on 5th and 6th and Chiffchaff carrying food in Hall wood on 29th. Spotted Flycatcher pairs were reported from several locations although no young have been seen to date. All of our resident Tit species were feeding young as were Nuthatch and Treecreeper. Many House Sparrow were going to nests at the Visitor Centre and Tree Sparrow were feeding a second brood in the dead tree at Sheepwash on 22nd. A group of 7 Crossbill was seen by Blackwall plantation on 28th and 29th and a Yellowhammer was singing near Shiningford Farm on 28th.

94 Species this June compared with 90 in 2015, 99 in 2014, 87 in 2013, 88 in 2012 and 95 in 2011.

MAY 2016 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Black-necked Grebe, Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Greenshank, Turnstone, Arctic Skua, Mediterranean Gull, Kittiwake, Little Tern, Black Tern, Pied Flycatcher and Crossbill.

All 3 Great Northern Divers were present at the start of the month and the 2 adults gained stunning summer plumage, attracting many admirers. The last record of all 3 was on 8th, with just the juvenile present by 12th and finally all had gone by 21st. If the loss of the Divers signified the end of winter many of our water birds got down to the business of reproducing as if to announce the coming of summer. Counts of water birds come from the WeBS count on 16th unless stated: 2 Little Grebe, 28 Great-crested Grebe, 2 Black-necked Grebe on 13th, 2 Little Egret on 25th, 3 Grey Heron on 27th, 6 Mute Swan, 20 Greylag Geese on 2nd including an individual wearing an orange neck collar traced to Cumbria (2 broods by the month end), 98 Canada Geese (several broods), 8 Barnacle Geese on 24th (3 broods), a pale bellied Brent Goose on 3rd, 4 Shelduck on 15th, 2 Mandarin on 9th, 4 Gadwall on 15th, 46 Mallard (13 broods), a pair of Red-crested Pochard from 8th, 3 Pochard on 5th, 61 Tufted Duck and 31 Coot.

A good set of raptor records included a cream crown Marsh Harrier on the 1st and amazingly another the following day, identified as a different bird by wing moult, 2 Sparrowhawk on 14th, 5 Buzzard on 15th, an Osprey flying east on 2nd and 2 mobbed by Black-headed Gulls on 30th, 2 Kestrel on several dates, the first Hobby of spring on 15th and a Peregrine on 15th.

High water levels were not ideal for passing waders but 14 species is a decent haul in the circumstances and maximums were: 8 Oystercatcher on 16th (at least 4 broods), 1 Little Ringed Plover on several dates, 5 Ringed Plover on 11th, 1 Grey Plover on 9th, 8 Lapwing (2 broods), 2 Sanderling on 18th, 19 Dunlin on 6th, a Bar-tailed Godwit on 9th, 4 Whimbrel on 11th, 2 Curlew on 6th, 6 Redshank on 16th (at least 2 broods), an impressive 11 Greenshank on 5th, 3 Common Sandpiper on 12th to 13th and 5 Turnstone on 10th.

Yet another Skua record for the reservoir came on the morning of 11th, this time a pale phase adult Arctic Skua was seen chasing Black-headed Gulls for 10 minutes before departing. A first summer Mediterranean Gull was around Millfields Island on 11th and 15th, the Black-headed Gull colony on Millfields Island had produced young by 19th and similarly young were on the Wildlife Centre Tern raft by 25th. An adult Kittiwake flew through on 3rd followed by another on 13th. Tern records included 4 Common Tern on 2nd, 29 Arctic Tern on 11th, 2 Little Tern on 23rd and 4 Black Tern on 6th.

There were 200 Sand Martin by 2nd and work to improve their access to the sand bank was carried out mid month, although sadly there was no interest from the birds, Swallow too showed no evidence of breeding although House Martin were nest prospecting around the Visitor Centre. Maximum counts of warblers during the month were 5 Reed warbler, 2 Lesser Whitethroat, 11 Whitethroat, 14 Garden warbler, 61 Blackcap, 67 Chiffchaff and 29 Willow warbler. Two Spotted Flycatchers arrived on 7th and there were 6 by 15th. Another record of Pied Flycatcher concerned a male at Penn Carr on 5th and a single Crossbill flew over Hall Wood on 8th.

111 Species this month compared with 107 in 2015, 105 in May 2014, 106 in 2013 and 116 in 2012.

APRIL 2016 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Red-breasted Merganser, Red Kite, Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Purple Sandpiper, Jack Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Greenshank, Little Gull, Sandwich Tern, Arctic Tern, Wood Warbler, Pied Flycatcher and Great Grey Shrike.

Another good month gave a total species count of 119, which is 1 short of the record for April (2003). All 3 Great Northern Divers remained throughout with the 2 adults in magnificent summer plumage by the month end. Wildfowl counts of note were: 5 Little Grebe on 13th, 33 Great-crested Grebe on 13th, 3 near summer plumage Black-necked Grebe on 25th, 11 Cormorant on 30th, 1 Grey Heron on several dates, 6 Mute Swan on 28th, a Pink-footed Goose on 4th, 17 Greylag Geese on 29th, 51 Canada Geese on 11th, 16 Barnacle Geese on 13th, 5 Shelduck on 12th, a pair of Mandarin all month, 6 Wigeon on 9th, 2 Gadwall on 11th, 6 Teal from 11th to 13th, 42 Mallard on 11th (and 6 broods of young by the month end), a drake Shoveler on 7th and 25th, a drake Red-crested Pochard on 1st, 1 Pochard from 9th to 11th, 72 Tufted Duck on 11th, 5 Goldeneye on 4th, 2 Red-breasted Merganser on 18th, a drake Goosander on 3 dates, 5 Moorhen on 13th and 29 Coot on 11th.

Three records of Red Kite were on 9th, 13th and 25th, an adult male Marsh Harrier flew east on 2nd, Sparrowhawk records included a female taking a Wood Pigeon, which was then stolen by Buzzards on 13th, 6 Buzzard were in the air on 30th, an Osprey flew through on 1st and 3 further records this month included 2 birds soaring over the reservoir together for an hour on 17th, 2 Kestrel on 5th and 29th and a female Peregrine, carrying prey, was joined by her mate on 30th.

Waders included: 11 Oystercatcher on 11th, the first returning Little-ringed Plover on 1st and 2 on 25th, 5 Ringed Plover on 18th, 3 Lapwing chicks on Millfields Island on 28th, a county scarce Purple Sandpiper (second site record) on the dam wall on 12th, 12 Dunlin on 29th, single Jack Snipe on 3rd and 4th, 11 Snipe on 2nd, 3 Black-tailed Godwit on 18th, 6 Whimbrel on 29th, 7 Curlew on 18th, 7 Redshank on 11th, single Greenshank on 9th and 21st and at least 5 Common Sandpiper on 30th.

Gulls and Terns included: a site record 19 Little Gull on 11th, 210 Common Gull on 4th, 18 Herring Gull on 3rd, a Yellow-legged Gull regularly to 11th, 10 Great Black-backed Gull on 6th, 3 Sandwich Tern on 12th, a Common Tern on 10th, 12th and 21st and 10 Arctic Tern on the early date of 12th.

The first returning Swift was over the water on 21st and Kingfisher were recorded throughout the month. Sand Martin peaked at 250 on 12th and Swallow 500 on 25th. House Martin were fewer with a maximum of 20 on 25th. The first Yellow Wagtail was on 10th and there were 3 on 14th, White Wagtail arrived on 1st and peaked at 8 on 18th. Three singing Redstart were on site by 13th and 3 Wheatear were noted on 12th. The first regular returning Warbler dates were Sedge 21st, Lesser Whitethroat 15th, Whitethroat 14th and Garden 24th. A more scarce Wood Warbler was singing in Middle Wood on 24th.

A Pied Flycatcher between Millfields and Penn Carr on 24th was the first for 3 years and a Great Grey Shrike, seen all to briefly on 6th, was another good find. Finally a Brambling was a nice late record on 12th.

119 species were recorded compared with 117 in 2015, 119 in 2014, 114 in 2013, 115 in 2012 and 111 in 2011.

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MARCH 2016 BIRD NOTES

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Little Egret, Whooper Swan, Water Rail, Red Kite, Merlin, Avocet, Grey Plover, Jack Snipe, Mediterranean Gull, Caspian Gull, Kittiwake, Barn Owl, Rock Pipit and Crossbill.

A diverse list of birds this month resulted in a record March total of 108 species. The 3 Great Northern Divers remained to the month end and continued to draw in observers. Waterbird maximums come from the WeBS count on 20th unless stated and were: 8 Little Grebe on 16th, 38 Great-crested Grebe, 14 Cormorant on 10th, a Little Egret in snowy conditions on 28th, 4 Grey Heron on 31st, 6 Mute Swan on 27th, 10 Whooper Swan on 11th, 10 Greylag Geese on 23rd, 114 Canada Geese on 16th, 29 feral Barnacle Geese on 24th, 2 Shelduck on 12th and 18th, a pair of Mandarin nest prospecting from 21st, 3 Wigeon from 2nd to 10th, 2 Gadwall, 40 Teal on 16th, 63 Mallard, 7 Pintail on 1st, 3 Shoveler on 31st, 1 Pochard on 8th and 14th, 73 Tufted Duck, 11 Goldeneye on 16th, 6 Goosander on 11th, a Water Rail in the Hopton reed bed to 24th, 5 Moorhen and 60 Coot on 16th. A Red-legged Partridge was flushed on Stones Island on 29th.

Raptors included a Red Kite seen on 23rd, 25th and 28th, 3 Sparrowhawk on 29rd with displaying birds noted on several occasions, an impressive 12 Buzzard on 5th, a female Merlin on 30th and 2 Peregrine hunting together on 7th and 27th.

Wader highlights were: 13 Oystercatcher on 23rd and 25th with birds noisily setting up territories on the islands, a lone Avocet on 11th (6th site record), Ringed Plover on 7th, 15th and 19th, 14 Golden Plover through on 5th, a Grey Plover on 21st to 23rd, 150 Lapwing on 1st, 3 Dunlin on 18th, at least 1 Jack Snipe in the Hopton reed bed to 18th, 10 Snipe on 20th with the popular leucistic individual seen regularly to the month end, 2 Woodcock on 10th, 36 Curlew on 7th and 7 Redshank on 27th.

Gull records were: a summer plumage Mediterranean Gull in the roost on 7th, Black-headed Gulls setting up breeding colonies all month, Common Gulls, although numerous, went uncounted, 22 Herring Gull flew northeast on 20th, a second winter Caspian Gull on 11th, a Yellow-legged Gull on several dates, 4 Great Black-backed Gull on 21st and 2 Kittiwake on 18th and 24th (with 4 other records of singles).

A Barn Owl was noted on the east side on the evenings of 10th and 11th, a Tawny Owl was roosting in an Ivy covered tree on 12th and a trickle of Skylark were moving through throughout the month. The first returning Sand Martin and Swallow were on 24th and an early House Martin was over the water on 29th. Meadow Pipit were on the move with 20 recorded on 21st and a Rock Pipit flew over on 24th. A male Wheatear was on the dam wall on 25th and winter visitors were still present in the form of 65 Fieldfare on 31st and 150 Redwing on 21st. The first singing Chiffchaff, near Penn Carr on 17th, was joined by many more by the end of the month. A flock of 2000 Starling was over Carsington pasture on 1st, a male Brambling was feeding in Alder on Stones Island on 30th, 20 Siskin were in the Wildlife Centre Creek on 10th and 9 Lesser Redpoll were on Stones Island to the month end. Finally another record of Crossbill concerned 2 flying over Blackwall plantation on 26th.

108 species this March compared with 103 in 2015, 95 in 2014, 96 in 2013, 97 in 2012 and 106 in 2011.

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FEBRUARY 2016 BIRD NOTES

February Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Water Rail, Jack Snipe, Mediterranean Gull, Kittiwake, Crossbill and Yellowhammer.

Water levels continued to rise and were back to normal by the month end, but most wildfowl had already left. With the nights drawing out, and spring hopefully just around the corner, many species were in song especially on the occasional bright warm days we experienced. The 3 Great Northern Diver remained all month and other notable waterbird counts this month were on the WeBS on 21st except where stated: 8 Little Grebe, 20 Great-crested Grebe, 36 Cormorant through in one flock on 19th, Grey Heron on several dates, just 4 Mute Swan on 4th, c50 Pink-footed Geese northwest on 28th, 3 Greylag Geese on 23rd, 110 Canada Geese, 29 feral Barnacle Geese on 19th and 21st, 4 Shelduck on 25th, 53 Wigeon on 1st, 5 Gadwall on 14th, 92 Teal, 89 Mallard, 6 Pintail on 18th, 1 Shoveler on 5th, 92 Teal, 89 Mallard, 4 Pochard on 2nd, 41 Tufted Duck, 9 Goldeneye on 18th and 25th, 3 Goosander on 25th, at least 1 Water Rail in the Hopton reed bed until 18th, 6 Moorhen on 25th and 69 Coot.

Raptors noted were: 2 Sparrowhawk on 4th and 9th (and a young male was hunting Tree Sparrows from a perch in the Willow in front of the Wildlife Centre on 14th), 5 Buzzard on 5th, Kestrel at several locations throughout the month and 5 records of at least 2 different Peregrine.

Waders this month include returning Oystercatcher with 7 on 21st, including the male with the bar-code leg ring (from the Exe Estuary in Devon) back for his eleventh successive year, 730 Lapwing on 5th, a Dunlin on 9th and 23rd, at least 1 Jack Snipe in the Hopton reed bed up to 18th, 25 Snipe on 3rd with the leucistic, nearly all white, individual reported on and off to the month end, Curlew passage peaked with 11 on 25th and 2 Redshank were present all month.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was in the roost on 21st, a colour ringed Black-headed Gull from last month was traced to Turek in central Poland, 700 Common Gull roosted on 25th, 14 Herring Gull flew over the Hopton end on 5th, a Yellow-legged Gull was reported on 7th, a Great Black-backed Gull on 23rd and adult Kittiwake were seen on 4th and 9th.

Kingfisher were reported fishing at Paul Stanley hide, a trickle of Skylark moved north, 6 Meadow Pipit were at the Wildlife Centre on 9th and 5 Grey Wagtail at the Hopton end on 5th. Thrushes were represented by 2 Song Thrush on 23rd, 40 Redwing on 4th and several Mistle Thrush records from the Wildlife Centre Creek. Two Raven were on 4th, 150 Starling flew north on 10th, with 40 Tree Sparrow on 12th, 6 Greenfinch on 9th, 20 Siskin on 21st, a Crossbill over on 7th, a Yellowhammer on 5th and 6 male Reed Bunting on Sheepwash car park feeders on 16th.

87 species this month compared with 85 in 2015, 81 in 2014, 90 in 2013, 91 in 2012 and 90 in 2011.

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JANUARY 2016 BIRD NOTES

January Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Water Rail, Jack Snipe, Kittiwake and Yellowhammer.

A wet, windy and mild month produced a count of 91 species. The 3 Great Northern Divers from the end of last year were joined briefly by a 4th bird on 18th only.

Water bird maximums were: 14 Little Grebe on 5th, 30 Great-crested Grebe on 30th, 16 Cormorant on 10th, 4 Grey Heron on 21st, 5 Mute Swan on 2nd and 21st, a single Pink-footed Goose on 24th, 4 Greylag Geese on 25th, 180 Canada Geese on 18th, 29 feral Barnacle Geese on 25th, 3 Shelduck on 1st, 32 Wigeon on 5th, 7 Gadwall on 16th, 228 Teal on 30th, 159 Mallard on 5th, 4 Pintail on 20th and 30th, 3 Shoveler on 16th, 36 Pochard on 2nd, 161 Tufted Duck on 2nd and 5th, 11 Goldeneye on 30th, 13 Goosander on 23rd, at least 1 Water Rail throughout the month heard, and sometimes seen, in the Hopton reed bed, 11 Moorhen on 30th, and 164 Coot on 30th.

Raptors records were few but included 2 Sparrowhawk displaying on 20th, 3 Buzzard in the air on 30th, Kestrel on a few dates and 2 Peregrine on 20th.

Three Oystercatcher returned on 26th, single Golden Plover were seen on 20th and 23rd, 800 Lapwing were counted on 3rd and there were 3 Dunlin on 5th. Jack Snipe were seen on and off throughout the month in the Hopton reed bed and 3 there on 23rd represents a site record. Snipe were also well recorded with a maximum of 32 on 3rd, a single Woodcock was flushed at the Hopton end on 24th, 2 Curlew moved through on 30th and 2 Redshank were present for much of the month.

Gull counts were: 6000 Black-headed Gull leaving the roost at dawn on 23rd, 800 Common Gull on 7th, 1000 Lesser Black-backed Gull on 12th, 8 Herring Gull on 29th, 3 Yellow-legged Gull on several occasions, 17 Great Black-backed Gull on 20th and 2 Kittiwake on 26th.

A Tawny Owl flew across the road near Sheepwash at dawn on 24th and Kingfisher was reported at many locations. A Great-spotted Woodpecker was heard drumming on 26th, 2 Skylark flew over on 20th, 5 wintering Meadow Pipit were at Sheepwash on 21st and at least 5 Grey Wagtail were in the Hopton arm on 25th. Winter Thrushes were represented by 20 Fieldfare on 14th and 100 Redwing on 6th. A wintering Chiffchaff was discovered at Penn Carr on 9th but was not subsequently seen. Other counts of note were: 200 Jackdaw on 25th, 2 Raven on two occasions, 25 Chaffinch on 11th, 1 Brambling on 20th, 8 Greenfinch on 1st, 10 Goldfinch on 20th, 60 Siskin on 25th, 8 Redpoll on 16th, 7 Bullfinch on 25th and 29th and a single Yellowhammer on 11th.

91 species this month compared with 82 in 2015, 82 in 2014, 89 in 2013, 92 in 2012 and 89 in 2011.

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