

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT JANUARY 2002 - 79 Species - 29 Days Covered

The New Year started with easterly winds, snow on the ground and nightly heavy frosts. By the second week daytime temperatures had risen but with light winds, mist was now the problem. Throughout the period the majority of the reservoir was icebound. It was not until 13th that we were clear of both mist and ice. The third week was more settled with South Westerly winds, but by the end of the month stormy weather with heavy rain took hold making January a difficult month for birding.

However despite the conditions, records were submitted for all but two days of the month. Four Shoveler were a good start on New Year Day but were not seen again. Shelduck were present all month with a maximum of five on 22nd and Goosander was also observed most days with a maximum of twelve on the 27th. One Ruddy Duck was noted on the 12th. The low water levels meant that Teal were the most numerous duck with a maximum count of one hundred and forty on 28th. Wigeon peaked at eighty-five with an influx on the same day. Two Pink-footed Goose were evident with the resident Canada Goose for several days up to 22nd but eight skeins totalling two thousand one hundred and sixty birds were a site record moving West on 27th.

Common Buzzard on 15th and 24th were welcome visitors along with three Peregrine Falcon sightings on 2nd, 29th & 31st. With the large numbers of Lapwing enjoying the exposed areas of the West Bank it was not a surprise to see Golden Plover on two occasions with a maximum of twenty-three on 12th. Dunlin were also observed on two days with five on New Year's Day. Snipe were in residence early in the month but declined to one on 25th.

'Gull Roosters' spent many hours scanning a depleted roost but were rewarded eventually on 22nd with a 1st Winter Iceland Gull. The 23rd improved with two Iceland Gull and a summer plumaged adult Mediterranean Gull. The Iceland Gull continued until 27th with one or two birds as with a Mediterranean Gull which was also seen on 30th. A Yellow-legged Gull was noted on 25th.

A Tawny Owl flying across the car park road into the sailing club surprised one member late on 30th and Little Owl was difficult to find this month with only six sightings. Kingfisher was even more so with a single on New Year's Day. Perhaps the highlight of the month was a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker observed in the old oak tree on the West Bank by one lucky observer on 2nd. Another rare sighting was a Dipper on Milltown Inlet, enjoying the low water levels on 21st. Fieldfare and Redwing were evident during the month but never in large numbers. Siskin were noted on two occasions with Redpoll also observed towards the end of the month.

Large flocks of both Goldfinch and Linnet were a feature on the West Bank for most of the month and the usual birds could be seen on the bird feeders. Yellowhammer was not easy to find but Church Farm produced three birds on New Year's Day. Another elusive species was Reed Bunting, which was only seen on two occasions. Grey Heron was also noted in small numbers but on the last day of the month thirteen were observed in South Bay. This perhaps was a sign that spring was only just around the corner.

Richard Wesley.

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT FEBRUARY 2002 – 78 Species – 28 Days Covered

February continued where January left off, with mild, very wet southwesterly winds. This continued into the second week with the same incessant wind and rain on most days. Spring arrived for a short time on 14th but only lasted until 18th. We soon returned to gales and heavy rain, including snow on 23rd, but this was generally a mild month.

A good record of twelve Greylag Geese joined the resident Canada's on 17th and Grey Heron were back in the Heronry with twenty-one on 5th. A new bird for the month was a Mute Swan on the same date. Another was released on the reservoir on 16th after being found on a car park in Clay Cross.

Shelduck numbers varied from one to five for the first eight days but were not seen for the rest of the month. Goosanders were seen on most days with a max. of seven on 3rd. Wigeon counts remained low with a max of four on 22nd. With the continuing low water levels Teal were still around in good numbers and eighty was the best on 7th. Pochard was also well represented with seventy-six on 5th. Whilst searching the gull roost on 17th two pairs of Pintail and one female Ruddy Duck were also discovered.

Common Buzzard continue to show a presence and two were seen displaying over the dam wall on 11th and another flushed twenty-eight Grey Heron from the Heronry on 13th. The scrape continues to attract Snipe and twelve were counted on 10th. The first Curlew of the year arrived on 19th, with further singles on 20th and 23rd. One Dunlin was present on 18th. Lapwing peaked at six hundred on 14th but declined towards the end of the month. Several Pheasant have been observed at the top of South Hill and two Grey Partridge seen in the same area was an excellent record on 17th.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was observed on the first three days of the month and the gull roost was rejuvenated with two Iceland Gulls seen both on 13th & 14th and singles on 15th & 19th. A Yellow-legged Gull filled in on 10th.

The first Green Woodpecker of the year was heard on 14th and Great Spotted was present most days. Little Owls were difficult to find this month and Kingfisher was not seen at all. A Tawny Owl was heard from the West Bank on 24th.

Singles of Meadow Pipit and Skylark have been heard passing through but they have been thin on the ground. Siskins were noted in Alders Wood, with a max. of six on 4th. A large Goldfinch and Linnet flock continued to be highlight of the West Bank and the usual tits and finches were seen around the feeders. A single Brambling was a bonus from 5th to 7th and provided good views around the Church Farm feeder. Yellowhammers became more numerous as the month progressed and could be heard singing on good days. Single Reed Bunting were also noted along hide lane.

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT MARCH 2002 - 94 Species - 31 Days Covered

High pressure brought frosty nights and clear days to the first week of the month with mainly westerly winds. The second continued in an unremarkable vein until the end of the week when the wind turned to a strong easterly. However after a few days the wind veered to the southwest and another high pressure brought more settled weather. The month ended on a good note, with dry, mainly clear days, overnight frosts and some early morning mists. In general a mainly dry month with some frosts early and late.

Cormorants peaked at sixty-seven, with a site record on 16th, probably due to the low water levels and the abundance of fish. One hundred and fifty Pink-feet Geese flew through West on 1st and Greylag Geese visited on four occasions with a max of four on 18th & 30th. Shelduck were noted on six days with a max of three on 17th. Wigeon were sparse this month with the only record being twenty-six which came into roost on 26th. Teal were present all month with sixty-four on 25th. A pair of Shoveler broke the monotony on 25th and Pochard were noted most days with a max of three on 23rd & 25th. Tufted Duck were also present regularly with a max of twenty-three on 31st. A female Goldeneye was the only record on 6th and Goosanders were noted nearly every day with a max of six on 20th.

Buzzards were a regular feature and sightings became daily towards the end of the month. The highlight of the month however would have to be the Osprey on Easter Saturday. It arrived from the north at 15:00 hours and stayed until 15:40 hours: which was long enough for it to catch a fish in front of the dam wall. Merlin gave good views on both 2nd & 11th passing close to observers on both occasions. Grey Partridge was a welcome sighting on two days with three on South Hill on 24th.

With the improving mud flats at Ogston, waders were anticipated and we were not to be disappointed with two Oystercatchers on 11th and a Knot on the West Bank on 16th. Dunlins were noted on six days and Redshank on sixteen. Snipe were regularly seen on the hide scrape and a Woodcock was found during our Saturday walk on 2nd. Little Ringed Plovers appeared on 25th and settled to an area in South Bay. By the end of the month the numbers had increased to seven. Ringed Plover were also noted with two records on 1st & 31st. Single Curlews passed through on six occasions during the month.

The gull roost declined throughout the month but not before 1st winter Iceland Gulls were observed on 2nd, 4th & 5th and our first 1st winter Glaucous Gull was found on 13th. Another discovered on 14th was thought to be a different bird. Sixteen Kittiwakes, which came into roost on 9th, was another excellent record.

The first Sand Martin arrived on 19th and Swallow on 30th. Other migrants included a female Wheatear, which stayed five days from 17th and our first Chiffchaff, which was noted on 16th during our first Breeding Bird Survey. A male Stonechat was also discovered the same day and two Tree Sparrows were observed on the bird feeders at the end of the month. The Survey was successful and produced a total of sixty-eight species during the day. We have further survey days planned in April, May and June giving us more to look forward too in the months to come.

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2002 - 101 Species - 29 Days Covered

The first week of the month was mainly dry with the predominant wind from the north or north east keeping temperatures low early and late. This continued into the second week with the wind constant from the north east. The third week saw a change with the loss of the cold north easterlies, temperatures began to rise and it began to feel like spring. During the final week the wind turned to the north again and most days had heavy showers. The month was unseasonably dry with average temperatures.

Great Crested Grebes peaked at nine displaying pairs on 16th but one wonders how or where they are going to be able to nest given the current conditions. Shelduck put in an appearance on six days with a maximum of two. Four Wigeon on 15th was the only record. Teal slowly declined during this period, but the highlight of the month was a Green-winged Teal on 8th, which gave good views in South Bay from Ogston New Road. Other records of note were twenty-two Tufted Duck on 15th and three sightings of Goosander with a maximum of two.

Common Buzzard was seen throughout the month with records on six days. Another highlight this month were two sightings of Osprey, one on 2nd and another on 11th, perhaps this will be another record year for this sort after raptor. The first Hobby appeared on 29th, worrying several hirundines as it flew along the West Bank.

Waders were in good numbers with the large expanses of mud increasing by the minute. Twenty-three Golden Plover on 2nd was a good record and up to three Dunlin were seen on 19th, 20th and 27th. Snipe have declined with only two records on 6th and 7th. The first Whimbrel of the year appeared on 20th but was short staying. Curlew, Redshank, Greenshank and Common Sandpiper also all put in regular appearances throughout the month. Common Tern returned on 21st and was then noted most days until the end of the month. Arctic Tern passed through on 29th but soon departed southwest. An unusual sighting from South Hill on 7th at 07:00 hrs was two Ring-necked Parakeets flying south.

Willow Warbler arrived on 2nd, followed closely by a male Redstart on 10th and 11th. The remainder of the migrants appeared consistently from then on with Garden Warbler on 16th, Cuckoo on 17th, Yellow Wagtail on 18th, Sedge Warbler on 20th, Swift and Whitethroat on 21st, Wheatear on 27th and finally Lesser Whitethroat on 30th completing the warbler group.

Other records of note were the two White Wagtails on 2nd and 27th, one Lesser Redpoll on 2nd, Green Woodpecker on 3rd, 4th and 8th, Redwing on 5th, Fieldfare on 17th, Tawny Owl on 20th and one Brambling on 6th.

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT MAY 2002 – 95 Species – 31 Days Covered.

The month started with unsettled cool showery conditions, the winds being mainly from the north to northeast. The second and third week showed some improvement, being generally dry with the winds from south to southwest. The final week reverted back to the cool showery conditions of earlier and was dominated by a southwesterly airflow.

Great Crested Grebes held their numbers despite conditions with a maximum of thirteen on 14th. A Pink-footed Goose appeared towards the end of the month being observed on four days and three Greylag Geese were seen on 5th. A single Teal was about on four days and two Ruddy Duck put in an appearance on 7th. Mallard numbers increased during the month with a maximum of thirty-two on 31st. Shelduck were recorded most days with a maximum of two.

Common Buzzard continued to provide regular sightings with a maximum of four on 21st. A Hobby showed well for five minutes on 19th and a Peregrine Falcon attempted to take a Common Tern on 30th. The highlight of the month however was the Osprey, which appeared daily between 3rd and 10th taking fish regularly early and late and providing most birders with excellent views.

Twelve species of waders were recorded this month. Single Oystercatchers on 8th, 10th & 14th along with single Ringed Plover on 7th, 12th & 14th. Lapwings were observed daily with a maximum of ten on 29th. A diversion on 9th was a summer-plumaged Knot an unusual record here in spring. Another desirable record was a Sanderling on 18th, which was accompanied by a Dunlin. Whimbrel was short-stayed on 4th along with a Curlew. Common Sandpiper was recorded on five occasions with a maximum of two. Finally two Redshank were noted on 6th and one Greenshank on 1st.

A pair of Common Terns was seen most days with a maximum of six on 4th and singles of Arctic Tern were noted on 19th & 23rd with a maximum of three on 25th. Cuckoo was recorded on nine occasions. Single Little Owls were noted in the usual location throughout the month and Tawny Owl was heard on three occasions. Green Woodpecker was also heard on two visits.

Our final migrants arrived mid month with Spotted Flycatcher on 10th and a welcome Grasshopper Warbler on 17th. Pied Flycatcher was also noted in Carr Wood on 30th during a Breeding Bird Survey.

Other birds of note were Red-legged Partridge on 2nd, Grey Partridge on 4th, Yellow Wagtail on 9th, two Wheatear on 3rd and two Siskin on Ogston Hall Drive on 25th.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT JUNE 2002 – 85 Species – 30 Days Covered.

The first week of June began settled with winds from the southwest, but as these turned to the north the weather became more unsettled. During the second week winds returned to normal, but we continued with unsettled showery conditions. The third week was more like summer with conditions turning sunnier and warmer. The final period however was more changeable again with cooler winds from the northwest. A generally cool month for June, with very variable conditions and winds predominantly from the southwest.

Cormorants declined from mid-month and were in single figures by the end of June. Grey Heron numbers increased post breeding and reached a staggering seventy on 14th. Fifty-eight were observed on the banks of the reservoir and twelve in the Heronry. This must be a site and possibly a county record, unless someone out there knows different. One Pink-footed Goose was observed with the resident Canada's on 1st but this was the only record. A pair of Shelduck appeared on six days but they were not seen towards the end of the month. Five Gadwall on 2nd were the first for the year and another was seen on 6th. Teal were noted in small numbers throughout the month with Mallard totals increasing to a maximum of seventy-two on 12th. Tufted Duck were also seen regularly in small numbers. The highlight of the month was a female Common Scoter, which arrived during the afternoon of 25th but unfortunately was not to be found the next day.

Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were noted most days but Common Buzzard was conspicuous by its absence and was not seen until 29th. Two more Osprey sightings this month on 5th and 19th, with the second taking a fish. A Hobby was also observed on 30th when it put in a short appearance close to the Dam Wall chasing some Swifts late evening.

Seven species of wader were noted this month with Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Little Ringed Plover, Lapwing, Sanderling, Curlew and Redshank. The best of these was a summer plumaged Sanderling on 2nd. We can also now report that two pairs of Little Ringed Plover have each successfully reared broods of four young. Lapwings have also done well with six broods. Both groups have shown well, mixing together on the West Bank directly in front of the members hide. Up to five Common Tern have been present all month but none have shown an inclination to nest.

Cuckoo has been heard on four occasions this month, with two on 3rd. Little Owl sightings have been rare with the only record on the 2nd, but Tawny Owl has been heard on three occasions. Kingfisher a species that has been affected badly by the works to the reservoir has again been absent, except for 14th when two were noted near the Severn Treat Treatment Plant. Green Woodpecker however have been seen and heard regularly throughout. Skylarks have been observed regularly along the West Bank giving us the hope that they may be breeding; but as yet this has not been substantiated. Spotted Flycatcher sightings have increased towards the end of the month and breeding has been confirmed at Brackenfield Church. There have also been records from Alders Wood, Tanyard Farm and Bottom Farm indicating a good year for this species.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT JULY 2002 – 90 Species – 31 Days Covered.

July continued unsettled with showers for the first two weeks bringing mainly southwest to westerly winds. Towards the end of this period however conditions improved. We experienced a drier, warmer period mid-month with light winds throughout. The final period returned to mainly southwesterly winds with variable conditions. A short period of hot humid weather was soon followed by heavy rain and thunderstorms at the end of the month.

Refilling the reservoir commenced from 16th with water pouring in from Carsington bringing a level increase of about three metres, to date. This benefited the Cormorants, which saw an increase to twenty by the end of the month. One Gadwall was noted in North Bay on 1st and two Shelduck were on the West Bank on 27th. Teal was regular with a max of two on several days and Tufted Duck peaked at six on 4th. Mallard numbers grew as the increase in water level brought more favourable feeding conditions

Three sightings of Buzzard on 17th, 18th and 20th was eclipsed by four records of Osprey on 4th, 5th, 15th and 26th. On each occasion the bird was seen to take a fish. Hobby was recorded on one evening on 14th chasing hirundines whilst a Peregrine was seen to pass through north on 5th. Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were seen regularly with a family group of four Kestrel noted around the dam wall on 16th.

Twelve species of wader were recorded this month with Oystercatcher, Little Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Dunlin, Snipe, Curlew, Redshank, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper. The most notable being two Green Sandpiper on 5th, the first of the year, followed by three further sightings on 13th, 28th & 30th. Little Ringed Plover produced a fourth brood of chicks, being observed near the Sailing Club on 22nd.

There were up to three Common Tern all month with a single Arctic Tern on 11th to provide some variety. I suspect the last Cuckoo of the year was heard on 1st. Three single sightings of Little Owl was an improvement through the month and Kingfisher became more evident with eight single sightings. Green Woodpecker was heard and seen regularly and Spotted Flycatcher was observed at Brackenfield Church with a maximum of four on 14th.

Nuthatch and Treecreeper were also noted around the Church and Jay was seen most days. Long-tailed and Willow Tit became more numerous as the month progressed and a small flock of Linnet was noticeable around the west bank car park area. Finally a Lesser Redpoll was noted on 27th during a sweep of the west bank before refilling of the reservoir.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 2002 – 94 Species – 31 Days Covered.

August's weather continued unsettled with heavy downpours for the first week, interspersed with hot, muggy conditions. Winds were from a northerly direction and this was a theme that was to be maintained throughout the month. The second week started similarly but gradually improved becoming dry, warm and sunny, with light winds. The following two weeks continued in the same manner with a mainly northerly airflow. Summer had finally arrived.

The rapid increase of water level now up to 50% full, produced several sightings of Little Grebe and Great Crested Grebe increased to a maximum of fourteen on 28th. Cormorants also enjoyed the conditions with numbers reaching forty plus. Grey Heron were regular as usual and Canada Geese counts reached two hundred and forty-nine.

Wildfowl in general benefited from the excellent feeding conditions, notably Wigeon up to ten on 28th, Gadwall on nine dates, Teal maximum of twenty-nine on 18th, Mallard reaching two hundred and seventy-four on 28th and Shoveler with a maximum of four on 24th. Pochard started arriving by 17th and Tufted Duck reached fifty-three on 30th probably a site record. Ruddy Duck arrived on 18th and up to three were seen to the end of the month. Finally, two male Common Scoter discovered on the afternoon of 11th was a good record.

Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were present most days and single Common Buzzard sightings were regular throughout the month. Osprey was seen on both 1st & 31st, catching fish on each occasion. A single Peregrine was observed on four dates and a Hobby became regular towards the end of the month being noted on 5th, 24th, 27th, 28th and 31st, taking advantage of the increase in hirundine numbers.

One of the highlights of the month was a Water Rail, which was heard from the Alders Wood Hide on 26th. The same day produced two Crossbill fly-overs by the fishermen's car park. Waders struggled with the conditions finding little mud, thus limiting sightings. However nine species were recorded including Lapwing, Little Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Snipe, Whimbrel, Curlew, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper. The last Common Tern was seen on 15th and an unusual sighting on 31st was a Ring-necked Parakeet near Milltown Inlet.

Little Owl was noted more towards the end of the month and Tawny Owl was heard from Carr Wood. Kingfisher was recorded regularly and gave good views to several observers. Green Woodpecker has been heard throughout and continues to be recorded regularly. It would appear to have been a good year for Spotted Flycatcher with several family parties observed with a maximum of nine on 22nd.

Linnets and Goldfinches have started to flock and good numbers should be expected again this winter. The bird feeders continue to attract all the usual species including Willow Tit and Coal Tit. Yellowhammer have been recorded on South Hill and Millers Lane with mostly single sightings of Reed Bunting from the hide footpath.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT SEPTEMBER 2002 – 103 Species – 30 Days Covered.

September was a predominantly dry, warm and sunny month with wind mostly from an Easterly direction. The only rain during the month occurred on only three days but when it came it was very heavy.

This month the work on the West Bank to form the Plover Island and to increase the number and size of the scrapes took place during the last eight days of the month, which obviously had some effect on the birds in that area.

Birdwise the month started very well with Osprey being seen every day for the first eight days. It gave excellent views on many occasions and its fishing trips became quite predictable. Another bird of note seen on one day only on the first of the month was a Ring-Necked Parakeet. Dipper was seen throughout the month but could be very elusive. Kingfishers were also much in evidence this month several times they were seen taking fish from the pond at the side of the members hide.

The increasing water levels made wader viewing very difficult, as birds were feeding out of site hidden by grass. Alders wood hide appeared to be the best place to view from and it was from here the Water Rail, Ruff and (the bird of the month) a WOOD SANDPIPER were all seen well. The Wood Sandpiper was seen and identified by Tim Sexey early evening on the 19th but it flew out of sight and could not be relocated, however it turned up the following day on mud in front of the New Napoleon and was eventually seen by many as it stayed until at least the 22nd. On the 24th four Curlew Sandpipers were seen to fly in but only stayed a very short time and were not seen again.

Common Buzzards were noted over to the West on several occasions, with up to four birds in the air together. On a couple of days Peregrine was seen and Hobby gave excellent views on the 7th with three birds hunting Hirundines over the West Bank car park.

The combination of the vegetation and rising water levels have meant that the area is very attractive to Ducks and some very good counts have been had. On several days Teal numbers were estimated at well over 100 and Tufted duck numbers peaked at over 100. Other ducks seen this month were Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Pochard, Pintail, Mallard and Wigeon. On the 18th a group of 8 Common Scoter were seen but were gone next day 3 more came in on the 28th but stayed only a few hours. Two Redhead Goosander were seen on the 29th

A Little Gull was noted late afternoon on the 7th and a Wheatear was in the West Bank car park on the 8th (it actually perched on a telescope). Two Swifts and three Sand Martins were noted on the 7th and on the 14th 2 Crossbills were seen in the top of pine trees near Milltown inlet. On the 21st one Arctic Tern was seen over the reservoir and in the evening 50 Pink-feet were observed flying East. Snipe were present on several days and one was even feeding in the scrapes whilst the digger was working close by.

Bryan Hartley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT OCTOBER 2002 – 87 Species – 31 Days Covered

This was a month of two halves starting with an Indian summer and finishing with a severe wet and windy spell for the last two weeks. October was colder than normal and Sunday 27th was particularly stormy with the southwesterly wind reaching force eight or nine in the morning. Several large trees were brought down and power supplies were affected in some areas.

Good numbers of Cormorant throughout the month with a maximum of seventy-one on 12th. One adult Mute Swan paid a visit on 29th and 30th and a welcome sight on 18th were eight Whooper Swan a rare visitor at Ogston these days. Pink-footed Geese started appearing from the 13th with a maximum of two hundred. Wildfowl numbers were variable due to the fluctuating water levels but Wigeon, Teal, Mallard, Shoveler, Pochard and Tufted Duck were recorded on most days. A Shelduck visited on 10th and Gadwall appeared on several days with a maximum of three on 1st and 30th. Goldeneye put in four appearances through the month with a maximum of two. Ruddy Ducks were recorded on eight days with a maximum of three on 24th. Goosander was noted on three days with fourteen Redheads on 30th.

One of the highlights of the month was a short staying ring-tailed Hen Harrier on 18th the first sighting for two years. It was mobbed by Crows and then left to the northeast. Peregrine was seen on three days and Common Buzzard on four. Kestrel and Sparrowhawk were observed most days. Two Grey Partridge was a good record on 20th seen flying over Quarry Lane by the old chapel.

Waders were conspicuous by their absence with twenty fly through Golden Plover on 5th and only single sightings of Redshank, Greenshank and Curlew. Snipe were only recorded on three days, only Lapwing being regular with a maximum of one hundred on 24th. On Saturday 26th a Skua species was seen over the recording area from Highoredish heading south. It was a dark phase bird thought to be either Arctic or Pomarine. Little Owl was noted on several days but Kingfisher was only recorded on two days. Green Woodpecker was seen near Brackenfield Church on 19th.

The last Swallows were noted on 18th and seven House Martins was the last record on 16th. Dipper was found regularly at the beginning of the month but as the water levels increased sightings came to a halt. Stonechat was another welcome visitor and a pair were seen daily from the eighteenth and a single female was still present at the end of the month.

The first Redwing were noted on 7th with Fieldfare arriving on 24th. Chiffchaff was last recorded on 20th and two Brambling were flyovers on 19th. Siskin and Redpoll were recorded regularly through the period. With the present influx of Crossbill from the continent it was not a surprise for four to be observed on the East Bank on 30th, the second record this year. The last day of the month produced another spectacular influx of with a flock of over one thousand Starlings seen at dusk.

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT NOVEMBER 2002 – 85 Species – 30 Days Covered

November was mild but wetter than normal. The first week brought mainly southeasterly winds with some heavy rain and showers. The second was quiet with predominantly mild southwesterlies and more rain. The last two weeks remained quiet with light winds producing foggy conditions particularly during the morning.

The first day of the month began well with two Bewick Swans, which were found in Woolley Bay and three Common Scoter, which were observed near the dam wall. However the highlight of the month was a Little Egret that came into roost in South Bay late afternoon on 27th. This was unfortunately not relocated the next day. A single Mute Swan continued its stay and was seen most days throughout the month.

Wildfowl counts remained good with a maximum of one hundred and three Wigeon, one hundred and thirteen Teal and one hundred and forty-one Pochard on 9th. Two Shelduck were noted off the west bank on 23rd and Gadwall were present most days with a max of four on 1st. Shoveler was recorded on six days with a max of four on 28th and Tufted Duck was seen most days with a max of thirty-six on 30th. Goldeneye were also well recorded with a max of six on 2nd & 20th. Goosander were observed most days with up to max of eleven on 23rd.

Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were seen regularly throughout the month but a single Common Buzzard was only noted on four days. A Peregrine was seen with prey, a Blackbird on 15th and a Water Rail was heard calling from the west bank on 28th. Pheasant which have been seen regularly, with up to ten on 2nd, have probably been released locally.

Small flocks of Lapwing have been recorded around the reservoir on several days and a single Oystercatcher paid a short visit on 24th. Single records of Dunlin were noted on 3rd and 17th as they flew through and Snipe became more apparent towards the end of the month with six on 29th and 30th. A Redshank was noted on 10th and a Woodcock was disturbed in Carr Wood on two occasions.

An excellent late record for November was two 1st winter Little Gulls that appeared for a short time on 16th. Gull roosts continue to be small with most birds continuing on to Carsington after a short stay at Ogston. All five of the commoner gulls have been recorded with numbers of Great Black-backed Gull increasing towards the end of the month.

Little Owl was noted on several days and on one day 23rd, Tawny Owl was heard. On the same day a Kingfisher was seen hovering over the new top scrape and landing on the island. Great Spotted Woodpecker was recorded most days and Green Woodpecker was seen on four days with two on 4th. A good record on the 9th was a Rock Pipit, which appeared giving close views for ten minutes by the island.

A female Stonechat kept us company near the members' hide all of the month and three Tree Sparrows were seen on the feeders on 30th. Small flocks of Goldfinch, Siskin, Linnet and Redpoll moved around the reservoir all month and single sightings of Reed Bunting were noted along Hide Lane.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT DECEMBER 2002 – 78 Species – 31 Days Covered.

December was quite wet overall, with snow showers on 12th. Towards the end of the first week the wind changed to a NE direction and it became bitterly cold with frost on several occasions; this continued until the end of the third week. Milder conditions prevailed for the rest of the month with the wind coming from a Westerly or Southerly direction. By the month end the rainfall had filled the reservoir to capacity and Plover Island had become a true Island (to the relief of certain parties).

Little Grebe were seen on six dates during the month and Great Crested Grebes peaked at fourteen on 19th. A mute Swan was present most of the month and several skeins of Pink-Feet totalling four hundred and eighty birds were noted heading East on 5th. Shelduck were noted on three dates and Goldeneye on two occasions. Goosanders were present virtually every day from 17th with seven birds present on 7th. Shoveler were also noted on many dates particularly during the third week. Tufted Duck numbers peaked at ninety-eight and Pochard reached near record levels the highest actual count being two hundred and ninety-eight. It is probably due to the excellent feeding conditions that we have seen the high numbers of Ducks.

Raptors did not feature highly but sightings of Common Buzzard were noted on three dates on one occasion the bird being perched near the entrance to Carr Wood. Sparrowhawks and Kestrels were seen on many days as would be expected.

Lapwings were present on six days with a maximum of two hundred and fifteen on the 6th. Redshank were noted several times during the month with three seen flying over near Milltown inlet on 10th and on 20th a single bird was feeding in the top scrape. Snipe numbers were at their highest on 1st with eleven birds being seen. On 29th the highlight for some was when a Water Rail showed itself in the Kingfisher Pond just before dark.

The Gull roost started to build from the end of the first week with Black-headed and Herring Gulls being the most numerous. Caspian Gulls were identified on 11th & 12th (1st winter), 13th (adult) and 16th & 20th (1st winter). Iceland Gulls (1st winter) were seen on the 12th, 13th and 16th and a 1st winter Mediterranean Gull was observed on 16th. Yellow Legged Gulls were found in the roost on 17th and 28th.

Other birds recorded during the month included Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker, Goldcrest, Treecreeper and Nuthatch. Flocks of Redwing and Fieldfare were around as were Siskin and Lesser Redpoll. The Stonechat, which had frequented the West Bank was not seen after 21st. Although Linnets were recorded they were not as common as last year. A new bird for the year was recorded on 18th when a Twite was heard calling as it circled around Milltown inlet.

Bryan Hartley