

BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE NATURE RESERVE  
AND SURROUNDING AREA.

AUGUST 2014

Once again it fell to Ian to maintain the daily coverage whilst I was away for a week, which was duly achieved and during the month 98 species were recorded with five new for the year taking the year list to 141. A few maintenance tasks were completed during the month with the gravel strips being weeded, the grass around Middle Flash being mowed, some of the south marsh being opened up and several Willows that were blocking our view of Meadow Flash were removed as were c200 Willow saplings from the Southern Flash.

Grey Lag Geese continued to be seen daily with one to four logged daily with five present on the 22nd. Sparrowhawks were logged on 21 dates, Common Buzzards entered the logbook on 29 dates and one or two Hobbies were seen on 23 dates. One or two Common Gulls were recorded on ten dates, the family party of Common Terns was present on seven of the first eight dates after which they became a bit more infrequent in their appearances with the last birds being three on the 15th. Kingfishers were seen on 19 dates, Green Woodpeckers were seen on 13 dates and Great-spotted Woodpeckers were logged on 15 dates.

A Grey Wagtail flew south on the 1st, four Cormorants flew south and a juvenile Marsh Harrier flew north on the 2nd when there was a count of 25 Stock Doves and a juvenile Dunlin circled the flashes on the 3rd. A juvenile Mediterranean Gull was a nice surprise on the 4th and on the 5th a juvenile Marsh Harrier, that an hour earlier had flown north over Annersley Pit Top carried on north over Carr Vale at height, once again confirming the link between the two sites. Also on the 5th a brood of three Little Grebes put in their first appearance. A Tawny Owl was seen on the 8th, a juvenile Little Ringed Plover, which had been seen on six dates earlier in the month was last seen on the 9th on which date two Grey Wagtails and a Meadow Pipit flew south whilst three Shelduck were seen on the 10th.

Six Black-tailed Godwits early on the 12th were unfortunately flushed by the arrival of the mid-week team, the remaining pair of Great-crested Grebes hatched two young on the 13th, 52 Red-legged Partridge and two Greenshank were present briefly on the 14th and during that evening a Barn Owl floated past the reserve, the first sighting since 2011. A Water Rail was heard calling on the 16th but the highlight of the day was the discovery of not one but two juvenile Mediterranean Gulls, the first time that more than one of this species has been seen on the reserve. A Common Sandpiper was seen on the 17th and one of the juvenile Mediterranean Gulls was present until 0810 when it flew off north to be replaced by the second one which came in from the south an hour later. 290 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were also present during the afternoon of the 17th along with five Herring Gulls, 33 Stock Doves and a Wheatear was, where else, on the Wheatear Wall on the same day. 14 Snipe on the 18th was a good count for August (with one to three seen on eight other dates) and the same morning there was a brief Greenshank. 15 Cormorants on the 20th included a flock of nine that flew north and the same day a Green Sandpiper was seen during an afternoon visit following rain as was the fourth Mediterranean Gull of the month, this time a more advanced bird that had partially moulted into first winter plumage. However the bird of the day was a Corn Bunting that flew over the observation mound twice, the first record since 2009, and now a very rare bird in the county. Also on the 20th 13 Buzzards were in the air at once.

An adult female Marsh Harrier drifted north on the 21st, a Peregrine was seen on the 22nd when a Water Rail was heard calling again. A juvenile Caspian Gull was picked out on the 23rd but it was only present for 15 minutes before departing south. Three Shoveler were present on the 24th along with two Ringed Plover, which departed north and a Green Sandpiper. Two juvenile Shelduck were present early on the 25th but the bird of the day (and possibly the month), a juvenile Turnstone dropped in briefly, becoming just the 4th record for the reserve and the first since 2009. Another good bird on the 25th was a juvenile Yellow-legged Gull which arrived with an influx of other gull species whilst Lapwings peaked at 206 for the month and a leucisitic Black-headed Gull was also present. Canada Geese peaked at 340 on the 26th and the same day a Water Rail was heard calling, two Ringed Plover, a Dunlin, a party of six Snipe and five Yellow Wagtails flew south whilst an adult Great Black-backed Gull flew north. A Green Sandpiper was present on the 27th as was a Greenshank, although as usual the latter's stay was typically brief and a juvenile Whinchat was also found on that date. An adult Peregrine spent some time sat in a field on the 28th when a Lesser Whitethroat was seen along with a male Whinchat and 15 Yellow Wagtails (eight of which flew west in a group) and there was a good count of 40 House Sparrows. 58 Red-legged Partridge were counted on the 29th, nine Grey Lag Geese and a Shoveler were present on the 30th when a juvenile Marsh Harrier was seen both in the early morning and again late afternoon and there was a count of 900 Black-headed Gulls. Eight Grey Lag Geese remained on the 31st and the juvenile Marsh Harrier put in an appearance as did a Peregrine and a first summer Great Black-backed Gull. Also on the 31st one or two Sand Martin holes were still occupied and a party of five Grey Wagtails flew west along with five Meadow Pipits.

Mark Beevers.