

## Ogston monthly report – May 2013

Species recorded – May = 105    Total for 2013 = 143

The weather during May continued where April left off remaining mostly cool and unsettled with gales at times, resulting in one of the coolest and latest springs on record. Much of the vegetation is lagging several weeks behind normal and not too surprisingly the underlying theme bird-wise was of late arrivals and departures. Rainfall was frequent but mainly light and as a result water levels finally began to drop, though a forest of Bistort stems cloaked most of the exposed mud, perhaps making it less attractive to some waders than it might otherwise be.

Mute Swans seem to be breeding and if successful it will be the first time they have done so here. At least 12 broods of Mallards have been seen so far and for the fourth consecutive year a brood of Mandarins was seen. A drake Goldeneye on 5<sup>th</sup> was unusually late, as was a Pintail on 15<sup>th</sup>. A Little Egret was showing well in front of the hides on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. At least three broods of Little Grebes have been seen so far, but although Great Crested Grebes have been present in good numbers, all breeding attempts have so far failed, though some are still trying. Migrant raptors were few and far between, three Red kites that did pass through all were heading south rather than their usual northward direction at this time of year. The lack of Ospreys this year is probably down to the weather, most having either taken another route or perhaps more likely the non breeders which probably make a large proportion of our sightings have remained further south than normal. At least one Water Rail was still present early in the month presumably having delayed its migration north. The regular pair of Oystercatchers are now nesting on the Tern Raft in Chapel Bay, sharing it with a pair of Common Terns. Ringed Plovers have been passing through fairly regularly but have not attempted to breed so far. A few Dunlins also passed through, there were several records of Whimbrel and a single Turnstone but otherwise wader passage has been relatively poor. Of most interest among the Gulls were a Kittiwake on 10<sup>th</sup> and several Yellow-legged Gulls. A few Herring Gulls were still passing through at the beginning of the month and a number of immature Greater Black-backed Gulls began roosting again for a while mid-month. Up to five Common Terns have been present and at least one pair is attempting to breed. A reasonable number of Arctic Terns have passed through and the only Black Tern of the year so far remained for much of the day on 7<sup>th</sup>.

The often wet and windy conditions forced large numbers of Swifts and hirundines to feed low over the reservoir on many days. Grasshopper Warblers continued to be present during the first half of the month, though there were no records after this. Most other Warbler species seem to be present in reasonable numbers and hopefully the weather will settle down and allow a good breeding season. A few Yellow and White Wagtails were still passing through and Linnets were still forming flocks during the first half of the month, though several pairs were settling down to breed by the month end.

**Mute Swan** A pair appear to be nesting on the scrapes between the Public and the Members hides. If they are successful it will be the first breeding record for Ogston. Occasionally pairs have built partial nests in the past and last year a few eggs were laid randomly around the reservoir banks, but there have been no really serious attempts to breed before.

**Greylag Goose** Maximum count of 25 on 31<sup>st</sup>. One mixed pair consisting of a Greylag paired with a Domesticated Greylag X Canada Goose hybrid, have hatched six 2nd generation hybrid young around 4<sup>th</sup> and all of these were still surviving at the end of the month.

**Canada Goose** Maximum count of 18 on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Mandarin** Seen quite regularly during the month with a maximum count of five on 6<sup>th</sup>. Breeding was proven once again with a female seen with 12 small chicks on 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Gadwall** Present on and off during the month with a maximum of seven on 8<sup>th</sup>

**Teal** Six on 1<sup>st</sup>, three on 2<sup>nd</sup>, two on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, a pair on 15<sup>th</sup> and a pair on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Shoveler** A pair present on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Pochard** A drake on 28<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> was the only record this month.

**Tufted Duck** Maximum count of 52 on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Aythya hybrid** The regular drake Tufted Duck X Pochard hybrid was present again from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Goldeneye** A late drake on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Egret** One on the West Bank showing well in front of the hides on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Grebe** Three broods have been seen so far.

**Great Crested Grebe** A good count of 27 on 12<sup>th</sup>. Several pairs have attempted breeding but have so far been thwarted by the falling water levels, though a few pairs are still trying.

**Red Kite** Two flew S together between 11:20 – 11:35 hrs on 22<sup>nd</sup>. One flew SE between 11:19 – 11:26 hrs on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Peregrine** Singles on five dates with two on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Water Rail** A late bird present until 7<sup>th</sup>, presumably having delayed its migration north.

**Oystercatcher** The resident two were present all month and extra birds were present on several dates though were usually chased off by the regular pair. After an unsuccessful breeding attempt on

the Island they are now breeding on the Tern Raft in Chapel Bay, sharing with a pair of Common Terns. Only time will tell if they get along OK and both breed successfully.

**Ringed Plover** One on 9<sup>th</sup>, six on 10<sup>th</sup>, three flew through on 15<sup>th</sup>, one on 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, two on 19<sup>th</sup>, three on 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>, nine on 23<sup>rd</sup>, one from 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Dunlin** Three on 4<sup>th</sup>, four on 5<sup>th</sup>, two on 10<sup>th</sup>, five on 15<sup>th</sup> and one on 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Snipe** Small numbers still present (maximum of four on 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>) until the last seen on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Whimbrel** On 7<sup>th</sup> one arrived at 07:10 hrs and remained until late afternoon at least. Two dropped in briefly on 10<sup>th</sup>. One flew N at 11:36 hrs on 21<sup>st</sup>. One flew E at 09:48 hrs on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Curlew** One – two visiting most days, presumably birds breeding nearby.

**Common Sandpiper** Two on 2<sup>nd</sup>, two on 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>, four on 8<sup>th</sup> and two on 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Redshank** One on 5<sup>th</sup> was the only record.

**Turnstone** A report of one flying through on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Kittiwake** An adult was present on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Gull** Two 1stS on 12<sup>th</sup>, an adult on 15<sup>th</sup> and a 1stS on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Herring Gull** A few immature birds still passing through at the beginning of the month.

**Yellow-legged Gull** A 1stS on 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, a 2ndS on 21<sup>st</sup>, 2 1stS through on 24<sup>th</sup> and one 1stS on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Greater Black-backed Gull** Unusually for this time of year a few immatures began roosting overnight mid-month, with up to eight on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Tern** One on 7<sup>th</sup> from 08:20 hrs until late afternoon at least.

**Common Tern** Up to five birds present at times. One pair are currently nesting on the raft in Chapel Bay.

**Arctic Tern** Three flew N on 10<sup>th</sup>, one on 11<sup>th</sup>, one on 15<sup>th</sup>, four flew N on 21<sup>st</sup>, one was present from 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, one flew NE on 28<sup>th</sup>, seven flew NE at 06:35 hrs and an immature bird was present during the afternoon on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Swift** Large numbers present on many days particularly during wet and blustery conditions with a maximum count of c1100 on 14<sup>th</sup> and over a thousand on several other dates around mid month.

**Kingfisher** During the first half of the month birds were still being seen regularly around the reservoir, though most seem to have gone off to breed now.

**Sand Martin** Present most days in small numbers with a maximum of c20 on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Swallow** Large numbers present on many days particularly during wet and windy weather with a maximum of c1000 on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**House Martin** Maximum count of c300 on 11<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Whitethroat** Two singing on 5<sup>th</sup>, one on 17<sup>th</sup>, one on 20<sup>th</sup>, and one on 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>. A slight improvement on the last few years, but none appear to be holding regular territories so far.

**Whitethroat** Seem to be present in good numbers this year.

**Grasshopper Warbler** One reeling daily from 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, two present on 8<sup>th</sup>, then at least two birds on 12<sup>th</sup> and one on 16<sup>th</sup> but no further sightings subsequent to this.

**Sedge Warbler** Up to seven singing birds on the West Bank on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Reed Warbler** The first to arrive was one on 4<sup>th</sup> soon after which birds took up territory in both reedbeds either side of the hide. Several extra birds have been singing in various areas around the reservoir, with a maximum count of five singing birds on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Dipper** Two seen on the River Amber during the monthly guided walk on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Spotted Flycatcher** First arrival on 13<sup>th</sup> after which a few pairs were recorded quite regularly.

**Yellow Wagtail** A few passed through, mainly during the first half of the month with up to seven on 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> with a female showing characteristics of the Blue-headed race on the latter date.

**White Wagtail** Two on 10<sup>th</sup> and one on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Siskin** A few still present early in the month.

**Linnet** Flocks still around during the first half of the month with up to 71 on 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Redpoll** One or two still around at the beginning of the month.