

OGSTON MONTHLY BIRD REPORT – DECEMBER 2013

Species recorded – December = 86

Total for 2013 = 161

A series of Atlantic depressions crossing the country during December produced a rather unsettled month with frequent storms, some fairly severe, one on 5th in particular brought down quite a few trees in the area. Overall it was a mild month with very few frosts and frequent rainfall gradually began to refill the reservoir though it remained several feet below full by the year end.

Pink-footed Geese passed through on two dates, otherwise wildfowl numbers were mainly relatively low, the most interesting records being a Scaup present on 1st, with a Ferruginous Duck X Pochard hybrid the same day and again on 26th. Highlight of the month was a Great Northern Diver, which like the bird last December flew through without stopping. There were several records of Peregrine and at least one Water Rail was present throughout. The low water levels early in the month attracted quite a few Snipe but numbers dropped off as the water levels rose. The gull roost frequently held quite large numbers but apart from a brief visit from a Glaucous Gull on 1st and fairly regular Yellow-legged Gulls, which were often also present during the day, it was largely disappointing for the scarcer species. Two adult Kittiwakes present mid-afternoon on 28th was a nice surprise. Probably due to the wet conditions several stubble fields were left unploughed in the area and these attracted very good numbers of finches including a few Bramblings as well as a reasonable number of Yellowhammers.

Mute Swan Four (two adults and two immatures) present 29th – 31st.

Pink-footed Goose A total of c910 flew E between 09:40 – 09:45 hrs on 4th. On 18th c95 flew SE between 12:40 – 12:43 hrs.

Greylag Goose Maximum count of 34 on 17th.

Canada Goose Maximum count of 81 on 27th and 28th.

Mandarin Three on 3rd, two on 6th, two on 8th, four on 10th, two on 12th and one on 14th.

Wigeon Small numbers present intermittently throughout the month with a maximum of five on 18th.

Gadwall Two drakes on 25th.

Teal Maximum count of 65 on 25th.

Shoveler One drake on 2nd, a 1stW drake on 7th, one female on 21st and a drake flew through with seven Goosanders on 28th.

Pochard Numbers peaked at 162 on 1st after which numbers fell quite rapidly and fluctuated wildly, with for example 52 on 9th and none the following day.

Tufted Duck Maximum count of 38 on 15th.

Scaup A juv female was present in Chapel Bay on 1st.

Aythya hybrid A drake Paget's Pochard (Pochard X Ferruginous Duck) was present on 1st and again on 26th.

Goldeneye A few were present almost daily with a maximum of six on 22nd.

Goosander One on 2nd, one on 9th, one on 18th and a total of ten passed through on 28th.

Great Northern Diver An adult circled the reservoir and then departed SW between 15:24 and 15:29 hrs on 20th. Upon arrival it disturbed the gulls that were gathering to roost, causing them to panic, this in turn then spooked the diver which would probably otherwise have landed.

Peregrine One on 4th, an ad male on 11th, one on 13th and one on 16th.

Water Rail At least one was present all month but was mainly elusive.

Snipe Good numbers present early in the month with counts of c30 on 3rd and 34 on 6th. Less present later in the month after the water levels rose.

Kittiwake Two adults present mid-afternoon on 28th.

Black-headed Gull The maximum count was of c3700 in the roost on 11th. A leucistic bird was in the roost on 13th.

Herring Gull The maximum roost count was of at least 830 on 7th.

Yellow-legged Gull One adult on 1st and 2nd, one 4thW on 5th, one adult in the roost on 6th, an adult and a 4thW present on 7th, one adult on 8th, one 4thW on 11th, two (ad & 4thW) in the roost on 13th, two 4thW on 15th, one adult on 18th and 19th, one 4thW in the roost on 20th, two in the roost on 25th, one adult on 26th and 29th, one 4thW on 30th and 31st and one 1stW in the roost on 31st.

Caspian type hybrid One thought to be a Caspian X Herring Gull hybrid in the roost on 8th.

Glaucous Gull A juvenile was present for just a couple of minutes in the roost on 1st before flying off SW.

Great Black-backed Gull The maximum count was of at least 670 on 25th.

Green Woodpecker One on 21st.

Kingfisher One at Carr Pond on 8th was the only record this month.

Starling Some were still roosting in reeds by the hides most evenings, with a maximum of c170 on 25th.

Redwing Maximum count of c150 on 13th.

Chaffinch A flock by the West Bank regularly held 150+ with other flocks NW of the reservoir and at Brackenfield of 50+ each.

Brambling Up to ten were regularly present in a large mixed finch flock feeding in fields opposite the West Bank.

Linnet A flock of 200+ present in fields opposite the West Bank all month.

Lesser Redpoll Small numbers present with a maximum of 16 which flew over the West Bank car park on 7th.

Yellowhammer Up to 65 in stubble fields NW of the reservoir.