

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT JANUARY 2004

Daily coverage continued throughout January for which we have to thank Dave Came, Kevin Navin and Ian Swain, who were all marshalled by Richard Box. Our efforts produced 75 species for the month, the highest January total since 1997. Unfortunately with the disappearance of both the Goldeneye and Firecrest right at the end of last year site rarities were noticeably absent apart from a first winter White-fronted Goose (3rd record) and two Caspian Gulls (2nd record). Other notable species included Pink-footed Goose, Grey Lag Goose, Common Buzzard, Peregrine, Chiffchaff and Brambling. The water level remained fairly constant throughout the month ranging between 21-24" although following snow on the 28th the levels rose to 27" at the end of the month.

Cormorants were seen on 28 dates with the only notable counts being 14 on the 24th and 19 the following day. Herons were recorded daily with a peak count of nine on the 11th and 23rd, whilst the wing-tagged bird was still present at the month end. Two to four Mute Swans were noted on 19 dates with five on the 15th and 17th and eight on the 16th. A Pink-footed Goose was present on the 1st and 2nd then 75 flew west on the 22nd followed by 195 west on the 23rd and 100 west on the 25th. A first winter White-fronted Goose was present on the 27th and eight Grey Lag Geese were reported flying south on the 15th. Canada Geese were present daily with three-figure counts noted on 11 of the first 14 days of the month after which high double-figure counts were made. The highest count of the month was 134 on the 9th.

Wigeon were present in high numbers throughout the month peaking at a record 213 on the 28th; it was only a matter of time before we brook the 200 barrier. Gadwall were present in good numbers with double-figures on all bar one date peaking at 30, also on the 28th. Teal were present daily with three-figure counts on 14 dates including a record count of 180 on the 9th. Mallard numbers remained fairly low with just two three-figure counts, 101 on the 10th and 109 on the 13th. Two or three Pochard were seen daily between the 2nd and 16th with one or two on three dates from the 28th whilst Tufted Ducks were noted daily from the 2nd peaking at nine on the 11th. A female Goosander flew south-east on the 26th, a male Ruddy Duck was present between the 9th and 11th and a female was seen on the 16th and 20th.

Sparrowhawks were logged on 17 dates, up to three Common Buzzards were seen on 28 dates (55 bird / days), Kestrels were recorded on 19 dates and one or two Peregrines were logged on ten dates (14 bird / days). The highest count for Grey Partridge was 19 on the 17th, one or two Water Rails were logged on 14 dates and Coot peaked at 43 on the 13th. 120 Golden Plover were present on New Years Day with 70 on the 6th after which there were records on just five more dates. 150 Lapwings were also seen on the 1st, after which no notable counts were made, indeed the species became very scarce with only three more log entries for the rest of the month. One or two Snipe were seen on 12 dates plus five on the 21st and a Redshank was noted on nine dates between the 8th and 23rd.

1,180 Black-headed Gulls flew south at dusk on the 4th and one to three Common Gulls were seen on 13 dates plus five on the 21st. 500 Herring Gulls were on fields to the west of the reserve along with 150 Great Black-backed Gulls on the 4th with 300 Herring and 125 Great Black-backed Gulls on the 11th. Also on the latter date two adult Caspian Gulls were found amongst the loafing gulls both of which came on to Meadow Flash to bathe; they were also seen on the 15th.

A single Kingfisher was seen on 19 dates with two on the 25th and a Green Woodpecker was noted on 17 dates. The only count of Skylarks was ten on the 24th and eight Meadow Pipits were seen on the 20th. One or two Grey Wagtails were recorded on 13 dates until the 17th and 30 Pied Wagtails were on a ploughed field south of the sewage works on the 5th. A count of 56 Blackbirds

on the 14th was notable, 300 Fieldfares were present on the 20th with 200 the following day and 120 on the 12th. The highest count of Redwings was 40 on the 13th with 25 present during the last week of the month.

Last year's wintering Chiffchaff just crept into 2004 remaining until the 2nd and although Goldcrests were seen on 22 dates their numbers were much reduced. 15 Long-tailed Tits were logged on the 5th, four Willow Tits were seen on the 21st and two Coal Tits were seen on the 11th with single birds on a further nine dates. The only Jay of the month was seen on the 14th, a Brambling found on the 1st was unusual as mid-winter records are rare at Carr Vale whilst 20 Siskins on the 14th was a notable count in a poor winter for this species. The only other record of Siskin concerned eight on the 21st and single Redpolls were logged for the 16th and 25th with two on the 20th. Bullfinches were present in good numbers peaking at 11 on the 14th on which date 20 Yellowhammers were seen. Finally seven Reed Buntings were noted at the feeding station on the 7th and 26th.

Mark Beevers.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT FEBRUARY 2004

Daily coverage during February produced 78 species, which equalled the record set last year and which is well above the nine-year average of 72.1 for species recorded during the month. The yearlist progressed to 83, equalling the highest ever end of February figure set in 1996. On the face of it a good start to the year but the lack of site rarities and the recording of a number of species that don't normally appear until later in the year probably means that by the end of April we will be dragging our heels again. The only notable species recorded during the month were Pink-footed Goose, Grey Lag Goose, Common Buzzard, Peregrine, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Dunlin and Woodcock. Local patching is not just about rarities though so it was pleasing to note record counts of Wigeon and Siskin. The water level remained fairly constant throughout the month ranging between 21-24" but freezing weather towards the end of the month saw the pools partially freeze over although wildfowl counts didn't seem to be affected.

The first Little Grebe of the year was noted on the 8th and again on the 10th and 11th and the first Great-crested Grebe appeared on the 8th, rising to two by the 14th, three on the 19th and four on the 21st. Cormorants were seen daily with double-figures on seven dates including a record equalling 24 on the 15th and 14 on three other dates. Herons were recorded daily but in lower numbers with a peak count of seven on the 7th and 29th, whilst the wing-tagged bird was still present at the month end. Two to four Mute Swans were noted on 18 dates with four daily between the 13th and 15th. A Pink-footed Goose was present amongst the Canada Geese daily from the 14th until the 29th. More unusual was a flock of 70 that spent the afternoon of the 12th feeding around the reserve whilst westerly movements included 450 on the 15th, 39 on the 19th and 45 on the 29th. Two Grey Lag Geese were present on the 17th and Canada Geese were present daily with three-figure counts noted on just three days at the beginning of the month, the highest count being 108 on the 5th.

Wigeon were present in record numbers throughout the month peaking at a massive 230 on the 28th with 14 other counts of 200 or more. Gadwall were also present in good numbers with double-figures daily and 20 counts in excess of 20 the highest of which was 34 on the 14th. Teal were present daily but three-figure counts were noted on just six dates the highest of which was 116 on the 24th whilst. Mallard reached a lowly 66 on the 26th. Pochard were seen daily with double-figures on eight dates and a peak count of 13 on the 25th and Tufted Ducks were also noted daily with double-figures on 17 dates peaking at 17 on the 17th. Goosanders have been very scarce this winter so the four that flew south on the 16th and the male on the 25th were notable records. A male Ruddy Duck was seen on the 7th with another on the 14th and 16th and four males and a female on the 17th. These were followed by daily records of up to five (though four males and two females were noted) until the 23rd.

Sparrowhawks were logged on 15 dates with three together on the 15th and up to three Common Buzzards were seen on 21 dates with four on the 15th (33 bird / days). Kestrels were recorded on 21 dates and one or two Peregrines were logged on 13 dates (19 bird / days) although they only came into the recording area on five dates. The highest count for Grey Partridge was seven on the 18th and 22nd, one or two Water Rails were logged on 17 dates from the 11th with a minimum of three on the 27th and on the 11th Moorhens peaked at 24 and Coot peaked at 53. An Oystercatcher, heard calling on the 13th, was only the second February record and the earliest ever and similarly a Ringed Plover on the 2nd was also the earliest ever. Another Ringed Plover flew north on the 12th and at the end of the month two were seen on the 26th, 28th and 29th. Golden Plover were noted five dates with a peak count of 22 on the 10th, Lapwings started to increase from the start of the second week, eventually reaching 188 on the 26th and a Dunlin was present on the 16th. One to four Snipe were seen on 12 dates, a Woodcock was seen on the 18th and a Redshank was noted on the 1st and 2nd.

163 Black-headed Gulls on the 22nd was the highest count of the month, one or two Common Gulls were seen on 11 dates but Herring Gull numbers started to increase late in the month reaching c600 on the 23rd when 18 Great Black-backed Gulls were also present. 200 Herring Gulls

were still present on the 29th and small numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls were also noted towards the month end.

A single Kingfisher was seen on just five dates, a Green Woodpecker was noted on ten dates with two on the 1st and 15th whilst a Great-spotted Woodpecker on the latter date was an unusual winter record. The only count of Skylarks was seven on the 19th and a few Meadow Pipits were seen on several dates during the month including five flying west on the 27th. One or two Grey Wagtails were recorded on 11 dates from the 6th and 30 Pied Wagtails were counted on the 24th. 100+ Fieldfares were present on the 3rd and 11th, three Song Thrushes were also noted on the 11th and good numbers of Redwings were about with 25 to 42 on 13 dates and 80 on the 11th. Goldcrests were seen on 22 dates but no more than three were recorded, 14 Long-tailed Tits were counted on the 3rd, four Willow Tits were seen on the 20th and two Coal Tits were seen on the 1st with single birds on a further 11 dates. 35 Siskins reported on the 12th was a notable record in a poor winter for this species but this was totally eclipsed on the 21st when a single flock estimated at 75 flew north, easily becoming the highest ever count for the site. Amazingly Siskins were logged on just three more dates. Two Redpolls were noted on the 10th and 13th with one flying north on the 27th. Bullfinches remained in good numbers during the first three weeks of the month peaking at seven on the 10th and Reed Buntings continued to come in to the feeding station with a peak count of seven noted, also on the 10th.

A Harris Hawk was a fine sight on the 25th as it made its way slowly north attended by a horde of Magpies. This is the first record of this escaped species at Carr Vale and what is presumed to be the same bird was seen later the same day at Pools Brook C.P. The only mammal of note was a Fox on the 6th whilst on the 19th a Small Tortoiseshell became only the second February record and just missed being the earliest ever for Carr Vale by two days, the previous earliest record being the 17th February 1998.

Mark Beevers.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT MARCH 2004

Daily coverage during March produced 85 species, which is the same monthly tally as last year and which is just below the ten-year average of 87.8 for species recorded during the month. The yearlist progressed to 90, this being the third lowest end of March total and the lowest since 2000. This situation was predicted in the February bulletin although a couple of expected summer visitors failed to appear early no doubt due to the prolonged spell of northerly winds experienced during the last ten days of the month so perhaps all is not lost. The only rare species recorded during the month were a female Goshawk (4th record) and Barn Owl (7th record). Other notable species included Pink-footed Goose, Grey Lag Goose, Shelduck, Common Buzzard, Peregrine, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover and Dunlin. The water level remained fairly constant throughout the month at around 18" during the first half of the month and then 21" for the remainder. Towards the end of the month we dropped the water level in the middle flash, which has produced a good area of mud for the spring migration, whilst the southern side of Meadow Flash looks in superb condition.

One or two Little Grebes were noted on 24 dates from the 6th and Great-crested Grebes were recorded daily with a high of six on the 4th and 6th. Cormorants were seen daily with double-figures on 11 dates prior to the 14th with a peak count of 20 on the 13th-14th and 18 on the 6th-7th and 10th. Herons were recorded daily but in lower numbers with no more than five on any date and the wing-tagged bird was still present at the month end. Ten Mute Swans were present on the 2nd with nine on the 7th and eight on the 18th but generally counts were of less than six. The Pink-footed Goose found on 14th February was seen daily throughout the month, two Grey Lag Geese were noted on the 17th with two more on the 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th and a single bird was present on the 26th. Canada Geese were present daily but in much reduced numbers so that the highest count was only 66 on the 2nd.

A male Shelduck was present briefly on the 13th, then a pair flew north on the 27th and another pair flew north on the 28th. Wigeon remained in good numbers with 205 on the 2nd being the highest count although there were three other counts of 200 or more before the 10th after which the flock declined slightly. For the next ten days counts ranged between 180 to 197 before declining further to 141 by the 20th. Between the 20th and 28th counts ranged between 141 and 171 and then over night on the 28th there was a large exodus with over 100 birds leaving. On the last three days of the month the counts were between 43 and 53. Gadwall were present in good numbers with double-figures on all bar three dates and five counts were of 20 or more the highest of which was 30 on the 1st. Following 141 on the 1st and 115 on the 2nd Teal declined dramatically so that after 53 on the 6th there were 20 counts of 30 or less and the highest count of Mallard was 65 on the 2nd. Pochard were seen daily until the 24th but the highest count was only eight on three dates until the 6th and Tufted Ducks were also noted daily with double-figures on 22 dates peaking at 18 on the 20th. A male Goosander on the 10th was the only record of the month and Ruddy Duck were seen daily from the 5th with a peak count of ten on the 9th, 25th, 27th and 31st.

A lucky observer saw a female Goshawk on the 27th, which is only the fourth record for the site. Sparrowhawks were logged on 16 dates (23 bird / days) with three together on the 7th and four together on the 13th. Common Buzzards were seen on 17 dates (24 bird / days with 17 within the recording area) with three on the 9th and 26th. Kestrels were recorded on 30 dates (44 bird / days) and a Peregrine was seen on seven dates between the 8th and 26th. All sightings of the Peregrine are thought to relate to an immature female that was seen in the recording area on four dates rather than the wintering pair, which seemed to leave the area at the end of February.

Five Grey Partridge were noted on the 1st and 3rd, one or two Water Rails were logged on 25 dates with three on the 23rd and 12 Moorhens were counted around Meadow Flash on the 16th with Coot peaking at 40 on the 9th. An Oystercatcher was present on the 15th and the first Little Ringed Plover of the year was seen on the 16th. Thereafter one or two Little Ringed Plovers were noted on six dates between the 17th and 24th rising to four on the 25th. Six were present on the 27th with eight on the 28th and nine on the 30th. Single Ringed Plovers were recorded on seven dates with two on five dates and three on the 30th and Golden Plovers were noted six dates with a peak count of ten on the 10th. Lapwings peaked at 150 on the 8th and 9th but then declined so that from the 14th there was no count above 40 and two Dunlin were present on the 28th, one of which departed west. One to six Snipe were seen on 23 dates until the 27th after which, as is typical with the species, numbers started to increase reaching 15 on the 30th and 31st. Two Curlew flew north on the 14th with single birds north on the 18th, 22nd and 24th and one south on the 19th and Redshank were present daily from the 10th peaking at six on the 24th and 28th.

One to three Common Gulls were seen on six dates, the last being an adult on the 20th, 200 Herring Gulls were seen on the 1st with 215 on the 15th and 16th and 56 still present on the 31st. 14 Great Black-backed Gulls were also present on the 1st with two still present on the 31st by which time small numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls were also being noted on a regular basis.

A Barn Owl on the 28th, the first since 2001, was a good find and the following day a Tawny Owl was calling from the Bluebanks. Kingfishers were scarce with two on the 1st and then just single birds on five widely spaced dates. A Green Woodpecker was noted on seven dates and the first Sand Martins of the year (five) were seen on the 18th. The long spell of northerly winds that set in after this date ensured that no more were seen until the 31st when ten were present in the evening. A total of 300 Meadow Pipits were logged flying north / north-west over 12 dates between the 14th and 31st but the only notable counts were 93 on the 22nd and 64 on the 26th. One or two Grey Wagtails were recorded on 11 dates between the 1st and 25th but four were seen together on the 8th and 40 Pied Wagtails were counted on the 8th.

Fieldfares became more noticeable from mid-month as birds started to return north and notable counts included 250 on the 17th, 150 on the 20th, 100 on the 21st and 150 on the 26th. Seven Song Thrushes were noted on the 3rd with six on the 29th and good numbers of Redwings remained for the first three weeks of the month peaking at 70 on the 12th with possibly the last of the winter being three on the 29th.

The first three Chiffchaffs of the spring arrived on the 17th and numbers quickly rose to eight on the 20th and nine on the 25th. One to three Goldcrests were seen on 17 dates with one still present on the 31st and 11 Long-tailed Tits were counted on the 4th. Coal Tits had unusually been present throughout the winter and one or two continued to be seen throughout the month with records on 11 dates until the 29th and three were seen together on the 22nd. Two Jays flew north on the 29th and became only the second record of the year and, following last month's large flocks, Siskins again became scarce with one or two noted on seven dates. Redpoll were even rarer with just two on the 11th and one the following day. Bullfinches remained in good numbers with six on the 8th and seven on the 27th and Reed Buntings continued to come in to the feeding station with a peak count of six noted on the 9th.

The only mammals noted during the month were Grey Squirrel, Hare and Water Vole and a Small Tortoiseshell was seen on the 29th.

Mark Beevers.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2004

Daily coverage during April produced 102 species, only the second time that a century has been broken in April but below the record for the month of 105 set in 1996. The yearlist progressed to 113, well down on the record 121 set at the end of April, again in 1996 but about average for the last seven years. A number of notable species recorded during the month including Pink-footed Goose, Grey Lag Goose, Shelduck, Mandarin Duck (3rd record), Marsh Harrier (19th record), Common Buzzard, Osprey (14th record), Peregrine, Hobby, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Greenshank (earliest ever), Kittiwake (12th record), Yellow Wagtail (earliest ever), White Wagtail (24th record), Whinchat, Redstart, Grasshopper Warbler and Reed Warbler (earliest ever for Derbyshire). Heavy rain at the beginning of the month saw the water level in the flash rise to 30" whilst at the end of the month it again rose to 27" as a result of some very heavy downpours. For the rest of the month the level ranged between 21-24" and all this water meant that there was very little mud around the edges of the flashes.

One or two Little Grebes were present on 26 dates and three pairs of Great-crested Grebes were present throughout with a site record of seven adults noted on the 27th. Two pairs had broods of three and two by the 15th but the third pair, nesting on Meadow Flash as usual made a couple of attempts at nesting but on each occasion lost their nest due to flooding. This is the first year that three pairs have nested at the site. Cormorants were seen daily until the 23rd after which just singles were noted on the 25th and 30th. The highest count as seven on the 6th and 8th and north-westerly movement included four on the 4th and two on the 9th. Herons were recorded daily with a peak count of seven on the 15th, whilst the wing-tagged bird was still present at the month end. Seven Mute Swans were noted on the 13th with two to five on 13 dates until the 17th after which a pair was present daily to the end of the month. The long-staying Pink-footed Goose that first arrived on 14th February remained with the Canada Geese into May. Five Grey Lag Geese were seen on the 24th with one to three on nine other dates and Canada Geese were present daily with the highest count being 75 on the 27th. A Bar-headed Goose was seen daily between the 11th and 14th and again on the 24th.

Two Shelduck were present on the 11th, 15th and 19th and a male Mandarin Duck flew around the flashes three times but barely settled and was last seen flying south, the first record since April 1999. 52 Wigeon were present on the 1st declining to 45 the following day and 32 by the 3rd. They then continued to dwindle in numbers until the last pair was noted on the 13th. Gadwall were present in very good numbers with double-figures daily and 24 counts in excess of 20 the highest of which was 32 on the 21st. Up to 19 males and 14 females were noted during the month, which bodes well for the breeding season. Teal were present daily apart from on the 26th when none could be found with a count of 42 on the 4th, though by the end of the month just three remained. The inclement weather at both ends of the month may explain why so far this year no broods of Mallard have been seen. A pair of Shoveler was present daily between the 3rd and 13th and they did look settled until they disappeared. A second pair on the 12th joined them and then a male was present on the 25th with two males on the 28th. Tufted Ducks were also noted daily with double-figures on 21 dates peaking at 16 on four dates. Ruddy Ducks were seen daily with double-figures on 12 dates and a peak count of 18 on the 21st.

A female Marsh Harrier flew north-west at 0910 on the 26th and Sparrowhawks were logged on 13 dates (14 bird / days). Up to three Common Buzzards were seen on 13 dates with four on the 2nd and 4th (a total of 31 bird / days of which 11 were from within the recording area, the others being more distant birds viewed from the mound to the south and west). An Osprey was present over the area for five minutes on the 6th before it drifted off north-west and Kestrels were recorded on 27 dates (50 bird / days) with five viewable from the observation mound on the 9th and four from there on the 24th. Two Hobbies dashed about the reserve on the 30th and a male

Peregrine returned to its favoured pylon on the 23rd and 25th.

There are probably three pairs of Grey Partridge in the area and several pairs of Pheasant. Water Rails were logged on 20 dates until the 27th and there was a count of 33 Coot on the 5th. An Oystercatcher as present on the 14th with two the following day and another on the 29th. Little Ringed Plovers were present daily with a peak count of 11 on the 3rd and 9th but Ringed Plovers were quite scarce with just two on the 1st, one on the 2nd and three on the 9th-10th, which were last seen flying north-east. Two Dunlin was present on the 17th and on the 30th one flew north and another was on the flashes. Snipe were seen on 27 dates with a peak count of 13 on the 1st and Redshank were noted on 29 dates with a peak count of seven on the 4th and 17th. The earliest ever Greenshank was seen briefly on the 2nd followed by another flying north on the 30th. A Common Sandpiper was present daily between the 16th and 19th and this was followed by one on the 25th, rising to two on the 26th and five on the 27th after which four were still present on the 28th and 29th.

Black-headed Gulls became typically scarce, although 22 flew north on the 30th and a Common Gull was seen on the 11th. Large gulls however remained in unusually high numbers with peak counts of 110 each of Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the 8th and 50 Great Black-backed Gulls on the 9th and 12th. However the most notable gull was an adult Kittiwake, which flew north with a party of 10 Black-headed Gulls on the 30th.

A Tawny Owl was heard on the 24th, the first Swift of the year was seen on the 22nd (the equal earliest ever for the site) and by the 27th 20 were present in the area. A single Kingfisher was seen on eight dates, a Green Woodpecker was noted on 13 dates whilst a Great-spotted Woodpecker on the 28th was an unusual April record. Sand Martins were present in good numbers with double-figure counts on 14 dates including 40 on the 15th, 60 on the 17th and 50 on the 27th. However on the 16th numbers slowly built up during the day reaching 150 in the early evening, the second highest count for the site. The first Swallow of the year was seen on the 2nd after which birds were seen daily with notable counts of 50 on the 18th, 28th and 30th, 70 on the 26th and 100 on the 27th. The first House Martin of the year was seen on the 3rd, which is the second earliest arrival date for the site but by the month end this species was still only present in low double-figures.

A total of 226 Meadow Pipits flew north between the 1st and 13th with a good count of 138 on the 9th (135 in two hours). A male Yellow Wagtail on the 2nd was the earliest ever for the site. The bird was seen again on the 4th and then there were daily records from the 13th peaking at 13 on the 24th, a record count for spring, with 12 the following day. A Grey Wagtail was seen on the 2nd and 4th, 33 Pied Wagtails were seen on the 7th and a White Wagtail was amongst 25 Pied Wagtails on the 24th. A male Whinchat was seen on the 20th, the second earliest ever at Carr Vale, a male Redstart was seen on the 22nd and a male Wheatear was noted on the 17th. 31 Fieldfares on the 5th was the highest count of the month and late records were one north on the 24th and seven north on the 30th. Five Song Thrushes were noted on the 3rd.

The first Grasshopper Warbler of the year was heard on the 16th with three singing by the 22nd and 24th. The first Sedge Warbler of the year was heard on the 23rd, the latest arrival date for this species since 1995. In contrast a Reed Warbler singing from the 9th became not only the earliest ever at Carr Vale but also the earliest ever for the county. Two Lesser Whitethroats were present on the 27th and 30th, the first Whitethroat of the year was recorded on the 23rd with six singing by the 25th and the only Garden Warbler of the year so far was noted on the 24th. The first Blackcap of the year was found on the 2nd with a total of 12 males and a female recorded during survey work on the 20th. 12 singing Chiffchaffs were present on the 1st with 17 singing males located during the breeding bird survey on the 20th. Four Willow Warblers on the 3rd were the

first of the year and on the 20th 40 singing males were located in an all area walk. A male Goldcrest was still present on the 25th, which is quite a late date for Carr Vale. Three Willow Tits were singing on the 1st and a late Coal Tit was seen on the 13th. One or two Jays were seen on eight dates between the 2nd and 25th, single Siskins flew north on the 3rd and 4th with three north on the 19th but the only Lesser Redpoll of the month was a male seen on the 3rd.

The best mammal sighting of the month concerned a male Roe Deer, which made its way south on the 12th, only the 6th record for Carr Vale and the first since 2001. Water Voles were seen on the 1st, 19th and 25th and up to four Hares were present on 17 dates including a leveret from the 23rd. Two Fox cubs were reported mid-month and a vixen was in the south marsh on the 20th, this animal no doubt being responsible for the failure of the Canada Goose nest in that area.

The first Peacock of the year was seen on the 2nd, with the first Brimstone appearing on the 9th followed by the first Orangetip on the 15th. Two Brimstones were seen on the 13th, 20th and 25th with three on the 23rd. Also on the 20th the first Comma of the year was noted along with 16 Small Tortoiseshells and 13 Peacocks. Three Speckled Woods were noted on the 23rd with two more on the 25th.

Mark Beevers.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT MAY 2004

Daily coverage during May produced 92 species, a very average total and a little below the record 96 achieved in 1999 and 2000. The yearlist progressed to 118, well down on the record 128 set at the end of May, in 1996 and below the recent range of 120-124, but the same as at the end of May last year. A number of notable species were recorded during the month the stars being the first ever Honey Buzzard for Carr Vale and a couple of sightings of Red Kite (2nd and perhaps 3rd record). Other notable species included Pink-footed Goose, Grey Lag Goose, Shelduck, Common Buzzard, Peregrine, Hobby, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Whimbrel (14th and 15th records), Greenshank and Grasshopper Warbler.

Non-avian highlights included fresh Roe Deer tracks, Water Vole, several sightings of Fox, Weasel, Stoat and Grass Snake. Warm weather during the month saw all the expected Butterflies including a couple of Brimstones and towards the end of the month four early species of Dragonfly / Damselfly had emerged. Generally a changeable month with quite a few heavy downpours during the first two weeks which ensured that the water level in Meadow Flash remained at around 21" only dropping towards the very end of the month. As a result of heavy rain during April the seasonal Southern Flash held water until the month end and generally the flashes remained in good condition throughout the month.

A single Little Grebe was seen on 18 dates with two on the 28th and three pairs of Great-crested Grebes were present throughout with seven adults noted on six dates between the 4th and 13th. The two broods of three and two were going well at the end of the month but the third pair, nesting on Meadow Flash, despite everything looking promising failed just before they were due to hatch. This is the first year that three pairs have nested at the site. Single Cormorants were seen on six dates including one on the 30th, with two on the 4th and 15th. Herons were recorded daily with a peak count of seven on the 28th, whilst the wing-tagged bird was still present at the month end. The resident pair of Mute Swans remained all month being joined by a third on the 7th whilst six flew south-west on the 15th and three flew north on the 18th. The long-staying Pink-footed Goose that first arrived on 14th February remained with the Canada Geese until last seen on the 16th after which it is presumed to have gone to Ogston. Eight Grey Lag Geese were seen on the 1st with one to three on 13 dates until the 20th and a late single was present on the 27th. Canada Geese were present daily with the highest count being 78 on the 28th, which included a flock of 45 flying north. 78 is a record count for May. On 25th May a ringed bird was present. This is the same bird that was present during May last year and the B.T.O. inform me that it was ringed when at least two years old at Pittance Park, near Edwinstowe, Nottinghamshire on 1st October 1998. Two Shelduck were present on the 1st, 5th and 15th with singles noted on the 16th-17th and 25th and three briefly on the 29th. Gadwall were present in very good numbers with double-figures daily and four counts in excess of 20 the highest of which was 23 (20 males) on the 24th. A male Teal was present on the 1st and 2nd and a pair of Shoveler was present from the 4th being joined by two more males on the 6th. The pair was seen together daily until the 13th after which the female became very elusive, although she was seen on the 13th, 16th and 17th, suggesting that a breeding attempt was underway. The male continued to be seen daily until the 28th but after then he was only seen on the 30th and it is presumed that by then the breeding attempt had failed. This is the first breeding attempt since 1999. Tufted Ducks were also noted daily with double-figures on nine dates peaking at 11 on the 28th and Ruddy Ducks were seen daily with a peak count of ten on the 3rd and 6th.

A quiet month livened up on the 23rd when a Red Kite flew north over the area at 1010 hours, the bird reaching Rother Valley CP just 15 minutes later (this was then watched as it flew north-east until it was lost to view). The following day another Red Kite gave superb views directly over the mound at 1150 hours before it gained height and flew off south-east. Whether one or two birds were involved we'll never know but over those couple of days a good number of Red Kites were reported on the pagers including four together in Norfolk so it is quite feasible that two birds were involved. Bird of the year, so far, came on the 29th when Sue Came picked up a male Honey

Buzzard, the first record for the site and the 10th species of raptor at Carr Vale this year. This bird was watched for ten minutes as it made its way slowly north-west by four of the site regulars. A very welcome addition to the site list although it is not the first for the Doe Lea Valley as one was seen by A Adams and K R Gould on 2nd August 1980 over Sutton Scarsdale Flash. Sparrowhawks were logged on just eight dates (eight bird / days). One or two Common Buzzards were seen on 11 dates with three on the 10th, 21st and 23rd-24th (a total of 27 bird / days of which nine were from within the recording area, the others being more distant birds viewed from the mound to the south and west). Kestrels were recorded on 29 dates (48 bird /days) with six viewable from the observation mound on the 18th and four from there on the 24th. Single Hobbies were over the reserve on the 3rd, 7th and 24th with a more distant bird to the south on the 25th and a Peregrine was on the favoured pylon on four dates between the 13th and 20th.

A pair of Red-legged Partridges was just south of the recording area on the 25th and four pairs of Grey Partridge were noted at various locations around the area during the month. A Water Rail on the 4th was surprisingly the only record for the month. A pair of Oystercatchers was present daily between the 1st and 4th, these being joined by a third bird on the 3rd. Things looked good for a breeding attempt with the pair displaying, mating and nest prospecting but it was not to be and they were not seen after the 4th. Further single birds were seen on the 10th, 21st and 28th. Little Ringed Plovers were present daily with a peak count of 11 on the 26th and the first Ringed Plover since 10th April was seen on the 23rd after which two were present on the 25th-26th with one remaining until the 29th. The last Golden Plover of the spring was seen on the 1st when a Dunlin was present. Then a single Dunlin was present between the 7th-9th, with two on the 11th rising to three daily between the 12th and 15th and finally a late bird on the 29th. The last Snipe of the spring was seen on the 2nd, a Whimbrel was down briefly on the 3rd before it departed north-west and two Whimbrel flew north on the 9th. Redshanks were noted on daily with a peak count of six on the 16th and a Greenshank was present on the 20th, with two the following day though these left north when flushed by a jogger. A Common Sandpiper was present on the 4th with two the following day and four on the 6th. Then one or two were seen daily until the 13th with four on the 12th. There was then a gap in records until two on the 17th-18th with one on the 19th and 21st.

Black-headed Gulls were recorded on 15 dates but only in single figures, small numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls were recorded on most dates with single Herring Gulls seen on the 11th and 15th. A Common Tern flew north on the 11th, another was present on the 13th and two were seen on the 20th, representing a poor month for this species. Single Cuckoos were seen or heard on the 7th, 15th and 21st and Swifts peaked at a lowly 60 on the 29th. A single Kingfisher was seen on eight dates with two on the 20th and 28th and the resident Green Woodpecker was recorded on 11 dates.

Sand Martins remained in good numbers with double-figure counts on seven dates including 40 on the 2nd, 30 on the 3rd and 35 on the 20th. Swallows peaked at 75 on the 4th and 21st but House Martins were only around in small numbers with no count exceeding 20. Yellow Wagtails were noted on 13 dates with a peak of four on the 2nd but they were only noted on two dates after the 18th.

A Grasshopper Warbler sang on the 1st, 5th and 7th after which it went quiet. Ten Sedge Warblers were singing on the 10th and 15th on which dates 15 Reed Warblers were singing around the reserve and on the Peter Fidler Reserve, with another male singing in a location away from the main population on the 24th. One or two Lesser Whitethroats sang daily between the 1st and 16th, nine Common Whitethroats were singing on the 10th and one or two Garden Warblers sang on 15 dates between the 4th and 31st, from three different locations. Eight male Blackcaps were singing on the 15th on which date 11 singing Chiffchaffs were counted

The first young Long-tailed Tits were seen on the 7th, single Jays were seen on seven dates between the 2nd and 21st and a Carrion Crow as seen to dive into a pond and catch a fish on the 26th. Fitting into a typical pattern of late spring occurrences single Lesser Redpolls were noted on the 12th, 13th and 15th.

Fresh Roe Deer tracks were found in fields to the west of the reserve on the 25th, two Water Voles were seen on the 14th and up to six Hares were present on 21 dates including four leverets on the 16th. A Fox was seen on the 3rd, 14th and 18th, a Stoat was seen on the 25th and single Weasels were logged on the 25th and 27th. A Grass Snake as seen on the 13th.

At least ten Orangetips were seen on the 10th and 13th and single Brimstones were seen on the 2nd and 17th. Small numbers of Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock Butterflies were seen on nine dates and towards the end of the month the first Small Heath, Wall and Common Blue were seen on the 28th as was a single Speckled Wood. The 23rd saw the first Large Red Damsels (four), Common Blue Damsels (15) and Broad-bodied Chasers (two) with three of the latter on the 30th and the first Blue-tailed Damsel on the 28th.

Mark Beevers.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT JUNE 2004

Daily coverage during June produced 87 species, the highest ever June total, the previous best being 85 in 1999 and 2000. The yearlist progressed to 123, the average end of June total over the last eight years but well below the record 128 set as far back as 1996. Some notable species were recorded during the month the highlight being a Wood Lark, the fourth record for the site. Other notable species included Grey Lag Goose, Shelduck, Common Buzzard, Peregrine, Hobby, Water Rail, Ringed Plover, Black-tailed Godwits (flock of 19, 13th record), Great Black-backed Gull (1st June record), Turtle Dove, Little Owl, Grasshopper Warbler and Siskin.

Non-avian highlights included Water Vole, Fox and Weasel. All the expected Butterflies were seen with the more notable species being Comma, several Painted Ladies and Small Copper. However pride of place went to a Brown Argus, the first record for the site. Amongst the expected Dragonflies / Damselflies were a Banded Demoiselle and good numbers of Broad-bodied Chasers. Generally a changeable month with winds from a mainly westerly direction. These winds brought quite a few heavy downpours during the month which ensured that the water level in Meadow Flash remained at around 15" but the seasonal Southern Flash, which had held water until the end of June finally dried up.

Little Grebes were seen on 22 with a single bird until the 13th and then a pair with initially three young, later two, noted from the 15th. An additional bird was present on the 16th and a fledged juvenile from elsewhere was present on the 28th-29th. The two pairs Great-crested Grebes and their broods remained throughout the month and were joined by an additional bird on three dates and by two more on the 26th. Single Cormorants were seen on the 13th, 21st, 26th and 30th and daily sightings of Heron peaked at nine on the 27th with the wing-tagged bird was still present at the month end. The resident pair of Mute Swans remained all month and they hatched a brood of five on the 5th, although one died on the 25th. They were joined by a pair between the 12th and 22nd, whilst on the 11th a flock of seven dropped in. Two Grey Lag Geese flew north on the 6th and Canada Geese were present daily until just that date with the next a solitary bird on the 30th.

Gadwall were present in good numbers with a peak count of 33 on the 9th and a male Teal was present on the 23rd Tufted Ducks were also noted daily with double-figures on nine dates peaking at 11 on the 28th and Ruddy Ducks were seen daily with a peak count of ten on the 3rd and 6th. A quiet month livened up on the 23rd when a Red Kite flew north over the area at 1010 hours, the bird reaching Rother Valley CP just 15 minutes later (this was then watched as it flew north-east until it was lost to view). The following day another Red Kite gave superb views directly over the mound at 1150 hours before it gained height and flew off south-east. Whether one or two birds were involved we'll never know but over those couple of days a good number of Red Kites were reported on the pagers including four together in Norfolk so it is quite feasible that two birds were involved. Bird of the year, so far, came on the 29th when Sue Came picked up a male Honey Buzzard, the first record for the site and the 10th species of raptor at Carr Vale this year. This bird was watched for ten minutes as it made its way slowly north-west by four of the site regulars. A very welcome addition to the site list although it is not the first for the Doe Lea Valley as one was seen by A Adams and K R Gould on 2nd August 1980 over Sutton Scarsdale Flash. Sparrowhawks were logged on just eight dates (eight bird / days). One or two Common Buzzards were seen on 11 dates with three on the 10th, 21st and 23rd-24th (a total of 27 bird / days of which nine were from within the recording area, the others being more distant birds viewed from the mound to the south and west). Kestrels were recorded on 29 dates (48 bird / days) with six viewable from the observation mound on the 18th and four from there on the 24th. Single Hobbies were over the reserve on the 3rd, 7th and 24th with a more distant bird to the south on the 25th and a Peregrine was on the favoured pylon on four dates between the 13th and 20th.

A pair of Red-legged Partridges was just south of the recording area on the 25th and four pairs of Grey Partridge were noted at various locations around the area during the month. A Water Rail on the 4th was surprisingly the only record for the month. A pair of Oystercatchers was present daily between the 1st and 4th, these being joined by a third bird on the 3rd. Things looked good for a breeding attempt with the pair displaying, mating and nest prospecting but it was not to be and they were not seen after the 4th. Further single birds were seen on the 10th, 21st and 28th. Little Ringed Plovers were present daily with a peak count of 11 on the 26th and the first Ringed Plover since 10th April was seen on the 23rd after which two were present on the 25th-26th with one remaining until the 29th. The last Golden Plover of the spring was seen on the 1st when a Dunlin was present. Then a single Dunlin was present between the 7th-9th, with two on the 11th rising to three daily between the 12th and 15th and finally a late bird on the 29th. The last Snipe of the spring was seen on the 2nd, a Whimbrel was down briefly on the 3rd before it departed north-west and two Whimbrel flew north on the 9th. Redshanks were noted on daily with a peak count of six on the 16th and a Greenshank was present on the 20th, with two the following day though these left north when flushed by a jogger. A Common Sandpiper was present on the 4th with two the following day and four on the 6th. Then one or two were seen daily until the 13th with four on the 12th. There was then a gap in records until two on the 17th-18th with one on the 19th and 21st.

Black-headed Gulls were recorded on 15 dates but only in single figures, small numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls were recorded on most dates with single Herring Gulls seen on the 11th and 15th. A Common Tern flew north on the 11th, another was present on the 13th and two were seen on the 20th, representing a poor month for this species. Single Cuckoos were seen or heard on the 7th, 15th and 21st and Swifts peaked at a lowly 60 on the 29th. A single Kingfisher was seen on eight dates with two on the 20th and 28th and the resident Green Woodpecker was recorded on 11 dates.

Sand Martins remained in good numbers with double-figure counts on seven dates including 40 on the 2nd, 30 on the 3rd and 35 on the 20th. Swallows peaked at 75 on the 4th and 21st but House Martins were only around in small numbers with no count exceeding 20. Yellow Wagtails were noted on 13 dates with a peak of four on the 2nd but they were only noted on two dates after the 18th.

A Grasshopper Warbler sang on the 1st, 5th and 7th after which it went quiet. Ten Sedge Warblers were singing on the 10th and 15th on which dates 15 Reed Warblers were singing around the reserve and on the Peter Fidler Reserve, with another male singing in a location away from the main population on the 24th. One or two Lesser Whitethroats sang daily between the 1st and 16th, nine Common Whitethroats were singing on the 10th and one or two Garden Warblers sang on 15 dates between the 4th and 31st, from three different locations. Eight male Blackcaps were singing on the 15th on which date 11 singing Chiffchaffs were counted

The first young Long-tailed Tits were seen on the 7th, single Jays were seen on seven dates between the 2nd and 21st and a Carrion Crow as seen to dive into a pond and catch a fish on the 26th. Fitting into a typical pattern of late spring occurrences single Lesser Redpolls were noted on the 12th, 13th and 15th.

Fresh Roe Deer tracks were found in fields to the west of the reserve on the 25th, two Water Voles were seen on the 14th and up to six Hares were present on 21 dates including four leverets on the 16th. A Fox was seen on the 3rd, 14th and 18th, a Stoat was seen on the 25th and single Weasels were logged on the 25th and 27th. A Grass Snake as seen on the 13th.

At least ten Orangetips were seen on the 10th and 13th and single Brimstones were seen on the 2nd and 17th. Small numbers of Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock Butterflies were seen on nine dates and towards the end of the month the first Small Heath, Wall and Common Blue were seen on the 28th as was a single Speckled Wood. The 23rd saw the first Large Red Damsels (four), Common Blue Damsels (15) and Broad-bodied Chasers (two) with three of the latter on the 30th and the first Blue-tailed Damsel on the 28th.

Mark Beevers.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT JULY 2004

Daily coverage, which is now approaching 1600 consecutive daily visits, during July produced 93 species, well above the nine-year average of 82.4 and indeed the second highest ever July total, the highest being 96 in 2000. The yearlist progressed to 126, which is what we would expect to be for the time of the year. Notable species recorded during the month included Grey Lag Goose, Goosander (1st July record), Common Buzzard, Hobby, Peregrine, Water Rail, Oystercatcher, Black-tailed Godwits (14th record), Redstart, Raven (9th and 10th records) and Siskin. Heavy rain on the 8th of the month ensured that the water level in Meadow Flash rose to around 21", a level it remained at for most of the month only receding towards the very end of the month, leaving us without any mud for the early autumn.

Up to three Little Grebes were seen on 27 dates with a peak count of four on the 21st and Great-crested Grebes peaked at nine (five adults and four juveniles) on the 2nd and 3rd. Single Cormorants were seen on six dates between the 9th and 27th with two on the 31st and daily sightings of Heron peaked at 11 on the 19th and 25th with ten on four other dates whilst the wing-tagged bird was still present at the month end. The resident pair of Mute Swans remained all month but the brood reduced further to just three cygnets on the 13th. An additional pair was present on the 14th and 15th. A Grey Lag Goose was present daily from the 25th, being joined by a second bird on the 31st and two hybrid Grey Lag / white Geese were present from the 27th. The first two Canada Geese arrived back on the 15th and birds were present daily from the 19th rising to 70 on the 29th and 30th.

Gadwall were present in good numbers with a peak count of 37 on the 19th, a male Teal was present on the 7th with two females on the 19th and another female on the 31st. Mallard numbers started to increase towards the end of the month reaching 118 on the 26th with three other counts in excess of 100 from the 25th. A female Shoveler was noted on the 19th, 21st and 23rd and a male Pochard was seen on the 11th. Tufted Ducks were noted on 24 dates and Ruddy Ducks were seen daily with a peak count of 14 on the 30th. However the best duck was a female Goosander seen by a single observer on the 19th, the first to be noted in July.

Sparrowhawks were logged on 17 dates (21 bird / days), one or two Common Buzzards were seen on nine dates (a total of ten bird / days, five sightings being from within the recording area, the others being more distant birds viewed from the mound to the south). Kestrels were recorded on 18 dates (29 bird / days) with six viewable from the observation mound on the 20th. Single Hobbies were over the reserve on the 4th, 15th and 23rd and a Peregrine was on the favoured pylons on five dates between the 23rd and 31st.

A brood of 16 Grey Partridge was noted near the sewage works on the 17th, a Water Rail was present on the 2nd, Coot peaked at 52 on the 14th and an Oystercatcher was also present briefly on the 2nd. Little Ringed Plovers were present daily until the 15th with a peak count of nine on the 6th, whilst the last of the month (year?) was seen on the 17th. The eight Golden Plovers that flew north on the 16th became the second earliest autumn arrival and just the third July record.

Towards the end of the month Lapwing numbers increased rising to 325 by the 31st with three-figure counts on 18 other dates. A Dunlin was present on the 22nd, one or two Snipe were seen on five dates from the 21st and a Black-tailed Godwit graced the flashes on the 3rd. One or two juvenile Redshanks were noted eight dates until the 11th, a Green Sandpiper was present on the 23rd and 24th followed by a group of four, that left to the south, on the 29th and a single on the 30th. The count of four equals the highest ever count for the reserve set in August 1998. One or two Common Sandpipers were present on 24 dates with three noted on the 5th, 21st and 23rd. Black-headed Gulls were recorded on 24 dates but only in single figures apart from 24 that flew south on the 21st and an adult Common Gull was seen on the 20th and 23rd. Small numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls were recorded on most dates with a high of 60 on the 9th on which date a single Herring Gull was seen with another on the 26th. Common Terns at last became more regular with records for 22 dates. Generally one or two were logged but higher counts were three on the 4th and 26th, four on the 30th and five on the 13th. Additionally a flock of five "Commic"

Terns flew south on the 22nd but they were too high to identify with certainty. 26 Collared Doves were present on the 15th and a Cuckoo was seen on the 9th. Swifts peaked at a lowly 150 on the 2nd, one or two Kingfishers were seen on 21 dates, a Green Woodpecker was recorded on five dates from the 21st and a Great-spotted Woodpecker on five dates between the 6th and 29th. Sand Martins remained in good numbers with double-figure counts on ten dates including 60 on the 2nd, 40 on the 8th and 30 on the 9th and 15th. The best count though was 100 on the 3rd. Towards the end of the month a small Swallow roost formed peaking at 300 on the 31st and 45 House Martins were noted on the 25th. Yellow Wagtails were noted on 18 dates with daily records from the 18th. They were around in good numbers too with seven logged for the 23rd and 25th, eight on the 30th and ten (a record count for July) on the 26th. Single Grey Wagtails were noted on six dates with two on the 13th.

A juvenile male Redstart was adjacent to Meadow Flash on the 30th and a Grasshopper Warbler sang near Vale Angling Fishing Pond on the 10th and 11th with another singing next to the observation mound daily from the 25th until the month end whilst both were present on the 25th. Lesser Whitethroats were noted on nine dates with three on the 20th and the first Goldcrest of the autumn was noted from the 18th with records thereafter of a single bird on five dates and two on the 30th. Coal Tits are rarely recorded at Carr Vale during the summer months so the one or two that were noted on 13 dates are quite notable. Rarer still are Ravens so the bird that flew south-west on the 20th was well received as was the one that flew east on the 25th. There have now been 14 records of this species since it was first seen at Carr Vale in 1998. The only other bird of note during the month was a Siskin on the 19th, which is an unusual summer record.

Mammals were scarce with one or two Hares present on 11 dates and single Foxes on the 4th and 20th. Commas were noted on six dates including four on the 30th and good numbers of Small Tortoiseshells were present on the thistles in front of the mound with 23 on the 13th, 20 on the 20th and 30 on the 21st. 17 were still there on the 29th with 13 the following day when a Peacock was also logged. Single Red Admirals were seen on the 6th, 19th and 20th and all the expected species were logged during the month. Five Emperors were seen on the 6th when a Black-tailed Skimmer was seen and similar numbers of both were logged on the 14th, though it has to be said July was a poor month for both dragonflies and butterflies.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 2004

Daily coverage, now totalling 1621 consecutive daily visits, during August produced 99 species, the third highest count for the month. The yearlist progressed to 130, the third highest end of August count so we are on track to reach our benchmark of 135 by the end of the year. The most notable species of the month was a Common Scoter, only the second confirmed record for the site. Other notable species recorded during the month were Grey Lag Goose, Shelduck, Wigeon, Marsh Harrier (17th or 19th record), Common Buzzard, Hobby, Peregrine, Water Rail, Ruff (20th record), Black-tailed Godwits (15th and 16th records, all since 2000), Whimbrel (16th record), Wood Sandpiper (10th record), Tree Pipit, Redstart, Wheatear, Grasshopper Warbler and Tree Sparrow.

Periods of heavy rain several times during the month maintained the high water level in Meadow Flash. However torrential rain for 36 hours around the 10th-11th (on which date our excavation work started) saw the worst summer flooding for over 20 years, indeed the level rose from 3'6" to over 5' in just three hours on that date! It remained high for most of the month only receding towards the very end of the month, but even then the level was that which is normal for winter not late summer. A contractor was on site for a couple of weeks during which time he extended Meadow Flash and the Southern Reedbed bringing both areas of habitat closer to the observation mound and the new southern observation point.

Little Grebes were seen daily with a peak count of seven on five dates between the 18th and 26th, the highest count since September 2000 when nine were present. Six Great-crested Grebes were present on the 1st after which numbers declined gradually though three were still present on the 31st. Cormorants were seen on all but two dates with daily records from the 9th although numbers were only small with a peak count of four on the 5th. Herons peaked at 16 on the 11th and 15th with double-figure counts on a further 15 dates including 15 on the 5th whilst the wing-tagged bird was still present at the month end. The Mute Swan family remained all month as did one or two Grey Lag Geese and two hybrid Grey Lag / white Geese were joined by a third towards the end of the month. Canada Geese numbers rose during the month, particularly during the last week when a record total of 600 was present on the 27th and 28th.

Three juvenile Shelduck stayed for a couple of hours on the 1st before departing north-west and the first Wigeon of the autumn arrived on the 28th, remaining to the month end and being joined by a second bird on the 31st. This is only the third August record for this species. Gadwall were present in good numbers with a peak count of 46 on the 10th and 15th, Teal were present on all but one date and the flock had grown to 15 by the 30th-31st and Mallard numbers also increased a respectable high of 274 on the 28th. Five Shoveler were present on the 10th with two the following day and one on the 14th. Then one to four daily from the 19th (apart from on the 29th) until the month end with five noted on the 25th and 28th. Tufted Ducks were noted daily with a peak count of 14 on the 27th and 30th. An immature male Common Scoter was present for most of the day on the 10th. This is the second confirmed record of this species for Carr Vale the first being on 25th July 2000. (One was reported on the Ogston Bird Club website for 26th April 2003 though this was not seen by any of the regular observers present on the site on that date). Ruddy Ducks were seen daily with a peak count of 17 on the 14th.

A second calendar year male Marsh Harrier was seen in torrential rain in the evening of the 9th and it was still present the following morning. Sparrowhawks were logged on 15 dates (18 bird / days), one or two Common Buzzards were seen on 17 dates (a total of 22 bird / days, 19 of which were from within the recording area, the others being more distant birds viewed from the mound to the south or west). Kestrels were recorded on 27 dates (44 bird / days) with five viewable from the observation mound on the 20th and four present on the 10th. Hobbies were noted on 11 dates (all but two over the recording area). Interesting sightings included one that flew south-west

on the 13th with one at night attacking the Swallow roost, which it did on several evenings and a juvenile that spent five days in the area from the 26th (not seen on the 27th-28th). On the 31st this bird was seen as close as 80 yards as it spent some time nonchalantly catching dozens of dragonflies, thus providing excellent entertainment unless of course you were a dragonfly! Single Peregrines were seen on 4th, 18th and 27th, all of which were over the reserve.

A second brood of Grey Partridges was noted in front of the observation mound on the 4th with a brood of Pheasants in the same area during the month. A Water Rail was present on the 3rd, 5th and 7th, whilst on the 16th 20 Moorhens climbed out of the water into low trees during a thunder storm as if in response to the adverse weather. An adult Ringed Plover circled the flashes and flew north on the 11th, a Golden Plover was seen on the 10th with two present on the 13th and one on the 14th and Lapwing counts peaked at 300 on the 2nd and 5th. A Dunlin was present on the 31st, a male Ruff was seen on the 4th and Snipe were logged on 14 dates although the highest count was just six on the 12th. Two flocks of Black-tailed Godwit flew over the flashes during the month, eight (south-east) on the 2nd and 11 (north-west) on the 10th, taking the total number seen this year to a very creditable 39. There have now been 15 records of this species at Carr Vale since 2000. A Whimbrel dropped in for several hours on the 10th and a Curlew was heard on the 16th. A Greenshank was seen on the 3rd and one was seen daily between the 12th and 19th. Single Green Sandpipers were seen on the 1st, 5th, 8th, 11th, 21st and 24th and a Wood Sandpiper was seen by a single observer on the 11th. Common Sandpipers were logged on 29 dates (and were probably overlooked on the other two) with one or two on most dates, three on the 1st and five on the 11th and 12th.

Numbers of Black-headed Gulls started to increase with 200 noted on the 21st, an adult Common Gull was seen on the 14th with a juvenile on the 23rd and 100 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were recorded the 17th with a Herring Gull on the 1st being the only record during the month for that species. Single Common Terns were seen on five dates between the 1st and 7th with two on the 3rd and a late bird was seen on the 15th. Swifts peaked at a 150 on the 10th, one or two Kingfishers were seen on 19 dates, a Green Woodpecker was recorded on 12 dates and Great-spotted Woodpeckers were recorded on six dates between the 5th and 26th including one that flew south on the 21st.

Sand Martin numbers reduced considerably from July with single figures on 16 dates and ten on the 23rd. A small Swallow roost was present during the first half of the month peaking at just 700 on the 8th, the low numbers possibly due to the persistent attacks by a Hobby and 110 House Martins were noted on the 12th. Single Tree Pipits flew south on the 14th, 15th and 22nd and unusually 43 Meadow Pipits (including a flock of 36) flew south on the 31st, a good two to three weeks earlier than normal. Yellow Wagtails were present daily until the 13th with records on just six dates after that. A count of seven was made on the 3rd but numbers were otherwise much lower than we would expect in August, which is the month when usually the highest count of the year is made. One or two Grey Wagtails were noted on nine dates with three on the 15th.

The juvenile male Redstart from July was seen on five dates between the 2nd and 10th adjacent to Meadow Flash and a Wheatear was present briefly on the 25th. 11 Mistle Thrushes flew over on the 2nd and a Grasshopper Warbler was heard reeling on the 3rd. One or two Lesser Whitethroats were noted on seven dates and Goldcrests were logged for 12 dates. The highest count for Long-tailed Tits was 16 on the 23rd, four Willow Tits were seen on the 14th and single Coal Tits were seen on the 11th and 28th. Two Jays flew south on the 14th as did another on the 21st with one present on the 28th whilst 200 Rooks flew south on the 5th. A single Tree Sparrow was a pleasing find amongst 100+ Greenfinches on the 31st, as this species has in recent years become very scarce in the area. The only escaped species noted during the month was a Harris Hawk on the 8th

on which date it flew north.

Mammals were again scarce with one or two Hares present on 14 dates and a single Fox was seen on the 3rd. A family of four Foxes was reported on the Peter Fidler Reserve on the 22nd. The best butterfly of the month was a Clouded Yellow, seen on the 15th along with one of only two Painted Ladies seen during the month, the other being noted on the 30th. Four Commas were noted on the 3rd with one on the 5th and two on the 11th on which date a Brimstone was seen. Southern Hawker, Brown Hawker, Emperors, Black-tailed Skimmer and Common Darters were all noted during the month and on the 31st at least five Migrant Hawks were found.

Mark Beevers.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT SEPTEMBER 2004

The daily coverage continued taking us past 1650 (actually 1651) consecutive daily visits and during September we recorded 100 species, the fifth time that we have reached three-figures for the month and incidentally the third year on the trot. The yearlist progressed to 137, the second highest end of September (the highest being 138) count so the thoughts from earlier in the year regarding whether we would reach our benchmark of 135 by the end of the year were seemingly unfounded. The most notable bird of the month was Red-crested Pochard (a pair), only the second record for the site. Other notable species recorded during the month were Grey Lag Goose, Pintail, Goosander, Common Buzzard, Hobby, Peregrine, Water Rail, Ruff (21st record), Jack Snipe, Woodcock, Yellow-legged Gull, Stonechats (11th and 12th records), Redwing, Spotted Flycatcher, Pied Flycatcher (5th record), Raven (11th record) and Siskin.

Although there were periods of rain this had little effect on the water level in the flashes which remained fairly constant at about 18". Early in the month with the start of the open season for Canada Geese we encountered a problem with shooters. However, they were not caught on the reserve, even though damaged fencing was discovered. Following a discussion with them we agreed to a compromise whereby they would still shoot the land, where they had the permission of the farmer, but on a reduced scale and after a couple of weeks they stopped visiting the area (as far as I am aware). The knock-on effect though was obvious with reduced numbers of Canada Geese and Mallard for much of the month.

Little Grebes peaked at five on the 1st with two to four noted daily whilst three Great-crested Grebes were present throughout the month. Cormorants were also seen daily and gradually increased to reach a peak of six on the 26th but Heron numbers declined from August so that the highest count was only nine on the 11th and the wing-tagged bird was still present at the month end. The Mute Swan family remained all month being joined by three more on the 15th and 24th and a singleton on six dates between the 19th and 25th. One or two Grey Lag Geese were seen on 17 dates between the 2nd and 26th and the two hybrid Grey Lag / white Geese were present on 11 dates. Canada Geese numbers declined from the heights of last month with a peak of 342 on the 2nd and by the end of the month there were days when none were recorded.

Wigeon numbers started to rise slowly reaching ten by the 13th and 12 by the 26th-27th and Gadwall were present in good numbers with a record count of 64 on the 12th. Other counts in excess of 60 were 63 on the 14th and 61 on the 23rd. Teal were present all month with counts generally ranging between 40-50 for most of the month although there was a slight increase on the 30th when 67 were counted. Mallard numbers were disappointing with just two counts over 200, the highest being 205 on the 13th and by the end of the month numbers were well down with counts reaching high double-figures only. Shoveler were a feature of the month being recorded in small numbers (up to seven) on all but three dates with eight counted on the 27th and 28th, which equals the record count for the site. On the 30th a female Pintail came in from the north, circled the flashes and then returned north but the highlight of the month, for the two observers that managed to catch up with them, was a pair of Red-crested Pochard on the 9th. Tufted Duck were noted daily with a peak count of 13 on the 1st and a red-head Goosander was present on the 25th. Ruddy Ducks were seen daily, but following a count of ten on the 1st numbers declined slowly so that by the month end no more than three remained.

Sparrowhawks were logged on 18 dates (21 bird / days), Common Buzzards were seen on 20 dates (a total of 46 bird / days, 25 of which were from within the recording area, the others being more distant birds viewed from the mound to the south or west). Generally one to three birds were noted but higher counts included six on the 22nd and 29th and five on the 28th. Kestrels were recorded on 26 dates (37 bird / days) but no more than three a day were recorded. Hobbies were noted on seven dates between the 7th and 22nd (all but one over the recording area) with two noted on the 8th. The one in the recording area was a juvenile that was seen as close as 30 yards as it spent a lot of time catching dragonflies in front of the observation mound and on the 22nd it was seen to take a House Martin. Single Peregrines were seen on 3rd, 27th and 28th, all of which

were over the reserve.

A party of nine Red-legged Partridges on the 22nd and 27th could be indicative of successful local breeding rather than birds that have been released as we tend to get those three or four weeks later in the year. Ten Grey Partridges were noted on the 9th with 11 on the 27th. A Water Rail was present between the 26th and 28th; Moorhens peaked at 41 on the 19th on which date 54 Coot were present. Single Ringed Plovers were seen on the 3rd, 16th and 29th, the last bird being the latest ever at Carr Vale. Golden Plovers were noted on 12 dates but only in small numbers with a peak count of 32 on the 29th, the only other double-figure counts being 22 on the 12th, 16 on the 22nd and 21 on the 25th. Lapwing counts peaked at 300 on the 25th with three-figure counts on 14 other dates and the Dunlin from the end of August was still present on the 1st. A Ruff was a brief visitor on the 11th but rarer still was a Jack Snipe on the 30th. This species used to be seen regularly until 1997 after which there wasn't a record for five years. This is however the third successive year that a bird has been seen but all have been autumn birds on a single date. Snipe were logged on 28 dates with double-figure counts on 13 dates, the highest being 25 on the 11th whilst 21 were seen on the 24th and 22 were counted on the 30th. A Woodcock was flushed on the 25th by a dog-walker, a Redshank was present on the 21st, single Greenshank were present between the 1st and 4th and again on the 14th and 16th and a Common Sandpiper was seen daily between the 1st and 5th.

Black-headed Gulls peaked at a lowly 124 on the 20th, single adult Common Gulls were seen on the 24th and 29th and 120 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were present on the 15th. Single Herring Gulls were noted on the 11th and 28th and an adult Yellow-legged Gull dropped onto the flashes on the 22nd. A small flock of Stock Doves remained throughout the month with a peak count of 30 on the 11th and 26 Collared Doves were counted on the 22nd. Eight Swifts on the 1st was the highest count of the month but this year birds lingered and one was still present on the 24th, the latest departure date since 2000. One or two Kingfishers were seen on 20 dates, a Green Woodpecker was recorded on seven dates and Great-spotted Woodpeckers were recorded on ten dates.

The first Skylark flew south the 15th and by the end of the month a further 18 had flown south along with 58 south-east on the 29th. Other notable counts included 45 on the 23rd and 35 on the 28th, both flocks being seen over fields to the west of the reserve pools. Sand Martins were in very short supply with records for just five dates, the last of the year being logged on the 19th. A southerly passage of Swallows was noted on several dates but the highest count of birds moving south was only 50 on the 19th, whilst the highest count for the month was 150 on the 16th. House Martins too were noted moving south on a number of dates with 100 south in 15 minutes on the 12th and 180 south on the 19th. September is the month that Meadow Pipits move south, often in considerable numbers and this year southerly passage was noted on 18 dates from the 4th although the main movement didn't start until the 13th. A total of 488 birds were logged including 164 in three and a half-hours on the 19th and 60 on the 22nd. Single Yellow Wagtails were seen on the 3rd and 13th and one to three Grey Wagtails were noted on 27 dates. Higher counts included six on the 13th and 22nd (four of which flew south-west on both dates) and four (three south) on the 23rd. Other birds moving south included one on the 8th and three on the 17th. 23 Pied Wagtails were counted on the Southern Flash on the 12th and southerly passage commenced on the 15th when two flew south. By the end of the month a total of 48 had been logged moving through including counts of 11 on the 26th, eight on the 27th and 14 on the 28th.

Three Dunnocks flew west on the 28th with two south the following day, a first winter male Stonechat was present on the 27th with a first winter female two days later on the 29th. There was an increase in Song Thrush activity towards the end of the month with four (three south) noted on the 26th and seven (six south) on the 29th. 12 Mistle Thrushes were seen on the 28th with 18 on the 30th whilst 13 Redwings flew south-west on the 29th followed by one on the 30th. A late Reed Warbler was seen on the 29th, the last Lesser Whitethroat was noted on the 5th with the last Common Whitethroat logged on the 8th (both rather early dates). A female Blackcap was still present on the 30th, Chiffchaffs remained in good numbers to the end of the month with ten

on the 12th and 21st and 15 on the 25th and the last Willow Warbler was seen on the 7th. Goldcrests were logged on 20 dates, a Spotted Flycatcher was seen on the 6th with both Spotted Flycatcher and Pied Flycatcher in the same bush on the 11th. The latter is only the 5th record for the site, it's the first since 1997 and it is also the first ever in autumn as all the previous records have fallen between 15th April and 4th May. 27 Long-tailed Tits were counted on the 25th, single Coal Tits were seen on five dates with single Jays on six dates. A Raven flew south-west to the south of the recording area being mobbed by four Buzzards as it went on the 28th and four Tree Sparrows flew west on the 5th. 100 Greenfinches were present on the 8th with 35 Goldfinches in front of the mound the previous day and the first Siskins of the autumn (ten) were seen on the rather late date of the 30th.

Mammals were again scarce with one or two Hares present on seven along with the odd Grey Squirrel sighting. The results of mammal survey work during the summer have shown that Water Shrews are present on the reserve. This is encouraging as the species is thought to be rare (or under-recorded?) in Derbyshire. No butterflies of note were seen during the month and very few Dragonfly species were recorded. 75 Common Darters were counted on the 7th and both this species and Migrant Hawkers were still about at the end of the month despite the best efforts of the juvenile Hobby.

Mark Beevers.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT OCTOBER 2004

The daily coverage continued taking us to 1682 consecutive daily visits and I am very grateful to Ian Swain and Kevin Navin for their continued efforts whilst I was on Scilly. Without their efforts this run would have undoubtedly come to end. During October we recorded 90 species, the third time that we have reached this figure, which is the highest October total for the site and the yearlist progressed to 139, the second highest end of October (the highest being 142) count. Notable species recorded during the month included Grey Lag Goose (3rd October record), Pink-footed Goose, Shelduck, Goosander, Common Buzzard, Peregrine, Water Rail, Woodcock, Mediterranean Gull (8th record), Yellow-legged Gulls (at least three different birds), Rock Pipits (two, 20th record), Stonechat (13 record) and Brambling. October was a wet month and particularly heavy rain fell between the 20th and 25th. During this period the water levels rose dramatically around Meadow Flash reaching in excess of four feet on the 22nd. This caused the second worst flooding that I have seen in the area and further heavy rain a couple of days later saw water levels rise again to almost three feet. Four-foot floods are not unprecedented but they do only occur once every four or five years.

One to three Little Grebes were seen on 26 dates and Great-crested Grebes were present daily with a peak count of five on the 5th. Cormorants were also seen daily and gradually increased to reach a peak of 11 on the 19th although this was the only double-figure count of the month. Herons were seen daily but only in single figures with a peak count of eight on the 5th and the wing-tagged bird was still present at the end of the month. The Mute Swan family remained together until the middle of the month when one departed after which numbers varied peaking at eight on the 18th and 22nd. A lone juvenile was present during the latter half of the month but that was found dead on the 30th. 140 Pink-footed Geese flew south-east on the 8th followed by 100 plus south-east on the 26th and 80 south-east late-on on the 30th. A Grey Lag Goose was seen on the 2nd, becoming just the 3rd October record and the two hybrid Grey Lag / white Geese from last month were seen again on the 21st. Canada Geese were logged in much lower numbers than in recent autumns with a peak count of 122 on the 2nd. Indeed this species was only recorded on 22 dates with just five counts in excess of 50.

A Shelduck on the 13th was only the fourth October record, Wigeon numbers continued to rise reaching an impressive total of 97 by the 29th and Gadwall were present double-figure on all but two dates with a peak count of 36 on the 16th. Teal were present all month with 15 counts of 50 or more the highest of which was 74 on the 23rd but Mallard numbers were again disappointing with just three counts over 100, the highest being 113 on the 23rd. Two to six Shoveler were seen daily until the 25th with five or six noted on 15 dates and a peak count of seven on the 21st. The first Pochard of the autumn was seen on the 8th with low numbers during the rest of the month on 16 dates peaking at eight on the 29th. Tufted Duck were noted daily with double-figure counts on eight dates including a peak of 15 on the 19th, 22nd and 23rd. A male Goosander flew north-east on the 9th and a party of six red-heads flew south on the 22nd. Three Ruddy Ducks were seen on the 1st followed by one or two on seven dates until the 9th after which a single female was noted on the 13th, 16th and 26th.

Sparrowhawks were logged on 13 dates (15 bird / days), Common Buzzards were seen on ten dates (a total of 15 bird / days, nine of which were from within the recording area, the others being more distant birds viewed from the mound to the south or west). The highest count was four on the 1st, which included three to the south of the recording area. Kestrels were recorded on just 13 dates (14 bird / days) and a single juvenile male Peregrine was seen on the 5th, 9th, 13th, 16th, 21st and 31st, all but the last sighting coming from over the reserve.

Ten Grey Partridges were noted on the 26th, a Water Rail was present on the 1st but the next

wasn't until the 18th after which one or two were logged on ten dates. Moorhens peaked at 33 on the 24th when 47 Coot were present and Golden Plovers were noted on ten dates although the only notable counts were 105 south on the 14th and 75 on the 26th. Lapwing numbers were very poor with 250 logged for the 1st and 28th, all other counts being less than 100. A Dunlin was present on the 2nd and 3rd it being joined by a second bird on the 4th. One with a rather long bill was seen on the 9th and another was present on the 20th. 18 Snipe were logged on the 1st but the only other double-figure count was 12 on the 20th on which date a dog walker flushed a Woodcock. A Curlew present on the 4th was only the second October record ever, whilst a Redshank present on the 22nd and 24th was possibly only the fourth for October.

A first-winter Mediterranean Gull was present on the 10th with it (or another, though it is likely to be the same given the scarcity of this species at Carr Vale) present on the 20th. Three figure counts of Black-headed Gulls were made on seven dates with a peak count of 300+ on the 13th and good numbers of Common Gulls were seen with records for 19 dates including six on the 11th, 13th and 17th and eight on the 15th. 150 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were present on the 13th and Herring Gulls became more regular towards the end of the month with 17 south on the 29th. Single adult Yellow-legged Gulls were noted the 8th, 9th, 17th, 18th and 27th with two adults together on the 13th and a second winter on the 16th. 20 Stock Doves were counted on the 4th and Wood Pigeons were logged flying south-west on three dates with 23 on the 23rd, 63 on the 24th and 115 on the 26th. 18 Collared Doves were counted on the 14th and 18th, one or two Kingfishers were seen on 16 dates, the only Green Woodpecker of the month was recorded on the 1st and Great-spotted Woodpeckers were recorded on ten dates.

Skylark passage south-west was noted on ten dates with a total of 253 being logged. This total included an impressive 128 on the 26th, on which date a flock of 50+ was also present out in the fields west of the reserve ponds. Other movements included 18 on the 1st, 23 on the 5th, 22 on the 7th and 32 on the 23rd, whilst the flock to the west of the reserve numbered 31 on the 1st and 40 on the 24th. 55 Swallows flew south on the 1st, with seven south on the 5th and three south on the 13th whilst the last of the year (and the last House Martin) was noted on the 15th, a rather early last date. Meadow Pipits continued to move south until late October, which is unusual and during the month a total 423 were logged. A good count of 185 flew south on the 1st and other reasonable counts were 64 south on the 7th and 63 south on the 26th. However the autumn total of 954 south was very average. Two Rock Pipits were present on the 10th one of which was still present the following day and one to three Grey Wagtails were noted on 23 dates.

Two Dunnocks flew south on the 1st and one was singing on the 22nd whilst a male Stonechat on the 29th was the third of the autumn. The first Fieldfares of the autumn were a flock of 51 that flew west on the 9th and by the end of the month a total of 1955 had moved south-west over 12 dates. By far the highest count was 1065 on the 29th but other reasonable counts included 135 on the 22nd, 240 on the 26th and 160 on the 27th. Six Song Thrushes flew south on the 1st and good numbers of Redwings flew south-west with a total of 900 logged over ten dates. Notable counts included 231 on the 8th and 203 on the 19th whilst over 100 were grounded on the 17th. A female Blackcap was seen on the 8th and 14th and up to three Chiffchaffs were seen on 19 dates until the 25th when a male was singing. Goldcrests were logged on 24 dates with a peak count of six on the 14th, 17 Long-tailed Tits were counted on the 30th and one or two Coal Tits were seen on 11 dates. In a very poor autumn for Jays single birds were seen on the 1st and 22nd whilst 43 Jackdaws flew north on the 25th.

Eight Tree Sparrows flew north on the 19th and two were by the observation mound on the 31st. A Brambling flew south on the 24th, a total of 48 Goldfinches flew south over five dates with 14 on the 22nd and 13 on both the 1st and 24th, whilst a flock of 20 was present on the 23rd and 26th. Siskins remained in very short supply throughout the month with birds noted on just seven dates.

Visible movement was almost non-existent with a meagre eight noted over six dates however good numbers of Linnets flew south over seven dates totalling 183 birds, with 55 on the 1st, 38 on the 19th and 50 on the 24th. A total of 57 Lesser Redpoll flew south over 12 dates with a peak count of 16 on the 15th whilst a total of 27 on the 23rd included a flock of 25 feeding along the river. Four Bullfinches flew south on the 26th and 17 Reed Buntings flew south over four dates including nine on the 5th with seven dropping into the southern reedbed to roost on the 30th.

In a poor month for mammals single Hares were present on three dates, a Fox was seen on the 22nd and there were occasional Grey Squirrel sightings. Ten Common Darters were present on the 1st and 24th with a late Migrant Hawker on the latter date whilst a Red Admiral was seen on the 1st, a Peacock was seen on the 4th and a Comma was noted on the 8th.

Mark Beevers.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT NOVEMBER 2004

No Report.

CARR VALE MONTHLY REPORT DECEMBER 2004

Another milestone was reached on New Years Eve as we completed our fourth consecutive year of continual daily visits to the site and the total now for consecutive daily visits now stands at 1743. This has been a tremendous effort by the people involved and they are to be congratulated on this achievement. During a fairly quiet December 74 species were logged, the third lowest December total but one species was added to the year list taking that to a creditable 140, the fourth highest annual species count and just above the eight-year average of 139. Notable species recorded during the month included Pink-footed Goose, Common Buzzard, Peregrine, Water Rail, Dunlin, at least two Chiffchaffs and Ravens (13th-14th records and latest ever) but the birds of the month were two Waxwings (6th record). The now resident Harris Hawk also provided regulars and visitors alike some entertainment. December was a fairly dry and frost free month although heavy rain on the 24th caused the water level in the flash to rise to two foot and the flashes were mainly frozen on the 20th-21st and 26th-28th of the month. Steve Price and a colleague opened up a drain on the south-eastern side of the Reserve Pond which will hopefully allow us to lower the water level in the Reserve Pond / Southern Marsh in the autumn

A Little Grebe seen on the 5th was the only record for that species unlike Cormorants, which were seen daily apart from on the 11th, with a peak count of 26 (a record count for the site) on the 5th. The only other double-figure count was 17 the previous day. Herons were seen daily but again only in single figures with a peak count of eight on the 11th and 30th and the wing-tagged bird was still present into 2005. Mute Swans were logged on 16 dates with a peak of four on ten dates. 110 Pink-footed Geese flew north-west followed by 40 west on the 19th and 380 west on the 29th whilst two unidentified grey geese flew west on the 3rd and one of the white geese was present on the 28th. Canada Geese were present daily with a peak count of 82 on the 26th.

Three-figure counts of Wigeon were made daily with a peak count of 154 on the 28th and Gadwall were present double-figure on all bar three dates with double-figure counts on 19 dates and a peak count of 37 on the 18th. Teal were present all month with 17 counts of 100 or more the highest of which was 157 on the 29th, the second highest count for the site. Mallard numbers were typically low with a peak count of 84 on the 4th. Unseasonal Shovelers included a female present on seven dates between the 4th and 14th with a pair present on the 23rd-24th and 26th. Pochard were seen on all bar one date with a high of nine on four dates and Tufted Ducks were noted on 29 dates although no more than eight a day were logged. A male Goosander was seen on the 6th with a female present on the 13th-14th and again on the 17th.

Sparrowhawks were logged on 15 dates (16 bird / days), Common Buzzards were seen on just four dates (2nd, 5th (two), 19th and 21st) and Kestrels were recorded on eight dates (eight bird /days). An immature male Peregrine was seen on the 12th and 20th and the escaped Harris Hawk continued to put on a good show being seen on 16 dates during the month.

Seven Grey Partridges were noted on the 5th, single Water Rails were present on six dates with two on the 3rd, 18th and 26th and 44 Coot were counted on the 4th. Golden Plovers were noted on 11 dates with double-figure counts on seven dates the highest of which was 33 on the 27th. Lapwings increased with three-figure counts noted on nine dates including 300 north-west on the 1st and 300 down on the 20th. A Dunlin present on the 12th was only the 5th December record, Snipe were logged on 16 dates but only in very low numbers with four noted on the 10th and 15th and a Redshank present on the 4th and 5th.

965 Black-headed Gulls flew south to roost on the 2nd with 1500 noted flying south late on the 11th. One or two Common Gulls were seen on eight dates, 650+ Herring Gulls flew north on the 5th on which date 46 Great Black-backed Gulls also flew north with 27 south on the 29th. A

Kingfisher was seen on 13 dates with two on the 24th and 31st and a Green Woodpecker was recorded on the five dates.

One or two Grey Wagtails were logged on 25 dates and 25 Pied Wagtails were logged on the 3rd with 27 leaving the area to roost on the 26th. Two Waxwings were present very briefly on the 28th but they flew off before any other observers could be contacted so this species remains a sought after bird by several of the Carr Vale regulars. The highest count of Fieldfare was 175 on the 16th whilst Redwings peaked at 100 on the 25th.

A single Chiffchaff was seen on 13 dates with two together on seven more dates and Goldcrests were logged daily in small numbers. 14 Long-tailed Tits on the 23rd was the largest group, three Willow Tits were seen on the 10th and a single Coal Tit was seen on seven dates. Two Ravens flew north, then south on the 5th and another flew north on the 19th, which became the latest ever record for the site.

15 Goldfinches were present on the 27th and 20 Lesser Redpolls flew north on the 3rd (but there were just three more records of one to three birds during the rest of the month and there was not a single record of Siskin!). Bullfinches were present in good numbers with 13 on the 5th and ten on the 25th and 20 Yellowhammers were present on the 11th. The Reed Bunting roost in the Southern Reedbed was monitored closely on several evenings and this produced a peak count of 52 (the highest count in Derbyshire since 1997) on the 10th. The day before there had been 27 in the Southern Reedbed and the following day 20 were seen to drop into one of the Peter Fidler Reserve reedbeds.

A Stoat was seen on the 3rd and a Hare was seen on the 17th.

Mark Beevers.