

## **OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT JANUARY 2005 - 83 Species - 31 Days Covered.**

Little Grebe numbers remained fairly constant throughout the month, maximum of six on both the 27th and 31st, Great Crested Grebe were recorded on most days with a best count of thirteen on the 17th. Cormorant were seen on a daily basis, with most records into double figures, with a maximum of fifty five on the 21st, Grey Heron numbers increased from the 17th onwards, with a maximum of eight on the 29th.

Apart from the resident Pink Footed Goose, major movements were noted from the 22nd onwards with two hundred and forty birds on that date, one hundred and fifty on the 23rd, fifty on the 24th, three more skeins on the 25th held a total of five hundred birds, and on the 29th two more skeins were reported containing four hundred and fifty birds. A single Greylag Goose was joined by a second on the 21st. Canada Geese have remained constant throughout the month with a maximum of one hundred and eighty on the 23rd. Two Mute Swans visited on the 19th with a single bird reported on the 21st. Mallard and Teal have been fairly stable with maximums of ninety four and ninety six, Shoveler were recorded almost on a daily basis, with a best count of five on the 16th, with a pair still present at month end.

A Little Egret which came into bathe on the 11th was then observed to fly into Carr Wood to roost, has been recorded on at least eleven occasions and was still present at the end of the month. A group of four Pintails visited on the 19th with a single bird on the 26th, two Gadwall were noted on the 20th, and a maximum of seven Goosander on the 24th.

Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were seen frequently and Buzzard noted on six occasions, with a maximum of two on the 23rd, the 31st brought sightings of both Peregrine and Goshawk. Snipe numbers increased during the month, and one hundred and sixty five on the 12th was a sizeable increase on the previous site record, with seventy still present at the end of the month. Lapwing numbers also continued to increase with a best count of three hundred and ten on the 21st, Little Owl which had become difficult to find between the 1st and the 17th is now being seen on a more regular basis with a maximum of three on the 26th, Kingfisher and Great Spotted Woodpecker have been seen frequently, with Green Woodpecker seen on five occasions.

Tree Sparrow sightings have been fairly regular with a maximum of seven on the fifth, a best count of twenty nine for Linnet on the 21st, and a maximum of fifty three Yellowhammer on the 11th were very welcome. A wintering Chiffchaff found on the 23rd caused a great deal of interest, unfortunately, although it was heard on the 24th it has not been seen since,

"Gull Roosters" have been well rewarded for the many hours they spend on bitterly cold evenings by the tremendous regularity with which "White Winged Gulls" have been appearing in the roost, Adult Iceland Gull has been recorded on at least six occasions, with two on the 8th. First Winter Iceland Gulls were present on the 3rd, 10th, 14th, 15th, 22nd, 24th, 26th, 27th, 28th, and 29th, A Second Winter bird appeared on both the 26th and 29th. Caspian Gulls have been seen with great frequency, with First Winter birds on the 1st, 6th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 20th, 22nd, and 29th, A Second Winter bird appeared on the 3rd. Third Winter birds were seen on the 19th, 20th, and 22nd. A Fourth Winter on the 3rd, and an Adult on both the 25th and 30th. The month was brought to a close in great style with the appearance of an Adult Kittiwake on the 27th, and a superb Adult Mediterranean Gull.

## **OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT FEBRUARY 2005 - 81- Species-27 Days Covered**

Little Grebe numbers were reasonably constant throughout the month with a maximum of eight on the 10th, Great Crested Grebe were recorded on almost a daily basis with a maximum of fifteen on both the 4th, and 16th, Cormorant numbers had a best of fifty eight on the 12th. Canada Geese reached a high of 200 on the 6th and decreased gradually from then , both the Pink-footed Goose and the Greylag Goose were still present at month end. Shelduck were present on three occasions, with a maximum of five on the 8th. Both Mallard and Teal numbers were constant throughout, with counts of seventy and fifty five respectively, Shoveler visited on five occasions, with a best count of four on both the 2nd, and the 5th. Tufted Duck were recorded mainly into double figures with a peak of twenty five on the 2nd, Pochard numbers began to decline after the 7th. A Red breasted merganser made an appearance on the 18th which was a pleasant surprise, sadly it was not seen the following day. Grey Heron were back in the heronry early in the month, and after a period of disturbance, became settled again, with forty one on the 12th. Wigeon numbers varied from one to six, but were not recorded after the 11th. The Little Egret which was first seen on the 11th of January, is still present and has given many excellent views, and a host of superb photographic opportunities.

Sparrowhawk and Kestrel sightings were again fairly frequent, with Buzzard being noted on at least eight occasions with a best of three on the 11th. A Merlin passing through on the 9th was a new bird for the year. Little Owl has been seen fairly regularly in its favoured locations, with one noted on Crow Lane on at least two occasions, with a maximum of three birds on the 4th, and 18th. Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen frequently, with a best count of four on the 6th, Green Woodpecker noted on at least six occasions, and just one sighting of the elusive Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

Although the water level continued to rise, there were waders present, namely three Redshank on the 6th, single Dunlin on the 8th, and 19th, with two on the 21st, and a Ringed Plover on the 20th. Lapwing numbers declined from the early monthly maximum of two hundred and sixty on the 3rd, down to double figures towards the end of the month.

“White Winged Gulls” again showed very well at the beginning of the month, with records of Adult Iceland Gull on the 2nd, and 1st winter birds on the 4th, 6th, 8th, and 16th, with a 2nd winter present on the 3rd. 1st winter Caspian Gulls were noted on 3rd, 4th, and 8th. A 3rd winter Glaucous Gull, on the 3rd was the first of this species for this winter period, and although the bird was put out on the pager system, it flew off a few minutes after it was first observed in the direction of Carsington.

Tree Sparrow was recorded on three occasions, becoming reasonably regular in the Amber Cottage area, a good count of fifty five Linnets on the 11th, and the first Lesser Redpolls of the year with twelve noted on the same day.

Bird of the month for those who were lucky enough to be able to see them , were the circa forty Waxwings which were present on Brackenfield Green for a short period of time on the 16th , before flying off in the direction of Ashover.

Keith Turton

## OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT MARCH 2005 - 94-Species - 31 Days Covered

Little Grebe numbers have remained stable throughout the month with a maximum of four on 7th, 13th, and 14th, Great Crested Grebe has been into double figures most days with a best of 19 on the 14th and 15th, Cormorant numbers remained slightly lower than last month with a best of forty two on the 4th. Grey Heron were much more numerous with at least forty four noted on the 20th. Canada Geese numbers declined in the latter half of the month, from the high of one hundred and twenty nine on the 4th. Most wildfowl numbers have declined with the exception of Mallard and Tufted Duck, with maximums of sixty one and twenty two respectively. Gadwall put in an appearance on the 22nd when a pair were seen in the evening. The drake Wood Duck has been seen on at least five occasions with a female Mallard in close company. Water Rail was seen for the first time this year on the 8th, and the 19th 20th and on the 31st.

Seven Common Scoter on the 28th were a very good find, but were not present next day.

The Little Egret which first appeared on the 11th of January was not recorded after the 22nd, a period of some ten weeks.

Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were seen regularly, but surprisingly Buzzard records have been much more numerous, with possibly six different birds seen on the 23rd, and five in the air together above the dam wall on the 24th. Peregrine has been recorded on at least three occasions. Bird of the month has to be the Rough-legged Buzzard seen by just two fortunate observers to the South West of the reservoir on the 15th, making it only the third record for Ogston, incredibly the second record occurred on March 18th 2004.

Sadly the gull roost has gone into decline, by mid-month very few birds were to be found, although 1st winter Iceland and Glaucous gulls were seen towards the month end. The regular watchers have had a very satisfying few months. Iceland, Glaucous, Caspian, and Mediterranean Gulls being seen, and a Yellow-legged Gull was being seen on a regular basis towards the month end.

Little Owl has again been difficult to locate during the second half of the month, with only one record of Tawny Owl. Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen on almost a daily basis with four being the maximum. A male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker seen on the 25th was the second record of the year, with another seen on the 29th. Green Woodpecker was noted on at least eight occasions. The first Raven of the year on the 30th was seen firstly disturbing the Herons, then had a conflict with a Buzzard before disappearing over Ogston Hall.

A Stonechat found on the 1st stayed until 5th, the years first Curlew was recorded also on the 1st, followed by Redshank on the 6th, the first Little Ringed Plover on the 21st

Two Oystercatchers found on Plover Island on the 23rd were present all day but could not be located next day. A Dunlin on the 25th was followed on the 26th by another Little Ringed Plover. The first Chiffchaff of the year was found during the breeding birds survey on the 19th, with up to six singing on the 23rd, and twelve noted on the 25th. The first Skylarks of the year, on the 21st and 25th reminding us that Spring may soon be with us, a further reminder came in with the arrival of three Sand Martins on the 23rd and four on the 24th with the first Swallows on the 26th.

Keith Turton

## OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2005

Little Grebe numbers remained constant throughout the month with a maximum of six on the 1st and 8th Great Crested Grebe were recorded into double figures most days with a best count of 15 on 25th, with three well grown juveniles in Milltown Inlet from early in the month. A superb summer plumaged Black-necked Grebe dropped in on the evening of the 19th giving very close views for the few people who were able to get, this is the first record of this species since 1997. Six Shoveler visited on the 4th with a single on the 22nd. The immature drake Goldeneye was still present at month end. Two Egyptian Geese which visited on the 19th was a welcome record. A pair of Gadwall on the 14th and a drake on the 19th were noted. Two Common Scoter on the 5th with a single bird on the 8th and twenty two Wigeon on the 4th made it a good month for wildfowl.

Both Sparrowhawk and Kestrel have been seen quite frequently, and Buzzard seen on almost a daily basis with a maximum of three being seen quite regularly. There are three candidates for bird of the month with regard to raptors, the first being a Marsh Harrier on the 10th, and on the 22nd a Honey Buzzard, and finally a Red Kite on the 29th must have been a great sight and although none of the birds stayed for more than a few minutes, all were very welcome additions to the year list. The first Osprey of the year put in an appearance on the 17th, but after an unsuccessful attempt to catch a fish it moved quickly through. A Red-Legged Partridge seen in Brackenfield on the 4th was a welcome record.

The very high water levels have meant very few waders have been seen, Oystercatcher, Redshank, Curlew, have all passed through as have two Whimbrel. Little Ringed Plover have been present all month with a maximum of four on the 12th and 13th. A Common Sandpiper which was first noted on the 16th was seen on at least six more occasions. Common Terns were noted from the 14th, and an influx of thirty Arctic Terns on the 25th must have been a tremendous sight, sadly they flew straight through.

Little Owl has been very difficult to find only being noted on two occasions, and a single Kingfisher sighting on the 10th. Great Spotted Woodpecker sightings were fairly regular, surprisingly Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was seen more than Green Woodpecker. The first Yellow Wagtail of the year showed characteristics of cinereocapilla or Ashy headed race. Hirundine passage continued throughout the month in good numbers particularly Swallow, with a maximum in the region of four hundred and fifty birds on the 8th. The first Swifts were recorded on the 24th when forty five were noted making their way north.

The first Willow Warbler was noted on the 2nd from four locations around the reservoir, the first Blackcap was noted on the 4th a very early Garden Warbler on the 8th, Chiffchaff numbers continued to increase and were well into double figures by mid month. A male Redstart found in the evening on Whitecarr Lane sadly had moved on less than ninety minutes after being found, the first Lesser Whitethroat was noted on the 20th and Whitethroat on the 22nd. A Wheatear on the 16th was another very good find but again proved to be a short stayer. Other sightings of note were Raven on the 2nd & 3rd, a Merlin observed flying through a mass of hirudines on the 14th, eleven Lesser Redpoll on the 25th and a single Tree Sparrow on the 9th, and the first Sedge Warbler on the 29th.

Keith Turton

## OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT MAY 2005 - 98-Species - 31 Days Covered

Little Grebe numbers were again fairly constant with a maximum of seven on both the 23rd and 24th, Great Crested Grebe maximum count was 17 on both the 7th and 9th. Cormorant numbers increased after the 9th with a best of thirty on the 27th. Two Mute Swans which visited on the 6th were still present at month end. A pair of Gadwall and a Shoveler was recorded on the 2nd, a Shelduck was noted on at least four occasions, the drake Wood Duck on at least three, and a drake Goosander on the 26th was a real surprise but the bird only stayed for ten minutes. Tufted Duck numbers were in double figures for most of the month with a best of nineteen on the 27th, on the same date, amongst the sixty six Mallard counted twenty nine were young birds ranging from tiny duckling (seven), through to almost adult size. Ruddy Duck were quite regular until mid-month but none were recorded after the 21st. Canada Geese numbers remained very low throughout, but increased by at least three goslings which were spotted on Plover Island towards the end of the month. Two Little Egrets were welcome visitors on the 24th but moved on within minutes.

Given that there were nine different raptor species seen during April this month's sightings have been very mundane, only Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, and Buzzard have been noted quite regularly. There were three sightings of Osprey on the 12th and 23rd and 29th but none of the birds stayed very long, not even attempting to catch a fish. The first Hobby of the year was seen on the 2nd, and on at least five more occasions with two birds seen displaying on some days.

The lower water levels have had a marked effect on the numbers of waders that were recorded, Oystercatcher, Little Ringed Plover with a maximum of four on the 23rd, and Ringed Plover, Curlew, Whimbrel, Redshank, Common Sandpiper, Dunlin with a maximum of four on the 26th which included one bird in apparent winter plumage, which gave rise to a lot of discussion, but in the end it remained a Dunlin. We had to wait until the 21st for the bird of the month which was a superb summer plumaged male Turnstone found in front of the members hide and giving tremendously close views throughout the day but sadly it had moved on by the next morning. The first Lapwing chicks (four) were noted on the 21st.

Only one sighting of Kingfisher during the month, but both Green Woodpecker on the 12th and 27th, and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker on the 2nd have been seen, together with Great Spotted Woodpecker which has been seen on at least five days. Hirundine passage continued throughout the month the best day being the 5th, with "circa" 2000 birds moving through, on the 31st a Swallow seen gathering mud appeared to be either (*ssp.transitiva*) or (*savignii*). The first Cuckoo was recorded on the 1st of the month and on at least seven more occasions up to month end. Common Terns continued to drop in but had a tendency to move quickly through a maximum of six were observed on the 27th, likewise the Arctic Terns including the twelve on the 4th were soon gone. A Kittiwake, also on the 4th was a very welcome record, as was the Little Tern recorded on the 26th.

The first Spotted Flycatcher was seen on the 7th, two days later than last year, and continued to be seen on a regular basis with three being noted from the 15th all in the area around Brackenfield Church, another bird was noted on the 27th on Hurst Lane. Warblers have been recorded in good numbers with Blackcap appearing to be the most numerous with a maximum of twenty nine on the 2nd, a best of seven for Garden Warbler on the 9th, also on that date 12 Willow Warblers were noted. The highest count for Chiffchaff was the seventeen seen on the 2nd, both Whitethroat and Lesser Whitethroat have been seen or heard regularly with best counts of eight and three respectively, and three being the highest for Sedge Warbler. The only other bird of note during the month was Tree Sparrow which has been seen in a bird club's members garden.

Keith Turton

## **OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT JUNE 2005 - 30 Days Covered-90 Species**

Little Grebe was difficult to locate throughout the month ,and was recorded only twice, but five noted on the 6th was a good record, Great Crested Grebe reached a maximum of sixteen on the 20th,Cormorant numbers were quite low until the 9th when fifty were recorded and they continued to be recorded well into double figures until month end. The two Mute Swans which were present for most of May are still with us, and Tufted Duck are still being recorded in double figures .One hundred and three Canada Geese were counted on the 20th which included thirteen juveniles. Mallard reached a high of fifty one on the 20th, and forty Grey Heron were recorded, again on the 20th. The splendid drake Wood Duck was seen on the 15th , and new for the month were three Ruddy Duck found on the 17th. Shoveler and Teal were also present on a few occasions throughout the month , a Goosander was present on the 23rd, but nothing outstanding in what has been a very quiet month for wildfowl.

A tremendous number of Buzzard sightings during the month, on an almost daily basis, with three a maximum on both the 7th and 12th, Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were noted on quite a regular basis, with Hobby sightings not nearly as frequent. The Osprey which made an appearance on the 8th, was the fifth record for the year and very welcome. A single Peregrine recorded on the 11th brought the number of raptor species for the month to six.

Another significant decrease in the water level did not attract the hoped for increase in wader species. The species recorded during the month included Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Ringed and Little Ringed Plover, Redshank, Dunlin, Common Sandpiper and Curlew. Little Ringed Plover were by far the most prominent of these and have been seen on almost a daily basis with nine on both the 14th and 20th, and eleven on the 22nd.Ringed Plover was seen on at least six occasions with a maximum of four seen on the 11th. Black-Tailed Godwit was seen on both 25th and 26th, but neither bird stayed.

Although very few gulls are recorded during the summer months, it is pleasing to be able to mention a superb adult Yellow-legged gull which has been present on at least five occasions from the 21st of the month. Common Tern made numerous appearances throughout the month four being the best count on the 21st, but sadly no attempt to breed as yet.

Little Owl was very scarce all month only being recorded once, Cuckoo was noted during the month and Kingfisher became very much easier to see. Green Woodpecker was noted on a couple of occasions. Good numbers of young Pied Wagtails have been noted almost on a daily basis with a maximum of twenty three on the 6th. Four Yellow Wagtails were observed flying north on the 23rd.

Most warbler species have been seen in reasonable numbers with Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, and Whitethroat, being most prominent. Sedge Warbler, Blackcap, Garden Warbler being noted to a lesser degree, Lesser Whitethroat on only a couple of occasions. A Reed Warbler found on the 18th in the reeds around the Kingfisher pond and still present on the 19th, was a very welcome addition to the year list. Spotted Flycatcher was well noted during the month particularly in Brackenfield Churchyard, with four a maximum on the 14th, and a record of nestlings being fed on the 20th.Two records of Raven on the 6th and the 12th were particularly pleasing.

Keith Turton

## **OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT JULY 2005 - 31 Days Covered - 91 Species**

Little Grebe has been difficult to find throughout the month, two being noted on the 2nd with singles on the 20th, 21st and 22nd. Great Crested Grebe were recorded into double figures for most of the month, with eighteen on the 11th. Cormorant numbers were fairly stable throughout with a maximum of fifty seven on the 8th. The two Mute Swans which were first noted on May 6th are still present. The resident flock of Canada Geese have remained constant with numbers into the high eighties for most of the month. Mallard, although difficult to count some days, appear to be stable with a maximum of one hundred and four on the 29th. A Little Egret which was first seen on the 9th was seen last on the 18th, two being present on the 15th. Grey Heron were very prominent around the waters edge with a maximum of twenty one present on the 4th. A drake Common Scoter was present for most of the 7th lingering in the vicinity of the dam wall, a single female Teal was noted in front of the members hide on most days early in the month, and a drake was seen in Wooley Bay on the 12th, with ten birds being seen in front of the members hide on the 13th. Three juvenile Goldeneyes were a pleasant surprise on the 9th, but only stayed that day. A drake Scaup found late evening on the 22nd, again in the vicinity of the dam wall, could not be located the next day.

Very few raptor sightings up to mid month, probably due to birds breeding, Kestrel being noted most with five seen on 12th, maximum count for Buzzard of three on both the 7th and 12th. Sparrowhawk sightings were fairly infrequent, only being noted on five occasions. The first sighting of Hobby for July was on the 20th, what could have been the same bird was seen on four occasions during the day. A juvenile Peregrine seen on the 25th was a really good find, and again was the first for the month.

The Yellow-Legged Gull was present almost on a daily basis throughout the month. The only other gull of note was the second summer Little Gull found on the 22nd which stayed until early evening, before flying off in a north easterly direction with seven Black Headed Gulls. Common Tern was present on a daily basis with a maximum ten on both the 4th and 22nd.

Much better news regarding waders with a total of fifteen species recorded during the month. Apart from the resident Little Ringed Plovers which have produced young, but sadly very few seem to survive for long with Carrion Crow seen on at least one occasion taking a chick. Common Sandpiper was seen quite frequently with a maximum of ten on the 21st. Green Sandpiper seen on six occasions, with two on the 30th. Adult Dunlin on the 7th with five on 22nd, Redshank were present on a number of occasions with four on 27th.

The five summer plumaged Black-Tailed Godwits which visited on 11th sadly only stayed until the evening before moving on, with a single bird present on the 22nd. A Ruff dropped in after the departure of the Godwits, and stayed for three days.

Bird of the month had to be the Pectoral Sandpiper which was found on the 14th, only the second record for Ogston. Although it could be fairly elusive it caused a great deal of interest during its short stay, it was seen until the evening of the 15th but sadly could not be found on the Saturday. The first Greenshank was noted on the 12th, but stayed for less than an hour, and a single bird was present on the 21st. A Sanderling located on the 22nd was a very welcome addition to the year list, and brought the number of wader species present on that day to eight.

Warblers continued to be seen fairly regularly with juveniles noted of Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, and Sedge Warbler. New for the year was a Grasshopper Warbler which was found near the hide path on the 20th, it could be heard singing in that area, and also from the oak tree on the West Bank. Other birds of note worth mentioning were the one hundred and seventeen Pied Wagtails which were seen going to roost on the 25th, and a Crossbill seen in the conifers just to the right of

Smithy Cottage on the evening of the 18th.

Keith Turton

## **OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 2005 - 100 Species - 31 Days Covered**

Little Grebe numbers were quite low throughout the month with one juvenile recorded, and a maximum count of three on 31st, whilst Great Crested Grebe were noted on most days with a maximum of twenty-four on 4th. Cormorant numbers were fairly stable throughout with a best count of forty-four on 3rd, Canada Geese were noted almost on a daily basis with a best count of two hundred and twenty four on 23rd, best count for Mallard was one hundred and seventy three on 22nd. Two Garganey found on the 2nd were a very welcome addition to the year list, incredibly three more were found on 19th but sadly could not be located on 20th, six Goosander visited on the 8th, whilst two Gadwall made an appearance on 23rd. Maximum count for Tufted Duck was the twenty-two recorded on 3rd., although Teal numbers were quite low early in the month a best count of twenty-four was obtained on 22nd and they continued to be recorded into double figures until month end. A single Ruddy Duck on 3rd was the first of four sightings during the month with two birds present on 30th. Two Little Egrets found on the 16th were recorded on twelve consecutive days, with a single bird present from the 28th until month end.

Both Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were seen on a regular basis with a best count of six for both species on the 15th, Common Buzzard was again well noted during the month with a maximum of eight in the air together on the 21st, with at least two juveniles reported. Hobby was seen more regularly than last month with two on some days and a best of three on 20th and again as with Buzzard at least two juveniles noted. An Osprey seen on 14th was the first record since early in June with others noted on the 19th, 20th, 23rd and 30th these together with five Peregrine sightings made it a good month for raptors. A male Goshawk recorded on the evening of the 27th and a Merlin on the 29th was the first record of both species for quite some time, and brought the number of raptor species for the month to eight.

With disturbance at a maximum whilst the new scrapes are under creation a wader species count of ten was very good, with Little Ringed Plover noted on most days with two juveniles recorded on 7th, Ringed Plover noted on eight days with a maximum of three on 22nd and one juvenile on 20th. Single Green Sandpiper recorded on the 12th, whilst Common Sandpiper was seen on more than six days with a maximum of three on 22nd. Lapwing numbers began to increase with eighty noted on 3rd, and four records of Curlew with a best count of ten flying North West on 31st. was a very good record. Dunlin on seven days with two juveniles noted on 13th and 20th, Common Snipe with six recorded on the evening of the 31st and a single Redshank were the other waders noted during the month. A Greenshank found on the 3rd was followed by a second bird on the 18th which was still present at month end spending the majority of the time on the North Bank and Wooley Bay areas.

Little Owl was again quite difficult to locate with a maximum of two on the 24th, whilst a record of Tawny Owl on 3rd was the first since March, both male and female birds could be heard calling in Milltown Inlet on the evening of the 26th. Green Woodpecker was noted on six days whilst Great Spotted Woodpecker was noted on eleven dates with a maximum of six on 29th.. Kingfisher was noted with much more regularity with at least sixteen sightings with probably the best sightings in Milltown Inlet and Wooley Bay areas.

A Garden Warbler on 10th was the only record of the month, Lesser Whitethroat was noted on nine days with a maximum of four on 2nd and a best count of eight for Whitethroat on 24th. Spotted Flycatcher was recorded on thirteen days with a maximum of nine on 29th, one hundred and twenty Linnets on both the 13th and 14th was a very good record. A good month for Yellow Wagtail sightings with birds noted on eight days with a maximum of five on both 21st and 30th, single Lesser Redpoll noted on two days with singles also of both Meadow Pipit and Siskin. The first two Whinchats of the year were recorded on 20th together with two Wheatears on the same date with singles of each species on 21st and 24th. The best month for quite a few years for

sightings of Crossbill with a total of twenty-one birds recorded from three different locations and a maximum of twelve from the Highoredish watchpoint, six Willow Tit records during the month with a best of two on 15th ,and finally a Reed Warbler found in the West Bank Car Park on the 31st brought the number of species recorded during the month to one hundred.

Keith Turton

## **OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT SEPTEMBER 2005 - 30 Days Covered - 107 Species**

Little Grebe were more numerous throughout the month with a maximum of eight on two dates, Great Crested Grebe reached a peak of twenty-six on 17th, whilst Cormorant had a best count of thirty-six on the 5th. The Little Egret which had been present during August continued its stay for the first fourteen days of the month, Canada Geese peaked at two hundred and thirty on the 5th, A single Greylag Goose was present on the 12th whilst a skein of one-hundred Pink-footed Geese were observed flying East on 11th. Shoveler was noted on two occasions, single Pochard on three dates, Tufted Duck numbers declined from sixteen at the beginning of the month down to single figures, Teal remained very constant during the month with a high of thirty-six on 18th. Ruddy Duck was seen on five dates with two a maximum on 18th, both Wigeon and Gadwall were also noted with a best count of forty-one and four respectively. The second Mandarin of the year was found on 22nd, whilst the drake Wood Duck was noted on at least five occasions. Mallard numbers reached one hundred and forty-six on 12th

There were many sightings of Common Buzzard with a maximum of three on more than four days, Sparrowhawk was seen regularly, Kestrel seen far less frequently, but Hobby was noted on almost a daily basis with a best count of four on two days with two juveniles seen quite frequently. Peregrine Falcon was noted on at least four occasions with both adult and juvenile birds being seen. Bird of the month and the second sighting of the year was a Honey Buzzard observed on the 21st. An Osprey was noted on 28th

Eleven wader species were noted during the month with Lapwing numbers reaching one-hundred and fifteen on 20th, whilst Common Sandpiper was seen on at least five occasions up to mid-month, Greenshank was also seen on five days. Singles of Ruff on 3rd and Oystercatcher on 9th were followed also on 9th by a Knot, a very welcome addition to the year list, but unfortunately the bird did not stay very long. There were two visits by Redshank on 4th and 9th, and Common Snipe were on the increase with ten being seen on 23rd. There were two records of Curlew with a single on 5th and three on 20th. A single Golden Plover seen on 24th was surprisingly a first for the year.

The adult Yellow-legged Gull was seen throughout the month, and two Little Gulls were enjoyed for a few minutes by two observers on 2nd, with a 1st winter bird on 28th. Common Tern was noted on two days with five seen on 25th, and Arctic Tern with two on 8th and a juvenile on 10th, also on same date and another addition to the year list were two Sandwich Terns which stayed for around twenty minutes, brought in no doubt by the atrocious weather conditions.

Passage of hirundines increased towards month end with two-hundred and forty Barn Swallows on 20th and seven-hundred and seventy five House Martins on 23rd, very few Sand Martins were seen with five a maximum on 11th. Both Little Owl and Tawny Owl were noted during the month, and Kingfisher was seen almost on a daily basis with a maximum of three on 27th. Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen very frequently, with four sightings of Green Woodpecker.

Yellow Wagtail was noted on at least seven dates during the month, Tree Pipit on both 4th and 9th was another notable addition to the year list, although both birds were fly-overs. Most of the warblers were still with us up to the month end with Chiffchaff the most prominent with a maximum of eighteen seen on two occasions, ten Blackcaps were noted on 9th, both Whitethroat and Lesser Whitethroat were recorded sporadically as was Sedge Warbler. Spotted Flycatcher appear to have had a good breeding year with a maximum of nine birds seen on 8th.

Wheatear was noted on at least four dates with two records of Whinchat on 15th and 16th, a single Lesser Redpoll was heard on 21st, whilst Siskin were being seen regularly with a best count

of twenty on both 11th and 22nd. The second Redstart of the year was found on 5th in the fields adjacent to the West Bank. A Skylark seen on 22nd was the first record for some time, with five noted on 28th, and two Raven sightings on 2nd and 12th brought an interesting month to a close.

Keith Turton

## **OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT OCTOBER 2005 - 31 Days Covered - 100-Species**

Little Grebe was seen on fewer occasions than last month, but a maximum of eight on the 9th, 10th, and 11th with up to four juveniles seen was a good record, Great Crested Grebe numbers was fairly constant throughout the month, whilst Cormorant was quite spasmodic with forty birds on 1st, and just a single bird on 2nd. Single figure records of Grey Heron during the month with a best count of nine on 3rd, whilst Mallard peaked at two hundred and five on 14th. Wigeon numbers remained quite low until mid-month, when they began to improve, reaching double figures on at least three occasions with a maximum of twenty-four on 19th, Tufted Duck was slightly better with a maximum of twenty-two also on 19th. Teal was the best recorded of the wildfowl and peaked at seventy-two on 12th, and Pochard had a best count of twenty-eight on 17th. A visit by three Pintail on the 12th was very welcome as was the single Shoveler on 13th with a single bird also present on 19th. Ruddy Duck was seen on a few occasions with three birds on 17th. Three Greylag Geese were noted on 9th, and a skein of c100 Pink-footed Geese were seen heading south east on 13th, a female Mandarin on 6th was the third record of the year, whilst four Goldeneye on 17th were the first since March. Bird of the month was the Slavonian Grebe found on 18th, although at first it lingered under the dam wall, it later gave tremendous views from in front of the members hide, and was enjoyed by many observers, and was last seen on 20th, this was the first record of this species since 1998, when one was reported 25th January (Birdnet Pager) offshore of the West Bank among the roosting gulls.

Nine sightings of Common Buzzard, ten of Sparrowhawk including two juveniles on both 2nd and 3rd, with just five Kestrel sightings. The juvenile Peregrine seen on 8th was a very good record, as was the Osprey seen for a few minutes on 2nd.

Twelve wader species were recorded during the month with Dunlin being noted quite frequently with a best count of five on 4th, two Ringed Plover were present on 8th with a juvenile bird noted on 15th. Greenshank was observed on two occasions on 4th and 16th, Golden Plover was seen on 4th and 14th, and a single Oystercatcher was present on 7th. There were singles of Common Sandpiper, Curlew and Redshank. Bird of the month was shared by a Grey Plover, (a very welcome addition to the year list), that paid a very short visit on 8th and a Knot (the 2nd of the year) on 6th, which many observers were able to see, whilst Lapwing and Common Snipe numbers increased during the month, with best counts of seventy-six and forty respectively.

A late record of Sandwich Tern on 6th which stayed less for than ten minutes, was bettered by an even later one on 24th, whilst there was one sighting of the adult Yellow-legged Gull on 12th, a 2nd winter Mediterranean Gull on 20th was a very good find, and was seen by many observers before flying off in the early evening.

The last hirundine sightings were of c forty-nine Barn Swallow and thirty-two House Martin heading South on 9th, also moving South on 9th were ten Pied Wagtail, five Chaffinch, forty-three Greenfinch, twenty Siskin, and nine Skylarks. whilst on 10th there were six Chaffinch, thirty-one Greenfinch, two Reed Bunting, twelve Redpoll and four Skylarks again moving South. A Rock Pipit on 16th was an excellent and very welcome addition to the year list, but unfortunately only seen by a single observer. Although most warblers have left there were two records of Blackcap, seven of Chiffchaff with a best count of five on 3rd, and a very late record of Willow Warbler on 8th.

The first Redwings of the Autumn were noted on 3rd when two birds were seen, and a maximum of circa five hundred on 26th, although the only record of Fieldfare were the four seen on 16th. Brambling were reported 17th and 18th with ten on 21st, and an influx of thirty-one seen in the Castle Farm area on the East Bank of the reservoir.

Other birds worthy of a mention during the month were two Raven on 12th, ninety-five Linnet on 7th, six Treecreepers on 11th, with single Tawny Owl noted on 11th, and three sightings of Little Owl on 3rd, 7th and 11th.

Keith Turton

## **OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT NOVEMBER 2005 - 30 Days Covered - 82 Species**

Little Grebe was seen quite frequently during the month with a best count of six on 2nd, Great Crested Grebe was recorded very sporadically with a maximum of nineteen on 7th, Cormorant was also under recorded with a best count of twenty-three on 23rd. Teal continued to be the most numerous with regards to wildfowl with a maximum of sixty-four on 2nd, Wigeon were recorded on a number of occasions with a best of forty-four on 19th, two Pintail on both the 8th and 9th were very welcome, as were the six sightings of Gadwall with two present on 7th four on 10th two on 11th and three on 12th, four were present on both 24th and 25th and a pair present on 27th. There were at seven visits by Goosander on 6th and 14th when single birds were present on each occasion, with five (three males two females) on 16th, three on 19th a single bird on 26th five on 27th and two on 30th. A Shelduck was present on 14th, Goldeneye was recorded on at least fifteen occasions, with a maximum of ten (one male, nine females) on 17th. Tufted Duck was noted fairly constantly with a best of fourteen on 19th. A Mandarin Duck noted on 2nd was the fourth of the year. Pochard were noted on a regular basis with a maximum of thirty-two on 19th. There were three Barnacle Geese present with the resident flock of Canada Geese on 21st 22nd and 23rd and 28th. A Pink-footed Goose was new on the 28 and remained until month end. The nine Whooper Swans recorded on 14th consisted of seven adults and two juveniles, and were observed in front of the public hide at 0.945 hours and were a very welcome addition to the year list.

Common Buzzard was noted on 6th 7th and 9th and 20th, with Sparrowhawk seen on 2nd 7th and 8th 15th and 16th, and Kestrel on 5th and 7th and two on 21st. The best sighting of the month with regard to raptors was of a pair of Peregrine Falcons seen on 12th, a single bird flew directly in front of the members hide on 26th causing panic along the whole of the West Bank as the bird made its way towards Brackenfield.

Two Little Owls were seen on 5th with a single bird on 19th and two seen again on 21st, whilst Kingfisher was noted on more than five dates with a best count of two on 1st and 21st. Green Woodpecker was seen on three occasions during the month on 9th 15th and 16th, with single birds on each occasion, whilst Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen on at least eleven dates with a maximum of two on 13th 14th and 21st.

Common Snipe are making use of the newly created wetland area on the West Bank, with eleven being noted on 21st, a Dunlin was present on the 14th, and one Woodcock was seen on 23rd flying towards Ogston Hall.

Four Jack Snipe together must have been an enjoyable sight for the two observers who saw them whilst gull watching, and were certainly a welcome addition to the year list.

The gull roost began to build up towards mid-month with thirty-five Greater Black Backed, fourteen Common Gulls, and three Yellow-legged Gulls (two Adults and one 3rd Winter) present on 14th. Four Yellow-legged Gulls (two Adults one 1st and one 2nd Winter) together with the First Caspian Gull of this Winter period (a 1st Winter bird) were present on 16th. Three Yellow-legged Gulls together with a 1st Winter Caspian Gull were present on 18th.

An adult and one 1st Winter Yellow-legged were in the roost on 23rd as were two 1st Winters on 24th, and two adults and one 1st Winter on 27th. An adult Mediterranean Gull was present on 26th, with possibly the same bird seen on 27th, also present on 27th were one 1st Winter Caspian Gull and two adult Yellow-legged Gulls together with a 1st Winter. The adult Mediterranean Gull was again in the roost on 29th. Three adult Yellow-legged Gulls were in the roost on 30th, together with two adult Mediterranean Gulls.

Two Skylarks were noted moving South on 6th and 9th, seven Fieldfares South East again on 6th with one hundred North West on 12th. Lesser Redpoll have been noted on more than six occasions with at least two sightings of Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*, last recorded in Derbyshire in 2003 and rated as a rare passage migrant and winter visitor, (source D.O.S. annual report 2004).

Brambling have been noted on a few occasions as have Linnet with best counts of two and twenty-five respectively, Siskin noted on just two dates. Nine Goldcrests on 7th was a good record as was the single Chiffchaff on same date, with another noted on 28th. Two Raven on the 29th were the first for some time.

Keith Turton

## **HARVEST MICE AT OGSTON RESERVOIR – NOVEMBER 2005**

The harvest mouse is Europe's smallest rodent, weighing only 4-6g (about the same as a 20p piece) and measuring only 5-7cm in length. Its fur is a reddish-golden colour on the upperside and white on the underside with a sharp division between the two areas. In contrast to other mice it has a much more rounded nose and smaller, more hairy ears. It also has characteristic bright beady eyes and a unique prehensile tail, which it can use to wrap around objects such as grass stalks in order to improve balance.

Largely nocturnal, harvest mice are extremely active climbers, living and feeding in the stalk zone of long grasses and reeds. Although typically associated with cereal fields, they are certainly not restricted to this habitat and can in fact be found almost anywhere where tall grass, reed or sedge species exist throughout the year.

Nests, which are round and usually 5-10cm in diameter, are used for both shelter and breeding purposes. They are built from the leaves of plants, which are shredded lengthways and woven together to form a tight ball. The nest remains attached to the stalks of the vegetation from which it is made and is lined with finely shredded grass or thistle down. Whilst in use there is no obvious entrance to the nest however once abandoned, a visible entrance hole may be left.

Harvest mice usually have two or three litters a year in the wild, between late May and October (or even December if the weather is mild). Most litters are born in August. There are usually around six young in a litter, which are born blind and hairless but grow extremely quickly. They become independent after about 16 days but continue using the nest. A fresh nest is built for each litter.

In autumn and winter the mice descend from the dying stalks of tall vegetation to live at ground level. During this time hedgerows become valuable sources of food and shelter, with nests of grass being built near ground level.

Based on the apparent decline of harvest mouse populations across the country, its vulnerability (particularly to adverse weather conditions and human intervention) and on the general lack of information about the current distribution and status of harvest mice in Derbyshire, the harvest mouse was highlighted as a locally important species in the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

Derbyshire Mammal Group have been working over the past couple of years to increase information on the harvest mouse in Derbyshire through undertaking surveys which concentrate on looking for abandoned summer nests. Thus it was that with the kind permission of Severn Trent Water, a group of Derbyshire Mammal Group members descended onto Ogston Reservoir on a crisp, clear but cold morning in November.

On the west bank of the reservoir, to the south of the Ogston Bird club hide, there is a large area of Reed Canary Grass, which is a favourite nest building material of harvest mice. Feeling confident we set to work, parting the stalks to look for the characteristic nests. It wasn't long before the first nest was found, perhaps appropriately by Ian Wildbur, a STW volunteer ranger and Ogston Bird Club member! The nest was sitting, perfectly formed, about 35cm above the ground and judging by its size, it was almost certainly a breeding nest.

Things just got better from there and in total 15 nests were found, many of which were breeding nests, all within a 100 metre stretch of the bankside vegetation. This indicates a good breeding population on site and further highlights the importance of the site for a wide range of wildlife.

These records are the first from this part of the county and therefore provide valuable information in the quest to improve our knowledge of this diminutive mammal in Derbyshire. Monitoring of the status of the population at Ogston over the next few years will also provide important information on population trends and the impacts of climatic variations on harvest mouse populations.

For more information on the harvest mouse and other Derbyshire Mammals, visit the Derbyshire Mammal Group website at <http://www.derbyshiremammalgroup.com>

## **OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT DECEMBER 2005 - 29 Days Covered - 76 Species.**

Little Grebe was seen fairly frequently with a maximum of seven on 4th, Great Crested Grebe was seen a little more regularly with a best count of twenty three again on 4th, Cormorant was recorded more regularly than last month with a maximum of thirty nine on 28th, Grey Heron had a maximum of six on 19th, the resident flock of Canada Geese peaked at one hundred and seventy one on 4th, and for some of the time had the lone Pink-footed Goose with them, which stayed until month end, a flock of some one hundred Pink-footed Geese were observed flying from south to east on 12th. Mallard and Teal appeared to be amongst the most numerous recorded wildfowl, with best counts of one hundred and twenty five and seventy respectively, Pochard were noted on a regular basis with twenty four on 31st, Ruddy Duck were seen on at least four occasions. There were numerous sightings of Goldeneye with seven birds seen on both 3rd and 4th, three Goosander ( 2males +1 fem ), were present on 10th with six present on 31st (4male+ 2female), a single Pintail visited on 3rd. A Little Egret which put in an appearance on 7th, was seen on at least six more dates, on 8th, 9th, 15th, 18th, 22nd 24th and 31st, A Water Rail caused a great deal of excitement when first seen on 7th, it was subsequently seen on 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 26th and again on 31st, whilst three Gadwall were present on 2nd (2males 1 female ), four on 4th, and singles on 25th and 26th. Wigeon had an early month high of forty five on 3rd, but were down to a single bird on 12th.

Raptor sightings were very scarce throughout the whole of the month, with Sparrowhawk seen on just four occasions on 12th, 19th, 24th and 27th, with single birds seen on each date, whilst Kestrel was noted on 3rd (single), 5th (two birds), and a single bird again on 12th.

Throughout the whole of the month things had been fairly quiet with not much to get excited about, then the Gull Roost gave us a candidate for bird of the month, when a 1st winter Glaucous Gull was found on 2nd

This was the first bird of this species of the second winter period, and only the third bird of this species this year, and was followed on 3rd by an adult Mediterranean Gull. There was an adult Yellow-legged Gull and a 1st winter Caspian Gull on 1st, and a possible adult Caspian Gull on same date, a 1st winter Yellow-legged and 1st winter Caspian were present on 3rd, two adult Yellow-legged Gulls together with two adult and two 1st winter Caspian Gulls on 4th, single 1st winter Caspian on 5th, two adult Yellow-legged Gulls and two 1st winter Caspian Gulls were in the roost on 7th. One adult Yellow-legged and one adult Caspian roosted on 10th. The 17th provided one adult Yellow-legged and three 1st winter Caspian Gulls. The roost on 29th had a Caspian Gull, a Glaucous Gull, two Iceland Gulls (the first birds of the second winter period), and what must definitely be the bird of the month, and possibly the year, a Kumliens Iceland Gull, with possibly the same bird also reported on 30th. The bird, if accepted by the D.O.S. Rarities Committee, would be a very welcome addition to the year list, and a tremendous climax to 2005. An adult Iceland Gull and a 1st winter Glaucous Gull were present on 30th, and 1st and 2nd winter Iceland Gulls and 1st winter and adult Glaucous Gulls were in the roost on 31st.

Kingfisher seen on at least ten dates, with a maximum of two on 24th, with Little Owl seen on five days. Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen very regularly on the feeders near the members hide, as were most of the common species, including Great, Blue and Coal Tit, together with Nuthatch and Jay. A Green Woodpecker seen on 23rd was the only sighting of the month, but was a welcome addition to a very depleted list for the month. A mixed flock of Redwings and Fieldfares circa one hundred were noted on 12th, eight Goldcrest on 19th was a good record, Bullfinch became very easy to see during the month and a maximum of five on 3rd was quite good, and two sightings of Reed Bunting on 12th and 19th.

Just six sightings of Common Snipe with a maximum of nine seen on 28th, a Redshank was present on 13th Lapwing peaked at thirty five on 5th, the only other wader to be noted was a Dunlin on 27th. Four Siskin were recorded on 12th, and five Lesser Redpoll were observed close to the public hide on 4th. A single female Blackcap was seen near Carr Pond on the guided walk on the 3rd, a single flyover Crossbill was observed in the same area on the 4th, and later during the gull roost on the same evening, observers were treated to the sight of a single flyover Waxwing , calling as it made it's way towards Brackenfield, but the bird was not located again.

Keith Turton