

CARSINGTON MONTHLY BIRD REPORT – NOVEMBER 2013

Highlights: Great Northern Diver, Bewick's Swan, Jack Snipe and Caspian and Iceland Gulls.

With water levels the same as last year and no adverse weather conditions, it is surprising to find that this November's species count is the lowest for over 10 years. It may of course be due to a noticeable lack of records and observer time this month, but it may simply be that there was very little bird movement to produce the usual range of species. An adult Great Northern Diver arrived on 9th, probably the returning bird that left on 9th May, which will hopefully stay again until next May. There were 2 adult plus 2 juvenile Bewick's Swan, looking like a family party, on 14th and again on 29th. Pink-footed Geese movements noted were flocks of 170 and 60 travelling SE on 10th and 45 SE on 22nd. Wildfowl maximum counts were: 7 Little Grebe on 10th, 32 Great Crested Grebe on 17th, 18 Cormorant on 10th, 21 Mute Swan on 10th, 9 Greylag Geese on 20th, 96 Wigeon on 10th, 7 Gadwall on 27th, 173 Teal on 10th, 162 Mallard on 10th, 1 Pintail on 4th, 2 Shoveler on 11th, a big 361 Pochard on 17th, 265 Tufted Duck on 10th, 5 Scaup from 23-29th at least, 1 Common Scoter on 23rd, 16 Goldeneye on 26th, 6 Goosander on 24th and 1020 Coot on 10th.

Raptor records were few, with a Sparrowhawk eating a Goldfinch on 6th, 3 Common Buzzard on 4th and 2 Peregrine on 6th. Waders included: a Ringed Plover 1-2nd, 305 Lapwing on 17th, 2 Dunlin on 22nd, a site rare Jack Snipe seen twice from the Wildlife Centre on 22nd, 16 Snipe on 9th, 2 Redshank on 16th, a Green Sandpiper occasionally 6-13th and a Common Sandpiper still around on 25th.

Gulls were interesting, with a first winter Mediterranean Gull in the roost on 5th and a colour-ringed Lesser Black-backed Gull on 6th proving to have been ringed in Gloucestershire in 2007. A Black-headed Gull was killed and eaten on 6th by the winter resident Yellow-legged Gull, which then went on to kill and devour a Little Grebe in front of many observers in Sheepwash Hide on 17th. The gull roost held both a sub-adult Caspian Gull and a distant immature Iceland Gull on 18th and 2 Kittiwake on 11th.

485 Woodpigeon flew over during a visible migration count on 6th and Collared Dove numbers around the Ranger Base increased to a site record of 34 on 21st. A Kingfisher was seen at many locations and 2 were at Sheepwash Hide on 6th and Paul Stanley Hide on 20th. A flock of 11 Skylark flew over northwards on 17th and 20 Meadow Pipit were on the dam wall on 6th. Thrush numbers, boosted by the autumn influx, were 15 Blackbirds in the Wildlife Centre fields on 26th and 40 Fieldfare plus 300 Redwing were noted between Wildlife Centre and Sheepwash on 29th. A late, or wintering, Chiffchaff was near Paul Stanley Hide on 13th and a leucistic Coal Tit was around Lane End feeder all month. Many small Starling flocks were noted and 400 birds passed Sheepwash Hide on 11th. There were 24 Tree Sparrow on Lane End feeder on 25th and 46 Chaffinch plus 3 Brambling flew over during a half hour visible migration count at Hopton End on 1st. There were 20 Siskin on 22nd, 3 Lesser Redpoll on 13th, and 13 Bullfinch were counted between Millfields and Sheepwash on 4th.

92 species recorded compared with 95 in November 2012, 99 in 2011, 95 in 2010 and 105 in 2009.