

BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE NATURE RESERVE AND SURROUNDING AREA

MARCH 2012

March was a fairly mild month with only one very wet day but there was a period of ten days mid-month when early morning mists hampered viewing. 96 species were recorded (best is 99) with 17 new for the year taking the year list up to 104 with the 100th species for the year being logged on the 28th. The close fishing season started from the 16th and there was a couple of transgressions but generally it was adhered to and on the 29th four new tern rafts were put in position on the Middle and Far (west) Flashes.

Five **Shoveler** (three males) were seen on the 1st when 16 **Buzzards** could be seen at once from the mound, **Lapwings** peaked at 125 and a male **Stonechat** was a nice find. The same day the first Butterfly of the year, a **Small Tortoiseshell** was seen. 122 **Wigeon** and five **Shoveler** (four males) were counted on the 2nd whilst four **Roe Deer** the same day was the highest count during a month when sightings were fairly regular (six dates). Seven male **Pochard** on the 3rd was quite a good count for the reserve and the same day two **Peregrines** were present, the first of six sightings during the month, two **Weasels** were also seen on the 3rd (with singles on three other dates mid-month). A **Dunlin** and a **Jack Snipe** were present on the 4th, three early **Grass Snakes** were seen on the 5th and a **Curlew** left to the north on the 6th.

There was the a bit of a lull until the 11th when the first **Chiffchaff** of the year was heard singing and the first **Brimstone** and **Red Admiral** of the year were recorded whilst the following day the first **Comma** and **Peacock** were also seen along with a **Stoat**. A female **Marsh Harrier** reported on the 13th becomes the earliest ever for the reserve. Two **Dunlin** were seen on the 15th (and 16th with one remaining until the 18th) and the same day the first **Sand Martin** of the year was seen (flying south), **Chiffchaffs** became a daily feature from this date, **Tree Sparrow** peaked at eight and **Bullfinches** peaked at 14. The first **Little Grebe** of the year appeared on the 16th when 120 **Fieldfare** and 40 **Lesser Redpolls** were present whilst on the 17th 14 **Buzzards** could be seen from the mound and seven **Sand Martins** were present. A **Red Kite** was over the reserve on the 18th when six **Snipe** was the highest count of the month, a **Curlew** and 30 **Meadow Pipits** flew north. A male **Wheatear** was present on the 19th and five red-head **Goosanders** flew north on the 21st.

Grey Lag Geese peaked at ten on the 22nd and the same day a female **Merlin** flew north. The first **Blackcap** of the year was found on the 23rd and a **Black-tailed Godwit** flew north on the 24th. The first **Little Ringed Plovers** of the year were three on the 25th when 14 singing **Chiffchaffs** were counted. A **White Stork** flew over the mound on the 26th (and 27th), what a shame it was an escaped bird, magnificent nevertheless. The same day a **Chiffchaff** was found which was a mixed singer, giving renditions of both **Chiffchaff** and **Willow Warbler** song. Another **Little Ringed Plover** was present on the 27th and a **Knot** was present briefly on the 28th whilst on the embankment the first **Willow Warbler** of the year was seen. Also on the 28th there was an excellent count of 12 **Grass Snakes**. 48 **Gadwall** and four **Oystercatchers** were counted on the 29th, the same day a **Little Ringed Plover** was also present and the first **Swallow** of the year was seen. **Golden Plover** peaked at 140, eight **Sand Martins** flew north on the 30th whilst on the 31st 20 **Wigeon** were still present, a **Curlew** flew north, three **Swallows** were logged and an early **House Martin** was seen.

Mark Beavers