

## BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE NATURE RESERVE AND SURROUNDING AREA

MAY 2012

A determined observer effort during the first three weeks and daily coverage throughout paid dividends as the previous May record for species recorded was smashed when 106 species were logged. The only other year when a 100 plus species has been recorded was 2010 when 101 were seen. The year list moved on to 124, ten behind the best ever year. It remained cool unsettled throughout the month and heavy rain on the 9th / 10th resulted in another 4'6' flood which caused the loss of many nests.

Single **Hobbies** were seen on eight days during the month with a pair on a further five dates with all but one record coming in the first 16 days of the month. A similar situation prevailed with **Peregrines** with a single bird logged on 16 dates and a pair on three dates with daily sightings between the 4th and 16th. A pair of **Common Terns** was present all month with one or two additional birds on four more dates and single **Little Owls** were logged on 19 dates whilst the singing **Cetti's Warbler** was heard daily. **Wheatears** were a daily feature until the 22nd (apart from on the 18th) with up to five a day seen, many of which were **Greenland Wheatears** and up to seven **Yellow Wagtails** were also seen daily. Amongst the mammals up to eight **Brown Hares** were seen on 23 dates, a **Roebuck** was present on the 7th with a female **Roe Deer** on seven dates, on three of which she was accompanied by a single fawn.

Two pairs of **Shelduck** flew north on the 1st with a 20 minutes of each other and the same day there was a count of 11 **Great-crested Grebes**. Also on the 1st single **Golden Plover**, **Bar-tailed Godwit** and **Whimbrel** were seen, a **Curlew** was heard, 100 **Swallows** was the highest count of the month and a **White Wagtail** was present. The male **Wigeon** from April was last seen on the 2nd when a **Common Sandpiper** was present and an adult **Kittiwake** was on the pools for just over an hour before it flew off north. Six **Common Terns** and a flock of 12 **Arctic Terns** (the largest ever flock recorded at Carr Vale) also flew north on that date, whilst there was also a count of eight **Yellow Wagtails** and a **Siskin** flew north. The event of the year however did not concern passage birds on the 2nd but a new breeding species for the reserve, for on this date and the 3rd whilst the male **Cetti's Warbler** was singing loudly another was watched nest-building; a welcome addition to the breeding diversity at Carr Vale Nature Reserve. A female **Shelduck** was present on the 3rd, the date that the last pair of **Teal** of the winter was finally recorded and when a **Water Rail** was heard calling (with records for a further five dates between 10th and 21st). Also on the 3rd three *tundrae* **Ringed Plovers** were present and the last Snipe of the winter was seen. A male **Shelduck** and the **Golden Plover** were seen on the 4th when two **Common Sandpipers** arrived for a two day stay and 90 **Swallows** were over the flashes.

Four **Grey Lag Geese** were seen on the 5th (and 8th) on which date a **Red Kite** flew west, the first **Garden Warbler** of the year was found as was a stunning male **Whinchat**, which stayed until the following day, the **Wheatear** total reached a record 11 and six **Siskins** flew north. A female **Marsh Harrier** flew north and five **Oystercatchers** were present on the 6th when eight **Wheatears** were still present and two **Grass Snakes** were seen. Nine **Mute Swans** on the 8th included seven that flew north and the same day another **Common Sandpiper** was present, the first **Cuckoo** of the year was recorded (with single birds on nine more dates) and a **White Wagtail** was seen. The pair of **Pochard** from April was seen on four dates until the 9th when 14 singing **Chiffchaffs** were located. Other totals for singing birds on the 9th included 14 **Willow Warblers**, two **Lesser Whitethroats**, seven **Common Whitethroats** and ten **Sedge Warblers**. 33 **Gadwall** on the 10th included nine females and the same day a **Red Kite** flew south-east, the only **Dunlin** of the month was noted, a **Common Sandpiper** commenced a four day stop-over and 11 **Common Terns** was the second highest count for the site

A pair of **Shelduck** left north at 0800 on the 11th to be replaced by a female which flew in from the north just over an hour later whilst early in the morning another adult **Kittiwake** flew north. A male **Shoveler**, three singing **Grasshopper Warblers** and the first **Common Blue Damsel** of the year were present on the 12th. 13 **Mute Swans** were present on the 13th (and again on the 19th) when a **Little Egret** was also seen and another **Red Kite** flew south-east and **Common Sandpipers** increased to two. The first brood of **Mallard** (eight) was found on the 14th when there was a touch of exotica with a male **Cape Shelduck** on Meadow Flash. A male **Shoveler** was seen on the 15th (remaining until the 17th) when a **Ringed Plover** was also present whilst on the 16th a different **Ringed Plover** was present, 14 **Sedge Warblers** and nine **Reed Warblers** were singing and the first **Large Red Damsel** was found. One of the highlights of the year was an adult summer plumaged **Little Gull** which was present briefly early on the 17th before it departed north-east. The following day two **Ringed Plovers** flew north, a **Common Sandpiper** was found (remaining until the 20th) and an extra three **Common Terns** flew east whilst on the 19th two **Cuckoos** were seen chasing each other. The Vale Angling pair of **Great-crested Grebes** hatched four young on the 20th although the brood had declined to three by the month end.

It then went fairly quiet but three **Common Terns** flew north on the 21st and a **Holly Blue** was found on the 24th. Once again **Swallowtail Butterflies** were released by a misguided individual, this time at least 13 insects and two of these were seen on the 28th. A pair of **Teal** was present on the 29th but far more unusual was a **Hawfinch** on the Stockley Trail by Vale Angling pond. A rare sunny day saw a clutch of insect records on the 30th including five **Dingy Skippers**, six **Large Red-eyed Damsels**, four **Large Red Damsels**, 25 **Azure Damsels** and four **Four-spotted Chasers** whilst on the 31st a **Red Kite** and **Curlew** were over the reserve. A good end to a busy month.

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