

BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE NATURE RESERVE

February 2013

It was a cold month with periods of snow and a lot of the time the pools were almost completely frozen. Even so we managed to record 81 species and the year list moved on to 93, respectively four and two below the best ever years. We suffered a further spate of vandalism when paint was thrown all over the observation mound. I was away for most of the month so it fell to Ian to continue with our daily recording.

Three **Mute Swans** were seen on the 1st with four on the 2nd after which just a pair was recorded daily whilst on the 17th first a herd of 15 **Whooper Swans** flew north in the morning followed by a very impressive flock of 59 that also flew north later in the afternoon. The only **Pink-footed Goose** flock was one numbering 75 that flew west on the 18th whilst the only **Grey Lag Goose** record concerned a singleton that was present between the 15th and 17th. **Canada Geese** numbers ranged between 35 and 78 with an isolated high of 105 on the 6th on which date they were joined by a lone **Barnacle Goose**.

A pair of **Shelduck** was seen on 15 dates between the 10th and the 28th, three-figure counts of **Wigeon** were a daily feature with a peak count of 163 on the 28th whilst **Gadwall** were recorded on 25 dates, with double-figure counts on six dates, the highest being 16 on the 4th. Double-figure counts of **Teal** were made on all bar two dates during the month (18 counts of 20 or more) although toward the end of the month their numbers started to decline, the highest count being an isolated 62 on the 17th whilst the highest count of **Mallard** was 39 on the 3rd. A male **Shoveler** was seen on the 11th and 15th, **Pochard** remained in reasonable numbers peaking at 13 on the 18th whilst **Tufted Ducks** were recorded in double-figures on 20 dates with a high of 22 on the 2nd. **Goosanders** continued to be very scarce with the only birds of the month being three (two males) on the 27th.

Red-legged Partridge numbers declined although 25 could still be found on the 7th but there wasn't a single record of **Grey Partridge** during the month. The maximum count for **Pheasant** was 17 on 21st, **Cormorants** were logged on all bar two dates with a maximum count of ten (including a flock of nine flying north) on the 28th. The highest count of **Heron** was just three on four dates. The first **Great-crested Grebe** of the year was seen on the 5th with other singletons on the 15th, 17th and 28th.

A **Red Kite** flew south-east on the 17th, **Sparrowhawks** were recorded on only eight dates during the month (nine bird / days), **Common Buzzards** were recorded on 25 dates during the month (48 bird / days) with a maximum count of six on the 21st and 28th whilst **Kestrels** were recorded on 20 dates during the month (31 bird / days), with a maximum count of three on the 28th but unusually there was not one record of a **Peregrine** during the month.

A **Water Rail** was seen on four dates and heard on two more, **Coot** peaked at a lowly 34 on the 8th and the first **Oystercatcher** returned on the 17th, remaining to the month end. A **Ringed Plover** was on Sutton Scarsdale Flash on the 21st and 22nd. **Golden Plover** were logged in double-figures on 11 dates but there were two counts in excess of 100 with 125 on the 17th and 170 on the 18th. **Lapwings** were around in reasonable numbers with three-figure counts on 23 dates with a notable high of 457 on the 19th and one to four **Snipe** were recorded on 15 dates with a maximum count of five on the 27th. A **Woodcock** was reported on the 18th but unusually no **Redshank** had returned by the end of the month.

Three-figure counts of **Black-headed Gulls** were recorded on all but one date, the highest count being 455 on the 24th and the Polish ringed (5P4) adult **Mediterranean Gull** was present again on the 4th. One to three **Common Gulls** were seen on 11 dates, **Herring Gulls** were mainly present in double-figures although 170 were present on the 7th when 150 **Great Black-backed Gulls** were also counted with 130 of the latter still present on the 27th.

41 **Stock Doves** on the 8th was the highest count of the month, the **Little Owls** that could usually be seen opposite the mound disappeared but one was seen at Deepdale Farm on the 21st and 28th and a **Tawny Owl** was seen on the 22nd. Two **Kingfishers** were reported on the 7th with single birds on five further dates, and a **Green Woodpecker** was logged on six dates.

One or two **Jays** were seen on five dates and 30 **Jackdaws** were present on the 17th. One or two **Goldcrests** were seen on seven dates and a single **Coal Tit** was recorded on seven dates also. Six **Willow Tits** were noted on the 14th but more notable was a flock of 100 **Skylarks** that had congregated in response to snowy weather. The **Cetti's Warbler** was heard calling on four dates between the 5th and 25th but two were calling simultaneously on the 6th. The highest count of **Long-tailed Tits** was only ten on the 5th and 26th whilst **Fieldfare** peaked at 40 on the 2nd, 32 **Redwings** were counted on the 8th on which date six **Mistle Thrushes** were also seen. A **Grey Wagtails** were seen on five but **Siskins** became very scarce with just five log entries and a peak count of only 121 on the 5th. Similarly **Lesser Redpoll** also became very difficult to find with log entries on three dates and a maximum count of 12 on the 6th. **Bullfinches** continued to show well at the bird tables and the peak count was 11 on the 17th, whilst **Yellowhammers** peaked at 17 on the 5th of which a flock of 14 flew south. Up to 11 **Reed Buntings** continued to attend the feeding station on the mound during the month.

There wasn't much mammalian activity to report during the month apart from **Hares** being recorded on five dates (up to four) although there was a report of a Roe Deer on the 28th.

Mark Beevers