

BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE AND SURROUNDING AREA-MARCH 2011

A skein of 300 **Pink-footed Geese** that flew north on the 1st proved to be the last of the winter and the same day a pair of **Shelduck** put in the first of twelve appearances, a **Peregrine** was also seen and there was another sighting of a **Common Redpoll**. Two **Ringed Plover** were on Sutton Scarsdale Flash on the 2nd when 40 **Lesser Redpolls** were on the Peter Fidler Reserve. Two **Ringed Plover** were present on the flashes on the 3rd when the only **Grey Wagtail** of the month arrived for a three day stay and two **Roe Deer** were reported. A male **Shoveler**, a **Dunlin** and a **Curlew** were present on the 4th when two **Lesser Redpoll** flocks totalled a very respectable 80 and hidden amongst these were three **Common Redpoll**. The following day 450 **Golden Plover** and a **Stoat** were seen. Three **Great-crested Grebes** on the 6th were the first of the year whilst the same day three **Shelduck** were present and a **Curlew** flew north. 130 **Wigeon**, nine **Buzzards** and 80 **Herring Gulls** on the 7th were the highest counts of the month for those species and the same day a third **Oystercatcher** arrived for a two day stay. A splendid flock of 22 **Whooper Swans** flew north on the 8th, a male **Shoveler** was also present on that date with a pair on the 9th when a female **Merlin** was seen and two **Ringed Plover** flew north. Also on the 8th a **Curlew** left to the north and 23 **Siskins** that flew south was the highest count of the month.

A second pair of **Oystercatchers** was present on the 11th along with 500 **Golden Plover** (also on the 12th), the only **Kingfisher** of the month, 60 **Fieldfare**, 80 **Linnets**, 30 **Lesser Redpoll**, two **Common Redpoll** and 70 **Yellowhammers**. A **Little Ringed Plover** on the 12th appears to be the first of the year for the county and the following day the first **Chiffchaffs** (two) of the year were seen. The first **Brimstone** and **Small Tortoiseshell** were seen on the 15th. 110 **Wigeon** on the 17th was the last three-figure count of the winter when a third **Oystercatcher** was also seen, **Lapwings** peaked at 400 (also 18th) and two **Roe Deer** were seen again. A **Red Kite** was a magnificent sight for a lucky observer on the 18th when two **Little Ringed Plovers** were also seen and **Chiffchaffs** had increased to six. The first **Sand Martins** of the year were three on the 19th when 45 **Goldfinches** were still in a flock.

A **Peregrine** was seen on the 20th, an extra **Oystercatcher** was present on the 21st (and 24th) along with two **Little Ringed Plovers** and 75 **Fieldfare**. A **Little Ringed Plover** was present on the 22nd after which birds were then present daily. A **Curlew** flew north on the 23rd when there was a count of four **Redshank** and three **Sand Martins** after which the latter were recorded daily. Also on the 23rd a **Common Lizard** was seen, something that is very rarely, if ever, recorded at Carr Vale. The warmth also encouraged four species of Butterfly to fly with the first records of **Peacock** and **Comma** of the year plus six **Small Tortoiseshells** and another **Brimstone**. A male **Wheatear** on the 24th was the first of the year and the same day saw the first sighting of the **Red-eared Slider (Terrapin)**. A male **Shoveler** and four each of **Little Ringed Plover** and **Redshank** were present on the 26th when 40 **Sand Martins** were present. The same day the earliest ever **House Martin** was seen and it was then seen most days until the end of the month and another male **Wheatear** was found. The first **Little Grebe** of the year was seen on the 27th on which date six **Goosanders** flew south, a lucky teenager photographed another **Red Kite** and the first **Water Rail** since November was heard calling from the sewage works. Also on the 27th 48 **Meadow Pipits** flew north, both female **Stonechat** and female **Wheatear** were in front of the observation mound in the afternoon, 38 **Fieldfare** flew south-west, **Chiffchaffs** further increased to ten and a party of six **Jays** was an unusually high number for spring. 26 **Sand Martins** and 65 **Meadow Pipits** flew north, 49 **Fieldfare** flew north-west and a **Roe Deer** was seen on the 28th when a very early **Large White** was also seen. Four **Little Ringed Plovers** were present on the 29th and 110 **Golden Plover** were still in fields just west of Meadow Flash on the same date. Also on that date at least 38 **Sand Martins** were logged, the first male **Blackcap** and **Willow Warbler** of the year appeared and the warmth induced no less than seven **Grass Snakes** and another **Common Lizard** to appear. A **Weasel** was also seen on the 29th. Four **Goosander** flew north on the 30th on which date the first **Swallows** (four) of the year were seen. A lone male **Shelduck** was seen on the 31st but bird of the day was an adult **Kittiwake** that was seen flying north. Also on the 31st two male **Blackcaps** were present.

Mark Beevers

