

BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE NATURE RESERVE
AND SURROUNDING AREA.

MARCH 2014

95 were logged during our daily coverage in March and the year list moved on to a lowly 98, the first time for a number of years that we have not reached 100 species for the year by the end of the month. The Sand Martin bank was finished off and the cattle pen was built. After a wet February March was a much drier month and the water level in Meadow Flash remained constant at around 30 inches. Grey Lag Geese were logged on 19 dates in single figures, one or two Pochard were seen on 14 dates, Red-legged Partridges and Cormorants were logged in single figures on 13 dates and daily respectively, Sparrowhawks were seen on 16 dates, Common Buzzards were seen on all bar one date with double-figure counts made on ten dates, Water Rails were logged on 20 dates although only seen on five, the pair of Oystercatchers were missing for the first two days of the month but thereafter they were seen daily and Snipe were also logged daily. Up to three Redshank were recorded on 17 dates, Common Gulls were seen on 15 dates whilst good numbers of both Herring and Great-Black-backed Gulls remained. A single Kingfisher was logged on eight dates, Green Woodpeckers were recorded on 22 dates, Great-spotted Woodpeckers were logged on ten dates including a drumming bird, Coal Tits were logged on 12 dates with two males on the 30th, Chiffchaffs were recorded daily from the 3rd whilst one, occasionally two Siberian Chiffchaffs were logged on 21 dates, single Grey Wagtails were seen on eight dates. Meadow Pipit passage was logged on 16 dates, no More than four Siskins were recorded over seven dates with Lesser Redpolls being seen on nine dates and Bullfinches were seen daily. One or two Hares were seen on five dates.

A Great-crested Grebe had returned by the 2nd with a pair the following day. 160 Lapwings were counted on the 3rd amongst which there was also a Redshank whilst out on the fields 250 Great Black-backed Gulls were loafing and a Peacock Butterfly was seen. The first Little Grebe of the year was seen on the 4th (and on five more dates until the 11th) when a female Goosander left south and there was a count of six Red-legged Partridges. Another female Goosander flew south on the 5th, 129 Wigeon on the 6th was the highest count of the month and the same day a Peregrine was seen over the reserve (with a more distant sighting the following day), a Tawny Owl nest was discovered at Mill Farm and a flock of 12 Lesser Redpolls was found. Two Curlew flew west on the 7th, a Firecrest was found on the embankment on the 8th, it being subsequently seen on six dates between the 10th and 21st, this being the first for ten years. A pair of Shelduck was present on the 9th, a day which saw four Brimstones, a Comma and six Small Tortoiseshells on the wing whilst a second winter Caspian Gull was seen on the 10th.

A male Shoveler and two Golden Plover were present on the 11th when three Dunlin also flew north-east, the first Migrant Chiffchaff was seen and a flock of 40 Yellowhammers was a nice surprise. Also on the 11th two Roe Deer were seen. Two Water Rails were calling on the 12th when a Tawny Owl was seen and Rock Pipit flew north on the 13th when a female Roe Deer put in an appearance. A female Goosander was present on the 14th when the second winter Caspian Gull showed up again and the first Red Admiral of the year was seen. 100

Wigeon on the 14th was the last three-figure count of the winter and 20 Golden Plover were seen on the 16th when a Stoat was seen. A Tawny Owl was seen on the 17th when a flock of 80 Meadow Pipits was grounded and a Little Egret flew south on the 18th. 94 Redwing were counted on the 19th when an immature male Peregrine was over the reserve (and one was seen on the 21st). Three Oystercatchers, six Common Gulls and 250 Herring Gulls were present on the 20th when the first two Sand Martins of the year flew north.

A Curlew flew west on the 21st, two Water Rails were again calling on the 22nd and a Dunlin left south on the 23rd but the bird of that day was an adult Mediterranean Gull that spent five minutes on the reserve before flying south-east, although a first winter Caspian Gull was also notable on that date too. Also on the 23rd 170 Fieldfare flew north and a Stoat was seen whilst Cormorants peaked at eight on the 24th. On the 25th two flocks of Pink-footed Geese came down in murky conditions and remained for the rest of the day. The same murky conditions were no doubt responsible for putting down three Avocets but unfortunately shortly after they were found something spooked them and they disappeared south-east. Also on the 25th 12 Golden Plover flew south and 18 Snipe was a good count. Two Pink-footed Geese remained on the 26th until the month end and the same day a male Shelduck left south whilst a female Marsh Harrier left north-west after ten minutes on the reserve. Also on the 26th a Peregrine flew over which appeared to have the remains of jesses attached to its leg, Snipe increased to 26, five Curlew left north-east, three Kingfishers were chasing around, a pair of Wheatears was found (these remaining until the 28th with the male still present on the 29th). A female Merlin flew south and an adult Kittiwake flew north-east on the 27th which also proved to be the last date for a Siberian Chiffchaff. Nine Grey Lag Geese on the 29th was the highest count of the month, the same day a male Goosander was seen and the first Little Ringed Plover of the year flew north. Two Tawny Owls were found in different areas also on the 29th and the same day there were counts of ten Sand Martins and 17 singing Chiffchaffs. The first Blackcap of the year was also seen on the 29th with a male present the following day whilst at least six Brimstones were also counted on the 29th. Another Little Ringed Plover was present on the 30th when ten (nine adults) Common Gulls were present, 43 Meadow Pipits going north was the highest count of the month and two female Roe deer were seen whilst 45 Wigeon remained on the 31st.

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