

BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE NATURE RESERVE
AND SURROUNDING AREA

MAY 2011

May was another excellent month for the reserve with a total of 98 species recorded for the month, the equal second highest May total, the highest being 101 last year. Three species were added to the year list, which rose to 130, the second highest end of May count. Once again we suffered from a spate of vandalism and theft the most serious of which was the theft of the hinge mounts from the shutters on the observation mound rendering them inoperable. On a more positive note several classes of local school children enjoyed a visit to the reserve early in the month.

Six **Grey Lag Geese** and two pairs of **Teal** were seen on the 1st (the latter remained until the 2nd) when a male **Peregrine** was also seen. Also on the 1st a **Ringed Plover** arrived for a five day stay, four **Garden Warblers** were singing as was a **Coal Tit** and a **Weasel** was seen. There was a count of ten **Common Buzzards** on the 2nd when the **Peregrine** was seen again but birds of the day were a **Bar-tailed Godwit**, which then stayed until the 5th and a brief **Greenshank**. A **Herring Gull** and four **Common Terns** were also present on the 2nd as was a **Cuckoo**, 72 **Sand Martins** and 45 **Swallows**. Insects on that date included eight **Large Red Damsels**, six **Azure Damsels**, two **Four-spotted Chasers**, the only **Brimstone** of the month, a **Red Admiral** and a **Grass Snake** was also reported. Seven **Yellow Wagtails** were counted on the 3rd which was the last date for the long-staying **Wheatears**. Four **Oystercatchers** and a **Common Sandpiper** were present on the 4th (with both still on the 5th) along with a **White Wagtail**. A **hybrid goose** on the 5th (and 6th) appeared to show characteristics of **Pink-footed Goose** and **Ross's Goose** and a **Whimbrel** was also seen on the 5th. The first **Hobby** of the month was seen on the 6th after which there were sightings on 13 dates and also on the 6th **Dingy Skippers** were found in two areas. A distant **Little Egret** flew south on the 7th and later that day a female **Marsh Harrier** was seen from the observation mound and three **Roe Deer** were present (with one or two on five other dates). Seven **Grey Lag Geese** were present on the 8th when seven **Barnacle Geese** flew north-east having earlier flown north-east over Ogston Reservoir and another **Red Admiral** was seen. A pair of **Shelduck** came in briefly on the 9th on which date a **Cuckoo** was reported and 40 **Sand Martins** were present on the 10th.

12 singing **Sedge Warblers** were counted on the 11th with nine **Reed Warblers** in the Peter Fidler reed-beds, 13 singing **Common Whitethroats** and 14 male **Reed Buntings**. Insects on the 11th included four **Large Red-eyed Damsels**, five **Blue-tailed Damsels**, six **Common Blue Damsels** and a 32 emerging **Four-spotted Chasers**. A **Ringed Plover** was seen on the 12th, a pair of **Teal** appeared on the 13th (and was still present on the 14th) and a female **Marsh Harrier** dropped in for 25 minutes on the 14th. Five **Little Ringed Plovers** were on the flashes on the 15th when a **Curlew** was present for a short while and the same day a male **Grey Wagtail** was an unusual record for the time of year. Also on that date an **Osprey** caught a fish during the late afternoon and what is likely to be the same bird was seen again for 45 minutes the following day before it departed west. A party of five **Black-tailed Godwits** that had earlier been at Pleasley Pit spent an hour and forty minutes on the Middle Flash on the 16th and the same day there was a count of 80 **Swifts**. An additional **Oystercatcher** and five **Little Ringed Plovers** were present on the 17th (the **Oystercatcher** remaining to the 18th) as was a **Grass Snake** and six **Yellow Wagtails** were present on the 18th. A **Red Kite** circled the flashes before flying east on the 20th on which date a **Peregrine** flew south.

An extra pair of **Common Terns** was present on the 21st, a **Cuckoo** was seen on the 22nd and a third **Oystercatcher** was present on the 24th on which date there was a count of 45 **Black-headed Gulls** and the **Cuckoo** was seen again. The only **Dunlin** of the month was seen on the 26th whilst on the 27th a **Hedgehog** was believe it or not an unusual record for the area. A male **Wigeon** was present on the 28th when a **Grasshopper Warbler** had recommenced singing whilst on the 29th an extra **Oystercatcher** joined the resident pair on the 29th and another **Cuckoo** was seen. A **Redshank** on the 30th was the first for three weeks and a **Tree Sparrow** was seen on the 31st.

Mark Beavers.