

BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE NATURE RESERVE AND SURROUNDING AREA

APRIL 2011

April was an excellent month for the reserve with a record total of 108 species for the month. This is the seventh time that we have broken a century in April but record for any month is still 110 in September. As you would expect with such a high monthly species total the year list also marched on reaching 128, the highest ever end of April count. Needless to say we recorded a number of scarce species for the reserve the rarest being the fourth record of **Wood Warbler** whilst **Common Tern** and **Common Redstart** were both seen earlier than ever before. Other rarities included **Barnacle Goose** (12th record), **Red Kite** (14th record), **Osprey** (two), **Whimbrel**, **Greenshank** and two flocks of **Arctic Terns** including the largest ever. All in all a good month. However it was soured by a spate of wanton damage and vandalism the most serious of which was the destroying by fire of one of the most popular benches by the main reserve pond, an event which was reported in the Derbyshire Times. Once again can I ask that if anyone witnesses antisocial behaviour or acts of damage on our reserve (including the Peter Fidler Reserve) can you please report it to the Police on 03451233333. Even if the Police are unable to attend to a specific incident the fact that the incident has occurred will be logged and if a pattern of events start they may be able to address the problem.

39 **Wigeon** were still present on the 1st and a male **Pochard**, 40 **Sand Martins** and a male **Wheatear** were seen on the 2nd. A pair of **Shelduck** was present on 3rd (and 4th) and the same day a five hour vigil produced a hoped for **Osprey** flying north. Also on the 3rd 200 **Golden Plover** were present and 53 **Fieldfares** flew north-west. The first **Yellow Wagtail** of the year was seen on the 4th when a male **Wheatear** was again seen. A single **Shelduck** remained on the 5th when a male **Pochard** was also seen then on the 6th the first **Common Tern** of the year arrived for a three day stay becoming the earliest ever record for Carr Vale. The same day a male **Common Redstart** also went into the record books as the earliest ever arrival for the reserve. **Wigeon** had declined to five by the 7th when **Little Ringed Plovers** peaked at six and **Sand Martins** built up to a creditable 235 during the morning. Also on the 7th a total of 78 **Meadow Pipits** flew north and a **White Wagtail** was also caught up in the movement, it remaining until the following day. A male **Wheatear** was also present on the 7th and 8th and the last **Fieldfare** and **Siskin** (both singles) of the winter were also logged on the 7th as was a **Stoat** and three **Brimstones**. Four **Oystercatchers** were present on the 8th and an intensive search of the valley netted a fantastic count of nine **Grass Snakes**. Also on the 8th the regular party of three **Roe Deer** put in an appearance (with one or two on six other dates during the month). Ten **Grey Lag Geese** and a pair of **Shoveler** were present on the 9th on which date a **Water Rail** was discovered, the latter remaining until the 13th whilst also on the 9th the first (two) **Sedge Warblers** of the year were found along with a **Reed Warbler**, which equalled the earliest ever arrival date for that species. A **Comma** was also seen on the 9th. The last five **Wigeon** of the winter were seen on the 10th when two **Common Terns** turned up (and stayed until the 11th) whilst two male **Wheatears** on the 10th were the start of an unprecedented run of daily records to the month end and seven **Grass Snakes** were counted in the area.

An immature male **Peregrine** was seen on the 11th when the first **Common Sandpiper** and **Common Whitethroat** of the year were seen. 40 **Sand Martins** were seen on the 12th on which date the only **Lesser Redpoll** of the month flew south. An **Osprey** attempted to fish on Meadow Flash on the 13th when a female **Great-spotted Woodpecker** was an unusual spring record and a reeling **Grasshopper Warbler** was the first of the year. The male **Peregrine** appeared again on the 14th along with another **Common Sandpiper** whilst **Wheatears** peaked at four on this date and a **Weasel** was seen. A **Tawny Owl** was seen on the 15th when another **White Wagtail** was also found as was a **Reed Warbler** after

which there were daily records of the latter. A breeding season recce was carried out on the 15th which produced some good totals of singing birds including 19 **Blackcaps**, 17 **Chiffchaffs** and 24 **Willow Warblers**. Three pairs of **Grey Partridges** were found on the 16th when the last **Golden Plover** of the winter was logged as was a **Common Sandpiper**, a female **Common Redstart**, and four **Wheatears** whilst there were also reports of a **Water Vole**, a **Comma** and a **Common Blue** in the area. Nine **Yellow Wagtails** and a different **White Wagtail** were present on the 17th and there was still a flock of 17 **Yellowhammers** to be seen. A **Barnacle Goose** was seen on the 18th when four **Oystercatchers** and two **Curlews** were also present along with a very brief **Greenshank**. A **Green Sandpiper** was an unusual spring visitor on the 19th and the same day the first **Cuckoo** of the year was seen. Singing birds on the 19th included 22 **Blackcaps**, a record count for the area. Two **Common Terns** were present from the 20th after which one to three were seen on most dates whilst also on the 20th 37 **Sand Martins** flew north.

Six **Yellow Wagtails** were around Middle Flash on the 22nd when the first **Lesser Whitethroat** and **Garden Warblers** (two) of the year were singing. A **Common Gull** flew east on the 23rd but the bird of the day was a singing **Wood Warbler**, just the fourth record for the area. Also on the 23rd 12 **Large Red Damsely** exuviae were discovered on the Peter Fidler Reserve. A **Red Kite** drifted north-east on the 24th, another **White Wagtail** was seen on the 25th and a **Ringed Plover** on the 26th was the only one of the month. A **Shelduck** was seen on the 27th, a **Common Gull** was seen on the 28th whilst the 29th saw a male **Shoveler**, a party of seven **Arctic Terns** that flew north-east and the first **Swift** of the year. The first **Hobby** and **Whimbrel** of the year were seen on the 30th and another party of eight **Arctic Terns** (the largest ever at Carr Vale) flew north-east. Also on the 30th a **Lesser Whitethroat** was found.

Mark Beevers