

BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE NATURE RESERVE  
AND SURROUNDING AREA

SEPTEMBER 2013

As the summer drew to a close the annual problem of shooting around the edge of the reserve reared its head and once again had an impact on wildfowl numbers, particularly the Canada Geese and Mallard numbers. Further fishing transgressions occurred including five youths who were seen fishing around Middle Flash on the reserve one afternoon, as well as others that fished the south side of Meadow Flash. The new viewing screen overlooking Tony's scrape was vandalised and two youngsters were caught setting fires on the reserve. Ah don't you just love school holidays! On a more positive note we had an excavator on site for a week early in the month to re-profile the banks of the flashes, removing a lot of the invasive *juncus* (although we could do with more removing) and we also started work on the construction of a Sand Martin bank, although that was curtailed once it was deemed that planning permission was required. Despite all the problems September was a very good month with 109 species being recorded, the result of many hours spent carrying out visible migration watches and the year list moved on to 148.

Two Hobbies were seen on the 1st and one or two were then seen on 22 dates until the last on the 28th. Water Rails were also regular during the month with one or two, mainly heard, on 22 dates. 300 Canada Geese were in the area until late on the 2nd when a party of shooters on the reserve edge disturbed them and not surprisingly the seven Grey Lag Geese were also last seen on the 2nd (although up to four on seven other dates). Three Shoveler were seen on the 2nd as was a juvenile Great-crested Grebe whilst a Tawny Owl was heard calling in the evening. A juvenile Pintail on the 3rd equalled the earliest ever arrival date and a pair of Grey Partridge the same day was well received given that they were the first to be recorded since mid-June. Also on the 3rd the Pink-footed Goose from August was last seen. A juvenile Shelduck flew north-west with a group of five Cormorants and a Nuthatch was calling from the riverside on the 4th. A Greenshank was heard on the 5th on which date 79 Swallows flew south along with the first three Meadow Pipits whilst on the 6th 150 house Martins were overhead. The pair of Partridges was seen again on the 7th, this time accompanied by a brood of at least seven unfledged young, a welcome sight indeed. A flock of c22 Wigeon flew north on the 7th (with single figure counts on 13 dates until the 19th and double figures daily from then on). The same day two juvenile Pintail commenced a three day stay before they too were flushed by gun men on the 9th as was a male Pochard. A Peregrine was seen on the 8th with subsequent sightings on eight dates (at least two, possibly three birds being involved, a juvenile male, adult male and possibly an adult female) and the same day a Greenshank was present along with a juvenile Redshank whilst the ringers caught 17 Chiffchaffs, ten Blackcaps and a Common Whitethroat. The 9th was a good day before the firearms turned up with first a Tree Pipit flying south, followed by a juvenile Little Egret, which was present briefly before flying south. Bird of the day was undoubtedly a dark juvenile Honey Buzzard which flew low in front of the mound to the back of the reserve Pool where it was chased back towards the observers by one of the resident Buzzards, before heading off south-west. Also on the 9th 16 Common Buzzards could be seen in the air at once, a late Little Ringed Plover flew south, the juvenile Cuckoo was seen again and two Sky Larks flew south-east.

A Barnacle Goose was seen on the 10th when the juvenile Cuckoo was seen for the last time and two Sedge Warblers were also seen. A Ringed Plover was heard only on the 11th on which date 46 Meadow Pipits flew south and a Green Sandpiper was seen on the 12th. Two male Pochard were

brief visitors on the 13th when 76 Swallows flew south, a late Whitethroat was seen along with juvenile Whinchat and Wheatear and seven Grey Wagtails that included a party of four which flew south. The Pink-footed Goose reappeared on the 14th, a day which was marred by a local Partridge shoot taking place quite close to the reserve. The beaters put up 85 Red-legged Partridges and managed to kill about a dozen. Also on the 14th the first two Golden Plover of the autumn were seen, Lapwings reached a high of 170, a Little Owl was seen for the first time since July, 150 House Martins were present again, a late Reed Warbler was found and 41 Greenfinches left the roost on the mound. Southerly movement on the 15th included five Golden Plovers, 77 Swallows, 55 House Martins, a Tree Sparrow and 64 Meadow Pipits. Despite the disturbance around the reserve Mallard peaked at 170 on the 16th when 23 Teal and a Shoveler were also seen. On the 17th an adult Common Gull was found, 86 Meadow Pipits flew south and 80 Goldfinches were present whilst on the 18th the Pink-footed Goose was seen again, another 159 Meadow Pipits and eight Siskins pushed through south, the latter being the first of the autumn. 15 Cormorants on the 19th was a good count for the site, the Pink-footed Goose was seen again on the 20th when Gadwall peaked at 33 (also on 21st) and the same day 12 Sky Larks and two Siskins flew south.

Two Ruff came in briefly but then flew off strongly west on the 21st on which date a Green Sandpiper was present, two Yellow Wagtails and 99 Meadow Pipits flew south, the Goldfinch flock increased to 100 and two more Siskins flew south. 20 Cormorants were counted on the 22nd on which date a Red Kite flew south-west and 189 Swallows flew south. Three Pintail were brief visitors on the 23rd but left after just five minutes heading north-west and a female Shoveler was also present on that date. Also on the 23rd 380 Swallows, 162 Meadow Pipits and what was thought to be the last Yellow Wagtail of the year flew south. Two Pintail and a Green sandpiper were present on the 24th whilst birds moving included 35 Sky Larks south-west and four Sand Martins south (last of the year). On the 25th a Red Kite flew south, a Grey Plover was heard calling as it flew south in thick mist and the first Redpoll of the autumn flew south. Five Grey Partridges were seen on the 26th when a Grey Plover flew west, a Dunlin flew north as did a flock of 12 Ruff, setting a new record for this species. The 26th was also the first date for a 2nd winter Caspian Gull, which subsequently came in briefly on the following two days and the same day 110 Swallows flew south and the first Redwing of the autumn was found. 410 Pink-footed Geese flew north-west in seven skeins on the 27th when 142 Red-legged Partridges were counted, a new record for the site. Also on the 27th ten Snipe were counted, an adult Yellow-legged Gull was found, 47 Sky Larks flew south-west and 134 Swallows flew south. Two Redwings were present on the 29th but the excitement of the day was the tussle between a Weasel and Brown Rat, the latter losing. The lone Pink-footed Goose was back on the 30th when Wigeon peaked at 46, Gadwall reached 45, Teal numbered 24, another Redwing was recorded, the first Rock Pipit of the autumn put in an appearance and 44 Greenfinches left the roost.

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