

BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE NATURE RESERVE
AND SURROUNDING AREA

DECEMBER 2011

December was a fairly mild month with a cold snap mid-month, making it a very different month to December 2010. The month past without incident save for the weekly Partridge shoot, which caused some disturbance. More worryingly during the run up to Christmas it became obvious that somebody else was shooting either on the reserve or very close too it as evidenced by the lack of wildfowl on occasion (one morning just two Wigeon and five Gadwall were present) and the presence of injured Canada Geese.

Water Rails were recorded on eight dates and the resident **Cetti's Warbler** was logged on seven dates during the month. The highest count of **Goosander** was five on the 1st (with three daily until the 9th) and the **Green Sandpiper** from November was seen again on the 2nd (and 3rd) whilst the male **Peregrine** was seen on the 4th. Three **Whooper Swans** were seen on the 5th when the last **Little Grebe** of the year and the only **Pochard** of the month were seen and six **Shoveler** were present from the 8th. A first winter male **Goldeneye** was first seen on the 11th and a **Woodcock** was flushed by a dog-walker on the 12th. **Shoveler** peaked at seven on the 13th and the **Peregrine** was seen on the 14th (and 16th). The young **Goldeneye** was back for a two day stay on the 16th when a male **Goosander** flew north and a check of all the bird tables produced counts of 11 **Willow Tits**, six to eight **Tree Sparrows** and 13 **Bullfinches**. Bird of the day would have been a **Red Kite** but it was seen drifting north over the M1 near Duckmanton and wasn't picked up from the mound, although it was most likely viewable from there.

A flock of 13 **Cormorants** flew south on the 17th when 37 **Reed Buntings** were counted into roost whilst on the 18th 163 **Golden Plover** and 30 **Meadow Pipits** were seen. On the 19th 70 **Pink-footed Geese** flew west whilst a skein of 310 flew east and **Wigeon** reached an autumn high of 120 on the 20th when 40 **Pied Wagtails** flew up from the sewage works. Seven **Tree Sparrows** were behind Mill Farm on the 21st, the male **Goldeneye** reappeared on the 23rd (still present on the 24th) and a lone **Pink-footed Goose** was amongst the **Canada Geese** from the 24th. A **Grey Lag Goose** joined the **Canada Geese** on the 25th when a male **Goosander** flew north-west. A **Woodcock** was seen on the 26th on which date **Herring Gulls** peaked at 130 and **Great Black-backed Gulls** reached an impressive total of 280. The highlight of the day on the 27th was the discovery of an adult winter plumaged **Mediterranean Gull**, the 2nd record for December and only the fourth full adult for the site. Other birds that day included 80 **Pink-footed Geese** north-west, the **Goosander** from the previous day and the adult male **Peregrine**. **Teal** peaked at 74 on the 28th and three more **Pink-footed Geese** arrived on the reserve on the 30th on which date 350 flew west, a flock of 30 **Long-tailed Tits** was at the southern end of the recording area and 12 **Willow Tits** were scattered around the feeding stations. The last day of the year produced a flock of 14 **Cormorants**, the male **Peregrine** and the calling **Cetti's Warbler**.

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