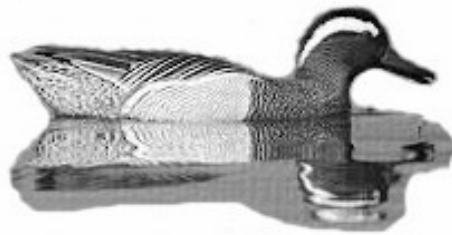


Risley Moss
Local Nature Reserve

Bird Report
2001



Garganey

Compiled by Rob Smith

LITTLE GREBE

Casual First bird of year heard calling from mossland on 20/3. Two pairs present on 12th April, thereafter only one pair seen/heard calling from various parts of the mossland. Breeding was not confirmed. Last bird heard calling on the fairly late date of 29/10.

GREAT BITTERN

Rare A bird was flushed from dense cover in the early afternoon of the 26th November by a male Peregrine Falcon. The bird flew off to the SE calling in alarm as it went. This is only the 2nd time this species has been recorded on the reserve [previous 27/1/90].

CORMORANT

Regular diurnal N/S movement in winter

Peaks:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
	91	45	22	22	1	0	1	0	10	10	40	38

EUROPEAN SHAG

Rare A bird flying erratically NE on 22/2 was an unusual and first record for the reserve.

LITTLE EGRET

Rare On 12/5, two birds came off one of the mossland scrapes, circled and flew out SE, climbing as they went. A first for the reserve.

HERON

Resident Up to two birds recorded in every month. Exceptionally 4 were present on 19/6 and 3 present on 16/6, 20/7, 3/8, 23/8.

PURPLE HERON

Rare A bird of this description was observed heading north west across the mossland @ 11.37am by 2 regular bird watchers on 23/5. (would class this as a 'Possible' as both observers gave a written description which requires further ratification) (description to follow)

MUTE SWAN

Casual Unusually, an immature was present on the mossland on 24/3 with an adult there on 20/9 and 2 adults & 3 immatures landing briefly on 28/10 before flying out NW. Otherwise most records refer to overflying birds with peaks of 4 adults on 5/6, 16/9

BEWICK SWAN

Rare The rare sight of 4 birds landing on the mossland pools on 23/10 was a first for the reserve. The birds remained for About 15' & then flew off NW. A bird was also seen flying low to the south on 6/1.

WHOOOPER SWAN

Rare Six flew over the mossland on 12/2, 11 flew West on 23/10 and 1 flew NE on 18/11.

PINK FOOTED GOOSE

Overflying Birds noted landing on adjacent farmland 21/10. Last birds recorded on 1/3, earliest returning birds noted on 21/9

Peak counts:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
	60	100	50	0	0	0	0	0	36	600	300	42

LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

Rare A juvenile bird was noted on the mossland on several occasions in the company of Greylag Geese between 4 - 7 December. A first for the reserve.

GREYLAG GOOSE

Scarce Unusually, a bird was present on the mossland pools on 16/10 and an impressive 11 birds there between 2 & 7 December.

A total of 32 birds were noted overflying the reserve on seven occasions with a peak of 10 flying west on 23/6 and 13 landing on adjacent fields on 13/8

SNOW GOOSE

Rare Unusually two (feral) birds flew South East over the reserve and circled the landfill site on 31/10. Previously only recorded in March 1983.2 flew SE, circled landfill site, 31/10

CANADA GOOSE

Resident Birds seen on the reserve in every month to September. Up to 4 pairs present during the breeding season with 1 pair producing two young which were soon predated. Late summer interest focuses on the post breeding flocks which flight in after dark to moult.

Typically: 13 on 10/8 rising to 128 on 16/8 and a record count of 260 by 22/9

BAR HEADED GOOSE

Rare A bird of this description flew over the mossland on 3/10 and again on 17/11 (previously only recorded in September 1992) and was possibly same escapee that frequented Pennington Flash on a number of occasions.

SHELDUCK

Casual One noted on a mossland pool on 18/11 otherwise the few records referred to overflying birds which included 2 on 27/2, 4 flew south on 14/3 - 4 flew west on 17/4 - 3 flew east on 7/9.

WIGEON

Scarce Previously only recorded in 1987 & 1988. A spate of autumn records produced 3 (2m/1f) on 25/9 - 4 on 26/9 - 7(2m/5f), in eclipse on 15/10 - 3 on 13/10 - 2 on 19/10.

GADWALL

Casual The recent trend of casual visits continues. 1 pair present on 1/3, 27/5, 26/7 - 2 flew NE on 18/8 - a male on a pool on 5/9.

TEAL

Resident Number of autumn birds down on previous year. Breeding success greatly improved increasing to 6 pairs (2pr in 2000). First brood noted on 25/5 and the last (6 young @ 10 days) on 16/8. Peak Nos include:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	70	60	24	10	-	-	30	36	40	40	55

MALLARD

Resident Number of birds into autumnal & moult roost after dark, consistent with 2000. Breeding success slightly improved to 4 pairs (cf 3 pairs in 2000). First brood noted on 16/4 last on 19/6. Peaks inc:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	15	4	-	-	-	-	68	116+	20	7	4

PINTAIL

Scarce Unusually an adult female was noted on a mossland flash on 2/10 otherwise a group of 12 flying west on 30/8 were the only records.

GARGANEY

Rare Previously only recorded in 1983. A male came in with Teal on 22/10 with a pair present the following day on 23/10

SHOVELER

Casual A male was present on 18/2. A pair was subsequently seen prospecting around the mossland on many dates between 11/3 and 4/5. Two males & a female noted on 15/4 with singles seen on 1/9, 27/9, 3/12 & 9/12.

POCHARD

Rare A group of 12 birds flew west on 10/1. On 19/2, 13 males and an immature were seen on one of the mossland scrapes. A first for the reserve and further indication of the success of the rewetting scheme.

TUFTED DUCK

Casual Regular spring & summer visitor most years, occasionally breeds. Unusually 1 pair were present on 26/1 and 2 pair on 13/2. Main build up began in March and varied between 1pr (8/3) and 4pr (7/4, 3/5) with 12(7m/5f) present on 23/4 and various combinations thereafter. Only 1 pair bred, a female with 6 young noted on 9/7 and the last bird seen was on 2/9.

HONEY BUZZARD

Rare A dark brown bird was noted moving south against headwind on 21/8, it dropped down and flew low over southern boundary & then climbed high to head out.

MARSH HARRIER

Casual An interesting spring movement began when an immature female flew north on 17/4 - an adult female stayed down on the mossland for 2 hours on 26/4 - ad/fem seen again on 7/5 - ad/fem with dark grey central tail feather & no yellow on wing on 10/5 - and a different ad/fem bird on 11/5.

On return passage saw, a fem/imm briefly over site on 3/8 & 20/8 (seen tussling with goshawk as they moved S) - juvenile bird mobbed by swallows as it flew west on 28/8 - ad/male flew off south east on 16/9 - fem/imm over the NE corner mobbed by rooks on 9/10.

HEN HARRIER

Casual An improvement on last year. All four sightings were of birds passing through the area and included an adult male flying NW on 19/4 - a female/immature flying low & slow west on the relatively late date of 1/5 - a juvenile male showing well over Floods & in front of the tower chased by ad/fem sparrowhawk on 23/10 - a ringtail over mossland flying south in driving rain on 5/12.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER

Rare Bird came in on a low glide from south, circled mossland (harassed by lapwing & crows) & then landed in grass. 30/5.

GOSHAWK

Rare Occasional birds seen between 1982 & 1988 and then absent until 2000, followed by a spate of sightings [10] in 2001 which began with:

A brief sighting of a bird which appeared to be displaying over the NE wood before it flew off east on 8/1 - female seen on edge of mossland on 12/3 - a male was over the mossland for c5' before drifting south on 11/4 - male flew strongly NW on 27/7 - a female flew south tussling with female/immature Marsh Harrier on 20/8 - a juvenile bird flew out of south west wood harassed by 3 Sparrowhawks (2m/1f + magpies) on 6/9 - same again on 10/9 being harassed by 5 magpies, after much chasing juv suddenly turned back sharply on magpies & took a bird down to the ground - adult male circled mossland & then drifted North on 28/9 - adult male chased ad/male Sparrowhawk before heading off north on 12/10 - adult male hunting low over mossland Harrier like with deep, slow wing beats on 1/11.

SPARROWHAWK

Resident Single birds & pairs noted regularly, 3 & 4 birds frequently, 5 birds occasionally, 6 different birds noted during August. Sightings in Bird Days [bds] as follows;
Jan =13bds - Feb=9bds (5 different birds noted during month) - Mar=39bds [inc a female gliding s.e. owl like over moss] - Apr=49bds [inc 1pr + 3 later] - May=55 bds - June=26bds [2 pairs present] - July=28bds[inc lge fem killed lapwing in mid-air, 23/7] - Aug=70bds [inc 2m juv/1fem juv, 2fem/1m ad(6 birds) - male o/h followed by 50 swallows, 16/8 - 3m/1f fighting 2 kestrels, edge of woods, 27/8] - Sept=36bds [2m/1f took turns to harass/mob juv Goshawk on edge of woods, 6/9] - Oct=12+bds - Nov=11bds - Dec=7bds

COMMON BUZZARD

Casual Sightings on the increase. Mostly in air over/on edge of reserve, occasionally landing on mossland trees. Singles regularly, 2s frequently, 3s/4s occasionally, 5 in air together on 7/5. Sightings recorded in Bird Days (bds); Jan=2bds - Feb=11bds [3s on 14/2, 28/2, 11/4] - Mar=13Bds [3 on 1/3] - Apr=18bds [3 on 11/4] - May=23bds [3 on 12 &19/5 - 5 in air together, 7/5 - June=16bds [3 on 4/6] - July=15bds - Aug=48bds [3 on 23 & 28/8][up to 5 birds id by plumage/age] - Sept=30bds [4 on 26/9] - Oct=9bds - Nov=2bds - Dec=2bds

OSPREY

Rare A bird flew North on 22/4, this is only the 5th time the species has been noted since records began and twice in 2 years.

KESTREL

Casual Birds bred in area and spend much time hunting over mossland and woodland edges. Singles noted regularly, Pairs frequently, 3s frequently in mid-summer when 2 juveniles were present. [Behaviour included; Birds hunting "Hobby" fashion ie hawking insects in mid-air on many occasions - a female being harassed by 4 magpies, 10/8 - 2 fighting with 4 sparrowhawks, 27/8 - 2 accompanied buzzard across mossland, 14/9 - one tussling with buzzard, 24/9]. Monthly bird days [bds] were: Jan=10bds - Feb=3bds - Mar=9bds - Apr=32bds - May=20bds - June=6bds - July=40bds - Aug=49bds - Sept=39bds - Oct=18bds - Nov=4bds - Dec=no records.

MERLIN

Casual Interesting range of sightings with birds absent only in February/May/July. Where identified, records involved only male & female/immatures. Interestingly two sightings occurred in

June [a female/immature being chased by Hobby on 2/6 and a male over the mossland on 6/6].
Bird days were: Jan=2bds - Mar=2bds - Apr=3bds - June=2bds - Aug=2bds - Sept=4bds - Oct=10bds -
Nov=2bds - Dec=4bds.

HOBBY

Summer The reserve is becoming a regular stronghold with birds showing well on many days from 1st May to the late date of 17th October. Four separate birds noted and included adults & sub adults. Behaviour included; talon claspings on several occasions - chasing sparrowhawk - consorting with kestrel - chasing snipe. Bird days were: May=43bds - June=12bds - July=27bds - Aug=38bds [all sub adults except one] - Sept=10bds - Oct=4bds.

PEREGRINE FALCON

Casual Birds seen most years, but a definite increase in records over last two years. Sightings involved adults & immatures, males & females and included birds perched on/hunting over mossland, stooping or making shallow passes at prey. Behaviour included; putting up woodpigeons and corvids - aerial display [28/3] - mobbing buzzard [9/8] - flushing Bittern & Jack Snipe on mossland [26/11]. Records (in bird days) were: Jan=3bds - Mar=3bds [1fem + 2 aerial display] - June=2bds - July=1bds - Aug=1bds - Sept=2bds [lge fem + male high o/h] - Oct=9bds [singles x 7/pair x 1] - Nov=7bds [singles x 6] - Dec=6bds [ad/fem x 2/ ad/male x 4].

PARTRIDGE

Casual Birds occasionally roost on part of the mossland where they can be heard in the evenings most months.

QUAIL

Rare A bird was flushed from the central area of mossland by a Sparrowhawk on 26/7. This is only the second time this species has been confirmed as being present.

PHEASANT

Casual Occasional birds seen/heard around the edge of the mossland and once near the Woodland Hide [19/3].

WATER RAIL

Casual Noted on 5 occasions only [13/3, 23/3, 1/8, 10/8 & 22/8]

CORNCRAKE

Rare A first for the reserve. Following an overnight fog, 2 birds were initially heard calling to each other for c10' from outside the southern boundary. A short while later at least one bird had entered the reserve and was heard calling just up from the bottom coppice for a further 5'.

MOORHEN

Resident Six pairs bred with 1 brood of 2 young (ca4 days old) being seen on 4/8.

OYSTERCATCHER

Casual Previously restricted to birds overflying the reserve. Since 1998, birds have begun using the flooded scrapes on occasions throughout the breeding season. Typically, first noted overflying on 15/3, last on 7/7. Singles noted on scrapes 16/4, 2/5, 9/6, 17/6, 2/7 & 7/7 with pairs noted on scrapes 1/6, 6/6 & 19/6.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER

Summer/Casual Species noted regularly during breeding season with birds displaying as early as 24/4 and peaking at 3 pairs on 31/5. With conditions undergoing change only 2 pairs attempted to breed [cf 4 pairs 1997], but only 1 pair managed to rear 1 young which subsequently disappeared very quickly. Unusually as if to emphasise the changes only 1 record for July!

Earliest noted on 30/3, last 4 flying south on 19/8. Birds present; Mar=1bds - Apr=7bds [inc 1 untidy bird with 1 leg, 20/4] - May=41bds [inc 3 present on 14/5, 29/5, 31/5 - 3 pairs on 31/5] - June=28bds [inc 3 on 6/6, 4 on 3/6, 5/6, 15/6 (female feigning injury), immature on 24/6] - July=1bds [16/7] - Aug=6bds [1 on 7/8 & 8/8 - 4 over S, 19/8].

RINGED PLOVER

Scarce Second year in succession & only 5th year birds noted over/on reserve since records began. Details were: 1 calling o/h, 15/4 - 4 on 6/5 - 1 off edge of Maudsleys Ridge, 3/6 - present, 5/6 - 2 flew in, 21/8 - 6 circled moss & flew E, 5/9 - 1 landed on Floods, 9/10

GOLDEN PLOVER

Casual Small numbers noted occasionally overflying the reserve in winter. Details were, 4 flew E, 1/1 - 100 over N, 25/3 - 3 flew SW, 29/8 - 1 flew N calling, 28/9 - 4 o/h & to W, 3/10 - birds calling from S, 15/10 - 3 flew N, 20/10

LAPWING

Casual Similar situation to LR Plover, conditions on mossland are becoming unsuitable for this species. Up to 4 pairs noted displaying in March & early April, but only 2 pairs, then 1 pair settled down to breed. Breeding was not confirmed, and no young were noted. Outside the breeding season peak numbers on/overflying were: 20 flew S, 7/1 - 25 flew NW, 5/2 - 10 on scrape, 30/6 - 15 there on 2/7 - 48 (inc imms) on scrapes, 16/7 - 15 flew W, 19/8 - 7 on scrape, 2/9 - 2 on 15/10 & 27/10 - 40 flew W, 16/12

LITTLE STINT

Rare A single bird landed briefly on pool edge, 30/9. This is only the second record of this species on the reserve [cf 1996]

CURLEW SANDPIPER

Rare A bird landed on the mossland & 2 flew north on 17/9 & a single calling bird landed on moss on 13/10. This is only the second record for this species on the reserve [cf 1996].

DUNLIN

Scarce Birds noted in winter or on passage and occasionally landing/feeding on the scrapes. Recorded previously in 1987, 1998, 1999 & 2000. Details were: 1 on 11/1 - 1 up from moss, 24/9 - 9 flew east over Floods, 1/10 - 2 flew west calling, 8/10 - 1 calling from moss, 13/10 - 3 flew off later calling, 22/10 - 1 calling o/h, 6/11 - 5 flew west, 15/11

RUFF

Rare Four birds dropped onto scrapes (2m/2f) on 3/7. Previously only recorded in 1983, 1994 & 2000.

JACK SNIFE

Casual/winter

Exceptionally, 4 separate birds noted on 7/12, otherwise singles or occasionally 2 noted most winter months. Last bird seen on 17/3, first returning bird noted on the early date of 16/8.

COMMON SNIPE

Resident One pair held territory & bred. The mossland scrapes provide ideal conditions for feeding/roosting birds with numbers present throughout the year continuing to rise towards the levels of the early 1980s. Typically, peaks recorded were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
17	11	32	33	5	1	2	23	21	44	36	60

WOODCOCK

Resident Not regularly noted. Single birds were seen on 14 occasions over the winter period but not recorded between May & October & is unlikely to have bred.

BLACK TAILED GODWIT

Rare A bird was present on the mossland on 21/8 otherwise previously recorded in 1986.

CURLEW

Casual Single birds noted on 8 occasions prospecting around/over the mossland between 26/2 & 22/4 with 2 pair overhead on 20/4 & 23/4. On 12/5, 3 landed on the mossland & then flew off north east. Last seen were 2 o/h on 10/6 & 1 on 12/6.

SPOTTED REDSHANK

Rare A calling bird of this description landed briefly on mossland before flying N on 23/9. A first for the reserve.

REDSHANK

Casual Has become a more regular visitor since 1997, with birds being recorded landing on/passing over the mossland. Typically, 2 on scrapes on 20/9 with 1 there on 6/8, 9/10, 30/10 & attempting to land on frozen water on 26/12. Singles overhead on 21/3, 6/4, 15/12.

GREENSHANK

Passage/Casual Unusually a bird was present on 19/4, making this only the 3rd Spring record since records began. Otherwise birds noted on autumn passage with singles noted on 21/8, 22/8, 23/8, 25/8, 4/9 & 21/9 & exceptionally 3 present on 6/9.

GREEN SANDPIPER

Passage/Regular Usually noted on autumn passage which can begin as early as June & involve good numbers of birds moving through. Spring records are unusual [3 records only since 1972], so 2001 was exceptional, over wintering birds heard on 1/1, 26/1, 10/2 & a Spring bird heard on 3/4. Thereafter returning birds noted as follows, June=33bds [inc 3 present on 6 dates] - July=62bds [inc 3 on 5 dates & 4 present on 2/7, 7/7 & 25/7] - Aug=45bds [inc 3 on 4 dates] - Sept=3bds [singles on 1/9, 3/9, 22/9] - Oct=2bds [1 on 3/10 & 29/10 - Last bird noted on 6/11]

WOOD SANDPIPER

Passage/Rare Using the mossland more frequently in recent years. One was on the mossland on 22/6, 24/6, 7/7 & exceptionally - 2 present on 24/8

COMMON SANDPIPER

Passage/Casual Singles noted on Spring & Autumn passage on 2/4, 3/4, 11/5, 24/6, 20/8, 22/9 & last seen flitting around moss on 9/10.

LITTLE GULL

Rare An adult in summer plumage noted with Black Headed Gulls on 23/5.

BLACK HEADED GULL

Casual Birds tend to use acidic pools for preening/courting purposes. Numbers vary considerably but rarely more than 20-25 birds at any one time.

COMMON GULL

Casual Apart from a bird noted briefly on the mossland on 24/3, most records refer to overflying birds in autumn/winter and then to a max of 4 birds.

LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL

Casual Birds over fly reserve in various directions most months, exceptionally a bird was noted on a mossland pool on 4/7 & 5/9. Typically: c10 moving SW, 1/1 - 58 flew N, 16/2 - c125 o/h, 27/3 - 24 flew W, 4/4 - 2 flew S, 15/6 - 1 on Flash, 4/7 - 65 in 4 hrs flew SW, 21/8 - 1 on scrapes, 5/9 - 5 flew W, 3/9 - 2, flew N, 15/10 - 2 flew E, 15/12

HERRING GULL

Casual Mostly confined to overflying birds. Exceptionally 2 landed on pools on 29/3

GREAT BLACK BACKED GULL

Casual Two adults flew E on 16/9 - an adult over on 3/12, 12/12

COMMON TERN

Rare Two birds flew past Tower on 16/10. Previously only recorded in 1999.

STOCK PIGEON

Resident Up to 2 pairs noted around area most months with 1 pair occasionally noted coming out of Jay Wood & single birds feeding/drinking from mossland pools.

WOODPIGEON

Resident Nests & roosts on site in large numbers. Winter roosts which down on previous years were: 550 on 21/2 - 120 on 8/3 - 1600+ on 23/10 - 600 on 15/11 - c800 into woods, 1/12

COLLARED DOVE

Resident Regularly seen/heard around north part of reserve where two pairs bred otherwise birds noted overflying area most months.

TURTLE DOVE

Scarce Confined to occasional birds overflying reserve from known breeding sites to south & north. Typically, 2 flew NE, 1/6 - 1 flew N on 3/6 - 1 flew SW, 4/7 - 1 N on 5/7 - 1 S on 13/7.

CUCKOO

Casual First returning bird heard calling on 25/4 (in line with previous years). Otherwise May=27bds [1sx23, 2sx2] - Last bird noted on the 1/6.

BARN OWL

Casual A pair usually hold territory to the south & occasionally hunt over mossland, but the only record received was of a bird heard 'screeching' over the moss after dusk on 4/11.

TAWNY OWL

Resident Birds heard or seen in various parts of the reserve most months with 2 noted frequently at winter roost & 3 calling to each other on 22/9. A pair bred in the main woodland rearing 2 young in close proximity to passing & oblivious public.

LONG EARED OWL

Casual A pair were noted - precariously, roosting in area frequented by Tawny Owl on 1/1. Elsewhere one came onto reserve after dusk on 17/11.

SHORT EARED OWL

Casual A better year. Began with a bird perched & then hunting over the mossland on 25/7 [24/7 in 2000!] - A bird flew up & moved off south on 3/8 - An immature flew up circled several times calling as it did & then flew off SE, chased by swallows on 22/8 - A bird was hunting along boundary ditch on 29/10 - One perched & then flew East on 17/12.

SWIFT

Summer/Regular Birds hawk for insects over the mossland in varying numbers throughout summer. First two birds noted on 25/4 - last noted on 8/9. Peak numbers recorded were: May [40+] - June [c150] - July [200+] - Aug [c150 on 4/8 dropping to 20 on 22/8]

KINGFISHER

Scarce One near frozen ditch on mossland edge, 14/1 & over fire ditch on 3/9.

GREEN WOODPECKER

Casual Birds seen and heard on a number of occasions during year. Of particular note was close up views of a juvenile bird working the area & sunning itself on 10/8 & several other dates besides. Otherwise birds seen or heard 'yaffling' on 4/2, 7/2, 30/7, 15/8, 23/8, 6/9, 8/9, 19/11 [female], 26/11, 5/12, 29/12.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Resident 3 pairs bred [Woodland B.B.S.]. Birds noted around all woodland areas & occasionally on or crossing the mossland. Up to 5 at Woodland Hide feeders on occasions in winter.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Rare Only three records. A bird flew low over mossland to SW wood area on 2/7 - in same area on 9/8 & 23/10[PH]

SKYLARK

Casual Occasionally birds noted on mossland [9/3, 12/3, 16/4] or singing over it [2/4, 9/4, 15/4], otherwise confined to seasonal/hard weather movement, as following peaks show: 20 to SW in 90' on 1/1 - 10/hr south, 3/10 - 17/hr, north, 6/10 - 33/hr, south, 15/10 - 44/hr, south, 23/10 - 2 o/h on 30/10 - 3 o/h, on 15/11, 26/11

SAND MARTIN

Summer/Casual Never common or regularly noted. Numbers down on previous year with birds noted over the reserve on 19 dates during summer. First arrivals noted on 23/3 - last departing birds on 10/9. Peaks of 10 on 29/3 - 20 on 29/4 & 4/5 - 9 on 28/8

SWALLOW

Summer/Regular Birds hawk over the reserve throughout summer with post breeding birds roosting over the water filled ditches on the mossland [50 on 16/8]. October & September also saw

typical heavy movements south. First returning bird noted heading NW on the very early date of 8/3 [previous earliest was 27/3 in 2000] - Last on 23/10 [latest ever was 28/10 in 1982]. Monthly peaks were: Mar = 10 - Apr = 6 - May = 3 - June = 30 - July = 50+ [feeding/moving S, 26/7 & 30/7] - Aug = 80 - Sept = passage 8/hour south on several dates - Oct = passage peaks of 13/hour on 2/10 rising to 30/hour on 8/10 & declining to occasional birds on 23/10.

HOUSE MARTIN

Summer/Regular Birds hawk over reserve throughout summer. Occasional birds perch on reeds/trees on mossland with a group of 30 preening juveniles there on 3/9. Two early birds through on 10/4 - Last noted on 8/10. Peaks were: May = 50+, June/July = 50+, Aug = 100+, Sept = 150 [3/9] reducing to 5 by 3/10.

TREEPIBIT

Scarce Only records received were of a bird in NE corner on an extremely early date of 19/4 - 1 on mossland on 14/9 - 2 there 15/9 - 1 flew S, 15/10.

MEADOW PIPIT

Resident Present on mossland all year round except in very harsh weather. Breeds & roosts on mossland. Peak numbers roosting included: Jan = 15; Mar = 50+; Aug = 20+; Sept = 25 [by end of month passage south noted] - Oct = 35 [passage inc. 54/hr on 3/10 - 73/hr on 6/10 - 11/hr on 15/10 - 4/hr on 23/10]; Nov = 30; Dec = 3.

YELLOW WAGTAIL

Summer/Casual A better year with birds noted on the mossland on several occasions & likely to have bred in the area. Details were: 1 pair on scrapes on 6/5 - 3 [2m/1f - males fighting] on 20/5 - 1 male on 25/5 - 1 on 18/6 - 2 immatures on 1/7 - 1 overhead on 23/8 - 1 flew E on 5/9 - Last overhead on 11/10.

GREY WAGTAIL

Winter/Casual Birds occasionally land on scrapes - 1 on 6/9, 3 on 3/10, otherwise 1/2 overfly the site on occasions [exceptionally 6/hr flew S. on 15/10].

PIED WAGTAIL

Resident Birds noted in most months. From June onwards up to 6 juveniles noted on many dates until 10/9, thereafter up to 5 adults noted on occasions to years end.

WAXWING

Rare Unusually, 7 flew NE low over mossland on 10/1. Previously only recorded in 1976 & 1986.

WREN

Resident 39 pairs bred [Woodland BBS]. Interestingly birds continue to feed/roost on the mossland in all weathers throughout the year.

DUNNOCK

Resident 34 pairs bred [Woodland BBS]

ROBIN

Resident 62 pairs bred [Woodland BBS]. Up to 5 birds also noted at woodland hide feeders on occasions.

REDSTART

Scarce/Passage A female was noted skulking in mossland coppice on 21/9 with autumn passage in line with most previous records.

WHINCHAT

Summer/Casual Now confined to migratory passage only. Male perched on mossland on 19/8, 27/8 & 21/9.

STONECHAT

Scarce Confined to winter or passage. Male on mossland on 5/3, 15/3, 1/11 - 4 birds there on 7/3 - female on gorse, 9/4.

WHEATEAR

Summer/Casual Occasionally seen on passage with a male present on 26/4.

RING OUZEL

4 over mossland flew W, possibly feeding in area, 1 male among them, 1/9, 17/9

BLACKBIRD

Resident 21 pairs bred [Woodland BBS]. Notable influx of birds in late March & October with 10 - 20 roosting in rhododendrons near Tower in winter. Up to 15 birds noted feeding out on edge of mossland on many occasions throughout autumn. Up to 12 males at Woodland Hide on many days during winter.

FIELDFARE

Winter Last recorded on 4/4, first returning bird noted on 3/10. Small numbers roost in woods. Peak numbers of note: Feb = 125+ - Mar = 57 - Apr = 80 - Oct = 400 in 3hrs, 15/10 - 120 in 2hrs, 16/10 - 122/hr heading S, 23/10 - Nov = 100.

SONG THRUSH

Resident 10 pairs bred [Woodland BBS]. A good year with many going onto 2nd broods in late June.

REDWING

Winter Last recorded on 14/4 - First returning bird on the early date of 20/9. Small numbers roost in main woods. Peak numbers: Jan = c30 - Apr = 30 - Oct = 58/hr flew S, 23/10 - Nov = 25.

MISTLE THRUSH

Resident 1 pair bred [Woodland BBS]. Birds singing as early as 26/1. Of note, 4 flew NE, 5/8 - 8 perched on mossland on 15/8 - 10 flew E on 18/8 - 12 flew west on 20/8 - 5 flew NW on 3/10 - 6 into woods on 10/11 - 6 flew west on 11/10.

SEDGE WARBLER

Summer/Scarce One was heard singing out on the mossland on 27/4, 1/5, 6/5 & 12/5 only. Down on previous year & only the 6th year recorded on the reserve.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER

Summer/Scarce A male was heard "reeling" out on the mossland on 16/4, 1/5, 6/5, 20/5, 25/5 & 10/8. A good year but only the 7th record for the reserve.

LESSER WHITETHROAT

Summer/Scarce Only record was of a bird present along woodland edge on 28/8.

WHITETHROAT

Summer/Breeds 6 pairs bred [Warbler BBS]. A very good year, all in scrubby areas & brashing piles around edge of mossland. First arrival on 28/4 - last noted on 17/9.

GARDEN WARBLER

Summer/Casual Did not breed. A single bird was noted on 29/4 and a 2 briefly on 12/5 - 1 in woods nr mossland edge on 28/8.

BLACKCAP

Summer/Breeds A total of 18 pairs bred [Warbler BBS]. Early bird noted on 9/4 - last noted on 21/9.

WOOD WARBLER

Summer/Scarce One was among a 'fall ' of warblers on 16/4 - 1 heard nr Tower on 26/4, 27/4 & 28/4 - 1 in mixed flock, on 20/7. Only 5th year noted [last time in 1994].

CHIFFCHAFF

Summer/Breeds A total of 5 pair bred [Woodland BBS]. First arrivals heard on 28/3 - last noted on late date of 9/11.

WILLOW WARBLER

Summer/Breeds A total of 42 pair bred [Warbler BBS]. A below average of recent years [57 pairs] but up on low levels of 2000 [34 pairs]. First heard on the early date of 29/3 - last noted on 23/9.

GOLDCREST

Resident Absent during breeding season but singles noted mostly throughout remainder of year. Of note, 2 in conifers on 5/1, 6/3 - 3 noted on 17/3 & 9/11 - 2 displaying in rhodis on 23/2.

FIRECREST

Rare Species noted for second winter in succession. Bird in conifers on 5/1, 12/1, 17/3 & again with a mixed flock on 2/11.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

Scarce migrant Now only noted on passage. Single bird present on 3/5, 23/6, 27/8 & 28/8 - 2 noted nr Tower on 26/8.

LONG TAILED TIT

Resident Two pairs bred [Woodland BBS]. Present in variable numbers all year round & in most parts of reserve including mossland & woodland hide feeders. Peaks included: Jan = 13, Feb = 10, June = 24, Aug = 25, Sept = 31, Oct = 17, Nov = 10, Dec = 12.

MARSH TIT

Rare A bird was seen & heard with mixed flock of blue & great tits on 26/12. Only the 2nd confirmed record of species on the reserve [previous 1986]. Present again on 5 & 12/1/2002.

WILLOW TIT

Resident One pair bred [Woodland BBS]. Noted in most areas of woodland & occasionally at the woodland hide feeders in winter. Never abundant with 2 birds at any one time only seen.

COAL TIT

Resident One pair bred [Woodland BBS]. Seen & heard in various parts of the reserves woodlands & regularly at woodland hide feeders. Following an influx in late October up to 9 birds seen at feeders & surrounding area on several dates to years end.

BLUE TIT

Resident Breeding estimate unknown. Up to 15 noted on many days in winter at woodland hide feeders & in mixed flocks.

GREAT TIT

Resident Breeding estimate unclear but up to 10 at woodland hide feeders & in mixed flocks on occasions.

NUTHATCH

Casual Seen at nest box on 22/5 but species did not stay to breed. Birds present from 17/8 onwards with up to 2 present most days at woodland hide & vicinity, with 3 noted there on 19/12.

TREECREEPER

Resident Two pair bred [Woodland BBS]. Found in main areas of woodland throughout year and at Woodland hide in winter. Singles seen on many dates, 2 on a few dates & unusually 3 at the Woodland hide feeders on 3/1.

JAY

Resident Three pairs bred [Woodland BBS]. Found in all areas of woodland & even occasionally out on mossland. Outside breeding season birds gather together in noisy social groups of around 6 birds [especially when an owl is around!], exceptionally 11 together on 15/1- 12 on 10/9.

MAGPIE

Resident Three pairs bred [Woodland BBS]. Winter roost still forms but numbers considerably down on previous years [80 on 4/3 max noted]. Of interest: 4 birds teasing/playing with young fox on mossland - 5 hassling Goshawk which turned suddenly & took one down to ground, 10/9.

JACKDAW

Overflying Diurnal north/south/north movement. For example: 25 on 15/10 & 19/10 - 60 in mixed flock on 21/11 - 30 on 13/12.

ROOK

Overflying Diurnal movement N/S/N. Typically: 27 flew N on 19/6 - 150 flew S, 1/8 - 50 flew S, 3/9 - 132 flew S, 13/12.

CARRION CROW

Resident One pair bred [Woodland BBS]. Post breeding numbers increase resident population some of which carry long standing varying degrees of white on the wings. Numbers typically inc: 6 on 1/5 - 9 on 16/9 - 20 on moss, 2/10.

HOODED CROW

Rare A possible hybrid flew off south on 15/10.

RAVEN

Scarce A good year for this recent addition to the bird list. Most sightings are probably related to the pair that bred in St Helens town centre. Details of single birds include a calling bird

flying NW on 29/4 - heading for landfill on 17/8, 2/9, 16/9 - flew past Tower on 23/9 - flew overhead on 13/10 - harassed by other corvids on 4/11.

STARLING

Casual Occasional records refer to birds overflying the reserve. Typically: 60 flew low SW, 4/1 - c100 hawking over NE woods, 21/8 - c500 nr E edge, 2/10 - 10 flew W over moss, 15/11.

HOUSE SPARROW

Scarce Only record was of a bird on the NE edge, 15/11.

TREE SPARROW

Scarce 1 noted on 12/1, 2/11 - 2 perched on mossland on 28/11.

CHAFFINCH

Resident 13 pair bred [Woodland BBS]. Up to 20 birds noted at Woodland Hide in winter & entering roost nr Tower on many occasions during winter.

BRAMBLING

Winter/Casual Never abundant, details inc. 3 at Woodland Hide on 8/12, 9/12 - 2 flew SW, 13/12 - 1 male @ hide on 16/12 & 19/12.

GREENFINCH

Resident 2 pair bred [Woodland BBS]. The winter roost continues to hold good numbers with typically 120+ present throughout January & February, reducing to 70+ in March & April. Otherwise up to 6 noted on occasions at Woodland Hide.

GOLDFINCH

Casual All records refer to overflying birds or occasional birds feeding in tree tops. Typically: 12 on 4/1 - 20 over mossland on 13/9 - 70 on 22/10 - 40 on 1/12 - 1 pair in trees above Woodland Hide on 31/12.

SISKIN

Winter/Regular Last bird noted on 16/3 and returning on 21/8. Flocks containing up to 20 birds noted around woods on several occasions in winter. Exceptionally 40 noted on 22/10 with much smaller flocks noted thereafter. Occasional bird seen feeding/drinking at Woodland Hide.

LINNET

Resident Situation improving slightly. Four birds noted regularly in breeding area although only 1 pair bred. Otherwise birds noted flying over on occasions with 5 on 22/9 - 9 over mossland on 2/10.

REDPOLL

Resident 1 pair bred. Small numbers seen frequently around/over reserve. Exceptionally 10 over mossland on 2/4 - 40 there on 17/4 - 13 on 3/10.

COMMON CROSSBILL

Rare An adult calling male noted along conifer belt on 2/11. A first for the reserve.

BULLFINCH

Resident 2 pair bred [Woodland BBS]. Heard & seen in various parts of reserve all year round & frequently at the Woodland Hide feeders in winter.

YELLOWHAMMER

Resident/Casual A better year for records. A male took up residence on the mossland & could be seen/heard singing there between 4/3 & 29/3 & again on 24/4 & 22/5. Otherwise 5 on edge of mossland on 11/1 - 8 there on 26/1 with singles noted on 23/10 [female] & 29/12.

REED BUNTING

Resident Noted throughout the year in all but the harshest weather. Birds breed & roost on the mossland. Males singing on territory by 9/3. Roosts numbers vary between 6 - 12 birds, exceptionally 30 on 16/9, 15 on 20/9. Between January & April birds noted feeding at Woodland Hide with 5 present [4m/1f] on 16/3 to 10 males there on 18/4 & last noted 1m on 29/4.

RING NECKED PARAKEET

1 near north fence 30/1, 7/2, 8/2, 10/2, 11/2 - 1 flew SW on 31/7 and calling from mossland edge on 26/9.

CONTRIBUTORS

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