

Regent's Park

Bird Report

2006



Written by Tony Duckett

Little Grebe

Summer visitor. Due to the mild winter birds were recorded from 20/2. Numbers peaked at eleven birds on 27/4, four pairs were present during May. Three pairs attempted to breed, with only one pair rearing any young to the flying stage. The chicks were seen being harassed by the Coots. Could these be the reason for the grebes in the park rearing so few young?



Little Grebe family

Great Crested Grebe

Resident. Due to the lack of cold weather up to four birds were present throughout the winter period. Four pairs attempted to breed, with only two young fledging.

Cormorant

Resident. Seen daily throughout the year. The winter roost peaking at over eighty birds in December. Some birds were occasionally seen carrying nesting material during spring.

Heron

Resident. Twenty-five pairs bred. Five baskets were again used successfully.

Mute Swan

Resident. One pair nested, rearing one cygnet.

Greylag Goose

Resident. Birds peaked at sixty-two during September.

Canada Goose

Resident. Birds peaked at two hundred and ninety-five during July.

Egyptian Goose

Regular visitor. One pair were present 2/1, then three birds 1/4. A pair, with a pale headed female were present from 1/11 until the end of the year.

Common Shelduck

Occasional visitor. One very agitated bird was present on the lake 2/5.

Mandarin Duck

Resident. Two pairs bred. Maximum number was fourteen during both winter periods.

Eurasian Wigeon

Occasional winter visitor. Three birds were on the lake from 6/1 until 9/2. There was the odd fully flighted bird on the lake during the latter part of the year. These though were thought to have originated from St James's.

Gadwall

Resident. A total of thirty three birds, a park record were seen on the lake at the end of January and beginning of February.

Green-winged Teal

Winter visitor. As many as five birds were present until 15/3 feeding in the Hanover Bridge sanctuary. In autumn, two birds arrived on 5/10. One bird remained until the end of the year.

Mallard

Resident. Again not a very successful breeding season, due the cool spring.

Northern Pintail

Winter visitor. Up to three birds present during the winter period, which constitute part of the small feral population in the London area.

Northern Shoveler

Winter visitor. Possibly due to the lack of cold weather, the numbers were unusually low, not exceeding more than twenty-five birds during the winter months.

Red-Crested Pochard

Resident. This species could eventually have a large population in Central London. Nesting in late March, their young would have less chance of being predated on by large gulls. That feed their young on ducklings later in the spring. Numbers peaked at twenty-eight.

Eurasian Pochard

Resident. Numbers peaked at more than two hundred and eighty during the winter period. Sixteen pairs bred.

Tufted Duck

Resident. Peaked at over three hundred during the winter period. Fifteen pairs bred.

Greater Scaup

Resident. A drake remains present at the Longbridge Sanctuary for its tenth year.

Ruddy Duck

Resident. Numbers reached eighteen during the winter periods.

Goosander

Scarce. The seventh record and the first record of a bird on the lake 18/1.

This redhead was present briefly at first light before flying off. Amazingly it returned on 8/2, being present almost daily. It eventually joined the ones in the collection, feeding with them on the food supplied, approaching even closer than them. It was last seen 10/3.



Goosander

Common Buzzard

Annual. After last years no show, this was a record year with eight birds being seen on seven dates. In spring birds were seen from 5/4 through to 30/5, with two on the latter date. During the autumn singles were seen on 6/8 on 3/10. These records reflect the ever expanding range of this raptor.

Honey Buzzard

Rare migrant. Two records, one was seen 30/4, resulting in an exciting few minutes for those on a park bird walk. It was picked up later drifting over the Wetland Centre. Another bird flew south-east 12/5.

Red Kite

Passage migrant. Numbers of sightings in the London area are increasing. After three sightings last year, a truly magnificent site occurred after heavy morning showers 20/5. Four birds spent almost twenty minutes circling above the park, drifting eastwards before returning and then moving off westwards at 11.05am. This must have been the largest party of kites since they were a common British bird.

Marsh Harrier

Ocassional passage migrant. There were two sightings of this increasing UK raptor. One was seen flying west at 2.35pm on 9/5; then two juveniles flying at a very high altitude flew south on 7/9 at 12.25pm.

Northern Goshawk

Scarce passage migrant. An adult male flew northwards 16/4 at 12.35pm. This was the third time this powerful accipter has been seen over the park.

Sparrowhawk

Resident. Two pairs nested, One pair in the American Ambassadors residence must have failed in their first attempt as young were heard calling in late July. Birds thought to have been migrants were as follows; five 14/8 and five 17/9.

Osprey

Occasional passage migrant. The ninth record for the park was a bird that drifted slowly over Primrose Hill on 9/5 at 2.25pm.

Kestrel

Resident. Two pairs bred; one pair's first attempt may have failed, as their young did not fledge until 16/7, almost a month later than the other pair.



Kestrel juvenile

Eurasian Hobby

Summer visitor and passage migrant. An increase on the last few years with single birds recorded on five dates; 22/4, 6/5, 5/9, 17/9 and the 13/10.

Peregrine Falcon

Occasional visitor. The pair that had nested on the University of Westminster, this year decided to go elsewhere. I am glad to say they were successful. We had to make do with the occasional sighting of one of the adults from time to time. There was some good news when an immature female took up temporary lodgings on the university. The resident male was happy to have two partners but his mate had other ideas and after several days had chased off the intruder. On the 5/5 the immature female had attracted another male and were seen pair bonding over the park, hopefully a good sign for 2007.

Common Pheasant

Scarce visitor. The sixth record, the first since 1977 was an adult present from 28/11 until the year's end. The origin of this bird or any game bird is open to debate, it is highly unlikely to have escaped locally. Most pheasants are not really wild as they will have been bred for shooting.

Water Rail

Scarce Visitor. With several areas of marginal plantings maturing it was encouraging to have birds spend time at two of these locations. One was present in the Wetland Pen from 24/10 until at least 30/10. Then another was present from 6/11 until the end of the year at The Old Boathouse reed bed.



Water Rail

Moorhen

Resident. Numbers are difficult to assess because of their secretive behaviour.

Coot

Resident. Common, at times being very territorial.

Eurasian Golden Plover

Occasional migrant. One bird flew east at 9.30am on 3/10.

Lapwing

Passage migrant. A very poor year with only three sightings of single birds 27/3, 17/7 and 12/12.

Jack Snipe

Scarce visitor. Two records of birds that seem to have been attracted to the wetland area, on 27/2 and 30/10.

Common Snipe

Annual visitor or passage migrant. Three singles were seen two in the first quarter on 27/2 and 23/3. The other bird was seen on the 30/10.

Woodcock

Winter visitor. Two records of a species that would normally go unnoticed unless flushed. One was seen feeding in the rose gardens several mornings from 23/1 until 5/2. The other record was of a bird seen flying south-east at 6.35am 4/4.

Whimbrel

Scarce passage migrant. Two singles were seen on 10/5, one north at 7.40am and another flew north-east at 8.10am.

Greenshank

Scarce passage migrant. One flew over calling 2/9.

Green Sandpiper

Scarce visitor. A bird flew east at 5.55am 13/7.

Common Sandpiper

Passage migrant. A better year with two sightings in spring on the 5/5 and 7/5. The autumn passage involved one in the long bridge sanctuary for three days from 5/7 and another bird on the islands on the main lake on 22/8.

Black-Headed Gull

Winter visitor. Seen in every month of the year, Numbers peaked at over three hundred during February.

Mediterranean Gull

Scarce visitor. A juvenile seen first on the open spaces before moving on to the lake from 5.45am until 7.10am 29/7 was only the fourth park record.



Mediterranean Gull juvenile

Common Gull

Winter visitor. Maximum numbers are usually during February. The last birds of the winter were seen on 27/3. In autumn one was present 11/9, though the regular wintering birds did not arrive until 4/11.

Lesser Black-Backed Gull

Summer visitor. Small numbers occur during the winter months, a peak count of fifty 5/11. Birds are breeding in increasing numbers in the surrounding area.

Herring Gull

Resident. Numbers increase during the winter period; peak early morning count of two hundred and fifteen 8/3. As with the above species, local breeding is also on the increase.

Great Black-Backed Gull

Occasionally seen overhead. Four records; one over on 30/3, unusual for the park one was seen perched on a post on the lake 7/4; other fly overs were two 20/7 and one 18/9.

Yellow-Legged Gull

Winter visitor. What was probably the regular adult, was seen on several dates between 17/1 and 13/3, then on 17/7, 30/7 and 1/8.

Kittiwake

Scarce passage migrant or storm driven visitor. There were two records this year of singles on the typical dates 23/4 and 3/11.

Common Tern

Summer visitor. The first bird of the year was seen on 24/4, with two further spring records a pair on 27/4 and three on 30/4. Birds were then recorded on seven dates during July with a maximum of three on 14/7. These birds were probably on fishing trips from their breeding site over at Brent Reservoir.



Common Tern

Arctic Tern

Scarce passage migrant. One flew north-east at 6.50am 24/4 and two adults circled high over the park before heading off south-eastwards at 8.10am.

Feral Pigeon

Resident. A few pairs breed under Clarence Bridge.

Stock Dove

Resident. At least eighteen pairs bred. Birds are often seen at the bird table by the Nature Study Centre, and the feeding station in the small plantation. A group of up to sixteen regularly visit the garden by St Marks Bridge. Birds are often noticed amongst the passage of Wood Pigeons, forty-five were seen 1/11.

Wood Pigeon

Resident. The largest movements seen in the autumn, involved one thousand one hundred and fifty on 20/9, and two thousand and five hundred on 1/11.

Turtle Dove

Scarce passage migrant. Only one record 16/9 of a bird wanting to land in the Leaf Yard Wood, but was chased off by magpies .

Collared Dove

Passage migrant. Recorded on eight dates during the spring with a maximum of three 12/5. Recorded only once in the last half of the year 12/10.

Ring-Necked Parakeet

Occasional visitor. This species is moving further into London, with birds now in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. How long before they breed here? Two singles flew over 26/4 and 2/5.

Cuckoo

Passage migrant. One was heard calling from the grounds of The Holme 11/4 at 6.15am.

Tawny Owl

Resident. One pair bred rearing two young, the eggs were laid later this year with the owlets not leaving the nest until 3/4. There were two males having territorial disputes from early November.



Little Owl



Tawny Owlets

Little Owl

Occasional visitor. One was heard calling from trees behind Nursery Lodge 22/11. Then from 14/12 two birds roamed the south-eastern corner of the park

Common Swift

Summer visitor. First sighting of the year was four on 27/4, over one hundred birds fed over the lake 2/5. The last bird was seen on 23/8.

Alpine Swift

This record concerns a bird that spent several days over at Highgate Ponds.

Due to its large size we were able to identify it from the top of Primrose Hill 12/4. Unfortunately it cannot go down as a record for the park.

Kingfisher

Scarce passage migrant. An exceptional year with two birds being present at the same time. The first turned up in the wetland area 21/8, before moving to the

Nature Study Centre. It was then joined by a second bird on the 30/8, the birds then commuted between both areas.



Kingfisher in the Wetland Pen

Green Woodpecker

Resident. Two pairs bred, a third pair were present but young were not seen.

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Resident. Six pairs bred. Birds regularly use the peanut holders at the feeding station.

Skylark

Passage migrant. The number of sightings dropped to four dates involving twenty four birds. Not recorded in the first quarter; During autumn nine 12/10, ten 2/11, two 3/11 and three 4/11.

Woodlark

Occasional passage migrant. Singles were seen on 30/10 and 4/11. Two birds flying just above tree height in the same area of the park. A coincidence or had this bird spent sometime in the grounds of The American Ambassador?

Sand Martin

Passage migrant. Recorded on ten dates, but probably overlooked. The first birds of the year were four 1/4, the last birds were ten through on 5/9.

Swallow

Passage migrant. Two birds through on the 15/4, were the first birds of the year. The largest number in spring involved ten birds on 7/5. Autumn passage began with two on 14/8. Peak passage days involved three hundred and fifty 5/9 and five hundred and fifty 12/9. Last birds of the year were two on 14/10.

House Martin

Summer visitor. The first bird of the year was seen on 15/4. The small colony that nests on the nearby flats in Park Road may have fared a little better this year. Fifty birds above the lake 18/8 are thought to have originated from this colony. There was no large passage noticed during the autumn. The largest daily totals were one hundred 18/8, one hundred and fifty 5/9 and two hundred and eighty 19/9. The last record of the year was six on 4/10.

Tree Pipit

Passage migrant. Single birds were recorded on four dates, once in spring 16/4, then in autumn 20/8, 12/9 and 14/9.

Meadow Pipit

Passage migrant. A poor spring passage with two on 19/3 and three on 21/3. The autumn passage began on 6/9 and peaked at over two hundred and fifty on 20/9. The last sighting was on 9/11.

Rock Pipit

Scarce passage migrant. Three singles flew over on 3/4, 4/4 and 19/9.

Water Pipit

Scarce passage migrant. There were two records one in spring 24/4 and the other on 6/11.

Yellow Wagtail

Passage migrant. Bird days were up this year with five in spring, the first on 5/4. Then in the autumn birds were recorded on further nine dates from 22/8 until 21/9 with two being the largest number seen.

Grey Wagtail

Resident. This was a poor year for this species with birds recorded only in nine months. There was no proof that birds had bred locally. A small passage was noted during September; six on 19/9 and eleven on 20/9 being the largest day counts.

Pied Wagtail

Resident. Two pairs possibly bred close to the park. A small group frequented the sports pitches from mid September to mid October, peaking at nine birds.

White Wagtail

Annual passage migrant. Two birds flew west on 3/9

Wren

Resident. Widespread in areas that have suitable habitat.

Duncock

Resident. Very secretive, easily overlooked once the males have stopped singing in spring.

Robin

Resident. Widespread in areas with suitable habitat.

Common Redstart

Passage migrant. Four sightings. One spring male was present in the Leaf Yard 15/4. In autumn one was in the leaf yard 16/8 and then another spent two days in the cricket pen from 27/8.

The first time since 1998 that three species of chat have been seen in the park



Whinchat



Stonechat



Northern Wheatear

Whinchat

Passage migrant. Again a poor year, with only two records on 4/9 and 18/9.

Stonechat

Scarce passage migrant. Two singles birds were seen in autumn one fed in one of the wild flower patches 3/10 with another flying over 24/11. These were the first records since a recently fledged juvenile was present in Queen Mary's in 1998.

Northern Wheatear

Passage migrant. This year the number of bird days was similar to last years. Seen on eleven dates in spring starting with four 29/4. In autumn birds were seen on five days between 20/8 and 12/10 all singles. Several birds of the Greenland race were noted.

Blackbird

Resident. Widespread, the numbers being boosted by the arrival of birds from the continent in late October, which stay until all the berries have been consumed.

Fieldfare

Passage migrant. Three records during the first quarter, the largest groups being sixty 5/2 and one hundred and seven 8/2. Autumn passage started with sixteen 30/10, peaking at one thousand seven hundred and fifty 2/11 and six hundred and thirty-five 3/11. These birds were passing over from 7.00am until 9.30am when they either fly to high to be seen or the passage stops.

Song Thrush

Resident. Numbers are still low. Birds are seldom seen far away from dense cover, apart from those flying overhead. The passage of birds from the continent produced seventy-four on 17/10 the largest total ever recorded in the park.

Redwing

Passage migrant and winter visitor. During the early part of the year, a small flock of up to twenty-six birds could be found on Gloucester Green. The last bird of the spring was seen 23/3. The first birds of the autumn were thirty on 12/10. Peak passage days in autumn saw two hundred and fifty on 15/10, and two hundred and sixty on 2/11. Birds were then seen almost daily until the end of the year.

Mistle Thrush

Resident. No large gatherings were noted this year.

Ring Ouzel

Scarce passage migrant. Four single birds were recorded one in spring on 20/4 and three in the autumn on 4/10, 2/11 and 3/11. The latter bird was being closely perused by a male Sparrowhawk.

Sedge Warbler

Passage migrant. An encouraging sign was that of a bird holding a territory from 19/4 until 30/4. There were three other sightings on 5/5, 23/8 and 1/9.

Reed Warbler

Summer visitor and passage migrant. At one time, six males held territories. There were four proven breeding records, near Hanover Bridge and in the Long Bridge Sanctuary. Birds thought to have been migrants were seen on 11/8, 12/8, 23/8, 28/8 and 5/9. These were in areas away from the lake.

Lesser Whitethroat

Passage migrant. This year there were no sightings in the spring. In the autumn birds were recorded on eight dates between 22/8 and the 5/9, with up to three birds being present.



Lesser Whitethroat

Common Whitethroat

Passage migrant. Records for this species were the highest for many years, possibly reflecting the increase in the population nationally. Birds were seen on sixteen dates; In spring a male was present in one area from 22/4 until 30/4 with a female present there 18/6. The autumn passage started with one 8/8 with as many as three birds being seen until 17/9.

Blackcap

Summer visitor. At least 12 males held territories, slightly down on last year. The wet weather during the spring seemed to hit the number of successful breeders. The peak day count in the autumn was eighteen birds on both 18/8. Several birds were seen during the winter months.

Garden Warbler

Passage migrant. This was the best year for a long time for this plane but attractive warbler. Only three spring records, the first 23/4. During the autumn, birds were seen on fourteen days from 28/7 involving at least thirty birds, with six present on 15/8.

Wood Warbler

Passage migrant. The national decline is reflected in that this once annual spring and autumn visitor was only recorded on 16/8 around the bird drinking pool in the Leaf Yard Wood.

Chiffchaff

Summer visitor and passage migrant. The first bird of the year was seen on 28/3; four males held territories with breeding only confirmed at one location. Peak spring count saw seven birds present 11/5. Autumn passage started with ten 11/8; peaking at around the twenty mark from 18/8 until 11/9. The last migrant of the year was recorded on 15/11.



Chiffchaff

Willow Warbler

Passage migrant. The first bird was seen on 3/4, peak count in spring twenty 20/4. The autumn passage began with one 1/8 peaking at twenty-five plus on 22/8 and 27/8. The last birds of the year were three on 15/9.

Goldcrest

Resident. There is currently at least eight pairs breeding. The peak count during the autumn was sixteen 13/10.

Firecrest

Passage migrant and winter visitor. Only recorded once on 8/11, when a female was seen briefly amongst a fast moving mixed tit flock.

Spotted Flycatcher

Passage migrant. Yet again there were no spring records. The first autumn record was one on the 16/8. Birds were then observed sporadically until 3/10, the peak day count was five on 5/9.

Pied Flycatcher

Passage migrant. A very poor year with only one sighting on 9/9, seen briefly by DJ whilst leading a bird walk.

Long-Tailed Tit

Resident. At least eleven pairs breeding. There were at least ninety five birds present in three flocks 5/9.



Long-tailed Tit at nest

Coal Tit

Resident. Six pairs breeding.

Blue Tit

Resident. Makes good use of nest boxes that have been erected in the park.

Great Tit

Resident,. Breeding in slightly less numbers than the above species.

Jay

Resident. This species is the most secretive member of the crow family. They have now grown accustomed to using the peanut feeders.

Magpie

Resident. Numbers appear slightly down; birds have a pre-roost gathering site on Primrose Hill.

Crow

Resident. The non-breeding flock totalled ninety.

Rook

Passage migrant. Four sightings on typical dates for this species; one 1/4, one 16/4, two 21/4 and one autumn record 12/10.

Jackdaw

Passage migrant. Forty three birds recorded on ten dates, eight of those dates during the spring. The 30/10 saw sixteen birds pass through.

Starling

Resident, passage migrant. The new areas of rough grassland that surround the sports pitches continue to offer the birds food away from the cages in London Zoo. Autumn passage was fairly light with a large passage noted only on 25/10 involving over one thousand five hundred birds. Movements of up to three hundred birds were observed almost daily until 4/11.

House Sparrow

Resident in London Zoo. The only record away from London Zoo was in a garden by St Marks Bridge on 5/5, 6/5 and 15/6. These records were probably the same cock bird.

Chaffinch

Resident, passage migrant. Good numbers of this finch can be seen at the feeding stations in the small plantation, the leaf yard wood as well as the area on either side of the canal during the winter period. Autumn passage was again.

Brambling

Passage migrant, winter visitor. A male was present from 24/3 until 27/3 at one of the feeding stations. Then a pair were in Nursery Lodge garden on 15/4. A very poor autumn passage, recorded on only four dates, with five on 26/10, ten on 27/10 and then singles 3/11 and 8/11.

Greenfinch

Resident. Good numbers of this finch also visit the feeding stations. No significant autumn passage noted, sixty plus 30/10 being the peak.

Goldfinch

Resident. One pair possibly bred. A small flock of 6 birds were sometimes seen feeding on thistles. Small numbers were seen passing over during the autumn, a maximum of fifty-five were seen 4/10.

Bullfinch

Scarce passage migrant. A bird dropped in during heavy drizzle on 5/10.

Eurasian Siskin

Passage migrant. It was good to have some winter sightings, with one to three birds being seen on ten dates from 15/1 through to 16/4. The autumn passage started with three 17/9; birds were then recorded on a further five date until 30/11.

Lesser Redpoll

Passage migrant. Sightings dropped again with just six bird days. Birds were recorded on four dates during the spring with one 5/4, then two on 20/4, 27/4 and 28/4. The two sightings in the autumn involved one 12/10 and two 5/11.

Linnet

Passage migrant. This once common farmland species was recorded on ten dates. The first of the year 31/3, and the last 4/11. The peak passage dates saw twenty-five 3/10 and eighteen 4/10.

Common Crossbill

Rare passage migrant. One male bird landed briefly in a pine tree in the small plantation on 6/7.

Reed Bunting

Summer visitor, scarce passage migrant. A male turned up back at the reed bed near Hanover Bridge 27/3, being joined by a female 30/3. Remarkably a male that we presumed to be the bird from Hanover Bridge turned out to be another individual. He then attracted a mate and breeding was proven at this site but not at the first location. Juveniles were seen at the feeding station and in the wild flower patches until 9/11.



Reed Bunting male and female



Chicks in the nest

Acknowledgement:

Thanks to Dave Johnson for his sightings.