

Regent's Park Bird Report

2009

by Tony Duckett



The front cover and the pictures above show a female Smew (redhead) that turned up during February. This was the first sighting of this species in the park since the winter of 1963. It was spotted by a member of the public on the 25th February on the main part of the lake. She thought it had escaped from the area that houses our collection birds, which includes two pairs of Smew. She reported the sighting to me on the 27th, thinking nothing of it. I said that to my knowledge none of the captive birds had escaped. I was thinking that I had missed a really big (scarce) bird for the park. I was so relieved when a little while later she came to me and said that the bird was still present on the bank of Heron Island. Over the course of its stay it joined the collection birds, bonding with one of the males. It even learnt to take food from caged feeder, which meant it had to dive below the water and come up inside and feed from the hopper. She eventually departed on the 3rd April.

Review of 2009

As one year ends and another begins we look forward with excitement to the next 12 months, hoping for plenty of birds and with luck a new species for the park. By the end of the year and a very respectable total of 123 species recorded, you would have expected us to be over the moon, in some ways we were. The disappointing aspect was the very low numbers of our regular visitors. This downward trend has been happening for many years, but seems to have increased in recent years. The colder wetter springs that we are now encountering will have caused nests to be washed out and chicks to starve due to lack of invertebrates in this critical period. It makes you wonder what the years ahead will bring. Will it be an increase in scavengers and alien species, these seem to be the ones that at present are adapting to today's problems, more quickly, though it would be nice to see more Red Kites in the London area.

January was relatively quiet and wet for long periods. The Water Rails could be relied on to put in an appearance, though you had to wait a while on occasions, it preferred those rare sunny days. 13 Lapwings flew NE 7th, ducks on the lake included 3 Common Teal and 40 Mandarin Ducks (not collection birds). 14 Siskins were feeding on Silver Birch seeds throughout the month. A Little Owl was found roosting in either a nest box in the goose pen or a nearby hollow tree. Was it an adult or one of their youngsters from last year? **February** began with up to 55 Fieldfares and at least 76 Redwings present in the park. It is extremely unusual for the former to be present other than in single figures and then only for a day at the most. Going on tail length and undertail covert colouration there were three Water Rails present on the 8th. A pair of Peregrine Falcons was also seen overhead on that date. A redhead Smew turned up 25th, the first since 1963. Two Blackcaps were on the feeders in the cricket pen from 28th. **March** saw a Rook our scarcest corvid fly south 2nd. Four Tawny Owlets emerged over two days from the 8th, unfortunately one was soon killed by Magpies. A Chiffchaff was singing on the 11th, more than likely a bird that had been over-wintering in the UK. Jackdaws were seen on several days, with a maximum of 6 on 16th. The owlets were down to two by the 21st. A Woodcock flew across the open spaces 23rd. The first Common Buzzard of the year flew west 24th a day when 3 Chiffchaffs were singing. A very unusual record concerned a pair of Great Black-backed Gulls displaying on the rowing boats on the lake 25th. They began nest-building on the island where the Herring Gulls breed 26th, however they didn't return the following day. **April:** The Smew was last seen on the 3rd. A Hawfinch flying south, 2 Willow Warblers and the second Woodcock of the year 5th, with another bird in the Leaf Yard 6th, seven House Martins flew north 7th. A male Firecrest sang from within the grounds of the Holme 10th. The 13th saw Common Buzzard, Red Kite, 2 Peregrines and 4 Sparrowhawks fly over. While scanning the lake early morning on the 14th a very vocal Oystercatcher flew low over the water, later in the day the first Northern Wheatear was present on the open spaces. A Ringed Plover, a very scarce wader flew west in heavy rain 16th, a day the first two Swallows of the year were feeding over the lake. The 21st saw 2 Red Kites and 2 Common Buzzards late afternoon, 1 female Common Redstart was seen briefly by one observer 22nd, an Osprey drifted south-east 26th. The 27th saw a superb male Garganey turn up, having been seen in Hyde Park the previous day, this bird was to remain throughout the summer. A female Ring Ouzel made a pit stop 28th, Common Tern and Reed Warblers were present from 30th. The first Swifts arrived 2nd **May** along with a Lesser Whitethroat, another Red Kite flew east and 2 Wheatears of the Greenland race were on the open spaces 3rd. A Wood Warbler put in an all too brief appearance in trees bordering The Holme 5th and a Sedge Warbler was singing in the Heather Gardens. The Kestrels were feeding their young in the Wetland Pen 9th. A Turtle Dove, a really scarce visitor flew west 10th. A Common Sandpiper was around the lake and 2 Arctic Terns flew through 14th. An unseasonal Siskin flew through 20th, what was thought to be a young Little Owl was heard 29th. **June** saw another couple of unseasonal visitors with a Kingfisher in the Wetland Pen 25th and a Common Whitethroat male nearby. On **July** 3rd and 4th a Common Whitethroat seemed to be holding territory on Primrose Hill, but wasn't heard or seen after that. Two juvenile Lapwings were found on the grass by the Bandstand 30th and were very tolerant of the public, remaining until late afternoon. Six Curlews were also seen on that afternoon, as well as the first of the UK's dispersing Willow Warbler. The following day 31st witnessed the arrival of a good number of warblers, including Whitethroats, Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs, Willow and Garden Warblers. Normally these species in these numbers do not arrive until the second half of

August. Three Crossbills were possibly disturbed from trees 2nd, Common Sandpiper and Nuthatch 9th. The only Pied Flycatcher of the year was seen 10th; Common Buzzard and Hobby were high over the rose gardens 12th. A Tree Creeper was roaming with the tit flock 16th, the first sighting for several years. Always harder to see during the autumn were two Sedge Warblers 21st in a tree by Long Bridge. A 1st winter male Common Redstart was in the grounds of the old Golf and Tennis school 21st. Though not seen Sandwich Terns were heard flying over early in the morning 26th heading southwards, this followed a report of a small group flying in the same direction over Brent Reservoir (3 miles to the north) five minutes earlier. This was also the day that the drake Garganey was last seen. The last Swift passed through on **7th September**, then a first for the park in the form of a magnificent female Montagu's Harrier 9th. This bird was seen while participating in a spot of autumn sky-watching. Though this period wasn't as productive as in previous years, we were still picking up Common Buzzards, Hobby's, Peregrine Falcons and Sparrowhawks. Two Whinchats were on the ropes protecting the cricket squares 10th, another was present briefly on 18th a day when two Woodlarks contemplated landing, but thought better of it. On the 20th six species of raptors were recorded, these included single Red Kite and Honey Buzzard. Sightings as usual then begin to tail off as we await the last dates for hirundines and the first dates for winter thrushes. The first of last years over-wintering Water Rails returned **8th October**, with a second bird present the following day. This was also the day the first Redwing flew through. The sight and sound of two Skylarks 11th always reminds me of larger scale movements of the past. The last Swallow flew through 12th and four Teal were feeding in the Wetland Pen. The number of Redwings (312) and Song Thrushes (14) passing through began to increase from the 13th, the first Fieldfare headed west 14th. Another memorable day 17th saw Firecrest, Rock Pipit, Ring Ouzel and the third Woodlark of the year, as well as good numbers of other passage migrant. To the lucky few on a late season bird walk on 18th a Ring Ouzel was flushed from the Wetland Pen. The second Rock Pipit of the autumn flew west 21st. Six Lesser Redpolls were feeding on Silver Birch seeds on the 29th and were seen off and on for the next few days. Three Water Rails were present on the 3rd **November**, two in the rail ditch and another in the in a reed bed in the wetland. A female Firecrest flew from the Holme in to the grounds of the Open Air Theatre 4th. A Woodcock flew in to the Community Wildlife Garden early morning on the 5th. A first winter Mediterranean Gull was on the lake from the 6th, this bird would commute between here and St James's Park. Yet another Ring Ouzel was seen 10th, making this one of the best autumns for this shy mountain breeding species. The Mediterranean Gull was last seen on 21st, by which time it had become very approachable. A Chiffchaff was present on 3rd **December**; it is surprising that we do not records of this species during the winter months. Mandarin Duck numbers began to increase this month with 56 on the lake 9th. Winter began to set in from 18th with a light dusting of snow that morning, which resulting in 10 Lapwings flying over. The following day a further 11 birds flew east; Redwings and the odd Fieldfare were now turning up in the park. Two Woodcocks were flushed on 20th from two different areas on the western side of the park. Meadow Pipits are rarely seen at this time of year so one on 22nd and two 23rd feeding on the ground were very unseasonal.

Little Grebe

Resident/Summer visitor. One bird overwintered in the Longbridge Sanctuary. Five birds were present 30/3, increasing to seven birds 14/4. Eventually three pairs nested with very disappointing results. In fact only one chick managed to survive, the probable cause for them failing could be persecution by Coots. At least two birds were present at the end of the year.

Great Crested Grebe

Resident. None recorded in January, the first birds arriving back in late February. This had increased to two pairs by the 11/3 and three pairs by 5/5. The pair on the main part of the lake failed on their first attempt, due to disturbance by rowing boats. Eventually they were successful as were the two other pairs rearing a total of 5 young.

Cormorant

Resident. Large numbers are still roosting during the winter months, though no counts were taken. High flying birds are guaranteed to make your heart miss a beat when looking for raptors.

Heron

Resident. Twenty nine nests were again occupied. Though as usual some more than once, so being shaw how many different pairs have nested is uncertain.

Mute Swan

Resident. One pair was present on the lake but there was no attempt to nest. Other birds dropped in, but were quickly moved on by the resident pair.

Greylag Goose

Resident.

Canada Goose

Resident

Egyptian Goose

Regular visitor. One pair bred but fortunately they lost all of the young. Numbers built up during the course of the year from twenty three 11/3 to a record fifty-seven 3/11.

Common Shelduck

Occasional visitor. A drake was present on the lake 11/3. A pair returned 31/3, when a fully-flighted drake from the collection tried to chase the male off. They were present off and on until last being seen 10/5.

Mandarin Duck

Resident. The year started with numbers in the first quarter increasing to a park record forty birds. As with last year two pairs bred on the lake and another pair on the canal. During December the record was broken yet again fifty-eight birds were present, remaining into the new year.

Gadwall

Resident. Two pairs summered but failed to breed for the third year in a row, possibly the cold wet spring put them off. There was a peak count of fourteen on 17/12.

Common Teal

Winter visitor. Three birds were present during the winter period. The first bird of the autumn arrived 14/9 in the Wetland Pen, a new bird for that site. Six birds were present 12/10 but, numbers then dropped away with only two or three present at the end of the year.

Mallard

Resident

Eurasian Wigeon

Passage migrant. A first winter pair were present on the main lake briefly 12/10.

Northern Pintail

Winter visitor. A drake was present throughout January staying until 16/2.

Northern Shoveler

Winter visitor. Numbers slightly up on recent years with twenty-nine birds coming to feed in the Hanover Bridge Sanctuary. The first bird of the autumn arrived 14/9, with numbers increasing to sixteen in December.

Red-Crested Pochard

Resident. This species has an increasing feral population in Central London. Six pairs bred successfully, though birds found nesting in the ornamental waterfowl nest boxes had their eggs removed. Numbers on the lake in October reached sixty-five.

Greater Scaup

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

Eurasian Pochard

Resident. Twelve pairs bred, numbers peaked at two hundred and twenty 2/2

Tufted Duck

Resident. Sixteen pairs bred, it is good to see an increase in the breeding of this and the above species after a few poor years. There was a peak count of one hundred and seventy 2/2.

Ruddy Duck

Winter Visitor. DEFRA's plan to eradicate this species from the UK seems to be working. For the first year since the early 1990's no birds summered. Four over-wintering birds had departed by the end of March. Two ducks were present 12/11 and were joined by a male on 4/12.

Common Buzzard

Annual. Slightly down on last years record number, but still a fair showing with eleven birds recorded on twelve dates. Four birds were recorded in spring between 24/3 and 23/4. Then birds were recorded during the autumn period between 12/8 and 4/10. In general the weather systems needed to push this and other birds of prey over the park didn't occur on many occasions.

Honey Buzzard

Rare migrant. Only recorded once this year, when a high flying dark morph bird flew south-west 20/9.

Red Kite

Passage migrant. After last years single observation, this year five birds were recorded on four dates; one 13/4, two 20/3, one 3/5 and one 20/9

Montagu's Harrier.

Rare Visitor. Finally after sightings in the past of birds that were probably this species, it is now on the parks list. A female was seen heading SW at 12.15pm 9/9.

Osprey

Occasional passage migrant. We possible miss some of these birds when they are heading northwards in spring as we haven't got back in to the habit of looking up. However I did manage to look in time to see a high flying bird heading SE 26/4.

Sparrowhawk

Resident. Sightings were again few during the breeding season leading us to again presume that there are none within the parks boundaries. The only records of birds thought to be on passage were three 6/4 and one 12/10. During the latter part of the year birds regularly hunted birds using the feeding stations.

Eurasian Hobby

Summer visitor and passage migrant. Not recorded at all this spring. During the autumn birds were seen on eight dates between 12/8 and 24/9. Two were seen together 6/9, a couple of the other records were birds in hunting mode.

Kestrel

Resident. Two pairs bred. The number of young to fledge this year was down on the previous couple of years. The pairs in the Wetland and on Primrose Hill both only managed to fledge 3 young each. This was possibly down to the cool damp spring causing a shortage of prey items.

Peregrine Falcon

Occasional visitor. The number of observations was slightly down on last year, possible due to the weather. Birds were recorded between 13/2 and 12/10. Again these sightings involve the birds from the city and the female that was in the area last year. What is needed is another male to find this female and defend the territory. On the 6/5 a male was seen, unfortunately he was chased off by the bird from the city.

Water Rail

Winter visitor. There were two birds in the rail ditch during January. However on 6/2 three birds were seen, though not all at one time, these birds had different under-tail coverts. As soon as the boats were hired out 15/3 the birds departed. The first returning winter arrived 8/9 followed by a second bird the following day. There was a very brief view of a bird in the wetland 3/11, but not recorded since.

Moorhen

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

Coot

Resident. A large flock of up to one hundred and twenty can be seen on the lake by Clarence Bridge.

Oystercatcher

Scarce passage migrant. The fifth record for the park and the first since 1995 arrived from the south-west low over the lake, before heading off south-east 14/4 at 7.30am.

Ringed Plover

Scarce passage migrant. One flew west in rain 16/4, the third record for the park.

Golden Plover

Scarce passage migrant. The tenth record for the park involved four birds flying south at 8.15am 17/10.

Northern Lapwing

Passage migrant. Sightings were up this year, due to the cold spells of weather at the beginning and end of the year. Birds recorded on five dates; 3 on 5/1, 12 on 7/1, 2 juveniles were present by the bandstand for much of the day 30/7, 10 on 18/12, 11 on 19/12.

Woodcock

Winter visitor. Four birds recorded on three dates; one 23/1 flew across the open spaces and landed under a hedge by the nursery. The other records were at the end of the year; one in the Wildlife Garden and two sightings in the west of the park 20/12 were thought to be to different birds.

Eurasian Curlew

Passage migrant. Six birds were seen flying south by one lucky observer 30/7.

Common Sandpiper

Passage migrant. A poor showing this year, one in spring 14/5 and then singles on the 9th and 26th August.

Black-Headed Gull

Winter visitor. Birds were seen in every month of the year, almost all the wintering birds had departed by 19/3.

Mediterranean Gull

Scarce visitor. A first winter bird 1st seen at St James Park, arrived 6/11 and spent time commuting between the two, before choosing to stay in the former from 21/11. This was the first time a bird in this plumage has been seen since 1982, which then was the second record of this species in Inner London.

Common Gull

Winter visitor. The wintering flock reached twenty-four 17/3. The first returning birds arrived 14/10 when two were present.

Great Black-Backed Gull

Occasional visitor. Birds were recorded on six dates this year. An unusual event occurred 25/3 when a pair turned up and were displaying on the rowing boats. The following day they were carrying nesting material, but had left the park by late afternoon.

Lesser Black-Backed Gull

Summer visitor. Small numbers occur during the winter months.

Herring Gull

Resident. Three pairs laid eggs on Heron Island but all failed to rear their young., possibly due to predation by other gulls.

Yellow-Legged Gull

Winter visitor. An adult was present off and on during the first quarter of the year. A 3rd winter was on the lake 20/7. The adult bird was then seen sporadically from 5/8 until the 18/10.

Common Tern

Summer visitor. The first record of the year was a single bird over the lake 24/4. Overall sightings were down on previous years, though as normal a pair displayed over the lake on several dates. The last record of the year was on the early date of 30/7.

Feral Pigeon

Resident. A few pairs breed under Clarence Bridge, numbers in the park have risen possibly due to the lack of food provided in Trafalgar Square

Stock Dove

Resident. At least ten pairs were present, though the number of juvenile birds was very low. Birds are often seen at the feeding stations. The garden by St Marks Bridge regularly gets up to 20 birds drop in to feed in the afternoons.

Wood Pigeon

Resident. This year there was no significant movement of birds heading south-west in the autumn. The largest movement noticed was one thousand five hundred 10/11.

Turtle Dove

Scarce passage migrant. Only one record, a bird flew west at 8.15am 10/5.

Collared Dove

Passage migrant. Birds were recorded on nine dates, four during the spring and three in the autumn. The other dates during June and July possibly relate to birds that were being seen in a garden to the north of Primrose Hill.

Ring-Necked Parakeet

Resident. Birds were seen throughout the year, with slightly more regularity. There was no evidence of breeding, though I am sure it won't be long.

Cuckoo

Passage migrant. Three birds were seen this year, or was it the same bird returning. Birds were seen on 9/6, 16/6 and 23/6. The last two birds were seen in the wetland, almost in the same trees.

Tawny Owl

Resident. The pair in the north-west section of the park was present until late February, but there was no proof of breeding. The pair in Queen Mary's Garden fledged four but unfortunately lost two due to predation by corvids.

Little Owl

Resident, Central London's first and only breeding pair managed to rear at least two young. The problem this year was that they used a box high up in a London Plane tree, making it was hard to see them.

Common Swift

Summer visitor. First sighting of the year was a bird on 20/4. Small numbers of birds are present over the park daily, though where they breed is uncertain. The largest gathering of birds was one hundred and twenty; these were feeding above the lake 5/6. The last bird of the year was seen on 7/9.

Kingfisher

Occasional passage migrant. A very disappointing year with only two records; a bird flushed from the Wetland Pen 25/6 and another heard flying over the lake.

Green Woodpecker

Resident. Breeding birds had increased to four pairs bred.

Great Spotted Woodpecker

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

Skylark

Passage migrant. Again a disappointing year with birds recorded on three dates; one 9/10, two 11/10 and one 7/11.

Sand Martin

Passage migrant. Birds were recorded only on four dates, twice in the spring on 18/4 and 18/5. The autumn saw birds pass through 1/9 and 13/9. The low numbers may be partly down to the lack of time spent looking over the lake.

Barn Swallow

Passage migrant. The first bird of the year flew north 13/4, overall numbers during the spring were again fairly low. Autumn passage started with eight birds 18/8, peaking at over four hundred 19/9 and one hundred and sixty the following day. The last bird flew south 12/10.

Northern House Martin

Summer visitor. The first birds of the year was seen flying north 7/4. Autumn passage saw one hundred and eighty fly through 19/8. The following day over three hundred headed south, with over two hundred feeding briefly above the open spaces. The last bird was recorded on 17/10.

Tree Pipit

Passage migrant. Passage was a little disappointing with birds only recorded on four dates during the autumn, between 18/8 and 14/9.

Meadow Pipit

Passage migrant. Spring passage was poor with birds only recorded on three dates, a bird 31/3 being the first of the year. The autumn passage began with three 5/9, passage was very light peaking at twelve 9/10.

Rock Pipit

Scarce passage migrant. Recorded only once this year 17/10 at a time of year when you stand a chance of hearing and seeing this species pass overhead.

Pied Wagtail

Resident. Birds were recorded from the middle of March through to the middle of October. At least two pairs breed close to the park.

White Wagtail

Annual passage migrant. Records involved singles 6/4 and 7/9 and three birds 21/9.

Grey Wagtail

Resident. This was the first year for a long time when birds were not recorded in every month of the year. Recently fledged young were recorded during the year suggesting that at least two pairs again bred close by. Peak autumn passage saw eight birds pass through 14/10.

Yellow Wagtail

Passage migrant. Eleven birds were recorded on eight dates, of which three were in spring. One bird was seen feeding with the Starling flock 6/5, until flushed by dogs.

Wren

Resident. Widespread in areas with 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. Birds were recorded on two dates, once in spring 21/4 on the edge of the Leaf Yard Wood 21. Then one on the site of the Old Golf and Tennis School 28/8.

Northern Wheatear

Passage migrant. Numbers were back down again, with birds recorded on only five dates, twice in spring one 14/4 and two Greenland race birds 3/5. During the autumn birds were seen on 9th, 10th and 24th September.

Whinchat

Passage migrant. This year again birds were only recorded on two dates, both during the autumn. This involved two birds 10th September and a single bird 18th September.

Blackbird

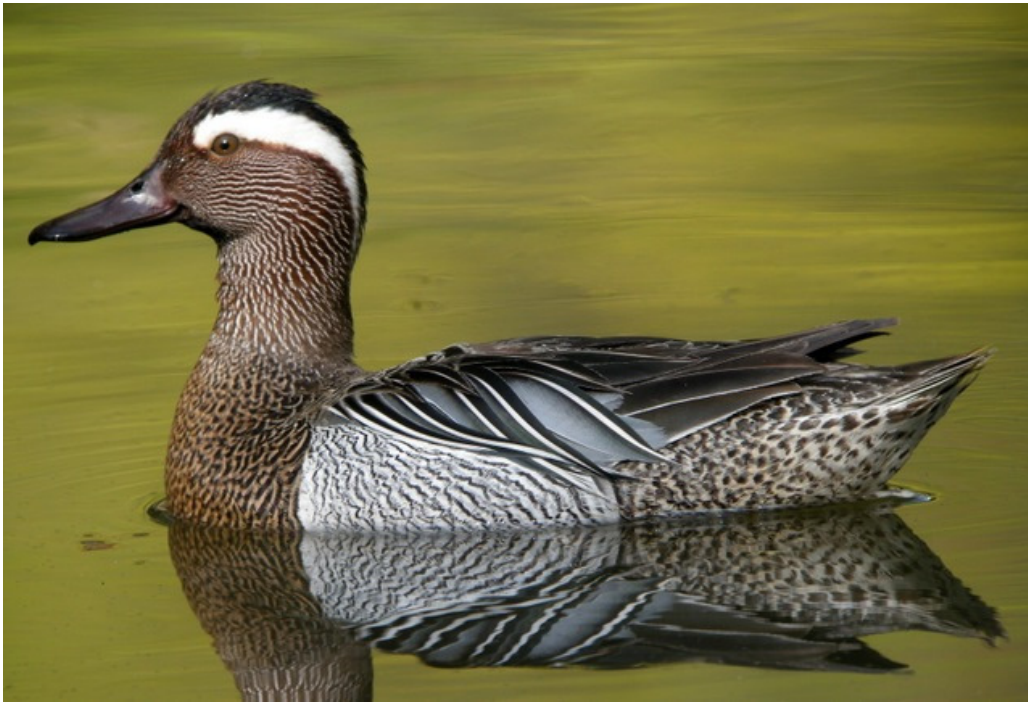
Resident. Twenty-eight birds on migration flew west 19/10.

Mistle Thrush

Resident. The largest gatherings were noted on Primrose Hill where up to twenty-two birds were recorded feeding in late summer.

Garganey

The photos below show how much drakes change when they moult after the breeding season





Mediterranean Gull 1st winter



Great Black-backed Gull; The rarest of the five commonest UK gulls to be seen on the Ground in the park. Even rarer than the above species.

Northern Lapwing

One of two very confiding juveniles that spent the day by the lake in late July



Little Owl

This female was seen by this nestbox on several occasions and on one date a juvenile was nearby





Two species that make use of the ropes and pins around the cricket wickets are Northern Wheatear(above) and Whinchat(below)





The cold weather at the end of the year brought good numbers of these two species of winter visitors, Fieldfare(above) and Redwing(below).



Fieldfare

Passage migrant. Birds were recorded on four dates during the cold spell in the early part of the year. A flock of fifty-five were feeding in the park 2/2. The numbers then gradually reduced with fifteen present 9/2. The first bird of the autumn flew west 14/10. Birds were noted in small numbers passing over until a change in the weather saw one hundred and ten 17/11 and one hundred and sixty 16/11. A handful of birds were then seen feeding around the park until the year end.

Song Thrush

Resident. Numbers seem to stable at present. Passage birds were noted from 20/9 until 11/10 moving west in one's and two's.

Redwing

Passage migrant and winter visitor. Only recorded once in January, but a spell of wintery weather in early February brought a flock of seventy-two into the park. These birds remained in slightly reduced numbers until the end of the month. The last birds of the winter were twenty-five heading west 8/3. One bird 9/10 was the first of the autumn. The largest movement involved three hundred and twelve 13/10 and three hundred and seventy 17/10 all heading west. The cold spell in November saw almost two hundred birds feeding around the park on berries or on any unfrozen ground they could find.

Ring Ouzel

Scarce passage migrant. Numbers not as good as last year; one 28/4 was perched in a tree by the old golf and tennis school. The two autumn records were both birds flying over, on 17/10 and 10/11.

Reed Warbler

Summer visitor and passage migrant. The first bird of the year arrived 23/4. There was a slight drop in the number of males holding territory, from eight last year down to five this year. The wet weather in May no doubt had an effect on the breeding success rate, with only two family parties seen. The last birds of the year were recorded in the Wetland Pen 24/9.

Sedge Warbler

Passage migrant. As with last year another disappointing showing with birds recorded on just two dates. In spring one sang from the shrubs in the Heather Garden 5/5. In autumn two birds were feeding in trees by Longbridge 20/8.

Lesser Whitethroat

Passage migrant. Like the previous two years, only recorded once in spring 2/5. During the autumn birds were recorded on four dates 30/8, 7/9, 13/9 and 20/9.

Common Whitethroat

Passage migrant. Not recorded in spring, with the first record being a male singing on Primrose Hill for two days from 5/7. Birds were then recorded on a very disappointing three dates 31/7, 10/9 and 19/9.

Blackcap

Summer and winter visitor. A male was at the feeding station in the Cricket Pen 29/1. Then at least three birds were seen using the insect bar(suet block) feeder during February and March. The first notable arrival of spring migrants occurred 4/4 when four males were singing around the park. A count on 4/5 found fourteen males holding territories around the park. Autumn passage peaked at fourteen birds 8/9.

Garden Warbler

Passage migrant. Seen only once in spring, a male singing 8/5 in the Longbridge Sanctuary. During the autumn passage up to four birds used the old Golf and Tennis School area from 31/7 until 2/8. The last of a disappointing passage was seen 17/8.

Chiffchaff

Summer visitor and passage migrant. The first birds of the year were two on 19/3. Spring passage was very low, with numbers not exceeding more than four singing males. It then seemed that these birds held territories and succeeded in attracting females. The only young seen were by The Nature Study Centre and the Leaf Yard Wood. Autumn passage saw numbers peaking at twenty-five 5/9 and twenty 24/9. The last bird of the year was seen 23/12 by the Nature Study Centre.

Willow Warbler

Passage migrant. Eight birds arrived 6/4 and were the first of the year. The spring passage was very poor with birds only recorded on five dates. The first signs of birds heading south started with one 30/7, passage peaked with eleven present the following day. The last sighting was two birds on 5/9.

Goldcrest

Resident, passage migrant. Seven males again held territories, with breeding proven in the Avenue Gardens. Numbers peaked in the autumn with eighteen present on the 19/09.

Firecrest

Passage migrant and winter visitor. Birds were recorded again on three dates this year. A male sang and showed briefly in the grounds of the Holme 10/04. Then in the autumn females were seen on an island in the Longbridge Sanctuary 17/10 and one flew into the Open air Theatre 14/11

Spotted Flycatcher

Passage migrant. This has to be the worst year on record for this once common parkland and woodland species. Birds were only recorded on two dates, one 2/9 and two on the 5/9.

Pied Flycatcher

Passage migrant. As with the above species, it was also a disappointing year for this species with only one record on the 10/8.

Long-Tailed Tit

Resident. The largest flock recorded was forty-eight on 22/9.

Coal Tit

Resident. The central area of the park is the best place to see this species, as they tend to favour the areas with Yew and conifer trees. Eight pairs were recorded.

Blue Tit

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

Great Tit

Resident. The number of pairs are slightly less numbers than the above species.

Nuthatch

Occasional visitor. Three sightings this year of what was possibly two different birds. One on 12/6 and then birds were recorded on 9th and 14/8.

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. This species has also realised what peanut feeders are about and can be seen using the one at the feeding station in the Leaf Yard Wood.

Crow

Resident. There is a flock of non-breeding birds that move between the side of the main lake and the open spaces. This flock tends to have a large number of weak looking individuals. Probably due to the fact that they rely largely on the public to feed them, rather than foraging for natural food stuffs.

Rook

Passage migrant. Only one sighting this year on the 2/3.

Jackdaw

Passage migrant. Birds were recorded on eleven occasions this year. Eight of these were within the first five months of the year and then three in the autumn. The peak count saw six fly through on the 9/10.

Starling

Resident, passage migrant. The new areas of rough grassland surrounding the sports pitches continue to offer the birds food away from the aviaries in London Zoo. Numbers of continental birds passing over during the autumn was light, due to unfavourable winds.

House Sparrow

Resident in London Zoo. The only records away from London Zoo were again in the garden by St Marks Bridge, where a male was recorded twice on 15/6 and the 19/6. There was a report of one in the Cricket Pen in November

Chaffinch

Resident, passage migrant. This attractive finch can be seen at all the feeding stations in the park. The largest movement witnessed this autumn involved two-hundred and twenty birds heading west in small groups.

Brambling

Passage migrant, winter visitor. A very disappointing year for this regular passage migrant. There were two records in March, one in the Cricket Pen 15th and one flew north 31st. This was the first autumn where no birds were recorded.

Greenfinch

Resident. Exact breeding numbers are not known, but there strong hold appears to be the more formal garden areas.

Goldfinch

Resident. Three nests were found, though other nests probably went undetected. The largest number recorded was sixty 27/3. These were birds feeding in different areas of the park at a similar time

.Eurasian Siskin

Passage migrant. A small flock of fourteen birds fed around the park from the beginning of the year, gradually declining to five 29/1. Fourteen flew north 14/4 and one was recorded on 20/5, a slightly unusual date. Autumn numbers as with most birds from the continent was poor, one 8/10, two 9/11 and one 4/12.

Lesser Redpoll

Passage migrant. A slightly better showing this year, though not in large numbers and only one early year record 16/3. During the autumn birds were recorded on seven dates from 18/10 through to 26/11. A small flock of five fed in Silver Birch trees from the 9/11 until 11/11.

Linnet

Passage migrant. Though recorded on six dates this opposed to three last year the total number of birds recorded ten was one less. This species used to drop in and feed on the weeds on the sports pitches. Now that they are being maintained to a higher standard, there is now no weeds to attract them.

Acknowledgement:

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