

Shropshire Ornithological Society

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Bird Notes

Oct, Nov and Dec 2009

Weather - October saw variable weather, with periods when it was fine as well as prolonged rain at times. November was very unsettled, with periods of strong wind and rain. Despite this, November was very mild with temperatures well above the average for the month. December was initially mild, becoming colder by the second week.

Great Crested Grebe At Priorslee Lake an adult was seen to spear and drown a juvenile on 12 Oct

Black-necked Grebe One was seen at Priorslee Lake from 8 to 29 Dec.

Great Bittern The only sightings came from VP from 9 Oct to 16 Nov.

Great Egret One was seen at Chelmarsh Res. on 23 Oct. This sighting has been accepted by the records committee.

Whooper Swan The first record of the winter came from VP with one present from 9 to 12 Oct. One was then seen at Chelmarsh Res. on 2 and 3 Nov. Two were seen at the unusual locations of ASF on 5 Nov and Oswestry Hill Fort on 11 Nov. Two records came from the usual location of Melverley Green, with the best total being 25 on 31 Dec.

Pink-footed Goose 68 were seen at Cross Lane Head on 13 Dec and the other record was a single bird at Leighton on 30 Dec.

Mandarin Duck All five records came from the general Bridgnorth area of the River Severn. The best count was four at Highley on 20 Nov.

Gadwall The best count came from Chelmarsh Res. on 20 Dec when 10 were seen during a spell of hard weather.

Northern Pintail Birds were seen at ASF, Priorslee Lake, VP, Whixall Moss and Whixall Canal Floods.

Northern Shoveler As usual, the best counts came from Chetwynd Park. The best count of was of 80 on 16 Nov.

Common Scoter A male was seen at ASF on 11 Nov.

Common Goldeneye The only records were of pairs at Dudmaston and Ellesmere.

Goosander A count of 108 at Chelmarsh on 5 Dec was by far the largest count in the period.

Hen Harrier A ringtail was seen at Whixall Moss from late Oct, with a suspected different bird seen at the same site in Dec. The other two records came from Leighton and Anchor.

Northern Goshawk One was seen at Brown Clee on 8 Dec.

Merlin Singles were seen at ASF, Maesbury Marsh, VP, Pulverbatch and Whixall Moss.

Red Grouse The records all came from the Long Mynd with the max count being 24 on 19 Dec.

Water Rail There were many more records in the period than is usual. Most of the records

came from VP and Priorslee Lake with two and three respectively at these sites.

Common Coot Priorslee Lake had the best counts with a site record count of 300 by 5 Dec before this was bettered by counts of 327 26-27 Dec. VP had very low counts with none present for a period in Oct and early Nov.

Little Stint An individual at ASF on 15 Oct was the last of the year.

Dunlin Birds were seen in all months of the period with records coming from ASF, VP and Wood Lane.

Ruff One was seen at Whixall Moss or on the Canal Floods on 8 and 12 Dec.

Jack Snipe Four were seen on the scrape at Chelmarsh on 15 Nov. Other sightings came from Hampton Loade and Whixall Moss.

Black-tailed Godwit One was present at VP on 14 Oct.

Eurasian Curlew The best counts came from Wood Lane with up to 40 by late Oct.

Common Sandpiper The only birds were seen at Wood Lane in the first half of Oct with up to 2 seen.

Mediterranean Gull A first winter seen at Priorslee Lake on 1 Nov had a red colour ring PKA2. The other record was also of a first winter at Ellesmere on 8 Dec.

Little Gull An adult was seen at Priorslee Lake on 10 Dec and a first-winter at VP on 14 Nov.

Ring-billed Gull One was seen at Priorslee Lake on 29 Dec. This sighting is awaiting acceptance by the records committee.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Priorslee Lake had the largest flock with up to 2000 in Dec. When it was frozen over, during spells of hard weather, it allowed viewers to note the many birds that had colour rings. One had been ringed at South Walney, Cumbria on

05/07/2003 and re-sighted at Oviedo (Spain) in Apr and Dec 2004 as well as A Coruna (Spain) in Jan 2006. Another was ringed as a 30 day juvenile at the Ribble Estuary colony on 24/07/2003 and has previously been sighted at Badajos Spain on 18/01/2004 and Blaringhem, Nord, France on 24/06/2004.

Herring Gull Several colour ringed birds were seen at Priorslee Lake. One was ringed at Vest-Agder (Norway) in Mar 2003 and has also been seen in Finnmark (Norway) on 12/07/2009 before visiting Priorslee on 28 Dec. One had ringed as an adult on Gerrards Cross Landfill (Bucks) on the 21st January 2004, and there were no other reported sightings of this bird until it was seen on 28 Dec.

Yellow-legged Gull Fourteen different adults were noted by one observer at Priorslee Lake over the two days of 28-29 Dec. Nine of these were adults, with the others first or second calendar year bird.

Caspian Gull Up to two adults were at Priorslee Lake from 28-30 Dec. These sightings are subject to acceptance by the records committee.

Glaucous Gull A first winter bird was seen at Wood Lane on 20 Nov. This sighting has been accepted by the records committee. Another was seen at Polemere on 17 Nov and is still waiting acceptance.

Great Black-backed Gull Up to two were seen at Wood Lane in Oct and Nov, and one was seen at Priorslee Lake on four dates.

Barn Owl Birds were seen at Childs Ercall, Tibberton and Wolston. A dead bird was found at VP on 26 Nov.

Short-eared Owl Two were reported. One at Pentre on 19 Nov and the other at Whixall on 27 Dec. Both sightings are still awaiting acceptance by the records committee.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker The only bird reported was one seen on The Wrekin with a Tit flock on 2 Nov.

Skylark 92 were counted at Little Wenlock on 19 Dec. Movements of birds were observed at VP on 28 Oct with a total of around 20, in groups of two or three, passing overhead in a SW direction over the course of a three hour visit.

Barn Swallow 50 were seen at Church Stretton on 19 Oct and the last sighting was of one the following day at ASF.

House Martin There were three records in Oct with the last being 5 at Knuck Wood, nr Cefn Einion, on 8 Oct.

Yellow Wagtail Two were noted at Wood Lane on 12 Oct.

Black Redstart One or possibly two males were present at Myddle from 8-10 Nov.

Stonechat Five were seen at Whixall Moss on 8 Nov. Several Dec records were received from the sites of Bettwys-y-crwyn, Tibberton Moor and Whixall Moss.

Redwing The largest counts came in mid-Oct when flocks could be seen flying over, often in a SW direction. The largest flock was of 321 on 16 Oct at Hampton Loade.

Cetti's Warbler A juvenile was caught and ringed at Chelmarsh on 30 Oct. A bird was then seen or heard at the same site on five further dates in Nov or Dec.

Blackcap There was one recorded in early Oct and there was then a gap in sightings until mid Nov. Three records all came on 15 Nov and sightings continued after that date.

Common Chiffchaff One or two were seen at Wood Lane throughout Oct and birds were also seen on occasions at Chelmarsh, VP and Priorslee Lake. The only Nov records were of an individual at Chelmarsh on 15 and 19 Nov.

Firecrest One was seen on the main track leading from the car park up to the Wrekin. It was first seen on 4 Nov and then seen on a further 12 dates until 12 Dec, where it was usually around 150m up the path.

Willow Tit Most of the records came from Priorslee Lake with up to two seen in Oct and then again in Dec. The other sites that recorded this species were Wyre Forest, Hampton Loade, Whixall Moss and The Wrekin.

Great Grey Shrike One was found at Whixall Moss on 29 Oct and was seen until 8 Dec although it was often on the Welsh side of the Moss. This sighting is still awaiting acceptance by the records committee.

Starling A number of large flocks were seen in the period. The largest was of 3100 at Edgmond Marsh on 4 Nov. Four figure flocks were also seen at Chelmarsh, Whixall Moss and Wood Lane.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow A sighting of 23 at Polemere on 28 Dec was the largest count in Shropshire for a while. Another good record was of 15 at Whitton Court on 4 Nov.

Brambling There were far fewer records than last autumn, with just six records from four locations. The best count was of four at Ercall Heath on 28 Dec.

Lesser Redpoll There were a good number of records although most flocks were of single figures. The largest count was of 30 at Knuck Wood, nr Cefn Einion, on 28 Nov.

Common Crossbill Counts of 35 and 25 were recorded at Blackgraves Coppice on 21 Nov and 10 Oct. There was also a count of 35 at Brown Clee on 28 Dec and 18 at Cefn Coch on dates in Oct and Dec.

Corn Bunting A flock of 21 was seen at Isombridge Farm on 8 Oct. Other sightings came from Cherrington Moor, Eyton Moor and Puleston.

Total number of species - 128

Total number of recorders - 97

Total number of records - 5004

Also seen during the period - Little Grebe, Cormorant, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Black Swan, Anser sp, Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Snow Goose, Common Shelduck, Eurasian Wigeon, Eurasian Teal, Mallard, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, Anas sp., Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Red Kite, Common Buzzard, Common Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Red-legged Partridge, Common Pheasant, Common Moorhen, Eurasian Oystercatcher, European Golden Plover, Northern Lapwing, Common Snipe, Eurasian Woodcock, Common Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Feral Pigeon, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Collared Dove, Tawny Owl, Common Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Meadow Pipit, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Dipper, Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Common Blackbird, Fieldfare, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit, Marsh Tit, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Nuthatch, Eurasian Treecreeper, Eurasian Jay, Eurasian Jackdaw, Magpie, Rook, Carrion Crow, Common Raven, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, European Greenfinch, European Goldfinch, Eurasian Siskin, Common Linnet, Reed Bunting, Common Bullfinch, Yellowhammer,

Decisions of the Records Committee

The following decisions have been accepted for publication in the annual report:

2008

Short-eared Owl	One seen on 4 dates	Long Mynd	24 Oct - 26 Jan 09
Nightjar	One or two	South Shropshire	15 – 26 Jul
Water Pipit	One	ASF	15 Nov
Hawfinch	Five	Aldenham	20 Dec

2009

Bittern	One	VP	9-16 Oct
Great Egret	One	Chelmarsh Res.	23 Oct
Purple Heron	One, juv	Montgomery Canal / Pen – yr- Estyn	9 Aug & 5-11 Sep
White Stork	One	Rednal / Pen-yr-Estyn Marsh	13 – 20 Apr
Spoonbill	One	Chelmarsh Res.	22 Aug
Whooper Swan	One, ad	VP	9 – 12 Oct
Whooper Swan	One, ad	Chelmarsh Res	2 Nov
Whooper Swan	Two, ads	Mire Lake	5 Nov
Whooper Swan	Two, ad and juv	Oswestry	11 Nov
Honey Buzzard	One	South Shropshire	13 Jun
Hen Harrier	One, fem	Little Stretton	20 Jul
Hen Harrier	One juv	Snickton	28 Aug
Common Crane	Two	Muckleton	22 Mar
Common Crane	Two	Mire Lake	17 Apr
Common Crane	Two (4 13-14 Aug)	Wood Lane	20-21 Jul, 13-14 Aug & 21 Aug.
Common Crane	Two	Kynnersley	9 – 10 Aug
Knot	One	Wood Lane	27 May
Bar-tailed Godwit	One, ad	VP	15 May
Iceland Gull	Two, 2 nd win	Priorslee Lake / Flash	2 Jan – 2 Mar
Iceland Gull	Two (poss three Juveniles / 1 st winters)	Priorslee Lake / Flash	8 Jan – 4 Mar
Glaucous Gull	One or two juvs	Telford (especially Priorslee)	17 Jan – 14 Mar
Glaucous Gull	One, juv	Wood Lane	20 Nov
Nightjar	One, male	South Shropshire	7 – 13 Jul
Nightjar	One (or two)	North Shropshire	31 Jul – 6 Aug
Black Redstart	One (or two) males	Myddle	8 – 10 Nov
Cetti's Warbler	One (juv ringed)	Chelmarsh Res.	30 Oct – 5 Dec
Firecrest	One	Wrekin	4 Nov – 12 Dec

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