

December 2018

Bird News: November

Winter is arriving, slower than usual, but there have been some cold and dreich days out east. No real frosts or snowflakes yet. But if 'atmospheric' days are your thing, plenty of misty ones. Birdlife is generally settling into the winter scene and the passage of birds has slowed for some species. We need a few clear days to actually see what's out there! Here are November's highlights:

Geese: Very good numbers of Pinkfooted Geese around the full moon mid-month with 7350 on 21st and 6340 on 24th. A lone Barnacle Goose on 7th, and no Brent...yet.

Estuary Wide: Wildfowl numbers are steady with 418 Shelduck, 126 Wigeon, 54 Teal and 19 Pintail on 5th. A nice count of 24 Scaup shows this species appearing again in decent numbers in the reserve records much as last year. 7 Goldeneye, low but present.

A single Red-throated Diver, 4 Slavonian Grebe and 5 Little Grebe out on 5th too.

Wader wise Oystercatcher are now around 800-1200 mark, 184 Lapwing on 5th along with 869 Redshank, 100 Black-tailed Godwit and 13 Greenshank. A nice spot of 11 Turnstone off Coble shore on 7th and 19 off Outhead on 8th shows they are still 'sheltering'. I don't blame them!

Coble Pools: The pools are still slow to fill, but that may have changed in last day or so. Snipe, Partridge, Yellowhammer and Teal all noted here.

Outhead: Out at the extremes on 16th were 3 Stonechat, 1 Reed Bunting, 7 RB Merganser, 9 Long-tailed Duck, a

lone RT Diver and 3 GC Grebes. All lovely birds.

Sea Eagle: Single bird noted on 4 out of 30 days mainly between 15th-23rd. The male has also been noted locally so good signs for next year.

Eden Centre: 4 Little Grebes up around the bridges. 2 GC Grebes on 8th. Little Egret recorded through the month with 4 on 8th and 3 on 26th. 8 Whooper swan on 24th. Raptor wise, Kestrel, Sparrow Hawk Buzzard and Eagle all noted this month.

A nice 1250 Dunlin noted on 22nd, not showing on the WeBS counts but here nonetheless. 11 Greenshank on 7th. A notable spot of a single Mediterranean Gull on 3rd.

Kingfisher spotted occasionally all month and up on the feeders were Treecreeper, up to 14 Tree Sparrow, Long-tailed Tit and a single Brambling on 29th. Not a bad month for birdlife!

Bird of the Month



Brambling

A distinctive and notable finch. Often in huge flocks, but can be in single and mixed with other finches like Chaffinch. So study those finches - one may be a Brambling. They are seed feeders and one of our favourite 'winter' birds. They are often associated with deep winter and snow and their stunning markings can really cheer a bleak mid-winter walk. A fitting record for the Season.

Eden Centre: Christmas

- **Christmas closing times:** the centre is closed on

25th December

31st Dec and 1st January

- **Heaters:** Please do not leave these on when leaving and use sparingly.

Reserve News:

- **Records:** Please pass on records of birds and mammals you spot out on the reserve. We rely on this data for future management.
- **Donations:** Thanks to all those who have made a contribution, we are always grateful. Thank you.

Merry Christmas!

It is that time of year to put your feet up, stay warm and reflect on past glories and ones yet to come. It's been another busy year and much has happened. The Nature Reserve turned 40 and we can all take a little joy in knowing that the world may be going to hell in a hand cart...but some things let you know, it hasn't made it yet....maybe it never will.

I wish you all a really good Christmas and thanks for all your support. It can't be done without you.

Best wishes

Ranald Strachan