

## January 2018

### Bird News: December

Well the forecasts for the New Year period stated 'unsettled' and its fair to say they were correct. 2018 is now well under way and the temperatures have plummeted. Minus 7 this morning. Hard going for the birdlife but makes for some superb light conditions and the reserve is quite stunning under these conditions. Plenty to spot out there, here are December's highlights:

**Geese:** The Pink-footed numbers were pretty good and stable most of December with around 2500 birds most days with 4860 on 20<sup>th</sup>. 27 Greylag on 11<sup>th</sup> and 24 LB Brent Geese on 12<sup>th</sup>.

**WeBS (Estuary Counts):** Very good numbers are showing on the full counts with 333 Shelduck, 424 Wigeon, 65 Teal and 54 Pintail on 12<sup>th</sup>.

Wader wise, 2895 Oystercatcher, 12 Ringed Plover, 128 Sanderling, 205 Lapwing, 3075 Dunlin, 1724 Redshank, 1215 Knot and 132 Bar-Tailed Godwit.

**Low Tide Count:** This count picked up high numbers of birds with notable numbers of Dunlin, Knot and Redshank on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Still fewer Bar-tailed Godwits and Grey Plovers than expected, but Common Scoter, Mallard, Lapwing and Oystercatcher numbers were good.

**Outhead:** Good numbers of Oystercatcher and Redshank using West Sands southern beach with Linnet and Stonechat still busy around the dunes.

**Goosepools:** 15 Redwing on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Sea Eagles:** A slow month for Eagle sightings with single bird recorded on 5 out of 31 days.

**Eden Centre:** As always a top spot for bird life. Good Little Grebe numbers all month, very much a feature of the centre just now with 7 on 5<sup>th</sup>. Little Egret turning up on 11<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. 6 Whooper swan on 8<sup>th</sup>. 50 Mallard on 19<sup>th</sup>, a nice count. 5 Goldeneye on 11<sup>th</sup>. Decent records of raptors with Kestrel, Peregrine and Sparrowhawk showing well. 33 Golden Plover on 19<sup>th</sup> and 17 Grey Plover on 28<sup>th</sup>. Black-tailed Godwit numbers are fairly steady around 100 with 125 on 28<sup>th</sup>.

The feeders are busy with the likes of GS Woodpecker, Tree Sparrow and Bullfinch and Goldfinch are passing by too.

### Bird of the Month



#### Dunlin

Continuing the 'common' theme, the Dunlin is one of the most encountered winter waders along our shores. What it may lack in rarity, it makes up with in number and spectacle. Flying in co-ordinated flocks and landing in streams of silver wings spreading out across a mudflat is a joy to see. Stunning. ID includes black legs, down curved beak and plumage hints at tortoiseshell and dark belly patch, but not always. In recent years we have had good numbers on the reserve. Very much a feature this month.

### Eden Centre

- **Open 9am-4pm**
- **Heating:** Please ensure heaters are off when leaving the centre

### Reserve News

- **Low Tide Counts:** These will be taking place Jan 18- Feb 18.
- **West Sands Christmas Tree Day:** Sat. 13<sup>th</sup> January, come along to move some Christmas trees into the sand dunes and do your bit for seabirds by carrying out a beach clean. 10am at the cafe.
- **Severe Weather:** Please be aware that during freezing weather coastal birds are putting in a good deal of effort to feed, please be considerate when spotting roosting birds and maybe stick to paths and beaches in such weather. Thanks.
- **Bird Records!** Please record all that you see from the Eden centre in the log book, this is crucial for inclusion in our data for managing the site. Thanks.

Happy New Year folks.

I hope you all had a grand holiday break and I wish you a fine and prosperous 2018. Come and see us up on the reserve and who knows maybe this is the year to get more involved with our countryside? See you around!

*Ranald Strachan*