

March 2018

Bird News: February

March opens with a blast! As this is written snow is piling up around the country. The reserve has taken a fair battering with blizzards rushing in off the North Sea. The sea conditions have been rough and there will no doubt be some loss of coast to the higher tides. This arctic blast goes against the trend as even with low temperatures signs of Spring were everywhere, but it's great to see so many Redwings and Fieldfare. Here is February highlights:

Geese: The Pink-footed numbers were pretty reasonable after a dip at New Year with 2000 on 13th and nearer 3000 on 14th. Some White fronted geese have been recorded in amongst them on occasion. LB Brent quite low with 16 on 15th then disappearing after that.

Estuary Counts: Some good counts still happening with high numbers of Common Scoter in St Andrews Bay, 60 Mallard, 233 Wigeon and over 450 Shelduck on 13th.

Wader wise, 2959 Oystercatcher, 61 Ringed Plover, 51 Lapwing, 3680 Dunlin, 1120 Redshank, 885 Knot and 74 Black Tailed Godwit.

Low Tide Count: The last count picked up high numbers of birds with very notable numbers of Dunlin (3768), Knot (838) and Lapwing (469) on 16th and 19th. Still few Bar tailed Godwits and low numbers of Grey Plovers than expected and far fewer Oystercatcher, some movement is suspected now. Interesting feedback on feeding areas, which is the main reason to do this count.

Outhead: 128 Scaup and 10 GC Grebes offshore on 8th. 7 singing

Skylarks on 26th, before the snow arrived!

Coble Pools: 45 Curlew, 65 Oystercatcher, 8 Redshank, 4 Wigeon and a single Pintail on 9th. The pools look good but will be draining now.

Sea Eagles: A worryingly poor month with a single bird noted on 1 day (7th)

Eden Centre: As always some good spots from the hide. Little Egret on 6th and 9th. 8 Whooper swan on 25th. 12 Scaup on 15th along with 10 Goldeneye. A nice triple of Kestrel, 2 Peregrine and Merlin on 1st, Peregrine again on 19th. 9 Golden Plover on 15th. 110 Black tailed Godwit on 19th. A nice unconfirmed record of a Great Egret on 25th.

At the centre, Linnet, Tree Sparrow, Bullfinch and GS Woodpecker. Nice.

Bird of the Month



Merlin

This falcon is the UK's smallest bird of prey. A red list species that is often noted in winter along the coast, many birds actually travelling from Iceland. During severe weather many think of small birds but spare a thought for the raptors too, they can suffer badly during meagre days and with small birds forming most of the Merlin diet, this is true of this species. An attractive bird and an occasional record in winter around the reserve. One spotted on 1st February.

Eden Centre

- **Open 9am-5pm**
- **Centre Closure:** The centre has to be closed during severe weather (snow/ice) as if the building cannot be serviced by staff it cannot be open. Apologies.
- **Heating:** Please ensure heaters are off when leaving the centre

Reserve News

- **Visitor Handbook:** £1.
- **West Sands Dune Days:** March 16th and 17th. We need a hand planting up some new dunes. Contact Meg on **01592 656080**.
- **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.
- **FCCT Facebook:** This is a great way to keep up with information.
- **Spring Passage:** It's that time of year, no, really! Birds will be moving on or off, breeding comes to mind and the reserve changes, a hopeful and good time of year.
- **Seabirds:** All along the coast there will be wrecked or resting seabirds. Please keep dogs away from them and don't force them to move, they may recover and at HT head back to sea.
- **Outhead:** The dune erosion here has left 4m cliffs, please be careful in this area.