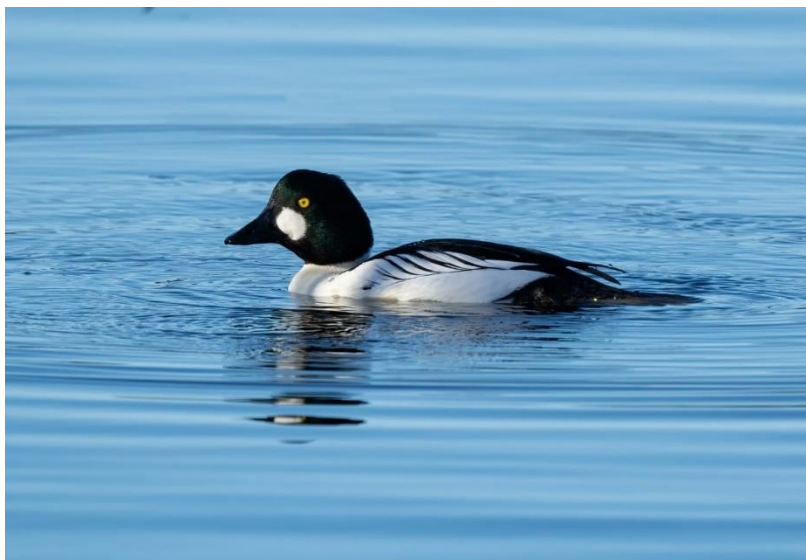


Rostherne Mere Newsletter Jan-Mar 2023

Greetings! Welcome to the first newsletter of 2023. As I write this the sun is shining and it appears that spring has finally arrived. The transition of winter into spring is one of my favourite periods at Rostherne as it provides a lot of wildlife interest.



Goldeneye on 7th Jan, photo Tony Tyler

Wintering wildfowl included up to 12 Goldeneye, 32 Mandarins, 37 Pochard and over 150 Mallard, Teal and Wigeon. Up to Ten Goosanders flew into roost during Feb evenings. An early arrival was a Black-necked Grebe seen in front of the Boathouse during Feb. There were up to 28 Great Crested Grebes with several pairs displaying. Four Water rails squealed from the reed

beds and five Woodcock flew into roost during Jan. Snipe were often encountered in the new wetland habitat.

There were around 550 Lapwing rising from surrounding farmland in Jan and 120 Golden Plover in Feb. There was a single Curlew and Oystercatcher calling in early Mar.

The Cormorants started building their nests in Jan and there were birds sitting on 115 of them by the middle of Mar!

Six Buzzards were seen on several dates with two fiercely battling with a Raven during Feb. Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were frequently observed and a Peregrine was hunting over Harpers Bank Wood on several dates. A welcome visitor was a Marsh Harrier in early Feb.

There were around 2000 Black-headed Gulls, up to 320 Lesser Black-backed Gulls and several Herring Gulls roosting on the mere in Jan evenings.

There have been at least three Barn Owls seen on the Reserve. Tony Tyler built an excellent new box which was put up to replace the old dilapidated one in Mere Field. Both Tawny Owl and Little Owl were also recorded during the quarter.

Bullfinches, Siskins, Lesser Redpoll and Reed Buntings often visited the bird tables in front of the Observatory and hides.

Kingfishers were frequently seen at several locations around the mere. Cetti's Warbler was recorded on most days and Malcolm Calvert caught two females and a male.

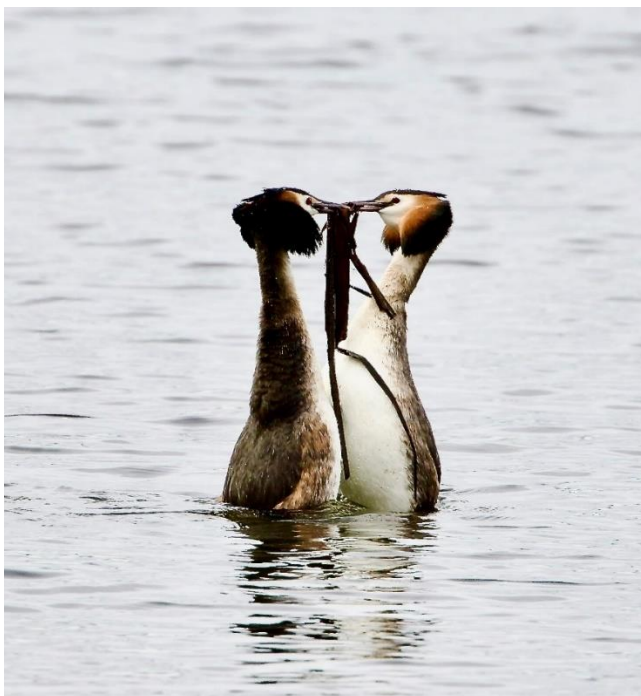
Over 100 Fieldfare and 80 Redwing were feeding in the fields around the Reserve in Jan. There were around 50 Linnets and flocks of Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Reed Buntings regularly feeding on the Sprout Field. Grey Wagtails were seen on the banks of Rostherne Brook from the road bridge.

Mar saw the arrival of the first Sand Martins and Chiffchaffs. Skylarks were heard singing as they displayed near the Sprout Field. Stonechats were seen on Dolls Meadow with two pairs on several dates.

One of the highlights was a male Otter as it swam across the Mere on 15th Feb. Fresh Otter spraints were seen along Rostherne Brook and in the Boathouse. One was recently captured on Trailcam footage in the Boathouse along with film of several American Mink. Brown Hares were frequently seen on the meadows and a Reeves' Muntjac was spotted in Harpers Bank Wood in Mar. The first butterfly of the season was a Small Tortoiseshell seen by Pete Kelly on 22nd Mar.

Finally, fingers crossed for the warm sunshine to continue and I look forward to seeing many of you visiting the Reserve in the coming months. Best Wishes.

Bill Bellamy



The Great Crested Grebe 'Weed Dance', photo John Hancock



The Cormorant Colony on 21st Feb, photo Paddy Carrington



Little Grebes on 7th Jan, photo Tony Tyler



Treecreeper caught on 21st Feb, photo Malcolm Calvert



Siskin in front of the Observatory on 10th Jan, photo Sheelagh Halsey



Female Stonechat on Dolls Meadow, photo Pete Kelly



Chiffchaff on 22nd Mar, photo Pete Kelly



Brown Hares on 26th Jan, photo Phil Dell



The Mere Covert reed bed on 21st Feb, photo Paddy Carrington