

Rostherne Mere Newsletter Jul-Sep 2023

Welcome to late summer newsletter. It covers a fascinating time for wildlife when many new offspring and family parties are evident but when we also welcome the arrival of the first winter visitors!

Interesting wildfowl records included two juvenile Black-necked Grebes in Jul, 20 Common Scoters in Aug and 23 Egyptian Geese in Sep. There was a count of 85 Mandarin Ducks in Jul which set a record high for the Reserve. A Little Egret was seen in Aug. There were two broods of Great Crested Grebes and several Coot chicks were seen. Up to seven Grey Herons visited in Aug. Three Pink-footed Geese flew over in Sep and Goosander, Pochard, Shoveler, Teal and Wigeon were all seen for first time since the spring. A Water rail was heard 'sharming' in Dolls Meadow in early Sep.

Waders were rarely encountered but a Common Sandpiper and a Curlew were logged in Aug.

One of the highlights of the quarter was the sight of up to four Hobbies in front of the Observatory. Food passes between adult and juvenile birds were witnessed on several occasions. A female Marsh Harrier was frequently viewed quartering Dolls Meadow. Up to three juvenile Kestrels were seen around the Reserve. There were six Buzzards circling over the Mere in Aug and four Sparrowhawks in Sep. A Peregrine was also recorded in Jul.



Long-eared Owl on 31st Aug, photo by Steve Collins

Amazingly, a Long-eared Owl was spotted by Steve Collins and his daughter Emily on 31st Aug. This is only the second ever record for Rostherne! Both Barn Owls and Tawny Owls were also logged in the quarter.

Swallows bred at Briddonweir Farm with six nests recorded but counts over the Mere were generally in single figures! Although, 20 were seen on wires near Marsh Lane during Sep. There were 24 House Martins in early Jul but the highest count of Swifts was only 20.

Another fantastic record was that of a juvenile Lesser Spotted Woodpecker ringed by Malcolm Calvert in Aug. The presence of a young bird suggesting they bred nearby.

Both Garden Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat were recorded in Aug. A pair of Common Whitethroat bred in Dolls Meadow. A Spotted Flycatcher was seen near the Permissive Path. It was a good breeding season for Reed Warblers with over 100 adults ringed by Malcolm and John Adshead. Sedge Warbler and Willow Warbler were both recorded but at low numbers.

Cetti's Warblers were heard in several areas in the margins of the Mere and five new juveniles have now been ringed this year by Malcolm and John. Blue Tits had a very good breeding season with young birds seen throughout the Reserve and many of them were ringed. It was also an encouraging year for House Sparrows with 43 seen in a hedgerow near Briddonweir Farm. A juvenile Willow Tit was ringed by Malcolm near Old Hall Wood in Aug.

Other interesting records included around 200 Wood Pigeons on the harvested Sprout Field and 100 Jackdaws in the trees along Rostherne Brook in Jul. There were up to six Ravens and around 80 Meadow Pipits recorded in Sep.

There were high numbers of butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies seen on weekly surveys with interesting species including the Ruddy Darter dragonfly and Emerald and Small Red-eyed damselflies.

Bill Bellamy



Juvenile Black-necked Grebe on 16th Jul, photo by Tony Tyler



Kestrel on 16th Jul, photo by Tony Tyler



Juvenile Lesser Spotted Woodpecker on 10th Aug, photo by Malcolm Calvert



Hobby on 25th Aug, photo by Graham Roberts



Barn Owl on 25th Aug, photo by Graham Roberts



Goldcrest on 16th Sep, photo by John Adshead



Ruddy Darter on 19th Jul, photo by Sheelagh Halsey



Small Red-eyed Damselfly on 10th Aug, photo by Pete Kelly



Dolls Meadow on 15th Aug, photo by Rupert Randall