

BRINSLEY HEADSTOCKS

Heritage & Nature Reserve

BIRDS

2016

We accept that the Headstocks Nature Reserve is never going to challenge the flagship nature reserves in the county (such as Attenborough), where a comprehensive mix of habitats can result in as many as 250 species of birds being recorded. An absence of a large body of standing water with shallow muddy edges means that wildfowl and waders will be in very short supply.

A new species was added to the site list in 2016 – a lovely male lesser redpoll seen on an alder in the Long Meadow in February. The site list now stands at 83 species. A total of 48 species were recorded in 2016.

The list of species recorded is as follows :-

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Not recorded in 2016. No records in 2015 either, which was the first time in the last four years that this species was not seen. All previous records relate to birds in flight over the site.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

One flew fairly low over the Long Meadow on August 10th, heading south east.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Not recorded in 2016. The only record to date is of a pair flying east over the site on 02/03/2010.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Not recorded in 2016. The only record to date is of a skein of c120 flying west over the site on 24/01/2011.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

A flock of 42 was seen flying over the site on December 27th 2016, en route from the Erewash Valley to Moorgreen Reservoir. The only other sighting was a flock of 8 heading south west on December 30th.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Not recorded in 2016. A single bird of this species was observed flying over the top portion of the Long Meadow towards Moorgreen Reservoir on April 19th 2015. On June 8th 2014 approx 25 birds flew noisily over the Headstocks in a North-easterly direction. The only previous record is of one bird flying over the site on 25/04/2006.

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*

Not recorded in 2016. A female of this species was flushed from the middle pond in Willow Holt on March 10th 2015. It was seen again on the brook close to point where it passes under the railway line on March 12th.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

On March 10th 2016, a pair were on Brinsley Brook pond and only flushed when I was very close to them. On July 28th, a female and 8 newly-hatched ducklings were at the same location. This is the first breeding record for this species on the site.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Following successful breeding of this species in 2015, 2016 was a very disappointing year, with only a single record, a female low over the Long meadow on September 4th.

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Seen regularly throughout 2016, most records relate to singles or two birds. Interesting behaviour was noted on November 19th, when a buzzard seen bombing oak trees, in an apparent attempt to flush and attack wood pigeons.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

A male of this species was seen on several site visits during the year. Interestingly, no females have been seen for the last two years.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Not recorded in 2016. There were three records in 2011, two records of a pair actually on site in May and a flock of five adjacent to the site, in pasture by the old railway line, on 04/01/2011

COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

After a lean year in 2015, there were far more sightings in 2016. Most records relate to single birds, but on May 1st a pair and two separate males were noted, with three males feeding together on December 27th.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Not recorded in 2016. Last record was of 2 birds by the stream in the long meadow on 02/07/1999.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Disappointingly, this species was not seen in 2016, 2015 or 2014, which is perhaps due to the national decline in numbers. There were a number of sightings in 2013, mainly of single birds flying over the adjacent fields.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Not recorded in 2016. The first and only record so far for this species on the site is of one bird flushed from the wood behind the headstocks on 14/03/2009.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Regularly recorded flying over the site in small numbers, usually in winter. An interesting record on July 28th was of one bird in full summer plumage.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Not recorded in 2016. Surprisingly, the only record is of one bird over the site on 03/02/2009.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Only one record for 2016, which involved a single bird flying over the Long Meadow on August 13th.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Two birds flew over the Headstocks on April 1st, heading south-east and two flew over the Long Meadow heading west on December 29th 2016.

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Not recorded in 2016. The last record was of two birds were seen soaring high over the Headstocks on March 16th 2014.

ROCK DOVE *Columba livia*

Occasional records of this species flying over the site, which all relate to Feral Pigeon.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

This species is regularly recorded and probably breeds on, or just off, site. Most records are from the Long Meadow area, but two birds were seen feeding in the "sunflower meadow" adjacent to the Headstocks on March 16th 2016. First song was noted on February 11th.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

A common resident, whose numbers appear to be increasing significantly.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

A common resident in the village, but not recorded regularly on site. Most records come from the area around the car park, but on January 13th 2016, one was feeding on the railway line near Saints Coppice.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Not recorded in 2016. The only site record for this species was of a bird calling at 7.00 a.m. on 6th June 2011 from the adjacent playing field boundary.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

An occasional visitor to the site. Unusually, there were no records in 2016. There were two sightings in 2015.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Probably a resident pair, breeding close to the site. There were no records for 2016.

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

Regularly (but not frequently) recorded over the site in summer, probably relating to birds from the breeding colony in Eastwood. Singles were recorded on only a few dates in 2016.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

An irregular visitor, probably more frequent than records suggest. There were two records in 2016 :- one was flushed from the brook in Willow Holt on July 24th and was on the brook where it crosses the railway line on November 24th. This was encouraging, as there were no records for 2015.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

A resident pair on and around the site. More frequently heard “yaffling” than seen. There were just two records in 2016, one was calling from Saints Coppice on April 1st and one was seen on August 15th.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

A resident pair on and around the site. Breeding proved in 2008, when young were heard calling from the nest site. An adult was seen with young in the Long Meadow on 15/06/2010. There was just a single record in 2016.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Not recorded on 2016. The only record of this declining “Red List” species was just offsite (in Saints Coppice) on 24/04/2000.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Another “Red List” species in severe decline nationally and locally. There were no records in 2016. The last site record was of a single bird in 2012.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Not recorded in 2016. The only site record for this species was on 14/05/2013, when a flock of five birds were feeding over the pasture to the right of the railway line. They were observed flying over the ridge from the direction of Moorgeen Reservoir, before disappearing over Redgates farm.

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

This summer visitor breeds nearby and is recorded regularly on site. Strangely, there were only two records in 2016 – a single on September 3rd and another single on September 4th.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

A rare summer visitor. 2016 proved to be a very good year on site for this species. There was a flock of 9+, possibly as many as 15, over the Headstocks Meadow on July 5th. Two were seen over the Long Meadow on September 3rd and a flock of 12 in the same location on September 4th. Disappointingly, there were no records in 2015.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Not recorded in 2016. The last record of this species was of one bird around the stream in the Dell on 14/03/2012.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarelli*

At last !, I managed to see this species on the site. The only site record to date, seen by my fellow recorder, was of a single bird in 2012. I was lucky enough to see one flying over the Headstocks Meadow on February 23rd 2016.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulous*

Not recorded in 2016. The only site record to date is of a flock of 35 birds on 30th March 2009.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A common resident, with several pairs present. Breeding was confirmed in 2009 and 2010.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

A common resident, which is often overlooked due to its unobtrusive nature.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

A common resident. Song was heard from January 13th onwards.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

A common resident, which breeds on site..

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

An occasional winter visitor. A scarce bird in 2016, with three feeding in the pasture by the railway line on April 1st and a single bird in hawthorns by the railway line on December 2nd.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

An uncommon resident, which has suffered a major decline nationally. There were only three records in 2016, one in January, one in April and one in May.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

An uncommon winter visitor. There were two records of this species in 2016 from the period January-March and just one record for the later winter period (of a single bird on November 19th). Numbers were relatively low, with the largest flock being 40 in the pasture behind the dipping pond.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

A fairly common resident. There were several records for the year, the most interesting being of three birds in a territorial dispute in the Long Meadow on May 17th.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla* A common summer visitor, with usually 2/3 pairs present annually, in 2016 there were thought to be 2 pairs. The first record for the year was of a male singing on April 19th, which had increased to two singing males by June 21st.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

A rare summer visitor. Birds were recorded a few years ago (probably a pair), but no confirmed recent sightings.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Not recorded in 2016. Males have been recorded singing and “rattling” in 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2010.

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

A single record in 2016, of a male singing on the railway line just past Willow Holt on May 17th. This is the first record since 2013.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

The only site record of this species was of a bird in Saints Coppice wood on 24/04/2000.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

A fairly common summer visitor, with normally 5/6 breeding pairs. In 2016, there were thought to be only three pairs. Traditionally an early arriving migrant, first site record for 2016 was of two birds in song on 13/04/2016. Song was heard throughout April, May, June and July.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

This species now appears on site as a passage migrant, singing for a short time before

moving on. Despite records of single birds spending a few days on site in the last few years, there were no records in 2016.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Occasional records, mainly in winter. There were three sightings in 2016, all of single birds, on March 10th (car park), November 2nd (on railway line near Sts Coppice) and November 19th (in conifers near Vine Wood).

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa lasostris*

There are two old records for this species, both from Saints Coppice wood, on 14/05/2000 and 24/06/2001.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

A fairly common resident. Numbers were up on 2015, with the largest winter flock being 12 birds on a feeder on the railway line near Saints Coppice on December 27th.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile Montana*

Not recorded in 2016. The only record for 2014 was of a single bird moving down the railway line calling on 06/12/2014. There were three records of this species in 2013, the previous two years had only two records.

COAL TIT *Parus ater britannicus*

An irregular visitor to the site. There was only a single record in 2016, one was on the railway line near Saints Coppice on February 11th.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A common resident. In winter, regular counts of 12+ were made, with birds scattered around the site.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

A common resident. Double figure counts were regular in 2016.

EUROPEAN NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

There is usually a resident pair based in Saints Coppice wood, adjacent to the site, although disappointingly, there were no records in 2016.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

There are usually one or two sightings a year of this species. There were no records in 2015, but there were two sightings in 2016, in the Dell on January 1st and on the railway line on March 16th.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

An occasional visitor, more often heard than seen. Only one record for 2016, when a single bird was seen on two separate occasions flying over the Headstocks Meadow into the wooded hill on September 3rd.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

A common resident. Breeds on site.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Frequently recorded in small numbers throughout the year. Probably breeds just offsite, in Saints Coppice wood.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

The rookery which was established in Vine Wood in 2013, continued to be occupied, with an decrease from eighteen nests in 2015 to thirteen nests in 2016 (plus another three nests nearby in a private garden). There is also a small rookery becoming established close to the site in Saints Coppice.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

A common resident. This species breeds on site.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Not recorded in 2016. There are normally on or two records per year.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Regularly recorded, but usually in small numbers. There were 16 in the tall ash tree in the Long Meadow on February 11th, bullying a mistle thrush.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

A common species in the village, but only sporadically recorded on site. There were no records in 2016.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Only one record for the site – in early spring 2002 one was seen near Saints Coppice wood. This bird was probably from the population which existed at that time at Willey Wood farm.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

A common resident. Winter numbers were similar to 2016, when flocks of four birds were regularly seen.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla* Not recorded in 2016. The first site record of this species was in 2010. Some birds

remained from this influx into 2011, with an immature bird on 16th February and a flock of six (including two stunning adult males) on 28th February 2011.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

A surprisingly rare visitor to the site, with just a single record in 2016, when a female was seen on November 19th 2016, feeding on the hips of dog roses close to the Dipping pond.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Mainly a winter visitor to the site. This species seems to find the seeds of the numerous alder trees on site as an attractive food source. Numbers in 2016 showed a healthy increase over recent years. The maximum count was 29 on January 13th, feeding in alders by the Long Meadow. Another significant count was 15 on November 2nd, also in this area. The maximum count in 2015 was only 8.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Probably an uncommon winter visitor, with small flocks most years. There were four records for 2016, which shows a healthy increase over previous years. The maximum count was 4 (2 males and 2 females) on January 13th. All records for the year relate to birds feeding in alders, usually in mixed flocks with goldfinches.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Not recorded in 2016 and appears to be a surprisingly rare visitor to the site. The last record was of a flock of sixteen birds in 2010.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

The first site record for this species occurred on February 23rd 2016, when a beautifully marked male was seen feeding in an alder tree in the Long meadow, in the company of two female siskins.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

The Headstocks nature reserve is proving to be a stronghold for this declining species, although records were well down on previous years. There were only three records in 2016, two of which related to pairs and the other to a single male. As a comparison, in 2012 a maximum of 11 birds were seen in one visit.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella*

Not recorded in 2016. This species was once a common farmland bird, but has been in decline nationally for a number of years. There is only one record for the site : a single bird in the boundary hedge on 18/03/2000.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

This species was not recorded in 2016, which was a surprise as there were a number of sightings in 2013 (although no sightings in 2014).