

BRINSLEY HEADSTOCKS

Heritage & Nature Reserve

BIRDS

2017 & 2018

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 2017 – a Common Tern, which flew directly over the site on its way from Moorgreen Reservoir to the Erewash Valley. Another new species was added in 2018 – a Hobby, which flew past the car park. The site list now stands at 85 species. A total of 49 species were recorded in 2016, but only 40 species were seen in 2018 (probably due to the “double whammy” of the “Beast From the East” and the exceptionally hot, dry summer which followed it.

The list of species recorded is as follows :-

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Not recorded in 2016, but a single flew over the site on 17th September 2017. This was the first record for three years.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

One flew fairly low over the Headstocks on December 11th 2017, heading west. There was also a single record in 2018, also flying west over the Headstocks on September 5th 2018.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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 2017 or 2018. 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 30 was seen flying over the site on September 30th 2017. They were flying from the Erewash Valley towards Moorgreen Res, but turned around over the Long meadow and retraced their steps ! A flock of 40 was seen on November 19th 2017. There were no sightings in 2018.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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 2017 or 2018. 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*

Surprisingly, there were no sightings in 2017. A pair were seen flying down the brook on March 25th 2018 and a pair were by the new pond in the Long Meadow on May 15th 2018. In 2016, a female and 8 newly-hatched ducklings were on Brinsley Brook Pond. This is the first breeding record for this species on the site.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

There were three sightings in 2017, including one of a male chasing goldfinches on January 3rd 2017. There were also three sightings in 2018, including a male soaring with a group of Buzzards on March 5th 2018.

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Seen regularly throughout 2017, most records relate to singles or two birds. There was only one sighting in 2018, of four birds soaring together over the car park on March 5th 2018.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

There were several sightings in 2017, mostly of single males, but pairs were seen displaying together on January 12th and April 2nd. There were several records of single birds in 2018, of both sexes (no females had previously been seen in the last two years).

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

This species comprised a new site record, when one flew past the car park and over Brinsley Lodge on September 5th 2018.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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*

Normally frequently encountered, this species was thin on the ground in 2017. There was an unusual record of a female pheasant strolling past the Headstocks on April 18th 2017. Even thinner on the ground in 2018, with just a single record.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. Last record was of 2 birds by the stream in the long meadow on 02/07/1999.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Disappointingly, this species has not been seen since 2013, despite breeding in good numbers in the Erewash Valley.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

The first site record for this species was on May 20th 2017, when one flew over the Headstocks meadow en route from Moorgreen Reservoir to Aldercar Flash.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Regularly recorded flying over the site in small numbers, usually in winter.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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 2017, which involved a single bird flying over the Long Meadow on June 22nd. There were no sightings in 2018.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Three birds flew over the Long Meadow on March 28th 2017. There were no sightings in 2018.

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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, with a maximum of three birds seen together on April 2nd 2017. In 2018, a pair were seen by a potential nest hole in the veteran ash tree in the Long Meadow.

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 22nd 2017 a pair flew over the Headstocks Meadow.

There were several records in 2018, with one feeding on the ground in the car park on June 1st.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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*

With a blank year in 2016, it was encouraging to record three sightings of single birds in 2017. There was a single record in 2018, on January 20th.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Probably a resident pair, breeding close to the site. There were no records for 2017 or 2018.

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 2017 and 2018.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

An irregular visitor, probably more frequent than records suggest. There was a single record in 2017, when one was seen flying along the brook by a participant on the fungal foray on November 5th. There were no records in 2018.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Formerly a resident pair on and around the site, but rarely recoded in the last couple of years. There was a single record in 2017, on August 15th. Worryingly, there were no records in 2018.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

There were normally a number of sightings every year, but rarely encountered lately. There were no records in 2017 and a single record in 2018, of a male drumming on February 8th.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Not recorded on 2017 or 2018. 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 2017 or 2018. The last site record was of a single bird in 2012.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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 was only a single record in 2017 – on September 8th and no records at all in 2018. This is probably more to do with lack of observer coverage than genuine scarcity.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Following an excellent set of records in 2016 (flocks of 12+ recorded on two occasions), 2017 and 2018 were normal years for this species, with no records in 2017 and a single bird on September 9th 2018.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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*

There were no records of this species in 2017 or 2018. There was a single record in 2016.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulous*

I was lucky enough to see a single bird of this species on April 2nd 2017, my first site record. There were no sightings in 2018. The only previous site record 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. Not seen at all in 2017, but an average set of records in 2018, with four feeding on hawthorn berries on Nov. 12th 2018 and a single in millennium Wood on Dec. 4th 2018.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

An uncommon resident, which has suffered a major decline nationally. There was an encouraging increase in records in 2017, mostly of singles, but two males were singing on May 13th 2017. A juvenile was seen in Willow Holt on July 8th 2017, indicative of successful breeding. There were fewer records in 2018, but again two males were heard singing (on the early date of Feb. 18th).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

An uncommon winter visitor. There were more records than usual in 2017, with the largest flock being 35, feeding in the pasture adjacent to the railway line. Much scarcer in 2018, with only two records. There was a single on Jan. 7th 2018 and a flock of 40 in the ash tree in the Long Meadow on Jan 30th 2018.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

A fairly common resident. There were several records in 2017, with a pair seen together on March 1st 2017. Fewer records for 2018, but three were seen together on Jan. 30th 2018.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla* A common summer visitor, with usually 2/3 pairs present annually, in 2017 there were thought to be 2 pairs. The first record for the year was of two males singing on the early date of April 2nd. In 2018, sightings were reduced, with probably only one singing male.

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 2017. Males have been recorded singing and “rattling” in 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2010.

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. There was a single record in 2016, of a male singing on the railway line just past Willow Holt on May 17th.

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. Traditionally an early arriving migrant, first site record for 2017 was of a single bird in song on March 28th 2017, increasing to three singing males by April 2nd 2017. There were fewer records in 2018, with only a single in song by April 19th 2018, but the hot weather may have been a factor.

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 2017 or 2018.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Occasional records, mainly in winter. There were three sightings in 2017, on Jan. 3rd, Jan. 24th and two together on Sept. 19th (feeding with a roaming tit flock).Surprisingly, there were no records in 2018.

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 down on 2016, with the largest flock being 8 on Jan. 3rd 2017. There were even fewer in 2018, with the largest flock being 6 on Jan.30th 2018.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile Montana*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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 *Periparus ater britannicus*

An irregular visitor to the site. 2017 proved to be a bumper year for sightings of this species, with five records spread through the two winter periods. The largest count was of three on March 1st 2017. There were fewer records in 2018, but a partially leucistic bird of this species was seen on the railway line adjacent to Sts. Coppice on December 4th 2018. A very peculiar bird !

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 2017 and 2018.

EUROPEAN NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

There is usually a resident pair based in Saints Coppice wood. In 2017, all of the sightings came from this area. In 2018, however, one was seen on an elm tree adjacent to the Headstocks structure on Dec. 12th 2018.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

In 2017, it is thought that this species attempted to breed in Willow Holt. All of the three sightings came from this area, with a pair being seen on Apr. 2nd 2017. There were two sightings in 2018, with one bird feeding with a tit flock on Jan.30th 2018.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

An occasional visitor, more often heard than seen. Only one record for 2017, when a single bird was heard calling from Willow Holt on Sept. 8th 2017. There were no records for 2018.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

A common resident. Breeds on site.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Frequently recorded in small numbers throughout the year. There was an impressive spectacle on Feb. 22nd 2017, when 34 birds were “kettling” and calling loudly over the Long Meadow. In 2018, six birds were on the ground near the car park, which is most unusual as most birds are “fly-overs”.

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 both 2017 and 2018. 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*

On Feb. 22nd 2017 a raven flew over Sts Coppice. It was mobbed by a flock of jackdaws and flew south low over the Long Meadow. On July 25th 2017 two birds of this species were soaring over the Long Meadow. There were no sightings in 2018.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Regularly recorded, but usually in small numbers.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

A common species in the village, but only sporadically recorded on site. There was a single record in 2017, of one bird in the hedge opposite the car park on May 2nd. In 2018, two birds were seen in the tall ash tree adjacent to the car park.

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. An interesting record in 2017 was of four birds mobbing a Little Owl. In 2018, the largest flock was eight in Vine Wood on December 9th.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla* Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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 2017, when a male was seen in the pasture adjacent to the railway line on Feb. 22nd, feeding with a mixed finch flock. There were no records in 2018.

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 2017 were similar to 2016, with the biggest flock being 30+ on Jan. 3rd. Numbers were much reduced in 2018, with the largest flock numbering just eight birds on Jan. 7th.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Probably an uncommon winter visitor, with small flocks most years. There were four records for 2017, which was similar to 2016. The maximum count was 5 on December 4th 2017. There were no records in 2018. All records for the year relate to birds feeding in alders, usually in mixed flocks with goldfinches.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018 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*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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 2017, two of which related to single males, but on Feb. 22nd 2017 a total of eight birds were seen (two separate pairs and a male with three females. In 2018, there were only two records, both of single males.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella*

Not recorded in 2017 or 2018. 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 is not regularly recorded on the site, so it was pleasing to see a pair on Jan. 24th 2017. Even better was the sighting on Dec. 4th 2018 of a flock of six birds around the sunflower meadow.