

BRINSLEY HEADSTOCKS

Heritage & Nature Reserve

BIRDS

2025

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.

The site list now stands at 86 species. A total of 38 species were recorded in 2025, a very modest total, but currently there is only a single observer involved in recording and his visits to the site were curtailed in 2025 due to mobility problems.

The list of species recorded is as follows :-

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Not recorded in 2025. The last record was a single which flew over the site on 17th September 2017.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Not recorded in 2025. There are single records of this species in 2024, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Not recorded in 2025. 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 2025. A skein of 800 plus were seen flying over the Headstocks Meadow on 2nd February – a magnificent sight (and sound). This was the third site record, the previous records were of much smaller flocks in 2011 and 2014.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Not recorded in 2025. The most recent site record were in 2017, when a flock of 30 was seen flying over the site on September 30th and a flock of 40 was seen on November 19th.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Not recorded in 2025. A surprisingly rarity on the site ! There are only two records, four birds of this species flying low over the Dell and calling loudly on February 28th 2024 and a single bird observed flying over the top portion of the Long Meadow towards Moorgreen Reservoir on April 19th 2015.

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*

Not recorded in 2025. 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*

A pair were seen on the Dew Pond on April 28th 2025. There are normally a few records each year. In 2016, a female and 8 newly-hatched ducklings were on Brinsley Brook Pond. This was the first breeding record for this species on the site.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Not recorded in 2025. There was a single sighting of this species in 2024, when a female was soaring over the car park on February 24th, causing havoc in the rookery.

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Seen regularly throughout 2025, all records relate to single birds.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Disappointingly, there was only a single record in 2025, when a pair were seen circling over Monarch Wood (adjacent to the site) on June 17th. This species used to be seen much more frequently.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

There were no records in 2025. The only site record to date is of one flying past the car park and over Brinsley Lodge on September 5th 2018.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Not recorded in 2025. 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*

Usually seen regularly in the fields surrounding the site, but a change in land use means that they are now rarely seen, with no sightings in 2025.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Not recorded in 2025. 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 2025. 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*

Not recorded in 2025. The only 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*

A single bird was seen on December 25th 2025, flying over the Headstocks Meadow with a flock of Black-headed Gulls. There is only one previous record, in 2009.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

A single bird flew over the site heading north east on September 22nd 2025. The only previous record dates from 2017.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Not recorded in 2025. The last record was in 2017, when three birds flew over the Long Meadow on March 28th.

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Not recorded in 2025. 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. Song was first heard in early February and regularly for the next few weeks, although there were very few sight records.

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.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Not recorded in 2025. 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*

Disappointingly, this species was not recorded in 2025. There are normally a few sightings every year, with three seen in 2017. They seem to have been displaced by the new housing development adjacent to the site.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Probably a resident pair, breeding close to the site. There were no records for 2025.

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 2025.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Not recorded in 2025. An irregular visitor, probably more frequent than records suggest. There was a single record in 2024, when one flew past an environmental contractor working in Willow Holt, by the brook.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

An encouraging increase in records of this species in 2025. One bird favoured the short grass where the Headstocks formerly stood and was heard “yaffling” from this area several times in May. Later in the year, one flew closely past the lucky observer on the railway line on October 23rd.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

There were normally a number of sightings every year, but rarely encountered lately. There were no records in 2025, the last record was in 2018, of a male drumming on February 8th.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Not recorded on 2025. 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 2025. The last site record was of a single bird in 2012.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Not recorded in 2025. 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. The maximum number seen was a flock of six over the Headstocks meadow on May 25th.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Following an excellent set of records in 2016 (flocks of 12+ recorded on two occasions), there were no sightings in 2025.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Not recorded in 2025. 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 2025. There was a single record in 2016.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulous*

There were no sightings in 2025. I was lucky enough to see a single bird of this species on April 2nd 2017, my first site record. . 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. This species was unusually scarce in the area in 2025 and none were recorded on the site.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

An uncommon resident, which has suffered a major decline nationally. There were only three records in 2025 (singles on June 17th and August 8th, with two on June 27th).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

An uncommon winter visitor. What looked like a blank year for this species finally delivered on December 25th, with a flock of nine near the Dipping Pond and an impressive eighty plus on the railway line. This species is normally recorded in much higher numbers, but the high number of berry-munching wood pigeons and squirrels on site means there is very little food left when the redwings arrive.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

A fairly common resident. The first record for 2025 was of one in full song on January 24th. There were several records in 2025, mostly of singles, but with two on March 26th.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

A common summer visitor, with usually 2/3 pairs present annually. In 2025, there appeared to be three pairs, compared to only one pair in 2024. The first song was heard on April 28th. There was a late record of a female feeding near the Headstocks on September 9th.

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 2025. Males have been recorded singing and “rattling” in 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2010.

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Not recorded in 2025, 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. In 2024, however, none were recorded – a worrying decline. Whilst no singing males were recorded in 2025, there were three sightings of birds feeding, on April 4th, May 19th and May 25th.

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 2025.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Following a few blank years, it was reassuring to record a single of this species on the railway line on February 5th 2024. There were, however, no records in 2025.

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. Surprisingly, there were no records of this species in 2024, but this is probably due to lack of coverage rather than genuine scarcity. There was a single record in 2025, when a pair were seen in Vine Wood.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile Montana*

This species was regularly recorded in the past, but now seems to have been lost to the site. The last record was of a single bird in 2014, with three records of this species in 2013.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater britannicus*

An irregular visitor to the site. Not recorded in 2025. There were five records in 2017 and in 2018 a partially leucistic bird of this species was seen on the railway line adjacent to Sts. Coppice on December 4th. A very peculiar bird !

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A common resident. In winter, regular counts of 8+ were made, with birds scattered around the site.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

A common resident. Double figure counts were regular in 2025.

EUROPEAN NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

There is usually a resident pair based in Saints Coppice wood. In 2025, the only sighting was a pair on the old ash tree in the Long Meadow on December 25th.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Normally a few sightings every year, but there was only one record in 2025, when one was seen at the back of the wooded hill on April 4th.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

An occasional visitor, more often heard than seen. There was a single record in 2025, when two birds were seen in Monarch Wood (just off the site) on December 25th.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

A common resident. Breeds on site.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Frequently recorded in small numbers throughout the year. There appeared to be a nest in the tall ash tree in the Long Meadow.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

The rookery which was established in Vine Wood in 2013, continued to be occupied, with a decrease from eighteen nests in 2015 to only six nests in both 2024 and 2025. 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*

No records in 2025. 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.

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 2025, of one bird in the hedge opposite the car park on May 2nd.

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. In 2025, there were at least two singing males on the site.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla* Not recorded in 2025. 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 no records in 2024. It was encouraging, therefore, to see a pair on April 28th 2025.

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. Flocks of 30+ were normal, but the largest flock in 2025 was only two birds (on a number of dates), but a flock of eight juveniles was seen feeding on thistles close to the site of the former Headstocks structure on July 24th.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Not recorded in 2025. There was a flock of ten birds on Jan 1st 2024, but that was the only record for that year.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Not recorded in 2025 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 2025. 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 was a stronghold for this declining species, although records were well down on previous years. There was only a single sighting in 2025, of a pair in the Dell on December 25th.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella*

Not recorded in 2025. 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*

Not recorded in 2025. The most recent record was of a pair 29th October 2019, in the hedge by the sunflower meadow.