

PRIORY COUNTRY
PARK

BIRD REPORT

2011



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SUMMARY

2011

January

The New Year started on a fairly mild, cloudy note weatherwise but at least the mist that had been present on the last days of 2010 was absent. Ice still covered about 60% of the main lake and most of the Finger Lakes but it was of the soft, fudgy variety. The Bewick's Swans which arrived to roost on the previous evening had departed very early, well before dawn, much to the disappointment of those who had come to get them on their year list. A drizzly rain started at about 10.30 and continued for some time. Skylarks were on the move, but not in any particular direction. In all 32 passed over. In the late afternoon 49 Magpies came in to roost and the Bewick's Swans arrived at 1645 departing the following morning. The Bewick's Swans didn't return to the park on the evening of the 3rd but, as if in compensation, a Bittern flew across the lake and off in the Willington direction. Sparrowhawks were displaying over the south side on the 4th and a Common Buzzard passed over on the 5th. The thaw was well underway on the 6th and only about 40% of the main lake was covered with ice. The Bittern flew out from the north side of the main lake and landed in the reeds by the south hide. In the evening it returned to the crescent reed bed. It rained throughout much of the 7th, very heavily at times, making it very difficult to see any birds at all. The Bittern was seen again on the 8th as it flew out of the crescent reed bed and again as it returned at 1835. On the 10th Tufted Ducks had increased to 90, two Mistle Thrushes were on Kingsmead and the Bittern was again seen outside the Kramer Hide. A redhead Smew, probably a female was outside



the south hide on the morning of the 11th and remained all day. Whilst one lucky observer was observing it the Bittern flew across from the north side of the lake and landed in the reeds at the side of the hide, only a few metres away! From then onwards the Bittern was seen regularly, sometimes several times a day and for prolonged periods, mainly outside the Kramer Hide, although it didn't usually stir itself until after 9.00 am. An immature Goldeneye was on the south side on the 12th and the count of 142 Pochards on the 13th was the highest of the year. An immature Goldeneye was again present on the 14th and the first Little Egret of the year was in the Finger Lakes on the 15th. The temperature had gradually risen from the 12th onwards, often not falling much below 10°C at night and rising to over 12°C during the day. Although this was a pleasant change it often brought periods of rain and coincided with a decline in the wildfowl population. Three Song Thrushes were singing on the 18th along with Chaffinches and Great Tits but the highlight were two Waxwings spotted near the Visitor Centre. A Shelduck flew over on

the 21st, 28 Siskins were in the alders by the crescent reed bed and roosting birds included 21 Corn Buntings and three Little Egrets. A Treecreeper on the 22nd was only the second sighting of the year. Four Red-crested Pochards were with 82 Pochard on the 23rd and a Common Buzzard made a brief appearance. A flock of 180 Lapwings which passed northeast on the 26th was the first sighting of the year for this species and a record of the Bittern was the last of the month. Three Little Egrets came in to roost on the 27th and a fine pair of Smew was on the main lake for a while on the 28th. A female Stonechat was on the fence posts of Fenlake on the 29th and 20 Corn buntings roosted on the 31st.

February

The cold, cloudy weather continued into February. A Shelduck flew over on the 1st, a Water Rail was on the north side and 102 Gadwalls were on the main lake along with the imm. female Goldeneye. Both Blue and Great Tits were very active and many of the male Chaffinches were singing. A group of 25 Magpies were on the New Meadow on the 2nd and three Mistle Thrushes flew over. One of the ringed Marsh Tits put in an appearance on the spit and a Grey Wagtail was only the second record of the year. The temperature rose to 11°C on the 4th but the wind also increased to SW 6-7. A fine selection of geese on '100 acre' on the 5th included an Egyptian, a Pink-footed and a White-fronted amongst 156 Greylags and about 90 Canada Geese. Sixty-one Common Gulls were on the main lake on the 6th and the ♀ Stonechat was again on the fence posts of Fenlake. The mild weather and strong winds continued to the 7th when a Bittern put in an appearance after nearly two weeks absence when it flew up from the north side of the main lake and over into the west Finger Lake where it buried itself in the reeds. Three Shelducks and the imm. ♀ Goldeneye were on the main lake and the ♀ Stonechat put in another appearance on Fenlake. A Water Pipit joined the Stonechat on the 9th. It remained fairly mild, but usually cloudy, for the next few days but species such as Goldeneye, Water Rail, Stonechat, Grey Wagtail and Common Buzzards continued to be seen and 52 Common Gulls were on the water on the 13th. A male Red-crested Pochard was on the main lake on the 19th and 20th and the ringed Marsh Tit put in an appearance on the 21st and 24th. The group of Siskins increased to 50 on the 22nd and 26th and two Oystercatchers and a male Red-crested Pochard were on '100 acre' on the 26th.

March

Weatherwise the month started on a dull note being very cloudy, however, as things turned out, it ended up being the driest month since 1929. The river was very high and water continued to flow out of the main lake. There was much surface water and the ground was generally muddy. A flock of about 40 Siskins still fed around the crescent alders and a few Redwings were still to be seen. Two Golden Plovers which flew north on the 2nd were the first of the year. A Little Egret was in the Finger Lakes on the 3rd and 21 Fieldfares flew over. A pair of Common Buzzards spent a lot of time at the back of Kingsmead on the 4th, two Black Swans spent a short time on the main lake and two Grey Wagtails were along the canoe slalom. The White-fronted Goose was on '100 acre' on the 5th and was regularly seen there until the 9th. The 7th was the first really sunny day but there was little different seen over the next three days. A Chiffchaff singing on the 11th was the first of the year and the first sign that spring was on its way. A Cetti's Warbler singing in the Finger Lakes on the 12th was the first since the previous September. It was at first thought that the bird had moved on but it was recorded again on the 15th and then daily. Blue Tits were noted feeding on the nectar in willow catkins on the 14th and a Green Woodpecker was sun bathing. Two ♂ Red-Crested Pochards were on the main lake on the 15th and a ♂ and a ♀ on the following day. The first Sand Martins of the year were two which were feeding in the mist on the 16th. A male Blackcap was singing on the south side on the 17th, a Little Egret flew over and the pair of Red-crested Pochards remained until the 22nd. A Common

Buzzard flew over on the 19th, two Oystercatchers were feeding on the sailing club lawn and a Water Rail was at the end of the spit. The last of the wintering Pochards was present on the 20th and a pair of Shelducks spent some time on the main lake. The first ♀ Blackcap was near the ♂ on the south side on the 22nd. We had several days of bright sunshine from the 23rd onwards and the arrival of summer migrants picked up after this. Sand Martins numbered 36 on the 25th and the first Willow Warbler of the year was singing near the Visitor Centre and seven Chiffchaffs were singing. The Willow Warbler was still present, this time near the 'sheep pen', on the following day and six ♂ Blackcaps were also counted. Duller weather on the 27th suited the arrival of hirundines with about 150 Sand Martins over the lake and the first Swallow and House Martin amongst them. Chiffchaffs had increased to 11♂♂. The last few days of the month were very similar, mainly featuring Blackcaps, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Swallow, House Martin and Sand Martins but a Water Rail along the spit on the 29th and 30th was the first for a while. Willow Warblers increased to four on the last day of the month, a Common Buzzard flew over and the Cetti's Warbler performed well.

April

The month had a cloudy but mild start with little different to the last few days of March but the wind went round to the south on the 2nd and it was obvious that more Blackcaps had arrived with 21 ♂♂ counted. Chiffchaffs increased to 14 and the first Common Tern of the year dropped in. The Cetti's Warbler was again on form, a Common Buzzard flew over as also did an Oystercatcher. A Dunnock was collecting nesting material. Two Shelducks were present on the 3rd. Over 180 Sand Martins came down with a Swallow and a House Martin on the 5th and Willow Warblers had increased to nine. The weather became very summer like with temperatures rising to 22° C in the shade and 29° C in the sun. The first Sedge Warblers (6) arrived on the 7th, Blackcaps numbered 31 and Willow Warblers increased to 20. The first Reed Warbler of the year arrived on the 8th nearly a week earlier than the previous earliest. A Jay was on the Flower Meadow and a Common Buzzard flew over. A surprise on the 10th was a ♂ Goosander which flew over, possibly having been put up from the river. Six Common Terns were present on the main lake and a further three passed over ENE. A Kingfisher which flew across the New Meadow on the 11th was the first since 27th February and a Jay was seen again. Cloudy weather on the 13th brought down 300 Sand Martins and a Swallow. There were still 250 Sand Martins on the following day but little else of special note. The first Common Whitethroat of the year was by the gas pumping station on the 15th, just one day earlier than average for the previous ten years and the first broods of Mallard ducklings were on the main lake. The summery weather continued and Orange Tips, Speckled Woods and Holly Blues were around the park in reasonable numbers. There was yet another sighting of a Jay on the 16th and nine Sedge Warblers was the highest count so far. Two Oystercatchers flew around the lake on the 17th, three Shelducks flew over and Reed Warblers increased to seven. Two Common Whitethroats were near the Labyrinth and a Common Buzzard flew over. A Grasshopper Warbler was singing well on the south side on the 18th and the first Cuckoo of the year was calling on Fenlake. A Goldcrest was singing on the 21st and a Nightingale was singing on Fenlake on the 22nd with one at Meadow Lane on the 29th. The latter stayed at least until 14th May. A Grasshopper Warbler (possibly the same as on the 18th) was singing on Fenlake on the 25th. The only Arctic Tern of the spring passed through on the 28th and first Swift arrived on the 30th when six Shelducks flew over northeast.

May

Three Common Sandpipers were on the shingle beach very early on the 1st but didn't remain. An Oystercatcher flew over on the 2nd and there were several further records during the month. A White

Stork, the first record for the park, flew northeast over the park around mid-day on the 3rd. It had been seen earlier in the day at Stewartby and was over Godmanchester GP (Cams) early on the following day. Two Black Terns on the 5th were the first of the year and a single turned up on the 8th. Two Hobbies were over the east side of the park on the 9th and a Common Buzzard was the first of several for the month. A pair of Greylags hatched three young on 10th but they didn't survive. A Kingfisher on the 15th was only the ninth record for the year. Two Shelducks flew over on 17th. The first female Cuckoo of the spring was in 'the rough' on the 19th and there were plenty of family parties of Great and Blue Tits. A pair of Gadwalls was present into the second half of the month. Breeding was well underway with the first juvenile Song Thrushes and Robins appearing from the 18th. The Finger Lakes pair of Great Crested Grebes hatched four young on the 20th, one of which, however, did not show itself for several days after the first three. A fine summer plumaged adult Slavonian Grebe, the thirteenth record for the park, was a very pleasant surprise on the morning of the 21st. House Sparrows and Starlings were along the lake shore for much of the second half of the month, presumably being one of the few places where they could find water. Similarly it was one of the few places where birds could find mud for their nests. Chaffinches were feeding on the willow seeds which collected on the path on the 20th, nearly two weeks earlier than in previous years. The mainly sunny weather continued for the next few days and there were further records of Oystercatchers passing over and the Finger Lakes Mute Swans hatched seven young on the 27th. A Jay and a Turtle Dove were in the Finger Lakes. Two Little Egrets were present on the 29th and both ♂ and ♀ Cuckoos were present on the 31st.

June

The sunny weather continued into June and a Kingfisher was seen on the 1st. A Hobby was also over the park in the evening but last year's bat roost was not occupied. The Cetti's Warbler did not sing as frequently and was last recorded on the 5th. Carp were spawning well in the west Finger Lake on the 4th. A rather unusual record was that of a Pink-footed Goose which arrived on the 5th, possibly a bird which had escaped from a collection, and Ed Green ringed a juvenile Coal Tit in the rough, only the tenth ever record for the site. Presumably it had dispersed from its breeding area not too far away, illustrating how habitat-specific these birds can be. A Kingfisher was seen on the 7th and 40 Swifts were overhead. A Jay was in the Finger Lakes on the 10th and both Lesser Whitethroat (very scarce in the park this year) and a Turtle Dove were in the rough. The Turtle Dove was again singing on the 12th and a Hobby, three Redshanks and an Oystercatcher flew over. Twelve Lapwings passing southwest on the 13th were the first of the post-breeding period. There were further records of Turtle Dove, Common Buzzard, Little Egret and Oystercatcher in the following few days and a juvenile Marsh Tit was trapped on the 18th when both Hobby and Common Buzzard flew over. There were some short, but quite heavy, rain showers in the following days with heavy overnight rain on the 24th but it was mainly the same species that were being seen. Both Treecreeper and Grey Wagtail were seen with young on the 27th.

July

The month started on a warm, sunny note but there was little new activity amongst the birds as they fed young or continued with their post breeding moult. Family parties boosted numbers with peak counts of 31 Reed Warblers, 24 Blackcaps, 19 Common Whitethroats, 8 Chiffchaffs and 5 Garden Warblers during the first half of the month, but no sightings of Willow Warblers or Lesser Whitethroats. The first juvenile Common Terns visited on the 2nd but were regularly seen after this. Two Oystercatchers and a Common Buzzard flew over on the 3rd but a pleasant surprise was a

Garganey on the west Finger Lake. The warm weather also encouraged one of the Red-eared Sliders to come out of the water to sun bath on its favourite spot. It was seen regularly during the warm weather. A Treecreeper was on the spit with two young on the 4th and the first south-westerly movement of Lapwings was noted on the 4th and 5th. Things were a little more active on the 6th when a Hobby spent some time hawking insects over the New Meadow, a Little Egret flew over and two Common Buzzards were at the back of Kingsmead. Showers in the afternoon were the start of what was



to be a fortnight of very mixed weather with regular showers, some very heavy, interspersed with occasional sunny periods. This made it difficult to find passerines in particular, but it did bring down



the occasional small group of Sand Martins and Swifts. There was a noticeable increase in Black-headed Gulls and, on the 14th, a fine adult Mediterranean Gull, the first since March 2002. The first returning Common Gull, an adult, was also on the lake. Three Shovelers on the 15th were the first since the spring. Four juvenile Kingfishers perched together in the Finger Lakes on the 22nd were a pleasant sight after the very low number of records during the first half of the year.

August

Two Teal on the 4th were the first since the spring. Gadwalls were seen more regularly after the first week of August with, usually, two to four present during the second half of the month. Cormorants increased from 15 on the 5th to 20 on the 12th and 27 on the 30th. Although Common Swifts were seen on many days during the month numbers were never high with 16 on the 10th and 20 on the 12th being the highest counts. Twenty-one Greylags flew over on the 23rd. There was a minor passage of waders with a Greenshank over on the 22nd followed by a Green Sandpiper on the 23rd and a Common Sandpiper on the 24th. A tit flock contained 44 Long-tailed Tits on the 24th and a juvenile Goldcrest was seen on the 26th. A juvenile Black Tern arrived on the 28th and remained until the morning of the 30th when it departed. Coots increased to 67 on the 29th and 42 Great Crested Grebes, on the 31st, August was the highest count of the year up to that date. Hirundines began to build up during the last couple of weeks with wet, or damp, weather bringing down 73 House Martins on the 24th, 85 on the 25th and 150 on the 28th; 65 Swallows on the 26th and 80 on the 27th and 50 Sand Martins on the 30th. Warblers also began to increase towards the end of the month with Chiffchaffs peaking at 21 on the 25th and Blackcaps at 31 on the 27th and 32 on the 31st.

September

There was a fine, sunny start to the month soon followed by some very mixed weather. During the first week the mornings started quite cold, as low as 8.5°C on the first, but usually made 20°C - 22°C by mid-day. Most of the warbler species were seen in reasonable numbers on the 1st and Comma, Speckled Wood, Red Admiral and Small Copper were amongst the butterflies seen. The 'Pop Festival' started on the 2nd so it was a bit of a surprise on the morning of the 3rd when a Cetti's Warbler could be heard singing loudly on the island. John Bishop had a Raven flying over and off to

the northwest. At least seven Gadwalls and a Little Grebe were present and 85 House Martins collected over the main lake. Two Common Swifts appeared on the fourth and, after a couple of hours of heavy rain, a Hobby passed southwest. A Stoat seen on the spit added to Red-eared Slider, Mink and Muntjac which had been seen in recent days. The Cetti's Warbler was heard again on the 5th and c200 House Martins were over the main lake with only a few Swallows and Sand Martins. The weather turned stormy on the 6th with south-westerly winds reaching force 7 and rain being almost continuous. A Little Egret was sheltering in the Finger Lakes and 300 House Martins were over the main lake which attracted a Hobby. The Cetti's Warbler was heard again on the 7th, 200 Sand Martins were over the lake with 150 House Martins and a Lesser Whitethroat was trapped. A Little Egret was again present on the 8th and five roosted with c1000 Jackdaws in the evening. A Swift was present for most of the day. A flock of 50 Goldfinches on the 9th was the first large group of the autumn. Although it was dull on the 10th it was also very mild being 17.5°C at 0700 and the wind was a very light southerly. This seemed favourable for passage as 236 House Martins, 29 Sand Martins and 5 Swallows passed south as did three Snipe, three Meadow Pipits (the first of the autumn), a Swift and a Lapwing whilst five Siskins which passed south-east were also the first of the autumn. The Blackcap phenomenon continued with Ed Green Trapping 36 of which 35 were new birds. Other warblers included 22 Chiffchaffs, 2 Willow Warblers, 2 Common Whitethroats, four Reed Warblers and a Garden Warbler. A Spotted Flycatcher also arrived in 'the rough'. A Lesser Whitethroat and two Willow Warblers were noteworthy on the 11th when Great Crested Grebes were up to 46. Blustery south-westerlies, a remnant of hurricane Katia, kept many passerines well out of sight on the 12th but a visit in the evening revealed three Little Egrets at roost and both Hobby and Swift passing over. Another successful day was spent ringing in 'the rough' with 26 more Blackcaps, a couple of Willow Warblers and a Reed Warbler amongst the haul. A Spotted Flycatcher was also in 'the rough', and another Swift passed over. Two Mistle Thrushes flew east on the 15th and the last Common Tern of the year was over the main lake. Robins were on good numbers (20) as were Chiffchaffs at 21. It was fairly quiet on the 16th but it was livened up by a Swift, 28 Swallows, a Siskin and a Meadow Pipit all passing south. A Water Rail, the first of the second winter period, was heard on the 17th. The first Wigeon of the autumn was on the main lake on the 18th and the second Common Buzzard in two days passed overhead. Two Siskins passed south on the 20th and a Willow Warbler was a good sighting as were three Jays. The Coot on the main lake totalled 95. Four Green Sandpipers flew over the park towards Willington on the 22nd and 54 House martins passed south. Five Skylarks south on the 23rd were the first of the autumn and Dunnocks were particularly active. Meadow Pipits and Skylarks continued to pass south in small numbers in the following days and eleven Black Terns passing high to the southwest on the 25th were a pleasant surprise. The weather was of particular note during the last few days of the month with the temperature rising to 26°C in the sun on the 28th and up to 32°C in the sun on the 30th. The first Lesser Redpoll of the autumn passed over on the 29th and a redhead Goosander flew over towards Willington on the 30th.

October

After an 11°C start in the early morning the temperature rose to over 20°C on a cloudless and windless first day. Skylarks and Meadow Pipits continued to pass over in small numbers as did several Pied Wagtails. A Reed Warbler was still present in the rough but only four Blackcaps and three Chiffchaffs were seen. The 3rd was a bit of a thrush day with 31 Blackbirds being well above recent counts and 13 Song Thrushes including at least two 'grey' birds of probable continental origin. A Little Egret and about 600 Jackdaws came in to roost in the evening which again was very mild, being still at 25°C at 1915. A surprise on the 4th was a Sand Martin which appeared over the Finger Lakes but didn't seem to be going in any particular direction. Skylarks continued to pass over with a flock of 15 west and three southwest amongst the 21 which flew over. Four Little Egrets came in to roost in

the evening. The wind freshened to 4-6 on the 5th but it remained fairly mild. A Lesser Whitethroat trapped in 'the rough' was the latest ever for the park, the previous latest being on the 2nd October 1989. Nine Swallows passed south and 13 Blackcaps were trapped. Three Little Egrets roosted in the evening. There was a sudden decrease in temperature on the 7th but ten Chiffchaffs were still present. It was very mild after fairly heavy overnight rain on the 9th but, after the rain, flocks of Redwings totalling 330, passed west and low in a fairly strong westerly. These were the first of the autumn for Priory CP. Two House Martins and a Sand Martin passed south and two Common Snipes passed southwest. It was not surprising that the Redwing passage did not continue on the 10th for, although it was mild, the winds had increased to south-westerly 4 – 6 but 28 grounded migrants were still around. Six Siskins were feeding on the 'crescent' alders and a Little Egret was in the west Finger Lake. Passage continued with 19 Wigeon SW and 164 Woodpigeons south on the 14th. A Green Sandpiper flew up from the Finger Lakes on the 20th. Twenty Gadwalls were present on the 23rd and 22 on the following day. A Swallow which flew south on the 26th equalled the latest ever recorded in the park.

November

The month began fairly quietly, possibly due to some very mixed weather during the first week, particularly on the 7th and 8th when the park was enveloped in a misty drizzle. It was, however, fairly mild. A male Blackcap was in the Long Hedge on the 8th and 14 Common Gulls was the first count in the second winter period of more than three. Fourteen Teal were present on the 9th and two House Martins south were the last of the year. Thirty-six Gadwalls on the 10th increased to 40 on the 11th and 42 on the 12th. A Curlew flew NE at dusk on the 11th just after five Corn Buntings arrived at the 'crescent roost'. Twenty-one Shovelers on the 12th was a big increase from the pair which had been present on the previous few days and a Water Rail wandered around the shore of the island. A Green Sandpiper flew over, 362 Woodpigeons passed south and a ♀ Stonechat was on Fenlake. A Lesser Redpoll flew over on the 13th, the Stonechat was still present, a Water Rail called from the spit in the late afternoon and five Little Egrets and four Corn Buntings came in to roost.

The undoubted highlight of the 14th was a juvenile Gannet found by Tony Gill at about 1015 – the first record for the park. It remained until 0944 the following day when it departed to the east. Two Shelducks flew over on the 15th and nine Lesser Redpolls were in the crescent. Sixty-four Herring Gulls which passed south on the 17th was the first significant movement of the autumn. A Red-breasted Merganser arrived at about 0910 but only stayed for a few minutes before departing. A Common Snipe flew over Kingsmead. It was a little brighter on the 18th and a Chiffchaff called behind the sailing club. Five Little Egrets came in to roost on the 20th as did 34 Corn Buntings, the latter being the largest gathering of the autumn up to that date. Fifty-seven Gadwalls on the 22nd was well above the usual counts of 35 – 45. Another south-westerly passage of Herring Gulls took place on the morning of the 23rd which involved a total of 163. Six Little Egrets which came to roost was the highest count up to that date. A ♀ Stonechat was again on Fenlake on the 25th. A Shelduck was on the main lake on the morning of the 28th but departed later. Two ♂ and two ♀ Blackcaps were along the hedge behind the sailing club and a pair of Goosanders visited the main lake in the afternoon.

December

A pleasant start to the month were six Goosanders on the main lake. It was frosty and sunny on the 2nd but, despite the wonderful weather, there was little of special note. Fifty-one Cormorants came to roost on the 4th as did nine Little Egrets. There were several records of Common Buzzard during the month, the first of which was on the 5th. The ♀ Stonechat was again showing on Fenlake on the 6th and 11 Little Egrets came in to roost on the 7th, the latter being the highest number ever to occur in the park. Torrential rain on the 8th made it difficult for viewing birds but it was bright and sunny again on

the 9th. (It is interesting to note that the total rainfall for the whole year was a little less than 40cm at this time.) Great Black-backed Gulls had started to pass over south and six passed south in the early morning. Of 35 Long-tailed Tits 20 of them were in one flock and a ♀ Blackcap was in the Finger Lakes area. Twenty-four Tufted ducks on the 11th was the highest count of the second winter period, a pair of Great Crested Grebes was displaying as was a pair of Kestrels. A ♂ and two ♀ Blackcaps were behind the sailing club again on the 12th.

There was prolonged overnight rain but there were some good sunny periods on the 13th. Around 80 Lapwings arrived for dawn display. A Common Buzzard flew over on the 14th and 53 Cormorants, nine Little Egrets and 700 Jackdaws came in to roost, the latter including a leucistic bird. Things were quiet for a couple of days but 235 Fieldfares passed south on the 17th. A Mistle Thrush was singing in 'the rough on the 18th and a Lesser Redpoll was in a flock of Goldfinches. Two Water Pipits turned up on Fenlake on the 20th and four Snipes were on the recently-formed pools there. The total of 52 Corn Buntings at roost was the highest count of the year. There was a further passage of Fieldfares on the 22nd when 145 passed southwest. The Stonechat was seen again on Fenlake, a Water Rail called in the Finger Lakes and 1500 Jackdaws roosted on Kingsmead. The number of Common Gulls on the 23rd reached 116 before a heavy rainstorm. Things were a little better on the 24th with Tufted Ducks (25) and Pochard (18) having increased slightly. A Merlin which passed over was the first since 2004 and a Common Buzzard was also seen. The Stonechat showed itself again on Fenlake. Mild weather asserted itself on Christmas Day and Boxing Day with two ♂ Pintails on the main lake for a short time on Boxing Day morning. The mild weather continued into the next two days but the birds were very much the same. The wind increased overnight on the 28th reaching force 6 by the morning of the 29th. Light rain early on changed to heavy for a while before becoming bright and sunny. Ten Little Egrets were seen very early in the morning as they departed from roost and a pair of Great Crested Grebes displayed with enthusiasm on the main lake. About 2100 Jackdaws roosted on the ground on Kingsmead in the evening and were joined by 60 Rooks as well as by the usual Carrion Crows. A Common Buzzard flew over on the 30th and 11 Bullfinches were seen which included a party of six. Water Rails were in short supply but one, perhaps the only one in the park, showed itself well as it flitted across from one patch of reeds to another outside the Kramer hide.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

2011

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

A breeding resident and visitor.

High numbers were present during the first half of January, usually between 80 – 130, but declined to 60 – 70 during the second half of the month. The highest count in January was of 141 on the 1st. Over 100 were regularly present throughout February with the highest count being 152 on the 17th. The flock on the main lake declined from 99 on the 1st March to 18 by the 26th.

Monthly maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
141	152	99	29	17	19	34	56	67	74	46	40

Breeding: A pair in the Finger Lakes hatched seven young (six survived) on the 27th May and a pair on the main lake hatched three young on the 1st June. Only one of the latter pair survived. A pair on Riverside Pool hatched eight young.

After the breeding season numbers peaked at 67 in September and 74 in October but settled down to between 25 and 35 on most days to the year end.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus*

A scarce winter visitor. Twelve previous records. Last recorded in December 2010.

The twelve Bewick's Swans which roosted overnight departed well before dawn on the 1st January much to the disappointment of those who had come to get it on their year list. However, they returned to roost at 1645 and departed at 0758 the following morning.



Bewick's Swans Departing. Photo: D Barnes

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

A rare winter visitor. Ten previous records. Last recorded in December 2009.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrynchus*

A very rare winter visitor. All three previous records have been of large flocks. Last recorded in December 2002.

One was present on ‘100 acre’ on the 5th February with 156 Greylags, 90 Canada Geese and an Egyptian Goose. One arrived on the main lake with a Canada Goose on the morning of the 5th June. Both records were almost certainly the bird of uncertain origin which was recorded in the county last year.



WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

A very rare winter visitor. Three previous records. Last recorded in December 1996.

An immature was present with Greylags and Canada Geese on ‘100 acre’ on the 5th, 7th, 13th and 26th February and was recorded almost daily from the 1st to 9th March.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

A regular visitor throughout the year and occasional breeder.

Flocks from four to 42 passed over regularly during January and between 100 and 150 were on ‘100 acre’ in early February. Smaller numbers, from one to seven, were present on the main lake fairly regularly throughout March with 13 on the 22nd and 12 on the 27th being the highest counts. A pair produced three young on the 10th May of which two survived, but these almost immediately attached themselves to the Canada Goose crèche. The only larger numbers in late summer were a flock of 21 which flew over on the 23rd August and 30 over on the 7th September. Numbers remained low, usually one to three, to the end of the year but 28 present on the 2nd October and eight on the 25th December were the only higher counts.

GREY GOOSE Sp *Anser Sp*

Three, considered not to be Greylags, flew northeast over the park on the 12th November.

GREATER CANADA GOOSE *Branta Canadensis*

A breeding resident. Numbers may be enhanced by birds disturbed from neighbouring areas. The population of this species has been controlled by oiling eggs since 2004.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
107	93	54	40	41	71	69	39	173	253	86	129

Five young were produced from a nest in the Finger Lakes in early May and three new young were present there on 21st May. Four broods on the main lake were of 7, 7, 6 and 4 but only twelve remained by the 3rd June. Netting erected in front of the sailing club in August, to prevent birds from

feeding and defecating on the sailing club lawn, was very successful and the numbers visiting the park were usually much lower (10-40) and more sporadic than before the netting was erected. Quite sizeable flocks did, however, come in to roost on the water in the evening and, occasionally, large flocks visited during the day with 127 on the 12th September, 173 on the 13th and 114 on the 20th September being good examples. A party of 253 on the morning of the 2nd October had roosted overnight but most parties during October were of 70 or fewer and the November counts averaged 16. Flocks continued to roost on the main lake overnight but, during the second half of December numbers were augmented by 80 – 90 which fed on Kingsmead.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Feral birds are occasionally recorded in the park and are usually part of the Roxton flock.

One on the 11th September was the first of the year. One on the 21st September probably involved the same bird.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

A very rare winter visitor. Six previous records. Last recorded in November 1994.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Three previous records; one of three birds in November 1993, another three birds in March 1998 and one in May 2001.

One was on '100 acre' with many other geese on the 5th February.

COMMON SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

An uncommon but regular visitor and passage migrant, mainly in spring. Breeding at nearby Willington has resulted in sightings of both adults and immature during and after the breeding season.

Singles flew over on the 21st January and 1st February. Three were on the main lake on the 7th February, singles were present on the 10th and 16th and two were seen on the 20th February. In March two were on the main lake on the 20th and presumably the same two were on Fenlake on the following day. Two were on the main lake on the 3rd April, three on '100 acre' on the 17th April and six flew northeast on the 30th April. In May two flew over on the 17th. Two separate individuals flew NE over the park on the 15th November and one was on the main lake on the morning of the 28th November.

[RUDDY SHELDUCK] *Tadorna ferruginea*

Two previous records: in June 1985 and July-September 1994. Both were thought to be escapes.

[WOOD DUCK] *Aix sponsa*

Once an irregular visitor, now rare. Last recorded in 1994.

MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

An irregular visitor.

EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope*

A regular winter visitor mainly from Scandinavia.

Up to 19 were present in the first half of January but numbers gradually declined to less than ten in the second half of the month. Five to nine were regularly present in February and from two to seven until two, (the last), on the 21st March. During March quite a large group of up to 79 were present on '100 acre' and it was probably these birds that were visiting the park. The first of the autumn was an eclipse ♂ on the 18th September. Singles were then seen regularly with four visiting on several dates and seven on the 29th September. One to six were regularly present during October, November and much of December.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

A regular winter visitor in small numbers. Occasionally recorded at other times of the year.

Good numbers were present during January with peaks of 80 on the 6th, 88 on the 9th and 96 on the 10th. In February 102 were counted on the 1st but numbers were variable after this with the lowest count being 30 but 58 on the 2nd, 62 on the 13th, 72 on the 18th, 68 on the 19th and 55 on the 22nd. Groups of up to 40 birds of this species often associated with feeding groups of Mute Swans and fed on the weed which the swans brought to the surface.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
96	102	36	7	5	3	2	4	15	22	57	51

After 36 on the 4th March and 27 on the 8th there was a rapid decline to four on the 12th and two on the 16th March. Eleven were present on the 17th March and eight on the 19th but, after this, only two to five were present to the end of the month. Up to seven were present in early April but, after four on the 13th and one on the 14th, a pair was present on the 21st and 25th a male on the 27th and three on the 29th April. Two pairs were present to the 12th May with a fifth bird on the 3rd but a male and a female stayed around to 21st. One was recorded on 28th May, 4th and 5th June followed by two on the 13th and 14th and three on the 16th. The only July records were of one on the 20th and two on the 28th. This species became more regular in August, particularly in the second half of the month, with up to four in the last week. There was a gradual increase in September with ten on the 17th increasing to 15 on the 21st. Up to 12 were present daily during the first half of October increasing to 22 on the 24th. A further increase was noted in November when 24 on the 6th increased to 28 on the 8th, 36 on the 10th and 42 on the 12th. A count of 57 on the 22nd November was well above the other highest counts which were of 45 and 46. In December numbers were more variable; as low as 16 on the 21st but up to 51 on the 19th. Most counts were from 30 – 40.

EURASIAN TEAL *Anas crecca*

A fairly regular winter visitor in small numbers from September to April.

Regularly recorded in January with peaks of 15 on the 2nd, 21 on the 18th and 19 on the 28th. A flock of 40 flew over towards Willington on the 18th. Up to 14 were recorded in February but most counts were from four to eight.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
61	14	11	6	0	0	0	3	5	8	17	10

Between one and eight were recorded throughout March with 11 on the 6th. There were three records in August: two on the 4th, three on the 10th and one on the 17th. We had to wait until the 21st September for the next record when two were in the west Finger Lake. Small numbers were regularly

present in the Finger Lakes after this with most counts being of less than ten but higher counts included 15 on the 10th and 22nd November, 16 on the 25th and 17 on the 27th and 30th.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

A common resident and winter visitor.

Up to 78 were recorded in January and up to 63 in February. After 53 on the 12th March numbers reduced to the breeding population and counts were usually between 20 and 25.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
78	63	53	54	77	86	107	85	81	108	83	104

Breeding: This year twenty three broods totalled 154 young, giving an average 6.7 per brood. This compares favourably with 2010 when twenty six broods were hatched which totalled 138 young; an average of 5.3 per brood (7.2 in 2009; 6.2 in 2008).

The Distribution of the Production of Young by 14-Day Periods – 2008

Year	Apr 2-8	Apr 9-22	A/M 23-6	May 7-20	M/J 21-3	Jun 4-17	J/Jul 18-1	Jul 2-15	Jul 16-29	Jul/A 30-12	Aug 13-26	Total
2011	0	18	40	43	19	20	2	4	0	8	0	154
2010	8	0	38	16	7	18	34	12	5	0	0	138
2009	0	0	80	25	34	28	13	0	0	0	0	180
2008	0	5	46	10	33	10	4	2	8	0	0	118

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

An uncommon winter visitor. Forty-four previous records.

A pair was on the main lake around mid-day on the 18th January (GG) and two males spent a short time on the main lake on the 26th December (DB).

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

A rare passage migrant. Eleven records. Last recorded in April 2007.

An eclipse male was on the West Finger Lake on the 3rd July, the twelfth record for the park and the first since April 2007.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Mainly a regular winter visitor from September to May. Occasionally observed in summer.

Numbers during the first few months were lower than in previous years with peaks of 13 on 25th January, seven on the 4th February and eight on the 15th March. Two to five were recorded regularly to the end of the month. In April the only record was of two pairs on the 7th. There was then a fourteen week gap until the 15th July when three flew over.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	7	8	4	0	0	3	3	4	0	21	8

One to four were regularly recorded in August and September but this species was not recorded in October. After a pair from the 8th – 11th November 21, the largest count for the year, were present on the 12th. However, only three to eight were recorded after this.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

An uncommon visitor, mainly in winter. Most, if not all, used to be visitors from the group on the river in the Queen’s Park area of Bedford but a large dispersal early in 2010 from Cotswold Water Park resulted in over 30 being recorded in the county and some of the present records may be from this source.

A party of four (3♂♂ + 1♀) was on the main lake on the 23rd January. One of the males had a much paler back and may have been a hybrid. A single ♂ was present on the 19th and 20th February and one, probably the same bird, was on nearby Meadow Lane West pit on ‘100 acre’ on the 26th. Two ♂♂ were on the main lake on the 15th March and a ♂ and a ♀ the following day; these remained until the 22nd March.

COMMON POCHARD *Aythya farina*

A common winter visitor from the Baltic and Russia. Occasional in summer.

Numbers were quite variable in January, usually between 80 and 120 with 142 on the 13th. A few departed from the 20th February onwards and 54 was the last count of the month. After 49 on the 7th March the number declined fairly rapidly with the last of the wintering flock on the 20th. Three were present on the 7th April.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
142	119	49	3	0	0	0	0	5	7	8	42

The first to return were two pairs on the 4th September but numbers were of eight or less until the 19th December when 18 were present. Further increases took place in the last week of December with 42 on the 27th.

FERRUGINOUS DUCK *Aythya nyroca*

A very rare visitor. Two previous records, involving different birds, in November 1998 and December 1998 to March 1999. The origin of these birds was probably related to releases at Swiss Gardens in early 1998 and subsequent breeding there.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

A fairly common winter visitor from Northern Russia, Scandinavia and Low Countries. Scarce in summer. Last bred in 1986.

Numbers during the first half of January were much higher than usual with higher numbers involving 78 on the 8th, 90 on the 10th and 84 on the 13th. Thirty-two were present on the 12th February with 24 on the following day but most February counts were between seven and 20. Numbers were often above 15 during March with 22 on the 11th and 28th and 23 on the 12th and 25th.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
90	32	23	14	10	4	3	6	5	4	18	25

After 14 on 1st April the number declined to 11 on 6th but numbers were usually less than ten in April and May and, occasionally, up to four in June. Records were more sporadic from July to the beginning of November after which they were recorded daily with peaks of 18 on the 20th November, 24 on the 11th December and 25 on the 31st.

GREATER SCAUP *Aythya marila*

A scarce winter visitor from Iceland, Northern Europe and Russia.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

A rare winter visitor from the Arctic and Scandinavia. One previous record, November 1982 to February 1983.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

A rare visitor from arctic Russia and **Scandinavia**, mainly spring and autumn. Five previous records. Last recorded in April 2000.

COMMON GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

A fairly regular but uncommon winter visitor from northern and central Europe.

A single immature female was on the main lake on the 12th, 14th, 18th and 20th January to the 12th February. It was joined by an adult female on the 4th February.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*

A rare winter visitor from northern Russia. Last recorded in December 2007.

A ♀/imm was in an open area of water in front of the south hide on the 11th January and a pair was present on the 28th January.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

A rare winter visitor and passage migrant from northern Eurasia and northern Britain. Nine previous records. Last recorded in January 1998.

One, thought to be an eclipse ♂, arrived on the main lake at 0910 on the 17th November but only stayed for a few minutes before departing to the northeast.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

An uncommon but regular winter visitor from northern Europe and northern Britain. Less frequent in mild winters. Earliest: 29th October 1983. Latest: 11th April 1990.

A male flew over the park, possibly having been put up from the river, on the 10th April, only one day earlier than our latest record. A redhead which flew over on the 30th September was the first of the autumn and surprisingly early. A pair was on the main lake on the afternoon of the 28th November. A male and three 'redheads' on the 1st December were joined by another male and a 'redhead' but one of the males soon departed.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

An uncommon visitor. Has been recorded in all months. Last recorded in January 2008. Expected to occur less frequently as a result of recent culling in the UK.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Once an irregular visitor to the park but now very infrequent since mineral extraction commenced in neighbouring fields. Last recorded in June 2009.

Four young were present on nearby Riverside Meadow on 9th June.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

An uncommon, now almost rare, visitor to the park. Occasionally seen in the surrounding fields. Last recorded in April 2009.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

A rare passage migrant. Two previous records in May and June 1989.

COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

A breeding resident in small numbers.

Surprisingly scarce during the first part of the year with one on the 29th January being the only one recorded in the first two months of the year. One - two were regularly recorded in spring and again from October to the year end. The highest count was of eight in Kingsmead on the 22nd November.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

A rare winter visitor. Southward coastal movements from breeding areas in western Scotland take place during the winter. One previous record, 20th-22nd November 1993.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

A rare winter visitor. Moves south to coasts from breeding area in Iceland and Greenland. Five previous records. The first, in February 1983 was the fourth county record. Other records involved singles in December 1989, January 1990, November 1998 and November 2006.

FULMAR *Fulmaris glacialis*

A very rare visitor. Two records; one in September 1989, the sixth record for the county, and one in February 2004.

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

No previous records.

A juvenile arrived on the main lake at 1015 on the 14th November (A. Gill *et al*) and remained until 0944 on the following day when it departed over the east end of the main lake towards Willington. It occasionally made flights around the lake and plunged-dived on several occasions, once catching a fish. This is the first record for the park.



GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

May be seen throughout the year but mainly a winter visitor from coastal and inland breeding sites. Roosting started in 2001.

Recorded daily with 37 on the 10th being the highest January count. A significant reduction took place during the second half of March as birds moved to breeding areas.

Monthly Maxima (second row) and Monthly Average (bottom row) not including evening roosts.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
37	30	22	8	6	10	18	27	28	36	41	38
20.2	18.5	8.8	2.6	1.9	2.9	6.0	13.9	19.9	25.6	24.8	29.5

Roosts (Note, the above table does not include roosts):

The roost at the back of Kingsmead regularly held 40 to 45 during January and early February. During the second winter period the roost relocated back to trees on the south side of the main lake and increased to 41 on the 28th November. December counts included 51 on several occasions, 54 on the 11th and 53 on the 14th. The roost relocated to the back of Kingsmead for about a week from the 15th December.

P. c. sinensis Hybridisation with *P. C. carbo* sometimes makes it difficult to identify the races of this species. Up to three present in January, up to five in February and up to four during the first half of March. There were three records of singles during the second half of March.

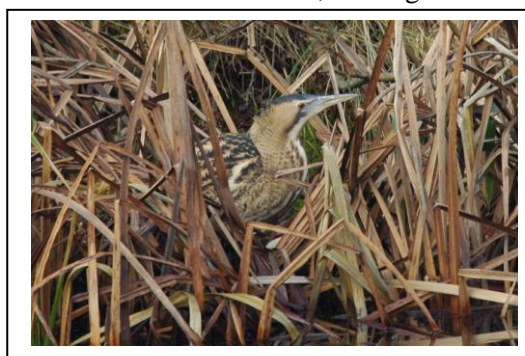
SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

A rare winter visitor. Six previous records. Last recorded in March 1995.

EURASIAN BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

A very rare visitor. Recorded in October 1994, February 1997, February 2002 and December 2010.

One flew NW across the main lake at 1645 on the 2nd January and off in the direction of Willington. It was seen again on the 6th January when it flew across the lake from the north side, landing near the south hide. In the evening it was seen to fly in and land in the crescent reed bed at 1640. On the 8th January it flew out of the crescent reed bed at 0840 and off towards Willington. It returned to the crescent reed bed at 1635. From the 9th January onwards it was seen almost every day until the 26th January, usually outside the Kramer Hide, giving some excellent views. It was then thought to have departed but one flew from the north shore on the 7th February over to the reeds in the west Finger Lake.



LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Once rare but now a regular visitor. First recorded in May 1986. Annual since 2001. Has roosted regularly, mainly in autumn through to spring, since 2006.

Roosting: Singles came in to roost on the 15th, 16th and 17th January with three arriving together on the 21st. One to three, mainly three, were recorded at roost into February. Five came in to roost on the 8th September. Although birds probably roosted every evening they were checked on the 12th September when three were present and two were present on the 21st, 24th and 30th. Up to four roosted in October with four on the 4th. Most counts in November were of three but five roosted on the 13th and six on the 23rd and 24th. Numbers were generally higher in December with nine attending on the 4th, 14th and 22nd and 11 (the highest count ever at Priory CP) on the 7th.

Daytime records: The first of the year was in the west Finger Lake on the 15th January followed by two on the 22nd and one on the 29th January. After one on the 3rd February other records, all of singles were on the 3rd, 17th and 26th March. Two were present for a short time on the 2nd April, one on 23rd May, two on 29th May and one on 3rd June. Singles were recorded on four further days in June with two on 22nd and singles on five days in July. There was only one record in August (11th) but one was in the west Finger Lake on the 6th September and again on the 8th with five coming in to roost in the evening. Singles were around the main lake on the 13th, 15th, 17th 19th, 20th and 27th-29th September. Singles were recorded on the 2nd, 10th, 13th and 24th October with two on the 1st. In November singles were recorded around the main lake on the 14th and 18th and in December two were present on the 3rd and one on the 8th.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

A non-breeding resident and visitor.

One to eight (more usually 1-5) were recorded daily throughout the year but numbers were slightly lower than usual, particularly during the period of post-breeding dispersal.

Maximum Day Count

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	6	5	3	3	5	7	8	6	5	8	7

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

No previous record.

One which passed north-east over the park at 1345 on the 3rd May (Geoff Glazebrook) was the first record for the park. One, presumably the same bird, had been recorded earlier in the day over Stewartby L and was also seen at Godmanchester GP (Cams) early on the following day. There have been 12 records (13 individuals) of this species in the county since the first in 1983 with most seen in April and May.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

An uncommon but regular winter visitor from September to April. Occasionally recorded in summer.

Recorded regularly outside the breeding season but numbers were fairly low this year.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	4	3	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	4	4

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Recorded throughout the year with post-breeding numbers reaching 37 on the 22nd August, 42 on the 31st, 46 on the 11th September, 40 on the 14th and 20th September and 44 on the 5th October.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	7	13	10	15	21	26	42	46	44	18	15

A pair on the west Finger Lake had one egg on the 26th April and two on the 28th. Four young hatched on 20th May. A pair nested in the south-west corner of the main lake in July and had two eggs on the 21st but was flooded out a few days later.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena*

A rare visitor, mainly in winter but occasionally on passage. Breeds in Europe, east from Denmark. Nine previous records. Last recorded in November 2005.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

A rare passage migrant in winter and spring. Twelve previous records. Last recorded in November 2007.

A fine adult in summer plumage was present on the main lake from early morning on the 21st May (DB, DK).



BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

A rare visitor. Eleven previous records. Last recorded in November 2008.

HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*

One previous record: two east over the park on the 6th October 2000.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Ten records. First recorded on 2nd April 2004 followed by two records in 2005, one in 2006 and one in 2007. First bred in the county in 2008.

One flew over on the 21st March.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

A very rare visitor. Five previous records, all between April and mid-June.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

One over the park on the 23rd November 2006 was the first record for the park.

NORTHERN GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

A very rare visitor. Six previous records. First accepted record in March 2002 followed by one record in April and two in October of the same year. One in April 2004 and one in April 2007.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

A regular visitor throughout the year. Often breeds either in the park or nearby.

A pair displayed over the park on several days in early January. Recorded on only 129 bird days this year (179 in 2010; 141 in 2009) the biggest difference being fewer records in September and October. This may reflect lower numbers of juveniles in the surrounding area.

Bird Days

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
16	7	11	12	6	3	9	11	13	12	14	15

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Once a rare visitor to the park, now more frequent. Now a regular breeding bird in the county it will doubtless visit more regularly. First recorded in the park as recently as March 1998.

In January singles were recorded on the 5th and 23rd and two passed over on the 30th. Singles flew over on the 9th, 14th, 22nd and 26th February with two on the 12th. A pair was calling at the back of Kingsmead on the 4th March, one was recorded on the 19th, three circled over the park on the 22nd March and one was in the Finger Lakes area on the 31st March. In April singles were recorded on the 1st, 2nd, 8th and 17th and two were present on the 6th. In May singles on the 1st, 9th, 12th and 21st, and again on the 11th, 14th, 18th and 19th June. Other records involved one on 3rd July, two on 6th July, one on 25th July, one on 22nd August, singles on the 17th - 18th and 24th - 25th September. There were no further records until one on the 29th November. There were eight records of singles in December. Recorded on 47 days in 2011 compared with 24 days in 2010 continuing the increase of this species in the area.



Bird Days

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	6	7	6	6	6	4	1	4	0	1	8

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus*

One west on the 5th November was accepted by the Beds Bird Club Rarities Panel and, as such, was the first record for the park.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

A fairly scarce, but now almost annual, passage migrant. Forty previous records. Last recorded in April 2008.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Once an uncommon but fairly regular visitor. Serious recent decline, (182 bird days in 2002, 9 in 2007), probably as a result of nearby mineral extraction removing feeding habitat.

Recorded on 38 bird days this year compared with 64 in 2010 and 66 in 2009. A pair was displaying over Fenlake on the 11th and 12th December.

Bird Days

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	3	1	0	0	3	4	0	6	2	8	6

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

A rare winter visitor. Fifteen previous records. Last recorded on 30th December 2004.

One which flew over on the 24th December (AP) was the first since December 2004.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

An uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.

Earliest: 24.04.91 and 93. Latest: 18.10.95.

Average earliest in spring 1985 to 1999: 1st May. 2000 to 2009: 4th May.

Average latest in autumn 1985 to 1999: 24th September. 2000 to 2009: 25th September.

The first of the spring were two on the 9th May but there were no further records until one in the evening on the 1st June. Singles were recorded on 12th, 13th and 18th June, 6th and 27th July; 4th, 27th and 30th August. One passed SW after heavy rain on the 4th September, one came to harass the House Martins on the 6th and one, the last, passed over on the 12th September.

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrines*

First recorded in February 1996 and again in September of the same year. Twenty-six previous records. Now breeds in the county.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

A regular but uncommon visitor, mainly in winter. Only one summer record, in August 1989 on Fenlake.

Earliest arrival in autumn: 05.09.09. Latest departure in spring: 23.04.03.

Average date of first autumn arrival 1990-2009: 15th October.

Average date of last spring departure 1990-2009: 3rd April.

Up to four were recorded almost daily during January and up to two in February. In March singles were recorded regularly up to the 19th but there were no further records until singles on the 29th and 30th March. The first of the autumn was heard on the 17th September and again on the 25th but there were no further records until one on the island on the 12th November and one on 'the spit' on the 13th. The latter bird called most evening at dusk to the end of the month. One, probably the same bird, was recorded in the Finger Lakes fairly regularly to the year end. The lack of numbers during the second winter period may have been due to the lack of Scandinavian migrants arriving this year.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

One from the 16th to 20th June 1998 is the only record.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

A breeding resident in small numbers and a winter visitor.

Numbers were generally lower this year with monthly maxima being, on average, 34% lower than last year.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
12	21	14	4	3	8	9	8	7	6	5	14

Two pairs in the Finger Lakes produced two young each.

COMMON COOT *Fulica atra*

A breeding resident in small numbers. No longer a winter visitor.

High numbers were recorded in January with high counts including 180 on the 5th, 181 on the 8th, 195 on the 9th, 189 on the 12th and 182 on the 15th. Numbers then declined to less than 100 by the end of the month.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
195	106	80	31	29	26	40	67	94	121	63	105

Breeding: four nests along the north shore (2+1 young), one in the NW corner of the main lake and one in the SW corner, two on the west Finger Lakes (4(6) +3(5) young)

Two pairs had five young each in May. A pair had eight new young on 100 acre on the 17th April. Numbers increased during the second half of August reaching 67 on the 29th and numbers remained high in September, often above 70 during the first half of the month and over 80 during the second half. The highest September count was of 94 on the 20th. Counts of 90-120 were regular during the first half of October with a maximum of 121 on the 11th but there was a rapid decline during the second half of the month to 56 on the 25th. In November counts were mainly between 45 and 55 with the peak count being 63 on the 29th. Numbers increased further during December with numbers usually over 80 and peaking at 105 on the 10th.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

An uncommon passage migrant. Has increased from April to July in recent years due to breeding taking place in the Willington complex of gravel pits.

The first of the year were two on '100 acre' on the 26th February and again on 27th February and 1st to 10th March. Three were flushed from '100 acre' on the 13th March and passed over the park before returning. Two were feeding on the sailing club lawn on the 19th March and singles were recorded on the 23rd and 25th. In April singles were seen on the 1st, 13th, 25th, 27th and 28th and two on the 16th, 17th and 29th. These doubtless came over from '100 acre' where up to three were seen regularly. In May there were seven records of singles plus three on the 7th and two on the 9th whilst in June there were five records of singles with three over on the 26th. The species was slightly more regular in July with nine records of singles and two of two. There were no further records during the rest of the year.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

A very rare passage migrant. Two previous records: 27th March 1983 and 16th April 2008.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

An uncommon passage migrant, wintering in central Africa. Earliest: 19.03.89 Latest: 17.09.89

One on '100 acre' on the 3rd April.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

An uncommon passage migrant wintering in central and east Africa. Bred in 1982.

EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

A regular winter visitor in varying numbers. Winters in southern Britain, breeds in northern Britain.

Two north over the park on the 2nd March were the first of the year.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

A scarce passage migrant. Twenty-five previous records. Last recorded in October 2008.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Once a common passage migrant and winter visitor, now less frequent. Bred in 1991 and attempted in 2000.

A flock of 180 flying northeast was the only record in January. In February 36 flew NE on the 13th and two were seen overhead on the 15th and 25th. Only one to three were seen very occasionally during the summer months with the highest counts being 12 southwest on the 13th June and nine southwest on the 5th July. There were no records in August and only three records, all of singles passing southwest, in September. There were again no records in October and early November but five flew northeast on the 12th November, 28 southwest on the 15th and 300 south on the 26th. From the 25th November 80 regularly arrived for dawn display and this increased to 160 on the 22nd December. After wet weather at the end of the month Fenlake attracted up to 130 on the 24th, 145 on the 30th and 138 on the 31st December.

RED KNOT *Calidris canutus*

A rare visitor to the park. Recorded on only four occasions. One record of 23 on the 23rd January 1994 was the first for the park and the highest number ever recorded in the county up to that time.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minutus*

A rare passage migrant. Two previous records, September 1985 and September 1993.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

A rare passage migrant. One previous record on the 13th August 1981.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

An uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

A scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Thirty-two previous records.

JACK SNIPE *Lynocryptes minimus*

A rare winter visitor.

COMMON SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

A regular winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers.

One flew south over the park on the 2nd January and one was on Fenlake on the 20th February. Three south on the 10th September were the first of the autumn. Two passed southwest on the 9th October and one flew over Kingsmead on the 17th November. After the December rains, pools again formed on Fenlake and four to eight were recorded there in the second half of the month.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

An uncommon visitor and passage migrant, mainly in winter. Sixty previous records.

One was flushed on the 1st January.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Once a rare passage migrant, now becoming more frequent. Last recorded in December 2009.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

A fairly rare passage migrant, mainly in spring. Breeds in the low arctic. Seventeen previous records, eleven in spring. Last recorded in September 2005.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

A scarce passage migrant, mainly mid-April to mid-May. Breeds in northern Europe, NW Russia, Iceland and northern Britain. Winters in coastal Africa. Thirty-nine previous records. Last recorded in August 2009.

Earliest: 16.4.98. Latest: 25.8.96

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

An uncommon but regular passage migrant. Seventy-four previous records. Average first date for spring passage 1980-1999: 8th April. 2000-2009: 4th April.

One flew northeast at 1556 on the 11th November.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

A regular summer visitor and passage migrant. Winters in central and southern Africa.

Earliest: 25.3.05. Latest: 20.10.2000. Average arrival date on spring passage 1980-1999: 18th April. 2000-2009: 14th April

The first were three on the 1st May. The first returning bird was one on the 24th August.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

An uncommon but fairly regular visitor. Has been recorded in all months of the year.

One flew up from the shingle beach on the 23rd August, four flew over towards Willington on the 22nd September, one passed southwest on the 26th as did one on the 30th September. One flew up from the Finger Lakes on the 20th October and one flew over on the 12th November.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

A rare passage migrant. Winters in central Africa. Breeds in northern Europe and Russia. Six previous records. Last recorded in September 2000. Earliest: 3.4.88. Latest; 26.9.99.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

An uncommon passage migrant, mainly July to September. Winters in southern Africa, Breeds in northern Europe and Russia. There have been 108 previous records in the park, all but eleven in autumn (six in spring 2000). Earliest: 3.5.95. Latest: 12.10.99.

One flew over towards Willington on the 22nd August.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

A very rare passage migrant. Recorded in August 1982, July 1996 and September 2004.

COMMON REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

An uncommon winter visitor and regular passage migrant.

One was on '100 acre' on the 27th February and, after this, up to two were recorded regularly at this site. One flew SW over the park on the 29th March as did one on the 4th April. These, along with one north-east on the 9th April doubtless originated from the '100 acre/Willington area where up to six were regularly present and one pair hatched two young. In June three flew over on the 12th and one flew over on the 27th July.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

A rare passage migrant. Seven previous records. Last recorded in July 2002.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *Phalaropus lobatus*

A very rare passage migrant. One on the 30th May 1991 was the first for the county since one was shot at Houghton Conquest on the 1st June about 1880.

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

One on the 14th October 2002 was the seventh county record since 1900.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A very rare visitor. One on the 20th-21st November 1999 was first for the park and the fifth for the county.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

A rare visitor, mainly in spring, and storm-driven passage migrant. Sixteen previous records. Last recorded on the 10th April 2005.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Passage migrant and resident. A common winter visitor from Fenno-Scandia and the Low Countries.

There were several counts of 200 or more during January and February but, as usual, counts from April to early July were rarely higher than six.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
250	240	70	8	6	11	34	23	40	150	350	400

High winds on the 29th November resulted in 350 settling on the main lake in the afternoon.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

An uncommon but regular passage migrant, mainly in spring. Breeds from Holland and Denmark across to N. Asia. Winters south to the Mediterranean. Earliest: 31.3.97. Latest: 26.11.93. Average earliest on spring passage 1980-1999: 27th April. 2000-2009: 26th April. One summered in 2000, the first summering record for the county.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

A rare visitor. Nine previous records. Last recorded in March 2002.

A fine adult was on the main lake for a while on the morning of the 14th July, but soon departed to the southwest.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Mainly a winter visitor, with numbers tending to increase in recent years. Although a few arrive in late June and early July the main arrival commences in October.

Regularly recorded in January with higher counts involving 23 on the 6th, 23 on the 14th and 51 on the 16th. In February 61 were counted on the 6th and 52 on the 13th. After 11 on the 3rd March only one to six were present during the rest of the month until 16 passed NE on the 30th. In April two were present on the 1st, 19 flew SW on the 2nd and one NE on the 3rd, a typical last date for this species.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
51	61	16	19	0	0	1	1	1	3	34	116

The first returning bird was an adult on the 14th July followed by four records of adults and one of an immature before the end of the month. There were only three records in August and two in September, all of single adults. One to three were recorded fairly regularly during October but it wasn't until 8th November that numbers increased significantly with 14 present followed by 17 on the 11th and 34 on the 13th. Before heavy rain on the 23rd December 116 collected on the main lake.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

A regular passage migrant. British birds winter in SW Spain, Portugal and NW Africa. Winter visitor in small numbers. Now fairly regular in summer with post-breeding movements taking place in late June to August. There has been an increase in wintering records in recent years.

Small numbers, usually one to ten, passed over to and from feeding or roosting areas during most of the year but 18 were present on the main lake on the 14th January. A few visited the main lake more regularly from late April to late August.

Monthly Maxima - not including passage.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
18	2	1	11	7	4	4	9	3	1	1	8

Passage was noticeable from early September with small numbers passing southwest. This continued during October and November.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

A regular winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers. May have bred in Bedford in recent years.

Up to 12 were noted passing southwest in January and up to 13 in February. From April to early August one to six adults were present on the main lake suggesting that these may have been breeding in the county.

Monthly Maxima - not including passage.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	5	8	6	3	3	4	2	0	0	1	3

Return movement was noticeable during November with 64 south on the 17th and 163 south on the 23rd.

Lesser/Herring Gull (*L. fuscus/argentatus*)

Thirty-one passed north on the 30th January and 47 passed south on the 3rd February. A total of 105 Lesser/Herring Gulls southwest on the 28th November were thought to be mainly Herring Gulls.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

First recorded on 24th July and 2nd August 1992. Singles recorded on 15th July 2000; 23rd December 2001; 7th and 8th March 2002.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

A very rare winter visitor. Three previous records: one at the sewage works on the 18th March 1962 was the first county record, one on the 11th December 1994 and one on the 25th April 1998.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

A very rare winter visitor. Three previous records: November 1983, November 1991 and February 1996.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

A regular winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers. British population more or less resident. Fenno-Scandinavian population wholly migratory, reaching the east coast of Britain from September onwards with numbers peaking in October. Return passage is mainly in March and April.

One on the 1st January, two north on the 2nd and 4 southwest on the 3rd were the only records in that month. In February five passed north on the 27th. In March one passed NE on the 5th, three SW on the 13th, one SW on the 17th and one SW on the 20th. The only April record was of one on the 4th. This species is usually totally absent during the breeding season and it wasn't until 23rd November that the next, three south, were recorded. One passed south on the 30th November. One to six passed southwest between 4th and 17th December.

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

A scarce passage migrant. Twenty previous records nineteen of which were of single birds. Last recorded in April 2005. Earliest: 22.4.01. Latest: 26.8.01.

CASPIAN TERN *Hydroprogne caspia*

A very rare vagrant. One previous record, on 17th April 1992, was the second county record.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

An uncommon but regular passage migrant. Winters on the west coast of Africa. Breeds in the Low Countries, mainly Netherlands. Earliest: 18.4.84. Latest: 22.10.2000.

Average earliest date on spring passage 1980-1999: 30th April. 2000 to 2009: 1st May.

Two were present on the 5th May and one on the 8th. A juvenile arrived on the morning of the 28th August and was present until the morning of the 30th. A party of 11 passed high southwest on the 25th September.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

A scarce passage migrant. Winters on west and south African coasts. Thirty-two previous records which have involved 107 birds. Earliest: 8.4.96. Latest: 30.9.2000. Average earliest 1980-1999: 26th April. 2000-2009: 17th April

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

A common summer visitor and passage migrant. Winters mainly along the west African coast. Bred in 1982. Earliest: 24.3.97. Latest: 23.10.87.

Average earliest date on spring passage 1980-1999: 10th April. 2000 to 2009: 7th April.

Average latest date on autumn passage 1980-1999: 17th September. 2000 to 2009: 10th September.

The first arrived on the 2nd April, earlier than the average, and was present to the 6th when it was joined by another two. Six were on the main lake on the 10th and an additional three birds passed north-east. After eight on the 11th April three to nine were regularly present until mid June when numbers increased slightly with 12 on the 12th, 14 on the 25th, 15 on the 26th and 16 on the 30th being the highest counts. The first juveniles arrived on the 2nd July and were regularly present after this. The July peak count was of 20 on the 20th and up to 14 were present in August. One to four visited during the first half of September and, after two on the 11th September there were no further records until the last, a juvenile, on the 15th.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
			8	9	16	20	14	4			

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

An uncommon migrant, mainly in spring. Occasionally occurs in large numbers after periods of strong winds from the northern sector during the second half of April and early May. Winters in the southern Antarctic oceans. Recorded on 133 days in the last 27 years, all but four in spring. Earliest: 6.4.91. Latest: 16.10.87.

Average earliest date on spring passage 1981 – 1999: 21st April. 2000 to 2009: 27th April.

One passed northeast on the 28th April.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

One previous record on the 3rd November 1995.

ROCK DOVE/FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Once a fairly common resident with 300-400 regularly recorded until 1990. Now an uncommon visitor.

Recorded on only 13 occasions this year, possibly reflecting a decline in the population in town centres.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

An uncommon, but regular, visitor in varying numbers, mainly in winter. Roosts in some years at the back of Kingsmead.

Recorded fairly regularly in the early part of the year with the highest counts being 7 on the 20th January, nine on the 26th January and seven on the 2nd February. After this one to five were seen regularly in Kingsmead to the end of May with, in addition, seven passing NE on the 29th March. One to three were recorded fairly regularly throughout the remainder of the year with seven on the 22nd November.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

A regular breeding resident in small numbers, winter visitor and passage migrant, sometimes in large flocks.

Numbers were very variable during the first few months of the year with 20 to 35 being the most regular counts but up to 66 in January and 84 in February.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
66	84	58	59	45	16	60	25	37	164	362	86

About 12 pairs nested. Passage was fairly light this year with 164 south on the 14th October being the first signs of movement. Numbers were quite high in the park after this with 150 present on the 24th but it was not until 12th November that any further significant movement took place when 362 passed south.

Roosts:

Roosts during January were consistently around 35 but had increased to 70 by the 3rd February. In December 60 were recorded at roost on the 11th but this had increased to 120 on the 29th.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

A breeding resident in small numbers. May form roosts in winter.

One to three were recorded almost daily during the first six months of the year and one to four during the second half. Six on the 1st September was the highest count. This species was fairly scarce during November and December.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

A scarce summer visitor. Earliest: 26.4.82. Latest: 20.10.81.

The first arrived on the 28th May followed by two males on the 2nd June and singles on the 5th, 11th, 12th, 15th, 19th and 20th.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET *Psittacula krameri*

Three previous records; two in September 1982 and one from 19th August 2004 to 9th February 2005.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

A regular summer visitor. Earliest: 10.4.90. Latest: 20.10.81. Average earliest date on spring passage 1981 – 1999: 21st April; 2000 – 2009: 19th April.

The first of the year was a male on the 18th April after which one was recorded daily with two males on the 28th April. One to two males were present daily during May but the first female didn't arrive until the 19th May. Both males and females were recorded to the 10th June but, after two males on the 11th June only singles males were recorded until the last on the 25th June.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

An occasional visitor. Not recorded in the park since 1996.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

A rare visitor. Fifteen previous records. Last recorded in September 2003.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

A past resident. Bred in 1991-93. Infrequently recorded in recent years.

Singles were recorded on the 24th April, 22nd November, 1st and 6th December.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

A rare winter visitor. Six previous records. Last recorded in October 1993.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

A very rare visitor. Seven previous records. Last recorded in April 2004.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

A common summer visitor and passage migrant. Earliest: 17.4.94. Latest: 22.9.84. Average earliest date on spring passage 1981 – 1999: 26th April; 2000 – 2009: 23rd April. Average latest date in autumn 1980-1999: 13th September; 2000 – 2009: 31st August.

The first was one which passed northeast on the 30th April followed by six on the 1st May, nine on the 2nd and 31 on the 3rd. Higher numbers were then regularly recorded with the highest counts being 40 on the 5th, 12th and 23rd with 55 on the 31st May. Up to 50 were recorded on several days in June but no more than 26 in July. Although seen almost daily throughout August numbers were rarely above 11 with 16 on the 10th and 20 on the 11th being the highest counts. As usual this species was scarce in September, but remained longer than has been usual in recent years with two on the 4th and 5th and singles to the 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th and 17th September.

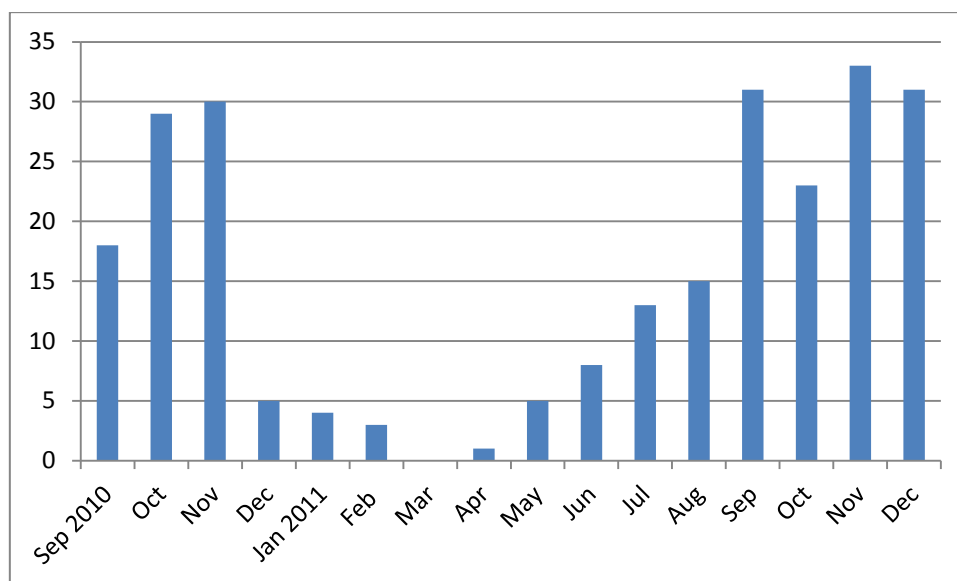
KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Recorded almost daily but can be totally absent during and after periods of severe cold weather. Often breeds within the park or nearby.

There were only four records of singles in January, three in February, none in March and one in April, reflecting the devastating effect of the hard winter on this species in the park. There were five records of singles in May and 8 in June. The sight of four juveniles together in the Finger Lakes on the 22nd July was a satisfying sight and records were more regular after this.

Bird Days

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	3	0	1	5	8	13	15	31	23	33	31



The effect of the 2010/2011 winter on records of Kingfisher illustrating the decline and recovery

Bird Days

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2011	4	3	0	1	5	8	13	15	31	23	33	31
2010	11	17	14	6	6	9	9	12	18	29	30	5
2009	32	32	23	7	8	20	20	12	32	30	52	50
2008	48	38	27	18	16	35	25	25	38	24	56	54

Year	1 st Half	2 nd Half	Total
2011	21	146	167
2010	63	103	166
2009	122	196	318
2008	182	222	404

EUROPEAN BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster*

A very rare summer visitor. One on the 29th June 1991 was the first county record.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

A breeding resident. This vociferous species has increased greatly in recent years.

Regularly recorded throughout the year. The cold weather in the first winter period didn't appear to have any adverse effect. At least three pairs bred.

Bird days

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
70	91	93	48	25	31	100	88	78	(28)*	28	43

* = incomplete coverage

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

A breeding resident. First bred in 1995.

Although drumming was first heard on the 22nd January it was recorded on only four occasions in February but almost daily from March to mid-May. Two to three pairs bred.

Bird Days

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
41	35	63	37	35	19	33	32	30	32	47	29

An unusual record was of one drumming for a short time on the 26th November and again on the 2nd and 6th December.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Now a rare visitor. Has bred.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

A very rare passage migrant. Only one record, an immature on the 5th September 1996.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

A rare winter visitor. Six previous records. Last recorded in November 1998.

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator*

A very rare vagrant. One record, 17th July to 29th August 1972.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Once a scarce visitor mainly in autumn, now more frequent particularly during the summer. Recorded on 36 occasions in the twenty-four years from 1982 to 2005 and 56 occasions from 2006-2008.

One was by ‘100 acre’ on the 2nd April but the first for the park was on the following day and again on the 8th, 11th and 16th April. Three were present on the 23rd April and singles on the 28th May, 10th and 24th June and 22nd July. One was recorded on the 11th August and two on the 27th. Singles on the 2nd, 17th and 18th September with three together on 20th, one on the following day and one on the 24th. There were four records of singles in October but only two records, one on the 11th and two on the 30th, in November.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

A breeding resident in small numbers. Roosting annually since 1995.

Most counts during the first ten months of the year were of ten or fewer but there was a noticeable increase during late November and December with most counts being from 11 to 18 during this period and peaks of 30 recorded on the 8th and 32 on the 28th December.

At least four pairs bred.

Roost:

Higher counts involved 49 at roost on the 1st January, 36 on the 21st January and 43 on the 14th February. The construction of a children’s play area during the summer in the area where the Magpies collected to feed before going to roost maybe the reason why the roost was not established in ‘the

rough' during the second winter period. However, it is likely that there was a roost not far away as birds could be seen dispersing in the early morning.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

In recent years large numbers have collected in autumn and winter on Kingsmead in the late afternoon before going to roost. Often roosts in the park from mid-summer through the winter. Has bred in the park.

Apart from birds departing from roost in the early morning, most counts during the day were of one to three. Once again a small post-breeding flock, mainly comprised of juveniles, built up in June. This increased from four on the 7th to 18 on the 14th, 60 on the 23rd, 75 on the 25th and 74 on the 27th before gradually declining to one on the 7th July.

A leucistic Jackdaw was seen in the roosting flock on the 14th and 29th December.

Roost

Between 1000 and 1700 regularly roosted during January and up to 1000 in February. Up to 600 were regularly present at roost in September with 900 on the 30th and up to 1000 in October. November counts were mainly of 500-600 but 1200 roosted on the 9th. Low counts of 200-800 were recorded frequently in December but 1000 attended on the 13th and 2100 on the 29th.

ROOK *Corvus frugiligus*

An occasional visitor but can be seen passing over, more frequently to and from roosts in winter, but also when feeding young. In the late afternoons large numbers occasionally join with Jackdaws and Carrion Crows to feed on Kingsmead and attend the roost.

There were six records of one to three from April to June when birds occasionally passed over carrying food to colonies.

A few roosted in Kingsmead with the other corvids in January, numbering eight on the 4th, 35 on the 8th and 15 on the 10th. In December 11 were with other corvids on the 27th December and 60 were present on the 29th.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

A breeding resident in small numbers. Roosting since 1993 when an increase was noted in the numbers coming into the park to feed.

Ten to 15 regularly present throughout the year with young birds augmenting the population in June and July. Higher numbers were recorded in both winter periods when roosting birds tend to stay around in the area. Peak counts included 58 on the 15th January and 49 on the 4th February during the first winter period and 53 on the 14th October in the second winter period. About eight pairs bred. The roost on Kingsmead reached about 70 in February and 50 in December.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

A very rare visitor. One on the 30th October 2003 was the first record for the park.

One which flew NW over on the 3rd September (JB) was only the second record for the park.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

An uncommon but regular winter visitor. Bred in 2003 and 2004.

There were only four records of singles in January, two in February and four in March. The only April record was of a singing male on the 21st. There were no further records until a juvenile on the 26th August. Recorded on nine days in September, mainly singles but two on the 3rd and 23rd. Recorded regularly during the second winter period and, apart from four on the 12th October, all records were of one or two birds.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapilla*

A very rare winter visitor. Eight previous records. Last recorded in December 2004.

PENDULINE TIT *Remiz pendulinus*

A very rare visitor. One on the 18th-19th September 1991 was the first county record.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A common breeding resident.

Good numbers recorded throughout the year. This species survived the freezing first winter period very well.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
19	27	21	16	20	26	14	25	20	16	15	21

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

A fairly common breeding resident.

As with Blue Tit, this species survived the freezing first winter period very well. Both species probably benefitted from feeding stations and such items as fat balls which members of the public placed around the park.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
22	19	22	17	14	12	8	14	23	17	11	15

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

A rare visitor. Only nine previous records. Last recorded in September 2010.

An immature was trapped in ‘the rough’ on the 5th June. This was only the tenth record for the park illustrating how habitat-specific this species is during the breeding season. Its arrival at Priory CP was undoubtedly due to post-breeding dispersal.



Photo: Ed Green

WILLOW TIT *Poecile montanus*

Once an uncommon visitor, mainly during post-breeding dispersal. It is now thought to be almost extinct in the county. Last recorded in Priory C. P. in September 2004.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Only thirteen previous records. Last recorded in December 2010.

One on the 3rd, 21st and 24th February was seen to be ringed and, as such, was thought to be one of the birds trapped in 2010. One was trapped in 'the rough' on the 18th June.



BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus*

A very rare visitor. The only records were in October 1988, October 2004 and November 2010.

SKY LARK *Alauda arvensis*

Winter visitor and passage migrant. Once a summer resident, now only seen occasionally in summer. Bred in 1995.

Movement was noticeable on the 1st January when 32 passed over the park in small parties but in no particular direction. Five passed over on the 2nd January and one on the 6th. There were three records, all of singles, passing over in February and four records of singles and one of two in March. The last was of one over on the 26th March. The first of the autumn were 6 south and two others on the 23rd September. Small numbers passed mainly south after this with 3 on the 24th September, one on the 27th, four on the 28th, six on the 29th, seven on the 30th September, 13 on the 1st October, 12 on the 2nd and 24 on the 4th. Two to six were recorded on most of the remaining days in October and one to three on most days in November. There were only two records, both of singles, in December.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

A common summer visitor and passage migrant. Earliest: 2.3.2000. Latest: 09.10.01.

Average earliest date on spring passage 1980-1999: 26th March; 2000 -2009: 18th March.

Average latest date on autumn passage 1981 – 1999: 28th September. 2000- 2009: 24th September.

The first two arrived over the main lake on the 16th March and were followed by five on the 17th, three on the 18th and two on the 20th. After several days absence 36 were over the main lake on the 25th, 30 on the 26th and 150 on the 27th March. These were followed by 100 on the 28th March, 46 on the 29th, and 80 on the 30th and 31st. This species was recorded daily in April with highest counts being 43 on the 4th, 180 on the 5th, 50 on the 10th, 300 on the 13th and 250 on the 14th. Very few (0-3) were recorded during the period of hot weather from the 15th to 25th April. Duller weather brought down 60

on the 26th and 200 on the 28th April. Very few visited the park in May and June with none present on several days and only one to five on others. The highest counts during this period were 35 on the 3rd May and 25th June. The only count of more than ten in July was of 30 on the 7th and there was little further activity until the end of August when wet weather brought down maxima of 40 on the 26th and 50 on the 30th. High counts in September included 200 on the 7th and 80 on the 8th but, after 29 south on the 10th numbers were much smaller with 13 on the 14th, singles on the 16th and 18th and six on the 21st. There were no further records until one feeding over the Finger Lakes on the 4th October and one south on the 9th.

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

A common summer visitor and passage migrant. It used to breed regularly under the bridges around the park but not in recent years. Earliest: 13.2.2000. Latest: 26.10.91.

Average earliest on spring passage 1980-1999: 2nd April; 2000 – 2009: 28th March.

Average latest on autumn passage 1980-1999: 13th October; 2000 – 2009: 14th October.

The first was one which arrived with a large flock of Sand Martins on the 27th March. One, presumably the same, was recorded almost daily to the 14th April. After one on the 19th April four were present on the 26th and eight on the 28th. One to four were present regularly throughout May but there were only two records, both of singles, in June and only one record, of one, in July. It wasn't until the end of August that wet weather brought down 65 on the 26th and 80 on the 27th but there were only five further records in the month, all of one to five. Small numbers passed south on most days in September, usually eight or less but 20 on the 8th, 28 on the 16th and 18 on the 26th. In October 14 passed south on the 2nd and nine south on the 5th but then the species became scarce with two on the 12th, one on the 14th and the last on the 26th, equalling the latest date of 1991.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

A fairly common summer visitor. Mainly a passage migrant. Earliest: 24.3.03. Latest: 1.11.89.

Average earliest date on spring passage 1980-1999: 12th April; 2000 – 2009: 5th April.

Average latest date on autumn passage 1980-1999: 12th October; 2000- 2009: 10th October.

The first arrived with a large flock of Sand Martins on the 27th March, well in advance of the average arrival date for this species. One, presumably the same bird, was recorded on the 28th and 30th March and 5th April. This species was very scarce in May with one to four recorded on only seven days (average day-count: 0.42); only five records in June and two records in July. Birds were seen more regularly in August but it wasn't until the last ten days that any significant numbers were recorded. After 21 on the 23rd, 73 were present on the 24th, 85 on the 25th, 150 on the 28th, 100 on the 29th and 30th. In September 85 were counted on the 3rd, about 200 collected over the main lake on the 5th, 300 on the 6th, 150 on the 7th and 250 on the 8th. Other high counts involved 236 south on the 10th, 170 on the 12th, 200 on the 13th, 250 on the 14th 64 on the 16th, 80 on the 18th, 75 on the 20th, 100 on the 21st and 54 on the 22nd. Passage then came to an almost abrupt halt with 10 south on the 24th and three south on the 28th September but the last were two south on the 9th October.

CETTI'S WARBLER *Cettia cettia*

A very rare visitor but increasing in regularity. First recorded January to April 1997, the first county record.

Recorded again in October 1997, October 1998, 12th December 1999 to 8th February 2000. One recorded in

October 2001. Recorded again in the winter periods of 2003/04 and 2006/07 and in September 2010. First bred in the county in 2008.

One was recorded singing in the Finger Lakes on the 12th March. It was recorded again on the 15th and then daily, giving bravura performances, until the end of the month. It was recorded throughout April and May, mainly on ‘the spit’ but occasionally in ‘the rough’ and once in ‘the sheep pen’. It was trapped on the 3rd April by ‘the crescent’ and again on the 1st and 25th May in ‘the rough’. The last record was on the 5th June making it the longest stay (86 days) of this species in the park (previous longest: 59 days when one stayed from 12th December 1999 to 8th February 2000).

One was singing on the island in the middle of the main lake on the 3rd – 8th September.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

A breeding resident in small numbers.

Monthly maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	8	16	5	16	14	27	44	55	23	41	38

About six pairs nested in the park.

High post-breeding counts included 44 on the 24th August, 55 on the 10th September, 38 on the 20th and 50 on the 28th September. There were several counts of more than 20 during the last two months of the year which include maxima of 41 on the 20th November, 38 on the 9th December and 31 on the 11th.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

A very rare vagrant. One on the 17th October 1997 was the first county record.

RADDE’S WARBLER *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

A very rare vagrant. One on the 12th October 1991 was the first county record and the second inland record for Britain.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

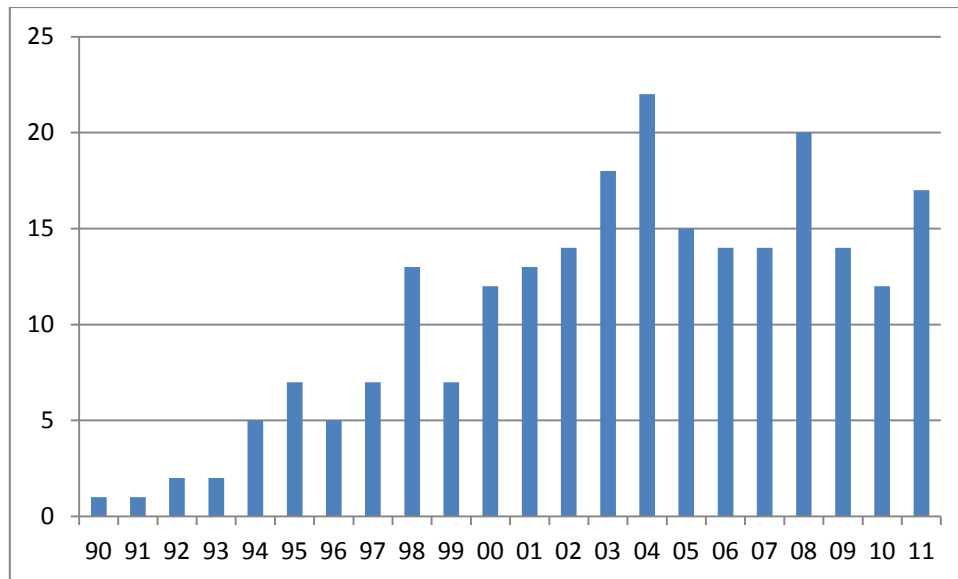
A rare passage migrant. Five previous records, four in spring and one in autumn. Last recorded in May 2008. Earliest: 23.4.83. Latest: 7.9.95.

COMMON CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Mainly a breeding summer visitor and passage migrant in increasing numbers. An occasional, and seemingly increasingly, winter visitor from Fennoscandia and Siberia. Some British birds regularly overwinter. Average earliest on spring passage 1985 – 1999: 20th March; 2000 – 2009: 12th March.

There were no records of birds overwintering in the first winter period. The first of the year was recorded on the 11th March increasing from one on the 14th to two on the 15th and three on the 16th. After six on the 19th seven were recorded on the 25th and 11, all ♂♂, on the 27th. A further increase took place on the 2nd April when 14 ♂♂ were singing and again on the 5th when 17 were present. After 16 on the 7th April numbers declined.

Seventeen males held territory (twelve last year) Average number of territorial males for 2001-2005 = 16.4; 2006-2010 = 14.8).



Chiffchaff – Territorial males 1990-2011

Small numbers, usually less than ten, were recorded in June and July but an increase was noted from the 22nd August when 17 were counted, followed by 21 on the 25th and 20 on the 26th. Numbers remained fairly high during the first half of September with peaks of 21 on the 9th, 22 on the 10th, 20 on the 13th and 21 on the 15th. There was a slight decline after this to 14 on the 21st but a more rapid decline to nine on the 22nd, seven on the 23rd and four on the 24th. Up to ten were recorded during the first week in October (9th on the 4th, 10 on the 7th) but numbers declined from seven on the 8th to three on the 12th. Singles were recorded on the 13th, 16th, and 23rd-25th but there were no further records until one behind the sailing club on the 18th November. One was along the path to Meadow Lane on the 26th November.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

A fairly common summer resident and passage migrant. The population has declined since the mid 1990s.

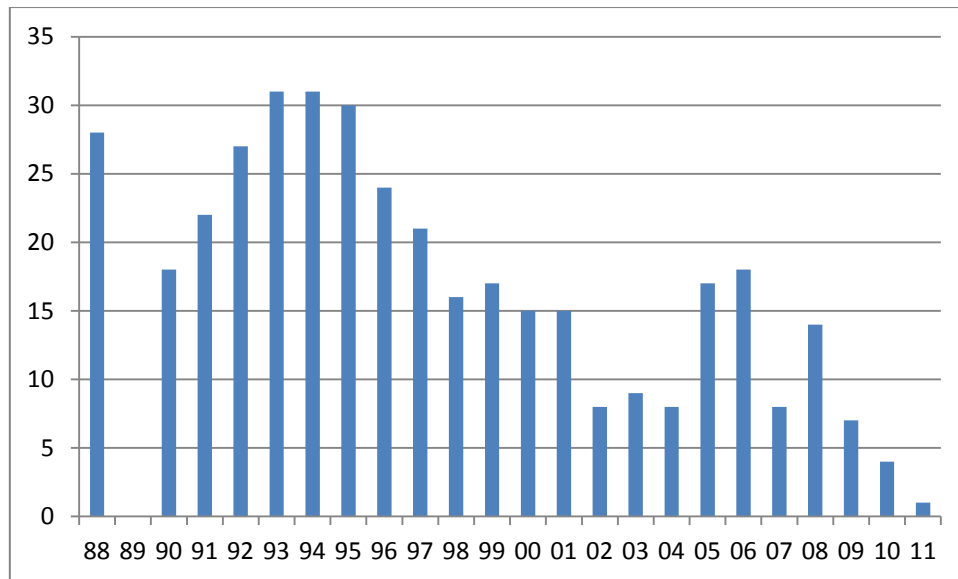
Earliest: 23.3.05. Latest: 9.10.88.

Average earliest 1985 – 1999: 2nd April; 2000 – 2009: 31st March.

Average latest 1985-1999: 20th September; 2000-2009: 20th September.

The first, one of the first few recorded in the country, arrived on the 25th March, six days in advance of the average arrival date for this species. It was still present to the 30th and four males were singing on the 31st March and five on the 1st April. There were further arrivals with nine on the 4th, 20 on the 7th and 17 on the 8th. Numbers rapidly declined after this with five or less (mainly 1-2) recorded daily during the second half of the month.

Only one male held territory in the park, a decline on the four of last year. (Average number of territorial males 2001-2005 = 11.4; average 2006-2010 = 10.5). After the 2nd June this species was not recorded until one on the 30th July and two on the 31st. These may have been migrants (150 arrived at Portland Bird Observatory on the 28th July). One to four were recorded regularly throughout August.



Willow Warbler - Territorial males 1988-2011

Singles were recorded on the 1st, 2nd, 8th and 10th September with an additional bird trapped on the latter date and two were seen on the following day. Two new birds were trapped on the 14th September and the last were one on the 20th and one trapped on the 25th September.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

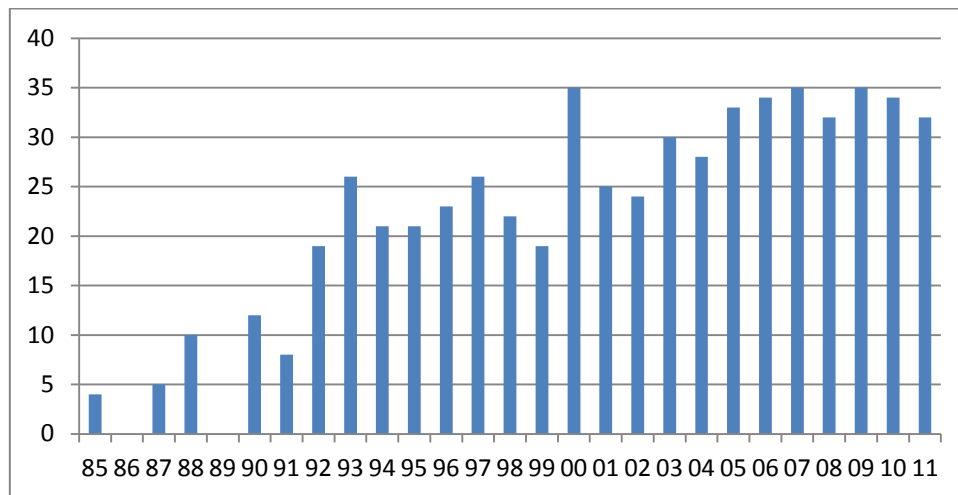
A fairly common summer resident and passage migrant. Fairly regular winter visitor. Winters in southern Europe and north Africa. A few from central Europe winter in England.

Average earliest 1985-1999: 3rd April; 2000 – 2009: 26th March.

There were no wintering records during the first winter period. A male on the 15th March was the first of the year followed by a male on the 17th. The first ♀ of the year was near a male on the 22nd March. Six, all males were present on the 26th and eight males on the 28th. A further arrival took place on the 2nd April when 21 males were counted. Thirty-one (30♂♂, 1♀) were present on the 7th April. Numbers remained at about the 25 mark until the 11th with 15 to 19 to the end of the month. Thirty-two males held territory (34 last year). Average for 2001-2005= 27.4 territorial males; average for 2006-2009 = 34.

A noticeable increase took place at the end of August and trapping in ‘the rough’ by Ed Green revealed some interesting information. On 27th August 31 Blackcaps were counted of which 26 were trapped and 70% of these were ♂♂. Most of these had moved out by the 29th August but on 31st August Ed trapped a further 30 Blackcaps (50:50 ♂/♀) of which only one had been trapped on the 29th. A further eleven were trapped on the 7th September. Of 36 trapped on the 10th 35 were new birds. A further 25 new birds were trapped on the 14th September and five others were seen in the park. Thus, over 130 Blackcaps passed through ‘the rough’ in 19 days, a quite astounding total! After eight on the 18th and 21st September only three were recorded on the 22nd and 23rd with four on the 24th. Eleven were trapped on the 25th September. Nearly all these birds carried either no fat or had low fat scores and most were juveniles; only three had high fat scores. It is interesting to speculate as to why this exchange of populations took place. It didn’t seem to be related to birds taking advantage of an abundant food supply as this would apply to all sets of birds. It is possible that quite large groups of Blackcaps gradually work their way southwards in Britain after breeding but without putting on significant amounts of fat in preparation for migration. However, many of the 13 trapped on the 5th

October did have fat deposits. Numbers declined after this with three on the 11th followed by singles on the 13th, 16th, 22nd and 23rd October. A ♂ was present in the Long Hedge on the 8th November.



Blackcap - Territorial males 1985-2011

There were no further records until the 28th November when 2♂♂ and 2♀♀ were seen behind the sailing club.

Ringling: A Blackcap ringed on 7th June 2004, hatched in 2003, was recaptured six years and 339 days later on the 22nd May 2011 making it the oldest Blackcap recorded in the park. It had been controlled previously in July 2006, May 2008, September 2008 and July 2009 (per Ed Green).

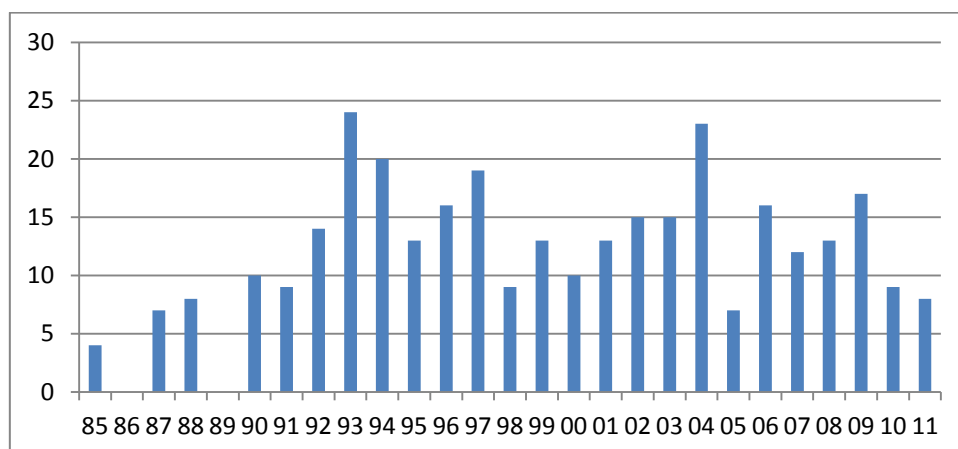
GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

A fairly common summer resident and passage migrant in suitable habitat. Winters in central and southern Africa. Earliest: 10.4.91. Latest: 7.10.85.

Average earliest 1985-1999: 23rd April; 2000 – 2009: 22nd April.

Average latest 1990-1999: 13th September; 2000-2009: 14th September.

The first of the year was in ‘the rough’ on the 19th April with one to four recorded daily to the end of the month. Spring passage was unremarkable with only six on the 8th May being the highest count.



Garden Warbler - Territorial males 1985-2011

Eight males occupied territory. Only one to five were seen regularly during August but September birds involved singles on the 1st and 2nd and one, the last, trapped on the 10th.

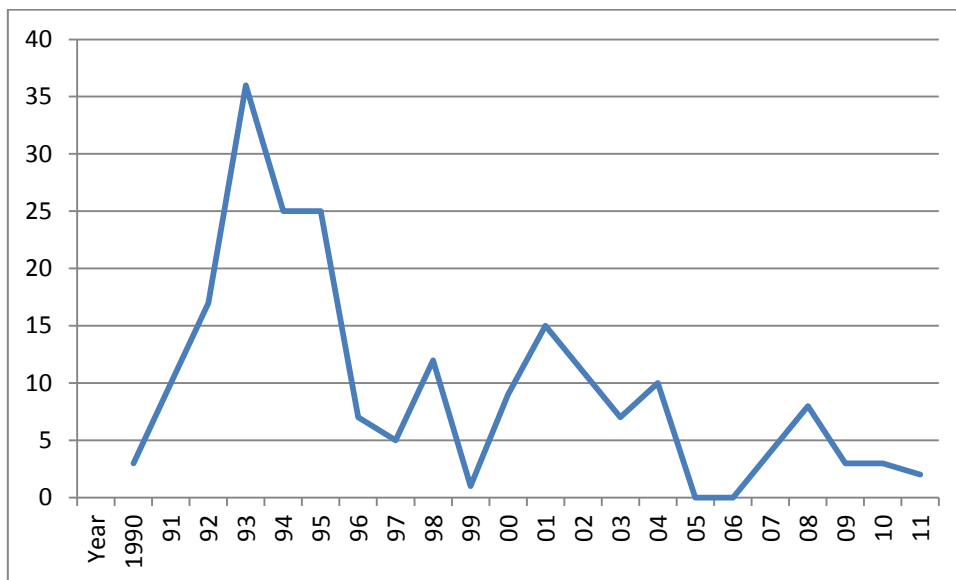
LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

A regular but uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant. Winters in the Ethiopian highlands. Has bred since 1985. Earliest: 9.4.97. Latest: 2.10.89.

Average earliest 1985-1999: 24th April; 2000 – 2009: 21st April.

Average latest 1985 – 1999: 21st September; 2000 – 2009: 14th September.

The first was one on the 23rd April followed by two on the 25th. There were no further records until one on the 1st May followed by three on the 3rd. No males occupied territory this year. Average territorial males for 2001-2005 = 4.4; average 2006-2009 = 3.8 territorial males. Numbers were very disappointing with only two records of singles in June, no July records, two records of singles in August with two trapped on the 26th and three records of singles in September on the 1st, 7th (trapped) and the last of the month on the 11th and 25th September. One trapped on the 5th October was the latest ever recorded in the park, the previous latest being one on the 2nd October 1989.



Number of Lesser Whitethroats trapped annually at Priory C.P.
1990-2011 (Ivel Ringing Group)

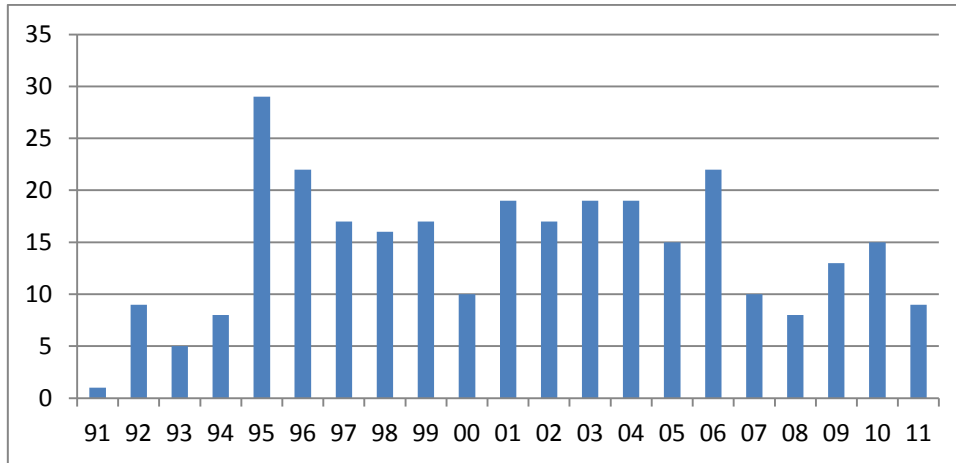
COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Once uncommon but now a fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor. Winters in Africa. Earliest: 9.4.95. Latest: 5.10.06.

Average earliest 1985-1999: 18th April; 2000 – 2009: 16th April.

Average latest 1985 – 1999: 21st September; 2000-2009: 29th September.

The first arrived near the gas pumping station on the 15th April followed by two near the labyrinth on the 17th. Six were present on the 19th April and four to five were seen regularly to the end of the month. They were particularly common between the sewage works bridge and the bypass this year. Nine males held territory (15 in 2010). The decline this year at Priory CP is probably related to habitat change as this species did well at other sites. The 2001-2005 average = 17.8; 2006-2009 average = 13.6. The highest counts were in July with peaks of 19 on the 10th and 21 on the 23rd as young birds augmented the adult population.



Common Whitethroat - Territorial males 1991 - 2011

Up to nine were recorded in August but this species was fairly scarce in September with one to three present until the last on the 11th.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Bred in 1993 and possibly bred in 2000 but otherwise an uncommon passage migrant. Earliest: 31.3.98. Latest: 3.8.83.

The first was reeling on the south side on the 18th April and again on Fenlake on the 25th.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Once common but now declining breeding summer resident and passage migrant. Winters in Africa. Earliest: 31.3.98. Latest: 16.10.94.

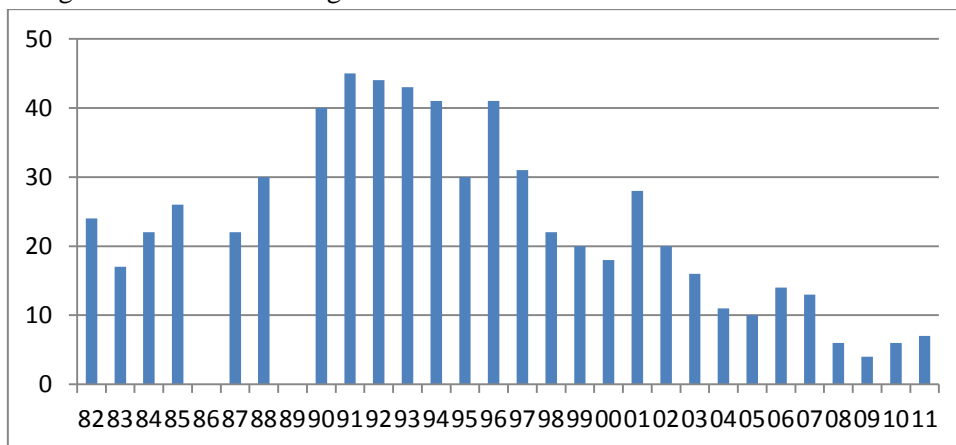
Average earliest 1985-1999: 9th April; 2000 – 2009: 9th April.

Average latest 1985-1999: 26th September. 2000-2009: 11th September.

The first were six which arrived on the 7th April and numbers remained at about this level until nine on the 16th.

Seven males held territory, six last year. Average for 2001-2005 = 17. Average for 2006-2010 = 8.6.

This species now has a tenuous hold in the park with most of the breeding birds holding territory along the Navigation Channel or along the river.



Sedge Warbler - Territorial males 1991 - 2011

One to six were recorded in June but only one to three in July. There were only three records in August, singles on the 9th and 19th and two on the 29th. The last was one on the 2nd September.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceous*

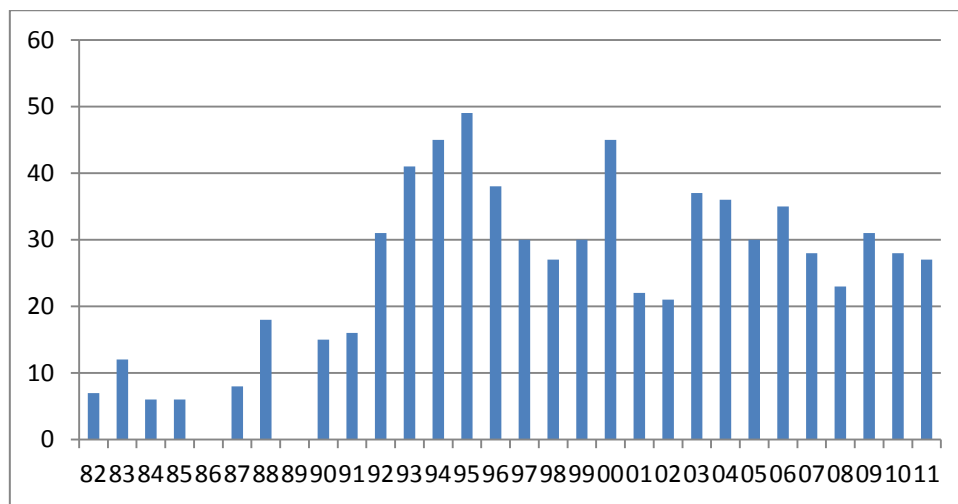
A common breeding summer resident and passage migrant. Winters in tropical Africa. Earliest: 14.4.93. Latest: 13.10.89.

Average earliest 1985-1999: 24th April; 2000 – 2009: 21st April.

Average latest 1985-1999: 8th October. 2000-2009: 7th October.

The first arrived on the 8th April, six days before the previous earliest record. This bird was recorded daily until the 14th when two were present. These increased to seven on the 17th.

Twenty-seven males held territory, twenty-eight last year. Average for 2001-2005 = 29.2; average 2006-2010 = 29.).



Reed Warbler – Territorial males 1982-2011

Post-breeding counts were usually between 20 – 31 to mid-August, but declining during the second half of the month. Fourteen on the 1st September was the only count in that month above ten with, in the second half of the month, numbers declining from six on the 18th to two on the 29th. The last was recorded on the 1st October.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

A rare visitor usually occurring only in irruption years. There were five records in 1996 and five in 2005.

Two were present near the Visitor Centre on the 18th January (RB).

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

A rare visitor. Seven previous records. Last recorded in August 2002.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

An uncommon breeding resident.

A difficult species to find early in the year with only two records of singles in January, three records of singles and one of two in February. There were seven records in March, all singles apart for two on

the 10th. At least one, and possibly two, pairs bred. An adult with one young were seen on the 27th June. Recorded more regularly from July onwards having been recorded on 22 days from January-June and on 73 days from July-December. Two adults and two young were seen on the 4th July.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

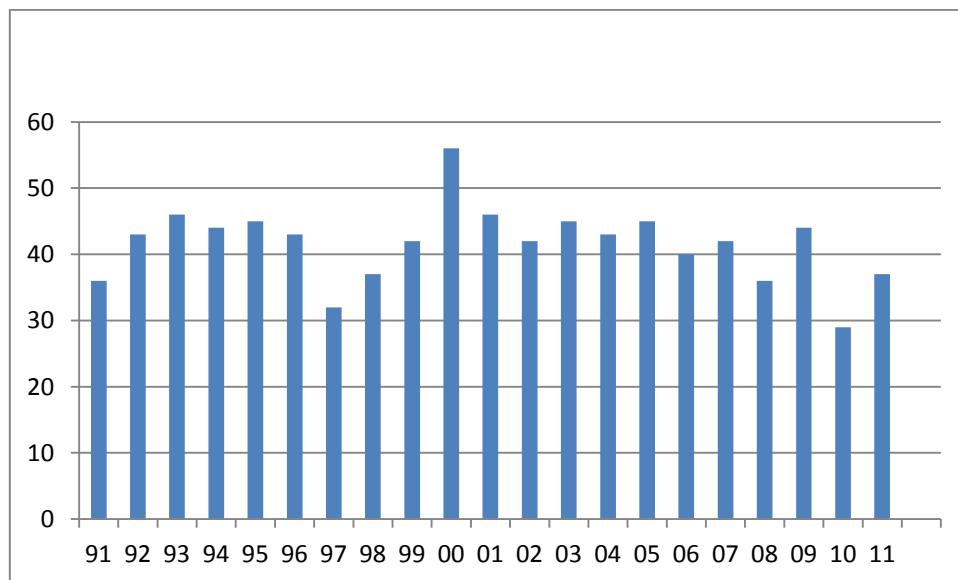
A common breeding resident.

Scarce during January with five being the maximum count. The situation remained the same throughout much of February but more were singing towards the end of the month with ten on the 25th and 16 on the 26th.

Maximum Day Counts

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	16	17	26	16	16	18	15	17	14	12	10

Thirty seven males held territory (2001-2005 average 44.2; 2006-2009 average 38.2)



Wren – Territorial Males 1991-2011

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

A resident in very small numbers. Also a winter visitor from east and northern Europe in much smaller numbers in recent years.

A flock of 140 was recorded on the 8th January and one of 150 on the 28th February but, apart from these, this species was scarce, not being recorded on 43 of the 59 days of the first two months of the year.

*Monthly Maxima (second row) and Daily Average (bottom row)
not including passage birds or roosts*

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
140	150	40	15	21	13	4	3	102	31	15	15
5.7	5.75	1.8	0.87	7.8	2.2	0.38	0.16	4.97	3.2	0.8	1.1

Passage was recorded from mid October with 91 west on the 14th, 36 west on the 23rd, 38 southwest on the 25th October, 78 southwest on the 6th November and 51 southwest on the 12th.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

A rare passage migrant. Eight previous records. Last recorded in September 1994. Earliest: 15.4.84. Latest: 29.9.94.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

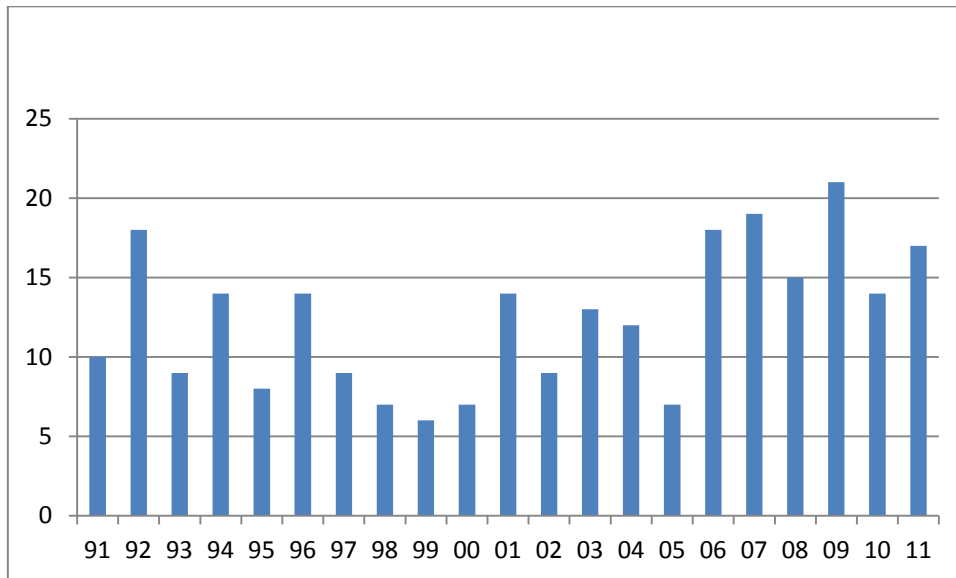
A common breeding resident. Winter visitor and passage migrant.

The highest January counts were of 36 on the 22nd and 25 on the 27th. The first song was heard on the 26th February, (24th February in 2009 and 2010) well after many observers hear them singing in towns where artificial lighting causes them to sing earlier.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
36	20	32	24	20	16	22	13	16	31	36	40

Seventeen males occupied territories, 14 last year. Average 2001-2005 = 11; 2006-2010 average = 17.4)



Blackbird - Territorial males 1991-2011

An arrival took place on the 3rd October when 31 were counted. This took place at the same time as an arrival of Song Thrushes. The same number was recorded on the 8th October but counts were smaller after this. Thirty-six on the 8th November again indicated passage with 19 of these being together behind the sailing club. Forty on the 9th December was the highest count of the year.

Ring Recovery:

Blackbird

Ringed in 'the rough' on the 9th December 2009. Male, hatched in the year it was ringed. Found dead (not fresh) at Södderudden, Vaasa, **Finland** on the 23rd September 2011. Duration: 653 days. Distance: 1775 km. Direction 46° northeast.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

A regular winter visitor and passage migrant, sometimes in large numbers. Often scarce in the first winter period.

Up to 30 were recorded in the first week of January but they were scarce after this. Two on the 15th February was the only record in that month. A party of 21 which flew WNW on the 3rd March was the last of the first winter period. The first of the autumn was a total of 227 which passed WSW on the 13th October with 89 WSW on the following day. Small numbers passed over until the end of the month but few were recorded in November apart from 108 S on the 13th, 145 south on the 17th and 40 SW on the 23rd November. Very few were recorded until mid-December when a second movement took place. This involved 235 S on the 17th and 145 on the SW as well as several smaller parties of 30-40.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelus*

A declining breeding resident but showing signs of recovery since 2000. Passage migrant. Often scarce in winter.

Although January and February counts were slightly lower than in previous years the first song was heard on the 6th January and regularly from the 17th January onwards (19th in 2009, 22nd in 2010).

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	7	10	9	7	9	8	3	3	13	4	6

Seventeen males occupied territories, 22 last year. 2001-2005 average 10.4; 2006-2010 average 18.2.

Numbers were very low during the post-breeding period, particularly in August and September when no more than three were seen on any day. 'High flying' was recorded on the 30th September and 2nd October and this was followed by an arrival on the 3rd October when 13 were counted of which two were 'grey' birds, suggesting a continental origin. Six on the 8th and five on the 25th October were above average counts for the autumn. The first song was heard on the 22nd November (19th Nov. last year) and was a regular feature of December from the 2nd to the 31st.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

A common passage migrant. Winter visitor in small numbers. Earliest: 25.9.82. Latest: 11.5.84.

Recorded regularly in small numbers, (one to eleven), during the first winter period with 25 on the 9th February being the highest count. Up to eleven were recorded in March, the last being one on the 31st March. The first of the autumn were 330 (largest parties of 66, 51, 90, 100 and 11) which passed very low west over the park on the 9th October. This was not entirely unexpected as large numbers had arrived in Holland from Norway on the previous couple of days and obviously flown west across the North Sea and continued over Bedfordshire. Strong south-westerlies on the 10th put paid to any further significant arrival but 28 grounded migrants were still around as were 35 on the 11th October. Passage continued on the 12th with 22 west and continued on the following days with highest counts involving 100 west on the 13th, 136 WSW on the 14th and 73 southwest on the 24th. Small local groups of 10-37 were around in November and slightly smaller numbers were present in December.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

An infrequent visitor. Seen more regularly in recent years.

Two flew over on the 1st and 10th January and one on the 5th. Three flew over on the 2nd February, one on the following day and two on the 14th and 26th. There were no further records until four over on the 20th August followed by two on the 15th September and singles on the 19th, 25th and 29th September. In October two on the 15th was the only record of the month as was one on the 14th November and one, singing, on the 18th December.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

An uncommon summer visitor in decreasing numbers. Now mainly in autumn.

Earliest in spring: 26.04.91. Latest: 26.09.93.

There were no spring records. The first records involved post-breeding dispersal with an immature on the 21st July followed by two together on the 25th and one on the 31st July. One arrived in ‘the rough’ on the 10th September and it, or another, was present there on the 14th.

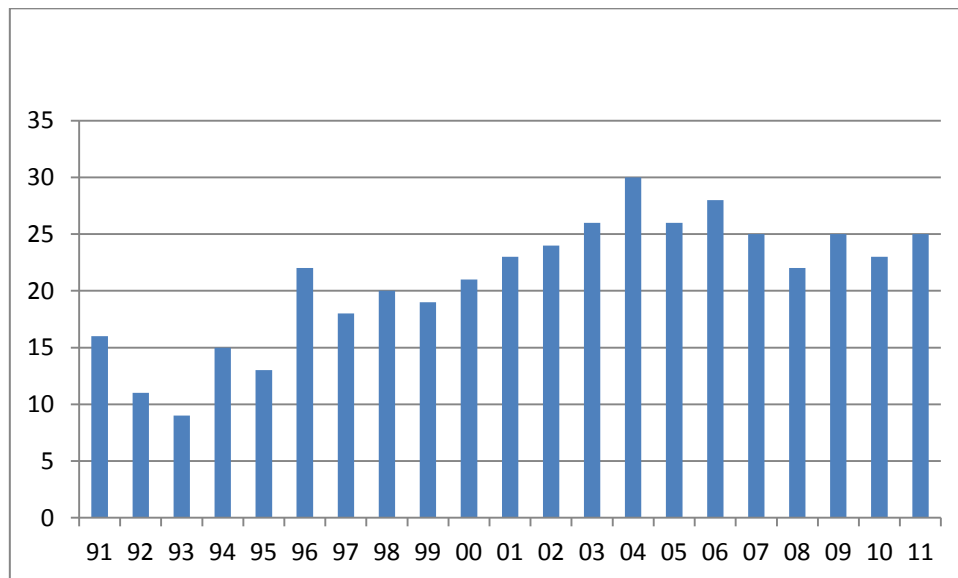
ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

A common breeding resident. An increase often noted in autumn may be due to passage.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	15	17	16	10	11	12	18	23	25	12	13

Twenty-five males occupied territories, 23 last year. Average 2001-2005: 26.2; average 2006-2009 24.6).



Robin - Territorial males 1991-2011

Up to 23 were recorded (27th) in the second half of September and 25 on the 2nd October and may have indicated passage.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

A rare resident and passage migrant. Only three records before 1993. Bred 1993 to 1996, 2000, 2002 and 2003.

One was singing on Fenlake on the 22nd April (R. Bowler) and one was singing by the Meadow Lane bridge on the 29th April.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochurus*

A rare passage migrant. Although some birds winter in SW Britain, most winter in the Mediterranean region. Seven previous records. Last recorded in April 1992.

COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A scarce passage migrant. Twenty-one previous records. Last recorded in April 2006. Earliest: 08.4.06. Latest: 19.9.02.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon but fairly regular passage migrant. Earliest: 17.4.83. Latest: 15.10.88. Average earliest date on spring passage: 2nd May.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquatus*

An uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Recorded more regularly during the winter in recent years, particularly in neighbouring fields. Earliest: 28.9.94. Latest: 30.4.89.

A female was recorded on Fenlake on the 29th January and 6th – 26th February. A ♀ was on Fenlake on the 12th – 13th and 25th November, 6th, 22nd and 24th December. This bird may have been present from at least the 12th November to the year end.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

An uncommon passage migrant in decreasing numbers. Earliest: 8.3.89. Latest: 11.10.82. Average earliest date on spring passage 1981 – 1999: 30th March.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

A scarce passage migrant. Eleven previous records, eight in spring, three in autumn. Earliest: 15.4.93. Latest: 21.9.79 and 83. Last recorded in September 2004.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

A fairly common breeding resident in suitable habitats. One was collecting nest material on the 2nd April.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	12	13	8	7	7	7	9	15	20	10	9

Ten males occupied territories, (2001-2005 average 9; 2006-2009 average 10.6). A total of 20 on the 1st October may have indicated passage.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

A breeding resident and visitor in small numbers. Can be scarce in winter.

This species is very local in the park, mainly being recorded around the Visitor Centre where up to 24 were recorded in January. One or two were occasionally recorded near the sailing club.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

A very rare visitor. Last recorded in January 1995.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

A summer visitor and passage migrant in small numbers. Has bred. Recent decline. Earliest: 28.3.89. Latest: 1.10.83. Average earliest date on spring passage: 6th April. Not recorded for the first time in 2005.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Now more or less a resident. Has bred either in the park or nearby since 1999.

Very scarce in the first winter period with one record of a single in January and four records, all of singles in February. A young bird was present with an adult at the end of June after which numbers increased slightly in July with a maximum of four. Up to seven were on the canoe slalom course in August and up to four in September but fewer than usual were present from October to the end of the year.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Resident and passage migrant. Large numbers are sometimes seen going over to roost.

One to two were recorded fairly regularly to the end of May and up to five young were in the park in June. This species was relatively scarce from July to the end of September with only one to two recorded occasionally. Up to five were reported in October and up to six in November. Evening movements to roost involved 17 SW on the 5th December and 28 SW on the 29th.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

A very rare passage migrant. Four records, two in May 1996, one in September 2002 and one in August 2006.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

A fairly common migrant. Winter visitor in varying numbers.

There were few spring records. One flew over on the 2nd April. Three south on the 10th September were the first of the autumn. Light southward passage continued to mid-October with peaks of 10 on the 23rd, 22 on the 24th September and nine on the 30th. In October 12 passed south on the 2nd but most counts were of five or less. Up to four passed over in mid-November.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

A rare passage migrant. Five previous records. Last recorded in March 1983.

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

A rare passage migrant. Three previous records. Last recorded in April 2000.

One was on Fenlake on the 9th February (AP). Two were on Fenlake on the 20th December (DK).

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

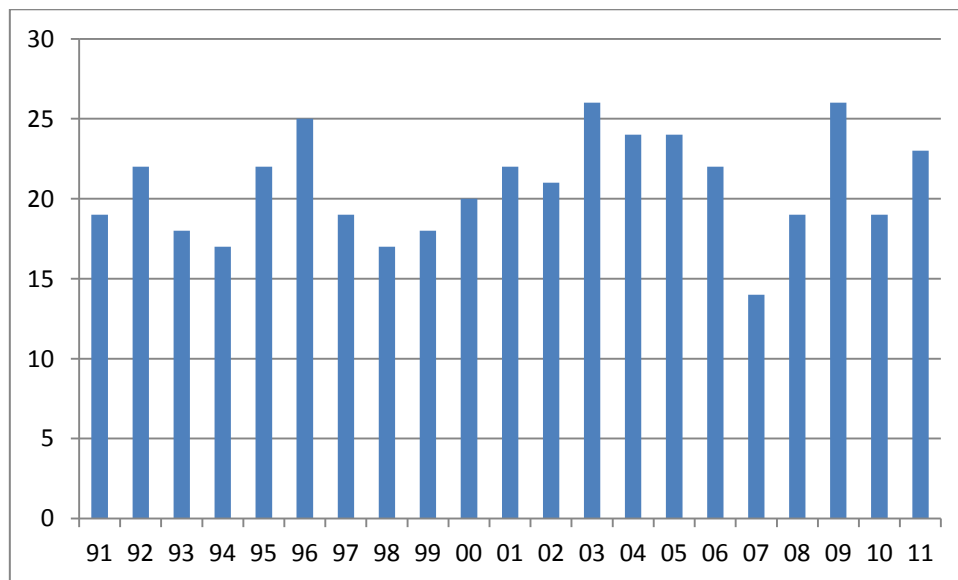
Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Numbers varied greatly in January with only two seen on some days and an average daily count of only 3.8, but 11 present on the 25th. The species was much more noticeable in February with an average count of 13.6 and the highest counts being 22 on the 2nd and 25th.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	22	21	18	26	16	11	10	20	18	10	16

Twenty-three males held territory, 19 last year. Average territorial males 2001-2005 = 23.4; average 2006-2009 = 20. Several were noted passing over in late September (e.g. 15 south on the 26th) but passage was not very noticeable this year.



Chaffinch - Territorial males 1991-2011

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

An irregular and uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

One was in the Finger Lakes on the 23rd October.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Very scarce during the first winter period with, apart from roost counts, daily averages of only 1.2 in January and 1.9 in February.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
5	8	12	5	5	5	8	9	13	18	15	25

26 came in to roost on the 17th January and 12 on the following day. About five pairs bred. Annual numbers have continued to be low and we no longer get the large roosts which were a feature several years ago.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

Small flocks visited the park in January and February with 35 on the 4th and 26th January and 53 on the 5th February being the highest counts during this period. About five pairs bred.

Monthly Maxima.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
35	53	15	9	7	6	14	8	57	53	34	47

Post-breeding counts included 57 on the 9th September, 53 on the 5th October and 49 on the 11th. Thirty-four on the 18th November and 47 on the 10th December were other notable counts.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

An irregular winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers.

One to 15 regularly present during January and February with the highest counts being 28 on the 21st January, 35+ on the 22nd, 24 on the 26th January, 30 on the 12th February, 50 on the 22nd and 50 on the 26th. Forty-five were counted on the 27th February and 35 on the 28th. In March 40 were seen on the 1st, 37 on the 3rd and 21 on the 6th but numbers after this were less than ten until the last on the 21st. Singing was recorded on several days from the 27th January to mid-March. Three south-east on the 10th September were the first of the autumn after which one or two were noted to the end of the month. Even in October, although seen regularly, the highest counts were of only six and seven.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

An uncommon visitor and passage migrant. More common in winter. Irregular breeder.

Not recorded again this year.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

An uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant in varying numbers. Recorded less frequently in recent years. Last bred in 1991.

The first of the autumn was one south on the 29th September with the next not until two plus five southwest on the 14th October. Four flew over on the 26th October and two on the 30th. One flew over on the 13th November and nine were seen on the 15th. There were only five other records, all of singles, to the end of the year.

COMMON (MEALY) REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

A rare winter visitor. The only records involve one in March 1981 and three in January 1986.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Three previous records, October and November 1997 and April 2003.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

A breeding resident in small numbers.

Regularly recorded in small numbers throughout the year. About four pairs bred. Eleven on the 30th December was the highest count of the year.

Monthly Maxima

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	4	5	6	3	2	2	3	4	9	9	11

Average monthly maxima 2005-2007

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9.7	13	10	9	3.3	4	6	6	6	8.3	9.7	12

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A very rare winter visitor. One recorded on the 8th November 1980 and one (not submitted to the rarities committee by the observer) on the 15th November 1996.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

An uncommon visitor.

Not recorded this year.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

A breeding resident and winter visitor.

Although recorded almost daily until the first half of July numbers were mainly from one to four with six and seven being recorded on only a single day each. There were no records in August and two of singles in both September and October.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

An infrequent daytime visitor but may roost in fairly large numbers in some years.

Roost:

There were only four records of roosting birds during the first winter period: 21 on the 21st January, 8 on the 28th and 20 on the 31st January. One at roost on the 3rd February was the last. In the second winter period nine exited roost on the 29th October as did 3 on the 5th November. Five came in to roost on the 11th November, six on the 12th and 4 four on the 13th.

EXOTICA:

Black Swan

A pair was on the main lake on the 23rd and 24th February and again briefly on the 4th March.

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