



## WORK ON THE RESERVE

### Work Party Sunday 3rd September

*Ian Watson*

The first of the new season We welcomed two new workers- Eileen Patch and Helen Harbrow.

We began the job of clearing a path through undergrowth to make way for cattle fencing in the meadows between the lake and the River Colne

*Also in attendance were Nigel Daley, Evelyn Fox, Andy Schofield, Ian Watson and Jack Westbrook.*

### Work Party Sunday 1st October

*Emma Brading*

Rain threatened, but never came, but the volunteers did. The largest work party for some time. Luckily there was plenty of work for all in more or less the same part of the reserve by Stocker's House. I say luckily because it is sometimes difficult to find work for everyone in the same area.



We cleared the alder saplings away from the larger pond by the wooden broadwalk. Which were turning the pond into woodland; we cleared a path behind the hedge at the entrance to the reserve,

so that we could layer the hedge when needed; we then removed undergrowth in the small copse we planted years ago by the lockkeeper's cottage as the undergrowth was stifling some of the smaller trees.

Our usual high standard of catering was maintained with Jammy Dodgers, Hobnobs and delicious chocolate gingernuts. Plus, tea and coffee.

*Our thanks to Nigel Daley, Ken Davies (good to see you again), Emma Brading, Miles Dodia, Helen Harbrow, Paul Knutson, Tim Lawrence, Sheila and Tony Lee, David Neal, Eileen Patch, Ian Watson, Jack Westbrook, Dominic Wilson. And a special welcome to newcomers, Miles, Tim, David and Dominic.*

## EVENTS ON THE RESERVE

### Spring Chorus & Warbler Walk 7th May

*Dick Beeden*

Three of us this year gathered on the causeway at half past eight for a walk round the lake. The weather was cold and gloomy, far from ideal for our task and about as different from last year as you can get. The recent cool weather had again slowed leaf growth making seeing the birds a bit easier than in some years. We saw most of the expected birds. There were **swallows, house martins and swifts** in quite good numbers over



Stocker's and Bury Lakes No woodpeckers, reed bunting or house sparrows though.

Several **Cetti's warbler** called from various points round the lake and seen on two occasions. Warblers were however in short supply but we did manage **reed** from the causeway, **chiff-chaff** and **sedge** along the river, **whitethroat** along the Fort Drew meadow, **blackcap** near Stocker's House and possibly **garden** at various points around the lake. Otherwise **blackbirds, wrens, chaffinches, robins, greenfinch and song thrushes** serenaded us as we passed along.

We saw just two **common terns** patrolling between Stocker's and Bury lakes but the tern rafts seem to have been taken over completely by **black headed gulls**. No raptors again this year, which was a little surprising, as red kite are now quite frequently seen over the lake. There were still numerous nests in the heronry with both **young heron and young egrets** in them. Good view of three young herons from the riverside path near the signpost. Not many **cormorants** this year. There were a few **pochards** plus just one **red headed pochard**. Also **tufted ducks, coots and a few moorhens**. Otherwise **great, long-tailed and blue tits** flitted about. Including the other common species like **swan, woodpigeon, crow, magpie** and so on, we spotted and or heard about 44 species altogether, the same as last year, (see list below). Not a bad morning.

*blackbird  
blackcap  
blue tit  
canada goose  
chaffinch  
Cetti's warbler  
chiffchaff(heard)  
common tern  
common coot  
common magpie  
common starling  
common whitethroat  
carrion crow  
dunnock  
great cormorant  
great crested grebe  
great tit  
greenfinch  
grey heron  
greylag goose  
house martin  
goldfinch*

*little egret  
long tailed tit  
mallard  
moorhen  
mute swan  
pochard  
red crested pochard  
reed warbler  
rose-ringed parakeet(heard)  
robin  
sedge warbler  
song thrush  
swift  
swallow  
tufted duck  
woodpigeon  
wren  
Egyptian Goose  
black-headed gull  
lesser black-back gull  
herring gull  
garden warbler (heard?)*

### Wild Flower Walk Sunday 25th June

*Sue Sanderson*

Following a warm, sunny week Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> was a dry, perfect for the walk to look at the wild flowers around the reserve. A group of around 12 met on the causeway. I talked briefly about the type of plants to expect to see growing on unimproved, neutral soil, and that *the smaller the plant, the more quickly it is likely to disappear.*



### **Species diversity is inversely proportionate to infertility of the soil.**

This year I had compiled a check-list of many of the plants we could expect to see as we walked around the reserve. Each plant could be ticked off by each participant as it was spotted.

On the causeway we saw: **Dittander**, (an in-comer, usually preferring habitats with brackish water) **Common Speedwell**, **Creeping Cinquefoil**, **Mugwort** (not yet flowering) **Hedgerow Crane's Bill**, **Creeping Buttercups**, **Greater and Ribwort Plantain**, **White clover**, **Smooth Sow-thistle**, **Perforated St. John's-wort**, **Daisies** and **Comfrey**.

*Dense colonies of Comfrey often cover large stretches of river banks and lake sides, adding brightness and colour to the landscape. The stout plant grows up to 4' high, displaying a thick foliage composed of large, wavy-edged, lance-shaped leaves, and tough, bristly stem which is exceedingly resilient. Comfrey has bell-shaped flowers which begin to bloom in mid-May and last until early July. Their colour varies greatly, being either reddish-purple, dull violet, creamy-yellow, dirty white or a mixture of all four. Petals form a long tube which ensures that small bees pollinate the plant as they crawl up the corolla in search of nectarines located at the base. However, the flower receives the attention of larger bumble-bees which, restricted by their size, are unable to crawl up the thin petal tube, and so cut short the operation by biting a hole near the stem to reach the plant's hidden nectar supply via a quicker route, directly through the sepal.*

*The leaves were once used as a cure for external wounds. A poultice prepared from the prominently veined leaves was anciently credited with the power to mend bones, it being the medieval herbalists' favourite bone-setter. Thus, the alleged cure gave rise to the plant's common country name: 'knit-bone'.*

There were also plenty of Creeping Thistles and Nettles, which can quickly overwhelm the smaller species. The meadow near the Heronry was lush with grasses: **Yorkshire Fog**, **Cock's Foot** and **False Oat grass**. Here, amongst the grasses and **Sedges**, we saw **Meadow Crane's-bill**, the yellow flowers of **Meadow vetchling**, **Fleabane**, **Creeping cinquefoil** **Silver weed**, more **clover** and **buttercups**; **Hemp Agrimony**, **Nipplewort**, **Herb Robert**, **Ox-eyed Daisies**, **Hedge Bedstraw**, **Lesser Stitchwort**, various **Docks**, **Cleavers**, **Red Bartsia**, **Ragwort** as well as **Greater Willowherb**.

Alongside the river we found **Hemp Agrimony**, **Hedge Woundwort**, **Wood Avens**, **Hedgerow Crane's-bill**, **Mugwort**, **Herb-Robert**, more **Nipplewort** and several clumps of **Water Figwort**. Here also were **Tufted Vetch**, **Hedge Woundwort**, **Hedgerow Crane's-bill**, **Hemlock**, **Water-dropwort** **Pendulous Sedge**, **Red Campion** as well as more **Comfrey**,

Other plants seen on the walk were: **Knapweed**, **Broadleaved Helleborine**, (not yet in bloom) **Yellow Flags** and **Water Lilies**, **Water Forget-me-not**, **Spear Thistle**, **Dove's Foot Crane's-bill**, **Common Ragwort**, **Self-heal**, **Goat's Beard**, **Goat's Rue**, (despised by many for its invasive habit) **Hogweed**, **Hemlock Water-dropwort**, **Tufted Vetch**, **Rough Chervil**, **Wild Angelica**, **Butter Bur**, **Black Briony**, **Germander Speedwell**, **Convolvulus**, **Black Medick**, **Bird's -Foot-trefoil**, **Agrimony**, **Horse-tail**, **Perennial** and **Smooth Sow-thistle**, **Burdock**, **Brambles**, **Enchanter's Nightshade**, **Upright Hedge Parsley**, **Ox-eyed Daisy**, **Hogweed** and **Ground Ivy**.

The group managed to tick-off all the plants on their check-lists, as well as adding others by the end of the walk.

These lists enabled me to focus upon certain plants to explain to the group how to differentiate between certain varieties within a species. E.g. **Common/Germander Speedwell** or **Creeping /Meadow/Bulbous Buttercup**.

It was a long session, but I hope that everyone who took the time to come enjoyed their walk and learned some hints about identifying plants.

### **Butterfly & Dragonfly Walk August 13th**

*Jane Archer*

A beautiful sunny day attracted 10 attendees for the 2017 Dragonfly and Butterfly walk. We were very fortunate to have Damien Weller the Three Rivers District Council Park



ranger with us carrying his sweep net and bug examination pots. This gave us the opportunity to see some dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies close up. As usual all attendees were on the lookout for flying animals as well as some non-flying ones.

Before the walk started we took the opportunity to look at some dragonfly exuviae (shed nymph skins) to appreciate the differing shapes and sizes and Damien had already netted male common and blue tailed damselflies. A brown hawk was also seen patrolling the area. Setting off from the causeway we walked along the river Colne, around the lake and ended in the meadow next to Stocker's House taking a total of 3 hours. We saw 3 different species of **dragonfly**: male and female **common darter**, **brown hawkers** and a probable **southern hawk** in flight - one poor dragonfly was seen struggling in the river- we hope it managed to reach a branch from an overhanging tree and haul itself out.

Our 4 **damselflies** included: male and female **common blue**, **male and female blue tailed**, **a male banded demoiselle** normally seen in good numbers this one was on the far side of the river, **red eyed damselflies** on their favourite lily pads plus one **common blue damselfly** that had rather odd black markings on it.

We saw 8 species of **butterfly**: **green veined** - this caused some confusion as it had wing spots but Damien could also see darker triangle patterns on the wing. On further research, the second brood of green veined does have a spot on the wings. Several **small white**, **1 small tortoiseshell**, **1 red admiral**,

**1 comma**, **2 speckled wood**, **1 meadow brown** and **a brimstone**.

Other sightings included a kingfisher on the river which flew past several times, a dead common **shrew**, a **nest of hornets**, a green caterpillar hitching a ride on someone's T-shirt, 2 very small eggs on the underside of a leaf that took on a glittering effect in the sunlight, a rather large **terrapin** and only one damselfly exuvia on a reed. The shrew will be entered onto the Herts Natural History Society Mammal Atlas records.

### **Recruitment Drive for New Members 2017**

*Nigel Daley*

We have had 2 successful recruitment day campaigns in 2017, Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May and Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September. Many thanks to Ian, Paul, Dick, Evelyn, Sheila and Tony for giving up part of their Sunday on one or both of these

days to not just help increase our membership but also raise the profile of what we do. Over the two Sundays, we recruited just short of 50 new FoSL members and of course, a big welcome to all, if this is your first copy of our newsletter. We will be continuing to recruit during the Sunday work party sessions over the coming year.

## OTHER FoSL NEWS

### Volunteer Organiser - Ian Watson

Emma Brading has taken over the as our volunteer organiser from Sarah Coombs who has been doing the job for the past 15 years or so. Sarah is one of the original FoSL members and has done much for the reserve particularly in the early years of FoSL. We are very grateful for what she has done and thank her most sincerely. I'm glad to say she continues as a member.

Emma is from a well-known Rickmansworth family. Her grandmother Marye Brading, was an early FoSL member. Emma has considerable organisational skills and is already working on getting our lists of volunteers up to date with full details and computerised. So, if you hear from her, please give her the information she needs as quickly as possible. She is also taking an initiative with bats on the reserve.

### Bats

On Stocker's Farm, next to our lake, there are three WW2 pill boxes built in 1939-40 to deal with German parachutists landing in the Colne Valley. They would make near perfect bat roosts, and bats do well at Stocker's Lake. So, Emma Brading is taking the first steps in converting a pill box to a bat roost. That means ensuring that the pill box maintains an even temperature throughout the year and is totally protected from ignorant human interference. That means a lot of work and some expense. When, and if, bats get established, then the pill box can only be entered by a licenced person. We're hoping Herts and Middx Wild Life Trust Bat Group will help at this stage.

### A Big Thank You from the Committee to all Our FoSL Volunteers - Nigel Daley

committee organised a BBQ for all the volunteers that have put in a lot of time and effort over the previous year on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (yes that was the day that rained pretty much all day). Unfortunately, due to the bad weather conditions the BBQ turned into a sit-down Lasagne meal. Despite the poor weather, a big thank you to all our volunteers for all the work and efforts and my wife for cooking the delicious meal.

### The Cattle Meadows Project - Nigel Daley

Ian Watson has been busy getting quotes for new fencing to be erected on the meadows at Stockers, which will allow us to put cattle on this grassland allowing the local fauna and flora to really develop between Stocker's and the River Colne on the north-eastern edge of the lake. Ian has been meeting with Affinity Water and Ewa Prokop (who has been appointed by Groundwork to develop a Landscape Partnership scheme bid) in order to receive part funding for this project. It is looking very hopeful that we can work on this joint project in the near future.

### Camera Project - Dick Beeden

You may recall I mentioned at the AGM that we are hoping to get a live camera feed from the herony for next season's nesting. I am able to report that this project is progressing. We have a suitable supplier and installer; a feasibility study has been done and we are now waiting for estimates and to finish off the details. So hopefully next season we will have a live video stream to our web site and live pictures on a screen in the Cafe in the Park.

### Subscriptions

Please remember it is not too late to pay this year's subscription by sending your cheque for £5 per person plus any donation to Dick Beeden 1 Finch Lane, Bushey, Hertfordshire WD23. We will be facing heavy demands for money in the near future as major work comes to fruition.

## FUTURE EVENTS

### AGM 2018 – diary date

The 2018 AGM will be held on the evening of Wednesday 11th April at the Baptist Church Hall, Field Way, Mill End. We will announce the speaker and title of the talk nearer the time.

### WILDFOWL WALK



Sunday January 14th 2018

Guided walk to look at wintering wildfowl on the Lake.

Meet: on the causeway 10am

### WORK PARTIES

Sunday November 5th 2017  
 Sunday December 3rd 2017  
 Sunday January 7th 2018



Meet at 9.55am usually by Stocker's House next to Stocker's Lock but it is a good idea to check with Emma Brading (07428 790460) before the date just in case we have changed the meeting place.

## COMMITTEE

Nigel Daley (Chairman)	01923 282844
Dick Beeden (Treasurer, Membership)	208 421 9958
Sue Sanderson (Secretary)	01923 445541
Ian Watson (Work party organiser)	01923 282136
Trish Jeneid (Newsletter editor, posters)	01923 770221
Emma Brading (Volunteers organiser)	07428 790460
Simon Jones (Web site)	01923 285763
Steve Carter (Wildlife recorder)	079177969776
	Text preferred

# Stocker's Lake Bird Report 2016

Steve Carter

The year started mild with a single goosander and breeding Great Crested Grebes at the end of Jan a Yellow legged gull was seen. February produced a Peregrine and Wigeon numbers increased. March produced few migrants.

April was more productive with Lesser spotted woodpecker and various waders. May a Cuckoo arrived and on Springwell Lake a female goldeneye had 7 juveniles. Hirundines increased in June along with hunting Hobbys. July had breeding House Martins at Stocker's House and in August Kingfishers were breeding. September provided mixed hirundines and a Great White Egret. October a party of Bearded tits on the Colne side of the lake for one lucky observer. Early November a party of 8 Whooper swans arrived briefly and 4 Water Rails present. In December up to 140 Wigeon, a Little Owl on Stocker's farm and a scattering of Winter thrushes. A late Christmas treat was the red head Smew at close quarters.

**Mute Swan** – *common breeding resident*. normally 2 pairs on Stockers supplemented by non-breeders on Bury lake.

**Whooper Swan**- Rare winter visitor. 8 birds seen from causeway on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November left early the next day.

**Greylag Goose**- no significant winter count 1<sup>st</sup> June breeding pair with 6 juveniles

**Canada Goose**- *Common breeder*

**Brent Goose**- one on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November

**Barnacle Goose**- a single bird sighted by heronry mid-September possible escape.

**Egyptian Goose**- Four was the highest count, have bred locally nearby.

**Shelduck**- Two birds on Stocker's farm in March

**Wigeon**- Winter visitor highest count 120 birds average around 80 seen grazing on Stocker's farm

**Gadwall**- No significant counts although present.

**Mallard** – *common resident*. No reports this year

**Shoveler** – *fairly common winter visitor*. No significant counts this year.

**Red-crested Pochard** – *well-established and colourful resident*. Virtually a year-round resident of the lake, but there no reports of breeding this year. The peak counts were: 12 on New Year's Eve, 9 in January, then 12 were logged in March.

**Common Pochard** – *fairly common resident*. A female was seen with a brood of 5 ducklings in July.

**Tufted Duck** - *common resident and regular breeder*. No significant counts two adults and two juveniles on 12<sup>th</sup> of August.

**Common Goldeneye** – *fairly common winter visitor*. This is my favourite winter duck. The first winter peaks were: 17 on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 18 on Xmas eve, 14 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December, During the summer a female was seen on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May with seven juveniles on Springwell lake.

**Smew** – *scarce and declining winter visitor in small numbers*. A single Red head obliged arriving around 26<sup>th</sup> of November till December 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Goosander** – *scarce and declining winter visitor*. Two birds seen on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Jan, one on March the 7<sup>th</sup> and 5 birds on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November, present most of December.

**Pheasant** – *uncommon resident*. A few birds are resident in the meadow on the Mill End side of the River Colne, but there were no reports this year.

**Little Grebe** – *occasional winter visitor*. No reports this year

**Great Crested Grebe** – *a common resident and breeder*. 3 broods as early as 26<sup>th</sup> of February, one on nest on Springwell on 2<sup>nd</sup> of January.

**Cormorant** – *all year-round resident*. No significant counts this year

**Little Egret** – *all year round fairly common resident and scarce breeder*. This small heron is now a permanent resident throughout the year and a substantial breeding

colony is now becoming established. Peak counts during the year were up to 21 in June At least ten pairs bred this year, but this figure is probably an under-estimate of the true total and it is not known how many young were fledged. Roost counts were: 66 on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Great White Egret** – Seen from Tern hide on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September.

**Grey Heron** – *common resident and breeder*. An ever-present sight around the lake from dawn until dusk! The BTO Heronries survey count in April to assess the number of nests reached a total of 23 (down from 27 in 2014), most of which were undoubtedly successful. Much the same data this year no observer count

**Red Kite** – *fairly common resident*. Nowadays a regular sight over the reserve, with a peak count of thirteen over scrubby area behind River Colne on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June.

**Sparrowhawk** – *regular visitor throughout the year*. Single sightings generally nesting in Alder wood on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Marsh Harrier** – one sighting on 17<sup>th</sup> of January

**Common Buzzard** – *fairly common resident*. Single birds mostly 5 on March 11<sup>th</sup>

**Peregrine Falcon**- 4 sightings February, April, May and June

**Kestrel** – *local resident*. *NO RECORDS for this common raptor it nested on the causeway some years ago in a nest box perhaps another one should go up.*

**Hobby** – *scarce summer visitor*. The first record of the year was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June. Further sightings (of single birds) followed on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of June with the last sighting of the year on September 30<sup>th</sup> of a juvenile hawking.

**Water Rail** – *uncommon winter visitor, more often heard than seen*. Singles were seen on four dates in Jan Feb March and November, however 4 birds heard on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March.

**Moorhen** – *common resident and breeder*. No records of this common species received.

**Coot** – *common resident and breeder*. The peak counts were estimated at 400. There was no assessment of the number of pairs breeding.

**Lapwing** – *regular visitor throughout the year, scarce breeder*. Biggest count of 150 on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December, once bred on Stocker's farm.

**Oystercatcher** – *occasional visitor and possible breeder*. The first sighting of the year was of three birds on April 5<sup>th</sup>, with regular sightings after that. One pair probably bred on one of the islands four birds seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May. The only other sightings were two birds on June 11<sup>th</sup> and one on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Ringed Plover** – *uncommon passage migrant*. Single birds at Stocker's Farm from 2<sup>nd</sup> of April till the 4<sup>th</sup> of May.

**Common Snipe** – *rare winter visitor*. No sightings reported unusual but skulking birds hard to detect

**Greenshank** – *scarce and irregular visitor*. One on April 20th was the only sighting of the year on Stocker's farm a five-minute wonder.

**Common Sandpiper** – *scarce passage migrant*. One bird on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July, 3 on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 4 on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July on the raft.

**Green Sandpiper** – One record on the 21<sup>st</sup> passage migrant.

**Black-headed Gull** – *common resident and breeder*. At least eight juveniles on the raft opposite the Tern hide on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May but no further reports were forthcoming, but it is likely that more pairs did actually breed. There were no winter counts again this year.

**Common Gull** – *regular visitor in small numbers*. Three on December 9<sup>th</sup> and eight on December 11<sup>th</sup> and one on 2<sup>nd</sup> of January.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** – *common visitor and nearby breeder*. No reports for this species I find strange, however possibly overlooked with Greater Black-backs reported some could be erroneous.

**Yellow legged Gull** – *rare* One on 30<sup>th</sup> of January also from the 2<sup>nd</sup> till the 21<sup>st</sup> of February, a second winter bird on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March.

**Herring Gull** – *common winter visitor* 4 birds on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October.

**Great Black-backed Gull** – *uncommon visitor*. A more regular visitor this year with single birds present on three dates in December, one date in February.

**Black Tern** – One from Tern hide on the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup> of May

**Arctic Tern** – A passage of 15 birds on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May preceded by one a day earlier.

**Common Tern** – *regular passage migrant and breeder in small numbers*. The first sighting of the year was on July 9<sup>th</sup>, then 15 on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 15 on the 15<sup>th</sup> including 6 nests and 6 juveniles, on the 20<sup>th</sup> 16 including 8 juveniles. Then 3 birds on August 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Stock Dove** – *common year-round resident and breeder*. A pair on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August. Disappointingly there were very few reports of this common resident.

**Woodpigeon** – *common resident and breeder*. There were no reports this year.

**Collared Dove** – *fairly common nearby, but infrequent visitor to the lake*. There were no reports this year.

**Ring-necked Parakeet** – *common resident*. This gaudy introduction has now become very much part of the avifauna around the lake and their screeching calls can be heard almost daily! Highest count 16 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, 2 on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December severely under recorded.

**Cuckoo** – *increasingly scarce summer visitor*. One on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of April. Two in May the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup>. Not as disappointing as last year.

**Tawny Owl** – *scarce breeding resident*. One was heard calling on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September.

**Little Owl** – *uncommon resident and breeder*. All sightings were at Stocker's Farm: one on January 6<sup>th</sup>, then a pair on February 16<sup>th</sup> and a pair on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. and 18<sup>th</sup> and then one on February 16<sup>th</sup>. There were no more sightings until October 19<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>, then single birds were seen. Three sightings in November and five sightings in December.

**Bearded Tit** – *rare visitor*. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of October one lucky observer saw 4 birds diving and ping in tall vegetation by the River Colne a first for Stocker's possibly.

**Common Swift** – *summer visitor in small numbers*. One on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, 3 one on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 4 on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Highest count 100 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June decreasing to 30 on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 8 on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July.

**Kingfisher** – *common year-round resident; subject to cold weather fluctuations*. At least one pair bred again this year – adults were observed carrying fish to a nest-hole between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of August. Other winter sightings were 7<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of November singles and two on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Woodpecker** – *fairly common resident, most often seen at Stocker's Farm*. No reports strange as they call frequently obviously under recorded.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** – *common resident and breeder*. Only one record on 6<sup>th</sup> of December next year's feeder records should be better.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** – *very scarce resident*. Stocker's Lake proved very popular this year when a male selected a tall oak tree on one of the islands adjacent to the Bury Lake causeway as one of its drumming posts. The first sighting was April 4<sup>th</sup> a drumming male and again on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of April.

**Sand Martin** – *uncommon summer visitor*. – Just two sightings this year was disappointing: three on July 15<sup>th</sup> were the first of the year, followed by three on September 17<sup>th</sup> at Stockers Farm Clearly this is not an accurate representation of its true status on the reserve.

**Swallow** – *common summer visitor and nearby breeder*. More often seen at Stocker's Farm where quite a few pairs breed in the stables and farm buildings. The first spring arrival was at Stocker's Farm on April 1<sup>st</sup>, then 100 on April 16<sup>th</sup> followed by 275 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> The peak count of the year was of over the causeway. then 75 on August 18<sup>th</sup> over the farm, the last observations of the year were back at the farm where six were seen on October 9<sup>th</sup>.

**House Martin** – *common summer visitor and nearby breeder*. Up to 50 birds in April. 4 active nests at Stockers House 28 birds present on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July. The last sightings were at the farm: fifteen on September 1<sup>st</sup> and 40 on October 1.

**Yellow Wagtail** – *scarce summer visitor*. Three records in April five on the 19<sup>th</sup> and one on the 24<sup>th</sup> of seven and one on the 30<sup>th</sup> on the farm.

**Grey Wagtail** – *scarce visitor, occasional breeder*. Just a few rather scattered sightings this year: one on the 19<sup>th</sup> of Feb and a pair on the Colne on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Pied Wagtail** – *scarce resident and occasional breeder*. One on April 16<sup>th</sup> was the only

**Robin** – *abundant resident and breeder*. Under recorded mostly at feeding station

**Northern Wheatear** – *uncommon passage migrant*. Just April records this year: all at Stocker's Farm on April 6<sup>th</sup> and another April 20<sup>th</sup>, two on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and four on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Whinchat** – One on Stocker's farm on 21<sup>st</sup> of April

**Duncock** – *abundant resident and breeder*. There were no reports this year.

**House Sparrow** – *common nearby resident and breeder*. A very frequent sight around Stocker's Farm where at least 20 birds live and breed, but only occasionally seen around the lake.

**Fieldfare** – *common winter visitor*. There were no impressive counts at Stocker's Farm this year just two on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November six on the 18<sup>th</sup> and six on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December.

**Song Thrush** – *common resident*. No reports this year.

**Redwing** – *common winter visitor*. Only one record 6 on the farm on Dec 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Mistle Thrush** – *fairly common resident*. No records this year

**Blackbird** – *abundant resident and breeder*. No counts this year.

**Cetti's Warbler** – *scarce resident*. – The first report of the year was of some singing birds on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April, 3 birds on 4<sup>th</sup> of May, but strangely there were no more reports until August 27<sup>th</sup>, then again from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> of October, then 1 on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2 on December 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Sedge Warbler** – *summer migrant*. The first arrival was on Apr 10<sup>th</sup>, followed by one on the 13<sup>th</sup>, then two on the Apr 14<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Reed Warbler** – *summer migrant and breeder*. One on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and two on April 30<sup>th</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> were the only reports.

**Blackcap** – *common summer visitor and breeder*. – One on 16<sup>th</sup> of Jan then 5 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April followed by 5 on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8 on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April.

**Garden Warbler** – *summer visitor and breeder*. One on April 12<sup>th</sup> and one on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April.

**Common Whitethroat** – *summer visitor*. Disappointingly there was just one sighting this year: one on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Whitethroat** – *scarce passage migrant*. Two sightings this year one on the 24<sup>th</sup> and one on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April.

**Common Chiffchaff** – *scarce winter visitor, summer migrant and breeder*. A single on 23<sup>rd</sup> of January, one on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March then 8 on the first of April and 3 along the Colne on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December.

**Willow Warbler** – *uncommon passage migrant*. One singing on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March followed by 12 on April 1<sup>st</sup> and 3 on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April.

**Goldcrest** – *uncommon visitor, usually in winter*. There were a few records this year 3 on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January and 4 on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August.

**Spotted Flycatcher** – *scarce passage migrant*. One on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May canal side of lake.

**Blue Tit** – *common resident*. There were no reports this year.

**Great Tit** – *common resident*. There were no reports this year.

**Coal Tit** – *uncommon visitor*. There were no reports this year.

**Long-tailed Tit** – *common visitor*. 18 on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November

**Nuthatch** – *uncommon resident*. One on 18<sup>th</sup> of Feb and one on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November.

**Treecreeper** – *uncommon resident and breeder*. One record on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Feb.

**Wren** – *abundant resident and breeder*. Two birds on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December.

**Starling** – *common resident*. No reports this year

**Magpie** – *common resident and breeder*. There were no reports this year.

**Jay** – *irregular visitor*. One on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November.

**Jackdaw** – *common, non-breeding, resident*. Roosting count 500 on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Rook** – *scarce visitor, although nearby breeder*. No counts

**Carrion Crow** – *common resident*. This opportunistic predator is seldom missed on a walk around the lake. There were no reports this year.

**Raven** – 3 reports of this rare bird 2 on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March and two on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September and one on December the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Chaffinch** – *common resident and breeder*. There were no reports this year.

**Bullfinch** – *uncommon resident*. Pleasingly, a pair were seen on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Greenfinch** – *uncommon resident*. There were no reports this year.

**Lesser Redpoll** – *uncommon winter visitor*. First on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February with Siskins then another on the 26<sup>th</sup> followed by three March records including a Mealy, (pale plumage) lastly one on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Goldfinch** – *fairly common resident*. A fairly regular sight around the lake, the only count being 5 on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Siskin** – *common winter visitor*. There were 140 on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Jan 50 on the 25<sup>th</sup>, 40 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February and 6 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March and 40 on two dates Nov 27<sup>th</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Reed Bunting** – *scarce resident and breeder*. There was one report of one male on

**LIST OF OBSERVERS** My thanks to the following without whose help this report would not be possible, thanks to Andrew Moon, former recorder, and all at FoSL and Herts and Middlesex Trust.

JBailey, LCarter, SCarter, GClark, LEvans, GFolkerd, PFrost, GHiggins, THulls, PJones, SJones, AKirby, GLapworth, PLewis, AMarett, RMorton, SMiddleton, BNorcott, JNewton, EPerfect, CSharp, CSmout, JThomson, IWatson and JWatson.



**Whooper Swans - rare visitors to the Lake**



**Female Goldeneye with 7 Juveniles**

**Steve Carter - Nigel Daley**

Steve has joined our committee as wildlife recorder. He takes over from Andrew Moon who has left the district. Steve, a local man has a very long-standing connection with Stocker's Lake and all the birding hotspots of the district. Welcome, Steve.