

Stocker's Lake Bird Report 2023

JANUARY started with a **Blackcap** in the (Stocker's) lock keeper's garden. Up to 5 **Goldeneyes** were present and up to 14 **Red-Crested Pochard**. A **Firecrest** was seen on the 15th and also a **Barnacle Goose**. On 17th a single **Raven** flew over and there were a few **Fieldfare** about at the end of the month.

In FEBRUARY it was milder. **Lapwing** were increasing up to 60 and there were 6 **Goldeneye**. A drake **Smew** arrived and was a continuing highlight. Some pollution was found in the river Colne. On 9th a **Peregrine** was seen over the farm. 3 **Chiffchaff** were singing mid-month. Other highlights were a drake **Mandarin** and a **Water Rail** along the river at months end.



Smew (drake)

MARCH started cold and sunny with the **Smew** still present. Winds from the south west brought rain and a single **Oystercatcher** on 16th. By 24th 8 **Chiffchaff** were singing and also 5 **Cetti's Warblers**. Two days later a **Little Ringed Plover** was seen. By month's end Hirundine passage had started including 84 **Sand Martin** on 29th.

In APRIL a single **Willow Warbler** was seen on 1st. Two days later 8 **Blackcap** were singing. A **Little Ringed Plover** on the farm and a **Common Scoter** on the lake were followed by **Green Sandpiper** and **Redshank** on the farm. More warblers included **Sedge Warbler** and **Whitethroat**. On 24th a **Cattle Egret** was seen briefly.

MAY started quiet although a pair of **Reed Warbler** was nesting on the Colne. Hirundines, including **House Martin**, continued to arrive and up to 9 **Cetti's Warbler** were calling. On 10th a pair of **Kingfisher** were seen feeding fledged young and 8 **Shelduck** were reported, seen from the heron view point. **Swift** were increasing with a peak count of 30 reported on 13th. A single **Cuckoo** was seen and heard calling on 14th and 16th. A **Spotted Flycatcher** was seen in the car park on 18th and on the same day a **Raven** was seen flying overhead. A **Cuckoo** was again heard calling again on 25th.

JUNE was not flaming! Two **Black Tern** were seen from the heron watchpoint on 2nd and 3rd with **Garden Warbler** being reported regularly from 5th onwards. By 9th a total of 18 **Common Tern** were being reported, including two juveniles. Only one **Reed Warbler** appeared to be present.

In JULY summer progressed and on 4th 22 **Common Tern** including five juveniles were recorded, and also 12 **Swallow** and 13 **Swift**. A **Common Sandpiper** was seen on 10th and again on 26th. 40 **Swallow** were counted on 19th and on 22nd there were 12 **Egyptian Goose** – 2 adults with the remainder being juvenile birds.

In AUGUST on 7th second broods of both **Kingfisher** and **Common Tern** (after Black-headed Gulls had departed the raft) were observed. Otherwise this was a wet month and Stocker's birdlife was under-watched and under-recorded.

SEPTEMBER was a better month. On 2nd two **Willow Warbler** and at least 35 **Swallows** were seen. A **Kingfisher** was seen along the Colne a few times and in mid-month a **hybrid White-fronted/Snow Goose** was observed. By 26th **Swallow** numbers had diminished to just a single bird but seven **Cetti's Warblers** were calling.

In OCTOBER things became interesting towards the end of the month. A pair of **Stonechat** were in residence on Stockers Farm from 21st. Then on 25th 13 **Red-Crested Pochard**, 12 **Siskin** and a single **Redwing** were reported from around the lake. Two **Common Sandpiper** followed on 27th as well as a flock of around 30 **Lapwing**.

NOVEMBER - on 6th a single **Brambling** was seen in a flock of circa 20 **Siskin**. Also a **Firecrest** was heard from the boardwalk. On 7th an *Aythya* hybrid - probably a **tufted/scaup** - was observed. On the farm a flock of 80 **Siskin** and three **Meadow Pipit** were seen on 10th. Up to three **Kingfishers** were seen on the reserve numerous times throughout the month. A single **Fieldfare** was reported on 13th and again on 15th whilst **Wigeon** were reported regularly and were increasing (5 by 24th). **Goldeneye** sightings were sparse although on 20th three females were seen at the west end of the lake. A (Common) **Pochard** count peaked at 144 and there were also circa 20 **Red-Crested Pochard**.



Kingfisher

At month's end, a **Water Rail** was reported and as well as a drake **Goldeneye**.

DECEMBER turned colder with rain and sleet on 3rd together with 14 **Egyptian Goose**. A Pike match produced a 13 lb Pike. On 6th I led a FoSL wildfowl walk which produced three **Goldeneye**, three **Kingfisher**, a sunbathing Fox and a Muntjac. Continuous rain with high water levels was the norm for most of the month. **Kingfishers** continued to be seen regularly and a splendid **Treecreeper** ended the year.

Steve Carter