



**TEWKESBURY NATURE RESERVE LTD
BIRD REPORT
FOR 2014 and 2015**

**BY
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Issue 2

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A resume' of the birds seen on the reserve covering summer and the autumn so far in 2014.

Summer migrants that stayed to breed....

Chiffchaff were fairly numerous as were Whitethroat around the bramble brakes at the southern end of the reserve. Blackcap were seen or heard on several dates and assumed to breed. Reed Warblers arrived a little late, I did not hear the first until the 12th May but numbers built up quite well considering the small size of the existing reed beds. The maximum singing males I had was 11. This was made up of 4 in the small reed bed, 5 in the larger and 2 in dense herbage on the river bank... 2 singing Lesser Whitethroat were present for most of the summer in suitable habitat and at one location a pair were seen so again breeding assumed to have taken place.

On the 15th May a singing Skylark over the field at the southern end adjacent to the larger reed bed was a new bird for me on the reserve. In early June we had a lot of rain and although the bird was still singing on the 5th the field was 2 feet deep in water! If it had bred the nest would have been swamped and after this date I did not see or hear it again.

The water did attract a Mute Swan, again a first for me as was a cuckoo that was seen and heard on several dates at the southern end. On the 9th June another Reed Warbler appeared in the small pond at the southern end and was still singing into August making 12 on the reserve as a whole.

The rain also flooded the northern section and attracted to the field in front of Morrisons a Little Egret which I also saw from the garden at the southern end making a great garden 'tick'. As the water went so did the bird but may well be back if it floods this winter.

Mid July and more heavy rain attracted 4 Mute Swan and large numbers of hawking Swallow and House Martin with locally breeding Swifts screaming about the place.

Mid-August and autumn migration was beginning. On a lovely sunny day on the 7th a particular stretch of hedgerow about the middle of the reserve held 3 Redstart, numerous Chiffchaff, Wren, House Sparrow, Whitethroat Lesser Whitethroat and Goldfinch. All the birds were washing in a puddle left under the hedge and a truly excellent half hour spent watching the coming and goings.

Jay and Meadow Pipit were added to list and on the 10th of October the star bird, a female/juvenile Whinchat which was present for an afternoon near to the bridge.

Tit flocks are now common in the hedges, containing Blue, Great and Long Tailed, all of which seemed to have a very good season. On the 12th I found a Goldcrest with one such flock, again a reserve first for me.

Tawny Owls were heard again in early October, males staking out their ranges and a flock of 50 plus Meadow Pipits feeding on seeds washed out following more heavy rain and a singing Chiffchaff on the 13th were of note.

Two Snipe were found and a total of 32 Mallard on floods on the 14th Oct and the first of the returning winter thrushes with 2 Redwing on the 18th.

Work was going well by now on the new pools and 'meander' at the southern end where on the 27th I was lucky to find a Kingfisher and Grey Wagtail. The Kingfisher had been reported earlier in the year down on the Northern section so it could be a second bird!

A walk on the 12th November and the skies were full of not only Redwing but now Fieldfare with a few perched up feeding on hawthorn berries. A pair of Blackcap, Grey Heron and a small flock of 10 Chaffinch added bright points to a dull day.

So far I have managed to record 68 species of bird, some passing through on migration, others, like gulls using it for loafing and feeding. The majority however are breeding birds and that is not a bad total. As the new pools and reed beds mature I am sure that this total will creep up. It's possible that when the workmen leave and the levels rise in the large pool Coot, and other duck species will move in along with maybe Water Rail as vegetation begins to cover the banks, all exciting stuff !!.

This certainly gives a flavour of what is present pre-development, watch this space for post-development.

For the purposes of this report I have used the following abbreviation codes to try and put the birds into some sort of context as regards the reserve. 2 species seen flying over the reserve, cormorant and raven, although not actually on the ground they will still count.

Codes:

Resident = R

Summer visitor = SV

Winter visitor = WV

Passage migrant = PM

Occasional = O

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UK BAP priority bird species recorded on the Reserve are:

- Skylark
- Cuckoo
- House Sparrow
- Song Thrush
- Duncock
- Starling
- Linnet
- Lesser Redpoll
- Reed Bunting
- Herring Gull

2015

This is just a short report following on from last years which took us up to autumn 2014. My first wander around the reserve in the new year and I found a delightful Goldcrest in with a large Tit flock foraging the hedgerows adjacent to Priors Park. There were plenty of winter Thrushes, 200 Redwing on the 14th January clearing up the few remaining berries. For the next couple of weeks Wood Pigeons were very evident with flocks of up to 40 seen on several dates and good numbers of Meadow Pipits wintered at the Northern end. Snipe were also found in the wet areas but we're very susceptible to disturbance.

As we moved into and through February Dunnock, Song Thrush and Robin were all in song, and on the 15th March the first spring migrant of the year, a very noisy Chiffchaff took up residence at the back of Stonehills and was still singing into July.

The last Redwing departed for Northern Europe in early March and I saw the resident Buzzards displaying at the Southern end and found the presumed nest site in a large tree. They built it at the bottom of someone's garden but I guess the disturbance proved too much and they moved on further south of the reserve but to date I do not know if they were successful.

The first Swallow of the year arrived on the 12th April with up to 6 Chiffchaff feeding in the reed beds, recovering from the long flight from Africa.

On the 15th April the first Reed Warbler was seen in my garden! And shortly after in the smaller of the reed beds. 6 Willow Warbler were of note although, as like last year, they only passed through and did not breed.

Mid-April and Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Blackcap and Reed Warbler were singing from hedges and reed beds. A new bird for the reserve on the 22nd When I found a singing Sedge Warbler in the ponds by Morrisons. There were in fact 2, with another in the reeds in mid-May but both seemed to move on. The situation with the Reed Warblers was very similar to last year with the same numbers singing from the 2 small reed beds and 2 more from the dense vegetation on the river banks, making 12 singing males in total.

Reed Buntings seemed to do well with several pairs in the damper spots. At least 4 pairs of Moorhen bred with a couple of Mallards, not only on the Morrisons pools and the SUD but also on the river by the new meander.

Little Egret and Grey Heron have been seen on a regular basis especially at the new ponds on the Southern end.

As we moved into July migration was beginning. The very large hedge that runs down the spine of the reserve towards the Northern end held 4 Redstart and numerous Chiffchaff and on the 30th 3 Lesser Whitethroat. The Whitethroat were all adult so I cannot confirm breeding but I suspect they did somewhere in a quiet area. Linnets have been feeding in small numbers on the bare earth around the large pond in company with Goldfinch.

Perhaps the best bird of the year however has been the House Martin. Up to a hundred of these wonderful little birds have been feeding and collecting mud for nesting from this new pond and what a wonderful sight they make. The majority seem to head off towards Wheatpieces with their beaks crammed and as they are a nationally declining species we should celebrate the fact that we seem to be doing very well with them.

Lastly, since the meadow has been ploughed waiting for seeding at the southern end we have a good selection of gulls feeding and loafing. Lesser Black Backed and Herring Gull are the most numerous with a few Black Headed although they have mostly lost their summer plumage and look slightly tatty! Autumn has only just begun so I am hoping that Whinchat may pass through again, a cracking bird. Watch this space!!

Sedge Warbler, Green Sandpiper and a fly over Peregrine have now pushed the number of birds species up to 71.



Chiffchaff (SV)



Whitethroat (SV)



Blackcap (SV)



Cuckoo (SV)



Lesser Whitethroat (SV)



Skylark (O)



Mute Swan (O) possible resident



Little Egret (O)



Swallow (SV)



House Martin (SV)



Swift (SV)



Redstart (PM)



Wren (R)



House Sparrow (R)



Goldfinch (R)



Jay (O)



Meadow Pipit (WV)



Blue tit (R)



Great Tit (R)



Long Tailed Tit (R)



Goldcrest (R)



Tawny Owl (R)



Snipe (WV)



Mallard (R)



Mistle Thrush (O)



Song Thrush (R)



Kingfisher (R)



Grey Wagtail (O)



Fieldfare (WV)



Grey Heron (R)



Redwing (WV)



Blackbird (R)



Robin (R)



Duncock (R)



Starling (R)



Whinchat (PM)



Wood Pigeon (R)



Collard Dove (R)



Stock Dove (O)



Moorhen (R)



Shelduck (O)



Cormorant (O) flying overhead



Reed Warbler (SV)



Willow Warbler (SV)



Garden Warbler (SV)



Rook (O)



Carrion Crow (R)



Jackdaw (O)



Raven (O) flying overhead



Magpie (R)



Siskin (WV)



Chaffinch (R)



Bullfinch (R)



Linnet (R)



Greenfinch (R)



Lesser Redpoll (WV)



Pied Wagtail (R)



Reed Bunting (R)



Buzzard (R)



Sparrow hawk (R)



Kestrel (R)



Red Kite (O)



Greylag Goose (O)



Green Sandpiper (O)