

BRINSLEY HEADSTOCKS

Heritage & Nature Reserve

BIRDS

2019

We accept that the Headstocks Nature Reserve is never going to challenge the flagship nature reserves in the county (such as Attenborough), where a comprehensive mix of habitats can result in as many as 250 species of birds being recorded. An absence of a large body of standing water with shallow muddy edges means that wildfowl and waders will be in very short supply.

A new species for the site was recorded in 2019 – two Red Kites were seen circling in the field adjacent to the Headstocks Meadow on 17th April. The site list now stands at 86 species. A total of 40 species were recorded in 2019, a relatively modest total, but currently there is only a single observer involved in recording.

The list of species recorded is as follows :-

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Not recorded in 2019. The last record was a single which flew over the site on 17th September 2017.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

One flew fairly low along the railway line, being mobbed by a crow, on 3rd May. There were also single records in 2017 and 2018.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Not recorded in 2019. The only record to date is of a pair flying east over the site on 02/03/2010.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

A skein of 80-100 were seen flying at mid-height over the Headstocks Meadow on 20th October. This was the second site record, the previous record was a skein of c120 flying west over the site on 24/01/2011.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Not recorded in 2019. There were no sightings in 2018, but in 2017 a flock of 30 was seen flying over the site on September 30th and a flock of 40 was seen on November 19th.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Not recorded in 2019. The last record was a single bird observed flying over the top portion of the Long Meadow towards Moorgreen Reservoir on April 19th 2015.

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*

Not recorded in 2019. A female of this species was flushed from the middle pond in Willow Holt on March 10th 2015. It was seen again on the brook close to point where it passes under the railway line on March 12th.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

There were two records of this species in 2019 – a pair resting in sedges adjacent to the old railway line on 20th March and two males flying north over the car park on 15th May. In 2016, a female and 8 newly-hatched ducklings were on Brinsley Brook Pond. This is the first breeding record for this species on the site.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

There were no sightings of this species by the official recorder, but a resident reports the a pair bred on the wooded hill behind the Headstocks. Apparently young were seen in the nest, but there was no news on fledging.

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Seen regularly throughout 2019, all records relate to single birds.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

There were several records of single birds in 2019, but only during the winter period.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

There were no records in 2019. The only site record to date is of one flying past the car park and over Brinsley Lodge on September 5th 2018.

GREY PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix*

Not recorded in 2019. There were three records in 2011, two records of a pair actually on site in May and a flock of five adjacent to the site, in pasture by the old railway line, on 04/01/2011

COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus*

There was an increase in sightings of this species in 2019, the maximum being four (2 males & 2 females) on 2nd December. On 20th March, a male strolled across the old railway line only feet away from me !

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Not recorded in 2019. Last record was of 2 birds by the stream in the long meadow on 02/07/1999.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Disappointingly, this species has not been seen since 2013, despite breeding in good numbers in the Erewash Valley.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Not recorded in 2019. The first and only record so far for this species on the site is of one bird flushed from the wood behind the headstocks on 14/03/2009.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Not recorded in 2019. The only site record for this species was on May 20th 2017, when one flew over the Headstocks meadow en route from Moorgreen Reservoir to Aldercar Flash.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Regularly recorded flying over the site in small numbers, usually in winter. In 2019, a flock of 28 was feeding alongside cows in the pasture adjoining the old railway line.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Not recorded in 2019. Surprisingly, the only record is of one bird over the site on 03/02/2009.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Not recorded in 2019. The last record was in 2017, which involved a single bird flying over the Long Meadow on June 22nd.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Not recorded in 2019. The last record was in 2017, when three birds flew over the Long Meadow on March 28th.

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Not recorded in 2019. The last record was of two birds were seen soaring high over the Headstocks on March 16th 2014.

ROCK DOVE *Columba livia*

Occasional records of this species flying over the site, which all relate to Feral Pigeon.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

This species is regularly recorded and probably breeds on, or just off, site. In recent years, however, this species seems to be much scarcer, with just a single record in 2019, of a bird singing on 18th February.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

A common resident, whose numbers appear to be increasing significantly.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

A common resident in the village, but not recorded regularly on site. Most records come from the area around the car park.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Not recorded in 2019. The only site record for this species was of a bird calling at 7.00 a.m. on 6th June 2011 from the adjacent playing field boundary.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Disappointingly, this species was not recorded in 2019. There are normally a few sightings every year, with three seen in 2017.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Probably a resident pair, breeding close to the site. There were no records for 2019.

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

Regularly (but not frequently) recorded over the site in summer, probably relating to birds from the breeding colony in Eastwood. Singles were recorded on only a few dates in 2019.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

An irregular visitor, probably more frequent than records suggest. There were no records in 2019, the last sighting was on 5th November 2017.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Formerly a resident pair on and around the site, but rarely recorded in the last couple of years. There were no records in 2019, the last sighting being on August 15th 2017.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

There were normally a number of sightings every year, but rarely encountered lately. There were no records in 2019, but a single record in 2018, of a male drumming on February 8th.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Not recorded on 2019. The only record of this declining “Red List” species was just offsite (in Saints Coppice) on 24/04/2000.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Another “Red List” species in severe decline nationally and locally. There were no records in 2019. The last site record was of a single bird in 2012.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Not recorded in 2019. The only site record for this species was on 14/05/2013, when a flock of five birds were feeding over the pasture to the right of the railway line. They were observed flying over the ridge from the direction of Moorgeen Reservoir, before disappearing over Redgates farm.

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

This summer visitor breeds nearby and is recorded regularly on site. Strangely, there were no records for 2019 or 2018 and only a single record in 2017 – on September 8th. This is probably more to do with lack of observer coverage than genuine scarcity.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Following an excellent set of records in 2016 (flocks of 12+ recorded on two occasions), there were no sightings in 2019.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Not recorded in 2019. The last record of this species was of one bird around the stream in the Dell on 14/03/2012.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarelli*

There were no records of this species in 2019. There was a single record in 2016.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulous*

There were no sightings in 2019. I was lucky enough to see a single bird of this species on April 2nd 2017, my first site record. . The only previous site record is of a flock of 35 birds on 30th March 2009.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A common resident, with several pairs present. Breeding was confirmed in 2009 and 2010.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

A common resident, which is often overlooked due to its unobtrusive nature.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

A common resident. Song was heard from January 13th onwards.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

A common resident, which breeds on site.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

An occasional winter visitor. There was only one record in 2019, when a flock of 8 flew directly over the Headstocks on 2nd December.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

An uncommon resident, which has suffered a major decline nationally. There was an encouraging increase in records in 2019, mostly of singles, but two males were singing on April 23rd. The first song was heard on February 19th.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

An uncommon winter visitor. There were more records than usual in 2019, with the largest flock being 80, feeding in the pasture adjacent to the railway line on December 2nd, with a separate flock of 12 on the wooded hill on the same date.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

A fairly common resident. There were several records in 2019, with one seen food-carrying on April 23rd.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla* A common summer visitor, with usually 2/3 pairs present annually. In 2019, there appeared to be only one pair, with the first song heard on May 3rd.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

A rare summer visitor. Birds were recorded a few years ago (probably a pair), but no confirmed recent sightings.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Not recorded in 2019. Males have been recorded singing and “rattling” in 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2010.

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Not recorded in 2019. There was a single record in 2016, of a male singing on the railway line just past Willow Holt on May 17th.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

The only site record of this species was of a bird in Saints Coppice wood on 24/04/2000.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

A fairly common summer visitor, with normally 5/6 breeding pairs. In 2019, however, there only appeared to be one singing male – a worrying decline.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

This species now appears on site as a passage migrant, singing for a short time before moving on. Despite records of single birds spending a few days on site in the last few years, there were no records in 2019 (or 2017 & 2018).

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Surprisingly, there were no records of this species in 2019 (or 2018). There were three sightings in 2017.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa lasostris*

There are two old records for this species, both from Saints Coppice wood, on 14/05/2000 and 24/06/2001.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

A fairly common resident. Numbers were down on 2019, with the largest flock being 5 on February 19th.

WILLOW TIT *Poecile Montana*

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

COAL TIT *Periparus ater britannicus*

An irregular visitor to the site. 2019 provided only a single record, on February 18th. There were five records in 2017 and in 2018 a partially leucistic bird of this species was seen on the railway line adjacent to Sts. Coppice on December 4th. A very peculiar bird !

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A common resident. In winter, regular counts of 12+ were made, with birds scattered around the site.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

A common resident. Double figure counts were regular in 2019.

EUROPEAN NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

There is usually a resident pair based in Saints Coppice wood. In 2019, all of the sightings came from this area, with two together on February 18th.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Normally a few sightings every year, but sadly there were no records in 2019. In 2017, it is thought that this species attempted to breed in Willow Holt.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

An occasional visitor, more often heard than seen. Following a blank year in 2018, there were three records in 2019. One was seen in Vine Wood on 23rd April, one on the Wooded Hill on 3rd May and one flying over the Long Meadow on 2nd October.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

A common resident. Breeds on site.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Frequently recorded in small numbers throughout the year. Breeds just off-site, in Saints Coppice.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

The rookery which was established in Vine Wood in 2013, continued to be occupied, with an decrease from eighteen nests in 2015 to thirteen nests in both 2017 and 2018 and only eight in 2019. There is also a small rookery becoming established close to the site in Saints Coppice.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

A common resident. This species breeds on site.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

No records in 2019. On Feb. 22nd 2017 a raven flew over Sts Coppice. It was mobbed by a flock of jackdaws and flew south low over the Long Meadow. On July 25th 2017 two birds of this species were soaring over the Long Meadow. There were no sightings in 2018.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Regularly recorded, but usually in small numbers.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

A common species in the village, but only sporadically recorded on site. There was a single record in 2019, of one bird in the hedge opposite the car park on May 2nd.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Only one record for the site – in early spring 2002 one was seen near Saints Coppice wood. This bird was probably from the population which existed at that time at Willey Wood farm.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

A common resident. In 2019, the largest flock was six in Vine Wood on December 9th.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla* Not recorded in 2019. The first site record of this species was in 2010. Some birds remained from this influx into 2011, with an immature bird on 16th February and a flock of six (including two stunning adult males) on 28th February 2011.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

A surprisingly rare visitor to the site, with no records in 2019. The last sighting was on Feb. 22nd 2017.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Mainly a winter visitor to the site. This species seems to find the seeds of the numerous alder trees on site as an attractive food source. Flocks of 30+ are normal, but the largest flock in 2019 was only six birds.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Not recorded in 2019. No records for 2018 either, but there were four records for 2017, which was similar to 2016. The maximum count was 5 on December 4th 2017.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Not recorded in 2019 and appears to be a surprisingly rare visitor to the site. The last record was of a flock of sixteen birds in 2010.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Not recorded in 2019. The first site record for this species occurred on February 23rd 2016, when a beautifully marked male was seen feeding in an alder tree in the Long meadow, in the company of two female siskins.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

The Headstocks nature reserve was a stronghold for this declining species, although records were well down on previous years. There were only three records in 2019, a pair on 20th March and two separate females. All records were from the area between the car park and the Headstocks structure.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella*

Not recorded in 2019. This species was once a common farmland bird, but has been in decline nationally for a number of years. There is only one record for the site : a single bird in the boundary hedge on 18/03/2000.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

This species is not regularly recorded on the site, so it was pleasing to see a pair on 29th October 2019, in the hedge by the sunflower meadow.