

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT JANUARY 2000 – 60 Species – 29 Days Covered

Dry, sunny and generally mild. Mostly rather cold and frost for one week after mid month. Very mild closing days with severe gales in the north. This has been the sunniest January since 1959 in England and Wales.

This was an under-recorded month, despite the good weather. Three skeins of Pink-footed Goose with a total of four hundred and sixty-five were observed on 1st with another skein of one hundred and twenty on 20th; three were also noted on 17th. Wildfowl counts produced the following maximums this month; one hundred and eighty-five Wigeon on 2nd, eighty Teal on 1st, two hundred and fifty Mallard on 1st, twenty Pochard on 1st and eight Tufted Duck on 1st. There was only one Shelduck sighting on 31st and two Gadwall were observed on 1st & 2nd. A single male Pintail was more obliging with records from 2nd through to 20th, with a female on 23rd. Goosander were present all month with a maximum of nine on 29th.

Raptors were few and far between apart from Sparrowhawk and Kestrel, which were noted on most days.

Snipe were found regularly close to the hide with a maximum of twenty-one on 31st. Lapwings were also seen on several days with a good count of one hundred and fifty on 11th. Woodcock were seen flying out of Carr Wood at dusk on several dates, with a maximum of five on 6th & 8th.

Gull roosters were more proficient with several good records during a cold spell mid-month. A single adult Mediterranean Gull was found on 5th & 22nd and a 2nd winter Iceland Gull was present on five days from 18th to 24th. Glaucous Gull was the most prolific with twenty sightings from 13th through to 29th including both 1st and 2nd winter birds. An adult Caspian Gull (*Larus argentatus cachinnans*) was noted on 8th, 13th & 15th, with a 1st winter also on 15th & 22nd. Adult Yellow-legged Gulls (*Larus argentatus michahellis*) were seen on 7th, 9th, 12th & 16th and a 2nd winter was seen on 19th.

A single Little Owl was noted on 15th but Great Spotted Woodpecker was recorded most days. Two Meadow Pipit on 18th and three Grey Wagtail on 1st and one on 3rd were the only sightings. Pied Wagtails were noted on several days with a maximum of six on 19th. Treecreeper was recorded close to the recording hide along with Nuthatch which came to the feeders. A further selection of the more common birds could be found on or near the hide feeders including Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Blackbird, Willow Tit, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, House Sparrow, Chaffinch and Greenfinch. Bullfinch was regularly seen with a maximum of seven on 1st but the only record of Reed Bunting was one on 31st.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT FEBRUARY 2000 – 68 Species – 28 Days Covered

Mostly mild wet and windy, especially during the first part of the month. There were some good sunny periods and some snow mid month. This was the sunniest February since 1989 in England and Wales.

Great Crested Grebes reached a maximum of twenty-six and Grey Heron were back on nests in the heronry by the end of the month. Wildfowl numbers were low with one Mute Swan and a single Greylag Goose noted on 2nd and a Shelduck on 7th. Teal and Wigeon were observed on most days with a maximum of one hundred of each on 1st. There was a single Pintail on 12th; two pairs of Shoveler on 6th and Pochard numbers were low with a maximum of seven on 6th. Tufted Duck counts were also low with a maximum of seventeen on 29th. A single male Goldeneye put in appearances on 2nd and 18th and Goosander were noted on most days with the best count of twelve on 25th. Ruddy Duck were noted on two days with two pairs on 6th.

A single Common Buzzard was seen over Carr Wood on 24th and a Peregrine was in the same area on 12th. These were the only raptors of note apart from the regular Kestrel and Sparrowhawk sightings throughout the month. There was a maximum of two Kestrel on several days and similar for Sparrowhawk.

A Water Rail was seen around the hide area early on 19th and a single Dunlin was observed on 7th. Good numbers of Lapwing showed most days with a maximum of two hundred and fifty on 15th. Snipe was also seen regularly around the hide with a maximum of thirty-six on 6th.

Vigilant gull roosters were rewarded with several good records. A 2nd winter Iceland Gull was noted on seven days, 1st to 4th, 16th, 18th & 19th. Glaucous Gulls were also well represented with a 1st winter on 11th to 13th, 16th, 18th & 19th. A 2nd winter also appeared on 16th, 18th & 19th and continued on 20th & 23rd to 26th. A single Yellow-legged Gull was noted on 10th and 27th with three on 26th. (adult, 2nd & 3rd winter). An excellent record on 27th was one hundred and thirty very vocal Kittiwake; this was a site record.

Little Owl was only found on three days and Kingfisher was even more reluctant with the only sighting on 10th. Song Thrush became vocal towards the end of the month with a maximum of six on 28th. The only other birds of note were a single Tree Sparrow by the feeders on 2nd and pairs of Reed Bunting around the hide area on seven days. Nuthatch and Treecreeper were in the normal haunts and the usual tits and finches were seen around the hide feeders.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT MARCH 2000 – 84 Species – 31 Days Covered

Very dry, sunny and mild overall. A prolonged mild spell mid month ensured that temperatures were well above average. Unsettled later with some rain or showers, rather cold finish to the month.

Eleven Whooper Swans arrived on 19th but only stayed until late afternoon. However three more turned up on 22nd and remained for three days giving observers a good chance to add this to their year lists. Two Greylag Geese were noted on both 13th & 20th and one Barnacle Goose on 16th, appeared with the Canada Geese. This was probably of feral origin as with most sightings of this species at Ogston. There was only one record for Shelduck, which was seen flying through on 11th. Other wildfowl maximums regularly seen this month were eighty-five Wigeon on 6th, fifty-one Teal on 9th, thirty Mallard on 29th and twenty-four Tufted Duck on 19th. One male Pintail on 31st, one male Scaup on 13th, one male Ruddy Duck on 20th and two records of a male Garganey on 25th & 26th were excellent sightings to add to the wildfowl list. Finally Goosander was present on several occasions with four on 4th being the best count.

Raptor sightings improved this month with two records of Buzzard on 6th & 25th and two sightings of Merlin near Carr Wood on 25th & 26th. A female Goshawk on 29th was another exciting visitor and was enjoyed by one observer. Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were regular throughout with a maximum of two for both species.

Another scarce visitor was a Water Rail, which was found by the scrapes on 25th. Our first Ringed Plover arrived on 19th, followed by Little Ringed Plover on 28th. Lapwing were present all month with a maximum of a two hundred and fifty on 3rd. Dunlin were noted on three dates with the best being three on 19th and Snipe were seen most days with a maximum of twenty-five on 7th & 12th. Bar-tailed Godwit on 11th was another unusual record for the month, visiting us en-route for its breeding grounds in the north. Three sightings of Curlew on 1st, 21st & 24th and five singles of Redshank on 12th, 13th, 14th, 18th & 21st completed a good selection of waders.

Gull roosters still found interest with a 2nd winter Glaucous Gull on 2nd & 4th. Two Yellow-legged Gulls on 2nd & 8th provided further entertainment with an adult and 3rd winter on both occasions. There was a good count of twenty-seven Common Gull on 27th and one 1st winter Kittiwake was an uncommon passage visitor on 14th.

A single Little Owl was present on several days and a Green Woodpecker was heard on three dates. The more elusive Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was heard calling and drumming in Alders Wood on 21st. Two Sand Martin on 19th were the first of our summer hirundines followed by an early House Martin on 29th. A scarce passage visitor the White Wagtail was recorded on 31st.

The first of our summer warblers the Chiffchaff arrived on 8th, followed by a single Blackcap on 20th. Two Siskin were noted on two dates and finally two observers recorded a Crossbill flying over on 21st.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2000 – 98 Species – 30 Days Covered

Very wet in most parts of the UK. Many local rainfall records were broken in England, Wales and Scotland. This has been the wettest April in England and Wales since records began in 1766.

On 21st at 06:40 hrs an excellent record, three Black-necked Grebes were found off the West Bank and were present all day. This makes the fifth consecutive year that they have been found at Ogston. A Fulmar was present on 4th for an hour between 11:20 & 12:20 hrs and was in constant flight, eventually been seen to depart North. This was only the fourth record of this species, on this day of strong NE winds and sleet & snow.

Shelduck was only seen on 17th and Wigeon were down to a maximum of four on 5th. Teal were seen until 18th with a maximum of thirty on 5th and a male Garganey was present on Carr Pond for three days starting on 2nd. A pair of Shoveler was noted on both 2nd & 16th with Pochard also being seen on two days. A pair of Common Scoter were present all day on 11th and a pair of Goldeneye on 4th. Goosander was seen on five days with five on 11th. Ruddy Duck was available on four days with three on 21st and Tufted Duck was seen most days.

A better month for raptors with a Marsh Harrier on 13th and singles of Common Buzzard on four days. The first Osprey appeared on 2nd followed by further sightings on 3rd, 4th & 5th with another on 15th and two reported on 16th. A Red-footed Falcon noted on 29th, was seen to fly down the reservoir and then across into Carr Wood. (This species comes under the classification of a Record Requiring Special Consideration. These records must be supported by a full description for consideration by the Rarities Sub-committee.) Unfortunately because no description was submitted for this record it cannot be accepted onto the Ogston List.

A Water Rail was found on 2nd at the south end of the reservoir moving north along the water's edge between tree shoots. One Oystercatcher was observed on 27th early morning to the right of the hide. One Little Ringed Plover was seen on 1st, 2nd, 4th & 30th with Dunlin also being found on four dates 1st, 2nd, 19th & 29th. One Redshank was noted on 4th, while Common Sandpiper appeared on three days with a maximum of four on 23rd.

One adult Kittiwake was the only gull of note this month, arriving at 09:14 hrs and departing northwest at 09:28 hrs on 29th. One Common Tern appeared from 23rd with three on 29th and two on 30th.

The first Cuckoo was heard near Carr Wood on 27th and hirundines were passing thru' all month. Sand Martin reached a peak of about two hundred and fifty on 22nd with Swallow reaching a maximum of two hundred of eighty on 15th. House Martin passed thru' in smaller numbers with the largest count of thirty on 29th. Yellow Wagtail moved thru' in singles and pairs with six records all month and a male White Wagtail was noted on 16th. The first Wheatear was found near the members hide on 29th.

The remainder of the migrant warblers arrived during the month with Blackcap from 7th, Willow Warbler on 8th, Whitethroat on 16th, Sedge Warbler from 18th, Grasshopper Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat from 23rd and Garden Warbler finally on 28th. Two Brambling were recorded in Alders Wood on 24th and one Lesser Redpoll was noted on 10th & 22nd. Reed Bunting reached a maximum of eight on 24th.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT MAY 2000 – 74 Species – 29 Days Covered

After a warm, dry start frequent outbreaks of rain and thunderstorms in southern England caused some local flooding. Very sunny in Scotland and N Ireland with many local records broken.

Two Mute Swan on 12th, five Shelduck on 22nd and a 1st summer male Gadwall on 28th & 29th. Tufted Duck all month with a maximum of eight on 9th and two redhead Goosander on 5th. Ruddy Duck were observed most of the month with a maximum three on 25th.

Only one record of a Common Buzzard on 16th and a Hobby was noted early morning on 6th. As usual Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were recorded all month with a maximum of three and two respectively.

Three Oystercatchers were short stayed on 23rd and a single Whimbrel appeared on 1st & 9th. One Greenshank flew thru' early on 11th, calling as it passed over the west bank car park and Common Sandpiper were recorded on three days.

Common Tern were present all month with a maximum of three recorded and were noted on the raft in south bay from 18th. Arctic Tern were observed on passage early morning on four days with two on 1st, four on 6th, six on 8th and three on 11th. A welcome record of a single Turtle Dove on 5th with a singing Cuckoo noted on 1st & 9th. There were single sightings of a Little Owl on three days and a Tawny Owl was heard on 1st. Green Woodpecker was also heard on the evening of 10th. Swift sightings were regular with a peak of sixty-three on 6th.

There was a movement of hirundines most days, with up to a maximum of four hundred House Martins towards the end of the month. Yellow Wagtail were seen passing thru' on 5th & 6th. All the usual warblers were available with a maximum of six singing Sedge Warbler, one singing Lesser Whitethroat, seven singing Whitethroat and five singing Garden Warbler. Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff were under-recorded and three Goldcrest was the only sighting of this species on 17th.

Up to two Spotted Flycatcher were noted around the Brackenfield Church area from 9th, but they were often high in the trees. A maximum of ten Yellowhammer were also counted around the church area on 5th. The usual finches and tits were seen around the bird feeders and up to two Reed Bunting were often close to the hide on the west bank. In general the month appeared to be under-recorded and the species count was lower than normal, making this month rather disappointing after an excellent April.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT JUNE 2000 – 85 Species – 30 Days Covered

Mixed with spells of changeable weather and more settled anticyclonic weather.

A record deep low near the Faeroes produced record-breaking gales (for June) in the north of Scotland, with gusts at Lerwick reaching 80 mph.

Between two to three Mute Swan were present for most of the month, while three Greylag Geese stayed only one day on 15th. A male Gadwall was found on 18th and Teal reached a maximum of six on 26th. Five Shoveler in partial eclipse plumage were noted on 9th and two males were found on 10th. Seven Pochard were seen on 16th, Tufted Duck numbers peaked at twenty on the same day and a male Ruddy Duck was present on 1st, 15th & 16th.

A Common Buzzard was mobbed by corvids over Carr Wood on 27th and Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were present most days as normal.

Oystercatcher appeared on three days with a maximum of three on 7th & 27th and Little Ringed Plover numbers increased towards the end of the month with six on 28th. Lapwing were noted most days with a maximum of forty-five on 16th, however a single Black-tailed Godwit in full summer plumage was a real find on 30th. Two Curlew were seen flying north on 4th and one flew high along the West Bank on 30th. A single Redshank was noted on four days and two Green Sandpiper were together on 19th. Common Sandpiper were observed from 20th with a maximum of two on 29th & 30th.

Common Tern were present all month with a pair in residence on the Chapel Bay raft and one Arctic Tern put in an appearance on 15th. A Cuckoo flew SSW on 11th and two were heard calling on 20th. Both Little Owl and Tawny Owl were recorded through the month and Kingfisher became a regular visitor from 18th. Great Spotted Woodpecker was well represented with a maximum of six on 20th. Swift were recorded in good numbers peaking at three hundred on 13th.

A male Redstart was found on the west bank on 25th but had moved on by 28th. A single Grasshopper Warbler was heard on 21st and Sedge Warbler peaked at eight on 20th. Other warblers were under recorded but a better count on 26th produced two Lesser Whitethroat, ten Whitethroat, one Garden Warbler, four singing Chiffchaff and ten singing Willow Warbler. Spotted Flycatcher were noted around Brackenfield Church and a pair were seen feeding young on 19th. Others were found near Tanyard and Bottom Farm.

Twenty Linnets was a good record on 20th and three Lesser Redpoll were flyovers on 27th. Three Yellowhammer were noted on 26th and Reed Bunting were present for most of the month with a maximum of ten on 20th. The usual Sparrows, Finches and Tits frequented the feeders.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT JULY 2000 – 91 Species – 31 Days Covered

Mostly cool and often cloudy, with occasional rain and thundery showers for first two weeks as fronts moved through south. Sunny and very warm third week. The last week was more unsettled again with some thunder.

Little Grebe were observed most days with a maximum of three towards month end. One nest with eggs was taken over by a Moorhen, but another pair was seen with one young on 31st. Great Crested Grebes were seen daily with a maximum of thirty-four recorded on 15th including eight broods of young. Cormorant numbers have started to increase with a maximum of thirty-two by 31st whilst Grey Heron numbers varied with a maximum of twenty on 31st. A pair of Mute Swans remained all month with three seen on first three days and Canada Geese were recorded regularly with a maximum of seventy on 1st & 31st.

Seven Wigeon of which six were eclipse females were unexpected visitors on 7th whilst Teal were recorded most days with the best count of fifteen on 23rd. Mallard were recorded regularly with one hundred and fifteen on 30th whilst Pochard were only noted on four days the best being six on 1st. Tufted Duck were found regularly with a maximum of twenty-five on 5th and a pair of Common Scoter provided a pleasant diversion on 13th. The only Ruddy Duck of the month was a female on 28th.

Common Buzzard was noted on 6th, 10th & 29th and an Osprey was observed for a short period on 19th. A Hobby seen on four dates at the beginning of the month was twice observed in conflict with a Sparrowhawk. A juvenile Peregrine caused havoc along the west bank on 7th with two more records on 11th & 20th. Kestrel were noted most days with a unusual record of six together on 29th and Sparrowhawk were also regular with the best being three on 7th.

A single Oystercatcher was observed on 25th whilst Little Ringed Plover declined from eleven on 4th to one on 31st. A juvenile Ringed Plover was recorded on 19th, 20th & 21st whilst Lapwing numbers increased to one hundred and thirty-three on 27th. Dunlin were well represented this month with a maximum of four on 2nd & 27th whereas single Snipe were only found on five days. The highlight of the month was several appearances of summer plumaged Black-tailed Godwit one on 1st, five stunning individuals on 10th and two flying through on 15th. Three Whimbrel sightings this month and as usual only fleeting glimpses with three on 19th & 20th and one on 26th. Curlew were seen on four days whilst Redshank was present on six days with a maximum of seven on 14th. Greenshank were noted on four days at the end of the month whilst a single record of Green Sandpiper was in front of the hide on 1st. Common Sandpiper was recorded almost daily with a maximum of three most days and Common Tern were regular with a maximum of eight on 8th & 17th including some juveniles and two chicks on the chapel bay raft. More unusually two Arctic Tern passed through north on 22nd giving excellent views from the hide.

Kingfisher became regular during this period and two could be seen most days around the scrape area. Great Spotted Woodpecker was noted almost daily whilst Green Woodpecker was only recorded on five days at the end of the month. A Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was observed in the orchard of the house opposite north bank car park on both 4th & 5th completing the trio. Five Yellow Wagtail flew north over the public hide on 1st and a juvenile Redstart was found near hide lane on 6th only to be rediscovered in Bert's field on 9th.

Reed Warbler heard singing briefly from reed mace next to the hide was a good record on 20th & 22nd but warbler song generally declined through the month. Spotted Flycatcher were recorded on five days with four counted on 15th including two young being fed in Alders Wood. Finally a large count of forty Greenfinch and sixty Linnets on 15th concluded this months highlights.

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 2000 – 99 Species – 31 Days Covered.

Changeable and mostly warm. Thundery outbreaks alternated with warm dry sunny spells.

Little Grebe were present all month with the best count of four on 30th whilst Great Crested Grebe decreased to a maximum of twenty-two on 9th & 25th. Cormorants were well recorded with fifty-three on 1st and Grey Heron were regular as usual with seventeen on 25th. The pair of Mute Swan were recorded daily until 17th and Canada Geese counts reached one hundred and ninety-eight on 29th.

A single Shelduck was recorded between 7th and 19th whilst eight Gadwall on 18th was an excellent record. Teal were present all month with the best count being seventeen on 25th & 30th and similarly Mallard with the highest count of two hundred and seventy-five on 25th. Three sightings of Shoveler with three on 9th and singles on 10th & 12th whilst Pochard was more difficult with singles only on 5th & 13th. Tufted Duck were noted most days with a good record of twenty-five on 1st including four young but a single redhead Goosander on 21st was an unexpected visitor. Two juvenile Ruddy Duck arrived on 11th followed by singles on 13th and 31st.

An adult female Marsh Harrier, which appeared early afternoon on 30th and again late morning on 31st was a rare sight and another unusual record was a Common Buzzard with a grass snake near carr wood on 31st. An Osprey was seen on 6th, catching a trout, followed by two further records on 27th & 31st. A juvenile Merlin was noted flying southeast on 19th and a juvenile Peregrine Falcon was observed on five dates often chasing gulls and on two occasions sat on the west bank. Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were present most days with an adult Kestrel observed with four juveniles on 13th.

One or two Little Ringed Plover were recorded most days with the last noted on 26th whilst Ringed Plover was found on nine days with a maximum of six on 22nd. Three Golden Plover were noted on 14th and Lapwing were well represented all month with the best count of one hundred and fifty. Six juvenile Curlew Sandpiper arrived on 26th for the day whilst Dunlin were noted on five days with two on 25th. It was an excellent month for Ruff with eight on 14th, two on 22nd, three on 23rd, two on 24th and seven juveniles on 26th. Snipe were seen most days with three on 21st whilst a single Black-tailed Godwit provided a change on 2nd. A Whimbrel was heard calling as it flew through on 3rd and Curlew were noted on three dates, three juveniles on 14th, one on 20th and two on 26th. Redshank were seen on two days and Greenshank were observed daily from mid month with the best count of eight on 26th. Green Sandpiper was recorded on 3rd, 29th & 31st whereas Common Sandpiper were seen daily with the highest count six on 2nd.

Common Tern were still around until mid-month the best being seven on 4th including two juveniles and one Arctic Tern was sat on the west bank also on 4th. A juvenile Cuckoo was an unusual sighting in chapel bay on 23rd as was a Barn Owl, which started showing in front of the members hide from 27th. Little Owl was only noted on four days with a maximum of two whereas one or two Kingfisher were recorded almost daily. Green Woodpecker was been heard throughout and Great Spotted Woodpecker was regular at the feeding station all month.

Hirundine passage started to pick up towards the end of the month and Yellow Wagtail were also noted in small numbers moving south indicating autumn was not far away. Redstart was another bird on the move with one recorded in carr wood on 30th and similarly Wheatear with nine records through the month. Warblers were still singing in their usual haunts and all the regular tits and finches were to be found on the hide feeders. Spotted Flycatcher was observed with young on two occasions and finally a Raven was a good record on 4th.

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT SEPTEMBER 2000 – 102 Species – 30 Days Covered

Generally warm but very unsettled with frequent outbreaks of rain, heavy and thundery at times. Short hot sunny spell second week. Back to sunny periods and heavy showers for the last part of the month.

Little Grebe was recorded most days with a maximum of nine on 12th whilst the highest Great Crested Grebe count was sixteen also on 12th. Cormorant numbers were consistent with thirty-two the best count on 6th but Grey Heron numbers decreased from seventeen on 12th to just three on 29th. Fourteen Greylag Geese were seen heading south early on 27th whilst Canada Geese peaked at two hundred and sixty-eight on 12th. The Little Egret was still present from last month, remaining until late afternoon on 10th, a total stay of fifteen days giving most birders the chance to add it to their Ogston list.

Five Shelduck on 25th was the only sighting of the month whilst Wigeon first appeared from 9th and reached a maximum of eighteen on 12th. Teal were regular most days with the highest counts of eighteen on 1st & 7th and Mallard were present in good numbers with a maximum of three hundred and seventeen on 12th. Two juvenile Pintail were noted on 1st and singles were recorded on 6th & 10th whilst six Pochard on 12th and a single male on 23rd were also only visiting. Tufted Duck decreased from a high of sixteen on 1st to six on 27th and single Ruddy Duck were observed on three days 1st, 2nd & 5th.

During the second half of September an unprecedented influx of Honey Buzzards arrived along the East Coast of Britain. Numbers ran into many hundreds of birds with sightings coming, it seemed, from almost anywhere where a birder bothered to look up. Strong easterly winds from Germany are thought to have caused this phenomenon and Ogston was not to be left out. On the afternoon of 28th at 1545 hrs the first two arrived from the northeast to be followed at 1620 hrs by another. All three gave good views and were watched by several birders in the west bank car park before moving south. It is possible that a further two passed through on 29th & October 1st but these were not confirmed. A Marsh Harrier arrived at 1500 hrs on 29th moving south and could also have been part of the same displacement, followed the next day by a Goshawk sighting. Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were regular all month whilst Common Buzzard was seen on nine days with three on 4th. These birds were circling over carr wood and two were observed 'talon touching'. (they were thought to be juveniles). A visiting Osprey stayed and caught a fish on the morning of 21st and was followed by another sighting late afternoon on 22nd. A Merlin was noted on 16th whilst a Hobby was observed on six days; on three of these dates 5th, 19th & 29th a juvenile was confirmed. This was an exceptional period with nine raptor species being recorded throughout the month..

Two Ringed Plover were recorded on 15th whilst Lapwing were regular with a maximum of one hundred and forty-four on 12th. A single Dunlin appeared on 3rd, 5th & 6th and Ruff on two days, two on 4th and one on 19th. Snipe showed on eight days and a Curlew was noted on 29th. Redshank was present most days with mainly singles but eight on 10th was unusual.. Greenshank was daily with the highest count being five on 2nd and Common Sandpiper was noted most days with a maximum of four on 1st. A Kittiwake was a welcome visitor on 1st along with a juvenile Black Tern at mid-day. Two further Black Tern were observed on 21st and Common Tern were seen on three dates the last being two on 21st.

The Barn Owl continued to be seen perched in front of the hide or searching for prey along the west bank during the evening on seven dates up to eighteenth when it was last seen. Little and Tawny Owl were regularly recorded during the month with a maximum of two and three respectively. Kingfisher was observed daily with highest count three of on 13th showing mainly at

milltown inlet or on the kingfisher pond itself. Green Woodpecker was heard on two days whereas Great Spotted Woodpecker was recorded almost daily. The last sighting of Sand Martin was three on 8th whilst Yellow Wagtail continued to move through in small numbers all month. Other movement included a Redstart on 2nd, a Stonechat on 30th and Wheatear on five days.

Warblers were on the move also with the last dates as follows; Lesser Whitethroat & Whitethroat on 1st, Garden Warbler on 9th, Blackcap on 15th, Willow Warbler on 20th & Sedge Warbler on 29th, whilst the last two Spotted Flycatcher departed on 13th . An unusual sighting was a Marsh Tit seen and heard well in front of the west bank car park on 9th with another good record two Tree Sparrow on 16th. Finally Siskin and Linnets were seen in small numbers through the month whilst Reed Bunting was only noted on five days.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT OCTOBER 2000 – 93 Species – 31 Days Covered

Very unsettled. Heavy rainfall in the second week brought flooding to Kent, Sussex and southwest Scotland. A severe storm at the end of the month brought more heavy rainfall and strong winds causing widespread damage and flooding. There were snow showers in parts of northern England.

Little Grebe numbers declined with a maximum of six on 19th whilst Great Crested Grebe remained constant with the best count eight on four days, 15th, 19th, 24th & 25th. Cormorant numbers were down with a maximum of eighteen on 6th and Grey Heron continued to decrease from nine on 1st to one on 30th. Two adult Mute Swan visited on 11th but left NNE that evening. Canada Geese were present most days with the best count of two hundred and ninety late in the month on 30th.

Wigeon were present almost daily with a maximum of forty on 8th and a pair of Gadwall was a welcome diversion on 18th. Teal were seen most days with a maximum of twenty on 30th whilst Mallard were present in good numbers all month with the best count of two hundred on 25th. A single female Pintail was present on 13th; two were noted 19th and from 22nd to month end one was recorded almost daily. One Shoveler visited on 14th followed by four on 18th whilst Pochard were seen on six days with the best count of six on 12th & 15th. Small numbers of Tufted Duck were noted on four days and one drake Goldeneye was found on 28th. An unexpected visitor was a male eclipse Red-breasted Merganser on 15th whilst Goosander were noted on two days with the highest count of two on 27th.

A ringtail Hen Harrier flew over the reservoir at 1045 hrs on 30th, mobbed by corvids and eventually dropped down into the valley behind the dam wall before leaving south. A female Merlin was another good find on 3rd in willows to the right of the hide. There were three further records during the month, one on 10th, a female again on 12th eating prey near the hide and a final sighting on 13th to the left of the dam wall. Common Buzzard was seen on four days with a maximum of two on 1st whilst Sparrowhawk and Kestrel were seen most days with maximums of three and two respectively. Snipe were only noted on 7th & 9th and a single Redshank was recorded on 17th. A Black-tailed Godwit provided a diversion on 15th whilst the last Common Sandpiper was seen on 1st. Up to a maximum of two Little Owl were seen on several days whilst Tawny Owl were recorded on five days with four heard calling at dusk on 19th. Kingfisher was present on the scrape most days with two seen on 1st & 30th. Green Woodpecker was only noted on four days but Great Spotted Woodpecker was regular around the feeders throughout the month.

The weather was suitable for a check on visible migration on 3rd and the following notable records were taken at carr pond; two Skylarks, thirteen Swallows, two House Martin, two hundred and forty-one Meadow Pipits, forty-seven Pied Wagtail, one hundred and fifty-three Siskin and twenty-one Lesser Redpoll. The final sightings of Swallow and House Martin were recorded on 11th. A juvenile Whinchat was found in front of the members hide on 5th and a Stonechat was in front of the public hide on 2nd. Redwing started appearing from the 25th and the first two Fieldfare were recorded on 31st. A late male Blackcap was noted on 15th along with the last Chiffchaff on the same day. Brambling started appearing with a flock of thirteen on 30th and three more south on 31st. A flock of between twenty and thirty Goldfinch were regular along the west bank with smaller groups of Linnet. Finally a good addition to the year list was a Twite seen and heard well south at 0830 hrs on 31st.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT NOVEMBER 2000 – 80 Species – 30 Days Covered

Very unsettled with periods of persistent rainfall, heavy at times. Temperatures were mostly near normal with some overnight frost mid-month but very mild at the month end. In England and Wales this has been the wettest autumn, since records began in 1766.

Little Grebe numbers were in single figures with a maximum of seven recorded on 1st whilst Great Crested Grebe were similar with a maximum of six on 6th. Cormorant were seen daily with a maximum of twenty-six on 16th and Grey Heron continued to decrease with a maximum of three on 3rd. One Mute Swan flew through on 19th and two unidentified Swan species were through northwest at 0930 hrs on 25th. Canada Geese were seen regularly all month with the highest count being three hundred and ten on 4th.

The only Shelduck was recorded on 7th whilst Wigeon numbers increased gradually to a maximum of fifty-six also on 7th. Gadwall visited on three dates, singles on 4th & 12th and a pair on 7th whilst Teal were evident in small numbers all month with a peak of sixteen on 6th. Mallard continued in good numbers with the best count of one hundred and ninety-five on 3rd and a female Pintail was seen most days between 2nd and 16th. A male Shoveler was recorded on 7th and a pair on 10th. A juvenile Red-crested Pochard was a surprise vagrant found on 5th possibly a visitor from Carsington whilst Pochard were seen all month with a maximum of fifty-eight on 6th. Tufted Duck were noted most days with the best count being eighteen on 5th and it was a good month for Goldeneye with sightings on eight days. A site record was achieved on 7th with twenty-six counted, seven drakes and nineteen females. Several good records were noted during this period as a deep low moved from the southwest through to the north sea from 5th to 8th. Goosander were increasingly noted with records on eight days the highest count of four on 30th and Ruddy Duck were seen on two days with three on 5th and two on 7th.

A quiet month for raptors with Common Buzzard on five dates and Sparrowhawk most days with two on four dates. Kestrel was almost daily with a maximum of four counted on a walk around the reservoir on 3rd. Lapwings were in good numbers until 18th with the best count of one hundred and sixty eight on 3rd and nine Dunlin and a late Curlew were recorded flying south on 22nd. Single Snipe were noted on 16th & 29th and Woodcock were seen leaving Carr Wood on 19th & 23rd. The gull roost began to build from 9th and several Yellow-legged Gulls were recorded from that date as follows. Two adults on 9th, singles on 12th, 13th & 14th, 20th & 21st, two adults & 3rd winter on 24th, three adults & two 3rd winter on 25th and finally single adults on 26th & 29th. Caspian Gulls were found towards the end of month with a 1st winter on 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th and 29th.

Little and Tawny Owl were seen or heard most days and Kingfisher was noted regularly around the reservoir particularly by the scrape. Great Spotted Woodpecker was almost daily with the best count of three on 14th. Some passage continued with three Skylark counted over on 4th and singles on three other days whilst Meadow Pipit continued in small groups until 12th. The last Swallow was recorded on 3rd and a late Chiffchaff was found on 12th heard calling in willows at Milltown Inlet. A single Raven was recorded on 21st while Siskin were found on several days with a flock of thirty on 8th and 28th. Lesser Redpoll were seen in small groups, the best a flock of fifteen on 3rd whereas Reed Bunting was hard to find with only a single record on 14th.

Richard Wesley

OGSTON MONTHLY REPORT DECEMBER 2000 – 74 Species – 29 Days Covered

Very mild and very wet first half, with frequent gales and squally showers. Some fog and frost third week. Colder and more wintry weather arrived during the last week with some heavy snow and clear skies led to some severe overnight frosts.

Little Grebe numbers were in single figures with a maximum of three recorded on 2nd & 9th whilst Great Crested Grebe reached double figures with a count of eleven on 30th. Cormorant were present throughout with a maximum of twenty-one on 26th and Grey Heron numbers remained low with a best count of four on 14th. Three Mute Swan visited on 16th with two adults and a juvenile whilst single Bewick's Swan were recorded on 19th & 28th. In total four skeins of Pink-footed Geese flew through this month with two skeins totalling three hundred and sixty west at between 1125-1130 hrs on 2nd, one skein of fifty-eight west on 15th and finally one skein of eighty through southwest at 1600 hrs on 16th. One Greylag Goose was noted as a fly through on 24th and Canada Geese were regularly recorded again this month with a maximum of one hundred and ninety-eight on 27th.

As colder weather moved south from the northeast Shelduck visited in two large groups with twelve on 23rd and thirteen on 24th. This also coincided with a short visit from a single male Common Scoter on 24th. Wigeon numbers increased as the month progressed with a peak count of sixty towards month end. Teal were evident most days with a maximum of twenty-six on 22nd and similarly Mallard with the best count of forty-six on 9th. Shoveler visited on two days with one male and four females on 7th and two females on 12th whilst Pochard were daily with a maximum of sixteen on 22nd. Tufted Duck were only recorded on three days with the best count being seven on 20th. Goldeneye were visitors on four dates with five on 16th, one on 17th & 20th and four on 21st. Goosander were observed most days the highest count being eight on 27th whilst an unusual sight was a single female Red-breasted Merganser on 22nd. Finally for wildfowl a single female Ruddy Duck was noted on 15th.

A single Common Buzzard was recorded on 9th & 15th whilst Sparrowhawk was found most days with a maximum of two on 9th and Kestrel similarly with two counted on 9th & 14th. A welcome sight was eight Golden Plover through southeast on 1st and one south on 28th as these were the only records of the year. Snipe peaked at eleven on 26th and a Bar-tailed Godwit paid a short visit on 21st before leaving southwest the second record of the year.

Gull roosters were kept occupied this month with plenty of variety. An adult Mediterranean Gull showed well on 8th, 28th & 29th whilst a 1st winter Little Gull was noted in the roost on six dates 6th, 7th and 12th to 15th. The star of the show however was an adult Bonaparte's Gull, which was first found on Boxing Day in the roost and then repeated on 27th, firstly in fields behind the New Napoleon and later again on the reservoir. This was the first record since 1995. Caspian Gull was found on six dates with a 1st winter on 1st & 2nd, a 2nd winter on 14th, 15th & 16th and an adult on 29th. Yellow-legged Gulls were not to be outdone with an adult & 1st winter on 1st, a 2nd winter on 2nd, an adult on 13th & 14th, a 2nd winter on 16th & 24th and to finish the month three on 29th with two adults & a 2nd winter. Finally an adult Iceland Gull on 15th capped an exceptional month for some of our rarer gulls.

Little Owl was only noted on two days whilst Tawny Owl was recorded on six days. Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen daily with three maximum on 24th & 26th and Kingfisher was recorded on the scrape on five dates 2nd, 12th, 16th, 25th & 27th. A Stonechat gave good views in front of the old oak tree on 29th, but apparently too good as it was taken by a Sparrowhawk late afternoon. The only other record of note, was seventy Siskin seen feeding on alders in Carr Wood on 7th.

Richard Wesley