

December 2011 Sightings at Wormwood Scrubs



Rose-ringed Parakeet (D. Fettes)

This was the poorest December list on The Scrubs – ever!

After such a promising start, 2011 started to peter out during October and ground to a crashing halt by the year's end. This is the story of the year.

January opened with a **Mediterranean Gull**, our second ever **Yellowhammer** and an unidentified species of godwit seen distantly flying into the sun. The **Mediterranean Gull** lingered into February – the same month that saw the first appearances of **Peregrine** and **Lesser Redpoll**.

We had an exceptionally early migrant **Common Buzzard** drifting over during March plus our first ever **Teal** and second record of **Brambling**, a male that hung out in a Braybrook Street garden. Some early summer migrants also appeared including **Swallows** and **Northern Wheatear**.

April is historically *the* month to be birding at the Scrubs and it didn't disappoint with two separate singing **Nightingales** being the main stars. The supporting acts included a **Shoveler**, a pair of **Shelduck**, a couple of **Common Buzzards**, a party of **Bar-tailed Godwits**, two **Turtle Doves**, as many as six **Common Redstarts**, **Northern Wheatears**, **Whinchats** and an exceptionally early singing **Garden Warbler**. As if that haul wasn't enough an unprecedented four **Ring Ouzels** also passed through.

There was no let up in May because we recorded our first **Quail**, more **Shelduck** and **Common Buzzard**, our second **Red Kite**, a **Hobby** plus a sprinkling of quality migrants like **Yellow Wagtail**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and yet more **Northern Wheatears**. Early June was sizzled with the sound of

the previous month's singing **Quail** that made its presence known for just the first day of the month. We added **Ringed Plover**, yet another new bird, to The Scrubs list plus watched a solitary **Little Egret** and more **Hobbys**.

July was quiet by comparison with multiple **Peregrine** sightings, a **Mediterranean Gull**, and an early **Yellow Wagtail** and **Goldcrest** being the highlights. Autumn migration kicked in during August when we witnessed larger than normal numbers of **Sand Martin**, **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Common Redstart**, **Garden** and **Reed Warblers**. We also came across our first **Coal Tit** ever. Things were still looking good during September when we discovered another new bird for the site – a **Nuthatch**. Our third **Shoveler** flew over plus a slew of migrants moved through in larger numbers including **Swallow**, **Sand Martin**, more **Common Redstart**, **Whinchat**, **Yellow Wagtail** and late **Willow Warblers**. September scarcities were also present including **House Martins**, **Spotted Flycatchers** and **Reed Warblers**.

Things started slowing down majorly during October but we still managed to see another **Ring Ouzel**, **Coal Tit**, a passing **Common Buzzard**, a brief **Stonechat** and a **Bullfinch**. The only thing November added was the largest number of **Egyptian Geese** ever seen over The Scrubs....and then we slipped into December.

We also face the New Year in the knowledge that we have lost our arguably best Scrubber, Neville Smith. Nev, the finder of our long staying **Quail**, has moved out of the area so now we have to work trebly harder to fill his boots.

If you are looking for a patch to indulge in some potentially rewarding birding look no further. We at Wormwood Scrubs need you!

Contributors: Rob Ayers, Matthew Bournat, Charlie Farrell, David Jeffreys, Neville Smith, Bob Stills, Paul Thomas et al.

Cormorant

Two birds went over on the 14th and single on the 19th.

Sparrowhawk

A lone bird was reported on the 17th.

Common Gull

Very small numbers were reported this month due to poor coverage from the resident Scrubbers. The five or six birds reported paled into insignificance when compared to the 150 or so birds that were counted during December 2010.

Wood Pigeon

The movement of birds that we noted since late October continued into December with at least 560 passing over on the 9th.

Rose-ringed Parakeet

At least 750 were counted on the 19th.

Green Woodpecker

The usual bird was seen and heard during the month, however, two were recorded on the 11th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker

A singleton was seen on several occasions during the month and two birds were seen on the 17th.

Meadow Pipit

Very few were reported with the peak count being just six birds on the 9th. The weather during the last two December's was far harsher than this year and as a consequence there were far more birds around. Last year there were at least 40 birds roaming the area.

Wren

Around four were seen on the 14th.

Mistle Thrush

A male was discovered singing on the 11th.

Fieldfare

A single bird was seen on Christmas Eve.

Goldcrest

A couple of birds were seen with Long-tailed Tits on the 9th and Christmas Eve whilst a singleton was found on the 17th.

Long-tailed Tit

At least 19 were seen on the 24th.

Magpie

A respectable count of 27 was achieved on the 19th.

Jay

Two birds were noted on the 9th.

Chaffinch

At least six birds were found on the 9th.

Goldfinch

A flock of 16 birds were at large on the 9th.

Greenfinch

Ten birds were counted on the 14th - quite a high number these days.

Bullfinch

A single female was in Martin Bell's Wood on the 17th.

Reed Bunting

A female was present on the 19th.

2011 Year List

- 1. Cormorant**
- 2. Little Egret**
- 3. Grey Heron**
- 4. Mute Swan**
- 5. Greylag**
- 6. Canada Goose**
- 7. Egyptian Goose**
- 8. Shelduck**
- 9. Mallard**
- 10. Shoveler**
- 11. Teal**
- 12. Red Kite**
- 13. Common Buzzard**
- 14. Sparrowhawk**
- 15. Kestrel**
- 16. Hobby**
- 17. Peregrine**
- 18. Quail**
- 19. Ringed Plover**
- 20. Lapwing**
- 21. Bar-tailed Godwit**
- 22. Woodcock**

23. Snipe
24. Black-headed Gull
25. Common Gull
26. Mediterranean Gull
27. Herring Gull
28. Lesser Black-back
29. Great Black-back
30. Common Tern
31. Feral Pigeon
32. Stock Dove
33. Woodpigeon
34. Collared Dove
35. Turtle Dove
36. Swift
37. Rose-ringed Parakeet
38. Green Woodpecker
39. Great Spotted Woodpecker
40. Skylark
41. Sand Martin
42. Swallow
43. House Martin
44. Meadow Pipit
45. Tree Pipit
46. Pied Wagtail
47. Yellow Wagtail
48. Grey Wagtail
49. Wren
50. Dunnock

- 51. Robin**
- 52. Nightingale**
- 53. Common Redstart**
- 54. Northern Wheatear**
- 55. Whinchat**
- 56. Stonechat**
- 57. Song Thrush**
- 58. Redwing**
- 59. Fieldfare**
- 60. Mistle Thrush**
- 61. Blackbird**
- 62. Ring Ouzel**
- 63. Garden Warbler**
- 64. Blackcap**
- 65. Lesser Whitethroat**
- 66. Common Whitethroat**
- 67. Sedge Warbler**
- 68. Reed Warbler**
- 69. Willow Warbler**
- 70. Chiffchaff**
- 71. Goldcrest**
- 72. Spotted Flycatcher**
- 73. Coal Tit**
- 74. Great Tit**
- 75. Blue Tit**
- 76. Long-tailed Tit**
- 77. Nuthatch**
- 78. Jay**

- 79. Magpie**
- 80. Jackdaw**
- 81. Carrion Crow**
- 82. Starling**
- 83. House Sparrow**
- 84. Chaffinch**
- 85. Brambling**
- 86. Linnet**
- 87. Lesser Redpoll**
- 88. Goldfinch**
- 89. Greenfinch**
- 90. Siskin**
- 91. Bullfinch**
- 92. Yellowhammer**
- 93. Reed Bunting**

93 species for the year

(98 species in November 2010 & 94 in November 2009)