

## **Berkshire Birding Highlights 2009/10**

Starting in December 2009, the 17<sup>th</sup> saw the first report of BITTERN returning to Dinton Pastures. BITTERNS remained on the site until March, with up to 3 being present, with at least 3 others being reported elsewhere in the County.

Also in December, a juvenile GREAT NORTHERN DIVER was at Brimpton Lakes, whilst a lucky Charvil resident unwittingly photographed a GREAT WHITE EGRET on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> December. A total of 12 BEWICK SWANS during the month was a very good number for Berkshire. A handsome drake FERRUGINOUS DUCK only stayed for a day at Dinton Pastures, as did the drake RED BREASTED MERGANSER at Woolhampton.

January began with a ring-tailed HEN HARRIER in the Bury Down area which stayed into February. A Caversham resident recorded a MEALY REDPOLL in their back garden – a new garden record for them.

Three WHITE FRONTED GEESE enlivened the Charvil area for the last two weeks of February.

In March; another juvenile GREAT NORTHERN DIVER turned up, this time at Queen Mother Reservoir. This one had a bill deformity, giving it a definite cross-billed appearance.

The first Osprey of the year flew over Moor Green Lakes on the 18<sup>th</sup> March, whilst on the 20<sup>th</sup> an ALPINE SWIFT was located in the Borough Marsh/Wargrave area. The Swift was very mobile, and only two observers were fortunate to connect.

April – a month of avian ‘brief visits’ included our only PIED FLYCATCHER of the year at Padworth.

A drake SMEW at Moatlands on the 21<sup>st</sup> May surprised everyone. HOBBIES were back in near-normal numbers, but also noticeable were good numbers, despite the very harsh winter, of KINGFISHERS, DARTFORD and CETTIS WARBLERS. Breeding records for these species will make interesting reading. Both the TEMMINCK STINT and KITTIWAKE at Hosehill on the afternoon of the 28<sup>th</sup> May were one day birds.

Berkshires first and second breeding records of OYSTERCATCHER occurred this year at Theale Main and Twyford.

June and July are normally light months for birds. Four different RUFF were certainly the highlights for August.

September highlights were 2 reports of GANNET, both on the 26<sup>th</sup>, and at least 4 OSPREY moving through.

October, with another GANNET, and an AVOCET which stayed for 5 days, were both eclipsed by the first BITTERN of the winter being seen at Dinton Pastures on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

November 1<sup>st</sup> saw a brief visit by a male BLACK REDSTART to Hungerford, and finally on the 6<sup>th</sup>, the much expected first WAXWING arrival of the autumn, at Worlds End in the Bracknell area.

Ken Moore  
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