

# DEESIDE NATURALISTS SOCIETY BIRD REPORT, 2017

## COVERING THE CONNAH'S QUAY NATURE RESERVE AND THE RSPB RESERVE AT OAKENHOLT MARSH.

By: Glenn Morris, March, 2018.

Access to CQNR, its five bird hides and other facilities is available 24/7 (with minor exceptions) exclusively to members of the Deeside Naturalists Society. Membership details and application forms can be found at [www.deesidenaturalists.org.uk](http://www.deesidenaturalists.org.uk)



Two forms of Great White Egret (Photo: Peter and Sue Haslem).

The bird species list for the Connah's Quay Reserve (inc. RSPB Oakenholt Marsh) has now reached over 235 in over 40 years of bird recording, although this total does include about 16 that are likely or definite escapes from captivity.

This year 161 species were recorded: Two new species were a **Pallid Harrier** seen across the river from West Hide and a **Hooded Crow** photographed on the grazing fields. Other notable events included an Iceland Gull, another Green-winged Teal and the return of Cattle Egret, Shag and Ring Ouzel, with regular visits by up to 4 Great White Egrets. The best autumn gales for a long time brought rarely-seen sea-birds like Pomarine and Arctic Skuas, Leach's Petrel, Manx Shearwater, Kittiwake and Gannet close to the West Hide.

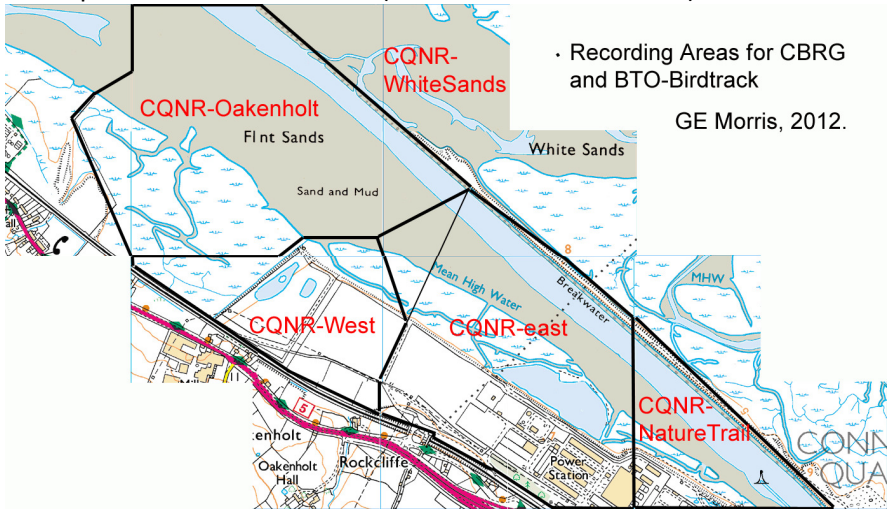
Please continue to make photographic records of unusual sightings for ID purposes, whenever possible. This practice is thankfully on the increase.

**The Birds of Connah's Quay Nature Reserve and Oakenholt Marsh** by Glenn Morris (order for £5.30 inc P&P from [glennmanc@hotmail.com](mailto:glennmanc@hotmail.com))

This 70-page paperback guide to all 233 species of bird seen on the Reserve over the past 40 years (9x6 inch with full colour cover photos) is still available on back-order. Reserve Map, a brief history of the Reserve and list of mammals.



Starting in 2012, we have been entering all DNS records into BTO's BirdTrack. This system is based on 1x1km squares, but these don't translate easily into obvious landscape features on the Reserve. The divisions shown below are a compromise between the exact km square boundaries and what are generally perceived as different areas of the estuary. Counts in the text are the sum of all four Reserve areas. Divisions are arbitrary since birds move with the changing tides and the south part of Oakenholt Marsh (within CQNR-west below) has few birds.



**CQNR-Oakenholt** includes all the “birdy” areas of Oakenholt Marsh as far back as the rows of fence posts and most of the mudflats visible from the West Hide as far as the revetment. **CQNR-West** includes the fly ash lagoon area, the papermill stream and its banks, the grazing fields west of the helipad road and the area of marsh just below and to the rear of the West Hide. **CQNR-East** includes the bunded pool area, the river between the helipad and the Field Study centre, the grazing field east of helipad road, the Rockcliffe woods and the most of the Power Station. **CQNR-Nature Trail** includes all the area east of the Field Study Centre, including the river around the wooden piles used by Cormorants and any activity above and beyond the revetment. West Hide records for across the river on Parkgate marshes are recorded under **CQNR-White Sands**.

## THE SPECIES LIST FOR 2017.

Birds seen in less than 5 previous years on the Reserve are shown in **bold** face. Birds that nested this year as shown as **(B)**.

The tables show the **maximum count** for each month, except for raptors where the **total sightings** per month is shown.

### Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) **(B)**

A pair on the fly ash lagoon raised 6 young first seen on May 20<sup>th</sup> and 8 was also the highest count. The gradual loss of cygnets over time has been a puzzle for some years but may have been solved happily when 4 cygnets were seen passing through the fence onto Oakenholt Marsh on June 26<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	2	2	2	6	8	8	2	1	2	5	2	0

### Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*) Escape.

Two on March 2<sup>nd</sup> (Burton Marsh), Sep 10<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> were the only records (all P&SH).

### Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*).

Four on Feb 10<sup>th</sup> was the only reserve record, apart from 3 on Burton Marsh on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> (both P&SH).

### Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

There were 4 on Feb 10<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and Nov 6<sup>th</sup> (PDS), 2 on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> and singles on Mar 23<sup>rd</sup> and Nov 7<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

### Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

These birds can be seen (with a telescope) most of the winter across the river towards Burton. The highest count of Burton/Parkgate birds made from the Reserve was 3,500 on Mar 23<sup>rd</sup> (P&SH). The highest count for birds on the Reserve itself was 2,000 on Oakenholt Marsh on Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH). Wintering birds were recorded until Apr 25<sup>th</sup> (SS) and they

returned on Sep 10<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). In the Table below, records for the two sides of the River Dee are shown separately.

Neston/Parkgate

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	120	0	3500	2000	0	0	0	0	70	70	2850	0
Oakenholt												
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	400	0	400	0	0	0	0	0	2	2000	0

#### White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

Two records of singles this year, one from across the river on Feb 28th and a bird of the nominate European ssp on Oakenholt Marsh on Oct 30th (both P&SH), still present on Oct 31st (DW).

#### Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

There were 17 records year in nearly every month with a maximum of 30 flying over on Aug 31<sup>st</sup> (P&SH).

#### Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) (B)

At least one pair nested successfully this year, on the fly ash lagoon island, when 2 chicks were seen on May 25<sup>th</sup> (RR). Canada Geese can be seen on Oakenholt Marsh or the fly ash lagoon during most of the year.

The highest count of 2,347 on Oakenholt Marsh was on Oct 31<sup>st</sup> (DW).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	110	600	170	22	250	400	400	700	2000	2347	2200	2000

#### Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

There were records of this species, with 2 birds seen nearly every month of the year. The highest count was 19 on Nov 24<sup>th</sup> (DW) but double figures were reached 11 times between Oct 31<sup>st</sup> and Dec 30<sup>th</sup>. The birds may come from the large feral flocks in Lancashire.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	11	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	17	19	18

#### Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla*)

Two birds were present on Oakenholt Marsh during Oct 20<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, one light-bellied from Greenland and one dark-bellied from Russia (GR, PDS, P&SH). Singles were seen on Apr 2<sup>nd</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, Oct 5<sup>th</sup> and Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*)

A “hybrid” was present between Jun 20<sup>th</sup> and Jul 9<sup>th</sup> this year (P&SH)

### Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*)

Three were seen across the river on Neston Marsh on Oct 4<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

### Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) **(B)**

Four ducklings were seen on Oakenholt Marsh on June 6<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). The highest logbook count of 1200 on Oakenholt Marsh was made during the summer moult on Jun 8<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	66	210	45	152	325	1200	600	170	150	1000	250	50

### Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

A winter visitor to grassland around the fly ash lagoon and bunded pools, but once again up to 4 remained throughout the summer. The highest count of 4000 was on Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> (DW) and is similar to last year’s record number for the Reserve.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	960	700	336	47	3	5	3	2	5	512	4000	254

### Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

There were 32 records of 1-6 birds, mainly on the fly ash lagoon, but a lone male frequented the bunded pools late in the year. The highest counts of 6 were made on Mar 14<sup>th</sup> and Apr 28<sup>th</sup> (both P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	6	4	6	6	4	2	1	0	3	0	1	1

### Teal (*Anas crecca*)

These frequent the mudflats, lagoon and bunded pools for most of the year. The highest count of 1020 was on Sep 18<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). This is about average if we don’t include the bumper years with huge numbers, such as 6000 in 2015 and 3000 in 2014.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	504	130	262	164	0	0	12	500	2210	1316	670	750

### Green-winged Teal (*Anas carolinensis*)

One on the bunded pools on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> (JR). Males have a vertical white bar, instead of the horizontal one. A North American species, originally.

### Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) (B)

At least one pair bred successfully with up to 10 chicks on the fly-ash lagoon on Jun 2<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH). The highest numbers usually arrive for the summer moult and the highest count of 400 on Jun 17<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) was less than average for recent years.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	54	122	7	100	298	400	180	90	132	88	56	20

### Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

This sporadic winter visitor is usually seen on the river from West Hide, sometimes in very large numbers, but rarely staying long. The highest count of 2,000 was on both Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> and Mar 3<sup>rd</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	402	2000	2000	200	0	0	0	2	0	800	34	5



Photo: P&SH

### Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

The highest counts on the fly ash lagoon were of 25 in Jan and 21 on Dec 12<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). There were 27 records altogether.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	25	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	8	10	21

### Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) (B)

All records are from the fly ash lagoon, where two pairs bred successfully this year, one with 8 chicks and another with at least 5. The highest count of 15 on July 26<sup>th</sup> included 11 chicks (P&SH). The highest adult count was 11 birds on Mar 14<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	4	10	11	8	8	4	15	2	6	1	2	0

### Scaup (*Aythya marila*)

One on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> (SS) and two on Nov 7<sup>th</sup> (observer unknown; KD?).

### Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

An amazing year for a sea duck with the highest ever count of 100 during NW gales on Oct 5<sup>th</sup> after an earlier count of 20 on Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> (both P&SH). Further singles on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> and Nov 4<sup>th</sup> (PDS, P&SH).

### Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

Only one record: a female on the river on Nov 4<sup>th</sup> (GR). Sad, for a duck that was once regular and in good numbers on the bunded pools.

### Redbreasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

Only one record from the West Hide on Aug 9<sup>th</sup> (SS).

### Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

Seven records of 1-2 birds in Apr, Aug and Oct-Dec.

### Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Ten records this year of 1-2 birds, Mar-May, Oct and Dec.

### Leach's Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*)

Two were seen near Flint castle on Oct 5<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and two more from West Hide on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> (PDS, P&SH). Another migrant marine species brought up the estuary by severe gales and high tides.



Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*)

Autumn gales brought one close to the West Hide on Sep 11<sup>th</sup> (GEM) and again on Oct 5<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).



(Photo: GEM)

Gannet (*Morus bassanus*)

Gales and high tides also favour sightings of this seabird. The first was an adult on Sep 11<sup>th</sup> (GEM), while subsequent records on Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> were of juveniles (PDS, P&SH).



(Photo:GEM)

### Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

The highest count of 76 on Mar 14<sup>th</sup> included birds on the Nature Trail and on Oakenholt Marsh (GEM). There are usually 20-30 birds at this time of year on the groynes in the river opposite the Nature Trail; the highest count there was 66 on Mar 14<sup>th</sup> (GEM).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	34	48	76	20	12	8	32	35	40	58	50	50

### Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*)

One was seen on Oakenholt Marsh on Dec 7<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). Only the 6<sup>th</sup> Reserve record, it was last reported 10 years ago.

### Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)

One was present on the bunded pools on Aug 13<sup>th</sup> (JR, P&SH), the second Reserve record. It was flushed by a Peregrine (DeeWeb).



Photo: P&SH

### Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

This species nests at Burton across the estuary and can be found throughout the year on Oakenholt Marsh and the bunded pools, where sizeable post-breeding numbers congregate in autumn. The highest count of 75 on Sep 3<sup>rd</sup>, which included counts from both West Hide and bunded pools, was a record number for the Reserve (GEM).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	2	1	10	8	5	19	29	60	75	25	9	8

### Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*)

There were an incredible 70 non-duplicated logbook records of this species this year, some from across the river (with a telescope) but many of them from the Reserve itself, both Oakenholt Marsh and the bunded pools. The highest count was 6 across the river (DW, P&SH), but up to 4 separate birds were also present on the Reserve on July 31<sup>st</sup> (P&SH). The latter included both grey-billed and yellow-billed birds in June/July (the bill darkens when acquiring summer plumage: **Cover Photo**).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	0	0	1	0	3	4	4	6	2	4	1

### Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

This species is found all year round, peaking in autumn, with a maximum of 12 on Aug 31<sup>st</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	6	7	6	10	1	7	6	12	8	7	7	6

### Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) **(B)**

At least one pair bred successfully on the fly ash lagoon this year; 3 chicks were first seen on Jul 4<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). Once again, there was a preference for the bunded pools from Sep onwards, with maximum 11 present there on Oct 31<sup>st</sup> (DW).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	7	7	5	6	5	5	5	6	10	11	9	8

### Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

There were 50 records this year, twice as many as in 2016, but the maximum count of 6 on Oct 5<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) was lower than last year's 8 and much lower than the count of 30 in 1988.

They are almost invariably brought up the river by high tides.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	3	2	1	3	4	0	4	1	0	6	4	1

### Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

Recorded again in almost every month of the year but the 27 sightings were only half as many as last year. However, the number seen together

increased to 4 (including one male) over Burton Marsh on Sep 9<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). Most records were from the marsh across the river, but there were 6-7 sightings on our side of the river, including 2 together over the fly ash lagoon on Feb 27<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). Once again, birds were seen in winter, as well as during the autumn migration.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	1	2	4	2	0	8	5	3	9	6	2	0

#### Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

The 14 records of single birds this year included 7 of males and were mostly in Nov-Dec. Although many of the records were from across the river, 3 of them were from the bunded pool hides. Cautious optimism at best for a seriously-threatened species in the UK.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6

#### **Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*). NEW SPECIES**

The famous bird from Burton Marsh was seen flying along the Welsh part of the Marsh on Sep 30<sup>th</sup> and again on Oct 1<sup>st</sup> (P&SH). There is no evidence that it actually crossed the river, but we welcome it as an honorary member.

#### Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*).

One was seen flying over Rockcliffe on May 26<sup>th</sup> and 3 together there on Jul 25<sup>th</sup> (both DeeWeb)

#### Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Back to 34 sightings of singles this year (17 in 2016, 25 in 2015) and nearly all post-breeding as usual. Twice seen with a kill, one of which was a Woodpigeon.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	3	7	8	7	4

#### Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

The maximum count was of 7 in the air together on Sep 28<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). The total of 96 birds (72 records) recorded during the year is the largest number yet recorded, though the Reserve was visited often this year.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	1	1	8	7	6	6	3	21	22	7	5	10

### Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

There were 53 sightings this year, the best year since 1989 with a high count of 4 individuals on Sep 7<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). As usual, most records were during the autumn post-breeding and passage period.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	1	0	0	4	0	3	9	12	19	11	4	1

### Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

Only 14 sightings altogether (12 singles and one record of 2 birds) and 3 of these sightings were from across the river. On Feb 15<sup>th</sup>, one was seen trying to take a Twite from the ringing trap on the fly ash lagoon (IMS) and another was seen to kill a Dunlin on Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH). One was photographed perching on a stick after terrifying all the waders on the bunded pools on Dec 7<sup>th</sup> (GEM: photo below).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	3	2



Photo: GEM

### Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

There were 8 records in May-Jun and Aug-Sep this year, though 3 of these were from across the river. One was perched on the fence outside West Hide on May 2<sup>nd</sup> (LC), one was catching dragonflies on Sep 20<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and another caught a swallow on Jun 4<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

### Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)

The 65 sightings are about average and include one of a adult pair on Aug 11<sup>th</sup> (PDS) and another of an adult and juvenile perched together on Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> (AD). A juvenile killed a Greenshank on Sep 23<sup>rd</sup> (AD) and there were three more records of unidentified kills. The sightings show the post-breeding peak typical of most raptor species.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	2	0	2	6	0	5	6	10	10	13	12	6

### Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

There were 5 sightings of singles on the fly ash lagoon this year on Jan 30<sup>th</sup>, Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mar 5<sup>th</sup>, Nov 18<sup>th</sup> and Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> (SS, GEM, JR, P&SH, PDS).

### Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) (B)

There appeared to be an occupied nest on the fly ash lagoon, but successful breeding was only proven on the Study Centre pool for the first time, when a pair with a well-grown juvenile was seen on July 6<sup>th</sup> (GEM). The count of 27 on Jan 15<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) was a record number.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	27	12	16	6	6	3	4	4	4	4	10	18

### Coot (*Fulica atra*) (B)

Two chicks were first seen on the fly-ash lagoon on Apr 27<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and there was another record of another pair with 3 chicks on Jun 13<sup>th</sup> (P&SP). The highest count was 71 on Jan 15<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	71	27	40	12	16	35	40	15	8	54	28	16

### Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)



Photo: P&SH

A big increase this year with 29 records. The record count of 12 included 11 from the West Hide on Aug 8<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). Mostly pre- and post-breeding, but one bird decided to spend Christmas here. One of our July birds had been ringed as a fledgling on Jun 7<sup>th</sup> at Seal Sands, Cleveland (RB), so they don't all come from Burton Mere!

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	0	1	6	0	2	7	12	4	0	1	1

### Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) (B?)

For a second year in a row, although there were occupied nests on both the bunded pool and the fly-ash lagoon, there were no reports of fledged young. The highest count was 4000 on Oct 8<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	400	50	22	56	160	70	120	1000	2000	4000	2500	300

### Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

A very good year (relatively!) for this species. After a single on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH) came 9 further records between Oct 15<sup>th</sup> and Dec 30<sup>th</sup> with a maximum of 5 on Dec 24<sup>th</sup> (all PDS, P&SH, RB).

### Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

There were only 4 records of singles during Jan-Feb, Sep and Dec (P&SH, PDS)

### Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

No evidence of nesting, but large numbers on the mudflats and (sometimes) the grazing fields in winter. The highest count was 3300 on Jan 15<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	3300	2000	0	0	0	70	150	220	160	400	1556	1000

### Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*) (B)

Breeding was confirmed for the second time on the Reserve when a pair with 3 chicks was seen on June 22<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH). A pair was seen regularly by many observers between April 3<sup>rd</sup> and July 29<sup>th</sup>.



Photo: P&SH

### Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

There was a light spring passage with 5 records of up to 8 birds between Mar 20<sup>th</sup> and May 30<sup>th</sup> and then a good autumn passage with 22 records of up to 200 birds between Aug 5<sup>th</sup> and Oct 20<sup>th</sup>. The high count of 200 was on Aug 21<sup>st</sup> (GR).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	0	2	1	8	0	0	200	50	3	0	0

### Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Present throughout the year and throughout the Reserve, including the grazing fields. There always seems to be one single bird on the banded pools.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	46	120	100	65	40	20	90	220	200	109	93	80



## Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

There were 13 spring records between Apr 20<sup>th</sup> and Jun 4<sup>th</sup> with a maximum of 15 on Apr 23<sup>rd</sup> (DeeWeb) and 7 autumn records of 1-4 birds between July 19<sup>th</sup> and Sep 8<sup>th</sup>. The spring passage is usually bigger for this species.



Photo: P&SH

## Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

It was a much better year, with a short spring passage of up to 14 (the highest count since 2010; P&SH) between Apr 23<sup>rd</sup> and May 8<sup>th</sup>. The autumn passage (up to 5 on Oct 21<sup>st</sup>) was prolonged by a few stragglers to the end of the year.



Photo: P&SH

### Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Numbers remained fairly normal during the year, with a maximum count of 4000 on Oakenholt Marsh on Nov 4<sup>th</sup> (GR). There was more evidence of a spring passage this year. A bird ringed in Iceland in Jun 2015 was seen on Sep 4<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and two more Iceland-ringed birds were seen on Apr 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> (all RB).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	400	1500	500	400	140	2	65	2000	3000	3000	4000	121

### Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

There were 6 singles between Jul 20<sup>th</sup> and Aug 21<sup>st</sup> and 7 birds, some in summer plumage, on Jul 28<sup>th</sup> (PDS), the highest count for 10 years.

### Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

Knot numbers fell once again this year with a maximum of only 6 on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and Nov 4<sup>th</sup> (GR). They often flock with the godwits, which have also been rather sporadic, especially in spring. The last time they came in their thousands was 2012.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	6	0

### Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

There was winter record of a single on the bunded pools on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and an early migrant on Jun 28<sup>th</sup> (RW), with a maximum of 4 on Oct 17<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). The last record was on Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> (PK).

### Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

A sporadic visitor in winter, as usual, but when present, numbers were large. The highest logbook count was 4,500 on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH). A leucistic form was seen between Sep 18<sup>th</sup> and Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> (PDS, P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	800	4500	500	50	500	0	8	800	200	300	1000	1000

**Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)**

Another good year, but a much later one, with 14 records of 1-3 birds between Sep 10<sup>th</sup> and Oct 26<sup>th</sup> (last year the passage was over by Sep 10<sup>th</sup>!). To cap it all, a bird stayed well into the winter and was recorded 5x between Nov 1<sup>st</sup> and Dec 13<sup>th</sup> (P&SH, PDS, GP, SS, DW). The highest count was 3 on Oakenholt Marsh on Oct 26<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).



Photo: P&SH

**Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)**



Photo: P&SH (with Dunlin)

There were 3 on Oakenholt Marsh on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> and one on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>. The only autumn record was of 2 on Aug 8<sup>th</sup> (all P&SH).

### Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

There were 8 records this year, starting with the maximum of 5 on Sep 17<sup>th</sup> (PDS) and then 1-3 birds between Sep 22<sup>nd</sup> and Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> (PDS, P&SH), all from the West Hide.

### Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

The number of records doubled again with 148 this year and at least 1 bird was present in every month of the year. The highest count was 10 (7 at West Hide and 3 at banded pools) on Apr 26<sup>th</sup> (RR). Unusually, 1-2 stayed on the banded pool until Dec 31<sup>st</sup> (many obs).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	1	1	1	10	1	1	6	3	3	1	1	2

### Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*).



Photo: P&SH

A single on passage was seen almost daily from West Hide between Aug 31<sup>st</sup> and Sep 6<sup>th</sup> (RR, P&SH). Another appeared on the banded pools on Nov 17<sup>th</sup> (PDS).

### Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

Most birds are usually found on the banded pools at high tide, with smaller numbers at West Hide. The highest count this year of 18 on Sep 18<sup>th</sup> (GEM) was about average for recent years. Winter numbers were higher than usual, with a remarkable 16 on Jan 15<sup>th</sup> and 12 on Dec 6<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	16	7	10	4	0	0	7	14	18	16	12	12

### Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Another Reserve speciality, which frequents the bunded pools even at low tide. Autumn numbers remained close to average with a maximum of 20 on both Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH) and Oct 27<sup>th</sup> (KLB), but, like Spotted Redshank, winter Greenshank numbers were high once more, with 9 still present on New Year's Eve. The last spring bird was on May 1<sup>st</sup> and the first autumn bird on Jun 18<sup>th</sup>.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	8	9	5	4	1	2	9	14	14	20	13	12

### Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

The highest counts were 5,000 on both Aug 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> (GR, JR, P&SH), an impressive sight as they gather on the bunded pools at high tide. A bird ringed near Cardiff on 12/1/16 was seen on Sep 9<sup>th</sup> (P&SH); it was also seen on the Dee in Jul 2016, but returned to Cardiff by Mar 2017.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	124	214	506	260	0	80	610	5000	2000	2500	480	237

### Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Yet another extraordinary year for this species with 122 records from the bunded pools and a record high count of 75 birds on Dec 11<sup>th</sup> when snow and ice on the pools brought them out into the open to be counted (DW). They left by Mar 29<sup>th</sup> and returned by Sep 27<sup>th</sup> (with an early single on Aug 11<sup>th</sup>; PDS).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	36	25	27	0	0	0	0	1	2	11	22	75

### Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

A single bird was seen with the Common Snipe on Nov 17<sup>th</sup> (PDS) and Dec 6<sup>th</sup> (SS).

### **Pomarine Skua (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) 3<sup>rd</sup> Reserve Record**

Two were seen during the gales of Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>, a dark-phase and a light-phase, both with visible "spoons" (PDS, P&SH). Both previous records were in 1989.

Arctic Skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

One seen during the Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> gales (P&SH) was the 1<sup>st</sup> record since 1994.

Guillemot (*Uria aalge*)

Singles on Sep 9<sup>th</sup> and Oct 5<sup>th</sup> were followed by a record count of 6 on the high tide of Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH, PDS).

Razorbill (*Alca torda*)

Two were seen on the high tide of Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH). This species, once regular, was last recorded on the Reserve in 1993.

Little Tern (*Sternula albifrons*)

One was fishing with Common Terns on June 7<sup>th</sup> (PDS).

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

Five were seen in the river channel on Apr 30<sup>th</sup> (PDS) and a single was seen on Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> (P&SH). This is only the 2<sup>nd</sup> record since 1994.

Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*)

There were 4 spring records of 1-4 birds during May 1<sup>st</sup>- 23<sup>rd</sup>, plus singles on Jul 19<sup>th</sup> and Aug 8<sup>th</sup> (all P&SH, PDS).



Photo: P&SH

### Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

The first sighting of 2 over the river was on Apr 23<sup>rd</sup> (P&SH) and the last was a very late single on Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> (P&SH). The highest count was 150 on May 1<sup>st</sup> (PDS).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	0	0	50	150	50	20	20	0	1	0	0

### Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

There was an extraordinary passage of 50 on Apr 27<sup>th</sup> (P&SH), double the previous record number in 1988. There were further singles on Jul 4<sup>th</sup> and Aug 8<sup>th</sup>, plus 1-2 late birds on Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> (all P&SH).

### Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

Another seabird brought in by high tides and NW gales; 1 on Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2 on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH, PDS).

### Blackheaded Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)

The highest count was 3000 on the WeBS count of Aug 13<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	100	100	40	34	45	240	240	3000	1000	2000	200	31

### Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*)

There were 4 records of singles during Apr 23<sup>rd</sup> to May 17<sup>th</sup>, the first being a juvenile chased by a Peregrine (PDS, P&SH) and second a 2<sup>nd</sup>-year bird (PDS).



Photo: P&SH

### Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)

There were four records of singles on Apr 20<sup>th</sup>, Jul 30<sup>th</sup>, Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> and Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> (P&SH, PDS), the last being a winter adult.

### Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

Uncommon on the Reserve, though they roost elsewhere on the estuary during the winter and commute daily to the hills to feed.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	1	0	12	0	4	0	0	2	0	56	0	0

### Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

The most common of the larger gulls on the Reserve and present all year. One seems especially fond of feeding on crabs from the bunded pools.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	20	100	23	45	40	50	80	600	1000	200	120	155

### Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*)

There were 17 logbook records of 1-2 birds between May and November, more records in fact than any other gull! (PDS, P&SH, JR, GR, DW). One had a red ring on its left leg (PDS) and one on Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> was described as having "Caspian traits" (PDS)

### Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Less common than Lesser Black-backed among roosting flocks, though it may be equally common flying over. The counts show that roosting numbers increase post-breeding.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	20	10	6	20	12	24	30	100	0	0	0	0

### Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*)

One was seen on Oakenholt Marsh on Dec 27<sup>th</sup> (SH). It was only the 4<sup>th</sup> record of this species on the Reserve.

### Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Non-breeders are present most of the year, with large winter numbers.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	12	10	6	5	7	4	80	23	12	25	12	0



### Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

There were 24 records covering most months. The highest count was 40 on Sep 16<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) but they are usually seen in small groups of 1-4 around the bird feeders or the fly ash lagoon.

### Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*) **(B)**

Present all year in small numbers. The highest count was 14 on Mar 10<sup>th</sup> (GEM). Breeding was proven by a sighting of 2 adults with a juvenile on Jun 16<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

### Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

This species is found near the railway line at the back of the fly-ash lagoon, but rarely recorded in the logbooks. Two on Apr 1<sup>st</sup> and a single on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> are the only records (P&SH).

### Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

One was seen flying across the Nature Trail on Jun 3<sup>rd</sup>, mobbed by Meadow Pipits, and another over the revetment from West Hide on Jun 10<sup>th</sup> (both P&SH). A common sight on the Reserve 30 years ago, it is good to see a possible comeback.

### Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

A bird was seen hunting at 6.30AM on Sep 29<sup>th</sup> (PDS). This was only the 3<sup>rd</sup> record for the Reserve, apart from one found dead.

### Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

One was reported from the Reserve entrance at 6.30AM on Sep 30<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). This was only the 5<sup>th</sup> record for the Reserve, though it is almost certainly overlooked.

### Swift (*Apus apus*)

The first record was on Apr 27<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and the maximum count of 340 on Aug 6<sup>th</sup> (PDS) was the highest ever, with 3 more counts of 100+ in June/July. A very late bird was seen across the river on Sep 10<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

There were only 3 records early in the year, the last being on Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH). One was seen very early on Jun 25<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) but birds were only regularly from Jul 22<sup>nd</sup> until Dec 16<sup>th</sup>. After Jul 29<sup>th</sup>, there were 8 records of a pair on the bunded pools and there were 78 records altogether, including 11 from the West Hide.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Only two records this year on Sep 8<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and Oct 21<sup>st</sup> (PDS).

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

Fifteen records this year in Feb, Mar, Jul, Sep, Oct and Dec, with a maximum of 3 together on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> (PDS).

Magpie (*Pica pica*)

The highest count was 15 on Apr 14<sup>th</sup> (GEM).

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

Only 2 records, each of 2 birds, on Jun 17<sup>th</sup> and Oct 1<sup>st</sup> (both P&SH).

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

The highest count of 200 was on May 23<sup>rd</sup> (P&SH) with further counts of 120 on Nov 10<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and Dec 7<sup>th</sup> (GEM). All records were in spring (Mar, Apr) or autumn (Sep-Dec).

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

Many more records this year (17), with a record high count of 172 on Dec 1<sup>st</sup> (PDS).

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*)

These are numerous on marsh, mudflats and grazing fields with peak numbers in the summer; maximum count of 80 on May 23<sup>rd</sup> (P&SH). One was seen eating an eel on the bunded pool on Oct 11<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	26	20	35	67	80	78	66	23	52	33	45	15

### **Hooded Crow (*Corvus cornix*) NEW SPECIES**

This new species for the Reserve was seen and photographed on Apr 28<sup>th</sup> (DP, P&SH).



Photo: P&SH

### **Raven (*Corvus corax*)**

A good year with 30 records and a maximum of 4 birds on Aug 8<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

### **Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)**

There were 10 records this year, mainly from Rockcliffe, but all in March or Oct-Dec. The highest count was 3 on Oct 6<sup>th</sup> at Rockcliffe (PDS) and Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> in the west Reserve (AD).

### **Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) (B)**

Breeding was confirmed when an adult was seen carrying food to the nest on Jul 27<sup>th</sup> (GEM). The maximum count was 3 (GEM: several dates).

### **Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*).**



This one was photographed on Aug 31<sup>st</sup> (P&SH)

**Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) (B)**

Evidence of breeding was the presence of 2 adults with 5 recently-fledged young on Jun 2<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH). The highest count was 8 on Mar 10<sup>th</sup> (GEM).

**Great Tit (*Parus major*) (B)**

Another common nesting species with a maximum count of 7 on feeders on Nov 25<sup>th</sup> (DW) and breeding confirmed by a nestbox containing young birds on May 16<sup>th</sup> (GEM).

**Coal Tit (*Parus ater*)**

There were 5 records of singles at Rockcliffe, one on Mar 29<sup>th</sup> (GEM) and 4 during Sep-Dec (P&SH, GEM).

**Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)**

There was a singing male on the revetment opposite the Nature Trail on Mar 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> (GEM) and records elsewhere during Jun 10<sup>th</sup> – Jul 26<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) year and 14 records altogether. The highest count of 18 was from Oakenholt Marsh on Nov 6<sup>th</sup> (PDS).

**Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)**

The highest counts were of 30 on May 12<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> (both P&SH). First and last dates were Mar 31<sup>st</sup> and Aug 11<sup>th</sup> (both P&SH). This and other hirundines are best seen over the fly ash lagoon.

**Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)**

The highest count this year was 90 on Jul 25<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). First and last dates were Apr 4<sup>th</sup> (SS) and Sep 17<sup>th</sup> (GEM).

**House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)**

First and last dates were Apr 16<sup>th</sup> and Sep 10<sup>th</sup> (both P&SH), the latter also giving the highest count of 80.

**Longtailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)**

There were 18 records this year from Mar, Apr, Jun, Jul and Oct-Dec, with a high count of 20 on Oct 15<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

The first record was on Mar 13<sup>th</sup> (N&PH) and the last on Sep 29<sup>th</sup> (P&SH), with a high count of 8 passage birds on Apr 9<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). No proof of breeding again, although a male sang at Rockcliffe all summer. There were 2 records of a wintering bird on Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> (H&W) and 5<sup>th</sup> (PDS, DW).

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

The first record was a singing male on Apr 3<sup>rd</sup> (JR) and the last was of 2 birds on Aug 20<sup>th</sup> (PDS). The maximum count was 8 on Apr 9<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). Passage only.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

No proof of breeding this year, though a pair was present at Rockcliffe on Apr 27<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). The first record was Apr 3<sup>rd</sup> (JR) and the last on Aug 23<sup>rd</sup> (PDS), with a high count of 6 on Apr 30<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). A wintering female was seen in the bunded pool area on Dec 21<sup>st</sup> (DS).

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

The only record was from the Meadow Trail on Sep 28<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

The only record was a single on Aug 15<sup>th</sup> (PN, GD).

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*).

The highest count was only 4 on Apr 30<sup>th</sup> and no evidence of breeding was recorded in the logbooks, though it may have passed unrecorded. First and last dates were Apr 23<sup>rd</sup> and Aug 6<sup>th</sup> (P&SH, PDS).

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

There were 2 records of singles on the fly-ash lagoon on May 12<sup>th</sup> (GEM) and Jul 4<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Breeding is possible since a pair with a singing male were present in reeds of the fly ash lagoon from May 12<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> (P&SH, KL-J). First and last dates for singles here were Apr 28<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and Sep 11<sup>th</sup> (GEM).

**Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)**

Only one winter record of a single bird in the Rockcliffe woods on Oct 30<sup>th</sup> (DW).

**Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)**

They are often seen on grazing fields with outside the breeding season. The highest count of 600 on Oakenholt Marsh was on Jan 27<sup>th</sup> (GEM).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	600	0	59	12	100	20	100	100	100	400	200	400

**Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)**

The highest count was 25 at Rockcliffe on Nov 7<sup>th</sup> (P&SH), the same time that 24 were found in 2016. There were no logbook records of successful breeding, although present throughout the year.

**Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*)**

Two sightings this year were only the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> records for the Reserve, the first being in 2006. The first was on Mar 11<sup>th</sup> (Jd'A) and the second on the fly ash lagoon on Mar 29<sup>th</sup> (SH: photo below).



Photo: P&SH

### Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

The last record of the winter was 2 birds on Mar 20<sup>th</sup> (RR) and they re-appeared with 6 birds on Nov 7<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). The highest count was 20 on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

### Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

The highest count was of 90 birds on Nov 11<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). The last record of the winter was 2 birds on Mar 5<sup>th</sup> and they re-appeared with 4 birds on Oct 18<sup>th</sup> (both P&SH).

### Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

The high count of 17 birds on Dec 12<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) was by far the largest flock ever recorded on the Reserve. A singing male was present on Mar 29<sup>th</sup> (GEM), but there were no Jun-Aug records.

### Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

The highest count was 23 on Jul 28<sup>th</sup> (PDS), slightly higher than the previous Reserve record of 21. There were no May-Jun records and no evidence of breeding.

### Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) **(B)**

An adult with one young was seen on Jun 22<sup>nd</sup> (P&SH). The highest count was 4 on Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mar 10<sup>th</sup>, Sep 29<sup>th</sup>, Oct 26<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

### Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)

One was seen on the revetment from West Hide on Sep 29<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

### Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

Only 4 records this year – a male on Apr 16<sup>th</sup>, a pair on Apr 23<sup>rd</sup>, a male with 2 juvs on Jul 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> (all P&SH, PDS) and 3 on Jul 25<sup>th</sup> (DeeWeb).

### Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

It was a good spring with 8 records of 1-3 birds between Apr 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> (P&SH, PDS, SS, RR), but only 2 widely-spaced singles on return passage on Jul 3<sup>rd</sup> (AS) and Sep 19<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

### Stonechat (*Saxicola torquatus*)

The first record was on Mar 5<sup>th</sup> (GEM), followed by a lone juvenile on Jun 2<sup>nd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). After a single on Oct 1<sup>st</sup> (P&SH), there were 4 records of both male and female between Dec 11<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> (PDS, P&SH).

### Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

The first record was a single on Mar 12<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and the highest spring count was 16 on Apr 23<sup>rd</sup> (P&SH). A female of the Greenland race was recorded on May 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). The highest count on return passage was 10 on Aug 30<sup>th</sup> (RR) and the latest date was Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> (PDS, P&SH). There were 56 logbook records during the year.

### Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) **(B)**

Breeding was proven when this common resident seen with fledged young on Jul 27<sup>th</sup> (GEM). The highest count was 8 on Mar 14<sup>th</sup> (GEM).

### House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) **(B)**

The count of 15 on Jun 4<sup>th</sup> included recently-fledged young (P&SH) but the highest count was 30 on Jul 14<sup>th</sup> (RR). 14/16 records were during the summer months.

### Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava flavissima*)



Two birds in spring on Apr 30<sup>th</sup> (JR), two on Aug 13<sup>th</sup> (P&SH) and a single on Aug 15<sup>th</sup> (PN, GD)

### Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Apart from one record of 2 birds on Jun 25<sup>th</sup> (P&SH), the other 12 records were of singles and mostly during Oct-Dec.



**Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*) (B)**

A pair nested on the fly ash lagoon, where up 3-5 fledged young were seen with 2 adults during Jun 3<sup>rd</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). There was a high count of 21 near the West Hide on Dec 12<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

**Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)**

The highest count of 28 birds was on Sep 22<sup>nd</sup> (PDS). It was recorded in every month except Jan-Mar, but all except 2 of the 24 records were in single figures.

**Rock Pipit (*Anthus petrosus*)**

This species is usually recorded on the rocks around the West Hide in winter, usually after a high tide. There was a single on Feb 28<sup>th</sup> and then 1-3 birds were seen 16x between Oct 21<sup>st</sup> and Dec 19<sup>th</sup> (P&SH, PDS, RB, DW, GR).

**Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)**

A massive flock of 250 was found on the Nature Trail of Nov 18<sup>th</sup> with 150 present on Dec 14<sup>th</sup> (both PDS).

**Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)**

Recorded mainly in the Rockcliffe area in nearly every month, the highest count was of 6 birds on Aug 6<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). There were 24 records.

**Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)**

The largest flock was of 20 birds on Dec 30<sup>th</sup> (AD). They are often seen on the feeders and there were 25 logbook records.

**Twite (*Carduelis flavirostris*)**

Winter flocks of up to 103 birds (on Feb 11<sup>th</sup>, RB) were present around the West Hide. There was a late departure on Apr 22<sup>nd</sup> (SS) with 14 birds re-appearing on Oct 30<sup>th</sup> (6 had rings: H&W). A bird ringed here on Jan 26<sup>th</sup> was recovered near Rishworth, Yorkshire on Apr 4<sup>th</sup> (IMS, RB).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	60	103	44	24	0	0	0	0	0	14	70	35

### Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*) (B)

Evidence of breeding was an adult feeding 2 young on Aug 27<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

Large flocks were of 100+ were seen from July onwards with a high count of 280 on Sep 18<sup>th</sup> (RB), beaten only by the flock of 400 in 1985.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	12	20	20	6	10	60	170	120	280	150	50	22

### Lesser Redpoll (*Acanthis cabaret*)

This species was recorded again this year with a count of 15 near the Reserve entrance on Dec 20<sup>th</sup> (P&SH), almost the same date as the 13 last year. A single bird was also seen there on Nov 6<sup>th</sup> (PDS).

### Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

The largest post-breeding flocks were 114 on Sep 17<sup>th</sup> (GEM) and 100 on Oct 11<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). The 40 logbook records covered nearly every month.

### Siskin (*Spinus spinus*)

There were 4 records this year with a high count of 5 on Nov 6<sup>th</sup> (PDS).

### Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

The maximum count of 5 was on Sep 28<sup>th</sup> (P&SH). No evidence of breeding apart from a singing male on May 31<sup>st</sup>, although there were summer records from suitable habitat around the fly ash lagoon.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	0	3	2	2	1	2	2	5	4	2	3

## Mammals:

**Fox:** There were only four records of Fox this year. One was seen carrying a rabbit on Aug 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Rabbits** are common and under-recorded, but no longer “abundant”.

**Stoat:** There were 19 records, almost monthly from May onwards, including 3 records of 2 together. One caught a rabbit, which escaped, on Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> and another caught a Blue Tit on Dec 31<sup>st</sup> (both P&SH).

**Weasel:** Only one record near the Reserve entrance on July 26<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

**Badger:** One was seen at 7am on Sep 30<sup>th</sup> (P&SH).

**Grey Seal:** There were 3 records from West Hide between Oct 10<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> (GR, KD, H&W), including one with a flatfish (KD) and a record of 3 together (H&W). A further record was from the under the Dee bridge on Nov 18<sup>th</sup> (PDS).

## Contributors

This report is based mainly on logbook records from the five hides on the Reserve, but other sources of information include WeBS counts and [www.deeestuary.co.uk](http://www.deeestuary.co.uk) (DeeWeb).

All logbook records with a legible observer name are valuable and are submitted to BTO Birdtrack with the observer name. The names below are given to show who takes responsibility for some for the more unusual counts or sightings, so that queries can be directed to them.

Richard Beckett (RB)

Laura Castell (LC)

K Davies (KD)

Sue Haslem (SH)

N&P Hallas (N&PH)

Keith Lloyd-Jones (KL-J)

P Nickles/G David (PN, GD)

P&S Parker (P&SP)

Giles Pepler (GP)

R & G Riley (R&GR)

Julie Rogers (JR)

D Shenton (DS)

Ian Spence (IMS)

KL Brimage (KLB)

Joe d’Arcy (JdA)

A Davis (AD)

Peter & Sue Haslem (P&SH)

Hough and Winnard (H&W)

Glenn Morris (GEM)

P Kershaw (PK)

D Parry (DP)

R Riley (RR)

Geoff Robinson (GR)

PD Shenton (PDS)

S Skelton (SS)

Dave Winnard (DW)