

DODDINGTON POOL BIRD REPORT 2021



By David Cookson



By Andy Warner

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An exceptional year due to the coronavirus pandemic. Occasional visits were made to the site in periods when lockdown restrictions were eased, to try to obtain monthly waterbird counts for the BTO WeBS survey. A visit in late March was adequate to count the nests in the heronry.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Doddington	6	0	0	18	30	52	61	60	42	58	56	1

In July a pair appeared with six cygnets and they survived and stayed together until last seen in November.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

One was recorded on 22nd October.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

Singles in January, February, March and November.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Doddington	300	150	15	14	6	23	26	220	320	624	30	138

The usual pattern but numbers continue to increase with the October count of 624 being a site record. No breeding activity was noted.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

Two were recorded on 9th April.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Doddington	150	150	140	80	90	190	230	557	450	300	250	136

Many pairs bred with a total of 54 young seen in May plus one brood of five on Lemon Pool.

Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*)

One was seen on 11th March and one on 24th April.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Several records from January to early May with a maximum count of eight on 2nd May.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

In the first winter period peak counts of 29 in January and 28 in February. Then in the second winter period 3 in September, 8 in October, 7 in November and 13 in December.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Back up to more usual numbers with up to four in January and February and then two in October and November.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Max counts of 15 in January and 12 in February, then up to six from August to December.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

A very common resident and with some birds released no accurate counts are made but over 900 were counted on the two pools in autumn and many young seen.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

As usual only occasional records of this scarce bird here, with a single in January, four in February and two in December.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Present from January to April with much higher numbers than usual and an exceptional 53 on 12th February. Present from September to the year end but in more usual numbers with a maximum count of 15.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

A better year for both presence and numbers. 13 in January and 27 in February. Then present from July with occasional records and then up 23 during November and December.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Doddington	114	174	196	61	26	18	17	57	44	45	114	61

Another good year for numbers with a very high count of 174 in February and 196 in March, but only two broods were seen..

Mandarin (*Aix galericulata*)

A male was seen in January, a pair on 1st February and then a female in November..

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

A regular winter visitor, present from January to March, with a maximum count of 24 in February and from November to December with a maximum of 14 in December.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

A few decades ago this used to be the best site in Cheshire for Goosander. Strangely, although the species is much more common in the area with a few breeding pairs, it is now a scarce visitor here. A single in March and two singles in December.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

Regularly seen in the area, with a maximum count of nine in March.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Many reared by the shooting syndicate and released.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Just singles in January and March. Then present from June to the year end but with a maximum count of just eight in October. The previous regular autumn surge in numbers (85 in 2018) seems to have finished.

Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*)

On 24th August one was seen to fly in, perch up for a while then fly off north. The first record here since December 2018.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

The breeding colony continues to increase with 22 nests noted this year in April, with the colony expanding from the original blue cedar tree into nearby hawthorn and beech. Many pairs were successful. Up to seven seen during the year outside the breeding season.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

On the main pool up to 12 in January, then four breeding pairs were noted with a total of eight juvs seen. In the second winter period numbers built up to 18 in November. On Lemon Pool five males were heard trilling in March but ultimately only one pair were seen to be successful with two juvs seen in June and July.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Recorded in all months except December, usually less than ten. After a slow start it finished as a good breeding season. In August on the main pool the maximum count was 37 including 17 young from seven broods and on the Lemon Pool two pairs bred with five young seen. A few years ago there used to be a big increase in numbers in a post-breeding flock with 97 recorded in 2014. In recent years this has not happened and this year the maximum count was 20 in September.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Resident and breeds in the area.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Resident and common. Three pairs seen displaying in early May.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

One seen frequently around the Sailing Club as usual but no breeding season records.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

Singles recorded in January, October and November.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Present on both pools all year but in surprisingly low numbers as usual; maximum count of eight and no juvs seen.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Doddington	572	552	169	78	92	294	365	740	880	1320	1290	386

Doddington continues to be a major site for Coot within the county. Numbers usually increase in late autumn but this year's total of 1320 in October was phenomenal, the whole pool seemed to be covered in black dots! Many pairs bred and young were seen.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Again a very early returning bird was seen on 24th January (29th last year). Then during February numbers slowly increased from one to seven. Present continuously then through to 6th August. In the early spring a heap of gravel was put on the roof of a grey shed at the Sailing Club and this was quickly claimed so that this year three pairs nested, one on the island and two at the SC, one on the green shed roof (as usual) and one on the grey shed roof (new site). The only juvs seen were a brood of three on the island.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

The highest count in the first winter period was 45. The flock reformed in the second winter period but with a maximum of 80 in December.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

One was feeding at the edge of the island on 19th March.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Present in the first winter period when occasionally flushed from the juncus near the island. Present in the second winter period when they settled on the island with a maximum count of three seen.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

A much better year for sightings on spring passage with up to three seen frequently from 9th April to 17th May but fewer on return passage with just two through July.

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)

A maximum count of 5,000 in the gull roost on 31st December was much lower than usual.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

Usually up to three on the water during winter and a count of 40 in the gull roost on 31st December.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

A maximum count of just 400 in the gull roost on 31st December, well down on last year's 2,400. Up to 30 on the water in the daytime in winter.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

A maximum count of around 80 in the gull roost on 31st December and occasional low numbers in the daytime in winter.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

None seen in the gull roost, but one or two seen in January and February.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Seen and heard regularly but no high counts recorded.

Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Very common and flocks of 300 and 250 noted in winter.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

A few records.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Does breed and adults occasionally seen at dusk from the main road.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

The pair seem to be using the nest box with several sightings of an adult in the nest entrance. The box also shows evidence of being used but no young were seen.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Resident and breeds. One heard hooting from by the church on 8th January.

Common Swift (*Apus apus*)

The highest count noted was 120 on 20th May. An exceptional day – see hirundines later.

Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Recorded in March and July only.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

The commonest woodpecker and several pairs bred.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

Seen occasionally.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Very common with flocks of 150 noted and many pairs breed in and around the hall.

Raven (*Corvus corax*)

The resident pair were recorded in most months and an adult was seen with two young in June.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Resident and breeds.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Recorded in most months through the year.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

The first record was 70 on 2nd April and the highest count was 150 on 20th May.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Conditions were right for hirundines on 20th May with 150 over the water.

House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)

The highest count noted was 100 on 20th May, feeding very low over the water.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

A summer visitor.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

A summer visitor.

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

A summer visitor.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

A summer visitor.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Up to five singing males recorded in the reeds around Lemon Pool and several young seen in late summer.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Flocks of around 200 were present in each winter period but on 30th November there were around 450 in the trees and on the grass.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

Maximum counts of 95 in February and 60 in December.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Maximum counts of 60 in February and 80 in December.

Stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*)

A male was seen on vegetation by Lemon Pool on 1st October.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

A really bright male was seen on 27th and 28th March and three were present on 11th April.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

A slightly better year but nothing like the numbers of a few years ago. Two on 28th April, one on 7th May and two on 17th May.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

The only record was of two seen in March.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

Some evidence of a light spring passage with 20 recorded in late March, including a White Wagtail on 20th March. Then one or two during the winter.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

The highest count on spring passage was 44 in March. Up to seven recorded in the winter.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Commonest finch with up to 140 seen during January..

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Just one record of a single on 17th December.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Always a pleasure to see, recorded during January.

Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*)

A few records.

Lesser Redpoll (*Acanthis cabaret*)

Ten seen on 17th December.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Few finches recorded, maximum flock size of 10.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

A singing male seen from January to June but no proof of breeding..

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