

Rode Pool



Bird Report 2014

RODE POOL BIRD REPORT 2014

denotes that the species was seen using the feeding station at the bird hide.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Only autumn records with one in August, two in September and one in October.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Once again recorded in every month with a maximum count of five adults. Two broods seen in April and one late brood in July.

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Recorded in all months except July. Usually only one or two but an exceptional count of 11 in October; the same month as a big influx at other local sites.

Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*)

Not quite as exciting as in 2013 but one was seen on 16th and 18th March this year. Quite possibly the bird that was present in November and December 2013 which over-wintered.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Present from the beginning of the year until 7th March, usually one but occasionally two were seen many times going in to roost behind the island. Two were seen on 29th July. Then one was seen several times during December.

Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*)

Another record of this county rarity when one was seen opposite peg 3 at 16-45 on 6th March but was not present the next day.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

43 nests in the heronry this year, another slight increase on the 42 in 2013 and 37 in 2012; with 10 on the north bank; 11 on the main island (despite the top of the main nesting tree coming down); 11 on the south bank and 11 on the small island.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Recorded in all months except September but as usual only visiting birds, with a maximum of five seen.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

Becoming more regular and recorded in all months except August and September with 24 in January and 26 in October. Two pairs bred and at least six young were seen.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Recorded in every month in varying numbers with a maximum count of 82 in February. In June there were 29 adults but with only six young seen, a very low count.

Mandarin (*Aix galericulata*)

Recorded in every month with a maximum recorded number of 16 in August and November. However, these birds also use Lawton Pool and the maximum number recorded there is 26 in December. Three nest boxes were used, see the appended note for details.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

No records in the first winter period. Recorded from October to December with a maximum count of just three in October

Gadwall (*Anas penelope*)

Not recorded every year so two in December was a good record.

Common Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Present in all months except May and June as usual; with a maximum count of 29 in January and 37 in October.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) ##

Generally up to 100 present and 109 in September was the highest count. Many pairs bred.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

A similar pattern to last year; present from January to April with a peak count of 28 and September to December with a peak count of 23.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Still decreasing in numbers, following the national trend. Only recorded in the first winter period from January to March and only two birds.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

As Pochard fortunes go down so Tufted Duck goes up. Now established as a resident breeder with additional visitors in winter. Three broods were seen in July, 7, 5, and 5. Peak numbers were 26 in February and 24 in December.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

Present in the winter months but in lower numbers than last year with seven in January and six in December.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Seen regularly zipping through the wood by the bird hide, presumably hunting for birds on the feeders.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Seen regularly and bred with young seen and heard all summer. Seven were seen circling together in October.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

A single observer record from 30th March when one was seen to fly in, circle over a few times, have one unsuccessful dive and then fly off. Another one was seen to fly over on 8th June.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Seen regularly and probably bred.

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

Just one record on 26th August.

Common Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) ##

Seen all year, with one (Mick's mate) so tame it waited for us in the wood and walked with us up to the hide waiting to be fed.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) ##

Resident with a maximum of nine seen and at least two pairs bred.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Resident with up to 23 seen and at least three pairs bred.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Five flew over on 13th May.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Recorded during the winter but always less than ten.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

A report of up to five flushed from the woods during the winter periods.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

An exceptional record of up to 40 reported from the willow bed reeds during the February cold spell. Also 11 in March and eight in November plus records of singles during both winter periods.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

A single bird seen on 16th May.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Two records of singles in March, one on the 11th and one on the 28th.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Regular from January to March and August to December with numbers usually up to 100 but an exceptional count of around 400 during February's cold spell.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Becoming slightly more common with one in March, two in June, three in August and one in November.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

A maximum count of 35 in the first winter period.

Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Common resident but no large flocks noted.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Resident in the woods.

Common Swift (*Apus apus*)

Present during the summer with four on 25th May.

Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

One or two recorded in every month including the breeding season - did they nest here?

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Singles seen or heard in February, March and August.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*) ##

The commonest woodpecker and a few pairs bred on the estate. Once again adults and a young bird were regular visitors to the feeders in late summer and autumn.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*)

Probably always resident but most records come in February and March and the same this year, with a male drumming and a female seen.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Not recorded every year so 20 on 26th August was a good record.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Present during the summer and 40 present on 19th August.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

Present during the summer with 30 on 26th August.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

One or two seen from 30th September to the year end.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrelli*)

Seen regularly and bred at the farm. An autumn influx peaked at 23 on 26th October.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes troglodytes*) ##

Common resident.

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) ##

Common resident.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) ##

Common resident.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) ##

Common resident.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

Winter visitor but no large flocks noted this year.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Common resident.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Winter visitor with a peak count of 150 in March.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Common resident, although the usual peak of family groups in autumn was not recorded this year.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Always a delight to see, one was recorded on 15th July.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Common summer visitor.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

At least three pairs bred in the reed beds.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Common summer visitor.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Common summer visitor.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Two records in April of this now scarce visitor.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*) ##

Recorded throughout the year.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*) ##

Resident and breeds but no large flocks were noted.

Coal Tit (*Parus ater*) ##

Common resident.

Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*) ##

Six pairs used nest boxes, laid 56 eggs, hatched 36 young and fledged 35.

Great Tit (*Parus major*) ##

Six pairs used nest boxes, laid 42 eggs, hatched 33 young and fledged 25.

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*) ##

A common breeding resident, and one pair used a nest box and fledged seven young.

Eurasian Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Common resident. One pair used a nest box, laid three eggs and fledged three young.

Eurasian Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*) ##
Now regular on the feeders, but very wary.

Magpie (*Pica pica*) ##
Common resident. On 12th October 17 were seen feeding on a sheep carcass.

Eurasian Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)
The largest winter flock recorded was around 160 and many pairs bred.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)
Common resident.

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone corone*)
Common resident.

Raven (*Corvus corax*)
One or two recorded in most months of the year and probably bred in the area. Three seen together in the second winter period.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)
Recorded in both winter periods but with counts of just seven. (no records at all in 2013.)

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) ##
Common resident.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)
Previously common resident. Numbers have fallen quickly due to the deadly Trichomonosis disease.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)
Common resident.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*) ##
A few records, with a peak count of 12 in January.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)
Not regularly seen but one or two were recorded during spring and summer.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) ##
At least one singing male present during the summer and also seen on the feeders in the winter.

Colin Lythgoe; SECOS Recorder.

MANDARIN DUCK NESTING ON RODE ESTATE IN 2014

In 2009 Mandarin Duck was first recorded at Rode Pool as an occasional visitor. It was recorded more frequently every year after that and in 2013 two pairs nested. These used Mandarin design nest boxes located at the edge of the pool. One nest box had a clutch of ten eggs, with eight hatched and the other nest had a clutch of nine eggs, with four hatched. Sadly no young were seen.

In 2014 the three available nest boxes were monitored, with amazing results. During March to mid-April a total of 73 eggs were laid in just three nest boxes! A case of egg dumping on a grand scale! This can occur in many species but particularly in ducks and pheasants that have large clutches and when there are more breeding females than available nests.

One contained 21 eggs and another held 18 eggs. These two clutches were never seen to be brooded. The third box held 34 eggs and a female brooded these continuously. It was decided that they would not all hatch naturally so they were tested by "candling" or holding a powerful light behind the egg to check for development. Of the 34 total 14 were not developing and were discarded. Since 12 is the maximum normal clutch size this number were left in the nest and the remaining eight were taken away to be incubated by a broody hen.

Many water birds and waders are precocial in that the young are ready to leave the nest soon after hatching. Mandarin ducklings should be out of the nest box within 24 hours. Of the 12 egg clutch nine eggs hatched and all young left the nest. Of the eight brooded by the hen two hatched but died within 24 hours. Again sadly no young birds were seen on the pool.

It was later discovered that two more Mandarins had nested, but using Barn Owl design nest boxes located at Ashbank Farm. They were 1.3 kms away from Rode Pool and 0.7 kms away from Lawton Hall Pool but only 100 metres away from a tree fringed pond in an adjacent field. During the spring three pairs of Mandarin were seen on Lawton Hall Pool, but no breeding activities noted.

Mandarins have large clutch sizes and so the expected survival rate is low but so far we have not seen any ducklings at Rode Pool. The finger of suspicion is pointed at Herons as being the predators, since the pool is surrounded by a heronry of almost 50 nesting pairs - a Mandarin duckling would provide a tasty snack for a Heron. We intend to provide more nest boxes on the estate in 2015 but located away from the heronry.

The Rode Pool Regulars

August 2014

Summary

Nest	Eggs laid	Eggs hatched	Chicks left nest	Chicks seen later	Note
Nest Box 24 Rode Pool	34 (12)	9	9	0	1 and 2
	8	2	2	0	3 and 4
Nest Box 23 Rode Pool	18	0	0	0	5
Nest Box 13 Rode Pool	21	0	0	0	5
SJ821563 Ashbank Farm	8	6	5	0	6
SJ822564 Ashbank Farm	8	4	4	0	6
Total	89	21	20	0	7

Notes

1. All 34 eggs were candled; 14 failed and were removed, 8 were taken to put under a broody hen, 12 were thought to be ok and left in the nest.
2. Of the 3 unhatched eggs of the 12 left, 2 contained a fully developed embryo and 1 was bad.
3. These 8 eggs were from NB24.
4. 2 eggs hatched, 1 chick died quickly and 1 chick died within 24 hours. 2 eggs had fully developed embryos but did not hatch.
5. These eggs were never seen to be incubated.
6. Nest in a tree mounted barn owl box, reported by the South Barn Owl Group.
7. South Barn Owl Group also reported two other Mandarin nests in Barn Owl boxes. One in Betley at SJ752494 with 10 eggs and eight hatched and one near Hurleston at SJ624558 with eight eggs and ?? hatched.