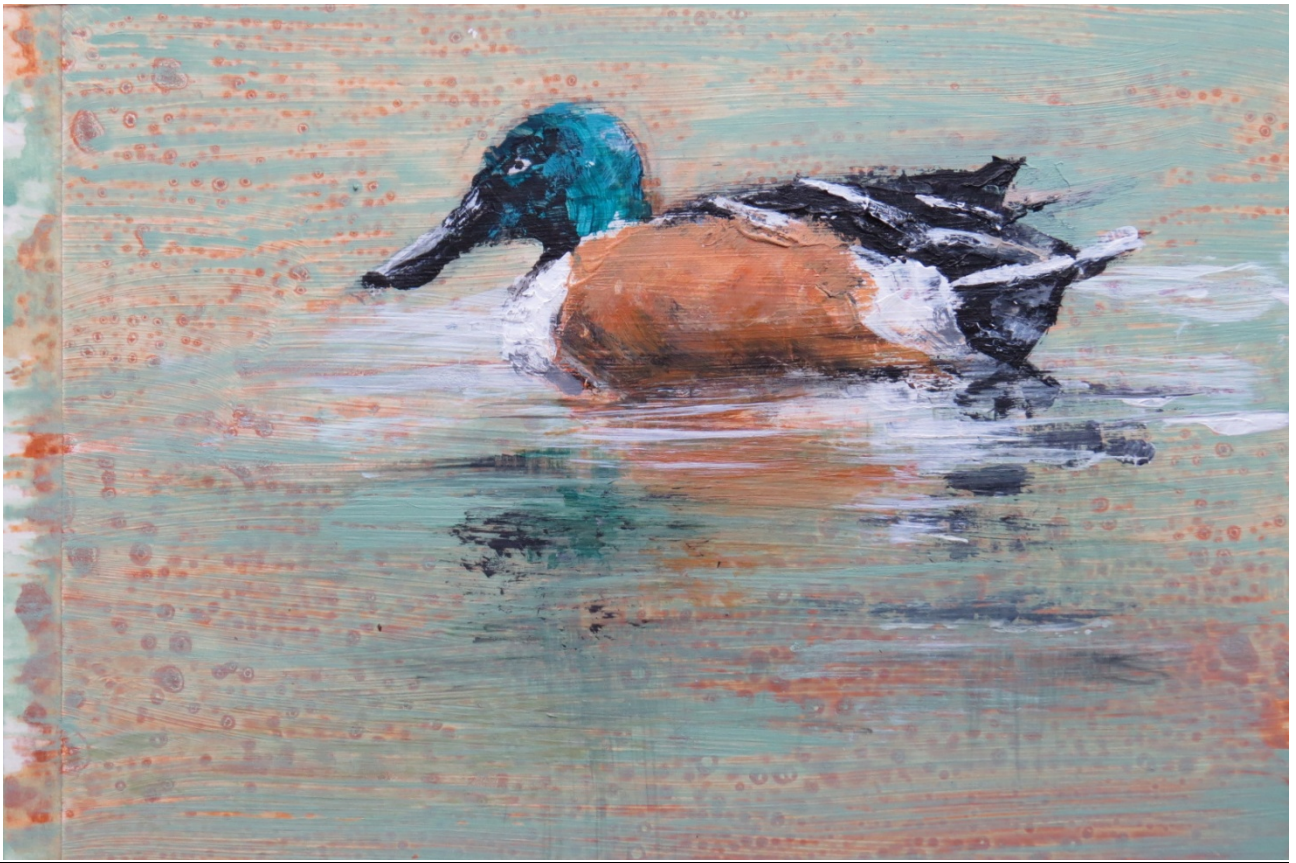


Rode Pool

Bird Report 2020



Shoveler by Chris Parry

RODE POOL BIRD REPORT 2020

An exceptional year due to the coronavirus pandemic. Occasional visits were made to the site in periods when lockdown restrictions were eased, usually just to Poolside. A special effort was made to make enough visits so that the Mandarin Duck nest box usage was recorded accurately. A visit in late March was adequate to count the nests in the heronry.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Continues to frustrate us, with records of one or two in both winter periods but they don't stop to breed. The highest count was three in January and November.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Up to six recorded in the first winter period. The only breeding noted was a pair with three young in May; then in June another pair probably bred but no young were seen. One or two seen up to the year end.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Maximum counts of six in March and four in October and November.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Up to five seen frequently in the first winter period. Then from October a group of four seemed to have become resident and were seen on most visits.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

56 nests in the heronry this year, up from 55 in 2019; with 10 on the north bank; 7 on the main island; 32 on the south bank and 7 on the small island. A summary chart of numbers over the last twenty years is attached as an appendix.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Three in January and two in October.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

Big numbers at the start of the year with 54 in January. Probably two pairs stayed to breed with a brood of nine and a brood of one seen in May. Numbers built up slowly to a maximum of 41 in December.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Lower numbers than usual recorded with maxima of 40 in February and just 24 in December. In May a pair was noted with six young.

Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*)

A pair appeared during March and have been present ever since. On 12th April a second pair were also seen at Poolside.

Mandarin (*Aix galericulata*)

Numbers of breeding attempts continue to increase as additional nest boxes are provided. This year there were six nest boxes; all were used and a total of 104 eggs were laid with 53 hatched and pleasingly two broods of young were noted. A summary of breeding over the past ten years is attached as an appendix.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Four in January, five in March and five in September.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Two were seen on 7th September.

Common Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rode Pool	20	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	5	33	60	38

The commonest duck after Mallard, and slightly higher numbers than usual in the second winter period.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) ##

Slightly higher numbers with a peak count of 76 in December. Several pairs bred.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rode Pool	2	9	6	0	0	0	0	0	4	20	21	20

Generally normal numbers and pattern.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Just one record of a single in February.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rode Pool	17	12	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	11	12

Usually, and probably was this year, present in all months.

Smew (*Mergellus albellus*)

These are scarce winter visitors from Northern Europe and we have been fortunate to have one visit here for the past four winters. As usual a female type appeared during January and stayed through to late February.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

Monthly maxima of seven in January, 11 in February, four in March, two in November and eight in December.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Probably present.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Seen regularly and bred.

Kestrel (*Falco tinninculus*)

Probably present.

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

One seen on 7th September.

Common Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) ##

Seen all year,

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

One in September and one in November.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) ##

Resident with a maximum of six seen but no evidence of breeding this year.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Resident with a maximum of six seen but no evidence of breeding this year.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Two were recorded in late April and May but no breeding noted.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

None seen this year.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Present during the winter periods with a peak count of 11 in the first winter period and two in the second winter period. However, they are difficult to count accurately since they blend in so well with the phragmites reeds.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

One was seen briefly in June.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

One was recorded in March and in October one was seen on floodwater at the junction of Townsend Lane and the A50.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

A maximum count of 92 in the first winter period. Usually around 100 in the second winter period but a very high count of 240 on 6th December.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*) ##

The highest number recorded was just seven in November.

Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Common resident and the largest flock noted was 60 in December.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

No records tyhis year.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Resident in the woods and were heard calling in March.

Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

One or two recorded in most months.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Recorded several times through the year.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*) ##

The commonest woodpecker and a few pairs bred on the estate.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Recorded in January, April, September, October and November.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrelli*)

Present all year, particularly around the cricket club where they usually breed and a family party of three were seen there in May.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes troglodytes*) ##

Common resident.

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) ##

Common resident.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*) ##

As last year a singing male was present at Poolside in late May and June but no successful breeding noted.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) ##

Common resident.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) ##

Common resident.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Common resident.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Winter visitor with a peak count of 20 in January.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Common resident but no big counts this year.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

At least two pairs bred in the reed beds.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

One on passage in September.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*) ##

One was seen in May carrying food, so probably feeding young.

Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*) ##

No boxes checked this year.

Great Tit (*Parus major*) ##

No boxes checked this year.

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*) ##

A common breeding resident.

Eurasian Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Common breeding resident.

Eurasian Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*) ##

Resident.

Magpie (*Pica pica*) ##

Common resident.

Eurasian Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Largest winter flock recorded was 40 but 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. A party of three in September were considered to be two adults with one juv.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Recorded in both winter periods.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) ##

Common resident.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Recorded in February.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Common resident but the largest group seen was just 11 in October.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*) ##

A flock of 30 recorded in January.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) ##

Two seen in July.

Colin Lythgoe and the Rode Pool Regulars.

Appendix

Mandarin Duck nesting on Rode Estate in 2020

There has been a big increase in nesting Mandarin numbers this year with the number of breeding attempts going up from four in 2019 to six this year and a huge increase in the number of hatched young leaving the nest. Despite that a sighting of a young Mandarin is quite a scarce sight, possibly because the herons always look well fed!! The table below gives a summary of breeding effort over the years since they first bred in 2012 and shows clearly the huge increase this year.

year	boxes available	nests	eggs	hatched	young seen #
2012	1	?	?	?	yes
2013	3	2	19	12	?
2014	3	3	73	9	no
2015	3	2	23	21	10+
2016	3	2	22	22	yes
2017	3	2	25	21	5+
2018	3	2	49	14	2+
2019	4	4	41	16	6+
2020	6	6	104	53	yes

One further nest box is on the estate near Ashbank Farm

year	boxes available	nests	eggs	hatched	young seen #
2020	1	1	6	4	no

the actual fledging success is difficult to confirm since the young leave the nest box within 24 hours of hatching and then stay with the mother hidden in the reeds and poolside vegetation for the first few weeks, trying to avoid being eaten by Herons from above or pike from below!

Additionally Mandarin nests with either sitting females or old eggs were recorded in Barn Owl nest boxes at the following sites in the SECOS area:

Alsager (golf course); Barthomley (New Farm); Weston (Wychwood Park); East Crewe (Marshfield Farm).

Rode Pool Regulars

(but with only a few isolated visits this year)

Rode Pool Heronry 2002 to 2020

