

DODDINGTON POOL

BIRD REPORT 2017



Common Scoter by Dennis Swaby

DODDINGTON POOL BIRD REPORT FOR 2017

Details of all the water related birds and birds of prey that we have recorded have been included, together with most of the more noteworthy species.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Doddington	6	0	1	6	6	37	41	23	24	46	57	46

No signs of a nesting attempt this year.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

Two were seen on 7th October and then a single was present from 17th October to 20th November. After a short break an adult and one immature were present from 30th November to 1st December.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

A single on 28th January. Then in the second winter period 18 circled over on 5th October and on 2nd November four arrived and stayed to the year end.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

Recorded in every month with higher numbers in autumn and winter, maximum of 235 in August and 210 in December. One pair bred and fledged three young.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

As last year there was the usual numbers of under 200 in the early part of the year but in autumn numbers increased dramatically with 440 in August and then peaked in October with an exceptional count of 980. Breeding success was good and in July a creche of 49 young of differing ages was recorded.

Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*)

A single bird was present through January and then disappeared.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

As last year one or two were recorded from January through to April but did not stay to breed.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

In the first winter period peak counts of 11 in January and 18 in March. Then in the second winter period 12 in October, 37 in November and 21 in December.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Two were recorded occasionally during January, February and March and in the second winter period just two on 29th September.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Much higher numbers than usual for this winter visitor with a maximum of 50 in February and 95 in December.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

A very common resident, with over 500 counted on the two pools in autumn and many young seen.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Two were present during February, two on 11th November and a single male on 1st December.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Present from January to April, with a maximum of 16 in January, and from October to the year end with around 10 as usual, except for a good count of 71 in December.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Numbers remain low for this once common species. Present from January to April with a maximum of 38 in February. In the second winter period present from October to December with a maximum count of just six in December.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Doddington	148	98	139	131	48	17	23	28	99	97	45	95

A good year with the now regular high numbers in winter and good breeding success. Three broods were recorded with a total of 16 young.

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

Although up to 25,000 are regular on the Wirral coast they are very scarce inland so a male from 6th to 14th July was an unusual record to get.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

A regular winter visitor and present from January to April, with a maximum count of 27 in January and from October to December with a maximum of 16 in December.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

A long staying female was present from the start of the year through to 24th February. Then a single on 23rd October and three during December.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

Regularly seen in the area.

Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

None actually recorded.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Many reared by the shooting syndicate and released.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Recorded in all months except April and July. Usually less than ten, except for the regular autumn surge in numbers, which this year was low, with a peak count of 27 on 27 October.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Several records of a single in January, February and April.

Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*)

On 2nd January one was seen settled on the dead tree along the drive.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Once again the size of the breeding colony has increased with a total of nine occupied nests counted on 31st March. Still active on 11th April but on 5th May all the nests were empty with no activity - what happened??

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

A poor year for breeding with just one young recorded on Main Pool and three pairs with two broods on Lemon Pool. A maximum count of 21 on both pools in October.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Also a poor year for breeding with just three broods and three young on Main Pool. On Lemon Pool one pair had two young and one pair failed. The usual post-breeding flock was a low 35 in September.

Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

A single bird seen on 2nd October was an excellent record; probably dispersing from the breeding colony at Woolston Eyes.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Resident and breeds in the area.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Resident and common with at least 13 'kettling' together high overhead in February.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

No record this year.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Resident and two seen regularly near the sailing club and probably bred nearby.

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

Just a single record this year with one seen on 31st August.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

Seen more often in recent times and wandering singles were seen in February, April and August.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquatica*)

An excellent series of records this year with one or two seen or heard regularly in the first winter period up to 20th March from both pools. In the second winter period just one record on 9th November but probably present all winter.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Bred on both pools and young seen on each. Maximum count was 5 on Main Pool and six on Lemon Pool in July, but usually under-counted due to its shy habitats.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

In the first winter period the maximum count was 197 in February. Many pairs bred and in August a count of 595 contained many young. In the second winter period the maximum count was still high with 490 in November.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Seven birds returned by early February and as usual two pairs bred, one on the Sailing Club roof with two young seen, and one on the island but no young seen. In June a group of five adults were visiting. The last birds were seen on 24th July. Then a single on 21st December was perhaps a very early returnee, although it did not stay.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

The huge flock of 700+ that was present in December 2016 was still present during January but was down to a more usual 170 in February. The highest count in the second winter period was 93 in October.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

The bird present in December 2016 probably stayed through the winter but was only seen once, on 1st March.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Another good year for sightings, with peak counts in the first winter period of 15 in February and in the second winter period of six in November. Usually seen on the waterline around the island.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

An unusual record of one on 25th September.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

The commonest wader and a regular visitor on passage. Present from 8th to 28th April with a peak count of three and several singles in the autumn from 19th June to 25th August.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

A single record of one on 21st August.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

If seen it's usually on passage in May and so it was this year with a single present on 1st and 4th .

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

Three records on spring passage with one on 2nd May, two on 7th May and two on 14th June, but no records on return passage in autumn.

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)

A maximum count of around 6500 in the gull roost in December.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

A maximum count of around 50 in the gull roost in December.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

A very high maximum count of around 4,000 in the gull roost in December. Numbers are now increasing rapidly following the establishment of breeding colonies in Crewe.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

At least 150 seen in the gull roost in December. Numbers are increasing more slowly.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Seen regularly but no high counts recorded.

Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Very common but the largest flock size noted was just 600 in February.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

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

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

A pair present and probably bred near the Sailing Club.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Resident and breeds. Heard occasionally in early spring.

Common Swift (*Apus apus*)

The highest count noted was 120 in August.

Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

One or two seen frequently except for the breeding months of May, June and July. Where do they nest?

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

The commonest woodpecker and several pairs bred.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

A family party of five seen in June.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Very common and many pairs breed in and around the hall.

Raven (*Corvus corax*)

The resident pair were recorded in most months and seen guarding the usual nest site in Georges Wood, although no family group was seen.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Resident and breeds.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Usually less than 10 birds present.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

A good count of 300 on 6th April, low over the water in a bitterly cold strong wind.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

The only flock size noted was 20 in July. Several pairs are just hanging on to nest in the old timber yard shed.

House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)

The highest count noted was 40 in July.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

A summer visitor.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Not common here but one singing on 6th April.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

A summer visitor.

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

A summer visitor.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

A summer visitor.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Three singing males on 28th April.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Probably eight pairs bred around Lemon Pool.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Small numbers during the winter periods.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

The only large flock recorded was 300 on 10th January.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

The highest count was 38 in November.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

A more extended spring passage and recorded on most days from 16th March through to 30th April with a peak count of seven on 26th April.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

The first record was one on 3rd April, then increased up to four on 11th, the usual number. However, on the 23rd there was an exceptional count of 23 yellow, 32 pied and two white wagtails. An average year with males holding territory along the road to the units and later seen carrying food and dropping into the cereal crop in July, and broods of two and one noted. A Blue-headed Wagtail was noted here on 12th and 16th May. The last record was two on 14th September.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Occasional sightings through the year but an interesting one on 17th July when a pair were seen with at least one juvenile.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

An exceptional spring passage for both Pied and White Wagtail (*m.a.alba*) again. Heavy spring passage from 16th March through to 30th April with peak counts of 43 on 20th March, 52 on 11th April and 32 on 23rd April. In the same period White Wagtails usually numbered one or two except for seven on 13th April. Probably two pairs bred with young seen. Few records on autumn passage but 21 on 10th August and 22 on 25th September and one White on 18th September.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

A passage migrant and winter visitor. A big spring passage from mid March to mid April with a very high count of 60 on 14th April. In the second winter period a high count of 27 in November.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

A flock of at least 140 was present during November feeding on maize stubble.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

In spring a pair were seen on 10th April. In late winter from November to the year end at least three were feeding with the finch flock on the maize stubble.

Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*)

A flock of 20+ seen in October.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

The largest flock recorded was 30 in September.

Siskin (*carduelis cannabina*)

A flock of 25 seen in March.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Not recorded every year nowadays so a flock of 64 in December was a good record.

Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*)

Two were seen on 13th and 19th November.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Seen in August.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

A few pairs breed, with two singing males around the yacht club and south bay in April, May and June and one on Lemon Pool. A few also remain for the winter.

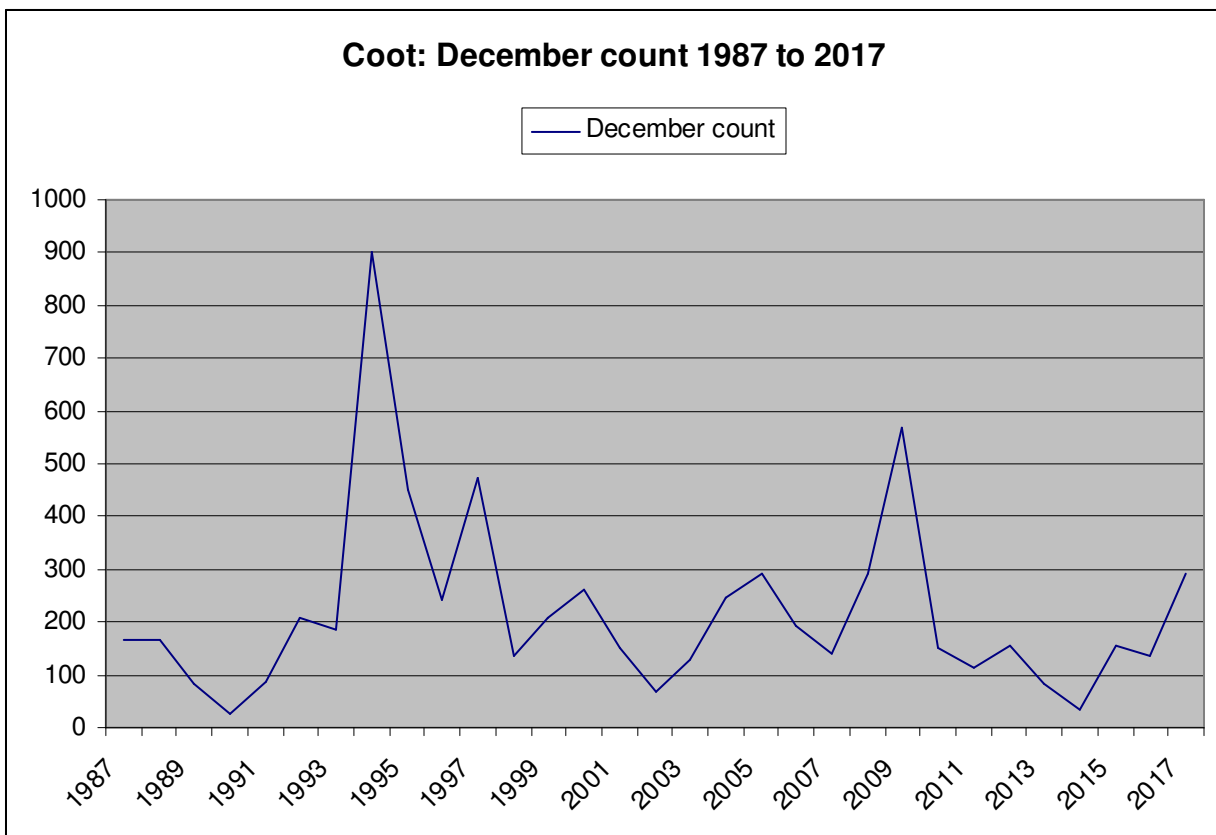
Colin Lythgoe; SECOS Recorder; and Andy & Mike Warner

Coot

The UK breeding population is augmented in winter with visitors from northern Europe. The total national population has increased by around a third in the past 20 years.

The Cheshire and Wirral Bird Atlas of 2004 to 2007 cites Doddington Pool as the major site for Coot in Cheshire and Wirral with 884 birds counted in November 2004, a huge count but well short of the record count of 1,300 birds in November 2001. The next largest flock during the survey period for the atlas was 400 on Redes Mere with few other sites approaching 200.

I have used data on the British Trust for Ornithology database, where I have submitted counts since 1987 to the Wetland Bird Survey, to produce a chart of December maxima from 1987 to 2017.



December counts from 1987 to 2017

The 2014 late winter counts were very low, just 35 in December. However, they have shown a gradual recovery since then and gave a count of 292 in 2017.

Colin Lythgoe