

DODDINGTON POOL BIRD REPORT 2023

I have made sufficient visits to be able to complete the monthly WeBS counts and also to record the activity in the heronry and all this data has been submitted to the BTO. However, I feel that I do not have sufficient data to produce a comprehensive annual report as I have done for many years and so I have just noted the highlights. All records from the Doddington permit holders have been entered in BirdTrack and so are available to the SECOS Recorder and to the CAWOS Recorder.

Flood Pool A major lowlight is that sadly in early March new deep drains were installed in the flood field and it was emptied of water. So a good opportunity to make this temporary pool into a permanent feature has been wasted. In 2022 13 species of wader used this area and two species bred for the first time. Now it has reverted to just another acre of tilled farmland on the estate.

Gull Roost: for many years there has been an overnight roost of gulls in the winter. The main species are Black-headed Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull with a few Herring Gull and Common Gull and a total of 8-10,000 birds.

In November 2023 the roost started to develop and was very noisy by dusk but no counts were made.

In mid-December a visit was made to assess the size of the roost. At 16-00 there were c.3000 birds present but the numbers then steadily decreased as birds flew away and by 16-30 no gulls were left.

A visit a week later and there were around 500 gulls in the air but none landed so none in the roost.

A visit in late December and no gulls were present at all.

I always expected numbers to be reduced by Avian Flu but not for this long established colony to disappear completely. Is there any other reason?

Mute Swan Max count of 49 in autumn and none bred.

Black Swan one present on 5th September

Greylag Goose max count of 270 in October.

Canada Goose max count of 550 in November.

Egyptian Goose a pair present from July to September.

Shelduck after last year's unprecedented breeding of three pairs on the flood pool back to normal with just up to four seen occasionally.

Wigeon max count of nine in October.

Teal max count of 36 in first winter period.

Mallard too many!!

Gadwall a single in November.

Pintail a single record of four on 25th November.

Shoveler max count of 29 in January on the flood pool

Pochard max count of 23 in January

Tufted Duck max count of 120 in March and two pairs bred.

Gadwall one on 20th July

Common Scoter a male present on 15th December

Goldeneye max count of 19 in March

Goosander a single present in late winter.

Cormorant max count of just 10 in late winter

Grey Heron another slight increase in the heronry with 26 nests this year, up one.

Little Egret two seen in July and August and also in December

Great White Egret single records in September and December

Black-necked Grebe three seen in September

Little Grebe a good year for numbers with 48 counted in September. At least two pairs bred and young seen.

Great Crested Grebe also a good year for numbers with a max of 71 in autumn. At least three pairs bred and young seen

Red Kite seen frequently from February to June

Hobby two were seen in May and one on 20th July

Osprey one passed through on 15th July

Peregrine Falcon a single seen occasionally

Coot max count of around 600

Oystercatcher Two pairs bred as usual on the roof of the two metal sheds at the Sailing Club.

Redshank singles seen in April and July

Common Sandpiper up to three on spring and autumn passage.

Green Sandpiper one seen on 21st September

Gulls see introductory note.

Common Tern Ten on 18th August.

Arctic Tern good views of one on 23rd October

Black Tern eight were present on 18th August

Reed Warbler at least three singing males recorded in the reeds around Lemon Pool

Stonechat up to three in winter around the sailing club

Wheatear one seen in April and two singles in September

Yellow Wagtail a juv was seen on 7th and 15th June. Bred locally?

Reed Bunting one pair bred by the sailing club.

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