

# Rode Pool

## Bird Report 2019



Mute Swans by Chris Parry

## **RODE POOL BIRD REPORT 2019**

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

### **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 November.

### **Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)**

Up to six recorded in the first winter period and then three pairs probably bred with just one seen with young. A late second brood in August when a small juv was seen. A single bird was usually seen through to the year end.

### **Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)**

Recorded in all months except May and June with maximum counts of seven in March and six in November.

### **Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)**

Slightly fewer records this year with up to three from January to April. Once again frustratingly none stayed to breed in the heronry. Birds returned from early November with the best record being on the 31<sup>st</sup> December when six came in to roost at dusk.

### **Great Egret (*Egretta alba*)**

Another good series of records with a single each month from January to April and two seen on 19<sup>th</sup> March. Super views at times with the bird right in front of the hide. The only record in the second winter period was one with a Little Egret on 31<sup>st</sup> December.

### **Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)**

55 nests in the heronry this year, down from 56 in 2018; with 10 on the north bank; 7 on the main island; 29 on the south bank and 9 on the small island. Since the big tree on the main island fell a few years ago numbers have built up in the south bank area. Two late (replacement?) nests were noted on 9<sup>th</sup> July with one on the main island with two young around three weeks old and one on the south bank still holding juvs. Then on 6<sup>th</sup> August one nest on the small island was noted with three young still not fledged yet.

### **Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)**

A pair were present through from January and nested in the reeds. Two small cygnets were seen in mid June but they were down to one by the end of June and that one disappeared in mid July. Pike? Fox? Heron?

### **Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)**

Big numbers at the start of the year with 40 in January and 53 in February. Then numbers dropped off quickly and just two pairs stayed to breed with four young seen on 21<sup>st</sup> May and another brood of two 25<sup>th</sup> June. Numbers again built up quickly to 43 in July but then surprisingly none until two in December.

### **Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)**

On 7<sup>th</sup> December 40 passed low over.

### **Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)**

Recorded in every month of the year. High numbers at the start of the year with 144 in January and 96 in February. An average breeding season with 13 young of probably two broods seen in August. In the second winter period numbers peaked at 45 in October and 17 in December.

### **Mandarin (*Aix galericulata*)**

For the first time they were recorded in every month of the year. A difficult species to make accurate counts of numbers since they spend most of the day roosting in pool side low trees. A peak count of 13 in the first winter period. Four nest boxes were used and a more detailed report is added as an appendix. Very pleasingly two broods of ducklings were seen, the most successful breeding effort yet. Up to 13 were recorded in the second winter period.

### **Baikal Teal (*Sibirionetta formosa*)**

An adult male was seen and photographed on 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June but not after that. This species is a national rarity and a supporting description has been submitted to CAWOS. Another male was in the country at the same time, moving around the east of the UK and causing a lot of excitement amongst the twitching fraternity.

### **Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)**

Just a single recorded in January, then 14 in November and two in December.

### **Common Teal (*Anas crecca*)**

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Rode Pool</b>	25	25	11	11	0	0	0	0	5	38	10	14

The commonest duck after Mallard, but slightly lower numbers than usual.

### **Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) ##**

Once again lower numbers than last year with generally less than 50 and a peak count of 60 in December. Several pairs bred.

### **Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*)**

Three present on 12<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)**

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Rode Pool</b>	17	35	21	11	0	0	0	0	5	12	5	6

Generally normal numbers and pattern although slightly down at the end of the year.

### **Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)**

Three present in February and March and then 11 in October.

### **Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)**

Maximum	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Rode Pool</b>	13	9	12	15	4	7	4	0	4	10	9	10

As with most of the duck species numbers seem to be slowly decreasing. No breeding success was recorded.

**Smew** (*Mergus albellus*)

These are scarce winter visitors from Northern Europe and we have been fortunate to have one visit here for the past three winters. In the 2017/18 winter a female type was present from 23<sup>rd</sup> January until the 13<sup>th</sup> March. In the second winter period i.e. 2018/19 one appeared on the 1<sup>st</sup> December, which was good but became even better when a second bird appeared on 8<sup>th</sup> December. They were still present during January 2019 but were down to a single in February.

Good news when a female type appeared for the third winter in mid December. However, it moved off when the pool froze completely in late December and did not return in 2019.

**Goosander** (*Mergus merganser*)

Monthly maxima of seven in January, five in February, six in November and four 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.

**Kestrel** (*Falco tinninculus*)

A few records during the summer.

**Hobby** (*Falco subbuteo*)

One seen from the hide on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

**Common Pheasant** (*Phasianus colchicus*) ##

Seen all year, with a maximum count of ten.

**Water Rail** (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Only recorded during January.

**Moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*) ##

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

**Coot** (*Fulica atra*)

Resident with a maximum of 15 seen and at least two pairs bred.

**Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*)

A few records in March and April with up to six seen. A large flock of around 100 present during December..

**Woodcock** (*Scolopax rusticola*)

Fairly common in the woods during the winter and birds were flushed there on 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February.

**Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Present during the winter periods with a peak count of 11 in the first winter period and eight 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 late afternoon on 19<sup>th</sup> April.

**Black-headed Gull** (*Larus ridibundus*)

Regular from January to March with a peak count of 85 in January and August to December with a peak count of 45 in October.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*)

One or two recorded regularly with the gull flock in winter.

**Herring Gull** (*Larus argentatus*)

Two with the other gulls in January.

**Stock Dove** (*Columba oenas*) ##

A flock of 31 was recorded on the field across from Poolside in March. In the breeding season there was much competition with Mandarin Ducks over nest box use that got quite complicated but at least two pairs nested in boxes, laid three eggs and two juvs fledged.

**Wood Pigeon** (*Columba palumbus*)

Common resident and the largest flock noted was 83 in January..

**Barn Owl** (*Tyto alba*)

They do breed on the estate and singles were seen in January and February.

**Tawny Owl** (*Strix aluco*)

Resident in the woods and were heard calling in January and February and one was seen in April and a nest box was used.

**Swift** (*Apus apus*)

Eight were recorded over on 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

**Common Kingfisher** (*Alcedo atthis*)

One or two recorded in every month except April and May but no evidence of breeding.

**Green Woodpecker** (*Picus viridis*)

Recorded several times through the year and one was seen in January and in June.

**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.

**Sand Martin** (*Riparia riparia*)

Present during the summer. First record was seven on 19<sup>th</sup> April.

**Swallow** (*Hirundo rustica*)  
Present during the summer.

**House Martin** (*Delichon urbica*)  
Present during the summer, max count of 20 in September and the last record was two on 8<sup>th</sup> October..

**Grey Wagtail** (*Motacilla cinerea*)  
Recorded in January, April, 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 six were seen on the cricket field on 6<sup>th</sup> August with a peak count of nine here in October.

**Wren** (*Troglodytes troglodytes troglodytes*) ##  
Common resident.

**Dunnock** (*Prunella modularis*) ##  
Common resident.

**Spotted Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa striata*) ##  
One was seen in the woods on 16<sup>th</sup> June and then two on the 18<sup>th</sup> June. Unfortunately they were not seen again after 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

**Robin** (*Erithacus rubecula*) ##  
Common resident.

**Blackbird** (*Turdus merula*) ##  
Common resident.

**Fieldfare** (*Turdus pilaris*)  
Winter visitor, with a peak count of 30 in October..

**Song Thrush** (*Turdus philomelos*)  
Common resident.

**Redwing** (*Turdus iliacus*)  
Winter visitor with a peak count of 70 in October.

**Mistle Thrush** (*Turdus viscivorus*)  
Common resident, with big counts of 48 in January and 45 in September.

**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, with the first record on the 19<sup>th</sup> March.+

**Willow Warbler** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

On 9<sup>th</sup> April three and on 16<sup>th</sup> April one was singing by the hide; presumably on passage since they are not common here and the only other record was one in late August.

**Goldcrest** (*Regulus regulus*) ##

Recorded throughout the year. On 20<sup>th</sup> August there were nice views of a family party when two adults were seen with three young along Poolside.

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

Resident and breeds; the largest flock was just nine in December.

**Coal Tit** (*Parus ater*) ##

Common resident.

**Blue Tit** (*Parus caeruleus*) ##

Four pairs used nest boxes, laid 36 eggs, hatched 34 young and fledged 34; an average productivity rate of 8.5 young per nest; a successful year.

**Great Tit** (*Parus major*) ##

Six pairs used nest boxes, laid 43 eggs, hatched 36 young and fledged 36; an average productivity rate of 6.0 young per nest, again a successful year.

**Nuthatch** (*Sitta europaea*) ##

A common breeding resident and young seen but no nest boxes used this year.

**Eurasian Treecreeper** (*Certhia familiaris*)

Common breeding resident and one pair used a nest box, laid 3 eggs, hatched 3 and fledged 3..

**Eurasian Jay** (*Garrulus glandarius*) ##

Now regular on the feeders, but very wary.

**Magpie** (*Pica pica*) ##

Common resident.

**Eurasian Jackdaw** (*Corvus monedula*)

No large winter flock recorded 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.

**Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Recorded in both winter periods.

**Chaffinch** (*Fringilla coelebs*) ##

Common resident.

**Greenfinch** (*Carduelis chloris*)

Previously common resident. Numbers have fallen quickly due to the deadly Trichomonosis disease. Not recorded this year.

**Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Common resident and up to 40 seen in autumn.

**Siskin** (*Carduelis spinus*) ##

A few records in each winter period, with a peak count of 30 in October.

**Bullfinch** (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Not regularly seen but one or two were recorded during the year.

**Lesser Redpoll** (*Acanthis cabaret*)

Two by the hide on 31<sup>st</sup> December.

**Reed Bunting** (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) ##

Recorded in March and May.

Colin Lythgoe and the Rode Pool Regulars.

A total of 85 species recorded, with 19 species using the feeders at the hide.

## Appendix

### **MANDARIN DUCK NESTING ON RODE ESTATE IN 2019**

As last year there was a battle between Mandarin Ducks and Stock Doves for the use of the large hole nest boxes. And as last year the Stock Doves won when a Stock Dove ousted a Mandarin sitting on 12 eggs. As usual there was a lot of 'egg dumping' with multiple females laying in the same box and actual clutch sizes were 36 eggs and 25 eggs. These were adjusted down to a more manageable size, giving a greater chance of success.

This strategy seems to have worked since two Mandarins were successful. One was left with 13 eggs and hatched 10 and one was left with 11 eggs and hatched 6.

The totals were:-

species	nests	eggs	hatched	fledged
mandarin	4	41	16	#

# 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! The good news this year was that we did see a female with two juvs and another female with 4 juvs.