

# Rode Pool



Bird Report  
2013

## RODE POOL BIRD REPORT 2013

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

### **Little Grebe** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

An increase in records, but not during the breeding season. Singles in January and April and then two from September to the year end.

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

More records than last year and recorded in every month. Two broods were seen in the summer and then in early November they still had three young and one young surviving and another pair was seen with three very small young, giving a total of three broods. The maximum count was 11 also in November.

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

Recorded from January to May and then August to December but a maximum of only three, in September.

### **Bittern** (*Botaurus stellaris*)

Great excitement in January when one was flushed from the reeds by peg 18 on the 22nd. It had apparently also been flushed from the willow beds on the 17<sup>th</sup>. It was last recorded on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Good records of a very scarce and secretive species.

So even more excitement in November when one (quite possibly the same bird) was seen on the 1<sup>st</sup> and then at least six times until 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

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

One was seen at dusk on 31<sup>st</sup> December, the last bird of the year to be recorded!

### **Great White Egret** (*Ardea alba*)

A county rarity, so even more excitement when one was present in the reed beds from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October. Last seen on that date and one was reported from Tittesworth Reservoir, Staffordshire later the same day, so probably the same bird.

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

42 nests in the heronry this year, another slight increase on the 37 in 2012 and 36 in 2011; with 10 on the north bank; 13 on the main island; 11 on the south bank and 8 on the small island.

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

Recorded in most months but only a single, except for October when a family party of two adults with four young visited.

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

Present from January to August with a maximum count of 19 in February. Successful breeding when adults were seen with two young in May. Returned in December when two were present.

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

Recorded in every month in varying numbers with the maximum count in June of 68 adults and a high count of 21 young.

**Mandarin** (*Aix galericulata*)

Much more satisfying news this year, with birds present from April to the year end and two pairs used nest boxes and hatched eggs, although no young were seen. Full details are in the separate article attached. Finally in November a high count of 16 adults was noted.

**Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*)

Recorded from January to March and then October to December. Usually only up to three but a high count of 22 in January.

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

Present in all months except May and June as usual; with a maximum count of 27 in January and 39 in September.

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

Generally up to 100 present but 145 in November was the highest count. Many pairs bred.

**Shoveler** (*Anas clypeata*)

Becoming slightly more common; present from January to April with a peak count of 19 and September to December with a peak count of 32.

**Pochard** (*Aythya ferina*)

Decreasing in numbers, following the national trend. Only four records, with a single in January and April, two in March and two on 10<sup>th</sup> November.

**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. Two broods were seen in July, one of four and one of five but by September there were just three survivors. Peak numbers were 35 in February and 30 in November.

**Goosander** (*Mergus merganser*)

Present in the winter months with a slight increase in numbers of up to 14 in January and 10 in November.

**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 tinnunculus*)

Seen regularly and probably bred.

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

Seen all year, with two regular at the feeders by the hide.

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

A definite record of two on 8<sup>th</sup> December plus two other probable heard records in this winter period.

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

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

**Coot** (*Fulica atra*)

Resident with up to 14 seen and at least three pairs bred.

**Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Recorded during the winter but no count made.

**Woodcock** (*Scolopax rusticola*)

A report of up to 12 flushed from the woods during the winter periods.

**Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*)

A single bird was flushed from in front of the hide on 12<sup>th</sup> April.

**Common Sandpiper** (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

A single bird seen on 16<sup>th</sup> April.

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

Regular from January to April and July to December with a max count of 152 recorded.

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

A single seen in the regular gull flock in February.

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

A single seen in the regular gull flock in February.

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

A maximum count of 20 in the first winter period.

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

Common resident and a large count of 600 in the second winter period.

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

Resident in the woods.

**Common Swift** (*Apus apus*)

Present during the summer.

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

One or two recorded in every month except for the two crucial breeding months of May and June. Do they move away? If so where to?

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

One was heard calling on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

**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, including a pair seen together in the trees by the feeders.

**Swallow** (*Hirundo rustica*)

Present during the summer and 50 present on 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

**House Martin** (*Delichon urbica*)

Present during the summer.

**Grey Wagtail** (*Motacilla cinerea*)

One or two seen during October, and singles on 19<sup>th</sup> November and 31<sup>st</sup> December.

**Pied Wagtail** (*Motacilla alba yarrelli*)

Seen regularly and probably bred.

**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 with a peak count of 60 in November.

**Song Thrush** (*Turdus philomelos*)

Common resident.

**Redwing** (*Turdus iliacus*)

Winter visitor with a peak count of 52 in November.

**Mistle Thrush** (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Common resident, although the usual peak of family groups in autumn held a maximum of only eight (usually over 30 at this time).

**Reed Warbler** (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

An increase in breeding pairs this year with a total of five singing males heard in the reed beds.

**Blackcap** (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Common summer visitor.

**Chiffchaff** (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Common summer visitor. Also one recorded on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

**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 the only flock size noted was 10 February.

**Marsh Tit** (*Parus palustris*) ##

Following the disappearance - and probable demise - of the long staying individual last year there were no records this year of this now scarce species.

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

Common resident.

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

Five pairs used nest boxes, laid 32 eggs and hatched 30 young.

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

Five pairs used nest boxes, laid 30 eggs and hatched 28 young.

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

A common breeding resident, but no pairs used a nest box this year

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

Common resident.

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

Now regular on the feeders, but very wary.

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

Common resident.

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

The largest winter flock recorded was around 45 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.

**Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

[Common resident and winter visitor.] That used to be its status for many years; this year there is no record all year in the log book.

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

Common resident.

**Greenfinch** (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common resident.

**Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Common resident and a flock of 150 noted on 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

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

A few records, with peak counts of 25 on 22<sup>nd</sup> January and 10 in December.

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

At least two singing males present during the summer and also seen on the feeders in the winter.

Colin Lythgoe; SECOS Recorder.

## MANDARIN DUCK BREEDING AT RODE POOL

Mandarin Ducks were first seen here occasionally during 2009 and 2010, so in 2010/11 we provided a nest box fastened to a tree over the water. Mandarins are one of the few hole nesting species of ducks and need a suitable sized hole in a tree, preferably in woodland near to water.

In 2011 birds were present for seven of the 12 months with two males and a female present during the breeding season, but no breeding attempt noted.

In 2012 birds were present for nine of the 12 months with a peak count of six males and two females. During the summer they showed an interest in the only nest box but it was not possible to check the contents. Frustratingly in June, from the hide, we had quite literally a one second view of a fluffy duckling as it emerged and immediately disappeared into the poolside reeds, with a female Mandarin nearby. Identification by association was probable but not conclusive. Encouraged by this we provided two more nest boxes in the winter of 2012/13.

In 2013 birds were again present regularly. On 21<sup>st</sup> May whilst doing checks of all the nest boxes one of the Mandarin boxes was opened to reveal a female Mandarin sitting on a clutch of nine eggs. Euphoria!!

With two females having been seen regularly we hoped that the second box was also being used. Having decided not to disturb the nest boxes again we sat back to await a pool full of Mandarin ducklings, since the normal brood size is 9 to 14. Sadly we never saw one! A later check of the nest boxes and their contents indicated one clutch of nine eggs with four hatched and one clutch of ten eggs with eight hatched. Where did they go? Although Mandarins with young are notoriously secretive we are sure that if any had survived they would have been seen. Unfortunately Rode Pool has a very poor record for young water birds surviving to fledge. Six Mute Swan cygnets disappeared within two weeks of hatching in 2011 and again in 2012. The survival rate of Mallard and Tufted Duck ducklings is very poor and Great Crested Grebe is not good. We suspect that there are some big pike in the pool who are the main culprits, ably assisted by the Grey Herons who will take anything they can catch, including ducklings. Rode Pool has the third largest heronry in Cheshire and on a relatively small pool.

So, sadly although nesting has been proved here our only sighting of a Mandarin duckling is a one second view of a probable one in 2012.

The Rode Pool Regulars

### Complete nest box use

Species	Nests	Eggs	Eggs hatched	Young fledged
Blue Tit	5	32	30	30
Great Tit	5	30	28	28
Mandarin Duck	2	19	12	0?

The number of eggs per pair is low for Blue Tits since one nest was abandoned with just one egg in it after it was taken over by bees.

For the tit species the fledging success was excellent.