

August 2010 summary

Introduction

This report on birds seen in Hertfordshire during August 2010 is produced using records sent in to the website and to the BTO Birdtrack recording scheme. I have also looked at the Yahoo Hertsbirding group so that any interesting sightings reported there are not excluded even though they August not yet have been reported in a more formal way. Clearly additional records will arrive in due course so the summary is not a completely comprehensive view of August 2010. All of these records need to be considered as provisional particularly in the case of species for which a full description is required.

August weather

August in Hertfordshire was exceptionally wet proving to be the second wettest month in St Albans I have recorded since 2001 (124.2mm). It was also quite dull and not surprisingly temperatures were below the long term average. More information about the month's weather (August not yet available on the 2nd of September) can be found at <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/> .

August highlights

A juvenile **Black-necked Grebe** was seen at Wilstone reservoir from the 17th to the 23rd generally to the right of the hide. **Little Egrets** were once again widely reported with no less than 9 present on the main pit at Tyttenhanger GPs on the 6th, a site record. The feral **Whooper Swans** turned up at Tring reservoirs at the end of the month and a **Barnacle Goose**, also probably feral, was at King's Meads on the 28th. There were a few **Egyptian Goose** records; the two seen at Tyttenhanger on a number of days included a hybrid. **Mandarin Ducks** were particularly well represented in the Beech Farm/disused Hatfield airfield area with up to 9 seen on the 14th and the 30th, the species was also recorded regularly at Lemsford Springs which is nearby. **Wigeon** were seen at Tring reservoirs on the 24th, 28th and 31st and at Tyttenhanger on the 5th and 15th. **Teal** numbers built up with 80 at Wilstone reservoirs on the 31st and a **Pintail** was seen there on the 22nd and the 24th. A **Garganey** was seen at Rye Meads on the 17th and the 18th and at King's Meads on the 28th, a drake in eclipse plumage remained at Wilstone reservoir from the 6th to the 24th. **Red-crested Pochards** are normally seen near Rickmansworth where one was seen on the 2nd, this month they could be seen all month in varying numbers at either Startop's End reservoir or Wilstone reservoir with 9 birds at the former site on the 26th and the 28th; one was also at Tyttenhanger on the 24th.

Again there were numerous **Red Kite** records with 6 seen in Kelshall area on the 4th; this general area also continued to produce views of Marsh Harriers with up to 5 seen on numerous days. An **Osprey** was reported as being seen at Wilstone reservoir on the 22nd, a first-hand record of this individual would be most welcome. There were a respectable number of records of **Hobby** with five seen casing Swifts over North Mymms Park on the 15th. **Peregrines** were seen at South Mymms on the 24th, Tyttenhanger on the 21st and at Wilstone reservoir on the 31st where it had been for the preceding three days.

A **Quail** was heard calling at Sandon on the 1st and **Water Rails** were seen at Amwell, Wilstone reservoir and Tewinbury reserve; at the last place at least three juveniles were seen proving local breeding had occurred. Six **Oystercatchers** were seen at Wilstone reservoir on the 9th, **Little Ringed Plovers** were seen at King's Mead and Startop's End reservoir, Tring with **Ringed Plovers** found at Pitstone Quarry, Tyttenhanger and Wilstone reservoir. A **Golden Plover** was seen flying over Wilstone reservoir on the 10th and a **Dunlin** was seen there from the 22nd to the 30th. A **Ruff** made a brief visit to the main pit at Tyttenhanger in adverse weather conditions on the 26th and **Snipe** numbers started to increase with a maximum of 14 at King's Mead on the 30th. Twelve **Black-tailed Godwits** were seen over King's Mead on the 11th and this species was seen

on numerous occasions at Tring reservoirs from the 11th to the 23rd. The 23rd of the month was particularly good at Tring reservoirs for wader passage with five **Bar-tailed Godwits** seen over Startop's End reservoir along with five **Whimbrel** in flocks of 3 and 2 (for some unexplained reason the sightings did not appear on the website - my apologies for the omission). A **Spotted Redshank** landed on the dam wall of Hilfield Park reservoir on the evening of the 31st. There was a trickle of passage **Greenshanks** passing through the county from the 7th onwards with four at Wilstone reservoir on the 16th. **Green Sandpiper** numbers continued to grow with 13 at Rye Meads on the 8th, a **Wood Sandpiper** appeared at Wilstone reservoir on the afternoon of the 5th. **Common Sandpipers** were widely recorded with nine at King's Mead on the 30th.

Single **Mediterranean Gulls** were seen at Wilstone reservoir on the 26th, 28th and 31st and an adult **Yellow-legged Gull** was seen flying over Startop's End reservoir on the 13th with a first summer bird at Amwell NR on the 21st. There was a large passage of **Common Terns** through Wilstone reservoir on the 23rd with numbers in excess of 210 with one **Arctic Tern** also recorded.

A **Turtle Dove** was seen at Hare Street on the 1st and ten **Ring-necked Parakeets** were seen at Cassiobury Park, Watford on the 9th. A **Barn Owl** was seen over the disused Hatfield airfield on the 31st and at Maple Lodge NR on the 3rd and the 12th. **Kingfishers** were seen at many waterside locations with young being seen fed by adults.

Sizeable numbers of **Sand Martins** were seen with 330 at Wilstone reservoir on the 17th, 150 **Swallows** were present at Startop's End reservoir on the 26th and 175 **House Martins** were seen at Wilstone reservoir on the 24th. Thirty **Meadow Pipits** were at King's Mead on the 29th and fifteen **Yellow Wagtails** were seen at Redbournbury on the 24th with nearly 30 other records of this species. Eight **White Wagtails** were seen in a larger flock of **Pied Wagtails** at St. Clement Danes School, Chorleywood on the 31st. There were a trickle of **Redstarts** passing through the county with one near Buntingford on the 15th and the 18th with another at Stevenage on the 18th; one was at Beech Farm/Hatfield airfield on the 28th and the 29th. **Whinchat** passage picked up towards the end of the month with Norton Green, Stevenage a favoured location with 5 seen there on the 27th, 4 were seen at Beech Farm, St Albans on the 28th. There was a steady passage of **Wheatears** from the 11th onwards with 4 at Long Marston on the 26th.

Cetti's Warblers were present in their usual places of Amwell NR, King's Mead and Tring reservoirs and **Grasshopper Warblers** were seen at King's Mead on the 1st and Blagrove Common on the 4th. A family party of Firecrests was seen in Hatfield Park on the 8th and there were over thirty records of **Spotted Flycatchers** with 12 near Buntingford on the 15th and 10 in two groups at Wilstone reservoir on the 17th. A **Pied Flycatcher** was seen in the apple orchard at Wilstone reservoir on the 19th. There were 11 **Raven** records with three seen at Berkhamsted Common on the 1st. **Tree Sparrows** were also present near Tyttenhanger Farm and a single bird was seen at Hertford Heath on the 30th. Two **Crossbills** were seen at Hawkshead Woods on the 7th and a **Hawfinch** was seen at Rye Meads on the 21st. A **Corn Bunting** was seen near Deadmans Hill, Sandon area on the 1st.

An archive of the website records used to produce this report is available from this link:-
<http://www.hnhs.org/birds/sightingsarchive.php?year=2010&month=8>