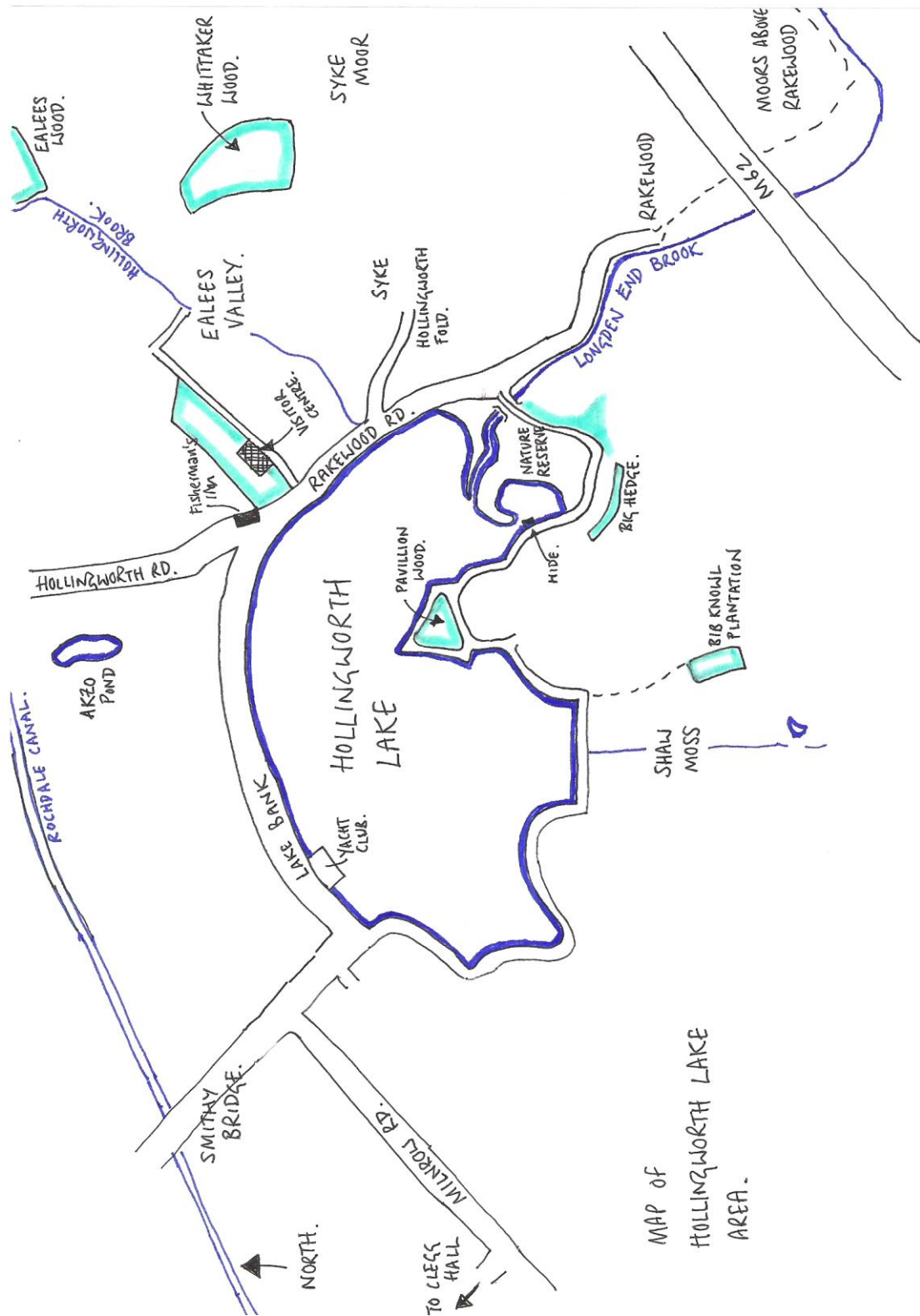


**BIRDS AT
HOLLINGWORTH
LAKE 2009**





SUMMARY

113 species were recorded in the Hollingworth Lake and Clegg Hall area during 2009. The highlight was undoubtedly the long-staying and showy juvenile Great northern Diver which enjoyed a protracted stay from November 5th until the year end. Despite being only the second record for the site it was then incredibly joined by another juvenile on 26th November. There was one addition to the Hollingworth Lake list with an adult Yellow-legged Gull being a first for the site. Other scarcities included only the fourth record of Iceland Gull for the site (this bird was briefly in the same scope view as the Great northern Diver – surely a first for Rochdale !) as well as records of Gadwall, Shoveler, Whooper Swan, Common Scoter, Hobby, Sandwich and Arctic Terns, Waxwing, Redstart, Ring Ouzel, Willow Tit, Raven and Twite. However several species that have been annual in recent years were not seen in 2009, including Little-ringed Plover, Dunlin, Red-breasted Merganser, Kittiwake, Whinchat and Spotted Flycatcher. Another poor summer with periods of above average rainfall meant that there was again no exposed mud during the spring or autumn, and consequently wader passage was virtually non-existent.

A pair of Tree Pipits bred for the second successive year near Rakewood and other breeding birds included a pair of Oystercatchers which bred on the old Akzo chemicals site (the first confirmed breeding record in the Hollingworth Lake area) and a pair of Stock Doves which bred successfully near Syke Farm. It was another poor year for breeding waterbirds though, with Moorhen and Mallard being the only species nesting successfully at the nature reserve. A pair

of Kingfishers was seen carrying fish in April but a period of torrential rain probably flooded the nest site.

The cold spell in February seems to have had an adverse effect on some species with Nuthatch and Stonechat (both recent colonists to the area) disappearing after the freezing weather.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have tried to make this report as complete as possible and I thank everyone who has sent in records – this helps to build up a more complete record of the wildlife value of the site. I would like to particularly thank Jim Taylor and the rangers for their time and enthusiasm in trying to improve the wildlife habitat within the country park. I would also like to especially thank Pauline Greenhalgh, Robert Adderley and Jim Taylor for kindly agreeing to let me use some of their excellent photographs in this report.

The nature of the site means that migrant birds are often present only briefly, and therefore many records are probably missed throughout the year. I would be most grateful to receive details of any records from the area.

Simon Hitchen

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Front cover photo: Great northern Diver (Pauline Greenhalgh)

SYSTEMATIC LIST (all records and photos Simon Hitchen unless otherwise stated)

MUTE SWAN

Cygnus Olor

Birds were present at Hollingworth Lake throughout the year. There was unfortunately no attempt at breeding here despite the presence of suitable habitat. A pair did breed nearby on the canal near Littleborough Station. One cygnet was seen here on 21st June but it disappeared soon after this date and may have been predated. There was no report of breeding at Clegg Hall this year.

Numbers have recently increased at Hollingworth Lake, but this appears to be mainly due to the release of rehabilitated birds from The Three Owls Bird Sanctuary. 13 on 27th December was the maximum count.

Monthly maxima at Hollingworth Lake were as follows:-

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
8	7	4	7	9	4	4	4	3	2	5	13

WHOOPEE SWAN

Cygnus Cygnus

It was a good year with 3 records being better than average:-

- 10 (5 adults and 5 juveniles) on 13th January (Alan Nuttall)
- 4 adults on 5th November
- 7 flew SE at 15:00 on 28th November (Jim Taylor)



Whooper Swans – Hollingworth Lake 5/11/2009

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

Anser Brachyrhynchus

A single bird was with Canadas at Littleborough station on 30th April – this was the sole record in the first half of the year.

In autumn 70+ flew west over Littleborough at 12:30 on 26th September. A single bird was then seen associating with the Canada flock on numerous occasions between 18th October and the year end. 7 were seen on 9th November (Dave Winnard). Finally a skein was heard flying over in the dark at 18:45 on 21st December – they sounded to be heading westwards.

GREYLAG GOOSE

Anser Anser

The only record this year was a single on 30th November (Mike Hirst).

CANADA GOOSE

Branta Canadensis

A pair bred successfully at Akzo Pond and 2 pairs bred on the canal at Littleborough Station. The species continues to increase in numbers - the maximum count this year was 430 on 1st January - another record for the site.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
430	256	74	22	14	130	145	110	344	280	220	427

BARNACLE GOOSE

Branta Leucopsis

A single bird was associating with the Canada flock from 6th to 22nd November. It was assumed to be feral in origin.

RUDDY SHELDUCK

Tadorna Ferruginea

A female was associating with Canadas from at least 18th-26th July. It was most often seen in the fields surrounding Akzo Pond. The bird was assumed to be an escape. It was also seen at Watergrove Reservoir.

Ruddy Shelduck
Akzo Pond July 2009



SHELDUCK

Tadorna Tadorna

The only records this year were of a pair on 2nd March, a single female on 6th-7th March and a drake on 29th April.

WIGEON

Anas Penelope

There were 4 (2 pairs) on 1st and a drake on 3rd January. 15 on 29th January may have been cold weather migrants, but 5 on 16th, 13 on 21st and 2 on 25th February more likely reflected early spring migration. There were then pairs on 3rd, 7th and 10th March and 3 on 31st March.

Autumn passage commenced in October when there were singles on 11th and 13th, 7 on 14th and 4 on 21st. There were then no records until December when there were 2 on 13th and a single female on 31st.

Monthly maxima were as follows:-

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
15	13	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	2

GADWALL

Anas Strepera

A pair on 13th January was the only record. This species remains a very scarce migrant in the Rochdale area.

TEAL

Anas Crecca

Once again high water levels made Hollingworth Lake unattractive for this species. Consequently Shaw Moss and Akzo Pond were the favoured sites. Max: 42 on 22nd November.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
20	15	22	5	-	-	-	2	15	19	42	15

MALLARD

Anas Platyrhynchus

Only one pair bred successfully at the nature reserve itself, which has become increasingly devoid of waterbirds in the last few years, presumably due to disturbance and the presence of mink. Maximum: 80 on 27th August.

Monthly maxima were as follows:-

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
64	37	32	16	-	-	58	80	36	38	38	48

SHOVELER

Anas Clypeata

This species is a rare passage migrant in Rochdale. The only records were:-

- A female on 1st January
- 6 (3 pairs) on 31st March
- A female on 22nd December

POCHARD

Aythya Farina

This species has declined dramatically at the site in the last twenty years and is now only a scarce passage migrant. The only records were as follows:-

- 4 on 11th February (3 drakes, 1 duck)
- 3 drakes on 16th February
- 1 drake on 21st February
- 1 female on 19th April
- 2 females on 27th August
- 1 female on 24th December

TUFTED DUCK

Aythya Fuligula

This is another species that has declined alarmingly at the site over the last twenty years. The only records from the Lake itself were of small numbers recorded on passage. The maxima were 5 on 21st February and 7th April. Monthly maxima were as follows:-

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1	5	2	5	-	1	1	1	-	4	-	-

Small numbers were regularly seen at Clegg Hall Pools throughout the year and a female was seen with 11 ducklings here on 5th July.

COMMON SCOTER

Melanitta Nigra

The only record this year was a drake on 15th October (Chris Jepson-Brown).

GOLDENEYE

Bucephala Clangula

It was an extremely poor year for this species, which seems unable to co-exist with the almost constant boating disturbance at the site these days. There were incredibly only 3 records: a female on 1st January, 2 females on 16th February and a drake on 10th March.

GOOSANDER

Mergus Merganser

The highest numbers this year were during periods of harsh weather in February and December. Presumably the Lake is one of the last local waters to freeze and it therefore attracts birds from other nearby sites. Boating disturbance undoubtedly limits the numbers here at other times of year. The latest in spring was a redhead on 5th April, whilst the earliest returning was a pair on Akzo Pond on 17th October.

Max: 18 on 31st December. Monthly maxima were as follows:-

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
4	16	12	3	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	18

GREY PARTRIDGE

Perdix Perdix

This species remains sparsely distributed in the area but there was evidence of successful breeding. There were several sightings of a family party in the Turnough Hill area in late August and there appeared to be at least 6 well-grown young. A male was also heard calling in the Syke area in June and a covey of 6 birds was reported near here at Whittaker on 21st August (Dave Winnard). The only other records were of 2 at Shaw Moss on 6th March (Alan Nuttall) & 2 at Clegg Hall on 25th April (Steve Atkins).

PHEASANT

Phasianus Colchicus

Males were calling in spring at Whittaker, Syke, Shaw Moss & in the Clegg Hall area. There were occasional sightings of birds throughout the year, but no evidence of successful breeding.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER

Gavia Immer

Undoubtedly the highlight of the year was the presence of a long-staying juvenile from 5th November until the 31st December. Unfortunately it left overnight on 31st December due to harsh weather causing the lake to freeze, which was a major disappointment to many year-listers! It was most confiding during its stay and seemed unconcerned by the presence of boats, presumably not having encountered humans before on its breeding grounds. Incredibly this bird was then joined by a second juvenile on 26th November, although this second bird unfortunately only stayed for one day. These are the second and third records of this species at the site – a long wait since the first record on 20th-25th December 1983.



Great Northern Diver – Hollingworth Lake (Pauline Greenhalgh)



**Top: Great Northern Diver (Jim Taylor) Middle: 2 Great Northern Divers 26/11/2009
Bottom: Great Northern Diver (Pauline Greenhalgh)**



LITTLE GREBE

Tachybaptus Ruficollis

The only record was of a single on Akzo Pond on 26th July (Alan Nuttall)

GREAT-CRESTED GREBE

Podiceps Cristatus

It was a disappointing year for this species as once again there was no attempt at breeding. Disturbance, especially by boating, would appear to be the main reason for the loss of this charismatic species as a breeding bird at the site.

In recent years there has been a build up of birds at the site in February and March prior to their dispersal to breeding sites, but this did not really occur in 2009. Consequently the maximum count this year was only 8 on 10th March.

Monthly maxima were as follows:-

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
6	6	8	2	2	-	1	-	1	-	6	6

CORMORANT

Phalacrocorax Carbo

This species still appears to be increasing locally despite the national policy of limited culling. At the start of the year small numbers were regularly recorded from early January until 12th May, with a maximum of 14 on 4th January.

There were then 2 on 10th July with singles on 30th July and 9th August.

Small numbers were then regularly noted again from 4th September until the year end, with a maximum of 26 on 31st December during hard weather.

Monthly maxima were as follows:-

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
14	7	7	5	3	-	2	1	2	3	6	26

GREY HERON

Ardea Cinerea

Up to 4 were regularly recorded throughout the year.

BUZZARD

Buteo Buteo

Singles were recorded on 2nd March, 12th & 24th May and 6th September (Jim Taylor). Four records this year was a marked increase on previous years. There appears to be suitable habitat in the area for this species, which is expanding into the Rochdale area. It could therefore be a future colonist.

SPARROWHAWK

Accipiter Nisus

A pair nested successfully with 2 young being fledged. These may have been the same 2 juveniles that were being fed by a female near the visitor centre on 6th August (Jim Taylor) although it is also possible that there may have been two pairs in the area.

KESTREL

Falco Tinnunculus

This species was regularly recorded throughout the year. A pair nested near Rakewood.

HOBBY

Falco Subbuteo

An adult flew south-east near Whittaker on 2nd May and another adult flew west over Big Hedge on 30th July. Records of this species appear to be increasing and it has been an annual visitor for the last few years – perhaps it could even colonise the area in the future.

MOORHEN

Gallinula Chloropus

A pair bred successfully at the nature reserve. Pairs also bred at Akzo Pond, Shaw Moss and the pool at Rakewood.

COOT

Fulica Atra

Another terrible year for this species with the only records from the Lake being singles on 1st May and 13th September (Jim Taylor).

It remains slightly puzzling why this species has disappeared from the site completely – disturbance can't be the only factor as this species appears to tolerate other disturbed sites. I assume the high local Mink population is an important factor that needs to be addressed.

OYSTERCATCHER

Haematopus Ostralegus

The first returning bird was on 19th February at Akzo Pond – two days earlier than 2008 despite the cold weather at the time. A pair bred successfully at Akzo Pond on the cleared site of the former chemical works, with 3 recently hatched young being seen on 24th May. This was the first confirmed breeding record for the Hollingworth Lake area. One or two birds were also regularly seen at Hollingworth Lake itself and Clegg Hall pools in spring and summer but there was no proof of breeding at these sites. Birds were regularly present until 7th July. The only record after this date was a single on the raft on the Lake from 5th-6th September.

RINGED PLOVER

Charadrius Hiaticula

One flew through calling on 23rd August - the only record of the year.

GOLDEN PLOVER

Pluvialis Apricaria

The only record was a summer-plumaged bird which flew straight through east on 17th April.

LAPWING

Vanellus Vanellus

This species has declined dramatically in the last twenty years, both as a breeding and as a wintering species, in line with the national picture. Breeding was at least successful at Shaw Moss where 2 recently hatched chicks were seen on 9th May and 2 more were seen on 18th June. A pair also nested at Akzo Pond but no young were seen.

The maximum count was 108 on 19th August. Monthly maxima were as follows:-

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
80		12	12	9	24	67	108	42	85	80	45

SNIPE

Gallinago Gallinago

Birds were displaying in spring at Shaw Moss, Clegg Hall Marsh and Longden End, Rakewood. A pair was seen in suitable habitat at Longden End, Rakewood and breeding appears almost certain to have occurred here but confirming this is very difficult.

Small numbers were regularly recorded outside the breeding season. Max: 35 at Clegg Hall Marsh on 28th February.

JACK SNIPE

Lymnocyrtus Minimus

The only record this year was a single flushed from Clegg Hall Marsh on 28th February.

WOODCOCK

One was feeding in a garden on Milbury Drive on 23rd December. It had presumably been forced here by the heavy snowfall which covered the area at this time.

CURLEW

Numenius Arquata

In spring overflying singles were seen on 26th February, 2nd, 10th & 22nd March and 11th & 12th April. There were 2 over Shaw Moss on 4th April. Most birds were heading east.

A pair was present in the Longden End area from at least April to the end of June but breeding was not confirmed.

REDSHANK

Tringa Totanus

The earliest in spring were 2 on 3rd March at Shaw Moss. Up to 4 were then present in the area until 13th June but, despite pairs displaying at both Shaw Moss & Akzo Pond, there was no evidence of breeding. Heavy rain and flooding during the summer probably hindered any breeding attempts.

GREEN SANDPIPER

Tringa Ochropus

A juvenile was on the nature reserve lagoon on 20th August – the first record since September 2006.

COMMON SANDPIPER

Actitis Hypoleucos

One on 23rd April was the earliest returning bird. There were then regular sightings throughout May until 13th June but there was no attempt at breeding. 5 together on 14th May was a high count for the site.

There were no autumn records – the first time I can remember this - which probably reflects the very high water levels and consequent lack of mud. Water levels seem to have been much higher than surrounding waters during the last few summers.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

Chroicocephalus Ridibundus

Common winter visitor. Numbers peaked at 2000+ on 1st January but the roost is not regularly checked and higher counts may have occurred.

COMMON GULL

Larus Canus

The highest roost count was 300+ on 1st January. The latest in spring was a single first summer bird on 28th May. The first returning bird was an adult on 15th July.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus Fuscus

Small numbers were regularly recorded throughout the year but there were no large counts with 12 on 4th April being the maximum.

HERRING GULL

Larus Argentatus

Small numbers were occasionally recorded in the roost from January-April and then again in December. Numbers were however typically small with 20 on 17th December being the maximum.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL

Larus Michahellis

An adult of the race ‘*Michahellis*’ was present from 14:10-14:30 on 29th January before flying off west. This is the first record of this species at the site.

ICELAND GULL

Larus Glaucooides

A 2nd winter bird was present on 12th December from at least 13:30 to 15:20. This is only the 4th record of this species at the Lake following individuals in 1984, 2005 & 2006. At one point it could be seen in the same 'scope view as the Great Northern Diver which must have been a first for Rochdale!



Iceland Gull –Hollingworth Lake
12/12/2009 (all photos courtesy of
Robert Adderley)

(below picture with Great
Northern Diver and Black-headed
Gull)

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus Marinus

Small numbers were recorded in the roost from January until 5th March & again in December. The maximum was 75+ on 17th December which is the highest ever count for the site. This species used to be a rare visitor to the Lake and numbers have certainly increased in recent years.

SANDWICH TERN

Sterna Sandvicensis

A single adult flew in from the west at 07:35 on 10th April and fished for 5 minutes before disappearing east. The lake has a good record of attracting this species which has been almost annual in recent years. This appears to have been the earliest ever record.

COMMON TERN

Sterna Hirundo

The only records were 2 on 22nd May and singles on 10th June and 5th September.

ARCTIC TERN

Sterna Paradisaea

One flew through east on 16th April. There were then 3 on 4th May (Alan Nuttall), 9 on 6th May and 2 on 13th May in a good spring passage for this species.

FERAL PIGEON

Columba Livia

Small numbers present throughout the year. Bred at Rakewood and Turnough Farm.

STOCK DOVE

Columba Oenas

A pair nested in a barn near Rakewood and reared 2 young – the first confirmed breeding in the area in recent times.

Elsewhere 2 were present in Ealees Valley on 30th January, a pair was at Longden End on 20th June and a single was in the same area on 25th June. 2 were at Clegg Hall pools on 5th July and 2 flew over Ealees Valley on 6th September.

This species appears to be increasing locally – it was absent from the area until very recently.

WOODPIGEON

Columba Palumbas

The leucistic bird which has been present for several years was again paired to a normal Woodpigeon in Pavilion Wood. Max: 34 on 27th February.

COLLARED DOVE

Streptopelia Decaecto

Breeding numbers continue to increase locally but there were no notable counts this year.

LITTLE OWL

Athena Noctua

There was no confirmed breeding but there were regular sightings of a pair at a suitable location near Rakewood. Elsewhere singles were at Whittaker on 13th September and near Turnough Farm on 22nd October.

TAWNY OWL

Strix Aluco

A pair was present in a traditional location near Rakewood but it is unknown whether they bred successfully this year.

SWIFT

Apus apus

Earliest was one on 2nd May. A pair was seen mating on the wing on 26th May. This species appears to be declining locally. It also appears to be leaving the area earlier in autumn with the latest sighting being on only 8th August.

KINGFISHER

Alcedo Atthis

There were regular sightings of a pair throughout the year, both at the Nature Reserve and along Ealees Brook. A pair was seen carrying fish up the stream at the Nature Reserve on 2nd May (Jim Taylor), but torrential downpours later in the month led to flooding that would probably have ruined any breeding attempt.

GREEN WOODPECKER

Picus Viridis

There were occasional sightings throughout the year, especially in the area around Syke and Rakewood. Despite this there was no direct evidence of breeding, although a juvenile was seen on 23rd August.

Green Woodpecker
September 2009



GREAT-SPOTTED WOODPECKER

Dendrocopos Major

Regularly recorded throughout the year. Birds were heard drumming in spring at Whittaker Wood and Ealees Wood. A pair nested successfully in Whittaker Wood and a pair was seen feeding a juvenile at Rakewood in June.

SKYLARK

Alauda Arvensis

This species is declining locally but a few pairs still breed at Shaw Moss and Clegg Hall and it is still fairly common on surrounding moorland.

SAND MARTIN

Riparia Riparia

The earliest were 4 on 1st April at Longden End. The latest was 1 at the Lake on 5th September. Approximately 70 nest holes were counted in June at the small Longden End colony but not all of these may have been active. There is also a small colony on the R.Beal at Clover Hall.

SWALLOW

Hirundo Rustica

The earliest was 1 on 5th April at Longden End. The latest were on 2 on 26th September. Several pairs bred successfully in the area.

HOUSE MARTIN

Delichon Urbicum

This species is always late to arrive in this area and the first were not seen until 4 were over Clegg Hall Pools on 23rd April. Bred successfully in Smithy Bridge but the species was present in lower numbers than in previous years. The latest were 17 on 17th September.

MEADOW PIPIT

Anthus Pratensis

This is still a common breeding bird in upland areas around Hollingworth Lake and there was confirmed breeding this year at Bib Knowl and Syke Moor. Maximum counts were 40 + at Whittaker on 13th September and 30+ at Bib Knowl on 17th September. The species was absent from the area through the winter months – the earliest in spring were 10 at Shaw Moss on 3rd March with the latest in autumn also at Shaw Moss – a single on 22nd November.

TREE PIPIT

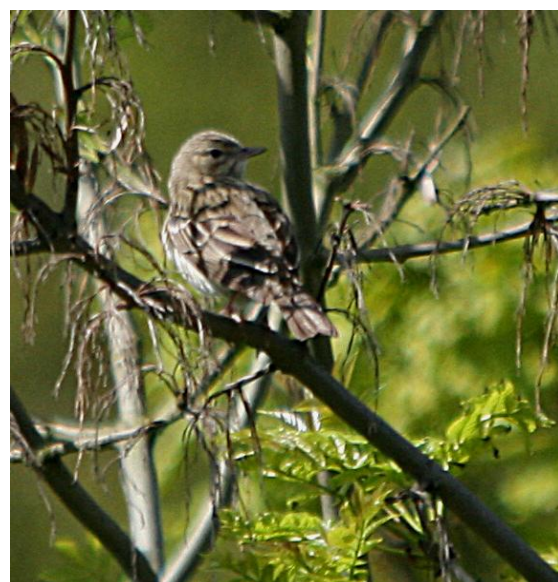
Anthus Trivialis

A pair was present near Rakewood from at least 24th May to 13th June in the same area as last year. The male bird was song-flighting and holding territory. A bird was seen carrying food on 13th June so it seems likely that breeding took place again. However, I visited the area on a few occasions later in the summer without obtaining any further sightings, in a similar pattern to the situation in 2008.

The only other record was a single flying south over Big Hedge calling on 6th August.



Tree Pipit – nr. Rakewood May 2009



YELLOW WAGTAIL

Motacilla Flava

One was in fields at Higher Eafield Farm, Smithy Bridge on 25th April (Steve Atkins).

GREY WAGTAIL

Motacilla Cinerea

A pair bred successfully at Rakewood rearing 2 broods. A further 2 pairs were in the Longden End area, at least one of which bred successfully. The species was scarce during the winter months.

Grey Wagtail – Rakewood March 2009



PIED WAGTAIL

Motacilla Alba

There were no notable counts this year. The species bred successfully near Shaw Moss with 3 recently fledged juveniles being seen on 27th June.

WAXWING

Bombicilla Garrulous

Six were reported in Ealees Valley on 2nd January. 10 were at the junction of Bank Close and Woodbank Ave. on 1st April and 9 were still there early next morning before flying off west.



WREN

Troglodytes Troglodytes

Common resident. Breeding confirmed.

DUNNOCK

Prunella Modularis

Breeding confirmed. A fairly common resident.

ROBIN

Erithacus Rubecula

Common resident. Bred successfully.

REDSTART

Phoenicurus Phoenicurus

A female was seen on 8th August in an area of horse paddocks near Turnough Farm. Presumably the same bird was seen in the same area on 6 occasions between 18th August and 3rd September. Finally a first year male was in the Big Hedge area on 10th September.

STONECHAT

Saxicola Torquatus

This species had become firmly established as a breeding bird in the area in recent years. Unfortunately the harsh weather in February appears to have virtually wiped the local population out. There were several records in January – a female at Whittaker on 4th & 22nd and a female at Shaw Moss on 29th January. The only records after the cold spell in February were of a pair at Syke on 2nd April and a pair at Longden End on 26th April (Ian Kimber) but there was no evidence of breeding at either site. This species is particularly susceptible to sustained cold weather and it may take several years for the population to recover from the effects of the freeze in February 2009.

WHEATEAR

Oenanthe Oenanthe

In spring a female was at Syke Moor on 2nd April and a pair was there on 23rd April. A pair was at Whittaker on 24th May. There were also spring sightings from Longden End, Clegg Moor and Low House Moor but these areas were not watched through the summer, and it is therefore unknown whether breeding took place at these locations.

The only autumn record was a single at Whittaker on 3rd September.

RING OUZEL

Turdus Torquatus

A male was at Longden End on 26th April (Ian Kimber)

BLACKBIRD

Turdus Merula

Common resident. Breeding was confirmed.

FIELDFARE

Turdus Pilaris

The highest count in the first winter period was 60+ at Clegg Hall Marsh on 28th February. The latest in spring were 2 on 5th April.

The first returning were 25 on 17th October. There were 110+ on 28th November.

SONG THRUSH

Turdus Philomenos

Bred successfully but appears to be declining

REDWING

Turdus Iliacus

Only small numbers were recorded in the first part of the year with the latest being 1 on 3rd April.

The earliest returning were 8 on 11th October (Mike Cooper). There were 200+ on 22nd October.

MISTLE THRUSH

Turdus Viscivorus

At least 2 pairs bred successfully. Maximum was 14 on 5th September.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER

Locustella Naevia

A bird was reeling at the nature reserve from at least 30th April to 14th May. Another bird was heard reeling at Clegg Hall Marsh from 30th April to 1st May and then again from 30th June to 19th July. A third bird was reeling at Shaw Moss on 14th July.

This was an excellent year for this species which appears to be increasing in the area. Proving breeding is very difficult but it would seem likely to have occurred at Clegg Hall at least, where I presume the male only sang in between broods.

SEDGE WARBLER

Acrocephalus Schoenobaenus

An exceptionally early bird was at the nature reserve on 11th April – the earliest ever here. A pair bred in the marshy area below the Shaw Moss embankment at the west end of Hollingworth Lake and fledged at least 2 young.

The only record at Shaw Moss this year was a bird singing from 18th-19th July. Possibly the same bird was singing at Clegg Hall Marsh on 25th July.

LESSER WHITETHROAT

Sylvia Curruca

In spring birds were singing at Higher Eafield Farm, Smithy Bridge on 25th April and again on 3rd May (Steve Atkins), at Rakewood on 26th April (Ian Kimber) and at the Nature Reserve on 2nd & 14th May. There was however no evidence of breeding at any of these sites.

In autumn there were 2 on 8th August and then singles on 9th, 16th & 23rd to 25th August. Some of these sightings may have referred to the same bird.

WHITETHROAT

Sylvia Communis

The earliest in spring was a male singing at Clegg Hall on 1st May and this bird held territory here throughout the summer. Records elsewhere were scarcer than in recent years – the only records from the Lake itself were a male on 23rd May and a female/imm on 6th August. The only record at Shaw Moss was a male singing on 25th July. A female/imm was at Clegg Hall on 1st August and was seen to fly down and repeatedly attack a vole which was crossing the road – very odd behaviour!

BLACKCAP

Sylvia Atricapilla

The first returning migrant was a male singing on 19th April. There was no confirmation of breeding although birds were present throughout the summer. Numbers however did appear to be lower than in 2008. The latest were 2 on 17th September.



CHIFFCHAFF

Phylloscopus Collybita

The earliest was a bird singing on 15th March. A pair bred successfully near the Visitor Centre – the first confirmed breeding for the site. Another bird held territory near Ealees Wood but breeding was not confirmed here. There was an influx of birds on passage in September with a maximum of 12 on 17th September. The latest was 1 on 30th September.

WILLOW WARBLER

Phylloscopus Trochilus

The earliest were 3 on 7th April. Breeding was confirmed, although the species does appear to be declining. The latest was 1 on 15th September.

GOLDCREST

Regulus Regulus

There were very few records of this species this year. There were occasional records during the first winter period and a male was singing on 26th April, but there were surprisingly no records at the year end. It would seem that the cold spell in February may have caused a serious decline in numbers.

LONG-TAILED TIT

Aegithalus Caudatus

This species bred successfully at the Nature Reserve. The maximum count was 25+ on 1st January. This species continues to increase locally having only colonised the area in the last twenty years.

BLUE TIT

Cyanistes Caeruleus

Bred successfully in the area but there was no change in status.

GREAT TIT

Parus Major

Fairly common resident. Breeding was confirmed.

COAL TIT

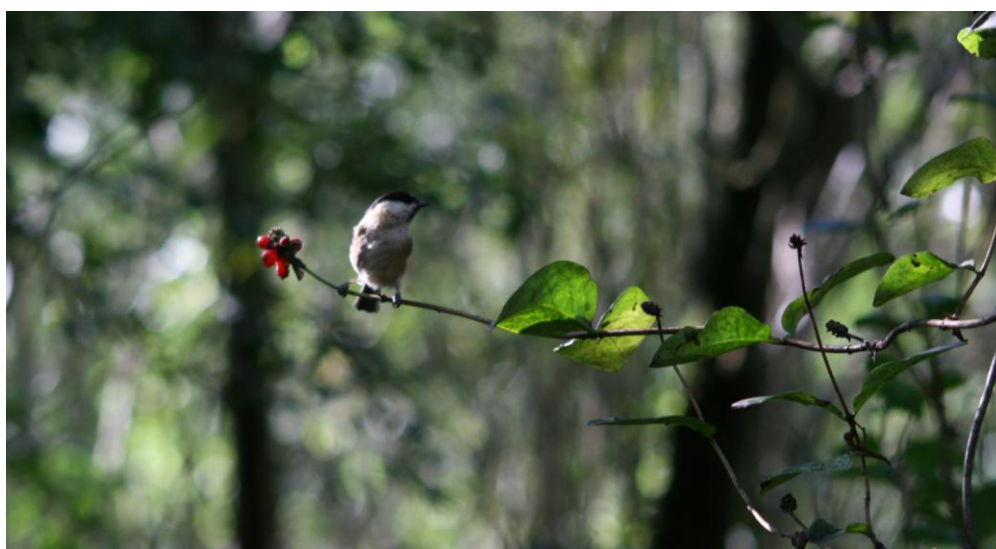
Periparus Ater

Small numbers were present throughout the year and several pairs bred in the area. This species is still increasing locally where it is a fairly recent colonist.

WILLOW TIT

Poecile Montanus

A single bird was regularly seen and heard between 22nd March and 4th May. Presumably the same bird was then seen again on 10th & 17th September. There were no records in between these dates. It seems likely that this is the same bird that was first seen last autumn. Maybe it is passing through the Lake in between summer and wintering quarters. However the species is absent from quite a wide surrounding area and as I had always thought that this species was fairly sedentary in nature it is a bit of a mystery as to where it originated. It will be intriguing to see if it reappears in 2010.



NUTHATCH

Sitta Europaea

A pair which had been resident in Whittaker Wood since 2007 were still present throughout January, but disappeared during the cold spell in February. Unfortunately there were no subsequent sightings in this area despite repeated searching.

However singles were reported from Ealees Wood on 8th March, 14th June and 18th September.

The species had only recently colonised the area and it would seem that the cold winter may have been too severe for this species here.

JAY

Garrulus Glandarius

This species was regularly recorded throughout the year and a pair nested successfully in Ealees Wood fledging 2 young.

MAGPIE

Pica Pica

This species is a very common resident and continues to increase locally.

JACKDAW

Corvus Monedula

Several pairs nested in Smithy Bridge. This is another species which is increasing locally.

CARRION CROW

Corvus Corone

This is a very common resident and is still increasing locally.

RAVEN

Corvus Corax

One flew north over Shaw Moss on 26th September. Despite increasing within Rochdale this species is still extremely rare at Hollingworth Lake and this is only the 4th record for the site.

STARLING

Sturnus Vulgaris

Common resident. Breeding was confirmed.

HOUSE SPARROW

Passer Domesticus

Numbers appear to have stabilised locally after several years of decline.

CHAFFINCH

Fringilla Coelebs

Small numbers were regularly recorded throughout the year and breeding was confirmed at the nature reserve.

BRAMBLING

Fringilla Montifringilla

3 were near Big Hedge on 22nd October and one was on feeders by the Visitor Centre on 11th November (Stuart Herring). These were the only records.

GREENFINCH

Carduelis Chloris

This species bred successfully. Max: 40+ on 6th August.

GOLDFINCH

Carduelis Carduelis

This species continues to increase locally and several pairs bred successfully. There was a large build up of birds in late summer with a maximum of 110+ on 27th August which was the highest ever count at the site.

SISKIN

Carduelis Spinus

It was a poor year for this species with the only records in the early winter period being a fly-over on 8th February and a singing male on 1st March.

In late summer/autumn a male on 6th August was an unusual date. More typical were one on 11th and 2 on 15th & 22nd October and 12th November. 20+ on 17th October (Jim Taylor) was the only sizeable count of the year.



Siskin on feeders with Goldfinch (Jim Taylor)

LESSER REDPOLL

Carduelis Cabaret

The only record in the first winter period was 2 over calling on 15th January.

There was then a glut of records between early April and late May. A pair was present at the Nature Reserve throughout this period with the male regularly song-fighting. Unfortunately there was no proof of breeding. There were also regular spring sightings in the area around Benny Hill Plantation and Whittaker but again there were no confirmed breeding attempts. Most records were just of one or two birds but there were 7 at Bib Knowl Plantation on 23rd April. The only records after this period were 2 over on 17th September and 28th November.

LINNET

Carduelis Cannabina

This species was only recorded during the summer months, with the earliest being 4 on 1st May and the latest one on 13th September. Max: 35+ on Turnough Hill on 25th August.

TWITE

Carduelis Flavirostris

At least 8 were at Whittaker on 21st August (Dave Winnard). 3 flew west calling on 30th August (Ian Kimber).

BULLFINCH

Pyrrhula Pyrrhula

This species still appears to be increasing locally, in contrast to the national picture. At least two pairs bred. The provision of a regular feeding station by the Visitor Centre has undoubtedly helped this species increase in the area. Max: 10 here on 1st January.

REED BUNTING

Emberiza Schoeniclus

Birds were holding territory in spring at the Nature Reserve, Clegg Hall Marsh, Ealees Valley, Syke Moor, Shaw Moss and Longden End and breeding probably took place at all these sites. Max: 20+ on 22nd October when there appeared to be an influx into the area.