

April 2009**29th**

The Estate is holding Whitethroats, Lesser Whitethroat, Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs and 2 Turtle Doves. Numbers of Linnets are still increasing with a few moving through.

28th

Across our recording area 30 Whitethroats, one Garden Warbler on the Estate and Backsand Scrape had a male Scaup.

27th

On a overcast, blustery day with intermittant heavy showers few birds were recorded the highlight being a Yellow Wagtail on Restharrow Scrape.

26th

With the Estate and Worth covered today warbler numbers have picked up with 2 Cettis, 13 Sedge, 10 Reed, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 31 Whitethroats and 5 Blackcaps being the highlights. 5 Wheatears and 2 Yellowhammers were also noted and the Bar-tailed Godwit is still on Restharrow Scrape. There was excitement in the evening when a Lesser Yellowlegs was reported from the Scrape but unfortunately it could not be re-found.

25th

Numbers of Whimbrel have increased throughout the area, 13 Greenshank were seen on New Downs along with 2 Common Sandpipers. On the Estate were 2 Turtle Doves, an additional 2 Greenshank and a single Common Sandpiper on Restharrow Scrape.

23rd

Well, the wind shifted, but the birds didn't. This morning was dire except for a Swift that flew N over Restharrow Scrape, a few new Whitethroats and a Hobby in the evening.

22nd

The fruits of today's labours amounted to a N movement of 124 Linnets, 36 Goldfinches, 5 Yellow Wagtails, 28 Swallows, 2 Sand Martins and 59 Wood pigeons, plus a Grey Heron that flew in off the sea and 2 Redpolls over the Observatory car park at mid day. Apparently, *Blow the Wind Southerly* is a traditional Northumbrian folk song. The strains of this melancholy little ditty will soon be wafting across the Estate unless the wind shifts direction soon.

21st

Similar to yesterday but a little colder, today had a completely different feel, with little moving overhead apart from 6 Jays and a Marsh Harrier and the only new arrival was a Garden Warbler that sang briefly on the Estate.

20th

A warm, sunny day with a light NE breeze brought an arrival of 11 Common Whitethroats and a Nightingale, singing in the Little Gully. Overhead, 180 Linnets, 46 Goldfinches, 48 Swallows, 6 Yellow Wagtails and 9 House Martins flew N and at least 10 Whimbrel were whistling cheerfully around Restharrow Scrape.

19th

It was again hard work on a grey, inhospitable day with a stiff NE breeze. The most notable event of the

day came very early on when a female Sparrowhawk took a Green Sandpiper on Restharrow Scrape. Otherwise, a few Swallows and Yellow Wagtails moved through, a Firecrest was in the Elms, 2 Ring Ouzels were flushed from Worth track and a Hobby flew past the toll gate in the early afternoon.

18th

On a day when most were preoccupied with learning about moths, a Common Sandpiper was on Restharrow Scrape, over which 3 Greenshanks flew N, and 91 Linnets and 8 Siskins flew N in an hour from 08.30.

17th

Courtesy of a welcome message from Phil Milton we headed off for Pegwell to find a good arrival of waders that included a male Kentish Plover, 43 Whimbrel, 350 Dunlin, 53 Bar-tailed Godwits, at least 7 Avocets and 14 Greenshanks, while Phil had seen 60 Common and 8 Arctic Terns earlier. A Little Tern was on the mud with about 40 Sandwich Terns and a steady procession of 120 Swallows and 8 Sand Martins made up for another stagnant day for small migrants.

16th

Despite long-awaited overnight rain the Estate was again very quiet, although pulses of Swallows appeared in breaks in continuing periods of rain during the morning, 2 Green Sandpipers and a Greenshank dropped in briefly to Restharrow Scrape and a Whimbrel flew in off the beach. 5 more Whimbrel flew N on a warm and humid afternoon that also featured a female Merlin over Worth marshes.

15th

It was another quiet day on the Estate, apart from 2 Bramblings in the Elms, one of which was a superb summer-plumaged male. However, there has clearly been a substantial influx of migrants not far inland, including 18 Sedge Warblers on Worth marshes.

14th

On another sunny day that was better for butterflies than birds a party of 14 Whimbrel flew out to sea over the Estate, with another later in the morning, and 4 adult Mediterranean Gulls flew N. There was also a Fulmar over the golf course!

12th

Although the Estate was fairly quiet, apart from an obvious influx of Chiffchaffs, there were again indications that spring is on its way at last. In addition to similar numbers of warblers that were seen on Worth yesterday, a Common Whitethroat had arrived, with another on New Downs, plus 4 Yellow Wagtails and a party of 11 Wheatears near the Chequers.

11th

There was a sense of the recent 'blocking' weather relenting to allow an arrival of 2 Ring Ouzels near the sailing club and, on Worth marshes, 6 Sedge Warblers, a Reed Warbler and 2 Lesser Whitethroats, plus a Yellow Wagtail, which have been a bit like hen's teeth so far this spring.

10th

This morning brought an influx of at least 20 Swallows, 7 Song Thrushes and 3 or 4 continental-type Coal Tits while, frustratingly, a party of 3 Hawfinches in the Elms was seen by only one observer.

9th

Overcast and breezy, today featured little more than a few probably local Swallows and a Hen Harrier. Linnets seem to be accumulating, rather than going anywhere in particular - there were 120 on Worth -

but it was otherwise very quiet.

8th

113 Sandwich Terns and a Red-breasted Merganser flew N during early morning rain, driven on by a squally SW wind, but dried up as the sun showed itself for the first time around 9.30. Subsequent investigation of the Estate and the sky above was rewarded with Red Kites at 11.40 and 13.20, a Marsh Harrier flying N at about 11.30, a Ring Ouzel in a hedge close to the Observatory and a Hen Harrier over Worth. A pair of Peregrines was almost constantly in view for some time and the male was seen tussling with another male that made the mistake of appearing nearby.

7th

Today was pretty quiet, with the notable exception of a Hawfinch that was briefly perched in trees on the Estate before flying off to the north. Otherwise, just a few Willows and Chiffs, 12 Swallows, a Yellow Wagtail and 2 or 3 Sparrowhawks heading north.

6th

After early mist had thinned, it was an increasingly warm and pleasant day. Migrants included 7 Willow Warblers, 6 Chiffchaffs, a Yellow Wagtail, a quite superb male Common Redstart and 3 Crossbills that flew S over the Estate. The Scaup was still on the scrape - the photograph below was taken by Justin de Villeneuve.



5th

On a lovely, sunny day summer migrants included 7 Willow Warblers, our first Yellow Wagtail, 5 Chiffchaffs, 12 Swallows, a Wheatear and 2 Blackcaps. 178 Linnets flew N during the morning, the Scaup was still present on the scrape, but the main event involved a southward passage of at least 17 continental-type Coal Tits, no doubt connected to the presence of a **WILLOW TIT** in the Elms; almost certainly a continental bird. A measure of its current scarcity, apart from the fact that it is probably now extinct in the county as a breeding species, is that this is the first Observatory record for over 20 years, since two were seen in October 1987.

4th

Despite another grey morning, a shift in wind direction to the SW proved significant, with an arrival on the Estate of 19 Chiffchaffs, 3 Willow Warblers, 2 Wheatears and a Blackcap, while a Swallow flew N and 6 Sandwich Terns and a Red-breasted Merganser were seen offshore. There was also great excitement with the discovery of the first Scaup to have been recorded on Restharrow Scrape - an handsome drake to boot.

3rd

Early fog was very slow to lift, though the absence of wind made the circuit of the Estate far less unpleasant than yesterday. A Willow Warbler was our first of the spring, 3 Chiffchaffs and 4 Firecrests were in the Elms and adjacent gullies and a Black-tailed Godwit flew from Restharrow Scrape and across the marshes. However, bird of the day was a **GREAT WHITE EGRET** that flew NW over the Observatory at 12.50, possibly heading on up the Stour valley.

2nd

Grey with poor visibility in a stiff ENE wind, today was utterly cheerless. Bird highlights, such as they were, amounted to a Firecrest in the Elms, a ringtail Hen Harrier at Restharrow Scrape early on and 2 Swallows and a party of 45 Fieldfares on Worth marshes. There was also a steady passage of 27 Lesser Black-backs along the beach.

1st

Things started well, with a Merlin on a fence post near the Observatory and a Firecrest in the mitts of one of the ringers. However, apart from 2 Swallows, a Sand Martin and a party of 3 Whimbrel flying N with 2 Curlews the remainder of the morning never really got off the ground, although the Garganey was showing again on Restharrow Scrape, where it has been visible every other day since it arrived.