

January 2018

On the 1st of the month, a male Shoveler was seen on Hewenden Reservoir (1st) and a Barnacle Goose was feeding with 77 Canada Geese in nearby fields. A Northward movement of 75 Pink-footed Geese (7th) and another skein of 45 (26th) were seen crossing over moorland in the south of the area.

Two Shelduck visited Lower Laithe Reservoir (31st) and there were nine others at Cononley Ings at the end of the month together with a 100 Teal and over 100 Wigeon. There was also a similar gathering of Wigeon at Otley Wetland where Goldeneye were also reported. Elsewhere, at Yeadon Tarn, a solitary male Pochard was present along with 16 Tufted Ducks. Other flocks of these ducks consisted of 36 on Fewston Reservoir (31st), 30 at Lister Park (14th), 20 at Otley Wetland and 28 at Redcar Tarn (27th). Over at Stockbridge, three pairs of Goosander were performing their courtship displays (29th).

Ten Grey Herons were seen in the meadow and by the large "muck heap" at the bottom of Shipley Glen (1st). There was a Little Egret at Bingley Bog North (11th), and three days later a second bird was watched at Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits as it was harassed by a Red Kite. Members at Stockbridge witnessed the third sighting of Little Egret when a bird flew along river (25th).

A Little Owl, a Red Kite were both noted along Walsh Lane, Bingley and next day, a Kestrel and a Tawny Owl were both watched at Stockbridge Reserve. Amongst the raptors seen from Barden Scale were three Peregrines (30th) and another was watched as it skimmed over the moor at Warley Moor Reservoir (also 30th).

Water Rail was once more heard at Stockbridge and very briefly, it was seen emerging from cover. A single Oystercatcher, the first to return, was seen at Leeshaw Reservoir (10th) and two weeks later 14 others were reported at Lower Barden Reservoir. A large flock of 450 Lapwings was also in the same area at this time (26th) and a smaller ones of 200 had gathered at Cononley Ings (29th) and 182 at Queensbury (1st). A Woodcock was flushed at Otley Gravel Pits, this being the first for the site (14th).

There was a winter flock of 18 Magpies at Stockbridge (2nd) and a flock of 60 Fieldfares were feeding in fields at Street Lane, above East Morton (24th).

At Otley Wetland, a mixed flock of finches included 40 Siskin and 10 Lesser Redpoll feeding on alders (31st), whilst earlier in the month the cold weather had brought these species to feeders in an Ilkley garden. A single Hawfinch was once more seen in trees at Ikley cemetery (22nd). Bullfinch were often seen at Stockbridge, Otley Wetland and St. Ives, and there was a report of pairs in a Bingley garden and at Esholt. Up to six Reed Buntings regularly visited the feeders at Stockbridge.

An over-wintering female Blackcap visited feeders in an Otley garden (4th) and single Ring-necked Parakeets were reported at Lister Park (14th) and Apperley Bridge (20th). A kingfisher was seen once again on Oxenhope village pond and a second was reported on the canal at Dowley Gap (13th).

During the month up to eight Stonechats were attracted to the feeding station at Warley Moor Reservoir and the moorland fringes whilst a single male was located on Hazlewood Moorside (20th). Mistle Thrush were singing loudly and Nuthatches were active in Shipley Glen, Myrtle Park, St. Ives Estate, Lister Park and Esholt. Spring is on it's way!