

Reay's Riveting Resumé: 18–25 December 2016

On the 17th, a synchronized dawn count of **Goosanders** roosting on five Dartmoor reservoirs produced a total of 63, of which 16 were at the Avon Dam. This was well down on the 29 counted there on 11 November, but on a beautiful calm morning they were a wonderful sight. Just visible from first light at about 7.30 am, the two adult males and 14 red-heads (females and immatures) gradually became more visible, more vocal and more active – swimming about and chasing each other – until they took off and flew over the dam at about 8.25 am. This is one of Brent's best avian spectacles, well worth a visit. You don't need to go any further than the dam, but it does mean an early start as it's best to get there half an hour before sunrise. Another spectacle is the **Pied Wagtail** roost near the Village Hall. Only 60 were counted at about 4 pm on 16th, but this was by one observer, and one observer cannot see all the sites where they gather.

Also at the Avon Dam were three **Pintail** among about 40 **Teal** and 12 **Mallard**, and on the fishing lakes near Aish Bridge, the wintering flock of **Wigeon** is still visible from the road, but hard to count, though there must be at least 30.

Other sightings this week include: six **Buzzards** over Brent Hill; a **Woodcock** near Hillside; **Chiffchaffs** at Hillside and by the Sewage Treatment Works; 150 **Starlings** near Palstone Cross; 100 **Redwings** at Forder; and 11 **Meadow Pipits** in a field at Gidley Bridge. On one of those days when birds were particularly hard to come by, one observer was relieved to find two **Treecreepers** feeding in a tree right at the edge of open moorland at Dockwell Hole; this species has previously been seen in 'last trees' in the Glaze Valley and below the Avon Dam.

Please send any interesting sightings for next week to peter.p.j.reay@btinternet.com by 6 pm on Sunday.