

WWW

There have been a trickle of migrants this week, on the 8th a **Redstart** between Yalland and Dockwell was presumably the same bird as seen there on the 4th, hopefully fattening up for the journey to come. Also on the 8th a **Sedge Warbler** was seen near the old pumping house and a **Great Crested Grebe** was on the reservoir. What was presumably a family party of **Spotted Flycatchers**, at least five in number, were feeding in a field alongside Gidley Bridge also on the 8th. On the 9th a **Redstart** was seen at Lincombe and two **Whinchats** were seen in Zeal Gulley.

On the 10th a Wood Warbler was reported associated with **Chiffchaffs** between Shipley Bridge and the dam, further details were sought for what is an unusual sighting away from the Dartmoor breeding sites and full details have now been supplied. On the 11th a **Grasshopper Warbler** was seen for a few seconds in bracken at Small Brook before it crept away, so typical of the species. On the 12th a **Sedge Warbler** was seen at Long-a-Traw and two **Wheatears** were on the short turf on high ground to the north west of Black Tor. Also on that date a small number of **Coal Tits** were seen to be working down the valley and feeding on the way, perhaps showing a more leisurely progress than other migrants. On the 13th a **Whinchat** was seen in Zeal Gulley and on the 14th a small movement of warblers was seen moving down the Avon between the old pumping house and the dam, mostly **Willow Warblers**, they were gone by 08:00 hours. On that day Zeal Gulley which had held a few migrants on previous days had very few birds in it. Elsewhere there was a **Spotted Flycatcher** on the lower slopes of Brent Hill but only one **Willow Warbler** was seen there.

The Avon valley upstream of Shipley Bridge has been covered most days this week and changes in the bird population have occurred on most days with the 10th probably being the busiest day. It has to be a major route to funnel migrants off the moor and is likely to repay an observer who watches it on a regular basis, although the best conditions are not yet understood. With so much cover in the area it will always be hard work and is likely to hide more than it reveals.

On a more domestic note tit flocks are likely to be seen soon, the first report of a family party of **Long-tailed Tits** visiting a garden at Pennaton has been received. They do seem to vanish for a few weeks in high summer and then form roaming bands as the autumn proceeds, possibly dragging other species such as **Treecreeper** along with them from time to time.

Bird records included are as submitted; this does not necessarily mean that they have been accepted.