

Reay's Riveting Round-up: 7–13 November 2016

Having said last week that the summer visitors had all gone, a lone **Swallow** appeared over Brent Hill on the 8th! The large numbers of **Fieldfares** of a week ago have now all but gone, and with no significant reports of migrating **Woodpigeon**, the largest flocks were of **Starlings**. Two groups of around 500 were noted south of the A38, and at least some of the 60 or so in the village have been seen diving into clumps of bamboos to roost at around 16.30. The **Pied Wagtail** roost by the Village Hall is still going strong, with at least 80 birds noted mid-week.

Three sightings of **Hen Harrier** in different moorland squares were probably of the same individual. The same may apply to the several reports of **Peregrine**, although these have ranged from the Bala Brook to near the A38. There have been no reports of **Merlin** during the week, but small numbers of **Golden Plover** have been recorded, on the ground near Three Barrows and flying over Overbrent Farm, and **Woodcock** have been flushed from four different squares.

The (early morning) monthly count on the Avon Dam reservoir on the 11th produced 25 **Mallard**, 10 **Teal** and a single **Wigeon** (perhaps the first record for the Dam), but more impressive was a flock of 29 roosting **Goosander** which flew out a little before sunrise. Over 20 **Teal** were present on a private pond near Harbournford, and it would be interesting to know whether these are a separate group from those at the Dam or birds that shuttle between the two sites.

Small birds are now very scarce on the moor. Two observers walking separate routes over several hours in fine weather on the 11th produced only one **Meadow Pipit**, three pairs of **Stonechat** and a few **Reed Buntings** between them, and no **Skylarks** or **Yellowhammers** were seen. **Blackbirds** seem to be doing well, however, conspicuously bouncing around among the hawthorn and rowan berries. **Song Thrushes** are less conspicuous, but will become more so when they start singing, and indeed one was heard singing, albeit rather feebly in yesterday's sunshine. And in today's sunshine, at least one **Red Admiral** was still about.

An unusually bold **Fox** has recently been frequenting the village. Several chickens have disappeared, but a **Moorhen**, an unusual visitor to a Moorland Park garden, has so far escaped its attention. While this bird was an unexpected arrival, another of the same species, normally a regular on the wee pond at Stidston, appears to have disappeared. As has the pond, effectively.

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