



Milford Conservation Volunteers.

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March 2024 Observatory Report.

Black Tailed Godwit: After the new tidal flap was fitted on the 15th March and the water started to go down, it took the Godwits 8 days before they returned to the Pans. Between the 23rd and 27th the numbers increased to 14 birds present. Once the spring tides occurred the water levels increased dramatically. As we know the Pans new tidal flap works, the water must be coming from the Avon Water side, so hopefully the Environment Agency will look at controlling the water levels on Avon Water.

Blue Tit: Recorded every day. One pair have been taking nesting material into the closest nest box.



Two Blue Tits checking out one of the nest boxes.

Carrion Crow: Present Every day.



A Carrion Crow by the Kingfisher Pool.

Cattle Egret: A single bird was present on the 19th March. Photo below



Cetti's Warbler: Present every day of the month.

Chaffinch: Have been recorded on 17 days during the month.



Male.



Female.

Chiffchaff: Recorded on 5 days during the month.



A Chiffchaff on the central hedge.

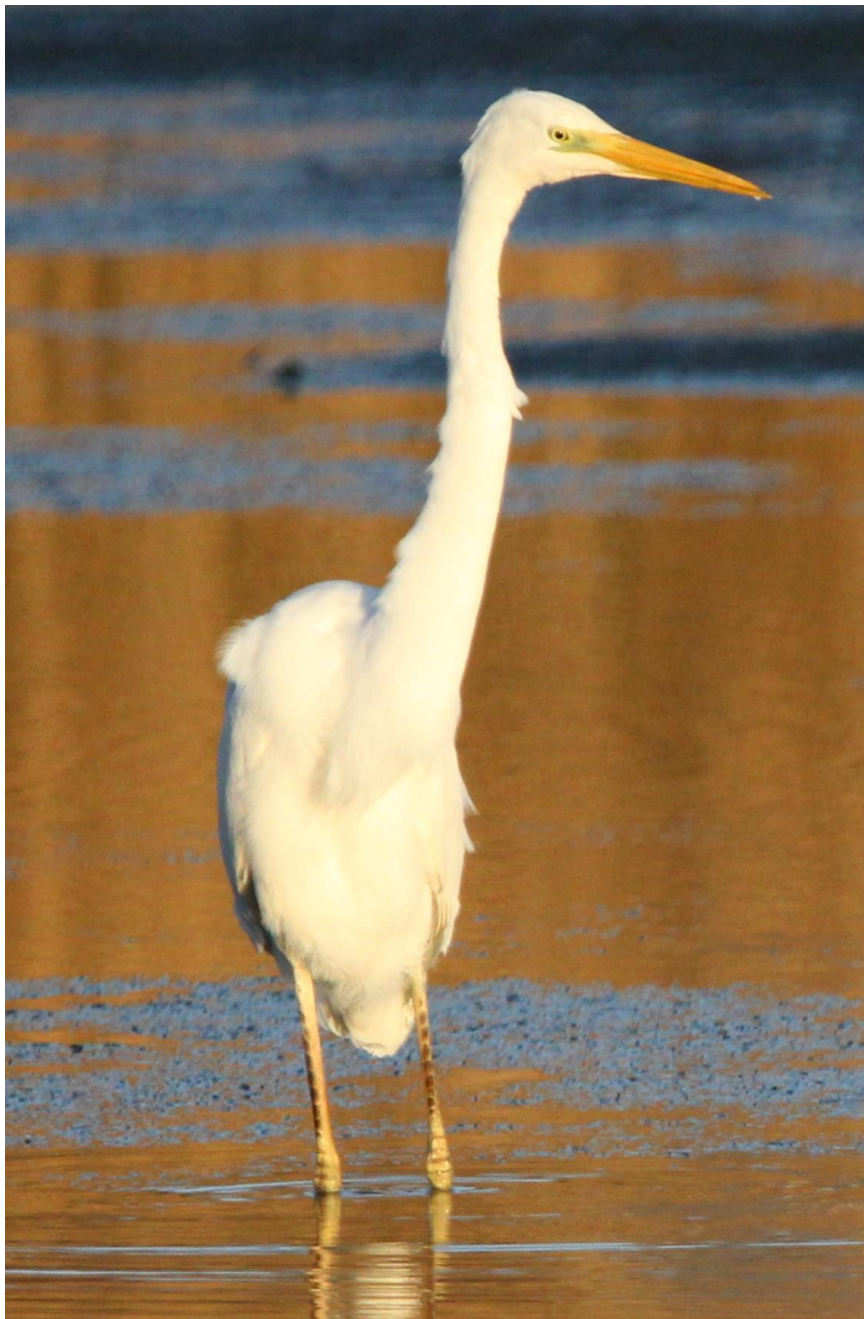
Coot: Present every day. 32 was the highest number recorded on the 1st and 7th March. Towards the end of March the numbers declined to 6.

Cormorant: Seen most days with 6 being the highest number recorded on the 31st March.

Dunnock: Recorded most days of the month. One of them was ringed, I took a photo of the ring showing some of the numbers. The photo was sent to Graham Giddens (a BTO registered bird ringer). Luckily some of the numbers coincided with two birds ringed at the Pans on 08.08.2019. Both were juveniles, which hatched that summer, making it almost 5 years old, a good age for that species.

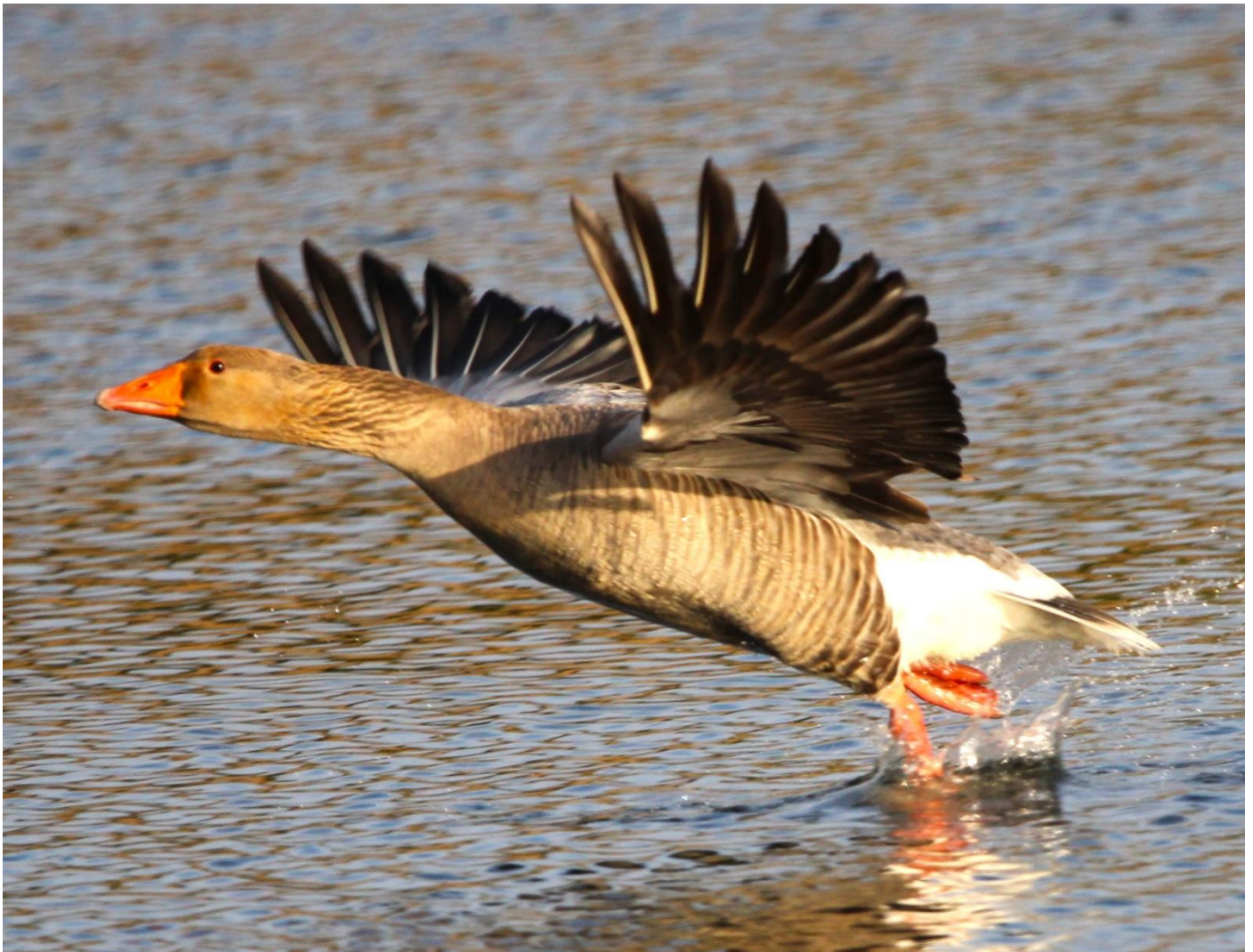
Egyptian Goose: Recorded on three occasions during March.

Great White Egret: Seen on 12 days during the month. It has been seen all over the site. Photo below.



Greenshank: Recorded at the Pans on 8 days.

Greylag Goose: Recorded on 17 days during the month. They have had a few run-ins with the Mute Swan.



A Greylag goose leaving the site.

Grey Heron: Seen on 12 occasions with 4 being present on the 25th March.



Grey Herons near the Observatory.

Herring Gull: Present every day.

Jay: Seen flying over the site on 14 days during the month.

Kingfisher: Present until the 20th July. Not seen at the Pans since then.

Lapwing: Seen on 6 days in March.

Little Egret: Present every day during the month. The highest number recorded was 32 on the 26th March.



A Little Egret in flight.

Little Grebe: Recorded on 19 days during the month but in relatively small numbers with 8 being the highest number on the 6th March.

Magpie: Often seen flying over the site with 8 being the highest number on the 30th.

Mallard: Recorded every day but in small numbers. 11 has been the highest number recorded on any day during the month.

Marsh Harrier: Recorded every day, with 3 being the highest number. They have often been seen in the reedbeds on the Avon Water side.



Marsh Harrier in the Avon River reed bed.

Mediterranean Gull: Seen or heard on 21 days during the month.

Mute Swan: Recorded on every day during the month. Two pairs were seen nest building, one pair on Avon Water where the old nest was and another pair at the far end of the Pans. Unfortunately, due to the high-water levels both nests have been swamped at times.



The photo to the left shows the Mute Swans nest on the Avon Water side.

Both pairs of Mute Swans have been very protective of the whole site and have both been seen seeing off the Greylag Geese as soon as they were seen.



A Mute Swan chasing a Greylag Goose.

Oystercatcher: Present on 4 days during March. Photo below.



Pheasant: Recorded most days.



A male Pheasant near the Observatory.

Redshank: Recorded most days, initially one or two birds but up to 14 by the 27th.



Redshank.

Snipe: Despite the high-water levels for some days 1 of the month the Snipe have been recorded on 16 days with 10 being the highest number.



A Snipe on March the 9th.

Teal: Present for 16 days of the month with 17 present on the 12th and 19th March.

Water Rail: Recorded on 13 days during the month.



Water Rail on the 9th March.

Wren: Recorded on 13 days during the month.



A Wren displaying on the deck railing.

Birds Recorded but not mentioned in this report.

Blackbird, Blackcap, Black Headed Gull, Buzzard, Canada Goose, Collared Dove, Curlew, Gadwall, Golden Plover, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Greenshank, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Long Tailed Tit, Moorhen, Raven, Robin, Shelduck, Sparrowhawk, Stock Dove and Woodpigeon.

Thanks to: David Chamberlain, David Horne, Keith Metcalf, Douglas Marcuse and Dudley Powell for their additions to the Bird records.

Open Morning.

This took place on Saturday the 2nd March and was run by David Horne, Keith Metcalf and Chris Barrass. A quiet morning with 22 species of birds seen, including 2 Marsh Harrier, a female Kingfisher, 30 Coot and a total of 31 Shelduck flying over the Pans.

News from Graham Giddens.

On the 21st March Graham received 2 belated ringing reports from Spain, one of which related to a bird that Graham had ringed at the Pans. It was a juvenile Sedge Warbler that Graham had ringed on the 21st July in 2022. It was re-caught by Spanish ringers at Soto del Barco in NW Spain. The Sedge Warbler was on its first migration south to winter in Africa. Northern Spain is a typical place for it to stop off to fatten up for its next leg of the journey.

Trail Cameras.

Birds recorded: Black Headed Gull, Carrion Crow, Coot, Dunnock, Great Tit, Little Egret, Mallard, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Pheasant and Woodpigeon.



One of the 2 Mute Swans on the Observatory side.

Animals Recorded: Fox, Otter and Rat.



Fox.



Otter.

A single Otter was recorded on 4 occasions during the month. The 1st, 16th, 23rd and 28th of March. A Fox was recorded on 2 occasions, the 1st and 26th March. Rats were seen most nights.

Finally, I have included two photos of the Pans. The first one was taken after the new tidal flap was fitted (on the 15th March) and the second one was taken at the end of the month during the high tides.



It will be interesting to see how normal tides and warmer weather will impact on the water levels on the Pans.

Chris Barrass 31st March 2024.