

Regent's Park 2010

Bird Report



by Tony Duckett

Review of 2010

The year started with and finished on a cold spell, very much like 2009. The end of year blast was very cold with the lake remaining frozen for several weeks. The wish to add a new species to the park was achieved, in fact two firsts were recorded. A Lapland Bunting 12/10, occurred at a time when large numbers of this species were arriving in the country and then a Hoopoe graced the skies all too briefly 16/10. There were other scarce species that showed this year, an Eurasian Nightjar was enjoyed by those on a bird walk 9/5 and a record 5 Osprey's were recorded on four dates during the autumn. Though not all regular species were recorded, we did manage to record a fairly respectable 122 species for the year. Another cold wet spring was a disaster for our summer visitors, with Reed Warblers really suffering. Young were only seen in two locations, when at least 6 pairs were present. The march of the Rose-ringed Parakeets continues, they are now a regular but unwanted site in the park. Soon ear plugs will be needed to soften the sound of their harsh contact calls.

January: The Water Rails could be seen throughout the day, as they came and went at the feeding station. A Hawfinch flew east and a flock of 36 Fieldfare fed by the Leaf Yard Wood, while on the other-side of the park 68 Redwings fed on Marylebone Green 7th. Nine Lapwings flew east 8th, while numbers of ducks on the lake continued to increase, with 270 Pochard, 320 Tufted, 58 Shovelers, 52 Red crested Pochards and 72 Mandarin Ducks. By the 15th the Redwing flock had built up to 150 birds though at times they did split in to smaller flocks. The same day a male Firecrest was found in the Leaf Yard Wood. A Little Egret may have roosted with the Herons 20th, as one was seen at 6.55am. Six Brent Geese headed south-east 23rd and last years female Smew returned. **February:** Now a scarce visitor a Treecreeper arrived 1st. On the canal embankment a Woodcock 3rd and possibly the same bird was flushed 8th. Twenty-six Grey Herons 19th were staking a claiming to a nest site, with lots of calling and chasing going on. A park record 13 Common Teal were present on the lake. **March:** The Chaffinch flock by the canal had reached at least 70 2nd, what was almost certainly an over-wintering Chiffchaff was present 3rd. A pair of Sparrowhawks were displaying above the lake 4th, another early morning surprise saw a Bittern flying north 7th. The 16th saw a male Stonechat feeding from the top of gorse bushes. The first Blackcap sang on the 17th, followed on the 18th by what was probably one of two possible spring sightings of Osprey, the other 21st but neither could be positively identified as they were too far away. There was a pair of Firecrests present in the Leaf Yard Wood also 21st. A phone call the same day from a friend in the city at 10.00am saying that two Red Kites were heading my way saw me scanning the skies from Hanover Bridge, within two or three minutes I had picked them up as they headed west. The female Smews stay ended 21st, will she return next year? Three Woodcock were seen 23rd. A short afternoon skywatch 24th produced 4 Bar-tailed Godwits, 4 Sand Martins and a very early Hobby, also present were six Chiffchaffs. The last sighting of a Water Rail was on 29th the day after a busy Sunday of boating on the lake, this shows that they need a wider reed bed if they are to stand a chance of staying. **April:** A Ring Ouzel spent six days from the 3rd feeding on Ivy berries with two Redwings in the Leaf Yard Wood. The first Willow Warblers arrived 8th, a fly over Yellow Wagtail 9th. The 18th was a good day with two Buzzards, Red Kite, Sedge Warbler, Common Whitethroat, House Martins plus other common migrants. The first Reed Warbler sang from reeds by Hanover Bridge 23/4, the day when last years drake Garganey returned, but only for one day this time. The first Northern Wheatear graced the open spaces 23rd. Seven Swifts flew through 25th and single Turtle Doves passed through on 28th and 29th. **May:** The only Common Sandpiper of the spring was around the lake 4th. An amazing sight for those on a bird walk 9th was a Nightjar, picked up in flight it perched briefly before being mobbed by a Magpie and disappearing in to the grounds of the Open Air Theatre. Fortunately for a handful of birders, the bird showed well again just after dusk that evening. A Honey Buzzard flew east 12th, a Hobby was chased off by a local Kestrel 15th and a male Peregrine chased off another male the same day. A Marsh Harrier flew north 20th, when a Greenland Wheatear and Skylark were on the ground, the latter being a very rare sight at this time of year. The Little Owls were also showing well, which normally means that they are feeding young. The first Common Tern of the year flew east 26th when Lesser and Common Whitethroat both sang from trees in the Cricket Pen. **June:** A Red Kite flew east 7th and the first Little Owllet showed outside the entrance to the nest 11th. There were three broods of Red crested Pochards on the main lake 13th. A pair of Common Whitethroats began nest building in the Cricket Pen 21st. An adult Common Sandpiper was perched on a rowing boat after a heavy shower 29th, possibly a failed breeder. **July:** There were four large Kestrel juveniles still in the nest box on Primrose Hill. Two Common Crossbills flew through 8th and an adult and 3rd summer Yellow legged Gull were on the lake. A Garden Warbler 26th and another early migrant a juvenile Swallow 27th, hirundines don't normally start to pass through until late August. There were eighty Swifts over the park 30th and the first departing Willow Warblers (4) were present.

August: Similar to last year, possibly as a result of a poor breeding season, saw migrants on the move at the start of the month. Two Wood Warblers 2nd one of which was ringed began the parade of an excellent crop of birds, many of which were seen in or close to the Cricket Pen at the north-east end of the lake. There were twenty Willow Warblers at this location 3rd along with Chiffchaffs(8), Garden Warbler(2). This site produced Pied Flycatcher 11th, Common Redstart 17th it also seemed to be the best spot in the park to see Ospreys. Five were to be seen this autumn with three being seen on almost identical flight lines, with the first 17th. Peak passage for Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff saw similar numbers approximately 22 scattered around the park 22nd. A Hobby flew south-west at 8.40am 25th, possibly a bird from a nearby site, as one was seen, who's behaviour makes us think that it wasn't a passage bird. Another Wood Warbler was in the Cricket Pen 27th. Common Buzzards began to move from 31st. **September:** An exceptional seven Common Buzzards flew through 2nd along Hobby's one of which attempted to catch a Yellow Wagtail. Five Sparrowhawk also 2nd, two were almost certainly high flying migrants. Swallows (50) were also on the move. The second Osprey of the autumn flew very low south-west 5th and was seen a short time later at the Wildfowl & Wetland Centre in Hammersmith. The third Whinchat of the year must have roosted on fencing over-night 8th, because as soon as the sun came up it flew off. The Cricket Pen produced yet another gem 9th a cracking male Common Redstart, this was accompanied by Pied Flycatcher and four Spotted Flycatchers. Fourteen Yellow Wagtails also flew through on this date. The third Osprey headed south-west 10th and was enjoyed by two other lucky lunchtime birders. The fourth Wood Warbler was seen by another birder 12th. The 17th saw two-hundred and seventy Meadow Pipits head south-west. Hirundine passage peaked with one thousand two hundred Swallows and eight hundred plus House Martins 22nd. While witnessing this spectacle, two Ospreys and a Honey Buzzard were also picked up. The first of what was going to be a poor autumn for Siskins saw six pass over 24th. The first winter thrushes then began to be seen, with eleven Redwings 28th and four Song Thrushes 29th. The 30th saw a scarce but annual visitor the Rock Pipit fly through, its distinctive call giving it away. **October:** A Ring Ouzel fed with Blackbirds on Yew berries 7th, a Common Snipe was flushed from long grass 9th. An exceptional three hundred and ten Jackdaws headed south-west 11th, some of these flocks landing for a few minutes. Seventy Chaffinches in small parties moved through 12th, with one small party containing a Lapland Bunting. Two hundred and forty Redwings moved through also on the 12th with the first Fieldfares being seen 14th. Another red letter day 16th, saw a Hoopoe a Mediterranean speciality, fly high westwards harried by several Magpies. Two Meally Redpolls also touched down in trees briefly on the 16th. The first of our regular wintering Water Rails arrived in the rail ditch 19th. Our second autumn Ring Ouzel spent two days in Queen Mary's Gardens from 26th. Wintering ducks were now beginning to arrive, with a female Eurasian Wigeon on the main lake 28th. **November:** There were forty-eight Mandarin Ducks and fifty-six Red crested Pochards 5th. Sightings of Linnets were really disappointing with birds only sighted on three dates twice in spring and our only autumn record 11th. The only large group of Bramblings this autumn saw eighteen flying west 14th. A pair of Firecrests was seen by the grounds to the American Ambassadors residence 22nd these birds were then relocated in the Leaf yard Wood 27th where they were to stay through in to the New Year. A Woodcock was flushed from beneath a hedge 29th. **December:** As a spell of cold weather setting in from the beginning of the month caused a Jack Snipe to stop off briefly in the rail ditch 1st, while looking for the bird later in the day I was surprised to see three Common Snipe feeding there, fifty-one Lapwings also flew over on this date. The following day four Common Snipe and one hundred and three Mandarins were present. There was an unconfirmed report of two Jack Snipe being flushed from long grass in the Cricket Pen 3rd, with the last two Common Snipe feeding in the Wetland Pen 4th. A drake Eurasian Wigeon was on one of the few remaining areas of open water 7th but didn't connect with a female that was present the following day. Two Common Snipe returned for two days from the 19th and one Skylark was seen though more were expected due to the prolonged period of frozen ground. On the 27th thirty-five Fieldfares and twenty-six Redwings were seen.

Little Grebe

Resident/Summer visitor. Three birds were present at the start of the year. Six birds were on the lake 1/4 this built up to four pairs 17/6, with three pairs breeding successfully. A single bird in the Longbridge Sanctuary has learnt to come and feed with the waterfowl collection.

Great Crested Grebe

Resident. Three were present 4/3. This species is struggling to breed successfully on the lake, with only two pairs breeding. One bird remained until the end of the year

Cormorant

Resident. Large numbers are still roosting during the winter months, though no counts were taken. A high flying flock of eighteen 7/9, for a second made us think that they might be something more interesting.

Heron

Resident. Twenty six nests were occupied. Though as usual some more than once, so being sure of the exact number of pairs is difficult. The cold weather at the start of the year meant that the first young were not heard until 16/3.

Eurasian Bittern

Scarce vagrant. One flew north at 6.25am 7/3, surely one day a bird will drop down in to one of our reed beds.

Little Egret

Occasional visitor. One had possibly roosted in the Heronry 20/1, as when seen at 6.55am flying north it wasn't very high, just clearing the tree tops.

Mute Swan

Resident. One pair was present on the lake but there was no attempt to nest. Other birds dropped in, but as usual were quickly moved on by the resident pair.

Greylag Goose

Resident.

Canada Goose

Resident

Egyptian Goose

Resident. This unwanted now resident species peaked at forty-eight 8/1. One pair bred during October, hatching three goslings, luckily enough one was predated on, possibly by a gull. The other two struggled to put on weight but have managed to get through the severe weather at the end of the year.

Common Shelduck

Occasional visitor. A drake was present on the lake 11/3. A pair returned 18/4 and remained throughout the summer.

Mandarin Duck

Resident. The year started with numbers in the first quarter increased to a new park record seventy two. This year four pairs bred, with again another pair on the canal. During December the record was broken yet again one hundred and three were present, with birds coming to feed at the rearing pond by the Nature Study Centre.

Gadwall

Resident. Two pairs again summered but failed to breed. During the start of the year there was a peak count of twenty six 30/1. The cold period at the end of the year saw forty-five birds on the lake.

Common Teal

Winter visitor. There were a record thirteen birds were present during the winter period, with birds making good use of the Wetland Pen. Birds remained until the last four departed 23/3. The first bird of the autumn arrived 21/9. Numbers were slow to build up with only three birds present at the end of the year.

Mallard

Resident

Eurasian Wigeon

Passage migrant. A duck was present 15/1. first winter pair were present on the main lake briefly 12/10.

Northern Shoveler

Winter visitor. It was good to see that numbers of this species are increasing again after a dip in recent years. Numbers in the winter period at the start of the year peaked at sixty-two 30/1. The first bird of the autumn arrived 4/8 and numbers slowly increased until fifty-five were present 10/12.

Red-Crested Pochard

Resident. This species has an increasing feral population in Central London, although only three pairs bred successfully this year. Numbers during the first winter period reached sixty-eight and at the end of the year at least eighty-eight birds were on the lake

Greater Scaup

Resident. A drake remains present in the Longbridge Sanctuary for its fourteenth year.

Eurasian Pochard

Resident. Ten pairs bred. Numbers at the start of the year peaked at two hundred and seventy 9/1 and at the end of the year two-hundred and forty.

Tufted Duck

Resident. Twelve pairs bred. There was a peak count of three hundred and twenty 9/1 and at the end of the year numbers had reached one-hundred and eighty-five.

European Goldeneye

Scarce winter visitor. A drake was on the main lake early morning 19/11, by mid-day he had joined the Goldeneye in the collection. Unfortunately he had departed by the following morning. This was only the sixth park record and the first since 1985.

Ruddy Duck

Winter Visitor. DEFRA's plan to eradicate this species from the UK seems to be working for now. Four birds again over-wintered departing by the end of March, however none had returned by the end of the year.

Common Buzzard

Annual. Slightly down on last years number of days that birds were recorded, with birds were recorded on ten dates. Six singles between 9/2 and 17/5 and then during the autumn birds passed over between 31/8 and 7/9, with an incredible seven recorded on 2/9.

Honey Buzzard

Rare migrant. Recorded twice this year, once during the spring 12/5 and then during the autumn 22/9.

Red Kite

Passage migrant. Birds were only recorded on three dates during the spring; two 21/3 and then singles on 18/4 and 7/6.

Osprey

Occasional passage migrant. There were two distant sighting of birds during the spring that were thought to be this species. It is always disappointing not to be able to get positive ID of a bird. We made up for this with a record tally of five birds on four dates during the autumn; one 17/8, one 5/9 and another 10/9. These three sightings involved birds on almost identical flight lines and seen in the same location from the location in the park. The final observation was of two birds migrating together 22/9.

Sparrowhawk

Resident. Birds were recorded from early March until the years end. On bright sunny days in March two pairs could be seen displaying above the park. There was however no proof that any of these birds bred within the parks boundary. Birds that were thought to be passage birds were recorded as follows, two 22/3 and two 2/9.

Eurasian Hobby

Summer visitor and passage migrant. It was good to record birds during the spring, a very early bird flew east 24/3. Then another bird 15/5 and two were hawking insects high over the lake 20/5. Not recorded at all this spring. During the autumn birds were seen on nine dates between 9/8 and 23/9. Three singles were recorded on the 2/9 with one attempting to catch a migrating Yellow Wagtail.

Birds of prey



Common Buzzard



Osprey



Honey Buzzard



Sparrowhawk



Hobby



Little Owl

Kestrel

Resident. Two pairs bred. The pair in the Wetland Pen only managed to hatch and rear on bird. This was probably due to the fact that another male ousted the resident male. There was an even sadder end for this pair when the juvenile was killed by Magpies. The pair on Primrose Hill fared much better, fledging four young.

Peregrine Falcon

Occasional visitor. As well as sightings of the birds from the city we now have another pair holding a territory to the west of the park. This however hasn't brought more sightings of this species but on the odd occasion there can be territorial disputes, as happened 26/3 and 15/5 when the male from the city chased off the newcomer. One was also seen carrying off a House Martin that it caught above the lake 26/5.

Water Rail

Winter visitor. Two birds remained in the rail ditch at the start of the year with the last sighting on 29/3. This was the day after the rowing boats had been hired out on the lake. It goes to show that they need a wider expanse of reed if they are to contemplate staying here. The first bird returned to the reed bed 19/10 and was joined by a second bird 11/12. A third bird was recorded flying in to cover in the Wetland Pen 22/12.

Moorhen

Resident. Numbers are difficult to assess because of their secretive behaviour.

Coot

Resident. A large flock of up to one hundred and twenty can be seen on the lake by Clarence Bridge.

Northern Lapwing

Passage migrant. There was only one sighting at the beginning of the year involving nine birds 8/1. Even though we had severe weather at the end of the year, there were no large scale movements. Back in the 1980's this type of weather would have produced large hundreds of birds to head west. This year showed how numbers of this once common farmland bird have declined. Birds were recorded on three dates, one 22/11, fifty-one 1/12 and two 7/12.

Jack Snipe

Scarce winter visitor. The cold weather brought one to the rail ditch 1/12 and two days later there was a report of two birds being flushed from long grass in the Cricket Pen.

Common Snipe

Occasional visitor. One 4/5 was flushed by the lake in Queen Mary's Gardens at 7.45am, before being relocated later in the day in the Wetland Pen. This is an unusual time of year to see this species. The Wetland Pen hosted another on 9/10. Three in the rail ditch on the afternoon 1/12, these were joined by a fourth bird the following day, staying here until flushed 3rd. Two birds were then seen in the Wetland Pen 4th with one present 5th. What may have been two of this group returned to the rail ditch 19/12, with one present the next day.

Woodcock

Winter visitor. This was the best year on record with eleven birds seen on nine dates. Eight birds were recorded between 15/1 and 24/3, with three seen 23/3. During the autumn singles were recorded 29/11, 23/12 and 24/12.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Scarce passage migrant. Only the second record for the park saw four birds flying east 24/3.

Common Sandpiper

Passage migrant. This was another poor showing with singles on 4/5 and 29/6. This reflects the dramatic decline of what was once a regular passage migrant to the park during the spring and autumn.

Black-Headed Gull

Winter visitor. Birds were seen in every month of the year, with two hundred and sixty-five on the lake 10/3. The majority of the wintering birds had departed by 16/3.

Common Gull

Winter visitor. Numbers do not normally peak until mid February, before they depart by early March, This year a count wasn't made at this time of year. An adult was present 20/7, it was then seen on and off until others started to arrive from 2/9, when the first juvenile was seen.

Great Black-Backed Gull

Occasional visitor. Birds were recorded on only two dates this year. Three were recorded on 21/3 and a small group of six flew west 5/9.

Lesser Black-Backed Gull

Summer visitor. Small numbers occur during the winter months.

Herring Gull

Resident. Three pairs nested again this year, but faired much better than last year with 5 young fledging.

Yellow-Legged Gull

Winter visitor. An adult was again present off and on during the first quarter of the year and was joined by a first summer bird 23/3. An adult was seen 26/5. An adult on 7/7 was accompanied by a 3rd summer birds the next day. The adult was then seen sporadically until the end of the year.

Common Tern

Summer visitor. After a couple of very good summers in the park for sightings of this attractive species, this was to be a very poor year. The first sighting didn't occur until 26/5, which is very late. The maximum numbers seen were three 29/5 and 8/7. We also had a very unusual observation on two occasions of a bird swooping down to snatch first pieces from a doughnut floating on the lake 14/6 and on 26/7 picking up bread from the surface.

Feral Pigeon

Resident. A few pairs breed under Clarence Bridge, numbers in the park have risen possibly due to the lack of food provided in Trafalgar Square

Stock Dove

Resident. Numbers of this attractive little dove seem to be stable, at around ten pairs.

Wood Pigeon

Resident. This year was similar to last, in the fact that there wasn't any significant passage recorded in the autumn.

Turtle Dove

Scarce passage migrant. Singles were recorded on the 28th and 29th April.

Collared Dove

Passage migrant. A fairly disappointing total of seven birds on five dates, for a bird that is quite common in most places apart from Central London. There were four sightings from February to mid-May and one record in the autumn on 7/9.

Ring-Necked Parakeet

Resident. Birds were seen throughout the year, the largest flock consisting thirty-eight 11/8. Breeding was thought to have taken place on the Bandstand Island.

Tawny Owl

Resident. There were still two pairs present, with fully grown juveniles seen two in Queen Mary's Gardens and one in The Leaf Yard Wood.

Little Owl

Resident. The pair on the eastside of the park managed to rear three young in a site that they use in 2009.

Eurasian Nightjar

Scarce passage migrant. Only the second park record was seen by those on a bird walk 9/5. It was mobbed by a Magpie before landing briefly on a branch above the Open Air Theatres ticket office. It was then attacked again and disappeared into some Horse Chestnut trees and couldn't be relocated. A small group came back at dusk and were rewarded with the several sightings of the bird hawking insects, before then disappearing.

Common Swift

Summer visitor. First sighting of the year involved seven on 25/4. We have been playing the call of the Swift on the Nature Study Centre building during the past two years, hoping to attract birds to the nest boxes sighted there. For several days around 14/5 at least forty birds fed just above the building, with the possibility that one bird did investigate a box. The last birds of the year were seen 3/9.

Kingfisher

Occasional passage migrant. Slightly up on last year with six sightings this, though none in the first half of the year. Possibly all the sighting relates to the same bird, first seen 5/7 and last reported 20/9.

Hoopoe

Vagrant. This was a really unexpected sighting 16/10, while looking for some diurnal migrants. I was watching a small group of Magpies heading west suddenly change course. In front of them there target, its flight action, broad round black and white wings were instantly recognisable as a Hoopoe. It gained height to avoid its pursuers, who gave up the chase.

Green Woodpecker

Resident. There were still four pairs present, though breeding was only confirmed at two sites.

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Resident. Seven pairs bred. Birds regularly use the peanut holders at the feeding station.

Skylark

Passage migrant. It was another disappointing year with only seventeen birds seen on ten dates. In the past, periods of prolonged cold weather, like we encountered at the end of the year we would have meant a movement of birds looking for food. In December, which was cold for the whole month we only recorded eight birds on three dates.

Sand Martin

Passage migrant. Birds were recorded only six dates, twice in the spring four on 24/3 and one 18/5. The autumn saw birds pass through on three dates at the end of August and finally two birds 1/9.

Barn Swallow

Passage migrant. The first bird of the year flew north 18/4, numbers during the spring were again low. There was a juvenile over the lake 27/7, which is an unusual record as we normally see adult birds first. Autumn passage got underway with two birds 22/8. A truly spectacular sight occurred on the 22/9 when over one thousand two hundred birds passed through. The last bird flew south 7/10.

Northern House Martin

Summer visitor. The first birds of the year was seen flying north 18/4. Birds from the nearby colony were seen regularly collecting mud from the damp areas around the pop-up sprinklers on the sports pitches. I am not sure if this is the best medium to construct the nest from, due to its sandy consistency. Just like the above species though, not in quite in such high numbers, over eight hundred birds passed over 22/9. The last bird was recorded on 27/9.

Tree Pipit

Passage migrant. Passage this year was again disappointing with birds only recorded on three dates, all during the autumn. One 17/8 perched briefly in a tree on the open space.

Meadow Pipit

Passage migrant. Spring passage was poor with birds only recorded on two dates, eight 31/3 and a single bird 26/4. The autumn passage began with three 9/9, and peaked at two-hundred and seventy 17/9.

Rock Pipit

Scarce passage migrant. Only one record this year 30/9, in a period of the year that allows you the greatest chance of hearing then seeing this species pass overhead.

Pied Wagtail

Resident. Birds were recorded from the middle of March through to the middle of October. At least two pairs breed close to the park.

Grey Wagtail

Resident. The first sighting was not until 18/4, of a species that until last year was normally recorded in every month. There were again two pairs breeding close to the park, with recently fledged young seen around the shores of the lake. Peak autumn passage saw twenty four birds pass through 13/9.

Yellow Wagtail

Passage migrant. Thirty-one birds were recorded on ten dates, of which there was only one in spring 9/4. Autumn passage commenced 2/8 and peaked at fourteen 9/9. One very agile bird managed to out manoeuvre a Hobby 2/9 and another bird landed amongst Meadow Pipits 13/9.

Wren

Resident. Widespread in areas with suitable habitat.

Dunnock

Resident. Very secretive, easily overlooked once the males have stopped singing in spring.

Robin

Resident. Widespread in areas with suitable habitat.

Common Redstart

Passage migrant. Three birds were recorded on two dates one in the Wetland Pen 17/8 and two in the Cricket Pen 9/9.

Northern Wheatear

Passage migrant. Numbers were still down again, with birds recorded on only three dates, once in spring 23/4. During the autumn birds were seen only on 1/9 and 9/9. Birds of the Greenland race were recorded on 18/5 and 20/5.

Common Stonechat

Passage migrant. A fine male spent the day flying down from the clumps of Gorse 16/3.

Whinchat

Passage migrant. Birds were only recorded on three dates, twice in spring 15/5 and 18/5. One during the autumn was seen perched on fencing at first light 8/9, but flew off when the sun came up.

Blackbird

Resident. Over fifty birds were feeding on berries around the park 7/10. birds

Mistle Thrush

Resident. A small flock tends to build up on Primrose Hill from early summer. Elsewhere in the park any large open area can produce this species.

Fieldfare

Passage migrant. During the cold spell during January at least thirty-six birds spent three days in the park from the 7/1. The first birds (94) of the autumn flew west 13/10. Birds were recorded on eight dates from then through to the years end, there were know large scale movements noted.

Song Thrush

Resident. Numbers seem to stable at present. Passage birds were noted from 20/9 moving predominantly west in one's and two's. Twenty were recorded on 9/10.

Redwing

Passage migrant and winter visitor. The cold weather at the start of the year brought birds into the park and had reached an impressive two hundred and fifty by 3/2. The last of these birds had departed by 22/3. Two were then found feeding in the Leaf Yard Wood 3/4 and stayed for three days. The first two of the autumn flew over 27/9. There only significant movement involved two hundred and forty 12/10. Small numbers were then seen almost daily until the end of the year.

Ring Ouzel

Scarce passage migrant. Last years sightings involved birds passing over or making the briefest of stops. This year however two birds stayed for more than a day. During the spring one fed on Ivy berries in the Leaf Yard Wood from 3/4 through to 8/4, it was accompanied by 2 Redwings. During the autumn one was feeding with Blackbirds on Yew berries 7/10. Then one again was seen feeding with Blackbirds in Queen Mary's Garden on 26/10 and 27/10.

Reed Warbler

Summer visitor and passage migrant. The first bird of the year arrived 23/4, the same date as last year. There was nine males singing from the reed beds around the lake 29/5. The wet weather seemed to really affect the numbers that bred, as young were only seen at three locations. The last bird of the year was seen 9/9.

Sedge Warbler

Passage migrant. Three birds were recorded all during the spring. Males sang from reed beds 18/4 and 23/4, then another bird was in the grounds of The Holme 14/5.

Birds seen in the Cricket Pen



Wood Warbler



Chiffchaff



Common Whitethroat



Lesser Whitethroat



Common Redstart



Pied Flycatcher

Lesser Whitethroat

Passage migrant. There were two spring sightings 1/5 and 27/5 both singing males in the Cricket Pen. During the autumn birds were recorded on four dates 12/8, 3/8, 9/9 and 17/9 all recorded in different locations around the park.

Common Whitethroat

Passage migrant. Last year we recorded none during the spring, this year was slightly better. One 21/4 and another 11/5. Then something exceptional happened, a male took up territory in the Cricket Pen from 28/5. He eventually attracted a mate and nest building was observed and by the 30/7 both birds were collecting food. This was the first confirmed breeding since 1996 and only the fifth breeding record. The last birds of the year were three seen in the Cricket Pen 9/9.

Blackcap

Summer and winter visitor. A male was seen 17/3 probably a bird that had over wintered in the UK. There were five males singing on 28/3. The number of birds breeding in the park this year was probably down, as only seven males seemed to holding a territory 15/5. Autumn passage peaked at twelve birds 11/8 and 10/9 and the last sighting of the year was on 27/9.

Garden Warbler

Passage migrant. There was no sightings this spring, though a bird was recorded 14/6. Autumn passage got underway with one 26/7, peaking at five 4/8. The Cricket Pen was the best place to encounter this species. The last two birds of the year were seen 24/8.

Chiffchaff

Summer visitor and passage migrant. One was recorded during the winter period on 7/1. The next bird was then not seen until 3/3, this was almost certainly a bird that had wintered in the UK. The first genuine migrant arrived 18/9, with spring passage peaking at ten 8/4. Four pairs probably bred. The 18/7 saw the start of the autumn migration, with four birds in amongst a tit flock. Autumn passage peaked with twenty 2/8, twenty-two 22/8 and twenty-four 9/9. The last of the year was seen 26/10.

Willow Warbler

Passage migrant. The first bird of the year didn't arrive until 30/4, with spring passage peaking at nine 21/4. Autumn migration was going to be one of the best for several years and started with one 25/7. Passage peaked at twenty 3/8 and twenty-two 22/8, with the Cricket Pen being the best location to see this species, though they were recorded in most areas of the park that had suitable trees. The last birds of the year were seen 10/9.

Goldcrest

Resident, passage migrant. Eight males held territories, with breeding proven in the Avenue Gardens.

Firecrest

Passage migrant and winter visitor. A male was seen in the Leaf Yard Wood 15/1 and a pair was present here on 21/3. Later in the year a pair were seen by the boundary fence to the American Ambassadors Residence 22/11. This pair was then found in the Leaf Yard Wood 27/11, where they remained till the end of the year.

Spotted Flycatcher

Passage migrant. There was an improvement on last years poor showing, with birds on and off between 12/8 and 17/9. Passage peaked on 30/8, when five birds were present at the northeast end of the lake.

Pied Flycatcher

Passage migrant. Birds were recorded on three dates during the autumn 11/8, 12/8 and 9/9. All these sightings were in the Cricket Pen.

Long-Tailed Tit

Resident. The largest flock recorded was sixty-five on 19/11.

Coal Tit

Resident. The central area of the park is the best place to see this species, as they tend to favour the areas with Yew and conifer trees. Eight pairs were again recorded.

Blue Tit

Resident. Birds make good use of the nest boxes that have been erected in the park.

Great Tit

Resident. The number of pairs are slightly less numbers than the above species.

Jay

Resident. This species is the most secretive member of the crow family. They have now grown accustomed to using the peanut feeders.

Magpie

Resident. This species has also realised what peanut feeders are about and can be seen using the one at the feeding station in the Leaf Yard Wood.

Crow

Resident. There is a flock of non-breeding birds that move between the side of the main lake and the open spaces. This flock tends to have a large number of weak looking individuals. Probably due to the fact that they rely largely on the public to feed them, rather than foraging for natural food stuffs.

Rook

Passage migrant. There were three sightings this year, two in spring 1/4 and 5/5, then during the autumn 24/11.

Jackdaw

Passage migrant. Birds were recorded on nine dates this year, five times during the spring and four in the autumn. A remarkable movement was noted 11/10 when three-hundred and ten birds headed north-west. One flock consisted of two hundred and forty birds.

Starling

Resident, passage migrant. The new areas of rough grassland surrounding the sports pitches continue to offer the birds food away from the aviaries in London Zoo. Numbers of continental birds passing over during the autumn was light, due to unfavourable winds.

House Sparrow

Resident in London Zoo. The only records away from London Zoo were again in the garden by St Marks Bridge.

Chaffinch

Resident, passage migrant. This attractive finch can be seen at all the feeding stations in the park, though during the early part of the year a flock of around seventy could be found feeding under Hornbeam trees alongside the canal embankment. This years autumn passage was very light, with a maximum of seventy recorded 12/10. involved two-hundred and twenty birds heading west in small groups.

Brambling

Passage migrant, winter visitor. Not much of an improvement on last years disappointing total and again none were recorded at any of the feeding stations. Birds were recorded on three dates, three 12/3, two 16/1 and the only autumn record was of eighteen birds flying west 14/11

Greenfinch

Resident. Exact breeding numbers are not known, but there strong hold appears to be the more formal garden areas.

Goldfinch

Resident. This species I am pleased to say is a one of the few species that is on the up. There are at least eighteen birds present throughout the year. These numbers are added to during the late summer and autumn by birds from the local area and passage birds. A flock of thirty-six flew over 1/11.

Common Crossbill

Scarce passage migrant. Two birds flew north-east at 6.50am 8/7.

.Eurasian Siskin

Passage migrant. A disappointing start to the year, with the only records involving a single bird 24/2 and 2/3. The autumn passage was slightly better, with passage migrants heading over peaking at twenty-two 16/10 and twenty 26/10. Our last sighting of the year was of five birds on 15/11.

Meally Redpoll

Scarce passage migrant. Only the second park record saw two birds perch briefly in the Leaf Yard Wood 16/10.

Lesser Redpoll

Passage migrant. Birds were recorded on seven dates, mostly of birds flying overs, though two were feeding on Silver Birch seeds 18/3. The largest flock saw twenty fly over the Leaf Yard Wood 5/4. A slightly better showing this year, though not in large numbers and only one early year record 16/3. During the autumn birds were recorded on seven dates from 18/10 through to 26/11. A small flock of five fed in Silver Birch trees from the 9/11 until 11/11.

Linnet

Passage migrant. A very disappointing year with birds recorded on only three dates 16/3, 1/5 and 11/11. This species used to drop in and feed on the weeds on the sports pitches.

Lapland Bunting

Scarce migrant. One bird that was first heard flew west with 40 Chaffinches 12/10, this was the first record of this species for the park.



This Firecrest male was seen by the American Ambassadors fence before moving to the Leaf Yard Wood

Acknowledgement:

Thanks to Dave Johnson for his sightings.

The Cricket Pen



The Cricket Pen or area 31 on the map Regent's Park Bird Sightings Guide has produced an excellent crop of migrants this year. This small enclosure was planted back in the mid 1970's, when the park had its own nursery, where a wide variety of native and non-native trees were grown. Every year trees were planted around the park, sometimes without much thought as to whether or not they would be any good for attracting our native species of wildlife. It was decided that this small triangular piece of grass, surrounded by pathways would be fenced and then planted with a large number of trees mainly deciduous, though eight pines were positioned in the centre. The soil in this area was very poor, and would become saturated after prolonged periods of rain during the winter, thus the trees grew very slowly indeed. The parks maintenance at this time meant that all grassy areas were always kept very short and until being enclosed, this is what happened here. Now it was decided we would have area that we would allow to become overgrown, with sections within it being kept cut short. This site got its name due to the fact that a colony of Roesel's Bush Crickets was found here, due to the fact that the grass had been allowed to grow and flower and offer them a suitable habitat. They may have been imported in to the park on the roots of some of the trees. So being the only area of the park with long grass and the fact the trees were so slow growing they flourished.

In the early 1990's a new management plan was drawn up and it was decided to start reducing the number of trees here, to take out the weaker specimens and most of the non-native species. The aim was to get more light in to the area, plant wild flowers, and to introduce some Gorse and Blackberry to give song birds the chance to nest here. By now the pines trees had become very large and were a main cause for the lack of sunlight reaching the ground and the amount of needles they shed prevented the grass beneath them from growing. Five of these were felled, which had an immediate affect on the look and feel of the area. The enclosure had a large number of Silver Birch, Hornbeam, Alder, Mountain Ash and White Beam some these were then removed, with the better specimens being kept. In the 1970's there had been a large Elm in the south-east corner that had fallen victim to Dutch Elm disease. This has resulted in an area of Elm scrub that is controlled on a rotational cutting regime and is a favourite area for lots of bird's throughout the year. The Blackberry has done really well, in fact to well, so this too is being controlled so that we have clumps in several areas. There is a large patch that has had the centre cut out to protect a number of Bee-hives that have been sited here. They have been positioned to make sure that their flight line is away from the public.

To attract a wide range of birds to this area we have created a feeding station here, with three hanging feeders. Two feeders suspended from a pine tree of the have been enclosed within a 1 inch square mesh cage. This is to prevent Grey Squirrels, Stock Doves, Feral Pigeons and nowadays Rose-ringed Parakeets from feeding from them. Nearby another feeder contains Nyjer seed, which attracts Goldfinches throughout the year. There is also a raised ground feeder, this to is enclosed by a mesh cage. There is always something of interest to see here, with Blackcap (winter period), Brambling and Reed Bunting having being seen, though rarely. During the course of the year it is possible to see nearly all of the parks regular species apart from the water birds, though on occasions Mandarins and Mallards can be found feeding from puddles.

As I have mentioned it does attract a good number of migrating warblers, flycatchers and Common Redstart. It will depend on a favourable weather patterns occur during the migration period. Though there is always likely to be Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Blackcaps to see. The best time of day to visit is normally as soon after sunrise as possible, this way you avoid too much disturbance from humans and dogs. If there is a breeze blowing, look to find the sheltered spots, here the insects will be and with luck some interesting birds. Listening carefully you should be able to here a Goldcrest singing or calling, as a pair breeds in one of the pines.

More birds found in the Cricket Pen



Blackcaps breed here



This juvenile C. Whitethroats was raised here in 2010



Goldcrest

The passerines using the feeding station have to be on the alert in case they become a prey item not for the Kestrel mentioned above but for a Sparrowhawk. Birds are often seen hunting here or close by and the tell tale sign of a patch of feathers on the ground shows that they have been here. More often than not, they seem to take one of the Feral Pigeons that hand beneath the feeders picking up scraps. The Tawny Owls that breed in Queen Mary's Gardens can also be encountered here, though to see them your best chance is just before dusk or before dawn. Another woodland species the Woodcock is normally seen once or twice a year, normally when flushed or again like the Tawny at dusk or before dawn. Mind you the typical view is of a bird flying away that has seen you first.



Regent's Park

Earliest and latest dates of migrants

	Earliest	Summer Visitors	Last	
	23/03/1996	Osprey	19/09/1965	
	24/03/2010	Hobby	02/11/1995	
	28/03/1985	Common Sandpiper	18/11/2004	
	08/05/1978	Sandwich Tern	02/10/1986	
	22/04/1995	Common Tern	12/10/1995	
	24/04/2006	Arctic Tern	01/09/1994	
	10/05/1966	Black Tern	15/09/1994	
	05/04/1982	Turtle Dove	05/11/1981	
	09/04/1969	Common Cuckoo	10/10/1955	
	09/05/2010	Eurasian Nightjar	16/09/1992	
	18/04/2007	Common Swift	10/10/1985	
	15/03/1994	Sand Martin	12/11/1989	
	16/03/1990	House Martin	10/11/1983	
	01/04/1993	Barn Swallow	30/11/1968	
	21/03/1963	Tree Pipit	08/10/1968	
	03/04/2004	Yellow Wagtail	09/11/1967	
	19/04/1985	Nightingale	26/09/1972	
	07/04/2005	Common Redstart	06/10/1960	
	22/04/2007	Whinchat	09/10/1980	
	15/03/1961	Northern Wheatear	15/11/1994	
	26/03/1965	Ring Ouzel	03/11/2006	
		Grasshopper Warbler	15/10/1973	
	05/04/1983	Sedge Warbler	18/09/1968	
	23/04/2009	Reed Warbler	06/10/1982	
	05/04/2002	Garden Warbler	11/10/1984	
	20/04/1968	Lesser Whitethroat	05/10/1967	
	15/04/1959	Common Whitethroat	05/10/1978	
	16/04/1951	Wood Warbler	18/09/1991	
	11/03/1990	Willow Warbler	14/10/1981	
	29/04/1966	Spotted Flycatcher	08/10/1976	
	11/04/1991	Pied Flycatcher	07/10/1986	
		Winter Visitor		
	04/01/1963	Smew	16/03/1954	
	30/10/2006	Jack Snipe	29/04/1999	
	15/09/1981	Fieldfare	28/04/1978	
	15/09/1981	Redwing	31/05/1995	
	28/09/2008	Brambling	15/04/1967	
	08/09/2008	Siskin	21/04/1984	

Regent's Park Checklist

Little Grebe	1		Grey Plover	71		Grey Wagtail	141	
Great crested Grebe	2		Knot	72		Yellow Wagtail	142	
Slavonian Grebe	3		Lapwing	73		Wren	143	
Black-necked Grebe	4		Ruff	74		Hedge Accentor	144	
Leach's Petrel	5		Dunlin	75		Robin	145	
Gannet	6		Jack Snipe	76		Nightingale	146	
Cormorant	7		Common Snipe	77		Black Redstart	147	
Shag	8		Woodcock	78		Common Redstart	148	
Little Egret	9		Bar-tailed Godwit	79		Whinchat	149	
Bittern	10		Whimbrel	80		Northern Wheatear	150	
Grey Heron	11		Curlew	81		Black-eared Wheatear	151	
Mute Swan	12		Redshank	82		Ring Ouzel	152	
Whooper Swan	13		Spotted Redshank	83		Blackbird	153	
Bewick's Swan	14		Greenshank	84		Fieldfare	154	
White fronted Goose	15		Green Sandpiper	85		Mistle Thrush	155	
Pink footed Goose	16		Wood Sandpiper	86		Redwing	156	
Grey lag Goose	17		Common Sandpiper	87		Song Thrush	157	
Canada Goose	18		Turnstone	88		Grasshopper Warbler	158	
Brent Goose	19		Arctic Skua	89		Sedge Warbler	159	
Egyptian Goose	20		Pomarine Skua	90		Eurasian Reed Warbler	160	
Common Shelduck	21		Long-tailed Skua	91		Melodious Warbler	161	
Mandarin Duck	22		Mediterranean Gull	92		Lesser Whitethroat	162	
Mallard	23		Black-headed Gull	93		Greater Whitethroat	163	
Eurasian Wigeon	24		Little Gull	94		Blackcap	164	
Gadwall	25		Common Gull	95		Garden Warbler	165	
Northern Pintail	26		Herring Gull	96		Wood Warbler	166	
Northern Shoveler	27		Yellow Legged Gull	97		Willow Warbler	167	
Garganey	28		Lesser Black-backed Gull	98		Chiffchaff	168	
Common Teal	29		Great Black-backed Gull	99		Goldcrest	169	
Red Crested Pochard	30		Iceland Gull	100		Firecrest	170	
Common Pochard	31		Glaucous Gull	101		Spotted Flycatcher	171	
Tufted Duck	32		Kittiwake	102		Pied Flycatcher	172	
Ring-necked Duck	33		Sandwich Tern	103		Red-breasted Flycatcher	173	
Feruginous Duck	34		Common Tern	104		Long-tailed Tit	174	
Lesser Scaup	35		Arctic Tern	105		Blue Tit	175	
Greater Scaup	36		Little Tern	106		Great Tit	176	
Common Scoter	37		Black Tern	107		Coal Tit	177	
Long-tailed Duck	38		Guillemot	108		Marsh Tit	178	
Common Goldeneye	39		Feral Rock Dove	109		Willow Tit	179	
Smew	40		Stock Dove	110		Nuthatch	180	
Red Breasted Merganser	41		Collared Dove	111		Treecreeper	181	
Goosander	42		Turtle Dove	112		Golden Oriole	182	
Ruddy Duck	43		Wood Pigeon	113		Red-backed Shrike	183	
Common Buzzard	44		Rose-ringed Parakeet	114		Great Grey Shrike	184	
Honey Buzzard	45		Cuckoo	115		Jay	185	
Red Kite	46		Barn Owl	116		Magpie	186	
Black Kite	47		Tawny Owl	117		Carion Crow	187	
Hen Harrier	48		Little Owl	118		Rook	188	
Marsh Harrier	49		Short-eared Owl	119		Jackdaw	189	
Montagu's Harrier	50		Long-eared Owl	120		Starling	190	
Northern Goshawk	51		Eurasian Nightjar	121		Waxwing	191	
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	52		Swift	122		House Sparrow	192	
Osprey	53		Kingfisher	123		Tree Sparrow	193	
Common Kestrel	54		Hoopoe	124		Brambling	194	
Merlin	55		Wryneck	125		Chaffinch	195	
Eurasian Hobby	56		Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	126		Greenfinch	196	
Red Footed Falcon	57		Great Spotted Woodpecker	127		Goldfinch	197	
Peregrine Falcon	58		Green Woodpecker	128		Hawfinch	198	
Grey Partridge	59		Woodlark	129		Bullfinch	199	
Common Pheasant	60		Eurasian Skylark	130		Common Crossbill	200	
Water Rail	61		Barn Swallow	131		Siskin	201	
Corncrake	62		Red-rumped Swallow	132		Serim	202	
Moorhen	63		Sand Martin	133		Lesser Redpoll	203	
Coot	64		House Martin	134		Meally Redpoll	204	
Common Crane	65		Tree Pipit	135		Reed Bunting	205	
Oystercatcher	66		Meadow Pipit	136		Corn Bunting	206	
Stone Curlew	67		Rock Pipit	137		Yellow Hammer	207	
Little Ringed Plover	68		Water Pipit	138		Snow Bunting	208	
Ringed Plover	69		Richards Pipit	139		Lapland Bunting	209	
Golden Plover	70		Pied Wagtail	140		Black-headed Bunting	210	





