

## Three Haggas Jubilee Wood Bird Report

April 2014-March 2015

It will take some time before nest sites are available in the emerging trees and understorey at 3 Haggas Wood and as a result birds did not breed on the site in 2014. However, a plentiful supply of soil, pond and plant invertebrates, seeds, and an ever increasing number of field voles, gave sustenance to at least 22 species which were recorded during fortnightly visits. Susie Bradley also supplied some interesting records.

When the meadow was cut ground feeding birds arrived including Wood Pigeon, Stock Dove, Meadow Pipit, Blackbird, Mistle Thrush, Starling, Magpie and Carrion Crow. Most of the sightings were of individual birds though family parties of Mistle Thrush and Starling were present during July 2014. The soil under the meadow continued to provide food for migratory thrushes well into the late winter period. Twenty four Fieldfares were present on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2005 as were a hundred or so Redwing in early March. During this time a rather tame Robin held a winter territory close to the entrance gate.

Swallows arrived in June to hawk the winged invertebrates emerging from the meadow flowers. A family party spent much time in the area at the end of the month. The adults parked their two recently fledged young on the electricity wires and brought them food until they were strong enough to be independent.

As the flowers died off seeds became accessible though surprisingly only small numbers of Goldfinch took advantage of them. Other seed eating passerines such as Linnet were not seen though they could have been missed. However, as the shooting season progressed the uncut vegetation provided a refuge for game birds. On 17<sup>th</sup> January 4 Red-legged Partridges flew in and at least one pair of Pheasant was present. The remains of two fox killed Pheasants showed that the refuge was not impregnable.

An indication that 2014 was going to be a peak year in the field vole population cycle came when a hunting Kestrel along with a dependent offspring appeared in July. The increasing number of voles led to a unique feeding opportunity and as the year progressed Buzzards and two Barn Owls joined the Kestrels and were still present in early March. Perhaps the most unusual event of the year was the

arrival of two Herons which became resident vole hunters for over a month during late January and February. Although Herons will take a wide variety of prey they normally focus on aquatic species and for them to spend so much time on land hunting a mammal is a rare event.

Other sightings during the year included a pair of Mallard rising off shallow flooding; a Collared Dove on the overhead wires and a young Pied Wagtail caught on a trail camera set by the pond.

In addition to regular visits a formal breeding bird survey will take place in 2015. If you have any bird records resulting from a visit please do forward them.

David Tate 12.03.15

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