

Deeside Naturalists' Society Bird Report 2025



Peter and Sue Haslem.

Deeside Naturalist Society (DNS) reserve is managed by the committee of trustees together with the support of Uniper. The reserve is strictly accessed by members only. For further information on joining please visit our website. www.deenats.org.uk

135 species were recorded in 2025. No new species.

The total number of species seen on the reserve stands at 248 (including 18 escapes).

Notable records include Glossy Ibis, Scaup, Osprey, Little stint, Wood sandpiper and Grasshopper warbler.

Two Great crested grebes raised three chicks on the Ash pool. Possibly a first record.

The DNS reserve is observed from two main viewpoints.

1. Firstly, from the West hide this provides panoramic views across Oakenholt RSPB marsh, Flint sands and with a telescope Burton and Neston marshes. The West hide also provides a clear view of the freshwater pools (Ash pool and meadow pool) and associated grassland.

Tides and weather influence the movement of waders, wildfowl and seabirds on the Dee estuary.

2. Secondly from the Bunded hides (Dee, Middle and East) where brackish pools are fed with tidal water providing a refuge for waders and ducks. The surrounding hedges, trees and grazing land attract year-round and migration passage species.

Starting in 2012, we have been entering all DNS records into BTO's Bird Track. This system is based on 1×1km squares and the reserve is described by quadrants:

SJ2671 Includes Ash pool area and Oakenholt marsh.

SJ2672 Flint sands and the Dee up to the breakwater (revetment).

SJ2771 Grazing fields, the power station, garden compound and the Bunded pools.

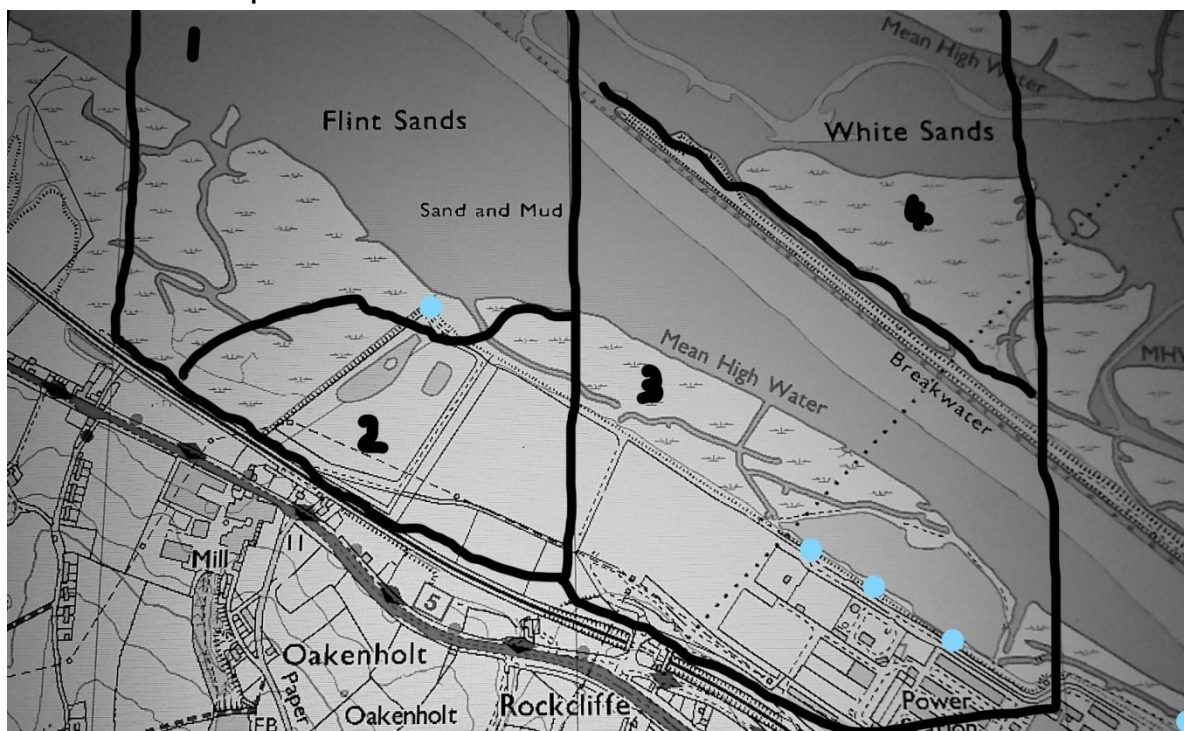
SJ2772 Including Breakwater and Burton Marsh in Wales.

Observers record their sightings in the hide logs, summarised monthly and recorded on Bird track.

Many records are supported by photographic and/or video evidence.

Use of a mobile phone attachment on a telescope provides a quick easy *record shot*.

Photos included in the report were taken this year and on the reserve. Most images are phone scoped using Samsung A21 and Swarovski ATX95 telescope.



Map of reserve: Hides are shown as dots.

1. SJ2672 CQNR Oakenholt Marsh and Flint Sands.
2. SJ2671 CQNR Ash Pool and Meadow Trail.
3. SJ2771 CQNR Bunded Pools and Garden Compound.
4. SJ2772 CQNR Whitesands.

THE SPECIES LIST FOR 2025.

Birds seen in less than 5 previous years on the Reserve are shown in **bold** face. Birds that nested this year as shown as **(B)**.

The tables show the **maximum count** for each month, except for raptors where the **total sightings** per month is shown. The tables clearly show seasonal distribution of passage birds and the best months to observe them.

Bird records are taken from hide logs and WeBS counts.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*).

Released birds.

Two on 07/04.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*).

Common resident. Released birds.

Seen throughout the year.

Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*).

Unknown origin.

One 03/03.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*).

Common resident.

Mute S	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	12	10	16	12	6					3		10

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus Cygnus*).

Winter visitor.

WSwan	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	17	22									22	

Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*).

Escaped species.

One was observed on the reserve during January.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*).

Resident in winter in their thousands on Oakenholt and Burton marshes.

PFG	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	3900	2600	4000	1600	4				300	200	720	2000

European White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*).

Rare winter visitor.

One 29/10.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*).

Frequent feral visitor.

Canada goose (*Branta Canadensis*). (B).

Common feral resident.

Can G	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	400	400	300	50	500	500	250	300	500	300	300	61

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*).

Uncommon feral visitor.

Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla*). Pale-bellied race.

Scarce winter visitor. Though relatively common around Hilbre they rarely venture onto the reserve.

Three 31/10.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*).

Common all year round. Large numbers present on the Dee estuary for their summer moult before dispersing.

Shel D	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	50	35	25	52	600	2000	300	260	120		50	

Wigeon (*Anas Penelope*).

Common winter visitor.

Wig	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bunded	190	250	20	2						60	36	
Ash	120	40	150	50				5	8	200	450	
Oak	200	350	100	30						8	3200	680

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*).

Winter.

A small number overwinter on the Ash pool.

Teal (*Anas crecca*).

Common winter visitor.

Teal	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bund	45	60		14			10	20			700	
Ash	70	90	50	15	2		25	380	500	400	760	
Oak	410	200	60	239				380	400	800	3000	700

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*). (B)

Common resident.

Mal	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bund	30			4				14	8	40	30	
Ash	6		10	30	210	520	280	200	160	60	72	
Oak	12	9	6	5	50	160		138	200	40	12	23

Pintail (*Anas acuta*).

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

PT	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
		5	200	54					80			

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*).

Common winter visitor.

Good numbers spend the winter on the Ash pool.

SH	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	6	2				3		3	33	10	6	5

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*). (B).

Common winter visitor and frequent breeding resident.

A regular feature on the Ash pool.

Tuf	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	3	10	7	9	8	5	5	6	5		2	4

Scaup (*Aythya marila*).

Female on river from west hide 2/09 (MP).

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*).

Rare winter visitor.

One on Ash pool 17/11 to 22/11 (SH).

Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*).

One record.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*).

Uncommon visitor.

10 records on river.

Swift (*Apus apus*).

Summer visitor.

First record 24/05.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*).

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*).

Common resident. Commonly seen on grazing land.

SD	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	120	90					6	25	12	25	35	50

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*).

Common resident and winter visitor.

220 were counted in January.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*).

Resident.

Regularly seen by entrance road and along the railway.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*). (B).

Very common resident on Ash pool. Regular breeder.

MH	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	5			4	2	6	3	6	5	4	6	

Coot (*Fulica atra*). (B).

Resident.

Coot	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	7	8		8	15	17	6	9	14		2	

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*).

Rare winter visitor.

One 20/01 to 08/03.

One 29/10 to 23/11.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*). (B).

Resident.

Annual breeding success.

LG	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	8	4	6	6	6	5	10	9	8	12	8	

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*). (B).

Resident and common winter visitor.

Seen most months on the river. **A pair nested on the Ash pool 26/06 and successfully hatched three young 10/07.**

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*). (B).

Present all year round.

OYC	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	60	14	50	268	125	12	13	750	1000	1500	500	

Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*). (B).

Passage migrant and summer resident. Breeding success since 2021.

Five pairs hatched 10 young. First chick was seen on 07/06.

Avo	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
			30	9	12	57	58	37	17	7	10	

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*).

Uncommon passage migrant.

Most records were in August and September with 23 on 12/08.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*).

Uncommon summer resident and passage migrant.

They nest within the Uniper compound and can be seen on the reserve when they first arrive, often showing courting behaviour. First record 16/03.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*).

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor.

50 recorded on 01/01.

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*).

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

All records were in November with up to 3 noted.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*).

Common migrant and winter resident.

LW	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	1000	600	30				70	35	150	70	2000	3500

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*).

Regular passage migrant.

Wh	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
				3	30		8	4				

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*).

Resident and winter visitor. Large numbers feed on grazing land over the winter months. Move between fields and muddy edges of river,

cu	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
East Field	70	58					20			30	55	35
West / Ash	20	50					12	6	42		50	
Mud	27	84	20	11	21	2	8		60	50	60	10

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*).

Common winter visitor and migrant. Large population uses east edge of Ash pool during summer months.

Black t	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bund								1	400	850	60	
Ash							1500	2300	150			
Oak	300	900	800	100	4		1400	4000	3000	2500	2400	800

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*).

Bar-t	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	8	2	1					2	4	1	10	

Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*).

Uncommon passage migrant.

Knot (*Calidris canutus*).

Regular passage migrant and winter visitor.

Roosts in summer with large population of Black-tailed godwits on Ash pool.

Knot	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
			60				150	3000	1000	2000	500	600

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*).

Uncommon passage migrant. Late summer passage of juvenile birds.

Present July to October with a high count of nine 09/09.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*),

Uncommon passage migrant.

One from 20/09 until 27/09 from Middle hide.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*).

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Flying in their thousands, around Dee sands, as tide ebbs and flows, dropping in to feed on the wet mud.

dun	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	1000	700	350		2		44	6	30	60	4000	1500

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*).

Scarce winter visitor.

Eight records, Two birds 19/07 and three 04/09.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*).

Common winter visitor roosting on marshy area in front of Middle hide.

Sni	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	28	50	40					2	4	2	63	

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*).

Common passage migrant and winter resident.

CS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	1			2		2	1	1	6	6	1	

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*).

Two on Ash pool 19/04.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*).

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Several thousand redshank roost on late summer/ autumn passage around the Bunded pools. Smaller numbers stay all winter.

RS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bunded	40	15	280	170		92	2900	4000	3000	500	1400	
Oakenholt	140	350	380	860			1400	2000	4000	1800	4000	67

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*).

Passage migrant and resident.

Regular sightings from Middle hide.

GS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	7	6	8	5		2	20	32	45	35	8	

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*).

Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Regular sighting from Middle hide late summer / autumn.

SR	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	4	3	2			1	10	12	27	29	9	2

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glarcola*),

Rare passage bird.

One 28/07.

Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*).

Uncommon visitor.

One 03/07.

Black-Headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*). (B).

Abundant passage migrant and resident.

A breeding colony is established on the island of the Fly ash lagoon.

BHG	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ash				80	250	270	380	220				
Oakenholt	50	900	70	120	300	1700	270	1100	300	240	950	25

Common Gull (*Larus canus*).

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*). (B).

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor. Present most months.

A pair nested on the power station, producing three young.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*).

Common migrant and winter visitor.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*).

All year round. Best observed over high tide.

Common Tern (*Sternus hirundo*).

Summer resident.

Annual breeding colony at Shotton Steel lagoons.

CT	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
				6	20	25	22					

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*).

Passage migrant

Four records in April with a count of 14.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*).

Always present roosting on the marsh edge on Oakenholt at high tide.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*).

Common visitor.

Large numbers post-breeding from Burton Mere wetlands.

LE	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
			4	9	6	51	60	12	50	46	20	2

Great Egret (Ardea Alba).

Now a regular feature on the reserve. Often seen fishing for fish and shrimp in the shallow water on the Bunded pools.

GE	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	1		7				2	29	20	16	9	1

Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea).

Common across the reserve. Larger numbers following breeding, in the colony, at Burton.

GH	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	5	2	2	1	2	6	3	4	13	3	6	2

Spoonbill (Platalea leucorodia).

Scarce summer visitor.

Ten records of one and two birds 23/08 to 21/09

Glossy Ibis (Plegadis falcinellus).

Report of *thirty flew over reserve from Flint 05/09 (CW)*.

Red Kite (Milvus milvus).

Uncommon visitor.

One record 18/02.

Osprey (*Pandion Haliaetus*).

Rare migrant.

One record.

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*).

Healthy population on the Dee marshes leads to the occasional sortie onto the reserve.

MH	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
sightings	8	2	1	1			2	7	7	3	9	3

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*).

Winters on the Dee marshes. Sometimes hunt on the reserve.

Two records of the same bird in October.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*).

Regular sighting cruising the reserve.

SP	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
sightings	2	1	1	1	1			1	1		1	

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*).

Resident all year round.

BU	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
sightings	2	2					1	6	8	3	8	

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*). (B).

Bred successfully on the power station.

Ke	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
sighting	1			2			7	8	13	3	3	

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*).

A winter visitor on the Dee marshes.

Me	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
sighting	1										7	

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*).

Seen on or around the reserve most months.

Pe	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
sighting	3		1	2		1		1	6	3	6	

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*).

Uncommon summer visitor.

Two records 12/08 and 16/08.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*).

Winter resident from August to November.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus major*).

Resident.

An infrequent visitor to the peanut feeder.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*).

Resident.

Sightings near reserve entrance.

Magpie (*Pica pica*). (B)

Very common resident.

Reported most months.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*).

Very common resident.

Large numbers can frequent marsh and grassland. Opportunist feeder.
Takes advantage of winter food put out for sheep.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*). (B).

Common resident.

A rookery close to the paper mill has led to larger numbers feeding on the sheep pasture late summer.

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*).

Abundant resident.

Large numbers frequent marsh and grassland.

Raven (*Corvus corax*).

Regular visitor.

A loud 'croncking' alerts to the presence of one or two in flight.

Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*). (B)

Common resident. Main user of reserve nesting boxes.

Great Tit (*Parus major*). (B)

Common resident. Major beneficiary of provided nest boxes.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*). (B).

Seen flying over revetment and salt marsh. Brought closer by highest tides as the marsh becomes flooded. A pair nested on East field in long grass.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*).

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

First record 13/04 and last record 22/09.

House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*).

Common summer visitor and passing migrant.

First record 26/04 and last record 13/09.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*).

Common summer visitor and passing migrant.

First sighting 05/04 and last 13/09.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*). (B).

Common resident.

Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*).

Resident.

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*).

Rare visitor.

Heard around bunded pools from middle hide 21/04, 26/04 and 08/06 (SH).

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*).

Summer visitor.

Very vocal on the reserve in April. First record 05/04 and last record 11/05.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*). (B).

Summer resident,

First record 08/03 and last record 06/11.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*).

Uncommon summer visitor on the reserve.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*). (B).

Annual summer visitor to reserve. 26/04 to 07/08.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*). (B)

Common summer resident. Heard singing across the reserve 13/04 to 23/09.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*). (B).

Annual summer resident.

21/04 until 06/09.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*). (B).

Fairly common summer resident.

26/04 to 07/08.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*).

Resident.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*). (B).

Common resident.

Seen across the reserve holding territory.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*).

Abundant visitor.

Large noisy groups roam the reserve, in the winter, and roost in the reeds around the ash pool at dusk.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*). (B).

Abundant resident. Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*).

Common winter visitor and passage migrant from November.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*). (B).

Resident and winter visitor.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*).

Winter visitor and migrant from October to February.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*). (B).

Resident.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*). (B).

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*).

Annual passage bird.

One record 12/04.

Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*). (B)

Resident and passage visitor. At least two pairs successfully bred.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*).

Passage bird in spring and autumn. Single bird records 13/04, 01/05 and 14/08, 07/09.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*).

Annual passage in spring and autumn. 23/03 to 08/05 and 23/08 to 08/10.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). (B).

Small breeding population around entrance, meadow trail and railway.

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*). (B).

Resident. Recorded in all parts of the reserve. Breeding behaviours observed.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flavissima*).

Uncommon visitor.

Two birds recorded 12/08.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*).

Resident and winter visitor.

Sometime visitor to Paper mill streams and edge of Ash pool.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrelli*). (B)

Resident breeding bird.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*). (B).

Common on Dee marsh area. Good numbers on reserve during migration periods.

Rock Pipit (*Anthus petrosus*).

Winter.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*).

Resident and abundant winter visitor. A large flock spends the winter feeding on the marsh areas.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*).

Rare winter visitor.

One record 07/01.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*). (B)

Resident. Small numbers seen each month.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*).(B).

Resident and small wintering population.

Siskin (*Spinus spinus*).

Scarce bird for the reserve.

Two 10/02.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*).

Common resident.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*). (B).

Resident and winter visitor.

Two pairs known to have bred on reserve.

Large feeding flock in winter.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*). (B).

Common resident seen most months.

Contributors to records.

Sue Haslem (SH), Peter Haslem (PH), Glenn Morris (GEM), Mike Pollard (MP), John Gilbody (JG), Stan Skelton (SS), Tony Lovat (AL), Richard Speechley (RS), Julie Rogers (JR), Geoff Robinson (GR), Graham Jones (GJ), Colin Wells (CW).



Spotted Redshank.



Stonechat.



Yellow wagtail.



Great crested grebes.

