



Normal Reserve Opening Times:

Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday
9am - 5pm (4pm Nov - end of Feb)

Visitor Centre
10am - 4pm (3.30pm Nov - end of Feb)

Trustees:

Kirsty McLeod - Treasurer
David Nesham
John Brook
Peter Murphy
Graham Barlow
Ian Willoughby
Jerry Knapp
Maggie Bellwood
John Hart
Andrew Woodall
Denese Swann
Louise Staniland

Company Secretary - Peter Murphy
Report Editor - Peter Murphy

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Photographs:

Front and back cover: Chadwick Pond - from an original photograph by Barbara Murphy

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Introduction

As in 2021, once again the Reserve was closed for the first three months of the year, but this time not due to Covid. This year it was the long threatened development of the Airedale Mills site (formerly Barkers factory) next to the entrance to the Reserve which was dependent on a new swing bridge over the canal, this the only means of vehicle access for our visitors.

We were pleased, indeed relieved, when the first phase of the work was completed on schedule; the old bridge had been removed and the canal was once again open to boat traffic. The next stage was to be the construction of the new swing bridge and we were led to believe this would be in place by the end of May when we would again have vehicle access. In the meantime it was decided to open the Reserve again on a trial basis on Sundays only from 3rd April with access on foot via the canal towpath.

Sadly the work was to take much longer than planned and the new bridge wasn't brought on site until October. By the end of the year we still had no vehicle access. Thanks to our hard working volunteers we were able to maintain Sunday opening for the public, continue essential habitat management work and complete a programme of mid-week educational visits by walking the children in along the towpath. These visits are very much appreciated by the schools, enabling the children to experience the Reserve's wildlife and learn about habitats and conservation. Our own children's group, the Rodley Robins continued their monthly meetings off site visiting local parks and nature reserves but were able to return to the Reserve in August to continue their learning here.

Inevitably, all large events had to be cancelled but we were able to run a Moth Trap Opening Event for our visitors on Sunday 27th August and a Fungus Foray on Sunday 23rd October, both of which were well attended. Supervised pond dipping was also able to take place during the summer months.

Fortunately, the wildlife on the Reserve itself was largely unaffected by all that was going on by the canal and it was an interesting year in many ways. A Black Redstart, first spotted on the farmland manure heap on 1st April and photographed close by two days later, was only the third record for us and the first since 9th February 2008. The odd new species is added to the Reserve list most years and this year it was a Black-necked Grebe that was seen on the river from the bridge on 7th November. This species

can be seen not far away at St.Aidans Nature Reserve and this bird could well have reached Rodley via the river, as was likely the case with Cetti's Warbler which arrived here in December 2014.

The old Barn Owl nest box on the east facing wall of the Yorkshire Water compound had been used successfully by a pair of Kestrels for a number of years but it was starting to look somewhat fragile. The decision was taken to erect a new box on a post at a location close by at the edge of the John Ackroyd Meadow with a camera installed. The birds certainly took to their new home, five young fledging successfully, the highest number of young ever on the Reserve from one nest.

The Barn Owls also had another good year raising three young in their nest box on the Scrubland. Having cameras in both the Kestrel and Barn Owl boxes and being able to relay images to monitors in the Visitor Centre has certainly proved very popular with our visitors but it also allows us to have detailed information about the private lives of these birds.

It would be nice to be able to claim that we also had Common Buzzards nesting on the Reserve but they are doing so just across the river and are now being seen more frequently than Red Kites. Successful nesting has now taken place for probably the fourth year running with two young fledging this year. This would have been unthinkable not so many years ago.

Daytime sightings of Otters have been few and far between in the past but there have always been signs of their presence. This year was almost certainly the best ever with numerous daytime sightings and a female with two young on several occasions.

Back in 2019 the Reserve was officially recognised as a Dragonfly Hotspot by the British Dragonfly Society. Two new species were added to the growing list this year - the Willow Emerald and Golden-ringed Dragonfly.

Looking ahead to 2023 let us hope that we will soon have vehicle access again and we can welcome back those many visitors who have been unable to manage the long trek along the canal towpath in 2022. We still have the building development to look forward to but the trustees have continued to closely examine the planning application in great detail and have submitted a number of reports to the Planning Department.

The maintenance of an adequate ecology buffer/wildlife corridor between the properties and the river throughout the building process and in the

longer term is an area of particular concern as it is extremely important to maintain connectivity of wildlife populations along the river. We are also concerned as to how this zone is to be protected and have stressed the need for adequate secure fencing before the construction phase begins.

A proposal to construct a pipeline across the ecology buffer for storm water discharge into the river is a worry as this could include pollutants and is immediately upstream of our water inlet where we pump water onto the Reserve's wetlands. This could have devastating consequences for our wildlife populations. It is also in an area where there has been a considerable amount of Otter activity this year.

Another area of concern is the prevention of domestic cats from accessing the Reserve. This would cause a major problem for ground nesting birds and small mammals such as our Harvest Mouse population that we have spent so many years establishing. It does appear that these concerns have been addressed but we do, nevertheless, need to remain vigilant throughout the construction process.

We must end by saying a big thank you to all our volunteers and visitors who have supported us through another difficult year. We must also thank all of you who have taken the time and trouble to make your own views known on the Planning website. The Trust continues to work closely with local councillors and Leeds City Council planning officers and Yorkshire Water to ensure the interests of the Reserve, its users and local communities are protected.

Rodley Nature Reserve - Monthly Roundup for 2022

January

It became very mild at the end of December with temperatures reaching 15°C on New Year's Eve - the warmest on record. Temperatures again touched 15°C on New Year's Day in a south westerly breeze. A couple of very windy days followed with heavy rain on 2nd. The bulk of the month's rainfall in fact fell in the first few days of the month and the remainder was very dry with just a light breeze in the main. However, the month did end on a very wild and windy note. Storm Malik brought gale force winds reaching 90mph in parts of the country overnight on 28th/29th and it was followed by Storm Corrie overnight on 30th/31st.

With the river relatively low and clear for much of the time it provided ideal feeding conditions for Otters and it turned out to be an excellent month, a family group being recorded for the first time. On 12th January volunteers leaving the Reserve at 4pm were able to photograph a female and two noisy young close to the river bridge. There were further sightings between 21st and 24th. On the latter date a large male Otter was recorded on a camera trap at 5.04am and a female with the two young at 7.35am.

With the Reserve closed from the beginning of the year there were inevitably fewer records of the bird life but volunteers were able to carry out the monthly BTO WeBS count on 23rd and conduct some other surveys. On the Lagoon a count of 21 Goosanders late in the day on 16th included nine males and 12 females. A male Goldeneye was seen some days but four on 24th included three males. The first Oystercatcher arrived on the Lagoon on 29th - exactly the same date as last year. There was little activity on the Duck Marsh throughout much of the month but 11 Grey Herons here on 2nd was a good count and eight were reported on the farmland on 31st. A Little Egret flew over the Reedbed on 31st and was seen on the Duck Marsh later the same day.

Low river levels throughout much of the month suited not just the Otters but also Dippers. Two were seen in the streamy water below the weir on two dates and a single bird was seen on three dates.

There was a lot of Kestrel activity. A bird was seen at a new nest box at the edge of John Ackroyd Meadow on three dates and on 29th three were reported hovering and circling over Tim's Field. A Peregrine Falcon was

seen over the Scrubland and far woodland on 21st. The Barn Owls were in residence in their nest box on the Scrubland throughout the month.

February

It was a very wet and a very windy month with more named storms, Dudley and Eunice arriving in quick succession around the middle of the month. Just for a bit of variety snow on 19th left a good covering but it had gone by the next day. Storm Franklin brought further gale force winds overnight on 20th and 21st. Inevitably, the river was very high throughout the month, breaking its banks on 20th and flooding part of the farmland, Dragonfly Ponds, River Path and Fish Pass area. Not surprisingly, there were no signs of the Otter family or the Dippers.

On the wetlands a count of 27 Coot on 14th was the highest for February since 2013. Duck numbers though were disappointing. Tufted Duck numbers dropped considerably this month, a best count of just eight being the lowest for February since 2004. A Little Egret was on the Duck Marsh on 27th.

New arrivals on the Lagoon included a second Oystercatcher on 9th and four birds were seen on 28th. The first two Lapwings arrived there on 9th and the only Water Rail of the month was seen on the same date. The first Great Crested Grebe was reported on 20th, a second bird arriving on 27th with the first signs of nest building the following day.

Canada Geese numbers remained high, reaching 278 on 20th during a WeBS visit. The flooded farmland proved very popular with a variety of birds as it usually does and on 28th 44 Pink-footed Geese were recorded there. An immature Great Black-backed Gull there in a mixed flock of gulls on 28th was a good find - usually only recorded as flyovers here.

Kestrels again provided much of the raptor activity with birds taking a very obvious interest in the new camera nest box on several occasions. Barn Owls continued to be in residence at their box on the Scrubland throughout the month.

Tim's Field is looking well past its best at this time of year and Linnet numbers visiting for seed dropped considerably with a best count of just 20 birds on 14th. However, a count of 35 Chaffinches on 20th, many of these in trees close to the field, was an exceptional number here.

Unusually, there were no signs of winter thrushes but Song Thrushes were rather more evident with at least four birds sing round the Reserve on 20th.

Mammal-wise, there was a lot of Roe Deer activity. As many as five were seen on different dates on Tim's Field and the Scrubland and four on Poplar Field. Stoats are far from common here and so one that appeared just outside the Visitor Centre window on 18th was a nice record. Weasels are usually much commoner but had a poor year in 2021. There were two sightings this month - by the Visitor Centre and on Bentley's Path.

March

In sharp contrast to February, March proved to be quite a dry month with a spell of lovely weather in the second half of the month seeing temperatures between 15°C and 20°C and bringing out a number of early butterflies from hibernation. However, it all changed in the last two days with rain turning to sleet and snow on 30th and daytime temperatures as low as 3°C. There was a good covering of snow by 31st but it had largely disappeared by the end of the day.

The first summer visitors started to arrive this month, no doubt encouraged by the spell of warm, settled weather. Sand Martins are usually among the early ones. The cleaning out and refilling of last year's holes in their nesting bank was completed early in the month and the first birds were see over the Lagoon on 20th during an early morning WeBS visit. The first Swallow was spotted on 25th. Chiffchaffs were very much in evidence with the first bird singing in the Coppice as early as 11th and as many as 10 singing around the Reserve by the end of the month.

On 4th March two Woodcock were accidentally flushed in the Coppice during habitat management work. The flock of Pink-footed Geese was still present on the flooded farmland on 1st with 41 counted on this occasion. Canada Geese numbers dropped considerably this month with a best count of just 89 on 20th and Greylag Geese numbers were very much lower.

On the wetlands the Great Crested Grebes were busy with their nest building next to one of the buoys on the Lagoon. Up to four Oystercatchers were present throughout the month and more Lapwings started to appear in the second half of the month with up to 14 birds recorded. The two adult Mute Swans and two juveniles were still together on the Lagoon with a second pair on the Wet Grassland. An immature Great Black-backed Gull

put in two further appearances this month on 11th and 20th, this time on the Duck Marsh.

A few more Tufted Duck were present this month with up to 15 seen on the Lagoon. Teal numbers typically started to fall away but a count of 30 on 1st was still the highest for this month since 2015. It was a good month for Shoveler with birds seen daily and up to seven recorded. Two male Goldeneye on the Lagoon on 20th were the last of the spring. Two male Mandarin Ducks paid a visit to the Lagoon and Duck Marsh on 6th but didn't stay. A report of 26 Coot on 11th was the highest March count since 2012.

There was a lot of Common Buzzard activity with three birds calling over the river bridge on one date. The Kestrels continued to take interest in the new nest box which was encouraging and the Barn Owls were resident in their box on the Scrubland throughout.

April

A thin covering of snow on 1st soon melted but it remained unsettled for several days right up to 12th. High pressure dominated from this point and it turned out to be the frostiest April for many years thanks to clear skies for much of the time. Sunny days with temperatures reaching 19°C brought out more butterflies. It was cloudier for a time in the last week of the month but mainly dry. It was in fact a very dry month.

More summer visitors continued to arrive but the bird of the month was undoubtedly a Black Redstart, seen at the edge of the farmland on 1st and still present on 3rd. The first Blackcap was heard on the far riverbank on 11th and the first Willow Warbler was singing in the Coppice on the same date. Thick bramble patches on Poplar Field are popular with Common Whitethroats and the first bird was reported in this area on 17th.

On the wetlands the first Little Ringed Plover of the year was on the Duck Marsh on 17th and there were further sightings here on 24th and 25th with two birds on 29th. A Common Sandpiper was seen in the same area on 24th. The first holes appeared in the Sand Martin nesting bank on the Lagoon this month and 28 were counted on 25th. One or two Swallows were seen on several dates but there were no reports of House Martins.

The Great Crested Grebes had abandoned their nest on the Lagoon by one of the buoys by the end of the month and a Coot was in residence. Perhaps the most interesting sighting here was the brief appearance of

seven Shelduck on 27th - an infrequent visitor here. A gathering of 12 Goosanders - six males and six females - on the Duck Marsh on 8th was another interesting record and there was a further report of 10 on 13th. Two Little Egrets were seen here on 22nd. Lapwings and Oystercatchers were reported daily with best counts of 11 and six respectively.

Away from the wetlands, Little Owls were seen in the Manager's Garden on four dates this month with two together near the nest box on 11th. The Kestrels had certainly taken to their new home and the first two eggs could be seen on the monitor in the Visitor Centre in the last week of the month. Two Common Buzzards displaying over woodland across the river on 4th was interesting.

May

The weather was rather unsettled throughout the month. Temperatures did rise considerably for a few days from 16th reaching 23°C on 17th but in the latter part of the month there was a spell of very windy weather with rain at times and temperatures no higher than 14°C.

The Duck Marsh continued to attract a few waders with up to three Little Ringed Plovers on several dates and a Common Sandpiper on two dates. Two Lapwings settled down to nest on the islets at the beginning of the month and an adult was seen with three chicks there on 26th and 27th. Two adults were also seen with two chicks on the Reedbed on 27th. One pair of Oystercatchers also nested successfully and a single chick was reported from 15th.

Mute Swans were on nests on both the Lagoon and Wet Grassland and six cygnets made their first appearance on the Lagoon on 22nd. The Great Crested Grebes there were constructing their second nest by one of the buoys from 15th following the failure of the first nest. Duck numbers were generally on the low side but a male Pochard on the Lagoon on 2nd was newsworthy being the first record of this species, rather surprisingly, since July last year. Still on the wetlands, it was a bit better month for Kingfishers with sightings reported on four dates.

The first Reed Warbler was recorded on 2nd and a WeBS visit on 15th produced the first Sedge Warbler of the year at the Dragonfly Ponds. The first Swift was reported over the Lagoon on the same date. Sand Martin numbers were certainly very much lower this year with only 47 nest holes excavated in the nesting bank by the middle of the month. Among other summer visitors Common Whitethroats could be seen and heard at all

their usual sites by the middle of the month as could Chiffchaffs though Willow Warblers were again very much less numerous. Sightings of Wheatears are few and far between these days but one was spotted on Poplar Field on 1st.

There were more reports of Little Owls in the Manager's Garden this month with two birds there on 1st. Three eggs could be seen in the Barn Owl box on the Scrubland by the middle of the month and five eggs were visible in the new Kestrel box, the first one hatching on 27th.

A male and two female Goosanders were seen on the river on 8th, one of the females with three ducklings. However, the Duck Marsh continued to be the best place to see Goosanders with up to four birds present on several dates.

As regards the mammals, a Stoat on the road near the Mammal Hotel on 13th was only the second record of the year.

June

It proved to be a fairly dry and sunny month with a particularly warm spell in the second half with temperatures ranging between 24°C and 27°C on several days. There was some rain at times in the last four days of the month.

A family of three Otters seen on the river from the River Path on 1st was a nice start to the month as was a Goosander and three ducklings recorded there on the same date. The first families of Gadwall and Mallard ducklings started to appear on the wetlands and the Great Crested Grebes were present throughout but there were no signs of successful nesting. Two cygnets were seen with the Wet Grassland pair of Mute Swans for the first time on 18th and the Lagoon pair still had their six cygnets at the end of the month.

On the Duck Marsh it was another good month for Little Ringed Plovers with as many as four birds seen on 19th. Lapwings and Oystercatchers were seen daily and two Oystercatcher chicks were reported on 12th. Still on the wetlands, Kingfishers were reported on four dates and a Little Egret on three dates.

It was a busy month in the nest boxes. Five young in the Kestrel box kept the adults busy bringing in food and in the Barn Owl box at least two tiny chicks could be seen with the adults despite the dirty camera lens. A Little

Owl was seen going into the box in the Manager's Garden on 5th and on 16th one was reported on the ramp to the Butterfly Bank. There was a further sighting in the Manager's Garden on 24th.

There was more evidence of successful nesting this month. Three Great Spotted Woodpeckers in the Manager's Garden on 19th included one juvenile and three juvenile Song Thrushes were seen at the Dragonfly Ponds on 3rd.

There had been less than a handful of sightings of Swifts but 12 were reported at the corner of the River Path on 19th.

July

Temperatures soared during the second and third weeks of the month reaching 37°C on 19th before starting to drop back again. Volunteer working days are rarely cancelled due to the heat but the decision to do this was taken on Monday 18th as temperatures reached 34°C that day. There was a bit of rain at times but it still proved to be the driest July for England since 1935.

Not surprisingly the river level was very low throughout the month and the River Path was always a good place to scan the rocky shallows. A family group of four Grey Wagtails was a nice record here on 17th and a group of five fully grown juvenile Goosanders provided good views on 20th. Otters weren't seen here this month but two possible juveniles were spotted just above the weir on 8th and one was seen on the river from the bridge on 14th. Still on mammals, it was the best month of the year so far for Weasel sightings, a family group of six by the farmland gate on 24th being the highlight.

There was again plenty of activity on the Duck Marsh. In what was an excellent month for Kingfisher sightings a bird was seen here on four dates. As many as 11 Grey Herons were counted on the islets; a Little Egret was seen here on three dates with two on a further date, an unseasonal male Wigeon on 17th, a Little Ringed Plover on 1st and two on 3rd. However, the highlight of the month was undoubtedly the group of 15 Black-tailed Godwits that dropped in on 31st. There was rather less of note to report on the other wetland areas but a Water Rail on the Wet Grassland on 31st was, surprisingly, only the third record of the year.

All five young Kestrels fledged successfully this month. Despite the poor images on the camera it became apparent that there were three chicks in

the Barn Owl box – two large and one very small. An adult was seen early in the day on two dates.

The farmland produced some interesting records this month. On 17th what was thought to be a juvenile Peregrine Falcon was seen on the pylon behind the Manager's Garden. On 24th a Green Sandpiper was accidentally flushed from a small pond there by volunteers driving in on the temporary dirt road. The following day 12 Grey Herons were counted assembled on the farmland.

August

Temperatures again rocketed this month reaching 32°C on Sunday 14th in what proved to be the joint hottest summer on record. With very little rain and with Yorkshire now one of several areas in a drought situation Yorkshire Water declared a hosepipe ban starting on 26th. With the river level so low maintaining sufficient water on the wetlands proved a problem.

A Great White Egret on the Duck Marsh on 7th was the only record so far this year. Little Egrets were rather easier to find with sightings on eight dates and three on the Duck Marsh on 28th. Three Snipe were seen here on 25th and a Little Ringed Plover was present on 21st. The Wet Grassland produced a good view of a Water Rail on 12th and a Green Sandpiper on 21st.

Away from the wetlands, four Common Buzzards over the Reserve on 1st included two juveniles, almost certainly from the nest in woodland on the far riverbank. Birds could be heard calling in this area on several dates and three were reported circling on 26th. A Peregrine Falcon was seen on the pylon behind the Manager's Garden on three dates. Only two juveniles were to be seen in the Barn Owl box this month and on 29th one came out onto the ledge of the box briefly at 12.30pm during a volunteer working day.

Bird song typically starts to die away as August progresses but it was particularly noticeable this year, possibly due to the heat and dryness. Apart from the contact calls of Willow Warblers and Chiffchaffs the Willow Path and Coppice were very quiet for most of the month.

August usually offers the best chance of seeing Spotted Flycatchers here and one or two are seen most years. Two birds were reported on the Scrubland from the River Path on 28th. Swifts are among the first of the

summer visitors to leave us and two birds over the Lagoon on the very early date of 14th August proved to be the last of the year. Reports of House Martins had been very few this year but 20 were counted over the farmland on 29th.

There was another Otter sighting this month, one observer on the bridge being fortunate to see one swimming upstream and under the bridge on 1st. Stoats are hard to find here but there were two sightings this month, only the 3rd and 4th records this year.

September

Temperatures reached 24°C in the first few days of the month but much needed rain soon arrived and it proved to be the first month since February with above average rainfall. There was a distinct autumn feel in the second half of the month with some chilly nights. The month ended on a very wet and windy note with some heavy rain on 30th.

Summer visitors typically start to leave this month. At least 50 Swallows assembled on wires outside the Visitor Centre on 6th shortly before heavy rain but they soon departed and the last bird of the year was reported on 12th. A total of 25 House Martins over the farmland on 14th was both the highest count and last sighting of the year.

Tim's Field was looking very colourful with its fine crop of Quinoa. This is a good time of year for passage visitors and Tim's Field is certainly the best place to look for Stonechats. The first two birds of the autumn were spotted here on 25th. There was a further sighting of a Spotted Flycatcher, another passage visitor, by the edge of the Duck Marsh on 11th.

On the wetlands Teal and Shoveler numbers started to build in the latter part of the month. A count of 15 Teal flying off the Wet Grassland on 25th was the best so far. Shoveler numbers reached 10 on 24th. The Duck Marsh was certainly the best place to see Little Egrets with one or two birds most days and three on two dates. As many as 15 Lapwings were counted here. A Redshank that flew over the Lagoon and Duck Marsh during a WeBS count on 11th was the first record of the year. A Water Rail was seen on the Reedbed on 18th. On the river a Dipper seen on 18th was the first record since 31st January.

As always the pylon on the farmland was worth checking regularly for Peregrine Falcons and a bird was reported here on six dates this month.

It was another good month for Common Buzzards with birds seen on nine dates with two on two occasions.

Mammal-wise, an Otter was again spotted (and photographed) from the river bridge and just a few yards from it on 11th. There was another sighting of a Stoat on 23rd, this time on Poplar Field and just the 5th record of the year.

October

For most of the month it was warmer than usual and the last ten days were especially mild with a notable absence of frosts. However, it was also predominantly unsettled with no dry spells longer than a couple of days.

A Cetti's Warbler seen in the Reedbed on 9th was the first record of the year and the following day one was seen and heard on the Duck Marsh. There were then reports on three further dates on all four wetland areas. It was also a good month for Kingfishers with sightings on eight dates. On 2nd a bird was watched catching two fish on the Dipping Ponds - well away from the river and wetland areas.

Still on the wetlands, Wigeon numbers reached nine on 31st and 33 Teal on the Duck Marsh on 15th proved to be the best October count since 2011. It was also a good month for Water Rails with reports on six dates, four of these on the Duck Marsh, albeit two of these were heard rather than seen.

Winter thrushes typically start to be recorded this month but there were few reports this year. The first four Redwings were seen in the bridge car park on 16th with four again on 31st. A total of 15 Fieldfares on 31st were the first of the autumn.

A small flock of Linnets fed on Tim's Field throughout the month with up to 41 birds counted. However, there were very few reports of Stonechats passing through, the first on the Scrubland on 2nd. On 9th a bird was seen on both the Scrubland and Tim's Field and on 11th three were spotted on Tim's Field.

Common Buzzards were reported on seven dates with three birds together on one occasion. A Peregrine Falcon was seen on the pylon on the farmland on three dates.

There were more Otter sightings this month. On 9th two were seen on the Lagoon by one of the tern rafts and on 30th one was reported swimming upriver from the bridge. A Mink at the Dragonfly Ponds on 30th was a rather less welcome visitor.

November

It was a very mild but also very wet month. It proved in fact to be the third warmest November for the UK since records began in 1884 and it certainly delayed the arrival of many of our winter visitors. Those that did arrive quickly moved on. Three Pippistrelle Bats seen at dusk on 28th was an unusually late record and no doubt all down to the very mild conditions.

Four Goldeneye were on the Lagoon on 14th but didn't stay and were the only record of the month. Likewise, six Wigeon were present on 13th but there were no reports after 14th. Shelduck are only very occasional visitors to the Reserve and so five on the Duck Marsh on 20th was a nice record. Seven Shovelers were there on the same date. There were more reports of Water Rails this month, the Duck Marsh being the most productive area with two birds seen here on 22nd.

Good numbers of gulls were present on the farmland and Lagoon some days and for those prepared to study them all carefully there was the odd reward to be had. On 27th a Mediterranean Gull that was spotted proved to be the first record of the year.

It was another good month for Cetti's Warblers with birds seen or heard on six dates and on all the main wetland areas. This is also a good time of year to see Goldcrests on the Reserve. Eight were recorded at various locations during a WeBS visit on 13th. Among the other small birds, although they are normally thought of as summer visitors, overwintering Chiffchaffs are not uncommon here these days and sometimes appear in among mixed feeding flocks. This was the case on the Willow Path on 14th. There was a further sighting here on 22nd.

There was another Otter sighting this month - this time three animals seen from the river bridge on 13th - probably the female and two juveniles. Little Grebes are often seen on the river from the bridge but a Black-necked Grebe upstream on 7th was certainly not expected and was a new species for the Reserve. Further down the river a Dipper feeding in the "rapids" below the weir on 14th was the first record for two months but high river levels in the second half of the month put paid to any further sightings.

December

Temperatures dropped sharply from 7th and struggled to reach 1° or 2°c most days. From 2°c on 18th the temperature suddenly shot up to 14°c the next day. It dropped somewhat after that but it remained relatively mild with rain at times but also some pleasant sunshine.

Most of the wetlands were frozen over between 7th and 18th but the Mute Swan family kept a small area of the Lagoon ice-free. Eight Shovelers were counted here on 11th. Gadwall numbers reached 85 on the same date, peaking at 95 the next day. Six Wigeon were on the Lagoon on 12th and six again on 26th. One or two Goldeneye were seen on the Lagoon on several dates but three were on the river on 11th. Water Rails were reported on four dates. Late afternoon gatherings of Goosanders on the Lagoon in the winter months have always been a regular feature but the best count this month was just seven - and they were on the Duck Marsh on 26th.

Water levels were raised on the Wet Grassland this month and this proved very popular with the wildfowl, particularly Mallard, Gadwall and Teal. But the birds were very easily disturbed and at least 100 Mallard took to the air when the window in the hide was opened on 25th December. The next day around 50 Tufted Ducks also took to the air - an unusually high count here these days.

On the farmland a flock of up to 35 Pink-footed Geese was present between 4th and 11th and a WeBS count of 240 Canada Geese on the latter date proved to be the highest ever for December. Greylag numbers peaked at 150 on 11th. Up to 28 Lapwings were also recorded on the farmland - a nice record here these days.

There was another Otter sighting on the river from the bridge - this time a single animal on 11th. A possible American Mink on the same date was less welcome news. Further downstream two Dippers were seen from the River Path on 8th, 11th and 12th thanks to low river levels.

Away from the river, wetlands and the farmland, there were two further reports of overwintering Chiffchaffs this month and Goldcrests were recorded on three dates with three seen along the Willow Path on 11th.

Introduction to the Systematic List of Birds

The bird's name is followed by the Latin name and a description of its status on the Reserve. In order to do this, each bird has been placed in one of the following categories:

Resident	A species which is found on the Reserve throughout the year.
Common	A species which is present regularly or in large numbers but not necessarily all year.
Uncommon	Occurs most years but only on a few days or in low numbers
Scarce	Has occurred more than 10 times but not on an annual basis.
Rare	Has occurred fewer than 10 times.
Passage	Seen when moving between winter and breeding areas elsewhere.
Migrant	Generally only present for a short time, usually on passage.
Visitor	Usually present for more than a day at any time.
Casual Breeder	Has bred irregularly on the Reserve and is likely to do so again.
Escaped Species	Used where there is a possibility that some (but not necessarily all) records of a species refer to birds that have escaped from captivity.

The observer's initials appear in brackets after some records.

Abbreviations used in the Report:

BTO British Trust for Ornithology

c approximately

et al and others

RNR Rodley Nature Reserve

WeBS BTO Wetland Bird Survey

YNU Yorkshire Naturalists Union

Systematic List of Birds Recorded

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* Resident Breeder

The lives of our Mute Swans have been far from straightforward in recent years and cygnets in particular have disappeared mysteriously on several occasions. The surviving two juveniles from last year were still on the Lagoon in January and were present into May. The adults were seen with six small cygnets on the Lagoon for the first time on 22nd May and in June a second pair was seen on the Reedbed with three cygnets and subsequently on the Wet Grassland with just two. There was no sign of these two cygnets after 11th July. The Lagoon pair still had five of their six into September and were on the Duck Marsh with them when another juvenile flew in on 24th. This bird had a yellow leg ring 4Y71 and was ringed not far away in Rawdon. This bird was on the Duck Marsh again on 3rd October with three adults but there were no subsequent sightings of it. The two adults with their five juveniles were still together on the Lagoon at the end of the year, the juveniles taking short flights round the Lagoon at times.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* Passage Visitor

This is mainly a visitor to the UK from Iceland where it breeds and most sightings here are just of birds flying over. Last year there were four such records but this year there were none.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* Passage Visitor

This medium sized goose breeds in Spitsbergen, Iceland and Greenland and large numbers spend the winter in Britain. A single bird was picked out among other geese on the farmland on 2nd January (BH/AT) and on 21st January a skein of around 150 birds flew over the Reserve (JSK). On 28th February 44 were on the flooded farmland (SB) and 41 were still there the next day (PM/BM). There were no further sightings until 4th December when around 25 were on the farmland (MG/PG). The following day 35 were counted there in a mixed flock with other geese (SB). There were further sightings on the farmland over the next seven days with 30 on 11th (WeBS) the best count.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* Resident Breeder/ Winter Visitor

Numbers on the farmland in the early part of the year were low with only one three figure count reported - 150 on 14th January (PM/BM). A few pairs usually stay to nest and two were on nests on the middle island of the Lagoon in April, each producing five goslings later in the month. On 2nd May a family of six goslings was on the river with another of seven on the farmland. On 11th May four adults were seen in the bridge car park

with a total of 16 goslings (DW). On 20th May 63 adults, 40 of these on the farmland with 14 goslings, was the highest count of adults ever recorded for that month, beating last year's previous best of 49. There were no sightings at all in August and in September and October numbers were very low apart from a report of 100 birds on the farmland on 29th September (PM/BM). Numbers started to build from the middle of November reaching 170 on the farmland on 26th November (PM/BM) and 150 on 11th December (WeBS). Monthly maxima are shown below (adults only).

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
150	45	26	38	63	22	27	-	100	13	170	150

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* Resident Breeder/Winter Vis.

Last year's counts in January and February were the highest ever recorded. This year a report of 235 on the farmland on 10th January (SB) was a new record and on 24th January 240 were counted during a WeBS visit. Numbers reached 278 on 20th February (WeBS) compared to the record 310 in February last year. Numbers dropped back considerably in March as expected but were, nevertheless, rather higher than in the same period last year. A few pairs always stay to nest. The first four goslings were on the Duck Marsh with 39 adults on 29th April (SB); a pair was again seen with four goslings on 1st May and a pair was on the Wet Grassland with two goslings on 27th May (EC). Numbers started to build in October with 130 counted on the Duck Marsh on 16th (EC). They reached 172 on 13th November (WeBS) and increased further in December. Counts of 240 on the farmland on 11th (WeBS) and 232 on 25th December (PM/BM) proved to be the highest ever for that month. Monthly maxima are shown below (adults only).

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
240	278	89	76	60	25	23	45	31	130	172	240

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucosis* Rare Visitor / Escaped Sp.

There have been no sightings in the last 12 years. A single bird seen on the farmland during an early morning WeBS visit on 18th April 2010 was the first record since 26th April 2003 and only the second for the Reserve.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla* Rare Visitor

This was a new bird for the Reserve in 2016 - a single bird found on the farmland with other geese on 13th November. There have been no sightings since this date.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* **Rare Visitor**

Feral populations of this introduced species occur in parts of Britain and on the Continent. It was a new bird for the Reserve in 2018 - a single bird picked out among the Greylag Geese on the farmland on 4th March that year. There have been no further sightings in the last four years.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* **Scarce Visitor**

The last two years had produced just one record. There were two this year. On 27th April seven were counted on the Lagoon (DW) and on 20th November five were reported on the Duck Marsh (EC).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata* **Scarce Visitor**

Prior to last year this introduced species had been recorded on little more than a handful of dates but 2021 produced sightings on 13 dates with up to six birds seen. This year sightings were reported on four dates, one of these on the canal close by. On 26th January a male and female were seen on the canal with around 40 Mallard (PM/BM). On 6th March two males were on the Duck Marsh (DW) and on 10th April a male and female were photographed there (PH). On 28th August a female was seen on the river near the bridge (PM/BM).

Wigeon *Anas penelope* **Winter Visitor**

Numbers in the early part of the year were low in both 2020 and 2021 but this year there was only one reported sighting. On 28th February two males were seen on the Lagoon and three males on the flooded farmland, two of which were probably the same birds (SB). Odd birds can occasionally turn up in the summer months and this year a male was seen on the Duck Marsh on 17th July (WeBS *et al*). On 11th September a female was recorded on the Lagoon (WeBS/LB) and on 29th September what was probably an immature male was photographed on the Duck Marsh (PM/BM). This bird was interesting in that it had a green ring on the left leg. A few birds started to arrive on the Lagoon in the second week of October peaking at nine on 31st October (SB). However, there were only two records after 14th November - six birds, three males and three females, on the Lagoon on 12th December (SB) and six there again on 26th December (EC). Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
-	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	9	6	6

Gadwall *Anas strepera* **Resident Breeder**

A WeBS count of 67 on 23rd January wasn't as high as last January's total of 80 but it was, nevertheless, higher than any other year for that month.

Numbers gradually reduced after this. The first two families of ducklings were recorded on the Lagoon on 12th June (EC) and the first family of two ducklings was on the Duck Marsh on 24th June (DW). On 17th July a female was seen on the Lagoon with nine ducklings (WeBS). A total of 65 adults on the same date was the highest ever July count. On 25th July a family of eight ducklings was on the Duck Marsh (BM/SB). Numbers rose in August and September, a total of 93 on 29th August (SB) being only seven short of last year's record August count. Numbers again dropped back in October and November but built again in December with several 70+ counts and a report of 95 on 12th (SB), all of these being the highest ever December counts. Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
67	53	41	26	22	31	65	93	92	67	42	95

Pintail *Anas acuta* Rare Visitor

There were no sightings reported this year. First recorded in 2011, there were sightings in 2012 and each of the three years from 2016 to 2018. In 2020 a male in eclipse plumage was present from 3rd October until 18th October and last year a male in eclipse plumage was again recorded, this time just on 13th October.

Teal *Anas crecca* Winter/Passage Visitor

The Wet Grassland was the most productive site in the first three months of the year with 30 birds counted here on 1st March (JB/MB). Later in the year some of the best counts came from the Duck Marsh with 33 here on 15th October (PM/BM) proving to be the highest for that month since 2011. The wetlands were largely icebound for part of December but with a rise in temperatures and the Wet Grassland reflooded this was again the most productive area with the number of birds here reaching 34 on 26th (EC). Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
30	30	30	13	-	-	-	4	15	33	25	34

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* Resident Breeder

This species obviously commutes between the canal and the Reserve and as a consequence when numbers are low here they can be much higher on the canal just a few hundred yards away. The first family of ducklings was on the middle island on the Lagoon on 13th April (PM/BM) and included one rather strange bright yellow duckling. Small families subsequently appeared on the three other main wetland areas and it appears to have been a good nesting year. Among the larger families a

female was on the Wet Grassland with eight newly hatched ducklings on 20th May (SB) and on 8th July a female was seen on the Duck Marsh with 10 ducklings (PM/BM). Numbers built considerably In July with a count of 101 on 27th (EC) the highest for that month since 2012. They started to drop back again after this but in December the freshly flooded Wet Grassland produced a count of at least 100 birds on 25th as they took to the air (PM/BM), this the second highest ever December count (110 in December 2017). Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
36	19	15	16	30	50	101	58	40	32	46	100+

Garganey *Anas querquedula* Scarce (Summer) Visitor

There have been no sightings in the last four years. In 2018 a male bird spent 11 days on the Reserve from 4th to 14th April. Prior to this the species had only been recorded in 2003, 2006, 2014 and 2015.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Winter/Passage Visitor

A few birds were on the Lagoon most days in the first three months of the year with a best count of seven (4 males and three females) on 14th March (PM/BM). Numbers typically started to build again in September with a count of 10 birds on 24th (PM/BM) only one less than last year's highest ever September count. October failed to live up to last October's record count for the Reserve of 14 birds with a best of just six, five of these males on 11th (PM/BM). Five males and two females were reported on the Duck Marsh on 20th November (EC) and December produced a best count of eight birds on 11th, all on the Lagoon (EC). Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
4	5	7	2	1	1	-	2	10	6	7	8

Pochard *Aythya ferina* Winter/Passage Visitor

Due to a recent severe decline in the winter population and a moderate decline in its breeding range this species is now on the Red List. The highest ever count of 18 on the Reserve was as far back as March 2013 and the last double figure count of 11 was in February 2019. This year was the worst ever with a single male on just two dates - 2nd May (PM/BM/SB) and 14th November (SB).

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* Former Breeder/ Winter Visitor

Numbers on the Lagoon increased from just three on 1st January to 19 - 16 males and three females - on 16th (PM/BM), this proving to be the second highest count of the year. A WeBS visit on 20th March recorded 15 birds - 12 males and three females, this the third best count of the year. Unusually, throughout May and June all reported sightings were on the Duck Marsh though no more than five birds were seen. There was no evidence of nesting for the seventh year running. Three birds were on the Lagoon on 15th August but there were then no further sightings until 23rd October when a single female was recorded (SB). A single female was also present on just one date in November - 14th (SB). A few did start to return in the first week of December with eight on 4th (MG/PG), nine on 12th (SB) and eight on 20th (PM/BM) among the best counts. However, on 26th December around 50 took off from the freshly flooded Wet Grassland (EC). The last time this many birds were recorded here was as far back as January 2013. Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
19	8	15	12	5	3	2	3	-	1	1	c50

Scaup *Aythya marila* Rare Visitor

This diving duck is mainly seen in the winter months on large estuaries though small numbers do occur inland on deeper waterbodies. It bears a strong resemblance to the Tufted Duck. There have been no sightings in the last three years. In 2019 an immature bird arrived on the Lagoon on 10th November and was seen most days until 15th December. Prior to that there had been no sightings since 9th March 2014.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra* Rare Visitor

The UK breeding population of this sea duck has declined substantially and it is now on the Red List. Large overland movements occur at times and this is when a bird is most likely to drop in at the Reserve. However, there has only been one record so far and that was on the Lagoon on 21st March 2016 - a female or immature bird.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* Winter Visitor

Due to a recent severe decline in the winter population this species is now on the Red List. The last double figure count here was as far back as February 2019 when 16 birds were recorded. This year no more than four were reported. A single male was on the Lagoon from 10th January and on 24th January three males and a female were seen there (SB). Two males were on the Lagoon on several dates in February and on 20th March (DW), this proving to be the last record in the first part of the year. The

first returning birds were reported on 14th November - a male and three immature birds (SB) but there were then no further sightings until 8th December when a male and female were recorded on a small area of ice-free water on the Lagoon (LJ). One or two birds were seen most days from this point up until 24th. Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
4	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola* **Rare Visitor**

This North American duck is a rare vagrant to Western Europe. A female bird that was ringed and had a tag on the other leg photographed in the Reedbed on 11th May 2017 was most likely an escapee from a private collection. The bird stayed until 14th May.

Goosander *Mergus merganser* **Common Visitor**

In the winter months birds gather on the Lagoon towards dusk before flying off to their roost sites A count of 20 in January last year was the highest for that month since 2013. The best count in January this year was 21 (9 males and 12 females) on 16th (PM/BM). Islands on the newly developed Duck Marsh proved popular in April last year with as many as 12 birds recorded here during the day. It was the same again this year with 12 on 8th and 10 on 13th (DW) - in each case an equal number of males and females. On 8th May a female was seen on the river with three small ducklings (HS/PS) and again on 1st June (DW). On 20th July five juvenile “redheads” were recorded on the river (PM/BM). Males leave the females around late June to carry out their amazing moult migration to a fjord in Norway, usually returning in October. The first three returning males this year were recorded on the river from the bridge on 21st October (DW). A few birds were seen on the Lagoon during the day in December but there was only one late afternoon count reported and that was not on the Lagoon but on the Duck Marsh – seven birds (three males and four females) on 26th (PM/BM) The maximum daily count for each month is shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
21	10	5	12	4	2	5	-	-	3	4	7

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* **Now Rare**

The national cull of this species was very successful and there have been no sightings since 16th May 2009. Birds bred on the Reserve in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* **Rare Visitor**

There had been no sightings of this introduced species since 24th April 2012 and while there were again none this year its distinctive call was reported on three dates in the area of the Manager's Garden and Poplar Field - on 29th August, 11th September and 14th September (SB).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix* **Casual Breeder**

Small releases of birds were made in July and October 2020 and there were two further small releases this year. Two birds were reported at the edge of Tim's Field on 1st March (JB/MB) but this was the only record in the first half of the year. One or two were seen on several dates from the second week in August and on 23rd October as many as seven were reported in the area around the Rodley Robins' garden (JH). There were several further sightings of up to six birds in the last two months of the year - in the main car park, on the entry road and on Tim's Field (DW)

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* **Resident Breeder**

This is still a common bird on the Reserve despite a very healthy Fox presence. The Bee Garden and Manager's Garden are popular throughout the year with birds visiting for seed spilled under the feeders. As many as six were recorded in the Manager's Garden. The first two juveniles of the year were seen on the River Path during a WeBS visit on 19th June with one in the Manager's Garden on the same date (EC). A female and five juveniles were reported on Mike Fisk Meadow on 10th and 11th September (EC) and the following day what may have been the same birds were seen in the Bee Garden (BM). Other smaller families were seen subsequently and it appears to have been a good nesting year. Tim's Field is popular in the autumn and winter months with birds visiting for seed but a total of 21 seen flying in during a WeBS visit on 13th November was an exceptional number.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* **Resident**

Birds are present daily throughout the year with the highest numbers tending to be in August and September. A few birds can be seen on the pylon by the Fish Pass most days but the highest counts are usually on the Lagoon where birds assemble in trees on one of the islands. Fourteen here on 19th August (DW) proved to be the highest of the year but only one more than an unusually high count of 13 on the pylon just a few days earlier on 14th (WEBS). There was a further count of 13 in September - four on the pylon and nine on the Lagoon (EC). Numbers typically started to fall away in October and there were no double figure counts after 16th of that month. The highest counts were somewhat lower than last year

when there were several reports of between 20 and 25 birds in September. Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
5	2	4	6	5	7	12	14	13	11	8	4

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* **Rare Visitor**

There have been no records in the last six years. A bird spent several weeks in the Reedbed and on the Duck Marsh from 16th January 2016. It was last seen on 26th April that year.

Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*) **Scarce Visitor**

First recorded as a “fly over” on 9th December 2018, there were a number of sightings in 2019 but just three in 2020, one of these half a mile further up the valley from the Reserve. In 2021 a bird was present daily from 3rd to 15th July, on 22nd September and on 10th October. There was only one record this year - a bird on the Duck Marsh on 7th August (EC).

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) **Common Visitor**

Like last year there were sightings in every month but the number of days birds were seen was well down on last year’s record 100 to just 53 this year. However, this was most likely due to a lack of observers this year. A bird at the edge of the Duck Marsh on 31st January (SB) was the first of the year. The large majority of records came from this area with the four months from July to October being the most productive. Most sightings were of just one or two birds but three were on the Lagoon on 6th March (DW) and three were reported on the Duck Marsh on 28th August, 4th September (PM/BM) and 6th September (EC). As many as seven were recorded in August 2020 and July 2021. A bird on the farmland near the river on 26th December (EC) was the last sighting of the year.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* **Resident**

The newly developed Duck Marsh was by far the most popular wetland area last year for this species and it produced a very good count of 11 birds on 2nd January this year (EC). Like most years gatherings occurred on the farmland some days and eight were reported here on 31st January (SB). A count of 11 on 26th June included seven on the farmland (SB) and 12 on 1st July included 11 on one islet on the Duck Marsh (PM/BM). On 25th July 12 birds were counted on the farmland (SB) and there were further reports of as many as seven here in both September and November. Single birds were often to be seen fishing on the public dipping ponds but usually early or later in the day when there were fewer visitors around.

The highest counts each month are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
11	7	4	5	6	11	12	9	9	5	8	6

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* **Rare Visitor**

A new bird for the Reserve this year, one was watched feeding on the river upstream of the bridge on 7th November (SB). The species breeds at St.Aidan's RSPB Reserve where it can be found for much of the year. This bird may well have reached Rodley via the river corridor from there. There were no further sightings.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* **Resident Breeder**

The large majority of reported sightings are on the Lagoon but the deeper stretches of the river above and below the bridge can be productive at certain times of the year. A report of six birds on the Lagoon on 24th January (SB) was, surprisingly, the joint highest ever for that month. On 3rd February five on the river near the bridge (DW) was the highest for that month. Though one or two birds were seen on the Duck Marsh from the middle of March successful nesting only appears to have taken place on the Lagoon, the first young being reported on 11th July (SB). It appears that at least two pairs nested here successfully. The highest counts again came from August onwards and most probably included some juveniles. A count of 20 on 11th September was the highest of the year - 12 on the Lagoon and eight on the river (WEBS). Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
6	5	4	3	2	3	7	14	20	11	13	8

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* **Summer Visitor/ Breeder**

The first bird usually arrives on the Lagoon in February and the first this year was recorded on 20th during a WeBS visit, just two days later than last year. A second bird arrived on 27th and there were signs of nest building the next day. Like last year a nest was constructed in open water by one of the buoys and a bird was sitting by early April. However, there were no subsequent reports of young. On 16th May further nest building was underway by one of the buoys but again there were no signs of successful nesting. Both birds were last seen on 1st July (PM/BM). Last year the early disappearance of three juveniles and a later chick was a mystery.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus* **Common Visitor**

Surprisingly, this species was recorded on considerably fewer dates than Common Buzzard this year but this is more likely due to under recording rather than a scarcity of birds. Most sightings reported are usually of birds over woodland across the river and it was the same again this year. Most involved just one or two birds but three were reported over the farmland on 26th May (DW).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* **Rare Visitor**

There have only been four records and all of a bird flying over the Reserve, three of these in the period from 4th August to 21st September 2018. Last year one was reported flying along the river at tree height on 21st August.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* **Casual Breeder**

There were reports of both males and the considerably larger females from the beginning of the year as well as the usual evidence of successful kills around the Reserve - though some of these could of course be the work of a Peregrine Falcon these days. A female was seen on the Willow Path as early as 1st January (EC). There was again no evidence of nesting taking place on the Reserve but a pair probably did nest close by in trees across the river. On 18th October a juvenile male was seen to drop onto prey on Tim's Field and did not re-emerge (PM/BM) - almost certainly a successful hunt. Birds on the feeders in the Manager's Garden and Bee Garden will always prove a tempting target and one was reported attacking the feeders at the latter site on 16th December (DW).

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* **Common Visitor and Casual Breeder**

Thanks to limited access to the Reserve this year the number of sightings (68) was well down on last year's record 140. Nevertheless birds were seen in all months and successful nesting again took place in woodland just across the river, probably for the fourth year running. Three birds were seen from the River Path as early as 2nd January (AT) and three were again seen on 20th March calling over the river bridge during a WeBS visit. Two were displaying over the woodland on 4th April (SB) and on 1st August two adults and two juveniles were seen in the same area (JHa/AB). On the same date the four were reported over the Scrubland (SB) and four days later over Mike Fisk Meadow (DW). Subsequent sightings were of no more than three and three were last seen together on 15th October calling high over the Wet Grassland (PM/BM). A single bird over Poplar Field on 12th December (SB) was the last sighting of the year.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* **Rare Visitor**

There has been just one record of this species. On 13th June 2012 one was photographed high over the Dragonfly Ponds.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* **Rare Visitor**

An immature bird photographed high over the Reserve on 5th May last year was a new bird for the Reserve. Needless to say, there were no sightings reported this year.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* **Scarce (Summer) Visitor**

Sightings are, unsurprisingly, few and far between. There were none this year and just one in each of the previous two years, in each case a bird flying over the Reserve or close by.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* **Resident Breeder and Winter Visitor**

Like last year the large majority of records of this secretive bird were in the second half of the year and this year particularly in the period from the beginning of October. The first sighting was on the Lagoon on 9th February (JSK) but there were then just four records between this and the end of September, three of these on the Wet Grassland and one in the Reedbed. Birds were seen or heard on all four main wetland areas with the Duck Marsh producing most records and these all between 10th October and 12th December.

<u>Lagoon</u>	<u>Duck Marsh</u>	<u>Reedbed</u>	<u>Wet Grassland</u>
4	11	2	5

On 12th December one was watched catching small fish in an ice-free area of the Lagoon (SB). There were no sightings after this date.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* **Rare Visitor**

This is a scarce breeder in the UK and thanks to its small size, secretive nature and love of thick vegetation it can easily be missed. However, both 2005 and 2018 provided several sightings in the space of a few days. In 2005 one spent five days on the Wet Grassland from 1st October. In 2018 one again appeared on the Wet Grassland on 25th August and was recorded most days in the same area up to 2nd September. There was one further sighting that year on 14th September. There have been no sightings since then.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* **Resident Breeder**

This common bird can be found on all four main wetland areas. Particularly in the winter months several often gather at the edge of the farmland close to the riverbank. The best January count of 19 birds

included nine here (SB). The first family of three young was seen on the Duck Marsh on 27th May (DW) but there very few other reports of successful nesting this year. The best count of the year came on 11th September, an early morning WeBS visit producing a total of 22 birds with nine on the Lagoon, nine on the Duck Marsh and four on the river. Numbers started to drop back after this and counts in the last three months of the year were all lower than in the same period last year. Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
19	10	9	8	5	6	12	16	22	14	9	11

Coot *Fulica atra* Resident Breeder and Winter Visitor

No more than 11 birds were on the Lagoon in January but a count of 27 on 14th February, 22 of these on the Lagoon (SB), was the highest for that month since 2013. Numbers remained high until the second week in March, a count of 26 on 11th (SB) being the highest for that month since 2012. Successful nesting did take place with two chicks seen on the Duck Marsh on 6th May and three there on 20th May (DW). On 20th May a pair was reported on the Lagoon with seven young (SB) though there were no subsequent reports of this many. Two small families were seen on the Lagoon in in June. In 2020 birds were totally absent in October for the first time ever and no more than three were present to the end of that year. There was an improvement last year but October this year produced no more than four birds and in November just a single bird was on the Lagoon - the joint lowest ever November count. With much of the wetlands frozen over for a time in December no more than two birds were reported but when the ice did start to clear a few did return, ten very close together on the Duck Marsh on 26th (PM/BM) being the best count. Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
11	27	26	12	14	8	11	10	8	4	1	10

Common Crane *Grus grus* Rare Visitor

This was a new bird for the Reserve in 2018 when two were seen standing on the farmland on 13th April that year. Just over a week later one was seen circling very high over the Reserve. There have been no sightings since then.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* Summer Visitor/ Breeder

The first bird arrived on the Lagoon on 29th January (JSK), six days earlier than last year. Two were present daily from 9th February (JSK/DW) with

four on the Lagoon on 28th February (SB). With birds very mobile and moving between the Lagoon and farmland it was difficult to be sure how many were actually on site but it is probable there were no more than four in March. However, five were on the Duck Marsh on 8th April (DW) and six were recorded flying round the Reserve on 17th April (WeBS). The large majority of sightings were on the Duck Marsh and two pairs nested here, a single chick being first seen with two adults on 15th May (WeBS). As many as six birds were on the Duck Marsh on 30th May with one on a nest (SB). On 12th June four adults and two chicks were seen here (EC). Almost all sightings from this point were on the Duck Marsh and two adults here on 25th July proved to be the last sighting of the year (PM/BM).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* **Rare (Summer) Visitor**

There have been no records in the last four years. This was a new bird for the Reserve in 2018 when two spent a day on the Duck Marsh on 27th June. There was just one other brief sighting of one on the far side of the Lagoon on 2nd July that year.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* **Rare Visitor**

There have been no records in the last six years. A single bird that flew over the Reserve on 30th May 2016 was the first and only record for the Reserve.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* **Scarce Visitor**

During the summer this is a bird of the uplands. In winter it can form large flocks on farmland in lowland Britain but it has always been a scarce visitor here on the Reserve. There were just two records last year and none this year.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* **Winter Visitor and Casual Breeder**

The first two birds arrived on the Lagoon on 9th February (JSK) but it wasn't until 20th March that more started to appear with 14 recorded that day, 10 of these on the farmland (WeBS). As many as seven were on the Wet Grassland on 25th March (SB). However, the Duck Marsh proved to be the most popular area throughout the rest of the year with two birds on nests here on 1st May (PM/BM). Birds have nested on Tim's Field in the past and up to six were seen here on 15th May (EC) but there were no reports of nesting this year. Two adults and three chicks were on the Duck Marsh on 26th May and the following day two adults and two chicks were seen in the Reedbed (EC). Eleven birds were counted on the farmland on 24th July (MG/PG) and there were then several double figure counts on both the Duck Marsh and farmland in August and the first part of September with 15 on the former site on 29th August the highest (SB).

There were no sightings reported after 9th October until 5th December when 21 were seen over the farmland. There were further 20+ counts on the farmland throughout the rest of the month with 28 on 20th the best (PM/BM). Maximum counts each month are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
-	2	14	11	12	8	11	15	14	4	-	28

Little (Ringed) Plover *Charadrius dubius* **Summer Visitor**

There was a considerable increase in the number of sightings last year - all of them on the newly developed Duck Marsh. This area again proved popular this year with 27 reported sightings here in the period between 17th April and 21st August. A single bird on 17th April was the first of the year (WeBS). Two were present on several dates from 29th April with three on 30th May and four on 19th June (WeBS). Two on 3rd July looked like being the last of the year but there was then a late sighting of a single bird on 21st August (EC). There was no evidence of nesting.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* **Rare Visitor**

There have been no records since 2007.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* **Scarce (Summer) Visitor**

There have been no records since 2012.

Curlew *Numenius arquata* **Passage Visitor**

In the UK Curlew populations have declined by more than 48% in the last 25 years and it is now on the Red List. Most sightings are of birds flying over the Reserve and these occur mainly in the period from February to April. Last year there were six records and this year just two, both involving single birds flying over, the first on 13th March (JB/DW) and the second the next day (PU).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* **Rare Visitor**

Prior to last year there had been just a handful of records of this species. It had been hoped that the newly developed Duck Marsh would prove attractive to wading birds and in 2021 four were recorded here on 10th July. This year 15 birds dropped in on 31st July (EC/LB *et al*) but had moved on by the next day. There were no further sightings. Following a steep decline only a few dozen breeding pairs remained in the UK and it is now another species on the Red List.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* **Rare Visitor**

This species was recorded for the first and only time on 7th May 2006 when a single bird was found on the Duck Marsh.

Knot *Calidris canutus* **Rare Visitor**

A bird on the Duck Marsh on 28th May 2006 was the first and only record for the Reserve.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* **Scarce Visitor**

There were no records this year. A single bird on the Duck Marsh on 12th July last year was the first since 1st February 2012.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* **Passage Visitor**

The number of reported sightings has been going down in recent years. The “new” Duck Marsh did produce a number of records last year and it was hoped there would be even more this year. Sadly, there were just five and all of single birds. Four of these were on the Duck Marsh, the first on 24th April (EC) and the last on 31st July (EC/AT). On 15th May one was heard on the river from the River Path (WeBS).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* **Passage Visitor**

Last year was an excellent one for this species with the first sighting on 24th March and the last on 27th December, the “new” Duck Marsh proving particularly popular. With the Reserve only open to the public on Sundays this year it was inevitable that there would be fewer records but the fact that there were just two was disappointing. On 24th July one was seen on a small pool on the farmland (PM/BM) and on 21st August one was reported on the Wet Grassland (EC).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* **Rare Visitor**

There have been no sightings since 2006 when a single bird was seen on the Duck Marsh. This was the first and only record for the Reserve.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* **Scarce Passage Visitor**

A bird on the Duck Marsh on 21st and 22nd August last year was the first record since 2018. There were none this year.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* **Scarce Passage Visitor**

A single bird flying over the Lagoon and Duck Marsh on 11th September (WeBS) was the first record since 17th March 2019.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* **Passage/Winter Visitor**

There were no reported sightings of this secretive bird this year, just two in 2021 and none in 2020. The Wet Grassland has proved to be the most productive site in recent years and a bird photographed here on 30th October 2021 was the last sighting.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* **Passage/Winter Visitor**

It was a disappointing year with only 11 sightings reported, not helped by the fact that the Reserve was closed for the first three months of the year. There was only one record during this period - a single bird at the edge of the Lagoon on 18th March (JSK). There were two records in April, both of single birds - on the Wet Grassland on 4th (SB) and on the Duck Marsh on 17th (WeBS). The first returning bird was reported on the very early date of 14th August on the Wet Grassland (WeBS). On 25th August three were seen together on the Duck Marsh (PM/BM) but the only other records were of single birds. Maximum monthly counts are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
-	-	1	1	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	1

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* **Uncommon (Winter) Visitor**

Although there is a large influx of birds from the Continent in winter this species is now on the Red List due to a long term severe decline in its breeding range in the UK. Here at Rodley it is very much just a winter visitor and, being largely crepuscular, the best chance of seeing one is towards dusk when a few birds fly into the Coppice from the farmland. Having said this, the five records received last year were all of birds accidentally flushed by volunteers working in the Coppice and all in the period from 12th January to 28th February. There was just one record this year - two birds again accidentally flushed in the Coppice on 4th March (JSK).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* **Summer Visitor**

This species has been recorded every year since 2000 though we have to go back to 2017 when a pair last nested successfully on one of the rafts on the Lagoon. This year there was only one reported sighting - a single bird on the Duck Marsh on 24th July ((EC/MG/PG).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* **Rare Visitor**

First recorded here in 2011, there have been no records since 24th May 2015.

Black-headed Gull

Chroicocephalus ridibundus **Common Visitor/Casual Breeder**

Large gatherings occur on the farmland and Lagoon in the winter months though numbers in January and February this year were considerably lower than last year. Following its redevelopment the Duck Marsh has become a popular place for birds throughout much of the year with a number of immature birds reported here from the beginning of July. A count of 78 here on 17th July (EC) included several immature ones. On 8th August a report of 140 on the Lagoon (SB) was a good count for that time of year. The highest count of the year came during a WeBS visit on 13th November - a total of 227 including 145 on the Lagoon. Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
122	90	72	56	9	8	78	143	58	112	227	127

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus* **Rare Visitor**

There have been no records in the last four years. This was a new species for the Reserve in 2018 when an adult bird paid a brief visit to the Lagoon on 7th April that year.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus* **Rare Visitor**

First recorded on 7th October 2015, there were no further sightings until last year when single birds were reported on four dates. This year there was one sighting - a bird on the Lagoon on 27th November (AL).

Common Gull *Larus canus* **Common Visitor**

Numbers in January were a bit higher than last year, a best count of 50 on 24th including 35 birds on the farmland (SB), but still well short of the three figure counts in that month some years. Numbers dropped considerably in February and only started to rise again in October. There were no three figure counts last year but there were two this year - 198 on 13th November included 150 on the farmland (WeBS) and 118 the next day included 108 there (SB). Monthly maxima are shown below.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
50	10	10	1	-	-	5	14	3	29	198	54

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* **Common Visitor**

Recorded in all months except January and November this year, the Duck Marsh produced the large majority of sightings but numbers reported were generally lower than last year with a best count of just 10 on 2nd May (SB). Last year produced several double figure counts with the best being 37.

Like last year sightings tailed off in the last three months of the year with just five reports of no more than two birds in that period.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* **Common Visitor**

Numbers on the farmland were high throughout January with between 40 and 50 adult and immature birds some days. They dropped off somewhat from the beginning of February but 36 on 4th April (SB) was a particularly good count for the time of year. No more than two birds were recorded thereafter with none in August or September. Numbers remained low throughout the autumn and to the end of the year with few double figure counts and a best of just 19 on 5th December (SB).

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* **Rare Visitor**

This large gull used to be classed as a race of Herring Gull but is now a species in its own right. There were no records this year. It is still a scarce bird locally but it is always worth checking the large gulls on the Lagoon or farmland. It was a new bird for the Reserve in 2019 when a near adult was picked out on the flooded farmland on 24th February that year. In 2020 there were sightings of a single bird on three dates between 4th January and 1st March and last year one was recorded on the farmland on 28th February.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* **Scarce Visitor**

Now recognised as a species in its own right, this was a new bird for the Reserve in 2021 with numerous sightings between 15th April and 18th July, all of a single bird. There were three reports of a bird on the wetlands this year - on 1st May (JM), 22nd May (AT) and 7th June (POG).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* **Uncommon Visitor**

There were four records this year and, unusually, all four were on the wetlands or farmland and not just “flyovers” which has usually been the case. However, last year the one record received was of a bird flying off Tim’s Field on 13th June. This year an immature bird was picked out in a mixed flock of gulls on the flooded farmland on 28th February (SB). What may have been the same immature bird was seen in a mixed gull flock on the Duck Marsh on 11th March (SB), on the Duck Marsh again on 20th March (WeBS) and on the Lagoon on 1st April (SB).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides* **Rare Visitor**

On 12th and 13th March 2021 a juvenile bird was seen further up the valley at Calverley bridge. On three dates between 4th and 11th December 2021 a 2nd winter bird was recorded on the farmland. Prior to this there had

been just one record on 17th January 2009. There were no reported sightings this year.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia domest* **Common Visitor?**

Almost certainly under recorded, there were just eight reported sightings last year and five this year, all between 5th June and 21st August and involving no more than three birds (EC). The underside of the river bridge has been a popular roosting and possibly nesting site in the past and birds can often still be heard here.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas* **Resident (probable) Breeder**

The majority of records typically come from the Manager's Garden where as many as 12 were recorded in January (SB). For the rest of the year the best count here was just seven. The 100+ counts on the farmland are now just a memory and the highest number reported here this year was just eight on 13th November during a WeBS visit.

Wood Pigeon

Columba palumbus **Resident Breeder and Winter Visitor**

Large flocks often gather on Tim's Field in the winter months. One such flock photographed over the field on 14th January contained around 300 birds (PM/BM). There was just one other three figure count reported - 122, again on Tim's Field on 24th January (SB). Numbers reported in the latter part of the year were low, 70 over the farmland being the highest.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* **Uncommon Visitor**

Sightings have been few and far between in recent years and this year there were no reports. Last year there was just one record and in the two years prior to that just two in each year. The population has certainly declined considerably throughout the country, probably due the spread of trichomonosis which the species is prone to.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* **Scarce (Summer) Visitor**

After two years with no records of this declining species 2021 proved to be the best ever with sightings reported on six dates, one of these the latest ever on 11th August. Sadly, there were again no records this year.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba* **Resident Breeder**

Erected in December 2020, the new nest box on the Scrubland proved very successful last year, five young fledging successfully. Thanks to a camera in the box the birds' progress could easily be followed on a monitor in the Visitor Centre. Birds regularly roosted in the thatched gazebo at the edge of Tim's Field and two were seen here early in the day on 21st

January this year (DW). There were regular sightings thereafter but always very early in the day. By the middle of May three eggs had been laid and two large chicks and one very small one could be seen in July. We have to assume all three subsequently fledged successfully. Two birds were last seen in the box on 22nd October but one was there most days to the end of the year.

Little Owl *Athene noctua* **Resident Breeder**

The nest box in trees in the Manager's Garden was used successfully in 2019, two young fledging, but the outcome in 2020 and 2021 is unknown though birds were seen in the area each year. This year there were numerous reports in or near the Manager's Garden from 6th March with two birds seen near the nest box on 11th April (SB) and 1st May (LB) but there was again no evidence of successful nesting though it could certainly have occurred. A bird was recorded actually going into the box on 5th June (EC). A single bird in the Manager's Garden on 9th October was the last reported sighting of the year (EC *et al*).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* **Uncommon Visitor**

There were three records in 2020, five in 2021 but none this year. Evening bat walks in the summer months produced sightings but there were no such walks this year due to limited access to the Reserve. Daytime sightings are usually few and far between but there were three last year, albeit all early in the day.

Swift *Apus apus* **Summer Visitor**

This is one of several species that was added to the Red List in December 2021 due to worsening declines in the breeding population. A single bird over the Lagoon on 15th May during a WeBS visit was the latest ever first record. On 19th June there were reports of up to 12 birds over the Reserve but these proved to be the only double figure counts this year (EC *et al*). The next highest count was just eight over the Lagoon on 11th July (SB). Two over the Lagoon on 14th August during a further WeBS visit were the last of another disappointing year.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* **Resident Breeder**

Like last year the Duck Marsh again proved to be the most productive area for sightings though there was no sign of nesting occurring at the Kingfisher Bank there. There were also numerous sightings on the river from the bridge with two birds together on several occasions but there were no reports of juveniles this year. Well away from the wetlands, on 2nd August one was seen at the Dipping Ponds (JB/MB) and on 2nd

October a bird was watched catching two small fish there (LB). A breakdown of sightings is shown below.

Lagoon	Duck Marsh	Reedbed	Wet Grassland	River	Other
13	19	4	2	17	8

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* Uncommon Visitor

There were no reported sightings this year. However, it has always been just a very occasional visitor to the Reserve. Last year produced two records on 24th March and 15th May but prior to that there had been just three records in the previous three years.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* Resident Breeder

The majority of sightings were, as usual, on the Willow Path and in the Manager's Garden. Most sightings were of single birds but on 17th February a male and female were seen in a tree by the river bridge (PM/BM). It is not known if the old nest site at the edge of the Willow Coppice close to the Willow Path was used this year but there was the usual woodpecker damage to nest boxes on the fence in this area. On 19th June a male, female and juvenile were seen in the Manager's Garden during a WeBS visit.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Resident Breeder

A bird was seen at the new nest box as early as 7th January (DW) which was encouraging after many years of successful nesting in the old box in the compound. Both birds were recorded at the new box for the first time on 21st February (GJB) and there was daily activity here from this point. With a camera in the box the first egg could be seen on the monitor in the Visitor Centre on 24th April and four more were subsequently laid, the first one hatching on 27th May. All five young subsequently fledged successfully and were last seen together on top of the box on 1st July (PM/BM). As the young dispersed sightings dwindled and there were only three after the end of August, the last of these on 4th December - a bird reported over the Visitor Centre on that date (MG/PG).

Merlin *Falco columbarius* Scarce (Winter) Visitor

This is another species on the Red List. Recent years have produced just one or two records. It was the same again this year, a single bird seen flying between the farmland and Poplar Field on 23rd January during an early morning WeBS visit being the only sighting.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo* **Uncommon (Summer) Visitor**

This summer visitor is quite widespread in south and central Britain but is thinly distributed further north. 2021 ranked as a good year here with sightings reported on six dates between 12th May and 8th August but there were none this year.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* **Uncommon Visitor**

There were sightings on a record 51 dates in 2021 despite the Reserve being closed for the first three months of the year. The pylon on the farmland behind the Manager's Garden produced many of the sightings and is always a good place to check. This year was disappointing in comparison with sightings reported on just 18 dates and only two of these in the first half of the year. The large majority of sightings were on the pylon with a bird reported here on 12 dates in the period from August to October. Two or more different birds were involved, one of these a juvenile which was seen on at least two occasions.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* **Escaped Species or Scarce Visitor from feral population**

First recorded here in 2001, there were no further sightings until 2015 when a single bird was seen on six dates. There were then no sightings in the three years from 2016 to 2018, just one in 2019, none in 2020 and one in 2021 - two birds on 19th December. There were no reported sightings this year.

Magpie *Pica pica* **Resident Breeder**

Several pairs almost certainly nested again and this remains a very common bird here. There were no reports of substantial gatherings which do occur most years, particularly when a raptor is encountered, but being so common the species is probably under-recorded.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius* **Resident Breeder**

There were sightings in all months, many just of single birds. There were two reports of several birds together in April - four flying into the Coppice on 1st (SB) and four on the River Path on 17th during a WeBS visit. Noisy parties can usually be seen in late summer and autumn flying over on their hazelnut and acorn forays but there were few reports of more than two birds in this period this year. However, one was photographed flying over with an acorn in its beak on 18th September (EL).

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* **Resident Breeder**

Large noisy gatherings occur later in the day in the winter months as birds come into trees along the river to roost. More than 200 were recorded at

4.30pm on 23rd January (PM/BM). Earlier in the day good numbers usually assemble on the farmland but the best reported in January was just 65 on 31st (SB). A few pairs do nest on and very close to the Reserve and a juvenile was recorded in the Manager's Garden on 15th July (PM/BM). Counts reported in the latter part of the year were disappointingly low with a best of just 62 on the farmland on 30th October (EC).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* **Uncommon Visitor**

Most reports of this species are of small numbers flying over. Birds actually landing on the Reserve are a rare event. There were no records this year.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* **Resident (Probable Breeder)**

Large gatherings of this common bird frequently occur, particularly in the winter months and often on the farmland. There was a report of 60 together in January this year but considerably larger numbers do congregate on occasions. Birds are rarely reported at nest sites here, hence its status as "Probable Breeder". However, one was seen at a nest in a tree at the eastern end of the Butterfly Bank on 1st March (PM/BM). Numbers reported in the latter part of the year were on the low side with a best count of just 39 in December. Much larger numbers can be seen at roost sites across the river later in the day in the winter months but no counts were submitted this year.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* **Rare Visitor**

This species is closely related to the Carrion Crow and is mainly found in North and West Scotland where it replaces that species. It is also a winter visitor from Scandinavia. There have been no sightings in the last four years. One seen briefly over the farmland on 10th November 2018 was the first and only record for the Reserve.

Raven *Corvus corax* **Rare Visitor**

This species is unlikely to be recorded other than as a "flyover". In 2019 there were reports of a bird over the Reserve on four dates but there have been none in the last three years.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus* **Scarce (Winter) Visitor**

There have been no records in the last five years. This species was last seen on the Reserve on 1st April 2017.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater* **Uncommon Visitor**

There were seven records in 2020, five in 2021 and just two this year. On 13th November a bird was seen at the edge of the Duck Marsh during a

WeBS visit and the following day one was reported on the feeders in the Bee Garden (SB). The majority of the few records that are received of this species tend to be in the autumn/winter period.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* **Resident Breeder**

This common bird is a daily visitor to the feeders in the Bee Garden and Manager's Garden. It readily takes to nest boxes and is the main user of them along the Willow Path. A bird was watched checking three different boxes there on 18th March (BM), presumably trying to choose a home or perhaps just looking for insects? Unfortunately, due to limited availability it was not possible to check the boxes here this year. There were no reports of family parties or indeed mixed feeding parties which always include numerous Blue Tits which is unusual, though this was most likely due to the limited access to the Reserve and a shortage of birdwatchers rather than a shortage of birds.

Great Tit *Parus major* **Resident Breeder**

Like the Blue Tit, this common bird is a daily visitor to the feeders in the Manager's Garden and Bee Garden and it can easily be seen along the Willow Path where it is a regular user of nest boxes there. The first juvenile this year was reported in the Manager's Garden on 12th June with three adults (EC). An adult and four juveniles were seen here on 15th July (PM/BM). However, numbers in the latter part of the year were on the low side and there were no reports of large mixed feeding parties of tits elsewhere on the Reserve.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus* **Rare Visitor (former Breeder)**

This species has suffered the worst population decline of any UK resident bird in recent times. Numbers have fallen sharply since the 1970s; it has become locally extinct in many of its former haunts and it is now on the Red List. There have been no sightings on the Reserve since 13th November 2013.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris* **Rare Visitor**

Like its cousin the Willow Tit this species is now also on the Red List due to significant declines in the population. Birds were last recorded on the Reserve in 2004.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea* **Rare Visitor**

There have been no records in the last three years. This was a new species for the Reserve in 2019, one being recorded flying south over Tim's Field on 23rd March that year.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis* **Uncommon Passage Visitor**

There are a few records most years but almost always just of birds flying over the Reserve. There were six such reported sightings last year but none this year.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* **Summer Visitor and Breeder**

First dates have been very similar in recent years -15th March in 2020 and 20th March in 2019, 2021 and this year – five birds over the Lagoon (WeBS). There were no further sightings until 4th April when two were over the Visitor Centre (SB). More birds started to arrive and 28 freshly excavated holes could be counted in the nest bank on the Lagoon by the end of April but numbers were, nevertheless, well down on the last three years. A final count on 15th July revealed a total of 67 nest holes.

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of nest holes</u>
2019	180
2020	142
2021	133
2022	67

Two birds over the entry road on 14th August were the last of the year (WeBS), the earliest last date since 2013.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica* **Summer Visitor and Breeder**

A single bird over the Visitor Centre on 25th March (DW) was only two days later than last year's earliest ever date. There were no further sightings until 11th April when two were on overhead wires near the car park (SB). On 14th May four were seen gathering mud on the entry road during a WeBS visit and at least two pairs subsequently nested in the dumper truck shed, which is a popular site most years. Birds were still feeding young there in the second week of August. There were two decent counts on overhead wires by the Visitor Centre in the first week of September - 32 on 4th (EC) and 50+ on 6th (PM/BM). A single bird over the Reserve on 12th September (SB) was the last of the year, more than three weeks earlier than last year (6th October).

House Martin *Delichon urbica* **Summer Visitor**

This species was added to the UK Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern in December 2021 due to a worsening decline in the breeding population. Numbers of birds over the Reserve remained very low last year with less than a handful reported up to the end of July. This year there were no records at all until 1st August when one was seen over the Visitor Centre (SB). There were only four further reported sightings, all high over the farmland - three on 15th August, 10 on 22nd August, 20 on 29th August and 25 on 14th September (SB).

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* **Uncommon Visitor**

First recorded on the Reserve on 17th December 2014, there have been sightings every year since then but reports have always been spasmodic with often long gaps between. This year there were no reports until 9th October when one was photographed in the Reedbed (PH) and heard in the same area (MG/PG). The explosive song is unmistakable and from that date there were regular reports of birds both heard and seen on all four main wetland areas. Interestingly, the same period was also the most productive in the previous three years. A bird seen at the edge of the Duck Marsh on 12th December (SB) was the last record of the year.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* **Resident Breeder**

Small groups of up to five birds were seen all round the Reserve in January and February. These birds are early nesters and last year two were watched nest building in bushes on the River Path as early as 27th February. There were no reports of nest building this year but sightings of groups of up to 12 birds later in the year almost certainly included juveniles. These birds can sometimes be seen in large mixed feeding parties with other tits in the autumn months but there were none reported this year.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* **Rare Visitor**

Wintering birds are becoming more common these days, probably due to the mild winters we usually have. Birds arrive on the east coast in the autumn, September and October being the peak months and a few are recorded inland. This was a new bird for the Reserve last year, one being heard on the Willow Path on a few occasions on 16th October. The following day it was calling along the Willow Path again and was seen briefly. There were no records this year.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* **Summer Visitor and Breeder**

This is a common summer visitor here and a few birds overwinter most years. A bird singing in the Coppice on 11th March was the first of the year (SB) and by the end of that month as many as 10 could be heard around the Reserve. As well as their contact calls birds could be heard singing well into the autumn, on 18th October in the Coppice (PM/BM) and in winter in the Coppice again on 5th December (SB). A single bird reported on 8th December was the last of the year.

Siberian Chiffchaff

Phylloscopus collybita tristis **Rare (Winter) Visitor**

Breeding in coniferous taiga forest from the Ural regions eastwards these birds winter mainly in India, though a few stray to Western Europe each year in autumn. A bird showing all the features of Siberian Chiffchaff was seen on four dates in December 2018 and on one occasion responded to the call being played. There were no records in 2019 or 2020 but on 24th November last year the song of a bird heard at the corner of the Coppice near the Lagoon Hide was recorded and later matched to that of this species. There were no records this year.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* **Summer Visitor/ Breeder**

The Coppice is usually the best place to hear this bird's distinctive song and the first one of the year was heard here on 11th April (SB). Less than a week later four were singing during an early morning WeBS visit - two in the Coppice and two at the Dragonfly Ponds. The UK breeding population has declined substantially in recent years but numbers on the Reserve this year appeared to be rather higher than in 2021 which was encouraging. Between five and six were recorded on several dates but, disappointingly, there were no sightings reported after 17th July when two were seen on the Scrubland (EC). *Phylloscopus* warblers can usually be heard round the Reserve throughout August but there were no records submitted this year. Unlike last year there were no reports of juveniles.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* **Summer Visitor and Breeder**

Some birds are now overwintering locally and a female was recorded in the Manager's Garden on 23rd October last year. However, there were no subsequent reports of overwintering birds and one singing on the far riverbank on 11th April was the first of the year (SB). Two days later a male was seen in trees by the Lagoon (PM/BM). There were regular sightings from this point. As many as six were recorded singing round the Reserve during an early morning WeBS visit on 14th August. There was only one report of juveniles - a bird near the Dipping Ponds on 9th September (LB) but several pairs almost certainly nested. One singing on the Willow Path near the Mike Sheldon Hide on 12th September (PM/BM) was the last record of the year.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* **Summer Visitor and Breeder**

For the first year ever there were no reported sightings this year. Last year there were just five records. However, the species is never numerous and can easily be overlooked. A limited number of observers due to access problems this year certainly didn't help.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* **Summer Visitor and Breeder**

Smaller than its cousin the Common Whitethroat this species is rather more secretive and is more often heard than seen. For the first time since 2005 there were no reported sightings this year. There were just three records last year. However, lack of observers certainly hasn't helped.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* **Summer Visitor/ Breeder**

The large bramble patches on Poplar Field are always a favourite nesting site for this species and the first bird was singing here on 17th April during an early morning WeBS visit, just a week earlier than last year. As many as 13 were recorded during the next WeBS visit on 15th May, four of these in the same area of bramble on Poplar Field. During the following weeks birds could be heard and seen all round the Reserve, the Scrubland being another particularly popular area. Three were recorded in bushes on the Butterfly Bank on 15th August (SB) but there was only one reported sighting after this date - a single bird near the thatched gazebo on 11th September (LB) proving to be the last of the year, six days later than the final record last year.

Grasshopper Warbler

Locustella naevia **Uncommon Summer Visitor and Casual Breeder**

Although never numerous, prior to 2019 most years produced a few records of this skulking bird, the loud "reeling" song being unmistakable. However, there was just one record in 2019 and there have been none in the last three years. The species is on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern due to long term severe breeding population decline.

Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus **Summer Visitor and Breeder**

First dates in the previous four years were remarkably similar, all between 20th and 22nd April. The fact that the first bird this year was not recorded until 15th May was most likely due to limited access and a lack of observers. A single bird reported on this date was spotted in reeds at the Dragonfly Ponds (WeBS/LB). Disappointingly, there were only five more records after this date, the last on 4th September - two juveniles on the Wet Grassland near the gazebo (LB), this the only evidence of successful nesting.

Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus **Summer Visitor and Breeder**

In 2020 the first record was on the earliest ever date of 15th April. Last year the first bird was reported on 24th April and this year on 2nd May (SB).

The majority of sightings were on the Reedbed and Wet Grassland though there were disappointingly few, almost certainly due to the same reasons mentioned above for Sedge Warbler. Two birds reported on 15th August were the last of the year (SB).

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus* **Rare Visitor**

There were no reported sightings this year or last year. First recorded on 17th December 2017, there were sightings in 2018, 2019 and 2020, the last on 1st February that year.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* **Winter Visitor**

The resident population is enhanced in the winter months with birds from Northern Europe. Spring and summer sightings on the Reserve are very infrequent as it prefers to nest in coniferous woodland. The number of sightings was well down on last year, probably mainly due to limited access for visitors. There was just one report in the first part of the year - two birds in a tree at the edge of the Dragonfly Ponds on 24th January (SB). October can be productive but there were no reported sightings until 13th November when as many as eight were counted round the Reserve during a WeBS visit. There were sightings on two further dates in November and three dates in December, the last on 11th when three were recorded on the Willow Path (LB).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* **Resident Breeder**

Often heard rather than seen, this is still a very common bird here with reports from every habitat. Birds have nested in the Manager's Garden Hide in the past and one was seen in the hide on 16th March (DW). On 19th June one was seen coming into the hide during a WeBS visit but there were no subsequent reports of successful nesting here this year. However, a check of the Swallow nest in the hide in December revealed a nest, most likely constructed by a Wren but possibly from a previous year.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* **Scarce Visitor**

There were no records this year. Its distinctive call usually gives this bird away and all three records last year were just of a bird calling but not seen.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* **Casual breeder**

Riverside trees by the bridge have proved productive in the past and last year there were several sightings on the Willow Path with a handful elsewhere on the Reserve. Unusually, there were no sightings reported this year but limited access to the Reserve throughout the year certainly didn't help.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* **Casual Breeder and Winter Visitor**

Last year proved to be the worst ever here for the number of reported sightings of this once common species which is now on the Red List. There was an improvement this year though the very large flocks seen on the farmland in the past are now just a distant memory. Having said this, a count of 100+ on the farmland on 4th April (SB) was a good number these days. No more than a dozen birds were reported from then until 24th September when around 50 landed on the pylon on the farmland behind the Manager's Garden (PM/BM). The second highest count of the year - 80 birds - was on the farmland on 14th November (SB).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus* **Rare (Passage) Visitor**

This species is now on the Red List due to long term declines in the breeding population and breeding range. Nesting in the uplands, this is our only summer visiting thrush and sightings are inevitably going to be few and far between. It was a new bird for the Reserve in 2017 when there were two records - on 6th May and 4th November - the last one photographed on Mike Fisk Meadow. There have been no sightings since then.

Blackbird *Turdus merula* **Resident Breeder and Winter Visitor**

This remains a common bird on the Reserve and is most easily seen in the Manager's Garden. Like last year there was only one report of juveniles but several pairs almost certainly nested successfully. Also like last year there was no real evidence of a large influx of Continental birds in the winter months which does happen some years. The best winter counts were actually lower than last year.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* **Winter Visitor**

In the final three months of last year there were just five records and none involving more than 11 birds. According to the BTO far fewer of these birds arrived in the UK in the latter part of the year, due in part to mild temperatures in northern Europe and unfavourable winds. It appears that higher numbers of birds remained in Scandinavia rather than moving further south. There was just one sighting here in the first three months of this year though this wasn't helped by the closure of the Reserve during that period. Two birds were seen in trees at the edge of John Ackroyd Meadow on 24th January (SB). The autumn period this year was somewhat better but there were, nevertheless, no reports of the usual large flocks of birds flying over the Reserve. The first 15 birds were seen on 31st October (SB). A total of 50 recorded during a WeBS visit on 13th November included 43 flying over the farmland and into the Poplars. The

following day 26 were reported (SB). There were only four further sightings , the best being just 13 on 12th December (SB).

Redwing *Turdus iliacus* **Winter Visitor**

With the Reserve closed for the first three months of the year sightings in this period were few and far between. On 24th January three were seen in a tree at the edge of John Ackroyd Meadow (SB) and on 20th March a single bird was seen at the edge of Tim's Field during a WeBS visit. The first birds of the autumn were reported on 16th October - four in trees at the car park by the bridge (LB). Surprisingly, there were no double figure counts until 13th November when a total of 53 were counted during a WeBS visit, 43 of these on the farmland. On 12th December 16 were on the farmland (SB) and on 25th December a flock of c25 winter thrushes there were mainly this species (PM/BM).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* **Resident Breeder**

The first singing bird this year was heard at the edge of John Ackroyd Meadow on 23rd January during a WeBS visit. Two were singing in the Coppice during the next WeBS visit on 20th February. At least one pair nested successfully, three juveniles being seen at the Dragonfly Ponds on 3rd June (DW). This species is usually hard to find between August and October and it was the same again this year with just four reported sightings of a single bird in this period and only one sighting in November. There were just three records in December - in the Bee Garden on 8th and 11th and one bathing at the edge of the Lagoon also on 11th (LB).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* **Uncommon Visitor**

This is another species on the Red List. Birds were recorded on 20 dates this year, just three more than last year, the large majority of sightings coming in the first four months. The farmland proved to be the most productive site with three or four seen here on several occasions.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* **Uncommon Passage Visitor**

This species is on the Red List due to a recent severe decline in the breeding population here. Even the best years only produce little more than a handful of sightings and these are usually in August or September. Last year sightings were reported on five dates and all were in this period. This year there were just two records. On 28th August two were seen on the Scrubland (JS) and on 11th September one was seen at the edge of the Duck Marsh (PA).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* **Rare Visitor**

This was a new species for the Reserve in 2020 - a juvenile, which was ringed, being photographed on the Willow Path on 1st August that year. There were no reported sightings last year or this year.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula* **Resident Breeder and Winter Visitor**

This common bird can be found all around the Reserve but is probably most easily seen on the Willow Path where it is usually very confiding. Just like last year there were no reports of juveniles until mid-July when one was seen with an adult in the Manager's Garden on 17th and 24th (EC et al)). There were further sightings of a single juvenile in August in the Manager's Garden and on the Butterfly Bank. There was no obvious increase in numbers in the autumn and winter months when birds can arrive from Continental Europe.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* **Rare Visitor**

There had only been two records of this species prior to this year, the last as long ago as 9th February 2008. On 1st April this year one was seen on the farmland manure heap (SB) and two days later it was photographed in the same area (KMCL). There were no subsequent sightings.

Common Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus **Uncommon Passage Visitor**

With just one record in each of 2018 and 2019 and none in the last two years there seemed little prospect of any sightings this year and so it proved.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* **Uncommon Passage Visitor**

Due to a recent severe decline in the breeding population this is another species now on the Red List. With just one record in 2019 and none in 2020 there was a slight improvement in 2021 with sightings on three dates, all between 4th and 12th September, the first of these involving two birds. Sadly, there were no reported sightings this year.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* **Uncommon Passage Visitor**

Last year was disappointing with no spring records and sightings on just four dates in the autumn. It was exactly the same this year. Two birds were seen on Tim's Field on 25th September (PA/AH) and on 11th October a male and two females were recorded there (PM/BM). In between those dates a female was reported on the Scrubland on 2nd October (PU) and on 9th October a male was seen on both the Scrubland and on Tim's Field (PH/EC).

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* **Uncommon Passage Visitor**

The last three years have produced just six records. Birds can turn up in both spring and late summer/autumn and last year all four records came in the period from 11th August to 10th October. This year there was just one reported sighting - a single bird on Poplar Field on 1st May (LB).

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus* **Uncommon Visitor**

While still classed as an uncommon visitor there are now rather more sightings of this bird than there used to be thanks to changes in the nature of the river below the weir. The partial collapse of the weir further downstream at Newlay in February 2020 resulted in a drop in the river level and the emergence of fast flowing shallows where once there had been deep glides. This provided ideal habitat for the birds. There were sightings on five dates in January this year with two birds on 10th and 17th (SB). There were no further reports until 18th September when one was photographed in the same area (CR). On 14th November a single bird was watched feeding on the shallows (SB/JHa). In December two birds were recorded on 8th, 11th and 12th (PM/BM *et al*).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* **Uncommon Visitor**

The few sightings that are reported are usually close to the main entrance gates, birds only occasionally venturing onto the Reserve. However, with all the work in that area throughout the year, unsurprisingly, there were no records. One did venture onto the Reserve though on 1st January and was seen just by the Visitor Centre (AL/JH).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* **Casual Breeder**

This species continues to do reasonably well on the Reserve though the population is small. Between two and four were seen in the Manager's Garden from the beginning of the year with eight recorded on 31st January (SB). Feeders in the Bee Garden attracted one or two birds daily from the latter part of March. Both the camera nest box on the east facing wall of the Visitor Centre and the sparrow terrace box on the north facing wall were used again and on 25th July a bird was observed going into the latter box suggesting at least a second brood there. However, there were only two reports of juveniles - in the Bee Garden on 3rd July (EC) and in the Manager's Garden on 24th July (MG/PG). Numbers of birds recorded in the latter part of the year were certainly lower than last year with no more than five in the Manager's Garden and six in the Bee Garden.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis* **Resident Breeder**

This is a very common bird here but it often tends to be overlooked. The majority of sightings reported this year were either in the Manager's

Garden or Bee Garden but it can be found all around the Reserve. There were no reports of young but the hedgerows provide plenty of ideal nesting sites and there is no reason to think it did not have a successful nesting year.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* **Scarce (Summer) Visitor**

This is a very infrequent visitor to the Reserve. There were no records between 2005 and 2015, none in 2020 and last year two. On 21st August a bird was heard calling on the farmland but could not be located and on 5th September four were seen around cattle on the farmland. There were no reported sightings this year.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* **Common Visitor/Casual Breeder**

Like last year the shallow stretch of the river downstream of the weir, caused by the partial collapse of the weir at Newlay, again produced numerous records. Three birds were seen here on 20th March during a WeBS visit and four on 17th July included juveniles (SB). Two were reported on several dates. August and September proved to be the most productive months when water levels were low. There were also several reports of a bird on the farmland manure heap, particularly in the last few weeks of the year.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba* **Common Visitor/Casual Breeder**

In the early and later parts of the year the majority of sightings were on and around the manure heap at the edge of the farmland though no observers reported more than two birds there. From 20th April to 1st July there just nine records and all of a single bird on the Duck Marsh. A count of five during a WeBS visit on 13th November proved to be the best of the year with two birds on the Duck Marsh, one near the Dipping Ponds and two on the farmland. Birds have nested in the Yorkshire Water compound in the past but there were again no reports of young this year.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba* **Scarce Passage Migrant**

Birds usually pass through Britain in early March through to May and from mid-August to early November. Most of the ones we get are thought to be from the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland. It is always worth carefully checking any black and white wagtails seen in these periods as this passage migrant does turn up on occasions. There was one record in 2020 - two birds on Tim's Field on 6th April that year, none last year and none again this year.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* **Passage Migrant**

There were just two reported sightings, both in the spring period. On 1st April four birds were seen on the farmland manure heap (SB) and on 8th April two were recorded there (DW). Last year there was more evidence of autumn passage and the fact that there were no sightings reported in that period this year was most likely down to a lack of observers.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* **Rare Passage Visitor**

There have been no sightings in the last three years. A bird that flew over the Visitor Centre calling on 25th August 2019 was only the fourth record for the Reserve.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* **Resident and Winter Visitor**

The resident population is small but numbers can increase considerably in the winter months with an influx of visitors, probably from Northern Europe. The seed crop on Tim's Field is the big attraction. On 23rd January 19 were counted in trees around the field during a WeBS visit and on 20th February 25 were recorded near the Fish Pass on the next WeBS visit. Last year there were several reports of juveniles at the feeders in July and August but there were none this year and no more than four adults. Like last year birds were seen visiting Tim's Field from the second week in November with 12 seen there on 13th (WeBS) and 14 on 11th December (WeBS).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* **Scarce (Winter) Visitor**

There were no reports of this winter visitor this year. Sightings have always been few and usually just of single birds. There were three sightings in 2018, two in 2019, one in 2020 and four last year in the period from 13th October to 12th December.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* **Resident Breeder**

This species is a daily visitor to the feeders in the Manager's Garden and Bee Garden throughout the year but it was also recorded at various other sites round the Reserve this year. Numbers reported were very similar to last year though, disappointingly, there were no records of juveniles this year. Four were seen in the Coppice during a WeBS visit on 20th March, three in the Manager's Garden on 16th October (EC) and four there on 30th October included three males (EC). A count of nine round the Reserve on 12th December (SB) was the highest of the year.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* **Resident Breeder**

The disease Trichomonosis has hit the population hard and as a result of a severe decline in the breeding population the bird was moved directly

from the Green List to the Red List. Not surprisingly, like last year numbers recorded on the Reserve were very low with a best count of just five birds on 20th June (SB).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris* **Rare (Winter) Visitor**

There have been no sightings reported in the last five years. In 2017 a single bird was seen on 11th and 12th November, on each occasion associating with Linnets. Prior to this there had been just two records - in 2000 and 2003.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* **Casual Breeder and Winter Visitor**

The seed crop on Tim's Field is the big attraction for this species and while numbers have been a bit disappointing in the last few years there were four good counts in the latter part of last year - 184 on 23rd October, c200 on 28th November, 184 On 1st December and 176 on 7th December. Numbers dropped considerably from the start of this year with a best count of just 70 on 18th January (PM/BM). There were no double figure counts after 11th March but one or two birds were seen in July and August. Numbers started to build again in October with between 35 and 40 over Tim's Field on 3rd (PM/BM). However, surprisingly this proved to be the highest count in the last three months of the year.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret* **Passage and Winter Visitor**

Almost certainly under-recorded this year due to limited access, roadside trees by the Lagoon can be productive in winter when birds can be seen feeding on alder seed. However, there was just one record this year - three birds feeding on alder seed in the Coppice on 7th January (JSK/DW).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* **Rare Visitor**

First recorded as a "flyover" in 2018, there were no sightings in 2019 or 2020 but there was one last year - three birds flying south over the Coppice on 16th October. There was again just one record this year - a single bird flying over the Dragonfly Ponds on 18th September (AL *et al*).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* **Resident Breeder**

As recently as 2019 a flock of around 120 birds was recorded on Mike Fisk Meadow feeding on the ripe seed heads there but numbers in 2020 and 2021 were disappointing with the best count on the Reserve in 2021 being c40. The best count this year was 45 in the Poplar Field area on 10th January (SB). A similar sized flock was seen in trees on the canal bank close to the Reserve on 26th January (PM/BM). There were only a few double figure counts after this but around 30 in and over trees by the containers on 29th August did include several juveniles (PM/BM),

suggesting successful nesting close by if not on the Reserve. There were only four subsequent double figure counts, the best just 21 birds on 12th December (SB).

Siskin *Carduelis spinus* **Passage and Winter Visitor**

One of our smallest finches and breeding in coniferous and mixed forest, this is very much a winter visitor to the Reserve. The late winter months is the best time to see them here feeding on the seed in roadside alders and birch trees. There were numerous records last year but only one this year - a single bird in trees at the corner of the Wet Grassland, spotted during a WeBS visit on 20th March. This is almost certainly not a true reflection of the number of birds passing through the Reserve this year and is most likely due to the lack of access and observers.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella* **Rare Visitor**

This is a very scarce bird in the area and another bird that is on the Red List due to a recent moderate decline in the breeding population and a long term severe breeding range decline. There was just one record in 2018 and there have been none in the last four years.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* **Resident Breeder**

In the early part of the year the majority of sightings tend to be at the feeders in the Manager's Garden and Bee Garden and on Tim's Field where birds visit for the seed crop there. They nest in the reeds on all four main wetland areas but the Wet Grassland seems to be the most popular with sightings here from 20th March. Birds have also nested at the Dragonfly Ponds in the past and one pair is thought to have nested there last year. This year there were sightings at the ponds from the middle of April and on 20th July three males were recorded here (PM/BM). A few were again reported visiting Tim's Field for seed towards the end of the year. On 11th December four birds were seen at the Dragonfly Ponds during a WeBS visit.

ESCAPED SPECIES

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus* **Escaped Species**

First recorded in 2013, there were sightings in 2016 and each of the three years from 2019. There was just one record last year - a single bird that flew round the Lagoon on 12th February. No sightings were reported this year.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* **Escaped Species**

Previously recorded in 2009, 2010 and 2011, one was seen on the Lagoon on 8th April 2018. There have been no sightings in the last four years.

Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea* **Escaped Species**

There have been no records in the last five years. Recorded for the first time in 2016, a male was seen on the Lagoon during an early morning WeBS count on 18th December that year. There was again one sighting in 2017 - a male on the Lagoon on 19th March.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus* **Escaped Species**

One flew over the farmland to the river on 2nd March 2019. This was the first and only record of this species.

Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata* **Escaped Species**

On 30th June last year a bird landed briefly at the edge of one of the Dragonfly Ponds and was seen by three observers. This was the second record of this species on the Reserve, the first being on 5th August 2018. There were no sightings reported this year.

Other species that have been recorded on the Reserve in previous years:

Corn Bunting
Grey Phalarope
Marbled Duck (Probable escape)
Red-crested Pochard (Probable escape)
Ringed Teal (Escape)
Sandwich Tern
Short-eared Owl

FIRST AND LAST DATES FOR WINTER VISITORS
2022

SPECIES	LAST	FIRST
Whooper Swan	-	-
Wigeon	28 th February	11 th September
Goldeneye	20 th March	14 th November
Waxwing	-	-
Fieldfare	24 th January	31 st October
Redwing	20 th March	16 th October
Brambling	-	-

Wigeon - Odd birds can occasionally turn up in the summer months. A male was recorded on the Duck Marsh during an early morning WeBS visit on 17th July.

FIRST AND LAST DATES FOR SUMMER VISITORS
2022

SPECIES	FIRST	LAST
Garganey	-	-
Hobby	-	-
Osprey	-	-
Marsh Harrier	-	-
Avocet	-	-
Little (Ringed) Plover	17 th April	21 st August
Whimbrel	-	-
Black-tailed Godwit	31 st July	31 st July
Greenshank	-	-
Common Sandpiper	24 th April	31 st July
Common Tern	24 th July	24 th July
Arctic Tern	-	-
Cuckoo	-	-
Swift	15 th May	14 th August
Sand Martin	20 th March	14 th August
Swallow	25 th March	12 th September
House Martin	1 st August	14 th September
Yellow Wagtail	-	-
Common Redstart	-	-
Whinchat	-	-
Wheatear	1 st May	1 st May
Ring Ouzel	-	-
Grasshopper Warbler	-	-
Sedge Warbler	15 th May	4 th September
Reed Warbler	15 th May	15 th August
Garden Warbler	-	-
Common Whitethroat	17 th April	11 th September
Lesser Whitethroat	-	-
Willow Warbler	11 th April	17 th July
Spotted Flycatcher	28 th August	11 th September
Pied Flycatcher	-	-

In view of the number of Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs now over-wintering in the area it is not possible to give accurate arrival and departure dates for actual migrants.

MAMMALS

Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

There were sightings in every month except October. A pregnant female was seen on the entry road on 6th March (KMCL) and it is likely that a pair bred in the Willow Coppice again but there were no subsequent reports of young this year. Last year five cubs were seen on Mike Fisk Meadow close to the Willow Coppice in May and June. The autumn months were particularly productive in terms of sightings last year but there were considerably fewer this year. However, this was most likely due to the limited opening hours rather than an absence of animals.



Otter *Lutra lutra*

Daytime sightings had always been few and far between here prior to mid-November last year but this was about to change. There were several records in the last few weeks of 2021 and on 12th January this year a family of three and possibly four Otters was seen and photographed just a few yards upstream of the bridge (PM/BM). Three were again seen briefly upstream on 21st January (JSK) and over the next three days there was a considerable amount of activity. On 22nd two juveniles were watched fishing under the bridge (GJB). On 23rd three were seen downstream of the bridge (WeBS). On 24th a male Otter was caught on a camera trap at 5.04am on a path between the river and the Lagoon and at 7.35am the same morning a female and two juveniles were filmed on the same path. There were no further sightings until 1st June when an adult and two juveniles were seen further downstream from the River Path (DW). Two juveniles were again seen on 8th July (JSK). Further sightings followed and on 9th October two animals were watched fishing on the Lagoon at 11am (LR). The last three sightings of the year were all from the river bridge. On 30th October a single Otter was seen swimming upstream (EL). On 13th November three were seen both upstream and downstream (SB) and one again on 11th December (EL).



American Mink *Neovison vison*

For the second year running this unwelcome visitor was only recorded on three dates. This could well be down to the considerable increase in Otter activity. On 10th January one was seen near the Fish Pass during habitat management work (BB). There were no further sightings until 30th October when one was reported at the Dragonfly Ponds (EC). On 11th December what was almost certainly a Mink was seen in the river close to the bridge during a WeBS visit.



Weasel *Mustela nivalis*

Last year, for the first time to our knowledge, there were two reports of Weasels being predated by Grey Herons - on 3rd November and 4th December. There were no reports of this behaviour this year. The road between the Visitor Centre and the Dipping Ponds has always produced sightings in the past and there were several again this year, three of these between 23rd February and 13th March (DW/MB). A family of six were seen by the farmland gate near the path to the Manager's Garden on 24th July (GG) and the next day a single animal was seen in the same area (DAN). There was a further sighting of one disappearing into the drystone wall in the same area on 12th September (PM/BM). There was just one record in the last three months of the year - a single animal seen on the Willow Path on 26th December (EC).



Stoat *Mustela erminea*

This is a scarce visitor to the Reserve and one photographed in the Manager's Garden on 28th November last year was the first record since 2017. This year six sightings were reported, the first on 18th February when one came from Mike Fisk Meadow and onto the patio outside the Visitor Centre (JSK). All sightings involved single animals. On 13th May one was seen on the road, appropriately near the Mammal Hotel (GJB), on 14th August at the top of the ramp to the Butterfly Bank (GJB), on 26th August at the edge of Mike Fisk Meadow near the Coppice (DW), on 23rd September on Poplar Field (DW) and on 7th October on John Ackroyd Meadow (DW).

Roe deer *Capreolus capreolus*

This is still a common mammal in the valley and it was by far the most frequently recorded mammal on the Reserve this year. As in the previous two years the deer-proof fence around the Willow Coppice did little to deter it and there were numerous sightings in this area again. Footprints were found there on 7th January and three were seen on the Willow Path on the same date (JSK). One or two animals were seen in the Coppice on a number of dates subsequently. One or two could also be seen on the Willow Path throughout the year, particularly early and later in the day when there were fewer visitors about. Groups of four and five animals together were reported on several dates - on Tim's Field, Poplar Field, the Scrubland and John Ackroyd Meadow. Four on Tim's Field on 26th July included a male, two females and a fawn (JB/MB). On 11th December at 3.45pm two ran out from the Willow Path and onto the road, skidding and falling, leaping up and throwing themselves at the Coppice fence before finally jumping over the dead hedge by the ramp to the Lagoon Hide (KMcL).



Mole *Talpa europaea*

Just like last year molehills were particularly numerous on the farmland behind the bridge car park. "Scores" were reported here in January. They were also numerous on the grass verge along the entry road. Sightings of the animals themselves are few and far between and usually relate to dead individuals left by predators. There was just one record this year – a dead animal on Bentley's Path on 25th August (PM/BM).

Common Shrew *Sorex araneus*

Almost certainly much more common on the Reserve than the few records would suggest, one or two have turned up in Longworth traps during small mammal surveys over the years. Dead animals are also found occasionally as larger mammals such as Foxes will kill them but not eat them because of the foul tasting liquid produced from glands on the skin. There were no records this year.



Pygmy Shrew *Sorex minutus*

This tiny mammal has only turned up once in a Longworth trap in June 2016. The only real evidence of its continued presence on the Reserve is from its remains which have been found in Barn Owl pellets on occasions.

Water Shrew *Neomys fodiens*

Detailed survey work needs to be done to establish the current status of this small mammal on the Reserve. When surveys were last carried out some years ago in the Reedbed it was found to be present there and almost certainly on the other wetland areas too. Last year a dead individual that appeared to have been predated was found at the edge of the Lagoon on 19th July but there were no records this year.

Harvest Mouse *Micromys minutus*

The Harvest Mouse breeding project started in 2012 and since 2014 mice have been introduced at several locations on the Reserve. A further small release was made on 16th June this year at the edge of Tim's Field from the Dipping Ponds down the western edge of the field. A total of 15 males and 19 females were released. The edge of the field is always left uncut to provide a wildlife corridor and give mice a relatively safe home to build their nests. The mice are tiny and very difficult to spot in the wild but they can be seen easily in the permanent display area in the Visitor Centre.

Wood Mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus*

This is a very common small mammal on the Reserve. It is regularly found in Longworth traps during small mammal surveys and, being an excellent climber, it is a user of nest boxes on the Willow Path. With no surveys or nest box checks carried out this year there were just two records. On 24th January one was caught on a camera trap at the edge of the Lagoon and on 11th September three were found in one of the small mammal homes on the Willow Path (LB).

Bank Vole *Clethrionomys glareolus*

This is another very common species that used to turn up in Longworth traps during small mammal surveys. In the absence of any surveys this year there was just one sighting reported - a single animal in the Bee Garden on 21st August (EC).

Field or Short-tailed Vole *Microtus agrestis*

This species is probably at its most numerous on the Scrubland, the tussocky grass there providing ideal habitat for it. Its remains are often found in the pellets of Barn Owls which hunt this area daily. In the absence of any Longworth trap surveys this year there were no records of live animals to report.

Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius*

This species is under serious threat from both habitat loss and predation by American Mink. It is now on the Red List for Mammals and not

surprisingly it is a rare mammal here. There were no sightings in 2019 or 2020, just two last year and none again this year.

Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*

There are surprisingly few records most years but from December 2020 there were a number of sightings of up to five animals in the Bee Garden feeding on spilled seed under the feeders, the last in December 2021. There were just two reported sightings this year, both in the Manager's Garden, with three seen on 31st July and two on 7th August (EC).

Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*

This species is a much commoner visitor to the Reserve than the few reported sightings would suggest. Squirrels have attempted to breed on the Reserve in the past and at least one drey could be seen in the Willow Coppice last year but whether animals actually bred on the Reserve this year is not known.

Rabbit *Oryctogalus cuniculus*

This is a rare visitor to the Reserve. There were two reported sightings in 2020 but prior to that there had been none since August 2016. In 2021 there were four records all involving single animals but there were none this year.

Brown Hare *Lepus capensis*

Even rarer than the Rabbit here, there have only been four records in the Reserve's history, the last one on 15th November 2020. There were none this year.

Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*

Britain's Hedgehog population is experiencing a long term decline, part of the reason being loss of habitat. It is now one of our mammals with a Red List Classification. It has always been a rare mammal here and there have only been three records since the Reserve opened in July 2000, the last of these on 19th July 2019 - on the road under the entry gates!

Common Pipistrelle Bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

Pipistrelles are the commonest bats to be found on the Reserve and are recorded in good numbers during Bat Night events. With no events held this year only one record was received and this was from volunteers locking up the hides at dusk on 28th November. Two were seen at the end of the Willow Path by the edge of Tim's Field and one by the Dipping Ponds (PM/BM) - but whether these were Common Pipistrelles or Sopranos is not known.

Soprano Pipistrelle Bat *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*

This has only been a separate species since 1999 when the Common Pipistrelle was split into two species on the basis of different frequency echolocation calls. With no Bat Night events this year there were no confirmed records but see under Common Pipistrelle above.

Noctule Bat *Nyctalus noctula*

This large bat can often be seen flying just before sunset and occasionally during the day but the large majority of records typically come from Bat Night events. There were no events this year and no records to report.

Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentoni*

This medium-sized bat is often associated with water and is not uncommon on the Reserve. It has been seen over the Duck Marsh and the river in the past during Bat Night Events and occasionally during the day. There were no records this year.

AMPHIBIANS

Spending much of their time well hidden on land, our three common amphibian species on the Reserve - the Common Frog, Common Toad and Smooth Newt - are most likely to be seen when they return to the water to breed in early spring. In the absence of any detailed surveys during this period there were inevitably very few sightings reported this year. However, all three species are undoubtedly still common on the Reserve despite declines in recent years.

Young newts leave the water in August or September and one or two turn up regularly during supervised pond dipping activities for children in the summer months. Newts, Frogs and Toads can also sometimes be found by lifting the lids on the wooden shelters along the Willow Path.

A different species, the Palmate Newt prefers shallow acidic pools such as those found on heathland and moorland and is not one we would normally expect to find on the Reserve. However, detailed surveys carried out in 2010 and 2011 revealed its presence.

REPTILES

Although the habitat appears to be ideal on the Reserve, surveys carried out a number of years ago to establish the presence of the Grass Snake *Natrix natrix* failed to find any evidence. A three foot long snake seen in the margins of the river just upstream of the Reserve in April 2020 may have been this species but it may also have been an introduced species. A population of snakes suspected of originating from southern or eastern Europe is known to have been present within and around the Esholt sewage treatment facility since 1990 and they are very good swimmers. There have been no reported sightings in the last two years.

BUTTERFLIES

In 2020 and 2021 although the wildlife did fine, access restrictions limited the amount of recorders/recording time available to monitor our wildlife. So having got through the worst of the Covid pandemic we had hoped that 2022 would be a good year for wildlife and recording, famous last words!

Removal of the canal bridge for a year resulted in the Reserve only being open to the public one day a week and not at all from the start of the year until early April. There were also fewer school visits and less time for volunteers to spend on recording while doing habitat maintenance work. Not surprisingly this resulted in a big decrease in the number of records this year, which often makes it difficult to make valid numerical comparisons (of the numbers of butterflies seen or the number of days species were seen on) with previous years and so to discern trends. So the lower numbers of records for some species may simply be the effect of a lower footfall on the Reserve.

There were no new species this year and quite a few 'no shows' again. Essex Skipper and Brown Argus have not shown up again this year and as 'colonists' at the edge of their range it appears they have yet to establish self-maintaining colonies, although difficulties in identification of these species may confuse this issue. Others like the Wall and White Letter Hairstreak are essentially extinct at Rodley.

On the positive side Holly Blues have made a good showing this year. It was also a good year for Brimstones with a good number of records and with breeding observed again this year. Breeding of Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock was again observed this year and it would be valuable if we could receive more breeding records - of egg laying, the presence of caterpillars and of pupae. 2022 was a good year for Gatekeepers with several daily counts in the 20s and 30s.

The Poplar Field seems to be a consistently good area for a lot of species and the fact that it has been cut later than the hay meadows helps prolongs the flowering season which is probably beneficial for species. The rise of Speckled Wood to top the list of days on which species were recorded is interesting and reflects the long season for this species and the fact that its habit of searching for patches of sunshine in shady places attracts attention compared to most of the 'brown' butterflies.

The butterflies recorded at Rodley on the most days in 2022 are shown below, with comparisons for the two previous years.

Ranking 2022	Species and number of dates seen on	Ranking 2021	Ranking 2020	Ranking 2019
1 st	Speckled Wood - 38	3 rd =	5 th	-
2 nd	Small Tortoiseshell - 35	1 st	1 st	1 st
3 rd	Red Admiral - 31	4 th	-	2 nd
4 th	Small White - 26	2 nd	4 th	6 th
5 th	Peacock - 23	3 rd =	2 nd	5 th
6 th	Meadow Brown – 21	5 th	-	-
7 th	Comma - 20	-	3 rd	3 rd

Jerry Knapp

HESPERIDAE

Essex Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola*)

Essex Skipper is relatively new to the Reserve first being recorded in 2019. It wasn't seen in 2020 but a single individual was seen in July 2021. There were no reports in 2022. However this is a difficult species to identify and is near the edge of its distribution in the country.

Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*)

As usual there weren't many records of Small Skipper; it was only recorded on four days. The first of the year were seen on 8th July (HS/PS) in John Ackroyd and Mike Fisk Meadows and this is where the last sightings of the year also occurred on 24th July (HS/PS)

Large Skipper (*Ochlodes venatus*)

The first of the year were seen on the river walk on June 18th (PM/BM) but they were only seen on seven days in 2022, compared with 15 in 2021 and seven in 2020. Large Skippers were seen all across the Reserve, but never in large numbers, three being the largest daily count. It seems that this charming butterfly is probably under recorded at Rodley. The last record of the year was on 25th July (SB) when 'several' were seen on Poplar Field and the river walk.

PIERIDAE

Orange Tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*)

Orange Tip appeared pretty much on schedule with the first sighting of seven on 17th April (HS/PS). In 2022 they were recorded only on nine days compared to 19 in 2021 and 14 in 2020. The small number of days was almost certainly related to the decreased number of 'observer days' as this species is mostly seen from April to June. Orange Tip were seen all across the Reserve in reasonable numbers, with a maximum count of 21 on 6th May (HS/PS). The last sighting of the year was on 27th May, the third earliest last of the year.

Large White (*Pieris brassicae*)

The first Large White of the year was seen on 11th July on Tim's Field (SB). This was the second latest first of the year. Thereafter they were only recorded on five further dates in small numbers with the last record of four on Poplar Field on 15th August (SB). This was the third earliest last date of the year.

So, with late appearance and early departure, another poor year for Large Whites at Rodley. Recording of small numbers on only a few days seems to be the pattern in recent years and it is difficult to offer an explanation for this.

Small White (*Artogeia rapae*)

A common species, frequently recorded often in large numbers, this is clearly the most successful of the 'Whites' at Rodley. The first of the year was spotted on 17th April (HS/PS) and it was seen in all on 26 days, making it the 4th most recorded butterfly. It was seen across the Reserve but with Tim's Field and the Willow Walk being the best sites. Numbers started small with one to four per day until July after which twenties or thirties were often recorded with a highest count of about 60 on Tim's Field on 25th August (PM/BM). Numbers remained high until the last sighting of 10 on 11th September (AW).

Green-veined White (*Artogeia napi*)

The first sighting of the year was of one on Tim's Field on 17th April (HS/PS). Subsequently they were recorded on 17 days in all, compared to 19 days last year. Generally daily counts were of one to three with a highest daily count of 12 on 15th May. The last of the year was seen on 11th September.

Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*)

Brimstone were seen on 18 days in 2022, similar to the 22 days recorded in 2021 and 16 in 2020. The first record of the year was on 25th March with one on John Ackroyd Meadow and two near the river bridge (SB). This is the second earliest first of the year although the end of March is now the new normal; since 2017 all first Brimstones of the year have been between 20th and 31st March, with 25th in four years. Generally, sightings were of one to three individuals but six were recorded across the Reserve on 22nd May (HS/PS). Breeding was again recorded in 2022 with egg laying observed on several days (JSK, JHar). Eggs and caterpillars were seen on both Alder and Purging Buckthorns, on established trees, hedges and free-standing saplings (JSK). The last sighting of the year was relatively early with one seen on Poplar Field on 8th August (SB).

NYMPHALIDAE

Wall (*Lasiommata megera*)

Sadly, no Walls were seen in 2022, the last sighting at Rodley being in 2017. This species has been in decline for several years especially across central England. The reasons for its decline are unclear. At Rodley we do have at least some of its food plant species available (e.g. Cock's-foot and Yorkshire Fog are both common).

Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*)

The first of the year was seen on 17th April with two on Poplar Field (HS/PS); thereafter Speckled Wood were recorded on the Reserve on 38 dates, making it top of the list for the most dates it was seen on. They were seen every month from April to September, generally in twos or threes. However, there were some peak days with 10 seen on 19th June, 16 on 21st August, 13 on 28th August and 17 on 2nd September (HS/PS). They were seen all over the Reserve but with a good number of sightings on Poplar Field and particularly on the Willow Walk. The last sighting of the year was on 12th September (PM/BM), a bit earlier than usual last dates in late September to October. Speckled Wood is a butterfly that is doing well nationally with increases in both range and numbers over the last forty years.

Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*)

No sightings in 2022, but there have been no sightings since 2005.

Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*)

The first Ringlet of the year was seen in the coppice on 17th June (JSK), the third earliest of the year, the earliest ever being on 14th June. Ringlets

were seen on only nine days in comparison with 26 days in 2021, a decrease which probably reflects numbers of recorders rather than butterflies! Numbers increased rapidly in early July with 36 on 3rd July, 53 on 8th and 19 on 17th (HS/PS), after which they reduced with small numbers by the end of the month and a final sighting of one on 1st August. They were seen across the Reserve with Poplar Field, the hay meadow and the edge of the coppice favoured locations.

Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*)

Meadow Browns appeared on time in mid-June with the first of the year on Poplar Field on 17th June (JSK). They were recorded on 21 days, compared with 30 in 2021. Numbers increased steadily with 31 on 8th July (HS/PS) and remained high throughout July with a maximum count of 52 on 17th (HS/PS). Numbers remained good until early August with 18 on 1st (SB) after which they slowly declined until the last of the year was seen on 21st August (HS/PS), earlier than usual with only three earlier last of the year dates since 2002. As usual, and as expected for a grassland species, the best sites were the meadows, Butterfly Bank and Poplar Field.

Marbled White (*Melanargia galathea*)

Following Marbled White's debut appearance at Rodley in 2021, there were no observations of this species in 2022.

Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*)

The first of the year was seen on 8th July (HS/PS) and they were subsequently recorded on 16 days, the same as in 2021. They were very prominent across the Reserve in 2022, but with Poplar Field, the Butterfly Bank and the meadows being the best locations. Numbers were also good with 10+ sighted on at least 10 days, 20+ on five days with maximum counts of 32 on 29th July (HS/PS) and 31 on 1st August (SB). The last sightings of the year came on 15th August, with 10 seen (SB), rounding off another very good year and making Gatekeeper one of the 'butterflies of the year'.

Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*)

After the first and only record in 2019 this was another year without Dark Green Fritillary, but given the lack of suitable habitat and food plants this is not surprising.

Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

The first of the year came on 22nd May (JWC/AL) and Red Admiral were then seen on a total of 31 days, very similar to the 34 days in 2022, putting

it at third position on the list of 'days seen'. Numbers were generally low (one to three per day) but at least six were seen across the Reserve on two days in June (17th and 20th - JSK). Thereafter numbers remained low until they started to increase in late August with seven on 21st and five on 28th (HS/PS). They were more evident in September with nine on 17th (PM/BM) and 15+ on 23rd (JSK), both centred around the buddleias near the Visitor Centre. There was a final flourish in October with six near the Visitor Centre on 8th (AW). Overall another good year for this lovely insect which was seen in every month from May to October.

Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*)

As a long-distance migrant numbers and timings are always likely to be variable. This year Painted Lady were recorded on 10 days (compared to 11 in 2021 and none in 2019) with a daily maximum of three. The first of the year was seen near the Dragonfly Ponds on 11th July (SB). Most records were of singles with two on two days and a maximum of three on 28th August (HS/PS) along the Butterfly Bank. The last sighting of the year was of one on the Visitor Centre buddleias on 23rd September (JSK).

Peacock (*Aglais io*)

The first record of the year was of two on 18th March (JSK, PM/BM) and Peacock were recorded on 23 days in all. Most reports were of one to three individuals but the highest daily counts were of 13 across the Reserve on 17th April (HS/PS) and eight on 29th July (HS/PS) and 1st August (SB). The final sighting of the year was of one on the Butterfly Bank on 26th September. So again, this year this very visible species was seen on a good number of days but not in very large numbers.

Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*)

The first sightings of the year were on 18th March in the Dragonfly Ponds area (DW, DM) and Small Tortoiseshells were then seen on 35 days during the year compared with 64 in 2021 and 41 in 2020, the decrease probably associated with the limitation on openings this year. This made it the butterfly recorded on the second highest number of days in the year – after three years at number 1! Numbers increased rapidly as more emerged from hibernation with 17 seen across the Reserve on 25th March (SB). Spring counts were variable but with good numbers on 24th April (18 – HS/PS) and 8th May (20 - HS/PS - the best of the year). Thereafter numbers recorded declined with seven on 15th May, 19th June and 3rd July and six on 8th July (HS/PS), most other subsequent counts being of one or two. The last of the year was seen on 17th September (PM/BM). So, a good spring season was followed by a poor late summer/autumn for Small

Tortoiseshells; this doesn't auger well for early sightings in 2023. It is unclear if this was due to parasitism or weather factors.

Comma (*Polygonum c-album*)

The first of the year was recorded near the Lagoon on 25th March (PM/BM). Comma were then recorded on 20 days, mostly from July onward, the paucity of early sightings probably due to the small number of observers because of Reserve closure. 80% of daily records were of one or two butterflies, with maximum daily numbers of six on 24th July (HS/PS) and 1st August (SB). The last sighting of the year was on 23rd September (JSK). 2023 was therefore a fairly typical year with a good number of records due to its distinctiveness but only small numbers. In recent years the Comma has been one of the butterfly species that has gone against the trend of decline and has (over the period 1976 to 2019) increased both in terms of its distribution/range and numbers. So, it is doing well nationally but it would be good to see more at RNR!

LYCAENIDAE

Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*)

The first report of the year was rather late, on 19th June with one on the Mike Fisk Meadow (HS/PS). After this Small Copper were only seen on a further nine days with just one or two seen per day. The low number of daily sightings may have been due to the smaller number of recording days in the year, a pattern similar to that in the Covid affected 2020. The last of the year was a sighting of one in the Visitor Centre car park on 24th September (PM/BM) - a relatively early curtain call.

Purple Hairstreak (*Quercusia quercus*)

There was just one sighting of Purple Hairstreak this year with two being seen in the Manager's Garden on 17th July (AL). All records of this species so far have been on the Willow Path and in the Manager's Garden, probably as this is the only part of the Reserve where there is public access to large oak trees. Purple Hairstreaks breed on oaks and feed on aphid honeydew often higher in the canopy. Most of the other oaks on the Reserve are either not within view of footpaths or still too small to attract them.

White-letter Hairstreak (*Satyrium w-album*)

2022 was another year without any records of this species and none have been seen since 2018. Given the lack of elm trees (the caterpillar's food plant) on the Reserve this species is never likely to be more than an occasional vagrant at Rodley.

Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*)

After two years with poor results for Holly Blue, no sightings in 2020 and only two in 2021, it was great to receive quite a lot of reports with this lovely insect seen on 11 days in 2022. The first of the year was seen near the Visitor Centre on 24th April (EC) with two more April records. August was the best month with five sightings, one seen on the river walk on 28th August (HS/PS) being the last of the year. All sightings were of one or two but they were seen all over the Reserve. Regular fluctuations in numbers are normal for this insect due to parasitism, but there is hope that we should get better numbers for the next few years, followed inevitably by another crash.

Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis*)

There were no records of Brown Argus in 2022. This was also the case in 2020 and 2021. The species first appeared at Rodley in 2019 but clearly has not established a colony as yet.

Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*)

The first record of the year was on 22nd May (JWC/AL). There were only six sightings in all (compared with 12 in 2021), most of only one butterfly but two were seen on 8th August (SB). The last record of the year was on 28th August (PM/BM) in the Visitor Centre carpark.

Contributors

P Allan	PA	P&B Murphy	PM/BM
J Brook	JB	J Payne	JP
S Brown	SB	H&P Smith	HS/PS
J W Cooper	JWC	S Stevenson	SS
E Cowan	EC	D Swann	DS
S Curtis	SC	A Thompson	AT
M&P Greenwood	MG/PG	P Unia	PU
J Hart	JHar	M Unsworth	MU
K Hockridge	KH	D Walker	DW
J Knapp	JSK	A Worrillow	AW
A Levitt	AL	J Worrillow	JW
D Marsden	DM		

Butterflies
First and Last Dates - 2022

Species	First date	Last date
Essex Skipper	-	-
Small Skipper	8 th July	24 th July
Large Skipper	18 th June	25 th July
Orange Tip	17 th April	27 th May
Large White	11 th July	15 th August
Small White	17 th April	11 th September
Green-veined White	17 th April	11 th September
Clouded Yellow	-	-
Brimstone	25 th March	8 th August
Wall	-	-
Speckled Wood	17 th April	12 th September
Small Heath	-	-
Ringlet	17 th June	1 st August
Meadow Brown	17 th June	21 st August
Gatekeeper	8 th July	15 th August
Dark Green Fritillary	-	-
Red Admiral	22 nd May	8 th October
Painted Lady	11 th July	23 rd September
Peacock	18 th March	26 th September
Small Tortoiseshell	18 th March	17 th September
Comma	25 th March	23 rd September
Small Copper	19 th June	24 th September
Purple Hairstreak	17 th July	17 th July
White-letter Hairstreak	-	-
Holly Blue	24 th April	28 th August
Brown Argus	-	-
Common Blue	22 nd May	28 th August

MOTHS

As predicted in the 2021 Report, access onto the Reserve continued to be a major issue throughout 2022 and was only open to visitors via the canal towpath with openings restricted to Sundays only. As a consequence visitor records were minimal. It was possible, however, to hold overnight traps on 20 May, 13 August for the Rodley Robins Club and 27 August.

The three events, together with the few individual sightings resulted in only 41 macro and 11 micro species being recorded during the year. There were no new species recorded during 2022 – the first year since records began back in 2001.

THE TOTAL SPECIES COUNT FOR THE RESERVE STANDS AT 241 MACRO AND 195 MICRO = 436 SPECIES

Individual Records 2022

Name	No.	Location	Date	Recorder
Small Yellow Underwing	1	?	15/05/2022	PH
Mullein caterpillar	2	Figwort, DFP area	18/06/2022	BM
Snout	1	Gate to Fish Pass	19/06/2022	DAN
Silver-ground Carpet	1	By Lagoon Hide	19/06/2022	DAN
Riband Wave	1	In Visitor Centre	28/06/2022	DAN
Straw Grass-veneer (<i>Agriphila straminella</i>)	2	Mike Fisk Meadow	13/07/2022	DAN
Copper Underwing agg.	1	by Lagoon Hide	25/07/2022	SB
<i>Udea lutealis</i>	1	Bramble by Visitor Centre	28/07/2022	DAN
Cinnabar caterpillars	?	Riverside Walk	01/08/2022	SB
Gold Spot	1	Buddleia on Butterfly Bank	07/08/2022	DS
Humming-bird Hawk-moth	1	Buddleia on Butterfly Bank	07/08/2022	PS
Mother of Pearl (<i>Patania ruralis</i>)	1	by Visitor Centre	14/08/2022	JSK
Cinnabar caterpillars	8	Riverside Walk	14/08/2022	PU
Sallow Kitten caterpillar	1	Riverside Walk	02/10/2022	PH
Rush Veneer	1	by Visitor Centre	11/10/2022	BM

Individual records of note include a Mullein caterpillar spotted on 18 June on figwort in the Dragonfly Pond Area, the second such caterpillar record the first being in June last year. The adult moth has yet to be seen at

Rodley and whilst widely distributed in England, it is more often found in its larval state.

Cinnabar caterpillars were also spotted on Riverside Walk Ragwort in August and as with the Mullein, the Cinnabar moth has proved elusive on the Reserve being last spotted in July 2019. The Cinnabar caterpillar was the top species of larvae recorded in Yorkshire during 2021 with 83 records submitted whilst the Mullein was fourth on the list with 37. As pointed out by the Yorkshire recorder this gives an indication as to which larvae are the easiest to identify either because they are well marked and common across the county or more likely to be feeding during the day.

The Buddleia on the Butterfly Bank can be a bit of a hotspot for Lepidoptera activity and in August a Humming-bird Hawk-moth was spotted nectaring on the flowers. This migrant moth was last recorded at the Reserve in 2019 being spotted most frequently in August. This is an excellent record for the Reserve as the Humming-bird Hawk-moth fared badly last year with only 31 records across the county.

The Riverside Walk is a popular area for day time moth activity particularly with caterpillar sightings - a Sallow Kitten larva was a late addition to this year's records being spotted in early October. First recorded in 2014 a further three sightings of the adult moth have been recorded up to 2018 but no further records since.

A further late sighting by the Visitor Centre was a Rush Veneer and whilst this is a common and fairly widespread migrant across Yorkshire this is only the fifth record for the Reserve since 2001.

Moth Trap Record 2022

Species	20 May	13 Aug	27 Aug	Total
Macro				
Blood-vein		1		1
Brimstone Moth			1	1
Burnished Brass			1	1
Common Rustic agg		6	6	12
Copper Underwing			1	1
Copper Underwing agg			1	1
Dark Arches		1	1	2
Dun-bar			1	1
Flame Shoulder		1	1	2
Garden Carpet		1		1
Gold Spot		1	1	2
Green Carpet	1			1
Ingrailed Clay	6			6
Iron Prominent		1		1

Species	20 May	13 Aug	27 Aug	Total
Large Yellow Underwing		9	83	92
Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing		3	5	8
Lesser Yellow Underwing		2		2
Lime-speck Pug			1	1
Lychnis	1		1	2
Nutmeg		1		1
Old Lady			3	3
Pinion-streaked Snout			1	1
Poplar Hawk-moth	2	1		3
Pug species	2			2
Riband Wave		2		2
Rustic Shoulder-knot	1			1
Sallow			3	3
Setaceous Hebrew Character		2	7	9
Shuttle-shaped Dart		4		4
Silver-ground Carpet	1			1
Single-dotted Wave		1		1
Six-striped Rustic		5		5
Small Square Spot		2		2
Smoky Wainscot		1	1	2
Snout			2	2
Spectacle			3	3
Square-spot Rustic		8	52	60
Straw Dot		1	1	2
Turnip Moth			1	1
White Ermine	4			4
Micro				
Acleris laterana/comariana agg			2	2
Agriphila straminella		1	2	3
Agriphila tristella			2	2
Yponomeuta evonymella (Bird-cherry Ermine)		1		1
Blastobasis lacticolella			2	2
Celypha lacunana			2	2
Epiphyas postvittana (Light Brown Apple Moth)		1		1
Pyrausta aurata (Mint Moth)		3		3
Mompha subbistrigella	1			1
Patania ruralis (Mother of Pearl)		3		3
Cataclysta lemnata (Small China-mark)			1	1
				271

Unfortunately the weather wasn't particularly kind on the planned trapping nights although the regular species came to light in reasonable number. Again, as is expected, the Large Yellow Underwing (92) finished top of the popularity list with the Square-spot Rustic (60) moving up from fifth last year to second spot.

Micro records for the year were particularly disappointing but the *Mompha subbistrigella* coming to light on 20 May was a welcome surprise and was only the third ever record for the Reserve being previously recorded in 2013 and 2016.

Macro species of note this year include the Lime-speck Pug. Whilst common and fairly widespread across the county this was only the seventh record at Rodley since 2001 being last recorded in 2017. In a similar vein it was good to record the Nutmeg returning after a four year absence and, whilst this is a fairly common species, can be thinly distributed across Yorkshire with distribution nationally decreasing significantly since 2000. Final macro species to note was the Pinion-streaked Snout, potentially mistaken as a micro moth, the species made an appearance to light in August. Classed as a scarce and local resident in Yorkshire this was the first record at the Reserve since 2017.

At the time of writing the Reserve is back to normal opening arrangements so, hopefully, mothing activity will be able to resume during 2023 with subsequent reports more representative of the moths to be found at Rodley.

Dave Nesham

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DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

This was a difficult season due to the limited opening of the reserve for the whole of the year. There were few records in the early part of the season but we ended up with a reasonable number. There were sightings of 17 species, 11 of which showed some form of reproductive activity. Most exciting of all was the sighting of a pair of Willow Emerald Damselflies in tandem; a new species for the reserve (Table 1). However, reproductive activity was not seen in the Emerald Damselfly, the Emperor Dragonfly and the Four-spotted Chaser and, sadly, no exuviae of any species were reported. It would be very helpful if 2023 could become the ‘year of the exuviae’, as this is the only stage which provides conclusive evidence of breeding, i.e. a complete reproductive cycle has been achieved.

Species	Wheel	Tandem	Ovipositing	Teneral	Exuviae
Willow Emerald Damselfly	-	1	-	-	-
Large Red Damselfly	-	1	1	-	-
Azure Damselfly	-	46	30	1	-
Common Blue Damselfly	-	1	-	-	-
Blue-tailed Damselfly	-	1	-	1	-
Migrant Hawker	-	-	1	-	-
Southern Hawker	-	-	1	-	-
Brown Hawker	-	-	6	5	-
Broad-bodied Chaser	1		1	-	-
Black-tailed Skimmer	-		2		
Common Darter	1	5	21	1	-

Table 1. The number of occasions on which the different phases of reproductive behaviour (wheel and tandem) were recorded, the number of times females were seen ovipositing and the number of teneral and exuviae.

Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*)

It was a better year for this species. It was first recorded on 23rd May over the Wet Grassland (JH), the first record for the Dragonfly Ponds being on 13th June (PJM). Throughout June and July it was seen at various locations: the edge of the Scrubland (PM/BM), along the River Path (PM/BM), at the Dragonfly Ponds (PJM, JS), near the Lagoon (PM/BM), along the Riverside Walk (EC), over the Reedbed (PM/BM) and along Bentley’s Path (ST). The largest number on any one day was six, comprising five males and one female at the Dragonfly Ponds on 20th June

(PJM). The last records were of two individuals on 6th August (PM/BM), a male on the River Path and a female near the Marsh area at the Dragonfly Ponds.

Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes sponsa*)

After 2021, when it was recorded on 11 days, this year was rather disappointing as the Emerald Damselfly was only seen on four days, although this was still better than the single record in 2020. The first sightings were on 10th July when both males and females were seen at the Dragonfly Ponds (JS, AT). It was again seen at the Dragonfly Ponds on 24th and 31st July (DW, RB, AT), with the final sighting of the season on 5th September (PJM). As in previous years, it was present at Chadwick Pond but was also seen this year at Mabgate Pond.

Willow Emerald (*Chalcolestes viridis*)

A brand new species for the reserve and a really exciting find. An individual was first seen on 28th September at an unknown location (JWC). On 2nd October a male and a pair in tandem were spotted on a willow at the Duck Marsh (AT, JWC, JS, PA); this was also the last record. There were a few odd records of Willow Emerald in Britain between 1979 and 2007. However, in 2009 there were around 400 sightings from 35 sites in Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, possibly resulting from an undetected influx from the continent in 2007. Over the following years the Willow Emerald has steadily extended its range. It reached Lincolnshire in 2018 and Yorkshire in 2019 and has been extending its range in the county since then. Finding a pair in tandem at the reserve is very encouraging for the future. This species lays its eggs in the branches of willow (and some other trees) that hang over the water and the resulting scars can easily be seen. When they hatch, the prolarvae drop into the water, where they continue their development.

Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*)

It was another very disappointing year for the Large Red Damselfly, mainly because this is a 'Spring' species and there was a dearth of recording early in the season. The first record was of a male near the Visitor Centre on 29th April (JS/JSK). The next record was not until some six weeks later, on 13th June, when one individual was seen on the Dipping Ponds (PJM) and a further four on the Dragonfly Ponds (PJM), one of the latter ovipositing. A pair in tandem were seen at the Dragonfly Ponds on 18th June (PM/BM) and the final sighting was at the same location on 20th June (PJM). On the best day only five individuals were seen, which compares with six in 2021 and 30 in 2020. However, on the positive side, one of 13th June records was of a mate-guarded female

ovipositing (PJM) and on 18th June a pair were seen in tandem (PJM); both of these records were from the Dragonfly Ponds.

Azure Damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*)

The Azure Damselfly has a long season. It was first recorded on 22nd May at the Dragonfly Ponds (AT) but then there was a gap until 13th June when good numbers were recorded at both the Dragonfly and Dipping Ponds (PJM) (Table 2). Numbers increased until at least the end of the third week in June (PJM), with the maximum seen on any one day being 86 at the Dragonfly Ponds and a further 44 at the Dipping Ponds (PJM) in the afternoon of 20th June. There were a total of 46 pairs seen in tandem and 30 pairs observed ovipositing. There were still reasonable numbers well into July but, by the end of that month, numbers were tailing off. The last record of the season was of a male at the Dragonfly Ponds (Woodhead Pond) on 5th September (PJM).

Date	Total	Male	Female	Pairs in Wheel	Pairs in Tandem	Ovipositing
Dragonfly Ponds (including the Education Pond)						
13 June	44	29	15	-	10	5
20 June am	57	43	14	-	5	9
20 June pm	86	68	8	-	2	6
10 July	20+	20+	-	-	-	-
20 July	11*	5	5	-	1	4
Dipping Ponds						
13 June	21	11	10	-	10	-
20 June am	22	17	5	-	5	-
20 June pm	44	33	11	-	5	6

Table 2. Numbers of Azure Damselflies at the height of their season. *plus one teneral.

Considerable reproductive activity was observed, the highest number of tandem pairs being on 13th June (PJM), with 10 at the Dragonfly Ponds and 10 at the Dipping Ponds. The most seen ovipositing was on 20th June (PJM); in the morning there were nine at the Dragonfly Ponds, while in the afternoon there were six at the Dragonfly Ponds and a further six at the Dipping Ponds (Table 2). It was a good year for this species, comparable to that of 2021.

Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*)

As noted previously, this species tends to be found at large bodies of water rather than the smaller water bodies found at the Dragonfly and Dipping Ponds. The larger water bodies on the reserve are not easily

accessible for dragonfly recording and so, as in previous years, this is probably why there have been few records of this species, even though it has a long flying season. It was only seen on three different days compared to three in 2020 and four in 2021. The first sighting was of two individuals at the edge of the Lagoon on 8th July (PM/BM). Good numbers were seen on the Willow Path and at the Dragonfly Ponds on 10th July (AT), the latter including a tandem pair. The next and last record was of a single male at an unrecorded location (PH).

Blue-tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*)

It was a rather disappointing year for this species which was first recorded on 22nd May along the Willow Path (AT). It was almost a month (20th June) before the next sighting, this time at the Dragonfly Ponds (PJM). It was recorded on only five dates in July: at the edge of the Lagoon (PM/BM), at the Dragonfly Ponds (JS, AT, RB) and along the River Path (PH/BM), the highest number recorded being five males on 10th July at the Dragonfly Ponds (AT). It was seen on just three dates in August, all at the Dragonfly Ponds, the last sighting being on 25th August at the Co-op Pond (PM/BM). There was just one record of reproductive activity – a pair in tandem at the Dragonfly Ponds on 31st July (AT).

Small Red-eyed Damselfly (*Erythromma viridulum*)

As last year, there were no sightings of this species.

Common Hawker (*Aeshna juncea*)

Unsurprisingly there were no records of the Common Hawker. It was last seen in 2019.

Migrant Hawker (*Aeshna mixta*)

It was a fairly good year for the Migrant Hawker. It was first seen on 15th August over the river by the bridge, this being 11 days later than the first sighting in 2021. It was sighted on a further seven days until the last record on 18th October on the Duck Marsh (PM/BM). It was seen at a variety of other locations around the reserve: the Dragonfly Ponds (PJM, JSK), the Wet Grassland (PM/BM), the Fish Pass (PM/BM), the Dipping Ponds (PJM), the Robins' area (EC) and along the roadside (PM/BM). The one in the Robins' area was ovipositing.

Southern Hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*)

It was a disappointing year for the Southern Hawker. It was first seen on 10th July around the Dragonfly Ponds (JS) but the next record was not until 14th August when a female was observed ovipositing at the Dragonfly Ponds (AT). There were then three occasions when single males were

recorded: on 26th August at the Dragonfly Ponds (Co-op Pond) and on 14th and 17th September at or near the Dipping Ponds (PM/BM). The last record was of a single male at Chadwick Pond on 22nd October (PM/BM)

Brown Hawker (*Aeshna grandis*)

The first record of the season was of a single individual on 19th June at the Dragonfly Ponds (JS). This was about two weeks earlier than the first record in 2021. The Brown Hawker was seen regularly throughout July and August and it is one of the commonest species on the reserve. The most seen on any one day was in excess of 10 from the Dragonfly Ponds and the surrounding area on 10th July (JS) and 10 at the Dragonfly Ponds (Mabgate Pond) on 24th July (DW). The latter record comprised four males, an ovipositing female and five teneral. Ovipositing females were also recorded on four other dates at the end of July and in August, all at the Dragonfly Ponds (RB, AT, PM/BM). In 2021 this species was seen at a wide variety of habitats but this year, apart from a sighting at the River Bridge (PM/BM) and the final record of the season on 9th September at the Dipping Ponds (PM/BM), all records were from the Dragonfly Ponds area.

Emperor Dragonfly (*Anax imperator*)

Sightings of the Emperor Dragonfly were similar to those of 2021 except there were no records of females. Only single males were seen, the first being on 10th July at the Dragonfly Pond area (JS), the last on 31st July, again at the Dragonfly Ponds (RB, AT). There were only two other recordings, one at the Dragonfly Ponds (Co-op Pond) on 11th July and the other over the Wet Grassland on 20th July (PM/BM).

Golden-ringed Dragonfly (*Cordulegaster boltonii*)

A surprise first record for the reserve was of a Golden-ringed Dragonfly, spotted on 24th July on Bentley's Path near the Dragonfly Ponds (ST). It is a long way from its normal habitat of acidic streams and is unlikely to be seen again.

Four-spotted Chaser (*Libellula quadrimaculata*)

It was a rather disappointing year for this species, with no more than two males being seen on any one day and no record of females. The first sighting was on 20th June at the Dragonfly Ponds (PJM); this was about two weeks later than last year. It was only seen on two other days; 4th July (PH) and 10th July (CR, JS, AT), before the last record of the season on 31st July, again at the Dragonfly Ponds (RB, AT). Unlike 2021, there were no records away from the Dragonfly Ponds, although there was one record for which no location was given.

Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*)

The first record of this species was on 22nd May (PH) but the location was not recorded. The first sighting at the Dragonfly Ponds was of a male on 20th June. It was seen regularly throughout July, with most of the records being of males (CR, AT, PM/BM, PH, RB). However, single females were seen on a few occasions in the first half of the month (PH, CR). There is one record of an ovipositing female on 4th July (CR) and another of a pair in the wheel position on 8th July (PM/BM), the latter at the Co-op Pond. The largest number recorded on any one day was six (five males and a female) on 10th July at the Dragonfly Ponds, interestingly all at the Co-op Pond (JS). All of the records where the location was given were from the Dragonfly Ponds but there were a number of records where no location was provided. The last record of the season was at the Co-op Pond on 8th August (PM/BM).

Black-tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*)

It was a good year for the Black-tailed Skimmer. It was seen on eight different days, compared with nine in 2021. The first record was on 4th July at an unrecorded location (PH). On 8th July, two males and an ovipositing female were seen at the Dragonfly Ponds (Co-op Pond) (PM/BM) and a single female along the entry road (PM/BM). It was seen on three more dates in July, mostly at the Dragonfly Ponds (RB, JS, AT), including another ovipositing female on the Co-op Pond. Other sightings were on the Wet Grassland (RB) and on the path by Tim's Field. A male was also seen at the latter site on 1st August (PM/BM). No more records were obtained until the last visit of a male seen by the Gazebo on 14th August (AT).

Keeled Skimmer (*Orthetrum coerulescens*)

This species has not been recorded at the reserve since a single record in 2015.

Black Darter (*Sympetrum danae*)

There were no records of the Black Darter this year. It was last seen on 8th September 2021. It is a species of heathland and moorland so any visitors to the reserve are unusual.

Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*)

This is by far and away the most commonly recorded dragonfly on the reserve. The first record of the season was of a female at the Dragonfly Ponds on 10th July (JS), almost two weeks later than the first record in 2021. It was seen regularly throughout the rest of July, August, September and October, the last sightings being on 22nd October at the Dragonfly and

Dipping Ponds (PM/BM). There were two peaks in the numbers recorded. The first was in the first half of September (PJM, PM/BM), the second in the third week of October (PM/BM). However, this may be a reflection of the limited recording this year rather than two 'real' peaks. The highest numbers recorded were 15 on 5th September (PJM), 22 on 9th September, 16 on 17th September and 27 on 22nd October (PM/BM), most of the records being from the Dragonfly and Dipping Ponds (Table 3).

Date	Total	Male	Female	Pairs in Wheel	Pairs in Tandem	Ovipositing
Dragonfly Ponds (including the Education Pond)						
5 September	15	10	5	-	-	5
9 September	17	9	8	-	-	7
17 September	4	2	2	-	1	1
22 October	18	13	5	-	1	4
Dipping Ponds						
9 September	4	3	1	-	1	-
17 September	9	6	3	-	1	2
22 October	9	7	2	-	-	2

Table 3. Numbers of Common Darters at the height of their season, showing what appears to be two peaks, one in early to mid-September, the other in late October.

However, there were records from elsewhere on the reserve: over the Wet Grassland on 12th and 26th August, on the Riverside Walk on 26th August and along the path by Tim's Field on 9th and 17th September (PM/BM).

Apart from a couple of exceptions, all reproductive activity was recorded during the two peaks of maximum activity and comprised four tandem pairs (PM/BM) and 21 sightings of oviposition (PJM, PM/BM). The two exceptions were a tandem pair recorded on 26th August (PM/BM) and a pair in the 'Wheel' formation seen on 29th September (MG/PG), both at the Dragonfly Ponds. The last record of the season was on 22nd October (PM/BM).

Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum sanguineum*)

As in 2021, the Ruddy Darter was only recorded on two occasions, its first sighting on 10th July (AT) and its last on 31st July (AT)

Dragonflies and Damselflies
First and Last Dates (in order of first date seen) - 2022

Species	First Date	First date order in 2021	Last date
Large Red Damselfly	29 th April	1	20 th June
Azure Damselfly	22 nd May	2	5 th September
Broad-bodied Chaser	22 nd May	6	8 th August
Blue-tailed Damselfly	22 nd May	4	25 th August
Banded Demoiselle	23 rd May	3	6 th August
Brown Hawker	19 th June	11	9 th September
Four-spotted Chaser	20 th June	7=	31 st July
Black-tailed Skimmer	4 th July	7=	14 th August
Common Blue Damselfly	8 th July	5	4 th September
Emperor Dragonfly	10 th July	9	31 st July
Common Darter	10 th July	10	22 nd October
Emerald Damselfly	10 th July	12	5 th September
Ruddy Darter	10 th July**	13	31 st July
Southern Hawker	10 th July	14	22 nd October
Golden-ringed Dragonfly	24 th July*	-	24 th July*
Migrant Hawker	15 th August	15	18 th October
Willow Emerald Damselfly	28 th September*	-	2 nd October*
Black Darter	-	15	-

*First record for the reserve, **Earliest ever record

Terminology

Exuvia - The shed larval skeleton. Plural: exuviae

Ovipositing - The act of egg-laying.

Tandem pair - When the male attaches to the female at the back of her head before mating and, in many species, after mating as a form of mate guarding.

Teneral - A newly emerged adult dragonfly without the full coloration of the mature adult. Strictly speaking before its maiden flight.

Wheel position - The mating position when the male and the female form a wheel shape with their bodies.

New Invertebrate Records for 2022

Only three new species were identified in 2022. One of these, the Willow Emerald Damselfly *Chalcolestes viridis* was seen at the end of September/beginning of October on willow by the Duck Marsh. Its thorax and abdomen are metallic green like the Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa*, which is seen in small numbers at the Dragonfly Ponds. It can be distinguished from the latter by its large pale wing spots which are outlined in black. The Willow Emerald is a recent colonist, first appearing in significant numbers in East Anglia as recently as 2009. Rodley is near the northwest edge of its range. The Golden-ringed Dragonfly *Cordulegaster boltonii* was seen on just the one occasion, on Bentley's Path. This is almost certainly a one-off event as it is far from its normal habitat, the nearest records being about 10 miles away on the River Wharfe. Further details are given under 'Dragonflies and Damselflies'.

The third new find was of an ichneumon wasp belonging to the genus *Lissonota*. Members of this genus are very difficult to identify to species level. These 'wasps' are parasitoids, laying their eggs in other insect larvae and 15 species of Ichneumon have now been recorded on the reserve. These *Lissonota* were seen flying to and running around on a rotting fence post on Poplar Field investigating the holes made by insect larvae and probing their long ovipositors into them. These wasps tend to go for concealed moth caterpillars which feed on the rotting wood.

FUNGI REPORT 2022

This report is based largely on the finds from the two forays we carried out. One was a public foray on 23rd October and there was a foray for the 'Robins' on 12th November. As the climate changes the fungus season is extending by starting earlier and finishing later, so November can still be good for fungi. (It can also begin earlier depending on the amount of rain we get.)

One of the most striking finds was the Collared Earthstar which looks more like some alien spaceship with its landing legs down. These were found on both forays in the willow coppice. Also in the coppice we found plenty of White Coral Fungus. The previous year, almost in the same area, we had the very similar Wrinkled Coral but none of that was seen this year.

Every year we see the Artist's Bracket on some of the larger willows and that's because these brackets are perennial and can carry on growing for ten years or more. There are several species called Artist's Bracket so this one is sometimes called the False Artist's Bracket to distinguish it. However, all the Artist's Brackets share the same property that gives them their name. The white underside can be drawn on with a stick and it produces a permanent brown line.

All the above and many of the fungi we found were not of the conventional toadstool shape. They rejoice in names like, Blushing Bracket, Hairy Curtain Crust, Turkeytails, Jelly Ear and Amber Jelly. One of these, the Yellowing Curtain Crust has become more common in recent years and we may have recorded it for the first time on the reserve this year.

The grassland areas provided us with three different species of waxcap; Blackening, Parrot and Snowy Waxcaps. The number of species of waxcaps a grassland contains is a good measure of the quality of the grassland from a conservation point of view. It will be interesting to see if this number increases as we continue to manage the meadow areas on the reserve.

Another notable grassland species was the Fairy Ring Champignon. We could see part of a fairy ring where the grass was significantly darker. What causes the darker grass is actually quite a complex process but it is mainly due to the fungi releasing enzymes into the soil to break down the dead plant material.

At the edge of the grassland we found several Blue Roundheads but only the very youngest of them still looked blue. The colour soon gets washed out by the rain. Near to them were some toadstools that used to be called the Yellow Cowpat Toadstool but the name has been changed to the more pedestrian Yellow Fieldcap. A sensible decision, I suppose, as most, like ours, weren't growing out of a cowpat, though they do like very rich soil.

Several specimens had to be taken home to identify as some cannot be separated in the field and require a microscope. For example a little oyster mushroom type fungus could have been the Variable Oysterling but this has different spores from the equally common Round-spored Oysterling. That is what it turned out to be. There are also several species called Poisonpie and it's only just beginning to be realised that several Poisonpie species are more common than the so called Common Poisonpie. We found a lovely specimen of Velvetfoot Poisonpie in the willow coppice. Recent studies indicate this is quite common in the UK but you will find it mentioned in very few books!

Andy Woodall

Photograph Credits

We are grateful to the following for allowing us to use their images.

Black Redstart	Kirsty McLeod
Collared Earthstar	Rachel Gander
Comma butterfly	Barbara Murphy
Common Blue Damselfly	Barbara Murphy
Common Buzzard	Peter Humphrey
Gatekeeper butterfly	Barbara Murphy
Hoverfly <i>Sphaerophonia scripta</i>	Barbara Murphy
Hummingbird Hawk-moth	Howard Smith
Jelly Ear Fungus	Barbara Murphy
Kestrel with eggs	Barbara Murphy
Kestrel juveniles	Barbara Murphy
Otter	Elaine Lessani
Roe Deer	Barbara Murphy
Small Yellow Underwing Moth	Peter Humphrey
Water Scorpion	Pam Hunt
Willow Emerald Damselfly	Peter Humphrey