

DECEMBER 2017 – THURLESTONE BAY BIRDS

A month of contrasting weather with some mild spells at the beginning – cold with frost on 5 days mid month.

Stormy with F8 and 9 gales at the month end. Heavy rain on 13th and 14th, 26th and 27th, 29th 30th and 31st. Month end both Marshes flooded

Two additions to the year list – BITTERN and a hybrid AMERICAN WIGEON/WIGEON took the total to 204 (c/f 2016 – 202, 2015 – 187)

Only 108 species recorded (the expected influx of winter duck just not occurred this month) – c/f 2016 – 112, 2015 – 101)

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

GEESE, DUCKS and DIVERS

BRENT GOOSE (DB) 1 with a small CANADA flock on South Huish Marsh on 11th. One flew around the Bay then West on 20th.

SHELDUCK – first returning birds – 2 on South Huish Marsh on 14th.

WIGEON – Max on South Huish Marsh 90+ on 27th. On South Efford Marsh 200+ on 17th

AMERICAN WIGEON/WIGEON – A male first picked up amongst the WIGEON flock on South Huish Marsh on 14th, after discussions and looking at photos a correct decision reached that it was a hybrid. Still present at the end of the month.

TEAL – Max on South Huish Marsh 35 several dates, at South Efford Marsh 90+ most of the month.

TUFTED DUCK – A male on South Huish Marsh on 7th.

COMMON SCOTER – Only one record of 2 flying east on 12th.

RED T DIVER – Single flying west on 12th and 17th.

BLACK T DIVER – Single flew east on 18th.

GREAT N DIVER – Increase in sightings this month - 2 on 11th, 12th and 18th with same bird in the Bay on 20th and 22nd.

FULMAR and GANNET

FULMAR – Late returning this year – singles on 8th and 21st.

GANNET – Large counts – 105 on 21st, 125 on 18th.

EGRETS, HERON, SPOONBILL, RAILS and DIPPER

LITTLE EGRETS – Up to 4 on South Huish Marsh all month.

CATTLE EGRET – the standout species this year being recorded in every month – numbers increased at South Huish Marsh from 1 on 7th to 7 from 18th onwards.

BITTERN – One reported flying over North Marsh late afternoon of 5th.

SPOONBILL – A Juvenile between 6th and 20th at South Huish Marsh and on the Avon Estuary, also on Thurlestone Marsh on 30th.

WATER RAIL – Max of 3 on South Milton Ley on 18th.

DIPPER -1 by Hatch Bridge on 13th.

WADERS – A total of 12 species recorded.

OYSTERCATCHER – Max 23 on 11th.

RINGED PLOVER – Max 10 on 20th.

LAPWING – A lone bird on South Huish Marsh all month. On 12th a flock of 45 sighted near the Churstow roundabout.

DUNLIN – A single bird recorded from 7th at South Huish Marsh.

SNIPE -Max of 90+ on South Huish Marsh on 22nd (flushed by a SPARROWHAWK).

BLACK T. GODWIT – Max of 11 from 7th – 13th at South Huish Marsh.

CURLEW – On South Efford Marsh 16 on 11th.
COMMON SANDPIPER – Max of 6 on Avon Estuary on 15th.
GREEN SANDPIPER – 1 on Avon Estuary on 13th.
GREENSHANK – Max of 6 on 15th on South Efford Marsh.
REDSHANK – Max of 4 on 15th on South Efford Marsh.
TURNSTONE – Max of 18 on 11th.

GULLS

KITTIWAKE – Max through the Bay 18 on 21st.
MEDITERRANEAN GULL – 2 on South Huish Marsh on 7th and 11th.
COMMON GULL – 4 on South Huish Marsh on 7th was the max this year.

OWLS

BARN OWL – Reported from 2 sites.
TAWNY OWL – Reported from several sites.

CREST and WARBLERS

GOLDCRESTS – Reported from 4 sites a total of 8 ringed on 2 dates.
FIRECREST - The Autumn influx resulted in many more records than previous years – 1 ringed at South Milton Ley on 5th, 2 on site on 18th and 19th. 2 at Aveton Gifford on 6th and 27th, in a Thurlestone Garden on 12th.
CETTIS WARBLER – 2 at South Milton Ley on 5th and 1 on 18th.
CHIFFCHAFF – Influx at South Milton Ley with 12 ringed on 5th, 15 on 18th when total on site estimated at 30+. Also recorded from 3 other sites.
SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF – 1 ringed at South Milton Ley on 5th and also on site on both 18th and 19th.
BLACKCAP – 1 in a South Milton Garden on 21st surprisingly the only record.
YELLOW BROWED WARBLER – Dave Pages had 1 in the hedgerow near the Sewage Works on 6th
NUTHATCH – Around Aveton Gifford is the stronghold for these – 2 on 15th and 27th.

THRUSHES

FIELDFARE – Huxton Cross main site with 70+ on 7th and 120+ on 20th. Other sites recorded a max of 5
REDWING – Huxton Cross recorded the max of 100+ on 12th. At South Milton Ley 80+ on 19th.
MISTLE THRUSH – Only singles at 2 sites.
SOUTH THRUSH -Noticeable increase with a total of 8 on 12th and 17th, 6 in the copse on 27th.

STARTS, PIPITS, FINCHES, BUNTINGS ETC.

BLACK REDSTART -A female around my garden on 15th and 18th.
MEADOW PIPIT- Max 100+ on South Efford Marsh on 11th.
WATER PIPIT- 3 on South Efford Marsh on 11th, singles at both Marsh sites on several dates.
GOLDFINCH – Max 40 over my Garden on 12th.
BULLFINCH – Max 9 around Aveton Gifford on 11th.
YELLOWHAMMER -Single male at Huxton Cross on 12th and 22nd
CIRL BUNTING – In my garden on several dates with a pair on 17th.
REED BUNTING – Low numbers this winter – 3 ringed at South Milton Ley on 18th. Up to 3 regularly on my feeders.
TREE CREEPER – 1 at Aveton Gifford on 27th was first record since March.

Will endeavour to write a brief annual review early next month.

A year of some standout highlights and disappointments with the numbers of Duck particularly Sea Duck.

A New Year always brings the expectations of what might be recorded.

Thurlestonebaybirds.co.uk

