



Maun Conservation Group

Oakham & Quarry Lane Nature Reserves

Avian Report for the period Jan-Dec 2022

Survey day is the second Wednesday in the month, commencing at 0945 (weather permitting) from the entrance to Oakham off Bleak Hills Lane. The route follows the perimeter of Oakham Meadow and continues towards Hamilton path via the zig zags. Crossing the road, to observe the Hamilton circle, and returning, to proceed to Quarry Lane reserve. Continue on the path under the viaduct and across Sarah's bridge to finish at Field Mill Pond. Time taken is approximately 2.5 hours.

Despite Covid continuing to make its presence felt and flu ravaging the country in the second winter period, surveys were 100% completed. The forced creation of a new (lumpy) meadow on Oakham, destroying prime warbler habitat, had its expected effect - Garden Warbler and Whitethroat were absent during 2022. Three new birds were added to the species list, the long overdue Spotted Flycatcher passing through during the August survey, Jay during the January survey and Rook during the February survey, bringing the total species list since Oct 2018 to 67. The Field Mill Mute Swans raised a single chick from 4 eggs, 2 of which initially hatched. This was the first successful breeding on Field Mill for several years, much to the delight of the local observers.

The What's App chat line continues to play an important part in reporting for the site, not only for birds but for all aspects of wildlife. Photographs are welcome, please keep them coming. Survey days give only a snapshot of the avian activity. It is these additional reports that give a fuller picture and enhance the understanding of the comings and goings of the study area.

Total number of species recorded in 2022 stands at 46. Species not seen this year:- Cormorant, Grey Lag Goose, Garden Warbler, Whitethroat, Shoveler, Wigeon, Mandarin Duck, Herring Gull, Lesser Black Backed Gull, Common Gull, Gt White Egret, Little Egret, Goosander, Barn

Swallow, House Martin, Sand Martin, Pied Wagtail, Linnet, Starling, Nuthatch and Mistle Thrush.

Species List 2022 (IOC Taxonomic order)

Canada Goose- scarce visitor

A single bird strayed onto Oakham and was present on Reed Mill during the April survey.

Mute Swan

A welcome success for the pair on Field Mill Pond who successfully raised a single chick to adulthood. 2 cygnets hatched but were down to one after 2 weeks.



April



July



December

This was the first observed breeding of Mute Swans since records began (2018). Aggressive protection of their one surviving cygnet could be a factor for an unusual breeding pattern by Field Mill Pond residents.

Mallard - Resident breeder

Present all year on Field Mill, numbers peaking at 41 in January. This is a similar pattern to previous years.

For some reason Reed Mill does not attract this species. A maximum of 2 birds seen on odd occasions.

Tufted Duck - regular visitor

Reed Mill is the only site to see this diving duck, Field Mill is too shallow. Present in low numbers all year.

Little Grebe - Winter visitor

A visitor to both reserves. A poor year, just a single on Field Mill in January and returning birds visiting Reed Mill in October and November with up to 3 birds present.

Great Crested Grebe - Summer visitor

A single overwintered on Reed Mill but had departed by the time of the March survey. Up to 2 birds summered (May-Oct) on Reed Mill but the breeding success from last year was not repeated.

Grey Heron - regular visitor

Not seen as frequently as last year. Up to 2 birds were present on both Oakham and Quarry Lane during July-September and a single bird on Quarry Lane in December.

The peak in the Summer months coincides with Coot, Moorhen and Mallard chicks on Field Mill Pond. Easy pickings for unguarded young.

Sparrowhawk - Occasional visitor

Like last year just 3 records, at Oakham in January and February and Quarry Lane in September.

Buzzard - scarce visitor

Seen in the first and second Winter periods over both reserves.

Moorhen - resident breeder

Common throughout both reserves all year though never in large numbers on Oakham.

An excellent 2021 breeding season on Field Mill, swelled the winter numbers to a record of 18 in January. This dwindled, Spring and Summer breeding came to a halt (?) but late breeding activity

increased numbers to a modest level.



Coot - resident occasional breeder.

Present in low numbers on Reed Mill Pond for most of the year and only once reaching double figures (Jan) but no evidence of breeding.

However, a pair on Field Mill produced 5 healthy young which survived into adulthood.

Black Headed Gull - Winter visitor

Numbers were consistent in the middle thirties for the first winter period but exactly as last year, the annual breeding dispersal cleared out all birds by the beginning of April. Returning birds appeared from August onwards and had increased to 41 on the December survey. Field Mill Pond is the stronghold, birds rarely venturing in numbers to Reed Mill.

Wood Pigeon - resident

A common resident, numbers probably under recorded. No evidence of breeding recorded.

Collared Dove - scarce visitor

Just 3 records of singles on Quarry Lane in January and May and one on Oakham in July. A declining species nationally.

Common Swift - Occasional summer visitor

Just 3 circling over Oakham Meadow in May and a further single in June.

Kingfisher - resident.

Continues to excite locals with many single sightings posted on What's app throughout the year. Seen only in Oct/Nov on survey days. A visitor to the reserve saw two together on Boxing Day. What a Xmas treat!

Great Spotted Woodpecker - Scarce visitor

A single in March and two in April and June graced Oakham. Oct/Nov saw a single take up residence in Quarry Lane. This bird thrilled the October NWT (Notts Wildlife Trust) Wildlife Watch Group (7-13 yrs) children.

Common Kestrel - irregular visitor.

Both sexes seen sporadically throughout the year. A juvenile male seen on Field Mill in December possibly points to breeding in the locality.

Magpie – resident

Present in low numbers throughout the year

Jackdaw – resident

More often heard calling on both reserves.

Rook – Occasional visitor

First ever record of a single on Oakham in January was again seen in February

Carrion Crow - resident

Present in low numbers
throughout the year.



Jay- increasingly common visitor

A single seen in February on Quarry Lane LNR was the first of monthly sightings through till July when a family of 5 birds were observed searching for food on Oakham Meadow. It appears that a subsequent dispersal took place, no further sightings until a single was observed in Hamilton Wood in November and December. A new bird for the reserve.

Blue Tit - resident breeder

Present in single figures throughout the year. A beneficiary of the nest boxes on Oakham but does also use natural sites on Quarry Lane. A maximum of 11 birds on Oakham during the February survey.

Coal Tit- A rare visitor

Two sightings was considered a good return for this conifer dwelling tit. Both events on Oakham in September and December/.

Great Tit – resident

Relatively common on both reserves but strangely no evidence of breeding.

Long Tailed Tit - resident breeder

Present all year on both reserves but tends to favour Quarry Lane.

Common Chiff Chaff – summer visitor

Was absent during the first winter period but returned in low numbers from March onwards. Several records of singing males but no young observed although probably bred. Come September and all had deserted both reserves. A disappointing decline but hopefully the return of bramble scrub on the new lumpy meadow, will encourage breeding for this ground nesting warbler.

Willow Warbler - summer visitor

At least one male singing on Oakham during May and June but no evidence of breeding.

Blackcap - summer visitor

Significant arrival in April, several singing males and at least one family observed on Oakham. By end July all had departed.

Goldcrest- irregular visitor

Probably this tiny crest is under recorded. Seen occasionally throughout the year but no pattern has been established.

Wren – resident

Probably bred on Quarry Lane, a bird was seen carrying food in July. Up to six birds present on both reserves throughout the year.

Tree Creeper - scarce winter visitor

Just one record of a bird feeding on the path adjacent to Reed Mill at the bottom of the zig zags.

Song Thrush – resident

Singles seen from January onwards on both sites which had risen to 4 in June suggesting a successful breeding season. Sightings then fell away until August and no further records until 2 were present on the grassy path to Field Mill Pond.

Blackbird – resident breeder

Present all year but rarely getting to double figures on either reserve. A maximum on Quarry Lane in March.



Spotted Flycatcher - vagrant

A new bird for the reserve observed on Oakham during the August survey.

Photograph by courtesy of Phil Millns, Mansfield RSPB Local Group.



Robin - resident breeder

Low numbers on each reserve but increasing September onwards suggesting a good late summer breeding season.



House Sparrow - sporadic visitor

A small colony in hedge to the East of Matlock steps seen occasionally feeding in the area around the dipping pool. Probably breeds.

Dunnock – resident

One pair present on both reserves all year. 3 birds seen in the territory around the zig zags suggests breeding at this site.

Grey Wagtail - resident breeder

Almost certainly only one pair present on Quarry Lane favouring the territory around the culvert under Sheepbridge Lane. No young seen this year.

Chaffinch – resident

A resident of Oakham only. A maximum of 4 birds seen in September.

Bullfinch - resident

Hamilton is the stronghold but only in low numbers. No young seen during the year.

Greenfinch – resident

Becoming increasingly scarce on Field Mill area and now rarely seen or heard on either reserve.

Goldfinch – resident

Numbers are boosted by the post breeding season, peaking at 20 in March and 18 in September, over Oakham common. Only seen in ones and twos on Quarry Lane.

Siskin - winter visitor

Very small flocks seen on Oakham during February and March.

Tony Wardell

The compilation of this report would not be possible without the regular survey volunteers and What's App contributors Sarah & Tim Spurry, Nat Singhal, Isobel Boundford, Steve Dale, Claire Wickham and Martin Ellis.

Photography by Maun Conservation unless designated otherwise.

Legend

First Winter period Jan - March

Summer period April – September

Second Winter period – October - December.