



*Spring and autumn 2012 were once again good for Northern Wheatear records, especially on Wanstead Flats. Birds were also seen on the Plain in Wanstead Park. Photo: Nick Croft.*

# THE BIRDS OF WANSTEAD 2012

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## TIME LINE

### February

At least 5  
Goosander, 2 Smew,  
8 Golden Plover,  
Grey Plover and  
Jack Snipe seen  
during big freeze

### April

Up to 60 Northern  
Wheatear bird-days  
and 4 Ring Ouzels  
on Flats

### July

2 Black-tailed  
Godwits over Flats

### August

Wryneck and 4  
Pied Flycatchers

### September

Greenshank over  
Alex

### October

2 Hawfinches and  
several Woodlarks  
involved in another  
impressive visible  
migration season

### December

At least 12  
Waxwings on Flats

*For the third year running, more than 130 species were seen in the Wanstead Park/Wanstead Flats area. Highlights were many and included the first Jack Snipe, Grey Plover, Greenshank and Hawfinches for a very long time – and the second Wryneck in three years.*

The first of those was found on a frozen Alexandra Lake on 'Jack Snipe Sunday' (5 February), a day in the middle of a very cold snap when multiple Golden Plover and hundreds of Lapwings were seen over the Flats. The cold spell also brought Smew, Goosander, Grey Plover and unusual numbers of Wigeon to our area. For anyone out in the field that day, the memories will live on for years.

Equally memorable was the fall of 25 August, a day that dawned dull and drizzly but which was quickly enlivened when Tony Brown found a Wryneck in the SSSI. As more pairs of eyes focused on the hawthorn where it had originally been seen, a succession of other interesting birds appeared in the same tree: Spotted and Pied Flycatchers, Common Redstart, Common and Lesser Whitethroats, Garden and Willow Warblers ... If that's what one hawthorn can produce during early autumn migra-

tion, imagine what still gets missed, in spite of the best efforts of 'constant effort' birders such as Nick Croft. Autumn passage was good, once more reminding us that the Flats is one of the best places in London to see species such as Whinchat, Northern Wheatear, Ring Ouzel and Spotted Flycatcher.

However, it was not all good news. Once more there were no passage Turtle Dove records in spring or autumn, and just the one Cuckoo – reflecting the rapidly declining fortunes of these species as breeding species. And Skylark breeding numbers were down, though whether this was related to the cool and wet conditions through most of the summer – or something else – was not immediately obvious. Close monitoring of this species is required in 2013.

I hope you enjoy the report.

**Tim Harris**

*I hope you enjoy this report, but it would not have been possible without the thousands of hours of effort put in by many observers. So, thanks to Barry Bishop, Tony Brown (TB), Jennifer Charter, Nick Croft (NC), Paul Davies (PD), Paul Ferris, Stuart Fisher (SF), Sally Hammond, Kathy Hartnett, Dan Hennessey (DH), Gary Hewett (GH), Adam Hudson, Harry Lacey, Jonathan Lethbridge (JL), Mike Messenger, Richard Oakman, Pete Saunders, Josh Selfe, John Skerry, Steve Thorpe (ST), Bob Vaughan, Eve Wee and Wanstead Wildlife. (Apologies to anyone I've forgotten.) Special thanks to Jono Lethbridge and Nick Croft for their fantastic photos.*

*In the cases of locally rare species, descriptions have been or will be submitted to the London Natural History Society (Ornithological Section) rarities committee.*

## THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

### Mute Swan

*Resident, breeding in small numbers*  
Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals (\*denotes Eagle Pond included in figures):

15/1: 18 (20\*)  
12/2: 36\*  
10/3: 2 (WP and Eagle only)  
16/9: 24\*  
14/10: 24\* (no count for Alex)  
18/11: 25\*  
16/12: 17 (WP only)

*Breeding:* nestbuilding at Alexandra Lake, 16/2, Shoulder of Mutton, 26/2 (nest later abandoned). Pair on Heronry raised 6 cygnets.

### Greylag Goose

*Resident*  
Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals:

15/1: 16\*  
12/2: 0\*  
10/3: 0 (WP only)  
16/9: 2\*  
14/10: 5\* (no count for Alex)  
18/11: 6  
16/12: 0 (WP only)

*Maximum count:* 24 by Alex on 28/12.

### [Barnacle Goose

*Not known to have occurred in the wild*  
1 flew over Heronry Lake, 31/5; 1 over Flats, 10/10.]

### Canada Goose

*Resident breeder*  
Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals (\*denotes Eagle Pond included in figures):

15/1: 199 (228\*)  
12/2: 260\*

10/3: 45 (WP and Eagle only)  
16/9: 280\*  
14/10: 77\* (no count for Alex)  
18/11: 338\*  
16/12: 5 (WP only)

*Breeding:* broods were raised on Alex, Jubilee, Heronry and the Basin.

### Brent Goose

*Rare*  
One over Flats, 31/12 (NC).

### Egyptian Goose

*Small numbers present for much of the year.*  
Coordinated wildfowl counts during the winter months produced the following totals (\*denotes Eagle Pond included in the figures):

15/1: 10\*  
12/2: 8\*  
10/3: 10 (WP only)  
16/9: 2\*  
14/10: 2\* (no count for Alex)  
18/11: 2\*  
16/12: 2 (WP only)

*Peak count:* 12 on 2/2 and 19/2.

### Shelduck

*Scarce visitor in spring and summer*  
2 over Jubilee Pond in fog early on the morning of 13/4. Over Flats, 2 on 27/4 and 1 on 28/4. 3 over Flats, 11/5.

### Mandarin

*Rare visitor*  
Pair in Fortifications on 11/3 (ST) were the first since November 2010; male there, 20/3, 27/3, 28/3. Presumably the same pair flew N from Shoulder of Mutton on 17/3. Display observed by Ornamentals, 31/3.

### [Wood Duck

*Rare visitor, presumably from a feral population.*  
A leucistic female was on Shoulder of



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**Small numbers of Common Teal winter in the area. They favour the Ornamental Waters, in Wanstead Park, and Alexandra Lake, on the Flats.**

Mutton in the fog on the early morning of 24/3. Possibly the first bird seen in Wanstead?]

**Wigeon**

*Scarce autumn and winter visitor*  
A good first winter period. Two males, Basin, 1/2; 3 males and 2 females, Basin, 4/2. The 4 on the Basin, 6/3. In autumn 9 over Alex on 1/9, 3 of which were then seen on the Basin — a very early autumn record. Juvenile was on Ornamentals on 15–16/9. Another or the same present there in late November and December.

**Gadwall**

*Resident non-breeder, numbers increasing significantly in winter*  
Wanstead Park is a very important winter site for this species. First returning birds were 7 on Alex, 12/8. Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months pro-

duced the following totals:

- 15/1: 88\* (peak count: 105)
- 12/2: 52\*
- 16/9: 19\*
- 14/10: 63\* (no count for Alex)
- 18/11: 105\*
- 3/12: 107 on Basin, 20 Heronry
- 16/12: 124 (WP only)

Around 100 were present on The Basin on some days in December and the WeBS count that month was one of the biggest ever, climbing even higher at the year end, with 200+ in the Park on 23/12.

**Common Teal**

*Scarce winter visitor*  
Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals:

- 15/1: 7\*
- 12/2: 3\*
- 10/3: 0 (WP only)
- 16/9: 0\*
- 14/10: 5\* (no count for Alex)
- 18/11: 0\*
- 16/12: 2 (WP only)

Small numbers on the Roding in February. 11+ in Park on 20/2, 10 (8

drakes) on Ornamentals on 21/3. A pair lingered on Alex until 21/4 at least. Two over Flats, 1/9. Four in Park on 1/12.

**Mallard**

*Resident, breeding in small numbers*  
Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals:

- 15/1: 159 (192\*)
- 12/2: 177\*
- 10/3: 71\* (WP and Eagle only)
- 16/9: 128\*
- 14/10: 102\* (no count for Alex)
- 18/11: 141\*
- 16/12: 70 (WP only)

*Breeding:* broods raised on all the main ponds.

**Garganey**

*Rare passage migrant*  
No records since 3 in 2009.

**Two Common Goldeneye stayed only briefly on Heronry Lake on the morning of 15 October. They were found by Dan Hennessey on his way to work.**

**Shoveler**

*Fairly common winter visitor*  
First returning bird of autumn was a female on Alex, 12/8. Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals:

- 15/1: 23\* (peak count: 38)
- 12/2: 11\*
- 10/3: 13\* (Eagle only)



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- 16/9: 2\*
  - 14/10: 5\* (no count for Alex)
  - 18/11: 29\*
  - 16/12: 8 (WP only)
- About 30 on Alex, 26/3, with 15 there, 4/4.

**Pochard**

*Fairly common winter visitor*  
Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals:

- 15/1: 47\*
- 12/2: 50\*
- 10/3: 2\* (WP and Eagle only)
- 15/4: 0\*
- 16/9: 33\*
- 14/10: 38\* (no count for Alex)
- 18/11: 7\*
- 16/12: 24 (WP only)

There was a clear-out in late February: numbers in the Park fell from 42 on 22nd to six on 28th and just 1 on 10/3. A pair was on Alex on 12/4 and another or the same in the Park on 9/5. The first returning birds were on Heronry on 1/9, with 14 there the following day. The lower November WeBS count was followed by a new increase with 30 on 30/11. *Peak count:* 53 (all on Heronry), 7/1.

**Tufted Duck**

*Resident, with numbers increasing significantly in winter*  
Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals:

- 15/1: 110\* (peak count: 170)
- 12/2: 61\*
- 10/3: 57\* (WP and Eagle only)
- 16/9: 70\*
- 14/10: 70 (no count for Alex)
- 18/11: 64\*
- 16/12: 73 (WP only)

*Breeding:* mating observed on Perch, 24/2. Broods of 7 (Jubilee) and 8 (Alex) ducklings in late July.



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**A Redhead Smew, found by Steve Thorpe on the River Roding by the Old Sewage Works in February was joined by a second bird for one day at least. Their arrival, and that of several Goosander, coincided with a very cold spell that also brought single Jack Snipe and Grey Plover and multiple Lapwings and Golden Plover to our area.**

**Common Goldeneye** 2  
*Rare visitor*  
Female and first-winter male on Heronry, 15/10 (DH), were the first since December 2009.

**Goosander**  
*Scarce visitor in cold weather*  
A good year with several birds appearing during the early February cold spell. Present in area between 9–15/2, as follows: 4 males and a female on the Basin, and another on Roding, 9/2; 3 males north up Roding and 2 males over Heronry, 11/2; 2 males south over Ilford golf course and a redhead on Basin, 12/2; 2 males on Roding, 13/2; 3 males in Park, 14/2; 2 males in Park, 15/2.

**Smew** 2  
*Rare visitor*  
Redhead on Roding, 8/2–16/2 (ST), with two there on 12/2 at least. Thought to be the first in the area since 1985.

**Little Grebe**  
*Resident, breeding in small numbers*  
Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following

totals:  
15/1: 4\*  
12/2: 6\*  
10/3: 4 (WP only)  
16/9: 19\*  
14/10: 24\* (no count for Alex)  
18/11: 6\*  
16/12: 0 (WP only)

The WeBS count in October was impressive, with most of these birds on The Basin.  
*Breeding:* 2 pairs bred on Alex (3 young raised) and Shoulder of Mutton (2 young).

**Great Crested Grebe**  
*Scarce near-resident; breeding attempted on Heronry*

Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals:  
15/1: 0\*  
12/2: 0  
10/3: 4 (WP and Eagle only)  
16/9: 3  
14/10: 2 (no count for Alex)  
18/11: 3  
16/12: 0 (WP only)

The first of the year was on the Basin, 24/2. Then on Heronry, 29/2.  
*Breeding:* a pair nestbuilding on the Basin, 22/3. Nestbuilding on Heronry in late March, with 4 birds fighting for mates and nest, 1/4. Three young fledged, 23/5, and all 3 almost adult-size in late July.

**Cormorant**  
*Regular visitor*  
Regular double-figure counts of overflying birds during the breeding season.

**Little Egret**  
*Scarce but increasingly frequent visitor*  
Seen by the Roding on several dates in January but disappeared during the early February freeze, only to return later in

the month. 5 in Park, 8/4 and 4 on Ilford Golf Course, 26/4. One over Heronry, 22/7.

**Grey Heron**  
*Regular visitor; formerly bred*  
Small numbers feed in Park waters, Alex and Jubilee throughout the year; 9 in Park/Flats, 18/11.

**Red Kite**  
*Increasing passage migrant, especially in spring*  
First was a bird circling high over Chalet Wood before flying S towards the Flats on 17/3. Another over Aldersbrook Estate, 1/4. 2–4 W over Park, 11/5.

**Marsh Harrier** 1  
*Rare visitor*  
One over Cat and Dog pond, 26/8 (BB, SH, NC)

**Goshawk**  
*Rare visitor*  
Probable female SW over Flats, 29/3 (PD).

**Sparrowhawk**  
*Scarce resident, breeds locally*  
Seen displaying over Capel Road, 18/3. Seen carrying food into City of London Cemetery, 26/3.  
Bred successfully in Park; 2 juveniles calling, 2/8.

**Common Buzzard**  
*Increasing visitor, especially as a passage migrant in spring and autumn*  
More records than ever. Over Flats, 11/1; over Plain, 15/1; calling in City of London Cemetery, 9/2; east over Flats, 19/2; 2 over Flats, 26/2; 1 by Ornamentals, 5/3. Single, 11/3. Two over Lake House Estate, 18/3. Eight seen on weekend of 24–25/3, including three together over Lake House Estate on the

first date. Another over Alex, 1/4. Over Park, 11/5.

**Osprey** 0  
*Rare visitor*  
None seen on passage, cf. bird on 7/9/11.

**Kestrel**  
*Scarce resident*  
Pair seen mating on electricity pylon in OSW, 5/2. 3 present in Park/Flats, 11/2. Pair hunting in SSSI, 21/7. 4 together east of Alex, 11/8, suggests successful breeding.

**Hobby**  
*Summer visitor; bred locally?*  
A poor year by recent standards, perhaps influenced by atrocious weather during much of the breeding season. The first of spring was one day earlier than in 2011: 1 over Lake House estate on 25/4. Singles seen on 28/4 and 29/4. One over Plain, 22/7.

**Merlin** 1  
*Rare visitor*  
Male high over Flats early morning of 19/11 (NC).

**Peregrine Falcon**  
*Scarce but fairly regular visitor*  
The first of the year was one NW over SSSI early on 1/1. Most subsequent records over Flats, but also from OSW and a pair on a pylon by the Ornamentals.

**Water Rail**  
*Scarce (increasing?) winter visitor*  
Monthly peak counts in Park:

Jan	2
Feb	3
Mar	1
Nov	1
Dec	2



NICK CROFT



One of the finds of the year was this Grey Plover over Wanstead Flats in February's cold snap. Finder Nick Croft even had the composure to get the bird digitised for posterity.

Early year: birds seen in Reservoir Wood (2), Shoulder of Mutton (1), on the south side of Heronry (1), the west end of Perch (1) and in the Dell (1). One still by Perch, 17/3. Autumn return was later than in 2011 (6/11), the first being seen by the Alders Brook on 25/11; single in Perch Carr on 2/12, then another by Shoulder of Mutton.

**Moorhen**

Common resident  
Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals:

- 15/1: 39 (44\*)
- 12/2: 45 (inc. 19 on Alex)
- 10/3: 12 (WP only)
- 16/9: n/a
- 14/10: 40
- 18/11: 65
- 16/12: 25 (WP only)

The November WeBS count appears to be a recent record; the majority of these birds were on Alex and included a high proportion of juveniles.

*Breeding:* nests on all the main ponds. Juvenile on Jubilee, 13/8. Probably fared better than Coot (pro rata) again in 2012.

**Coot**

Very common resident  
Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals:

- 15/1: 133 (167\*)
- 12/2: 193
- 10/3: 69 (WP only)
- 16/9: chk\*
- 14/10: 132 (no count for Alex)
- 18/11: 176
- 16/12: 112 (WP only)

*Breeding:* nests on all the main ponds. Productivity seemed better than in 2011 but still not great.

**Stone Curlew**

Rare visitor  
Sadly, no repeat of the bird of 4-5/4 2011.

**Little Ringed Plover**

Rare passage migrant  
After 2 in 2011, no records.

**Ringed Plover**

Rare visitor  
One heard as it flew S over Capel Point, 2/12 (NC).

**Golden Plover**

Rare visitor in cold weather  
Six over Alexandra Lake, 5/2 (JL); 2 on Fairground, 8/2 (TH).

**Grey Plover**

Rare visitor in cold weather  
One over Flats (and photographed) on morning of 9/2 (NC).

**Lapwing**

Scarce visitor, with midsummer passage apparently regular  
A very good year. Six over Flats, 10/1. Then unprecedented cold-weather movements in early February: c40 on 1st, 22 south on 2nd, 375 mostly west, 5th, and 7 west, 19th.  
In autumn 57 W on 24/10 and 125 W on 27/10. In cold snaps 21 N over Lake House estate, 2/12; 54 N over SSSI on 11/12; 92 N and on ground, Flats, 12/12..

**Dunlin**

Rare visitor  
One heard flying N over broom fields in poor weather on the afternoon of 3/6 (NC). The first since April 2010.

**Woodcock**

Rare visitor  
One by allotments, 9/1, then a cold-weather influx produced at least seven sightings in February; probable passage birds E over Aldersbrook Road at 9.30 on 13/3 and (a possible) reported by dog-walker in SSSI, 17/3.  
In autumn 1 over Esso Copse on 1/12 and 1 N over SSSI on 3/12.

**Black-tailed Godwit**

Rare visitor  
Two over Alex, 31/7 (DH) were the first in our area since at least the 2010 report.

**Common Snipe**

Scarce winter visitor  
After a very opoor start to the year, when the SSSI was almost bone-dry, numbers picked up during the cold spell. More birds were seen around the cold spell in February. Monthly bird-days as follows:

- Jan: 1
- Feb: 7
- Mar: 1
- Aug: 2 (singles on Angell and Jubilee, 11/8)
- Sept: 1 (broom, 1/9)
- Oct: 8
- Nov: 8 (inc. 3 on 29/11)
- Dec: 8 (inc. 5 N over WP, 13th)

Numbers were up on 2011, helped by a wetter autumn and damper conditions especially in the SSSI.

**Jack Snipe**

Rare visitor  
One, Alexandra Lake, 5/2 (JL, NC, TH, SM). The first local record since 1979 was another product of the cold snap.

**1 Whimbrel**

Rare visitor  
33 E over Forest Gate, viewed from Flats, 23/4 (NC).

**Greenshank**

Rare visitor  
1 over Alex, calling, morning of 7/9 (DH).

**Common Sandpiper**

Scarce passage migrant in spring and autumn. Rare winter visitor.  
A very poor spring: 1 by Heronry for several hours on 27/5. Autumn much better: singles feeding by Jubilee Pond, 13/8 and 19-22/8, by Heronry Lake 19/8, by Ornamentals and Heronry, 25/8, and by Alex, 1/9.

- Mar: 0
- Apr: 0
- May: 1
- Aug: 3
- Sept: 1

**Green Sandpiper**

Scarce passage migrant  
In spring, singles by Roding, 21/2, 29/2, 28/3 (NC). In autumn, singles in Roding

A product of the early February freeze, this Jack Snipe 'bobbed' for an admiring group of local birders on a frozen Alexandra Lake.



JONATHAN LETHBRIDGE

shallows, 12/8, and over Flats, 27/8 (NC).

**Black-headed Gull**

*Resident, with numbers increasing in winter*

Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals:

- 15/1: 734 (883\*)
- 12/2: 341
- 10/3: 151 (WP and Eagle only)
- 16/9: 72
- 14/10: 239 (no count for Alex)
- 18/11: 585
- 16/12: 229 (WP only)

1,300 N over OSW at dusk, 23/12; more than 1,000 on waterlogged Flats, 27/12.

**Mediterranean Gull**

*Scarce visitor*

The discovery of an adult on frozen Alex on 5/2 led to further discoveries, including a Jack Snipe and six Golden Plover over, so will long live in the memory. Adult seen on several dates, including over the River Roding on Christmas Day.

**Common Gull**

*Winter visitor*

Wanstead Flats is a very important

location for this species in winter. Coordinated waterbird counts during the winter months produced the following totals (note that because of the mobility of gulls on the Flats, these counts rarely coincided with peak numbers at the roost):

- 15/1: 300 (307\*)
  - 12/2: 248 (numbers low during freeze)
  - 10/3: 7 (WP and Eagle only)
  - 16/9: 0
  - 14/10: 8
  - 18/11: 142
  - 16/12: 3 (WP only)
- c500 by Alex, 27/12.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**

*Regular visitor in small numbers*

**Herring Gull**

*Winter visitor in small numbers*

**Yellow-legged Gull**

*Very scarce visitor*

3rd-winter on Flats playing fields, 27/4; 1-2 ads on Flats, 17/8, and 27-30/8.

**Great Black-backed Gull**

*Scarce visitor; commoner in autumn and winter*

**Common Tern**

*Scarce summer visitor*

The first of the year were 2 over Heronry, 28/5. Up to 4 present there until late July (2, 22/7) at least, and seen to roost near the tea hut at night.

**Feral Rock Dove**

*Common resident*

**Stock Dove**

*Resident breeder*

**Woodpigeon**

*Abundant resident and autumn passage migrant*

Autumn passage included 1,000+ S on 26/10 and 1,700 S on 28/10.

**Collared Dove**

*Resident breeder in small numbers*

**Turtle Dove**

*Rare passage migrant, becoming even rarer.*

Another blank year.

**Ring-necked Parakeet**

*Increasing resident, breeding in small numbers*

109 S over Flats in 45 minutes on the evening of 12/8 was a record count for our area.

**Cuckoo**

*Rare passage migrant*

One seen briefly by Long Wood, 1/9 (SF).

**Little Owl**

*Former resident*

One calling from Flats between Christmas Day and 1/1/13 was the first in the area since 16/2 2011.

**Short-eared Owl**

*Rare visitor*

One over Flats, 21/10 (NC).

**Tawny Owl**

*Scarce resident, breeds*

One heard in Bush Wood, early evening of 1/6. 2 juv calling there at the end of September. One heard in Reservoir Wood, 23/12.

**Common Swift**

*Common summer visitor*

The first of spring were two over the Basin and one over Belgrave Rd on 25/4. 22 to end of April. In a movement in advance of rain on morning of 7/5 at least 146 NE over Flats between 0830-1030. Most birds left at the very end of July but small numbers seen in August (for example, 8 S over Aldersbrook, 12/8, 2 over Snaresbrook 13/8, 3 over Flats 16/8, 3 over Flats 17/8, 6 over Flats 18/8, 6 over Flats, 27/8). Latest bird was one over Flats on 2/9.

**Kingfisher**

*Scarce local breeder*

Three in the Park, 5/2 included two on the Roding. Presumably the same two were seen along a short stretch of the river on several dates in February. Most birds were seen along the Roding or the Park's lakes but there were also records from the Flats, including 1 at Angell Pond, 4/9. 3 in the Park, 18/11.

**Wryneck**

*Rare visitor*

One in SSSI, 25-30/8 (TB). Incredibly, this was the second record in three years, though a lot harder to see than the bird in the Alex scrub from 16-24/9/2010. Not all of the 100 or so who twitched it were able to see it.

**Green Woodpecker**

*Resident breeder*

Pairs seen in SSSI, near Long Wood, near

Common Terns were found to roost overnight by Heronry Lake.



NICK CRIFT

Alexandra Lake, on the Plain, around the Ornamental Waters and in the OSW.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker**

*Resident breeder*

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**

*Scarce resident; breeds*

January: six sightings, with birds in the Park and (on 16th) two on the Flats.

February: about half a dozen sightings including two in Chalet Wood, 3/2, and one in Esso copse, 26/2.

March: most observations were on the Flats, with 1 seen to fly S from East Copse over Capel Rd, in direction of Manor Park Cemetery, on 13/3. Male drumming on large oak on the Plain, 17/3. Two in Park, 20/3 and 31/3. The first bird of autumn was by Perch Pond, 2/9, then 1 by Alex, 17/9.

**Woodlark**

*Rare visitor*

One heard over brooms, 11/10 (NC); 3 W over Flats, 23/10.

**Skylark**

*Resident breeder on Wanstead Flats, and passage migrant*

Monthly maxima as follows (singing birds in parenthesis):

- Jan: 5 (1)
- Feb: 14 (6/2, Fairground) (5)
- Mar: 15 (9)
- Apr: 12 (7)
- May: 14 (9, inc. 1 in SSSI)
- Aug: 6
- Sept: 2
- Oct: 29 (1)
- Nov: 8
- Dec: 3

One over the Plain, singing, c24/2.

*Breeding:* 9 or 10 song-fighting males on Wanstead Flats from March to May, indicating a decline in breeding numbers. Breeding success also appeared to be poor, doubtless affected by the wet and cool spring and summer weather.

**Sand Martin**

*Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant*

First significant arrival on 21/4. Small groups over Flats from late July, including 4 over on 28/7 and 6 over on 26/8. Light autumn passage inc. 10 on 30/9.

**Swallow**

*Passage migrant*

The first of spring were 2 past Long Wood, 1/4. Numbers trickled through our area during early April, inc. 8 on 12/4. 28 over Flats 1/5. In a movement in advance of rain on morning of 7/5 at least 87 hirudines N over Flats between 0830-1030, 74 of which were this species. In autumn, 5 over Flats 16/8, 1 on 18/8, 4 on 19/8, 64 S from 17-19/9, for example. Peak passage 305 over in period 23-30/9.

**House Martin**

*Uncommon summer visitor*

The first of spring was 1 over the SSSI,

14/4. First significant arrival on 21/4. 15 over Basin, 25/4. Breeding: nests on flats in Brading Crescent. 22 feeding around Aldersbrook Estate, 14/8. 20 SW over SSSI, 25/8; 50 SW over Flats, 21/9. Then big movement of 531 NW between 10:00-10:45 on 30/9.

**Tree Pipit**

*Scarce passage migrant in spring and, especially, autumn*

There were no spring records. The first of autumn was in the Alex scrub on 4-5/9 and another flew over, 7/9; 2 in SSSI, 21/9; 1-2 in Alex scrub, 30/9. Another on 7/10.

**Meadow Pipit**

*Resident breeder on the Flats, and passage migrant*

Monthly maxima as follows (singing birds in parenthesis):

- Jan: 9 (24/1)
- Feb: 10 in broomfields, 27/2 (1)
- Mar: 55 (5), inc. 40 over
- Apr: 70, mostly over
- Aug: 10
- Sept: 66 (20/9), about 50%

being passage birds); 70+ on 23/9

Passage: in spring, 40 over Flats in under an hour, late morning of 20/3; about 70 over on morning of 13/4, including a flock of 17. In autumn, peak passage in late September with about 35 over Flats on 20/9 and 70+ on 23/9.

**Yellow Wagtail**

*Passage migrant in spring and autumn*

In spring, water conditions on the Flats and poor weather encouraged more birds to linger. The first was a single over the SSSI on 13/4 was the first. Total: 2 by 16/4. xxx [not many] in late April 2 on flooded Fairground, 2/5. 2 feeding by Alex, 3/5. 4 E, 4/5. A male and two females fed by Alex for most of the day

on 5/5. 1 over Flats, 7/5.

First of autumn over Flats 18/8 (cf. 12/8 in 2011); peak passage 5 S, 5/9; late bird over Heronry, 14/10.

**Grey Wagtail**

*Resident, with increased numbers in winter*

Good numbers around Park, especially near Roding in January and February. Small numbers were observed on visible migration watches on the Flats in autumn.

**Pied Wagtail**

*Uncommon resident*

Seven on cricket pitch on 17/3, with another flying over Basin. Autumn passage of *alba* wagtails noted.

**Waxwing**

*Scarce visitor in invasion years*

Wanstead eventually benefitted from the national invasion in the autumn, with 12 south along Centre Road on 16/12; c15 by SSSI, 27/12.

**Wren**

*Abundant resident*

**Duncock**

*Common resident and passage migrant*

**Robin**

*Abundant resident and passage migrant*

**Common Redstart**

*Passage migrant, more common in autumn*

Spring: 2 males in Long Wood, 11-12/4; 1 male in Long Wood, 14/4. Autumn: female in Alex scrub, 11/8; male, Long Wood 20/8; 2 in SSSI 23/8; 2 in SSSI, 25/8; 4 on Flats, 26/8; male in SSSI, 27/8, 28/8 and 31/8; 2 in broom and 1 in SSSI, 1/9; female in Long Wood, 3/9.

*The second Wryneck in three years, this one found by Tony Brown, was another long-stayer although it was often elusive in the hawthorn scrub of the SSSI.*



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Bird-day totals were as follows:

Apr: 5  
Aug: 13  
Sept: 10 (last on 7/9)

### Whinchat

*Passage migrant in spring and autumn*  
Spring: 1 in broom, 1/5, with 2 (male and female) in dry ditch between East Copse and Alex, 2/5. Male, SSSI, 9/5, and brooms, 11/5.

In autumn, singles on Flats on 16/8 (cf. first date of 15/8, 2011), 18/8, 21-22/8, 25/8 (Cat and Dog); 3 on Flats, 26/8, then 2 on 27th, 1 on 28th, at least 4 on 29th, 5 on 30th and 8 on 31st. In September, 5 on 1st, 3 on 2nd, 5 on 3rd. Last 3 birds, 22/9. This is one of the best autumn sites in London. Bird-day totals as follows:

May: 5  
Aug: 28  
Sept: 44

### Stonechat

*Winter visitor and passage migrant in very small numbers*  
Female in broom fields, 18/3. Juv by Jubilee Pond, 20-21/9, then 2 on Flats to

25/9; singles seen in four dates in October.

### Northern Wheatear

*Passage migrant in spring and autumn*  
Spring passage 16/3 to 11/5, and 117 bird-days. It kicked off with 4 males by the broom fields on the early date of 16/3, at the time the biggest concentration in London; on the same day there was a female on the Plain, WP. Another peak of 5 on 11/4. Then a quiet period (poor weather) before 4 (3 males, 1 female) on 20/4 and 8 (6 males, 2 females) together on evening of 24/4; 8 (2 males, 6 females), 27/4; 9 (5 males), 30/4. 10 birds present on 3/5.

Autumn passage: the first was on Flats, 7/8; lat 4 there on 7/10. Peak was 6 on 26/8.

This is one of the best spring and autumn sites in London. Bird-day totals as follows; 117+ bird-days in spring, 47 in autumn:

Mar: 15  
Apr: 56-60  
May: 46 (to 11/5, when last)  
Aug: 18  
Sept: 24  
Oct: 5

### Ring Ouzel

*Scarce passage migrant*  
At least 10 different birds seen this year. Spring: 5 birds (7/4 to 30/5): male, broom, briefly early on 7/4; probable female in same area, 9/4. Single females, broom, 20/4, near Alex, 28/4. Male on Ilford Golf Course, 30/5. Autumn: at least 5 birds (16/10 to 8/11); present daily 16-23 October with at least 2 males and a female present together, and possibly 5 birds, in this period; singles then on 29/10 and 8/11.

### Blackbird

*Common resident and passage migrant*

Autumn passage noted.

### Fieldfare

*Winter visitor and passage migrant, especially in autumn*  
Early year: reasonable numbers in January but a big influx around the early February freeze. 300 estimated on/over western Flats, 7/2. 12, Coronation Copse, 17/3. One in Long Wood, 11/4. Last over Capel Road, 19/4.

Autumn: the bulk of the autumn visible migration was between 9/10 (4 days earlier than 2011) and the third week of November and involved more than 2,100 birds, including 650 over on the morning of 6/11.

### Song Thrush

*Resident breeder and passage migrant*  
Two juveniles seen in SSSI, 19/9. Passage in autumn included 30+ over the Flats on both 22/10 and 23/10.

### Redwing

*Winter visitor and passage migrant, especially in autumn*  
Early year: reasonable numbers in January but a big influx around the time of the early February freeze. 1,200 estimated on/over western Flats, 7/2. Bush Wood held especially large numbers in early February. c.30 in St Mary's churchyard, 10/3 and 17/3. Autumn: the bulk of the autumn migration was between 7/10 (two days earlier than 2011) and the third week of November during which time more than 1,500 were counted (cf. 994 in 2011), including 500 on 20/10 9/11 when 994 were counted over the Flats.

### Mistle Thrush

*Resident breeder and passage migrant in small numbers*  
Bred in Park and on Flats.

### Sedge Warbler

*Rare visitor*  
One by Alex, 30/7 (DH), and another there, 8/8 (TB). At least 1 at Cat and Dog, 21/8, 1 at Angell Pond, 23/8 and 1 at Alex, 2/9. This species benefitted from higher water levels in Flats' ponds in autumn (usually, the smaller ponds are bone-dry).

### Reed Warbler

*Scarce breeder; recent colonist*  
First sang briefly in willows on island in Alex, 14/4; then one south of OSW, 16/4. Male singing at Shoulder of Mutton, 23/5, with a non-singing bird by the Rodng the same day. [note two arrivals, again, a long time apart] Shoulder of Mutton bird still singing 22/7. Dispersed local breeders or passage birds (all singles) were at Long Wood/Alex scrub on 21/8, 26/8, 4/9 and 15/9.

### Blackcap

*Common summer breeder and scarce winter visitor*  
1 singing Belgrave Road from 1/3. 3 singing (St Mary's churchyard, Bush Wood, Belgrave Rd) 10/3. 4 still singing in Park, 22/7.

### Garden Warbler

*Scarce summer visitor, possibly breeding*  
No spring birds. In autumn, singles in Long Wood and by Alex, 8/8; 1 in OSW, 10/8; 5 in Alex scrub/Long Wood, 11/8; 3 Alex/Long Wood, 14/8, with up to 4 on the Flats regularly until 6/9.

### Lesser Whitethroat

*Scarce summer visitor*  
Singing male in OSW from 21/4 (to 29/4 at least, when 2) and another in broom fields the same day. Singer in Long Wood, 27/4-2/5. On 2/5, 3 singing on Flats (both ends of SSSI and Alex). In late May a bird held territory on the west

*Whinchat autumn passage peaked at the end of August and beginning of September. One bird took up temporary residence opposite the Golden Fleece on Capel Road.*



JONATHAN LETHBRIDGE





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*The scrubby areas east of Alexandra Lake, around Long Wood and in the SSSI are all good for Lesser Whitethroat, especially in the autumn.*

island in Heronry on 22/5 at least, and again on 27/7. In June, singing heard in OSW and near Jubilee Pond. Numbers built up in August; in late month and early September up to 5 reported almost daily from Alex scrub, Long Wood and SSSI. Still present in early October.

**Common Whitethroat**

*Common summer visitor*  
The first of 2 singing males were in the SSSI on 13/4 (a week later than 2011). 1 still singing on Flats, 21/7. Good numbers on Flats in early August (30+ on 14/8 and 40+ on 25th, for example) suggested another good breeding season. Still present in late September.

**Chiffchaff**

*Common summer visitor; some overwinter*  
Present in OSW, 1/1. First singing bird in WP on 12/3. 10+ singing males 14/4. Autumn: estimated 100 on Flats, from SSSI to Alex, including broom fields, 23/8. 40 on Flats, 19/9.

**Willow Warbler**

*Scarce summer visitor; breeds in very small numbers*

The first of spring was singing by Shoulder of Mutton, 30/3. Numbers trickled through in early April with 3 singing on 12/4 and 4 on 14/4 (Long Wood, West Copse, 2 in Park). 6 on Flats, 21/4.  
Breeding: SSSI bird on territory from 12/4 with a second bird singing in May (2 to 23/5 at least).  
In autumn, 1 singing in Long Wood, 2/8. 1 in OSW, 6/8. About 10 on Flats, 23/8, and small numbers almost daily in late Aug and early Sept. Still present 21/9 (1).

**Goldcrest**

*Localised resident*  
Numbers increased in the last week of September. Double-figure total present in Bush Wood in November.

**Firecrest**

5+

*Rare winter visitor; becoming regular?*  
Two, at 1 east, in Bush Wood on 1/1; two there still on 1/2; one still, 26/2. Singing male there, 30/4. In autumn, 1 in Long Wood 16/10 was the first record for the Flats. Single in Bush Wood from 30/11 and another in Alex scrub in December.

**Spotted Flycatcher**

*Passage migrant, much commoner in autumn*  
In spring, 1 was at by the Warren Road entrance to the Park, 11/5. In autumn, 1 in OSW, 2/8; 2 in Long Wood, 11/8 and 14/8, 2 on 15/8, then singles on 16/8, 18/8, 2 on 19/8, singles on 20-21/8 and 5 on 23/8; 3 on 25th, 3 on 26th, 3 on 28th, 1 on 1/9, 1 on 2nd, 2 on 3rd. On 5/9, 2 in Park and 4 on Flats.  
Autumn bird-days as follows:

Aug: 27  
Sept: 18 (last on 19/9)

**Pied Flycatcher**

4

*Scarce autumn passage migrant*  
The best year ever. Autumn passage 18-31/8. Female/1st-winter by

Ornamental Waters, 18/8. 1st-year male in Long Wood 20/8. Female/1st-winter, SSSI, 25/8, 1 on Flats, 31/8.

**Long-tailed Tit**

*Abundant resident*  
Nestbuilding seen from mid-February.

**Blue Tit**

*Abundant resident*

**Great Tit**

*Abundant resident*

**Coal Tit**

*Scarce resident*  
Displaying pair watched in Bush Wood, 3/3. This and Reservoir Wood were the most reliable areas for the species.

**Nuthatch**

*Scarce visitor and former breeder*  
One in The Dell, 2/8 (NC) and 1/2 in Reservoir Wood/west end of Heronry, 2/9. 3/4 in Bush Wood and 1 on Alex island, 15/9; 1 in Bush Wood 13/10. Regularly seen or heard there and in Reservoir Wood in November and December.

**Treecreeper**

*Very scarce visitor; former breeding species*  
Disappointingly, none seen after the

records from early 2011.

**Jay**

*Common resident*

**Maggpie**

*Common resident*  
Between 1500-1630 on 1/12 at least 43 were counted entering the Wanstead Golf Course roost,

**Jackdaw**

*Common and increasing resident*  
85+ in Park, 21/2.  
*Breeding:* seven pairs displaying over Belgrave Road, 25/2.

**Rook**

1

*Rare visitor*  
Juvenile over Alex, 25/3 (SF).

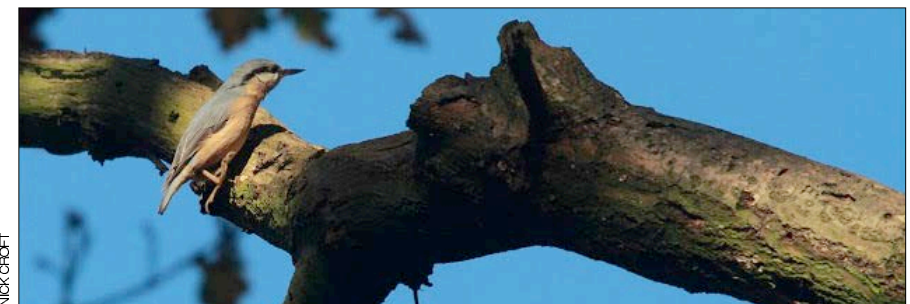
**Carrion Crow**

*Common resident*  
There is a large night-time roost of this species and the other corvids in Wanstead Golf Course outside the breeding season. Between 1500-1630 on 1/12 at least 416 were counted entering this roost, though some were also seen to leave it.

**0 Starling**

*Common resident and passage migrant, numbers increasing in winter*  
The biggest count in autumn was of

*The autumn of 2012 saw a return to form for Nuthatch with multiple records from Bush Wood, Reservoir Wood and even the copse at Alex.*



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1,000 N over the Flats on 25/10.

*Breeding:* holes in trees on Flats already being prepared in mid-February.

**House Sparrow**

*Scarce resident*

A small colony in Richmond Road still. Birds from the Lake House and Aldersbrook estates feed in the SSSI and by Heronry Lake, respectively.

**Chaffinch**

*Resident, breeding in small numbers, and passage migrant*

Visible-migration watches on Flats logged 1020+ birds over between 6/10 and 11/11, including 200 W, 24/10. Dates are remarkably similar to those in 2011.

**Brambling**

1

*Scarce passage migrant in autumn*

A good autumn: 13 over Flats between 9/10 and 11/11, including 4 on 25/10. Then 4 N in cold weather on 11/12.

**Greenfinch**

*Common resident and passage migrant*

**Goldfinch**

*Resident*

Flock of 30-50 at Capel Point on several dates in January, February and early March. 40 on Aldersbrook estate in Dec.

**Siskin**

*Winter visitor*

Early year: numbers relatively low. Autumn passage peaked with 44 over Flats on 24/10.

**Linnet**

*Quite scarce visitor*

Some passage in early April, inc. at least 22 over Flats 12-16/4 (17 on 12/4). Autumn passage light. No evidence of local breeding.

**Lesser Redpoll**

*Winter visitor and passage migrant*

Numbers relatively low in early year. One late bird in SSSI on 13/4. 36 over Flats, 8/10. First 'settled' birds of autumn, 15 in OSW, 8/11.

**Common Crossbill**

6

*Rare visitor*

Two over Windsor Road, 2/8; 2 over SSSI, 13/8; 1 over, near CoL Cemetery, 17/8; 1 over SSSI, 23/8.

**Bullfinch**

*Scarce resident*

Up to five seen on several dates in OSW in January and February. Birds also seen near Alex.

**Hawfinch**

1/2

*Rare*

One near Esso Copse, 23/10 (NC) followed by 1/2 in the area the following day. The first since 1985.

**Yellowhammer**

*Very scarce visitor*

One over Capel Road, early morning of 24/3; 1 over broom, 30/3 (NC); 1 circled brooms, 18/10.

**Reed Bunting**

*Scarce breeder and passage migrant*

Numbers low in early year. Several seen regularly in SSSI in November and December.