

## London Birding Monthly Highlights: Rotherhithe, Southwark Compiled by John Cadera

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The LNHS recording area occupies a 20-mile radius surrounding St Paul's Cathedral. This area encompasses a wide range of wildlife habitats and some outstanding nature reserves, which are inhabited by a surprisingly high number of bird species that are recorded each year. Around 350 species of birds have been recorded since 1900. In a typical year, over 200 species are recorded. Given below are a series of monthly highlights from January 2022 from the London Borough of Southwark. The borough is densely populated and has the River Thames on its northern border. The only significant patch of wild area is the Russia Dock Woodland in east London, situated on the south bank of the River Thames, which is within view of the city buildings of Canary Wharf on the north bank. Within a couple of kilometres of Russia Dock is Southwark Park, a largely formal park with a pond that attracts wintering **Shoveler**. In the south of Southwark Borough is Burgess Park, a large park that is predominantly formal with a wild border, which is important for passerines, on one side. The Lake attracts **Shoveler** and the occasional **Goldeneye**. Although Southwark is relatively poor for birds when compared to many other London boroughs, these monthly reports demonstrate that a decent mix of birds can be found in densely built urban centers where small areas have been set aside for nature.

## 2023

### June 2023

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#### Southwark Park

25 **Starling** over the Bandstand area and at least 10 **House Sparrow** near the Sports Centre on 12<sup>th</sup>. On 13<sup>th</sup> we had **Coal Tit** calling near Ada Salter Gardens. Things picked up with a **Sand Martin** on 26<sup>th</sup> and around 15 **House Martin** on 28<sup>th</sup>. On 20<sup>th</sup> one **Swift** was over The Lake. **Little Grebe** had one young on 12<sup>th</sup>. We counted 22 **Canada Goose** including 8 young but we also logged two dead adults. **Mute Swan** continued with 4 young but the **Egyptian Goose** young were gone by the end of the month. One **Stock Dove** was calling on several days and **Peregrine** was over the park on 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland, and Globe Pond

The family of **Canada Goose** continues at Globe Pond. By 21<sup>st</sup> all but one **Tufted Duck** had left, this last, a female had a brood of 13 which was doomed from the start; even as we watched, a dog off its lead killed one chick in the pond and a week later we only found one chick and no adult. At least 3 **Chiffchaff** and 6 **Blackcap** continued to sing through the month. **Cetti's Warbler** was last heard on 8<sup>th</sup>. On 7<sup>th</sup> we had 20+ **Swift** over the Long Meadow, with at least 15 seen the following day. This is a remarkable number of Swift through the area since 2 or 3 is more likely these days. This late move also brought through one **Swallow**. On 8<sup>th</sup> a **Common Buzzard** went over North and a **Sand Martin** was over Stave Hill. On 10<sup>th</sup> 3 **Starling**

including one juvenile went over The Shed. The **Song Thrush** continues to sing but has moved from the Long Meadow to Stave Hill Pond area. A **Mistle Thrush** was seen on 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Surrey Water**

On 10<sup>th</sup> 2 **Sedge Warbler** singing in nearby Albion Channel, as it turned out there was also a **Reed Warbler** with them. The Sedge were soon gone but **Reed Warbler** remained to be joined by a 2<sup>nd</sup> a few days later, both remained throughout the month. On 19<sup>th</sup> one **Great Crested Grebe** was present along with 13 **Tufted Duck**. We found at 20 **House Martin** at the colony near Salt Quay, nearby two pairs of **Sand Martin** were feeding young. On 30<sup>th</sup> there were c12 feeding over Albion Channel.

### **Canada Water**

Last month I wrote: **Mute Swan** nest was abandoned and no sign of swans. To misquote a misquote, the disappearance of the Canada Water swans has been greatly exaggerated since on 12<sup>th</sup> we saw both birds with 3 young, where they were hiding last month is anyone's guess! There were originally 4 young and by the end of the month only 2 remained. On 17<sup>th</sup> we got a message that there were 2 **Great Crested Grebe** on the water and they were already under attack by the Mute Swan. This is the first record of Great Crested Grebe on Canada Water for over 6 years.

### **Greenland Dock**

On 1<sup>st</sup> we found 13 **Tufted Duck**. 4 **Great Crested Grebe** were seen on 17<sup>th</sup>. **Mute Swan**, **Egyptian Goose** and a pair of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** are regulars here.

### **Bermondsey**

There are at least 2 pairs of **Collared Dove** in the area. 3 **House Martin** were over on 6<sup>th</sup> and c10 were seen on 24<sup>th</sup>. On morning of 17<sup>th</sup> an **Oystercatcher** went over calling several times, a new patch tick. An out of place female **Mallard** was walking up Grange Road on 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **May 2023**

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### **Southwark Park**

**Blackbird** and **Long-tailed Tit** were seen with fledged young while on The Lake there were two broods of **Canada Goose**. 2 **Little Grebe** but no further sign of breeding. On 23<sup>rd</sup> we found 6 **Stock Dove** feeding on the ground at the North side of the park, they may well be the entire Rotherhithe population. A **Coal Tit** was singing on 5<sup>th</sup> when we also found 13 **Starling** around the Bandstand, all adult and the highest number that we have seen at this time of the year. A **Mistle Thrush** was also around the Bandstand on 29<sup>th</sup> and on the same day a **Chaffinch** was singing at the Sports Ground. Other notable species during the month were **Peregrine**, **Grey Wagtail** and **Collared Dove**.

### **Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland, and Globe Pond**

On 1<sup>st</sup> reports of a Long-eared Owl found in Russia Dock Woodland turned out to be an escaped **Great Horned Owl**, remained on site for two days before turning up in Bermondsey on 15<sup>th</sup>. It returned to Rotherhithe a few days later. On 2<sup>nd</sup> we heard **Willow Warbler** for the last time and 2 **Swallow** over, also 2 **Mistle Thrush** went through. On 5<sup>th</sup> we saw our first **Swift** over Stave Hill, 2 were seen on 7<sup>th</sup> and again on 10<sup>th</sup>. On 7<sup>th</sup> **The Chorus Day** event with **Sound**

**Camp** gave us 30 species including great sounds and views of the **Cetti's Warbler**. Another **Song Thrush** was singing at Mahogany Pond but was gone soon after. The **Song Thrush** at Long Meadow continued to sing for the rest of the month. We also had 20+ **House Martin** over in the morning. Other notable species were **Stock Dove** and **Grey Heron** on 24<sup>th</sup>.

### Surrey Water

8 **Tufted Duck** remained on 22<sup>nd</sup>, also **Grey Heron** and 2 adult **Black-headed Gull** went over. 1 **Blackcap** was singing along the wooded path to Canada Water. On 22<sup>nd</sup> we took a walk along the river to check the **House Martin** colony near Surrey Water and found only 8.

### Canada Water

8 **Tufted Duck** on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### Greenland Dock

2 **Great Crested Grebe** remain.

### Norway Dock

Male **Pochard** on 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Bermondsey

A couple of notable sighting this month; a **Swift** high over on 5<sup>th</sup> and a **Hobby** hunting low over the Community Orchard at Rouel Estate on 10<sup>th</sup>.

## April 2023

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### Southwark Park

A **Common Buzzard** over on 3rd. on 10th a pair of **Pochard** arrived, the first record in the park for over 30 years! Also **Common Sandpiper** and **Grey Wagtail** while a **Firecrest** was relocated for the last time. **Hobby** was seen over the park on 11th and 12th, followed on 22nd by a **Red Kite** and a **Common Whitethroat** near The Lake.

### Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland, and Globe Pond

The **Canada Goose** at Globe Pond are incubating three eggs. On 5th a male **Common Pheasant** was in the TCV compound. On 8th one **Swallow** over Stave Hill. On 15th **Listening Group** for **Sound Camp** logged 28 species that included 2 **Willow Warbler** and **Chaffinch**. Also a **Common Buzzard** over in the afternoon and a **Nuthatch** was heard near Archangel Street, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rotherhithe record since Southwark Park on 15th January 2019. One **Willow Warbler** was seen on 23rd during the **London Bird Club** walk. The **Song Thrush** was still near The Long Meadow. Despite poor weather we managed to log 29 species including an elusive **Common Whitethroat**. **Blackcap** numbers changed over the course of a few days with at least 7 singing on 19th and only 3 on 26th. **Cetti's Warbler**, found by a local photographer and a first for Rotherhithe was present most of the month.

### Surrey Water

**Tufted Duck** numbers dropped from 45 on 8th to 24 on 19th, when they were joined by the pair of **Pochard** from Southwark Park. A pair of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** seem to have established themselves but no sign of breeding.

### Southwark Park

**Black-headed Gull** numbers went from 60+ on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 40+ on 11<sup>th</sup> and by 16<sup>th</sup> only 6 immatures remained. Up to 6 **Canada Goose** and a **Greylag x Canada hybrid** were seen most of the month. On 27<sup>th</sup> the **Egyptian Goose** pair had 8 young which were all predated. **12 Tufted Duck** throughout most of the month. One **Shoveler** was on the Lake on 11<sup>th</sup> and a pair of **Gadwall** dropped in on 2<sup>nd</sup>. A pair of **Sparrowhawk** were seen throughout the month. A pair of **Little Grebe** were together by middle of the month. A **Grey Heron** was seen on 2<sup>nd</sup>. On 4<sup>th</sup> a **Peregrine** went over. Two **Firecrest** were still on 18<sup>th</sup>. A **Chaffinch** sang at Gomm Gate on 4<sup>th</sup> later moving to The Warden's Lodge where a female was also found on 23<sup>rd</sup>. On 4<sup>th</sup> 20 **Redwing** gathered in the Bandstand area. On 31<sup>st</sup> a singing **Willow Warbler** was our earliest record in the park. 20 **Starling** around the Bandstand on 4<sup>th</sup> later moved to the Sports Ground on 10<sup>th</sup>. Also of note was **Coal Tit** and 2 **Mistle Thrush** seen several times, 2 **Blackcap** and 3 **Chiffchaff** were singing by the end of the month. A **Water Rail** seen on 13<sup>th</sup> was another first for the park.

### Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland, and Globe Pond

The pair of **Canada Goose** at Globe Pond were still around but no sign of breeding so far. On 21<sup>st</sup> a pair of **Tufted Duck** dropped in. On 5<sup>th</sup> 10 **Redwing** remained, usually 15+ (in the same week of 2019 around 30 gathered prior to migration). On 5<sup>th</sup> a pair of **Stock Dove** were at Globe Pond and another was in Russia Dock Woodland. 10 **Moorhen** were counted around the ponds. **Water Rail** and **Kingfisher** remained at Downtown Pond. **Grey Wagtail** at Globe Pond. Other notable sightings was a party of 6+ **Long-tailed Tit**, **Sparrowhawk**, **Song Thrush** singing on 1<sup>st</sup> near the Long Meadow, male **Greenfinch** on 5<sup>th</sup> along with 10 **Goldfinch**. On 31<sup>st</sup> 3 **Chiffchaff** and 2 **Blackcap** were singing around Stave Hill and Russia Dock Woodland.

### Surrey Water

On 5<sup>th</sup> 50 **Tufted Duck** and by 31<sup>st</sup> only 15 remained. Also, on 5<sup>th</sup> a **Common Gull** was with 30+ **Black-headed Gull** along with a pair of **Lesser Black-backed Gull**. By 12<sup>th</sup> the resident **Egyptian Goose** had lost their brood – a regular occurrence at this time of the year.

### Greenland Dock

A pair of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** and one **Great Crested Grebe** were the only notable species.

### Canada Water

**Coot**, **Moorhen** and **Mute Swan** are using the platforms that have been provided. 15 **Black-headed Gull** were seen on 20<sup>th</sup> but left soon after. **Tufted Duck** numbers ranged from 9 on 20<sup>th</sup> to 18 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Bermondsey

A **Fulmar** was found at Grange Road on 8<sup>th</sup> and rescued by **London Wildlife Protection**. This appears to be the first record in this area since one was at Tower Bridge on 14<sup>th</sup> February

1994 (Birds of London by Andrew Self). A **Collared Dove** was calling at Rouel Road estate on 21<sup>st</sup> and a **Chiffchaff** was singing near Bermondsey Station on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## February 2023

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### Southwark Park

On The Lake the **Mute Swan** pair were seen repairing last year's nest under the willow. A pair of **Shoveler** on 13<sup>th</sup> and a pair of **Gadwall** on 18<sup>th</sup>. **Black-headed Gull** numbers rose to c100 on 13<sup>th</sup> but generally c40 were present most days. The **Firecrest** continued to roam from The Ada Salter Garden and Nature Area. A male **Sparrowhawk** on 17<sup>th</sup>. On 13<sup>th</sup> one **Starling** went over. On 18<sup>th</sup> several **House Sparrow** behind The Gallery, also in the area a **Mistle Thrush** singing. On 21<sup>st</sup> 2 **Song Thrush** in the Rose Garden; one remained and sang for 2 days. At King's Stairs a pair of **Goldcrest** on 21<sup>st</sup>. Over-wintering male **Blackcap** was still in The Ada Salter Garden on 25<sup>th</sup> and a **Chaffinch** was singing at Gomm Gate. Also, in the Rose Garden a pair **Stock Dove** seen several times. A **Redwing** went over on 13<sup>th</sup>. A **Coal Tit** was singing in several locations throughout the month.

### Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland, and Globe Pond

On 4<sup>th</sup> a male **Chaffinch**, 3 **Egyptian Goose** and a pair of **Canada Goose** at Globe, 3 **Mute Swan** over. On 4<sup>th</sup> a **Song Thrush** was seen again on 19<sup>th</sup>. A **Kingfisher** remained at Downtown Pond until 25<sup>th</sup>. **Grey Wagtail** on 19<sup>th</sup> and 2 **Redwing** seen throughout the month.

### Surrey Water

Good numbers of **Tufted Duck** remained with 60+ on 11<sup>th</sup>. 2 **Common Gull** on 21<sup>st</sup>.

### Canada Water

c50 **Black-headed Gull** were seen on 11<sup>th</sup> along with a high count of 15 **Tufted Duck**.

### Bermondsey

On 23<sup>rd</sup> a flock of 18 **Magpie** were along St James's Road, a record high away from Southwark Park and Stave Hill/Russia Dock Woodland.

## January 2023

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### Southwark Park

The year started well with 26 species on 1<sup>st</sup>: The Lake held 40+ **Black-headed Gull**, 3 **Cormorant**, 1 **Tufted Duck** and 3 **Shoveler**. A singing **Coal Tit** was present throughout. The **Mistle Thrush** and 3 **Blackbird** were still feeding together the conifer near the Ada Salter Garden. 2 **Firecrest** remained throughout the month. 5 **Egyptian Goose** turned up on 4<sup>th</sup>, only 2 remained after this date. On 9<sup>th</sup> a pair of **Stock Dove** were back. 2 **Grey Heron** visited on and off during the month. On 10<sup>th</sup> a **Starling** was singing near Jamaica Road and an over-wintering male **Blackcap** was found on 16<sup>th</sup>. At least 6 **Redwing** were seen on 27<sup>th</sup>. On 31<sup>st</sup> 2 **Common Gull** were at the Sports Centre, while on the Lake a pair of **Gadwall**, a pair of **Shoveler**. Also, on 31<sup>st</sup> a **Collared Dove** and 3 **Mistle Thrush**.

### Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond

The **Water Rail** relocated to Downtown Pond and was heard and seen on 6<sup>th</sup> and still present on 31<sup>st</sup>. A **Kingfisher** was also at Downtown Pond. 10 **Black-headed Gull** and a pair of **Egyptian Goose** were on Globe Pond on 6<sup>th</sup>. 2 **Mute Swan** over on 29<sup>th</sup>. A **Collared Dove** went over on 6<sup>th</sup>. 5 **Jay** were seen on 29<sup>th</sup> and one pair of **Great Spotted Woodpecker** throughout January. At least 10 **Redwing** stayed around Globe Pond.

### Surrey Water

Around 85 **Tufted Duck** were present on 6<sup>th</sup> and a first for the patch was a female **Shoveler**, possibly the same one at Downtown Pond on 24<sup>th</sup> December. 30+ **Black-headed gull** and a single **Common Gull** were present most of the month. On 15<sup>th</sup> a pair of **Gadwall** arrived, a single **Redwing** was also found.

### Canada Water

A visit on 6<sup>th</sup> found 4 **Tufted Duck** and only **Black-headed Gull** along with a **Grey Wagtail**. **Note:** there is currently a considerable amount of construction work on and around Canada Water.

Bermondsey: a leucistic male Blackbird returned for 2<sup>nd</sup> Winter Bermondsey.

## 2022

### December 2022

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#### Southwark Park

**Mute Swan** have done poorly this year, and the last of this year's young were found dead on the 3rd, with the remaining adult leaving soon after. The cold spell froze most of the Lake, driving away the **Little Grebe** that we only found on the 8th. **Tufted Duck** numbers were low, with only one pair sighted over the month, while up to six **Shoveler** remained throughout. A single **Common Gull** was on the Lake with **Black-headed Gull** on the 17th. **Black-headed Gull** numbers rose to around 75 on the 5th but dropped off to around 40 at the end of the month. A pair of **Teal** turned up on the 12th but did not hang around. Twenty-five **Woodpigeons** were in the Park on the 8th, and by the end of the month we had also found singles of **Stock Dove** and **Collared Dove**; these two species have been absent for some time. **Chiffchaff** and **Firecrest** remained around the Lake along with at least five **Goldcrest**. A **Mistle Thrush** took up residence in the juniper near the Rose Garden, along with at least three **Blackbird** (a total of six on the 17th); there was a lot of activity around this tree. Although **Redwing** numbers remained very low for most of the month, the 17th bought some 150 through the Park, travelling south. This may have been the large flock from Surrey Water, moving on after stripping out all the berries in that area. Other noteworthy species were a **Coal Tit** on the 24th, a **Sparrowhawk**, and a **Peregrine** towards the end of the month. Around the Sports Centre, we found a small group of **House Sparrow**, and two **Starling** passed through on the 17th.

#### Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond

December started with a sighting of seven **Canada Geese** overhead on the 1st and went on to give us a good record of notable species. A female **Shoveler** dropped into Downtown Pond on the 24th (this was our first record since January 2019). **Shoveler** are regular winter visitors



to Southwark Park, but rarely turn up anywhere else on the peninsula. The freezing weather that arrived mid-month also bought a **Water Rail** to Globe Pond. Several people were lucky enough to get a good look, as this elusive bird was forced to run across the ice between reed patches. Two **Kingfisher** remained throughout, ranging between Globe and Downtown Ponds, occasionally together. On the 13th, 20 **Black-headed Gull** visited Globe Pond, along with a single **Common Gull**. Records of this once-regular species are few and far between, this being our first record since 2018. A **Grey Heron** continued to visit Globe Pond and was joined by another adult on the 27th. A **Coal Tit**, locally scarce, sighted on the 23rd made for a good winter record, while a **Chiffchaff** also remained in the area until the end of the month. The two **Fieldfare** remained around the Central Meadow and were seen several times during the month, and at least 40 **Redwing** remained until the 17th. Three **Song Thrush** on the 1st was our highest count for some time. Other notables were a **Sparrowhawk** and four **Jay** on the 1st.

### Surrey Water

Good numbers of **Tufted Duck** stayed throughout the month, but the cold weather failed to bring in any interesting ducks. Notable birds during the month included a single **Common Gull**, possibly the same bird seen at Globe Pond and in Southwark Park, three **Starling** on the gasworks and at least 100 **Redwing** feeding on remaining berries near the Lake before moving on.

### Canada Water

Construction work on and around the Lake continues, and there was very little change in bird records for this site. **Tufted Duck** numbers rose to 75 on the 12th, while **Black-headed Gull** numbers rose to around 50.

### Bermondsey Station area

A group of three **Mistle Thrush** flew through on the 7th; at least two remained until the 23rd when they were seen with at least five **Redwing** feeding on a few remaining rowan berries.

Excluding the hybrids and exotics, we logged 48 species during December.

## November 2022

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### Southwark Park

On the 4th, our record number of 14 **Gadwall** were still on the Lake, along with the **Yellow-billed Teal**; all left together soon after. The **Mute Swan** has lost another young to probable avian influenza. A trio of **Shoveler** arrived on the 14th, but two females soon left. A single female **Tufted Duck** seen arriving with a **Mallard**, probably from Surrey Water where many **Tufted Duck** gather, was a regular visitor. **Black-headed Gull** numbers at the Lake rose to over 70 on the 21st, but the average was around 30 on most days. The last decent flock of migrating **Woodpigeon** to fly over the Park went through on the morning of the 2nd, with more than 40 heading southwest. Only one **Chiffchaff** was found during the month, occasionally joining a **Long-tailed Tit** flock. At least one **Firecrest** remained in and around the Rose Garden but proved elusive. A **Mistle Thrush** was near the Lake on the 28th. **Redwing** numbers were greatly reduced in the area, with only three on the 21st passing through the Park.

### Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond

We continued with a few more early morning-visible migration meets from the top of Stave Hill and had good results — 580 plus **Woodpigeon** in groups of 30 to 50 went through on the 4th; by the 12th there were only 20. Four **Meadow Pipit** also went through on the 4th. Other notables were a **Brambling**, three **Lesser Redpoll** over the month and two **Fieldfare** that stayed in the Goblin Wood area for the rest of the month. This is a good record for us, as **Fieldfare** rarely hang around for long. It seems that the majority of **Redwing** have now gone through, with only 11 appearing during the month. Another interesting record was the **Blackbird** migration; it is a rare thing for me to see **Blackbird** flying high overhead. Another odd occurrence on the 4th was a mass of over 30 **Carrion Crow** mobbing an unseen raptor or owl that had dropped into a tree near Downtown Road. Buzzard and Short-eared Owl trigger a massive mob response from crows, and we watched several head over from the direction of Southwark Park and Canada Water just to join in. Whatever it was got away soon after, and the noise dwindled into a sort of crow grumble as the ones that had made the effort for nothing headed back over us. Twelve **Canada Geese** flew over on the 18th, but we only saw a single **Egyptian Goose** go over on the 4th. Two **Kingfisher** remained on site. A lot of tracking by Rotherhithe Birders revealed that we have had a change of **Kingfisher**; originally a male and female turned up, but the female left and was replaced by a first-year bird. Three **Stock Dove** heading east on the 18th was our first sighting for some time. At least 24 **Ring-neck Parakeet** commuted through on the 4th. A **Long-tailed Tit** flock of over ten wandered around the area and was joined by **Great Tits** and **Blue Tit**; this is a good time to check through these flocks (we have yet to find a **Firecrest** in this area). At least two **Chiffchaff** remain. Seventeen **Starling** flew over, heading for Surrey Water, on the 12th.

### Surrey Water

**Tufted Duck** numbers dropped to over 50, and **Black-headed Gull** numbers were also down to 20 on the 4th. A pair of **Gadwall** were found on the 19th; a good find (possibly a first for Surrey Water) considering that the Southwark Park flock had left some time earlier. Over 30 **Starling** gathered on the old gasworks on the 12th. Sadly, the only **Common Gull** this month, on the 19th, appeared to be suffering from avian influenza. Another gull was seen in a similar state along the river.

### Canada Water

This was a particularly uneventful month for Canada Water, with over 30 **Black-headed Gull** and six **Tufted Duck** as notable sightings.

### Greenland Dock and the River Thames

After visible migration on the 12th, we headed to Durand's Wharf and along the river to Greenland Dock. We found four **Common Gull**, four **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and a single **Great Black-backed Gull** amongst 150 plus **Black Headed Gull**. Eighty-six **Tufted Duck** were on Greenland Dock, as well as three **Great Crested Grebe**. We counted 12 **Cormorant**, and many of these were likely the birds that we had seen from Stave Hill earlier in the morning.

Excluding the hybrids and exotics, we logged 51 species during November.



### Southwark Park

On the 4th, we found a **Firecrest** in the Rose Garden; I suspected two were present, and this was later confirmed. This is our first winter record in Rotherhithe of this species. Five **Blackbird** also spotted on the 4th was a good number for the Park. On the 12th, we encountered the **Greylag** and **Canada Goose** pair that had previously bred at Globe Pond. They had with them seven hybrid young, but we have no idea where they were raised. We had a decent passage through on the 13th, with a single **Song Thrush**, four **Chaffinch** and a flock of over ten **Linnet**. **Redwing** started to arrive on around the second week of the month, with over four arriving on the 10th and a high of around 70 on the 20th. Bear in mind that by this time several thousand were passing through other parts of the country. **Chiffchaff** numbers rose throughout the month, with at least six feeding together on Willow Island. They later joined up with **Long-tailed Tit**, and on the 20th, I found a mixed flock by the Lake that included **Long-tailed Tit**, **Great Tit**, **Blue Tit**, a **Wren**, a **Robin**, two **Chiffchaff** and a **Firecrest**; it has been many years since I have seen such an impressive mixed foraging party. By the end of the month, we had only found one **Chiffchaff**. We had noticed that the number of **Mute Swan** young had dropped to four and believed that they had left, but we were later told that they had been dying. As I've mentioned before, **Gadwall** have become regular visitors to the Park over the last couple of years, and this season has been exceptional with 14 on the Lake by the end of the month. On the 24th, we found an odd, unfamiliar duck with a bright yellow and black bill that seemed to have dropped in with the **Gadwall**. It was an elusive little duck and, eventually, after much stalking and patience by Rotherhithe Birders, it was finally identified as a **Yellow-billed Teal** (not a **Yellow-billed Pintail** as previously thought). In an autumn of incredible rarities elsewhere, this duck native to South America is most definitely an escape and was still on the Lake on the 28th.

### Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond

A pair of **Egyptian Geese** flew over Stave Hill, heading for Surrey Water. On the 9th, we met up for a walk with the London Bird Club. We found 25 species with the highlight being a **Kingfisher** at Downtown Pond; another sighting on Globe Pond was likely the second bird (this was confirmed at the end of the month). On the 15th, a dawn bird watch from Stave Hill gave us our second **Jackdaw** record this year and our third record for the Stave Hill area. It perched on the turbine for at least five minutes before flying off with some **Carrion Crow**. On the 22nd, we had one of our few **Mute Swan** flyovers — a first-year bird that we saw on two days during visible migration. Another visitor was a small, white duck that has been dropping into Globe Pond over the last few weeks. This looks more like a fancy breed and is not one of the local hybrids. Towards the end of the month, **Woodpigeon** numbers rose — over 225 flew over Stave Hill on the morning of the 26th. Also on this date, a female **Kestrel** flew over our group; this is only our second record since 2019. It is hard to believe that we have had more **Common Buzzard** and **Red Kite** records in the area than this once common and familiar falcon. **Redwing** numbers remained low, with a rounded-up figure of more than 90 over Stave Hill for the month. A total of eight **Chaffinch** were recorded going through, but we were also lucky enough to pick up a **Brambling** on the 26th and a **Siskin** on the 15th.

### Surrey Water

**Tufted Duck** numbers rose and fell over the month, with a high of around 130 on the 15th, along with over 50 **Black-headed Gull**. On the 22nd, we found a **Mistle Thrush** and a flock of over 30 **Redwing**. A pair of **Grey Wagtail** are regular visitors to the area.

### Canada Water

Forty-five **Tufted Duck** on the 28th were likely some of the Surrey Water birds, as numbers dropped there by the end of the month. Over 50 **Black-headed Gull** were on the water at the start of the month.

Excluding the hybrids and exotics, we logged 51 species during October.

## September 2022

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### Southwark Park

The excitement of late August continued in to the first week of September with two **Spotted Flycatcher** near the Lake; they remained for at least two days. On the 3rd, a male **Sparrowhawk** following a group of **Goldfinch** was mobbed by a couple of **Carriion Crow**. As the crows left, the **Sparrowhawk** was joined by another bird, a male **Peregrine Falcon**, which it chased off toward Jamaica Road. A single **Mistle Thrush** on the 3rd was spotted. **Mistle Thrush** is, like so many species, in decline. We have had few sightings in the area this year.

### Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond

A single **Chaffinch** passed through on the 1st, and a **Coal Tit** was near Mahogany Pond on the 15th. A **Pied Flycatcher** was found in the Long Meadow on the evening of the 5th. We have certainly had an excellent flycatcher year in Rotherhithe. On the 8th, we found what appeared to be a female **Mandarin Duck** on Globe Pond. I had some doubts about this bird, as an adult female should have a crest. A close look at photos taken of this bird showed that it was a male in eclipse; a couple of days later, a 'female' **Mandarin Duck** was at Brookmill Park. I suspect that this is the same male that arrived last year and that also turned up on Southwark Park lake earlier this year. A **Grey Wagtail** has again become a regular visitor to Globe Pond and Back Pond.

## August 2022

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### Southwark Park

It was pointed out that there are in fact two pairs of **Little Grebe** on the Lake and that both had broods — the pair we saw last month with two young and a pair with a single, older chick that evaded our visits for over a week before we saw it. Sadly, the younger brood was lost within two weeks. A pair of **Gadwall** on the 16th was a good summer record for us. This species has been turning up regularly, although infrequently, for at least three years. Six **House Martin** over the Lake was our highest count for some time, and numbers have been low this year. There was quite a lot of excitement towards the end of the month, starting with a good warbler return from around the 20th, with over four **Chiffchaff** and two **Willow Warbler** feeding regularly in trees near one of the viewpoints. We had no spring passage of **Willow Warbler**. 'Bird of the month' for the Park was undoubtedly the **Pied Flycatcher** near

the Lake on the 23rd, which remained until at least the 26th. There has been a good movement through London of **Pied Flycatcher**, as there was a few years back when at least two were at Stave Hill and Russia Dock Woodland, and one was at the Park, calling near the Bandstand. A **Sparrowhawk** turned up on the 23rd, chased by a **Carrion Crow** across the Park.

The Bat Watch on Wednesday the 17th of August had a good turn out, and we managed to track down **Soprano** and **Common Pipistrelle**. A probable **Brown Long-eared Bat** was again around the bowling green area.

### **Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond**

An unremarkable July turned into an exciting August, with a string of good records starting on the 4th with a **Hobby** and a **Common Buzzard** over The Shed. The 14th turned out to be one of those drop-in days, with the sighting of a **Reed Warbler** on Downtown Pond, a returning **Willow Warbler** and two **Sedge Warbler**, which remained for at least three days on Stave Hill Pond. On the 27th, two **Reed Warbler** and another **Sedge Warbler**, our fourth this year, were found at Downtown Pond. A **Grey Wagtail** and our first **Spotted Flycatcher** this year were also found on the 27th. Also of note were three immature **Grey Heron**, which turned up on Globe Pond on the 14th. This is the first time that we have had more than one immature bird.

## **July 2022**

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### **Southwark Park**

Mid-summer birding in parks has quite a few challenges: there is little change in species and singing has all but faded away. At least two **Blackcap** are still around the Lake; now you need to listen for what sounds like two pebbles knocked together indicating that somewhere in that bush is a skulking bird. The pair of **Egyptian Geese** have also bred, with a single youngster seen at the start of the month. This pair seemed rather laid back about things; the last time **Egyptian Geese** bred in the Park, a few years ago, they were chasing everything off. On the 25th, I found the first returning **Black-headed Gull** with three adults around the Lake. Also on the 25th, was the **Little Grebe** pair with two newly hatched young. On the 4th, a pair of **Grey Wagtail** visited the Lake — the first sighting of this species for some time. A single **Swift** on the 4th was the only record this month; by mid-August, **Swift** will be leaving for Africa. I was lucky enough to see all four **Peregrine**, and judging from the bulging crop of one juvenile, it had recently fed. A single **Chiffchaff** called briefly in the Nature Area on the 2nd.

### **Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond**

Apart from the heat, it has been an unremarkable month. **Blackcap** and **Chiffchaff** have stopped singing, while a single **Greenfinch** near The Shed was a good find. The **Grey Heron** remained at Globe Pond, and a single **Grey Wagtail** was the first record for quite a while. We counted at least ten **Moorhen** between Globe Pond and Downtown Pond. Bea Pond was dried out, and work was being done clearing silt.

## **June 2022**

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### **Southwark Park**

The **Mute Swan** family is doing well, and all six young have survived. While a pair of **Tufted Duck** have remained throughout the season, there is still no evidence of breeding. On the 6th, there was a lot of **Ringed-neck Parakeet** activity, with several recently fledged young around the islands. We saw **Blackbird** chasing these shorted-tailed fledglings several times; perhaps the shape reminds them of a predator, such as a peregrine passing through. Up to five **House Martin** have been visiting the Lake, but we only saw one **Swift** fly over on the 27th. 'Bird of the month' was the male **Reed Warbler** that dropped into the little reedbed in front of the Rose Garden; he sang for at least two days before moving on. So far this is the only record of this species in Rotherhithe this year. At least four **Blackcap** were still singing at the end of the month, and a single **Collared Dove** still has a territory near the old café, but there has been no sign of breeding. **Stock Dove** have also been rather elusive lately, with only a couple of sightings during the month.

It was brought to our attention that **Peregrine** have bred somewhere in Rotherhithe and fledged two young. We have contacted The London Peregrine Partnership who monitor peregrines throughout the London area, and we have been informed that the birds we see in our area may be from further afield.

#### **Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond**

By the end of the month, the long-staying pair of **Canada Geese** had left Globe Pond; the abandoned nest contained two eggs. A pair of **Tufted Duck** that arrived in May had a brood of five young on the 22nd. **Blackcap** and **Chiffchaff** have continued to sing throughout, and the **Song Thrush** was again singing at his territory near the Long Meadow.

### **May 2022**

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#### **Southwark Park**

It seems not so long ago that there was hardly anything on the Lake; it is now full of young **Coot**, **Moorhen**, **Mallard** and **Canada Geese**. The **Mute Swan** are also finally succeeding in hatching six young. The **Little Grebe** have been very active, and we were lucky enough to find that the youngster from last year is still hanging around. Two **Sand Martin** over the bandstand on the afternoon of the 10th were a welcome sight — this species has all but disappeared from the area over the last few years. We also found a pair of **Coal Tit** on the 28th, and judging by the amount of wear on the heads, they were feeding young — a great find as we have not heard **Coal Tit** in the Park for quite some time. We know that at least one pair of **Goldcrest** successfully fledged their brood. Despite some good sightings earlier in the year of **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, we have had very few records lately and they do not appear to have bred.

#### **Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond**

Sound Camp Dawn Chorus took place on the 1st of May this year. We had a good turn out for a fine, sunny dawn that resulted in recording 30 species. This beat our previous record of 27, and a new species was added to the local list when six **Shelduck** flew over. A pair of **Egyptian Geese** were on the Back Pond, and seven **Tufted Duck** arrived and remained throughout the month. On the 12th, a **Red Kite** was seen over The Shed. On the 29th, we were joined by members from the London Bird Club; although the season is getting on and many species are

feeding young, we managed to record 26 species, which included three **Swift** and five **House Martin**. There are at least two successful **Great-spotted Woodpecker** broods in Russia Dock Woodland.

## April 2022

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### Southwark Park

A pair of **Shoveler** lingered for another couple of weeks before moving on. The **Tufted Duck** remained throughout the month; perhaps we will get a brood this year. The **Mute Swan** are on eggs, and at least one pair of **Canada Geese** are also sitting on eggs. Several broods of **Mallard** and **Coot** were seen, and they managed to dodge **Gull** and **Heron** predation. The pair of **Little Grebe** were seen and heard several times, but with no evidence of nesting (yet). A female **Grey Wagtail** was seen on the 14th, but no further sightings have happened since then. A pair of **Stock Dove**, **Goldcrest** and three singing **Blackcap** were seen on the 23rd.

April has been a mostly quiet month; north-east winds held back spring migration for some time, and the hoped-for arrival of interesting migrants did not happen. We only found one **Chiffchaff** on the 18th. Although we found **Willow Warbler** in two other Rotherhithe locations, there were no records in the Park of this scarce species. At least four **Blackcap** were singing around the Park early in the month.

### Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond

A **Common Buzzard** that flew over The Shed on the 20th was our first decent raptor for quite a while. Our first true spring migrants arrived this month, with several **House Martin** and six **Swallow** over Stave Hill on the 28th being our highest spring record. A **Willow Warbler** found in the Long Meadow on the 25th seems to be our only record this month. **Blackcap** and **Chiffchaff** numbers also went up with new arrivals. A pair of **Canada Geese** continued to visit Globe Pond, but there was no evidence of breeding yet. A **Sedge Warbler** dropped in at Globe Pond on the 25th and left the following day.

## March 2022

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### Southwark Park

On morning of the 17th, we discovered that Rotherhithe's first **Mandarin Duck** had just returned. We think he arrived with a group of **Tufted Duck** as he did last year and remained for five days. At least two **Shoveler** remained throughout the month. On the 9th, the adult **Common Gull** was again over the Lake. **Black-headed Gull** numbers rose to over 100 at the start of the month, with a dramatic move a few days later when not a single gull remained. Only individuals passing through were seen by the 28th. **Mistle Thrush** were singing near the Lake, and a **Peregrine Falcon** went over on 17th. A **Grey Wagtail** on the 19th was the first for quite some time.

Over 15 **Redwing** were around the bandstand on the 9th. These were no doubt preparing for their move to their breeding grounds. Very few remained in Rotherhithe after the 17th. We

had some great views of **Stock Dove** and have seen three individuals together, while a **Collared Dove** was calling near the old café.

### **Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond**

The **Kingfisher** remained and was last seen on the 4th. Another highlight was our second record of **Jackdaw** — a single one over Stave Hill on the 28th. Very few **Redwing** overwintered, with only five or so in the area.

## **February 2022**

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### **Southwark Park**

A high count of nine **Shoveler** at the start of the month dropped off to two, whilst a pair of **Tufted Duck** stayed throughout most of the month. **Black-headed Gull** numbers were up and down over the month, with a high count of around 80 plus. We can expect most, if not all, to be gone in the next few weeks as they return to their breeding colonies. A very nice find on the 8th was a brief visit from an adult **Common Gull**. This is now a scarce species away from the river, although I recall that in my teens I saw them regularly on the playing fields. A single **Mistle Thrush** singing near the Lake was a welcome sound. **Winter Thrushes** have continued to be scarce. A single **Redwing** over the bandstand on the 1st was the only record.

### **Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond**

One **Kingfisher** continued throughout the month, mostly on Downtown Pond. A pair of **Stock Dove** were displaying in Russia Dock Woodland on the 25th. The **Song Thrush** was still singing near the orchard.

## **January 2022**

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### **Southwark Park**

A pair of **Gadwall** remained until mid-January. Another female dropped in briefly. **Shoveler** and **Tufted Duck** numbers rose during the month (mostly males). **Black-headed Gull** numbers remained around 100 plus throughout the month, with a single **Herring Gull** also remaining. **Egyptian Geese** visited most days, and the two **Grey Heron** remained throughout. A single over-wintering **Chiffchaff** was a good find, and we had some good encounters with a **Goldcrest**. On the 24th, a flock of around 20 **Goldfinch** flew over. On the 31st, a **Song Thrush** sang very briefly. This species is very scarce locally and, hopefully, this male will establish a territory. Very few wintering thrushes have stayed in the area, with none in the Park throughout January.

### **Stave Hill, Russia Dock Woodland and Globe Pond**

The overwintering **Kingfisher** was seen throughout the month, mostly on Downtown Pond with occasional sightings on Globe Pond. Although we only ever saw one bird, we had confirmation that two, a male and a female, were present for several weeks. We recorded one of our few **Mute Swan** flyovers on the 25th, with two flying toward the river. The **Firecrest** was relocated at the turbine, but soon moved. At least three **Coal Tit** were in the Park, along



with a **Song Thrush** singing near the orchard. On the 13th, six **Redwing** was our highest number, while five **Greenfinch** at the Long Meadow was a good winter record.

### **Would you like to contribute?**

If you would like to contribute a monthly or quarterly highlight, to an area not already covered, please get in touch with Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne, Chair of the London Bird Club. See <http://www.Inhs.org.uk/index.php/about-us/contact-us>

### **Acknowledgements**

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