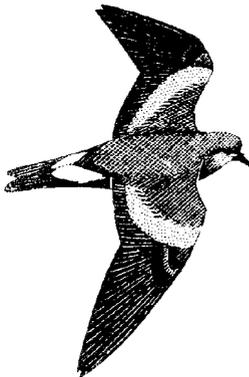


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BIRD NEWS

Number 96

July 2014



County Rarity: Olive-backed Pipit

Ringling Report: The Clough Brook Dippers

Black-headed Gull at Parkgate 2010-14

Submission of Electronic Records

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Front cover: Night Heron by Ray Scally

Other illustrations by Phil Jones

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Note: the copy date for the next issue is 18th October 2014

Guest Editorial

It was with interest, as it always is, that I read Bob Anderson's offerings for this issue and know exactly what he means. I won't go into too much detail except to say that many birders have high expectations every time they go out birding, and in the event, actually see very little..... or do they? I had a whinge recently when I did a short article for the Frodsham Marsh Bird Blog, an excellent daily read if I say so myself. Put together by Bill Morton, it is meant to be the electronic version of the old log book which kept getting stolen, burnt or blown away. I was bemoaning the fact that as I work, time to enjoy myself is relatively short, compared to a lot of my associates who are now retired. Bob comes to mind again. Before I can relax and go birding, I have a list of chores that I have to complete so that the next week goes like clockwork. My article was meant to be an honest account of a Saturday when I was just too busy to get down to Frodsham Marsh for the day and just went for a few hours, and being frustrated that 'I hadn't seen anything'. It simply wasn't true! Breeding Avocets, a male Marsh Harrier.... Bill remarked that it had come across as a negative read which surprised me. So it got me thinking. Time constraints can be artificial. Better time management is what I needed. Work couldn't be rearranged, so it had to be my spare time. After a bit of reassessing what was critical, I was left with everything else that could be put off or mentally deleted. It worked. My weekends are now more my own and I head off west down the M56 with a spring in my throttle. So, once again, Bob was right. Not only that, he's actually using the term 'birder', which made me smile. Bob will understand, I think.

Hugh Pulsford has written an interesting account of a Dipper study that the ringing group have been carrying out in the eastern hills. It reminded me of when we used to trap the Dippers in Happy Valley between Poynton Pool and Bramhall Park in the 80s. They are a big, strong, meaty bird and you can feel the muscles when you handle one. The initial results are fascinating. Just keep your eyes open for colour-ringed birds.

Moving on to big gulls. This year for the first time, I began to notice Lesser Black-backed Gulls calling overhead as I wandered around Woodford Garden Centre, just west of Poynton. When I say I noticed them, I didn't just hear the odd call as in the past, but courtship calling. Loud wails and laughing chuckles. They would be engaged in courtship manoeuvres over the plant stalls before dropping down close by. I realised that they looked like they were nesting on the old Woodford Aerodrome aircraft shed roofs. A month later there were dozens of pairs, but I couldn't actually see them as they sat out of sight. Bill Morton mentioned that there were a lot of pairs nesting by the ship canal on the walls which was unusual. Now I see that David Norman has specifically mentioned the new phenomenon and discusses the potential effects on humans and breeding birds. It gives a different perspective on an event that I initially took as quite nice. I wonder why these gulls have decided to nest like this all of a sudden?

As summers go, this one is dry and hot as far as I'm concerned, and I love it. You can keep your cold and wet summers. I've had enough of them and would love to know that the next twenty were going to be like this one. It's a joy to go out in a t-shirt and shorts. As a result, there is anecdotal evidence that birds would seem to be moving early, possibly as a result of a good breeding season. Is this correct? As I type this, it's also being hailed as one of the best years for migrant insects as well and there has been a huge influx of Scarce Tortoiseshell butterflies into Holland with some turning up on the south and east coast of Britain. Formerly known as Yellow-legged Tortoiseshells, they are a species from way east of us and a gross rarity. I've also been looking at insects for the first time in my life and have found it to be fascinating. I've been doing a piece called Nature Notes on the Frodsham Marsh blog and have enjoyed sharing my ramblings immensely. Several people have commented positively and for me it's an additional reason for hiking all that way down the M56 when 'there's not much about'. Well, there is, always, if you only would take the time to stop and look and be interested. Nature is a wonderfully rich and diverse part of our lives and I've only just begun to realise over the past few years, that being solely interested in birds, does blinker you somewhat.

There is actually never a day when there is nothing about.

Tony Broome

County Rarities

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT *Anthus hodgsoni*

Perhaps an interesting one for a County Rarity write-up, as surely I hear you say, isn't this a national rarity whose records are judged by BBRC. Well, no, it has become sufficiently frequent in occurrence that it no longer is a BBRC species and records are now assessed at the county level. Of course, 'sufficiently frequent' reflects an increase in records in the northern isles and along the east coast of the UK, following a number of years of so called influxes! Whilst in the north-west it remains a true rarity.

I find in general folks either love or hate pipits, small brown streaky birds that annoyingly fly away just as you get your binoculars on them, with a buzzing set of calls that are easy to forget. However, I think faced with a potential OBP (as they are generally known) several things would strike you as different from your regular Meadow Pipit and although one's general experience with Tree Pipit annually is likely to be restricted to an occasional flyover, or a parachuting and singing bird on territory in the Goyt Valley, which doesn't actually show very well in terms of its plumage, OBP is actually quite distinctive.

In any migrant situation it is likely to be the call of a flushed bird that alerts you. OBP gives a similar "spiiiz" type of call as Tree Pipit does, but it's higher or shriller and not drawn out, I always think they sound like Redwings! That should get your attention, and if you can get a good look, particularly at the upperparts, OBP isn't a streaky pipit; it appears very olive green with some dark streaks on the back, but nothing like a heavily-marked Tree Pipit or Meadow Pipit. Because it isn't as streaked, a first-year bird (most likely to occur) has obvious tertials with broad, brown-olive edges, nothing like the whitish grey ones on an immature Tree Pipit. In fact, the whole of the back of an OBP has nice dark-centred tertials and buff-tipped greater coverts, lacks any whitish fringing at all and, in general, the bird will appear quite greenish-olive looking with noticeable white, mostly well streaked, underparts on the belly, with less so on the flanks.

It is the head markings that are usually quoted as distinctive on OBP and I suppose they are, but with a bird moving about on the ground, it's often difficult to put it all together as distinctive. So OBP does show a well-marked, quite wide, creamy-whitish supercilium, usually with a dark border above the eye. It is obvious, but it's actually the rusty-buff area in front of the eye and a pale but not pink, thin lower mandible that confirms it is not a Tree Pipit. OBP also show this much quoted, but unless you get a really good view!, an isolated pale spot above a small, dark patch on the lores at the end of the supercilium. No other species show this combination of facial pattern, although I would have to admit, on the four I have found in my birding life in the UK, this actually was the last feature I noticed! Seeing them in China and Japan, it was very obvious.

Jizz-wise they are very Tree Pipit like, they can be found deep in vegetation, woods, etc, and although they tend to pump their tails more so than other pipit species, this is useless as an ID feature.

This species is not on the Cheshire and Wirral list, yet you can't help feeling we should have had one or two; I think we need to look harder!



Hugh Pulsford

Note: If YOU see anything of interest in your local paper, on the Internet, or even in the national press, relevant to Cheshire and Wirral, please bring it to the Editor's attention. Either scan in the article and email it, or cut it out and put it in the post. Please make sure the source and date is clear. Editor's contact details are on the inside front cover of *Bird News*.

County Round-Up

Some of the records may be unauthenticated and therefore will require review by the Society's Rarities Team or the BBRC. This report covers the period from January to April 2014.

SITE REPORTS

Chester area

A Garganey was on the Gowy Meadows on Mar 15th. A Mealy Redpoll was ringed at Backford on Jan 30th.

Congleton area

An Egyptian Goose was at Astbury Mere on Apr 23rd and four Common Scoters on Apr 30th. Two Sand Martins were at Astbury Mere on Mar 18th, a Swallow was at Congleton on Mar 30th and a Willow Warbler was at Astbury Mere on Apr 2nd.

Crewe and Nantwich area

Two Whooper Swans were at Maw Green Tip on Jan 10th, an Egyptian Goose was at Sandbach Flashes from Apr 8th - 12th, a peak count of 770 Wigeons were here during Feb and a max of 22 Goosanders also during Feb. Two Little Egrets were at Rode Pool during Feb. An Osprey was at Elton Hall Flash on Mar 20th and another over Crewe on Apr 11th, a Merlin was at Pump House Flash on Jan 15th and Doddington on Feb 7th and a Hobby was at Sandbach on Apr 22nd and 27th. A Common Crane was at PHF on Mar 10th and Rode Pool on Apr 17th.

Three Woodcocks were at Fodens Flash on Jan 2nd. A Little Gull was at Elton Hall Flash on Apr 4th with Iceland and Caspian Gull on various dates. A Long-eared Owl roosted at Maw Green Tip throughout Jan and Feb. An early Swift was at EHF on Apr 17th, Sand Martins were at EHF on Mar 14th, a Swallow was at Rode Pool on Mar 23rd, House Martins were at EHF on Apr 8th, Yellow Wagtail was at EHF on Apr 7th, and a Wheatear was there on Mar 21st. 450 Fieldfares were at Doddington on Mar 21st. Other migrants included: Sedge Warbler at EHF on Apr 19th, Lesser Whitethroat on Apr 15th, Whitethroat on Apr 20th and Willow Warbler on Apr 8th. 130 Bramblings were at Doddington on Apr 4th and two Crossbills were there on Jan 3rd.

Ellesmere Port and Neston area

Wildfowl included: nine Bewick's Swans at Burton on Feb 1st, c39 Whooper Swans at BMW on Jan 25th, 4500 Pink-footed Geese at Parkgate on Mar 2nd, an American Wigeon at Burton on Jan 5th, a Green-winged Teal at BMW on several dates, two Garganeys there during late Apr and three Goosanders on Jan 15th. A Great White Egret was at Parkgate on several dates with two on Jan 17th, and another was at BMW on Apr 28th, a Spoonbill was at Parkgate on Feb 23rd, a Glossy Ibis was over Ellesmere Port on Mar 16th. Five Hen Harriers were at Parkgate on Jan 14th, an Osprey flew over Willaston on Apr 5th, four Merlins were at Parkgate on Jan 4th. 68 Avocets were at BMW on Apr 30th, the first

Little Ringed Plover appeared at Parkgate on Mar 29th, Little Stints were at BMW on several dates during Jan. The first Swallow was at Parkgate on Mar 21st, 30 Rock Pipits at Neston on Jan 3rd along with three Water Pipits, a Buff-bellied Pipit remained in the Burton/Parkgate area during Jan/Feb, whilst a Wheatear was at Burton on several dates during Jan. Two Cetti's Warblers were at Neston on Apr 13th, two Siberian Chiffchaffs were in the Burton area during Jan, five Chiffchaffs were at Neston on Jan 9th, an early Willow Warbler was at BMW on Mar 12th. Elsewhere, two Twites were at Neston on Jan 3rd, a Lapland Bunting was at Neston on Jan 3rd.

Lapland Bunting
by Phil Jones



Halton area

Two Barnacle Geese were at Pickering's Pasture on Jan 18th and 19th, four Brent Geese were at Hale on Mar 13th and a Red-breasted Goose on several dates. Three Little Egrets were in the Hale area on several dates during Jan and Apr. A Marsh Harrier was at Hale on Mar 31st, Merlin was there on Jan 19th and Pickering's Pasture on 22nd. Waders included: two Avocets at Hale on Apr 14th and the first Little Ringed Plover there on Mar 26th, single Sanderling noted on Jan 19th, a Little Stint on several dates and Woodcock on Feb 20th, all at Pickering's Pasture, 240 Black-tailed Godwits were at Hale on Apr 17th and eight Whimbrels at Pickering's Pasture on Apr 18th.

A Kittiwake was at Pickering's Pasture on Jan 1st, and a Guillemot after the gales on Feb 16th. A Hoopoe was in a Runcorn garden on Apr 13th. The first Swallow was at Hale on Apr 1st, a Yellow Wagtail at Carr Lane Pools on Apr 23rd, 18 White Wagtails were at Pickering's Pasture on Apr 16th and a Whinchat on Apr 24th. A male Cetti's Warbler was at Wigg Island for most of Apr, a Grasshopper Warbler was at Carr Lane on Apr 23rd.



Whinchat
by Phil Jones

Macclesfield area

Three Barnacle Geese were at Withington Hall Pool on Apr 6th, a Red-breasted Goose was at Redes Mere during Jan, an Egyptian Goose was at Capesthorpe on Mar 24th and Rostherne on Apr 9th and 27th. A Little Ringed Plover was at Acre Nook SQ on Apr 6th. Red Kites were over Danebower on Apr 16th and Lamaload Reservoir on Apr 16th and 19th, an Osprey flew over Rostherne on Apr 12th and a Merlin was at Three Shires Head on Apr 12th. A Black-tailed Godwit at Rostherne on Jan 19th was the only wader of note. A Common Tern was at Rostherne on Apr 27th. The first Sand Martin was at Rostherne on Mar 16th, a Redstart was at Bollington on Apr 6th, a Ring Ouzel was at Three Shires Head on Apr 10th. At Rostherne: the first Grasshopper Warbler on Apr 23rd, a Reed Warbler on Apr 18th, Whitethroat on Apr 27th and Willow Warbler on Apr 8th. 40 Bramblings were at Rostherne on Apr 13th, a Scandinavian Arctic Redpoll was in a garden at Broken Cross on Mar 16th, eight Mealys and 100 Lesser Redpolls were in the Macclesfield Forest on Mar 13th, and up to 90 Crossbills were in the Macclesfield Forest area on Jan 5th.

Vale Royal area

Two Bewick's Swans and 19 Whooper Swans were at Frodsham Marsh on Jan 4th, a Green-winged Teal was at Neumann's Flash on Jan 11th. Two Bitterns were at Marbury CP on Feb 1st, two Little Egrets were at Neumann's Flash on Apr 11th and three Great White Egrets were at Frodsham Marsh on Feb 1st. A Red Kite was over Neumann's Flash on Apr 19th. Two Avocets were at Neumann's Flash on Feb 25th, a Little Stint at Frodsham Marsh on Feb 2nd, two Curlew Sandpipers during Apr, 27 Whimbrels were at Neumann's Flash on Apr 27th. An Arctic Tern was at Ashton's Flash on Apr 26th. Five Twites were at Frodsham Marsh on Mar 1st, a Mealy Redpoll was at Ashton's Flash on Jan 19th and Middlewich on Jan 22nd and Feb 2nd.

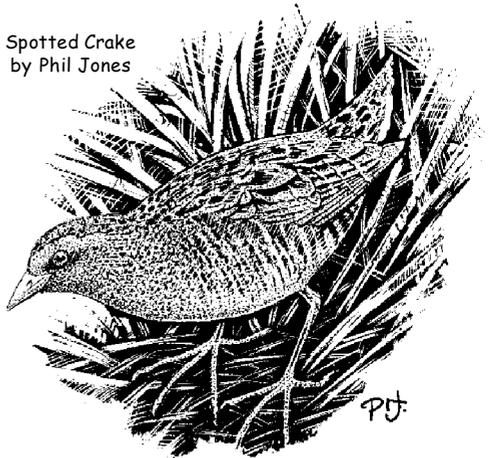
Warrington area

A Whooper Swan was at Woolston Eyes on Feb 4th and 9th, an Egyptian Goose on Apr 5th, two Garganeys were at Moore on Mar 14th, a Goosander was at Woolston on Feb 22nd. A Bittern was at Moore NR on Jan 25th whilst a Great White Egret was at Halfway House on the Mersey on Apr 10th. The first returning Black-necked Grebes were two birds at Woolston Eyes on Mar 8th. A female Marsh Harrier was at Woolston Eyes for much of the period. Two Little Gulls were at Woolston Eyes on Mar 31st, a Kumlein's Gull was at Richmond Bank on Jan 7th and Feb 11th, 10 Arctic Terns were at Woolston Eyes on Apr 22nd. A Redstart was at Gatewarth on Apr 24th. A Cetti's Warbler was singing at Gatewarth on Apr 19th-24th. A Siberian Chiffchaff was at Moore on Jan 5th, a Firecrest was at Woolston on Jan 4th. A Mealy Redpoll was at Moore on Jan 25th and a Crossbill was at Woolston Eyes on Jan 27th.

Wirral area

Five Whooper Swans were noted over Heswall on Jan 4th, 3470 Pink-footed Geese flew over north Wirral on Apr 2nd, 235 Brent Geese was the highest count at Hilbre on Feb 20th, a Green-winged Teal was at Leasowe on Apr 4th and three Eiders there on Apr 2nd. A huge flock of 27,000+ Common Scoters were off Hilbre on Mar 3rd, a Velvet Scoter was at Leasowe on Apr 21st and 22nd and 21 Red-breasted Mergansers were off Leasowe on Apr 4th. 84 Red-throated Divers were off Hilbre on Jan 4th, two Black-throated Divers at Leasowe on Apr 28th and four Great Northern Divers off Hilbre on Apr 3rd, a Slavonian Grebe was in the Hilbre/Hoylake area on Jan 4th. 35 Gannets were off Leasowe on Apr 10th. A Night Heron was at Leasowe from Apr 23rd - 27th. A Red Kite was over West Kirby on Feb 23rd, an Osprey was over Bidston on Apr 27th and Hilbre on several dates during Apr. A Spotted Crake was at Red Rocks on Apr 30th.

Spotted Crake
by Phil Jones



Black-tailed Godwits
by Phil Jones

Waders included: 820 Grey Plovers and 430 Sanderlings at Hoylake on Jan 19th, 970 Black-tailed Godwits at Gilroy NP on Apr 21st and 22 Whimbrels at Heswall on Apr 24th. An Arctic Skua was at Leasowe on Apr 11th, 23 Little Gulls were off Hilbre on Mar 18th, the first Sandwich Tern was at Leasowe on Mar 30th with 196 there on Apr 26th. 11 Guillemots were off Leasowe on Apr 18th and 40 Razorbills were at Hilbre on Feb 1st. A Wryneck was at Red Rocks on Apr 27th. The first Sand Martin was at Gilroy NP on Mar 20th, two House Martins were at Hilbre on Apr 3rd, three Tree Pipits were at Leasowe on Apr 16th, 950 Meadow Pipits were at Hilbre on Mar 31st, a Tawny Pipit was at Red Rocks on Apr 30th, c135 White Wagtails were at Leasowe on Apr 11th, a Black Redstart at Hoylake on Apr 21st, a Redstart at Moreton on Apr 8th, 15 Whinchats were at Red Rocks on Apr 28th, a Wheatear was at Leasowe on Mar 10th, a Ring Ouzel was at Meols on Mar 13th. The first Sedge Warbler was at Gilroy NP on Apr 10th, a Reed Warbler was at Red Rocks on Apr 9th, two Lesser Whitethroats were at Leasowe on Apr 12th, a Whitethroat on Apr 4th, a

Wood Warbler at West Kirby on Apr 29th. A Chough flew over Hilbre on Apr 21st. Two Twites were at Leasowe on Mar 1st, a Lapland Bunting was on Hilbre on Apr 10th, a Little Bunting was there on 28th, and Snow Buntings were at Red Rocks on Jan 3rd and 4th and Feb 15th, Wallasey on Jan 18th and Hilbre on Mar 9th.

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Thanks/acknowledgments to: *Birdwatching* magazine, Rob Cockbain, James Canovan, Dee Estuary website, Macclesfield RSPB, Moore NR website, SECOS, WECG and everyone else who passed records on.

Ringling News

Ringling plays an important part in developing our knowledge of birds. In this new feature we invite ringling groups (or individual ringlers) active in Cheshire and Wirral to contribute their own accounts of their activities. In general, the idea is that these should provide a means of updating local birders on the groups' work - both by way of information about birds ringled or recovered, and news of other events (or incidents).

Future contributions from other groups and/or individuals will be welcomed; contact Bob Anderson 01270 623044 or email Robert@andersons.myzen.co.uk.

SOUTH MANCHESTER RINGING GROUP

The Clough Brook Dippers

Although the original BTO RAS (Retrapping Adults for Survival) project finished in 2012, Michael Miles and Hugh Pulsford have continued to monitor the Dipper population along Clough Brook, Wildboardclough each year. Since we erected nest boxes under nearly all of the bridges along the brook, the local Dipper population has quickly taken to this affordable housing, making assessing the comings and goings, and ringling activities, significantly easier. Given the altitude of Clough Brook, running from the Stanley Arms at Bottom o' th' Oven, down to the A54 bridge and subsequently into the Dane at Allgreave, adult birds that have held a territory and bred in general don't stay into the winter months; evidence from recaptures from the Dane suggests most birds move off to less inclement areas to winter. However, in mild winters some birds do linger at well-provisioned sites such as by Crag Hall along the brook.

The project aims each year to assess survival and productivity, either by re-sighting previous years' colour-ringed adult birds known to be breeding, or if one of a breeding pair has only a BTO metal ring, or is unringled completely, then catching and colour ringling that breeding bird. Female Dippers can be hand caught at the nest whilst on eggs with a zero desertion rate; the males do require mist nets to be set up across the brook, and are most easily caught when the pairs are feeding young. All pulli are ringled with a BTO metal ring only. Dippers are highly territorial, both male and females will sing in an attempt to attract a mate and/or defend a territory, and in the 'Dippering' world, bigamy, infanticide and even incest are all par for the course. Given the location, it makes Coronation Street look like a soap opera as they say!

To understand the comings and goings along Clough Brook, you have to appreciate the territories, and their potential to successfully raise a brood or two, as some are marginal: where the stream is narrow, with few classic feeding areas, therefore usually occupied after the others, which have good runs of water, lots of stones, feeding pools and good bankside vegetation that presumably attracts the flies and invertebrates they feed on.

Ringlers are notorious for clever naming of nest sub sites to identify them on the national database operated by the BTO, so from where the brook emerges under the road by the Stanley Arms at the top, little wider than a foot of water width down to where it passes under the massive A54 bridge at 3 metres wide we have the following territories/bridges and nest boxes:

Bottom (o' th' Oven): Reasonable bridge, nest box somewhat exposed, narrow water, small wood adjacent, two culverts feeding run-off water in. Very limited feeding above, a marginal territory occupied only 3 times in 7 years, (and two of them in the culvert not the nest box!).

Best Kept Village: Very small bridge, hidden nest box, slightly wider water, open and exposed banking with minimal vegetation. A marginal territory, occupied only twice in 7 years.

Brough: Long bridge, wider water and adjacent feeder stream, with good feeding areas. Nest box well hidden. A quality territory and occupied in every year since 2007. Often one of the first to be occupied.

Yarnshaw: Narrow bridge, nest box exposed. Good feeding areas but within 500 metres from Brough above and Clough House Farm below. Despite being a quality site and usually occupied in most years, it has probably had the highest failure rate on the brook in terms of usurped clutches and desertions.

Clough House Farm: Narrow bridge up side stream, nest box exposed but access to several good feeding areas. Occupied, usually later than surrounding sites, in every year since it was put up in 2010 except one year (when the nest-building bird was predated by a Sparrowhawk).

Shutlingsloe: Narrow bridge, but hidden box, excellent feeding areas from open banking to wooded edges, large shallow stony areas. A quality site, always occupied (held for 4 years by a particular female).

Crag Hall: Bridge wide and exposed, so nest traditionally up a side stream culvert, not in nest box (ignored!) Culvert recently damaged in winter storms so nest now further in. A quality site with side feeder stream, large wide shallow water with stony areas, and often a winter territory. One of the first to be occupied and often second broods from here.

Brookside: Narrow small bridge, box somewhat exposed, but several good feeding areas downstream. A quality site.

Blaze: Narrow small bridge, but box well hidden. Good feeding along brook and up feeder stream. Usually the earliest first box occupied and often double brooded. Brook widens here.

A54: Huge arched bridge, box completely exposed (nest box has protective netting to eliminate predation by corvids). A marginal site set up, as little or no natural sites available down this 1000 metre stretch through Allgreave Wood, but only used in 3 years and subject to territorial disputes.

2014 started earlier than previous years in terms of birds back on territories along Clough Brook; a mild winter may have presumably ensured both adult survival and an early bloom of invertebrates, and elsewhere (Sutton Bridge on the Bollin) we had a pair of Dippers on eggs, a month earlier than 2013, or 2012 at a more lowland site. However, in mid-March, along the brook there was some nest building at 5 out of 10 potential or previously used nest sites but by the first week in April, two of these (Blaze and Brookside) that had held eggs on 1st April, had the clutches destroyed and the females here were forced into a re-lay with a new male. At Blaze it was last year's male that had to usurp an interloping suitor and reclaim his lady of old, but we never pinned down the story at Brookside. The new male here was elusive, and evaded our attempts to capture him, and given that he forced his female to lay another 5-egg clutch he didn't seem to be in attendance very often, and only 3 young fledged from this nest. By the third week in April, things had settled down, and pairs from previous years were also together again at two other sites, where they had been for the last 2 years at least, Crag Hall, and Brough. That left various empty territories, and this year it was a bit of new kids on the block and some shuffling around of previous years' birds.

Clearly, some birds hatched on the Brook in a previous year or two that survive their first winter seemed to return and try and take up a territory if one is vacant and they can attract a mate. In 2014, a pair of pulli born and ringed in 2013 from two different sites down the brook (one from Crag Hall, and the other from Brookside) were paired up at one of the more marginal sites at Best Kept Village, but, perhaps as inexperienced parents, they only managed to fledge 3 young. Similarly, a pullus from the Crag Hall brood in 2013 moved upstream, and found an unringed female and took up residence near Clough House Farm quite early in the season. Both birds from this site from 2013 dispersed elsewhere on the brook, with mixed success. The male, previously a 2011 pullus from Blaze, but not seen again until he appeared here in 2013, had moved downstream to Shutlingsloe, which in 2013 had been a failed nest site with new birds in residence. The female from Clough House Farm in 2013, which was a pullus from a nest site down on the Dane in 2012, moved upstream, and laid early at Yarnshaw, a site where there hasn't been traditionally a regular pair occupying it, but the nest was deserted in mid-April and she was not seen again. She was paired with the male from Brough, which of course was already nesting with another female at Brough Bridge in the next territory along! There has been a history of Brough males being bigamists; it has happened in two previous years, and once with a daughter from a previous year, so incest as well. Perhaps it's something in the water at this site! There was no activity at Bottom or A54 in 2014.

So how did they do? Well, the early usurping by males at Blaze and Brookside and the slightly later than expected nesting at Crag Hall, meant we had no second broods on Clough Brook in 2014. However, we had 8 nesting attempts, one failure, two relays and a total of 29 young fledged. So where do the young disperse to? We have had recoveries from Bramhall, over into the Peak District near Sheffield, down onto the Dane, and intriguingly, a young ringed Dipper was seen at Vale Royal Locks this May, maybe that too was a Clough Brook bird!

Hugh Pulsford

RINGING AT WOOLSTON – WINTER 2013/2014

(and a first look at the 2014 breeding season)

This note covers the winter period from October 2013 through March 2014 ('this winter') and gives a preview of how the 2014 breeding season is shaping up. In this winter period 946 new birds were ringed at Woolston, which compares to 1007 new birds ringed in the 2012/2013 winter period ('last winter'). This modest decline of 63 birds (or 6.1 %) contains within it a number of different factors. This winter was more clement than last and survival should have been better thereby increasing catches. These same conditions will have supported more natural food in the wider countryside thereby reducing the number of birds resorting to our feeders, where we make a large proportion of our winter catches. Broadly speaking, these two factors tended to cancel out each other in our winter catching. In addition to these effects, the behaviour of potential immigrants from mainland Europe also differed markedly between the two periods.

Turning to individual species, there were only a small number of significant variances between the two winters. Last winter was a 'Brambling Winter' and this winter was not. Our catch fell from 105 to nil. Less dramatically, but presumably also reflecting good food supplies in northern Europe, our catch of Goldcrests fell from 83 to 38.

Lesser Redpolls did arrive in good numbers and we ringed 40 compared to just eight last winter. The number of Common Redpolls included in this movement has been widely commented on and Woolston was no exception with three birds ringed. Greenfinches appeared to have had a good breeding season in 2013, as we ringed 352 birds this winter, mostly juveniles, compared with 242 last winter. A feature of Woolston's Greenfinches is that we encounter virtually no trichomonosis. It may be that our population, being slightly isolated, spends little time at garden feeders. In my note a year ago I referred to the large and unexplained drop in the number of Bullfinches ringed. I am pleased to report that numbers have recovered with 40 birds ringed this winter compared with just eight last winter, which remains a 'mystery blip'. Finally, catches of Reed Buntings declined from 55 last winter to just 21. It seems possible that the management work undertaken on the bed has temporarily reduced the amount of prime habitat for this species.

As part of the management work the Woolston Eyes Conservation Group kindly arranged some 'waterscaping' to create a purpose-designed area for a permanent duck trap, the construction of which was completed by the ringing team over the winter. This has already demonstrated its worth catching 27 Mallards, four Teals, two Moorhens, a Coot and Woolston's first Tufted Duck before catching was suspended for the breeding season. We look forward to what the autumn might bring.

So what of the breeding season? It is too early to have a definitive picture but early signs look good. In the nest boxes on No.3 bed we ringed 85 Great Tit pulli (72 last year) and 64 Blue Tit pulli (48 last year). We have not yet checked all the boxes to confirm successful fledging but we have currently retrapped 30 of the Great Tits (35%) and nine of the Blue Tits (14%). In the case of Great Tits 35% is a typical retrap rate in a year with very successful fledging and in the case of Blue Tits 14% is well above the typical retrap rate which is in the order of 5%. These numbers may surprise some readers and post-juvenile dispersal is not well understood at Woolston. Some broods fledge successfully but are never re-encountered so we assume they leave the bed 'in toto'. In other cases, the majority of a brood are re-encountered over the following weeks and clearly remain on and around the bed.

Other residents also appear to be doing well. The following figures relate to No.3 bed but reflect the Woolston experience:

Species	2014		2013	
	Juveniles ringed to 23rd June	First Date	Juveniles ringed to 23rd June	First Date
Robin	34	03 May	7	01 Jun
Wren	8	14 Jun	0	30 Jun
Dunnock	12	31 May	1	22 Jun
Bullfinch	21	31 May	0	30 Jun

On the assumption that we start catching juveniles as soon as they fledge and start moving around the bed, it can be seen that the breeding season for these species started between two

and four weeks earlier than in 2013. Of course 'earlier' does not automatically mean 'better', but the above numbers imply a very good start to the season for our residents.

It is too early to make similar comparisons for our migrant warblers, but the following table of 'first juvenile' dates does show that the breeding season for most of them started about three weeks earlier than in 2013:

	2014	2013
Species	First Date	First Date
Chiffchaff	31 May	22 Jun
Blackcap	08 Jun	30 Jun
Whitethroat	21 Jun	22 Jun
Reed Warbler	14 Jun	07 Jul

In summary then, we have evidence that the breeding season started earlier than in 2013 and that fledging and survival of first broods has been good. The overall success of the season depends on the weather over the next two months and we keep our fingers firmly crossed!

Michael Miles on behalf of the Woolston Ringing Team

HILBRE BIRD OBSERVATORY (HiBO)

February to June 2014 Ringing Review

Twenty years ago one of the current members of the Bird Observatory had just started to learn about birdwatching and was talking to Peter Williams, then chairman of the Bird Observatory, about the intricacies of identifying Chiffchaffs and Willow Warblers. Pete, ever practical, said that the best way was from the song, but went on to explain how wing formulas work, given that you have the bird in the hand, and pointed out primary projection as a reliable method if you did not. (Primary projection is the distance the primary feathers stick out beyond the tertial feathers. For a Chiffchaff the length of the projection is equal to about one third of the length of the tertials; for a Willow Warbler the projection is about two thirds of the length of the tertials.) He said that leg colour was unreliable and demonstrated that lots of Hilbre Willow Warblers have dark legs. As an afterthought he said that the other warbler of the same genus as Willow Warblers and Chiffchaffs that breeds in the UK is the Wood Warbler. The student said that he had never seen a Wood Warbler. Pete said, "Don't worry about that - we get them here regularly, we'll have one to show you."

That Wood Warbler finally turned up this spring. This is an indication of the massive decline in Wood Warblers in the UK in the last 20 years, but it is also an indication of the wonderful conditions encountered on Hilbre this spring for migration.

In the last report, we grumbled about the dreadful winter weather and the effect it had on the Bird Observatory, but spring 2014 stands out as one of the best Hilbre springs ever. The weather provided exactly what was required to get lots of migrants to Hilbre. Hilbre is a migration hot spot when drift migration occurs. Drift migration happens when the wind blows the birds off the course that they would like to follow. As an example, we know from ringing recoveries that many of our Willow Warblers are going to north-east England or south-east Scotland. The prevailing winds were from the south-east for much of the spring and consequently birds found themselves flying over the north Wales coast, when they should have been flying somewhere over the centre of the UK. The migrants we are talking about fly at night; consequently, the dawn would bring them a nasty surprise as they find themselves either over the Irish Sea or about to be over it. Their usual decision, given that they will have used up most of their fat deposits by this time (fat is the fuel that allows them to make the journey) is to stop and reorient themselves. They land on Hilbre as part of this process and quickly move on. Hilbre is not a stopover site, in the sense that birds spend time on the island feeding up, most birds move on soon after they arrive. It is not a good idea to turn up on Hilbre at 10am to see migration as (at least in spring) it is often over for the day then. It was a record spring this year for Wheatears, a Hilbre speciality, but still we have never had either one of our ringed birds recovered or captured one ourselves from another place. Maybe this year one might be recovered in Canada.

The potter traps we use to catch Wheatears were put to excellent use with other species. In particular a spot at the North End proved highly successful for catching White Wagtails from late

April onwards with seven birds caught and ringed. More unusually, a Ringed Plover found our mealworms to its liking and wandered into a potter trap.

However, the number of sub-Saharan migrants that we have caught this year must lead to some recoveries and the consequent contribution to our knowledge of their migration routes.

In terms of rarities a Little Bunting found on the island on 28th April, and even heard singing, then caught itself in a mist net in the Old Obs garden and therefore became the first record and consequently the first to be ringed on the island.

It was a fabulous spring, what will the autumn bring?

Check out our blog site for daily reports www.hilbrebirdobs.blogspot.com or you can now follow us on twitter at @hilbrebirdobs for more up-to-the-minute news and photographs.

John Elliot, on behalf of the Hilbre Bird Observatory

MID CHESHIRE BARN OWL CONSERVATION GROUP

"What a difference a year makes" – perhaps I should say "What a difference another year makes!!".

2012 was a record year for Barn Owls in Cheshire with 225 successfully recorded breeding pairs and 600 chicks. 2013 felt like a record 'poor' year with only 30 successfully recorded breeding pairs and only 75 chicks.

So what for 2014? Well, everything looks (at the moment) very positive. It may not be a record year, but it is looking good – with successfully recorded breeding pairs already in mid-Cheshire alone, equalling the whole of Cheshire for 2013. But, and equally important, broods being particularly early (increasing the possibility of later second broods) and of large sizes (one clutch realising 9 eggs – possibly a record in its own right).

Clearly the conditions (weather and vole/shrew availability) are very good at the moment. However, as we have found before, we must remain cautious as conditions can change very quickly. Fingers crossed nothing too drastic occurs to affect our optimism.

Finally, and to repeat our usual concerns and plea, if you have seen any Barn Owls recently, please could you let us know (either direct or by our sighting report on the website www.cheshirebarnowls.co.uk); as you will appreciate it is important that we know where the birds are regularly seen.

John Mycock, Chairman Tel: 07970 235437 Email: john.mycock@birse.co.uk

CHESHIRE SWAN STUDY GROUP

Since my last report in February, the Swan Study Group has ringed a total of 9 Mute Swans including 3 adults, 6 second-years. There were also 6 controls and 3 retraps.

The maximum counts of flocks of Mute Swans since November are as follows:

- Acre Dell Pools, Congleton: 56 on 8th Feb; 64 on 8th Mar; 45 on 12th Apr; 62 on 11th May.
- Astbury Mere, Congleton: 17 on 9th Feb; 16 on 9th Mar; 19 on 13th Apr; 13 on 11th May.
- Baddiley Meres, nr Nantwich: 20 on 16th Feb; 20 on 16th Mar; 36 on 19th April.
- Burleydam Pool, nr Whitchurch: 13 on 15th Feb; 20 on 16th Mar; 12 on 14th Apr; 5 on 18th May.
- Comber Mere, nr Whitchurch: 18 on 16th Feb; 13 on 16th Mar; 11 on 14th Apr; 29 on 18th May.
- Coole Pilate, nr Nantwich: 28 on 15th Mar; 19 on 12th Apr; 9 on 4th May.
- Doddington Mere, nr Nantwich: 2 on 17th Mar; 2 on 8th Apr; 21 on 20th May.
- Trent and Mersey Canal, Middlewich: 43 on 9th Feb; 40 on 6th Mar; 47 on 13th Apr; 36 on 11th May.
- Nantwich Boating Lake: 23 on 22nd Feb; 19 on 8th Mar; 17 on 29th Apr; 19 on 6th May.
- Woolston near Warrington: 26 on 11th May.

Interesting Movements:

Mute Swan 17J (orange colour ring) ringed as an adult on 8-10-2013 at River Severn, Bewdley, Worcester, seen 31-3-2014 at Coole Pilate Fisheries, Nantwich = 70kms from ringing site

Mute Swan 64E (orange colour ring) ringed as a cygnet on 4-9-2012 at Upton-on-Severn, Worcestershire, seen on 13-4-2014 and 11-5-2014 at Trent and Mersey Canal, Middlewich = 125kms from ringing site.

Breeding:

Early indications in the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council area are that 23 pairs of Mute Swans have been seen and of those 10 pairs have hatched 47 cygnets. There have been casualties already, but at the time I am unable to report with any accuracy.

Sightings of all swans, geese and Mallards should be sent to David Cookson (contact details below) giving details of place (6-fig map ref), colour/character combination of ring and, if with other birds, total number present in flock. All sightings will receive a printout of the history for the relevant bird(s).

NB. Please note that if you need any more information visit our new blog/website:

<http://cheshireswanstudygroup.wordpress.com>

David Cookson, Group Leader, 70 Rope Lane, Rope, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 6RD
Tel: 01270 567526. Email: Cheshireswans@aol.com

RINGING INFORMATION ONLINE

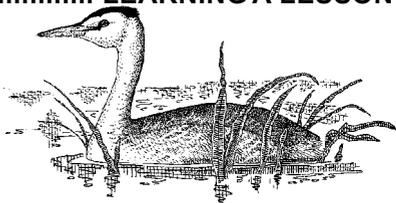
The BTO provides interesting material about ringing and recoveries online. Go to the BTO home page: click on 'Ringing' in the Core Surveys panel; then on Ringing home page: click on 'online reports'. There is then a choice of ringing totals, recovery summaries (nationally or by county in each case) and recovery summaries by species; all are available for the last five years.

<http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports>

One Man's Birding

LEARNING A LESSON

I don't often get up into the eastern hills these days. Once upon a time, when my duties at Keele involved visiting students in Buxton, it was a matter of routine to call in at The Chimney, to tick off Ring Ouzel – and, on one memorable occasion, to watch a little party of Twite feeding on the track. (There was, of course, the added satisfaction of doing a bit of birding at the firm's expense.) Lately, visits have been less frequent and dip-outs more common.



Martin had seen Ring Ouzel a week or so earlier; Pete had been close enough to get a decent photograph of the cock bird the day before I set out. Back home in Nantwich, it was quite bright and sunny; the further east and higher up we went, it became a cold, grey, unpromising, windy day – not a total, gale-blown disaster by any means, just one of those days when you know that conditions aren't right. Jane, wisely, elected to stay in the car; the dog and I trudged down to the old workings and back, stopping from time to time to listen and to scan the area. (Anyway, I did – the dog doesn't really do scanning.) A few grouse calling, a brief bit of bubbling from a Curlew, a single Meadow Pipit the only passerine. Another birder remarked gloomily "Every year, somebody says he has seen them, or a friend of his has seen them – but it's ages since I've found them here." I knew exactly how he felt.

This bit of blasted Cheshire heath was no place for lunch, so we made our way to the comparative shelter of the top Langley reservoir. I have to confess that, not knowing the area, and where to look for the heronry, the first thing to strike me was the group of Cormorant nests on the far side. The contrast between the black plumage of the heraldic-looking birds and the great white patches of guano beneath them was really quite impressive – so long as you were far enough away not to smell it all, of course. I realised that these were the first tree-nesting Cormorants I can recall seeing, although the habit has been steadily growing in the UK for thirty years or so.

When I watched a Heron flap across the water and bank into the larches, its legs sticking out in that unlikely way as it prepared to land, I realised that the heronry was much closer at hand than I had expected, and that there were good views of the stately grey figures standing on guard over the nests. This provoked a short discussion over the coffee and sandwiches. If we have heronries, why don't we have cormorantries? Or do Cormorants, like penguins, live in rookeries? And should a Puffin colony be referred to as a puffinry? Bit pointless, but it helped to pass the time.

On the water, seven or eight Mandarin drakes swimming in a neat little flock under the near bank made me recall David Norman's remark that Mandarin was probably the second most common breeding duck in the county, after Mallard - something which I had hitherto found hard to accept. I know they are foreigners, 'plastic waterfowl', but there is no denying that they are immensely attractive in their exotic way – always nice birds to see.

And there were the Great Crested Grebes. I had watched them building a shallow raft, just clear of the willows, as the basis for a nest. Then one of them decided on a bit of heavy lifting. From under the bank beneath us, he appeared, dragging a branch which was twice as long as he was. He crabbed his way laboriously across to the nest site. The only way to describe it is that he was carrying it over his left shoulder (if grebes can be said to have shoulders), swimming with his head and neck bent sideways as he clung onto his load. Arriving at the raft, he heaved the stick on to it – just the way that you and I would dump a heavy sack of compost or sand, with a feeling of relief. Then (again as you or I would do) he paused for a moment before shoving it sideways into its exact position, and setting off in search of the next component.

Watching all this alongside us was a gentleman with a large telescope and a small daughter. No binoculars, and needing my help to identify the Cormorants. Not a real birder, then – but someone trying to interest the little girl in the wildlife around her. Who knows? Perhaps she will be a birder of the future.

Time to head for home, and I complained (as birders are inclined to do) of a rotten day – no Ring Ouzels, not even a Wheatear, complete dip-out, gripped off by a couple of friends, why couldn't I have chosen better conditions? Jane immediately disagreed (as she is prone to): I had had a really good time at the reservoir, with plenty to interest me; what was I moaning about? She was right, of course (as she is prone to be).

I guess there is a moral in all this. We may set off with high expectations, looking forward to finding the newly arrived migrant, or the latest rarity, or whatever. When things don't work out, and our hopes are dashed, we become disgruntled and dissatisfied. And the danger is that we then fail to see that the day which didn't deliver the anticipated highlight can still offer some perfectly good, if less spectacular, birding. At my age, I should have learned this; maybe it's not too late.

Bob Anderson

Conservation News

A round-up of news from the CAWOS conservation representatives, who aim to keep an eye on what is going on in their area. If you have any issues or concerns then do contact your local representative (by letter or email preferably). They may be able to help or should know someone who can! The relevant contact information is listed at the end.

CONSERVATION NEWS FROM STEVE TURNER

I hope you have all had a good start to the season on your local patch. Here at Weaverham things have got off to a slow start, the only success stories are House Sparrows and Blackbirds. We have had one young Goldfinch at the feeders, no Greenfinches. The House Martins and Swifts were a week later than last year and their numbers seem to be down; hopefully it is not the picture across the county. The weather at the beginning of the year seems to have thrown everything out of kilter. From a personal point of view I feel that we need a good hard winter to put things back as they should be.

Please keep an eye on any new developments in your own areas and if you feel that things are not as they should be please let your area conservation rep know. There are many developments all over the country that are slipping through without any thoughts to the wildlife that it will affect, and as usual no one in power gives a hoot as long as it does not affect them, as the latest TV advert from the RSPB states: "If there are no places for wildlife there will be no wildlife". Never has a statement been more relevant than at this time. If we the few that care do not keep an eye on these developers no one else will.

Enough of me banging on. The next thing I would ask you to keep an eye on is any waters that are on your patch that carry fish and swan mussels. As the numbers of Europeans increase in our county, coarse fish and swan mussels are being targeted for food. We would not think of relying on these foodstuffs to grace our tables, but to many Europeans they are staple diet items. The damage to swan mussel beds caused by raking out will lead to numbers decreasing to such an extent that it will be impossible for them to recover. Fish are taken by traps placed in the water to catch them alive, many traps are similar in construction to eel and fish traps, made out of willow and placed in the water where fish regularly swim and feed. Another method is the use of 'otter boards', these consist of a piece of wood tethered to the bank, from this wood are suspended a number of lines with baited hooks, the board is pushed out into the water and left for a period of twelve hours or more and then pulled in and the catch unhooked. The tell-tale sign of either of these methods of trapping is ropes staked to the bank and covered in grass to conceal them. In instances of this nature I do not feel that prosecution is the answer but education. Whilst we know it is unlawful to many Europeans, this is a way of life and a tradition handed down for generations, also a major part of traditional staple diet. Angling clubs pay a great deal of money for the waters and the fish and also they do a great deal for conservation. Whilst anglers are also out and about at all times of the day and night, they could do with our help as we keep hours more unsocial than theirs.

Persecution of raptors is again becoming a problem nationwide; again it is the old story of predation of game birds. Please remember that 99.9% of all gamekeepers are law abiding and do much for conservation of all species, it is the remaining few who cause all the problems and the bad press for an occupation that is long hours and often low pay. Please be vigilant when out and about. If you see something that you feel may be poisoned bait left out for raptors, contact the Police. DO NOT TOUCH anything that may be contaminated, some of these substances used will not just make you ill they will KILL, some of them by skin absorption, some instantly and some take a while for all your organs to shut down. Many substances are designed for crop protection with a small amount diluted in many gallons of water. The idiots (and I use the term loosely) who use these chemicals, use them neat. Leave the touching of any suspect baits to the authorities.

I hope you have a good summer and get the lifer that you have been waiting for.

Steve Turner, Conservation Officer, 11 Pinfold Way, Weaverham, Northwich, CW8 3NL
Tel: 01606 853796 Email: conservation@cawos.org

CONSERVATION REPRESENTATIVES

Chester	Neil Friswell, 8 Oaklands Crescent, Tattenhall, Cheshire, CH3 9QT. Tel: 01829 770463 Email: neil.friswell@btinternet.com
Congleton	Vacant - please let Steve Turner know if you are willing to take on this role
Crewe & Nantwich	Colin Lythgoe, 11 Waterloo Road, Haslington, Crewe, CW1 5TF. Tel: 01270 582642 Email: colin.lythgoe@uwclub.net
Halton	Tony Parker, 41 The Park, Penketh, Warrington, WA5 2SG. Tel: 01925 726986 Email: tonyparker@cawos.org
Macclesfield	Vacant - please let Steve Turner know if you are willing to take on this role
Vale Royal	Roy Leigh, 8 Hall Drive, Marston, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 6DT Tel: 01606 892032 Email: roysleigh@aol.com
Warrington	Brian Martin, 45 Albert Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, WA4 2PF. Tel: 01925 264251 Email: brianmartin1940@hotmail.com
Wirral	Richard Smith, March Wall, King's Drive North, Caldy, Wirral, CH48 1LL. Tel: 0151 625 2320 Email: richard@cawos.org

CAWOS DATABASE

SUBMISSION OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS – BRIEF GUIDELINES

General hints to save you (and us!) time

- There is no need to put your name and address or other general heading at the top of the spreadsheet - please put your full contact details, along with other relevant information such as number of columns, number of records, new sites, queries, etc, in the main body of the email.
- Records sent in as text, either within an email message, or as a Word document, will need to be transferred into a spreadsheet format, so please do use a basic spreadsheet where possible, even a table within Word would be better than simple text. Reserve Reports which are often produced in Word are the obvious exception.
- Generally, we will not be importing any electronic records until after year-end, but if you find it easier to send in your records more frequently than once a year, please do so (this does not apply to paper records which we would want to receive in batches).
- **All records should be emailed asap after year-end to:** submissions@cawos.org, or by post on a CD to: Database Chairman, Sheila Blamire, Woodruff Cottage, Clamhunger Lane, Mere, Cheshire, WA16 6QG.

Layout of the spreadsheet

- If using an Excel Workbook for your records, *do not use more than one sheet* (the other sheets will be lost when saving the file into csv format for importing).
- Put headings at the top of each column, some are **mandatory**: 'Species', 'Site', 'Date', 'Number', and 'Comments'. Others could include '**Observer's Site**', 'Age', 'Sex', and especially desirable is '**Breeding info**', and '**Grid Ref**' which should be your more precise grid ref, NOT the grid ref given in the *Gazetteer* for that site, leave blank if you do not have a more precise grid ref.
- All entries, e.g. 'Comments', must be typed in *on one line only for each record*; it does not matter how wide the column is.
- Do not leave blank lines between the column headings and the first record, or between different records or species.
- Please use the species or site name, rather than the species or site ID number on its own, as it makes it easier to visually check the records and also there is less room for error.
- The local significance of some records may not be immediately apparent. Additional comments are therefore welcomed and observers' anecdotes are often useful in preparing a readable *Bird Report*. Comparisons to previous years' records are also useful.

Site

- The name in the '**Site**' column should 'conform' where possible to those names listed in the *Gazetteer*. A more precise location can always be included in a separate column headed '**Observer's Site**'.
- For *garden records* put the town or village as the site name and the actual house address under 'Observer's Site'. The precise grid ref would be valuable – see below.
- The **latest electronic Gazetteer** is available from sheilablamire@cawos.org or can be downloaded from CAWOS website. Where possible we will give the main site (i.e. 'parent') followed by the sites within it (i.e. 'child'). If you see any errors or omissions please let us know!

Grid Ref

- The '**Grid Ref**' if supplied under a separate column, should be YOUR more precise grid ref, NOT the grid ref given in the *Gazetteer* for that site - leave blank if you do not have a more precise grid ref.
- This precise '**Grid Ref**' will be held against that record, rather than the more general site grid ref listed in the *Gazetteer*.

Species

- For common species (particularly garden birds) we would prefer dated (or undated) monthly maxima rather than daily counts. Comparisons to previous years would be useful to add in under 'Comments'.
- The CAWOS Database contains generic species for some species, e.g. auk spp, diver spp, etc, and some confusion species such as Willow/Marsh Tit or Commic Tern (for Common or Arctic Terns!). Records of subspecies or races should also be sent in.
- If your sighting refers to an **unusually early or late date** for a particular species, or is in an **unusual location**, please add as much extra information as possible, e.g. whether the bird was singing or not.
- Any breeding records of Schedule One Breeding Species will be automatically marked as **confidential** by the database. In addition, each observer has the option to mark any of their records confidential and these will not be released to any third party without the observer's prior approval. If the observer is unwilling to give an accurate description of the location, general locations may be used such as East Cheshire, Mid-Cheshire, North Cheshire, South-East Cheshire, South-West Cheshire, and Wirral, as listed in the *Gazetteer*.
- No need to put species in the same order as the Systematic List. Most people do their records in date or site order.

Number or count

- **Actual numbers are preferred**, though the system will also cope with c100, 100+, number ranges e.g. 50 - 100, '1pair', '2ad 3juv', etc, and also 0 (zero) if recording the absence of a species from a usual location (with a word of explanation under 'Comments'). Other information, e.g. many, flock, etc, should go under 'Comments'.
- **Do not** enter any commas in the 'Number' column whether in '10,000' or '1m, 1juv', etc.
- Any figure in the 'Number' column should refer to the **actual number of birds recorded**, not to the number of nests or number of pairs, though it is acceptable to put '1pair' under 'Number'.
- If you have recorded weekly/monthly maxima or year/breeding summaries, please put **'summary'** in the 'Number column', rather than leave it blank, with more information under 'Comments'. Also, where the records have already been entered individually; this will avoid doubling up of numbers.
- With some records, it is difficult to put down a precise number, e.g. "light overhead passage all morning", in this case put **'see comments'** in the 'Count' column to draw attention to this.
- Sometimes you might want to record the species without having an actual number, in this case you can put **'present'** in the 'Number' column.

Date

- Always include a date, **do not leave blank**. If the record is a year summary for that species then simply put the year, e.g. **2015**, under 'Date'. Check the 'format of the cells' if you have any problems.
- Always submit the date in a conventional format if possible, e.g. 09-12-15 or preferably 09-Dec-15. If you are unable to do this please alert us to this problem so that we do not try to import records with American dates mm-dd-yy (12-09-15) or those which put the year first.
- The following can be used instead of specific dates: **seasons** - winter1 (Jan to Feb), spring (Mar to May), summer (Jun to Aug), autumn (Sep to Nov), winter2 (Dec); **breeding** (defaults to 1-Apr to 30-Jun); **months** e.g. Jan; or **date ranges** e.g. Aug to Sep, or Aug-15 to Sep-15 **Do not use** a hyphen or / to separate ranges, e.g. **do not use** Aug-Sep or Aug/Sep.
- Think carefully whether it is best to create separate records for additional dates if these are particularly relevant for the species concerned. Otherwise put as additional info under 'Comments'.

Always give your file a quick check before sending it to us - does it 'look right' to you?

Don't struggle on your own – get in touch! For further information or advice contact:

Sheila Blamire, Woodruff Cottage, Clamhunger Lane, Mere, Cheshire, WA16 6QG
Tel: 01565 830168 Email: sheilablamire@cawos.org

Notes & Letters

Bird News is always keen to hear from CAWOS members. Please send us any notes of unusual avian behaviour or amusing anecdotes that you think your fellow birders will be interested in. Also, we are always interested in your views on any of our articles or on the newsletter itself. Ed.

THE BLACK-HEADED GULL AT PARKGATE PARADE 2010 – 2014

Since moving to Parkgate in 2010, my wife and I have carried out regular daily dog walks in Parkgate and our morning walk takes us along Parkgate Parade. We always walk from north to south and usually count from Bevyl Road to a point opposite Mostyn House School where our GPS tells us 1km square SJ2778 finishes and square SJ2777 starts. We count the birds using 10 x binoculars and enter the data into the BTO BirdTrack recording system as complete lists on a 1km square basis. Data is only entered if wind force does not exceed estimated force 5, visibility is good, and precipitation does not exceed light showers.

The Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* is a characteristic member of the avifauna, and was recorded in 100% of the 947 lists entered into BirdTrack. This species is tolerant of the tourists who walk along the Parade, and is especially attracted to those people who throw chips and ice cream cones for them to eat. The winter population can be noisy, and the breeding birds also fill the air with their distinctive calls as they build nests, squabble for territory, and feed chicks.

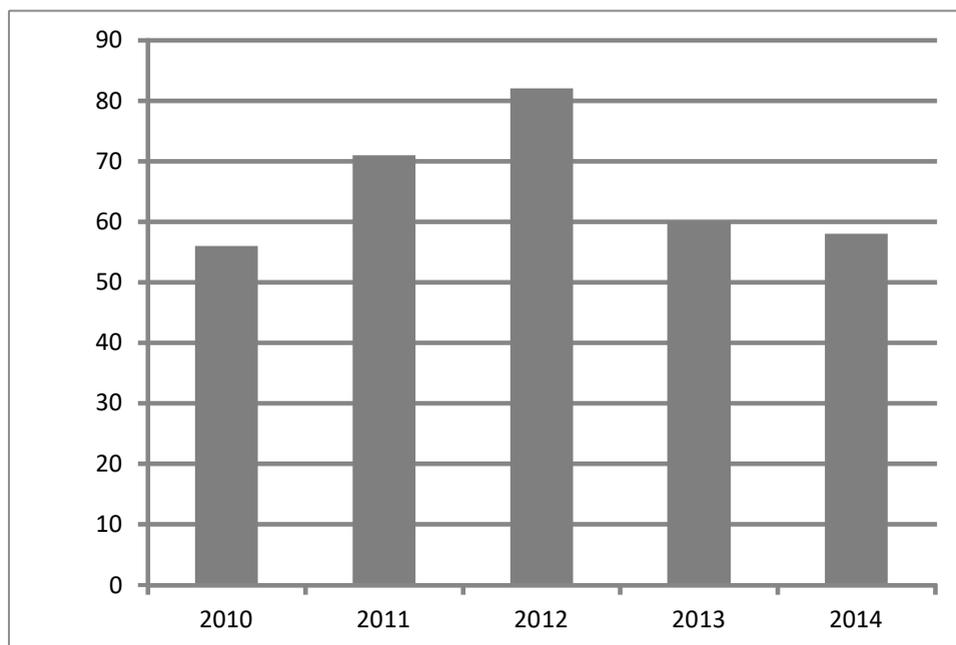


Figure 1. Mean abundance of Black-headed Gull at Parkgate Parade, 2010 (starting in March) to 2014 (includes data up to 9th June).

In 2010, our first year, the nesting colony was centred on the salt marshes off Bevyl Road, mostly at the seaward side of the flashes there, and extended several hundred metres to the south. Construction of the new Donkey Stand Flash in summer 2011 created more prime habitat for this species.

The Black-headed Gulls responded well to the newly-created Donkey Stand Flash, and by 2012 were nesting on the new Flash, especially on small islands and along the marsh towards Bevyl

Road, so that the Parade at Parkgate was fronted by a coalesced straggly colony of nesting Black-headed Gulls. The methodology of this survey is not really adequate for making a realistic estimate of colony size, but I hazard a guess at >200 pairs. However, the colony did not seem to fledge many young gulls, only 25 were seen in 2012 for example, and a mere 8 fledglings in 2013. No human disturbance was ever noted as the newly-dredged out gutter parallel to the Parade seemed to have deterred casual access by the general public and dog walkers. However, sometimes disturbance was seen in the colony. For example, on two occasions in 2012 Black-headed Gulls were seen mobbing something on the ground, flying a few metres above the unknown cause and following its progress through the colony. I assumed that the cause was a fox, moving slowly through the colony.

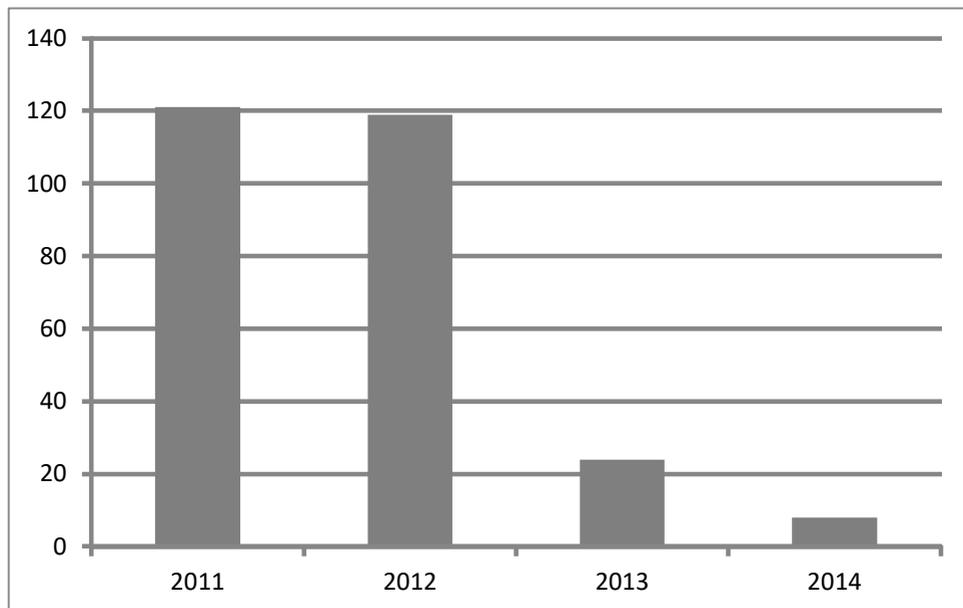


Figure 2. Mean daily counts for the month of May 2011-2014. Number of visits: 2011 =16, 2012 =23, 2013 =17, 2014 =18.

In 2014, after a decent wintering flock, numbers dropped away in spring, and by May there were very few Gulls to be seen on the Flashes (Figure 2). But, scattered pairs did seem established further out on the Marsh, and I hoped for a few breeding. Sadly, on 17th May 2014 disturbance was seen out on the marsh beyond Bevy Road Flash, with Black-headed Gulls and a pair of Lapwings mobbing something on the ground. Examination by bins revealed an adult fox looking straight at me, at estimated range of 800m, carrying an adult Black-headed Gull in its mouth. This was at 9.20 in the morning in broad daylight. My conclusion was the fox had stalked a nesting bird, killed it and possibly eaten its eggs.

Following this, numbers of Black-headed Gulls remained low, mostly immature birds, and the position on 9th June 2014 was five 'pairs' of immatures making half-hearted attempts to nest on scattered small islands. Sadly, it seems the breeding colony has for practical purposes died out, and the Parade is now strangely silent.

Figure 2 shows the counts for the month of May between 2011 and 2014. Data for 2010 were not enough for analysis (only 3 counts), but the drop in numbers in 2013 and 2014 is apparent.

Ray Eades

Acknowledgements: I wish to thank my wife, Valerie for her support, and Dr Adam Britt for much help with analysis and figures.

PLEASE RECORD URBAN-NESTING LARGE GULLS

It looks like large gulls are now taking off *en masse* as Cheshire breeders. Following the note by Mark Stubbs and Colin Lythgoe in the 2012 *Cheshire and Wirral Bird Report* about Lesser Black-backed and Herring Gulls breeding on factory roofs in Crewe, in 2014 both species (with an odd pair of Great Black-backed Gulls) have been recorded breeding in Runcorn, Widnes and Warrington.

This habit brings the likelihood of conflict with humans who do not like potentially aggressive birds nesting near their homes, and elsewhere has frequently been followed by calls for control measures. In Liverpool, some roofs have been covered with netting, and falconers' birds used, ineffectively, as attempted deterrents. At the Ford/Jaguar building at Halewood, just outside the county boundary, where perhaps 50 pairs of Lesser Black-backed Gulls breed on the roof, mechanical distress calls are being broadcast day and night, to the amusement and entertainment of the birds which appear to be unaffected.

These large gulls also can pose significant conservation problems with their propensity for predating chicks of ground-nesting species. Just one pair of Lesser Black-backed Gulls which held territory, but did not breed, at Inner Marsh Farm every year from 1996 to 2000, was responsible for substantial loss of eggs and chicks of Black-headed Gulls, Coots and ducks. This year, Lesser Black-backed Gulls are reported to commute regularly from their Warrington-area rooftops to take Black-headed Gull chicks from Woolston Eyes, and there are suspicions that the Runcorn birds have visited Frodsham Marsh to take wader chicks including possibly some Avocets.

Especially because of the potential for conflict, it is important that CAWOS has as complete a picture as possible of the breeding status in the county. Urban sites do not often feature on lists of favoured birdwatching venues, and it can be difficult, from the ground, to tell how many pairs of each species are nesting. But all reports, with estimates of numbers, will be valuable and this note is a plea for all observers to keep an eye out for signs of urban-breeding gulls and to submit all records to CAWOS in the usual way.

I thank Rob Cockbain, Brian Martin, Bill Morton, Paul Oldfield and Paul Slater for exchange of information.

David Norman

MEDITERRANEAN GULL SHOWING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR TO BLACK-HEADED GULLS

An immature Mediterranean Gull was seen on Donkey Stand Flash on the morning of Monday 5th May 2014. This bird was seen flying in from the north and did not look right for an immature Common Gull. It landed, showing its identification features well, especially the narrow tail bar and plain upper wing panel. It then proceeded to attack immature Black-headed Gulls also on the Donkey Stand Flash, and was surprisingly dominant over the smaller species. After a few minutes it flew off towards Denhall. A week later, on 11th May 2014, at Burton Mere RSPB, I was surprised to see two immature Mediterranean Gulls, seemingly paired up in front of the main hide. These two birds also showed aggressive behaviour to nearby nesting Black-headed Gulls.

Ray Eades

STRANGE INCIDENT

Whilst busy working in the garden, mowing the lawn, feeding and watering the tomatoes, and of course replenishing the bird table so the juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker could continue feeding and also the one lonely Tree Sparrow amongst the 15-20 House Sparrows, I heard a noise above the roar of the M6 and planes heading for Manchester Airport. It could only be an Oystercatcher making a hell of a racket. I looked up to see a semi-inflated charity balloon blowing over being mobbed by said Oystercatcher.

Which makes me think the Oystercatchers in the field opposite, which I have been monitoring, have still got their young one.

Derek Pike

SITUATIONS VACANT

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY - *VERY URGENT!!!*

Susan Canovan has been Membership Secretary for the last 5 years and announced her retirement at the AGM in March 2014. A replacement has still to be found. **Please please please volunteer for this vital job.** Below is an attempt to give some idea of the workload involved; anyone interested should in the first instance contact Clive Richards (see below) for more details.

JOB DESCRIPTION

- send out reminders to members about the payment of subscriptions (usually one in the November *Bird News* and one with the *Bird Report* in January).
- collect subscriptions, either at meetings or those received in the post, to pay these into the bank and to inform the Treasurer of the amount paid in (Oct-Feb the peak period). There is a computer programme for the collation of members' details.
- respond to all applications from persons wishing to join the Society (it takes approx 10-15 mins to process an application).
- keep a record of the 'numbers of current members' and to inform Council through the Secretary of any significant changes.
- keep Gift Aid records and to pass them on to the Treasurer for forwarding (they are automatically kept by the computer programme and printed off).

CAWOS COUNCIL - *VERY URGENT!!!*

Also, Council requires a Vice-Chairman and two members ***with immediate effect***, plus, some senior Council members are due for retirement at the AGM in **March 2015** and we need to find new blood to replace them.

For further information, please contact:

Clive Richards Email: cliverichards@cawos.org Tel: 01625 524527

“THE SOCIETY NEEDS YOU”

CAWOS News

Welcome to the new members: Mr N Simpson, Mr T J Clegg, Mr D R Swaby, Mr D Scott Campbell, Mr S Rose, J & P Nolan and Mr D Wiggins. As well as new members, we have now deleted 17 members who have been asked on several occasions but not paid up their dues by mid-year. If you know any of them perhaps you could enquire as to the reason for stopping their membership. They are: Peter Raikman, Ian Coot, Chris Eccleston; Richard May, Jeremy Nolan, Alec Thomasson, Mark Smith, George Jones, Richard Hargreaves, TJ & M Irons, L Peach, T K Bradshaw, S Jubbie, A Leach, C Painter, C Phillips and J Upchurch. The current membership now stands at 317 and, once again on behalf of Council, we would like to thank Susan Canovan for carrying on with this role while we try to find a replacement Membership Secretary. This is a key post for the Society and despite contacting a number of people and advertising in *Bird News* we have been unable to find somebody willing to take on this role. This is after all our Society and it is sad that of the 300 plus members nobody is able to find the time to take on this important role.

A desperate last call!!

Council has met only once since my last report, that being in April soon after our AGM. For those of you unable to attend the last meeting of CAWOS before the summer break, the AGM had 21 attendees and the Council's reports were accepted. Overall, the Society was £1850.38 in the black last year and with a considerable sum in other accounts, one member asked why did we have such a large reserve and how were we planning to spend it. Some monies still need to be refunded to the Heritage Lottery Fund once our final report is complete, but Council agreed to look at this question during this year. Another question raised was why do we not circulate *Bird News* via email and save on postage. Council did survey members early last year and the feedback was such members liked to read a copy in their hand and were against it. I am sure this issue will be raised again in the future as more and more members are supplying their email addresses and the number without one is declining! Finally, we were very pleased to welcome Phil Hampson as a new Council member. Phil has been working with Geoff and Sheila Blamire in the transfer of our bird records into the rECOrd system. Phil updated Council on the current position reporting that they were currently transferring 100,000 records from 2012 onto the rECOrd system as a further test, indicating very encouraging progress following a very long gestation period. Council is still short of a vice-chairman and two ordinary Council members. Council would also like to thank Steve Barber who decided to step down from Council following many years of excellent service. Steve will still be around but focussing on his interest in other aspects of birding and his contribution to the county *Bird Report*.

In addition to our ongoing issue of succession planning, Council has been addressing conservation issues. The major one to arise since my last report has been the clearance of land at Red Rocks on the Wirral coastline. Cheshire Wildlife Trust (CWT) now manages this SSSI and began work to improve the coastal dune habitat with a plan approved by Natural England (NE), primarily to create new breeding pools for Natterjack toads. The clearance included a small area of trees and shrubs used by migrating birds and some breeding birds which led to a conflict between local birders, including Richard Smith, co-editor of the *Cheshire and Wirral Bird Report* and our Wirral conservation representative, who with others eventually persuaded the workers to stop the clearance work, but not before a large part of the bird habitat was lost. CAWOS was not consulted regarding the importance of this site for birds. Council spent some considerable time discussing this issue and found itself in a difficult position; firstly, it is important that CAWOS is seen to challenge issues where important bird habitat is lost. However, we also have to work with CWT, as evidenced by the last Atlas survey and wish to continue this relationship; likewise, we work with NE regarding Rostherne Mere. The CAWOS Chairman has written to CWT expressing our concerns and they have agreed to consult with us before starting work again in the autumn. In the meantime, David Parker, Chairman of the Dee Estuary Conservation Group, has been working with all interested parties to try and find a way forward.

Many members will know a new bridge will be built across the River Mersey called the Gateway Project. David Norman, a Council member, told Council that he had been asked to join the Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust, which has been formed to help protect the environment and covers from the Runcorn Bridge up to the end of the tidal area in Warrington. He also told Council that 27 hectares was being set aside in mitigation for the footprint of the bridge.

Mitigation work is also being discussed regarding the Frodsham Wind Farm, and CAWOS, Steve Barber and Mark Eddowes have been consulted on the plans to enhance the habitat in Cell 3 by the environmental consultants Atmos.

Ted Lock, Secretary

Members' Noticeboard

Do you have any helpful tips; requests for information; small items for sale (ornithological, of course!) etc? Well, this is the place for you! Write in with your thoughts or requests to the Editor (address inside the front cover of *Bird News*).

FOR SALE: Viking binoculars harness. As new. £18
Opticron car window mount for scope or bins. Boxed. £18

Contact Rodger Harvey Tel: 01625 532080

SITUATIONS VACANT (cont)

DISTRIBUTION OF BIRD REPORT

We are still without a *Bird Report* Distributor, so we are looking for someone to take over this role **with immediate effect**. For further information please contact:

David Cogger Email: dmcogger46@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 01606 832517

SYSTEMATIC EDITOR AND TECHNICAL EDITOR

The major focus of the Society is the production of the *Bird Report*. However, it is a small group of dedicated members who take on this task. The editors have expressed that they wish to hand over their roles, and it is proving very difficult to get replacements. Both roles can be split between two or more people. For further information please contact:

Sheila Blamire Email: sheilablamire@cawos.org Tel: 01565 830168

“THE SOCIETY NEEDS YOU”

CAWOS Programme

3rd October 2014

‘BIRDING IN PERU: AN INCANVENIENT TRUTH’ by David Wood

David Wood is chair of Sheffield Bird Study Group and Professor of Latin American Studies at the University of Sheffield, where he specialises in the culture and society of Peru. These two roles come together during regular visits to the country, where he has travelled extensively over the years. One of the first things that all Peruvian schoolchildren learn is that their country consists of three distinct regions: costa, sierra and selva, and this talk will cover habitats from the desert coastal strip, up into the Andes and down again to the Amazonian jungle. Peru enjoys a very high number of endemic species and is home to some very special birds, some of which David has been able to photograph to include in this talk.

7th November 2014

‘DESPOTS IN PINK TIGHTS’ by Dr Kevin Briggs

Also known as Oystercatchers! A talk about a 40-year study of individually colour-marked, inland-breeding Oystercatchers featuring food, sex, family life, migration and life histories. Kevin has studied Oystercatchers on an island site at Arkhole in Lancashire since 1974. This has involved studying their feeding methods and foods over the breeding season, and their breeding biology and migration, through individual colour ringing. The despotic nature of their territorial behaviour has been particularly interesting. The talk covers all these aspects, and the ups and downs of this local population.

5th December 2014

‘THE FARM’ by Paul Hobson

This talk covers the myriad of wildlife that shares our farmland with us; not a single farm but a look at farmland and the wildlife that lives with agriculture across the UK (or tries to!). A mixture of birds and mammals is covered, plus a few insects and why they actually live on farmland and how human influences have resulted in an ever-changing habitat over the last 50 years. Farms are what most people think of as the countryside but our source of food and wildlife depend on the very same things.

9th January 2015 (not 2nd)

‘PENNINE WILDLIFE’ by Tim Melling

A new talk on the moorlands and surrounding habitats covering largely birds, but mammals, butterflies and interesting flowers as well. Tim has managed to photograph all of the interesting birds in the Pennines, including the rare elusive ones that many casual visitors might not see. This is a superb local region for birdwatching and this is a chance to remind ourselves how lucky we are to have the upland ‘option’, in Cheshire.

6th February 2015

‘WADER QUEST’ by Rick and Elis Simpson

Take 12 months; 9 flyways; 6 continents; 14 countries; 134,345 miles of travel by land, sea and air; a house squandered. Result - 175 species of wader - a baffling diversity of birds within just one group. Wader Quest has two main aims: awareness about the challenges and dangers that wader species face in the modern world and secondly to raise money to support the WWT Spoon-billed Sandpiper captive breeding programme. This is the story of how a determination to see a Spoon-billed Sandpiper evolved into creating a charity in support of wader conservation: www.waderquest.org.

6th March 2015

AGM followed by 'THE SWIFT' by Edward Mayer

The talk is about Swifts, their amazing lives, the severe problems they face in our modern world, and what we can do to help them survive. Edward was Gallery Manager for the Tate Gallery in London and he has loved Swifts since childhood. In the late 1990s noticing Swifts nesting were in decline, he realised that re-roofing of buildings was blocking Swifts from returning to their long-established nest sites. Within 20 years the Swift may become a rare bird in the UK unless we create new nesting places and properly protect existing ones. Edward set up Swift Conservation, a charity to provide advice on urban biodiversity and urban habitat improvement to government, building professionals and the public. Further information: www.swift-conservation.org



AUGUST

- 5 ADNHS Evening walk, Marbury/Anderton, ring for details
- 16 NCRSPB Burton Mere Wetlands RSPB/Frodsham Marsh, meet at BMW car park at 10am
- 19 ADNHS Evening walk, Dunham Park, for bats, ring for details
- 30 CADOS Migrants (field visit), ring Roger Wilkinson 01244 381343 for details

SEPTEMBER

- 1 HPRSPB AGM, followed by a short talk by a group member
- 7 HPRSPB St Aidan's RSPB Reserve, Leeds, ring 0161 427 0881
- 9 MRSPB 'WILD MERSEY' by Bill Morton
- 9 ADNHS 'WILD FLOWERS OF NORWAY'S FJORDLAND & GOL PLATEAU' by Jack Swan
- 14 MRSPB Wildlife & Outdoor World Extravaganza at Pikelow Farm
- 15 HPRSPB 'A DIGITAL LANE' by Mike Lane
- 19 NCRSPB Talk on Speyside – tbc
- 20 CADOS North Wirral, ring Nick French 01829 271945 for details
- 21 KOS North Wales, meet at the Sessions House, Knutsford at 9am
- 21 NCRSPB Fairhaven Lake/Marton Mere, meet at Fairhaven Lake at 9:30am
- 26 KOS 'NORTH NORFOLK HERE I COME' by Jim Almond
- 26 WGBG 'THE BIGGEST TWITCH' by Alan Davies and Ruth Miller
- 29 MCOS Conwy RSPB Reserve, meet at Conwy at 10am

OCTOBER

- 2-6 NCRSPB Long Weekend to Lincolnshire, ring for details
- 3 **CAWOS** 'BIRDING IN PERU: AN INCANVENIENT TRUTH' by David Wood
- 3-5 MRSPB Weekend in Hartlepool, contact Graham Palmer 01625 420179 for details
- 5 HPRSPB Potteric Carr, ring 01663 745208
- 9 CADOS 'EUROPEAN WILD ORCHIDS' by Dave Goff
- 10 MCOS 'NORTHERN BOTSWANA: A VAST WILDERNESS' by Sheila Blamire
- 12 MCOS Anglesey, meet at Cemlyn Bay at 9:30am
- 14 MRSPB 'ANTIPODES – AT THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS' by Jeff Clarke
- 14 ADNHS 'RAPTOR MIGRATION & BIRDING IN S SPAIN & GIBRALTAR' by Dennis Atherton
- 17 NCRSPB AGM followed by a talk tbc
- 17-19KOS North Norfolk weekend, ring Derek Pike 01565 653811 for details
- 18 CADOS Migrant Mystery Tour, ring Don Pawlett 01244 677477 for details

- 19 WGBG Spurn Point by coach, ring for details
- 20 HPRSPB 'IN SEARCH OF FLOWER KISSERS' by Mike Leach
- 22 NCRSPB Marbury CP/Neumann's Flash, meet at Marbury CP at 10:00am
- 24 KOS 'MORE WILD LIFE, WILD PLACES' by John Gardner
- 24 WGBG 'BIRDS OF PREY' by Geoff Trinder

NOVEMBER

- 2 HPRSPB Cheshire Mosses, ring 0161 494 5367
- 6 CADOS 'BIRDING SPAIN – LAND OF CONTRASTS' by Alan Davies & Ruth Miller
- 7 **CAWOS 'DESPOTS IN PINK TIGHTS' by Dr Kevin Briggs**
- 8 KOS Connah's Quay, meet at the Sessions House, Knutsford at 9am
- 11 MRSPB 'SKYDANCERS' by Keith Offord
- 11 ADNHS 'WILDLIFE OF THE WEAVER VALLEY' by Jeff Clarke
- 17 HPRSPB 'BIRDS AND MIGRATION' by Jeff Clarke
- 21 NCRSPB Talk tbc
- 22 NCRSPB St Aidan's RSPB Reserve, Castleford, meet at SE399287 at 10am
- 25 ADNHS Social Event and Supper
- 28 KOS 'BIRDING IN THE ISLE OF AVALON' by Mike Roberts
- 28 WGBG 'EDGE OF THE ABYSS' by Jeff Clarke
- 30 WGBG Attenborough by coach, ring for details

DECEMBER

- 4 CADOS 'MOROCCO' by David King
- 5 **CAWOS 'THE FARM' by Paul Hobson**
- 6 KOS Marshside/Martin Mere, meet at the Sessions House, Knutsford at 9am
- 7 HPRSPB Marshside RSPB Reserve, ring 0161 449 8299
- 7 NCRSPB Wirral CP/Red Rocks, meet at Thurstaston CP (SJ238836) at 10am
- 8 HPRSPB CHRISTMAS PARTY
- 9 MRSPB 'A PHOTOGRAPHER'S WILD BRITAIN' by Nick Martin
- 9 ADNHS 'SHROPSHIRE WILDLIFE' by Jim Almond
- 10 WGBG Chelford area by car, followed by lunch, ring for details
- 12 KOS CHRISTMAS PARTY
- 12 WGBG 'A GREAT BRITISH SUMMER' by David Taylor
- 13 ADNHS Annual Christmas Walk and Pub Lunch, ring for details

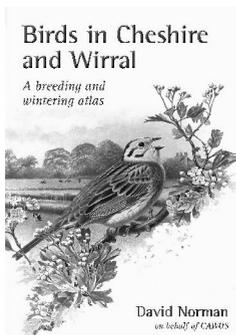
AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

- ADNHS Altrincham&Dist.NaturalHistorySoc,mtgs JubileeCentre,TheFirs, Bowdon,Altrincham7:30pm,contactHonSecClaireJoures01619284513
- CADOS Chester & Dist. Ornithological Soc, mtgs Caldy Valley Community Centre 7:30pm, contact Prog. Sec. Nick French 01829 271945
- CAWOS Cheshire and Wirral Orn Soc, mtgs St Vincent's RC Church Hall, Knutsford 7:45pm, contact Clive Richards 01625 524527
- CRSPB Chester RSPB Group, mtgs St Mary's Centre, Chester 7:30pm, contact Chris Kay and Peter Stevenson 01352 716886
- HPRSPB High Peak RSPB Members' Group, mtgs Senior Citizens' Hall, Marple 7:30pm, contact Peter Griffiths 0161 427 5325
- KOS Knutsford Ornithological Soc, mtgs Jubilee Hall, Stanley Road, Knutsford 8:00pm, contact Tony Ellis 01565 632501
- LOG Lymm Ornithological Group, mtgs Lymm Village Hall 8:00pm, contact Prog. Sec. Hilary Unsworth 01925 860155
- MCOS Mid-Cheshire Ornithological Soc, mtgs Cuddington & Sandiway Village Hall 7:45pm, contact John Drake 01928 561133
- MRSPB Macclesfield RSPB Members' Group, mtgs Senior Citizens' Hall 7:45pm, contact Ray Evans 01625 432635
- NCRSPB North Cheshire RSPB Members' Group, mtgs Appleton Parish Hall, Appleton 7:45pm, contact Olive Giles 01928 733405
- NNHS Nantwich Natural History Soc, occasional meetings throughout the year, contact Sec. Mike Holmes 01270 611577
- SECOS South-East Cheshire Orn Soc, mtgs Ettiley Heath Church Community Centre at 7:30pm, contact Sec. Colin Lythgoe 01270 582642
- WGBG Wilmslow Guild Birdwatching Group, mtgs Wilmslow Guild HQ 7:45pm, contact Sec. Judith Rees 0161 980 5034

Will **affiliated societies**, who wish to advertise meetings of relevance to CAWOS, please send their programme to:- **Sheila Blamire, Woodruff Cottage, Clamhunger Lane, Mere, Cheshire, WA16 6QG** or, *preferably please*, by email: **sheilablamire@kawos.org**

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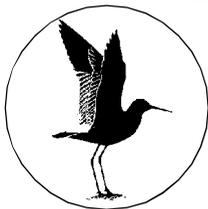


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'BIRDING IN PERU: AN INCANVENIENT TRUTH' by David Wood
3rd October 2014 at St Vincent's RC Church Hall, Knutsford

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