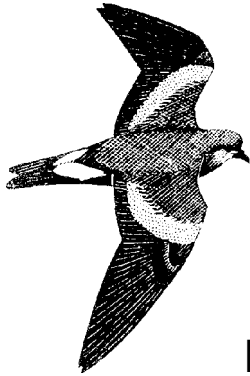


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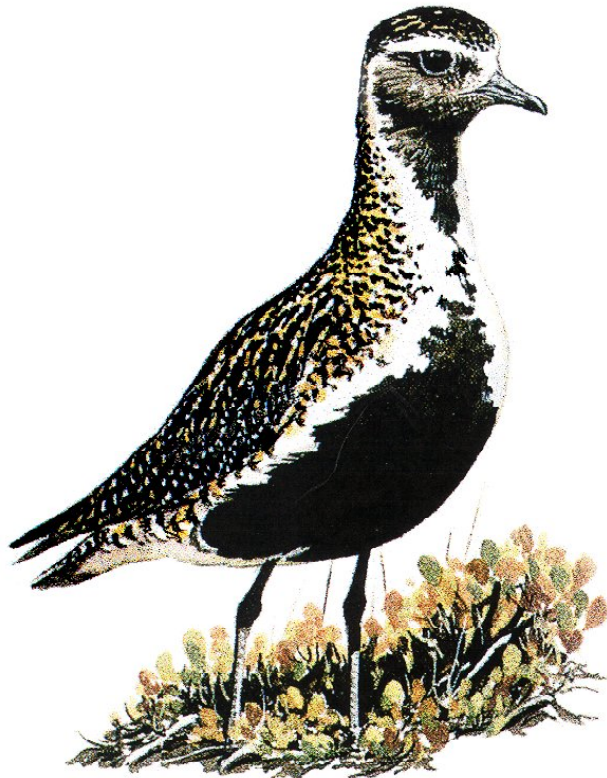
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BIRD NEWS

Number 52

Oct 2001



**Yellow-browed Warbler
Leach's Petrels • Rostherne Update
Winter Farmland Bird Survey
Computerisation of CAWOS Records**



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*Bird News welcomes articles, letters and comments relevant to birdwatching in Cheshire & Wirral.
Please either e-mail or post (on disc) your contributions to the Editor at the address shown above.*

*The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the
Society, the Council of the Society, or the Editor.*

Front cover: Golden Plover by Tony Broome

Other illustrations by Tony Broome, Jeff Clarke, Tom Lowe,
Bill Morton, Thelma Sykes and Jane Turner

Editorial

Looking back through the annals of *Bird News* recently, it occurred to me that I have been the Editor of this esteemed (if only in some quarters!) publication for exactly two years, my first full edition as Editor being that of October 1999. Over the subsequent nine issues, I have attempted to make my mark and striven to maintain *Bird News* to the very high standards that were set by my predecessors, notably Jeff Clarke and Richard Gabb, and which are quite rightly demanded by you, the CAWOS membership. After all, with the exception of the annual *Cheshire & Wirral Bird Report*, *Bird News* is the most important benefit provided by CAWOS to its members. However, as with all things, an end must come, and it is with no small amount of regret that I have decided to resign my editorship and pass the mantle on to another more able soul.

Thinking about my tenure, it is apparent that I have only been partially successful in achieving the above aims. During this time, there have indeed been a number of what I believe to be improvements to *Bird News*, not the least of which are the reformatting of Recent Reports and the reintroduction of Ringers' Notebook. New semi-regular features have also appeared - such as Personality Profile (look out for Thelma Sykes in January) and Society Spotlight - whilst the other more-established articles, like County Rarities and View from the Farmyard, have continued in the strong vein that I inherited. I alone can not take the credit for these achievements, considerable thanks also being due to Sheila Blamire, Tony Broome and the regular authors of these items. There have, though, also been the failures, including the consistent late arrival of issues and the absence in print of a number of the notes and letters that have been submitted to me for publication. This latter shortcoming is entirely attributable to my own lack of time to read and edit these valuable vignettes of the bird life of Cheshire. Despite my appeal in July for a "Features Editor" to help spread the workload, no offers have been forthcoming; this has, to some extent, contributed to my decision. However, my resignation has much more to do with personal reasons, such as the ever-increasing pressures of my job and my urgent need to spend what little spare time I have with my family. Hopefully, next year will see the arrival of a sibling for Rebekah Joy and a change of address for the Edwards clan. I, therefore, wish to leave the role of *Bird News* Editor before these significant, but welcome, events have a further detrimental effect on my ability to provide the attention to the job that it deserves.

Whilst it is not my wish to leave CAWOS "up a gum tree without a paddle", this will be the last issue of *Bird News* that I edit, though in reality the vast majority of the work has for the last couple of issues been performed by Sheila. Without her considerable support and long-suffering, I'm sure that I would have been long gone by now. As such, please let me make one final appeal - do not allow this newsletter to cease to exist as it really is one of the best county bird club members' newsletters in the country. Please, somebody step forward and put your shoulder to the plough.

It just remains for me to again thank all of the individuals who have contributed to *Bird News* over the last two years. Hopefully, we can get the outstanding items published in the New Year. Without your articles, notes and letters, there would be no newsletter and CAWOS would be much the poorer. Please keep them rolling in and provide my successor, whoever he or she may be, with your fullest support. I certainly will do so.

Simon Edwards

PS For the first time, CAWOS will have a stand at the North West Bird Fair at Martin Mere WWT. This is over the weekend of November 17th & 18th. See you, and several thousand 'pinkfoots', there!

Note: the copy date for the next issue is 17th Nov - please be prompt

We cannot guarantee that material received after this date will be published in that issue.

If you are aware that your material may be delayed, please let the Editor know as soon as possible.

.....
: ~~~~~ **COMPUTERISATION OF CHESHIRE & WIRRAL** ~~~~~ :
: **ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS** :
.....

In the next few weeks you will receive a special posting from CAWOS

County Rarities

YELLOW BROWED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

One of most people's favourites, and not difficult to identify if seen or heard well. However, given that this species is often very active, feeding in the tops of trees, sometimes in poor viewing conditions, sometimes silent, and often seen from below, clinching an ID can be difficult. Several times I have joined an enthusiastic throng waiting for one to show, and to have Willow or Wood Warblers and even Pallas's Warblers all called out as Yellow-broweds. In addition the much rarer Hume's Warbler, considered to be a separate species from Yellow-browed Warbler, should also be eliminated, particularly from late autumn sightings.

For me, I am always struck by how pale underneath Yellow-broweds look, contrasting with brighter upperparts, before you even get into the yellowish/greenish plumage tones, strong supercilium, usual double wing-bars, sandwiched with dark centres to coverts giving that striking wing pattern, along with the pale legs and feet. From underneath, the lack of a dark sided crown above the supercilium should rule out Pallas's Warbler, even if you have not had views of the rump or Pallas's greener upperparts, whilst structurally, Yellow-browed Warbler is more Goldcrest sized, and short winged than bright autumn Willow or Wood Warblers.

The call is distinctive, a crisp and strident "tseeweesst" with a distinct upward inflection, and is often what alerts you to the bird's presence. To me, it's a bit Coal Tit like, but more drawn out and almost two syllables with the rising second part. The call is a good separator from Hume's Warbler, which is a flatter tsue-uep, sounding an almost House Sparrow like note.

Hume's Warbler is generally a duller version of Yellow-browed, with reduced buff coloured wing bars and greyer plumage tones lacking the contrast seen on late autumn Yellow-broweds. However, occasional over-wintering or spring Yellow-browed Warblers tend to be worn and greyer in overall plumage tones and can be difficult to tell from Hume's, but call and darker bare parts on Hume's, specifically the bill and legs/feet will separate them. Perhaps the only other confusion species is the very rare Two-barred Greenish Warbler, which, although structurally different, is quite close plumage-wise. Again call and Yellow-browed's pale bare parts are key to telling these apart.

Although almost annual in Cheshire and Wirral, unfortunately we get far too few records of Yellow-browed Warbler with the Wirral laying claim to most. However records from further inland do suggest we may be overlooking this delightful little sprite.

Hugh Pulsford, 19 Tudor Way, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 2AS

REVIEW OF PAST RECORDS:

1973	Hilbre (1 st county record)	13 Oct	1988	Tattenhall	23 Oct
1975	Hilbre	30 Sep		Moreton	24 Oct
1978	Alsager	13 Oct	1991	Port Sunlight	18 Nov
1979	Red Rocks	7 Oct	1993	Red Rocks	24 Sep
1985	Hale	16 Oct	1994	Red Rocks (2 birds)	15 Oct
	Meols	19 Oct		Parkgate	26 + 30 Nov
1986	Heswall	27 Sep	1996	Leasowe	21 Sep
	Frodsham	5 Oct		Rostherne Mere	20 Oct
1987	Red Rocks	27 Sep	1997	Wilmslow	27 Sep
	Bosley Reservoir	3 Oct	1998	Moreton	21 Sep
	Hilbre	24 Oct		Woolston Eyes	3 Oct
	Hilbre	27 Oct	2000	Lyme Park, Disley	4 Oct

Since 1973 when the first county record was found on Hilbre, the total number of birds is 25, up to and including 2000. 1987 was the best year with four birds recorded. Otherwise the maximum in a year is usually just two. In recent years there have been four records from a private site in North Wirral, which have yet to be submitted.

Only two of the records occurred outside the optimum time for seeing this warbler, which can be seen to be in the five week period between September 21st and October 27th. The two November records are 18th and 26th, some three weeks later and *humei* must be a possibility for these two sightings, as the observer of the first one suggested.

Looking at the dates there is no 'peak time' for birds being found on our part of the west coast. Given suitable weather conditions, any date is good.

September			October												
21 st	24 th	27 th	30 th	3 rd	4 th	5 th	7 th	13 th	15 th	16 th	19 th	20 th	23 rd	24 th	27 th
2	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1

And the best place for seeing a Yellow-browed? From the west, working eastwards:

Hilbre 4, Red Rocks 5, Meols 1, Moreton 2, Leasowe 1, Port Sunlight 1, Parkgate 1, Heswall 1, Hale 1, Frodsham 1, Woolston Eyes 1, Alsager 1, Rostherne Mere 1, Tattenhall 1, Wilmslow 1, Disley 1, Bosley Reservoir 1.

With birds at Hoylake and Red Rocks reported during 2001, this area has recorded most Yellow-broweds. Interestingly, there hasn't been a record from Hilbre since 1987*. Away from the 'coast', there have been seven truly inland records, but the Wirral notched up a very respectable 13 during the period up to 2000. The remaining five were 'near coastal', as migrants move inland.

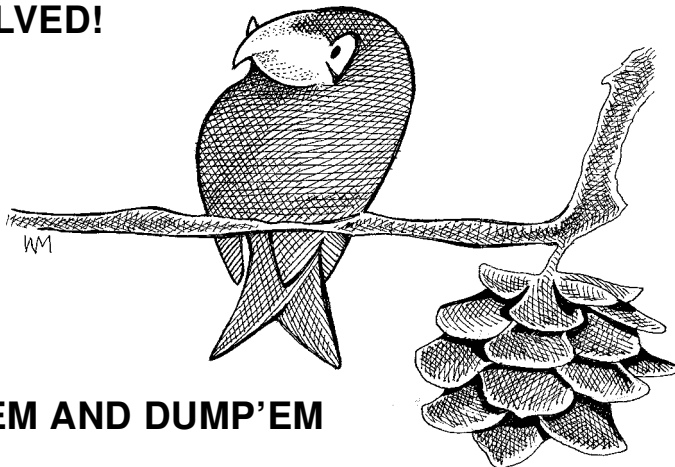
Just listen for that call!

Tony Broome, 4 Larchwood Drive, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 2NU

***Stop Press News:** Yellow-browed Warbler reported on Hilbre 16th October 2001!

THE CROSSBILL PROBLEM.....

SOLVED!



LUMP'EM AND DUMP'EM

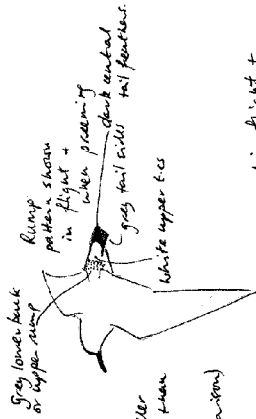
WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - COUNTY RARITIES UPDATE

The last sentence of 'County Rarities' in *Bird News* 39 read "County records are less than one every three or four years, the total White-rumped Sandpipers recorded being around six or seven individuals". Well, this was turned on its head last year when Mark and Jane Turner found two White-rumped Sandpipers within a week! Over the following two pages you can see the descriptions and sketches which Jane made at the time - read and enjoy!

Note: After scrutinising these descriptions the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) has now notified us that they have accepted both of these records.

Generally like a big W.P. stink
 grey, with a slight brown tinge on upper,
 s. body grey + white underparts.
 Much greater than Dunlin

Bill stout - not able to
 be pulled back - but
 bill weak + sun bright.
 Slight down curve (LW)
 and fine, up at tip



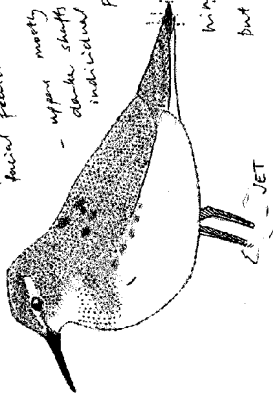
4 patch smaller than
 but cleaner than
 Curlew Sand
 (Carislet comparison)

long winged in flight +
 clearly smaller than more of the
 Dunlin

like Goosander!

strong rising square ended super -
 super beyond the eye straight
 facial feature

upper mostly uniform grey slightly
 darker shafts + pale edges, but
 individual feature tend to be
 few of: 1st number feature of chestnut/warmer
 brownish centres + pattern
 fringes. Exact number + pattern



3 primaries in visible tip
 but no fringe. In center + upper when
 complete breast band of five grey streaks.
 edge, with white base - forming narrow band strip + frothy white when
 seen head on. Beneath with silver grey bar.
 Upper flanks also silver grey, and 5 feathers with grey centres
 forming spots like those on ridge of breast (wing?)
 breast streaks on left (wing?)

complete breast band of five grey streaks. In center + upper when
 edge, with white base - forming narrow band strip + frothy white when
 seen head on. Beneath with silver grey bar.
 Upper flanks also silver grey, and 5 feathers with grey centres
 forming spots like those on ridge of breast (wing?)
 breast streaks on left (wing?)

Single remaining
 breast streaks on left (wing?)



more body
 bill ahead of
 " " "

WHITE-LUMPED SANDPIPER
- HOYLAKE / REDROCKS

SEPTEMBER 2000

Found from our front room
 White watching Curislet

WHITE RUMORED SANDPIPER

No. 2.

9, 10
11, 12

PATH OF BARREL
UN MOUTED FEATHERS
- LIKE PULLEN PATCH ON CHIM
- ACENTUATED BEIDING SWARS

THE BILL WAS NOT
THIS CURVED!

SEE BELOW FOR RETAIL.

FACIALLY WHITE LIKE CURBED SAND

PEROAL BAND OF GREY STREAKS.

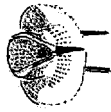
WITHOUT TINTONE OF LAY WEED BIRD

- FINER THAN DUNLIN

BOTTOM EDGE MADE ANGRY THAN OTHER

UPPER EDGE STRAIGHTER

CLEAN WHITE BELLY



THROAT WHITE

GREY REC
BAND

HEAD ON
VIEW EXTREMELY
CHARACTERISTICAL.

- BEIDING SWARM,
FOREHEAD SPOT

figs

HEAD ON BODY PROFILE

LIKE TERMINAL SWART - VERY DIFFERENT

FROM DUNLIN.

IMPRESSION OF PLUMAGE

- STRUCTURE EXAGGERATED HERE

TOD STRETCHED HERE

TWO VERY WEAK, GREYISH
MANTLE LINES

SLIGHTLY BARREL
WEDGE IN UPPER
EAR COVERS

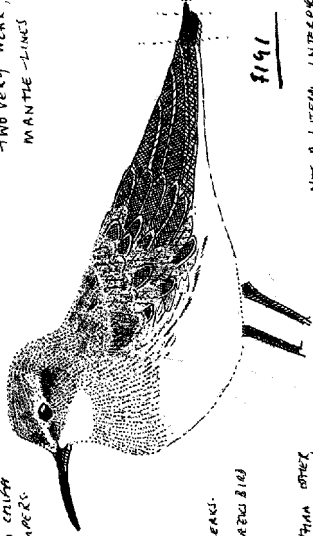


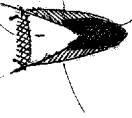
fig 1

NOT A LITERAL INTERPRETATION
OF FEATHERING - BUT THOSE
APPROXIMATE OF OLD TO NEW
ABOUT RIGHT

EVEN SHORTER PRIMARY
PROJECTION THAN BIRD 1.
SEVENTH SPACES FAR BEYOND
TERTIALS + LESS THAN DISCA
PART TAIL - VARIED DEPENDING
ON ANGLE - THIS WAS THE WORST CASE.

MORE UNMOUTED FEATHERS
ON LEFT SIDE!

BENNYMOUNTAIN
TALE/LUMP
PATEIN



ONE
DARK
MARK
- LONGER.

WHITE
LINES.

EDGES GREY

CENTRE TAIL BAR

fig 2



BILL DIPPED AT
TIP. BASE OF
LM BROWNISH

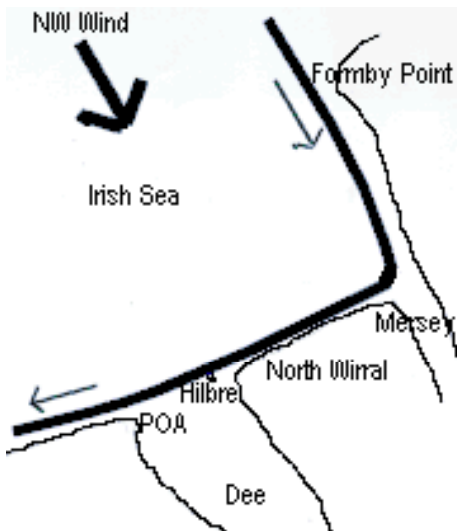
fig 4

Species Spotlight

LEACH'S PETREL

You can tell that the Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) means something special to this area as a sketch of the bird is the logo for CAWOS (Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Society); adorns page one of the *Hilbre Bird Reports*; figures prominently on the cover of the last two *North West Region Bird Reports*; and is the only bird shown on the cover of the Hilbre 'Bible' - *Hilbre, The Cheshire Island* by Professor J.D. Craggs. A special bird it certainly is.

Leach's Petrels breed on remote islands to the north-west of Scotland, Faeroe Islands and Iceland⁽¹⁾. In September the adults leave the young to fend for themselves and head south. They spend the winter in the Atlantic tropical seas and beyond, some reaching as far as the Cape of Good Hope. They are very much oceanic birds and their normal route south would take them well out into the Atlantic, west of Ireland. Although significantly bigger than the Storm Petrel they are still very small for a sea bird - weighing a mere 45 grams⁽¹⁾. Compare this to the 800 grams of a Fulmar! Despite this they cope remarkably well with storms, flying within a few centimetres of the surface where, perhaps, the waves give some protection from the gales. But, given a strong and consistent north-west wind as they leave Scotland, many get carried by the wind through the North Channel of the Irish Sea. They then get blown unerringly straight to the mouth of the River Mersey.



Leach's Petrel Migration



From here they are forced to fly parallel to the wind along the north Wirral coast, past Hilbre Island and the Point of Ayr (POA), then along the North Wales coast. The same wind that blows them to the Mersey in the first place holds them close to shore, sometimes at high tide only a few feet away, affording fantastic views for the waiting birdwatchers. It is amazing just to watch these dainty little birds, with their slow fluttering flight, dancing over the waves, knowing their true habitat is way out in the ocean.

But this spectacle doesn't happen every year. It requires a strong north-west wind (force 5 and above) blowing for at least two days during the main migration time (September 4th to 22nd) to blow them in from the Atlantic to the eastern side of the Irish Sea. Given those conditions we can see hundreds a day, with the North Wirral coast, Hilbre and Point of Ayr being the best places in the country to see Leach's Petrel.

This year has certainly been a good one; the table below shows the maximum daily count for various locations going back six years (^{2 3 4 5}). As you can see the last good Leach's Petrel passage before this year was in 1997:

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Leasowe	3	300	15	2	0	120
Hoylake	0	4	2	0	5	135
Hilbre	18	252	72	10	0	100+
Point of Ayr	5	258	24	20	0	305



References:

1. Stanley Cramp (Ed.), *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*, Oxford University Press, 1977.
2. Birdline North West, *North West Region Bird Reports*, 1996, 1997 and 1998.
3. *Clwyd Bird Report 1999*.
4. *Cheshire and Wirral Bird Report 1999*.
5. E-mail communications from 'Hoylake Bird Observatory'.

Note: This article by Richard Smith was first published in the October 2001 *Newsletter of the Dee Estuary Birding Website*, www.deeestuary.co.uk.

Ringers' Notebook

Like other areas of birdwatching, ringing has its devotees who have made substantial individual contributions to our knowledge of birds, their needs, movements, etc., but who largely remain unknown to the majority of the birding public. Several people immediately spring to mind, but one person that I would like to mention in particular is Malcolm Calvert of the South Manchester Ringing Group, who has studied the Rostherne Mere population of Reed Warblers continuously every year since 1973. Each year, Malcolm tries to find each individual nest, ring all of the pulli (chicks) contained therein and catch and mark all of the fully-grown birds in this important Cheshire population. All of this data is then sent to the BTO as part of the Re-trapping Adults for Survival programme (RAS). This attempts to catch year-on-year all of the adults of a particular target species in a certain colony or area in order to determine the annual survival of adult birds, their loyalty to breeding grounds, fidelity to a mate, etc. Around 100 nest record cards per annum are also completed, most of these supplying complete information of all nesting attempts from early building to eventual outcome, whether successful or not.

Many facts have emerged from this study, but the one that I perhaps find most interesting is the number of birds that were originally ringed there in the nest returning to breed in subsequent years. For instance, in 2000, of 157 adult birds captured, 98 proved to have been ringed at the site in previous years, and out of these 46 were originally ringed as nestlings, thus showing a high proportion of birds returning to breed in their natal area. Of note in the 2000 season was a bird returning to breed having first been ringed there as a nestling in 1991. This is not by any means a longevity record in terms of age for this species (this stands at 12 years and 10 months), but it is a fascinating record of an individual bird's history which only ringing can prove. No doubt a paper will one day be written about this study, something that will probably make most enjoyable reading, as well as providing us with more valuable information on the life of the Reed Warbler.

Has anyone else noticed the high number of Grasshopper Warblers around this year? Ringing on Woolston Eyes No.1 bed this season has produced, to date, 16 'new' fully-grown birds, at least two birds that had been ringed there in previous years, plus the added bonus of a nest found with six chicks (all got ringed of course). This compares with only three birds ringed at the same site in the previous year; quite a marked increase for an area that had about the same amount of ringing effort put into it. From the observations of my fellow nest recorder at Woolston, Scott Kennedy, and

myself of singing birds, capture of birds in breeding condition, etc., we estimate that there were at least between 25 and 30 pairs of this species at Woolston Eyes in 2001. There were probably more, due to the fact that many areas of this vast reserve are just too distant to lend the time to searching. I would guess that there are not too many sites with such a large population of this enigmatic warbler in the county, or country for that matter; no doubt someone will correct me on that!

Another long-lived Oystercatcher has just been reported, found dead on the Orkney island of Sanday in May this year, 20 years after being ringed at Bidston, Wirral in November 1981. Following on from the Sand Martin reported in the last Notebook, which was the 130th recovered in Spain from birds ringed in the British Isles, news has just been received of another bird ringed in the region. Trapped at a sand quarry near Sandiway in July 2000, it was subsequently caught just south-east of Madrid a month later, obviously taking a direct overland route to the southern Spanish coast before flying across the sea to North Africa on its journey south. A Chiffchaff trapped at Woolston Eyes in early May 2000 sporting a Portuguese ring was just the third ever from that country to these islands. It had first been trapped in the south-west province of Baixo Alentejo in November 1999.

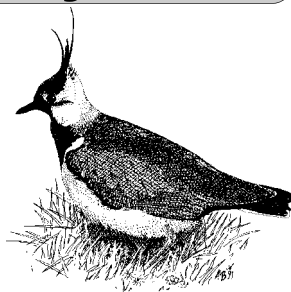
Perhaps the most welcome of all winter finches to visit our gardens is the Siskin, and ringers naturally take advantage of this in order to ring good numbers of the species. When your house is situated atop Bidston Hill on the Wirral, as is that of ringer Tony Ormond, then you can make full use of the fact that it is also situated under a major flyway for the species during migration. To date Tony has managed to ring over 2000 Siskins in his garden over the last 20 years or so, and has caught many that had been previously ringed in other parts of this and other countries during the same time span. Many of these birds have been recovered elsewhere, mainly in this country but also on the Continent, the recoveries being plotted on a map showing spring-caught birds to head due north up western England before spreading 'umbrella-fashion' throughout Scotland to their breeding grounds. In the last few months alone, seven such recoveries have been reported from Cumbria (2), Dumfries and Galloway (2), Argyll (1) and Highland Region (2).

Finally, we have just had confirmation that the Blyth's Reed Warbler trapped and ringed at Woolston Eyes in August last year has been accepted by the BBRC. An account of how the bird was trapped and identified will, I believe, be in the forthcoming *Cheshire and Wirral Bird Report 2000*.

Chris Benson, 39 Redesmere Park, Flixton, Manchester, M41 9ER

View from the Farmyard

Glorious summer sunshine had been a bonus in the last days before fledging, enabling the parent Swallows and House Martins to feed all day to provision their young for their lives yet to begin upon the wing. July became August and late first broods overlapped with the first of the second broods, their young lining the hall gutters. Sitting in small huddled groups each brood is separated from the next by a small gap. Every adult that approaches is greeted with the same response, as the ever-hungry gapes explode with anticipation. It is difficult for the casual observer to know, but it would appear that an adult bird confronted with 40 identical gaping mouths could still identify its own young. A week later and 150 or so young Swallows and House Martins, now proficient fliers, rested upon the warm slate roofs around the farmyard, some spreading their wings and sprawling on their sides. Towards lunchtime a change in the air brought more humid conditions and the distant rumble of thunder. The birds moved from the roof to the wires that span the farmyard; spots of rain the size of 50p pieces first disturbed the dust, then pounded it into a raging torrent as almost two inches of rain fell in just 35 minutes. Where once the cobbled track entered the farmyard there now ran a stream. Drains overwhelmed by the downpour aid the formation of a huge puddle 30 yards wide where once was the farmyard. The young birds at first startled by the force of the falling water took to the wing;



discovering the pleasures of flying in rain they bathe on the wing, shaking their wings and fanning their tails. However as the falling rain grows ever heavier the young Swallows find themselves in danger. Struggling to stay aloft some make for the safety of a window sill, others sit in the pitch holes of the old barn lofts. A couple desperate for shelter sit in a hole in the masonry. The House Martins however were totally unfazed by the rain and climbed higher, drawing into a tight flock to ride out the storm, apparently still reluctant to enter man-made structures. After the rain all birds return to the wires to preen and dry out. Why I wonder, are martins so reluctant to take shelter in buildings even in extreme weather, when it comes so easily to Swallows?

Autumn's arrival brings shortening daylight hours, making it difficult to enjoy a walk after work and tea are out of the way. This is coupled with the onset of middle age when a keen youth overnight becomes 'slipper man' and would much rather collapse in the chair and have a couple of those 40 winks a little earlier than was once the case. But to make the effort can prove most rewarding; with limited time before dark I set off to get to a few favourite spots, hopefully ending sitting with my back resting against a particularly comfortable chestnut tree to watch the sun go down.

First call was at the Swallow roost in the maize field; tonight only a couple of hundred birds had gathered but they still drew the attention of a hunting male Hobby. The russet glow from the sinking sun set his red thighs ablaze, making the identification of a male all the easier. I watched until his hunt and hunger and my observations were satisfied. Moving on I paused to watch 300 Canada Geese fly onto the stubble field, their calls every bit a part of the autumn experience. I hear the last mournful 'seeps' of the Robins and a few broken segments of his song, his marvellous breast feathers reflecting that same rosy glow as the Hobby, the haws and the sunset. I quicken my pace to pass the pool before darkness descends. The Mallards disturbed by a prowling fox cluster together in the deeper water, their communal quacking sounding to me like a mocking taunt to the fox. The fox, his senses working overtime, sniffs the ground, tastes the water, scent marks the spot, then hurries along, he clearly has an appointment elsewhere. On the large island in the pool a dozen Mistle Thrushes go to roost, their rasping calls silenced as each reaches cover.

As the last Swallows to roost make their final approach I settle down against the chestnut tree, its roots forming a natural armchair. I have found this to be a good place to sit, as the huge silhouette of the tree masks my presence. Dusk is the cue for many flying and crawling creatures to emerge, dung beetles, ground beetles and craneflies rise in their thousands from the damp grass. Crows, aware of this supper snack, stand spread about the field facing this way and that and snapping up the insects nearest to them. An untidy family of Little Owl, the young still displaying tufts of down, emerge from the nest hole, now their roost. Dispersing to fence posts and low branches close to me, they one by one drop to the ground to join the feast. Craneflies are consumed on the spot, dung beetles are carried to fence posts to be dismembered. Another fox picks his way across the field eating from the same larder. Fox droppings often contain many insect parts, showing insects to be an important part of their diet.



The male Hobby returning from his kill at the Swallow roost, joins the insect banquet; his summer diet containing many young Swallows and martins was all the while supplemented with insects. Now as winter approaches insects once again will become the major part of his diet upon his return to Africa. Snatching dung beetles from the air he wheels round in broad gliding circles dismembering his prey on the wing, all the while silhouetted against the ever darkening sky. This can be repeated up to four times a minute for beetles and even more often for craneflies.

It's hard to know when to stop watching, gradually the birds go to roost, and the fox makes its way into the woods. This is autumn to me, the whole spectacle of falling leaves, juicy berries, muted bird song, the chill draught as the sun sinks, the sweet smell of decay and the earthy smell of cultivated fields. Swallow, House Martin and Hobby will soon be gone, replaced by the migrant thrushes. Picking my way back home across the fields the hoot and screech of owls tell me to be gone as this is their time.

Pete Hall, The School House, Toft Road, Knutsford, Cheshire

Projects and Surveys

THREE YEAR WINTER FARMLAND BIRD SURVEY

Farmland bird populations have generally been in steep decline since the mid-1970s. While a number of BTO surveys/schemes provide information on the breeding population changes (i.e. Breeding Bird Survey and Common Bird Census) and breeding success (i.e. Nest Record Scheme and Constant Effort Sites Ringing), there is relatively little data available on the winter ecology of these birds. For example, is the decline in farmland birds due to fewer suitable nesting sites and less suitable food for the nestlings; or is it partly due to the inability of the farmland birds to obtain suitable food during the winter period with the consequences that they are not fully fit and in prime condition for the following breeding season; or is it a combination of both?



British Trust for Ornithology

As a result of this gap in our knowledge the BTO is running a three-year Winter Farmland Bird Survey to gain insights into the number of birds using farmland during the winter; how numbers vary across the country and within and between winters; and how different species utilise different agricultural habitats and crop types in winter.

The survey aims to cover some 30 species of farmland birds. This selection of species includes declining farmland birds that are of conservation concern (e.g. Tree Sparrow), scarce or localised users of farmland (e.g. Snow Bunting) and common and widespread species that use farmland in winter (e.g. Pied Wagtail).

This survey was run for the last two winters but with the uncertainty of the prevalence of foot-and-mouth during the coming winter and the understandable caution being exercised even in disease free areas, the BTO has thought it prudent to postpone the third and final year of the Winter Farmland Bird Survey. However it is vital that the third winter of the survey is completed in order that between winter variances in farmland bird numbers are fully documented. It is therefore intended that the final winter's fieldwork will now take place in the winter of 2002/2003.

However, this survey also includes two sub-surveys namely:

WINTER WALKS

This is a route walked regularly by the observer between November and February inclusive and is obviously well suited to dog walkers! The route is chosen by the observer and preferably it should be at least 1km in length and run through farmland in the region. Observers record the 30 target species seen during the walks, using fields, hedges and other farmland habitats adjacent to the route.

CASUAL RECORDS

This part of the survey records the sightings of any significant flocks of farmland birds also between November and February inclusive. The sizes of the flocks and the flock groups to be recorded are specified on the BTO instructions.

Most Winter Walks routes and Casual Records observations are from public rights of way such as tracks and footpaths. As these surveys do not require access to farmland itself, it may be possible to carry out these surveys this winter in most areas.

It would be of great benefit if as many CAWOS members as possible could take part this winter in the Winter Walks/Casual Records surveys/observations, where the foot-and-mouth restrictions have been lifted. This will enhance the database both for the BTO and for CAWOS. A copy of the reporting forms for each of these two surveys is included with this issue of *Bird News* and full instructions are specified on the appropriate form.

If you have any queries or would like any further information please contact me by telephone: 01270 628194 or by e-mail on: edleston@yahoo.co.uk.

Charles Hull, Edleston Cottage, Edleston Hall Lane, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 8PL

Recent Reports

Some of the records may be unauthenticated and therefore will require review by the Society's Rarities Panel or the BBRC. This report covers the summer period from June to August.

SITE REPORTS

Crewe/Sandbach area

A Mandarin was at Queen's Lake, Crewe in August and on July 27th seven Buzzards flew over Crewe Business Park. An Osprey flew over Sandbach on Aug 25th. At least three pairs of Hobbies bred in the SECOS area. A pair of Little Ringed Plovers bred at Doddington Pool. A Jack Snipe was reported by the River Weaver at Nantwich on June 5th - this will be the first June record for the county, if confirmed. A Barn Owl was at Crewe Green on Aug 29th and a Whinchat at Crewe Business Park on Aug 19th. A Raven was at Oakhanger Wood on Aug 4th.

Dee Estuary/South Wirral

Single Little Egrets were at Heswall and Neston and three were at Parkgate in August. The Great White Egret was off Burton on Aug 20th, 22nd and 26th. 15 Grey Herons were off Heswall on Aug 19th. A Spoonbill flew over the Decca Pools on July 14th and was earlier reported at Parkgate on June 19th. 1093 Shelducks were counted off Heswall on Aug 19th, three Mandarins were at Raby Mere (July 13th) and two returning Wigeon were off Heswall (Aug 19th). A fem Marsh Harrier was at Burton (Aug 25th), Neston Old Quay (Aug 15th) and Parkgate (Aug 15th and 27th). A ringtail Hen Harrier visited Burton, Neston Old Quay and Parkgate on seven dates between Aug 15th-27th. An early Merlin was at Parkgate on Aug 21st. Calling Quails were at Decca Pools (July 29th), Neston Old Quay (June 5th-13th), Parkgate (one/two June 2nd-12th) and four calling birds were in the Neston/Parkgate area on June 12th. Just outside Cheshire, three calling birds were at Shotwick fields on July 23rd.

Peak wader counts at Heswall in August included 28 Grey Plovers, 12 Curlew Sandpipers, 2580 Curlews, 4045 Redshanks and 15 Greenshanks. A Curlew Sandpiper was at Parkgate on Aug 3rd and five Spotted Redshanks were there on June 13th-14th. 29 Greenshanks at Parkgate on July 24th had increased to 80 on Aug 31st. 22 Whimbrel were off Heswall on Aug 18th and 20+ next day. Three Yellow-legged Gulls were at New Ferry Tip (Aug 13th). An escaped Eagle Owl was in a Bebington garden on July 20th. Two Grasshopper Warblers reeled at Neston Old Quay with another at Parkgate. A reported Marsh Warbler by the Shropshire Union Canal, Beeston from June 18th-21st turned out to be a Reed Warbler. Two pairs of Reed Warblers bred at Burton, as did a pair of Spotted Flycatchers. Five Ravens visited Parkgate (June 16th). Eight or nine Crossbills were at Thurstaston CP (July 4th) and at least one was still there on 6th. Just outside Cheshire, 3 singing male Corn Buntings were at Shotwick fields on July 23rd.

Fiddler's Ferry

A Greylag Goose was seen on June 20th (a first for that month) and then reappeared on Aug 25th and 30th-31st. Five pairs of Canada Geese bred on the reserve and a Bar-headed Goose (Aug 29th-31st) was the second reserve record. Up to 100 Shelducks in June (a new June record) included three broods totalling 34 young. 32 Gadwall were seen on June 24th and 26th, followed by 16 in early July and 14 in mid-August. 50 Teal in July (new monthly maximum) increased to 358 by late August. On Aug 27th, 410 Mallard and 64 Shovelers were seen. A pair of Scaup visited on July 24th. A sub-adult Marsh Harrier was seen on June 2nd and an imm visited on Aug 27th. A male Goshawk was reported on June 6th and Aug 22nd. Up to three Buzzards were regular in June and an Osprey flew over on Aug 26th. A Hobby visited on Aug 22nd and a Water Rail was seen three days later.

10 Little Ringed Plovers were seen in late June/early July. 11 Golden Plovers returned on Aug 27th and an imm Grey Plover on July 7th was the first record for that month. Lapwings reached c4000 on Aug 26th. A site record 15 Sanderling visited on June 4th with one on 5th-6th and another on 20th. The peak monthly counts of Dunlin were 20 in June, 44 in July and 300 in August. One/two Little Stints were seen during August. Up to nine Black-tailed Godwits arrived on nine dates between June 29th and Aug 4th with a peak of 21 on July 22nd. The first June Bar-tailed Godwit was seen on

12th. One/two Green Sandpipers were seen in July and there was a site record of six on Aug 29th. A Wood Sandpiper on July 24th-25th was only the fourth reserve record. A report of a Purple Sandpiper on Aug 17th will be the first reserve record if confirmed.

At least five Yellow-legged Gulls were present in July and two first summer Kittiwakes flew past on June 5th. A Sandwich Tern seen between July 3rd-7th was the fourth site record and the first since May 1994. The peak count of Swifts was 500 in June, with the last birds on Aug 21st. Sand Martins peaked at 1500 in July. A late migrant Whinchat was seen on June 3rd and a returning bird was seen on Aug 15th. The last Greenland Wheatear of the spring was seen on June 3rd. The post-breeding Mistle Thrush flock reached 56 on Aug 26th.

Frodsham

A juv Black-necked Grebe visited the Weaver Bend (Aug 17th). One-two Little Egrets were seen regularly on No6 tank culminating in the first breeding record of this species away from southern England. A single chick hatched on July 10th and was present till mid-August at least. One over the Weaver Bend (June 7th) was the only report away from No6 tank. A Great



White Egret was reported circling No6 tank on July 28th before flying towards the River Mersey at 7.55am. 16 Mute Swans were on the Weaver Bend on June 11th. The first returning Pintail were on No6 tank on Aug 26th and 30 Pochard, 124 Tufted Ducks and 98 Ruddy Ducks were there on the same day. A fem Marsh Harrier was seen on July 29th and a Hobby seen in late July.

Eight Knot were seen on June 21st and three in late July. Two Sanderling were seen on July 22nd and 29th. A Temminck's Stint was reported with the Godwit flock on June 22nd. The first returning Curlew Sandpiper was at No5 tank on July 22nd. 30 Ruff visited No6 tank on Aug 17th. The monthly maximum counts of Black-tailed Godwits were 500 in June, 1600 in July and 600 in August. Four Whimbrel arrived (July 18th) and 16 Common Sandpipers were at the Weaver Bend (July 15th). A 1st sum Little Gull visited No6 tank on June 7th and the Weaver Bend on July 30th. The pair of Great Black-backed Gulls hatched two chicks this year. A migrant Black Tern was at No6 tank (Aug 23rd). A Turtle Dove was reported on July 22nd and 28th. 1000 each of Swifts and Swallows were seen on Aug 11th. The male Blue-headed Wagtail was at the Turf field in early June.

Hilbre

A Red-throated Diver flew past on July 19th. Up to three Fulmars were seen on four dates in June and early July. Manx Shearwater passage consisted of low counts with peaks of 53 on June 6th and 35 on July 19th. Two Storm Petrels flew past over high tide (July 11th) with one next day. Gannet passage consisted of a peak of 60 on June 2nd with double figures on six other dates. Single Little Egrets were seen on Aug 15th and 18th. Two fem Eider lingered offshore on June 24th. The peak monthly counts of Common Scoters were 39 in June, 83 in July and 250 on Aug 28th.

During the summer, exceptional numbers of Knot were recorded including 10,000 on June 23rd and 6000 on July 22nd. The first returning Purple Sandpiper was seen on Aug 28th. The only Whimbrel in June was a single on 7th. This was followed by up to six on 14 dates between July 14th and Aug 20th with peaks of 15 on July 25th and 26 on Aug 3rd. Four returning Common Sandpipers arrived on July 16th and 200 Turnstones were counted on Aug 31st.

A Pomarine Skua flew past (July 14th) and up to seven Arctic Skuas were seen irregularly during the summer. Great Skuas were recorded on just two dates in July. A 1st sum Mediterranean Gull was found on June 29th and a Yellow-legged Gull was present on July 27th. An incredible 1500 Sandwich Terns were reported offshore on Aug 3rd and 5th. The peak count of Common Terns was 430 on Aug 14th but only a few Arctic Terns were seen. 170 Little Terns were seen on Aug 5th. Small numbers of Guillemots lingered through the summer. 350 Swifts passed over the island on June 23rd. Two Tree Pipits and a Redstart appeared (Aug 25th) and 10 Wheatears on Aug 18th. A Garden Warbler and two Spotted Flycatchers arrived with a small fall of migrants on Aug 25th.

Hoylelake/Leasowe area

402 Cormorants were counted off Hoylelake (Aug 11th) and 1500 Oystercatchers were there (Aug 7th). 20 Golden Plovers were at Leasowe (Aug 23rd) and 1000 Grey Plovers were counted between

Hoylake and Leasowe three days later. 500 Sanderling was the peak count at Hoylake (Aug 8th). A possible White-rumped Sandpiper visited Hoylake (Aug 6th) but could not be confirmed. Three Curlew Sandpipers had returned to Hoylake on Aug 20th. 3500 Dunlin fed at Hoylake on Aug 7th. A Green Sandpiper was at Hoylake on Aug 22nd. A Mediterranean Gull was at Leasowe (Aug 3rd). A partial albino Common Gull was at Hoylake on July 25th and nearby at Leasowe a 2nd sum Iceland Gull was seen (July 17th). 100 Little Terns were seen off Hoylake on July 25th.



Inner Marsh Farm

A Little Egret was seen on July 29th, Aug 8th, 15th and 22nd. A Great White Egret lingered briefly on July 23rd and returned on Aug 27th. An adult Spoonbill was seen July 17th-19th, Aug 3rd and 6th. The first returning Pintails were 99 on Aug 31st. Garganey remained scarce with two on July 17th and a single on Aug 23rd and 25th. One-two Marsh Harriers were seen regularly in August with three birds seen on Aug 16th. A ringtail Hen Harrier was seen on seven dates from Aug 3rd. A Hobby was seen once in July and on four dates in August.

Up to five Little Ringed Plovers in July increased to seven on Aug 3rd. A juv Little Stint present from Aug 29th was joined by two more on Aug 31st. A Curlew Sandpiper on July 19th was followed by one on Aug 11th and three on Aug 31st. 621 Black-tailed Godwits on Aug 17th was the largest count of the summer and a Bar-tailed Godwit arrived on Aug 31st. The only Whimbrel was seen on July 20th and Spotted Redshanks returned from mid-August. Up to three Green Sandpipers were seen in August and a Wood Sandpiper was present on Aug 24th. The peak count of Common Sandpipers was three on Aug 3rd. A Little Tern on July 26th is only c7th site record. Two Whinchats were recorded on Aug 22nd and nine Ravens were seen on Aug 13th.

Macclesfield area

A white egret sp found dead at Chelford SQs (Aug 11th) was thought to be a Little Egret. A male Ruddy Shelduck appeared at Chelford SQs (June 9th and 12th). Mandarins bred at two undisclosed sites. A Wigeon at Chelford SQs (July 28th) was the first returning bird there. Two Honey Buzzards were reported flying north over Wilmslow on June 23rd. An Osprey was seen over Macclesfield Forest on July 11th. Single Hobbies were by the A523 south of Macclesfield (July 19th), Holmes Chapel (July 17th), a Mere garden (Aug 24th), Prestbury SF (July 27th), Shakerley Mere (July 23rd) and Timbersbrook (July 21st).

A Curlew Sandpiper was at Chelford SQs on Aug 19th and a Spotted Redshank was there the same day. A very early returning Jack Snipe was at the same site (Aug 25th) and a Black-tailed Godwit was there (July 22nd). Up to four Green Sandpipers were at Chelford SQs in July/August and a Wood Sandpiper also visited this site on Aug 4th. A Common Tern visited Redesmere (July 21st). A Black Tern at New Platt Wood SQ, Goostrey on July 25th was the first July record for four years. A Spotted Flycatcher was at Redesmere in mid-July. Crossbills were seen irregularly at Macclesfield Forest from June 20th with 20 on June 22nd, 30 on July 21st, 40 on July 22nd and 25 on July 31st.

Northwich/Middlewich area

A Little Egret visited Butterfinch Bridge (June 30th), Neumann's Flash (June 25th-26th, 29th-30th, July 1st) and Haydn Pool (Aug 16th). Two Wigeon were at Neumann's Flash during late July. A Water Rail was at Haydn Pool from late July and an adult Spotted Crake was reported there (July 29th-31st). 14 Little Ringed Plovers were at Neumann's Flash (June 29th) and 10 at Haydn Pool (July 22nd). A Ringed Plover visited Neumann's Flash in early July and a Black-tailed Godwit was there on June 25th. Three Whimbrel visited Neumann's Flash (Aug 2nd) with two more on 5th. 350 Curlews roosted at Neumann's Flash (July 26th). The first returning Green Sandpiper at Haydn Pool was on June 10th with five by 29th and 10 on July 7th.

An adult Mediterranean Gull roosted at Neumann's Flash between July 29th and Aug 3rd. An adult Yellow-legged Gull also roosted there on July 29th and Aug 2nd. An Arctic Tern visited Neumann's Flash on July 29th. A Black Tern was reported at Budworth Mere (June 12th) with two more on Aug 25th. A pair of Green Woodpeckers bred near Haydn Pool. Single Grasshopper Warblers reeled at Haydn Pool and Neumann's Flash.

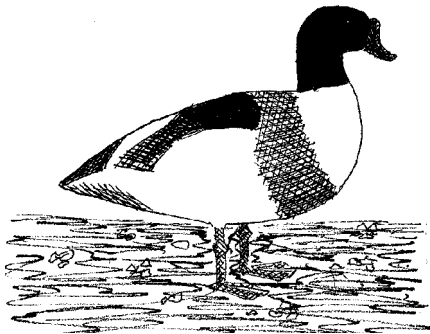
Poynton area

An adult Little Egret was at Mill House Bridge Pool, just south of Adlington by the A523 on Aug 14th-15th. A Buzzard was at Adlington Driving Range (June 11th). A possible Osprey was seen over Poynton station on Aug 14th. One or two Oystercatchers over Swan Close, Poynton on June 24th was only the second garden record. A pair of Curlews was at Adlington Driving Range on June 11th and at least two flew over Swan Close, Poynton on Aug 5th. A Green Sandpiper over Swan Close, Poynton on Aug 1st was the second ever garden record.

A Tawny Owl was heard on several dates in July/August near Lostock Hall Farm. Three Yellow Wagtails at Adlington Driving Range (June 11th) was a first for the site. Up to 50 House Sparrows seen at Swan Close, Poynton in July represented a good breeding season. A pair of Tree Sparrows bred at Adlington Driving Range.

Poynton Pool

The regular fem Mute Swan was found dead on June 26th and a new bird arrived on Aug 10th. A juv Shelduck flew through on Aug 22nd - only the second record here. Up to 120 Mallard were counted in the post-breeding flock and two eclipse Shovelers (July 12th) were the first birds of the year. A male Tufted Duck on June 24th and two on Aug 8th



were typical records. Two Oystercatchers flew over on July 13th - the second record of the year here and a Common Sandpiper (July 14th) was the start of return passage. A Great Black-backed Gull over on Aug 28th was the first record for some months. A small Collared Dove roost had formed by late August. A Tawny Owl showed well on July 14th with a juv heard in late August. The last Swift was seen on Aug 9th and a late spring Sand Martin was seen (June 1st). Up to five pairs of House Martins bred this summer and at least 36 Mistle Thrushes were seen on July 12th. Single pairs of Nuthatches and Treecreepers bred this summer.

Red Rocks/West Kirby

A Bittern was reported at Red Rocks on the very early date of Aug 21st and a Little Egret was seen flying past in August. A male Marsh Harrier was at West Kirby on Aug 15th and a Hobby was seen nearby in August. A pair of Water Rails bred. 4100 Oystercatchers were seen off West Kirby on Aug 18th and 1000 Ringed Plovers were at Red Rocks the next day. 14 Bar-tailed Godwits were present in July and 1750 Curlews was the peak count for August. A Green Sandpiper visited West Kirby (Aug 21st) and a Common Sandpiper was at Ashton's Park, West Kirby (July 10th). An Arctic Skua and a Mediterranean Gull were both seen at Red Rocks in July. Two Crossbills flew over in July.

Rostherne

An adult and up to three imm Black-necked Grebes arrived July 8th-15th. A male Common Scoter dropped in on Aug 16th. Eight Buzzards was the peak August count here. A Hobby was seen on July 10th and a Whimbrel visited Aug 30th. Six Common Sandpipers on July 12th was a high count for here. Two Common Terns and eight Black Terns were seen on Aug 19th.

Sandbach Flashes

Single Little Egrets were seen at Elton Hall Flash on Aug 11th and 17th. A feral White-fronted Goose associated with the Canada Goose flock from Aug 24th-31st at least. Up to four pairs of Shelducks bred and 20 Wigeon had returned by late August. August counts of ducks included 300+ Teal on 30th, 550 Mallard on 14th, a returning Pintail on 30th, a Garganey from 26th-31st at least and 24 Shovelers on 29th. Single Marsh and Hen Harriers were reported on Aug 19th and 28th respectively. A pair of Little Ringed Plovers failed to breed but eight were present on June 29th and 12+ on July 13th. Returning waders in August included 10 Ringed Plovers on 24th, five Golden Plovers on 27th, up to 520 Lapwings during the month, up to eight Ruff, 36 Snipe on 24th, two Black-tailed Godwits on 4th (and 12 on July 31st), a Whimbrel on 19th, five Green Sandpipers on 4th and four Common Sandpipers.

Three Sanderling were at Elton Hall Flash on June 4th. Two Spotted Redshanks on June 22nd were followed by one on Aug 30th. Single Mediterranean Gulls were seen on July 13th and Aug 19th. Up to four Yellow-legged Gulls were regular in August. A pair of Green Woodpeckers bred for the first time ever. A Whinchat was at Maw Green Tip (Aug 27th). Nine Reed Warblers were singing around the flashes in June. Three Ravens flew over on Aug 27th.

Tatton Park

The only records of note were:- an Osprey flew west on Aug 18th, two Red-legged Partridges on farmland (July 5th), a Common Sandpiper on flooded fields (Aug 18th) and a small Sand Martin colony was located on the Birkin Brook. We would welcome additional records from this area for inclusion in this report.

Warrington area

At least three pairs of Great Crested Grebes bred at Moore NR. A Black-necked Grebe visited Pump House Pool, Moore on June 3rd with two at Houghton Green Pool on July 11th. The Great White Egret was seen over Stockton Heath on July 25th. 31 Gadwall at Norbury Pool on June 21st included nine juvs, a pair bred at Moore NR and 20+ birds were there on July 29th, 20+ were at Astmoor Saltmarsh (Aug 26th and 28th) and 24 were at Gatewarth SF (Aug 27th). 46 Tufted Ducks at Moore NR (July 29th) included 21 juvs.

A Red Kite circled Stockton Heath (July 3rd) before flying off north. Single Marsh Harriers visited Astmoor Marsh (June 3rd), Hale (Aug 3rd) and Risley Moss (Aug 28th). A Goshawk was reported at Moore NR (Aug 29th) and an Osprey flew over the M6 just south of jtn 21a on June 16th. A Merlin was at Risley Moss on June 2nd - a very unusual date! Another Hobby was at Hale (Aug 3rd). Just outside Cheshire, a Corncrake was reported east of Burtonwood on Aug 13th.

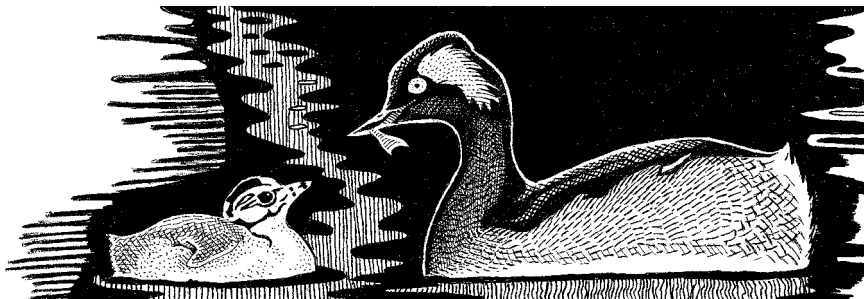
At least six pairs of Ringed Plovers were at Weston Marsh. The first returning Golden Plover was at Gatewarth on Aug 18th and 312 were at Pickering's Pasture on 27th. 20+ pairs of Lapwings bred at Weston Marsh, whilst post-breeding counts included c1000 at Astmoor, c1500 at Gatewarth and c2000 at Pickering's Pasture. A Little Stint was at Hale (Aug 3rd) and a Black-tailed Godwit was on the Mersey at Gatewarth (Aug 27th). A Greenshank visited Norbury Marsh on Aug 22nd. A Green Sandpiper was at Moore NR on Aug 25th and three were at Risley Moss on June 24th. Single Wood Sandpipers visited Gatewarth on Aug 25th, Risley Moss on June 24th and July 8th. Single Common Sandpipers visited Astmoor (June 23rd), Gatewarth, Hale (both Aug 27th), Pickering's Pasture (June 22nd) and Risley Moss (June 24th).

A Mediterranean Gull was at Hale (Aug 3rd). A 1st sum Iceland Gull was at Arpley Tip while nearby a 1st sum Little Gull and Kittiwake were at Halfway House, Moore (all June 5th). A Common Tern flew over Moore NR (June 5th). A returning Whinchat was at Hale on Aug 27th. A Cetti's Warbler was reported singing by Sankey Brook, 1.5mls SE of Burtonwood on June 21st. Single Grasshopper Warblers were at Cuedley Marsh, Norbury Marsh and two were at Gatewarth. 13 Reed Warblers were along a section of the St.Helen's Canal on June 22nd and 11 Whitethroats sang at Gatewarth on June 3rd. A pair of Redpolls was at Risley Moss (June 2nd), a single on 24th and another was at Sankey Valley Park on Aug 1st.



Woolston Eyes

Up to 20 pairs of Black-necked Grebes may have bred this year (a new record) hatching at least 23 young. This site is the second most important breeding site in Britain for this species. A fem Garganey was reported on No1 bed on July 21st. A Hobby was seen twice in June. Up to six Little Ringed Plovers were seen in both June and July. A Curlew Sandpiper was reported in June and three Green Sandpipers in June/July. A Wood Sandpiper was at No4 bed and a Little Tern flew along the canal, both in July. A Long-eared Owl was seen on July 28th and up to 250 Swifts were seen in June. Up to 18 Grasshopper Warblers sang around the reserve.



SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Little Egret influx

During August, 11 sites had Little Egrets including four inland areas. This follows the first confirmed breeding record for Cheshire at Frodsham. One remained at No6 tank to Aug 10th at least. A bird appeared at Elton Hall Flash on Aug 11th, the same date that a dead egret sp was first seen at Chelford SQs. Three days later, a fine adult was at Adlington (14th-15th) allowing close views. Another bird was at Marbury No1 tank (Aug 16th) which was probably the bird seen in the same area in July. Next day (17th), a bird was at Elton Hall Flash briefly. Coastal records came from Inner Marsh Farm (Aug 8th, 15th and 22nd), Hilbre (Aug 15th and 18th), Heswall (Aug 17th), Parkgate (up to three Aug 20th-29th), Neston (Aug 21st) and one was at West Kirby shore (no date given).

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Thanks/acknowledgements for Recent Reports go to: - S. & G.Barber, Birdcall, *Birdwatch* and *Birdwatching magazines*, J.J.Canovan (Rostherne), J.Gibson, M.Gough, K.Massey (Fiddler's Ferry reserve), D.Morris (Tatton Park and Knutsford Moor LNR), B.Perkins (Sandbach Flashes), R.Smith (www.deeestuary.co.uk), Rostherne Log and all the observers who passed records on.

The Osprey swooped down on the lake
As the dawn was just starting to break,
But the light wasn't right,
And he got quite a fright,
When he caught an old boot by mistake.

Hazel J Raw



BTO MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION

Have you been thinking of joining the BTO? As part of the BTO/Bird Clubs Partnership CAWOS can gain from every new member recruited. Simply fill in the special Bird Clubs Partnership form available from David Cogger (usual contact details), take out a Direct Debit payment (by which you save £2 anyway) and BTO will make a donation of £5 to CAWOS.

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.

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD - Yacht crew claim Britain's first!

When CAWOS member Roger Barnes encountered an 'unusual' seabird off the Isles of Scilly, he was intrigued and took some photographs. It wasn't until a good month later that he realised the significance of his sighting - if accepted, it will be Britain's first Red-billed Tropicbird.

Our boat, Marg a Rita, left New Quay in Wales on Saturday 2nd June embarking on a five week cruise to Belle-Ile, which lies in the Bay of Biscay to the south of Brittany - a journey of some 1200 miles. Of course we had no idea that en route we would see a magnificent seabird, later identified as a Red-billed Tropicbird. Marg a Rita is a 32 ft bilge-keeled sailing yacht. Our crew for the first leg of our trip was George Legg from New Quay, Martin White from Manchester, who entertained and fed us, Paul Fraser a keen dinghy sailor from Northwich, and myself, the skipper, and the nearest thing on board to a birdwatcher.

We left New Quay in a strengthening wind and instead of sailing directly to the Isles of Scilly put into Fishguard, Pembrokeshire for the night to see out some bad weather. The next day was better and we made Treco and spent three enjoyable days rediscovering the delights of Scilly. We walked around Treco and Bryher, sailed to St. Agnes where we visited the lonely church and the graves of lost fishermen, including many Leggs who might be a long lost line of George's family, and spent a night in Hugh Town on St. Mary's.

We left the island at about 10 am on Thursday 7th June with a fresh northerly wind and a clear sky - in short, ideal sailing conditions for our passage through the Chenal de la Helle to Dournenez in Brittany. By 11 am we were in full sail. George was on the helm, Paul was look-out, Martin was down below preparing cup-a-soup lunch, and I was sitting at the chart table doing the sort of things that skippers do, like trying to work out where we were and what the tide was doing to us. We were about 20 miles south-south-east of Scilly when George called us on deck to view an unusual-looking bird, the like of which he had never seen in all his years at sea. It hovered and flew in large circles around the boat. We thought that on more than one occasion it was considering landing. We have in the past had tired birds land on the boat, rest for a few hours, and then fly on. This one didn't, but it stayed with us for about five minutes, coming close enough for us to get a good look and take some photographs.

The bird had the appearance and mannerisms of a large tern. I knew that it was not a European bird, or to be more precise not in my 1983 edition of Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*. It flew between sea level and 100 ft, occasionally hovering. We noticed immediately the very long tail (longer than the body), but we could not decide whether it comprised one or two streamers. The bird was predominately white and had a large, blood-red bill. There was a conspicuous eye-stripe, black on the wings towards the wing tips. The feet were black.

Whilst the others were watching the bird, I rushed below to change the lens on my camera. As I only have two, a 35 mm and 90 mm, the choice was not difficult! I put on the 90 mm, hoping that the bird would come



close enough for me to get a good shot. I set the shutter speed at 1/1000th of a second, the aperture at 2.8 and pre-set the distance at 30 ft. At the time I was using up some old Kodak 200 ASA film. Fortunately the bird obliged and I managed to get one good shot. I use a Leica M6, which helps in these circumstances as the viewfinder has a greater field of view than the lens, making it easier to track something in flight. The bird left us and we pressed on with the rest of our holiday, enjoying such delights as Basking Shark, Sailfish, porpoises and dolphins, as well as plenty of the 'usual' sea birds.

It was not until my return home to Knutsford more than a month later that the significance of our sighting became apparent. I first phoned Jeff Clarke, a 'tern man', who identified the bird from my description as a Red-billed Tropicbird. I then rushed round to Sheila Blamire, Chairman of the Cheshire & Wirral Ornithological Society, who has seen and photographed Red-billed Tropicbirds in the Galapagos and Tobago. She confirmed the identity and told me that we had had the first-ever sighting of the species in the UK. We are, of course, submitting our record to the British Birds Rarities Committee for verification.

Since then I have read up about tropicbirds and found a couple of good Internet sites with the help of Tony Usher, who runs the Knutsford Ornithological Society web site. The Red-billed Tropicbird is one of three closely related species in a single genus. The wing pattern is diagnostic: Red-billed has both black outer primaries and black primary coverts; White-tailed has black outer primaries but white primary coverts, and also black 'braces'; and Red-tailed looks white-winged in the field. We all consider ourselves very fortunate to have seen such a rare bird - the first for Britain and only the second in Europe.

Roger Barnes, 5 Ruskin Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 6TJ

Tropicbird: dead rare

Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*) is a ground-nester on oceanic islands. The only regular breeding site in the Western Palearctic is on the Cape Verde Islands, where the birds, of the Atlantic race *mesonauta*, are said to be "in alarming decline" (Cramp and Simmons 1977). Birds of the Indian Ocean race *indicus* are regular in the Red Sea, although outside the breeding season they roam the tropical oceans.

Only one individual has previously been seen alive in European waters - a bird 162 km west of Cabo Sardao, Portugal, on 13th August 1988 (Mitchell and Young 1999). However, tideline corpses have occurred on several occasions, with records from France, The Netherlands and the UK. The latter record involved an adult of the race *indicus* washed up at Landguard, Suffolk, in 1993. It was not accepted onto the British List as presumably the corpse had been washed overboard during cleaning of a ship in the nearby Felixstowe container port.

References

Cramp, S. and Simmons, K. 1977. *Birds of the Western Palearctic Vol 1*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
Mitchell, D. and Young, S. 1999. *Rare Birds of Britain and Europe*. New Holland, London.

Note: This article first appeared in *Birdwatch* August 2001. Roger has decided to donate the fee he received from *Birdwatch* equally between RNL and Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

STRANGE MALLARD BEHAVIOUR

A recent visit to Marbury Country Park took us along Marbury Lane to where it crosses the Trent and Mersey Canal. We paused to lean on the rail and watched a Mallard, which seemed to be very active in the canal below us. It was trying unsuccessfully to swallow a fairly large item. After it had a number of attempts it took a breather and we could clearly see what it had been attempting to swallow. It was a mole! The Mallard was holding it at the head end, except the head was missing leaving a mass of raw flesh where the head had been. Now the Mallard changed tack and started to vigorously shake the mole. The mole flew into the water as a piece of flesh came away which the Mallard swallowed. At this point a second Mallard approached and our mole-eating bird joined it. As they swam away the mole, or what remained of it, was left behind.

Had the Mallard caught and killed the mole or was it purely scavenging? Either way we were amazed at the behaviour we had just witnessed. I know Mallards have a varied diet but.....

John Somerville, 17 Forest Drive, Sale, M33 4SR

EXCERPTS FROM CAWOS DISCUSSION FORUM (www.cawos.org)

LEACH'S PETRELS

A young Peregrine has taken to knocking off Leach's Petrels. On Friday 14th September, many Leach's Petrels were moving west just before dusk and many were crossing the sand. This Peregrine took at least six petrels in 20 minutes, but did not appear to be eating them - or at least was only picking out for example the liver and then getting a new bird.

This Monday (17th September) a Peregrine was perched out on the wreck off Hoylake - 2.4 nautical miles offshore. I didn't see any Leach's out there, but perhaps it was waiting!

Jane Turner, 'Hoylake Bird Observatory'

SHELDUCK

On the evening of 11th July 1975 I saw a huge skein of birds flying west to east, about 9.30pm. The following two years, by coincidence, similar skeins were seen flying over and thereafter I started to look out for them - always at about the same time in the evening, between 9.20 and 9.50, always at a tremendous height though they could be heard calling.

I wrote to the late Mr Bill Mulligan, who had a weekly column in the *Manchester Evening News*, and also took ornithology classes, and he said they would be Shelduck flying to Heligoland to moult; returning in the winter. In fact, on 8th October 1985 at 7.46am I saw a huge skein flying east to west. For some years I passed on details of sightings to Mr Barry Shaw of Heald Green (a member of the Manchester Ornithological Society as I recall).

The last occasion I saw the Shelduck was 8th July 1987, then small groups in 1990 and 1992. Since then, none though some years I have watched out for them specially. I should mention the sightings have always been in July. I think over the years there were sightings in other areas, eg over the Pennines, farther north, and I am wondering if the flight path gradually changed, or if they no longer go at all.

Mrs B. Baker, 66 Wellington Road, Timperley, Cheshire, WA15 7RW

BEESTON PEREGRINES

This is an update on the Beeston Peregrines, for which a group of volunteers has held a round-the-clock watch for the past seven years. This year foot-and-mouth disease has prevented access to the site and so the watch could not be held. Observation from the surrounding lanes pinpointed the area of the probable nest and as soon as foot-and-mouth restrictions allowed, a licensed climber investigated the area where most Peregrine activity had been seen. The volunteers were devastated to learn that a dead female Peregrine was found on the nest ledge, but there was no sign of eggs or chicks. The male was still flying around. The dead bird has gone away for an autopsy and the result will be reported in due course in this newsletter. In addition the bird was ringed and so its history should be discovered. It is possible that it was hatched at Beeston because the original female there was not ringed but all chicks have been. Watch this space!

This article was first published in *Chester RSPB Group Newsletter August 2001*

The Buzzard said, "This isn't funny,
Making all this fuss over a 'Honey'
Who's just passing through,
While I'm always on view
Really much better value for money."

Hazel J Raw



HOUSE MARTIN SURVEY

Please return this year's House Martin survey forms as soon as possible to:

Brian Martin, 45 Albert Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, WA4 2PF. Tel: 01925 264251.

Sites to Watch

THE BITTERN IS BACK! - September News from Rostherne

An eye-catching and true headline! - this regular winter resident has been seen already on the Reserve.

The A.W. Boyd Observatory has commanding views across Rostherne Mere and offers really good facilities. The Observatory is a rather non-twitcher place but good birds are still turned up. The Reserve is noted for its water bird populations notably in winter, but woodland species can always be seen and it is these that can be drawn closer, of course. In order to help, we've started up a NEW feeding station and expect that this will bring the birds to the observer and no doubt this coming winter will be a good time to judge success.

Also NEW is that the Observatory will be 'manned' on Wednesday mornings from 10.00am (or earlier by arrangement) and day permits are available for £1 per person. Visitors have long been welcome to visit too when the voluntary wardens are available on Sunday mornings from 9.00am onwards, when it is possible to join accompanied walks to parts of the National Nature Reserve, courtesy of English Nature. Again day permits are available at £1 per person. (Wellingtons essential - please *avoid* 'duck count' days - parking is available on the cricket pitch.) Casual visitors can go at times outside of these 'manned' hours, but you will need to contact either Peter or Dave below. Any interested societies are also welcome to book a guided visit - again please contact Peter or Dave.

For the last few years outgoings at the Observatory have exceeded income and 2001 has been worse than ever due to foot-and-mouth disease restrictions having made access impossible. This year there are 83 permit holders, but it seems that day visitors' payments bridge the gap between loss and profit in any year and half of this year has seen no money coming in from this source at all. By far and away the most costly bills are in respect of the insurance premium and for cleaning and with standard permit fees at only £7pa, we have suffered a loss because fewer birdwatchers are visiting. The upshot is an annual loss of around £200 and we are rapidly reducing the reserves built up over decades.

The place is perfect and so peaceful but still needs to be appreciated by more of us. We need help to make ends meet and seek sponsorship, either that or to generate greater use - please do what you can to help.

Remember: NEW feeding station.
NEW Wednesday morning 'manning'.

Duck count days (up to March 2002) are:

4th November, 16th December, 13th January,
10th February, 3rd March.

For further information contact:

Peter Day, 41 Dorrington Road, Sale Tel: 0161 973 0067
or

Dave Clarke, I Hart Avenue, Sale Tel: 0161 973 7122

Clive Richards, Fairhaven, 13 The Green, Handforth, Cheshire, SK9 3AG

Note: Observatory only, managed by Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Society.



~ **The National Nature Reserve celebrated its
40th anniversary last month too.** ~

Membership News

Welcome to the following new members:

Dr and Mrs N Williams, IR Davidson, RL Groves, Mrs M Parker, SJ O'Connor, R Scally and PJ Stretch. Membership for 2001 now stands at 360, the highest figure ever.

A meeting of Council was held on Sept 20th. The following points emerged:

- Jeff Clarke would write an article for *Bird News* on the relative priorities of conservation and recording in CAWOS' work.
- The proposal to transfer the Society's archives to the County Record Office in Chester was agreed in principle, though points of detail regarding access and the position of sensitive records had still to be finalised.
- A donation of £50 had been received from Chadkirk Natural History Society, which was winding up. The money would be put towards the Computerisation of Records Project.
- **Volunteers were required** to man a stand to be run by CAWOS and the Liverpool Bay Wader Project at the NW Bird Fair at Martin Mere on Nov 17th-18th. Please contact Tony Parker on tonyparker@kawos.org or 01925 726986.
- Good progress was being made on both the computerisation of records and the production of the *Cheshire and Wirral Bird Report 2000*.
- Financial help was given to the Rostherne Observatory after the reports of vandalism and the lack of permit funds due to the closure because of the foot-and-mouth epidemic. See Rostherne article page 20.

**David Cogger, 113 Nantwich Road, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9HD. Tel: 01606 832517
E-mail memsec@kawos.org**

ON MEETINGS AND MEETING PLACES

At our first indoor meeting of the new session on Friday 5th October at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, we asked all who attended to sign in. A few escaped the net but most people did so. Analysing the results gave:

- 24 members who regularly attend at Knutsford meetings, including some from Crewe and Northwich for whom Chester and Knutsford are equidistant.
- 12 members from the Chester, west Cheshire and Wirral areas, including certainly two who attend at Knutsford.
- 24 non-members, including two brave souls from Clitheroe and Chorley.

It has to be said that attendance at this meeting was a little disappointing; the last meeting we held at Chester, at the time of our exhibition three years ago, filled the lecture theatre. Having said that the first meeting of the session is usually the worst attended and there may have been other rival attractions.

From time to time members from the west of the county and Wirral ask why we cannot hold more meetings in that part of the world. This is a perfectly valid point; we understand that driving to Knutsford in the winter months is difficult for many of our members and Council has several times discussed this matter without, however, coming up with any positive ideas. It was rather disappointing, then, to analyse membership and to find that of 94 members living in west Cheshire/Wirral only 12 attended the last meeting. Other members from the area do tell us that they are quite happy to remain members for the sake of the *Bird Report* and *Bird News*, which they consider good value for money. I could also, if I was arguing a case, point out that most of the outdoor events and workshops take place in the west of the county around the Mersey and Dee estuaries.

So I would like to ask a few questions? Why did so few members from the Chester and Wirral areas attend? Is the Grosvenor Museum the ideal venue? It is reasonably priced and very pleasant but how accessible is it? Would a venue, say, between Chester and Ellesmere Port and nearer the motorway network, be easier for many people? At present the Grosvenor are quite

happy to accommodate us every few years or so would they be so willing to do so on a regular annual basis if we tried to hold more meetings in the west of the county?

If we are to spread our venues, there are many logistics problems to be thought about. Where are we to meet? Who will sort out projectors and other equipment needed? Who will look after refreshments and if necessary entertain the speakers? Will those who regularly service the Knutsford meetings, most of whom come from the north-east or centre of the county, be willing to travel further more frequently? Do we run the risk of losing existing regular attendees without gaining new ones? None of these problems are insuperable but we would need to solve them.

Your views would be very welcome either in *Bird News* or to me or any member of Council.

David Cogger, 113 Nantwich Road, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9HD. Tel: 01606 832517

E-mail memsec@cawos.org

CAWOS PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Open to members only and restricted to those photos taken in 2001

Closing date Saturday 2nd February 2002

There will be three categories which can be either slides or prints:-

1. **Foreign**
2. **Great Britain**
3. **Humorous** - all entries should be accompanied by an appropriate caption. There will be equal weighting regarding the originality and humour of the caption and the quality of the photograph.



Make sure each entry is clearly marked with the following:-

1. your name
2. where the photo was taken and approximate date
3. the species depicted

Please include your address and contact number with your entry. There will be a fee of 25p per entry with a prize of £5 awarded to the winner of each section. Winners and runners-up will be shown at the March AGM/meeting and reported in *Bird News*.

If you want your entries to be returned by post please enclose an appropriate sae. We will take the utmost care of your photos but wish to point out that we cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage. If you require further details please contact Richard on 01625 262946.

Please hand or send your entries to:-

Richard Gabb, 72 Chester Road, Poynton, Cheshire, SK12 1HA

BRITISH BIRDS SUBSCRIPTION

Enclosed with this copy of *Bird News* is a leaflet offering members a substantial discount in the price of a subscription to *British Birds*. Please send the form direct to the address given if you are interested.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

COMPUTERISATION OF CHESHIRE & WIRRAL ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS

As many of you are probably aware, a team of CAWOS members has undertaken a project to prepare for the computerisation of future and eventually past Cheshire & Wirral bird records. The primary objective is to facilitate the future use of these ornithological records for appropriate scientific purposes. As a by-product, it will greatly simplify the process of data preparation for the writing of the annual *Bird Report*. Anyone who has spent days cutting, rearranging and finally pasting thousands of paper strips, each with an individual record on it, will immediately see the value in this!

The Derbyshire Ornithological Society went through this process a few years ago and has been extremely helpful by giving us the programme and database they designed, which we have adapted to our requirements. In return we will make available to them the automatic electronic input programme and updated species lists that we have developed.

Our current priority is to get all 2001 records into the database in time for the compilation of the 2001 *Cheshire and Wirral Bird Report*. Once we have the system running smoothly we will start the process of adding historical data currently held electronically by many members and contributing organisations. Eventually, time and funding permitting, we hope to start entering some of the paper data currently lying in the Grosvenor Museum in Chester.

In the next few weeks you will receive a special posting from CAWOS.

This will include:

1. Guidelines to help those who wish to make electronic submissions.
2. The *Cheshire & Wirral Gazetteer* to enable accurate recording of sites.
3. Record forms for those who prefer to stay paper-based - restyled for easier entry.
4. Rarity forms - to be used for both national and county rarities.
5. Individual copyright forms which we need to ask you to sign and return stating that you are the copyright owner of your records and that you are willing to grant CAWOS permission to make use of your records. However if you submit records on behalf of a society you will require a Group/Organisation form to sign and return to us, in which case please contact David Cogger.
6. Membership renewal information will also be included.

Thank you for your help and support for this important project.

Jane Turner, on behalf of the Database Team

Who's who in the Database Team:

Sheila Blamire	Chairman
Geoff Blamire	Programme Developer
Frank Linley	Database Trainer and Troubleshooter
Jane Turner	Project Coordinator
Dave Walters	Database Manager
David Cogger	
Steve McWilliam	
Phil Oddy	
Tony Parker	

BIRD REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

As part of the scheme to computerise our records we are writing not only to all our members (see separate notice) but also to those people who are not members of CAWOS but who regularly contribute to the *Bird Report*. Unfortunately we do not have addresses for many of them. Can you help? Some submit their records through SECOS or Nantwich Natural History Society, and I have contacted those organisations to ask for their addresses. However there are quite a few remaining.

Contributors whose addresses are unknown:

C Chatterley R Dunford MS Garner P Hilton K Lawson J Moorcroft R Norweb
C Purvis P Rees NJ Smith R Smith RA Smith J White R Wilkinson

If you know of any of these contributors could you please ask them to leave their address on e-mail, by phone (facility for leaving messages available) or to write to me. Contact details as below.

I am aware that in the case of common surnames precise identification may prove difficult!

Also, if you know of anyone *who is submitting records for the first time* and is not a CAWOS member, please ask them to get in touch. Thank you.

**David Cogger, 113 Nantwich Road, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9HD. Tel: 01606 832517
E-mail memsec@cawos.org**

Outdoor Programme

HIGH TIDE BIRDWATCH - remaining dates for 2001

Venue: Riverbank Road car park, Lower Heswall, Wirral

Saturday 17th November 10:45am (HW 12:19, 9.6m)

Venue: Banks Road Car Park, Lower Heswall, Wirral

Saturday 15th December 8:45am (HW 11:21, 9.4m)

Saturday 16th December 9:00am (HW 12:01, 9.3m)

2002 dates, times & tides to be confirmed

Further information: Jeff Clarke tel: 0151 423 4275 or contact Wirral Country Park 0151 648 4371/3884 or RSPB 0151 336 7681

Indoor Programme

These meetings will be held in the Cranford Suite, Civic Centre, Knutsford starting at 7:45pm. Entrance fee of £1.00 to members and £2.00 for non-members, except the AGM which will be free.

7th Dec 'KOOKABURRAS, CURRAWONGS & CROCODILES' by Keith Offord

There can be few parts of the world which feel so far removed from us as Australia, not only in terms of distance but also in terms of the flora and fauna. This presentation takes the audience on a memorable journey through some of the most exciting and remote parts, from the temperate hills of New South Wales to the steamy rainforests of Queensland and then on to the north, visiting the immense Kakadu National Park, and finally ending up in the spectacular gorges of the Kimberley. The wildlife is similarly varied with outrageously plumed parrots, impossibly cryptic frogmouths and, lurking in the still waters of the north, are some of the biggest crocodiles in the world. Many parts of Australia have retained a new, undiscovered feel and host an extraordinary range of wildlife from the breathtaking to the bizarre. This talk, illustrated with a wealth of photographs, blends spectacular scenery with fascinating insights into the lives of some of these amazing creatures.

4th Jan 'POLICE AND WILDLIFE' by Mike Wellman

In 1992 the forward-thinking Cheshire Constabulary appointed Mike Wellman to the role of the first full-time Wildlife and Environment Officer in Great Britain. Today, as a result of Mike's campaigning, every police force in the country now has a Wildlife Liaison Officer. Mike says, "Policing wildlife in Cheshire has been a challenge with the criminals trying every trick in the book to exploit wildlife for illegal means and profit. The incidents of cruelty have been horrendous and wildlife crime is now second only to drugs, with vast sums of money made in the illegal trade of some of the world's most endangered species". Mike's talk will highlight some of the varied work of a Wildlife and Environment Officer in a modern police force, and emphasise the role that the public can play in the fight against wildlife crime.

1st Feb 'SRI LANKA: THE TEARDROP OF INDIA' by Tim Loseby

Tonight Tim Loseby, a renowned ornithological photographer based near Maidstone, will take us on a journey through the island of two monsoons which is Sri Lanka. Palm-fringed coasts and lagoons, tropical rainforests, mountainous tea estates and the remains of ancient cultures all provide beautiful and varied habitats. So close yet so different from India it boasts an impressive list of wildlife including over twenty endemic species of birds.

1st Mar AGM & MEMBERS' SLIDES

Following the AGM there will be updates on various projects undertaken throughout the year. The evening will conclude with the entries and winners of the Annual CAWOS Photographic Competition.



NOVEMBER

- 1 CADOS 'BIRDS AND MIGRATION' by Jeff Clarke
- 2 **CAWOS** '**SAVING SCOTERS: Conservation of Common Scoters**' by **Dr Baz Hughes**
- 4 CRSPB Anglesey & Tunnickliffe Gallery by coach - contact Margaret Hough 01829 770567
- 9 SECOS 'SMILING COAST (THE GAMBIA)' by Keith Offord
- 9 MCOS 'BIRDQUEST TO AUSTRALIA' by Braydon Holt
- 11 KOS Old Moor Wetland Centre, near Barnsley, meet at Sessions House at 8:30am
- 11 WGOS Slimbridge WWT Reserve by coach departing at 7:30am - ring for details
- 11 MCOS Leighton Moss/Woodwell - ring Mike Hems 01606 888525 for details
- 12 SRSPB 'ISLAY MAGIC' by Gordon Yates
- 13 MRSPB 'BIRDS OF PREY' by Nick Williams
- 13 ADNHS 'BEYOND THE GARDEN HEDGE' by Margaret McCormack
- 14 HO 'BIRDS BY CHARACTER' by Jeff Clarke
- 15 NNHS 'A NIGHT ON THE TILES' by Jeff Clarke
- 16 NCRSPB 'BIRDING IN LESBOS' by Steve Knell
- 16 MRSPB 'OUR LOCAL WILDLIFE' by David Tolliday - ring for venue details and tickets
- 17 **High Tide Birdwatch, Riverbank Rd car park, Lower Heswall - 10:45am (HT 12:19, 9.6m)**
- 17 CADOS Cheshire Birding, contact: Chris Done 01928 724994
- 17-18 NW BIRD FAIR, MARTIN MERE - visit the CAWOS stand
- 18 NCRSPB North Wales coast, meet at Llanfairfechan car park (SH 679755) at 10:00am
- 18 LOG Field trip to be arranged
- 18 SECOS Old Moor Wetland Centre, Barnsley, ring for details
- 18 MRSPB Martin Mere/NW Bird Fair - ring Peter Kirk 01625 829119 for details
- 21 CRSPB 'ANTARCTIC ISLANDS' by Valerie McFarland
- 23 KOS 'A NIGHT ON THE TILES' by Jeff Clarke
- 27 HO 'CHESHIRE FOLKLORE' by Ann Metcalfe
- 30 LOG 'A CELEBRATION OF BIRDS' by Gordon Yates
- 30 WGOS 'TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO' by Valerie McFarland
- 30-2 MCOS Solway Weekend - ring Les Goulding 01925 265578 for details

DECEMBER

- 2 CRSPB Sunderland Point - ring Andy Arthur 01244 315549 for details
6 CADOS 'AUSTRALIA' by Don Coan
7 **CWOS** '**KOOKABURRAS, CURRAWONGS AND CROCODILES**' by Keith Offord
8 NCRSPB Martin Mere/Marshside, meet at Martin Mere car park at 9:30am
9 KOS Marshside/Martin Mere, meet at Sessions House at 9:00am
9 LOG Moore, contact Peter Tonge 01606 891274
9 SRSPB Parkgate, the Wirral, meet at the Old Baths car park at 10:00am
9 SECOS Marton Mere and Pilling, ring for details
10 SRSPB 'WILD BRITAIN' by Geoff Simpson
11 HO 'TRAVELS IN 2001 AND BEFORE' by Hilda Summersgill
11 MRSPB 'A MOMENT IN TIME' by Andy Harmer
12 HO 'SEABIRD SUMMER' & 'BIRDS OF THE PENNINE FOREST' by Gordon Yates
12 CRSPB MEMBERS' EVENING
14 LOG CHRISTMAS PARTY & SPEAKER
14 WGOS 'OWLS OF THE WORLD' by Michael Leach
14 SECOS 'EILAT' by Dr John Raines
14 MCOS 'TEXAS - 5 STAR BIRDING IN THE LONE STATE' by Paul Rogers
15 HO Morning walk at Marbury Mere - contact Maureen Carter 0161 973 9692
15 **High Tide Birdwatch, Banks Rd car park, Lower Heswall - 8:45am (HT 11:21, 9.4m)**
16 **High Tide Birdwatch, Banks Rd car park, Lower Heswall - 9:00am (HT 12:01, 9.3m)**
16 CADOS Marshside, contact: Peter Hale 01244 341074
20 KOS CHRISTMAS PARTY
20 NNHS MEMBERS' NIGHT with refreshments

JANUARY

- 3 CADOS 'TRINIDAD & TOBAGO' by Valerie McFarland
4 **CWOS** '**POLICE AND WILDLIFE**' by Mike Wellman
5-6 NNHS Open Day at all hides - Annual Winter Survey
6 CRSPB Cheshire and Shropshire Meres - ring Howard Sherman 01244 344117 for details
8 ADNHS 'THE FASCINATION OF BIRDS' by Rev Hugh Linn
8 MRSPB 'LINDOW COMMON' by Paul Hughes
9 HO 'BIRDS OF INDIA' by Mark Hamblin
11 SECOS 'BIRDS OF THE WHITE PEAK' by John Power
11 MCOS 'WILD INDIA' by Mark Hamblin
12 CADOS North Wales Coast, contact: Dave King 0151 327 7212
13 KOS Tatton Park, meet at Dog Lodge layby at 9:00am
13 WGOS Pennington Flash by car, meet at the Guild at 8:30am or 9:15am at Pennington
13 SECOS Slimbridge, ring for details
13 MRSPB Bollin Valley - ring Peter Kirk 01625 829119 for details
14 SRSPB 'TAYMYR - THE ENDLESS DAY' by Braydon Holt
16 CRSPB 'THE BARN OWL' by Colin Shawyer
17 NNHS 'BADGERS' by Keith Musgrave
17-25 MCOS Goa, India - fully booked
19 ADNHS New Year Dinner - ring for details
22 ADNHS 'STONES FROM CARNAC TO CALLANISH' by Vincent Pedley
25 KOS 'LAND OF THE KIWIS' by Sheila Blamire
25 WGOS 'ISLAY MAGIC' by Gordon Yates
27 HO Leighton Moss by coach - ring for details

FEBRUARY

- 1 **CWOS** '**SRI LANKA: THE TEARDROP OF INDIA**' by Tim Loseby
3 CADOS Tregaron, contact: Ron Shewring 0151-339-0696
3 CRSPB Seaforth and Marshside - ring Brian Webster 01244 851026 for details
7 CADOS 'ETHIOPIA' by Roger Wilkinson
8 SECOS 'FAIR ISLE' by Tim Melling
8 MCOS 'THIS BLESSED PLOT' by Andy Harmer

- 10 MCOS Doxey Marsh/Croxall Pool - ring Paul Grimmett 01925 268770 for details
 11 SRSPB 'BIRD MIGRATION - THE GREAT EASTERN FLYWAY' by Mike McKavett
 12 ADNHS 'LINDOW COMMON' by Paul Hughes
 12 MRSPB 'BIRDS OF THE BULGARIAN BLACK SEA COAST' by John Roberts
 13 HO 'FROM THREE SISTERS TO SEVEN SISTERS' by Charlie Owen
 17 MRSPB Carsington Water - ring Philip Widdows 01625 262597 for details
 20 CRSPB 'ALASKA' by Ian Higginson
 21 NNHS 'THE UNIQUE LEMURS OF MADAGASCAR' by Kath Edwards
 22 KOS 'THE MAGIC OF SWANS' by David Cummings
 22 WGOS '(NORTH) RONA - ISLAND ADVENTURE' by John Lawton Roberts
 23 MRSPB Bollin Valley - ring Peter Kirk 01625 829119 for details
 23-24 CADOS Fife Coast Weekend, contact: Don Pawlett 01244 677477
 26 ADNHS 'GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE' by Noel Leathers
 tbc KOS Connah's Quay, details to be confirmed
 tbc WGOS Wirral by car, details to be confirmed
 tbc SECOS Porthmadoc, details to be confirmed

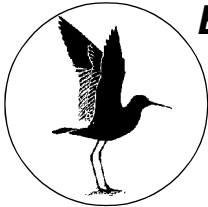
MARCH

- 1 **CAWOS AGM, PROJECT UPDATES & PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION RESULTS**
 1-3 SECOS Dumfries & Galloway weekend, ring for details
 3 CRSPB Frodsham and Weaver Bend - ring David Wright 01829 751662 for details
 7 CADOS AGM & MEMBERS' EVENING
 8 SECOS 'BIRDS ON RUSSIAN TUNDRA' Charlie Ligget
 8 MCOS 'LOOK NORTH - FROM ANGLESEY TO THE ARCTIC' by Rev Hugh Linn
 10 WGOS Old Moor Wetland Centre & Fairburn Ings by coach - ring for details
 11 SRSPB 'AUSTRALIAN WALKABOUT' by Tom Lawson
 12 ADNHS 'COASTAL PLANTS OF LANCASHIRE' by Peter Gately
 12 MRSPB 'BITTERNS AND BEARDED TITS' by John Wilson
 13 HO 'FABULOUS FLORIDA' by Mike Wilkes
 16 CADOS Leighton Moss, contact: Dave Goff 01244 345043
 17 KOS Seaforth Reserve, followed by Frodsham if time, meet at Sessions House at 9:00am
 17 SRSPB Sandwell Valley, West Midlands by coach - ring for details
 17 HO Fairburn Ings by coach - ring for details
 17 MCOS World's End - ring Paul Kenyon 01606 77960 for details
 17 MRSPB Marshside RSPB Reserve - ring Tricia Thompson 01625 526546 for details
 20 CRSPB 'BIRDS OF THE WHITE PEAK' by John Power
 21 NNHS 'THE 13th EARL OF DERBY AND THE KNOWSLEY MENAGERIE' by Steve Woolfall
 22 KOS 'BIRDS OF A BRISBANE GARDEN' by Steve Woolfall
 22 WGOS 'TANZANIAN SPECTACULAR' by Mike Wilkes
 24 SECOS Wigan & Pennington Flashes, ring for details

AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

- ADNHS Altrincham & Dist. Natural History Society, mtgs Hale Methodist Church Hall 7.30pm, Sec. Vincent Pedley 0161 748 4717
 CADOS Chester & Dist. Ornithological Soc, mtgs Caldy Valley Community Centre 7.30pm, Prog. Sec. Nick French 01978 856522
 CAWOS Cheshire & Wirral Ornithological Society, mtgs Knutsford Civic Centre 7.45pm, contact Sheila Blamire 01565 830168
 CRSPB Chester RSPB Group, mtgs St Mary's Centre, Chester 7:30pm. Prog. Sec. Rob Adams 01829 270654
 HO Hale Ornithologists, mtgs St Peter's Assembly Rooms, 7:45pm, Prog. Sec. Barbara Vercambre 0161 980 8362
 HPRSPB High Peak RSPB Members' Group contact John Durell 0161 427 3018, Ken Hodgson 0161 427 6828
 KOS Knutsford Ornithological Society, mtgs St John's Church Centre 7.45pm, contact Roy Bircumshaw 01565 634193
 LOG Lymm Ornithological Group, mtgs Lymm Village Hall 8.00pm, Prog. Sec. Colin Antrobus 01925 635337
 MCOS Mid-Cheshire Ornithological Society, mtgs Hartford Village Hall 8:00pm, contact Paul Kenyon 01606 77960
 MRSPB Macclesfield RSPB Members' Group, mtgs Senior Citizens' Hall 7.45pm, contact Peter Kirk 01625 829119
 NCRSPB North Cheshire RSPB Members' Group, mtgs Appleton Parish Hall, Appleton, Mem. Sec. Carol Davidson 01925 635967
 NNHS Nantwich Natural History Society, mtgs The Gables at 7:30pm, Sec. Mike Holmes 01270 216890, mike@uimprove.com
 SECOS South-east Cheshire Ornithological Society, mtgs St Peter's Church Hall, Elworth, Sandbach 7.30pm, Sec. Colin Lythgoe 01270 582642
 SRSPB Stockport RSPB Members' Group, mtgs Stockport College, Theatre A 7:30pm, contact Peter Hugo 0161 485 4024
 WGOS Wilmslow Guild Ornithological Society, mtgs Wilmslow Guild HQ 7.45pm, Prog. Sec. Stephanie Harrison 0161 428 5462

Will affiliated societies, who wish to advertise meetings of relevance to CAWOS, please send their programme to:- **Sheila Blamire, Woodruff Cottage, Clamhunger Lane, Mere, WA16 6QG Tel: 01565 830168**



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