

The Buzzard

**Shropshire
Ornithological Society's
quarterly magazine**



No. 247

Spring 2017

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Bird Notes	Jim Almond

Table of Contents

Society Officers and Officials	1
Welcome to our new members	3
Annual general meetings	3
Letter to the editor	5
Your chance to get involved	6
Birds of Shropshire: later this year	7
Field Trip Report to Pennington Flash	8
World Bird List adopted by British Ornithologists Union	9
Spotted Flycatcher	10
Curlew appeal	11
Swift Bricks – just like busses	13
BTO Newsletter	15
Bird Notes	18
Notes for contributors	22
Upcoming field trips	23
Indoor meetings	23

Welcome to our new members

A very warm welcome to the following new members of the Society:

Alford	Mr & Mrs J	Shrewsbury
Steggles	M/s K	Newcastle
Barrett	Mr & Mrs J	Bellan Lane
Birks	Miss G	Petton
Fallon	Mr M	Dawley
Edie	Mr A	Clunton
Williams	Mr & Mrs A	Brookside
Constable	Mr & Mrs P	Bridgnorth
Bell	Mr C	Shrewsbury
Jennings	Mr P	Choulton

Please note that names and addresses are held on computer and anyone who objects should contact the Membership Secretary.

**Copy deadline for the Summer 2017 issue is:
1 April 2017**

Annual general meetings

SHROPSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 62nd AGM of the Society will be held on Wednesday, 5 April 2017, at Bayston Hill Memorial Hall at 7.15pm, prior to the Indoor Meeting.

Nominations for Officers and Management Committee Members must be made in writing to the Secretary, by any two Members of the Society, at least 14 days prior to the AGM.

Any items notified to the Secretary for inclusion on the AGM Agenda are to be in accordance with Rule 7 of the Constitution.

***Helen J Griffiths
Hon Secretary
25 January 2017***

SHROPSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY 2005

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 5 April 2017

Bayston Hill Memorial Hall (immediately following the Annual General Meeting of Shropshire Ornithological Society)

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 April 2016.
3. Matters Arising.
4. Presentation and Approval of the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016.
5. Appointment of Directors.
 - a. Mr. C.J. Whittles, Mr. P.G. Deans and Mr. J. Almond retire by rotation and being eligible offer themselves for re-election.
 - b. Mrs. A.P. Andrews having been co-opted and appointed on 27 July 2016 is to be confirmed as a Director.
 - c. Mrs. J.L. Rickard and Mr. T. Devanney having been co-opted on 27 July 2016 and appointed on 25 January 2017 are to be confirmed as Directors.
6. Appointment of Independent Examiner.
7. Any Other Business.

BRIAN ANDREWS - Company Secretary

Letter to the editor

First reports of nesting Peregrine?

Dear Editor,

I refer to the article on pages 15/16 of the last issue, entitled, "Shropshire Peregrine Nest Site to be demolished" - specifically, reference to the "early days of Peregrines nesting in the county (it began in 1987...)"

This is not correct. The first report on record of peregrines nesting in Shropshire was made in December 1970, by Eric Hardy, the eminent ornithologist, in an article in the Shropshire Magazine, entitled "The return of the Peregrine", in which he refers to the successful nesting of a pair earlier that year four of five miles from Minsterley. Hardy wrote regular articles about Shropshire and Welsh wildlife which were published in the Shropshire magazine from to time and the article referring to peregrines nesting near Minsterley is typical.

There is some corroboration in the fact that a pair of peregrines have continued to nest in the Minsterley area since at least 1990, and probably earlier. They could well be descendants of the birds reported by Hardy in 1970.

The above was discovered during my research for the forthcoming book on Shropshire Birds and is included in the species account for the Peregrine Falcon.

Regards
John Turner
Shropshire Peregrine Group

Your chance to get involved

Survey Work in the 2017 Breeding Season

Red Grouse Counts

SOS members are wanted to help with counts of Red Grouse on The Long Mynd, around sunset on every Thursday evening between 30 March and 4 May, please. This will update the results of previous annual counts. The results help the National Trust's management of the heathland for this *Amber List* species.

People who have helped before will receive a report of the results, and will be contacted nearer the time. New helpers are invited to a project briefing at 7.30pm on Thursday, 23 March 2017 at the National Trust's Chalet Pavilion in Carding Mill Valley. It's your chance to get close-up views of this wonderful bird, and see other moorland specialities and birds of prey. Please help. For further information see the website www.shropshirebirds.com, or contact Andrew Perry

Andrew.Perry@nationaltrust.org.uk 01694 725005, mobile 07425 144597

Community Wildlife Groups

There are now eight Community Wildlife Groups. Those covering the Upper Onny, Upper Clun, Kemp Valley, Clee Hill, Strettons area and Wenlock Edge have been joined by two new ones, in the Rea/Hope Valleys, and Camlad Valley areas, being developed through the Stiperstones & Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme. All eight Groups will be running bird surveys during 2017, mostly concentrating on monitoring Lapwing, Curlew and a number of other threatened species. This usually involves three half-days, around 1 April, 1 May and mid June.



The Strettons area CWG and SOS Church Stretton Branch are starting a similar survey this year, covering an area east of Church Stretton, and a new CWG in the north-west, covering the Three parishes of Weston Rhyn, St Martin's and Gobowen and the area eastwards towards Ellesmere, is also starting a Curlew and Lapwing survey. Letters describing the plans in these

new areas giving details of the launch meetings for SOS members in and around the survey areas are included with this issue of The Buzzard

The results are used to promote local conservation.

It's easy ... simple instructions are provided, and fieldwork training is available for anyone who wants it.

SOS members can make an important contribution to the conservation of these birds, while enjoying their hobby in superb countryside. All welcome. For further information, see the website www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk

Shropshire Raptor Study Group

Membership is restricted to people who will go out and actively look for birds of prey, particularly Hobby, Merlin, Red Kite and Goshawk. We co-operate with, but do not duplicate, the work of the Peregrine and Barn Owl Groups.

Birders who have an interest in monitoring and conserving birds of prey, and have the skill and willingness to undertake the necessary fieldwork, are welcome to apply. For further information see the website www.shropshirebirds.com, or contact the Convenor, Leo Smith (01694 720296, leo@leosmith.org.uk).

If anyone knows of a nest site of any of the target species, or finds one in future, we would be grateful for details, in the strictest confidence, please.

Birds of Shropshire: later this year

William Edmund Beckwith's *Birds of Shropshire*

My available time is currently dominated by preparing to publish a book containing the bird work written by William E Beckwith (1844-1892), the leading ornithologist of the nineteenth century. He died young before being able to publish his *Birds of Shropshire*. The book will put all his work between two covers for the first time and discuss his life, family (he did not marry), work and times in as much detail as I can glean. The book will appear in the autumn this year.

John Tucker

Field Trip Report to Pennington Flash

Sunday, 11 December 2016

A small group of four people arrived at Pennington Flash, a country park situated at Leigh near Wigan. The weather proved to be dry but there was quite a cold wind blowing which made itself felt in exposed areas. After ensuring no more people were going to arrive, and having had a welcome bacon butty(!), the group started to walk anti-clockwise around the area where various hides are located.

Initially the Flash itself was inspected, a large area of open water where at the far end there is a yacht club, with a few hardy souls out enjoying themselves. Bird-wise, it proved to be Coot heaven with a goodly number about, followed by Black-headed Gulls, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Canada Goose in the area by the car park, plus at least three pairs of Goldeneye, a welcome winter visitor. Further round at Ramsdale's Flash, there were quite a few Great Crested Grebe, and although missed by the group, amongst these birds was a Long-tailed Duck; a pity to have missed it, but easily done with their plumage looking much the same during the winter period. Wigeon, Teal, Grey Heron, Carrion Crow, Cormorant were also noted, plus Mute Swan.

At Kidney Pool, via a hide, really good views of a perched Sparrowhawk were noted. It was a real treat to actually study this raptor which of course is usually seen at great speed during a raid on small birds. After the Sparrowhawk flew off, the group resumed their walk. Along the path the group saw Blackbird, Blue Tit, Great Tit and Chaffinch amongst the trees.

Continuing the walk there was stretches when few birds were seen, but at the Teal Scrape, from a hide, a number of Goosander were noted looking in very fine plumage, plus some Gadwall, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Moorhen, Lapwing, Little Grebe, Shoveler and Wigeon. A further walk took the group to the feeding station hide. This is probably, in the writer's opinion, one of the best around. Initially, at least six Stock Doves were busy feeding in the company of about eight Grey Squirrel, but as the squirrels started to move off, other birds started to gain the confidence to make an appearance. This included a couple of pairs of Bullfinch looking lovely and bright in the grey weather conditions, then a Nuthatch quickly came through but didn't stay long. Coal Tit, Great Tit, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Dunnock, Greenfinch, a couple of Jay, and then probably the bird of the day, at least three Willow Tit flashed in and out to feed. It was really great to see this rarely seen bird.

Then the group went into the last hide overlooking the Pengy's Pond. To the right hand side there was another feeding station and Long-tailed Tits were noted in the trees, and then although mistaken as a Moorhen initially, a Water

Rail came out of the bushes and the group were able to get really good views of this elusive bird. Other birds seen included Reed Bunting, Woodpigeon, and Robin. Then to the left of the hide a Kingfisher was seen perched in a shrub looking really good. It then flew around the pond again perching but this time in the red branches of a large *Cornus* shrub. The contrast in colour between the bird and shrub was really magnificent. It then flew further around the pond obviously changing position frequently in order to get a better chance at feeding well.

After a further viewing over the main Flash, hoping to see a reported Scaup, unsuccessfully, the group decided that the cold was getting the better of them, so after a really successful day with a list of at least 42 birds, everyone departed for home and warmth.

Sue Brealey

World Bird List adopted by British Ornithologists Union

The British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) will adopt the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) World Bird List from 1 January 2018. The decision was one of close debate, the outcome requiring the chair's casting vote. Explaining his thinking Andrew Harrop reasoned that moving to the IOC World Bird List would be the most likely way of achieving a more unified global taxonomy. This move, he argued, would be more in keeping with the BOU's previous approach to taxonomy, and for many would demonstrate greater scientific credibility.

This decision to adopt IOC taxonomy is expected to increase the total number of species recorded in Britain as a number of 'splits' included in the IOC list are not recognised by BOU.



Do you think we should adopt the Robin as the national bird?

To petition for a parliamentary debate you can add your name online:
<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/166442>

Spotted Flycatcher

Spotted Flycatchers have nested in the same ornamental brickwork star in our Victorian Ludlow house in most years from 1973 to 1995.

Since then, they have been irregular nesters, 2004 being the last year that they raised a successful brood.

I was delighted last year (2016) when a pair arrived on the traditional date, 25 May, and immediately started setting up residence, by building a nest in the same star feature, after an absence of 12 years. This *nesting* date seems very constant over the whole 40-odd years, but it's worth recording, that I have frequently found this species up to 10 days earlier, catching mayflies and stoneflies in abundance on their first arrival to the UK, to replenish their reserves and prepare them for breeding. Only when they are fit for breeding do they appear at the nesting site.

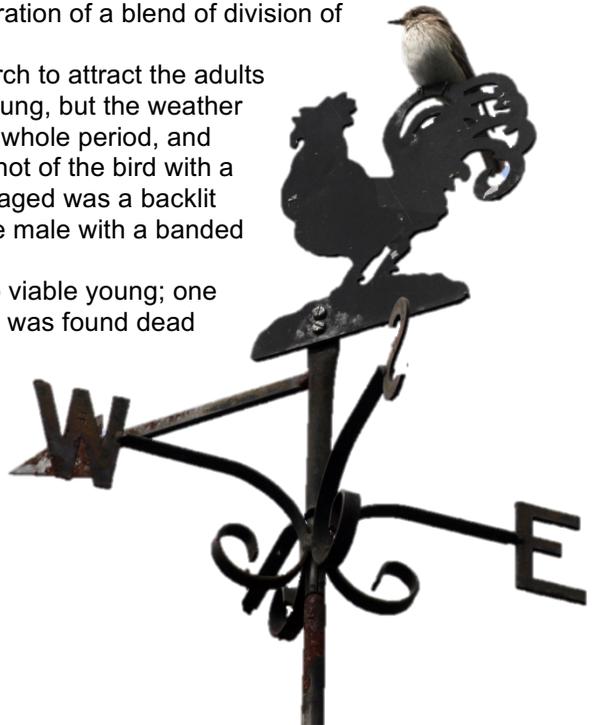
The nest was built over three days by the female alone, but with the male in close attendance in a supervisory capacity. A good deal of encouragement, even bribery was involved, where the male would continually catch desirable flies and wait for his mate to complete the next stage of construction with the material she had just gathered, before handing over the prize.

It was an entertaining demonstration of a blend of division of labour and coercion.

I had set up a perfect photo perch to attract the adults with prey when feeding their young, but the weather was entirely against me for the whole period, and instead of getting my desired shot of the bird with a Blue butterfly in beak, all I managed was a backlit grab-shot one dismal day of the male with a banded demoiselle.

The pair eventually fledged two viable young; one other died on fledging, and one was found dead in the nest along with a sterile egg. It was, overall, a qualified success, and a delight to observe after their absence from our garden for so many years.

Gareth Thomas



Curlew appeal

The UK has an estimated 28% of the European breeding population, more in winter, and an estimated 19-27% of the world population. Curlew was added

“Curlew is probably the highest priority for bird conservation in the UK”

to the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern a year ago because of a decline of 62% since the 1960s.



Here in Shropshire, the population has declined by an estimated 77% in only 20 years, from around 700 pairs in 1990 to around 160 pairs in the recent Atlas period. Monitoring carried out by Community Wildlife Groups shows that numbers are still going down. Nest monitoring by the Stiperstones-Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) in the county hotspot, with a quarter of the breeding pairs, found another disastrous breeding season in 2016. Immediate conservation action is vital if the evocative bubbling song

of the Curlew is not to be lost from the county forever. National conservation organisations have launched their own Curlew appeals, but they do not intend to spend any of the proceeds here. The fate of the local population is in the hands of Shropshire's people. SOS is committed to supporting Curlew conservation, has supported the LPS financially over the last two years, and is exploring whether to provide further support in 2017. SOS members can help save Shropshire's Curlews.

Firstly, members can help monitor the population by taking on a survey square for one of several Community Wildlife Groups, or surveying in an area where monitoring has not yet started.

See “Your chance to get involved” on p6.

There may also be opportunities for people who have the patience and can give the time to help locate nesting territories.

Secondly, funds are needed to pay for nest finding and protection, the essential first step for any conservation action.

The Upper Onny Wildlife Group (UOWG) raised over £2500 last year to help with this, with the help and support of SOS members. Thank you very much to everyone who contributed. Halting and reversing the decline is a long term project, which must start with working with landowners, finding and protecting nests and monitoring the behaviour of chicks through radio-tagging. Expert help must be bought in to do most of this, and make maximum benefit of volunteers' time. The LPS finishes after one more breeding season, so we need to establish a means of carrying on with this important work.

The UOWG appeal is therefore included again in this Buzzard mailing. It is also being supported by The National Trust (Carding Mill Valley and the Long Mynd), and Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Further information about the appeal can be found on the UOWG section of the Community Wildlife Groups website www.shropscwgs.org.uk/?page_id=3373

Members can make one-off donations, but, as reversing the decline is a long term project, donors are encouraged to give through multi-annual standing orders. Using the money raised in the appeal, and the level of commitment shown by CWG members monitoring 76 tetrads, applications will be made to various Trusts to double our money.

The Appeal leaflet explains how to make your donation.

Please give generously to support long term action to reverse the decline of one of our most iconic local breeding species.

If you do donate, please make sure you notify the UOWG Treasurer, Janet Poynton, jan.56poynton@outlook.com so we can keep you informed of progress and action.

If anyone wants to help with monitoring work by the various Community Wildlife Groups, or locating nest sites, or has any ideas about who we can approach for funding or how we can raise more money for Curlew conservation, please let me know.

Leo Smith
01694 720296 (leo@leosmith.org.uk)

Swift Bricks – just like busses

takes the place of
a single brick

the coloured face blends in
to the surrounding bricks

built in cavity tray detail

protects against water ingress

easy to
install

can be fitted quickly
during bricklaying

29 x 65 mm
opening obround

leading into a recessed
entry tunnel.

413cm² of floor area

gives the maximum habitable living
space within the wall construction

integral

nest concave

provides ideal starting
point for nest building

Since the well known swift mitigation project in Fulbourn, Cambridgeshire where a colony of 70 pairs of swifts was successfully retained when the 1960s houses they were nesting in were rebuilt by the local district council, swift conservation volunteers have been waiting for a solution that can - and will - be used by developers. With the thousands of new houses that are being built to exacting standards that exclude wildlife, together with the inexorable updating of current housing stock to exclude anything but humans, swifts and other house dependent species are facing a very difficult future. At last there is some recognition that we must do something on a big scale to help.

Many of us do think about swifts, martins, bats and all the insects that use our houses and time building work appropriately and also put up suitable boxes. However with swift numbers down by around 45% in 20 years and continuing to decline at around 3% a year, larger scale solutions are also needed. In the last six months two such products have been launched.

swift conservation volunteers have been waiting for a solution that can - and will - be used by developers

Firstly, in September 2016 the Manthorpe brick was launched. This was designed by the RSPB in conjunction with Barratts Homes and Manthorpe Building Products. Action for Swifts was also involved – see <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.co.uk/2016/08/the-manthorpe-swift-brick-back-story.html>.

The press releases for the brick can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/manthorpe-brick> and it explains the need to design something that could be quickly and easily incorporated by the bricklayers. This injection moulded brick is the result and 900 are being installed in the new Kingsbrook development that is being built outside Aylesbury. Although swift bricks have not been made from plastic before, this brick has been carefully designed and meets all the criteria for an ideal nest site.



The second product is the Cambridge Swift System which is made by C J Wildlife.

Again Action for Swifts has been involved with this design and you can see the full story at <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.co.uk/2017/01/cj-commercialises-cambridge-swift-box.html> .

Externally the swift brick is unobtrusive but then spans the cavity to locate the actual Woodstone nest box in the roof space.



These swift nest sites are to be installed in large numbers at the Nansledan development outside Newquay which is being developed by the Duchy of Cornwall. It is expected that swift bricks will be part of other developments across the country being built by the Duchy. These 2 products have the potential to make a significant contribution to providing swift nest sites in new build across the country. We now need to see them being adopted by developers across Shropshire so please do your bit to help swifts by making everyone of these effective solutions. But this does not exonerate you from putting up your own boxes and making your friends and neighbours aware of what you are doing to help swifts – they need all the help they can get.



Peta Sams
Shropshire Swift Group
January 2017

BTO Newsletter

So, 2016 has gone and 2017 is here. I am going to refrain from mentioning any of the tumultuous political events that 2016 and 2017 will be remembered for. I'd rather dwell on the birds and, for me, the excitement is building as SURVEY SEASON is just around the corner!!

So what happened in 2016?

Plenty of bird-related news has been nicely summed up by the BTO Team themselves here:

<https://www.bto.org/news-events/news/review-year-2016>

BTO Surveys

In Shropshire, there were good levels of participation in all the BTO-led surveys. The Breeding Bird Surveys had several new recruits and also...

...Unfortunately, it was the last year for some participants. The Upland Breeding Wader survey was also well-represented and results are currently undergoing analysis. The House Martin colony survey got off to a strange start due to the cold spring, and is due to run again this year. For more information on all these surveys please see here:

<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys>

As you may remember from previous newsletters, I am an avid participant in the BTO's Nest Record Scheme. Last year was an excellent year for me and together with my small network of nest-recorders, including helping the Shropshire Peregrine Group with administration of their nest records, I was able to monitor, or coordinate monitoring/administer data for nearly 250 nests of species ranging from Barn Owls to Blackbirds, with a personal highlight being my first Willow Tit and Spotted Flycatcher nest records. This is a great scheme to get involved with as it is both challenging and fascinating and can reward different levels of participation – you can make a contribution just monitoring nests in your garden, and common species provide valuable data as much as rarer species do. The BTO use all this data together with data from bird ringers across the UK to provide information about our breeding birds each year – the Preliminary 2016 results are available here and reveal mixed fortunes:

<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs/results/nrs-preliminary-results-2016>

Please contact me as always if anything interests you here.

Local Surveys

Curlew

The Stiperstones Curlew Project had another amazing year of data collection and community involvement. Sadly, the news for the Curlew is still not good, but the hard data and evidence collected so far is leading towards the focus on trying active solutions to protecting the remaining Curlew. Please read more about the project and how you can help here:

<http://www.stiperstonesandcornndon.co.uk/curlewcountry/>

Willow Tit

In 2016, I instigated a survey for Willow Tit in Shropshire, based on the guidance from the RSPB Species-recovery Group. This elusive species is fast declining in the UK, but a new survey method has been revealed more territories in other areas of the UK including nearby Staffordshire and Powys. Surveys and a desk-study of records submitted to the County Recorder established over 40 sites for this species, including several new sites with no previous records. This was very successful and from the experiences of surveyors in 2016, it would appear to be difficult bird to find and has been overlooked previously in many areas. I was also fortunate enough to find a Willow Tit nest that successfully raised a large brood of nine young. Wonderful to see! I would really like to continue this survey in 2017 and subsequent years as I am cautiously optimistic that Shropshire might still have quite a widespread population. The only way to find out is to keep getting out and looking for them and continuing to build up data.

Willow Tit feeding young at a nest site in Shropshire



What's coming up in 2017?

All of the regular BTO surveys are continuing, as is the House Martin survey. At present, there are no upcoming surveys for specific species.

Breeding Bird Survey

One of the most important surveys that runs each year is the Breeding Bird Survey. Data from this underpins a lot of what we know about how our birds are doing each year. It is my top priority to ensure that Shropshire is well represented. There is data from Shropshire that has been consistently collected for over 20 years in some areas, which is of massive value as it shows clearly the changes in a single area over a long period of time. This consistency is very important.

There are currently two high priority squares in Shropshire with this high level of data and the surveyors have unfortunately had to retire from surveying after 2016. These squares are a top priority for me so if you think you may be able to help, please get in touch and I will be happy to discuss further. You don't need to be an expert, you just need to know your common birds by sight and sound.

The two survey sites are located near Shifnal/Albrighton and between Highley and Cleobury Mortimer (near Wyre Forest).

Willow Tit Survey

This is not an official BTO survey but I am very keen to hear from anyone who may be able to participate. All you need is to visit a site (or more than one site if you can) during March to early April and use a simple playback method to elicit a response. You don't need to be an expert on Willow Tit but you will need a device capable of playing back an mp3 audio file – most mobile phones have this capability. I will be out doing the survey myself so I would be happy to have interested parties along with me to show them how it works.

Thanks for reading and please get in touch if you'd like to get further involved with any of the surveys I have talked about.

Kind regards

Jonathan Groom
Shropshire BTO Regional Representative
Mobile: 07981820979 Email:bto.shropshire@gmail.com

Bird Notes

October, November, December 2016

Black-necked Grebe One present on Shavington Big Pool on 2 and 9 Oct.

Little Egret Individuals were seen at Leighton, Venus Pool, Oswestry and Trefonen. Five were present at Wood Lane on 10 Oct.

Mute Swan The highest count was in the riverside field at Coundlane where steady increase was noted during the quarter up to 43 on 11 Dec. Other double figure counts were on the river at Uffington 7 Nov (14), Pickstock 11 Dec (12) and Newport 4 Dec (10).

Whooper Swan A single was present at Venus Pool on 20 Oct and then Cound fishery the following day. Just two other reports: five were seen in flight at Stirchley Pool on 2 Nov and two were present at Coundlane on 11 Dec.

Bewick's Swan Two were seen and photographed in the same field at Coundlane on 29 Nov.

White-fronted Goose One was present at Venus Pool from 21- 22 Oct.

Tundra Bean Goose Six were viewable from the causeway with Greylag Geese on the 18 Nov at Chelmarsh reservoir. They continued to be seen either at the reservoir or feeding in nearby fields until 9 Dec.

Pink-footed Goose A skein of 40 flew over Tibberton on the morning of 9 Oct. The only other records were of a single with the Greylag Goose flock at VP, on 25 Nov and 26 Dec.

Pintail The highest count was of three at Venus Pool on 26 Dec with a single drake reported throughout the period there. Two were seen on the Mere at Ellesmere, 31 Dec.

Shoveler Widely reported throughout the period, the highest count was at Venus Pool on 5 Oct when 52 were present. Other notable counts were at Shavington Big Pool on 9 Oct (25) and Chetwynd Pool on 18 Dec (21).

Wigeon Reported throughout the quarter, the highest counts were from Venus Pool, with a maxima of 143 on 26 Oct.

Common Teal Highest counts came from Venus Pool with a maximum on 30 Nov (280)

Green-winged Teal A male was found at Venus Pool on 24 Nov and seen daily until 3 Dec. It then disappeared whilst reserve management took place before reappearing on the 10 Dec for one day only.

Pochard Seen throughout the period with maxima at Shavington Big Pool 13 Nov (5), Priorslee Lake 3 Dec (4), Fenemere 30 Oct (3), The Mere, Ellesmere 15 Nov (2) and Cound fishery 29 Nov (1).

Scaup The first report was of a first winter drake at Priorslee Lake on 14 Nov, still present on 25 Nov. Up to three first winter male / female seen regularly on White Mere from 2-15 Dec.

Common Scoter Two were present at The Mere, Ellesmere on 24 Nov.

Velvet Scoter A juvenile was found at Trench Pool on 28 Nov which then remained, seen daily and showing well until 8 Dec.

Long-tailed Duck An unprecedented influx of four first winter birds into the county took place. The first, a male, was found at The Mere, Ellesmere on 13 Nov, then on 3 Dec, a female was found at Cole Mere. The following day, both were together on the Mere and they remained together until the end of the year, commuting between the Mere and White Mere. A third Long-tailed Duck was present on the Middle Pool, Trench on 14 Dec and the fourth was the highlight of a WEBS count at Chetwynd Park on 18 Dec. This latter bird was also still present on 31 Dec.



Long Tailed Duck Jim Almond

Goldeneye Reported from two sites with maxima at Cole Mere on 19 Dec (12) and The Mere, Ellesmere 18 Dec (11).

Goosander Reported from multiple sites with notable counts at Shavington Big Pool on 13 Nov (25), Tee Lake, Dothill on 10 Oct (24) Priorslee Lake on 25 Oct (21), Buildwas on 28 Dec (16) and Springfield Mere on 28 Nov (16).

Hen Harrier An adult male was seen regularly each day over the arable field at Venus Pool between the 3-10 Nov and then briefly at Cound Stank on 11 Nov. Another adult male was seen intermittently between 4 Oct and 18 Dec over Whixall Moss. Other sightings of individual birds at Brown Clee on 4 Oct, High Park on 12 Oct, Anchor on 21 Oct and Small Batch on 4 Dec.

Red Grouse Seen in the usual areas of the Long Mynd and Stiperstones, with the highest count being five birds at Minton on 7 Nov.

Grey Partridge A single report 4 Nov (8) at Dodecote Grange, Childs Ercall.

Golden Plover Reported from nine locations; the largest flocks were seen during Dec at Lyth Hill (140) and Stoney Pound (130). 100 were present at Jonathans Hollow on 18 Oct and 90 in flight at The Rea on 23 Dec.

Dunlin All sightings came from Venus Pool where one was present from 20-26 Oct. Three were briefly present there on 8 Nov.

Common Sandpiper One at Priorslee Lake on 30 Oct / Venus Pool on 9 Nov.

Green Sandpiper Two were present at Venus Pool on the 8 Oct. Individual birds were seen during the period at Knighton Reservoir, Buildwas, Devils Dingle and Wood Lane

Common Redshank One was at Venus Pool from 20-28 October.

Black-tailed Godwit Three were present at Venus Pool between 2-27 Oct. A single bird was then reported most days until 15 Nov.

Woodcock Two were caught on camera in a Newcastle garden on 23 Nov. Other records of single birds at Cranmere Bog, Whitcott Keysett, Haddon Hill and Albright Hussey, all during November.

Common Snipe Over sixty reports, the majority from Venus Pool where the highest count was 27 on 8 Oct. Other double figure counts came from Cranmere Bog on 26 Nov (12) and Trefonen on 13 Dec (11)

Jack Snipe Two reports of single birds, one at Abdon on 4 Dec, the other at Brosely Wood on 14 Dec.

Ring-billed Gull A second-winter was present on the dam at Chelmarsh reservoir on the 29 Oct. The same bird was seen in the roost the following day.

Yellow-legged Gull Reported from Chelmarsh Reservoir, Wood Lane, Priorslee Lake, Trench Pool and the Mere, Ellesmere. The best counts were from the latter where four were present on 20 Nov.

Little Gull One was present on the Mere, Ellesmere on 4 Oct.

Cuckoo A juvenile was reported in Carding Mill Valley on 2 Nov.

Barn Owl Eleven reports from ten locations throughout the period. One was seen hunting at 11.45am at Wall farm on 9 Oct

Little Owl Just a single record from Kynnersley on 25 Oct.

Ring-necked Parakeet Two birds reported, one from Welshampton on 4 Oct and one Tee Lake, Dothill on 25 Oct.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Individuals seen at Postenplain and in the Wyre Forest, both on 12 Nov.

Swallow The latest reports came in early October, with 80 seen at Prees on 1 Oct plus individuals seen elsewhere until 9 Oct.

Waxwing The first reported arrivals were six at Coedway on 18 Dec. More were later seen at Gobowen, Oswestry and Shrewsbury. The highest count of individual flocks was 42 in Oswestry on 29 Dec and 28 in Shrewsbury on 31 Dec.

Black Redstart One present in Ludlow on 8 Nov and another on Titterstone Cleve on 26 Dec.

Wheatear Just one record of two in the old quarry, Titterstone Cleve on 4 Oct.

Redwing Arriving with the Fieldfares and initially the predominant of the two species, with 100 seen at Whixall Moss on 8 Oct. The highest counts were 230 at Beambridge, Aston on Clun on 20 Nov, then 200 at the Wrekin on 17 Dec.

Fieldfare Numerous reports and the first arrivals were seen between 8-10 Oct when flocks of 50+ were seen. The highest counts were at the Rea where 200 were seen in Nov / Dec.

Ring Ouzel One was reported on Titterstone Cleve on 26 Nov.

Blackcap Single birds seen at Church Stretton on 19 Oct, Venus Pool on 22 Oct and Whitchurch on 10 Dec.

Cetti's Warbler One present at Chelmarsh scrape between 12 and 19 Nov.

Yellow-browed Warbler Two records of this locally rare vagrant. One was present in a garden opposite the post office in Condober on 14 Oct and another trapped and ringed at Whixall Moss on 15 Oct.

Firecrest One present at Wood Lane on 23 Oct

Willow Tit Seen at five locations; Bringewood, Norbury, Haughmond Hill, Whixall canal floods and Moss Cottage.

Bearded Tit A male and female were present at Wood Lane on 31 Oct.

Great Grey Shrike One or two were seen on Whixall Moss between 29 Oct and 5 Dec. Another was seen on Black Hill on 13 Nov.

Tree Sparrow Just a single record received, one at Clun 18 Nov.

Brambling A quiet quarter with up to three seen at Market Drayton during Nov. Two were reported on the Wrekin 17 Nov and single birds also seen at Shavington Big Pool, Valeswood, Venus Pool and Preston Montford.

Lesser Redpoll Most records came from Whixall Moss, where 48 birds were trapped and ringed on 8 Dec. Thirty were present at Aston Locks, West Felton 27 Dec and other records came from Abdon, Shavington Big Pool, Edgmond Marsh, Cefn Coch and Tibberton.

Common Crossbill Reported from six locations with highest counts: 14 at Black Hill on 16 Nov and nine at Bury Ditches on 18 Nov.

Corn Bunting 23 were seen in the Tibberton area on 27 Nov and a single at Venus Pool on 28 Dec.

Some sightings are subject to acceptance by the County Records Committee

Jim Almond

Notes for contributors

We welcome contributions to the Buzzard. Please send contributions or suggestions to: **Tim Devaney** buzzard@shropshirebirds.co.uk

It helps if you:

- Keep formatting to a minimum
- include photographs
- only send original work
- keep your word count to a maximum of 1500 words
- start your email subject line with "Buzzard Contribution"

Do contact me if you have any questions at all.

Views expressed in The Buzzard are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the SOS or its Committees unless otherwise stated.

Upcoming field trips

Sunday, 26 March BURY DITCHES Leader: Dave Pearce

PLEASE REMEMBER THE CLOCKS GO FORWARD THIS WEEKEND!!

Full Day – Meet at the Forestry Commission Car Park at 9.30am

From Clunton, take the road towards Brockton and the B4385. The Forestry Commission car park is about 2 miles up the road.

See: www.forestry.gov.uk & follow links England, West Midlands, Bury Ditches

Sunday, 30 April QUEEN'S HEAD CANAL Leader: Allan Dawes

Full Day – Meet at Car Park at 9.00am

Directions: Turn right from the A5 if coming from Shrewsbury, or left if from Oswestry at Queen's Head. Use the canal car park. – This is a new site walking along the canal looking for any migrants and other birds

Sunday, 21 May ELAN VALLEY Leader: Helen J Griffiths

Full Day – Meet at Visitor Centre Car Park at 10am

Directions: From Rhayader follow the B4518 west out of the town. The left turn for the Visitor Centre is signposted after three miles. If following SatNav, ignore any advice to cross over the iron bridge, instead drive over cattle grid and visitor centre is ahead of you. See www.elanvalley.org.uk

Thursday 1 to Sunday 4 June TRIP TO PEMBROKESHIRE

Please see Sue Brealey for details. Maximum number – 14

Sunday, 25 June GRONANT DUNES (for Little Terns) Leader: Estelle Hughes

Full Day – Meet at Car Park at 9.30am

Take A483 towards Chester, then take A55 towards North Wales. At Junction 33 take A5119 to Flint. Turn left in Flint onto A548 towards Prestatyn. At Talacre (Point of Ayr) carry straight on at round-about towards Prestatyn. After 1½ miles turn right for Lower Gronant. Use Car Park on left before railway bridge.

There will be no Field Trip in July

Indoor meetings

5 April AGM followed by SCILLY PELAGIC MAGIC Speaker: Jim Almond

Adventures aboard MV Sapphire from St.Mary's on the Isles of Scilly. From Gulls, Fulmars and Gannets to the passage of Skuas, Petrels & Shearwaters, enjoy the magic of seabirds & other marine creatures.

4 October ALASKA TO ARGENTINA Speaker: Mark Sissons

Mark's presentation was so good when he came in Oct 2016 I booked a speedy return. He is local, from Newport, writes in the Shropshire Magazine and runs photography workshops, hence the quality of his presentation. One to look forward to.