

The Buzzard

**Shropshire
Ornithological Society's
Quarterly Magazine**



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Autumn 2018

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Welcome to New Members

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

Mr J	Hill	Kidderminster
Mr & Mrs JO	Grigg	Stourbridge
Ms V	Walton	Telford
Mr & Mrs RJ	Gough	Telford
Mr A	Lee	Telford
Mr & Mrs J	Drever	Shrewsbury
Mr & Mrs R	Austin	Shrewsbury
Mr & Mrs MJ	Hathaway	All Stretton
Mr B	Jones	Codsall
Mr T B	Taylor	Gwersyllt
Mrs J	Moore	Cambridge

BTO Project Owl

Your help with Project Owl

Predatory birds are particularly important to monitor because they can be useful indicators of the health of the wider environment.

You may be surprised to learn that the Tawny Owl is one of our most numerous predatory birds, second in population size perhaps only to the Buzzard. Yet we know much

less about our Tawny Owls than we should, given their importance in the ecosystems of our towns, cities and countryside. There is an urgent need for us to expand our knowledge of this species so that we are in the best possible position to provide advice on issues which may impact them. So, we are running a national survey and need your help; please [visit the survey page to sign up](#). Or search Tawny Owl Point Survey



Jon Groom

Curlew Conservation



SWT/SOS 'Save Our Curlews' Campaign and Update

The last issue of *The Buzzard* described the Campaign's planned work in 2018, building on the local knowledge of the Upper Clun and Clee Hill Community Wildlife Groups, looking for Curlews, and working with landowners to find and protect nests.

Nest Finding and Protection Projects in Upper Clun and Clee Hill

Three nests were found and fenced in each area, and none of them were predated, confirming that fencing nests is an effective strategy to get them to hatching stage. In both areas, the chicks that did hatch were radio-tagged and tracked regularly, to see where they go, and what happens to them.

In the Upper Clun, two nests produced seven chicks between them. Unfortunately, one nest failed, as two chicks hatched but did not survive, and the other two eggs did not hatch. None of the eggs in the protected nests were predated. Apparently, none of the seven chicks fledged.

At Clee Hill, three of the 13 eggs didn't hatch (two eggs in one clutch were lost to predation), and one brood was lost to starvation, partly because of the very hot and dry weather, but at least one, possibly two, young fledged. However, another nest, just outside the area, was run over by a tractor before it could be found.

These results show just how difficult it is going to be to save the County's Curlews. The project fieldwork team will be meeting shortly to review the results and see what can be learned from this first season's fieldwork, and how it can be developed next year. In spite of the poor results, we've learned a lot, which will hopefully improve the outcomes next year. There will be a report in the next *Buzzard*

Landowner Support

One of the most encouraging aspects of the work has been the high degree of interest, support and practical help from the farmers and owners with Curlews on their land. They, like the Curlews, were under pressure from the extremes of weather, yet they made the time to pass on observations and discuss chick protection with the project team.

Shropshire Curlew Group

The next meeting will be in the autumn, to review the project work in Upper Clun and Clee Hill areas, plan continuing it next year, and raising further funds.

Community Wildlife Group Surveys

The three groups in the north-west all held feedback meetings in early June, to consider survey results in April and May, and the surveys by all nine CWGs have been well supported, and completed. A report for each group will be published in the late autumn.

Further information about these groups, and their survey work and results, can be found on the CWGs website, www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk All would welcome the involvement of more SOS members.

Breeding Curlew Records Wanted Please

Although most conservation effort will be invested in areas being monitored by CWGs, there are many other Curlews in the County. We will need to try and protect these too, so any records of breeding Curlews should be sent to Leo Smith, please.

Funding the Work

The work is paid for by a joint Shropshire Wildlife Trust / Shropshire Ornithological Society appeal, and we need to raise enough to keep the campaign going for many more years. The decline has been going on for a long time, and it will take just as long to halt and then reverse it. For more information about the Save our Curlews campaign, see the SOS website

www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/ If you want to donate to the appeal see www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/appeals

Many thanks to all SOS members who have already contributed

How SOS Members Can Help

Members will be asked to help with the Curlew monitoring next year, and contribute to the Appeal that funds the work in the autumn.

SOS Website

Detailed information about the campaign can all be found on the SOS website <http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/>

Otherwise, contact Leo Smith, the SOS representative on SCG

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

And Then Two 'Buses' Turn-up, Together

After nearly a decade of work on Histo and hoping for a nineteenth century diary to turn up, early last year one did, quite out of the blue – the Ornithological Field Journal (1882-1911) of Charles Gawen of Chetwynd Park. I am concluding work on Gawen and it will soon go online on Histo with 25 copies printed in book form for limited distribution. I was resuming the wait for another diary to appear.

Suddenly, last week, Tony Waddell contacted again – he contributed the photograph to Birds of Shropshire (BoS) of the clutch of very rare erythristic (reddish) rook eggs too - he collected them near Ellesmere in 1958. He now lives in Hampshire and has just published, in a limited edition of 50 copies, the two-volume bird diaries of the brothers Douglas and Cecil Meares of Clive, north of Shrewsbury from 1892 to 1949; Cecil, the younger, was killed on the Somme in 1916. I now have charge of the copy destined for Histo and the SOS.

The brothers were ardent and very systematic oologists, a respectable science in their day, and their diaries are full of well-documented breeding records – valuable for us today. In the last few days, for example, their notes on Common Sandpipers breeding on the Cound Brook 1902-1911 have been incorporated into the bird's account in BoS. Also among the pages of mostly breeding records are 88 migrant arrival dates for Shropshire, 22 of which are improvements to SMAD, the Shropshire Migrant Arrivals Database.

The second 'bus', which Tony has also just told me about, is the ornithological diary of his teacher A E Wilson in Ellesmere, so early/middle twentieth century. It is lodged at the Shropshire Archive, ref. 7782, and I have yet to have a look at it - I have high hopes for it, although he was not a member of the SOS.

John Tucker

Peregrine/s Attack Canada Goose

After almost 900 recorded and usually uneventful BirdTrack visits to my regular circuit just west of Aston on Clun, something extraordinary occurred on my walk on 6 July 2018. I heard a Peregrine overhead and saw a dishevelled looking Canada Goose making an enforced crash-landing in the field about 200m from me – some feathers were out of place but it happened too quickly to tell exactly which.

The noise of, in fact, two Peregrines, which I presume to be the pair that nest locally, increased and became as intense, loud and excited as I have ever heard as they chased around in the air above the field and the goose. Three or four times in close succession the pair 'buzzed' the goose in fast passes within a metre above it at which the goose reared up its head and neck in defence. The noisy show went on for several minutes during which a pair of Ravens moved to a tree overlooking the field and watched events. The excitement then died down, the attackers went quiet, gave up and flew away. Ten minutes later I saw a female Peregrine at the top of a stag-headed oak about 400m away from the scene, perhaps the apparent attacker recovering from her exertions.

I began to walk to where the goose had landed – I had not seen it fly off. I noticed a Buzzard on the ground among a scatter of feathers within 50m of where the goose had landed and I headed for it. The Buzzard flew off and left a scatter of pure white contour and flight feathers, a few with spot-fresh red blood. The longest primaries were shorter than 20cm and must have come from some form of white pigeon or dove. There was nothing left of the body and the feathers were certainly not from the goose which I continued to search for. About ten minutes later I flushed a Buzzard which flew off clutching something pure white – presumably the remnants of the kill from which I had disturbed it. As for the goose, there was no trace., The field was sheep-fenced and it would not have been able to escape from it and I presume that it had crawled into a hidden quiet corner to recover, or die.

I did not see the attack on the goose by what I presume was one and may have been both Peregrines but the vehemence of their pressing the case suggested to me that they were continuing what was an earlier joint attack in the air. It would not have been an instance of an adult 'training' a bird of this year's brood – both assailants were highly proficient on the wing and were

adults. I suspect that it was a Peregrine which brought down the pigeon or dove being finished by the Buzzard.

BWP (1980) records “at least 117 [prey] species in Britain ... ranging in size from Goldcrest ... to Grey Heron ... and goose” with two authors reporting ‘cooperative hunting by pairs’ and Ratcliffe (1993) does not specifically list Canada Goose among prey species. This report is of an apparent attack on a bird at the top of the size-range of prey for the Peregrine.

References

BWP. Cramp, S. (Ed.) (1980). Birds of the Western Palearctic.
Ratcliffe, D. (1993) The Peregrine Falcon (2nd edn.).

John Tucker

The Birds of Shropshire; A County Avifauna

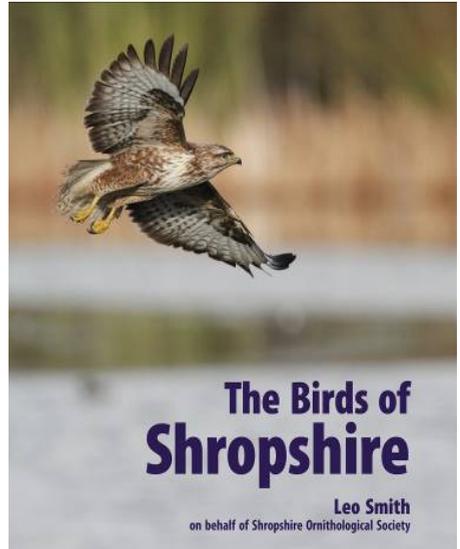
Progress Report

At last, the text for the accounts for all of the 301 species that have occurred in the County since the early nineteenth century are complete, apart from checking final details on a handful, and adding records for rarities that have been seen after the data cut-off at the end of 2014.

This has involved copious correspondence with the 27 different authors on accounts that have each gone through several drafts, checking of records and data, sending the almost final drafts to the Avifauna Working Party for comment, then finalising the accounts with the authors to incorporate the comments. As a result, the accounts are now more extensive and ambitious than the original plans.

It has also involved compiling charts showing the local BBS trends for 34 species, and numbers, years and periods of occurrence for scarce and / or migratory species, almost 100 more charts in total.

All the maps are complete too: five different standard maps for every species recorded during Atlas fieldwork 2007-13, and a dozen or so special maps. The maps comparing distribution of breeding species in 1985-90 and 2008-13,



together with a tetrad occupancy table showing the number of tetrads in each breeding category occupied by each species in each of the two Atlas periods, highlight the massive changes that have occurred in less than 25 years. Several maps showing the County's habitats and climate have been commissioned.

Digital images of the vast majority of species, taken by over 20 local photographers, have been collected and made available to the designers.

Chapters on *Shropshire and its Bird Habitats*, the *Introduction to the Species Accounts* and conclusions from the Atlas, were largely completed some time ago, but need tweaking to take into account the content of the species accounts that were finalised more recently. Finalising the chapter on *Changing Arrival Dates for Migrants*, particularly presenting the statistical analysis of the data, was particularly time consuming.

Forewords have been written by Amanda Craig (Operations Director of Natural England), Dawn Balmer (Head of Surveys at BTO), and Frank Gribble and Peter Deans (previous and current Presidents of SOS).

We still need to review the status of each species, listed in the heading to the account, to ensure consistency, and finalise the status definitions; agree the final design and page layout with the publisher (Liverpool University Press); redo the charts, maps and tables in the format that the publisher requires them; and compile the long list of references into a standard format, but hopefully that will all take weeks rather than months.

The publisher requires around six months to design, print and distribute the book, and promote the pre-publication offer, but won't set a timetable until they see the material we submit. However, it looks as though the book may be published in the middle of next year. Hopefully the timetable, and the pre-publication offer, will be included in the next edition of the *Buzzard*.

Thanks to each and every one of the 27 authors for their efforts and their patience, the Avifauna Working Party, particularly Allan Dawes and Graham Walker, for commenting on the accounts, to John Arnfield for compiling all the maps and tetrad occupancy tables, Jim Almond for collecting and sorting all the photographs, Allan Dawes for compiling the data for many of the charts, and several BTO staff for providing data. Many other people have contributed information, or text on specific issues. Thanks also to John Tucker for establishing *The Historical Ornithology of Shropshire* website, which made the research undertaken by account authors considerably easier.

Leo Smith

Notes from a Country Garden – Recording for Garden BirdWatch

January to July 2018

The best thing about my tardiness in entering this year's BTO Garden BirdWatch records was the reminder of the goings on in our fairly large, and fairly scruffy, rural garden.

Fieldfares visited in the first half of January, feasting on windfall apples, while Bullfinches worked their way steadily through guelder rose berries, which were dangling out of reach of larger species (the same bush that had provided a larder for our first Waxwings ever the previous season). Before the month was out, I had heard the Song Thrush singing; at the same time, a Tree Sparrow shacked up, rather surprisingly, with our resident House Sparrows. On the last day of January, the first Blackbird sang.



The bird table in the snow [December 2017. "I gave up taking snow photos after that"]

A good start to the year, followed in early February by the arrival of Lesser Redpoll and Marsh Tit on the bird table. On Valentine's Day, I watched a Sparrowhawk make a lightning fast kill on the lawn and take its prey away – most likely a Blackbird - always difficult viewing.

For light relief, we watched the progress of the Wood Pigeons building a nest on top of the sloping roof of a bird box, high up in the large cherry tree; this enterprise didn't end well of course.

The Greenfinch started singing on 25 February and with gaps in between, has been serenading us ever since – his previous absence certainly makes this heart grow fonder. The following day I noted as "very cold", which turned out to be an understatement. Officially, the Beast from the East started on 24 February and lasted until 4 March. It brought us Blackbirds, Mistle Thrushes and Redwings, one dead Redwing and a dead Wren. We dug windfall apples out of the snow to feed the birds and swept and filled the bird table constantly. The Mini Beast that followed in mid-March led to wondrous snow drifts in the orchard, another first.

A Starling with a very long bill appeared in the third week of March; it had to hold its bill sideways on the bird table to sweep in the "Hi energy, no mess"

seed mixture. The first (unidentified) bumble bee appeared, as did one Brambling, the latter only briefly. On 7 April I saw five Lesser Redpoll and three Siskin feeding together on the bird table, but only two days later the Chiffchaff was tuning up in the orchard, likewise the Nuthatch, while the Starlings continued collecting nesting material.

During the hot and sunny week of 15 April, insects in the garden featured prominently in my notes. They included bright ginger Tawny Mining Bees, a queen wasp, a bee fly, other mason bees, buff-tailed and red-tailed bumble bees; also a male Brimstone, a Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Holly Blue – we only see butterflies in ones and twos now, apart from the Whites, as forty plus years of intensive arable farming in our area have taken their toll.

From the garden, but not far away, I heard my first Cuckoo of the year on 25 April, a much anticipated annual event – so far.

By the latter half of May, the Blue Tits were busy in their new nest box, a squawking Blackbird fledgling was begging from its parent on the lawn and on the last Sunday of May, five fledged Starlings lined up in a row with their parents on the ridge of our roof. On 29 May, I heard Tawny Owls calling loudly from the orchard at 10.15pm.

A June highlight was the temporary bat roost in the loft: we could hear them fidgeting and scrabbling above the shower in the bathroom, but our special visitors left all too soon. I consoled myself with the Blue Tit and House Sparrow chicks peering out of their respective nest boxes and one evening a Tawny Owl perched on top of our phone pole just outside the window. Demoiselle Agrion damselflies visited the garden, two (also unidentified) bats whizzed around and by mid-June the Song Thrush's day started at 4.05am. There was non-stop activity in the garden, including Goldfinch, Wren, Robin, Magpie, Jackdaw, fledged Great Tits and Blue Tits, also Bullfinch and Long-tailed Tit on occasion, all of which I noted down diligently. We even saw a Red Kite soaring over the garden, though over flight doesn't count for GBW records.

The fine weather continued throughout July and the lawn now resembled coconut matting in the drought; it was very hot indeed, but our small pond still provided some relief to the birds and other creatures in the garden. While everything, and everyone, wilted as July progressed, the Wood Pigeons and Collared Doves carried on cooing, courting and nesting, while, from next door,

the Stock Dove's song rose to repeated crescendos.



It's easy to be a BTO Garden Birdwatcher: simply keep a record of all the birds you see in your garden each week, and enter the records regularly on the website, or send them by post; you can also opt to record mammals, insects etc. I've been doing GBW for more than 15 years.

All records are valuable, whether from large or small, urban, suburban or country garden. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

The GBW home page states:

“Garden BirdWatch monitors the changing fortunes of birds and other garden wildlife through its network of 'citizen scientists'. Observations collected by BTO Garden BirdWatchers are analysed by BTO researchers and published in leading journals. BTO Garden BirdWatchers have charted the decline of the House Sparrow, the rise of the Wood Pigeon, have discovered that urban birds get up later than their rural counterparts and have alerted conservationists to the impact of an emerging disease in Greenfinches.”

No wonder I'm pleased to have a singing Greenfinch in the garden.

Nicola Pacult

A Blue Tit called Pinocchio

This Blue Tit with an extremely elongated bill was a regular visitor to the sunflower seed feeder outside our kitchen window in the spring. Acquiring the seed from within the feeder presented an enormous challenge, having to pick it up with the tip of its bill and then manoeuvre it further back so it could be swallowed. This photo was taken on 28 April



2018, so somehow this individual had survived the very cold winter we had experienced in South Shropshire despite all the difficulties it must have had both finding food and drinking. Curiously there was a Great Tit visiting the feeder around the same time with an even more elongated bill than this one. That individual was much more camera shy however.

Rob Rees & Sara Giffen
Photos Sara A M Giffen

Field Trips

RSPB Ynys Hir
Sunday, 20 May 2018

A group of eleven people arrived at Ynys Hir for hopefully a good day's birding. The weather was a bit chilly to begin with, but warmed up a touch during the day and there was no rain.

The morning was taken up with going round the Saltmarsh Trail. From the reception centre, the group walked towards the Marian Mawr Hide, passing through the woodland where the sightings were difficult due to the trees being in leaf. However, the place sang with bird song. Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Chiffchaff, and Wren were among those heard and then a Pied Flycatcher was seen. Also Blackbird, Great Tit, and Robin were seen. Moving further on and across the railway bridge, we saw a Great Spotted Woodpecker at the top of a tree, and Chaffinch were noted. Once at the Marian Mawr hide, the area viewed from its height including the Dyfi estuary. A large number of Black-headed Gulls were noted, plus Herring Gulls, Canada Geese, a Lapwing,

Mallard and Cormorant. A Dunnock was seen in the trees, and Sedge Warbler was seen by a few in the reeds. Out on the Estuary, Great Black-backed Gull, Little Egret, Redshank, and Shelduck were seen. For the first time during this season, and because the heronry has been abandoned, the group were able to visit the Doman Las hide. The members had been cautioned however to be rather quiet in the hide, and when we arrived we saw why. An Oystercatcher was looking after her nest on a wall just in front of the hide. It was lovely to see this bird so close. The hide overlooks the bend in the river Dyfi and on it some Goosander were noted. In the distance, Red Kite were seen as well as Buzzard. After visiting this hide, the group went on to the Saltings Hide. During the walk, Sedge Warbler were seen and definitely heard. Once at the hide, the lagoon was inspected and amongst the other species seen included Redshank and Little Ringed Plover. The group then walked back up the hill in order to cross the Railway Bridge and return to the centre for a well-earned lunch.

After lunch, the group re-convened and walked through the woodland to the Ynys Hir Hide, with views over the canopy towards the estuary. During the walk, Wood Warbler, Robin, Redstart were amongst those heard if not actually seen. From the hide Jay and another Great Spotted Woodpecker were seen. Afterwards, the group walked down towards the boardwalk which eventually brought the group to the Ynys Feurig Hide. However there were not any new species of note seen. On the walk back to the reception centre, Skylark were seen singing high in the sky, Carrion Crow, and Jackdaw were noted, and near the end of the walk, some members heard a Grasshopper Warbler.

All in all a good time was had by all with up to 54 species seen or heard. A good result.

Queens Head, near Oswestry Sunday, 10 June 2018

On a nice sunny day a group assembled at the car park opposite the Queens Head pub, in order to walk down the Montgomery Canal towards Maesbury on a half day trip, led by Allan Dawes.

This walk had been undertaken the previous year, when Allan took the group round what was left of a reserve near Aston Locks. The area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), of importance mainly for aquatic plants, and it was about to be brought back to a better state as part of the restoration of the canal. This year the group found that a great deal of work had been carried out, but access was not allowed for safety reasons. But it was obvious that further work still needed to be carried out and although concentrating on plants, birds usually follow, so this could become a really good area to visit in the future.

On the walk along the towpath various birds were seen and heard. Amongst those seen were Whitethroat, Blackbird, Mistle Thrush, Song Thrush,

Dunnock, Tits, and Carrion Crow. Amongst the reed beds Sedge Warbler and Reed Warbler were seen and heard. The Sedge Warbler was seen to be feeding amongst the reeds then returning across the canal to what was obviously the nest with young. Then a bird standing with rather an erect stance was perched at the top of a tree, and on closer inspection this proved to be a Spotted Flycatcher, a really good spot. A Jay flew by, as well as Long-tailed Tits.

The group walked past the Aston Lock complex, and then reversed the direction, slowly returning back towards Queens Head. Along the way, further birds were seen so that in the end about 24 birds were seen. This had been a pleasant morning's walk and, again, thank you to Allan for leading the trip.

Sue Brealey

Bird Notes

Apr, May and Jun 2018

Egyptian Goose Two were seen intermittently at Venus Pool between 8 Apr and 23 Jun. Other reports from Leighton, Lyneal and Harnage may have been the same pair. A single was also seen at Chetwynd Park on 15 Apr.



Common Scoter Three (2 males and 1 female) were present on Colemere on 14 Apr.

Red Grouse Most records came from Stiperstones where up to eight were present on 20 Apr. Three were heard or seen on 6 and 17 May at the Long Mynd.

Grey Partridge A pair was present near Withington on 24 April and at Ercall Heath on 1 Jun.

Common Quail The first report came from Noneley where one was singing on 5 Jun then two the following day. Singles were also reported at Colehurst and Tilstock during June.

Little Egret One record received, a single at Coal Brook, Hales on 1 Apr.

Great White Egret One was seen at All Stretton between 2 and 5 May followed by another sighting, presumably the same bird, on 12 May at Little Stretton.

White Stork One was reported at Eyton on Severn on 10 Apr.

Red Kite Numerous records of up to four birds were received, many from the usual areas in the south but also a number of sightings from the north and east areas of the County. These included: urban Shrewsbury, Whitchurch, and Telford.

Hen Harrier Two records, one from the Long Mynd on 29 Apr and another from Newport on 7 Jun, no age or sex stated.

Osprey The first sighting was on 5 Apr at Bridgnorth and single birds were also seen at: Shirlett on 8 Apr, over Telford town centre on 8 Apr, Venus Pool on 28 Apr, then Bridgnorth on 5 May.

Merlin Just one record, a single bird seen at Shawbury on 6 Apr.

Hobby The earliest arrivals were reported from Whixall Moss, Tibberton and the Long Mynd, all on 28 Apr. This was much later than in 2017 when the first bird was seen on Apr 1. There were no large counts reported, but two were seen at four different sites.

Oystercatcher Despite repeated failure at Venus Pool, breeding success was reported from Chelmarsh Scrape where three chicks were caught and ringed on 28 May. At Wood Lane, five young fledged towards the end of June.

Little Ringed Plover The first returning birds were seen at Wood Lane on 1 Apr and Leighton on 14 Apr. Most records then followed from Venus Pool where a pair, present from 22 Apr attempted breeding but later abandoned due to predation (?). Success at Wood Lane, however, where three birds fledged in late Jun.

Ringed Plover A flooded field near Noneley produced one on 20 Apr and three on 27 Apr. Two were present at Whixall canal floods on 19 May, then singles on 24 May and 2 Jun.

Golden Plover One was present at Noneley on 28 Apr and 4 May.

Dunlin Two were seen at Polemere on 2 May.

Woodcock Two were reported from the Wyre Forest on 2 Jun plus a single at Black Hill on 10 Jun.

Whimbrel Two were present at Venus Pool on 17 Apr then one the following day. Other reports of singles came from Hadnall and Noneley during Apr. (*Below*)



Wood Sandpiper One was present at Knighton reservoir on 24 May.

Common Sandpiper Most records came from the Venus Pool and Priorslee Lake with up to three seen at both sites during April. Three were also present at the new lagoon at Aston Locks on 20 Apr.

Green Sandpiper Singles were seen at three locations during April, no records during May, but then some excellent counts at the end of Jun at Venus Pool where nine were on the present 29th

Greenshank Single birds were at Venus Pool on 17, 18 and 29 Apr. One was at Wood Lane on 21 May and another at Whixall floods 27 May.

Common Redshank Up to three were reported at Coal Brook, Hales, seen on 1 Apr, 27 May and 3 Jun. Three were reported from Wyre Forest on 5 May and three at Whixall canal floods on 27 May.

Black Tern One was present at Colemere on 27 Apr then six were seen there on 24 May. (*Below*)



Common Tern Two long staying birds were seen at Priorslee Lake between 20 May and 26 Jun, a single was at Whitemere on 24 May.

Cuckoo The earliest records were at Tibberton on 16 Apr then Dowles Brook on 18 Apr. Reports steadily increased from late April into May and the highest counts were four at Whixall Moss on 29 Apr and four at Stiperstones on 9 May.

Turtle Dove One was reported purring at Crosemere on 26 Jun but not seen or heard thereafter.

Barn Owl Records of single birds came from five locations: Tibberton, Springfield, East Kempton, Crudgington and Chirbury.

Little Owl Singles were reported at three locations: Childs Ercall, Wall Farm and Muxton.

Tawny Owl Seen or heard at twenty locations with breeding success at some of these.

Nightjar One was heard churring and seen at Black Hill between 5 and 10 Jun.

Common Swift The first seen was on 21 Apr at Newport, followed by birds at Bridgnorth 22 Apr and Albrighton 23 Apr. The highest count was 35 in Newport town centre on 8 Jun.

Alpine Swift A report of one seen over Broseley was posted on the bird news services. No further details or the identity of the observer have been forthcoming. A description will be needed and without this, the record will not stand.

Hoopoe Two were reported, the first at Shavington Park on 22 Apr and another at Lower Shorditch Turbary (Kerry Ridgeway) on 9 May.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Reported from two locations: Haughmond Hill on 4 Apr and Norbury on 11 Jun.

Sand Martin The earliest record was one at Newport on 1 April (10 days earlier than in 2017). 100 were present within a mixed flock of hirundines at the Mere, Ellesmere on 24 Apr.

Swallow The first reported bird was seen over Newport on 4 Mar (19 days earlier than 2017), followed by sightings at Little Stretton and Bridgnorth, on 5 Apr. The highest count was of 100 birds together with the martins over The Mere, Ellesmere on 24 Apr.

House Martin A single was reported at Bridgnorth on 5 Apr (one day later than 2017) followed by six at Priorslee Lake on 6 Apr. The highest count was 100 at the Mere, Ellesmere with hirundines on 24 Apr.

Tree Pipit Records came from thirteen sites, with the first at Caer Caradoc on 9 Apr. The highest count was nine, on 14 and 18 Apr from the Wyre Forest.

Yellow Wagtail The first record came from near Chirbury on 7 Apr, followed by Tibberton on 8 Apr. The highest counts, of three, came from: Polemere, Noneley, Uppington and Childs Ercall Airfield. One of the Polemere birds was a possible *M. flava*, paired with a *M. flavissima* male.

Black Redstart A male was present at Adderley on 7 Apr. (*Below*)



Common Redstart The first reported bird was at Craig Sychtyn on 14 Apr. Highest counts of six came from Moelydd on 30 Apr and Newcastle-on-Clun on 31 May.

Wheatear The highest counts were thirty on the Long Mynd on 27 Apr and sixteen at High Park, All Stretton on 21 Apr.

Whinchat Records from the Long Mynd area predominated where six were reported in Cardingvale 31 May.

Rose-coloured Starling One was reported at Church Stretton on 4 Jun.

Ring Ouzel Just four records, the first at Nedge Hill on 4 Apr, four at Titterstone Clee on 9 Apr, five at Stiperstones between 20 and 21 Apr and one at Caer Caradoc on 4 May.

Fieldfare The latest record was three at Wall Farm on 17 Apr.

Redwing Aston on Clun produced the last record on 10 Apr.

Cetti's Warbler A singing male was heard between 3 and 7 May at Newport canal. Another record came from Whixall Moss on 5 Jun.

Sedge Warbler The first reported was a singing male at Venus Pool on 17 Apr. Up to eight were present at Hales Pools West on 29 Apr. Twelve were caught and ringed at Chelmarsh on 6 May.

Reed Warbler The earliest records came from Priorslee Lake on the 6 Apr and then a gap until one seen at Noneley on 20 Apr. Numerous records thereafter with up to six at Sambrook Mill Pond on 19 May.

Garden Warbler Haughmond Hill and Dowles Brook produced the earliest records on 1 Apr. There were a few other April records, followed by numerous sightings throughout the County thereafter.

Lesser Whitethroat Well recorded from over 20 locations. The earliest seen were at Cae Howel and Choulton on 18 Apr.

Common Whitethroat The first reports were on 20 May at six locations (over a month later than in 2017). Numerous records thereafter.

Wood Warbler The first records came from Wyre Forest and Whitcliffe Common on 15 Apr (two days earlier than in 2017). The highest count came from Wyre Forest where twelve were reported on 18 Apr.

Willow Warbler The first returning birds were seen at Priorslee Lake on 4 Apr and Venus Pool the following day. Records steadily increased thereafter and fifteen were reported at Stiperstones on 30 May.

Firecrest One was present at Hopesay between 19 and 25 May.

Spotted Flycatcher The earliest report was at Dowles Brook, on 18 Apr followed by the main arrivals in early May

Pied Flycatcher The first record was on 14 Apr at Craig Sychtyn. Reports followed from numerous locations, with the highest count being seventeen at 'Hall of the Forest', Newcastle-on-Clun. (*Below*)



Willow Tit Records of single birds came from four sites: Mary Knoll, Colemere, Wenlock Edge and Wyre Forest.

Tree Sparrow Regular counts of up to 9 were reported from Oakley Mynd throughout the quarter. Also reported from Clungunford, Springhill, Whixall canal floods, Cockshutt, Rigwardine - Market Drayton, Flashbrook, Choulton and Pentre.

Lesser Redpoll The largest count came from the Cefn Coch where 24 were seen on 22 Apr.

Hawfinch The wintering birds continued to be seen until the 8 Apr, the best count being 24 at Adderley on 7 Apr.

Common Crossbill Reports came from Shirlett, Buttonoak, Cefn Coch, Wrekin, Bury Ditches and Longford, Market Drayton.

Corn Bunting Reported from over twenty locations throughout the quarter. The highest count of 10+ came from Childs Ercall airfield on 15 June.

NB Some sightings are subject to acceptance by the Records Committee.

Photos and compiled by Jim Almond

Proposed Field Trip Holiday to Europe

A couple of months ago I received an email from Naturetrek offering to help the Society to organise group trips. Naturetrek is a travel company specialising in worldwide nature-based holidays. (www.naturetrek.com)

After a great deal of thought and discussion it seems that the proposal for a Society trip to somewhere in Europe would be worth following-up and could be rather fun. However, it would take at least a year to organise any such trip so if it goes ahead then the trip would occur in 2020.

But before any work goes ahead, I will need to know if there are any members who would be interested in such an adventure. So I would be grateful if there are such members, that they get in contact so I can make a decision about whether it would be worth carrying this forward.

So please contact me through fieldtrips@shropshirebirds.co.uk or phone at 01939 262450

I will look forward to hearing from you.

Sue Brealey

Indoor Meetings

Bayston Hill Memorial Hall, Lyth Hill Road, Shrewsbury, 7:15pm

For more details visit: <http://www.shropshirebirds.com/indoor-meetings/>

3 October **Chris Ward**
“Wildlife Down Under”

Centred on the rich and varied habitats of SE Queensland, New South Wales and the ‘Top End’, visited during a three-month winter experience, this will be an extravaganza of colourful, rare and iconic Australian wildlife. Enjoy birds, mammals, reptiles, insects and others

(Church Stretton Branch)

The Methodist Church Hall, Watling Street, Church Stretton 7:30 pm

22 October **Oliver Smart**
“A Birding Migration – Birds of Lesvos”

Lesvos has been well-documented for its impressive list of migratory species passing through each spring. Having visited three years in succession to witness the spectacle of migration, Oliver will talk about many of the important birding areas on the island and the value of each to the species that stop to refuel for their long journeys north. Oliver will also illustrate many of the common resident species as well as some other animals that live on this fantastic Greek island. Visit Oliver’s website at <http://www.smartimages.co.uk/index.php>.

7 November **Kate MacRae**
Create Your Own Spingwatch

Kate has set up a network of cameras both in her own garden and at a 7 acre site in Worcester which capture the secret lives of visiting wildlife. Her work has been on Spingwatch, Autumnwatch and Countryfile. Tonight you can share some of her techniques and see amazing footage to inspire and excite.

5 December **Nigel Spencer**
British Wildlife in Macro

As well as being a renowned wildlife photographer, Nigel is an expert macro photographer, having captured all our native butterfly species. Widely travelled, he has photographed plants, birds and animals in many challenging places. Tonight though, he is closer to home and should help us to appreciate our own smaller species.

Upcoming Field Trips

30 September Brandon Marsh (by car)

Organiser: Sue Brealey

Full Day – Meet at Reserve Car Park at 10am. SatNav. Post Code: CV3 3GW
Directions: Take M6 to Junction 2. Take A46 south, and then turn left onto A45 towards Rugby. Turn left after about 200 yards, and then turn left after the Texaco Station into Brandon Lane. The Nature Centre is a mile along the lane. Follow the brown signs. Entry Fees £2.50 for Adults & £1.50 for Concessions
See <http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/brandon-marsh>

18 to Sunday 21 October Weekend Trip to Norfolk (by car)

Organiser: Sue Brealey

Please see Sue Brealey for details

Maximum number is 14

Bookings from January 2018

4 November Pennington Flash (by car)

Leader: Estelle Hughes

Full Day – Meet at the Car Park at 10am SatNav. Post code: WN7 3PA
Directions: – From J22 of M6, take A580 towards Manchester. Turn left onto A572 (Newton Rd). Follow Sign Posts (Actually the Fire Station, but park is opposite). Pay & Display Car Park

See www.wlct.org/leisure/parks/parkshome

9 December WWT Slimbridge (by coach)

Organiser: Sue Brealey

Full Day – Meet at the Shirehall Car Park at 8.15am

Cost will be £15 per person for the coach plus entry to the reserve for non-members.

Price is £8.50 for Concessions & £10.80 for Adults. Please book with Sue Brealey from September 2018.

See www.wwt.org.uk/slimbridge

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

Please send contributions or suggestions to: **Tim Devanney** buzzard@shropshirebirdscouk

Copy deadline for the Winter 2018 issue is: 1 November 2018