



# ***The Buzzard***

**Shropshire  
Ornithological Society's  
Quarterly Magazine**



**No 254**

**Winter 2018**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Society Officers and Officials</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Welcome to New Members</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Proposed Field Trip Holiday to Europe</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Chelmarsh Little Bittern</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Rookery Re-count in 2019</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Swift Success in St Laurence's, Ludlow</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Feral Pigeon is a "<i>Common naturalised resident</i>". Really?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Thinking of Next Spring ... Swallows ...</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SWT / SOS "Save our Curlews" Campaign</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Anting in Birds</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Pied Flycatcher Network in Shropshire</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Recycling and Theft in the Warbler World</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Peregrine Attacking ... Shelduck</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Journal of Field Ornithology Volume II 1888-1911</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Field Trips</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Bird Notes</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Indoor Meetings</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Indoor Meetings Church Stretton Branch</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Upcoming Field Trips</b>	<b>24</b>

## Welcome to New Members

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

Mr & Mrs M	Woffinden	Telford
Mr & Mrs RJ	Bacon	Shrewsbury
Mrs J	Hackett	Shrewsbury
Mr AW	Lutwyche	Shrewsbury
Mr & Mrs A	Wilding	Cotes Heath
Mr OL	Law	Cotes Heath
Miss PE	Law	Cotes Heath
Mr CP	Smith	Wigmore
Mr R	Taylor	Rorrington
Mr G	Sinden	Shrewsbury
Ms J	Hood	Wolverhampton
Mr & Mrs A	Clough	Shrewsbury
Mrs P	Topping	Telford
Mr C	Downes	Pontesbury
Mrs A	Bednall	Shrewsbury Road

## Proposed Field Trip Holiday to Europe

In the last Buzzard I let Society members know about a proposed trip to Europe in 2020 which would be organised by Naturetrek (see [www.naturetrek.com](http://www.naturetrek.com)).

The trip would be based on the usual terms and conditions used by Naturetrek, in that the trip's costs would include all flights, accommodation, food, transport and the services of a guide. The costs could be between about £1,500 to £1,800, depending on the country visited, and up to £200 for single room supplement. Participants would need to pay for their own personal items, drinks, tips etc and would need to have current travel insurance. The minimum number required is 6 with a maximum of 12 to 16 depending on the destination. Flights would probably be from an airport near to the County.

To date, as a result of this article, seven people have shown an interest in this proposal. If anyone else is interested or would like any other details do let me know.

**Sue Brealey**

[fieldtrips@shropshirebirds.co.uk](mailto:fieldtrips@shropshirebirds.co.uk)

01939 262450

## The Chelmarsh Little Bittern

Friday, 6 July 2018 was a day local birder John Reeves will long remember! He was busy checking out likely places where a Garganey might be lurking and one of his destinations was Chelmarsh Reservoir. After parking at the 'Scrape' end early afternoon he wandered up the causeway to check the reservoir and was greeted by a sound he hadn't bargained for! Something was lurking in the reedbed adjacent to the reservoir and making a regular dog-like bark. There were a couple of things to consider before letting the world in on his hunch. Was the 'barking' sound emanating from the reeds a lost small dog or a vociferous amphibian?

**No, it had to be just one thing, a Little Bittern!!!**



John contacted and urged several local birders to get down quickly. Despite his not having seen the bird, the call was conclusive! A vigil of up to nine hours for most of the watchers then followed ... would it appear? Eventually at 9:52pm, a time etched on my memory, the Bittern broke cover and flew low across the reedbed, an identifiable view for most.

Hoping for better sightings, John returned at first light the following morning and at 4:30am the Little Bittern was seen in flight again. At 5:15 it was located at the base of the reeds in the north-west corner and showed well in the open for 30 minutes ... success indeed. With patience, observers were now being treated to great views of this colourful male, usually at about 100 metres. The pattern of brief flights followed by an appearance at the edge of the reedbed was repeated the following day. Restricted parking meant that most visitors had to walk from the village and up to 30 birders were present on occasions. The biggest issue for most was having a good supply of water and sun cream due to the extreme heat as temperatures soared into the 30°Cs.



The Little Bittern continued to be seen throughout the following week and it also spent periods of time away from the favoured reedbed further up the reservoir. It did however remain faithful to the causeway bed and would be present there at some time during the day. The last record was on Friday, 13 November 2018 and it was not seen or reported thereafter.

Due to its secretive nature, Little Bittern is difficult to observe and monitor. Breeding probably occurred in south-east England in the 1940s and 1950s and subsequently the first proven breeding was confirmed at a site in Yorkshire in 1984. Since then, Ham Wall in Somerset has taken over the headlines following UK breeding success there on occasions since 2010.

Given the substantial reedbed habitat at Chelmarsh reservoir, it will be interesting to see if there are any future sightings of prospecting birds and then who knows what might happen...?



***Text and images Jim Almond***

## Rookery Re-count in 2019

In 2008 I organised a rookery survey – more than 130 people sent me records and the list ran to over 530 sites, most with nest counts. How are they doing? Next year I will again be asking people to find and count every possible rookery in the county – the census will tell us how the population is doing.

**John Tucker**

## Swift Success in St Laurence's, Ludlow

In July 2014 Ludlow Swift Group installed 4 Swift boxes and a call system in the east face of the tower in St Laurence's in Ludlow.

The wooden cabinet was designed to fit behind the louvres and the netting that had previously been installed to stop pigeons entering the bell chamber cut away to allow Swifts access to the box entrance hole.

In 2017 Swifts were frequently seen flying in front of the entrances although we had to wait until they



had migrated before we could look in the boxes for evidence of nesting. We were delighted to find that a nest, mainly of pigeon feathers, had been built in one of the boxes. There was no sign of breeding but this is typical behaviour for Swifts – young birds find a nest site for the following year.

We were hopeful that the birds would return this year and fortunately they did.

Migration was difficult for many of our summer birds this year. Bad weather over France and Spain together with reports of an intense sandstorm over the Sahara meant that Swift numbers were very slow to build up. Several known nest sites were never occupied and that for many “their” swallows never arrived.

At the end of July, the face of a Swift chick was seen looking out of the box and it was observed, like this, for just a few days; eyeing up the world before it

took that one leap to a life on the wing. So that is, we hope, the start of our church tower Swift colony here in Ludlow.

## Providing nesting sites for Swifts in churches really does work!

There are now 350 pairs of Swifts in boxes across Cambridgeshire. St Mary's Church in Ely had the first Swift boxes installed in 2008 and now has 54 pairs. St Mary's in St Neots has 34 pairs, All Saints in Worlington 35 pairs, St John's, Bury St Edmunds 25 pairs together with 10 other churches that have between one and eight pairs.

These are fantastic figures and something we should be aspiring to here in Shropshire, there is no shortage of churches with suitable towers. There is probably a church near you with a tower that would be ideal for swift boxes.

### Why not make this a winter project?

Shropshire Swift Group is happy to lend call systems and offer advice. I look forward to hearing from you. The RSPB tells us that we have “lost” 44 million birds since the late 1960s – Swifts are a species that you and I can help to recover by providing new nesting sites.

**Peta Sams**

[shropshireswifts@gmail.com](mailto:shropshireswifts@gmail.com)

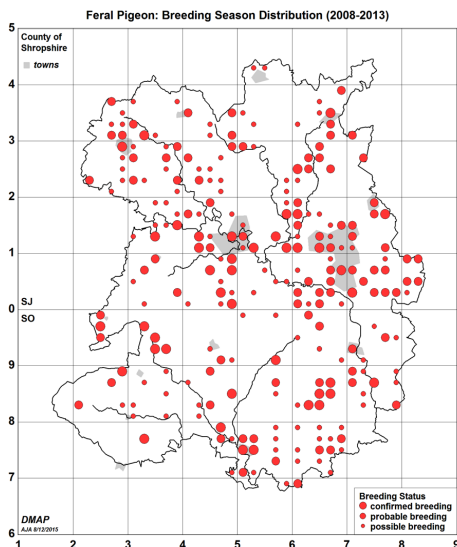
Shropshire Swift Group

## The Feral Pigeon is a “*Common naturalised resident*”. Really?

I have the questionable honour of writing the Shropshire Bird Report (SBR) 2017 annual species account for the humble Feral Pigeon (FP), *Columba livia*. Currently the reports starts with the statement: “**Shropshire Status: Common naturalised resident**”. On the next line comes “BBS: Present in 2% of plots, 5 birds recorded”\*.

Most of us recognise the Curlew as a rare bird these days “Present in 15% of plots, 21 birds recorded” and likewise the Lapwing “Present in 16% of plots, 48 birds recorded”. Meanwhile a genuinely ‘Very common’ bird the Robin is “Present in 98% of plots, 446 birds recorded” and likewise the Blackbird is “Present in 100% of plots, 856 birds recorded”. Returning to the FP - a species present in a mere 2% of plots with only 5 birds recorded - is regarded in the SBR as “Common”; surely something is amiss!





OK, the species is generally under-recorded; who goes out of their way to record FPs - certainly not me? However, the BTO's BBS survey, the source of "Present in 2% of plots, 5 birds recorded", uses data from statistically randomly selected survey units within which every bird is recorded. Thus, BBS rises above the cherry-picking of which sites to visit and which birds to report – BBS survey lists record every bird, every FP, so we ought to be able to believe the BBS statement; it says present in 2% of plots with 5 birds recorded – and we call that 'Common'.

When carrying out BirdTrack surveys, and if ticking the 'all species recorded' box, that will pick up Feral Pigeons and it is these records (24 of the 58 records (41% of them) by just two observers) which inflate, and skew, the few records submitted for Feral Pigeon in 2017.

I think we need to reconsider the Status statement for Feral Pigeon. The bird is very familiar in certain urban situations, where it can be quite numerous, but it is certainly not 'Common' county-wide. A better description for Shropshire might be "Locally common in some urban environments".

More recorders should pay attention to where FPs are occurring and report them, especially where there are large numbers – to give us a more rounded view of the bird's status in the county. It will give the authors of the bird's annual account more to work with and a better understanding of this 'weed' species overall.

The Feral Pigeon breeding distribution map works quite well as a proxy for the distribution of human settlements – try and identify them all – and the exceptions.

The FP breeding distribution map for the forthcoming (mid 2019) *The Birds of Shropshire* with permission of the author. Leo asked 11.10.18 ...

\*The figures in this account have been taken from the SBR for 2014.

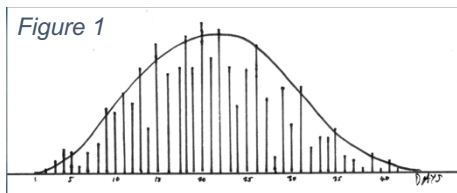
**John Tucker**

## Thinking of Next Spring ... Swallows ...

Shropshire has the most complete county data set of FIRST dates for migrant birds, some back into the 1870s – and the trend for most species is that they are arriving earlier, for example Swallows. Those figures are based on the leaders of the pack, literally the early birds – but what is the situation for MOST county Swallows? How can we determine the peak time for arrivals?

In an attempt to find the answer, for Shropshire, ALL MEMBERS of the SOS (and many others besides) will be asked to report the date of *their personal first* Swallow. By tracking the build-up of records through the arrival period, using as many dates as we can amass, we want to see if a peak in recording appears. Please be ready to help when Swallow-time comes. Full details will be given in *The Buzzard* in March.

Figure 1



The sketch (Figure 1) suggests what might be the true curve if we were able to plot the arrival of every Swallow as it entered Shropshire's air-space, with a peak around day 32. It would vary year to year. The histogram is a guess at the result we might achieve next

year, each day's records piled up. The more records that come in, the more accurate the estimate of the peak. If the system works. This will be an experiment.

**John Tucker**

## SWT / SOS "Save our Curlews" Campaign



The appeal raised sufficient for a nest finding and protection project to be carried out in both the Upper Clun and Clee Hill areas, in co-operation with the respective Community Wildlife Group. Three nests were found and protected in each area, and none were predated, although two eggs were lost from one nest in Clee Hill. 16 chicks were radio tagged, and in Clee Hill one definitely fledged, and one probably did.

There are now 10 Community Wildlife Groups, which all undertook Lapwing and Curlew surveys in 2018. Between them, they cover well over half of the County's breeding Curlews. They covered 137 survey squares (tetrads). There were over 270 participants, who spent a total of more than 2,200 hours on survey work, and 80 – 100 Curlew

territories were identified. This is a clear indication of the concern that local people have for the decline of Curlew, and their willingness to support action to do something about it.

Full reports of all this work can be found on the website, with details of the Campaign [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews)

This work needs to continue for many years yet if we are to identify the causes of poor breeding success, and reverse the decline. **The campaign appeal is continuing.** Please donate if you feel you can. See [www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/appeals](http://www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/appeals).

**Leo Smith**

## Anting in Birds

I recently discovered a little booklet titled *Ramblings of a Shropshire Naturalist* published by *lulucom* containing a series of short articles written by Edward A Wilson (1904-1974). He was senior biology master at Ellesmere College and formed a Field Club there for the boys. The notes he and the club produced are largely botanical but do include some birds which I have processed for Histo. The note below from page 98 may be of interest to SOS members. It is reproduced here with the permission of EA Wilson's son, Richard. Copies are available at this website: <http://www.lulucom/shop/edward-wilson/the-ramblings-of-a-shropshire-naturalist/paperback/product-23584373html>

### *"Experiments with Mallophaga*

#### *Experiment 2 A possible explanation of 'anting' in birds*

*It is now well known that some birds pick up ants and thrust them under their wings; a process known as 'anting' It is supposed to rid them of ectoparasites. I decided to check this by experiment so I obtained some ants and ground them up in order to collect the resulting juice. Two feathers were treated with the juice and placed in a corked tube while two untreated feathers were placed in a second corked tube. Four feather lice were added to each tube and left for several hours.*

*The results were quite conclusive as the lice in the tube containing the treated feathers were dead while those in the other tube remained healthy.*

*It is common knowledge that ants contain formic acid thus in order to substantiate my previous findings I took a very dilute solution of formic acid in place of the juice and repeated the former experiments. The results were as I anticipated – the formic acid killed the lice. Thus it*

*seems that 'anting' is a behaviour which helps to free birds which indulge in it from some of its ectoparasites".*

All good kitchen-sink science which any of us could have undertaken – but whence the feather-lice he used? They were carefully (very carefully to ensure no escapes) collected from the body of a shot rook immersed in water. But do not try this at home.

Copies of *Ramblings* are available from:

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/edward-wilson/the-ramblings-of-a-shropshire-naturalist/paperback/product-23584373.html>

***John Tucker per Edward A Wilson***

## Pied Flycatcher Network in Shropshire

Red-listed in Wales in 2006 and in Britain in 2015, the Pied Flycatcher is a bird in trouble.

The 2007-11 BTO Atlas indicated both a contraction in range (apart from SW Wales) and falling levels of abundance, except for a small area coincidentally around Newtown, Carno, Llanfair Caereinion and Anchor. Data from the 'The Birds of Shropshire' will show a 57% reduction in the number of tetrads with confirmed breeding evidence and an estimated breeding population of c500 pairs (at the end of the Atlas period 2013); down on the c2,000 pairs in 1990. This figure of 500 pairs has probably declined further, since the reasons for the national decline are unknown. The phenological mismatch between the time of breeding and caterpillar peaks (even though flycatchers themselves are arriving earlier) is one hypothesis as is the changing environmental conditions in Africa and pressures on migration.

The breeding presence of Pied Flycatchers is relatively easy to monitor (they take easily to nest boxes) and once successfully used they will return annually. In Shropshire during 2017 Pied Flycatcher chicks were ringed at 86 locations. At least 36 of these sites are known nestbox schemes. In order to better understand the ecology and reasons for their decline in Shropshire, we are attempting to set up a network of contributors. We will gather data from across Shropshire, compare with and contribute to national monitoring schemes.

If you monitor Pied Flycatchers in any context, we would be glad to hear from you. We would also like to hear from anyone interested in a study of flying invertebrates.

Please contact: [piedflyshrops2017@gmail.com](mailto:piedflyshrops2017@gmail.com) for further information

**Bob Harris**

## Recycling and Theft in the Warbler World

On 19 June 2017 I was checking on the outcome of a Chiffchaff nest at a site near Oswestry as part of the BTO Nest Monitoring Scheme. On my previous visit, well-grown young were in the nest and I was now expecting them to have left the nest. It was indeed empty and intact, suggesting that they had fledged successfully. As I was leaving, a small bird flew briefly into the bramble patch containing the nest. I wondered if some of the young were still nearby so I watched for further activity. Young in the vicinity of the nest would have confirmed that they had fledged successfully. The bird soon came back again and was seen to be carrying something when it departed. This was intriguing as faecal sacks are not produced once young have reached this stage. Further observations revealed that the bird was carrying feathers when it left and that it was a Willow Warbler, rather than a Chiffchaff. It always left in the same direction and was obviously collecting the feathers from the old Chiffchaff nest to line a nest of its own, although I was unable to locate the Willow Warbler nest.

In May 2018, I watched a Chiffchaff disappear briefly under some dead bracken close to the location of the 2017 nest. Suspecting nest building, I watched from a distance and the bird soon returned. While trying to pinpoint the nest spot, I realised that the bird was arriving with an empty bill and leaving with feathers.

From my watch point, I could not see exactly where the Chiffchaff was taking the feathers to, but in early June I found the nest when the young were being fed and they eventually fledged successfully within a few metres of the 2017 nest. In the meantime, purely by chance, I saw a Willow Warbler leave the patch of dead bracken where the Chiffchaff had been collecting feathers and further observation revealed a nest with eggs in the exact spot that the Chiffchaff had been visiting.

The timing suggested that the Chiffchaff had been removing feathers as the Willow Warbler was actively building its own nest. Unfortunately, the Willow Warbler nest failed when the eggs disappeared during incubation. Young Willow Warblers later fledged from a nest nearby.



This type of behaviour is often associated with colonial nesting species such as Rooks and seabirds. Where materials such as feathers are in short supply it may be more widespread but goes unnoticed.

***A P Dawes***

## Peregrine Attacking ... Shelduck

John Tucker's article in the recent Buzzard regarding a Peregrine attacking a Canada Goose reminds me of an incident I witnessed at WWT Slimbridge some years ago. I was on the top floor of the Holden Tower hide overlooking The Dumbles towards the River Severn. Way over to the left was a group of 8 to 10 Shelduck on the ground. Some distance away from them was a peregrine sitting on one of the posts of the wire fencing. There was often a Peregrine at this position, so it was habit to look there for one. (Finding one increased one's spotting credentials among others in the hide who had not seen it!).

The Peregrine took off and flew at the group of Shelduck, forcing them to take off in fright. The Peregrine then flew in attack mode at the highest Shelduck of the Shelduck in flight and I thought, "Surely these are too big for a Peregrine to attack?". At the distance they were I could not see if the Peregrine actually made contact with a Shelduck, but one was forced down to the ground whilst the others flew off. The Peregrine then made low flying attacks on the shelduck now standing on the ground. It did this several times but each time the Shelduck raised its wings above its back, so preventing the Peregrine from delivering an attack on the Shelduck's head or back. After a number of such passes, the Peregrine flew off (I cannot remember where it went) and the Shelduck remained on the ground until after I left the Tower. At the distance it was I could not see, even using a scope, if it had any injuries.

The Shelduck is a large duck, only a little smaller than a Barnacle Goose, so surely a Peregrine could not kill one in the air and fly off with it. Had it killed the Shelduck it would have had to eat it where it on the ground where it fell, and that would make it vulnerable to interference, by corvids for example. I have never seen this behaviour before or since and have not heard of similar behaviour before John's article. I expect it has happened, but it must be a rare occurrence.

***Richard Camp.***

## Journal of Field Ornithology Volume II 1888-1911

Softback book version of the ***Journal of Field Ornithology*** of Charles Gawen Roberts Gawen (1860-1940).

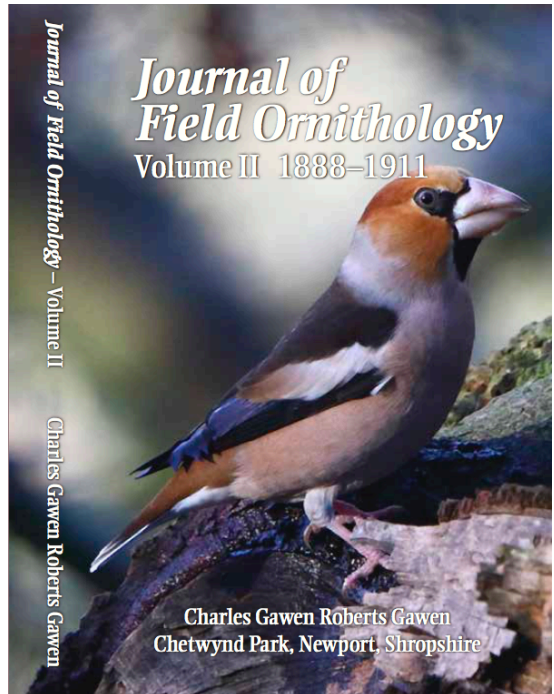
This handwritten Journal, covering the years 1888-1911, most of it written while living at Chetwynd Park near Newport, turned up in early 2017. It is now available online, currently at <http://www.lanius.org.uk/gawen> and will be later on Histo. It comprises the 327 pages of this Journal with a 34-page editor's introduction and is illustrated with wood engravings by Thomas Bewick (1753-1828). The cover photo is by Jim Almond.

Only 30 copies (15cm x 21cm) have been printed and sent to contributors, relevant libraries and institutes. One copy (30/30) is now on sale, by auction, at the above www (online) address. It will go the highest bidder and bidding will close at 22:00 on 2 January 2019.

The money raised will be donated to the BTO's Cuckoo satellite-tracking project.

The winning bid (not the bidder's name unless it is agreed) will be announced in the next issue of *The Buzzard*.

*Buy the book and help track Cuckoos to Africa*



**John Tucker**

### **Brandon Marsh Nature Reserve Sunday, 30 September 2018**

Three members met at the reserve, situated between Coventry and Rugby, which had been developed within a working sand and gravel extraction site. It was 10 o'clock, the weather was dry and overcast with a cold wind blowing.

As we made our way to the pools, only Mallard and Carrion Crow were noted but after spotting movement in an oak tree, we were treated to excellent views of a Jay collecting acorns. We arrived at Wright hide which overlooks the East Marsh Pool where several Black-headed Gulls were on the water with a Herring Gull, plus a few Gadwall, Teal, Cormorants, Moorhen and Coot. A flock of c100 Lapwing were constantly being disturbed, suggesting a nearby raptor was active!



We moved on to Jon Baldwin Hide from where nothing new was visible but with the Lapwings suddenly flying up, we spotted the cause of their unease, a Sparrowhawk which flew across the pool. Our next stop was the East Marsh Hide where we added Grey Heron and Shoveler to the day list. The scrape in front of Teal Pool Hide had dried out completely due to the recent drought and none of the hoped-for waders were present. The same fate had happened to Carlton Pool although there was still a small area of water with lily pads towards the rear!

We decided to have lunch here anyway, in the hope that something would appear? And appear it did, as movement in the water caught our eyes, we realised that the shape moving towards the lily pads was an Otter! It swam about for a short while before disappearing into the reeds, most definitely the highlight of the day.

The walk back to the reception centre drew another blank at Mick Taylor hide. A few more consolation birds were added at the reception feeding station where just Blackbird, Blue Tit, Great Tit and Chaffinch present. It had been a disappointing day with just 22 species seen but the fantastic views of Otter had made it worthwhile!

***Report and image Sue Brealey***

## **Pennington Flash Country Park**

### **Sunday, 4 November 2018**

On a rather grey, but, rainless morning four members met for the trip to Pennington Flash near Leigh in Greater Manchester. It is a wetland reserve run by Wigan Council bordering the Leeds and Liverpool canal, comprising lakes, pool, woodland and marshland, but also has a golf course, sailing and play areas.

After coffee and bacon butties in the carpark overlooking the largest lake, then a scan produced a great number of Coot and Tufted duck with Mallard, Great-crested Grebe, Canada Geese, Cormorant, Goosander, a female Goldeneye and Black-headed and Lesser Blackback gulls.

Goldfinch, Blue Tit, Great Tit and Magpie flitted in the shrubs as we made our way to Horrocks, the first hide. From here we saw eleven Heron, many Cormorant, Teal, Lapwing and a male Goldeneye. The single Oystercatcher we were told was a hand-reared bird and here permanently. Jackdaw and Wood Pigeon foraged on the grassy bank.

From the screen opposite the Tom Edmundson hide we picked up a Little Grebe, while from the hide we added Mute Swan, Shoveler, Gadwall and a fleeting glimpse of a Kingfisher. A Great-Spotted Woodpecker 'chinked' as we progressed to Ramsdale's hide, where we added a further six Great-crested Grebe (the site is known for its high numbers) among the ducks and one snipe.

Reaching a recently mown open area we spotted Redwing and Goldfinch, singing from deep scrub and from here we climbed the bank to the canal, a favourite for the many dog-walkers and no birds! We descended to walk along a tree-lined path with several Blackbird, Long-tailed Tit, Robin, Redwing Bullfinch and Willow Tit flying across the track and disappearing rapidly into the bushes.

The Teal hide produced its namesake species along with Gadwall, Shoveler and the ubiquitous Coot. The site has one of the best feeder stations anywhere, but, no food provided at all. Nevertheless, we had two male Reed Bunting, Dunnock, Chaffinch and twenty Moorhen which sought left-over food under the leaf litter. There were also several very rotund Squirrels squabbling over scraps of seed.

Pengy's, the last hide afforded another fleeting glimpse of the Kingfisher, but no new species, however, the spectacular autumn colours were much enjoyed. It proved to be a rather short trip and, after lunch overlooking the big lake, we set off home with some 37 species recorded.

***Estelle Hughes***

## Bird Notes

### July, August and September 2018

**Pink-footed Goose** A juvenile was seen at Venus Pool on 27 Sep.

**Egyptian Goose** One was present on the canal at Ellesmere on 22 Sep.

**Shelduck** A large brood of young was raised at a small pool in Gains Park, Shrewsbury and three juveniles also fledged from Tittenley Pool. Eleven were noted on a pond near Chirbury on 11 Jul.

**Gadwall** Up to eighteen were reported throughout the quarter at both Venus Pool and Ellerton Mill Pool. Breeding took place at the latter pool where three juveniles were seen on 11 Jul.

**Grey Partridge** Just one record of a single at Tibberton on 7 Jul.

**Common Quail** One was heard calling near Condovery on 1 Jul and another report came from Noneley on 3 Jul.

**Little Bittern** A male was present at Chelmarsh Reservoir between 7-13 Jul. See separate article for account and pictures.

**Little Egret** The earliest reports were of a single bird at Venus Pool from 3 Aug. More individuals arrived as the month progressed with five present on 21 Aug and the maxima was six on 18 Sep. Other sightings came from the Severn and Chelmarsh Reservoir.

#### **Great White Egret**

One was seen at Venus Pool on 30 Aug and again briefly on 9 Sep. Other sightings came from Wood Lane on 17 / 30 Sep. Two were present at Whixall Moss on 29 Sep and one was seen in flight over Danesford, near Bridgnorth on 30 Sep.





**Red Kite** Records of up to four birds were received, many from the usual areas in the south of the County but also some sightings from elsewhere. These included: Whixall Moss, Broseley, Pentre and Venus Pool.

**Marsh Harrier** An immature was observed at Whixall Moss on 10 Aug, plus another seen at Wildmoor, Long Mynd on 4 Sep.

**Hen Harrier** A ringtail was seen from the Long Mynd on 1 Sep.

**Osprey** A single was present at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 7, 9 and 11 Jul. One was also seen at Venus Pool on 31 Aug.

**Golden Plover** 150 were reported at Bicton Hill on 26 Sep and 100+ at Long Mynd on 29 Sep.

**Ringed Plover** One was at Venus Pool on 19 Aug.

**Little Ringed Plover** One was seen at Venus Pool on 13 Jul, followed by an adult with juvenile on 16 Jul.

**Lapwing** Reported from various wetlands, most records came from Venus Pool with numbers increasing steadily throughout the quarter up to a maxima of 109 on 30 Sep.

**Curlew** A flock of up to 21 was regularly seen at Wood Lane during the quarter. Other reports came from Whixall Moss, Gains Park, Shrewsbury and Venus Pool.

**Black-tailed Godwit** Five were present at Venus Pool 7 Jul, then seven on 8 Aug. One was seen at Chelmarsh Scrape on 27 Aug.

**Ruff** One was showing well at Venus Pool between 31 Aug and 2 Sep.



**Ruff**

**Dunlin** Two were observed at Venus Pool on 25 Jul and then singles there on 14 Aug, 26 Aug and 20 Sep.

**Common Sandpiper** One or two were noted throughout the quarter at six locations: Venus Pool, Holmer Lake, Whitcliffe/Teme, Shavington Park, Chelmarsh scrape and The Mere, Ellesmere.

**Green Sandpiper** Regularly seen throughout the quarter at Venus Pool with a maximum of ten on 12 Sep. Also reported from Hales Pools West, Chelmarsh Reservoir, Holly Banks and Gallows Bank.

**Wood Sandpiper** One was reported at Venus Pool on 13 Aug.

**Greenshank** Up to two were present at Venus Pool most days between 31 Aug -17 Sep.

**Common Snipe** The first returning bird was seen at Venus Pool on 2 Jul, numbers steadily increased there to seventeen by 11 Sep.



**Black Tern** One was present at Priorslee Lake on 26 Aug and at Cole Mere on 22 Sep.

**Common Tern** Two were observed on Cole Mere on 10 Aug and a single bird was there on 21 Sep.

**Mediterranean Gull** A 1cy bird was seen at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 22-23 Aug and a 2w near Condoover on 8 Sep.

**Common Gull** Singles were noted at Venus Pool from 5 Jul and then at Dorrington and Chelmarsh Reservoir during Sep.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** Reported at various locations throughout the quarter, including six newly fledged juveniles at Battlefield on 22 Jul. Roosts of up to 3,300 individuals were noted at Chelmarsh Reservoir during Aug / Sep.

**Yellow-legged Gull** Up to seven roosted at Chelmarsh Reservoir throughout Aug and Sep. Four were present at Priorslee Lake on 6 Sep and up to three seen daily near Condoover at the end of Sep.

**Caspian Gull** A 4cy bird was in the roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 22 Aug. The same or another bird was seen there on 18 Sep.

**Barn Owl** Three youngsters were reported near Albrighton on 21 Aug and records of single birds came from six other locations: Whixall, Noneley, Pitchford Estate, Nesscliffe, Bletchley and Bromfield.

**Little Owl** Present at four sites: Tibberton, Cockshutt, Albrighton and Lower Walton.

**Tawny Owl** Two were seen at Haughmond Hill on 19 Jul, Venus Pool on 8 Sep and Shifnal on 12 Sep. Single birds also reported at Queens Head, Park Hall, Plealey, Crose Mere, Muxton, Aston-on-Clun and Pontesford Hill. Three newly-fledged youngsters were observed regularly in Meole Village in early Jul.



**Short-eared Owl** One was present on the Long Mynd on 12 Sep.

**Nightjar** A single record of one present at Haughmond Hill on 19 Jul.

**Common Swift** The last sighting came from Gunstone on 27 Aug. The highest count was 46 at Ellesmere on 16 Jul.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** One was reported in a Bayston Hill garden on 6 Jul.

**Merlin** One record, which came from Bicton Hill on 26 Sep.

**Hobby** Present at 20+ locations throughout the period, mostly single birds but up to three noted together at Kinlet and Clungunford.

**Willow Tit** Two records of single birds at Ford on 28 Jul and Pam's Pools, Bridgnorth on 2 Sep.

**Sand Martin** The highest count was 200 at Aston-on-Clun on 10 Aug. The latest report was on 22 Sep.

**House Martin** Birds were still noted at the end of Sep. The highest counts were 160 at Springfield on 11 Sep and 100 at Aston-on-Clun on 10 Aug.

**Swallow** Reported until the 29 Sep. The highest count was 76 at Camp Farm on 23 Jul where many of the birds were perched on stubble stalks.

**Red-rumped Swallow** One was seen over the slopes of Caer Caradoc on 1 Sep.

**Cetti's Warbler** One was present at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 7 Jul.

**Garden Warbler** The latest record came from Sugnall on 25 Sep.

**Lesser Whitethroat** Singles reported from five locations, the last sighting at Venus Pool on 8 Sep.

**Common Whitethroat** Noted at seventeen sites, with the latest report on 4 Sep at Priors Halton.

**Reed Warbler** Observed at seven locations, with a highest count of 11 at Chelmarsh reservoir on 7 Jul. The last report was on 13 Aug at Crose Mere.

**Ring Ouzel** One was reported on the Long Mynd on 29 Sep.

**Spotted Flycatcher** Numerous sightings throughout the County with the last on 19 Sep. Some reports noted families or groups, with five feeding together at the National Sports Centre, Lilleshall.

**Whinchat** Up to six were in Town Brook Valley, Long Mynd on 25 Jul, two at Whixall Moss on 10 Aug and one at Camp Farm on 26 Aug.

**Wheatear** Up to three were reported from Stiperstones, Long Mynd and Titterstone Cleve during the quarter.

**Tree Sparrow** An impressive count of 60 came from Upton Cressett on 19 Aug! Singles were reported at Whixall and Pentre.

**Yellow Wagtail** Twenty nine were seen feeding in a cattle field near Condober on 28 Aug. The latest record was on 8 Sep.

**Tree Pipit** Up to two were present at Mason's Bank, Cefn Coch, Long Mynd and Ragleth Hill. The last report was on 29 Aug.

**Common Crossbill** Up to eight were recorded at Cefn Coch during Jul and Aug and two were present on Whixall Moss on 10 Aug.

**Corn Bunting** Seventeen were feeding at the edge of a cereal field near Knockin on 11 Jul. Other records came from Noneley, Hordley, Crose Mere and Wall Farm.

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

*compiled and images Jim Almond*

## Indoor Meetings

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

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

**Wednesday,  
2 January**                      **Dave Hollis**                      **Bird Watching in Norfolk**

Norfolk is packed with birds all year round and this talk shows the richness of Norfolk's birdlife throughout the seasons.

**Wednesday,  
6 February**                      **Gary Jones**                      **Great Britain's Wonderful Wildlife**

From the Mountains to the Seas .. Gary shares his wildlife encounters and experiences.

**Wednesday,  
6 March**                      **Jeff Clarke**                      **Bird Migration**

Bird Migration – the Whys and Whens of this fascinating topic.

**Wednesday,  
3 April**                      **Jim Almond**                      **Annual General Meeting followed by: Shropshire Birds**

Another year looking at the local bird world.

## Indoor Meetings Church Stretton Branch

### **Indoor Programme for 2019 Church Stretton Branch**

All meetings are held in the Methodist Church Hall starting at 7.30pm  
Tea and Coffee on arrival

**Monday,  
28 January**                      **Mark Sisson**                      **Alaska to Argentina**  
Wildlife through the Americas

**Monday,  
25 February**                      **Anna Nicholas and  
Megan Morris-Jones**                      **History of Cuan Wildlife Rescue**  
How it has transformed over 25 years, with case histories.

**Monday  
25 March**                      **Rupert Marshall**                      **The Science of Birdsong**



## Upcoming Field Trips

## Car

**Organiser: Sue Brealey**

Directions: Take the A55 from Chester towards Anglesey. After going through Conwy road tunnel, exit after 2nd roundabout (J14) into the town. At traffic lights turn right and continue to the car park on the sea front. Grid Ref: SH 680 753

## Car

**Leader: Estelle Hughes**

Directions: Take M6 north to J27, Then A5209 to Parbold, and turn right onto B5246 through Rufford until T-junction. Turn left onto A565. At roundabout take third turning onto Martine Drive. Car Park is at next junction.  
Grid Ref: SD 353 205

**By Coach**

**Organiser: Sue Brealey**

Costs: - £15.00 per person for the coach. Booking from October .  
Please bring proof of RSPB membership.

See [www.rspb.org.uk/reserves](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves) then Dearne Valley Old Moor

### Telephone Numbers for Organisers and Leaders:

Estelle Hughes 01948 840902// 07817 243693

Please send contributions or suggestions for *The Buzzard* to: **Tim Devanney**  
**[buzzard@shropshirebirds.co.uk](mailto:buzzard@shropshirebirds.co.uk)**

**Copy deadline for the Spring 2019 issue is: 1 February 2019**

*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*