



# ***The Buzzard***

**Shropshire  
Ornithological Society's  
Quarterly Magazine**



**No 255**

**Spring 2019**

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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>Annual General Meetings</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PRESIDENT'S AWARDS 2018</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Accountant(s) Wanted Urgently</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Curlew Projects 2018, and plans for 2019</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Grade 1 Swift Bricks?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Shropshire's Duck Decoys</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Auction</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Of the Hoatzin and the Nene</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Request for Records</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>BTO Surveys</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>YOUR CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Red Kite</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Other Birds of Prey</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>The Birds of Shropshire</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Shropshire Rookeries Survey 2019</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Field Trips</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Bird Notes</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Indoor Meetings</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Indoor Meetings Church Stretton Branch</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Upcoming Field Trips</b>	<b>32</b>

## Welcome to New Members

Mrs CE	Eldridge	Hadley	Mr & Mrs J	Hipkiss	Clee Hill
Mr A	Collins	Bridgnorth	Mr & Mrs G	Broad	Ludlow
Mr J	Box	Ironbridge	Mr M	Smith	Bayston Hill
Miss J	Langfield	Berrington	Mr J	Highfield	Shrewsbury
Mr S J	Rose	Wombourne	Mr & Mrs A	Rands	Berrington
Mr M	Evans	Stottesdon	Mr & Mrs A	Arnold	Shirlett
Mr & Mrs R	Hall	Britons Lane	Mr D	Wyatt	Llanymynech
Mr D	Ackland	Kingswinford	Miss AP	Peters	Sutton Hill
Mr P	Wareing	Shawbirch	Mr & Mrs T	Pratt	Trench
Mrs N	Shield	Fernhill Barns	Mr & Mrs N	Pursey	Shrewsbury
Mr & Mrs D	Croft	Shrewsbury	Mr R	Austin	Copthorne
Mr S	Fox	Apley	Mr W	Lockwood	Newport
Mr P	Nield	Broseley	Mrs L	Rosser	Shifnal
Mr T	Tipton	Bomere Heath	Mr M	Brough	Longton
Mr D J	Parton	Danehurst Estate	Mr & Mrs M	Stuckey	Priorslee
Mr M	Whitfield	Leegomery	Mr C	Smith	Cleobury
Mr J	Hallard	Rhosllanerchrugog			Mortimer

## Annual General Meetings

### SHROPSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 64th AGM of the Society will be held on Wednesday, 3 April 2019, at Bayston Hill Memorial Hall at 7.15pm, prior to the Indoor Meeting.

Nominations for Officers and Management Board 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, Honorary Secretary*

# SHROPSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY 2005

Company Limited by Guarantee No. 5322294

Registered Charity No. 1108166

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 3 April 2019

Bayston Hill Memorial Hall (immediately following the Annual General Meeting  
of  
Shropshire Ornithological Society which will be held at 7.15 pm)

### AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 April 2018.
3. Matters Arising.
4. Presentation and Approval of the Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2018.
5. Appointment of Directors.  
Miss SM Brealey, Mr J Arnfield and Mr CJ. Whittles retire by rotation and being eligible offer themselves for re-election.
6. Appointment of Independent Examiner.
7. Any Other Business.

**Brian Andrews, Company Secretary**

## PRESIDENT'S AWARDS 2018

From time to time, SOS gives a President's Award to an individual who is considered to have made a particularly notable contribution to the Society and to ornithology in Shropshire. During 2018 there were two recipients and we were delighted to make two awards, one to **John Tucker** and one to **Allan Dawes**.

**John Tucker** has spent an enormous amount of time on SOS work; as well as contributing to the work of the Conservation Sub-committee for many years, he has initiated and undertaken much survey and research work on the County's birds, contributed to bird atlas work, to Shropshire Bird Reports, and to many local and national surveys, and is a member of the working group of the forthcoming avifauna, "The Birds of Shropshire". He has produced (together with his brother, Peter) the "Historical Ornithology of Shropshire", known as



“Histo” – a valuable and unique resource of the complete history of ornithology in Shropshire (see [www.pgt7.uk/sos](http://www.pgt7.uk/sos)). John’s award was presented in October at a meeting of the Conservation Sub-committee, by our President, Peter Deans, in the presence of members of that Sub-committee, and of our Chairman, John Arnfield.



**Allan Dawes** has also dedicated a huge amount of time to SOS work, been an active member of the Conservation Sub-committee for many years, organised fieldwork and contributed to bird atlas work, to Shropshire Bird Reports, and to many local and national surveys, and is also a member of the working group of the forthcoming avifauna. He has recently retired as BTO representative for Shropshire, a role he undertook

with great dedication and which he held for at least 25 years. Allan’s award was presented at a small ceremony at Venus Pool in November, prior to our annual autumn work party. The award was presented by our President, Peter Deans, with members of the Conservation Sub-committee and several work party volunteers present.

Both John and Allan have made a huge contribution to SOS and to ornithology in Shropshire, with their expertise and dedication, and these awards, engraved crystal glassware, are a small thank you to them in recognition of all their hard work over the years.

**Photos: Helen J Griffiths**

## Accountant(s) Wanted Urgently

You will recall that Jean Rickard took on the role of Treasurer of the Society following the retirement in 2017 of Brian Andrews (who had held the post for 25 years). Jean is the first to admit that she is not an accountant and does not have the skills necessary for the preparation of the Society’s Annual Accounts. In consequence, Brian has continued to lend a hand. This is not a satisfactory arrangement for the long-term and we do need a volunteer to help Jean out.

Brian in his role as Company Secretary is now preparing the Agenda for the forthcoming AGM and it would be helpful, if there is someone out there willing to assist, if they would in the first instance contact Brian on 01952 727531.

You will also note that the heading is in plural terms. Roy Westerman has acted as Independent Examiner for even longer and has indicated that the 2019 Accounts are to his last! Clearly that is not an onerous task but it is an essential job to be undertaken once a year. We need a replacement who has a suitable accountancy qualification.

Anyone out there please come forward. Again contact Brian on 01952 727531. Many thanks in anticipation!!

**Brian Andrews**

## Curlew Projects 2018, and plans for 2019

### SWT / SOS Appeal

An appeal letter signed by the Presidents of SWT and SOS was distributed with the December 2017 and March 2018 issues of the Buzzard. Including the Upper Onny Wildlife Group appeal (which was transferred to the SWT/SOS Appeal), a donation of £2,500 from SOS, and Gift Aid, the appeal raised enough to fund nest protection and chick monitoring work in Upper Clun and Clew Hill.

### Results in 2018

#### **i. Upper Clun and Clew Hill**

Three nests were found and fenced in each area. None of these nests were wholly predated, although two eggs were lost from one nest, presumably to Crows. Fences were totally successful in protecting nests from mammalian predators, including foxes.

Seven chicks from two nests in the Upper Clun were radio-tagged. The remains of three chicks were found, and they had been predated; based on field signs, it is likely that a Buzzard, an unknown avian predator and a fox each accounted for one of the three. The other four were probably predated, but the tags were carried out of range or underground, and not found.

In Clew Hill, definitely one, probably two, of the chicks from one brood fledged, but none of the other radio-tagged chicks are believed to have fledged. Three chicks were radio-tagged: one was definitely predated by a Buzzard, and two were probably predated, but the tags were carried out of range or underground

The tags that were carried out of range or underground may have been taken by either avian or mammalian predators. If the latter, fox is most likely, although not the only possibility.

Predation rates of the nests that were not found and fenced appear to be rather less than that in the Curlew Country project area. In the Upper Clun, territorial activity was observed at four further nests into mid- or late June, suggesting that eggs hatched, and there was evidence of hatched young at one further site in Clee Hill.

## ii. **Curlew Country**

The “Curlew Country” project concentrated on the trialling of Headstarting in 2018. This involves removing eggs from Curlew nests, incubating them artificially, rearing chicks in captivity, and then releasing them into the wild after they fledge, at or near a potential breeding site. It is considered to be a short term measure to try to boost the Curlew population while discovering the appropriate measures to improve breeding success to the level needed for recovery. Under a Natural England licence, eggs were collected and 21 curlew chicks were raised, fledged and released. While this has been a successful technique with Spoonbilled Sandpiper and, closer to home, Black-tailed Godwit in East Anglia, it is not known whether our local Curlew chicks will survive and return to their natal area to breed; if they do it will probably not be until they are two years old. However, if it does work it will lead to a significant short-term increase in the local Curlew population and it is important to continue the trial.



## iii. **Monitoring by Community Wildlife Groups**

There are now 10 CWGs, which between them cover 137 of Shropshire’s 870 tetrads, and monitor well over half of the tetrads that had evidence of breeding Curlews in the 2008-13 Atlas. Over 270 participants spent over 2,200 hours on these surveys in 2018, very clear evidence of concern in the local community about the decline of Curlews here, and their support for Curlew conservation. Between them the groups located around 80-100 Curlew territories (including about 40 in the area covered by “Curlew Country”), the vast majority of the County population. SOS members are asked to help with this in 2019 (see article on “Getting Involved”, elsewhere in this “Buzzard”).

## iv. **Detailed Reports**

**Full project reports for the work in the Upper Clun and Clee Hill, and an overview of all the work, can be found on the SOS website**

**[www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/)**

**Further information about the headstarting project can be found on**

**[www.curlewcountry.org](http://www.curlewcountry.org)**

## Plans for 2019

We need more information on where recently-hatched chicks move to because maintaining and improving, and possibly re-creating, the right sort of habitat is the key to long-term success. We also need to have a better understanding of the different predation pressures, and their timing, which are not uniform across the County (hatching rates of unfenced nests appear to be higher in both Upper Clun and Clee Hill, compared to the Curlew Country area).

No scientific study relies on results from one year, which might be atypical for many reasons, and 2018 was certainly atypical. The “Beast from the east” and subsequent cold weather in early spring stopped the grass growing to hide nests and delayed the breeding cycle of invertebrate food, while the following hot, dry weather dried the ground and again affected food supplies. As a consequence, the 2018 project work in Clun and Clee needs to be repeated, but it can only proceed in full if a further appeal raises sufficient funds.

It also appears likely that Curlew Country will apply for funding to continue their headstarting project.

While a low-key appeal will continue into the future, as this is inevitably a very long term project, it is not expected that appeals to fund fieldwork will be made beyond this year.

**The SOS Board agreed on 23 January 2019 to continue the appeal to fund further work in 2019, and to contribute £2,500 from its own funds.**

## Appeal

It is difficult to be precise on what the appeal will fund, as it partly depends on how much is raised, and then it will be necessary to agree the best use of the funds with SWT. Nevertheless, SOS priorities are to continue:-

1. the Upper Clun and Clee Hill projects, so we have information from three separate and different areas of the County, not just one (the SOS contribution has been earmarked specifically for these two areas)
2. Curlew Country’s headstarting project

Capital equipment bought in 2018 can be reused, so repeating the projects in Upper Clun and Clee Hill in full will cost about £7,000 in each area. Costs of the headstarting project, and funds available from other sources, are not yet known. Therefore, hopefully the appeal will raise several thousand pounds.

**All charities and conservation organisations are finding funding difficult to come by in these times of austerity and uncertainty. Shropshire's Curlews are in dire straits and this important work is dependent on funds generated by, and from, local residents, SOS members and local Conservation charities. The Appeal letter sent out last year concluded "If, like us, you think Shropshire will be a much poorer place without Curlews please support our appeal".**

**Please donate if you feel you can. See [www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/appeals](http://www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/appeals).**

**Leo Smith**

## Grade 1 Swift Bricks?

Built in 1797 as the first iron framed building in the world, Shrewsbury Flax Mill was a very successful and profitable producer of thread until the middle of the 19th century. In 1897 the building was adapted for use as a maltings for the brewing industry and it was at this time that vents were put into the walls to help provide adequate air flow for the malting of the barley. The maltings closed in 1934 but was used again for malt production between 1948 and 1987 when the site finally closed. It was during this latter phase of its use as a malting that the inside of the vents was sealed off – between 1950 and 1980. The innovative construction of this building paved the way for the skyscrapers of our modern world and it is recognised as one of the most important buildings from the industrial revolution. Hence its classification as a Grade 1 listed building and the current involvement by Historic England to bring the building back into a good state and see it used again.

What's this got to do with Swifts? Well, the closing of the vents just on the inside, together with the fortuitous wide spacing of the wooden slats on the external face of the vents, meant that around 25 Swift bricks had been created sometime between 1950 to 1980. We have no idea when the birds spotted this potential but in 1999, when Brian Martin was asked to survey the site, at least 11 pairs were observed using the vents on the west side of the Main Mill and vents on both the north and south sides of the adjoining Cross Mill.

In 2007, to prevent the collapse of the building, extensive scaffolding was erected on the Main Mill building which effectively prevented access to nest sites. However, when Shrewsbury Swift Group surveyed the site in 2015 ten vents on the Cross Mill were seen to be in use by Swifts – which was very good news. The group have surveyed the site annually and it is good to see that the number of Swifts there is pretty stable, with up to 14 vents on the Cross Mill being used by Swifts in the last two years.

In spring 2017 more than 20 Swift boxes were put up on an adjacent building on the site in mitigation and although the birds have investigated them, they were not observed being used during surveys in 2017 or 2018.

Much effort to secure the significant funding needed for this project finally allowed work to restore the Main Mill to start in 2017 and after 11 years(!) the scaffolding has, in just the last month, been taken down. Shrewsbury Swift Group, together with Brian Martin who has retained a very keen interest in the site since the initial survey all those years ago, visited the site very recently and were pleased to see, in addition to the 13 active nest sites seen in 2018 on the Cross Mill, there are a further 15 vents available for Swifts on the Main Mill. These have been lightly restored by Historic England but the original wood from around 1897 is in good condition and has been retained and the significant gap over the top slat kept.

A section of the Main Mill after scaffolding removed in 2018. There are 15 potential nest sites here in the renovated vents.



2019 is going to be an exciting year to see if the Swifts find and use the newly available nesting sites on the Main Mill that they have not been able to access for so long. Could these be the first ever internal Swift bricks? – and Grade 1 listed at that!

We would like to thank Historic England and especially Gabriella Smith and Nick Hill who, despite having a very serious conservation project on their hands to rescue the whole site, have been willing to let Swift group members on site and have shown much interest themselves in the use of these Grade 1 Swift boxes by the Swifts each summer



*Thanks to Dick Newell of Action for Swifts for the model above showing what we think the nest sites look like.*

**Peta Sams**

<mailto:shropshireswifts@gmail.com>

<https://facebook.com/groups/shropshireswiftgroup/>

## Shropshire's Duck Decoys

Peter Brown has recently published *Shropshire Duck Decoys*, a 14-page account of the five or six decoys; they were at Oakley Park near Ludlow, Sundorne Castle NE of Shrewsbury, near Whittington on the Perry, Hawkstone Hall and Onslow Hall west of Shrewsbury, Peter allows as number six that at Lymore Hall near Montgomery, just beyond the county border. Most

were active until the end of the nineteenth century, one of them certainly still in use in 1950 when a Mallard, ringed at Slimbridge was controlled (captured alive and released), 11 days later, at Oakley Park.

Peter concentrates on the decoys rather than the birds they caught but the paper is a valuable contribution to his subject.

The paper appears in *Shropshire History and Archaeology*, the *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society*. 93:7-20 and it will be available on Histo soon.

**John Tucker**

## Auction

Internet auction of copy 30/30 of Charles Gawen's Journal Of Field Ornithology, Vol.II, 1888-1911.

The process raised £45 and that sum has been sent to the BTO's Cuckoo Satellite Tracking project. The donor wishes to remain anonymous and is thanked.

**John Tucker**

## Of the Hoatzin and the Nene

### ***The Ascent of Birds* (2018).**

John Reilly. Pelagic Publishing ISBN 978-1-78427-169-5

I have chosen just two examples of the birds discussed by John Reilly in his fascinating book, which he subtitles '*How Modern science is revealing their story*'. He relates aspects of the recent advances in the understanding of the evolution of the 10,000 or so bird species in the World today. The story goes back to before the extinction of the dinosaurs and to recent DNA studies which have revolutionised our understanding. He illuminates the story with many fascinating digressions into evolutionary biology in a book which, such is the speed at which DNA studies have moved, could not have been written even five years ago. I cannot commend the book more highly.

If you are not aware of the Hoatzin, *Opisthocomus hoazin*, do look it up. It is surely one of the most bizarre and primitive-looking birds and its ecology is equally singular. Reilly gives many details of just how odd the bird is. To see one you have to visit the river corridors of Brazil and I suspect that one or two SOS members have been fortunate enough to do that. The ancestors of Hoatzins once wandered Europe. DNA research in the last five years shows that they evolved on *this* side of the Atlantic, some 30 million years ago. How then is it that are now only on the other side of the ocean?

You may guess that it was in the days of Gondwanaland, before the Americas moved east and the Atlantic opened up. Perhaps some pre-Hoatzin birds were present on what has become South America, and they are still there. But that is not so because they evolved *after* the split and remained on this side of the Atlantic, in Eurasia and Africa – where their fossils have been found. Yet the Hoatzin now occurs only in South America. They could not have flown across, like the founding group of Cattle Egrets in 1955, blown over on a storm and settled in Costa Rica where their numbers are increasing. The Hoatzin family, unlike Cattle Egret, have always had very weak flight muscles yet they made the Atlantic crossing.

The answer is that a few pre-Hoatzins rafted across the ocean on huge floating islands of soil and vegetation swept out from west African rivers. The phenomenon is rare but not unknown today. It accounts for the occurrence in the Americas of all the Monkeys, Geckos and Blindsnakes, a few of which also made the trip at some stage over millions of years, ample time for such rare events and subsequent evolution. You may then ask, why are there no Hoatzin look-alikes left on this side of the Atlantic and there is an answer which the book provides.

The Nene or Hawaiian Goose, *Branta sandvicensis*, was immortalised by Sir Peter Scott who did so much to save the species from extinction. The species' DNA reveals that they are descendants of Canada Geese, some of which found their way to the Hawaii islands perhaps three million years ago and evolved, in their splendid isolation, into the Nene.

**John Tucker**

## Request for Records

Thanks to the great work by the dedicated team of species account writers, we will be substantially up to date with the Annual Bird Report when you receive this edition of The Buzzard. You will receive the 2016 Bird Report with this mailing and the 2017 Report with the May Buzzard at the absolute latest. This means that seven reports will have been produced in the last two and a bit years. A great achievement.

We are already gearing up and preparing to produce the 2018 edition and will be distributing the 2018 records to the species account writers as you are reading this! We will have an absolute cut-off date of 31 March 2019. Any records submitted, either into Birdtrack or to the County Recorder after this date may not be included in the report, so please make every effort to submit your records before this date. If an observation is a national or county rarity, a description with supporting evidence, eg a photograph, will be needed. The current list of County Rarities is given below.

Anecdotal information about your sightings will help for the species account writers to write more interesting and varied accounts each year, so behavioural or other notes will be a gratefully received.

## But we would prefer observers to enter records directly into Birdtrack as Ian will do so anyway!

**Ian Grant, County Bird Recorder ([Soscountybirdrecorder@gmail.com](mailto:Soscountybirdrecorder@gmail.com))**  
**Gerry Thomas, Annual Bird Report Editor**

## County Rarities requiring description and supporting evidence, January 2019

*For species with an asterisk only those records specified require a description*

Tundra Swan	Red-necked Phalarope	White Stork	Shorelark
Taiga Bean Goose	Grey Phalarope	Glossy Ibis	Wood Lark
Tundra Bean Goose	Kentish Plover	Eurasian Spoonbill	Red-rumped Swallow
Red-breasted Goose	Pomarine Skua	Red-necked Grebe	Citrine Wagtail
Brent Goose	Arctic Skua	Slavonian Grebe	Common Nightingale
Greater White-fronted Goose	Long-tailed Skua	Black-necked Grebe	Bluethroat
Ruddy Shelduck	Great Skua	Black Kite	Red-Flanked Bluetail
American Wigeon	Ring-billed Gull	Honey Buzzard	Black Redstart
Green-winged Teal	Iceland Gull	Osprey	Barred Warbler
<b>Garganey*</b> (all records except of males in breeding plumage)	Caspian Gull	Marsh Harrier	Dartford Warbler
Smew	Little Gull	<b>Hen Harrier *</b> (descriptions are not required for birds seen in the winter months October to April)	Marsh Warbler
Scaup	Kittiwake	Montagu's Harrier	<b>Cetti's Warbler *</b> (records away from known locations)
Red-crested Pochard	Glaucous Gull	Rough-legged Buzzard	Blyths Reed Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Puffin	Golden Eagle	Icterine Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Razorbill	White-tailed Eagle	Melodious Warbler
Eider	Guillemot	Common Crane	Siberian Chiffchaff
Velvet Scoter	Black Guillemot	Spotted Crake	Dusky Warbler
Surf Scoter	Little Auk	Corn Crake	Radde's Warbler

Long-tailed Duck	*Black Tern (Birds in non-breeding plumage)	Quail * (away from known locations)	Greenish Warbler
Red-breasted Merganser	Sandwich Tern	Stone Curlew	Yellow-browed Warbler
Ptarmigan	Little Tern	Black-winged Stilt	Firecrest
Black Grouse	White-winged Black Tern	Pied Avocet	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Capercaillie	Roseate Tern	Eurasian Dotterel	Chough
Red-throated Diver	European Turtle Dove	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Rosy Starling
Black-throated Diver	Rock Dove	White-rumped Sandpiper	Golden Oriole
Great Northern Diver	Long-eared Owl	American Golden Plover	Common Rosefinch
White-billed Diver	Short-eared Owl * (away from Whixall and Long Mynd)	Grey Plover	Twite
Fulmar	European Nightjar * (may require description based on location)	Red Knot	Water Pipit
Manx Shearwater	European Bee-eater	Little Stint	Rock Pipit
Great shearwater	Alpine Swift	Temminck's Stint	Richards Pipit
Cory's Shearwater	Hoopoe	Pectoral Sandpiper	Serin
Leach's Storm Petrel	Eurasian Wryneck	Purple Sandpiper	Hawfinch
European Storm Petrel	Red-footed Falcon	Curlew Sandpiper	Common Redpoll
Wilson's Storm Petrel	Red Backed Shrike	Bar-tailed Godwit	Coue's Arctic Redpoll
Gannet	Great Grey Shrike	Spotted Redshank	Parrot Crossbill
European Shag	Woodchat Shrike	Spotted Sandpiper	Scottish Crossbill
Bittern	Hooded Crow	Wood Sandpiper	Snow Bunting
Great Egret	Crested Tit	Ruddy Turnstone	Ortolan Bunting
Cattle Egret	Bearded Tit	Sanderling	Lapland Bunting
Purple Heron	Penduline Tit	Little Bunting	

## BTO Surveys

### Breeding Bird Survey

Arguably the most important survey for the BTO is the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). There is always a need for additional surveyors, so please do get in

touch if you can identify common bird species by sight and sound and would like to use your skills to help contribute to national survey efforts.

I have a site that has become vacant this year down in the south of the county, between Highley and Cleobury Mortimer. It is one of the longest running BBS sites and has a huge amount of continuous data (which is of high value for analysis) and so I am very keen to recruit someone to cover it. Please do get in touch if you can help.

## Farm Woodland Bird Survey

This is an interesting one. This survey is designed to look at how birds colonise newly planted woodland stands in farmland area. There is a new webpage with an interactive map showing locations of these woodlands. They are often quite small and sometimes there are multiple stands close together. This does mean they could be relatively quick to survey – perhaps only 20-30 minutes. The method will be a version of the Common Bird Census territory mapping, which involves plotting bird sightings onto scale maps with behavioural codes.

Please have a read on the new survey webpage if you are interested and please have a look at the interactive map to see if there are any locations close to you: <https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/english-farm-woodland-bird-survey>

## Willow Tit Survey

As you probably know I have been coordinating surveys for Willow Tit in Shropshire for the past three years. In 2019 and 2020, the RSPB are coordinating a national survey. Our data will feed back into this, but I am also keen to continue to contribute as I think Shropshire is an important county for this species. The RSPB survey method is identical to that which we have been using already and results will be shared with me in order that I can continue to update local records.

If you are keen to help with this please get in contact with Simon Wotton at the RSPB who is coordinating this survey ([simon.wotton@rspb.org.uk](mailto:simon.wotton@rspb.org.uk)).

## Birds in Churches and Burial Grounds

I have been asked to share the following message from the Caring for God's Acre group about birds and other wildlife in churchyards:

*“The charity Caring for God’s Acre is working with several partners including the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) and both the Church of England and Church in Wales to improve biological recording within burial grounds of all types, sizes and denominations. Burial grounds can be absolute gems for ancient trees, historic walls, monuments, lichens, fungi and flowery grassland, all of which in turn support invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, mammals and of course BIRDS! As well as feeding into the NBN Atlas and local recording systems, we will use these records to put information onto the Church Heritage Record; the system used when planning building or repair work within churches and churchyards. In this way, we hope to influence thinking and avoid uninformed decisions.*

*We would love to receive any records of birds in burial grounds, in particular Spotted Flycatcher and nesting Swift. We recommend joining our iRecord activity or submitting records via the recording form on the Caring for God’s Acre website: <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/our-beautiful-burial-grounds-project/share-your-records/>”*

**Jonathan Groom**  
**BTO Regional Organiser for Shropshire**

## YOUR CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED

### Survey Work in the 2019 Breeding Season

#### Community Wildlife Groups (including the “Save our Curlews” campaign)

In 2019, eleven Community Wildlife Groups will be carrying out surveys looking for Lapwing and Curlew, and a number of other threatened species. This usually involves three half-day visits, around 1 April, 1 May and mid-June.

**All the groups need more helpers, and SOS members will be especially welcome.**

The surveys are easy, simple instructions are provided, and fieldwork training is available for anyone that wants it. The results are used to promote local conservation. In particular, they pinpoint Curlew territories to help the “Save our Curlews” campaign to locate and protect nests.

For further information about the “Save our Curlews” campaign, see the article elsewhere in this issue of The Buzzard, and [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/)

The area covered by each CWG is shown overlain on the Curlew Atlas distribution map on the *Save our Curlews* part of the SOS website (the Kemp Valley area is not shown, as there are no Curlews there, but it is south of the Upper Onny, and east of the Upper Clun, CWG areas).

A meeting to present the results of the 2018 survey, and make plans for 2019, including deciding who surveys which square, is being held in most areas, as shown in the table. Two groups have already held their meetings, but contact details are listed.

<b>Community Wildlife Group</b>	<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Tanat to Perry Oswestry south	5 March	Morda Village Hall
Upper Onny	11 March	The Crown, Wentnor
Abdon	13 March	Abdon Village Hall
Camlad Valley	18 March	Horse & Jockey, Churchstoke
Strettons area	19 March	Methodist Church Hall, Watling St, Church Stretton
Three Parishes Weston Rhyn, St Martin's and Gobowen	21 March	Weston Rhyn Church Recreation rooms, 22a Clee Hill High Street
Clee Hill	25 March	Hill High Street
Rea / Hope Valleys	26 March	Minsterley Village Hall
Severn-Vyrnwy Confluence	contact Michael Wallace 01743 369035	
Upper Clun	contact Michelle Frater 01588 640909	
Kemp Valley	contact via website	

All meetings start at 7.30 pm. Contact details for each CWG can be found on the website [www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk](http://www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk)

The Strettons area project has the active involvement and support of the SOS Church Stretton Branch. SOS members can make an important contribution to the CWGs and the conservation of these birds, while enjoying their hobby in superb countryside. All welcome.

## 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 4 April and 16 May, please. Counts will also be held on Monday or Tuesday evenings between these dates. They will update the results of previous annual counts. The

results help the National Trust's management of the heathland for this *Amber List* species.

We didn't have enough helpers in 2018, and need more this year, so if you've thought about doing this in previous years, but not done so, please help this year.

People who have helped before will receive a report of the 2018 survey results, and will be contacted nearer the time. New helpers are invited to a project briefing at 7.30pm on Thursday 28 March 2018 at the National Trust's Chalet Pavilion in Carding Mill Valley. The methodology is simple, and 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](http://www.shropshirebirds.com) or contact Pete Carty, the National Trust's Countryside Manager [Peter.Carty@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:Peter.Carty@nationaltrust.org.uk) 01694 725003

## Red Kite

In 2018, 25 nests were found, and five additional pairs. 18 were successful, producing 25 fledged young. Since the first successful breeding in modern times, in 2006, around 300 young are known to have flown from Shropshire nests. Seven young were tagged in the nest, making a total of 203.

The annual report has been delayed, but will be posted on the SOS website [www.shropshirebirds.com](http://www.shropshirebirds.com) in the near future.

We are still trying to find all the nest sites, primarily to look for tagged birds. If you see evidence of breeding (a pair together, display, stick carrying, or one going into a wood, please let us know ASAP.

## Other Birds of Prey

In addition to Kites, the Raptor Group is looking for Hobby, Merlin, Goshawk and Kestrel. If anyone knows of a nest site of any of the target species, or finds one in future, or finds other evidence of breeding, we would be grateful for details, in the strictest confidence, please. We are working with the Shropshire Ringing Group on a Kestrel nestbox scheme, so records of all Kestrels, not necessarily nest sites, are wanted too, please

For further information see the website [www.shropshirebirds.com](http://www.shropshirebirds.com), or contact the Convenor, Leo Smith (01694 720296 [leo@leosmith.org.uk](mailto:leo@leosmith.org.uk)).

# The Birds of Shropshire

The content of the book, described in *The Buzzard* in October, is now being drawn together for submission to the publisher. Publication is planned for the late summer 2019. A pre-publication offer and order form should be included in the next *Buzzard* mailing.

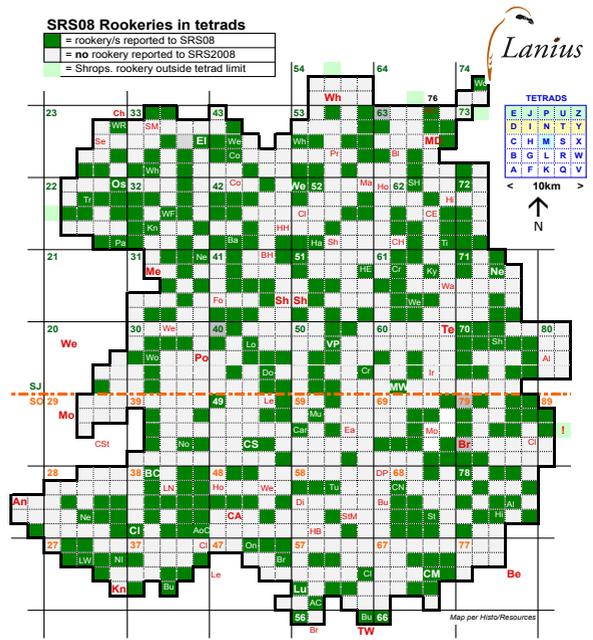
Leo Smith

## Shropshire Rookeries Survey 2019

The survey this year seeks to record all possible rookeries and the number of nests in each, for comparison with what was recorded in SRS08. How is the population faring? There is an enclosure about it with this issue.

The accompanying map of all Shropshire's 870 tetrads shows in green those which had rookeries reported during SRS08. In grey are those without. SRS08 was not a systematic survey requiring that every tetrad should be searched. I accepted all records contributed and in the event 536 were reported from 313 tetrads, by around 160 people. The last Atlas project, which was systematic, requiring visits to every tetrad, confirmed breeding in an additional 163 tetrads, some by recording the presence of young birds of the year as opposed to actual rookeries.

I examined the implications in "So how many rookeries do we have?" in *Buzzard* 231:8-9 in 2013. The purpose of this map is to emphasise that in SRS08 rookeries were reported from just 313, 36%, of the tetrads. The figure including the Atlas records makes it 476 occupied tetrads but that is still only 54.7% of the county. The other half of the County is seemingly without rookeries. How many rookeries hide, yet unrecorded, in the remaining 45.3% of the tetrads – close to half the land area of the County?



In 2013 I postulated that the true number of rookeries was, then, close to 1,000. I am casting the survey net very wide this year asking for records from the public and starting here with the key audience, SOS members. Please help by submitting every rookery you come across, to [www@lanius.org.uk/rook](mailto:www@lanius.org.uk/rook). The results will appear in a *Buzzard* at the end of this year.

**John Tucker**

## Field Trips

### **Weekend Field Trip Report – North Norfolk Coast 18 to 21 October 2018**

#### ***Thursday, 18 October 2018***

A group of 16 met up at Lackford Lakes Nature Reserve between Mildenhall and Bury St. Edmunds, run by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. It was a first visit for the group to this reserve, former sand and gravel workings. The Trust have recently been able to purchase further land adjacent to the reserve, following a generous donation, and this is being developed to attract Stone Curlews in future years.

We started by visiting the Winter Hide, overlooking the Sailing Pool, followed by visits to Paul's Hide and Bernard's Hide overlooking the Slough, then onto Steggall's Hide, overlooking Plover's Lake and Wilson's Flood. Amongst the birds seen were Black-headed Gull, Blue Tit, Buzzard, Canada Goose, Carrion Crow, Coot, Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Grey Heron, Jackdaw, Jay, Kestrel, Lapwing, Little Egret, Little Grebe, Long-tailed Tit, Magpie, Mallard, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Pheasant, Pied Wagtail, Snipe and Teal. The highlight was a Barn Owl, seen from Paul's Hide, which flew into a reed bed at the Slough, where it appeared to have caught some prey, which it consumed, before flying up and away. There were good views of Kingfisher from Bernard's Hide, as well as Snipe, and at Steggall's Hide, the group were serenaded by a Cetti's Warbler which was positioned above the hide. We learned that earlier in the day an Otter had been seen from this hide over Wilson's Flood, but we were not lucky this time, Approximately 38 species were seen on our visit and we felt that this had been a good start to the weekend.

#### ***Friday, 19 October 2019***

We all assembled at RSPB Titchwell at about 10am. On the way to the Island Hide several Greenfinches, and Goldfinches were seen at the feeding station. Walking further down the path, and looking back towards the road, we were pleased to see a great many Pink-footed Geese grazing in a field near the

entrance to the reserve. Further along the path, Thornham Grazing Marsh pool was completely dry, probably as a result of the very dry summer. Amongst the reed beds to the right, however, Teal and Mallard were noted, as well as Marsh Harrier flying over. The majority of the group stopped off at the Island Hide, scanning the scrape and adding Avocet, Bar and Black-tailed Godwit, Black-headed Gull, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Dunlin, Little Grebe, Great-crested Grebe, Grey Plover, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Greylag Goose, Gadwall, Pochard, Redshank, Ruff, Shelduck, Shoveler, Tufted Duck and Wigeon. Further along the path, we watched flocks of Brent Geese flying in, probably arriving after migration. At the Parrinder Hide, we worked hard to see a very reclusive Spotted Redshank, and Coot, Moorhen, Common Gull, Starling, Mute Swan, Pied Wagtail, and Curlew were also present. Over on the marsh, Skylark were seen and heard, as well as Reed Bunting. On arriving at the seashore, the beach and sea were scanned and revealed Gannet, Turnstone, Sanderling, Oystercatcher, Eider, and Great Black-backed Gull. A leisurely return towards the reception centre brought part of the group to a huddle of birders by a tree near the Island Hide. In the tree, flitting about and clearly seen by some, if not all, was a Yellow-browed Warbler, a great addition to the list. Members took advantage of the benches by the reed beds, and were treated to a Red Kite, and accompanied by a cacophony of thousands of Pink-footed Geese leaving the field and flying over the reserve towards their roosting sites. It was definitely one of the best times for the group to see and hear these lovely birds flying over at such close quarters. And then to add to the fun, a couple of male Bearded Tits decided to show themselves, much to the delight of one member who had never seen them so close. As well as these, other smaller birds were noted including Chaffinch, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Dunnock, and Redwing.

At Choseley Barns, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Magpie, Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Pheasant, Woodpigeon and Yellowhammer were added to the list, and pleasing large flocks of Brent Geese, Pink-footed Geese, Lapwing and Golden Plover flying across the fields. Several members were delighted to be able to watch at least ten hares in the fields near the barns.

It was a lovely end to a lovely day, and the group retired to the Jolly Sailor at Brancaster Staithe for a well-earned drink and meal.

### ***Saturday, 20 October 2019***

NWT Cley Marshes was the venue for the next day's jaunt. First, the three hides (Avocet, Daukes's and Teal) overlooking Whitwell, Simmonds' and Pat's Scrapes.

From these, plenty of birds were seen including Avocet, Black-headed Gulls, Black-tailed Godwit, Canada Goose, Coot, Cormorant, Dunlin, Gadwall, Grey Heron, Greylag Goose, Lapwing, Linnet, Little Egret, Mallard, Meadow Pipit,

Pied Wagtail, Pintail, Redshank, Ringed Plover, Ruff and Snipe, as well as the only Green Sandpiper of the weekend. We then moved off to the North Hide, which overlooks the North Scrape. Here, Marsh Harrier were noted and then the cacophony of Pink-footed Geese, as several hundred took flight to the delight of all concerned and landed right in front of the hide. It was such a pleasure to watch them taking long drinks, having a bathe, and preening themselves. After about an hour they started to fly out towards the nearby fields to feed. Also noted from here were skeins of Brent Geese flying over. Those of us who headed towards East Bank, to an open hide overlooking Arnold's Marsh could see effect the summer drought had had on the reserve. The marsh to the right of the bank was a great deal dryer than usual and so there were fewer birds, but from the open hide, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Cormorant, Curlew, and Mute Swan were apparent. A sea-watch added Gannet to the list, and a Stonechat along the path on our return to the Visitor Centre. We then returned to Wells after another good day's birding, with drinks and a meal at Ollies' in Wells rounding off events.

### ***Sunday, 21 October 2019***

This was the last day and after breakfast everybody dispersed, to enjoy an extra day on the coast, to have a leisurely drive home, or to visit WWT Welney to enjoy another day's birding before making their way home later in the day.

As we approached Welney, we stopped to watch several Whooper Swans and a flock of Fieldfares feeding together on the fields. The visit to Welney began with a coffee-break when we were treated to excellent views of up to about 25 Tree Sparrows, as well as House Sparrows, at the feeders just outside the café. After this treat, we started out over the bridge to the hides. Low water levels again appeared to be affecting the numbers of birds present. Visits to several hides revealed Barnacle Goose, Black-tailed Godwit, Mute Swan, Whooper Swan, Canada Goose, Coot, Cormorant, Egyptian Goose, Gadwall, Mallard, Teal, Lapwing, Ruff, Shoveler and Wigeon. We also heard Cetti's Warbler (as we had at all the reserves visited on this trip), Water Rail and Kingfisher were present, as well as Kestrel, Marsh Harrier, and a Great White Egret to round-off the day.

The weekend had been a great success, with a total of 98 species seen, including spectacular views of Pink-footed and Brent Geese, and with Barn Owl, Bearded Tit, Yellow-browed Warbler and Tree Sparrow also amongst the highlights. The weather was glorious, with plenty of bright sunshine, wonderful light, wide blue skies with no clouds, and not a sign of rain.

## **Field Trip Report – WWT Slimbridge**

### **Sunday, 9 December 2018**

An early start for a group of 33 for the coach trip to WWT Slimbridge. The temperature was 10° C on arrival at 10.30 am, dropping to 5°C during the afternoon. On arrival the group split up to explore the reserve.

Part of the group, started out along the arm which ends with the Holden Tower Hide, which overlooks the reserve towards the Severn Estuary. From here, we were delighted to see the results of a great deal of work by WWT, in that at least 11 Common Cranes were sighted feeding in these fields. WWT have captive-bred these birds, releasing them on the Somerset Levels, but quite a few have returned to Slimbridge, and it was a real pleasure to see these lovely birds. Other birds noted were Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Oystercatcher, flocks of Golden Plover amongst the Lapwing, which at one point were put to flight by a Peregrine, at least 45 Black-tailed Godwit and a Merlin. Also seen were Meadow Pipit and Pied Wagtail, as well as Black-headed, Lesser Black-backed and Herring Gulls. From the hides, working back towards the reception centre, other birds noted included large numbers of Wigeon, the largest ever recorded at Slimbridge (a WeBS count - BTO Wetland Bird Survey - had been carried on the day of our visit). Other sightings included Bewick's Swans, Pintail, Ruff, Teal, Curlew, a Buzzard perched in a hedge, Pochard, Shoveler, Great-crested Grebe, Tufted Duck, one Green Sandpiper, and several Snipe, and distant brief view of a Roe Deer. Along the way, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Blackbird, Feral Pigeon, and Magpie were noted, amongst other small birds.

At the Kingfisher Hide, picnics were consumed whilst we enjoyed the views. Over the fields, White-fronted Goose and Barnacle Goose were added to the list along with Shelduck, Mallard, Gadwall, and Cormorant. At the feeding station, Chaffinch, Dunnock, Pheasant, House Sparrow, Robin, Moorhen, Jackdaw were all recorded. Back towards the reception centre at the Zeiss Hide, Grey Heron, Water Rail, Rook, Carrion Crow, Redshank and Linnet were added to the list. As the light was beginning to fade, we moved towards the Penge Observation Room, the heated area where we were able to watch the wildfowl being fed. It was interesting to note how the Bewick's & resident Mute Swans interacted, with territory being argued over, and to see how the Bewick's Swans, in particular, behaved as they gradually flew in and gathered absolutely on time to get their evening treats.

Altogether, 59 species were seen or heard. A really good day.

***Sue Brealey***

## Bird Notes

**October, November, December 2018**

**Barnacle Goose** One was present on Chetwynd Pool on 22 Nov.

**Pink-footed Goose (*right*)** One was reported at Priorslee Flash on 2 Oct, then singles, both juveniles, were seen intermittently at Venus Pool between 13 Oct and 21 Dec.



**White-fronted Goose** Five, (three adults and two juveniles) were present at Venus Pool on 21 Dec.

**Whooper Swan** The first report came from Venus Pool where one was seen on 16 Oct, then twelve were present there on 26 Oct. Ten were present at Shavington Park between 4 and 11 Nov, 22 at Cae Howel/Melverley on 27 Dec, and six were seen regularly at Coundlane swan field from 27 Dec.

**Egyptian Goose** One was present intermittently at Venus Pool between 20 Oct and 30 Dec. Two were seen at various Meres in the Ellesmere area on 26 and 30 Nov, then five were present at Edgerley on 17 Dec.

**Mandarin Duck** Ten were seen on Dowles Brook, Wyre Forest on 17 Dec and up to four were present at The Mere, Ellesmere during Nov/Dec.

**Shoveler** Reported throughout the period, the highest count was at Chetwynd Pool, where 158 were present on 22 Nov. Other maxima were: 42 at Venus Pool on 11 Oct and 34 at Shavington Park on 10 Dec.

**Gadwall** Thirteen were present at Ellerton Mill Pond on 14 Oct and 12 at Sambrook Mill on 31 Oct. The highest counts came from Venus Pool where 28 were present on 27 Dec.

**Wigeon** Good numbers were reported at several locations, peaking towards the end of Dec. The highest counts came from: Shavington Park where 90 were present on 23 Dec, Venus Pool produced 80 on 31 Dec and at Wall Farm there were 35 on 3 Dec.

**Pintail** The highest count was eight, seen at Edgerley on 17 Dec. Three were present at Whixall canal floods on 26 Nov, a pair was present at Monkmoor Pool on 4 Dec and two drakes were at Venus Pool on 31 Dec.

**Common Teal** Joint highest counts of 220 came from Whixall canal floods on 26 Nov and Wall Farm, Kynnersley on 24 Dec. The maxima at Venus Pool was 140 on 28 Nov.

**Pochard** Seen from 29 Oct onwards with maxima at Shavington Park on 19 Nov (12), Monkmoor Pool on 4 Dec (7) and Venus Pool on 28 Dec (3).

**Common Scoter** One was reported at Colemere on 26 Nov and 2 Dec.

**Goldeneye** Reported from six sites, notably 20 present at The Mere, Ellesmere on 3 Dec.

**Goosander** Several sites had large gatherings, including: 112 at Priorslee Flash on 9 Dec, 103 at Trench Pool on 16 Dec and 54 at Colemere on 16 Nov.

**Red Grouse** Just one report received of a single at Long Mynd on 7 Oct.

**Grey Partridge** A single report of nine present at Ercall Heath on 30 Nov.

**Great Northern Diver (right)** One was found at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 30 Nov and was seen thereafter most days up to the end of Dec, although very mobile and sometimes elusive.



**Cattle Egret** One was seen daily at The Mere, Ellesmere between 28 and 31 Dec.

**Little Egret** Five were reported at Hindford near Oswestry on 22 Dec and three north of Llanymynech on 27 Dec. One was often at Venus Pool between

1 Oct and 10 Nov and other singles were seen during the quarter at Leighton, The Mere, Trench Pool, MaesburyMarsh and Aston Locks.

**Great White Egret** One or sometimes two were reported during the quarter in the Meres/Wood Lane area. Other reports, possibly one of these birds, came from Worfield and Fenns Moss.

**Marsh Harrier** One was reported at Whixall Moss on 25 Nov.

**Hen Harrier** An adult male was seen at the Long Mynd on the 18 Oct, then a ringtail was reported in the same area on 20 Oct. Another ringtail was seen at Wall Farm on 23 Oct. Further reports of a single male came from Whixall Moss between 28 Oct and 8 Dec.

**Golden Plover** Reported from seven locations; the highest counts came from Mason's Bank UC Wetland (450) on 10 Nov, Wall Farm (150+) on 28/31 Dec, and the Long Mynd (150) on 20 Oct.

**Black-tailed Godwit** A single was seen at Venus Pool between 17 and 24 Nov.

**Dunlin** One was present at Venus Pool on 17 Nov.

**Green Sandpiper** One was seen at Venus Pool on 8 Nov and 26 Dec. Other singles were seen at Choulton (River Onny) on 4 Oct, Shavington Park on 26 Nov, and Aston Locks on 31 Dec.

**Greenshank** One was present at Wood Lane on 4 Oct.

**Woodcock** Twelve records, mostly singles but included some multiples: six flushed from woodland in daytime at Shavington Park on 31 Dec, three at Kinlet on 21 Nov and three at Pontesford Hill on 25 Oct.

**Jack Snipe** One was flushed from a small pool at Eardington NR on 1 Oct. Another report came from Mason's Bank UC Wetland on 19 Oct.



**Common Snipe(left)** Reported from several locations, the highest counts came from Whixall canal floods (12) on 26 Nov, Wall Farm (11+) on 31 Dec and Venus Pool (10) on 27 Dec.

**Black-headed Gull** The largest gathering at roosts came from The Mere, Ellesmere where 4,000 were present on 26 Nov, 3,000 were present at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 6 Nov.

**Common Gull** The first record came from Venus Pool where three were seen on 28 Oct. The gull roost at The Mere, Ellesmere produced some large numbers thereafter, the largest count being c500 on 17 Dec.

**Mediterranean Gull** Single adults were present in the roost at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 13 Oct and at Melverley on 27 Dec.

**Great Black-backed Gull** An adult was seen in the roost at The Mere, Ellesmere on 16 and 21 Oct.

**Herring Gull** Most records came from The Mere, Ellesmere where 200 were in the roost on 26 Nov.

**Caspian Gull** Two reports, a first winter at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 6 Nov, then one of unspecified age at the same location on 30 Nov.

**Yellow-legged Gull** The largest count was six at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 6 Nov. One was at Wall Farm on 7 Oct. Two or occasionally three were reported from The Mere, Ellesmere from 31 Oct onwards.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** Good numbers at the usual roosts including the highest count at Chelmarsh Reservoir, where 2,800 were present on 6 Nov. The Mere, Ellesmere produced 1,600 on 16 Nov.

**Little Auk** One was found in a garden at Stapleton on 5 Dec. After being assessed by Cuan House and considered to be in good health, it was driven to Hunstanton by a member of Chelmarsh ringing group and released the following day.

**Barn Owl** Reported from thirteen locations throughout the period. Unfortunately, two of the reports related to deceased birds.

**Short-eared Owl** Three records, the first at Battlefield, Shrewsbury on 5 Dec, another was at Bentlawnt on 10 and 13 Nov, then one at Whixall Moss on 16 Nov.

**Little Owl** Two reports, one at Hilley Farm, Pentre on 24 Oct and another at Cockshutt on 22 Dec.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** Four records were received of single birds: at Whixall Moss, Sugnall, Hopton Titterhill and Whitemere.

**Merlin** Singles were seen at Tibberton (3 Oct), Venus Pool (18 Oct), Wall Farm (18 Nov), Whixall Moss (26 Nov), Caldly Bank and Newcastle on Clun (30 Dec).

**Hobby** A late juvenile was seen hunting over fields south of Condover on 14 Oct.

**Great Grey Shrike** One was reported in a road side hedge near Clunton on 25 and 31 Dec.

**Waxwing** Good numbers elsewhere in the UK but just one Shropshire record, of a single bird heard calling in Market Drayton on 21 Nov.

**Willow Tit** One or two were reported from five locations: Shavington Park, High Vinnals (to the south), Sugnall, Choulton and Norbury.

**Skylark** Three-figure flocks were reported at Crosemere (110) on 10 Dec and at Hollywaste (100+) on 4 Nov.

**Swallow** The latest reports were of two on 12 Oct then a single on 13 Oct, at Venus Pool.

**House Martin** The only record was on 1 Oct, a group of five with at least one juvenile at Wall Farm.

**Yellow Browed Warbler** One was caught and photographed in a mist net at Candy Woods on 28 Oct.

**Firecrest** One was caught and ringed at Whixall Moss on 10 Nov

**Rose-coloured Starling** A juvenile was present in a Shrewsbury garden, seen most days between 27 Oct and 11 Nov.

**Ring Ouzel** A female was reported in Carding Mill Valley on 7 Oct.

**Fieldfare** Numerous reports and the first sighting came from Sugnall on 3 Oct. The highest site counts came from Cantlop on 29 Dec (800 migrating birds) then at Dodecote where 420 were feeding in a sparsely vegetated field.

**Redwing** First arrivals were seen at Cantlop, Whixall Moss and Attingham Park on 7 Oct. The highest counts came from Cantlop where 130 were seen on 28 Oct and at Wall Farm, 120+ seen on 20 Nov.

**Black Redstart** A male was reported catching insects from the roof of grain stores at Ticklerton on 17 Oct.

**Tree Sparrow** Sixteen were reported at Oakeley Mynd on 3 Oct, up to six feeding daily at Choulton, three at Spoad Hill on 17 Nov, singles were at Moreton Say on 14 Oct and at Hilley Farm on 24 Oct.



**Brambling (left)** A huge flock of c500 were present at Croft Castle on 15 Nov, c200 were seen at Linley on 23 Dec and a flock of 100+ were reported at Brown Clee on 2 Dec. Other double-figure counts came from Romsley (20+) on 28 Dec, Ratlinghope (20) on 29 Oct and at Gorstybank (14) on 14 Nov.

**Hawfinch** Two were recorded in flight heading south-west near Conover on 21 Oct.

**Lesser Redpoll** Large numbers (100+) reported at Breakneck Bank and Meaton Lane during Dec. Whixall Moss and the nearby canal produced counts of up to 80. Counts of 30+ at Venus Pool with up to 22 counted in one tree.

**Common Crossbill** Many good counts from fourteen locations, including 60+ on Brown Clee Hill on 2 Dec, 20+ at Meaton Lane, near Kinlet during Oct/Nov, plus 10 at Stowe Hill on 30 Oct.

**Corn Bunting** Seven were on wires at Tibberton South on 5 Nov, also three at High Ercall on 20 Oct.

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

Records for Bird Notes are extracted from the quarterly Birdtrack report for Shropshire. Due to the volume of records produced, common species are not normally included. Records must be recorded by observers in Birdtrack by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month following the end of each quarter to ensure consideration for inclusion. Given the short timescale for processing 'Bird Notes' it is not always possible to process personal lists. All rarities should either be entered into Birdtrack or submitted to the County Recorder.

*compiled and images and cover image 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,  
3 April**

**Jim Almond**

**AGM followed by:  
Shropshire Birds**

Another year looking at the local bird world

**2 October**

**Steve Watson**

**Peregrines and Goshawks**

A detailed look at and comparison between the lives of two our most prolific predators

**6 November**

**Ashley Grove**

**Birding in the Gambia**

A look at the amazing birdlife in this West African country

**4 December**

**Helen Mugridge**

**Tanzania**

A journey through Tanzania looking at the endless array of birds and animals

## Indoor Meetings Church Stretton Branch

### Indoor Programme for 2019

#### Church Stretton Branch

All meetings are held on Mondays in the Methodist Church Hall starting at 7.30pm

Tea and Coffee on arrival

**25 March**

**Rupert Marshall**

**The Science of  
Birdsong**

How it has transformed over 25 years, with case histories

**28 October**

**Peter Carty**

**Nature Conservation  
and The National Trust  
in South Shropshire**

**25 November**

**Ben Waddams**

**Meres and Mosses of  
North Shropshire**

## Upcoming Field Trips

**24 March**                      **RSPB Dearne Valley – Old Moor**                      **By Coach**  
Organiser: Sue Brealey  
Full Day – Meet at Shirehall Bus Stop to leave                      Postcode for SatNav:  
at 7.45pm sharp                      S73 0YF  
Costs: £15.00 per person for the coach. Please bring proof of RSPB  
Membership.  
See [www.rspb.org.uk/reserves](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves) then Dearne Valley Old Moor

**7 April**                      **Leasowes, Parkgate and RSPB**                      **By Car**  
**Burtonmere**  
Organiser: Sue Brealey  
Full Day – Meet at the Leasowes Car Park at                      Postcode for SatNav:  
9.30am                      CH46 4TA  
Directions: - Travel towards The Wirral and go onto M53. Come off at J1 onto  
A554 going north. At the 'T' junction turn onto A551. Just as the road turns  
left go straight ahead onto rough road towards the lighthouse. The car park is  
on the left. Grid Ref: SD 30I 028 See [www.deeestuary.co.uk/](http://www.deeestuary.co.uk/)

**30 May – 2 June**                      **Weekend Trip to Suffolk**                      **By Car**  
Organiser: Sue Brealey  
Please contact Sue for details

**23 June**                      **Upton Warren**                      **By Car**  
Organiser: Sue Brealey  
Full Day – Meet at the Moors Car Park at                      Postcode for SatNav:  
9.30am                      B61 7ET  
Directions: Take A38 north towards Bromsgrove from junction 5 of M5. Go  
past Webb's Garden Centre and turn in the Moors car park on the right after  
about a mile. This lane is not surfaced. There will be a permit charge of  
£3.00 from Worcestershire Wildlife Trust unless you are a member of the  
Wildlife Trusts. Grid Ref: SO 936 677 See  
[www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/reserves/the-christopher-cadbury-wetland-reserve-at-upton-warren](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/reserves/the-christopher-cadbury-wetland-reserve-at-upton-warren)

**July and August: No Trips**

### Telephone Numbers for Organisers and Leaders:

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Please send contributions or suggestions for *The Buzzard* to:  
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**Copy deadline for the Summer 2019 issue is: 1 May 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*