



# *The Buzzard*

Shropshire

Ornithological Society's  
Quarterly Magazine



No 258

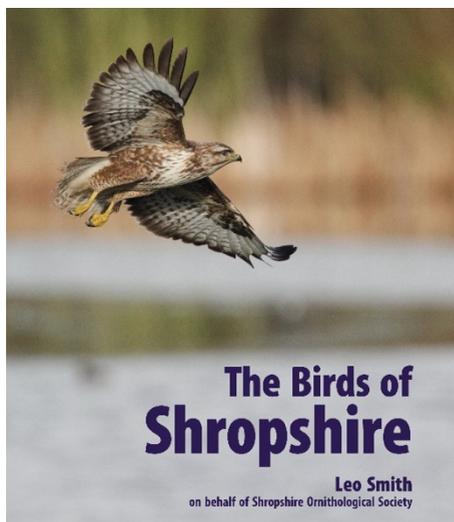
Winter 2019

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The Birds of Shropshire: A County Avifauna



The County Avifauna is due back from the printers on 1 December 2019, and the pre-publication orders will be mailed out shortly afterwards, well in time for Christmas. This is your last chance to order copies at the pre-publication discount price.

The description of the book, reproduced from the back cover, states:-

*The Birds of Shropshire* provides the most comprehensive record of the County's avifauna ever published. Produced by Shropshire

Ornithological Society, the book is partly based on the results of six years fieldwork by over 650 different observers who submitted over 333,400 records. These records have been used to produce maps showing the distribution and relative abundance of almost 200 different species.

The current breeding and winter maps have been compared with those shown in *An Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Shropshire* (1992) and with the Shropshire part of the national *An Atlas of the Wintering Birds in Britain and Ireland* (1986), and many show very rapid change in a very short timescale.

Every species on the “Shropshire List” (301) has been covered, including migrants, County rarities and birds that have not been seen here since 1950. Charts show the pattern of annual and seasonal occurrence of many of them. Historical records from the nineteenth century and results of specific local studies have also been incorporated.

The accounts have been written by 27 of the County’s most experienced and knowledgeable birders. Stunning images of 220 species have been contributed by 21 local photographers. Other chapters include a History of Ornithology in the County, Changes in Arrival Dates for Migrants, a description of the County, its landscapes and habitats and changes in them, and Changes over time in the Status of Breeding Species.

The book was initiated to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Shropshire Ornithological Society, and edited by Leo Smith, supported by an Avifauna Working Party also comprising Jim Almond, John Arnfield, Allan Dawes, Geoff Holmes, John Tucker and Graham Walker, all of whom have made major contributions to the finished publication.

Beautifully illustrated and richly documented, *The Birds of Shropshire* is an authoritative reference point for anyone interested in the birdlife of the County. The book will also shape conservation priorities in Shropshire for the next 20 years.

### ***The Birds of Shropshire***

published by Liverpool University Press.

The cover price will be £45, but a pre-publication offer price of £25 + £4.50 postage and packing is still available, but **only until 1 December.**

Further details can be found on the LUP and SOS websites [www.shropshirebirds.com](http://www.shropshirebirds.com) A flyer giving details of how to order the book is enclosed in this issue of *The Buzzard*.

## Subscription Renewal 2020

Members are reminded that subscriptions fall due for renewal on 1 January, 2020. Those members paying by cheque or cash will find a renewal notice enclosed with this issue of *The Buzzard*. Renewal notices will not be issued to those who have signed bankers' orders as these should be paid automatically. The rates of subscription for 2020 remain unchanged and are:

Adult Single Membership	£18.00
Adult Joint Membership <small>(Includes up to 2 adults and all children up to 16 years old at the same address.)</small>	£24.00
Junior Membership <small>(16 years and under.)</small>	£8.00

**Annie Andrews**  
Membership Secretary

## HELP!

### We need an Independent Examiner

Roy Westerman has been our Independent Examiner for as long as anyone on the Committee/Board can remember. Certainly 27 years plus. It's not unreasonable that he would like to retire!

We therefore need a replacement ASAP. In particular, we need someone with a business appreciation of a set of Accounts. There is no requirement for a professional qualification, but, obviously, one would be helpful. Someone with relevant experience can undertake the appointment, bank managers are specifically mentioned (albeit a vanishing breed).

If you are able to help then please contact John Arnfield or Brian Andrews. Hopefully, we will be able to answer any queries and can wish Roy well in the knowledge that the position has been filled.

Please Note: This is time sensitive and if we cannot find a replacement examiner we shall need to canvass accountancy firms and probably incur significant charges to the SOS.

### Birding Buddy Needed

I have received a request from a person in the Telford area who wishes to get back into birding after some years away. In the past, he was a professional ornithologist, has been an RSPB warden and was also involved in Barn Owl monitoring. He would like to find an individual or group in his home area that he can join to get him reacquainted with birds. He does not drive and has some mobility issues, being able to walk only about 200 m before requiring a rest and finding stairs and slopes challenging. If anyone is able to assist him, please contact me (01694 724 170 or [arnfield.2@osu.edu](mailto:arnfield.2@osu.edu)). Thank you.

**John Arnfield**

At the time of writing, *The Birds of Shropshire* has yet to be published, but I have seen enough during its gestation to know that it will rank as one of the most complete county avifaunas ever published. This is thanks in part to John and Peter Tucker's extraordinary compendium *The Historical Ornithology of Shropshire* (or *Histo* for short), which provided those of us who wrote accounts for *The Birds* with online access to every known published text about the birds of the County. The combination of *Histo* and *The Birds* will mean that Shropshire's birds are more comprehensively documented than those of any other county.

*Histo* runs to more than 4,700 pages and covers more than 220 accounts, but as John and Peter point out, the quality of these accounts is variable and it is up to those using this fantastic resource to make their own judgements as to the accuracy and of what they find. It seems worth me putting on the record what I discovered when one particular account excited my curiosity.

When compiling the species text for Red Grouse for *The Birds*, what was I to make of the statement to be found within the 'Victoria County History' which reads, 'small numbers of grouse, presumably Black Grouse, were shot at Walcot in the later 18th century and again figure in the game books 1904-09 (from 'Shooting' by AT Gaydon and DTW Price, 'Victoria County History for Shropshire', Vol 2, 1973).

This is a reference to Walcot at Lydbury North, and fortunately many of the Walcot Estate's records, including game books, are held in the wonderful Shropshire Archives. A careful reading of the game books for the period 1904-09, when Walcot was owned by the Earl of Powys, revealed that they covered not just the area around Walcot, but other places within the Earl's extensive holdings, including parts of the Clun Forest. And close scrutiny of the records revealed that it was in the Clun Forest, and not at Walcot, that 'grouse' were shot. But were they Red or Black Grouse?

In the 1890s there were records of the shooting in the Clun Forest of both 'Black game' (= Black Grouse) and of 'grouse,' the latter, by implication, being Red Grouse. It seems safe then to assume that the records of 'grouse' shot in the period 1904-9 refer to Red rather than Black Grouse. Interestingly, estate documents for the period 1780 to 1786 include four records of 'grouse' being sent to the Queen, but there is no detail as to where they were shot. It seems very probable however that it was in the Clun Forest, and that these too were Red not Black Grouse.

Although my little investigation of this source from *Histo* revealed nothing of major significance, it seems worth putting it on the record. Hopefully, this issue of *The Buzzard* will in due course be archived on *Histo* and be there to explain to a future researcher why the seemingly *bona fide* account in the 'Victoria County History' of Black Grouse shot at Walcot was side-lined when *The Birds* was written.

**Tom Wall**

### Congratulations ...

It seems fitting to find space here to thank and congratulate John and Peter Tucker who researched, authored, edited, curated and published *Histo*. They were nominated this year for the BTO Marsh Award for Local Ornithology. This is a prestigious award afforded to those publishing a book, completing a significant study or other exceptional activity in the preceding calendar year that advances knowledge about birds.

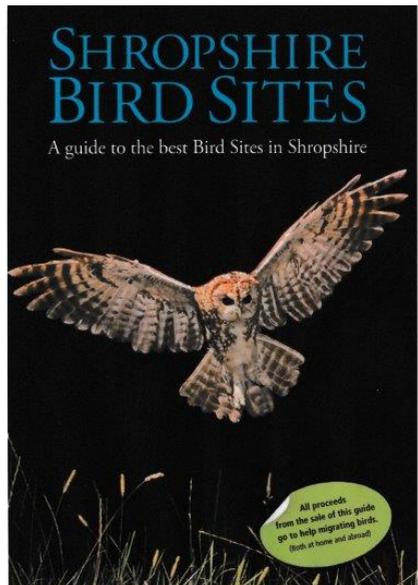
The winner 2019 was Mike Smart BTO regional representative for Gloucestershire for his work on the Severn Curlew Project.

John will be taking as a 'live' poster display at the Swanwick BTO conference in December. Please take a look and say hello to him if you are also at the event.

### Shropshire Bird Sites

It's not often one might choose to look at a guide book about a place known as home. Shropshire Bird Sites is one book well worth making an exception for. Informative and colourful, this book makes clear and accessible the best corners of Shropshire to satisfy any birder's curiosity. Its intention, invention and purpose will chime with ornithologists new and matured.

For a long time, the loss of our migrating songbirds concerned members of the South Shropshire RSPB group. One of the members, John McDermott (big John), was especially distressed when he read about the birds trapped on the British airfields in Cyprus. So much so that he encouraged others in the group to



transform concern into action, with a suitable project to mark the local group's 50th anniversary whilst raising vital funds.

The idea: to publish a small book featuring some of the best birdwatching sites in Shropshire. Any money raised would be directed to the RSPB fund to help migrating birds.

The time, patience and ingenuity forthcoming has been inspirational. Expert ornithologists were asked and have kindly contributed material describing areas they are familiar with. Illustrative photographs detailing species have been gifted by magnificent photographers and Martin Jordan, wildlife artist, donated original pencil drawings. The more technically-able members of the group gave hours and days to editing and producing digital drafts of the work.

Morgan Creative of Grinshill have professionally designed and crafted a book that South Shropshire RSPB group is delighted with.

Due to the help of CJ Wildlife, the AONB, group members and Shropshire Ornithological Society, every penny from the sale of the book will be used to protect our visiting birds

Selling for a mere £5:00, a copy can be obtained from many retailers, including, The Bog, The Secret Hills, Severn Valley Country Park and Castle Bookshops.

South Shropshire RSPB group wishes to thank all the brilliant contributors. A joyous gift just in time for the festive season. We hope you will enjoy the book.

### Curlew Conservation Projects 2020

The previous issue of The Buzzard (August 2019) summarised the results of Curlew conservation projects this year, highlighting the fact that the SWT/ SOS appeal that has funded the work in the last two years is unlikely to be equally successful in future. A meeting is being arranged with SWT to discuss the results of the appeal in 2019, expenditure this year, and plans for the future.

The profile of Curlews, and the need for concerted and co-ordinated action to halt and reverse the decline, has received considerable support recently, at regional and national level:

- An article in British Birds in November 2015, pointing out that the UK had about 28% of the European population, and 18-27% of the world population, and arguing that Curlew conservation is the highest bird conservation priority in the UK

- Addition of Curlew to the *Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern 4* in the UK in December 2015
- Mary Colwell's high profile 500 mile walk in 2016 to highlight the plight of the Curlew (see "*Curlew Moon*" by Mary Colwell, published by William Collins in 2018)
- The formation of the South of England Curlew Forum in 2017
- Formation of similar Action Groups in Ireland, Scotland and Wales
- Setting up a national Curlew Species Recovery Group, comprising RSPB (who provide the chair/secretariat), BTO, GWCT, WWT, JNCC, National Trust, Birdwatch Ireland, National Parks Ireland and the four country-based statutory agencies. The purpose of the group is to bring together five statutory agencies and various non-governmental organisations to shape and drive a co-ordinated programme for curlew conservation and to support international obligations, including the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement and the EU Birds Directive.
- A "Curlew Summit" at 10 Downing Street in July 2019, to brief the parliamentary species champions and the national conservation bodies in the home countries.

Further information about these initiatives can be found on the SOS Website [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/)

The Shropshire Curlew population of about 130 breeding pairs is regionally important, and we've now started discussing what Curlew conservation work we can do here next year, and in the longer term. The feeling is that we can't effect meaningful change at the County level, to landscape management, agricultural change or reducing predation, so we need our work to have a national and regional context to make it fully effective, and it will need more resources than we can continue to raise locally. These issues will be discussed at the South of England Curlew Forum at the end of November.

Hopefully, we will be able to repeat in 2020 the nest finding and protection projects in the Upper Clun and Clee Hill Community Wildlife Group (CWG) areas, and extend it to the Strettons area. This will help establish if nest failure rates and predation of chicks are consistent across the County. From results to date, it appears that predation rates of eggs and chicks in the Clun and Clee areas are proportionately less than that in the Curlew Country area, probably reflecting the lower relative abundance of Pheasants (see winter RA Atlas Map 2007-11) and hence foxes in those areas.

BTO published research findings earlier this year correlating numbers of avian predators and scavengers (Buzzard and Crow in particular) with proximity to large-scale Pheasant release sites. Unfortunately, there aren't any data on fox populations to conduct a similar study, but there is a strong case that foxes are bound to benefit from ever-increasing Pheasant food, and there is an

interesting graph on the GWCT web-site showing that, in England, while Pheasant release increased 10-fold since 1960, from 4 to 40 Million birds annually, the fox bag reported through the gamebird bag census increased 390% (i.e. however many foxes were killed, there were always more the following year, and they were attracted into the gamebird areas).

Continued monitoring of the County Curlew population is vital, and 10 different CWGs cover the vast majority of it (and other target species of Conservation Concern, including Lapwing and Kestrel). Surveys take about three hours each, at times to suit you, ideally in a two week window around the beginning of April and May, and again in mid-June (i.e. a nine-hour commitment in total).

All these Groups have planning meetings in February or March, to brief members on results in 2019 and plans for 2020, and allocate survey squares (tetrads, the same unit used for Bird Atlas surveys).

<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
Clee Hill	25 March	Recreation rooms, 22a Clee 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)

**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 area covered by each CWG is shown overlain on the Curlew Atlas distribution map on the *Save our Curlews* part of the SOS website.

## BTO

### **International Swan Census 11-12 January 2020**

The next five-yearly International Swan Census (ISC) is being coordinated by Wetlands International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Swan Specialist Group. The aim is to estimate across Europe the size and distribution of the Northwest Bewick's Swan and the Iceland Whooper Swan populations. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) is administering the survey in the UK. The census will be undertaken during the 11-12 January 2020, the WeBS Priority Core Count Priority weekend, when Shropshire WeBS counters are requested to count Bewick's Swans and Whooper Swans on their sites and also on non-WeBS sites of agricultural land and other non-wetland areas which counters and all Shropshire birders are requested to visit during or as close as possible to the coordinated weekend. All birders are also asked to record the species throughout January 2020 as swans may be absent from sites during official survey weekend. It would be appreciated if data in relation to breeding success, egg counts of juveniles, immatures and adults and habitat use, could be recorded for additional information that will be useful in analysis.

Online recording forms and instructions for form completion will be available and I shall post paper forms and documents to counters who require them. General census information is available on <http://monitoring.wwt.org.uk/get-involved>. For additional information, please contact: [kane.brides@wwt.org.uk](mailto:kane.brides@wwt.org.uk) , Phone: 01842 750050. Please encourage all birders to participate in this important census to enable achievement of comprehensive coverage of Shropshire. If you wish to discuss the survey, please contact Michael Wallace on [michaelwallace47@gmail.com](mailto:michaelwallace47@gmail.com)

### **Shropshire BTO Wetland Bird Survey Vacant Sites**

The following five sites are vacant on the Shropshire WeBS schedule: Chelmarsh Reservoir (SO731877) near Bridgnorth. Chelmarsh is an interesting and an important site that attracts a diversity of waterbirds and passerines throughout the year and merits counting; the species list is 62. Blake Mere, SJ558425 and Ossmere, SJ556438 both are close together and near Whitchurch. Two Telford sets are Middle Pool, SJ688118 and Trench Pool, SJ686124. There are numerous other unlisted sites in the County that justify counting and would improve Shropshire's species population indices.

Survey methodology is straightforward “look-see” within the site boundary. Training will be given if requested. Those interested, please contact Michael Wallace at michaelwallace47@gmail.com

### Refuse in Wetlands

The BTO requests birders to support International Waterbird Census (IWC) and Wetlands International with the aim to reduce litter-plastics-trash in the wetland environment. Firstly, the IWC network recommends “The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership” (EAAFP) whose aim is to gather data on types of litter in wetlands. You can find information at <https://www.eaaflyway.net/join-the-wetlands-trash-hunters/> The website is comprehensive.

Secondly, Wetlands International has partnered with the “Plastic Soup Foundation” whose app is named Litterati which you can download and join the “Wetlands Trash Hunters”. All Shropshire birders visiting wetlands are encouraged to take photographs, record locations which can be “tagged” on the app. The recorded data can be used to tackle the problem at source and make the situation visible to the public. Data can be turned into infographics and communicated material can be used by national partners and to inform the public.

Refuse is a major problem in all environments, particularly in oceans and also inland wetlands where plastics readily degrade causing widespread declines in wildlife species. Plastics have been recorded as widespread in the River Severn. Participation in recording refuse deposition is voluntary, however in doing so collectively we can make a valuable contribution in refuse reduction, thus assisting environmental improvement and, importantly, supporting these organisations.

**Michael Wallace**

*BTO Shropshire WeBS Local Organiser*

## Field Trip Reports

### **Cors Caron NNR (Tregaron Bog) Sunday, 8 September 2019**

A group of eleven from SOS and the local RSPB group arrived at Cors Caron after a long, but scenic, journey through the welsh countryside. The weather was bright, sunny and dry with blue skies, and a temperature of 13°C at 11am. We began by walking north along the Railway Walk, towards the junction with the River Walk. Great Tit, Robin, Chaffinch and Coal Tit were seen at the car park feeders and Blue Tit, House Sparrow and Magpie were noted in the bushes. A Grey Heron was seen on the margins of a small lake, and a little

further on, a Nuthatch was heard and then seen, as well as a Great Spotted Woodpecker and a Treecreeper. Near the farm, plenty of Swallows and House Martins were noted, feeding-up in preparation for migration, also a pair of Blackcap a little further on. In one of the fields a Buzzard rose up and flew along a hedgerow with a couple of Crows in pursuit. A Jay was seen flying over the trees, and then a Red Kite was spotted quite high in the sky. At the boardwalk, good views were obtained of the extent of the bog and some of the plant-life was enjoyed. On the way back, Woodpigeons were seen and a Wren's distinctive call was heard.

A break was then taken to have lunch. After lunch, we explored the area to the south, discovering the main boardwalk which leads to the Bog Hide. The walk produced good views of Reed Bunting, and then a few Canada Geese were seen, as well as a couple of juvenile Grey Wagtails and a Pied Wagtail. A few Mallard were noted, all in eclipse plumage. The water level in the pool in front of the hide was very low, and after adding Cormorant to the day list, and seeing another couple of Grey Wagtails, we started returning to the car park. On the way back, a family of Stonechats was seen.

Although it was a very quiet day, with only 27 species seen, everyone enjoyed the day, which had been enhanced by seeing good numbers of butterflies including Speckled Wood, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Green-veined White, and Large White and, at the end of the day, a Brimstone. Also, on the boardwalk to the hide a few Common Lizard were seen, basking in the sun. Flying over the area were Black Darter and Common Darter. Amongst the plants seen were Perennial Sow-Thistle, Devil's-bit Scabious, Bog Asphodel,, Bog Rosemary berries, White-beaked Sedge, Meadowsweet, Purple Loosestrife, Rosebay Willowherb and Toadflax.

*Sue Brealey*

### **Kingsbury Water Park Sunday, 13 October 2019**

Unfortunately, due to the atrociously wet weather conditions, which appeared to be getting worse on the drive east, this meeting was abandoned.

*Sue Brealey*



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## Apr, May and Jun 2019

**Egyptian Goose** Two were seen at Venus Pool on 1 Jul and one was present at Leighton on 30 Sep.

**Shelduck** Four fledged youngsters were noted with two adults at Baggy Moor on 5 Jul.

**Garganey** An eclipse drake and female were present but elusive at Whixall canal floods between 25 Jul and 2 Aug. A single was later reported there on 14 Aug.

**Gadwall** Twelve, including a female plus five downy young, were present at Sambrook Mill on 1 Jul. Ellerton Mill Pool had 28 reported on 11 Sep.

**Common Scoter** (Photo) Four drakes were present on The Mere, Ellesmere on 28 Jul.



**Red Grouse** Records came from Titterstone Clee, Stiperstones and Long Mynd where four were seen at Pole Cottage in 25 Sep.

**Grey Partridge** Five were present near The Rea on 24 Jul and a single was seen at Dodecote on 13 Aug and 3 Sep.

**Common Quail** Up to three were reported (and occasionally seen) at Noneley between 3-31 Jul.

**Little Egret** The earliest report was of a single bird at Venus Pool on 9 Jul. More individuals arrived there as the month progressed, up to a maximum of four on 2 Aug. Additional singles were seen at Bromfield, Leighton, Attingham Park and Tittenley Pool.

**Great White Egret** Singles were reported: over Whitchurch on 6 Jul, at Venus Pool on 2 Aug and Leighton on 1 Sep.

**Gannet** An adult was seen and photographed on a muck heap by a dog walker in a field near Tibberton on 12 Aug. It was alert and appeared in good health but went unreported at that time. Three days later it was found to be deceased at the same spot.

**Red Kite** Records of up to six birds were received, primarily from the usual areas in the south of the County but also some sightings from other locations. These included: Kinlet, Annscroft, Pentre, Bomere Heath, Preston Gubbals, Much Wenlock and Venus Pool.

**Marsh Harrier** A juvenile was seen at Venus Pool on 26 Aug plus another reported at Crudginton on 10 Aug.

**Hen Harrier** Singles were reported at Rhos Fiddle on 8 Sep and Long Mynd on 15 Sep.

**Osprey** Single birds were seen at Venus Pool on 15 and 19 Aug.

**Stone Curlew** One was accidentally flushed by a birder whilst walking through a stubble field near Boningale/Albrighton on 19 Sep. It was not seen again.

**Lapwing** (Photo) Most reports came from Whixall canal floods and Venus Pool, including several three figure counts. 170+ were at the floods on 20 Aug.



**Golden Plover** Just three reports of up to five during mid Sep, all from the Long Mynd.



**Ringed Plover** One was at Venus Pool on 14 and 21 Aug. Up to four were seen at Whixall canal floods between 3 – 9 Sep.

**Little Ringed Plover** Apart from one record at Leighton on 3 Jul, all records came from Whixall canal floods and Venus Pool for the rest of the quarter. An impressive count of 12 came from Whixall canal floods on 11 Jul.

**Whimbrel** One flew low calling at Venus Pool on 11 Aug.

**Curlew** A flock of up to 27 was seen at Whixall canal floods on 20 Jul and 31 were present at Wood Lane on 4 Aug.

**Black-tailed Godwit** The highest count was 20 at Whixall canal floods on 7 Jul. Three were present at Venus Pool on 3 and 21 Jul.

**Turnstone** One was seen at Wood Lane on the 11 and 14 Aug.

**Ruff** Up to three were present at Whixall canal floods between 21 Aug-1 Sep. Singles were present at Quarry Farm Pool, Howle on 11 Sep and at Venus Pool on 22 Sep.

**Dunlin (Photo)** The first passage bird was seen at Venus Pool on 29 Jul and a single was regularly seen there until 23 Sep. Six were present at Whixall canal floods on 10 Aug.

**Common Sandpiper** Up to three were noted throughout the quarter at eight locations: Venus Pool, Polemere, R. Severn (Frankwell) Chelmarsh Reservoir, Whixall canal floods, The Glebe, R Teme (Whitcliffe) and Wall Farm.

**Green Sandpiper** Up to six were seen regularly throughout the quarter at both Venus Pool and Whixall canal floods. One or two also were reported from Wall Farm, Chelmarsh Reservoir, Hilley Farm and The Glebe.

**Wood Sandpiper** Good numbers were seen on passage throughout the UK this year and this was mirrored in Shropshire. After a first sighting of two at Whixall canal floods on 5 Aug, six were present at Venus Pool on 9 Aug with one still there the following day. Three were then seen at Whixall canal floods on 10 Aug and a single was seen at Allscott Sugar Factory on 11 Aug.

**Redshank** Two were present at Hales Pools East on 7 Jul, followed by a single at Venus Pool on 20 Jul and 11 Aug. Three were present at Whixall canal floods on 20 Aug.

**Greenshank (Photo)** Singles were seen at Whixall canal floods and Venus Pool between 18 Aug – 6 Sep.



**Woodcock** Just one record, of three at Gretton on 26 Aug.

**Common Snipe** The earliest record came from Hales Pools East where one was present on 7 Jul. Good numbers were seen at Whixall canal floods from later that month up to a maximum of 80 on 29 Aug.

**Black Tern** One was present at The Mere, Ellesmere on 28 Aug.

**Common Tern** Two were observed on Priorslee Lake between 10-15 Jul and another two were seen at Venus Pool on 9 Sep. Singles were present at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 29 Aug and at Venus Pool on 9 Sep.

**Mediterranean Gull** A juvenile was present at White Mere on 29 Jul and an adult at Venus Pool on 5 Aug.

**Common Gull** Four were present at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 29 Jul, then two juveniles the following day. Another juvenile was present at Venus Pool between 5 – 10 Aug.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** Reported at various locations throughout the quarter including six newly-fledged juveniles at Battlefield on 11 Jul. Roosts of up to 2,800 individuals were noted at The Mere, Ellesmere and up to 1,400 at Chelmarsh Reservoir during Aug / Sep.

**Yellow-legged Gull** (Photo) Up to twelve (on 29 Jul) roosted at Chelmarsh Reservoir throughout the period. Five were present at The Mere, Ellesmere on 27 Aug.



**Barn Owl** Records of single birds came from: Tibberton Moor, Plowden, Venus Pool/Cound Stank, Bicton Hill and two+ at Gretton.

**Little Owl** Reported from three locations: Venus Pool, Wistanstow, Meadowley.

**Tawny Owl** Three were seen at Cantlopgrove on 25 Aug and Market Drayton on 28 Sep. Single birds were also reported at 18 other locations.

**Nightjar** Just two records from the same observer at Haughmond Hill where two were heard on 1 Jul followed by three on 12 Jul.

**Common Swift** The highest count was 62 at Ludlow on 12 Jul. The last sighting came from Shrewsbury on 11 Sep.

**Merlin** Singles were reported at Bicton Hill on 17 Sep and Shadwell Hill on 18 Sep.

**Hobby** Seen at numerous locations throughout the period, mostly single birds but five were present at Meadowley on 18 and 25 Aug. A single was seen regularly at Venus Pool.

**Ring-necked Parakeet** Singles were seen in Newport on 2 Aug and at Belle Vue, Shrewsbury on 8 Aug.

**Willow Tit** Two were ringed at Pam's Pools, Bridgnorth on 12 Jul and up to three were seen in Mary Knoll Valley during September. Other records came from, Lower Short Ditch, Whixall canal floods, Bentlawn and Bicton.

**Sand Martin** The highest count was 100+ at both Ludlow and Venus Pool on 31 Aug. The latest report was on 11 Sep.

**House Martin** Birds were still being reported at the end of Sep. The highest counts were 200+ at Claverley on 8 Sep and 120+ at The Mere, Ellesmere on 4 Sep.

**Swallow** Numerous records with counts peaking in early September. 200 or more were seen at Telford, Cantlopgrove and Calverley.

**Cetti's Warbler** One was reported at Venus Pool on 19 Jul.

**Grasshopper Warbler** A male was singing at Maesbury on 24 Jul.

**Garden Warbler** The latest record came from Chelmarsh Scrape on 8 Sep

**Lesser Whitethroat** Singles reported from seven locations, the last sighting at Cross Lane Head on 23 Sep.

**Common Whitethroat** Noted at numerous sites with the maximum count (12 on 15 Aug) and latest record on 13 Sep, both at Venus Pool.

**Reed Warbler** Observed at eleven locations with a highest count of six at Queens Head on 15 Jul. The latest record was on 13 Sep at Chelmarsh Scrape.

**Spotted Flycatcher** Numerous sightings throughout the County with the last on 13 Sep. Several reports noted families or groups, with a maximum of twelve (at least three pairs with young) at Wall Farm on 7 Aug.

**Whinchat** Three were present at Wall Farm Marsh on 3 Aug. Other records came from Long Mynd, Whixall canal floods, Westbury, Rhos Fiddle and Charlton Hill.

**Wheatear** Most records came on passage during Sep when up to five were reported from Rhos Fiddle and up to three at various other locations.

**Tree Sparrow** Up to 14 were seen daily at a location in Newcastle. Other reports came from Pentre, Bicton near Clun, Meadowley, Whitcott Keysett, Anchor and Venus Pool.

**Yellow Wagtail** Nine were present at Cantlogrove on 21 Aug. The latest record was on 8 Sep. A Blue-headed Wagtail was reported at Whixall canal floods on 31 Aug.

**Tree Pipit** Three were present at Cefn Coch on 4 Aug. Singles were also seen at Long Mynd, Lower Short Ditch and Mary Knoll.

**Hawfinch** One was reported present at Whitcliffe Common on 16 Jul (via Bird News Service).

**Common Crossbill** Up to six were seen at Cefn Coch during Jul and Aug. Other records came from Bury Ditches, Kinlet, Kerry Ridgeway and Meaton Lane.

**Corn Bunting** There were no double-figure counts, five were seen at Child's Ercall on 1 Jul and at Noneley on 16 Jul. Other records came from Tibberton, Ercall Heath and Earnstrey.

**Lapland Bunting.** One was found on the Long Mynd, on a track near Robin Hood's Butts, early morning on 14 Sep. It remained faithful to a short stretch of the Shropshire Way despite being repeatedly flushed by walkers and bikers and was last reported on 17 Sep.

Some sightings are subject to acceptance by the 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 10th 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 by and photos Jim Almond*

## Indoor Meetings

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

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

**4 December 2019**

**Helen Mugridge**

**Tanzania**

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

**Please note that there will be no January meeting in 2020. Because the first Wednesday of the month is on 1 January, a Bank Holiday, the meeting has been moved to September for this year only.**

**5 February 2020**

**Dawn Balmer**

**Britain's Owls -  
Behaviour, Monitoring  
and Surveying**

Dawn is Head of Surveys for the BTO, an editorial Board Member of British Birds and coordinated the 2007-11 BTO Bird Atlas.

**4 March 2020**

**Amanda Perkins**

**Shropshire Curlew  
Project**

Talk on the work on the project to date, results so far and the future challenges for this wonderful wader

**Indoor Programme for  
Church Stretton Branch**

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

**25 November 2019**

**Ben  
Waddams**

**The Meres and Mosses of  
North Shropshire**

This talk will focus on the natural history of the Meres and Mosses, with more than a few nods to its birdlife. Ben has been exploring this region for many years and was even lucky enough to discover a new species there. His aim is to take people on a journey through this interconnected landscape and introduce them to some lesser-known species.

**27 January 2020**

**Michael  
Leach**

**In Search of the Flower  
Kissers**

Hummingbirds. Aztecs called them rays of sun and in Brazil they are known as flower kissers. There are more than 300 living species, from tiny bee hummingbirds to the giant Patagonian. Everything about hummers is extreme; their astonishing colours, 1,000 beat-a-minute heart rate, fearless aggression and, above all, breathtaking flying abilities. This talk looks at one of the world's most iconic birds.

**24 February 2020**

**Andrew  
Fusek Peters**

**Wilderland, Wildlife & Wonder  
from the Shropshire Borders**

Andrew will share an entertaining evening of his long term safari in the Shropshire uplands and valleys, sharing incredible stories of hares suckling leverets, spotted flycatchers nesting above his electric meter, robins bringing up young in the winter heather where he parks his car, and dragonflies roosting on the Mynd under the Milky Way. His pictures regularly grace the national papers and last year he was highly commended in British Wildlife Photographer of the Year; he was also awarded 3rd in Category and Commended in the International Garden Photographer of the Year. He will also share some of his birding stories, from the ultra-rare leucistic Red Kite to Great White Egrets in a blizzard and the curlews having a little bath at sunset. More information? Visit [www.andrewfusekpeters.com](http://www.andrewfusekpeters.com)

**23 March 2020**

**Ashley Grove Crane Spotting**

Lake Hornborga in Sweden plays host to one of Europe's most spectacular wildlife watching experiences each spring. Over 25,000 Common Cranes stop here to refuel on route to their breeding grounds further North, joining hundreds of ducks, geese and Whooper Swans in the area. Time your visit well and you can also see all five of Europe's grebes here, White-tailed Eagles, Capercaillie, beavers and much more. Wildlife photographer and tour leader Ashley Grove will give us some geography and history on this wildlife-rich area, all illustrated with stunning images from his experiences in Sweden

