



The Buzzard

Shropshire
Ornithological Society's
Quarterly Magazine



No 264

Autumn 2021

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Announcements

Peter Deans

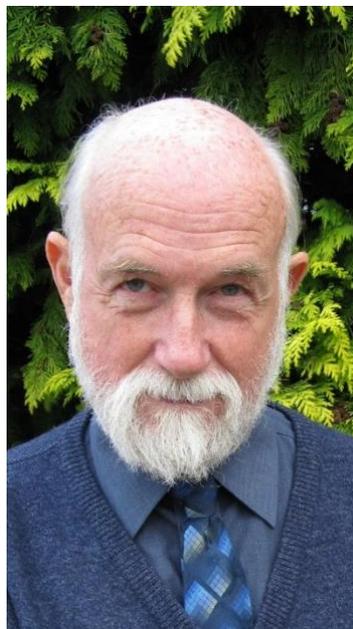
It is with great sadness that the Society announces the death of its President, Peter Deans. Peter died suddenly on Friday, 23 July as the result of a heart attack. He served as Chairman of the Society for 37 years before becoming President in 2017

He will be greatly missed by the SOS and by all the other wildlife organisations he was involved with.

Our deepest condolences go to his wife Jan and family.

A full obituary will be published in the next Annual Bird Report.

Chris Whittles
Vice President



Peter Deans (1941-2021)

Shropshire Ornithological Society Annual General Meeting

The 65th AGM of the Society will be held on Wednesday, 15 September 2021, 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

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Annual General Meeting 2021

(incorporating the postponed A.G.M. for 2020)

Wednesday 15th September 2021

Bayston Hill Memorial Hall

(Immediately following the Annual General Meeting of
Shropshire Ornithological Society to be held at 7.15 p.m.)

Assuming that we are not forced back into lockdown, the Agenda and Accounts will be distributed at the meeting. If, however, we are unable to meet and must resort to Zoom then those registering for Zoom will be sent their paperwork by e-mail. Anyone unable to access Zoom is asked to contact the Membership Secretary who will be pleased to forward the accounts.

Brian Andrews
Company Secretary

House Martin Conservation UK & Ireland

Many members of SOS will, undoubtedly, have been involved with the BTO National Survey of House Martins back in 2015 and the Nest Survey in 2016. At that time, it was recognised that these wonderful summer visitors were in trouble and the situation has not improved in the intervening years. Indeed, this year there have been many reports from across the whole country of numbers of these birds being low or even completely absent from previously well-known colonies.

Where are our big colonies here in Shropshire now? The National Trust seem to have a few smallish colonies at Attingham, Carding Mill and, just over the border into Herefordshire, at Berrington, but compared with the reports of seriously large colonies in the first half of the last century in *The Birds of Shropshire* today's 'large' colonies are comparatively small.

To address some of these questions, bring together those interested in House Martins as well as hopefully raising a lot more interest in these wonderful summer visitors the charity House Martin Conservation UK and Ireland has been set up. Although the group's conservation work will be based in UK and Ireland, often partnering with other bird conservation charities, it is encouraging membership from all over the world to increase and share knowledge. The charity is optimistic that by working together they can make a real difference to UK and Irish populations.

The charity's very active Facebook group has over 1,000 members and the Twitter feed has over 1,300 followers so there's a lot of people out there with a real passion for House Martins. Already, over 100 people have signed up as members of the charity.

The website provides a clear and accurate source of information – something that has long been needed. With sections on how you can help house martins (including a useful educational leaflet, where to find help if you find a bird that needs care and the opportunity for you to join this group as a member it really is proving to be a very valuable resource. As well as advice on what to do if you find a grounded House Martin it is very good to see a comprehensive list of individuals and wildlife rescue organisations who can help rehabilitate these birds.

Why not have a look to see what you can do help these birds and do remember to log all your sightings, especially nest sites, in BirdTrack.

Don't let the House Martin disappear – let's all work together to save this enigmatic little bird.

Peta Sams

Website <https://housemartinconservation.com/>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/429717927897413>

Twitter - <https://twitter.com/ukhousemartins>



House Martin
Conservation
UK & Ireland



House martins need you



From March–May house martins will begin to arrive in the UK & Ireland after their long journey back from Africa, to spend the summer here raising their chicks. You may have noticed their mud nests on your home from previous years.

How you can help

You can attract house martins to nest on your house by putting up **artificial nest cups** to give them a permanent home year after year. Encourage others to do this too by helping your community understand the problems that house martins face.

If you have to remove nests to do renovation work please make sure it is outside of the nesting season (it is illegal to remove or disturb an active nest of any bird in the UK).

Replacing the removed nests with artificial ones will encourage returning birds to stay and continue to breed. If you don't have any suitable eaves you could fix a weatherproof wooden board at least 200mm deep to create an overhang for nests.

© Paul Stevens



House martins leave droppings which can be an issue for some households but they are easily removed with a hosepipe or brush. Flower pots can be placed on the ground beneath the nests or a droppings board can be placed at least 2 metres below the nest cups.

Ponds attract lots of insects for house martins to feed on and a muddy edge can provide nest building material too.

© Paul Ash



Gable ends & eaves make the perfect site for house martin nest cups!



Contact us

- Get in touch: contact@housemartinconservation.com
- House Martin Conservation UK & Ireland @ukhousemartins
- www.housemartinconservation.com

Decline



Adverse weather can impact migration and the availability of mud for nesting.



Insect decline.



Habitat degradation.



Suitable nest sites are in decline due to new buildings using unsuitable materials.

© Adrian Galley



© Edd Cottell



Emergency

If you have a house martin emergency please contact us or your local wildlife rescue centre.



House Martin Conservation UK & Ireland is a registered charity, United Kingdom no. 1193623

Chirk Aqueduct Swifts

For the past five years I have worked on the Llangollen Canal, maintaining the waterway for its many visitors, but there is one visitor in particular that brings me unparalleled joy – the Chirk Aqueduct Swifts. Once May is around the corner and our eyes are to the skies, Chirk Aqueduct, lying on the border between England and Wales, is the place to be face-to-face with your first Swifts of the season.

Whilst I have always been aware of Swifts, I have only recently become aware of their plight. As a Canal and River Trust employee and Chirk resident, I thought it could be effective to use my job to raise their profile and make sure that they are protected. And, as you can read in the last copy of The Buzzard, SOS member Tom Wall was thinking the same thing at the same time.

I, too, got in touch with our senior ecologist, Glyn Stewart and our local ecologist, Jenny Spelling to try and arrange a surveying programme. I have also consulted the Canal and River Trust heritage team about the possibility of installing signage to raise awareness. I joined the Facebook page Shropshire Swifts, too, where Peta Sams kindly put me in touch with Tom Wall and Sarah Gibson, Oswestry resident and author of the recently published 'Swifts and Us'. So far this summer, a team of us, including SOS member Michael Wallace, have surveyed Chirk Aqueduct four times, and found that there are at least 25 nest sites along the structure, not to mention dozens of prospecting birds jostling for their own forever nests.

The most important thing now is to preserve these precious nest sites, spread unevenly on and under the 10 arches of the aqueduct. We have recorded the sites and have lots of photos of Swift activity which is all available to Canal and River Trust staff. Chirk Aqueduct is a heritage structure which will inevitably require some attention in the future, but any maintenance works will be planned well in advance and will involve the ecology team, giving everyone plenty of chance to get involved with safeguarding these magnificent birds. The most favourable and practicable option is to leave the existing nest sites and leave space for future breeders. The Swifts would never be excluded.

Following on from work-based surveys, I have set up Chirk Swifts - a local conservation group to raise awareness of Swifts and help halt their decline. The aqueduct is a perfect place to learn about these birds, so I have started regular Swift Watch evenings to include people from the local community. Next year, I plan to do plenty more with the local community to safeguard not only the aqueduct colony but help make Chirk Swift friendly for the future.

As our summer flies by there is always that pang of sadness when our Swifts start heading back to Africa. The best thing we can do while they sun themselves over winter is get ready to welcome them back in 2022 with their existing nest sites, nest boxes and heightened public awareness.

- If you would like more information to join the Facebook group Chirk Swifts or email h.garrod@hotmail.co.uk

- The photo below shows the eighth arch (counting from the Welsh end) which lies in Shropshire and is particularly popular with Swifts. In the photo in the previous edition of The Buzzard Tom highlighted three confirmed nest sites on this face, we now know of 12.



Hayley Garrod

When to count nests in rookeries?

Background

I have been surveying rookeries, with the generous help of many volunteers, since 2008, never quite sure of the optimal time to count the nests to record the best assessment of colony size. To investigate this, I appealed for people to count the number of nests in colonies, weekly from week 3; I use week numbers here – see the Table below for conversion to calendar dates. I received records from seventeen volunteers relating to more than sixty colonies, between them sufficiently continuous at the various stages of the nesting cycle to allow the following analyses.

Counting Rook nests is not an exact science as anyone who has tried it will attest; change your viewpoint and count again and you will likely get a different total - too early and some birds may be yet to start building, too late and the nests are obscured by developing leaves. The results derive from the available figures; never 100% accurate but for this exercise they need not be – the changes are the important feature and their sequencing and timing have emerged.

Results

Stage 1. The commencement of nest construction, refurbishing or new builds.

There will probably be differences between years and with latitude (within Britain); this year's data indicates that in Shropshire the sequence, of adding material to existing nests and starting new ones, was protracted. The first nest-building began in week 4, peaked at 8 sites between weeks 8 and 9 but some did not begin until week 11.

Stage 2. The peak of adding new nests.

Judged by the increase in the number of nests from one week to the next, the most intensive period of nest building was, at 8 sites, around weeks 10 and 11.

Stage 3. The stage at which the number of nests peaked and stabilised.

The stage at which colonies ceased to increase in size and became 'full' spanned a month between weeks 11 and 14, peaking at 8 sites between weeks 11 and 12. The last four sites to reach full size did so by week 17, at the end of April.

Table. The number of sites at which the key periods can be identified. Peaks in bold.

Week of	18.1	25.1	1.2	8.2	15.2	22.2	1.3	8.3	15.3	22.3	29.3	5.4	12.4	19.4	26.4
Weeks	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Stage 1			1	1	3	3	8	3	1						
Stage 2					2	3	3	6	8	1					
Stage 3									5	8	5	6	1	1	2

The implications for annual, one-visit, rookery size monitoring.

Particularly pertinent to this investigation were weeks 14 to 17. By week 14 most colonies (28 of 33; 85%) were at their maximum size and by week 17 nest numbers at all monitored sites were stabilised. This suggests a target date for single-visit nest-count visits to Shropshire rookeries can reasonably be set at the last weekend in April by which time virtually all sites should be at or very close to their maximum size and there are not yet leaves to obscure the nests.

Acknowledgements

I must thank all those who contributed to this project, many submitting records for multiple sites: Paul Bate, Alison Bennett, Rob Corfield, Michelle Frater, Martin Grant, Richard Halahan, Estelle & Brian Hughes, Keith & Ann Lucas, Wendy Lund, Charlie Pearce, Andrew Roberts, Katie Steggle, Christopher Twigg, Michael Wallace, Michael Wall, Tom Wall, and Andy Wood.

Footnote: The total population, including non-breeding birds.

Lloyd, in his work on Shrewsbury's rookeries in 1938, allowed (following the example of B Tucker [no relation]) that to the estimate of the number of breeding birds (nests x2) should be added between 10% and 25% non-breeding birds; Lloyd took the mean of those two and added 17.5%. Using this assumption the total population estimate of rooks at a colony, and indeed the county, would be derived by multiplying the number of nests by 1.175.

Are Hopesay parish's Hirundines the canary in the Salopian mine?

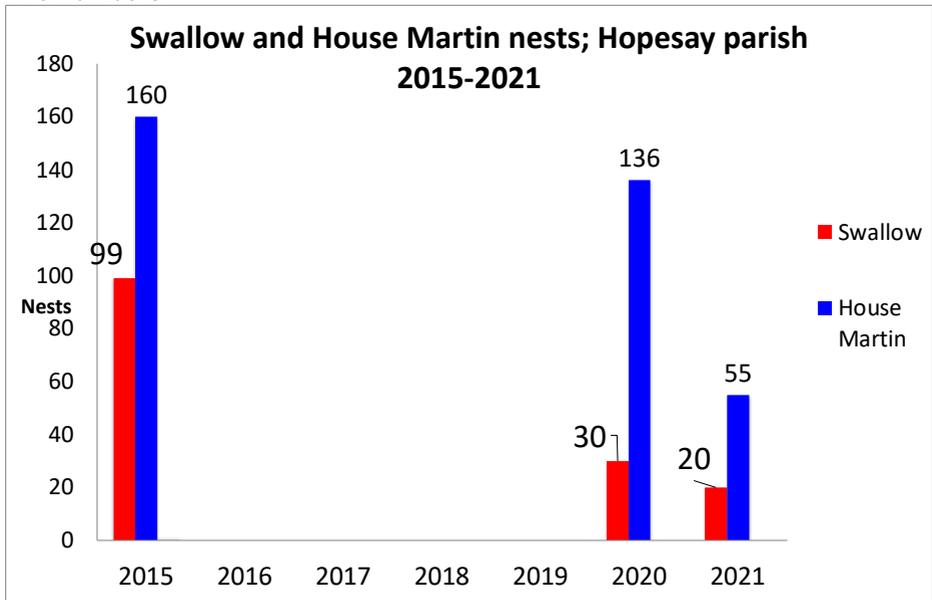
From 2005 we felt honoured to have House Martins nesting under our eaves while Swallows used nearby outbuildings and barns. By 2010 House Martins no longer nested on our house and many local people told similar stories; Swallows also appeared to be less common. I carried out a baseline survey mapping all breeding Swallows and House Martins at the 260 or so dwellings and buildings in Hopesay parish in 2015, publishing the results in 2017 (*The Buzzard* 249:11-12).

Five years on, in 2020, I repeated the survey and had alarming results, confirming the impression of population declines; House Martin nest numbers were down by 14%, which might be within normal variation, but Swallows were down by 70%. In 2020, in *The Buzzard* (160:16), I asked if members were noticing declines and I received some affirmative responses.

In 2021, hoping for a recovery in both populations, I repeated the exercise, and the summary results are presented below. Again, natural annual variations may be operating but there is an apparent steep increase in the rate of loss of House Martins. For Swallows, the decline, though slightly less steep, continues and might suggest a trend to local extinction as a breeding bird within a few years.

The Birds of Shropshire (Smith 2020) allocates the Swallow to the Green and the House Martin to the Amber Lists; nationally they are listed the same way. Purely from the Hopesay parish data it is the Swallow which is under the greatest threat; to what extent is this the case in Shropshire as whole? This work will be written up fully and submitted for publication in the 2021 SBR.

Hirundine population trends from three Hopesay parish surveys.
The numbers:



John Tucker

Save our Curlews Campaign

Project Work Summary 2021

Work has been carried out in three Community Wildlife Group areas, Upper Clun, Clee Hill and Strettons. In April, the Community Wildlife Groups located the pairs in these areas.

Nest-finding started in early May, and a total of 16 were found. Three were predated within a day, before the planned electric fence to protect them could be erected, and the landowners refused permission to fence another. A fifth was inside a rabbit-proof fence enclosing a tree nursery, and a nest-fence was considered unnecessary. The project target, finding four nests in each area, and fencing three, was exceeded.

The fences were effective - none of the clutches in them were wholly predated, but the one inside the tree nursery fence was. One clutch was incubated for the full term but failed to hatch. Two clutches were abandoned close to the estimated hatch date. Five more eggs in three nests failed to hatch, although other eggs in the clutch did so. Twelve unhatched eggs were sent to Sheffield University for expert analysis, to ascertain the reasons for failure. There were no unfertilised eggs.

Twenty-four eggs in eight nests hatched, and all except two of the chicks were radio-tagged. Tracking the tagged chicks aims to show how they use the landscape, and what happens to them. Failure of chicks to survive and fledge is a major cause of the Curlew population decline, locally and nationally, and we need a better understanding of the reasons so we can develop effective conservation measures.

In the Upper Clun, a brood of three (one tagged and two not) all fledged, but none of the chicks in the other tagged broods did, and there is no evidence that any of the other pairs in the three areas produced fledged young. In Clee Hill three pairs produced chicks, which were closely monitored, but none fledged. There is no evidence that any untagged chicks in the Strettons area fledged either. Therefore 24-25 nests in the project areas with known outcome produced three fledged young. The project results are summarised in the table.

Project Area	Pairs Located	Nests Found	Nests Fenced	No. Eggs in Fenced Nests	Unhatched Eggs	Nests producing chicks	Chicks Hatched	Chicks Radio-tagged	Fledged Young
Clee Hill CWG	8 + 2*	6	4	16	12*	1	4	4	0
Strettons CWG	7 - 8	5	5	17	5	4	12	12	0
Upper Clun CWG	7	5	3	11	3	3	8	6	3
Total	24 - 25	16	12	44	20	8	24	22	3

* two fenced nests were just outside CWG area

* = includes four predated eggs



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Only half the nests found produced any chicks. Only one of the tagged chicks survived for more than a few days. Almost all the 21 tagged chicks that died were predated (none were lost to agricultural activities), but a detailed analysis of the 2021 results has not been undertaken yet. Results from previous years indicate that most predation is carried out by foxes. There is increasing evidence, reproduced on the SOS website (www.shropshirebirds.com/index/bird-conservation/save-our-curlews/), that the food supply provided by the release of Pheasants for recreational shooting supports unnaturally high levels of predators and scavengers, particularly foxes, which in turn limits the breeding success of Curlews.

Seven other Community Wildlife Groups have been monitoring most of the remaining County Curlew population (about another 75 pairs). Most monitoring returns have been received, but the analysis has not started yet. However, no ad-hoc reports of fledged young have been received. Last year, it is believed that only one of the 100 or so pairs monitored produced any fledged young. The 2021 result is likely to be similar.

A full report will be prepared and published for each of the three areas, including an assessment of what happened to the chicks. The results will be sent to the South of England Curlew Forum, and the national Curlew Species Recovery Group, so the work will be an integral part of the case to Government for effective Curlew conservation measures.

SOS has contributed to the project costs from its own funds, and an appeal to members, Community Wildlife Group members and the public also contributed. SOS gratefully acknowledges grants from the Stepping Stones project, via Strettons area Community Wildlife Group, with funding from the People's Postcode Lottery*, the Shropshire Hill AONB Conservation Fund*, British Birds Charitable Trust, Wader Quest, the Garreg Llwyd Windfarm Community Benefit Fund* and Stretton Focus Community Awards* (* = funding for specific project areas).

This is a long-term project, which will continue in future years.

Leo Smith
SOS Curlew Campaign Co-ordinator
email leo@leosmith.org.uk

Apr, May, and Jun 2021

Pink-footed Goose A single record which came from Cranmere Bog on 4 Apr.

Whooper Swan One was reported at Bletchley on 6 / 8 Apr via the Bird News services.

Egyptian Goose A breeding pair with six goslings were present at Edgmond on 10 Apr and remained as a family group until the end of Apr. Four were present at Polemere on 11 Apr and two at Venus Pool on 30 Jun.

Ruddy Shelduck A single was at Wood Lane on 2 May and one, perhaps the same, was seen grazing east of Newport on 17 & 20 May having moved to Belvide for part of the intervening period.

Pintail A very late male was present at Sambrook Mill on 19 May.

Scaup One was present at The Mere, Ellesmere on 4 Apr and continued to be reported via Bird News Services until the 14 Apr.

Common Scoter One was reported (Nocmig) over Cantlop Grove on 11 Apr and three were present on the Mere, Ellesmere on 24 Jun.

Red Grouse Up to five were seen at The Long Mynd during Apr / May plus two at Stiperstones on 4 May.

Grey Partridge Reports of up to three during the quarter came from Bourton (3), Moortown (2), Isombridge (2), Shawbury Heath (2) and Brompton (3).

Common Quail The first returning bird was heard in fields near Sleaf on 1 Jun. Singles were also heard later calling at Tibberton, Knowbury and near Church Stretton.

Great White Egret One was seen near Cockshutt on 4 & 9 Apr, another at Kempton on 6 Apr and finally one at Chelmarsh Scrape on 2 May.

Little Egret Two were seen at Venus Pool on 23 Apr. Singles were reported at fourteen other locations throughout the County.



Osprey (right) A busy quarter! April records came from Cantlop Grove (5th), Neen Savage, Leighton / Buildwas, Venus Pool (all 9th), Acton Reynald (11th) and Chelmarsh Reservoir (15th). During May, most sightings came from Venus Pool, on 5th, 6th, and 9th together with one over Dothill NR on 11th. Two further sightings came from Venus Pool on 6 and 26 Jun.

Marsh Harrier One was seen near Rednal on 20 Apr.

Golden Plover Sixty were present at Felhampton on 7 Apr. Two other records came from Soulton Hall and Cantlop Grove (Nocmig).

Ringed Plover Singles were present at Venus Pool on 20 Apr and 1 May, then three on 8 May. Two were present on farmland near Whixall on 5 May and a single near Cockshutt on 21 Apr.

Little Ringed Plover (below) The first returning birds were singles seen at Venus Pool and Polemere on 2 Apr. Most records then came from Venus Pool where up to four were

present during the quarter. Two were also seen at Brompton, Wood Lane, Northwood Floods and on a shingle bank by the River Severn.



Whimbrel Just a single Nocomig record of at least one over Belle Vue, Shrewsbury on 21 Apr.

Turnstone Three sightings of single birds stopping for 'one day only', the first at Venus Pool on 8 May, another at Condover on 21 May and the final one near Bridgnorth on 22 May.

Knot One was present with other waders at Northwood Flood on 4 May.

Ruff One was seen in a flooded field near Cockshutt on 24 Apr. A second report came from nearby Wood Lane NR on 26 Apr, possibly the same bird?

Dunlin Eight were present at Northwood Flood on 4 May accompanying the Knot. Four records of up to three birds were seen at Venus Pool during April and May. A single was present at Wall Farm on 20 Apr.

Common Snipe The highest count during the quarter was fifteen at Wall Farm on 6 Apr where the final sighting was also made on 29 Apr.

Common Sandpiper Most records came from Venus Pool where up to three were seen from 9 Apr. Three were also present on the Severn upstream of Frankwell, Shrewsbury on 18 Apr. Singles were seen at Buildwas. Chelmarsh Reservoir, Stowe and Monkmoor.

Green Sandpiper (below) Singles were reported at Venus Pool and the nearby River Severn until 17 Apr with returning birds from 13 Jun



Common Redshank One was seen at Venus Pool on 5 Apr and another heard at The Rodway on 20 Apr.

Greenshank One was present at Wood Lane on 26 Apr.

Arctic Tern One briefly landed on a buoy before departing from Chelmarsh reservoir on 28 Apr and two flew through Venus Pool on 8 May.

Common Tern A single was present at Venus Pool on 14 Jun.

Turtle Dove There were two reports of birds heard 'purring' (but not seen). The first report came from The Ercall on 15 /16 May, the second from Burleydam on 27 Jun.

Cuckoo The earliest sighting was at Cherrington Green on 14 Apr, followed by more reports at various locations over the following few days. There were numerous reports throughout the County from over eighty locations, same as in 2020!

Barn Owl Records of single birds or pairs came from seventeen locations throughout the county.

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

Little Owl Singles were reported from Shrewsbury, Eyton on Severn, Wall Farm and Moortown.

Short-eared Owl Singles were seen at Wildmoor, Long Mynd, on 12 Apr, Titterstone Clee on 2 May and Magpie Hill on 15 May.

Nightjar Two were present at Haughmond Hill on 11 Jun and two at a site near Cheswardine on 22 Jun.

Common Swift The first returning birds were seen on 25 Apr at Venus Pool, Shrewsbury and in Telford. The highest counts came from Ludlow where 100 were seen on 18 Jun, and Venus Pool where there were 80 on 24 May.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Most records came from Wyre Forest and Venus Pool between the period early April to early May. Both sites reported male and female birds.

Hobby The earliest records came from Aston on Clun on 3 Apr and the Long Mynd on 17 Apr. More records followed from 16 other locations.

Great Grey Shrike One was found near the summit of Brown Clee Hill on 4 Apr where it was last reported on 11 Apr.

Willow Tit Reported from just three sites: Clun Forest (Crossways), Bury Ditches and Shifnal Sewage Works.

Sand Martin (below) Some good counts were noted during severe weather at the beginning of May. There were 400 at Whitemere on 5 May, 350 at The Mere, Ellesmere on 3 May and 200 at Venus Pool on 4 May



Swallow Well over 500 records with big counts of 100 at The Mere, Ellesmere on 3 May and Whitemere on 5 May.

Cetti's Warbler Seen or heard at seven locations: Whixall Floods (1), Venus Pool (1), Aston Locks (1), Monkmoor, Shrewsbury (1), Attingham Park (1), near Oswestry and a site east of Newport (5+).

Wood Warbler The first record was a singing male at Bomere Coppice on 16 Apr (via the Bird News services) and then Wyre Forest shortly after. Counts of four birds or more came from Dowles Brook, and other sites within the Wyre Forest. There were just two reports of one or two birds from Clunton Coppice.

Sedge Warbler The first reported was a singing male at Venus Pool on 9 Apr. Counts of five or more came from Wall Farm, Rednal and Aston Locks.

Grasshopper Warbler One was present, singing at Newport on 9 Apr and others were reported from Grindley Brook on 26 Apr, Acton Burnell on 30 Apr, Chelmarsh Scrape (2) on 2 May and Whixall Moss on 3 Jun.

Lesser Whitethroat (below) Numerous reports from over 20 locations. The earliest sighting came from Venus Pool and Market Drayton on 22 Apr.



Ring Ouzel The first sighting was of three at Titterstone Clee on 3 Apr increasing to nine there on 9 Apr. An estimated 13 were seen on the Long Mynd on 29 Apr spread out

on a very steep gorse covered hillside. Other reports came from The Wrekin and Brown Clee.

Spotted Flycatcher The earliest record was a single at Clunton Coppice on 1 May. Eight were recorded during a survey in the Wyre Forest on 22 May, plus many reports of pairs at the usual hotspots.

Pied Flycatcher (below) The first sighting was on 4 Apr at Bridges and there was a surprise record of one at Venus Pool on 10 Apr. (see image). Reports from numerous locations followed with the highest count being 24 at Folly Brook, Newcastle-on-Clun on 14 May.



Black Redstart One was seen on Brown Clee on 9 Apr, then again on 15 Apr. Another was reported over Bridgnorth High Street on 2 Jun.

Common Redstart The first record came from The Ercall on 16 Apr. The highest counts came from walks at Bridges (10) on 15 Jun, Moelydd (9) on 19 Apr. There were numerous countywide reports.

Whinchat The Long Mynd produced most records, and the first report was a single in Batch valley on 26 April. Eight were present at High Park on 16 Apr and a flock of seven were seen at the Gliding Club on 5 May.

Wheatear (next page) The first report came from Titterstone Clee on 1 Apr. Good counts from the usual sites with nine present at Callowgate. Eight birds were seen at Wall Farm on 12 Apr, High Park on 16 May and Doddington on 7 May. An influx of Greenland race birds (*Ieucorhoa*) was noted in early May with seven at the Gliding Club on 5th. (next page)



Tree Sparrow Most reports came from Oakley Mynd or Pentre with up to ten birds were seen during the quarter and excellent counts of up to thirty came from Clunbury.

Yellow Wagtail The first reports came from Polemere and Venus Pool on 2 Apr. The highest count of ten, came from Venus Pool on 1 May.

Tree Pipit Records came from over 30 sites, with the first sightings at Wyre Forest on 2 Apr. The highest count of 11 also came from the same site on 20 Apr.

Brambling Four were present at Lower Overton on 2 Apr, then singles at Venus Pool and Market Drayton. the latest report was of two at Shirlett on 18 Apr.

Hawfinch Two reports: one from Wyre Forest on 20 Apr and then another from Upper Longwood on 9 May.

Common Crossbill Reported from eight locations with most sightings in April. The highest counts were 15 at Bishops Wood on 19 Apr and 10+ at Lower Overton on 3 Apr.

Corn Bunting Reported from sixteen locations throughout the quarter. The highest count of eight came from Child's Ercall Airfield on 9 Jun.

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.

Photos and compiled by Jim Almond

Indoor Meetings

Shropshire Ornithological Society

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

Please monitor the SOS website ([under "Breaking News"](#)) for confirmation of the arrangements under which each talk will be held, including the use of Zoom.

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

Wednesday, 15 September 2021

Annual General Meetings followed by:

John Martin New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands – Birding Down Under
NZ's Subantarctic Islands are difficult and expensive to get to. They hold some of the greatest seabird spectacles on earth...

<http://www.shropshirebirds.com>

Wednesday, 6 October 2021

Diane Monether Feed the Birds

Taking us through a Shropshire Wildlife Trust initiative to encourage people of all ages and settings to care for our feathered friends and showcasing some of the benefits and successes.

Wednesday, 3 November 2021

Jeff Clarke Cruisers Go Wild

A fascinating look at the vast array of birds and mammals that can be seen on regular cruise trips with tips on locations, time of year etc, to get the best of both worlds i.e., cruise holidays and wildlife watching.

Wednesday, 1 December 2021

Mike Lane A Lane in Eastern Europe

A look at the diverse wildlife across several Eastern European countries.

Shropshire Ornithological Society (Church Stretton)

The Methodist Church Hall, Watling Street, Church Stretton SY6 7BG

Meetings commence at 7:30 p.m., doors generally open around 7:00

Monday, 25 October 2021

Diane Monether Feed the Birds Project
(Shropshire Wildlife Trust)

Monday, 22 November 2021

Andrew Fusek Peters Hill and Dale, my Shropshire Year

Field Trips

Sunday, 19 September **RSPB Conwy** Car
Organiser: Sue Brealey
Full Day – Meet at Car Park at 10am Postcode for SatNav: LL31 9XZ
Directions: From the A55, take junction 18 (signposted Conwy and Deganwy) and follow the brown RSPB signs. The reserve is on the south side of the roundabout.
See: www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/conwy/

Sunday, 17 October **RSPB Marshside** Car
Leader – Estelle Hughes
Full Day – Meet at the Car Park at 10am Postcode for SatNav: PR9 9PJ
Directions: Take M6 north to J27, Then A5209 to Parbold, and turn right onto B5246 through Rufford until T-junction. Turn left onto A565. At roundabout take 3rd turning onto Martine Drive. Car Park is at next junction. Grid Ref: SD 353 205
See: www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/marshside
(Please note the Merseyflow notes below)

Sunday, 21 November **Pennington Flash** Car
Organiser – Sue Brealey
Full Day – Meet at the Car Park at 10am SatNav. Post code: WN7 3PA
Directions: - From J22 of M6, take A580 towards Manchester. Turn left onto A572 (Newton Rd). Follow Signposts (Actually the Fire Station, but park is opposite). Pay & Display Car Park
See: www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Leisure/Greenheart/Pennington-Flash.aspx

Sunday, 12 December **WWT Slimbridge** (With RSPB Local Group)
Organiser: Sue Brealey by Coach
Full Day – Meet at Shirehall Bus Stop leaves 8:15am sharp Postcode for SatNav: GL2 7BT
Costs: - £15.00 per person for the coach plus entry fees for non-members of WWT
See www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/slimbridge

Contact Details:

Sue Brealey 01939 262450//07713 164463

Estelle Hughes 01948 840902//07817 243693

For updates, please check
Breaking news on our website

<http://www.shropshirebirds.com>

Please send contributions or suggestions for *The Buzzard* to **Tim Devanney**:

buzzard@shropshirebirds.co.uk

Copy deadline for the Winter 2021 issue is: 1 October 2021

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.