



SHEFFIELD BIRD STUDY GROUP
BULLETIN

ISSUE 214

SEP 2012

www.sbsg.org



SUMMER ROUNDUP

All the sightings highlights from Jun, Jul and Aug

STARLINGS IN DANGER

The decline of one of our most familiar birds

PLUS!

Garden bird observations

Tim Birkhead lecture report

Field trip report, news and dates for your diary.

Website updates

The SBSG website has now been upgraded, not only to new software which make it easy for us to update, but with a Members' Area, which gives added value to members.

The new members-only features include the ability to see recent sightings for entire year, full access to site guides, an archive of Annual Reports, and a facility to browse your own records that you have sent to the SBSG. Visitors still have access to

much of the site, including the last two weeks of recent sightings.

Everyone who has supplied an email address with their membership should have received an email with details on how to login to the site. If you have not, then please contact Simon Bailey at webmaster@sbsg.org.

Please note old bookmarks leading to www.sbsg.org.uk will

News in brief

New members

The group welcomes new members Dave Simmonite, Ibraheem Mirza, Stephen Hall, David Langston, Mark Smith and Richard Bradley. We hope you enjoy your membership and good birding!

Cover photo

This month's cover photo is by C.M. Dunhill.

Peregrine blog



P. Thomas

As well as our own blog, the birds found local fame, being covered by the Sheffield Star and Telegraph, BBC's Look North, and various updates on the website of the University of Sheffield, who own St George's Church.

There are still sightings of the birds around the City Centre, so always scan the skies when shopping!

Hopefully they'll give us another opportunity to follow their progress with another breeding attempt next year.

As covered in the last issue of the Bulletin, Sheffield's Peregrines, which nested on St George's Church, bred successfully, fledging two young.

A blog was set up by SBSG members to give updates on the Peregrines, which can be found here - sheffieldperegrines.wordpress.com.

Deadline for next Bulletin

The next Bulletin will be issued at the November indoor meeting. Please note that any items for inclusion in the Bulletin must be received by Pete Mella at peterjmella@googlemail.com (for preference), or 21 Lump Lane, Grenoside, Sheffield, S35 8PL, by **Saturday 27th October**.

Bulletin by email

More and more members have agreed to receive their Bulletins by email, and now **well over half** of you are on our email list, meaning we have been able to cut our print run considerably, and make big savings on postage. Many thanks to all members who have agreed to this, and if you would like to switch over to receiving your Bulletin in pdf format then please email me at peterjmella@googlemail.com. **Stamps have just rocketed in price—there's never been a better time to switch!**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Indoor Meetings

Derek Yalden - Common Sandpipers

Wed October 10th 2012, Sheffield University Arts Tower, Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

Dr Derek Yalden is a zoologist and Honorary Reader at the University of Manchester. The co-author of over 200 publications, he is president of the Mammal Society, and has research interests in the fauna of Ethiopia (where a rat and treefrog have been named in his honour) and the conservation ecology of the Peak District.

Dr Yalden's Peak District research includes work on Mountain Hare, Golden Plover and Common Sandpiper, and it is the latter he will be focusing on in what promises to be a very informative lecture.

Keith Clarkson - Changes in Yorkshire's Bird Populations

Wed November 14th 2012, Sheffield University Arts Tower, Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

A familiar face to the SBSG, Keith Clarkson is a pioneer of visible migration in the Sheffield area, and is the RSPB's northeast reserves manager. One of his responsibilities in this role is leading the seabird colony counts at the Bempton Cliffs reserve, which he gave a fascinating and entertaining account of during a lecture to the group last year.

Tonight Keith will be giving a talk on the change fortunes in Yorkshire's bird populations.

Field Meetings

Ringing at Ramsley

Visible migration at Redmires

The autumn's fieldtrips will include a ringing demo at Ramsley Res (September) and a visible migration event at Redmires (November). Dates will be decided nearer the event to take advantage of good weather conditions - keep your eyes on the website for announcements.

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

21-23rd Sept - Barnsley Bioblitz. Joint event between RSPB and Sorby Natural History Society, with a full weekend of events at RSPB Old Moor. Reserve entry fee applies.

22nd Sept - Viking Optics Day (RSPB Old Moor). Optics buying advice from Viking at RSPB Old Moor. 10am-4pm. Free.

28th Sept - DOS indoor meeting. Mike Lane will be giving a talk on 'A Lane in Brazil'. Evergreen Club, Allestree, Derby. 7.30pm, £1 DOS members, £1.50 non-members.

4th Oct - Sheffield RSPB Group indoor meeting. Gordon Yates will be talking on 'Islay: Queen of the Hebrides'. This will also be the group's AGM. 7.30pm, Central United Reformed Church, Sheffield. £1.50 group members, £3 visitors.

16th Oct - DOS/Carsington Bird Club joint meeting. The BTO's Neil Calbrade will be giving a talk on the BTO Wetland Bird Survey. 7.30pm, Henmore Room, Carstington Water, £1 DOS members, £1.50 non-members.

28th Oct - Wyming Brook Photography Workshop. Autumn colours photography workshop with Paul Hobson/Sheffield Wildlife Trust, 10am-4pm. £20pp, contact Julie Gough 0114 2634335 or j.gough@wildsheffield.con to book.

1st Nov - Sheffield RSPB Group indoor meeting. Laurence Rose will talk on 'The RSPB in Northern England'. 7.30pm, Central United Reformed Church, Sheffield. £1.50 group members, £3 visitors.

Group contacts

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Lecture report

Tim Birkhead:

What's It Like To Be A Bird?

The May 2012 lecture was given by Professor Tim Birkhead. Tim has spoken to the group on several occasions in the past and, his reputation going before him, there was a full house to hear him speak. His lecture was based largely on the content of his new book 'Bird Sense: What It's Like to Be a Bird.'

Tim discussed our current understanding of the level and development of the various senses in birds, in order to provide an idea of what goes on inside their heads. He took an old phrase 'a wing guided by an eye,' and proceeded to show his audience how far from the truth this simplistic statement is. Whilst acknowledging that we can never know what it is like to be another person, let alone a member of a different species, Tim outlined some of the factors that aid our understanding. These include the anatomy and relative size of organs, knowledge of avian physiology, the study of behaviour and, increasingly, an understanding of the molecular genetics of birds. An example of the latter comes from the recent identification of genes relating to the sense of smell in birds and the recognition that, in general, their number is positively correlated with the relative size of the olfactory organ and, in turn, with the importance of smell in detecting food in poorly-sighted birds such as the kiwi.

Tim recalled an incident from his early days whilst studying Guillemots on Skomer, in which an adult on a breeding ledge showed unmistakable signs of recognising its mate, at that moment nothing more than a dark speck – to the human eye – several hundred metres out at sea. Another aspect of eyesight, pattern recognition, may be important in sexual selection; it seems likely that the peahen chooses a mate based on the symmetry of the pattern in his tail feathers. On the other hand it has been shown that the female starling is unable to detect symmetry in the

neck feather pattern of the male, thus ruling this out as a factor in her choice of mate.

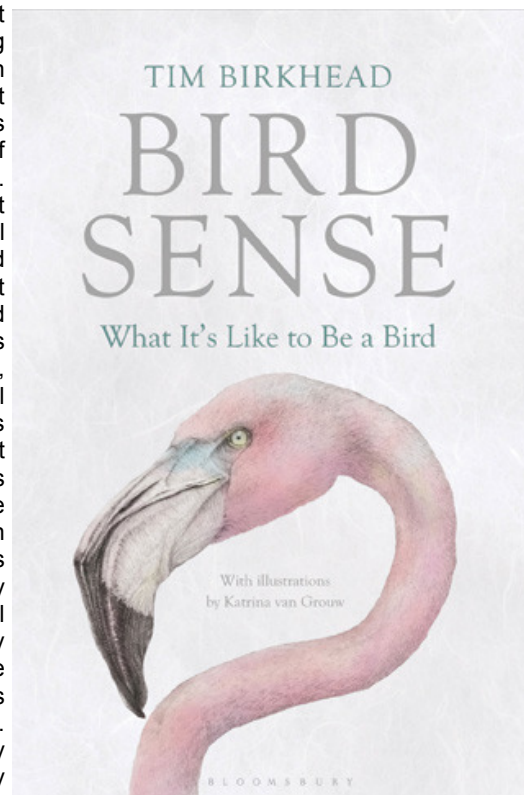
Hearing in birds is generally well-developed, especially so among the owls. In the Great Grey Owl, for example, the ears are not only very large but are positioned asymmetrically such that sound reaches them at slightly differing times, enabling the bird to more easily pin-point the position of its prey. The bird's head is actually rather small, much smaller than it appears from the size of the feathered facial disc, which acts as a sound-funnelling device. Hair cells within the ear, which are critical for hearing, can regenerate in birds. This is not so in man, where damage to these cells, for example after prolonged exposure to excessive noise, produces deafness.

The sense of smell in birds had long been the subject of controversy. The famous bird artist Audubon was convinced that Turkey Vultures had no sense of smell, as a result of some flawed studies using putrified meat. They can smell fresh meat with great acuity however, as was shown by the studies of Kenneth Stager in California. A chance finding was that employees of the Union Oil Company of California had known for many years that Turkey Vultures congregated at points where natural gas leaked from pipelines, attracted by the smell of ethyl mercaptan, one of its constituents. As a result additional mercaptan was added to the gas to maximise the value of this association to the company. Stager's work thus not only demonstrated the powerful sense of smell in the Turkey Vulture but also identified the compound that drew the birds to freshly dead carcasses. Stager had been inspired by the research work of Betsy

Bang in the 1960s, whose detailed anatomical drawings of the nasal structures of a variety of species strongly suggested that the sense of smell was highly although variably developed in birds. Her work, and her later collaborations with Stanley Cobb, provided the foundation on which later research has built.

Tim then went on to discuss the sense of touch, indicating how well-developed it is in ducks, for example, which have the ability to reliably detect edible from inedible matter among silt, mud and gravel below water. During an extended question time he briefly discussed, among other topics, some recent findings on the ability of birds to detect the earth's magnetic field, and how this might be achieved. He was thanked for a superb presentation that was instructive, stimulating and entertaining.

Rod Hinchliffe



Field trip report

Moorland Fringe

Crepuscular

Creep

This has proved a popular (if chilly!) excursion in the last couple of years, but the evening of June 6th, the Wednesday chosen well in advance for our stroll around Hallam Moors, failed to provide the warm sunny evening that might have given us ideal conditions. Following a rainy spell over the previous couple of days, it threatened to be showery for the 20 of us who met at 8 p.m. in the car park at the top end of Wyming Brook. In the end, however, it remained dry and we managed to see a good range of moorland fringe species.

A walk up to the lower reservoir at Redmires gave us the chance to see the pair of Oystercatchers on a rocky islet, one bird sitting on the nest while the other gave occasional fly-bys. Excellent work by Richard Hill on liaising with Yorkshire Water ensured that rising water levels after works on the dams were halted before the nest was flooded, and three chicks were present by the end of June. Unfortunately, nests of two pairs of Little Ringed Plover were not saved, but the birds seemed intent on another attempt and were very evident on the shoreline, their yellow eye-rings visible with the aid of a telescope. Common Sandpiper were also present, a regular breeder at Redmires, though the recreational pressures to which breeding birds here are subject was all too evident as a dog off the lead ran across the bank of the dam and down onto the shoreline. The dog flushed the Lapwing and Curlew roosting on the shoreline, both species waders typical of the moors and rough pasture in the vicinity of Redmires.

Passerines included Siskin, Linnet, the ubiquitous Meadow Pipit and Bullfinch, while a very yellow Willow Warbler gave us the opportunity to practise distinctions from Wood Warbler. House Martin and Swallow

flew low over the grassy banks of the dams picking off the numerous flying insects to be found around the reservoirs. The reservoirs themselves held few waterfowl, although those yet to have Mallard or Canada Goose on their year list were not to be disappointed!

Walking out along the conduit that feed into the top reservoir we enjoyed excellent views up some 8 water voles, including a couple of family parties with half-grown young. Also on the mammal front, brown hares were noted at close quarters in one of the rough fields, while rabbits were more numerous, including one black individual. The rough fields on either side of the conduit provide excellent habitat for breeding Lapwing, almost entirely lost from the 'improved' grassland between Redmires and Lodge Moor, and we counted 10 juveniles at different stages of development. Curlew were also present, and the characteristic 'chipper, chipper, chipper' of Snipe revealed them to be in rushier patches in the fields. There were no signs of their spectacular 'drumming' display this evening, although this can be a good place to observe it overhead. Cuckoos seem to be present in good numbers this summer, and one started calling from the trees west of the conduit; its calls attracted a second bird, which flew from Hammond's Field and engaged in some aerial chasing with the first bird, much appreciated by all.

As soon as we passed the rough fields and were flanked by heather moor we saw our first Red Grouse, and a little further on heard Golden Plover, which are present as a breeding bird in this area in small numbers. By now, the light was fading and we walked down across the moors towards Wyming Brook, where a male Stonechat showed



well on a stone wall before dropping down and disappearing completely. A very agitated Curlew and similarly excited Lapwings caught our attention, with thoughts of a quartering owl or raptor, but a scan of the moorland revealed something even more unusual – a fox, my first in the Redmires area, no doubt drawn by the ground-nesting birds.

Approaching stands of willow and silver birch, the first Woodcock of the evening croaked overhead, with numerous further sightings over the following half an hour. The target bird for this part of the excursion, however, made its presence known by starting to 'churr' in the manner of a distant two-stroke motorbike. This continued, on and off, for a few minutes, and eventually scanning in the gloom produced the sight of a Nightjar hawking moths low over the moor, its white wing patches clearly visible before it landed on the ground. As the light faded, and the midges rose the Nightjar flew again, and a second bird started 'churring', an encouraging indication that this species may be more widespread locally than is generally realised, although it no doubt remains scarce.

We all made it back to the car park in the dusk without incident, and no need to call on the Group's public liability insurance – a major bonus! The trip drew a good level of participation from members and non-members alike, and proved highly successful in the range of species we were able to see, and hear, typical of this habitat we are fortunate to have so close to the city.

David Wood

Closely Observed Birds

John Kirkman examines the differences between the species in his garden.

Have you ever noticed whether or not the birds in your garden or local patch are ever still and calm, like old men dozing on a park bench, or are on the move all the time, like small children round the play area in the same park?

The tits, for example: they are pretty well all fidgety live-wires. The smaller the bird, the more hyper-active. Coals and Long-tailed I have never seen stop still for a second. Blues will pause for a few seconds, but they are constantly swaying, and twirling their bodies, as though their nervous energy is bursting against any constraint. Greats are very similar. It's seen to be a driven family.

Greenfinches will spend spells of ten or twenty minutes in my garden treetops, on survey, the male often wheezing his jingle. Of course, they are looking round, for there is always the Sparrowhawk threat, but the birds are not shaking with the need to dart off. Chaffinches are less static than greens, and Bullfinches rarely seem to take a break, at least in Bradway.

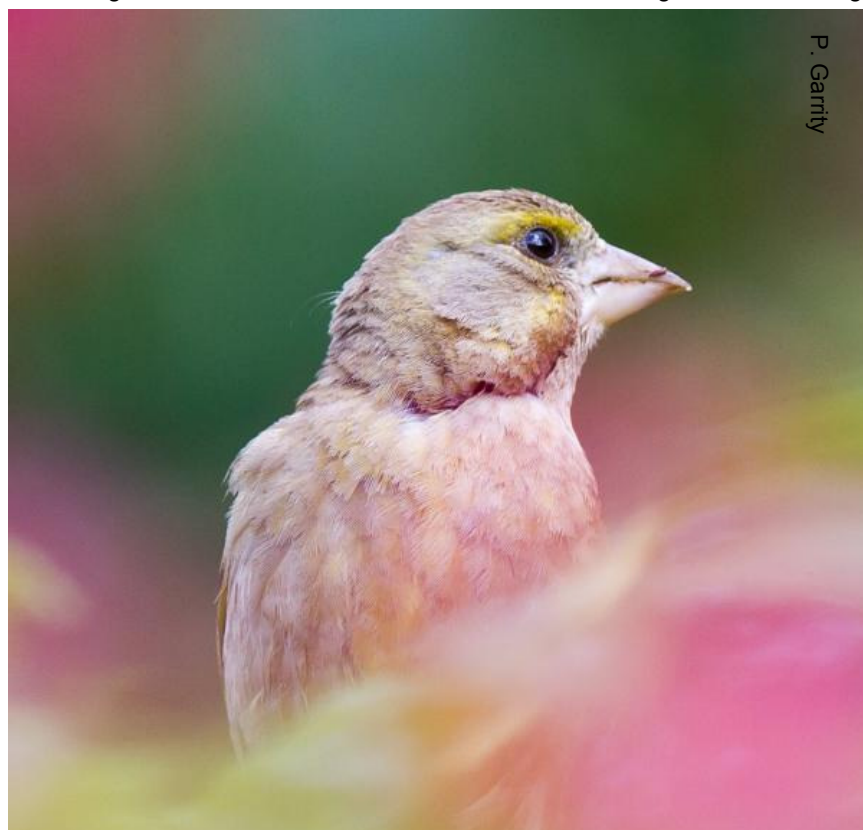
The few sparrows that now visit often spend time in a large and dense cotoneaster. They sit in the foliage, with just their heads poking out, all safe and sound. Cheeping away to each other, and again swivelling their heads to scan the skies, they will be there for half an hour before departing.

So in the finch-sparrow group, size seems not to be a factor, the species having their own characteristics.

Woodpigeons and Collared Doves are quite happy to have sedentary spells. The former feed voraciously in the morning rush-hour, then will sit for an hour, occasionally crooning, arranging feathers, and seemingly to doze. Even more relaxed are the Collareds, which might be there for two or three times as long. A pair will touch beaks, sit with shoulders touching, preen themselves or each other, and seem also to sleep. These are dangerous practices, for the local female Sparrowhawk is no slouch, and testified by the frequency of feather-piles in the district. What advantage has evolved to outweigh the risk?

Our Feral Pigeons are much more active, spending no more than a few minutes on the roof prospecting for food. We are fortunate enough to have two or four Stock Doves visit every day, from the hedges and copses towards Holmesfield to the garden, and they feed with the Woods and Ferals, often returning at dusk. However they never loll around the roof or in the trees. They are on the move all the time. Food finished, and off they go. Again species within one family, at comparative size, behave very differently. Strange.

Again, Crows will sit in our trees, on a high point, surveying for long spells. Magpies, on the other hand, never do this. Tails flicking, they are on full alert, and work each other up. Six or a dozen will interact, chasing and chattering



P. Garrity

for a whole morning, while Crows will sit around and watch.

Or take the existence of crests, or at least of feathers which can be raised or fluffed to make the head look bigger or to convey a message of determination, anger or aggression. Blue Tits raise the feathers on their crown, but I don't think Great Tits do. They flaunt their chest-stripes or bow and sway instead.

Chaffinches do the same as Blue Tits, but Bullfinches and Greenfinches appear not to - in my patch, anyway. Blackbirds also lift their topknot, but use their whole body on occasion. Thus an interloper male Blackbird landed in a bush next to the resident, which erected all its non-flight feathers, so seeming to double in size and be full of bristles. The other elongated itself, fanned its tail and made sinuous side-to-side snake movements. This display failed to cow the holder of the territory, and the subordinate bird left. No fighting took place, or even the more usual diagonal pacing, or the running near each other.

Crows fluff all their head and neck feathers. A relaxed Crow in our treetop looks smooth and sleek; any worry, such as the near approach of the neighbour's Crows, causes the proud-head warning appearance. Magpies, however, I don't observe doing this.

The pigeon family also approach the bird table differently. Our Stock Doves never use it, neither landing on the roof nor venturing onto the table itself. The other three species certainly will, Sharing goes against the grain for Woodpigeons; ill at ease, they glare at each other, make themselves as tall as they can, and it's not long before only the dominant is there. Ferals and Collareds are quite different. Neither will share with the other, but are happy enough with their own. Four or five Ferals will squeeze in, tails in each other's faces, but show no aggression. Collareds occupy the space in pairs, but again quite peacefully.

Gaining access to the covered

section they find quite hard. All three species perch on the roof, peer down, make false starts, before performing a clumsy half-circle downwards flutter, the Woodpigeon being particularly heavy as it does so.

Observe also the distinction or otherwise of birds on the nut-holder. The four tit species are confident and agile, flying straight on, or hopping with directness and vigour from a nearby twig. Sparrows vary, at least in our garden; some are like tits, others have to spur themselves on. Around the country I have seen Starlings that cope well, being nimble and well-coordinated, but not so their Bradway brethren.

Ferals and Stock Doves ignore the holder, but Collareds and Woods will occasionally land on a twig and look longingly. One will now and then try to land and cling, others will strain forwards and

reach through the underbars to nuzzle nut fragments loose.

Chaffinches are surprisingly incompetent. The sparrows leave them behind. Greenfinches are bulkier than Chaffinches, and look clumsier, but are adept on the feeder. Bullfinches are there much less often, but are capable. So why does the Chaffinch struggle? One will hover, with great intensity, before the feeder, yet fail to make contact. Another will edge along the twig and, with diffidence, creep inside the frame, seeming to find the whole thing too much. Siskins, of course, are as adept as tits. Dunnocks use the feeder less often, but are good at getting in. So too is a Wood Mouse, that climbs the trunk, runs along the branch and down the string. No bird will go on while the mouse is there, even though it is only the size of a Coal Tit.



Shed a tear for the Starling

Dodo, Great Auk, Passenger Pigeon, Starling, OK, it's an unlikely sequence. Starlings, there are millions of them or maybe there were. It depends on what you read or how you read it. The BTO website tells us that we had a summer population of 8.5 million (1994-2000). The bird trends section indicates a very precise estimate of 804,000 territories in 2000. The forthcoming BTO Atlas will update that. In any event, Starling's conservation listing is firmly in the red. The BTO's status summary: "The abundance of breeding Starlings in the UK has fallen rapidly and continues to be strongly downward".

So much for the science, this is the anecdotal. June 12th 2012, I take a nine mile walk meandering from Owlbar to Millhouses via Barbrook, Topley Moss, Topley, Ecclesall Woods and Millhouses Park. I wander through moorland, moorland fringe, upland pasture, woodland, suburb and park. I see or hear 53 species, a total which includes just one single Starling. One Starling, outnumbered by Whinchat and Willow Tit, Stonechat and Grey Partridge and matched in number by Tree Pipit and Quail.

It's not an isolated example of what I know is happening to the Starling population locally. I've worked for many years now enthusing youngsters in over a dozen junior schools about birds and the environment. When we leave the

classroom we spend a few minutes getting used to the binoculars and then we look for birds. When I started doing this, bird number one was almost always a Starling and it was a "wow" bird. Confiding, colourful, noisy and numerous, the kids could latch on to them quite easily. The magic could start to happen. Not now, bird number one is usually a Woodpigeon. It doesn't quite have the same impact. There are still Starlings around. We get to see a few on some of the school fields but now in fours or fives when a few years ago it was forties and fifties.

That's the south east of the city, still in places a Starling stronghold. My own patch is in the south west of Sheffield. I do two or three guided birding walks each year through Millhouses Park and Ecclesall Woods with local community groups and for the last few years I've taken to carrying chocolate biscuits as prizes to give to anyone finding a Starling. I now overdose on Yorkie bars but then I always know I'm on a winner. I've seen two Starlings in my fairly bird rich garden in the last twelve years.

So what? It's 50 years since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* brought the world's attention to the disastrous effects that the widespread use of pesticides were having on birds and the environment in general. We've moved on since then haven't we? Harmful pesticides have been banned, the "green" agenda is addressed by politicians of all persuasions, there are nature reserves everywhere and the RSPB boasts a million members. We all care about the planet now but in those last 50 years we've also carelessly mislaid several million Starlings besides a few hundred thousand Corn Buntings, Linnets, Yellowhammers, Grey Partridges, Tree Sparrows and Skylarks not to mention a few million House Sparrows too.

Progress? We've made some and some of it has been spectacular but not enough to offset the damage that we've done to our environment in the past half-century. Our Starling is a barometer. Colourful, charismatic and disappearing from a rooftop near you. The demise of the Starling is an indicator of something very wrong in our countryside and our towns. Yes, save the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, protect the Peregrine, conserve the Corn Crake but worry more, much more, about the Starling.

Pete Brown



RECENT SIGHTINGS

1st June - 31st August 2012

These records are largely unchecked. Records in bold require supporting details.

Little Egret - One flew N at Catcliffe Flash on 15th July.

White Stork - 4 flew W/NW over Aston on the morning of 2nd June, and were seen again later in the day W over Redmires. The quartet had been reported travelling the country previously, and are genuine wild birds.

Barnacle Goose - One at Thrybergh CP on 10th June.

Shelduck - Seven at Middleton Moor on 5th June was the highest count of the period, with birds reported at the site on several dates up to 7th July. Elsewhere two flew N at Rawmarsh on 6th June.

Garganey - One was at Thrybergh CP on 19th August.

Common Scoter - Eight were at Redmires Res on 18th June. Five were at Orgreave Lakes on 9th July, with a drake lingering until 11th. Up to seven were again at Redmires on 15th July, with four still present on 22nd. A female was at Ladybower Res on 25th July, and two females were at Orgreave Lakes on 26th.

Red Kite - Two birds were at Agden Beck on 17th June, and Ewden Valley on 1st July. Elsewhere singles reported at a number of sites, including

Troway, Redmires, Agden Res, Mosborough, Longshaw, High Bradfield, Leadmill, Peat Pits, Owl Bar, Leash Fen, Broomhead Res, Broomhead Moor, Rocher Head, Canyards, Middleton Moor, Greno Wood and Mam Tor.

Marsh Harrier - All reports pertain to juveniles - one at Middleton Moor on 25th July, one SW at Redmires on 26th, two hunting at Redmires on 28th and 29th, and one at Peat Pits on 27th August.

Osprey - Singles over Longley Estate on 12th June, Treeton on 9th August, Broomhead Moor on 19th August, Firsby Res on 21st August and



Redshank (M. smethursti)

Langsett Res on 29th August.

Peregrine - Breeding was successful at St George's Church, with two young successfully fledging. Later sightings include an adult male and juv female on the BT Building on 26th August.

Quail - One calling in pasture NE of Barbrook Res on 12th June.

Water Rail - One at Poolsbrook Marsh on 11th July.

Oystercatcher - Confirmed breeding at Redmires, Orgreave Lakes and Blue Man's Bower.

Dunlin - Various reports from Orgreave Lakes (peaking at seven on 10th July) and Middleton Moor (peaking at four on 30th July). Elsewhere two circled Thrybergh CP on 8th July, two were at

Silverwood Lagoon on 10th July, two were flushed at Cartledge Flats (with one unsuccessfully chased by a Hobby) on 14th July, one was at Candlerush Edge on 15th July, six flew SE at Silverwood Lagoon on 20th July, one was at Langsett Res on 21st August, and one at Thrybergh CP on 24th August.

Ruff - A partial summer plumage male was at Orgreave Lakes on 10th July. Two circled Thrybergh CP on 26th August before departing SE.

Black-tailed Godwit - Recorded on several dates in July at Middleton Moor, peaking at eight on 11th. Three were at Orgreave Lakes on 10th.

Whimbrel - One flew W at Orgreave Lakes on 15th July, with another at the same site on 19th. One flew E at

Thrybergh CP on 20th July, one flew SW at Aldwarke on 5th August, and 14 circled Thrybergh CP, before departing NE, on 12th August.

Greenshank - One was at Middleton Moor on 10th June, and one flew S at Thrybergh CP on 26th July. In August one was at Silverwood Lagoon on 1st, two at Middleton Moor on 2nd and 4th, one at Orgreave Lakes on 4th and 8th, one at Middleton Moor on 8th, and singles over Thrybergh CP on 9th, 11th and 21st.

Green Sandpiper - Two were at Thrybergh CP on 5th August. Elsewhere singles were reported at Silverwood Lagoon, Orgreave Lakes and Middleton Moor.

Wood Sandpiper - One at Silverwood Lagoon on 28th July.

Turnstone - A juv at



Osprey (CM Dunhill)

Redmires Res on 6th August.

Arctic Skua - Two flew NW at Moscar Cross on 8th June. Two flew over the Loxley Valley towards Damflask Res on 13th June.

Mediterranean Gull - Two juvs were at Middleton Moor on 25th July. A juv moulting into a first winter was at Orgreave Lakes on 4th-7th August, with a first winter present on 21st.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - site maxima included 110 at Shirecliffe Tip on 12th July, 1,100 at Middleton Moor on 15th August, 522 at Langsett Res on 21st August, and 300 at Orgreave Lakes on 28th August.

Yellow-legged Gull - A good number of sightings, from 8th July onwards, with an impressive count of 13 at Orgreave Lakes on 2nd August. Elsewhere birds were reported on various dates from Middleton Moor, Redmires, Foolow, Langsett Res and

Wardlow.

Arctic Tern - Two at Thrybergh CP on 11th August.

Cuckoo - Sightings of juvs include one at Redmires on 12th August, two at Middleton Moor on 12th, one at Ewden Height on 19th, one being fed by host Meadow Pipit on 19th, and one at Redmires on 22nd.

Short-eared Owl - Singles at Fox House on 13th June, Leash Fen on 21st August, and Orgreave Lakes on 31st August.

Swift - Larger flocks include 600 at Thrybergh CP on 2nd June, 400 at Rawmarsh on 18th June, 300 at Wharnccliffe Wood on 19th June, and 300 at Orgreave Lakes on 8th August. Later records include five SW at Rawmarsh on and two at Thrybergh CP on 31st August.

Swallow - Large counts include 600 roosting at Middleton Moor on 18th August, and 1,000 at Orgreave Lakes on 28th.

Tree Pipit - Early signs of visible migration include 10 S at Broomhead Moor on 19th August, and 10 S at Redmires on 28th.

Yellow Wagtail - Three present throughout June at Thrybergh CP, and four present at the site on 18th August. Elsewhere there were records from Orgreave Lakes, Edge Mount, Ulley Brook Bog and Upper Midhope.

Wood Warbler - Singing males at Agden Res, Broomhead Res and Wyming Brook, the latter with three recorded on 2nd June.

Crossbill - High counts include 23 at Wyming Brook on 2nd June, 35 at Redmires on 22nd July, 10 at Wigtwizzle on 25th July, and 19 at Midhope Res on 27th August.

Lapland Bunting - An early record over Rod Moor on 23rd August.



Sedge Warbler (M. smethursti)



Stonechat (D. Simmonite)



Pied Flycatcher (C. Hurst)



Willow Tit (P. Garrity)



Peregrine (P. Thomas)

Records were received from the following observers, with apologies for any omissions.

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