



SHEFFIELD BIRD STUDY GROUP
BULLETIN

ISSUE 216

JAN 2013

www.sbsg.org



**SEEING OUT
2012**

Round-up of November and December's best birds

ETHIOPIA

Highlights of a birding trip to this African gem

Changes in Yorkshire Bird Populations
Common Sandpipers
Latest news and dates

Betty East 1924-2012

Just before Christmas, on Dec 21st, Betty died peacefully after a long illness, bravely borne.

It was after attending an ornithology course (the tutors being Dave Herringshaw and Dave Gosney) that Betty joined the SBSG along with her husband Alan and daughter Jane. Betty was already involved in local birdwatching - she was giving support to her daughter Jane, a teacher, in the running of her school 'Young Ornithologists' group, an involvement which altogether spanned 20 years. Joining the SBSG gave this group a link with the then junior group of the SBSG which was organised by Dave Gosney and Pete Freeman.

The SBSG in its early days had well supported coach trips to more distant birding areas. Betty and Jane came along, bring a few YOC group members (and parents sometimes). Favourite places included Boston Point, Titchwell, and the Cley Marshes.

Betty faithfully submitted records of all the birds seen in her wildlife friendly Greystones garden. Together with her husband, she also took part over many years in the BTO Garden Survey.

Betty and Alan regularly walked in the Porter Valley, and submitted their bird records, over many years. Chris Falshawe later collated these records when he wrote an article for the SBSG Bulletin on the status of birds in the Porter Valley.

A birding area greatly enjoyed by Betty's family was Suffolk, particularly Southwold and its surrounding area. Visits to Minsmere RSPB reserve were a highlight of these holidays. Sadly, in

2001, Alan predeceased Betty, after a short illness with Betty and Jane in Southwold.

Betty's health deteriorated in the last few years of her life with the onset of Parkinson's Disease. This resulted in her spending the last six years in Northfield Nursing Home. But the birdwatching continued with Jane's help. Feeders attached to her room window attracted Blue Tits, Great Tits, occasional Long-tailed Tits, Robins and House Sparrows. Extensive views across the Sheaf Valley provided a chance to watch the evening flypast of Rooks.

Joint membership of the SBSG with Jane was retained, and kept Betty in touch with the SBSG via Bulletins and Bird Reports. Together with Jane, TV Wildlife Programmes and Bird Magazines were enjoyed.

At her funeral, at Ecclesall Parish Church, Betty's son Simon paid tribute to other facets of her life. Betty had been born in Hope and had an outdoor upbringing. She had had a career as a nurse and community midwife before her marriage. This was relinquished as she chose to concentrate on homelife and giving a happy upbringing to Jane and Simon. Later on, she became a volunteer at St Luke's Hospice for over 25 years.

Betty leaves behind a lasting legacy of happy memories to many people - including former YOC members, many SBSG members, and to her family - her brother Geoffrey, daughter Jane, son Simon, and his wife Annabella, and her twin grandchildren David and Natalie.

A long life well-lived.

Hazel Barton

News in brief

New members

We have had a bumper crop of new members of the last couple of months, so a big welcome to (deep breath)... Richard Jones, Jasmine Ghotbi-Ravandi, Kathryn Haworth, Andrew Jones, Gabriele Montejo Kovacevich, Charlie Young, Alex Long, Dennis Patton, Jane Wilkinson, Dave Barrett, Gill Stroud, Christopher & Margaret Spencer, Andrew Hill, Jenny Carter, Dennis & Lynn Wilkinson, Chris Parkin, Sue Bradshaw, Margaret Nalty, Lewis Riley, Bethany Dixon, Billy Clapham, Phil Riley, Joel Wirth, Debbie Smith, Isaac and Oenone, Anna Pethen, Ian Cracknell, Jean & Martin Dykes, Richard & Lindsay Burton, Penny Philcox, Lynn Seymour, Christopher & Julie Austin, Bruce & Liliias Bendell and Keith & Jennifer Horton. Good birding to you all!

Bulletin distribution volunteer needed

A volunteer is wanted to help us distribute Bulletins. This will entail dealing with the postage of the paper copies. If anyone fancies the job please email peterjmella@googlemail.com

Cover photo

This month's cover photo is by David Wood.

More news page 10.

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 **28th February**.

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

Clive McKay—Visible Migration: A New Perspective

Wed February 13th 2013, Sheffield University Arts Tower, Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

A familiar face to the group, Clive McKay returns after a very well-received lecture on his formative birding years last year. Clive is a visible migration pioneer, and UK co-ordinator of the Trektellen migration-logging website, and it will be this fascinating area of study that he will be speaking to us about tonight.

AGM + 2012 Review of the year

Wed 13th Mar 2013, Sheffield University Arts Tower, Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

It's that time of the year again - this meeting will see the group's AGM, plus a review of 2012's Sheffield birding highlights.

Field Meetings

Pit-house West

Sat 26th Jan 2013, 2pm (with reserve date 27th Jan)

This trip will take the form of a walk through to the northern end of Rother Valley Country Park and back to Pit-house West via birch and woodland, perhaps 3-4 km in total. We will end up at the 'Bittern Pool' for dusk in the hope of seeing one fly to roost. We should see some of the winter wildfowl present at RVCP at the northern end of the complex, and other possibilities at Pit-house West include Redpoll, Kingfisher, Water Rail, Willow Tit and Cetti's Warbler, but all of these local specialities require a good deal of luck and patience! Stout (waterproof) footwear advised.

Meet by the roundabout on the A57 Chesterfield Road between Beighton and Swallownest, approx. SK448844. Heading east on the A57, the roundabout is after crossing the Beighton 'flyover' and the railway line, before heading uphill to the Swallownest roundabout. The best bet for parking is on the exit roads to the left or right (stub slip road only) of the roundabout, as approaching from Sheffield.

Please check the SBSG website for updates nearer the time —the date may change according to weather.

Group contacts

Bulletin

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OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Thu 24th Jan—Sorby field trip to Carsington Water. SBSG members welcome. Please contact Jim Monach at jim.monach@gmail.com or 07815027643 for details.

Fri 25th Jan - DOS Indoor Meeting. Tim Melling will be talking on Fair Isle. Friends Meeting House, Chesterfield. 7.30pm. £1 members, £1.50 non-members.

Wed 30th Jan - SK38 Birders Indoor Meeting. AGM, followed by short presentations, including "Caring For Optics" and "Birds of Pensthorpe". Aston Parish Hall, Ryton Road, North Anston, 7.30pm. Members £1, non-members £2.

Thu 7th Feb - RSPB Sheffield Group indoor meeting. The talk will be "Shetland Birds" by Richard Ashbee. 7.30pm, United Reformed Church, Sheffield. Members £1.50, non-members £3.

Thu 7th Feb—Wyming Brook Advisory Group Meeting. St Luke's Church, Blackbrook Road, 7-9pm.

Wed 20th Feb - Sorby Bird Group Indoor Meeting. The talk will be "Bird Observatories of the UK" by Steve Stansfield. 7.15pm, Room F38, University of Sheffield Hicks Building, Hounsfield Road.

Fri 22nd Feb - DOS Indoor Meeting. Tim Mackrill on "Ospreys Home and Away". Evergreen Club, Allestree, 7.30pm. Members £1, non-members £2.

Wed 27th Feb - SK38 Birders Indoor Meeting. Malcolm Walpole will be talking on "Japan In Winter". Aston Parish Hall, Ryton Road, North Anston, 7.30pm. Members £1, non-members £2.

Thu 7th Mar - RSPB Sheffield Group indoor meeting. Chris Galvin on "Around The World In 80 Birds". 7.30pm, United Reformed Church, Sheffield. Members £1.50, non-members £3.

Sat 9th Mar - DOS Indoor Meeting. Joint meeting with Bakewell Bird Club, plus Stuart Meredith on "Aren't Birds Brilliant". Buxtom Methodist Church Rooms, 7.30pm. Members £1, non-members £2.

Lecture Report

Keith Clarkson

Changes in Yorkshire's Bird Populations

The lecture at the November meeting was delivered by Keith Clarkson, well known to the Group as a pioneer of visible migration.

Keith began by listing some the major losses to the Yorkshire avifauna during the 19th century – Great Bustard, Red Kite, Avocet, Bittern, Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit and Chough. Despite these losses, and that of Stone Curlew, which had ceased to breed in the county by 1937, the total number of breeding species increased to 138 during the first half of the 20th century, according to Chislett in his book 'Yorkshire Birds' (1952).

By the 1950s Red-backed Shrike and Raven had disappeared, to be followed by Nightingale, Hen Harrier and (probably) Black Redstart, but the addition to the list of Wigeon, Collared Dove, Goshawk and Siskin, with occasional records of Fieldfare, maintained the total at 138 according to Mather (1986). Since then additional species have bred, including Mandarin, Little Egret, Egyptian Goose and Common Crane, together with Marsh, Cetti's and Savi's Warblers, whilst Red Kite (currently about 100 pairs) Corncrake and Avocet have returned. There are now some 160 species breeding in the county.

Despite this increased diversity, the populations of many species have fluctuated in recent decades and Keith proceeded to discuss the numerous factors involved. A warming climate probably explains the presence of Little Egret, Hobby, Woodlark and Cetti's Warbler, and the huge increase in the Stonechat population.

Among changing agricultural practices the winter sowing of wheat has contributed to large increases in the populations of Wood Pigeon, Stock Dove and Jackdaw.

Other changes, including the loss of stubble and winter weeds due to autumn ploughing, the huge decrease in hay meadows, loss of hedgerows, permanent pastures and wetland, and the effects of the widespread use of herbicides and pesticides, have had negative impacts on the numbers of Rook, Starling, Grey Partridge, Corn Bunting and Twite. The latter does have a small stronghold in the Halifax area, where hay meadows remain to fulfil the demands of horse owners.

The Common Snipe has been hard-hit by wetland drainage and by the compaction of damp soils arising from large numbers of grazing sheep. This makes it difficult for them to access earthworms in damp farmed areas, although numbers are holding up on moorland.

There has been a significant increase in woodland in recent decades, both locally and nationally, and Great Spotted Woodpecker, Chiffchaff, Nuthatch, Blue Tit and Great Tit have benefitted – as has the Grey Squirrel. Siskin, Crossbill and Coal Tit have increased as a result of the proliferation of conifers.

Rotational conifer felling, leaving a succession of cleared areas, has



A. Deighton

worked wonders for Nightjars and there are now 400-600 pairs in moorland and forest in North Yorkshire. Nevertheless there has been a loss both of woodland structure and management and of heterogeneity of the understory, the latter largely due to the increase in the Roe Deer population. Despite the overall increase in woodland the loss of wet wood, and the increase in the Great Spotted Woodpecker population, have had significant negative impacts on Willow Tit numbers, whilst the demise of the Hawfinch can be linked to the predation of eggs and young by Grey Squirrels.

Summer migrants such as Spotted Flycatcher are being squeezed not only by factors in this country such as reduced insect populations as a result of pesticide use, but by environmental degradation in their winter quarters and by persecution during migration.

Furthermore, migrants cannot easily adjust to the earlier peak of insect availability on their breeding grounds arising from global

Increased protection has been a major factor for some species, leading to a massive 1740% increase in the Yorkshire Buzzard population in the last 20 years. Guillemot numbers have also increased dramatically, in part due to protection but also to changes in the structure of the fish population in the North Sea. As Cod has disappeared due to overfishing there has been an explosion in the numbers of Mackerel and Herring, key prey items for the Guillemot. Illegal persecution persists however, most notoriously in the case of the Hen Harrier.

Also of importance for some species in recent years have been the effects of re-introduction (Red Kite), disease (trichomoniasis wiping out one-third of the British Greenfinch population and the effects of avian pox on Blue and Great Tits) and competition (a fall in Magpie numbers following an

expansion in the population of the predatory Carrion Crow). Feral populations of various Parakeet species now exist, and a staggering 35 million Pheasant are released each year into the UK countryside. The associated roadkill is an important food source for Crows, Buzzards and Kites, whilst the effect of such huge numbers of an introduced species on natural food resources is unknown but doubtless significant. Finally, conservation management has resulted in the return of Marsh Harrier and Bittern, and in the establishment of an important population of Black-necked Grebe within the county.

Keith concluded by briefly discussing the aim of the Dearne Valley Green Heart Project as a major initiative in creating a critical mass of interconnected wetland within the county. He stated that broad and shallow environmental payments to farmers haven't worked and that targeted payments are the way forward. He asked his

audience to step up for nature, donate to the county's conservation bodies, ask their MPs to fight for EC Common Agricultural Policy reform and press their newly-elected Police Commissioners on wildlife crime.

Keith's lecture, even by his own standards, was a tour de force and he was warmly thanked for an outstanding and stimulating presentation. In recognition of his contribution to the Group over many years, and of his particular role as organiser of several local Magpie surveys, he was presented with a framed print of the original artwork of that species, as featured on the cover of the Group's journal of the same name, generously donated by Paul Leonard.

Rod Hinchliffe



Lecture Report

Derek Yalden

Common Sandpipers

Based in the University of Manchester for many years, Dr Derek Yalden has very widespread research interests, but a particular focus on the ecology of the Peak District, where he has worked on Mountain Hare, Golden Plover and Common Sandpiper, and it is this last he covered in his presentation.

It seems Derek's 30+ year project on Common Sandpiper breeding and ecology started almost by accident: forced by low cloud to abandon a 1971 upland wader survey visit, he took the opportunity of walking 6k along the River Ashop and found six pairs of Common Sandpiper, and the seed was sown.

However, it was not until 1978/9 that he and two colleagues carried out the first major survey of the Ashop/Alport river system, identifying 27 Sandpiper territories, of which around 22 would prove to be tenanted in any one year. Ringing activity added greatly to the richness of the study data, allowing them to analyze return rates, hatching and fledging rates and more. In an interesting parallel with Ian Newton's talk on The Sparrowhawk, they found that over half the pairs never fledged a single chick, while others managed over a dozen and one an impressive 19.

Wide variation was noted between territories in both frequency of use and breeding success; this could have been due to availability of shingle banks for chick feeding and/or cover for predator avoidance, but it was very difficult to determine.

After his colleagues left for other pursuits, Derek carried on the survey work for many years, spending countless hours

searching, ringing and logging both adults and chicks, and carrying out numerous analyses in order to tease out the reasons for differing year-on-year breeding numbers and success.

He showed us 1978-89 charts presenting a very plausible theory based on late April temperatures determining breeding success to a large extent, only to admit that his 90-99 data showed no correlation whatsoever, no doubt a huge disappointment, especially since there was no identifiable reason for the change.

A long-term chart showed an alarming fall from around 22 pairs per year in the 70's to only 3 pairs in 2009, though the level has since recovered to around 10 pairs.

Moving on, Derek told us of his work around the Upper Derwent reservoirs (Ladybower, Derwent and Howden, or LDH), which explored numbers and breeding success in the context of the effect of recreational disturbance by anglers and other visitors (like bird surveyors!).

With 30 kms of shoreline to cover, his bi-annual surveys each took three days to complete. He arbitrarily divided the entire shoreline into sections, and then counted Sandpiper presence and behaviour and that of anglers and visitors.

Since the angling season and the breeding season largely coincide, the disturbance potential was high, and he found there was in most areas a high negative correlation between angler/visitor presence and Sandpiper presence. However, one

area stood out, showing no such correlation, but close observation showed that the birds had wisely taken to breeding in the woodland fringe rather than as usual on the shore.

Turning to a wider geographical perspective, Derek explored with us:

* a comparison of success by year between LDH and Ashop/Alport, which showed no correlation at all, perhaps because periods of heavy rain would arguably have more impact in a stream or river than in the reservoirs,

* results from a study in the Scottish Borders similar to Derek's which showed very similar percentage breeding success, but far better population retention, possibly because the Peak District is on the edge of the breeding range and therefore has less chance of birds moving into the area than the Borders population does, being in the heart of the range,

* Migration Atlas data showing returns from over 20,000 Sandpipers ringed since the early 1900's. This showed consistent SW/NE movements, but sadly not a single return from the Peak District.

However, in a happy conclusion to his talk, Derek told us of another ringer on the Spey who only recently got hold of several geo-locators which were attached to local Sandpipers, one of which has been re-trapped, revealing details of the bird's travels from the Spey down to Guinea Bissau by a westerly route and its return further east to its UK home. It also revealed where it had stopped over and for how long, giving the first clear picture of one Common Sandpiper's migration.

Derek's determination and enthusiasm shone through his presentation as did his engaging openness about his difficulties and blind alleys as well as his successes.

Simon Bailey

ETHIOPIA 2012

Paul Pearsall introduces us to this great African birding destination.

Ethiopia is a land-locked country greater in size than France, with a population of 84 million, a 20% literacy rate, and an agricultural system barely changed from Old Testament times. Very friendly people, despite the widespread carrying of spears and AK47s (particularly near the Somali border). A diverse range of habitat wetlands, forest, bush/savannah and montane, with temperatures ranging from -1°C to 35°C leads to a huge variety and number of birds, which thanks to the lack of persecution are very tame and confiding.

A fourteen day trip produced a list of 393 clearly identifiable birds and many more which one could not safely tick.

Raptors

Raptors are everywhere, from the ever present Yellow-billed Kite and Hooded Vulture, to very confiding views of a Martial Eagle, to the charming Pygmy Falcon. Seven different species of vulture were seen, including a gathering patiently waiting for the carnage from a road accident when a bus ploughed into a herd of cattle, the locals butchering the corpses by the roadside. A total of 40 different raptors were seen.

Larks

The prize bird here was the endemic (and nearly extinct) Sidamo Lark. This proved to be hard work to fine, but after a three hour search (enlivened by the presence of male Pallid and Monty's Harriers) they suddenly decided to put on their parachute display and sang, perching nicely in confiding positions.

Other larks seen well were Erlanger's, Foxy, Gillett's and Thekla, as

well as Chestnut-headed and Chestnut-backed Sparrow Larks.

Hirundines

These were Ethiopian, Barn, Red-rumped, Grey-rumped, Lesser Striped and Blue Sawwings. The endemic White-tailed Swallow have excellent views on a petrol station and was never seen again outside this squalid Shanty Town.

Corvids

These were ever present - including the Thick-billed Raven. The endemic Stresemann's Bush Crow proved to be a remarkably tame town dweller virtually walking between one's legs.

Starlings

Twelve species were seen, perhaps the most beautiful being the Golden-crested, closely followed by the Superb Starling.

Woodpeckers and Wrynecks

Woodpecker and Wrynecks were in every wood; the Red-Throated Wryneck and edemic Abyssinian Woodpecker easily found. A Nubian Woodpecker actually attacked the leg of a table whilst people were eating there.

Weavers

Fourteen different species were seen ranging from the stunning Red-headed Weaver to the large and noisy Red-billed Buffalo Weaver.

Whydah Birds

Four different species were seen, ranging from the stunning Long-tailed Paradise Whydah to the Steel-blue Whydah (accompanied by a flock of 100+ Cuthroat Finches).

Barbets

Five different barbets, including the endemic Banded Barbet, were easily

found. A pair of Red and Yellow Barbet nesting on a termite mound gave excellent views.

Fish markets always had scores of cormorants, pelicans, hammerkops and the ever present Marabou Storks in attendance. In fact children feed those monstrous storks scraps of fish, following them around like pet dogs.

Wherever one goes in this spectacular country there are birds - owls, bustards, bee-eaters, surfbirds, wheatears, chats, shrikes, tits, flycatchers, cisticolas, thrushes, kingfishers, rollers, hornbills, turacos, waders, nightjars, etc etc.

Stop anywhere on a rural road and walk for an hour and a distance of a kilometre and one can chalk up a list of twenty species ranging from crombecs to Arabian Bustards, with the ever present raptor overhead.

Accommodation is rather basic, outside of Addis Ababa, each "hotel" having its own endemic cockroach species. Food is interesting and would no doubt provoke an interesting comment from Gordon Ramsay. The roads are poor and full of dangerous drivers.

Snakes are a hazard, puff adders are common and are unafraid of humans as are some baboon troops.

Perhaps the worst hazards were head high stinging nettles, with a truly painful sting, presenting a hazard when viewing a rather shy Narina Trogon.

Despite this Ethiopia is a superb country which presents a sublime experience to a birder.

RECENT SIGHTINGS

1st November—31st December 2012

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

Bittern - One was at Carr Vale NR on 28th Dec.

Whooper Swan - Singles and small parties over the period, with 44 SE over Orgreave Lakes on 25th Dec an impressive count. An injured bird lingered at Morehall Res until the end of the December, and was taken into veterinary care.

Pink-footed Goose - Larger counts in Nov included 300 over Thrybergh CP on 9th Nov; 300 W at Cundy Cross on 10th; 570 NW at Broomhill on 15th; 400 W at Lodge Moor on 15th; and 300 over Longley on 15th. In December there were fewer large counts, with a large movement on 13th including 210 NW at Dronfield, 270 NW over Poolsbrook, and 400 NW at Stubley Hollow.

Common Scoter - Two were at Rother Valley CP on 16th Dec.

Goldeneye - 24 at Rother Valley CP on 16th Dec were the highest count.

Red Kite - Singles at Grange Park on 9th Dec, Poolsbrook Marsh on 16th, and Handsworth on 17th.

Merlin - One was an unusual garden tick in Sheffield on 12th December.

Water Rail - Seven at Thrybergh Tip on 21st Dec were a good count.

Common Crane - **One was Middleton Moor on 9th and 10th November.**

Bar-tailed Godwit - One at Middleton Moor on 18th Nov.

Green Sandpiper - Records from Blackburn Meadows peaked at three on 8th and 10th November. One was at Thrybergh CP on 3rd Dec.

Little Gull - One at Thrybergh CP on 3rd Dec.

Black-headed Gull - Peak counts at the regular gull roosts included 2,230 at Langsett Res on 10th November, and 1,800 at Broomhead Res on 23rd December.

Common Gull - 17 were at Langsett Res on 10th November. 50 were at Broomhead Res on 2nd and 10th December.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - 1,000 roosted at Middleton Moor on 4th November.

Herring Gull - Peak counts included 335 at Orgreave Lakes on 16th December, and 445 at Broomhead Res on 24th.

Yellow-legged Gull - Two first-winters were at Redmires on 2nd November, and two adults at Middleton Moor on 10th. Other sightings at Orgreave throughout November, peaking at three on 6th.

Caspian Gull - **A good run of sightings of this species, with several records from Orgreave Lakes, Middleton Moor, Neepsend and Broomhead Res.**

Glaucous Gull - One at Poolsbrook CP on 11th November.



These Caspian Gulls were among several sighted at Neepsend during the period (both pics Andy Deighton).

Great Black-backed Gull - Peak counts included 197 at Orgreave Lake on 16th Dec, and 216 at Broomhead Res on 24th.

Short-eared Owl - Orgreave Lakes was home to up to four birds at the start of November. Elsewhere singles were at Silverwood Lagoon on 16th Nov, Rawmarsh on 2nd Dec, and Peat Pits on 18th.

Rock Pipit - One at Barbrook Pools on 2nd November.

Waxwing - Two first-years at Sheffield Park Academy on 4th November heralded a memorable winter for this species, that was reflected nationally. The first significant count was 105 at Crosspool on 8th Nov, with flocks gathering at usual haunts including Cemetery Avenue, Walkley and the City Centre. Higher counts included 150 at High Storrs on 12th, 200 at Mount Pleasant Park on 15th, 230 at Sharrow on 16th, 150 at Ecclesall on 21st, 170 in the City Centre on 23rd, 260 at Sharrow on 23rd, and 300 at Shalesmoor on 26th. Numbers thinned slightly during December, with peak counts 100 at Meadowhall on 7th, 100 at Burngreave on 20th, and 100 at Hackenthorpe on 27th.

Black Redstart - One was at Orgreave Lakes on 2nd November.

Stonechat - Singles at Middleton Moor, Totley Moor and Cowell Flat, with the notable overwintering pair at the notable site of Outo Kumpo Steelworks present again.

Fieldfare - Higher counts included 425 SW over Rawmarsh on 4th Nov, 200 at Peat Pits on 29th, 250 at Stavely SF on 23rd Dec, and 200 at Freebirch on 27th.

Redwing - Few large counts, with the highest being 128 at Thrybergh CP on 4th November, and 137 at the same site on 3rd Dec.

Cetti's Warbler - one was singing at Pit-house West on 17th November.

Blackcap - Overwintering birds reported from Middlewood, Longley Estate, Botanical Gardens, Millhouses, Beauchief, Kiveton, Ecclesall, Waterthorpe and Hillsborough.

Chiffchaff - Birds were at Ruskin Park, Silverwood Lagoon, Thrybergh CP, Parkwood Springs, Wardsend Cemetery, Rotherham Centre, Poolsbrook CP, Poolsbrook Marsh (where three were present on 16th), and Aldwarke SF.

Firecrest - One was reported at Poolsbrook CP on 13th and 16th December.

Great Grey Shrike - One was at Leash Fen on 10th November.

Starling - An impressive roost at Middleton Moor peaked at 13,000 on 9th December.

Twite - One was at Peat Pits on 30th November.

Hawfinch - Reports from Woolley Wood on 6th November (an encouraging record from a former stronghold), and Bamford on 17th Dec.

Pete Mella



This Great Grey Shrike (left) was seen at the regular wintering site of Leash Fen (pic Andy Deighton). The Common Crane (right) was a great find at Middleton Moor (pic David Wood).

The One Show Comes To Sheffield

After liaising with a producer for The One Show some months ago, they are coming to do some filming around urban birds in February/ March, and are very keen to film Kingfishers on the Don. If anyone sees Kingfishers in urban Sheffield, especially in the Effingham Street-Norfolk Bridge stretch of the river, please do make sure

you submit sightings to the website. The river through Sheffield (and beyond) has improved hugely in recent years in terms of water quality, and now also hosts breeding Grey Wagtail, Sand Martin, Moorhen: well worth checking at lunchtime or a spring weekend.

David Wood

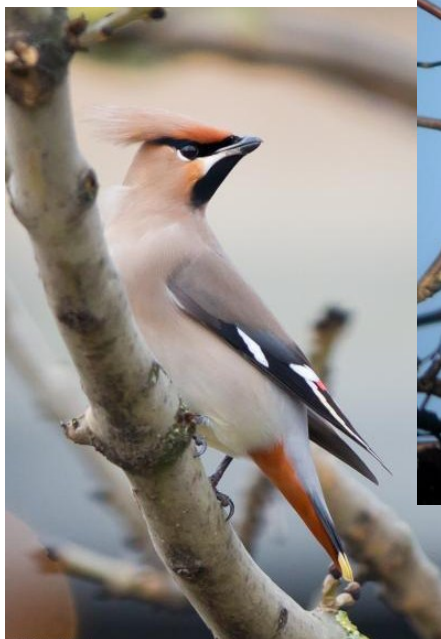
Wyming Brook

Volunteer Days

The first Sheffield Wildlife Trust Wyming Brook volunteer day of 2013 will take place on 20th January, with an emphasis on woodland thinning and scrub clearance. Meet at Redmires Road car park.

For more details see www.wildsheffield.com

Waxwings!



As always in irruption years, we've received some excellent photos of Waxwings. Above are just a few of the best ones—from left to right P. Garrity, D. Wood and D. Rigg.

This issue's observers, with apologies to any omissions:

MG Archer, S Ashton, J Atkin, A Bailey, B Bailey, S Bailey, IM Barnes, SJ Barnes, A Baverstock, AR Bell, AS Bilton, RP Blagden, C Bonnington, K Bower, SJ Branch, PL Brown, V Browne, RV Burton, R Butterfield, M Capper, BM Carr, I Chapman, J Clarke, B Cole, J Crank, J Crooks, R Dale, A Deighton, W Dudhill, NP Dunningan, CM Dunhill, H Egan, MG Fenner, D Gains, M Garner, P Garrity, KA Gehring, D Gill, KR Gould, G Grant, S Green, T Grose, S Guymer, D Hallam, R Harris, I Hedge, M Hibbert, A Hill, AA Hill, RD Hill, DJ Hitchen, M Hodgson, J Hornbuckle, J Housden, C Hurst, G James, Anne Johnson, A Jones, C Kelly, JE Kenward, T Kettle, S King, J Kingsland, N Kipling, J Kirkman, K Knowles, M Lacey, D Lakin, D Langston, P Lawson, P Leonard, P License, P Lockwood, P Mella, B Merryweather, M Miller, TH Minskup, D Mowbray, PH Pearsall, NR Porter, MN Reeder, D Rigg, D Roddis, M Sanders, E Shaw, J Sherwin, M Sherwin, S Sherwin, A Siddall, D Simmonite, MA Smethurst, M Snook, B Spencer, MJ Sweeney, J Taylor, M&L Taylor, N Taylor, SG Tebbutt, P Thomas, A Thompson, M Timms, R Twigg, C Tyler, SE Vickers, EC Vincent, D Warburton, G Williams, RDR Williams, I Wilson, JB Wilson, P&A Wilson, D Wood, D Woodriff, P Wragg, Sorby Breck Ringing Group, Thrybergh CP Bird Log.

GIFT AID AND MEMBERSHIP

In recent years there have been changes to Gift Aid legislation, making it easier for charitable organisations to reclaim income tax on the contributions, including subscriptions, made by members.

The group is constantly looking for sources of income to offset the increasing costs of running the group, such as printing the excellent Annual Report, (the better it gets, in terms of photos etc, the more it costs) and also room hire for our Indoor Meetings.

Gift Aid is a means by which every basic rate tax-paying member can contribute to the group's income, courtesy of the Inland Revenue (what an incentive!). If you are about to pay your 2013 subscription, please tick the relevant box overleaf so we can receive this.

At the end of the tax year I can then recover 22/78 of your subscription (£3.95). If you are a higher rate taxpayer, you can include the payment on your tax return, and get higher rate tax relief yourself.

Please take the time to do this, as we can potentially raise hundreds of pounds for the group.

Ron Blagden
Treasurer

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 2013 RENEWAL FORM

Individual membership £14 Family membership £16

To renew, please see Martin Hodgson at any meeting, or complete this form and send your cheque payable to Sheffield Bird Study Group to Martin Hodgson, 142 Hangingwater Road, Sheffield, S11 7ET. For new members an application form is available at meetings, on the website or by email to martin@hodgson54.orangehome.co.uk

Alternatively, you may pay by inter-bank transfer. ***If so, do not complete this form.*** Simply email Martin and ask for payment instructions.

Please note that Under-21s need to complete this renewal form, even though no payment is involved, in order to receive their membership card and maintain member's access to the website. Email the completed form to Martin

Name(s)..... Date.....

Postal address.....
.....
.....

Email.....

Telephone no.

Paying members only:

Please indicate whether you would like to receive your Bulletin by e-mail: **Yes/No**

Do you still agree to your fee being treated as a GiftAid contribution: **Yes/No**

Are you still a Basic Rate taxpayer? **Yes/No**

Paying members please include a stamped addressed envelope for return of your membership card.

To: Martin Hodgson, 142 Hangingwater Road, Sheffield, S11 7ET