



SHEFFIELD BIRD STUDY GROUP
BULLETIN

ISSUE 217

MAR 2013

www.sbsg.org



**WINTER
HIGHLIGHTS**

Seeing in 2013 with the best bird sightings

BIRDS & PEOPLE

Garner and Amundsen talk to the group

PLUS!

40 Years of the SBSG
Visible Migration
and much more

NEWS

Russell Slack - 1967-2013

We were saddened to hear of the untimely death of Russell Slack at the end of February, after a battle with cancer. Our thoughts are with his family and friends.

The news came just as this Bulletin was coming to completion, and therefore we are inviting the many members who knew Russell to contribute memories for a full tribute to be published in the May issue. Please see the bottom of this page for contact details and deadlines for submissions.

Below is a tribute from Mark Reeder, taken from his blog shortly after news of Russell's death. - PM

The news this evening was that Yorkshire birding stalwart Russell Slack had passed away after losing his battle with cancer.

I have some happy memories of birding with Russ, when he first

came to Sheffield Uni' in the mid-Eighties. Being a couple of years older than me and my then birding mate we looked up to him and were inspired by his enthusiasm, student tales of charming members of the opposite sex (that failed to inspire me to progress my education) and his seemingly ever present smell of Patchouli Oil and long curly locks.

During this time Russ and I would regularly bump into each other at Thrybergh Country Park usually seeing very little, in fact the highlight of a few years visits was a summer-plumage Spotted Redshank that circled the reservoir then left. It was only a few months ago that we were laughing about that and how crap Thrybergh was (and it still is). On another Thrybergh visit I was sat next to Russ when he was s**t upon by a Swift which gave us much hilarity and a short discussion on the likelihood of an *apus* s***ting

on you - of course statistics were very much Russ's bag.

My first Spurn visit was courtesy of a field trip organised by Russ and I saw my first Subalpine Warbler and Brent Goose!

I've used the word inspiring a couple of times already but to me as a 16 year old birder Russ was like a big brother during those distant Thrybergh days and truly did inspire me to get out birding.

Russ you were a bloody good bloke and you will be much missed. R.I.P mate - though the memories will live on.

A tribute can also be found on the Birdguides website at www.birdguides.com/webzine/article.asp?a=3673

Derek Yalden - 1940-2013

Sadly we have another death to report from February. Derek Yalden spoke to the group as recently as October 2012, on the subject of Common Sandpipers, and we were therefore shocked to hear of his death on 5th Feb, while he was holidaying in the Forest of Dean.

Derek was President of the Mammal Society since 1997, and an honorary reader of zoology at the University of Manchester. The author of over 200 scientific papers, his research included work on the ecology of Peak District, covering species such as

Common Sandpiper, Golden Plover and Mountain Hare.

The SBSG's thoughts are with his family. A full obituary can be found at the Independent website, at <http://tinyurl.com/yalden>

Deadline for next Bulletin

The next Bulletin will be issued at the May indoor meeting. Please note that any items for inclusion must be received by Pete Mella at peterjmella@googlemail.com (for preference), or 21 Lump Lane, Grenoside, Sheffield, S35 8PL, not later than the **30th April**.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Indoor Meetings

David Wood - Peru: Costa, Sierra and Selva.

Weds Apr 10th 2013, Sheffield University Arts Tower Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm



David has been a member of the SBSG committee for 15 years and Chair of the Group for the last five, having played a leading role in the Breeding Atlas now nearing completion. Work and family have taken him to Peru on numerous occasions, giving him the opportunity to get to know many areas of this bird-rich country.

This talk will cover birds across a range of habitats from the country's three main geographical areas (Pacific coast, Andean mountains and Amazon jungle), passing through some of the major tourist destinations on the way.

Neil Porter & Rod Hinchliffe - The Galapagos

Weds May 15th 2013, Sheffield University Arts Tower Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

Neil and Rod are SBSG Committee members, and in this lecture the well-travelled pair will be leading us through their experiences on the iconic archipelago of Galapagos, the fabled crucible of evolution that sparked Darwin's imagination and led to his theory of Natural Selection. This promises to be a great talk on one of the most important wildlife areas in the world.

Field Meetings

Orgreave Lakes - Waders & Wagtails

April, details TBC

Padley Gorge - Migrants

May, details TBC

Two very different field trips to two very different habitats. The first, at the Orgreave Lakes wetlands site, hopes to pick up spring passage and breeding waders, and migrants which should include Yellow Wagtail and various warblers. At Padley Gorge, an early start should find the wealth of scarcer migrants that breed there, including Pied Flycatcher, Wood Warbler and Redstart, as well as a chance to pick up the songs of commoner woodland species, and moorland fringe species on the edges of the wood.

See the SBSG website and Twitter feed for more details as we get closer to these trips.

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Fri 15th Mar - Sorby Natural History Society. Launch party for 'Mammals of Derbyshire' book. 7.15pm, Medway Centre, Bakewell.

Tue 19th Mar - SK58 Birders Organisers Meeting. 19.30, Loyal Trooper, South Anston.

Fri 22nd Mar - DOS Indoor Meeting. AGM, plus Anita and Barrie Staley on "Butterfly Adventures". Evergreen Club, Allestree. 7.30pm.

Sat 23rd Mar - Natural History Book Sale. St Augustine's Church, Brocco Bank, Sheffield.

Wed 27th Mar - SK58 Birders Indoor Meeting. Endemics of Puerto Rico with Paul Hobson. 7.30pm, Anston Parish Hall.

Thu 4th Apr - RSPB Sheffield Group Indoor Meeting. Danny Green will be talking on 'East Midlands through the Seasons'. 7.30pm, Central United Reformed Church, Sheffield.

Thu 2nd May - RSPB Sheffield Group Indoor Meeting. Jim Almond - "Out and About: A Special Year". 7.30pm, Central United Reformed Church, Sheffield.

Have a bird-themed event to advertise here? Email peterjmella@googlemail.com with details.

NEWS

Peregrine webcam online



The University of Sheffield have installed a webcam to keep an eye on the Peregrines nesting on St George's Church on Broad Lane.

The birds eventually bred on the Church's tower for the first time in 2012, after a nestbox was installed by the University, who own the Church, in 2010. The Peregrines can now be seen on a live feed, via a camera installed by the University's Estates team during the winter. It is hoped the Peregrines will repeat their breeding success, and viewers will get stunning views of this year's chicks. The adults have already been giving stunning views when they do turn up on the nestbox, and activity should become more frequent as the breeding season approaches.

As well as providing these views, the camera provides security for the birds to ensure the nest is not tampered with.

The University's Energy Manager Phil Riley, who masterminded the webcam, with consultation with the SBSG,

said: "The success has been a University-wide effort. I worked closely with Professor David Wood, Jim Lonsdale and other colleagues in the University's Department of Estates and Facilities Management to ensure a suitable nest box was constructed and appropriately located. I am delighted that all our hard work has been rewarded."

The webcam is found at <http://efm.dept.shef.ac.uk/peregrine>. As well as keeping an eye on the live feed, there is a Twitter account dedicated to the Peregrines' progress (www.twitter.com/peregrines2013) and the SBSG's Sheffield Peregrines Blog (<http://sheffieldperegrines.wordpress.com>).

If anyone sees any interesting behaviour on the webcam then please get in touch!

News in brief

SBSG 2012 List now available

Richard Hill has updated the official SBSG list for the Breeding Atlas, complete with status breeding and residence status.

The list is available as a PDF on the group's website.

New members

We welcome Jayne Tulip, Sarah Armour, Michael & Tina Warwick, Farrell & Julie Kent, Mike & Lorna Taylor, John Dibbs, Michael Hullet, Jack Ellis, Cameron White, Scott Linacre, Jack Chapman, Ellie Wood, Adam Gosztonyi and Mandy Chee. We also welcome back Phil Ridsdale and Jonathan Barnaby. Good birding to you all!

Cover photo

This month's cover photo is by David Wood.

Contacts

Bulletin

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Martin Garner & Tormud Amundsen

Pushing The Boundaries: Birds & People

Group members were entertained at the January meeting by two excellent speakers who, in their different ways, were both pushing the boundaries of birding.

Martin Garner spoke about the highlights of his last year, seen in the contexts of wonder, creativity and the engagement of his 'child or wild' side. Among his special moments were finding Basalt Wheatear and Russian Common Gull in Israel and Jordan, and Siberian Tit, Siberian Jay, Pine Grosbeak, Arctic Redpoll, Hawk Owl and Tengmalm's Owl in Varanger. Boat trips from Lanzarote brought sightings of White-faced Storm Petrel and its behaviour of jumping straight-legged from the ocean surface as if from a trampoline, Corey's Shearwater, Swinhoe's Storm Petrel and only the second record from The Canaries of Scopoli's Shearwater. He advocated throwing away the books and just going 'out there' and discovering, trying to be the best birder he could. Sheffield birders take note.

Tormud Amundsen is an architect and birder from northern Varanger

in Finland. Birding appears to have had little if any fascination for the locals, birds being perceived to be of two types – big ones and little ones. Tormud has worked to change this perception, especially amongst those in power, in order to have the value of the area recognised. He stressed the savage nature of the environment, especially in winter, when temperatures can be below -20°C for weeks on end. Remarkably, Rock Pipit and Purple Sandpiper manage to survive in such conditions, whilst Varanger Fjord holds many wildfowl in winter, including huge rafts of Eider.

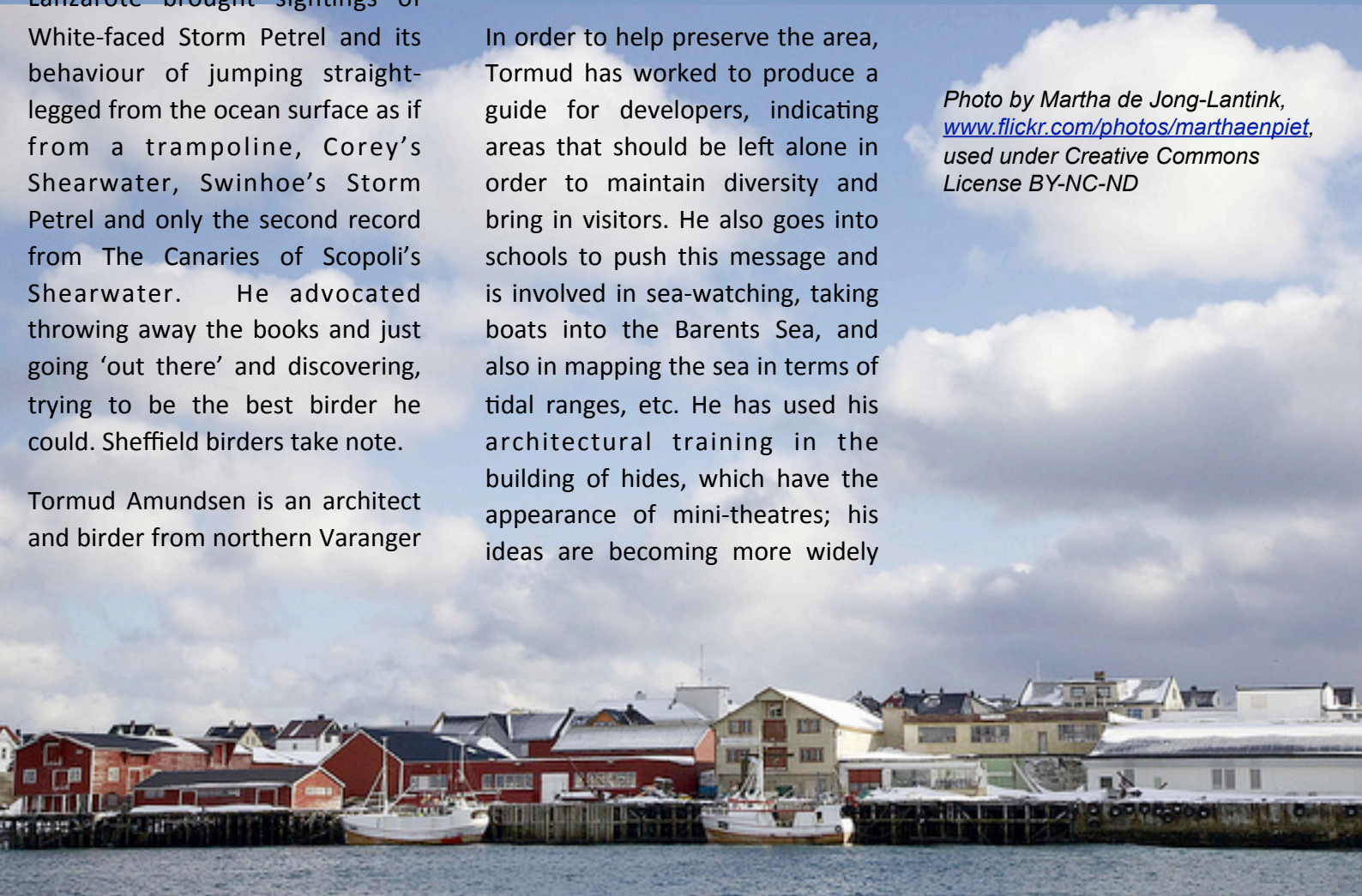
In order to help preserve the area, Tormud has worked to produce a guide for developers, indicating areas that should be left alone in order to maintain diversity and bring in visitors. He also goes into schools to push this message and is involved in sea-watching, taking boats into the Barents Sea, and also in mapping the sea in terms of tidal ranges, etc. He has used his architectural training in the building of hides, which have the appearance of mini-theatres; his ideas are becoming more widely

used and have featured in architectural magazines. A gullfest drew in 40-50 locals and about 200 visitors in its first year, with local fishermen conscripted to provide fish and offal. This interaction with local birds appears not only well-established but continues to grow, with one local making a floating hide, from which superb photographs of King Eider had been taken. A much bigger hide has since been constructed.

Both Martin and Tormud were thanked for their excellent and original presentations.

Rod Hinchliffe

*Photo by Martha de Jong-Lantink,
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Clive McKay - Visible Migration

The February lecture was given by Clive McKay, making a return visit to the Group on what turned out to be a day of miserable weather. Some 25-30 members turned out despite snow and ice and were rewarded with an excellent lecture which reflected Clive's enthusiasm for his subject.

Clearly someone who keeps detailed records and reflects deeply on his birding experiences, Clive returned several times to his 'Mickleden moment' on September 29th 1980, when, on a misty morning, large numbers of birds were heard rather than seen as they moved south down Mickleden Beck. A total of 1285 birds were recorded that day, including 796 Meadow Pipit, 81 Linnet, 100 Chaffinch, 47 Siskin, 42 Redpoll, and remarkably, 34 Blue Tit, moving over the moors.

Clive saw that day as the start of his vis-mig journey, a journey intimately bound up with development of identification skills. He went on to describe other vis-mig experiences, such as those involving migrating sea birds on Islay and raptors at

short sea-crossings. He indicated, through his slides, the tendency to under-estimate the numbers of birds in flocks, especially large flocks. He suggested migrating wildfowl are best counted against patches of clear sky, and pointed out that flocks are typically tight-knit as migration begins but break up over long journeys. Within the UK the biggest movements are typically of Swallow, pipits, Skylark, Starling, Woodpigeon, wagtails and winter thrushes, together with Mistle Thrush and Song Thrush.

Clive reiterated some of the vis-mig principles, in particular the funnelling effect at barriers to migration. Sheffield has several excellent sites, such as Redmires, Strines and Mickleden, where valleys lead up to the moorland edge, and there are a number of similar sites around the UK. Spurn is an excellent site, especially so when the wind is from the south-west, or birds are heading south- south-east. The best weather conditions are associated with cold fronts and rising barometric pressure; birds tend not to move in high pressure systems.

Vis-mig is very popular on the Continent, and is almost entirely a male preserve. The Trektellen

vismig website has a huge amount of data available from many sites. Some of the movements recorded are spectacular, with 420,000+ Woodpigeon counted on November 7th 2010, whilst an observer in The Pyrenees had a count of one million of this species on one occasion. This considerable emphasis on migration studies at the continental level, together with ringing data, has brought new information, such as the fact that Greater Noctule Bats sometimes prey on night-migrating birds.

Clive concluded by pointing out that diurnal migrants are typically flock-forming, rely on safety in numbers, and fly up and away from predators. In order to do this they must stay light, whereas nocturnal migrants can lay down a lot of fat and make long flights, as the predation risk is much less and they can stay in cover during daylight hours.

Rod Hinchliffe

Kevin Gould - 40 Years of The SBSG

The December meeting was a fitting end to the Group's 40th Anniversary year. Kevin Gould was the group's recorder between 1987 and 2012, and active in the group before and since, and so a perfect choice to chronicle the group's history, and the ornithological highlights of four decades.

Moving through the group's history year by year, we heard tales of the characters that have populated Sheffield's birding scene, and of course the birds that have been recorded in that time.

The 1970s saw the start of the group, and some great birds including Ferruginous Duck, Gannets, Spoonbills, Velvet Scoter, Red-footed Falcon, Night Heron and - perhaps best of all - Dark-eyed Junco. As well as the rarities, however, it was fascinating to hear of some of the big changes in bird populations. Twite, Tree Sparrow and Black Grouse were present in numbers that we can only now dream of, and species we not take for granted - including Peregrine, Buzzard and Cormorant - were very scarce indeed.

The 1980s saw probably the most surprising bird in the area ever - Marmora's Warbler, a mega rarity at Midhope that required an hour's trek, and that lured one Barnsley birder onto the moors on crutches! Other star birds of the decade included Baird's Sandpiper, Parrot and Two-barred Crossbill, Richard's Pipit, Least Sandier, Caspian Tern and Black-throated Thrush. Aside from rarities, the 80s saw the release of the first SBSG breeding atlas, an important milestone in the area's ornithological literature.

The 1990s starred such highlights as Alpine Swift, American Golden Plover, Little Auk, Sabines Gull, Two-barred Crossbill and many more, with 1996 singled out as the best year ever, with Kevin managing a SBSG area yearlist of 196, highlights including Pine Bunting, Arctic Redpoll, Red-rumped Swallow, Wryneck, Blue-winged Teal and Hoopoe.

The 2000s saw Spotted and Broad-billed Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, White-tailed Eagle, Dartford Warbler, Common Rosefinch, American Wigeon, Rose-

coloured Starling, Cattle Egret and Cetti's Warbler. The decade also saw the first ever Little Egret of the area - a species that, although by no means common, we take somewhat for granted as a regular visitor.

The 2010s have already seen some highlights that have included Great White Egret, Red-rumped Swallow, Pallid Harrier and Little Bunting, and who knows what else the decade will bring.

Kevin's talk not only gave a wonderful trip down memory lane for the group's stalwarts members, but gave a fascinating insight into the area's birdlife, and the ornithologists who have worked to supply thousands of records to give us the knowledge we have of Sheffield's avifauna. As well as looking to the past, the talk showed how, for such a landlocked city, we have had a remarkable amount of species and unlikely vagrants, and I for one was spurred to keep watching to see what turns up next!

Pete Mella

SBSG Membership Issues

The year 2012 saw interesting changes for SBSG members. Some of them came about because of a desire to keep abreast of modern practices, others through the constant need to be vigilant over rising costs – particularly in printing and postage.

In summer 2102 we saw the website upgraded and access to certain areas restricted to members. The enhancements were welcomed by those members who chose to comment, but surprisingly at 31 January there were still more than a third who had never attempted members' access. Perhaps the recent further change to limit guests to the first page of sightings will have an effect.

Some members have had difficulties in logging-in. It's worth reading Simon's advice signposted on the Home page before you attempt your first log-in. The main thing to remember is: when you've entered your password it seems as though you're being asked to do so again. You aren't! You're just being invited to change it if you wish. If you don't wish, click Cancel. A personal plea. Please keep your password safe, or change

it to something you'll remember. At the moment the only way I can deal with a lost password is to take you off the system and then re-enter you. This then generates an automated email with a new password. If that email isn't in your inbox within a few minutes of my telling you I've activated it, have a look in your Junk Box as your spam filter may have diverted it!

A welcome innovation was to offer free membership to those who have not yet reached their 22nd birthday. In 2012 we enrolled 19 such members, and by the end of January 2013 four more had applied.

Many members used to find the posting of a paper renewal application and the sending of a s.a.e for the membership card a little tiresome. It has now been replaced with

1. A totally paperless transaction using interbank transfers of money on line, or
2. The continuing submission of a cheque, but without the s.a.e
3. In both cases the sending by me of a Membership Certificate by email, unless the

member has no email access in which case I will send them a hard copy of the Certificate

Some will miss the tactile pleasure of the old membership card, but most comments I've received so far have been supportive.

And now for answers to those questions you never really wanted to ask

a. At 31 January, the current over-21 membership entities (both individuals and joint) stood at 189, the highest for many years. With 21s and Under, this made total membership entities of 212.

b. Actual member numbers were 261, of whom 184(70%) are male and 77(30%) female.

c. About 58% of members live in the south and west of the city (our U21 students boosting that quite a bit), 14% in the north and 17% outside the city

d. You are 10% more likely to have already paid your 2013 sub if your surname is in the first half of the alphabet!

Martin Hodgson

RECENT SIGHTINGS

1st Jan - 28th Feb 2013

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

Bittern - Present at Pit-house West from the star of the year up at least 19th Feb. Two birds were present on 8th Feb, with a possible third bird seen.

Little Egret - One was present at Kiveton from 27th Jan - 7th Feb.

Whooper Swan - Various sightings, including something of an influx towards the end of Feb. 12 were at Howden Res on 15th, 14 were at Broomhead Res and Rawmarsh on 17th, 54 flew W/NW at Orgreave Lakes on 17th, 13 flew NW at Pit-house West on 19th, and 17 were at Thrybergh CP on 19th.

Pink-footed Goose - Larger skeins included 940 W/NW at Wentworth Lakes on 3rd Jan, 250 NW at Upperthorpe on 4th, 630 NE at Canklow on 6th, 300 NW at Fulwood on 6th, 1,220 over Hillsborough on 6th, and 370 over Nether Edge on 6th. In February 300 were W at Orgreave Lakes on 9th, 290 NW at Ulley on 19th, and 175 NW at Stubley Hollow on 28th.

Red-crested Pochard - A female was at Orgreave Lakes on 4th and 6th Jan. A pair were present at the same site on 19th Feb.

Red Kite - Singles over Damflask Res on 20th Jan, Harley on 14th Feb and Pit-house West on 19th.

Rough-legged Buzzard - One was over Spout House Hill on 17th Feb.

Water Rail - Up to two at Pit-house West, Thrybergh Tip, Bolehill Flash, Poolsbrook Marsh and Woodhouse Washlands throughout the period. Higher counts were fours at Bolehill Flash on 13th Jan, and Poolsbrook Marsh on 9th Feb.

Oystercatcher - Sightings from Orgreave Lakes, Thrybergh CP and Langsett Res, with the highest count being four at Orgreave Lakes on 19th Feb.

Ringed Plover - Most records were from Orgreave Lakes, peaking at eight on 21st Feb. One was at Silverwood Lagoon on 26th Feb.

Golden Plover - Highest counts were 19 SE at Wentworth Lakes on 3rd Jan, 216 at Thrybergh CP on 11th, 45 at Rawmarsh on 9th Feb, 70 at Wentworth on 14th, 70 at Thrybergh on 18th, 150 at Freebirch on 19th, and 350 at Peat Pits on 27th.

Dunlin - Singles at Rother Valley on 17th Jan, and Thrybergh CP on 18th. Up to four were at Orgreave Lakes between 19th and 21st.

Jack Snipe - The highest counts were 12 at Woodhouse Washlands on 8th and 14th Jan. Elsewhere there were singles

reported from Silverwood Lagoon, Waverley Opencast and Orgreave Lakes.

Snipe - Largest counts were 57 at Woodhouse Washlands on 14th Jan, 54 at Orgreave Lakes on 21st, and 13 at Outo Kumpo Steelworks on 8th Feb.

Green Sandpiper - Singles at Bolehill Flash on 20th Jan, Silverwood Lagoon on 28th, and Blackburn Meadows on 2nd Feb.

Pomarine Skua - A pale phase adult caused great surprise in both gulls and observers by darting through the Broomhead gull roost on 2nd February.

Mediterranean Gull - Single adults reported at Poolsbrook CP on 20th and 26th Jan, and 3rd and 8th Feb.

Black-headed Gull - Peak counts of 2,500 at Broomhead Res on 3rd Jan, 2,000 at Orgreave Lakes on 26th, and 1,701 at Langsett Res on 22nd Feb.

Common Gull - Peak counts of 100 at Broomhead Res on 20th Jan, and 160 at Langsett Res on 22nd Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - Higher counts included 31 at Orgreave Lakes on 13th Jan, and 24 at Middleton Moor on 17th Feb.



This Oystercatcher was at Thrybergh CP on 21st February
(photo M.A. Smethurst)

Herring Gull - 1,400 were at Broomhead Res on 3rd Jan. Elsewhere 200 were at Neepsend on 22nd.

Caspian Gull - A good run of records, including birds at Neepsend, Broomhead Res, Owlerton, Shirecliffe Tip, Orgreave Lakes, and Poolsbrook CP, up to 3rd Feb. The highest count was three at Broomhead Res on 3rd Jan.

Glaucous Gull - A number of records of juvs/1st winters between 3rd and 12th Jan, relating to birds moving between Shirecliffe Tip and Broomhead Res, peaking at three (two dark and one pale birds) on 5th. A pale 1st winter was at Poolsbrook COP on 20th Feb.

Great Black-backed Gull - Birds in the Broomhead roost peaked at 600 on 3rd Jan.

Waxwing - The invasion continued, although with fewer three figure records than in previous months. Peak counts in January included 160 at Intake on 3rd Jan, 150 at Chapeltown on 6th, 94 at New Stubbin on 19th, and 100 at Gleadless on 31st. In February, 100 were at Handsworth on 3rd, 70 at Dore on 20th, 100 at Shalesmoor on 22nd, and 50 at Hillsborough on 25th.

Stonechat - Low counts, with highest counts of two at Leash Fen on 5th Jan, and Win Hill on 12th. The male bird was still present at Outo Kumpo steelworks up to at least the 14th Feb.

Fieldfare - Three-figure counts included 150 at Wharnccliffe Chase on 1st Jan, 150 at Rawmarsh on 2nd, 200 at Wharnccliffe Chase on 5th, 250 at Upper Midhope on 9th, 150 at Langsett on 13th, 200 at Peat Pits on 13th, 135 at Tinsley Marshalling

Yard on 23rd. In February, 150 were at Rawmarsh on 11th, 100 at Gillfield Wood on 17th, and 130 at Ewden Height on 22nd.

Redwing - Few large counts, with 47 at Stubley Hollow on 11th Jan, 35 at Wharnccliffe Chase on 2nd Feb, 50 at Whiston Meadows on 3rd, 40 at Pit-house West on 8th, 50 at Endcliffe Park on 10th, 110 at Stubley Hollow on 21st, and 97 at Canklow Woods on 27th.

Cetti's Warbler - A single bird reported from Pit-house West on various dates between 1st Jan up to at least 23rd February. Elsewhere, one was at Poolsbrook Marsh on 27th Jan.

Blackcap - Wintering birds reported from Hillsborough, Walkley Bank, Greystones, Hangingwater, Rawmarsh, Norton Lees, Fulwood, Wadsley Bridge, Moorgate, Millhouses, Sharrow, Totley Brook, Brincliffe Edge, and the Botanical Gardens.

Chiffchaff - Birds reported from Thrybergh Tip, Aldwarke SF, Wardsend Cemetery, Parkwood Springs, Wisewood, Fatty Boyns Pond and Eastwood.

Siskin - Larger flocks included 100 at Loxley Valley on 4th Jan, 100 at Calver on 6th, 120 at Haywood Farm on 6th, and 100 at Froggatt Bridge on 23rd.

Common (Mealy) Redpoll - Single birds reported at Wadley Common on 3rd, 21st and 23rd Feb, an Kilnhurst on 6th.

Lesser Redpoll - Largest flocks included 30 at Waverley Opencast on 1st Jan, Thrybergh Tip on 27th, 37 at Handsworth on 3rd Feb, 40 at Thrybergh Tip on 3rd, and 28 at Canklow Woods on 11th.

Crossbill - One was at Hall Wood, High Green on 1st Jan, with eight at Morehall Res on 20th. Four were at Linacre Res on 2nd Feb and three at Broomhead again on 16th.

Corn Bunting - Four on overhead wires at Pebley on 10th Feb.

Bittern - Present at Pit-house West from the start of the year up to at least 19th Feb. Two birds were present on 8th Feb, with a possible third bird seen.

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Blackcap - Wintering birds reported from Hillsborough, Walkley Bank, Greystones, Hangingwater, Rawmarsh, Norton Lees, Fulwood, Wadsley Bridge, Moorgate, Millhouses, Sharrow, Totley Brook, Brincliffe Edge, and the Botanical Gardens.



It was a good period for Caspian Gulls, including this striking 1st Winter at Neepsend on 24th January (photo by A. Deighton)

Chiffchaff - Birds reported from Thrybergh Tip, Aldwarke SF, Wardsend Cemetery, Parkwood Springs, Wisewood, Fatty Boyns Pond and Eastwood.

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Pete Mella



They're still with us! This bird was at that perennial Waxwing-magnet of Asda at Handsworth on 22nd February (photo by P. Garrity)

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

MG Archer, S Ashton, J Atkin, A Bailey, B Bailey, S Bailey, IM Barnes, SJ Barnes, A Bateman, AR Bell, J Bennett, AS Bilton, RP Blagden, K Bower, P Bowker, RJ Bradley, SJ Branch, MC Brew, PL Brown, V Browne, AR Burns, RV Burton, R Butterfield, BM Carr, EO Chafer, I Chapman, J Clarke, B Cole, H Coull, J Crank, J Crooks, N Cross, A Deighton, S Draper, J Ducker, NP Dummigan, CM Dunhill, G Dyson, H Egan, MG Fenner, D Gains, M Garner, P Garrity, KA Gehring, D Gill, KR Gould, G Grant, S Green, T Grose, S Guymer, R Harris, I Hedge, M Hibbert, A Hicks, A Hill, AA Hill, RD Hill, RF Hinchliffe, DJ Hitchen, M Hodgson, J Hornbuckle, K Horton, J Housden, G&J James, Anne Johnson, R Kay, C Kelly, JE Kenward, S King, J Kingsland, N Kipling, J Kirkman, K Knowles, M Lacey, D Langston, JM Laskey, P Lawson, P Leonard, P Lockwood, J Luis, F Maddock, JN McGourlay, P Mella, B Merryweather, J Monach, M Morrell, M Miller, TH Minskip, J Mountford, D Mowbray, MG Oxlade, J Partridge, J Perlstrom, R Popplewell, NR Porter, M Purslow, MN Reeder, P Ridsdale, L Riley, B Roberts, D Roddis, GA Rodgers, S Samworth, T Scott, J Sherwin, M Sherwin, S Sherwin, A Siddall, D Simmonite, MA Smethurst, AHV Smith, M Snook, B Spencer, D Spencer, JAH Stobart, MH Sweeney, M&L Taylor, SG Tebbutt, P Thomas, A Thompson, W Thomson, M Timms T Terffry, R Twigg, C Tyler, SE Vickers, EC Vincent, RV Walker, M Wells, 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 the Gift Aid legislation, making it easier for charitable organisations to reclaim income tax on their 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

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

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