



SHEFFIELD BIRD STUDY GROUP
BULLETIN

ISSUE 218

MAY 2013

www.sbsg.org

**SPRING
IS HERE!**

Spring finally arrives, and the migrants return

PEREGRINE UPDATE

The latest on Sheffield's breeding pair

PLUS

**Recent News, Dates For Your Diary,
Ringing Demonstration**

Photo: P Flackett

NEWS

Peregrine update



For those of you who have been following the Peregrine blog, or the (University-run) twitter feed, the trials of the collapsing nest platform and the frustrations of a webcam crashing as it became overloaded with viewing traffic will be only too familiar. Fortunately these have been overcome, thanks to the efforts of staff in the University's Estates Department and Computing Services. Much to everyone's relief, the female was not put off by her experience of the floor dropping beneath her, and returned to the nest platform the following day, going on to lay four eggs between 27th March and 3rd April. Only when the third and fourth

eggs had been laid did incubation get under way consistently, and since then the female has undertaken the great majority of the incubating, although the male has also done some stints.

One of the things that the webcam has made it possible to appreciate is what goes on round the clock, and it's been interesting to see how active the female is during the night, shifting position and looking around, as in the screen grab below. We've not seen it in Sheffield yet, but perhaps we'll see this nocturnal activity take the form of night-time hunting, as has been noted with the Derby cathedral birds.

During the incubation period, which averages 30-32 days, we have become accustomed to great views of the birds filling our screens, but not much else has been going on, and the male is often away from St George's. The birds have a larder near to the nest and occasionally give some exciting flight views, but – at the time of writing – it's a case of the calm before the action really gets under way. The eggs are expected to hatch around 5th May, after which the adults will start to bring food into the nest on an increasingly regular basis. Once this becomes established, we'll be setting up Peregrine watches for anyone who wants to enjoy terrific views of the birds 'in the flesh', as in the picture below, taken a couple of weeks ago. Details of dates and times of the watches will be posted on the website, from where there are also links to the webcam and blog.

No doubt there will be plenty of action and excitement to come in the weeks ahead: fingers crossed for a successful outcome!

David Wood

Reader poll

Thanks to all who filled in the online Bulletin reader's poll, which was emailed to all who take the Bulletin by email. There will be some details of the results next issue, as well as some new features based on some of the feedback. If you haven't filled in the survey but would like to, find it at <http://www.tinyurl.com/SBSGpoll>

New members

The group welcomes **Mark & Vicky Walton, Paul & Christine Bain, Neil Cross, Emma Lomas, Joe Woods, Abigail Harris, Juliette Linford, Jack Ellis,** and **Jake Brady** to the group. Good birding to you all!

Deadline for next Bulletin

The next Bulletin will be issued at the September 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 **31st August**.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Indoor Meetings

Alan & Ruth Davies - The Biggest Twitch

Weds Sep 11th 2013, Sheffield University Arts Tower Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

In 2008, Welsh couple Alan & Ruth Davies started an amazing journey - a personal challenge to break the world record of the biggest ever birding year list. Visiting all corners of the world, the Davies' broke the 4,000 barrier, and will be telling their incredible story tonight.

Both avid birders, the couple met through mutual work for the RSPB. Alan runs Birdline Wales, and is author of Best Birdwatching Sites in North Wales, and Ruth is author of the popular 'Bird, Boots and Butties' guides to bird walks in their home area.

This lecture promises to be a tale of a fascinating adventure that spans the entire globe.

Tristan Reid - "Giving My Right Arm For Turkey"

Weds Oct 9th 2013, Sheffield University Arts Tower Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

Tristan Reid, known as The Inked Naturalist, has dedicated not only his time, but his skin, to the beleaguered birds of Turkey - by having 20 of the country's most iconic species tattooed on his arms. A professional ecologist, Tristan was so moved by the plight of birds during a wildlife holiday to Turkey - where fragile biodiversity is threatened by private Hydro Electric Power Plants - he decided to commit to his unusual conservation initiative to raise funds and awareness for [Doğa Derneği](#), the BirdLife International partner in Turkey.

If the tattoos weren't enough, Tristan is also embarking on a 4000km walk across Turkey, and tonight will be describing his inspiration for his remarkable dedication to Turkish conservation.

Field Meetings

Ramsley Reservoir - Ringing demonstration

September, details TBC

Redmires Reservoir - Visible migration

October, details TBC

Hard to imagine, but by the time the next Bulletin comes around, we'll be into autumn migration! These two field trips will take in two of the area's best sites for watching migration in action - keep your eyes on the SBSG website and Twitter feed for more details nearer the time.

Club contacts

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Ringling Demonstration

In February, some members of Sorby Breck Ringing Group carried out a ringing demonstration at 70 Acre Hill Nature Reserve, part of High Hazels Park in Sheffield. It was a shared event for the Sheffield Countryside Rangers and the Sheffield Bird Study Group. Being a feed site adjoining a mature woodland, we opted to err on the side of caution so only two nets were put up. Ringing got off to a good start when the first bird to be taken from a bag was a retrapped Great Spotted Woodpecker, first ringed in September 2009.



This was followed by Blue Tits, Great Tits, Long-tailed Tits, one Coal Tit and another Great Spotted Woodpecker, making a total of 26 birds for the morning.

Approximately 18 members of the public joined us. BTO ringing leaflets were handed out and as usual everyone left with smiles on their faces. A big thank you to Dave, Brian, Alan, Millie, Sean and Bryn for their help.



Words: Kev Bower, Pics: Chris Kelly

RECENT SIGHTINGS

1st Mar - 28th Apr 2013

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

Bittern - One was recorded roosting at Pit-house West on various dates, including on 2nd and 5th April. These were the first April site records.

Little Egret - Two were at Thrybergh CP on 21st April, and one at Orgreave Lakes on 24th.

Whooper Swan - Many records in March, with higher counts including 40 NW at Rivelin Valley on 12th, 43 W over Millhouses on 18th, and 31 over Catcliffe and Orgreave on 21st. 50 flew NNW at Waverley on 1st April.

Pink-footed Goose - 70 were NW at Broomhead Moor on 1st March. Elsewhere a few stragglers included one at RVCP on 5th March, two at Chatsworth on 10th, three at Old Wheel Dam on 10th, three at RVCP on 31st, and four at Orgreave Lakes on 13th April. Three were reported feeding with Greylags at Dale Dike Res on 16th March and 6th April.

Barnacle Goose - One was at Thrybergh CP on 19th April, departing N with four Canadas.

Garganey - Two were at Carr Vale on 29th March.

Red Kite - Single birds, throughout the period, from Newbold, Ewden Height, Kiveton, Barlborough, Agden Beck, Holling Dale, Longshaw, Wharnccliffe Side, Frecheville, Freebirch, Baslow, Thrybergh, Padley Gorge, Wadsley and Redmires Res. One over Bramall Lane on 27th April was a City Centre record, and two birds were at Agden Side on 20th.

Marsh Harrier - A cream-crown was at Thrybergh CP on 22nd April.

Osprey - Singles at Chatsworth Park on 8th April, and Hurlfield on 13th, were the first of the year.

Hobby - One was at Ravenfield Ponds on 27th April.

Peregrine - The pair returned to breed on St George's Church in Sheffield City Centre, with the first egg laid on 27th March, and the last of four on 3rd April. These are expected to have

hatched by the time this Bulletin is distributed.

Avocet - Two were at Middleton Moor on 20th and 21st April.

Golden Plover - The biggest group was once again in the Peat Pits/Onesmoor area, peaking at 350 on various dates. Elsewhere 200 were at Thrybergh CP on 4th March and 10th April, 250 were at Hickfield Bank on 14th April, and 200 were at Redmires Res on 21st.

Sanderling - Singles at Orgreave Lakes on 12th and 18th April.

Dunlin - Reports from Orgreave Lakes (peaking at 11 on 17th April), Thrybergh CP (five on 17th March), and Middleton Moor (highest count six on 26th April).

Ruff - A male was at Orgreave Lakes from 9th-11th April.

Jack Snipe - The highest counts were four at Bolehill Flash, and seven at Woodhouse Washlands, all on 25th



This Little Gull spent some time on the River Rother from 26-29th March (photo P. Garrity)

March. Later records included singles at Orgreave Lakes and Silverwood Pit Top on 6th April, Orgreave Lakes on 12th, and Leash Fen on 20th.

Snipe - The highest count was 42 at Woodhouse Washlands on 25th March. 20 were at Orgreave Lakes on 24th March, and ten at the Outo Kumpu site at Europa Link on 28th.

Whimbrel - Five at Orgreave Lakes on 17th April was a good count. One was at Strines Moor on 21st, and two at Rawmarsh on 24th.

Curlew - 134 roosting at Redmires Bottom Res on 30th March was a site record. Other high counts included 85 at Rivelin Valley on 12th, 63 at Middleton Moor on 17th, 56 at Midhope on 20th, 61 roosting at Middleton Moor on 20th, and 60 at Wet Shaw on 21st April.

Spotted Redshank - A partial summer plumaged bird was at Orgreave Lakes on 23rd April.

Redshank - Numbers at Orgreave Lakes peaked at seven on 19th April. Two were at Redmires Middle Res on 23rd, one at Silverwood Lagoon on 26th, and two at Middleton Moor on 28th.

Common Sandpiper - One at Rother Valley CP on 14th April was the first of the year, with birds the following day at Langsett Res, Middleton Moor and Orgreave Lakes, with three recorded at the latter. Orgreave also saw the

highest count of the period, with six present on the 19th, and four were present at Redmires Res on 21st.

Mediterranean Gull - Adults at Thrybergh CP and Poolsbrook CP, on 26th and 28th March respectively.

Little Gull - A full summer-plumaged adult was on the River Rother at Orgreave fom 26th to 29th March. Two dropped in during heavy rain on 12th, with one at Wentworth Res on the same day. Finally, an adult flew WNW over Redmires Res on 21st.

Kittiwake - Four were at Poolsbrook CP on 10th March. Orgreave Lakes saw one on 18th March, one E on 6th, and two N on 19th.

Common Tern - The first returning bird was at Orgreave Lakes on 14th, with others at Thrybergh CP, Rawmarsh and Silverwood Lagoon by the month's end.

Arctic Tern - One was at Thrybergh CP on 16th April, with presumably the same bird lingering at Orgreave Lakes from 18th-20th.

Cuckoo - Padley Gorge saw the first of the year, on 19th April. Singles were at Wharcliffe Chase on 26th, Big Moor and Ewden Valley on 27th, and Blacka Moor on 29th.

Swift - Single birds were picked up at Orgreave Lakes and Treeton on 18th April, Centenary Riverside on 19th, and Thrybergh CP on 22nd. The first in

larger numbers were 40 at Orgreave Lakes on 26th, 20 at Thrybergh CP on 27th, and 50 at Orgreave Lakes on 28th.

Woodlark - One flew calling over an observer's garden in Fulwood on 2nd March.

Sand Martin - A relatively late arrival for this species, with the first two N at Cowell Flat on 7th April. A trickle of records included 23 at Orgreave Lakes on 10th and 40 at Rother Valley CP on 11th, before an arrival of 250 at Orgreave Lakes during heavy rain on 12th, with 60 at Thrybergh CP on 15th another good count. Birds had returned to urban breeding grounds on the Don in Rotherham and Sheffield by the month end.

Swallow - Records of four and two at Orgreave Lakes on 9th April were the first records, with thirty during heavy rain on 12th the first count in double figures. Numbers rose more generally after the middle of the month, with 40 at Wentworth Lakes on 17th, 50 at both Blue Man's Bower and Orgreave Lakes on 19th, 50 at Effingham Street on 22nd, 100 at Thrybergh CP on 22nd, 70 at Wentworth Lakes on 22nd, 80 in Sheffield City Centre on 28th, and 70 at Thrybergh CP on 28th.

House Martin - One was at Rother Valley CP on 11th April, with sparse records of singles or single-figure parties until 20 at Wentworth Lakes on 22nd, 20 at Effingham Street on 23rd,



This Yellow Wagtail was at Thrybergh CP on 18th April (photo K. Smith)

30 at Millhouses on 25th, and 50 at Effingham Street on 25th.

Tree Pipit - Four at Wharnccliffe Chase on 13th April were first of the year, with numbers there reaching 10 by 19th. Elsewhere four were at Blacka Moor on 19th, four at Greave's Piece on 20th, five at Barbrook Plantation on 28th, and one at Normanton Spring on 28th.

Rock Pipit - One (a presumed *littoralis*) was at Orgreave Lakes on 17th Mar. Another Rock Pipit was briefly at the more surprising location of Crookes Valley Park on 20th, with Orgreave again hosting a *littoralis* bird from 8th-17th April. A calling bird left NE at Silverwood Lagoon on 17th.

Yellow Wagtail - The first of the year was one at Orgreave Lakes on 12th April, a site which saw a peak of eleven on 17th, and a Blue-headed Wagtail (*flava*) on 17th - 19th. Elsewhere Thrybergh CP saw its first on 15th, and peaked at twelve on 22nd, and one was recorded W at Barbrook Pools on 13th.

Pied Wagtail - Higher roost numbers towards the start of the period included 110 at Middleton Moor on 20th March, and 160 at Baslow on 1st April. The first White Wagtail (*alba*) was recorded at Orgreave Lakes on 27th March, with large numbers of the race recorded at the site during April, peaking at 30 on 17th-19th. Elsewhere, White Wagtails were reported from Rivelin Valley,

Baslow SF, Thrybergh CP and Wentworth Lakes.

Waxwing - Patchy records throughout the entire period, with sightings still occurring as we go to press, of flocks peaking at around 50. Sightings in March included 45 at Hillsborough on 3rd, 50 at Norwood Allotments on 4th, 44 at Barlborough on 11th, 23 at Ulley CP on 16th, 22 N at Wharnccliffe Heath on 17th, 30 at Burngreave on 22nd, 30 at Walkley on 22nd, 35 at Netherthorpe on 25th, 22 at Hillsborough on 26th, and 25 S at Orgreave Lakes on 29th. April records included 50 at Whiston on 4th, 40 at Sothall on 5th, 30 at Parkwood Springs on 8th, a flock of c40 at Hillsborough on several dates, 36 at Heeley City Farm on 16th, 31 at Netherthorpe on 17th and 59 at Highfield on 21st.

Black Redstart - A pager report was received on one at Stannington on 7th April. A singing male was at Rotherham Centre from 23rd April until at least the end of the month.

Redstart - A male at a railway embankment at Halfway on 15th April was the first of the year, followed by males at Stubley Hollow on 16th, and Padley Gorge on 18th. The first singing birds were two (among three seen) at Wharnccliffe Chase on 19th. An impressive 14 were singing at Longstone Edge on 20th, and seven were at Middleton Moor on 28th.

Whinchat - The first of the year was a male at Orgreave Lakes on 17th April,

with a female at the same site on 19th. Four were at Bar Brook Valley on 20th, and two at Cutthroat Bridge on the same date.

Stonechat - Still low numbers of this species, with the highest count being three at Edale on 12th March. A male and female were at Orgreave Lakes on 9th March, and a pair at Barbrook Plantation on 21st April.

Wheatear - The first was one at Orgreave Lakes on 2nd April, with the first larger counts being seven at Middleton Moor on 15th, ten at Orgreave Lakes on 16th and 25 at Abney Moor on 20th. Greenland Wheatears (*leucorhoa*) were present at Abney Moor on 20th (as part of above flock), and Orgreave Lakes on 29th.

Ring Ouzel - A male at Burbage Rocks on 6th April was the first of the year, followed by a group of four at Cutthroat Bridge on 7th. The highest counts were nine at Burbage Valley on 20th and 21st.

Fieldfare - 350 at Whitwell Moor on 1st March was the largest count of the period, with other sizable flocks including 200 at Emlin Moor on 10th, 120 on Soughley Lane on 15th, 200 at Middleton Moor on 15th, 120 at Wortley on 13th April, and 100 at Upper Midhope on 19th.

Redwing - 300 at Rother Valley CP on 9th April was by far the highest count of the period, and one of the few three



© Mark Reeder

This *littoralis* Rock Pipit was at Orgreave Lakes from 8th-17th April. (Photo M.Reeder)

figure counts. 100 were at Orgreave Lakes on 12th, with numbers quickly petering out, to single birds at Ecclesall on 16th and Redmires on 21st.

Grasshopper Warbler - The first of the year were singles at Firsby Res and Pit-house West on 15th, with further birds at Canklow, Leash Fen, Silverwood Lagoon, Thrybergh CP, and Handsworth by the end of the month.

Sedge Warbler - The first was at Thrybergh CP on 20th April, with subsequent records of three at Poolsbrook Marsh on 25th, one at Blackburn Meadows on 28th, three at Treeton Dyke on 28th, and one at Silverwood Lagoon on 29th.

Reed Warbler - Two singing at Poolsbrook Marsh on 25th April were the first of the year. Three were at Silverwood Lagoon on 25th, one at Blackburn Meadows on 28th, three at Treeton Dyke on 28th, and three at Silverwood Lagoon on 29th.

Lesser Whitethroat - Thrybergh CP saw the first of the year on 20th April, with birds at Treeton Dyke, Ickles, Woodhouse, Aldwarke, Blackburn Meadows, Blue Man's Bower, Smithy Wood, Silver Wood and Treeton by the month's end.

Whitethroat - Males at Heeley City Farm, Treeton and Woodhouse Washlands on 16th April were the first records of the year. The highest counts

by the month end were 11 at Silverwood Lagoon on 25th, and 12 at the same site on 29th.

Wood Warbler - Some quite unusual locations saw the first returning birds, with singing birds at Hillsborough Park on 25th-26th April, Sharrow General Cemetery on 26th, and Heeley City Farm on 29th.

Willow Warbler - 13th April saw a widespread arrival of this species, with singles at Baslow SF, Canklow Woods, Orgreave Lakes, Silver Wood, Treeton Dyke and Wharncliffe Chase, with higher numbers building up over the subsequent week including 12 at Pit-house West on 15th, 15 at Catcliffe Flash-Treeton Dyke on 17th, 11 at Longshaw on 20th, 22 at Redmires Res on 21st and 18 at Wharncliffe Heath on 27th.

Pied Flycatcher - The first was a male at Padley Gorge on 15th April. One was at Rivelin Filters on 17th, four at Padley by 20th, five at Chatsworth Park on 21st, three at North Lees on 21st, one at Haywood Farm on 24th, two at Agden Bog on 27th, and two at Midhope Cliff on 28th.

Brambling - 32 at Redmires Middle Res on 7th April was one of the higher counts this species has seen all year, with other records in this period all under ten birds. Records from a Fulwood garden peaked at nine on 15th March, and the latest birds were two at Fulwood and one at Hathersage

on 20th April, and two males at Green Moor on 21st.

Siskin - Higher counts in April included 40 at Wharncliffe Side on 8th March, 31 at Handsworth on 9th, 40 at Ecclesall on 23rd, and 25 at Grenoside on 23rd, with many garden records during harsh weather.

Common (Mealy) Redpoll - Records of single birds at Canklow on 3rd and 17th March, and Pit-house West on 3rd.

Lesser Redpoll - Canklow Woods saw the highest count, peaking at 62 on 7th March. Elsewhere 30 were at Kilnhurst on 18th April, and 20 at Green Moor on 21st and 27th.

Crossbill - Few larger counts, with 15 at Linacre Res on 17th March, five at Wharncliffe Wood on 6th April, and 29 at Holmebrook Valley Park on 29th.

Pete Mella

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

C Almond, MG Archer, S Ashton, D Aspinall, J Atkin, A Bailey, B Bailey, S Bailey, J Barnaby, R Barnard, IM Barnes, SJ Barnes, A Bateman, AR Bell, AS Bilton, M Blagden, RP Blagden, C Bonnington, K Bower, RJ Bradley, SJ Branch, PL Brown, V Browne, RV Burton, R Butterfield, DJ Buttle, BM Carr, EO Chafer, I Chapman, J Clarke, L Coates, D Cockayne, B Cole, J Crank, J Crooks, N Cross, R Dale, A Deighton, J Ducker, NP Dummigan, CM Dunhill, M Dyson, H Egan, H Ensor, MG Fenner, P Flackett, D Gains, D Gardiner, P Garrity, R Garrow, KA Gehring, C Gibson, DN Gill, KR Gould, G Grant, T Grose, S Guymmer, D Harmston, I Hedge, M Hibbert, A Hill, AA Hill, RD Hill, DJ Hitchen, A Hobson, M Hodgson, J Hornbuckle, K Horton, J Housden, G&G Hunt, P Jackson, G&J James, M Jarvis, Anne Johnson, A Jones, C Kelly, S King, J Kingsland, N Kipling, K Knowles, M Lacey, D Langston, JM Laskey, P Lawson, J Le Corney, P Leonard, K Leyland, P License, P Lockwood, F Maddock, JL Marriott, D Massey, P Mella, B Merryweather, A Metcalf, M Miller, T Millson, TH Minskip, J Monach, J Mosley, D Mowbray, B Mulhearn, J Mullins, L Nelson, MG Oxlade, J Partridge, PH Pearsall, J Perstrom, R Platts, NR Porter, M Purslow, C Raven, MN Reeder, P Ridsdale, B Roberts, D Roberts, K Roberts, D Roddis, GA Rodgers, S Rowlands, M Sanders, R Scally, T Scott, J Sherwin, M Sherwin, S Sherwin, A Siddall, D Simmonite, MA Smethurst, K Smith, M Smith, M Snook, B Spencer, CG Stack, L Stanley, JAH Stobart, MJ Sweeney, J Taylor, M&L Taylor, N Taylor, SG Tebbutt, M Thomas, A Thompson, M Timms, P Tucker, R Twigg, C Tyler, SE Vickers, EC Vincent, RV Walker, D Warburton, JC Wasse, R Watkinson, M Wells, CJ White, G Williams, RDR Williams, JB Wilson, P&W Wilson, C Winfrow, M Winter, D Wood, D Woodriff, P Wragg, Sorby Breck Ringing Group, Thrybergh CP Bird Log