



SHEFFIELD BIRD STUDY GROUP
BULLETIN

ISSUE 223

MAY 2014

www.sbsg.org



Photo: David Wood

Rough Wood



Many people seem unaware of the threat to Rough Wood, a lesser-frequented part of the Longshaw Estate.

Network Rail are proposing to put in a loop on the Sheffield to Manchester line at this point, which would involve extensive and serious disruption and

habitat loss in the area beside the line. At present, there is a hiatus on this plan, and there is cause for optimism that these proposals will be shelved. However, as the 3 month period mentioned here <http://peakdistrictnt.blogspot.co.uk/2014/02/grindleford-dore-railway-update.html> has now passed, the threat may again become active, so any wildlife records from this site will help us to protect it.

Some fellow fungi enthusiasts and I are making a long-term survey of the fungi in this area and have the support of the National Trust to do so. Longshaw is a nationally, if not internationally important site for fungi but as SBSG members are aware, it is also a very special site for birds. This week, I paid another visit specifically to look for birds. Even with my meagre birding skills, I counted 25 species in the woodland and immediate vicinity, including Pied Flycatcher, Redstart and Great Spotted Woodpecker.

Chris Kelly

First for the Sheffield Area



Congratulations to Mark Reeder for a perhaps slightly overdue first for the Sheffield area - a **Glossy Ibis** which dropped in briefly to Orgreave Lakes on 3rd May, and went on to take up a longer residence just outside our area in the Dearne Valley. More details in next issue's Recent Sightings.

Guillemot survey under threat

Professor Tim Birkhead, a strong supporter of SBSG, has asked if we can publicise the petition below, which seeks to secure ongoing funding for his long-running study of Guillemots on Skomer, which has been cut by the Welsh government. Please sign it if you can - see the link <http://bit.ly/NBcdJD>

Scribes wanted!

I'm still in need of volunteers to write lecture reports from indoor meetings - if no-one puts their hand up this section may have to disappear from the Bulletin! Drop me an email at bulletin@sbsg.org if you're up for it, either as a regular role or for any lectures you particularly want to do as a one-off. (PM)

New members

We welcome the following new members to the group - good birding to you all and we hope you enjoy your membership.

Jack Massey, Mark Powell, John Quincey, Mark Ridler and, and a welcome back to Sally and Christopher Hewitt.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Indoor Meetings

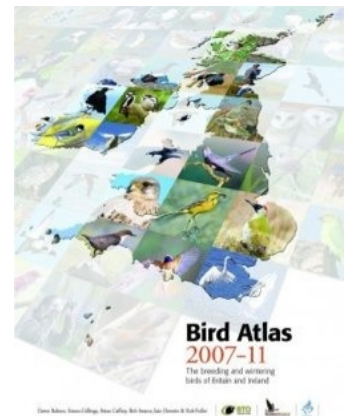
Richard Hill - Reservoir Slogs - a birding history of Redmires
Weds September 10th 2014, Sheffield University Arts Tower
Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

Somewhere between being the SBSG's Secretary, editing the group's Annual Report, and co-editing our recently-published Breeding Atlas, Richard is also a dedicated patch-watcher at the upland site of Redmires Reservoirs. This often bleak, but occasionally spectacular, patch rewards the faithful, and is particularly well-known for visible migration, which Richard has been a particularly keen proponent of. This talk promises to give an insight into the birding highs and lows of one of the Sheffield area's most iconic sites.



Dawn Balmer - The BTO Bird Atlas 2007-11
Weds October 8th 2014, Sheffield University Arts Tower
Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

Rightly described as one of the most ambitious volunteer projects ever undertaken, the BTO's Bird Atlas 2007-11 is a remarkable piece of work giving the definitive state of Britain's changing avifauna. Tonight Dawn Balmer, the Atlas Coordinator, will be talking to the group about this landmark work.



Field Meetings

Hallam Moors Crepuscular Creep - Weds 11th June.

Our now-traditional wander around Hallam Moors keeping eyes and ears open for twilight species like Woodcock, Owls and Nightjar. Be prepared for cold as well as for midges early on! See the website for confirmation of details.

Club contacts

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Breeding Swift Survey - 2014-2015

One of the major themes to emerge from the recent publication of the SBSG Breeding Atlas was our lack of detailed knowledge on certain familiar species. One such example is Common Swift *Apus apus*, which despite an overall increase in tetrad occupancy, showed a 50% reduction in breeding confirmations between 1975-80 and 2003-08.

Some of this local decline can be accounted for by the fact that the 1975-80 Atlas results were based on a specific survey of this familiar species, but a downward trend has also been apparent at a national level for a number of years.

To celebrate the 35th anniversary of the original survey, we would now like your help in revisiting its strongholds to try and find out how things have changed for these iconic birds. We also plan to share our results with the RSPB, who run an annual Swift survey on a similar basis.

To start with, we are simply asking observers to submit **ALL** records of Swifts showing breeding behaviour from anywhere within the SBSG area, but particularly SK 38 in and around the city centre, as this 10km square was particularly well-recorded last time around. Depending on the response, we will then either confine the survey to SK 38 or expand the survey to the whole of the SBSG recording area. We are then hoping to combine the results from the 2014-15 breeding seasons into a meaningful comparison with the results from original survey which spanned the breeding seasons of 1979-80.

There is no survey form to complete - simply submit your records in the usual way i.e. via the website 'Submit Sightings' page, BUT please try to add the following important information in the 'Comments' section for each individual record:

Location – street name & postcode

Type of building – approximate age & materials Height of nest (in metres).

Position on building – e.g. junction of roof, eaves etc.

Number of nests - where possible

An example of what we are after when submitting records on the SBSG website sightings page is shown on the right.



Site	<input type="text" value="Ecclesall"/>	Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	<input type="text" value="29/06/2014"/>
Grid Reference	<input type="text" value="SK 38"/>	Time	<input type="text"/>
Observer Name	<input type="text" value="RD Hill"/>	Email	<input type="text" value="rdhill@yahoo.com"/>
Species	<input type="text" value="Swift"/>	Count	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Confidential	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Comments	<input type="text" value="Ansell Road - S11 7PE
Nest site at junction of roof
10 m off ground
Semi-detached house - 1930's brick
North facing wall - 2 NESTS"/>		
Activity Code	<input type="text" value="NY"/>		
Photo	<input type="text" value="Browse..."/>		

Submitted photos may be used on the SBSG website, Bulletin or Facebook page, with full credit to the photographer

The best time to look for breeding Swifts is during June and July, either during the early morning before adults leave the vicinity of the nest site to feed further afield, or better still, in the early evening, when feeding activity is at its peak.

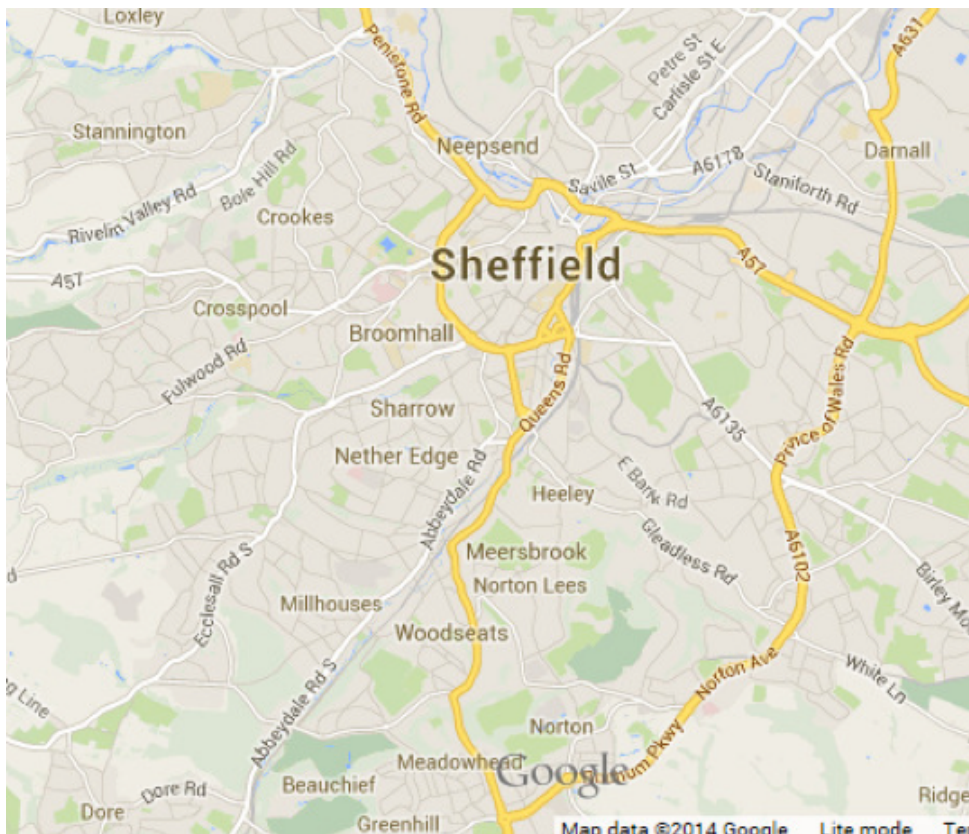
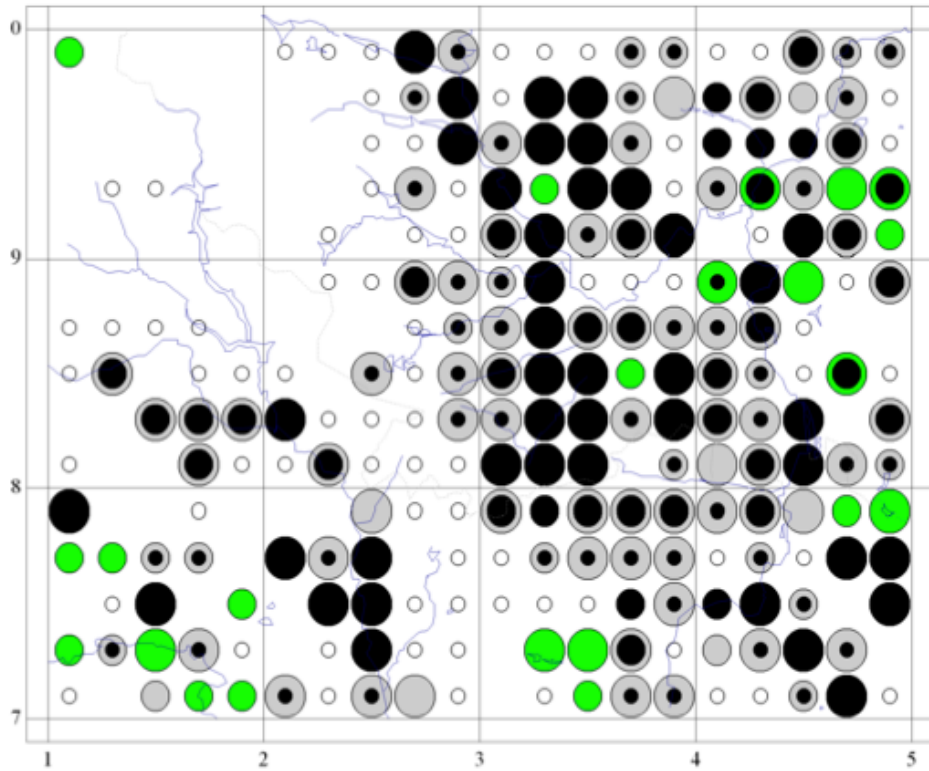
Breeding behaviour includes:

- low-flying birds around suitable nest **sites**
- **adults entering a building on a regular basis**
- **evidence of droppings under a suitable nest site**
- **young calling from an active nest.**

Although high-flying feeding parties of Swifts are not necessarily indicative of breeding behaviour for the purposes of this survey, please continue to report them in the usual way via the SBSG website, as these records are still of great value for the SBSG annual report.

The distribution map from the 2003-08 Atlas (which also incorporates the 1975-80 Atlas results) is given below – this highlights the strongholds for Swifts across the SBSG area – in particular SK 38 (three squares across from the left and two squares up from the bottom). It is worth noting that open circles most likely indicate feeding birds.

Also below is the rough area of SK 38 for reference (map data ©Google 2014). If you have any queries about the survey, please contact Richard Hill at secretary@sbsg.org. Thanks in advance for your help!



Lecture report

Mark Thomas: Catching The Killers

The April speaker was Mark Thomas, Senior Investigations Officer of the RSPB.

Mark began by pointing out that the RSPB was started by a group of women protesting about the use of bird feathers in hats, and who formed themselves into the "Society for the Protection of Birds" in 1889, which later became the RSPB. After many years with the emphasis almost entirely on conservation, the RSPB now finds itself again having to put much effort into crime detection and prevention.

Mark's first film clip related to a case in Cumbria in 2013, and was a shocking sequence showing a gamekeeper entering a cage trap containing two Buzzards and proceeding to club them to death with a wooden stick. The RSPB had previously been notified of the illegally set cage trap by members of the public, and had installed cameras to see what was happening. When questioned, the gamekeeper initially admitted that the trap had "mistakenly" caught two Buzzard but claimed he had subsequently released them. The filmed evidence was there, however, and he admitted killing five other Buzzards; he was convicted on several counts including animal cruelty and an illegally set trap. He escaped a custodial sentence due to ill health.

This case was just an example of the massive problem of persecution of birds of prey. Some progress was being made at the start of this century, for example the setting up of PAW (Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime) in 2000. In 2011, the RSPB believed that the next few years had the potential to improve matters substantially due to: the Law Commission being about to consult on its proposals for the reform of wildlife protection laws, which could lead to new offences and penalties to aid prosecutions; the police service was being re-organised with the creation of the National Crime Agency (NCA); Police and Crime Commissioners were to be elected in 2012; the future shape and direction of conservation agencies were about to be decided. However, although the Scottish government in 2012 introduced the concept of "vicarious liability", which allows for the

prosecution of landowners who fail to ensure that their employees or contractors act within the law, governments in England and Wales had no interest in doing something similar for the rest of the UK. This is shameful, as there is evidence that the new legislation has reduced the incidence of poisoning in Scotland. It is worth noting that the PCC for Derbyshire has stated publicly that he strongly supports all initiatives to eradicate persecution in the Dark Peak, but otherwise the RSPB fears that opportunities to eradicate persecution are slipping away.

RSPB keep meticulous records of all crimes reported to them, together with outcomes, and these show that in the period 1996-2008, three-quarters of convictions were of gamekeepers, with pigeon fanciers a distant second. A map of wildlife crime in the UK shows the Peak District to be a very black spot indeed. The RSPB began their investigations into what was going on in the Dark Peak area of the Peak District in 2000, when they set up The Peak Nestwatch Partnership. They monitored breeding success each year, and every year recorded evidence of persecution, including shooting, trapping, nest/egg destruction and the killing of chicks. Although the situation was considered very bleak, things got even worse in 2007 when a new gamekeeper arrived, and there have been no successful Goshawk or Peregrine nests since 2008.

The RSPB has now appointed a full-time fieldworker whose job it was to go out every day and check closely what was going on. The first Peak Malpractice report was published in 2006, with an update in 2007. (These were summarised in the SBSG Bulletins in September 2006 and December 2007, respectively, the latter being available to members on the SBSG website, whilst both can be downloaded in their entirety from the RSPB website – see the link at the end of this report). These problems all occur in the Dark Peak, in stark contrast to the White Peak where raptors are doing well.

Mark gave detailed account of the case of Glenn Brown who was arrested in May 2010, following a covert

surveillance operation, and convicted in 2011. The case concerned the use of a large cage trap baited with a domestic pigeon to attract raptors. The RSPB has to be meticulous in gathering its evidence, as shooting estates will employ a legal team well used to dissecting evidence with the slightest weakness in it and, as on this occasion, will attempt to smear the RSPB with accusations of being "unscrupulous liars" and of "planting evidence", an extremely important issue which would have repercussions on future court cases if they had got away with it.

Of course all of this is taking place on National Trust property, and pressure has been put on the National Trust to do something about it. The shooting tenancy was up for renewal in 2010, and there is now a new tenant employing new gamekeepers. The National Trust has told the new tenant that they expect a healthy population of raptors to be present on the estate. The case was also important for illustrating what goes on in shooting estates, and in fact RSPB currently have other cases in progress which for obvious reasons cannot be made public at present.

Of course it is not all bad news and, in particular, there are believed to be in excess of 40,000 pairs of Buzzard nationally, and it is now our commonest raptor. However, there are frequent reports of killing of Buzzards using poison and/or illegal traps, but the species seems able to maintain numbers in a way that other raptor species cannot. However, if persecution was stopped, or even substantially reduced, populations could recover relatively quickly. Unfortunately there is currently no sign of anything changing. Mark gave detailed accounts of a number of prosecutions elsewhere in the UK. One involved an estate outside Hereford where a pheasant laced with poison was found with six dead Ravens nearby, and the subsequent raid on the premises uncovered a thriving cannabis farm. Another was concerned with a whistle-blowing gamekeeper in Shropshire which led to the discovery of notebooks recording the kills (including over 100 Buzzards, 40 Ravens and 37 Badgers) in 2007, and was

subsequently reported in detail on Channel 4 News.

Mark made the point that it takes a very brave gamekeeper to report illegal activities of his employer. Gamekeepers tend to live in tied cottages, and whistle-blowers will find it difficult to find other employment.

Mark emphasised that the RSPB do not have the resources to patrol the whole country adequately, and rely on the public to report evidence of wildlife crime. He particularly asked us to keep our eyes open, and to be aware of what constitutes illegal activity; in particular, we should note that:

Spring traps can legally be used to trap animals such as rodents or rabbits, but must be placed in burrows, never in the open air where birds could be caught, and especially not on the top of poles.

Cage traps can legally be used for carrion crows, rooks or magpies. They must be baited with a corvid, which must be supplied with food and water, the trap must be checked daily, and any birds caught must be killed humanely. Traps must by law have an identification tag on them, otherwise they are illegal.

Poisoned bait must never be used where passing animals, birds (or humans) might accidentally take it.

Anyone finding a dead bird that has had its lower legs severed, or a cage trap baited with a bird other than a corvid, or a spring trap or poisoned bait in the open should report the matter immediately, either to the local police or to RSPB's Alan Firth on 07568 103445 (please put the number in your mobile phone!). Mark warned against touching anything, especially poisoned corpses or eggs, as there have been cases where extremely toxic (and illegal) poisons have been

found. However photographic evidence could be very valuable.

Raptor persecution in our area takes place in order to maximise grouse numbers, but Mark finished his talk by reminding us that egg-collecting is still a problem elsewhere. A pernicious aspect of this is that collectors take complete clutches, never feel they have enough eggs in their collections, and target scarce species. A serial collector with many convictions finally received an ASBO banning him from Scotland during the breeding season (1st February to 31st August) for ten years then, after he appealed, extended to "indefinitely". To some extent, there have been fewer cases since the law changed to allow gaol sentence for wildlife crimes, and this does not just act as a deterrent, but also gives the police additional powers during arrest.

Mark drew our attention to two publications, "Bird Crime" which appears annually and lists offences against wild birds in the preceding year, and "Legal Eagle" which is the RSPB's Investigations Newsletter, and produced three times per year. Issues of both, together with many other publications, can be downloaded from the RSPB website if you go to:

rspb.org.uk/ourwork/policy/wildbirdslaw

and click on RSPB Publications. You can also search the RSPB website for more about the Glenn Brown and other cases.

Another site which has a lot of information about raptor persecution is

raptorpersecutionscotland.wordpress.com.

This blog gives up-to-date news about what is going on, not just in Scotland but also elsewhere in the UK.

Wendy Thomson

Field trip reports

A brief report on the two recent visits to Orgreave Lakes and Wyming Brook.

On 27th April Mark Reeder led a migration watch at Orgreave Lakes, without doubt the area's most productive site during spring passage. The weather was good, in fact too good to result in a major passage or fall of migrants, but nonetheless we enjoyed great views of Little Ringed Plover, Yellow Wagtail, Ringed Plover, all three hirundines, several Swift, Wheatears and a range of the expected waterfowl. Star birds of the morning were two male Red-crested Pochard that circled the main lake and flew past us before seeming to drop onto Treeton Dyke, though later on they were on nearby Catcliffe Flash. Thanks to Mark for his expertise and sharing his knowledge of the site, whose growing reputation was enhanced by the Glossy Ibis that dropped in the following Saturday!

On 10th May Richard Hill led a walk through Wyming Brook to look (and listen) for migrants singing in the early morning, the site chosen as an alternative to Padley Gorge partly for its ease of access from Sheffield. A brisk wind was blowing on the nearby moors, but as soon as we dropped down from the car park it was left behind and a single Crossbill flew calling from the top of a conifer and headed towards Redmires. Richard was able to draw on his extensive knowledge of song and calls to point out a range of resident and migrant breeding species, the highlight perhaps being an early Spotted Flycatcher, whose song can best be described as subtle! We failed to find any sign of Wood Warblers in an area that had, until recently, been one of the best spots in our area to find them. As noted in the Atlas, this is a species in trouble. Thanks to Richard for leading the trip and sharing his skills.

David Wood

Thermal Minimumus

Each winter, like many other birders, I enjoy searching local sites for the elusive Jack Snipe. And, like most birders, I only manage flight views as they are flushed from some marshy ground, circle around and drop in again nearby. With eyes fixed on where I am certain the bird landed, I sometimes make a second attempt to find the bird on the ground before it flies again. This invariably fails with the bird flushing again at close range, at which point I accept defeat and leave it be.

So, on a late winter search for jack snipe at a site in the Sheffield area with my old birding colleague since school, Sean Gauton, talk turned to 'on the ground' views. My own were as far back as 1991, on St Mary's, Scilly. I began wondering why they flushed for humans but not livestock. Was it the outline and could that be altered by wearing something like poncho? One method to test my livestock theory came to mind, and that was to dress as a pantomime cow and wander through the marsh!!

However, a recent programme where a child had enquired as to hiring a thermal image camera to look for a lost hamster also came to mind. This I thought had potential.

My thoughts moved on. What if jack snipe were split into flyers and crouchers? I could remember an old black and white photograph of a jack snipe sitting tight alongside a wellington boot. What if the only birds I were seeing were the ones that flew at close range? Were there just as many sitting tight as I walked straight past?

A search of the internet revealed that hand held thermal image cameras were available for hire. These are used for security purposes and in various industries. The camera operates by picking up heat emitted from objects in infra-red. Every surface above absolute zero has a heat signature, so spot the hottest object in the viewfinder and you should have something warm blooded.

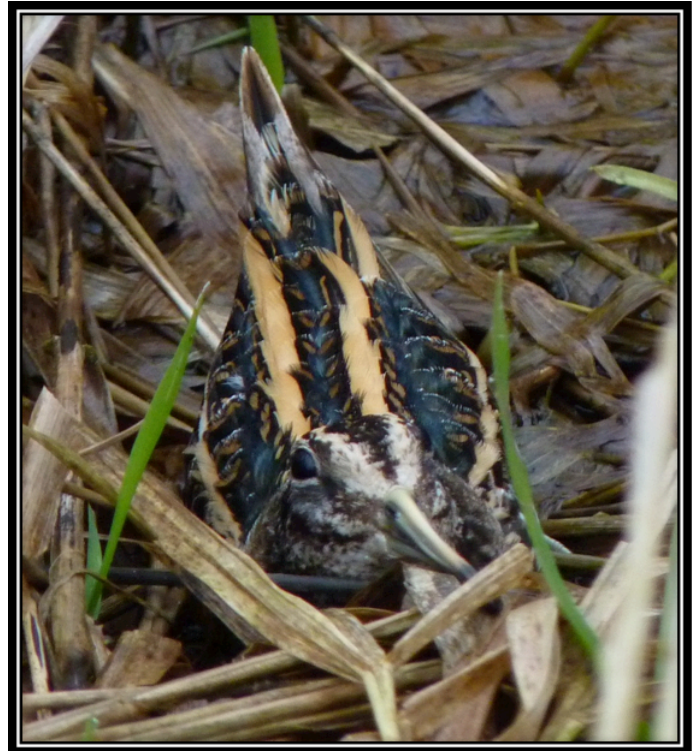
Enquiries were made and in late February I came into possession of such a device. It was game on!

On the morning I was to put my theory to the test I was again joined by Sean and also my dad Jim to re-visit the site. Predictably, having just endured one of the wettest and dullest winters in a long time, the weather was bright and sunny, the worst conditions for trying to use an infra-red camera in the day. Although three jack snipe were seen, none were on the ground. The camera was unable to pick out any bird as each clump of grass or reeds seemed to catch the sun, resulting in a number of 'false positive' results. It is fair to say I was very disappointed that my plan appeared to have failed.

The 6th March arrived and with both a free morning and the weather looking promisingly dull I again returned to the site. Unfortunately as I switched the camera on the battery was only one quarter charged, time was going to be tight. However, with no direct sunlight things looked much more promising. A small rodent was picked out by the camera but remained unseen with the naked eye. Further on a couple of warm objects attracted my attention, but as I manoeuvred into position, one jack snipe flew and the second heat source just disappeared.

At this point the battery nearly gave up so I was left with a much reduced image in the viewfinder. Was I to be thwarted again?

I began to return towards the car, still persevering with the camera, when I picked out another heat source. It was about eight feet away in some low vegetation. I switched from the camera to my binoculars, nothing seen. So I slowly changed my viewing angle. Heat source still there, nothing in my bins. This was getting frustrating. The situation



continued for about a minute until, there it was! Crouched down, head towards me, tail cocked in the air, a vision of dark purple and rich buff.

Hardly daring to breathe, I slowly put the thermal image camera back in one pocket and took my own camera out from another. The little beauty stayed frozen to the spot enabling me to take several photographs and a short video. Even though I have seen many jack snipe over the years, I found my adrenaline pumping and had a job holding the camera steady. I watched it for a while, soaking up all the intricacies of the plumage, until I slowly stepped away, leaving it in peace.

To devise a plan, follow it through and actually have it all fall into place to achieve the desired result left me with not only a great sense of achievement, it also proved to be one of my most satisfying birding experiences of recent years.

And the pantomime cow suit? Maybe next winter.....!

Mick Sherwin

Bird names, languages and myths quiz - the answers

Here are the answers to Karl Gehring's rather fiendish quiz from the last issue. Think you can tickle the grey cells of your fellow SBSG members? Why not send us a quiz for the September issue?

Rotschenkel This is a simple translation of redshank.

Turdus Philomelos and Rossingol Philomele These are the song thrush and nightingale respectively (in Latin and French). Philomela was an Athenian princess with a beautiful voice whose sister, Procne, was married to Tereus, King of Thrace. Procne wished to see her sister so Tereus agreed to go to Athens and escort Philomele to Thrace. During the voyage Terius lusted for Philomela and once on land he raped her. Philomela said "you have taken away my honour but I still have my voice so I will use it to sing of your infamy for the rest of my life". Whereupon Tereus cut off her tongue (or murdered her in a different version). The Gods were furious and gave her voice to a songbird. There are two version of which bird was the lucky recipient of the beautiful voice.

Quattrocchi The translation from the Italian is four-eyes and the bird is the goldeneye (with apologies to to anyone who thought it might be the spectacled warbler/eider/owl/etc).

Barnacle Goose There is also a barnacle, called the Goose Barnacle, which is found hanging by a neck-like structure from objects, often rotting wood, in the sea. In the days before it was realised that birds migrate, it was thought that Barnacle Geese developed from these Goose Barnacles. How else could they explain the sudden appearance of those large flocks of geese in the winter, having never been seen in the summer breeding or laying eggs. This belief was quite useful to monks who were forbidden by their religion from eating meat on certain days. Since these Barnacle Geese were were thought to be "not flesh, nor born of flesh", they were allowed to be eaten on those days.

..... **a duvet** This is the "Eider a Duvet" but it needs these three words in French

Puppenblau This is extremely unfair. The bird is the bluethroat and the language is Romansch. This language is spoke by only a few thousand inhabitants of isolated valleys in

eastern Switzerland. But it is one of the four Swiss national languages.

Zilpzalp The Common Chiffchaff in German.

Birdwatchers who gave names to birds There are 10 of these but if you failed to name Darwin you lose a point! Blyth 16, Darwin 20, Finsch 15, Gould 24, Hodgson 15, Jerdon 15, Reichenow 18, Salvin 15, Swainson 17, Temminck 18.

Bonapartes Gull Prince Charles Lucien Bonaparte, 1803-1857, was an ornithologist and a nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte. A total of 9 birds were named after him.

Loffel This means spoon so the easy one is the Spoonbill. The other is the "Loffel Ente" which means "spoon duck" or Shoveller.

Quebrahantahuesos The words mean break bones and the bird is the bearded vulture. The reference is to the ingenuity of the bird to gain access to all that tasty marrow by dropping bones from a great height to smash them on the rocks below.

Alouette The bird is the lark and the children sing: " ... je te plumerai ... " which means " ... I will pluck you ... ". Oh dear!

Gallocanta This is the huge wetlands in NE Spain where tens of thousands of cranes rest for a few days on their migration between northern Europe and Africa. They fly up at dawn to feed in the surrounding fields while calling loudly to each other. The name means "the chicken sings"

Tjiftjaf The Chiffchaff makes a second appearance.

Sex life This is the dunnock - but almost any LBJ can be marked as correct.

Wisdom In Ancient Greece the owl was thought of as a wise bird who was closely associated with the goddess of wisdom Athena. Athena was adopted as the patron deity of the city of Athens. Athena was often shown with an owl perched on her head and so the owl became one of the symbols of Athens. The species of owl associated with the goddess was the Little Owl and during antiquity many of them lived protected and honoured lives on the Acropolis.

Seidenschwanz The translation is silk tail. We know it as the Waxwing.

Halcyon The goddess Halcyon and her mortal lover, King Ceyx, were tragically parted when Ceyx died in a shipwreck. Halcyon threw herself into the waves in despair, whereupon the goddess Hera, Halcyon's mother, took pity on her and transformed both of them into kingfishers, so they could still be together. Halcyon was also able to get Zeus to promise a spot of good weather so she could lay her eggs. One version of the myth has the nest on the surface of the sea and in another version the nest is on a beach. In both cases a period of calm weather is required for the young to hatch successfully.

Russian General He was General Prjevalsky, also spelt Przevalski. After his death a town was named after him.

David Of course this refers to the Goliath heron. 1.4 metres high.

Chevalier culblanc This French name means "cavalier with a white backside" and it is the Green Sandpiper. As you all know; Wheatear is derived from White-arse.

Ziegenmelker This is a nightjar. According to Europe-wide folklore (including UK where the name was goatsucker) it feeds at night from the udder of a goat or a cow. The latin name of the genus, Caprimulgus, has the same meaning.

Sources

Google and Wikipedia.

"The Wisdom of Birds" by Tim Birkhead.

"Whose Bird" by Bo Beolens and Michael Watins.

Swiss Bird Guide published by the Swiss Ornithological Institute, Sempach. This uses all four national languages plus English and Latin.

The website www.mumm.ac.be/~serge/birds/ for some of the foreign names.

RECENT SIGHTINGS

1st March - 30th April 2014

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

Black-necked Grebe - One was on the Rother Valley CP main lake on the 22nd April.

Bittern - One at Pit-house West on 8th and 12th March.

Whooper Swan - A good number of March records, with the highest counts 11 at Ladybower Res on 8th, 17 at Thrybergh CP on 11th-13th, nine at Damflask Res on 13th, and 22 W at Sheffield City Airport on 25th. In April, 28 were at Orgreave Lakes on 4th.

Pink-footed Goose - 179 over Dale Dike Res on 1st March, and 100 NW at thrybergh CP on 5th.

Common Scoter - A single drake at Thrybergh CP on 28th March, and OPrgreave Lakes on 1st April.

Velvet Scoter - Two immature drakes and a female were at

Langsett Res on 28th April, leaving overnight with no signs the next day.

Red Kite - Single birds reported from a range of sites - Arbourthorne, Ickles, Oughtibridge, Bolsterstone, Upper Midhope, High Green and Woodhouse Washlands.

Marsh Harrier - Cream-crown at Thrybergh Tip on 24th March.

Osprey - The first report of the year was one at Silverwood Lagoon on 18th March, with subsequent reports of singles at Broomhead Res (21st), Thrybergh CP (22nd), Howden Res (8th April), Pilsey (10th) and Orgreave Lakes (12th).

Avocet - One circled Thrybergh CP on 28th March, before leaving north.

Golden Plover - Peat Pits once again saw the largest counts, peaking at 600 on 29th March. Elsewhere 120 were at Thrybergh CP on 10th, 120 at Redmires on 23rd, and 120 at Orgreave Lakes on 1st April.

Lapwing - 120 at Redmires Middle Res on 1st March was a notable count.

Sanderling - Four were at Orgreave Lakes on 7th April.

Whimbrel - Reports from a number of sites during April - Four at Orgreave Lakes on 7th, with one at the same site on 16th; one with a Curlew at Rivelin Dams on 16th; one at Thrybergh CP on 21st; four at Middleton Moor on 24th; one again at Orgreave Lakes on 26th; one at Mayfield Valley on 27th; and five N at Leash Fen on 29th.



The Kumlien's Gull was again at Shirecliffe Tip during March (Photo: Andy Deighton).

Mediterranean Gull - A first year bird was at Elsecar Res on 22nd April.

Common Gull - A "large and noisy" pre-roost gathering of 350 were at Middleton Moor on 30th March.

Yellow-legged Gull - An adult and two 3rd winters at Orgreave Lakes on 8th March.

Caspian Gull - Probable first winter N at Orgreave Lakes on 13th April.

Iceland Gull - An adult was at Orgreave Lakes on 2nd March. The adult Kumlien's Gull was still present at Shirecliffe Tip on 19th March.

Kittiwake - One at Orgreave Lakes on 3rd and 4th April.

Arctic Tern - There was an influx in late April - 22 were at Orgreave Lakes on 20th; one at Middleton MOore on 21st, eight at Elsecar Res and four at Thrybergh CP on 23rd; one at Thrybergh CP on 24th; four at Orgreave Lakes and one at Rawmarsh on 25th; five at Middleton Moor, two at Orgreave Lakes and one at Thrybergh CP on 27th.

Black Tern - Two summer-plumage birds at Middleton Moore on 27th April.

Cuckoo - The first of the year was one at Blacka Moor on 14th April.

Swift - Singles at Thrybergh CP and Woodhouse Mill on 18th April were the first reports of the year.

Sand Martin - Larger gatherings of 200 at Orgreave Lakes on 17th April, and 180 at Thrybergh CP on 22nd.

Meadow Pipit - 250 at Whitwell Moor on 30th March was an impressive count.

Rock Pipit - A *littoralis* bird was at Orgreave Lakes on 19th March.

Yellow Wagtail - Two at Orgreave Lakes on 4th April were the year's first.

Pied Wagtail - 220 roosted at Middleton Moor on 16th March.

Waxwing - Nine were at Ecclesall on 1st March, 16 at Ringinglow on 17th, and three at Bents Green on 31st. In April, six were at Sothall on 3rd.

Fieldfare - Higher counts included 110 at Silver Wood on 5th March, 150 at Middleton Moor on 13th, 100 at Moscar on 21st, and 200 at Moss Valley on 21st.

Redwing - 120 were at Hutcliffe Wood Cemetery on 5th March.

Redstart - 11th April saw the first of the year, at Losehill, Langsett Res, Barbrook Plantation and Limb Valley.

Whinchat - One at Silverwood Lagoon on 22nd April was the first of the year.

Cetti's Warbler - A singing male was present at a site in Rotherham from 6th April.

Grasshopper Warbler - The first of the year were at Burbage Moor and Redmires on 22nd April.

Sedge Warbler - Four singing at Poolsbrook Marsh on 23rd April were the first records of the year.

Reed Warbler - First of the year was at Thrybergh CP on 17th April.



Two-barred Crossbills continued to show to observers at Broomhead Res throughout the period (Photo: Pete Garrity)

Lesser Whitethroat - The *blythi* bird was still present in a suburban Sheffield garden until at least the 15th April. The first migrant was at Thrybergh CP on 12th April.

Whitethroat - Kilnhurst Ings and Langsett Res saw the first returning birds, on 11th April.

Garden Warbler - A singing male at Catcliffe Flash on 12th April was the first of the year.

Wood Warbler - The first of the year was at Padley Gorge on 26th April.

Pied Flycatcher - Males at Padley Gorge and Chatsworth Park on 13th April were the first of the year.

Firecrest - One at Carr Vale NR on 10th March.

Great Grey Shrike - Single birds at Leash Fen on 1st March, Ramsley Moor on 9th March, and one at Totley Moss from 15th-27th April.

Starling - The murmuration of 40,000+ birds remained at Middleton Moor, reducing in numbers by late March. Elsewhere there were large movements at Redmires (possibly of birds roosting at Middleton Moor) - 4,500 SW on 1st March, 1,000 on 2nd, and 5,500 SW on 9th.

Siskin - 100 at Broomhead on 16th March.

Linnet - Notable flocks of 100 at Thrybergh CP on 5th April, and 500 at Grenoside on 19th (with 250 still present on 21st).

Common (Mealy) Redpoll - Singles at 70 Acre Hill on 10th March, and Orgreave Lakes on 24th.

Two-barred Crossbill - Still present into the birds' eighth and ninth months at Broomhead Res, with a peak count of seven on 2nd March. Singing was reported on several dates in late April.

Pete Mella



The Middleton Moor Starling roost peaked at six figure numbers during the period, and attracted

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

MG Archer, S Ashton, B Bailey, S Bailey, J Barnaby, R Barnard, AR Bell, AS Bilton, F Bird, RP Blagden, K Bower, P Bowker, RJ Bradley, D Branch, SJ Branch, MC Brew, PL Brown, V Browne, RV Burton, R Butterfield, BM Carr, EO Chafer, I Chapman, J Clarke, B Cole, J Crank, J Crooks, N Cross, J Curiel-Sosa, C Dauris, A Deighton, W Dudhill, H Egan, MG Fenner, D Gains, P Garrity, S Gauton, KA Gehring, D Gill, G Grant, S Guymer, C Hallam, R Harris, M Hibbert, A Hill, AA Hill, RD Hill, DJ Hitchen, M Hodgson, J Hornbuckle, K Horton, J Housden, G James, M Jarvis, Anne Johnson, A Jones, C Kelly, JE Kenward, S King, J Kingsland, N Kipling, K Knowles, M Kramer, M Lacey, D Langston, MR Langston, P Lawson, P Leonard, P Lockwood, F Maddock, C Measures, P Mella, B Merryweather, M Miller, TH Minskip, J Mosley, D Mowbray, L Nelson, H&M Nichols, MH Oxlade, PH Pearsall, H Perkins, NR Porter, M Purslow, MN Reeder, B Roberts, K Roberts, SJ Roddis, S Samworth, M Sanders, R Scally, D Seal, J Sherwin, M Sherwin, S Sherwin, A Siddall, D Simmonite, MA Smethurst, A Smith, M Smith, B Spencer, M Stacey, MJ Sweeney, M&L Taylor, N Taylor, SG Tebbutt, MS Thomas, P Thomas, A Thompson, J Thompson, W Thomson, M Timms, R Twigg, C Tyler, SE Vickers, EC Vincent, RV Walker, R Watkinson, AD Watson, M Wells, RDR Williams, JB Wilson, P&A Wilson, D Wood, M Wood-Bonelli, D Woodhead, D Woodriff, P Wragg, Barnsley Bird Study Group, Sorby-Breck Ringing Group, Thrybergh CP Bird Log, BTO Bird Track