



# SBSG E-NEWSLETTER MAY 2017

## Recent Highlights (Mar - Apr 2017)

### March

The wandering Iceland Gull made another appearance at Orgreave on the 1st and continued to be seen in the Attercliffe area throughout the period and was still in the vicinity at the time of writing. Waxwings were reported on the 1st in the centre of Rotherham (21) and in Stocksbridge (11), with sightings daily throughout March at various sites with a maximum of 90 at Parkhead on the 11th. A Great-Grey Shrike seen on the 1st remained in the Greave's Piece/ Ramsley Moor area until the 28th.

Two herds of Whooper Swan, totaling 56 birds, passed north through Orgreave on the 3rd, and two spent a couple of hours at Thyrbergh C.P. The immature bird was still favoring the Parkgate Mute Swan flock throughout the period, occasionally going for a wander. The Bean Goose was last reported at Ulley on the 5th.



Iceland Gull (Attercliffe © P.Garrity)

A total of 300 Golden Plover were at Peat Pits on the 6th with 100 at Redmires the same day. Also on the 6th a Red Kite was at Rivelin, the first of an astonishing 20 reports (not allowing for duplicates) mostly in the west of the area, during April and March.

A very early Ring Ouzel was seen and photographed at Redmires on the 7th, one of the first to be reported in the UK this year!



Rock Pipit (Orgreave © M.Reeder)

A Little Egret was seen over Stocksbridge on the 8th. A nocturnal Bar-tailed Godwit was heard over Eccelsall on the 9th.

A Green Sandpiper, an increasingly scarce species these days, spent just under an hour at Aldwarke on the 10th. Whooper Swans were again moving on the 10th with seven through Orgreave and 11 -NW- through Silverwood.

A rather smart looking *littoralis* Rock Pipit was at Orgreave on the 11th.

The Redmires Golden Plover flock had increased to 598 birds by the 12th, with the first Wheatear also there that day. Also on the 12th two Whooper Swans spent the day at Holmebrook Valley Park, Chesterfield.

A Little Ringed Plover was at Orgreave on the 13th, the first to be reported.



Common Scoter (Thyrbergh CP © M.Smethurst)

The only report of Common Scoter during the period was of a single male at Thyrbergh C.P on the 14th. A 1st W Yellow-legged Gull was at Middleton Moor on the 16th, also 105 Pied Wagtails roosted there the same evening. A very popular Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was found at Graves Park on the 17th and continued to be reported into April.

Another northward movement of Whooper Swans occurred on the 22nd with a total of 69 through Orgreave, 20 over Hyde Park, one at Langsett Res', five E through Dore and five on Agden Res'.

An early House Martin was among a few Sand Martins at Stevenson Road, Attercliffe on the 23rd. Also on the 23rd nine Whooper Swans were at Orgreave and another Rock Pipit was found in the evening, remaining until the 26th. A single wary, unringed and therefore surely wild Barnacle Goose at Orgreave on the 24th, the first record at this site!



Barnacle Goose (Orgreave © M.Reeder)

The final movement of Whooper Swans took place on the 25th with 35 NW over Derwent Edge, two W over Manor and a total of 37 through Thrybergh C.P between 07:35 and 10:30.

A total of 111 Common Gulls were at Middleton Moor on the 26th and the first Osprey was recorded passing north through Redmires. A single Swallow over the Botanical Gardens on the 26th was the first reported. On the 27th an adult Little Gull spent a couple of hours at Orgreave before leaving north.

An Avocet spent much of the 28th at Orgreave, giving a few local birders the chance to add this usually short stayer to their Sheffield lists. The first Willow Warblers were reported on the 31st, with singles at Treeton and Ulley C.P.



Great-Grey Shrike (Greave's Piece 9th March © P.Thomas)

## April

On the 1st a Little Egret was at Orgreave, a Green Sandpiper at Blackburn Meadows and an Osprey flew W over Stocksbridge. An early Yellow Wagtail was at Orgreave on the 2nd.



Yellow Wagtail (Orgreave © R. Twigg)

A CATTLE EGRET was found by Kev Navin at Poolsbrook Marsh on the 3rd. It stayed until early evening when it flew off north, it was not subsequently seen. This is the second record for our area. The previous bird at Carr Vale was mostly out of our recording area but reportedly strayed in at some point!



Cattle Egret (Poolsbrook Marsh © R.D.Hill)



Cattle Egret (Poolsbrook Marsh © A.Deighton)

Elsewhere on the 3rd the first reported Tree Pipit was at Surprise View. On the 4th two Avocets were at Thrybergh C.P briefly and a Black-tailed Godwit was at Orgreave. A further three Avocets were at Orgreave on the 8th with one staying for most of the day.



Avocet (Orgreave © M.Reeder)

A Black-necked Grebe arrived at Orgreave on the 9th and apart from a two-day stint at RVCP remained until the month end. The 9th proved to be a bumper day there with an adult Little Gull, Red Kite and 4 Sandwich Terns that passed through quickly before being picked up later at Redmires.



Black-necked Grebe (Orgreave © M.Smethurst)



Black-necked Grebe (Orgreave © M.Reeder)

The first Redstarts were at Chatsworth Park and Cressbrook Dale on the 9th, with the first Reed Warbler at Thrybergh the same day.

The 10th produced the first Common Sandpiper and Whinchat at Orgreave and Ringinglow respectively.



Common Sandpiper (Agden © A.Deighton)

Despite spending all of its stay out of the area a Bearded Tit at Carr Vale on the 11th technically made it in when it flew north. Also on the 11th c.350 Sand Martin were gathered at RVCP, with c.400 at Thrybergh C.P the following day.

An Osprey flew north over Norwood on the 12th. The first Sedge Warbler was at Thrybergh C.P on the 13th. First Lesser Whitethroats were at Silverwood and Thrybergh on the 14th and the first the following day.

A Whimbrel flew north over Manor Fields on the 15th and the first Grasshopper Warbler and Whitethroat were at Bolehill Flash and Firsby. Another Osprey flew north at Redmires on the 16th and an early Swift was a present at Thrybergh C.P on the 18th.

A Thorpe Hesley garden hosted an all too brief WRYNECK on the 21st the observer even managing .....

to get a phone photo of the bird as it sat on his patio.



Wryneck (Thorpe Hesley © P.Walsh)

The first Cuckoo was heard at Owl Tor on the 22nd and a very brief Whimbrel was at Orgreave. Two Garden Warblers at Orgreave on the 25th, were the first reports.

A single Arctic Tern was at Orgreave on the evening of the 26th, the first

Wood Warblers were singing in Wharncliffe Wood on the 28th and a Whimbrel was at Middleton Moor on the same day.

Avocets were reported from Carr Vale and Orgreave (two) on the 29th.

With the wind switching to the east on the 30th the month ended with a flurry of Terns with Arctic Terns seen at Orgreave (ten) and RVCP (three). Black Terns at Orgreave (one), RVCP (two) and Thrybergh C.P (three). Though the four Little Terns at Thrybergh were much envied!



Little Tern (Thrybergh CP © W.Dudhill)

Waders also made an impression on the 30th with three Turnstones at Orgreave and a Sanderling at Middleton Moor.



Turnstone (Orgreave © A.Deighton)



Mark Reeder

## Photo of the month



The image chosen by members for Jan-Feb 2017 is this flight shot of a

drake Goosander at Orgreave Lakes taken by Peter Garrity.

**Equipment:** Canon 1DX body, 500mm F4 mkii Canon Lens plus Canon 1.4 TC.

**Settings:** 1/1000<sup>th</sup> sec; F6.3; ISO 2000

**Notes:** "I wasn't really prepared for this shot as I had spotted the bird on the main lake and it was static on the water. As the sky was overcast I had reduced my shutter speed down and opened the aperture to capture as much light as possible, keep the ISO down and reduce noise. It took flight but fortunately panning and taking multiple shots produced a few keepers, although you can still see movement in the wing tips".



## Field Trip Reports 2017



### Report on the Derwentdale Raptor Watch (Sat 18th March)



Common Buzzard © P.Garrity

Saturday 18th March was the date chosen for our annual trip to "Windy Corner" in Derwentdale to look for raptors, in particular Goshawk. The previous Saturday had been perfect conditions (as, indeed, was the following Saturday). Our day, however, was cold and drizzly with low cloud, not ideal for soaring raptors.



Despite the conditions, fourteen hardy souls braved the elements (we just managed more species than observers), with the highlight undoubtedly dive-bombing (appropriate location), and eventual eviction, of a Peregrine from one of the Howden dam wall towers by the male of the local pair of Kestrels, with his mate watching from the other tower. Good views were also obtained of Common Buzzard and Raven but, sadly, for the first time in many years we failed with Goshawk (we understand they are present in the valley, with better viewing conditions). Thanks to all who attended, in particular the experienced local birders who helped point out birds to everyone present.

## Report on the Orgreave Field Trip, 29 April 2017



The Saturday morning for the Orgreave field trip, chosen long in advance, proved to be overcast, but with winds swinging round to the E/SE after a prolonged period of mostly northerlies there was reason for optimism. A group of 8 of us met below the Treeton cricket club and crossed the railway bridge to walk onto the site and had managed to see several Swift, Sand Martins and a House Martin overhead before we passed over the river bridge, while Whitethroat, Blackcap and Chiffchaff sang from the bushes. A gentle walk around the two lakes revealed the typically diverse mix of wildfowl (a Pink-footed Goose among the Greylags and a party of 15 Goosander), waders (Dunlin, Ringed and Little Ringed Plover, Redshank, Oystercatcher, Curlew and 4 Common Sandpiper) and passerines (Wheatears, Reed Buntings and singing Skylarks). The standout bird was no doubt the summer-plumaged Black-necked Grebe that continued to show well after an unusually long stay for this species locally, allowing great scope views for all. No terns passed through during our time there (they were to come the following morning), but a Little Egret that headed N was good to see and a Sheffield area first for many on the trip. A healthy total of 61 species was seen over the couple of hours, confirming the site's status as one of the most productive locally.



Images © D.Wood

## Local Field Trips 2017



Visit [here](#) for details of the local field trips for 2017. These may be subject to change so please keep an eye on the web site for updates.

### Next Field Trip: Saturday 6th May – 8.30am

#### Padley Gorge – Spring Migrants



Pied Flycatcher © A.Deighton

Local field trip to Padley Gorge. A walk down Padley gorge with Ron Blagden to see (and hear) summer migrants of the wooded cloughs and moorland fringe. Specialities of the site include Pied Flycatcher, Redstart and Tree Pipit, with Wood Warbler and Cuckoo also possible. See [here](#) for full details.

### Wednesday June 7th – 8.30pm (Weather permitting)

#### Hallam Moors - Crepuscular Creep



Local field trip to Hallam Moors. Our annual 'Crepuscular Creep' will meet up at Redmires Top Reservoir at 8.30pm. We will walk out onto Hallam Moors in the hope of seeing breeding waders, Nightjars and perhaps owls. See the web-site [here](#) for details as our plans may change dependent on weather conditions at the time.

## Protecting Ring Ouzels



As Ring Ouzels are returning to local breeding grounds it is an appropriate time to ask for maximum protection for this declining species. Many of us will want to see the birds, and some will want to photograph them, but the best interests of the birds must come first.

See [here](#) for a BMC paper which illustrates how we can be proud of the breeding success of our Peak District birds despite the pressure from recreational groups. A Sheffield Telegraph article by David Bocking entitled "Sanctuary for the Peak District's mountain Blackbird" can be found [here](#).

## Committee Matters

As there were no nominees for election to the committee prior to or at the recent AGM, under the terms of the SBSG constitution, Neil Porter was re-elected into the general committee. Subsequently at the committee meeting on the 26th April 2017 all of the committee officers were re-elected without change for the 2017/18 period.

## Indoor Meetings – 2017



Visit [here](#) to see the complete list of indoor meetings for 2017. Location is Sheffield University Hicks Building, Lecture Theatre 5 and the meetings will commence at 7.15pm.

## Forthcoming Meetings:

**Wednesday 10th May at 7.15pm**

**Geoff Carr – Georgia**



As a past Naturetrek leader he visited many countries around the world and led around 50 tours during that time. He now runs his own Ecology survey business – Geoff Carr Ecology. He has been a bird ringer for 35 years, a photographer and article contributor to British Birds magazine, YNU Bird Report, Flamborough Bird Report and of course Barnsley Bird Study Group.

### Visit to Georgia

"I visited Georgia in April 2014 after talking to the guys on the Georgia stand at the Rutland Birdfair the previous year. I wanted something different so choose this little-visited, historically turbulent country. There were three of us on the trip and lead by a Georgian wildlife film-maker. We had a great time, starting up in the snow-clad Caucasus Mountains, south through wooded valleys and onto the steppe landscape to the south of the country. A real mix of landscapes for such a small country. Migration in full swing through the country sandwiched between the Black and Caspian Seas".

**Geoff Carr**

## What to look out for in May & June



Click [here](#) to read an informative article by Ron Blagden which outlines some of the target birds for the next two months which might be found in the area.

## Bird of the Month



### Pied Flycatcher

The oak woodlands in the river valleys of the Peak District are one of the best places to see this month's bird, Pied Flycatcher. Wintering in sub-Saharan West Africa, the first birds (invariably males) arrive with us during the second week of April, but early May is probably the best time to see them in numbers. Surprisingly difficult to see, particularly once the trees are fully leafed, the male can often be picked out by listening for the simple, three-four note, slightly melancholy song. Sadly one of three woodland birds recently added to the Red Data List by the BTO, the species readily takes to nest boxes, and the long-running scheme at Padley Gorge, between Fox House and Grindleford, has for many years been one of its strongholds.

Our visit on 6th May should, hopefully, provide good views of both the striking black and white male, and more understated brown and white female, as well as other summer visitors such as Redstart and Tree Pipit.

## Report on the 2016/17 Waxwing Influx



A comprehensive report by Peter Garrity including a review of sightings, analysis of data, heat maps and details showing the movements of colour-ringed birds can be found [here](#).

## Off the Beaten Track



### The Limb Valley

This new feature for the e-newsletter seeks to encourage members to visit less well-known sites, or establish their own patches. The idea is to enhance our coverage of the recording area and so generate richer holdings of data for future conservation purposes. In this second article, Martin Hodgson shares his experience of a visit to the Limb Valley.

See [here](#) for his report.



Martin Hodgson

## Sheffield Parks Survey 2015-16

The survey has now concluded so please gather all of the records you have and submit them as soon as possible via the website. Alternatively your completed forms can be submitted at an indoor meeting to a committee member. Details of the survey and the sites covered are on the website [here](#).

## 2015 Annual Report

We apologise for the later than usual completion of the Annual Report but it is currently being printed and should soon be available, hopefully for the May indoor meeting.

## Diary Dates

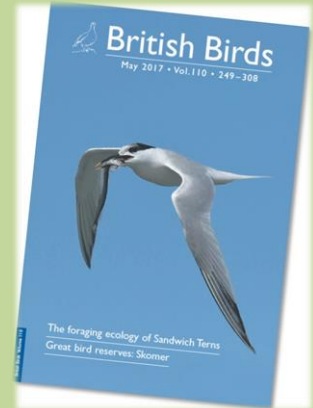


### Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust

I am just writing to let everyone know what is going on at Wyming Brook in the month of May. We have our Volunteer Work Days on Tuesday **2nd May** and **Sunday 21st May**. Both days will meet in the car park on Redmires Rd at 10am. Please wear warm outdoor clothing and bring dinner and a drink if you would like to stay all day (until 3pm).

**Saturday 13th May** is our Birding Event with local bird expert and Wyming Brook RAG member Neil Fawson. Meeting in Redmires Rd car park at 10am and strolling around the site we will finish at 1pm. Please go to [www.wildsheffield.com/whats\\_on](http://www.wildsheffield.com/whats_on) to book a place. Hope to see you all soon. Rachel Stevenson, Community Wildlife Ranger.

## British Birds Magazine



### A special offer for Sheffield Bird Study Group members

Many members will be familiar with British Birds magazine; it is the UK's leading monthly birding publication, covering the UK and Western Palearctic, and has been the birdwatchers' journal of record since 1907. It is read and recommended by many well-known amateur and professional ornithologists, writers and photographers and has been called "the gold standard of ornithological literature in the UK".

### Half price offer, including free trial of Rare Bird Alert

For a limited time, a new subscription to *British Birds* is available to SBSG members for half price, just £27.50 when paying by Direct Debit (other payment methods are available). You can choose from the print or digital edition, or get both for just £10 extra. Plus, each new subscriber also gets a free three-month trial of Rare Bird Alert, the UK's longest running instant bird new service in the UK. You will get access to the Bird Alert PRO Lite service via iPhone or Android smartphone and access to Rare Bird Alert Online via your web browser.

For more information or to take up this offer, go to [www.britishbirds.co.uk/sbsg](http://www.britishbirds.co.uk/sbsg), or call 01424 755155 and quote SBSG.

**But hurry! Offer ends 31<sup>st</sup> May  
2017.**

## Photo of the Month



Below are the shortlisted images from the months of March and April which were submitted by SBSG members.

Please select your favourite photo via the e-Newsletter link. The image with the highest number of votes received before the end of June will feature in the next issue along with a note from the photographer describing how the image was achieved. To give all photographers a chance showcase their images the winner will not be considered for the following issue.

**Please Vote [here](#)** or click on the link at the foot of the page (one vote per member) but note that the form may not work on old versions of Internet Explorer ( IE 8 or older ). Alternatively use Chrome, Firefox or Safari and paste the link/address or email your vote [here](#). Many thanks.

### 1. Stock Dove



### 2. Iceland Gull



### 3. Black-necked Grebe



### 4. Mandarin Duck



### 5. Cattle Egret



### 6. Iceland Gull 2



### 7. Kestrel



## BTO – SW Yorkshire



An article by Richard Hill found [here](#) introduces Grant Bigg, the new BTO representative for SW Yorkshire, discusses the BTO's historic relationship with the SBSG and covers the latest BTO initiatives particularly the opportunity for members to get involved in the various local, regional and national surveys undertaken by the group.

Grant Bigg will be at our May indoor meeting and will explain how you can help.

## Ideas for funding projects?

Following the announcement of the SBSG accounts surplus at the AGM we have already received some suggestions to putting the funds to good use. If you have any further ideas, particularly in terms of conservation projects or donations, then please contact or send an email to any member of the committee.

### e-Newsletter

We hope you have enjoyed the e-newsletter this year. The next edition will be out at the beginning of Sept but please keep an eye on the SBSG web-site for latest news and sightings. Have a great summer and good birding.



E-newsletter Editor – [Peter Garrity](#)



**VOTE FOR PHOTO OF THE MONTH**