



SBSG e-Newsletter November 2016

Recent Highlights (Sept - Oct 2016)

September

A juvenile **Black-necked Grebe** was at Thrybergh C.P on the 3rd (remaining until the 9th). **Yellow-legged Gulls** were reported at Redmires and Middleton Moor on 4th, whilst the **Shag** remained at Linacre and at least one **Marsh Harrier** continued to be seen in the Agden area. On the 6th 72 **Common Scoter** flew northwest over Catcliffe Flash. Wandering post breeding **Little Egrets** were well represented on the 7th with four at Orgreave and five at Thrybergh. A report of a juvenile **Black Redstart** at West Street on the 7th was intriguing.



Pallid Harrier (Big Moor – A.Deighton)

Candidate for bird of the year was a juvenile **Pallid Harrier** in the Big Moor area. First seen on the 9th and identified from photographs. For a fortunate few it was still present the following day, though mostly distantly. It appeared again briefly the following morning when it showed well to a small group before vanishing. Presumably it had roosted nearby and continued on its journey post roost. At least one **Osprey** over Big Moor provided some consolation for those searching for the Harrier.



Pallid Harrier (Big Moor – P.Garrity)



Pallid Harrier (Big Moor – S.Dell)

Keeping the raptor theme, cream-crowned **Marsh Harriers** were at Orgreave and Firsby early morning on the 13th, with another at Redmires on 16th. An **Osprey** went south at the latter site that day with another over Arbourthorne.



Marsh Harrier (Firsby Res - V.Browne)

On the 17th the first skeins of **Pink-footed Geese** were reported over Middleton Moor, Orgreave and Stocksbridge. Another **Osprey** at Barbrook on the 18th and more evidence of wildfowl movement with two **Pintail** at Redmires, followed by a further five at Langsett on the 20th.

Observers watching two **Dippers** on the Don at Attercliffe were lucky enough to see a **Red Kite** as it headed northeast on the 26th.

October

The first of several **Whooper Swan** records received during the period was of two adults at Redmires briefly on the 2nd October the same day as a small movement of **Pink-footed Geese** with small skeins over Aldwarke, Blackburn Meadows and Fulwood. A brief **Garganey** (probably a juvenile) was at Thrybergh C.P on the 3rd. **Red Kites** were over Brecks and Norwood Allotments (possibly 2) on the 4th with another over Dore on the 6th. Also on the 6th five **Pintail** circled Orgreave before leaving south. On the 7th the Redmires gull roost held two **Yellow-legged** and a single 1st winter **Caspian Gull**, with three of the former species and presumably the same 1st winter Caspian the following evening. An excellent record of four **Common Cranes** west at Silverwood Lagoon on the 8th – a much sought after species for Sheffield listers!



Pintail (Orgreave Lakes – M.Smethurst)



Common Scoter (Rother Valley CP – P.Brown)

On the 13th a single female type **Common Scoter** was at Rother Valley CP, with two at Thrybergh the following day remaining until the month end. A further two were at Rother Valley on the 16th.

Pink-footed Geese were on the move on the 17th with skeins of 120 over Ringinglow and Totley and with 76 over Kiveton. Another two adult **Whoopers** were at Redmires the same day.

The 20th saw **Whooper Swans** reported southeast over Norwood Allotments (33), with 16 down at Rother Valley.



Yellow-legged Gull (R.Don, Attercliffe – A.Deighton)

The first **Waxwing**, of what will hopefully be a bumper winter, was reported at Rivelin Rocks on the 24th.



Shag (Linacre Res 26th Oct – P.Stoppard)

A **Yellow-browed Warbler** at Owlthorpe was an excellent find by Pete Brown on 25th, though due to driving there it sadly couldn't be added to his "Free Bird" list. Also on the 25th a **Great Grey Shrike** was at Big Moor.



Snow Bunting (Broomhead Moor – P.Garrity)



Snow Bunting (Broomhead Moor – P.Gould)

On the 28th a single Whooper Swan flew west at Orgreave and two Waxwings and a **Snow Bunting** were at Broomhead, the latter remaining until the month's end. A fine looking **Siberian (*tristis*) Chiffchaff** was found at Lyons Street, Pitsmoor the same day.



Siberian Chiffchaff (Pitsmoor – A.Deighton)

A **Knot** paid a brief visit to Orgreave on the 29th and 18 **Common Crossbill** were at Redmires.

At Orgreave eight female type **Common Scoter** were present during the morning of the 30th and two (increasing to three the following day) **Twite** were among the mobile Linnets flock.



Knot (Orgreave Lakes – M.Reeder)



Crossbill (Redmires – D.Wood)



Common Scoter (Orgreave – M.Reeder)



Twite (Orgreave – M.Reeder)



Twite (Orgreave – M.Smethurst)

Mark Reeder

Membership 2017

"Membership secretary, Martin Hodgson, will be available at the December indoor meeting to receive subscriptions for 2017. The membership fees remain as before - £14 for an individual and £16 for a couple/family. If you can't attend the meeting, you can still renew early by printing off and completing [this](#) form or following the link below.

On-line application forms for Adults and U21s can be found [here](#). The form can also be used to submit changes in personal details.

Sheffield Parks Survey 2015-16 Update



Kingfisher in Endcliffe Park (David Wood)

It's the last chance to get counts made for the Parks Survey. November is the last 'autumn count' month and December the last 'winter count' month before the survey period of 2015-16 comes to an end, so a great opportunity to get two counts done in two months! If you undertook to survey a park, please do make sure you have the counts for all species submitted via the website, and if you didn't have your own park to survey, do get out and submit records of everything you see in Sheffield's parks. Details of the survey and the sites covered are on the website under <http://www.sbsg.org/survey-work/sheffield-parks-survey>

What to look out for in November and December

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.

Committee Matters

In addition to planning indoor meetings, field trips, the Group's website and the annual report, one of the standing items at committee meetings is local conservation matters. In October, David Wood made a submission on behalf of SBSG to provide evidence to the parliamentary select committee on driven grouse shooting. The Group's submission can be read in full at:

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/petitions-committee/grouse-shooting/written/40046.html>

Unfortunately, the presentation and hearing of evidence was decidedly unscientific, with the case for the Moorland Association and the Countryside Alliance resting on unsubstantiated statements around the (financial and conservation) benefits of grouse shooting that went essentially unquestioned by the members of the committee. Committee member Simon Hart is ex-CEO of the Countryside Alliance and has listed on the parliament's Register of Interests that his secretary/ research assistant (his wife) is an administrative assistant for the Countryside Alliance. Should we be surprised that those challenging the vested interests of grouse shooting came in for far more rigorous questioning than those who continue to advocate it?

The full debate can be watched (or read) via:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/petitions-committee/news-parliament-2015/petition-debate-grouse-shooting/>

The SBSG submission was part of an extensive range of views presented to inform the debate. Mark Avery, the man who started the online petition, appreciated its contents and provided a summary of our return as part of his 'Gems from the Written Evidence' on his Twitter account.

BBC Autumnwatch

BBC Autumnwatch researchers recently contacted the SBSG with a view to contributing to their upcoming piece on Urban Wildlife. After some discussion on themes they decided to visit the Kingfishers on the River Don near Stevenson Road. The report was broadcast on 26th October and can be found on BBC iPlayer.



Image © P.Brown

The picture here shows the Autumn Watch "circus" in action with "Urban Birder" David Lindo presenting.

Thanks go out to Pete Brown for attending and guidance on the day, Paul Leonard for a back-up plan, Andy Deighton for advice and site information and Pete Garrity/Dave Wood for liaising with the Autumnwatch team.

Free bird 2016

Pete Brown's attempt to see 150 species in the SBSG area at no cost to the planet or his pocket and to raise a few bob for Cancer Research UK in the process.

As of early November, 145 species recorded during the course of just under 500 miles of walking and biking and a fair few bus journeys since January. Will he find those last five or even more? Come along to the January 2017 indoor meeting to find out and if you've been kind enough to sponsor the attempt all donations to CRUK will be gratefully received.

Eastern Moors Survey Update

Find the updated **Eastern Moors** Ring Ouzel Survey [here](#).



Image © P.Garrity

Indoor Meetings 2016

Visit [here](#) to see the complete list of indoor meetings for 2016. Location is **Sheffield University Hicks Building, Lecture Theatre 5** and the meetings will commence at 7.15pm.

Forthcoming Meetings:

Wednesday 9th Nov at 7.15pm

Ron Marshall – Alaska



Image © R.Marshall

Ron has had an interest in wildlife and the countryside from a very young age, but has been seriously birding for the last 35 years. He spent all of his working life running the family butchering business so long holidays were very rare.



Image © R.Marshall

On retirement at 60 yrs. of age he invested in a camera and big lens, so now his main interest is wildlife photography. Retirement enabled him to travel to countries he could only dream of. Alaska which his presentation is about was one of the places at the top of his wish list.

Indoor Meetings 2016

Wednesday 14th Dec at 7.15pm

David Wood - Kenya Believe It? Birds on Safari



Image © D.Wood

David is Chair of SBSG, co-author (with Richard Hill) of *Breeding Birds of the Sheffield Area* and co-editor of the Group's Annual Report. Making a safari in Kenya was a lifetime ambition and in this talk David will share his experiences of the country and several of its iconic national parks, from savannah and bush to lakes and forests. The emphasis will be on the diverse and spectacular avifauna, as well as some of the challenges they face, while the region's diverse mammals will also feature.

We will be having the usual festive wine and mince pies after the talk so one not to miss!!

A journey back to 1977



Richard Hill looks back to the archives and covers 1977, the silver jubilee for QE the 2nd but also sadly the loss of two iconic musicians, Elvis Presley and Marc Bolan. Birding highlights included the UK's first Cape May Warbler and on another positive note the SBSG membership was growing. You can find his latest detailed account [here](#).

Local Field Trips - 2016

Visit [here](#) for details of the local field trips for 2016. These may be subject to change so please keep an eye on the web site for updates.

Next Field Trip:

Saturday 10th December



Poolsbrook CP/ Poolsbrook Marsh

Meet at 1pm in the car park **OPPOSITE** the visitors centre / cafe:

Nestled in the outskirts of Chesterfield, the Poolsbrook area has a remarkable diversity of species which regularly feature in the SBSG and DOS annual reports. The primary focus will be the small lake at Poolsbrook Country Park - this traditionally provides an area for gulls to congregate and 'wash off' after using the adjacent refuse tips, before they head off to roost at Ogston Reservoir, just outside the area. Amongst the regular species such as Black-headed, Common, Herring, Lesser and Great Black-backed Gulls, there is always a chance of picking out more unusual species such as Yellow-legged, Caspian, Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. If time permits, a circuit of nearby Poolsbrook Marsh should also be productive, with Water Rail, Willow Tit and wintering Chiffchaff often recorded from the reedbed / willow scrub, plus the possibility of Cetti's Warbler, which has wintered occasionally in recent years.

Optical / Photographic Equipment for sale

If you have any equipment to offer for sale that someone in the group might be interested in please contact [me](#) or any other committee member to include in the next e-newsletter.

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