

# SBSG E-NEWSLETTER

## SEPTEMBER 2017



### Recent Highlights (May - Aug 2017)

#### May

May is probably one of the most eagerly awaited months in the bird watching calendar and this May certainly lived up to expectations.

A trio of scarce waders on the 1st got the month off to a good start with a **Turnstone** at Middleton Moor and **Sanderling** and two **Bar-tailed Godwits** at Orgreave. Orgreave also enjoyed a total of 16 **Arctic Terns** on the 1st with a single through Thrybergh Country Park (TCP) the same day. The single **Black-necked Grebe** remained at Orgreave until the 2nd.

On the western extremes of our area a **Hoopoe** was reported from Chee Dale on the 2nd and the last **Waxwings**, a group of nine, were at Manor Fields Park. At Orgreave two **Whimbrel** were around the small lake. The **Whooper Swan** was still in the Parkgate area on the 3rd, before moving to Rother Valley where it was still present at least until mid-August. Another **Arctic Tern** passed through TCP on the 3rd.

On the 4th a single **Bar-tailed Godwit** was at Orgreave, with a **Whimbrel** also there. A **Black Tern** was at Rother Valley C.P that evening.



Black-necked Grebe (Orgreave © M.Reeder)

A pair of **Black-necked Grebes** spent the day at Orgreave on the 5th and a single **Arctic Tern** was seen over Rawmarsh! An **Osprey** was at Wentworth Lakes on the 6th and a **Red Kite** was at Upper Midhope.

At Orgreave on the 7th a party of terns dropping in during a rain shower contained five **Arctic** and five **Black Terns**, a brief **Whimbrel** was also present and a single also passed over Rawmarsh. A single **Whimbrel** was briefly at RVCP on the 8th and a 2nd calendar year **Caspian Gull** was at Norfolk Bridge. Also on the 8th eight **Arctic Terns** were at TCP. Two more **Black Terns** were at Orgreave on the 9th, with a single **Sanderling** also there. Away from the east at Redmires mid-morning a cream-crown **Marsh Harrier**.



Black Tern (Orgreave © M.Smethurst)

Another good day at Orgreave on the 12th with **Sanderling**, **Little Stint**, two **Turnstone** and 20 **Arctic Terns** through. A **Sanderling** was also at Thrybergh on the 12th. The following day a single **Turnstone** and 18 **Black-tailed Godwits** passed through Orgreave with seven of the latter through Wentworth Lakes. A **Temminck's Stint** was found at Orgreave on the 14th, where, despite the best efforts of the local dog walkers it remained all day. This was the first record since the long staying bird at Rother Valley in 1999. A single **Whimbrel** flew SW with **Curlews** at Rud Hill.



Temminck's Stint (Orgreave © I.Robertson)

More waders and terns at Orgreave on the 16th with **Knot**, **Sanderling** and an **Arctic Tern** recorded. The **Knot** remaining until the 17th when two **Sanderling** and five **Arctic Terns** were present. **Red Kites** were over Upper Midhope and Rawmarsh on the 18th, with further singles over Cowell Flat and Moscar Fields on the 21st. Records of scarce birds began to tail off towards the end of the month but confirmed breeding of **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** at Graves Park (two juvs) was welcome news.



Knot (Orgreave © M.Reeder)

#### June

June kicked off in macabre fashion with a decapitated **Quail** found at Royal Mail, Brightside on the 1st. Also on the 1st a 2nd yr **Caspian Gull** was again at Norfolk Bridge. On the 3rd two **Sanderling** were at Orgreave. More **Red Kites** (or the same) were reported on the 4th over Beeley Wood and Sheffield University.

At Peat Pits two **Quail** – complete with heads – were found on the 4th. Singing birds continued there until the 18th with three there on the 8th. At Orgreave on the 10th a **Great White Egret** was found during a spell of heavy rain. Unlike most of the previous records this bird spent several days before departing overnight on the 12th. A most welcome addition to the list of many Sheffield birders.



Great-white Egret (Orgreave © M.Reeder)



Great-white Egret (Orgreave © A. Deighton)

A 2s **Yellow-legged Gull** was at Norfolk Bridge on the 12th as were 130+ **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, with 237 of the latter at Middleton Moor that lunchtime. More **Red Kites** were reported with singles at Rivelin 14th and on 15th and 17th over Rawmarsh with an **Osprey** over there the following day.

The same **Caspian Gull** reappeared at Norfolk Bridge on the 19th to 26th and two **Yellow-legged Gulls** were at Middleton Moor. An adult **Mediterranean Gull** was briefly at Orgreave on the 27th before leaving to the north. At gull Mecca, Norfolk Bridge two more **Caspian Gulls** were found on the 29th, 3rd summer and new 1st summer the former bird present again the following day. On the final day of June, a drake **Scaup** was found at Orgreave and a drake **Common Scoter** was at Thrybergh, the former

remained until the 6th July and the latter until the 2nd.



Honey Buzzard (Ramsley Res - 18th © A.Deighton)



Caspian Gull (Effingham Street © A.Deighton)

## July

July generally sees the first returning waders and large concentrations of Lesser-black Backed Gulls with the odd Yellow-legged thrown in.

A **Sandwich Tern** was briefly at Orgreave on the 3rd, before leaving north. On the 4th 200 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were at the site of the former Sheffield Airport with an adult **Yellow-legged Gull** among them.

A cream-crown **Marsh Harrier** was at Barbrook on the 5th and a **Quail** was singing at Redmires conduit.

A single **Little Egret** was present at Orgreave on the 6th, with birds present almost daily until the end of August, with a maximum of five there on the 8th August. A single **Green Sandpiper** flew over Waverley on the 12th, where four **Yellow-legged Gulls** were present. Also on the 12th an adult **Mediterranean Gull** circled over Stubbin, Rawmarsh.

At Pebley two **Little Egrets** were seen on the 14th. A total of 470 **Lesser-black Backed Gulls** were loafing at Middleton Moor around lunchtime on the 15th, with just one **Yellow-legged Gull** among them. A **Bittern** at Kiveton Community Woodland on the 16th was the first record from there.



Sandwich Tern (Orgreave © M.Reeder)

Two **Red Kites** were seen at Broomhead Moor and a single at Holmebrook Valley Park on the 22nd. A **Black-necked Grebe** was at Thrybergh C.P on the 23rd. Elsewhere on the 23rd: a drake **Common Scoter**, 11 **Black-tailed Godwit** and a **Whimbrel** at Orgreave, a **Green Sandpiper** at Blackburn Meadows and **Red Kite** and **Marsh Harrier** at Agden Beck. The following day a single **Common Scoter** was at Rivelin Dam, a **Whimbrel** at Orgreave and a **Turnstone** at Silverwood Lagoon – the first there since 2007.



Yellow-legged Gull (Waverley © R.Twigg)

Another **Black-necked Grebe** was at Orgreave on the 26th (where it remained until the 4th August) with a juvenile **Mediterranean Gull** there the following morning. The last day on the month brought three **Knot** over Stubbin and a single **Black-tailed Godwit** at Orgreave.

## August

Another juvenile **Mediterranean Gull** was at Orgreave on the 1st. A **Whimbrel** flew SW over Rawmarsh on the 2nd. On the 3rd a **Caspian Tern** spent a couple of hours at Carr Vale. Remarkably the 2nd year that this species has been recorded here and proven to be a different bird to last years. This was presumably the bird that had previously been in the Swillington/ Fairburn (West Yorkshire) area.



The Langsett gull roost held three **Yellow-legged Gulls** and a **Caspian Gull** on the 4th. Far rarer in the west of our area a **Little Egret** was at Redmires briefly on the 5th. Also, that day a **Green Sandpiper** was at Silverwood and 270 **Swift** were over Rawmarsh.



Caspian Tern (Carr Vale NR © L.Stoppard)

Further **Mediterranean Gulls** were seen on the 7th with an adult at Norfolk Bridge and a juvenile at Orgreave where eight **Yellow-legged** and 400 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were in the pre-roost. On the 9th **Common Scoter** were recorded at Redmires (three fem/imm) and Orgreave (two drakes and fem/imm). The latter site also recording **Grey Plover** and **Knot** during a spell of heavy rain. At Middleton Moor on the 9th a juv **Marsh Harrier** (also present 11th) and a juvenile **Mediterranean Gull** with a

total of 525 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** roosting. At Peat Pits on the 12th an adult male **Dotterel** was frequenting the same field as last year's two birds and remained there until the 17th. On the 13th a **Marsh Harrier** was over Birchen Edge with an **Osprey** nearby at Ramsley Moor. A peak roost count of 1100 **Lesser-blackbacked Gulls** were at Middleton Moor on the 15th.



Mediterranean Gull (Norfolk Bridge © A.Deighton)



Marsh Harrier (Birchen Edge © A.Deighton)

A single **Black-tailed Godwit** flew high to the south over Rawmarsh on the 16th, with an **Osprey** NW there. At Rother Valley three **Black-tailed Godwits** flew west on the 19th. An **Osprey** at Wentworth Lakes on the 20th was reported to have been present for a couple of weeks by the local keeper.

At Thrybergh on the 23rd four **Black Terns** flew south. A **Cetti's Warbler** was found at Treeton Dyke on the 24th. Favouring the area around the concrete slipway it was generally very elusive, remaining until at least the 27th.

Carr Vale did the double on the 25th with a moulting adult **Sabine's Gull**. Present for an hour it is not clear whether it was seen within the Sheffield area.



Mark Reeder

## Photo of the month



The image chosen by members for Mar-Apr 2017 is this superb shot of

a **Stock Dove** at Norfolk Bridge taken by **Andy Deighton**.

**Equipment:** Canon 7Dii body, 100-400 USM II Canon lens

**Settings:** 1/400<sup>th</sup> sec; F5.6; ISO 500

**Notes:** "On my daily stroll along the 5 weirs walk above Norfolk Bridge this **Stock Dove** caught my eye, perfectly framed inside a metal pipe end, giving it a ships 'porthole' like look. The green metallic neck patch and dark eye stand out on this subtly plumaged bird."



## Field Trip Reports 2017



### Report on the Padley Gorge Field Trip (Sat 6th May)



Crossbill © P.Garrity

A report by Ron Blagden on the Padley Gorge field trip can be found [here](#). Highlights included Crossbill, Redstart and Pied Flycatcher.

### Crepuscular Creep

#### Friday 16 June 2017

Perhaps buoyed by the success of this trip over recent years, a group of 20 met at the car park at the top of Wyming Brook for what has become one of the most popular local field trips in the calendar. A walk up the road to the reservoirs provided views of Oystercatchers that had once again bred at Redmires, plus a brief Common Buzzard, and Grey Wagtails and Common Sandpipers gave good views at the top reservoir. Heading out along the conduit proved quieter than expected, not boding well for the breeding success of Lapwing and Curlew this year, although the resident water voles proved typically obliging.



Heading down back towards Wyming Brook along the paths, the first roding Woodcock croaked their way overhead. A stiff breeze kept the midges away, but also kept the temperature down and made for less than ideal conditions to hear crepuscular calls. The wind also meant that moths were not flying, reducing the chances of being able to watch any Nightjars quartering the moors, but one did give close if brief views to almost all of those present as it flew over us. It soon dropped back out of sight, but proceeded to 'churr' on and off, while more Woodcocks passed close overhead.



Images © D.Wood

The return to the car park passed without incident, and all went home satisfied after a good evening; thanks to all those who supported the event.

**David 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:

#### Visible Migration at Redmires

**28 or 29 October 2017**

The annual field trip to witness (hopefully!) one of the birding spectacles for which the Sheffield area has become renowned. The end of October provides the best chance of good passage of winter thrushes, finches and Woodpigeons, with the chance of scarcer migrants as they pass through.

Exact details of the trip will be confirmed on the website nearer the time to maximise the chance to coincide with favourable weather conditions, but we'll meet at around 07:30 at the corner of Soughley Lane and Brownhills Lane below the bottom res (approx SK272856). Park on the roadside here or in the car park at the top of Wyming Brook. Warm clothing, gloves and sturdy footwear strongly recommended.





## 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 13th Sept at 7.15pm**

**Pete Brown – Freebird 2016**



In January 2016 Pete Brown, long time SBSG member and former group chairman, set himself the challenge of seeing how many bird species he could find in the local area during the course of the year at no cost to his pocket or the planet and of raising a few bob for Cancer Research UK in the process. Tonight's talk reflects on the highs and lows, successes and failures and ultimate achievement of the "Free Bird" year.



Long-tailed duck - Species number 147

**Wednesday 11th Oct at 7.15pm**

**Tim Jones**

**Spurn Bird Observatory**



Tim first visited Spurn in September 2005 and has been visiting regularly since 2011. He quickly became hooked on the birding at Spurn and staying at the Observatory living there for large parts of 2013/14. 'Vismigging' quickly became a passion and you'll normally find him stood at the Warren in the morning whilst visiting Spurn counting and photographing birds flying south. Whilst not stood at the Warren Tim is a ringer and sound recorder and tries his hardest to unearth the next rarity!

### What to look out for in Sept & Oct



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



### Pintail

This is the best month to see this beautiful northern duck in our area. Numbers vary from year to year (e.g eight in 2009 was followed by fifty-three in 2010), but there is generally a reasonable passage of the species, with an average of around thirty birds.

Slightly larger than mallard, but much more elegant, look out for a duck which is distinctly greyer than the commoner species, with an altogether different look. The head is more rounded, plain with often a rusty tinge, with a long, greyish-black bill. The long neck is often what distinguishes the bird at a distance. As the name implies, the tail is pointed, accentuating the stretched out appearance of the bird, particularly in flight, when the long, narrow wings are also noticeable.

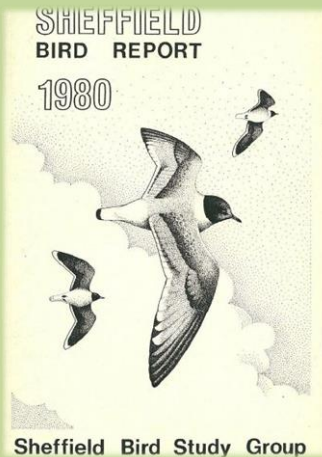
Records of pintail are spread pretty evenly across the area, in both the lowlands and uplands, with any reasonable sized water body worth a look, particularly in the second half of the month. On the uplands, Middleton Moor and Redmires are favoured sites, with odd records from the other reservoirs on the western fringe of the area. On the lowlands, Carr Vale NR and Orgreave Lakes are your best bet, with occasional records from other well-watched sites to the east.

### Ron Blagden



Images © A. Deighton

## A Look Back to 1980



Richard Hill looks back into the archives to 1980 [here](#). He covers significant and interesting world events and the birding highlights of the year including Belted Kingfisher, Forster's Tern, Evening Grosbeak and Killdeer just to name a few. A number of local topics are also described including the various developments within the SBSG. I thoroughly enjoyed this very interesting and witty article and recommend that you read it!! I'm sure Richard would welcome some feedback.

## Diary Dates



**Stange Forum AGM**  
**September 23rd (2pm - 4pm)**

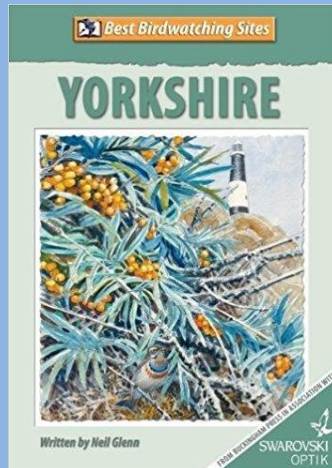
**Hathersage Methodist Hall, Main Rd, Hathersage**

Neil Porter will also be setting up a stand with Ring Ouzel reports and info on bird surveys on the Stange, North Lees Estate.

## Book Review



### Best Birdwatching Sites: Yorkshire



Neil Glenn & John Miles; John Davis (illus.)

A county guide including detailed descriptions of eighty-eight reserves and wildlife areas, located right across Yorkshire. A review by John Reilly can be found [here](#).

## Off the Beaten Track



### Owlthorpe

In this latest article, Pete Brown shares his experience of Owlthorpe.

See [here](#) for his report.



**Pete Brown**

## Letter to Editor re "Off the Beaten Track" (May edition)

### Limb Valley

I would like to support the suggestion that the birds of the Limb Valley should be regularly monitored to continue the long term study already undertaken. It seems that the surveys of birds, plants and animals by members of the Sorby Natural History Society are not well known to birdwatchers and naturalists in Sheffield. These surveys are published and listed on the Sorby web page<sup>1</sup>. Those visiting the Valley may have noticed the marker posts which relate to the Limb Valley Nature Trail described in the booklet published by Sorby Nat. Hist. Soc. in 1995.

With regard to the birds an early survey by S.T. Elliot for the years 1974-76 was published in 1978 (Sorby Record 16). Subsequently Sorby members including Alan Gladwin carried out CBC type surveys of different locations in the Valley for the years 1977/78. In 1979 I began a CBC survey for the BTO which terminated in 1997 although at the request of the BTO two resurveys were carried out in 2003/04. The results for the early years were published 1995 (Sorby Record 31) and showed changes in the numbers of certain species following changes in management (or lack of it) and/or a reflection of national changes. Other surveys including winter surveys were also undertaken. It is important that such long term studies be continued particularly since land use is likely to remain unchanged because of the topography of the Valley.. It is also important that any study should be of the CBC type since mapping of individual territories is more meaningful than merely listing the birds present. The minimum number of visits should be 10 (April-July). The methodology is not something that can be acquired in a year and the observer should have a long term commitment to the project.

Sorby is investigating the possibility of digitising the A3 maps of individual territories for all of the survey years...



so that the data will be available to future generations of birdwatchers and conservationists.

With best wishes for your future activities

**Harold Smith**

<sup>1</sup> Limb Valley Study Group: View a Limb Valley bibliography

## Ray Hawley

We were sorry to learn of the recent death of Ray Hawley at the age of 82. Ray was an influential member of the Sorby Natural History Society during the 1950s and 1960s and pioneered many of the key principles of local bird recording, which were adopted by the SNHS Ornithological Section and subsequently the SBSG on its formation in 1972.

Ray was active in the Sheffield area for many years and provided a timely summary of Sheffield's birds for the Sorby Jubilee in 1968, as well as a write-up of observations on local breeding Long-eared Owls, which was referenced in the landmark *Birds of the Western Palearctic*.

Ray was regional co-ordinator for the inaugural BTO Breeding Atlas during 1968-71 before handing over the reins to David Herringshaw for the final year of the field work. By the time Ray had illustrated the Firecrest for the cover of the 1974 annual report he had already left Sheffield to work for the RSPB at both Sandy and Hornsea Mere, before later becoming President of the Society.

A full biography of Ray's remarkable contribution to local, regional and national ornithology will appear in a forthcoming Sorby Record.

## Hen Harrier day



**Sat 5th August 2017**

Organised by Sheffield Environmental in association with Birders Against Wildlife Crime, this was a well-supported event with over 300 people together at a sunny Devonshire Green in the centre of Sheffield. Speakers included Mark Avery, Natalie Bennett, Iolo Williams and our very own David Wood.



The success of this event, and others taking place across the country, was a positive testimony to the growing movement against the persecution of wildlife and in particular raptors on and around the UK moorlands managed by gamekeepers for the purpose of driven grouse shooting.

## Photo of the Month



**We would welcome your support with this item and hope you have the time to take part by voting. At the moment the membership involvement is low therefore the future format will be open for discussion at the next indoor meeting.**

Below are the shortlisted images taken between the months of May - Aug 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 October 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 final 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. Peregrine Falcon



2. Golden Plover



3. Little Owl



4. Turnstone



5. Great-white Egret



6. Little Owl 2



7. Swift



8. Black-necked Grebe



9. Mandarin



10. Dunlin



11. Spotted Flycatcher



12. Redstart



13. Arctic Tern



## 2016 Annual Report

### REQUEST FOR HELP

The annual report for 2016 is well underway however due to unforeseen circumstances we are asking for help from members to complete one of the species sections. A template and previous examples are available and full support and advice will be provided by the committee. This is a great opportunity to get involved with the publication and be recognised for doing so. Please contact any member of the committee as soon as possible. Many thanks.

### e-Newsletter

Welcome back to the e-newsletter and hope you all had a great summer. We are always happy to include topical articles from members so if you have something for us to consider please contact me.



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



VOTE FOR PHOTO OF THE MONTH