

JANUARY 2020

SBSG E-newsletter



Caspian Gull © Andy Deighton



Welcome to the SBSG E-newsletter!

We hope you enjoy this edition which includes the birding highlights & images from Nov - Dec, details of forthcoming meetings & events and much more.....

Please use the “smart links” to key **news articles** to the right hand side of the “Welcome” page and **regular topics** at the foot of the page. Click on a link to be quickly directed to a PDF version of the article or to the particular topic you are interested in! We are happy to receive your comments and suggestions so that we can continually improve your membership experience



LATEST NEWS

A pick of the birding news from recent months



INDOOR MEETINGS

Don't miss out on our forthcoming indoor meetings



PHOTO GALLERY

Enjoy the most recent images submitted to the SBSG web-site



RSPB 2020
Big Garden
Birdwatch -
25-27 Jan

[Read Here](#)



“What to Look
Out For”

by

Ron Blagden

[Jan - Feb](#)



BTO

“BirdTrends”
Key findings for
2019

[Read Here](#)

Recent Sightings

with Mark Reeder
For the period Nov-Dec 2019

For the period Nov-Dec 2019

Gannet

A juvenile was seen over Midhope Res' on 15th Nov. Presumably the same individual seen earlier over Silkstone, Barnsley.

Bittern

One was reported briefly at Catcliffe Flash on 19th Dec.

Cattle Egret

On 20th November Graham Sharples found two birds in a sheep field adjacent to Thrybergh Country Park. Both birds were present until dusk, but could not be located the following morning.



Cattle Egret - Thrybergh CP - M Reeder



Cattle Egret - Thrybergh CP - A Deighton

Great White Egret

One spooked the Cattle Egrets as it flew south over Thrybergh C.P on 20th Nov.

Whooper Swan

A relatively poor showing with just 3 reports all during November: 5 SE at Baslow 6th, 25 at Middleton Moor on 10th and 36 north over Carr Vale on the 16th.

Pink-footed Goose

A maximum of 420 (in two skeins of 240 and 180) headed southeast over Middleton Moor on 10th Nov.



Pink-footed Geese - A Deighton

Common Scoter

A female type was at Thrybergh C.P on 17th Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser

A red-head was among 6 Goosanders at RVCP on 8th Nov.

Sanderling

An unseasonal individual was at Thrybergh C.P on 1st Nov.

Jack Snipe

One was at Thrybergh C.P on 27th Nov. An excellent count of 6 were at Kilnhurst Flash on the 15th Dec.

Common Gull

A maximum count of 180 were at Tideswell Moor on 15th Nov.

Yellow-legged Gull

Three birds were present at Middleton Moor on 3rd Nov, with an adult there on the 10th and 24th. On the 12th Nov 3 birds were in the Attercliffe area (adult, 2nd w and 1st w). At Orgreave on 7th Dec a 2nd w and 1st w were present pre-roost.

Caspian Gull

At least 3 birds (2 1st winters and a lame adult) were present in the Attercliffe area on and off from the 30th Nov, with 1st winter birds visiting Orgreave on the 7th and 14th Dec.



Caspian Gull (1W) - Stevenson Road - P Garrity



Caspian Gull (Adult) - Attercliffe - A Deighton

Waxwing

Only three reports so far this winter: A single was at Burngreave 18th to 19th, with 2 at Aldwarke on the 24th. Two were reported at the Botanical Gardens on 30th Dec.



Waxwing - Burngreave - A Deighton

Starling

By the 22nd Dec around 70000 birds were coming into roost at Cavendish Mill, Stoney Middleton, but as yet no murmuration has been reported.

Brambling

Up to 100 birds were reported at Foulstone Delph on 2nd Nov and at Edge Mount on 15th Dec.

Snow Bunting

Three singles were reported, the first at Curbar Gap feeding on path from car park to White Edge on 8th Nov one at Mam Tor on 25th Dec and one at Kinder Scout on 29th Dec.

Mealy Redpoll

A probable male was reported at Longshaw on 16th Dec.



Brambling - Ringinglow- J Hogg



Brambling - Kilamarsh - D Gaffney



Snow Bunting - Mam Tor - A Deighton

Crossbill

The only reports came from Holling Dale (25 on 3rd and 12 30th Nov) and White Lee (5 on 29th Nov and 10+ on 29th Dec).

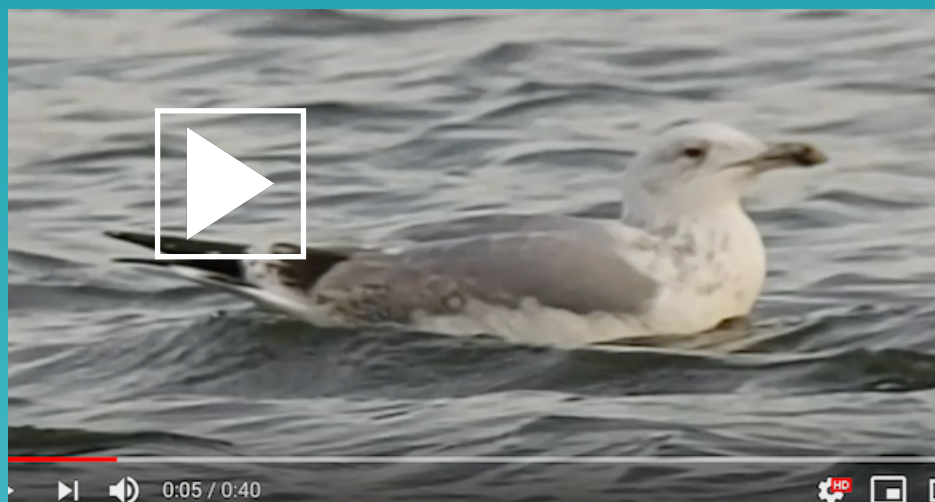
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Featured videos

Caspian Gull at Orgreave Lakes by Roy Twigg

Our video feature spotlights our members recent efforts within the recording area. Please note that at the moment media is hosted by YouTube and therefore the video will open in your web browser. After watching the video simply close your browser to return to the newsletter.



Caspian Gull at Stevenson Road by Pete Garrity

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LATEST NEWS



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Membership subscriptions (£14 single, £16 household) are due from 1 January and can be paid using any of the methods found [here](#). The Membership Secretary will be available to receive cash payments at the indoor meeting on 8 January.

Martin Hodgson, Membership Secretary.



TREE SPARROWS NEST BUILDING IN OCTOBER??

I had a really good response to this news item as follows :

“According to Summers-Smith in his 1995 monograph on the species, by the end of October roosts in field areas break up and adults and juveniles often return to their breeding colony. They may then take nest material in to their nests, both as a sexual activity [sometimes leading to copulation] and to provide a well-insulated winter roosting place. This is based on European studies, but it seems likely to happen here, as it certainly does with House Sparrows. Such activity is said to dwindle during November and has finished almost completely by December”. [Roy Frost](#)



[Pete Garrity](#)



South Yorkshire Day 2020

This will be held on Saturday 22 February 2020 as usual at Treeton Miners Welfare.

Short talks and displays are welcome from any South Yorkshire Naturalists, individuals and groups, on any subject relating to South Yorkshire Natural History. Please contact Bob Croxton bats@sorby.org.uk

See [here](#) for details

Foreign Trip Register

This has now been updated and can be accessed [here](#) - it's a useful reference for those planning a birding or family holiday.

Country	Year	Time of Year	Days	Host Country	Bird Guide	Contact	Photograph
Austria	2012	February	8 days	Austria	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Austria	2012	May	Family trip	Austria	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Austria / Hungary	2012	October	Family trip	Hungary	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Austria	2012	October	Family trip	Austria	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Canada	2012	November	10 days	Canada	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Canada	2014	March	10 days	Canada	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
China	2012	July/August	Family holiday	China	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
China	2013	July/August	Family holiday	China	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
China	2014	July/August	Family holiday	China	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
China	2015	July/August	Family holiday	China	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
China	2016	July/August	Family holiday	China	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
China	2017	July/August	Family holiday	China	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
China	2018	July/August	Family holiday	China	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
China	2019	July/August	Family holiday	China	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
France	2012	May	Family trip	France	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
France	2013	May	Family trip	France	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
France	2014	May	Family trip	France	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
France	2015	May	Family trip	France	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
France	2016	May	Family trip	France	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
France	2017	May	Family trip	France	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
France	2018	May	Family trip	France	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
France	2019	May	Family trip	France	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2012	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2013	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2014	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
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Germany	2019	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2020	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2021	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2022	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
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Germany	2064	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
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Germany	2066	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2067	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2068	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2069	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2070	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2071	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2072	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2073	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2074	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
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Germany	2082	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2083	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
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Germany	2097	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2098	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2099	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith
Germany	2100	April	Family trip	Germany	John Smith	John Smith	John Smith

A Great Evening!!

The December Indoor Meeting was well attended with a really interesting talk from Lucy Mitchell about her work with Nightjars. Many thanks to those who attended, who were also rewarded with a tippie or two and festive mince pies!!



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Indoor Meetings

Visit [here](#) to see the complete list of indoor meetings for 2020.



Wednesday 8th January

Pete Brown

Birding in Botswana

Botswana is a fantastic country for watching wildlife and particularly bird life in a region of endless pristine wilderness. Its vast reserves are measured in thousands of square kilometres.

In contrast to what follows, Pete's talk begins with a brief look at the bird life of bustling, crowded Johannesburg, the starting off point for traveling to Botswana. Pete's itinerary in Botswana includes several days watching wildlife along the Okavango and Chobe Rivers and a week of basic camping, exploration, birding and close encounters with a wide range of mammals in the Chobe, Savuti and Moremi National Parks, the latter part of the Okavango Delta, all making this an unforgettable experience.



Sheffield University - The Diamond - Lecture Theatre LT2 and the meeting will commence at 7.15pm



Wednesday 12th February

Keith Clarkson

The Caribbean

Keith's talk looks at a trip he made to Barbados, St Lucia, St Vincent and Trinidad in December 2018 with 'Birding the Islands'



Keith Clarkson

I am a passionate birder and conservationist. I was brought up in Sheffield with the Peak District as my playground. Here I got into birding and ringing at an early age, becoming an active member of the Sheffield Bird Study Group. At Sheffield University I received a PhD on the behavioural ecology of the Magpie, and was lucky enough to work on seabirds with Prof. Tim Birkhead in the Canadian Arctic. I dabbled with Yellow-billed magpies in California and Zebra Finches in Australia before settling down to spend many years working for Sheffield City Museum and the Peak District National Park.

Later I achieved my lifelong ambition, of joining the RSPB. A variety of posts followed and prior to my retirement in 2017 I was the Senior (old) Site Manager, responsible for the RSPB's Bampton Cliffs and Coquet Island nature reserves - my dream job!

Throughout, I have been passionate about bird migration and have spent a lifetime studying visible migration both through the Southern Pennines and now on the East Coast of Yorkshire.

I am a trustee of the Garganey Trust, an active member of the RSPB, BTO and both Flamborough and Filey Bird Observatories and I lead tours of Iceland for Naturetrek and have branched into a possible new venture in the Caribbean, but I keep my feet on the ground by following The Owls - Sheffield Wednesday!

2019 was a year to remember. I was awarded the Professor Robert Boucher Distinguished Alumni Award by the University of Sheffield, I received an MBE for services to wildlife conservation from The Queen and, found my first Fea's-type Petrel at my beloved Hunmanby Gap!



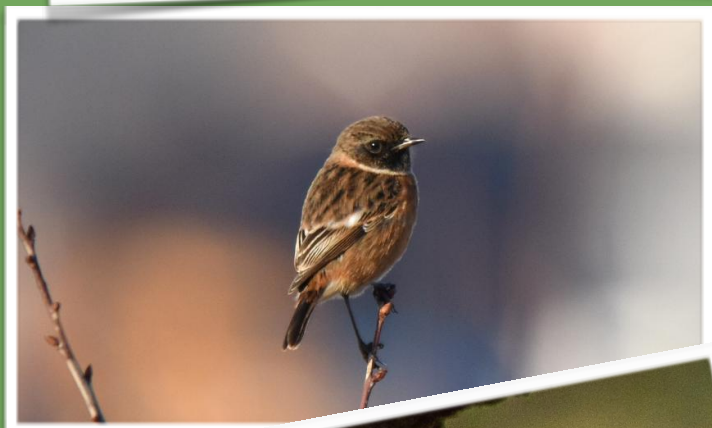
Sheffield University - The Diamond - Lecture Theatre LT2 and the meeting will commence at 7.15pm

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Photo Gallery

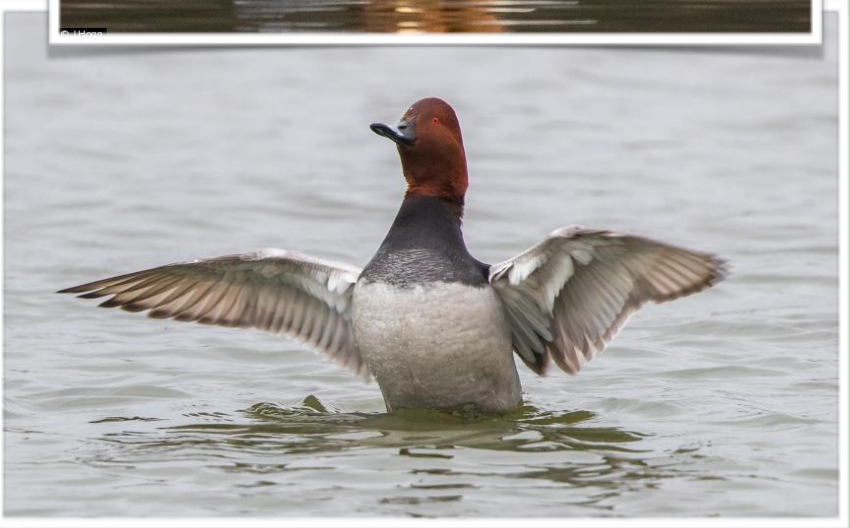
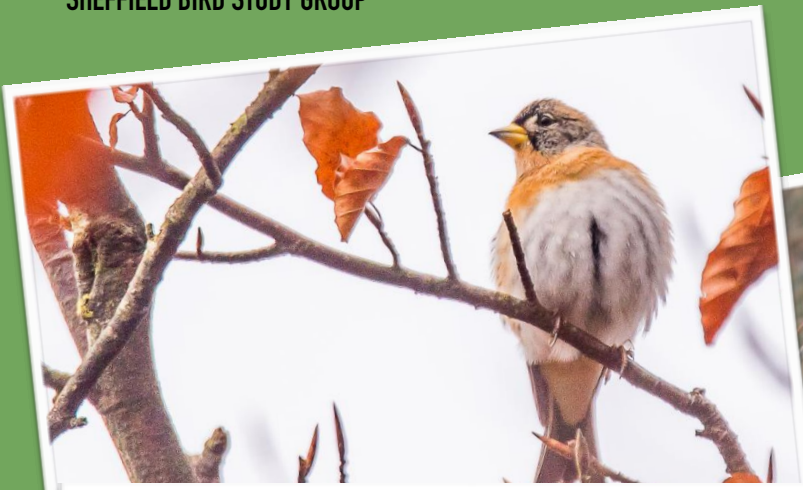
A selection of the latest images submitted to the SBSG web-site

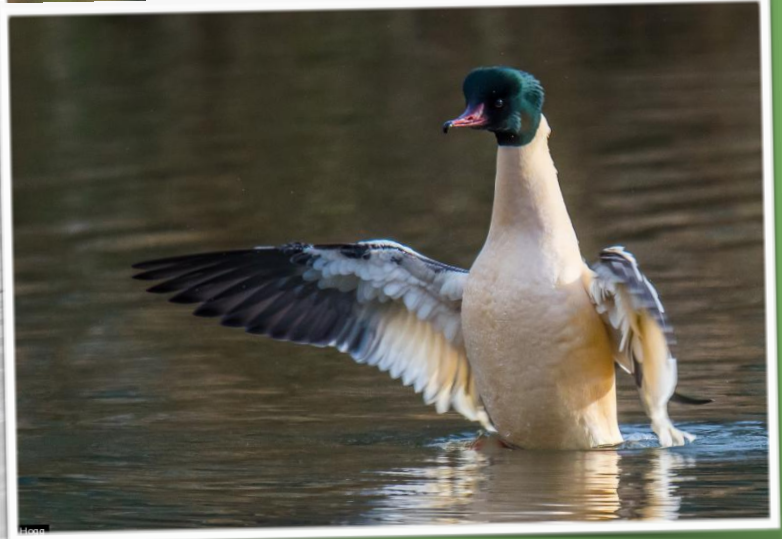












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BTO ID Video

Identifying Common and Jack Snipe



Click [here](#) to access the BTO video

BTO ID Video

Identifying Common Sparrows and Reed Bunting



Click [here](#) to access the BTO video

Photo of the Month

The winner chosen by the committee for the period NOV -
DEC 2019 is: **Wren by John Hogg**



Equipment: Nikon D750 with a Sigma Sport 150 - 600mm lens

Settings: Focal Length 600mm, ISO 640 @ f6.3

Notes: “Taken on Eastmoor from my car, on a lovely misty, frosty morning. I was actually trying to get close to a large flock of Fieldfare and Redwing, when the Wren and a female Reed Bunting suddenly appeared on the wall next to me.”

Bird of the Month



Water Rail by Andy Deighton

January Bird of the Month

Water Rail

Reed bed birds are notoriously difficult to monitor, and this is certainly true of this month's bird, **WATER RAIL**, *Rallus aquaticus*. This species, however, more often gives away its presence by its characteristic call; a high-pitched squeal with occasional grunts, known as "sharming", often likened to a squealing piglet. A visit to a reed bed site such as Pit-house West in the evening, possibly looking for a roosting Bittern, can be an eerie experience with this strange noise in the gathering gloom.

The species is present throughout the year, with breeding proved each year at a few sites in the area, but numbers undoubtedly increase in the autumn with the arrival of continental birds.

Water Rail is a crepuscular species, being most active at dawn and dusk, and best looked for in the muddy margins of reed beds. Views are often a fleeting glimpse of a small brown bird moving quickly across a gap in the vegetation. The reason why January can be one of the best months of the year to see this species is, as a mid-winter month, temperatures can go below freezing for a prolonged period, rather than just the odd day as in the autumn. The water within reed beds starts to freeze and this makes much of the food on which the bird feeds by probing in the mud inaccessible. Hunger will then force them out into the open on the ice around reed beds, often in broad daylight. At these times, they are sometimes quite regular underneath bird feeding stations and, being omnivorous, will feed on a range of items including carrion. It is then possible to see this attractive small bird in good light, often at close quarters.

Carr Vale NR and Thrybergh CP are two well-known sites in the east which are probably best for this species, with the latter site believed to hold up to a dozen wintering birds, but Bolehill Flash and Poolsbrook Marsh are two other places where multiple sightings regularly occur in the right conditions. However, the species is almost certainly present at any of the wetland sites to the east with even a small reed bed, and so patience, and a stealthy approach, may be rewarded. The only site to the west where you are likely to record this species is Middleton Moor, where they are occasionally heard by No 4 lagoon when viewing the Starling roost and, earlier in the autumn, are sometimes heard, and have very rarely been seen, whilst counting the gull roost.

Ron Blagden

Mystery Bird ?



Mystery Bird for Nov 2019



Answer by Andy Deighton [HERE](#)

Mystery Bird January 2020

Obviously a raptor but this one is another tricky challenge from Andy Deighton so good luck and we will reveal the answer in the next issue.





e-Newsletter

We hope you had a great Xmas and new year and are ready for another exciting year of birding ahead. We also hope you enjoyed the January 2020 issue of the E-newsletter. We are always happy to include topical articles from members so if you have something for us to consider for future issues then please contact me. If you have videos taken in the recording area I would love to see them and perhaps include them in our regular video feature.

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

