

MARCH 2020

SBSG E-newsletter



Firecrest - Meadowhall TS © Andy Deighton

Welcome to the SBSG E-newsletter!

We hope you enjoy this edition which includes the birding highlights & images from Jan - Feb, 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 - Will the Environment Bill deliver for wildlife?

[Read Here](#)



“What to Look Out For”

by

Ron Blagden

[Mar - Apr](#)



BTO

Scottish owl tracked to Morocco

[Read Here](#)

Recent Sightings

with Mark Reeder
For the period Jan-Feb 2020

For the period Jan-Feb 2020



Bittern

Though not seen this winter the Pit-house West bird was heard on the evening of the 3rd Feb.

Little Egret

Up to 4 were roosting on the Main Lake island on 8th Jan. A colour-ringed bird was at Treeton Dyke on 21st Feb, ringed as a chick at Besthorpe NR on 15th June 2013.

Mute Swan

A peak count of 103 at Parkgate Basin, Rotherham on 19th Jan.

Whooper Swan

On New Year's Day 3 adults spent much of the day at Orgreave, before leaving NW at 3:40pm. Also, at Orgreave 2 went SW on 4th Jan.



Whooper Swan - Orgreave - M Reeder



Whooper Swan - Howden Res - R Twigg

On 6th Feb a group were heard over Handsworth at 10:55pm, seemingly heading north. Two birds were in the Upper Derwentdale Valley on the 7th and 8th of Feb.

Pink-footed Goose

Highest counts, during the period, were; 350 west over Underbank Res' on 20th Jan and 560 heading NW in a total of 6 skeins.

Wigeon

A maximum count of 206 at RVCP on 14th Jan.



Pink-footed Geese - P & A Wilson

Scaup

A party of 5 (2m, 2f and imm m) were at Thrybergh CP on 8th February.

Smew

A red-head was at RVCP from the 8th-12th of Jan, present mostly on the small pond between the reserve and fishing lake.

Red Kite

Singles were reported over Loxley Chase (18th Jan), Parkwood Springs (15th Feb) and Blackburn Meadows (18th Feb).

Golden Plover

A peak count of 343 were at Peat Pits on 2nd Feb.

Jack Snipe

A total of 15 were at Woodhouse Washlands on 5th Jan.

Snipe

A count of 166 at Woodhouse Washlands on 5th Jan.

Black-tailed Godwit

At Low Moor, Upper Midhope, 6, very unseasonable birds, were seen sheltering from the strong winds.

Common Gull

An excellent count of 250+ at Tideswell on 13th Feb.

Yellow-legged Gull

Singles were at; Orgreave (1st and 5th Jan and 7th Feb) and Middleton Moor (19th Jan).



Smew - RVCP - D Gaffney



Caspian Gull - Attercliffe - A Deighton

Caspian Gull

Single 1st winter birds were recorded moving between Attercliffe and Orgreave through much of January, with 2 at Orgreave on the 5th. An adult was at Stevenson Road on the 18th.



Iceland Gull - Stevenson Road - R Twigg

Iceland Gull

An unusual record of 1 low over pasture in the Loxley Valley on 17th January. More typical was a 1st winter at Stevenson Road on 14th and 15th February and (what was probably the same bird) again on the 23rd.

Great Black-backed Gull

At Stevenson Road 250 were loafing on waste ground on 16th Jan.

Waxwing

Scarce nationally this winter. 2 at Meersbrook Park Road briefly on 7th Feb and a single equally brief at Wharncliffe Side on the 16th.

Fieldfare

Around 500 were feeding in fields to the east of Firsby Res' on 7th Feb.

Firecrest

One of these delightful little gems was found on the 20th January adjacent to Meadowhall train station, where it occasionally showed very well until it was last reported on the 23rd.

Starling

Around 50000 (fifty thousand!) roosted at Middleton Moor on the 19th and 22nd Jan and again on 5th Feb, though murmurations were said to range from little to reasonable.

Brambling

Maximums of 100 at Longshaw and Ladybower Res (north arm) on 18th and 31st Jan respectively.



Firecrest - Meadowhall - R Mellor

Crossbill

The highest count was of 15 in Derwentdale on 18th Jan.

Snow Bunting

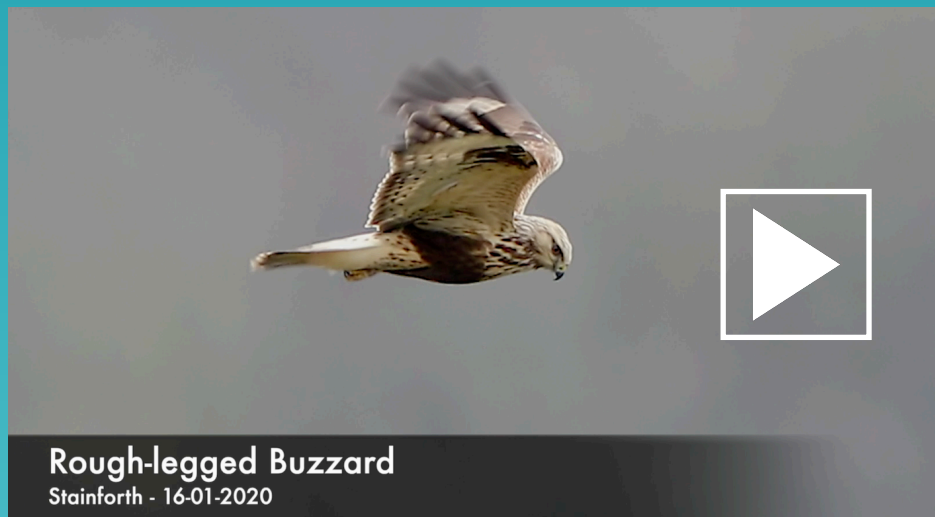
At Birchinlee Pasture 2 were on the track near grouse butts on 30th Jan. A single was regularly reported from Mam Tor during the period.



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.

Featured videos

Not in our area but of interest - Rough-legged Buzzard at Stainforth near Hatfield by Pete Garrity



Long-tailed Duck at Wintersett Res by Pete Garrity

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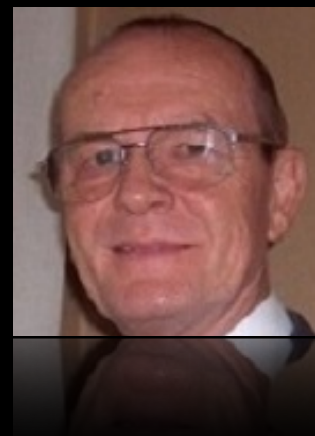
LATEST NEWS



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

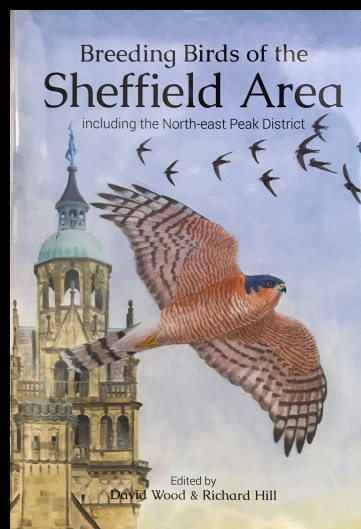
Membership subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2020 are now overdue. Approximately 60% of our 210 paying members have paid, and of these nearly 35% found the bank transfer method the easiest. Rates are, for yet another year, held at £14 single and £16 household membership. Full details on how to pay can be found [here](#). If fees are not paid by the time of the AGM in March, membership will lapse.



Martin Hodgson, Membership Secretary.

SBSG Breeding Atlas - e-book version now available for £1.99 [here](#)



”2019 Records submission” - Could you please make any final submissions before the 31st March 2020 - Many thanks.

Ring Ouzel Monitoring 2019 – a Summary

Eastern Moors,
Burbage and Stanage
North Lees.

A report by **Chris
Greenwood** [here.](#)

Eastern Moors and
Burbage 2019 Ring
Ouzel survey

by **Kim Leyland** [here.](#)



Ours to
Care For

Ring Ouzels

Help to protect Ring Ouzels on the Sheffield Moors

April – July 2020

**PLEASE REMAIN ON THE TRACK IN THIS
AREA & KEEP MOVING.**

If you wait in this area, you may be
disturbing nesting Ring Ouzels trying to
feed their young.

Thank you!

Any questions? Kim Leyland (Eastern Moors Partnership) 07813 076626

2019/20 National Willow Tit Survey

We are appealing for volunteers to help the SBSG undertake a survey to assess the changes since the 2003-08 local atlas and help contribute to the RSPB / BTO National Survey. Further details will be provided at the March indoor meeting.

Find National information [here.](#)

SBSG methodology [here.](#)



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FOR SALE

Leica APO televid 77mm telescope with 20-60x zoom eyepiece and stay-on case. Optically excellent and in very good condition. £650. Email David Wood on david.wood@sheffield.ac.uk to arrange to see and test the scope.



PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

The SBSG are continuing to support summer migrants at Stanage/ North Lees with the provision of a further 20 nest boxes

Indoor Meetings

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



Wednesday 11th March

Richard Hill

Birds in the Sheffield Area 2019 and AGM

Richard Hill presents the review of the Year 2019

Meeting also to include presentation of the SBSG accounts by Ron Blagden

Two short presentations by Bob Croxton and Stuart Davies

Willow Tit survey 2020

Recorders Report



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



Wednesday 8th April

Ben Hatchwell

Long-tailed Tits

Ben Hatchwell

I first came to Sheffield in the mid-1980's to study for my PhD on common guillemots. I was supervised by Tim Birkhead at the University of Sheffield, but did all my fieldwork on Skomer Island off the coast of Pembrokeshire, where I spent three memorable field seasons. The beauty and spectacular wildlife of Skomer has drawn me back there almost annually ever since. Sheffield made a similar impression! After completing my PhD and spending six years doing post-doctoral research on dunnocks and alpine accentors in Cambridge and blackbirds in Oxford, I was delighted to be appointed a lectureship in the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences in 1993. My priority when I arrived back in Sheffield was to establish a research project on long-tailed tits. A little was already known about their extraordinary social behaviour, but following a teenage infatuation with the species, I knew that their nests were readily found and I was convinced that they could tell us much about social evolution, among other things. Little did I know when finding the first nest and ringing the first pair in the Rivelin Valley in March 1994 that I would still be studying them with the same enthusiasm 26 years later. Along the way, I've also had various other projects in ornithologically exciting parts of the world, including rifleman in New Zealand and sociable weavers in South Africa, but daily trips to the Rivelin Valley from March to June are by now a non-negotiable fixture of my annual routine.

Kinship, cooperation and conflict in long-tailed tits

Long-tailed tits have an extraordinary social system in which failed breeders often become 'helpers' at a nest belonging to another pair, helping them to raise their offspring. This cooperative behaviour is driven by close kinship between helpers and the brood that they raise, but living alongside relatives also brings conflict. In this talk I will describe how long-tailed tits are able to maximize the benefits of cooperation and minimize the costs of conflict.



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

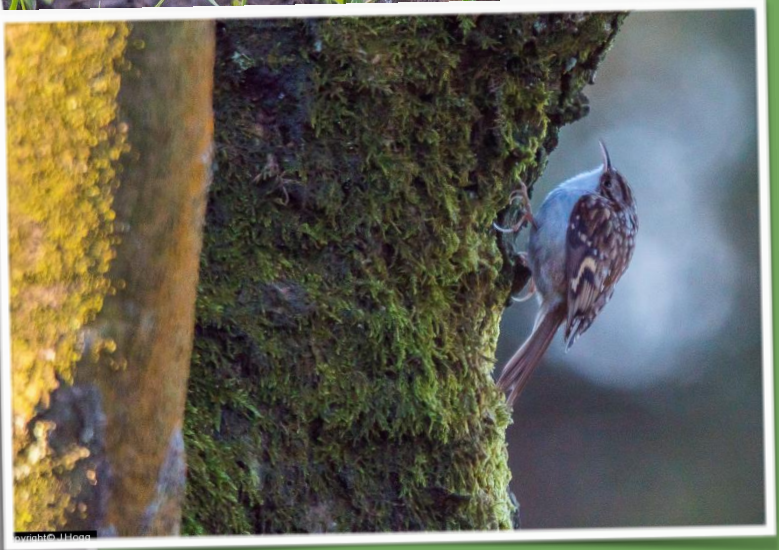












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BTO ID Video

Identifying female dabbling ducks



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

BTO ID Video

Identifying Skylark and Woodlark



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

Photo of the Month

The winner chosen by the committee for the period JAN -
FEB 2020 is: Firecrest by R Mellor



Equipment:

Settings:

Notes: Taken at Meadowhall train station

Bird of the Month



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker © David Wood

March

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

There are some species which, although resident, are easier to see at certain times of year. This month's bird is one of those – **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**

This unobtrusive, sparrow sized bird (it really is small) spends most of its time in the tops of

large, mature trees, working its way along the underside of branches, rather than up tree trunks like its large relative the Great Spotted. However, two things make March the best month to see this bird. Firstly, the trees are not in leaf. Secondly, and most important, it is when the bird is most vocal. It “drums”, again like its larger counterpart, but when compared is faster, softer, and lasts longer, with no obvious downward inflection at the end. Secondly, its high pitched, kestrel-like call is more obvious in woodland before summer migrants arrive.

Once you think you have heard one, carefully scan the tops of nearby trees looking for the silhouette of a really small (just bigger than a nuthatch) bird moving methodically along a branch. If a good view is obtained, the white-barred black back and wings, lacking the large white “ovals” so obvious on Great Spotted, can be seen. Flight to adjacent trees is deeply undulating.

This bird has suffered a nationwide decline, along with some other woodland birds, but also possibly because of competition with Great Spotted, which has been seen to attack its smaller relative on more than one occasion in the Sheffield area. Observer awareness is also important for such a shy bird- some people have had an almost uncanny ability to find this species.

Traditionally, the stronghold of the species in the Sheffield area was the woodland and parkland to the north of the city, and records are received most years from Wentworth Park, with Beeley Wood another regular site. Further south and east, Renishaw Park almost invariably has a breeding pair, and, amazingly, Graves Park occasionally has quite obliging birds. The species definitely favours mature woodland near lakes and slow-moving rivers.

A quick glance at the Bird Report for the last few years, however, shows that this species can turn up almost anywhere in our area with records ranging from Moss Valley and Coal Aston to Ravenfield and Thrybergh Tip, Chatsworth and Upperdale to Wadsley Common and Midhopestones. The little bird is, undoubtedly, overlooked and, with usually a dozen or less records each year, any sightings will add to our knowledge of its status locally.

Ron Blagden

Mystery Bird ?



Mystery Bird for Jan 2020



Answer by Andy Deighton [HERE](#)

Mystery Bird March 2020

A little brown job (LBJ) is this months mystery bird from Andy Deighton so good luck and we will reveal the answer in the next issue.





e-Newsletter

We also hope you enjoyed the March 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](#)

