

NOVEMBER 2019

# SBSG E-newsletter



Common Scoter © Roy Twigg



## Welcome to the SBSG E-newsletter!

We hope you enjoy this edition which includes the birding highlights & images from Aug - Oct, 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



Recovery of the Bittern - News article by the RSPB

[Read Here](#)



“What to Look Out For”

by Ron Blagden

[Nov - Dec](#)



Climate change in a warming world - Case Study by the BTO

[Read Here](#)



### 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

# Recent Sightings

with Mark Reeder  
For the period Aug-Oct 2019

For the period Aug-Oct 2019



## Black-necked Grebe

A moulting adult was at Thrybergh C.P on 13<sup>th</sup> August.

## Little Egret

Regular reports were received from sites along the Rother, with a maximum of 5 at Orgreave on 16<sup>th</sup> Aug. In the west singles were reported at Redmires and Middleton Moor, 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Sept respectively.

## Great White Egret

At Middleton Moor 2 settled briefly on the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> Aug, before heading northwest. At Carr Vale a single flew northeast (and presumably into our area) on 9<sup>th</sup> Sept, with another single circling Middleton Moor on 21<sup>st</sup>.

## Whooper Swan

The first returning birds were recorded at Orgreave, then Ulley C.P on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct with further records as follows: Parkgate on 25<sup>th</sup> 2 flew south, Redmires on 27<sup>th</sup> 15 dropped in briefly, 29<sup>th</sup> 4 flew NW at Ewden, 6 east at Langsett and 7 south at Silverwood Lagoon.



Whooper Swan - Redmires - J Morey

## Pink-footed Goose

Passing Skeins were first reported on 11<sup>th</sup> Oct, when 200 headed east over Thrybergh. Skeins were then recorded almost daily to the 20<sup>th</sup> involving almost 3,000 birds.

## Pintail

A locally scarce bird these days, though September records at Orgreave (2 9<sup>th</sup>) and Redmires (4 29<sup>th</sup>) were typical.

## Red-crested Pochard

A group of 4 were found (once the fog cleared) at Thrybergh C.P on 21<sup>st</sup> Sept and had increased to 6 (1m, 5f) by the 26<sup>th</sup>.



Red-breasted Merganser - Orgreave - M. Reeder

## Common Scoter

At Orgreave singles were recorded during all three months, with birds present on 3/4 Aug, 9<sup>th</sup> Sept and 20<sup>th</sup> October. Elsewhere 6 were at Redmires mid-afternoon on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct and 1 was recorded, during a 'nocmig' session, over Sothall on 9<sup>th</sup> September. A drake was on Norbriggs Flash on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct.



Goldeneye - Orgreave — M Smethurst

## Goldeneye

The first returning bird was at Orgreave on 12<sup>th</sup> Oct, with 5 there on 29<sup>th</sup>.

## Red-breasted Merganser

An eclipse drake was at Orgreave on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct.

## Honey Buzzard

A pale morph bird was seen over Dale Dike Res' on 4<sup>th</sup> Aug.

## Marsh Harrier

Singles were reported in August from Catcliffe Flash (7<sup>th</sup>) and Morehall Res' (23<sup>rd</sup>). In September singles were at Redmires (8<sup>th</sup>) and Middleton Moor (19<sup>th</sup>).



Osprey - Middleton Moor - A Deighton

## Osprey

August was a good month for birds passing through our area with a least 8 individuals recorded between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.

## Hobby

Last recorded at Middleton Moor on 5<sup>th</sup> Oct.

## Golden Plover

A maximum of 200 at Redmires on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct.



## Whimbrel

The only report was of a single flying west at Ramsley Moor on 9<sup>th</sup> August.

## Greenshank

At Orgreave singles were reported on 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug and 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept, with 2 there on 10<sup>th</sup> Aug. At Redmires 2 were present on 15<sup>th</sup> Aug, with singles there on 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Green Sandpiper

Singles were at Orgreave on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Aug, with 1 at Thrybergh on 8<sup>th</sup> Sept.



Mediterranean Gull - Orgreave - M Reeder

## Mediterranean Gull

A 2<sup>nd</sup> calendar year bird was in the roost at Orgreave on 19<sup>th</sup> Aug, with a 1<sup>st</sup> year bird there on 16<sup>th</sup> October.

## Yellow-Legged Gull

A maximum of 6 were at Middleton Moor on 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug.

## Caspian Gull

An adult at Carr Vale (flying towards Poolsbrook) on 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug and an Adult nearby at Duckmanton on 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct were the only reports.

## Arctic Tern

A juvenile was briefly at Orgreave on 9<sup>th</sup> Sept.

## Black Tern

Juveniles were at Orgreave and southeast over Rawmarsh on 10<sup>th</sup> Aug.

## Ring-necked Parakeet

At least 10 roosting in the grounds of the Northern General Hospital on 10<sup>th</sup> Sept.

## Swift

Last recorded at Thrybergh C.P (2) on 18<sup>th</sup> Sept.

## Swallow

At least 1,000 birds roosted at Middleton Moor on 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug. A single at New Stubbin was the last to be reported.

## Tree Pipit

One south at Redmires on 15<sup>th</sup> Sept, the last to be recorded.

## Rock Pipit

At Orgreave 2 were around the Small Lake on 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct with at least 3 there on 6<sup>th</sup>.

## Yellow Wagtail

One south at Wharnccliffe Chase was the last record.



### Redstart

A male at Redmires conduit on 13<sup>th</sup> Sept was the final record of the year.

### Whinchat

One with Stonechats at Foulstone Delph on 21<sup>st</sup> Sept was the last of the year.



Whinchat - Barbrook - P Brown

### Fieldfare

The first winter arrival was at Ramsley Moor on 19<sup>th</sup> Sept.

### Redwing

Three over Oughtibridge on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct, were the first arrivals of the winter. An impressive count of over 1800 birds, between 07:30 – 09:30, flew south over Ecclesall on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

### Cetti's Warbler

The 1<sup>st</sup> for Fatty Boyns Ponds was recorded on the 8<sup>th</sup> Sept and was still present a week later.

### Sedge Warbler

One at Redmires on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept was the last record.

### Reed Warbler

One on the Don at Effingham Street was the last record received.

### Lesser Whitethroat

Last reported at Thrybergh C.P on 15<sup>th</sup> Sept.



Redstart - Longshaw - J Hogg

### Whitethroat

A single at Thrybergh C.P on 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept.

### Yellow-browed Warbler

An elusive bird was present at Carr Vale between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Oct.

### Wood Warbler

A single reported associating with a tit flock at Blacka Moor on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept.

### Willow Warbler

One sub-singing at Parkwood Springs on 17<sup>th</sup> Sept, the last of the year.

### Spotted Flycatcher

One recorded at Ramsley Moor on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct.

### Chaffinch

630 flew south at Ewden Height between 07:30-09:00 on 12<sup>th</sup> Oct.

### Brambling

One over Ramsley Moor on 8<sup>th</sup> Oct, the first of the winter.



Brambling - Ringinglow - J Hogg

### Crossbill

Two south at Redmires on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Oct and 2 over Ewden Height on the 17<sup>th</sup> were the only records received.

### Snow Bunting

A single calling as it headed south over Redmires on 5<sup>th</sup> Oct.



Spotted Flycatcher - Aldwarke - P Leonard



Spotted Flycatcher - Manor Fields Park - A Siddall

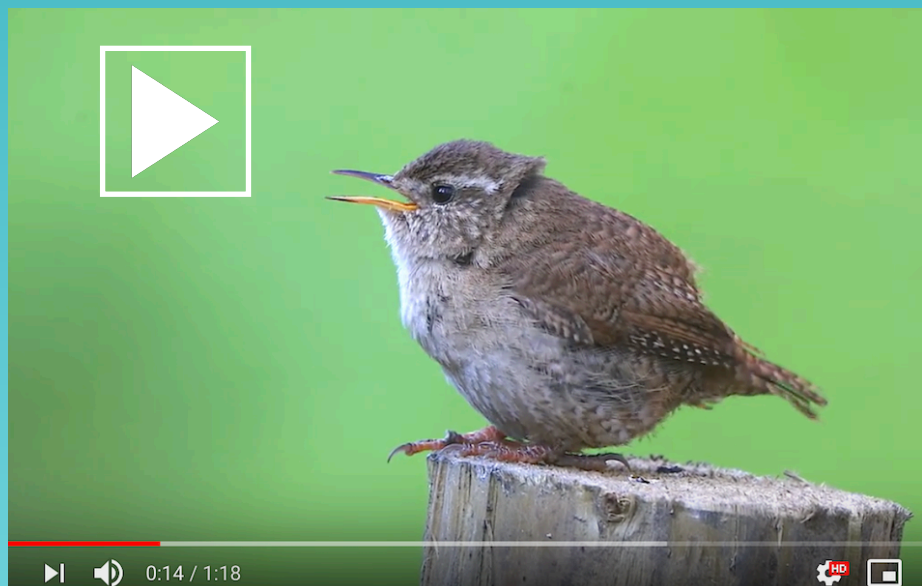
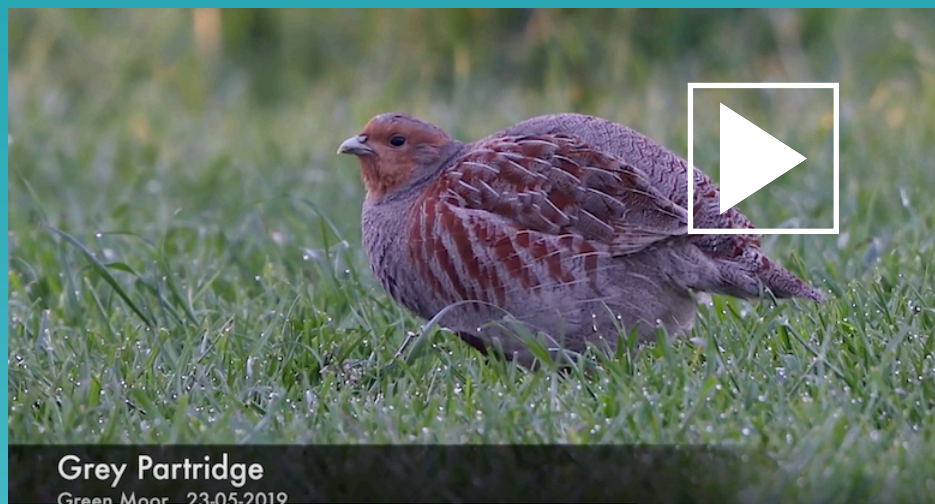




## Featured videos

### Grey Partridge at Green Moor by Pete Garrity

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.



### Wren singing at Padley Gorge by Pete Garrity

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# LATEST NEWS



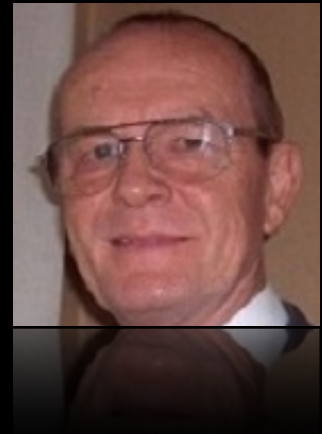
## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Subscriptions for 2020 are being held at their current levels - £14 single, £16 household.

They are due on 1 January, but I'll begin collecting at the December indoor meeting on 11 December. I'm also happy to receive online or postal renewals from the beginning of December.

Members aged 25 and under have no need to renew. Their membership runs automatically until they reach their 26th birthday.

**Martin Hodgson**, Membership Secretary.



## TREE SPARROWS NEST BUILDING IN OCTOBER??

Over a couple of days at the end of October I noticed two Tree Sparrows building a nest in one of my boxes at Green Moor. I thought this was pretty strange but can only presume it was adolescents / first winter birds practising or getting ready for a winter roost. I have heard of House Sparrows roosting in boxes but this is the first time I have seen Tree Sparrows do this.

If you have witnessed this or can enlighten me more then please let me know.

Pete Garrity



## Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

### "First breeding record (2019) for Sheffield".



A pair of Lesser Black-backed Gulls bred in Broomhill on the western side of Sheffield this year (2019), certainly raising one chick to fledging. A pair of adults first visited the level roof of the flats opposite my kitchen window on 7<sup>th</sup> April, this being my first such sighting on that roof in over 49 years. The roof is not entirely level so that puddles form easily, providing nearby facilities for bathing and drinking. A gutter ensures that some water remains when the puddles have virtually dried up and the 2019 summer was very wet anyway.

The birds paid regular daily visits together and attempted copulation on 30<sup>th</sup> April, and with an improved sense of balance on 5<sup>th</sup> May (perhaps suggesting first-time breeders). I was away in the latter half of the month. Only a single adult bird at a time ever visited from 4<sup>th</sup> June onwards until fledging. I saw an adult escort a Buzzard away from the area with the help of several Carrion Crows on 15<sup>th</sup> June and a Grey Heron was vigorously mobbed on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

I sought access to a nearby roof on the 15<sup>th</sup> July when a downy chick was visible on a chimney-top nest-site and two were begging an adult there for food on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. A single chick/juvenile was seen on the 30<sup>th</sup> July and a fledgling was brought by the adults to the flat roof on the 10<sup>th</sup> August where it 'pecked' at the water and picked up a leaf. Presumably it was the same bird I saw later in the day, exercising and flying in a wildly exaggerated manner. The second chick was not seen again (with its sibling), although a juvenile was at the nest and begging an adult for food on the 4<sup>th</sup> September.

Breeding in the SBSG recording area was first confirmed in the Chesterfield area in 2015, and breeding around the Sheffield (centre) was forecast in the recently published report of 2017.

**Mike Archer**



## Indoor Meetings

Visit [here](#) to see the complete list of indoor meetings for 2019.



Wednesday 13th November

Bob Croxton

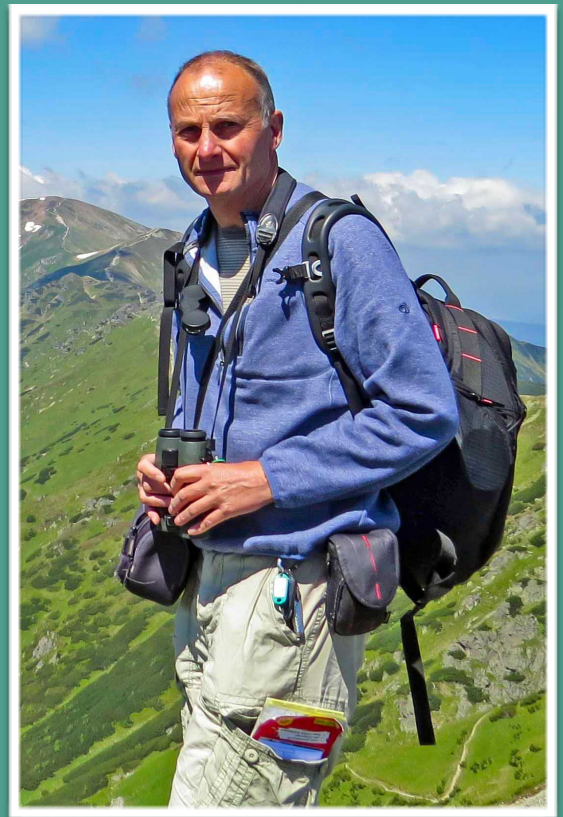
Eastern Europe



**BOB CROXTON** is no stranger to the SBSG having been a member for over 30 years and currently he acts as our conservation lead. He is also a keen photographer and has travelled widely in the UK, Europe, Africa and USA.

### Central/Eastern Europe (The first 14 visits)

His talk will cover Slovakia, Southern Czech Republic, Lower Austria including Lake Neusiedl and Hungary particularly the Hortobágy marshes and plains. Many photos of the region's raptors and woodpeckers, plus many of the other specialities.



Sheffield University - The Diamond - Lecture Theatre LT3 and the meeting will commence at 7.15pm



## Wednesday 11th December

### Lucy Mitchell

# 'GPS-ing our Goatsuckers: tracking Nightjars in South Yorkshire'



**Lucy Mitchell** successfully obtained her PhD in September this year, following four years of work at the Uni of York. Prior to this, she has worked in both the public and charity sectors, in a variety of environmental

roles, aiming to improve habitat management for vulnerable species and people's engagement with the natural environment.

To provide appropriate habitat for species to improve their conservation, we need to collect information on where they move and where they go, especially species that have specific requirements. New technology is helping us to collect this information on species that are hard to follow because of camouflage or their nocturnal nature.

Lucy will talk about her PhD at the University of York during which she tagged a small but important population of Nightjars on the Humberhead peatlands NNR, South Yorkshire, in conjunction with Natural England and a small army of dedicated volunteers, to provide information on their movements and important areas of use to help manage the habitat for this valuable and vulnerable bird. Four years of tracking has provided vital information on their flexibility and the distances they can fly to foraging sites and the results are encouraging in terms of their ability to adapt to change.



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

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## Indoor Meeting Review – 11th September 2019

## Mark Cocker – Our Place



After last year's successful joint meeting with the Sorby Natural History Society, when the SBSG helped push the boat out to celebrate the Sorby's centenary with the visit of TV's Iolo Williams, we decided to hold a similar event this year by welcoming Mark Cocker to The Diamond Building – the SBSG's shiny new home for indoor meetings.

Mark is an award-winning author, naturalist and environmental tutor who grew up in Buxton, where the landscapes of the Derbyshire Peak District and Limestone Dales ignited his passion for the natural world. After studying English Literature at the University of East Anglia, Mark has subsequently combined these two passions to forge an enviable reputation within the field of natural history writing, a genre which has enjoyed something of a renaissance in recent times – perhaps on account of the dawning realisation that all is not well within the British countryside. Not content with being *The Guardian's* country diarist for the past thirty years, Mark has written an impressive total of twelve books about people, history and wildlife – the most recent of which was the subject of September's talk: *Our Place – Can We Save Britain's Wildlife Before It's Too Late?* – a presentation delivered, it has to be said, without the use of a single image or photograph – a first for the SBSG and a remarkable feat which made my own talk on Redmires a few years ago seem like an entire re-run of *Planet of the Apes*.

In just over 60 minutes, Mark managed to take us on a journey through the origins of UK conservation, the history of those well-known organisations, its key protagonists and both the internal and external battles they faced in trying to stop the tide of environmental destruction – a somewhat tragic course of events which has left the hopelessly divided United Kingdom 28th from the bottom of a list of 218 countries in terms of its original biodiversity. Mark intertwined this narrative with some of the passages from his book, as well as his own personal memories - from early childhood birding experiences in Derbyshire, to more recent natural history encounters in his native Norfolk.

Whilst it was perhaps inevitable that in cataloguing some of these key developments, such as the decline and fall of the Nature Conservancy Council, the march to agricultural intensification and the often futile attempts at saving some of our nation's precious habitats, Mark would aptly convey that sense of heartfelt loss many of us feel when we revisit old haunts that decorated our birding youth. The resulting question and answer session, however, was arguably one of the most engaging and interesting in the Group's history. If there was one positive thing to take away at the end of the evening, it was the collective sense that things have to change if we are to stem the tide – something Mark calls for in the final pages of his book, although even he might admit that his references to democratic government now seem as forlorn as the plight of some of our declining species.

After a frantic book signing, which would have left even the most seasoned author with arm ache, our speaker was off into the night and on his way down to Worcester, where a significantly larger gathering would assemble the following morning to hear Mark speak at Natural England. Let's hope he was able to inspire a similar call to arms amongst those who currently work in what to many, represents the organisational husk of what the likes of Max Nicholson and Derek Ratcliffe originally envisaged for the NCC. Members of both the SBSG and SNHS are thanked for their support and a debt of gratitude is owed to Roy Twigg for his powers of persuasion in tapping into the 1970s twitching grapevine and helping organise what many believed was a memorable evening.

Richard Hill





# Photo Gallery

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



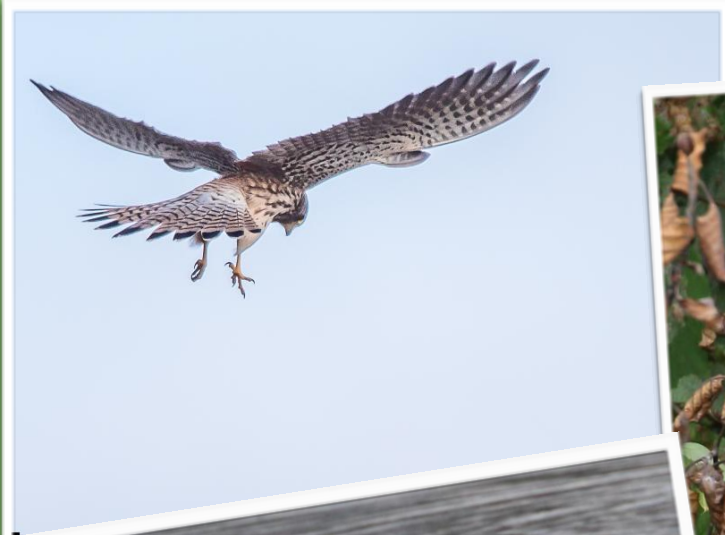




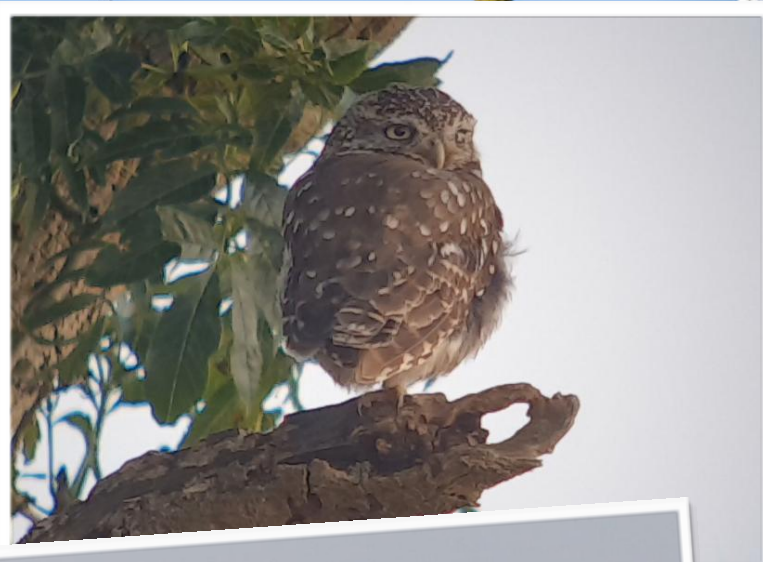




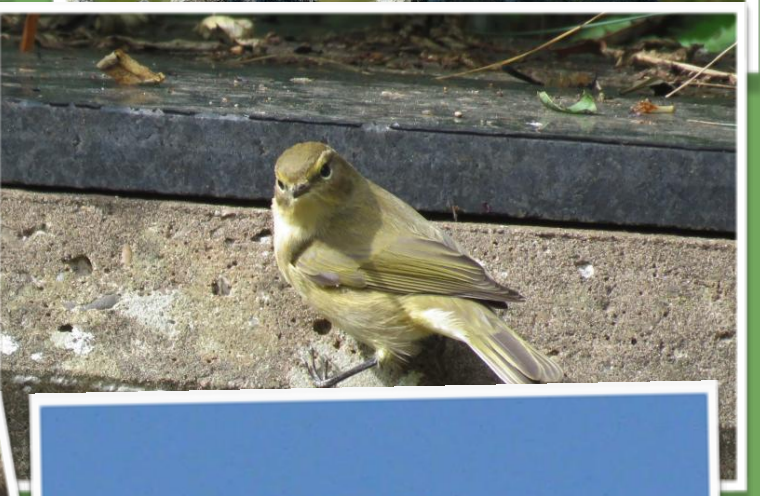












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## BTO ID Video

### Identifying Winter Swans



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

## BTO ID Video

### Identifying Chaffinch and Brambling



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



# Photo of the Month

The winner chosen by the committee for the period AUG - OCT 2019 is: **Goosander by Andy Deighton**



**Equipment:** Canon 7Dmkii, Canon 100-400mm mkii

**Settings:** 1/1600 sec at 5.6, 500 iso at 400mm.

**Notes:** Effingham St. 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2019

“While watching this redhead Goosander fishing on the Don at Effingham Street, I was surprised to see it catch and eat a Signal Crayfish. This introduced American species seems to be well established now in the Don, which is bad news for the endangered native White-clawed Crayfish, as Signal Crayfish is a carrier of the ‘Crayfish Plague’, to which the White-clawed has no resistance and populations are crashing.

The Goosander took quite a while to disable the Crayfish, shaking off the large claws before swallowing the rest of it whole. The serrated edges to the bill can clearly be seen, showing why species in this genus are also often referred to as ‘Sawbills’.”

# Bird of the Month



Pink-footed Geese by Pete Garrity

## November Bird of the Month Pink-footed Goose

One of the great birding spectacles of the Sheffield area is the sight of hundreds of Pink-footed geese moving south-east in the autumn, and north-west in late winter. We are on the flight path which the bird takes between Morecambe Bay, where it arrives from Iceland in the autumn, and wintering grounds in north Norfolk. They are even noticed by non-birders; how many of us have had a work colleague say “you know about birds, what was the big flock flying over in a V-shape I saw on my way in?” Chances are, they were “Pinkies”.

Although the first sightings each year are getting earlier into September, perhaps because of an expanding population, the biggest numbers are often recorded in late October, or early November. Clear, anti-cyclonic days are best, although if the weather is good on the west coast, but worsens over the Pennines, flocks can be seen quite low in cloudier conditions. First indication is often that characteristic flight call, reminiscent of a group of noisy children in the distance, although it can often be surprisingly difficult to spot them in a clear blue sky.

This is a bird which can be seen anywhere over the area, from the moorland fringe “vis-mig” sites (where flocks can often be appear like thin lines of smoke moving along the edges) to lowland constant effort sites such as Carr Vale, Orgreave and Thrybergh CP, and even the city centre itself. something worth looking out for.

**Ron Blagden**



# Mystery Bird ?



Mystery Bird for Sept 2019



Answer by Andy Deighton [HERE](#)

## Mystery Bird November 2019

This looks a difficult challenge especially as quite a bit of the bird is concealed. You can just see its bill though so good luck and we will reveal the answer in the next issue.







## e-Newsletter

We hope you enjoyed the November 2019 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](#)**

