

SEPTEMBER 2019

SBSG E-newsletter



Temminck's Stint © Peter Garrity

Welcome to the SBSG E-newsletter!

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



May field trip to Padley Gorge - report by Ron Blagden

[Read Here](#)



"What to Look Out For"

by

Ron Blagden

[Sept - Oct](#)



June Field Trip to Stanage Pole - report by Pete Garrity

[Read Here](#)

Recent Sightings

with Chris Greenwood
For the period May-July 2019



Whooper Swan

Perhaps the last of the over-wintering stragglers, a single bird was found amongst **Mute Swans** at Thyrbergh CP on 25th May! Similarly a **Barnacle Goose** had been seen on the island at Orgreave on 17/5 before heading off, north presumably.

Bittern

Two were reported on Saturday 18th May, a bird at Silverwood Lagoon flew from the western reed bed at 06.35 and headed SW. 70 mins later potentially the same bird circled high over the Southern end of Orgreave lakes and appeared to head south. Interesting records given the time of year when males were still to be heard booming occasionally at other Yorkshire sites.

Little Egret

These were reported far and wide across the period including on the Don at Stevenson Rd. July was a busy month for them with a bird at Redmires repeatedly throughout the month and a high count of 9 at Orgreave.

Garganey

A drake was present all day at Orgreave on 28th May.



Garganey - Orgreave - M Reeder

Sanderling

Birds were present at Orgreave on and off throughout May and up to 3rd June as birds stopped off on their way north, 4 being the highest count. 1 bird was also at Middleton Moor on 17th May.

Whimbrel

4 birds at Orgreave on 3rd May with 1 on the 10th, 1 at Thyrbergh same day and then 2 on the 27th. Plus a nice count of 9 at Middleton Moor, also on the 10th.

The first bird returning south was recorded calling at 03.37am on 9th July – at that time of the morning I'm assuming it was a noc-mig audio recording Andy?? The shape of things to come. One bird at Orgreave headed west on 11th and then 5 birds there on 24th again headed west.



Whimbrel - Orgreave — A Deighton

Grey Plover – 1 bird at Carr Vale 21/5 went north.

Orgreave hosted 2 female **Ruff** on 18th & 19th May, single **Greenshank** on 3rd, 9th & 17th and a **Wood Sandpiper** early morning on the 28th.



Ruff - Orgreave — M Reeder

Green Sandpiper

A single bird spent an hour at Aldwarke on 28/6 and despite heading north was presumably our first bird of the season on passage from higher latitudes. One at Silverwood Lagoon on 16/7 and 1 at Redmires on 21/7.

Wood Sandpiper

Two at Orgreave on 28th July with one still present briefly the following day. Single **Greenshanks** appeared at Silverwood on 26th July and at Orgreave 2 days later

Turnstone

Highest count of 6 at Orgreave on 9th May, 1 bird on 10th & 2 on 17th.

Black-tailed Godwit

1 at Holmebrook Valley Park on 10/5, 2 at Orgreave on 26/5. A flock of 23 at Orgreave on 1st July circled over main lake then landed until disturbed by human activity, flying off west.



Black-tailed Godwit - Orgreave - M Reeder

120 **Golden Plover** were feeding in a recently seeded beet field on Ughill Moors on 10th July and 150 **Lapwings** in a cut hay meadow Bownhills Lane (towards Redmires Res) on 3rd July.

A single moulting drake **Ruff** was at Orgreave 18/7.

On the 9th May a **Temminck's Stint** was the stand out wader amongst the migrating birds sheltering at Orgreave from the poor weather. The bird was reported early morning, and being the morning after the SBSG Indoor Meeting, many members bumped into each other for the second time in less than 12 hours! The bird was sometimes hard to spot as it blended into the shoreline in the unseasonal drizzle and gloom but was still present late afternoon. There were no subsequent sightings. There were also good numbers of **Swallows**, **Swifts** and **Sand Martins** over the lakes despite the weather and later in the morning they were joined by the first noticeable numbers of **House Martins**.



Temminck's Stint - Orgreave - M Smethurst

Swallow

There were 150+ at Thrybergh on 4th May and 100 there on 12th with counts of 100+ **House Martins** there too on the 3rd 5th & 10th plus a 200 count on the 4th. Away from large water bodies Hirundine sightings were on the low side for May and early June, mirroring national trends. On the far west of our

area the long established **House Martin** colony at Millers Dale station were very late to return, with decent numbers not noted until June was well established. Renovation work over the winter here by the PDNPA established a cafe in the old station building meaning at least half a dozen nests were destroyed and replaced with artificial nest cups however, by August none of the artificial nests appeared occupied with birds preferring the remaining few mud nests.

Swift

Similarly **Swifts** seem to be struggling in 2019. Reporting rates to the BTO were down in Yorkshire by 28% in mid-June and anecdotally members spoke of late and fewer returns. However parties of 100 were reported at Firsby Res and Orgreave on 4th May, 110+ on 6th at Thrybergh and then 200+ there on 27th. 500+ were at Orgreave on the 3rd June. The last records of the summer on my patch were on Aug 3rd, a parting screamed farewell. These fabulous birds are always gone too soon.

Better news however with **Sand Martin** numbers at the urban colony along the River Don continuing to grow into early May with several counts of 100+ and at some times there were 100-200 birds at the Stephenson Rd section alone. A sight well worth heading out on the Five Weirs Walk for. Post-breeding, a pre-roost party of circa 120 was seen at Middleton Moor on 20th July.

Arctic Terns

Following on from the first birds in mid-April, more passage "Sea Swallows" were spotted at water bodies across the first week or so of May, highest counts at Carr Vale (13) and Orgreave (18) on the 3rd. On 28th July the first birds

apparently returning south called in at Orgreave, 4 in total including a probable juvenile.

Black Tern



Black Tern - RVCP - M Sherwin

As the **Arctic Tern** numbers waned, a week into May, their marsh dwelling cousins made their first appearances in numbers from the 8th with 4 noted at Thrybergh, then at Orgreave with 2 on 9th, 5 on 17th May (with 5 on RVCP on the same day presumably the same birds?)

On the gull front **Yellow Legged Gulls** were noted (mainly singles) regularly across May at Middleton Moor (2CY 25th, 27th, 30th & 1st, 3rd June) with another 2CY also present at Redmires on the 30th and 3 Adults on the Top Res on 21st June plus a single 3CY on the Don on 18th & 28th. July saw regular sightings of doubles and groups at Middleton Moor and Redmires with peak counts of 8 at Middleton on the 20th then again at Redmires the following day. **Lesser Black Backed** increased in July too with counts at Middleton moor going from 110 on 7/7 to 350 on 20/7 and 155 at Redmires on 21/7.

Back on the Don there was a lame/one-footed 4CY **Caspian Gull** on 19th & 20th June. 100+ **Herring Gulls** were recorded in Attercliffe on 7th May. **Med Gull** singles were on the Don on 24/6 & 13/7 (with possibly the same bird at Orgreave on the same day) Shalesmoor 15/7 and Handsworth 20/7.



Caspian Gull - Stevenson Road - A Deighton

Pomarine Skua

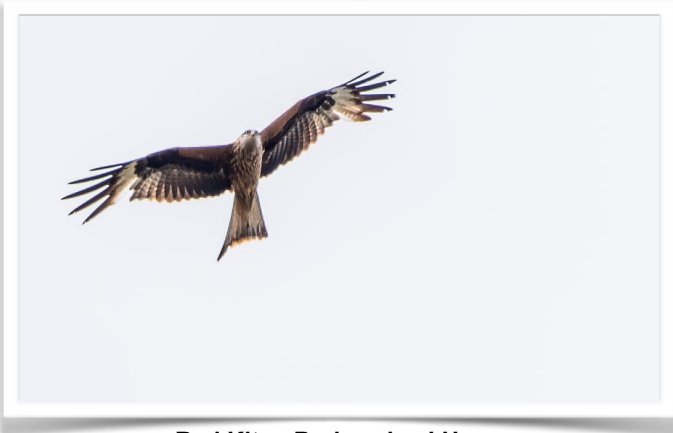
A pale morph adult flew north over Carr Vale on 17th May

Common Crane

A far from common record on 12th May of a pair over Kilnhurst. Fingers crossed for more in coming years.

On the Bird of Prey front, ignoring the dramas at St. Georges, a decent 21 records of **Red Kite** (mainly singles) across May and June spanning our area East and West. Many of the westerly records were in close proximity and are likely all the single bird which seemed to take up residence across Strines, Moscar, Stanage, Hagg Lane and Wyming Brook from 15th May -

onwards for a couple of weeks. The bird was noted roosting in a tree right outside Moscar lodge early on 1st June not necessarily the wisest choice of locale.



Red Kite - Barbrook - J Hogg

There were no more reports in the area for a few weeks, let's hope the bird reported in Rivelin Valley on July 6th was the same bird. Easterly records were in the Canklow (9/5) Kilnhurst (14/5) Rawmarsh (23/5) and Orgreave (2/6) areas with southerly records centring around Barbrook (1/6), Chatsworth (6/5 & 5/6) and Leash Fen (2 on 22/6). Of only 5 birds reported in July the record over Burncross, Chapelton on 10/7 stands out.

Marsh Harrier

Two records in May at Agden Side (6th) and White Lee Moor (27th), two records in June at Redmires (9th & 13th) and two in July as well at Upper Ewden (6th) and Thrybergh (7th).

There were 7 reports of **Osprey** in May, at Carr Vale on 2nd and at Damflask on the 11th, 3 reports on the 12th May in close proximity and may well have been the same bird at Chatsworth, Linacre Res and Holmewood Valley Park, the latter sighting of the bird fishing. Promising.

Two separate birds on the 27th at Barlow Common and Midhope Res. 4 Reports in June (Ewden 14th, Ladybower 16th, Middleton Moor 19th & Walker Edge 23rd).



Osprey - Holmebrook Valley Park - L Stoppard

Just 3 records of the elusive **Quail**, males singing Barlow Common (23/5), Cowell Flat (9/6) and upto 5 birds in wavy-hair grass on Edale Moor on 22/6.

On to summer passerines and the star record is perhaps the **Bee-eater** reported heading north and calling over White Edge on 28th June.

Sadly just as rare these days is **Turtle Dove** with a single reported at Thrybergh on 16th May mixing with **Collared Doves** under a feeder. Calling male **Cuckoos** were reported from 1st May to 26th June. The first juvenile was noted on 22/6 at Ramsley Res being fed by **Meadow Pipits**, as was the juv noted at Barbrook on 30/6. A third juvenile was at Redmires on 24/7.

Wood Warblers appear to be making a small but notable comeback in our area this year and last. Wyming Brook is the top site with at least 5 singing males

recorded throughout May and at least one confirmed nest being provisioned on 9th June, as observed by our new Chair. Other records in May came from Padley (2 birds), Longshaw (2), Derwent Res/Ouzelden Clough (2+), Blacka Moor (May & June) and most notably a late record of a singing male at Redmires Plantation on 21/6. Let's hope this chap returns to the same spot next year.



Wood Warbler - Wyming Brook - P Garrity

Whilst on the Warblers, **Cetti's** were noted at Poolsbrook Marsh 31/5 and at Blackburn Meadows on 7/7.

Crossbills were at Redmires on 7/5, Wyming Brook on 5/6 and Wharncliffe Side on 16/7.

Starlings are often overlooked and under-reported during the summer months so it is welcome to read of a flock of 110 on 27th July on the Springs Academy school fields at Arbourthorne.

A **Black-necked Grebe** spent 6 days at Orgreave 6th – 11th July. First record of the year on this patch.

The end of July was marked with massed westerly movements of **Common Scoters** during a period of wet and dreary weather.

Reports of birds were coming in far and wide from water bodies across East and West Yorkshire and into Manchester, Lancashire and Cheshire, with large groups of birds flying over or taking refuge from the weather.

There was a similar picture to the south of our area in Derbyshire and Notts. Were all the birds deliberately avoiding SBSG territory and taking a big swerve round Sheffield and Rotherham? Despite our Chair trawling all the reservoirs of west Sheffield on the Saturday it wasn't until the fourth day of the influx that we finally found some birds on Sunday 28th. One bird at Orgreave became 3 by the afternoon and 2 early birds at Redmires Top Res became 7 by lunchtime, with 8 birds overflying west in the intervening period. The following day 40 were noted over Carr Vale however, by August it was all over, as quickly as it began.



Common Scoter - Redmires Top Res - B Russon

LOCAL FIELD TRIP

Come and join us !

REDMIRE RESERVOIRS - VISIBLE MIGRATION



Saturday 26th October - Date TBC on the website

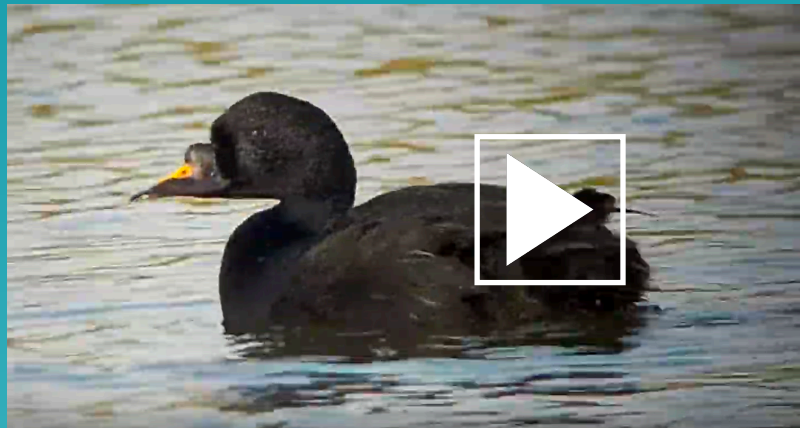
The annual field trip to witness (hopefully!) one of the birding spectacles for which the Sheffield area has become renowned. The end of October provides the best chance of good passage of winter thrushes, finches and Woodpigeons, with the chance of scarcer migrants as they pass through. Exact details 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 Middle Reservoir. Park on the left by the reservoir cottages or in the Middle Res lay-by (now re-open again $53^{\circ}22'07.0''N$ $1^{\circ}36'13.2''W$).

Warm clothing, gloves and sturdy footwear strongly recommended.



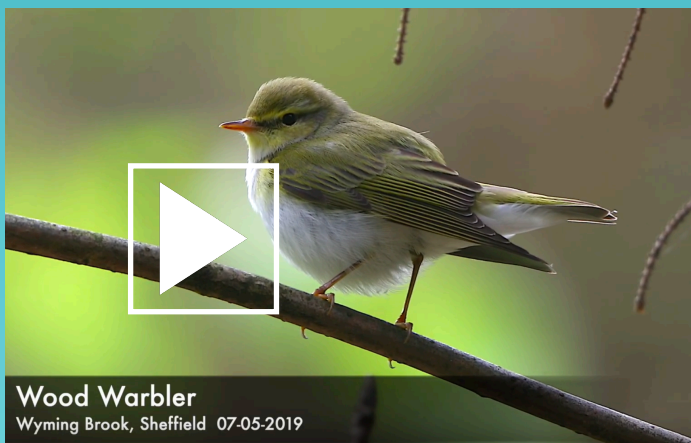
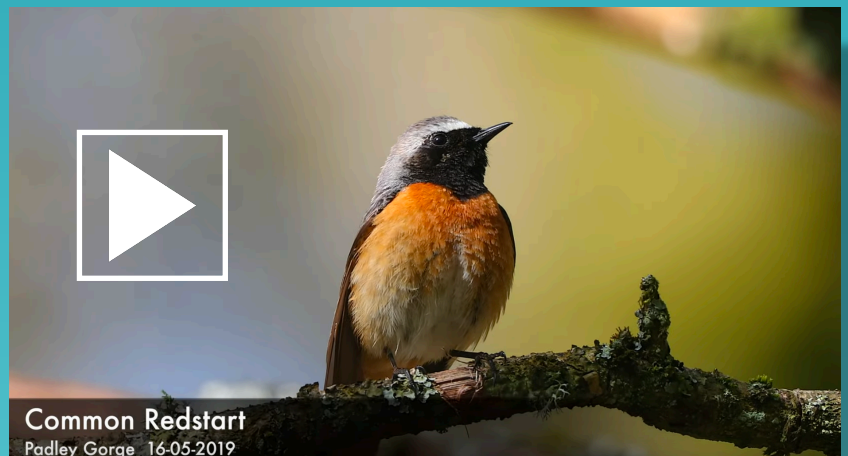
Featured videos

Common Scoter at Orgreave 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.

Common Redstart singing at Padley Gorge by Pete Garrity



Wood Warbler singing at Wyming Brook by Pete Garrity

Temminck's Stint at Orgreave by Pete Garrity





LATEST NEWS



MEET RICHARD HILL, OUR NEW SBSG CHAIR



Richard has identified key objectives that he hopes we can achieve -

- ◆ streamline the running of the Group;
- ◆ increase our membership, particularly among young people through education and engagement;
- ◆ form closer links with local & regional groups;
- ◆ expand our recording effort through new technology.

Read Richard's full chair's statement [here](#)

Paul Medforth 1951 – 2019



In July we were greatly saddened by the news of Paul's untimely and sudden death.

Paul was a member of SBSG for over 30 years, served on the Committee between 1996 and 2002 and will be best remembered for his efforts in organising the group's field trips for many, many years. As the fall in numbers attending our monthly field trips in the nineties began to make the cost of coach hire prohibitive Paul took on the responsibility for organising and driving minibuses to all the traditional birding venues. With his customary cheerfulness Paul did a superb job of managing the early morning starts and late evening finishes not to mention safely transporting a dozen or more enthusiasts on long days out. In that way, non-drivers,

youngsters and people new to the group got to see birds that they might otherwise have struggled to see and got to meet and know fellow Sheffield birders. Many group members were very grateful to Paul for all his hard work.

Paul enjoyed birding. He was as happy watching the birds in his Dronfield garden or Ecclesall Woods as seeing a rarity at Spurn. And he was a sociable birder. He liked talking with people about birds and that no doubt sustained his efforts as field trip organiser. His outgoing personality also served him well as an active volunteer in the Sheffield RSPB members group, serving on the committee alongside his wife Janet for many years, manning stalls at RSPB events and leading guided walks in the local area.

Less well known were Paul's contributions in other areas including working on a range of conservation projects, monitoring the Hen Harrier nest site in 2007 and carrying out moorland, woodland and farm surveys for the BTO in a number of years.

And bird watching was only one of Paul's interests. He devoted time to motor bikes, railways, family history, home brewing, music and even Chesterfield FC. He lived life to the full.

Back to bird watching and a personal note: Paul, myself, Mike Fenner and Paul Pearsall got together in 2002 to form the Gang of Four, the GOF, and for the next 15 years competed to see which of us could see the most bird species locally and nationally during the course of the year without expending too much effort in the process. Utterly silly but good fun particularly as we'd have a monthly meeting in the pub to ridicule each other's ID skills and record keeping, never Paul's strongest attribute. At the end of the year the winner's name was inscribed on an impressive trophy and the cup presented in the local pub. And that of course was what birding was for Paul, a hobby to be enjoyed and shared with others.



And a final note. At Paul's funeral in Chesterfield the crematorium hall was packed and with over 40 SBSG and RSPB members there to say farewell. Paul will be greatly missed by many in the birding fraternity.

Pete Brown

[Back to Welcome Page](#)

Indoor Meetings

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



Wednesday 11th September

Mark Cocker - Our Place: Do we have time to save British Wildlife?

MARK COCKER is an author of creative non-fiction. He is also a naturalist and environmental tutor, who writes and broadcasts on nature and wildlife in a variety of national media. In 2018 he released a new book *Our Place* (Cape), on the fate of British nature in the twentieth century, and completed 30 years as a *Guardian* country diarist.

His 11 other books include works of biography, history, literary criticism and memoir. They include *Claxton: Field Notes from a Small Planet* (2014) and *Birds and People* (2013). The latter was published to international acclaim and was a collaboration with the photographer David Tipling. Between them these two were shortlisted for six literary awards including the Thwaites/Wainwright Prize. His book *Crow Country* was shortlisted for several awards, including the Samuel Johnson Prize, and won the New Angle Prize (2009). In 2016 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Literature from the University of East Anglia, where he has recently placed his archive.



Mark has travelled in more than 50 countries on six continents and in 1999 was awarded a Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship to study birds in magico-medicinal practices in Benin and Cameroon. For the last 35 years his home has been in Norfolk, where much of his spare time is devoted to the restoration of a small wooded fen called Blackwater. He is married to the arts professional Mary Muir, from whom he gets many of his best ideas!

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



Wednesday 9th October

John Reilly

**New Guinea -
The Evolution of
Paradise**

John's talk 'New Guinea - Evolution of Paradise' interweaves three of his lifelong passions - travel, birds and evolution. During the last five years, he has spent a total of over three months travelling extensively throughout the region, including visits to several remote mountains and offshore islands, in search of some of the most remarkable birds on the planet. More than a travelogue, his talk will also explain how many of the island's iconic species are thought to have evolved: including the huge and secretive Cassowaries, the numerous night birds - owls, owlet-nightjars and frogmouths - the array of exotic parrots and parakeets, and the bewildering number of passerines that include no less than seven endemic families. However, it is the remarkable birds-of-paradise and the bowerbirds that top most birders' wish lists and John will recount his efforts to see and photograph these remarkable 'jewels' and explain the origin of their bizarre plumages and unique behaviours.



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

[Back to Welcome Page](#)

Pete Brown

“Free bird”

Free Bird 2016 update

In 2016 Pete Brown set out to see how many bird species he could find in the SBSG recording area at no cost to his pocket or the planet. Through species sponsorship and other fund raising activities the “Free Bird” year raised over £3,400 for Cancer Research UK prompted by the loss of the group’s former chair and long-time stalwart, Mike Fenner, to cancer. Subsequent talks about the year to a range of societies in the local area have pushed that figure to £4,100 with the prospect of increasing that total still further.



The “Free Bird” never ending tour continues this September with talks with groups at the following venues:

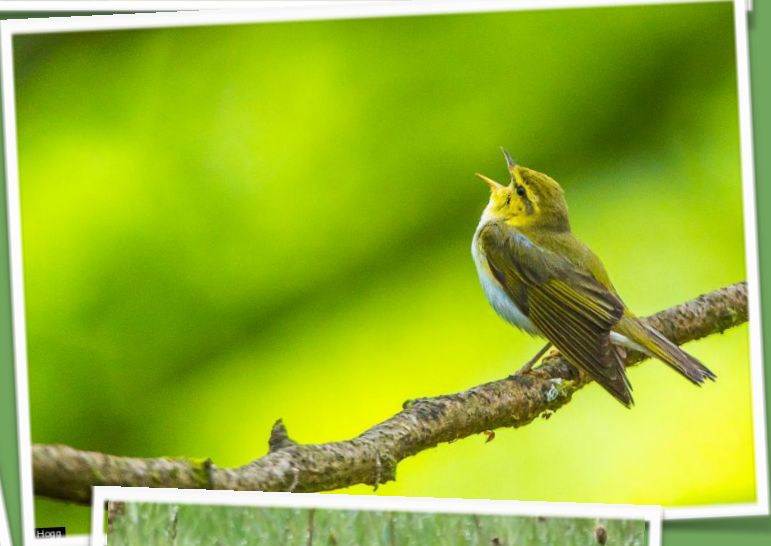
Monday 9th September 7:30: Wadsley and Loxley Commoners. Wadsley Church Hall, Worrall Road, S6 4BG.

Friday 20th September 7:30: Rotherham and District Ornithological Society, The United Reform Church, Wickersley Road, Rotherham, S60 4JN.

SBSG members and friends would be most welcome to attend.

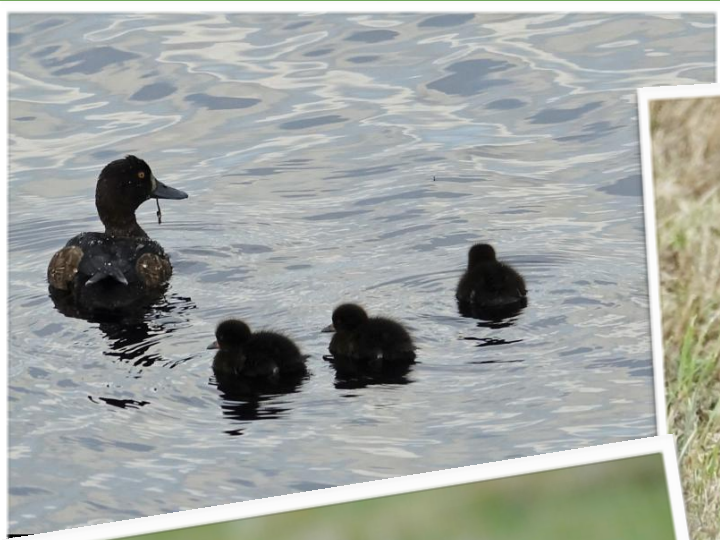
Photo Gallery

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









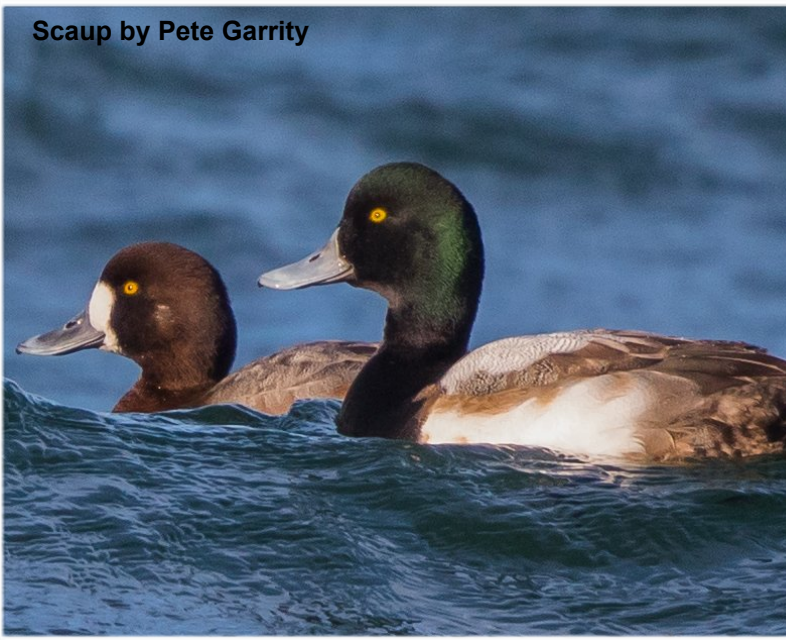




[Back to Welcome Page](#)

BTO ID Video Identifying Diving Ducks

Scaup by Pete Garrity



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

BTO ID Video Identifying Winter Buntings (Reed, Little, Snow & Lapland)

Snow Bunting by Pete Garrity



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

Photo of the Month

The winner chosen by the committee for the period MAY - JULY 2019 is:

Yellow-legged Gull by Andy Deighton



Equipment:

Canon 7Dmkii, Canon 100-400mm mkii

Notes:

“After the excitement of last summer, the Gulls at Norfolk bridge have been a bit of a disappointment this year. Railtrack have decimated the trees on the embankment nearby, and one of the buildings has been demolished giving the area a very open feel now. This 3cy/second summer YLG was on the weir on one of the few occasions birds have been present, and as it took off this was the sharpest of the series of shots taken. Open wing shots are useful helping with ageing Gulls, and to check the extent of moult. In this bird you can see that the outer four primaries are old and worn, with the inner 4 primaries being newly replaced grey feathers, with p5 and p6 missing or regrowing.”

Bird of the Month



September Bird of the Month – Swallow

Although the first swallow is often seen as a sign that summer is just around the corner, one of the best times to see this species in numbers is September. Birds can build up feeding over lowland wetland sites such as Carr Vale, Thrybergh CP and Orgreave lakes, and in poor weather flocks can be “grounded” in residential areas (160 on wires in the Stannington area on 9 September 2014, and, exactly a year later, over 200 on wires on a foggy Baslow morning), but I think they are a great “vis-mig” bird in September.

Most days a trickle of birds passes through to the south-west, but often, around the third week of the month, there is a “big day”. You become aware of the familiar twittering call and a few birds move through, and then a few more. Scanning out to the east it is apparent that hirundines, particularly swallows, are moving in numbers.

At sites such as Redmires, Ramsley and Middleton Moor, parties drop in to drink from the surface, re-orientate themselves, and move off between west and south-west over the moorland. Sadly numbers are not as great as they were, but it is still something worth looking out for.

Ron Blagden

Mystery Bird ?



Mystery Bird for May 2019



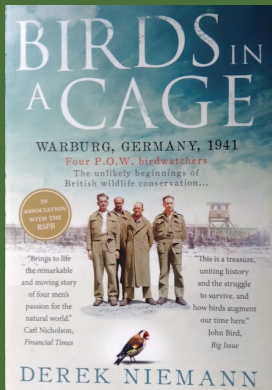
Answer by Andy Deighton [HERE](#)

Mystery Bird September 2019

Due to holidays you will have to wait for the May mystery bird answer but until then here's a tricky gull for you to identify, as usual, provided by Andy Deighton - if there's one family I really struggle to identify, this is it!



Book Review - Birds in a Cage



Pete Brown reviews this “highly recommended” book which tells the compelling story of four young officers who were POW’s in Germany and Poland during WW2 and how they overcame anxiety, deprivation and boredom by recording the natural history and birdlife that they could see. Read his full review [here](#).



e-Newsletter

Welcome back to the E-newsletter and we hope you had a great summer of birding. We also hope you enjoyed the September 2019 issue. 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](#)

