



SBSG e-Newsletter January 2017

Recent Highlights (Nov - Dec 2016)

November

November began where October left off with two **Common Scoter** at Thrybergh C.P, at least one Twite at Orgreave (remaining throughout November) and the Snow Bunting at Broomhead Moor (until the 2nd). An adult **Caspian Gull** was at Effingham Road on the 3rd and a **Curlew** at Orgreave was the first of several unseasonal waders at the site. A **Great Grey Shrike** was at Barbrook on the morning of the 4th.

A large flock of **Lesser Redpoll** at Orgreave throughout November yielded at least two **Mealy Redpoll** on the 4th. At Thrybergh Tip on the 6th two **Little Egrets** were down, and four **Whooper Swan** and 65 **Pink-footed Geese** went through, with 200 of the latter east at Upper Midhope. The first Waxwings (30), of what will hopefully be a Waxwing winter, were seen briefly at Orgreave on the 7th and three **Whooper Swans** at Thrybergh C.P were equally brief after being seen off by the local Mute Swans.

The first **Long-tailed Duck** in our area for over seven years was found on the River Rother at RVCP on the 9th where it remained until the 11th.



Long-tailed Duck (RVCP – P.Brown)

The same day four **Scaup** were at Orgreave early that morning.



Long-tailed Duck (RVCP – P.Garrity)

At Pit-house West the **Bittern** was again seem heading to roost at 16:45 on the 10th and again on the 18th. On the 16th a confiding **Waxwing** was outside the Donkey Derby in Chesterfield where it remained until the 19th. The wandering juvenile **Whooper Swan** was at Orgreave on the 16th with a further 15 there from mid-morning.



Whooper Swan (Orgreave – M. Smethurst)



Common Scoter (Orgreave – M.Reeder)

At Heeley City Farm 36 **Waxwings** went north on the 17th. On 19th a calling **Cetti's Warbler** was seen well at Poolsbrook Marsh. At Orgreave on the 20th female **Scaup**, **Common Scoter** (until 22nd), **Redshank** and **Ringed Plover** were present, the latter being the first November record at this site. Also on the 20th two **Whooper Swan** were at Middleton Moor and a single **Waxwing** was at Holme Hall.

A **Knot** was at Orgreave on the 22nd and the **Shag** at Linacre clocked a 12 month stay – though it was sadly found dead on the 21st December. A **Water Pipit** at Staveley Sewage Farm was an excellent find of this now very scarce local species.

A fine looking adult **Caspian Gull** was on the roofs around Effingham Road on the 23rd and 24th. What was presumably the same bird was briefly at Orgreave on 27th.



Caspian Gull (Effingham Road – A.Deighton)

A **Waxwing** flew south over Bolehill Flash on the 28th. A report (via info services) of a female **Two-barred Crossbill** at Broomhead on the 29th was intriguing.

December

A Red-breasted Merganser at RVCP on the 2nd only the second recorded in South Yorkshire this year! Even scarcer these days were the two Bewick's Swans found at Orgreave early morning on the 3rd and present until dusk, when they flew northwest, the following day. A Great Grey Shrike was briefly in Clearfell at Lockerbrook on the 4th. An imm drake **Scaup** was at Thrybergh C.P on the 7th, whilst nearby a **Little Egret** was at Kilnhurst Flash.



Bewicks Swan (Orgreave – M. Smethurst)

Another imm Scaup was at Orgreave from 10th with a ferruginous type hybrid also there. A party of eight adult Whooper Swans were also at Orgreave the following day.



Scaup (Orgreave – M.Reeder)

A good movement of **Pink-footed Geese** took place on the 17th with skeins of 300 through Midhope and Orgreave, 120 east over Stocksbridge and an unseen heard west over Silverwood Lagoon.



Aythya – ferruginous hybrid (Orgreave – M.Reeder)

Also on the 17th a **Cetti's Warbler** was calling at Pit-house West.

A 1st yr **Caspian Gull** was at the Gin House Lane Recycling Centre, Rotherham on 18th. A male **Mealy Redpoll** was among the Lessers at Orgreave on the 21st.

The 22nd saw the start of the **Waxwing** invasion proper, with the first flock reported on Manchester Road, Crosspool. At Orgreave at least four **Mealy Redpoll** were among the Lessers. A single **Merlin** was also at Orgreave and a very elusive Short-eared Owl put in a couple of brief appearances at Silverwood Lagoon.

On Boxing Day **Waxwings** were at Crosspool (25+) and Greenhill (10) with birds seen going to roost at Redmires that evening.



Waxwing (Crosspool – P.Garrity)



Waxwing (Greenhill – A.Hill)



Waxwing (Crosspool – D.Wood)

An unseasonal **Little Egret** was reported on the Don at Winn Gardens on the 30th.

Waxwings continued to dominate until the end of the month with a peak flock of 150 over Heeley City Farm on New Year's Eve and four parties, totaling 131 birds roosting at Redmires that evening.



Mark Reeder

Membership 2017

Membership fees for 2017 remain as before - £14 for an individual and £16 for a couple/family. Our membership secretary Martin Hodgson will be available at the January indoor meeting to collect fees but if you can't attend the meeting, you can still renew by printing off and completing [this](#) form or following the link below.

On-line application forms for Adults and U21s can be found [here](#). The form can also be used to submit changes in personal details.

Please note Martin's email address has now changed and the membership forms / web-site will be updated accordingly. His new email address is:

mjhodgson43@btinternet.com

Waxwing Winter

As the 2016/17 winter is shaping up nicely as the best 'Waxwing winter' for some years, here is a link to an article by Dave Wood documenting the 2010/2011 influx in our area, with some useful information on ageing and sexing.

It can be found [here](#).

Sheffield Parks Survey

2015-16 Update



Kingfisher in Endcliffe Park (David Wood)

The survey has now concluded so please gather all of the records you have and submit them as soon as possible via the website. Alternatively your completed forms can be submitted at an indoor meeting to a committee member. Details of the survey and the sites covered are on the website [here](#).

What to look out for in January and February

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.

Optical / Photographic Equipment for sale

If you have any equipment to offer for sale that someone in the group might be interested in please contact [me](#) or any other committee member to include in the next e-newsletter.

Archived Articles

Both Richard Hill's "Look Back" and Ron Blagden's "What to look out for" full series can now be found in the member's area under Publications then Articles & Reports.

Committee Matters

The committee has agreed to maintain subscription levels at the same level as in recent years, including free membership for under-21s and those in full-time education. We very much hope you will renew your membership for 2017 and that you will continue to enjoy the Group's activities. Your ongoing support is appreciated and is what makes it possible for the Group to do what it does.

We recently discussed preparations for the 2015 Annual Report, and are pleased to say that it is in the home straight. With the combination of excellent artwork, high quality photographs and attention to detail in the text, we trust it will prove worth the wait!



After managing the Group's database of records for, well, forever, David Williams is stepping down from the role, having given terrific service to the Group over many years. As a result, we are in real need of members with some level of expertise in database management (Access or Excel) and a willingness to get involved with a crucial aspect of the Group's activities. If this sounds like you (it is ideally a role for more than one individual), please do come forward and get in touch with me as Chair (david.wood@sheffield.ac.uk), or with any member of the committee. We can then discuss further details and handover/ briefing needs.

With best wishes for 2017,



David Wood.

Free bird 2016

Pete Brown's attempt to see as many species as possible in the SBSG recording area at no cost to his pocket or the planet and to raise a few bob for Cancer Research UK in the process. At the time of writing there are only a few days to go but with 154 species on the list there's time yet to get one or two more before the year end.

The final total will be revealed at the January meeting and if you've been kind enough to sponsor Pete in his efforts he'll be delighted to see you then.

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:

March – Date TBC

Derwentdale Raptor Watch



Peregrine © D.Wood

Our annual trip to Derwentdale nearly always delivers something special. Previous years have included Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Hen Harrier and many other quality species. Further details including exact location (normally Windy Corner) and timings will follow nearer the time. Please keep your eyes on the web-site for the latest news.

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 11th Jan at 7.15pm

**Mark James Pearson –
Filey International - Arrivals &
Departures at North Yorkshire's
Bird Observatory**



Mark lives at Filey and with the east coast Bird Observatory (literally) on his doorstep spends plenty of his time enjoying birds and wildlife, and relishes the opportunity to hit the local patch regularly. He is also a writer, ecologist, & musician / songwriter.

A journey back to 1978



Richard Hill looks back to the archives and remembers 1978, the 'winter of discontent' but ironically a great sledging winter! Two Popes died in consecutive months but thankfully birding prayers were answered with highlights including Wallcreeper, Great Bustard, Ivory Gull, White-throated Sparrow and the Black-browed Albatross which returned to Hermaness. You can find his latest detailed account [here](#).

Indoor Meetings - 2017

**Wednesday 8th Feb at 7.15pm
Matthew Capper – RSPB Old Moor
Reserve**



Image © M.Capper

In February we welcome back long time member Matthew Capper to talk about the RSPB's chain of reserves in the Dearne Valley, just up the road near Barnsley. A former secretary of the SBSG, Matthew has been rather inactive for a number of years since joining the staff of the RSPB in 2006. Many of you may remember him for leading the annual raptor walk in the Upper Derwent.

Since 2009 he has been site manager of the Dearne Valley reserves, based at RSPB Old Moor. His talk will focus on Old Moor and the other reserves, covering their history, wildlife and future plans.

Garden wildlife health advice

SBSG member Bill Padley is concerned about afflictions affecting birds at the bird table. He has been corresponding with Dr Becki Lawson, Research Fellow at the Institute of Zoology. Becki is keen to see cases logged [here](#) on the website.

There are currently two main areas of concern.

Trichomonosis in Garden Birds

There has been an epidemic throughout Europe. Greenfinch and chaffinch have been most affected by this infectious disease but others including house sparrow, siskin, goldfinch and bullfinch are susceptible. "Trike" causes disease at the back of the throat and gullet so the birds have difficulty swallowing.



Bullfinch with "Trike" - © Peter Garrity

Typically birds sit on the bird table, hungry but unable to eat. They become lethargic with fluffed-up plumage and don't fly away when approached.

Finches often have matted wet plumage around the face and beak. When the birds, typically, die they are often very emaciated. The disease is caused by a parasite transmitted between birds via food or drinking water contaminated from an infected bird. The wood pigeon beneath the bird table might apparently be a carrier.

Leg abnormalities in Finches

You may have seen leg lesions on chaffinches (also rarely bramblings and bullfinches), which look like a very swollen white leg. There are two main causes, a virus and a mite. They can affect other finches also.

Generally

If you wish to protect your garden birds, the primary action is to keep feeding stations clean and disinfected. The solution when these diseases occur is to cease feeding for a week or two while the birds disperse and then recommence with clean stations. Fact sheets are available from the above website and make informative reading.

Many thanks to Bill for this timely advice.



Great Tit with Avian Pox - © Peter Garrity