



SBSG e-Newsletter January 2016

Recent Highlights (Oct - Dec 2015)

October

There were obvious signs of **Coot** numbers rising in the region with 170 birds recorded at Orgrave Lakes on the 1st, 174 at Thrybergh CP on the 5th and at least 110 at Catcliffe Flash on the 7th.

A Gull count at Middleton Moor on the 3rd produced 850 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, 180 **Black-headed Gulls** and three **Yellow-legged Gulls** whilst the annual **Starling** roost there only amounted to around 300 birds. Elsewhere on the 5th at Redmires Middle Res there were 472 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** and four **Yellow-legged Gulls**.

The first sizable **Redwing** count in the month involved 120 at Ramsley Moor on the 6th whilst a **Black Tern** reported from Thrybergh CP on the 7th stayed until the 10th. The 8th of October proved to be a significant day for the movement of **Pink-footed Geese** across the area with a total of 1,450 birds recorded. The largest report involved 500+ birds in two skeins heading E at Nether Hay. A further two skeins were reported on the 9th with a total of 338 crossing to the NW over Sheffield.

Two welcome reports were received on the 10th with a fly over (N) of a **Rock Pipit** at Redmires Res and news of a **Firecrest** caught and ringed at Bradfield Moors. The following day (11th) was graced by the reappearance of the **Cettis Warbler** in Rotherham when brief calls/song

were heard.

The first raptor highlight came on the 13th when a **Red Kite** was reported flying over Kilnhurst Ings at 13.45. Evidence of finch flocks increasing was supported by a number of reports on the 14th with 100 **Goldfinch** at Rivelin Rough, 150 **Goldfinch** at Big Moor and an impressive 500 **Linnet** feeding in fields at Peat Pitts.

Winter thrush numbers continued to build on the 16th with at least 200 **Fieldfare** at Leash Fen and a minimum of 400 **Redwing** flying W over Intake. Significant numbers were also recorded on the 17th with peak counts including 490 **Fieldfare** at Ramsley Moor, at least 1,000 **Redwing** flying W over Woodseats and 840 **Redwing** W over Redmires.

The 17th also proved to be another good day for passage geese as records of circa 2,800 **Pink-footed Geese** were reported from across the area. The most significant counts included 520 in three skeins at Redmires, and at least 700 in five skeins at Bowden Housteads Wood. A further 400+ flew E in three skeins over Eyam on the 18th. Elsewhere on the 18th a single **Mediterranean Gull** flew N over Haugh Rd, Rawmarsh and a 2nd winter **Caspian Gull** was reported from Orgrave Lakes.



Caspian Gull – M Reeder

Highlights on the 19th Oct included a single **Red Kite** over Stocksbridge at 10.45am, a **Great Grey Shrike** at Brown Edge Farm and five **Yellow-legged Gulls** (four adults and one 2nd winter) at Redmires Res. Winter **Starling** flocks were developing and a flock of 500+ were reported from Southey Green on the 22nd.

Woodpigeon movements were noted on the 25th with a max of 3,100 SW at Redmires Res. Also present at Redmires were 210 **Lapwing** and two **Whooper Swan** whilst elsewhere there were 135 **Golden Plover** at Peat Pitts, a single **Green Sandpiper** flew over Blackburn Meadows NR and a **Great Grey Shrike** was at Leash Fen. A further report of **Green Sandpiper** came from Blackburn Meadows NR when three birds were present on the 28th. A first winter **Caspian Gull** was at Norfolk Bridge, Sheffield on the 29th and a single **Whooper Swan** flew NE over Thrybergh CP on the 30th.

Movements of winter thrushes were recorded on the 31st when at least 1,000 **Fieldfare** roosted in heather at Totley Moss, 200+ **Redwing** flew SW at Linacre Res and 1,525 **Fieldfare** flew S/SE in four hours at Rawmarsh. Decent **Woodpigeon** numbers were also noted on the same day with 1,000 S at Redmires Res, 300+ SW at Linacre Res and 400 S at Green Moor.

November

Reports of passage movements continued on the 1st November with 200 **Pink-footed Geese** SE at Millhouses, 15,350 **Woodpigeon**

S/SW in one hour at Redmires Res and 200 **Fieldfare** S at the same location. Highlights elsewhere on the 1st included a **Yellow-legged Gull** at Langsett Res and a **Great Grey Shrike** at Ewden beck near the Shooting Lodge. **Pink-footed Geese** were also seen on the 2nd with 350 S at Abbeydale and 1,500+ in seven skeins E over Low Moor.



Great Grey Shrike (Leash Fen) – P Ridsdale

A **Great Grey Shrike** appeared at LeashFen on the 4th November whilst elsewhere **Lapwing** numbers were increasing with 225 at Redmires Top Res on the 8th. The 8th proved to be a historic day when a MEGA turned up in Chesterfield town centre. A **Crag Martin** was found by Roy Frost in the gloom at the twisted spire of St Mary and All Saints church. This was the first bird for Derbyshire and for the Sheffield recording area. The bird remained around the spire on the 9th and 10th.



Crag Martin - Andy Deighton



Crag Martin - David Wood

Woodpigeon were still moving on the 12th with 1,600 SW over Fulwood and a **Firecrest** was caught and ringed at Renishaw Park on the same day.

The **Crag Martin** reappeared on the 13th and was noted as roosting at the Proact Football Stadium on the 14th. It was then seen at both the Stadium and Crooked Spire daily until the 19th when it was last seen leaving the Proact Stadium in the afternoon.



Crag Martin – Peter Garrity

Other interesting records during the period included 10,000 **Starling** gathering at Middleton Moor on the 15th, 540 **Pink-footed Geese** in two skeins E over Silverwood Lagoon on the 17th and a single **Kittiwake** at Thrybergh CP on the 20th.

At least eight **Shag** were reported from Linacre Res on the 21st and eight were confirmed there on the 22nd.



Shag – Pete Brown

Elsewhere on the 22nd there was a **Bittern** at Pit-house West, single **Yellow-legged** and **Caspian Gulls** at Norfolk Bridge and a **Great Grey Shrike** was present at Ramsley Moor. The eight **Shag** were still at Linacre Res on the 26th and a **Bittern** at Pit-house West again on the 27th. A **Jack Snipe** was reported from Orgreave Lakes on the same day.

Around 200 **Golden Plover** were at Peat Pits on the 28th, **Shag** numbers

had reduced to six at Linacre Res on the 29th and five **Jack Snipe** were at Markham on the same date. Also reported on the 29th were 300 **Fieldfare** at Silverwood Lagoon and 36,000 **Starling** at Middleton Moor.



Shag – Richard Hill

December

Two reports of **Short-eared Owl** were received on the 1st with one at Silverwood Lagoon and one at Orgreave Lakes. Good numbers of **Goosander** (30) were also present at Orgreave on the 1st. Eight **Shag** were reported (6 photographed) from Linacre Res on the 3rd and then 6 were present on the 4th whilst elsewhere 250+ **Golden Plover** were in a field at West Nab on the same day. Notable duck numbers on the 5th included 217 **Pochard** at Orgreave Lakes, 12 **Mandarin** at Beauchief Abbey and there were 14 **Goosander** at Hillsborough Park. **Short-eared Owls** featured again on the 6th with one at Orgreave Lakes and one at Silverwood Lagoon whilst a **Barn Owl** was seen at Edge Mount. Other interesting records from Orgreave on the 6th included a single **Snow Bunting** and seven **Grey Partridge**.

A pair of **Peregrines** returned to St George's nest platform on the 7th with the male showing signs of courtship display.



Sheffield University webcam

On the 9th at least two **Peregrines** were seen flying around Sheffield University Arts Tower car park and a single adult was at Bernard Road incinerator.

A **Green Sandpiper** flew over Blackburn Meadows NR on the 9th whilst two **Caspian Gulls** were seen on roofs at Effingham Road, Attercliffe on the 10th. At least 300 **Fieldfare** were present in fields at Silverwood Lagoon on the same date. A duck count at Rother Valley CP on the 13th produced 175 **Wigeon**, 148 **Tufted Duck**, a single juv **Scaup** and 353 **Coot**. Elsewhere on the same day there were 200 **Golden Plover** at Wentworth Park, 1,856 **Black-headed Gulls** at Langsett Res, 3 **Shag** at Linacre Res and a single **Cetti's Warbler** calling at Poolsbrook Marsh.

Single **Caspian Gulls** were reported from Attercliffe again on the 14th and 15th whilst two **Black-tailed Godwits** reported from Orgreave Lakes on the 16th were still present on the 17th. **Lapwing** numbers were building with 170+ at Thrybergh CP on the 18th and 184 at Freeburch on the 21st. Three **Caspian Gulls** at Rectory Road, Duckmanton on the 22nd included one adult and two 2cy. On the 24th 400 **Golden Plover** and 150 **Fieldfare** were at Peat Pits whilst 1,700 **Black-headed Gulls** were reported from Broomhead Res. There were still geese moving on the 25th with 146 **Pink-footed Geese** SE over Attercliffe, the single female **Scaup** was still present at Rother Valley CP on the 26th and gull numbers at roost were impressive on the same day when Broomhead Res produced 2,000 **Black-headed Gulls** and 248 **Herring Gulls**. A single **Jack Snipe** was seen at Silverwood Lagoon on the 27th and in the morning of the 28th a number of reports of **Pink-footed Geese** skeins included 230 in two skeins W over Thrybergh CP, 325 in two skeins W over Stocksbridge and 160 in two skeins NW over Linacre Res. On the same day the **Starling** roost at Middleton Moor had reached 45,000 in number.



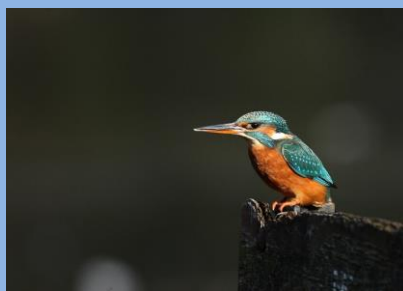
Starling – Middleton Moor – Dave Wood

A skein of 317 **Pink-footed Geese** W over Heeley City farm on the 29th was probably the same group recorded at Loxley Valley ten minutes later. Gulls in the Attercliffe area on the 29th included at least two **Caspian Gulls**, a first winter **Glaucous Gull** and 453 **Great Black-backed Gulls**. A **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was recorded at Calver Sough on the 29th whilst another **Caspian Gull** was at Effingham Road, Attercliffe on the 30th and the three **Shag** remained at Linacre Res.

Sheffield Parks Survey 2015-16 Update

As the Parks Survey enters its second (and final) year, many observers will be continuing to survey their site to complement 2015 records. However, a handful of parks are still in need of a surveyor. These are, with indicative post code and OS grid reference:

Concord Park (S5)
Crabtree Pond (S5 / 362899)
Firth Park (S5/ 368910)
Longley Park (S5/ 358914)
Meersbrook Allotments (S8 / 360842)
Roe Woods, Burngreave (S5 / 357903)
Wincobank (Wood) (S9 / 375907)



Kingfisher in Endcliffe Park (David Wood)

If you are able to survey any of these, please contact David Wood (david.wood@sheffield.ac.uk) for details of how to get involved. The minimum requirement is to count all birds present in the park at least once each season, with two visits in the breeding season. Full details are available at

<http://www.sbsg.org/index.php/survey-work/sheffield-parks-survey>

Membership News

As one year ends and another starts, subs are due... Once again the committee has agreed that these remain unchanged and continue to represent great value for money at £14 individual and £16 for joint membership. We're also maintaining our offer of free membership for under 21s (or those in full-time education). For that you get a copy of the excellent annual report, entry to all Group meetings and activities, our bi-monthly E-newsletter, and access to the members' area of the website, which we'll be developing further over the year ahead. And, of course, you'll be continuing to support the Group's efforts in recording local birds and feeding into regional and national studies and conservation efforts. For details of how to re-join (or join!) visit [here](#).

Indoor Meetings 2016

Visit [here](#) to see the complete list of indoor meetings for 2016. They start on **Wednesday January 13th** with a presentation covering birding in Japan by Tony Sawbridge.



Tony Sawbridge

Location is Sheffield University Hicks Building, Lecture Theatre 3 (**note LT5 from Jan-May**) and the meetings commence at 7.15pm. Please keep an eye on the web site for any further changes.

Indoor Meetings 2016

Our indoor meeting on **Wednesday 10th February** features Tim Birkhead who be presenting "A bird's Egg: The Most Perfect Thing"



Tim Birkhead has been Professor of Behavioural Ecology at the University of Sheffield since 1992 and is internationally renowned for his research on various aspects of ornithology, notably sperm competition and his long-term study of Guillemots on Skomer. He has been a Fellow of the Royal Society since 2004 and has published over a dozen books, including the acclaimed Bird Sense, The Wisdom of Birds and his seminal study of The Magpies. An accomplished lecturer, Tim was awarded the prize for best UK University Bioscience Teacher in 2013 and in 2015 won the Eisenmann Medal from the Linnaean Society of New York for excellence in ornithology and encouragement amateur ornithologists. We've been fortunate to enjoy several of Tim's previous talks to the Group, which have always been a highlight of the programme, and this one - which explores the subject of a forthcoming book - should prove another memorable night.

Committee Matters

Looking ahead to the March AGM there will be two vacancies on the committee that will need filling if the Group is to continue its range of current activities. Do consider standing: the committee meets once a month on a Weds evening between September and May.

The committee typically discusses issues around local conservation matters, survey work, website developments and the Group's publications, as well as planning indoor meetings and local field trips. At recent meetings we have agreed a response to the proposed development of Pit-house West to construct a theme park, updated the format and content of the E-Newsletter, finalised arrangements for the 2014 Annual Report and made arrangements for the forthcoming indoor meetings.

To contribute to such efforts, or to find out more as to what is involved, contact David Wood (david.wood@sheffield.ac.uk) or any member of the committee.

Photographic Equipment for sale

For sale - Canon 400mm f/5.6 telephoto lens and Canon 1D mk ii n digital camera £750. Great set-up for bird photography. Items also available separately. Contact David Wood on david.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

What to look out for in January & February

Click [here](#) to read an enlightening article by Ron Blagden which outlines some of the target birds for the early part of next year which might be found in the area.

Local Field Trips - 2016

Visit [here](#) for details of the local field trips for 2016. These may be subject to change so please keep an eye on the web site for updates.

Foreign Bird Trip Register

This is now updated and can be found at the foot of the page [here](#). Please could you send details of any recent trips to Neil Porter at :

nrporter48@hotmail.co.uk

Alternatively hand the information to Neil or another committee member at an indoor meeting.

Free Bird 2016 - The Antidote to Twitching

Pete Brown's personal challenge for 2016: "**Free Bird**". The aim, to enjoy birding in the local area at no cost to either my pocket or no extra cost to the planet. (I figure that public transport will still be running with or without me).

I simply intend to bird the SBSG area and maybe a bit beyond on foot, by bike and by bus throughout the year (OK with senility setting in I do possess a pensioner's bus pass). I've got a target of 150 species in mind for the SBSG area but this is mostly about enjoying local birding. The only rule, no use of my or anyone else's car in pursuit of that target.

I'll let you know how I get on.

Pete Brown