



## SBSG e-Newsletter March 2016

### Recent Highlights (Jan - Feb 2016)

#### January

January got off to a quiet start, the mild conditions leading to various records of resident species in song, including **Song Thrushes** at Roundwood Golf Course, Thrybergh Tip and Thrybergh CP on 1st, the latter site also holding two **Water Rails** to see in the New Year. A busy day's birding also brought an adult **Caspian Gull** on the rooftops at Attercliffe and a first-winter in the roost at Broomhead Res, as well as a **Cetti's Warbler** in song at Old Whittington SF. New Year's Day closed with both **Barn Owl** and **Short-eared Owl** at Edge Mount, excellent records for the uplands at this time of year, and further evidence of the mild conditions.



Caspian Gull – A. Deighton

Three of the long-staying **Shags** were at Linacre Res on 2nd when the female **Scaup** was again seen at Rother Valley CP, while the first-winter **Caspian Gull** frequented rooftops in the Attercliffe area, all of these continuing to be seen over the following days and weeks. Also on 2nd single **Blackcaps** visited gardens in Hillsborough and Kimberworth, with two at Moorgate, Rotherham on 3rd, when a **Chiffchaff** was at Aldwarke SF, and yet another **Blackcap** was at Sheffield University on 5th.

On the following day a fine male **Common Scoter** was an unseasonal visitor to Thrybergh CP, a decent movement of **Pink-footed Geese** saw 500 NW at Middleton Moor and the owl-fest at Edge Mount included **Barn**, **Short-eared** and two **Long-eared**.



Blackcap – P&A. Wilson

An adult **Caspian Gull** roosted at Orgreave Lakes on 8th, and on 9th three **Crossbill** were at Thornseat Delf, further **Blackcaps** visited gardens at Hangingwater and Millhouses, and **Short-eared Owls** were seen at four separate sites. Counts of 262 **Golden Plover** at Peat Pits and 229 **Mallard** at Dale Dyke Res, also on 9th, were noteworthy. An excellent count of four **Water Rails** was made at Poolsbrook Marsh on 10th, when **Barn Owls** were seen at Ughill and Roper Hill, the latter bird hunting at Redmires Res the following day, continuing the good run of this species on the moorland fringe.

A **Chiffchaff** was a good find in a Malin Bridge garden on 10th and another was at Linacre Res on 11th, when a single **Stonechat** was at Topley Moss, and a **Brambling** visited garden feeders at Norton on 13th in a very poor showing for this species. Reports of a **Black Redstart** alongside the new housing estate at Waverley on 13th were confirmed the following day in the form of a fine male, which sometimes showed well but could also prove extremely elusive.



Black Redstart – P.Garrity

A **Great Grey Shrike** was reported from Big Moor on 16th and on the following day the **Bittern** was seen flying to roost in the reedbeds at Pit-house West while a **Ring-necked Parakeet** visited feeders in a Handsworth garden and an amazing four **Blackcaps** flocked to feeders in a garden in Greystones. Also on 17th several skeins of **Pink-footed Geese** moved NW in the clear skies and an excellent count of at least 75 **Skylarks** was made by birders enjoying the **Black Redstart** at Waverley, which was joined by a female on 18th, an excellent record, while the same day saw a party of nine **Whooper Swans** drop into the adjacent Orgreave Lakes.

A search of Woodhouse Washlands on 20th revealed 20 **Snipe** and two **Jack Snipe**, and the following day brought a fine male **Red-crested Pochard** to Thrybergh CP. A count of 195 **Greylag Geese** at Thrybergh CP on 23rd was of note, though a single **Iceland Gull** there on 24th was more appreciated. The month closed with three **Shags** still at Linacre Res, the pair of **Black Redstarts** at Waverley, the Bittern again seen flying to roost at Pit-house West and a rare winter record of three **Pintail** at Redmires Res on 31st.

## February

February began with a **Mute Swan** disrupting the traffic on Main Street, Rotherham before being manhandled back to the nearby Don Canal, and at Endcliffe Park a **Little Grebe**, two **Kingfishers** and two **Dippers** provided further urban birding delights. An early **Curlew** moved NW over Rawmarsh on 2nd and two **Short-eared Owls** hunting at Totley Moss made an early return to the uplands on 3rd. After a quiet few days, a single **Dunlin** visited Orgrave Lakes and a **Red Kite** drifted over Meadowhall on 9th, with what was presumably the same bird seen the following day over the M1 at Aston. Also on 10th a good showing of **Short-eared Owls** saw three at Leash Fen, two at Totley Moss and another two at White Lee Moor, with a **Barn Owl** at Kirk Edge for good measure. On 11th a **Black Redstart** made a re-appearance at the Waverley Estate and a **Great Grey Shrike** popped up on Big Moor, the same day seeing a good passage of **Pink-footed Geese** over the area, including 354 NW over Orgrave Lakes.



Whooper Swan – P.J. Stoppard

A dedicated larophile found some reward on the rooftops at Attercliffe on 12th in the shape of a German-ringed **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, and also on 12th a herd of 15 **Whooper Swans** visited Linacre Res, where two **Shags** remained to the end of the month, and another ten **Whooper Swans** headed N at Thrybergh CP on 13th. A pair of **Stonechat** at Orgrave Lakes on 15th was a good record in a poor couple of months for this species, and on the same day at least 15 **Tree Sparrows** visited feeders at Thrybergh CP, one of the few local strongholds for this declining species. An **Oystercatcher** was at Orgrave Lakes on 16th, when the male **Black Redstart** was seen again at Waverley Estate, seen on and off to the end of the month.



Lesser-black Backed Gull – A.Deighton

A **Ring-necked Parakeet** squawked its way around St Mary's Gate on 18th, when a **Curlew** at Great Longstone marked the return of this species to the upland breeding areas. On 21st a **Jack Snipe** was an excellent upland find at Ramsley Res and four **Whooper Swans** at Middleton Moor had increased to six by the following day, being joined by the same number of **Curlew**. A **Gadwall** at Midhope Res on 22nd was the first there since 1997, and the same day saw an excellent count of at least 300 **Golden Plover** at Peat Pits, while a thorough search of Woodhouse Washlands on 23rd revealed an equally impressive nine **Jack Snipe** together with 58 **Snipe**. A pair of **Egyptian Geese** at Thrybergh CP on 24th departed the following morning and presumably accounted for a pair that appeared at Weston Park, where they remained to the end of the month. Numbers of **Curlew** typically began to build up, as evidenced by 22 at Bolsterstone and 42 at Upper Midhope on 26th, with 45 in Loxley Valley on 28th, and generally clear conditions for the last week of February resulted in almost daily passage of **Pink-footed Geese** skeins heading NW.

Also on 28th sightings of a **Red Kite** at both Redmires and nearby Porter Clough within minutes of each other no doubt related to just the one bird, and the same day brought a fine adult **Mediterranean Gull** briefly to Catcliffe Flash and a spectacular party of 50 **Whooper Swans** to Middleton Moor, where 17 remained on the last day of what proved to be a better month than might have been expected.



Egyptian Goose – M.Smethurst

## Membership News

Please refer to the web-site for the latest membership information. Membership fees for 2016 remain unchanged and continue to represent great value for money at £14 individual and £16 for joint membership, 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. For details of how to re-join (or join!) visit [here](#). Alternatively speak with a committee member at an indoor meeting or contact us via the web-site.

## On-line Membership Application Forms

Our new on-line application forms for Adults and U21s can be found [here](#). Membership application/renewal is now easily done with one click of a button. Fill in the on-line form and click submit. Payment instructions are shown on the form. The form can also be used to submit changes in personal details. The PDF printable versions are still available.

## Membership Renewal and Annual Reports

By now it is hoped that everyone who was a paid member in 2015 will have received their 2014 Annual Reports. If anyone has not received theirs yet, please contact Martin Hodgson at [martin@hodgson54.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:martin@hodgson54.orangehome.co.uk). Those who are still to pay their 2016 membership fee can click [here](#) to complete an online renewal form.



## Indoor Meetings 2016

Visit [here](#) to see the complete list of indoor meetings for 2016. Location is **Sheffield University Hicks Building, Lecture Theatre 5 and the meetings will commence at 7.15pm.** Please keep an eye on the web site for any further changes.

### Forthcoming Meetings:

#### Wednesday 9th March at 7.15pm.

##### SBSG - AGM

An evening packed with interest will include the following:

- Secretary's report - Richard Hill
- Annual Accounts - Ron Blagden
- Committee Nominations
- 2015 Review of the year - Richard Hill
- Talk on the Congo - Helen Hipperson
- Talk on Tobago - Stuart Davies
- Recorder's Report - Ron Blagden

#### Wednesday 13th April at 7.15pm

Our indoor meeting features Richard Hill who will be presenting "**Firecrests**". Richard is a major contributor to the Group being Honorary Secretary / Annual Report editor since 1997. View Richard's profile [here](#).



Firecrest – P. Garrity

This diminutive gem of a bird has held a special fascination for tonight's speaker since childhood. This talk documents a personal journey of discovery taking in the species' recent history in the UK, with particular reference to the Sheffield area.

## 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.

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

## 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](mailto:nrporter48@hotmail.co.uk)

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

## Outstanding Records for 2015

As we are about to commence the Annual Report for 2015, we would be grateful if you would submit any outstanding records as soon as possible via the web-site or via any Committee Member, many thanks.

## 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.

### Next Field Trip:

**Saturday 5th March**

**Raptor Watch at Derwentdale**



Goshawk – P. Garrity

Our annual visit to Derwentdale to look for raptors. Previous highlights include Peregrine, Goshawk, Sparrowhawk, Merlin, Kestrel, Hen Harrier & Common Buzzard. Other species that we may see include, Common Crossbill, Siskin, Whooper Swan and Goosander to name a few; who knows we might also be "outraged" by Ravens!

Warm clothing a must for this exposed spot! Meet at Windy Corner at 8.30 am.

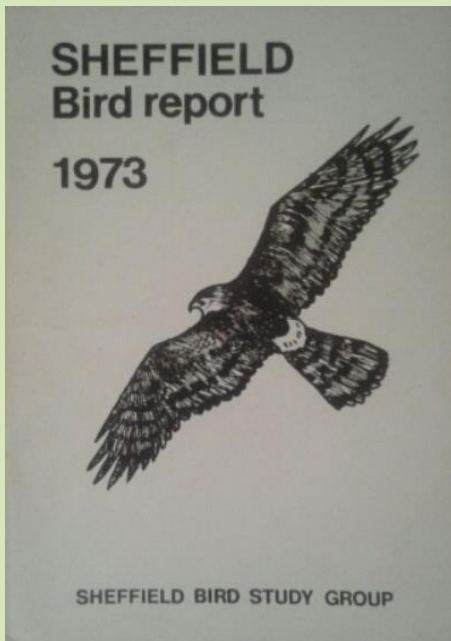
## Optical / Photographic Equipment for sale

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.

## What to look out for in March & April

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.

## A Journey back to 1973



Richard Hill looks back on memories of 1973 reflecting on momentous world events at the time, touching on UK birding highlights including Cettis Warbler, Ovenbird, Little Swift to name a few and also reviewing the first full year of the SBSG which culminated in the 1973 Sheffield Bird Report. Richard also comments on the early dynamics of the Group's Committee which included Marcus Moore, Keith Tayles, Harold Holland, David Herringshaw, Betty Moore and Philip Nolan. You can find his detailed account [here](#).

## Stanage Forum News

The SBSG is working through the Stanage Forum with Peak District National Park and the Eastern Moors Partnership to get even better coverage of Ring Ouzel movements and breeding across the Sheffield Moors. It remains an iconic bird, depicted on the 'Ring Ouzels Rock' T shirts which are still available via Neil Porter ([nrporter48@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nrporter48@hotmail.co.uk)). These have been modelled by elegant SBSG members as far away as South Africa! You can also support Ring Ouzel Management by buying a Stick up for Stanage sticker from the on-line store (<https://shop.peakdistrict.gov.uk>)

## Scarce Breeding Raptors in the Peak District 2014

Close monitoring of scarce breeding raptors in the Peak District is carried out by two groups: the South Peak Raptor Study Group (SPRSG) and the Peak District Raptor Monitoring Group (PDRMG). Since 2011, they have combined their Annual Reports into one "Peak District Raptor Report", which outlines the (mixed) fortunes of raptors in our area. A summary of the key points contained in the report for 2014 can be found on the SBSG website [here](#).

## Best Protection for Ring Ouzels

In only a few days now, we will be getting reports of our first returning Ring Ouzels so it is an appropriate time to ask for maximum protection for this declining species. Many of us will want to see the birds, and some will want to photograph them, but the best interests of the birds must come first.

Last year, birds around Stanage Edge, Burbage Edge and Cutthroat Bridge were unfairly put under pressure by overly zealous photographers and those straying far too close to birds and their nest sites. It was, of course, only a minority of those who enjoyed the birds but having obtained maximum cooperation from the climbing groups who use these areas, it does no good whatsoever for the reputation of the birding community if we are seen as the cause of inappropriate disturbance.

Please take care and do report any cases that cause offence.

*(per DOS March Newsletter)*

## Sheffield Parks Survey 2015-16 Update

There's been a good response to the request for surveyors and all sites are now covered.



Kingfisher in Endcliffe Park (David Wood)

Spring will soon be upon us so please get out there and do your bit and submit records to the web-site.

The minimum requirement is at least one visit in each of the four seasons, with a minimum of two visits in the breeding season. For full details of the methodology please visit [here](#).

## Reward offered by the RSPB

### Reward offered as more birds of prey are illegally killed in the Peak District National Park

Derbyshire Police and the RSPB are appealing for information following the illegal killing of two birds of prey near to Glossop, Derbyshire. A £1000 reward has been offered by the RSPB for information leading to a conviction. For further information please visit [here](#).

## Sorby Breck Ringing Group

SBRG's Annual report for 2015 is now freely available to download [here](#)